PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

PURPOSE

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Element provides for a system of public and private 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. Park systems provide a geographic balance, assuring that facilities are not concentrated in one or a few small areas. Goals established in the 1997-2010 Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan Recreation and Open Space element have been substantially met. These goals were established as a result of the Wallace, Roberts, and Todd Park Master Plan that was created in 1997. This revised element establishes a policy to develop a new parks master plan by 2012.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

PRC GOAL 1: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
Establish an integrated system of parks, open space and recreational resources that provides a diverse, yet balanced, range of user-based and resource-based recreational opportunities.

PRC Objective 1.1: Planning, Acquisition, Design and Development
To plan for a park and open space system, acquire sites and facilities, design and develop parks that will ensure that residents and visitors to Charlotte County are afforded opportunities to readily access a variety of parks and open space.

PRC Policy 1.1.1: Park Classifications
The County shall develop an integrated, balanced system of parks based on classifications of park size, function and service area including the following:

- Mini-park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Environmental Park
- Special Purpose Facility
- Greenway
- Blueway
PRC Policy 1.1.2: Park System
The County shall formulate the role of each park classification in the park and open space system, and shall pursue efforts toward their acquisition, preservation and/or development as essential components of the park system.

PRC Policy 1.1.3: Waterfronts/Beaches
The County shall continue public acquisitions of waterfront property and, through public resources and public/private partnerships, seek new opportunities to preserve working waterfronts, expand and maintain public beach and water access and protect coastal and marine resources.

PRC Policy 1.1.4: Boating Access
The County shall encourage responsible use of waterways and marine resources by evaluating the characteristics and needs of the County’s boating population, both residents and visitors, and providing public access for motorized and non-motorized watercraft and mooring facilities.

PRC Policy 1.1.5: Coordination of Efforts
The County shall coordinate with developers, property owners associations, private business, citizen-based neighborhood and community-based planning initiatives, special funding districts and governmental agencies to plan and provide for parks, open space, and recreational facilities as part of their plans and developments in order to achieve common goals through synergy of efforts.

PRC Policy 1.1.6: Concurrency
The County shall acquire and develop a park, recreation and open space system that is, at a minimum, consistent with Florida state concurrency management requirements, incorporating elements of County, State, Federal, and private park and recreation opportunities, meeting a Level of Service (LOS) Standard based on Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) points of 16 PROS points/1,000 population. Assignment of PROS points shall consider factors such as, but not limited to, acreage, distribution, specific amenities, demand, facility capacity, maintenance and operations impacts, and availability for public use.

PRC Policy 1.1.7 Private Development Participation
The County shall consider amending its land development regulations to require private residential development to participate in the provision and development of public parks, recreation and cultural resource facilities through land dedication, in-kind services or fees-in-lieu thereof for facilities that are primarily intended to serve the proposed development. This participation shall be in addition to paying all required impact fees.
PRC Policy 1.1.8: County-Wide Master Plan
The County shall develop a formal, comprehensive, county-wide parks and recreation master plan by 2012.

PRC Policy 1.1.9: Park Site Master Plans
The County shall create master plans for park sites in order to plan for parks that function in harmony with the environment; that, where possible, incorporates active/passive and user/resource based opportunities together; and, that serves to guide phased park development providing a uniform basis for establishing management and maintenance practices and levels of service.

PRC Policy 1.1.10: Park Design and Construction Standards
The County shall create design and construction standards for public park design and development that establishes a consistent functional and aesthetic vocabulary while allowing for unique response to site and program.

PRC Objective 1.2: Park and Cultural Resources Maintenance and Management
To protect and maintain existing parks and assets to preserve physical, environmental, functional, recreational and aesthetic values.

PRC Policy 1.2.1: Public Awareness
The County shall protect, restore, and manage natural resources in parks and provide interpretive information regarding environmental parks, preserves, water management resources, conservation easements and other ecosystems within parks considering their proper long-term ecological functions and recreational value, and to increase public awareness and understanding of ecological systems.

PRC Policy 1.2.2: Park Management and Maintenance Guidelines
The County shall develop and implement guidelines for all park lands, grounds, assets, natural resources and improvements that serve to provide a uniform basis for establishing management and maintenance practices and criteria which consider periodic, short and long-term needs.

