

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: To develop and maintain a community park and recreation system that will provide a diverse range of active and passive recreational opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of the present and future residents of the City of North Port.

Objective 1: To plan, acquire and improve community parks and open space lands consistent with the needs of North Port's resident population, as determined by the City's recreation level of service and the recommendations of the City of North Port Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 1.1: As determined through the annual budget and Capital Improvements Program processes, the City shall employ financial resources sufficient to implement those projects identified in the North Port Parks and Recreation Master Plan deemed to be of priority importance for the expansion and improvement of the City's park and recreation system.

Strategy 1.1.1: Ensure that financial and human resources are available to implement priority projects in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan accepted by the City Commission.

Policy 1.2: Recreation and open space lands shall be designated as either active or passive recreational uses and are located in urban, State park/forest and conservation areas. These lands contain park sites and their associated facilities or open space with minimal facilities. "Recreational and Open Space" lands, as depicted on the adopted Future Land Use Map, may be publicly owned. Other non-public recreational lands may be depicted on the adopted Future Land Use Map as "Commercial Recreation."

Strategy 1.2.1: Ensure that sufficient recreational lands are available in the City based on adopted local level of service standards.

Policy 1.3: The City shall continue to utilize the following definitions for recreation and open space lands:

Community park - A community park is an aesthetically pleasing and safe "ride-to" park, located near major streets or arterials. It is designed to serve the needs of ten (10) to fifteen (15) neighborhoods which constitutes a community -- and serves community residents within a radius of up to approximately three (3) miles, or a service population of approximately twenty-five thousand (25,000) to thirty-five thousand (35,000) permanent residents. Community parks shall be approximately twenty (20) acres or more in size. Facilities to be provided in a community park are those consistent with criteria identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Greenway – Chapter 260.013 of the Florida Statutes defines "greenway" as a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or over land along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route; any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage; an open space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features,

or historic sites with each other and populated areas; or a local strip or linear park designated as a parkway or greenbelt.

Open Space - Open space, as it relates to recreation, is undeveloped public lands suitable for passive recreation and used primarily for parks, recreation, conservation, preservation of water resources, historic or scenic purposes, and greenways designed to buffer incompatible land uses. It varies considerably in size and may take the form of land or water surfaces.

Conservation lands - Conservation lands are public lands maintained for continuing the sustainable yield of natural resources, including potable water, timber, game, and sport fishing. Allowable development activities include development of linear parks and greenways, wildlife relocation areas and improvements which are ancillary to the principal uses, including fire trails, or facilities which allow limited human access, such as unpaved parking spaces, primitive camping areas, canoe launches, and sanitation facilities. No other uses may be permitted within Conservation Areas, with the exception of the Winchester Boulevard hurricane evacuation route through the Myakka State Forest, which is deemed necessary to protect human life from the threat of natural disasters provided that such facility is constructed so that the impact upon native habitat and wildlife populations are minimized consistent with the policies in the Conservation Plan, and consistent with the requirements of all permitting agencies.

Neighborhood park – A neighborhood park has an optimal size of 3-5 acres and serves as a recreational and social focus for neighborhoods within a one-half mile radius. Aesthetically pleasing and safe open space is a key characteristic of a neighborhood park. Facilities provided in a neighborhood park are those consistent with park system criteria.

Special use facilities – Special use facilities are designed for a special purpose or constituency group. They include, but are not necessarily limited to: softball, baseball and/or soccer complexes; dog parks; BMX facilities; model airplane fields; skateboard parks; aquatics centers; gymnastics centers; ice hockey rinks; equestrian centers; and other single-purpose, often competition-quality, facilities.

Policy 1.4: The City shall depict on a Future Land Use Map series appropriate general locations for Recreation and Open Space which includes: Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Open Space, Conservation and Commercial Recreation lands and facilities.

Policy 1.5: The City adopts a level of service of ten (10) acres of recreation and open space area per one-thousand (1,000) residents, to be allocated, among three (3) park classifications, with the following minimum acreage classifications:

1.5 acres of Community park;

1.5 acres of Open Space;

7.0 acres of Conservation lands.

For Parks & Recreation Facilities, the following shall be met to satisfy City concurrency requirements: Consistent with the public welfare, and except as otherwise provided in this section, parks and recreation facilities to serve new development shall be in place or under actual construction no later than 1 year after issuance of a certificate of occupancy or its functional equivalent. However, the acreage for such facilities shall be dedicated or be acquired prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy or its functional equivalent, or funds in the amount of the developer's fair share shall be committed no later than the approval to commence construction.

