

# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## Goals, Objectives, and Policies

**Adopted: August 22, 2011**

**Goal One: Winter Haven will facilitate the development of a well-balanced system of parks and programs that include active and passive recreational opportunities to meet a variety of needs for individuals and groups of all ages and abilities.**

*OBJECTIVE 1.1: The City shall adopt Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and recreation facilities to reflect current conditions and community desires.*

**Policy 1.1.1:** A LOS standard of 6.0 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents shall be adopted. Park land may consist of neighborhood parks, community parks, nature parks, golf courses, trails, and undeveloped public open space.

**Policy 1.1.2:** The City shall strive to maintain existing ratios of recreation facilities as reflected in Table 1.1. Every five years, the City shall evaluate, and if necessary, revise their facility guidelines to reflect changing community desires and conditions.

**Table 1.1 Recreation Facilities Guidelines**

| <b>Recreation Component</b> | <b>Components to Population Ratio</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Ballfield                   | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Basketball                  | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Boat Ramp                   | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Dog Park                    | 1 per 25,000                          |
| Fishing Dock                | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Fitness Course              | 1 per 10,000                          |
| Golf (18-hole course)       | 1 per 100,000                         |
| Horseshoe Court             | 1 per 4,000                           |
| Multi-use Field             | 1 per 6,000                           |
| Open Water Access           | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Swimming Pool               | 1 per 25,000                          |
| Picnic Shelter              | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Playground                  | 1 per 5,000                           |
| Skate Park                  | 1 per 25,000                          |
| Shuffleboard Court          | 1 per 4,000                           |
| Tennis Court                | 1 per 2,000                           |
| Volleyball Court            | 1 per 4,000                           |

**Policy 1.1.3:** Winter Haven shall meet the needs of the current and growing community through improvements, expansions, and upgrades to existing parks and the addition of new parks.

**Policy 1.1.4:** Prioritize the development of new trails and parks in the eastern and southeastern part of the community to address gaps in service. By 2014, locate and acquire land to construct an active park in southeast Winter Haven.

**Policy 1.1.5:** When selecting new park sites, consideration should be given to locate parks in areas so as to prevent urban sprawl. Work towards locating parks near residents to increase walkability and the quality of life in Winter Haven.

**Policy 1.1.6:** All residents should be served by a recreational trail within 1/3 mile of their home. Work towards funding new trail projects to increase

the number of residents being served by a recreational trail by 25 percent by 2020.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2:** *Winter Haven will develop, improve, maintain, and manage park facilities and resources in a manner that evokes a positive and safe image. The City should provide an above average number of facilities and recreation areas when compared to peer cities.*

**Policy 1.2.1:** When developing new or renovating old parks, work towards the provision of 50 percent active facilities and 50 percent passive facilities.

**Policy 1.2.2:** Continue to provide multi-modal access to all parks, facilities and water bodies. Modes should not be limited to land access.

**Policy 1.2.3:** Design, construct, and manage parks and trails with access ways that are compatible with the natural features and character of the individual park site.

**Policy 1.2.4:** Uniform wayfinding and signage shall be developed for use in parks, recreation facilities, and trails.

**Policy 1.2.5:** Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) methods, programs and techniques should be integrated in the design and operation of public parks, recreation facilities, trails and environmental lands. Actively work with the Winter Haven Police Department to ensure that all parks remain a safe and inviting place for all residents.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3:** *To allow for a more efficient use of resources, work with other public, private, and not-for-profit recreation providers for opportunities to share facilities and/or programs.*

**Policy 1.3.1:** Continue to pursue opportunities for shared facility use or joint recreation programs through interlocal and recreation user agreements with other area recreation providers which include, but are not limited to, the Polk County School Board, private schools, Polk State College, Polk County Parks and Recreation Department, Lake Region Lakes Management District, and non-profit clubs and sports organizations.

**Policy 1.3.2:** Continue working with the School Board and Polk County on 'Joint Use Agreements' for the use of school and park facilities for public use.

