

INTRODUCTION

Recreation and Open Space Element

The Recreation and Open Space Element is intended to guide public decision-making while providing for a comprehensive system of public and private recreation and open space sites available for public use. This Element considers the existing County recreational facilities, determines current deficiencies, and projects future recreation and open space needs. Goals, objectives, and policies are then recommended to guide decisions based on the projected recreational demand of visitors and residents in Clay County.

Recreation is required to maintain a healthy balance in life. What people do in their leisure time is in response to their internal needs and desires, and the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities available to a community has a direct effect on the general quality of life. Thus, satisfying people's recreational needs is important to maintain the high quality of life in Clay County.

There are four general considerations addressed by the goals, objectives, and policies. These include the coordination of public and private resources to meet the recreation demand, the quality and quantity of recreational facilities, the availability of recreational facilities for public use, and the provision of open space sites.

REC GOAL 1

To provide, protect, and maintain a high-quality, environmentally sensitive, accessible, economically efficient, and adequate system of recreation facilities and sites and open space that serves Clay County residents and visitors.

REC OBJ 1.1

Clay County will acquire, develop, maintain, and protect parks and recreation facilities, consistent with the needs of its population, as determined by the County's recreation levels of service.

REC POLICY 1.1.1

The County will adopt and maintain the following countywide recreation levels of service (LOS) for parks:

Type of Park:	
Neighborhood Parks	1 acre per 2,100 persons
Community Parks	1 acre per 700 persons

REC POLICY 1.1.2

The County shall adopt and maintain the following levels of service (LOS) for recreation facilities:

Countywide:	
Boat Ramp Lanes	1 per 25,000 persons
Baseball Field	1 per 7,500 persons
Softball Field	1 per 5,500 persons
Football Field	1 per 24,000 persons
Soccer Field	1 per 5,500 persons
Basketball Court	1 per 5,500 persons
Tennis Court	1 per 4,500 persons

REC POLICY 1.1.3

Clay County will continue to identify, evaluate, and acquire future recreation sites within the generalized areas outlined on the Future Neighborhood Park Siting Map and Future Community Park Siting Map in the *Future Land Use Map Series* to maintain the adopted levels of service (LOS).

REC POLICY 1.1.4

The siting of future recreational facilities shall be prioritized upon the following criteria, listed in order of importance.

- 1) For boat ramps, the boat facility siting requirements of adopted Clay County Manatee Protection Plan.
- 2) Land acquisition and site improvement costs.
- 3) Proximity to the largest population centers within each planning district that reflects recreational demand.
- 4) Ease of public access based on roadway functional classifications as shown in Transportation Element.
- 5) Potential sites determined to accommodate the most deficient recreational facilities shall be considered of higher priority in the siting process.
- 6) Land area available for recreational facility development.

REC POLICY 1.1.5

The County shall develop a list of management priorities for each park in the Clay County Park Inventory in terms of existing and future tasks, park relationships to surrounding uses, and other functions of the park system, including an analysis of existing vacant County-owned lands for temporary or permanent recreation use. The list of management priorities shall be included in annual budget for the Parks and Recreation Division.

REC POLICY 1.1.6

The County shall establish locations, and design standards for providing public access to water ways.

REC POLICY 1.1.7

The County will continue to assess the feasibility of installing lights at existing ball fields to accommodate demand during league competition played at night.

REC POLICY 1.1.8

The County shall require that all new developments that abut the Florida Trail provide adequate buffering to protect the integrity of this facility.

REC POLICY 1.1.9

The County shall adopt a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide acquisition and development of a coordinated county-wide system of recreation sites and programs that reflects the population's needs. This Master Plan shall include financial tools to ensure the adopted plan is

adequately funded. This Master Plan shall be updated/amended on a regular basis and/or at a minimum of every five (5) years.

