

G. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Element is to provide the framework and direction for a comprehensive system of public and private sites for recreation, including, but not limited to, parks and playgrounds, parkways, beaches and public access to beaches, open spaces, waterways, and other recreational facilities.

Recreation and Open Space Needs Summary

The following summarizes the Recreation and Open Space Element:

- There are three (3) principal land uses within the Recreation and Open Space element: parks, recreation facilities and open space. The benefits of these land uses and related land uses are many and include development pattern, aesthetic, environmental and recreational benefits. These land uses provide a benefit to the City and will continue to be incorporated into development and redevelopment plans.
- Currently, 13% of the City's total land area falls under the existing land use classification of "recreation open space," which includes parkland and recreational facilities.
- Vacant land (3% of land in the City) provides certain open space benefits to the City, and its loss will continue to be partially offset through the dedication of open space land on-site or elsewhere in the City.
- Beautification of open space along the gateway corridors is needed to enhance the City's image distinguishing "core" parkland, i.e., community, neighborhood, and scenic parks from other "adjunct" parkland.
- An established minimum level of service of four (4) acres of parkland per one thousand (1,000) persons for Citywide application will continue to be adequate.
- When new recreation and/or park uses are planned to be developed, priority should be given to areas of the city that are deficient.
- All needs of the City's diverse population will be taken into consideration when recreation provisions are being assessed. Clearwater has a variety of water-based recreation opportunities including beaches, boating and fishing which can continue to be developed for the benefit of both residents and visitors.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**G.1 GOAL - TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACES, PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES WHICH ARE DESIGNED FOR THE MAXIMUM SATISFACTION OF THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF CLEARWATER'S RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS.****G.1.1 Objective - The City shall ensure that parks, open space, trails and recreation facilities are efficiently and adequately maintained for all segments and districts of the population according to the level of service standards established for the City.**

Policies

G.1.1.1 Maintain the established minimum level of service standard of four (4) acres of core system parkland for every one thousand (1,000) persons for citywide application. For the purpose of applying this Level of Service standard, core system parkland includes community, neighborhood, and scenic parks.

G.1.1.2 Locate new neighborhood parks near schools, local or collector roads, and transit routes if feasible.

G.1.1.3 Locate new community parks and expansions to existing community parks adjacent to arterial streets and/or transit routes whenever possible.

G.1.1.4 Continue to provide automobile and bicycle parking facilities at all community parks and public beaches.

G.1.1.5 Parking lots, which serve public parks, may be constructed with a permeable surface subject to pavement requirements in the Community Development Code.

G.1.1.6 Preserve existing and develop new beach accessways through development control and preservation of accessible street ends.

G.1.1.7 Continue to provide accessible parking at public recreational facilities as well as ramps at park buildings to ensure that recreational lands and facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities consistent with the *Florida Accessibility Code*.

G.1.2 Objective - The City of Clearwater shall continue intergovernmental coordination with the private sector and other public entities to increase public recreational opportunities and open space acreage.

Policies

G.1.2.1 Continue to enforce the adopted recreation and open space land dedication requirements for the express purpose of maintaining the existing levels of service of recreation lands and facilities.

G.1.2.2 Funds collected under dedication requirements shall be expended to benefit the development from which they were collected, specifically:

1. Open space funds shall be expended within a two (2) mile radius when used for the acquisition of community parkland, within a one (1) mile radius when used for the acquisition of neighborhood parkland, or at any location in the City when used for the acquisition of parkland to be used for the development of a resource-based recreation area;
2. Recreation facilities land funds shall be expended within a two (2) mile radius when used for the acquisition of community parkland, within a one (1) mile radius when used for the acquisition of neighborhood parkland, or at any location in the City when used for the acquisition of parkland to be used for the development of a special facility site when the site is based on a recreational facility that is deemed to provide Citywide service in accordance with established service radius guidelines; and
3. Recreation facilities funds shall be expended within a two (2) mile radius when used for facilities placed in a community park, within a one (1) mile radius when used for facilities placed in a neighborhood, or at any location in the City when used for a facility which serves as the basis for the development of a special facility site providing City wide service.

G.1.2.3 Recreation facilities funds collected under dedication requirements shall be expended in consideration of the need for recreation facilities as determined by the application of the service radius guidelines and primary user guidelines contained in this plan and in conjunction with other considerations determined to be relevant by the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department and approved by the City Manager or designee.

G.1.2.4 Provide an incentive within the City's recreation facility impact fee structure for private developers to provide recreational opportunities for their residents.

G.1.2.5 Continue existing and facilitate new joint-use agreements between the Parks and Recreation Department and other private and public organizations including the Pinellas County School Board, St. Petersburg College, Pinellas County Government, and other governmental jurisdictions.

G.1.2.6 Review, and revise if necessary, the City's recreation and open space land dedication requirements.

G.1.2.7 Coordinate the Parks and Recreation Department's plans and activities with all other appropriate City departments and government agencies.

