



## BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

### 1.1 METHODOLOGY

PROS Consulting with assistance from the City of Boca Raton Recreation Services Department (“Department”) and the Greater Boca Raton Park District (“Boca Raton”) identified operating metrics to benchmark against comparable parks and recreation agencies. The goal of the analysis is to evaluate how Boca Raton is positioned among peer agencies. The benchmark assessment is organized into specific categories based on peer agency responses to targeted questions that lend an encompassing view of each system’s operating metrics as compared to Boca Raton.

Information used in this analysis was obtained directly from each participating benchmark agency, when available, and supplemental data was collected from agency / municipality websites, Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), and information available through the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) Park Metrics Database. Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains, and reports data, variances may exist. These variations can impact the per capita and percentage allocations, and the overall comparison must be viewed with this in mind. The benchmark data collection for all systems was complete as of May 2020, and it is possible that information in this report may have changed since the original collection date. The information sought was a combination of operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, and inventories. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available.

The table below lists each benchmark agency in the study, arranged by total population served. Peer agencies represent broad geographical coverage across the country, and those selected have demographic and organizational characteristics similar to Boca Raton. It should also be noted that Boca Raton is unique, not only within the State of Florida but nationally, as its recreation needs are jointly provided by both the City of Boca Raton Recreation Services Department and the Greater Boca Raton Park District. This is a rare instance and the reason why we expanded our search to agencies across the country, including several Gold Medal Winning and CAPRA Accredited agencies. The agencies benchmarked are in the top 5% of agencies nationwide based on these accolades and that must be kept in mind as we benchmark Boca Raton’s performance against them. *Note: CAPRA stands for Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. Agencies that receive this accreditation either meet, or exceed, standards maintained by park and recreation leaders in programming, facilities, and experiences they provide their communities.*

For all agencies examined, Boca Raton represents the benchmark median for population density (4,167 residents per sq. mi.) falling just below Fort Lauderdale, FL (5,079 residents per sq. mi.) but above Allen, TX (3,939 residents per sq. mi.).

Agency	Jurisdiction Type	Population	Jurisdiction Size (Sq. Mi.)	Population per Sq. Mi.	NRPA Gold Medal Winner	CAPRA Accredited (Year)
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	City	182,827	36.00	5,079	1993	Yes (2011)
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	City	128,757	23.94	5,378	No	No
Boca Raton, FL	City/District	125,000	30.00	4,167	No	No
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	City	106,736	27.10	3,939	2016	Yes (2019)
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	Special District	95,797	47.46	2,018	2014	Yes (2014 & 2019)
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	Village	62,373	45.25	1,378	No	Yes (2019)
Park District of Oak Park, IL	Park District	51,793	4.50	11,510	2015	Yes (2015)



1.2 BENCHMARK COMPARISON

1.2.1 PARK ACRES

The following table provides a general overview of each system’s park acreage. Boca Raton falls in the middle for number of parks (47) but is the second highest regarding total acres owned/managed with 1,531 acres. Assessing level of service for park acres, Boca Raton ranks third in the study with 12.25 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which is also well above the NRPA median for similar-sized agencies of 8.9 acres per 1,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Total Number of Parks	Total Acres Owned or Managed	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	56	1,953	18.30
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	37	894	14.33
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>12.25</b>
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	128,757	49	768	5.96
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	17	535	5.58
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	106	962	5.26
Park District of Oak Park, IL	51,793	20	96	1.85
<b>NRPA Median 2020 = 8.9 Acres per 1,000 Residents</b>				

1.2.2 TRAIL MILES

The information below reveals the service levels for dedicated trails within each system. By comparing total trail mileage to the population of the service area, the level of service provided to the community can be determined, which is expressed as trail miles for every 1,000 residents. Boca Raton represents the benchmark’s third highest agency in terms of total trail mileage (29.5 total miles), and is the benchmark median for trail mileage per capita (0.24 miles per 1,000) among agencies assessed. However, with 0.24 miles per 1,000, Boca Raton currently falls just below the national best practice of 0.25-0.5 of trail miles per 1,000 residents. It should be noted that Wellington’s significantly higher trail miles per 1,000 (1.09) is largely due to their vast number of equestrian trails.

