

THE BIG *green* EASY



A Citywide Park and Recreation Vision Plan for New Orleans
January 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the leaders and project team members below, the City of New Orleans extends sincere thanks to all the community members who participated in this process through focus groups, workshops, surveys and more. Your time and expertise made this plan possible.

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City of New Orleans

Mayor LaToya Cantrell



Dear Neighbors,

It's time for us to reimagine parks and recreation in New Orleans!

What if every park in our city was the beloved heart of its neighborhood or, if our residents found daily joy and community in our recreation centers? What if we protected, as parkland, all our precious cultural landscapes—our neutral grounds, beaches, bayous, and live oaks?

Suppose our park and recreation providers had the staff and funding they needed to keep all our parks as clean, safe, and beautiful on day 10,000 as they were on day 1? Could these interconnected landscapes make our city cooler, greener, and healthier for people and wildlife?

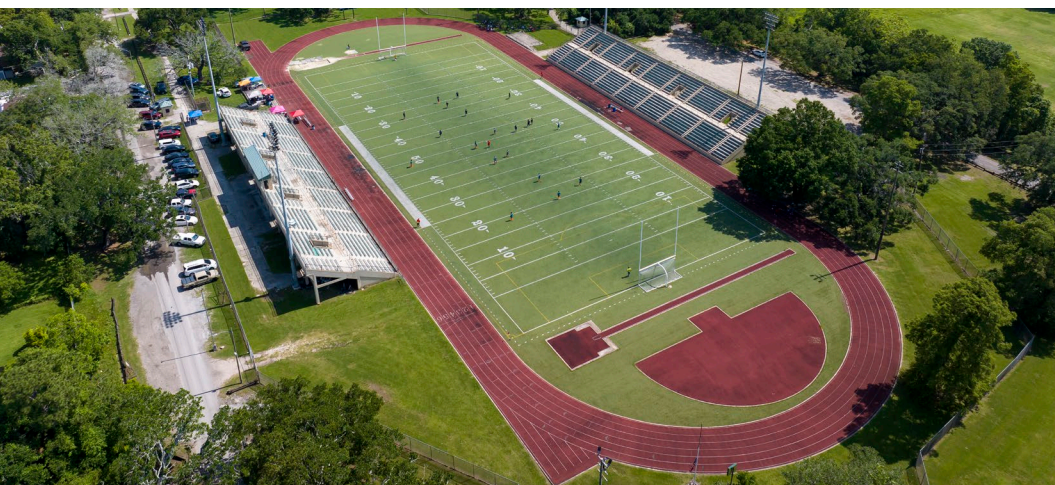
As Mayor of the City of New Orleans, I know that it's possible! In 1947, a few local coaches and civic leaders shared their vision for public recreation, and the City of New Orleans found the resources necessary to create—in less than a decade—a public recreation system that was the envy of the nation. Unfortunately, their efforts had a fatal demise. The new parks, camps, classes, social events, performances, and sports leagues were offered under Jim Crow, and in the 1960s, lost its battle against integrating public facilities. This initiated the beginning of a long period of disinvestment and decline for New Orleans.

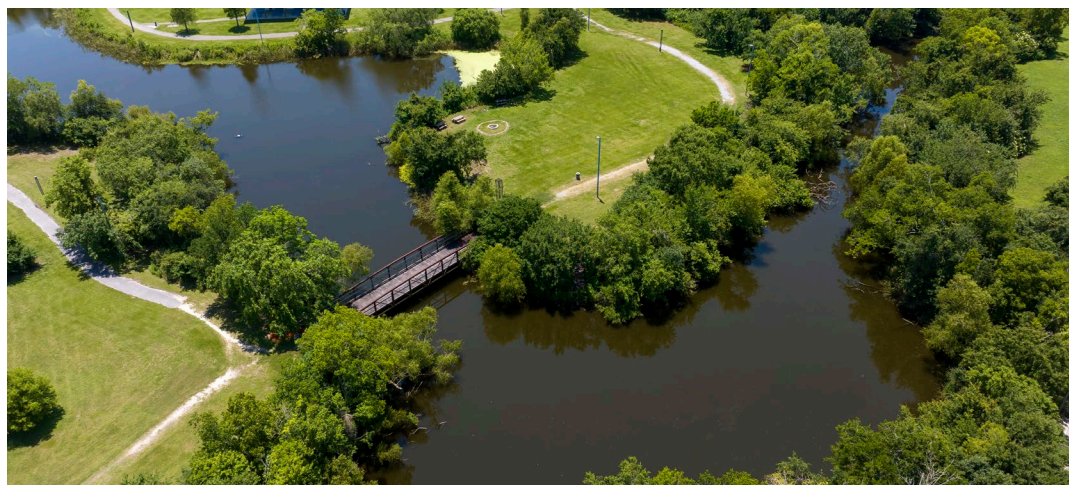
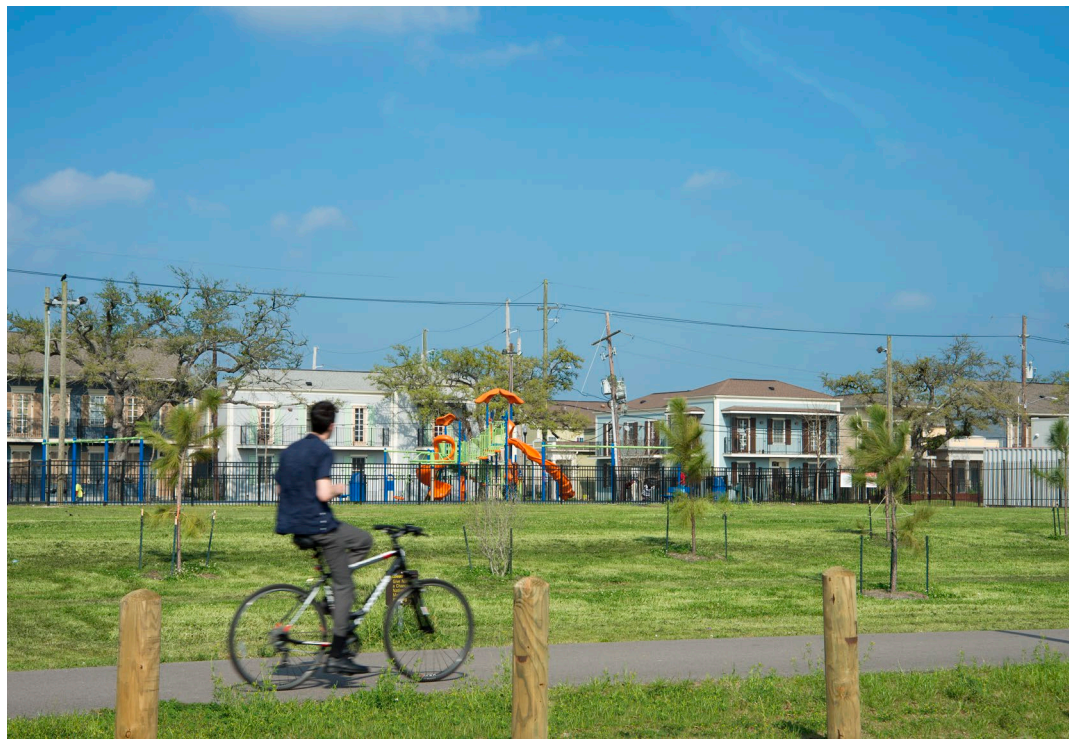
Today, we are investing in and rebuilding a world-class park and recreation system that serves and brings together all New Orleanians. The Big Green Easy: A Citywide Vision for Parks and Recreation in New Orleans, is a road map to a park and recreation system that is equitable, beautiful, and resilient. The plan takes stock of our existing assets and identifies disparities in park quality and accessibility. It offers an ambitious long-term vision for citywide parks and recreation, then filters that vision through a rational, transparent, and community-driven ranking system to identify the physical improvements that should happen first. It makes specific recommendations about strategies we can use now to create, fund, and sustain a park and recreation system that will make our neighborhoods and our city a better place to live today and into the future.

Inaction is not an option. We have heard the community's call for improved and equitable parks and recreation – this plan is the first step. I look forward to working with all of you to deliver on the promise of The Big Green Easy.

Sincerely,

LaToya Cantrell
Mayor, City of New Orleans









EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Why is this plan important, and why now?

New Orleans is home to public parks that are some of the oldest and most celebrated in the country. For many New Orleanians, the city's iconic parks and waterfronts make them healthier and happier and provide the backdrop against which they live, work, and play.

However, the life-changing benefits of parks, recreation, and greenspace are not equitably distributed or experienced by all. Following decades of uneven investment, and with no coordinated process to prioritize citywide park improvements, **the park and recreation disparities in New Orleans are stark:**

- » Park condition assessments and walkshed analyses show that **city residents who are Black, low-income, or living in a household with disability** are significantly more likely to live close to a public greenspace that is **low-quality or downright unsafe**.
- » And park visitor mobility data indicates that in a majority-Black city, only 26% of citywide park visitors from 2019 to 2022 were Black.

For the first time in New Orleans history, the *Big Green Easy* offers an **equitable, community-driven framework** for citywide park and recreation investments now and into the future, with project prioritization that is **directly informed by community needs and feedback**.

Implementation of this plan could not be more urgent. Climate change is making New Orleans hotter and more flood-prone, and community leaders are seeking new and diverse tools to address community health disparities, gun violence, and declining public trust.

Strategic investments in parks and recreation can make cities more livable and drastically improve the daily lives and long-term wellbeing of residents. This plan offers a path forward, toward a park system that **celebrates the distinct cultures and identities of New Orleans** while making the city and its neighborhoods **cooler, greener, healthier, more resilient, and more just for all**.

➔ **Big Green Easy Community and Planning Context**

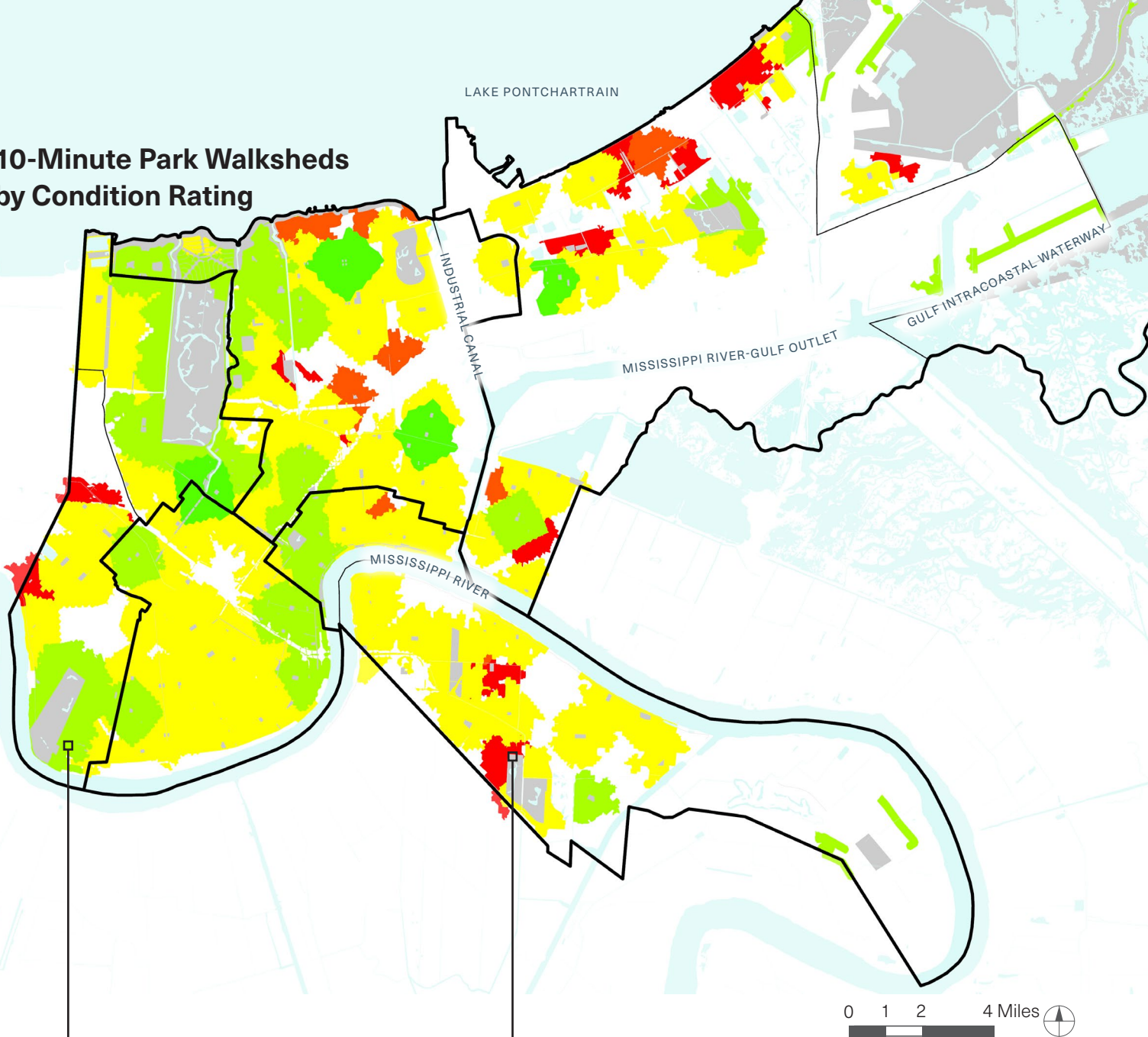
Chapter 1

➔ **Current State of New Orleans Parks**

Chapter 2



10-Minute Park Walksheds by Condition Rating



New Orleans households **below the poverty line** or with a **disability** are **more likely** to live within a 10-minute walk of a park in poor condition.

White New Orleans residents are **more likely** to live within a 10-minute walk of a park in good condition, and **Black** New Orleans residents are **more likely** to live within a 10-minute walk of a park in poor condition.

MAP LEGEND

10-Minute Park Walkshed
by Condition Rating

- 1 (New or Like-New)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Unusable or Unsafe)

- Plan Enlargement Area
- City Council District
- Waterbodies
- Existing Park



ABOUT THIS PLAN

What does the plan include, and how was it created?

The origin of this project dates to 2019, when New Orleans voters overwhelmingly passed a **park and recreation millage** in support of the Park Partners—New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDc), the City's Department of Parks and Parkways, Audubon Nature Institute, and City Park Conservancy.

This planning process, which launched in 2022, was intended to align—for the first time—Park Partner efforts in pursuit of a community-driven vision for parks and recreation, with a focus on **equity and resilience**.

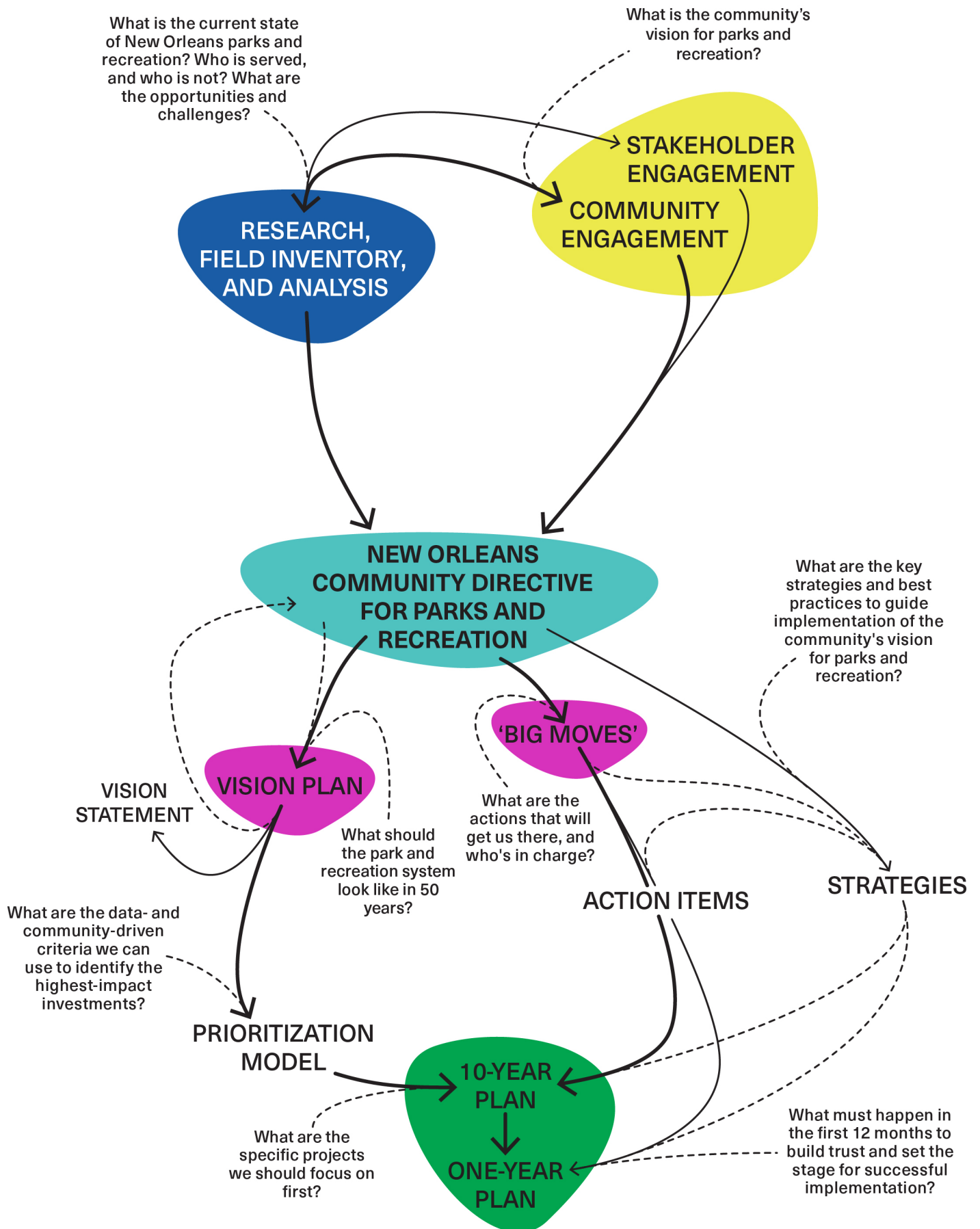
Grounded in the realities of the current system and planning context and driven by community feedback, the plan is both **visionary and pragmatic**. It envisions an ambitious park and recreation system that New Orleanians can be proud to leave to future generations, and it uses community priorities to narrow those actions and opportunities to a scope that's realistic for one-year and 10-year implementation.



**Project Background
and Park Partners**
Chapter 1

NAVIGATE THE DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The ‘short and sweet’ summary of plan recommendations.
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	The origin of this project, the current state of New Orleans parks and recreation, and how this relates to other plans.
COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE	What the New Orleans community wants from its park and recreation system, and how that drives the final plan and priorities.
VISION PLAN AND 10-YEAR PLAN	The long-term vision for parks and recreation, plus the 10-year projects that are highest-priority for an equitable, resilient system.
ONE-YEAR PLAN	The things that must happen in the first year to create ‘early wins’ and set the stage for successful implementation.
STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS	Best practices, and action items for (1) Building Public Trust, (2) Neighborhood Parks for All, and (3) Parks as Essential Infrastructure.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Staffing and funding considerations for plan implementation and the long-term health and maintenance of citywide parks and recreation.





COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

How does this plan reflect community feedback and priorities?

The *Big Green Easy* is built on **ideas and feedback from a six-month process of listening** and community engagement. Given the city's documented disparities in park quality and access, the planning team wherever possible filtered feedback by demographic variables such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability, to check where responses might vary and to ensure recommendations reflect the needs and priorities of historically underserved groups.



Community Directive and Engagement Process

Chapter 3

Where there was consensus across communities and engagement formats, the planning team translated that feedback into the 'New Orleans Community Directive for Parks and Recreation'—**these are the guiding directives from which all plan recommendations and priorities flow.**

COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

- 1 Build public trust** through community-driven project prioritization, transparent design and decision-making processes, reliable park maintenance, and coordination of efforts and resources across park providers.
- 2 Make high-quality neighborhood parks the backbone of the city's park and recreation system.** Great neighborhood parks are the anchor of their communities—spaces where people come together for socializing, respite, civic life and cultural expression as much as for recreation and exercise. Every neighborhood in New Orleans should have a park to call its own, designed to meet its specific needs, with features that authentically amplify its neighborhood character and identity. A city where every neighborhood park is high-quality and distinct, designed in active partnership with community members to ensure their neighbors thrive—that is the bedrock of an equitable park and recreation system.
- 3 Recognize the city's parks and recreation centers as essential infrastructure.** High-quality park systems yield enormous benefits for public health, community cohesion, and resilience. Their interconnected landscapes cool the city, absorb and clean stormwater, shelter urban wildlife, and connect people to each other and their parks. They make neighborhoods more beautiful and elevate the day-to-day experience of the city. Parks and recreation centers in New Orleans must serve multiple functions—with adaptable spaces and programming that support everyday quality of life, in addition to the recovery and healing that are needed in the midst of tragedy, flood, heat wave, or pandemic.

AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE,
EVEN THE DISABLED.
EVERYONE KNOWS THE
PARKS BELONG TO THEM!

MORE NATURAL LOOKING PARKS

BRING NATURE TO
THE CITY

UTILIZING NEUTRAL GROUNDS
AS PART OF THE PARK NETWORK
TO CONNECT PARKS AND
NEIGHBORHOODS

PARKS THAT ARE OPEN,
CLEAN, IN GOOD CONDITION
AND FREE TO ALL

1,595+

PAPER AND
ONLINE
SURVEY
RESPONDENTS

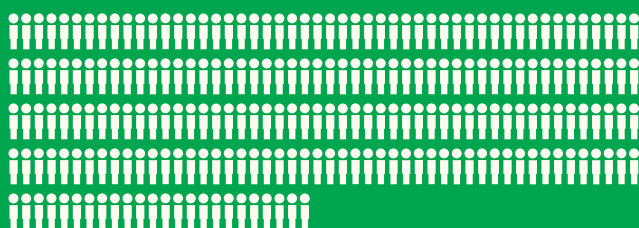
8 PARK
AMBASSADORS



WORKSHOPS THROUGHOUT
THE CITY



249 REGISTERED
ATTENDEES



26

STAKEHOLDER
CONVERSATIONS

10

FOCUS
GROUPS



10-YEAR PLAN

What should we focus on first?

The planning team asked the community for feedback about the long-term Vision Plan projects and programs that are **most important** for short-term focus and implementation. This feedback drove the 10-Year Plan.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION MODEL

To identify the physical park and recreation projects that should happen first, the team used a **prioritization model** (Figure 1) to score the Vision Plan projects and divide them into three phases based on **priorities expressed during the community engagement process**.

For example, park projects received a higher score if they:

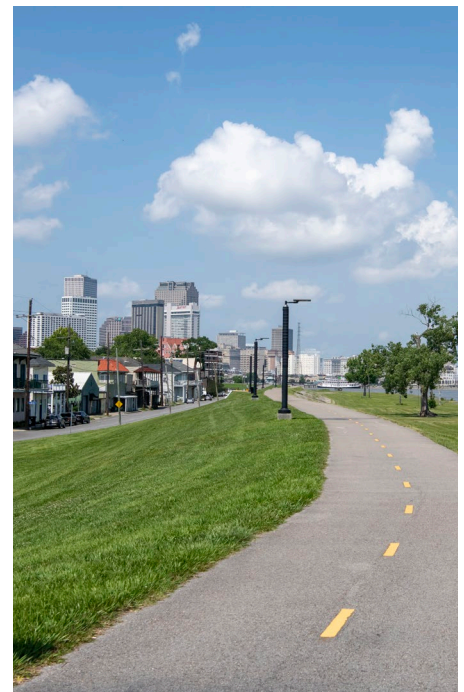
- » Serve areas of the city with a **history of public underinvestment** and environmental contamination.
- » Improve **park access and experience** for New Orleans neighborhoods that currently have no parks or only low-quality parks.
- » Improve the quality of an existing park in **poor condition**.
- » **Leverage** an existing opportunity.
- » Align with **public health goals** in areas with higher crime rates.

For the first time, this model provides New Orleans public officials and park providers with a **community-driven methodology for prioritizing citywide park and recreation investments**. As with the overall plan, this model should be revisited regularly to ensure it continues to reflect community priorities.



Project Prioritization Model and 10-Year Plan

Chapter 4



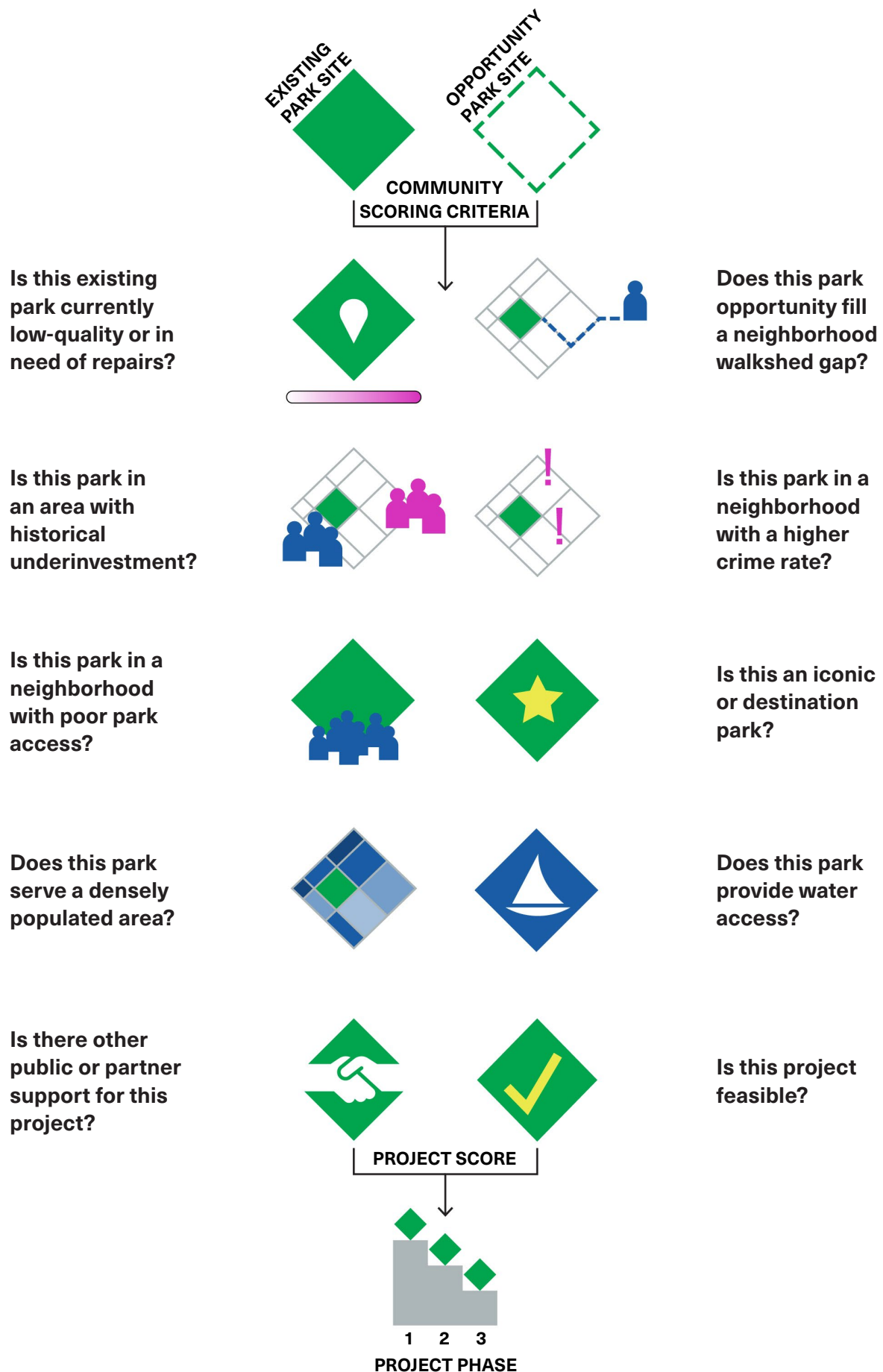


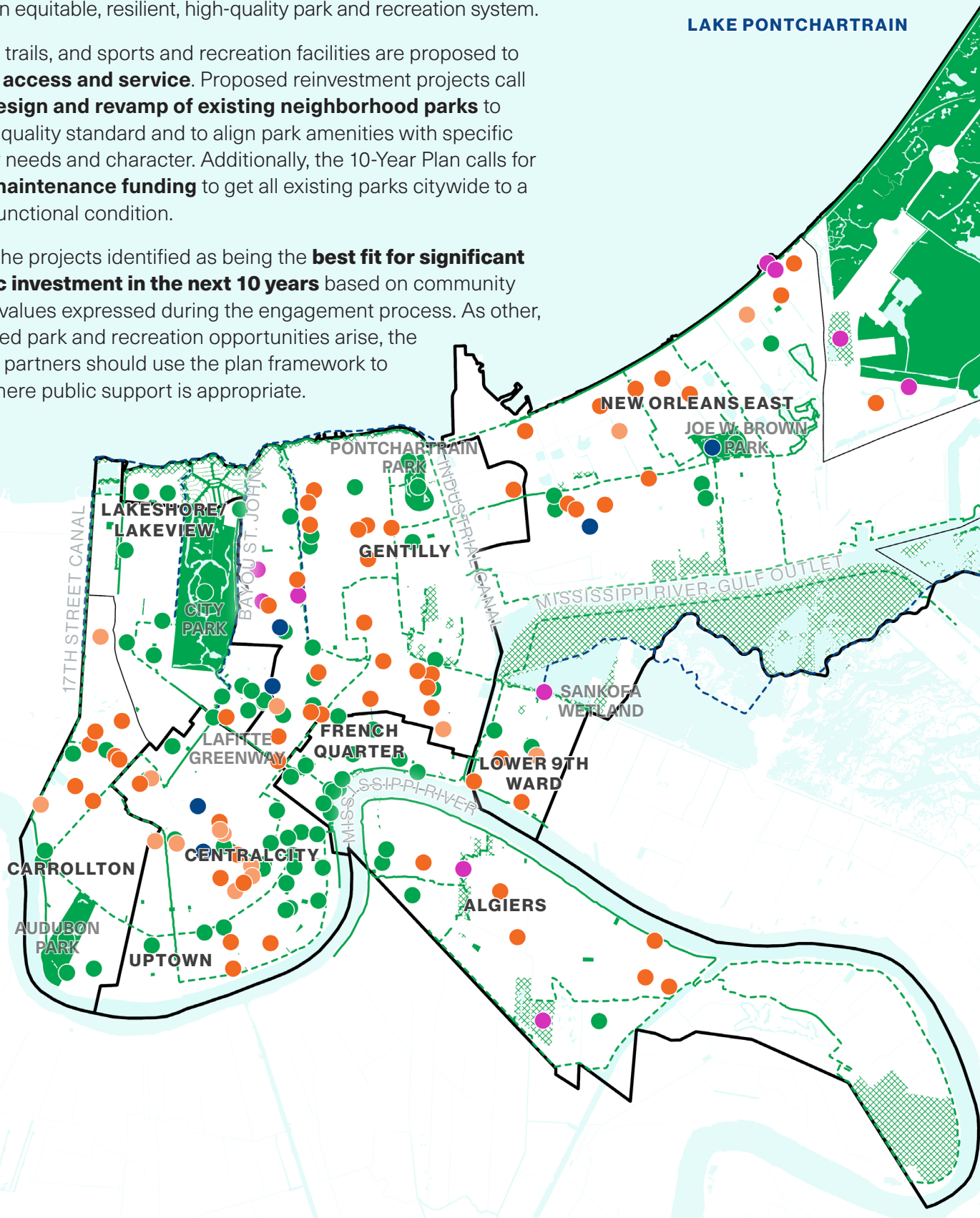
Figure 1: Community-driven prioritization and scoring to break projects into phases.

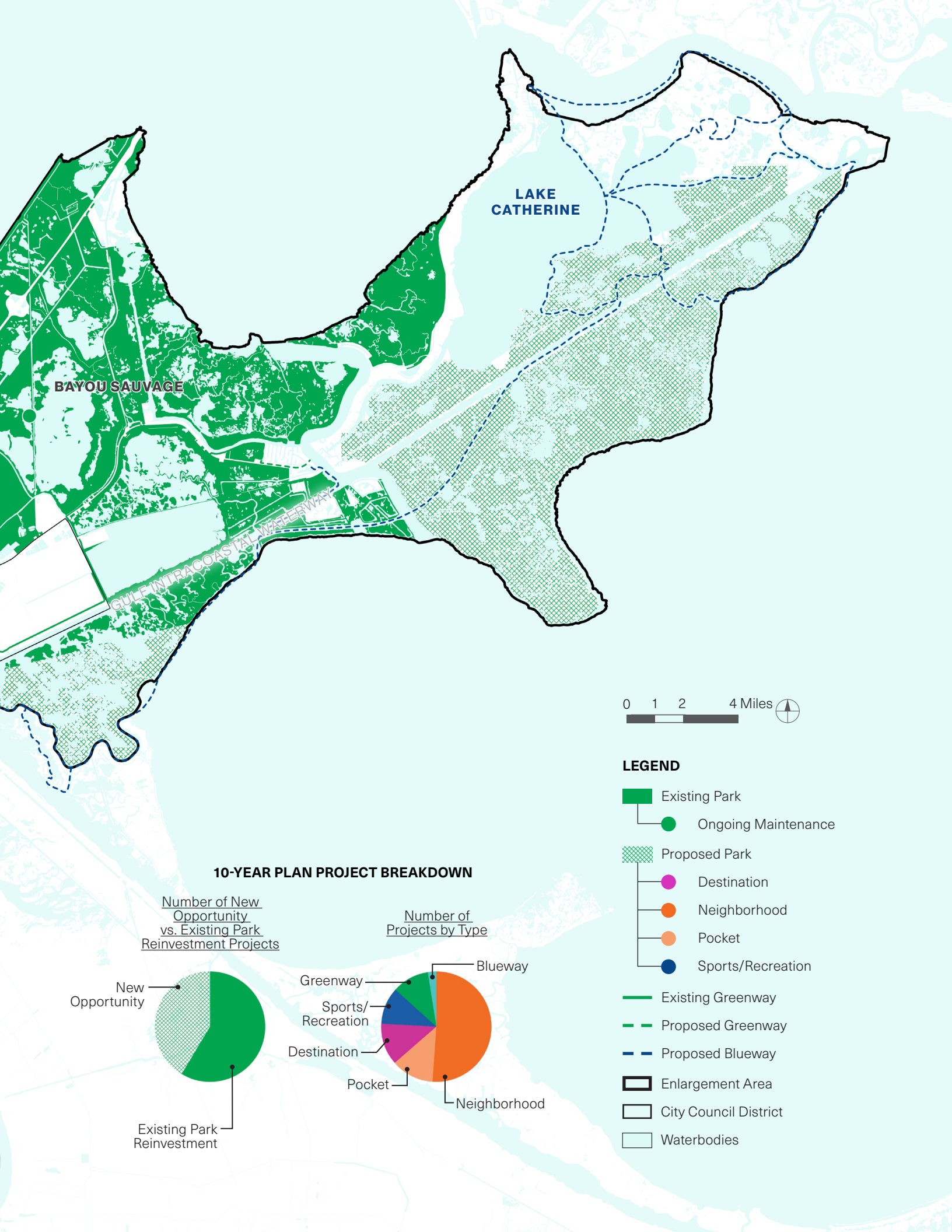
10-YEAR PLAN PROJECTS

These are the park and recreation investments that received the highest score in the community-driven prioritization model (Figure 1). In other words, these projects give the City and its partners the **'biggest bang for their buck'** in short-term projects with the highest potential impact for achieving an equitable, resilient, high-quality park and recreation system.

New parks, trails, and sports and recreation facilities are proposed to **fill gaps in access and service**. Proposed reinvestment projects call for the **redesign and revamp of existing neighborhood parks** to a universal quality standard and to align park amenities with specific community needs and character. Additionally, the 10-Year Plan calls for **deferred maintenance funding** to get all existing parks citywide to a good and functional condition.

These are the projects identified as being the **best fit for significant new public investment in the next 10 years** based on community needs and values expressed during the engagement process. As other, unanticipated park and recreation opportunities arise, the City and its partners should use the plan framework to evaluate where public support is appropriate.



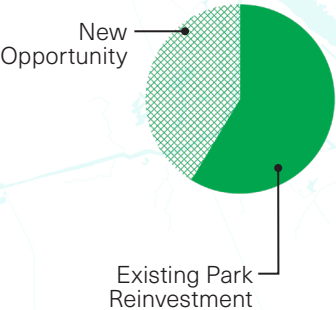


LEGEND

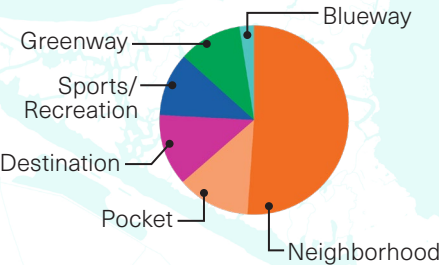
- Existing Park
- Ongoing Maintenance
- Proposed Park
 - Destination
 - Neighborhood
 - Pocket
 - Sports/Recreation
- Existing Greenway
- Proposed Greenway
- Proposed Blueway
- Enlargement Area
- City Council District
- Waterbodies

10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT BREAKDOWN

Number of New Opportunity vs. Existing Park Reinvestment Projects



Number of Projects by Type



BIG MOVES



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS FOR ALL

Invest in distinctive, safe and high-quality neighborhood parks. This includes launching a Neighborhood Park Program with staff support to: Implement the community-driven design of neighborhood park projects; ensure adherence to new citywide quality standards; establish best practices for empowering community-based groups as park stewards; and find new ways to connect people to their parks.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Improve access to quality and inclusive programming. This is critical to the community vision of a park and recreation system that promotes individual and community health and wellness. The plan focus is on building new partnerships, identifying new funding sources, and investing in marketing strategies to (1) expand and improve the programs available—particularly for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities—and (2) make those programs easier to find and access.



PARK AND RECREATION DELIVERY

Rethink park and recreation delivery in New Orleans. Given the fragmented organizational structure of New Orleans park and recreation providers and the large number of park management entities, the plan recommends short-term actions and specific follow-up studies to examine how limited resources might be better deployed to improve the quality and efficiency of citywide park and recreation delivery.



SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Fix the park funding shortfall. The plan recommends a series of avenues the City and its partners can pursue to increase and diversify public and private funding for New Orleans parks and recreation.



RESILIENT AND BEAUTIFUL SYSTEM

Create a park and recreation system that bolsters the cultural, recreational, environmental, social, and economic life of the city. Plan proposals—including new ordinances, park stormwater management targets and best practices, land conservation and water access goals, and proposed 'resilience hubs'—seek to build out a system that makes the city greener, cooler, more beautiful, and more resilient.



ICONIC PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

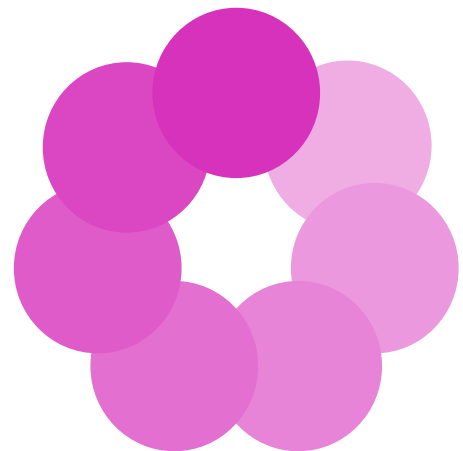
Continue to invest in iconic parks and landscapes. These are the parks that are core to New Orleans' identity and bring people together from across the city. The plan proposes continued support for existing destination parks and identifies opportunities in underserved areas for a new generation of iconic parks that celebrate the city's unique cultural and natural landscapes.



ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PLANS

Follow through on previous plans.

This includes a focus on completing previous park and recreation plans, such as Lafitte Greenway, in addition to aligning park investments with other critical infrastructure work, such as green stormwater infrastructure, urban tree canopy restoration, and bike/ pedestrian mobility improvements.



The 'Big Moves' capture important takeaways from six months of community feedback and guidance from stakeholders, the City, and Park Partners. Each Big Move is supported by specific action items, including target timelines and responsible entities, to help guide implementation and keep the City and its partners coordinated and on track.



ONE-YEAR PLAN

What has to happen first to build trust and lay the groundwork for implementation?

Because there is no single City of New Orleans parks and recreation entity charged with implementation of the *Big Green Easy* recommendations, the planning team identified steps that should be taken by specific City staff and departments in the next 12 months to set the stage for successful implementation. These first steps seek to:

- Take on the most pressing needs and challenges identified during the planning process, and
- Leverage existing or in-the-pipeline assets and resources, to move the plan forward as longer-term funding issues are resolved.

This includes securing 2024 General Fund dollars for short-term deferred maintenance at parks in Equity Investment Zones, and taking advantage of existing American Rescue Plan Act funding to implement high-priority Neighborhood Park projects in partnership with the Office of Community Assets and Investments, Department of Parks and Parkways, and Health Department.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Another ongoing initiative that can support implementation of this plan is the City's pursuit of asset management software. This tool can help the City track its park and recreation assets and maintenance hours; anticipate and budget for maintenance needs and equipment; and identify where new positions or operational efficiencies might be needed to address challenges or backlogs. The inventory and condition assessment completed as part of this planning process can be integrated with this system.

PARTNERSHIPS, ADVOCACY AND FUNDING

The One-Year Plan seeks to lay the groundwork for greater sustained funding and partnership support of citywide parks and recreation.

Table 1 lists the first steps and target deadlines for the City and partners to set the plan recommendations into motion. The Office of the Mayor should lead coordination and implementation of these tasks.

RETHINKING PARK AND RECREATION DELIVERY

The One-Year Plan recommends appointment by the Mayor of a Chief Park Planning Officer to guide short-term plan implementation and jumpstart improvements to the City's park and recreation organizational structure and operational efficiencies. Current staff do not have the capacity to take on this additional task. The CPPO position can be filled by an internal move within City government or the creation of an interim position.

'EARLY WIN' PROJECTS

The One-Year Plan also identifies 'early win' park and recreation projects that promote equity and resilience, demonstrate progress, and build public trust that the plan recommendations will be taken seriously and implemented.

NOTE:

The Chief Park Planning Officer is proposed as a temporary City of New Orleans administrative position at a peer level to the CEO of NORDc and Director of Parks and Parkways. This position would not have decision-making authority for Audubon Nature Institute or City Park Conservancy, which are independent agencies with their own governing boards and leadership.

Table 1: One-Year Action Items

TASK	DUE	OWNER
ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT		
Appoint a Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO) charged with immediate coordination and implementation of plan recommendations and to establish a City point of contact and advocate for citywide parks and recreation. This position should also represent public park and recreation interests in negotiation of development projects.	March 2024	Office of the Mayor
Continue convening the Park Partners working group to coordinate efforts and share best-practice resources.	Quarterly	Park Partners
Conduct a study of NORDc and Parks and Parkways (PKW) organization and staffing to strengthen strategic alignment, improve operational efficiencies, and streamline public branding and park policies.	May 2024	Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO)
'EARLY WIN' PROJECTS		
Dedicate identified City-owned park opportunity sites as future parkland, in coordination with the Strategic Properties Oversight Working Group.	April 2024	Community Assets and Investment
Develop a marketing strategy for City park and recreation plans, project updates, and available amenities and programs.	May 2024	Consultant
Secure funding to complete short-term deferred maintenance projects at parks in Equity Investment Zones rated moderate to poor.	May 2024	NORDc and Parks and Parkways
Launch and staff a Neighborhood Park Program to formalize the City's emphasis on neighborhood park improvements. Adopt Neighborhood Park Design and Management Guidelines with an emphasis on community-driven design.	May 2024	CPPO
Complete community-driven design processes and Phase 1 implementation of identified ARPA-funded Neighborhood Park projects with OCAI and PKW.	July 2024	CPPO
Investigate the transfer of ownership and management of West End Park to the City.	July 2024	CPPO
Finalize a community-driven master plan to preserve and restore Lincoln Beach.	July 2024	Resilience and Sustainability
MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS		
Assign clear operation and management responsibility for all existing and future parks, recreation centers, rights-of-way, and green stormwater infrastructure.	July 2024	City CAO
Implement an asset management system and Total Asset Management approach to track and adequately budget for existing and future park maintenance needs.	July 2024	Public Works
ALIGNMENT AND ADVOCACY		
Identify existing brownfield, public housing, resilience, and economic development projects that can be leveraged in the near term to create new public park and recreation opportunities. Clarify the role of public parks in development projects.	April 2024	Community Assets and Investment, City Planning
Direct the City's lobbyist to develop a state legislative agenda to support city parks.	April 2024	Intergovernmental Relations
Work with the congressional delegation to identify potential avenues for federal support, improvements, and parkland dedication for New Orleans parks.	April 2024	Intergovernmental Relations
FUNDING AND FINANCE		
Engage Trust for Public Land or Bureau of Governmental Research to conduct a park finance study.	April 2024	CPPO
Work with the City's grants officer to identify and coordinate critical next steps for specific state and federal grants.	April 2024	CPPO
Fund a cost recovery study to explore the impact of fees at NORDc facilities.	May 2024	NORDc

CHAPTER

1





PLAN BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Project Background

New Orleans Park and
Recreation History

Community and Planning Context

PROJECT BACKGROUND

PARK AND RECREATION MILLAGE

The origin of this planning project dates to 2019, when New Orleans voters overwhelmingly passed a park and recreation millage in support of the Park Partners—New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDc), the City's Department of Parks and Parkways, Audubon Nature Institute, and City Park Conservancy.

As part of the millage initiative, the Park Partners signed an agreement that committed each agency to shared objectives, including to "provide guidance and engage broad stakeholder input for a city-wide parks, green/open space and recreation master plan."

In 2021, the Mayor's Office of Youth and Families and the New Orleans Recreation Development (NORD) Foundation jointly applied for a grant from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to support development of such a citywide plan.

This planning process, which launched in 2022, was intended to align—for the first time—Park Partner efforts in pursuit of a community-driven vision for parks and recreation, with a focus on equity and resilience.

Grounded in the realities of the current system and planning context and driven by community feedback, the plan is both visionary and pragmatic. It envisions an ambitious park and recreation system that New

NEW ORLEANS PARK PARTNERS

The Park Partners are the city's four major park agencies, each of which receives annual public dollars following passage of the 2019 park and recreation millage.

The Park Partners oversaw the *Big Green Easy* planning process, which itself grew out of their commitment as part of the millage initiative to increase organizational coordination and collaboration in pursuit of a community-driven park and recreation vision.

New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDc)

City of New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways

Audubon Nature Institute

City Park Conservancy

Orleanians can be proud to leave to future generations, and it uses community priorities to narrow those actions and opportunities to a scope that's realistic for one-year and 10-year implementation.

All four Park Partners oversaw the *Big Green Easy* planning process and will continue to guide its implementation. Because City Park Conservancy and Audubon Nature Institute are independent agencies with their own strategic plans, the *Big Green Easy's* park condition assessments and organizational and operational recommendations focus on the needs and assets of NORDc and Parks and Parkways.

WHY THIS PLAN IS IMPORTANT

New Orleans is home to public parks that are some of the oldest and most celebrated in the country. For many New Orleanians, the city's iconic parks and waterfronts make them healthier and happier and provide the backdrop against which they live, work, and play.

However, the life-changing benefits of parks, recreation, and greenspace are not equitably distributed or experienced by all. Following decades of uneven investment, and with no coordinated process to prioritize citywide park improvements, the park and recreation disparities in New Orleans are stark:

- » Park condition assessments and walkshed analyses show that city residents who are

Black, low-income, or living in a household with disability are significantly more likely to live close to a public greenspace that is low-quality or downright unsafe.

