

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

7

CHARTING
PORT ST. LUCIE

DATA & ANALYSIS

September 28, 2026

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CHAPTER 7. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

I. Introduction

Per Chapter 163, F.S., the recreation and open space element provides for a comprehensive system of public and private sites for recreation, including, but not limited to, natural reservations, parks and playgrounds, parkways, open spaces, waterways, and other recreational facilities. The element also includes a Level of Service (LOS) standard for parks to ensure there is sufficient park space for existing and future development and to ensure a high quality of life.

This Data and Analysis section documents the current inventory of recreation facilities and open space, reviewing the current level of service (LOS) standards, and analyzing present and future parkland needs based on population projections.

II. Inventory of Existing Recreation and Open Space Facilities

The Parks and Recreation Department administers the development and maintenance of parks. The Department is responsible for planning and developing public parks and recreation facilities within the City and managing a variety of recreation and leisure programs throughout the City. The department's mission is to enhance the quality of life in Port St. Lucie by providing the programs and facilities that will facilitate the residents' pursuit of culture and recreation in a safe and enjoyable setting. This is pursued with the understanding of contributing to the attractiveness of the community, conservation of the environment, and the social and economic health of the City.

In July 2019, the City developed a 10-Year Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. The plan is currently undergoing an update to assess current conditions and incorporate community health/wellness activities and community education opportunities.

A. Classification System for Parks and Open Space

The City classifies parks and open space based on the following categories. Park acquisition and development are not based on this system, but it is provided as a way to inventory and monitor existing or future facilities and sites.

1. Neighborhood Parks: Neighborhood Parks typically range from 6 to 14 acres in size, but may be as small as one quarter (1/4) of an acre. Neighborhood Parks are generally found along residential streets and are within walking distance (3/4 to 1 mile) of residents in the area. Neighborhood Parks may include active and passive recreation facilities depending upon the neighborhood's wants and/or needs, including playground equipment, sports fields, recreation buildings, and picnic areas.
2. Within the Neighborhood Park classification, there are seven parks that contain few amenities and serve primarily as passive spaces. Typically, they feature a walking trail and benches, and are intended to serve local populations.
3. Community Parks: Typically, a minimum of 15 acres that may be associated with a park-school combination. They can contain lighted athletic facilities for nighttime play, large playgrounds, recreation center, picnic area, and a swimming pool. They are designed to serve several neighborhoods and the population of a 1 to 3 mile radius.
4. Special Purpose Parks: These are facilities that vary in size and serve as particular function, such as a swimming pool or a golf course.

5. Nature Preserves: These open space areas of various sizes will remain, to a large extent, in a natural setting. They are used for conservation purposes, drainage and natural waterways, and platted greenway areas but provide passive recreation opportunities for residents. They generally have a land use of Open Space Conservation (OSC) and are restricted by similar zoning.

B. Inventory of City Parks and Recreation Facilities

The City of Port St. Lucie owns and maintains a diverse range of parks and recreational areas, providing an array of recreational opportunities for residents. The parks system currently includes 1,632 acres across 53 parks with an additional 12 future park site planned, for a total of 2,249 acres. This inventory includes neighborhood parks, community parks, nature preserves, and special purpose parks detailed in **Table 7-1**. The table does not include lands currently being developed or planned for parks. That list can be found in **Table 7-4**.

Park locations are shown on **Map 7-1.** The map highlights the concentration of existing parks on the east side of the city. However, there are a number of park sites west of I-95 that are slated for development in the coming years. The area between I-95 and Florida's Turnpike does seem to have a lack of public parks. To address this disparity, the City will explore opportunities to establish parks in that area. This proactive approach will help ensure equitable access to recreational spaces for all residents.

It should be noted that only sites that are open to the general public for recreation purposes have been included in the inventory of parks. Thus, vacant public lands and open space typically found in medians, buffers, retention areas, and similar facilities are not included as part of this inventory.

Table 7- 1. Inventory of Parks and Recreation Facilities

PARKS	ACRES	RESOURCES & FACILITIES
Neighborhood Parks	***246.7***	
1. Apache Park	13.9	Benches
2. Charles E Ray Park	8.7	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, walking trails, tennis court
3. Fred Cook Park	5.5	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground
4. Girl Scout Friendship Park	8.4	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, baseball fields, multi-purpose playing fields
5. Jaycee Park	6.2	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, baseball field
6. Kiwanis Park	3.8	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground
7. O.L. Peacock Park	110.0	Restrooms, open space, playground
8. Pioneer Park	22.6	Restrooms, tables, fountains/splashpads, playground, fishing pier, canoe/kayak launch
9. PSL Elks Lodge Friendship Park	3.5	Restrooms, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, basketball court, fishing pier
10. Ravenswood Racquetball Courts	1.0	Racquetball court
11. River Place Park	7.8	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, basketball court, volleyball court, baseball field, soccer field, canoe/kayak launch
12. Rotary Park	8.5	Restrooms, tables, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, dog park, basketball court, volleyball court, disc golf course, baseball fields
13. Sandpiper Bay Park	11.5	Tables
14. Tom Hooper Family Park	2.6	Pavilion/gazebo/shelter

