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# ***Recreation/Open Space Element***

*March 21, 2016*

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## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Element is to plan for a comprehensive system of public parks, open space, and recreational facilities that satisfy the current and future needs of New Port Richey residents and visitors. This element identifies current recreational resources, analyzes existing and future needs, and contains goal, objective and policy statements to guide decisions on public policy and capital improvements for park and open space lands, and recreational facilities and programs that are consistent with the City's goals and objectives.

## **II. Background**

### **Context**

A major draw to New Port Richey in its early settlement years was recreational use of the area's abundant natural resources. The community's tradition of waterfront parks began around 1915 with the opening of Enchantment Park (now Sims Park) on the Pithlachascotee River in Downtown. With enhancements over the years, Sims Park remains the jewel of the City's park system, which offers an increasingly broad spectrum of recreational opportunities to area residents.

Since its founding, the City has served as the center of community life for much of west Pasco and, in so doing, has offered recreational and leisure activities for residents and visitors of the broader community. Most notable in this capacity is the City's premier community event, the Chasco Fiesta. The annual spring festival holds the distinction as the longest running festival in the state and attracts people from across the region. Also, the City has long provided parks and recreational programs when surrounding areas outside the City had few recreational resources. Therefore, it was not uncommon for residents of the unincorporated area to use City facilities. Today, Pasco County has numerous community and regional parks and facilities in west Pasco to serve unincorporated and municipal populations.

With recent reports on increased obesity in adults and children in the US, communities have come to recognize the contribution of recreation in achieving public health. In places with more recreational opportunities, people are more likely to be active. The correlation between quality recreational facilities and programs and health-related quality of life indicators has prompted the City to make significant investments in the New Port Richey Parks and Recreation Program and continue developing plans for future enhancements to the recreation system.

### **Recreation Program Management**

The New Port Richey Parks and Recreation Department administers the Parks and Recreation Program and maintains City parks, open spaces, and facilities. Additionally, the City has an interlocal agreement with Pasco County for the joint use of the City's Plummer Field athletic facilities for league activities.

**Service Area**

The New Port Richey Parks and Recreation Program serves the area within the City’s corporate limits. This service area is shown in Map ROS-1 in Appendix A.

**Service Area Population**

The City Parks and Recreation Program serves residents citywide, although there is no residency requirement for entry into City parks and recreational facilities.

The *functional* population of the City is used for recreation planning. The functional population is comprised of the permanent and seasonal resident populations. Table ROS-1 shows the City’s current population (2005) and projected population in five-year increments through the Comprehensive Plan horizon in 2020.

**Table ROS-1  
Population Projections  
City of New Port Richey**

<b>Population</b>	<b>2005<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>
Permanent	16,928	16,803	17,229	17,668
Seasonal <sup>2</sup>	2,437	2,437	2,437	2,437
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>19,365</b>	<b>19,240</b>	<b>19,666</b>	<b>20,105</b>

Notes:

1. Estimate.
2. Based on full occupancy of 567 seasonal dwellings at 2.11 persons per household (2000 Census) and 75% occupancy of 662 rooms in tourist accommodations at 2.5 persons per room.
3. Total represents the functional population.

Source: Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse, 2002, Bureau of Economic & Business Research, 2006, and URS Corporation, 2006.

**Level of Service Standards**

Table ROS-2 identifies the City’s minimum level of service (LOS) standards for local parks, open space, and recreational facilities. LOS standards are used in assessing current and future recreational demand and needs. The City’s LOS standards are based on guidance from *Outdoor Recreation in Florida 2000, Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* and community input. The adoption of LOS standards in the Comprehensive Plan constitutes a commitment by the City to achieve these levels in the provision of parkland and recreational facilities.

In the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the City established LOS standards for five park types: mini-park, neighborhood park, community park, district park, and open space. Since the City does not operate district parks, which typically serve the recreational needs of a larger geographic area than a municipality the size of New Port Richey, the City has eliminated the standard for this park type in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Also, the City has combined the LOS standards for mini-park, neighborhood park, community park, linear park, and special purpose facility under a single parkland LOS category: *local park*. This action will uncomplicate the analysis of parkland LOS as many City parks serve dual

functions by meeting the needs of immediate neighborhoods as well as the citywide population. The City’s relatively small geographic area, compact boundaries, and good accessibility by pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation allows residents convenient access to City parks and recreational facilities from all areas of the community.

