

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE DATA AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This is data and analysis that support the Recreation and Open Space (REC) adopted Goals, Objectives and Policies. The Charlotte County Community Services Department provides an integrated delivery system designed to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors to Charlotte County. The Smart Charlotte 2050 Plan gathers these components from scattered sections of the previous comprehensive plan and consolidates them into one element, Recreation and Open Space, to better reflect the true scope of the County's efforts to



meet the park and recreation needs and deliver those services within the County. Goals include Parks and Open Space, Recreation, Libraries and History, and Service Delivery. Overall, the element shows a more logical reorganization, clarification and balance of policies.

The purpose of the REC element of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide for a system of public recreation and open space sites which are available to all of Charlotte County's citizens and visitors.

A park system attempts to serve all age groups, providing choices between activity-based and resource-based recreation and provides a geographic balance, assuring that facilities are not concentrated in one or a few small areas.

The key to developing a successful park system is to determine community needs and preferences, and to adopt Level of Service (LOS) Standards for those needs which, when implemented, will provide the land, facilities and programs in locations that serve the public. When the standards have been approved by the governing body, funding sources must then be determined to defray the costs of land acquisition, park and facility development, along with operations and maintenance.

The goals of the 1997-2010 Recreation and Open Space element have been substantially met. Citizen support through utilization of a portion of a one-cent sales tax provided the catalyst for this achievement. The new element establishes a policy to develop a new parks master plan by 2012.

In the new REC element, objectives and policies are better organized to address a natural array of park planning, acquisition, design, development, maintenance and management policies. More emphasis is placed on parks and open space functioning as an integrated system.

Goal #1 deals with parks and open space. Blueway Trails and Greenway Trails have been added to the basic park classifications (mini, neighborhood, community, regional, environmental and special area parks), which remain essentially unchanged. Reflecting the County's coastal and riverine setting, beaches, waterfronts and boating access are specifically addressed. New emphasis is placed on developing park master plans, management plans, and standards.

With the passage of the sales tax by citizen referendum and with effective grant management, the citizens of Charlotte County have the ability to access a large amount of environmental park land. Policies within the REC element address the importance of proper stewardship of those resources while providing appropriate public access and interpretive opportunities.

One of the biggest changes in the REC element has been to establish a new measurement for levels of service. LOS was previously measured using acreage per 1,000 populations. This method requires continual purchase of acreage as population grows and does not lend itself to an acceptable definition of when a park is "developed" for concurrency purposes. The Community Services staff has developed a system that will assign points to park acreage, amenities and distribution/unique value. The resulting composite LOS Standard enables a more balanced perspective regarding the provision of a park system that will meet evolving and emerging needs of the public over time.

Goal #2 focuses on providing various recreation programs for residents and visitors. An objective addresses events and programs offered through the County's premier venues: Charlotte Sports Park and the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center.

Goal #3 outlines the delivery of library, historical and arts services using the County libraries, the Historical Division, and arts and humanities organizations. In the previous Comprehensive Plan, the library Goals, Objectives and Policies were established in the Community Facilities and Services element. Also in the previous Comprehensive Plan, the historical Goals, Objectives and Policies were established in the Historic Preservation element. Both the Community Facilities and Historic Preservation Elements were eliminated and consolidated into other elements, such as the REC and FLU elements. State statutes require historic Goals, Objectives and Policies to be located in the Future Land Use, Housing and Coastal Elements. Since the Community Services Department is responsible for historic preservation, it is appropriate to include historic preservation goals in this element as well.

Goal #4 addresses objectives common to the three public-contact program goals such as funding, service base and citizen involvement. In addition to customary funding policies regarding grants and impact fees, new emphasis is placed on public/private partnerships and concession agreements. A policy ensures universal accessibility of facilities and programs. Green practices and web-based accessibility are newly recognized emerging trends. Citizen

involvement policies include support for public input and new emphasis on volunteers, partnerships and moving toward national accreditation.

The REC element is one component of a much larger comprehensive plan. While it more accurately describes the scope of parks and recreation services than the previous element, these goals are impacted by policies in several other elements including Future Land Use, Transportation, Natural Resources, Coastal Planning and Intergovernmental Coordination.

RELATIONSHIP TO 2050 PLAN

Within the Future Land Use element, the Smart Growth Planning Framework promotes mixed use development to reduce dependence on automobiles and also promotes protecting open space. Supporting a diverse range of neighborhoods by protecting and enhancing existing neighborhoods is one of the components of the Smart Charlotte Concept Plan. Neighborhood development policy should promote community identity and character by creating walkable places. The Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Recreation and Open Space element (REC Goals 1, 2 and 3 and their associated objectives and policies) describe the County's overall structure for creating an integrated system of parks, recreational and open space resources.

There are several key linkages between the REC element, and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan which include the following: promoting mixed use development; reducing dependence on automobiles by promoting other modes of transportation, and protecting open space and rural lands.

