

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

I. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: THE CITY SHALL MAINTAIN LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT AND ADEQUATE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES TO SATISFY THE RECREATIONAL AND OPEN SPACE NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS.

Objective 1.1: The City shall continue maintaining and upgrading, where appropriate, existing open spaces, green spaces, parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 1.1.1: The City shall adhere to the following Level of Service Standards (LOS). They shall serve as standards to determine issuance of development orders. In addition, the City shall strive to have a park within a half mile walking distance of residential development.

PARK TYPE	LOS (yr 2017)	
Regional	1.5	
Community/ Neighborhood	2.5	
Total	4.0	(Acres/1,000 Persons)

Policy 1.1.2: Continue to acquire and develop, when appropriate, the best available park and community center sites, in respect to population concentrations and natural amenities, which are needed to satisfy existing and future recreational needs.

Policy 1.1.3: The City shall continue to implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 1.1.4: By 2024 the City shall initiate the update of the 2016 Parks and Recreation Master Plan to meet a best practice of updating the plan every 10 years.

Policy 1.1.5: Parkland shall not be made available for right-of-way related to non-park activities, unless a site plan demonstrates an inherit need for such right-of-way or there is no alternative means of access.

Objective 1.2: The City shall continue to adhere to the Level of Service standards established in this Element for private developers providing recreation facilities in major Planned Developments.

Policy 1.2.1: Guidelines to mandate private developers to provide recreation facilities shall include but not be limited to the following strategies:

- a) Approve park land dedication requirements for large scale developments that will allow on or off site dedication;

- b) Consider cash in lieu of dedication of land;
- c) require the provision of private recreation facilities by adopting a formula based on type of residential unit, residential density, size of development, availability of land, etc.;
- d) Require the mitigation of impacts on public facilities during all residential development approval process; development proposals shall be denied if requirements are not adhered to,
- e) Consider the addition of park impact fees for redevelopment dollars to enhance parks; and
- f) Require a maintenance plan and private development funding to ensure upkeep.

Objective 1.3: The City shall ensure the safe functioning condition of all parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 1.3.1: A status report on the safe functioning condition of parks and their facilities such as swimming pools, basketball courts, recreation buildings, and play equipment, etc., shall be updated on an ad hoc basis. The City shall immediately execute an action plan to either, renovate, remove or replace a facility that poses a safety hazard.

Policy 1.3.2: The development, maintenance, and operation of parks should be coordinated with other departments and functions of the City, particularly through planning, engineering, capital improvements programming, special events, and public safety functions.

Policy 1.3.3: The city shall implement a maintenance plan including preventative maintenance and maintenance standards as recommended best practices through but not limited to the National Parks and Recreation Association’s Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies.

GOAL 2: THE CITY SHALL PRESERVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE UNIQUE RECREATIONAL AND NATURAL OPEN SPACE RESOURCES TO PROVIDE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL AND/OR LEISURE-TYPE OPPORTUNITIES.

Objective 2.1: As a first priority, utilize publicly-owned lands with unique environmental resources for nature-oriented recreational opportunities when not to the detriment of the environmental resources.

Policy 2.1.1: The City shall continue the development of passive recreation facilities and its educational and recreational programs at Grassy Waters Preserve.

Policy 2.1.2: The City shall continue coordination with the County Archaeologist regarding the presence of cultural resources on park lands in an effort to preserve, protect, and highlight educational opportunities for identified sites.

Objective 2.2: The City shall maximize utilization of waterfront areas and water bodies for recreational uses and visual amenities, particularly the Intracoastal Waterway, Lake Mangonia, and Clear Lake.

Policy 2.2.1: The City shall require that structures built on privately-owned waterfront lands are designed in a manner to maximize water views for the public in accordance with the City's Zoning Code.

Policy 2.2.2: For waterfront lands and water bodies owned by the City, usage should be limited to those which serve a public purpose and, when possible, offer visual or active enjoyment of these resources.

Objective 2.3: The City shall seek opportunities to provide additional park lands, open space, and green space to serve as linkages that would enhance the City's open space system.

Policy 2.3.1: The City shall utilize existing and pursue additional open space as buffers, greenbelts, and green ways, separators and recreational space where possible to help unify and structure the City's open space system.

Policy 2.3.2: The City shall pursue linkages and trails throughout the park system as an economic resource for increased property values and access to local businesses.

Policy 2.3.3: The City shall develop conditions by which incentives may be offered for the provision of urban open space and park land in the Downtown area.

Policy 2.3.4: The City shall provide branded wayfinding signage providing information on park locations, amenities, etc.

GOAL 3: THE CITY SHALL MAXIMIZE CITIZEN INPUT AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSIVENESS TO CHANGING RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF THE USERS TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

Objective 3.1: The City shall monitor the user groups of recreational facilities and programs and evaluate their effectiveness.

Policy 3.1.1: Recreation programs and educational opportunities provided by the City shall be tailored to satisfy shifting demographic and recreation trends.

Policy 3.1.2: Surveys and evaluations shall be conducted for recreation programs to identify areas of need and improvement. These shall serve as a base for program adjustments.

Policy 3.1.3: A random city-wide survey will be conducted on an ad hoc basis and to

evaluate existing programs and generate ideas and topics for future programming.

Policy 3.1.4: The City shall experiment with innovative pilot programs that have demonstrated success in other municipalities, such as the Youth Empowerment Centers.

Policy 3.1.5: The City shall develop a pilot program to provide access to wireless internet in City Parks to meet the needs of the community.

