



RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

CITY OF PALATKA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Summary

The recreation and open space element presents an inventory of the existing public and private recreation facilities and sites available to residents of the City of Palatka. Included is an analysis of the needs for recreation facilities and sites based on population projections and the adequacy of existing recreation facilities and sites available to the public. Goals, objectives, and policies present the long-term end towards which recreation and open space programs and activities in the City of Palatka should ultimately be directed.

Included in the inventory are several Federal and State managed regional parks, a golf course, four (4) community parks, seven (7) neighborhood parks, three (3) equipped play and tot lots, and four (4) urban open space parks.

In addition to the municipal golf course, the City of Palatka owns, operates and maintains sixteen (16) parks and recreation locations designed and intended to serve all City residents. (Source: City of Palatka Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study, May 2007)

## Introduction

The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Element is to plan for a comprehensive system of public and private recreation and open space sites that are available for public use. The data requirements section inventories existing public and private recreation sites and open spaces including natural reservations, parks, playgrounds, parkways, and water resources, and identifies facilities at each site.

### Inventory of Existing Recreation and Open Space Facilities

Recreation sites are either resource-based or user-oriented. Resource-based differs from user-oriented in that it cannot be provided just anywhere. It is dependent upon some element or combination of elements in the natural or cultural environments that cannot be easily duplicated by man. It may be either active or passive in nature. Examples include hunting, fishing, camping, backpacking, boating, water skiing, surfing, and nature study. Visiting historical and archaeological sites are also included because such sites, while not strictly natural resources, share the limitations of being fixed in both quantity and location. User-oriented types of recreation are those that can be provided almost anywhere for the convenience of the user. Examples include golf, tennis, baseball, basketball, shuffleboard, soccer, swimming, archery, skeet and trap shooting, and playground activities. Some activities can be considered either user-oriented or resource-based, depending upon where the opportunity is made available. For example, swimming in the ocean is a resource-based activity, but swimming in a pool is user-oriented. Other such activities include picnicking, bicycling, and horseback riding. An important distinction to make between user-oriented and resource-based is that the former can always be provided, assuming the availability of space and funds for development, while the latter can be provided only to the extent that the supporting natural or cultural resources are available. Thus, while intensifying social pressures dictate a high priority for creating user-oriented recreation opportunities close to urban areas, the rapid depletion of suitable resources gives a sense of urgency to a resource-based recreation program. Because they satisfy essentially different human needs, it is difficult to compare these two types of recreation in terms of importance or urgency, except to say that both are important and both must be met expeditiously to keep up with the demands of a growing population (Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 2000).

There are approximately two hundred sixty-two (262) acres of user-oriented recreational resources available in the City of Palatka and nearby in Putnam County that serve City residents. Included in the inventory are several Federal and State managed regional parks, a golf course, four (4) community parks, seven (7) neighborhood parks, three (3) equipped play and tot lots, and four (4) urban open space parks. See Figure F-1 for the locations of the sites that are within the City's corporate limits and Table F-1 for an inventory of existing recreational resources available to City residents.

#### A. Existing Recreation Facilities

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Recreation, has established a set of definitions of the parks relevant to the City of Palatka, which are as follows:

Equipped Play and Tot Lot – Usually located within a residential setting with: a service area of one-quarter (1/4) mile; serving a maximum population of two thousand five hundred (2,500) people; an area of one-half (1/2) acre per one thousand (1,000) people; a minimum size of one (1) acre or one-quarter (1/4) acre if adjoining a school; and, providing facilities such as play structures, benches, picnic areas, opens spaces and landscaping.

Neighborhood Park – Usually located within a neighborhood area with: a service area of one-quarter (1/4) to one-half (1/2) mile; serving a maximum population of five thousand (5,000) people; an area of two (2) acres per one thousand (1,000) people; a minimum size of five (5) acres

or two (2) acres if adjoining a school; and, providing facilities such as play structures, recreation buildings, court games, hard courts, tennis courts, internal trails, shuffleboard, picnic area, open area and landscaping.

Community Park – Usually serves two or more neighborhoods with: a service area of one-half (1/2) to three (3) miles; serving a maximum population of five thousand (5,000) people; an area of two (2) acres per one thousand (1,000) people; a minimum size of twenty (20) acres or five (5) acres if adjoining a school; and, providing facilities such as those found in a neighborhood park, informal ball fields, swimming pools, archery ranges, disc golf areas, ornamental gardens, open spaces and cultural activity centers.

Urban Open Space – Located in urban areas with: a service area of one-quarter (1/4) to one-half (1/2) mile; an area of one (1) acre per one thousand (1,000) people; a minimum size of one-tenth (1/10) acre; and providing a resource-based recreation area.

Regional Park – Usually located on the periphery of an urban area with: a service area of thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes driving; serving a population of more than one hundred thousand (100,000) people; an area of twenty (20) acres per one thousand (1,000) people; a minimum size of two hundred fifty (250) acres; and, providing facilities such as camping, nature and bridle paths, picnicking, and other facilities.

Sports Complex – a minimum of twenty five (25) acres and usually strategically located to provide community-wide facilities such as ball fields, soccer fields, football fields, tennis courts, play structures, hard courts, internal trails, and picnic areas.

The following is an inventory of recreational facilities that are available to the residents of the City of Palatka. Some of these facilities, such as boat ramps, the Ravine Gardens State Park, Dunns Creek State Park, Federal parks, conservation areas, and the County Sports Complex are owned and operated by other than the City of Palatka and serve a greater population than the City. However, all of these resources are part of the "package" of recreational amenities available to City residents and therefore are included in this element as City recreational resources. Finally, the City has a working relationship with the county in which recreational facilities are shared between jurisdictions. In 2006, the City entered into an Interlocal agreement with Putnam County whereby the county would operate recreational programs for City-owned recreational facilities and parks. The City still maintains ownership and provides maintenance for these facilities and parks.