Agency	Population	Total Trail Miles	Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	68.0	1.09
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	75.0	0.70
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	24.7	0.26
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>0.24</b>
Park District of Oak Park, IL	51,793	7.0	0.14
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	128,757	10.0	0.08
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	6.8	0.04
<b>Best Practice = 0.25-0.5 Trail Miles 1,000 Residents</b>			



1.2.3 STAFFING/VOLUNTEERS

This section compares staffing levels for each system by comparing full-time equivalents (FTEs) to total population as well as levels of volunteers. Total FTEs per 10,000 residents is a key performance metric that assesses how well each system is equipped, in terms of human resources, to serve its jurisdiction. In general, agencies participating in the benchmark study are very well staffed, all being above the national median of 8.4 FTEs per 10,000 residents. Among peer agencies, Boca Raton is second in regards to staffing relative to the population served with 42.6 FTEs per 10,000 residents. Boca Raton also ranked second in total volunteer hours (47,694 hours) and third in number of volunteers (1,354 volunteers) which shows that the system is valued by the community and its residents. It is important to note that Boca Raton manages several special use facilities such as Golf Courses, Nature Centers and Tennis Centers which typically require higher levels of staffing and active management.

Agency	Population	Volunteers	Total Volunteer Hours	Av. Hours per Volunteer	Total FTEs	FTEs per 10,000 Residents
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	24,190	96,795	4.0	817	44.7
Boca Raton, FL	125,000	1,354	47,694	35.2	533	42.6
Park District of Oak Park, IL	51,793	1,426	9,899	6.9	182	35.1
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	39	2,784	71.4	224	21.0
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	378	2,703	7.2	180	18.8
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	128,757	580	1,564	2.7	144	11.2
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	167	1,346	8.1	55	8.7
NRPA Median 2020 = 8.4 FTEs per 10,000 Residents						

1.2.4 OPERATING EXPENSE PER CAPITA

Agencies participating in the benchmark study are spending on parks and recreation operations at a substantial rate. Dividing the annual operational budget by each service area’s population allows for a comparison of how much each agency is spending per resident. Boca Raton ranks first among peer agencies for both total operating expense (\$52 M) and expense per resident (\$416.04), and nearly six times the NRPA median of \$74.67 per resident.

This is in part due to the aforementioned special used facilities and also because, unlike most agencies, the Recreation Services Department in Boca Raton is responsible for roadway and median maintenance which contributes to its higher operating budget. In addition, the overall operating budget is jointly funded by the City of Boca Raton and the Greater Boca Raton Park District.

Agency	Population	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Resident
Boca Raton, FL	125,000	\$ 52,005,000	\$ 416.04
Park District of Oak Park, IL	51,793	\$ 17,548,052	\$ 338.81
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	\$ 50,397,098	\$ 275.65
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	\$ 24,763,468	\$ 232.01
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	\$ 13,567,512	\$ 141.63
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	128,757	\$ 14,810,228	\$ 115.02
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	\$ 5,330,298	\$ 85.46
NRPA Median 2020 = \$74.67 Operating Expense per Residents			

1.2.5 DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURES

The table below compares the distribution of expenditures for each agency across personnel, benefits, operations, capital, and other expenses. The median distribution for all agencies reporting to the NRPA database who service 100K-250K residents is also provided for additional perspective. Boca Raton is spending a lower percentage on personnel and has the highest percentage of capital expense not in CIP when compared to benchmark agencies.

(Note: Vehicles and larger maintenance equipment are the primary source of capital expense for Boca Raton)

Agency	Personnel	Operations	Capital Expense not in CIP	Other
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	62%	38%	0%	0%
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	61%	38%	1%	0%
Boca Raton, FL	57%	38%	5%	0%
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	57%	39%	4%	0%
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	55%	42%	3%	0%
NRPA Agencies Serving 100k-250k Residents	58%	36%	3%	4%

Note: The distribution of expenditures were not available for the Park District of Oak Park & Allen Parks and Recreation

1.2.6 REVENUE PER CAPITA

By comparing each agency’s annual non-tax revenue to the population, the annual revenue generated on a per resident basis can be determined. Similar to the analysis of operating expenditures, benchmark agencies demonstrate very high levels of earned income. Although Boca Raton’s \$75.98 of revenue generated per resident represents the benchmark median, this level of earned income is significantly higher than the national median of \$15.44 of revenue per resident. The key difference between Boca Raton and the three agencies generating revenue greater than \$100 / person is that they all have a large multigenerational recreational center that generates a significant portion of revenue through memberships and fees, whereas a facility of that sort is missing in Boca Raton.

