

# Dallas White Park - Master Plan

Final Report

*City of Northport, Florida*

April 2008



**Architects Design Group, Inc.**  
*Winter Park • Fort Myers, Florida*







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AAC001197

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April 23, 2008

**Marcelo A. Ranalli, P.E.**  
**Project Coordinator**  
**City of North Port**

**RE: Comprehensive Facility Study and Master Plan**  
**City of North Port, Florida**  
**ADG Project No. 775-06 / 1.2**

Dear Mr. Ranalli:

In accordance with the City/Architect Agreement, Architects Design Group, Inc. has prepared a site evaluation and Conceptual Master Plan for the City of North Port Dallas White Park. The process implemented to create the Master Plan included investigation of existing park facilities, interviews with current service providers, studies of alternate thematic park scenarios, review with City Staff, and presentation of preliminary findings to the City Commission. This document incorporates the comments received at the City Commission meeting on March 11, 2008 and is intended to serve the city as a framework for redevelopment of the Dallas White Park facilities. This Submittal concludes the Dallas White Park Master Plan phase of this project.

**1. PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

The Conceptual Master Plan is the result of a cooperative effort between ADG, the North Port City Commission, the City Manager and Department Staff to enhance and contribute to the City's evolving park system. The plan recognizes the need for active response to the City's continued population growth and changing demographics. The Dallas White Park Master Plan is Phase One in a two-phase project, which will provide the City with a comprehensive analysis of future facility space requirements resulting from recent, and future projection of, dramatic population growth. Phase One is an evaluation of Dallas White Park's existing facilities and community programs, resulting in a Master Plan for the Park's future development.

The initial master planning activities began by assembling the list of "stakeholders" providing services at the park. Meetings were conducted with the stakeholders for the purpose of beginning to understand the inter-relationship of activities and to begin the process of visualizing what the park should become. Tasks then included an inventory of existing site conditions and the collection of site data relevant to the redevelopment of the park. The inventory investigated environmental conditions, site features, and site context. The information was generated through review of aerial photographs, on-site reconnaissance, reviews of existing property information, historical records and previous site studies. The Final Master Plan identifies areas and features to be included within the park and illustrates a layout based on design relationships of the various features and suggestions from stakeholders involved in the process.

**2. COMMUNITY ANALYSIS AND INFLUENCES**

Dallas White Park is located on the northwest edge of the City, approximately .25 miles north of US Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail) on the east side of North Port Boulevard. The overall site area is approximately 19.20 acres. Coco Plum Canal defines the park's southern boundary, and later connects west to the Myakka River system. The north and east edges abut both single and multi-family residential developments. On the west side of North Port Boulevard, adjacent to the site, is the City's skate park and a water treatment plant.

Dallas White Park is the remnant of the City of North Port's original Municipal Complex, now centrally located along Sumter Boulevard. Several pre-engineered steel buildings were constructed for municipal services starting around 1970, and included the City Hall, Police, and Fire Department along with various other organizations. Still remaining are the "old" planning facility building, the Al Goll Center, and Fire Station 82. A new fire station, replacing the current pre-engineered building, is planned for the northeast corner-made available through the demolition of the old municipal buildings.



More extensively, Dallas White Park is part of a network of City parks, located throughout the older portion of the City of North Port. Each park provides diverse, yet complimentary activities, including softball, baseball, basketball, shuffleboard, playgrounds, and passive and picnic areas, amongst others. Beyond the park system, the North Port Health and Family Services Center offers social services, geared towards special needs adults, teens and children, a counseling program, pediatric clinic, and childhood immunization.

**3. EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS AND CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Though no longer the City's Municipal Center, Dallas White Park is home to diverse and distinct community-oriented programs- the Charlotte County YMCA (Al Goll Center) and Aquatic Center, the YMCA Scout House, the North Port Art Guild ("old" planning building), and the aforementioned Fire Station 82. A series of interviews and on-site tours were used to assess the current use of the facilities and to further project potential park enhancements as well as envision long range planning goals. A separate task included a Facility Assessment for potential re-use of the existing Fire Station 82, which concluded the existing pre-engineered steel building should be demolished to enhance the park's canal-front activities.

The activities associated with the YMCA are currently an integral aspect of the Park. A Capital Campaign is being conducted by the YMCA based on the premise that its main facilities would better serve the community at a more geographically-centered site. A site has been acquired by the YMCA near the intersection of West Price and Toledo Blade Boulevard. However, the YMCA is committed to providing services at the Dallas White Park, establishing this site as an important satellite location.

**4. EXPLORING IDEAS AND PARK CONSIDERATIONS**

The conceptualization of the Park is based on the understanding of Dallas White Park's history - its municipal-oriented origins, recognizing its physical location within the community, and foreseeing its role in the City's future development. Four transitional zones currently organize the park:

- (1) **The Semi-active, municipal zone**, which includes the New Fire Station 82, on-site parking, and the YMCA, the Aquatic Center and community activity buildings;
- (2) **The Primary-active, waterfront zone**, which incorporates sports courts, boat-launch, and canal-side boardwalk;
- (3) **The Passive, parks and recreation zone**, which is dominated by a multi-use field; and
- (4) **The Active-passive, transitional zone**, which includes a foot path, fitness trail, and picnic areas.

The conclusion recommends these areas be enhanced with future facilities that provide semi-active community recreation opportunities.

A dog park and teen center were among early considerations, though were concluded to be better situated elsewhere within the city. Ultimately, through design-charrettes with elected City Officials and Staff, it was concluded that the Park's focus should be towards the canal-front. Though maintaining aspects of an active park- Aquatic Center, boat launch, and volleyball, shuffleboard and horseshoe courts- it would enhance the shift towards predominately semi-active recreational opportunities.

**5. HYDROLOGY (WATER WORKS) PARK**

Florida has a unique and, complex hydrological system- ranging from uplands, to sinks and springs, to lowlands, grasslands and wetlands. Indigenous flora is similarly as diverse, from the pine forests to scrubland to cypress swamps and mangroves. The City of North Port has embraced a mission to become a sustainable, "green" community as population growth continues. With its location along the Coco Plum Canal, Dallas White Park has the opportunity to become more than a traditional neighborhood/community park. It has the opportunity to enhance the City's mission through the integration of architectural interpretation of Florida's natural hydrology- landforms, water features and native plants- with sustainable design techniques. The park thus becomes not only a place of leisure and recreation, but a firsthand, interpretive learning *experience*. The Park is planned to be implemented in a three phase approach, mitigating costs and allowing park usage during each phase:

- Phase I:** Includes the demolition of the old Fire Station 82, miscellaneous structures associated with the YMCA and Aquatic Center, the tennis courts and softball field, existing parking, and the current boat launch ramp. The ramp is planned to be relocated farther West, closer to North Port Boulevard. Its size will be limited, encouraging low-impact water usage, primarily kayaks and canoes. In place of the old fire station, stabilized grade parking will provide a boat-staging area, yet simultaneously allow groundwater recharge. Volleyball, shuffleboard, and horseshoe courts are located just east of the boat launch. New landscaping, paths and trails, and a boardwalk along the canal-front are also planned, as is a new children's splash park adjacent to the current pool. Street-scaping is planned to both the north and west, linking the site visually and physically to the neighboring skate park and residential developments.
- Phase II:** Begins the introduction of new structures to the Park. A new Observation Tower will anchor the east end of the Central Promenade. The existing pool house and scout house will be demolished, and in their place a new building, containing pool lockers, restrooms, and a Community Center/Meeting Space will be built.
- Phase III:** The Al Goll Center will be demolished. The fitness center will be relocated within the Phase II building and an enhanced Community Environmental Interpretation Center within a new building, programmatically complimented by an Environmental Demonstration Center. Furthermore, a new pool is proposed to replace the old aquatic facilities.

6. **CONCLUSION**

It is recommended that the City of North Port adopt the Hydrology Park Concept and implement the three phase approach as funding becomes available. Priority should be placed on demolishing the old Fire Station 82, relocating the boat launch ramp, and introducing an interactive display area that presents the long-range vision of the Dallas White Park Master Plan.

This report is respectfully submitted for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**Kevin Ratigan, AIA**  
**Senior Vice President**



City of North Port  
Dallas White Park Master Plan  
Final Report- April 2008



**Project Stakeholders**

- Charlotte County Family YMCA  
Paul Versnich/CEO  
Michael Bostwick/COO  
Winnie Shoemaker/North Port Branch Manager
- North Port Art Guild  
Steve & Janie Atter/Co-Presidents
- Sarasota County  
Jack Colligan/Manager-Parks and Recreation
- CHAT-Community Health Action Team  
Kelli Chidester  
Monica Becket  
Carla Pawich  
Diane Ramseyer
- Youth Opportunities Advisory Board  
Julie Bellia/Staff Liaison
- City of North Port Parks and Recreation  
Bill Ward/Manager
- City Commission (Dallas White Park Area)  
Fred E. Tower III/Commissioner,  
Vice Chairman

North Port – Project Coordinator  
Marcelo A. Ranalli, P.E.

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## **PREFACE**

Incorporated in June 1959, the City of North Port is an emerging community that in many aspects reflects the changing demographics of the State of Florida. The City occupies 103 square miles of southeast Sarasota County. It is one of the largest Florida cities in land area but is only 10 percent populated. The City's population for 2006 was estimated at 47,770 people. Total build-out of the City is expected to be in excess of 200,000 population. The median age has dropped from 49 to 41 in ten years, due in part to the area's excellent school system. The City's Comprehensive Plan, updated in 1997 established a goal of achieving a healthy balance of commercial, residential and industrial land use. A mature, vibrant system of parks and open-space is a critical element necessary to establishing the quality of life the community seeks.

The City was initially established on the US-41 corridor between Sarasota and Ft. Myers. A popular post-WWII tourist destination, Warm Mineral Springs is located just west on US-41 from where the center of City Government was originally located. Dallas White Park is the remnant of this old Municipal Complex that has since been relocated close to the geographic center of the City. Several pre-engineered steel buildings were constructed on the Dallas White Park location starting around 1970. The buildings that housed Police and City Hall staff have since been demolished. An existing fire station remains along with the "old" planning facility building and the Al Goll Center. A new fire station, replacing the one currently on-site, is planned for the northeast corner of the site that was cleared with the demolition of the old municipal buildings. The challenge is to create a vision for the park that addresses the needs of multiple stakeholders. The property is a significant community asset. It is however doubtful that this should become the City's "signature" park. The overall land area is somewhat limited and the location is not central to the overall development pattern of the City.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The initial master planning activities began by assembling the list of "stakeholders" using the park. Meetings were conducted with the stakeholders for the purpose of beginning to understand the inter-relationship of activities and to begin the "visioning" process of what the park should become. The following entities have been interviewed:

- Charlotte County family YMCA
- North Port Art Guild
- Sarasota County Parks and Recreation
- CHAT – Community Health Action Team
- Youth Opportunities Advisory Board
- City of North Port Parks and Recreation

Currently, the Park's activity areas are maintained and operated by Sarasota County per a City/County Interlocal Agreement initiated in 1993 and most recently executed in June 2006 for a term of 10 years with a 5 year automatic renewal. The County maintains and operates the softball field and volleyball courts. The City maintains a children's playground and tennis courts. Sarasota County, in turn, has entered into a Facilities Management Agreement with Charlotte County Family YMCA for use of the Al Goll Center, the "Scout" House and the North Port City Pool. The YMCA operates an aquatics and fitness centers at these facilities. The North Port Art Guild has recently entered into a 5 year contract with the City to use the "Old" Planning Facility Building for an Art Center. The Art Guild's long range plan is to create a place of community focus for the arts. Finally, a small boat launch ramp, also maintained by the County, is on the Coco Plum Canal that creates the south edge of the site. All the facilities at the Park, with the exception of the softball field were being utilized during visits to analyze the existing conditions.

The next step in the master planning process was an inventory of existing site conditions and the collection of site data relevant to the development of the park. The inventory investigated environmental conditions, site features, and site context including the creation of a site plan illustrating the current facilities and site layout. Site access, surrounding pedestrian and vehicular routes, adjacent uses and surrounding land-use patterns are also documented. The information was generated through review of aerial photographs, on-site reconnaissance, reviews of existing property information, historical records, and previous site studies.



### COMMUNITY INFLUENCES

The City of North Port is primarily a single family home community for a young population, relative to the overall demographics of Florida. The City has grown rapidly in the past twenty years and has worked hard to create institutions that reflect the nature of the community. As mentioned earlier, the Municipal Complex has recently developed new facilities near the City's geographic center at North Sumter/West Price Blvd. Farther west on Price Blvd. is Butler Park and the High School and Middle School complex. Tamiami Trail (US 41) is the largest thoroughfare and continues to grow with new commercial development. The City's Library (Sarasota County System) is located near Dallas White Park, to the southwest on Tamiami Trail. The North Port Health and Family Services Center is located to the northeast of Dallas White Park on Pan American Drive. All of these facilities play an important role in creating the sense community. The plan for Dallas White Park should compliment the community services provided by these facilities.

**The New Municipal Complex** (City Center Blvd.) has recently been completed with City Hall and Police Station buildings. The main Fire Station is located here along with the Mullens Center. The complex provides the focus for municipal government and services. Undeveloped land at the center will allow for future expansion as the City continues to grow. The Mullens Center serves several recreational activities including a gymnasium, classrooms, weight room, restrooms/lockers/showers, a kitchen and offices for parks personnel.

