

# **CITY OF FORT PIERCE**

## **PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**REPORT TO THE MAYOR  
AND  
CITY COMMISSION**



# Should the City of Fort Pierce provide a dog-friendly beach?

**Presented by Committee Members:**

**Annette Brown**

**Charlene Adair**

**Patty Reconco**

**Joe Hayek**

**John Smith**

**Jim Podsedly**

**Martha Wright**

**Mike Reals, Public Works Director**

**Kay Czarnecki, Support**

# City of Fort Pierce Parks Advisory Committee Report to the Mayor and City Commission

- **Current Overview**
- **Actions Taken**
- **Information Gathered**
- **Recommendations**

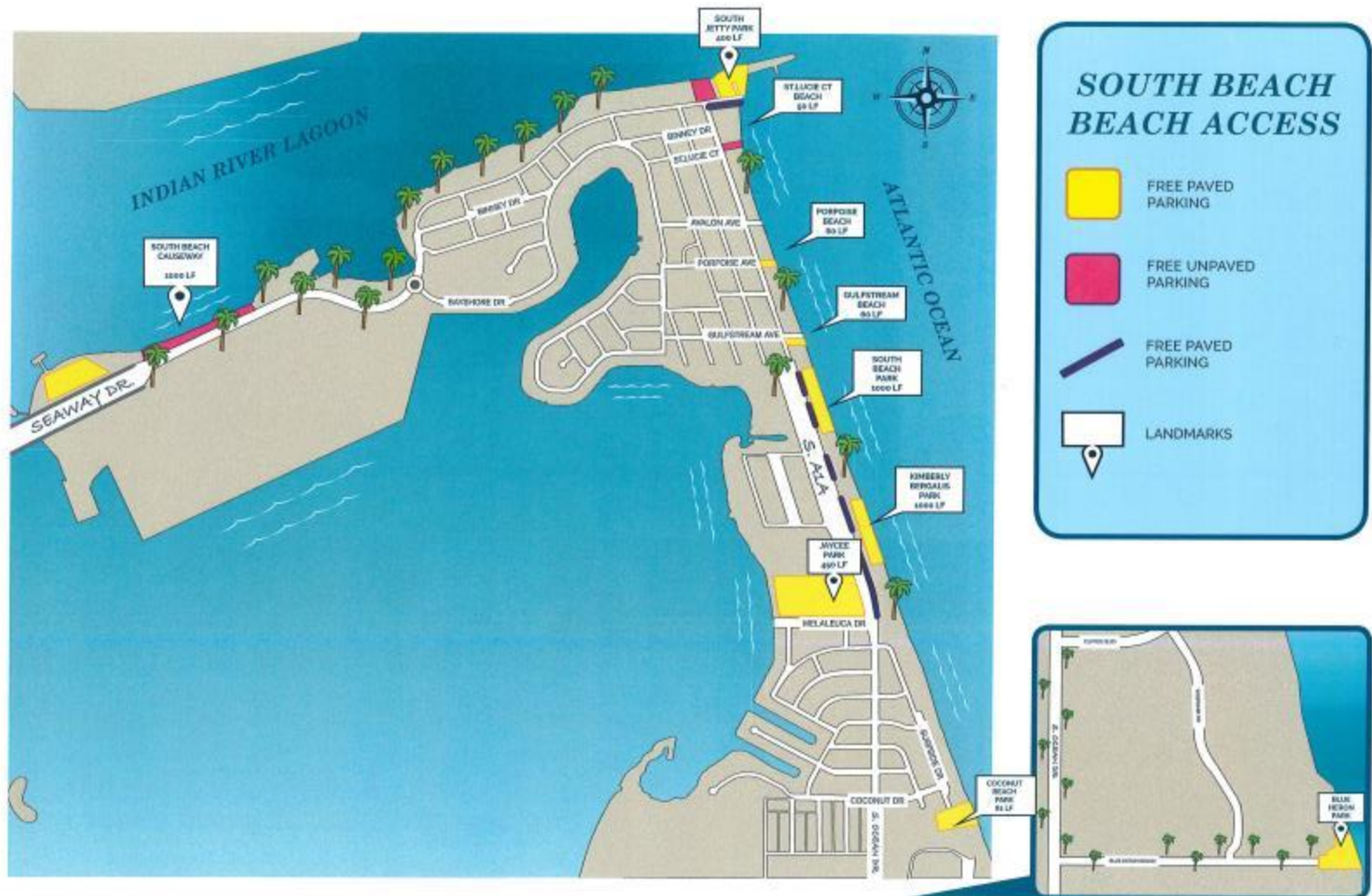
## Current Overview

**Fort Pierce does not have any dog-friendly beaches or beach parks (Ordinance 12-202) and owns/maintains 9 waterfront parks that total 15.77 acres and have approximately 5100 linear feet of beach frontage.**

**Enforcement of this ordinance is inconsistent and ineffective, causing concern from citizens on both sides of the issue of whether to allow dogs on our beaches and in our parks. Several dog attacks have occurred.**

