

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Parks & Recreation Analysis

August 2024



Purpose

Charlotte County is in a period of unprecedented growth. The purpose of this analysis is to locate where Future Community (FC) and Future Regional (FR) parks will be needed based on the growth from future development, as forecasted by the Interactive Growth Model. Charlotte County currently has sixty-four developed parks. This analysis is limited to the existing community and regional parks. Neighborhood parks were excluded as the County plans to only operate and maintain community and regional parks.

Data Gathering

The Charlotte County Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update 2015-2050 was reviewed to gather key information for the analysis. Parcel data was gathered from the Charlotte County Property Appraiser to create a vacant land database for this park analysis. Metro Forecasting Models (MFM) also requested the most up to date GIS shapefiles for existing parks and vacant land that is currently owned by the Parks and Recreation Department. In Figure 1 below, there are a total of thirteen existing community parks and four existing regional parks.

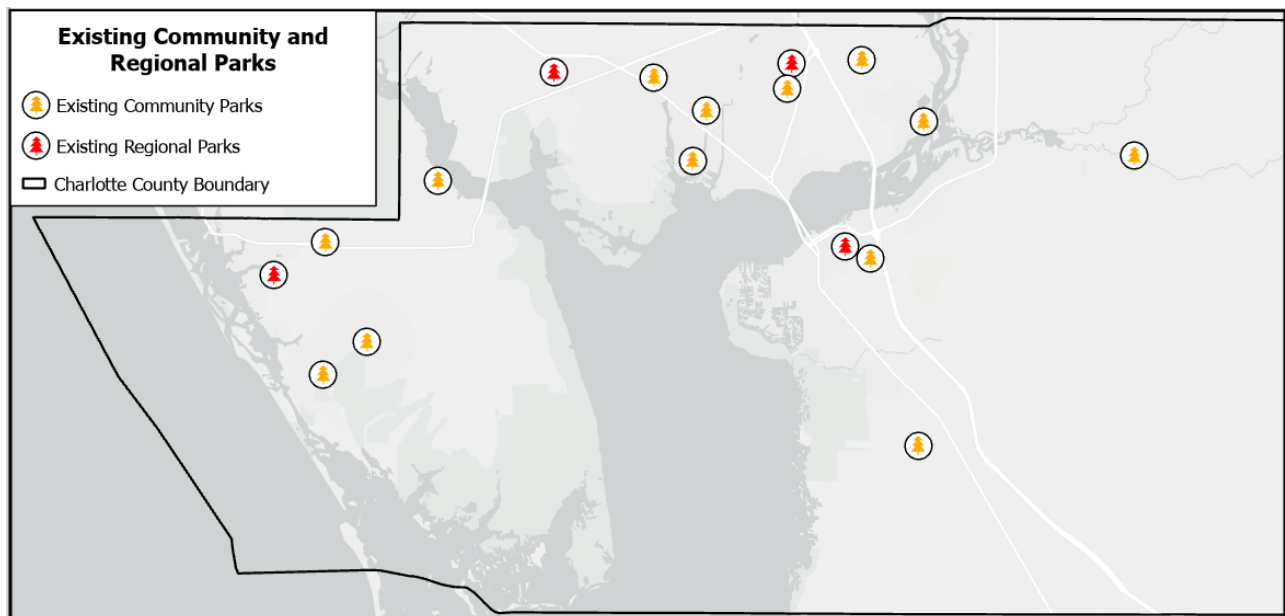


Figure 1: Existing Community and Regional Parks.

Population Growth

In 2023, Charlotte County retained MFM to develop the Charlotte Interactive Growth Model (CIGM). The purpose of developing the CIGM is to identify micro and macro development trends that are taking place in the County. The CIGM incorporated the very best available data including spatial demographics from the 2020 Census. The CIGM spatially models the County's land use changes over time. The purpose of studying the County's land uses is to measure the area's realistic growth potential and provide data for prioritizing capital improvements, transportation planning, future County facilities, and conducting long-range planning.