- The Future Land Use element serves as an overall blueprint for managing growth in the County, defines the direction and intensity of future growth and development, and influences the analysis of future recreational demand and facility needs in different portions of the County.
- The Transportation element provides input on the development of a greenway system.
- The Infrastructure element, particularly the potable water and sanitary sewer sections, will greatly help to shape development trends within the planning horizon. This will, in turn, influence the analysis of recreational demand and facility need.
- The Natural Resources element includes a policy that will promote links between existing public parks, preserves, and similar areas which will serve to provide for the conservation of natural resources in order to develop a system of interconnected greenways and blueways that provide public recreation.

- The Coastal Planning element contains policies that encourage the acquisition and development of waterfront property, preserve recreational and working waterfronts, and maintain public access to the Gulf of Mexico and bay waters
- The Intergovernmental Coordination element provides opportunities to improve County collaboration and coordination with other agencies, such as the School Board, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or others, in the delivery of park and recreation services.
- The Capital Improvements element reflects the County's strategy for the delivery of infrastructure and other public services, which will serve a primary role in growth management and help shape future demand for recreation. In addition, the Capital Improvements element will reflect the five-year budget plan for park and recreation capital outlay, which supports the goals, objectives, and policies of this element.

LEGISLATION

FEDERAL

The National Park Service was created on August 25, 1916 in order to “conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

The Antiquities Act of 1906 laid the groundwork for the philosophy of historic preservation. The Act provides for the protection of “any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States”.

STATE

The Recreation and Open Space element is a required element as stated in Chapter 163, Section 3177(6)(e)F.S.

Chapter 418, F.S., defines the responsibilities of the State of Florida regarding recreation. The Florida Department of State manages the State Library and Archives of Florida in Tallahassee. The State Library provides consulting services for grants and training to assist public libraries and their partners design and improve adult and family literacy programs. They also provide support and technical assistance to public libraries wishing to establish or enhance services for children, teens and their parents, teachers, and caregivers.

The Florida Division of Historical Resources is also under the Department of State. It is the State agency responsible for promoting the historical, archaeological, museum and folk culture resources in Florida. The Director of the Division of Historical Resources also serves as Florida's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), providing a liaison with the national Historic Preservation Planning Program conducted by the National Park Service.

The Florida Historical Commission is established in Chapter 267.0612, F.S. The purpose of the Florida Historical Commission is to enhance public participation and involvement in the preservation and protection of the State's historic and archaeological sites and properties. The Commission advises and assists the Division of Historical Resources in carrying out the programs, duties and responsibilities of the Division. The Commission is responsible for reviewing and ranking Special Category Historic Preservation Grant applications; six members also meet as Florida's National Register Review Board to review and vote on proposed nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Commission advises with regard to policy and preservation needs.

LOCAL

Part 1, Chapter 1-11 of the Charlotte County Code of Laws and Ordinances establishes guidelines for the administration of parks, recreation, and the Historical Advisory Committee. Part 1, Chapter 1-9 establishes guidelines for local public library administration.

Part III, Chapter 3-5, Article X establishes the Historic Preservation Ordinance which outlines procedures for local historic preservation efforts.

LOCAL PROGRAMS

Recreation

The Charlotte County Recreation Division is responsible for managing the Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center (CHECC), the Charlotte Sports Park, and all recreation, aquatics, athletics and County-wide and community special events.



The Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center opened on January 10, 2009. CHECC replaced the Charlotte Memorial Auditorium that was damaged in 2004 as a result of Hurricane Charley and which was later demolished. CHECC is a 44,000 square foot facility that will host conferences and large events in Charlotte County.



The newly-renovated Charlotte Sports Park is the spring training home of the Tampa Bay Rays and the home of the Charlotte Stone Crabs. The Rays played their first spring training game at this facility on February 25, 2009. The Charlotte Stone Crabs, the

Tampa Bay Rays affiliate, began their season on April 9, 2009. As part of the renovation, the stadium has been completely refurbished. The Charlotte Sports Park will also host many events such as festivals, concerts, sporting events, tournaments, and ceremonies.

Charlotte County has four recreation centers: Port Charlotte Beach, Harold Avenue, Tringali and South County Regional. Skate parks are located at Oyster Creek Park and Carmalita Park. The Community Services Department provides camps and special interest classes to all age groups. In addition, the department provides facilities such as meeting rooms, ball fields and swimming pools for schools, athletic leagues, special events and general public use.



Charlotte County has three aquatics facilities which offer a wide variety of aquatic programming: two regional pools located at South County and Oyster Creek Regional Parks and one neighborhood pool at Port Charlotte Beach Park. The Regional Pools host the Charlotte High

School and Lemon Bay High School swim teams as well as the Charlotte Blue Fins local club swim team.

There are over 48 ball fields in Charlotte County. Athletic field maintenance staff currently maintains all "non-professional" sports fields to include all repairs, mowing, game day and practice preparations. Field maintenance staff also oversees all maintenance. Leagues are run by independent organizations.



