

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Conservation Element is to promote the conservation, use, and protection of natural resources.

II. INVENTORY

This Element identifies existing public and private recreation sites and open spaces available to the public, including natural reservations, parks, playgrounds, parkways and beaches. For each site, types of use such as activity-based/resource-based or active/passive recreation, and other types of recreation facilities provided, such as community centers and ballfields are explained. For open space, types of use, such as "Pastoral" or "Corridor" are explained. A listing of recreation and open space sites is provided on Table 1, as well on the Existing Recreation and Open Space Map.

A. RECREATION SITES

1. Resource/Activity-Based Sites

Recreational sites may be classified as resource-based or activity-based. Resource-based sites center around the natural resources of an area, such as a lake, nature trail, or beach. Activity-based sites focus on developed, i.e. man-made facilities for particular activities, such as ball games, recreation programs (aerobics/art), senior citizen activities, or spectator sports.

- a. There are no resource-based sites in the city limits of Freeport.
- b. Activity-based sites consists of: Freeport Recreation Area, which has 2 ballfields and a football field surrounded by a running track; Freeport High School which has 1 gymnasium, 3 tennis courts, and a hard court/basketball court; City Field, which has 1 ball diamond; and Freeport Elementary, which has 2 playgrounds.

2. Active/Passive Recreation

Active recreation involves direct participation, such as participation in a game (golf, baseball, aerobics, etc.). Passive recreation is leisurely, slower-paced activity (fishing, walking, picnicking, etc.).

Active recreation sites of Freeport include the Freeport Recreation Area Freeport High School Freeport's City Field, and Freeport Elementary.

Passive recreation sites of Freeport include Freeport Elementary.

These classifications/categories often overlap, or coexist at the same site. Therefore, for the purposes of this inventory, the recreational sites of Freeport summarized on Table 1 are categorized by size, capacity (the number of people they serve without exceeding capacity), and service area.

3. Other Types of Recreation

Spectator Recreation

Freeport has several types of organized spectator sports. Softball games are frequently played on the City ballfields. Within the schools, are basketball games, baseball games, football games, track meets, and volleyball tournaments.

B. OPEN SPACE SITES

Open space is defines as "undeveloped land suitable for recreation or conservation uses" for the purposes of this Element. Sub-categories may include "Corridor Open Space", "Pastoral Open Space", and "Utilitarian Open Space".

1. Corridor Open Space

"Corridor Open Space" is land preserved as open space that runs along a right-of-way or any long linear open space through which people travel.

Freeport has no Corridor Open Space.

2. Pastoral Open Space

"Pastoral Open Space" is open space land preserved for the management, protection, and prudent use of natural resources present on that land. Resource-based recreation may be allowed if compatible with the site.

Freeport has no Pastoral Open Space.

3. Utilitarian Open Space

"Utilitarian Open Space" is open space land reserved from intense development due primarily to public safety constraints such as being prone to flooding, or sinkhole formation or having contaminated soil.

Freeport has no Utilitarian Open Space.

TABLE 1:
EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

CATEGORY	NAME	CLASSIFICATION	FACILITIES AVAILABLE	ACREAGE
EXISTING RECREATION				
County	Freeport Elementary	neighborhood park	1 equipped play area 1 unequipped play area	2.0 land
County	Freeport High School	neighborhood park	1 gymnasium 3 tennis courts 1 hard court 1 playing field	3.5 land
County/Municipal	Freeport Recreation Area	neighborhood park	1 football field 1 track 2 ballfields	12 land
Municipal	City Ballfield	neighborhood park	1 ballfield	1.75 land
*****	*****	*****	*****	*****

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

III. ANALYSIS

A. DATA SUMMARY

The Recreation and Open Space of Freeport consists of Freeport High School, Freeport Elementary School, Freeport Recreation Area, and the City Ballfield.

B. LEVELS OF SERVICE

The purpose of levels of service is to establish a standard by which to ensure that an adequate park and recreation system is provided. The National Recreation and Park Association suggests that a park system, at minimum, be composed of a "core" system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1000 population.

This classification system measures service area and acres per population, as shown on Table 2.

C. CURRENT NEEDS

Using Table 2 as a guide for site use, service size and acreage per population, Freeport's recreation and open space sites can be classified as 4 neighborhood parks/playgrounds. Freeport has no open space sites at this time.

1. Estimated Recreational Demand

The level of service table utilized for Freeport is based on acreage per 1000 residents, service area., and size of facility. Since Freeport's population is 1235, they would only need 40.6% of the acreage and service area stated on Table 3. In this perspective, the recreational facilities of Freeport more than meet the levels of service requirements for service area and acres per population.