**Policy 1.3.3:** Work with the School Board and Polk County on partnering opportunities for existing and new sites for the use of school and park facilities for public use.

**Policy 1.3.4:** Pursue partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., YMCA, local and regional alternative providers, and local nonprofits in order to provide a wider variety of indoor and outdoor recreation activities for youth (i.e., athletic leagues, teen social activities, arts and cultural programs).

**OBJECTIVE 1.4:** *Ensure that adults are provided with facilities for life-long fitness and athletic competition.*

**Policy 1.4.1:** Provide hiking, jogging, vita-course, and other self-led physical fitness facilities in order to promote independent fitness.

**Policy 1.4.2:** Ensure an adequate supply of active adult league recreation programming and staff to implement the programs.

**OBJECTIVE 1.5:** *Ensure that the physically, socially, or economically disadvantaged have access to recreational opportunities.*

**Policy 1.5.1:** Ensure equal access and maximum availability to all facilities through the design and adoption and adherence to all accessibility guidelines and State and Federal laws.

**Policy 1.5.2:** Make recreation programs and activities available for the physically disadvantaged. When needed, develop specific recreational programs targeted towards the physically disadvantaged.

**OBJECTIVE 1.6:** *Winter Haven will continue to foster the development of a comprehensive system of greenways, trails, and bikeways that provide connections to parks, neighborhoods, downtown, natural resources and open spaces.*

**Policy 1.6.1:** Utilize the 2010 *Sidewalk, Pedestrian, and Multimodal Infrastructure Access Plan* as a guide when selecting trail and bikeway projects for funding. As opportunities arise, utilize grant funding to construct identified sidewalk, trail, and bicycle segments.

**Policy 1.6.2:** Where practical, include loop trails around lakes with priority given to lakes where public access is available and connections can be made to other lakefront parks or trails.

- Policy 1.6.3:** Connectivity shall be a priority in determining trail construction projects within the City's trail system. Efforts between the Planning Division, Leisure Services Division and Public Services Division shall be coordinated to provide bike and pedestrian connections and increase access through traffic calming measures for the following destinations and facilities:
- Existing multi-use trails and greenways
  - Future phases of the Chain of Lakes Trail
  - Parks
  - Recreation facilities
  - Educational facilities
  - Other City services and businesses
- Policy 1.6.4:** Create 'lake to lake' connectors via downtown to provide additional non-motorized access between the Chain of Lakes Trail Downtown Trailhead and other downtown attractors and the City's extensive water resources.
- Policy 1.6.5:** By 2014, establish Land Development Regulations requiring all new commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-family construction and significant reconstruction to provide designated facilities for bicycle parking.
- Policy 1.6.6:** Where feasible, develop bike lanes along all corridor/interconnecting roads when they are scheduled for repaving.
- Policy 1.6.7:** Bicycle parking should be provided at all park access points; prioritize development of parks that connect to sidepaths, multi-use trails, or greenway trails.
- Policy 1.6.8:** Explore the use of alternative traffic control devices/techniques to facilitate safe crossings of major arterial and collector roadways. Techniques may include trail overpasses as well as at grade crossings, pedestrian refuge islands, signals, etc.
- Policy 1.6.9:** Promote water resources as a system of blue trails (blueways) as part of the overall trail system and pursue designation of the Chain of Lakes System as an official State Blueway through the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails. Provide additional boat ramps, docks, and wayfinding signage to promote the use of the blueways system as well as increase access to it.

**Goal Two: Ensure the provision of recreational facilities and programs that support a positive overall social wellbeing for the City's current and future residents.**

*Objective 2.1: Offer a variety of programs and activities for all ages and groups. The City shall continue to offer a balance of recreational activities including, but not limited to, special events, youth programs, athletics, arts and culture, senior programs, multi-generational programs, health and wellness programs to meet the needs of residents and visitors alike.*

**Policy 2.1.1:** The City shall conduct a City-wide survey at a minimum of once every five years as well as conduct post-program and event evaluations to gain information from the community as to what programs are desired and popular.

