

RECREATION ELEMENT

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1: Definition of Parks and Recreation System

To provide a long-range plan that guides development of the City of Alachua's parks and recreation system, establishes funding protocol, and encourages citizen participation, to ensure the availability of recreational opportunities for present and future residents and visitors.

Objective 1.1: Long Range Planning and Funding

The City shall secure the provision, coordination and maintenance of recreational and cultural facilities for current and future residents and visitors, and guarantee safe access to these facilities for all persons, regardless of special need or condition.

Policy 1.1.a: The City shall engage the public in the recreation planning process by utilizing public hearings, meetings and workshops, surveys and other innovative techniques for citizen participation.

Policy 1.1.b: The City shall provide for future recreation needs and the correction of existing recreation deficiencies in the Capital Improvements Plan, updating the Plan yearly to reflect emergent needs and completed projects.

Policy 1.1.c: The City shall explore and utilize all appropriate means of funding available for recreational facilities, in an effort to reduce the need for additional ad valorem taxes. These sources include:

- Recreation impact fees on new residential development
- Federal and state grants
- Bonds and other long-range financing techniques
- Acquisition or lease of other government lands
- Surplus land/property sales
- Private property donations
- Public/private trusts and partnerships
- User fees
- Interlocal agreements with other agencies

- Existing City owned properties which could be converted to provide recreation opportunities.

Objective 1.2: Facilities, Levels of Service and Hierarchy of Parks

The City shall provide a variety of recreational facilities and opportunities that respond to appropriate levels of service for the established hierarchy of parks.

Policy 1.2.a: The City shall adopt recreational levels of service that recognize an established hierarchy of parks, and their associated capacities. The hierarchy may include regional, community, neighborhood and pocket parks.

Policy 1.2.b: The City shall adhere to a minimum level of service of five (5.0) acres of community, neighborhood or pocket park, per 1,000 persons, with a minimum of 20 percent of this in improved, passive parks.

Policy 1.2.c: The City shall encourage the development and operation of public pocket and neighborhood parks by non-profit organizations and private parties.

Policy 1.2.d: The City shall ensure the provision of parks, trails and recreation facilities, through the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian paths, and vehicle and bicycle parking areas. All City parks shall conform to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing barrier free facilities and safe, sufficient parking.

Policy 1.2.e: The City shall develop passive parks and greenways that satisfy the established levels of service, and are in harmony with the Conservation Element of this plan.

Objective 1.3: New Development Recreation Requirements

The City shall consider provide incentives for new development to enhance the City's recreation lands and facilities.

Policy 1.3.a: The City may investigate using recreation impact fees on new residential developments to offset the demand created by the new development.

Policy 1.3.b: The City shall require all Developments of Regional Impact to reserve adequate park and recreation land to enhance quality of life for residents.

Policy 1.3.c: The City shall consider incentives for new industrial, institutional and commercial development to encourage the inclusion of linear and pocket parks, particularly within close proximity to the downtown core.

Policy 1.3.d: The City shall consider incentives for new development to provide pedestrian and bicycle paths, connecting to a network of like paths, wherever possible. The City shall consider establishing a sidewalk/pathway fund as an alternative to the provision of onsite paths within new developments.

Policy 1.3.e: The City shall consider providing a density bonus for developments that include onsite recreation set asides and/or developed recreation.

Objective 1.4: Partnerships

The City shall pursue federal, state, regional and local, public and private partnerships to provide recreational facilities to residents and visitors, as available.

Policy 1.4.a: The City shall continue working with the Alachua County School Board to maintain lease and rental agreements for recreation facilities at Alachua Elementary School, W.W. Irby Elementary School, Mebane Middle School and Santa Fe High School.

Policy 1.4.b: The City shall ensure that facilities obtained through interlocal agreement are readily available to all residents on a non-discriminatory basis.

Policy 1.4.c: The City shall coordinate with Alachua County Division of Parks and Recreation to create recreation opportunities for City residents in regional parks.

Policy 1.4.d: The City shall participate in land acquisition and management efforts with Alachua County, the Suwannee River Water Management District, Florida Park Service, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and other agencies involved in projects that provide recreational opportunities for City of Alachua residents.

Policy 1.4.e: The City shall seek out and promote public/private partnerships that benefit the City's parks and recreation system. Local organizations and associations shall be encouraged to adopt and maintain pocket and neighborhood parks.

Objective 1.5: Cultural Programs and Facilities

The City shall develop or improve park facilities that allow appropriate public access and use to recreational, cultural, historical and natural resources.

Policy 1.5.a: The City shall pursue acquisition of culturally, historically and naturally significant properties for inclusion in the parks and recreation system. Appropriate usage fees shall be determined to offset the cost of maintenance and operation. Wherever possible these sites shall be linked through bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Policy 1.5.b: The City shall create interpretive centers in parks with significant cultural, natural or historical resources.

Policy 1.5.c: The City shall assist with the Alachua Historical Society, and other local cultural, historical and environmental organizations to aid in development of a cultural program.

