

**RECREATION
AND OPEN SPACE**

GOAL

To ensure adequate Recreation and Open Space opportunities for all sectors of the community.

OBJECTIVE 1

To identify and provide adequate and usable space and facilities for both active and passive recreation needs distributed equitably throughout the community.

Policy 1.1) The City shall ensure that the recreational needs of Fort Myers residents shall be adequately and efficiently provided.

Action 1.1.1) The City will provide a hierarchy park system that offers a variety of recreational facilities.

Standard 1.1.1.1) The Community Park shall provide nearby residents with an area for non-league sports, active and passive recreational activities. The Community Park should provide a place where residents can socialize and recreate with the larger community. The Community Park includes activities that cannot be accommodated in Neighborhood Parks, such as a ball field, community center, or swimming pool.

Standard 1.1.1.2) The Neighborhood Park shall provide close-to-home social and recreational opportunities within walking or bicycling distance of residents' homes. The Neighborhood Park should be the focal point of a neighborhood and fulfill the residents' needs of informal, non-league sports, active uses and passive uses.

Standard 1.1.1.3) The Civic Gathering Space is a large outdoor venue capable of hosting special events and activities, such as concerts and fairs.

Standard 1.1.1.4) Special Use Facilities support special and/or single purposes and constituency groups. The Special Use Facility is often a competition-quality facility, such as baseball, softball, and/or soccer complexes, dog park, skate park, gymnasiums, youth/teen center.

Standard 1.1.1.5) The Urban Plaza / Park provides small open spaces in the downtown area and other dense urban settings where residents, full-time and daytime, can enjoy passive recreation, such as sitting, sunning, picnicking, and people-watching.

Standard 1.1.1.6) Conservation areas and passive open spaces shall provide areas of native habitat and protect areas of biodiversity for nature-lovers and native flora and fauna, as well as all residents of the area. Conservation areas provide for the enjoyment of passive or site related uses, such as walking, bird watching, or kayaking on Billy Creek. Conservation areas can be designated conservation land use, nature preserves, portion of parks, or land reclamation areas.

Standard 1.1.1.7) Greenways and Trails provide a pedestrian and bike trail network throughout the City, utilizing existing utility corridors and canal right-of-ways. The Greenways and Trails network should provide a greenway system throughout the City that will help preserve remaining natural areas, such as stream corridors and wetlands, and provide a safe, enjoyable transportation alternative, as well recreational opportunity.

Action 1.1.2) Design guidelines for parklands will use the current best practices of the industry as well as utilizing the design criteria identified in the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan, Public Works Department.

Action 1.1.3) Acquire and provide adequate future parkland and facilities for the City's proposed population through the year 2030.

Standard 1.1.3.1) In order to be considered adequate, parkland must be of sufficient size to meet the population standards for the existing and proposed population within the service area for a particular park. To fulfill the functions of two or more classifications at one site, the facilities must be analyzed cumulatively; e.g., acreage at a park shall be construed to meet either classification, but not double-counted toward each. Table 1 outlines the parkland guidelines by park classification.

Table 1: Parkland Guidelines

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Maximum Service Radius</i>	<i>Level of Service Acres/Pop.</i>	<i>Desirable Level of Service Acres/Pop.</i>
Community	20 ¹ – 100 acres	2 miles	1/1,000	2/1,000
Neighborhood	3 ² - 5 usable acres	½ to 1 miles	2.5/1,500	2/1,000
Urban Plaza / Park	½ - 1 acre	¼ mile	N/A	N/A
Civic Gathering Space	5 acres	City Wide	N/A	N/A
Special Use Facilities	Varies	City Wide	N/A	N/A
Conservation Areas	Varies	Varies	N/A	N/A
Greenways and Trails	12' Wide	City Wide	N/A	N/A

¹ A minimum of 20 usable acres. Less than 20 acres may be acceptable in older neighborhoods where available land is constrained.

² Less than 3 acres may be acceptable in neighborhoods with special circumstances.

Standard 1.1.3.2) Adequate sizing of parks is critical to establishing an effective park system that is able to provide the variety of activities and facilities as identified in the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan. Parks in new developments shall be required to meet the minimum sizes identified in Table 1. Park sizes less than the guidelines may be acceptable in older neighborhoods where available land is constrained.

Standard 1.1.3.3) A variety of recreational needs will be met by providing an assortment of facility types. Table 2 outlines the various facilities the City may provide. When new types of facilities are added to Table 2, the City shall have 5 years to bring the Level of Service into compliance.