**St. Lucie County has one dog-friendly beach and park: Walton Rocks, which is self-policed, very successful, and provides restrooms, showers, picnic areas, parking, and space (about 24 acres) for non-aggressive dogs to run off-leash.**

# SOUTH BEACH ACCESS

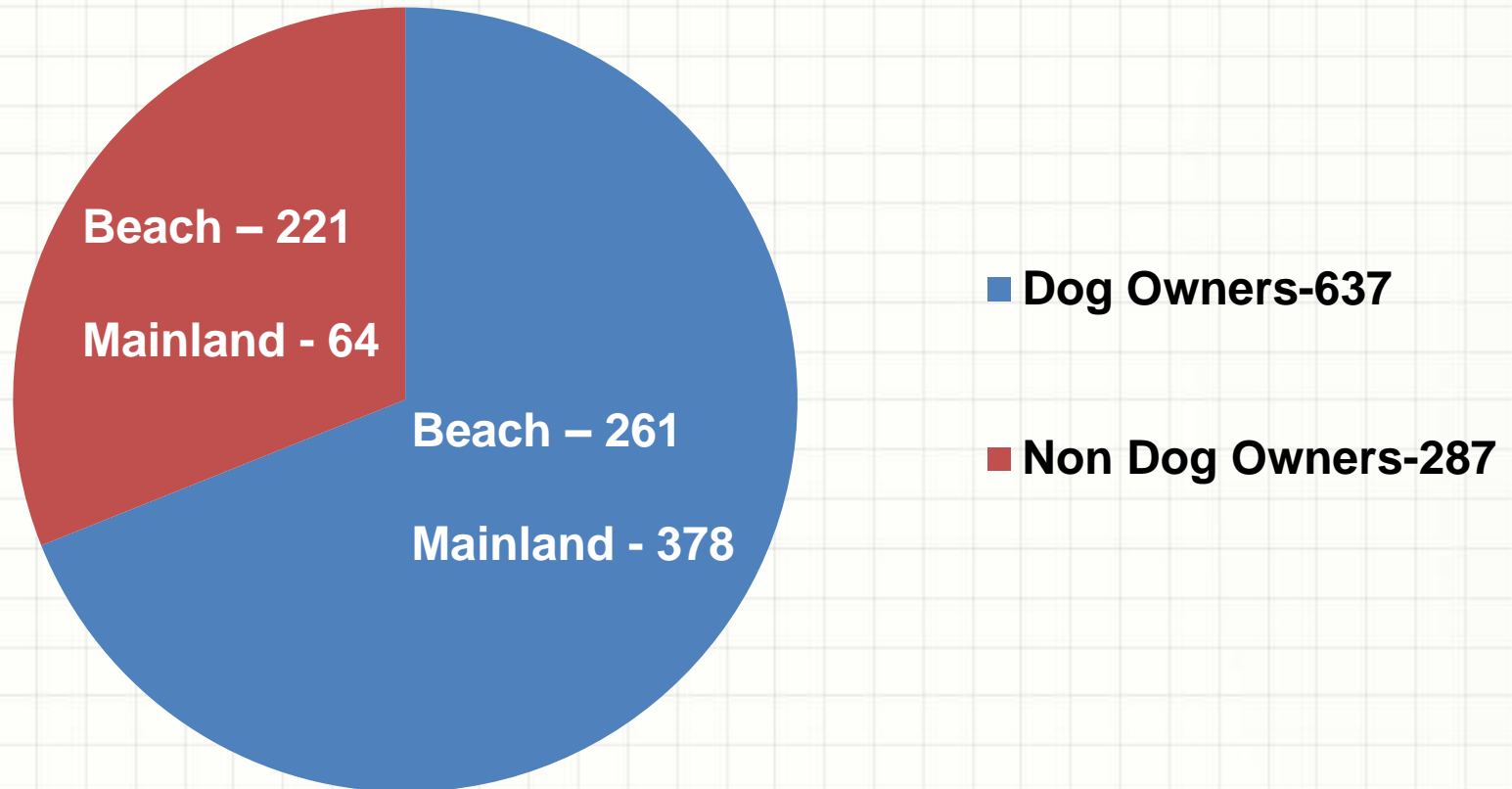


## **Actions Taken**

- **Developed a Dog-Friendly Beach Survey in order to collect information from the citizens on this issue, resulting in a very successful response of 924 citizens**
- **Promoted the Survey to ensure a maximum number of citizens participated through the City website and social media, such as the SBA newsletter, Nextdoor, and Facebook**
- **Analyzed and discussed the results of this survey**
- **Formulated recommendations based on this data**

# Information Gathered

## Respondents



**People on the beach responded whether they had dogs or not whereas people on the mainland responded much more strongly if they own a dog. This makes sense since people on the beach would be impacted whether they own a dog or not.**

