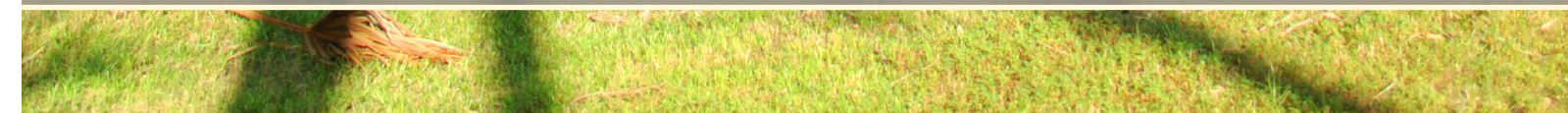




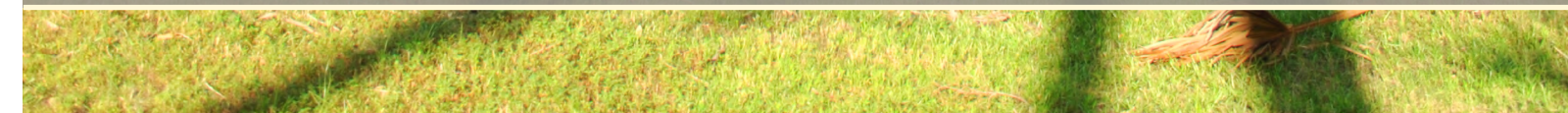
SEMINOLE COUNTY
FLORIDA'S NATURAL CHOICE

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SEMINOLE COUNTY
FLORIDA'S NATURAL CHOICE

PARKS + RECREATION + NATURAL LANDS + TRAILS
MASTER PLAN 2013 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Seminole County residents and community leaders decided decades ago that the development of parks and trails, and the preservation of natural lands and open space were critical to the quality of life for current residents and for future generations. On several occasions residents have decided to tax themselves to ensure this quality of life vision would become a reality through natural lands and trails funding; planning initiatives in the past have laid a strong foundation to allow the preservation of the rural lifestyle of eastern county residents; and the construction of many recreational facilities afforded to the population living along the I-4 corridor have all contributed to this vision. This vision even manifested itself in the County’s motto: “Florida’s Natural Choice.”

This latest planning endeavor began in 2012 to develop the next generation of long-range parks, recreation, natural lands, and trails initiatives within the framework of the economic realities of today. This Executive Summary describes the continuation of Seminole County’s long-standing vision through proposed – and necessary – improvements and programs for the next 10 years.

“Seminole County – Florida’s
Natural Choice!”



Greenwood Lakes Park, 2013

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The total inventory of recreation facilities and open space within Seminole County is not limited to only those facilities managed by the Seminole County Leisure Services Department. Seven individual municipalities also provide recreational services and facilities. Together, the County and municipalities maintain 164 public parks and natural areas totaling over 8,300 acres. Approximately 1,600 acres are in developed parks, while the balance of approximately 6,700 acres is in natural lands. Combined with the approximately 23,000 acres of St. John’s River Water Management District land, and land owned and maintained by the State of Florida within the Seminole Wekiva and Bronson State Parks, and the Little Big Econ State Forest, the overall inventory of parks, natural areas and waterways combine to make up approximately 40% of the entire County.

This study evaluated the total system – regardless of agency and ownership – to provide comprehensive recommendations which address all residents. Included were visits to a sample of park sites across the County and the evaluation of each in terms of facilities, safety, and maintenance. The sites were selected to represent a cross-section of facility types within the System. Representatives from the municipalities also provided input and information regarding the conditions of their facilities. Additionally, important inventory information regarding school sites was provided by the Seminole County School District. General observations about the total system include:

Strengths of the Existing System:

- Excellent system of trails providing links to parks, schools and natural areas
- Good co-location of parks, schools and other public facilities without duplication of services.
- Many parks facilities are highly-used and well-loved by the community
- Department is positioned to expand economic impact opportunities for the County

Opportunities for Improvement

- The existing system is showing its age and requires updating
- Some facilities are over-programmed and are showing signs of wear and stress
- Natural Lands appear to be under-utilized
- Need for increased universal accessibility (ADA), system-wide
- Patchwork maintenance and repairs over time have resulted in inconsistent signage and amenities; lack of a defined “brand”

