

# PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

## Background

The purpose of the Public Spaces, Parks, and Recreation Element is to establish planning practices that support the development and maintenance of public spaces, parks, and recreational facilities play in West Melbourne. Public space, parks, and recreational facilities are essential to the development of great communities as they provide opportunities for community members and visitors to congregate, relax, recreate, and participate in social activities. As the spaces that bring residents, business people, workers, and visitors together, community spaces such as these are central to what makes a community some place special.

The Public Spaces, Parks, and Recreation Element sets the framework for how to unite the community's residents, businesses, and visitors together in places that include civic buildings, shops and business services, parks, and other public spaces. This framework is a cornerstone of West Melbourne's future planning vision as it will enable the city to create a unique community that provides members and visitors a high quality of life and exceptional municipal services.

## Planning Framework

The objectives and policies established in the Conservation and Open Space Element provide a planning framework which:

- Identifies how to promote the development of community-oriented, neighborhood-based public places, parks, and recreational facility.
- Assesses how the development of community spaces support the plan's other planning directives.
- Adopts policies that guide the development and promote the use of public spaces.
- Achieves the community planning vision established through the Horizon 2030 EAR and 2010 Comprehensive Plan.
- Addresses the guiding issues and community concerns identified in the 2009 EAR.
- Provides for local, regional, and state planning priorities, principles, and practices.

The Public Spaces, Parks, and Recreation Element accomplishes its goal to *"foster West Melbourne's quality of life, well-being, and sense of place by providing a diverse variety of public spaces, parks, and recreational resources that meet the needs of a multi-generational community"* through planning directives aimed at:

- Utilizing park and public spaces to foster and support the city's unique identity, sense of place, character, and small hometown lifestyle.
- Establishing level of service standards that address accessibility, condition, utilization, distribution, and financial needs of the city's parks and public spaces.
- Partnering with local, regional, and state organizations on the provision and maintenance of parks, recreation, and public spaces.

By addressing these issues, the Public Spaces, Parks, and Recreation Element will enable the city to provide places where people can come together to create a community and, thereby, achieve its community vision of becoming a small hometown with a unique identity and distinct sense of place.

## **Public Spaces, Parks, and Recreation Goal**

Foster West Melbourne's quality of life, well-being, and sense of place by providing a diverse variety of public spaces, parks, and recreational resources that meet the needs of a multi-generational community.

### ***Objective 1: Sense of Place and Community Character Qualities***

Utilize park and public spaces to foster and support the city's unique identity, sense of place, character, and small hometown lifestyle.

#### *Policies*

##### **1.1 Community Character Resources**

Utilize park and public space resources and facilities to establish a unique community identity, create a unifying theme, and foster a distinct sense of place. Such facilities may include:

- a. Community and neighborhood center parks and civic areas.
- b. Community gateways.
- c. Parks and green space.
- d. Sidewalks and trails that link neighborhoods to parks, shops, and schools.
- e. Streetscape, landscaping, and trees, lighting and signs.
- f. Walking and biking trails.
- g. Sports and recreational facilities.

##### **1.2 Community Lifestyle Features**

Support the city's identity as the best little enclave in Central Florida by developing, expanding, and maintaining public space and park resources that:

- a. Support the city's architectural design features.
- b. Provide additional community resources where community members can interact and socialize.
- c. Create public gathering places and centralized parks for community events such as festivals, farmers markets, and concerts.
- d. Support community activities through resources such as water features, public fountains, benches, playgrounds, and trees.
- e. Encourage recreation and respite through parks, bike trails, walking paths, and sport facilities.

##### **1.3 Community Lifestyle Facilities**

By 2015, identify community needs for special events, community centers, and gathering spaces and develop a strategy to support the development of resources and facilities which meet those needs. Establish a solid program that is inclusive of the City's population and demographic composition in the City's recently identified indoor community recreation center.

#### **1.4** Neighborhood Character and Design

Ensure the design of neighborhood parks employs aesthetic architectural character and low maintenance landscaping features.

- a. Parks and public spaces that are being created in new neighborhoods and development areas shall establish the design features as part of the overall development strategy and master plan.
- b. Parks and public spaces that are located within existing neighborhoods and development areas shall incorporate the design features that are found in and support the design and character of the surrounding areas.

#### **1.5** Local Neighborhood Needs

The city shall work with recognized neighborhood organizations to meet local neighborhood park and public space needs and address local resource issues.

#### **1.6** Park and Public Space Connectivity

Explore opportunities to connect parks and public spaces through pedestrian/bike access ways including linear parks, sidewalks, trails, and greenways. This connectivity should:

- a. Integrate the city's parks, public spaces, community neighborhoods, mixed-use areas, and commercial centers.
- b. Implement strategies established through the city's Parks and Recreation Plan and Sidewalk Master Plan.

#### **1.7** New Resources

Explore opportunities to acquire and create additional city owned parks and public spaces based upon financial feasibility and identified community needs.

#### **1.8** Boundless Parks and PAL Facilities

Support the initiative to convert the existing Max K. Rodes Park into a boundless park and to accommodate Police Athletic League (PAL) facilities.

