

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEPARTMENT MISSION

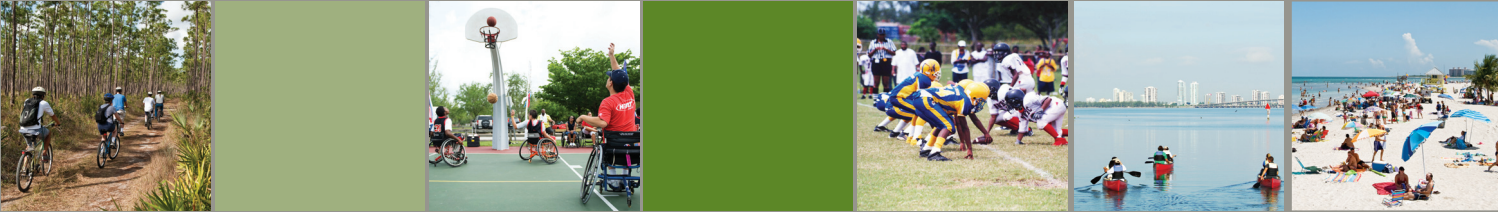
We create outstanding recreational, natural, and cultural experiences to enrich you and to enhance our community for this and future generations.

VISION

Delivering Excellence Every Day

CORE VALUES

Outstanding Customer Service
Enthusiastic Attitude and Teamwork
Accountability and Integrity
Creativity and innovation
Stewardship
Inclusiveness and Accessibility
Leadership and Professional Development



Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation

miamidade.gov

Recreation Program Plan

Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department

PURPOSE:

The Recreation Program Plan is not an end product in itself. The Plan is rather a means to guide the provision of recreation and leisure services to advance the overall mission and vision of Miami-Dade County. It is informed and guided by the County's Strategic Plan, supported by the Department's Business Plan, and serves in unison with the Parks and Open Space System Master Plan. Ultimately, the Recreation Program Plan will guide the delivery of excellent public facilities, activities, programs and services that will contribute to community prosperity and an improved quality of life for residents of and visitors to Miami-Dade County.

The purpose of this planning effort is three fold. First, it puts into place a systematic and ongoing inventory, analysis and assessment process that will help the Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department (the Department) now and in the future. Secondly, this effort will determine the context of recreation facilities and programs county-wide. Thirdly, it will provide specificity in determining the effectiveness of programs and services. This, ultimately, will guide the Department in an appropriate direction for current and future programs and services and provide specific means and measurements to determine success in meeting its mission and vision. This, then, is essentially a process of determining the following:

“Where are we; where do we want to be and how do we get there.”

The Recreation Program Plan strives to answer these questions. It is an assessment, visioning and planning tool that provides the Department with the opportunity for thoughtful reflection and a place from which to consider future initiatives. It is essential to the Department's success.

In 2005, the Department participated in two evaluation processes: one through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the other through the Florida Sterling Challenge Program. Both processes included an external examination and a self-assessment of organizational and operational functions. The results were measured against the goals and objectives of the Department and clearly identified the Department's strengths, as well as areas in which improvements might be made. At the end of both evaluation processes, the agencies determined that the Department lacked a functional Recreation Program Plan and because of this, there were deficiencies in critical areas such as program content, delivery, evaluation and monitoring.

Based on those evaluation processes, the Department sought to identify a clear basis for the provision of recreation programs and services. From the CAPRA accreditation review, the Department embraced the concept that its activities should be based on specific and critical determinants, including the following:

- ***conceptual foundations of play, recreation and leisure***
- ***constituents interests and needs***
- ***community opportunities***
- ***agency philosophy and goals***
- ***desired experiences (outcomes)***
- ***history of recreation program funding***

CONTEXT

As the Department began the critical undertaking to create a Recreation Program Plan, the following Goals of the Plan emerged:

- Ensure Quality Recreation Programs that are Responsive to Community Needs
- Create Healthy Communities
- Ensure Financial Sustainability for Program Delivery
- Foster Environmental and Cultural Stewardship
- Ensure the Equitable Provision of Program Opportunities

These goals would provide the Department with a new model for both short and long term program planning. They would become the pillars to support programming decisions. However, within these overarching goals, specific strategies and actions were developed to ensure that the Department captured constituents’ interests and needs, while aligning actions with the vision, mission, and principles of the Department, the Department’s Business Plan, the County’s Strategic Plan, and the Parks and Open Space System Master Plan. These guiding documents which influenced the development of the Recreation Program Plan share several important features: each focuses on providing excellence; each requires a customer-driven approach; and each requires sustainability, fiscal accountability and efficiency. These ideas are key to the Department’s short term and long term success.

