



# PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT SERVICE DELIVERY: Cost Recovery, Special Events & Parks



# OVERVIEW

The North Port Parks & Recreation Department supports and operates 30 park and facility sites with one additional site in development. This includes four core facilities: Morgan Family Community Center, George Mullen Activity Center, North Port Aquatic Center and Warm Mineral Springs Park which collectively serve more than 620,000 individuals annually. The parks system spans over 650 acres and offers a diverse mix of active and passive amenities that serve residents of all ages. The Department is also proudly recognized as a nationally accredited agency, one of only 222 accredited agencies nationwide and representing less than 3% of parks and recreation organizations across the country.

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# ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION

2018

- Parks & Recreation Department established by Ordinance No. 2018-52, encompassing Recreation, Park Maintenance, Aquatics & Administration.
- Former Property Maintenance Division dissolved, with operations redistributed to Parks & Recreation & Public Works.

2019

- North Port Aquatic Center opened on October 21, 2019.
- Atwater Splash Pad transitioned to Parks & Recreation, eliminating a recurring \$46,000 budget impact.

2021

- City assumed full responsibility for maintenance & operation of 19 sports fields/courts and 2 specialty parks following expiration of Sarasota County Interlocal Agreement.
- Reservation team & athletic field crew added to support transition, with partial-year costs of \$62,000 and \$350,500.

2022

- FY22 budget expanded to include \$937,027 in recurring maintenance costs following Interlocal Agreement expiration.
- Warm Mineral Springs Park closed ahead of Hurricane Ian & remained shut due to storm damage.
- City Commission directed termination of the WMSP Site Management Agreement & expedited park reopening.

2023

- Warm Mineral Springs Park site management agreement terminated March 9, 2023.
- Warm Mineral Springs Park reopened under City Parks & Recreation operations on April 7, 2023, under a hybrid staffing model.

# PERFORMANCE METRICS

Metric	City of North Port	NRPA Industry Median
Cost Recovery	51.30%	27.20%
Residents per total Parks/Facilities	3,210	2,411
Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents	5.3	10.2
FTE per 10,000 Residents	7.9	8.6
Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$106.82	\$103.13
Revenue per Capita	\$31.50	\$28.63



# COST RECOVERY MODEL & COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The Department operates under a cost recovery model designed to balance financial sustainability with equitable community access. This approach ensures that programs benefiting the entire community remain affordable or free, while services with higher individual benefit recover a greater share of their costs.

According to the NRPA Agency Performance Review, the typical parks and recreation agency recovers a quarter of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenue. The Parks & Recreation Department as a whole achieved a cost recovery rate (not including free events) of 51.3% in FY25, nearly double the national average.

FY25 Overall  
Department Cost  
Recovery Rate  
51.3%

Nearly double the  
national median  
for parks and  
recreation  
agencies

Reduced reliance  
on General Fund

Delivering high  
value at low  
taxpayer cost

# COST RECOVERY BREAKDOWN



## Recreation

34.05%



## Aquatics

56.82%



Spring: 76.6%



Summer: 111.8%



Fall: 41%



Winter: 12.77%



## Warm Mineral Springs Park

148.97%

Administration and Park Maintenance divisions do not generate direct revenue; as support divisions, these expenses are included in the overall Department Cost Recovery Rate.

# COMMUNITY BENEFIT FRAMEWORK

Programs and services are categorized into five tiers based on the balance of community versus individual benefit:

- Tier 1 – Mostly Community Benefit: Lower fees, higher subsidy
- Tier 2 – Considerable Community Benefit: Moderate subsidy
- Tier 3 – Balance Individual and Community Benefit: Balanced fees
- Tier 4 – Considerable individual benefit: Higher cost recovery
- Tier 5 – Mostly Individual Benefit: Highest cost recovery



