

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

GOAL 1:

To provide residents and visitors a comprehensive system of parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces meet the needs of all population segments and to preserve, protect, and enhance the natural amenities of the area

Objective 1: The City of Cape Coral shall continue to provide an adequate system of parks and recreational facilities which meet the needs of the existing and future populations and shall identify and plan park and recreation improvements to 2050.

Policy 1.1: The City of Cape Coral shall assure that appropriate amounts of park land and open space will be within the public domain to meet the standards of this plan.

Policy 1.2: The City of Cape Coral adoption levels of service for parks shall be:

Park Classification	Size and Service Population*	
Regional Park	50 acres and above; services population up to 50,000	
Community Park	Approximately 10-50 acres; up to 25,000 population	
Neighborhood Park	1-10 acres; serves population up to 5,000 population	

School-Park	Varies as to need	
Specialty Parks*	Varies as to need	

Regional Parks: Large areas of undeveloped or developed City or combination of City/County property (minimum of 50 acres), with 75 or more acres being optimal. These parks serve a broader purpose than community parks. The focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving and protecting unique landscapes, environmental, and open spaces.

Community Parks: Medium size areas of developed City property typically 10 – 50 acres (actual size is based on the land area needed to accommodate desired current and future usages) which has varied uses and purposes. These parks have been developed for passive and active recreation/athletic activities. Their focus is meeting the needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community and preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Typical development may include athletic fields/courts, playgrounds, indoor/outdoor rental facilities, beach, walking path, pools, recreation center/facility, pavilions, amphitheater, remote controlled vehicles, theater, BMX track, and boat ramp.

Neighborhood Parks: Small to medium size areas of developed City property typically 5-10 acres (its actual size is based on the land area needed to accommodate desired current and future usages). These areas have varied uses and purposes. These parks have been developed for passive and active recreation/athletic activities and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Typical development may include athletic field/courts, playgrounds, walking path, picnic facilities, boat ramp, and pond/lake.

School-Park: Combination of two public agencies allows for expanding the recreation, social, and educational component available to the community in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Depending on its size, one school-park could serve in several capacities such as neighborhood park, athletic fields, use of school facilities, before-after school uses, and summer programs. It is typically necessary to develop a joint use agreement between the involved agencies.

Special Use Park/Facilities: The special use classification covers a broad range of parks and facilities oriented toward single-purpose use. Special uses generally fall

into three categories: historic/cultural/social sites, recreation facilities, or outdoor recreation facilities.

Existing and Proposed Park Inventory, 2021

(Note: * refers to new parks planned as result of 2016 Go Bond)

Regional Park

Park	Acreage	Location
Rotary Park Environmental Center	97	5505 Rose Garden Road
Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve	365	2101 SE 23 rd Terrace
*Yellow Fever Creek	198.70	Del Prado Blvd N and NE 22 nd Ave
*Festival Park (includes Seahawk Park)	Approx. 191	2615 NW 14 th AVE 1030 NW 28 th Street

Community Park

Park	Acres	Location
Lake Kennedy Community Park (includes Lake Kennedy Center, Special Populations Center, Mini Bus Service *Tennis and Pickleball Complex)	46	400 Santa Barbara BLVD 283 SW 4 th TER
Wm. “Bill” Austen Youth Center/Eagle Skate Park	10.4	315 SW 2 nd Ave
Yacht Club Community Park Yacht Club Marina, Boathouse, Boat Ramp	13	5819 Driftwood Parkway
Koza/Saladino Park	11	301 SW 30 th Terrace
Northwest Softball Complex	15	1030 NW 16 th Place
Pelican Baseball Complex	16.6	4128 Pelican Boulevard
Pelican Soccer Complex	14.3	4020 SW 2 nd Court
Storm Football Complex	10	2602 Chiquita Blvd
Strausser BMX Sports Complex BMX Boat Ramp	20	1410 SW 6 th Place
*Lake Meade (name to be determined)	Approx. 45	Kismet Pkwy E and NE 11 th Ave
*Crystal Lake (name to be determined)	Approx. 65	Caloosa Pkwy and NW 44 th Pl