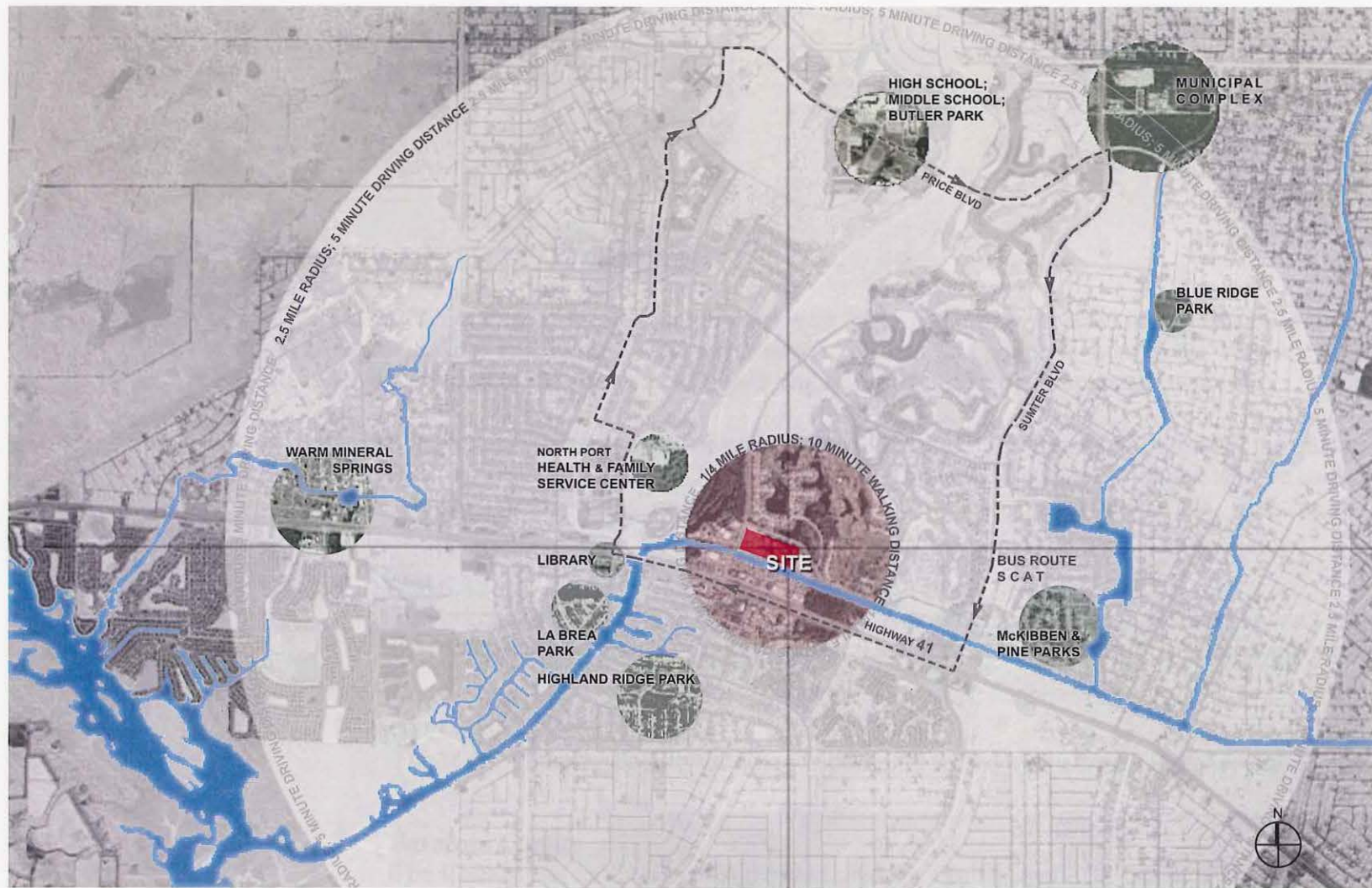
**North Port High School and Middle School** located west of the City Center on W. Price Blvd. is the largest Sarasota County educational complex. In addition to class rooms, educational resources and athletic fields, the high school provides a facility for the North Port Performing Arts Center. The center has 1023 Seats, was opened for the public in December 2001 and is the second largest theatre in Sarasota County.

Among the elements that have been discussed for the further development of Dallas White Park is a TEEN Center. Public transportation (bus route) or adjacency to the High School/Middle School is an important consideration to the long term viability of teen activities. Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) does serve the North Port Community however the bus route does not pass the Dallas White site. Bus traffic makes a loop of the Community, with the area of Price and Sumter Blvd. being the primary intersection.

**Butler Park and Narramore Park** are located just west of the educational complex on west Price Blvd. Butler Park is a significant natural preserve providing many passive recreational opportunities for city residents. Narramore Park is located further west off W. Price Blvd. at Narramore St./Glenallen Blvd. This park provides baseball fields and other active recreation opportunities.

**North Port Health and Family Services Center** a facility operated by the Sarasota County Health Department. The Health and Family Services Center provides a clinic for health/human services geared toward the special needs adults, children and teens. In addition to family services, the facility provides counseling, adult and pediatric clinics and childhood immunization. The facility is located at 6950 Pan American Drive.





CITY HALL



MULLENS CENTER



POLICE HEADQUARTERS



HISTORIC MINERAL SPRINGS MOTEL



LOCAL RESIDENCES



WARM MINERAL SPRINGS

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Location Analysis**  
*Final Report April.2008*



### **EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

Dallas White Park is located on the northwest edge of the City, approximately .25 miles north of US Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail) on the east side of North Port Blvd. The overall site area is approximately 19.20 acres. The south edge is a canal that connects west to the Myakka River system. The north and east edges abutt residential developments. The west side of North Port Blvd., adjacent to the site, is a skate park and water treatment plant operated by the City.

Dallas White Park has multiple users and agencies operating programs. Originally, the site was the location for City government facilities that have been moved to a new Municipal Center on North Sumter Blvd. just north of West Price Blvd. The new Municipal Complex is more central to the City limits. One of the remaining municipal facilities is Fire Station 82 that is scheduled to be vacated to a new building, to be constructed on the northwest corner of the site. The former City Hall buildings have been demolished to create the site area for new Fire Station 82.

- **YMCA**

The primary activity at The Park is the YMCA programs. Aquatics uses the pool and an office, restrooms and lockers facility on the north side. The Al Goll Center building is operated by the YMCA and serves as a Fitness Center. Lastly, the "Scout House" building is operated by the YMCA for various programs including summer day camp.

- **Art Guild**

The "Old" Planning Facility Building is currently leased by the North Port Art Guild. The building is being refurbished by the Art Guild and provides space for exhibits and classes.

- **Sarasota County**

The County has an Interlocal Agreement, which expires April 26, 2010, with the City to maintain and operate parks. At Dallas White, the facilities managed by the YMCA are under a separate management agreement between The County and The YMCA. The County maintains and operates the softball and volleyball fields on the site. The City of North Port Parks and Recreation maintains the balance of the facilities.

### **DALLAS WHITE PARK CONTEXT AND SITE INVENTORY**

The following site plan and photos present an inventory of the site itself and surrounding areas. At the time North Port was incorporated as a City, development was primarily along the Tamiami Trail (US 41) linking Sarasota to the North and Fort Myers to the South. The major natural environmental feature of the region is the Myakka River, which flows from the northeast into Charlotte Harbor to the southwest. A slough that appears to be a contributory to the Myakka River flows from the north along the west edge of the general area. Development in this area consists mostly of dispersed, multi-family condominium housing and the Sabal Trace single family development, north of Greenwood Ave. Commercial development continues along the Tamiami Trail. Single family residences occupy a one-block area opposite the Coco Plum Canal, running along the south edge of the park.

The slough is a major geographic element, affecting City development in the area. On the west side of North Port Blvd. is a City-operated Skate Park co-located with a water treatment plant. The slough is immediately west of the skate park/water treatment plant. Access across the slough from North Port Blvd. is located farther north, at Appomattox Dr. Neither roads are major thoroughfares; the site is somewhat isolated and hence, will not become a major destination in the North Port Park System. The major north/south thoroughfare is Sumter Blvd. A little less than one mile to the west, Pan American Blvd. is another north/south route that terminates at Butler Park, a major City green space that is a center of recreational activity in conjunction with the neighboring High School and Middle School.

**SITE INVENTORY**

Currently the site has the following facilities and uses:

YMCA – North Port Branch

- Aquatics Center
- Fitness Center ( Al Goll Center )
- Scout House
- Storage Buildings

Sarasota County Parks and Recreation

- Softball Field
- Volleyball Courts
- Fitness Trail
- Storage/Restroom Buildings

City of North Port

- Fire Station No. 82
- Tennis Courts (2)
- Children's Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Small Boat Ramp
- Skate Park (west of North Port Blvd.)

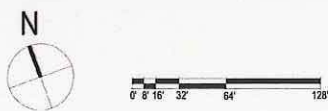
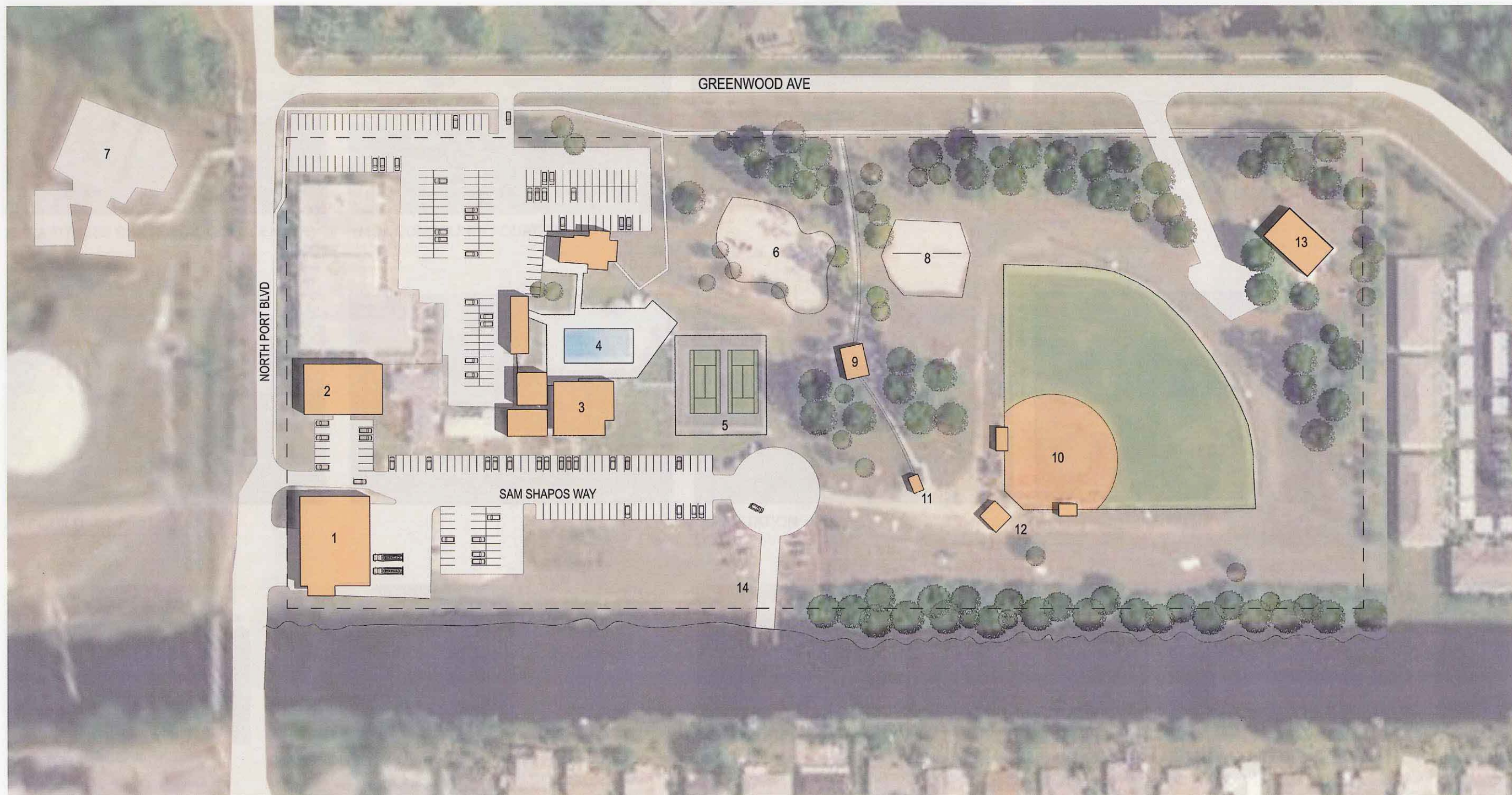
North Port Art Guild

- Old Planning Building

Parking

- Scattered Throughout





LEGEND			
1	FIRE STATION 82	11	RESTROOMS
2	ART GUILD	12	MAINTENANCE
3	YMCA (AL GOLL CENTER)	13	YMCA (SCOUT BUILDING)
4	YMCA AQUATIC CENTER	14	BOAT LAUNCH
5	TENNIS COURTS		
6	CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND		
7	SKATE PARK		
8	VOLLEYBALL COURTS		
9	SHELTER		
10	SOFTBALL FIELD		

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Existing Site Conditions**  
*Final Report April.2008*







YMCA FITNESS CENTER (AL GOLL CENTER)



YMCA COMPOUND-AQUATICS



ART GUILD



FIRE STATION



SCOUT CENTER (YMCA)



SHELTER



PLAYGROUND



SKATE PARK



TENNIS COURTS



SOFTBALL FIELD



BOAT LAUNCH

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Existing Site Conditions**  
*Final Report April.2008*



### **CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

A series of interviews were conducted with the current Dallas White Park stakeholders for the purpose of understanding the site's present use, potential enhancements to current operations, and envisioning what the park could become to serve the long range plans of each group. The stakeholders each expressed a strong commitment to the North Port Community and are pleased that the park is available to enhance their goals and objectives. Each group also expressed a positive attitude regarding the synergies possible with multiple users and activities on the site. There is however, an over-riding concern that as the City grows, the needs of each group will be difficult to accommodate by co-locating with limited, available site area at the park. The visioning process will focus on how best to expand the services available to the overall community with an acute appraisal of how the Dallas White site will support the organizations' long term goals and objectives.