Ensures fairness and affordability  
across demographics



Supports a balanced mix of free,  
low-cost, and full-cost-recovery  
programs

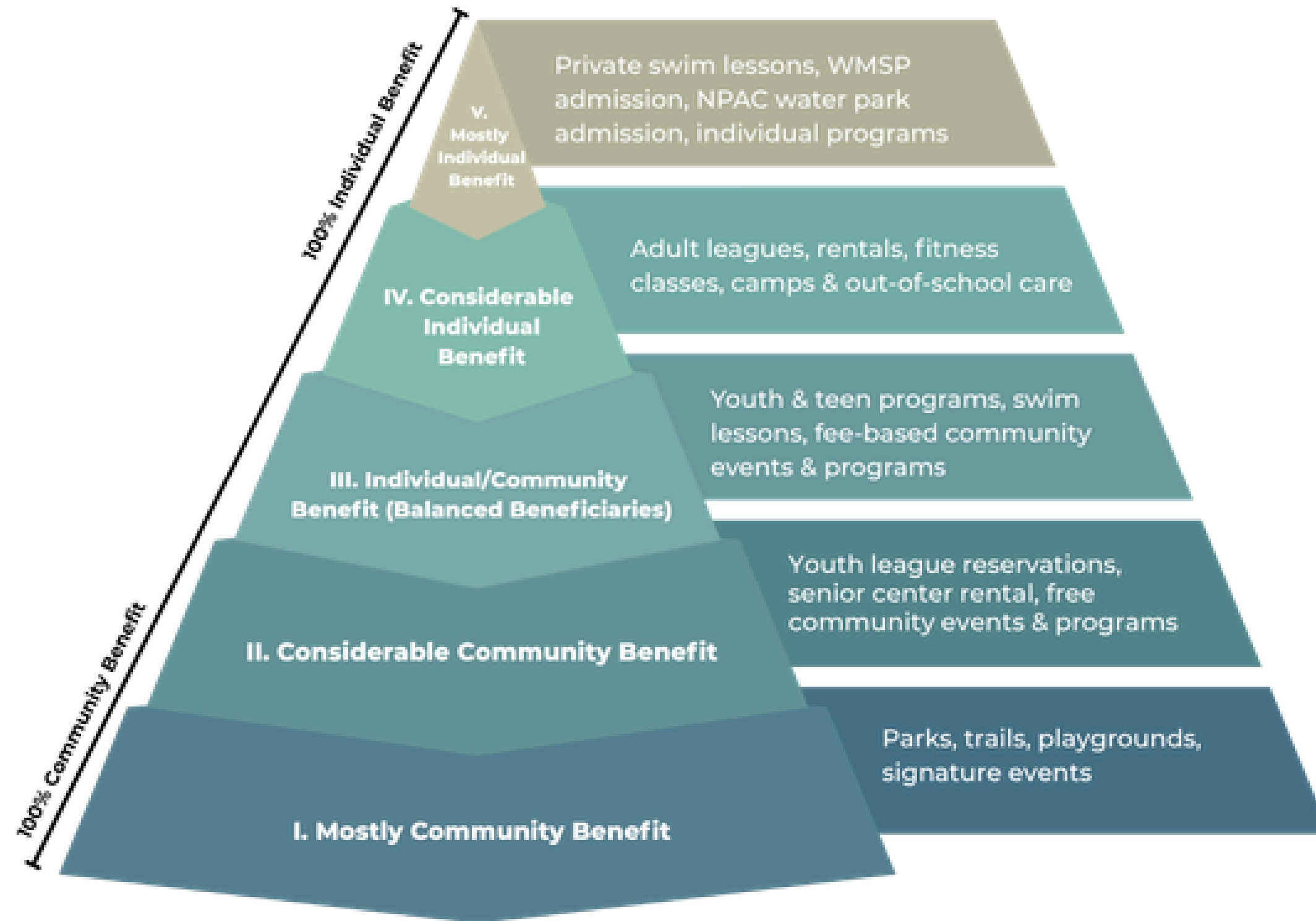


Aligns with CAPRA standards for  
service equity



Guides annual program review and  
fee adjustments

# COMMUNITY BENEFIT FRAMEWORK



# SPECIAL EVENTS

33,000 Annual Attendees | Community Engagement | Quality of Life | Economic Impact

- 91% of park and recreation agencies offer special events nationwide
- One of the top three ways residents engage with parks
- Core driver of civic pride, tourism and resident connection

## SIGNATURE EVENTS



- 6,000–12,000 attendees
- Freedom Festival, Poinsettia Parade and Festival, Trick or Treat
- Funding Model: Primarily City-funded, free admission, sponsorships offset expenses
- Boost tourism, local economy and City visibility

