

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

PURPOSE

The Recreation and Open Space Element provides for a system of public and private recreation, in the form of library, historical, park, and open space sites which are available to all of Charlotte County's citizens and visitors. A park system attempts to serve all age groups, providing choices between activity-based and resource-based recreation. Park systems provide a geographic balance, assuring that facilities are not concentrated in one or a few small areas. Goals established in the 1997-2010 Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan Recreation and Open Space element have been substantially met. These goals were established as a result of the Wallace, Roberts, and Todd Park Master Plan that was created in 1997. In 2017, a new parks master plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

All references to any ordinances, statutes or regulations contained herein shall, unless otherwise noted, be deemed to be those in effect as of the date of adoption of this element and thereafter as amended, renumbered or otherwise revised.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

REC GOAL 1: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Establish an integrated system of parks, regional trails, open space, and recreational resources that provides a diverse, yet balanced, range of user-based and resource-based recreational opportunities to meet county-wide current and future recreation needs.

REC Objective 1.1: Planning, Acquisition, Design and Development

To plan for a park and open space system, acquire sites and facilities, design and develop parks that will ensure that residents and visitors to Charlotte County are afforded opportunities to readily access a variety of parks and open space.

REC Policy 1.1.1: Park Classifications

The County has developed park classifications based on park size, function and service area. These classifications include the following:

- Mini-park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Environmental Lands / Park
- Special Purpose Facility
- Greenway

- Blueway
- Regional Recreational Trail

REC Policy 1.1.2: Park System

The County shall classify the role of each park in the park and open space system in order to create an integrated and balanced system, and shall pursue efforts toward the identification, acquisition, and preservation or development of essential components of the park system. There are two tiers of parks for the County: primary parks and secondary parks. Primary parks are those parks and facilities for which the County has daily operation and maintenance authority and seeks to be the focus for future development, including regional parks and trails, community parks, specialty facilities/venues, and environmental lands. Secondary parks and those parks, including mini-parks and neighborhood parks, are operated and maintained by the County or an entity other than the County such as neighborhood groups, private development, or non-profit organizations.

REC Policy 1.1.3: Waterfronts and Beaches

The County shall continue public acquisition of waterfront property and, through public resources and public/private partnerships, seek new opportunities to preserve recreational and commercial working waterfronts, expand and maintain public beach and water access and protect coastal and marine resources.

REC Policy 1.1.4: Boating Access

The County shall encourage responsible use of waterways and marine resources by evaluating the characteristics and needs of the County's boating population, both residents and visitors, and providing public access for motorized and non-motorized watercraft and mooring facilities.

REC Policy 1.1.5: Coordination of Efforts

The County shall coordinate with developers, property owners associations, private business, citizen-based neighborhood and community planning initiatives, special funding districts and governmental agencies to plan and provide for parks, open space, and recreational facilities in order to achieve common development goals through synergy of efforts.

REC Policy 1.1.6: Concurrency

The County has developed a park, recreation, and open space system that establishes standards for parks and recreation levels of service, identifies development priorities, and allows for effective decision-making and equitable allocation of services to address needs and shortfalls in the parks system. The County shall meet a Level of Service (LOS) Standard based on the 2015-2050 Charlotte County Parks & Recreation Master Plan of 4 points per acre for neighborhood parks, 3 points per acre for community parks, 3.5 points per acre for

regional parks, 16 acres per 1,000 population for environmental lands, and 5 acres per 1,000 population for active park lands.

REC Policy 1.1.7 Private Development Participation

The County shall consider amending its Code of Laws and Ordinances within one year of the effective date of this comprehensive plan to require private residential development to participate in the provision and development of public parks and recreation facilities through land dedication, in-kind services or fees-in-lieu thereof. This participation shall be in addition to paying all required impact fees.

REC Policy 1.1.8: County-wide Master Plan

The County shall keep current and update the formal, comprehensive, county-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan by 2027.

REC Policy 1.1.9: Park Site Master Plans

The County shall create master plans for park sites in order to: plan for parks that function in harmony with the environment; incorporate active and passive opportunities together; and to guide phased park development providing a uniform basis for establishing management and maintenance practices and levels of service. All parks are to be master-planned based on input from the public.