Neighborhood Park

Park	Acres	Location
Four Freedoms Park	3.2	4818 Tarpon Court
Burton Memorial Park	8.5	1502 NE 3 rd Terrace
Jason Verdow Memorial Park	5.5	801 SE 27 th Street
Bernice Braden Park	9.8	2051 Cape Coral Parkway E
Camelot Park	6.4	1718 SW 52 nd Terrace
Del Prado Linear Park	n/a	On Del Prado Blvd between Diplomat Pkwy & Kismet Pkwy
Giuffrida Park	3.7	1044 NE 4 th Street
Horton Park and Boat Ramp	5	2600 SE 26 th Place
Jaycee Park	8	4215 SE 20 th Place
Joe Stonis Park	7.4	3444 Ceitus Parkway
Founders Park	.75	929 SE 46 th Lane
Paul Sanborn Park	3	2310 SE 3 rd Street
Reflections Park	.25	815 Nicholas Parkway
Saratoga Lake Park	5	170 SE 4 th Terrace
Sirenia Vista Park	8.4	3916 Ceitus Parkway
Veterans Park	4.2	4140 Coronado Parkway
*Sands (name to be determined)	17	SW 43 Terrace
*Joe Coviello Park	Approx. 52	3514 Oasis Woods Ln
*Gator Circle (name to be determined)	Approx. 16.9	De Navarra Pkwy and NE 23 rd Ave
*Tropicana Park (name to be determined)	Approx. 7	Tropicana Parkway W and Old Burnt Store Rd N

School Park Sites

Park	Acres	Location
Jim Jeffers Park	18.5	2817 SW 3 rd Lane
Oasis Gymnasium	n/a	3507 Oasis Blvd
Starland Park	n/a	620 SW 19 th St
Caloosa Football Fields and Playground	n/a	610 Del Prado Blvd S

Special Use/Park Facilities

Park	Acres	Location
Cape Coral Art Center/Rubicond Park	2.2	4533 Coronado Parkway
Coral Oaks Golf Course	180	1800 NW 28 th Avenue
Sun Splash Family Waterpark	14	400 Santa Barbara Blvd
Cape Coral Sports Complex	52	1410 Sports Blvd

Burnt Store Boat Ramp	4.5	230 Burnt Store Road S
Cultural Park Cultural Park Theater, Historical Museum, Art League	16	528 Cultural Park Blvd
Pathway to Discovery	n/a	At Cape Coral Hospital
Seahawk Park	13.5	1030 NW 28 th Street
Rosen Park and Boat Ramp	14.4	2414 SE 15 th Terrace
Storm Football Field	10	2602 Chiquita Blvd
Pop's Café	n/a	1015 Cultural Blvd – City Hall

The Level of Service is benchmarked against the population numbers throughout the United States with similar activities/facilities and NRPA park metrics. Benchmarking data has been identified for the best practices to best serve the community optimally.

NRPA Population Benchmark per Facility (1 per population)	Activity	Existing # of City Facilities	Surplus or Deficiency 2019	Surplus or Deficiency at 400,000 population
31,239	Recreation centers (including gyms)	1	-6	(6)
27,322.3	Community centers	4	-4	(6)
51,201	Active Adult centers	2	-2	(2)
68,039.5	Nature centers	4	1	1
3,200	Playgrounds	29	(25)	(25)
29,318	Community gardens	1	-6	(6)
n/a	Pickle ball courts	18	(14)	(14)
6,892.8	Basketball courts	19	-13	(23)
4,908.4	Tennis courts (outdoor only)	19	-6	(6)
6,168.3	Diamond fields: baseball - softball	33	-3	(15)
43,018	Skate park	1	-4	(4)
37,960	Dog park	2	-3	(3)
7,725.5	Rectangular fields: multi-purpose	13	-16	(29)
23,695.5	Rectangular fields: football field	6	-3	(3)
62,421	Regulation 18-hole courses	1	-3	(3)

31,346.8	Swimming pools (outdoor only)	1	-6	(6)
n/a	Waterpark	1	1	1
n/a	BMX Bicycle Course	1	1	1
n/a	Boat Ramp Lanes	7	(11)	(11)
n/a	Exercise Course	17	17	17
n/a	Bocce Courts	6	6	6
n/a	Racquetball Courts	2	2	2

Policy 1.3: Funding of capital costs for park and recreational facilities, including acquisition, development and maintenance, shall be met using the following sources:

- Proceeds of impact fee collections (provided that such monies are not used to correct a deficiency);
- Federal, State or private grants, loans and bonds; and,
- Private donations.

Ad valorem tax revenues will only be used, when necessary, to provide the balance of necessary funding.

Policy 1.4: User fees will be used as a funding source for the operation and maintenance of City-owned parks and recreation facilities.

Policy 1.5: Reserved.