REC OBJ 1.2 **The County will improve public access to existing and future recreation sites and facilities, open space systems, and freshwater beaches and shores to meet the recreational needs of County residents and visitors.**

REC POLICY 1.2.1

New Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) shall provide a system of bikeways, footpaths, or nature trails linking recreational facilities and open space within residential areas.

REC POLICY 1.2.2

Those future neighborhood-level recreational facilities that are not located within or adjacent to community park facilities shall be provided with bicycle and pedestrian access ways from adjacent residential land uses.

REC POLICY 1.2.3

The County and private suppliers of recreational facilities will provide sufficient parking spaces at all County and private recreation sites. Bicycle racks shall be provided at all County and private recreation sites.

REC POLICY 1.2.4

Undeveloped and future park sites shall include vehicular access to a public roadway concurrent with the development of the park site.

REC POLICY 1.2.5

Future recreational facilities shall be designed with the character and quality of natural resources found on-site.

REC POLICY 1.2.6

The County shall provide safe access and parking facilities for the handicapped at all recreational sites by maintaining no physical barriers. If physical barriers exist to accessing a recreational site, they shall be eliminated where possible.

REC POLICY 1.2.7

The County shall adopt a Greenways and Trails Master Plan to guide acquisition and development of a coordinated system of land and water-based greenways and trails to link recreation sites, natural areas, open spaces and trails within the County.

REC OBJ 1.3 **The County will coordinate with and provide technical assistance to suppliers of public recreational opportunities so that available resources and programs are maximized toward meeting the recreational needs of all segments of the population.**

REC POLICY 1.3.1

Clay County shall coordinate annually through its Parks and Recreation Division with the Clay County School Board for joint use of recreational facilities by organized recreational programs at designated school sites.

REC POLICY 1.3.2

The County shall coordinate with the State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry, US Department of the Interior, St. John's River Water Management District, and other providers of recreational and conservation lands to enhance and expand the County's open space and recreation system.

REC POLICY 1.3.3

At such time as Clay County is unable to maintain the adopted recreation facility level of service, the County shall establish alternative funding mechanisms including the assessment of new development on equitable pro-rata share of the costs to provide parks and recreational facilities through donations of land suitable for development of facilities included in the adopted Levels of Service standards, provision of facilities and/or impact fees.

REC POLICY 1.3.4

The County shall require recreation/open space to be addressed directly by each applicant for a development permit. At that time, each development application shall submit data on the development's projected demands and evidence that the applicable levels of service shall not be adversely impacted. If proposed development is found to compromise certain points of the required levels of service, applicant will be required to provide said deficient facility.

REC OBJ 1.4 **Clay County shall ensure that an adequate amount of open space is maintained in all new residential and non-residential development, and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and native habitats.**

REC POLICY 1.4.1

The County shall establish standards for maximum lot coverage for residential and non-residential development to ensure that adequate open

space is maintained. These standards shall be applicable to public agencies and private development.

REC POLICY 1.4.2

The County shall maintain adequate open space by only permitting developments by public agencies and private entities that are consistent with the adopted recreation LOS standards.

REC POLICY 1.4.3

The County shall establish minimum open space requirements for mixed-use (PUDs) and multi-family developments that are consistent with the adopted recreation LOS standards.

Definitions

Boat Ramps – Boat ramps provide facilities for launching motorized and non-motorized watercraft that users transport to the site and then remove for storage or mooring elsewhere.

Community Parks - Community parks are located near or on major roadways and can serve two or three neighborhoods. These parks will serve populations of up to 20,000 within a radius of approximately 10 miles. The size of these parks usually ranges from 5 to 40 acres

Neighborhood Parks - A neighborhood park serves the residents of a community including a population of up to 5,000 and a service area of approximately five miles. Park size ranges from 1/2 acre to 10 acres.

Regional Parks - Regional parks are large, resource-based areas that serve two or more communities or counties and are usually located within an hour's driving distance of the residents they serve. The parks may serve a population of over 100,000 and could range in size from a minimum of 150 acres to several hundred acres.