REC Policy 1.1.10: Park Design and Construction Standards

The County will develop parks in accordance with the standards defined in the 2015-2050 Charlotte County Parks & Recreation Master Plan..

REC Objective 1.2: Park and Recreation Maintenance and Management

To protect and maintain existing parks and assets to preserve physical, environmental, functional, recreational and aesthetic values.

REC Policy 1.2.1: Public Awareness

The County shall protect, restore, and manage natural resources in parks and provide interpretive information regarding environmental resources, conservation easements and ecosystems within parks. The County shall consider the proper long-term ecological functions and recreational value of the land and will work to increase public awareness and understanding of ecological systems.

REC Policy 1.2.2: Park Management and Maintenance Guidelines

The County shall develop and implement guidelines for all park assets and improvements that will serve to provide a uniform basis for establishing management and maintenance practices and criteria which consider periodic, short and long-term needs.

REC Policy 1.2.3: Invasive Species Removal

The County shall continue to implement the invasive, exotic plant and animal eradication work programs for parks and open space.

REC GOAL 2: RECREATION

Promote, conduct and provide for high-quality, professional programs that are accessible, and provide traditional and alternative recreational venues and opportunities serving the needs of both residents and visitors.

REC Objective 2.1: Recreation, Athletics and Aquatics Programs

To create and provide for events, programs and staffing to enhance the quality of life and physical well-being of residents and visitors.

REC Policy 2.1.1: Programming

The County shall annually create programming plans considering factors such as implementation strategies, utilization of resources and assets, scheduling and public needs.

REC Policy 2.1.2: Promoting Recreation

The County shall program, promote and conduct activities to fulfill the diverse needs of County residents and visitors for recreational, educational and leisure activities. The County shall facilitate and participate with vendors, event sponsors and organizations in the use of parks and facilities.

REC Policy 2.1.3: Quality through Collaboration

The County shall maintain high quality recreational programming by working with and utilizing best practices and program curriculums of recognized organizations such as National Recreation and Park Association, American Red Cross, Little League Baseball, Florida Parks and Recreation Association, and other national and State professional organizations.

REC Policy 2.1.4: Sports Fields

The County shall provide a variety of sports fields, maintained and programmed in compliance with recognized standards to serve active recreation needs of youth and adults.

REC Policy 2.1.5: Aquatic Facilities

The County shall provide a variety of recreational aquatic facilities to be maintained, programmed and staffed in compliance with recognized standards to serve active recreation needs of youth and adults.

REC Objective 2.2: Special Purpose Venues

To provide special purpose venues that are capable of offering high-quality, professional-level, diverse events and programs attracting and meeting the needs of residents and visitors on a regional, State and national level.

REC Policy 2.2.1: Sports Park

The County shall maintain and provide for operation of a multi-field sports park capable of hosting a number of diverse events and programs throughout the year.

REC Policy 2.2.2: Event Center

The County shall maintain and provide for operation of an indoor/outdoor event and conference center capable of hosting a number of diverse meetings, conferences, events and programs throughout the year.

REC Policy 2.2.3: Contracts and Partnerships

The County shall enter into contracts and partnerships with businesses and groups such as local restaurants, hotels, promoters, trade organizations and business, civic and fraternal organizations for advertising and marketing and other event-related services at special purpose venues in order to provide the best possible experience for clients and guests.

REC Policy 2.2.4: Food, Beverage and Sundries Services

The County shall ensure provision of professional food, beverage and sundry services catering to both popular-type fare as well as specialized culinary services when needed.

REC Policy 2.2.5: Marketing

The County shall market the special event venues locally, regionally and nationally through a broad spectrum of resources including but not limited to press releases, sales kits, website, advertising and public outreach opportunities.

REC Policy 2.2.6: Technology

The County shall research and implement technological improvements and best-practice enhancements that contribute to competing with like facilities in order to maintain standing as a premiere special event venue.

REC GOAL 3: LIBRARIES, HISTORY, ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Provide, maintain and support educational access to informational resources and opportunities.

REC Objective 3.1: Library Facilities and Programs

To provide a system of community libraries and archives which ensure access to collections, programs, and staff sufficient to serve the needs of residents and visitors.