Agency	Population	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Revenue per Resident
Park District of Oak Park, IL	51,793	\$ 11,391,553	\$ 219.94
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	\$ 13,673,923	\$ 128.11
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	\$ 11,495,655	\$ 120.00
Boca Raton, FL	125,000	\$ 9,497,800	\$ 75.98
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	\$ 2,841,281	\$ 45.55
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	128,757	\$ 4,613,112	\$ 35.83
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	\$ 3,861,797	\$ 21.12
NRPA Median 2020 = \$15.44 Revenue per Residents			



1.2.7 OPERATIONAL COST RECOVERY

Operational cost recovery is a key performance indicator, arrived at by dividing total non-tax revenue by total operating expense. This measures how well each agency’s revenue generation covers the total cost of operations. Overall, agencies participating in the benchmark study exhibit high rates of cost recovery, with the top performers achieving industry best practice levels. Although Boca Raton has the second lowest cost recovery rate among peer agencies, its 18% operational cost recovery is just slightly below the NRPA median (21.8%).

It should be noted that the benchmark agencies with high cost recovery percentages have one or more signature facilities bringing in a majority of their non-tax revenue. A large portion of non-tax revenue for Boca Raton comes from programming and permit fees that includes Golf, Tennis, Beach Parking, Boat Launch, Dog Beach Permits etc. many of which have had minimal to no fee increases for over 10 years.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, Boca Raton is also responsible for maintaining medians and roadways which add to their operating expenses but are non-revenue generating services.

Agency	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Total Operating Expense	Operational Cost Recovery
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	\$ 11,495,655	\$ 13,567,512	85%
Park District of Oak Park, IL	\$ 11,391,553	\$ 17,548,052	65%
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	\$ 13,673,923	\$ 24,763,468	55%
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 2,841,281	\$ 5,330,298	53%
Coral Springs Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 4,613,112	\$ 14,810,228	31%
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>\$ 9,497,800</b>	<b>\$ 52,005,000</b>	<b>18%</b>
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 3,861,797	\$ 50,397,098	8%
<b>NRPA Median for Agencies Serving 100k-250k Residents= 21.8% Cost Recovery</b>			

1.2.8 CIP SUMMARY

Due to the volatility of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budgets and availability of funding from year to year, the table below reveals the last four years of actual investment and the budgeted CIP for 2020. These figures were then utilized to show the average annual capital investment for each agency. The top performing benchmark agencies are investing significant dollars into CIP efforts each year, as Fort Lauderdale, Boca Raton, and Allen are above the NRPA median for agencies serving 100K-250K residents (\$10M annual average).

Agency	CIP Budget 2017	CIP Budget 2018	CIP Budget 2019	CIP Budget 2020	Avg. Annual CIP
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 44,875,919	\$ 88,328,212	\$ 89,198,444	\$ 49,099,232	\$ 67,875,452
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>\$ 32,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 20,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 12,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 18,500,000</b>
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	\$ -	\$ 12,727,409	\$ 10,286,151	\$ 7,975,301	\$ 10,329,620
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	\$ 6,193,300	\$ 5,306,785	\$ 9,285,449	\$ 3,846,733	\$ 6,158,067
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 15,787,143	\$ 957,551	\$ 1,981,839	\$ 204,784	\$ 4,732,829
Park District of Oak Park, IL	\$ -	\$ 3,095,000	\$ 2,055,000	\$ -	\$ 2,575,000
<b>NRPA Median for Agencies Serving 100k-250k Residents= \$10M CIP Budget</b>					

Note: The CIP budgets were not available for Coral Springs Parks and Recreation

1.2.9 CIP USE

The table below describes the designated uses for capital investments for each of the benchmark agencies. Boca Raton is primarily focused on renovation and development for capital improvements, while its rather dense population explains the difficulty Boca Raton may face acquiring new land. Similarly, most benchmark agencies are spending the majority of their capital budgets on renovation and development, while acquisitions and other investments are utilized to a much lesser degree.