**Policy 2.1.2:** The City shall continue to provide recreation programs specifically targeted to school-age children and seniors.

**Policy 2.1.3:** The City shall work to increase the number of family based multi-generational activities that promote active lifestyles for all members of the family.

**Policy 2.1.4:** The City shall continue to partner with community arts organizations to expand programming for performing arts, arts and crafts, and art education.

**Policy 2.1.5:** The City shall continue to host and promote neighborhood and community special events.

**Policy 2.1.6:** Provide a variety of nature-based recreational opportunities and programs.

**Policy 2.1.7:** Communicate with partners and potential partners about activities and events, so that information will reach the largest number of citizens.

**Policy 2.1.8:** Develop partnerships with local hospitals and healthcare agencies to provide education and recreational programming that addresses health and wellness issues.

*Objective 2.2: Promote public art and other passive cultural activities within the City.*

**Policy 2.2.1:** Maintain and promote the Winter Haven Public Library as a hub of intellectual, cultural, and social activity in the City.

**Policy 2.2.2:** Continue to promote the display of public art within parks and City facilities.

**Policy 2.2.3:** Continue to support community organizations in their efforts to promote local history, arts, and culture through education programs and special events.

**Goal Three: Promote the natural environment and all forms of nature-based recreation opportunities.**

*OBJECTIVE 3.1: Ensure continued public access to lakes that are part of the Chain of Lakes as well as other lakes in the City that are large enough and appropriate to permit water activities.*

**Policy 3.1.1:** Provide access to lakes through existing rights-of-ways that extend to or are adjacent to a lake. The City shall retain all public rights of way on water bodies and shall work to develop them as access points where practical to do so.

**Policy 3.1.2:** Through coordination with the Lake Region Lakes Management District, maintain existing lake access facilities throughout the planning period.

**Policy 3.1.3:** Through coordination with the Lake Region Lakes Management District, implement a lake access plan, which will improve or add launch facilities as funding and/or dedication opportunities arise.

*OBJECTIVE 3.2: Identify, and when possible, preserve environmentally sensitive lands located within or adjacent to the City that may be suitable for passive recreational opportunities.*

**Policy 3.2.1:** Identify environmentally sensitive lands for potential acquisition. Particular attention should be paid to lakefront parcels and parcels that are adjacent to other public properties.

**Policy 3.2.2:** Provide a balance of developed recreation and open space in all parks.

**Policy 3.2.3:** Preserve environmentally sensitive areas and include interpretive signage and programming designed to celebrate the natural environment.

**Policy 3.2.4:** Continue the practice of co-locating stormwater management areas with nature parks as a way of encouraging interaction between residents and the environment.

**Policy 3.2.5:** Implement the *2010 Sustainable Water Resource Management Plan*.

*OBJECTIVE 3.3: Continue to implement a tree planting and maintenance program for the purpose of aesthetics, preserving the urban forest, habitat preservation, and energy conservation.*

**Policy 3.3.1:** Develop and implement streetscape plans where opportunities arise as part of street improvement or neighborhood revitalization activities.

**Policy 3.3.2:** When opportunities arise, continue the practice of planting trees on public grounds and lands.

**Policy 3.3.3:** Work towards meeting a goal of planting at least 250 new public and private trees annually within the City.

**Policy 3.3.4:** To ensure a diversified urban forest, encourage the planting of a variety of tree species on public and private property.

**Policy 3.3.5:** Implement a tree maintenance program that includes water conserving irrigation systems, proper pruning, fertilizing, and management techniques.

**Policy 3.3.6:** Continue to maintain and enforce tree canopy coverage requirements for all impervious parking areas within the City. By 2014, update the Landscape Ordinance to encourage the use of a variety of tree species to promote a diversified tree canopy.

**Policy 3.3.7:** By 2014, develop and implement land development regulations requiring the planting of street trees and yard/canopy trees within all new developments and provide protection to existing trees.