White Paper

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Prepared by: USTA Florida

The Case for Public Tennis Court Investment in Florida

A Data-Driven Framework for Policymakers, Parks & Recreation Directors, and Community Stakeholders

www.ustaflorida.com

USTA FLORIDA

About USTA Florida

Established in 1949, USTA Florida is a section of the United States Tennis Association, the national governing body for tennis in the United States, and serves as the official governing body of tennis in the state of Florida. For more than 75 years, USTA Florida has worked to grow the sport at every level, from grassroots recreation to competitive play, across all 67 counties in Florida.

As a not-for-profit organization with approximately 40,000 individual members and 500 organizational members, USTA Florida reinvests in the sport and the communities it serves. Our mission is to promote and develop tennis for all in Florida.

USTA Florida is a volunteer-driven organization. More than 600 volunteers embedded in communities across the state are the backbone of everything we do, organizing leagues and tournaments, supporting programs, advocating for court investment, and connecting players to the sport they love. This volunteer network is supported by a professional staff of more than 70 team members working both from our executive office in Orlando and remotely throughout Florida, extending our reach into every corner of the state.

USTA Florida Big Bold Moves

To accelerate tennis growth statewide, USTA Florida has committed to three strategic priorities that define how we invest our resources, engage our community, and lead the sport forward.

Best-in-Class Facilities and Providers

USTA Florida identified a critical need to invest in public tennis infrastructure and providers as the primary driver of growth. Public courts are where many players begin their journey—often becoming future private club members, coaches, and volunteers. This natural pipeline strengthens the entire tennis ecosystem. Tennis must feel accessible and fun from day one, and success means more than programs: it's about empowering play facilitators, building relationships with facility staff, and creating welcoming spaces that keep courts full.

Business Insights and Analytics

USTA Florida has an unique advantage utilizing local data and insights that go beyond national metrics. This bold move focuses on using that data to make informed decisions, demonstrate progress, and identify what drives growth. By asking the right questions, why isn't something working, how do we keep courts busy, we'll create a shared understanding of the state of play across programs and facilities. These insights will guide smarter strategies and resource allocation to ensure tennis thrives statewide.

Volunteer System and Structure

The Board emphasized the need for greater leadership in volunteer engagement. Volunteers are the heartbeat of USTA Florida, and this initiative ensures they have a structured, sustainable system to thrive. The Board will take an active role in mentoring, coordinating, and developing volunteers, reducing staff oversight while energizing new talent. Clear roles, responsibilities, and timelines will create a network where volunteers feel empowered to lead and advocate for tennis in their communities.

For more information, visit www.USTAFlorida.com.

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Executive Summary

Florida's tennis infrastructure faces a critical imbalance: surging participation is colliding with a public court system that covers less than one-fifth of the state's total court inventory. Of the 17,770 tennis courts tracked across 65 counties, only 3,497—roughly 19.7 percent—are publicly accessible. That translates to approximately one public court for every 6,686 residents, a ratio that trails national benchmarks and is especially inadequate given Florida's rapid population growth and year-round playing climate.

Meanwhile, demand is accelerating. Nationally, tennis participation reached a record 27.3 million players in 2025, a six percent increase that marks six consecutive years of growth. In Florida, an estimated 1.33 million adults and 332,000 youth played tennis in the past twelve months, with an additional 1.13 million adults expressing interest in starting. Florida's population is projected to reach approximately 28.3 million by 2050 under the medium-growth scenario published by the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), adding roughly 4.9 million residents over the next quarter century. Without corresponding investment in court infrastructure, the gap between supply and demand will widen every year.

This white paper presents the case that public tennis court investment is not merely a recreational amenity—it is a public health intervention, an equity strategy, a driver of local economic activity, and a community asset that appreciates in value over time. The paper draws on USTA operational data, U.S. Census demographics, BEBR population projections, peer-reviewed health research, and construction cost analyses to outline the scope of the challenge and recommend a tiered action framework for state, county, and municipal decision-makers.

Key Ask: Florida should target a minimum of 800 new or fully rehabilitated public courts over the next decade, supported by a combination of state capital grants, federal pass-through funding, and local public–private partnerships.