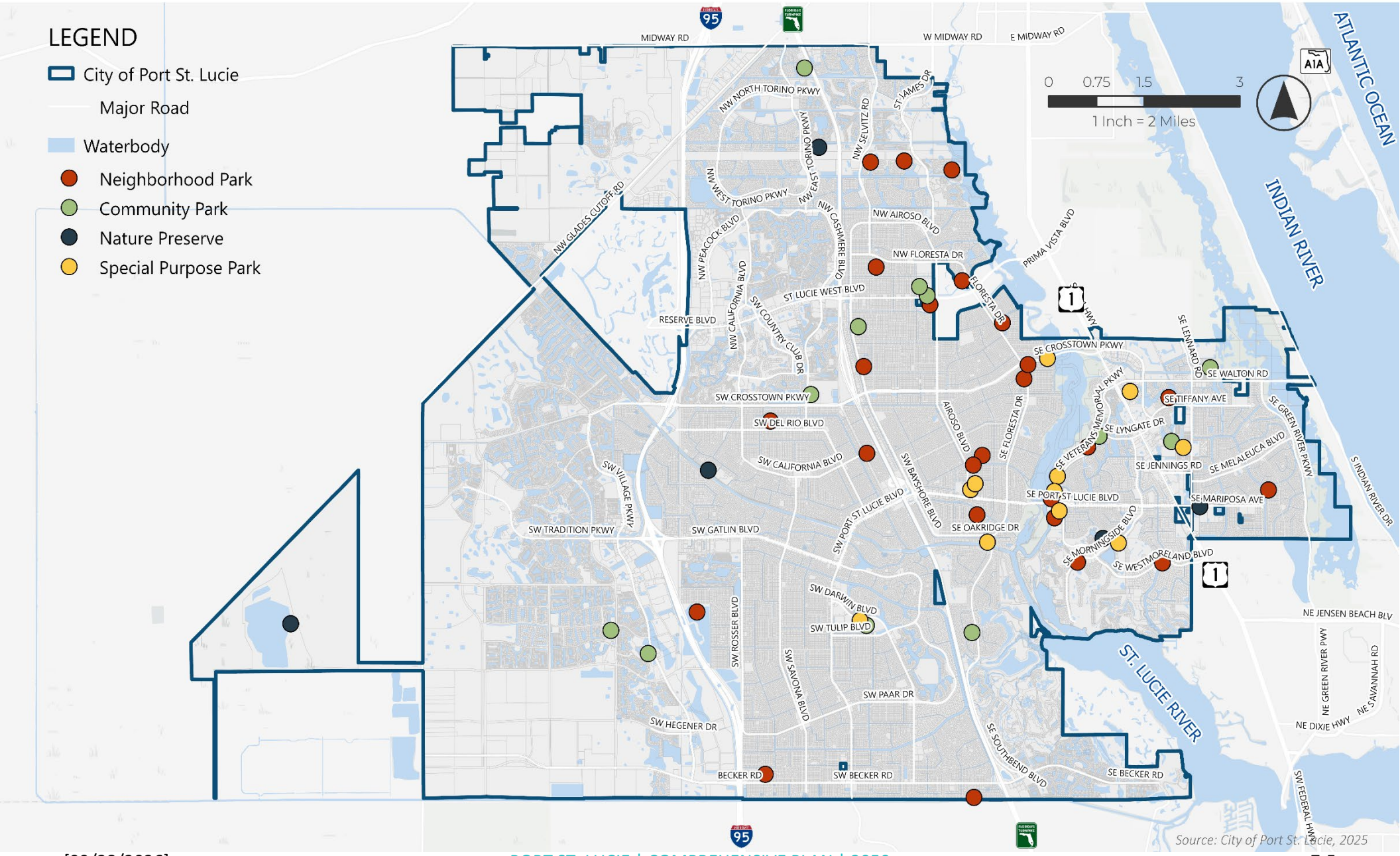
PARKS	ACRES	RESOURCES & FACILITIES
15. Turtle Run Park	10.0	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, volleyball court, baseball fields, multipurpose playing field
16. U.S. Submarine Veterans Park	5.3	Fitness stations
17. Whitmore Park	4.4	Tables, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground
18. Woodland Trails Park	13.0	Restrooms/ pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, dog park, fitness stations, multipurpose playing fields
Neighborhood Passive Parks	***32.5***	
19. Doat Street Park	2.4	N/A
20. Duck Court Park	0.6	N/A
21. Gulf Stream Park	8.5	N/A
22. Harborview Park	4.8	N/A
23. Ian T Zook Park	3.5	Tables
24. Loyalty Park	0.7	Amphitheater/plaza/open space
25. Midport Lake	12.0	N/A
Community Parks	***293.5***	
26. Jessica Clinton Park	20.0	Restrooms, amphitheater/plaza/open space, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, fitness stations, walking trails, basketball court, tennis court, baseball field, multi-purpose playing field, softball field
27. Lyngate Park	16.0	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, dog park, basketball court, tennis court, racquetball court, volleyball court, fishing pier, softball field
28. Riverland Paseo Park	12.0	Restrooms, tables, pavilion/gazebo/open space, dog park, multi-purpose playing field, softball field
29. Sandhill Crane Park	19.0	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, racquetball court, volleyball court, multipurpose playing field, softball field
30. Sportsman's Park	16.0	Restrooms, vending/concession stands, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, basketball court, tennis court, baseball field, multipurpose playing field, softball fields
31. Sportsman's Park West	13.0	Restrooms, vending/concession stands, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, football field
32. Stars and Stripes Park (Southern Grove Park #1)	26.5	Restrooms, solar system display, gleaming star sculptures, and meandering sidewalk with symbols through the park
33. Swan Park	6.5	Restrooms, playground, soccer fields
34. Whispering Pines Park	37.0	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, tennis courts, volleyball courts, baseball fields, football fields, pickleball court, multipurpose field, softball field
35. William McChesney Park	24.5	Restrooms, vending/concession stand, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, soccer fields
36. Winterlakes Park	28.0	baseball fields, soccer field
37. Woodstork Trail	75.0	Restrooms, walking trails, football fields
Nature Preserves	**799.5**	
38. Mariposa Cane Slough Preserve	19.8	N/A
39. McCarty Ranch Preserve	600	Boat & canoe launch, camping (RV & tent sites), disc golf, equestrian, fishing, parking, restrooms (ADA), trail, wifi