REC Policy 3.1.1: Library Space

The County shall strive to achieve a non-regulatory public library building LOS of 0.6 square feet per capita residential population by 2030, including operational support and public meeting spaces within each building.

REC Policy 3.1.2: Staffing

The County shall strive to achieve a non-regulatory library and history personnel LOS of 0.3 full time equivalent staff per 1,000 residents consisting of professionally-trained, in-service trained and support staff.

REC Policy 3.1.3: Collections

The County shall strive to achieve a non-regulatory library collection standard of two items per capita of residential population which will include a variety of formats by 2030.

REC Policy 3.1.4: Interlibrary Loan Program

The County shall maintain a county-wide loan system to maximize use of collections and an interlibrary loan (ILL) program to meet user requirements beyond the library system holdings.

REC Policy 3.1.5: Programming

The County shall provide programs for children and adults that promote literacy, support lifelong learning, and present opportunities for presentation and discussion of issues and differing points of view at times, days and locations that meet the needs of the community.

REC Policy 3.1.6: Libraries and History Master Capacity Plan

The County shall update the County's Libraries and History Master Capacity Plan, including review of all LOS standards, technology and system approaches, every ten years beginning in 2012.

REC Policy 3.1.7: Outreach Programs

The County shall engage with the community to develop outreach programs for underserved communities and special user groups.

REC Objective 3.2: Library Technology

To use industry-related technology to support and expand library services.

REC Policy 3.2.1: Online Services

The County shall provide a full range of remote services via the Libraries and Historical website, and shall conduct ongoing evaluation of the web site to ensure it meets user needs.

REC Policy 3.2.2: Public Access

The County shall provide technology for public use and self-service equipment at all library facilities.

REC Policy 3.2.3: Emerging Technologies

The County shall conduct ongoing evaluations of emerging and enhanced technologies, including integrated library management software systems and, as financially feasible, incorporate those that best support library and history services and meet user needs.

REC Objective 3.3: Historical and Archaeological Resources

To protect and preserve the County’s historic and archaeological resources.

REC Policy 3.3.1: Resource Survey

The County shall maintain and update a comprehensive, county-wide Survey of Historical Resources (archaeological sites and the built environment). An updated survey report will be published periodically.

REC Policy 3.3.2: Resource Database

The County shall maintain and update a GIS-based database of historic buildings, historic districts, archaeological sites and objects that are significant to local, State or national history and which have been placed on the Local Historic Register, listed in the Florida Master Site File or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

REC Policy 3.3.3: Historic Preservation Ordinance

The County shall maintain a Historic Preservation Ordinance that will provide specific criteria designed to protect the County’s historic and archaeological resources.

REC Policy 3.3.4: Archives

The County shall maintain an archival collection that preserves County’s historical materials.

REC Objective 3.4: Historical Resources Awareness and Education

To participate in public education opportunities and provide programs and exhibits that promotes public awareness of our heritage and the importance of preserving our historic, archaeological, architectural, and scenic resources.

REC Policy 3.4.1: Architectural and Scenic Resources

The County shall continue to incorporate regulations in the Historic Preservation Ordinance to preserve and protect architectural and scenic resources.

REC Policy 3.4.2: Education

The County shall develop permanent and changing exhibits and provide programs that educate children and adults about the County’s local history and heritage.

REC Policy 3.4.3: Historical Marker Program

The County shall use the local Historical Marker program to recognize significant local historic and archaeological sites.

REC Policy 3.4.4: Preservation Programs

The County shall participate in national and statewide preservation and historic recognition programs and ceremonies.

REC Objective 3.5: Arts & Humanities

To encourage and promote public art and design that enhances the quality of life, civic and social pride, and community identity for its residents and visitors.

REC Policy 3.5.1: Public Art Recognition

The County shall work with arts & humanities organizations to support a public art program that provides opportunities for local artists to showcase their works through display, public recognition and other means.

REC Policy 3.5.2: Design Awards Program

The County shall consider the development of an annual awards program that would give recognition to design excellence in public and private development projects in the County.

REC Policy 3.5.3: Art in Public Projects

The County shall integrate art into County projects.

REC Policy 3.5.4: Art in Private Projects

The County shall investigate creating incentives to encourage private developers to integrate public art and arts venues into project designs.