**Table ROS-2  
Recreational Level of Service Standards  
City of New Port Richey**

Parkland	Level Of Service Standard	
	Acres	Population
Local Park	5	1,000
Open Space	1	1,000
Recreational Facility	Level Of Service Standard	
	Unit	Population
Swimming Pool	1	25,000
Basketball Court	1	5,000
Tennis Court	1	2,000
Baseball/Softball Diamond	1	3,000
Picnic Area	1	6,000
Shuffleboard Court	1	5,000
Multi-Use Trail (Mile)	1	3,000
Fishing Site (Feet)	800	5,600
Boat Ramp Lane	1	5,000

Source: City of New Port Richey, 2006.

### III. Inventory of Recreational Resources

This section presents an inventory of existing parks, open space, and recreational facilities within the City of New Port Richey that are accessible to the public. The inventory includes both public and private facilities. However, since City parks and recreational facilities are intended to serve the recreational needs of its residents, public recreational resources that are not owned by the City (and private facilities) are not included in the assessment of recreational demand and need. They are addressed later in this element.

#### City Recreational Resources

Table ROS-3 lists the inventory of City parks and recreational facilities. Within the table, City parks are classified according to one of the six general park categories described in the following manner. In some cases, parks serve dual roles, such as when a larger, more diverse park is within walking distance of neighborhoods, so as to also serve as a neighborhood park. Another representation of dual roles is when a park supports active uses but, also contains environmentally-sensitive lands that can be classified as open space. For example, portions of the James E. Grey Preserve have been developed to support a variety of resource-based recreational activities, while other areas of the park have been preserved for passive recreation.

In observance of this condition, the quantity of open space within City parks has been estimated. Table ROS-4 contains a conservative assessment of the City’s open space acreage.

<b><u>Park Category</u></b>	<b><u>Description</u></b>
<b>Special Purpose Facility</b>	Uses: Park or recreational facility that typically provides a single or predominant recreation facility, or has a very limited number of recreational facilities that serve a specific recreational purpose for the entire community. Service area: Citywide. Acreage: Varies based on activity space needs.
<b>Community Park</b>	Park typically providing a diverse range of recreational and leisure activities, or may contain useable areas where residents can gather to share community events or activities in an aesthetic natural environment. Facilities and activities at community parks may include, athletic fields, swimming pools, gymnasiums, performing and designing art centers, crafts buildings, large-open areas for community events, and any facilities associated with neighborhood or mini-park recreation areas. Unlike special purpose facilities, community parks offer more than one recreation facility or leisure activity, and in most cases offer several. Service area: Citywide. Acreage: Varies based on activity space needs (typically 5 to 25 acres).
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	Recreational facilities sized for neighborhood needs or passive recreation. Typical facilities are playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, basketball courts, and open play areas or small multi-purpose field, and landscaping. Service area: One-half mile radius (walking/biking distance). Acreage: Based on activity space needs (typically 2 to 5 acres).
<b>Mini-Park</b>	Similar to but smaller than neighborhood parks. Often referred to as tot-lots, these parks typically contain open lawns and play areas, mini-parks may also provide play apparatus for small children, a half to a full-size basket ball court, one or two tennis courts, or picnic areas, landscaping, or natural areas. Mini-parks usually do not provide automobile parking. Service area: One-quarter mile radius (walking distance). Acreage: Based on activity space needs (typically less than 2 acres).
<b>Linear Park</b>	Linear facilities that accommodate bicycling, hiking, jogging, roller skating, or similar recreational activities. Service area: Citywide. Acreage: No minimum.
<b>Open Space</b>	Open space is undeveloped lands suitable for passive recreation, leisure, or conservation uses. Types of open space include undeveloped parkland, lakes, rivers, wetlands and floodplains, Conservation and Preservation designated lands on the Future Land Use Map, plazas, and beautified corridors. Acreage: 0.1 acre minimum.

