

ANALYSIS

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Planning Areas

Recreational facilities are assigned to one of two planning areas:

- * **Gainesville Urban Area**
- * **Quadrant**

"Urban Area" facilities and parks are those which, because they are few and so popular, are able to attract users from throughout the urban area. "Quadrant" facilities and parks are more widely dispersed, but tend to attract users from only a relatively small service radius (e.g., one or several neighborhoods).

Both of these geographic areas constitute service radii. Each radius is then used to calculate facility and park deficiencies. The more traditional service radius concept, which plots a circular radius around facilities, is retained as a device to determine the appropriate location of new facilities.

Map 13 shows the boundaries of the Gainesville City limits. The map also shows the four quadrants.

- * Southeast Quadrant
- * Northeast Quadrant
- * Northwest Quadrant
- * Southwest Quadrant

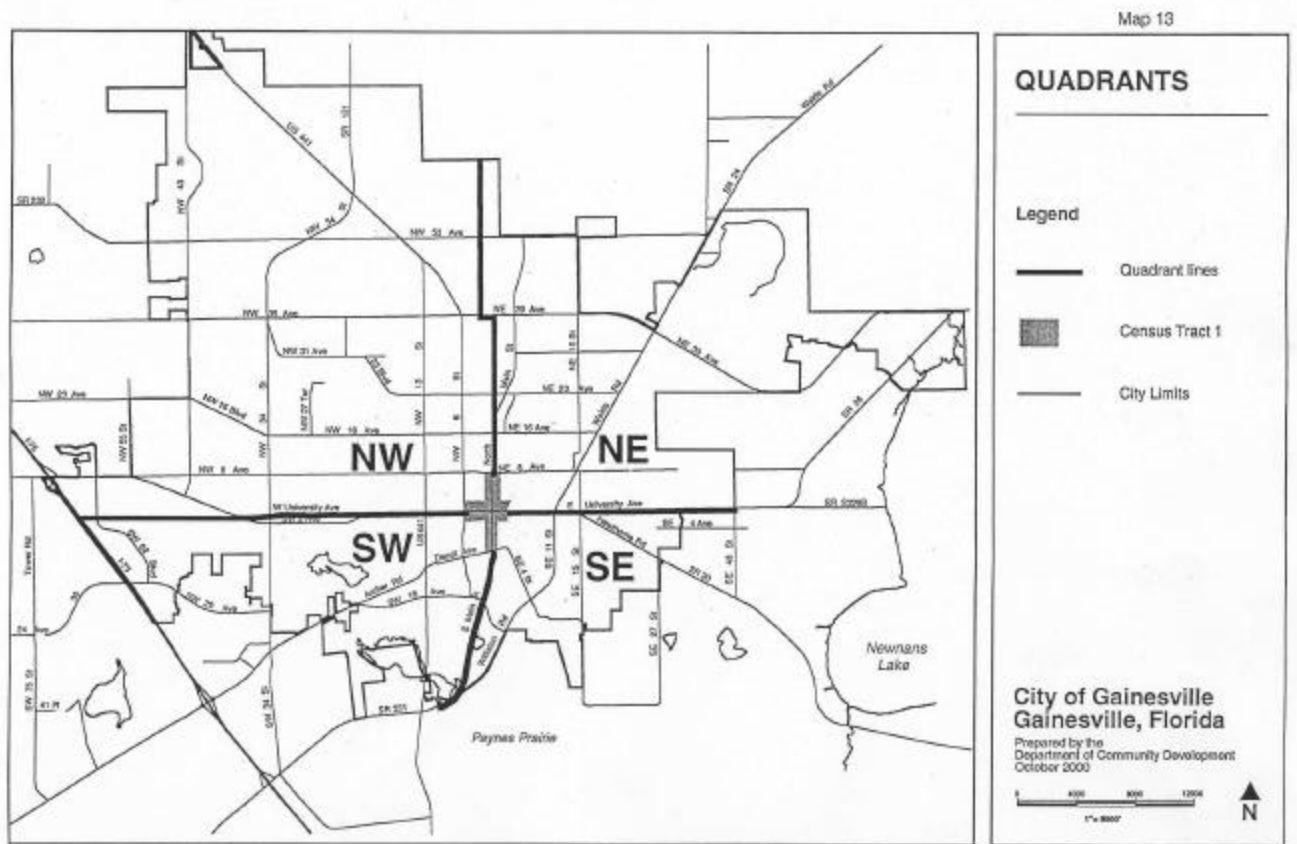
The Central City District (CCD) and the University of Florida receive somewhat different treatment within the Element. The CCD population, because of its central location, is not incorporated in "quadrant-level" recreation analysis, as it is assumed that the small number of residents have equal and adequate access to all quadrants. However, facilities and parks within the CCD are assigned to appropriate quadrants based on street address.

