

II. PARK AND OPEN SPACE GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

A direction for the future of a community park and open space system is defined through the establishment of goals, objectives and policies that serve as the basis for all subsequent planning efforts. The terms goals, objectives and policies are frequently used interchangeably even though each has a very distinct definition. It is, therefore, appropriate to define each of these terms to eliminate confusion about their meaning. Goals are general in nature and represent conditions that are desired but may not be fully attainable. Goals typically are expressed in broad statements such as "to provide clean air and water in all parks." Objectives define the specific routes or actions that should be taken to achieve a goal. For example, an objective might be "construction of two new neighborhood parks in the community during the next year." By suggesting ways to reach a goal, objectives provide the direction that will help the Town lay out choices to consider in meeting the community needs. Policies are rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation. An example of a policy would be "all public recreation facilities shall be accessible to the disabled."

Since the development of goals, objectives, and policies for the park and open space system represents the basic recreational values and needs of the community, it also then forms the basis for subsequent development of park and open space standards. With the above-mentioned factors in mind, the following set of goals, objectives and policies was formally approved in conjunction with the adoption of this document.

Goal:

Ensure provision and protection of sufficient parks, outdoor recreation facilities and open space areas to satisfy the health, safety, and welfare needs of residents and visitors, including special groups such as the elderly, the disabled, and pre-school age children.

Objectives:

1. To preserve natural features and amenities and conserve natural resources for the benefit of the community and society as a whole.
2. To provide quality outdoor recreation and access to open space lands and facilities for each neighborhood of the community.
3. To coordinate the addition of new park and open space lands and facilities to the Town park system in conjunction with new development and redevelopment projects.
4. To provide a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities so that residents of all ages have an equal opportunity to enjoy the park and open space system.

Policies:

1. The type of park and open space facilities should be scaled to the needs of the area and population served, both present and future.
2. Whenever possible, all park sites and experiences will be made accessible to all potential users, in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

3. Acquisition of park and open space lands should be coordinated with development to provide for reasonable acquisition costs and to facilitate site planning for development. Alternative means of reserving lands required for open space use should be fully explored to ensure that lands are obtained at the lowest cost to the public.
4. Preservation of environmental corridors, isolated natural areas, undeveloped floodplains, and other unique natural resource features in their natural state should receive special attention to ensure their maintenance as wildlife and fish habitats, as natural drainage areas, as groundwater recharge areas, and as areas for passive outdoor recreation, where appropriate.
5. Conservancy lands, which can be adequately and appropriately protected without public expenditure, should be preserved. Public funds should be used to acquire conservancy lands that cannot be protected through other means, or where public access is a high priority.
6. The Town should investigate all regulatory and acquisition tools available to preserve conservancy lands or other open space.
7. Whenever possible, parks and public areas will be linked to neighborhoods and each other by a system of non-motorized trails and path systems.
8. All parks should have multiple access points from surrounding neighborhoods.
9. Neighborhood parks should be sited and designed to enhance neighborhood cohesion and to provide a common neighborhood gathering place.
10. Park development should be planned to avoid creating nuisance situations between neighbors and park users.
11. All park and open space planning and design projects should be coordinated with land acquisition, land use control and planning programs of all federal, state, county and local agencies concerned with parks and conservation.
12. School lands and facilities will be used for park and recreational purposes where appropriate and feasible.
13. Active parklands in undeveloped areas should be acquired through developer land dedications where feasible.
14. All new residential development in the Town shall meet the park and open space standards and recommendations as outlined in this Plan.