



## park access and equity strategy

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## CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

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The purpose of this study is to develop a strategy to promote equitable access to park land based on the principles and goals of the Open Space Master Plan (OSMP) for the Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department (MDPR). This effort will analyze the existing conditions of park land distribution in the County and recommend policy (ies) to ensure equitable access as well as develop criteria for evaluation of potential areas of need and identify a strategy for acquiring specific properties or rights.

The 50-year vision established in The Miami-Dade County Park and Open Space System Master Plan (OSMP) is that great parks, public spaces, natural and cultural areas, streets, greenways, blueways, and trails create the framework for a more sustainable community. Such a plan for the public realm cannot be considered as an isolated system, but one that is integrated into the overall fabric of the community and one that will create the kind of place where residents want to live, employers want to do business, and tourists want to visit. The goal of OSMP is to “create a seamless, sustainable system of parks, recreation and nservation open spaces for this and future generations.” The vision for the County’s parks system emphasizes ***equitable access for every resident***, rather than the traditional measure of a certain number of County-wide park acres or facilities per County resident.

Equity and Access, two of the six guiding principles of the OSMP, are the focus of the research efforts in this report. In fact, it is the OSMP that is the basis for the Recreation and Open Space Element policy that is proposed for implementation by Goal 9, Strategy #1 of the CPPW grant.

**A. Goal:** The goal of this study is to develop Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and recreational open spaces that are intended to encourage equitable access to local (neighborhood) parks and open space as well as area-wide recreational activities for all County residents.

**B. Outcomes:** Outcomes and performance measures shall include:

- 100% of County wide pedestrian and bicycle Access to Parks Evaluation will be completed.
- 100% of new pedestrian and bicycle Access Standards and Criteria will be completed and implemented into department operating procedures.

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**C. Output.** Equitable access to recreation activities.

Neighborhood Parks and Open Space - the distance people have to walk, bicycle or drive to participate in the daily or weekly activities.

- Measure: Distance/access from each park per neighborhood.
- Data Source: MDPR

Regional Parks and Open Space - Transit and bicycle access are particularly critical to ensure access to these facilities.

- Measure: Distance/access from each park per neighborhood
- Data Source: MDPR

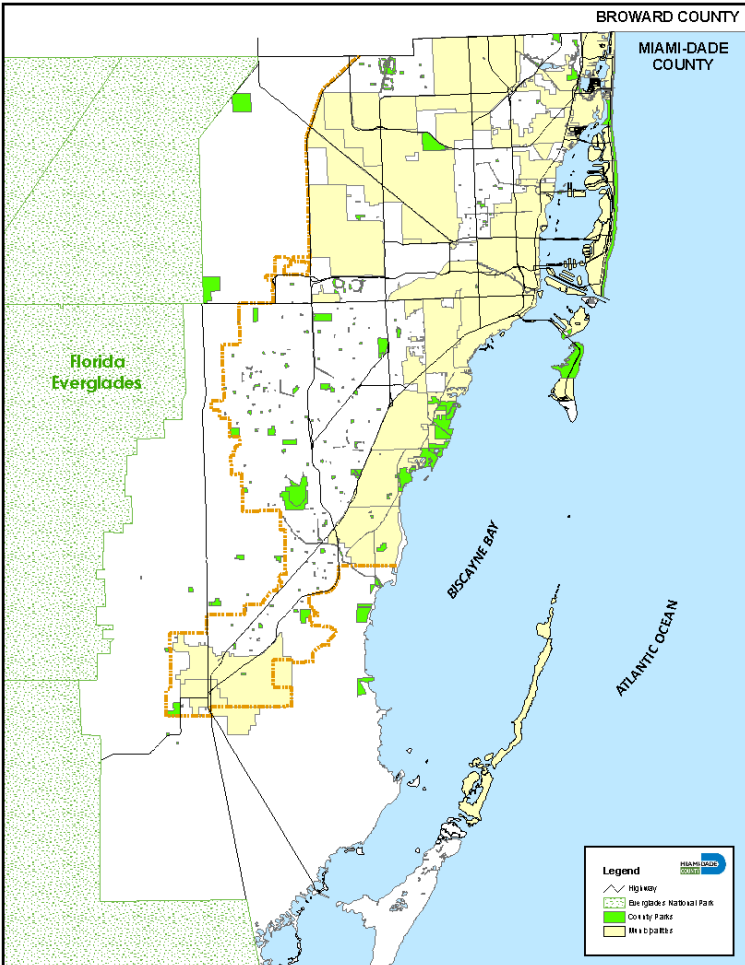
**D. Plan for Sustainability.** Policy ROS-8B of the Recreation and Open Space Element has been integrated as part of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan through adoption by the Board of County Commissioners requiring evaluation and appraisal through monitoring requirements.

## CHAPTER 2 – Community and Department Context

### COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Miami-Dade County is located in the southeastern part of the State of Florida. The United States Census Bureau estimates that the population of Miami-Dade County was 2,387,170 in 2007, making it the most populous county in Florida and the eighth-most populous County in the United States at the time. Miami-Dade is also Florida's second largest County in terms of land area, occupying approximately 1,946 square miles. The population of the County makes up approximately half of the South Florida metropolitan area population and includes several principal cities of South Florida. The County Seat is the City of Miami.

Miami-Dade County is home to 35 incorporated cities, in addition to many unincorporated community areas. The eastern portion of the County is heavily urbanized with high-rise buildings up and down the coastline, and is the location of the County's central business district, Downtown Miami. The western portion of Miami-Dade County extends into Everglades National Park and is largely unpopulated. East of the mainland is Biscayne Bay and includes Biscayne National Park, making Miami-Dade County the only metropolitan area in the United States that borders two national parks.





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## Growth

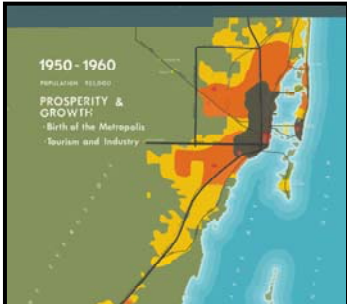
Over the last sixty years, Miami-Dade County (the County) has experienced significant and rapid population growth that can be directly attributed to foreign migration, mostly from Cuba, Haiti and Latin America. In 1960, the resident population of the County was approximately 935,000; in 2000, the population exceeded 2.2 million residents. Projections suggest that the County will top 3 million residents by 2025.

Developing specific objectives and strategies for recreation program planning requires understanding who our customers are and how our customer base is changing. Since 1929, the customer base of the Department has been characterized by growth and increasing diversity.

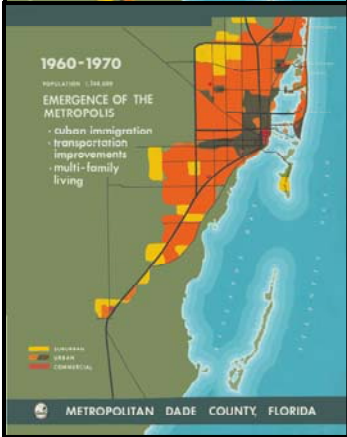
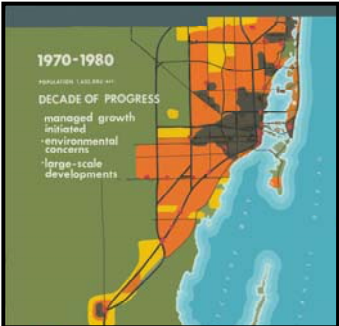


From 1940 through 1950, the growth of the County was attributed to recognition: visitors spread the word and many stayed.

From 1950 through 1960, the County saw prosperity and growth. Toward the end of the 1950's, Cuba fell and hundreds of thousands sought freedom in the United States, many settling in the County. Immigration had a dramatic impact on the demographic make-up of the County.



There were signs of capital development throughout the County during the 1970's, but hardly enough for the considerable increase in the County's population.



It can be noted that the dramatic population growth and the inability of County infrastructure to keep pace with that growth were contributing factors to urban sprawl – a footprint created during the 1980's and 1990's, and one that still taints the landscape of the



County today. The magnitude of the County's geographic area plays an important role in the distribution of facilities and services.

**DEPARTMENT CONTEXT**

**Department History**



The Department has a long, rich and storied history beginning in 1929. Originally conceived as a Roadside Beautification Program with an annual operating budget of \$10,000, the Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department is now one of the largest two-tiered recreation providers in the United States.

In 1929, the County hired A.D. Barnes as its first Director and later that same year, Commodore William J. Matheson, a local philanthropist, donated approximately eighty-acres (80) of coastal land that would become the first park in the County, Matheson Hammock Park.

During the 1930's, the Department began to acquire properties like Greynolds Park (1933); Haulover Park (1935); Redland Fruit and Spice Park (1938); Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (1938); and Homestead Bayfront Park (1938). These early acquisitions, known today as our Heritage Parks, were developed with assistance from the Work Program Assistance (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

During the 1940's, the Department again entered into discussions with the Matheson family concerning Key Biscayne. As a result of those discussions, a portion of Key Biscayne (Crandon) was donated to the County in exchange for the construction of a causeway (Rickenbacker) to the island.



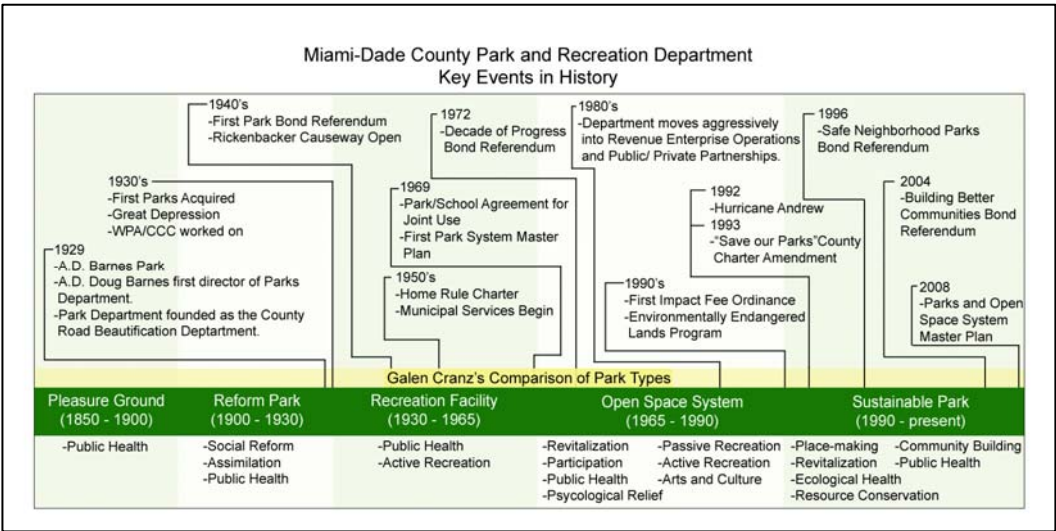
The Home Rule Amendment to the County Charter was adopted on November 6, 1956 by the electors. The Amendment to the Charter gave the Board of County Commissioners the legislative power to carry on a central metropolitan government. Article 1 of the adopted Charter “granted to the Board the power to provide parks, preserves, playgrounds, recreation areas, libraries, museums, and other recreational and cultural facilities and programs”. What this meant was that the County would not only be responsible for County-wide services but would be responsible for providing municipal type services to those residents living in unincorporated areas of Miami-Dade County.

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As a result, the Department began to acquire land to develop neighborhood and community parks like Carol Park, Myrtle Grove Park, Norwood Park, Westwood Park, Continental Park and Tamiami Park.

During the 1960's, the neighborhood park system expanded and the Department began to develop parks to include recreation buildings, swimming pools, athletic fields and game courts. Programming of those facilities followed.

The Department has evolved significantly from its origination in 1929. These changes are unique to the County, but are emblematic of the national evolution of the parks and recreation field. Galen Cranz, in her seminal book, "The Politics of Park Design, A History of Urban Parks in America," provides a detailed review of how the parks and recreation field has grown from the pleasure grounds of the 1850s to the Open-Space System model that is indicative of most park departments since 1965. These changes have continually redefined and expanded the role of recreation in American life. The graphic below charts the evolution of the parks movement as defined by Cranz, compared to the key events in the history of the Department. The chart shows how these epochs coincide with thirty to thirty five year, generational time periods. This suggests that we are, once again, on the cusp of a new era for parks and recreation. Some have termed this "The Sustainable Period" or "The Healthy Lifestyle Period". Irrespective of the name, the data suggests that it is important to take a new look at the role of parks and recreation and to recognize that one cannot be caught up in any paradigm of what has been done in the past. Rather, we must consider our past and the proud tradition of the County's Park and Recreation Department, while recognizing that we are in an era that must include emphasis on place-making, community building, public health, revitalization, ecological health and resource conservation.



## park access and equity strategy

### Department Overview

Today, the Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department operates a large urban park system, managing 261 park properties, comprised of active and passive parks, as well as protected environmentally sensitive properties, and serves as the local park department for unincorporated areas of the County. The Department also provides cultural experiences through its auditoriums, museums, cultural art centers and the Miami-MetroZoo.

Recreational experiences are provided through a wide range of programs and services at a very diverse range of park facilities. These unique facilities include:

- campgrounds
- golf courses
- marinas
- ball fields
- beaches and atoll pools
- a boxing center
- tennis, racquetball, volleyball and basketball courts
- a state of the art equestrian center
- a shooting range
- picnic shelters
- playgrounds
- swimming pools and water play areas
- recreational centers
- sports complexes
- walking paths and riding trails

Natural and environmental experiences are offered through passive recreational facilities, at nature centers and preserves, as well as active participation in Eco-adventure programs.

Facilities, programs and services directly provided by the Department are available to all residents of and visitors to Miami-Dade County. In addition, specialized leisure access camps and programs are provided for those persons with disabilities in our community.

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The following are some examples of direct programs that are offered by the Department throughout the year:

- sports development (including football and baseball)
- after school programs (chess, fencing, track and field, art and nature)
- summer camp and specialty camps (art, nature, sailing)
- eco-tours
- senior and teen programs

The Department has also enhanced its menu of programs by entering into partnership agreements with Community-Based Organizations (CBO) to provide competitive sports and related activities. The CBO typically offer programs such as:

- soccer
- tackle football
- flag football
- cheerleading
- basketball
- swimming
- roller hockey
- baseball and softball

The Department also produces special events such as the annual Rib Fest, the “Love In,” Fourth of July celebrations, and provides support for numerous community special events.

The Department also includes facilities that allow for citizens to engage in self-directed activities such as walking for leisure, walking for exercise, picnicking, hiking, biking, skating, fishing, boating, golfing, or simply enjoying being in a natural setting.

### **Parks Foundation**

One expects to find world-class parks, historic and cultural sites, environmental resources and outstanding recreation facilities and programs in Miami-Dade County. As the County continues to grow, so do the recreation needs of both residents and visitors. However, traditional government funding sources are not growing fast enough to keep pace with the growing demands of our

## park access and equity strategy

expanding community. The leadership of the Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department, in conjunction with prominent community leaders, recognized the need to establish alternative funding sources, independent of traditional government funding, in order to try to keep pace with the growing recreation needs of our community. Through combined public-private leadership, the Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade was founded in 2004 as a separate, independent, 501(c) 3 non-profit corporation.

The Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade was created to support the Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department, one of the community's most important assets. It is a nationally accredited park and recreation agency and one of the most recognized departments in the United States. The Department serves more than 2.5 million County residents and millions of tourists annually.

The Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade supports recreation programs that touch people of all ages and diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the program categories that are supported by the Parks Foundation include:

- special community events
- recreational programs
- educational programs
- fitness and health programs
- children's programs
- historic preservation programs
- programs for people with disabilities
- cultural programs
- senior programs
- wildlife programs
- after school programs
- land conservation programs
- Eco-Adventure programs

With more than 100 special events produced each year, there are a number of diverse ways that corporations may partner with the Department through the Parks Foundation to establish a mutually beneficial relationship. Sponsorships may be structured to benefit a company's marketing goals, community outreach initiatives, and employee relationship activities.

The Foundation also supports unique initiatives that include:

- Adopt-a-Tree Program
- Adopt-a-Bench Program
- Adopt-a-Recreation Program

### **Department Mission, Vision and Values**

The Department touches approximately 25 million people per year, who use the parks, attend events and participate in programs. As a three time winner of the National Gold Medal for excellence in park and recreation administration, the Department is renowned for its attractions and service. In order to deliver consistently outstanding service to the communities it serves, the Department has developed the following Mission, Vision and Values:

#### ***Mission***

“We create outstanding recreational, natural, and cultural experiences to enrich you and to enhance our community for this and future generations.”

#### ***Vision***

“Delivering Excellence Everyday”

#### **Core Values**

##### *Outstanding Customer Service*

The Department provides outstanding customer service exemplified by a professional, effective, efficient, considerate and friendly attitude towards our community, visitors and co-workers.

##### *Enthusiastic Attitude and Teamwork*

The Department works as a team based on respect for our co-workers, our community and our environment. Teamwork embodies loyalty to the Department’s mission, core values and goals in order to deliver outstanding parks and programs.

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### *Accountability and Integrity*

The Department is responsive to the community we serve by building public trust and confidence. We provide dependable, consistent and quality facilities and programs.

### *Creativity and Innovation*

The Department fosters and supports innovative, dynamic and creative solutions, programs and projects placing the department as a leader in our profession.

### *Stewardship*

The Department is a responsible and committed steward of the community's physical, natural and cultural resources creating a legacy for this and future generations.

### *Inclusiveness and Accessibility*

The Department provides parks, facilities and programs that are inclusive of the diverse residents of our community and are accessible to those with disabilities.

### *Leadership and Professional Development*

The Department fosters and supports life-long professional development, training and mentorship by providing education and professional development opportunities, which demonstrate best management, technical and leadership practices.

### *Excellence*

The Department fosters and supports excellence and professionalism in carrying out our mission, vision and goals for the delivery of outstanding parks, programs and facilities.



## CHAPTER 3 – Review of Guiding Documents

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The database (consisting of documents, regulations, procedures, mandates, reports, and policies) which are currently utilized as a basis for service delivery assessment and park land acquisition within unincorporated Miami-Dade County include the following:

- Park System Open Space Master Plan (OSMP)
- South Florida Parks Coalition (Charter)
- Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP)
- Land Acquisition Strategy Plan (LASP)
- Impact Fee Ordinance and Land Dedication Criteria
- Red fields to Green fields Initiative (R2G)

A summary of the base data and analysis efforts have been provided to facilitate understanding of the opportunities and constraints of the various data relative to our objective of providing standards for parks and recreational open spaces that are intended to encourage equitable access to local (neighborhood) parks and open space as well as area-wide recreational activities for all County residents. The data sources most relevant to this study have been reviewed in the following pages.

A copy of each of the data sources in their entirety has been included in electronic format on the enclosed CD and hyperlinks are available for the OSMP, the SFPC Charter, the CDMP and Impact Fee Ordinance. The results of the review and analysis will identify where constraints or opportunities exist within current policy and mandates that affect access to local (neighborhood) parks and open space as well as area-wide recreational activities within Miami-Dade County.

## A. Miami-Dade County Park and Open Space System Master Plan

February 19, 2008, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the *Miami-Dade County Park and Open Space System Master Plan*, also known as the Open Space Master Plan (OSMP). The OSMP took several years to develop and is based on a comprehensive analysis of other park systems in the US and around the world, an assessment of Miami-Dade County, as well as findings from a county-wide public participation and outreach effort, which included the Great Parks Summit in 2006. The vision for the OSMP is to create a ***new, interconnected framework*** for growth, one that results in a more a livable, sustainable community. Consisting of existing and proposed parks, public spaces, natural and cultural places, greenways, trails and streets, the framework will form the foundation or “bone structure” of the County to accommodate growth while also improving the quality of life for residents. The new framework will encourage the revitalization of neighborhoods; allow for the orderly redevelopment of existing land uses in response to changing markets and demographics; and ensure greater environmental protection. It will also improve the social fabric of the County, providing equitable access to parks and open spaces, and providing more opportunities for residents to meet socialize and connect with one another. The County’s Vision is that residents of every neighborhood, urban, suburban, rural, incorporated and unincorporated, have equal access to places to walk, to exercise, to socialize and to engage in a healthy, active lifestyle.

## **Guiding Principles of the OSMP**

### **ACCESS**

Every resident should be able to safely and comfortably walk, bicycle, drive and/or ride transit from their home to work, school, parks, shopping and community facilities.

### **EQUITY**

Every resident should be able to enjoy the same quality of public facilities and services regardless of income, age, race, ability or geographic location.

### **SEAMLESSNESS**

Every element of the County, including neighborhoods, parks, natural areas, streets, civic centers and commercial areas, should be connected without regard to jurisdiction.

### **MULTIPLE BENEFITS**

Every single public action should generate multiple public benefits to maximize taxpayer dollars.

### **BEAUTY**

Every public space, including streets, parks, plazas and civic buildings, should be designed to be as aesthetically pleasing as possible, and to compliment the natural and cultural landscape.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Every action and improvement of the Park System, including facilities, programs, operations and management, should contribute to the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the County.

The OSMP vision proposes that every resident has equitable access to these basic activities, and that every neighborhood within the County in time should be upgraded if necessary – to meet residents' needs. The type of facilities required to meet these needs may vary according to neighborhood context. A resident living in a high rise condominium in an urban area may walk on local streets and sidewalks, for example, while a resident in suburban Miami-Dade County may walk on a trail at a nearby Community Park. Similarly, a rural resident may play catch in someone's large rural yard, while an urban resident will walk to a nearby neighborhood green or square. The "Activity-Based Parks and Open Space Criteria" in Figure 2 outlines criteria for evaluating existing

and proposed neighborhood recreation activities in Miami-Dade County, as well as potential improvements or opportunities to ensure equitable local access.