**Table ROS-3  
Inventory of City Parks and Recreational Facilities  
City of New Port Richey**

Facility Name	Acres	Classification	Accessibility	Facilities / Programs	Comments
James E. Grey Preserve	83	Community Park <i>(w/Open Space)</i>	ADA / Waterfront	Picnic pavilion, benches, picnic tables, canoe access, fishing pier, restrooms, multi-use trail (2.0 miles), parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Open space component</li> <li>▫ 5,333 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> <li>▫ 140 species of birds</li> <li>▫ Archaeological site</li> <li>▫ Proposed enhancements: hiking trail extension, permanent restrooms, nature center and outdoor classroom ("Parks Promote Pride" program).</li> </ul>
Recreation Complex <i>(Outdoor Facilities)</i>	18	Community Park	ADA	Recreation center/gymnasium skateboard facility, outdoor basketball courts (4 goals), lighted tennis courts (4), swimming pool features (4), parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Recreational and leisure programs</li> <li>▫ Open Monday through Friday, 9AM to 9PM; Saturday, Noon to 8PM; and Sunday 1PM to 7PM (subject to change).</li> <li>▫ Proposed enhancement: 4 new tennis courts</li> </ul>
Sims Park	15	Community Park <i>(w/Open Space)</i>	ADA / Waterfront	"Super" playground, picnic tables, pedestrian path, Gene Sarazan Memorial Overlook, grill, amphitheater, restrooms, seating, fishing sites, floating dock (2), parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Open space component</li> <li>▫ 900 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> <li>▫ Venue for community festivals and events</li> </ul>
Lexington Park	10	Open Space	ADA	Trails, nature park, dog park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Future park</li> </ul>
Plummer Field Athletic Complex	9.68	Special Purpose Facility	ADA	Lighted baseball/softball fields (5), picnic tables (6), concession stand, restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ City owned. Pasco County Parks Department manages athletic league activities.</li> </ul>
Orange Lake Park	6.49	Open Space	ADA / Waterfront	Walking/jogging trail, seating nodes/benches, pedestrian scale lighting, bird watching, on-street parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Veteran's Memorial Walk</li> <li>▫ Historic Site</li> </ul>
Frances Avenue Park	6.63	Neighborhood Park <i>(w/Open Space)</i>	ADA / Waterfront	Picnic pavilions, fishing sites, canoe launch, basketball court, playground, restrooms, parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Open space component</li> <li>▫ 475 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> <li>▫ Proposed enhancement: shuffleboard court</li> </ul>
Meadows Park	5	Neighborhood Park	ADA	Basketball court, picnic shelters (2), playground, open play area, restroom	
Cotee River Park	1.8	Linear Park <i>(w/Open Space)</i>	ADA / Waterfront	Pedestrian path, fishing sites, seating, pedestrian scale lighting, picnic pavilions, parking, multi-use trail (.33 miles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Open space component</li> <li>▫ 1,742 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> </ul>
Jasmine Road Park	0.67	Mini-Park	ADA / Waterfront	Floating dock, grill, seating, picnic shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Open space component</li> <li>▫ 264 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> </ul>

**Table ROS-3  
Inventory of City Parks and Recreational Facilities  
City of New Port Richey**

Facility Name	Acres	Classification	Accessibility	Facilities / Programs	Comments
Grand Boulevard Park	0.55	Mini-Park	ADA / Waterfront	Playground, seating, picnic pavilion, floating dock, restroom, parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Open space component</li> <li>▫ 115 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> </ul>
Kulhawlik Park	2	Undetermined	ADA	None currently	
High Street Park	0.5	Mini-Park		Future playground	
Russ Park	0.27	Mini-Park	ADA	Covered seating, playground	
North River Drive Park	0.25	Mini-Park		Future park	
City Boat Ramp	<1	Special Purpose Facility	Waterfront	Boat ramp lanes (2), parking, restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ 158 ft. river frontage (approx.)</li> <li>▫ Collocated with Chamber of Commerce Building</li> </ul>
CARES "Claude Pepper" Senior Center	See Recreational Complex Acreage	Special Purpose Facility	ADA	Building, parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Recreational/leisure programs including dance, exercise, educational and art classes, organized card games, and Well Quest program.</li> <li>▫ Senior medical clinic</li> </ul>
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>160.84</b>				

**Table ROS-4  
Parks with Open Space Component  
City of New Port Richey**

Park Name	Park Classification	Total Acreage	Acreage for Open Space LOS Analysis
Sims Park <sup>1</sup>	Community Park	15	2.25
James E. Grey Preserve <sup>1</sup>	Community Park	83	12.45
Orange Lake Park <sup>1</sup>	Open Space	6.49	6.49
Cotee River Park <sup>1</sup>	Linear Park	1.8	1.8
River Road Park <sup>1</sup>	Mini-Park	0.67	-
Grand Boulevard Park <sup>1</sup>	Mini-Park	0.55	-
Francis Avenue Park <sup>1</sup>	Neighborhood Park	6.46	0.97
Lexington Park	Open Space	10	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>126.24</b>	<b>33.96</b>

Notes:

1. Denotes parks with river or lake-associated open space (not quantified).

Source (both tables this page): City of New Port Richey and URS Corporation, 2006.

**Other Public Recreational Resources**

*Pasco County School Board.* The Pasco County School Board has four public schools within New Port Richey. However, no interlocal agreement exists for the use of school recreational facilities by the general public.