Table 1 below is the CIGM Population Forecast and shows the population growth in 5-year increments through 2050 and buildout (9995). By 2050, the population will have grown by nearly 125,000 residents.

Population Forecast								
	2024	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	9995
Charlotte County	212,424	219,571	251,879	283,184	308,337	327,309	341,086	493,020

Table 1: CIGM Population Forecast

The population to be served by Charlotte County consists of permanent residents and seasonal residents. Transient visitors were excluded from the population analysis. Seasonal residents are those who live in privately owned housing units for less than 180 days per year. Housing units for seasonal residents are derived from the 2020 Census block group data. The various park service radius was overlaid on the CIGM population data to estimate existing and future populations for each future park.

Methodology

This study relies upon the existing service radii for community and regional parks as described in the 2015-2050 Charlotte County Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update (p.40). To identify the served and underserved areas for community and regional parks, MFM analyzed populated areas adjacent to the existing service radius for both park classifications.

The service radius for community parks differs depending on the park's acreage. Community parks that have an acreage of less than 25 acres have a service radius of 1.5-miles. If the park is greater than 25 acres, the service radius is 3-miles. Regional parks that have an acreage size greater than 100 acres have a 10-mile service radius. If the park has fewer than 100 acres, then there is a 5-mile service radius.

According to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, in 2014 the measured Level of Service (LOS) was 1.57 acres per 1,000 residents. To simplify the analysis, future community parks are assumed to be 25 acres with a service radius of 1.5-miles. The community park service population is calculated as follows:

$$25 \text{ acres} / 1.57 \text{ acres} \times 1,000 \text{ people} = 15,924 \text{ people}$$

Future regional parks are assumed to be 80 or 100 acres with a service radius of 5 and 10-miles respectively. The regional park service populations are calculated as follows:

$$80 \text{ acres} / 1.57 \text{ acres} \times 1,000 \text{ people} = 50,955 \text{ people}$$

$$100 \text{ acres} / 1.57 \text{ acres} \times 1,000 \text{ people} = 63,694 \text{ people}$$

MFM examined parcels in the vacant land database to identify potential locations/parcels where future park facilities can be developed.

Analysis

Existing parks and their service radii were mapped. Then future community and regional parks were modeled in the underserved developing areas adjacent to the existing parks. Circles were created to represent the service areas for future parks.

Future community and regional park centroids were then placed on parcels found in the vacant land database. Permanent and seasonal population values for the years 2024, 2035, 2045, and buildout from the CIGM were aggregated and evaluated against the service area population thresholds. The future parks were then ranked in terms of priority according to the current and future population within their service areas.

Community Parks

Charlotte County's goal is to prioritize their existing and future community parks. In Figure 2 below, a map of the existing community parks and their coverage areas are shown. Community parks that have a size of less than 25 acres are indicated by a dark cyan coverage area. While community parks with a size greater than 25 acres are indicated by a green coverage area.