The area made up entirely of the campus of the University of Florida, will be treated in a manner similar to the CCD. Individuals living on campus shall not be counted in quadrant or urban area-wide population totals. This treatment is based upon the following assumptions:

- * The University is not amenable to City or County recreation/open space planning.
- * The University offers a wide range of recreation/open space amenities which often exceed the quantity, quality and diversity enjoyed by non-student residents and residents not employed by the University.

- * The University adequately provides for the recreation/open space needs of on-campus residents.

Map 13 Quadrants



- * A large percentage of on-campus residents do not have sufficient transportation access to freely utilize many urban area facilities such as local nature parks, regional nature parks, sports complexes, and quadrant-level facilities.

However, Lake Alice on the University of Florida campus is considered a publicly accessible local nature park. (This facility would be classified as a regional nature park if there were more adequate public access.) The acreage of the Lake Alice site is therefore included in quadrant and urban area-wide park acreage calculations.

Level of Service Standards for Recreation

In addition to the level-of-service standards used to calculate deficiencies and surpluses, the following policies should be adhered to:

- * Both the sports-complex park and local nature park can be overlays to other park types.
- * All baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, and tennis courts should be lighted when appropriate.
- * Existing facilities should be in no worse than "poor" condition.
- * Regionally significant rail-trails (at least 5 miles in length) and quadrant facilities built at a sports-complex can be used to satisfy deficiencies for any of the four quadrants, regardless of the quadrant within which the complex or trail is built.

The following assumptions were made in developing level-of-service standards for facilities and parks:

- * The adopted standards are considered minimum standards, rather than ideal standards.

Active Urban Area Parks and Facilities

There is no existing and developed sports-complex park in the urban area. The 67.3 active acres at - Boulware Springs, however, are assumed to be suitable for the development of a sports-complex.

Urban Area Passive Parks and the Emerald Necklace

There is a substantial amount of regional park acreage in the Gainesville urban area. Much of this acreage is either not developed for public use or provides only limited access. One of the principal functions of the

"Emerald Necklace" would be to provide better access between these large regional parks (or "gems") and other areas.

There was no local nature park classification in the 1980 Comprehensive Plan. The local nature park is primarily designed to provide and improve public access to environmentally significant open space. Presently, there are seven publicly accessible sites which, because they are developed to accommodate passive recreation, qualify for this classification. Those that are not developed for recreation are designated as public conservation areas.

"Linear corridors," which are a special type of trail, can be considered the connecting strands of the Emerald Necklace since they often link the gems of the Necklace. Many radiate like "spokes" from the interior of the city (see Map 1). The corridors can provide transportation and recreational opportunities for non-motorized transportation modes such as walking, jogging, and bicycling. They can also provide for some degree of wildlife corridor access, where feasible. Through the use of features such as abandoned railroad rights-of-way, utility rights-of-way, and creek beds, corridors can link several active and passive parks. As a long-range objective, corridors should be developed to provide connections between residential, commercial, and industrial locations in a manner similar to the city's road network.

Southeast Quadrant

The southeast quadrant is the smallest of the four quadrants. Because of the relatively low population, and the presence of T.B. McPherson Park and Lincoln/Williams school, there are adequate recreational facilities available. However, many facilities need repair, and the facilities are probably too widely dispersed. This is of particular concern since socioeconomically depressed areas such as the southeast quadrant experience public facility inadequacies much more acutely than more affluent areas, where residents may have better access to private and semi-private recreational opportunities and non-local facilities.

In addition to repair and replacement of facilities, efforts to meet recreational needs within this quadrant should include an increase in staffing for facilities in combination with initiatives designed to encourage participation in recreational activities. Again, such measures are important as a result of the unique socioeconomic status of the quadrant. Table 4 inventories recreational facilities in the southeast quadrant, and shows projected deficiencies and surpluses.

Southwest Quadrant

The southwest quadrant is unique among the four quadrants in that it contains both the University of Florida campus and a large concentration of student apartment complexes. These complexes typically provide various types of on-site recreational facilities for use by apartment residents.