The County schedules youth and adult sport leagues that include sports such as Little League, softball, soccer, swimming and tennis.

Special events focus on County-wide events that include “Movie under the Stars”, The Annual Easter Egg Hunt, and the Bayshore Arts and Crafts Festival.

Library System

The Charlotte County Library System began in 1963 when the existing Punta Gorda, Englewood and Port Charlotte Libraries joined together to form a County public library system under a Library Board



appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. In 1976, Charlotte County signed a cooperative agreement with Glades County for the provision of library services, creating the Charlotte-Glades Library System. Charlotte County transitioned back to a single County system in 2008 when the cooperative agreement with Glades ended.

The Charlotte County Library System provides public library services to residents and visitors through regional and community libraries and the library website. Mid-County, the County’s first regional library, opened in 2005 at U.S. 41 North and Forrest Nelson Boulevard in Port Charlotte. The libraries provide a regular schedule of public service hours including nights and weekends. Hours of operation are reviewed annually and adjusted based on the available budget and public input. Services are also provided remotely 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the library website that provides access to patron accounts, the online catalog, events and to electronic databases for information and research.

Library services are guided by the Library Long Range Plan (2007-2012), revised every five years and approved by the Board of County Commissioners, the adopted Charlotte County Public Library Master Plan for Facilities (2002-2025), and the Florida Public Library Standards. The Long Range Plan identifies the library system’s major service goals and outlines objectives and activities to achieve those goals. The Master Plan evaluates the County’s library facilities and identifies future library space needs. The Florida Public Library Standards guide facility and service planning by providing target levels of service in the areas of access, funding, staff, materials, facilities, technology and programming.

The long range plan identifies the library’s primary service goal as providing current materials in a variety of formats for reading, viewing and listening. Supporting service goals are answers to questions on a variety of topics, materials and programs to explore personal interests, and safe and welcoming spaces in which to meet, interact, read and study. The library also provides public computers and staff support including assistance with job searches and accessing government information and services.

Library service goals for 2010-2030 include striving to meet Florida Public Library Standards in space, staffing, collections and programming. In addition, the adopted Master Plan identifies the need for two additional regional libraries in South and West County to meet the non-regulatory service standard of 0.6 square feet of library space per resident. Supporting Policy and Analysis Map (SPAM) Series Map #91: Library Facilities shows the location of the library facilities in Charlotte County.

Historical Center

The Charlotte County Historical Center began as a small, private organization that was chartered in 1969 as the Youth Museum of Charlotte County. It was temporarily housed in Charlotte Harbor and, later, in Punta Gorda. After several location changes, the museum moved in 1975 to the former Charlotte County Library building on West Retta Esplanade and Cross Street.



In 1989, the museum changed its name to the Museum of Charlotte County. It became part of the County Library system in the early 1990s. In 1996, the Museum Society, Inc., a private organization, operated the museum with grants from Charlotte County government and adopted the name Florida Adventure Museum.

In 2002, the Florida Adventure Museum building was lost to mold contamination, and Society members decided to form a new kind of alliance with Charlotte County government. The Board of County Commissioners voted to expand the museum and add a new focus on historic preservation County-wide by creating the Charlotte County Historical Center. Located on the waterfront at Bayshore Live Oak Park on Charlotte Harbor, the Center is situated near the site of the County's earliest pioneer settlement and first post office. It provides a wide variety of programs, events and services to educate the community about Charlotte County's history.

Programs and services include the preparation of permanent and changing exhibits at the Historical Center as well as off-site exhibits at the Justice Center and the Punta Gorda History Park; a monthly speaker series, boat and trolley tours and adventure camps for youth; and the professional management of historical archives and collections estimated at approximately 33,000 historical artifacts.

The Charlotte County Historical Center continues to provide programs to protect the County's historical and archaeological resources for future generations. Periodic updates to the County-wide survey provide an accurate knowledge base for managing growth, protecting historical resources, managing County-owned properties and qualifying for grant funding. Historical exhibits and public educational programs provide increased awareness of accurate information, to foster a sense of place and connectedness in the community, and to protect our historical resources in both the built and natural environments. Special events will continue to be held in support of community heritage education, such as the annual Florida Frontier Days festival,

which also provides a tourist destination for economic benefit. Local programs are being developed in conjunction with State and national observances.

The Charlotte County historical archives and artifact collections are properly managed and maintained to ensure their availability to future generations. Electronic access is being provided through a digitization program, and public access is provided as part of an archives/artifact repository.

County-owned resources significant to our history, such as the Placida Bunk House, the Cookie House and the Old Charlotte County Stockade, are being managed to ensure their stabilization, protection and preservation. Archaeological sites have been protected for future study. Historic preservation expertise is provided for County projects, development review, local historical groups and citizen inquiries.

Historical markers recognize places which are significant to Charlotte County history. Maps, publications and other media regarding our historical resources are made available to educate and inform the public about the important historic, archaeological, architectural and scenic resources, events or sites in the County and to stress the importance of preservation, heritage and folklore.