Introduction

Florida occupies a unique position in the American recreational landscape. With approximately 23.4 million residents, a median age that skews older than the national average, year-round warm weather, and a robust tourism economy, the state has both the demographic incentive and the climatic advantage to lead the nation in tennis participation and infrastructure. In many respects, it already does: Florida is home to the USTA National Campus in Lake Nona, hosts thousands of sanctioned tournaments each year, and consistently ranks among the top states for online tennis search interest.

Yet a closer look at infrastructure reveals a paradox. While Florida's total court count is substantial, the vast majority of those courts sit behind private gates—at country clubs, homeowner associations, apartment complexes, and commercial athletic facilities. For residents without a club membership or a community association that includes courts, the publicly accessible inventory is remarkably thin.

This paper examines the current state of Florida's public tennis infrastructure, documents the demand trajectory driving the need for investment, explores the equity implications of the existing access gap, and builds the economic case for closing that gap. It concludes with tiered, actionable recommendations for policymakers at every level of government. Throughout, the analysis relies on data sourced from USTA Florida's records, the Kinetica/GapMaps catchment report for Florida, the BEBR 2026 population projections, U.S. Census Bureau demographic estimates, and published cost benchmarks for court construction and resurfacing in the Florida market.

3. The State of Public Tennis Infrastructure

3.1 Court Inventory Overview

USTA Florida's records identify 5,601 active tennis venues across 65 of the state's 67 counties, housing a combined 17,770 courts. These facilities range from single-court private residences to large municipal tennis centers and resort complexes. The following breakdown illustrates the ownership structure:

Facility Type	Facilities	Courts
Public Park	990	3,248
Community/Recreation Center (Public)	65	249
Athletic/Commercial Club (Private)	435	3,026
Apartments/Condominiums (Private)	1,700	2,914
Schools (K–12)	530	2,512
Colleges/Universities	70	441
Country Club (Private)	270	1,621
HOA (Private)	690	1,709
Hotel/Resort, Military, Corporate, Other	850	2,050

Source: USTA Florida records, March 2026.

Only 19.7% of Florida's 17,770 tennis courts are publicly accessible — one public court for every 6,686 residents.

3.2 Public Versus Private Access

The 80/20 split between private and public courts is one of the starkest in any major tennis state. The Tennis Industry Association's Racquet Industry Research Group (RIRG) National Court Report estimates approximately 270,000 tennis courts in the United States, with public facilities representing a significant share of programming-active venues nationally. Florida's public share—19.7 percent—falls dramatically below national norms, meaning a Florida resident relying on public infrastructure faces substantially greater competition for court time compared to the national average.

The gap is especially consequential because Florida's private court inventory is concentrated in affluent coastal counties. Palm Beach County alone accounts for 2,483 courts, but the overwhelming majority are at country clubs, gated communities, and commercial clubs. A resident of Belle Glade or Pahokee in western Palm Beach County faces a fundamentally different access reality than a resident of Palm Beach Gardens or Boca Raton.

3.3 Geographic Disparities

Court distribution across Florida's 67 counties is highly uneven. The top five counties by total court count—Palm Beach (2,483), Broward (1,581), Miami-Dade (1,479), Lee (1,084), and Collier (999)—together hold 43 percent of all courts in the state. Meanwhile, 17 rural and small counties each have fewer than 10 total courts, with Glades County recording zero, and Dixie, Holmes, Hardee, and Lafayette counties having two or fewer.

When court counts are normalized by population, the disparities persist in a different pattern. High-population counties such as Hillsborough (805 courts for 1.58 million residents) yield roughly 5.1 courts per 10,000 people, while many smaller counties, despite low absolute counts, register even lower per-capita availability because their few courts are often privately held.

4. Demand Is Outpacing Supply

4.1 Participation Growth

U.S. tennis participation reached 27.3 million players in 2025, marking six consecutive years of growth and a six percent increase over 2024, according to the 2026 U.S. Tennis Participation Report published by the USTA in partnership with the Physical Activity Council (PAC) and the PLAY Study. Approximately one in every 11 Americans played tennis in 2025—the highest proportion on record, surpassing the previous ratio of one in 13 from 2023 and far above the pre-pandemic ratio of one in 16. Participation has surged 54 percent from the 2019 baseline of 17.7 million, transforming what some initially viewed as a temporary pandemic diversion into a sustained shift in American recreational preferences, with participation rates climbing from 5.8 to 8.8 percent of the population aged 6 and older.