PARKS	ACRES	RESOURCES & FACILITIES
40. Luca Bay	46	N/A. At this time, Luca Bay does not have any site plan/conceptual plan.
41. Oak Hammock Park	48.7	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, playground, walking trails, boat ramp, fishing pier
42. Wilderness Park	85.0	N/A
Special Purpose Parks	**260.2**	
43. Botanical Gardens	22.8	Education center, amphitheater/plaza/open space, fountains/splashpads
44. Canal Park	9.0	Tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, boat ramp
45. Community Center	4.9	Aerobics/fitness/wellness room; multi-purpose/banquet room
46. Deacon Street Transit Stations	1.9	N/A
47. Mary Ann Cernuto Park	0.9	Camping sites, amphitheater/plaza/open space, pavilion/gazebo/shelter
48. Midflorida Credit Union Event Center	8.7	Game room, gymnasium, indoor basketball/soccer/volleyball, multipurpose/banquet room
49. Pineapple Park	2.0	N/A
50. Robert E. Minsky Gym (@ Whispering Pines)	1.0	Restrooms, gymnasium
51. The Saints at Port St. Lucie Golf Course	185.0	Multipurpose/banquet room
52. Veterans Memorial Park	2.5	Restrooms, amphitheater/plaza/open space
53. Veterans Park at Rivergate	21.5	Restrooms, tables, grills, pavilion/gazebo/shelter, boat ramp
TOTAL	**1,632.4**	

Source: City of Port St. Lucie, November 2025.

PARKS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2050

MAP 7-1



Source: City of Port St. Lucie, 2025

C. Open Space

In addition to the park facilities listed above, the City of Port St. Lucie has been actively acquiring lands for conservation. These sites are typically not open to the public for recreation, but provide valuable open space. Conservation areas purchased or acquired by the City are listed in **Table 7-2**. With the exception of the Mariposa Preserve and McCarty Ranch Preserve, city-owned conservation areas are not included in the inventory of available public parkland for level of service purposes. Management plans for these sites will be prepared as funding becomes available.

The purpose of the Port St. Lucie's Conservation lands program is to preserve and maintain native habitat. The City's Conservation Trust Fund accumulates mitigation fees paid by developers in lieu of onsite preservation of upland habitat as required by the City's Natural Resources Protection Code. In cases where the land cannot be preserved, the City can elect to accept a land donation or a monetary donation in lieu of preservation. Conservation land has also been acquired through the Florida Communities Trust land conservation program.

Florida Forever funds were used to purchase approximately 32 acres of land along the east shoreline of the North Fork of the St. Lucie River. The site includes the City's first public garden, the Port St. Lucie Botanical Garden which opened in March 2010. The gardens include a pond with a fountain, paved public paths, and a pavilion, as well as ample public parking.

Table 7- 2. City-owned Conservation Lands

Name	Legal Description	General Location	Acreage
Del Rio North	2/3 37 39 From NE Cor Sec 3 Run St Lucie West Plat #91	SE Quadrant I-95 / Crosstown Interchange	5.38
Del Rio South	3 37 39 From NE Cor Sec 3 Run Parcel 2 Govt. Lot 8	SE Quadrant I-95 / Crosstown Interchange	30.04
Reserve	Sec 15, Township 36S, Range 39E	North of Commerce Center Dr.	94.5
Peacock Parcel	SLW Plat No. 91, Tract D	Peacock Blvd.	2.17
Westmoreland Park	Parcel 2 Govt. Lot 8	Westmoreland Blvd.	12.24
Mariposa Preserve	*Tract "C", First Replat of Lennard Square*	*Mariposa*	*19.77**
McCarty Ranch Preserve	14/15/21/22/23/24/28/33 37 38 THAT PART OF SECS MPDAF: FROM INT SLY RD R/W LI OF FEC RR AND C/L OF CARLTON RD LYG IN SEC 15, TH N 44 47 24 E ALG SLY R/W LI OF FEC RR 14,922.87 FT, TH S 00 01 35 W 193.12 FT, TH S 00 30 13 E 5239.21 FT, TH S 00 53 49	West of I-95, south of Glades Cut Off Rd. and Range Line Rd. intersection	600*
Rosser	26 37 39 ALL THAT PART OF SEC LYG E OF I-95 R/W AS IN OR 311-2946- LESS THAT PART FOR RD R/W AS IN OR 4228-2398-	South of SW Open View Road between I-95 and Rosser Boulevard	105
Total			**869.1**