INITIATIVE	ESTIMATED COST	EST. FUNDING	FUNDING SOURCE
1. Upgrade Existing County Parks and Natural Lands <i>(incl. existing 5-year CIP)</i>	\$24,900,000 (Parks)	\$12M	TBD
		\$12.9M	Matching Grants/ Partnerships with Schools, Municipalities, HOAs, Others
	\$2,609,000 (Natural Lands)	\$1.8M	Remaining Natural Lands Bond funds
		\$700k	Special Funds
2. Bikeways and Trails	\$48,000,000	\$30M – \$35M	TBD
		\$13M – \$18M	Matching grants TBD
3. Boat Ramps	\$520,000	\$332k	Existing Boating Improvement Funds
		\$250k	Anticipated BIFs @ \$50,000/ year for 5 years
4. Sports Complex			
Land Acquisition	\$7,000,000	\$7M	TDC
Development + Construction	\$20,000,000	\$20M	Future bond issue
5. Additional Initiatives	\$50,000	\$35k	TBD
	TOTAL EST. COST \$103,079,000	EST. FUNDING +/- \$103M	

Figure 0.1 – Phase One Implementation Plan: 10 years. +/- \$103M

RECOMMENDED HIGH-PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. Focus funding on the Existing System

- Fund the Department’s current 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan
- Engage partners within the County—including the cities and the School District—for the expanded public use of facilities, programs, and potential expansion of municipal facilities to meet current and future needs of all residents
- Re-invigorate the Natural Lands program by adding low-cost, low-impact programming and additional signage and wayfinding to existing natural areas where appropriate; and partner with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Wildlife Foundation of Florida to develop the Seminole County Youth Conservation Center

2. Bikeways and Trails

- Continue to ‘fill in the gaps’ in the existing system as programmed
- Prioritize specific bikeways and trails improvements within the next generation of trails projects

- Implement the Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) complete streets guidelines county-wide to increase overall safety and connectivity.

3. Boat Ramps

- Expand/upgrade infrastructure at existing sites
- Study user patterns, fee policies and potential partnerships to develop additional access opportunities

4. Sports Complex

- Fund the implementation of the sports complex

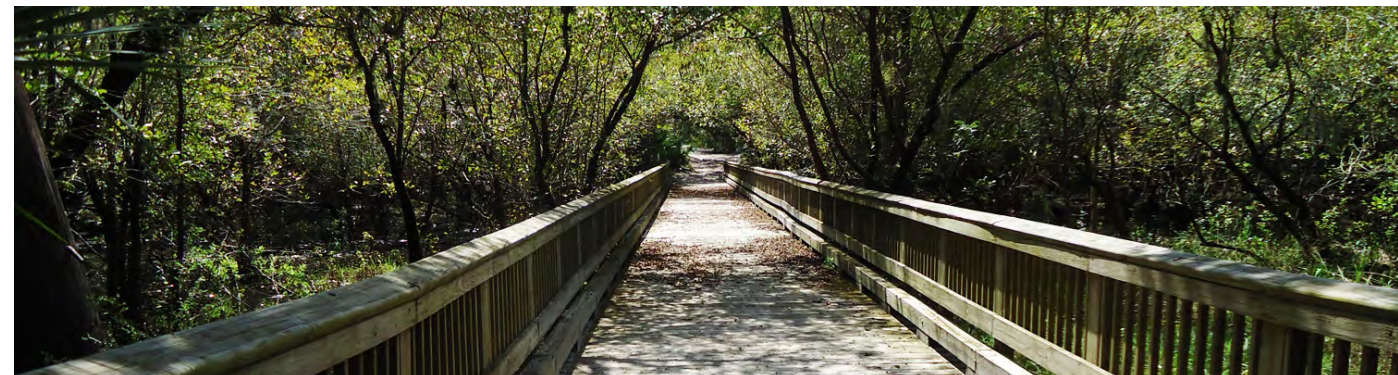
5. Additional Initiatives

- Conduct a county-wide, statistically-valid community opinion survey to better validate and quantify specific priorities including the potential need for additional neighborhood parks, tennis facilities, and other facilities and programs.

THE VISION

The vision established in the master planning process addresses both system facilities and administration. The future Seminole County system is accessible to everyone and effectively serves a broad population through partnerships between the County, cities, School District, and private organizations. Parks are not only well-maintained, beautiful, and multi-purpose but are destinations that protect natural and cultural resources. The trail system is well-connected across the county, and the Natural Lands program continues to thrive through active, inventive marketing. The four primary components of the vision are as follows:

