
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Element is to plan for the comprehensive provision of recreational and open space opportunities for City residents in accordance with their needs. In addition, the location of Pahokee on the eastern shore of Lake Okeechobee creates an opportunity for the City to increase its economic base through the provision of regional recreational facilities. The attraction of a regional population benefits the economy and the residents of the City directly as the recreational amenities provided will far exceed those that are normally available in a community of this size. Thus, while servicing the needs of residents of Pahokee is important, the City also has a goal to serve a portion of the needs of a much larger population.

This element provides an inventory of existing park and open space facilities and an estimate of the future demand for such facilities from within and outside of the City. The future demand and needs are assessed, as well as plans devised for the programs and facilities necessary for their accommodation. The goals, objectives, and policies section of this element lists the ultimate desires of the community in the areas of recreation and open space and lists the specific measures to be taken by the community to meet those desires.

The inclusion of this ~~optional~~ element in the Comprehensive Plan reflects the City's interest, acknowledgement, and dedication to recreation lands and open spaces as a fundamental component of the community fabric. Additionally, in August 2004, the City was presented with a comprehensive master plan for two City-owned park sites: City Park and the Community Center. This Comprehensive Plan has been updated to incorporate the recommendations advanced in this parks master plan document.

INVENTORY

The City of Pahokee currently owns and operates three active recreation areas: City Park, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park, and the Community Center. Additionally, an 86-slip deep-water marina is owned by the State of Florida and leased to the City of Pahokee; the City in turn subleases the facility to a private venture.

~~Policy 6.1.2.1 directs park level of service analysis to include all publicly owned land and facilities, improved or unimproved, within the City or within one mile of the City limits which are specifically designated or intended to be used by members of the public at large for active and/or passive recreation purposes as either a primary or secondary use. To that end, the following inventory includes recreation and open space that falls under these criteria.~~

Policy 6.1.2.1 in the City's comprehensive plan directs park level of service analysis to include all publicly-owned land and facilities, improved or unimproved, within the City or within one mile of the City limits which are specifically designated or intended to be used by members of the public at-large for active and/or passive recreation purposes. The following inventory includes recreation and open space that falls under these criteria.

**Table 6-1
Recreation and Open Space Opportunities in Pahokee Area**

Facility Name	Ownership	Acreage	Location	Use / Facilities
Canal Point Park	Palm Beach County	4.54	unincorporated	1 basketball court, 2 tennis courts, playground, community/recreation center, access to US Army Corps of Engineers operated shallow boat launch area to Lake Okeechobee (located across the road), open play field, picnic area with grill, restroom facilities, parking
City Park	Pahokee	3.39	Pahokee	<u>2 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, splash pad</u> , playground, parking, gymnasium restroom, storage room, adjacent to County Library
Community Center	Pahokee	8.67	Pahokee	Athletic field, 2 multi-purpose courts, playground, parking, community/recreation center, adjacent to historically significant Old High School
Dike and lake shore	Army Corps of Engineers and State of Florida	204.20	Pahokee	Passive waterfront, Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail
Duncan Padgett Park	Palm Beach County	21.36 <u>19.36</u>	unincorporated	1 baseball field, 1 softball field, 2 lighted racquetball courts, playground, snack concession, restroom facilities, parking
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park	Pahokee	15.63	Pahokee	Athletic field, 2 basketball courts, jogging / biking trail, <u>playground</u> , community/recreation center
Marina and Campground	State of Florida*	33.00	Pahokee	86 deepwater boat slips, 4 boat ramps, campground
Triangle Park	Palm Beach County	2.94 <u>3.6</u>	unincorporated	Picnic area with grills, restroom facilities, parking
	TOTAL ACREAGE:	293.73 <u>292.39</u>		

* Owned by State of Florida's Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIIF), leased to City of Pahokee, subleased to Everglades Adventures RV & Sailing Resort.

City Park

The 3.39 acre City Park is located on the landward side of the Herbert Hoover Dike. Facilities include three tennis courts, a vacant building, two sets of restrooms, a playground, and a 20- station exercise trail. An after school program accommodating up to 60 students is available. The central location of this park makes it relatively accessible to Pahokee's residents.