The depth of engagement is equally notable. The number of core players—those playing ten or more times annually—grew to a record 14.5 million, representing 53 percent of all participants, an 11 percent increase over 2024. Total play occasions reached 616 million nationwide, up seven percent year-over-year. Player retention hit a five-year high of 80 percent, while a record 4.9 million Americans played tennis for the first time in 2025. Established adults aged 35 and older powered nearly 95 percent of all growth, adding 1.5 million players and setting record highs across all segments. The USTA has set an ambitious goal to grow the participant base to 35 million players by 2035.

Florida mirrors and in some cases exceeds these national trends. The USTA section-level data shows Florida's participation rate rose to 9.1 percent in 2025 (up from 8.0 percent in 2024), with an estimated 1.9 million players—a 5.1 percent compound annual growth rate since 2020, making it one of the fastest-growing sections in the country. Florida also ranks among the top states for online tennis search interest, with the West Palm Beach–Fort Pierce, Miami–Fort Lauderdale, and Fort Myers–Naples metropolitan areas all appearing in the national top ten for search volume. The Kinetica/GapMaps catchment analysis estimates 1.33 million adults played tennis in the prior twelve months (a 7.36 percent participation rate), along with 332,000 youth aged 6 to 17 (an 11.09 percent rate). Critically, an additional 1.13 million Florida adults and 335,000 youth expressed interest in playing but had not yet done so—a pool of latent demand that exceeds the current active player count among youth and approaches it among adults.

1.9 million Floridians played tennis in the past year. An additional 1.47 million want to start.

4.2 Population Growth

Florida's population growth further amplifies pressure on existing infrastructure. The state's 2025 estimated population of 23.38 million is projected to reach 24.91 million by 2030, 26.97 million by 2040, and 28.25 million by 2050 under BEBR's medium projection series. That represents a net addition of approximately 4.87 million residents in 25 years—the equivalent of adding a city larger than Los Angeles to Florida's population.

Growth is not distributed uniformly. Several Central Florida and Gulf Coast counties are projected to see the most substantial gains. Osceola County is expected to grow from 485,000 to 755,000 residents (medium projection, 2050); Polk from 847,000 to 1.14 million; Lake from 446,000 to 626,000; Pasco from 648,000 to 867,000; and Lee from 839,000 to 1.07 million. These high-growth corridors often lack proportional increases in recreational infrastructure.

4.3 Evidence of Unmet Demand

Multiple indicators signal that Florida's current court supply is insufficient. USTA Florida's operational data shows 7,295 active league teams, 4,914 distinct sanctioned tournaments generating over 303,000 participant-appearances, 4,851 distinct league captains, and 150 Junior Team Tennis captains and co-captains—volumes that indicate an intensely organized and engaged playing community competing for limited court time. The 21 active wheelchair tennis programs registered across the state further illustrate the breadth of communities served.

Nationally, municipalities report peak-hour wait times exceeding 45 minutes at public courts, with many parks departments noting that dual-use conversions for pickleball have further compressed available tennis capacity. Florida's 788,000 adult and 49,000 youth pickleball participants (Kinetica/GapMaps Catchment Report, March 2026) add direct competition for court space, particularly in counties where blended-line courts are the norm rather than the exception.

5. Equity and Access

5.1 Income-Based Barriers

Tennis has historically been perceived as an affluent sport, and Florida's court ownership structure reinforces that perception. When 80 percent of courts require a club membership, HOA residency, or hotel stay to access, the cost barrier is structural, not merely cultural. Florida's median household income of approximately $75,630 masks significant disparity: 14.9 percent of households earn below $20,000 annually, and more than 29 percent earn below $35,000. For these households, a private club membership—typically $150 to $500 or more per month—is economically out of reach.

Public courts represent the only zero- or low-cost access point for these residents. When public courts are scarce, poorly maintained, or concentrated in wealthier neighborhoods, the sport effectively becomes inaccessible to lower-income populations regardless of their interest.