The following narrative outlines the current understanding of each organization and identifies opportunities and constraints of long term use of the park.

### **CHARLOTTE COUNTY FAMILY YMCA**

The YMCA is the largest on-site user, maintaining and operating the Aquatics Center and a Fitness Center. Additional, programs are run out of the Scout House. Generally these activities are traditional "Y" programs including:

- Fitness Instruction and Oversight
- Aerobic Programs and classes
- Child-Watch (limited space available)
- Wellness Counseling
- Aquatics

Since July 2005 the North Port Family YMCA has provided these activities partnering with the City of North Port and Sarasota County Parks and Recreation Department. The intent of the progress is to reach people of all races, gender, age, income level and faiths. The YMCA has conducted research into the needs of the North Port community and concluded that expanding facilities and programs is necessary to fulfill the organizations commitment. A Capital Campaign will be initiated to raise funds to implement the programs. The focus of the Capital Campaign will be a central full-service facility located on donated land off of Toledo Blade Boulevard.

A Market Research Study for the YMCA was conducted by Winfield Consulting Group, Inc. and a report was issued in August 2004. The conclusion of the report is that demand exists for a central, full-service facility and a "Y-express Facility" within the community. The strongest demand is for adult fitness programs, organized around;

- Cardiovascular Training
- Free-Weights/Strength Training
- Stress Reduction/Aerobics Studio
- Indoor Swimming Pool-Aquatics



Regarding wellness programs, the highest interest was expressed for:

- Sauna/Steam Bath/Whirlpool Facilities
- Massage Therapy
- Exercise/Weight Management Classes

It was further determined that moderate interest was present for Indoor Sports/Gymnasium facilities. And although relatively low-interest was found for Child Care Programs, there was a high-interest expressed for Fitness and Recreation Activities directed toward the City Teen Population.

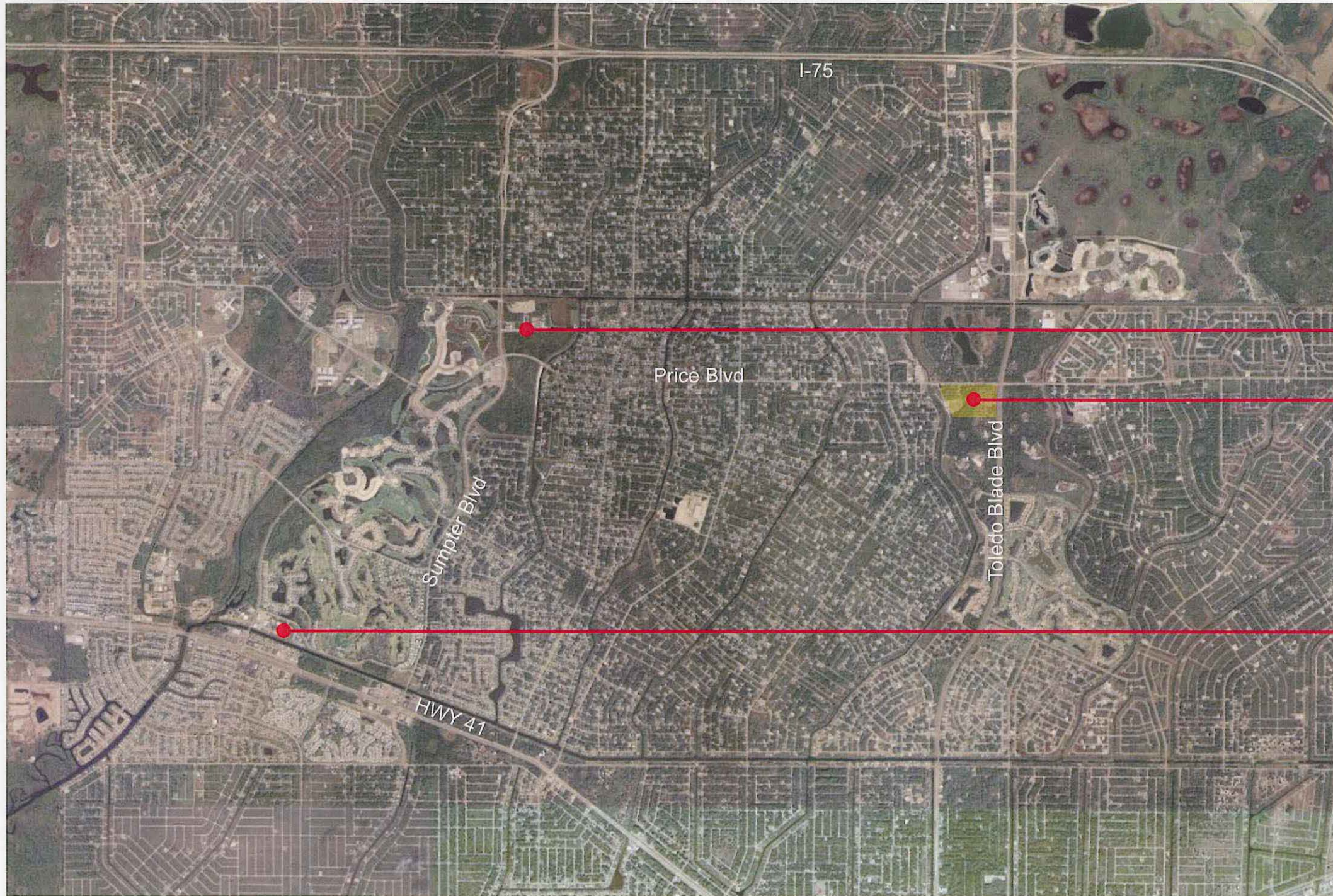
The Dallas White Park facilities were concluded to not be the basis for the Capital Campaign and the Park can best serve the YMCA Community as the Draft "Y-express" phase one program. The greatest needs are:

1. Provide facilities for Teen Programs.
  - Currently Scheduled to occupy space vacated by the clothes closet adjacent to the Al Goll Center.
2. Acquire more space to conduct Aerobic and Fitness Classes.
3. Provide additional facilities for:
  - Outdoor Ropes and Climbing Wall  
(ages 10-17)
  - Outdoor soccer League  
(ages 3-5 / 10-17)

The YMCA has initiated a grant request to provide funding for establishing a structured Teen Center. The facility would provide "drop-in" after school programs and be available for Friday evening programs and events organized around the existing aquatics facility.

The YMCA has expressed interest in acquiring the old Fire Station 82 when the new facility is completed. The YMCA questioned if the apparatus bays can be retrofitted as a multipurpose fitness space conducive to group classes. The kitchen and dayroom spaces might support a wide variety of potential community activities. The crew quarters might be renovated to become a Teen Center although the location is not conducive to long term community needs. However, the subsequent facilities assessment of the old Fire Station 82, completed in October 2007, concluded that the cost to adaptively re-use the building for community activities is not a cost effective strategy. The architects recommendation is that the building should be demolished after relocation of the fire-rescue operations.





- MUNICIPAL COMPLEX, City Center
- TOLEDO & PRICE, Proposed New YMCA
- DALLAS WHITE PARK, Site with Existing YMCA

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Charlotte County Family YMCA Capital Campaign**  
*Final Report April, 2008*





### **NORTH PORT ART GUILD**

The City of North Port Art Guild is an organization established approximately 18 years ago for the purpose of promoting artistic endeavors of the community. Similar programs have prospered in the adjacent communities of Englewood and Venice. The Art Guild started by conducting meetings and classes where space could be made available. Exhibits of community art work were shown in public spaces like Bank Lobbies, the Library and City Hall. Meetings were often held once per month at the Library and the 12-member Board of Directors meets once per month.

The City recently made available to the Art Guild the "Old Planning Department Building" at Dallas White Park. The agreement with the City is for a term of five years. The building is being adaptively re-used with only cosmetic improvement being made by the Art Guild. The Art Center will provide the following spaces to facilitate Guild activities:

- Gallery/Lobby/Restrooms
- Sales and Consignment Shop
- Administrative Offices
- Kitchen/Lockers (Art Supplies)
- Library/Conference/Computer Stations
- Classrooms (20-30 students/class)

The Art Center will provide needed permanent exhibit space and training in the traditional arts of painting, drawing, print making, stained glass, jewelry and ceramics.

There are several issues that the Art Guild needs to overcome in adaptively re-using the existing space, including low-ceilings, inappropriate lighting for the gallery and finding an appropriate location for the ceramics kiln. The Art Guild, however is very pleased to have a "home" for the activities and is enthusiastic in accepting the challenges posed by the facility.

The Art Guild believes that their activities are a much needed cultural asset to the North Port Community. Success of similar organizations in Englewood, Venice and Bonita Springs are examples of communities embracing and supporting the mission of the visual arts. The Art Guild is promoting out-reach to the community through once per month children's classes, networking with grant funding organizations like the Selby Foundation and programs with Manatee Community College. The Art Guild would like to expand their preserve at Dallas White Park. It is important to note, the location of this cultural, community asset is not dependant on a Central location for fostering the mission of the Art Center.

### **SARASOTA COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION**

The County operates and maintains athletic fields at City Parks through an inter-local agreement which expires April 26, 2010. At Dallas White Park, the County maintains the softball field, volleyball courts and boat ramp. The City is responsible for providing any new or expanded facilities through the C.I.P. (Capital Improvements Plan) process. Any new or expanded athletic facilities are then turned over to the County for maintenance and operations.

Pursuant to the City/County Inter-local Agreement, all athletic type facilities are under the County's control. The facilities operated by the Charlotte County Family YMCA are through a separate agreement between the "Y" and County. Discussion with the County revealed that the Inter-local Agreement was entered for convenience of the City and that the agreement with the YMCA is to facilitate use of the Park facilities for the community's best interest. The County appears to have no vested interest in redeveloping or adding additional activities to Dallas White Park.

Generally the cost of operating athletic fields, like the existing Softball Field, is augmented through user fees. An example is softball league play - the league is responsible to pay the cost of power for lighting. It appears that based on the "demand" charge for the softball field at Dallas White Park, that the field is currently under utilized. It was suggested that the City might be better served to expand the number of available baseball fields in parks like Butler or Narramore; rather than make greater investment at Dallas White. The County further identified the potential for School Board/Municipal Partnerships to expand athletic fields. Butler Park adjacent to North Port High School and Middle School might be an appropriate venue for such a "partnership".



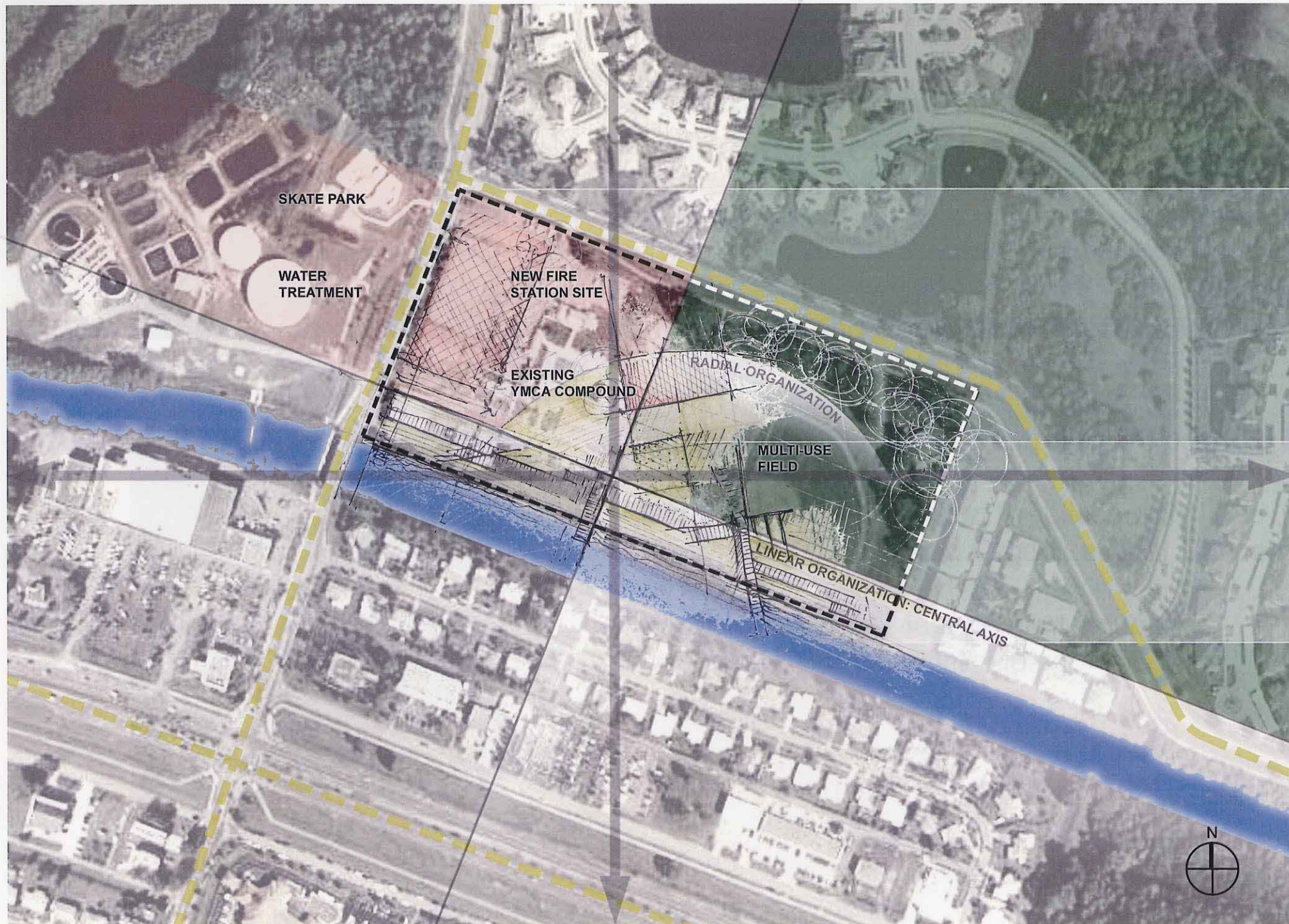
### ASSETS AND CONSTRAINTS

The Dallas White Park has several features that present significant opportunities to enhance the sense of “community” in the City of North Port. The open – space along a canal that feeds into the Myakka River basin is under utilized. The commitment of the YMCA to provide wellness, family and fitness services can be further enhanced. The western edge of the park with numerous trees and a fitness trail can provide a strong buffer to separate the residential and park use. These are just a few of the issues that need to be considered.