PRC Policy 1.2.3: Invasive Species Removal
The County shall develop and pursue invasive, exotic plant and animal eradication programs for parks and open space.

PRC GOAL 2: RECREATION
Promote, conduct and provide for high-quality, professional, accessible, traditional and alternative programs, venues and opportunities serving the needs of both residents and visitors, endeavoring to serve a larger segment of the population.
PRC Objective 2.1: Recreation, Athletics and Aquatics Programs
To create and provide for events, programs and staffing to enhance the quality of life and physical well-being of residents and visitors.

PRC Policy 2.1.1: Programming
The County shall annually create programming plans considering, but not limited to, factors such as implementation strategies, utilization of resources and assets, scheduling and public needs.

PRC Policy 2.1.2: Promoting Recreation
The County shall program, promote and conduct activities, and facilitate and participate with vendors, event sponsors and organizations in the use of parks and facilities to fulfill the diverse needs of County residents and visitors for recreational, educational and leisure activities.

PRC Policy 2.1.3: Quality through Collaboration
The County shall maintain high quality recreational programming by working with and utilizing best practices and program curriculum of recognized organizations such as National Recreation and Park Association, American Red Cross, Little League Baseball, Florida Parks and Recreation Association, and other national and state professional organizations.

PRC Policy 2.1.4: Sports Fields
The County shall provide a variety of sports fields, maintained and programmed in compliance with recognized standards to serve active recreation needs of youth and adults.

PRC Policy 2.1.5: Aquatic Facilities
The County shall provide a variety of recreational aquatic facilities to be maintained, programmed and staffed in compliance with recognized standards to serve active recreation needs of youth and adults.

PRC Objective 2.2: Special Purpose Venues
To provide special purpose venues that are capable of offering high-quality, professional-level, diverse special events, sporting events, and recreational programs attracting and meeting the needs of residents and visitors on a regional, state and national level.

PRC Policy 2.2.1: Sports Park
The County shall maintain and provide for operation of a multi-field sports park capable of hosting a number of diverse special events, sporting events, and recreational programs throughout the year.
PRC Policy 2.2.2: Event Center
The County shall maintain and provide for operation of an indoor/outdoor event and conference center capable of hosting a number of diverse meetings, conferences, special events, sporting events and programs throughout the year.

PRC Policy 2.2.3: Contracts and Partnerships
The County shall enter into contracts and partnerships with businesses and groups such as local restaurants, hotels, promoters, trade organizations and business, civic and fraternal organizations to promote the mutual benefits for advertising and marketing and other event-related services at special purpose venues in order to provide the best possible experience for clients and guests.

PRC Policy 2.2.4: Food, Beverage and Sundries Services
The County shall ensure provision of professional food, beverage and sundry services catering to both popular-type fare as well as specialized culinary services when needed.

PRC Policy 2.2.5: Marketing
The County shall market the special event venues locally, regionally and nationally through a broad spectrum of resources including but not limited to press releases, sales kits, website, advertising and public outreach opportunities.

PRC Policy 2.2.6: Technology
The County shall research and implement technological improvements and best-practice enhancements that contribute to competing with like facilities in order to maintain standing as a premiere special event venue.

PRC Policy 2.2.7: Customer Service
The County shall assess client and customer feedback and implement necessary actions to improve customer satisfaction.

PRC GOAL 3: CULTURAL RESOURCES
Provide, maintain and support research, development and access to cultural and informational resources and opportunities.

PRC Objective 3.1: Library Facilities and Programs
To provide a system of regional and community libraries with collections, programs and staff and ensure access to library services sufficient to serve the needs of residents and visitors.
PRC Policy 3.1.1: Library Space
The County shall strive to achieve a non-regulatory public library building LOS of 0.6 square feet per capita residential population by 2030, including operational support and public meeting spaces within each building.

PRC Policy 3.1.2: Staffing
The County shall strive to achieve a non-regulatory library personnel LOS of 0.3 full time equivalent staff per 1,000 residents consisting of professionally-trained, in-service trained and support staff by 2015.

PRC Policy 3.1.3: Collections
The County shall strive to achieve a non-regulatory library collection standard of 2 items per capita of residential population which will include a variety of formats by 2025.

PRC Policy 3.1.4: Interlibrary Loan Program
The County shall maintain a county-wide loan system to maximize use of collections and an interlibrary loan (ILL) program to meet user requirements beyond the library system's holdings.