Privately-Owned Recreational Facilities

Private recreation can be broken down into four distinct groups: private-commercial, private-nonprofit, private-club, and private-uninventoried.

Private-commercial recreation refers to the profit-driven commercial enterprises which supply recreation, and are a part of the community's economy. Quite often these facilities cater to tourists or seasonal recreation demands. In Charlotte County, golf and boat fishing are two types of recreation most often provided by private-commercial enterprise. These are available to the general public, usually for a fee.



Private-nonprofit recreation refers to the private and quasi-public land and facilities, provided by groups such as churches, the YMCA, scout groups, and special interest organizations that are made available to its members and often the general public. The County has entered into a partnership with the YMCA at the Franz Ross County-owned facility and provides maintenance of the YMCA park in exchange for public use.

Private-club recreation, which refers to recreation provided by country clubs, tennis clubs, yacht clubs, etc., is available to the organizations' members and their guests. Occasionally the facilities are made available to the general public. Charlotte County has several private golf clubs which provide recreation to its members.

Private-uninventoried recreation refers to the recreational facilities which are privately owned and are most often unavailable to the general public. These facilities include those owned by apartment complexes, hotels, motels, and private single-family residences.

Within Charlotte County there are a number of other park and recreation providers such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, and the City of Punta Gorda. Charlotte County also has an Interlocal Agreement with the Charlotte County School Board allowing for public access to school recreational facilities on a case-by-case basis.

In an effort to provide services to Charlotte County residents, the Community Services Department utilizes and implements interlocal agreements to provide for the development and maintenance of parks in various locations, provide weekly inspections and minor maintenance of water control structures, eradicate exotic nuisance vegetation and provide perpetual maintenance of several project sites. Charlotte County in general utilizes interlocal agreements when they can accomplish a particular objective. They may be between special interest organizations, homeowner associations, environmental organizations, the School Board, Police Athletic League, Gasparilla Island Bridge Authority, The Museum Society, Inc., d/b/a/ Historical Center Society, Port Charlotte Little League, Englewood Area Athletic Association, Punta Gorda Little League Association, Pop Warner Association, Florida State Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Recreation, and Charlotte County Family Young Men's Christian Association, Inc.

The County assists with the development of athletic facilities on school board property and cooperates with the Water Management Districts in an effort to improve the environment and safeguard natural resources.

The County's interlocal agreements provide for a range of additional recreational activities. In an effort to provide the general public with pool facilities, the County has entered into an agreement with the YMCA. The County provided funding for the construction of the YMCA pool and spa in exchange for the use of the facilities for the general public at a reduced fee. Another YMCA agreement provides for operations and maintenance of the Dotzler YMCA Outdoor Activity Center located at 22801 Bayshore Drive.

Interlocal Agreements will continue to be utilized by the Community Services Department to provide additional opportunities for residents.

The Cultural Center of Charlotte County is a County-owned facility which is privately managed and operated by a non-profit Board of Directors. It houses a 418-seat theater, an Activities Center, Continuing Education classrooms and the offices of the County's Veterans Service

Officer. The Cultural Center is a focal point for many of the County's senior population by providing adult education, recreational, and social activities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Charlotte County adopted and met a level of service of six acres of active/multipurpose park land and exceeded the adopted level of service of four acres of passive park land. Current LOS, based on acreage, compares favorably to counties adjacent and with like demographics to Charlotte County, although each County defines and measures LOS slightly differently. Charlotte County is proposing to adopt a new LOS measurement (based on a point system) which will reflect the County's current LOS or adopt a standard slightly below the current LOS.

During the 15-year planning horizon of the 1997 Wallace, Roberts and Todd Park and Recreation Master Plan, Charlotte County added 2.4 acres of mini-parks, 49.2 acres of neighborhood parks, 105.4 acres of community parks, 371.9 acres of regional parks, 353 acres of environmental parks with developed public access, 138.2 acres of special purpose facilities, 24 ball fields, 21 courts, seven playgrounds, two pools, 26 piers or boardwalks, nine boat ramps or canoe/kayak launches, and nine trail systems.

INVENTORY

Table REC-1 shows each park by name, address, location and acreage. Park classifications and totals are included in the table and are described below.