Policy 1.6: Parks and recreation facilities within the Urban Services Reserve Area will be acquired and developed in proportion to the rate of growth within the service area of the park or facility.

Policy 1.7: Acquisition of lands within the Urban Services Reserve Area will be via property trade or by direct purchase funded by the City's revolving Recreational Land Acquisition Fund. The City will seek additional funding from private sources. Condemnation shall not be used to obtain lands within the Urban Services Reserve Area, except as a last resort.

Policy 1.8: Excepting only such projects as described under Policy 1.9, below, a proposed residential development shall be determined concurrent for park and recreational facilities and services if any of the following conditions are met:

- At the time a development order or building permit is issued, the necessary park and recreational facilities and services are in place or under actual construction; or
- A development order or building permit is issued subject to the condition that the acreage for the necessary facilities and services has been dedicated to or acquired by the City of Cape Coral or funds in the amount of the developer's fair share have been committed by the time of issuance of the building permit; or,
- At the time a development order or building permit is issued, the necessary park and recreational facilities and services are the subject of a binding executed agreement which requires the necessary park and recreational facilities and services to serve the new development to be in place or under actual construction no more than three (3) years after the issuance of a building permit; or
- At the time a development order or building permit is issued, the necessary park and recreational facilities and services are guaranteed in an enforceable development agreement, pursuant to Section 163.3220, Florida Statutes, or an agreement or development order issued pursuant to Chapter 380, Florida Statutes, to be in place or under actual construction not more than three (3) years after issuance of a building permit.

Policy 1.9: For the purpose of issuing a development order or building permit, a proposed development may be deemed to have a de minimis impact on the affected park and recreational facilities and not subject to concurrency requirements of Policy 1.8 only if all of the following conditions are met:

- The development proposal is for an increase in density less than or equal to two (2) times the density or intensity of existing development, or for the development of a vacant parcel of land, residential development proposal is for a density of less than four (4) dwelling units per acre; and
- The park and recreational impact of the proposed residential development does not exceed 0.1 percent of the adopted level-of-service of the affected park and recreational facilities.
- If the affected park and recreation facilities do not meet adopted level-of-service standards, the cumulative park and recreational impact from the de minimis exemption does not exceed three (3) percent of the adopted level-of-service standard.

Policy 1.10: Design and development of park and recreation facilities shall consider environmental and neighborhood conditions.

Policy 1.11: The City shall meet the recreational needs of all population groups through the development of recreational facilities.

Objective 2: The City will acquire lands at least sufficient to provide the recreational facilities and improvements identified in the Comprehensive Plan as needed by 2030 and shall identify lands needed to meet future recreational demands in 2050, in order to preserve open space, and protect from intrusion the existing open space owned by the State of Florida.

Policy 2.1: The City will explore methods for preserving corridor open space and enhancing landscaping along the City's multi-lane divided roadways.

Policy 2.2: The City will cooperate with State authorities to protect State-owned preservation lands as a source of open space, passive recreation, nature study, and personal enrichment.

Policy 2.3: The City will coordinate with other government agencies and nonprofit organizations to acquire and manage natural areas and open space.

Policy 2.4: The City will adopt, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 163.3202 (1), Florida Statutes, land development regulations which include incentives to encourage the provision of open space within future developed areas.

Policy 2.5: In selecting lands for acquisition and future park development the City shall strive to locate and acquire environmentally sensitive lands.

Policy 2.6: By 2025, the City of Cape Coral will develop a master plan, including conceptual maps, for a network of recreational trails and conservation greenways. The network will be designed, to the degree feasible, around existing facilities. Land for the network, including land for destinations, trailheads, and associated parking facilities, will be acquired as opportunity and resources allow.

Policy 2.7: The City shall continue to develop Parks Master Plans (last updated: 2016) every 10-15 years.

Objective 3: The City of Cape Coral will continue to provide a system of parks, recreational facilities, and open space which is accessible to all members of the public.

Policy 3.1: All park facilities will be built and maintained in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Policy 3.2: The City will ensure that all new Community, Specialty, and Regional Parks have adequate parking, and are accessible to automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.

Policy 3.3: The City will assure the safety of all public park users.

Policy 3.4: Neighborhood Parks will be accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists, and adequate parking shall be provided in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Limited vehicular parking will be provided for all other users.

Policy 3.5: The City shall continue to look for opportunities to provide additional boat ramp lanes that would provide access to the Caloosahatchee River or Charlotte Harbor.

