

MARION COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

5 Year Operational Plan



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Executive Summary

The Five-Year Operational Plan for the Parks & Recreation Department provides a thorough outline of the administration and management of the Department for the next five years.

The Mission of the Parks & Recreation Department was established in 2018 as part of the Department's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan and remains as such:

“To provide recreational opportunities at park facilities that are safe, fun, and accessible while protecting and interpreting our natural resources.”

To meet this mission, we must continually evaluate our priorities, remain flexible as the community's needs evolve, and have the required staffing and fiscal support to deliver effective customer service. In this Plan, the Parks & Recreation Department is providing the means to position Marion County as a leader in improving our community's quality of life, health, and economic impact. As our community expands, we must provide safe and efficient transportation options to protect and serve our community through public safety and leverage our resources by moving forward with water/wastewater infrastructure. Parks & Recreation should be considered as another piece of our vital infrastructure. With it, we will avoid becoming a densely populated county with limited access to community-based, government-supported recreational opportunities for our youth, families, and active senior constituents.

Over the past five years, the Parks & Recreation Department has experienced a re-birth through the circumstances created by the pandemic. The push by our health and medical experts for us to get outside and experience the offerings at local parks has increased visitation and use of all county parks. With a national focus on mental health and well-being and a substantial population growth rate, safe and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities should be included in our current growth patterns. Green (nature/open space/parks) infrastructure is vital.

A key strategy for accomplishing our mission and providing the community with the resources they will need to live an active, healthy lifestyle and a vibrant park system, the Department must implement an approach of advocating for consistent funding of capital projects and maintenance backlog.

While Marion County considers parks and recreation facilities important to our community, several other services compete for limited resources. When funds are tight, parks and recreation agencies can face a decline in funding, while when there is a budgetary surplus, funding is typically restored or even enhanced. The pursuit of consistent financing to help address the growth-related needs increased visitation and demand for our services.

This Plan outlines the Department's vision for the next five years. Including the addition of new parks in the high growth areas, new recreational facilities, the transition to more durable and accommodating amenities at existing facilities, and the continuation of meeting the goals outlined in the 2016 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Marion County Parks & Recreation Department

The Parks & Recreation Department is proud of its accomplishments over the past five years. The park system has increased in size, programs and events are successful. While there are challenges along the way, the Department is excited about the future of Marion County and is looking forward to becoming a leader in providing customer service to our citizens and visitors.

Parks & Recreation is not a department where people *need to go* for something; people *want the services* we provide as they improve their lives.

Since 2018 the Department has been operating under two primary guiding documents: the 2016 Parks & Recreation 10-Year Master Plan, and the 2018-2022 Department Strategic Plan. At an organizational level, the *Empowering Marion for Success* (1.0) was initiated in 2017 providing the Department with strong support to reshape the culture, empower employees and accommodate a changing workforce. The Empowering plan had a big impact on staffing, how we hired and trained staff and started to really grow leaders for the future.

In 2022 *Empowering Marion for Success II* was initiated as an update to the initial strategic plan. Several important initiatives that were started in the initial plan were continued in Part II. The newer strategic plan includes great information and recommendations on the challenges we face associated with growth and public resources.

Combined with this plan and through the leadership and initiative set by the County Administration, and the support provided to them by the Board of County Commissioners, Marion County is currently working towards accomplishing the goals and tasks established in the *Empowering Marion for Success II* strategic plan.

In step with the County's Strategic Plan, the Department is also working on accomplishing the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, formally adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in early 2017. While the Master Plan serves as a snapshot of our community's needs in 2016, the Master Plan is due for an update based on the plan's age, the community's growth, new and evolving trends in park use, and the recreational needs of our citizens.

Mission

To provide recreational opportunities at park facilities that are safe, fun, and accessible while protecting and interpreting our natural resources.

Vision

Through the provision of parks & recreation services, we will enhance the quality of life and nurture the health and well-being of our citizens, our community, and our economy.

Current Conditions

The Parks & Recreation team currently consists of four primary divisions: Administration, Park Operations, Recreation, and Design. A total of 59 full-time staff, two part-time staff, and seasonal supporting staff provide services from multiple locations across the County. Each Division is led by team of truly dedicated professionals: *parks and recreation professionals*, *design professionals* and *administrative professionals*.

The **Administration Division** coordinates the Department's direction, administrative activities and priorities. It provides leadership and assistance to the other divisions and staff while organizing and establishing solid public relations with Marion County's citizens. This Division includes our Community Engagement Coordinator, who serves as the Department's public relations liaison and drives the Department's marketing and social media presence. This Division also provides administrative services to the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion (SELP) and the Marion County Airport (X35).

The **Park Operations Division** is responsible for the day-to-day operation of 57 unique sites owned and operated by the County, ranging in size from 0.72 to 684 acres. The Division consists of four primary operational areas: North, Central, South and Athletics. Operations also include natural resource management (prescribed fires, invasive species management, habitat management, etc.) and Park



Rotary Sportsplex

Operation Specialists who perform specific work including operation of KP Hole, Small Projects and Turf Management. Some iconic locations include the Administration Courtyard, Veterans Memorial Park, KP Hole, and Rotary Sportsplex. From inspecting the safety of all playgrounds to managing natural areas and waterways, operations staff provides frontline customer service support each year.

The **Recreation Division** is responsible for creating appropriate programming for our visitors and residents to promote and encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. While this Division is known more prominently for its highly successful Summer Camp offerings, with most of them booking out 100% within hours of opening registration, they also offer year-round programming, which takes advantage of the abundant adventuring opportunities here in Marion County.

Two main facilities operated by the Recreation Division include Brick City Activity Center, located at Brick City Adventure Park, and the Forest Community Center in Forest Corner. Each facility serves as a hub for recreation camps and programs. The Forest Community Center has grown substantially over the past three years and has become a destination for the Forest community. Services provided at the Center include food distribution in partnership with Marion Senior Services, the host location for several local clubs and organizations, community recreation programs, and community events, including the Forest Jam, Backwoods Bash, and Trunk-or-Treat.

The **Design Division** oversees the Department's park planning, design, construction, and capital improvement projects. The Division enhances the quality of life for citizens and visitors through dynamic park design that encourages unique experiences which connect people with nature and promote active lifestyles. The Division is also involved with the Development Review team by providing plan review and approval of landscape, irrigation, tree protection, replacement, and outdoor lighting plans.

The Design Division manages all department capital improvement and internal park projects and assists with projects at the SELP and X35. The primary focus of this Division is the execution of capital improvements according to the adopted Capital Improvement Program. The design professionals in this division facilitate public meetings, gather input on park projects and formulate designs that have a meaningful impact on our current and future generations. The Division performs much of the design work using in-house talent as much as possible while working with local consultants to help complete more complex projects that may require extensive permitting.

Internal park projects require drawings, permits, or construction management presented by the Park Operations and Administration divisions. These projects are smaller in scale and are not typically included in the Department's CIP.

In addition to the Department's CIP and internal park projects, the Division provides design and consultant services to other departments within Marion County. Projects range from designing an early learning garden for Library Services at the Library Headquarters, renovating the outdoor exercise equipment for Human Resources on the McPherson campus, and CR-475A gateway corridor buffer designs for Growth Services.

The following table illustrates the current workload for the Design Division:

Current Workload			
Project	Project Description	Type	Budget
Ocala Park Estates	New neighborhood park	EXP	\$210,000
Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp	Replace boat ramp and pave parking area	CRP	\$1,850,678
Norm Westbrook Park	New neighborhood park	EXP	\$300,000
Rotary Sportsplex	Convert to soccer fields 4 & 5 to synthetic turf	CRP	\$2,000,000
Reddick Playground	New playground and restrooms	EXP	\$300,000
Ray Wayside Park	Design + Permit - Replace boat ramp, and kayak launch	CRP	\$300,000
Belleview Sportsplex	ADA improvements at softball fields	CRP	\$30,000
Rotary Sportsplex	Sod sprigging of soccer fields 2 & 3	ROI	\$84,575
Ralph Russell	ADA improvements to playground	CRP	\$20,000
KP Hole	Replace handrails on dock	CRP	\$45,000
EXP = Expansion		DES/TOU = Destination /Tourist	
CRP = Capital Replacements		ROI = Return on Investment	

Core Services

The Parks & Recreation Department provides programs and facilities to support our citizens' diverse interests in Recreation, parks, and our natural environment. The Department's core services are applied throughout the County efficiently and equitably. The Department's core services are listed and discussed below.

Administrative Services – 10 percent

The tracking and monitoring of revenues and expenses is a critical component of the operation of the Department. All supervisors are part of the administrative procedures outlined in the Department's Procedure Manual. The Assistant Director oversees the total administrative functions of the Department.

Customer Service – 20 percent

Each staff member within the Department provides direct customer service, whether it is a staff member helping park visitors, someone walking into the office to register for programs, or a manager addressing a complaint. Each member is trained and expected to deliver exemplary customer service each day.

Cash Handling – 7 percent

Due to the fee structure within the Department, over \$1.6 million in revenue is collected annually. Time allocated to check and double-check all funds and reporting of revenue daily. Cash handling procedures are reviewed by the Internal Auditor and are clearly outlined in the Department's Procedures Manual.

Recreation Programs – 7 percent

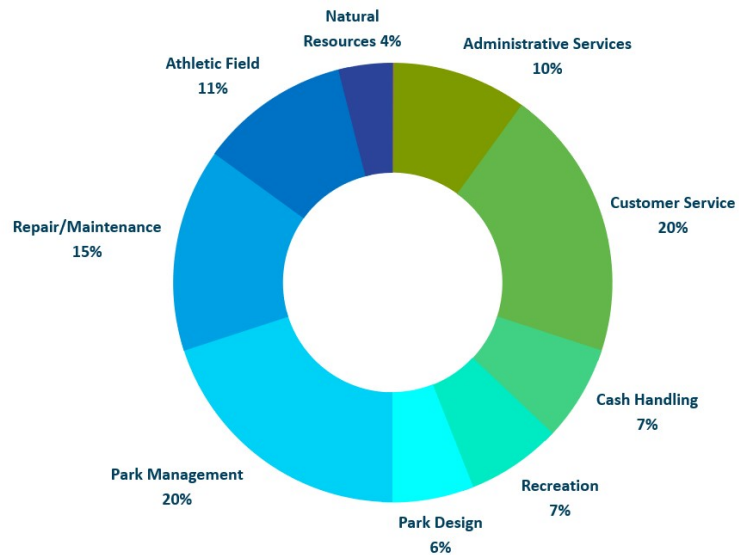
The recreation division oversees all recreation programs, including the programming, scheduling, booking, and execution of each program. All staff participates by proxy by maintaining park grounds and facilities where recreation programs take place.