### ***Objective 2: Facility Development Standards and Service Priorities***

Establish level of service standards that address accessibility, condition, utilization, distribution, and financial needs of the city's parks and public spaces.

#### *Policies*

#### **2.1** Parks Level of Service

Maintain a minimum level of service of 4 acres of parks and public spaces for each 1,000 population. Residential development shall be required to provide the appropriate amount of park space in relationship to the 4 acre standard or pay in lieu of fees, or other fees towards the city's recreation needs.

#### **2.2** Coordinated Planning Efforts

The city shall achieve its future community planning vision by ensure that all newly developed parks and improvements to existing parks are completed in accordance with the city's comprehensive plan directives, level of service standards, park master planning strategies, and Land Development Regulations.

### **2.3** Diverse Park, Public Space and Recreational Resources

Provide for the many needs and interests of a multi-generational community by providing an array of park, public space, and recreational resources that meet the recreational, sport, social, and leisure needs of the community. Such resources include:

- a. Active and passive park space.
- b. Plazas and courtyards.
- c. Pedestrian and bicycle trails,
- d. Walking paths and sidewalks.
- e. Sport facilities, playgrounds, and other physical activity areas.

### **2.4** Resources for All Development Areas

Ensure that all new residential and mixed-use developments have appropriate park, recreation, and public space resources based upon project size and community needs or are contributing to community recreation needs.

### **2.5** Accessibility for All Users

All future recreation facilities shall be usable and accessible to all segments of the population, including special groups such as the handicapped, the elderly, and the very young.

### **2.6** Development and Facility Operation Accessibility Considerations

Utilize the city's development process and parks operation efforts to ensure public access is provided to recreation facilities located within the city. Specific accessibility issues to consider include:

- a. Multi-modal accessibility resources and infrastructure needs such as:
  - i. Vehicular parking areas.
  - ii. Bicycle racks.
  - iii. Bike-ped paths and walkways.
  - iv. Transit stops and shelters.
- b. Disability accessibility features and resources.

### **2.7** Pedestrian Friendly Locations

The city shall strive to have a variety of park, recreational, and public space resources within a mile of all neighborhoods as available based upon financial feasibility that are accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **2.8** Master Plan Implementation

Maintain, update, and implement the City of West Melbourne Parks and Recreation Master Plan to ensure that the city's park system addresses the current needs of the community.

### **2.9** Variety of Needs, Array of Resources

Utilize the site and development process to ensure all developments provide an array of park and public space resources to meet the community's needs. The following issues ought to be addressed by each new development:

- a. Type and function of park, recreation, and public space resources.
- b. Location of resources in relationship to other amenities, residential dwelling units, and park or public space facilities both within the development and the surrounding area.

- c. Master plans for residential developments that meet Development of Regional Impact thresholds shall incorporate the facility design, types, size, location, and sidewalk access, into an overall development plan. Issues that ought to be addressed by this master plan include:
  - i. Mobility features
  - ii. Pedestrian accessibility and connectivity
  - iii. Architectural features
  - iv. Landscaping/hardscaping components

**2.10 Developer Contributions**

Continue to require dedication of land or payment of fee in lieu of land for all residential developments in the city, or create an impact fee.

**2.11 Facility Ownership**

Public, semi-public, and privately owned lands that are open and available for public use shall be counted to meet the adopted LOS for parks.

**2.12 Budgeting and Funding**

The city shall continue to budget funds to develop, expand, improve, and maintain park and public space, and recreational resources.

- a. The budget shall consider a variety of financial sources including: general fund, recreation special revenue fund, and recycling grant fund.
- b. The city shall pursue grants, foundations, and other public/private funding sources.

***Objective 3: Interagency Coordination***

Partner with local, regional, and state organizations regarding the maintenance and development of parks, recreation, and public spaces.

*Policies*

**3.1 County Park Facility Coordinated Management**

Coordinate with Brevard County regarding the operation and improvements of county parks located within the city including the reuse of the existing Max K. Rodes Park and continuing function of Erna Nixon Park, as well as the new Regional Max K. Rodes Park.

**3.2 School Facility Coordination**

Coordinate with the School Board regarding the operation and improvements of the recreation areas at Meadowlane Elementary School and Central Junior High School.

**3.3 Coordinated Park Development**

Coordinate with Brevard County to ensure that parks and recreational facilities in and around the city are available and maintained to accommodate the area's growth and demand for parks and public spaces.

**3.4 Shared Facilities Cooperative Agreement**

The city shall continue to develop cooperative agreements with private developments, recreational organizations, and other county-based organizations for the use, promotion, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities by the community-at-large.

**3.5** Regional Linear Park System

Participate with local, regional, and state organizations in the development of a regional linear park system that includes trails, bikeways, footpaths, and sidewalks. Coordinate such efforts with the Brevard County master trail, parks, and recreation efforts.

**3.6** Resource Co-location

Coordinate with local, regional, and state organizations on the use, co-location, siting, and design of cultural, education, park, recreation, and sport facilities.

**3.7** Transit Linkages

Coordinate with the Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) to provide bus service to regional parks and recreation facilities.