

Florida Redevelopment Agency (FRA) Award
Outstanding Rehabilitation Renovation or Reuse Project

1) Project title: what is the name of the project, plan or study? (This title will appear in all publications.)

Celebrate Sunrise - City Park Renovation

2) Image: this is of the project/study/plan – the system requires this...please upload your best hi-resolution photo that you would like included in the Best Book

3) 100-word description (This summary of your entry is used in the Best Book.)

The re-launch of City Park, the oldest park in Sunrise, brings impressive outdoor amenities to the heart of Sunrise's original neighborhoods. The complete makeover of City Park does more than restore residents' pride and expand safety – it also serves as a catalyst for redevelopment and it demonstrates the City's commitment to implementing the East Sunrise Improvements Master Plan. The underutilized baseball diamonds were converted into a multipurpose field surrounded by a walking path with outdoor exercise stations. New park features also include a covered amphitheater stage, event pavilions, a soccer-themed splash pad, a sun-shaded playground, covered basketball courts, and more.

4) Now fill out the boxes that comprise a "narrative" of your entry:

A. Innovation– How the project used new ideas to solve problems or to carry out the project or program

City Park once uninviting and underutilized, is now a first-class amenity where children play and neighbors gather. The redevelopment of this park has been a catalyst for revitalizing our original neighborhoods. The project was completed in 2020 and it was innovative for its commitment to public participation, as well as its role as a centerpiece of revitalization. Local residents were engaged in every step of the process – from meetings about the proposed GO Bond Referendum that would ultimately fund the renovation, to discussions that shaped the East Sunrise Improvements Master Plan. Thanks to an impressive degree of engagement, City Park is now a source of community pride that is leading to additional investment and enhancement in eastern Sunrise.

B. Community Impact – How the project improved economic, social, design, cultural assets of the community

There was a significant public outreach effort leading up to the design and renovation of City Park. The process started with a Parks Master Plan, which included extensive public engagement, including but not limited to focus groups, neighborhood association meetings, phone calls, surveys, events, and direct mail. During outreach meetings, the public made it clear what amenities they wanted in the Park. Instead of baseball fields, which were rarely used, residents requested a multipurpose field so they could play soccer or cricket, or simply enjoy green, open space. The Park also features three covered outdoor basketball courts with lighting for evening usage, as well as a new playground and splash pad for the kids.

The community wanted more cultural opportunities, so the City constructed a covered stage with a greenroom and other backstage amenities to facilitate the hosting of concerts and events. The renovated City Park connects to our upcoming Art Plaza, which will feature original sculptures and host a range of events – from green markets to art shows.

City Park and the adjacent Art Plaza are at the heart of a cluster of civic amenities, which include Village Civic Center (encompassing a meeting/event room, utility customer service, fire station and police substation), Village Beach Club (a freeform pool with additional amenities under construction), and Library Square (a suite of commercial bays being reimagined as public program space and innovative businesses). All are within walking distance of the City's original neighborhoods, and at the nexus of miles of bike lanes connecting Sunset Strip to other corridors of the community.

Powerful results came from garnering input from stakeholders whose lives have been enhanced by the new City Park. We have been extremely successful in progressing from ideas to implementation, and are encouraged by the project's emerging economic development benefits.

For a look at the new and improved City Park, enjoy our grand reopening video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPj6OGGg7HA>

C. Funding– How the project leveraged funding and in-kind assistance

The project was overwhelmingly approved by voters as part of a citywide park referendum that enabled Sunrise to raise \$65 million in general obligation bonds. The actual park renovation was \$6.5 million and it was completed in December 2020. City Park – renovated during the COVID-19 pandemic – was completed in 12 months, on schedule and within budget.

D. Problem Solving– How the project used problem-solving to address unique local issues

The park renovations improved:

- **Safety:** Before the renovation, neighborhood families rarely visited City Park. Due to disuse – and the absence of nighttime lighting – the park became the site of criminal activity. Now that the park is activated, well lit, and it has security features including call boxes and cameras, it has become a safe and welcoming place that residents enjoy.
- **Health and fitness:** The park's new multipurpose field, walking path, exercise equipment, basketball courts, playground and splash pad encourage residents of all ages to stay active and fit. The new nighttime lighting means that neighbors can enjoy the park's amenities whenever it is convenient for them.
- **Sustainability:** City Park features energy efficient LED lighting. Connected by bike paths to other parks and greenways, it has helped us realize our vision for sustainable mobility.
- **Community building:** The community has been involved in the changes, and they are proud of the positive outcome of their efforts.
- **Outlook for further improvements:** The City Park enhancements set the stage for further revitalization, with additional public and private investment coming to the area, including an Art Plaza, a new live/work residential development, a brewery, and even an interested co-working/incubator space.
- **Property values:** The City acquired a commercial bay in the plaza next to City Park in 2019, prior to City Park renovation and paid \$104 per square foot. After the City Park renovation was completed in 2021, the City purchased a commercial bay in the same plaza and paid \$160 per square foot. This increase in property value is a sign that the renovation added value to the area and is helping with the area's revitalization.

E. Applicability to Other Communities– Why this project or program could be transferred to other communities

This project should inspire cities to move park projects forward because they can help rejuvenate a community. In addition, the complete revitalization and transformation of an older park, this type of project can help with bigger redevelopment goals. We have seen renewed interest from private developers and investors who are now eager to come into the area after seeing the City Park transformation. The complete park renovation is a signal to the development community that the City is truly invested in transforming the area.

It is also important for other communities to remember that the potential for a park project to bring community revitalization is closely related to the genuine involvement of the people living in the area. It is very important to engage and involve the public before making any decisions regarding a park's amenities. This will ensure that the park will be used to its full potential and that the community will be proud at the end of the project.

F. Other Things to Tell the Judges – A description of any other aspects (first of its kind, most successful, aspects not included above)

The Park renovation has been key in attracting new investment into Sunrise's original neighborhoods. While there are no newer housing options in the immediate area, since the park renovation, we have seen a number of proposals for new residential developments starting to move forward. We have also been acquiring properties closer to the park to be able to incentivize and attract new, fresh and vibrant businesses. This is not just a simple park renovation but a catalyst for a larger area-wide transformation and it is already resulting in community revitalization.

The City Park project is about more than amazing amenities; it demonstrates how parks connect people and enhance the life of a community.

For a look at the new and improved City Park, enjoy our grand reopening video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPj6OGGg7HA>