** Acreage included in the parks inventory.*

Sources: City of Port St. Lucie Planning & Zoning Department, 2025

D. State Facilities

Port St. Lucie is also served by nearby state-managed recreation areas, offering residents access to regional natural resources. Approximately 33% of Savannas Preserve State Park (2,323 acres out of 6,996 total) is located within the city's limits, as shown in **Map 7-2**. The park a 6,000+ acre preserve that protects a representative sample of a basin march ecosystem. The park provides a variety of activities such as hiking, kayaking, fishing, birdwatching, and educational programs that highlight the region's ecological significance. As a significant natural resource, the Savannas Preserve State Park complements the City's recreational offerings and enhances residents' connection to Florida's natural environment.

E. Trails

In the 2019 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, developing multi-purpose trails was identified as a key strategy in meeting the community's recreational needs. Trails are designated pathways created for non-motorized users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, offering opportunities for active recreation and connecting various destinations. They provide numerous public benefits, including encouraging physical activity, reducing traffic congestion, and enhancing outdoor recreation experiences. Most trails feature paved paths complemented by amenities like benches, water fountains, bike racks, wayfinding signage, lighting, and waste receptacles. Thoughtfully designed trails also link parks, neighborhoods, and major destinations, ensuring they are both functional and accessible.

The City of Port St. Lucie also aims to develop and enhance a recreational trail system that ties into St. Lucie County's Greenways and Trails system, the trail system in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, and the trail system contained in the St. Lucie County TPO Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways and Trails Study. In the 2019 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, developing a City-Wide Trail Master Plan was identified as a key project to support the goal of providing safe walking and transportation routes throughout the city. The plan recommended a phasing, funding, and implementation strategy to do so, with an expected completion date of 2026.

The City of Port St. Lucie supports this effort by providing 184 miles of trails throughout the city, as detailed in **Table 7-3**. The locations of these trails are shown in **Map 7-3.** As shown in the table and map, a large portion of the city's trails are considered "other suggested routes." These routes do not represent traditional trails per se, but do feature long expanses of paved sidewalks that can be used as multi-modal pathways. They are not as wide as other multi-use paved pathways identified on the map and lack amenities such as buffers and landscaping that are typically associated with recreational trails.

The City continues to actively plan and construct several major trail projects. These include the Port Preserve Trails—a system connecting Pioneer Park and The Anchorage—as well as Wilderness Trail, a boardwalk connection under the bridge to provide a continuous pedestrian route from the Promenade to Veterans Park, to Pioneer Park. Additional trail projects, such as the **O.L. Peacock Trail** and planned paved and unpaved trails at **Torino Regional Park**, will further strengthen the city's trail network and promote connections to surrounding neighborhoods and regional amenities.

Table 7- 3. Inventory of Trails

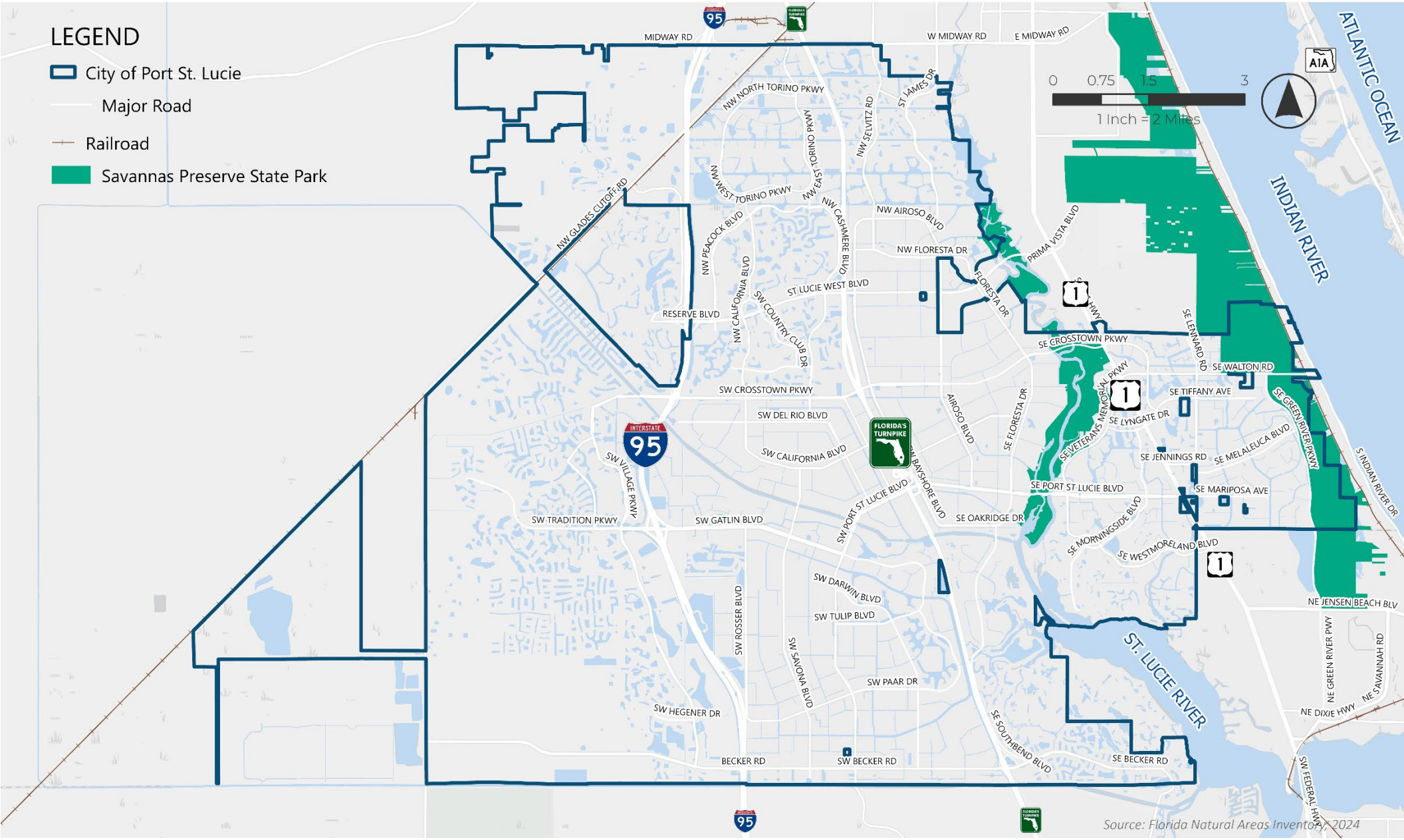
TRAIL TYPE	MILES
Paved Multi-Use Pathways	70.4
Bike Lanes (on road)	28.1
Paved Shoulder (on road)	1.2
Other Suggested Routes	84.5
Total	**184.2**