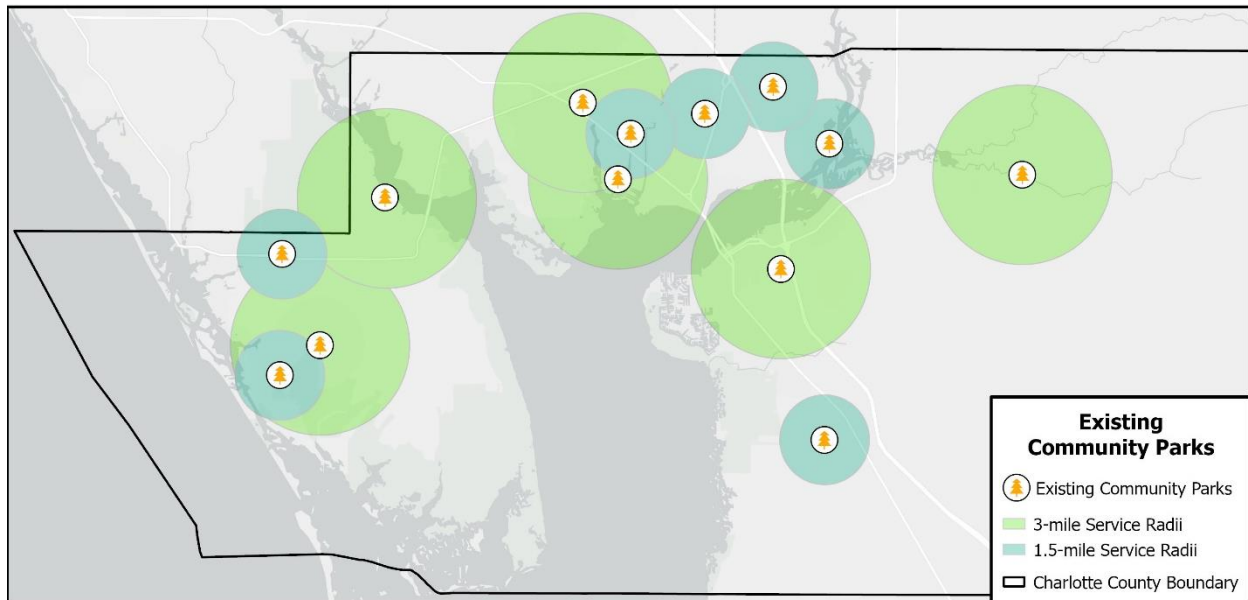


Figure 2: Existing Community Park Service Radii.

To locate potential Future Community (FC) parks, developing areas were evaluated by placing circles with a 1.5-mile radius on vacant parcels. In Figure 3 below future parks, indicated in blue, were placed outside of the existing community coverage areas (shown in dashed circles). FC parks are named using letters from A-L.

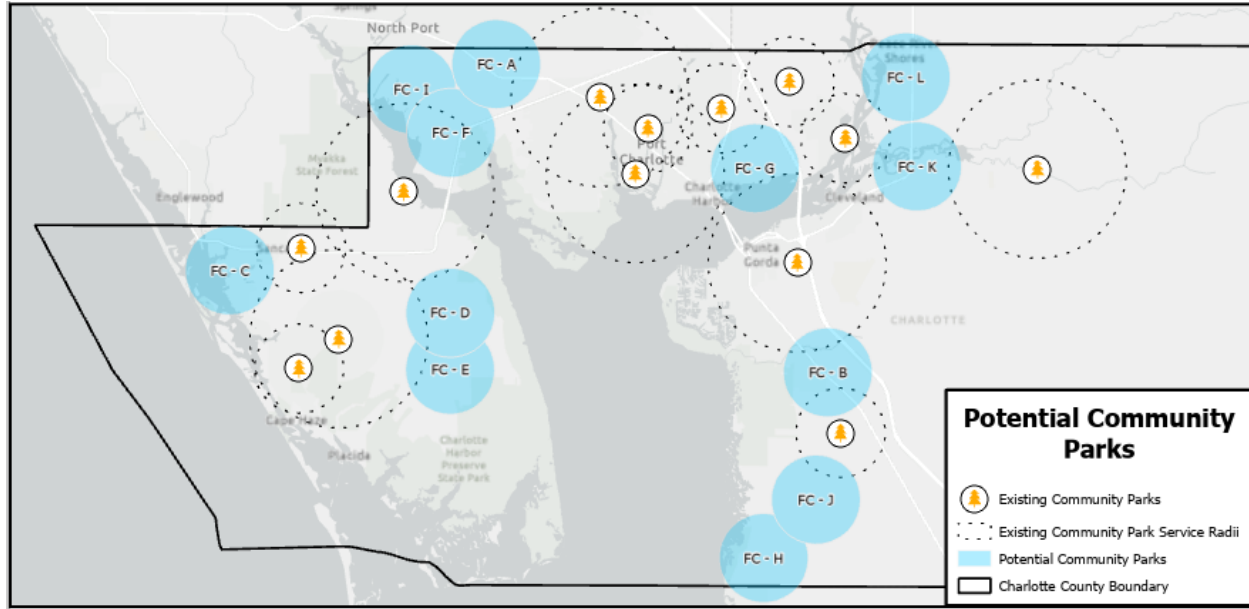


Figure 3: Potential Community Parks with Existing Park Service Radii.