The comprehensive parks master plan concluded the majority of the facilities located in City Park showed signs of significant deferred maintenance and are in need of replacement. The master plan outlines a series of improvements to facilities and programming including a splash park **(built)** and aquatics center (including new pool **(unbuilt)**), improved parking, outdoor reading, group activities associated with the adjacent Library, official trailhead connection to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, and a concession.

Community Center

Facilities at the 8.67-acre Community Center site include tennis courts, basketball courts, one former football field, a parking area, **gymnasium**, and three buildings (one houses public restrooms and the City Parks Department offices, and the other two are vacant.) Programming includes a seniors program, an after school program, a summer program, and recreational soccer. There are four classrooms and one senior/student shared facility. Like City Park, the parks master plan found the majority of the facilities located at the Community Center site displayed signs of significant deferred maintenance and were in need of replacement.

The parks master plan includes historic preservation and rehabilitation of the 11,000 square foot Old High School which is identified by the National Register of Historic Places as a significant historic resource. The building has been transformed into the Pahokee High School Learning Center which will provide day and evening educational opportunities. Many locals have expressed an interest in eventually relocating City Hall to this building. Other possible adaptive reuses include a museum dedicated to Pahokee's cultural heritage or the relocation of the Pahokee branch of the County Library system, currently housed at City Park.

Additional proposed site improvements shall include lighting for the athletic field, an outdoor amphitheatre, two tot lot playgrounds, one teen playground, a paved outdoor classroom and lunch area outside the administrative offices, improvements to the parking lot, and a life-trail fitness program to serve area senior and the Alzheimer's Center.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park

This 15.63 acre facility along East 5th Street, formally known as Pelican River Park, includes softball fields, two lighted basketball courts, playground equipment, and a large open field. Although located off of a commercial avenue, the park services several nearby neighborhoods, including a public housing development.

Marina and Campground

Everglades Adventures RV & Sailing Resort, which subleases this 33-acre facility from the City, is a complete outdoor recreation center and full service deep water marina and resort located 12.4 miles south of the St. Lucie Canal. The marina has a breakwater, fishing pier, 86 wet slips, four boat ramps, convenience store, and restrooms. The campground, formally a state park, offers 76 sites immediately adjacent to the lake, playground equipment, and picnic facilities. A community center with a banquet room and pool was constructed in 2007. A restaurant building has also been developed.

While the central location of this park makes it accessible to most Pahokee residents, it also serves a regional need for access to the lake. Planned activities and outdoor adventures on and

along the lake include guided fishing trips; kayak, canoe, and boat rentals; airboat excursions; hiking trails; sailing classes; and Eco-tours. Tent camping is permitted in designated areas and lakeside cabins are available for rent.

This facility is critical in the attraction of non-local revenues into the local economy. It is important that these uses continue to be strengthened and improved and that secondary uses be encouraged to further attract non-local revenues.

Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail

The 110-mile Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail circles the second largest freshwater lake in the contiguous United States. The multi-use trail is located atop the Herbert Hoover Dike, which surrounds the lake providing flood protection and scenic lakeside views. In Pahokee, the trail connects City Park and the marina / campground area to Alvin Ward Park in Glades County, 36 miles away. Completed in 2004, the \$13 million hiking, biking, and equestrian trail takes users through communities at the heart of Florida's agriculture industry and affords opportunities for viewing wildlife such as herons, egrets and a variety of wintering waterfowl.

The Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail is a partnership between the Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Trails Association, and local partners. In 1993, portions of the trail were designated as part of the Florida National Scenic Trail, one of only eight national scenic trails in the country.

School Board Operated Recreational Facilities

The School Board of Palm Beach County operates an elementary school, one middle / senior high school, and an alternative education school within the City limits of Pahokee. Each of these facilities provides recreational opportunities to Pahokee's student population. In the past, the City's Parks and Recreation Department has used one or more of these facilities for its recreation programs. Currently, however, there are no interlocal lease agreements between the City and School Board for use of these recreational facilities for the general population. Therefore, these facilities are omitted from the inventory used in the level of service analysis.