Park Design/Project Management – 6 percent

The design division (see comments regarding the Division in the opening of this Plan) oversees all park planning and design projects, mapping, asset inventory, and project management. Concepts for park projects are generated in-house, and depending on the project's complexity, designs are managed either with in-house staff or through consultants. Park projects, excluding vertical construction, are managed by the Parks Design team.

Park Management – 20 percent

Along with customer service, park management is one of the primary services. Park management refers to the day-to-day operation of the parks and facilities, from renting tubes to inspecting playgrounds.



Repair/Maintenance Building & Grounds – 15 percent

Another significant component of the Department's functions includes the routine repairs and maintenance of the park system. Staff routinely cleans bathrooms, removes trash and litter from parks, and completes maintenance-related projects such as replacing fencing, painting park features, and pressure cleaning monuments.

Athletic Field Maintenance – 11 percent

The maintenance of athletic fields has become a significant component of what the Department does, yet it is completed by a relatively small team of 10 staff members. The results of this team's work create safe play environments at six sports complexes that host state, regional, and national tournaments for baseball, softball, soccer, and football.

Natural Resource Management – 4 percent

Managing over 1,800 acres of conservation land is a critical component of how the Department protects the environment. Due to reductions in staff over the past several years, resource management has become a lower priority for the Department, yet it is a priority.



Silver Springs Archery Facility Ribbon Cutting

Key Personnel

Jim Couillard, PLA – Director

A Professional Landscape Architect licensed by the State of Florida and has been with Marion County for 16 years. He was hired as Parks Designer II in 2006, was promoted to Landscape Architect in 2008, and then promoted to Environmental Services Manager in 2014. In 2015, he became the Director-Landscape Architect.

Kelsey Mears, CPRP – Assistant Director

A Parks & Recreation professional that has been with Marion County for 5 1/2 years. She was hired in 2017, as the Assistant Director for the Parks & Recreation Department. Kelsey has a degree in Parks & Recreation and has worked in the field for 21 years

Charles Ryan, CPRP, CPSI – Park Operations Manager

The Parks Operations Manager and has been with Marion County for 17 years. In 2006 he started his career with Marion County at the Office of the County Engineer. He was hired as a Highway Maintenance Technician, was promoted to Light Equipment Operator in 2007, and then to Engineering Inspector in 2008. In 2013 he started his journey with the Parks & Recreation Department as a Parks Services Worker III. He was promoted to Parks Services Worker IV in 2014, Park Ranger in 2018, Parks Operations Supervisor in 2020, and then promoted to the Parks Operations Manager in 2022.

Jessica Majoros, CPRP – Recreation Manager

Began her career with Marion County about one year ago as Recreation Manager. She is a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional. With over 16 years of experience in Parks and Recreation, mainly in South Florida, Marion County is her forever home.

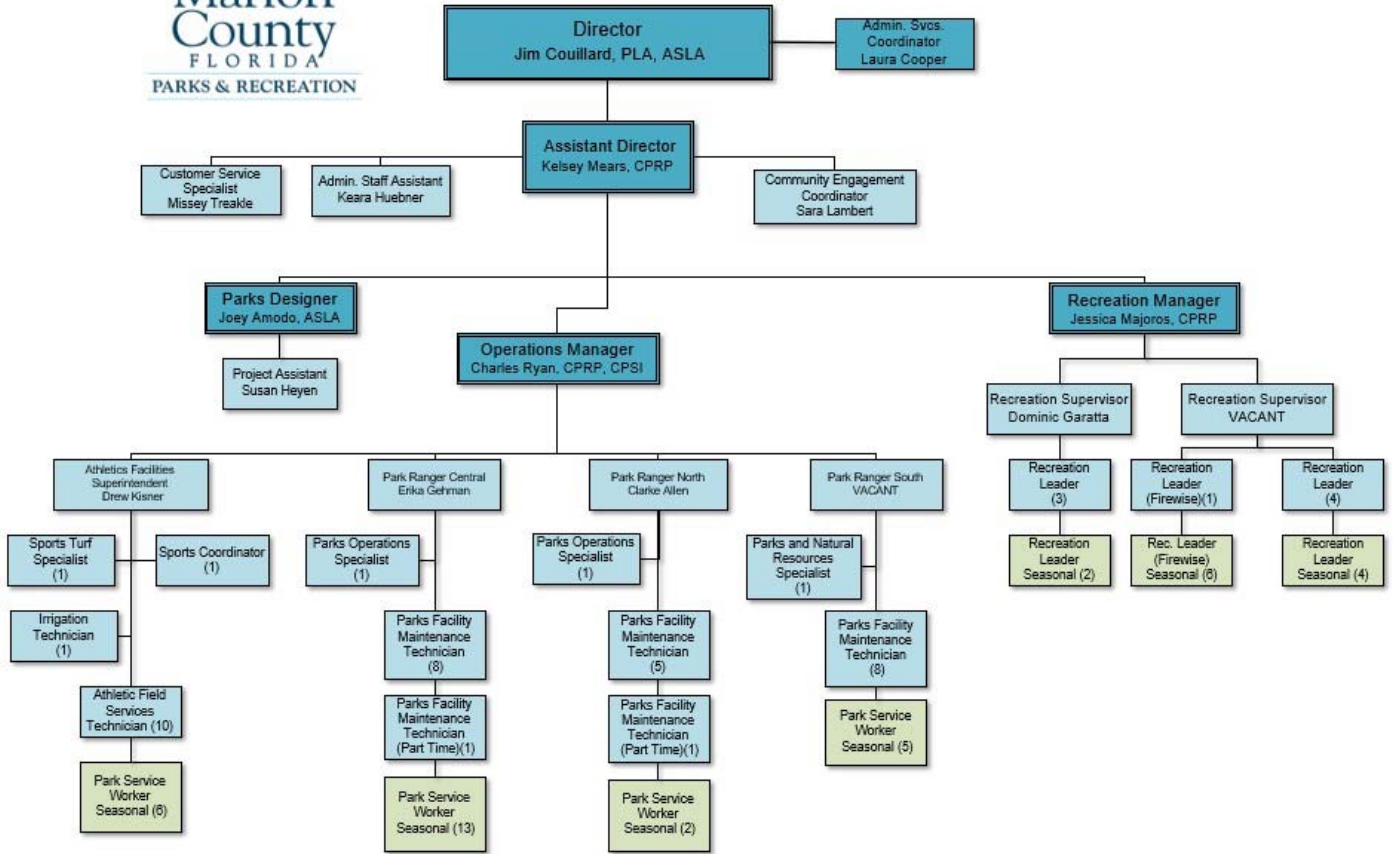
Joey Amodo, ASLA – Parks Designer

Graduated from the University of Florida in 2018 with a Bachelors in Landscape Architecture and is currently pursuing licensure through the State of Florida. He joined the team in 2021 as Parks Designer II and has been with Marion County for almost two years. In 2022, he was elected to serve as the Gainesville/Ocala Section Chair for the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Florida Chapter.

Sara Lambert – Community Engagement Coordinator

She has been with Marion County Parks & Recreation for about five years. She started with us in October of 2018 with the Recreation Division. In 2021 she moved on to fill our Customer Service Specialist role. Later, in that same year, she was promoted to become our inaugural Community Engagement Coordinator.

Parks & Recreation Current Organizational Chart



Department Funding

The Parks & Recreation Department maintains five different budget funds with the General Fund supporting four of them directly. Over the past five years, the Department has received substantial funding support from the Board of County Commissions to help push new initiatives (not included in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan) to help offset needs associated with the increased use of the park system.

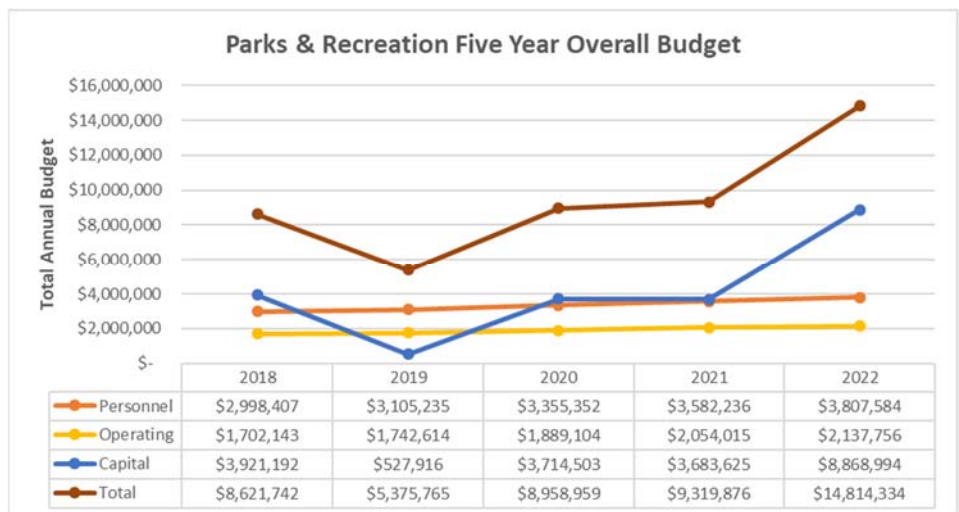
Expenditure Budget Funds

Parks & Recreation (Dept. 360) consists of the General Fund expenditures to operate and maintain the County park system and recreation programming. This fund includes salaries and wages for most of the Department's staff and nearly all of the operational expenses for the parks.

Other Recreation Programs (Dept. 361) consist of local, state, and federal revenues and/or grants. While this fund is technically in the General Fund, it is established as the location for public non-County revenues to be identified.