The current use patterns of the park need to be carefully considered. Several discreet activity characteristics can help discern zones for understanding the Park:

- **The North Port Blvd./Western Edge**  
This area is currently a “no-man’s” zone and can be viewed as the municipal services edge. Fire Station #82 will be reconstructed at the northwest corner. The existing Fire Station has several possibilities for reuse. Landscaping and cross-walk should be considered to integrate the skate park, buffer the water treatment plant and make an appropriate civic statement along North Port Blvd. Parking needs to be reconfigured, landscaped and softened to create an appropriate park setting. The “Old Planning Building” needs to extend into the landscape with an appropriate mix of exterior/interior spaces.
- **YMCA Facilities/Interior “Active Setting”**  
The facilities that are used for wellness and fitness activities have been loosely “recycled” to provide the YMCA facility. The aquatics center is over 30 years old and needs reconditioning. The buildings and spaces around the pool do not enhance the setting. Better integration to the east open-space is an opportunity. The Al Goll Center has recently been focused toward the pool with a single point of entry at the aquatics building on the north. The Complex needs to be examined carefully. Integration of all facilities as a “complex” is required to better utilize the assets. The YMCA has expressed an interest in expanding programs, specifically oriented toward teens.
- **The Canal Frontage/South Edge**  
The small boat launch and water-frontage on the canal is under utilized. Landscaping and trails can extend the waterfront into the park. The boat launch and parking needs to be reorganized for flow, efficiency, and integration into enhanced vehicle/pedestrian flow. Activities like the Volleyball Courts might better be located along an “activated” edge. Consideration of the home owners needs on the south edge of the Canal will be further evaluated for compatible uses.
- **Passive Park Activities/Eastern Edge**  
The Softball Field, Fitness Trail, Scout House and Picnic Shelter are not the best use of this zone. An opportunity to create a great lawn for passive, spontaneous activities may be a better use of the space occupied by the softball field. The restroom facility is not located well and should be relocated to serve overall park use patterns. The Scout House is isolated and could be renovated or expanded to provide additional uses. The Fitness Trail needs to be expanded into a more complete pedestrian system integrating overall park activities.
- **Greenwood Avenue/North Edge**  
The north edge of the park is the primary transition to the residential use patterns. Parking spills into the street right-of-way creating ambiguity to the park edge. Access to the YMCA and passive activities are best served from Greenwood Avenue rather than North Port Blvd. Enhanced landscaping should be considered to create a park-setting along this edge.





- 1 SEMI-ACTIVE, MUNICIPAL ZONE
- 2 PRIMARY-ACTIVE WATERFRONT ZONE
- 3 PASSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION ZONE
- 4 TRANSITIONAL (ACTIVE-PASSIVE) WATERFRONT ZONE





# Dallas White Park

## Reflecting North Port as a Sustainable Community

Conservation and Demonstration of Water Resources:

- \_ Reinterpreting Florida's Natural Hydrology to a Modern-day Park
- \_ Combining *Green Design* Practices with Previously Considered Organizational Concepts
- \_ Facilitating Water Management Education alongside Community Building

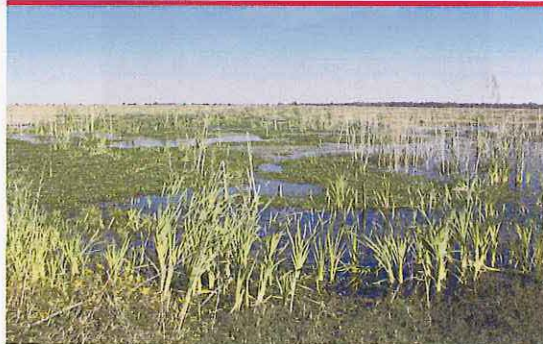




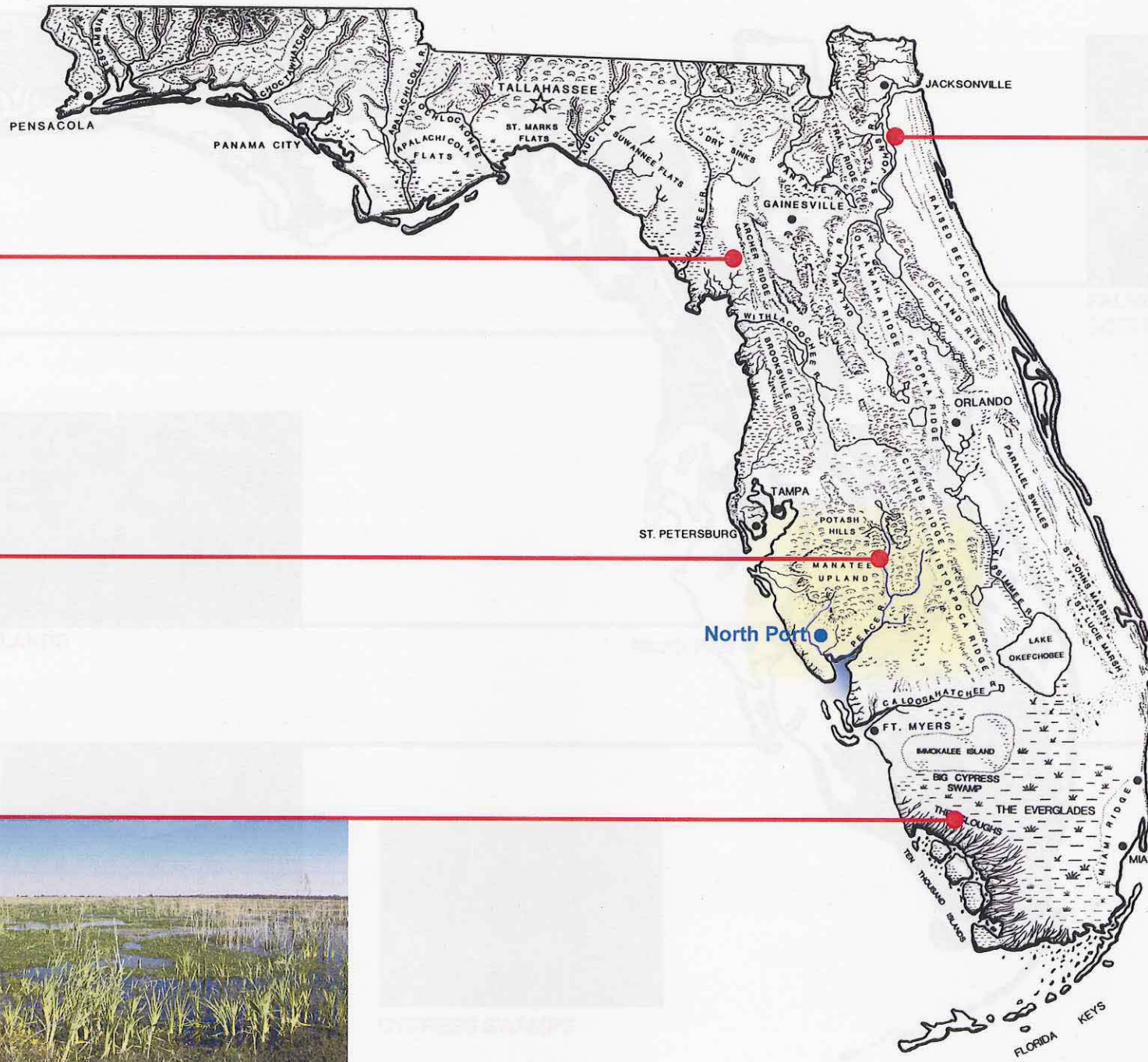
SINKS AND LAKES



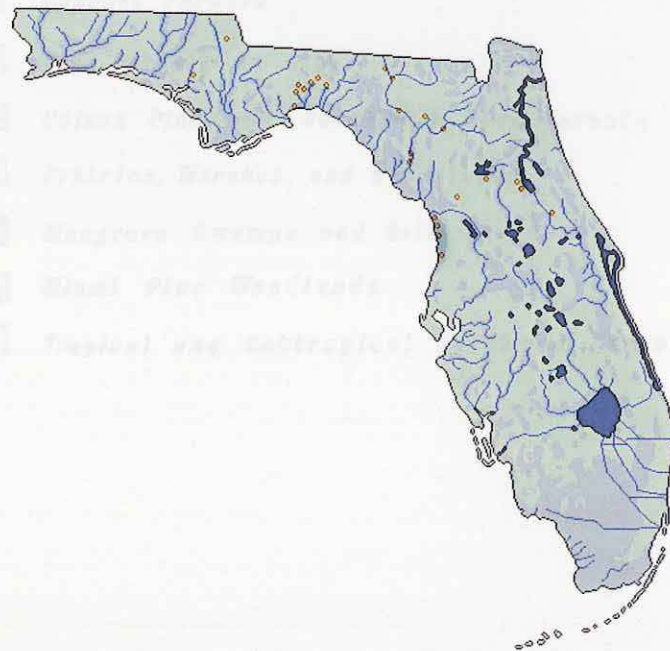
UPLANDS AND SCRUBLAND



WETLANDS AND SLOUGHS



RIVERS AND STREAMS

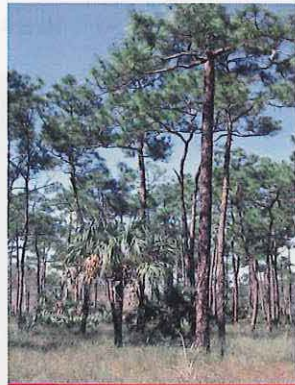


SURFACE WATER CONDITIONS

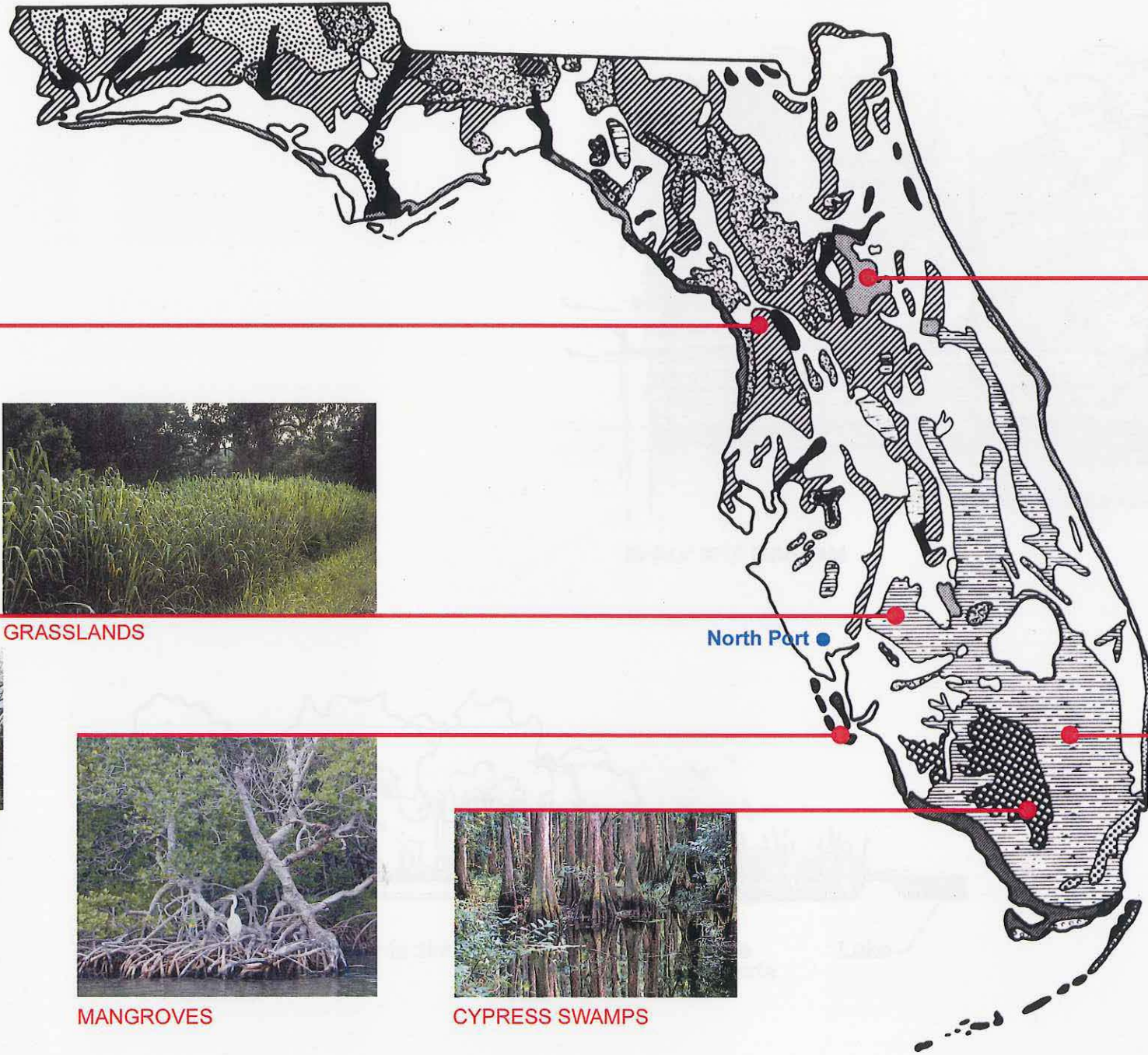
- Wetlands
- First-magnitude Springs

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Florida Landforms**  
*Final Report April 2008*