Sources: Port St. Lucie, 2024

STATE-OWNED PARKS

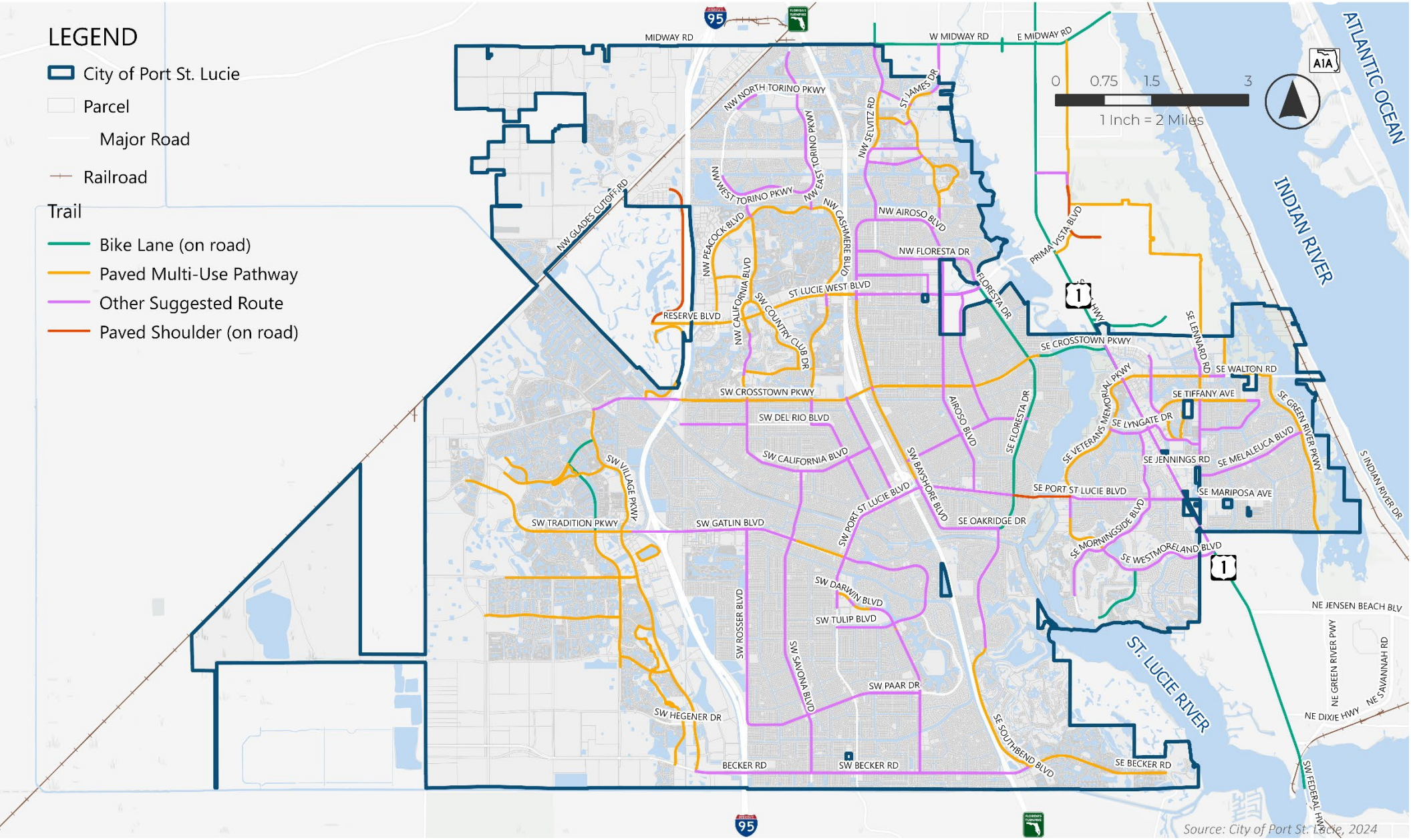
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2050