G.1.2.8 Coordinate Parks and Recreation Department's plans with local community groups when appropriate.

G.1.3 Objective - Continue to increase the supply of core system parkland in areas needing additional neighborhood parks.

Policies

- G.1.3.1 Review service radius and primary service guidelines for recreation facilities by the end of 2010 and every five years thereafter.
- G.1.3.2 Continue to acquire parkland for new supplemental parks to meet district deficiencies.
- G.1.3.3 Maintain the provisions of the City charter regarding the required referendum prior to approval the sale of public parklands to ensure adequate public recreation and open space lands within the City.
- G.1.3.4 Address the varying needs of the City's diverse population when creating and implementing parks and recreation plans with special attention to the needs of those who may have significantly limited recreational alternatives.
- G.1.3.5 Beautify parks and selected open space sites to enhance the city's visual quality.

G.1.4 Objective - Preserve natural open space areas which constitute aesthetic, and/or ecological community assets.

Policies

- G.1.4.1 To maintain adequate open space in the City's neighborhoods and commercial areas, the City will continue to administer landscape, drainage and impervious surface regulations in the Community Development Code.
- G.1.4.2 The City shall pursue designation and acquisition of open space through the creation of green permeable areas in easements, traffic islands, etc., in compliance with the City's Community Development Code.
- G.1.4.3 Continue to designate appropriate land "Preservation" and "Recreation/Open Space" in the Future Land Use Plan whenever feasible.
- G.1.4.4 Preserve coastal and interior wetlands, floodways, floodplains, and other environmentally significant areas to protect their aesthetic and environmental qualities which benefit the City.
- G.1.4.5 Continue to promote environmental education through various programs including television, brochures, lectures and other public relations methods.
- G.1.4.6 Maintain at least four percent (4%) of the total land in the City as "recreation open space" park uses by enforcing the City's current open space land dedication requirements.

- G.1.4.7 When possible, provide open space properties which have the diversity of resources necessary for nature study and the enjoyment of natural assets in order to assure environmental understanding.
- G.1.4.8 Coordinate recreation planning with other plans concerning water quality, stormwater management, fish and wildlife management, and environmental education.
- G.1.4.9 Enhance the image of Clearwater by developing gateway corridor beautification projects.
- G.1.4.10 Beautify and provide recreation and open space opportunities for the commercial redevelopment areas of Clearwater Beach and Downtown through the City's mission, vision and priority initiatives as articulated in the annual budget document.

G.1.5 Objective - Enhance and maintain the City's unique physical characteristics by making the best use of existing and potential recreation lands and open spaces.

Policies

- G.1.5.1 The City shall be responsible for maintaining the environmental integrity of significant and unique areas owned by the City.
- G.1.5.2 Incompatible land uses located in or near recreational areas and any action, which is known to have severe adverse impacts on such areas, should be minimized or abolished.
- G.1.5.3 The City should utilize and preserve areas of ecological, historical, or archaeological value for parks and recreation when possible.
- G.1.5.4 The historic preservation components of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Florida Department of State and private historical and archaeological organizations should be consulted when considering development or redevelopment of lands thought to have some historical or archaeological significance.
- G.1.5.5 Coordinate with other federal, state or local agencies and/or non-profit organizations to manage natural areas and open space when appropriate.
- G.1.5.6 Enhance open space and natural areas by restoring degraded natural communities and eradicating non-native vegetation.

G.1.6 Objective - Develop new and enhance existing blueways, greenways and recreational trail systems throughout Clearwater.

Policies

G.1.6.1 The City will continue to develop greenways and trails as identified in *Shifting Gears-Clearwater's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*.

G.1.6.2 The City will provide new access or enhance/maintain existing access to water bodies where possible for recreational use.

G.1.7 Objective - The City shall take an active role as a facilitator in providing recreation, park facilities, trails, cultural activities, and art opportunities for the needs of citizens and visitors of the City of Clearwater as articulated in the City's 2002 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan, the 2002 Clearwater Cultural Plan, the City's 2005 Public Art Ordinance and the City's 2006 Shifting Gears: Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Policies

G.1.7.1 As funds become available, the City will continue to implement the priority, medium term and long term actions, and continuous actions/policies as detailed in the *2002 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan*.

G.1.7.2 As funds become available, the City will continue to implement the goals, objectives and strategies of the *2002 Clearwater Cultural Plan*, and *The Public Art Ordinance, 2005*.

G.1.7.3 The Parks and Recreation Department will act as the City liaison for the Sister City program as a way to promote education and understanding between different world cultures.

G.1.7.4 As funds become available, the City will continue to implement the actions outlined in *Shifting Gears: Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, 2006*.

G.1.8 Objective - The City of Clearwater shall ensure the provision of facilities for the aging population.

Policies

G.1.8.1 The City of Clearwater shall complete the development of the proposed Aging Well Master Plan.