



RECREATION & OPEN SPACE



SJC
2050
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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G. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Goal G.1.

The development of a system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces to meet the health, safety, and welfare needs of the County citizens and visitors.

Objective G.1.1. Provision of Recreation and Open Space to meet County Growth

The County shall provide and maintain the recreation and park needs of the County population through the year 2050.

Policies

- G.1.1.1. The County shall develop existing parks based on the generated needs by Planning District, according to the level of service standards adopted and as recommended by Master Park and Recreation Plan.
- G.1.1.2. The County shall consider the use of wetlands and conservation areas for passive recreational and open space areas provided these sites have been determined to not endanger public health, safety, and welfare.
- G.1.1.3. Planned Developments (PUDs), PRDs, and other developments shall provide neighborhood-sized parks and playing fields within the development for their residents that meet the County LOS standard.
- G.1.1.4. DRIs and PUDs which have met the required neighborhood park LOS requirements may dedicate other parks and open space requirements generated by the development through dedication to the County, private ownership, and fee-in-lieu of payment for off-site acquisitions consistent with the master plan according to the adopted level of service standard. The choice of development of facilities, dedication, or impact fee payment shall be negotiated.
- G.1.1.5. The County shall work with other public agencies for the development of compatible multi-use programs for the public lands within the County.
- G.1.1.6. The County shall consider the use of bonds, local infrastructure taxes, and other alternative funding sources as revenue for recreation and open space.
- G.1.1.7. Public recreational and park sites shall not be diverted to other uses except in cases of overriding public need and when other equivalent sites are supplied.
- G.1.1.8. All new development except Single Family and Two Family Dwellings on existing platted or legally documented lots of record prior to this amendment, with frontage along the St. Johns River and Intracoastal Waterway shall be evaluated on providing at least one public access for every 750 feet of such frontage. The type of Public Access provided shall be determined based on site and environmental conditions and may include access suitable for the construction of a public boat ramp, dock, fishing pier, or wildlife viewing area with parking.

G.1.1.9. St. Johns County shall require the design of beach access and parking areas to be constructed so that it enhances and protects the waterways adjacent to lands within St. Johns County. Such parking areas shall be designed to include (but not be limited to) existing trees and use of pervious materials (e.g. turf block, stone, and similar materials) parking wherever feasible.

Objective G.1.2. Coordination of Public and Private Recreation and Open Space Facilities

The County shall coordinate the provision of recreation and open space through both public and private sources, which will at a minimum assure consistency with the LOS standards established in H.1.2.1.

Policies

- G.1.2.1. The County shall continue to seek citizen input for the development of recreational opportunities and facilities.
- G.1.2.2. The County shall strive to maintain the existing interlocal agreements with St. Augustine, St. Augustine Beach, and the St. Johns County School Board concerning the mutual use and support of recreational facilities.
- G.1.2.3. The County shall continue working with the School Board to provide recreational programs and facilities.
- G.1.2.4. The County shall continue to coordinate with the Tourist Development Council to provide tourist related recreational opportunities.
- G.1.2.5. The County shall continue to pursue Federal, State, regional, local, and private funding sources for the acquisition and development of parks and open space areas.

Objective G.1.3. Park, Beach, and Waterway Access

The County shall improve amenities, public access, and universal accessibility to County parks, open spaces, beaches, and waterways.

Policies

- G.1.3.1. The County shall improve parking at parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, beaches, and waterways through:
- (a) Providing adequate parking at beach and waterway access points or providing off-beach parking located where vehicle and pedestrian traffic identifies that there is a need to increase these facilities.
 - (b) Researching and applying for grants and other available funding to acquire and construct parking and access.
- G.1.3.2. The County shall improve access by public transit and active mobility such as walking, biking, and alternative modes of transit to parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, beaches, and waterways through:
- (a) All new oceanfront development except Single Family and Two Family Dwellings on existing platted or legally documented lots of record prior to this amendment, with ocean frontage shall be evaluated on providing at least one public beach access for every 750 feet of ocean frontage. Public off-beach pervious (e.g. turf block, stone, and similar materials) parking will be required at each public beach access at 5 spaces per beach access.
 - (b) Advocating the addition of bike lanes to State and County Roads.
 - (c) Requiring new development to provide walk/bike paths to connect its open space and recreational sites to residential areas.
 - (d) Developing a bike path plan which prioritizes the development of bike paths which link neighborhoods to schools and parks and uses the Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan as a guide.
- G.1.3.3. The County shall improve universal design to implement optimal accessibility for all ages and abilities at parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, beaches, and waterways.
- G.1.3.4. The County shall not vacate existing easements, walkways, and other access points to beaches and waterways without equivalent or greater mitigation.
- G.1.3.5. The County shall protect the accessibility of public beach access points and easements by:
- (a) Identifying public beach access with signage or other mechanisms which identifies dune walkovers as public access. All constructed public dune walkovers shall be posted.
 - (b) Continuing to pursue additional beach access funding sources.