PINE FORESTS



PALMETTOS AND SCRUB



GRASSLANDS
















SAW GRASS AND SALT MARSHES



MANGROVES



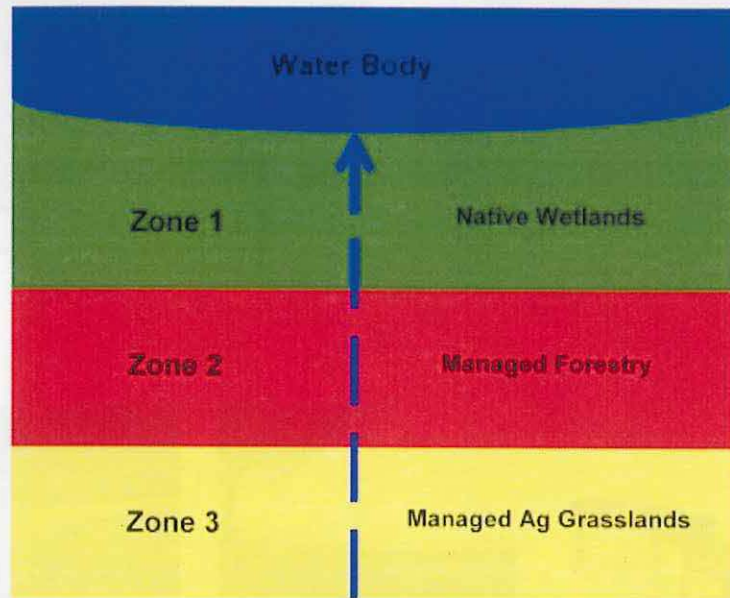
CYPRESS SWAMPS

-  Flatwoods
-  Scrub
-  Swamp Forests
-  Hardwood Forests
-  Hardwood and Pine Forests
-  Grasslands and Tree Islands
-  Cypress Forests
-  Pine Forests on Clay
-  Upland Pine and Scrub Oak Open Forests
-  Prairies, Marshes, and Everglades
-  Mangrove Swamps and Salt Marshes
-  Miami Pine Woodlands
-  Tropical and Subtropical Hardwood Forests

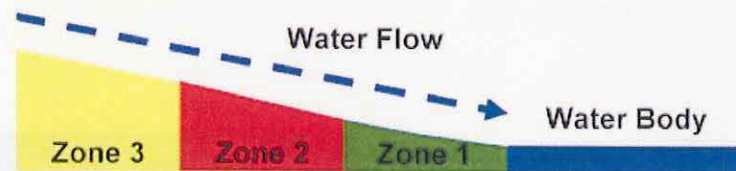


**3 ZONE BUFFER STRIP CONCEPT**

Aerial View Schematic:



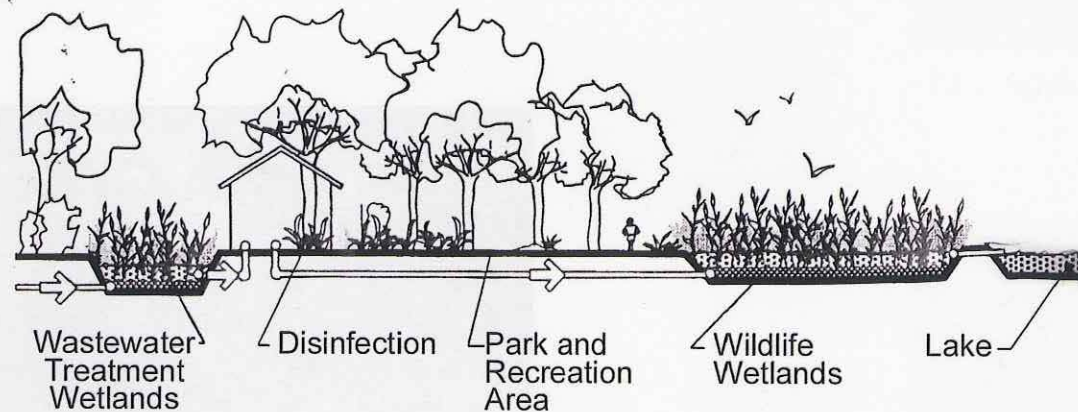
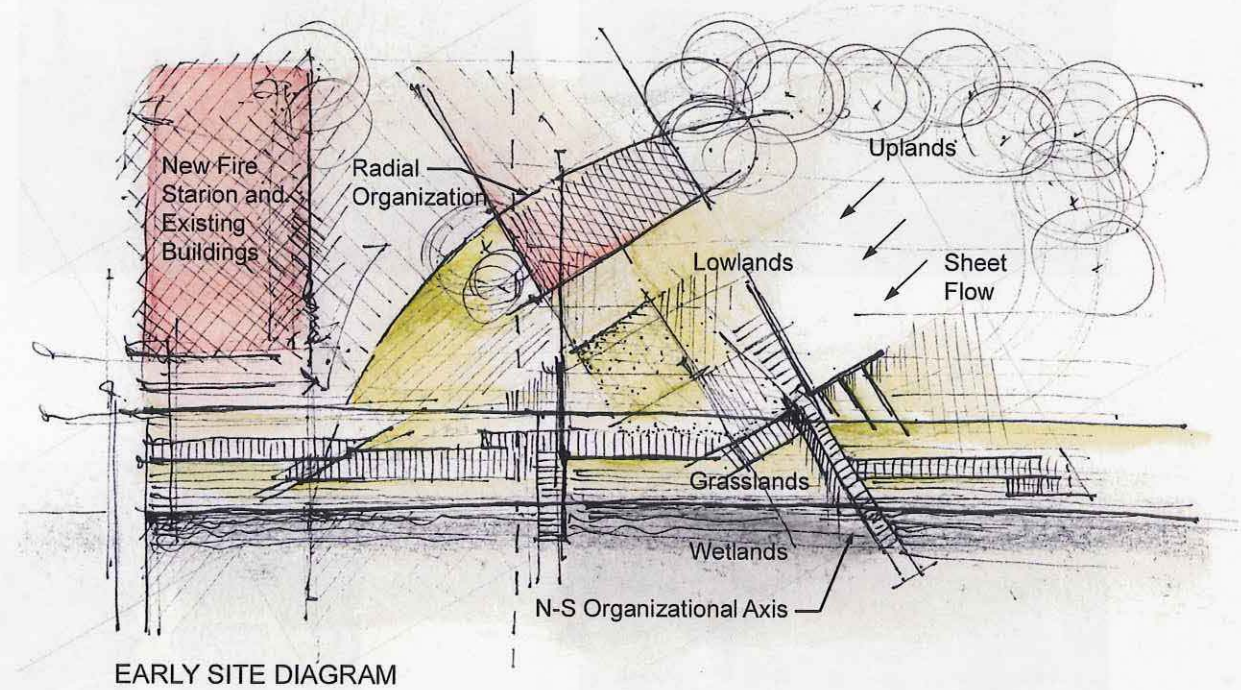
Ground View Schematic:



**ZONE 1 (WETLANDS)** -- consists of undisturbed forest and contains mostly mature trees which stabilize the water's edge and provide shade to maintain generally beneficial lower water temperatures. There is nutrient uptake occurring in this zone, but not to the extent of Zone 2.

**ZONE 2 (FORESTED UPLANDS)** -- consists of vigorously growing trees and shrubs, which are periodically cut as they approach maturity. This is the zone of maximum nutrient uptake because younger trees require more nutrients for growth than mature trees.

**ZONE 3 (GRASS AND SHRUB UPLANDS)** -- consists of a filter strip where concentrated channel flows from adjacent lands are converted to dispersed sheet water flows. This filter strip may be periodically harvested or grazed upon (e.g., growing legumes like alfalfa) to facilitate maximum nutrient uptake and removal.



EXAMPLE HYDROLOGY PARK SECTION





SUN SHADE STRUCTURES



PARK SEATING



PUBLIC BATHROOMS AS PAVILIONS



PROGRAM FEATURES



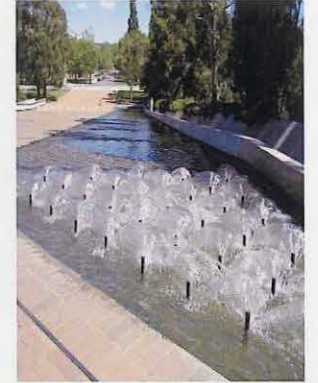




SCULPTED LANDSCAPE (ARTIFICIAL UPLANDS; "CUT & FILL")



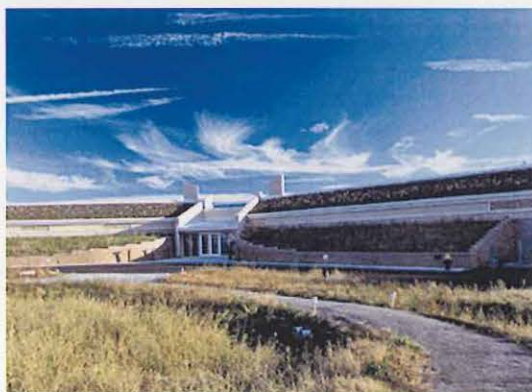
MULTI-USE FIELD AND WATER FEATURES (SINK; CANAL; SPLASH PARK)



INDIGENOUS GRASSES AND FLORA



PATHWAYS (THROUGH AND ALONG ESTUARIES)



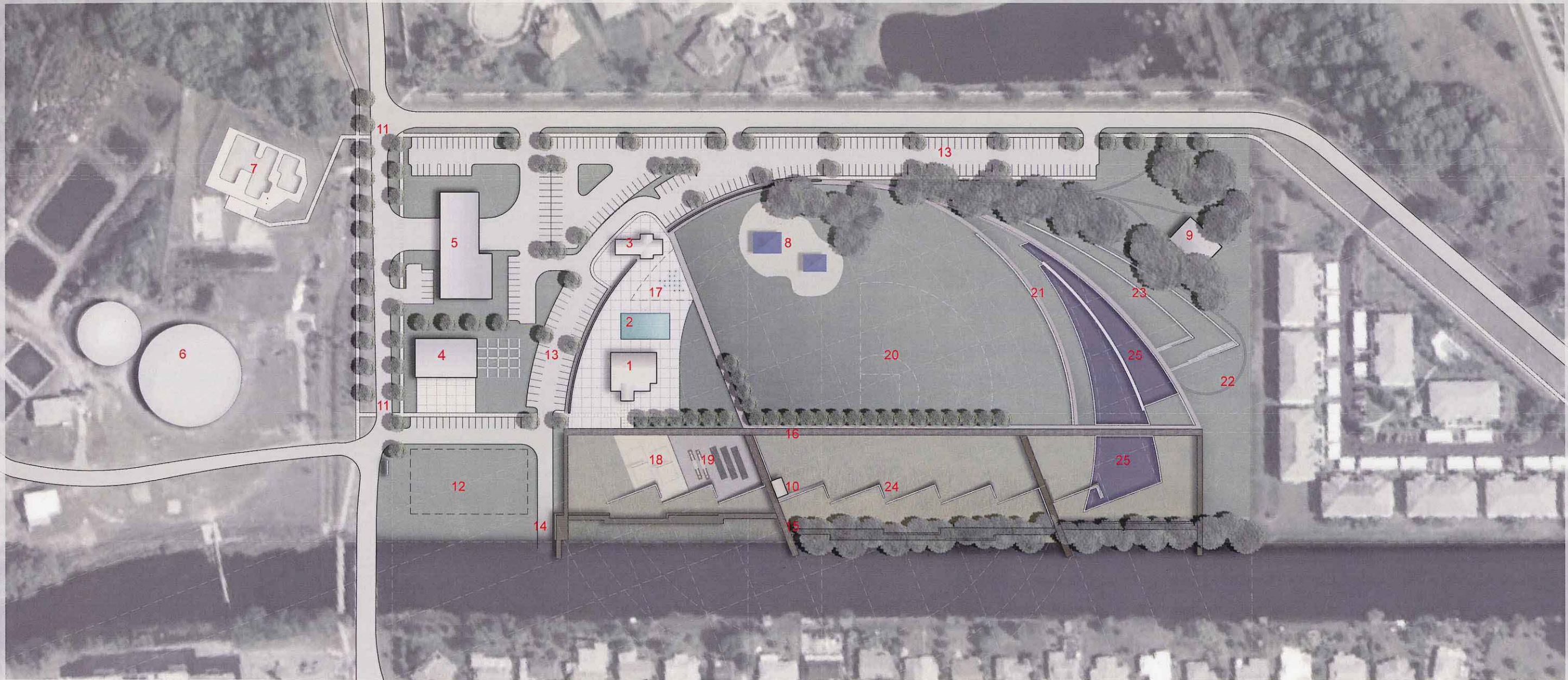
GREEN ROOFS (THERMAL CONTROL; STORMWATER RUNOFF MANAGEMENT)