The “Public Parks and Open Space Activity criteria” also outlines the third measure of equitable access, the distance people have to walk, bicycle or drive to participate in the *area-wide recreational activities* generally found outside of people’s neighborhoods such as:

- Swimming recreationally or competitively in a public pool
- Fishing from land or a boat
- Paddling a canoe or kayak
- Observing nature and wildlife
- Motor boating
- Attending festivals, concerts or special outdoor events
- Playing in organized competition sports
- Participating in exercise classes, lectures, social functions
- Access to and from transit
- Multiple access point from neighborhoods to surrounding parks

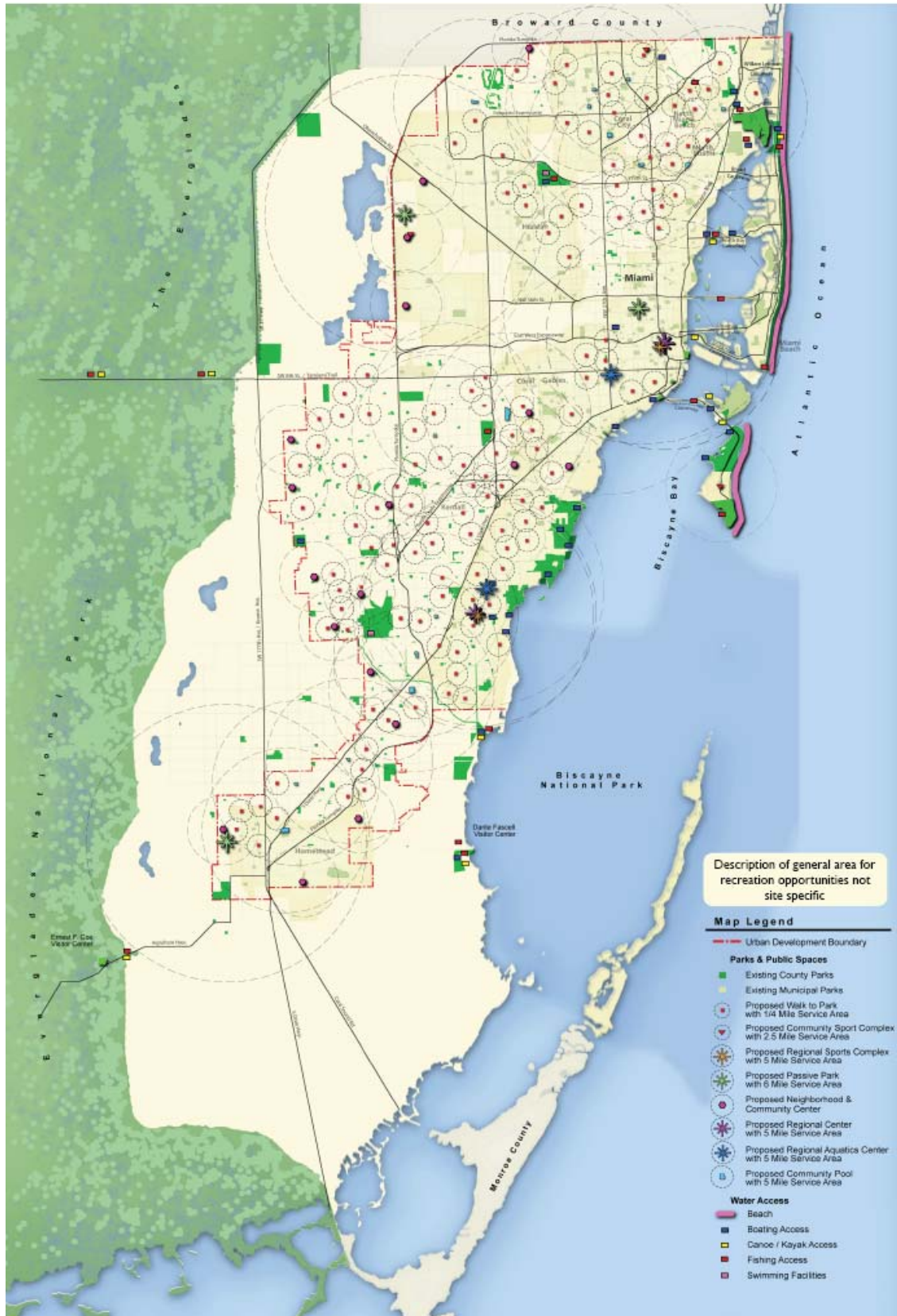
Generally the types of facilities needed to accommodate these activities require either:

1. A major natural resource,
2. A large facility that generates noise and traffic, and is incompatible with residential land uses,
3. A facility that cannot be supported by a single neighborhood.

Therefore these facilities are generally located along major collector or arterial roads, away from residential uses. The Parks and Open Space Vision proposes that these area-wide facilities should be distributed equitably throughout the County, based on the “Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria”, to ensure that every resident has equal opportunity to participate in the activities outlined above, and to reduce dependency on automobile access. Transit and bicycle access are particularly critical to ensure access to these facilities.

The map in Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the approximate locations of new parks and open spaces within the Urban Development Boundary to achieve “Equitable Access” to parks and open spaces in accordance with the new “Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria”.

Figure 1: A Strategy for Equitable Access and Distribution - OSMP



**ACCESS and LINKAGES:** Accessibility of park/recreation facility is affected by its connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a park are important as well, for instance viewing opportunities (into and from within the park) along the edge is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank space. Accessible spaces promote incidental physical activities.

The OSMP recommends that the County establish county-wide criteria for equitable access to parks and recreation facilities. This initiative provided the basis for change in policy in the Recreation and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Master Plan to be discussed in further detail the following pages.

**Figure 2: Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria - OSMP**

ACTIVITY		PARK OR OPEN SPACE TYPE			EQUITY ACCESS CRITERIA	
<i>Every resident should be able to:</i>		<i>This activity takes place in:</i>			<i>Measured by walking Distance/access from every household</i>	
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD</b>		<i>Measured by walking Distance/access from every household</i>				
<b>AT WILL ACTIVITIES</b>						
	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>SUBURBAN</b>	<b>RURAL</b>	<b>ACCESS</b>	<b>ACCESS MEASUREMENT</b>	
<b>WALKING</b>	Sidewalks, Nearby Park or Waterfront, Promenade, and Public Spaces	Sidewalks, Trails, Nearby Parks	Roads and Trails	All residents, regardless of location, should be able to safely and comfortably walk around their neighborhood, connecting to a safe, wide, shaded sidewalk system.	URBAN: Immediately accessible SUBURBAN: Immediately accessible RURAL: Immediately accessible	
<b>WALKING THE DOG</b>	Sidewalks, Private Amenity Areas, Nearby Parks	Streets, Sidewalks, Private Amenity Areas, Nearby Neighborhood/ Regional Park	Sidewalks, Private Amenity Areas, Nearby Parks	All residents, regardless of location, should be able to safely walk their dog around their neighborhood and at parks designated for dog use.	URBAN: Immediately accessible SUBURBAN: Immediately accessible RURAL: Immediately accessible	
<b>RIDE A BIKE</b>	Bike Lanes(on-street), Bike Paths (off-streets), Nearby Parks	Bike Lanes, Nearby Parks	Nearby Parks, Bike Lanes (on-street)	All residents should be able to safely ride their bicycle from urban to rural areas using a combination of on-street/off-street bike lanes. Additionally they should be able to enjoy recreational bicycle rides inside large parks, accessible by transit or greenway network.	URBAN: Immediately accessible SUBURBAN: Immediately accessible RURAL: Immediately accessible	
<b>SITTING OUTSIDE, READING, CONTEMPLATING, MEETING FRIENDS</b>	Nearby Parks, Public Spaces, Waterfront Promenade	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 5-10 minutes SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>GOING TO A PLAYGROUND</b>	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Park and Public Spaces	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 5-10 minutes SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>PLAYING CATCH, FRISBEE, PICNICKING, SUN BATHING</b>	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 5-10 minutes SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>PLAYING "PICK-UP SPORTS"</b>	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and School	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>RECREATIONAL SWIMMING, FAMILY FUN</b>	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and School	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES</b>						
<b>LEARNING TO PLAY A SPORT, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM</b>	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>LEARN TO SWIM</b>	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a	
<b>REGIONAL</b>		<i>Measured by Transit Distance/access from every household</i>				
<b>AT WILL ACTIVITIES</b>						
	<b>URBAN</b>	<b>SUBURBAN</b>	<b>RURAL</b>	<b>ACCESS</b>	<b>ACCESS MEASUREMENT</b>	
<b>RECREATIONAL SWIMMING, LEARN TO SWIM, FAMILY FUN</b>	Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15-20 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15-20 (5 miles drive/transit)	
<b>SHORELINE FISHING</b>	Public Access Dock/Pier/Shoreline/Causeway/Bridge	Public Access Dock/Pier/Shoreline/Causeway/Bridge	Public Access Dock/Pier/Shoreline/Causeway/Bridge	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15-20 minutes (2 miles bike/drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes (2 miles bike/drive/transit) RURAL: 15-20 (2 miles bike ride/drive/transit)	
<b>CANOING OR KAYAKING</b>	Public Access to Launch Area, Water Trails	Public Access to Launch Area, Water Trails	Public Access to Launch Area, Water Trails	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive) SUBURBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive) RURAL: 30 minutes (10 miles drive)	
<b>OBSERVING WILDLIFE, ENJOYING NATURE</b>	Waterfronts, Promenades, Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas, Greenways, Water Trails	Waterfronts, Promenades, Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas, Greenways, Water Trails	Waterfronts, Promenades, Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas, Greenways, Water Trails	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit)	
<b>MOTOR BOATING OR SAILING</b>	Water trails, Launch Areas/Marinas, Facilities that Allow Water Access, Docks	Water Trails, Launch Areas/Marinas, Facilities that Allow Water Access, Docks	Water Trails, Launch Areas/Marinas, Facilities that Allow Water Access, Docks	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit)	
<b>PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES</b>						
<b>ATTENDING FAIRS, FESTIVALS, CONCERTS, MARKETS OR OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	Waterfront Promenade, Neighborhood Park, Streets, Public Spaces	Waterfront Promenade, Neighborhood Park, Streets, Public Spaces	Waterfront Promenade, Neighborhood Park, Streets, Public Spaces	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 5 minutes (bike ride/transit) SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes (bike ride) RURAL: 30 minutes (drive)	
<b>PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZED OUTDOOR COMPETITION SPORTS</b>	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit)	
<b>PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZED INDOOR COMPETITION SPORTS</b>	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit)	
<b>EXERCISE, ATTEND CLASSES/ LECTURES/ SOCIAL FUNCTIONS</b>	Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas (nature center)	Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas (nature center)	Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas (nature center)	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit)	

## **The South Florida Park Coalition**

Miami-Dade County includes 35 municipalities as well as the unincorporated area each of whom own and manage hundreds of parks and recreation areas. During the development of the OSMP it was recognized that to realize the vision of an area-wide model park system required the creation of the South Florida Park Coalition (SFPC) to foster a seamless, connected, and sustainable parks system for the South Florida community. The SFPC brings together city, county, state and federal agencies and is dedicated to sharing knowledge and creating greater collaboration and cooperation to build a model park system that will foster economic prosperity through a greener, healthier, and a more livable community.

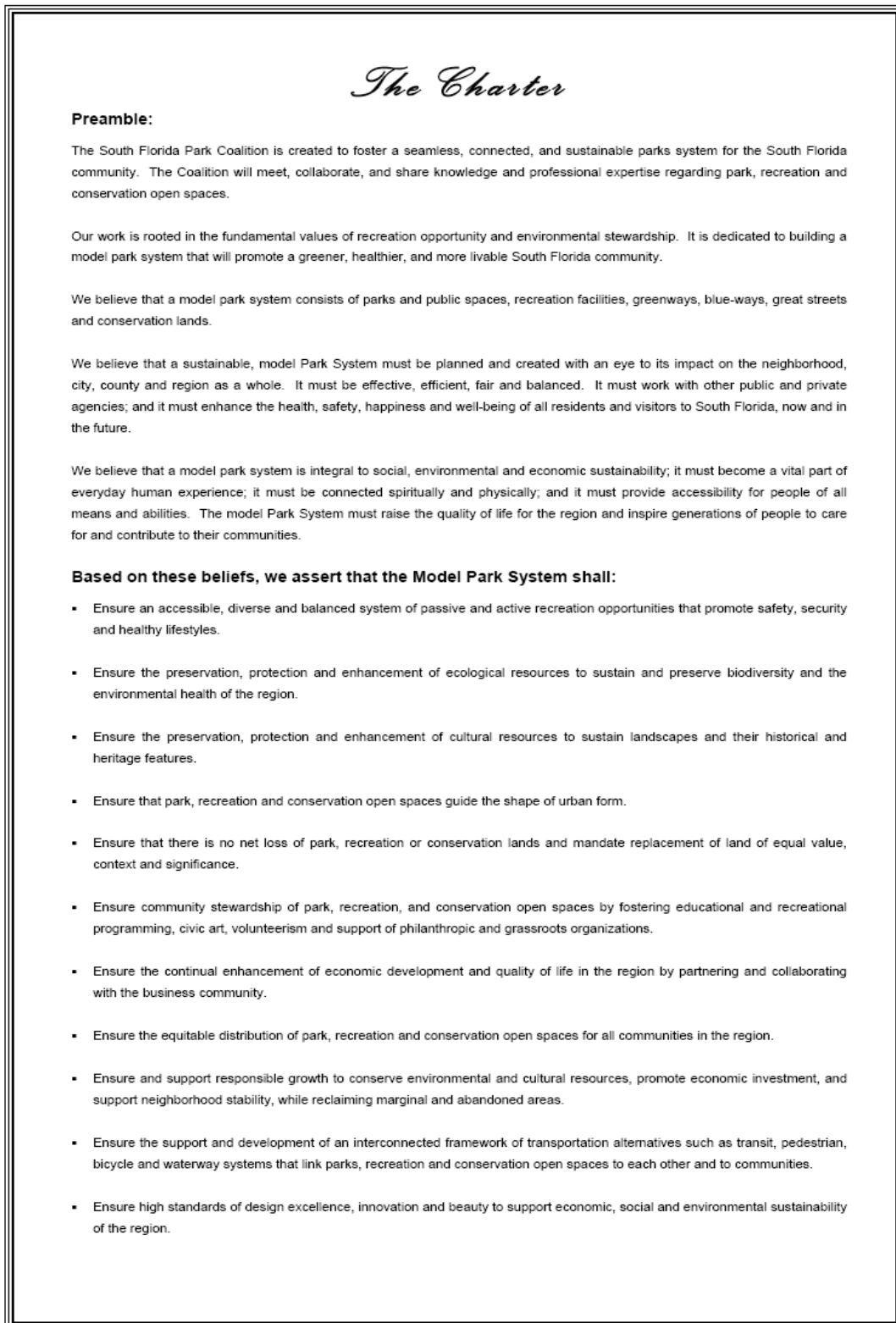
MDPR is working to have all participating city, county, state and federal agencies sign the Coalition Charter by resolution to institutionalize everyone's commitment to the health and livability. In addition to Miami-Dade County, local governments that have adopted the Charter through board approved resolutions include:

1. City of Coral Gables
2. City of Doral
3. Town of Golden Beach
4. Town of Bay Harbor Islands
5. City of Hialeah
6. City of Hialeah Gardens
7. Village of Key Biscayne
8. City of Miami Beach
9. City of Miami Gardens
10. City of North Miami
11. City of South Miami
12. City of Sunny Isles Beach

Agencies that have signed on are Biscayne National Park, Everglades National Park, Florida Department of Environmental Regulation Division of Recreation and Parks and educational institutions including the Miami-Dade County School Board, Barry University, Florida I University and the University of Miami. The Charter is included as Figure 3 on the following page. MDPR continues to work toward moving the SFPC beyond its preliminary stages of organization in order to establish an ongoing source of collaboration within Miami-Dade County in the development of a model park system.



**Figure 3: South Florida Parks Coalition Charter**



## **The Comprehensive Development Master Plan**

The Comprehensive Development Plan (CDMP) expresses the County's objectives and policies addressing where and how it intends development or conservation of land and natural resources will occur during the next ten to twenty years, and the delivery of County services to accomplish the Plan's objectives. It provides for "sustainable development" - allowing for land capacity to meet projected needs, preservation of wetlands and agricultural areas and protection of well fields.

The CDMP establishes the broad parameters for government to do detailed land use planning and zoning activities, functional planning and programming of infrastructure and services. It is a framework for use by other programs in support of its long-range planning goals. For each of the master plan elements, there are goals, objectives and policies, measures to be monitored and maps of planned future facilities.

The Plan establishes a growth policy that encourages development:

1. At a rate commensurate with projected population and economic growth;
2. In a contiguous pattern centered around a network of high-intensity urban centers well-connected by multi-modal intra-urban transportation facilities; and
3. In locations which optimize efficiency in public service delivery and conservation of valuable natural resources.

The CDMP is comprised of a series of elements (chapters) including the following:

2015-2025 Land Use Plan map

I. Land Use Element

II. Transportation Element

III. Housing Element

IV. Conservation, Aquifer Recharge and Drainage Element

V. Water, Sewer and Solid Waste Element

VI. Recreation and Open Space Element

VII. Coastal Management Element

VIII. Intergovernmental Coordination Element

IX. Capital Improvements Element

X. Educational Element

XI. Economic Element

## **Recreation and Open Space Element**

**A. Level of Service:** The existing Level of Service (LOS) in the CDMP for parks and open space is measured by acreage (See Appendix A for a description of the existing Level of Service). It does not take into account the specific recreation and open space needs of communities in the urban, suburban, rural and natural areas; nor does it account for equitable access to recreation, open spaces, natural and cultural resources.

In order to address this issue, in 2009 MDPR proposed text changes to the recreation and Open Space Element calling for the development of new criteria to supplement the LOS for parks and recreational open spaces that are based on access and neighborhood needs. The intent of the new, yet to be developed standards, along with the other recommended policies in the recently adopted text amendment, is to create a park system that facilitates the development of more sustainable and livable communities.

There are many policies of the Recreation and Open Space Element that discuss the provision of parks and open space in regard to level of service and access and accessibility. These are provided below. The policies below that refer to access have been highlighted for the readers benefit.

### **Objective ROS-2**

**Require the availability of adequate local recreation open space as a condition for the approval of residential development orders, and maintain an adequate inventory of recreational areas and facilities through 2010.**

### **Policies**

- ROS-2A. Miami-Dade County's minimum Level of Service (LOS) standard for the provision of recreation open space shall be the following:
- i. 2.75 acres of local recreation open space per 1,000 permanent residents in unincorporated areas;
  - ii. A County-provided, or an annexed or incorporated, local recreation open space of 5 acres or larger must exist within a 3 mile distance from the residential development;

- iii. The acreage/population measure of the Level of Service Standard will be calculated for each Park Benefit District (PBD) identified;
- iv. iv.) For purposes of issuing residential development orders, the minimum LOS standard shall not apply to rural and agricultural residences outside the Urban Development Boundary (UDB); and
- v. v.) For purposes of issuing residential development orders, a PBD is considered below standard if the projected deficiency is greater than five acres. This does not relieve applicants for development orders from applicable requirements for contributions or impact fees.

ROS-2B. Local recreation open space counted when measuring level of service shall include: 1) public local parks which exist or are committed by covenant; 2) public school and college playfields; 3) portions of private recreation open space; and, 4) County-owned or operated parks that have been incorporated or annexed into municipalities but in which a majority of park program participants are unincorporated area residents.

ROS-2C. In order to supply local parks to meet public demands, the County will maintain at 70% its 2003 proportionate share of the total local recreation open space required and strive to increase pursuant to Policy ROS-2A.i. to 80% of the LOS standard by 2010.

ROS-2D. The County will periodically research, review, and modify the LOS standard as necessary to ensure that it accurately reflects public recreational demand within unincorporated Miami-Dade County. LOS standard updates shall reflect the expressed recreational demand of residents, and the facilities necessary to serve the demand, measured by the minimum amount of land required to support these facilities.

ROS-2E. The County shall maintain an updated inventory of County and municipal recreation open spaces serving public recreational demand. The Park and Recreation Department shall maintain information on designated public and private recreation open space and facilities necessary for accurate and regular measurements of levels of service and administration of concurrency requirements.

**Objective ROS-3: Access to parks and recreational facilities will be improved in Miami-Dade County by 2010.**

**Policies**

- ROS-3A. The County shall continue to improve motorized access to parks and recreation open spaces on roads and mass transit routes for autos, bicycles, and public transport through the joint efforts of the Park and Recreation Department, the Public Works Department, and the Transit Agency, as well as other concerned County agencies where deemed necessary by the Park and Recreation Department.
- ROS-3B. The County shall improve and promote non-motorized access to existing park and recreation open spaces by implementing the North and South Miami-Dade Greenway and Blueway Network, as well as improved sidewalks and trails, to improve connectivity between parks and residences, schools, activity centers, and transportation nodes.
- ROS-3C. The Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department shall continue to provide improved access for persons with disabilities by removing architectural barriers to program participation. Actions include retrofitting existing building components to comply with the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ROS-3D. Through its park and recreation programs and all other available means, Miami-Dade County shall preserve and protect beaches and shores and maximize public ownership of these coastal resources. The County shall improve the maintenance of existing public park and recreation entrances and shall, where feasible, provide additional access points at waterfront and coastal locations.
- ROS-3E. The Park and Recreation Department shall seek to increase public awareness of available recreation opportunities through education and information programs and signage on roadways, at park entrances, and within large parks.

