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RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

PURPOSE:

Recreation and open space both play an important role in our lives. Though many of us may consider picnicking or playing a luxury, these activities make a significant contribution to maintaining emotional and physical health which contributes to overall productivity and happiness.

Zephyrhills was founded as a retirement community, and has a long tradition of providing leisurely activities for residents and visitors going back to the days of the "tin can tourists" of the 1920s. The local economy remains largely dependent on meeting the housing and service needs of retirees and seasonal visitors. Many of these persons reside in mobile home and RV parks which provide recreational and social activities for their residents. City government also has recognized the importance of leisure activities and provides facilities disproportionate to the City population. The "community", however, should continue to identify the need for and provide a wide variety of passive and active recreation opportunities for all age groups of residents and visitors. "Community" is broadly interpreted to include the State, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Pasco County and privately owned facilities as well as those provided by the City of Zephyrhills.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan describes current opportunities for recreation and the enjoyment of open spaces, addresses perceived recreation needs of the Zephyrhills community within the next twenty year period, and sets out goals, objectives and policies for meeting perceived needs.

EXISTING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Most mobile home and RV parks in the area provide some recreational facilities for their residents. Nonprofit organizations, such as the Zephyrhills Multi-purpose Senior Center and Zephyrhills Tourist Club, offer other recreational pastimes for area residents. There are also private membership clubs such as the Moose Lodge, Eagles and Elks with recreational opportunities as well as service clubs and churches, all of which provide a wide range of social and recreational contact. Private commercial recreation is another major component of the total spectrum of recreational opportunities. All of the above contribute to the community's overall appeal. While these social and recreational facilities are assets to the community, the City cannot guarantee their availability.

Since adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 1987, the City has met the two identified recreation facility deficiencies: swimming pool and multi-purpose center. The East Pasco County YMCA is complete as of 1997 and offers a gymnasium/basketball courts, swimming pool, two racquetball courts, weight training facility and an aerobic/dance facility.

Pasco County, The Pasco County School Board and The City of Zephyrhills together co-sponsor a summer recreation program. Other organized programs include Little League baseball, T-ball, girls', women's and men's softball, football, soccer, and tennis. Recreation facility locations are shown on Map REC-1.

In addition to formally designated recreation sites, Zephyrhills lies within an area of extensive open spaces which are presently in agricultural use (citrus groves, dairy, pastureland), mixed upland forest or environmentally sensitive wetlands.

Significant open spaces defined as areas which, due to size, function, or character, provide for passive recreation, active recreation, conservation uses, or historical site preservation; or create a sense a spatial separation for incompatible land uses. Additionally, significant open spaces meet one or more of the following criteria:

- publicly controlled and committed to long term open use
- privately owned and developed as an open, non-agricultural use
- surface water
- apparent wetland

TABLE REC-1 SIGNIFICANT OPEN SPACES AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC			
Site Identification	Location	Type	Present Use
Hillsborough River	East & South of City	Wetlands	Pasture
Pretty Pond	Pretty Pond Road	Water/Wetlands	Disputed
Little Lake Austin	East of Simons Road	Water/Wetlands	Private Recreation
FFA pasture	West of West Elementary School	Pasture	Agricultural Education

Source: City Manager

The following Table REC-2 Inventories the public recreation facilities available within a ten minute drive from Zephyrhills.

Table REC-3 lists privately owned recreational assets of the community.