Table REC-1: County Owned Park, Recreation and Environmental Park Facilities			
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
Allapatchee Shores Park	3100 Hickory Ct	Punta Gorda	0.54
Clark Park	3100 Patio Ct	Punta Gorda	0.53
Edgewater Park	22410 Glass Ln	Charlotte Harbor	1.78
El Jobean Park	4333 Kerrigan Circle	El Jobean	1.40
Englewood East Park	11120 Sunnydale Ave	Englewood	1.99
Helen Wrobbles Park	Route 17 & Cleveland	Punta Gorda	1.31
Learning Garden	13577 Blake Dr	Port Charlotte	1.54
Lincoln Park	357 Spring Lake Blvd	Port Charlotte	1.83
Lister Park	4301 Lister Ln	Charlotte Harbor	1.45
Ott Circle Park	4320 Gardner	Charlotte Harbor	1.31
Price Circle Park	1222 Price Circle	Port Charlotte	0.60
Salyers Park	1341 Veronica St	Port Charlotte	3.01
Scott Park	6430 Scott St	Punta Gorda	0.33
Scotts Lot #1	6362 Scott St	Punta Gorda	0.31

Scotts Lot #2	6296 Scott St	Punta Gorda	0.31
Severin Park	171 Severin Rd	Port Charlotte	1.68
Sharon Circle Park	431 Sharon Circle	Port Charlotte	1.14
Total for Mini Parks =			17 21.06
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
Bissett Park	12455 Path Ave	Punta Gorda	16.64
Butterford Waterway Park	13555 Marathon Blvd	Englewood	6.20
Deep Creek Park	25555 Sandhill Blvd	Punta Gorda	6.09
G. C. Herring Park	3406 Indiana Rd.	Cape Haze	20.92
Gulf Stream Park	12873 Gulfstream Blvd	Englewood	3.17
Harbour Heights Park	27420 Voyageur	Punta Gorda	8.21
Higgs Park	21400 Higgs Ct	Port Charlotte	4.04
Kiwanis Park	3100 Donora St	Port Charlotte	31.69
Lake Betty Park	2215 Conway Blvd	Port Charlotte	3.37
Maracaibo Park/Kidspace	1505 Maracaibo	Port Charlotte	11.56
McGuire Park	21125 McGuire Ave	Port Charlotte	4.96
Midway Park	23023 Midway Blvd	Port Charlotte	3.49
Shirley Park	18090 Regan	Port Charlotte	7.68
South Gulf Cove Park	10150 Amicola St	Gulf Cove	4.84
South Punta Gorda Heights Park	11040 Pinetrail Rd	Punta Gorda	7.39
Tringali Park	3460 N. Access Rd.	Englewood	10.22
Total for Neighborhood Parks =			16 150.47
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
Carmalita Park	6905 Florida St	Punta Gorda	33.00
Franz Ross Park	19355 Quesada Blvd	Port Charlotte	33.00
Harold Ave Park	23400 Harold Ave	Port Charlotte	41.30
Ollie's Pond Park	18235 Avon Ave	Port Charlotte	41.18
Sunrise Park	20499 Edgewater Park	Port Charlotte	40.28
Total for Community Parks =			5 188.76
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
North Charlotte Regional Park	1185 O'Donnell Blvd	Port Charlotte	103.30
Oyster Creek Regional Park	6791 San Casa Dr	Englewood	50.00
South County Regional Park	670 Cooper	Punta Gorda	90.31
Total for Regional Parks =			3 243.61
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
Ainger Creek Park	2011 Placida Rd	Englewood	1.93
Anger Fishing Pier	1385 Beach Rd	Englewood	0.66
Audubon-Pennington Nature Park	1153 Alton Rd.	Port Charlotte	31.26
Bay Heights Park	1000 S. McCall Rd	Englewood	2.57
Bayshore Live Oak Park	23157 Bayshore Rd	Port Charlotte	10.32
Boca Grande Fishing Pier (north and south)	5810 Gasparilla Rd	Gasparilla Island	4.50
Cape Haze Pioneer Trail	1688 Gasparilla Rd	Rotonda	67.60
Charlotte Harbor Event and	75 Taylor St	Punta Gorda	7.95

Conference Center			
Charlotte Sports Park	2300 ElJobean Rd.	Port Charlotte	82.00
Chester Roberts Park	5084 Melbourne St	Port Charlotte	0.32
Coral Creek Fishing Pier	Intersection of 771 & 775	Punta Gorda	1.15
Darst Boat Ramp	537 Darst Ave	Punta Gorda	0.53
El Jobean Boat Ramp	4224 El Jobean Rd	El Jobean	1.33
El Jobean Fishing Pier	SR 776	El Jobean	4.69
Englewood Beach/Chadwick Park	2100 North Beach Rd	Englewood	12.16
Hathaway Park	35461 Washington Loop Rd.	Punta Gorda	29.00
Hickory Bluff Park	4399 Willow St	Charlotte Harbor	32.82
Holiday Lakes Boat Ramp	Marathon Blvd	Port Charlotte	6.20
Meredith Dr. Beach Access	Meredith Dr	Englewood	0.22
O'Hare Canoe/Kayak Launch	19090 Midway Blvd	Port Charlotte	11.58
Placida Park and Boat Ramp	6499 Gasparilla	Placida	5.62
Placida Fishing Pier	Intersection of 771 & 775	Placida	2.54
Placida Rotary Centennial	Placida and 775	Placida	3.69
Port Charlotte Beach Park	4500 Harbor Blvd	Port Charlotte	16.08
Riverside Park	8320 Riverside Dr	Punta Gorda	0.56
Spring Lake Park	3520 Lakeview	Port Charlotte	8.11
St Paul Linear Park	9000 St Paul Dr	South Gulf Cove	8.33
Wisteria Park and Boat Ramp (closed)	end of Wisteria, off Rio Villa	Punta Gorda	0.10
Total for Special Purpose Parks =	28		353.82
Total for All Multi-purpose Parks =	69		957.72
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
Amberjack Environmental Park	6450 Gasparilla Pines Blvd	Rotonda	225
Buck Creek Preserve	5350 Placida	Englewood	80
Cedar Point Environmental Park	2300 Placida Rd	Englewood	115
Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park	15801 Tamiami Trail	Punta Gorda	487
Deep Creek Property	28000 Sandhill	Punta Gorda	450
Oyster Creek/San Casa Environmental	6791 San Casa	Englewood	256
Prairie Creek Preserve	1900 Duncan	Punta Gorda	1,600
Rotonda Park	100 Rotonda Blvd East	Rotonda West	32
Shell Creek Preserve	4334 Nellis	Punta Gorda	370
Thornton Key Preserve	8 Thornton Key	Englewood	31
Tippecanoe Environmental Park	2400 El Jobean	Port Charlotte	350
Tippecanoe II Mitigation Area	West of Flamingo Blvd	Port Charlotte	214
Total for Environmental Parks =	12		4,210
Total All Parks and Acreage =	81		5,167.72