The methodology for this study uses an idealized service population of 15,924 people for future community parks with a service radius of 1.5-miles. The permanent and seasonal populations for the years 2024, 2035, 2045, and buildout were used to evaluate each potential FC against the idealized service population.

In Table 2 below, the potential FC parks are ranked based on the existing and future populations of their respective service areas. The population of each service area for a given year is divided by the idealized service population to estimate the demand/need for a future community park. Each potential park is then ranked based on the population within the service area.

Potential Community Park	2024 Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand 2024	2035 Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand 2035	2045 Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand 2045	Buildout Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand Buildout	MFM Rank	Service Year Forecast
FC - A	6,272	39%	11,560	73%	13,661	86%	19,200	121%	1	2030
FC - B	8,300	52%	12,309	77%	14,407	90%	17,002	107%	2	2030
FC - C	9,906	62%	11,307	71%	12,150	76%	13,488	85%	3	2035
FC - D	4,491	28%	6,133	39%	7,517	47%	11,543	72%	4	2040
FC - E	4,806	30%	6,442	40%	8,118	51%	25,944	163%	5	2045
FC - F	5,590	35%	6,742	42%	8,162	51%	16,892	106%	6	2045
FC - G	6,030	38%	6,909	43%	7,391	46%	9,770	61%	7	2045
FC - H	2,798	18%	4,844	30%	6,517	41%	10,357	65%	8	2045
FC - I	2,415	15%	3,371	21%	4,468	28%	17,513	110%	9	Future
FC - J	2,854	18%	5,478	34%	7,204	45%	7,593	48%	10	Future
FC - K	5,061	32%	5,779	36%	6,283	39%	7,604	48%	11	Future
FC - L	1,724	11%	2,099	13%	2,472	16%	5,631	35%	12	Future

Table 2: Potential Community Park Ranking.

The ranking process began with reviewing the 2024, 2035, 2045, and buildout demands for Community Parks (CP). Note some of the potential future parks will have less than half of the service population within their service areas at buildout (e.g. FC – L has only 36% of the service population at buildout and is therefore a low priority). Ultimately the FC parks were ranked in priority from one through twelve. The top eight ranked parks should be prioritized since these parks have a faster population growth rate over time.