Table 2: Specialized Facility Guidelines

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Level of Service Population Served</i>	<i>Desirable Level of Service: Population Served</i>
Baseball/Softball Field	6,000	4,500
Basketball Court	10,000	5,000
Football/Soccer/Rugby Field	18,000	9,000
Golf Courses (18 holes)	50,000	50,000
Racquetball/Handball Court	12,000	10,000
Recreation Center Building	15,000	10,000
Shuffleboard Court	5,000	5,000
Swimming Pool	30,000	20,000
Tennis Court	3,000	2,000
Volleyball Court¹	6,000	6,000

¹ Volleyball Courts are a new addition as of 2007.

Standard 1.1.3.4) The City has determined that existing acreage is adequate to serve 2000 U.S. Census Bureau population data. The Acreage Level of Service Analysis from the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan projects a potential deficiency in acreage for the year 2030 if no new parkland is acquired. The City will require from new developments the dedication of parklands or a fee in lieu of dedication to ensure adequate parklands exist in 2030.

Standard 1.1.3.5) Needed parkland relative to the Service Area Analysis as reported in the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan should be scheduled in the Capital Improvement Program.

Standard 1.1.3.6) Needed facilities will be scheduled in the Capital Improvement Program relative to the year they are required, subject to funding constraints, as reported in the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan.

Standard 1.1.3.7) Privately provided facilities or parkland may be counted to fulfill the functions of a neighborhood or community park provided they meet the requirements of Policy 1.4 and associated Actions and Standards of this Element.

Action 1.1.4) The first priority in expenditure of capital funds for recreation shall be to provide adequate facilities for existing residential areas. The City shall include in its five-year capital improvements plan acquisition and/or improvement of parks in developed areas that

address the greatest deficiencies as identified in the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan.

Action 1.1.5) The Land Development Regulations shall contain regulations that allow new residential development only where adequate recreational facilities exist or are assured with the exception of single-family infill and previously platted lots.

Action 1.1.6) Require new residential development to provide a proportionate share of recreational facilities. The City will define a feasible funding method for use in determining the proportionate share of recreational facilities requirement for new residential developments. The funding method chosen shall be adopted through amendment of the Land Development Regulations by January, 2008.

Standard 1.1.6.1) New residential developments over 2,232 units shall be required to dedicate to the City an improved community park, sized at one acre per 223 units, within or immediately adjacent to the development. Developments of less than 2,232 units shall pay a fee in lieu of dedication or may dedicate improved land so long as the City is able to acquire enough contiguous land to assemble a community park.

Standard 1.1.6.2) New residential developments over 1,116 units shall be required to dedicate to the City an improved neighborhood park(s), sized at one acre per 223 units, within or immediately adjacent to the development. Developments of less than 1,116 units shall pay a fee in lieu of dedication, or may dedicate improved land so long as the City is able to acquire enough contiguous land to assemble a neighborhood park.

Standard 1.1.6.3) Provision for public access to the river or Billy Creek shall be given impact-fee and/or in-lieu-of-fee credits.

Action 1.1.7) The City should coordinate recreation programs with private recreation program providers.

Standard 1.1.7.1) Provide low-cost lease agreements at City owned facilities or sites for private community groups that offer a recreational benefit or program to the citizens of Fort Myers.

Policy 1.2) The City shall provide adequate access to the City's natural and historic resources for recreational use.

Action 1.2.1) The City recognizes that the built-up condition of the waterfront will prohibit establishment of a continuous riverfront greenbelt, but the City will approximate such a park by establishing a series of pocket parks along the river. Although first priority will be to improve currently-owned access points, the City will avail itself of opportunities to acquire riverfront property at favorable prices whenever possible. Access to pocket parks will include access ways for pedestrians and cyclists.

Action 1.2.2) The City shall continue to research methods to provide pedestrian and cyclist access to natural resources such as Billy Creek.

Action 1.2.3) When establishing access methods to the City's natural and historic resources, the City shall be cognizant of the natural surroundings and provide access methods that do not interfere with or destroy the resource.

Policy 1.3) Recreation areas shall be protected from the adverse effects of encroachment of incompatible uses.

Action 1.3.1) The City will implement Land Use Regulations preventing incompatible zoning changes on adjacent property of recreation areas and parklands.

Action 1.3.2) The City shall improve visual and safety issues resulting from property adjacent to recreation areas and parklands by working with the land owners of the adjacent property.

Policy 1.4) The City will ensure that its parks are adequately equipped and maintained in a usable and enjoyable condition. The City will use the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan as guidance for appropriate and required features and amenities in specific geographic locations of the City in order to provide a varied set of amenities throughout the City.

Action 1.4.1) Maintain all recreation facilities in an attractive, usable condition.