The location of the facilities listed below within the City of Palatka incorporated limits is shown in Figure F-1.

1. Regional Parks
  - a. Federal Facilities

Ocala National Forest lies in Putnam, Marion, and Lake Counties and is one of three national forests located in Florida. This area, encompassing 23,627 land acres in Putnam County, represents a major resource not only to City of Palatka residents but also to Putnam County and the other counties in which it is located, and the region, State and nation. A variety of recreational opportunities are offered including: fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, canoeing, and hiking all under the management of the U.S. Forest Service.

Welaka National Fish Hatchery was built in 1926 and originally operated by the State of Florida and is located south of Welaka in Putnam County. The hatchery was transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1938. The Hatchery land owned by the Fish and Wildlife Service consists of approximately 385 acres. Ponds are operated at two locations. Those ponds near the aquarium are called the Welaka Unit, and a second group of ponds about three miles south of headquarters is called the Beecher Unit. The Beecher Unit is named for the spring that serves as the water supply. Beecher Spring has a flow of 4,000 gallons per minute at a constant temperature of 72 degrees. Water for the Welaka Unit comes from a well 423 feet deep and from the St. Johns River. Fish raised at the hatchery as well as other native species of fish, amphibians and reptiles are on display at the aquarium, and information and brochures pertaining to the hatchery and its operation are also available at this location. An observation tower, interpretive information and a 0.75-mile nature trail are located at the Beecher Unit. Many species of water birds can be observed in this area.

b. State Facilities

The Ravine Gardens State Park, on Twigg Street in the City of Palatka, consists of one hundred forty-six (146) acres. It is one of the oldest parks in Florida and was created in the 1930's under the Roosevelt Administration as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps program. It contains the only known slope forest in Putnam County. Recreational opportunities include a multi-use paved trail, an exercise trail, hiking trails, jogging, picnicking and there is a newly renovated and expanded recreation center available for community events. Much of the original landscaping still exists as formal gardens and an extensive trail system. A 1.8-mile paved road winds around the ravine, offering motorists and bicyclists a view of the gardens. The Ravine Loop is closed to vehicle traffic one hour before sunset, but remains open for pedestrians, bicycles, and wheelchairs. The garden's peak flowering period is azalea season, late January to April. Facilities include numerous picnic sites, equipped with tables and grills, are available to visitors; the Roy E. Campbell Civic Center complex which features a large covered pavilion, auditorium, and meeting rooms that are available for rent; the large pavilion at the civic center is an eighteen hundred (1800) square feet pavilion with picnic tables, electricity, and BBQ grills, and seats one hundred (100) guests; the small pavilion at the civic center is near the amphitheater, and includes picnic tables, two (2) small BBQ grills, nearby restrooms & a playground, and seats up to twenty (20) guests. The Roy E. Campbell Civic Center is available for weddings, family reunions, conferences, training and other activities.

Dunns Creek State Park is located south of a sharp bend in the St. Johns River in Putnam County, 13 miles south of the City of Palatka on U.S. 17 between Pomona Park and Satsuma. Dunns Creek is one of the newest additions to the State park system. This Park was recently purchased from The Nature Conservancy and is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. The park is located on the southwest side of Dunn's Creek and contains 6,222 acres of land with significant frontage along Dunn's Creek. The park's natural communities include sand hills, covered with longleaf pines and wiregrass, and sand pine scrub. These communities protect several endangered and threatened species, such as the gopher tortoise, as well as a variety of other native animals. A picnic and hiking area is located on U.S. 17, north of Pomona Park. The mile-and-a-half (1 1/2) hiking and bicycling trail takes visitors to the pristine waters of Blue Pond.

Etoniah Creek State Forest is a newly created State Forest which was formally proposed as a "mixed use" new town Development of Regional Impact but was purchased by the

State several years later. It consists of 8,622 acres and includes a portion of Etoniah Creek within its boundaries. The Forest is located west of the City of Palatka near the unincorporated community of Florahome. Recreational opportunities include fishing, hunting, camping, canoeing and hiking under the management of the Florida Division of Forestry.

Welaka State Forest is located just south of Welaka in Putnam County and consists of 2,288 acres along the east bank of the St. Johns River. The forest contains two springs, one of which delivers 13,000 gallons per hour. Recreational opportunities include fishing, camping, boating and hiking under the management of the Florida Division of Forestry.

Katharine Ordway Preserve is adjacent to the Swisher Memorial Nature Preserve and is owned by the University of Florida (UF) Foundation and managed by the Florida State Museum and University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation. This 6,145-acre preserve is located south of the unincorporated communities of Melrose and Putnam Hall in Putnam County, and west of the City of Palatka. The University of Florida students studying forestry, ecology and biology use the Ordway Preserve. The Ordway Preserve is dominated by rolling sand hills and old fields that overlook large basin marshes and upland sand hill lakes. There is also a small area of planted pine and mesic flatwoods. The Preserve is home to many rare species associated with sand hills. The Preserve is not open to the general public.

Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area is owned by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The greenway runs across four counties and is part of the former Cross Florida Barge Canal project. The greenway is located adjacent to the Barge Canal and Lake Oklawaha south of the City of Palatka in Putnam County. Recreational opportunities include hiking, hunting, fishing and horseback riding.