5.2 Youth and Senior Participation

Two demographic groups stand to benefit most from expanded public court access: youth and seniors. Among Florida's 3.0 million children aged 6 to 17, the 11.09 percent participation rate represents 332,000 current players, with an additional 335,000 interested youth. Florida's 4,289 public schools and 1,725 private schools are potential points of entry, but school-based courts often have restricted community access and may not be maintained to standards that encourage recreational play.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Florida's 4.86 million residents aged 65 and older—21.6 percent of the population, compared to 17.7 percent nationally—represent a population for whom physical activity is a critical health intervention. The Copenhagen City Heart Study, a landmark prospective cohort study of 8,577 adults followed for up to 25 years, found that tennis was associated with the greatest gain in life expectancy among all sports studied—up to 9.7 additional years compared with sedentary individuals. As the authors note, this observational study cannot establish causation with certainty; however, the strength, duration, and consistency of the association makes it among the most compelling evidence linking a single sport to longevity outcomes. Spring, Holmes, and Smith (2020), in a peer-reviewed survey of long-term tennis participants, further documented that chronic tennis players aged 45 and older reported significantly better overall health, lower obesity rates, and lower prevalence of heart disease compared to general population benchmarks. That study drew on a self-selected sample of 151 ITF-affiliated members—a limitation worth noting—but its findings align directionally with the larger Copenhagen cohort and with a broader body of racquet sports health research. For a state where 20.7 percent of adults do not meet physical activity guidelines and the obesity rate is 26.8 percent, these health outcomes represent meaningful public value.

5.3 Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Florida's population is among the most diverse in the nation: 26.6 percent Hispanic, 17.0 percent Black, and 3.2 percent Asian. The 2026 U.S. Tennis Participation Report documents that tennis is making significant strides in diversifying its player base nationally. Black and African American participation grew 14 percent in 2025—a 454,000-player increase—reaching 3.7 million players, with a compound annual growth rate of 12 percent since 2020. Hispanic participation has surged at a compound annual growth rate of approximately 13.5 percent since 2020, far exceeding population growth rates, reaching 5.1 million players. Asian/Pacific Islander participation also grew at a compound annual rate of 7.4 percent since 2020, reaching 3.0 million players. Nationally, 39 percent of all tennis players report playing primarily at public parks—the single largest venue category—underscoring the central role public infrastructure plays in the sport's growth and diversification.

USTA Florida's membership data reflects growing but still underrepresented engagement: Hispanic members comprise 16.2 percent and African American members 3.2 percent of the total membership base. Expanding public court access in communities of color is both an equity imperative and a participation growth strategy.

6. The Economic Case

6.1 Tennis Tourism and Tournament Revenue

USTA Florida's inaugural Economic Impact Report, conducted by Tourism Economics (an Oxford Economics company) and released in December 2024, provides definitive evidence of tennis's economic value. The study analyzed 1,134 sanctioned amateur, youth, and adult tennis tournaments and events held across Florida in 2023. Those events attracted 92,456 participants and 160,325 spectators, of whom 112,838 were non-local visitors. These visitors generated $81.8 million in direct spending across lodging, food and beverage, retail, transportation, and entertainment. The total economic impact—including $30.4 million in indirect effects and $33.7 million in induced effects—reached $145.9 million in total business sales.

> ***Every dollar USTA Florida invested generated $12.84 in visitor spending, $6.95 in total income, and $1.80 in state and local taxes. — Tourism Economics / USTA Florida EIS, 2024***

The tournaments and events directly supported 661 jobs, with an additional 163 indirect and 183 induced jobs, for a total of 1,007 positions. State and local tax contributions totaled $11.4 million. These figures capture only sanctioned tournament activity; they do not include the economic contribution of league play, recreational court usage, coaching and instructional programs, equipment retail, or the year-round operations of the USTA National Campus in Lake Nona—all of which add substantially to the total economic footprint of tennis in Florida.

USTA Florida's executive director Laura Bowen observed that the report demonstrates why cities that develop tennis facilities and host events see returns well beyond direct revenue. When economic impact is combined with health and wellness benefits, public tennis centers represent a first-class investment for any community.

6.2 Property Value Effects

Proximity to well-maintained parks and recreational amenities is consistently associated with property value premiums in the peer-reviewed hedonic pricing literature. Studies conducted across multiple U.S. markets document premiums ranging from a few percentage points to more than 20 percent for homes located near high-quality park and open space assets, with the magnitude varying based on park size, amenity quality, and local market conditions. Florida-specific research on this relationship is limited and a dedicated hedonic pricing study quantifying the premium associated with public tennis courts specifically is a recommended area for future research. What the existing literature does establish is that well-maintained, actively programmed parks increase surrounding property values—and that public tennis courts, as visible, regularly used amenities within those parks, contribute to that effect.