- » And park visitor mobility data indicates that in a majority-Black city, only 26% of citywide park visitors from 2019 to 2022 were Black.

For the first time in New Orleans history, the *Big Green Easy* offers an equitable, community-driven framework for citywide park and recreation investments now and into the future, with project prioritization that is directly informed by community needs and feedback.

Implementation of this plan could not be more urgent. Climate change is making New Orleans hotter and more flood-prone, and community leaders are seeking new and diverse tools to address community health disparities, gun violence, and declining public trust.

Strategic investments in parks and recreation are critical to make cities more livable and to improve the daily lives and long-term wellbeing of all residents.

This plan offers a path forward, toward a park system that celebrates the cultures and identities of New Orleans while making the city and its neighborhoods cooler, greener, healthier, more resilient, and more just for all.

➔ **Audubon Nature Institute Background and Master Plan**
Appendix

➔ **City Park Conservancy Master Planning Process**
Appendix

PARK AND RECREATION HISTORY

The evolution of New Orleans' parks and recreation facilities has mirrored the shifting population, fortunes, and struggles of the city.

For the *Big Green Easy* this history is inspiring and instructive. It spotlights the historical role of New Orleans' parks and recreation centers in the life of the city—supporting culture bearers, community identity, and civic protest in addition to health, wellness, and recreation. It informs the plan's emphasis on equity and a transparent, community-driven method for prioritizing future park and recreation investments. And it demonstrates the impact that can be realized in a relatively short amount of time when city and community leaders rally behind the imperative of a high-quality park and recreation system that serves all New Orleanians.

Following decades of disinvestment and the staggering impact of Hurricane Katrina, the City and Park Partners are poised to launch a new era of citywide park and recreation quality and service.

A LONG HISTORY OF PARKS, SQUARES, AND NEUTRAL GROUNDS

Many of New Orleans' celebrated public squares—dating to Jackson Square, which was included at the heart of the original city plat, and followed shortly after by Congo, Lafayette, and Washington—are remnants of the city's earliest 18th-century urban planners and their efforts to impose colonial order on a fluid delta landscape. As former "long-lot" French plantations—

long slivers of land oriented on one side toward the river and the other toward the backswamp—were subdivided and developed, the tradition of formal and informal public squares continued, radiating from the French Quarter and anchoring their new communities.

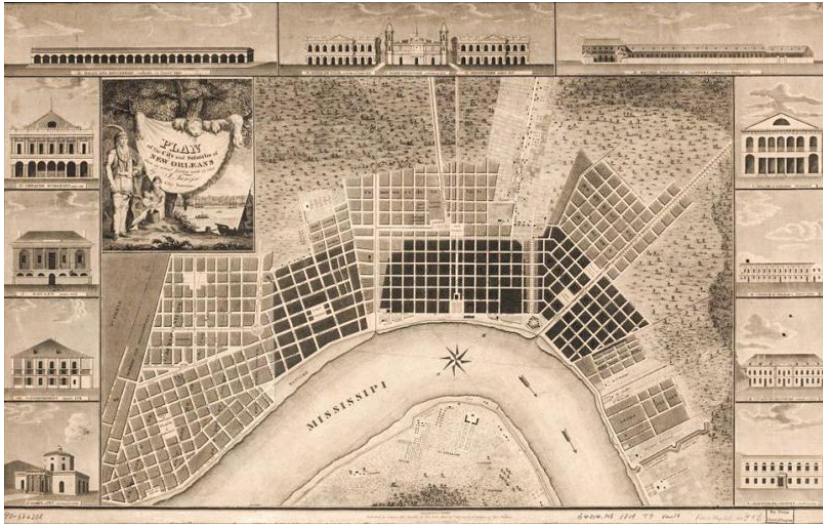
Neutral grounds are another of New Orleans' early urban design legacies—these tree-lined spaces give character and shade to the city and offer the potential for physical and visual connections between neighborhoods and parklands. As these spaces have been threatened by the introduction of high-speed, high-volume vehicle traffic at their edges, progress has been made—along Napoleon Avenue for example—toward the preservation and restoration of neutral grounds as citywide linear parks.

By the end of the 19th century New Orleans was home to two of the country's largest and most iconic public parks: City Park and Audubon Park, established in 1854 and 1871. Developed under the influence of the City Beautiful movement, both parks are celebrated as some of the earliest examples of American landscape architecture, with prominent designers including Bennett, Parsons & Frost at City Park and Olmsted Brothers at Audubon. Both parks also benefited enormously from 1930s Works Progress Administration design and craftsmanship, which resulted in many of the park features and details associated with each park today.



'Straight Streets in a Curvaceous Crescent: Colonial Urban Planning and Its Impact on Modern New Orleans'

*Richard Campanella,
Journal of Planning History
[external URL]*



Above: New Orleans plan, 1815; Below: Birds' eye drawing from the river, 1885



Lincoln Beach welcome sign, 1968



The City's Department of Parks and Parkways traces its roots to the 1909 establishment of the Parkway Commission. Its historical mission has been the stewardship of the city's public realm and landscapes, including parks, playgrounds, and squares; this mission today includes restoration of the city's urban forest, mitigation of the environmental and health impacts of climate change, and a focus on community-driven visions for citywide greenspaces.

EARLY NATIONAL LEADER IN PUBLIC RECREATION

The New Orleans City Council created New Orleans Recreation Department in 1946 at the urging of Mayor deLesseps Morrison, who had been lobbied by a small group of civic leaders, coaches, and athletic directors about the urgent need to create a unified city department for public recreation. At the time, the city's recreation

NOTE:
Historical images are accessed from the Louisiana Digital Library and New Orleans Public Library City Archives and Special Collections.



**'LIFE congratulates
New Orleans: Its
children's recreation
program is the most
progressive in the U.S.'**

*LIFE Magazine, September 1949,
via Google Books [external URL]*



**'Playing with Jim Crow:
African American Private
Parks in Early Twentieth
Century New Orleans'**

*Kevin McQueeney, University
of New Orleans Theses and
Dissertations [external URL]*

facilities and programming were managed by more than a dozen different entities.

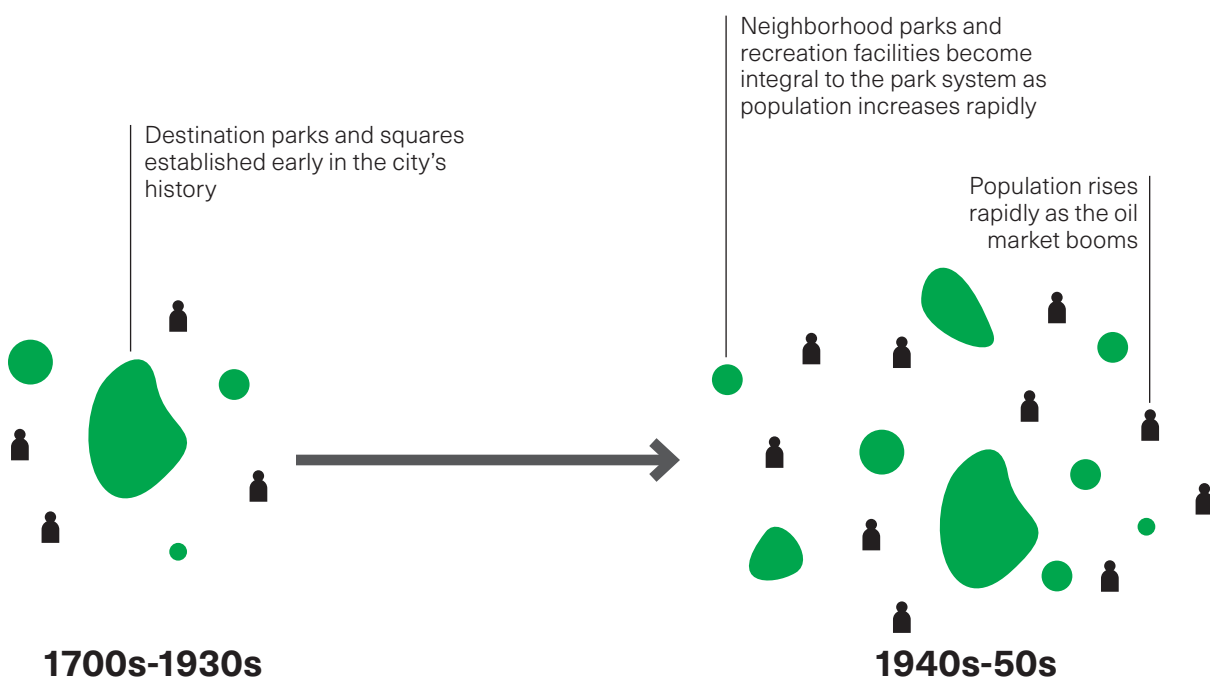
In just a few years, New Orleans was at the national forefront in providing public recreation and play. By the time NORD was featured in a *Life Magazine* profile in 1949, the department was hailed as a national model and oversaw 91 playgrounds, 17 swimming pools, eight stadiums, and diverse recreational and social programming.

The City accomplished this feat through a combination of visionary reorganization and ambitious expansion—including construction in less than two years of 58 new playgrounds and eight new swimming pools, in part through the adaptive reuse of facilities such as a firehouse, two public meat markets, and City jails.

SEGREGATION, PROTEST AND INEQUITY

From the 1890s to the 1960s New Orleans' parks, playgrounds, beaches, pools, and recreational programming were subject to the city's system of *de jure* and *de facto* racial segregation, and Black communities had proportionally fewer and lower-quality facilities. Like other places of congregation, the city's parks were embattled territory, with access for Black communities subject to shifting political winds and court decisions.

Black New Orleans civil and social groups in the early 20th century organized to offer their own recreational facilities and programming—often at privately established parks such as Crescent Star Park (now Hardin Playground) in Seventh Ward.



When NORD began to offer facilities for Black residents in the 1940s, these public parks and recreation centers—including the Julius Rosenwald Center, Shakspeare Park (now A.L. Davis Playground), Lincoln Beach, and Pontchartrain Park—became sites of protest and negotiation within the city's larger Civil Rights movement.

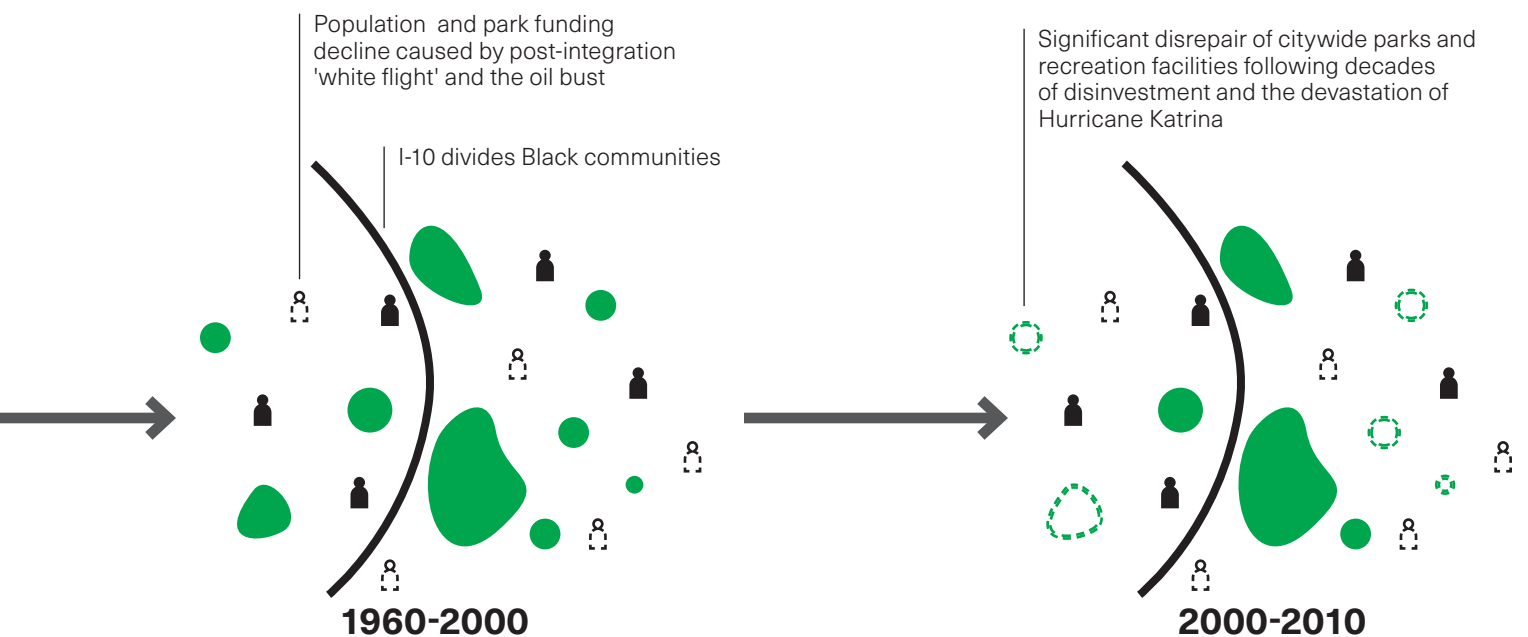
The City fought integration of NORD facilities until 1964, when the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a previous federal judicial order for the City to integrate its public parks and recreation facilities. The City closed rather than integrate many of these facilities. Public funding for NORD plummeted, and along with the city's decreasing population signaled the beginning of a long period of decline for New

Orleans' citywide system of parks, pools and recreation centers.

HURRICANE KATRINA AND NORD REFORM

Hurricane Katrina in 2005 devastated many of the city's parks and recreation facilities. More than 90% of City Park was underwater, causing \$43 million in damage. Audubon Park was spared from flooding but used as a makeshift helicopter port and encampment for National Guard troops and disaster relief workers. City-owned parks and recreation facilities that had been in decline before the hurricane were in dire need of repair and rebuilding.

Park and recreation needs took a backseat to other post-Katrina recovery efforts; in 2010, the lingering disrepair of



the citywide system prompted efforts to establish the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDc) as a semi-autonomous governing body, with members appointed by the Mayor and Council, along with creation of the NORD Foundation as a private 501(c)(3) to raise additional external funds and support.

This reform was set into motion—and establishment of the NORD Commission approved by voters in 2010—based on the recommendations of a Recreation Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP), which had studied the BREC park and recreation system in East Baton Rouge as a model. At that time the City did not implement the CAP's recommendation to establish a permanent millage, or voter-supported property tax, in order to create a steady and predictable source of funding for citywide parks and recreation at a level comparable to the park and recreation millage in Baton Rouge. Even with the park and recreation millage passed in 2019, New Orleans' millage support for parks and recreation remains less than half that in East Baton Rouge.

POST-KATRINA PARK AND RECREATION LANDSCAPE

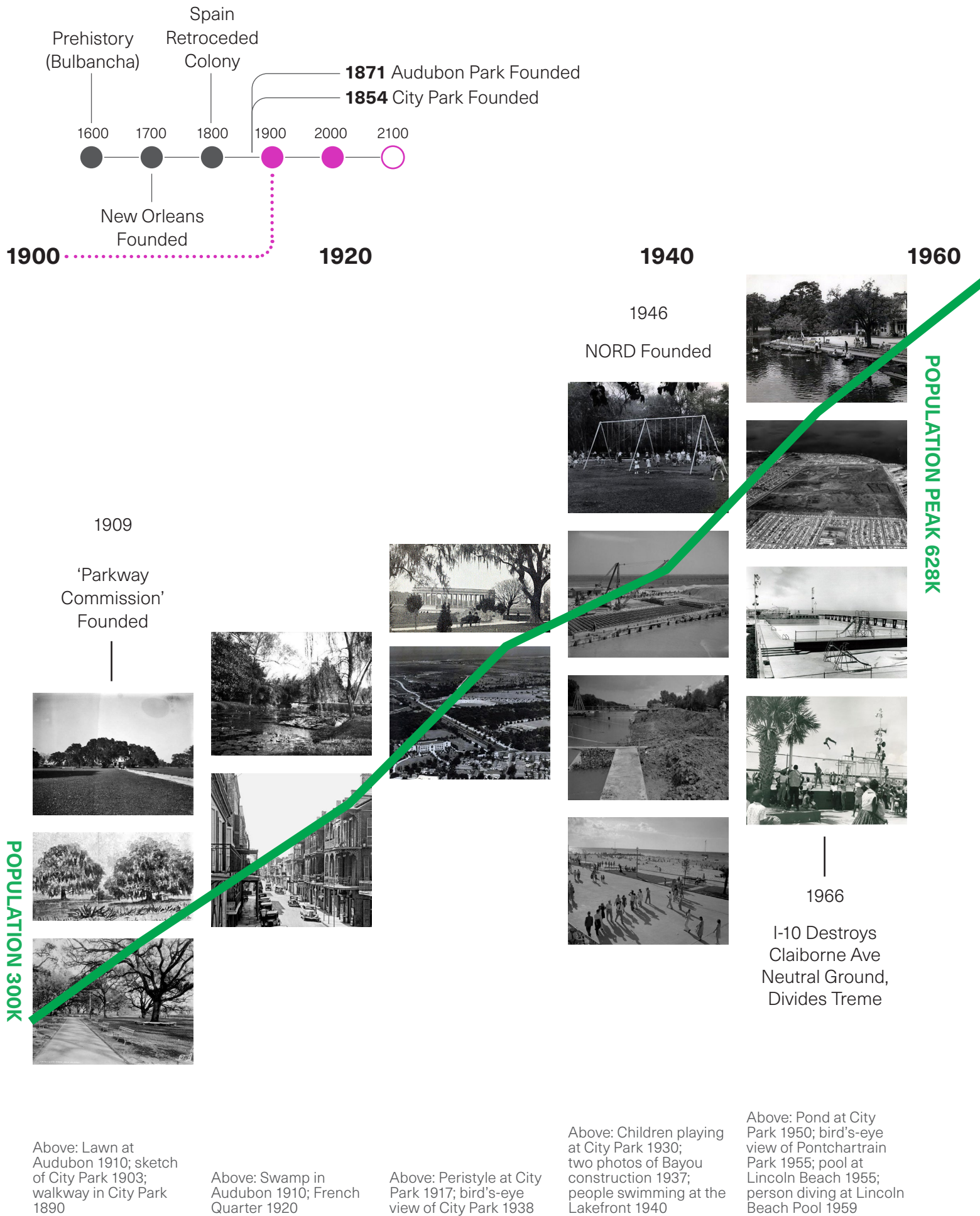
Ultimately New Orleans saw an influx of federal disaster relief funds dedicated to parks and recreation, resulting in the construction since 2010 of significant new destination parks—such as Crescent Park and Lafitte Greenway—in addition to the restoration of City Park and

reinvestment in NORDc parks and recreation centers.

While this infusion of one-time funding dramatically improved the quality and condition of citywide parks and recreation, it also created new challenges. The City did not establish predictable or sufficient annual funding for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of these post-Katrina facilities, and they are managed by an assortment of City and private non-profit organizations. This decentralized approach to park and recreation management can lead to inefficiencies, and without significant dollars for maintenance and regular improvement, the city is already starting to see a wave of post-Katrina facilities falling into disrepair.

The 2019 park and recreation millage was an exciting step forward. It provides a predictable annual source of funding to keep New Orleans' parks and recreation facilities in good condition, now and into the future. And it prompted the City and Park Partners to embark on New Orleans' first citywide park and recreation master planning process—to take stock of the current system, ask community members for their park and recreation priorities, and propose the specific improvements and ongoing support needed to realize that vision in the short and long term. This plan is the result of that process. It proposes a path forward for a system that honors the best of the city's park and recreation legacy while ensuring a more equitable and resilient future.





1980

2000

2020

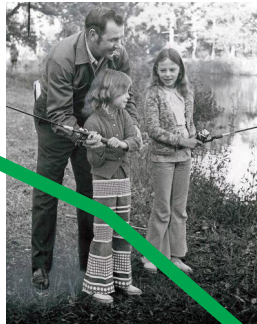


1960s

Post-Integration
'White Flight'

Container
Ships Alter
Ports

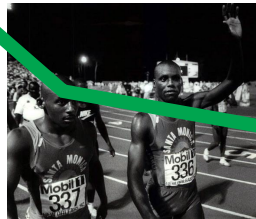
Above: Lincoln Beach
sign 1958; Audubon
dedication ceremony
1969; person playing
tennis at City Park 1970



1980s

Oil Bust

Above: Father and
daughters fishing in City
Park 1975; bird's-eye
view of Lincoln Beach
1976; oil tank field in an
unknown location 1980



Above: Two photos of
an Olympic trial race at
Tad Gormley Stadium in
City Park 1992



2005

Hurricane Katrina

Above: Two bird's-eye
views of New Orleans
post-Katrina; Crescent
Park development

Right: Live music at
City Park; plant sale
at City Park; bird's-
eye view of Lincoln
Beach; abandoned
pool at Lincoln Beach;
recreation center at
Morris F.X. Jeff Park;
Holly Grove Greenline
opportunity site; all
images from 2023



2020

COVID-19

POPULATION 377K

COMMUNITY AND PLANNING CONTEXT

This section explores the big takeaways from the planning team's exploration of community and recreation trends and the larger community context in which the *Big Green Easy* recommendations will be implemented.

CITY POPULATION TRENDS

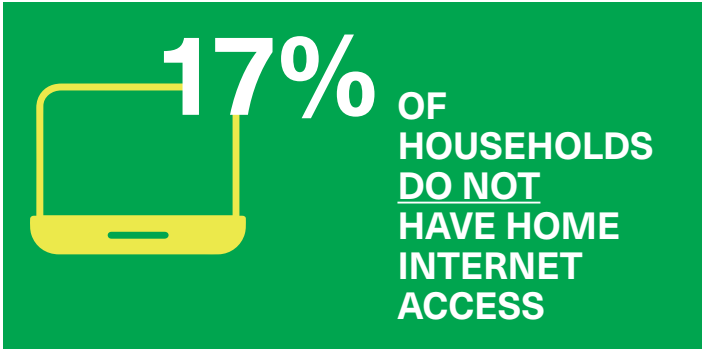
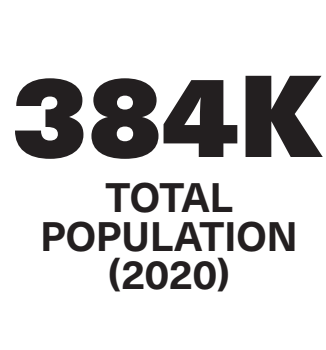
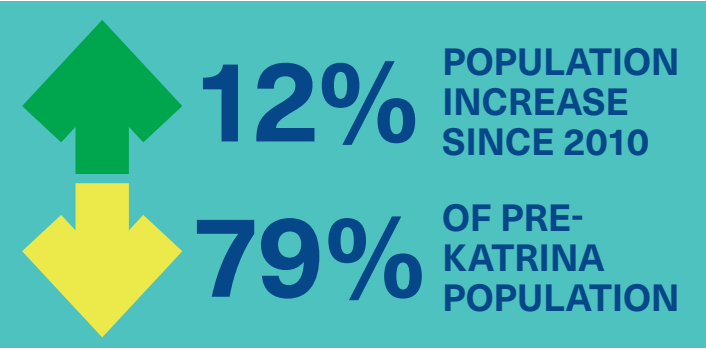
Demographic trends can shed light on current and future park and recreation needs and potential priorities.

For example, while the city's population has grown by 12% since 2010—more than the nationwide growth rate of 7%—the city still has only 79% of its pre-Katrina population, and 61% of its peak 1960 population. Alongside current park condition ratings and community feedback about the need to maintain existing facilities, this supports the

plan's short-term focus on improving existing park and recreation facilities, rather than expanding the system.

The following additional observations are pulled from a July 2023 brief from The Data Center, *Who Lives In New Orleans and Metro Parishes Now?*

- Growth in New Orleans' Hispanic population accounts for 50% of the metro area's total population growth since 2010, a huge driver in the growing diversity of the city and region.
- The share of households with children is shrinking, while the share of individuals living alone is growing. A broad menu of recreation facilities and programming is needed to serve a population of increasingly diverse ages, interests, and abilities.
- At 17%, New Orleans' share of households without access



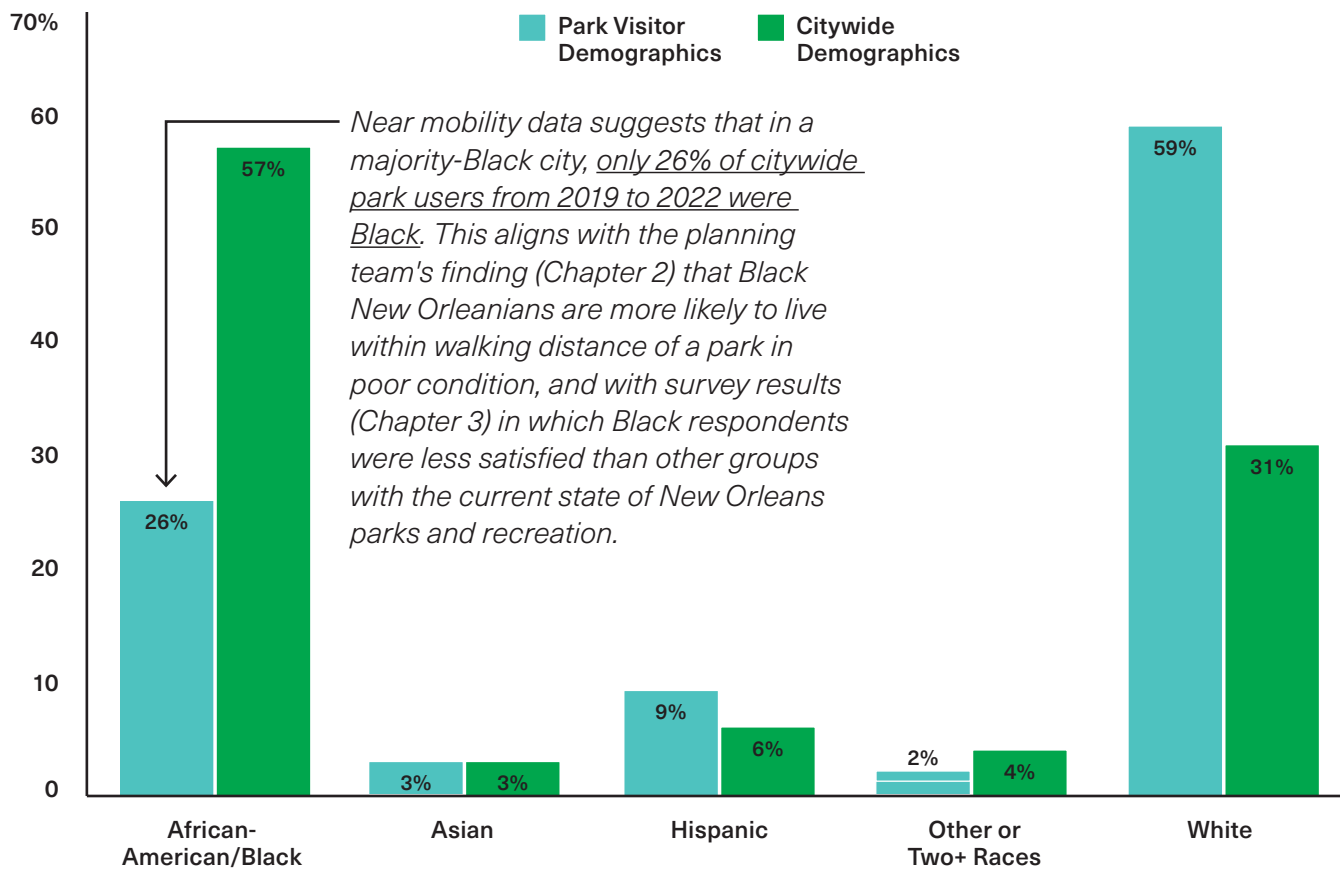


Figure 2: Demographics of citywide park visitors (Near mobility data, 2019-2022) compared to overall city demographics (American Community Survey 2021)

to a vehicle is more than twice as high as the national average and the figures in neighboring parishes. There is a pressing need for high-quality neighborhood parks accessible by walking, biking, or transit.

- The continuation of decades of racial disparities in New Orleans supports the *Big Green Easy* emphasis on prioritizing equitable park and recreation investments:

- » Black New Orleanians in 2022 had a median household income of \$30,292, compared to \$83,727 for white New Orleanians.
- » Thirty-three percent of Black New Orleans residents—and 51% of Black children—live in poverty, compared to 12%

of white residents and 5% of white children.

- » Only 23% of Black New Orleanians 25 years or older have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 69% of white New Orleanians.

PARK VISITOR TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The planning team used mobility data from Near to explore visitation patterns to all parks within New Orleans' city limits between January 2019 and December 2022.

Mobility data providers like Near rely on relatively small sample sizes that are statistically representative of the overall population. Their data can be extrapolated across

actual populations to estimate the true number of visitors to various locations as well as their travel behaviors and demographics. The data shared here is represented proportionally for the purpose of comparing park

visitor characteristics against overall city demographics. This data, when checked against community engagement results and the demographic analysis of park walksheds by park condition ratings, can help paint a picture of

Table 2: Top 10 Sports and Leisure Activities for Adult New Orleans Residents by Number of Participants

ACTIVITY	NO. OF ADULTS PARTICIPATED, 2022	PERCENT	MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX (MPI)
Walking for exercise	87,872	28.4%	91
Hiking	39,969	12.9%	81
Swimming	38,669	12.6%	80
Weight lifting	35,571	11.5%	91
Jogging/running	36,643	11.2%	101
Bicycling (road)	32,817	10.6%	94
Yoga	31,513	10.2%	80
Aerobics	25,598	8.3%	99
Bowling	24,697	8%	99
Fishing (fresh water)	22,209	7.2%	67

Source: Esri Business Analyst Sports + Leisure Market Potential Report

Table 3: Top 10 Sports and Leisure Activities for Adult New Orleans Residents by Market Potential Index (MPI)

ACTIVITY	NO. OF ADULTS PARTICIPATED, 2022	PERCENT	MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX (MPI)
Roller skating	5,622	1.8%	117
Zumba	11,529	3.7%	114
Football	10,758	3.5%	112
Rock climbing	5,622	1.8%	109
Horseback riding	6,916	2.2%	108
Ice skating	7,636	2.5%	106
Softball	6,153	2.0%	105
Basketball	21,343	6.9%	102
Backpacking	11,394	3.7%	102
Jogging/ running	34,643	11.2%	101

Source: Esri Business Analyst Sports + Leisure Market Potential Report

whether New Orleans' parks are serving some communities better than others.

Near data allows demographic comparisons by age, median household income, median home value, education level, and race/ethnicity. This comparison suggested that generally the demographics of park visitors match the demographics of the city overall, with one significant exception: In a majority-Black city, only 26% of park visitors citywide from 2019 to 2022 were Black (Figure 2).

RECREATION TRENDS

The planning team studied local and national recreation trends that could inform park and recreation planning for New Orleans.

LOCAL TRENDS

Table 2 shows the top sports and leisure activities for New

Orleanians by number of participants, according to Esri Business Analyst. Market Potential Index (MPI) refers to the likelihood that a resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the national average—figures above 100 indicate a higher-than-average participation rate. Table 3 shows the top sports and leisure activities for New Orleanians by MPI—in other words, those activities where participation in New Orleans is higher than the national average.

The planning team accessed 2022 data from RECTRAC, the system that tracks when users of NORDc facilities swipe their cards to access certain programs. Table 4 shows the top activities from 2022 based on this data, which does not account for users who sign in using a paper form or who don't swipe their card for any reason, such as the system being down. It offers a compelling

Table 4: Top 10 NORDc Programs in 2022 as Captured by RECTRAC Card-Swiping Data

ACTIVITY	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS, 2022
Pickleball Open Play, all ages	5,126
New Orleans Ballet Association (NOBA) Fitness, seniors	2,507
Fitness Center, all ages	1,904
FitNOLA Dance Fitness, seniors	999
Lap Swim	825
Water Aerobics, Evening	807
Basketball FUNdamentals, all ages	657
Choir, seniors	653
FitNOLA Morning Motivation, adults	637
Water Aerobics, Morning	509

Source: RECTRAC, NORDc

if limited snapshot of the diversity and relative popularity of existing NORDc programs. It also supports the plan's recommendation to improve seasonal tracking of park and recreation facility use and to regularly survey the community on needs and desires—for example, the runaway popularity of Pickleball Open Play, along with the lack of City-owned pickleball courts, suggests a need to build new courts or convert a number of existing tennis courts.

NATIONAL TRENDS

The Sports and Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) *2023 Topline Report on Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities* sheds light on trends at the national level:

- The most popular sport and recreational activities nationally include walking for fitness, hiking, treadmill, free weights, running/jogging, and road biking. Most of these activities appeal to young and old alike, can be done in most environments, are enjoyed regardless of skill level, and have minimal economic barriers to entry.
- For the first time since 2010, the number of inactive people—not participating in any of the sports or activities that SFIA tracks—dropped below 70 million. Though inactivity decreased in all household income levels, there remains a wide gap between the activity levels of the highest and lowest income levels: In 2022, only 14% of households earning more than \$100,000 were inactive, compared to 39% of households earning less than \$25,000.

- When inactive respondents were asked which activities they are most interested in but do not currently practice, fishing was the top choice for all age groups except 18- to 24-year-olds, who chose working out with weights.
- Team sports participation continued to recover from the large drop it sustained during the COVID-19 pandemic—the team sports participation rate rose in 2022 to 23.2%, just under the pre-pandemic level of 23.4%.
- For the fifth year in a row, the number and percentage of Americans who engaged in some kind of sport or fitness activity grew in 2022—237 million people, or 78% of Americans age 6 and higher, participated in at least one activity in 2022. Almost 70% of Americans say they became more aware of the importance of being physically active since living through the pandemic.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in its *Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2023* called out the following:

- Community leaders are increasingly looking to position their park and recreation systems as anchor institutions—organizations that create strong social, economic, and healthy bonds within communities. This label traditionally has been reserved for "eds and meds," or universities and hospitals. In the words of NRPA Director of Health Allison Colman, parks and recreation facilities "are not just nice-to-have in communities. They are essential, vital spaces and

programs that are social drivers of health, resilience and equity."

- Park and recreation systems are not isolated from the challenges of worker burnout and dissatisfaction affecting industries across the country. The NRPA stresses the importance of building organizational culture and securing competitive compensation to attract and retain workers.
- Park and recreation systems are seeing growing interest in programs that support mental, emotional, and social health—such as yoga, tai chi, guided meditation, nature therapy, and nutrition workshops.
- More park and recreation departments are proactively shifting their equipment, buildings, and vehicles to electric power. The NRPA identifies this shift as "possibly

the single-largest contribution that parks and recreation will make to reducing our carbon outputs to the atmosphere, thereby slowing the negative impacts of climate change."

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Parks and recreation have a vital role to play within larger citywide systems that build community health and quality of life. The NRPA describes seven dimensions of wellbeing—cultural, economic, emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, and social—that are advanced by parks and recreation centers with well-designed physical facilities, events, and programming.

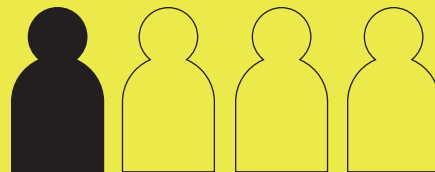
The *New Orleans Community Health Improvement Plan* (2022) identifies some of the city's most pressing public health issues that



**HEART
DISEASE IS
THE LEADING
CAUSE OF
DEATH
AMONG NEW
ORLEANIANS**

1 in 4

**RESIDENTS ARE
FOOD INSECURE**



27%

**OF NEW
ORLEANIANS
ARE
PHYSICALLY
INACTIVE**

2 of 3



**NEW
ORLEANIANS
ARE
CONSIDERED
OBESE OR
OVERWEIGHT**

16%

**OF ADULTS
HAVE FREQUENT
MENTAL
DISTRESS**

can be addressed in part through parks and recreation:

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death among New Orleanians.
- Two out of three residents are considered obese or overweight.
- Twenty-seven percent of New Orleanians are physically inactive.
- Sixteen percent of adults experience frequent mental distress.
- One in four New Orleanians are without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. New Orleans is ranked second among U.S. cities for highest rates of food insecurity.
- New Orleans is 16 degrees hotter in the city than in nearby rural areas.
- Homicide is the top cause of injury death for children aged 1

to 14 in the New Orleans region, and more than half in a 2019 survey of New Orleans youth said someone close to them had been murdered.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

The New Orleans community is experiencing the impacts of climate change now, and those impacts are expected to grow.

Parks and recreation—through nature-based solutions like green infrastructure, reforestation, and land conservation; social and wellness programming; and community-based disaster recovery and resilience infrastructure—will be part of a coordinated systemic approach to mitigating these impacts and protecting New Orleanians now and into the future.

100%

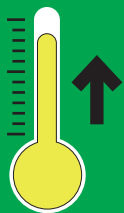
ANNUAL PROBABILITY IN NEW ORLEANS OF FLOODING, COASTAL EROSION, LAND SUBSIDENCE AND EXTREME HEAT

37%



OF PROPERTIES CITYWIDE ARE VULNERABLE TO FLOODING IN A '100-YEAR' STORM

2.5x



MORE LIKELY FOR A BLACK RESIDENT TO BE HOSPITALIZED FOR HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS, COMPARED TO A WHITE RESIDENT

74%

OF NEW ORLEANIANS LIVE IN AN URBAN HEAT ISLAND



CURRENT AND FUTURE CLIMATE IMPACTS

Net Zero by 2050: A Priority List for Climate Action in New Orleans (2022) describes the current and future impacts of climate change on the New Orleans community.

"Climate change is projected to cause greater intensity in storm events, including hurricanes and severe storms, that can cause flood and wind damage. Flooding due to intense rainfall and the limited capacity of pipes and pumps causes direct damage to roadways, homes, businesses, and infrastructure, and can hamper both emergency response and recovery efforts. As the city's soft soils become saturated and the drainage network reaches capacity during severe storms, the interdependencies of the City's utilities mean that effects can spread across multiple systems. Waterlogged soils, in conjunction with high winds, often result in downed trees and power lines, leading to outages that compromise the City's energy-dependent stormwater and wastewater pumping facilities and significantly increase the period of power interruption. Changing rainfall patterns may also result in longer dry stretches, which could exacerbate problems with shallow subsidence that reduce the longevity of infrastructure.

"Meanwhile, more extreme heat episodes will directly threaten the health of our residents and the reliability of infrastructure systems that supply us with energy and water. The record heat we have experienced over the past few years causes higher concentrations of air pollutants and greater amounts of ozone in our urban areas and accelerates the spread of allergens, exacerbating respiratory illnesses and allergy problems alongside the increased threat of heat stroke.

"A study from Climate Central further showed that some areas of the city act as 'heat islands', sometimes up to eight degrees hotter than other areas of the city due to a lack of green space and shade. These areas of sparse green space are generally our socially vulnerable neighborhoods. A sustained warmer climate also increases the risk of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and Zika virus. Additionally, we have experienced increased cold snaps and volatility in winter weather in the last few years, putting more stress on our aging infrastructure."



Figure 3: Top priorities for recreation providers, identified by park and recreation users surveyed for the *Louisiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2020)*.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER PLANS

The *Big Green Easy* builds upon previous planning efforts, and the planning team sought to align recommendations with existing plans and ordinances.

Big takeaways from a review of relevant plans include:

- Upcoming capital improvement projects will bring billions of dollars in one-time funding to citywide infrastructure systems. Coordinated park and recreation projects can ensure quality of life and multiple community benefits are realized as part of virtually all of these significant investments.
- There is a need for greater coordination across City departments and partners on multiple fronts, including data collection, grantwriting, and sharing of best practices on facility and asset management.
- Nature-based solutions and green infrastructure will continue to be vital pieces of the city's resilience and quality of life toolkits. Parks and recreation can take a leading role in public-oriented demonstration projects, education, and outreach, and in building the workforce and management guidelines needed to care for these systems citywide.
- A growing number of City plans prioritize their recommended investments with a consideration of equity and fairness. The *Big Green Easy* is aligned in this approach and offers an Equity Investment Zone methodology that could be adapted for other City departments and initiatives.

Table 5: Summary of Relevant Plan Review and Major Themes

	Green Jobs and Workforce Development	Nature-Based Solutions and Green Infrastructure	Citywide Connectivity, Mobility and Access	Urban Canopy Restoration	Community Engagement and Decision-Making	Equity-Driven Investment	Environmental Education and Stewardship Culture	Implementation and Funding Strategies	Place- and Neighborhood-Based Solutions	Asset and Facility Maintenance	Data Collection and Sharing	Infrastructure Coordination and Layered Benefits
New Orleans Master Plan (2010)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●
Net Zero by 2050: A Priority List for Climate Action in New Orleans (2022)	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	○
Taking Steps Together on Equity and Climate Change: A Report for and by New Orleanians (2019)	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
City of New Orleans Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
Resilient New Orleans: Strategic Actions to Shape Our Future (2015)	●	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	●
New Orleans Reforestation Plan (2022)	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Plan for Generational Economic Transformation (2023)	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	○	○	●
Greater New Orleans Urban Water Plan (2013)	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	●	●
Moving New Orleans: The Road to Equitable Transportation (2019)	○	○	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	●
Louisiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2020)	○	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Louisiana Recreational Trails Program Plan (2020)	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●
Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast (2023)	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	●





THE EXISTING STATE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Park Classification

Level of Service Analysis

Park Access and Walkability

Inventory and
Condition Assessment

Ecosystem of Park and
Recreation Providers



Understanding the current state of New Orleans' parks and recreation facilities was essential to inform the *Big Green Easy* engagement process, priorities, and recommendations.

The planning team used geospatial analysis, mobility data, and on-the-ground inventory of park and recreation assets to gain an initial understanding of New Orleans' parks and recreation facilities.

Those findings were vetted with the Park Partners—New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDc), the City's Department of Parks and Parkways, Audubon Nature Institute, and City Park Conservancy—and with the

Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and general public, to establish an up-to-date inventory of citywide parks, recreation facilities, and greenspaces, including ownership and management information. This inventory was evaluated alongside national and peer-city metrics for park and recreation delivery, and the team visited each City-owned park to collect additional data about the condition of parks and park assets.

This work established a baseline from which to build the *Big Green Easy* plan and prioritize future citywide park and recreation investments.



PARK CLASSIFICATION

A park classification system allows the City and Park Partners to establish a common language around park types and quality of amenities. This can help inform where access, quality, and equity gaps exist.

Park classifications are useful in:

- Communications (internal and external),
- Level of service analysis (whether certain parts of the city need more of a certain kind of park),
- Planning and budgeting (understanding the level of investment needed in a park),

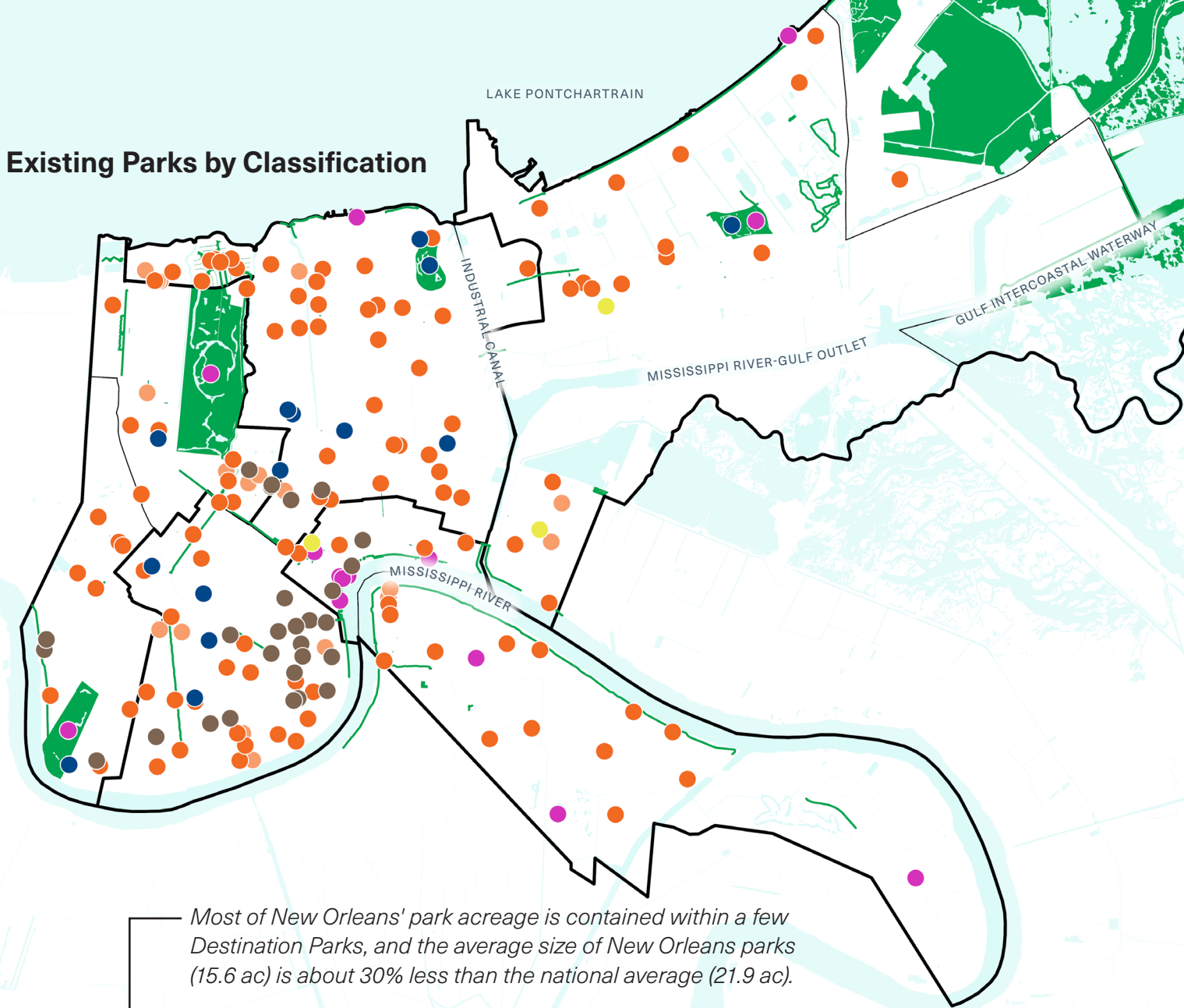
- Programming (the type and scale of activities appropriate to a park), and
- Operations (the degree of maintenance and regular investment needed).

Table 6 lists the classification types developed during the planning process to describe parks in New Orleans. These classifications helped to inform high-level recommendations regarding the types of park and recreation improvements needed across the system, along with the order-of-magnitude costs of those improvements.

