

## **1.5.E - A Brief Assessment of Success and Shortcomings related to the Recreation and Open Space Element**

### **A. Introduction & Background:**

The Recreation and Open Space Element contains three Goals, which are based upon a three-prong approach:

Goal 1 reads as follows:

“PROVIDE SUFFICIENT PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE AREAS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF COLLIER COUNTY.”

Goal 2 reads as follows:

“THE COUNTY SHALL DEVELOP A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SYSTEM TO PROVIDE USEABLE OPEN SPACE TO MEET THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF RESIDENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.”

Goal 3 reads as follows:

“THE COUNTY SHALL DEVELOP A COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM TO PROVIDE USEABLE OPEN SPACE TO MEET THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF RESIDENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.”

The Recreation and Open Space Element was recently updated by Ordinance No. 2003-67, adopted on December 16, 2003. As currently formatted, this Element consists of the original Goal (Goal 1), and two new Goals (2 & 3) that were included in Ordinance No. 2003-67. Each Goal is followed by relevant Objectives and Policies, including the addition of a new Objective 1.6. As part of the EAR-based amendments, formatting changes consisting of the addition of a brief introductory statement will be added to this Element.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.1:**

Continue to ensure that a comprehensive system of parks and recreation facilities is available from among facilities provided by the County, other governmental bodies and the private sector.

#### Objective Achievement Analysis:

For each Annual Update and Inventory Report (AUIR) between 1996-2002, Collier County maintained an average six-year *surplus* of 81.1 acres of community parklands and 1,411.7 acres of regional parklands, respectively. Furthermore, the average six-year value/cost for community parks and regional parks was \$3,686,480 and \$32,117,800,

respectively. Collier County continues to provide a coordinated system of community and regional parks to its residents and visitors. The County has identified no issues with regard to this objective. However, some of the Objective's enabling policies (see below) should be revised.

Policy Relevance:

Policy 1.1.1 adopts Level of Service (LOS) Standards for park acreage, which standards are also reflected in the Capital Improvement Element. However, the reference to \$179.00 per capita of population in part (c) of this Policy will be changed to \$240.00. This amendment would reflect a change adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2001. Policy 1.1.2 states that the County should "encourage the continuation and expanded use of public school and other public and private facilities by the general public to maximize the benefit from available facilities." Policy 1.1.3 states that the County should, "ensure that economically disadvantaged individuals will not be restricted from any participation due to financial hardships." Policy 1.1.4 requires that the County, "acquire suitable lands for new park sites in areas where major population growth is expected." Policy 1.1.5 requires that the County, "continue to correct or improve existing parks and recreation facilities deficiencies which are necessary in order to meet the level of service standards." Policy 1.1.6 requires that, "the County shall continue to establish and implement a program with appropriate criteria to designate or acquire open space areas and natural reservations." Policies 1.1.2 through 1.1.6 should be retained.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2:**

Protect designated recreation sites and open space from incompatible land uses through development of appropriate design criteria and land use regulations.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

This objective continues to be relevant and therefore should be retained.

Policy Relevance:

Policy 1.2.1 requires that the County, "continue to update land development regulations outlining specific definitions and standards applying to recreation and open space land provisions for natural reservations and open space." This policy should be retained.

Policy 1.2.2 requires that the County, "continue to rezone all County owned recreation sites and open space under appropriate recreation rezoning." This policy should be clarified as to whether "Recreation" is intended to be an actual, official zoning designation within the County's Land Development Code. Revise the policy as necessary.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.3:**

Continue to ensure that all public developed recreational facilities, open space and beaches and public water bodies are accessible to the general public.

#### Objective Achievement Analysis:

The Collier County Growth Management Plan outlines level of service standards (LOSS) for parkland in three categories: facilities value, community park acreage, and regional park acreage. Beaches, beach parking, and boating access acreage are currently included in the regional park acreage measure for purposes of comprehensive plan concurrency. The 2001 Annual Update and Inventory Report projects satisfaction of regional park acreage LOSS through 2009 based on acreage acquisitions planned in the Capital Improvement Element through 2004. Therefore, this objective continues to be relevant and should be retained. However, its two (2) enabling policies (see below) need to be revised.

#### Policy Relevance:

Policy 1.3.1 requires that, “all public developed recreation facilities shall have, where appropriate, automobile, bicycle or pedestrian access facilities.” This sentence should be rewritten to clearly define what is entailed by the phrase “all public developed recreation facilities” and to change “where appropriate” to “where appropriate and economically feasible.” Policy 1.3.2 requires that that County, “continue to ensure that access to beaches, shores and waterways remain available to the public and develop a program to the availability of such access and a method to fund its acquisition. The EAR-based amendments should include a rewording of this policy for purposes of clarity.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.4:**

Continue formal mechanism to improve and coordinate efforts among levels of government and the private sector in order to provide recreational opportunities.

#### Objective Achievement Analysis:

The County has identified no issues with regard to this Objective. Therefore, this objective and its enabling policies continue to be relevant and should be retained.

#### Policy Relevance:

Policy 1.4.1 requires that the County “maintain and improve the existing system by encouraging developers to provide recreation sites and/or facilities, which are consistent with park and recreation guidelines.” This policy should be rewritten to tie the “existing system’s” success or failure to the LOSS benchmarks as adopted in the County’s Capital Improvement Element, Category A, parks and recreation. Policy 1.4.2 requires that the County “continue to develop and implement a formal program for coordinating County

programs with other government agencies.” Collier County has identified two potential changes with regard to this Policy: 1.) This policy should be rewritten to explain what the reference to “development and implementation of a formal program with other governmental agencies” means 2. ) The policy should include a complete listing of all of the other governmental agencies (local, state, regional and federal) with which the County must coordinate.