6.3 Health System Cost Offsets

Florida's health profile underscores the cost of physical inactivity: 20.7 percent of adults are physically inactive (exceeding the 18.5 percent national rate), 26.8 percent are obese, and 8.2 percent have diabetes. Life expectancy in the state averages 78.6 years. Florida's healthcare economy is massive—the Florida Hospital Association reports that hospitals alone generated $198.6 billion in total economic output in 2023, supported nearly 977,000 jobs, and directly employed 348,085 workers (UF/IFAS Economic Impact Study for FHA). Any reduction in preventable chronic disease admissions yields meaningful savings across this system.

The connection between built environment and health outcomes is well documented in Florida-specific research. Florida TaxWatch's 2024 report on Social Determinants of Health: Neighborhood and Built Environment found that limited access to safe recreational areas increases the risk of chronic illness and mental health challenges, with the effects falling disproportionately on vulnerable populations. The report emphasized that strategic investments in community infrastructure—including recreational facilities—can significantly reduce healthcare costs while improving economic stability.

A 2016 Health Impact Assessment conducted in Hillsborough County by the Florida Department of Health, funded by a grant from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) in conjunction with the CDC, assessed a specific proposed policy to allow businesses to offer free outdoor fitness classes in county parks. The study documented that physical inactivity rates in Hillsborough County varied significantly by income and education level, and that expanding accessible outdoor recreation programming in underserved areas was associated with increased physical activity and reduced chronic disease risk—findings directly applicable to the case for public tennis court investment.

More recently, a 2025 study by the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization on active infrastructure investments offers a useful analogy for quantifying the health returns on public recreation investment. The study's health impact assessment calculated that a 1 percent increase in adult physical activity countywide would avert approximately 0.5 premature deaths annually and yield $6.9 million in economic value, while a 5 percent increase would avert 2.6 deaths and save $35.6 million per year. While those findings were derived specifically from pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Miami-Dade County and cannot be applied directly to tennis court construction statewide, the underlying methodology—which uses CDC-validated estimates of the economic value of physical activity—illustrates the order of magnitude of returns that any infrastructure investment generating meaningful activity increases can produce. Tennis courts, which convert sedentary residents into regular players, represent precisely that category of investment.

Tennis, as a sport accessible from ages 4 to 94 with documented cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, and cognitive benefits, represents a preventive health investment that reduces downstream medical costs. The Copenhagen City Heart Study associates tennis with up to 9.7 additional years of life expectancy in an observational cohort of 8,577 adults—the strongest sport-specific longevity finding in the peer-reviewed literature, though observational in design. Spring et al. (2020), in a survey of 151 ITF-affiliated tennis players, found that long-term participants report significantly lower rates of obesity and heart disease, consistent with the Copenhagen findings. Even modest shifts—moving a fraction of Florida's 3.76 million physically inactive adults into regular play—would produce measurable savings in emergency room visits, chronic disease management, and long-term care.

7. The Cost of Inaction

7.1 Deferred Maintenance Compounds

Tennis court surfaces have finite lifespans. Hard courts (acrylic on asphalt or concrete) typically require resurfacing every 4 to 8 years at a cost of $6,000 to $20,000 per court; clay courts require similar periodic rehabilitation. When municipalities defer these expenditures, surfaces deteriorate to the point of requiring full reconstruction—at $40,000 to $130,000 per court depending on surface type and whether lighting is included. The difference between a $12,000 resurfacing and a $100,000 rebuild represents the hidden cost of delay.

7.2 Lost Revenue and Programming Capacity

Courts in disrepair cannot host sanctioned tournaments, league matches, or instructional programs. Each tournament that bypasses a community due to inadequate facilities represents forfeited hotel tax revenue, restaurant spending, and local economic activity. Each youth program that cannot operate for lack of courts represents children who do not develop a lifelong physical activity habit. Each league season compressed by insufficient court capacity represents engaged adults who reduce their playing frequency or abandon the sport altogether.