Action 1.4.2) The City will ensure that its parks are equipped with features and amenities that complement the needs of the surrounding residents as well as fulfill a City-wide need.

Action 1.4.3) Adequate parkland and recreational facility parking should be determined by innovative methods, including the use of on-street parking and/or shared parking with adjacent facilities. Neighborhood parks require minimal parking and should reconsider the installation on-site parking. Urban plaza/parks should require no on-site parking.

Action 1.4.3) Ensure that all City parks are adequately equipped to fulfill their designated function.

Standard 1.4.3.1) A community park should consist of at least the required features and a combination of the optional features listed in Table 3. All community parks in new developments shall contain the required features and at least two optional features as determined by the needs of the geographical area, service area, and the purpose of the community park.

Standard 1.4.3.2) A neighborhood park should consist of at least the required features and a combination of the optional features listed in Table 3. All neighborhood parks in new developments shall contain the required features and at least two optional features as determined by the needs of the geographical area, service area, and the purpose of the neighborhood park.

Table 3: Park Features and Amenities Community and Neighborhood Parks

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Park Type</i>	<i>Required</i>
Community Center / Activity Building	Community	Yes
Court Games (Basketball, Tennis, Shuffleboard, Horseshoes, Volleyball)	Community, Neighborhood	Optional
Internal Walking Trails	Community	Yes
Internal Walking Trails	Neighborhood	Optional
Multi-Purpose Fields	Community, Neighborhood	Optional
Nature Areas	Community	Yes
On-site Parking, 0.5 space/acre	Community	Yes
Open Space	Community, Neighborhood	Yes
Passive Open Space / Quiet Areas	Community, Neighborhood	Yes
Play Structures	Community, Neighborhood	Yes
Restrooms	Community	Yes
Seating and Picnic Areas	Community, Neighborhood	Yes
Shade Structures	Community, Neighborhood	Yes
Skate Park / Skate Trail	Community	Optional
Splash Play (adjacent to restrooms)	Community	Optional
Swimming Pool	Community	Optional

Standard 1.4.3.3) An urban plaza/park should consist of at least the required features and a combination of the optional features listed in Table 4. At least two optional features should be required for all new urban plaza/parks as determined by the needs of the geographical area, service area, and the purpose of the urban plaza/park.

Table 4: Park Features and Amenities Urban Plaza / Park

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Required</i>
Fixed Seating Areas	Yes
Fixed Seating Areas w/Tables	Yes
Fountain(s)	Optional
Grass Area and Ornamental Plantings	Yes
Moveable Seating	Optional
Plaza Space	Yes
Shade Structures	Yes
Small Play Space	Optional
Space for Small or Temporary Stage	Optional
Space Within or Adjacent for Food Vendors	Optional

Policy 1.5) City waterfront ownership, easements, or right-of-way should be considered for public access use prior to being sold, vacated, or otherwise disposed of (see Map M).

Action 1.5.1) City waterfront property will be improved with walkways, piers, boat ramps, or other facilities to enhance use of the river.

Action 1.5.2) The City will expand and improve the Yacht Basin as a public access point to the greatest extent that permits may be obtained for; so long as the operation remains financially self-supporting.