There are no community parks within the city portion of this quadrant, and there is only one - community park (Forest Park) in the unincorporated area. Table 5 inventories recreational facilities in the southwest quadrant, and shows projected deficiencies and surpluses. The southwest quadrant contains the University of Florida

campus and a relatively large number of student apartment complexes. Both the campus and several complexes contain various outdoor recreational facilities used by on-campus students and residents of the off-campus complexes. These facilities often include swimming pools.

A 1986 Department of Community Development study examined 51 student apartment complexes in the southwest quadrant and found that 60 percent provided an on-site swimming pool. Another study conducted by Alachua County in 1990 found 41 swimming pools provided by apartment complexes in the unincorporated urban area of southwest Gainesville. Current apartment developments in the area indicate that pools continue to be a featured amenity. For these reasons, it can be assumed that the swimming pool needs of quadrant residents will be met for the foreseeable future.

The University, because of its recreational facilities and large greenspaces, provides students and some residents of the southwest many of the amenities found at a community park. The campus contains a 100+-acre local nature park (Lake Alice), 5 basketball courts, 32 tennis courts, 15 racquetball courts, four softball fields, 8 soccer fields, an outdoor swimming pool, and several picnic and trail facilities. For these reasons, it can be assumed that the community park needs of quadrant residents will be met for the foreseeable future.

Table 4. Southeast Quadrant - Inventory

Park	Type	Owner	Acres	Active	Passive	Land	Water	Baseball/ Softball	Soccer	25yd Pool	Trails	Bkball Hoops	Tennis	R-ball
CITY LOCATION														
Boulevard Springs	Community-U	City	103.30	67.30	36.00	103.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Community Plaza	Special	City	1.21	1.21	0.00	1.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Huebner Rail Trail	Linear	State	17 mi	17 mi	0.00	17 mi	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lincoln Williams	Neigh'd	SBAC-P	28.70	28.70	0.00	28.70	0.00	2.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Lynch	Mini	City	1.40	1.40	0.00	1.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #22	Mini	City	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #05	Mini	City	0.60	0.60	0.00	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
WA #1	Neigh'd	City	3.80	3.80	0.00	3.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
T.B. McPherson	Community	City	15.00	15.00	0.00	15.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	4.00	4.00	2.00
Williams Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	3.80	3.80	0.00	3.80	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Woodland	Neigh'd	City	5.31	5.31	0.00	5.31	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
COUNTY LOCATION														
Paynes Prairie	Regional	State	19728.20	0.00	19728.20	19353.61	374.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prairie Creek Park	Regional	WMD	202.50	0.00	202.50	202.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prairie View Elem.	Neigh'd	SBAC	5.50	5.50	0.00	5.50	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
TOTALS:			20089.82	132.32	19967.50	19725.23	374.56	7.00	9.00	1.00	3.70	13.00	6.00	2.00
Community Park Total			82.30											
Neighborhood Park Total			46.31											

* SBAC schools are not officially considered public parks. Such schools provide only limited public access for recreation. This access is typically during evenings & weekends, and only when not in use for SBAC programs. They are inventoried solely for the purpose of determining neighborhood-level recreational levels-of-service.

Rec.MS4(SBQUAD)

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, September 2000.

Revised: 10/4/00

Table 5. Southwest Quadrant - Inventory

Park	Type	Owner	Acres	Active	Passive	Land	Water	Baseball/Softball	Soccer	25yd Pool	Trails	Basketball Hoops	Tennis	Roller Skating
CITY LOCATION														
Audubon Golf Course	L. Nature	Private	38.00	0.00	38.00	20.40	11.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Beverly Arm Nature	L. Nature	City	56.00	0.00	56.00	14.00	42.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cockdough Nature Park	Conservation	City	4.98	0.00	4.98	3.46	1.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Green Acres	Neigh'd	City	37.03	20.03	17.00	37.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lake Alice	L. Nature	State	120.00	0.00	120.00	10.00	110.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mud Park #07	Neigh'd	City	0.20	0.00	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Timber Creek	Neigh'd	City	4.18	4.18	0.00	4.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
University of Florida	Special	State	356.70	282.30	73.40	356.70	0.00	4.00	8.00	0.00	1.50	4.00	32.00	15.00
Yonge (P.K.)	Neigh'd	State	12.70	12.70	0.00	12.70	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
COUNTY LOCATION														
Forest Park	Community-U	County	24.70	24.70	0.00	24.70	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gainesville Golf	Special	Private	140.00	140.00	0.00	140.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Idylwild Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	11.70	11.70	0.00	11.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kemp Addition (Dunk of all)	Conservation	City	20.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kanapaha Botanical	L. Nature	County	62.00	0.00	62.00	62.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kanapaha Park	Community-U	County	23.00	23.00	0.00	23.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lake Kanapaha	Conservation	County	453.37	0.00	453.37	150.00	303.37	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Squirrel Ridge	Community	County	16.80	16.80	0.00	16.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sugarbush Hammock	Conservation	City	333.00	0.00	333.00	333.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wiles Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	6.92	6.92	0.00	6.92	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS:			1720.76	542.53	1178.23	1252.29	458.47	6.00	15.00	0.00	9.50	17.00	37.00	15.00
Community Park														
Neighborhood Park														
64.50														
72.53														