7.3 Widening Equity Gaps

Without new investment, the private/public disparity will continue to widen. As Florida adds nearly five million residents by 2050, the residential development that accommodates that growth will include private courts in planned communities and upscale developments, further shifting the ratio. Public infrastructure that is not expanded will serve an ever-larger population at an ever-lower quality of service, pushing tennis further out of reach for residents who depend on public access.

8. Funding the Gap

8.1 State Funding Mechanisms

Florida offers several established programs that can support tennis court construction and rehabilitation. The Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) provides grants for public outdoor recreation, with an application window typically in September. The Florida Communities Trust (FCT) funds acquisition of land for parks and recreational facilities. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), administered through the state as a federal pass-through, funds outdoor recreation facilities including courts, lighting, fencing, and ancillary amenities. The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) can support trail connections and access paths that serve tennis facilities, and Florida Forever supports land acquisition enabling recreational development.

8.2 Federal Funding Mechanisms

At the federal level, the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides competitive grants for outdoor recreation development. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding through State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds can be directed toward outdoor recreation and park improvements. The Economic Development Administration's ARPA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation grants support infrastructure enhancements that may include tennis facilities, and the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) competitive grants specifically target new recreation facilities in underserved urban areas. Grants.gov serves as the primary portal for federal competitive grant opportunities.

8.3 USTA Florida Investment

USTA Florida is investing directly in public tennis infrastructure across the state. Since 2022, USTA Florida has committed over $2.9 million across 14 public facility projects—funding court resurfacing, full court rebuilds, new court construction, lighting and electrical upgrades, fencing, equipment replacement, and hurricane damage repairs. The following table details these investments:

Year	Location	Description	Amount
2022	Lee County Community Tennis Association	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, equipment replacement	$70,000
2022	Treasure Bay Golf and Tennis Facility	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, equipment replacement	$41,000
2022	New Smyrna Beach Tennis Center	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, light post and windscreens	$93,300
2024–2025	Southern Recreation Center, Palm Coast	Addition of 5 new clay courts	$695,000
2025	Riverside Racquet Complex, Vero Beach	Court resurfacing for 2 courts and crack repairs	$25,380
2025–2026	Fort Walton Beach Tennis Center	7 courts resurfaced and 3 hitting walls	$120,000
2025–2026	Racquet Club of Cocoa Beach	Rebuild of 6 hard courts + new lighting and electrical for 12 courts	$1,100,000
2025	Treasure Bay Golf & Tennis, Treasure Island	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, fence	$241,047
2025	HCC Tennis Center, Tampa	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, fencing & canvas structures	$167,878
2025	St. Petersburg Tennis Center	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, some lighting	$68,473
2025	McMullen Tennis Complex, Clearwater	Hurricane damage – fencing	$46,508
2025	Apollo Beach Racquet & Fitness Club	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing, lighting & electrical	$223,700
2025	City of Plant City Tennis Facility	Hurricane damage – court resurfacing	$57,080
		Total	$2,949,366

Source: USTA Florida records, March 2026.

These investments demonstrate USTA Florida's commitment to maintaining and expanding public court access, particularly in communities affected by hurricane damage and in high-growth areas where new capacity is needed. At the national level, the USTA's Tennis Venue Services (TVS) grant program represents an additional funding source—having awarded more than $19 million in grants since 2005, impacting over 500 courts in more than 60 communities. Florida municipalities should aggressively pursue TVS grants as matching funds to complement state, local, and USTA Florida investment.

8.4 Public–Private Partnerships

Several models merit consideration for Florida municipalities. Naming-rights agreements with local businesses can offset construction costs. Management concessions allow private operators to run programs at public facilities in exchange for maintenance obligations. Joint-use agreements with school districts open school-based courts for community use during non-school hours. Developer impact fee programs can require or incentivize tennis court construction as part of planned residential developments, ensuring that infrastructure growth keeps pace with population growth.

Estimated Construction Costs per Court (Florida Market, 2026)

Court Type	Without Lights	With Lights
Asphalt Hard Court	$40,000–$100,000	$45,000–$115,000
Concrete Hard Court	$60,000–$115,000	$65,000–$130,000
Post-Tensioned Concrete	$60,000–$120,000	$65,000–$135,000
Clay Court	$25,000–$60,000	$31,000–$75,000
Resurfacing (any type)	$6,000–$20,000	—

Source: USTA Florida court construction cost analysis, 2026.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations are organized by level of government, with specific, measurable actions and an accountability framework designed to track progress toward closing Florida's public court gap.