Carl Duval Moore State Forest consists of three hundred (306) acres in two separate parcels of land. The forest is located west of the City of Palatka and southeast of Interlachen in Putnam County. The forest currently does not have any facilities but a \$100,000 grant has been awarded to the Division of Forestry for development of the forest including plans for hiking trails, picnic areas, parking, restrooms and a possible fishing pier.

c. State Water Bodies:

St. Johns River flows northward through Putnam County from the north end of Lake George. Fish camps, numerous boat ramps, marinas, fishing piers, campsites, picnic tables, and picnic shelters are situated along the banks of the River.

Crescent Lake lies in Putnam and Flagler Counties and provides facilities that include boat ramps, marinas, campsites, and picnic tables. The lake surface area is twenty-seven (27) square miles.

In addition to the public lands identified above, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has designated two areas of Putnam County for potential land acquisition under the Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) program that will also serve City of Palatka residents. The Etoniah Greenways project consists of approximately 67,200 acres located just west of the City of Palatka from the Clay County line south all

the way to the Ocala National Forest. The second project is referred to as the “Dunn’s Creek Addition” and consists of approximately 1,300 acres for addition to the southeast side of the existing Dunn’s Creek property owned by the St. Johns River Water Management District. The Governor and Cabinet must approve purchase of these lands. Designation as a CARL project does not affect the legal uses of the property, which are currently afforded the property owner. The CARL list designation signifies that the State is interested in purchasing the lands due to their environmental qualities but until the lands are purchased they will have no additional regulatory restrictions placed on them. Should any of these CARL projects be purchased by the State, they would then be subject to the applicable rules of the State depending on whether the land is designated as a State Park, State Forest, and/or public Wildlife Management Area. In addition to the CARL program, other Florida land acquisition programs include (the Department of Community Affairs’ “Florida Communities Trust” program which is geared towards purchasing parks and trails near urban areas, the Department of Environmental Protection’s “Recreational Trails Program” which includes purchasing abandoned rail lines for recreational trail purposes, and the Water Management District’s “Save Our Rivers” program which focuses on purchasing wetlands and upland buffers adjacent to surface waters (Putnam County Comprehensive Plan, adopted September 8, 2006)

d. Water Management Districts

The following are some of the resources-based recreational areas that are owned and managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District who purchased them under the Save Our Rivers program.

Caravelle Ranch is a conservation area consisting of 13,383 acres adjacent to the confluence of the Ocklawaha and St. Johns Rivers south of the City of Palatka. The area also includes portions of the Cross Florida Greenways along the Barge Canal. Recreational opportunities consist of hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, biking, and limited primitive camping.

Dunn’s Creek Conservation Area is a conservation area that contains 3,182 acres and is located along the north bank of Dunn’s Creek just south of San Mateo in Putnam County. Recreational opportunities consist of hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, biking, and limited primitive camping.

Murphy Creek Conservation Area consists of Murphy Island, an eight hundred fifty-four (854) acre island within the St. Johns River located just south of the City of Palatka as well as an additional eight hundred fifty-three (853) mainland acres located adjacent to the south side of the island. Recreational opportunities consist of canoeing, boating, fishing, hiking and primitive camping.

J.A. Ginn, Jr. Parcel is located just north of the City of Palatka within an area of hardwood swamp adjacent to the St. Johns River. The parcel contains approximately seventy-one (71) acres.

Horseshoe Point Conservation Area is a two thousand seven hundred fifty-seven (2,757) acre conservation area is located just southeast of the City of Palatka between Lundy Road and the St. Johns River with over six (6) miles of riverfront. Recreational opportunities are currently limited to hiking and wildlife observation.



Plum Creek Parcel is a four thousand two hundred and two (4,202) acre parcel of land purchased in 2001 (a management plan is currently being developed for this site). The parcel is located just west of the City of Palatka within an area known as the Rice Creek Swamp.

2. Community Parks and County Sports Complexes

- a. Putnam County (Central Recreation) Triangle Park is thirty (30) acres, located in the City of Palatka and bordered on the north by SR 19, and on the east by US 17 in the southwest corner of their intersection. Facilities include four (4) ballfields, two (2) soccer fields, ninety (90) parking spaces, three (3) tennis courts, one (1) equipped play area, one (1) picnic shelter, three (3) picnic tables, concession/restroom building and a utility building.
- b. Putnam County Francis Youth Complex is located on County Road 309C in Putnam County on a nearly thirty (30) acre site. Facilities provided include six (5) lighted baseball fields, one (1) basketball court, one (1) equipped play area, and three (3) picnic tables.

3. Special Use Facility

Municipal Golf Course, on Moseley Avenue, encompasses one hundred twenty-six (126) acres and is the only 18-hole golf course in Putnam County. The complex has a clubhouse, entertainment facilities, and locker rooms.