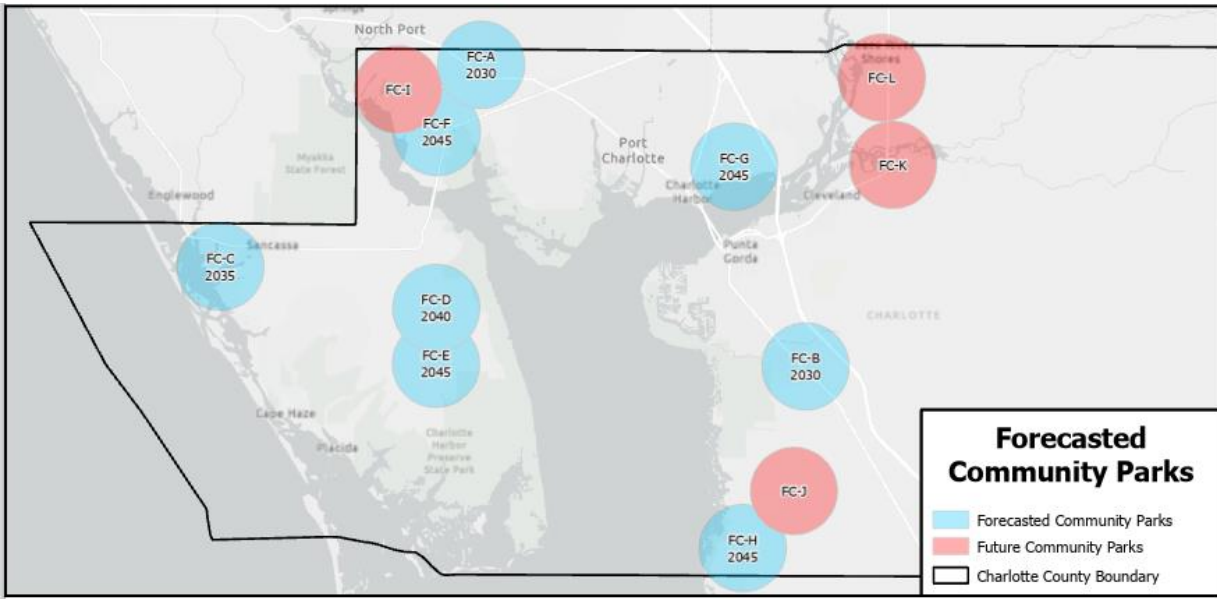


Figure 4: MFM Forecasted and Future Community Park.

Figure 4 above is a map of the Service Year Forecast from Table 2 above. FC parks with a blue circle are considered a top priority and have their respective service year under the park name. Parks with a red circle are low priority. In Figure 5 below we see the eight priority parks and their relationship with the existing community parks.

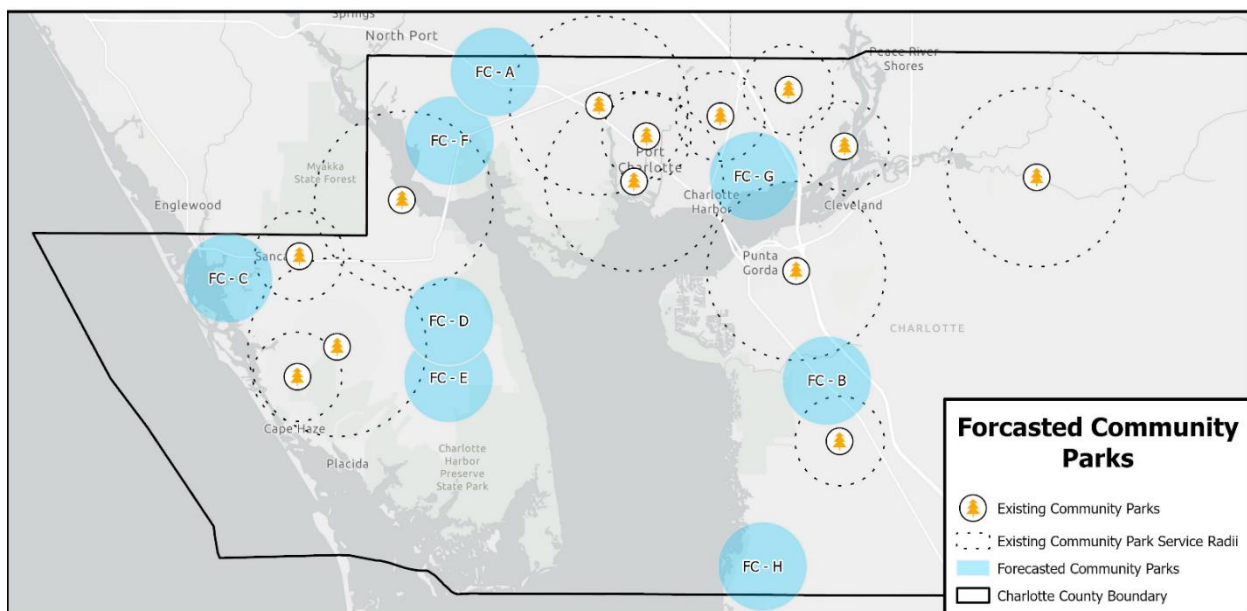


Figure 5: The Forecasted Community Parks through 2050 with the Existing Park Coverage Area.

Regional Parks

Charlotte County's goal for regional parks is to serve the remainder of underserved areas that the existing and future community parks could not cover. In Figure 6 below, a map of the existing regional parks and their coverage areas are shown. Regional parks with an acreage greater than 100 acres are indicated in magenta. If the regional parks have fewer than 100 acres, then the park is indicated in purple.