**TABLE REC-2
PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES
ZEPHYRHILLS COMMUNITY**

Name of Facility	Owner	Site Location/Map #	Area	Type of Use	Facility Provided
Hillsborough River State Park	DEP	9 miles south of Zephyrhills on US 301	2,884 a	Resource Based	Camping, day use, swimming, fishing, boating, nature study, bicycling, hiking
Hillsborough-Withlacoochee Wildlife Management Area	SWFWMD	5 miles east of Zephyrhills on CR 54	6,110 a	Resource Based	Fishing, hunting, hiking, day use, camping, nature study
Hercules Aquatic Center	Pasco County	SE Corner US 301/CR 54 #1	18.4 a	Activity Based	Swimming pool, exercise trail, picnic area
Sam Pasco Park	Pasco County	E. Bypass South of Airport #28	56.9 a	Activity Based	Baseball (2), play equipment; pavilion; picnic tables; hiking trail; lighted soccer (4); lighted baseball (4).
West Elementary School	PC School Board	1 st Street & 14 th Avenue #3	2.0 a	Activity Based	Playground, pavilion, basketball (2)
Woodland Elementary School	PC School Board	Henry Drive #4	1.0 a	Activity Based	Playground, pavilion
Stewart Middle School	PC School Board	8 th Street and 10 th Avenue and 12 th Street and 10 th Avenue, #5	4.0 a	Activity Based	Softball (3); playground; basketball (2); Tennis (2) gym.
Zephyrhills High School	PC School Board	CR 54 & 12 Street #6	24.0 a	Activity Based	Softball, baseball, soccer, football, track, tennis (4), basketball (4), gym.
Senior Citizens Center	C.A.R.E.S.	Airport Road #7	2.0 a	Activity Based	Multi-purpose building
Zephyr Park	City of Zephyrhills	South of CR 54 and east of 4 th Street #8	34.0 a	Activity Based	Alice Hall Community Bldg.; tennis (5); hand-ball; fishing; pavilion (4); open play field; picnic areas; horseshoe pits; play grounds; walking path around lake w/benches.
Shepard Park	City of Zephyrhills	East side of US 301 and South of "A" Avenue. #9	2.0 a	Activity Based	Boy Scout Bldg., picnic tables, open play field, basketball court
Depot Park	City of Zephyrhills	W. of CSX, S. of South Ave.#24	4.0 a	Activity Based	Picnic tables, play equipment, walking path
Lincoln Heights Park	City of Zephyrhills	Lincoln Heights #10	.5 a	Activity Based	Basketball, playground, pavilion
Krusen Field	City of Zephyrhills	Airport Road	33.0 a	Activity Based	Pavilion, picnic tables, playground, lighted football field, lighted soccer field, lighted softball (3), softball (2).
City Library	City of Zephyrhills	8 th Street & 7 th Avenue, #12	.1 a	Activity Based	31,000 volumes, mostly fiction
Zephyrhills Golf Course	City of Zephyrhills	E. end of B Ave at Airport #13	62.0 a	Activity Based	18 hole golf course and club house
Multi-Purpose Center/YMCA	City of Zephyrhills	E. side of W. Bypass at Silver Oaks #27	5.0 a	Activity Based	Aerobics, weight training, multi-purpose meeting rooms, volleyball, basketball, swimming pool
Transplant Park	City of Zephyrhills	5 th Ave. & 12 th Street, #29	.2 a	Resource Based	Bench, landscaping, table, open space
Times Square Park	City of Zephyrhills	5 th Ave. & 8 th Street, #22	.5 a	Resource Based	Benches, landscaping, bandstand, open space
Third Avenue Park	City of Zephyrhills	3 rd Ave. & Beltram	9.8 a	Activity Based	Fitness trail/walking path, BMX track, landscaping

**TABLE REC-3
PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES
ZEPHYRHILLS COMMUNITY**

Name of Facility	Site Location/ Map #	Area	Type of Use	Facility Provided
Silver Oaks Golf Course	Geiger Road # 14	151 a	Activity Based	18 hole golf course and club house
Zephyr Springs Golf Course	Chancey Road	169 a	Activity Based	18 hole golf course and club house
Valley Oaks Golf Course	Old Wire Road	95 a	Activity Based	18 hole golf course
Scotland Yards Golf Course	Wire Road/US 301	113 a	Activity Based	18 hole golf course and club house
Links of Bernadette	SR 54 West	119 a	Activity Based	18 hole golf course and club house
Skydive City	E. Side of Airport, # 29	13 a	Activity Based	Sport parachuting
Ethel's Bowling Alley	CR 54 East & 12 th St., # 18	1 a	Activity Based	8 lane bowling alley
Unity Lanes	US 301 North, # 19	2 a	Activity Based	24 lane bowling alley
Cinema Six	US 301 North	2 a	Activity Based	6 movie theatres
Zephyrhills Home Theatre	5 th Avenue, # 20	1 a	Activity Based	2 movie theatres
Zephyrhills Tourist Club	7 th Street, # 21	1 a	Activity Based	Shuffleboard, dancing and club house
Florida Trail Segment	South of Airport	3 miles	Activity Based	Hiking