4. Neighborhood Parks

- a. Forrester Field Complex, at Twigg Street and Moseley Avenue, covers nearly three (3) acres, and is adjacent to the Ravine Gardens. It contains a lighted softball field with bleachers and a paved parking area. The Azalea Bowl is also located on the site and consists of a School Board-owned lighted baseball diamond with covered dugouts, restrooms and equipment room, used for organized baseball activities. The National Guard Armory is part of this complex.
- b. Hank Bryan Park is a multi-use recreational site on approximately three (3) acres at Crill and 13th Street, provides facilities and open space. The park offers a variety of facilities for all age groups, including: tot-lot (with swings, slides, seesaw, and merry-go-round); three (3) lighted tennis courts; two (2) basketball courts; and, two (2) shuffleboard courts behind the recreation building. There are also picnic shelters with tables located on the site. The recreation building, across the street from the basketball and tennis courts, with multi-purpose rooms for indoor games and storage space, currently is home to the Duplicate Bridge Club and the American Red Cross.
- c. James C. Godwin Riverfront Park on the St. Johns River at Laurel and River Streets is the focal point of Palatka's downtown area. The facility covers approximately ten (10) acres, running from the bridge south to the Boathouse Marina. Focus is on both active and passive use of the River. Facilities include: a heavily used boat ramp and a dock with twelve tie-ups; parking for cars and trailers; restrooms; walkways; Millennium Clock Tower, the Veteran's

Memorial Fountain, the Frederick L. Griffin-Rotary Club Amphitheater, the Basil C. Pearce, Jr.-USS TANG Submariner's Memorial, a marina, a concession stand, picnic areas, and a gazebo covered dock. The Boat House Marina has forty (40) boat slips available for boaters, with electric and water available (see Boathouse Marina below in Section II.A.9(a)). A pump out station is on site, free of charge. The riverfront is a popular staging area for many local events including bass tournaments, festivals and private celebrations. The amphitheater is home of the Saturday Riverside Concert Series. A Boardwalk was constructed alongside and beneath the Memorial Bridge so that pedestrians may pass from north to south and back again without having to contend with the traffic on Reid Street.

- d. Fred Green Park, located at Main and Fourth Streets, is a two (2) acre park. Amenities include a lighted baseball field; converts to football field or basketball court. Concession stand and restrooms currently undergoing renovation. Through a \$50,000 grant secured from the DEP by the City Parks Department, the Fred Green Park will be renovated. The park facility will include new playground equipment at two (2) play areas, exercise paths, one (1) volleyball court, picnic pavilion, benches, new lighting, fencing, parking and restroom and concession renovations. The project will be completed by Summer 2008.
- e. Booker Park is approximately two (2) acres in size located on North 10th Street, serving the northern section of the City. Recreation facilities include lighted softball field, which converts to a football field, with a clay infield, and covered dugouts and bleachers, a tot-lot in the southeast corner with picnic tables, tennis court, and lighted basketball courts. The City is currently planning for additional recreation facilities, including a new equipped play area and a nature trail, and an upgrade to existing facilities at Booker Park after securing a \$180,000 grant from the DEP.
- f. Rotary Park, located at Laurel and Ninth Streets, is a two (2) acre park that contains a lighted multipurpose field with clay infield and bleachers, a storage building, and a concession stand. The park is classified in the Putnam County Comprehensive Plan Recreation and Open Space Element (adopted September 8, 2005) as a Community Park because of its facilities and use despite its small size. Because of its small size, but community-wide usage, it has been classified as a neighborhood park for the purposes of this inventory.

5. Recreation Centers

Price Martin Community Center at North 11th Street provides meeting, banquet and wedding area for public use. The large open room with a portable stage can seat two hundred fifty (250) persons and full kitchen facilities are available.

6. Equipped Play and Tot Lots

- a. Revels Park consists of approximately one and a half (1.5) acres lying in a triangle between 16th and 17th Streets and Laurel. The only play equipment is a jungle gym in an otherwise open grassy area, which also serves as an informal

practice football field. The site is lined with palm trees along one side.

- b. River Street Park is an undeveloped park of approximately one (1) acre, located between South 12th Street and River Street, on the edge of a residential area. Playground equipment includes a swing set, slide, three seesaws, jungle gym, and a rocking horse. A concrete slab formerly served as a basketball court.
- c. Shaw Buck Park is a two (2) acre facility in the Lemon Heights area at Catherine and Oliver Streets. It has a variety of equipment, including a lighted baseball diamond with bleachers, concession stand with restrooms, basketball court, tennis court, storage building, and an equipped playground.
- d. Edgemoor/Husson Avenue Park is a two (2) acre site with an unlit community playground.
- e. 10<sup>th</sup>/Olive Street Park is a one-half (1/2) acre site with new playground equipment.
- f. College Arms Apartments Playground is an unlit park nearly two (2) acres in size with a playground.

#### 7. Urban Open Space

- a. Oak Hill Park, located between Westover and West Oak Hill Drive, at the southwest corner of a small residential area, this one-half (1/2) acre park is largely undeveloped, and primarily serves as a grassy open area.
- b. Ralph C. Willis Park is an undeveloped area of just less than one (1) acre between Fern Street and Husson Avenue and presently serves as a grassy area.
- c. Veterans Memorial Park is a two (2) acre open space park located within Putnam County in East Palatka on the east side of the US 17 Causeway immediately across the St. Johns River from the City of Palatka. Facilities include (six) picnic tables.
- d. Old Palatka Waterworks Park is a nearly two and a half (2.5) acre site that includes a renovated waterworks building with plans for a museum and ecological park.
- e. Azalea Circle Park is a vacant park with no lighting located on a site under one-half (1/2) acre in size.
- f. West Diana Drive Playground is a vacant park with no lighting on a site nearly one (1) acre in size.

#### 8. County Boat Ramps

- a. County Boat Ramps #12, also known as the East Palatka St. Johns River Boat Ramp, is a one-half (1/2) acre site with one (1) boat ramp located near U.S. 17 and Pico Road on the St. Johns River.

- b. County Boat Ramp #14, also known as the Elgin Grove Boat Ramp, is a one (1) acre site with one (1) boat ramp located near SR 207A on the St. Johns River.
- c. Browns Landing Boat Ramp is a one-half (1/2) acre site with one (1) boat ramp located at the end of Lundy Road on the St. Johns River.