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Rec.Ms4(SWQUAD)

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, September 2000.

Revised: 10/5/00

Northwest Quadrant

The northwest quadrant is the most affluent of the four quadrants, and contains the largest residential population and acreage. Table 6 inventories recreational facilities in the northwest quadrant. The quadrant contains the "ecological backbone" of the community; namely, the Hogtown Creek system. - Public access along this creek corridor has increased due to the acquisition and development of Ring Park. When combined with the efforts to protect or acquire properties throughout the Hogtown and other creek systems, the City is well on its way to developing an interconnected trail network for public access and ecological enhancement in this quadrant and others.

On March 17, 1998, a charter amendment was approved by City voters that would not allow paving of the Hogtown Creek Greenway. Because of confusion concerning the language in the amendment, it has been suggested that the proposal could actually prevent the City from doing any paving in the Hogtown Creek Watershed, including roads, sidewalks, tennis courts or basketball courts. The Hogtown Creek Watershed generally includes the entire western half of Gainesville, including the currently vacant Possum Creek Park. This increases the difficulty in improving recreation levels of service, particularly in the northwest quadrant.

Because most of the growth in the community is occurring in the western half of the City, there is more pressure on the recreation facilities that currently exist in the area, such as Westside Park. The ability to develop Possum Creek Park would ease some of the pressure and improve levels of service in the area.

Table 6. Northwest Quadrant - Inventory

Park	Type	Owner	Acres	Active	Passive	Land	Water	Baseball/Softball	Soccer	25yd Pool	Trails	Softball Hoops	Tennis	R-Ball
CITY LOCATION														
ANNIE	Mini	City	0.91	0.91	0.00	0.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
AO Jones Sch	Neigh'd	SBAC	4.41	4.41	0.00	4.41	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Finley Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	17.00	17.00	0.00	17.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gladysville High	Neigh'd	SBAC	6.10	6.10	0.00	6.10	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Glen Springs Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	8.80	8.80	0.00	8.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Green Tree	Community-U	City	21.00	21.00	0.00	21.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
HGP2	Conservation	City	11.21	0.00	11.21	11.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hogdown Creek Gateway	Conservation	City	484.00	0.00	484.00	484.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Keweenaw	Mini	City	2.30	2.30	0.00	2.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Littewood Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	7.00	7.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lobby Enw Educ Fac	Local Nature	City	108.00	0.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #03	Mini	City	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #04	Mini	City	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #05	Mini	City	0.40	0.40	0.00	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #09	Mini	City	0.13	0.13	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
North Springs	Neigh'd	City	4.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northside	Community-U	City	34.50	34.50	0.00	34.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Norton Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	4.50	4.50	0.00	4.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Oak Hill	Mini	City	0.27	0.27	0.00	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Potomac Creek	Community-U	City	80.00	40.00	40.00	80.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rag Park	L. Nature	City	19.26	0.00	19.26	19.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ross Williams	Neigh'd	City	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Shamie Flor Park	Neigh'd	City	0.73	0.73	0.00	0.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Shirley Lanier Center	Neigh'd	SBAC	7.30	7.30	0.00	7.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stephen Foster Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	9.80	9.80	0.00	9.80	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Stephen Foster Mini	Mini	Private	1.41	1.41	0.00	1.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tenwilder Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	7.70	7.70	0.00	7.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Tenwilder Pond	Conservation	County	24.00	0.00	24.00	20.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Westside	Community	City	28.30	28.30	0.00	28.30	0.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	1.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Westwood Middle Sch	Neigh'd	SBAC	8.00	8.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00

Rec.xls4(NWQUAD)

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, September 2005.