Policy 1.6: In order to provide additional outdoor recreation experiences that can not be duplicated by any other natural resource within the City's jurisdictional boundaries, the City shall, as resources allow, work with public agencies and adjacent property owners to implement the Myakkahatchee Creek Greenway Master Plan.

Policy 1.7: Amend administratively the City's Future Land Use Map, City-owned lands located along the Myakkahatchee Creek as *Recreation and Open Space* only after an appropriate study determines the limits to the Recreation and Open Space areas, or when the City purchases/controls lands in this area.

Policy 1.8: On the City's Future Land Use Map, the City shall continue to classify Little Salt Spring, adjacent publicly-owned land and the archaic Indian burial grounds located across from Little Salt Spring, and the Atwater Drive Archaeological site as Conservation areas on which any new development or expansion/replacement of existing development may be undertaken only after the areas have been purchased/controlled by a governmental or educational agency.

Policy 1.9: The City shall continue to identify potential sites in the eastern part of the City for the development of a third community center.

Policy 1.10: The City shall continue its previously stated goal of incorporating dog parks or similar amenities that may be incorporated within existing or future neighborhood, community or regional parks.

Policy 1.11: The City shall continue to provide opportunities for non-motorized boat access to Myakkahatchee Creek, the Cocoplum Waterway, and other waterways, including, where needed and feasible, acquisition of land for portage of boats. Access to salt/brackish waters in motorized boats shall be considered only after the City determines the potential impacts to protected waters and wildlife, including manatees, through consultation with appropriate agencies.

Policy 1.12: The City shall continue its efforts to create an interconnected network of blueways, greenways, hiking paths and sidewalks that links parks, open spaces, schools, commercial areas, and neighborhoods in order to create a pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly environment.

Policy 1.13: The City shall create at least one large-scale dedicated civic gathering space for special events and citywide activities to supplement the space present in the Government Center.

Objective 2: Establish general priorities for the development of a community park system to meet the park and recreational needs of present and projected resident populations, to include operations and maintenance needs for the City's park system.

Policy 2.1: Establish recreational linkages between neighborhoods, activity centers, and existing and proposed community parks, schools, government facilities, multi-purpose buildings, and conservation areas by utilizing facilities including but not limited to: roadways, pathways, greenways, pedestrian bridges, and waterways.

Policy 2.2: The City may utilize impact fees for capital improvements to the existing fresh and tidal water canals, pursuant to the impact fee ordinance.

Policy 2.3: Where it is determined to be financially feasible, the City shall assemble lands for parks and open space that are adjacent to existing and proposed school sites and compatible City-owned properties.

Policy 2.4: The City shall pursue a proactive land assembly strategy to purchase, sell, barter, or enter into long-term lease agreements for the purpose of expanding existing or future community park sites.

Policy 2.5: Where economically feasible, the City shall promote the procurement of greenways for the purpose of expanding linear parks by acquiring land necessary to link publicly-owned conservation lands and recreation areas within and outside the City limits, and coordinate any such linkages with other agencies providing parks located outside the City limits.

Policy 2.6: The City shall monitor and report annually, as part of the budget process to the City Commission, the inventory of all public lands and recreation facilities for the purpose of identifying and prioritizing land assembly and facility development to meet existing and future recreational and open space needs of the resident population.

Policy 2.7: As discussed in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as park facilities are developed in the eastern and/or southern portions of the City, identify and develop a second maintenance yard for Parks and Recreation and other City agencies.

Objective 3: Promote the development of a privately supported neighborhood-based park system to fulfill the recreation and open space desires of existing and future neighborhoods within the City.

Policy 3.1: The City shall continue to support the expansion of its "Adopt a Park" program, for establishing, improving and maintaining neighborhood parks. Further, the City shall continue to require developers to provide and maintain neighborhood-level parks or open space within their new developments.

Policy 3.2: The City shall support the creation of a privately-administered endowment fund for the planting of street trees/landscaping along City roadways. This fund may also be used to acquire and place public art along roadways. The fund shall consist of contributions from developers and private donations and endowments.

Objective 4: Coordinate with other public and private agencies to meet existing and projected community and regional park demand.

Policy 4.1: The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will continue to provide a formal advisory role to the City Commission per Ordinance 2014-14.

Policy 4.2: Through the efforts of the City's Parks and Recreation Division and the City of North Port's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, conduct a survey every five years of community desires for new citywide park acquisitions and facility-based improvements.

Policy 4.3: The City shall coordinate with the State of Florida, Southwest Florida Water Management District and other agencies to provide appropriate public access to conservation areas located within, adjacent to or near the City limits.