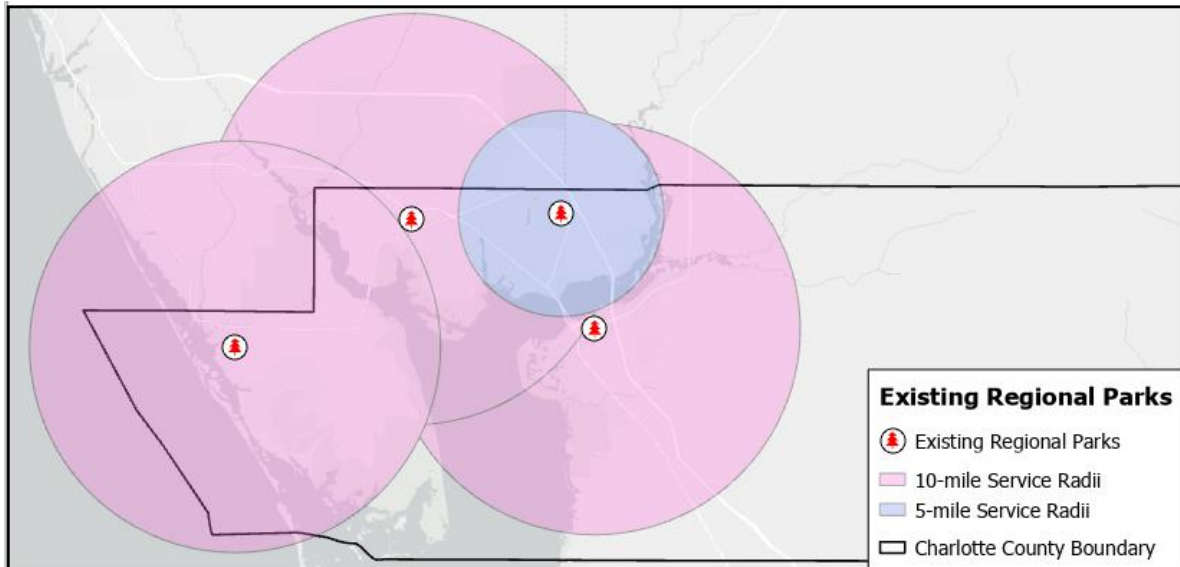


Figure 6: Existing Regional Park Service Radii.

To locate Future Regional (FR) parks, developing areas were evaluated by placing circles with a 5-mile radius on vacant parcels that have an acreage of 80 acres or a 10-mile radius on vacant parcels that have an acreage of 100 acres or more. In Figure 7 below, FR - A has a 5-mile coverage area while FR - B has a 10-mile coverage area. Both future regional parks are on vacant parcels that are privately owned and are indicated by a yellow circle.