Agency	Renovation	Development	Acquisition	Other
Park District of Oak Park, IL	100%	0%	0%	0%
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	64%	28%	1%	7%
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	55%	43%	2%	0%
Boca Raton, FL	17%	60%	0%	13%
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	15%	85%	0%	0%
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	7%	71%	8%	14%
NRPA Agencies Serving 100k-250k Residents	53%	35%	8%	4%

Note: The CIP budgets were not available for Coral Springs Parks and Recreation

1.2.10 MARKETING

Marketing budgets for parks and recreation agencies are typically much less than the private sector, but the industry is beginning to realize the value of investing in marketing and the potential return on investment that can be achieved. The table below compares the most recent marketing expense (2019) and the current marketing budget (2020) for each agency. Then the current budget is divided by the total population served to arrive at the total marketing spend per resident. Boca Raton represents the second highest marketing budget in the study, and reports the second highest spending per capita (\$2.15).

Agency	Population	Total Marketing Expense (2019)	Total Marketing Budget (2020)	Marketing \$\$ Spent per Resident (2020)
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	\$ 468,688	\$ 631,332	\$ 6.59
Boca Raton, FL	125,000	\$ 264,421	\$ 268,300	\$ 2.15
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	\$ 112,200	\$ 88,000	\$ 0.48
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	\$ 5,969	\$ 22,200	\$ 0.36

Note: Current marketing budgets were not available for Coral Springs Parks and Recreation, the Park District of Oak Park, or Allen Parks & Recreation



1.2.11 **MARKETING AS PERCENTAGE OF OPERATIONS**

The table below describes the marketing expense incurred by each agency and compares it to the Boca Raton’s actual expenditures for 2019 to show what percentage of the operating expenses are dedicated to marketing. Compared to its peers, Boca Raton ranks second for total marketing expense (\$264,421) and third when comparing the percentage of operations spent on marketing (0.51%). However, though Boca Raton ranks relatively high amongst benchmark agencies, they still fall well below the recommended best practice for total marketing expense as percentage of the total operating budget (3%-4%).

Additionally, it should be noted that agencies such as Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation have their own designated marketing personnel. In the case of Boca Raton, the City’s Communications department complements the marketing efforts for some larger events while the majority of the marketing is still done by site staff in addition to their day-to-day responsibilities.

Agency	Total Marketing Expense (2019)	Operational Expense (2019)	Marketing as % of Operations
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	\$ 468,688	\$ 13,567,512	3.45%
Park District of Oak Park, IL	\$ 198,099	\$ 17,548,052	1.13%
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>\$ 264,421</b>	<b>\$ 52,005,000</b>	<b>0.51%</b>
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	\$ 117,730	\$ 24,763,468	0.48%
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 112,200	\$ 50,397,098	0.22%
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 5,969	\$ 5,330,298	0.11%
<b>Best Practice = 3%-4% of Total Operating Budget</b>			

Note: Marketing expenses were not available for Coral Springs Parks and Recreation

1.2.12 **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media has increasingly become an integral part of marketing for parks and recreation agencies. The table below provides a snapshot of how many followers / subscribers each agency has across multiple platforms. Boca Raton has a relatively strong follower base for the three largest outlets, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. It should be noted that some Departments utilized their City’s account followers in instances where they don’t have their own independent social media pages.

Agency	Followers/Subscribers by Social Media Platform				
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube	LinkedIn
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	17,735	3,238	1,006	-	-
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	17,066	5,616	4,047	296	565
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>12,063</b>	<b>2,614</b>	<b>4,617</b>	-	-
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	10,528	5,370	3,689	-	-
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	7,970	1,231	1,927	405	-
Park District of Oak Park, IL	6,198	2,411	1,488	30	-

Note: Social Media statistics were not available for Coral Springs Parks and Recreation

1.2.13 PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

This portion assesses program participation for each agency by comparing total registered program participations to the population of each service area to determine the average participation rate per resident. Program activity is measured in participations (versus participants), which accounts for each time a resident participates in a program and allows for multiple participations per individual. Boca Raton represents the highest of the benchmark agencies with more than six participation per resident (6.10).