Source: Charlotte County Community Services Department, formerly Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department, 2009

Charlotte County park classifications generally exhibit the following characteristics:

- Mini-Park (1-3 acres): Intended to serve about 2,500 residents within walking or short biking distance (0.5 mile). Facilities typically include a playground, benches, picnic tables and open space with few or no parking spaces.



- Neighborhood Park (3-20 acres): Intended to serve about 5,000 residents within a 1-mile service radius, primarily for walking or bicycle access, but may have limited parking. Facilities typically include play equipment, informal sports field(s), paved court(s), existing vegetation, picnicking, shelter and walking paths.

- Community Park (20-80 acres): Intended to serve an average of 25,000 residents within a 3-mile radius. Typically included are the same types of facilities as a neighborhood park, as well as both lighted and unlighted sports fields and courts, group pavilion(s), restrooms, bicycle and walking paths, recreation center and other active and passive recreation areas to meet specialized needs. Community Parks are ideally located on a street classification of collector or higher with adequate parking. Adequate plantings/buffers and some passive recreational area should be provided.



- Regional Park (80 acres or more): Intended to serve an average of 50,000 or more residents within a 10 mile radius or up to 30-minute driving time. Facilities may include the same type of facilities as neighborhood and community parks except in greater quantities and level of development (i.e. lighting, range of sizes and level of detail). Sophisticated parking and circulation, stormwater management and infrastructure systems are typically involved. Trail systems allow for hiking/biking and interpretive use. Typically, significant passive recreational, as well as special purpose facilities are included.



- Environmental Park (size varies): Intended to preserve unique ecosystems, landscapes and/or open space while affording limited, passive recreational use. Environmental Parks may have some sensitive environmental habitats that are less important to the guiding influence of management. Management will



focus on both environmental preservation and the management of the natural resources from a human dimension. An environmental park may serve a population of 50,000 or more residents generally within a 20-mile radius and because of the nature and location of its resources, access may require 30-60 minutes driving time. Facilities may include nature trails, picnicking, horseback riding, biking, group pavilions, fishing, boating, and limited group camping.

- **Special Purpose Facility (size varies):** A special purpose facility is a single facility that may be located within a park of any classification or may comprise an entire park unit. Special purpose facilities may include elements such as a historically or archaeologically significant feature or site; biking, hiking or multimodal trails; linear parks; fishing piers; boat ramps and canoe/kayak launches; areas of rare or endangered flora or fauna; event/conference facility; stadium; or beach or water access.



- **Blueway Trail:** An identified route along a body of water intended primarily for small, human-powered watercraft such as canoes and kayaks. Blueway trails will vary in length, type of water body, aquatic environment, points of origin, exposure, and difficulty. Blueway trails and support facilities may be identified by navigational markers and signage bearing an identification logo. Landside support facilities may be either public or private and may provide rental watercraft, parking, improved launch/landing points, intermediate stopping points and supplies.



- **Greenway Trail:** A linear land route along either a natural corridor, such as a slough or shoreline; or, designated open space such as railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a scenic roadway, utility easement, or conservation corridors. Greenway trails are intended primarily for pedestrian or bicycle use rather than motorized vehicles, but in some cases may accommodate equestrian use. Connectivity among parks, preserves and points of interest is a key purpose for greenway trails. They vary in scale but are always characterized by their linear nature rather than circulation within a compact parcel. Surfacing may range from in-place materials to paving or boardwalks. Support facilities are typically minimal and may include parking, resting points and interpretive signage.