- ROS-4C. The County shall seek cooperative agreements such as the following with non-governmental organizations to provide additional resources for park acquisition, improvement, and programming priorities.
- iii.) The Park and Recreation Department shall continue to foster the growth and development of non-profit foundations that are dedicated to increasing the accessibility of recreation opportunity and open spaces to disadvantaged populations, and which can expand opportunities for facility improvements and recreation programming.
- ROS-4F. (v.) Improvements to physical access to parks and recreation facilities and special events through public transportation programs;
- ROS-5B. (iv.) In areas outside the Urban Development Boundary (UDB) but inside the Urban Expansion Area (UEA) or continuous to the UDB, the County may acquire and “bank” land for future use as recreation open space. Sites not contiguous to the UDB and not directly accessible by roadways wholly located inside or contiguous to the UDB shall not be developed as local recreation open space until the UDB is amended to encompass or abut the site.
- ROS-5C. The Park and Recreation Department shall, as funds are available, renovate, restore, and upgrade County facilities to ensure that the public can safely and securely enjoy recreational opportunities, and that the County can cost-effectively extend the useful life of existing facilities. Expenditures for the renovation, restoration and upgrade of existing parks and recreation facilities are prioritized as follows: 1) repairs and projects increasing visitor safety; 2) hazard reduction; 3) facility upgrade and resource management; 4) accessibility improvements in compliance with ADA; and, 5) energy efficiency improvements. The County shall implement projects and activities including but not limited to the following in order to address these priorities:
- ROS-5C iv.) The Park and Recreation Department shall continue to provide improved access for persons with disabilities by removing architectural, communication and program barriers to participation in compliance with ADA.

ROS-6B. Those portions of park properties containing important natural, historic, or archaeological resources will be developed and managed for long-term viability and integrity of the resource. Miami-Dade County shall use all practical means to assure that land in the vicinity of such park properties is developed for a use that is compatible with the protection of the natural, historic or archaeological resources. Through its park and recreation programs the County shall, wherever feasible, acquire and reuse historic buildings and sites to benefit the public. Opportunities for public access to the resource will be developed in a manner consistent with the conservation or preservation of the resource.

Upon approval of the OSMP by the Board of County Commissioners, as an update to the 1969 Recreation Open Space Master Plan, the Recreation and Open Space Element (including the goal, objectives and policies of this element) was in need of amendment in order to incorporate the guiding principles of the OSMP, as well as the vision for a seamless, sustainable parks and open space system. Realization of the vision will occur over time requiring completion of the efforts described in the Goal, Objectives and Policies of the Recreation & Open Space Element, as amended. The policies below address equity and access guiding principles of the OSMP. These were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners as part of the October 2009 Plan Amendment Cycle with final adoption on May 5, 2010.

ROS-8A. By 2017, Miami-Dade County shall conduct a countywide evaluation of neighborhoods for access to recreation and open space areas, using the “Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria” and the neighborhood context planning approach as described in the *Miami-Dade Parks and Open Space System Master Plan*. The neighborhood evaluation shall consider the parks and open space needs of communities in the urban, suburban, rural and natural areas of the County, assure equitable access to recreation, open spaces, natural resources, and social/cultural venues, and facilitate neighborhood stability and redevelopment.

ROS-8B. By 2013, the County shall develop Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and recreational open spaces that are intended to encourage equitable access to local (neighborhood) parks and open space as well as area-wide recreational activities for all County residents.

Monitoring measures for Objective ROS-8 require that;

1. Miami-Dade County shall annually log and report in subsequent Evaluation and Appraisal Reports (EAR) specific activities related to implementing seamlessness, access, beauty, sustainability, equity and multiple benefits in unincorporated Miami-Dade County parks and open spaces as described in the *Parks and Open Space System Master Plan*.
2. Miami-Dade County shall report in subsequent EARs the number of projects and amount of funds expended to improve the County's parks and open space system.

Objective 8 and the related policies of the Recreation Open Space Element are consistent with the CPPW's Goal 9, Strategy #1.



## **Land Acquisition Strategy Plan**

MDPR utilizes the *Land Acquisition Strategy Plan* (LASP) as a reference for all park land acquisitions. The primary criteria for acquisition are site suitability, compliance with policy and regulations, and local mandates. In addition MDPR uses the guiding principles of the OSMP as the basis for an equitable geographic distribution of park land throughout the County to ensure that residents have access to a full range of park types and recreation opportunities.

While it is recognized that formal acquisition criteria permit planned decision-making; nonetheless, unanticipated opportunities arise and disappear quickly, and criteria must be responsive. Therefore, while the acquisition program strives to adhere to a standard planning model that includes identification of unambiguous goals, specification of alternatives, and selection of an option that best advances identified goals; the plan also provides that the acquisition practice must be responsive to sudden and unexpected opportunities.

Decisions involved in land acquisition as provided in the LASP include a comprehensive search for prospects, careful evaluation of the costs and benefits associated with serious nominees, weighing of the alternative choices, and selection of the best candidates measured against criteria.

### **1. Acquisition Analysis Criteria**

MDPR's evaluation for acquisition is based on the following criteria. Development of acquired lands into various park types is largely driven by the opportunities and constraints of the following criteria which are described more fully within the LASP.

#### **a. Site Suitability**

- Site Location
- Site Accessibility
- Site Characteristics
- Funding Considerations
- Policy Related Characteristics

#### **b. Policy Supporting Land Acquisition**

State and County's enabling legislation requires that the County acquire and improve land as part of a recreation and open space system as follows:

- County Charter, Article 1, Section 1.01(A)(7);
- Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 9J-5;

- Recreation and Open Space element of CDMP; and
- Miami-Dade County Code, Chapter 33H.

Residents have supported County efforts to provide additional park land as follow:

- Voters approved special millage for the acquisition and preservation of environmentally endangered lands. (Miami-Dade County Code, Chapter 24 A);
- Voters approved general obligation bond program authorizing specific land acquisition projects. (Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond Program, General Obligation Bond); and
- Board of County Commissioners approved a bond program authorizing specific land acquisition projects (Quality Neighborhood Parks Bond Program).

The LASP strategy for acquisition and its acquisition criteria are consistent with the CPPW's Goal 9, Strategy #1.

### **Park Impact Fee Ordinance**

The park impact fee ordinance applies to the development of property for residential use located within the boundaries of the unincorporated area of Miami-Dade County. Nonresidential development of property is not subject to the terms of the chapter.

The impact ordinance provide not only for the minimum level of service established by the CDMP, but also for the additional public park open space and recreation facilities necessary to adequately serve the impacts and demands of new residential development; and to require that future residential growth contribute its fair share to the cost of additions and improvements to the County's public park system in amounts reasonably anticipated to offset the impacts and demands generated by such growth. This cost does not include operational and maintenance cost.

The level of service for parks as provided in the CDMP is implemented by the impact fee ordinance requiring that a minimum of two and three-quarter (2.75) acres for each one thousand (1,000) persons residing within unincorporated Miami-Dade County be devoted to local recreation open space.

Before a residential building permit is issued, the applicant will be required to pay monetary fees or to dedicate public local park land, or a combination.

## **1. Land Dedication**

As stated above land dedications may be made in lieu of monetary fees. If elected, land dedications are conveyed by plat and deed. The determination by the Director of MDPR to accept dedications shall be based on the County's present needs and availability of other park sites within the immediate vicinity of the development. Where land for a public local park is to be dedicated, and/or park improvements for a public local park are to be constructed, a recordable agreement is required stating which and and/or improvements will be dedicated for park purposes.

### *Determination of land dedication in lieu of monetary fees.*

For developments of more than fifty (50) residential dwelling units, or, if a site plan is not provided and the highest permissible development is more than fifty (50) residential dwelling units, the fee payer may request a local park open space determination by MDPR for the purpose of determining whether land dedication in lieu of the open space fee is acceptable.

Based on specific review of the development and the criteria listed below MDPR determines whether land dedication or monetary fees, or a combination would be in the best interest of the County. The determination must be in accordance with the following criteria for the purpose of maintaining the permanent level of service:

- Ensuring that new local parks are available within a short distance to serve new residential development;
- Addressing future needs by maintaining not less than the minimum permanent level of service for local parks as population growth occurs;
- Completion of public projects started;
- Initiation of new public projects identified in the Multi-Year Capital Plan of the County Budget;

All land dedications for park and recreation purposes, are reviewed and approved by MDP. The MDP considers the following in their review:

- Size
- Unity
- Shape
- Location
- Access
- Usability

The impact fee ordinance is primarily applicable to the level of service considerations for parks (2.75 acres per 1,000 residents) while the requirements for consideration of access and equity criteria are limited.

## **F. Red fields to Green fields Initiative**

### **Parks and the Urban Real Estate Crisis**

#### **The Vision**

Red Fields to Green Fields seeks to convert vacant and financially distressed commercial property into urban parks. The initiative recognizes that the glut of commercial space in U.S. cities threatens to pull down cash-strapped banks and stall the nation's economic recovery. At the same time, the effort acknowledges the catalytic effect that urban parks can have in improving the economy, environment and health of a city. The initiative hopes to capitalize on a historic opportunity to revitalize America's urban core and create liveable, walk-able communities. This vision is consistent with the guiding principles of the OSMP.

#### **The Strategy**

Public-private partnerships would buy distressed properties and, in many cases, demolish buildings. Part of the land would be turned into an urban park, while the remainder could be densely redeveloped later to help pay off the project's debt and create jobs. We are exploring the feasibility of using federal funding, matched by local public and philanthropic investment, to support the park projects.

City Parks Alliance, a national organization comprised of city parks leaders from across the country who work together to strengthen America's city parks, is working with Georgia Tech Research Institute to assess an initiative in six metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver, Miami-Dade County, Philadelphia and Wilmington, DE. That analysis will be released in late spring 2010. A second round of studies in 4 – 5 other cities will be released in late fall 2010.

### **Miami-Dade County Red fields to Green fields Strategy**

The strategies are based on the 50-year vision of the recently approved Open Space Master Plan and newly adopted policies in the Comprehensive Development Plan.

- 1. North/South Transit Oriented Parks (TOPs)**
- 2. East/West Greenways and Resource Conservation Network**
- 3. Neighborhood and Regional Parks and Connectors**

Implementation of these strategies will implement the goals of the Red fields to Green Fields initiative by:

- Removing troubled real estate from market;
- Creating jobs and reduce unemployment;
- Increasing property values;
- Encouraging physical activity and prevent obesity;
- Increasing park supply and connect people to the outdoors;
- Responding to sea level rise and water supply issues; and
- Creating sustainable development through transit oriented parks and transit oriented development.

In June of this year, Atlanta, Cleveland, Denver, Miami-Dade County, Philadelphia and Wilmington, DE presented each of their strategies to Derek Douglas, Special Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs on the Domestic Policy Council. He said the White House had identified three goals for its urban policy: economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

“If you take these three broad policy goals and you overlay them on Red Fields to Green Fields, it’s a perfect match,” Douglas told city and parks officials. The multi-disciplinary and multi-jurisdictional approach, he said, “is at the core of our urban policy work.”

Douglas described several interagency programs that he said would fit well with the Red Fields to Green Fields philosophy: the Sustainable Communities Initiative, Urban Water Initiative and Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. He echoed President Obama’s remarks that the nation should “stop seeing the cities as a problem and start seeing them as a solution.”

City Parks Alliance’s Catherine Nagel, speaking at the conference, said support from Washington is critical to the transformational initiative. She argued for a multi-billion dollar federal investment and creation of a land bank with zero percent interest on loans. “This is both a real estate problem and a banking problem,” she said.

The initiative continues to receive interest and Miami-Dade County’s proposed strategy has been particularly well received because of the OSMP vision that has been identified as the basis for our plan. If funded the Red fields to Green fields initiative would enable MDPDR to acquire land necessary to provide parks and open space and recreation facilities in areas of need.

**Figure 4: Parks Serve as a Catalyst for Neighborhood Redevelopment**



**G.**

## **Summary**

As described in this review of base data, parks and open space and recreation facilities are acquired and located through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. The combination of these measures will promote livable and walk-able communities.

The next phase of this study will provide:

- Compile standards from guiding documents and create a matrix of access and equity criteria to parks/facilities/activities currently being used in the County.
- Review and synthesize other models of service area analysis, gap analysis and acquisition criteria.
- Recommendations for access and equity criteria to be used in the study based on community context as well as walking, biking and driving equity access criteria as established in the OSMP.

## **V. Compilation of Standards/Guiding Documents**

Above in Section IV is a review of guiding documents, policies, procedures, mandates and reports which are currently used as a basis for service delivery assessment and park land acquisition including:

- OSMP;
- South Florida Parks Coalition (Charter);
- Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP);
- Land Acquisition Strategy Plan (LASP);
- Impact Fee Ordinance and Land Dedication Criteria; and
- Red fields to Green fields Initiative.

The following pages include 1) a compilation of standards from the guiding documents and 2) creation of a Matrix of Access and Equity Criteria to parks/facilities/activities currently being used in Miami-Dade County.

To identify a baseline of existing standards, the data collected has been compiled and categorized using the Guiding Principles of the OSMP. This is illustrated in the Matrix of Access and Equity Criteria. Each category is further broken down as listed below.

## **A. Compilation of Standards**

### **Access**

- ✓ Transit
- ✓ Vehicular
- ✓ Bicycles
- ✓ Pedestrian
- ✓ Gaps
- ✓ Barriers

### **Equity**

- ✓ Parks/Open Space
- ✓ Activities/Programs
- ✓ Neighborhoods
- ✓ Socioeconomic Variables
- ✓ Health Factors

### **Seamlessness**

- ✓ Connectivity
- ✓ Partnerships

### **Sustainability**

- ✓ Criteria
- ✓ Dedication
- ✓ Park Typology
- ✓ Size
- ✓ Activities
- ✓ Impact fees
- ✓ Concurrency
- ✓ Level of Service



**Multiple Benefits**

- ✓ Economic benefits
- ✓ Health Benefits
- ✓ Environmental Benefits

**Beauty**

- ✓ Design Standards
- ✓ Context

To understand how the data is applied by the existing standards, policies and reports a matrix has been developed that includes numerous standards, criteria, policies and measures and the document from which they are referenced. The matrix reveals the variety of measures of open space that are currently applied in some form or other within the County. The matrix reveals that a different and uniform standard of measure of open space is needed to clearly provide for the equitable distribution of parks and activities throughout Miami-Dade County.

**Table 1: Matrix of Existing Policies, Standards and Regulations**

Report/Policy/Mandate Criteria	OSMP	SFPC	CDMP	Land Acquisition Strategy Plan	Impact Fee Ordinance	Impact Fee Manual	Land Dedication Criteria	Red 2 Green
<b>ACCESS</b>								
Equitable Access	X	X	X	X				
Park Typology based on activity								
Access criteria:								
✓ Access to At Will Activities Within ½ Mile Walking Distance	X	X	X	X				X
✓ Access to Programmed Activities Within 1 Mile Walking Distance	X	X	X	X				X
✓ Access to Regional Population Based Activities Within 2 Miles Via Transit	X	X	X	X				X
✓ Access to Regional Resource Based Activities Within 2 Miles Via Transit	X	X	X	X				X
Distance from household Measured by Transit	X	X	X	X				X
Distance from household Measured by Walking	X	X	X	X				X
Access to Alternative Modes of Transportation via Complete Streets	X	X	X	X				X
Reduce Barriers	X	X	X	X				X
Active transportation infrastructure	X	X	X	X				X
Healthy Food Access								X
<b>EQUITY</b>								
Acres per population (2.75/1,000)			X	X	X	X		
Minimum Acres by Park Type			X		X	X	X	
Equitable distribution of parks	X	X	X	X				
Park Benefit Districts					X	X	X	
<b>SEAMLESSNESS</b>								
Linkages to other parks, trails, greenways, waterways, wildlife corridors, cultural features, landscapes or corridors	X	X	X	X	X			X
Partnerships with Miami-Dade School District	X	X	X	X	X			X
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>								
Sustainability Criteria - Economic, Social and Environmental	X	X	X	X				X
Health Benefits	X	X	X	X	X			X
Environmental Benefits	X	X	X	X	X			
Economic Benefits	X	X	X	X				
Balance of availability activity by type, i.e. Neighborhood and Regional	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Usable open Space				X	X	X	X	
Impact Fees			X	X	X	X	X	
Concurrency			X	X				
<b>MULTIPLE BENEFITS</b>								
Eyes on the park (residential or commercial activity)	X	X	X	X				X
Future development or increased density of residents expected in the neighborhood			X					
Incidental physical activity	X	X	X					X
<b>BEAUTY</b>								
Public art	X	X	X					
Active Transportation Infrastructure landscaped to provide shade and interest	X	X	X	X				X
Design standards for private and public spaces	X	X	X	X				
Context Sensitive	X	X	X	X				
Incorporates Cultural and Historic Sites	X	X	X		X			

## park access and equity strategy

## CHAPTER 4 – Senior Staff Review and Recommendations

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### 4. Senior Staff Review Meeting and Recommendations

#### 4.1. Meeting Summary and Recommendations

On January 7, 2011, senior staff met to review work completed to date and provide guidance and direction for the remainder of the study. Work completed to date includes a compilation of guiding documents, policies and mandates regarding access and equity criteria. Based on those guiding documents and the new vision as stated in the Park System Open Space Master Plan, a new set of Equity Access Criteria were established that is based on the ability of users to walk or ride a bicycle to parks.

Derivative of the analysis and research of reasonable walking and biking distances, an evaluation of service areas and subsequent gaps was conducted as follows:

1. Regional Parks
  - a. 2-3 mile biking distance to parks
  - b. Resource based
    1. Natural, Cultural or Historical
  - c. Population Based
2. Local Parks – UMSA
  - a. ¼ to ½ mile walking distance to park
  - b. Programmed Parks
3. Establish a set of criteria for the acquisition of park sites, including:
  - a. Access gaps in service
    - i. Regional
    - ii. Local
  - b. Deficiencies in park acreage
  - c. High density areas

## park access and equity strategy

- d. Accessibility
  - e. Size/Function
  - f. Areas of Economic disparity
  - g. Areas of health risks
  - h. Greenways access
  - i. Proximity to transit stations
  - j. Park and Ride stations
  - k. Sea level rise
  - l. Areas of potential redevelopment
- 4. Map of local park service areas and neighborhoods
    - a. Ideal would be to provide a local park for each neighborhood
  - 5. Maximize access to existing parks by eliminating barriers through a variety of means including building bridges over canals and installing sidewalks; there by increasing capacity of existing parks to serve more people.
  - 6. Institutionalize/Codify the Land Acquisition Plan including the updated Level of Service standards and criteria established.

These recommendations are compiled as a summary matrix in Chapter 5 and subsequently mapped in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 5 - Research

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### 5.1 Best Practices

*“Inequity in access to parks is a major problem in many urban areas. Rather than looking only at the overall acreage of open space per 1,000 residents—a commonly used metric that masks inequalities in access to open space across a city or community— some cities are developing alternate measures that focus on the distribution of open space throughout the city.”<sup>1</sup>*

Some other cities discussed here have created new measures that direct future park investment and in turn reduce disparities. They include Seattle, Denver, Minneapolis and Chicago.

By measuring open spaces differently, cities are working to minimize inequities in access to open space that are not detected with the standard gross acreage per population measure. This new information can be used to direct future investments in parks and open space in a more systematic way to reduce inequities in access to open space at the neighborhood level. The Center for City Park Excellence found that of the 50 biggest U.S. cities only 14 have a goal for the maximum distance any resident should live from his nearest park - and among the 14, the standard ranges from as little as one-eighth of a mile to as much as a mile. The Trust for Public Land prepared a collection of data on the standards used by metropolitan regions around the country in their report “Parks: How Far Is Too Far?” The results are illustrated in [Table 2 - Standards for Maximum Allowable Distance from a Park](#).

**Seattle:** The City of Seattle measures open space that includes a focus of useable open space based on accessibility. The city’s goals for open space (2000 Parks and Recreation Plan) include a measure of the proximity of usable open space to people’s homes. The city conducted a [Gap Analysis Report in 2000](#), based on the distributional measure of “useable open space” and a measure of overall acreage per resident

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Raya and Victor Rubin. “Safety, Growth, and Equity: Parks and Open Space,” [Policy Link](http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/SafetyGrowthEquity-ParksOpenSpace_final.pdf): < http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97C6D565-BB43-406D-A6D5-ECA3BBF35AF0%7D/SafetyGrowthEquity-ParksOpenSpace\_final.pdf> (Winter 2006).

## park access and equity strategy

“breathing room open space.” This analysis identified areas of greatest need to guide the city’s future land acquisition and park development efforts.

**Table 1: City of Seattle Open Space Goals**

City Open Space Goals (Seattle Comprehensive Plan and Seattle’s Parks & Recreation Plan 2000)		
	GOAL	AREA
BREATHING ROOM OPEN SPACE	Desirable: 1 acre per 100 residents Acceptable: 1/3 acre per 100 residents	City-wide
USABLE OPEN SPACE	1/4 to 1/2 acre within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of every resident	Villages

Source: Seattle Parks and Recreation

**Denver:** In Denver, Colorado, nine out of every 10 residents live within six blocks of a park, and the city overall has 11 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. Using GIS mapping and the six-block criterion the city identified gaps or inequities and applied capital funding to those areas of need. Denver Parks and Recreation plans to tighten the radius down to four blocks, or about 1/3 of a mile.

**Minneapolis:** Minneapolis also has a six-block standard, which has been in place over 50 years and is included in Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board policies and as one of the strategies of the Open Space and Parks Element of [The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth](#) adopted in 2009 (Minneapolis’ Comprehensive Plan). The strategy is provided below.