9. Other Recreational-Related Areas

- a. Boathouse Marina, on the St. Johns River at River Street, is a private enterprise offering approximately forty (40) boat slips with a water depth of six (6) feet. Transient slips are available for rent.
- b. St. Johns River Community College provides considerable recreation facilities to the general public, although students have first priority. Groups must first obtain permission to use the facilities, which include: four (4) unlighted tennis courts, four (4) lighted tennis courts, four (4) racquetball courts, a baseball and a softball diamond, and several acres of open space.
- c. Bronson-Mulholland House, listed on the National Register, is operated by the Palatka Historical Society and is open to the general public.
- d. Putnam Historic Museum is housed in Palatka's oldest surviving building, which was built circa 1837. The structure was one of eleven buildings that made up Fort Shannon, a Seminole Indian War military outpost located along the banks of the St. Johns River. The building is thought to have served as the officers' quarters. The structure was originally located on First Street across from the present day Quality Inn/Riverfront Inn. In 1984, when demolition was threatened, it was donated to the City of Palatka and moved around the corner to Sunny Point where it adjoins the Bronson-Mulholland House. The Putnam County Historical Society, in cooperation with the City has restored the building to serve as a county history museum. The Museum houses artifacts and memorabilia related to the history of Palatka and Putnam County. The Museum also includes a reading and research area. The Museum is open to the public without charge.
- e. Larimer Building provides the home facility for the Arts Council of Greater Palatka. Originally designed as a library and donated to the City in 1930 by Mellon, the building was named and dedicated to Mellon's wife, Rachel Hughey Larimer, and marked one of the most modern and up to date libraries in the South at the time. It housed more than 50,000 volumes and served the community as a literary resource for 62 years. During that time it also served the community as a center where adult and children's art workshops were held. In 1992, with the Mellon Family's permission, the library became the Larimer Arts Center. The center is leased to the Arts Council of Greater Palatka, Inc., an umbrella organization designated by the county to serve the cultural needs of the citizens of Putnam County.

10. Private Recreational Facilities

- a. Family Life Center is a private recreational center located at 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Dunham Street. The facility is open to the public at a charge and includes a community center, indoor recreational area, swimming pool and a basketball court.

11. Public Recreation Programs

The Putnam County Recreation Department provides basketball, baseball, soccer, softball, adult softball, football and women's volley ball programs throughout the year. In 2006, the City entered into an Interlocal agreement with Putnam County whereby the county would operate recreational programs for City-owned recreational facilities and parks. The City still maintains ownership and provides maintenance for these facilities and parks.

The School Board provides and conducts a variety of recreation-related adult courses (karate, judo, art, and computer literacy), and holds networking-type sessions for ham radio operators, primitive weapons collectors and a quilting club. Within Putnam County as a whole, there are 17 public schools including 3 High Schools, 1 kindergarten through High School, 4 Middle Schools, and 9 Elementary schools. Of these, 13 have recreational facilities on site. The degree to which these recreational facilities are available to City residents varies from school to school. Some of these facilities do provide recreational opportunities to City residents so they are being identified for informational purposes. For example, Pop Warner football utilizes the Palatka High School (Veterans Memorial Stadium) for games and Jenkins Middle School and Palatka High School gymnasiums are used for youth sports programs such as basketball. However, no Interlocal Agreement exists between the City of Palatka and the School District regarding use of facilities. Therefore, the City will not count these facilities as part of the county's Levels of Service.

Water sports and activities are actively pursued in and around the Palatka area. The private retail sector offers a range of equipment, services, and facilities to residents and visitors pursuing water sports and related activities.

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**Table F-1  
Summary of Recreational Facilities**

Comp Plan ID	Park Name	Location	Entity	Acres	Baseball/Softball Field	Soccer Field	Football Field	Basketball Court	Tennis & Racquetball Courts	Equipped Play Areas	Picnic Tables	Swimming Pools
<b>COMMUNITY PARKS</b>												
II.A.2(a)	Triangle Park (Central Recreation)	Palatka	county	30	4	2	0	0	3	1	3	2
II.A.2(b)	Francis Youth Complex	C.R. 309C	county	30	6	0	0	2	0	1	3	0
II.A.3	Municipal Golf Course	Moseley Street	City	126	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
II.A.9(b)	St. Johns River CC	Palatka	College	20	2	0	0	0	12	0	0	0
<b>Community Parks Sub-total</b>				<b>206</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>												
II.A.4(a)	Forrester Field Complex	Twigg & Moseley Streets	City	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II.A.4(b)	Hank Bryan Park	Crill & 13th Streets	City	3	0	0	0	2	3	1	3	0
II.A.4(c)	Goodwin Riverfront Park	Laurel & River Streets	City	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
II.A.4(d)	Fred Green Park	Main & Fourth Streets	City	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	0
II.A.4(e)	Booker Park	Eagle Street	City	2	1	0	1	2	1	2	4	0
II.A.4(f)	Rotary Park	Laurel & Ninth	City	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

		Streets										
II. A.10(a)	Family Life Center	15th Street & Dunham	Private	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Neighborhood Parks Sub-total</b>				<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>EQUIPPED PLAY AND TOT LOT</b>												
II.A.6(a)	Revels Park	16th/17th Streets & Laurel Street	City	0.5	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
II.A.6(b)	River Street Park	South 12th Street & River Street	City	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
II.A.6(c)	Shaw Buck Park	Catherine & Oliver Streets	City	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
II.A.6(d)	Edgemoor/Husson Park	Edgemoor & Husson Avenue	City	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
II.A.6(e)	10th/Olive Street Park	10th and Olive Streets	City	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
II.A.6(f)	College Arms	College Arms Apartments	City	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Equipped Play and Tot Lot Sub-total</b>				<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>URBAN OPEN SPACE</b>												
II.A.7(a)	Oak Hill Park	Westover & West Oak Hill Drive	City	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II.A.7(b)	Willis Park	Fern Street & Husson Avenue	City	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