Palm Beach County Operated Recreational Facilities

Palm Beach County does not have any parks within Pahokee. However, there are three County-run parks just outside of the City limits: Canal Point Park and Triangle Parks just north of the City, and Duncan Padgett Park just south of the City. Collectively, the County-owned parks within one mile of the City limits total ~~28.84~~ 27.5 acres.

Privately Operated Recreational Facilities

Currently, there are no privately owned recreational facilities within the City of Pahokee. Some private fishing camps are located just outside of the City limits, but the entire lake shore within the City is publicly held. Open space, however, is one amenity that is provided privately. Approximately ~~59~~ 67.5% of the total land area in the City is in agricultural use ~~with another 2% vacant and undeveloped~~. While this land is not improved for active recreational use, it does provide a buffer of open space between the more developed areas of City ~~town~~.

The importance of maintaining some agricultural and undeveloped parcels is demonstrated in the Future Land Use Element. Although agricultural and developed uses can sometimes conflict, the open space provided by agricultural uses can be used to buffer highly developed areas while maintaining a functional use. Therefore, through careful land use planning, the City can maintain open space without having to purchase it and allow ~~for~~ for uses to continue that add to the tax base and local economy.

Summary of Existing Recreation and Open Space Facilities

Currently, there are ~~294~~ 292 acres of publicly-owned land available for recreational use in and within one mile of Pahokee’s City limits that meet the level of service criteria advanced in Policy 6.1.2.1. This acreage includes the total amount of publicly held land which is available for active or passive recreation use. A variety of recreational facilities are available to members of the public from within the City and throughout the region. Neighborhood needs for playgrounds and courts are met by City-owned and county-owned facilities, as well as for enrolled students at School Board-owned facilities. Regional needs are met by the City’s campground and marina, operated by and subleased to Everglades Adventures, and by the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. These facilities in combination with the unique location of the City on the shore of Lake Okeechobee and amidst sugar cane and vegetable fields provide recreational opportunities and amenities not normally found in communities the size of Pahokee. While many of these facilities are in decent condition, many will need to be improved and additional areas developed as residential areas are expanded or created.

FUTURE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE DEMAND

The 2007 EAR suggested a scrivener’s error in the 1989 Comprehensive Plan incorrectly denoted the dike and lake shore acreages, resulting in an extremely high and unrealistic level of service requirement (Policy 6.1.2.1). The City has chosen to amend this Policy to reflect a more realistic and achievable standard. The following analysis is therefore based on the new service standard of thirty (30) acres of parks per 1,000 residents. The projected park needs for the City are based on the 292 acres of park land inventoried in this Element. Based on the level of service standard of 30 park acres for 1,000 population, the table below shows that Pahokee will be able to uphold its parks LOS requirement through this Comprehensive Plan’s 10-year (2035) and 20-year (2045) planning periods.

Table 6-2
Projected Overall Park Needs Through 2030 (Policy 6.1.2.1)

Year	Population- (projected)*	Available Park Acres (1)	Acreage needed to- maintain LOS (2)	Surplus (+) / Deficit (-) (acres)
2007	6,479	294	194	+100
2010	6,714	294	201	+93
2014	7,033	294	211	+83
2015	7,116	294	213	+81

2020	7,546	294	226	+68
2025	8,004	294	240	+54

Year	Population (projected)*	Available Park Acres (1)	Acreage needed to maintain LOS (2)	Surplus (+) / Deficit (-) (acres)
2030	8,484	294	255	+39

(1) Based on 2007 inventory including 3 County parks outside of City limits.

(2) Based on LOS of 30 park acres per 1,000 population

* Source: U.S. Census; BEBR; Calvin, Giordano & Associates, Inc.