Revised: 10/5/06

Table 6. Northwest Quadrant - Inventory

Park	Type	Owner	Acres	Active	Passive	Land	Water	Baseball/ Softball	Soccer	25yd Pool	Trails	Bkball Hoops	Tennis	R-ball
COUNTY LOCATION														
Burnholz High	Neighborhood	SBAC	17.60	17.60	0.00	17.60	0.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Duffy's Mill/Prosper	Regional	State	259.00	0.00	259.00	259.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00
El Centro Middle Sch	Neighborhood	SBAC	14.10	14.10	0.00	14.10	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Felisen Oak Elementary	Neighborhood	SBAC	7.00	7.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00
San Felipe Elementary	Regional	State	6010.46	0.00	6010.46	6010.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sam's Fe CC	Special	State	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	1.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
Talbot Elementary	Neighborhood	SBAC	6.60	6.60	0.00	6.60	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	8.00	5.00
TOTALS:			7237.67	281.94	6555.93	7233.67	4.00	19.00	9.00	1.00	6.75	49.00	23.00	15.00
Community Park						121.80								
Neighborhood Park						133.54								

* SBAC schools are not officially conditioned public parks. Such schools provide only limited public access for recreation. This access is typically during evenings & weekends, and only when not in use for SBAC programs. They are mentioned solely for the purpose of determining neighborhood-level recreational levels-of-service.

Northeast Quadrant

Because of the existence of several schools, as well as the Young American, Northeast, Morningside, and Copeland Settlement parks, there is a surplus of several quadrant facilities (see Table 7).

Allocating Deficiencies to Planning Areas

After raw park and facility deficiencies are calculated for each planning area, such deficiencies must be allocated to projects. Projects include: (a) generalized areas where new park acreage must be acquired to correct acreage deficiencies (and in most cases, deficient facilities that are to be built at the new park site); and (b) existing parks with excess acreage available and suitable for the building of deficient facilities.

Table 7. Northeast Quadrant - Inventory

Park	Type	Owner	Acres	Active	Passive	Land	Water	Baseball/ Softball	Soccer	25yd Pool	Trails	Bkball Hoops	Tennis	Reball Court
CITY LOCATION														
Archery Range	Special	City	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bishop Middle Sch	Neigh'd	SBAC	8.00	8.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Citizen	Community	City	31.00	31.00	0.00	31.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cone	Neigh'd	City	90.00	28.00	62.00	90.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Daniel Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	8.20	8.20	0.00	8.20	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00
Gum Rock Swamp	Conservation	City	741.00	0.00	741.00	831.00	110.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hatchel Creek	Conservation	City	6.00	0.00	6.00	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kirby Smith	Neigh'd	SBAC	4.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Mescalito Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	9.70	9.70	0.00	9.70	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #01	Mini	City	1.02	1.02	0.00	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #08	Mini	Private	0.15	0.15	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #10	Mini	City	0.26	0.26	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #11 Cedar Grove	Mini	City	1.10	1.10	0.00	1.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mini Park #12	Mini	City	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Morningside Nature	Local Nature	City	277.59	0.00	277.59	277.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
NE Lisbon Center	Neigh'd	City	0.53	0.53	0.00	0.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
NE 31st Avenue	Neigh'd	City	1.40	1.40	0.00	1.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	2.00	0.00
Northstar	Community	City	23.20	23.20	0.00	23.20	0.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	2.50	0.00	4.00	0.00
Palm Point	Conservation	City	18.10	0.00	18.10	4.59	11.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rowlings Elementary	Neigh'd	SBAC	18.00	18.00	0.00	18.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	0.00
Roper Open Space	Mini	City	1.50	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Smoky Bear	Neigh'd	City	4.50	4.50	0.00	4.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sweetwater Math Gway	Linear	City	1 mi	1 mi	0.00	1 mi	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Thomas Ballin Center	Neigh'd	City	1.02	1.02	0.00	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Thomas Center Gardens	Special	City	6.20	6.20	0.00	6.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Waldo Rail Trail	Linear	State	8 mi	8 mi	0.00	8 mi	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Rec-xix-4(NEQUAD)

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, September 2000.