Table 6: New Orleans Park Classification Categories

	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Destination Park	Destination Parks are iconic and serve the whole community in addition to visitors. These parks belong to everyone; bring people together for community-wide events; and promote tourism and economic development.	City Park, Audubon Park, Joe Brown Park
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Parks meet the day-to-day park and recreational needs of their immediate communities. Common facilities include playgrounds, walking paths, open lawns, sports courts, restrooms, and lighting.	Pradat Playground, Oliver Bush Playground, Marsalis Harmony Park
Pocket Park	Pocket Parks are pockets of greenspace with amenities that reflect their immediate context. They can be places for respite, play, art, or building community. In neighborhoods, they often have playgrounds and open lawns; in urban areas, they often have gardens and small seating areas.	Bienville Place, Roffignac Playspot
Recreation Center	Recreation Centers offer indoor recreation opportunities. They often serve as a hub by offering community services, classes, and events.	Rosenwald Recreation Center, Tremé Recreation Center
Special Use Facility	Special Use Facilities are parks with recreational facilities that serve specific types of users from across the city and region—such as tennis players or skateboarders.	Atkinson-Stern Tennis Center, Parisite Skatepark
Square/Plaza	Squares and Plazas are formal spaces set aside within the urban grid for respite, gathering, and events. These parks have flexible lawn and paved areas that can accommodate the social and passive recreational needs of neighbors and visitors alike.	Alcee Fortier Park, Washington Square
Greenway	Greenways are long corridors of recreational open space that connect people to each other and to the city's natural and cultural resources. These parks can be found in a variety of contexts, from natural resource corridors such as riverfronts to former railroad corridors in the heart of the urban grid. They allow people to get from one point to another, while offering places for respite and recreation along the way.	Mississippi River Trail
Blueway	Blueways are water trails that can offer paddlecraft, fishing, and swimming recreation opportunities.	Bayou St. John (informal)

Existing Parks by Classification



Most of New Orleans' park acreage is contained within a few Destination Parks, and the average size of New Orleans parks (15.6 ac) is about 30% less than the national average (21.9 ac).

This condition can create challenges for access—by clustering high-quality parkland in a city where 17% of residents lack access to a vehicle—and maintenance—by stretching workers' efforts over a large number of smaller park sites, many of which are undeveloped.



City Boundary

Waterbodies

Existing Park

Park Classification

Destination

Neighborhood

Pocket

Sports/ Recreation

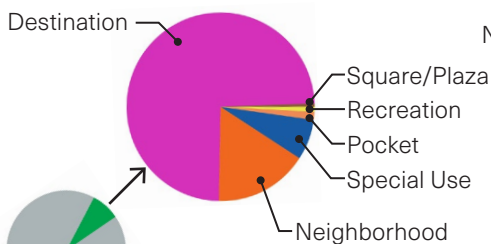
Special Use Facility

Square/ Plaza

Greenway

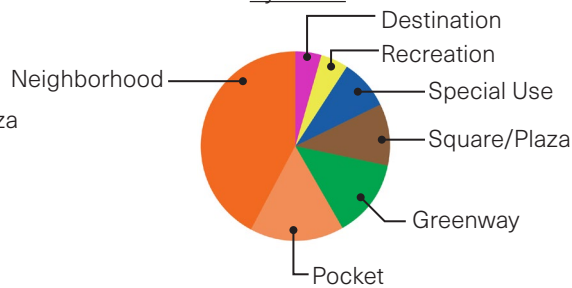
EXISTING PARK CLASSIFICATION

By Acreage



Bayou Sauvage (83% of citywide park acreage)

By Count



LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

'Level of service' refers to the amount of a particular public service or facility, often expressed as a population-based figure—for example, parkland acreage per 1,000 residents.

The planning team compared the current level of service metrics for New Orleans parks and recreation facilities to national metrics and cross-referenced that information against public survey results. Table 7 shows how New Orleans compares to national average figures for the number of residents per recreation facility by type. It also includes for each facility type the average existing citywide condition rating based on the planning

team's on-the-ground inventory and condition assessment at every City-owned park.

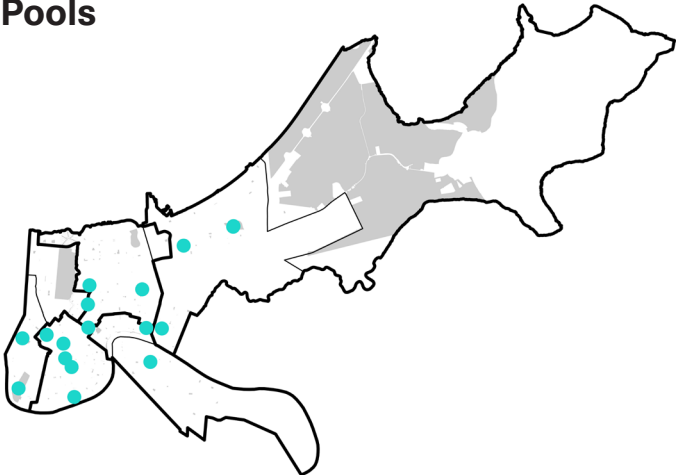
This analysis suggests that New Orleans has the basic park and recreational infrastructure needed to serve the city's current and future projected population, with the exception of pickleball courts. However, significant investment is needed to improve and ensure the consistent quality and maintenance of existing facilities: Most City-owned facilities have an average condition rating of 3 or worse, meaning that citywide facilities are at a tipping point where improvement or replacement is needed.

Table 7: Population-Based Service Metrics for City-Owned Recreation Facilities Compared to National Metrics, and Average Condition of Each Facility Type in New Orleans Across City-Owned Facilities

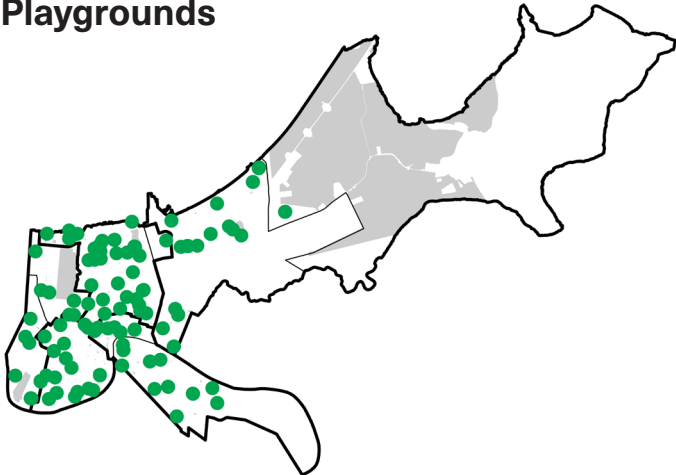
FACILITY TYPE	NO. OF CITY-OWNED FACILITIES	NOLA RESIDENTS PER FACILITY	NATIONAL AVERAGE RESIDENTS PER FACILITY (CITIES WITH POPULATION 250K+)	CURRENT NOLA FACILITY COUNT 'GAP' BASED ON NATIONAL METRICS	AVERAGE NOLA CITYWIDE FACILITY CONDITION RATING (1=LIKE-NEW, 5=UNUSABLE)
Playgrounds	103	3,728	10,811	0	2.79
Basketball Courts	83	4,626	15,214	0	3.43
Tennis Courts	56	6,857	12,033	0	3.13
Pickleball (Outdoor)	0	N/A	46,801	8	N/A
Softball and Baseball Diamonds/ Backstops	89	4,315	9,600	0	3.01
Soccer Fields	16	24,000	22,588	1	3.03
Swimming Pools (Outdoor)	17	22,588	108,245	0	3.00
Dog Parks	3	127,999	131,943	0	3.50
Skate Parks	2	191,999	235,209	0	3.00
Community Garden	0	N/A	114,666	3	N/A
18-Hole Golf Courses	2	191,999	239,241	0	4.00

Sources: U.S. Census, National Recreation and Park Association and Trust for Public Land

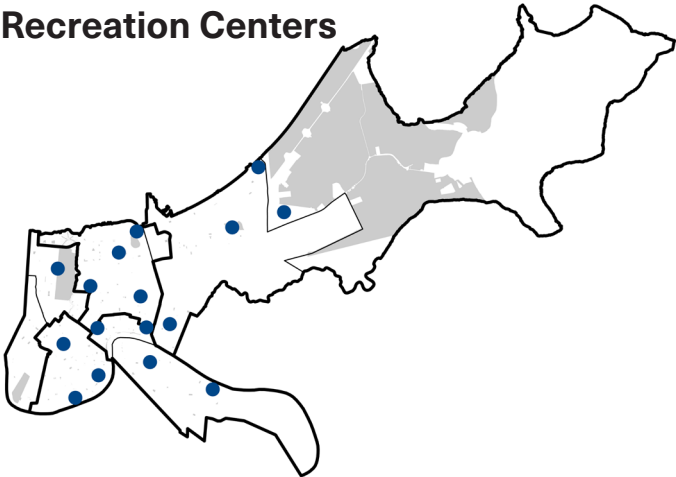
Pools



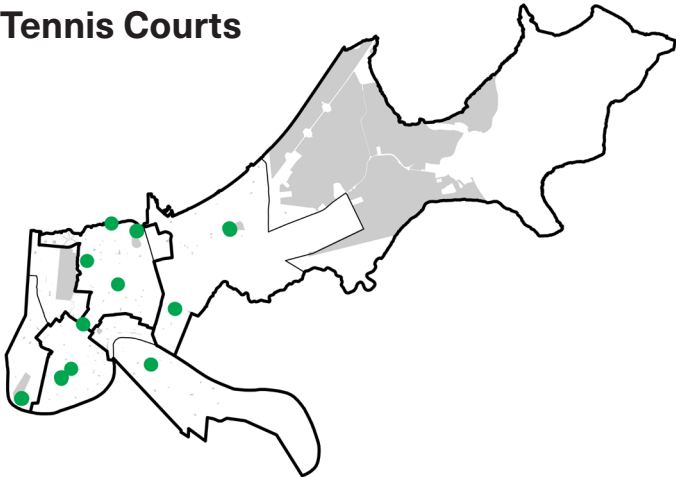
Playgrounds



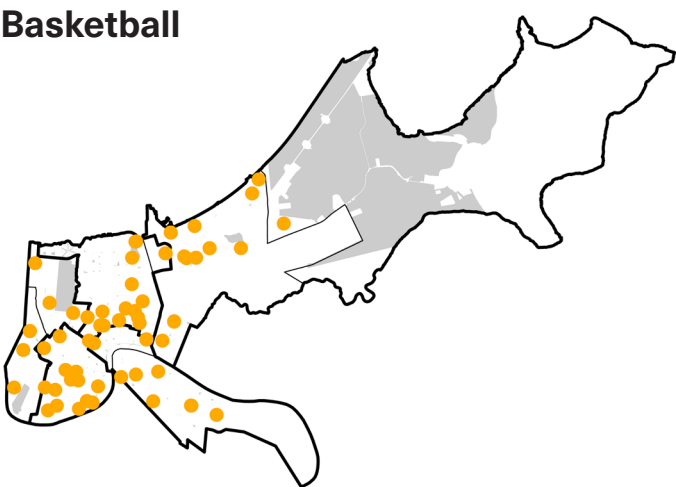
Recreation Centers



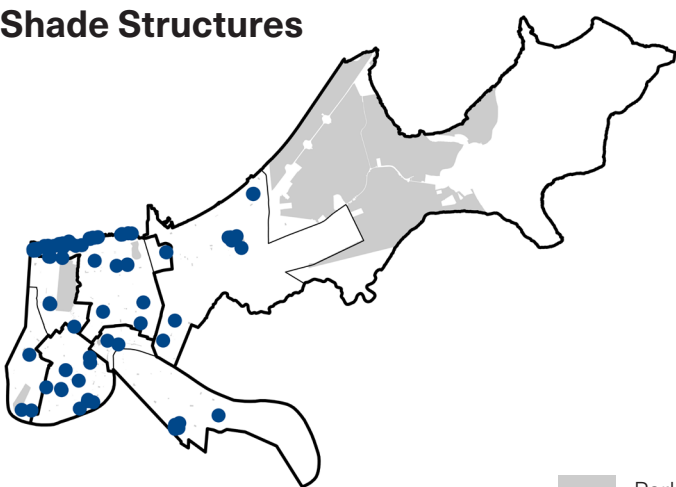
Tennis Courts



Basketball

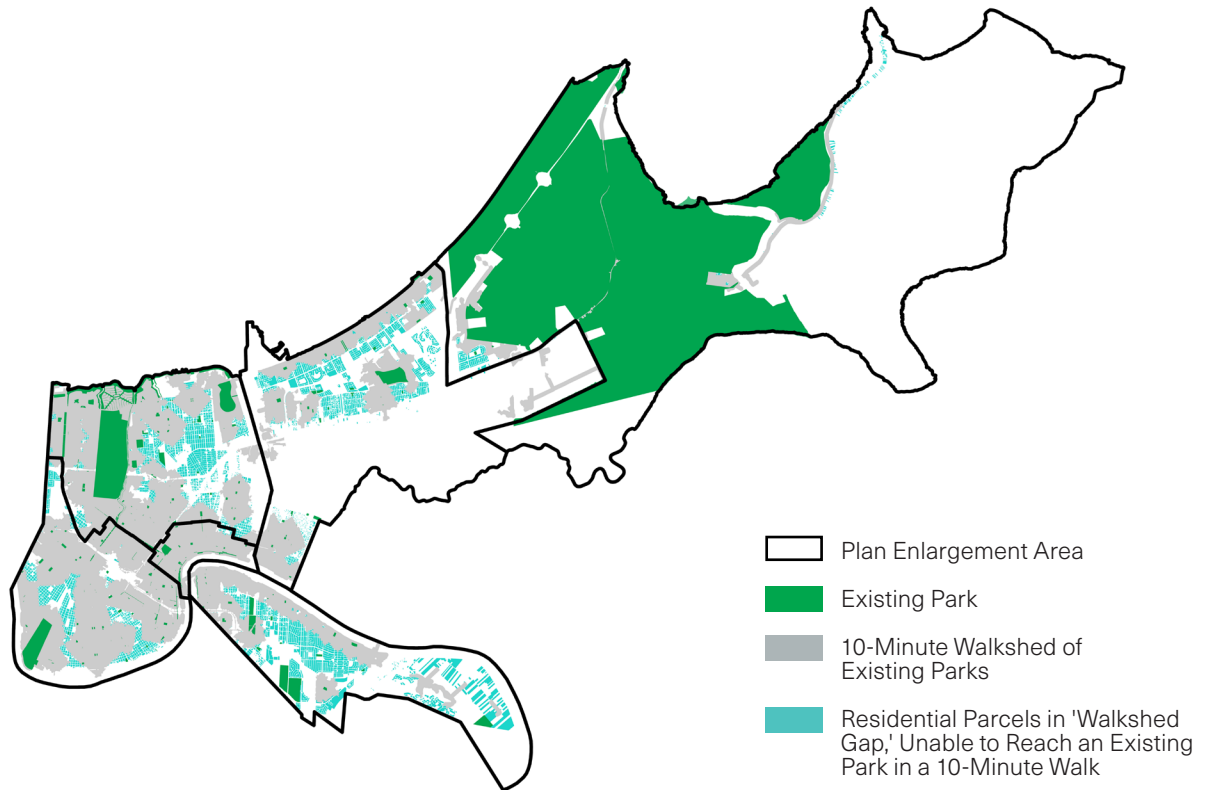


Shade Structures



 Park

PARK ACCESS AND WALKABILITY



Park and recreation access is considered through multiple lenses, including:

- Distance between New Orleans residents and their park and recreation assets.
- Walkability, or the ability of users of different abilities to safely and comfortably reach citywide parks and recreation facilities.
- The quality and universal design of spaces and activities to be welcoming and usable for all.

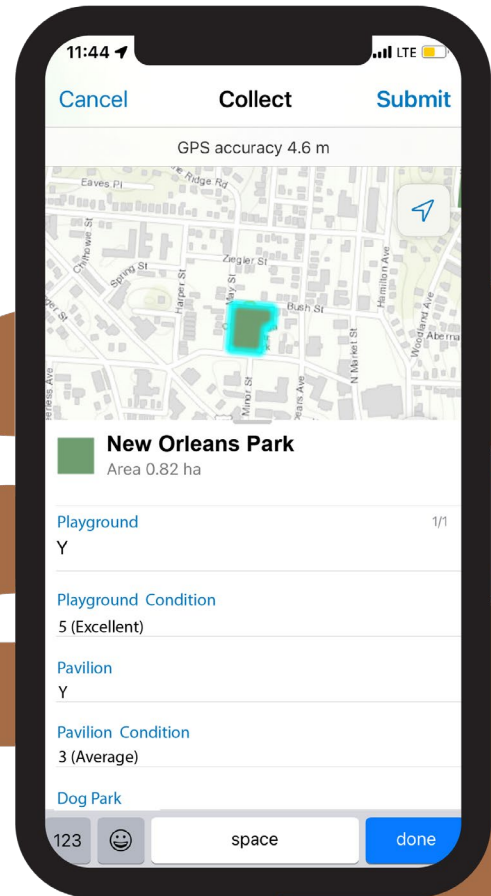
Many park and recreation systems set access goals informed by the Trust for Public Land's nationwide 10-Minute Walk Program, which advocates that everyone should have access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of their home.

The diagram above shows the 10-minute walkshed of existing New Orleans public parks and

greenspaces, generated using the ArcGIS Pro Spatial Analyst tool, which accounts for pedestrian barriers such as highways and canals. New Orleans has relatively high park walkability, with 84% of city residents living within a 10-minute walk of a public park or greenspace, compared to the national median figure of 55%.

The *Big Green Easy* has a broader definition of access, identifying potential park and recreation access improvements based on additional factors such as the quality and condition of existing park and recreation assets; the density of populations served; the history of uneven public investment in New Orleans parks and communities; and community feedback about the barriers that currently keep them from using parks and recreation facilities more often.

INVENTORY AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT



The planning team found big disparities in the quality and condition of parks and recreation facilities across the city. Some of the parks that appear as green shapes on the map lack the basic improvements—such as signage, benches, or picnic tables—that allow a site to function as a true park. This insight into park condition allowed the planning team to form a deeper understanding of citywide park and recreation access and where improvements are needed in the short term.

METHODOLOGY

The *Big Green Easy* planning team used the ArcGIS Field Maps application to conduct an on-site inventory and condition rating of

City-owned parks and their above-ground assets such as signage, lighting, playgrounds, basketball courts, and picnic shelters.

The team ranked the condition of park assets on the following scale:

- 1 — New aesthetically and functionally.
- 2 — Moderate loss of aesthetics and function.
- 3 — Improvements have reached a tipping point where irreversible decline will occur without reinvestment.
- 4 — Marginal remaining aesthetic and functional value.
- 5 — Functionally obsolete or unsafe.

➔ New Orleans Park Asset and Condition Report
Appendix

CITYWIDE ANALYSIS AND PLAN TAKEAWAYS

To shed light on the nature of citywide park access and equity, the planning team generated a map with each park and its 10-minute walkshed color-coded by overall park condition rating.

Takeaways include:

- Although New Orleans has relatively strong park walkability

as described in the Park Access and Walkability section above, the nature of that access looks very different depending on where residents live, given the high variability in park condition citywide.

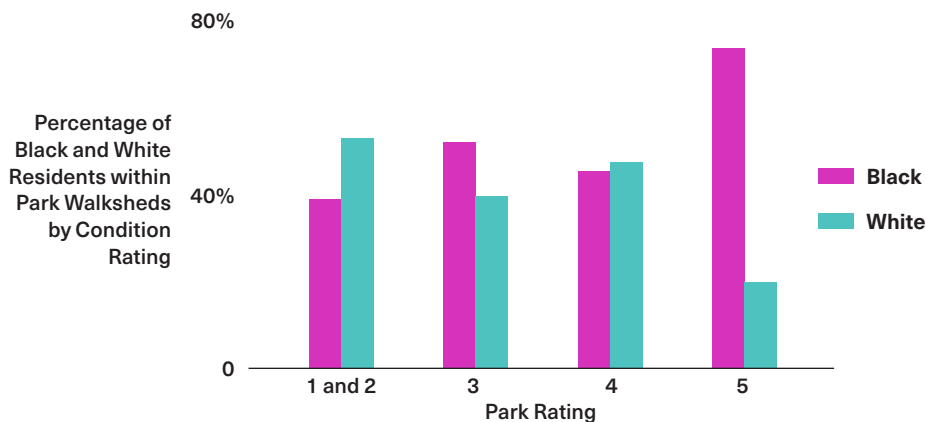
- Analysis of the communities living within a 10-minute walk of parks by condition rating sheds light on the demographic disparities in citywide park access.

PERCENTAGE OF BLACK AND WHITE PEOPLE BY CONDITION RATING OF NEARBY PARKS

PARK WALKSHED ANALYSIS

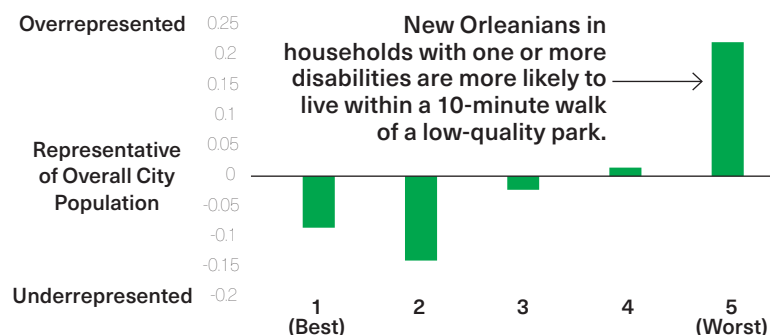
White New Orleans residents are more likely to live within a 10-minute walk of parks rated '1' and '2,' and Black New Orleans residents are more likely to live within a 10-minute walk of parks rated '5.'

The planning team analyzed the demographics of park walksheds by park condition ratings, to understand whether certain communities in New Orleans are more likely to live within walking distance of parks that are in better—or worse—condition.



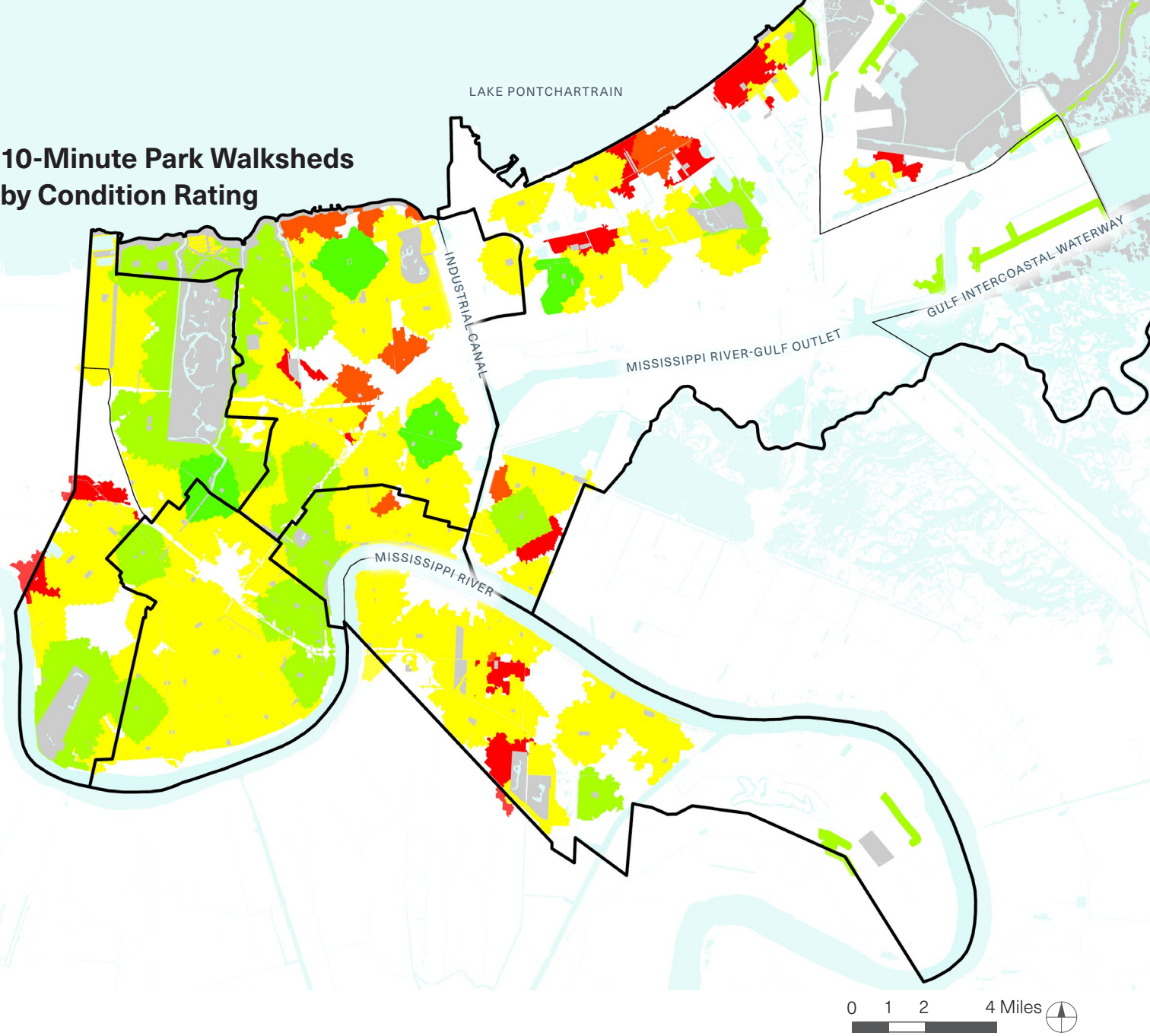
HOUSEHOLDS WITH DISABILITIES

BY CONDITION RATING OF NEARBY PARKS

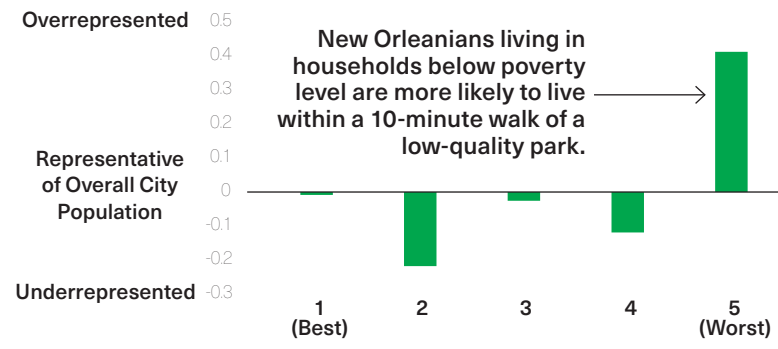


In the vertical axis of the graph to the left and the graph on the following page, '0' is representative of the overall city population. Anything above zero means the population is overrepresented within certain park walksheds, and anything below zero means they are underrepresented.

10-Minute Park Walksheds by Condition Rating



HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL BY CONDITION RATING OF NEARBY PARKS



MAP LEGEND

- 10-Minute Park Walkshed by Condition Rating
- 1 (New or Like-New)
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 (Unusable or Unsafe)
- Plan Enlargement Area
 - City Council District
 - Waterbodies
 - Existing Park



Picnic table, Mirabeau Playspot



Shade structure, Lake Oaks Park



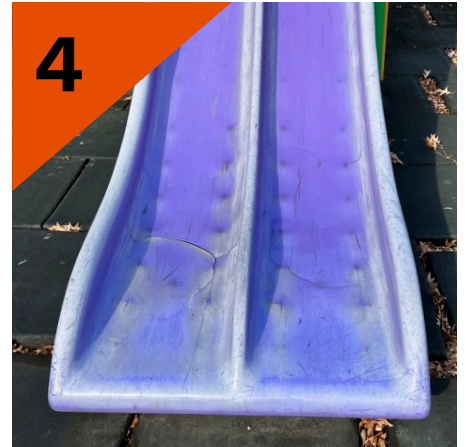
Water fountain, Atkinson Tennis Center



Trash receptacle, Stallings Center Playground



Covered basketball court, Village De L'est Playground



Playset, Cut-Off Playground



Tennis court, Oliver Bush Playground



Fountain, Fischer Place



Chess table, A.L. Davis Playground

- For example, communities with disproportionately high percentages of residents who are Black, below the poverty level, or in a household with one or more disabilities are more likely to live within walking distance of a park in poor condition (rated 4 or 5).

These findings prompted the plan recommendation—supported during the community engagement process—that proposed park projects receive a higher score in the park and recreation prioritization model if they:

- Improve the condition of an existing park in poor condition, and
- Improve high-quality park access in a neighborhood that currently has access to a lower-quality park.

The citywide park condition assessment also informed development and vetting of the Equity Investment Zone mapping model, which is used to identify areas of the city where short-term park and recreation investments should be prioritized. See Chapter 4 for more information about project prioritization.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

This analysis offers a new high-level understanding of the City's existing park assets and maintenance needs, while laying the groundwork for a more sophisticated use of this approach that is fully integrated with future City-owned asset management

systems. The goal of such an approach is to establish a basic understanding of:

- What park assets does the City own?
- What condition are they in?
- What kind of investment is needed now to get all the existing park assets to a good and functional condition?
- How might the City plan its investments moving forward to maintain the condition and quality of existing and future park and recreation assets?

The City of New Orleans has budgeted for an asset management system to improve the ability of all departments to understand what the City owns and how it can most effectively maintain and replace its assets over time. The park asset data collected by the planning team is available in both geodatabase and spreadsheet format for integration with this future system, per recommendations in Chapter 4.

77

BIKE AMENITIES

126

CULTURAL FEATURES

363

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

2,654

LIGHTS

321

SPORTS FIELDS AND COURTS

177

PLAY STRUCTURES

33

WALKING PATHS

27

WATER FEATURES

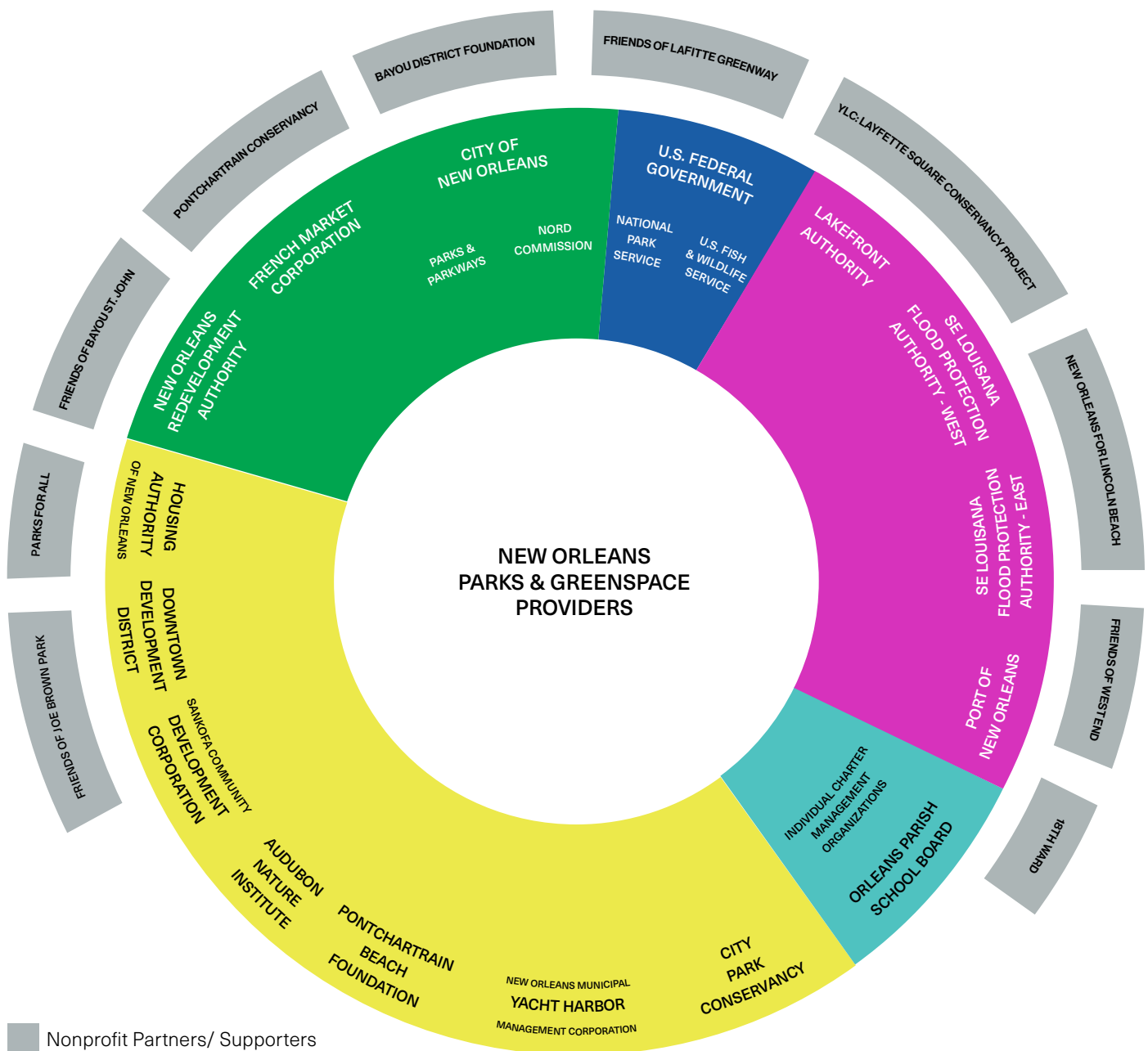
1,299

BENCHES

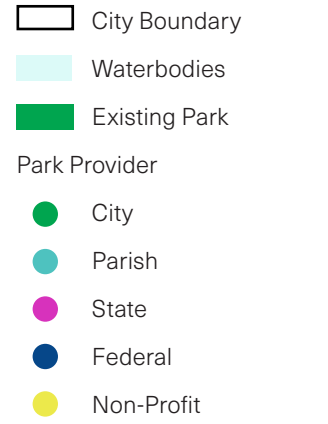
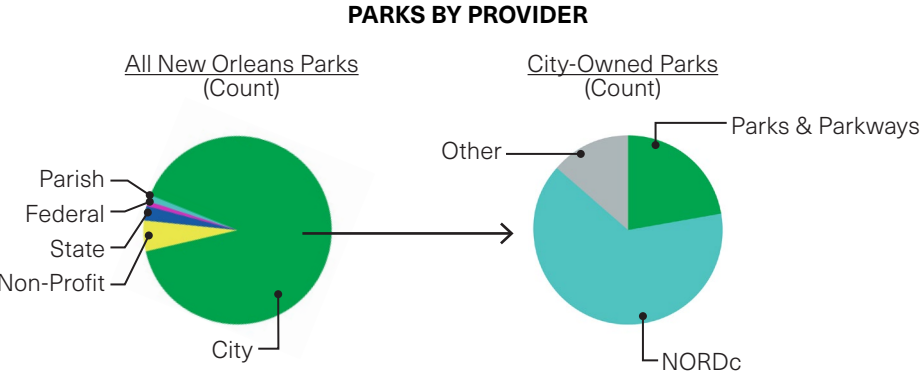
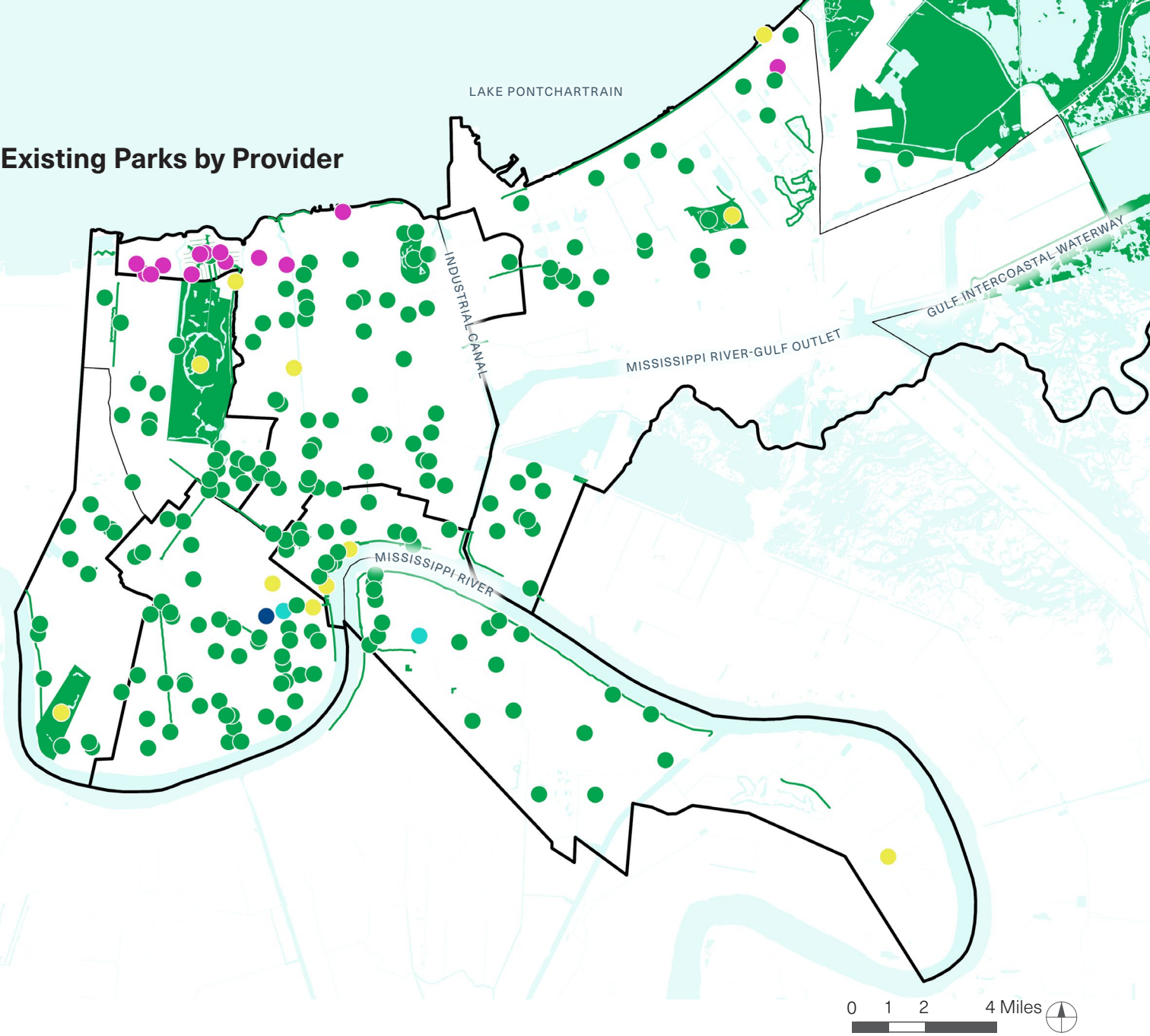
ECOSYSTEM OF PROVIDERS

New Orleans has an unusually large and complex ecosystem of park and recreation providers—the public and private entities that own and/or manage public parks and greenspaces. Analysis of this ecosystem and conversations with many of these entities helped to inform plan recommendations, particularly:

- To strengthen and formalize partnership agreements to clarify maintenance responsibilities and help ensure a consistent quality and access standard for citywide parks and greenspaces.
- To explore all opportunities to consolidate ownership and maintenance under a unified City park and recreation entity.



Existing Parks by Provider



CHAPTER

3





COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

Community Engagement Methods

What We Heard

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS



Summary of Plan Outreach and Engagement Efforts

Appendix



Summary of Plan Survey Results

Appendix

The *Big Green Easy* is the first comprehensive citywide parks and recreation plan in New Orleans' 300-year history, and its recommendations look years into the city's future. This offered a special opportunity to hold a public conversation about the role of parks and recreation in New Orleans, what people love about their parks and recreation centers, and where improvements should happen first.

Every recommendation and action item in the plan can be traced back to community feedback received through surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, workshops (in-person and virtual), pop-up events, and community canvassing.

The following outreach methods were used to reach New Orleanians throughout the planning process.

SURVEYS

Online and print surveys asked New Orleanians about their park and recreation vision, current use of parks and recreation facilities, barriers to use, and investment priorities.

- Online surveys: Two online surveys were created using SurveyMonkey. Survey URLs and QR codes were shared broadly through social media, email blasts, news media, City and partner websites, flyers, and yard signs.
- Printed surveys: Printed surveys were also made available at workshops and recreation

centers and were distributed by Park Ambassadors and City staff at community events and canvassing.

WORKSHOPS

Two public workshop series—eight workshops total—were held at key milestones in locations across the city.

- The first workshop series launched the community engagement process. The planning team, City, and Park Partners shared information about the team's preliminary findings about the state of New Orleans parks and recreation, and asked for feedback about what the community wanted to see from the planning process and from citywide parks and recreation.
- The second workshop series allowed the planning team and Park Partners to share the draft plan vision statement, big moves, action items, and project opportunities and to get more detailed feedback about plan priorities and recommendations.
- Materials from both workshops were also shared via the Konveio online platform as a 'virtual workshop,' where people could review the workshop boards and comment virtually.

FOCUS GROUPS

The planning team facilitated small-group virtual and in-person discussions around the following topics to get a deeper understanding of specific user needs and plan opportunities.

AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE,
EVEN THE DISABLED.
EVERYONE KNOWS THE
PARKS BELONG TO THEM!

MORE NATURAL LOOKING PARKS

BRING NATURE TO
THE CITY

UTILIZING NEUTRAL GROUNDS
AS PART OF THE PARK NETWORK
TO CONNECT PARKS AND
NEIGHBORHOODS

PARKS THAT ARE OPEN,
CLEAN, IN GOOD CONDITION
AND FREE TO ALL

1,595+

PAPER AND
ONLINE
SURVEY
RESPONDENTS

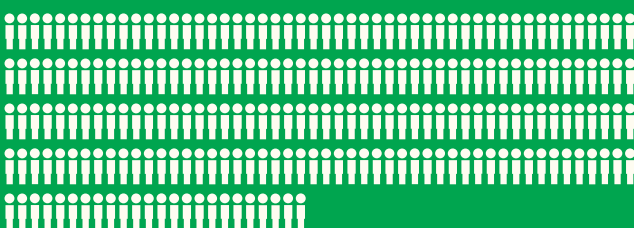
8 PARK
AMBASSADORS



WORKSHOPS THROUGHOUT
THE CITY



249 REGISTERED
ATTENDEES



26

STAKEHOLDER
CONVERSATIONS

10

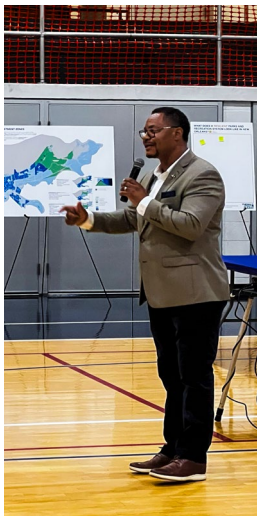
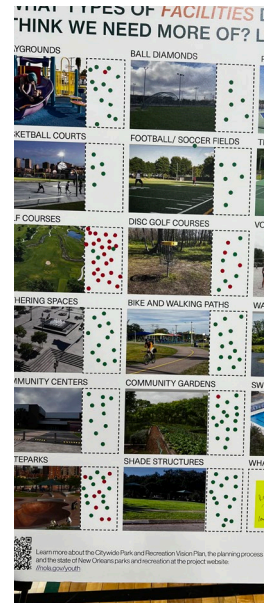
FOCUS
GROUPS

- Senior Communities
- Disability Communities
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Youth Non-Profits/Schools
- Young People
- Park Programmers
- Healthcare Providers
- Arts and Culture
- Community- and Faith-Based Groups

- Infrastructure and Safety
- Community Development

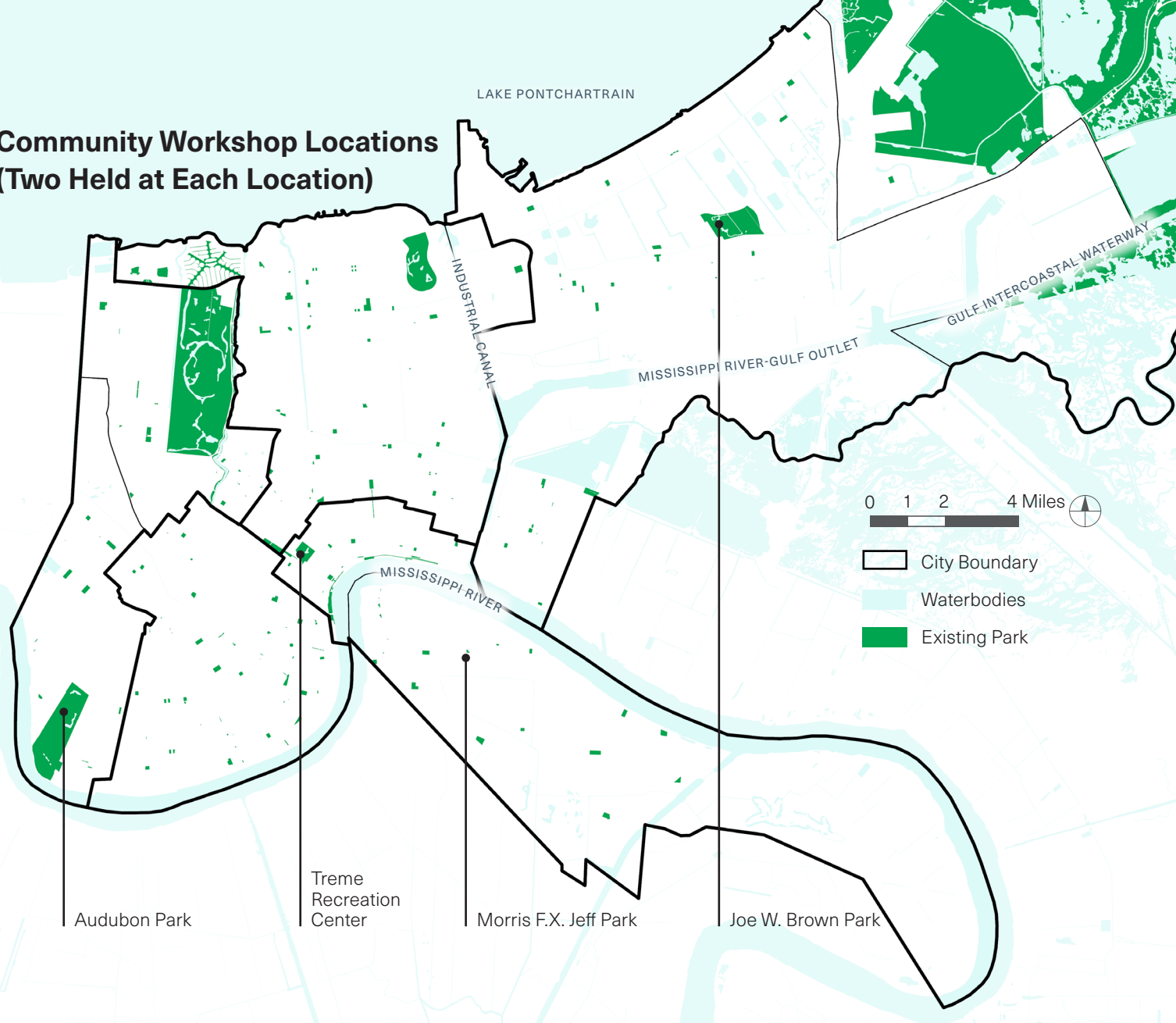
STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

The planning team held 26 stakeholder conversations with park providers, recreation leagues and programmers, Friends of Parks groups, community advocacy organizations, and other entities



Top to bottom, left to right: Workshop at Tremé Recreation Center, Larry Barabino speaking at a workshop at Joe W. Brown Recreation Center, two photos of community members evaluating the plans at the second workshop in Morris F.X. Jeff Park, Presentation at the first workshop in Audubon Park.

Community Workshop Locations (Two Held at Each Location)



with important insight into the challenges and opportunities of parks and recreation in New Orleans.

PARK AMBASSADORS

With coordination support from the City and Park Partners, the planning team hired eight Park Ambassadors, at least one from each Council District, with diverse backgrounds and experiences and representing different ages, race/ethnicities, gender identities, and languages spoken.

The Park Ambassadors helped the team develop a strategy for outreach and gave feedback on the draft plan materials.