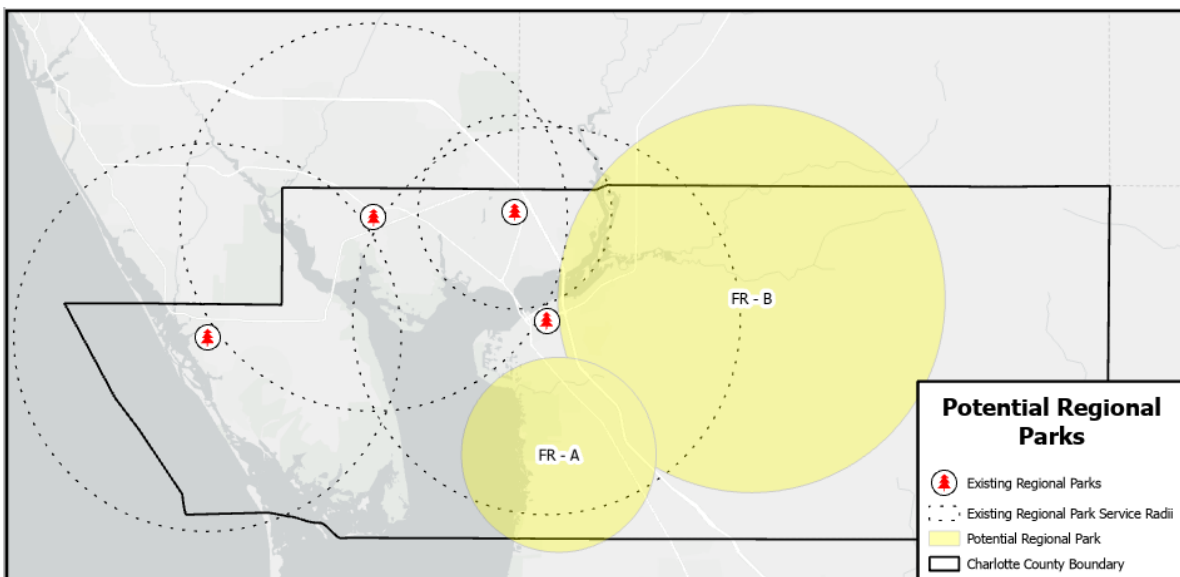


Figure 7: Potential Regional Parks with Existing Park Service Radii.

In the methodology for this study, regional parks use two different idealized service populations. Future regional parks less than 100 acres, the service population is 50,955 people with a service radius of 5-miles. Future parks 100 acres or larger have a service population of 63,694 people with a service radius of 10-miles. The permanent and seasonal populations for the years 2024, 2035, 2045, and buildout were used to evaluate each potential FR against the idealized service population.

In Table 3 below, potential FR parks were also ranked based on the existing and future populations of their respective service areas. Using the same method to estimate the demand for a future community park, each potential regional park was then ranked on the population within the service areas. Future Regional Park A (FR - A) is clearly the highest priority based on existing and buildout populations.

Potential Regional Park	2024 Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand 2024	2035 Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand 2035	2045 Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand 2045	Buildout Permanent & Seasonal Population	CP Demand Buildout	MFM Rank	Forecasted Service Year
FR - A (80 acres)	21,601	42%	34,441	68%	44,943	88%	67,949	133%	1	2030
FR - B (100 acres)	17,726	28%	22,152	35%	26,529	42%	44,266	69%	2	Future

Table 3: MFM Potential Regional Park Ranking.

Findings

This study is based on a Parks and Recreation Level of Service (LOS) of 1.57 acres per 1,000 residents. Charlotte County's LOS goals in the 2015-2050 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update should be reassessed based on available park lands and the County's ability to operate and maintain existing and future parks.

Charlotte County's population is anticipated to grow by 125,000 new residents by 2050. Based on the 1.57 acres per 1,000 residents, approximately 196 acres of new park land will be needed to maintain the LOS in 2050. By 2050, eight new community parks and one new regional park are recommended to serve Charlotte County residents and visitors. These nine new parks will improve the existing Level of Service.

Charlotte County Parks and Recreation owns very few parcels that can accommodate a future community (+/- 25 acres) or regional park (+/- 100 acres). County-owned parcels that are large enough for future community parks may not be ideally located to maximize the service population. Of the nine forecasted new parks, only one of them (FC – F) is recommended on a parcel dedicated for Parks and Recreation. The Charlotte County School Board owns vacant parcels for future schools. There may be an opportunity to co-locate and incorporate future community parks on some of these sites. However, it is a near certainty that most future community and regional parks will be developed on parcels that are currently privately owned.

Recommendations

- Identify vacant parcels where future parks are needed and purchase the land.
- Consider trading or selling county-owned vacant parcels to offset acquisition costs of more suitable locations for future parks. Some county-owned parcels may be suitable for development as multifamily projects and could be sold to developers at a premium to enhance funding for future parks.
- Plan and budget for increased operations and maintenance (O&M) costs as new parks are developed and opened.
- Reassess the Parks and Recreation LOS acres and population standards and update the master plan.

