Park Accessibility

A 1995 study by the Federal Transit Administration cited research completed by Richard Untermann which showed that Americans on average will walk 2,300 feet or ten minutes to a destination. After a distance greater than that threshold, the willingness to walk drops below ten percent. This amount varies based on residents' accessibility to transit with more transit oriented areas experiencing a greater willingness to walk longer distances. The 10-minute walking distance translates to a ¼-mile walkable service area.

For each of the thirteen (13) pilot parks, the walkable ¼-mile service area was defined using the Network Analyst extension of ArcGIS, or Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The service area takes into account any barriers to access such as canals, walls, cul-de-sacs, existing sidewalk network, large commercial properties, and other impediments to pedestrians. The service area reflects the true walkable portions of the neighborhood and is not a ¼ mile "as the crow files". Due to the barriers and true walkable areas taken into consideration, the service areas are not round in shape, but are shaped to reflect the areas where pedestrians can reach the park within a ¼-mile walking distance.

Residents may live directly adjacent to a park, but must travel distances greater than 1-mile in cases, due to the fact that there is a wall, fence, canal or lack of pedestrian access along the perimeter of the park. The first step in establishing the park service areas was to identify all of the pedestrian access points for each park. Using the Network Analyst extension, an analysis was applied which includes the street network, sidewalks and barriers into consideration. The result is the delineation of the ¼-mile walkable service areas for each of the thirteen (13) pilot parks.

The next step was then to create a base map of each pilot park which identifies the park boundary, the street network, public transit bus stops, schools, libraries, bike lanes and greenway trails within the vicinity of the park. These base maps served as the primary means to evaluate each pilot park and surrounding neighborhood for pedestrian accessibility.

Goulds Park - Service Area Base Map

Each of the base maps was then thoroughly evaluated to establish the existing conditions and a preliminary identification of opportunities and constraints for improving pedestrian access to the park. The evaluation of the park and surrounding neighborhood was based on the Park Access Criteria described in the previous section. The criteria, as shown on the next page, includes Universal Design Elements including distance, sidewalks, wayfinding, rest areas, mid-block crossings, intersection improvements, crosswalks, shade, and connections to greenways, bike lanes and public transit.

