

New Haven ParkScore Analysis

September 2021

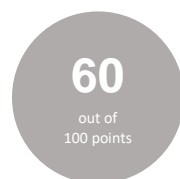
Overview

The ParkScore® index is the most comprehensive rating system developed to measure how well the 100 largest U.S. cities are meeting the need for parks. Across the country, more than 100 million people – including 28 million kids – don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home. Among the 100 largest U.S. cities, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 44% less park space than those in white neighborhoods. In partnership with the Urban Resources Initiative, the Trust for Public Land applied the ParkScore Index® methodology to New Haven's park system to identify its strengths and weaknesses relative to both the 100 most populous U.S. cities as well as selected cities of similar size and location. This analysis reflects all park and recreation facilities within the city of New Haven including those owned and/or managed by New Haven Parks & Recreation, Urban Resources Initiative, Gather New Haven, the State of Connecticut and publicly accessible community schoolyards.

The ParkScore index measures how well New Haven compares against the nation's most populous cities on measures across 5 categories reflective of an excellent city park system: Acreage, Access, Investment, Amenities, and Equity. The Acreage and Access categories reflect the importance of both large 'destination' parks as well as ensuring all residents have access to a public park within a short 10-minute walk of their home. The Investment and Amenities categories reflect the importance of high-quality parks – the spending needed to maintain them and a wide range of activities available for multi-generational user groups. The Equity category reflects the importance of ensuring park resources are fairly distributed between neighborhoods within a city.

For each measure, points are awarded on a relative basis, based on how a city compares to the 100 most populous cities. For example, a score of 90 can be interpreted that New Haven is among the top 10% of cities for that measure. The score for each of the five categories is an average of its measures; a city's overall rating is an average of the five categories. The measures are selected to facilitate comparison across a wide-range of cities; more information can be found in the methodology section (Appendix C).

In addition to the ParkScore analysis, we have provided a summary of the park acreage per capita statistics by city neighborhood (Appendix A) and additional benchmarks where data are available for each of the five categories (Appendix B).



Overall Score

Based on our analysis, New Haven's park system received a ParkScore rating of 60.4 out of a possible 100 points, indicating that it ranks slightly above average when compared to the most populous cities in the country. A strength of New Haven's park system is that 96% of its residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park (see Access Map). The city ranks among the middle of the pack in terms of its amenities and park acreage, indicating that although most residents live within a walkable half-mile, there is room to increase the range of activities and space for residents to enjoy once they get to their nearby parks. This is particularly true when analyzing the city's equity metrics. In New Haven, residents who identify as Black, Hispanic and Latinx, Indigenous and Native American, or Asian Americans and Pacific Islander are equally likely to live within a 10-minute walk of a park as white residents. However, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 47% less park space per person than those in white neighborhoods; a similar gap exists when comparing by income (see Equity Map). Perhaps the biggest opportunity to improve New Haven's park system is to increase the total investment in park and recreation facilities. After aggregating across all park agencies and organizations in the city, New Haven ranks among the lowest third of the country's most populated cities in terms of spending per resident.

36

 out of
100 points

Acreage

1,469 acres of parkland (12% of city area), median park size of 1.53 acres (~size of a schoolyard)

The acreage score indicates the relative abundance of large ‘destination’ parks, which include large natural areas that provide critical mental health as well as climate and conservation benefits. This category is scored as an average of two metrics, parkland as percentage of city area and median park size. New Haven scores above average in overall acreage (12% of city area, 62 / 100 points) while scoring among the lowest in the country in terms of median park size (1.53 acres, 10 / 100 points). This suggests that while New Haven has a significant amount of park acreage, its overall mix of parks heavily skews towards smaller parks.

95

 out of
100 points

Access

96% of New Haven residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park

The access score indicates the percentage of a city’s residents that live within a walkable half-mile of a park – the average distance that most people are willing to walk to reach a destination. In New Haven, 96% of its residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, making the city one of the best in the nation in ensuring residents have access to at least one close-to-home park. This strong network of parks throughout the city provides a strong foundation in which to provide high-quality park activities.

35

 out of
100 points

Investment

An average of \$77 per person is spent on parks and recreation in New Haven each year

The investment score indicates the relative financial health of a city’s park system, which is essential to ensuring parks are maintained at a high level for all to enjoy. This category is scored based on the total parks and recreation spending per person across all agencies and organizations, including monetized volunteer hours. With a score of 35 points (\$77 per resident per year), New Haven ranks below most cities in terms of sufficient spending to maintain its parks at a high level. Of the \$77 per resident spending, 98% reflects spending from the city’s park and recreation department, with the remainder reflecting volunteers and non-profits.