Table REC-2: County Owned Park and Recreation Facilities (located in REC Data and Analysis Appendix A) shows a listing of the recreational facilities in Table REC-1 with their associated amenities. These facilities are also shown on SPAM Series Map #92: County Owned Park and Recreation Facilities.

Table REC-3: County Owned Environmental Parks (located in REC Data and Analysis Appendix A) shows a listing of the environmental parks in Table REC-1 with their associated amenities. These facilities are also shown on SPAM Series Map #93: County Owned Environmental Parks.

Charlotte County has a significant portion of environmental lands and preserves that are State and Federally owned and operated. A complete listing of these lands can be found in the Natural Resources element and can be viewed on SPAM Series Map #52. More information on the environmental parks, Conservation Charlotte Preserves and traditional recreational park lands can be found on the County's website:

<http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/EnvironmentalServices/NaturalResources/EnvironmentalLands/>.

FUTURE CONDITIONS

CONCURRENCY

The LOS rating system combines three primary factors often used individually to assess level of service: size (acreage), amenities and location (service radius). The resulting composite level of service standard enables a more balanced perspective regarding the provision of a park system that will meet evolving and emerging needs of the public over time.

Charlotte County, as well as most Florida counties, currently uses a standard of six acres of active park land and four acres of passive park land per 1,000 persons. This is considered a normative standard. Although this type of standard allows maximum flexibility, it presents many limitations in its practical implementation:

- fails to define when the threshold of “developed” is reached (as dictated by SB360)
- defines a standard that may or may not contribute to most-needed improvements
- does not address how phased development contributes to the level of service
- gives no credit for park amenity infill
- often requires very costly expenditures to keep up with levels of service requirements
- does not allow credit for responding to naturally changing and evolving needs
- does not accommodate small incremental increases in LOS requirements

The new proposed point system moves toward a performance-based standard, still having normative characteristics, but not purely prescriptive in nature. This system allows flexibility within established boundaries, yet recognizes interdependency among assessment factors. It allows Charlotte County to achieve LOS credit for almost every dollar spent while addressing its unique park and recreational needs at every level. Unlike a strict acreage-based standard, this system responds to changes over time.

- As new technology and recreational trends emerge, the points system will allow the opportunity to apply weighted points to factors such as green development and eco-tourism.
- As other recreational interests wane, point scales can be adjusted to reward high-demand activities and discourage low-demand activities.
- It can be structured to reflect the value of the parks and recreation system to the quality of life in Charlotte County, not just the content of its components.
- It can respond quickly and efficiently to incremental increases in mandated level of service.
- Recognizing that Federal, State, non-profit, and private parks, open space and recreational facilities contribute toward quality of life, the point system may accommodate pro-rated credits for those parks and facilities.

The following factors play a role in assessing the relative value and contribution of individual elements to an overall public parks and recreation system:

- size
- distribution
- amenity type
- supply/demand
- initial cost
- uniqueness
- operations and maintenance

Amenities not listed on the point scale will be assigned a point value equal to the closest comparable amenity. Support facilities and elements required by codes, such as parking, stormwater management, and landscaping, must be developed in proportion to primary facilities sufficient to adequately support the intended activity. No additional credit points will be awarded for required support facilities. Amenities must be sized relative to their intended function and role within the park classification system. Not all environmental park acreage has been included as a basis to determine the proposed LOS standard, but only County-owned recreational facilities and centers have been used. Privately-owned recreational facilities were not used in the calculation. If the need arises in the future, some privately-owned recreational facilities may be included in the basic calculation for LOS Standards.

Table REC-4 outlines specific park amenities with their associated points and quantities.

Table REC-4: LOS Points Summary				
Factor	Quantity	Unit	Points per Unit	County-wide Points
Acreage				
Acreage Environmental	1330	ac.	0.1	133.0
Acreage Active*	994	ac.	0.3	298.2
Amenities				
Shuffleboard/Bocci/Horseshoes/Volleyball	55	ea.	0.2	11.0
Single Picnic Shelter	18	ea.	0.5	9.0
Nature Trail/Walking Trail (unpaved)	158	1000 l.f.	1	158.0
Dock/Boardwalk/Fishing Pier	86	1000 s.f.	1.5	128.7
Sports Lighting (Court)	24	ea.	2	48
Remote Control Car Track/Boat Basin	4	ea.	3	12
Skatepark/In-Line Hockey Rink	3	ea.	3	9
Multi-Purpose Trail (paved)	39	1000 l.f.	3	118
Environmental and/or Historical Interpretive Features	10	set	3	30
Specialty Garden	5	ea.	3	15
Group Pavillion	36	ea.	4	144
Sports Lighting (Ballfield)	38	ea.	4	152
Paw Park	2	ea.	4	8
Canoe/Kayak Launch	9	ea.	4	36
Basketball Court/Tennis	50	ea.	5	248
Playground/Fitness Trail/Disc Golf Course	24	ea.	5	120
Horse Arena	1	ea.	5	5
Restroom	34	ea.	6	204
Concession Building	9	ea.	6	54
Meeting Room	4	ea.	6	24
Soccer Field/Football Field	17	ea.	6	102
Baseball Field/Softball	31	ea.	8	248
Boat Ramp	15	lane	8	120
Environmental/Historical Center	2	ea.	20	40
Swimming Pool	3	ea.	25	75
Gymnasium/Recreation/Fitness Center	8	ea.	30	240
Special Event Venue	2	ea.	40	80