PINE AND OAK TREES

NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Architectural Interpretations & Landscape Considerations  
Final Report April.2008





**CONCEPTUAL COMPONENTS**

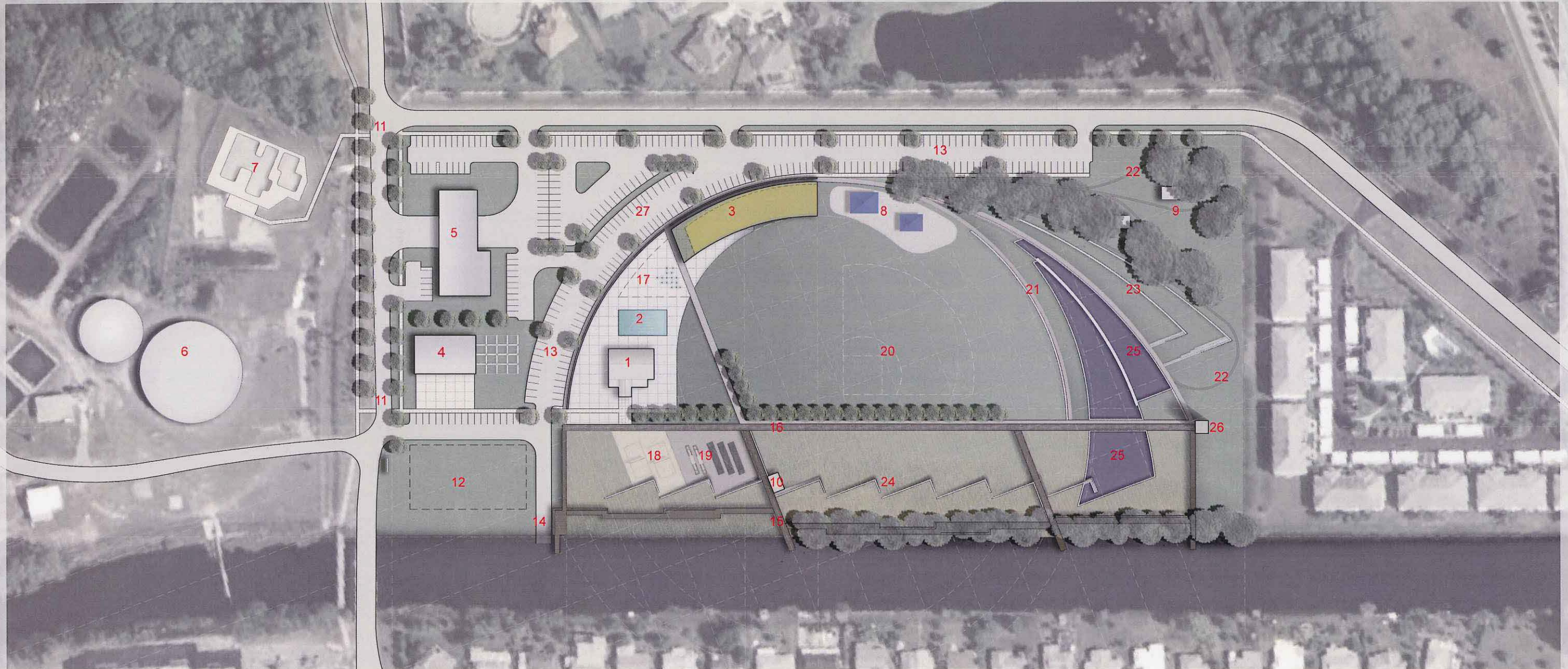
- UPLANDS- EXISTING PINES AND NEW BERM WALL PLANTED WITH MATURE OAKS
- SINK- WATER FEATURE AND RETENTION AREA TO ALLOW GROUNDWATER RECHARGE
- LOWLANDS- MULTI-USE FIELD; SLIGHT GRADING TOWARDS CANAL TO PROMOTE SHEET FLOW
- GRASSLANDS- INDIGENOUS FLORIDA GRASSES; FILTERS WATER BEFORE IT ENTERS THE CANAL
- WETLANDS- MATURE SCRUB AND WETLAND FLORA ALONG THE WATER'S EDGE ; STABILIZES THE SHORELINE

**PARK COMPONENTS**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 1 AL GOLL CENTER   | 11 CROSS WALKS & STREET-SCAPING                          | 19 SHUFFLEBOARD AND HORSESHOE COURTS                    |
| 2 EXISTING POOL  | 12 STABILIZED GRADE PARKING-<br>FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE | 20 MULTI-USE FIELD (LOWLANDS)                           |
| 3 YMCA AQUATIC CENTER                                      | 13 NEW PARKING, PERMEABLE PAVING                         | 21 FITNESS PATH   |
| 4 ART GUILD AND SCULPTURE GARDEN                           | 14 BOAT LAUNCH-RELOCATED                                 | 22 FOOT TRAIL   |
| 5 NEW FIRE STATION, BY OTHERS                              | 15 BOARDWALK ALONG CANAL EDGE                            | 23 RETENTION WALLS (UPLANDS)                            |
| 6 WATER TREATMENT FACILITY                                 | 16 CENTRAL PROMENADE                                     | 24 LOW-LANDSCAPE WALLS (GRASSLANDS)                     |
| 7 NEIGHBORING SKATE PARK-<br>CREATE NEW CONNECTION TO SITE | 17 SPLASH PARK   | 25 STORMWATER RETENTION<br>(SINK; GROUNDWATER RECHARGE) |
| 8 EXISITING PLAYGROUND                                     | 18 VOLLEYBALL COURTS                                     |   |
| 9 YMCA SCOUT HOUSE   |  |   |
| 10 NEW PUBLIC RESTROOMS                                    |  |   |

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Dallas White Park Phase I**  
*Final Report April.2008*





**CONCEPTUAL COMPONENTS**

- UPLANDS- EXISTING PINES AND NEW BERM WALL PLANTED WITH MATURE OAKS
- SINK- WATER FEATURE AND RETENTION AREA TO ALLOW GROUNDWATER RECHARGE
- LOWLANDS- MULTI-USE FIELD; SLIGHT GRADING TOWARDS CANAL TO PROMOTE SHEET FLOW
- GRASSLANDS- INDIGENOUS FLORIDA GRASSES; FILTERS WATER BEFORE IT ENTERS THE CANAL
- WETLANDS- MATURE SCRUB AND WETLAND FLORA ALONG THE WATER'S EDGE ; STABILIZES THE SHORELINE

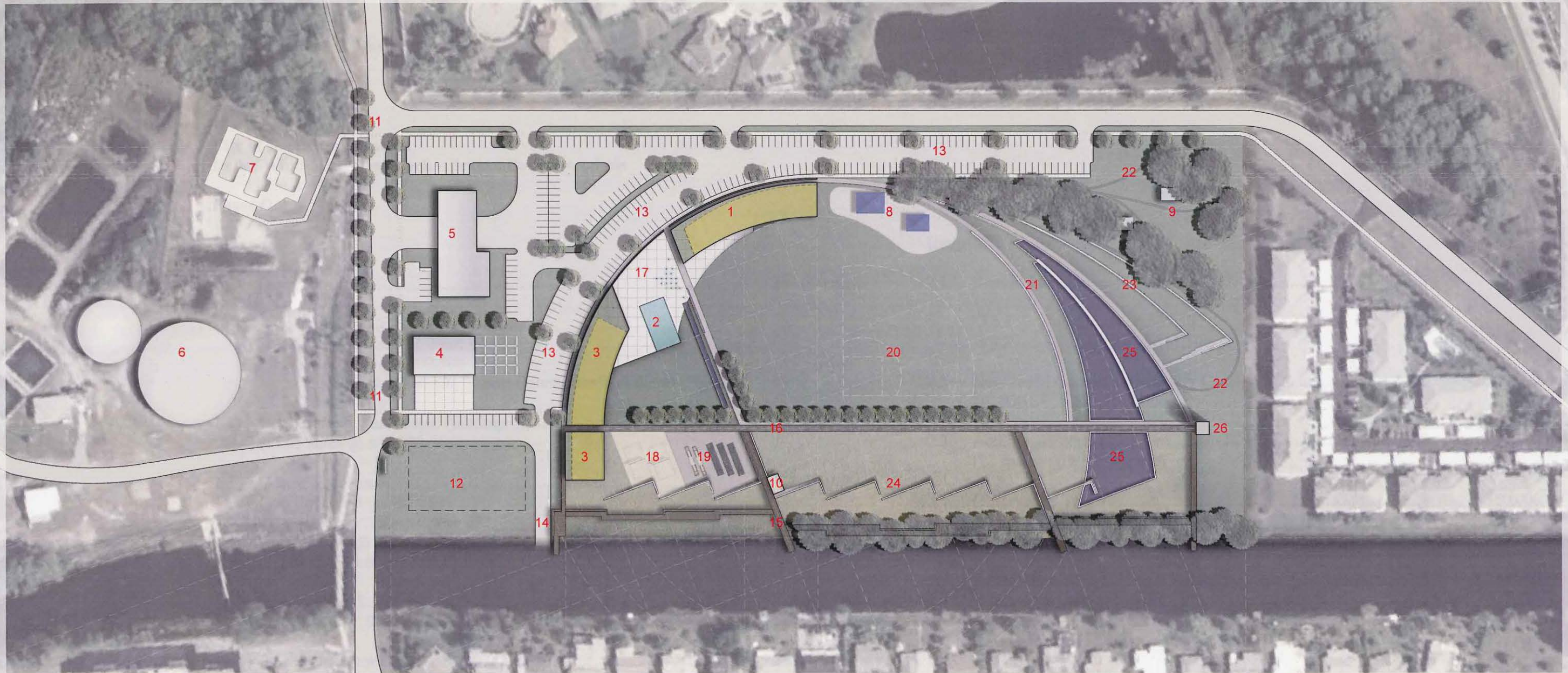
**PARK COMPONENTS**

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>1 AL GOLL CENTER</p> <p>2 EXISTING POOL</p> <p>3 POOL LOCKERS; COMMUNITY CENTER; &amp; PUBLIC RESTROOMS (WITH GREEN ROOF)</p> <p>4 ART GUILD AND SCULPTURE GARDEN</p> <p>5 NEW FIRE STATION, BY OTHERS</p> <p>6 WATER TREATMENT FACILITY</p> <p>7 NEIGHBORING SKATE PARK- CREATE CONNECTION TO SITE</p> <p>8 RELOCATED AND RECONFIGURED PLAYGROUND</p> <p>9 PICNIC AREA AND SHELTERS</p> | <p>10 PUBLIC RESTROOMS</p> <p>11 CROSS WALKS &amp; STREET-SCAPING</p> <p>12 STABILIZED GRADE PARKING- FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE</p> <p>13 NEW PARKING, PERMEABLE PAVING</p> <p>14 BOAT LAUNCH-RELOCATED</p> <p>15 BOARDWALK ALONG CANAL EDGE</p> <p>16 CENTRAL PROMENADE</p> <p>17 SPLASH PARK</p> <p>18 VOLLEYBALL COURTS</p> | <p>19 SHUFFLEBOARD AND HORSESHOE COURTS</p> <p>20 MULTI-USE FIELD (LOWLANDS)</p> <p>21 FITNESS PATH</p> <p>22 FOOT TRAIL</p> <p>23 RETENTION WALLS (UPLANDS)</p> <p>24 LOW-LANDSCAPE WALLS (GRASSLANDS)</p> <p>25 STORMWATER RETENTION (SINK; GROUNDWATER RECHARGE)</p> | <p>26 OBSERVATION TOWER</p> <p>27 ADDITIONAL, NEW PARKING, PERMEABLE PAVING</p> |
|---|---|---|---|

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Dallas White Park Phase II**  
*Final Report April. 2008*







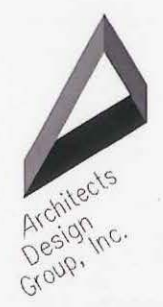
**CONCEPTUAL COMPONENTS**

- UPLANDS- EXISTING PINES AND NEW BERM WALL PLANTED WITH MATURE OAKS
- SINK- WATER FEATURE AND RETENTION AREA TO ALLOW GROUNDWATER RECHARGE
- LOWLANDS- MULTI-USE FIELD; SLIGHT GRADING TOWARDS CANAL TO PROMOTE SHEET FLOW
- GRASSLANDS- INDIGENOUS FLORIDA GRASSES; FILTERS WATER BEFORE IT ENTERS THE CANAL
- WETLANDS- MATURE SCRUB AND WETLAND FLORA ALONG THE WATER'S EDGE ; STABILIZES THE SHORELINE