**Table ROS-5  
Public Schools with Recreational Facilities  
City of New Port Richey**

School	Acres		Facilities
	Total	Recreation <sup>1</sup>	
Richey Elementary	16.3	3.5	Passive recreation areas
Gulf Middle School	20.0	7	Football field (1), baseball field (1), basketball courts (2), track (1),
Gulf High School	37.6	15	Tennis courts (4), football field (1), track (1), baseball fields (2), basketball courts (4)
Schwettman Education Center	7.9	5	Basketball courts (2), football field (1), open play field (1)

Notes:

1. Acreage associated with recreational use is approximated.

Source: Pasco County School Board and City of New Port Richey, 2006

*Florida Department of Environmental Protection.* The Pithlachascotee River is a designated Blueway under the Florida Greenways and Trails Program. This blueway is located west of Rowan Road and extends east of Grand Boulevard. The implementation plan for the program is *Connecting Florida's Communities with Greenways and Trails Plan* which is administered by the Office of Greenways & Trails.

*Pasco County.* The Robert K. Rees Park is a 45-acre resource-based park located west of the City limits on the Gulf of Mexico. The County-owned park contains 920-feet of saltwater beach, a canoe launch, picnic and gathering facilities, and a playground area.

**Community Organization Recreational Resources**

The community organizations listed below provide recreation and leisure opportunities that are open to the general public:

- West Pasco Little League
- Pasco Police Athletic League
- West Pasco County YMCA
- Richey Suncoast Theatre
- West Pasco Art Guild
- Greater New Port Richey Main Street Organization
- West Pasco Soccer Association

**Private Sector Recreational Resources**

There are few businesses within the City that provide recreation and leisure opportunities. There are no commercially-operated movie theaters or bowling alleys within the City.

- Apartment complex facilities
- Homeowner association facilities
- Lady of America Fitness Center
- HealthSouth Fitness Center

## IV. Recreational Demand and Needs Analysis

The analysis in this section identifies current and future demand for local parks, open space, and recreational facilities based on the City's current and projected functional populations and adopted recreational LOS standards. Recreational demand is compared to the inventory of parkland and recreational facilities in Tables ROS-3 and ROS-4 to derive the City's recreational need through 2020.

### Current Recreational Demand and Need

Table ROS-6 shows the current demand for local parks and open space in the City. Based on the City's LOS standards for these park types, the City's current functional population of 19,205 creates demand for 96 acres of local parks and 19.2 acres of open space. The Surplus/Deficit column in Table ROS-6 indicates the current need for parks. For both park types, the City is providing adequate parkland to accommodate the City's current functional population.

**Table ROS-6  
Current Demand and Need for Local Parks and Open Space  
City of New Port Richey**

Facility Type	Level of Service Standard		Supply 2006	Demand 2006	Surplus / (Deficit) 2006
	Acres	Population			
Local Park	5	1,000	126.8	96.8	30
Open Space	1	1,000	33.9	19.3	14.6

Source: City of New Port Richey and URS Corporation, 2006.

**Table ROS-7  
Current Demand and Need for Recreational Facilities  
City of New Port Richey**

Facility Type	Level of Service Standard		Existing Supply 2006	Existing Demand 2006	Surplus / (Deficit) 2006
	Unit	Population			
Swimming Pool	1	25,000	4 <sup>1</sup>	0.8	3.2
Basketball Court	1	5,000	6 <sup>1</sup>	3.9	2.1
Tennis Court	1	2,000	4	9.7	(5.7)
Baseball/Softball Diamond	1	3,000	5	6.5	(1.5)
Picnic Area	1	6,000	10	3.2	6.8
Shuffleboard Court	1	5,000	0	3.9	(3.9)
Multi-Use Trail (Mile)	1	3,000	3	6.5	(3.5)
Fishing Site (Feet)	800	5,600	8,870	2,766	6,104
Boat Ramp Lane	1	5,000	2	3.9	(1.9)

Notes:

1. Facilities identified were under construction at the time of the analysis.

Source: City of New Port Richey and URS Corporation, 2006.

Table ROS-7 indicates the current demand for recreational facilities based on the adopted LOS standards for each facility type. The Surplus/Deficit column shows deficits (needs) for tennis courts, shuffle board courts, multi-use trail, and boat ramp lanes. The City has no intention of

providing soccer or football fields, as these facilities can be found in the County or on school property.

**Future Recreational Demand and Need**

Based on the adopted parkland LOS standards and the City’s projected 2020 functional population, the demand for Local Parks and Open Space is 101.1 acres and 20.2 acres, respectively. As indicated in Table ROS-8, the City is projected to have adequate parkland to year 2020.

**Table ROS-8  
Future Demand and Need for Local Parks and Open Space  
City of New Port Richey**

Facility Type	Level of Service Standard		Existing Supply 2006	Demand 2010	Surplus/ (Deficit) 2010	Demand 2020	Surplus/ (Deficit) 2020
	Acres	Population					
Local Park	5	1,000	126.9	96.8	30.1	101.1	25.8
Open Space	1	1,000	24.0	19.4	4.6	20.2	3.8

Source: City of New Port Richey and URS Corporation, 2006.