The projected park needs for the City are based on the 294 ~~292~~ acres of park land inventoried in this Element. With a 2007-2025 population estimate of 6,479 ~~5,665~~, a total of 194 acres are needed to maintain the 30 acres/1,000 population standard. Therefore, there is currently a 100-acre surplus of park land. Further, this analysis indicates that Pahokee will be able to uphold its parks LOS requirement through this Comprehensive Plan’s short term (510 year and long term (1020 year) planning periods. 10-year (2035) and 20-year (2045) planning periods

Table 6-2: Projected Overall Park Needs Through 2050

Year	Population (projected)	Available Park Acres ¹	Acreage needed to maintain LOS ²	Surplus (+) / Deficit (-) (acres)
2010	5,649	<u>292</u>	<u>169</u>	+123
2020	5,524	<u>292</u>	<u>166</u>	+126
2022	5,579	<u>292</u>	<u>167</u>	+125
2025	5,665	<u>292</u>	<u>170</u>	+122
2030	5,781	<u>292</u>	<u>173</u>	+119
2035	5,869	<u>292</u>	<u>176</u>	+116
2040	5,929	<u>292</u>	<u>178</u>	+114
2045	5,960	<u>292</u>	<u>179</u>	+113
2050	5,983	<u>292</u>	<u>180</u>	+112

¹ Based on information from Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation

² Based on LOS of 30 park acres per 1,000 Population

Sources: Estimates and projections by Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, based on 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census data and population projections by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

In addition to the overall level-of-service standard for parks, Policy 6.1.1.1 requires that new development meet a LOS standard of three (3) acres of City-owned recreation facilities, improved for active and passive use, for every 1,000 City residents. The caveat of “City-owned” parks restricts the acreage that may be used in this analysis to only City Park, the Community Center, and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park; collectively these parks total ~~28~~27.⁶⁹ acres. Following is an analysis using these criteria.

**Table 6-3
Projected City-owned Park Needs Through 2030~~50~~**

Year	Population- (projected)*	Available City-owned Park Acres (1)	Estimated Demand (acres) (2)	Surplus (+)/ Deficit (-) (acres)
2007	6,479	28	19.4	+ 8.6
2010	6,711	28	20.4	+ 7.9
2014	7,033	28	21.4	+ 6.9
2015	7,116	28	21.3	+ 6.7
2020	7,546	28	22.6	+ 5.4
2025	8,001	28	24.0	+ 4.0
2030	8,484	28	25.5	+ 2.5

(1) Based on 2007 inventory

(2) Based on LOS of 3 acres of City-owned parks per 1,000 population

* Source: U.S. Census; BEBR; Calvin, Giordano & Associates, Inc.

Year	Population (projected)	Available City-owned Park Acres (1)	Estimated Demand (acres) (2)	Surplus (+) / Deficit (-) (acres)
<u>2022</u>	<u>5,579</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>16.7</u>	<u>+11.0</u>
<u>2025</u>	<u>5,665</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>17.0</u>	<u>+10.7</u>
<u>2030</u>	<u>5,781</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>17.3</u>	<u>+10.4</u>
<u>2035</u>	<u>5,869</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>+10.</u>
<u>2040</u>	<u>5,929</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>17.8</u>	<u>+9.9</u>
<u>2045</u>	<u>5,960</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>17.9</u>	<u>+9.8</u>
<u>2050</u>	<u>5,983</u>	<u>27.69</u>	<u>17.9</u>	<u>+9.8</u>

(1) Based on information from Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation

(2) Based on LOS of 3 acres of City-owned parks per 1,000 population

Sources: Estimates and projections by Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, based on 2010 and 2020 U.S. Census data and population projections by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida.

As is the case with the general LOS standard, this analysis indicates that Pahokee will be able to uphold its City-owned parks LOS requirement through this Comprehensive Plan's ~~short-term (5-year) and long-term (10-year)~~ 10-year (2035) and 20-year (2045) planning periods. However, the City needs to ensure the maintenance of its existing facilities and the provision of new facilities to continue to meet the needs and desires of the community.

The following Goals, Objectives, and Policies are hereby provided to steer the City of Pahokee toward a future of successful and adequate recreation and open space opportunities by accommodating the needs of existing and future residents and ensuring the current level of service standard.