9.1 State-Level Actions

1. Establish a dedicated Tennis and Racquet Sport Infrastructure Grant Program within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, modeled on FRDAP but specifically targeted at court construction, resurfacing, and lighting. Recommended initial appropriation: $15 million over five years.
2. Require the inclusion of tennis court condition assessments in statewide parks and recreation needs analyses, ensuring that deferred maintenance is quantified and tracked.
3. Codify tennis court construction as an eligible use within Florida's Tourist Development Tax, enabling counties to direct a portion of bed-tax revenue toward sports tourism infrastructure.
4. Direct the Florida Sports Foundation to commission an annual Tennis and Racquet Sport Economic Impact Study, providing policymakers with state-specific revenue data.

9.2 County-Level Actions

1. Conduct a county-by-county court condition and capacity audit. At minimum, counties in the top 20 by population should complete this audit within 18 months of this paper's publication.
2. Adopt a minimum public court standard of 1 court per 4,000 residents in county comprehensive plans. For Florida's current population, this would require approximately 5,625 public courts statewide—an increase of roughly 2,128 courts above the current 3,497.
3. Negotiate joint-use agreements with local school districts to open school-based courts (2,512 courts currently at schools) for community use during evenings, weekends, and summer breaks.
4. Establish or expand recreational impact fees on new residential development, with proceeds earmarked for public court construction.

9.3 Municipal-Level Actions

1. Apply annually to USTA Tennis Venue Services grants, FRDAP, and LWCF programs. Cities should designate a staff liaison responsible for grant tracking and application.
2. Prioritize court construction in parks located in census tracts where median household income is below $50,000 and current public court access is more than 3 miles.
3. Include LED lighting in all new court construction to extend usable hours and maximize return on investment. LED systems cost $5,000–$15,000 per court and effectively double a court's daily capacity.
4. Implement online court reservation systems to improve utilization data, reduce conflicts, and provide the usage metrics needed to justify future capital investment.

9.4 Accountability Framework

To ensure that investment translates into measurable outcomes, this paper recommends the following tracking metrics, reported annually:

- Public courts per 10,000 residents (statewide and by county)
- Percentage of courts rated in "good" or "excellent" condition
- Tennis participation rate by county (via USTA membership and survey data)
- Grant dollars applied for, awarded, and expended
- Tournament and league events hosted, with estimated economic impact
- Demographic profile of participants at public facilities versus statewide benchmarks

10. Appendix: Data Sources & Methodology Notes

10.1 Data Sources

- USTA Florida Records (March 2026): 5,601 active venues, 17,770 courts across 65 counties. Facility type, subtype, county, court counts, and open/closed status.
- Kinetica/GapMaps Catchment Report – Florida (March 2026): Demographic, participation, fandom, membership, provider, league, and tournament data. Sources include U.S. Census 2022 estimates, USTA 2025 data, CDC 2023, and Kinetica US Aura Survey 2024.
- BEBR Florida Population Studies, Volume 59, Bulletin 203 (February 2026): County-level population projections (low, medium, high) for 2030–2050 with 2025 estimates.
- USTA 2026 U.S. Tennis Participation Report (February 2026): National participation figures based on Physical Activity Council (PAC) and PLAY Study. 27.3M players in 2025 (+6% YoY, +54% vs. 2019), 14.5M core players, 616M play occasions, 80% retention rate, 4.9M first-time players. Section-level data: Florida at 9.1% participation rate, 1.9M players, 5.1% CAGR since 2020. Demographic breakdowns by age, race/ethnicity, income, and primary venue type.
- USTA Florida Tournament Database (March 2026): 4,914 distinct tournaments (by Tournament ID), 9,462 event entries, 303,000+ participant-appearances.
- USTA Florida League Captain Database (March 2026): 4,851 distinct league captains (by contact name); 150 distinct JTT captains and co-captains.
- USTA Florida Wheelchair Tennis Programs (March 2026): 21 active programs statewide.
- Spring, K.E., Holmes, M.E., & Smith, J.W. (2020). Long-term Tennis Participation and Health Outcomes: An Investigation of "Lifetime" Activities. International Journal of Exercise Science, 13(7), 1251–1261. PMC7523898. Survey-based study (n=151 ITF-affiliated members) linking chronic tennis participation to lower obesity, reduced heart disease prevalence, and better self-reported health among players aged 45 and older. As a cross-sectional survey of self-selected active tennis participants, findings should be interpreted alongside larger longitudinal evidence. Life expectancy data referenced from the Copenhagen City Heart Study (Schnohr et al., 2018, Mayo Clinic Proceedings).
- USTA Florida Court Construction Cost Analysis (2026): Florida-market cost benchmarks by surface type.