Table ROS-9 indicates the future demand for recreational facilities based on the adopted LOS standards for each facility type and the projected 2020 functional population. The Surplus/Deficit 2020 column indicates deficits (needs) for the same facilities that are currently deficient.

**Table ROS-9  
Future Demand and Need for Recreational Facilities  
City of New Port Richey**

Facility Type	Level of Service Standard		Existing Supply 2006	Demand 2010	Surplus/ (Deficit) 2010	Demand 2020	Surplus/ (Deficit) 2020
	Unit	Population					
Swimming Pool	1	25,000	4 <sup>1</sup>	0.77	3.23	0.81	3.19
Basketball Court	1	5,000	6 <sup>1</sup>	3.9	2.1	4	2
Tennis Court	1	2,000	4	9.7	(5.7)	10	(6)
Baseball/Softball Diamond	1	3,000	5	6.5	(1.5)	6.7	(1.7)
Picnic Areas	1	6,000	10	3.2	6.8	3.4	6.6
Shuffleboard Court	1	5,000	0	3.9	(3.9)	4	(4)
Multi-Use Trail (Mile)	1	2,000	3	9.7	(6.7)	10	(7)
Fishing Site (Feet)	800	5,600	8,870	2,766	6,104	2,890	5,980
Boat Ramp (Lane)	1	5,000	2	3.9	(1.9)	4	(2)

Notes:

1. Facilities identified were under construction at the time of the analysis.

Source: City of New Port Richey and URS Corporation, 2006.

**Community Expressed Recreational Needs**

During the development of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report for the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, public input indicated the need for additional public access to water resources in the form of boat ramps as well as special use parks, such as dog parks, public squares/greens, and multi-use trails.

Public Boat Ramp Needs

The Pithlachascotee River and Gulf of Mexico are significant recreational resources to residents and visitors countywide. The number of registered *pleasure vessels* countywide has increased by 61 percent over the past 15 years, from 13,684 registered boats in 1996 to 22,071 registered boats in 2004. In 2004, there were also 419 registered *commercial vessels* in Pasco County.

Currently, there are only 10 public boat ramp lanes in the County with access to the Gulf of Mexico. The City owns and maintains two of these boat ramp lanes which are located on the west side of the Pithlachascotee River in Downtown New Port Richey. The inadequacy of boat ramp facilities in West Pasco is evident by the congestion that is commonly experienced at existing boat ramp facilities.

**Table ROS-9  
Public Boat Ramps  
West Pasco Area**

Facility Name	Owner	# Lanes
Municipal Boat Ramp	City of New Port Richey	2
Anclote River Park	Pasco County	6
Robert J. Strickland Memorial Park	Pasco County	1
Nicks Park	City of Port Richey	2

Source: City of New Port Richey, City of Port Richey, and Pasco County, 2006.

In the adjacent counties of Pinellas, Hernando, and Hillsborough, there are 135,530 registered pleasure vessels and 52 public boat ramps. The volume of boaters and the limited capacity of boat ramp facilities regionally may indicate use of West Pasco boat ramps by residents outside Pasco County.

**Table ROS-10  
Pleasure Vessel Registrations  
Pasco County**

Year	Registered Boats	County Population	% of Population
1990	13,684	281,131	4.87
1995	16,736	305,576	5.47
2004	22,071	402,113	5.49

Source: Bureau of Vessel Titles and Registrations, Florida Department of Motor Vehicles and Safety, 2005.

Based on the City's functional population, the adopted LOS standard of one boat ramp lane per 5,000 population is not currently being met by the City. Considering the substantial use of the municipal boat ramp by persons residing outside of the City and, perhaps, outside the County, the actual demand for City boat ramps is probably much higher.

*Special Use Parks*

Over the past 15 years, the City has undertaken extensive improvement to its parks and recreation programs in its effort to stimulate private investment in Downtown and City neighborhoods and improve overall quality of life for residents. Historic Sims Park, the City's signature park and venue for numerous large-scale community events, received major modifications. Two new riverside parks were added to the City's park system; the Cotee River Park and the James E. Grey Preserve. The community has expressed high praise for the City's Parks and Recreational Programs and encouraged the City to move forward on plans for enhancements to the Recreation Complex and development of special use parks (e.g., dog parks, public squares/greens, and multi-use trails).