## FREE COMMUNITY EVENTS



- 300–1,500 attendees
- Egg Hunt, Movies on the Green, Woofstock
- Funding Model: City-funded and in-kind support
- Inclusive, accessible family programming
- Builds community

## FEE BASED COMMUNITY EVENTS



- 75–300 attendees
- Sweetheart Ball, Pumpkin Plunge, Swim with Santa
- Funding Model: Cost recovery through participant fees and sponsorships
- Cost recovery while expanding diverse offerings
- Supports financial sustainability
- Program variety

## OUTREACH EVENTS



- 50–100 attendees
- Park RX Day, Kids to Parks Day, Go Green
- Funding Model: No to low cost, often tied to nationally recognized observance days
- Educational, health-focused, reaches underserved populations

# SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Events	Attendance	Direct Expenses		Cost per Attendee**	Fees & Charges	Sponsorships	
	(Last Held)	Budget	Actual		Vendor Fees (Returned Revenue)	Contributions (Returned Revenue)	In-Kind Value
<b>Signature Events</b>							
Freedom Festival (2025)	8,489	\$74,280	\$70,597	\$8.32	\$2,850	\$7,750	\$6,812
Trick or Treat (2025)	6,260	\$11,750	\$10,601	\$1.69	\$800	\$4,250	\$1,488
Poinsettia Parade & Festival (2025)	12,236	\$47,250	\$52,782	\$4.31	\$4,800	\$3,356	\$7,000
<b>Free Events</b>							
Egg Hunt Extravaganza (2026)	1,551	\$5,830	\$3,247	\$2.09	\$300	\$ -	\$3,420
Concerts in the Park Series (2025)*	650	\$3,900	\$100	\$0.15	\$168	\$ -	\$2,250
Movies on the Green Series (2026)*	310	\$3,850	\$3,301	\$10.65	\$168	\$ -	\$ -
Woofstock (2026)	288	\$250	\$1,242	\$4.31	\$700	\$ -	\$ -
Community Yard Sale Series (2025)*	1,941	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$5,120	\$ -	\$ -
Newcomer Day Series (2025/2026)*	665	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

\*Not a singular event

\*\* Direct cost divided by attendance

# PARK SYSTEM

Parks are foundational community infrastructure. North Port's park system delivers measurable value and cost savings across public health & wellness, safety, environmental resilience, and economic impact. According to research by Trust for Public Lands, every \$1 invested in parks can yield up to \$4 in economic benefits, including increased property values, public health savings, and environmental services like cleaner air, stormwater capture, and urban cooling.

## HEALTH

- Free, accessible spaces
- Reduced risk of chronic disease & obesity
- Lower long-term health costs

## WELL BEING

- Inclusive for all ages
- Builds trust & social connection
- Strengthens community

## SAFETY

- Supports crime prevention
- Provides positive alternatives to youth
- Reduces delinquency

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE & STEWARDSHIP

- Tree canopy cooling & heat relief
- Stormwater capture & flood reduction
- Protected biodiversity

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Increased visitation
- Boosts property values
- Supports tourism

# PUBLIC SATISFACTION & TRUST



According to the Center for Active Design, people who live near parks are more likely to be satisfied with their local government. In two dozen U.S. communities, those living near popular public parks reported:

**29%**

Greater satisfaction with their Parks & Recreation departments

**14%**

Greater satisfaction with their Police departments

**13%**

Greater satisfaction with their Mayor

According to the NRPA 2025 Engagement with Parks Report:

**90%**

Of US adults consider Parks & Recreation an important local government service

**22 VISITS**

Residents visit Park & Recreation facilities an average of 22 times per year

According to the Trust for Public Lands (The Power of Parks to Strengthen Community), parks contribute to stronger overall community morale and improve residents' perception of their local government, including higher satisfaction with public services and leadership.

# PARK SYSTEM SNAPSHOT



650 acres of park land



30 Parks & Facilities sites



850,000 visitors to parks



3,527 athletic field reservations



3,700 youth athletes served

- 3 Community Parks
- 9 Neighborhood Parks
- 13 Special Use Facilities
  - +1 in development
- 2 Greenways
- 1 Open Space
- 2 Conservation



# PARKS MAINTENANCE DIVISION

The Parks Maintenance Division maintains and prepares 20 athletic fields to support leagues and community sports programs. Staff ensure fields are safe, aesthetically maintained, and environmentally managed while accommodating intensive youth sports use. Annual field improvements include new sod installation, aeration, top dressing, and Verti-cutting to protect player safety and field playability.