Access Criteria Chart
Age Friendly Initiative

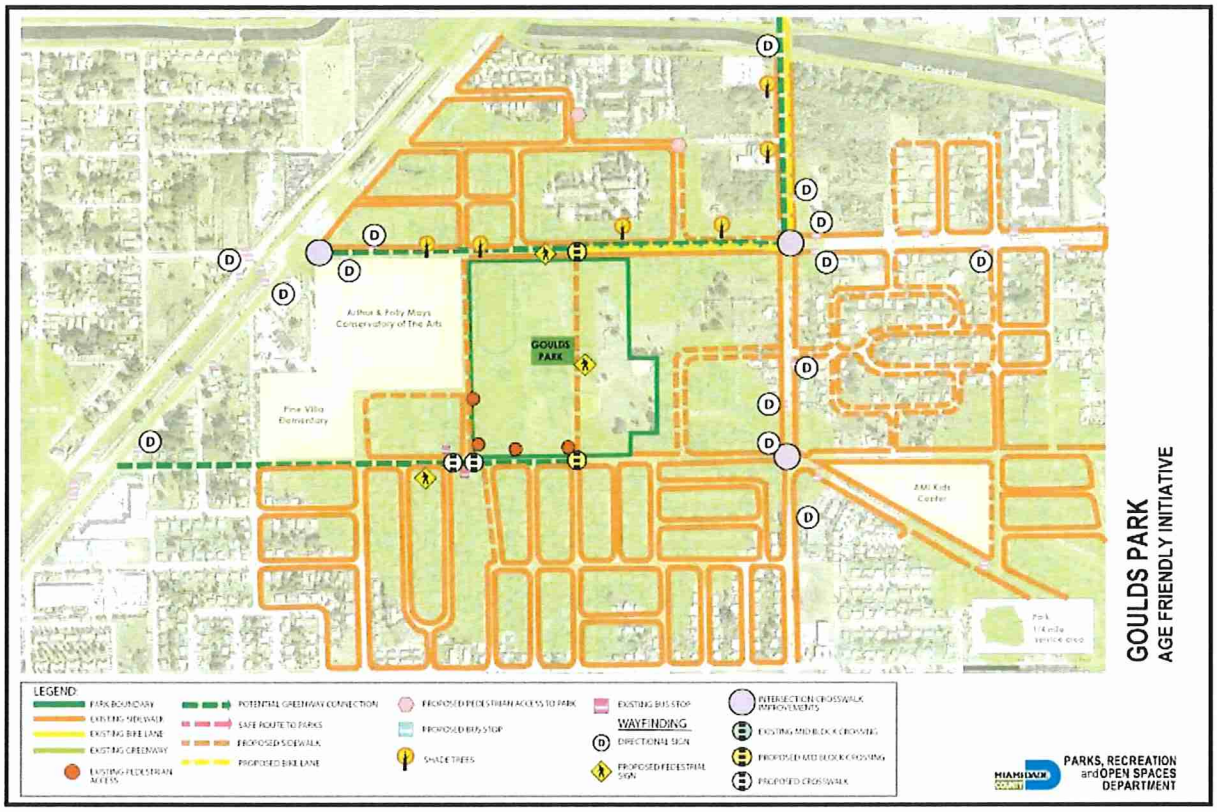
	Criteria / To the Park	Universal Design Elements	Design Intervention Menu
1	Older Adults should be able to walk to a local park within 8-10 minutes from their home	Distance	1/4 mile service area
2	Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of the street along all roadways adjacent to a park	Sidewalks	Sidewalks (8' width) with ramps for accessibility.
3	Blocks over 2000' should consider mid-black crossings, dependent on traffic & local circumstaces	Mid-Block Crossings	Crosswalks, Raised crossings
4	Arterial roads of 6 lanes or more should be evaluated with regard to crossings and intersections.	Intersection Improvements	Signalized crossing, Auduble signal, Crosswalk markings, Curb Extensions, Refude Islands, Medians
5	All intersections adjacent to a park should have crosswalks	Crosswalks	Crosswalk markings, signage, lighting
6	Wayfinding should be provided at all decision points	Wayfinding	Directional, Interpretive, Educational
7	Intermediate rest areas should be considered when distance warrants	Rest Areas	Benches, Shelters
8	All sidewalks and pedestrian areas should be shaded	Shade	Street Trees, Canopies
9	Parks should be accessible via the greenway trail network	Greenway Trail Connections	Trails, bike lanes, signage
10	Parks shall be connected to the public transit network	Public Transit	Bus stops, Rail stations, Transit Oriented Parks
11	Parks shall be accessible via bicycle	Bicycle Facilities	Bike Lanes, Shared Roadway Markings
	Criteria / Inside the Park	**Universal Design Elements**	**Design Intervention Menu**
12	Wayfinding signage should be designed to include large enough font for older adults to clearly read and be provided at all decision points within the park	Wayfinding	Directional, Interpretive, Educational
13	Intermediate rest areas and comfortable benches should be considered when distance warrants along pathways within parks	Rest Areas	Benches, Shelters
14	All pedestrian areas, sidewalks and pathways within parks should be adequately shaded	Shade	Street Trees, Canopies
15	Pavement are shaded, well maintanined, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.	Pathways / Infrastructure	Trees / Canopies
16	Pavements are non-slip, wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level	Pathways / Infrastructure	ADA standards
17	Cycle path are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways	Pathways / Infrastructure	Pathway design
18	Outdoor safety is promoted by good signage, street lighting, police partols and community education	Signage	Signage
19	Services are situated together and are accessible	Accessibble	Effective design
20	Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors	Signage	Signage / ADA design
21	Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible	Infrastructure	Infrastructure

The next step was to evaluate the walkability service area and neighborhood of each pilot park. The evaluation included identification of existing sidewalks, a lack of sidewalks, and pedestrian access points into the parks, bus stops, shade trees, crosswalks and intersections. The analysis also included recommended locations for wayfinding signage, bike lanes, installation of sidewalks, greenway trail connections and other opportunities to improve walkability to the parks. The evaluation of opportunities and constraints was conducted using aerial photos, GIS, and Google Earth's Street View feature. Site visits were conducted at each park to field verify the analysis and to identify any other features based on the on-the-ground evaluations of each pilot park.