II.A.7(c)	Crill Avenue Ecological Park	Crill Avenue	City	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II.A.7(d)	Veterans Memorial Park	East Palatka	county	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
II.A.7(e)	Old Palatka Waterworks Park	Near Ravine State Gardens	City	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II.A.7(f)	Azalea Circle Park	Azalea Circle	City	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II.A.7(g)	West Diana Drive Playground	West Diana Drive	City	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Urban Open Space Sub-total</b>				<b>10.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

## B. Existing Open Space

Lakes and other water bodies cover one hundred sixty-seven (167) acres of the City's land, and land classified as wetlands covers three hundred eight-three (383) acres. The majority of these wetlands are located adjacent to the St. Johns River, also called "tidal swamp" in that the area is affected by the tides which reach as far north as Lake George. These wetland areas plus the eighty-two (82) acre Ravine Gardens State Park comprise a total of four hundred sixty-five (465) acres or over ten percent (10%) of the City's total land area.

The Ravine Gardens State Park has eighty-two (82) acres of botanical gardens and natural environment with a civic center, garden club, garden walkways, and a nearly two (2) mile exercise/jogging path known as "Parcours."

As the eastern boundary of the City stretches along the west bank of the St. Johns River, the river provides an outstanding aesthetic amenity to the City itself. The City also has a riverfront park (River Street Park), which offers public access to the river.

## Recreation and Open Space Analysis

### A. Establishing Standards

To appraise the need for existing and future recreation facilities, and existing service deficits, estimates must be made balancing the demand for facilities against the available time to construct or provide infrastructure during the planning period. Here the City must consider both quality and quantity of recreation facilities to be provided.

In order to determine the quantity, quality, and types, of recreational facilities needed to serve the populace, both now and in the future, two factors must be considered. They are: the number and age group characteristics of the population to be served, and the Level of Service to be provided. The two following sections are designed to answer these questions with estimates of population size and character, and the associated Level of Service Standards to be established by the City to meet residential demand.

#### 1. Population Considerations

As noted above, the population or quantity portion of recreational demand is measured by the following parameters: age group characteristics; and, the size of each group in the subject populace. Age group characteristics help identify the types of recreation facilities that will meet the needs of each age group in the projected population.

**Table F-2  
Population by Age Group Classification, 1980-2020**

Age Group Classification	Year		Age Group* Classification	Year			
	1980	1990		2000	2005**	2010	2020
Total Population	10,175	11,346		10,033	11,154	12,400	14,517
Child (Age 0-9)	1,611	1,770	Child (0-5)	652	714	794	929
% of Population Youth (Age 10-18)	15.8	15.6	% of Population	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.4
	1,893	2,088	Youth (6-17)	2,438	2,699	2,976	3,253
% of Population Adult (Age 19-64)	18.6	18.4	% of Population	24.3	24.2	24	24
	5,133	5,514	Adult (18-64)	5,107	5,577	6,076	6,575
% of Population Senior (Age 65+)	50.5	48.6	% of Population	50.9	50	49	49
	1,538	1,974	Senior (Age 65+)	1,836	2,197	2,616	3,035
% of Population	15.1	17.4	% of Population	18.3	19.7	21.1	22

\* based on 2000 US Census data and Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2005 Population Estimates

\*\* Percentage of population is extrapolated from actual 2000 US Census percentage and projected 2020 percentages based on historical trends between 1980 and 2000.

In reviewing the population data and projections, it is significant to note both total numbers and the group components. Both the child and youth classes are declining as a percent of total population, even though they are still increasing in actual numbers and must be considered for additional facilities. In the same vein, the Adult component is increasing in actual numbers while decreasing slightly as a proportion of the total population. The senior portion of the population is increasing at an even swifter pace as evidenced by an actual percentage as well as numerical increase. Recreation facility components must take into account the changing age composition of the groups that will be using City recreational facilities during the planning period as well as their numbers.

## 2. Use of Facilities

The City of Palatka has a diverse population ranging from young families to older retired individuals. As persons of different age groups prefer different types of recreation, the City has endeavored to provide a range of recreational activities that will satisfy the needs of all age groups. Table F-3 provides a summary of recreational facilities in Palatka with an accompanying notation indicating the age groups that the type of facility serves.

**Table F-3  
Population Age Groups  
Related To Use Of Types Of Recreational Facilities**

Type of Facility	Populations Served* By Age Group
Baseball / Softball Fields	B, C
Equipped Play Areas	A, B
Basketball Goals	B, C
Boat Ramps	B, C, D
Tennis Courts	B, C, D
Swimming Pools	A, B, C, D
Hiking Trail	B, C, D
Picnic Area (Tables)	A, B, C, D

\* Age Groups taken from Table F-2: A=Child (Age 0-5); B=Youth (Age 6-17); C=Adult (Age 18-64); and D=Senior (Age 65+)

B. Level of Service Standards

1. User-Oriented Recreational Facilities

In order to evaluate the adequacy of existing recreational facilities and determine future recreational needs, recreational Level of Service Standards were created to be in accord with the guidelines of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection publication, Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 2000.