For the purpose of the Zephyrhills Comprehensive Plan, permanent availability of privately owned recreational facilities cannot be guaranteed.
Source: City Manager

RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Identifying current and anticipated recreation needs has been done using two different approaches. The first approach was to identify the types of recreation most in demand. This was done by means of a written questionnaire addressed to a statistically reliable sample of residential water customers (see Survey Results). The recreational survey was completed in 1995. The population base has not increased significantly and therefore, the City believes the survey is still a valid representation of the community's recreational desires. The most frequently checked responses were:

- Walking Path (35)
- Swimming (24)
- Aerobic Exercise (21)
- Music (21)
- Bicycle Path (20)
- Crafts/Hobbies (20)
- Library (19)
- Nature Preserve (19)
- Roller Skating Rink (17)
- Picnic Pavilion (16)
- Gym (15)
- Performing Arts (14)

Walking path and bicycle path combined is clearly the most frequently mentioned item. This recreational facility will be integrated into the pedestrian circulation component of the Traffic Circulation Element; the Capital Improvements Element; Subdivision Regulations; and Site Plan Review requirements. A pedestrian walkway has been constructed along south side of Eiland Boulevard from U.S. 301 to Massey Road and then connecting to the East Pasco YMCA. Future plans include extending the walkway across U.S. 301 and connecting to Hercules Aquatic Center.

Sidewalks and pedestrian walkways are a part of the review process and addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Potential sidewalks and pedestrian walkways are reviewed during the Development Review Process.

A swimming pool was built as the principle feature in development of a community park on the Hercules site (US 301 & CR 54 East) with Pasco County recreation bond funds. A second pool was built as an element of the City's Multi-Purpose Center/YMCA. The YMCA also holds aerobic exercise classes that also addresses a frequently checked survey response.

The City operates a municipal library and Pasco County has built a branch library in the greater Zephyrhills community with County bond funds.

Phase I of a multi-purpose center which accommodates aerobic exercise, weight lifting, water aerobics, swimming lessons as well as performing arts, crafts/hobbies and dancing opened April, 1995. The second and third phases (consisting of 15,000 square feet) and featuring racquetball courts and a gymnasium was completed in 1997.

There is a City owned golf course and five private golf courses in the immediate area.

There is ample opportunity for fishing and enjoyment of nature on public sites within the immediate area at Hillsborough River State Park and on lands owned by SWFWMD. The City is also

pursuing options with State Environmental Agencies to improve the quality of Lake Zephyr by enhancing the littoral zone of the lake with plantings of native vegetation.

There are two commercial bowling lanes within the City.

A second approach to quantifying recreational needs is by comparison of existing facilities with recognized standards. Recreation facility standards used for this analysis are derived from the National Parks and Recreation Association and are summarized in Table REC-4.

TABLE REC-4 RECREATION FACILITY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS		
Activity	No. of Units Per Population (LOS)	Amount of Population
Swimming Pools	1	20,000
Golf Courses	9-holes	25,000
Basketball Courts	1	5,000
Tennis Courts	1	2,000
Volleyball Courts	1	5,000
Baseball Fields	1	5,000
Little League	1	5,000
Soccer/Football Fields	1	15,000
¼ Mile Running Track	1	20,000
Softball Fields	1	5,000
Picnic Tables	1	240
Multi-Use Trail (linear miles)	1	5,000
Freshwater Fishing	800 feet	5,600

Source: Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, National Recreational and Park Association, 1983.

Comparing these standards to Zephyrhills' existing recreation facilities and projected City population provides a measure of the City's relative recreation deficiencies (Table REC-5).

**TABLE REC-5
RECREATION FACILITIES SUPPLIED, DEMAND AND NEED
FOR FUTURE RECREATION FACILITIES BY 2000 AND 2020
CITY OF ZEPHYRHILLS**