MAP 7-2



TRAILS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2050

MAP 7.3



III. Analysis

A. Level of Service Standard for Recreation and Open Space

The parks level of service (LOS) is a measure for determining the park acreage necessary to accommodate the needs of the community. A level of service designed for a specific type of park or facility is considered to be too restrictive to meet changing demands of the public and fluctuating funding sources based in part on state grant funds. Therefore, the adopted level of service of 5 acres per 1,000 residents focuses on the overall need for developed public park facilities. The city currently exceeds the adopted level of service and has a current level of service of 6.1 acres per 1,000. The City does not have a specific level of service for open space. However, the Future Land Use Element contains policies for the dedication of open space as new developments are approved. Also, the City continues to work with developers to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive areas through easements or acquisition.

B. Projected Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities

Understanding future demand for parks and recreation is important when deciding future goals, objectives, and policies for the City's long-range plans. This analysis is intended to project future demands for park facilities.

The projected demand for parks and recreation facilities has been derived by applying the adopted level of service (LOS) to projected population figures. According to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR, 2025), Port St. Lucie had a permanent population of 260,194 in 2025. The City estimates a total current population of 267,793 (including seasonal residents). The population is projected to grow to 344,145 by 2036 and 407,221 by 2050.

As mentioned earlier, there are a number of parks currently in the works and should come online in the next few years. **Table 7-4** shows the parks that will be added to the inventory in the near future. Southern Grove Park 2 is not developed, but is city-owned.

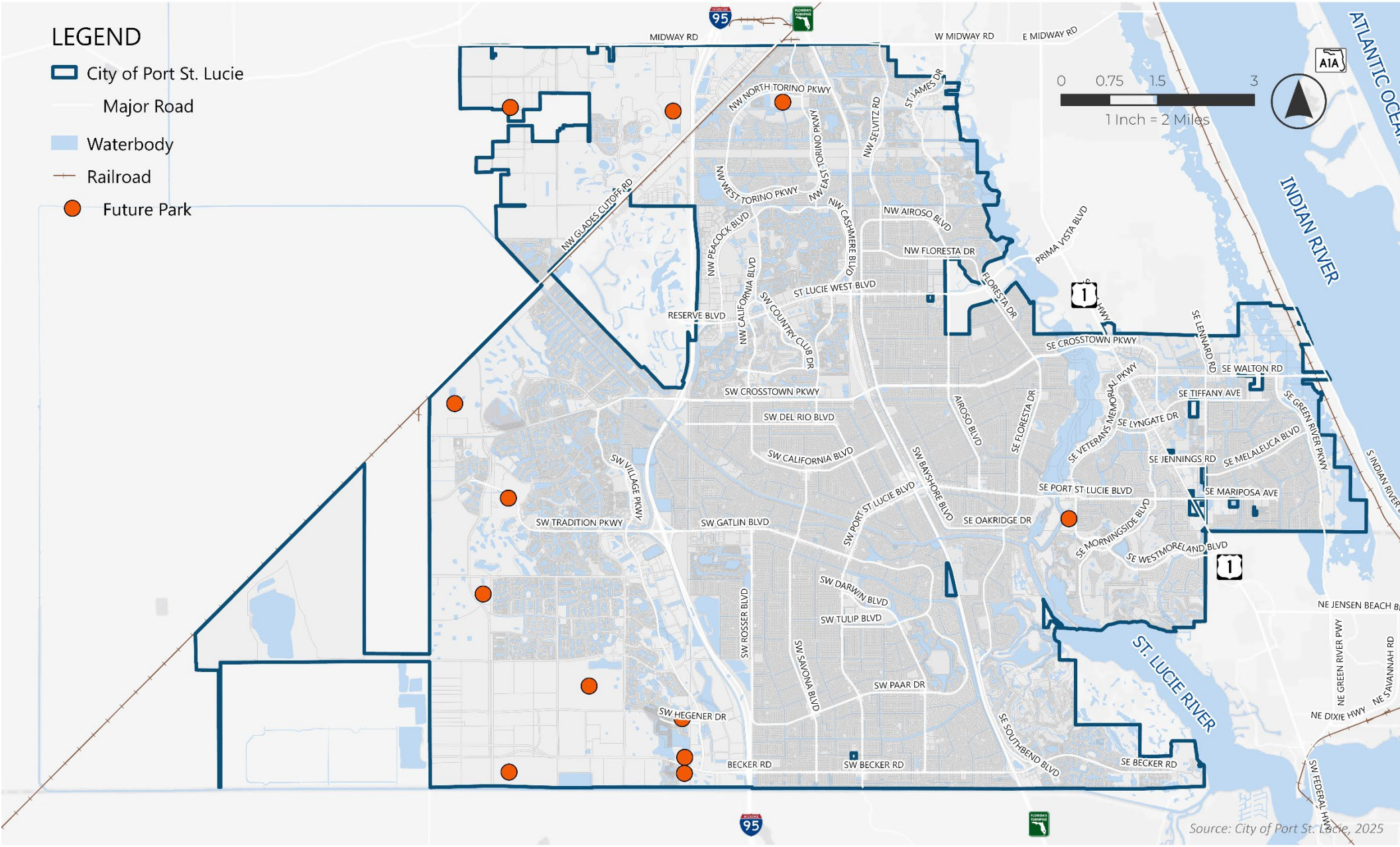
Table 7- 4. Future Parks and Recreation Facilities