Policy 3.6: The City will seek funding for additional boat ramp lanes by applying for its share of Lee County's Recreational Vehicle and boat tax funds and for Florida Recreation and Park Development Assistance Project (FRDAP) grants.

Policy 3.7: The City will permit no diminution in the length of fresh or salt-water shoreline which is available for public use and enjoyment and, as opportunity and resources allow the City will increase the length of such shoreline.

Policy 3.8: The City will ensure that the existing level of vehicular and non-vehicular access to fresh and salt-water shorelines is maintained and, as opportunity and resources allow, the City will increase the level of access to the City fresh and salt-water shorelines.

Policy 3.9: The City will continue to explore opportunities for obtaining beach access to Charlotte Harbor. The selection of the beach access shall be such that the environmental integrity and ecological function of the area is maintained.

Policy 3.10: In order to prevent the loss of fresh or salt water beach access, the City will pursue grants from the Federal, State, and County governments for beach renourishment and maintenance.

Objective 4: By 2029, City parks and recreational facilities will be as safe as, or safer than, they were during the period from 1996 through 2022. The number of accidents occurring in City parks, as a function of usership, will remain constant, or decrease.

Policy 4.1: The City will promote safety at public parks and recreational facilities through regular risk assessment and safety inspections. The frequency of the inspections for each facility will be a function of use and number of accidents, on a schedule to be established by the City Risk Manager within one year of adoption of this plan.

Policy 4.2: The City will promote safety at public parks and recreation facilities through the use of information signage, lighting, rails, fences, and other appropriate measures.

Policy 4.3: The City will promote playground safety through the use of impact-absorbing ground materials, by separating playgrounds from vehicular traffic, and by selecting safe play equipment.

Objective 5: The City will continue to provide adequate levels of funding to properly and efficiently maintain park and recreation facilities within Cape Coral.

Policy 5.1: The City will maintain park maintenance standards consistent with accepted national standards as set forth in the publication "Park Maintenance Standards" published by the National Recreation and Park Association.

Policy 5.2: The City will establish a maintenance program for each park and recreational facility and will prepare a schedule of expenditures required to maintain each park and recreation facility.

Objective 6: The City will aggressively pursue an increase in private and public funds for the acquisition, development, maintenance, and operation of parks and recreational facilities.

Policy 6.1: The City will continue and enhance its agreements with Lee County government and with the School Board of Lee County for the joint development and operation of parks and recreational facilities, and shall, when possible, extend these agreements to cover new school facilities.

Policy 6.2: The City will continue to study the feasibility of the privatization of park concessions by non-governmental vendors, including community-based, not-for-profit organizations. If determined feasible, the City will amend the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate a Schedule for privatization of services.

Policy 6.3: The City will adopt, as a part of its land development regulations, in accordance with s. 163.3202 (1), F.S., incentives for private developers to create recreational facilities, which are available for public use. These incentives may include, but are not limited to, park impact fee credits or density bonuses.

Policy 6.4: Reserved.

Policy 6.5: The City will encourage contributions from private sources by creating matching funds and identifying and creating other inducements.

Policy 6.6: The City shall diversify and expand its revenue base for park and recreation facilities.

Policy 6.7: The City shall explore and initiate cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations, civic clubs, religious organizations, and other organizations in the development and maintenance of park and recreation facilities.

Policy 6.8: In acquiring and developing parks, especially neighborhood parks, the City shall seek to obtain the financial, physical, and political support of the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy 6.9: The Parks and Recreation Department shall investigate the feasibility of revising the application of park impact fees to include special and neighborhood parks.

Objective 7: The City will maintain or expand public opportunities for participation in the creative and performing arts.

Policy 7.1: The City will promote the creative and performing arts by providing appropriate outlets for artistic expression.

Policy 7.2: The City will identify other fine arts organizations, which provide visual and performing arts. The Parks and Recreation Department will attempt to coordinate their efforts with such organizations to avoid duplication of services.

Policy 7.3: The City will evaluate, for purposes of long-term development, a broad variety of arts facilities, including: outdoor performing arts facilities, community theater activities, museums, and fine arts workshops. The City will amend the Comprehensive Plan, as necessary, to incorporate those facilities into its Capital Improvement Element for which adequate demand can be established and for which a cost/benefit analysis indicates financial feasibility.

Policy 7.4: The City will construct arts facilities capable of multiple uses when such construction will increase the use of the facility without creating scheduling conflicts.

Policy 7.5: The City will promote the efficient utilization of existing cultural and performing arts facilities located at Cultural Park, as well as other existing facilities throughout the City.