

2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



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**RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE
ELEMENT**

**GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND
POLICIES**

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GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GOAL 1

To provide a variety of recreational facilities, both active and passive, in order to achieve and maintain adopted standards for levels of service.

Objective 1.1 The City shall provide a variety of recreational facilities in the recreation and park system in order to achieve and maintain adopted levels of service standards.

Policies

1.1.1

The City shall maintain the Level of Service (LOS) standards provided under Goal 1 of the Capital Improvements Element for the provision of parks in the City.

Objective 1.2 The City shall ensure that recreation facilities are added to keep up with new growth and development.

Policies

1.2.1

The City shall implement an ongoing mechanism or system that will provide additional resources for the provision of recreation and open space. An investigation into a variety of funding sources and mechanisms shall be conducted.

1.2.2

The City shall examine all possibilities for land acquisition including purchase, scenic easement, eminent domain, open space zoning, tax concessions, property exchange, and lease of private lands, and community and private donation.

1.2.3

The City shall accept or purchase parcels of land for park purposes that are of sufficient size, location and configuration to handle their intended purpose(s). The Recreation and Community Services Department shall maintain objective standards for considering any parcel. The standards shall be based on a matrix and ranking criteria established by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department.

1.2.4

The City shall facilitate the use of the provisions of Section 193.501, F.S. The statute addresses the assessment of lands subject to a conservation easement, environmentally endangered lands, or lands used for outdoor recreational or park purposes when land development rights have been conveyed or conservation restrictions have been covenanted.

1.2.5

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall utilize guidelines for the development of neighborhood and regional parks that incorporate standardized designs and siting criteria.

1.2.6

In accordance with Section 122.421(b), Ordinance Code, City of Jacksonville, no parklands, park facilities, or other recreational or park related land or space shall be converted to another use or sold by the City unless it is replaced with new park facilities, land or space of equal or greater size or value in the same general area or as close thereto as possible or the property is to be used as a civic community center.

1.2.7

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department shall develop and utilize a matrix and ranking criteria to identify recreation facility needs. The matrix and ranking criteria analysis shall be updated every five years in order to prioritize capital improvements.

1.2.8

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department shall update the Master Recreation Improvement Plan (MRIP) by December 2023. The master plan shall at a minimum:

- identify existing park facilities and anticipated needs based on population growth for a minimum of a ten year planning timeframe,
- consider the provision of facilities and amenities in areas where health outcomes are the lowest, providing for engaging activities for youth and increasing access to the river,
- define active recreation, passive recreation and open space, and
- identify appropriate updates to active recreation policies within this element as they apply to all development areas with the exception of the Central Business District Development Area which shall be addressed by the DIA

1.2.9

The City shall provide easements for public access for recreation and open space uses on public land leased to private interests.

Objective 1.3 The City shall increase its pedestrian path and greenway and trail systems and develop strategies to ensure that these systems are included in new park development.

Policies

1.3.1

In accordance with standards developed by the Recreation and Community Services Department, nature walks, greenways and trails or multipurpose pedestrian paths shall be included in each new park at least ten acres in size acquired or developed by the City, if suitable.

1.3.2

The City, through the Recreation and Community Services Department, shall develop strategies for the acquisition or lease of linear parks for pedestrian paths and greenway and trail systems. These facilities shall be developed as a network connecting residential areas, schools and parks where land is available through purchase or easement.

1.3.3

On a continuing basis, the Recreation and Community Services Department will petition the State to acquire appropriate unused rail trackage in order for the City to sublease the land under the Rails to Trails program.

1.3.4

The City shall consider using properties acquired in the implementation of the Master Storm water Management Plan for recreational purposes when such properties meet the criteria and standards for recreational uses.

Objective 1.4 The City shall consider the needs and abilities of special groups, including the elderly and disabled, when designing and locating recreation facilities.

Policies

1.4.1

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall continue to evaluate programs in order to keep abreast of the recreational needs for special groups.

1.4.2

All new recreation construction undertaken by the City shall conform to applicable Federal Guidelines for access by the disabled, through Florida Statutes Section 553.503, in which the State adopted the federal Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility Guidelines.

Objective 1.5 Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department shall seek to develop jointly with the Duval County School Board sites which will meet both the educational and recreational needs of the community, as well as programs which will provide for the dual use of existing school sites.

Policies

1.5.1

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall maintain an agreement with the School Board to implement procedures for the joint utilization of school sites for both education and recreational activities, and to promote the same.

1.5.2

The City shall continue working with the Duval County School Board in relation to the coordination of school facility planning and comprehensive land use planning in accordance with the Interlocal Agreement for Joint Facility Planning between the City of Atlantic Beach, the Consolidated City of Jacksonville, the Town of Baldwin, the City of Jacksonville Beach, the City of Neptune Beach and the Duval County School Board. Florida Statutes 1013.33 requires local governments to develop a process for determining where and how joint use of either school board or local government facilities can be shared for mutual benefit and efficiency.