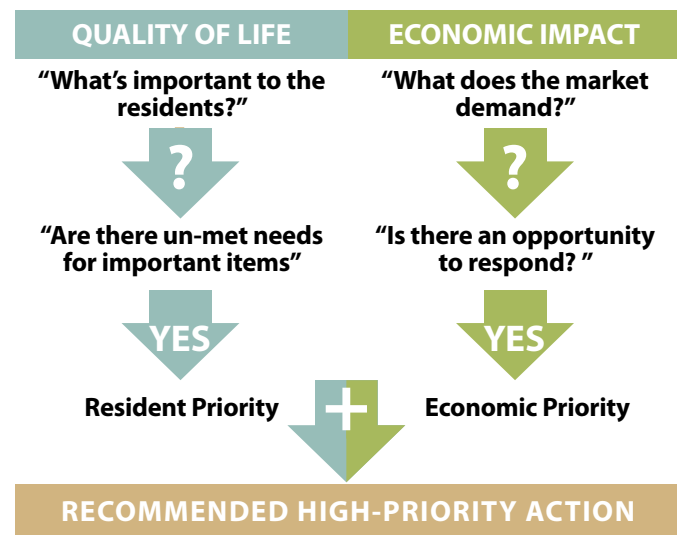
- 1. Upgraded Existing County Parks and Natural Lands**
The County's facilities will be upgraded to meet residents' needs, including improvements outlined in the County's current 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). General improvements include replacement of site furnishings; updated play equipment; re-surfaced roads and trails; updated shelters and restrooms; improved ADA access; and new signs. Additional amenities and programs will be provided at existing Natural Lands sites to improve visitor access and experiences. The County will also increase marketing and promotional events to raise awareness of the opportunities available at the natural lands sites.
- 2. Expanded Bikeways and Trails System**
Building on the County's highly successful existing trails network, the focus will be to continue to fill in the gaps of the existing system and expand the bikeways and trails system to connect to municipal trails, bikeways, streets and sidewalks.
- 3. Increased Boat Ramp Capacity**
The County will enhance existing ramps to expand capacity wherever feasible, and will also study user patterns and fee policies to determine how to best serve County residents.
- 4. New Sports Complex**
The County is currently working to develop a new sports complex. Additional multi-purpose fields at this facility will help meet residents' needs by relieving overcrowding pressure at existing park sites. This facility will also have the capacity to generate economic benefits for the County.



Flagler Trail, 2012

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Project Prioritization - Each of the projects recommended for completion over the next ten years were prioritized based on their ability to 1) sustain the high quality of life expected by Seminole County residents, and 2) provide opportunities for a positive economic impact - a reality critical to the future funding of municipal and county park amenities and programs.



For example, many residents believe that the quality of life provided by the County's system of parks, trails and natural lands make Seminole County one of the most desirable places to live in Florida and the Southeast. These same qualities are also what attract many new businesses to invest in the area further adding to the positive economic impact for the County.

The chart on the following page shows the estimated costs and potential funding sources for these improvements over the next ten years.

COMMUNITY NEEDS + PRIORITIES

Multiple planning assessment and community outreach techniques were used to identify current and future community needs, including:

1. Stakeholder Interviews - interviews with elected officials, other community leaders, and representative boards and associations
2. Focus Group Workshops –workshops with Parks Boards, Municipal Parks Department Directors, Planning officials and Facility Managers across different agencies
3. Level of Service (LOS) Analysis - evaluation based on total park acreage (ratio of park land to population); inventory of facility types (ratio of facilities to population); and facility access (spatial analysis of existing facility distance from existing residential neighborhoods)
4. Online Citizen Survey - allowing for a general, random representation of resident opinions regarding the existing system and needs for future improvements.

Based on the composite findings from these techniques, the top priority needs of County residents include:

Maintain, Update, and Improve Existing Parks and Facilities – The condition of many parks and facilities have declined over time due to heavy use and/or deferred maintenance. In addition, some parks need to be redesigned and/or retrofitted to meet residents' current and future needs. Existing Natural Lands properties are under-utilized.

Partnerships- There is a need to make better use of existing public facilities through stronger joint-use agreements, particularly with the Seminole County Public Schools (SCPS) and the municipalities.

Trails and Greenways - There is a need to complete the "gaps" in the existing trails system between existing trail segments, neighborhoods, and community destinations. There is also a need to expand the current system to include neighborhoods within the County which do not have direct physical access to the system.

Boat Ramps - There is a need to improve access to the County's water resources - existing public boat ramps are operating at or above capacity.