Table F-4 provides levels of service standards identified for the ten (10) facility types selected by the City of Palatka as representative of the City's most used recreational facilities. The City is not limited to providing only these facilities, as other recreational facilities are available within the City service area. It should be noted that the City's golf course and privately held swimming pools are used by Putnam County residents, and visitors to Palatka, as are county boat ramps and other county recreational facilities are shared by the county with City residents.

**Table F-4  
Level of Service Standard For Palatka Recreation Facilities**

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Facility Per Population</b>	
Regional Park	1 acre per 50	
Community Park	1 acre per 500	
Neighborhood Park	1 acre per 500	
Equipped Play and Tot Lot	1 acre per 2,000	
Type of Facility	Unit of Measure	Population Served*
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 Field	5,000
Football/Soccer Fields	1 Field	6,000
Equipped Play Area	1 Play Area	10,000
Basketball Courts	1 Court	5,000
Boat Ramp (Lanes)	1 Lane	5,000
Tennis Courts	1 Court	2,000

**(Table F-4 Cont.)**

Swimming Pools	1 Pool	25,000
Hiking (miles)	1 Mile	6,750
Picnic Areas (Tables)	1 Table	6,000

Source: Outdoor Recreation in Florida, Department of Environmental Protection, Table 6.4, 2000.

\* Based on State Recommended Guidelines for Parks and Recreational Facilities for Facility per Median Population Served.

2. Open-Space Recreational Facilities

As discussed in Section II(B), the City of Palatka contains approximately four hundred sixty-five (465) acres of land which may be categorized as open-space. Based on the population projection of 12,400 in year 2010, the City will have a total of almost twenty seven (27) acres of open space per person through the planning period ending in 2010. However, as a minimum standard, the City of Palatka shall adopt the recommended State standard and establish a Level of Service Standard of twenty-five (25) acres of open space per 1,000 residents.

C. Determination of Need

Table F-5 has been constructed to correlate the relationship of current and projected Palatka populations with available recreational facilities in order to identify current and future need. To ensure that an adequate number of facilities are provided for the various age groups population who would use each type of facility, the population demand for each facility is based upon the total population groups that would use the facility. This population group demand, by the ten (10) major recreational facility types chosen as representative by the City, shown in Table F-5 is based upon Table F-4, Level of Service.

As shown in Table F-5, residents of the City of Palatka enjoy a variety of recreational resources. For the most part, these resources are shared by the City with the residents of the immediate surrounding unincorporated Putnam County. In turn, the county-funded regional recreation facility at State Road 17 and State Road 19, and county boat ramps, provide particular resource benefits to the residents of the City of Palatka. The analysis presented in Table F-5 shows that available recreational facilities are sufficient to support the needs of the residents of the City of Palatka and residents of the adjacent unincorporated area through the year 2020.

D. Perceived Future Needs

Though the following needs are not required to meet the Level of Service Standard that will be adopted in the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Palatka has expressed a desire and a perceived need to rebuild or create the following facilities as grant opportunities or other funding may allow.

1. Riverfront Park Facilities

There is an existing partially developed site for a riverfront park on the St. Johns River. The City of Palatka wishes to expand and improve the use, capacity and utility of this downtown recreational facility by adding restrooms, walkways, a sprinkler system and other maintenance facilities. Funding for this project is dependent upon receiving grants in aid from various sources and the City is also actively pursuing a public-private partnership for this project.

**Table F-5  
Recreational Facility Needs, 2000-2020**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>
Population	10,033	11,154	12,400	14,517
Existing Park Acreage	248.5	248.5	248.5	248.5
Demand = 1 acre per 500	20.1	22.3	24.8	29
Surplus (Deficiency)	228.4	226.2	223.7	248
<b>Park Type</b>				
Regional Park (Acres)	72,189	72,189	72,189	72,189
Demand = 1 acre per 50	200.6	223.1	248	290
Surplus/(Deficiency)	71988.4	71965.9	71941	71,983
Community Park (Acres)	206	206	206	206
Demand = 1 acre per 500	20.1	22.3	24.8	29
Surplus (Deficiency)	185.9	183.7	181.2	177
Neighborhood Park (acres)	25	25	25	25
Demand = 1 acre per 1,000	10	11.2	12.3	14.5
Surplus (Deficiency)	15	13.8	12.7	10.5
Equipped Play and Tot Lot	8	8	8	8
Demand = 1 acre per 2,000	5	5.6	6.2	7.2
Surplus/(Deficiency)	3	2.4	1.8	0.8
Urban Open Space	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
Demand = 1 acre per 1,000	10	11.2	12.4	14.5
Surplus (Deficiency)	0.5	-0.7	-1.9	-4
<b>Facility Type</b>				
Baseball/Softball Fields	17	17	17	17
Demand = 1 per 5,000	2	2	2	3
Surplus (Deficiency)	15	15	15	14
Football/Soccer Fields	5	5	5	5
Demand = 1 per 6,000	1	2	2	2
Surplus (Deficiency)	4	3	3	3
Equipped Play Areas	13	13	13	13
Demand = 1 per 10,000	1	1	1	1
Surplus (Deficiency)	12	12	12	12
Basketball Courts	9	9	9	9
Demand = 1 per 5,000	2	2	2	3
Surplus (Deficiency)	7	7	7	6
Boat Ramps (Lanes)	4	4	4	4
Demand = 1 per 5,000	2	2	2	3
Surplus (Deficiency)	2	2	2	1
Tennis Courts	14	14	14	14
Demand = 1 per 2,000	5	6	6	7
Surplus (Deficiency)	9	8	8	7

Volleyball Courts	0	0	4	
Demand = 1 per 12,000	4	4	4	
Surplus/(Deficiency)	-4	-4	0	
Swimming Pools	4	4	4	4
Demand = 1 per 25,000	1	1	1	1
Surplus (Deficiency)	3	3	3	3
Hiking (Miles)*	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Demand = 1 per 6,750	1	2	2	2
Surplus (Deficiency)	2.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Picnic Areas (Tables)	20	20	20	20
Demand = 1 per 6,000	1	2	2	2
Surplus (Deficiency)	19	18	18	18

### Bibliography

Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, Outdoor Recreation in Florida, 2000: Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, February, 2002.