GOAL 2

To establish an active/passive park system in the suburban and rural areas of the City which assist in providing identity, form and a visual framework to the City and its communities.

Objective 2.1 The City of Jacksonville shall improve, expand and enhance its natural areas such as waterfronts, park lands, and open spaces to preserve the identity of these areas and encourage sectional recognition.

Policies

2.1.1

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall continue to utilize established guidelines for the development and maintenance of all its future recreational lands and facilities.

2.1.2

Open space planning shall be coordinated among all City departments to include Public Works, Planning and Development, Recreation and Community Services, the Office of Economic Development (OED), and Environmental and Compliance. Open space within the downtown area shall be coordinated with the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA).

2.1.3

The City shall continue to develop approximately 2,190 acres of recreation and open space on NAS Cecil Field which would be used for such items as golf courses, equestrian facilities, archery ranges, trails, and other active recreation facilities.

2.1.4

The City's Landscape and Tree Protection Regulations shall require the preservation of unique natural, native vegetation and habitat areas in new developments.

2.1.5

Funds from all City sales of surplus real property shall be designated for new park development and maintenance in accordance with Sections 110.349 and 122.429, Ordinance Code, City of Jacksonville.

2.1.6

The Recreation and Community Services Department and other related City departments will continue to identify lands which are desirable for acquisition under various environmental and other land acquisition programs.

2.1.7

The City shall apply for available State, Federal, regional and private funds for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands.

Objective 2.2 The City's Land Development Regulations, through the Subdivision Ordinances or other Ordinances, shall ensure the provision of active recreation and open space by private enterprise.

Policies

2.2.1

The City shall require that all new non-residential land uses provide a minimum of 10% of the property in open space.

2.2.2

The City shall require that all new single family and multi-family developments (residential developments) dedicate land for public parkland (active recreation parks) or provide monetary contribution to the appropriate department.

2.2.3

A residential subdivision development of 100 lots or more shall provide at least one acre of useable uplands for every 100 lots (and any fraction thereof), or 5% of the total useable uplands area to be platted, whichever is less, to be dedicated as common area and set aside for active recreation. There may be up to two areas for each 100 lots, and the areas shall be a minimum of 0.5 acres in size, unless otherwise approved by the Planning and Development Department, or by the City Council as part of a Planned Unit Development Zoning District.

2.2.4

A residential subdivision development of 25 lots to 99 lots shall pay a recreation and open space fee of two-hundred-fifty (\$250) dollars per lot, or provide at least four hundred thirty-

five (435) square feet of useable uplands for each lot (and any fraction thereof), to be dedicated as common area and set aside for active recreation. The City shall use recreation and open space fees collected pursuant to this subsection to improve, enhance, expand, or acquire recreation areas within the same Planning District in which the fees are paid.

2.2.5

All multiple-family developments of 100 units or more shall provide 150 square feet of active recreation area per dwelling unit. There may be one area for each 100 units, or the areas may be combined, subject to approval by the Planning and Development.

GOAL 3

To use open space and recreational facilities as a key element in the City's planning strategy to enhance the natural environment and to conserve important natural resources.

Objective 3.1 The City shall establish and maintain a comprehensive resource management program for the protection of natural areas having special characteristics.

Policies

3.1.1

The Planning and Development Department, with assistance from the Recreation and Community Services Department shall maintain an inventory/map of all natural areas of the City having special characteristics such as waterfronts, stream valleys, significant wildlife habitats, and drainage ways.

3.1.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department, along with State and Federal agency partnerships will manage those portions of park properties containing important natural resources for long-term conservation. Opportunities for public access to the resource will continue to be developed in a manner that is consistent with the conservation of the resource.

In addition, the Recreation and Community Services Department, along with State and Federal agency partnerships shall carry out the resource protection plan developed for preservation lands that incorporates the removal of non-native or invasive species for natural areas having special characteristics.

3.1.3

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall incorporate into its park design, development and redevelopment plans, strategies and programs for natural resource establishment, restoration or enhancement.

3.1.4

The City shall include specific open space definitions and standards in the Land Development Regulations.

3.1.5

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall implement the Comprehensive Public Access Plan for all preservation lands which emphasizes the importance of the historical, cultural and natural resources of those sites and public access to the resource will be developed in a manner that is consistent with the conservation of the resource.

3.1.6

Work with other State and Federal agencies to develop maps, databases, and resources that will better identify environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands and waters, to prioritize those areas, and develop plans for preservation, protection and if appropriate, public recreational access.

Objective 3.2 The City shall utilize the significant natural assets within the County for advancing eco-tourism.