Bellevue Sportsplex (Dept. 363) consists of the costs associated with the operation of the Bellevue Sportsplex in partnership with the City of Bellevue. Each year the City provides a direct payment to the County for \$50,000 for improvements to and operation of the city-owned parcel at the park.

Parks & Recreation Fees fund (Dept. 362) includes all fees generated through program registrations, user fees, pavilion/cabin/equipment rentals, and park pass sales. The Board of County Commissioners established this fund in 2007 to offset the cost of acquisition and capital improvements. In 2022 the Department set another record in revenue generation by reaching \$1.8 million.



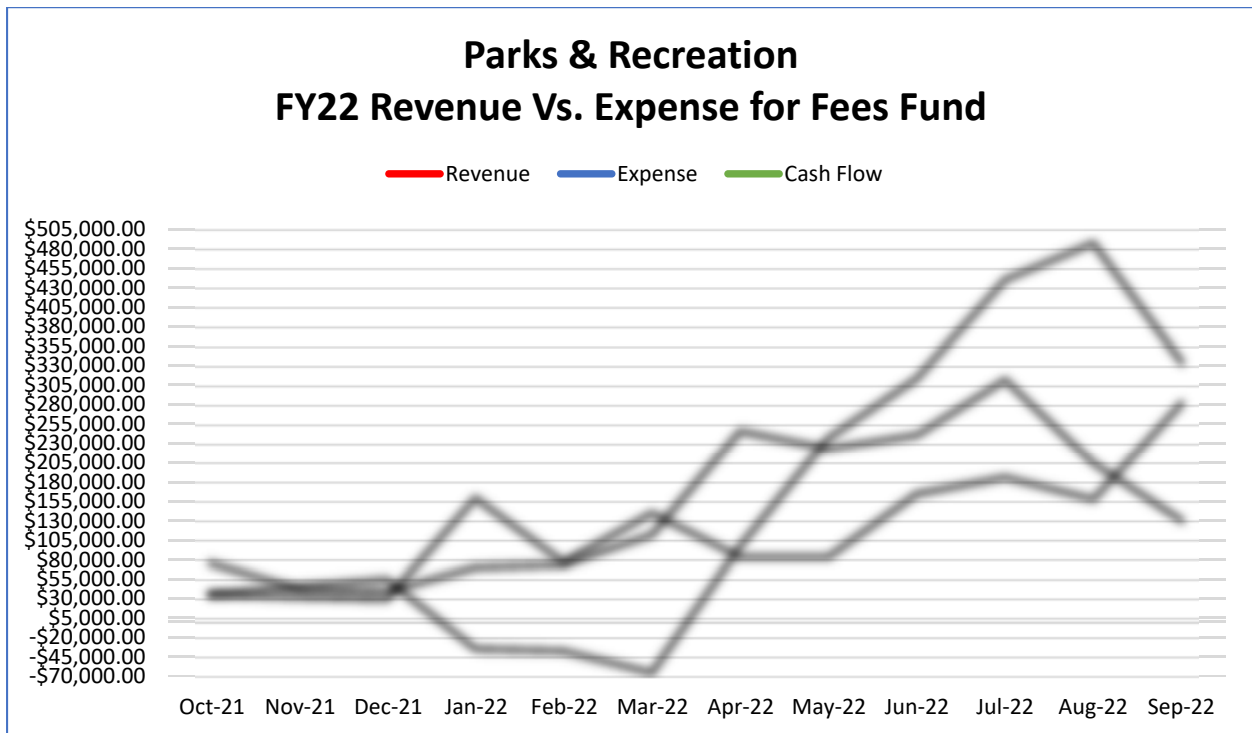
Parks & Recreation Capital fund (Dept. 715) includes funding for select capital improvement projects across three different parks or initiatives: New Tuber Exit, Blue Run of Dunnellon Park Restroom and Rotary Sportsplex Soccer Field Renovation (synthetic turf project).

Revenue Streams

The Department includes nine different funding streams which all contribute back into the Fees Fund. Over the years the Department continues to adjust fees and find the “sweet spot” for certain operations, in particular at KP Hole. This operation is considered to be the nest egg for the Department and in 2022, KP Hole was responsible for over \$1 million in revenues. This is a remarkable achievement considering the reduction of tubing by nearly 70% in 2020.

Revenue Type	FY22 Total
Equipment Rentals	\$4,033.08
Facility Rentals	\$92,434.06
KP Hole	\$1,142,173.35
VIP Parking at KP Hole	\$34,533.20
Leagues & Tournaments	\$55,868.67
Miscellaneous	\$53,600.00
Park Entry Fees	\$193,360.60
Park Passes	\$96,778.00
Program Registrations	\$141,068.68
Special Events	\$5,250.00
TOTAL:	\$1,819,099.64

Park entry fees, park pass sales and program registrations all followed the collection rate at KP Hole yet these figures cannot be taken for granted. They are the result of hard work and determination by the Park Operations team, the Recreation team and the Administration team who all work together to deliver these services.



Future revenue projections are expected to follow the current annual growth rate of approximately 3%, approximately \$35,000 per year. More discussion about revenue and funding is included in the next section of this plan.

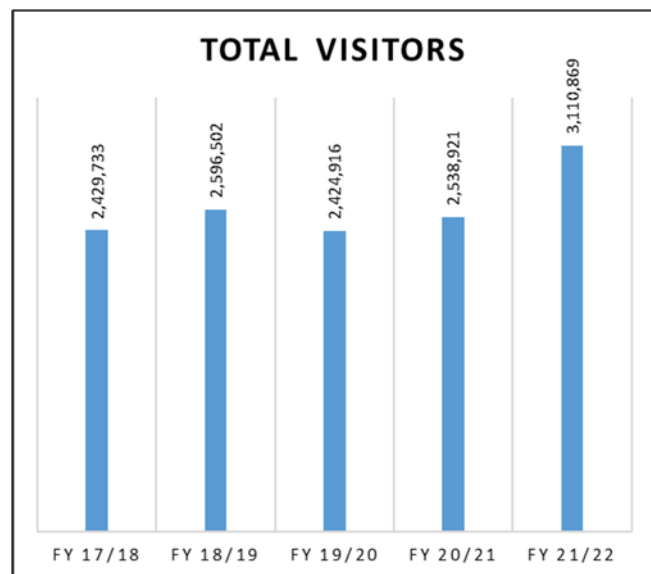
Opportunities and Constraints Today

The Parks & Recreation Department has been guided through the Master Planning process for over 25 years. This is a common tactic used by public agencies due the overall comprehensive approaches that are typically included in master plans and yields a guiding document for agencies to follow over a longer period of time. During the planning process, Master Plans tend to dig deeper into analysis thus a broader understanding of a community's needs gained through the public participation process. The most recent Parks & Recreation Master Plan was completed in 2016 and formally approved by the Board of County Commissioners in early 2017 after several public meetings and workshops over the course of a 12-month period. The current Parks & Recreation Master Plan is a 10-year vision and is essentially in effect through 2027.

The next five years for Marion County will be some of the most dynamic and changing times for our community. New developments and housing projects in previously developed communities are bringing more people with expectations of having more access to public parks. We are also experiencing requests for more access to particular types of sports facilities for sports such as flag football, soccer and pickleball. While this growth continues, our demographics continue to shift. Families are moving here from all parts of Florida and from across the United States.

Prior to 2020, park visitation was steadily increasing each year, however, after the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, visitation in 2021 increased back up to pre-COVID numbers. In 2022 visitation in the park system spiked to over 3,000,000. In a matter of three years, visitation grew by over 500,000 users.

Visitation numbers did not only consist of local park users. We can thank the successful marketing of our trails and natural resources by the Tourism Development team for the increases seen at other popular destinations such as KP Hole. The partnership and efforts between Tourism Development/VCB and Parks & Recreation is working! And the more public projects we can complete towards filling gaps in the sports/arts/events-venue segment of the local market, the more successful and relevant we will be. Sports tourism in Marion County is a strong market and we have some aging facilities competing with newer and more accommodating facilities within our competitive market area.



As these changes occur (growth of the community, increased visitation and a hustling sports tourism market), the Department must also continue to address the needs of the existing community and pressure on our local natural resources. The 2016 Master Plan outlines \$31-million in improvements that touch nearly every park that the Department currently operates and/or maintains. Some notable projects that are in the plan include:

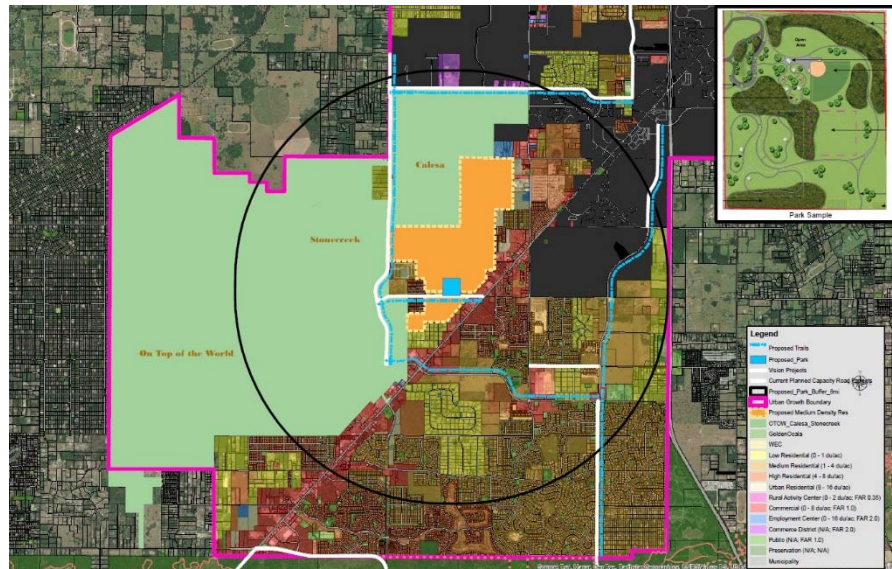
- Redevelopment of Ray Wayside waterfront will meet the needs of the increased use by paddlecraft, degrading retaining walls/boat ramps, new restroom facilities and improvements to vehicular circulation.
- Redevelopment of Belleview Sportsplex to address the current recreational needs in this area of Marion County and to facilitate increase in park use. This is the busiest park in the park system and deserves equivalent attention as the other well-used sports complexes.
- Development of a new Community Park in the Southwest/SR200 Corridor area to meet the historic deficiency of parks in that densely populated area of the county.
- Two new parks in the northwest area of the county have been completed since 2018:
 - Ocala Park Estates (current name) is complete, less one pavilion which is currently being bid out for pricing. This small park will be used by the local community and serve as a nice space for families to enjoy.
 - Norm Westbrook Park – Phase 1 is complete. Improvements include a paved entry road, a day-use parking area, an equine trailer parking area and two trailheads, one for equine use and one for foot traffic. Small improvements such as new signage and interpretive exhibits will be added in the immediate future. Phase 2 is scheduled to be completed in FY25 and will include a playground, bathroom, open multi-purpose field and amenities for picnicking.
- Replacement of the Baseline Road Trailhead Playground and safety surfacing with a goal of creating a “destination playground” featuring boundless access to ADA-compliant play features and hours of play for all visitors, regardless of abilities.
- Numerous recommendations for improvements at existing parks.