Revised: 10/5/00

Table 7. Northeast Quadrant - Inventory

Park	Type	Owner	Acres	Active	Passive	Land	Water	Baseball/ Softball	Soccer	25yd Pool	Trails	Bikeshop Hoops	Tennis	Softball
COUNTY LOCATION														
Copeland Settlement	Neighborhood	County	5.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
East Side High	Neighborhood	SBAC	29.00	29.00	0.00	29.00	0.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.00
Ironwood Golf Club	Special	City	122.00	122.00	0.00	122.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lake Forest Elementary	Neighborhood	SBAC	11.80	11.80	0.00	11.80	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Newman's Lake	Special	County	6339.68	6339.68	0.00	11.68	6328.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS:			7858.44	6755.75	1102.69	1408.93	6449.51	13.00	7.00	1.00	19.50	30.00	6.00	4.00
Community Park						54.20								
Neighborhood Park						129.15								

NOTES:

* SBAC schools are not officially considered public parks. Such schools provide only limited public access for recreation. This access is typically during evenings & weekends, and only when not in use for SBAC programs. They are inventoried solely for the purpose of determining neighborhood-level recreational levels-of-service.

Revised: (NEQUAD)

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, September 2000.

Revised: 10/5/00

When allocating deficiencies to projects, it is important to minimize service radius overlap from existing parks and facilities. Also, allocations should: (a) avoid locating parks and facilities on land not suitable for particular types of parks or facilities; (b) avoid locating parks and facilities in locations that are separated from neighborhoods by barriers such as major roads; and (c) avoid locating parks and facilities without the prior consent of adjacent residents and landowners. See also the "Supplemental Park and Facility Design Considerations" section.

Prioritizing Improvements for the CIP

After deficiencies of parks, facilities, and programs are calculated, a plan should be proposed to correct those deficiencies. Since the City is generally not able to finance all deficiencies in the upcoming fiscal budget cycle, a prioritized capital improvements program (CIP) is needed to phase in recreation improvements over a longer period of time (usually 5-6 years). The following criteria are used to prioritize park and facility deficiencies:

- Degree of Deficiency:** (A) **Largest Absolute Deficiency.** Those areas with the highest acreage or facility deficiency are prioritized.
- (B) **Lowest Current Level of Service.** Those areas with the lowest current level of service are prioritized. Implicit in both "A" and "B" is the need to prioritize urban area facilities before quadrant facilities.
- Proximity to Similar Facilities:** Those dysfunctional or deficient facilities which are at least one mile from the same type facilities are prioritized. This distance can include hazard-oriented barriers such as major roadways, as well as geographical distance.
- Program Dependency:** Those dysfunctional or deficient facilities which are necessary for the provision of the largest number of needed recreation programs are prioritized. Includes pools, basketball courts and all parks.
- Park Reclassification:** Those dysfunctional or deficient facilities which enable the park to be reclassified to the next higher park type, in an instance where the higher park type is needed, are prioritized.
- Urban Area Deficiency:** Urban area facilities that are deficient are prioritized. Urban area facilities include 50-meter pools, sports-complexes, and local nature parks.
- Recent Park Acquisition:** A new project at a park may be within the same area as another park of the same type. If this other park was acquired over the past three years, the new project is de-prioritized.

SCORING

<u>Criterion</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. Degree of Deficiency	
* Largest Absolute Deficiency	1
* Lowest Current Level of Service	1
2. Proximity to Similar Facilities	1
3. Program Dependency.....	2
4. Park Reclassification	1
5. Urban Area Deficiency.....	4
6. Recent Park Acquisition.....	-5

Each facility deficiency is assigned to a project (either an existing park or a to-be-acquired park). Each park and facility deficiency is then scored using the criteria and scoring system described above. Projects, which contain facilities with high scores, are given a higher priority than those with lower scores. For projects in which the highest scoring facility receive the same score, that project with the highest sum total score for all deficient facilities is given the higher priority. If projects remain tied in score after such summation, the following criteria shall be used to prioritize (in decreasing order of importance):

- * AREAS WHERE THE CITY ENCOURAGES REDEVELOPMENT
- * HIGH RESIDENTIAL DENSITY
- * LONG-STANDING DEFICIENCY
- * REVENUE-GENERATING POTENTIAL FOR THE CITY
- * PROXIMITY TO ACTIVITY CENTER
- * HIGH RECREATIONAL MULTIPLE-USE POTENTIAL

Those projects, which are ranked most highly by the criteria, are phased in over the first few years of the CIP.