2. Adequacy of Existing Sites and Facilities

- a. Freeport Elementary is a neighborhood park/playground of 2 acres, which is adequate for the population and age groups it serves. Its service area is at least 1/2 mile radius. The school is adjacent to Hwy 331 and is less than 1/4 mile from the neighborhood section of Freeport. Freeport Elementary

is suited for intense development and is easily accessible to the neighborhood population, with safe walking and bike access. As a neighborhood park can serve a population up to 5,000, Freeport Elementary more than meets the level of service standards for a neighborhood park.

- b. Freeport High School is a neighborhood park/playground of 3.5 acres, which is adequate for the population and age groups it serves. Its suited for intense development, but is easily accessible to the neighborhood population. The school is located within the northern neighborhood section of Freeport, with safe walking and bike access. A neighborhood park can serve a population up to 5,000, therefore Freeport High School meets the level of service requirements for a neighborhood park.
- c. Freeport Recreational Area is a neighborhood park/playground of 12 acres. Its service area is at least 1/2 mile radius. Freeport Recreation Area is suitable for some development. It is ideally located between Freeport Elementary and Freeport High School, therefore greatly increasing the service area of these facilities, plus having safe walking and bike access. A neighborhood park can serve up to 5,000, therefore, Freeport Recreation Area more than meets the level of service standards for a neighborhood park.
- d. The City Ballfield has area of 1.75 square miles. Its service area is at least 1/2 mile radius. The area is suited for intense development and is easily accessible to the neighborhood population. The park is geographically centered in Freeport, with safe walking and bike access. A neighborhood park can serve up to 5,000, so the City Ballfield meets the level of service standards for a neighborhood park. Park/playground of 12 acres.

3. Availability to the Public

All of the recreational sites of Freeport are available to the public. The two schools are primarily used during the day and after school hours and Saturdays by school age children and youth.

TABLE 2
LEVELS OF SERVICE

COMPONENT	USE	SERVICE AREA	DESIRABLE SIZE	ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	DESIRABLE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
A. LOCAL/CLOSE-TO-HOME SPACE:					
Mini-Park	Specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.	Less than ¼ mile radius.	1 acre or less.	0.25 to 0.5A	Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to apartment complexes, town house development or housing for the elderly.
Neighborhood Park/Playground	Area for intense recreational activities, such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, skating, picnicking, wading pools, etc.	¼ to ½-mile radius to serve a population up to 5,000 (a neighborhood)	15+ acres	1.0 to 2.0A	Suited for intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood population-geographically centered with safe walking and bike access. May be developed as a school-park facility.
Community Park	Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for Intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes, large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. H&V be any combination of the above, depending upon site suitability and community need.	Several neighborhoods. 1 to 2-mile radius.	25+ acres	5.0 to R.OA	May include natural features, such as water bodies and areas suited for Intense development. Easily accessible to neighborhood served.

TOTAL CLOSE-TO-HOME SPACE- 6.25- 10.5 A /1,000

TABLE 2 (Continued)
LEVELS OF SERVICE

COMPONENT	USE	SERVICE AREA	DESIRABLE SIZE	ACRES/1,000 POPULATION	DE'SIRABLE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
B. REGIONAL SPACE:					
Regional/Metropolitan Park	Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation. such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses; may include play areas.	Several communities. 1-hour driving	200+ acres	5.0 to 10.0A	Contiguous to or encompassing natural resources.
Regional Park Reserve	Area of natural quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation. such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include active play areas. Generally 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management, with less than 20% used for recreation development.	Several communities. 1-hour driving resource to	1,000+ acres sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.	Variable	Diverse or unique natural resources, such as lakes, streams, marshes, (Iota) fauna, topography.

TOTAL REGIONAL SPACE- 15-20 A/1,000

TABLE 2 (Continued)
LEVELS OF SERVICE

COMPONENT	USE	SERVICE AREA	DESIRABLE SIZE	ACRES/ 1,000 POPULATION	DESIRABLE SITE CHARACTERISTICS
C. SPACE THAT MAY BE LOCAL OR REGIONAL AND IS UNIQUE TO EACH COMMUNITY:					
Linear Park	Area developed for one or more varying Modes of recreational travel, such as hiking Biking, snowmobling, horseback riding, cross-County skiing, canoeing, canoeing, And Pleasure driving. May include active play rec- Area*. (Note: any included for any of the Above components may occur in the "linear Park".)	No applicable standard.	Sufficient width to protect the resource and provide maximum Use.	Variable	Built or natural corridors. such as utility rights-of way. bluff lines. vegetation patterns. and roads, that link other components of the reation system or community facilities. such as school. libraries. commercial areas. and other park areas.
Special Use	Areas for specialized or single purpose Recreatopma; actovoties, such as golf-Courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, Conservatories, arboreta, conservatories, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theatres, gun ranges. or downhill ski areas. or areas that preserve. Maintain, and interpret buildings, sites, and objects ofarchaeological significance. Also plazas or squares in or near commercial centers. boulevards. parkways.	No applicable standard.	Variable depending on desired size.	Variable	Within communities.
Conservancy	Protection and management of the natural/cultural - Environment with recreation use an a secondary objective.	No applicable standard.	Sufficient to protect the resource.	Variable	Variable. depending on the resource being protected.

