



LAUDERTRAC



PARKS AND PUBLIC PLACES UPDATE

Tracking Progress on Fort Lauderdale Commission Priorities for 2021

October 2021

FORT LAUDERDALE PARKS BOND PROGRAM

Parks Bond: Shared-Use Initiative Update



Bennett Elementary Playground Project

The City of Fort Lauderdale has made tremendous progress this fiscal year in its ongoing internal and external collaborative efforts to improve City parks by leveraging pre-existing public resources. On June 28, 2021, the City Commission approved a 25-year reciprocal use agreement with the School Board of Broward County (SBBC) for shared use of designated publicly funded parks and recreation spaces owned by either the SBBC or the City. The mutually beneficial agreement allows both parties to expand the availability of recreational and programming facilities to residents while minimizing overall costs incurred by the City. Based on approval and availability, both School Board and City owned parks and facilities will be accessible to the other entity, upon request, for the benefit of our community. The partnership is expected to positively impact overall educational outcomes throughout the community.

The initiative is a collective effort that continues to be extensively driven by community feedback, including insights from the Education Advisory Board, the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory Board, a designated Joint Use Working Group, and numerous public outreach meetings for public input which defined the initiatives and shaped overarching scope and objectives. Internal collaboration between the City's Parks and Recreation Department and the Education Office were also instrumental in advancing this project and expanding the City's partnership with the School Board to benefit the community. Multiple site visits and school meetings, facilitated and supported by SBBC school administration, were completed by the Working Group, in conjunction with other primary stakeholders, to empirically review and evaluate locations against pre-established criteria.

Improvements in walkability, expansion of recreational opportunities, bridging skill gaps and investing in educational outcomes are all shared strategic planning goals of the City, School Board and County, and pooling resources creates a win-win for all partners and community members. City Staff and its partners continue to solicit widespread community feedback on this project prior to final recommendations in FY 2022.

The City of Fort Lauderdale remains dedicated to creating partnerships that improve the community and positively impact residents. This year, the City was recognized by Broward County Public Schools for its ongoing collaborative efforts in advancing educational initiatives as an honoree for the Florida Department of Education's 2021 Commissioner's Business Recognition Award (CBRA). The award was presented to the Mayor and City Commission on October 21, 2021. City and Staff will continue to identify, collaborate, and invest in opportunities that support residents' needs.