**User Groups' Recreational Needs**

Local demographics should influence the types of facilities provided in the City's Parks and Recreation Program. Using state figures for comparison, the City's demographic profile is examined. The City differs from the State in that the City population is older and has a higher percentage of disabled persons. The median age for the City and the State are 44.2 and 38.7 years, respectively (2000 Census). The age group represented by seniors (age 65 or older) account for 28.3 percent of the City's population, while for the State, this same age group accounts for 17.6 percent of the population. The City's 2000 population under age 18 represents 19.1 percent of the population. The percentage for this age group for the State is 22.8 percent. Individuals with disability status over the age of five represent 30.6 percent in the City and 22.2 percent in the State.

It is also important to consider that the recreational opportunities should serve a variety of different interests and levels of physical ability. Special population groups such as the elderly, children, and physically challenged contribute to the demand for recreational resources. For example, age groups within the community differ in their preferences for recreational resources according to such variables as recreational activities, times of facility use, and facility location.

Some seniors, particularly those in older age cohorts, may prefer more passive and less energetic activities such as shuffleboard, walking, fishing, and picnicking. Youth groups and younger adults may demand more rigorous activities such as baseball, volleyball, and swimming. It should be noted that some seniors continue to participate in active recreational activities, allowing some of this demand to be met through recreational planning for all age groups.

The New Port Richey Recreation Complex addresses age-specific needs. Some activities are designed for older persons, such as CARES "Claude Pepper" Senior Center, some with youth in mind, such as Plummer Field, and others are planned for all age groups. The resource-based parks, while providing separate areas for recreation activities, are designed for all ages. Playgrounds offering recreational equipment designed for various age groups are located in City parks. New Port Richey parks include tot lots and other facilities for children. Plummer Field is designed to accommodate youth baseball.

**Recreational Resource Accessibility Needs**

Table ROS-3 indicates the type of accessibility available in each City park. All parks and most recreational facilities in the City are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. ADA, enacted on July 26, 1990, provides comprehensive civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, State and local government services, and telecommunications. Accessibility features include handrails, ramps, signs with large text and accessible restrooms.

**V. Plan to Meet Recreational Needs**

The level of service analysis in the foregoing indicates existing and future year deficiencies for the following recreational facilities:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Additional Need Existing</u>		<u>Additional Need Year 2020</u>
• Tennis courts:	6 courts		None
• Baseball/softball diamonds	2 diamonds		None
• Shuffleboard courts	4 courts		None
• Multi-use trail (mile)	3.5 miles	+	3.5 miles
• Boat ramp lanes	2 lanes		None

The City’s approach to resolving recreational needs as well as other community-desired recreational facilities is addressed in this section and in the Recreational Element Goals, Objectives and Policies.

**Boat Ramps**

The most pressing community expressed need is for additional boat ramps within or proximate to the City. The need for additional boat ramps has also been identified in the comprehensive plans of Pasco County and the adjacent City of Port Richey. As such, there may be opportunities for the City of New Port Richey to partner with these governmental entities toward the common goal of providing adequate boat ramp facilities for residents and visitors.

Major impediments to the development of new waterfront access will be the limited availability of suitable waterfront property; the cost of land; and, perhaps, the cost and timeframe for obtaining state and federal permits. There are few remaining, suitable sites in the City for boat ramp development; scarce, waterfront property is at a premium in the real estate market; and shoreline development always involves some degree of impact to the natural environment.

Permitting entities, such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), review permit applications for, among other things, potential impact on sea grass beds and other submerged vegetation, manatees, shellfish areas, water quality, and specially designated areas such as parks, sanctuaries, and preserves. Permits for use of sovereign submerged lands are reviewed by the FDEP Board of Trustees.

The future land use and zoning designations for candidate boat ramp sites may need to be amended to allow recreational use. Site characteristics of potential sites will have a bearing on the number of boat ramp lanes, the amount of parking (on- and off-site), and the number of boats launched (e.g., seasonal and weekday/weekend use variations). During the evaluation of the potential boat ramp sites, the City should analyze the locations of existing boat facilities and natural resources; existing boat use and traffic patterns; locations of popular boating destinations; and surrounding land uses. Criteria should be developed for screening candidate boat ramp sites.

The City proposes to convene a multi-jurisdictional task force to develop a strategic plan addressing the boat ramp deficiency.

### **Special Use Parks**

*Multi-Use Trails.* Trail development guidelines indicate that six miles of continuous trail is the recommended minimum in order to attract a sufficient number of trail users. Trails can be located within parks, public rights-of-way, other public lands, and private property through easements and fee simple acquisition. This action would increase the feasibility of achieving a functional trail (i.e., continuous trail segment of six or more miles). The City has applied for a Florida Department of Transportation Enhancement Grant to fund a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The plan would have a trail component that addresses trail connectivity to community focal points and regional trails, such as a programmed Pasco County trail connecting Starkey Park via Massachusetts Avenue and the Port Richey Bike and Hike Trail.