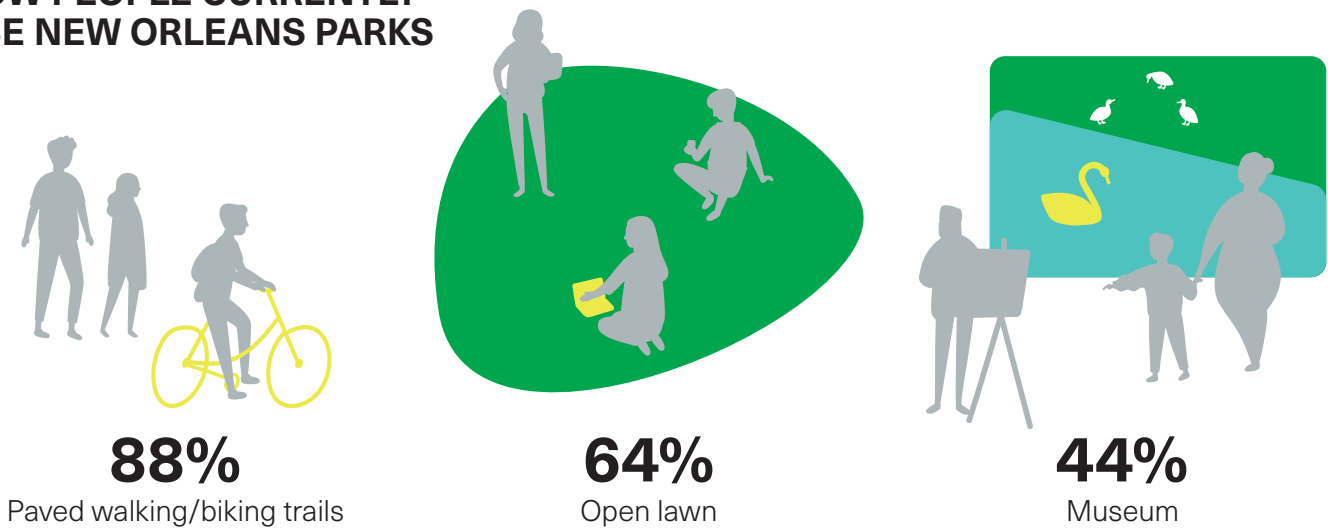
In their own communities and across the city, the Park Ambassadors also:

- Used their local networks to share information about the planning process and get feedback.
- Organized canvassing in their communities, including at second lines, busy pedestrian intersections, local parks and playgrounds, libraries, coffee houses, bakeries, convenience stores, and along greenways and bayous.
- Planned tabling and canvassing at community events already happening across the city, from April to June.

WHAT WE HEARD

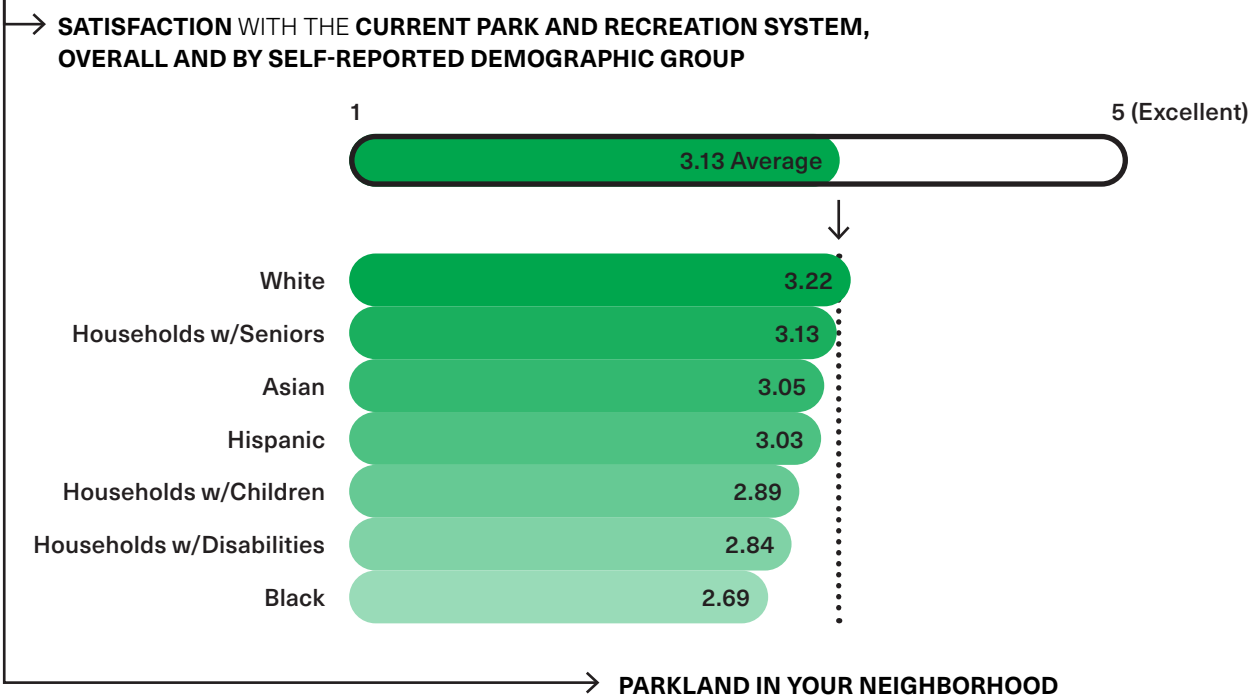
HOW PEOPLE CURRENTLY USE NEW ORLEANS PARKS

SURVEY NO. 1

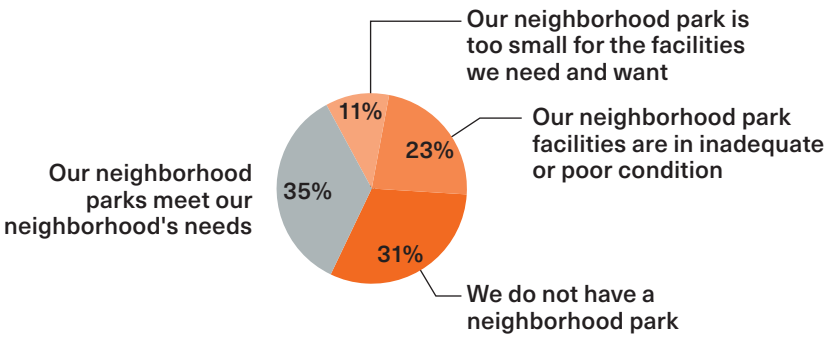


CURRENT PARK SYSTEM SATISFACTION

SURVEY NO. 1

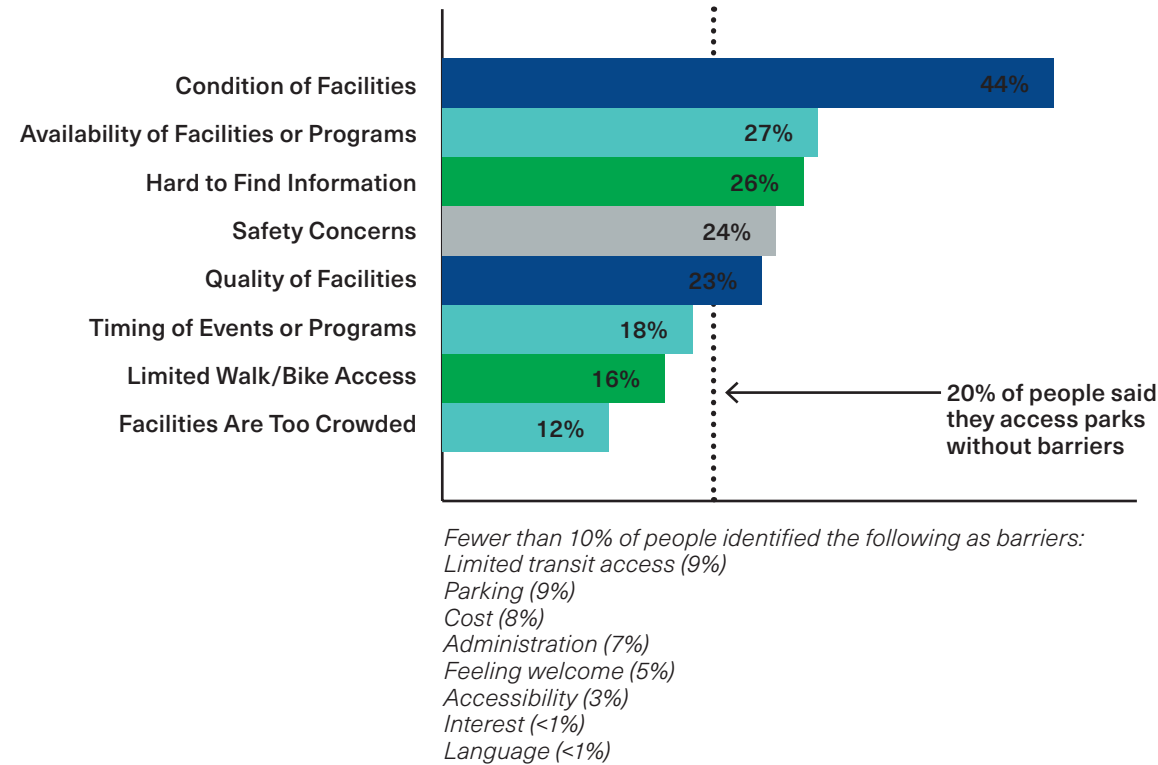


PARKLAND IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



CURRENT BARRIERS TO ACCESS

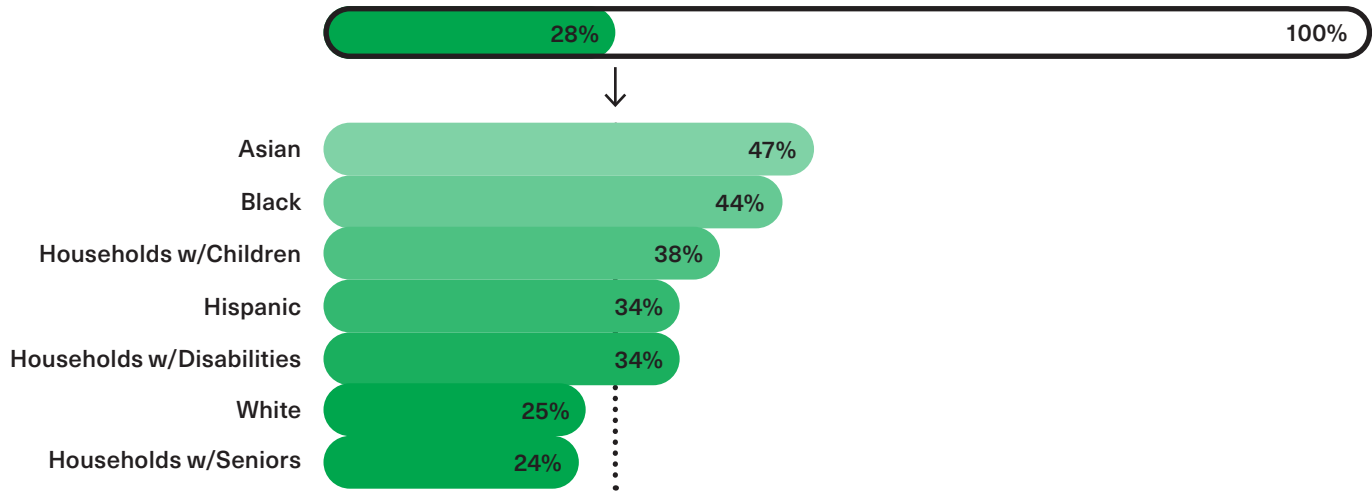
SURVEY NO. 1



PARKS AS A GATHERING SPACE

SURVEY NO. 1

MORE THAN **ONE-QUARTER** OF PEOPLE SAY
PARKS IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD **DO NOT BRING PEOPLE
TOGETHER OR CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE**



MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

SURVEYS AND WORKSHOPS

There should be one organization that oversees all public parks and rec centers in Orleans Parish. The goal should be equitable upkeep and maintenance of all public spaces. We need to end the excuses and start responding to community input and community requests for safe, sustainable parks and recreation.

Become more modern and more environmentally conscious. Be the City that other Cities come to study and let us be their role models for the future.

I'm all for expanding the park system throughout the city as long as the money isn't misused

Efficiency in management and city administrative structure. Better funding. Abolish redundancies in maintenance. Respect for high functioning parks and recreation governance.

We need a communication system for those who use NORDc activities regularly to be informed of cancellations. I shouldn't have to drive to the facility to learn of a cancellation.



EQUITY

SURVEYS AND WORKSHOPS

Every part of the city should have nearby access to a first-rate park. Resources (money!) should be spent equitably with all areas of the city receiving (re)development and maintenance funding

There need to be more parks that are WELL KEPT in historically underserved neighborhoods

Maintain parks equitably so all neighborhoods have the same level of access to nature, playgrounds, and outdoor space

Ample greenspace, with affordable events, accessible by all.

Parks should be developed in neighborhoods that are not fortunate enough to already have green spaces nearby



SAFETY

SURVEYS AND WORKSHOPS

I would love to feel safe on my bike going from Uptown to Mid City or the French Quarter.

A safe, sustainable and open network of parks/rec centers that bring communities together.

SAFETY. I do not consistently feel safe, particularly near the overgrown shrubbery on the Greenway.

Extending the greenway to have a safe connector to city park for walking /biking community members.

We need more areas to exercise outside that provide shade and safety during day and evening hours. I like to exercise in a park, but have found that is often not safe because no lighting or desolate.



WATER ACCESS

SURVEYS AND WORKSHOPS

We need better connection to water - big splash parks but also little interactive fountains and a connected greenway system. Protecting and preserving our tree canopy as a climate change resiliency strategy.

SPLASH PADS. For the love of God, please give us some splash pads in Orleans Parish.

Pools and other facilities should be open regularly and when people want to use them.

Let parks pave the way for the "living with water" ethos that New Orleans must embrace to mitigate its unique flood risks - easily tie in other climate adaptation techniques like connected ecosystems and habitat for wildlife preservation and human benefit.

We need ALL of the neighborhood pools to be open in the summer.



PHYSICAL PROJECT PRIORITIES

SURVEY NO. 2



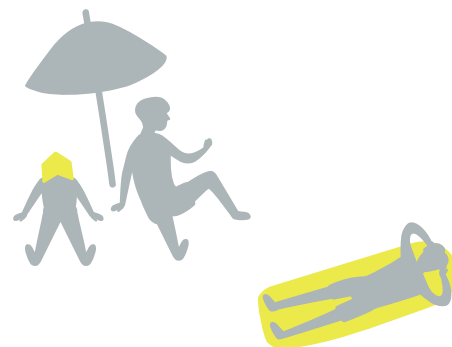
55%

Paved Walking/Biking Trails



37%

Playgrounds



31%

Swimming Pools

RECREATION PROGRAM PRIORITIES

SURVEY NO. 2



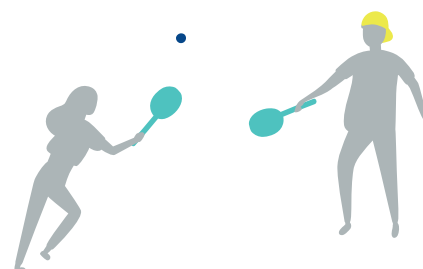
61%

Afterschool Programs



44%

Summer Camps



40%

Youth Sports Leagues

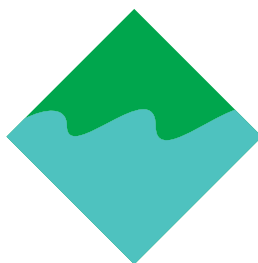
MOST IMPORTANT PROJECT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

SURVEY NO. 2



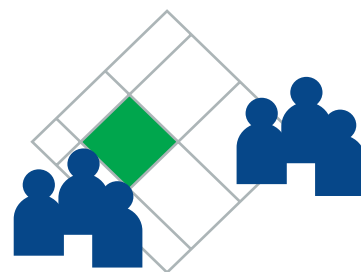
70%

Improving Condition of Existing Parks



62%

Promoting Resilience



60%

Promoting Equity

BIG TAKEAWAYS

This is the big-picture summary of what the planning team heard during the community engagement process. These takeaways directly informed the *Big Green Easy* recommendations in Chapters 4 and 5.

- 1** New Orleanians want an equitable citywide system of neighborhood parks and greenways that are welcoming, inclusive, safe, clean, and well-maintained.
- 2** They are more interested in preserving and improving the existing system than building new parks and facilities, and they want adequate resources and staffing to keep parks in good condition over time.
- 3** New Orleanians want more parks with flexible greenspace and opportunities to experience nature. They see parks as important for shade, habitat, and stormwater management.
- 4** New Orleanians want to find respite, wellbeing, social life, and community-building in their parks, in addition to physical health and recreation.
- 5** There is frustration about perceived costs, commercialization, and dysfunction of parks and recreation, and the difficulty of finding information about available facilities and programming.
- 6** Though New Orleanians want—and currently use—a diversity of recreation programming for people of all ages, interests, and abilities, they think high-quality youth programming, available at different times of day, week, and year, is particularly important.

CHAPTER

4





CITYWIDE PARK AND RECREATION VISION PLAN

Vision Plan

10-Year Plan

One-Year Plan

Strategies and Action Items

- » Building Public Trust
- » Neighborhood Parks for All
- » Parks as Essential Infrastructure

VISION PLAN

'BIG GREEN EASY' VISION STATEMENT

What should our parks and recreation look like in 50 years?

New Orleanians have a park and recreation system they **love**—with a **high-quality park in every neighborhood**; robust and inclusive programming for **individual and community health**; a **green and blue system** of trails and natural lands that **connect, protect** and **beautify** the city; and a **strong network of park providers** that are **aligned** in pursuit of this vision.

VISION PLAN

During the community engagement process, the planning team asked New Orleanians to share their vision for citywide parks and recreation. Putting aside short-term limitations of funding, operations, and competing public priorities—what kind of park and recreation system do New Orleanians want for future generations?

The *Big Green Easy* Vision Plan reflects what the planning team heard—that New Orleanians want an equitable park and recreation system that promotes community health and safety, connects people to their natural environment, and offers high-quality neighborhood parks for all.

The Vision Plan is ambitious. It seeks to build on and complete

previous visions for parks and recreation; correct for past inequities in community investment; restore and maintain the significant number of citywide facilities in poor condition; ensure every neighborhood in New Orleans has a park to call its own; and lay the foundation for a park and recreation system that New Orleanians feel proud to leave to future generations.

The Vision Plan is also realistic. Its focus is reinvestment in the city's existing parks and recreation facilities, with new opportunities primarily limited to sites and corridors that are publicly owned, with high impact for filling park gaps and connecting citywide greenways and blueways.

Vision Plan projects are prioritized using criteria supported by the community, and plan

implementation is broken into short-, medium- and long-term phases. Some projects are realistic to complete in the next one to five years, while others could need decades to come to fruition.

This section highlights the full scope of the community vision for citywide parks and recreation in New Orleans. The 10-Year Plan takes a deeper dive into the recommended short-term capital projects and the community-driven prioritization model that was used to narrow the list. The Strategies and Action Items section describes the 'Big Moves' needed to bring the plan to life. And the One-Year Plan lists the steps that must happen first to build trust and set the stage for implementation.

PROJECT TYPES

Proposed Vision Plan projects are a mix of existing park reinvestments and new park and trail opportunities. Proposals are based on community feedback and priorities; analysis of the current park and recreation system, condition, and gaps; identification of publicly owned opportunity sites and corridors; and a high-level analysis of site suitability and context for different project types.

GREENWAYS

New and improved paved trails located mostly along canals, rights-of-way, levees, and neutral grounds. This promotes citywide recreation and connectivity while preserving and linking natural resource corridors.

BLUEWAYS

New and improved access sites, amenities, signage, and rental opportunities to make it easier to fish and paddle along the city’s waterbodies.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

New and improved neighborhood parks that serve their immediate communities' daily needs, particularly in areas of the city with no parks or only low-quality parks.

POCKET PARKS

New and improved, small-scale stormwater and beautification projects on public land in communities across the city, with seating and other amenities depending on community context.

SPORTS AND RECREATION


New and improved recreation centers, swimming pools, athletic complexes, and other facilities that afford specific recreation activities.

DESTINATION PARKS

New and improved destination parks, nature parks, and recreational facilities that are iconic and loved by the whole city.

NATURE PRESERVES

New and improved passive parkland and land conservation opportunities to promote citywide environmental protection, habitat, resilience, and access to nature.

 [Full Plan Project List
by Phase](#)
Appendix

'BIG GREEN EASY' VISION PLAN

These are all the physical projects—parks, recreation facilities, trails, and natural areas—recommended to realize New Orleanians' vision for a citywide park and recreation system they feel proud to leave to future generations.

LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

+35

NEIGHBORHOOD
POCKET PARKS

26

SPORTS AND
RECREATION
PROJECTS

129

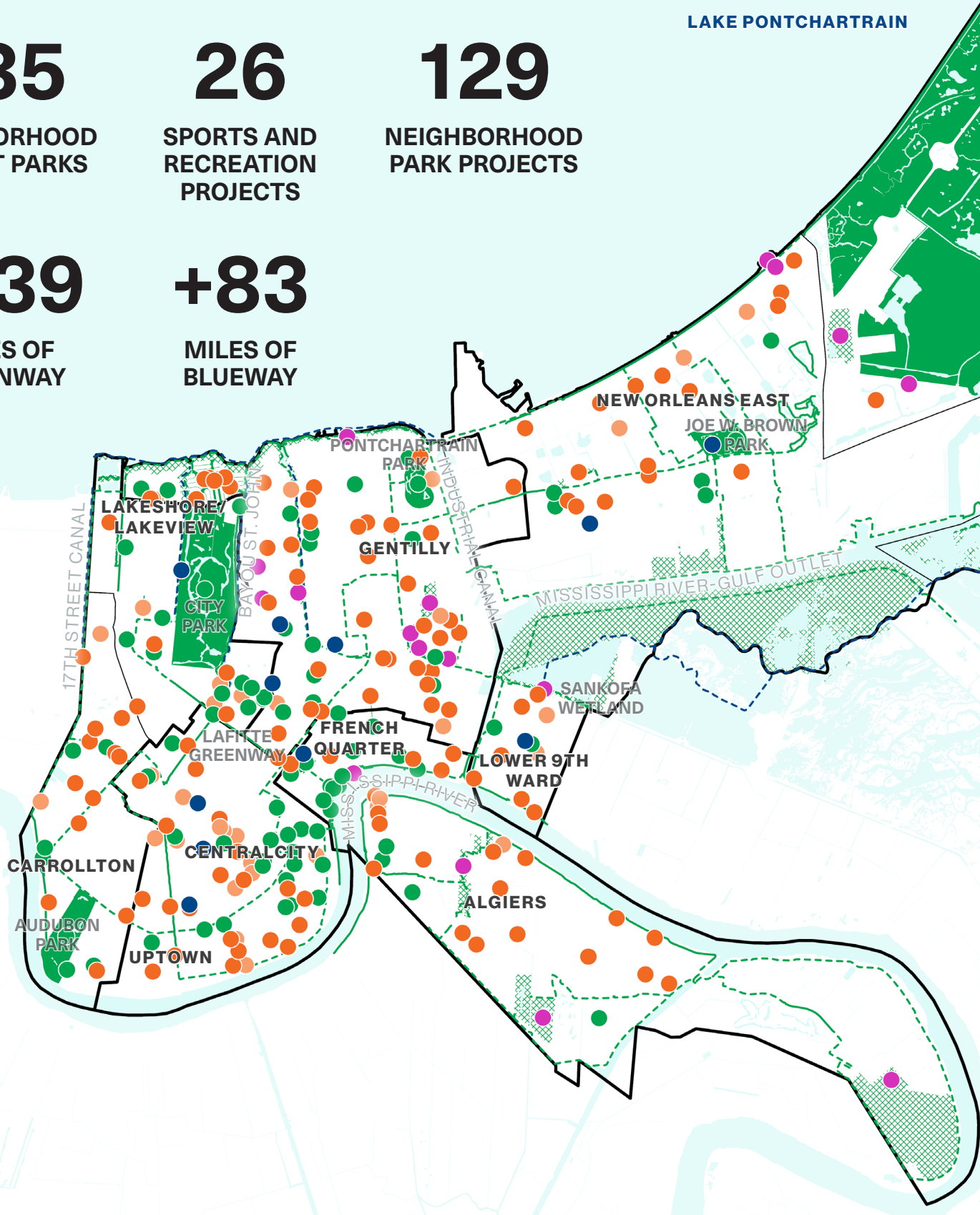
NEIGHBORHOOD
PARK PROJECTS

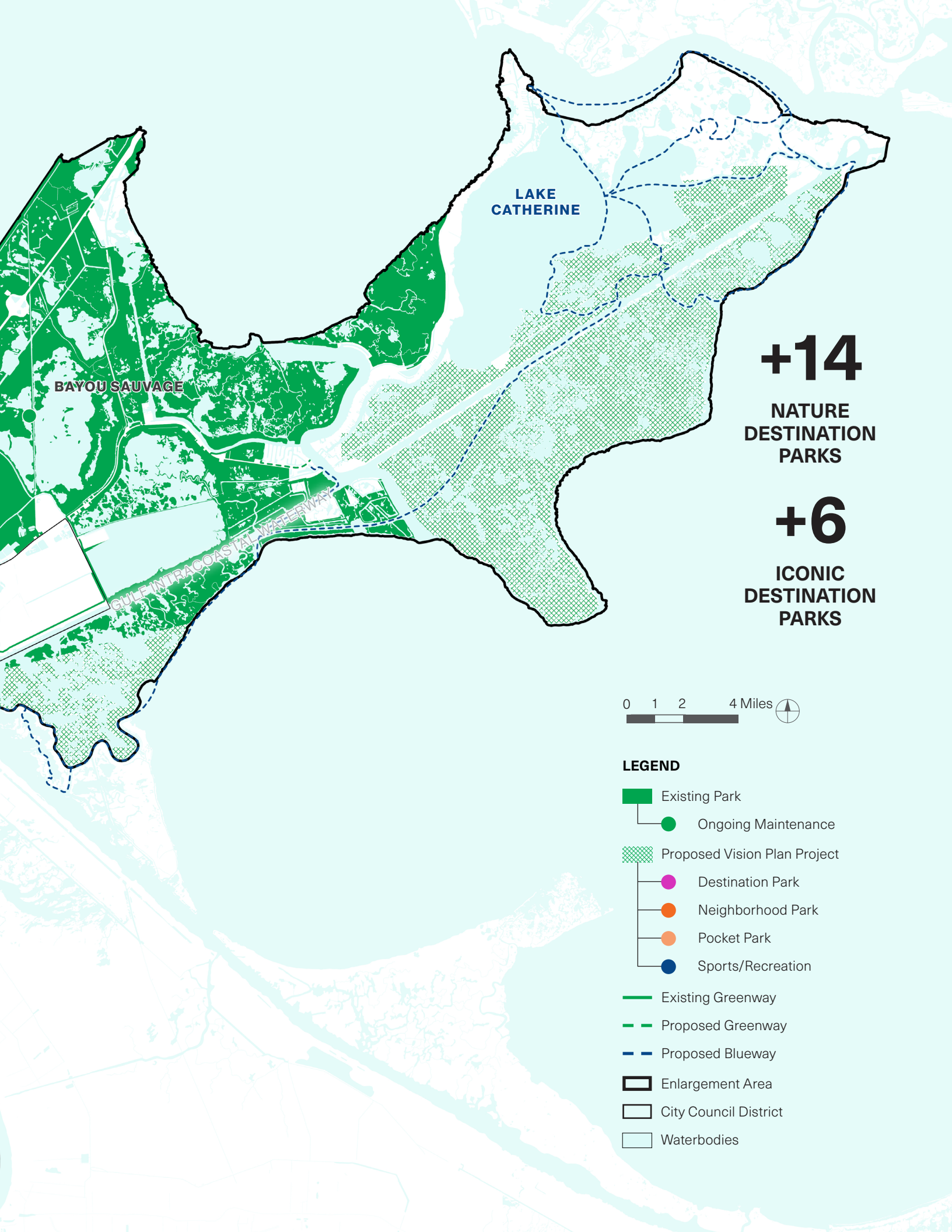
+139

MILES OF
GREENWAY

+83

MILES OF
BLUEWAY





LAKE CATHERINE

BAYOU SAUVAGE

GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY

+14

**NATURE
DESTINATION
PARKS**

+6

**ICONIC
DESTINATION
PARKS**



LEGEND

- Existing Park
- Ongoing Maintenance
- Proposed Vision Plan Project
 - Destination Park
 - Neighborhood Park
 - Pocket Park
 - Sports/Recreation
- Existing Greenway
- Proposed Greenway
- Proposed Blueway
- Enlargement Area
- City Council District
- Waterbodies

10-YEAR PLAN

PRIORITIZATION AND PHASING

The planning team asked the community for feedback about the Vision Plan projects and programs that are most important for short-term focus and implementation. This feedback drove the 10-Year Plan.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION MODEL

To identify the physical park and recreation projects that should happen first, the team used a prioritization model (Figure 4) to score the Vision Plan projects and divide them into three phases based on priorities expressed during the community engagement process.

For example, park projects received a higher score if they:

- » Serve areas of the city with a history of public underinvestment and environmental contamination.
- » Improve park access and experience for New Orleans neighborhoods that currently have no or only low-quality parks.
- » Improve the quality of an existing park in poor condition.
- » Leverage an existing opportunity.
- » Align with public health goals in areas with higher crime rates.

For the first time, this model provides New Orleans public officials and park providers with a rational and community-driven framework for prioritizing citywide park and recreation investments.

A LIVING FRAMEWORK

The prioritization model and phasing plan should be seen as a living framework that can adapt to meet evolving community needs.

For example, Phases 2 and 3 of the Vision Plan, and the relative importance of projects listed under those timeframes, will likely evolve in future plan updates to reflect new conditions and public values. Some projects listed in those phases might also become bigger priorities within the initial 10-year implementation timeline as new opportunities emerge; the prioritization of projects into phases in the *Big Green Easy* should not prevent the City or its partners from taking advantage of such opportunities as they arise.

Greenway projects in particular often grow out of unforeseen opportunities, such as new trail-oriented developments or donations of land or easement access. Because citywide and regional connectivity is more beneficial—and more challenging to implement—than any single trail segment, the City and its partners should take advantage of all opportunities as they arise, regardless of phase proposed in this plan.

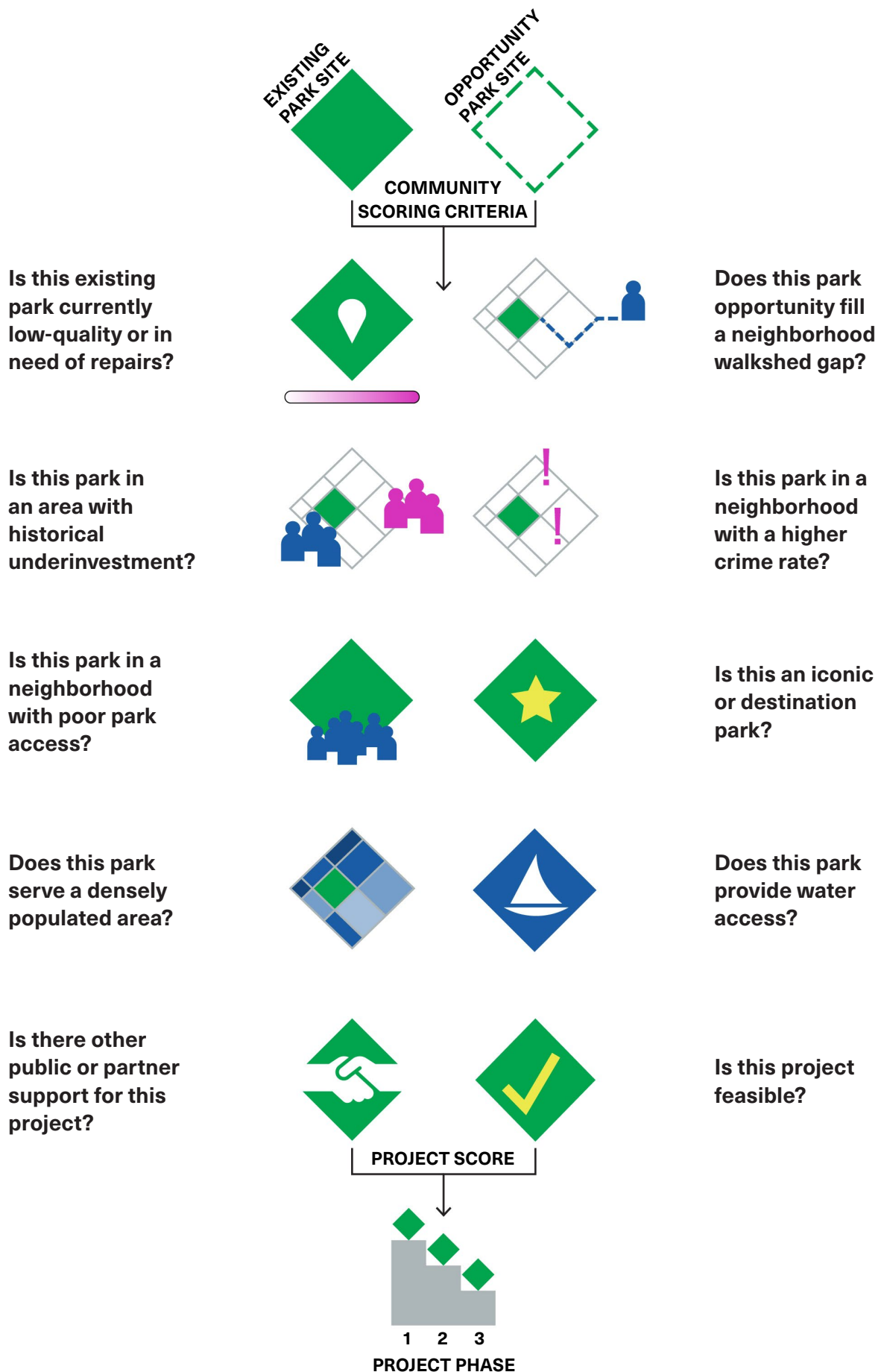


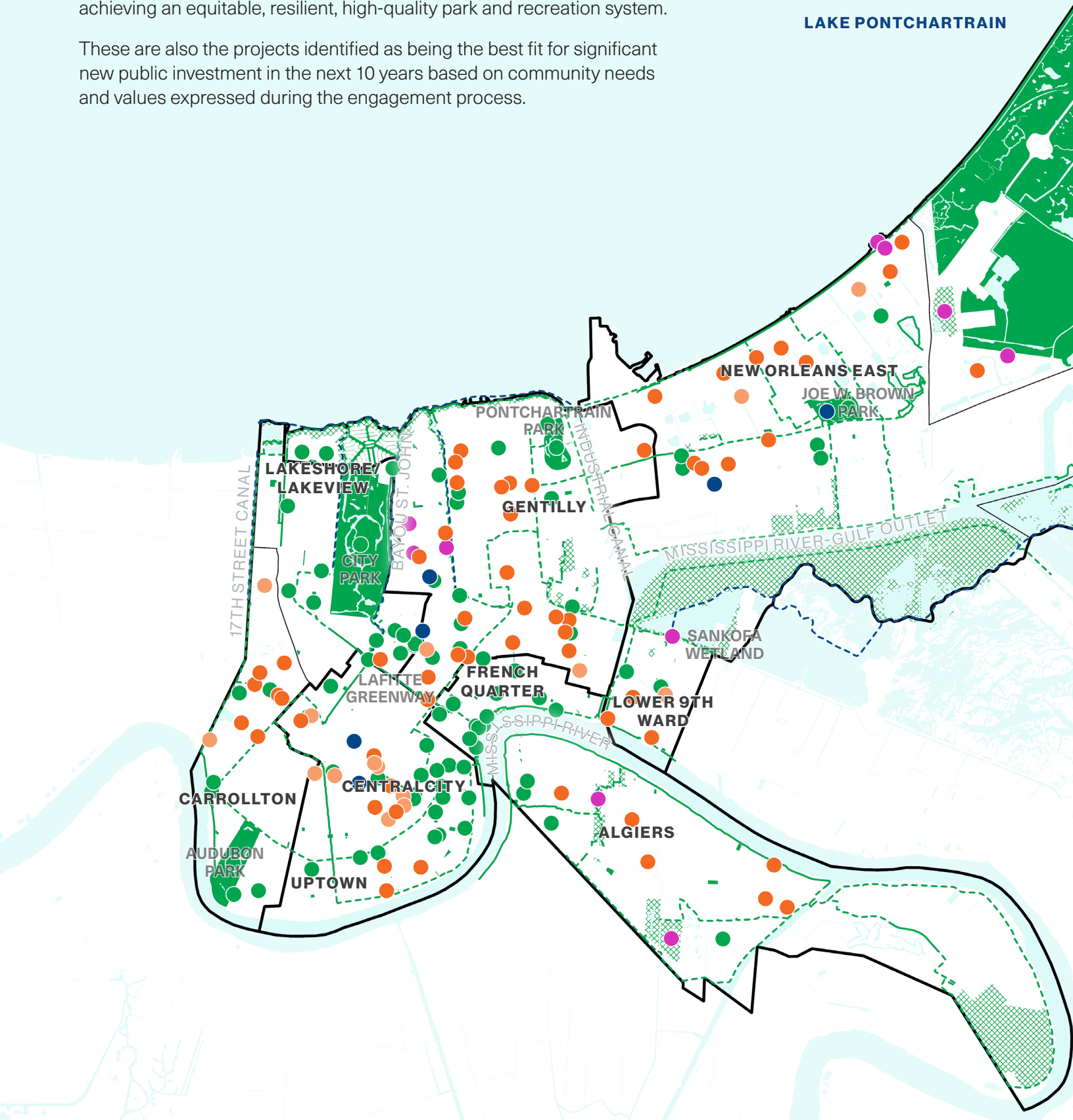
Figure 4: Illustration of the *Big Green Easy* Park and Recreation Prioritization Model used to score and rank proposed projects.

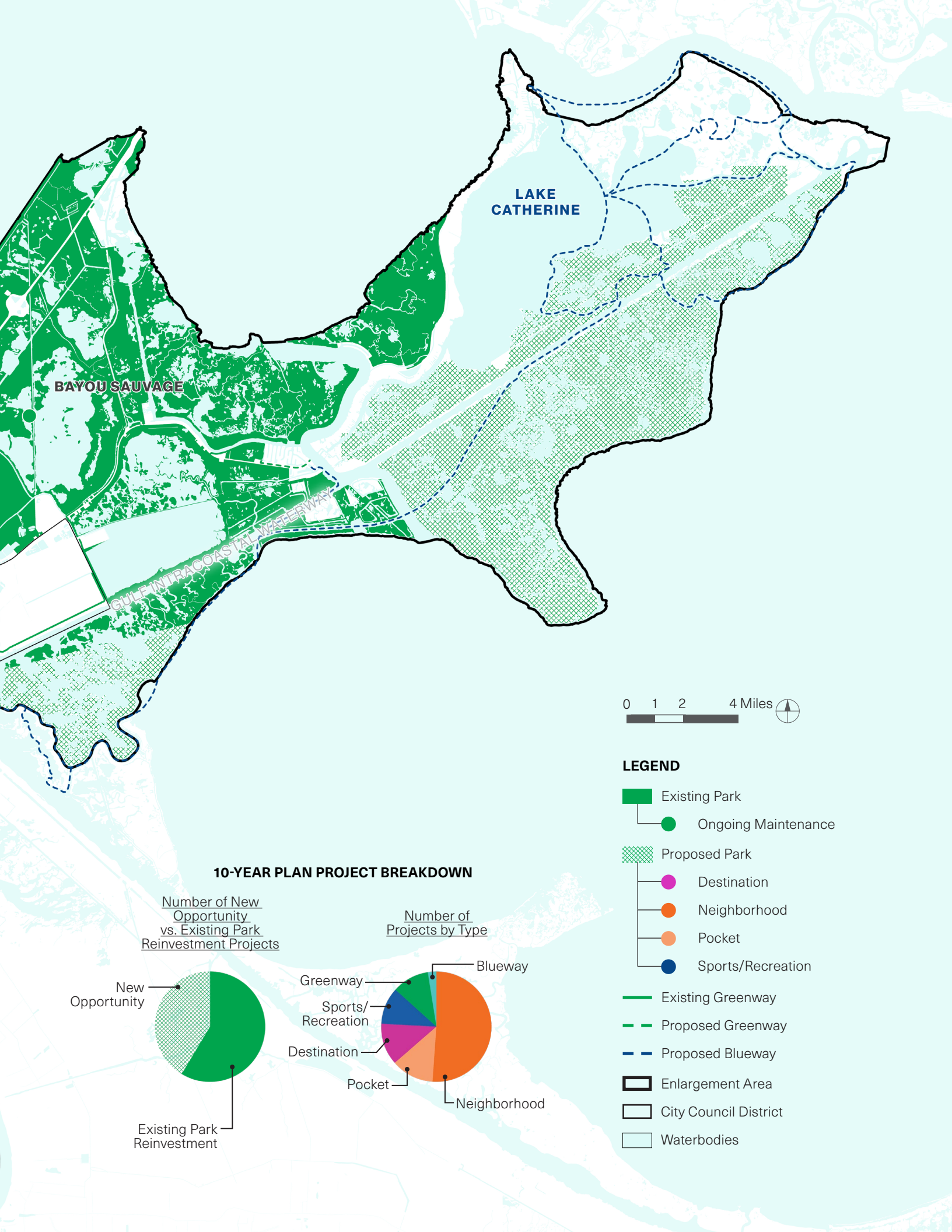
10-YEAR PLAN

These are the park and recreation investments that received the highest score in the community-driven prioritization model (Figure 4). In other words, these projects give the City and its partners the 'biggest bang for their buck' in short-term projects with the highest potential impact for achieving an equitable, resilient, high-quality park and recreation system.

These are also the projects identified as being the best fit for significant new public investment in the next 10 years based on community needs and values expressed during the engagement process.

LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN





LAKEFRONT-GENTILLY

10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT LIST

DESTINATION PARKS

- 94 Dillard Wetland Nature Park
- 109 Mirabeau Water Garden Nature Park
- 113 St. Bernard Nature Park

SPORTS AND RECREATION

- 104 Lemann Playground 1 Pool Reinvestment
- 114 St. Bernard Rec. Center Pool Reinvestment
- 119 Stallings Gentilly Playground Pool Reinvestment

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- 88 Bunny Friend Playground Reinvestment
- 92 Dauterive Playspot Reinvestment
- 93 Dillard Park
- 95 Donnelly Playspot Reinvestment
- 96 Easton Park Playground Reinvestment
- 97 F. P. Jackson Playspot Reinvestment
- 98 Florida Area Park
- 99 Gentilly Terrace Park Reinvestment

- 100 Hardin Playground Reinvestment
- 101 Hunter's Field Playground Reinvestment
- 102 Ideal Playspot Reinvestment
- 103 Lemann Playground 1 Reinvestment
- 105 Lewis Playground Reinvestment
- 107 Milne Playground Reinvestment
- 108 Miltenberger Playspot Reinvestment
- 110 Odile Davis Playground Reinvestment

- 111 Rome Playspot Reinvestment
- 112 St. Bernard Neighborhood Park
- 116 St. James Playspot Reinvestment
- 117 St. Roch Playground Reinvestment
- 118 Stallings Gentilly Playground Reinvestment
- 120 Treme-Lafitte Park
- 121 Union Playground Reinvestment

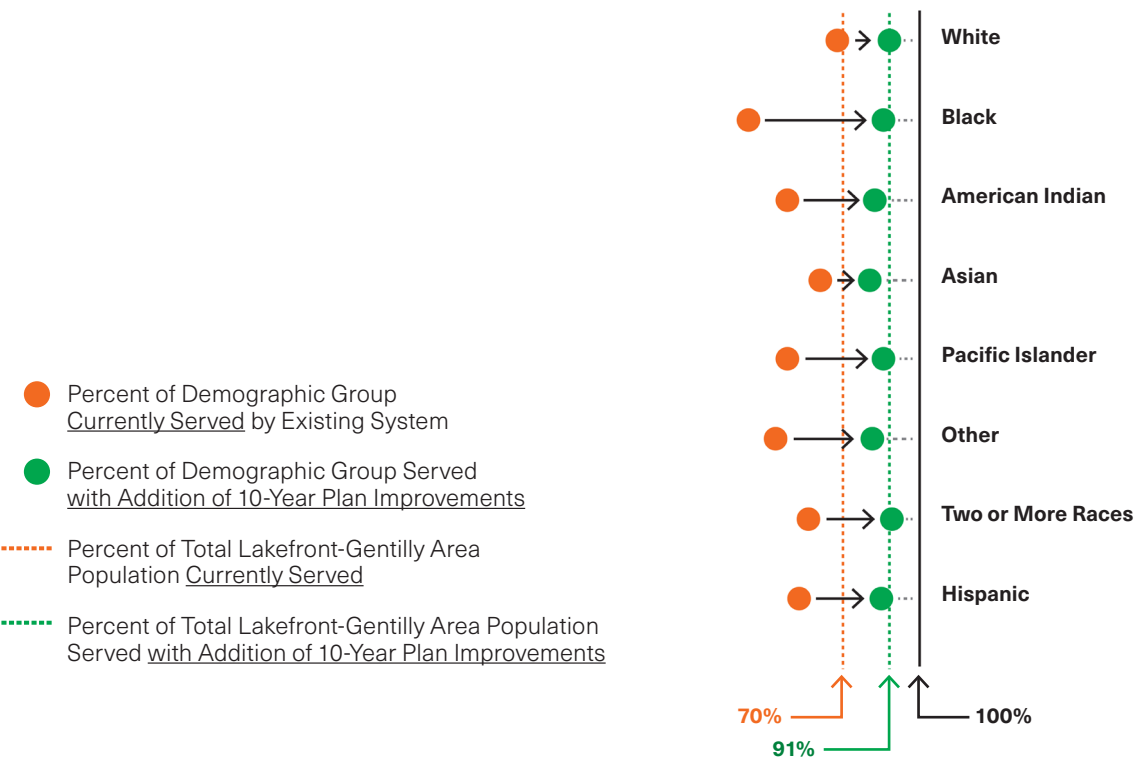
POCKET PARKS

- 85 Andre Calloux Park Reinvestment
- 115 St. Claude (Alvar Neighborhood Garden)

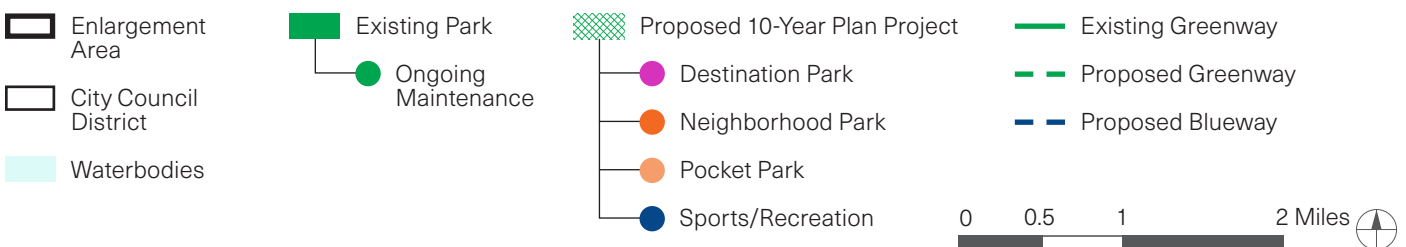
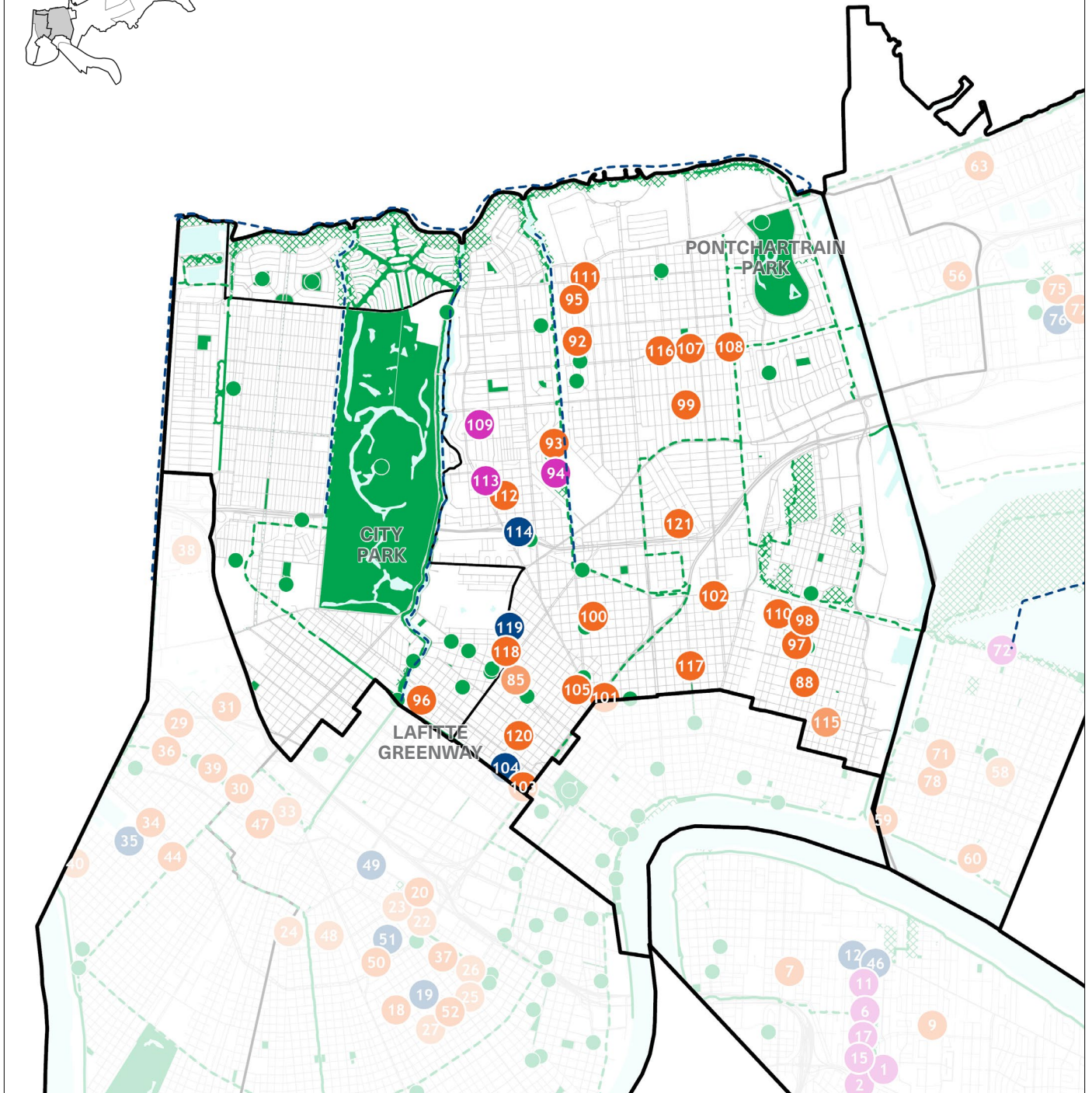
NOTE:
'Reinvestment' projects refer to the significant redevelopment and possible redesign of existing parks and facilities, including a community engagement process to ensure renovated parks reflect and serve their immediate communities.