**PARK COMPONENTS**

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>1 POOL LOCKERS; PUBLIC RESTROOMS; GYM AND CLASSROOMS (WITH GREEN ROOF)</p> <p>2 NEW POOL</p> <p>3 COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER (WITH GREEN ROOF)</p> <p>4 ART GUILD &amp; SCULPTURE GARDEN</p> <p>5 NEW FIRE STATION, BY OTHERS</p> <p>6 WATER TREATMENT FACILITY</p> <p>7 NEIGHBORING SKATE PARK- CREATE CONNECTION TO SITE</p> <p>8 RELOCATED AND RECONFIGURED PLAYGROUND</p> | <p>9 PICNIC AREA AND SHELTERS</p> <p>10 PUBLIC BATHROOMS</p> <p>11 CROSS WALKS &amp; STREET-SCAPING</p> <p>12 STABILIZED GRADE PARKING- FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE</p> <p>13 NEW PARKING, PERMEABLE PAVING</p> <p>14 BOAT LAUNCH-RELOCATED</p> <p>15 BOARDWALK ALONG CANAL EDGE</p> <p>16 CENTRAL PROMENADE</p> <p>17 SPLASH PARK</p> <p>18 VOLLEYBALL COURTS</p> | <p>19 SHUFFLEBOARD AND HORSESHOE COURTS</p> <p>20 MULTI-USE FIELD (LOWLANDS)</p> <p>21 FITNESS PATH</p> <p>22 FOOT TRAIL</p> <p>23 RETENTION WALLS (UPLANDS)</p> <p>24 LOW-LANDSCAPE WALLS (GRASSLANDS)</p> | <p>25 STORMWATER RETENTION (SINK; GROUNDWATER RECHARGE)</p> <p>26 OBSERVATION TOWER</p> |
|--|---|---|---|

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Dallas White Park Phase III**  
*Final Report April.2008*





City of North Port, Florida  
Dallas White Hydrology Park – Project Budget Analysis

Phase One

Item:

1.1	Demolition.....	\$	260,000.00
1.1.1	Buildings @ \$58,000 (Fire Station #82, Misc. Structures)		
1.1.2	Site Areas @ \$202,500 (Paving, Boat Launch, Tennis Courts, Baseball Field)		
1.2	New Grading, Landscape, Plantings .....	\$	549,880.00
	(11.65 acres @ \$47,200 /acre)		
1.3	Central Promenade .....	\$	72,250.00
	(850 lineal feet @ \$85/LF)		
1.4	New Boardwalk.....	\$	96,900.00
	(1,140 lineal feet @ \$85/LF)		
1.5	New Parking \$.....	\$	322,000.00
	(140 spaces @ \$2,300/space)		
1.6	Splash Park (lump sum) .....	\$	250,000.00
1.7	North Port Blvd. Enhancements .....	\$	50,000.00
	(plantings and sidewalks)		
1.8	New Restroom Facilities .....	\$	62,500.00
1.9	Relocate Volleyball Courts, Shuffleboard and Create Horseshoe Pits.....	\$	16,570.00
<b>1.10</b>	<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,680,600.00</b>
1.11	Estimator's Contingency @ 15% .....	\$	252,090.00
<b>1.12</b>	<b>Total – Phase I .....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,932,690.00</b>
1.13	Design Fees and Miscellaneous Project Costs .....	\$	289,904.00
	(\$1,932,690.00 @ 15%)		
<b>1.14</b>	<b>Grand Total – Phase I.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,222,594.00</b>

Phase Two

Item:

2.1	Demolition.....	\$	39,300.00
2.1.1	Pool House @ \$27,500		
2.1.2	Scout House @ \$11,800		
2.2	New Pool Lockers / Community Center .....	\$	2,300,000.00
	(10,000 SF @ \$230.00/SF)		
2.3	Additional Parking .....	\$	50,600.00
	(22 spaces @ \$2,300/space)		
2.4	Observation Tower .....	\$	350,000.00
2.5	Picnic Shelters .....	\$	45,000.00
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>2,784,900.00</b>
2.7	Estimator's Contingency @ 15% .....	\$	417,735.00
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Total – Phase II.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,202,635.00</b>
2.9	Design Fees and Miscellaneous Project Costs .....	\$	480,395.00
	(\$3,202,635.00 @ 15%)		
<b>2.10</b>	<b>Grand Total – Phase II .....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,683,030.00</b>



City of North Port, Florida  
 Dallas White Hydrology Park –Project Budget Analysis

Phase Three

Item:

3.1	Demolition.....	\$	65,000.00
	3.1.1 Al Goll Center @ \$35,000		
	3.1.2 Swimming Pool @ \$30,000		
3.2	New Environmental Demonstration Center .....	\$	2,850,000.00
	(15,000 SF @ \$190.00/SF)		
3.3	New Swimming Pool.....	\$	1,250,000.00
3.4	<b>Subtotal.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,165,000.00</b>
3.5	Estimator's Contingency @ 15% .....	\$	624,750.00
3.6	<b>Grand Total – Phase III.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,789,750.00</b>
3.7	Design Fees and Miscellaneous Project Costs .....	\$	718,463.00
	(\$4,789,750.00 @ 15%)		
3.8	<b>Grand Total – Phase III.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>5,508,213.00</b>

City of North Port, Florida  
 Dallas White Hydrology Park – Project Budget Analysis – Summary

Summary

Phase One.....	\$	2,222,594.00
Phase Two.....	\$	3,683,030.00
Phase Three.....	\$	5,508,213.00
<b>Total Development.....</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>11,413,837.00</b>



**City of North Port**  
**Dallas White Park Master Plan**  
**Final Report**  
Appendix-i

**C.H.A.T. (COMMUNITY HEALTH ACTION TEAM)**  
**YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

The discussion with CHAT primarily considered issues of appropriate facilities for TEEN Activities. The focal point for evaluating the needs and opportunities for the teens has evolved from a larger interest in visioning what a “healthy” North Port will look like. A Sarasota County initiative identified as C.H.I.P. – (Community Health Improvement Project) evaluated larger issues of mental health, substance abuse and prevention. CHAT became the sub-set for the North Port Community and had been very active in focusing the agenda for a healthy community.

The proposal to create a youth activities center or TEEN Center has become a primary interest for CHAT. Currently, the School System is a primary provider for structured programs, however, there are several constraints associated with school initiatives. The City’s Mullin Center, for example provides opportunities for summer programs. Relative to Dallas White Park, the skate park immediately adjacent on the north side of North Port Blvd. is a focus of teen activity. The park itself is a popular meeting spot after 9:00 pm when there is little supervision, until the park closes at 12:00 midnight.

CHAT conducted a North Port “Youth Forum” in the spring of 2007 for the purpose of discussing what a teen center could become. Two meetings were held at City Hall with a celebration/wrap-up to conclude the activity. The teens are interested in a “place” to hang out – let teens be teens. The vision for this “place” is a venue for several types of activities from counseling/crisis assistance, to dance with “battle of the bands” performances. City Council has approved planning for such a facility with C.I.P. funding identified. The location and building program has not been agreed upon.

The issue of location for a TEEN Center is an important consideration. It was identified that the individuals who would most benefit from the center, will likely need to rely on public transportation or be within walking distance from the schools. Dallas White Park is not close to North Port High School and Middle School; nor is it easily accessible from the (SCAT) bus route. A permanent location off West Price Blvd. in the vicinity of Butler Park would be a more desirable location. The conclusion was that Dallas White Park would make a good temporary location until the permanent location could be created. It is important to note that the YMCA expressed an interest to supervise such a program. The Old “Clothes Closet” as stated previously in the report is being considered for a small-scale teen activities room.

The North Port Youth Forum reached several conclusions that are the basis of considering the opportunities for a TEEN Center. Primarily the Center is a “place to meet”. The teens want a place that requires membership with some form of photo I.D. for entry. It will be a place to build relationships, have fun, mentor others and support the community as a whole. The Center will have rules and expectations for proper behavior; but not “perfect” behavior. There must be sound control – it is a place for teens to be teens (loud?). The TEEN Center should include:

- Arcade/ Video Gaming Area
- Food Court/Vending Area/ Dance Floor (DDR)
- TV Lounge
- Table Games – Pool/Foosball/Ping Pong
- Listening Room – Sound Proof, Stereo
- WIFI/Internet/Computer Lounge
- Quiet – Study/Reading Lounge
- Arts and Crafts Room/Yoga Studio
- Volunteer/Counseling/Mentoring Office
- Outdoor Activity Area/Courtyard

Many of these areas could be provided with the Old Fire Station #82 in conjunction with other site stakeholders.



### A DOG-PARK

During the process of considering potential uses and activities at Dallas White Park, direction was given to consider the potential for creating a Dog-Park. It is noted that the City Commission has considered this issue and C.I.P. funding has been identified. The following discussion is taken from *Wikipedia – the internet free encyclopedia*:

“A dog park is a facility set aside for dogs and their owners to exercise and play off-leash in a controlled environment. Parks vary in accoutrements, but a typical dog park is fenced; has separate, double-gated entry and exit points; a pond for swimming; hydrants for watering dogs; and tools to pick up and dispose of animal waste. In Australia, dog parks have water taps rather than hydrants, garden benches and mature trees for shade.

#### **Benefits of off-leash dog parks**

Pet ownership in the United States increased by over 1 million households between 1990 and 1992, up to 54 million, or 58% of all U.S. households. Of the pet-owning households, 38% included dogs. The number of dogs per dog-household was 1.5, totally 53.3 million dogs.

While suburban and rural zones have traditionally been areas containing most of the pet-owning population, the urban environment has been undergoing an increase in pet population since the 1970's. This, combined with the fact that over the past 15 years urbanization has been taking over what was formerly considered to be suburban and rural areas, has resulted in a phenomenon called “urbanization”. This, first of all, encompasses the recognition that animals are and will continue to be a “quality of life” aspect of urban society. Secondly, it recognizes that development must specifically provide for the inclusion of domestic animals in its growth plans.

Off-leash dog areas provide a social setting in which people can gather and interact in friendship. Off-leash dog areas are places where dog owners and non-dog owners can delight in the entertaining and interesting interaction of dogs at play. Scientific studies have shown that people somehow find it easier to talk to each other with dogs as the initial focus, breaking down the usual social barriers that make people in our society perceive others as “strangers”. Research has also shown that companion dogs improve people's health and increase resistance to disease by providing companionship, by giving people something to care for, by providing pleasurable activity, by stimulating people to exercise, by providing comfort with touch, and by being a pleasure to watch. The unconditional love of companion animal is very beneficial.

#### **Problems with off-leash dog parks**

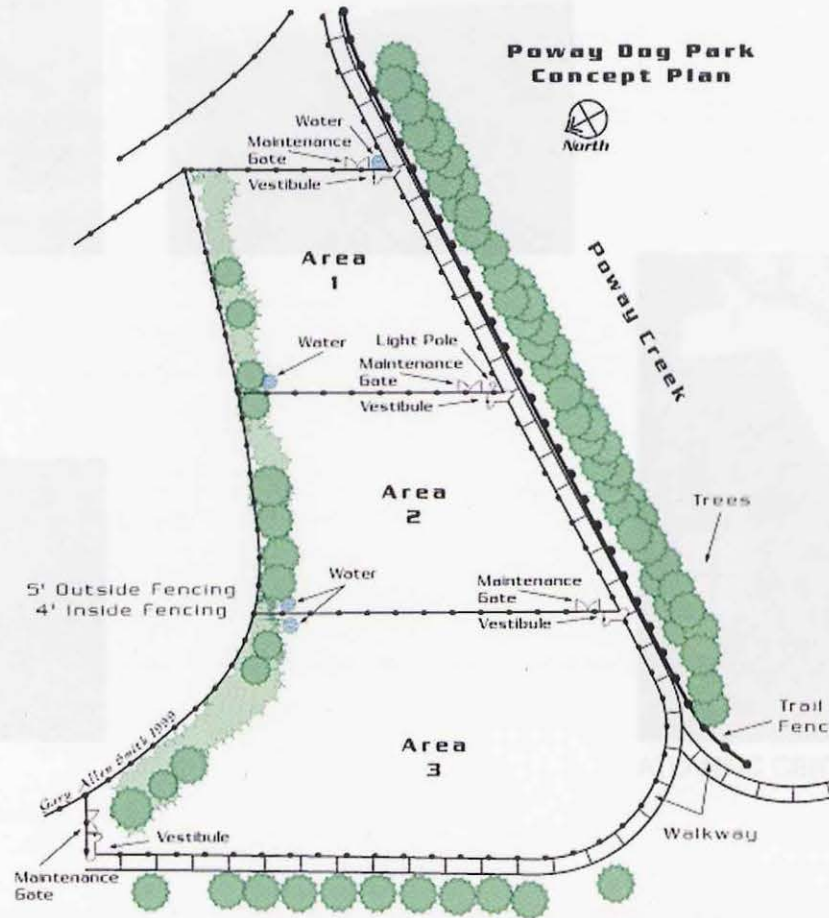
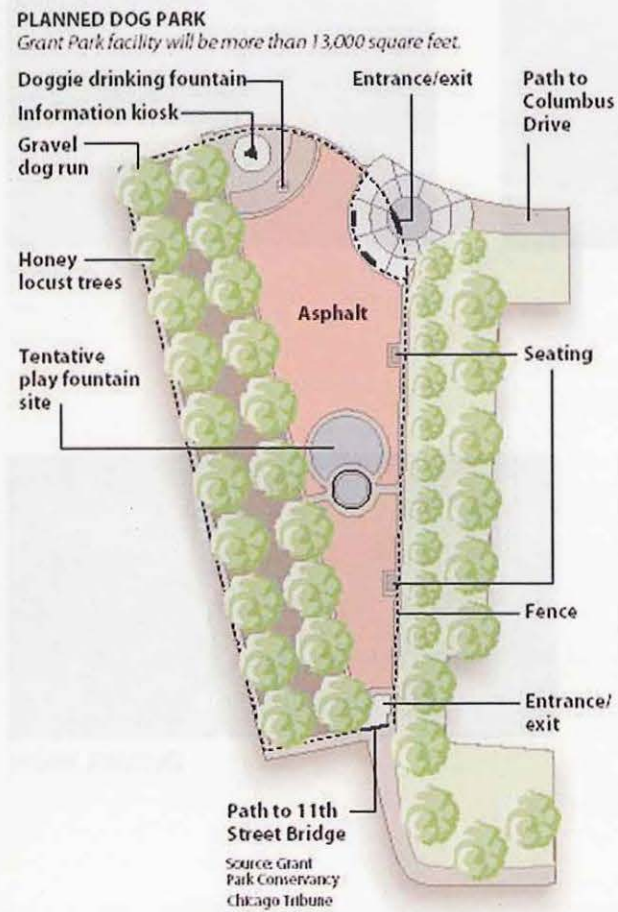
Like all recreation activities, certain safeguards need to be put in place before an off-leash dog park should be established. The first objective is to ensure that the location of the off leash park is appropriate. The park should not be placed in environmentally sensitive areas, and it must be free of poisonous plants and dangerous topography such as cliffs. The second objective is to ensure that the park itself is safe for dogs, people, and wildlife. This generally will require the park to be a safe distance away from traffic and always requires the park to have some sort of fence or barrier to ensure that dogs do not end up in precarious situations. A third objective is to make sure the size of the dog park is appropriate. Generally dog parks that are too big result in opportunities for dogs to learn and demonstrate anti-social, dominant behavior without swift intervention by their guardians.