PRC Policy 3.1.5: Programming
The County shall provide programs for children and adults that promote literacy, support lifelong learning, and present opportunities for presentation and discussion of issues and differing points of view at times, days and locations that meet the needs of the community.

PRC Policy 3.1.6: Library Master Facility Plan
The County shall update the County’s Library Master Facility Plan, including review of all LOS standards, technology and systems approaches every 10 years beginning in 2012.

PRC Policy 3.1.7: Outreach Programs
The County shall partner with community groups and agencies to develop outreach programs for special user groups including homebound adults and children.

PRC Objective 3.2: Library Technology
To utilize industry-related technology to support and expand library services.
PRC Policy 3.2.1: Website Services
The County shall provide remote 24/7 services via the library website including access to patron accounts, events and programs, the online catalog, and electronic databases, and shall conduct ongoing evaluation of the website to ensure it meets user needs.

PRC Policy 3.2.2: Public Access
The County shall provide computers for public use and technology/equipment for library patron self-service functions at all libraries.

PRC Policy 3.2.3: Emerging Technologies
The County shall conduct ongoing evaluations of emerging and enhanced technologies, including integrated library management software systems, and as financially feasible, incorporate those that best support library services and meet user needs.

PRC Objective 3.3: Historical and Archaeological Resources
To protect and preserve the County’s historic, cultural, archaeological and architectural resources.

PRC Policy 3.3.1: Resource Survey
The County shall maintain and update a comprehensive, county-wide Survey of Historical Resources as well as documentation of historical events, structures, and other resources with the aid of the historical and genealogical groups. An updated survey report will be published periodically.

PRC Policy 3.3.2: Resource Database
The County shall maintain and update a GIS-based database of historic buildings, historic districts, archaeological sites or objects that are significant to local, state or national history and which have been placed on the Local Historic Register, listed in the Florida Master Site File or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

PRC Policy 3.3.3: Historic Preservation Ordinance
The County shall maintain a Historic Preservation Ordinance which will provide specific criteria designed to protect the County’s historic, cultural, archaeological and architectural resources.

PRC Policy 3.3.4: Central Repository
The County shall maintain a central repository of historical and archaeological reports, archives and results of continuing work under various sponsorships which address the County’s historical and archaeological resources.
PRC Objective 3.4: Historical Resources Awareness and Education
To participate in public education opportunities and provide programs and exhibits that promote public awareness of our heritage and the importance of preserving our historic, archaeological, architectural, and scenic resources.

PRC Policy 3.4.1: Education
The County shall develop permanent and changing exhibits and provide programs that educate children and adults about the County’s local history and heritage.

PRC Policy 3.4.2: Historical Marker Program
The County shall utilize the Historical Marker program to recognize significant local historic, archaeological, architectural, and scenic sites.

PRC Policy 3.4.3: Preservation Programs
The County shall participate in national and statewide preservation and historic recognition programs and ceremonies, and encourage residents to take part in local historic preservation programs in conjunction with national and state observances.

PRC Objective 3.5: Arts & Humanities
To encourage and promote public art and design that enhances the quality of life, civic and social pride, and community identity for its residents and visitors.

PRC Policy 3.5.1: Public Art Recognition
The County shall work with the arts & humanities organizations to support a public art program that provides opportunities for local artists to showcase their works through display, public recognition and other means.

PRC Policy 3.5.2: Design Awards Program
The County shall consider the development of an annual awards program that would give recognition to design excellence in public and private development projects in the County.

PRC Policy 3.5.3: Art in Public Projects
The County shall integrate art into County projects.

PRC Policy 3.5.4: Art in Private Projects
The County shall investigate creating incentives to encourage private developers to integrate public art and arts venues into project designs.
PRC GOAL 4: SERVICE DELIVERY
Identify, promote and execute strategies and opportunities that add value and validity to the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural resource services, which include, but may not be limited to, libraries, historical preservation and the arts & humanities.

PRC Objective 4.1: Funding
To identify, evaluate and initiate the use of alternative sources of revenue for acquisition, development and operation of parks, recreation and cultural resources facilities and programs.

PRC Policy 4.1.1: Grants
The County shall seek and, where necessary provide matching funds as financially feasible, to utilize state, federal, foundation and other grant programs to assist with the provision of parks, recreation and cultural resources facilities and services.