10-YEAR PLAN IMPACT ON HIGH-QUALITY PARK ACCESS

Impact of Proposed 10-Year Plan Projects on Percent of Lakefront-Gentilly Community within 10-Minute Walk of a High-Quality Park (Overall and by Race/Ethnicity)



KEY MAP



AUDUBON-CARROLLTON

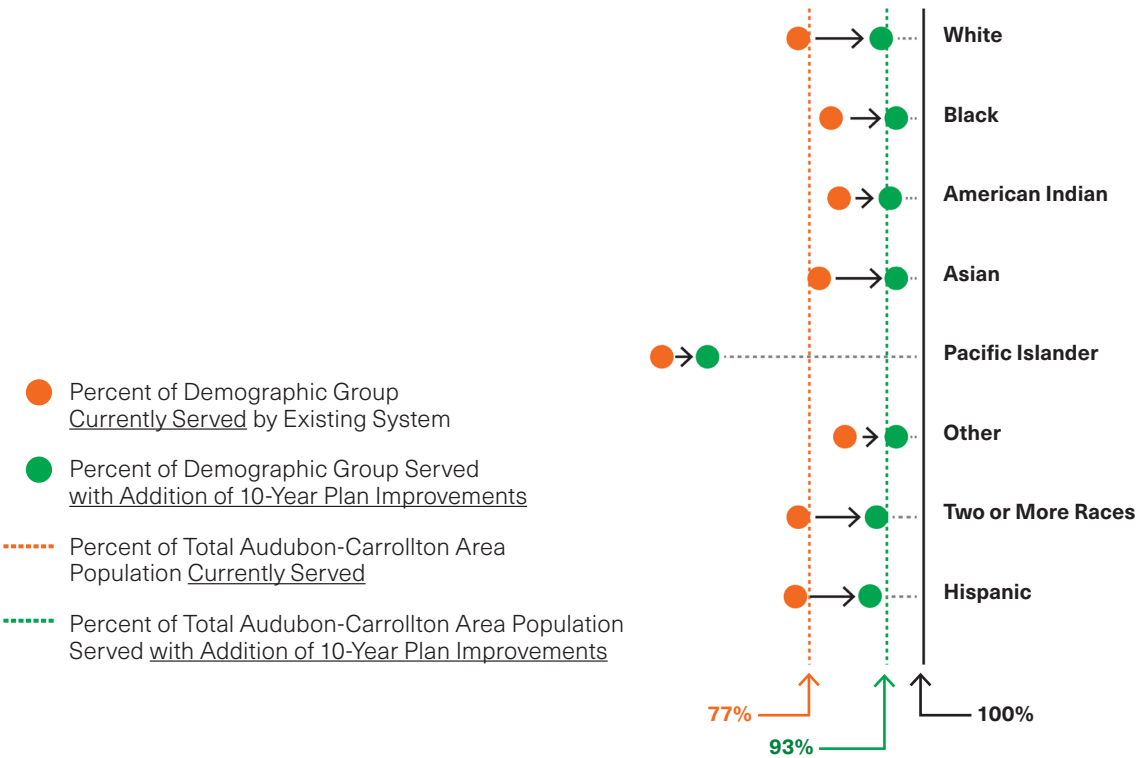
10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT LIST

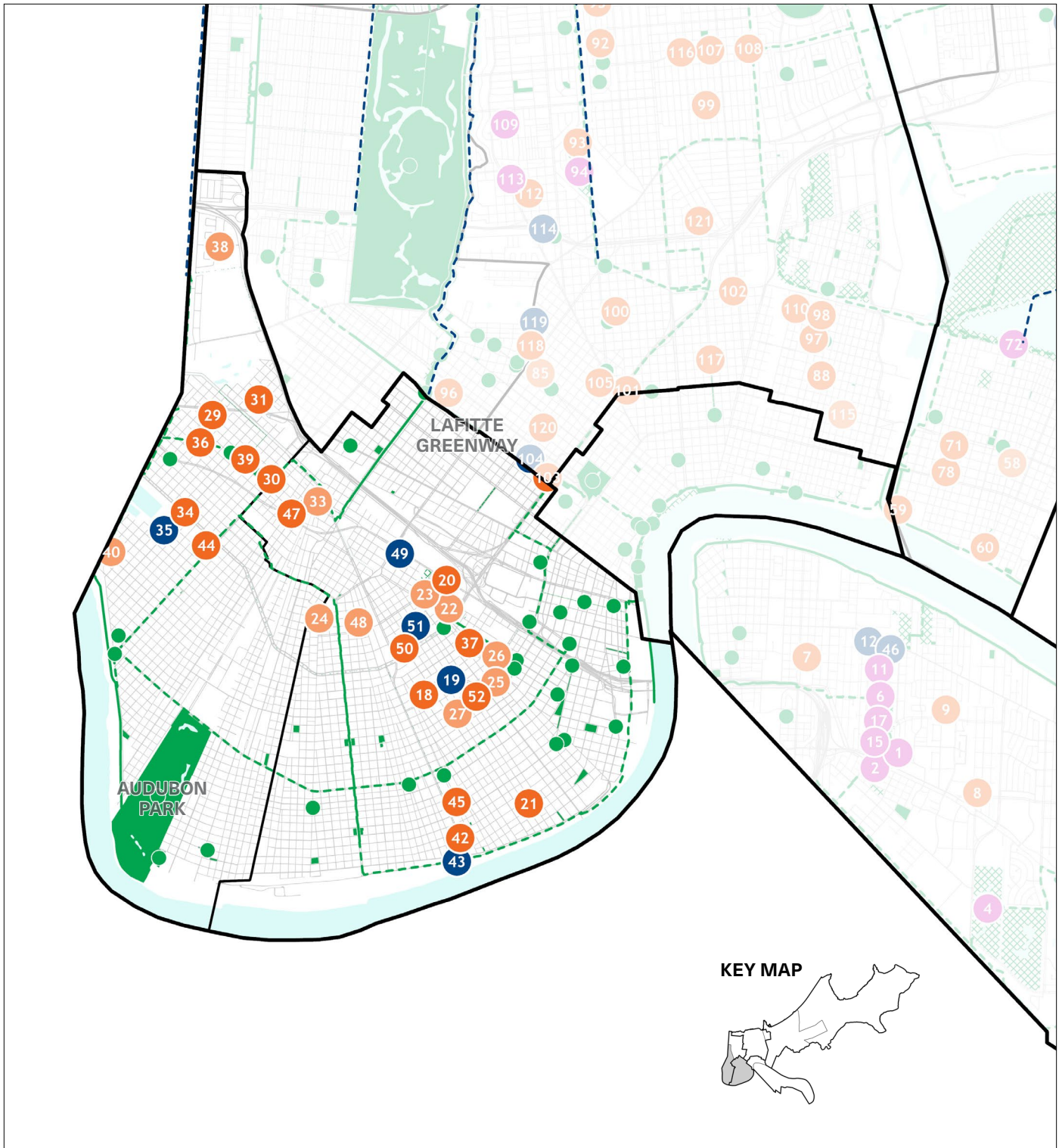
SPORTS AND RECREATION	NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS		POCKET PARKS	
19 A. L. Davis Playground Pool Reinvestment	18 A. L. Davis Playground Reinvestment	37 Keller Community Center Reinvestment	22 BW Cooper Neighborhood Garden	40 Leonidas (New Tom Hill Playspot)
35 Harrell Complex Pool Reinvestment	20 B.W. Cooper Park Reinvestment	39 Larry Gilbert Stadium Reinvestment	23 BW Cooper Pocket Park	48 Previous Broadmoor Community Center Reinvestment
43 Lyons Center Pool Reinvestment	21 Burke Playground Reinvestment	42 Lyons Center Playground Reinvestment	24 Cadiz Park Reinvestment	
49 Rosenwald Rec. Center Pool Reinvestment	29 Conrad Playground Reinvestment	44 Marsalis Harmony Park Reinvestment	25 Central City (Danneel Community Space)	
51 Taylor Playground Pool Reinvestment	30 Cuccia-Byrnes Playground Reinvestment	45 Montiero Playspot Reinvestment	26 Central City (Simon Bolivar Park)	
	31 Dixon Park	47 Norwood Thompson Playground Reinvestment	27 Central City (Third Street Garden)	
	34 Harrell Complex Reinvestment	50 Taylor Playground Reinvestment	33 Gert Town Garden	
	36 Hollygrove Greenline	52 Van McMurray Park Reinvestment	38 Lakewood Parklet	

NOTE:
'Reinvestment' projects refer to the significant redevelopment and possible redesign of existing parks and facilities, including a community engagement process to ensure renovated parks reflect and serve their immediate communities.

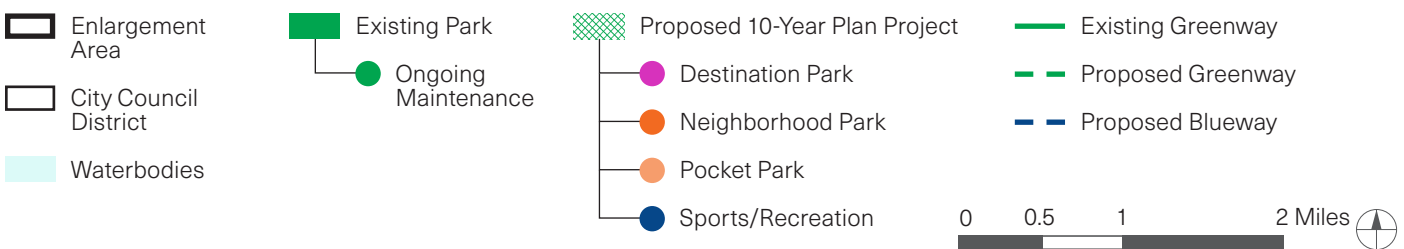
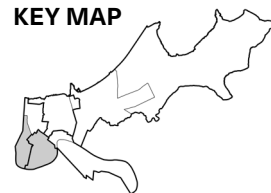
10-YEAR PLAN IMPACT ON HIGH-QUALITY PARK ACCESS

Impact of Proposed 10-Year Plan Projects on Percent of Audubon-Carrollton Community within 10-Minute Walk of a High-Quality Park (Overall and by Race/Ethnicity)





KEY MAP



TREME-FRENCH QUARTER

10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT LIST

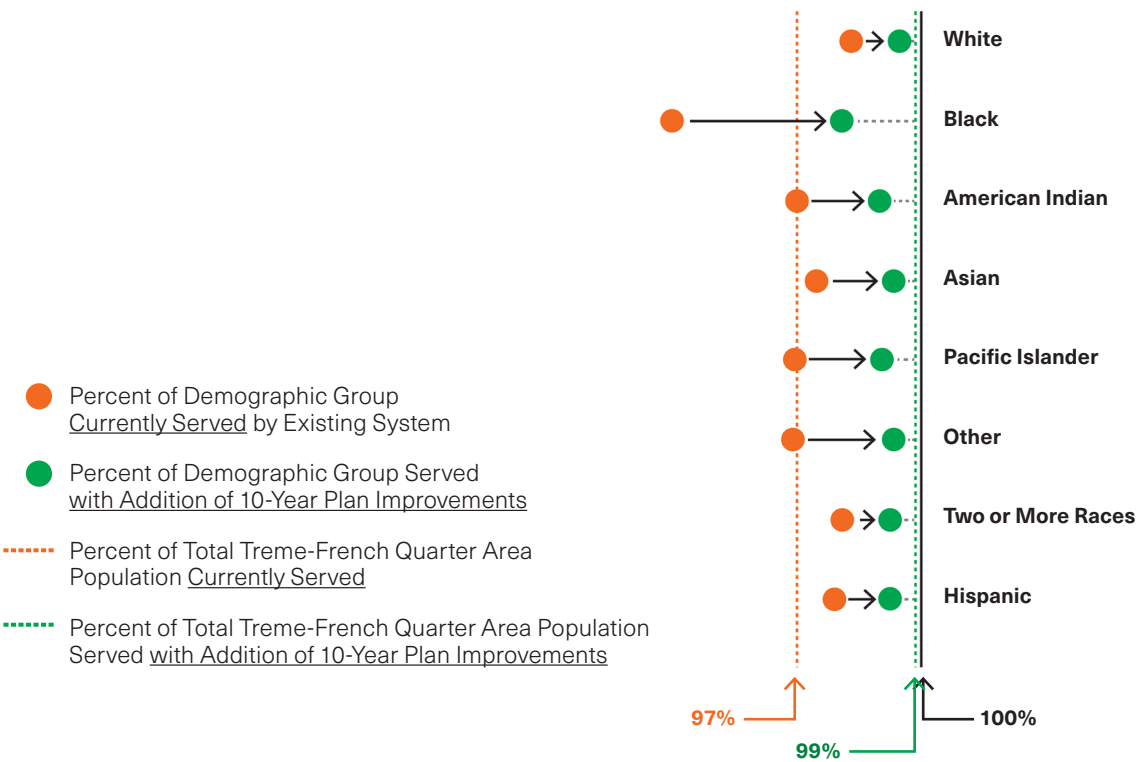
DESTINATION PARKS

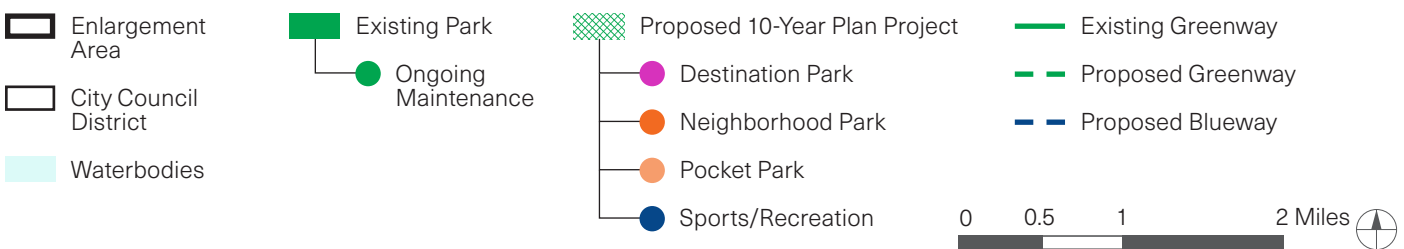
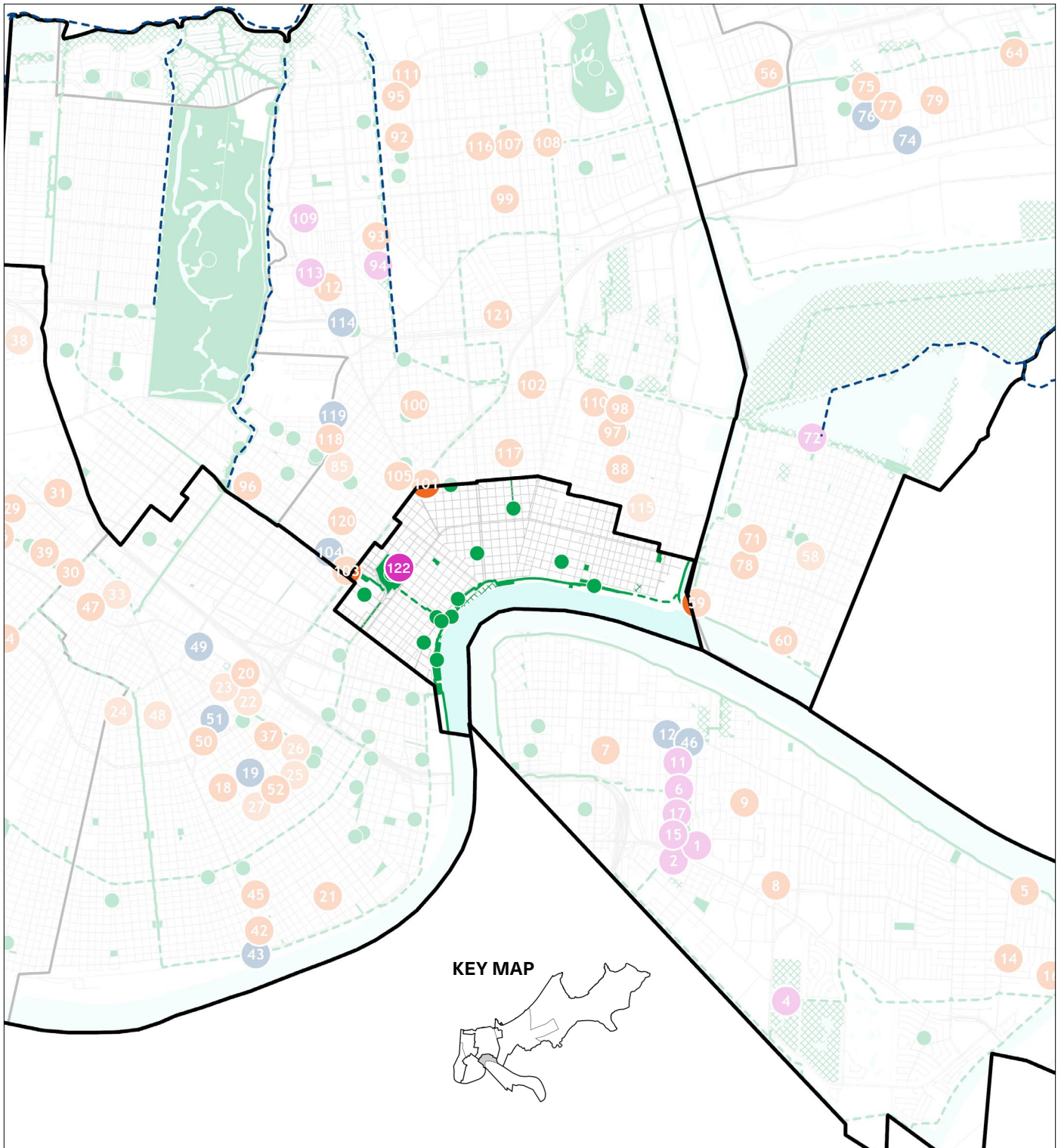
122 Louis Armstrong
Park Reinvestment

NOTE:
'Reinvestment' projects refer to the significant redevelopment and possible redesign of existing parks and facilities, including a community engagement process to ensure renovated parks reflect and serve their immediate communities.

10-YEAR PLAN IMPACT ON HIGH-QUALITY PARK ACCESS

Impact of Proposed 10-Year Plan Projects on Percent of Treme-French Quarter Community within 10-Minute Walk of a High-Quality Park (Overall and by Race/Ethnicity)





ALGIERS

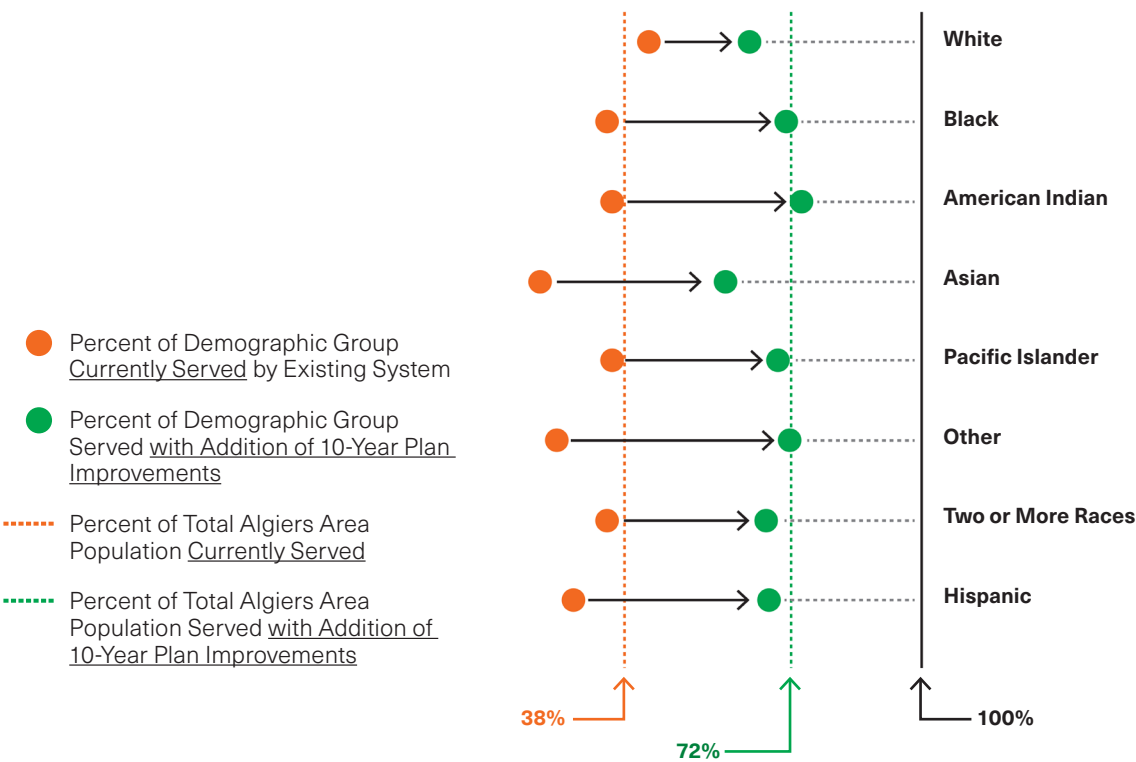
10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT LIST

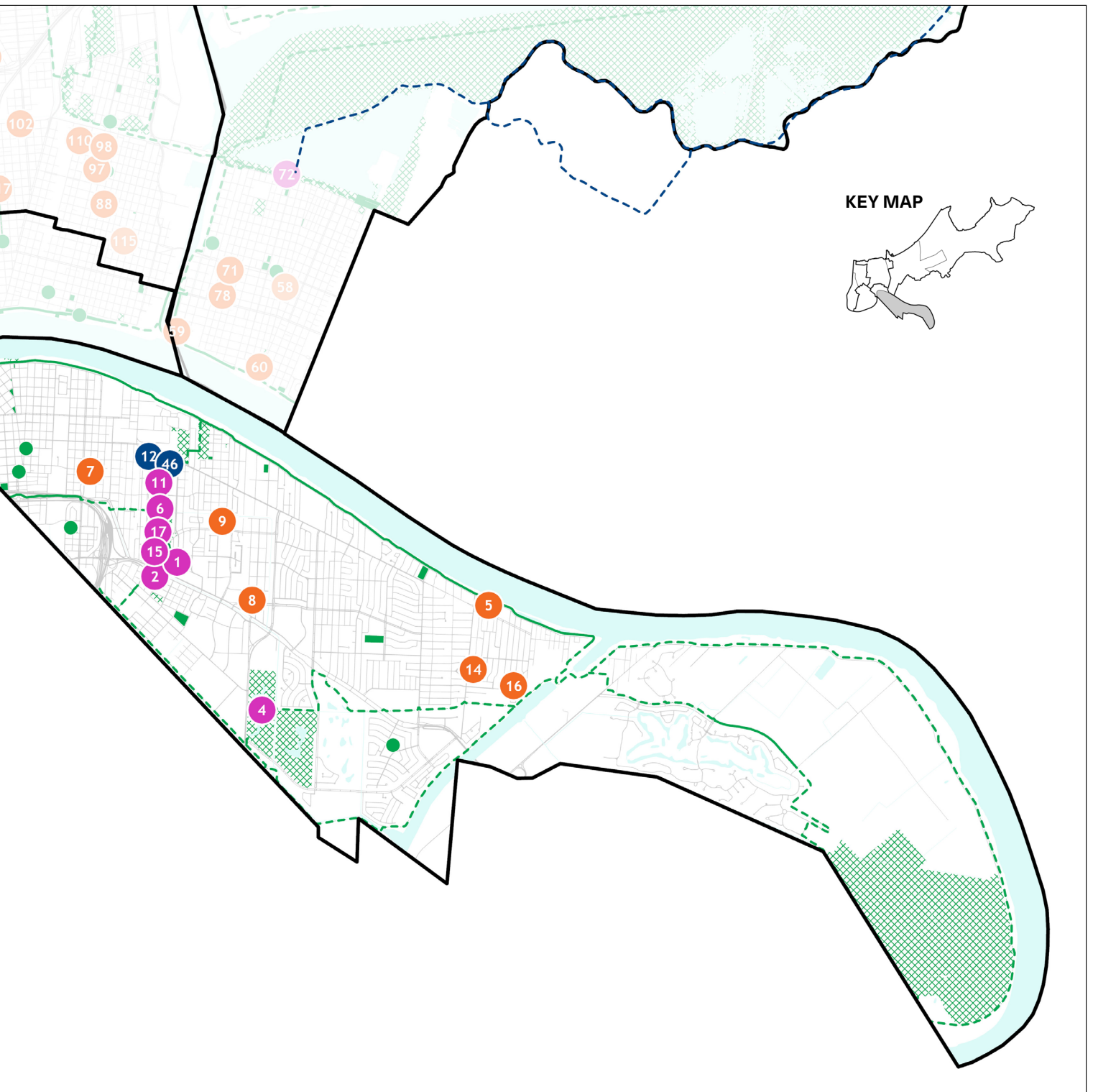
DESTINATION PARKS	NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
<div>1</div> <div>2</div> <div>6</div> <div>11</div> <div>15</div> <div>17</div> <div>4</div> Morris F.X. Jeff Mixed-Use Destination Park	<div>5</div> <div>7</div> <div>8</div> <div>9</div> <div>14</div> <div>16</div> Cut-Off Playground Reinvestment Fox Playground Reinvestment Lambert Playspot Reinvestment Magellan Playspot New Aurora - English Turn (School Area) River Park Playspot Reinvestment
SPORTS AND RECREATION	
<div>12</div> <div>46</div> Morris F. X. Jeff Recreation Center Reinvestment Morris F. X. Jeff Pool Reinvestment	

NOTE:
'Reinvestment' projects refer to the significant redevelopment and possible redesign of existing parks and facilities, including a community engagement process to ensure renovated parks reflect and serve their immediate communities.

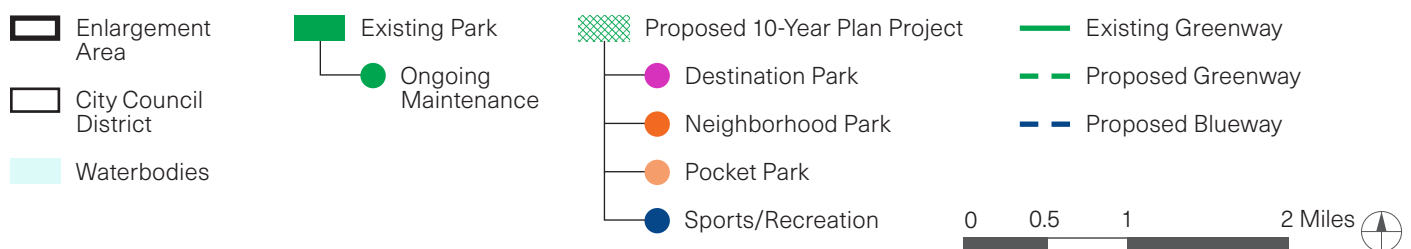
10-YEAR PLAN IMPACT ON HIGH-QUALITY PARK ACCESS

Impact of Proposed 10-Year Plan Projects on Percent of Algiers Community within 10-Minute Walk of a High-Quality Park (Overall and by Race/Ethnicity)





KEY MAP



LOWER 9TH WARD-NEW ORLEANS EAST

10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT LIST

DESTINATION PARKS

- 65 Lincoln Beach
- 70 Little Woods Nature Park
- 72 Sankofa Wetland Park Extension

SPORTS AND RECREATION

- 62 Joe W. Brown Memorial Park Pool Reinvestment
- 74 Pecan Grove Recreation Center Reinvestment
- 76 Pradat Playground Pool Reinvestment

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- 55 Del Mar Villa Playspot Reinvestment
- 56 Digby Playground Reinvestment
- 57 East Shore Playground Reinvestment
- 59 Holy Cross "Fly" Park
- 60 Holy Cross Neighborhood Park
- 63 Kenilworth Playground Reinvestment
- 64 Kerry Curley Playground Reinvestment

- 66 Little Woods (Barrington Playspot)
- 68 Little Woods (Citrus Canal)
- 69 Little Woods (Vincent Playspot)
- 71 Lower Ninth Ward (Sam Bonart Extension)
- 73 Marie Goretti Playground Reinvestment
- 75 Pradat Playground Reinvestment
- 77 Robert Playspot Reinvestment
- 78 Sam Bonart Playground Reinvestment

- 79 Werner Playspot Reinvestment

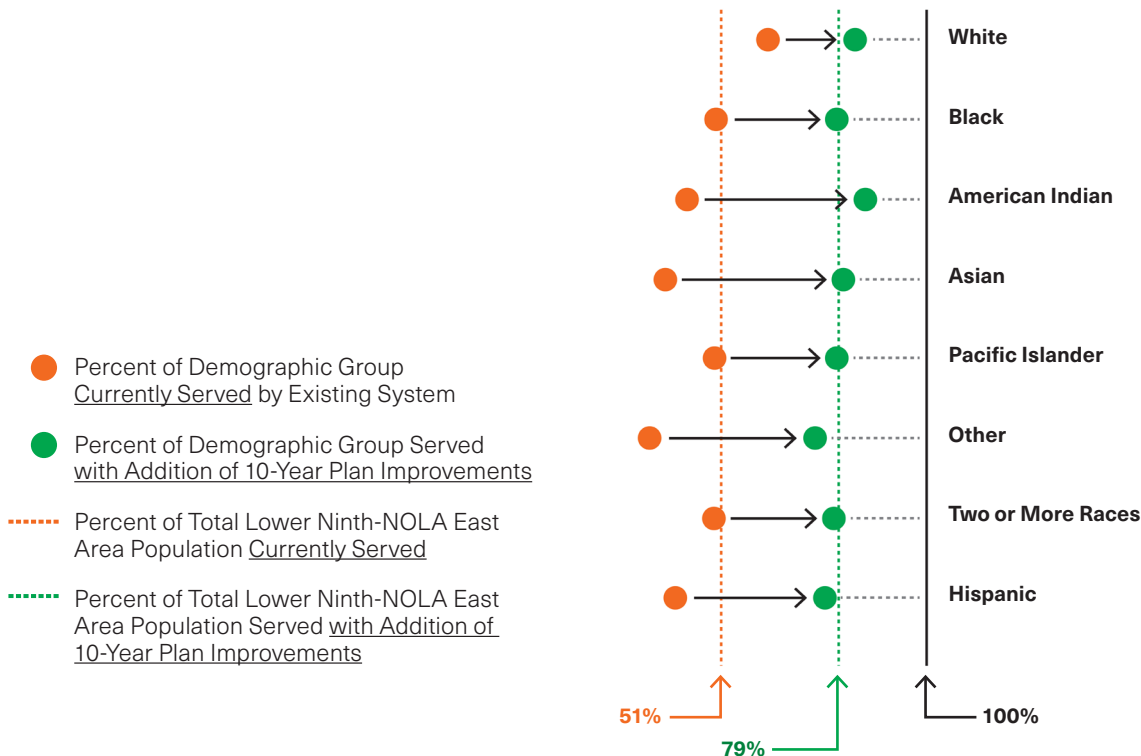
POCKET PARKS

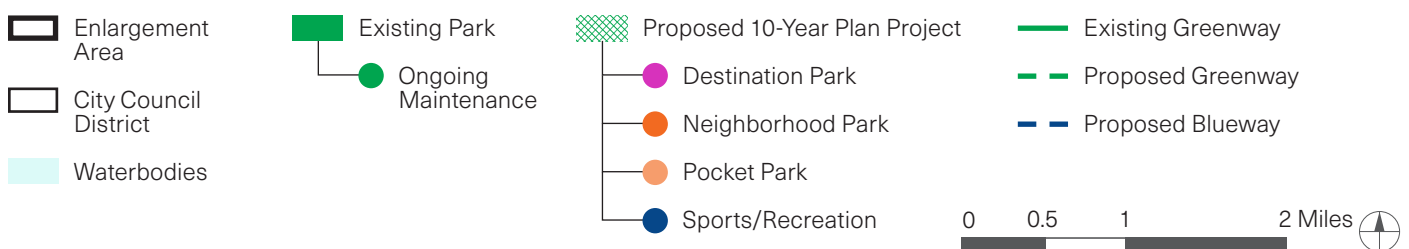
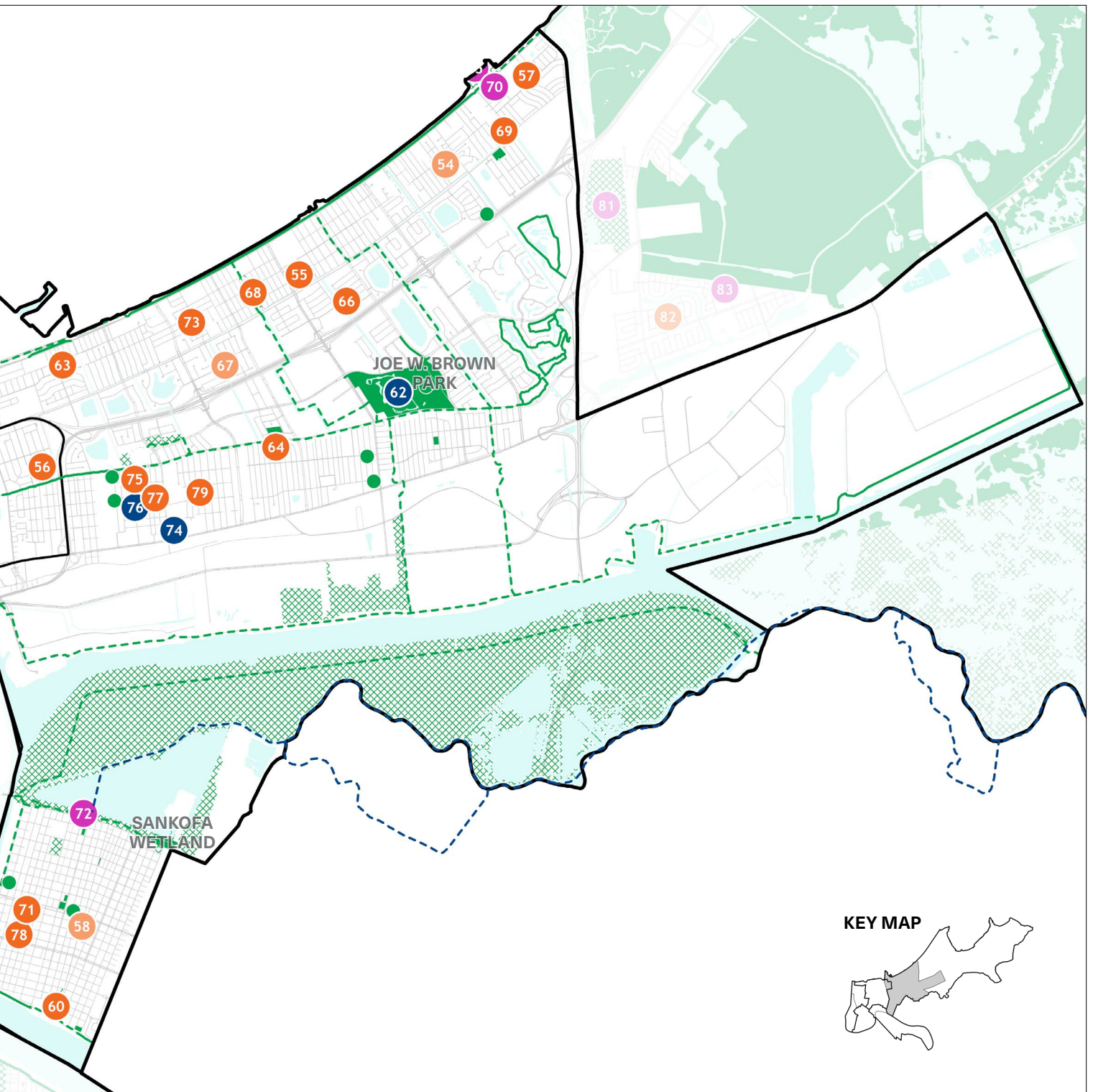
- 54 Curran and Windward
- 58 Goins Playspot Reinvestment
- 67 Little Woods (Benson Canal Gateway Park)

NOTE:
'Reinvestment' projects refer to the significant redevelopment and possible redesign of existing parks and facilities, including a community engagement process to ensure renovated parks reflect and serve their immediate communities.

10-YEAR PLAN IMPACT ON HIGH-QUALITY PARK ACCESS

Impact of Proposed 10-Year Plan Projects on Percent of Lower Ninth-NOLA East Community within 10-Minute Walk of a High-Quality Park (Overall and by Race/Ethnicity)





BAYOU SAUVAGE-LAKE CATHERINE

10-YEAR PLAN PROJECT LIST

DESTINATION PARKS

- 81 Jazzland Park (Six Flags Site)
- 83 Willow Brook Nature Park

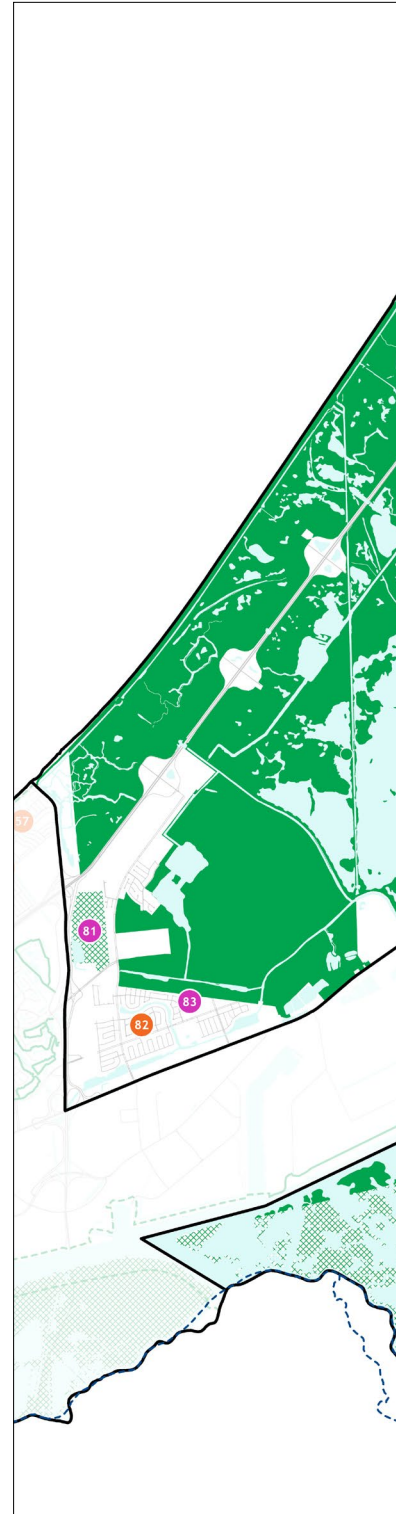
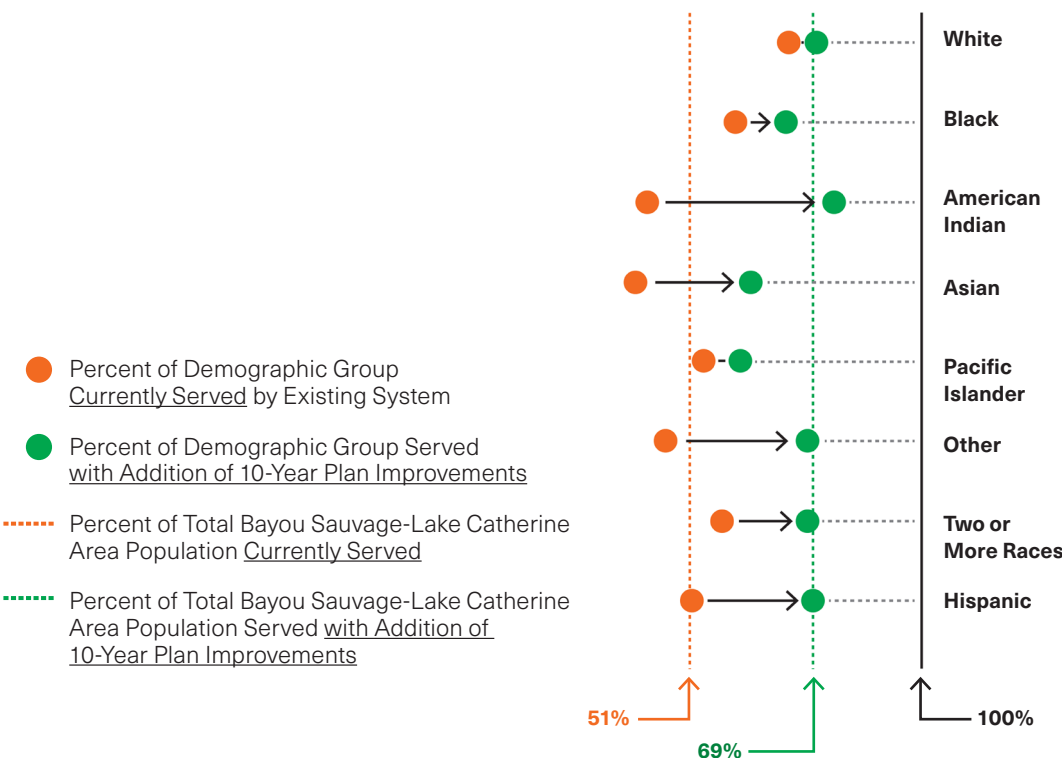
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

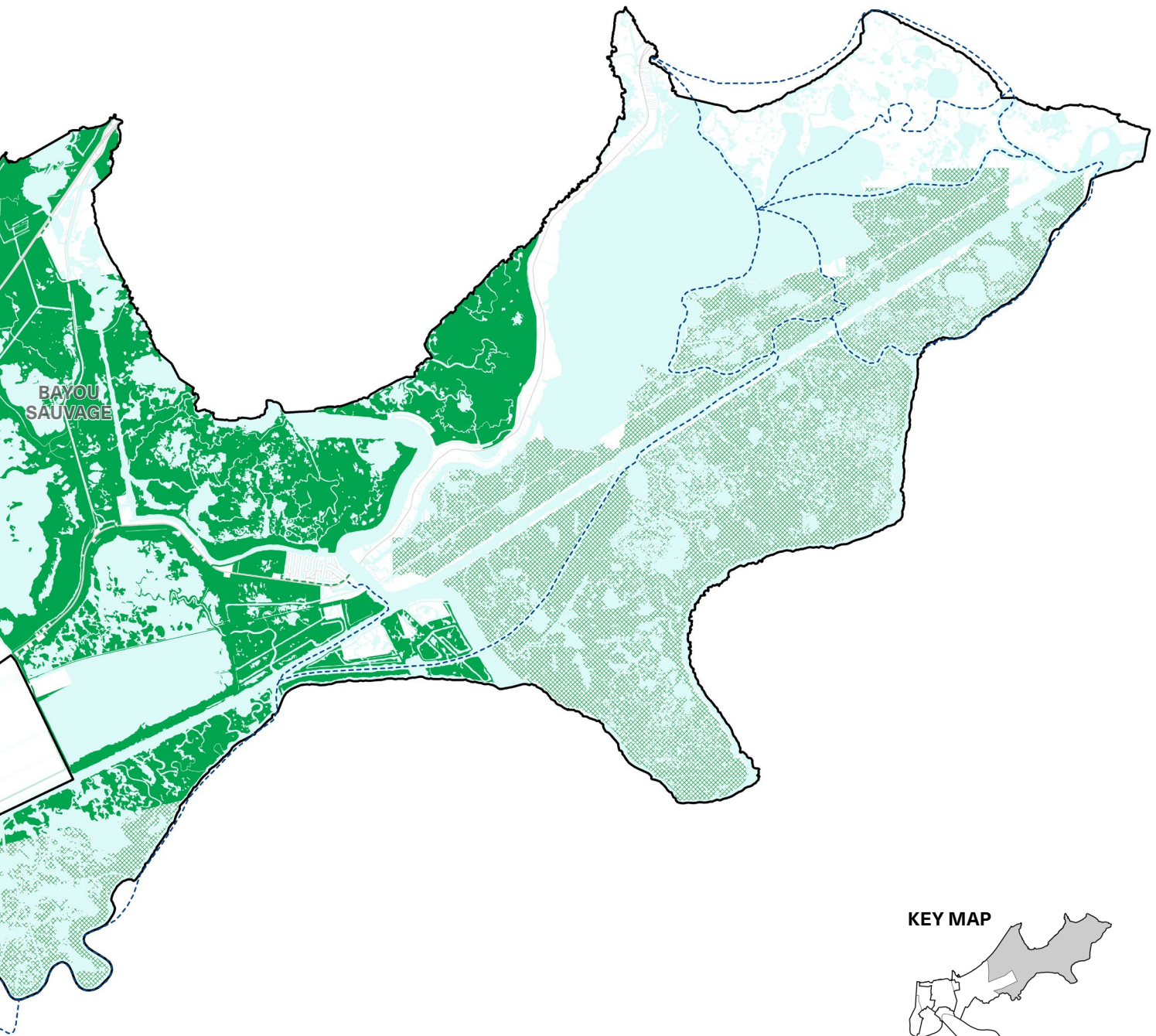
- 82 Village De L'Est Playground Reinvestment

NOTE:
'Reinvestment' projects refer to the significant redevelopment and possible redesign of existing parks and facilities, including a community engagement process to ensure renovated parks reflect and serve their immediate communities.