New Growth Challenges

Growth is affecting the Department in a few different ways. For example, at existing parks, higher levels of wear and tear are very evident; “future” park set-asides are gaining the attention of realtors and new perspective residents planning to reside near vacant park sites; and, new development, including residential infill projects, around the county are triggering the need for new parks and recreation facilities as well.

Orange Blossom Hills is a good example of a smaller community with a vacant park site surrounded by homes and families. The County owns 13 acres of land set aside as a “future” park site as listed in the 2007 and 2016 Master Plans. The Department receives inquiries about the development of this park from current and perspective residents. Currently, the development of Orange Blossom Hills is not included in the existing five-year Capital Improvement Program.

New growth is being assessed in accordance with Planning & Future Growth section of the *Empowering Marion for Success II* plan. One of the deliverables in this is a set of maps that identified areas of Marion County where growth should be considered, infill projects where utility infrastructure already exists or is planned to be completed in the next few years. In both the northwest and southwest planning areas, each are ideal locations for new Community or Regional Parks was shown.



Strategic Plan map – Southwest focus area for new growth

The planning & future growth committee identified two areas west of I-75 and assessed current land use and zoning patterns in those two areas. They also identified opportunities where land uses could be changed to accommodate higher-density residential development where the infrastructure is capable of supporting that type of growth.

The Department is using these same maps to assess land acquisition opportunities for new parks and recreation facilities. At the same time, the Department is also using its ability to work with our state partners to find lands that have the same potential of becoming new parks. One particular project includes the 40-acre Independence Park site.

While this park land was intended to serve the SR200 corridor area, the geographical location of the park creates a big challenge and may cause more pains than the use of the site is worth: it is tucked behind several existing homes and the route to get to the site would increase traffic through residential communities. Parks of this size (40 acres) will included amenities which would encourage much use and potentially degrade the quality of life for the residents who would experience more vehicles on the local streets.

At the same time, our state partners with FDEP are interested in including the Independence Park site into the Cross Florida Greenway. By doing this, the park would then be maintained in accordance with FDEP land management strategies. Essentially the fence between the Greenway and Independence Park would come down and the site would be managed consistently with the State Park plans.

In order to address both conditions, the Department has recommended that Independence Park be leased to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for inclusion into the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway. In exchange, Marion County would pursue a land lease for a portion of the Greenway



along or near SW 49th Ave. This “exchange” would allow Marion County to develop a “destination trailhead” as outlined in the 2016 Master Plan. This trailhead park would be upgraded from the current condition of SW 49th Ave. Trailhead (currently state-owned and managed) not only accommodates equine trail user groups but also provide amenities to support the paved trail and hiking trail users along with additional community park-type amenities. The recently completed paved trail system in the Greenway comes by this location and when SW 49th Ave. is widened, an eight-foot wide paved trail will be constructed in the right-of-way. This proposed park site would be situated where these two trails will connect one day and be another marketable destination for trail users to gain access to the amazing network of trails along the Greenway.

The only roadblock with this idea is the availability of sufficient capital improvement funding to build and operate the park. Upon entering into a lease, the County would be required to create a plan to develop and open the park within five years of executing the lease.

Implementation of the 2016 Parks & Recreation Master Plan

The Department has continuously worked on finding ways to work through the recommendations and lists of projects included in the Master Plan. One of the largest constraints of the plan is the \$31 million price tag associated with the needs of the park system without having a dedicated, consistent funding source. While other components of the plan, such as the Marketing Plan, Recreation Program Assessments, etc., have been implemented, the capital projects and operational recommendations have been slower to complete.

This following table is a representation of the overall project list included in the Master Plan. The yellow highlighted sections indicate projects that have been complete. It is important to recognize the estimated costs of these projects as they were provided in 2016.

Recommended Park Improvements		
Park	Recommendation	Cost Estimate
Coehadjoe Park	Connectivity paths between facilities / walking trail (800 ft.)	\$ 100,000
Coehadjoe Park	Construct Pickleball Courts; 4 with room for 4 more.	\$ 100,000
Coehadjoe Park	Construct Phase II of Wildcat Play Area	\$ 65,000
Gores Landing	Upgrade boat ramp facility	\$ 35,000
Gores Landing	Construction Sleep Pavilions; 4	\$ 48,000
Gores Landing	Construct new restroom and showerhouse	\$ 200,000
Gores Landing	Construct upgraded sewage package plant	\$ 35,000
Gores Landing	Pavilion in unshaded center area	\$ 65,000
Gores Landing	ADA parking signage	\$ 500
Salt Springs Civic Park	Parking improvements - asphalt and reinforced grass parking	\$ 60,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	New Playground and shade structure	\$ 110,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	16x16 Pavilion near playground area	\$ 40,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	30x30 Pavilion near volleyball	\$ 85,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Restrooms building - new	\$ 120,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Sidewalk improvements/ plaza at baseball field	\$ 60,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Upgrades to existing baseball field	\$ 75,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Drinking fountain	\$ 2,500
Salt Springs Civic Park	Site furnishings - sitewide budget	\$ 12,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Site Landscape Budget - trees and groundcovers	\$ 20,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Construct Pickleball Court; 1 with room for 1 more.	\$ 25,000
Salt Springs Civic Park	Fencing between playground and parking	\$ 12,000

Going Forward – It Starts With Parks

The Next Parks & Recreation Master Plan

The 2016 Parks & Recreation Master plan includes numerous examples of great projects and proposed park development ideas yet, as mentioned earlier, the plan is outdated. Numerous projects became a new priority for the Department and demand on staff, including some key positions experiencing turnover, slowed production and deliverables. Projects like the Marion County Aquatic Center and the conversion of soccer fields at Rotary Sportsplex have the ability to suddenly reprioritize workload, leaving some projects either partially completed or just not started at all. Both projects are highly feasible and the County should include more projects like these to help improve the quality of life here.

Funding Constraints and Execution of Projects

With new growth bringing new needs, addressing existing and committed projects is an on-going challenge compounded by the significant cost increases in construction. The market has continued to play havoc on all County projects, across all departments. Land prices in areas where new parks are needed have an effect on meeting our community's needs. Having these needs, and limited funding, creates a need to reprioritize projects based on where the funding is coming from; since there is a lot of competition for General Fund dollars, the Department would be more effective in delivery of services if a dedicated funding source, or a compilation of funding sources, was created.

One of the primary methods of funding park projects is through the Parks & Recreation Fees Fund which is supported by user fees. While the news of revenues reaching over \$1.8 million in 2022 is a great story, this Fund is burdened by two major factors: salaries/wages, benefits and operating costs along with "legacy" projects that encumber a substantial amount of funding.

There are seven full-time staff and seasonal staff who are included in the Fees Fund with an annual budget impact of \$825,000 per year. Each year the costs of personnel continues to increase through the Merit Program, pay raises associated with a position matrix, increases in the cost of benefits, etc. which increases this cost. Along with the cost increase in construction, the burden to sustain these staff members in this Fund, substantially limits this Fund from providing any substantial funding towards capital projects.

The second constraint in the Fees Fund are the long-term projects that have tied up over \$1.3 million in encumbered funding.

- Blue Run of Dunnellon Park Bathroom project has tied up approximately \$150,000 and has been in the budget since 2010. Thanks to the recent push by the Board of County Commissioners, a plan has been developed and the County is now committed to constructing a "parks standard" bathroom with a final budget of \$440,000 towards the project.
- Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp Improvements is another project that has isolated over \$836,000 in the Fees Fund. The complexity of budgeting and availability of State and Federal construction grants has delayed this project for over 10 years. With the cooperation of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the Federal Department of the Interior, the Department received nearly \$1 million in new grant dollars in 2022 needed to help push this project towards completion.

Acquiring land and developing a new park in the SR200 Corridor Area has been a long-term need. As the new growth is compounding this need, this park planning project is gaining momentum. As plans are made, funding for acquisition is available in the Fees Fund; \$650,000 for land in the southwest and \$650,000 for land in the northwest. There will not be sufficient funding for park development available in

the same Fund. To serve the growing needs in these two areas, it will be important to follow the momentum of acquiring land, start working on designing and building the park soon afterward. The community will expect a continual process of development until the park is open for public use; programming \$3-5 million for a Community Park level of site development and improvements would be a good start.

Strategic Plan

The Department participated in the research and helped create the various tasks included in the *Empowering Marion for Success II* plan, including to:

Identify and prioritize new and/or expanding facility needs and funding sources based on existing service gaps and expected population growth for the next ten years.

This task would be one that we would typically use in the Master Planning process and is a topic that the Department monitors on a routine basis, outside of it being a Task in the Strategic Plan. Most of the members of the Department's leadership team were either born and raised here, or moved here some time ago, and have decided to make Marion County home. The changes in our community are not hard to miss from a personal perspective or their professional perspective.

We hear from the community more frequently now than in prior years. Typical requests include inquiries about new parks, new amenities or extended use of already over-used facilities. The Department hears and sees the needs regularly. We are also very aware of the trends of growth in sports, both team and individual. This is a good sign for our community as it reflects on the level of activity being sought.