*“Ensuring easy park access for all residents by providing parks within an easy walk from their homes (no more than six blocks) and achieving a ratio of .01 acres of parkland per household.” Note: Some blocks in Minneapolis are so long that six of them can add up to more than half- mile.<sup>2</sup>*

**Chicago and Chicago Metropolitan Region:** The Chicago Park District and City of Chicago use a long-term goal of four to five acres per 1,000 people and estimates that

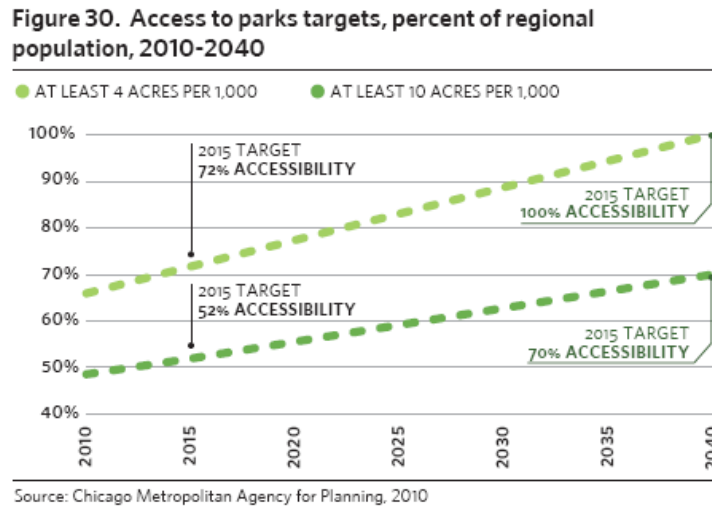
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<sup>2</sup> Peter Harnik and Jeff Simms “Parks: How Far Is Too Far,”  
[http://www.tpl.org/content\\_documents/cityparks\\_Planning\\_mag\\_article12\\_2004.pdf](http://www.tpl.org/content_documents/cityparks_Planning_mag_article12_2004.pdf).

## park access and equity strategy

more than 90% of the city's residents have a park or play lot within a half mile of their home. This was accomplished by an aggressive acquisition program and not necessarily by implementation of a maximum distance standard.

**Figure 5: Access to parks targets, percent of regional population, 2010-2040**



The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official regional planning organization for the northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP is responsible for developing [GO TO 2040](#), metropolitan Chicago's comprehensive regional plan. CMAP reported that currently, only 49 percent of people in the region have adequate access to parks, as defined by a standard of 10 acres per 1,000 people. But it was felt that this standard was not appropriate for the densest areas of the region and, therefore maintains a level of service of at least 4 acres per 1,000 people for these areas.



## park access and equity strategy

**Table 2: Standards for Maximum Allowable Distance from a Park**

<b>Standards for Maximum Allowable Distance from a Park</b>			
<b>City</b>	<b>Distance (ft)</b>	<b>Approx. % of residents meeting the distance std.</b>	<b>Year Standard Adopted</b>
Austin	5,280	60	early 1980s
Charlotte	5,280	50	1989
Chicago	2,640	90	unknown
Cleveland	2,640	unknown	1988
Columbus	2,640	unknown	unknown
Colorado Springs	2,640	unknown	unknown
Denver (new development)	1,050	unknown	unknown
Denver (older development)	2,100	90+	2003
Fresno	1,320	unknown	unknown
Indianapolis	5,280	70	"last 5-10 years"
Jacksonville	5,280	unknown	2003
Long Beach (high density neighborhoods)	1,320	unknown	unknown
Long Beach: low density neighborhoods)	2,640	unknown	unknown
Minneapolis	3,200	99+	unknown
Nashville	2,640	unknown	2002
Phoenix	2,640	unknown	unknown
Portland	2,640	unknown	unknown
San Jose	3,960	unknown	unknown
Seattle (urban villages)	660	unknown	1993
Seattle (single family neighborhods)	2,640	90+	1993
<b>Average Distance</b>	<b>2,925</b>		

Source: Trust for Public Land

# park access and equity strategy

## Demographics

The County is home to the third largest Hispanic community in the United States, behind Los Angeles County, California, and Harris County, Texas. Miami-Dade is considered a majority-minority County; this means that groups that are ethnic or racial minorities in other parts of the State and/or Country are recognized as the majority group in Miami-Dade County.

In 1960, approximately five percent (5%) of the population of the County was Hispanic. In 2000, fifty-seven percent (57%) of the County, or approximately 1.2 million residents, were Hispanic. This influx can be attributed to the political situation in Cuba in the early 1960's, the Mariel boatlift in the early 1980's, and immigration from Latin American countries. Future population projections indicate that by 2020, Hispanics will account for nearly seventy percent (70%) of the population of the County.

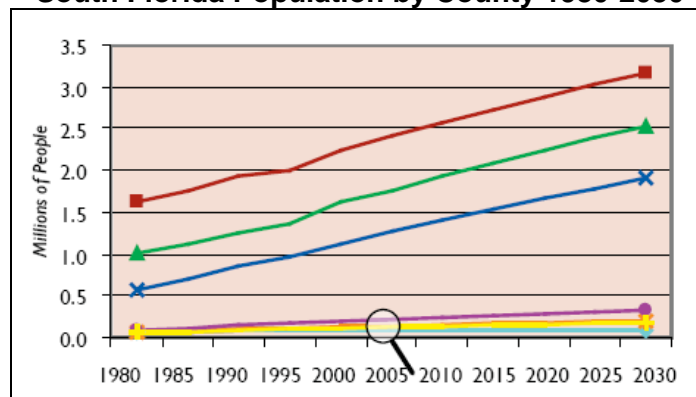
Although the Hispanic population has increased over the years, the same cannot be said of the population of White non-Hispanics. In 1960, approximately eighty percent (80%) of the population of the County was White non-Hispanic. In 2000, White non-Hispanics accounted for just twenty-three percent (23%) of the County's population. The following table further illustrates the changing population and diversity in the County, beginning in 1960 and includes population projections through 2020.

**Miami-Dade County – Population and Ethnicity Demographics**

Year	Total Population	White	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%
1960	935,000	749,000	80%	137,000	15%	50,000	5%
1970	1,268,000	782,000	61%	190,000	15%	299,000	24%
1980	1,626,000	773,000	48%	284,000	16%	581,000	36%
1990	1,967,000	617,000	30%	409,000	21%	967,000	49%
2000	2,253,000	534,000	23%	457,000	20%	1,291,000	57%
2010	2,551,000	418,000	15%	525,000	21%	1,620,000	64%
2020	2,858,000	347,000	11%	583,000	20%	1,971,000	69%

Source: Charting the Course, Florida Atlantic University Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, 2006.

**South Florida Population by County 1980-2030**



Source: Charting the Course, Florida Atlantic University Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, 2006.

# park access and equity strategy

## Ethnic Distribution

In order to develop and maintain a Recreation Program Plan and provide relevant programs and services, it is important to first understand the ethnic distribution of customers and potential customers. Ethnic and cultural variations impact park planning, programming, facility specifications and community needs.

In general, Hispanics are dispersed somewhat evenly throughout the County. However, large concentrations can be found in both the central and western areas of the County, as illustrated on the map on the following page.

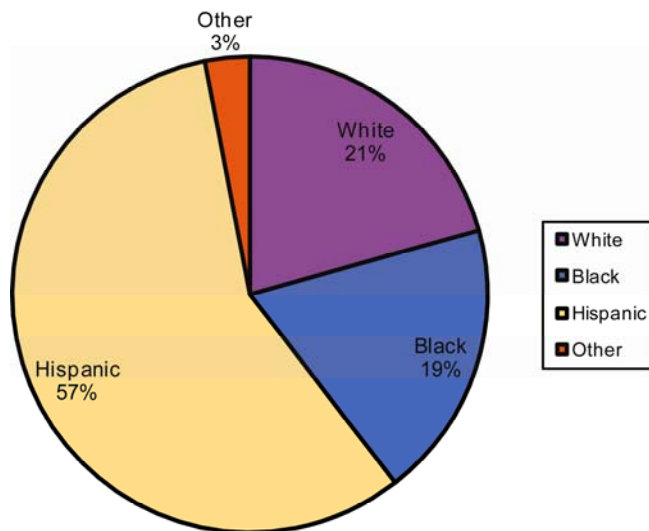
Black non-Hispanic residents are found in large concentrations in north and central municipalities (North Miami; Miami Gardens; and Opa-Locka) and in the southern portion of the County in Florida City. Miami Gardens has the largest percentage of Black non-Hispanics (81%) followed by the City of Opa-Locka (72%) and Florida City (61%). Black non-Hispanics are also concentrated in unincorporated areas of Miami-Dade County, including neighborhoods such as Perrine, Goulds, Naranja and Richmond Heights, as illustrated on the map found on the following page. Each of these areas and/or municipalities is located in economically disadvantaged areas of the County.

The majority of White non-Hispanic residents live along the east coast and in rural southwest Miami-Dade County. High concentrations of White non-Hispanics can be found in Aventura, Bal-Harbor, Miami, Miami Beach, Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay, Coral Gables and rural south Miami-Dade County and as illustrated on the map found on the following page.

Florida Atlantic University’s Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions (CUES) *Charting the Course Report* (2006) documents significant disparity in population and ethnic distribution in the South Florida region: “Poverty and wealth are geographically concentrated with barrier islands and Intracoastal locations housing the greatest concentration of wealth, and inner city neighborhoods and outlying rural areas containing the greatest poverty.”

### 2009 Population

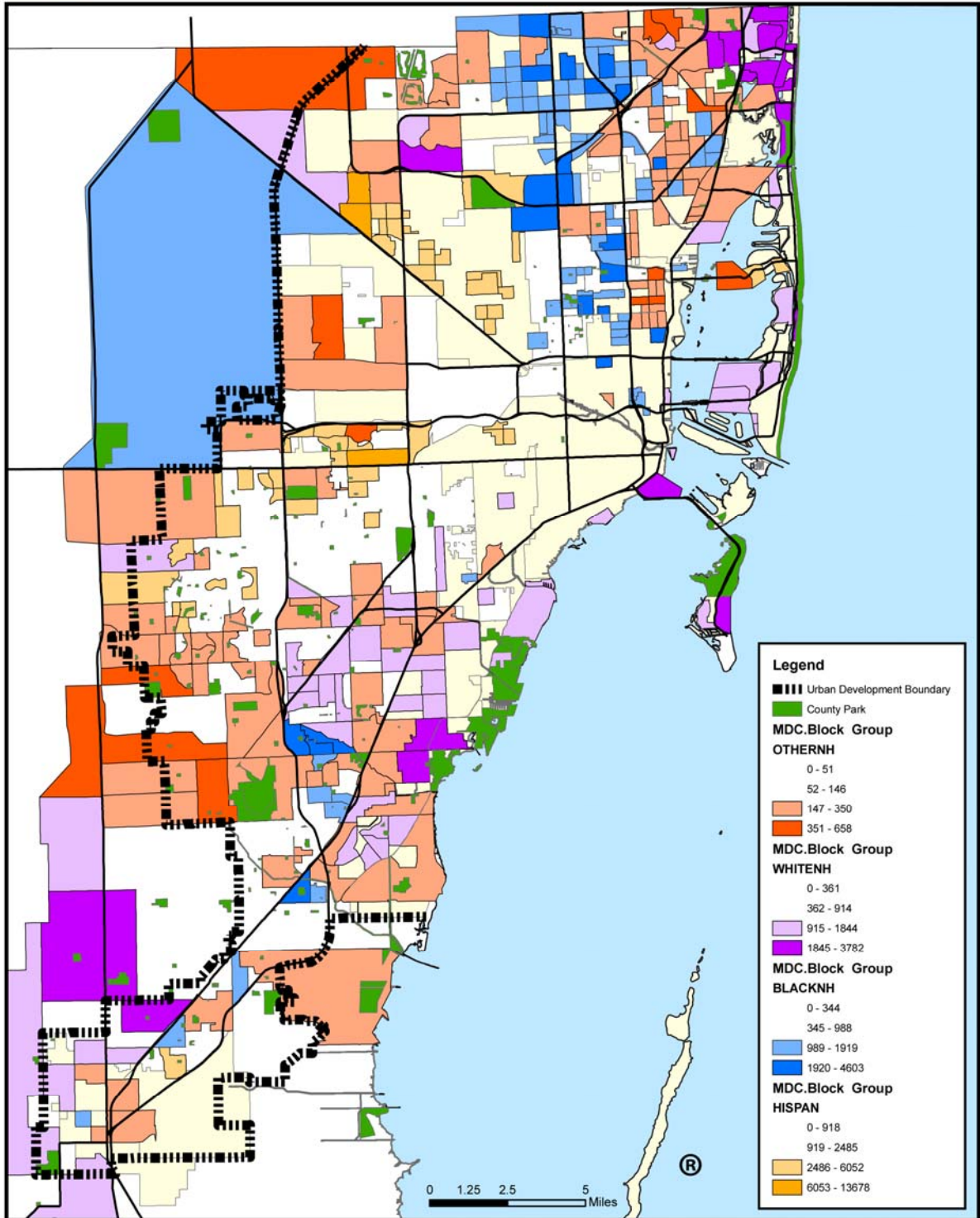
#### Distribution by Race:



# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.2.1 – Ethnic Distribution

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS - ETHNIC PROFILE



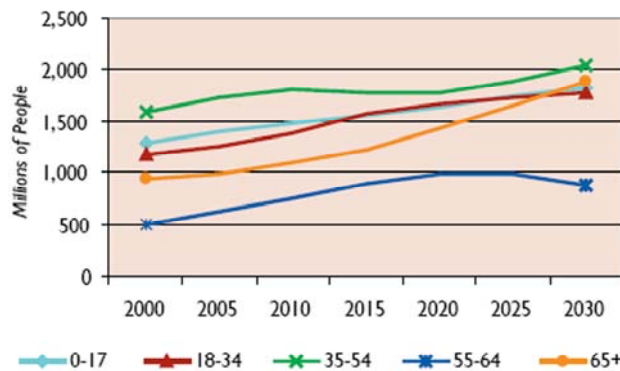
# park access and equity strategy

## Age

Today, the median age in Miami-Dade County is 38.7. This is three years older than what was reported in the 2000 US Census. Changes in the median age are an important indicator of a shift in the make-up of the County. Changes in the median age point to a population that is getting older, and older adults are more active today than in previous generations. As a result, they have different recreational needs and expectations.

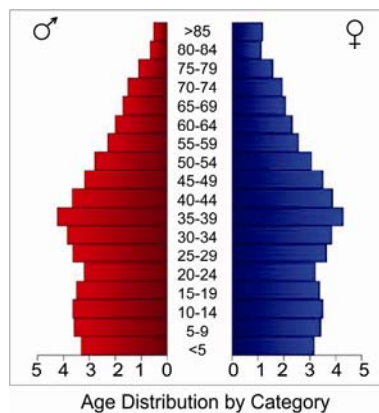
As stated in the CUES Report, *Charting the Course*, the population in South Florida is shifting from a surge in the youth population (under 18 years old) toward resurgence in senior citizens (over 65 years old). As baby boomers age, the number of seniors will rise and is expected to nearly equal the middle-age population by 2030 and surpass the youth population. Recreational opportunities, facilities and programs will need to meet the needs of this changing community.

### Population Change by Age in South Florida 2000-2030



Source: Charting the Course, Florida Atlantic University Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, 2006.

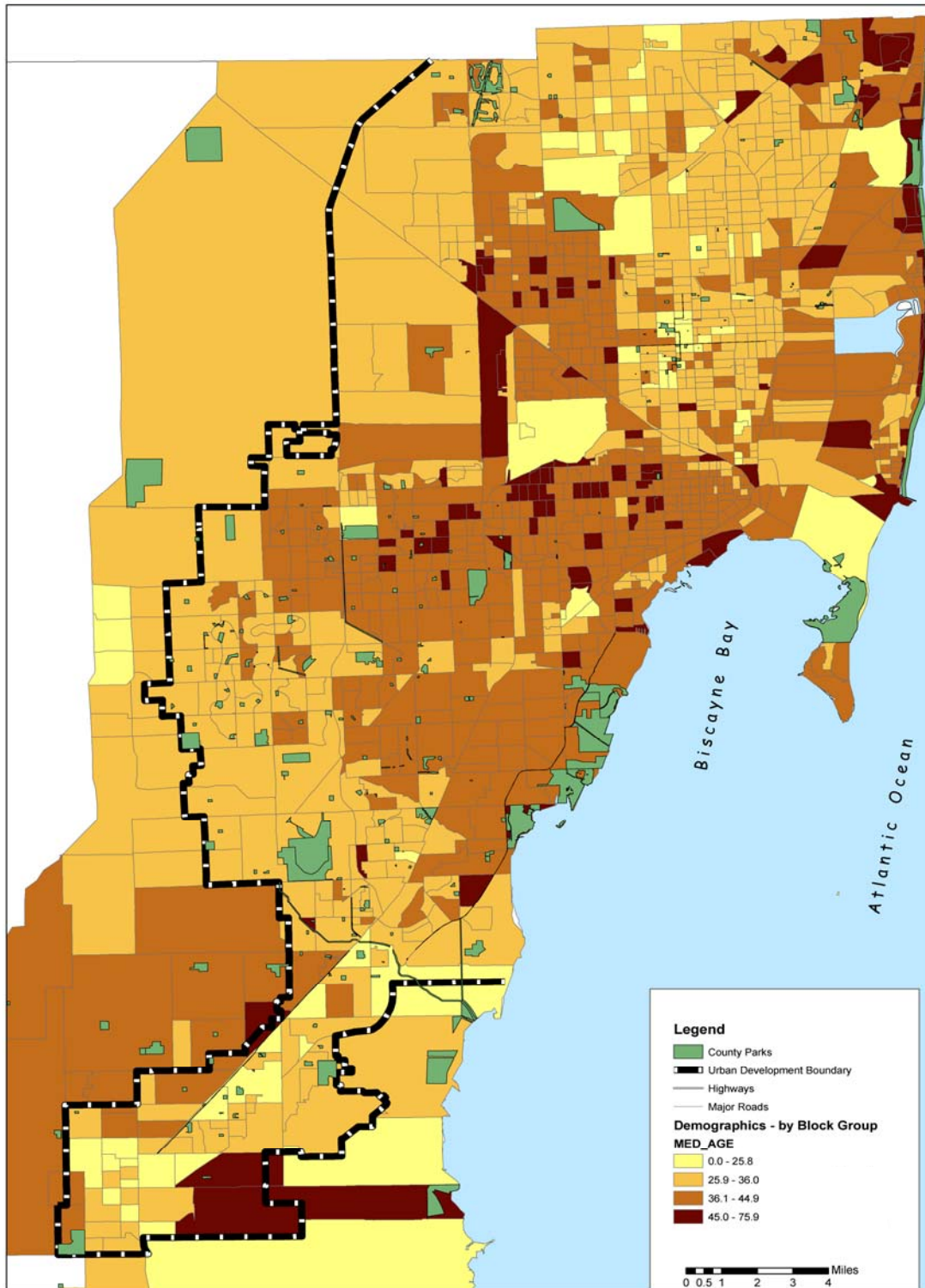
The age distribution map on the following page illustrates a predominance of 25-36 year olds concentrated in the north and central areas of the County. Concentrations of the 36-45 year old age group are located in the central and eastern areas of the County including Hialeah, North Miami Beach, City of Miami, Coral Gables and South Miami, as well as unincorporated areas. Seniors tend to reside predominately in the eastern and central areas of the County.



# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.2.2 – Age Distribution

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY Park and Recreation Department  
Demographics- Population by Age Distribution



# park access and equity strategy

## Education

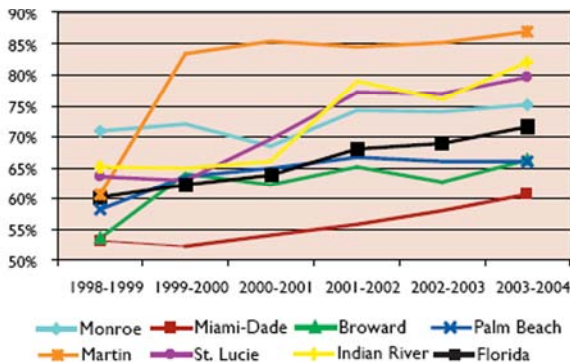
According to both the U.S. Census Bureau and the College Board, there is a positive correlation between higher levels of education and higher earnings for all racial and ethnic groups and for both men and women. In 2000, only about twelve percent (12%) of Black non-Hispanic Miami-Dade residents graduated from college and just eighteen percent (18%) of Hispanic Miami-Dade residents graduated from college. This means that more than eighty (80%) of each population group did not graduate from college (distribution as shown on the map on the following page). Attainment of higher education impacts one's lifetime earning potential. Due to this, one can extrapolate that those with lower income levels have less discretionary funds, in general, and certainly less to spend on recreational opportunities.

From 1960 to 2000, Miami-Dade residents over the age of 25 have made advancements in higher educational attainment as shown in the following table.

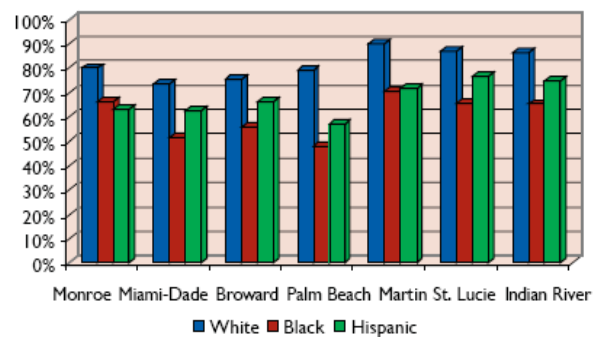
Total Persons	1960	%	1970	%	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%
<b>TOTAL PERSONS</b>										
High School	155,000	29%	226,000	30%	319,000	30%	296,000	23%	332,000	22%
College	30,000	6%	83,000	11%	175,000	17%	240,000	19%	323,000	22%
<b>BLACKS</b>										
High School	8,000	13%	17,000	21%	38,000	27%	54,000	25%	69,000	27%
College	1,000	2%	3,000	4%	12,000	8%	21,000	9%	29,000	12%
<b>HISPANICS</b>										
High School	NA	NA	43,000	25%	95,000	26%	296,000	37%	190,481	21%
College	NA	NA	17,000	10%	50,000	14%	91,000	11%	163,132	18%

However, from 1998-2004, Miami-Dade County had the lowest high school graduation rates compared to other counties in the South Florida Region, as shown in the following graphics. Additionally, Black non-Hispanics and Hispanics had lower graduation rates than White non-Hispanics throughout the South Florida Region.