Policy 4.4: The City shall work with Sarasota County and/or other appropriate agencies to develop a jointly managed regional park of approximately 100 acres with access to Interstate Highway 75 in the northeast quadrant of the City.

Objective 5: Pursuant to the provisions of the June 2006 Interlocal Agreement between the City of North Port and Sarasota County regarding Parks and Recreation Service, the City will continue to coordinate with the County and its agents so that when viewed in their entirety, programs, facilities and activities are readily accessible to and usable by City residents. Further, the City will also continue to coordinate with other local, state and federal agencies to provide public access to properties under their control.

Policy 5.1: Conduct a review of all publicly owned recreation and open space areas as part of future updates to the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan to assess the need for improvements or modifications of facilities to ensure full public access, and meeting the changing needs of the users.

Objective 6: All new residential development within the City shall be required to continue to provide for their proportionate fair share of recreation areas via the impact fee ordinance and through the identification and development of open space necessary to accommodate the recreational needs of residents of such developments.

Policy 6.1: Continue to implement the City of North Port Parks and Recreation Facilities Impact Fee Ordinance to ensure that community parks and open space areas are maintained at the adopted level of services for existing and future resident populations.

Policy 6.2: The City shall review and amend, as necessary, the Unified Land Development Code consistent with the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of this element.

Policy 6.3: The City shall amend its Unified Land Development Code, as needed, to enhance provisions that require developers to dedicate and develop land for public or publicly accessible parks and open space.

Objective 7: Continue to negotiate with property owners to increase the number of recreation and open space areas necessary to meet existing and future demand based upon the adopted level of service standards.

Policy 7.1: Negotiate with property owners to facilitate the utilization of Transfer of Development Rights, long-term lease agreements, land bartering or acquisition of future park sites for future community parks and open space in response to population growth.

Policy 7.2: Negotiate with property owners to expand the recreational value of lands located along the Myakkahatchee Creek.

Policy 7.3: Encourage private land owners not to sell off future designated park sites to third parties without first consulting with the City and to work with the City to identify alternative park locations.

Objective 8: Establish Special Interest parks and facilities to enhance the public's appreciation and enjoyment of the City's outstanding natural, architectural, and archaeological resource areas.

Policy 8.1: Where deemed appropriate, the City shall work cooperatively with the University of Miami, Sarasota County, and/or other property owners to designate and provide appropriate public access to selected architectural/historical/archaeological sites, which shall be classified as Special Interest Parks. These sites may include Little Salt Spring and other appropriate areas, such as those North Port sites listed on the Florida Master Site File.

Policy 8.2: By 2020 the City will consider the option to pursue recognition of one or more Working Waterfront sites for the Waterfront Florida designation and will promote recreation, including boating and sport fishing, as high priorities in planning for Working Waterfronts.

Objective 9: Coordinate with other government agencies and the private sector to implement park acquisition, construction, maintenance, and preservation plans.

Policy 9.1: The City shall continue to work with Sarasota County Department of Parks Recreation and Natural Resources on the operation, acquisition, improvements and maintenance of those recreation and open space lands for which the County continues to bear responsibility under the terms of the June 2006 Interlocal Agreement.

Policy 9.2: Continue to work with the Sarasota County School Board and with charter school administrators to provide recreation facilities and programs at City public and charter schools.

Policy 9.3: The City shall work with the Sarasota County School Board to develop and utilize a formalized joint planning process for the acquisition and development of parks and open spaces.

Policy 9.4: Increase cooperation with the Sarasota County Historical Society, the Environmental Coalition of SouthWest Florida (ECOSWF), the Southwest Florida Regional

Planning Council (SWFRPC), and related public and private agencies to ensure the preservation and protection of archaeological resources within the City.

Policy 9.5: By 2020, the City shall coordinate with local, state, regional, and national historic/archeological experts to better define sites and structures, and to determine appropriate protective actions by undertaking a city-wide survey to locate and evaluate historic sites and properties. If it is determined that more action is necessary, the City shall amend its Unified Land Development Code to strengthen provisions relating to the protection of historic/archaeological sites.

Objective 10: Continue to work with Sarasota County, the State of Florida, and the private sector to identify and develop potential facilities to encourage eco-tourism in the City of North Port

Policy 10.1 Continue to develop and improve City greenway and blueway corridors, including the recommendations included in Section 3.2 of the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 10.2: Continue to work with the developers of Activity Center 7A to provide locations for businesses that would complement the adjacent Warm Mineral Springs.

Policy 10.3: Continue to work with Sarasota County, governmental, and quasi-governmental agencies to identify and provide trailhead locations into the Carlton Preserve, Deer Prairie Creek, and Walton Ranch Preserve.