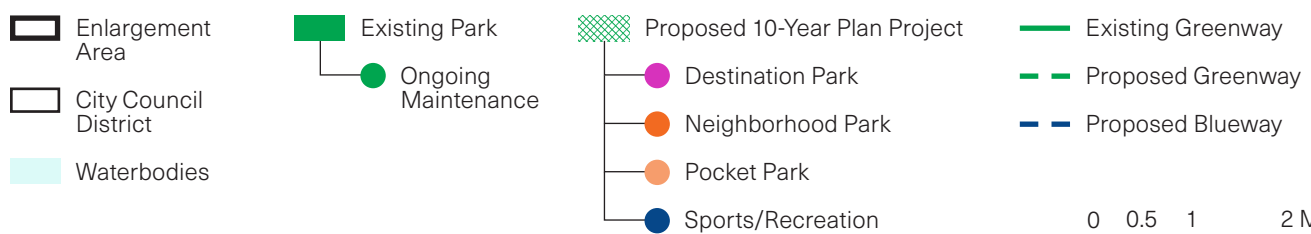
10-YEAR PLAN IMPACT ON HIGH-QUALITY PARK ACCESS

Impact of Proposed 10-Year Plan Projects on Percent of Bayou Sauvage-Lake Catherine Community within 10-Minute Walk of a High-Quality Park (Overall and by Race/Ethnicity)





KEY MAP



ONE-YEAR PLAN

1. **GOALS**

2. **STRATEGIES**

3. **ACTIVITIES**

4. **EVALUATION**

5. **CONCLUSION**

6. **REFERENCES**

7. **APPENDICES**

8. **NOTES**

9. **OTHER**

10. **DATE**

11. **SIGNATURE**

12. **REMARKS**

13. **DATE**

14. **SIGNATURE**

15. **REMARKS**

16. **DATE**

17. **SIGNATURE**

18. **REMARKS**

19. **DATE**

ONE-YEAR PLAN

Because there is no single City of New Orleans parks and recreation entity charged with implementation of the *Big Green Easy* recommendations, the planning team identified steps that should be taken by specific City staff and departments in the next 12 months to set the stage for successful implementation. These first steps seek to:

- Take on the most pressing needs and challenges identified during the planning process, and
- Leverage existing or in-the-pipeline assets and resources, to move the plan forward as longer-term funding issues are resolved.

RETHINKING PARK AND RECREATION DELIVERY

The One-Year Plan recommends appointment by the Mayor of a Chief Park Planning Officer to guide short-term plan implementation and jumpstart improvements to the City's park and recreation organizational structure and operational efficiencies. Current staff do not have the capacity to take on this additional task. The CPPO position can be filled by an internal move within City government or the creation of an interim position.

'EARLY WIN' PROJECTS

The One-Year Plan also identifies 'early win' park and recreation projects that promote equity and resilience, demonstrate progress, and build public trust that the plan recommendations will be taken seriously and implemented.

This includes securing 2024 General Fund dollars for short-term deferred maintenance at parks in Equity Investment Zones, and taking advantage of existing American Rescue Plan Act funding to implement high-priority Neighborhood Park projects in partnership with the Office of Community Assets and Investments and Health Department.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Another ongoing initiative that can support implementation of this plan is the City's pursuit of asset management software. This tool can help the City track its park and recreation assets and maintenance hours; anticipate and budget for maintenance needs and equipment; and identify where new positions or operational efficiencies might be needed to address challenges or backlogs. The inventory and condition assessment completed as part of this planning process can be integrated with this system.

PARTNERSHIPS, ADVOCACY AND FUNDING

The One-Year Plan seeks to lay the groundwork for greater sustained funding and partnership support of citywide parks and recreation.

Table 8 lists the critical first steps and target deadlines for the City and partners to set the plan recommendations into motion. The Office of the Mayor should lead coordination and implementation of these tasks.

NOTE:
The Chief Park Planning Officer is proposed as a temporary City of New Orleans administrative position at a peer level to the CEO of NORDc and Director of Parks and Parkways. This position would not have decision-making authority for Audubon Nature Institute or City Park Conservancy, which are independent agencies with their own governing boards and leadership.

Table 8: One-Year Action Items

TASK	DUE	OWNER
ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT		
Appoint a Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO) charged with immediate coordination and implementation of plan recommendations and to establish a City point of contact and advocate for citywide parks and recreation. This position should also represent public park and recreation interests in negotiation of development projects.	March 2024	Office of the Mayor
Continue convening the Park Partners working group to coordinate efforts and share best-practice resources.	Quarterly	Park Partners
Conduct a study of NORDc and Parks and Parkways (PKW) organization and staffing to strengthen strategic alignment, improve operational efficiencies, and streamline public branding and park policies.	May 2024	Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO)
'EARLY WIN' PROJECTS		
Dedicate identified City-owned park opportunity sites as future parkland, in coordination with the Strategic Properties Oversight Working Group.	April 2024	Community Assets and Investment
Develop a marketing strategy for City park and recreation plans, project updates, and available amenities and programs.	May 2024	Consultant
Secure funding to complete short-term deferred maintenance projects at parks in Equity Investment Zones rated moderate to poor.	May 2024	NORDc and Parks and Parkways
Launch and staff a Neighborhood Park Program to formalize the City's emphasis on neighborhood park improvements. Adopt Neighborhood Park Design and Management Guidelines with an emphasis on community-driven design.	May 2024	CPPO
Complete community-driven design processes and Phase 1 implementation of identified ARPA-funded Neighborhood Park projects with OCAI and PKW.	July 2024	CPPO
Investigate the transfer of ownership and management of West End Park to the City.	July 2024	CPPO
Finalize a community-driven master plan to preserve and restore Lincoln Beach.	July 2024	Resilience and Sustainability
MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS		
Assign clear operation and management responsibility for all existing and future parks, recreation centers, rights-of-way, and green stormwater infrastructure.	July 2024	City CAO
Implement an asset management system and Total Asset Management approach to track and adequately budget for existing and future park maintenance needs.	July 2024	Public Works
ALIGNMENT AND ADVOCACY		
Identify existing brownfield, public housing, resilience, and economic development projects that can be leveraged in the near term to create new public park and recreation opportunities. Clarify the role of public parks in development projects.	April 2024	Community Assets and Investment, City Planning
Direct the City's lobbyist to develop a state legislative agenda to support city parks.	April 2024	Intergovernmental Relations
Work with the congressional delegation to identify potential avenues for federal support, improvements, and parkland dedication for New Orleans parks.	April 2024	Intergovernmental Relations
FUNDING AND FINANCE		
Engage Trust for Public Land or Bureau of Governmental Research to conduct a park finance study.	April 2024	CPPO
Work with the City's grants officer to identify and coordinate critical next steps for specific state and federal grants.	April 2024	CPPO
Fund a cost recovery study to explore the impact of fees at NORDc facilities.	May 2024	NORDc

STRATEGIES AND ACTION ITEMS

BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST

For the first time, the *Big Green Easy* provides the City and Park Partners with a transparent, community-driven framework for citywide park and recreation investments. But many participants in the planning process expressed skepticism that the plan would be implemented or that their input would be reflected in future decision-making.

This section offers recommendations for building public trust through ongoing community-driven project prioritization, transparent design and decision-making processes, reliable park maintenance, and coordination of efforts and resources across park providers.

PARK AND RECREATION INVESTMENT AND DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORKS

Two methodologies developed during the planning process are transparent decision-making tools that can be adapted and used moving forward:

- The Equity Investment Zone map was created using an ArcGIS Pro weighted overlay script, with data inputs and weights that can be adapted to reflect changing community trends or equitable development priorities. The City should continue using the map to prioritize park and recreation investments—and



Big Moves and Action Items: Building Public Trust

Chapter 4

COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

1

Build public trust in parks and recreation.

BIG MOVES



Rethink park and recreation delivery in New Orleans.



Fix the park funding shortfall through new, diverse, leveraged, and creative funding sources and partnerships.



Follow through on previous plans.

potentially other City quality-of-life investments—in areas where they're needed most. The City, with stakeholder input, should revisit the inputs every five years and update as needed.

- The Park and Recreation Prioritization Model can be used as a tool in ArcGIS Pro, connected to the Vision Plan project shapefile, or as a standalone spreadsheet. It includes the community-supported criteria for scoring each Vision Plan project, with projects receiving the highest score given highest investment priority. This tool should be adapted and updated every year by the City as part of a transparent process to rank the park and recreation projects that are proposed for funding in the Capital Improvement Plan and for pursuit of other public funds.

PARK PARTNERS ANNUAL REPORT

This plan recommends the Park Partners—NORDc, Parks and Parkways, Audubon Nature Institute, and City Park Conservancy—jointly publish an annual report documenting the spending of millage dollars and their impact on citywide parks and recreation. This is an important exercise for preserving public support for the existing park and recreation millage and laying the groundwork for support of future park taxes or bonds.

It's also an important exercise for financial reporting and transparency. All Park Partners should clearly track the millage

dollars within their larger organizational budgets.

For example, the City should establish a separate fund code for the park and recreation millage, in order to document that millage funds are being used to support ongoing park and recreation investments supported by the New Orleans community. Millage funds should not replace operational support from the General Fund or otherwise allow the City's park and recreation funding to be diverted elsewhere.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

In the *Big Green Easy* public survey, when asked about the barriers that prevent them from using New Orleans' parks and recreation more often, 24% of respondents chose 'Information—Not sure where to find good information about parks and activities.' For park access and inclusion, New Orleanians must be able to find reliable information about how and where to find parks and recreational programming, and that information should be shared in formats and media that reach and appeal to broad cross-sections of the community. The *Big Green Easy* recommends several new efforts on this front:

- A branding campaign to build a clear and coordinated identity for City parks and recreation and help build public awareness of and support for the system.
- A physical signage and wayfinding campaign to help people find and navigate



Equity Investment Zone Weighted Overlay Map 'Recipe'

Appendix



Park and Recreation Project Prioritization Model

Chapter 4



**Active Parks, Healthy
Cities: Recommendations
from the National Study of
Neighborhood Parks**

City Parks Alliance [external URL]

citywide parks and recreation; learn about park amenities and rules; and celebrate parks' environmental and cultural features. QR codes can be incorporated to also allow visitors to give immediate feedback about park amenities or maintenance needs.

- A digital marketing strategy to help people access up-to-date information on City websites, apps, and social media about park amenities; the status of specific parks, recreation facilities, greenways, and blueways; and upcoming events and programs.

Marketing and signage efforts have paid off in other cities. The *Active Parks, Healthy Cities* study of neighborhood parks by City Parks Alliance found park departments that invested in social media outreach and on-site marketing—such as banners, posters and signs—saw a 62% increase in park users and a 63% increase in physical activity.

PARK DATA AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

In further support of rational and transparent decision-making processes, the City and Park Partners should use data to track and plan for short- and long-term park and recreation needs.

PARK VISITOR DATA AND BEHAVIOR MAPPING

The *Active Parks, Healthy Cities* study found that most neighborhood parks are underused, a fact that only

emerges with data or observation. When park agencies take the time to measure facility use and behavior, the data can make a strong case for where additional investment is needed—often when people are not using a park that is close to them, it's because the park lacks the amenities or character they want or need.

The City and Park Partners can use several tools to track visitation trends in citywide parks:

- Aggregate mobility data from cell phones can be analyzed to get high-level information about how many people are visiting certain parks, when they tend to go, how long they stay, and how far they travel to get there.
- On-the-ground technologies like automatic counters can track the number of trail users, and solar-powered park furnishings can track the number of cellular devices within range.
- Park agencies can lead seasonal volunteer visitor counts and behavior mapping, with standardized forms for tracking park visitation and use patterns. The Systematic Observation of Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) tool allows on-site observations of park amenity condition in addition to visitor behavior.

ASSET MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE AND FIELD INVENTORIES

Data collection can also be used to streamline maintenance operations and plan for future maintenance needs and capital investments.

PARKS AND RECREATION MAINTENANCE BEST PRACTICES

- 1** Convene a working group of park stakeholders and community members to develop new citywide standards for maintenance and quality by park classification, with a particular focus on neighborhood parks.
- 2** Incorporate into all updated management plans—particularly landscape and natural area management plans—recommendations, benchmarks, and performance metrics from local and national guides, such as the New Orleans Reforestation Plan and the Sustainable SITES framework.
- 3** Develop high-level management plans and practices—including timetables for seasonal tasks and anticipated repair and replacement of park assets—for each type of park classification, including greenways and blueways.
- 4** Develop park-specific management plans and timetables for all existing Destination Parks and Preserves, and as part of all future park projects.
- 5** Support maintenance staff through regular training, professional development, and upward mobility.
- 6** Explore organization of maintenance staff by zone and specialty to develop expertise, build community relationships, and instill a sense of ownership.
- 7** Strengthen the system for staff to coordinate park stewardship with volunteers.
- 8** Develop a system to monitor the condition and status of parks and outdoor sites, including with public crowdsourcing data.

The City is pursuing purchase of asset management software that would allow park and recreation staff to track systemwide assets and anticipate maintenance needs and replacement schedules. The asset inventory completed by the planning team can be integrated into this software when available and form a foundation for a Total Asset Management approach to planning and budgeting.

To make the most of this system, staff should also develop Landscape and Facility Assessment programs, whereby staff regularly visit parks and facilities and use standard assessment forms—ideally on geolocated devices that are integrated with the asset management software—to note condition and maintenance needs.

Asset management software can also help staff keep track of where they spend their time, including for:

- Mobilization.
- Tool maintenance.
- Equipment maintenance (or delayed repair/servicing of equipment maintenance orders).
- Time lost as a result of out-of-service or inadequate equipment (double staff in a truck, unable to complete a task).
- Time lost to travel.

Tracking this information can help:

- Evaluate whether the City is meeting maintenance standards, and track any backlog (if applicable).
- Evaluate if added positions are necessary. For example, if too much time is spent on tool

maintenance or lost due to out-of-service vehicles/equipment, it provides strong evidence for an in-house mechanic.

- Identify “problem” areas that require more resources.

MAINTENANCE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

As the City develops an inventory of its assets, landscapes, and facilities and a record of maintenance completed over time, this data can inform the development of estimated maintenance/operating costs, or maintenance impact statements, for all new capital projects. These statements should be developed as part of every design and construction process, with maintenance staff having multiple opportunities to weigh in on the design along with the resources they will need to maintain the new park over time. Historical data and observations from asset management software and the landscape and facility assessments can help staff develop realistic estimates for new staffing and costs associated with new park projects based on their proposed size, character, and amenities.

COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT AND STEWARDSHIP

Building public trust will require ongoing efforts and diligence to ensure that past patterns of disinvestment are not repeated and that all New Orleanians feel connected to their parks and recreation facilities.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The *Big Green Easy* recommends creation of a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to build institutional knowledge, reflect public values, and ensure equity and accountability in park decision-making. This extends not only to provision of park land and facilities but to park operations, maintenance, activation, design, planning—all the elements required to secure an equitable system for all New Orleanians, now and into the future.

POLICY AND RESEARCH WORKING GROUPS

The *Big Green Easy* recommends several areas of future study and development of best practices, including for departmental organization, recreational programming expansion, neighborhood park design and management guidelines, and a natural resource protection plan.

Each is an opportunity to engage small groups of diverse community residents and stakeholders in decision- and policy-making processes that will benefit from their perspectives and expertise.

STEWARDSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The plan also recommends development or improvement of various stewardship and volunteer programs to further leverage community resources and expertise, and to help build meaningful connections between

people and their parks and recreation. These include:

- Exploration of a New Orleans Conservation Corps program that hires and trains young people and veterans in environmental stewardship, environmental education, public engagement, park improvement, and data collection. This could include partnerships with other local park and recreation providers, environmental advocacy organizations, aligned workforce development programs like Louisiana Green Corps, the Orleans School Board, and local colleges and universities.
- Revival of the Park Ambassadors program from the *Big Green Easy* planning process, to build new avenues for people to use and love their parks and recreation facilities. Park Ambassadors can be community leaders who organize park and recreation excursions and programming for new users, with a focus on bringing greater cultural and racial diversity to New Orleans' recreation scene.
- Active support for the development of neighborhood park Friends groups that are actively engaged in the stewardship of their neighborhood parks. The City should provide capacity-building support for the creation and ongoing health of these community-based groups, who can help the City design and maintain neighborhood parks that authentically serve and reflect their communities.



Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Organizational Study Proposals

Chapter 5

Table 9: Action Item Matrix—Building Public Trust

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMEFRAME			
		SHORT TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM	ONGOING
BIG MOVE #1: Rethink park and recreation delivery in New Orleans.					
1.1 With community and consultant support, implement the recommendations of the organizational study proposed in the One-Year Plan to strengthen the strategic alignment and operational efficiencies of NORDc and Parks and Parkways and improve citywide park and recreation delivery.	Office of the Mayor	●			
1.2 Alongside implementation of NORDc and Parks and Parkways organizational improvements, create a Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee of subject matter experts, stakeholders and community members to provide guidance and oversight of City of New Orleans parks and recreation and ongoing plan implementation. Develop sub-committees as needed to inform development of guidelines and decision-making processes that will affect the quality and experience of parks and recreation centers.	Office of the Mayor	●			
1.3 Conduct an organization chart review of NORDc and Parks and Parkways and review all job descriptions to ensure they reflect current position requirements. Conduct a salary review to ensure salary ranges are competitive to recruit and retain staff. Encourage senior staff to be active members of professional park and recreation organizations and to participate in continuing education. Continue to build a staff with education and backgrounds in parks and recreation management, landscape architecture and related fields. Consider removing NORDc from the Civil Service system and adopting progressive human resources policies similar to Audubon Park, City Park and BREC in Baton Rouge.	NORDc Parks and Parkways				●
1.4 Require all City of New Orleans capital projects to identify ongoing management responsibility prior to the master planning and design process, and make maintenance staff an integral part of the design process. Develop a Maintenance Impact Assessment for each project.	Office of the Mayor	●			
1.5 Continue to align internal data and condition assessments with the City asset management software to implement a Total Asset Management system that guides ongoing maintenance and capital investment. Use this system to create regular maintenance calendars, develop capital improvement plans and funding requests, and fund deferred maintenance. Budget annually for deferred maintenance.	NORDc Parks and Parkways				●
1.6 Establish internal systems—such as geofencing at parks or seasonal staff- and volunteer-led behavior mapping—to collect visitor data and understand park and facility usage over time.	NORDc Parks and Parkways	●			
1.7 Revitalize the NORD Foundation.	Office of the Mayor		●		

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMEFRAME			
		SHORT TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM	ONGOING
1.8 Publish an annual 'Park Partners' report that compiles financial and performance reporting from Park Partners, to paint a picture of citywide parks and recreation and build public trust and transparency in how mill dollars are spent. Establish transparent accounting practices and a dedicated City fund code for mill dollars.	Park Partners				●
1.9 Update the Equity Investment Zone mapping tool every five years to ensure data inputs and weights reflect community needs and priorities.	Office of the Mayor				●
1.10 Use the Project Prioritization Model tool as part of annual budgeting and the development of Capital Improvement Plan requests. Update community-supported scoring criteria as part of the regular plan update process.	Office of the Mayor				●
BIG MOVE #2: Fix the park funding shortfall.					
2.1 Begin implementation of the recommendations of the park finance study proposed in the One-Year Plan to identify new funding sources for citywide parks and recreation.	Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO)	●			
2.2 Identify new and creative opportunities for public-private partnerships for parks and recreation in New Orleans, including through leveraging the catalytic site and corridor projects identified in the Office of Economic Development strategic plan.	CPPO	●			
2.3 Work with city grant officers to coordinate efforts and identify where master plans, land acquisitions and other steps are needed to position the City to take advantage of current and future federal dollars for parks, recreation and infrastructure.	Office of the Mayor				●
BIG MOVE #3: Follow through on previous plans.					
3.1 Complete the Lafitte Greenway as envisioned in the greenway master plan document adopted by Council.	Office of the Mayor		●		
3.2 Identify and prioritize proposed Bikeway Blueprint and Complete Streets projects that improve safe routes to parks and fill gaps in the existing and proposed greenway trail network.	Office of the Mayor				●
3.3 Strengthen public-private partnerships to support the implementation and ensure the long-term management, quality, and public benefit of public-private projects such as the Six Flags redevelopment and the revitalization of Pontchartrain Beach and Lincoln Beach.	Office of the Mayor				●

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS FOR ALL

Great neighborhood parks are the anchor of their communities—spaces where people come together for socializing, respite, civic life, and cultural expression as much as for recreation and exercise. They are critical in a city with disparities in car ownership and access to transit and leisure time. The community emphasized throughout the engagement process the importance of this plan in building out a system of neighborhood parks that serve the daily and year-round needs of nearby residents.


Every neighborhood in New Orleans should have a park to call its own, designed to meet its specific needs, with features that authentically amplify its neighborhood character and identity. A city where every neighborhood park is slightly

different, designed in active partnership with community members to ensure their neighbors thrive—that is the bedrock of an equitable park and recreation system.

The following guidelines and best practices can help Park Partners and City staff as they implement the 10-Year Plan recommendations and prioritize neighborhood parks for all.

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK PROGRAM



This plan recommends creation of a City of New Orleans Neighborhood Park Program to guide implementation of this community directive. Dedicated staff support will be needed to oversee the plan recommendation of 61 neighborhood park projects

 **Big Moves and Action
Items: Neighborhood
Parks for All**
Chapter 4

COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

-  **2 Make high-quality neighborhood parks the backbone of the city's park and recreation system.**

BIG MOVES

-  Invest in a system of safe and high-quality neighborhood parks, each of which is tailored through an engagement and design process to the character, needs, and talents of its community.
-  Improve access to quality and inclusive programming, and ensure there is something for everyone in New Orleans parks and recreation centers.



in 10 years—both new parks and significant redevelopment of existing parks—each with a community-driven design process.

Staff responsibilities could include:

- » Tracking and guiding progress on neighborhood park construction and improvement projects.
- » Ensuring that each project follows the community engagement, design, and maintenance guidelines established to guarantee a citywide quality standard for neighborhood parks.
- » Updating neighborhood park capital project lists as needed to meet emerging needs.
- » Cultivating community relationships for authentic design and engagement processes.
- » Building the capacity of community-based organizations and individuals to act as stewards and ambassadors for their neighborhood parks.
- » Ensuring that neighborhood park designs, programming options, and partnerships are tailored to match the needs and wants of specific communities and neighborhood-based cultural traditions.
- » Reporting back to the community, spotlighting beloved neighborhood parks, and finding new ways to connect people to their parks.

At a minimum one full-time position should be charged with oversight of this work, with support from project managers for individual projects.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

More than 80% of New Orleans residents live within a 10-minute walk of a public park or greenspace, but the quality of those spaces varies dramatically. Without

universal standards for park design, a common vision for prioritizing investments, or adequate funding for ongoing care and maintenance, many of those parks and greenspaces lack the characteristics or amenities to function as true neighborhood parks. In a plan survey, only 34% of respondents said they were satisfied with the

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | SAMPLE DESIGN KIT

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 'BUDGET GAME' OPTIONS—What would you prioritize at your neighborhood park given a limited budget?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic shelter or pavilion | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature play | <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Splash pad | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickleball court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skatespot features | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis court |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog run features | <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball/softball backstop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> What else? |

BASE AMENITIES AT NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS—The minimal features of every neighborhood park.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water fountains | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seating | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fitness equipment |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Picnic tables | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walking loop |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public art | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flexible lawn |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dark Sky Friendly lighting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wayfinding and interpretive signage |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trash and recycling | |

quantity and quality of parkland in their neighborhood.

This plan calls for the development of Neighborhood Park Design and Management Guidelines to:

- » Require a community-driven engagement and design process for new parks and park reinvestment projects.
- » Establish citywide standards for neighborhood park amenities—such as product longevity and standard design and material details—and site design—including a minimum fee for design and engagement, typically 10% of the anticipated construction cost.
- » Establish citywide standards for neighborhood park maintenance.
- » Build support for the City maintenance positions and

dollars needed to care for neighborhood parks over time.

- » Establish care guidelines and capacity-building programs to support volunteer stewardship efforts in neighborhood parks.

ENGAGEMENT AND DESIGN TOOLKIT

Great neighborhood park design is not design-driven—it results from a robust community visioning process that captures the specific activities, facilities, amenities, and 'look and feel' the community wants from its park. Designers translate this vision into site plans and material proposals that are vetted again with neighborhood residents, to work collaboratively toward a final design with community support.



The Budget Game (left) invites community members to distribute limited resources to the park features they value most. Visual preference boards (center) allow people to vote on park elements and aesthetics. The Chip Game (right) allows the community to place the park elements they want on the actual park site—when overlaid, the resulting heat map shows the kinds of features that residents want, and where they want them.

This plan recommends the City and its partners develop a neighborhood park engagement and design toolkit that can streamline this process while ensuring a baseline quality standard for both community engagement and neighborhood park design and amenities.

The development of reusable survey and activity templates could help to jumpstart these processes, provide basic quality control, and free up resources that otherwise would be spent on process and material planning to be focused elsewhere—community-specific outreach, stipends for artists and community leaders, and community event expenses such as meals, entertainment, childcare, and translation services.

SITE AND DESIGN STANDARDS

For future neighborhood park projects, this plan emphasizes the importance of:

- » Taking care with site selection or existing site analysis, to be sure site conditions and context can accommodate the type of facility envisioned there. The City should be selective in adding park sites to the system. Even excellent design and maintenance can't guarantee a great neighborhood park on a site that is too small, floodprone, or hemmed in by railroads or highways.
- » Making future park design and reinvestment decisions as part of a rational and transparent decision-making

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | SITE SELECTION STANDARDS

Does the site meet these basic standards?

- ☐ Is there a sizeable residential population within a 10-minute walk of the site? Would a park here help to fill a park watershed or service gap?
- ☐ Does the site have opportunities for safe walkable, bikeable and rollable access on multiple edges?
- ☐ Is the site big enough (ideally at least two acres) to function as a neighborhood park? Will the site soils, topography and drainage allow for a mix of spaces, from open and flexible to intimate and enclosed?
- ☐ Does the site have opportunities for active site edges—such as restaurants and shops—and strong connections to nearby schools, libraries and other community destinations?
- ☐ Is the site already owned by the City or a public or private partner?
- ☐ Are there opportunities to protect or restore natural resources? To protect or restore a cultural landscape?

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK | DESIGN STANDARDS

Does the park design create a welcoming entry experience?

- ☐ Are there multiple park entries to collect visitors from multiple directions?
- ☐ Are the park edges open, welcoming and beautiful, with clear views into the park and site entries?
- ☐ Do the park entrances have bike racks and good access by sidewalk and crosswalks?
- ☐ Is there an appropriate amount of parking for cars?

Does the park design celebrate and protect nature?

- ☐ What percent of the park acreage has tree canopy? Gardens? Naturalized areas?
- ☐ Are there big trees (or trees that will grow to be big) where they're needed to provide shade?
- ☐ Is stormwater captured and cleaned on-site through green infrastructure?
- ☐ Is the park beautiful?

Does the park design encourage people to use the space?

- ☐ Are there basic amenities—like playgrounds, flexible seating, shade, concessions, picnic tables and restrooms—that encourage people to linger, rest and socialize?
- ☐ Are there basic amenities—like walking paths, flexible fields and multi-generational fitness equipment—that encourage people to be active?

Does the park design promote access and inclusion?

- ☐ Are entries, paths and equipment accessible to ADA standards?
- ☐ Are park features like signage and fitness equipment intuitive to understand and use?
- ☐ Is there adequate space or facilities for the specific activities the neighborhood wants?
- ☐ Are the park edges and access routes safe and attractive for multiple types of users?

Does the park design promote safety?

- ☐ Is there adequate (and Dark Sky Friendly) lighting?
- ☐ Are there open sight lines within the park and beyond its edges?
- ☐ Are there facilities and programming to ensure that plenty of people are using the park at different times of the day, week and year?
- ☐ Are there active uses around the park edges?

Does the park design provide for ongoing care and sustainability?

- ☐ Are there adequate receptacles and signage for trash and recycling?
- ☐ Is there a coordinated management plan for City staff and volunteers?
- ☐ Is there adequate programming, visibility and stewardship to ensure eyes on the park?
- ☐ Are the park materials and equipment durable and sustainable?



Equity Investment Zone Weighted Overlay Map 'Recipe'

Appendix

framework, and in response to an adequately funded design and engagement process. The type of parks envisioned in the plan and by the New Orleans community can only be achieved through thoughtful and adequately funded park design, construction, and maintenance.

The checklists above—compiled from sources including National Recreation and Park Association, AARP, and City Parks Alliance—are a starting point for a standardized quality control system that should become the norm for every future neighborhood park project.

PARK EQUITY

Equity in the *Big Green Easy* is a commitment to justice, fairness, and the premise that everyone deserves access to great public parks and recreation.

This means a park and recreation system that is tailored to meet the unique needs of New Orleans' communities, looking beyond parks as a system of 'green shapes on a map' and ensuring that:

- Each park is equipped and maintained to be well-loved and well-used by its neighbors.
- Sidewalks, bike paths, greenways, and transit are provided and designed so all residents can easily reach parks.
- There are no longer disparities in the quantity or condition of parks depending on where you live.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach, as proposed *Big Green Easy* projects and actions seek to create a system with

facilities and programming that are accessible, inclusive, just, and welcoming for all.

EQUITY INVESTMENT ZONES

The citywide projects and investments recommended in the Vision Plan are prioritized in areas identified as Equity Investment Zones (Figure 5). The planning team worked with City staff, Park Partners, and stakeholders to develop a mapping methodology that identifies those parts of the city with a history of environmental degradation, historical underinvestment in parks and other public improvements, and greater need for the life-changing benefits of parks.

The equity mapping methodology, described in more detail in the appendix, considers equity through the lenses of Environmental Justice, Socioeconomics, and Public Health. This model can be adapted over time and helps ensure the projects prioritized in the 10-Year Plan meet the plan's stated goals of park, recreation, and environmental justice and fairness.

GETTING AHEAD OF PARK-RELATED DISPLACEMENT

Proposed park and greenway development increasingly is met with skepticism in communities affected by gentrification or investment-driven displacement. There is a growing body of research devoted to 'green gentrification'—the effect of new parks in driving up rents and home values, forcing out residents who can no longer afford to live in the neighborhood they've called home.

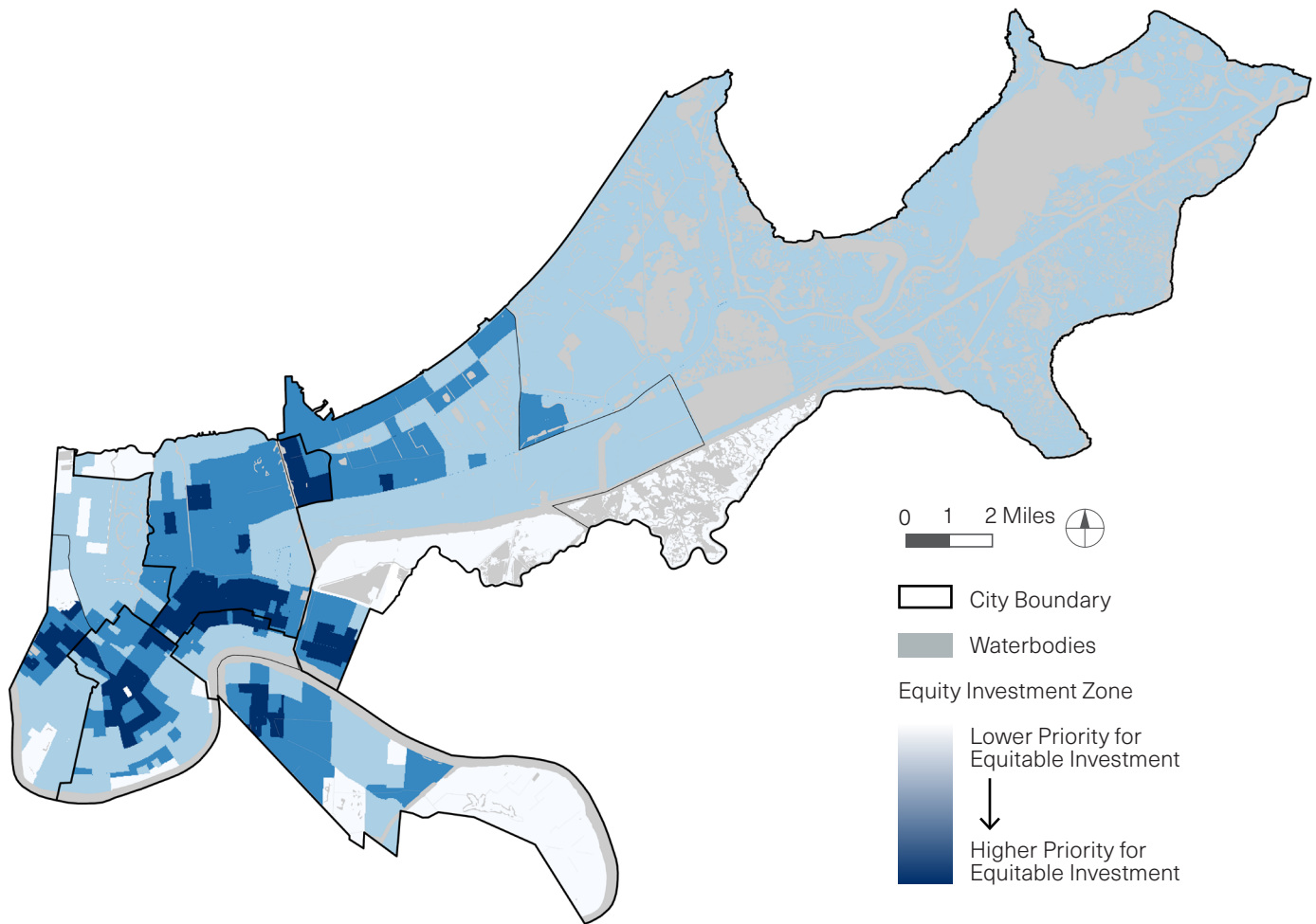


Figure 5: Park and Recreation Equity Investment Zones

Neighborhood change and new investment affect communities in diverse and complicated ways, and persistent lack of investment can just as easily lead to displacement. As part of its larger focus on equity, authentic neighborhood parks, and place-based economic development, the *Big Green Easy* recommends establishment of a City and partner working group to study this dynamic issue, review research and best practices from other cities, and develop a multidisciplinary strategy that's suited to New Orleans.

Other plan recommendations reflect universal standards for equitable development that the City and its partners can follow in

the interim. At the heart of all these recommendations is the importance of meaningful engagement with existing residents, along with community-led design and planning processes in areas facing new park or housing development. By working hand in hand with existing communities and being proactive with housing and economic development programs, such as those overseen by the Housing Authority of New Orleans, the Office of Community Assets and Investments, and the Office of Economic Development, the City can ensure that park and greenway improvements benefit rather than displace longtime residents.

- **Greening without Gentrification: Learning from Parks-Related Anti-Displacement Strategies Nationwide**
Institute of the Environment and Sustainability at UCLA [external URL]
- **Displacement Avoidance Strategy Memorandum**
Los Angeles Regional and Open Space Park District [external URL]

PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

The planning team heard during the engagement process that of all the benefits of parks and recreation, New Orleanians value most highly the potential for their parks and recreation facilities to promote health and wellness and to serve the day-to-day social, recreational, and cultural needs of their immediate communities.

To realize this vision, people should feel at home at their parks and recreation centers. They must be able to physically access their parks, and feel safe and welcome when they get there. The local park and recreation center should "fit" the neighborhood context and character, and events and programming held there should be tailored to meet the needs, interests, and talents of neighbors.

UNIVERSAL PARK DESIGN

- 1** Welcome all park visitors with open park edges, clearly marked and ADA-accessible entries, and safe connections to nearby transit stops, intersections, and other community destinations.
- 2** Plant and maintain trees and plants to provide shade, wildlife habitat, and beauty while preserving visibility.
- 3** Provide park amenities that are desired by the community and designed for visitors of all physical and cognitive abilities.
- 4** Follow design principles—such as open sight lines, active edges, and high-quality lighting—that promote real and perceived safety.
- 5** Offer a variety of spaces—open and enclosed, vibrant and peaceful, programmed and passive—for activity and rest, to serve visitors of diverse ages, interests, abilities, and sensory experiences.
- 6** Maintain park spaces and facilities to keep them safe from hazards and address graffiti, trash, and overgrown plants.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Many of New Orleans' existing parks lack basic accessibility features, such as clear entry signage or ADA-accessible entries and paths. The *Big Green Easy* calls for a Universal and Inclusive Design Audit and Feasibility Study of existing parks to capture the scope of the challenge and prioritize improvements.

The table below calls out basic principles for universal park design—or park design that accommodates and welcomes visitors of diverse ages, abilities,

backgrounds, and experiences. These should be incorporated into the proposed New Orleans Neighborhood Park Design and Management Guidelines and reflected in every future park improvement project.

PARK SAFETY

In the first plan survey, 26% of respondents said they don't feel safe in New Orleans parks or park-based activities. This is a significant barrier to park and recreation use. The table below lists some of the best practices

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING FOR PARK SAFETY

1

In park design and retrofits, include elements that communicate a place is cared-for—including landscaping, public art, and signage. Also design for open sight lines and visibility—including Dark Sky-friendly lighting and the design and maintenance of landscapes with open sight lines in high-activity areas.

2

Maintain parks to preserve open sight lines and neat edges and to remove litter or graffiti.

3

Offer a variety of on-site programming and activities that keep the park active and well-used throughout the day and week.

4

Work with other City departments to ensure the neighborhood around the park edges is active and vibrant, through public and commercial uses and safe and comfortable streetscapes.

5

Cultivate a sense of community ownership over the park through stewardship and conservation corps programs.

for design and programming that can promote safety—both real and perceived—to make more people feel welcome and comfortable in New Orleans parks. Neighbors should be given space to explore these concerns and possible solutions, which will look different for every community, during the

design and engagement process for each neighborhood park.

PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVATION

The planning team heard in focus groups and stakeholder interviews that even with the variety of programming offered by NORDc and its public and private

PARK PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVATION

- 1** Nationwide, seniors comprise 18% of the population but only 4% of neighborhood park users. This population stands to benefit from the health and social benefits of park programming—such as walking clubs and dance classes—and can offer the system expertise and stewardship in return.
- 2** Park programming and experiences in nature are crucial to child development. Programs for children should promote physical coordination, social interaction, and environmental stewardship, and in the summer should offer free lunch programs.
- 3** Park programming for teenagers, particularly in the evening and during the summer, can provide free and engaging experiences when there are few other options.
- 4** Park programming for people of diverse physical and cognitive abilities should be designed alongside disability communities and advocates to be meaningful and inclusive.
- 5** Park Ambassadors can be recruited as community leaders who design and lead park and recreation excursions for underrepresented communities and people with no previous recreation experience.

partners, there is great unmet demand for additional park-based and recreational programming tailored to specific New Orleans communities.

Active Parks, Healthy Cities: Recommendations from the National Study of Neighborhood Parks—a 2018 report by City Parks Alliance—found that nothing increases park use and physical activity as much as programming. The survey found that for each supervised activity added to a neighborhood park, park use increased by 48% and physical activity by 37%.

Though many New Orleans residents love and rely on the programming offered by NORDc, there are structural and organizational obstacles to delivering the highest standard of programming. Park activation and recreational programming can reach a new level of quality and service with a few system updates, improved communication and outreach, and increased investment.

The *Big Green Easy* recommends:

- In partnership with the Neighborhood Park Program, developing a strong network of programming providers and booster clubs, many of which have yet to bounce back fully following the Covid-19 pandemic. These groups should be convened to offer perspective on community recreational and programming needs, and possible system improvements to better coordinate physical facility maintenance and

scheduling. This input should also inform efforts to develop a formal partnership framework for volunteer groups and programming providers.

- Development of an online, mobile-friendly scheduling system that allows programming providers and clubs to schedule facilities and gives the general community a reliable source of information about programs, events, and the status of park and recreation facilities.
- Convening task forces to represent and speak to the specific needs and wishes of user groups that were identified during the engagement process as in need of new and improved programming—including youth, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- Administering a citywide scientific survey every five years to keep a finger on the pulse of recreation needs from neighborhood to neighborhood.










Active Parks, Healthy Cities: Recommendations from the National Study of Neighborhood Parks

City Parks Alliance [external URL]

Table 10: Action Item Matrix—Neighborhood Parks for All

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMEFRAME				
		SHORT TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM	ONGOING	
BIG MOVE #4: Invest in distinctive, safe and high-quality neighborhood parks.						
4.1	Continue to support the Neighborhood Park Program proposed in the One-Year Plan to spotlight beloved neighborhood parks; steward, share progress and rally support for neighborhood park reinvestment projects; and find new ways to connect people to their parks.	NORDc Parks and Parkways				
4.2	Regularly assess and update the Neighborhood Park Design and Management Guidelines proposed in the One-Year Plan, to ensure they serve staff needs and continue to set a citywide quality standard for the planning process, amenities, and ongoing management and upkeep of neighborhood parks.					
4.3	Establish a partnership framework and best practices for empowering and supporting Friends of Parks groups and other community-based organizations that can act as stewards and ambassadors for their neighborhood parks, including development of easy-to-use templates and processes for establishing Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperative Endeavor Agreements.	Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO)				
4.4	Convene a City and partner working group to study the issue of park-related displacement and develop a proactive, multidisciplinary strategy.	CPPO				
4.5	Launch a Safe Routes to Parks program with Transportation, Public Works and Health Department. At three to five pilot neighborhood parks in Equity Investment Zone priority areas, conduct a ‘Walk Audit’ with community residents and leaders and document improvements needed—such as traffic calming, sidewalk repairs and crosswalks—to promote safe community access. Implement the improvements and explore expanding the program.	Office of the Mayor				
4.6	Work with Housing Authority of New Orleans to ensure that every housing development includes or has walkable/rollable access to a high-quality park.	Office of the Mayor				
BIG MOVE #5: Improve access to quality and inclusive programming.						
5.1	Begin to rebuild or create new partnerships with programming providers to expand programming access and options citywide. Develop updated Cooperative Endeavor Agreement templates, scheduling systems and other system improvements to lower barriers and allow these providers to easily coordinate offerings across shared facilities.	CPPO				

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMEFRAME			
		SHORT TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM	ONGOING
5.2 Work with public and private partners to develop a strategy to increase park- and recreation center-based programming that is relevant, appealing and easily accessible, with a particular focus on young people, seniors and people with disabilities.	NORDc Parks and Parkways				
5.3 Revive the Big Green Easy Park Ambassador program, with a focus on hiring community leaders to develop programming, material rentals, or events that connect underrepresented communities to parks and recreation opportunities.	Office of the Mayor				
5.4 Explore new grant and donor funding opportunities to support, improve and expand NORDc programming options, hours and quality. Implement the recommendations of the fee structure and cost recovery system study proposed in the One-Year Plan to support these efforts. Implement an access pass program to provide free access for households based on SNAP eligibility; publicize the access pass program widely and in partnership with other entities such as schools, libraries and places of worship.	NORDc				
5.5 Complete a Universal and Inclusive Design Audit and Feasibility Study of existing City of New Orleans parks to capture the scope of the accessibility challenge and prioritize improvements.	CPPO				
5.6 Complete a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy that increases public awareness of NORDc and Parks and Parkways facilities and programming, including a new and improved website, app and bulletin system to make it easier for people to find consolidated, up-to-date information about park sites, facilities, programming, hours of operation, park rules, events and opportunities. Eliminate 'lack of information' as a barrier to use.	CPPO				
5.7 Focus NORDc's programming infrastructure at designated district- or community-level parks with the facilities and acreage to accommodate robust programs with extended hours; appropriate equipment and safety measures; and strong staff, coaching and administrative support. Ensure these facilities are distributed citywide for access by walking, biking and transit.	NORDc				
5.8 Administer a scientific survey on neighborhood and citywide programming needs every five years.	NORDc				

PARKS AS ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

High-quality park systems bolster public health, community cohesion, and resilience. Their interconnected landscapes cool the city, absorb and clean stormwater, shelter urban wildlife, and connect people to each other and their parks. They make neighborhoods more beautiful and elevate the day-to-day experience of the city.

Parks and recreation centers in New Orleans can serve multiple functions—with adaptable spaces and programming that support everyday quality of life, in addition to the recovery and healing that are needed in the midst of tragedy, flood, heat wave, or pandemic.

This section highlights some of the ways that park and recreation investments can be aligned with other essential public infrastructure investments to yield significant community benefits.

PARK AND RECREATION RESILIENCE HUBS

New Orleans' recreation center and park projects should seek to follow the design guidelines and principles of the 'Resilience Hub' model created by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), a national peer-to-peer network of local government professionals.

USDN defines Resilience Hubs as "community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life. ... They provide an opportunity to effectively work at the nexus of community resilience, emergency management, climate change mitigation, and social equity while also providing opportunities for communities to


➔ **Big Moves and Action Items: Parks and Recreation as Essential Infrastructure**
Chapter 4


COMMUNITY DIRECTIVE

- 3

Elevate the city's parks and recreation centers as essential infrastructure.

BIG MOVES

- 

Create a park and recreation system that bolsters the cultural, recreational, environmental, social and economic lives of the city.
- 

Continue to invest in iconic parks, and create the next generation of destination parks that celebrate New Orleans' distinct cultural identities and landscapes.