*Dog Parks.* Neighborhood dog parks can easily be designed into other parks. Proper fencing, park rules, and safety designs will enable a variety of recreational uses within the same park. The size of the “off-leash” area depends on the type and size of the park within which it is located. For example, within a neighborhood park, the guideline for the size of off-leash areas is between one and two acres. The recommended off-leash area in a community park is between two and five acres.

*Public Squares and Greens.* These special use parks are relatively small in scale and, therefore, could be accommodated on the numerous small, vacant parcels that exist throughout the City. Within neighborhoods, programs could be established so that residents could assist the City in the maintenance of these common areas. A community garden is an example of a resident supported public green.

### **Capital Improvements Plan and Redevelopment Work Program**

Funding for recreational facilities deficiencies are programmed in the City’s Capital Improvements Plan. Identified LOS deficiencies will be addressed through funding allocations or amending the Plan to eliminate facility types that are no longer desired by the community. For example, shuffleboard courts are proposed to be programmed in conjunction with the next phase of Recreation Center improvements. Also, four tennis courts are proposed for construction at Francis Avenue Park.

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) allocates a portion of the CRA tax increment revenues to the expansion and enhancement of the City’s parks and recreation system. Projects

that further the objectives of the New Port Richey Redevelopment Plan are funded via the Redevelopment Work Program.

Currently, the City's planned and programmed recreational plans and facilities include:

- Recreation Center Master Plan Aquatics facility, parking, drainage and landscaping
- Cotee River Park Canoe launch, restroom and picnic facilities
- City Boat Ramp Study Identify opportunities for additional boat ramp capacity
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Identify opportunities for enhancement of the bicycle/pedestrian facility network through on and off-street facilities
- James E. Grey Preserve Restrooms, boardwalk, bridge crossings, and a canoe launch

### **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board**

The New Port Richey Parks and Recreation Advisory Board assists the City in identifying enhancements to the City's Parks and Recreation Program to ensure that considerations are made for special needs populations (e.g., handicapped, elderly, youth, etc.). The advisory board weighs in on the diverse spectrum of interests involved in recreation planning including growth and fiscal management, facility and program planning, park themes, and architectural and urban design.

### **Land Development Regulations**

The New Port Richey Land Development Code includes standards ensuring the reservation of open space in future development. Open space in residential settings enhances layout and design, provides buffering between conflicting uses and accents natural amenities present on-site. Open space can provide privacy for adjacent residences, support natural vegetation, provide children with places to explore, and create scenic vistas. Greater coordination and cooperation must be established among the multiplicity of public and private recreation suppliers in the area to maximize the total outdoor recreation effort and direct it most effectively and efficiently.

## **VI. Goals, Objectives and Policies**

### **Introduction**

Pursuant to Section 163.3177(6)(e), FS, the following represents the Recreation and Open Space Goals, Objectives and Policies of the City of New Port Richey. These Goals, Objectives and Policies were developed in keeping with the character, conditions, both environmental and social, and desires of the community, and are intended to address the establishment of a long-term end towards which the recreation and open space programs and activities of the community are ultimately directed.

### **Implementation**

Unless otherwise stated, the implementation of objectives and policies contained in this section shall be through the development, adoption and application of the regulations set forth in the City Code of Ordinances and Land Development Code.

The following Goals, Objectives and Policies are adopted by the City of New Port Richey to guide public resource allocation decisions for the development and management of recreational facilities within the community. It is the intent of City that these guidelines also be utilized by private entities and other public agencies which have an interest in meeting the recreational needs of the New Port Richey community.

### **GOAL ROS 1**

To provide, protect and maintain parks, recreational facilities and open space of an appropriate nature, size and geographic distribution to serve residents of the New Port Richey community.

### **Level of Service**

#### **Objective ROS 1.1**

In cooperation with other governmental agencies, provide and maintain a system of parks and recreational facilities that meeting the needs of the existing and future populations of the City.

### **Policies**

ROS 1.1.1 The City shall continue to implement the following minimum level of service standards for parkland and recreational facilities:

<b>Parkland</b>	<b>Level of Service Standard</b>	
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Population</b>
Local Park	5	1,000
Open Space	1	1,000

Recreational Facilities	Level of Service Standard	
	Unit	Population
Swimming Pool	1	25,000
Basketball Court	1	5,000
Tennis Court	1	2,000
Baseball/Softball Diamond	1	3,000
Picnic Areas	1	6,000
Shuffleboard Court	1	5,000
Multi-Use Trail (Mile)	1	2,000
Fishing Site	1	5,600
Boat Ramp Lane	1	5,000