**OBJECTIVE 1.5:**

Continue to operate existing program for enforcing existing future developer commitments for recreation facilities and open space.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

This Objective is written in an overly complex manner and should therefore be revised for purposes of clarity. Otherwise, this Objective and its two enabling policies (see below) should be retained.

Policy Relevance:

Policy 1.5.1 requires that the County “continue to inventory new developer recreational facilities commitments as approved. This inventory will be updated on an annual basis.” Policy 1.5.2 requires that the County “continue to enforce commitments of developers for recreation facilities and open spaces through appropriate actions of County agencies.” These two enabling policies should be retained.

**OBJECTIVE 1.6:**

Whenever possible and practical, utilize County owned property for recreational uses.

Objective Achievement Analysis:

This is a new Objective, adopted on December 16, 2003. Therefore, the Objective should be retained as written.

Policy Relevance:

Policy 1.6.1 states that the County should “continue to coordinate inventory of properties with appropriate County and State agencies to determine availability for recreation uses.” This policy will be retained.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1:**

By the year 2010, the County Parks and Recreation Department will develop a Neighborhood Park Plan to identify general areas where neighborhoods might request sites for future neighborhood parks.

### Objective Achievement Analysis:

This is a new Objective, adopted on December 16, 2003. Therefore, the Objective will be retained as written.

### Policy Relevance:

Policy 2.1.1 requires that, “by the year 2010, the County Parks and Recreation Department will develop a Neighborhood Park Plan to identify general areas where neighborhoods might request sites for future neighborhood parks.” This policy will be retained as written. Policy 2.1.2 states that, the County shall amend the Land Development Code to include a new definition of useable open space that will provide for an open space area to be used as a neighborhood park for the recreational needs of the surrounding area.” This policy should be clarified by adding, “where appropriate and economically feasible” should be added to the end of this policy. Policy 2.1.3 requires that, “new neighborhood parks will be carefully sited and intentionally integrated into existing residential neighborhoods, and shall be designed according to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Neighborhood parks may also be co-located with churches, schools, or other recreational facilities.” This policy should be modified to add, “where appropriate and economically feasible” to both portions of this policy. Policy 2.1.4 requires that the County shall investigate the utilization of tax credits or other incentives for property owners who wish to dedicate land to the County to meet the recreational needs of neighborhood parks. This policy should be retained. Policy 2.1.5 requires that, “the County shall encourage the development of pedestrian pathways and bike lanes from the surrounding residential communities to park sites.” This policy will be retained as written.

### **OBJECTIVE 3.1:**

By the year 2010, the Parks and Recreation Department will develop a Community and Regional Park Plan to provide larger parks and recreational facilities as well as passive open space within a 15 to 20 minute drive of residents within the coastal Urban Designated Area, the Immokalee Urban Designated Area, and Northern Golden Gate Estates (this excludes Conservation designated areas, Agricultural/Rural designated areas, Southern Golden Gate Estates, and the outlying Urban Designated Areas of Copeland, Port of the Islands, Plantation Island and Chokoloskee). This plan will include the identification of future community and regional park sites (or general areas), park improvements, cost estimates, and potential funding sources. The principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) will be integrated into the planning and development of the Community and Regional Park sites.

### Objective Achievement Analysis:

This is a new Objective, adopted on December 16, 2003. Therefore, the Objective will be retained as written.

Policy Relevance:

Policy 3.1.1 requires that, “the Parks and Recreation Department will continue to acquire land to meet the needs of the Community and Regional Park Plan, including sufficient land to allow for a portion of these sites to remain in passive open space.” Policy 3.1.2 requires that, “the Parks and Recreation Department will design and construct the new community and regional parks.” Policy 3.1.3 states that, “the County shall continue to partner with the Collier County Public Schools to co-locate parks in conjunction with new school sites as they are identified and developed.” Policy 3.1.4 requires, “the County to continue to update the parks and recreation impact fees to keep pace with increased land acquisition and development costs for community and regional parks.” Policy 3.1.5 states that the “County shall investigate the utilization of tax credits or other incentives for property owners who wish to dedicate land to the County to meet the recreational needs of community and regional parks.” Policies 3.1.1 through 3.1.5 will be retained as written.

Policy 3.1.6 states that, “the County shall encourage the development of pedestrian pathways and bike lanes from the surrounding residential communities to park sites. The wording of this policy is exactly the same as that of Policy 2.1.5 (see above). Therefore, Policy 3.1.6 should be deleted, as unnecessarily duplicative.

Policy 3.1.7 states that “by the year 2010, the County’s Parks and Recreation Department and the Transportation Operations Department will investigate the utilization of the existing canal and power line easements to create a greenway system throughout the coastal Urban Designated Area, the Immokalee Urban Designated Area, and Northern Golden Gate Estates (this excludes Conservation designated areas, Agricultural/Rural designated areas, Southern Golden Gate Estates, and the outlying Urban designated areas of Copeland, Port of the Islands, Plantation Island and Chokoloskee).” Policy 3.1.7 should be retained as written.