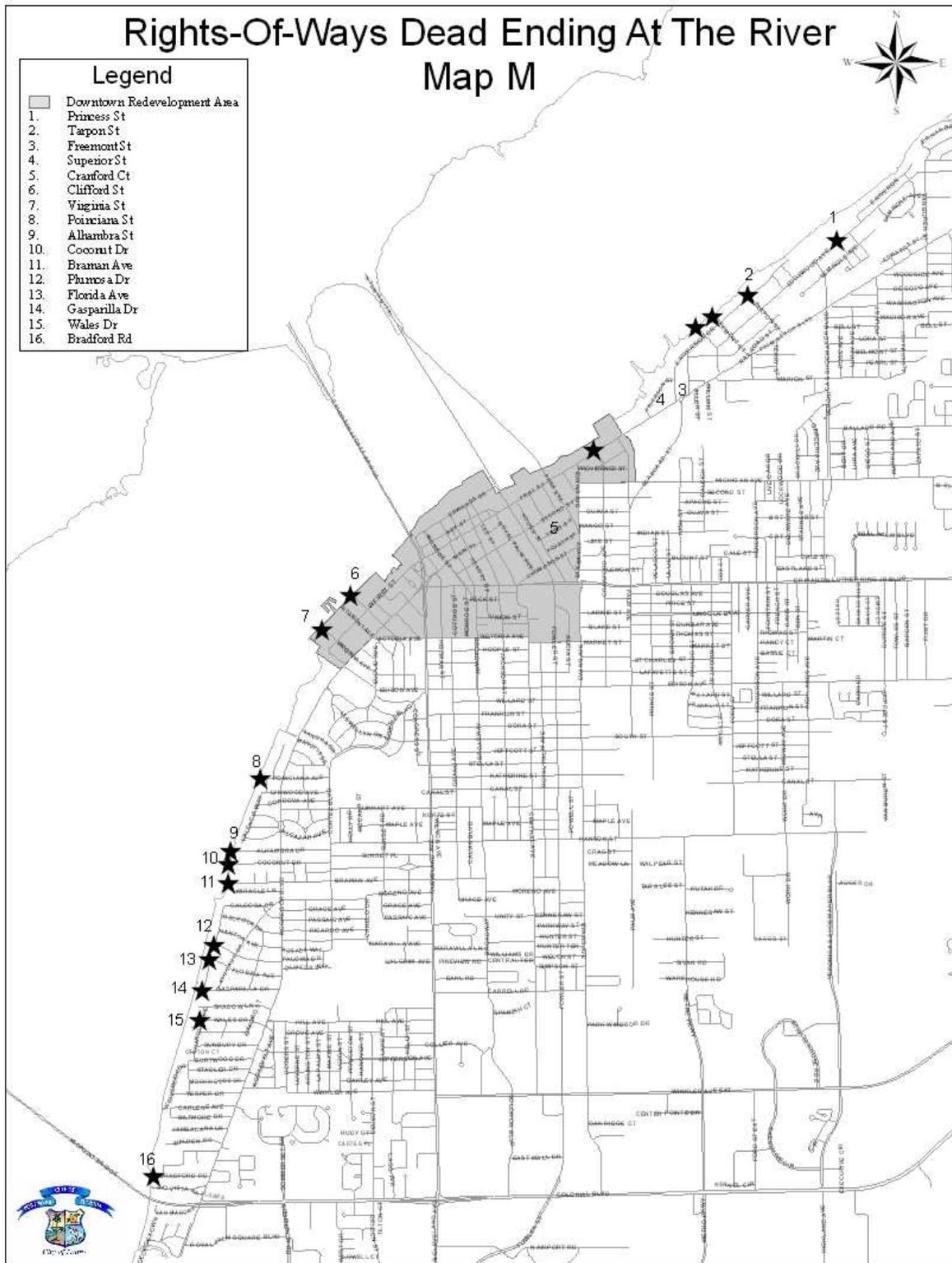
Action 1.5.3) When appropriate, the City will expand pedestrian walkways and bike trails/routes through historic districts and past historic sites, also placing markers denoting City-owned historic sites along these routes linking to nearby walkways and trails/routes, when feasible.

Action 1.5.4) Rights-of-ways dead-ending at the river shall be considered for pocket parks as well as waterfront walkways and pedestrian and bike trail linkages.

Standard 1.5.4.1) Appropriate rights-of-way dead-ending at the river should be equipped to accommodate launching of smaller watercraft, such as canoes and kayaks. The location of an appropriate area would also maximize available on-street parking and/or shared parking with adjacent facilities.

Standard 1.5.4.2) Pocket parks should be equipped to attract and promote scenic overlooks of the river; including such features as lighting for safety, benches, piers, and waterfront walkways and pedestrian and bike trail linkages.

Standard 1.5.4.3) Pocket parks should be targeted to local residents, pedestrians, and bike traffic. Therefore additional on-site parking should not be required.



OBJECTIVE 2

The City of Fort Myers shall ensure a broad range of recreational programming to all citizens.

Policy 2.1) The City will coordinate with other governmental, institutional, and private providers of recreational programming to ensure City residents the maximum amount of recreational opportunities with a minimum of duplication.

Policy 2.2) Programmed recreational activities will be equally accessible to residents of all areas of the City.

Policy 2.3) Recreational programming will recognize the varied demographics of City residents.

Policy 2.4) As financially feasible, the City will continue to expand its inventory of special use facilities to include facilities identified in the 2006 Parks and Open Space System Master Plan.

Policy 2.5) The City will provide through ongoing efforts more greenways and trails, including linkages, for recreational and alternative transportation modes.

OBJECTIVE 3

The City of Fort Myers shall ensure developments provide sufficient open space for the benefit of their patrons and the general public.

Policy 3.1) Land Development Regulations will be implemented by December 2008 that require commercial and industrial developments to provide sufficient open space for the benefit of their patrons and the general public.

Policy 3.2) Land Development Regulations will be implemented by December 2008 that require government buildings to provide sufficient open space including an Urban Plaza/Park for the benefit of their patrons and the general public.