Along with our own determinations, the Department engages with the Tourism Development team to assess where we can add facilities that would support visitation. The TDC team is planning to conduct a global study of what types of sports and event activities would be sustainable in our community and this Department is very eager to deliver. We anticipate many opportunities on the horizon with new sports facilities and sports tourism; we just need to get it right!

Project Classifications

For this Operational Plan, the definition of a Current Need is: projects, amenities and programs that the Department has on their existing radar, either as a recommendation from the current Master Plan or a more recent need identified by the community. These classifications are used to clarify any specific goals that are established for project and to help signal what type of funding may be utilized for each of them.

The current CIP projects are grouped into four categories:

1. Expansion
2. Capital Replacements
3. Destination /Tourist
4. Return on Investment

Expansion Projects include projects that involve the addition of new parks and the expansion of existing parks. Depending on the specific park designs and elements being planned in the park, operational and reoccurring costs can be estimated. Expansion of existing parks may include additional maintenance costs if the expansion is extensive and includes new amenities that add to the current workload, e.g. adding four baseball fields to Wrigley Fields would add the need for additional staff.

Capital Replacement projects are those that include the replacement of expensive items or the updating/upgrading of existing parks that are past their life cycle. Good examples of each of these would be the replacement of the playground at Baseline Road Trailhead Park and the renovation of Belleview Sportsplex.

Destination/Tourist related projects are those that either contribute to the bed tax or facilitate visitation from outside of Marion County. The addition of more cabins at Horseshoe Lake or the creation of a second Tubers Exit on the Rainbow River would both be classified here.

Return on Investment projects that directly contribute back to the Department in the form of continuous revenues. A good example of this would be the construction of a boat storage and RV campground at Carney Island.

Current CIP Projects

Capital Replacement Plan	Expansion	Destination/Tourist	Return On Investment
Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp \$1,850,678 Ray Wayside Park \$369,900 Total: \$2,220,578	Ocala Park Estates \$154,850 Norm Westbrook Park \$235,090 Reddick Playground \$300,000 Total: \$689,940	Rotary Field Improvements Phase 1 \$2,000,000 Blue Run Restroom \$440,981 Total: \$2,440,981	KP Hole Tuber Exit \$1,350,000 Total: \$1,350,000

CIP Total: \$6,701,499

The Department will continue to assess land acquisition opportunities in the two locations shown on the strategic planning maps. The process that the Strategic Planning Committee used in creating the projected growth maps is similar to the same process used during typical master planning. One main component that all successful Master Plans include is public input. The Department relies on engaging with the community and hearing directly from our neighbors, user groups and stakeholders as park planning moves into park design and construction.

A plan to address growth and high-demand facilities is to concentrate efforts toward acquisition in one area first. Amenities that are being requested the most include multi-use sports fields that are lighted and available for use year-round, more pickleball courts (both indoor and outdoor, preferably covered), a dedicated track and field facility, more disc golf courses, a large recreation/shared-use venue, indoor training facilities, and trails of all types. Before the Department even begins the process to update the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, there are numerous existing needs clearly identified.

Future CIP Projects

Capital Replacement Plan	Expansion	Destination/Tourist	Return On Investment
Belleview Sportsplex \$2,500,000 Brick City Adventure Park \$250,000 Baseline Road Trailhead \$1,500,000 Ray Wayside Park \$2,000,000 Gore's Landing \$500,000 Total: \$6,750,000	Salt Springs Civic Park \$500,000 Coehadjoe Park \$300,000 Norm Westbrook Park \$750,000 Rotary Sportsplex \$1,000,000 Shocker Park \$200,000 Total: \$2,750,000	Land Acquisition \$1,300,000 Total: \$1,300,000	Rotary Field Improvements Phase 2 \$2,000,000 Total: \$2,000,000

Future CIP Total: \$12,800,000

The renovation and updating of existing facilities is very important and should be included in the Department’s annual budget as necessary. Besides the Legacy Projects, each year the Department chips away at small improvement projects such as ADA accessibility improvements, addressing safety issues and improving customer service opportunities each year.

Currently the Department is focused on completing the two Legacy Projects, Blue Run Restroom and Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp. The Design team is also moving along with conceptual site plans for improvements at Belleview Sportsplex, which are slated to be completed in Year 7 (FY25). Once conceptual site plans are near completion, the Division will prepare to have public input sessions, conduct surveys and review demographic trends/projections prior to developing final park designs. The Department is prepared to hire a consultant to finalize development plans, obtain all required permits for site construction and provide a construction estimate.

Brief Future Project Descriptions

Capital Replacement

- **Belleview Sportsplex** (\$2,500,000) includes Phase 1 construction of new baseball facility; new baseball quad with new concession/restroom building; demolition of existing baseball facilities.
- **Brick City Adventure Park** (\$250,000) includes parking area improvements.
- **Baseline Road Trailhead Park** (\$1,500,000) includes replacement of playground, safety surfacing and shade structures.
- **Ray Wayside Park** (\$2,000,000) includes replacement of boat ramps, retaining walls and dock structure; new floating dock system; new hand-launch area
- **Gores Landing** (\$500,000) includes demolition of existing sewage package plant and construction of new restroom/showers.

Expansion

- **Salt Springs Civic Park** (\$500,000) includes construction of new restroom.
- **Coehadjoe Park** (\$300,000) includes parking improvements for pickleball courts.
- **Norm Westbrook Park – Phase II** (\$750,000) includes construction of restrooms, picnic shelter, playground and multi-purpose field.
- **Rotary Sportsplex** (\$1,000,000) includes construction of new maintenance facility and paved parking areas.
- **Shocker Park** (\$200,000) includes planning and design associated with the addition of softball fields and restrooms.

Destination/Tourism

Land Acquisition (\$1,300,000) for new park which may include a multi-purpose venue suitable for recreation use, tourism use and emergency shelter.

Return on Investment

Rotary Sportsplex – Phase II (\$2,000,000) includes conversion of two more soccer fields to synthetic turf and updated sports field lighting.

There are several long-term projects that will fall beyond this five-year plan. As part of the *Empowering Marion for Success II* plan, a look forward to the next ten years shows additional projects across all four categories. Depending on any future dedicated funding sources being available for capital improvement projects, the projects listed above may slide into the five years beyond this plan.

In order to move quicker, two primary components are needed:

1. Consistent funding for projects with high price tags.
2. Expand the Parks Design team to meet current and future workload.

Potential Funding Sources

The Parks & Recreation Department has identified that the Fees Fund is not a secure funding source that can drive the current and future capital improvement projects. The Department's financial resources support the operation and maintenance of our assets and reinvestment in our capital infrastructure. The Department must develop new dedicated funding strategies to help meet the diverse needs of an ever-growing community while still maintaining current facilities and service levels. Future park planning includes acquiring land to connect our parks better, meet the needs of park-deficient communities and provide space to improve the quality of life for Marion County residents.

As mentioned earlier, full time staff salaries/wages and benefits along with seasonal salaries, are included in the Fees Fund which is a reoccurring burden of approximately \$825,000 and continues to increase. Reallocation of these staff members into the General Fund would leverage funding for capital improvement projects to meet the increased needs.

Quality of Life Bond

Seeking a voter-approved bond for Quality of Life projects is the most suitable option when faced with an extensive list of capital needs. Bundling Parks and Recreation projects with other projects, such as expanding new Animal Services facilities, new libraries, and projects for Veterans, can be a successful means of obtaining significantly large sums of money for capital needs. Bonds provide funds on a relatively quick basis that can be used over a more extended period. The 1988 Pennies for Parks bond provided over \$23,000,000 in funding, essentially used over a 25-year period. Statewide there is a high voter approval rate for park and conservation finance bonding, with municipal and County proposals receiving approximately 68 percent approval. A copy of the annual report from the Clerks' office is included in the Appendix of this plan.

Parks and Recreation Impact Fee

In 2007 the Department undertook a study to investigate the potential of implementing a Parks and Recreation Impact Fee as another means to supplement the expiration of the Pennies for Parks bond. It was determined that the most feasible rate for new residential construction was \$0.71 per square foot; a typical 2,000-square-foot home would generate nearly \$1,400 in revenue. It is recommended that a new study be completed to verify these recommended rates.

Impact fees, paid by new development, should be used for new projects and new parks that would be used to meet the need of the new park development. With the majority of projects in the Master Plan slated for exiting park sites, assigning impact fee revenue to existing sites are not ideal. Therefore, impact fees should be considered when new development creates the need for new parks and facilities, especially due to the pressure of new growth happening so quickly. It should be noted also that the City of Belleview has had Parks and Recreation Impact Fees as a revenue source since 2012. The City uses a rate of \$1,000 per residence.

Sixth Percent Bed Tax

Similar to the Impact Fee, implementing the sixth percent or "sixth penny" of the bed tax to fund park projects makes sense for projects targeting tourism. According to the VCB, annual revenue generated by the sixth penny would be in the range of \$705,000 per year. Florida Statute 125.0104 states that the proceeds from this penny "are to pay the debt service on bonds issued to finance professional sports franchise facilities or retained spring training franchise facilities and to promote tourism." There are several larger projects within the Master Plan list and in the Future CIP, which would promote tourism. The addition of synthetic turf sports fields at various parks along with the addition of pickleball courts, or

even a dedicated pickleball facility, would increase tourism, create opportunities to expand sports tourism opportunities.

Emergency Management Funding

One of the larger scale projects that fall outside of this plan five-year horizon, yet will fill the gap in the ten-year forecast, is the construction of a Multi-Purpose Venue, similar to the Wiregrass Ranch Sports Complex in Wesley Chapel. This venue was constructed with a combination of tourism development dollars and emergency management funding. The venue is used by the general public and sports development training during the weekdays and evenings, on weekends, the facility hosts travel sporting events such as basketball, volleyball, and gymnastic competitions. The emergency management component comes in during major storm or other catastrophic events where sheltering is needed. At that point, the Pasco County Emergency Management team takes control of the facility and uses it as shelter during those episodes.

The viability of this idea may be included in the Tourism Development market assessment to be completed in FY 23.