Allowing dogs off-leash in the safety of a dog park is an excellent way to socialize dogs. Dogs that are shy or aggressive can learn to interact safely with other dogs if their owners take the time to learn about dog behavior and acclimate them at the dog park.

Modern dog parks usually have separate play spaces for large and small dogs to protect small dogs from rough play with bigger dogs. Separating the big from the small prevents “predatory drift”, a situation in which dogs that are normally predatory enter prey (attack) mode. Even highly socialized dogs can “drift” into predatory attack mode, particularly when smaller dogs appear injured or yelp during off-leash exercises. When a dog enters a “predatory drift” mode, it attempts to kill smaller dogs that trigger the event. Some adoption agencies such as the San Francisco SPCA refuse to place dogs into homes with existing dogs if the dogs differ substantially in size (they offer a pamphlet about predatory drift on their website).

Dog owners must watch their dogs carefully and stay within a reasonable distance of their dogs so that they can intervene if the dog acts violently or anti-socially. Some people think a smaller dog park makes it easier for dog owners to protect their dogs because they can see the activity in the whole park.”





EXAMPLE DOG PARK PLANS

**NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Dog Park Considerations**  
*Final Report April, 2008*







SCULPTED LANDSCAPE



SEATTLE'S OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK



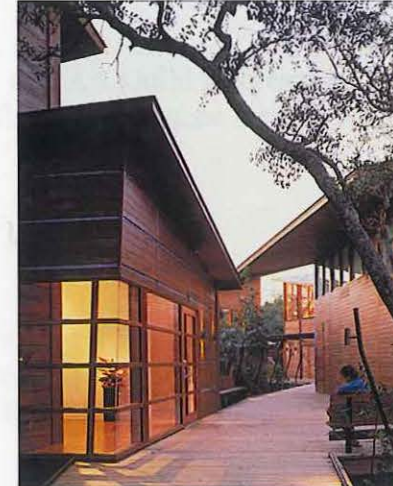
WATER FEATURES



NORTH CAROLINA ART MUSEUM- OUTDOOR THEATER AND PROJECTION BOOTH



PARK PAVING



ATLANTIC CENTER FOR THE ARTS- ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAMS





**City of North Port  
Dallas White Park Master Plan  
Final Report  
Appendix-v**

**PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS**

The process of concluding a Master Plan for Dallas White Park requires that the park users/stakeholders input into the understanding of the "highest and best use", or what the parcel can become. A design charrette was conducted for the purpose of soliciting direct participation to the planning process. Based upon the interviews with potential park users and analysis of the existing conditions and integration with overall community assets, a series of preliminary concepts were created. The preliminary concepts served as a starting point for soliciting input from the users. The concepts present a range of possibilities from renewing and reusing existing park facilities to envisioning a complete redevelopment of The Park. Obviously there are constraints on how best to invest community assets that will need to be carefully evaluated in determining how best to proceed. The preliminary concepts therefore become a tool to further the dialog within City Government and the North Port Community. The concepts are a tool for initiating the process.

**Preliminary Concept "A" – Renew & Reuse**

This concept generally works with the existing facilities and activities to enhance the park setting. New bathroom facilities with a park pavilion are proposed to better integrate overall activity zones. Tennis Courts and Volleyball Courts are proposed to relocate and activate the canal frontage. Enhancements to the YMCA are proposed to create a "complex". The Dog Park is created along the Greenwood Avenue edge with sufficient parking. The Softball Field remains. Old Fire Station #82 is proposed for re-use as a temporary TEEN Center. The site entrance, along North Port Blvd. proposed as a main "Gateway/Entry" to the park.

**Preliminary Concept "B" – New Facilities – YMCA & Art Guild**

This proposal reconfigures the park as a unified complex that mixes the YMCA and Art Guild to create a "synergy" of facilities and activities. A "satellite" TEEN Center occupies the Old Planning Building and Old Fire Station #82 is provided for Parks & Recreation offices/maintenance facility. A new sequence of fitness trails transitions into a boardwalk along an activated canal frontage. The proposed Dog Park is located along the northern edge of the park.

**Preliminary Concept "C" – Renew & Expand**

An Entry/Gateway on North Port Blvd. creates an appropriate entry while unifying the TEEN Center in Old Fire Station #82 and the Art Guild in the Old Planning Building. The YMCA is reconfigured with a new Aquatics Center; while the Al Goll Center is renovated to enhance the YMCA Complex. The Canal front is activated with a Boardwalk, Tennis Courts and Volleyball courts. The north edge of the Site transitions from passive playground area to the Dog Park with ample parking. The Fitness Trail, Scout House and a Softball Field remain as presently configured.

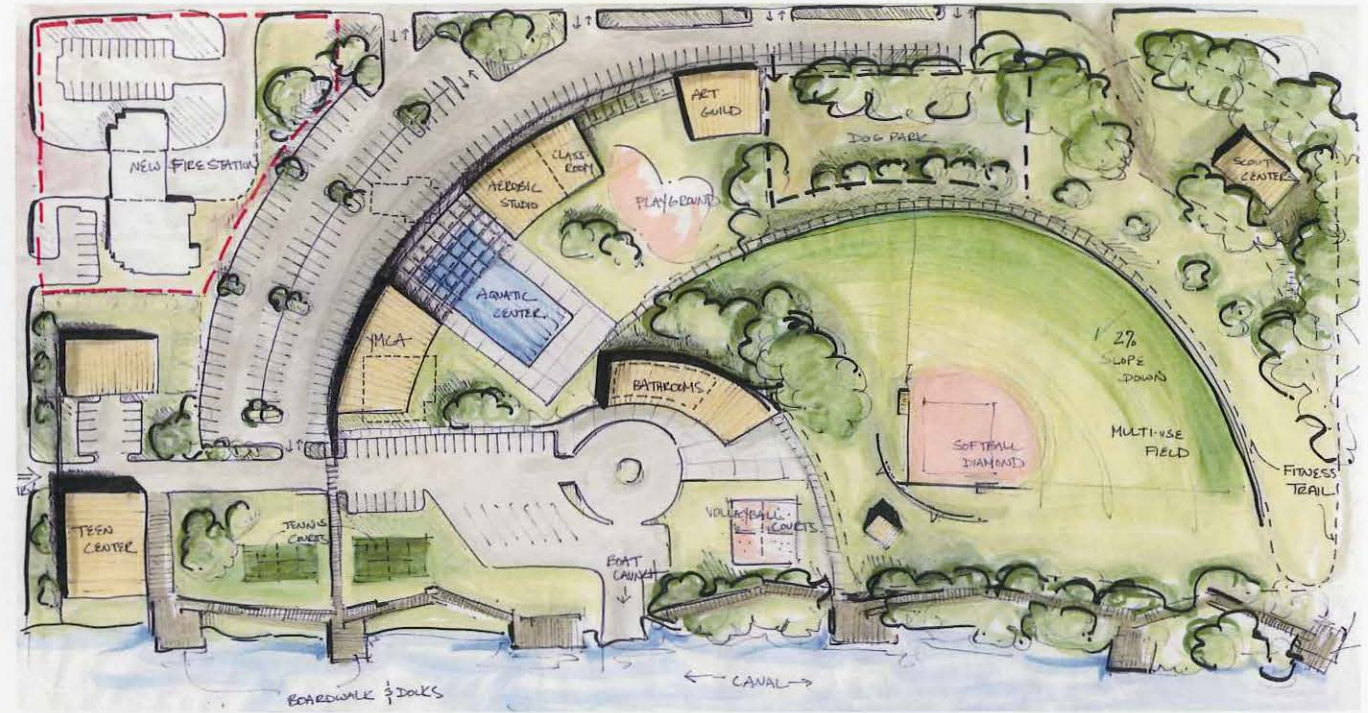
**Preliminary Concept "D" – A Cultural Park**

This concept challenges the notion of reusing and renewing existing functions at Dallas White Park with a "big" idea of creating a dynamic cultural asset. The western edge of the park is provided as a Municipal Zone with the new Fire Station #82 along the north and the Old Station and Old Planning building provided for Parks and Recreation maintenance activities. The Art Guild is envisioned to provide a series of pavilions for all of the arts and possibly, an artist-in-residence program. The Softball field is vacated and a "great lawn" created to stage a variety of outdoor activities associated with the arts. The YMCA remains but is reconfigured primarily as an aquatics center. A new series of fitness trails link the various activities. Access to the park is primarily located off Greenwood Avenue.





Renew & Reuse



New Facilities- YMCA & Art Guild

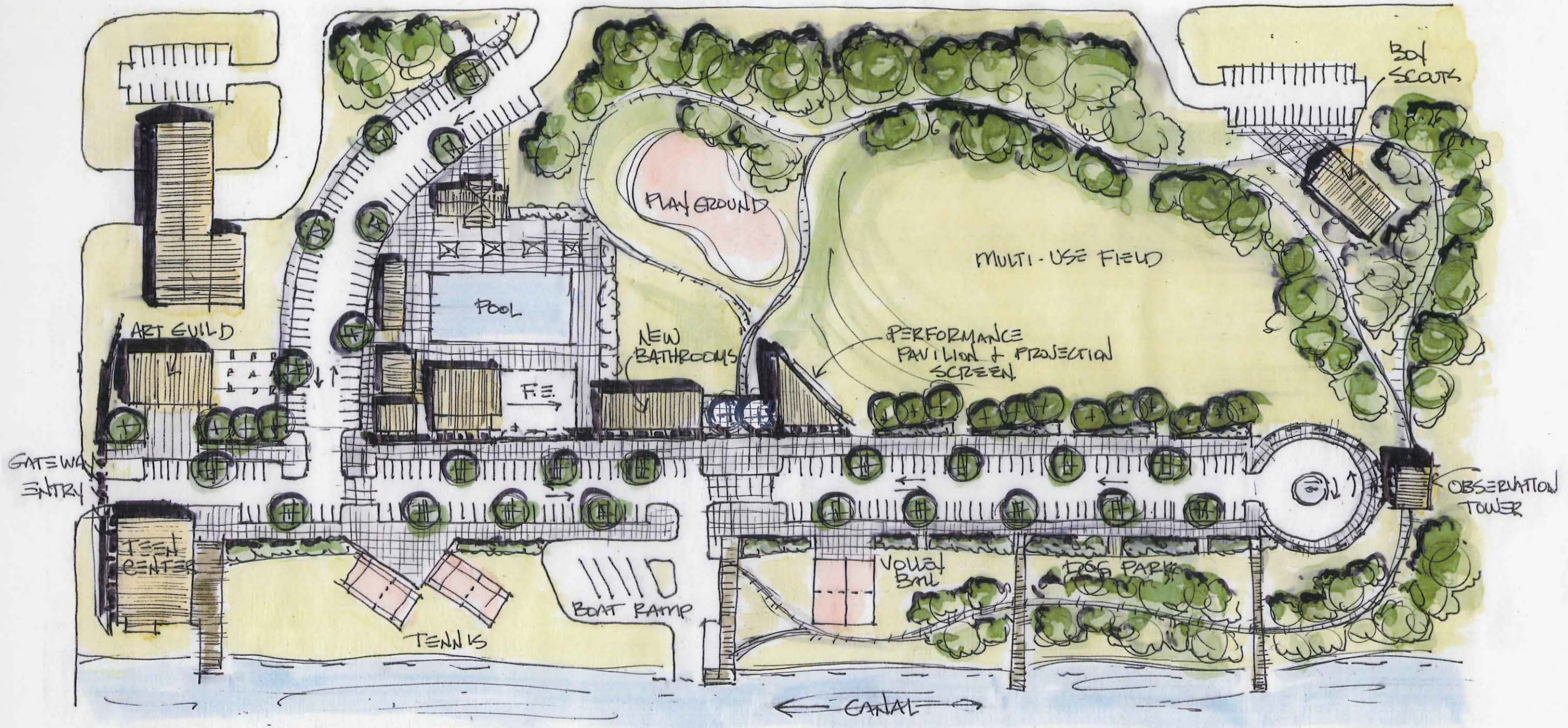


Renew & Expansion



A Cultural Park





NORTH PORT, FLORIDA- Linear Park  
 Final Report April.2008