Example

Project #1

<u>Deficient Facility</u>	<u>Points</u>
Soccer Field	9
Tennis Court.....	2
TOTAL	11

Project #2

<u>Deficient Facility</u>	<u>Points</u>
Swimming Pool.....	7
Softball Field.....	6
TOTAL	13

Project #3

<u>Deficient Facility</u>	<u>Points</u>
Soccer Field	7
Basketball Court.....	5
TOTAL	12

Of the three projects in the above example, Project #1 is given the highest priority even though the other two projects receive more total points. Such a ranking is due to the soccer field, which is the facility with the highest score of any of the facilities listed for the three projects. Project #2 is given a higher priority than Project #3, even though the highest scoring facility for each project has received the same score (7 points). Such a ranking is due to the higher total score received by Project #2 (13 points) than by Project #3 (12 points).

Park and Facility Substitution

It is possible that a LOS standard for a recreational facility will result in facility deficiencies in certain areas, which do not have vacant land sufficient to accommodate such a facility. For example, a quadrant may need 15 acres of neighborhood park, 3 tennis courts and 2 racquetball courts. However, this hypothetical quadrant may contain an insufficient amount of vacant land to accommodate a new neighborhood park.

In addition, socioeconomic and age differences between neighborhoods often mean differences in recreational facility preferences between neighborhoods. For example, a neighborhood may prefer 4 tennis courts, rather than the 2 tennis courts and 2 basketball courts called for by the LOS standards (or they may prefer a passive park rather than an active park).

Both of the above problems indicate a need for a mechanism to increase the flexibility of LOS standards without abandoning the benefits of such quantitative standards. There are two broad areas of flexibility:

PARK SUBSTITUTION

Used when needed park land is unavailable in a neighborhood, or when residents prefer a type of park other than a neighborhood park.

FACILITY SUBSTITUTION

Used when a determination is made that residents of one or several neighborhoods prefer recreational facility improvements that differ from what is called for by LOS standards.

Park Substitution

In certain neighborhoods, a determination may be made that the area does not contain acreage suitable and available for a new neighborhood park.

In the event that a neighborhood does not contain suitable and available land for a new neighborhood park, or when residents desire another park type, the following alternatives are considered sufficient to meet neighborhood park acreage needs within the area:

- * **Nature Center**
One center for every 10 acres of neighborhood park.
- * **Recreation (or Cultural) Center**
One center for every 10 acres of neighborhood park and 16 facility units (see below for discussion of units).
- * **Mini-Park**
1.5 acres of mini-park for every acre of neighborhood park.
- * **Botanical (or Vegetable) Garden**
1.5 acres of garden for every acre of neighborhood park deficiency.
- * **Local Nature Park**
One acre of nature park for every acre of neighborhood park deficiency. However, nature park must contain at least one acre of land outside of floodprone areas and suitable for development as determined by the City Manager or designee.

Facility Substitution

There are instances where LOS standards will indicate a deficiency for certain recreational facilities, yet the quadrant may not have the acreage or desire by its population to accommodate the new facilities. These are instances where:

- * The neighborhood does not have enough unused space at existing parks to accommodate facility deficiencies, yet meets park acreage standards;
- * The neighborhood does not have suitable and available vacant acreage to acquire for siting the new facilities; or
- * One or several neighborhoods to be served by a new neighborhood park express a desire to be served by facilities other than those called for by the Recreation Element.

The following alternatives are considered sufficient to meet facility deficiencies within a quadrant:

- * The construction of the needed facility at an SBAC school within the deficient quadrant, and appropriate joint-use agreements secured by the City from SBAC;
- * Developing a joint agreement between the City and SBAC for increased public access to existing school facilities within the deficient quadrant; or
- * Basketball, tennis and racquetball court deficiencies exchanged for different facilities (for example, two volleyball courts may be preferred over 2 tennis courts). Neighborhoods can also request a different mix of these three facilities. (For example, 2 tennis courts and 2 racquetball courts may be preferred over 4 basketball courts.)

For neighborhoods seeking different types or mixes of facilities not called for by the Recreation Element, the list of facilities below can be substituted. Each facility is assigned a "substitution unit" based on the relative cost to build the facility. (One unit is worth approximately \$25,000.)

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Substitution Units</u>
Basketball Court	0.5
Tennis Court	1.0
Racquetball Court	1.0
Volleyball Court	0.2
Picnic/Pavilion/Playground	0.8
Mulched Trail (1 mile)	0.2
Interpretive Pavilion	1.0
Recreation Center	20.0
Boardwalk Trail (1/2 mile)	4.8
Picnic Area	0.4

Condition of City Recreation Facilities

The City of Gainesville uses six classifications to define the condition of facilities:

- "E" Excellent. New or original.
- "G" Good. May show signs of use; otherwise close to excellent.
- "F" Fair. Shows definite signs of use, but no repairs are needed.
- "P" Poor. In use, but minor repairs will make item more useable; or not in use, but needs minor repair.
- "M" Major Repair. Major repairs are needed. It is not now usable, but is repairable.
- "N" Not Repairable. Disposal is recommended for facilities in this condition.