71

 out of
100 points

Amenities

71 basketball hoops, 4 dog parks, 78 playgrounds, 5 senior and rec centers, 2 restrooms, and 14 splashpads

The amenities score indicates the relative abundance of six park activities popular among a multi-generational cross-section of user groups (playgrounds, basketball hoops, dog parks, senior and rec centers, splashpads, and permanent restrooms). With a score of 71 points, New Haven ranks above average in terms of providing key amenities that drive the park usage necessary for residents to enjoy the full range of benefits parks can offer. Of the six amenities, New Haven ranks among the nation’s best in terms of splashpads, playgrounds, and dog parks (100/ 100 points each) and one of the lowest for permanent restrooms (2 / 100 points).

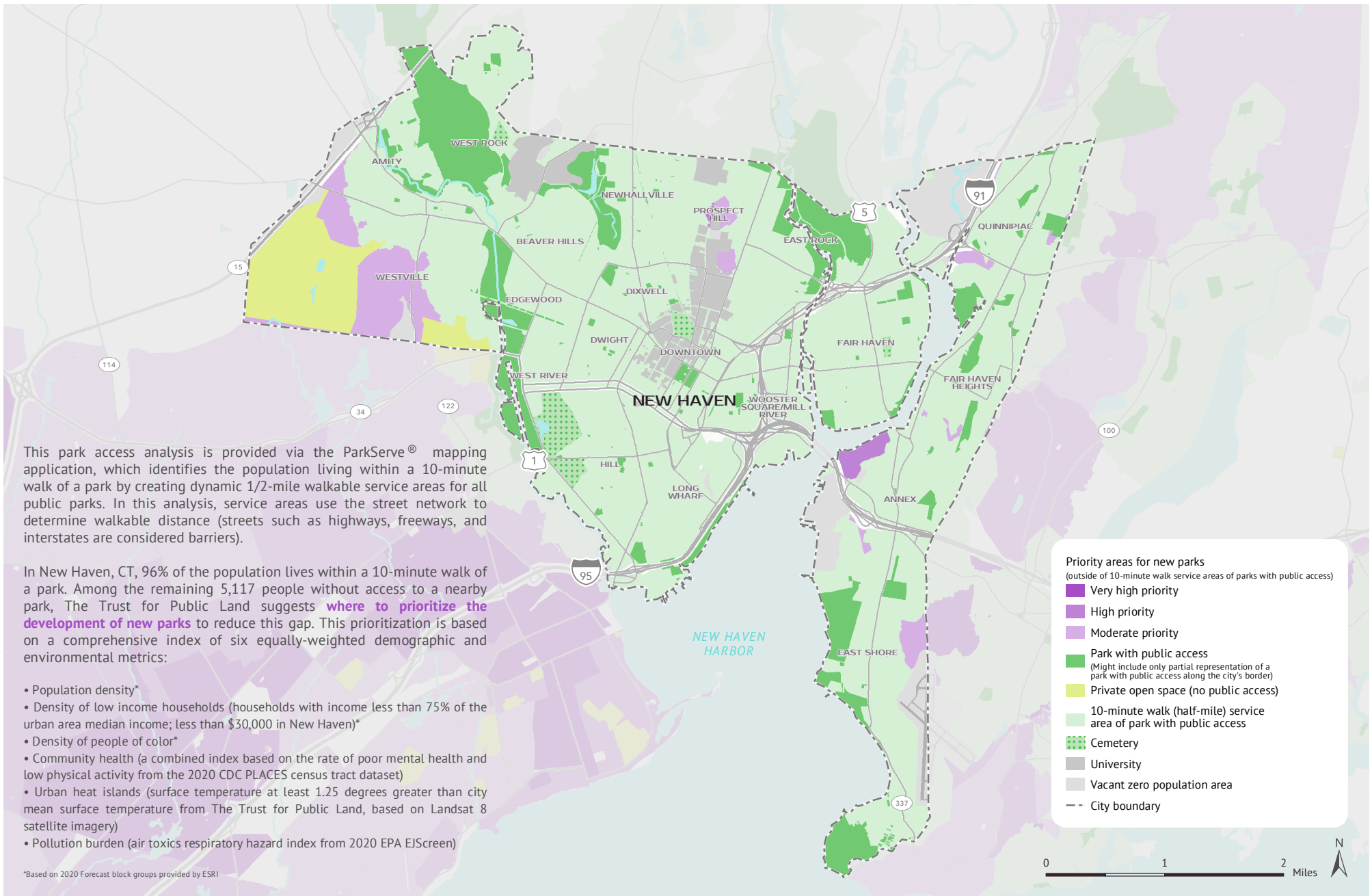
65

 out of
100 points

Equity

In New Haven, 97% of people of color live within a 10-minute walk of a park; 98% of low-income households. When comparing park space per person, neighborhoods of color have 47% less than white neighborhoods and low-income neighborhoods have 47% less than high-income neighborhoods.