- ROS 1.1.2 To achieve the greatest benefit for public expenditures, park and recreation lands shall be:
- a. planned for multiple uses and activities;
  - b. accessible and connected to surrounding neighborhoods;
  - c. maintained for safety and to project a good image of the City, and
  - d. located in areas most suitable to satisfy the needs of the permanent and seasonal population.
- ROS 1.1.3 Land set aside by new development for recreational purposes shall be determined suitable for that purpose during the site planning process and should not be land which is remaining after development.
- ROS 1.1.4 The designation and acquisition of recreation and park sites shall be in accordance with the future land use policies of this Comprehensive Plan and the New Port Richey Redevelopment Plan.
- ROS 1.1.5 The City shall investigate the feasibility of implementing multi-use trails throughout the City.
- ROS 1.1.6 The City shall ensure that recreation and historic park sites be held inviolate against diversion to other uses, except in instances of overriding public need.
- ROS 1.1.7 The City shall continue to provide a variety of recreational activities, including the utilization of unique natural features and scenic areas.

**Coordination**

**Objective ROS 1.2**

Coordinate with governmental agencies, non-profits organizations, community organizations, and the private sector for the efficient provision of parks and recreational facilities.

**Policies**

- ROS 1.2.1 The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board shall assist the City in the identification of opportunities to enhance the City's Parks and Recreation Program.
- ROS 1.2.2 The City shall consider the concerns of local arts and cultural organizations when planning for parks and recreation.
- ROS 1.2.3 The City shall coordinate with Pasco County, the City of Port Richey and other interests, as appropriate, to prepare a strategic plan that addresses additional public boat ramp facilities to accommodate existing and future boat ramp needs. A Boat Access Task Force should be established to assist in developing the strategic plan.
- ROS 1.2.4 The City shall continue to coordinate with Pasco County to provide combined athletic facilities and programs.
- ROS 1.2.5 The City shall coordinate with the Pasco County School Board to explore the potential for collocation of recreational facilities on School Board properties.

**Open Space**

**Objective ROS 1.3**

Protect lands defined as open space from incompatible land uses and by developing strategies for utilizing open space lands for passive recreation.

**Policies**

- ROS 1.3.1 The City shall continue to implement regulations in the Land Development Code that define open space and establish standards for the protection of open space and natural vegetation and the use of open space for buffering between land uses.
- ROS 1.3.2 The City shall adopt incentives which encourage the provision of recreation and open space areas.
- ROS 1.3.3 Open space in parks shall be maintained to protect and preserve native habitats and provide passive recreation opportunities.
- ROS 1.3.4 Open space shall be used to buffer incompatible recreational activities or land uses.
- ROS 1.3.5 The City shall acquire, protect and maintain natural reservations.
- ROS 1.3.6 The City shall create a system of greenways by defining and preserving the following areas as open space:
  - a. Conservation and Preservation Category designated lands on the Future Land Use Map;

- b. Jurisdictional wetlands and wetland buffers;
- c. Significant habitat of threatened or endangered species; and
- d. Any species management areas for species of special concern.

When feasible, facilities such as boardwalks, trails, interpretive displays, observation areas, and benches shall be installed within greenways.

**Objective ROS 1.4**

[Reserved.]

**Efficient Provision of Recreation**

**Objective ROS 1.5**

Continue to provide parks and recreational facilities in a cost effective manner.

**Policies**

- ROS 1.5.1 The Land Development Code shall stipulate that new residential development and redevelopment provides for the recreational needs generated by said development.
- ROS 1.5.2 The City shall preserve, maintain and enhance existing parks and recreation facilities through the use of adequate operating budgets, user fees and best management practices.
- ROS 1.5.3 Methods, such as tax incentives, impact fees and density transfers, shall be encouraged for the acquisition of lands with recreation potential.
- ROS 1.5.4 The City shall establish a recreational trust fund to which individuals can donate monies, gifts or properties for the sole purpose of recreational use.
- ROS 1.5.5 The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board shall continue to advise the City on the acquisition, development and maintenance of park and recreational programs.
- ROS 1.5.6 The City shall continue to pursue state and federal funding to enhance the City's Parks and Recreational Program. This is particularly important for the enhancement of the James E. Grey Preserve.

**Public Access to Recreation Sites**

**Objective ROS 1.6**

Ensure public access to existing and future public recreation sites.

**Policies**

- ROS 1.6.1 The Land Development Code shall require the provision of public access to existing and future public recreation sites, including freshwater beaches and shores.
- ROS 1.6.2 Access to park and recreation facilities and services shall be provided for the elderly, handicapped and economically disadvantaged.
- ROS 1.6.3 Parking space for the handicapped and bicycle racks shall be provided at City parks and recreation facilities.

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