REC GOAL 4: SERVICE DELIVERY

Identify opportunities and promote and execute strategies that add value and validity to the delivery of community services including parks, recreation, libraries, historic preservation, arts and humanities,

REC Objective 4.1: Funding

To identify, evaluate and use alternative sources of revenue for acquisition, development and operation of facilities and programs.

REC Policy 4.1.1: Grants

The County shall seek and, where necessary, provide matching funds as financially feasible to use State, Federal, foundation and other grant programs to assist with the provision of facilities and services.

REC Policy 4.1.2: Alternative Funding

The County shall create procedures and mechanisms to allow the County to accept donations, exchanges-in-kind, bequests, and to solicit and use private sector investment through sponsorships in order to assist in the provision of real property, capital improvements and delivery of programs.

REC Policy 4.1.3: Usage Fees

The County shall establish a schedule of fees appropriate to the provision of facilities and services, and shall provide for reevaluation every two years or sooner, as appropriate.

REC Policy 4.1.4: Capital Investments

The County shall use impact fees, bonds, sales tax and other alternative sources of revenue to finance land, facilities and capital investment in accordance with State statutes.

REC Policy 4.1.5: Concession Agreements

The County shall determine the potential for providing and operating facilities, programs and services through concession-type agreements.

REC Policy 4.1.6 Special Revenue Fund

The County shall maintain a special revenue fund that provides need-based assistance for children to attend summer and other specialty camps through donations, sponsorships, grants and other revenue opportunities as they become available.

REC Policy 4.1.7: Library Funding

The County shall investigate and make a recommendation regarding the establishment of a dedicated property tax millage to fund the provision of libraries and library services by 2032.

REC Policy 4.1.8 Self-sufficiency

The County shall identify and promote strategies that contribute to the financial self-sufficiency of facilities and programs.

REC Objective 4.2: Service Base

To promote availability, expand accessibility and ensure sustainability of activities by taking advantage of emerging and alternative strategies and recognizing opportunities to serve broader segments of the population.

REC Policy 4.2.1: Green Practices

The County shall encourage the use of green building, conservation and recycling practices in the sustainable design, construction and operation of facilities and programs.

REC Policy 4.2.2: Inclusiveness

The County shall provide facilities and operate programs so that, when viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities and other special needs populations.

REC Policy 4.2.3: Trends

The County shall monitor, evaluate and incorporate as appropriate new trends in the provision of amenities, programs and service delivery methods.

REC Policy 4.2.4: Web-based Accessibility

The County shall implement interactive, web-based access to information at each level of citizen contact.

REC Policy 4.2.5: Interlocal Agreements

The County shall maintain an interlocal agreement with the Charlotte County School Board to provide for mutually beneficial utilization of resources and provision of recreational, educational and extracurricular opportunities.

REC Objective 4.3: Citizen Involvement

To actively seek and encourage citizen involvement to assist with and improve the provision of facilities, programs and services.

REC Policy 4.3.1: Public Input

The County shall periodically identify, evaluate and respond to residents' and visitors' needs, desires and satisfaction with respect to their use and participation in amenities and programs.

REC Policy 4.3.2: Park and Recreation Advisory Board

The County's Park and Recreation Advisory Board, a citizen advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), shall review park and recreation issues and opportunities and make recommendations to the BCC for the provision and promotion of recreational opportunities.

REC Policy 4.3.3: Accreditation

The County shall maintain high standards in the delivery of a park and recreation program as evidenced by the pursuit of accreditation through a recognized State or national program.

REC Policy 4.3.4: Partnerships

The County shall expand and enhance the delivery of facilities, programs and services through the establishment of cooperative partnerships with businesses, organizations, and governmental agencies.

REC Policy 4.3.5: Support Groups

The County shall encourage and facilitate the establishment of non-profit organizations in order to leverage available public resources to solicit financial support and provide manpower to acquire, develop and operate programs and services.

REC Policy 4.3.6: Volunteer Programs

The County shall establish formal programs, including appropriate inducements, for using volunteers in constructing, operating and maintaining facilities, library and history division services, and assisting with and providing programs, services and research to supplement available public resources.

REC Policy 4.3.7: Internships

The County shall encourage and facilitate the use of interns to enable students and other qualified individuals to formally participate in the delivery of services as part of an educational pursuit.