**South Florida High School Graduation Rates 1998-2004**



**South Florida Graduation Rates by Race and Ethnicity 2003-2004**



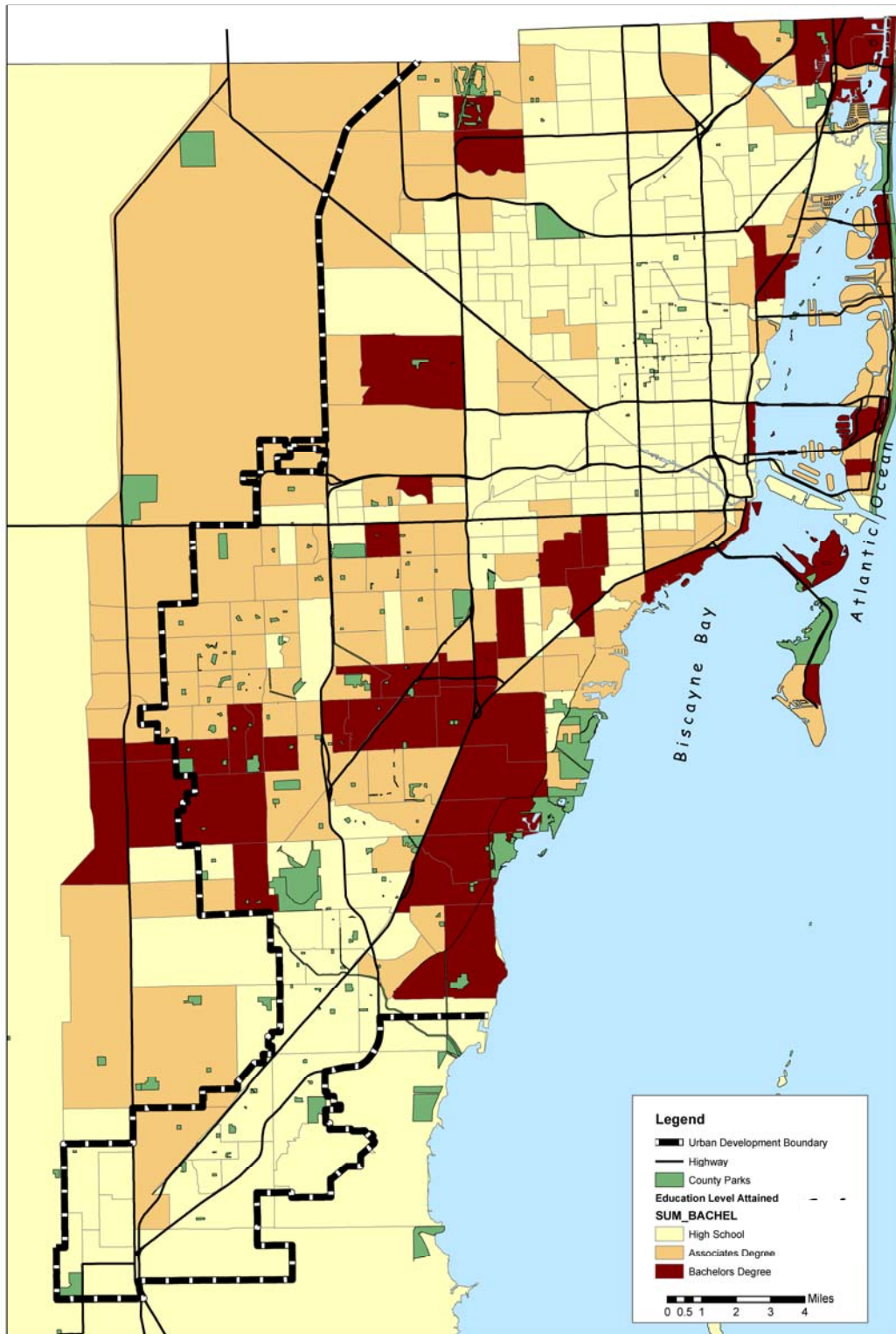
Source: Charting the Course, Florida Atlantic University Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, 2006.

# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.2.3 – Education Level Attainment



Park and Recreation Department  
Demographics- Highest Education Level Attained





## park access and equity strategy

### Income

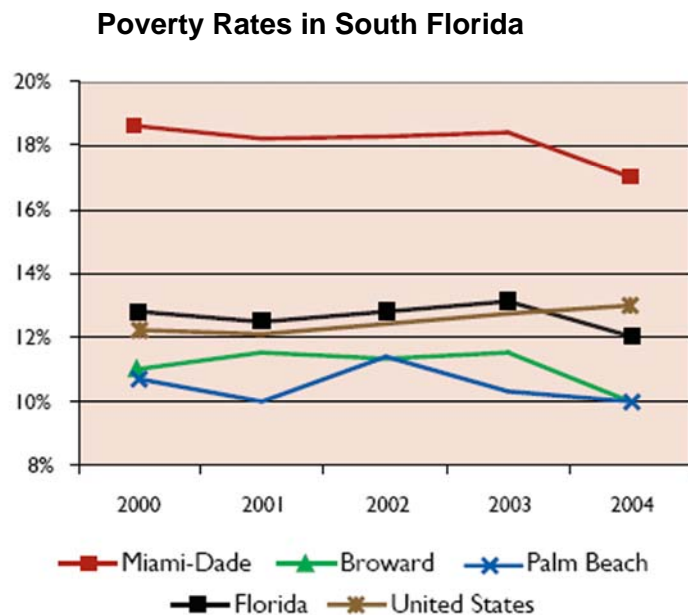
In 2000, the median income in Miami-Dade County was 36,000. The median income for male and female single parent families was \$32,405 and \$22,810 respectively. Both are much less than the median income of \$61,690 reported for married couples in Miami-Dade County. The following graphic illustrates a comparative look at household income, income level, and the number of households.

The U.S. Government defined the poverty level in 2003/2004 at an annual household income at or below \$18,400.00. The map found on the following page shows the distribution of those that live under the median income level in Miami- Dade County.

As compared to other counties in South Florida, Miami-Dade County has more households that fall below the poverty level than neighboring counties.

According to the *Charting the Course* report, in 2004, the City of Miami was the third poorest major city in the United States.

The graphic below illustrates the number of households in Miami-Dade County below the poverty level as compared to Broward and Palm Beach Counties, to Florida, and to national levels.

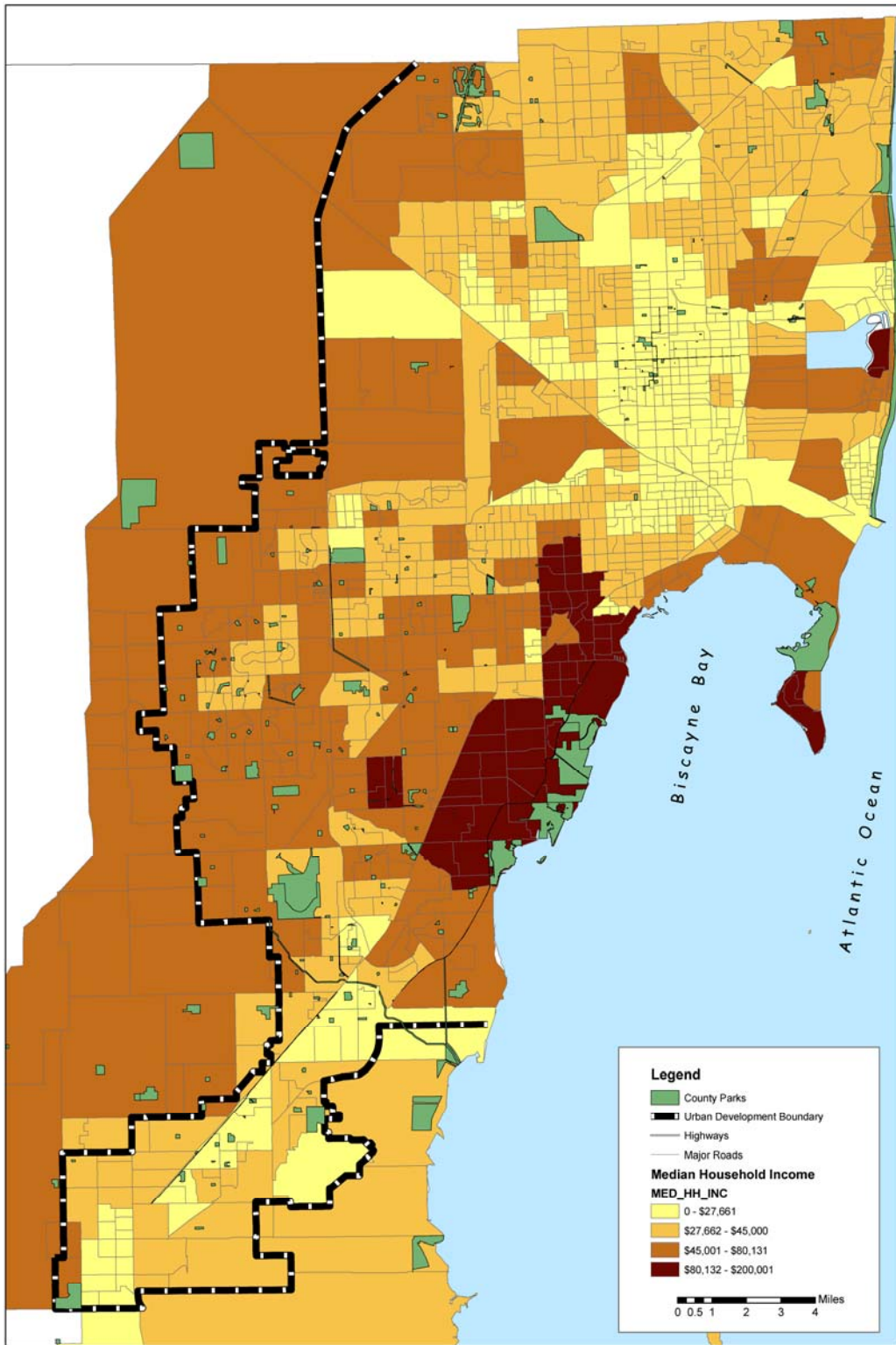


Source: *Charting the Course*, Florida Atlantic University Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions, 2006.

# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.2.4 – Median Household Income

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** Park and Recreation Department  
Demographics- Median Household Income



## park access and equity strategy

### Family Composition

Reported single family and female-headed households are more prevalent in Miami-Dade County than anywhere else in the country. The map found on the following page shows the distribution of single, female-headed households across Miami-Dade County. In 2007, sixty-two percent (62%) of children in Miami-Dade County lived in a married-couple family. This percentage is slightly lower than what was reported in the state (65%) and across the nation (68%).

Statistics suggest that White non-Hispanic children are more likely to live in a married-couple family setting than Black non-Hispanic or Hispanic children. In 2007, nearly fifty-six percent (56%) of Black non-Hispanic children in Miami-Dade County lived in a family headed by a single person; this is over five times what was reported for White non-Hispanic children (10%) and significantly higher than what was reported for Hispanic children (35%).

Grandparents serve as the head of household for approximately nine percent (9%) of children under the age of eighteen (18) in Miami-Dade County. This is close to the seven percent (7%) reported for the State and the six percent (6%) registered nationally.

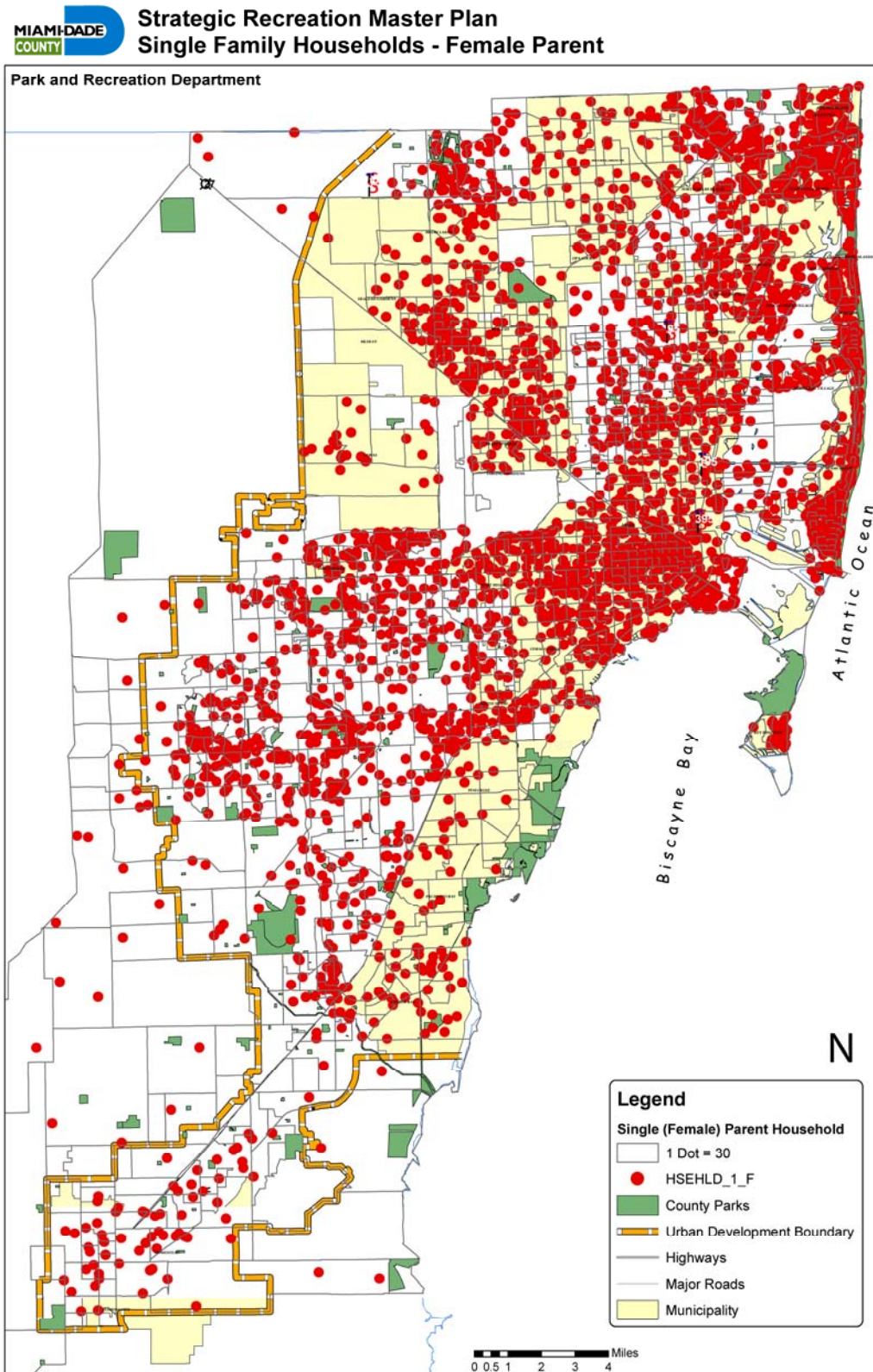
In 2007, almost thirty-four thousand (34,000) babies were born to unmarried mothers living in Miami-Dade County. Between 1999 and 2007, births by unmarried mothers in Miami-Dade County increased from forty-one percent (41%) to just over forty-seven percent (47%), exceeding the rate of unmarried mothers in Florida (45%) and the nation (39%). The highest concentration of births to unwed mothers were concentrated in the north (Liberty City – Miami Gardens), and the central (Allapattah and Little Havana) portions of Miami-Dade County, and in Homestead and Florida City.

A single-parent family income, as compared to a married-couple income is, in most cases, considerably less. The single-female parent income has declined since 2004, from forty percent (40%) of what married couples earn to thirty-seven percent (37%), in 2007. As a result, a single female parent in Miami-Dade County is more likely to receive public assistance than a married-couple family in Florida and in the United States. In 2007, more than twenty-seven percent (27%) of children in Miami-Dade County lived in families that received cash assistance income, supplemental security income or food stamps, compared with eighteen percent (18%) in Florida and nineteen percent (19%) in the nation.

These continuing population trends translate into the need to create recreation programs and services that serve the needs of non-traditional families, in addition to traditional families. In order to meet the needs of constituents within the County, the Department must make opportunities available for working single parents to participate in recreation programs and activities during non-traditional times and days. Additionally, due to constraints on family incomes, programming, facilities and services must be localized to minimize the time and transportation costs associated with attendance.

# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.2.5 – Single Family Households – Female Parent



# park access and equity strategy

## Demographic Summary

Miami-Dade County is a diverse community. The population is comprised of a variety of ethnicities, ages, family-structures, income levels and educational attainment. The Department strives to provide services to meet the varied recreational needs associated with the diverse cultures, ages and income levels of the County's population.

Planning recreation programs and facilities in order to meet the current and future needs of our community is the challenge and the goal of this Recreation Program Plan. Facilities must recognize cultural sensitivity in regard to the traditions and heritage of our diverse population. Additionally, facilities, services and programs must be offered locally to minimize time and transportation costs associated with attendance.

As stated by CUES in *Charting the Course*, "An emerging trend that will affect the culture, politics, and economy of the region is the difference in racial and ethnic composition among age groups. Young South Floridians are far more diverse than older residents, especially senior citizens. This trend is expected to continue for the next 25-years."

By recognizing the diversity of the population we serve, we can better anticipate how recreation trends change over time and be both proactive and responsive to the needs of the community.

## Population Growth

The peak decade for population growth in the County was during the 1950's with the addition of approximately 440,000 residents. Since that time, the rate of growth has continued to slow and is projected to continue to slow significantly through 2030. However, there will still be a substantial increase in population over the next twenty-five years; the rate simply indicates growth against a larger existing population base. Between 2000 and 2010, the County is expected to grow by over 352,000 additional residents; between 2010 and 2020, the County is expected to increase by 322,000 residents; and between 2020 and 2030, the County is expected to increase by another 269,000 residents. By 2030, this translates into an estimated 3.2 million total residents in the County as compared to the 2.25 million counted in the 2000 Census.

## Race and Ethnicity

According to the 1980 US Census, the population of Miami-Dade County was roughly forty-seven percent (47%) White non-Hispanic; eighteen percent (18%) Black non-Hispanic; and thirty-six percent (36%) Hispanic. By 2000, Hispanics made up fifty-nine percent (59%) of the County's population, and by 2020, it is projected that Hispanics will make up at least two-thirds of Miami-Dade County's population or sixty-nine percent (69%) of the total population. By 2020, White non-Hispanics will constitute just over twelve percent (12%) of the population of Miami-Dade County. These projected changes highlight the importance in assessing the differences in leisure and recreation patterns (or even if any differences actually exist) as they relate to Hispanic and non-Hispanic households.

# park access and equity strategy

## Components of Change

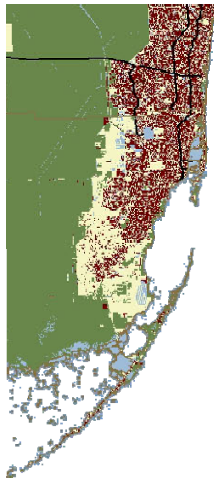
While there continues to be a significant outflow in population every year from Miami-Dade County to other parts of Florida and the United States (an average loss of 21,900 residents per year between 2001-2010 and an estimation of 27,500 residents per year between 2011-2020 respectively), this is more than offset by the inflow of immigrants from other parts of the world (almost 39,000 residents per year between 2001 and 2010 and 44,000 per year estimated between 2011 and 2020) and natural growth (births minus deaths of between 13,000 to 14,000 net new residents per year). Even if facilities do not change, individuals who use the facilities certainly will. As we consider upgrades, renovations and new facilities, we must consider the population we are serving and the needs of the community.

## Employment Trends

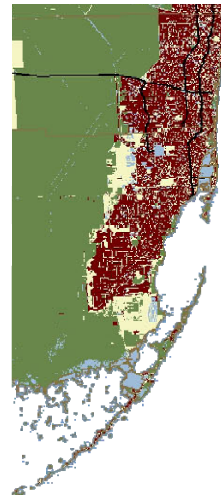
As the population of the County grows, so does the expectation for new jobs, new businesses and the County's geographic growth. Our employment growth is expected to be reasonably diverse over the next decade. The top three categories that the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation projects will grow by the largest absolute numbers in Miami-Dade County between now and 2013 include Administrative and Support Services; Local Government; and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, all categories with reasonably high wages. The next two fastest growing categories, however, Ambulatory Health Care Services and Food Service, have a significantly lower wage profile. All-in-all, it is expected that the market will continue to attract a mix of highly skilled and more modestly skilled workers over the next decade and all will have reasonably diverse recreation needs and use patterns.

Long-range planning is required to provide services, facilities and programming based on the current population and projected demographics. The Recreation Program Plan inventories the current distribution and service coverage for recreational programming, and provides analysis of gaps in service delivery to meet the needs of the community. Those needs are based on the demographics of the community and must be responsive to cultural, demographic, income and overall growth trends over time.