PRC Policy 4.1.2: Alternative Funding
The County shall create procedures and mechanisms to afford the opportunity to accept donations, exchanges-in-kind and bequests, and to solicit and utilize private sector investment through sponsorships, to assist in the provision of real property, capital improvements and delivery of recreational and cultural resource programs.

PRC Policy 4.1.3: Usage Fees
The County shall establish a schedule of fees appropriate to the provision of parks, recreation and cultural resources facilities and services, and shall provide for reevaluation every 2 years or sooner, as appropriate.

PRC Policy 4.1.4: Capital Investments
The County shall utilize impact fees, bonds, sales tax and other alternative sources of revenue to finance land, facilities and capital investment in accordance with state statutes.

PRC Policy 4.1.5: Concession Agreements
The County shall determine the potential for providing and operating, and implement, where appropriate, park and recreation facilities, programs and services through concession-type agreements.
PRC POLICY 4.1.6 Special Revenue Fund
The County shall maintain a special revenue fund that provides need-based assistance for children to attend summer and other specialty camps through donations, sponsorships, grants and other revenue opportunities as they become available.

PRC Policy 4.1.7: Library Funding
The County shall investigate and make a recommendation regarding the establishment of a dedicated property tax millage to fund the provision of libraries and library services.

PRC POLICY 4.1.8 Self-sufficiency
The County shall identify and promote strategies that contribute to financial self-sufficiency of parks, recreation and cultural resources facilities and programs.

PRC Objective 4.2: Service Base
To promote availability, expand accessibility and ensure sustainability of parks and recreation and cultural resource activities by taking advantage of emerging and alternative strategies and recognizing opportunities to serve broader segments of the population.

PRC Policy 4.2.1: Green Practices
The County shall encourage the use of green building, conservation and recycling practices in the sustainable design, construction and operation of facilities and programs.

PRC Policy 4.2.2: Inclusiveness
The County shall provide facilities and operate programs so that, when viewed in their entirety, they are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities and other special needs populations.

PRC Policy 4.2.3: Trends
The County shall monitor, evaluate and incorporate as appropriate, new trends in the provision of parks, recreation and cultural resource amenities, programs and service delivery methods.

PRC Policy 4.2.4: Web-based Accessibility
The County shall implement interactive, web-based access to information at each level of citizen contact.
**PRC Policy 4.2.5: Interlocal Agreements**
The County shall maintain an interlocal agreement with the Charlotte County School Board to provide for mutually beneficial utilization of resources and provision of recreational, educational and extracurricular opportunities.

**PRC Objective 4.3: Citizen Involvement**
To actively seek and encourage citizen involvement to assist with and improve in the provision of parks, recreation and cultural resource facilities, programs and services.

**PRC Policy 4.3.1: Public Input**
The County shall periodically identify, evaluate and respond to residents’ and visitors’ needs, desires and satisfaction with respect to their use and participation in park, recreation and cultural resource amenities and programs.

**PRC Policy 4.3.2: Park and Recreation Advisory Board**
The County shall utilize a Park and Recreation Advisory Board, a citizen advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), to review park and recreation issues and opportunities and to make recommendations to the BCC for the provision and promotion of recreational opportunities in Charlotte County.

**PRC Policy 4.3.3: Accreditation**
The County shall meet high standards in the delivery of a park and recreation program as evidenced by the pursuit of accreditation through a recognized state or national program by 2020.

**PRC Policy 4.3.4: Partnerships**
The County shall expand and enhance the delivery of park, recreation and cultural resource facilities, programs and services through the establishment of cooperative partnerships with businesses, organizations, and governmental agencies.

**PRC Policy 4.3.5: Support Groups**
The County shall encourage and facilitate the establishment of non-profit organizations to solicit financial support and provide manpower to acquire, develop and operate parks, recreation and cultural resources programs and services in order to leverage available public resources.
PRC Policy 4.3.6: Volunteer Programs
The County shall establish formal programs, including appropriate inducements, for utilizing volunteers, both individuals and groups, in constructing, operating and maintaining parks and facilities, library services and historical division services, and assisting with and providing programs, services and research to supplement available public resources.

PRC Policy 4.3.7: Internships
The County shall encourage and facilitate the use of interns to enable students and other qualified individuals to formally participate in the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural resource services as part of an educational pursuit.