(c) Encouraging new development to provide beach parking at a ratio of three (3) parking spaces for every 100 square feet of dune walkover

G.1.3.6. The County, when feasible, shall improve the amenities, both natural and built, at parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, beaches, and waterways.

G.1.3.7. The County shall protect its public beaches by pursuing additional funding sources to assist funding for future beach renourishment projects.

G.1.3.8. The County shall continue to work with DEP and FWC in the design and construction of beach access and parking areas to ensure that sea turtle habitat and Anastasia Island Beach Mouse habitat is adequately protected during and after construction.

Objective G.1.4. Correction and Improvement of Existing Recreation and Open Space

The County shall correct deficiencies, improve existing parks and recreation facilities, and strive to expand facilities for the County’s population.

Policies

- G.1.4.1. St. Johns County will utilize the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify park and recreational facility deficiencies and correct these deficiencies by establishing funding programs, development exactions, on-site dedication, fee-in-lieu preservation, or other appropriate methods.
- G.1.4.2. The County shall identify existing and the future LOS needs based on the four designated Planning Districts and using the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- G.1.4.3. In selecting park sites for site improvements the County shall consider those Planning Districts which require immediate construction, maintenance, or rehabilitation of existing facilities.
- G.1.4.4. In selecting future park sites for public acquisition the County shall consider serving the population in the high growth areas and Development Areas depicted on the Future Land Use Map.
- G.1.4.5. The County shall continue to annually budget for land acquisition and for the construction of public recreation facilities.
- G.1.4.6. The County shall consider updating its Impact fee requirements to incentivize new development to dedicate active public parkland in-lieu of recreational impact fee.
- G.1.4.7. Recreational impact fees shall continue to be utilized as an additional funding source for new parks and recreation facilities.
- G.1.4.8. The County shall continue to support the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands which can be set aside as open space and passive recreation areas through Federal, State, regional, local, and private programs
- G.1.4.9. The County shall continue to pursue Federal, State, regional, local, and private grant sources for the acquisition and development of recreational sites and open space.
- G.1.4.10. The County shall explore options for a dedicated funding source for the Land Acquisition Management Program (LAMP).
- G.1.4.11. In selecting future park sites for public acquisition the County shall consider acquisitions that support Federal, State, regional, local, private programs, and recommendations made by the LAMP Board, North Florida Land Trust, citizen visioning groups, and Scenic Corridor Advocacy Groups (e.g. Scenic and Historic A1A and William Bartram Scenic and Historic Highway).
- G.1.4.12. The County shall coordinate and support future park acquisitions with Federal, State, regional, local, and private programs.

Objective G.1.5. Greenway, Blueway & Trail

The County shall consider its Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan as a guide when reviewing new development and in obtaining grant funds.

Policies

- G.1.5.1. All new development shall use the St. Johns County Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan as a guide in the planning and design of the new development, in providing access and interconnectivity between adjacent lands, and within the new development.
- G.1.5.2. All new development that lies within or adjacent to the trails depicted on the Greenway, Blueway & Trails Master Plan shall be reviewed for internal and external connections.
- G.1.5.3. When acceptable to the property owners, the County may consider dual use of utility corridors for greenway, blueway and trail connections and crossings. Such utility corridors may include, but are not limited to, drainage easements, stormwater retention areas, gas pipeline easements, private trail connectors, mitigation sites, buffers and easements (which are not required to remain undisturbed), scenic edges, development edges, water and sewer transmission lines easements; telephone, cable, and fiber-optic communication easements; overhead electric transmission and distribution lines and existing road crossings.
- G.1.5.4. The County shall update the Greenway, Blueway & Trail Master Plan when determined necessary. The update shall at a minimum show development in and adjacent to the trails, connections, dual use connections, scenic edges, federal, state and locally publicly acquired parklands and conservation lands, mitigation sites, and any other publicly owned lands that is utilized as greenways/blueways.
- G.1.5.5. St. Johns County shall coordinate with federal, state, regional, and local governmental agencies for land acquisition and for greenways, blueways and trails planned in St. Johns County when they are adjacent to or connect to such federal, state, regional owned lands or to adjacent local governments.
- G.1.5.6. The County may consider land development regulations that include, but not be limited to, the use of incentives, such as, but not limited to, density bonuses, transfer- of-development rights, impact fee credits, park and open space credits, and tree credits for new developments that set-aside land within a greenway and blueway.