The County is home to a large and diverse population. Differences in race, ethnicity, income, education and family composition are seen across the County. Concentrations of distinct demographic types have created informal community areas. These distinct areas reinforce the need to approach the assessment and provision of recreation services thoughtfully across the County, rather than through a set of fixed services for the County as a whole. As noted through existing demographic data and projections, the County requires a unique and evolving approach to the provision of services. This requires the Department to be flexible in adapting to changing lifestyles and recreational needs.

Key demographic elements that have an impact on the provision of recreation services include the following:

- Miami-Dade County is racially and ethnically diverse and these populations are concentrated in distinct geographic areas. The County is home to the third largest Hispanic community in the United States.
- Differences in age, educational attainment and income are noted across the County.
- The percentage of reported single family and female-headed households is higher in Miami-Dade County than the State or national average. Additionally, more families in Miami-Dade County receive cash assistance income, supplemental security income or food stamps, than the state or national averages.
- Serving non-traditional, economically disadvantaged and low income families provides unique opportunities for the Department to consider localized, efficient and cost effective programming.
- Recreation programming needs to be sensitive to the neighborhood it is serving.
- Older adults today are healthier and more active; therefore, assumptions about what constitutes a senior program continue to be challenged

IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Planning initiatives and strategies support the Goals identified during this process and are intended to provide guidance in bringing the goals of the Plan to fruition. These specific strategies and actions were developed to provide a framework for decision making for the long term implementation of the Plan. Additionally, the Initiatives are intended to provide specific, initial steps that should be taken in order to advance the Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the Recreation Program Plan. This report includes specific steps that will be accomplished during implementation and will be continually updated on an annual basis. These steps are as follows:

PLANNING INITIATIVES

1. Conduct local recreation interest surveys and focus groups to better identify markets and needs at neighborhood level
2. Work with Miami Dade County Park and Recreation Department Park Managers; Region Managers; Park Planning staff; County Planning and Zoning staff and Metropolitan Planning Organization staff to identify and map neighborhoods
3. Conduct a pilot project for a specific service area to identify facility and programming deficiencies
4. Develop program plans that promote participation growth in business enterprise ventures, including golf, tennis, boating and fishing.
5. Develop age appropriate youth recreation lesson plans for pre-school, after school and summer camp programs to include outreach programming into economically disadvantaged areas of the County.
6. Develop Senior Recreation Program Guide
7. Establish recreation initiatives database and tracking methodology
8. Prepare an outline scope of work and budget item for the hiring of a consultant to conduct a comprehensive, county-wide leisure interest survey

RECREATION PROGRAMMING INITIATIVES

9. Increase Sports Development program participation
- 10.Implement profitable adult flag football and soccer leagues at Homestead Air Reserve Park
- 11.Implement profitable baseball program at Country Village Park
- 12.Implement Morning Wellness Programs

PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

- 13.Improve contract management system
- 14.Establish facility and programming partnership database
- 15.Solicit Requests for Proposals/Qualifications to provide operation and programming services at Department recreation facilities
- 16.Solicit Requests for Proposals/Qualifications to provide program delivery services through vendor provided facilities
- 17.Revise future contracted services agreements to include outreach programming in underserved areas of the County

ARTS AND CULTURE INITIATIVES

- 18.Grow profitability in auditoriums through increased programming and special events

ENTERPRISE INITIATIVES

- 19.Develop new golfers and increase golf participation at Briar Bay Golf Course through a partnership with the YMCA