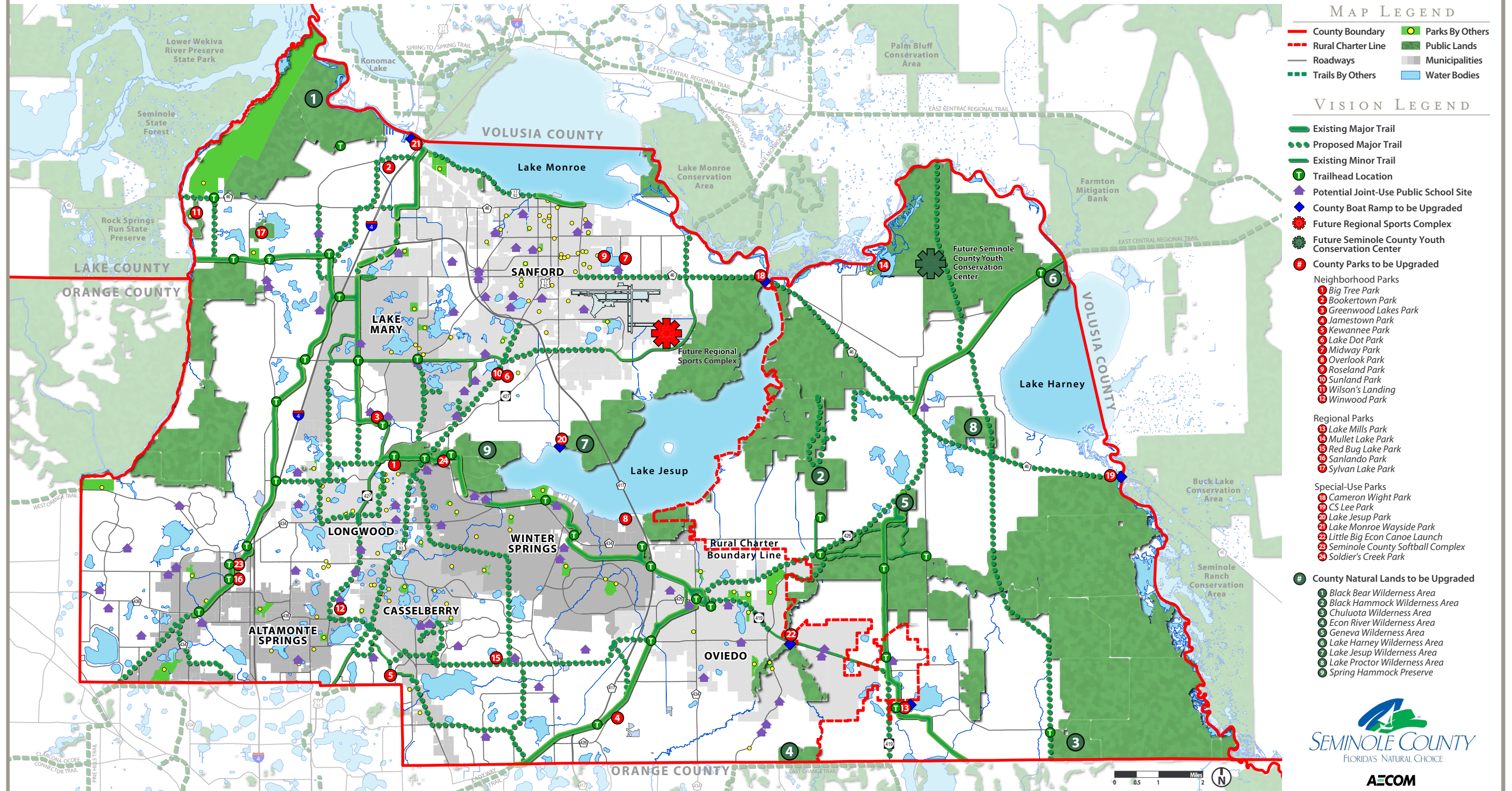
Provide New Multi-Purpose Green Spaces - Many parks have been over-developed with active, programmed recreation facilities, providing few multi-purpose green spaces remaining for sports practice, informal play and/or special events and activities.

Tennis Courts - The County's tennis complexes are well-used and operating at capacity. The extent of the need for additional facilities, however, is still unclear and must be determined through further analysis.

The Needs and Priorities Summary Chart, below, illustrates the specific needs identified from each of the needs assessment techniques.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES											
Priority Need / Need	Park-Site Evaluations		Demographics Analysis		Stakeholder Interviews		Focus Groups (PPAC)		Visioning Workshop		Comment
	Internet Survey		2008 SCORP Facilities LOS		Facilities LOS* (Central FL)		Access LOS		Acreage LOS		
Multi-Purpose Green Space	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Tennis Courts	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Does not include private facilities
Trails + Greenways	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Improve Existing Facilities	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Boat Ramps	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Partnerships	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Soccer Fields	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Aquatics Centers	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Does not include private facilities
Signage/Wayfinding	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Football Fields	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Playgrounds	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
New Neighborhood Parks	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	Does not include private facilities
Camp Sites	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Basketball Courts	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Indoor Recreation	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Baseball Fields	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Softball Fields	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Volleyball Courts	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div></div>	

COUNTY-WIDE PARKS + RECREATION + NATURAL LANDS + TRAILS MASTER PLAN VISION FOR SEMINOLE COUNTY



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Parks, Recreation, Natural Lands, and Trails Illustrative Vision Map