Grant Funding

While the Department continues to pursue grant dollars through state and federal programs, grant applications and having matching dollars are key components that lead to the successful implementation of grant dollars. A good example of this type of success is how grants leveraged the \$20 million Pennies for Parks bond resulting in a total of \$23,657,612 being invested in the parks system.

Sales Tax

The current Penny Sales Tax that is in place has been very successful in providing substantial funding for public safety and transportation projects. As our community grows, these two public services will still remain a high priority of our community. As this tax is due to sunset, there is an opportunity to re-structure the language of the tax ballot to include green infrastructure, such as the acquisition of park land and park development

Parks & Recreation Future CIP				
Year	Project	Project Description	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
FY24	Belleview Sportsplex Phase 1	New baseball facility, concession/restroom and new park amenities	\$2,500,000	PRI; QLB; BDT
FY24	Brick City Adventure Park Parking Improvements	Pave parking area	\$250,000	PFF
FY24	Salt Springs Civic Park	New restroom facility	\$500,000	PFF
FY25	Baseline Road Trailhead Playground	New playground system	\$1,500,000	QLB; GTF
FY25	Coehadjoe Park	Parking lot improvements	\$300,000	PFF
FY25	Norm West Brook Park Phase 2	New restroom facility, playground and pavilion	\$750,000	PFF
FY25	Rotary Sportsplex Parking	Parking Improvements Cal Riken Field 5-8	\$1,000,000	QLB; BDT
FY26	Ray Wayside Park Improvements	Renovate boat ramp, parking lot and addition of a kayak ramp	\$2,000,000	QLB; GTF
FY27	Gore's Landing	New restroom facility, sewer septic system, renovate parking	\$500,000	PFF
FY27	Rotary Sportsplex Turf Field Phase 2	Renovate soccer fields 4 and 5 to synthetic turf	\$2,000,000	QLB; BDT; PRI
FY28	Land Acquisition	Purchase land for new park	\$1,300,000	PRI; QLB
FY28	Shocker Park	Master plan the facility	\$200,000	PFF
Total			\$12,800,000	

Legend:
PRI = Parks & Recreation Impact Fee
QLB = Quality of Life Bond
BDT = Bed Tax
SLT = Sales Tax
EMF = Emergency Management Funding (FEMA)
GTF = Grant Funding
PFF = Parks Fees Fund

Gamechangers

There are always more ideas than there is the capacity to execute them, yet we should always dream big and then find a way to execute on the ones that are best suited for our community. The following is a list of such ideas:

- Large regional sportsplex in the southwest area of Marion County. This idea would add to the already needed Community Park in the SR200 area and replicate some of the other larger competitive venues such as Boombah Sports Complex Sanford.

- Tournament grade pickleball facility. This would be ideal for places like the 40-acre site adjacent to Shocker Park. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the United States with an average age of players at 38 years old. It is no longer a game for just seniors. A facility with 30 courts and a clubhouse with food vending, locker rooms and other support amenities would be sufficient.



- Keep an Aquatic Center in mind. While the FAST is now open, it is not serving the community adequately. New plans for an aquatic center would focus mainly on the recreational aspect, with rental facilities, food vending, slides, lazy rivers, etc. A public facility like this would be able to provide more access to drowning prevention and exercise/fitness courses which benefits our entire community. This would be open to the public for daily use fees and not be the destination for competitive swimming as the FAST now serves that need.

Securing New Funding

The Parks & Recreation Department's current improvement needs and project list exceeds the capabilities of the Department's revenues. The Department must seek other funding avenues to accomplish current and future project needs. Currently, the fund has an anticipated 2% growth in revenue annually. The fund presently generates a three-year average of \$1,742,807 which would only add a conservative increase of \$34,856 annually.

The Department will hire a consultant to develop and execute a feasibility study to determine a comprehensive funding recommendation that Marion County citizens would support. The funding would be used for land acquisition for future parks throughout the County, acquiring and improving lands for conservation, funding current CIP and Master Plan projects, improving the existing park system, and developing new park and recreation facilities. Based upon the assessment, the Department will develop a plan of action from the study with Board approval.

Parks must always make sensible financial decisions, and set priorities, particularly given the significant goals Marion County Parks & Recreation has set out to accomplish.

The Department recommends the following strategies for funding the Capital Improvement Plan, Master Plan, and current improvements:

- Explore bond funding that exceeds the value of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan. This funding would include land acquisition initiatives (future parks, environmental lands, recharge protection, etc.) and other quality-of-life projects.
- Develop and implement an impact fee for new construction within Marion County. These fees should go towards growth and ROI projects to sustain the ever-growing population without affecting current Marion County citizens.

Future Workload

Expansion of the park system and internal park projects associated with tourism and growth, typically come with and increase to the operational challenge of these facilities. At the same time, as we look to engage the community more, with engaging recreation programming and better customer service, the Department first look inward to make sure talent is in the right seat of the boat. Often what is found is that we are lacking talent or specific skill sets which would help push the boat forward and therefore look to hire the right people to welcome on to the team.

Marion County Parks & Recreation will:

- Provide exceptional park experiences
- Conserve, manage, and restore habitat and environmental resources
- Sustain our quality of life in a rapidly growing County
- Facilitate the tourism market as appropriate
- Assist in maintaining real estate values by creating a healthy balance between growth and open spaces.
- Ensure capital investments in Marion County Parks & Recreation infrastructure, habitat restoration efforts, and environmental hazards and mitigation.

Succession Planning

The Department has had mixed results with its succession planning. There have been a few long-term, established positions, such as the Parks Operations Manager, where the former staff member in that position had given the team ample notice about their pending retirement. Through the support of the Board of County Commissioners, a mid-management position was created and then filled with the right team member through an internal promotion. This was an instance when the plan worked.

With other long-term employees, succession seems to happen with the same success as above. However, in lower ranks of the Department, succession planning is more difficult. There are a few positions, such as the Park Rangers, where training of all staff under the Park Rangers is key in finding the next Park Ranger.

The Department continues to invest in staff through matrix positions. It is through determination and dedication to complete the steps needed to move up in a matrix that new leaders are identified. This is consistent across the Department, from Administration staff, Recreation staff and Design staff.

Administration

As the Department continues to grow, expand and add new parks along with the staff. The administration office will have to expand beyond the current staffing levels to have the resources to support the Department's ever-growing needs successfully.

This Division has identified the following changes and additions to our staff team:

- Staff Assistant to alleviate the administration workload and needs of the Operations and Recreation Manager. This position would manage the Departments' commercial park passes, special event permits, food vendor permits, and customer service.
- Fiscal Manager would help offset current workloads and expand upon future needs. The role of the Fiscal Manager would be to oversee and maintain the Department's complex budgets, procurement processing needs, budget and administration transfer, and grant reimbursement.
- Event Coordinator to help manage the ever-growing event programs the Department offers along with the needs of other internal County Departments. An Event Coordinator would handle event logistics with external event planners who seek our parks for event locations. This person would

help guide customers through proper location selection and assess event needs and the effects this will have on our park and staff.

In addition, the Department would like to purchase a mobile stage for County and non-county events throughout Marion County. Marion County has increased the number of internal and external events and requests from other entities for services or equipment needs for events. The County uses City of Ocala's stage for special events multiple times throughout the year. When leasing the equipment to non-County entities, the Department would seek to charge a rental fee for the usage of the stage to help offset initial investment and maintenance costs.

Park Operations

Within the Park Operations Division, staff continues to adjust to the changing priorities and wear and tear associated with the higher visitation the more popular parks are receiving. The largest operations team is the Athletics Division, with a total of nine full time staff. This team is the group, along with a crew of seasonal/part-time employees each summer, that facilitates the annual load of sports field use and preparing for some high-profile tournaments, such as the Cal Ripken 8U World Series being held at Rotary Sportsplex. They also maintain the sports complexes for recreational league use, travel ball tournaments and private rentals.

Park Operations also includes three other distinct operation areas: North, Central and South, each led by a Park Ranger. While their maintenance and operations are different than Athletics, they each maintain facilities that also host tournaments, recreational programs, rentals and access to our natural resources for recreational use.

Park Operations also includes a Park Operations Specialist with a focus on Natural Resource Management. This position has been vacant for the past two years. The Department recently attempted to hire private contractors to provide services such as prescribed burning (land management) however, it was deemed more appropriate to fill this position instead. The cost and value of having a staff member manage site conservation lands in accordance with the state-approved Management Plans for Silver Springs Sandhill, Silver Springs Conservation Area, etc. was far less than hiring contractors.

The Department continues to evaluate and adjust staff schedules and assignments to meet the needs of the public and our clients. Since 2020, some parks have become increasingly busy while others have slowed down a bit. Visitation and park use is impacted by several factors including:

- Weather
- Public health (pandemic)
- Water quality (blue-green algae, reddish/brown algae)
- Public school and university schedules

This Division has identified the following changes and additions to our staff team:

- Reclassification of a Parks Maintenance Technician to an Athletics Supervisor to assist the Athletics Facilities Superintendent.
- A new Building and Grounds Technician to work with the Parks Operations Specialist to improve safety and aesthetics in our facilities by performing light construction-based projects. This position will work to respond to immediate concerns in our facilities while reducing the need to utilize Facilities for smaller projects.
- Add a Parks Maintenance Technician for the North Operational Area to help offset growth of parks in this area and increase customer service a facilities such as Horseshoe Lake Park & Retreat.

- A budgetary change to shift one Parks Maintenance Technician into our General Fund budget (360) from Parks & Recreation Fees Fund (362). This will begin the lessening of the staffing burden on the Fees Fund.

Recreation

Recreation continues to change and grow. The Department has hired the fourth Recreation Manager in the span of seven years. The current Recreation Manager is reshaping the Recreation Division to grow the diversity and frequency of the recreation programs and camps each season. The Division operates out of two hubs: Brick City Activity Center at Brick City Adventure Park, here in southwest Ocala, and the Forest Community Center in the Ocala National Forest at Forest Corners.

As our community continues to grow, especially west of I-75, the creation of a modern community center with a strong indoor recreation component should be planned to support the community in that area. The success of community centers and recreation centers is rooted in those types of facilities becoming hubs for the local areas. Such hubs are able to provide locations for services that include recreation programming for youth, adults and mature adults (seniors), community services such as financial assistance programs for underserved populations, community educational opportunities and general social use. A more detailed discussion about this idea is continued later in this plan.