Recreation and Open Space Element Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 6.1 Provide recreational facilities to meet the needs and desires of the existing and future residents of Pahokee and provide regional facilities to attract regional users for the benefit of the local economy.

Objective 6.1.1- New development shall be required to meet the level of service standard set forth in this element for the provision of City-owned active and passive recreation areas.

Policy 6.1.1.1 - New development shall be required to meet a level of service standard of 3 acres of City-owned recreation facilities improved for active and passive use primarily by residents of the City for every 1,000 City residents. Such facilities shall be made available concurrent with impacts of new development. This standard shall be used in the Capital Improvements Element of this Comprehensive Plan and shall be used for the determination of concurrency as defined in that element.

Policy 6.1.1.2 - In accordance with Section 163.3202, F.S., land development regulations shall be adopted which define recreation, parks, and open space and which require new subdivisions and large developments to provide appropriate public recreation, parks, and open space facilities, consistent with the level of service standard given in Policy 6.1.1.1.

Policy 6.1.1.3 - In accordance with Section 163.3202, F.S., land development regulations shall be adopted which provide standards for public access to parks including: automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian entrances; automobile and bicycle parking and circulation; and handicapped parking, entrances, and ramps.

Objective 6.1.2 - Active and passive recreation areas shall be provided by a coordinated effort involving the City, county, school board, state, and the private sector; and the City shall establish a level of service standard for all publicly-owned land available for active or passive recreational use to be used for coordinating the availability of such land with other governmental agencies and when determining the long range recreational and open space needs of City residents, and insuring continuous public access to all public recreation sites identified in this element.

Policy 6.1.2.1 - For the purposes of the level of service standard established in this objective, recreation and open space shall be collectively referred to as “parks” which shall be defined as: all publicly-owned land and facilities, improved or unimproved, within the City or within one mile of the City limits which are specifically designated or intended to be used by members of the public at-large for active and/or passive recreation purposes as either a primary or secondary use. Parks as deferred herein, shall be made available at a level of service of 30 acres per 1,000 City residents.

Policy 6.1.2.2 - The City shall maintain an inventory of all parks within the City and within one mile of the City. Such inventory shall include the agency owning the park, the agency responsible for operating and maintaining the park, the primary use of the park site, and the active and passive recreational facilities available at the park.

Policy 6.1.2.3 - The City shall continue to meet annually with the county, school board, and state to discuss improvements to the park facilities owned by these agencies within Pahokee or within one mile of Pahokee.

Policy 6.1.2.4 - The City shall continually solicit resident commentary to assess satisfaction with those recreational and open space facilities in and within one mile of the City.

Policy 6.1.2.5 - In accordance with Section 163.3202, F.S., land development regulations shall be adopted which are consistent with the Future Land Use map and which limit development in designated agricultural buffer areas for the maintenance of open space.

Policy 6.1.2.6 - Through the Future Land Use Map and land development regulations, the City shall direct new development to those areas where existing agricultural or open space areas can be used to buffer dissimilar developed land uses.

Objective 6.1.2 - In accordance with Section 163.3202, F.S., land development regulations shall be adopted which provide for the provision of improved recreation facilities in underserved areas of the City.

Policy 6.1.2.1 – The City shall to the extent financially feasible strive to make available park, recreation, and open space facilities to all residents within a half (½) mile of their home. Residential areas currently not within ½ mile of a park should be given priority for accessibility to new public parks.

Objective 6.1.3 - The marina and campground shall continue to be maintained to attract a regional population, improve the local economy, and ~~ensure~~ ensure public access to the Lake Okeechobee shoreline.

Policy 6.1.3.1 - The City shall continue its sublease agreement with a private developer for the improvement of the marina facilities and the development of related tourist oriented facilities.

Policy 6.1.3.2 - The City shall continue to work with the State of Florida, Army Corps of Engineers, and South Florida Water Management District to optimize the recreational opportunities afforded by the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.

Policy 6.1.3.3 - ~~By the year 2012, t~~The City shall seek funding for and begin to develop a trailhead at City Park for the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.