- USTA Florida Economic Impact Report (December 2024): Conducted by Tourism Economics (Oxford Economics). Analysis of 1,134 sanctioned tournaments/events in 2023. $145.9M total economic impact, $81.8M direct spending, 1,007 jobs, $11.4M in state/local taxes.
- Florida Hospital Association / UF-IFAS Economic Impact Study (2023 data, published 2026): 337 hospitals, $198.6B total economic output, 976,834 jobs supported.
- AdventHealth Florida Economic Impact Study (CRA, April 2025): $16.4B economic output, 113,170 FTEs, $11.9B GDP contribution from a single healthcare system, illustrating the scale of Florida's healthcare economy.
- Florida TaxWatch, Social Determinants of Health: Neighborhood and Built Environment (November 2024): Analysis of how community infrastructure and recreational access affect chronic illness, mental health, and healthcare costs.
- Florida DOH / ASTHO, Health Impact Assessment of a County Parks and Recreation Fitness Policy in Hillsborough County, Florida (2016): HIA funded by ASTHO and CDC assessing a proposed policy to allow free outdoor fitness classes in county parks; documented links between physical inactivity, income, education, and chronic disease risk in underserved areas.
- Miami-Dade TPO, Impacts of Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure on Safety, Health, and Economic Growth (July 2025): Health impact assessment and 25-year benefit-cost analysis showing $6.9M–$71M annual returns from modest physical activity increases.
- Florida Property Value Impact Studies: A dedicated hedonic pricing study quantifying the property value premium associated with public tennis courts in Florida has not yet been conducted. The general relationship between park proximity and property values is well-established in the national hedonic pricing literature. Commissioning a Florida-specific study is recommended.

10.2 Methodology Notes

- Court counts: Derived from USTA Florida's records. Facilities marked "Closed" (14 records) were excluded. Courts at facilities with no type classification (16 records) were excluded from public/private segmentation.
- Public classification: Facilities typed as "Public" in the database, which includes public parks and publicly operated community/recreation centers. School courts are classified separately and counted as restricted-access unless a joint-use agreement is in effect.

- Per-capita calculations: Based on the BEBR 2025 estimated Florida population of 23,380,000. Note: The Kinetica/GapMaps 2024 catchment area estimate of 22,502,709 reflects a defined geographic catchment and differs from the statewide BEBR figure; BEBR is used throughout for consistency with population projections.
- National court inventory: The TIA Racquet Industry Research Group (RIRG) National Court Report estimates approximately 270,000 total tennis courts in the United States across an estimated 14,736 programming-active facilities with 101,142 courts in their database. Florida-specific public/private ratios are derived from USTA Florida's records.
- Population projections: BEBR medium series used throughout unless otherwise stated. BEBR recommends the medium series for most planning purposes.
- Known data gap — Court condition: No statewide court condition assessment currently exists. This paper assumes the national average maintenance cycle applies. A Florida-specific audit is strongly recommended.
- Known data gap — Economic impact: The USTA Florida Economic Impact Report (2024) covers sanctioned tournament activity only. The economic contribution of league play, recreational court usage, coaching and instructional programs, equipment retail, and facility operations has not yet been quantified. Commissioning a comprehensive state-level tennis industry economic study is a key recommendation of this paper.
- Known data gap — Health cost offsets: Direct Florida-level healthcare savings attributable to tennis participation have not been quantified. CDC national estimates for physical inactivity costs are used as proxies.
- AI disclosure: Claude (Anthropic) was used as an analytical and drafting tool in the preparation of this white paper, assisting with data analysis, source integration, and document formatting. All data sources, findings, conclusions, and policy recommendations were reviewed, validated, and approved by the USTA Florida project team.

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1 in every 13

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