Policy 3.1.6: The City shall continue to provide recreational programs for special groups of the population including seniors, those with special needs, pre-school age children, etc.

Policy 3.1.7: The City shall inform neighborhood associations located within a half mile radius of future plans for parks of interest and request their input.

Policy 3.1.8: The City shall initiate programs that involve the cooperation of neighborhood associations to offer programs for children in appropriate neighborhood parks.

Policy 3.1.9: The City shall work with neighborhood and other groups to increase organized play activities in community and neighborhood parks.

Policy 3.1.10: The City shall enhance the public information program pertaining to recreation activities, and, where appropriate use social media, work with neighborhood groups and others in disseminating recreation information.

GOAL 4: THE CITY SHALL SECURE THE SAFETY OF ALL PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR USERS AND SURROUNDING RESIDENTS TO ENHANCE THE VIABILITY AND APPEARANCE OF NEIGHBORHOODS.

Objective 4.1: Implement the crime prevention strategies to enhance safety and security of City parks and recreation programs.

Policy 4.1.1: The City shall continue a comprehensive enforcement program for the enforcement of park rules and regulations.

Policy 4.1.2: The City shall educate the public about the essential role that parks play in the community regarding open space amenities and neighborhood identity and encourage citizens to share the surveillance role. Neighborhood meetings are forums where this shall be emphasized.

Policy 4.1.3: The City shall support Neighborhood Crime Watch groups to deal safely with illegal activities in parks.

Policy 4.1.4: The City shall coordinate with and provide training to interested neighborhood residents or groups for a voluntary Park Ambassador Program. The Program

may include activities such as neighborhood park watch, park information resources, garbage pick-up, etc.

Objective 4.2: Design of parks shall incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts.

Policy 4.2.1: Design of parks and installation of facilities shall discourage vandalism. This shall require the cooperation of the Parks and Recreation Department, Police Department, Engineering Department, and the Planning Division in the review of all plans.

Policy 4.2.2: Improvements to parks that increase safety device measures shall be given priority among other improvements including, but not limited to, improving lighting fixtures, eliminating dark spots, installing automatic gate closures, etc.

GOAL 5: THE CITY SHALL ASSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO ALL PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO BENEFIT ALL SECTORS OF THE POPULATION.

Objective 5.1: All public park and recreational facilities shall maintain access for the disabled, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy 5.1.1: New development and redevelopment orders shall not be issued if there is evidence that public access to City parks are obstructed in any way.

Policy 5.1.2: The City shall provide ample parking spaces and bike racks in community centers and regional parks. This shall be included in the major improvements of all parks.

Policy 5.1.3: When evaluating the need for park improvements, the City shall consider providing specific park amenities tailored toward the disabled population.

GOAL 6: THE CITY SHALL MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND PUBLIC/PRIVATE COOPERATION TO CREATE MORE RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

Objective 6.1: The City shall, as necessary, initiate meetings consisting of representatives from the City Government, the School Board, the County Government, private developers, additional municipalities and nonprofit organizations, to coordinate efforts in providing efficient park facilities and recreation programs.

Policy 6.1.1: The City shall maintain the existing joint agreements between the City and School Board concerning joint uses of facilities on school sites. The City shall pursue additional agreements or consent with schools that do not have formal agreements with the City.

Policy 6.1.2: The City shall actively seek to increase the State's and County's role in financing, through grant funding and other means, the City's regional and special recreation facilities, especially those facilities at Dreher Park and Currie Park.

Policy 6.1.3: The City shall continue to pursue opportunities with other entities to provide enhanced park facilities, and recreational and educational programs. For example, the South Florida Science Museum and the West Palm Beach Zoo may enter partnerships with private corporations and the City to create educational and participatory programs within Dreher Park.

GOAL 7: THE CITY SHALL CONTINUE IMPROVING THE AESTHETICS OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

Objective 7.1: The City shall enforce regulations concerning open space regulations as specified in the City of West Palm Beach Zoning and Land Development Code.

Policy 7.1.1: The City shall continuously negotiate with developers regarding new development proposals to better the aesthetics of open space.

Policy 7.1.2: The City shall work more closely with the City landscape professionals to improve the quantity and quality of landscaping in the City, with an emphasis of planting native plants and trees, promoting xeriscape practices, and eliminating exotic and invasive plant species.

GOAL 8: THE CITY SHALL ASSURE THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND FACILITY CONDITIONS IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

Objective 8.1: The City's Department of Parks and Recreation shall pursue accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), the accrediting body for parks and recreation industry.

Policy 8.1.1: The Department shall initiate review of its organizational structure, policies and procedures by 2024 to ensure compliance with national standards and make adjustments where necessary to meet accreditation standards.

Policy 8.1.2: The Department shall submit a Self-Assessment Manual for Quality Operation of Parks and Recreation and associated backup materials by 2025 to the NRPA for review and scheduling site visit for accreditation.

GOAL 9: THE CITY SHALL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TRAILS AND LINKAGES BETWEEN PARKS, GREENWAYS, TRAILS AND CIVIC PLACES THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

Objective 9.1: The City shall create a Bicycle and Trail/Pathway System Master Plan.

Policy 9.1.1: The City shall work to create a Bicycle and Trail/Pathway System Plan which provides enhanced non-motorized connectivity opportunities.

Policy 9.1.2: The City shall ensure coordination between the proposed Mobility Plan identified in the Transportation Element and its planning efforts on the provision of bicycle facilities and multipurpose trails.