Policies

3.2.1

Implement recommendations of the North Jacksonville Vision Plan and Master Plan to establish eco-centers at both the Timucuan Preserve and the Ft. George Island Cultural Center.

3.2.2

Continue to support the cooperative efforts between the City, the State and the Federal government as established in the Timucuan Trail State and National Parks partnership to provide recreational and educational facilities to expand Jacksonville's role as an ecotourism destination.

GOAL 4

Capitalize on the scenic and recreational quality of the St. Johns River and its tributaries, the Atlantic Ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway and other significant bodies of water in Duval County.

Objective 4.1 The City shall provide greater public accessibility to the St. Johns River and develop appropriate recreational uses of its shorelines.

Policies

4.1.1

The City, through the Recreation and Community Services Department, will maintain a plan for the acquisition of acreage along the St. Johns River and its major navigable tributaries for public recreational use to accommodate the growing population and its desire to enjoy the river.

4.1.2

The City's Land Development Regulations shall include site design standards for new and redeveloped areas bordering major waterways in order to provide waterfront areas for recreational use and increase public access.

4.1.3

Parking and support facilities, such as drinking water and restrooms, shall be designed at public access points to the beach where pedestrian traffic is such to warrant the expenditure.

4.1.4

The City shall encourage new and protect existing public access to the St. Johns River in the Downtown Zoning Overlay district.

4.1.5

The City shall promote public use and enjoyment of the St. Johns River through the coordination of the Recreation and Community Services, Downtown Vision Inc., the Department of Sports and Entertainment, the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA) and other public and private agencies to provide special events focusing on the river.

4.1.6

The City shall encourage the preservation, protection, promotion and restoration of the St. Johns River as an American Heritage River in recognition of its ecological, historic, economic, recreational and cultural significance by adhering to best management practices for all park facility improvement and construction.

Objective 4.2 The City shall increase the number of public boating, kayaking and fishing facilities along the St. Johns River and its tributaries.

Policies

4.2.1

New boat ramps constructed by the City shall include multiple ramps, adequate parking areas, lighting, restrooms, and drinking water and launch preparation areas with clear overhead for masted vessels.

4.2.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall continuously examine all proposed and existing bridge crossings for inclusion of major boat ramps, either under or adjacent to the structure, and fishing catwalks along the span.

4.2.3

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall continue to examine all future, existing or abandoned bridges over the St. Johns River or its tributaries for areas for fishing either on or alongside the bridge.

4.2.4

The Recreation and Community Services Department, shall evaluate the desirability of fishing piers in existing as well as all future waterfront parks.

4.2.5

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall develop and utilize a matrix and ranking criteria to identify land and prioritize waterfront locations for the development of boat ramps, buffer zones and/or public access to the St. Johns River and its tributaries.

4.2.6

The City shall apply for grants to maximize city funding which allow for the acquisition, development, expansion, or renovation of water access parks and preserves.

4.2.7

The City shall partner with other State and Federal agencies to provide increased public access to the Timucuan Preserve.

Objective 4.3 Promote the City's unique and diverse array of water resources and distinctive economic opportunities for waterfront activation.

Policies

4.3.1

The Waterways Commission shall continue to coordinate the efforts and activities of various agencies, boards and commissions related to waterfront activation and protection in order to foster a consistent long-range vision for waterfront activation projects and to empower stakeholder efforts and market the brand to increase community awareness and tourism.

4.3.2

The City should consider programs, policies and regulations to maximize the benefit of waterfront assets by creating a regionally and nationally authentic brand or identity to boost tourism and business while also improving health and wellness outcomes through increased recreational opportunities for the City's residents.

GOAL 5

The City, in cooperation with the State and Federal governments, shall utilize stream and tributary areas for open space, watershed and wildlife habitat protection and recreational purposes.

Objective 5.1 The City, in cooperation with State, Federal, and private non-profit agencies, shall acquire and preserve major stream valley corridors plus adjacent vital resources such as wetlands, wooded areas, and conservation areas when deemed necessary for watershed protection.

Policies

5.1.1

The City of Jacksonville, through the Florida Forever Program, the Save Our Coasts (SOC) Program, the Save Our Rivers (SOR) Program, Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) and similar other programs, shall request and encourage the State to acquire major inland woodlands, major stream valleys, and other selected waterfront areas.

5.1.2

The City, in cooperation with the State and Federal governments, shall utilize stream and tributary areas for open space, watershed and wildlife habitat protection and recreational purposes.

5.1.3

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall encourage the revision of Ordinance 2005-917 as needed, for the continued protection of natural resources by codifying park rules and regulations.

GOAL 6

To promote economic prosperity within the City through increased recreational facility development.

Objective 6.1 A needs assessment analysis, based upon the population's needs and desires and in concert with the City's efforts and policies for future economic development, will be used to provide direction in the further development and operation of the park system.

Policies

6.1.1

The Recreation and Community Services Department, shall continue to inventory its needs and expand its survey research to stay abreast of demand.