**Existing Developed  
Lands in Miami-Dade County**



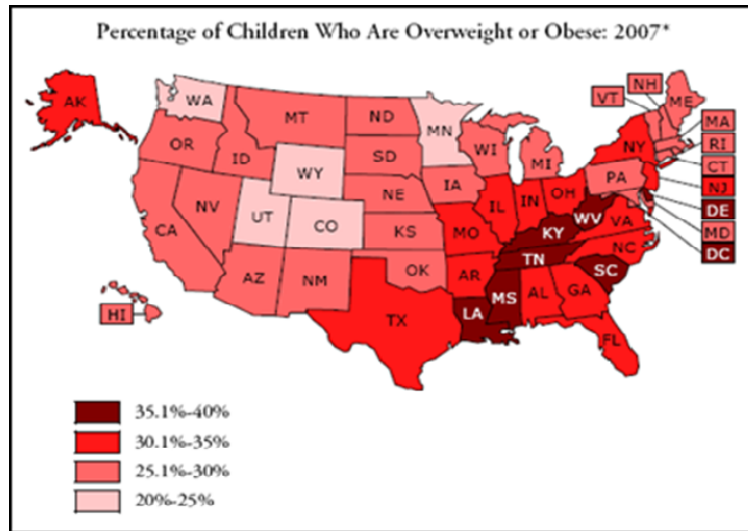
**2060 Projected Developed  
Land in Miami-Dade County**



# park access and equity strategy

## 5.3 Health

In Florida 30.3% of Miami children (ages 6-11) are overweight and 15.3% obese; 30.4% of Miami teenagers (ages 12 – 19) are overweight and 15.5% are obese. In 2010, 1 in 5 children will be overweight. Of Miami-Dade adults, 2/3's are overweight or obese, particularly among Black and Hispanic populations.<sup>3</sup> One of the attributable factors is lack of physical activity. The percentage of adults meeting physical activity recommendations is below the national average.



Source: The National Survey of Children's Health, Childhood Obesity Action Network, State Obesity Profiles, 2008. National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality, Child Policy Research Center, and Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. Retrieved 10/09/09 from <http://www.nschdata.org:80/Content/ObesityReportCards.aspx>.

A recent study by the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) reports that there is a strong link between the lack of physical activity and health conditions (e.g. heart disease, obesity, and other chronic conditions). The study continues that "Research has also shown certain population groups have a higher disparity." These groups include:

- - Low Income
- - Minority
- - Older Adults (over 65)
- 

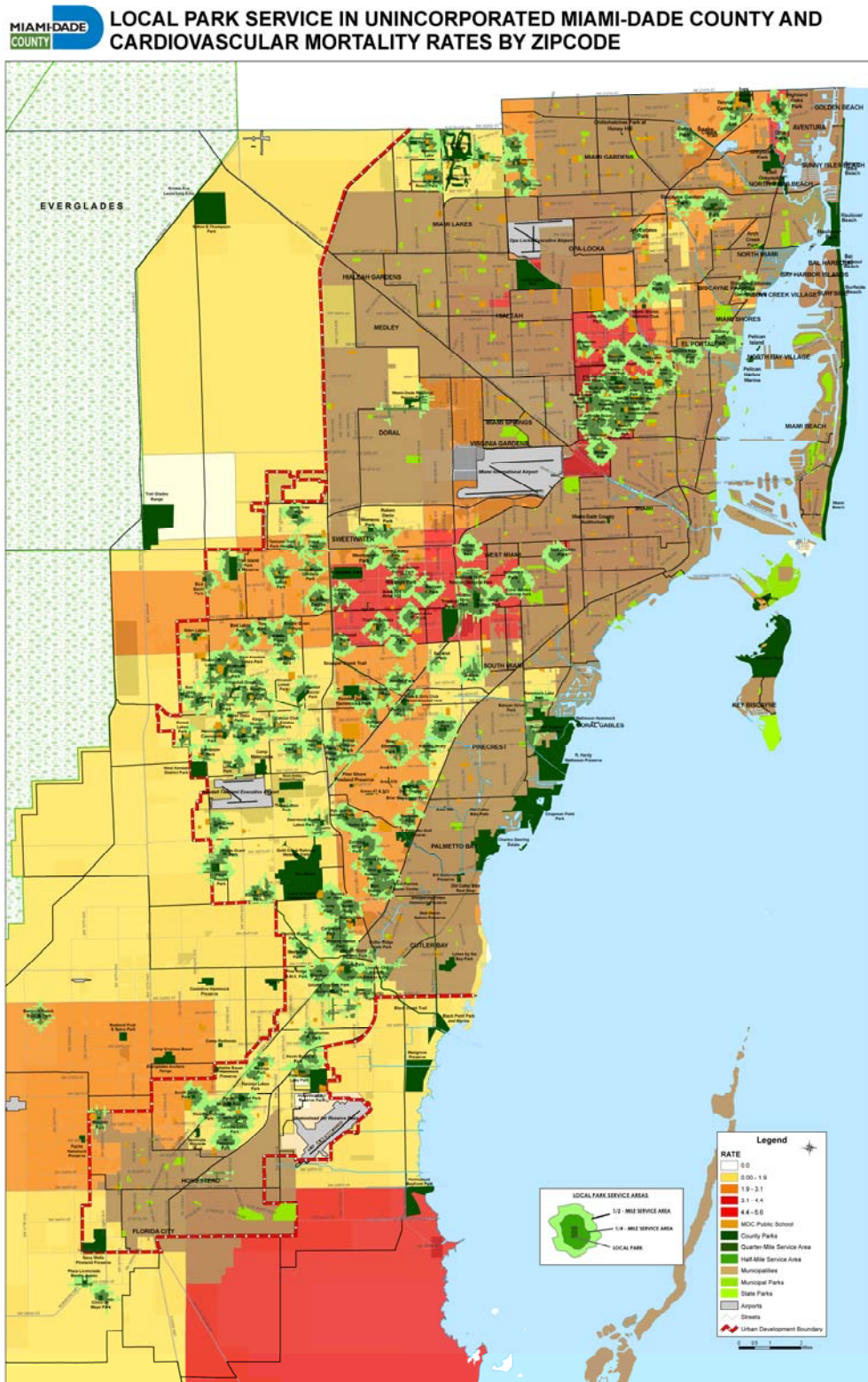
Existing available health data for Miami-Dade County is compiled by zip-code and is not available by smaller geographic areas. Therefore, consistent with the work of the Nashville MPO, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation have prepared the following maps to show where higher health disparities are located:

- Map 5.3.1 - Cardiovascular Mortality
- Map 5.3.2 - Infant Mortality
- Map 5.3.3 - Low Birth Weight
- Map 5.3.4 - Teen Birth

<sup>3</sup> The National Survey of Children's Health. Childhood Obesity Action Network. State Obesity Profiles, 2008. National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality, Child Policy Research Center, and Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. Retrieved 10/09/09 from <http://www.nschdata.org:80/Content/ObesityReportCards.aspx>

# park access and equity strategy

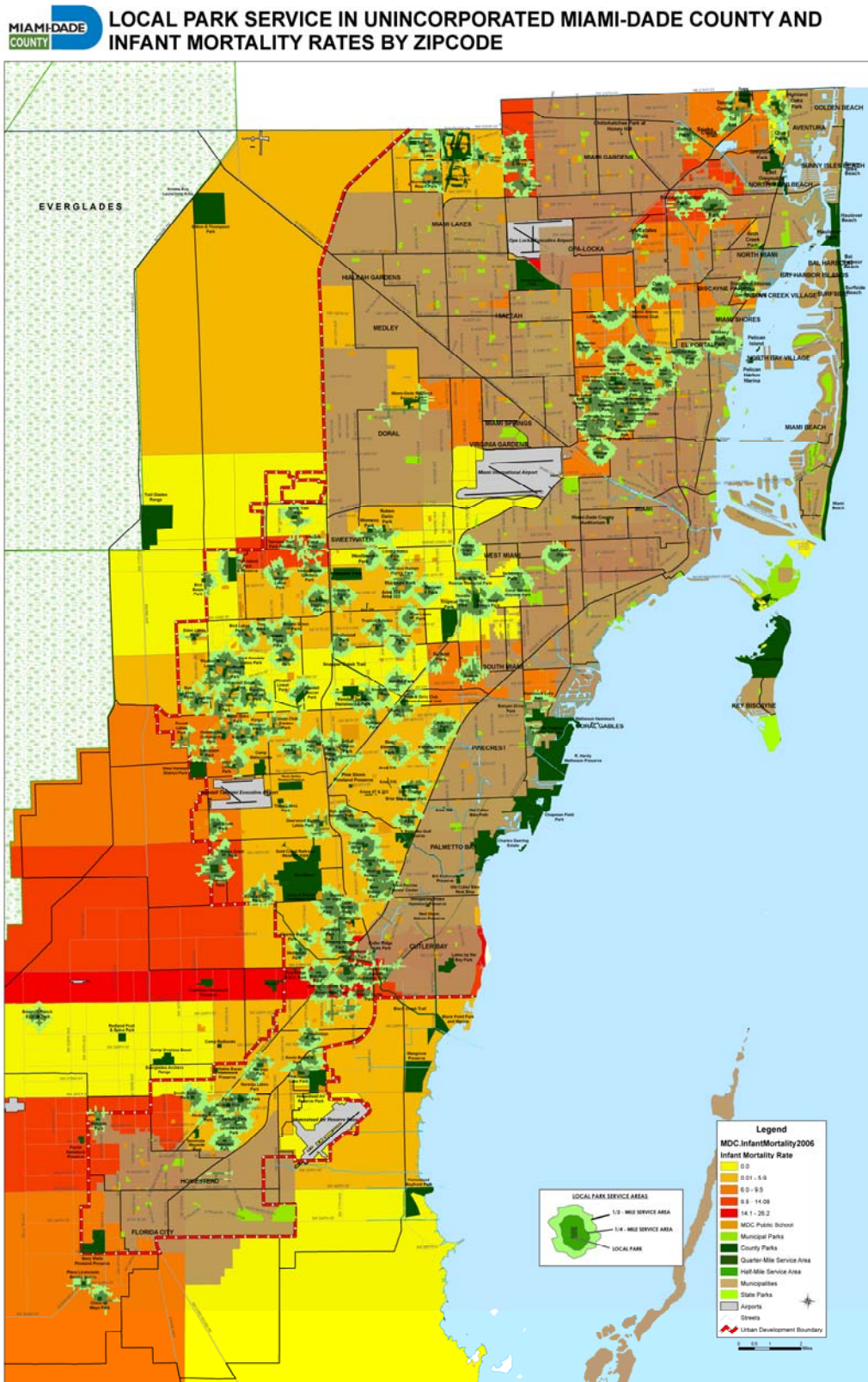
## Map 5.3.1 - Cardiovascular Mortality





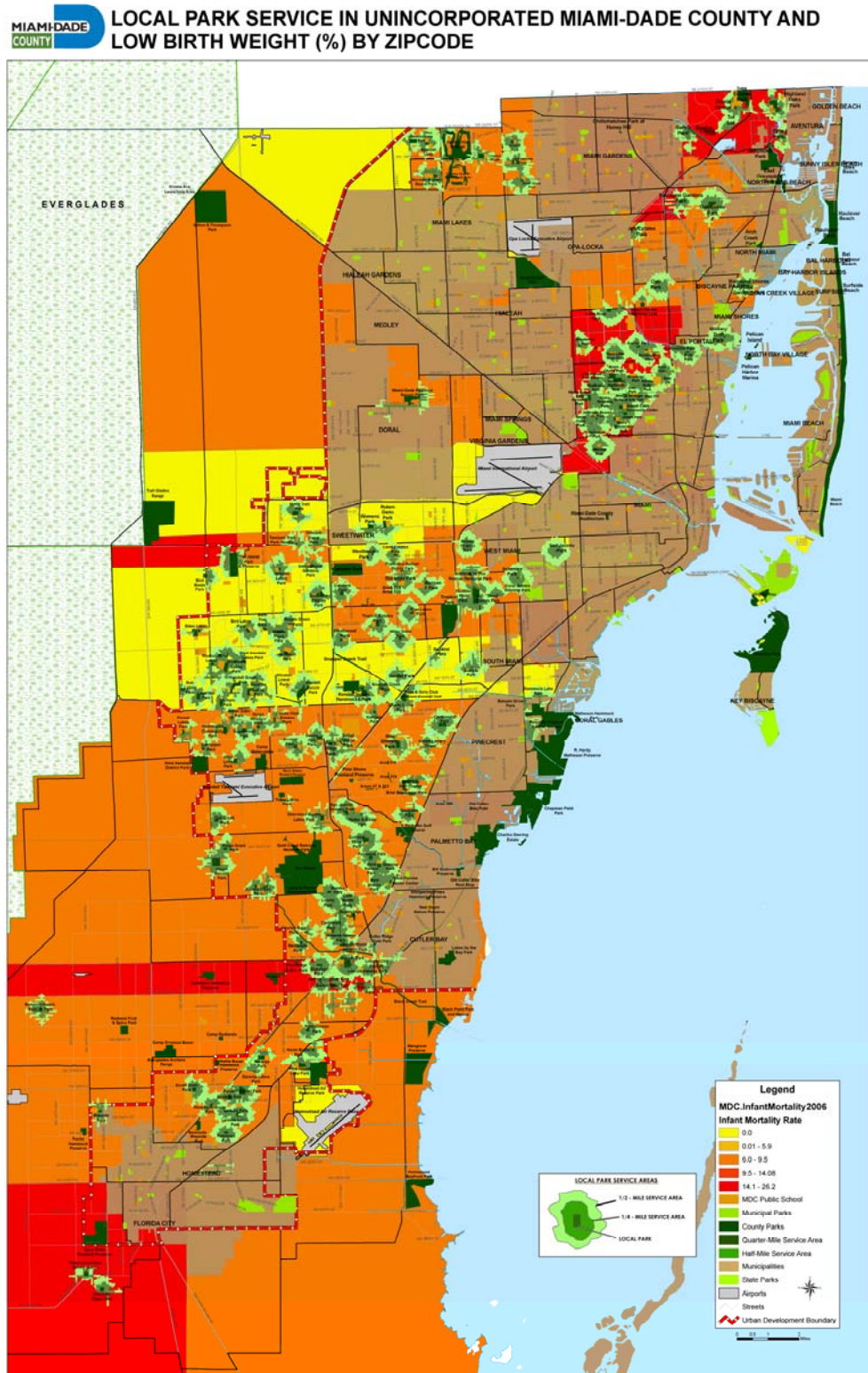
# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.3.2 - Infant Mortality



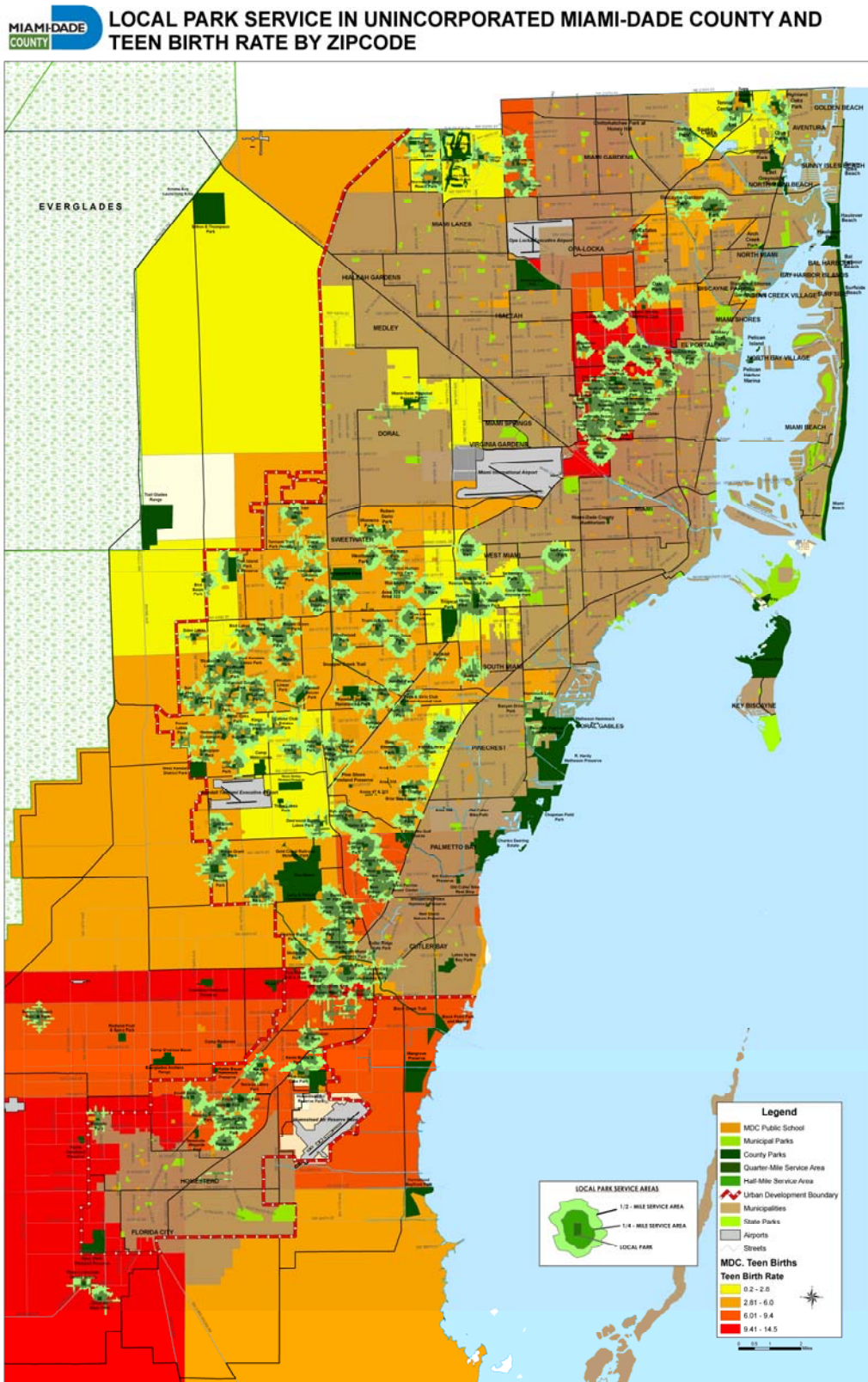
# park access and equity strategy

## Map 5.3.3 - Low Birth Weight



# park access and equity strategy

Map 5.3.4 - Teen Birth



## park access and equity strategy

### 5.4 Safety

Florida is ranked as one of the most dangerous for pedestrians. Miami has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest pedestrian danger index in the US metropolitan areas and 40% of our population will not walk or bike to work or school due to lack of pedestrian safe street design.<sup>4</sup>

The state of Florida has been in the top three in bicycle and pedestrian fatalities every year since 2001, according to federal data. In 2008, the most recent year for which federal statistics are available, 11.1% of pedestrians and 17.4% of bicyclists killed in the U.S. died in the Sunshine State, which has 6% of the nation's population.

*“There's a debate over those causes: Is Florida so deadly for walkers and cyclists because of the behavior of drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists? Or because of inherent flaws in the way roads are designed and built?”<sup>5</sup>*

A November 2010 study by Transportation for America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership found pedestrians in Florida — and around the U.S. — are endangered by the nation's shift from development clustered around traditional streets to wide, high-speed roads designed to move thousands of vehicles.

In 2000, the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership identified Tampa-St. Petersburg as the nation's deadliest large metropolitan area for pedestrians. That year in St. Petersburg, there were 203 collisions involving pedestrians. In response the city put together a plan that included building bike lanes and trails, improving pedestrian safety through crosswalks and other enhancements, education, enforcement and building sidewalks on major roads. Since 2003, the city has received more than \$40 million in federal grants, built 100 miles of bike lanes and trails and added sidewalks. It also pioneered a more visible traffic signal, a rectangular-shaped, flashing beacon like lights on emergency vehicles. Installed at 32 crosswalks for \$20,000 apiece, the signals have raised driver compliance at those crosswalks from 3% to 86%. In 2008, the latest year for full data, there were 89 collisions involving pedestrians — down 56% from 2000.