Governmental Services Group, Inc, City of Palatka Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study, May 2007.

Putnam County Comprehensive Plan Recreation and Open Space Element, adopted September 8, 2006.

Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2005 Estimated Population for Palatka, Florida, University of Florida.

US Census data for Putnam County, 2000.



RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT  
Goals, Objectives and Policies

CITY OF PALATKA  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Prepared by the Northeast Florida Regional Council  
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**RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT  
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES**

**Goal F.1**

The City of Palatka shall ensure the provision of sufficient parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of its residents and visitors.

**Objective F.1.1.**

Upon plan adoption, the City shall implement the following policies to ensure public access to all identified recreational facilities:

**Policy F.1.1.1**

The City shall continue a program to acquire and develop rights-of-way for access to public parks and facilities where deficiencies exist. Within twelve (12) months, the City shall adopt a Park Access Plan that shall inventory access to all public parks to determine if additional access routes are required in the future and include any existing right-of-way that should be designated as reserved for future park development.

**Policy F.1.1.2**

The City shall adopt the following Level of Service Standards:

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Facility per Population</b>
Regional Park	1 acre per 50
Community Park	1 acre per 500
Neighborhood Park	1 acre per 500
Equipped Play and Tot Lot	1 acre per 2,000

<b>Type of Facility</b>	<b>Unit of Measure</b>	<b>Population Served</b>
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 Field	5,000
Football/Soccer Fields	1 Field	6,000
Equipped Play Area	1 Play Area	10,000
Basketball Courts	1 Court	5,000
Boat Ramp (Lanes)	1 Lane	5,000
Tennis Courts	1 Court	2,000
Swimming Pools	1 Pool	25,000
Hiking (miles)	1 Mile	6,750
Picnic Areas (Tables)	1 Table	6,000

**Policy F.1.1.3**

The City shall continue to ensure that City recreational facilities within the City limits shall be accessible to the handicapped, the elderly and the transportation disadvantaged.

**Objective F.1.2** The City shall coordinate public and private resources to ensure that Level of Service Standards (LOSS) do not fall below acceptable levels through implementation of the following policies:

**Policy F.1.2.1**

The City shall include private recreational facilities open to the public (whether or not a fee is charged) in the Level of Service (LOS) calculations of this plan.

**Policy F.1.2.2**

The City shall coordinate its plans for recreational facilities with Putnam County and local private/civic groups to ensure that the greatest benefit is derived from City recreational funding.

**Objective F.1.3**

The City, through its Concurrency Management System, shall ensure that the adopted Recreation and Open Space Level of Service Standards (LOSS) are maintained and that defined recreational needs, for planning purposes, are entered into the City's Capital Improvement Plan 5 years in advance of actual need.

**Policy F.1.3.1**

The City shall ensure that there are sufficient recreational facilities to meet adopted Level of Service Standards (LOSS) in accordance with its Concurrency Management System and the requirements of 163.3180, F.S., and Rule 9J-5.0055, F.A.C.

**Policy F.1.3.2**

Upon Plan adoption, the City adopts recreational Levels of Service Standards (LOSS) as identified in Table F-4 of the Recreation and Open Space Element and an open space Level of Service Standard (LOSS) of twenty-five (25) acres per persons.

**Policy F.1.3.3**

Upon plan adoption, the City shall improve any existing deficiencies in parks or recreation facilities through budgeting for such improvements in its 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

**Policy F.1.3.4**

Where of mutual benefit, the City shall enter into interlocal agreements with Putnam County to meet the recreational needs of City residents.

**Policy F.1.3.5**

Open space/recreational lands shall be designated on the Future Land Use Map Series (Figure A-1). These lands shall be protected from adjacent incompatible land uses and development through the adoption and implementation of land development regulations that control the spatial distribution of land use on adjacent lands in accordance with that designated on the Future Land Use Map (Figure A-1) and control the density/intensity of land use in accordance with Policy A.1.9.3.

**Objective F.1.4**

The City shall annually review its activities pertaining to the provision of recreation and open space for its residents, and identify means of improving the delivery of service by 5 percent by the year 2010 through implementing the following policies:

**Policy F.1.4.1**

The City shall continue to require the designation of twenty-five (25) acres per one thousand (1,000) persons of open space in its subdivision and zoning regulations as a prerequisite of development approval. This requirement may be satisfied on-site or

may take the form of a cash payment or donated parcel of land (acceptable to the City) off the development site but within the City limits.

**Policy F.1.4.2** Within six (6) months, the City shall adopt a Parks and Recreation Facilities impact fee as a means of raising revenue to purchase land and construct recreational facilities/reserve open space to meet adopted levels of service.

**Policy F.1.4.3**

The City shall assist the Chamber of Commerce's program to promote tourism and the provision of open space activities for City residents and visitors. The City shall request to receive an Annual Report from the Chamber of Commerce Tourist Development Council on its activities and coordination with the City of Palatka in order to evaluate the success of this policy.