## Information Gathered

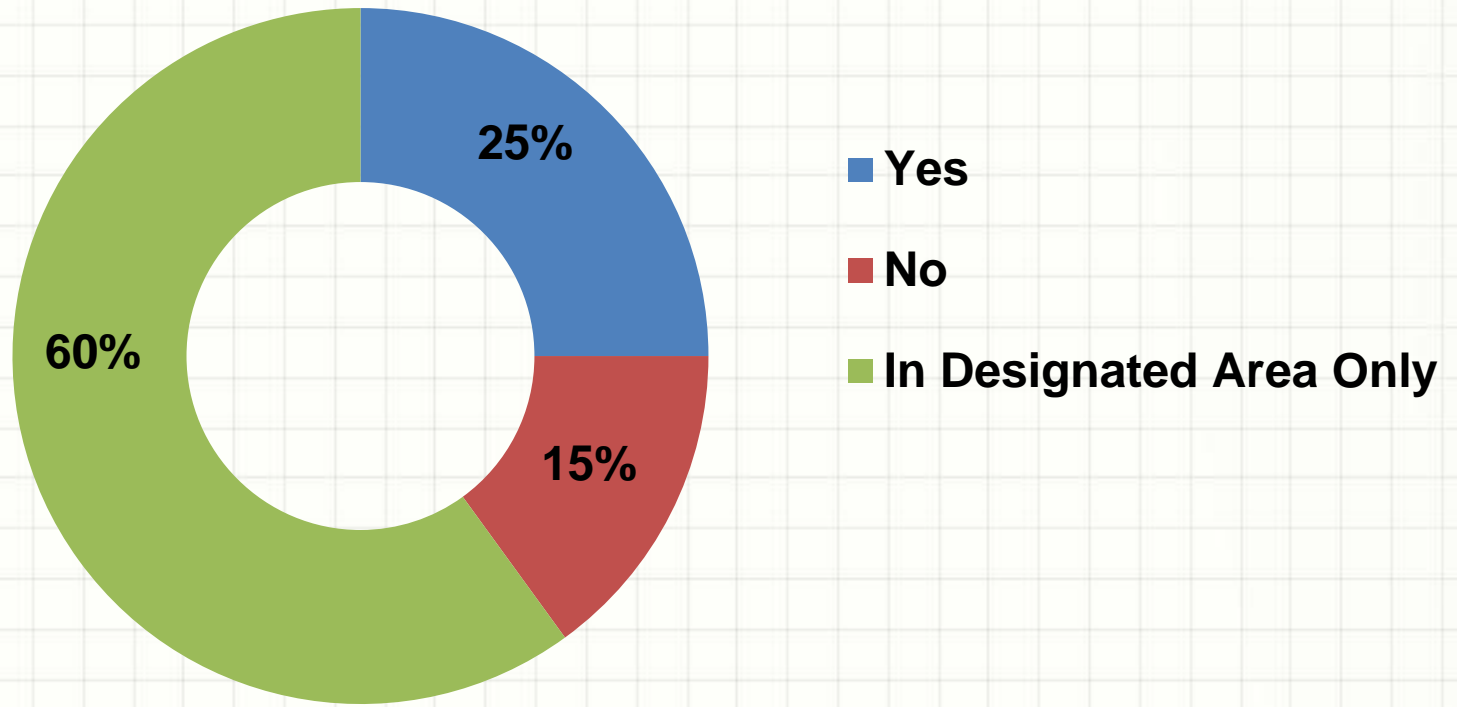
- Respondents were equally divided between those who frequent a dog beach and those who do not.
- Most of those who frequent a dog beach are dog owners.
- *45% of dog owners do not frequent a dog-friendly beach.*

## Information Gathered

- **37% of dog owners said they frequent a beach where leashes are required – this indicates misunderstanding, since there are no dog-friendly beaches requiring leashes within the City of Fort Pierce.**
- **29% of dog owners would not take their dog to the beach if leashes were required.**

# Information Gathered

## Should Dogs Be Allowed on any Beach?



## **Information Gathered**

**The top 3 things Important to a successful dog-friendly beach:  
(All Respondents)**

- 1. Parking**
- 2. Location (walkable)**
- 3. Restrooms**

## **Information Gathered**

**The top 3 things Important to a  
successful dog-friendly beach:  
(Dog Owners)**

- 1. Parking**
- 2. Dogs off leash**
- 3. Restrooms**

**(location was 7<sup>th</sup> out of 8)**

## **Information Gathered**

**The issues that related to dog-friendly beaches that concerned all respondents were:**

- 1. Cleanliness**
- 2. Dog Conflicts**
- 3. Safety**

## Recommendations

- **This Committee concludes that the City does not have adequate space and facilities to recommend having a dog-friendly beach.**
- **The data from the citizens does not support an urgency to have a dog-friendly beach within the City.**
- **We recommend increased promotion of Walton Rocks in City marketing literature, websites, social media, etc.**
- **Consistent enforcement of the City Ordinance will eliminate much of the confusion and misinformation surrounding this issue. This includes additional signage, law enforcement, and code enforcement.**



# **Discussion and Questions**