PARKS	ACRES
1. Wylder Park *	113
2. Riverland - SITE 1	14.0
3. Riverland - SITE 2	55.9
4. Riverland/Wilson Groves Regional Park	140.0
5. Southern Grove Park 2	14.83
6. Southern Grove Park 3	36.0
7. Southern Grove Park 4	11.66
8. The Preserve at The Port	12.6
9. Torino Regional Park	195.2
10. Tradition Regional Park - Under construction with ballfields, multipurpose fields, and a BMX track	126.9
11. Verano – Location 1	50.0
12. Williams Road Park Property (city-owned; consists of two parcels split by a canal: one is 10 acres and the other is 36 acres).	46.45
TOTAL	**816.54**

Source: City of Port St. Lucie, November 2025

FUTURE PARKS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2050

MAP 7-4



Tables 7-5 shows the projected demand for park space based on current level of service standards, current inventory of parks, and those coming online in the next few years. This analysis shows that Port St. Lucie is currently meeting LOS standards in park acreage and will continue to meet this standard through the planning horizon given the number of parks that are set to open in the coming years.

Table 7- 5. Projected Demand for Parks and Recreation Facilities

Year	Current/Projected Residents	Park Acreage (5 acres per 1,000 residents)		
		Demand	Acreage	Surplus/Deficit
2030	308,346	1541.7	2,449	907.3
2035	338,960	1694.8	2,449	754.2
2036	344,145	1720.7	2,449	728.3
2040	364,885	1824.4	2,449	624.6
2045	387,106	1935.5	2,449	513.5
2050	407,221	2036.1	2,449	412.9

Sources: Port St. Lucie, 2025

The City is actively pursuing park additions and improvements. In 2021, through the Community Redevelopment Agency, the City developed the Port District Master Plan to enhance a 1.5-mile area along the St. Lucie River. Covering approximately 85 acres, the plan aims to expand recreational opportunities by enlarging Veterans Memorial Park and Tom Hooper Park. Additionally, it explores the possibility of adding kayak launches, boat slips, and day use docks along the St. Lucie River to promote water-based uses and connectivity. The plan also emphasizes improved connectivity through the creation of new multi-use pathways and access points throughout the Port District.

Additionally, the City remains committed to implementing its 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Three key examples of this effort are the development of **Torino Regional Park, Tradition Regional Park,** and the planned improvements at **O.L. Peacock Sr. Park**. The City is actively working toward opening Torino Regional Park in Spring 2027, which will add 195.2 acres of parkland. Tradition Regional Park is expected to open shortly and will add nearly 127 acres of parkland. O.L. Peacock Sr. Park has been designated as a High-Performance Public Space Initiative Pilot Project and will undergo enhancements to upgrade existing amenities and improve the overall park experience. Further, although it is not listed in the park inventory or the five-year budget, the City has designated areas for land acquisition for the District 4 Community Center in fiscal year 2029–2030.

C. Parks and Open Space Funding

Strategies for acquiring new parkland have included the dedication of park and recreation land as part of the annexation agreements for the western annexed lands; utilization of the City's Conservation Trust Fund, which is funded by mitigation fees paid by developers in lieu of on-site preservation; and through annexation agreements with property owners to set aside land for parks and open space. The City also collects Park Impact Fees to develop parks and recreation facilities. More recently, the city started implementing the Naturally PSL Land Bank, which engages residents as well as private, public and nonprofit partners in contributing to land acquisition and green space enhancements.