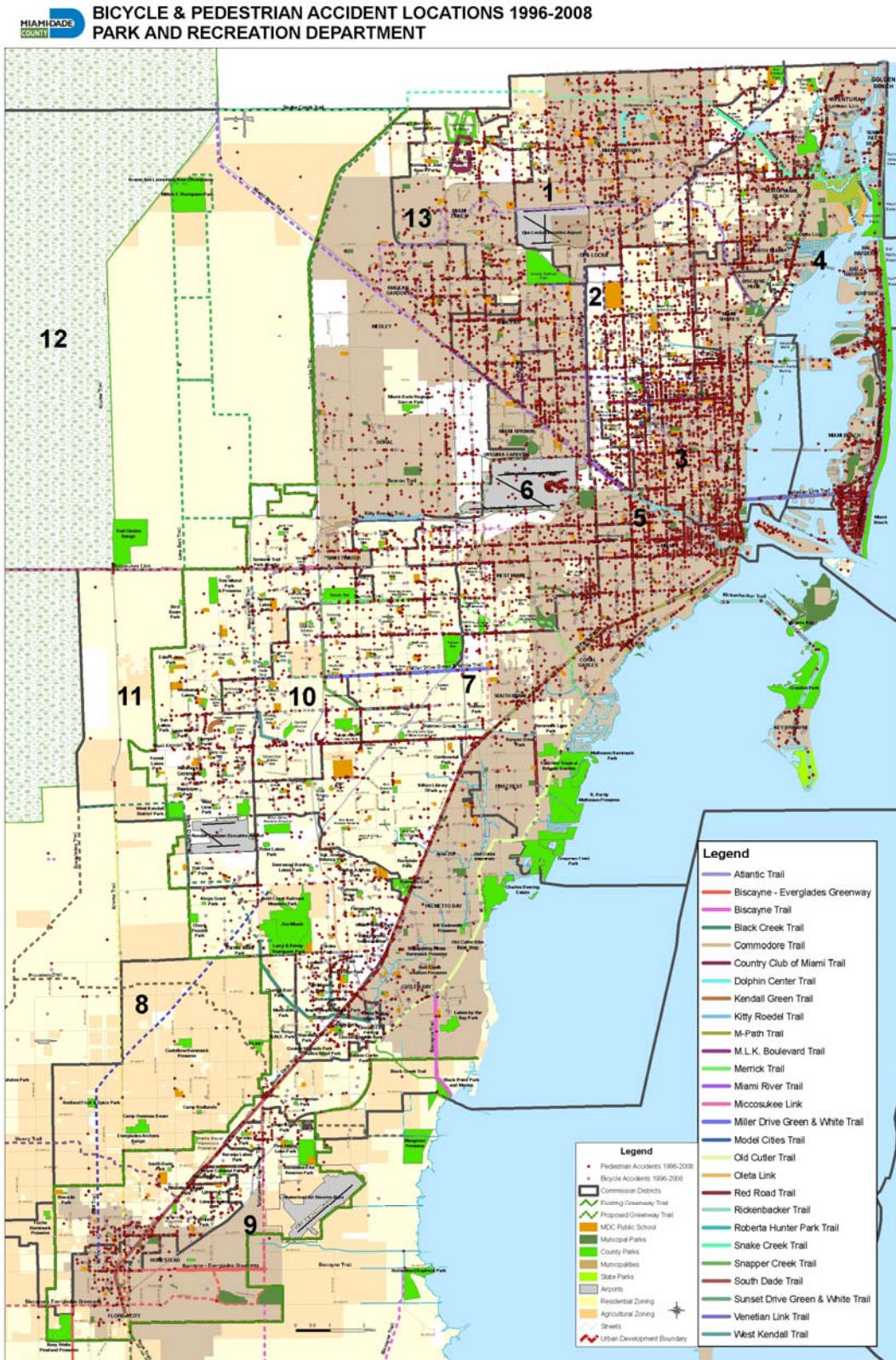
Map 5.4.1 shows the location of pedestrian and bicycle crashes in Miami-Dade County.

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<sup>4</sup> 2008 *Crash Facts Report*, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles highlights crashes in Miami-Dade County:

<sup>5</sup> USA Today, March 3, 2010, Florida deadliest state for walkers, cyclists, Larry Copeland

Map 5.4.1 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents in Miami-Dade County 1996-2008



## park access and equity strategy

### 5.5 Summary of base data and analysis efforts

The vision for the Miami-Dade County Parks and Open Space System is to create a new, interconnected framework for growth, one that results in a more a livable, sustainable community. Consisting of existing and proposed parks, public spaces, natural and cultural places, greenways, trails and streets, the framework will form the foundation or “bone structure” of the County to accommodate growth while also improving the quality of life for residents. The new framework will encourage the revitalization of neighborhoods; allow for the orderly redevelopment of existing land uses in response to changing markets and demographics; and ensure greater environmental protection. It will also improve the social fabric of the County, providing equitable access to parks and open spaces, and providing more opportunities for residents to socialize and connect with one another.<sup>6</sup>

The OSMP points out that Miami-Dade County has a great existing Parks System, currently comprised of over 250 parks and over 12,000 acres of land. Additionally, the County’s 35 municipalities also own and manage hundreds of other parks and recreation areas. As the County and municipalities have grown, however, the location of these facilities has resulted, in part, in an inequitable distribution of facilities and programs throughout the County. Some residents can walk or bicycle to a nearby park or community center, for example, while others have to drive for miles to get to a similar facility.

Similar to the dual purpose goals used in Seattle for the provision of breathing room open space (acres/population) and usable open space (distance to residence), the existing policies and regulations in Miami-Dade County provide for the traditional measure of a certain number of County-wide park acres or facilities per County resident which are complemented by recently adopted policies of the CDMP which emphasize equitable access for every resident. But the focus has been on the acres per population. As discussed above Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Goal 9 Strategy #1 requires that the County implement the CDMP Policy ROS 8B which requires the establishment of standards and criteria for parks and recreational open spaces that are intended to encourage equitable access to local (neighborhood) parks and open space as well as area-wide recreational activities for all County residents. Other great cities have already incorporated prescribed distances as criteria to ensure adequate and equitable access to parks, and some have also prepared studies which evaluate barriers or the absence of barriers in the determination of equitable access to existing parks and recreation facilities (i.e. Gap Analysis).

Miami-Dade County continually evaluates each of its existing park and recreation facilities to identify and address any “deficiencies” or barriers to access. This evaluation also includes the presence or absence of sidewalks, bicycle paths or lanes and transit service to each park and facility; many residents cannot drive, or do not have access to an automobile. However, until now Miami-Dade County has not included distance as a criterion in the evaluation of access to existing parks/activities or in the evaluation of access to sites for potential acquisition.

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<sup>6</sup> Miami-Dade County “Parks and Open Space System Master Plan”, 2008.

## park access and equity strategy

### Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria

Equitable access, in addition to the identification and analysis of barriers, is the distance people have to walk, bicycle or drive to participate in the activities generally associated with local (neighborhood) parks and open space. Residents should be able to safely participate in the following activities close to home:

- Walk for fun or exercise
- Walk the dog
- Ride a bike for fun or exercise
- Sit outside to read, contemplate or meet friends
- Play on a playground
- Play a game of catch or Frisbee
- Picnic and/or sun bathe on a lawn
- Play pick-up sports or practice baseball, soccer, football, skateboard, basketball, tennis, racquetball or other sports
- Attend classes, lectures, social functions
- Swim

The Parks and Open Space Vision proposes that every resident has equitable access to these basic activities, and that every neighborhood within the County in time should be upgraded if necessary – to meet residents’ needs. The type of facilities required to meet these needs may vary according to context. A resident living in a high rise condominium in an urban area may walk on local streets and sidewalks, for example, while a resident in suburban Miami-Dade County may walk on a trail at a nearby Community Park.

Similarly, a rural resident may play catch in someone’s large rural yard, while an urban resident will walk to a nearby neighborhood green or square. The “Activity-Based Parks and Open Space Criteria” on the next page outlines criteria for evaluating existing and proposed neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County, as well as potential improvements to ensure equitable local access.

The “Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria” also outlines the third measure of equitable access, the distance people have to walk, bicycle or drive to participate in the **area-wide recreational activities** generally found outside of people’s neighborhoods such as:

- Swimming recreationally or competitively in a public pool
- Fishing from land or a boat
- Paddling a canoe or kayak
- Observing nature and wildlife
- Motor boating
- Attending festivals, concerts or special outdoor events
- Playing in organized competition sports
- Participating in exercise classes, lectures, social functions

Therefore these facilities are generally located along major collector or arterial roads, away from residential uses. The Parks and Open Space Vision proposes that these area-wide facilities should be distributed equitably throughout the County, based on the “Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria”, to ensure that every resident has equal opportunity to participate in the activities outlined above, and to reduce dependency on automobile access. Transit and bicycle access are particularly critical to ensure access to these facilities.

# park access and equity strategy

## D. Recommendations

Based on the above data and analysis the following preliminary access and equity criteria in Table 3 (on the following page) are recommended for use by Miami-Dade County. These criteria will be used in the study to determine gaps in the provision of open space, facilities and activities. Section 6 includes GIS mapping of all parks and facilities with the above criteria applied to help illustrate where we have gaps in service by park type and activity.

Figure 5.5.1 - Access and Equity Criteria

EQUITY ACCESS CRITERIA		
REGIONAL		
RESOURCE-BASED		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION	All residents shall have opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, motor boating, fishing, observing wildlife, and experience a natural area.	Access to geographically dependent natural and cultural resources.
POPULATION-BASED		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
FOOTBALL	All residents should be able to access competition level football facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
SOCCER	All residents should be able to access competition level soccer facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
SOFTBALL/YOUTH BASEBALL	All residents should be able to access competition level softball and youth baseball facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
TENNIS	All residents should be able to access competition level tennis facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
AQUATICS	All residents should be able to access aquatic facilities such as a pool or splash playground.	2 - 3 MILES
LOCAL (UMSA)		
AT WILL		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
OPEN PLAY/PLAYGROUNDS	All residents, regardless of location, should be able to access open play areas, tot lots and playgrounds.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
FOOTBALL	All residents should be able to access football fields.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
SOCCER	All residents should be able to access soccer fields.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
SOFTBALL/YOUTH BASEBALL	All residents should be able to access softball and youth baseball fields.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
TENNIS	All residents should be able to access tennis facilities.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
BASKETBALL	All residents should be able to access basketball facilities.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
PROGRAMMED		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
OUT OF SCHOOL/SUMMER CAMP	All youth residents should be able to participate in an out of school or summer camp program.	2 - 3 MILES



**CHAPTER 6 – Inventory and Analysis**

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**6.1. Acreage**

**6.1.1. County-wide by Benefit District**

The Miami Dade County Park and Recreation Department operates a two-tier park system:

- 1) Local parks serving residents in the unincorporated (UMSA) area; and
- 2) Regional parks serving residents throughout the entire County with population-based and resource based parks.

The Miami-Dade County Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) mandates the level of service standard for local parks that the Department is required to maintain. It is as follows:

ROS-2A. Miami-Dade County’s minimum Level of Service (LOS) standard for the provision of recreation open space shall be the following:

- i. 2.75 acres of local recreation open space per 1,000 permanent residents in unincorporated areas;
- ii. A County-provided, or an annexed or incorporated, local recreation open space of 5 acres or larger must exist within a 3 mile distance from the residential development;
- iii. The acreage/population measure of the Level of Service Standard will be calculated for each Park Benefit District (PBD) identified;
- iv. For purposes of issuing residential development orders, the minimum LOS standard shall not apply to rural and agricultural residences outside the Urban Development Boundary (UDB); and
- v. For purposes of issuing residential development orders, a PBD is considered below standard if the projected deficiency is greater than five acres. This does not relieve applicants for development orders from applicable requirements for contributions or impact fees.

ROS-2B. Local recreation open space counted when measuring level of service shall include:

- 1) public local parks which exist or are committed by covenant; 2) public school and

## park access and equity strategy

college playfields; 3) portions of private recreation open space; and, 4) County-owned or operated parks that have been incorporated or annexed into municipalities but in which a majority of park program participants are unincorporated area residents.

Map 6.1.1 shows the current level of service maintained by the County in each of the three park benefit districts. Included in the level of service calculation is private and school open space, as well as local County parks. Municipal park acres are not included in the level of service calculation as they are not included in the CDMP mandate.

The table on Map 6.1.1 shows that the County provides is a total of 3,151.86-acres of local park land, exceeding the required 3,062.35-acres. The total level of service exceeds the standard in each of the benefit districts, ranging from 129%-156%.

### 6.1.2 Impact Fee Collection Areas

In Chapter 33H of the Miami-Dade County Code, the Park Impact Fee Ordinance establishes that based on the CDMP mandate for level of service, local park open space must be provided in unincorporated residential areas. As new residential developments are built, the need for additional local parks increases to serve those residents.

Section 33H-1 establishes that:

- This chapter shall apply to the development of property for residential use located within the boundaries of the unincorporated area of Miami-Dade County. Nonresidential development of property shall not be subject to the terms of the chapter.
- The existence of public parks has substantial benefits to proximate residential development. These benefits include actual use by residents of such development and aesthetic, recreational, and environmental benefits to the residential area and its population. These benefits accrue to all properties and residents of the area.
- The purpose of this chapter is to provide not only for the minimum level of service established by the CDMP, but also for the additional public park open space and recreation facilities necessary to adequately serve the impacts and demands of new residential development; and to require that future residential growth contribute its fair share to the cost of additions and improvements to the County's public park system in amounts reasonably anticipated to offset the impacts and demands generated by such growth. This cost does not include operational and maintenance cost.

Any application for a building permit within unincorporated Miami-Dade County enabling the construction of residential dwelling units is subject to the imposition of park impact fees. The County is divided into 8 Impact Fee Collection Areas and the funds collected at the time of the building permit application are allocated to the collection area within which the development is located.

Maps 6.1.2.1 through 6.1.2.9 show each Impact Fee Collection Area and include a table listing the County parks within each one. The number of local park acres per Impact Fee Collection Area varies, as the Areas are not of a similar geographic size. Some of the Areas are entirely unincorporated and others are mainly comprised of municipalities. The Department utilizes the funds collected within each Impact Fee Collection Area to purchase and develop local parks within the Area it was collected.

### 6.2. Access

#### 6.2.1. Equity Access Criteria

The Department strives to provide equitable access to parks and open space to all residents of the County. The criteria established in the recommendations section of Chapter 3 formed the basis of the Equity Access Chart (Figure 6.2.1). To make Miami-Dade County a more livable and sustainable community, residents should have access to parks within their neighborhood and be able to walk or bike to a park within ½ mile from their home. In addition, residents should have access to regional parks and the recreation opportunities there-in within 2-3 miles biking or driving distance from their home.

The Park and Recreation Department is composed of a two-tier park system:

- 1) Local parks serve residents in unincorporated areas with access to open space, play areas, playgrounds and other at-will types of recreational opportunities. Access criteria for local parks are ¼ - ½ mile walking distance.
- 2) Regional parks serve the entire County, including residents who live in both unincorporated and municipal areas. There are two types of regional parks:
  - i. Population-based parks which provide competition level sports facilities and large-scale recreational opportunities required to serve the entire population of the County. Access criteria for population-based regional parks is 2-3 miles biking or driving distance.
  - ii. Resource-based parks are based on a natural, historical or cultural resource and provide a specific type of recreational opportunity or experience. Access criteria for resource-based regional parks do not exist as these parks are located at the site of the resource. Residents and visitors in Miami-Dade County will travel to the park to experience the resource or program offered on site.

# park access and equity strategy

Figure 6.2.1 – Equity Access Criteria Chart

EQUITY ACCESS CRITERIA		
<b>REGIONAL</b>		
<b>RESOURCE-BASED</b>		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
<b>NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION</b>	All residents shall have opportunities for canoeing, kayaking, motor boating, fishing, observing wildlife, and experience a natural area.	Access to geographically dependent natural and cultural resources.
<b>POPULATION-BASED</b>		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
<b>FOOTBALL</b>	All residents should be able to access competition level football facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
<b>SOCCER</b>	All residents should be able to access competition level soccer facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
<b>SOFTBALL/ YOUTH BASEBALL</b>	All residents should be able to access competition level softball and youth baseball facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
<b>TENNIS</b>	All residents should be able to access competition level tennis facilities.	2 - 3 MILES
<b>AQUATICS</b>	All residents should be able to access aquatic facilities such as a pool or splash playground.	2 - 3 MILES
<b>LOCAL (UMSA)</b>		
<b>AT WILL</b>		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
<b>OPEN PLAY/ PLAYGROUNDS</b>	All residents, regardless of location, should be able to access open play areas, tot lots and playgrounds.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
<b>FOOTBALL</b>	All residents should be able to access football fields.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
<b>SOCCER</b>	All residents should be able to access soccer fields.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
<b>SOFTBALL/ YOUTH BASEBALL</b>	All residents should be able to access softball and youth baseball fields.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
<b>TENNIS</b>	All residents should be able to access tennis facilities.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
<b>BASKETBALL</b>	All residents should be able to access basketball facilities.	1/4 - 1/2 MILE
<b>PROGRAMMED</b>		
ACTIVITY	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
<b>OUT OF SCHOOL/ SUMMER CAMP</b>	All youth residents should be able to participate in an out of school or summer camp program.	2 - 3 MILES

### 6.2.2. Regional Park Inventory & Activities Offered

Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the Department developed service areas for each regional park based on the access criteria established in the Equity Access Criteria Chart (Figure 6.2.1). The service areas were developed based on the street network and show accurate 2-3 mile access, taking into account any barriers such as cul-de-sacs, one-way streets, walls, highways and major roads.

Maps were developed to show the regional park service areas provided within the County for resource-based regional parks and for the major recreational activities offered at population-based regional parks. These maps show areas currently served by regional parks and access to activities provided to the residents of Miami-Dade County. These maps also serve to show the gaps in service and will provide the basis for future land acquisition strategies and partnership development to decrease gaps in service.

Regional park service maps included are as follows:

Map 6.2.2.1.1 - Resource-Based Regional Parks

Map 6.2.2.2.1 – Regional Football

Map 6.2.2.2.2 – Regional Soccer

Map 6.2.2.2.3 – Regional Softball/Youth Baseball

Map 6.2.2.2.4 – Regional Tennis

Map 6.2.2.2.5 – Regional Aquatics

## park access and equity strategy

### 6.2.3. Local (UMSA) Park Inventory and Activities Offered

Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), the Department developed service areas for each local park based on the access criteria established in the Equity Access Criteria Chart (Figure 6.2.1). The service areas were developed based on the street network and show accurate  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile walking access, taking into account any barriers such as cul-de-sacs, one-way streets, walls, highways and major roads.

Maps were developed to show the local park service areas provided within the unincorporated areas of the County for at will and for local recreational activities. These maps also serve to show the gaps in service and will provide the basis for future land acquisition strategies and partnership development to decrease gaps in service.

In addition, Out of School and Summer Camp Programs are provided as a local service. However, as residents are often willing to travel a little further or drive to parks where programs are offered, therefore the service area for programmed parks is 2-3 miles, but they are considered a local park service.

Local park service maps included are as follows:

Map 6.2.3.1.1 – Parks with Playgrounds and Open Play Areas

Map 6.2.3.1.2 – Local Football

Map 6.2.3.1.3 – Local Soccer

Map 6.2.3.1.4 – Local Softball and Youth Baseball

Map 6.2.3.1.5 – Local Tennis

Map 6.2.3.1.6 – Local Basketball

Map 6.2.3.2.1 – Out of School and Summer Camp Programs

### 6.3. Inventory and Analysis Summary

#### 6.3.1. Acreage Distribution

The Miami Dade County Park and Recreation Department operates a two-tier park system:

- 1) Local parks serving residents in the unincorporated (UMSA) area
- 2) Regional parks serving residents throughout the entire County with population-based and resource based parks

The County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) mandates the level of service standard for local parks that the Department is required to maintain. The County is required to provide 2.75-acres of local open space within unincorporated areas of Miami-Dade County. Included in the level of service calculation is private and school open space, as well as local County parks. Municipal park acres are not included in the level of service calculation as they are not included in the CDMP mandate.

The County provides is a total of 3,151.86-acres of local park land, exceeding the 3,062.35-acres required by the current population residing in UMSA areas. The total level of service exceeds the standard in each of the benefit districts, ranging from 129%-156%.

While the County may be meeting current level of service standards, the acreage distribution varies and all residents may not have equitable access to local parks based on geographic location, physical boundaries which prevent them from reaching a park, disparate facilities located in differing areas of the County.

#### 6.3.2. Park Service Areas

It is through the Park Service Areas inventory and analysis that true service provided may be gauged. Based on the Equity Access Criteria standards, Local park service areas in unincorporated Miami-Dade County is  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile walking distance. Regional park service areas are 2-3 miles biking or driving distance. Inventory maps show that there are areas within the County that are well served and there are other areas in which there are gaps in service.



## **park access and equity strategy**

The gaps in service that are shown on the park service area maps provide the basis for a strategy to increase access and provide equitable service. This strategy will include tactics such as: 1) developing sidewalks, bridges or other public improvements to provide access to existing parks, 2) developing partnerships with schools, private recreation providers and other community base organizations, and 3) land acquisition for to establish additional parks.

## CHAPTER 7 – Long Range Plan

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### 7.1 GAP ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF ACQUISITION/IMPROVEMENT FOCUS AREAS

The vision of the Miami-Dade County Parks and Open Space System Master Plan (OSMP) consists of six guiding principles; **Access, Equity, Seamlessness, Beauty, Multiple Benefits and Sustainability**. While it is necessary that they be integrally applied to create a model park system, the two guiding principles of access and equity, which are highlighted in this study, play a key role in the implementation of Goal 9 of the CPPW Miami-Dade County Community Action Plan (CAP). Goal 9, Active Transportation and Recreation, of the Miami-Dade County CAP includes 4 strategies. Strategy 1, states that parks and open space and recreation activities will be accessible and equitable according to the level of service standards. The objective for this strategy was developed consistent with policies 8A and 8B of the Recreation and Open Space Element of the County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan and are provided below.

ROS-8A. By 2017, Miami-Dade County shall conduct a countywide evaluation of neighborhoods for access to recreation and open space areas, using the "Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria" and the neighborhood context planning approach as described in the *Miami-Dade Parks and Open Space System Master Plan*. The neighborhood evaluation shall consider the parks and open space needs of communities in the urban, suburban, rural and natural areas of the County, assure equitable access to recreation, open spaces, natural resources, and social/cultural venues, and facilitate neighborhood stability and redevelopment.

ROS-8B. By 2013, the County shall develop Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and recreational open spaces that are intended to encourage equitable access to local (neighborhood) parks and open space as well as area-wide recreational activities for all County residents.

Providing access to parks plays an important role in promoting physical activity which can help reduce obesity and obesity related disease. In Chapter 6, Inventory and Analysis, the County's two-tier park system was described including service standards, equity access criteria and a map series of the inventory of parks and activities offered. Mapping illustrated park locations

## park access and equity strategy

and their respective service areas and the resulting gaps in service. The main purpose of the analysis is to highlight gaps in Miami-Dade's open space network, and better understand which areas of the county are deficient in the ability to access local parks within a walking distance of ¼ to ½ mile and access to regional parks within 2-3 miles by bicycle, car or transit. The use of Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technology has become a critical tool as part of the evaluation process to determine where future open space investments should be made.