ATTRACTION INITIATIVES

- 20.Develop and implement a consolidated marketing plan to include Deering Estate at Cutler, Eco Adventures and Fruit and Spice Park.
- 21.Develop and implement a consolidated sales effort that includes product offerings available to the corporate and hospitality market at Deering Estate at Cutler, Eco Adventures and Fruit and Spice Park.
- 22.Implement partnership with Metro Zoo to meet market demand for Eco Academy enrichment programs to home schooled families.
- 23.Initiate the School Yard Science outreach program and seek alternative funding sources to expand program offerings in Title One Schools.
- 24.Downsized and re-align Eco Adventures operations with the objective of reducing costs while maintaining and expanding its revenue generating capacity.
- 25.Open and produce a positive revenue stream for the Mango Café at Fruit and Spice Park.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

- 26.Increase and/or enhance the fiscal sustainability of the Department by providing park staff with ongoing training that produces skills necessary to generate new revenue streams.

LONG RANGE PLAN

Recreation is an essential service in establishing and maintaining a healthy and livable community. Availability and accessibility to recreational opportunities provide a host of positive benefits and outcomes. Opportunities and facilities that promote physical and mental well being, that bring citizens together in positive, supportive and fun environments, and create memorable experiences for families are critical to the future of the community.

In order for the Department to provide quality facilities, programs and services, a new service delivery model has been developed. This model recognizes the Department's Goals. In order to meet these Goals, in some cases, the Department will serve as a direct provider of programs, services and facilities. Other times, the Department will serve as an **enabler / facilitator** for the development and/or provision of programs and services. Occasionally, the Department will **encourage outreach through partnerships** with existing agencies in the provision of programs and services. As a direct provider, facilitator, or through community partnerships and outreach, the Department will consider the most effective, efficient and expedient delivery of services to the County. This model of delivery provides a sustainable framework from which to operate.

Ultimately, this approach allows the Department to implement a Neighborhood Based Planning approach in order to better identify the needs of a community through a systematic method of research and community involvement. The approach includes public involvement and the active engagement of stakeholder groups to create an inclusive and transparent process that encourages community support. The model for delivery of recreation programs relies on collaboration between different agencies, community groups, residents and stakeholders. As a first step, the Department is currently working with the Planning and Zoning Department to better identify neighborhoods throughout the County. By taking a customer-driven, outcome-based, collaborative approach, the Department will continue to play a central role in maintaining and improving the quality of life for residents of the County.