The base maps containing the existing conditions and proposed improvements were then used to create Access Improvement Recommendations maps. The first step in that process was to establish symbology for each item in the menu of improvements and design interventions which may be applied to each pilot park. This menu is included on the maps as the legend. The maps were then created using Adobe Illustrator for each pilot park. The process included:

Access Improvement Recommendation Maps Process:

1. Converting the GIS base maps of the walkability service area to a graphic format.
2. Importing the GIS base maps into the Adobe Illustrator environment
3. Establish the symbology menu of Universal Design Interventions as a legend
4. Using the previously evaluated pilot park base maps for reference
5. Illustrate the draft Access Improvement Recommendation Maps with the existing conditions and recommended improvements



Access Improvement Recommendation Map – Goulds Park

Once the draft Access Improvement Recommendation Maps were complete, a workshop was held where each of the Park Managers and the Superintendent for Recreation and Programming Services had an opportunity to review the maps and provide input into the process. The Park Managers reviewed the draft maps, noted any additional recommendations, and identified the top three recommendations for

improving pedestrian access to their park. The feedback from the Park Managers was then incorporated into the Access Improvement Recommendation Maps and the accompanying list of recommendations for each pilot park.

An analysis of each pilot park was completed which describes the existing conditions, opportunities and constraints to improving pedestrian access and the proposed recommendations for the service area. These evaluations are included in Chapter 3: Access Analysis & Recommendations.

The evaluation, analysis, base maps and Access Improvement Recommendation Maps were shared with Miami-Dade County's Urban Design Center, within the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources. The Urban Design Center has conducted Charrette studies and developed Urban Plan reports for target areas throughout the County. The charrette report plans are a result of intensive community input and reflect the needs and desires of the residents. Seven of the thirteen pilot parks are located within areas where the Urban Design Center has been completed planning charrettes. Appendix 4 includes selected pages from the charrette reports that support the access improvements recommended for these parks.

A strategic prioritization and implementation plan was established based on the criteria of 1) improvements which the Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department can directly implement, and 2) improvements and design interventions which will require coordination with other County Departments, agencies and entities. These are detailed in Chapter 4: Implementation.

Analysis and Recommendations

For each of the thirteen (13) pilot parks, a thorough evaluation was conducted to determine existing conditions and to identify opportunities for improvements to pedestrian access. The evaluation included identification of current conditions such as an existing or lack of a sidewalk network; large barriers such as a public school or commercial development; and existing pedestrian access points. Opportunities for connections to public transit, bike lanes and greenway trails was identified and noted to encourage active transport and provide recreational facilities.

The following pages contain in-depth analysis, evaluation and recommendations for each pilot park.

A summary of the neighborhood characteristics provides an overview of the most prominent features relating to walkability of the surrounding area. The evaluation is followed by a list of recommendations for improving pedestrian access within the park service area for each pilot park.

Recommendations are illustrated on an Access Improvement Recommendations Map which is included for each park. The map shows both existing conditions and the recommendations for improving pedestrian access.

Pedestrian access improvement recommendations have been defined in two categories:

Internal Action Items

Partnership Action Items

Internal Action Items are improvements that can be made directly by the Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department within the park, on the park perimeter, or on nearby greenway trail connections and significantly improve access to the park and within the park. Implementation of these items would depend on the availability of funding.

Partnership Action Items are outside of the park boundary and require coordination with the County's Regulatory & Economic Resources Department (RER), Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Public Works and Waste Management (PWWM) and other entities. These improvements must be implemented in partnership with these County Departments with regard to identification of funding, prioritization and taking the actions necessary to make the recommended improvements. Coordination with Public Works traffic engineers and planners will be an integral aspect to successfully implementing the improvements. The Urban Design Center, a part of the Regulatory and Economic Resources Department would also serve as a resource and partner in the implementation process.