Source: RECREATION, PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES
A publication of the National Recreation and Park Association
(obtained from West Florida Regional Planning Council)

TABLE 3
CURRENT NEEDS: RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

City of Freeport Population 1235 Area: 7.72 Square Miles

SERVICE AREA

Existing Facilities Area	Desirable Size	Needed Service
4 Neighborhood Parks	1/4 to 1/2 mile per acre to serve population up to 5,000, therefore 12 acres	None

DESIRABLE SIZE

Existing Facilities	Existing Size	Desirable Size	Needed Acreage
4 Neighborhood Parks	19 acres	15 + acres	None

ACRES/1000 POPULATION

Existing Facilities	Existing Acreage	Desirable Acreage	Needed Acreage
4 Neighborhood Parks	19 acres	1 to 2 acres/1000 per National Rec. and Park Assn. guidelines, therefore total of 1.7 acres 6.25 acres/1000 per GOP's, therefore total of 7.8 acres	None

D. PROJECTED FUTURE NEEDS

The projected future needs are analyzed by comparing the growth of Freeport with the amount of recreation required for that increased population. The population projections for Freeport are on Table 4. The projected future recreation needs of Freeport are on Table 5.

1. Recreational Demands

Freeport already has enough recreational land for its population through the year 2020, if the population follows the projected level of growth. The City is projected to pass the 2,000 population mark by the year 2016. Provisions will have to be made to increase the recreation and open space available to the public. In this light, the City of Freeport has planned a new park facility for the city of Freeport on a 7 acre City-owned Site located at the southernmost tip of land dividing Four mile Creek and Lafayette Creek. It is planned to be a special purpose facility, combining resource-based and passive -recreation activities, such as picnicking, boating, play areas, nature walks, and swimming. This site could be utilized as open space for the City of Freeport, as it is located in an area which should be preserved for the sake of the natural habitat. A park of 7 acres, acting as a neighborhood park in combination as a conservancy will adequately meet the needs for future recreation of Freeport, as well as the need for open space.

2. Availability to the Public

The recreational facilities of Freeport are anticipated to continue to be available to the public.

TABLE 4
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

YEAR	TOTAL PROJECTED POPULATION	HOUSEHOLD SIZE	HOUSEHOLDS
1960	373	3.5	125
1970	518	3.1	167
1980	683	2.6	262
1989	859 (from housing survey)	2.49	345
1990	889	2.48	358
1995	1054	2.42	436
2000	1235	2.43	508
2005	1490	2.42	615
2010	1744	2.42	721
2020	2253	2.41	934

Population projections are based upon linear mathematical extrapolation technique. These projections are based on the 2000 Census, and the "Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) Florida Population Studies, Population Projection by Age, Sex and Race for Florida and its Counties, 2002-2025. Census data figures were compared to current population projections based upon the number of currently occupied households of 511 multiplied by the projected number of persons based upon reduction of 2000 census calculation of 2.43 persons per household by the average rate of decline in household size in Walton County as a whole of .45% per year. The result of 1235 persons living in Freeport in 2000 compared with the 518 living in Freeport in 1970 yields a linear growth rate over the 30 year period of 4.61%% per year.

TABLE 5
PROJECTED FUTURE NEEDS: RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE - 2020

City of Freeport Projected Population 2253 Area: 16.675 Square Miles

SERVICE AREA

Existing Facilities Service Area	Desirable Size	Needed
4 Neighborhood Parks	1/4 to 1/2 mile per acre to serve population up to 5,000, therefore 12 acres	None

DESIRABLE SIZE

Existing Facilities Acreage	Existing Size	Desirable Size	Needed
4 Neighborhood Parks	19 acres	15 + acres	None

ACRES/1000 POPULATION

Existing Facilities Acreage	Existing Acreage	Desirable Acreage Needed New
4 Neighborhood Parks	19 acres	1 to 2 acres/1000 None per National Recreation and park association guidelines 6.25 acres/1000 None per GOP's, therefore total of 7.8 acres needed