In addition to athletic fields, the division provides full maintenance for 30 park sites citywide. Responsibilities include playground safety inspections and repairs, irrigation system maintenance, landscaping and tree services, park amenity repairs, and restroom cleaning. The division also conducts environmental water testing, administers the city's tribute program for memorial trees and benches, and maintains specialized amenities such as kayak launches and dog-friendly areas.

Although the Parks Maintenance Division does not generate direct revenue, its work is essential to the department's overall revenue capacity. By ensuring athletic fields and park facilities are safe, functional, and attractive, maintenance operations enable the Recreation Division to generate revenue through field reservations, facility rentals, and park rentals. This interdependent relationship highlights maintenance as the foundational infrastructure for service delivery and revenue generation.

# LEVEL OF SERVICE – PARK MAINTENANCE MODES

## Mode 1



Mode 1 represents the highest level of maintenance for parks and amenities within parks locations with the most intensive public use and visibility. These properties receive daily or weekly attention for most maintenance tasks, including:

- Daily litter collection on weekdays
- Weekly trash can emptying
- Weekly inspections of playgrounds, benches and drinking fountains
- Daily cleaning of restrooms

Athletic fields in Mode 1 receive mowing twice weekly, fertilization six times per year, and daily repair of skinned areas during season.

Examples include Atwater Park, Butler Park, Dallas White Park, and all athletic complexes like Narramore Sports Complex.

## Mode 2



Mode 2 provides moderate maintenance for parks, and amenities within parks with regular but less intensive use. Maintenance frequencies are reduced compared to Mode 1 with:

- Litter collection occurring weekly instead of daily
- Trash cans emptied twice monthly for parks
- Restrooms cleaned three times per week.

Park turf is mowed twice monthly, and athletic field mowing occurs weekly with fertilization twice per year. Graffiti removal extends to within 10 days of notification rather than 5 days.

Examples include Butler Park Outside Basketball Court and Dallas White Park Volleyball Courts.

# LEVEL OF SERVICE – PARK MAINTENANCE MODES

## Mode 3



Mode 3 applies to parks and amenities within parks that experience limited routine activity and require only minimal ongoing maintenance.

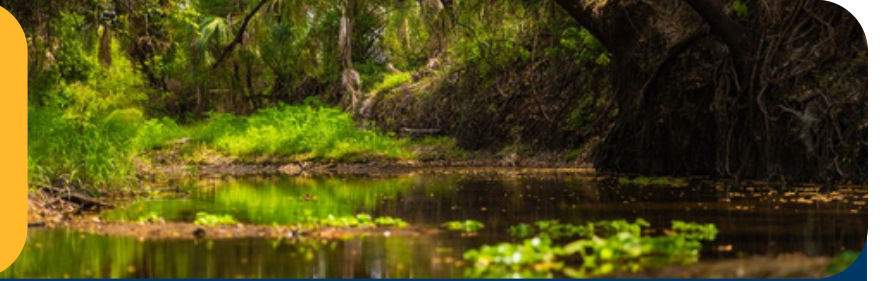
- Visual inspections occur every other month
- Litter is collected monthly
- Park turf is mowed monthly

Many maintenance activities shift to "as needed" status, including irrigation inspections and pressure washing.

Tree pruning is limited to hazard removal only, and mulching is not applicable.

Graffiti removal extends within 15 days of notification.

## Mode 4



Mode 4 represents minimal maintenance for preservation areas and properties with very limited public access.

Most routine maintenance is suspended, with only essential safety activities performed. Inspections occur only as issues are reported, tree pruning addresses hazards only, and weed control targets invasive species exclusively.

There is no stump removal, no scheduled mowing, and litter collection occurs only annually.

Restrooms, if available, are cleaned twice monthly.

# THANK YOU

Thank you for the opportunity to share the value, impact and strategic importance of North Port's Parks & Recreation Department. As our city continues to grow, high-quality parks, programs and facilities remain essential to supporting health and wellness, strengthening community connections and enhancing quality of life for our residents. We appreciate your continued support as we work to maintain and thoughtfully expand a parks system that serves, inspires and connects our community.