Recreation Facility	Existing Supply	Demand By 2000	Need By 2000	Demand By 2020	Need By 2020
Exercise Trails	2	1	0	1	0
Swimming Pool (Public)	2	1	1	1	1
Multi-Purpose Center	1	1	1	1	1
Golf Courses (9 holes)	5	1	0	1	0
Nature Study (sites)	2	2	0	2	0
Tennis Courts	9	6	0	8	0
Basketball Courts	10	5	0	6	0
Baseball Diamonds	4	3	0	3	0
Softball	6	3	0	3	0
Little League	1	1	0	1	0
Soccer/Multi-Purpose Fields	1	1	0	2	1
Football Fields	2	1	0	1	0
Handball/Racquetball Courts	3	1	0	1	0
Track and Field Facilities	1	1	0	1	0
Camping (Campgrounds)	2	2	0	2	0
Volleyball Courts	3	2	0	3	0
Picnic Tables (Picnic Areas)	65 5	2	0	3	0
Bicycle Paths (linear feet)	3 12,003	2	0	3	0

The community currently provides ample acreage and facilities for both resource-based and activity-based recreation. The City primarily has both neighborhood and community parks. Table REC-6 describes the park types and the standards that are being adopted. The City currently exceeds the standards established for both levels of parks. An abundance of opportunities are also available for regional recreation and open space activities that serve the Zephyrhills region as shown in Table REC-1.

**TABLE REC-6
PARK FACILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE STANDARDS**

Park Type	Acres per 1,000 Persons	Total Acreage Developed as Parks
Local Park (acres)	4.00	89.0

Although the City of Zephyrhills has no authority or obligation to plan for or provide recreation facilities for non-city residents, it is unreasonable to assume that non-residents do not use facilities within the City. It is equally obvious that City residents will use non-city facilities. Pasco County,

the Pasco County School Board and the City have co-operated and will continue to cooperate in meeting the recreational needs of the larger community. The assessment of recreational needs summarized in Table REC-5 assumes that the larger community needs will be addressed in the Pasco County Comprehensive Plan.

The very conservative inventory of open space (Table REC-1) indicates that the Zephyrhills community provides an abundance of opportunities for residents to enjoy the recreational benefits of open space without further expenditure of public funds for resource-based recreation. Recreational opportunities may, however, be a secondary benefit of land acquisition for some other primary purpose (e.g. environmental protection, flood control, airport approach zone, etc.).

PLAN TO MEET RECREATIONAL NEEDS

As assessment of current and future short term (1998) (2002) recreational needs indicates that the highest priority needs are additional walking and bicycle paths, improved ball fields and neighborhood-based pre-school activities. The City has been successful in pursuing and receiving grant opportunities to expand, improve and update existing city parks. Neighborhood and pre-school activities will now be addressed with the opening of the East Pasco YMCA. Additional sidewalks and bike paths are proposed to be constructed as addressed in the Transportation Element.

The City currently meets the neighborhood park standards. However, an additional neighborhood park located north of the two existing community parks would help provide additional recreational opportunities to the "older" existing residential neighborhoods located east of downtown. The City, in fiscal year 1997/1998, acquired a nine acre parcel of property from the Zephyrhills Airport currently zoned R-C (Recreational/Conservation). The City applied for and received a FRDAP grant to develop the parcel with passive recreational opportunities that will be completed in 2000.

Planned recreation facilities and proposed locations are shown on map REC-1 and incorporated into the Capital Improvements Element of this Comprehensive Plan.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES SURVEY RESULTS

Please indicate by placing an "X" in front of the ten types of recreational facilities your household does use or would use if available within the Zephyrhills Community at no cost, or with a nominal user fee.

<u>21</u> Aerobic Exercise	<u>19</u> Library
<u>6</u> Archery	<u>1</u> Motorized Vehicle (off road)
<u>6</u> Baseball	<u>21</u> Music
<u>5</u> Basketball	<u>19</u> Nature Preserve
<u>2</u> Bicycle Motorcross	<u>14</u> Performing Arts
<u>20</u> Bicycle Trail/Path	<u>16</u> Picnic Pavilion
<u>9</u> Bingo	<u>9</u> Playground
<u>9</u> Boating	<u>17</u> Roller Skating Rink
<u>8</u> Bowling	<u>3</u> Running Track
<u>6</u> Camping	<u>5</u> Shuffleboard
<u>5</u> Card Games	<u>6</u> Softball
<u>20</u> Crafts/Hobbies	<u>3</u> Soccer
<u>13</u> Dancing	<u>24</u> Swimming
<u>0</u> Drag Strip	<u>2</u> T-Ball
<u>13</u> Fishing	<u>8</u> Tennis
<u>3</u> Football	<u>4</u> Volleyball
<u>11</u> Gardening	<u>35</u> Walking Path
<u>12</u> Golf	<u>1</u> Other (specify)Photo Class
<u>5</u> Handball	<u>6</u> Other Practice Ball Fields
<u>8</u> Horseback Riding	<u>10</u> Other Roller Blading
<u>3</u> Horseshoes	<u>1</u> Other Ice Hockey
<u>12</u> Jogging Path	<u>1</u> Other Roller Hockey