The Department must continue to grow its offerings to support the senior (or mature adult) population. This can be achieved by leveraging our partnerships with Marion Senior Services and other non-profits and assist in their established missions first. Secondly, an increased focus on senior-specific recreational programming will also help.

Currently, there are no plans to add staff to this Division. Once the Division is fully staffed, the team will be more suited to implement quality programming and begin to impact a larger audience in the community.

Design

As implementation of the Pennies for Parks bond proceeds began, the Department grew the project team to include a total of eight positions in what was referred to as the "Acquisition & Planning" division. The team included a Landscape Architect, Project Assistants and Park Designers who were very involved with the planning and design of several of the parks and park spaces we are now seeing used by the general public. The Department receives a lot of praise about the parks system and at times, we seem to take the hard work that it took to establish such an outstanding system.

The Design division is responsible for the design, project management and completion of park projects. The Design team is currently overloaded with projects, whether they are internal projects that require design and permitting work, or the management of consultants who have been brought in to handle larger, more complex park projects. With a team that includes two full-time employees, it is important that the size of this team is increased to support the workload and meet the needs of the community.

Besides park projects, this team is also responsible for the review and approval of development plans as part of the Marion County Development Review team. The Tree Protection and Replacement, Landscaping, Irrigation and Outdoor Lighting components of the land development code are overseen and administered under the supervision of the County's Landscape Architect and their designee. The review of these plans, at the current pace of development, occupies about 50% of the time and effort assigned to the Project Assistant. The Department is currently hiring a second Project Assistant through a

contracted staffing agency. This will allow the Design team to shift some of the normal day-to-day tasks to this staff member and allow the Parks Designer to focus more on design and planning.

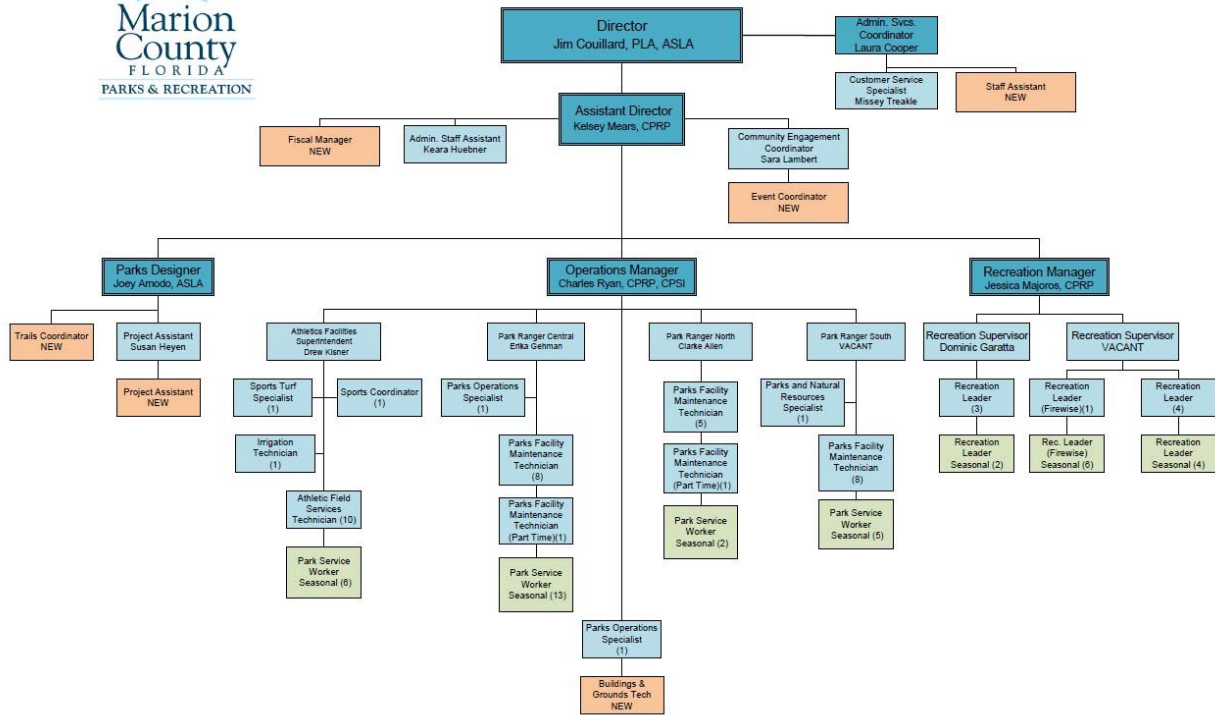
New trails are coming to Marion County, and as the host to such a robust trail system, it is key that the user experience is positive. While many of the trail projects are handled through other departments, the user experience (interpretation exhibits, maps, apps, restrooms, etc.) is sometimes only included in the design and construction aspects. A good example is the Indian Lake State Forest trail which originates at the Cross Florida Greenway property north of Silver Springs State Park and terminates at Indian Lake. No restrooms are planned for the southern terminus, the location of one of the most popular disc golf courses in Marion County.

The Department believes that that trail design, construction and management could be supported better by bringing these operations under one position. A Trails Coordinator would act as the staff member responsible for bringing trail projects to completion quicker, identify trail priorities based on the community's needs and the benefit our tourism market. This position would increase communication between agencies and other departments. While being a part of the Design Division, the Trails Coordinator would also be able to predict new capital projects that could be included in the trail initiatives.

This Division has identified the following changes and additions to our staff team:

- Project Assistant to help relieve the tremendous workload currently assigned to the team.
- Trails Coordinator to facilitate and work towards the completion of the Trails Master Plan and increase communication and coordination within the organization.

Proposed Organization Chart



Parks & Recreation Future Personnel					
Year	Operation Area	Title	Reclass/New	Projected Expense	Funding Source
FY24	Administration	Staff Assistant	New	\$40,581.00	General Fund
FY24	Parks-Athletics	Athletics Supervisor	Reclass	\$7,584.00	General Fund
FY24	Parks-North	Park Maintenance Tech	New	\$33,235.00	From Fees Fund to General Fund
FY24	Design	Project Assistant	New	\$40,581.00	General Fund
FY25	Parks-All	Building & Grounds Maintenance Tech	New	\$38,751.00	General Fund
FY26	Administration	Fiscal Manager	New	\$56,930.00	General Fund
FY28	Design	Trails Coordinator	New	\$43,431.00	General Fund
FY28	Administration	Event Coordinator	New	\$43,431.00	General Fund
Total				\$304,524.00	

Appendix



GREGORY C. HARRELL
CLERK OF COURT AND COMPTROLLER – MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA
FINANCE DEPARTMENT

CLERK OF COURT
RECORDER OF OFFICIAL RECORDS
CLERK AND ACCOUNTANT OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CUSTODIAN OF COUNTY FUNDS AND COUNTY AUDITOR

POST OFFICE BOX 1030
OCALA, FLORIDA 34478-1030
TELEPHONE (352) 671-5520
WWW.MARIONCOUNTYCLERK.ORG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Harrell, Clerk of Court and Comptroller
Jennifer Cole, Finance Director
Jim Couillard, Parks & Recreation Director

FROM: Michael Adams, CPA, Senior Accountant

DATE: October 20, 2022

SUBJECT: Parks and Land Acquisition Capital Projects Fund

I have updated the Pennies for Parks report to September 30, 2022, regarding the utilization of proceeds from the 1990 and 1998 Marion County, Florida Limited Ad Valorem Tax Bonds. These bonds were issued for the purpose of funding the costs of acquiring and improving parks and environmentally sensitive lands within Marion County under the "**Pennies for Parks**" Program. The report was designed to summarize expenditures and identify the remaining 30% of available funds to be used for park improvements. The attached report shows the summary of revenue and expenditures since inception of the program.

In 2006, the BCC removed the spending requirements that restricted the expenditures for improvements to 30%. However, this report still has value with regards to the reporting of total disbursements of the Bond related funds and to the respective parks. I will continue to update this report annually until the Bond funds have been exhausted.

Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact me.

Rev-Exp Status as of 9/30/2022
Parks and Land Acquisition Capital Project Fund

REVENUES

FYE	Bond Proceeds	Interest 1990 Bond	Interest 1998 Bond	Interest * Total	Contributions Land	Contributions Improv	Total Revenue
90-99	19,659,719.10	1,940,186.56	283,273.76	2,223,460.32	533,454.35	100,000.00	22,516,633.77
00-10	-	197,038.63	3,291,585.84	3,488,624.47	233,000.00	150,000.00	3,871,624.47
2011	-	-	1,893.13	1,893.13	-	-	1,893.13
2012	-	-	2,235.04	2,235.04	-	-	2,235.04
2013	-	-	1,364.10	1,364.10	-	-	1,364.10
2014	-	-	731.23	731.23	-	-	731.23
2015	-	-	5,842.69	5,842.69	-	-	5,842.69
2016	-	-	1,836.41	1,836.41	-	-	1,836.41
2017	-	-	4,068.70	4,068.70	-	-	4,068.70
2018	-	-	5,490.04	5,490.04	-	-	5,490.04
2019	-	-	7,145.42	7,145.42	-	-	7,145.42
2020	-	-	3,060.11	3,060.11	-	-	3,060.11
2021	-	-	414.77	414.77	-	-	414.77
2022	-	-	2,369.22	2,369.22	-	-	2,369.22
Totals	19,659,719.10	2,137,225.19	3,611,310.46	5,748,535.65	766,454.35	250,000.00	26,424,709.10

* Interest revenue reported on accrual basis starting FYE 2002.