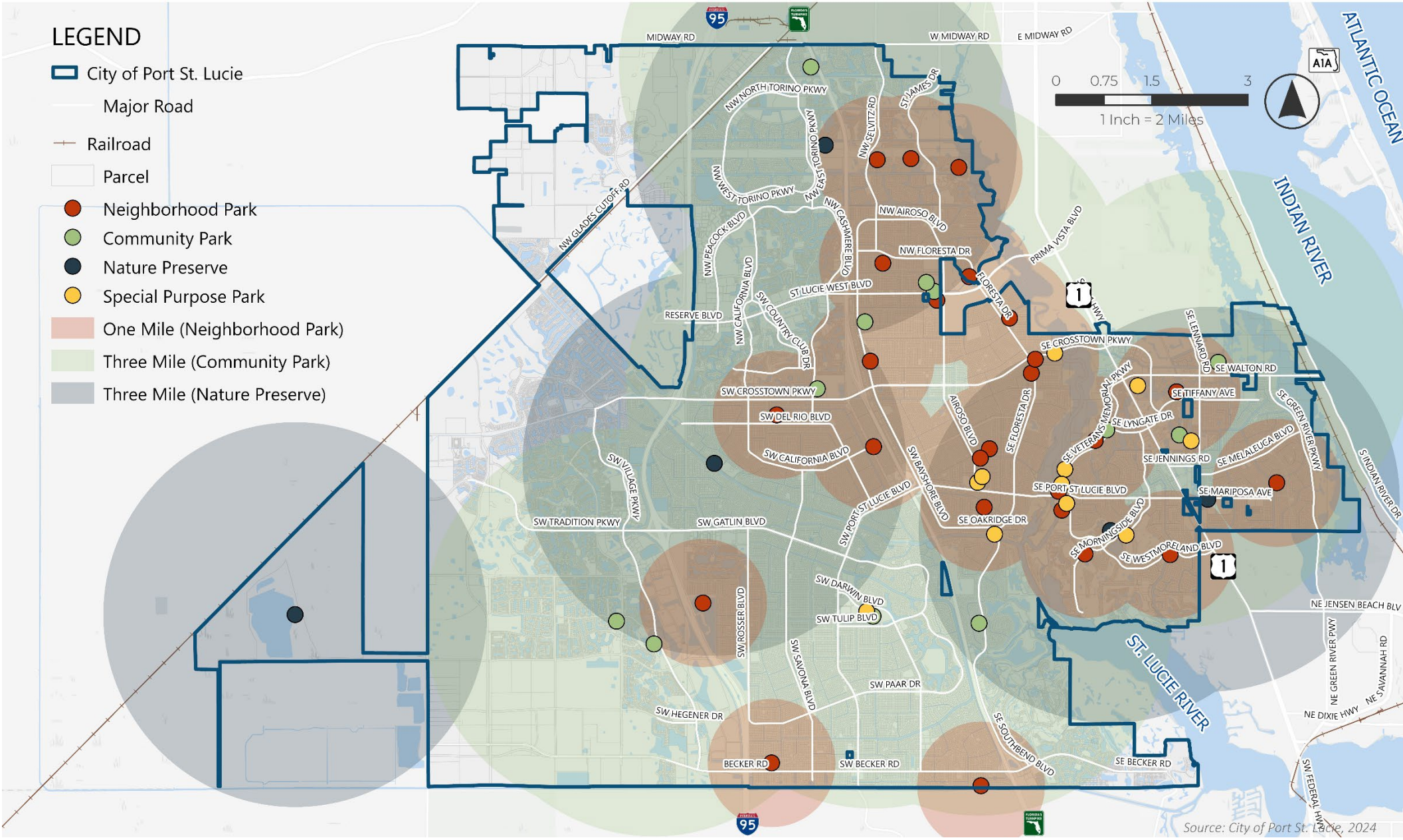
The City's Conservation Trust Fund accumulates mitigation fees paid by developers who choose to make this payment in lieu of preserving a portion of their sites as required under the City's Land Development Code. These fees can be used for preservation of land. Funds from the Conservation Trust Fund have been used for City parks such as the Port St. Lucie Botanical Garden, the City's first public garden opened in 2010.

The acreage level of service shows adequate provision of parks and recreational facilities for the current population, but it is also necessary to look at population centers and determine if the current parks are adequately serving all residents. **Map 7-5** shows the service areas of neighborhood parks, community parks, nature preserves, and open space parks. As seen on the map, the eastern part of the City is well served by all park types. The region of the city west of the Turnpike has access to neighborhood and community parks but currently lacks other park types.

PARK SERVICE AREAS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2050

MAP 7-5



IV. Future Considerations

The City of Port St. Lucie has invested in quality of life through the development of the MidFlorida Event Center, the Botanical Gardens, and ample park facilities. The City also supports public art projects and community and cultural events such as City Fest, jazz concerts, and holiday events. According to the 2019 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan, an evaluation of existing facilities revealed that the parks and recreation system is meeting expectations overall. However, opportunities for improvement remain.

A. **Accessibility.** Enhancing pedestrian comfort and connectivity between parks is a key area for advancement. For instance, adding buffers along sidewalks adjacent to roads that connect residents to parks can create a safer, more cohesive, and visually appealing parks system. To ensure accessibility for all residents, the city may consider co-locating transit stops with parks, integrating public transportation into the parks network. Improving the signage hierarchy—such as incorporating wayfinding and educational signage—may further enhance the user experience by providing clear directions and enriching visitors' understanding of park features. The City of Port St. Lucie will also consider continuing to expand their trails system, especially across southern portions of the city, to enhance multimodal accessibility as connectivity across the city.

B. **Amenities.** Given the city's relatively balanced distribution of children, adults, and seniors, it is essential to ensure that park amenities cater to the diverse needs of all demographic groups. The Master Plan also identified the potential to acquire land for dual-purpose stormwater treatment park sites. The City will explore the idea of acquiring land that supports recreational use while also addressing stormwater treatment and water quality improvement goals.

C. **Locational Considerations.** Traditional comprehensive planning in Florida has often recommended the co-location of parks and recreation facilities with public schools. Previous comprehensive planning documents encouraged this practice. However, with increased prioritization of school safety in response to recent tragedies, this practice is no longer recommended. While some community parks in Port St. Lucie are currently associated with park-school combinations, the city should reevaluate this approach to prioritize safety. Although the city is currently meeting level-of-service standards by acreage, it should also evaluate the geographic distribution and service areas of its parks.