6.1.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall develop economically feasible plans to guide development of park sites and services offered, based on its public input, and shall diversify and expand its facilities and programming.

6.1.3

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department shall coordinate with the Tourist Development Council and other public or private organizations that has an interest in developing and redeveloping the City's recreational facilities and programs. Development and redevelopment of recreational facilities and programs within the downtown area shall be coordinated with the Downtown Investment Authority (DIA).

6.1.4

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall plan recreational development in such areas as the Urban Core where open space is limited and where recreation development may be used to encourage the redevelopment of deteriorated or blighted areas.

6.1.5

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall work with other agencies to explore areas and methods to provide recreation areas to revitalize older neighborhoods.

6.1.6

The City shall improve coordination with all levels of government, non-profit providers and private landholders to increase available parkland and facilities, through negotiations and joint participation agreements for acquisition and management of recreational land.

GOAL 7

The City shall protect and utilize its cultural and historical resources.

Objective 7.1 The City shall protect historic and cultural resources from various types of incompatible development by preservation, conservation, restoration and inclusion in the City's recreational/open space inventory.

Policies

7.1.1

Through the Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission, the creation of historic districts, and the identification and protection of landmarks and landmark sites, the City will protect its historic and cultural resources. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department will coordinate with all appropriate agencies in its future development of recreational facilities to ensure preservation of historic and cultural resources.

7.1.2

The City shall assign names of a historic nature to park sites to emphasize their cultural or historical significance.

GOAL 8

The City shall improve citizens' perception, involvement and participation in local recreational activities and provide services and programs for all residents of the City, including children, adults, seniors and visitors.

Objective 8.1 The City shall provide full public information about new and existing facilities, activities and development plans and programs.

Policies

8.1.1

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department with the evolution of social media shall continue to provide informational publications and intensify its use of the media to inform the public of recreational projects and programs.

8.1.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall attend open Community Planning Advisory Council (CPAC) and Council members town hall meetings regularly for the purpose of soliciting citizen input concerning recreational issues.

8.1.3

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall develop feasible plans to guide development of park sites and services offered, based on public input and shall diversify and expand its facilities and programming.

Objective 8.2 The Recreation and Community Services Department shall continue to expand the number of park advocate groups that work with the City.

Policies

8.2.1

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department shall maintain an advisory committee consisting of representatives from the public and private sectors to stimulate and promote vision, leadership, and public/private cooperation.

8.2.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall make greater use of volunteer assistance in developing, operating, and maintaining recreation areas.

8.2.3

The Recreation and Community Services Department will continue to coordinate with private organizations, such as clubs and civic organizations, to join and participate in the

recreational process and encourage volunteer opportunities through the “Friends of the Park” partnerships.

8.2.4

The Recreation and Community Services Department will continue to provide technical assistance to neighborhood or community groups, which are working to better their recreational opportunities and make Jacksonville a city of identifiable and picturesque neighborhoods.

Objective 8.3 The City shall improve its visual attractiveness, both through positive measures of orderly development and beautification and through consistent efforts to avoid, remove, or diminish the impact of unsightly features.

Policies 8.3.1

The City's Land Development Regulations shall require adequate landscaping of public projects, such as future recreational facilities, as well as private development.

8.3.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall construct and rehabilitate recreation buildings in a manner that is compatible with neighboring buildings and which enhances the local environment.

Objective 8.4 The City shall protect the naturally beautiful environment and prevent unwarranted abuse of its resources.

Policies 8.4.1

The City's Land Development Regulations shall require the conservation of natural areas having special characteristics, such as major waterways, wildlife habitats, woodlands, and beaches. The regulations shall be consistent with the Conservation/Coastal Management Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

8.4.2

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department shall work with blight fighting campaigns to reduce vandalism in parks and open spaces and promote a sense of pride in public facilities.

GOAL 9

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall establish minimum standards for park maintenance and equipment repair and bring all parks up to this standard within five years.

Objective 9.1 The Recreation and Community Services Department shall consider for the future the allocation of funding maintenance and equipment repair equally with capital outlay for existing and new facility developments.

Policies

9.1.1

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall maintain a procedure for the rating of park facilities using a four-level semantic differential scale (excellent, good, fair, and poor) as outlined in the Master Recreation Improvement Plan (MRIP) plan.

9.1.2

The Recreation and Community Services Department shall strive to rate all of its parks on an annual basis, but in no event less often than once every five years. Each park will be identified by the type of rating received.

9.1.3

All parks receiving the lowest rating will be improved by the Recreation and Community Services Department to at least the next higher rating level within five years of the last rating.

9.1.4

Recreation and Community Services Department will develop and utilize a matrix and ranking criteria for determining the capital improvement ranking of all parks. The matrix and ranking criteria analysis shall be updated every five years.