EXPENDITURES

FYE	Land	Improv	Other/Misc Cust/Mngt fees	Arbitrage	Prior Year * Arbitrage Adj	Debt Service Issuance fees	Totals
90-99	7,541,185.99	2,132,151.69	19,007.10	831,188.40	-	488,514.34	11,012,047.52
00-10	1,861,739.89	12,555,715.04	47,036.34	665,620.75	(582,509.15)	-	14,547,602.87
2011	-	105,056.00	7,475.00	-	-	-	112,531.00
2012	-	53,632.81	750.00	-	-	-	54,382.81
2013	-	130,489.66	-	-	-	-	130,489.66
2014	-	74,585.06	465.80	-	-	-	75,050.86
2015	-	91,857.46	-	3,000.00	-	-	94,857.46
2016	-	11,036.50	-	-	-	-	11,036.50
2017	-	49,794.00	-	-	-	-	49,794.00
2018	-	41,249.56	-	-	-	-	41,249.56
2019	-	20,895.00	-	3,500.00	-	-	24,395.00
2020	-	4,678.30	-	-	-	-	4,678.30
2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	9,402,925.88	15,271,141.08	74,734.24	920,800.00		488,514.34	26,158,115.54

* Negative arbitrage in FY 2003 due to declining interest rates. Total arbitrage net of prior year adjustment.

Total funds available (Balance of revenues less expenditures)	<u>266,593.56</u>
Net interest earnings (Total interest less arbitrage)	<u>4,827,735.65</u>
Bond Proceeds	19,659,719.10
Total Interest	5,748,535.65
Total Bond Proceeds and Interest	<u>25,408,254.75</u>

No Longer Required	
Maximun available for improvements(30%).	7,622,476.43
Total improvements less improvements to misc properties and contributions to improvements	7,513,663.37
Funds available for improvements to Pennies for Parks property	108,813.05

Project Summary as of 9/30/2022
Parks and Land Acquisition Capital Project Fund

Property Description	Amount	Total
Brick City Park		
Land Acquisition	798,200.00	
Improvements	107,896.81	906,096.81
Carney Island		
Land Acquisition	2,206,099.28	
Improvements	4,480,330.77	6,686,430.05
Rainbow Springs State Park		
Land Acquisition	1,283,750.00	1,283,750.00
Perry Property (Bellevue Sports Complex)		
Land Acquisition	288,930.00	
Improvements	250,000.00	538,930.00
Knorr Property (Hope Beach)		
Land Acquisition	75,000.00	75,000.00
Fort King Property		
Land Acquisition	213,585.00	
Land Acquisition - J. Young property	260,000.00	473,585.00
Wagner Property (Coehadjoe Park/NE Park)		
Land Acquisition	287,453.00	
Improvements	823,589.95	
Contribution to Improvements (1)	-100,000.00	
Total cost to County for Improvements	723,589.95	1,011,042.95
Silver River Property		
Land Acquisition	1,324,745.50	
Contribution to Land (2)	-533,454.35	
Total cost to County for Land	791,291.15	
Improvements	10,308.60	801,599.75
Horseshoe Lake Park		
Land Acquisition	837,027.00	
Improvements	192,838.20	1,029,865.20
John Van Fleet Park (East Marion Little League)		
Land Acquisition	50,797.71	
Improvements	184,800.25	235,597.96
Flemington Community Park		
Land Acquisition	48,720.50	
Improvements	379,970.37	
Contribution to Improvements (3)	-150,000.00	
Total cost to County for Improvements	229,970.37	278,690.87
Orange Lake Community Park - Mr Green		
Land Acquisition	34,010.50	
Improvements	396,379.05	430,389.55
Veterans Mem Park (Poppa Jays)		
Land Acquisition	104,771.00	
Improvements	450,937.35	555,708.35
Silver Springs Shores Park		
Land Acquisition	322,010.00	
Improvements	18,640.00	340,650.00
Liberty Park (SR 200 Park 2004)		
Land Acquisition	175,205.64	
Improvements	467,972.02	643,177.66

Project Summary as of 9/30/2022
Parks and Land Acquisition Capital Project Fund

Other Land Acquisitions/Expense		
NC Park-Appraisal, pending acquisition	495.00	
Sharpes Ferry Office	4,232.62	
Sawallis property - (4) \$33,000 Contribution	35,181.55	
Van Duuren Park	64.70	
Wrigley Fields Park	435.92	
Pecan Trailhead	6,306.00	
Banyan Trailhead - Armstrong Trust	16,251.00	
James Ray Property - SELP	86,202.13	
K P Hole	137,827.74	
Heagy Park Orange Lake	252,088.50	
Misc Appraisals/surveys/taxes/arbitrage	9,274.32	
Ernie Mills Recreation Facility	20,010.50	
SR 200 Property - (5) \$200,000 Contribution	291,250.77	859,620.75

Description	Amount	Total
Misc. Property-Land Improvements		
Rotary Sportsplex	722,250.10	
Ernie Mills Park	37,000.00	
Ocklawaha Comm Park	56,273.40	
Orange Springs Ball Field	23,500.00	
Jervy Gantt Park	249,492.50	
Southeast Livestock Pavilion	25,460.08	
Cougar Park	812.00	
Rainbow Neighborhood Park	85,858.80	
Dunnellon Little League	26,280.95	
Heagy Park Orange Lake	84,711.55	
Promo Field	60,501.83	
Ocala Greenway Disc Park	11,490.55	
SSS Ballfield - Ralph Russell	262,469.96	
Clyatt Park	24,379.05	
Park Partnership Program	264,918.76	
Marion Oaks MSTU-Playground	20,000.00	
Kiwanis Beach	8,348.46	
K P Hole	95,221.52	
Wrigley Fields Park	4,977,175.63	
W.H. Willoughby Park	13,088.58	
Misc park imprv./Playgrounds/Trailheads	458,243.99	7,507,477.71
Total Expenditures for Acquisitions(net of contributions)	8,636,471.53	
Total Expenditures for Improvements(net of contributions)	15,021,141.08	
Grand Total	23,657,612.61	23,657,612.61

- (1) In 1996, **\$100,000.00** was received from Florida Recreation Development Assistant Program for improvements to the Wagner property.
- (2) In 1994, **\$531,860.00** was received from Florida Communities Trust for the purchase of the Silver River property. In 1995 an additional **\$1,594.35** was received.
- (3) In 2001, **\$138,215.12** and in 2002, **\$11,784.88** was received from Florida Recreation Development Assistant Program for improvements to the Flemington property.
- (4) **\$33,000** was received from State of Florida in 2008 for Sawallis property(Sharpes Ferry)
- (5) **\$200,000** was received from State of Florida in 2010 for SR 200 property

ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY22/OCT TO EOY

FUND 3011

ACCOUNT ACCOUNT NAME	BEG. BALANCE	ORG	DEBITS	CREDITS	NET CHANGE	END BALANCE
VA000000 104000		VA000000				
EQUITY IN POOLED CASH	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 151101		VA000000				
LOCAL GOVT SURPL FUNDS TF	264,224.34		2,369.22	.00	2,369.22	266,593.56
VA000000 202107		VA000000				
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE - SYSTEM	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 202701		VA000000				
PCARD PAYABLES	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 241101		VA000000				
APPROPRIATIONS	.00		.00	244,937.00	-244,937.00	-244,937.00
VA000000 241201		VA000000				
ESTIMATED REVENUES	.00		244,937.00	.00	244,937.00	244,937.00
VA000000 243101		VA000000				
ENCUMBRANCES (DEBIT)	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 271101		VA000000				
FUND BALANCE - UNRESERVED	-264,224.34		264,224.34	.00	264,224.34	.00
VA000000 271102		VA000000				
BUDGET FUND BAL - UNRESERVED	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 282001		VA000000				
FUND BALANCE - COMMITTED*	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 282002		VA000000				
BUDGET RESERVED FOR ENCUMB	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 290001		VA000000				
DEFERRED INFLOWS - FRS	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000000 290002		VA000000				
DEFERRED INFLOWS - HIS	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716361 361110		VA716361				
INTEREST-BOARD	.00		.00	2,369.22	-2,369.22	-2,369.22
VA000361 361310		VA000361				
FV ADJMT FOR INVESTMENTS	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000379 379999		VA000379				
LESS: 5% OF BUDG REVENUE	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000399 399900		VA000399				
CIP FUNDING	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000399 399990		VA000399				
BEGINNING FUND EQUITY	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA000399 399991		VA000399				
BALANCES FWD-CASH-REGULAR	.00		.00	264,224.34	-264,224.34	-264,224.34
VA716572 561101		VA716572				
LAND	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 562101		VA716572				
BUILDINGS - CONSTRUCT IMPROV	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 562102		VA716572				
BUILDINGS - CIP	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 563101		VA716572				
IMPROVE OTHER THAN BUILDINGS	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 563102		VA716572				
IMPROVE - CIP	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 563171		VA716572				
IMPROVE - PARK PTNRSHP PRGM	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 563176		VA716572				
IMPROVE - PLAYGROUNDS	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
VA716572 563211		VA716572				

ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY22/OCT TO EOY

FUND 3011

ACCOUNT ACCOUNT NAME	BEG. BALANCE	ORG	DEBITS	CREDITS	NET CHANGE	END BALANCE
IMPROVE - CARNEY ISLAND PARK VA716572 573201	.00	VA716572	.00	.00	.00	.00
ARBITRAGE REBATE	.00		.00	.00	.00	.00
TOTALS FOR FUND 3011						
PARKS CAPITAL PROJ FUND	.00		511,530.56	511,530.56	.00	.00
REPORT TOTALS	.00		511,530.56	511,530.56	.00	.00

ACCOUNT SUMMARY TRIAL BALANCE FOR FY22/OCT TO EOY

REPORT OPTIONS

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Print (D)etail or (S)ummary:           S
Fiscal year-to-date version:          Y
Reporting year:                        2022
Reporting from period:                 1 OCT   to 13 EOY
    Journal detail from                to
(B)alance sheet or (A)ll accounts:     A
Roll up projects to object level:      N
Omit zero balance accounts:            N
Sort by 6
Print Org Code? (Y/N)                  Y
Print Fund Header and Org/Obj          N
Include page break between funds      N
Include page break between each subfund N
Print subfund totals                   N
Print report options                    Y
Exclude fund balance YEC/AJE for prior years N

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Find Criteria
Field Name      Field Value
Fund            3011
Function
Activity
Unit
Division
Cost Center
Open 1
Open 2
Character Code
Org
Object
Project
Account type
Account status

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** END OF REPORT - Generated by Mike Adams **