The work in this chapter builds upon the previous efforts in developing access and equity distance criteria and the collection of existing and available data. Gaps in service are based on the Equity Access Criteria in Figure 6.2.1. Specific work deliverables included in this chapter are:

(a) Access and Equity Standards

- \_\_\_ (i) Composite map of identified acquisition/improvement focus areas.
- \_\_\_ (ii) Summary matrix of acquisition/improvement focus areas.
- \_\_\_ (iii) Summary evaluation of Opportunities and Constraints.
- \_\_\_ (iv) Summary of Intervention Strategies/Policies.

(b) Urban Design Manual Volume I Update (Private Development) Safe Routes to Parks; Wayfinding Signage and Pattern Book to Promote Physical Activity:

- \_\_\_ (i) Safe Routes to Parks Plan.
- \_\_\_ (ii) Way-finding Signage Plan.

### 7.1.1 REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM

Map 7.1.1.1 illustrates the gaps in regional park service.

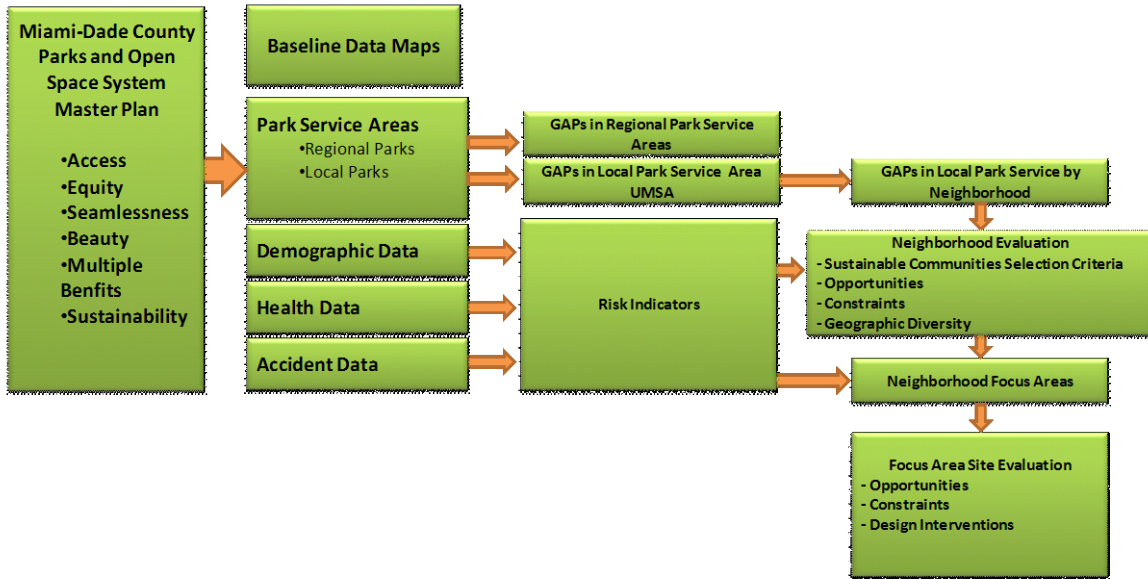
### 7.1.2 LOCAL PARK SYSTEM

Maps 7.1.2.1 and 7.1.2.2 are a composite series of map layers including local park service areas and gaps in service that when combined illustrate neighborhoods for acquisition/improvement. Once gaps in the open space network located on a neighborhood level were identified and taken into consideration with the results of the demographic and health and safety mapping completed in Chapter 5, neighborhood-wide opportunities and constraints were evaluated before selecting five (5) focus sites for further study as shown in Map 7.1.2.3.

# park access and equity strategy

The strategic process used to fill in the gaps for local park service areas is provided below in Figure 7.1.2.

**GAP Analysis Process Flowchart**



A summary matrix of acquisition/improvement focus areas, neighborhood-wide opportunities and constraints used in the evaluation is located below in Table 7.1.2. Mapping of baseline data including park service areas, demographic data, health data and accident data is included in Chapters 5 and 6.

# park access and equity strategy

## 7.2. FOCUS AREAS (SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOOD SELECTION) CRITERIA

Table 7.1.2

<b>Sustainable Neighborhood Selection Criteria</b>	
•	<b>Gaps in Service</b>
○	Equity
▪	Acres
▪	Access
○	Walkability
▪	¼ mile
▪	½ mile
▪	2-3 mile (Regional)
•	<b>Health Disparity</b>
○	Cardiac mortality
○	Infant death rates
○	Teen pregnancy rates
○	Low birth weight
•	<b>Demographics</b>
○	Per capita income
○	Poverty level
○	Single Parent Household
○	Education level attained
○	Age
•	<b>Bike/Pedestrian Accident Data</b>
•	<b>Geographic Diversity</b>
○	Along the transect
○	North-South
•	<b>Multiple Benefits</b>
○	Health
○	Partnerships with Schools & other County Depts
○	Linear Parks
○	Greenways
○	Existing and planned improvement projects
•	County
•	Municipal
•	Other
○	Green Infrastructure
○	Flood mitigation
○	Storm water retention
○	Ecological benefits

## park access and equity strategy

**7.2.1 IDENTIFY PRIORITY FOCUS NEIGHBORHOODS:** By applying the sustainable/livable communities' selection criteria five (5) focus neighborhoods were prioritized to go to the next phase in the process, i.e. evaluation of opportunities and constraints which resulted in identification of five (5) acquisition/improvement focus areas.

### **7.2.1.1. OPPORTUNITIES ANALYSIS: FOCUS NEIGHBORHOODS**

- Connect to Greenways
- Connect to Blueways
- Develop partnerships with:
  - SFWD
  - Planning & Zoning
  - Schools
  - WASD
  - Public/Private entities
  - Libraries
  - Housing
  - Parks (municipal, State, Federal)
  - Transit
- Coordinate with existing/planned capital improvement projects
- Connect to public transit (stations, park & ride and bus stops)
- Provide joint use parking
- Acquire adjacent contiguous property
- Provide historic/cultural/natural interpretation and education
- Develop a programming partnership
- Provide a land-use partnership
- Provide on-street parking
- Utilize existing sidewalks & public infrastructure
- Provide a safe route to parks
- Provide wayfinding to parks and recreational opportunities

### **7.2.1.2. CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS: FOCUS NEIGHBORHOODS**

- Site configuration
- Park size
- Lack of existing greenway(s)
- Lack of available land to purchase in gap areas
- Lack of existing natural/historic/cultural resources
- Lack of existing sidewalks and public infrastructure
- Incongruous street network
- Lack of public agencies for partnerships
- Lack of adequate access due to cul-de-sacs, canals, highways, etc.
- Incompatible zoning

For the purpose of this study, it was also considered appropriate to make a selection of focus areas that portray a geographic cross-section of opportunities and constraints in Miami-Dade County from north to south.

## park access and equity strategy

### 7.3. IDENTIFY FOCUS AREAS FOR ACQUISITION/IMPROVEMENT

#### 7.3.1. FOCUS AREA 1 CAROL CITY NEIGHBORHOOD: LAKE STEVENS PARK

MAP 7.3.11 Opportunities and Constraints and Map 7.3.1.2 Design Interventions/Safe Routes to Parks and Wayfinding Signage illustrate the potential tools that can be utilized to expand the service area of Lake Stevens Park.

##### 7.3.1.1. Opportunities and Constraints

###### 7.3.1.1.1. Opportunities

- Develop a JUA with Lake Stevens Elementary & Middle School
- Develop agreement with FPL for shared parking and access at Lake Stevens Park
- Increase access to neighborhood to the north of Lake Stevens Park thru developing pedestrian access thru the north side of the park
- Build a mid-block crossing to connect residential neighborhoods (south of park) to the western half of Lake Stevens Park
- Develop a partnership with the Orange Bowl Committee to develop playfields at Lake Stevens Park
- Incorporate transit stops at key park locations
- Provide access to park from high density residential area in the vicinity
- Provide access to park for the high percentage of children under 18 years old living in the vicinity
- Maintain moderate cardiovascular mortality & low birth weight rates
- Decrease the high rate of infant mortality & teen births
- Decrease instances of bicycle & pedestrian accidents on major roads adjacent to the park

###### 7.3.1.1.2. Constraints

- Site bifurcated by FPL substation
- Wall along the north edge of Lake Stevens Park limits pedestrian access
- High volume traffic on NW 183<sup>rd</sup> St limits pedestrian access from residential areas to the south of Lake Stevens Park
- Poor connection between adjoining park areas

##### 7.3.1.2. Design interventions/Safe Routes to Parks/Wayfinding

- Relocate existing bus stop to the west to better serve park patrons
- Install mid-block pedestrian stop light and cross-walk to western parcel of Lake Stevens Park
- Enhance pedestrian cross-walk connections at the intersection of NW 183<sup>rd</sup> St & NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave
- Install directional Wayfinding signage on NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave,
- Build an expanded sidewalk NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave from North Glade Park, past Lake Stevens Park to Acadia Park

## park access and equity strategy

- Develop bike lanes on NW 183<sup>rd</sup> Street & NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave from NW 167<sup>th</sup> Street to NW 199<sup>th</sup> Street
- Develop recreational facilities within the park that provide opportunities for physical activity, including: walking paths, basketball courts, tennis courts, open spay areas, football field and a recreation center.

### **7.3.1.3. Acquisitions (includes property use rights and partnership opportunities)**

7.3.1.3.1. No acquisitions proposed

## **7.3.2. FOCUS AREA 2 WESTVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD: LITTLE RIVER PARK**

MAP 7.3.2.1 Opportunities and Constraints and Map 7.3.2.2 Design Interventions/Safe Routes to Parks and Wayfinding Signage illustrate the potential tools that can be utilized to expand the service area of Little River Park.

### **7.3.2.1. Opportunities and Constraints**

#### **7.3.2.1.1. Opportunities**

- Develop a joint-use agreement with Henry Reeves Elementary
- Purchase additional land and provide service in gap areas
- Acquire land on south side of Little River Canal at NW 105<sup>th</sup> Street to establish a new park
- Purchase or develop a joint-use agreement for park use at property owned by the City of Miami Shores
- Build a bridge over the Little River Canal at NW 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue to provide pedestrian access to new park from adjacent residential areas
- Transfer of County-owned properties within the neighborhood to be developed into parks

#### **7.3.2.1.2. Constraints**

- Lack of parks in the neighborhood
- Lack of available, vacant land for acquisition and park development
- Little River Canal (C-7, SFWMD) is a connectivity barrier and blocks pedestrian access to the park from residential areas
- Large privately-owned open space with restricted access to public
- Lack of connection between Little River Park and the residential area to the north
- Lack of intersection improvements at NW 103<sup>rd</sup> Street & NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave

### **7.3.2.2. Design interventions/Safe Routes to Parks/Wayfinding**



## park access and equity strategy

- Develop Joint Use Agreement with Henry Reeves Elementary School, Westview Elem/Middle School and Miami Park Elementary
- Acquire additional park land in the neighborhood
- Build a bridge over Little River Canal at NW 19<sup>th</sup> Ave to connect to new park acquisition
- Develop Safe Routes to Parks on major roads
- Install Safe Routes Wayfinding on major roads and at key locations in conjunction with public transit and bus stops
- Improve intersection at NW 103<sup>rd</sup> Street & NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Acquire 2 parcels of land at NW 24<sup>th</sup> Ave & NW 107<sup>th</sup> Street
- Build a bridge over Little River Canal at NW 24<sup>th</sup> Ave to connect Little River Park to the residential area to the north
- Recreational facilities within the park that provide opportunities for physical activity, including: walking paths, basketball courts, baseball fields, tot lot, recreation center and swimming pool.

### **7.3.2.3. Acquisitions (includes property use rights and partnership opportunities)**

- Develop Joint Use Agreement with Henry Reeves Elementary School, Westview Elem/Middle School and Miami Park Elementary
- Acquire additional park land in the neighborhood
- Develop Joint Use Agreement with City of Miami Shores for shared use of property.

### **7.3.3. FOCUS AREA 3 BROWNSVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD: MARVA Y BANNERMAN PARK**

MAP 7.3.3.1 Opportunities and Constraints and Map 7.3.3.2 Design Interventions/Safe Routes to Parks and Wayfinding Signage illustrate the potential tools that can be utilized to expand the service area of Marva Y Bannerman Park.

#### **7.3.3.1. Opportunities and Constraints**

##### **7.3.3.1.1. Opportunities**

- Partial street closure for a portion of the day to provide safe routes between Schools & Parks
- Develop a bicycle blvd on major roads in the area
- Connect to Earlington Heights and Brownsville Transit Stations
- Connection of Earlington Heights transit station and the Miami International Airport
- Develop a partnership with schools
  - Share use of pool & other park facilities with Schools

## park access and equity strategy

- Share use of gymnasium, indoor facilities and parking areas with Parks
- Develop Wayfinding and safe routes to parks from bus stops
- Develop sidewalk on NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Street east from the Brownsville Transit Station
- Jointly develop with the Housing Department
- Add a traffic light at key intersections
- Add pedestrian safety features
- Add shade trees and canopy
- Design buildings with the concept of “eyes on the street” to deter crime
- Re-zone commercial corridors to provide pedestrian friendly routes
- Work with the Dept. of Planning & Zoning overlay and the Neighborhood Charette Plan
- Partner with the City of Miami
- Partner with the Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- Provide access to healthy foods

### 7.3.3.1.2. Constraints

- Lack of public transit directly to the Park
- Constraint lack of available on-street parking for park visitors
- On-street parking restricts bicycle and pedestrian access to the park
- Lack of crosswalks and pedestrian safety features
- Community perception of fear in walking through the neighborhood
- Social constraints
  - Unemployment
  - Crime

### 7.3.3.2. Design interventions/Safe Routes to Parks/Wayfinding

- Develop a bicycle boulevard on NW 50<sup>th</sup> Street & NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Install Wayfinding signage at Brownsville and Earlington Heights transit stations directing people to parks
- Develop Joint Use Agreements with Brownsville Middle School and Earlington Heights Middle School
- Install wayfinding signage on major roads and at bus stops directing people to parks.
- Develop sidewalk on NW 52<sup>nd</sup> Street east from the Brownsville Transit Station
- Establish pedestrian access to park from adjacent Housing development
- Install pedestrian and bicycle safety features at major intersections (NW 46 St & NW 24 Ave, NW 53 Lane & NW 23 Ave)
- Add shade trees and canopy along safe routes from Transit stops and Schools
- Establish local farmers markets in the parks to provide access to healthy foods

## park access and equity strategy

- Recreational facilities within the park that provide opportunities for physical activity include: walking paths, tennis courts, open spay areas, and a recreation center.

### **7.3.3.3. Acquisitions (includes property use rights and partnership opportunities)**

- Develop Joint Use Agreements with Brownsville Middle School and Earlington Heights Middle School

## **7.3.4. FOCUS AREA 4 KENDALL NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD: KENDALL INDIAN HAMMOCKS PARK**

MAP 7.3.4.1 Opportunities and Constraints and Map 7.3.4.2 Design Interventions/Safe Routes to Parks and Wayfinding Signage illustrate the potential tools that can be utilized to expand the service area of Kendall Indian Hammocks Park.

### **7.3.4.1. Opportunities and Constraints**

#### **7.3.4.1.1. Opportunities**

- Provide educational and interpretive experiences at existing archeological, historical & natural areas within Kendall Indian Hammocks Park
- Provide access to the park from the high density residential area surrounding park.
- Connect bicycle and pedestrian users of Snapper Creek Trail to the park.
- Provide safe routes to the park from nearby schools
- Provide pedestrians access from adjacent MDC School District property
- Provide regional connectivity via sidewalks, bike lanes, local streets and transit to nearby schools
- Provide wayfinding signage directing people to the park from nearby bus stops
- Provide on street parking for park visitors
- Establish connectivity between the park and surrounding street network
- Enhance sidewalks and crosswalks for persons with disabilities and seniors
- Expand existing park and acquire adjacent lands
- Develop shared use parking with adjacent high school
- Establish program partnership with adjacent Miami Dade County Schools

## park access and equity strategy

### 7.3.4.1.2. Constraints

- Limited pedestrian access due to adjacent land uses.
- Limited development on north side of park due to Natural Forest Community restricting development of recreational facilities and pedestrian access from the adjacent school.
- Limited park development potential due to MDC School Board controlling large areas of the park, restricting site development and park programming opportunities.
- Lack of direct connectivity to the regional greenway system.
- Lack of safe route and pedestrian access from nearby schools to the park.
- Limited development opportunities due to existing archeological zones and historical sites.
- Conflicting land uses on adjacent properties such as County Maintenance and Sign Shop, County Storage, Public Works and Fire Dept training facilities which require setbacks.
- Limited development on north side of park due to an existing 46' water easement.

### 7.3.4.2. Design interventions/Safe Routes to Parks/Wayfinding

- Install interpretive signage and exhibits detailed the archeological history & natural resources of Kendall Indian Hammocks Park
- Utilize Joint Use Agreement with Miami Dade County School District for use of 20 acres with baseball and soccer fields, basketball courts, and concession/storage facilities.
- Develop additional park access points from SW 76th Street & SW 112th Ave to provide access to more residents
- Connect to regional and community access from SW 107th Ave and the nearby Florida Turnpike
- Enhance regional connectivity via easement to snapper Creek Trail
- Provide access from adjacent MDC School District property via new school access road, SW 80<sup>th</sup> Terrace & new SW 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Develop on-street parking to minimize need for additional parking areas within the park
- Develop pedestrian connections into park via existing sidewalk network around park and from various street ends that abut park.
- Develop internal bicycle and walking paths within park
- Acquire additional Tropical Hardwood Hammock area northeast of park, adjacent to Solid Waste Dept. property.
- Acquire Haven Center property
- Develop joint-use agreement with MDC School District for renovation of gym and storage facilities

## park access and equity strategy

- Develop shared use parking with new high school for on and off park parking
- Establish program partnership with MDC Schools for after school, summer camp and seniors programs.
- Recreational facilities within the park that provide opportunities for physical activity, including: walking paths, playgrounds, baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, picnic shelters and a recreation center.

### **7.3.4.3. Acquisitions (includes property use rights and partnership opportunities)**

- Utilize Joint Use Agreement with Miami Dade County School District for use of 20 acres with baseball and soccer fields, basketball courts, and concession/storage facilities.
- Acquire additional Tropical Hardwood Hammock area northeast of park, adjacent to Solid Waste Dept. property.
- Acquire Haven Center property
- Develop joint-use agreement with MDC School District for renovation of gym and storage facilities
- Develop shared use parking with new high school for on and off park parking
- Establish program partnership with MDC Schools for after school, summer camp and seniors programs.

### **7.3.5. FOCUS AREA 5 CAROL CITY NEIGHBORHOOD: DEBBIE CURTIN PARK**

MAP 7.3.5.1 Opportunities and Constraints and Map 7.3.5.2 Design Interventions/Safe Routes to Parks and Wayfinding Signage illustrate the potential tools that can be utilized to expand the service area of Debbie Curtin Park.

#### **7.3.5.1. Opportunities and Constraints**

##### **7.3.5.1.1. Opportunities**

- Acquire adjacent vacant land for park expansion
- Establish pedestrian access point at the north east corner of the park
- Establish pedestrian access at the mid-point of the park on the north side
- Install wayfinding signage from Schools, bus stops, transit stations and major intersections to parks in the area
- Work cooperatively with the adjacent church for parking
- Connect to nearby EEL property

## park access and equity strategy

- Increase walking access to the park by developing roads adjacent to the park
- Develop residences with the concept of “eyes on the park” for greater safety
- Provide pedestrian access along SW 112 Avenue to the Goulds Elementary School
- Develop a partnership with the adjacent church to provide park access on SW 110<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Develop a future connection on SW 107 Ave

### 7.3.5.1.2. Constraints

- Limited pedestrian access due to lack of pedestrian access from the north side of the park
- Limited pedestrian access due to lack of street connectivity
- Lack of sidewalks in the area
- Lack of bike lanes in the area
- Lack of connection along SW 232 Street to SW 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Limited residential access to the park
- Limited sidewalks on SW 112<sup>th</sup> Street
- Park service area limited due to street network configuration
- Narrow rectangular configuration of the site restricts park development potential

### 7.3.5.2. Design interventions/Safe Routes to Parks/Wayfinding

- Acquire land to the south of the existing park
- Develop an agreement with the adjacent Church for shared use parking and access to the park via SW 110<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Establish a road at the (new) southern boundary of the park in alignment with SW 229<sup>th</sup> Street
- Install sidewalks & bike lanes on SW 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Install Safe Route wayfinding signage on SW 112<sup>th</sup> Ave, SW 232<sup>nd</sup> Street, SW 224<sup>th</sup> Street, and Bailes Rd
- Develop recreational facilities within the park that provide opportunities for physical activity, including: walking paths, basketball courts, playground, vita course, open spay areas and a recreation center.
- Establish a pedestrian access at the north east corner of the park by
  - Acquire private park parcel at SW 227<sup>th</sup> Terrace

### 7.3.5.3. Acquisitions (includes property use rights and partnership opportunities)

- Acquire private park parcel at SW 227<sup>th</sup> Terrace
- Acquire land to the south of the existing park

## park access and equity strategy

- Develop an agreement with the adjacent Church for shared use parking and access to the park via SW 110<sup>th</sup> Ave

### 7.4. SUMMARY OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES/POLICIES

By using the intervention strategies for the five focus areas above, a summary of potential intervention strategies are listed below that may be considered in the development of policies in helping to maximize park service areas.

- Install sidewalks within all local park service areas;
- Complete streets within all local park service areas;
- Development standards encouraging buildings/houses that watch over parks (eyes on the park), trails and open spaces;
- Develop appropriate provisions for on-street/off-street parking;
- Implement speed limits along Safe Routes to Parks;
- Provide transit stops with shelters;
- Encourage development of privacy fences no higher than 4 feet along park boundaries.
- Provide adequate street lighting within all park service areas;
- Provide traffic calming measures abutting park boundaries;