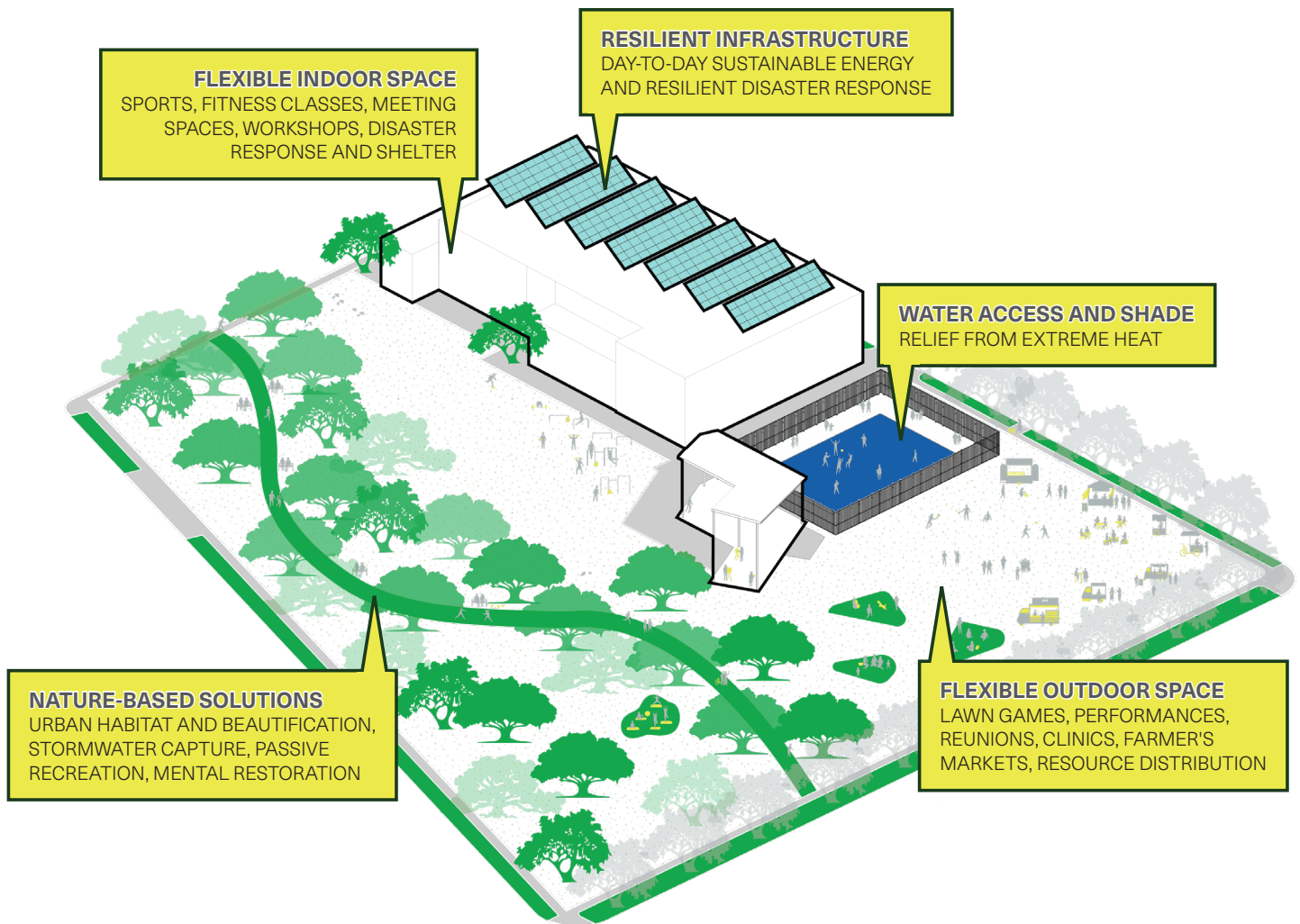


Figure 6: 'Resilience Hub' model for New Orleans parks and recreation centers

become more self-determining, socially connected, and successful before, during, and after disruptions."

This approach calls for parks and recreation centers with:

1. A diversity of facilities and programming designed to strengthen the health and social resilience of communities during the >99% of the time when acute disaster is not at hand, along with
2. Resilient and sustainable infrastructure that gives neighbors a safe place to shelter, charge, meet and recover when disaster does strike.

This multifunctional vision of parks and recreation centers aligns with feedback the planning team heard during focus groups, workshops, stakeholder interviews and canvassing. New Orleanians want their parks and recreation centers to act as hubs and lifelines that bring people together, spotlight and celebrate culture, and promote physical activity in addition to providing access to nutritious food, medical care, and job training.

The Resilience Hub model is adaptable to unique sites and communities, and the USDN provides frameworks and exercises to help designers identify



Guide to Developing Resilience Hubs

Urban Sustainability Directors Network [external URL]

the types of spaces and functions that are the best fit.

New Orleans and communities around the world face instability and ever-more-extreme impacts of a changing climate. The Resilience Hub model can help the city's parks and recreation centers do their part to safeguard community health and wellbeing.

integrated into park design. As a minimum target, every site should accommodate all stormwater falling on the park in a 10-year storm. Any additional storage, either for greater storm events or from surrounding neighborhoods, would be *lagniappe*. Some types of parks—such as nature preserves and certain destination parks—will have greater capacity for storage than others—such as smaller sites with recreation centers. The *Big Green Easy* recommends that the City park and recreation entities work with Sewerage and Water to establish design guidelines and realistic per-acre stormwater storage goals by park classification.

FUNDING AND MAINTENANCE

Given the current financial condition and needs of the New Orleans parks and recreation system, the retrofitting of stormwater storage into existing parks cannot be borne by current NORDc or Parks and Parkways budgets. However, the City could adopt a stormwater impact fee to support green infrastructure efforts by multiple coordinated entities. Baton Rouge and many other cities around the country have such an impact fee and are making great strides in addressing their resilience needs.

Finding capital dollars to make these stormwater storage improvements is one challenge; attention must also be given to ongoing maintenance of green infrastructure improvements.

PARK STORMWATER GOALS AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

The need to capture and hold stormwater during extreme rain events is of major importance to the city's health and its residents' peace of mind. Parks and greenspaces are logical places to look for stormwater storage opportunities, and previous resilience and water plans have highlighted this opportunity.

However, stormwater storage in parks must be done in such a way that park improvements are not damaged by standing water, or rendered unusable after rain events.

PARK STORMWATER STORAGE GOALS

In discussion with Sewerage and Water Board staff, there is no “magic number” in terms of the amount of water that should be stored within parks and greenspace. The need for storage is so great that any stormwater storage is of help to the city's drainage system.

For all new park projects, stormwater storage should be

→ Urban Water @ 10
[external URL]

→ City of New Orleans
Office of Resilience and
Sustainability
[external URL]



New or proposed stormwater parks, like Mirabeau Water Gardens, must be planned from the outset with maintenance staff as key design collaborators. This plan recommends that such parks be permitted and built only after maintenance responsibility is assigned.

There is also a great need in the city for personnel trained to maintain constructed wetlands, rain gardens, and other green infrastructure facilities. Existing facilities have lost storage capacity when not properly maintained. Educational programs and workforce training, such as the National Disaster Resilience Workforce Development Program, must be strengthened for existing and future staff and contractors.

Different types of landscapes have varying abilities to store stormwater. While developed parkland can be effective, the maintenance and restoration of the city's urban tree canopy and the protection of natural lands with richer vegetative cover than mowed parklands also play a key role in stormwater management. Again, management is critical to protect the storage function of such landscapes, and in populated contexts to prevent passive parks from becoming overgrown and labeled "eyesores" by community members.

PARKS AND PUBLIC HEALTH

High-quality, programmed, and abundant parks and greenspace are critical for community health.

The *Big Green Easy* vision for expanded neighborhood park and greenway access, increased tree canopy and urban habitat, and walkable, bikeable, rollable communities will promote health and wellness for all New Orleanians.

CHRONIC DISEASE

The City should continue to work with the Health Department to explore ways that the park system can support broader public health initiatives—for example, by hosting community gardens and farmer's markets; integrating food assistance programs into park spaces and events; hosting wellness fairs; developing programs for populations at risk of social isolation; investing in equipment, education, and representation to remove barriers from participation; and connecting people to local health providers through programs such as 'Walk with a Doc.'

Such initiatives have a measurable impact on improving community health outcomes and addressing chronic disease, such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

CLIMATE IMPACTS

The *Big Green Easy* recommendations can help support broader, ongoing City and partner efforts to mitigate the health consequences of rising temperatures, extreme rain events, poor air quality, and other impacts of a warming climate. For example:

- The City should set a target of minimum 50% tree canopy coverage for the park system.

Increased tree canopy, vegetative cover, and green infrastructure will help improve air quality and mitigate the impacts of extreme heat in addition to holding stormwater during extreme rain events.

- The Resilience Hub model for parks and recreation centers can support recommendations to provide places of refuge during extreme weather—whether for people whose homes have been damaged by wind or flood, or for residents needing relief from daytime extreme heat.
- The plan's focus on renovating swimming pools and creating new public water access will also offer new ways for New Orleanians to find relief from the heat.
- Expansion and better maintenance of green infrastructure will prevent standing water and avoid the creation of breeding sites for disease-carrying mosquitos.

BROWNFIELDS AND SOIL HEALTH

New Orleans' industrial legacy includes thousands of acres of contaminated land, often tucked within or adjacent to the city's lower-income communities and communities of color. As they stand, these brownfield sites are eyesores, liabilities, and public health risks. For people who live near them, they can be daily reminders of past environmental injustice.

New Orleans is far from the only city in the country with such a

➔ [New Orleans Reforestation Plan](#)
SOUL [external URL]

➔ [New Orleans Health Department](#)
[external URL]

➔ [City of New Orleans Office of Resilience and Sustainability](#)
[external URL]

➔ [National Recreation and Park Association 'Health and Wellness' Toolkits and Community Resources](#)
[external URL]



Plan for Generational Economic Transformation

Office of Economic Development
[external URL]

legacy, and there are countless success stories of communities cleaning up these lands and converting them to beautiful parks and greenspaces. The City's Brownfield Coordinator oversees coordination and funding opportunities with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other entities to address and prioritize New Orleans' brownfield sites. The *Big Green Easy* recommends a close working partnership with the coordinator, the Office of Community Assets and Investment, and the Office of Economic Development to explore opportunities for phytoremediation—or using plants to clean contaminated soils—and adaptive use of these sites for greenspace and parks.

Designated brownfields are far from the only contaminated sites in the city. Other sites certainly contain lead and other pollutants depending on previous use. Soil testing and historical research should be used to verify the safety of park sites—or establish the need for remediation—wherever doubt exists about the health of parkland soil and groundwater.

GUN VIOLENCE

A growing body of research supports the utility of robust youth programming in breaking cycles of community violence. As the New Orleans community reels from the effects of gun violence, the city's parks and recreation centers can create diverse, engaging, and positive programming that provides safe and constructive spaces for young people.

Programming with the greatest potential impact to reduce violence should be offered at multiple times of the day, week, and year, including nighttime and summer programming.

The transformation of vacant lots into modest pocket parks or community gardens has also been shown to improve real and perceived safety in communities with high levels of blight and vacancy.

PARKS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are many opportunities to align and leverage the recommendations of the *Big Green Easy* with those in the 2023 *Plan for Generational Economic Transformation* from the Office of Economic Development, including:

- The role of neighborhood parks in promoting quality of life within place-based economic development frameworks.
- The potential for park, recreation, and greenspace projects to be funded by Tax Increment Financing established through the new strategic Economic Development District policy and pilot program.
- The opportunity to align the plan's identified catalytic sites and corridors with those identified in the *Big Green Easy*, colocating parks and greenspace as part of all future public-private development.
- Promoting local benefits of ecotourism and cultural tourism.
- Promoting workforce development in green



Figure 7: Priority Areas, Districts and Corridors in the City's *Plan for Generational Economic Transformation*



infrastructure and resilience jobs, and offering parks and recreation centers as hubs for training and programs.

parks and recreation centers without having to drive, a goal with multiple benefits for individual and community health.

This presents a challenge in some communities where highways, railroads, canals, and other obstacles create unsafe connections or impossible barriers.

Because the last half-mile to parks and trailheads can be so important for access, the *Big Green Easy* proposes that the City launch a Park Walk Audit program. Community leaders, residents, City staff, and elected officials would get together to walk the half-mile radius of existing and future park sites; make note of needed improvements; and

PARKS AND CONNECTIVITY

Large and interconnected park systems can support multi-scaled community benefits, from regional habitat protection to cross-city bike trail connections to beautiful and comfortable walks in the neighborhood.

SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS

A Safe Routes to Parks program would focus City efforts on making it easier for more New Orleanians to safely and comfortably reach



Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework

National Recreation and Park Association [external URL]



Design and Programming Guidelines for Park Safety

Chapter 4



develop a strategy of short- and long-term investments to improve safe routes to specific parks. The Walk Audit program could be piloted at parks located in Equity Investment Zones, with a focus on parks serving nearby populations of children or seniors.

The half-mile park radius offers a useful focus for potential new connectivity plans and investments, and for prioritizing previously proposed Complete Streets, bikeway, sidewalk, or other mobility projects.

PARK, TRAIL, AND URBAN HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

By supporting the protection of wetlands and woodlands and

locating proposed greenway and blueway projects along New Orleans' citywide corridors, the *Big Green Easy* creates a framework for protecting critical habitat, keeping future development out of harm's way, and expanding the city's greenway and blueway network along trails that will be shaded and beautiful.

The many benefits of this approach have been demonstrated in natural-resource-driven greenway systems across the country. From an ecological standpoint, generally speaking, the larger and better connected the landscape, the better it's able to protect biodiversity and accommodate species and ecosystem adaptation in the face of threats. From a

public access and recreational standpoint, a regional system of protected lands and trail corridors is the foundation for a spectacular recreation environment and for new greenways that connect more

people to each other, to nature, and to citywide destinations.

The *Big Green Easy* recommends development of greenway design and corridor management guidelines within a Parks and

PARK AND PRESERVE STEWARDSHIP

- 1** Build staff expertise and efficiencies by comprehensively addressing management needs—such as invasive species and erosion control—by park land typology—such as grassland, wetland, or cypress forest.
- 2** Develop comprehensive guidelines based on industry standards — such as the American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability, the Sustainable SITES Initiative and restoration practices defined by the U.S. Forest Service and Environmental Protection Agency.
- 3** Develop a system whereby specialized teams of natural area managers are supported by trained volunteers, and identify those less specialized maintenance needs that can be outsourced.
- 4** Use the City asset management system to collect and manage data about site conditions over time.
- 5** Place Nature Destination Park sites under conservation easements, and develop standards for easements that are site-specific and purpose-based, with baseline data and ongoing monitoring.
- 6** Create visitor, education, and volunteer programs that cultivate positive natural experiences and a citywide stewardship ethic.
- 7** Create and deploy an integrated pest management program.

Natural Resources Plan. These guidelines should support future City and partner efforts to maximize the human and environmental benefits of the greenway system—for example, with best practices for safe multi-user trail design and wayfinding; aligning trails outside of waterbody buffers and away from sensitive or hazardous environments; and protecting water quality, habitat, and the free movement of wildlife.

PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES PLAN

The *Big Green Easy* recommends development of a Parks and Natural Resources Plan as a reference guide and blueprint for helping the City manage its current and future passive parks, nature preserves, native planting areas, nature-based stormwater solutions, and greenways and blueways.

The Parks and Natural Resources Plan should inform the City's approach to land preservation, restoration, and management at multiple scales and in diverse park and public realm contexts, from conservation lands and destination parks to neutral grounds and pocket parks. Plan development should be overseen by the Park Partners in partnership with other City departments and with insight and review from environmental and park stakeholders.

As the City does more to preserve open space, provide water access, restore landscapes, and expand beautiful and functional planting and tree canopy at parks and in the public realm, the Parks and

Natural Resources Plan will help the City and its partners develop and maintain these projects so that they meet their stated habitat, water quality, cooling, beautification, recreation, and other goals over time.

Stewardship entails a comprehensive, sustainable, and adaptable approach to land management that secures a property or project's environmental or conservation values over time.

For example, the *Big Green Easy* identifies 14 City-owned vacant properties to be set aside as Nature Destination Parks with protected landscapes and waterbodies and limited, strategic public access. To ensure these sites serve the highest and best public use over time, the City and its partners need stewardship policies, passive recreation design guidelines, adequate staffing levels, and site metrics and management best practices. As with other City parks, Nature Destination Parks should be more than 'green shapes on a map'—they need the right levels of protection and management to meet the community's critical environmental and recreational needs.

Table 11: Action Item Matrix—Parks and Recreation as Essential Infrastructure

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMEFRAME			
		SHORT TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM	ONGOING
BIG MOVE #6: Create a resilient and beautiful park system.					
6.1	Adopt park design standards that enumerate stormwater storage goals per acre by park classification for new park development and reinvestment projects. At a minimum, every park should capture stormwater that falls on-site; more natural sites will have the most ambitious stormwater goals. Incorporate park storage goals into updated citywide resilience plans and flood modeling.	Chief Park Planning Officer (CPPO)			
6.2	Based on size and context, identify existing parks that should be dedicated as passive greenspace rather than active recreation. Make this the first step toward a comprehensive urban habitat system that delivers citywide benefits—shade, biodiversity, beauty, and clean air and water—while supporting flood mitigation.	CPPO			
6.3	Incorporate the design guidelines and principles of the Resilience Hub model into all park and recreation projects, particularly recreation centers and neighborhood parks.	NORDc Parks and Parkways			
6.4	Consolidate management of citywide passive greenspaces and stormwater BMPs under trained, expert teams. Develop management standards in coordination with all Park Partners, Sewerage and Water Board, New Orleans Redevelopment Authority and Public Works.	Office of the Mayor			
6.5	Work with the Office of Economic Development to expand and improve green infrastructure and resilience workforce development programs with career pipelines for City parks and recreation.	Office of the Mayor			
6.6	Create a Parks and Natural Resources Plan as a reference guide and blueprint for management of citywide passive parks, nature preserves, native planting areas, nature-based stormwater solutions, and greenway and blueway corridors. Provide planting, soil and management guidelines at multiple scales, and define metrics for habitat, water quality, cooling, recreation and other goals.	CPPO			
6.7	Set a goal of minimum 50% tree canopy coverage for park sites, and leverage programs and partnerships to plant and care for trees.	Office of the Mayor			
6.8	Identify ways that the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance can be strengthened to protect natural areas, generate funding for parks, and encourage compatible development at park perimeters.	City Planning Commission			
6.9	With the Office of Community Assets and Investment, convene City, School Board, Housing Authority, Sewerage and Water and other public and private institutions for a coordinated review of vacant or surplus landholdings to determine highest and best use, including identification of suitable lands for parks, open space and resilience and colocation of public amenities such as parks, housing and schools. Repeat this exercise every three to five years.	Office of the Mayor			
6.10	Protect and restore the open space along the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, creating significant new habitat and passive park space and bringing Bayou Sauvage into the heart of the city.	Office of the Mayor			

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	TIMEFRAME			
		SHORT TERM	MID TERM	LONG TERM	ONGOING
6.11 Create a citywide stormwater detention policy whereby fees from new development that can't capture stormwater on-site support a dedicated fund for parks and recreation.	City Planning Commission		●		
6.12 Locate parks and open spaces to address New Orleans' industrial legacy – transforming contaminated sites and eyesores into community-serving parks and open space. Work with city, state and regional coordinators to navigate the regulatory environment and identify opportunities for brownfield redevelopment projects to include restored open space and parkland.	Office of the Mayor				●
6.13 Realize a vision for interconnected and continuous greenway trails and linear parks that follow bayous, canals, levees, highway underpasses, former railroads and other corridors; build on bike and pedestrian planning; and connect to regional trails beyond the city limits to adjacent cities and parishes.	Office of the Mayor			●	
6.14 Realize a vision for blueway trails along New Orleans' bayous and canals. Create new opportunities, such as classes and free boat rentals, for people to safely and freely access water recreation.	Office of the Mayor			●	
6.15 Create a framework to minimize commercialization along the river, protect free access and ensure views and public use. Create a system of 'Fly' parks that build easy access to river and bayou views and recreation for people across the city, including new park sites along levees and at former industrial riverfront sites.	Office of the Mayor				●
BIG MOVE #7: Continue to invest in iconic parks and landscapes.					
7.1 Create a dual pricing structure for park rentals, permits and other fees, whereby New Orleans residents pay discounted or sliding-scale fees relative to out-of-town visitors.	CPPO	●			
7.2 Commission a study of New Orleans' cultural landscapes, documenting specific steps needed to preserve these sites and celebrate them within the City park system, to raise the importance of landscape preservation on par with the city's architectural resources.	Parks and Parkways		●		
7.3 Preserve, restore, and re-open Lincoln Beach as a jewel in the park system, and work with historians and artists to tell the site's story.	Office of the Mayor		●		
7.4 Reimagine as citywide park and recreation assets the significant state- and authority-owned land along the lakefront and Bayou St. John. Consolidate parklands where possible, and place management of these assets under a local park entity or new lakefront parks conservancy with appropriate funding.	Office of the Mayor		●		
7.5 Advocate for limited public access and passive park amenities at sites that are restored by other agencies with resilience, hazard mitigation or other dollars. Pursue partnership agreements for access and ongoing maintenance.	Office of the Mayor				●
7.6 Realize a vision that every household is within a 30-minute walk, bike or transit ride of a destination park.	Office of the Mayor			●	

CHAPTER

5





IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

Organization, Staffing, and
Budgets

Funding

Partnerships

Zoning Ordinance

ORGANIZATION, STAFFING, AND BUDGETS

New Orleanians want a park and recreation system that is functional and fully funded, with high-quality facilities that are maintained over time. This section of the plan recommends high-level staffing figures and consideration of next steps for improved management of City-owned parks and recreation centers, now and into the future.

national figures from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review survey.

In addition to creating likely administrative and operational inefficiencies, this organizational structure makes it difficult for the average New Orleanian to know which City entity to contact to ask a question, report an issue, or seek a partnership with City parks and recreation.

Recently the independent Bureau of Governmental Research published an assessment of the Sewerage and Water Board's governance challenges and potential concrete paths to improvement. The *Big Green Easy* recommends a similar study for City-owned parks and recreation, including:

- A full history of City park and recreation departments and commissions over time.
- A review of current organization charts, job descriptions, governance, reporting, funding, and expenses for NORDc and Parks and Parkways.
- Examination of shared responsibilities, coordination challenges, and potential inefficiencies.
- Summary of peer-city agencies, organization, and governance.
- Concrete recommendations for reorganization—including timing and responsible entities—to build a City of New Orleans park and recreation entity designed to improve service and implement the community

REORGANIZATION OF CITY PARKS AND RECREATION

The planning team could find no examples outside New Orleans of a city splitting its administrative, operating, and programming functions for parks and recreation into two separate entities with different leadership and reporting structures.

The Department of Parks and Parkways is responsible for management, maintenance, development, beautification, and preservation of New Orleans' public greenspaces, including neutral grounds, rights-of-way, and the urban tree canopy in addition to parks and squares. New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDc) works to advance the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of New Orleanians through recreational, athletic, and cultural experiences, with a focus on recreation centers, facilities, and programming. The two entities work closely to coordinate efforts and maintenance responsibilities.

Figure 8 demonstrates how the split creates an unusual division of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff responsibilities compared to

→ **Big Moves and Action Items: Public Trust in Parks and Recreation**

Chapter 4

→ **Waterworks in Progress: Reassessing the Sewerage and Water Board's Governance Problems and Potential Paths to Long-Term Improvement**

Bureau of Governmental Research [external URL]

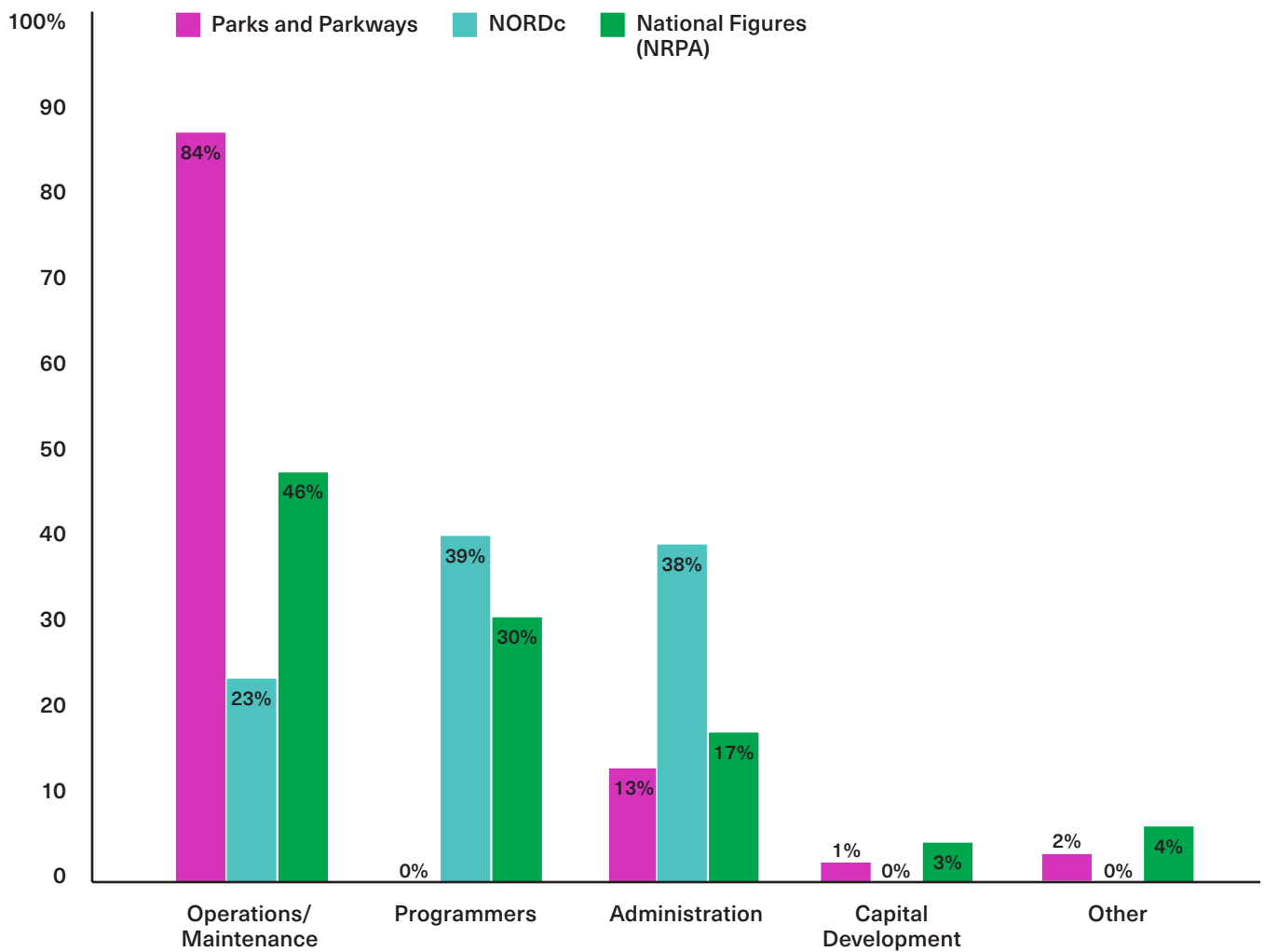


Figure 8: Percentage distribution of full-time equivalents (FTEs) for Parks and Parkways and NORDc compared to national averages

vision for citywide parks and recreation.

PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The *Big Green Easy* recommends creation of a park and recreation advisory committee to provide guidance and oversight for implementation of this plan. The structure of this group should be explored as part of the reorganization study, but it should include members of diverse perspectives and areas of expertise. In the short term, this role should be filled by quarterly meetings of the

Park Partners and public meetings for feedback.

BREC in East Baton Rouge could offer a model. The BREC Commission is composed of nine members—six appointed by Metro Council, one by the Mayor, and one by the Planning Commission to ensure planned development of the parish is coordinated with park and recreation needs. A unanimous Metro Council vote is required for all appointees.

Additionally, nine BREC Advisory Committees are composed of volunteers who offer advice, guidance, and expertise specific to the BREC departments.

Table 12: Existing and Target City of New Orleans Staffing and Operating Budgets, Current Park and Recreation System

	PARKS AND PARKWAYS	NORDC	TOTALS	METRIC
Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)				
Existing	65	210	275	7.0 FTEs per 10,000 residents
Target			349	8.9 FTEs per 10,000 residents
Maintenance FTEs				
Existing	57	46	103	2.6 FTEs per 10,000 residents
Target			160	4.0 FTEs per 10,000 residents
Annual Operating Budget				
Existing	\$8 million	\$19 million	\$27 million	\$68.21 per resident
Target			\$37 million	\$94.77 per resident

TARGET STAFFING AND OPERATING BUDGETS

The proposed reorganization of City of New Orleans parks and recreation creates an opportunity to right-size New Orleans' support for park and recreation against national and peer-city standards.

Table 12 shows current staffing and operating budget figures for NORDc and Parks and Parkways, along with target figures informed by a peer-city study and median figures for park and recreation agencies across the country. This is a baseline recommendation; staffing and budget figures should be annually reviewed and updated following reorganization to reflect

Table 13: City of New Orleans Annual Capital Budget Support for Park Partners, 2014-2023

	AUDUBON	CITY PARK	NORDC	PARKS & PARKWAYS	TOTALS
2014	\$400,000	\$700,000	\$8,466,973	\$0	\$9,566,973
2015	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2016	\$0	\$0	\$1,300,000	\$1,226,771	\$2,526,771
2017	\$0	\$0	\$1,800,000	\$630,000	\$2,430,000
2018	\$0	\$0	\$1,609,061	\$130,000	\$1,739,061
2019	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2020	\$0	\$0	\$910,900	\$0	\$910,900
2021	\$6,520,000	\$0	\$12,926,867	\$3,410,663	\$29,866,010
2022	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$1,210,900	\$1,360,900
2023	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
10-Year Totals	\$6,920,000	\$700,000	\$27,163,801	\$6,608,334	\$48,400,615

Table 14: Order-of-Magnitude Proposed 10-Year Plan Costs by Council District and Project Type, 2023 Dollars

	NEW PARK, GREENWAY AND BLUEWAY PROJECTS	EXISTING PARK REINVESTMENT PROJECTS	PROPOSED 10-YEAR PLAN TOTALS
Council District A	\$27 million	\$11 million	\$38 million
Council District B	\$15 million	\$21 million	\$36 million
Council District C	\$21 million	\$48 million	\$69 million
Council District D	\$16 million	\$24 million	\$40 million
Council District E	\$33 million	\$18 million	\$51 million
Totals	\$112 million	\$123 million	\$235 million

Table 15: Five-Year Capital Budget Comparisons, National and New Orleans

	FIVE-YEAR BUDGETS
Upper Quartile, Jurisdictions over 250k Population, NRPA	\$125 million
Lower Quartile, Jurisdictions over 250k Population, NRPA	\$15 million
Median, Jurisdictions over 250k Population, NRPA	\$43 million
New Orleans Historical (based on annual average 2014-2023)	\$25 million
New Orleans Proposed, 2025-2029	\$118 million

observed needs, a growing system, and data captured through the asset management system.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGETS

Every year the City of New Orleans approves an annual capital budget and five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for significant physical improvements—such as recreation centers, playgrounds, and sports facilities—generally defined as having a useful life of 10 years or longer.

Traditionally the City's park and recreation capital projects have been funded by State Capital Outlay funds and General Obligation Bonds, with the latest bond approved by New Orleans

voters in 2019. Table 13 shows the 10-year history of CIP support for the Park Partners.

Park and recreation capital projects proposed in the *Big Green Easy* 10-Year Plan have an order-of-magnitude anticipated cost of \$235 million—or annual capital costs in 2023 dollars of \$23.5 million per year for the next 10 years. This represents a significant increase in sustained annual park and recreation capital spending in New Orleans, which historically has been inconsistent and generally low by national and peer-city standards. However, this figure is comparable to peer-city and national capital spending for parks and recreation.

 [10-Year Plan Maps and Project List](#)
Chapter 4

FUNDING

The *Big Green Easy* outlines an ambitious phased vision for New Orleans parks and recreation. It calculates the high-level capital costs for implementing the vision, along with anticipated operating costs and staffing considerations for ongoing care of existing and future parks.

The City and its partners should pursue a diverse toolkit of park and recreation funding strategies and sources, with dollars spent according to decision-making frameworks that are rational, transparent, and community-supported.

Many of the below funding strategies require collaboration with other entities such as the Office of Economic Development, and others require future study—for example, to fine-tune ballot language or to revamp the NORD Foundation. While some options might not apply to specific parks or park systems, and some might be less feasible given other funding priorities, all options should be seriously explored as part of a larger strategy to build robust and sustainable funding for equitable citywide parks and recreation.

GENERAL FUND REVENUE

Beginning in 2024, the City should provide increased General Fund support to NORDc and Parks and Parkways, to help meet the annual maintenance needs identified in this plan and to make targeted short-term improvements in parks that are in poor condition and in Equity Investment Zones.

This funding is secured through the annual budgeting process and can provide a bridge toward implementation of the larger 10-Year Plan—the scope of which will require more significant capital investments, including through potential new voter-approved property taxes or bond referendum that will take time to evaluate and organize.

PROPERTY TAX

New Orleans voters in 2019 overwhelmingly approved a 20-year park and recreation property tax totaling 6.31 mills split between the four Park Partners.

The City should fund a public opinion survey to evaluate whether there is public support for an additional mill levy to fund implementation of the *Big Green Easy* capital projects, including deferred maintenance and reinvestment in existing parks.

A useful comparison can be made to the East Baton Rouge park and recreation commission (referred to as "BREC"). Both East Baton Rouge and New Orleans report close to \$5 billion of assessed property value subject to mill levy; however, BREC's total millage is 14.463, with a combination of renewable and permanent mills for operating and capital expenses dating back to 1947 and as recent as 2017.

If New Orleans park and recreation entities received millage support similar to the levy established by East Baton Rouge residents for BREC, it would generate an additional \$39 million per year for citywide park and recreation

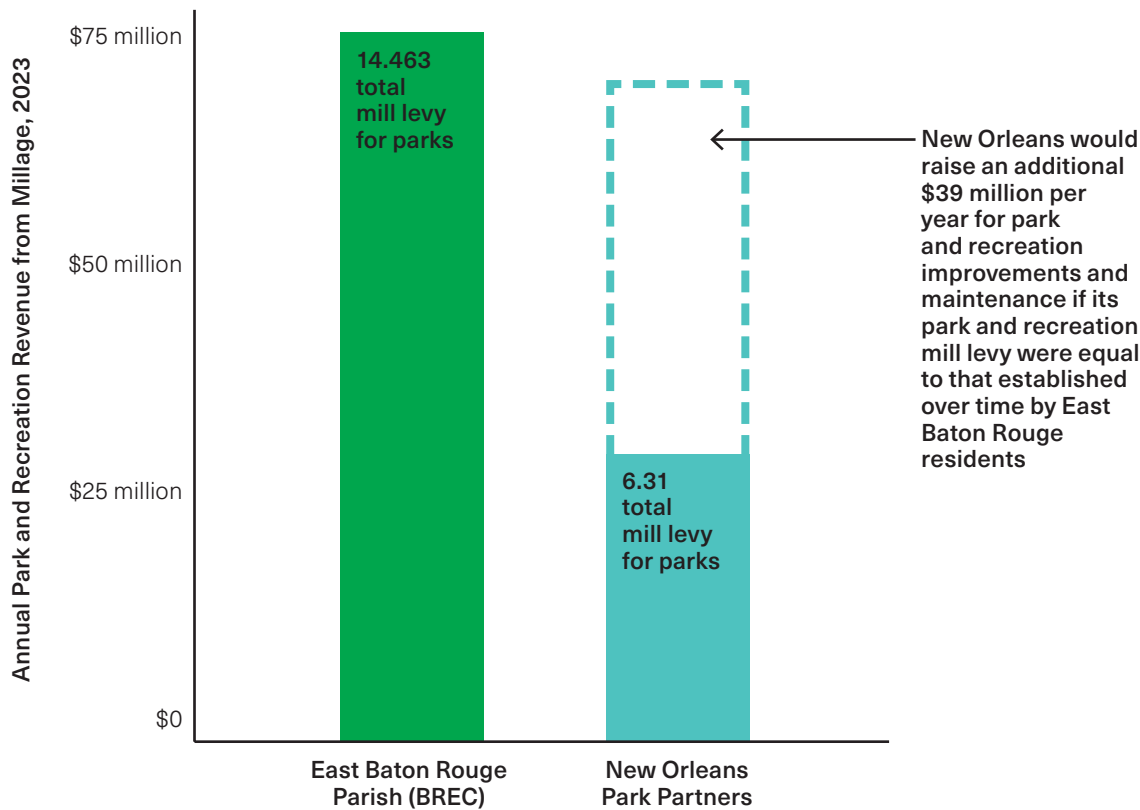


Figure 9: Comparison of annual millage revenue for parks and recreation in East Baton Rouge Parish and New Orleans

improvements and maintenance (Figure 9).

The 2013 conservation finance feasibility study by The Trust for Public Land evaluated previous property tax and bond measures put to voters and found that New Orleans voters were more likely to support property tax increases. The framing and scope of a proposed park and recreation millage—which would require vetting through focus groups or public opinion surveys—could be informed by the community values and priorities expressed during this planning process.

BONDS

Orleans Parish can issue bonds to raise significant one-time funds

for capital improvements, such as those recommended in the 10-Year Plan. These funds are available in the short term, with costs that are repaid over time and therefore shared by future beneficiaries of the investments. A bond issuance must be approved by New Orleans voters, who last approved a bond for park and recreation improvements in 2019.

As with a possible millage, this option should be studied to determine the City's bond capacity and to evaluate public support for such a measure. The findings and recommendations of the *Big Green Easy* could help build visibility and public support for a new park and recreation bond.

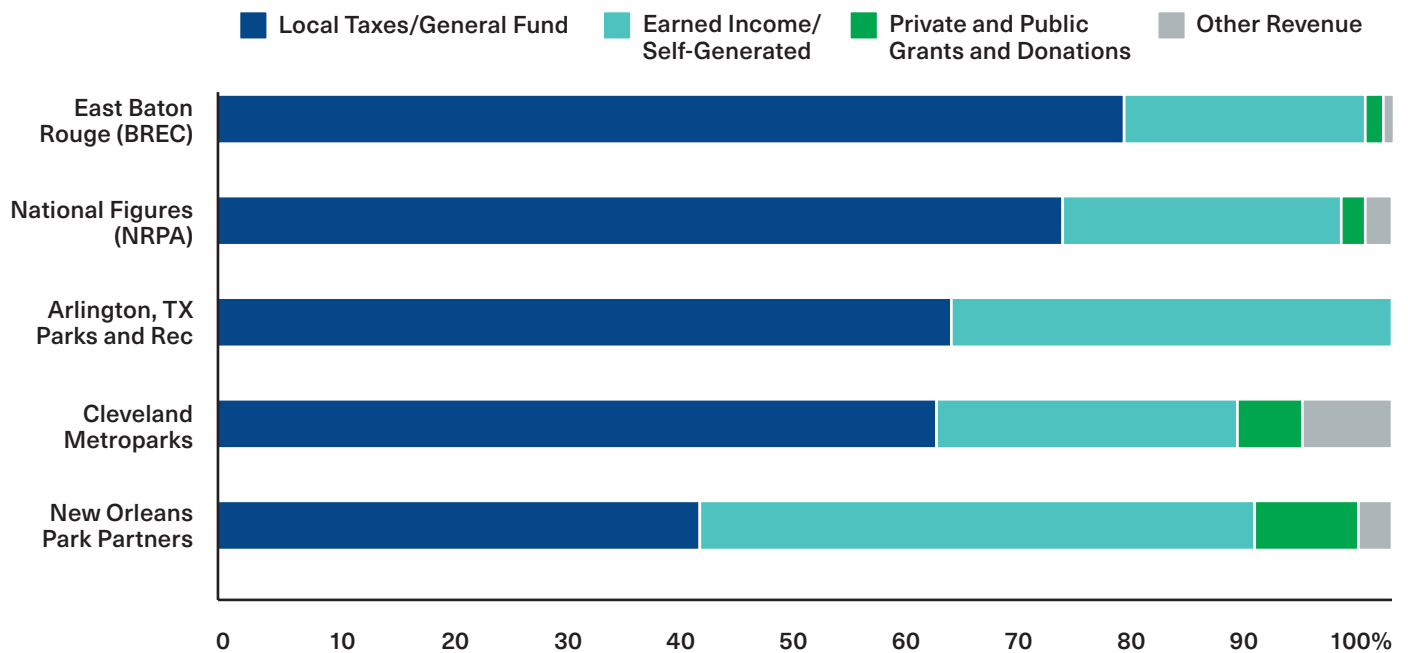


Figure 10: Comparison of relative funding sources for New Orleans Park Partners, peer city park systems, and national figures

EARNED INCOME

Parks can generate earned income through concessions, parking fees, user fees, park rentals, and sponsorships or naming rights. Earned income can generate significant revenue for ongoing park improvements and operating expenses.

For City Park Conservancy and Audubon Nature Institute in particular, earned income is critical for supporting day-to-day operations and filling public and philanthropic funding gaps (Figure 10). Earned income could do more to support new and improved recreational programming at NORDc facilities, where current user fees are close to zero. Only 11% of *Big Green Easy* survey respondents said they would be unwilling to pay higher user fees for NORDc recreational programming.

During the engagement process, the planning team also heard a community perception that New Orleans' parks are overly commercialized. Any new earned income strategies should be pursued with care and sensitivity to ensure fees are appropriate and don't create real or perceived barriers to park use.

For example, the *Big Green Easy* recommends a dual pricing structure for park rentals, permits, and other fees, whereby New Orleans residents pay discounted or sliding-scale fees relative to out-of-town visitors. And for development of a new fee structure for NORDc programming, the plan recommends implementation of an easy-to-use and well-marketed access pass for households based on SNAP eligibility.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

The Office of Economic Development *Plan for Generational Economic Transformation* calls for a new Economic Development District (EDD) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) strategy that is strategic, place-based, and supports broader community goals. TIF is a funding mechanism that rededicates a portion of a new or existing tax within a defined EDD to support district-specific goals or projects.

The Chief Park Planning Officer should work with the Office of Economic Development to ensure park and recreation improvements and ongoing maintenance are supported as part of this focus on place-based economic development and quality of life. The Office's plan, released in May 2023, proposes specific Economic Development Districts, corridors and catalytic sites across the city, and recommends establishing three to five pilot EDDs.

The existing parks and recreation centers and *Big Green Easy* Vision Plan projects that fall within these pilot EDD boundaries should be on the list of quality-of-life projects that benefit from one-time or ongoing district funding.

Additionally, as the Office of Economic Development implements a new EDD policy whereby TIFs are strategic, well-governed, and aligned with community priorities, these funding mechanisms could be an appropriate way to support short-

or mid-term implementation of Vision Plan projects that are not included in the 10-Year Plan.

NEW ORLEANS PARK AND RECREATION FOUNDATION

The NORD Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) that advocates and fundraises on behalf of NORDc. As the City evaluates the reorganization of Parks and Parkways and NORDc, the study should consider how to revitalize NORD Foundation. Greater New Orleans Foundation leadership should be consulted to develop a strategy that works for New Orleans.

A strong park foundation can help to supplement tax dollars through grants and private fundraising. Often just as important, a strong park foundation can bolster quality and community support for parks and recreation through volunteer coordination, marketing efforts, advocacy, and strategic tools.

National Recreation and Park Association conducted a survey of both park and recreation agencies and nonprofit foundations to explore the keys to successful leadership of these organizations.

Some of the keys to effective foundations were:

- Relationships between organizations: This study found that clarity and transparency between agencies and foundations is essential to an effective relationship. A key takeaway was that trust, collaboration, and clearly defined roles were essential to



Plan for Generational Economic Transformation

Office of Economic Development
[external URL]



Park and Recreation Agency-Foundation Relationships: Partnering for the Future

National Recreation and Park Association *[external URL]*

the success of the partnership. There must also be trust between the community and both the agency and foundation for effective results.

- **Fundraising and advocacy capacity:** The study found that 73% of respondents viewed fundraising or philanthropic support as “extremely or very important.” The ability of foundations to advocate for the parks and recreation department was crucial as many agencies are not able to lobby. As foundations are non-government entities, they possess greater capacity to fundraise than their governmental counterparts.

Some of the challenges in agency-foundation relationships were:

- **Equity:** Foundation support may not reach areas that need it most because fundraising is focused in more affluent areas.
- **Organizational structure:** Sometimes there may be competition between organizations for volunteers and board members.
- **Unproductive interpersonal relationships:** Scarce financial resources may be a challenge if there is a lack of communication on who is reaching out to donors, causing more than one solicitation to each donor.

FEDERAL AND STATE GRANT PROGRAMS

One-time grants for parks, open space, and greenways can fund specific capital projects or programming initiatives. Grants

generally have a formal application process with specific submission requirements, along with reporting requirements that seek to quantify the program's impact. They often require a local funding match. They also can require expertise to navigate the application requirements and forms and to understand what projects might be competitive for which grants.

The Chief Park Planning Officer should work immediately with other departments and the City grants coordinator to review all relevant private and public grant opportunities and to coordinate efforts to ensure project proposals are submitted that are the best fit for each grant program.

These reviews can also help to ensure that the City and Park Partners are well-positioned for future funding opportunities; for example, for grant applications that require projects to be shovel- or permit-ready, this review process can identify where investments in a park engagement and design process this year could make a project a strong candidate for that grant application next year.

Table 16 lists public grant programs that are considered a strong fit for local park and recreation projects. Generally, the grants administered by state agencies are those with the longest track record of promoting local parks, open space, and greenways. The federal opportunities are largely new grant programs created by recent federal climate and infrastructure legislation. These require a heavier lift for technical capacity and

coordination but offer exciting opportunities for transformative projects in the public realm.

Big Green Easy projects when pursued in coordination with other City departments and partners.

The table does not include other types of public grants—such as for water quality, brownfield remediation, green infrastructure, and hazard mitigation—that aren't specifically for park or recreation projects but could fund significant

Table 16: Public Grant Opportunities

GRANT OPPORTUNITY	ENTITY	LOCAL MATCH REQUIRED	WHAT THE GRANT CAN SUPPORT				
			LAND ACQUISITION	PARK PROJECTS	GREENWAY PROJECTS	PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS	PLANNING
Transportation Alternatives Program	LADOTD	●			●	●	
Safe Routes to Public Places	LADOTD		●		●	●	●
Community Development Block Grants	LCDBG	●		●	●	●	
Land and Water Conservation Fund	LA State Parks	●	●	●	●		
LWCF Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership	LA State Parks	●	●	●	●		
Recreational Trails Program	LA State Parks	●			●		
Multimodal Access Grant	LADOTD	●				●	
Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program	USDOT	●		●	●	●	●
Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Discretionary Grant Program	USDOT	●			●	●	●
Climate and Environmental Justice Block Grants	EPA		●	●	●	●	
Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program	USDOT	●				●	●
Climate Resilience Regional Challenges	NOAA		●	●	●	●	●
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities	FEMA		●	●	●	●	

PARTNERSHIPS



New Orleans Ecosystem of Park Providers

Chapter 3



City of Austin PARKnership Program and Configurations

*Austin Parks and Recreation
[external URL]*

New Orleans is home to a complex park and recreation ecosystem—the planning team was unable to identify another city in the country with a greater number of separate park owners and management entities. In addition to these park landowners is a number of public and private recreation programming providers who make use of these spaces, plus a multitude of Friends of Park groups and other community-based organizations that have formed to help care for their own local parks. There are still more public and private entities that wish to host events or programming at New Orleans' parks and recreation centers but have not yet found the best way to coordinate such a partnership.

The City should develop a park and recreation partnership framework that spells out clear roles and expectations for specific partner types. There are many models across the country of park and recreation agencies entering into formal agreements with public and private partners that support systemwide park operations, programming, maintenance, fundraising, and advocacy, such as:

- Other public park providers that share operations and maintenance loads.
- Private non-profits that provide programming at City-owned or other city parks.
- Schools, churches, and other entities that can offer public access to park and recreation amenities through shared use agreements. There is a particular need in New Orleans to re-

establish the historically strong relationship between NORDc and public schools and to develop a new strategy for establishing partnerships with multiple independent charter schools.

- Private Friends groups or conservancies that raise funds and provide maintenance and support for specific City-owned parks.
- Public and private utilities that can support greenway and blueway development and public access within easement corridors.
- Private conservation non-profits that can help negotiate land donations and easements for protected parkland and open space.
- Homeowners associations that can allow for the construction and maintenance of public trail facilities on private HOA land.
- Private organizations or arts groups that can provide grants or partnership programs for public art conservation and preservation.
- Private corporations that provide sponsorship of events and programs and receive recognition for their support for a defined period of time.
- Private advocacy groups and corporations that support ongoing operations and maintenance through organized volunteer efforts.

ZONING ORDINANCE

The City of New Orleans Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance establishes open space requirements for new development in environmentally sensitive areas, and in certain districts it provides density bonuses for development projects that provide or support new public parks or plazas.