Table REC-4: LOS Points Summary				
Factor	Quantity	Unit	Points per Unit	County-wide Points
Distribution				
Park does not fall within service radius x 1.25 of another park of the same category, OR	67	ea.	3	201
Park is resource-based, OR				
Park contains a Special Purpose Facility				
Total Points, Current (mid 2009)				3,071
Population (2009)				178,193
Points per 1000 people (existing baseline LOS)				17.2

Source: Charlotte County Community Services Department, formerly Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department, 2009

DEMAND

Table REC-5 shows future population projections to 2030 with corresponding points projection using existing facilities and amenities according to Table REC-4 as established in December 2009.

Table REC-5: Future Needs Projection		
YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	POINTS PROJECTION
2009	178,193	17
2010	178,606	17
2015	194,146	16
2020	213,333	14
2025	236,479	13
2030	262,770	12

Source: Charlotte County Growth Management Department, 2009

Table REC-5 shows that the demand for additional park development is not expected to occur until after 2015 based on the adoption of an LOS set at 16 points. Future parks and recreation needs will be largely maintenance related over the next several years due to the economic downturn and budget constraints experienced by the Community Services Department.

The County's main funding sources in the future for parks and recreation will be impact fees and ad valorem taxes. Impact fees can be used solely for the purpose of capital improvements and administrative expenses, not for maintenance or operations. Operational and maintenance expenses typically come from ad valorem taxes.

Open space acquisition, in the form of environmentally sensitive lands, can often be funded utilizing many of the Federal and State acquisition programs currently available. The County will need to continue to find innovative ways to fund facilities. Options such as user fees, grants, public-private co-operatives, special event fund raising, and other revenue generating opportunities will need to be explored.

IMPLEMENTATION

Budget constraints experienced in FY 2009-2010 will delay acquisition and development of additional park land. Service levels at the locations listed in Table REC-6 will be reduced to more accurately reflect the park land use occurring at the locations as of October 2009.

Table REC-6: Park Locations Recommended for Reduced Service			
PARK NAME	ADDRESS	LOCATION	ACREAGE
Bay Heights Park	1000 S. McCall Rd	Englewood	2.57
Clark Park	3100 Patio Ct	Punta Gorda	0.53
Gulf Stream Park	12873 Gulfstream Blvd	Englewood	3.17
Helen Wrobbles Park	Route 17 & Cleveland	Punta Gorda	1.31
Lincoln Park	357 Spring Lake Blvd	Port Charlotte	1.83
Lister Park	4301 Lister Lane	Charlotte Harbor	1.45
Ott Circle Park	4320 Gardner	Charlotte Harbor	1.31
Price Circle Park	1222 Price Circle	Port Charlotte	0.60
Salyers Park	1333 Veronica St	Port Charlotte	3.01
Scotts Lot #1	6362 Scott St	Punta Gorda	0.31
Scotts Lot #2	6296 Scott St	Punta Gorda	0.31
Severin Park	171 Severin Rd	Port Charlotte	1.68
Sharon Circle Park	431 Sharon Circle	Port Charlotte	1.14
Shirley Park	Shirley St	Port Charlotte	7.68
South Punta Gorda Heights Park	11040 Pinetrail Rd	Punta Gorda	7.39
TOTAL			34.29

Source: Charlotte County Community Services Department, formerly Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Department, 2009

There is a wide variety of implementation tools available for the development of the parks and recreation system. Some of these, such as the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) and Florida Communities Trust continue to be used with great success. Other tools, ranging from development regulations to volunteerism, may offer the County new or expanded opportunities to continue the development and operation of the parks system.

A Partners in Parks program has been approved by the Board of County Commissioners in November of 2009 to accommodate citizens and community groups who wish to support the

maintenance of park lands that will experience reduced service. This program will enable citizens to partner with the Community Services Department to provide park land maintenance during the time of reduced service.

The opening of the Charlotte Sports Park and the Charlotte County Event Center in 2008 will assist in improving the quality of life for Charlotte County residents in the future. Recreational opportunities will continue to be improved by the development and enhancements of blueway and greenway trails, environmental parks, interpretive exhibits and by continuing to provide opportunities for access to public lands. Additional park acquisition and development is not projected to occur until a new park master plan is developed in 2012. Maintenance of existing facilities will be the primary focus of the Community Services Department until a master plan is in place. The economic downturn of 2008-2009 has had a dramatic effect on park system amenities, operations and maintenance. Economic recovery is expected and park systems planning will reflect an improved economy in the future.