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Introduction

Pursuant to Sections 163.3177(6)(e), F.S., and Section 9J-5.014, F.A.C., the following represents the Recreation and Open Space Goals, Objectives and Policies of the City of Zephyrhills. In addition to statutory requirements, the following Goals, Objectives and Policies were developed in keeping with the character, conditions, both environmental and social, and desires of the community. These Goals, Objectives and Policies are intended to address the establishment of the long-term end towards which the recreation and open space programs and activities are ultimately directed.

Implementation

Unless otherwise stated, the implementation of objectives and associated policies contained in this Section shall be through the development, adoption, and application of regulations set forth in the City Code of Ordinances and Land Development Code.

The following goals, objectives and policies are adopted by the City of Zephyrhills to guide public resource allocation decisions for the development and management of recreational facilities within the Zephyrhills area. It is the intent of City Council that these guidelines also be utilized by private entities and other public agencies which have an interest in meeting the recreational needs of the Community.

GOAL
REC-1: Provide, protect and maintain recreational facilities and open space areas of an appropriate nature, size and geographic distribution to serve residents of the Zephyrhills community.

OBJECTIVE
REC-1-1: Continue to achieve and maintain the levels of service standards for recreation and open space.

POLICY
REC-1-1-1: The park facility infrastructure standards contained in Table REC-6 and the NRPA suggested standards contained in Table REC-4 are adopted as the City of Zephyrhills LOS Standards for recreational facilities.

OBJECTIVE
REC 1-2: Coordinate with Pasco County and other municipalities to discuss recreation and open space planning opportunities and to avoid overlapping facilities and programs.

POLICY
REC-1-2-1: City staff will communicate annually with Pasco County, other municipalities and the School Board to discuss recreational and open space issues and to ensure efficient and joint use of existing and future park/school sites.

POLICY
REC-1-2-2: The City will seek to utilize existing school facilities for park and other recreational needs to enhance students' access to parks and recreation.

OBJECTIVE
REC-1-3: Maximize sector assistance in providing recreational opportunities to meet demands.

POLICY
REC-1-3-1: Develop incentives for private developers to provide land for recreation and open space needs. Incentives should also be provided for land dedicated to the City of Zephyrhills.

GOAL
REC-2: Enhance quality of life by upgrading and improving existing parks.

OBJECTIVE
REC-2-1: Continue modernization and addition to new equipment and facilities at existing parks through the year 2010.

POLICY
REC-2-1-1: Continue to pursue recreational grant opportunities.

GOAL
REC-3: All existing and future recreation lands controlled by the city will be maintained in perpetuity for recreational use by the general public.

OBJECTIVE
REC-3-1: Maintain an inventory of city-owned lands to identify any sites which might be devoted to open space or recreational use and prepare site use plans for such sites.

POLICY
REC-3-1-1: The City will not dispose of any city owned property without first evaluating the recreation potential of the site.

POLICY
REC-3-1-2: The City will attempt to sell any small areas of land owned by the city which are of no apparent use to the city and which are not feasible as open space and utilize proceeds for acquisition of more viable open space and recreation sites.

OBJECTIVE
REC-3-2: Provide public access to all existing and proposed parks through the year 2010.

POLICY
REC-3-2-1: Encourage the continued construction of bicycle paths and bicycle racks at all public parks.

POLICY
REC-3-2-2: Ensure that all recreational facilities are accessible to the handicapped and elderly.

OBJECTIVE
REC-3-3: Conduct an inventory of existing open spaces not in public ownership to identify sites which have a potential for being maintained as open space or have significant recreation potential and devise strategies for public use.

POLICY
REC-3-3-1: The Levels of Service standards for various recreation facilities to be attained/ maintained are set forth in Table REC-4 of this element.

POLICY
REC-3-3-2: When the inventory of existing open spaces is completed, the city shall establish priorities for designation or acquisition of those sites identified as having open space and recreation potential.