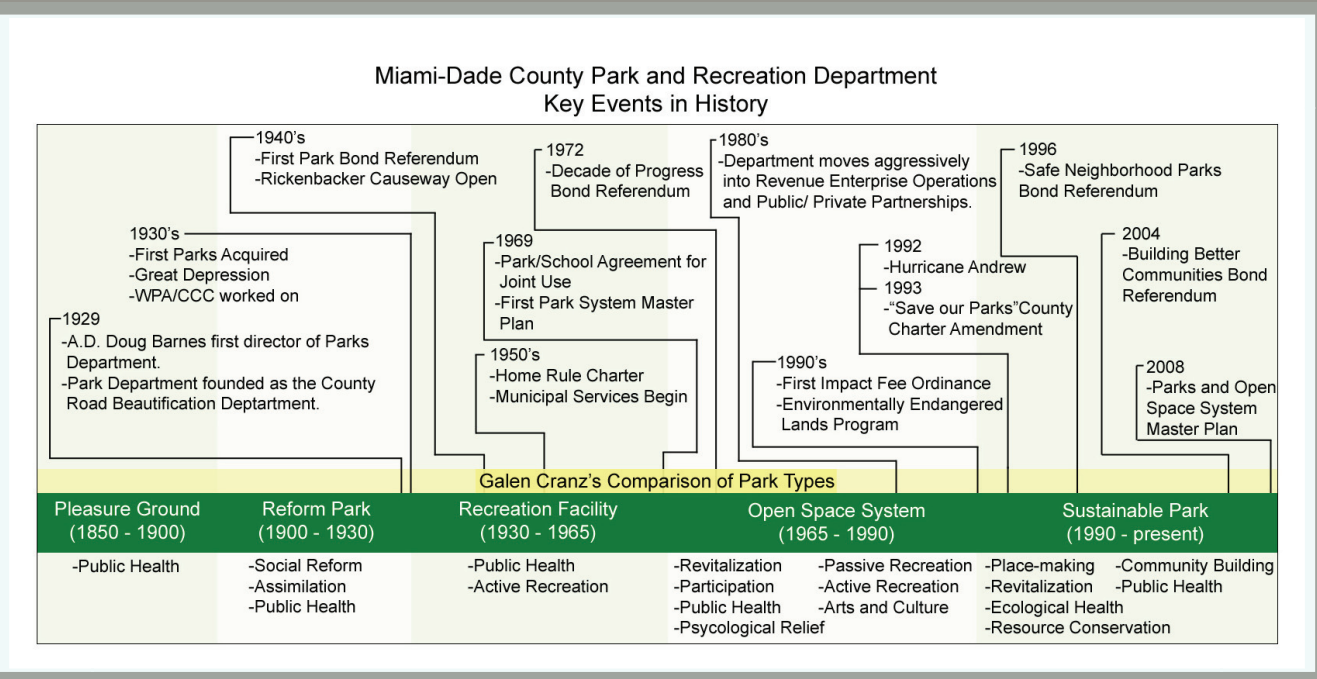


Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department:

The Department's mission is to create outstanding recreational, natural and cultural experiences to enrich individuals and enhance communities by providing sustainable, customer-driven services. The Core Values for the Department include outstanding customer service; an enthusiastic attitude and emphasis on teamwork; accountability and integrity; creativity and innovation; stewardship; inclusiveness and accessibility; leadership and professional development within a framework of excellence.

The Department has evolved significantly from its origination in 1929 and these changes, though unique to the County, are emblematic of the national evolution of the parks and recreation field. Galen Cranz, in her seminal book, "The Politics of Park Design, A History of Urban Parks in America," provides a detailed review of how the parks and recreation field has grown from the Pleasure Grounds of the 1850s to the Open-Space System model that is indicative of most park departments since 1965. These changes have continually redefined and expanded the role of recreation in American life. The graphic below charts the evolution of the parks movement as defined by Cranz, compared to the key events in the history of the Department. The chart shows how these epochs coincide with thirty to thirty five year, generational time periods. This suggests that we are, once again, on the cusp of a new era which will further define parks and recreation.

Some have termed this moment as "The Sustainable Period" or "The Healthy Lifestyle Period". Irrespective of the name, the data found in this report, along with local and national trends, underscores the importance of looking at the role of parks and recreation and to recognize that one cannot be caught up in any paradigm of what has been done in the past. Rather, we must consider our past and the proud tradition of the County's Park and Recreation Department, while recognizing that we are in an era that must include emphasis on place-making, community building, public health, revitalization, ecological health and resource conservation.



INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Miami-Dade County residents benefit from a variety of parks, facilities, and services offered by the Department. As of October 2009, 831 recreational facilities and open space areas existed in the County, of which:

- 24 are under federal and state jurisdiction
- 261 parks are under County jurisdiction
- 546 parks are under municipal jurisdiction

The Department provides recreation and parkland, facilities and services to Miami-Dade County in two primary ways:

- First, the Department provides typical local recreation open space, facilities, programs and services for Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA) residents.
- In addition, the Department provides county-wide recreation open space for both UMSA residents and residents that live within the 35 municipal areas that are within Miami-Dade County.

During the planning process, it was determined that the level of service standard that best fit the Recreation Program Plan was the standard already aligned with access criteria developed as part of the Parks and Open Space System Master Plan. Access criteria standards developed as a part of the Parks and Open Space System Master Plan indicate that every resident should be able to safely and comfortably walk, bicycle, or take public transportation to a recreation center, swimming pool, learn to swim program, summer camp program, after-school program, organized youth sports program and senior program, and that access to those facilities should not take more than 10-15 minutes.