The equity score indicates how fairly parks and park space are distributed within a city. This category is an average of two types of metrics: 1) the percentage of people of color and low-income households within a 10-minute walk of a park and 2) a comparison of the amount of park space between neighborhoods by race and income. Similar to most cities with strong Access scores, New Haven scores well on the access component of the equity category. However, New Haven scores among the lowest in the country when comparing the amount of park space between neighborhoods – residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 47% less park space per person than those in white neighborhoods.

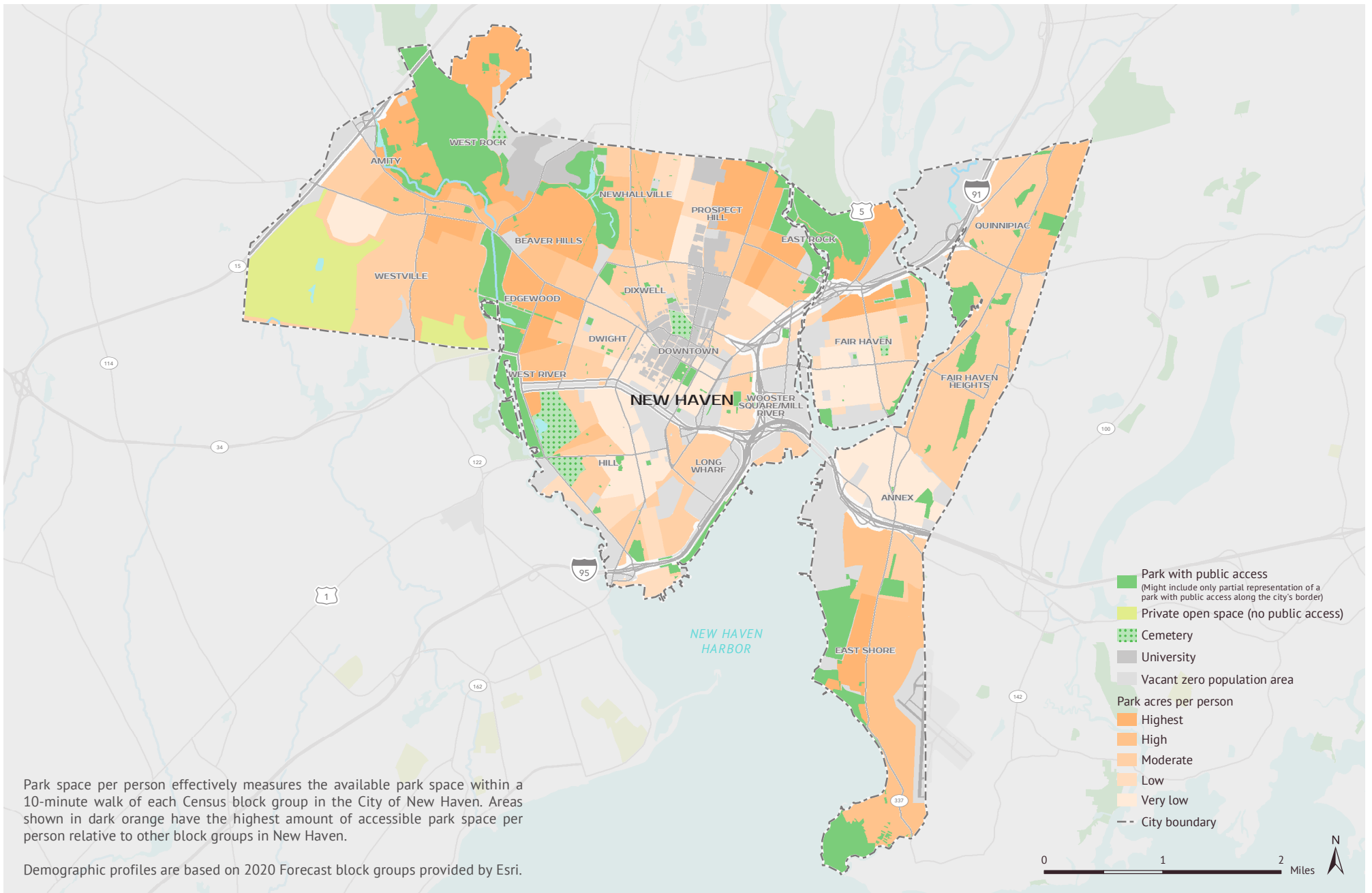


Park access

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

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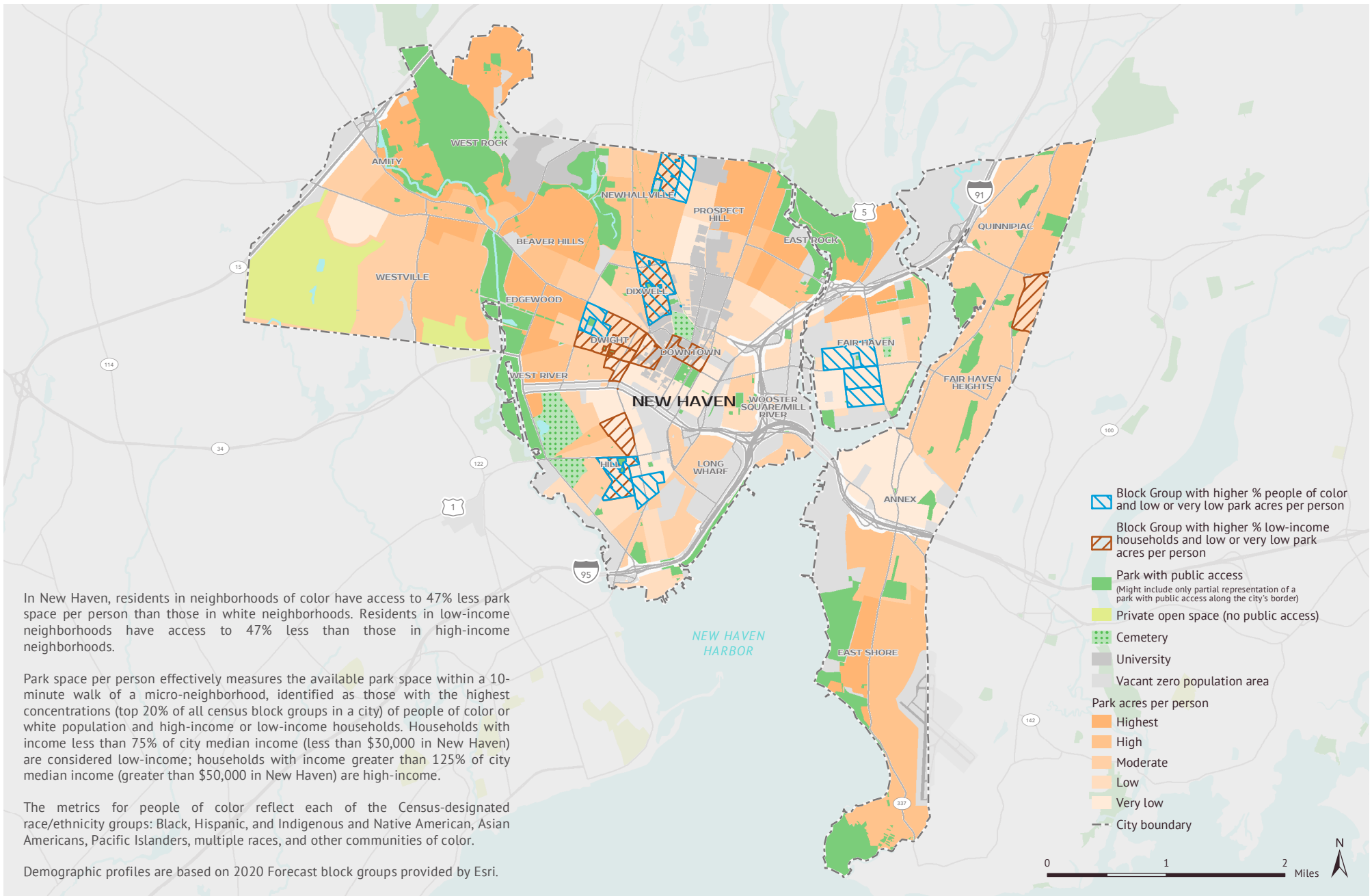


Park space per person

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Park equity

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