Agency	Population	Total Program Participations	Participations per Resident
Boca Raton, FL	125,000	763,017	6.10
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	953,354	5.21
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	550,574	5.16
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	296,037	4.75
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	160,158	1.67

Note: Participation numbers were not available for Coral Springs Parks and Recreation or the Park District of Oak Park

1.2.14 PROGRAM REVENUES

As an additional indicator of revenue-generating capabilities of benchmark agencies, the program revenue of each department was compared to total residents within each jurisdiction. Boca Raton ranks fourth among benchmark agencies and demonstrates modest earnings from programming, generating approximately \$10.54 in program revenue per resident.

As mentioned earlier, Boca Raton’s fees have been unchanged or minimally changed for the last decade though the City and District have commenced a gradual fee increase process in the recent past. To continue growing the program revenue per participant, it would be ideal to have a gradual yet continued evaluation of fees and charges to ensure they reflect the market rates and the value of the experience provided.

Agency	Population	Total Program Revenue	Program Revenue per Resident
Park District of Oak Park, IL	51,793	\$ 6,265,854	\$ 120.98
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	95,797	\$ 5,434,546	\$ 56.73
Allen Parks & Recreation, TX	106,736	\$ 1,337,669	\$ 12.53
Boca Raton, FL	125,000	\$ 1,317,367	\$ 10.54
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	62,373	\$ 339,822	\$ 5.45
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	182,827	\$ 240,228	\$ 1.31

Note: Program Revenue was not available for Coral Springs Parks & Recreation



1.2.15 PROGRAM COST RECOVERY

Similar to the overall cost recovery, each agency’s cost recovery levels for programs were assessed by dividing total program revenues by the direct cost to provide them. Even though Boca Raton’s cost recovery for programming is just under 70%, it still falls second to last amongst benchmark agencies. It should be noted, with agencies tracking direct/indirect costs to various degrees, the Department shouldn’t make inferences solely on this operational cost recovery comparison, but rather focus on their own programs’ cost recovery.

Agency	Total Program Revenue	Total Operating Expense for Programs	Operational Cost Recovery for Programs
Park District of Oak Park, IL	\$ 6,265,854	\$ 4,078,176	154%
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, IN	\$ 5,434,546	\$ 5,466,548	99%
Wellington Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 339,822	\$ 454,323	75%
<b>Boca Raton, FL</b>	<b>\$ 1,317,367</b>	<b>\$ 1,922,549</b>	<b>69%</b>
Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation, FL	\$ 240,228	\$ 4,282,262	6%

Note: Program Operating Expenses were not available for Coral Springs Parks & Recreation or Allen Parks & Recreation

1.3 SUMMARY OF BENCHMARK FINDINGS

As a whole, the peer agencies selected are high performing park systems which allowed Boca Raton to benchmark itself against best practice agencies across the country. For any given performance indicator, most (if not all) benchmark agencies far exceed the national median set forth by the NRPA. Specific areas where study participants perform to an exceptional level include: staffing levels, operational spending, and earned income.

The benchmark comparison validated the strong performance of Boca Raton in many areas, such as staffing levels, operational spending per capita, CIP spending, and program participation. These strengths speak to the investment in the system by the City and the District as well as the ability of the staff to offer high quality programming that engages the community.

The benchmark study also uncovered some limitations and opportunities for Boca Raton. The level of service for trail miles, operational cost recovery, CIP usage on renovations, and marketing as percentage of operations are four areas where Boca Raton falls below the benchmark median and/or national best practices.

Additionally, while Boca Raton is only slightly below the national median for operational cost recovery level, it ranks second to last among peer agencies for this key performance indicator. Boca Raton is generating strong non-tax revenue, but has a significantly high total operating expense. There could be an opportunity to increase non-tax revenue, in order to better offset operating expenses, by revamping or extending the current pricing philosophy for programs or investing in a revenue generating signature facility (E.g. a multi-generation center).

Overall, the benchmark analysis reveals that Boca Raton is a strong park system and is comparable to some of the “best practice” systems across the US. The perspective gained through the peer comparison is valuable in identifying areas for improvement and establishing strategic goals to pursue (E.g., Boca Raton should use this analysis as a baseline comparison that provides key performance indicators (KPIs) to be tracked and measures over time.