Given the significant support for improving parks, open space, and recreation in the *City of New Orleans Master Plan*, the Chief Park Planning Officer should work with the City Planning Commission to explore whether aspects of the zoning ordinance could be strengthened in support of citywide parks and recreation.

The City should particularly explore whether more could be done to generate financial support for parks and recreation in pace with new development, particularly infill development where new residents or visitors could place increased maintenance burden on existing parks and plazas. Measures could include:

- **Park Dedication Ordinance:** Such an ordinance would require a certain amount of land—typically defined as a percent of gross development area—be dedicated as open space within all new developments. Open space is defined as including various passive and active park and recreation amenities. Park dedication ordinances are most commonly associated with large developments and subdivisions.
- **Fee in Lieu of Park Dedication:** Where site constraints or project

location prevent a developer from dedicating public open space within the project boundary, developers could pay a fee-in-lieu equivalent to the value of land that would have been dedicated and any required infrastructure improvements. This payment would be directed to a restricted fund to support park amenities and maintenance in the development area.

- **Park Impact Fee:** For infill development and other projects in urban areas, park impact fees can be imposed on new development on a new-unit basis to help cover the costs of the additional local park amenities and maintenance that will be needed to serve new users.
- **Design Guidelines:** The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance should establish guidelines for how new development relates to parks, similar to those established for development along the Lafitte Greenway—for example, new development should front on and build safe pedestrian connections and viewsheds to parks.



**City of New Orleans
Comprehensive Zoning
Ordinance**

City of New Orleans
[external URL]



**City of New Orleans
Master Plan**

City of New Orleans
[external URL]





APPENDICES

Audubon Nature Institute
Background and Master Plan

City Park Conservancy
Master Planning Process

New Orleans Park Asset and
Condition Report

Summary of Plan Outreach and
Engagement Efforts

Summary of Plan Survey Results

Equity Investment Zone Weighted
Overlay Map 'Recipe'

Full Plan Project List by Phase

APPENDIX

New Orleans Park Asset and Condition Report



New Orleans
Citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Assessment Report

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02/23/2023
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INTRODUCTION

Wingate Engineers were tasked to perform Site Assessment for Design Workshop under the New Orleans Citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan project. The tasks for this assessment were to do a full asset inventory for each park, confirm the park's classification, rate each asset collected, and rate the park overall.

Wingate assessed a total of 216 parks throughout Orleans Parish from a list given by Design Workshop, and collected a total of 7568 assets averaging about 35 assets per park.

METHODOLOGY

The Site Assessment task consisted of collecting assets and rating them on a scale from 1 – 5. After completion of collecting all assets per park, an overall rating was given to each park. Below is the rating system along with its description.

- 1 – New aesthetically and functionally
- 2 – Moderate Loss of aesthetics and function
- 3 – Improvements have reached a tipping point where irreversible decline will occur without reinvestment
- 4 – Marginal remaining aesthetic and functional value
- 5 – Functionally obsolete and unsafe

Asset and overall park ratings were based off of functionality, aesthetic value, and the potential risks to visitors.

Wingate Engineers began Site Assessment on January 12th, 2023. We divided the City of New Orleans into 5 different zones based off of the relative sizes of the parks (**See Figure 1**). Our inspector was tasked to collect all assets for the program and our office engineer reviewed the data for quality control purposes.

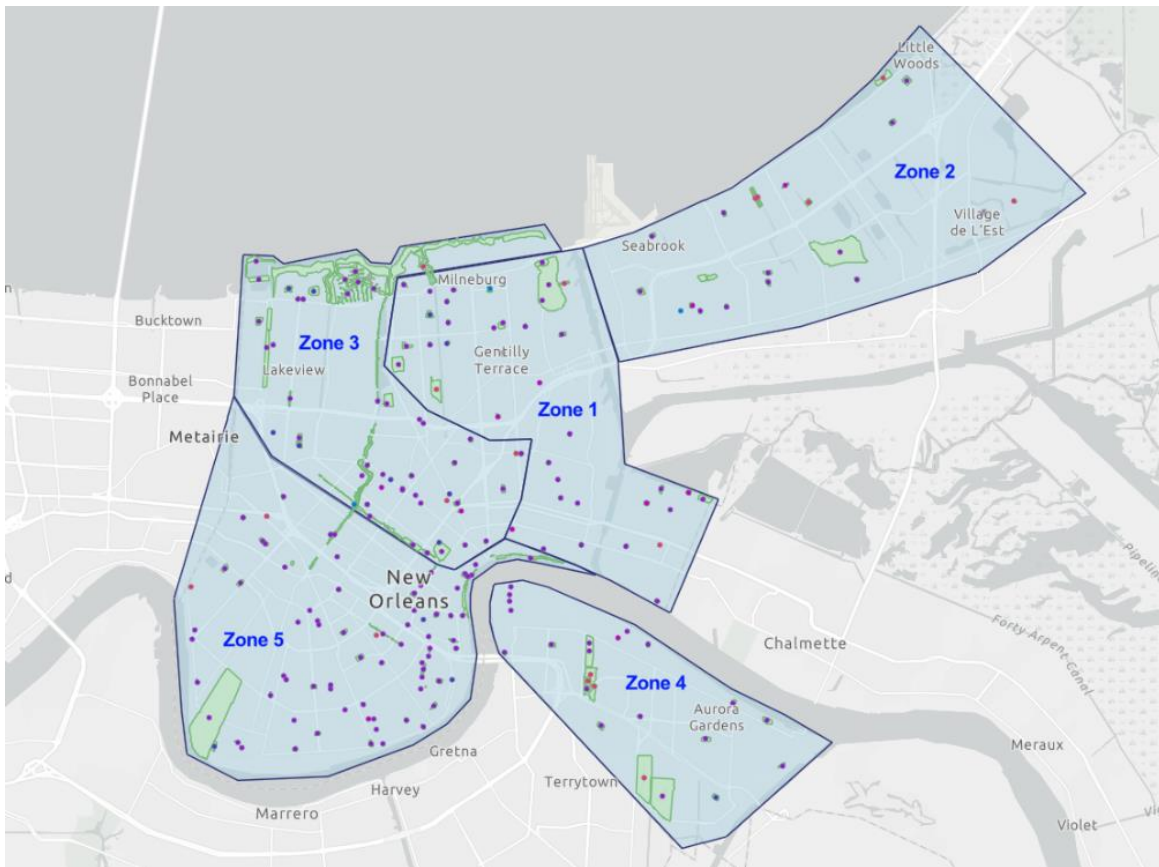


Figure 1: Citywide Parks and Recreation Plan Zone Map

SCHEDULE

For field collection, Zones 1, 2, and 4 were estimated to be completed within 3 days and Zones 3 and 5 were estimated to be completed in 7-10 days. One more week was estimated to perform high-level quality control. **Table 1** shows the comparison of the estimated completion date and its actual completion date for each zone.

Zone	New Orleans Districts(s)	Estimated Completion Date	Actual Completion date
Zone 1	Gentilly and The 9 th Ward	January 16 th	January 16 th
Zone 2	The East	January 19 th	January 19 th
Zone 4	The Westbank	January 24 th	January 24 th
Zone 3	Lakeview and The 7 th Ward	February 2 nd	February 11 th
Zone 5	Uptown New Orleans and The French Quarter	February 16 th	February 9 th

Table 1: Comparison Between Estimated and Actual Zone Completion Dates

Wingate Engineers and Design Workshop held weekly meetings for updates or concerns during the collection process.

In the last week set aside for high level quality control, Wingate was able to go back and collect confirm that each asset was collected and make note of any assets that the City of New Orleans does not have in any of its parks.

Wingate has provided **Tables 2-6** in the appendix which show a summary of our rating categories and examples that we found in the field.

FINDINGS

ASSET CONDITIONS

Several assets found needed notable repairs and resurfacing for both structural integrity and decorative appeal. Assets in these conditions were labeled as “3” s or “4” s because they are still functional at a base level but have the potential to be hazardous to users.

There were wooden assets found with chipping paint, splintering panels, and rotting bases with exposed concrete foundations. Several metal assets had moderate to heavy rust with dents and edges that are potentially unsafe as well as some with exposed concrete foundations. Play structure assets were found with heavy dirt build up and tripping hazards such as missing play tiles, shallow holes in the ground, and hanging chains from damaged swing sets. Concrete assets were either cracked, broken, or not level causing ponding and leaving courts unsuitable for use. Some opens lawns and other landscaping features have been used by construction equipment or are overgrown and full of debris.

ASSET STATISTICS

Out of the 7568 assets collected, 85% of the assets were at the tipping point with several showing signs of rust, fading paint and general weathering, signifying a lack of maintenance. In each category the percentage of “3” ratings were above 50% with the lowest category being Sports Fields or Courts at 58% of assets rated a “3” and the highest category being Lighting at 92% of assets rated a “3”.

Play Structures, Sports Fields or Courts, and Bike Amenities have the largest percentages of assets rated a “2” or better with Play Structures at 19%, Sports Fields or Courts at 20%, and Bike Amenities at 23% of total assets in that category. Additionally, Play Structures, Water Features, and Sports Fields or Courts have the largest percentage of assets rated a “4” or worse with Play Structures at 15%, Water Features at 19%, and Sports Fields or Courts at 22%. Overall, Bike Amenities have the largest amount of assets rated a “2” or better and Sports Fields or Courts have the largest amount of assets rated a “4” or worse.

The largest amount of assets collected were from the Park Amenities category making up 36% of assets collected. The second largest category was Lighting making up 35% of the assets collected.

Table 7 in the Appendix shows the statistics of the asset ratings from the time Wingate finished asset collection.

MISIDENTIFIED PARKS

There were three parks that when assessed could not be considered parks or classified as undeveloped parks due to the presence of other facilities located at that point and no other assets shown within that park boundaries.

London Park is a pump stations along the London Avenue Canal, and the canal is permanently closed in service of the pumpstation. The only other asset in that location is a levee which is part of the levee system along the lake front.

The Willie Hall Playground is a large open lawn next to the Edward Phillips Middle School that is entirely gated off and closed to the public. Additionally, the school itself is temporarily closed.

Lastly the Parkways Westbank Facility also a large open lawn next to what appears to be a storage facility for landscaping equipment. It is unknown what the facility is used for exactly but the land is maintained by Parks and Parkways.

ADDED OR REMOVED PARKS

Wingate collected assets for McGuire Park on the corner of Allen Toussaint Blvd and Canal Blvd. McGuire Park was not originally on the official list of parks but was adjacent to both Tiara Park and Peridot Park with only a street separating them.

McGuire Park was collected in the event that the park would be added in the future. The park was never officially added but the asset data was kept for the benefit of the overall park analysis.

Below is a bulleted list of parks that were removed from the list and did not have full asset collection by Wingate.

- Convention Center
- Curan Blvd. and Windward Ct.
- Latter Library Grounds
- Moss Place
- Parc Brittany
- English Turn Wilderness Park
- Woldenberg Park

RECOMMENDATIONS

A large majority of the parks assessed and the assets collected were rated “3” and showed significant signs of wear and tear but not to the point of functionality loss. These assets and parks have the potential to threaten safety and would need notable repair or replacement. Orleans Parish parks would benefit from a continuous maintenance plan in addition to the revitalization of these parks in order to keep users safe and to keep up the park’s appearance.

NOTES

- The Lighting assets were collected during the day; therefore, the functionality of the park lights was not verified and their rating was only based on aesthetic value.
- The smallest category of assets was Community Spaces making up less than 1% of assets collected. As a note, neutral ground space could be considered an asset such as a Plaza or Gathering Space under the Community Spaces category. However, our assessment of those spaces was based off of whether or not there were existing structures to facilitate gathering or if there was signage designating the space as one of the assets in question.
- Additionally, the rating percentages for Community Spaces were considered an outlier and not weighed in the asset findings
- All the pool assets were closed during the assessment, but that was not factored into the asset rating
- Lakeshore Park has a pump station located along the Orleans Canal. The “canal” asset in that park is also permanently closed in service of the pump station.

APPENDIX

RATING SYSTEM SUMMARY

RATING		1	New Aesthetically and Functionally
Park	Boe Playspot		
Date Assessed	1/12/2023		
Asset Shown	Playset		
Reasoning	The playset shows little to no wear and tear. The paint looks new and there are no signs of weather damage.		
			
Park	Kenilworth Playground		
Date Assessed	1/18/2023		
Asset Shown	Picnic Table		
Reasoning	The metal is new and the coat of paint still shines. There are very little signs of wear and tear and no signs of rust.		
			
Park	Peace Playspot		
Date Assessed	1/17/2023		
Asset Shown	Park Entrance Sign		
Reasoning	The park sign is in great condition with very little signs of weathering. There is no rust visible and the colors are vibrant.		
			

Table 2: "1" Park Rating Examples

RATING		2	Moderate Loss of Aesthetics and Function
Park	Mickey Markey Playground		
Date Assessed	1/16/2023		
Asset Shown	Playset		
Reasoning	This playset has very little wear and tear and the paint is still vibrant. It would at most need general cleaning and has no loss of function.		

			
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Park	Avenger Field & Audubon Tennis Courts		
Date Assessed	2/9/2023		
Asset Shown	Tennis Court		
Reasoning	This tennis court has seen a lot of use but had been well maintained with fresh paint lines and fairly clean grounds. The net and surrounding fences are also in good condition.		

			
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Park	Legacy Park		
Date Assessed	1/31/2023		
Assets Shown	Picnic Tables		
Reasoning	These benches are still in good condition and its paint still shines. The only signs of wear and tear are towards the base around the bolts. Not much would be needed to raise their value.		

			
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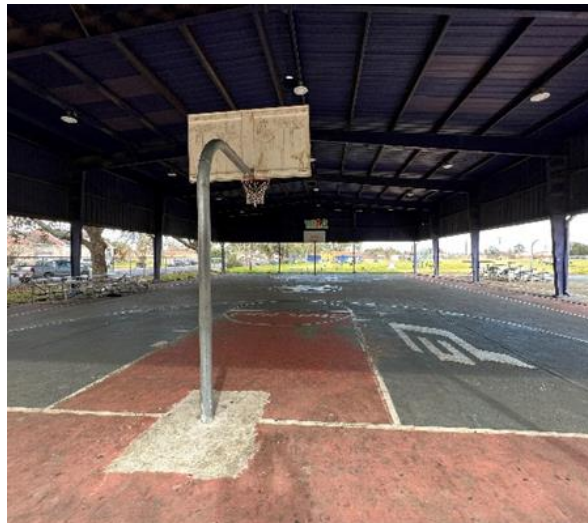
Table 3: "2" Park Rating Examples

RATING		3	The Tipping Point Before Irreversible Decline
Park	Parkerson Place		
Date Assessed	2/3/2023		
Asset Shown	Public Art		
Reasoning	This statue and the surrounding benches are worn and dirty from the environment. The statue itself has some weathering at the base and would need more than general cleaning.		

Park	Digby Playground
Date Assessed	1/17/2023
Asset Shown	Basketball Court, Full Covered
Reasoning	This Basketball court has a lot of weathering and has seen a lot of use. The paint is fading and the lines are still visible but starting to deteriorate.

Park	Delgado Playground
Date Assessed	1/27/2023
Asset Shown	Scoreboard
Reasoning	The scoreboard is still functional but the paint and decorative wording is fading. The posts that hold it up are heavily rusted and the metal plating around the words are starting to lift.








Table 4: "3" Park Rating Examples






RATING		4	Marginal Remaining Aesthetic and Functional Value
Park	Digby Playground		
Date Assessed	1/17/2023		
Asset Shown	Basketball Court, Full Uncovered		
Reasoning	One of the basketball goals is facing the wrong direction as well as missing a hoop. The paint lines are also fading. This court could function as a half court but is not fully functional as a full court.		
Park	Sam Bonart Playground		
Date Assessed	1/16/2023		
Asset Shown	Bench		
Reasoning	A large section of wood is missing from the bench. Even though it is functional it could be potentially unsafe due to splinters and would most likely need completely new wood to repair it.		
Park	Touro Park		
Date Assessed	2/17/2023		
Asset Shown	Open Lawn		
Reasoning	The lawn has pockets of exposed mud and ponding water caused by tire tracks. While there are still large sections of grassy fields the differences of elevation and mud could be a hazard.		

Table 5: "4" Park Rating Examples

RATING		5	Functionally Obsolete and Unsafe
Park	Skelly-Rupp Stadium		
Date Assessed	1/23/2023		
Asset Shown	Restroom Building		
Reasoning	This facility has over grown vines and part of the entrance is piled up with debris. The roof is missing shingles and the right side is partially caved in. There is also evidence of extensive water damage and rot on the roof siding.		

			
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Park	Little Flower Playground		
Date Assessed	2/6/2023		
Asset Shown	Baseball Backstop		
Reasoning	This backstop is unsafe to use. It is extremely rusted and is partially collapsed on one side. The grass surrounding it is over grown and the chain link is disconnected in several places.		

			
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Park	Lewis Playground		
Date Assessed	1/25/2023		
Asset Shown	Basketball Court, Full Uncovered		
Reasoning	Most of the area surrounding the court has been taken over by construction equipment and the ground is dirt or gravel instead of solid concrete. The goals themselves are heavily rusted and covered in graffiti and one has a broken net.		


			
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Table 6: "5" Park Rating Examples

ASSET STATISTICS TABLES

Rating							Rating Percentage				
Asset	Total	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Park Amenities	2718	34	249	2243	143	49	1.25	9.16	82.52	5.26	1.80
Lighting	2654	0	117	2448	55	34	0.00	4.41	92.24	2.07	1.28
Signage	260	7	27	217	7	2	2.69	10.38	83.46	2.69	0.77
Play Structure	177	5	28	117	23	4	2.82	15.82	66.10	12.99	2.26
Water Features	36	0	1	28	6	1	0.00	2.78	77.78	16.67	2.78
Sports Fields or Courts	233	1	45	135	33	19	0.43	19.31	57.94	14.16	8.15
Multipurpose Fields Assets	443	3	20	385	20	15	0.68	4.51	86.91	4.51	3.39
Bike Amenities	77	1	17	56	3	0	1.30	22.08	72.73	3.90	0.00
Landscapes	381	3	30	334	5	9	0.79	7.87	87.66	1.31	2.36
Cultural Features	127	1	15	108	3	0	0.79	11.81	85.04	2.36	0.00
Structures	282	0	30	228	16	8	0.00	10.64	80.85	5.67	2.84
Infrastructure	96	0	7	77	9	3	0.00	7.29	80.21	9.38	3.13
Walking Paths	33	0	2	28	2	1	0.00	6.06	84.85	6.06	3.03
Parking	47	0	3	41	2	1	0.00	6.38	87.23	4.26	2.13
Community Spaces	4	0	0	3	1	0	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00	0.00
Parks	216	3	13	168	11	21	1.39	6.02	77.78	5.09	9.72
Total	7568	55	591	6448	328	146	0.73	7.81	85.20	4.33	1.93

Table 7: Asset Rating Percentages

Asset	Category Percentage	Percentage Rated 2 or Better	Percentage Rated 4 or Worse
Park Amenities	35.91	10.41	7.06
Lighting	35.07	4.41	3.35
Signage	3.44	13.08	3.46
Play Structure	2.34	18.64	15.25
Water Features	0.48	2.78	19.44
Sports Fields or Courts	3.08	19.74	22.32
Multipurpose Fields Assets	5.85	5.19	7.90
Bike Amenities	1.02	23.38	3.90
Landscapes	5.03	8.66	3.67
Cultural Features	1.68	12.60	2.36
Structures	3.73	10.64	8.51
Infrastructure	1.27	7.29	12.50
Walking Paths	0.44	6.06	9.09
Parking	0.62	6.38	6.38
Community Spaces	0.05	0.00	25.00
Parks	N/A	7.41	14.81

Table 8: Additional Asset Statistics

APPENDIX

Summary of Plan Outreach and Engagement Efforts

Big Green Easy: New Orleans Citywide Park and Recreation Vision Plan
Engagement and Outreach Summary

Community Workshops

- Community Workshop No. 1 – Establish a Foundation of Understanding
 - Four events at four locations in March 2023
 - 173 registered attendees
- Community Workshop No. 2 – Draft Plan Review and Priorities
 - Four events at four locations in May 2023
 - 76 registered attendees
- Virtual Workshop
 - All workshop materials shared online for virtual review and comment
 - 48 virtual board comments (as of 6/16)

Surveys

- Survey No. 1 – Vision and Big Ideas
 - 1,551 online and paper responses
- Survey No. 2 – Draft Plan Review and Priorities
 - 349 online and paper responses

Outreach and Media, by Entity

- Parks and Parkways
 - Instagram posts: Feb. 24, April 17, May 2 & 15
 - Facebook posts: Feb. 24, April 17, May 2 & 15
 - Instagram Stories: Feb. 23 & 24, March 2, 7, & 9, April 10, 17, & 20, May 2, 8, 9, 11, 15, & 25
 - Press Conference: May 18
 - City Council QOL meeting: Jan. 30
 - March 2 & 24 email to tree planting partners: NOLA Tree Project, SOUL, Healthy Community Services, Treemendous Love, Water Wise Gulf South, Lafitte Greenway, & AmeriCorps VISTAs
- City Park Conservancy
 - Eblast sent to 119K+ subscriber list
 - Social-media reach
 - Facebook (six dedicated posts) = 27,092 accounts
 - Instagram (six dedicated posts) = 30,175 accounts
 - Twitter (six dedicated posts + four retweets) = 11,098 accounts
- Bright Moments
 - Eblasts (including workshop advertisements and links to project surveys and websites)
 - Bright Moments community database, approximate reach of 9k
 - Weekly blasts the month before each workshop
 - Daily blasts the week before each workshop
 - New Orleans Agenda, approximate reach of 6k
 - Twice before each workshop (week before and week of)

- The Tribune, approximate reach of 20k
 - Twice before each workshop (week before and week of)
 - Direct Emails
 - Church contacts, 150+
 - Focus group attendee list
 - Previous workshop attendee list (for second workshop)
 - Point people (asked to share with networks/constituents):
 - City Councilmembers
 - State representatives
 - State senators
 - NOPL
 - Office of Neighborhood Engagement
 - NORA
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Nonprofits distribution list
 - Flyer/Yard Sign Distribution
 - NOPL dropoff (then circulated to branches)
 - NORD dropoff (then circulated to rec centers)
 - City Park office
 - Metro area churches:
 - Franklin Ave
 - Abundant Life
 - Household of Faith (both locations)
 - New Home
 - Mt. Zion Methodist
 - Song Community Dev Corp (formerly outreach arm of Mary Queen of Vietnam)
 - New Israel Baptist Church
 - Door-to-door canvassing by Bright Moments team in neighborhoods around each meeting location in advance of the May community workshops.
 - Media Coverage
 - Nola.com/Time Picayune, February 26: https://www.nola.com/news/environment/weigh-in-on-new-orleans-parks-through-this-survey/article_0ca71c64-b3b5-11ed-b0ea-9318ea570198.html
 - Gentilly Messenger, March 3: <http://gentilymessenger.com/city-is-remaking-its-parks-and-recreation-and-it-wants-your-input/>
 - Uptown Messenger, March 3: <https://uptownmessenger.com/city-is-remaking-its-parks-and-recreation-and-it-wants-your-input/>
 - WGNO, March 6: <https://wgno.com/news/local/community-workshops-on-big-green-easy-master-plan-begin-monday-evening/>
 - The Lens NOLA, May 9: <https://thelensnola.org/2023/05/09/now-is-the-time-to-speak-up-for-parks-in-new-orleans/>
- Park Ambassadors
 - Virtual Outreach

- Personal social media networks and email lists, including friends, neighbors, colleagues, krewes, and campus organizations
- Professional email lists, including nonprofit blasts, yoga community blasts, public/charter school blasts to high school students, and professional associations such as the regional APA
- Neighborhood email lists, social media groups and meetings
- In-Person Canvassing
 - Park Ambassadors focused on areas of their communities where they know people gather or pass through, including survey and flyer canvassing at second lines, busy pedestrian intersections, local parks and playgrounds, libraries, coffee houses, bakeries, convenience stores and along greenways and bayous.
 - Park Ambassadors found people preferred to have conversations over taking the survey, either because of time constraints, length of the survey, or expressed distrust in a City process. Park Ambassador notes from canvassing and events will be compiled as an appendix in the final document along with the survey results.
 - Tabling and/or survey canvassing at events including:
 - French Quarter Fest
 - Jazz Fest
 - Earth Day University event
 - We Will Dream Festival
 - Neighborhood CARES
 - NOLA African American Museum
 - Senior Fest
 - Youth Day community event at AL Davis Park
 - Ninth Ward meeting hosted by ACORN
 - GenFezt

Focus Groups and Stakeholder Discussions

- Focus Groups:
 - Senior Communities
 - Disability Communities
 - Environment and Natural Resources
 - Youth/Schools (one with nonprofit and school leaders; another with young people)
 - Latino Communities
 - Park Programmers
 - Healthcare Providers
 - Arts and Culture
 - Community- and Faith-Based Groups
 - Infrastructure and Safety
 - Community Development
- Stakeholder Conversations:
 - Bayou District Foundation
 - Downtown Development District

- Friends of Joe Brown Park
- Pontchartrain Conservancy
- Friends of Lincoln Beach
- Friends of Lafitte Greenway
- Pontchartrain Beach Foundation
- Parks for Pigeon Town
- Lowrey Crews – 18th Ward
- Friends of Bayou St. John
- Woodland Conservancy
- French Market Corporation
- Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Parks for All
- NOLA Tree Project
- SOUL Community Forestry
- The Lot Algiers
- Grow Dat Youth Farm
- Bike Easy
- Tree NOLA Project
- Bayou Paddlesports
- Domain Companies
- Fitlot
- BREC
- Urban Conservancy
- Lakefront Management Authority

APPENDIX

Summary of Plan Survey Results

DESIGNWORKSHOP

Landscape Architecture
Planning
Urban Design
Strategic Services

621 Hillsborough Street, Suite 202
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
919-973-6254
designworkshop.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Asya Howlette, Office of Youth and Families
From: Design Workshop
Date: August 8, 2023
Project Name: NOLA Citywide Park and Recreation Vision Plan
Project #: 6989
Subject: Summary of Survey Responses

Survey No. 1: Vision for Parks and Recreation in New Orleans

Survey No. 1 for the New Orleans Citywide Park and Recreation Vision Plan opened in February and closed in June 2023. The intent of the survey was to gain an understanding of how New Orleanians currently use (or don't use) citywide parks and recreation, and to hear the community's vision and big ideas for the future of the system.

The survey received more than 1,600 online and paper responses. This was not a scientific survey; the team did not use random sampling or weight data. However, responses were filtered by demographic variables and are broken out by those variables below wherever responses were substantially different across variables.

- In summary, survey respondents want an interconnected system of neighborhood parks and greenways that are welcoming, inclusive, safe, clean and well-maintained. They are more interested in preserving and improving the existing system than building new parks and facilities, and they want adequate resources to keep parks in good condition over time. Respondents want more parks with flexible greenspace and nature, and they see parks as important for shade, habitat and stormwater management. They want to find respite and wellbeing in their parks in addition to social life and community-building. There is frustration about perceived costs and commercialization of parks and the difficulty of finding information about available facilities and programming.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being excellent, respondents rate the quality of New Orleans parks they visit regularly as 3.56 according to the weighted average across all respondents. That weighted average changes when responses are filtered by demographic variables:
 - All respondents: 3.56
 - Black respondents: 3.18
 - White respondents: 3.67
 - Hispanic respondents: 3.39
 - Asian respondents: 3.53
 - Respondents in HH with disability: 3.29
 - Respondents in HH with children: 3.37
 - Respondents in HH with seniors: 3.63
- On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being very satisfied, respondents rate their satisfaction with the current park and recreation system as 3.13 according to the weighted average across all respondents. That weighted average changes when responses are filtered by demographic variables:
 - All respondents: 3.13
 - Black respondents: 2.69
 - White respondents: 3.22
 - Hispanic respondents: 3.03
 - Asian respondents: 3.05
 - Respondents in HH with disability: 2.84
 - Respondents in HH with children: 2.89
 - Respondents in HH with seniors: 3.13

- Across all respondents, the biggest current barriers to park use are:
 - Condition of existing amenities – e.g. littered, dilapidated, dirty (44%)
 - Lack of availability of amenities/activities of interest (27%)
 - Feeling unsafe at parks (26%)
 - Lack of information about parks and activities (24%)
 - Low quality of amenities/activities (23%)
 - Timing of activities/events is not convenient (18%)
 - Difficult to access by walking/cycling (16%)
 - Parks or activities are too crowded (12%)
 - An additional 20% of respondents said they currently use New Orleans parks and recreation without barriers.
 - Fewer than 10% of respondents identified the following as barriers:
 - Not enough parking
 - Difficult to access by transit
 - Too expensive
 - Too difficult to access because of forms, wait times or other administrative procedures
 - Don't feel welcome
 - Lack of ADA facilities and universal design
 - Lack of interest
 - Lack of multilingual signage
- For the previous question, when responses were filtered by demographic variable, the following differences emerged:
 - Black respondents were more likely to identify lack of parking and administrative burdens as barriers to park use, and only 12% reported that their household used parks and recreation without barriers.
 - Limited access by transit was identified as a barrier by 18% of Hispanic respondents.
 - For respondents in households with disability, accessibility was identified as a barrier by 14% of respondents, and only 13% of respondents reported that their household used parks and recreation without barriers.
- Across all respondents, the top five most popular amenities and activities in New Orleans parks were:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (88% used in the last year)
 - Open lawn (64%)
 - Museum (60%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (58%)
 - Unpaved hiking trail (52%)
- For the previous question, when responses were filtered by demographic variables, the most popular amenities and activities in New Orleans parks were:
 - Black respondents:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (74% used in the last year)
 - Open lawn (52%)
 - Playground (48%)
 - Museum (44%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (41%)
 - Recreation center (36%)
 - White respondents:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (91% used in the last year)
 - Open lawn (68%)
 - Museum (65%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (63%)
 - Unpaved hiking trail (57%)
 - Playground (35%)
 - Hispanic respondents:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (88% used in the last year)
 - Open lawn (62%)

- Museum (59%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (58%)
 - Unpaved hiking trail (57%)
 - Picnic pavilion (39%)
 - Playground (39%)
- Asian respondents:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (95% used in the last year)
 - Open lawn (68%)
 - Museum (63%)
 - Unpaved hiking trail (58%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (47%)
 - Playground (47%)
- Respondents in HH with disability:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (83% used in the last year)
 - Museum (61%)
 - Open lawn (59%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (56%)
 - Unpaved hiking trail (49%)
 - Playground (35%)
- Respondents in HH with children:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (85% used in the last year)
 - Playground (73%)
 - Open lawn (68%)
 - Museum (64%)
 - Zoo (61%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (57%)
- Respondents in HH with seniors:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (82% used in the last year)
 - Museum (62%)
 - Botanical garden or nature center (61%)
 - Open lawn (55%)
 - Unpaved hiking trail (39%)
 - Concession stand or restaurant (32%)
-
- One-quarter of all respondents said the parks in their neighborhood do not bring people together or create a sense of place. The percentage of respondents who answered 'no' to this question changes when responses are filtered by demographic variables:
 - All respondents: 28%
 - Black respondents: 44%
 - White respondents: 25%
 - Hispanic respondents: 34%
 - Asian respondents: 47%
 - Respondents in HH with disability: 38%
 - Respondents in HH with children: 34%
 - Respondents in HH with seniors: 24%
- Across all respondents, the most important long-term impacts of New Orleans parks and recreation, in order of weighted average on a scale of 1 to 5, are:
 - Neighborhood parks (4.67)
 - Residents' health and wellness (4.63)
 - Environmental health and natural resources (4.61)

Survey No. 2: Draft Plan Feedback and Priorities

Survey No. 2 opened in May and closed in July 2023. The intent of the survey was to get feedback on the draft vision statement and to ask the community to help prioritize investments.

The survey received more than 400 online and paper responses. This was not a scientific survey; the team did not use random sampling or weight data. However, responses were filtered by demographic variables and are broken out by those variables below wherever responses were substantially different across variables.

- Across all respondents, the top three criteria for determining which park and recreation investments should happen first are:
 - Condition (Fix what we already have) (70%)
 - Resilience (Focus on storing stormwater, cooling communities and protecting open space) (62%)
 - Equity (Focus on underserved communities) (60%)
- For the previous question, when responses were filtered by demographic variables, Black respondents identified the top three criteria for prioritizing park and recreation investments as:
 - Equity (Focus on underserved communities) (78%)
 - Condition (Fix what we already have) (69%)
 - Safety (Focus on projects in areas more challenged by crime) (69%)
- Across all respondents, the top three facility types identified as most important for building and maintaining are:
 - Paved walking/biking trails (55%)
 - Playgrounds (37%)
 - Swimming pools (31%)
- Across all respondents, the top three recreational programs and events identified as most important are:
 - Afterschool programs (61%)
 - Summer camps (44%)
 - Youth sports leagues (40%)
- Across all respondents, only 11% said they would be unwilling to pay higher fees for recreational programming.

APPENDIX

Equity Investment Zone Weighted Overlay Map 'Recipe'

Big Green Easy: A Citywide Vision Plan for Parks and Recreation in New Orleans
Park and Recreation Equity Investment Zones
Weighted Overlay 'Recipe'

All values are separated using the "quantile" method

Layer Name	Value	Reclassified Value	Notes	Source
Environmental Justice				
Brownfield Site (population within 10-minute walkshed)	0	1	Average zonal stastics taken of the 10 minute walkshed of a brownfield site at the block group. High of 10 (within walkshed), low of 0	EPA
	0.001-0.627	2		
	0.628-5.255	3		
	5.256-10	4		
Urban Heat Island (1-5 scale)	1.001 - 1.177	1	Data comes as 1-5 scale. 1 being slightly above average for city and 5 being significantly above the average for the city. Used zonal stastics by block group on average.	TPL
	1.178 - 1.491	2		
	1.492 - 2.145	3		
	2.146 - 4.475	4		
% of Blighted Land / Buildings (properties per acre)	0 - 0.168227	1	Numbers represent number of blighted properties per acre per block group. 1 indicates that within a block group, there is one blighted prop per acre.	
	0.168228 - 0.459067	2		
	0.459068 - 1.008360	3		
	1.008361 - 4.420401	4		
Population Demographics and Socioeconomics				
Households with SNAP (%)	0-0.001	1	enriched to block group level	Esri
	0.001-4.706	2		
	4.707-9.804	3		
	9.804-100	4		
Unemployment Rate (%)	0-3.59	1	enriched to block group level	Esri
	3.59-8.005	2		
	8.005-8.226	3		
	8.226-44	4		
Housing-Burdened Households (%)	0-26.67	1	enriched to block group level	Esri
	26.67-43.529	2		
	43.529-43.922	3		
	43.922-100	4		
African-American/ Black Population (%)	0-5.49	1	enriched to block group level	Esri
	5.49-6.275	2		
	6.2745-63.922	3		
	63.922-100	4		
Population Density (population per square mile)	0-1446.349	1	enriched to block group level	Esri
	1446.349-3782.76	2		
	3782.76-7120.489	3		
	7120.489-28371	4		
Public Health				
Population with Heart Disease (%)	0.001 - 38.042	1	Census tract level	CDC
	38.043 - 39.148	2		
	39.149 - 40.918	3		
	40.919 - 56.4	4		
Population with Diabetes (%)	0.001 - 11.6	1	Census tract level	CDC
	11.601 - 11.9	2		
	11.901 - 13.5	3		
	13.501 - 25.5	4		
Crime Index	0-93	1	Crime Index enriched to block group level	Esri
	93.001 - 204	2		
	204.001 - 284	3		
	284.001 - 545	4		

APPENDIX

Full Plan Project List by Phase

Big Green Easy: A Citywide Vision Plan for Parks and Recreation in New Orleans

Vision Plan Physical Project List by Phase

Project Phase	Project Name	Proposal Type	Proposed Classification	Proposed Sub-Classification
1	17th Street Canal Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
1	17th Street Canal Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
1	A. L. Davis Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	A. L. Davis Playground Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Andre Cailloux Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
1	B.W. Cooper (Community Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Bayou Bienvenue W Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
1	Behrman (Morris Jeff Extension)	New Opportunity	Expansion Site	
1	Behrman (Morris Jeff Road Crossing)	New Opportunity	Expansion Site	
1	Behrman Canal Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
1	Berg Canal Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Brechtel Golf Course	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
1	Bunny Friend Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Burke Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	BW Cooper Neighborhood Garden	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	BW Cooper Pocket Park	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Cadiz Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Carrollton Ave Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Central City (Danneel Community Space)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Central City (Simon Bolivar Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Central City (Third Street Garden)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Citrus Canal Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Claiborne Ave Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
1	Claiborne Underline	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
1	Conrad Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Crescent City Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Cuccia-Byrnes Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Curran and Windward	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Cut-Off Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Dauterive Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Del Mar Villa Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Digby Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Dillard (Neighborhood Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Dillard Wetland	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Preserve
1	Dixon (International School of Louisiana)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Donnelly Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Eagle Preserve	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
1	East Shore Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Easton Park Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	F. P. Jackson Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Florida Area (Neighborhood Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Fox Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Gentilly Terrace Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Gentilly Terrace Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Gert Town Garden	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Goins Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Hardin Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Harrell Complex	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Harrell Complex Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Hollygrove Greenline	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	Greenway
1	Holy Cross "Fly" Park	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Holy Cross Neighborhood Park	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Hunter's Field Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Ideal Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Jahncke Canal Trail	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Jazzland Park (Six Flags Site)☐	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
1	Joe W. Brown Memorial Park Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool

1	Keller Community Center	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Kenilworth Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Kerry Curley Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Lakewood (Existing Parklet)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Lambert Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Larry Gilbert Stadium	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Lemann Playground 1	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Lemann Playground 1 Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Leonidas (New Tom Hill Playspot)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Lewis Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Lincoln Beach	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
1	Little Woods (Barrington Playspot)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Little Woods (Benson Canal Gateway Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	Little Woods (Citrus Canal)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Little Woods (Vincent Playspot)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Little Woods Passive Park Connector	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
1	London Ave Canal Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
1	Louis Armstrong Park	Reinvestment	Destination Park	
1	Louisiana Ave Greenway (Street Narrowing)	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Lower Ninth Ward (Sam Bonart Extension)	New Opportunity	Expansion Site	
1	Lower Ninth Ward (Sankofa Wetland Extension)	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
1	Lyons Center Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Lyons Center Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Magellan Playspot	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Marie Goretti Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Marlyville-Hollygrove Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	Marsalis Harmony Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Milne Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Miltenberger Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Mirabeau Water Garden	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
1	Montiero Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Morris F. X. Jeff Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
1	Morris F. X. Jeff Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Morris F. X. Jeff Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
1	Morris FX Jeff	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
1	New Aurora - English Turn (School Area)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Norwood Thompson Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Odile Davis Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Parkways Westbank Facility	New Opportunity	Expansion Site	
1	Pecan Grove Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
1	Pradat Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Pradat Playground Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Previous Broadmoor Community Center	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
1	River Park Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Robert Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Rome Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Rosenwald Recreation Center Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Sam Bonart Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Skelly-Rupp Stadium	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
1	St. Bernard Neighborhood Park (HANO Partners	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	St. Bernard Passive Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
1	St. Bernard Recreation Center Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	St. Claude (Alvar Neighborhood Garden)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
1	St. James Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	St. Roch Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Stallings Gentilly Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Stallings Gentilly Playground Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Taylor Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Taylor Playground Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
1	Treme-Lafitte Neighborhood Park	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
1	Union Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Van McMurray Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Village De L'Est Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Werner Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
1	Willow Brook Playspot	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park

2	Annunciation Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Atkinson Stern Tennis Center	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	
2	B.W. Cooper (Rec Center Extension)	New Opportunity	Expansion Site	
2	Bayou Bienvenue E Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Bayou Levee Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Bayou Saint John Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Bayou Sauvage Edge Trail	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
2	Bayou Sauvage N-S Trail	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
2	Bodenger Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Boettner Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Breakwater Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
2	Bretchel to Cut Off	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
2	Brignac Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Broadmoor Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Bywater (Neighborhood Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Canal Blvd Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
2	Catherine-Borgne-Rigol Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Central City (Erato St Neighborhood Garden)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
2	Central City (Thalia St Neighborhood Garden)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
2	City Park West Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Coliseum Square	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Comiskey Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Counterfeit Pass Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Crescent Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Cut-off to Lower Coast Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Danneel Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Delery Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Delgado Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Desire Neighborhood Park 2 (HANO Partnership)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Desire Neighborhood Park 3 (HANO Partnership)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Desire Passive Park 1	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
2	Desmare Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Di Benedetto Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Dwyer Road Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
2	East Carrollton (Mc Nair)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Evans Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Flanders Playspot	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
2	Florida Ave Greenway Difficult Split	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Florida Playground	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
2	George W. Carver Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Gert Town (Clio Street Garden)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
2	Gert Town Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Gravier Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Harmony Place	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
2	Harris Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Hufft Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Industrial Canal Crossing	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Joe Brown to MRGO Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
2	Kennedy Place	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
2	Kingswood Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Lafitte Greenway French Quarter Extension	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Lake Oaks Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
2	Lake Ponchartrain Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Lakefront Airport Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
2	Lakeshore Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
2	Lakewood (17th St Canal Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Lakewood Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Laurence Square Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Lemann Playground 2	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Leo Benewell Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
2	Lincoln Beach Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Little Woods (Berg Canal Gateway Park)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
2	London Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
2	Lower 9th Bridge Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Lower 9th Mississippi Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector

2	Lower Coast Algiers Levee Road	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Levee Road Gesture
2	Lower Ninth Ward Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
2	Lyons Memorial Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
2	McCue Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Miller Bayou Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Mirabeau Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Morris FX Jeff South Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Moss Place	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
2	MRGO Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	MRGO Levee Trail	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Levee Road Gesture
2	Musicians Village Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Napoleon Ave Riverfront Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	New Basin Canal Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	Norman Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Oak Park Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Oliver Bush Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Orleans Canal Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Perry Roehm Stadium	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	
2	Pontchartrain Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Richard Lee Playground	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Rosenwald Center Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	Recreation Center
2	Rosenwald Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
2	Sam Bonart Playground Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
2	Sampson Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Sampson Playground Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
2	Samuel Square Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Saratoga Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Schabel Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Simon Bolivar Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
2	St Charles Multi-Use Path	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
2	St. Bernard Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
2	St. Catherine Pass Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
2	Stallings Center Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Stallings Center Pool	Reinvestment	Special Use Facility	Swimming Pool
2	Sunken Gardens	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
2	U.S. Naval Base Park-Oriented Development 2	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Uptown & Convention Center Mississippi River Trail	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
2	Wembledon Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	West Bank "Fly"□	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	West End Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
2	West Lake Forest (Parc Brittany)	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
2	Wharves Riverfront Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
2	Wisner Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
2	Woodland Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Alma Peters Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Bayou Bienvenue SE Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
3	Bayou Bienvenue SW Blueway	New Opportunity	Blueway	
3	Bayou North Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Bayou Sauvage East Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Bayou Sauvage South Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Levee Road Gesture
3	Bayou St. John - Lafitte Greenway Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Bayou St. John Lake Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Berg Canal South Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
3	Bodenger II Playground	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
3	Boreas Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Brechtel Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
3	Brechtel Park Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Breeze Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Cabrini Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Carlson Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Central Business District Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
3	Central Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	City Park Lakefront Extension	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
3	Cut-Off Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
3	Delcazel Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	

3	Desire Area (Superfund Site)	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
3	Desire Area Greenway (HANO Partnership)	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
3	Desire Area to Peace Street Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Desire Destination Park (Old School Site)	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
3	Desire Neighborhood Park (HANO Partnership) □	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
3	Desire Park 1 (Old Recreation Center)	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
3	Desire Park 1 (School Surplus Site) □	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
3	Desire Pocket Park	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Donserieux/Harrison Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	East Gentilly Connector (Levee Wall)	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Trail Gesture
3	English Turn South Levee Road	New Opportunity	Greenway	Secondary Levee Road Gesture
3	English Turn to Cut-off Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Fleur De Lis Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Floral Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Florida Area to Lower 9th Ward Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Foliage Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	French Market Gap Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Gentilly to Lakeshore Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Gernon Brown Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
3	Harold DeVore Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Jack Bartlett Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Joe Brown South Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Joe Brown West Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Kiwanis Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Lake Terrace Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	
3	Lake Vista Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Lake Vista Lake Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Lake Vista Lake Connection East	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Lakefront Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Larkin Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	London Ave Canal Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
3	McDonogh Memorial Park, Church Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	McGuire Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Mickey Markey Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Milne Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
3	Morris FX Jeff North Connection	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Morrison Playspot	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Orleans Canal Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
3	Ozone Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Parc Brittany Loop	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Peoples Ave Connector	New Opportunity	Greenway	Connector
3	Peoples Avenue Greenway	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Trail Gesture
3	Peridot Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Pontchartrain Park Community Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
3	Roffignac Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Saint Mary's Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Garden	
3	Sankofa Wetland Park	Reinvestment	Destination Park	Nature Park
3	Soraparu Playspot	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	St. Patrick Playground	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	Stallings St. Claude Recreation Center	Reinvestment	Recreation	Recreation Center
3	Tiara Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	
3	U.S. Naval Base Park-Oriented Development 1	New Opportunity	Neighborhood Park	
3	Venetian Isles Levee Road	New Opportunity	Greenway	Major Levee Road Gesture
3	Wilderness Park	New Opportunity	Destination Park	Nature Park
3	Zephyr Park	Reinvestment	Neighborhood Park	

APPENDIX

City Park Conservancy Master Planning Process

CITY PARK CONSERVANCY, OCTOBER 2023:

New Orleans City Park is obligated to operate under a Master Plan pursuant to its enabling legislation. The previous City Park Master Plan (City Park 2018) was approved in March 2005 and has guided the improvements of the Park over the last decade and a half. The prior plan largely focused on improvements to the south side of the Park.

Now City Park is embarking on a bold re-envisioning of the Park as a whole, grounded in serving the greater good, addressing community needs, deepening the historical and cultural context, improving environmental resiliency, and creating a dynamic and enduring sense of place. Key elements of the plan will include:

- Market study
- Public engagement
- Master-plan development
- Cost estimating
- Existing-conditions survey
- Forestry-management plan
- Planting-typology plan
- Operations and maintenance plan
- Final plan

APPENDIX

Audubon Nature Institute Background and Master Plan

AUDUBON NATURE INSTITUTE, OCTOBER 2023:

Audubon Park has been a prime gathering place in New Orleans for more than 150 years, providing visitors with a lush landscape boasting majestic oaks and expansive greenspace perfect for recreation and relaxation.

Originally designed by Charles Olmsted, the park is ringed by a bustling 1.8-mile paved path where visitors enjoy scenic strolls, walking their dogs, running or bicycling. The lagoon, picnic shelters and playgrounds offer splendid venues for families with children.

Since 1898, the Audubon Golf Course has hosted both amateurs and professionals. The park is also home to tennis courts, horse riding stables and the Whitney M. Young Memorial Pool.

The Riverview, affectionately called the “The Fly” by locals, stretches along the Mississippi River and is an unrivaled spot for a picnic, tossing a football or watching a sunset. The Fly also offers athletic fields, including the Whitney Bank Miracle League Field, which is designed for children with special needs to play baseball.

The Commission previously completed a 90% Audubon Park Master Plan prior to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. This plan was the starting point as the Commission worked with Audubon Nature Institute and award-winning architecture firm Eskew+Dumez+Ripple to complete the plan. The theme of the process was Audubon Park New Orleans 300: Celebrating the Past and Shaping the Future. The Master Plan’s key areas of focus include: maintaining, protecting, and preserving the landscape; embracing sustainability; and maintaining current balance with no further program expansion.

The Commission, which oversees Audubon facilities, looked to the diverse community that uses the Park for community feedback included four public meetings, in-person surveys, and a public engagement website which featured an online version of the survey as well as regular updates to help frame the vision. We received feedback from the broad cross section of all guests who love Audubon Park as much as we do. Audubon Commission approved the new Audubon Park Master Plan at its meeting on June 27, 2018.



A Citywide Park and Recreation Vision Plan for New Orleans
January 2024