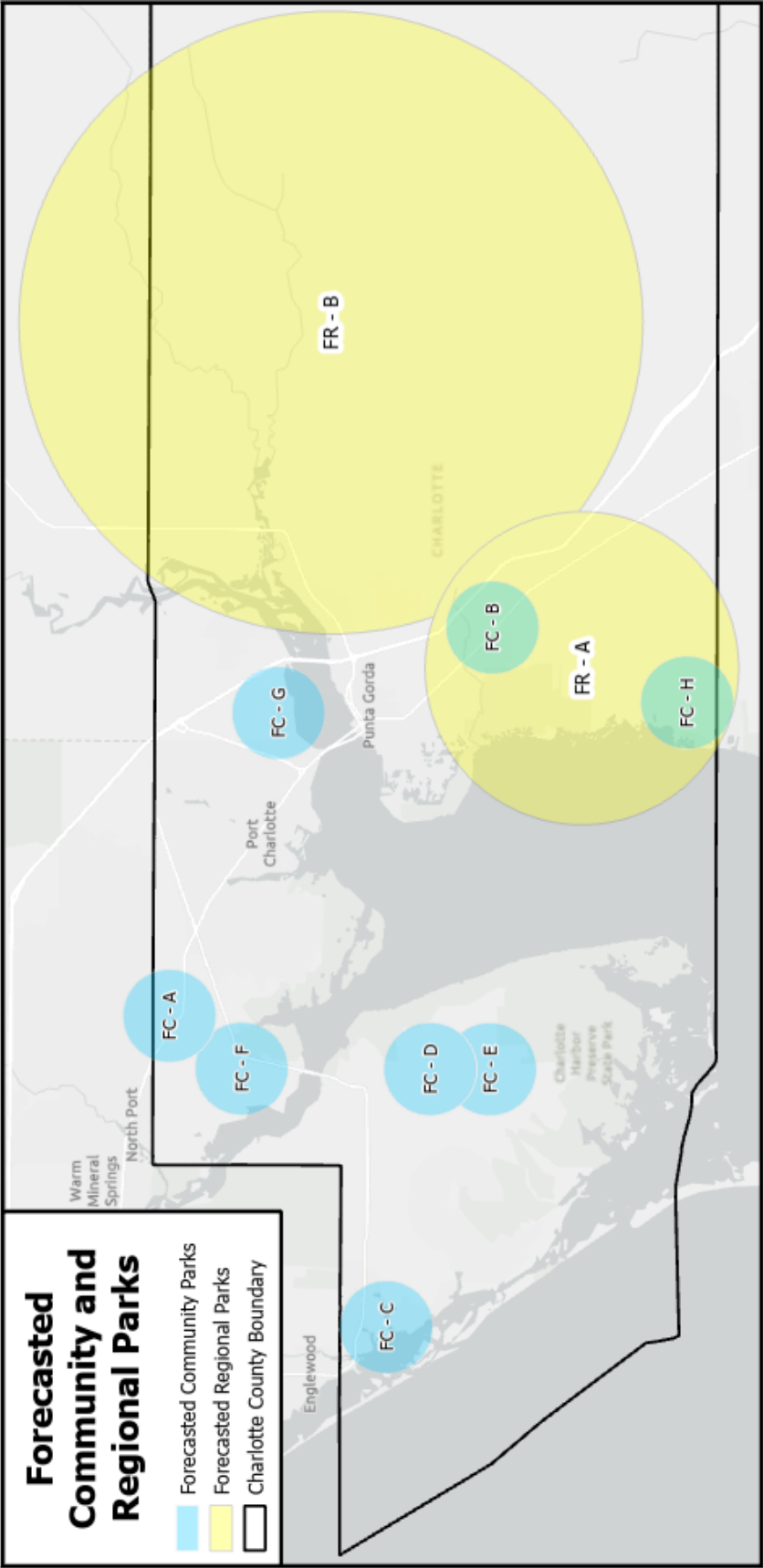


Figure 8: Forecasted Community and Regional Parks.

Service Year	Forecast Community Park (FC)	FC Acres	Forecast Regional Park (FR)	FR Acres
2030	FC - A	25	FR - A	80
2030	FC - B	25		
2035	FC - C	25		
2040	FC - D	25		
2045	FC - E	25		
2045	FC - F	25		
2045	FC - G	25		
2045	FC - H	25		
Total		200		80

Table 4: Forecasted Community and Regional Park Service Years and Acreage Requirements.