Following the determination of facility and program access standards, a mapping exercise was completed that geographically illustrated the location and distribution of existing facilities and programs. Standard-based Service Area Maps were developed for the facilities and program types for which standards were adopted. The Inventory and Analysis process showed that although the County has a sufficient amount of land to provide services (both today and for 2015 projections), facilities are not evenly distributed. The Access Analysis Maps depict several gaps which prevent residents from readily accessing certain programs within a reasonable travel distance.

Specifically, of the approximately 1.5 million residents who live in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, more than 616,000 residents live more than one (1) mile from a County recreation center and more than 950,000 residents live more than one (1) mile from a County swimming pool. Approximately 224,704 children live in unincorporated Miami-Dade County. Of that population, more than 126,000 live more than one (1) mile from a County After-School program; more than 116,000 live more than one (1) mile from a County Summer Camp program; and more than 183,860 live more than one (1) mile from a County Learn to Swim program. Approximately 300,830 seniors over the age of fifty (50) live in unincorporated Miami-Dade County. Of that population, more than 259,000 live more than one (1) mile from a County Senior Activities program.

Overall, the Inventory and Analysis Process suggests:

- Access to recreation centers is satisfactory
- Access to after school programs is satisfactory
- Access to organized youth sports is excellent
- Major gaps exist in learn to swim program service areas
- Major gaps exist in senior programs
- Gaps in service for each type of program included in this analysis tend to be repeated in certain areas. Ives Estates, Norland, Goulds, Perrine, and Naranja are typically lacking in each type of recreational program offered.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Miami-Dade County is changing and the expressed recreational needs of the community are also changing. In late 2007, Lambert Advisory LLC, together with Department staff, prepared a Leisure Interest Survey. The survey was conducted from June 2008 through September 2008. It was designed to obtain recreation related information from 3,000 randomly selected households in Miami Dade County. The purpose of the Leisure Interest Survey was to:

- Identify recreation and leisure interests that are favorites of residents
- Identify recreation and leisure interests that are least favorites
- Determine facility and program needs
- Obtain residents' general evaluation of various aspects of county facilities and programs

Many of the needs identified through the public opinion survey are indicative of urbanizing communities throughout Florida and the United States. People's lives are busy and they are less willing to commit to recreational activities that have a fixed schedule. The top recreational activities, as identified by frequency of participation, are activities that someone can participate in without a fixed schedule. The increase in this type of "at will" recreation is consistent with trends across the country and is indicative of a societal shift toward greater emphasis on increased quality of life recreational activities and a decrease in purely competitive sports.

Specifically, the Needs Assessment yielded several trends with regard to facility and program needs. These pointed to changes in lifestyles and subsequent recreational needs. However, the survey also showed that health and fitness activities are increasingly important to County residents. As the Department moves toward a new programming approach in an effort to provide more relevant and sustainable recreation activities, the programs and services must meet the needs of the community it serves. Therefore, the Department will adopt a "Benefits-Based Programming" approach developed and endorsed by the National Recreation and Parks Association. The approach is predicated on the idea that programmers take a developmental approach to recreation activities and programs. Through recreation experiences, the potential exists for addressing significant issues (social, economic, environmental) without changing the basic nature of the recreation experience.

The following is a summary of activity preferences and park/facility needs identified at community focus group sessions:

- Easier, equitable access to core recreation facilities and programs
- Affordable after-school program options for their children
- More educational and informational classes (community growth)
- More exercise related programs that reach across all age groups
- Facilities that have the capacity to host multiple programs/classes
- A diverse menu of programs/services for children and seniors
- An effort to obtain additional parkland

For the County, recreation activities from this point forward must be planned, designed, and implemented to meet the fundamental needs of the participant. Additionally, programs must be designed to provide outcomes that are critical to the growth and development of participants.

The Department will strive to deliver the following General Outcomes through the design, development and implementation of programs and activities: (1) provide equal access for all residents; (2) develop healthy citizens and a healthy community through active living programs; (3) cultivate stewards of environmental resources; (4) provide safe facilities and programs; (5) expand resources through partnership opportunities; (6) create lifelong learning programs; (7) develop active living programs; (8) build communities through quality facilities, exceptional programs and events; and (9) encourage cultural awareness.