These classifications are part of the City recreational facility inventory, and are used to determine when facilities require repair. The Gainesville Recreation Element requires that City facilities be maintained in at least "poor" condition. An annual assessment of facility conditions is required prior to adoption of the annual CIP.

An inventory of the condition of city-owned facilities is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Condition of City Recreation Facilities

Park	Address	Type of Park	Basketball	Cdn	Tennis	Cdn	R-ball	Cdn	Hardball	Cdn	Softball	Cdn	Soccer	Cdn	Pool	Cdn	Playgrd	Picnic	Trail	Cdn	RestRm	Cdn	Rec	Cdn	Lighted	Cdn	Inventory		
Babwara Springs	3510 Blk. SE 15th St.	Community	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	E	0	Y	0	0	Y	G	10/23/90			
Citizen	1490 NE 8th Ave	Community	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	F	50	G	0	3	F	0	Y	G	0	Y	G	0	9/3/86		
Green Tree	1900 NW 30th Ave.	Community-U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	G	0	0	0	0	1	F	6	P	0	Y	F	0	Y	G	9/24/86		
Northside	400 NE 16th Ave.	Community	0	4	E	4	E	4	F	2	F	1	F	1	F	0	1	F	8	G	2.5	G	Y	G	0	Y	G	9/3/86	
Northwest	NW 24th St & US 441	Community-U	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	7	3	7	Y	7	Y	7	Y	7	10/25/90	
Pondum Creek	4000 blk NW 53 Ave	Community-U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	N	0	1/14/07			
T.B. McPherson	1717 SE 16th St.	Community	4	F	4	F	0	0	0	0	2	F	0	0	25	E	1	E	15	E	0	Y	F	1	E	Y	G	10/25/90	
Westside	1011 NW 34 St.	Community	1	G	0	F	4	F	1	G	2	F	0	0	0	0	1	F	16	G	1.5	F	Y	F	1	E	Y	G	9/15/06
Shivers Arm Nature	3550 S. Main St.	Local Nature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	E	1.5	E	Y	E	0	Y	G	5/8/86		
Lobolly Low Educ Facility	3300 blk NW 9th Ave	Local Nature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	Y	2	1	?	N			
Memphis Nature	3500 E. University Ave.	Local Nature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	E	8	E	Y	Y	G	0	N	5/5/86		
Ring Park	2000 NW 16th Ave	Local Nature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	E	0.5	E	N	0	0	N	0	10/25/90		
Caldough Nature Park	2000 S. Main Street	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	10/25/90		
Gum Root Swamp	1300 Block	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/5/86		
HG #1	2400 NW 8th Ave	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	12/22/87		
HG #2	2219 NW 34th St	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	6/13/88		
HG #3	5000 NW 2nd Ave	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/26/86		
Hatchet Creek	SR 24 S of NE 42th Rd.	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/22/86		
Pain Point	Neeman's Lake	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/30/86		
Sweetwater Marsh Gully	NE Boulevard	Greenway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	N.A.	N	0	N	0	N	8/23/00		
Hoytown Cr. Greenway	Hoytown Creek	Greenway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	N	0	N	2/17/01		
Deport Rail-Trail	Deport Ave	Greenway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	EN.A	N	0	N	0	N	3/17/01		
Waldo Rail-Trail	Waldo Road	Greenway	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	E	N	0	N	0	N	2/17/01		
A.N.E.	6244 N.W. 20th Terr.	Mini	1	G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	G	3	G	0	N	0	0	N	0	8/31/86		
Grandmother's	405 SW 5th Ave	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	N	0	N	9/3/86		
Kwanda	NW 8th St & 8th Ave	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	12	F	0	N	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Lynch Main Garden	444 S. Main St	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	G	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #01	NE 15th St. & 4th Ave.	Mini	2	G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	P	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #02	SE 9th St. & 8th Ave.	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	P	3	P	0	N	0	0	N	0	7/15/86		
Mini Park #03	510 NW 2nd St.	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	3	F	0	N	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #04	424 NW 6th Ave	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #05	1302 SE 2nd St	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #06	NW 31st Pl & 20th St	Mini	1	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	1	P	0	N	0	0	N	0	7/15/86		
Mini Park #07	320 SW 7th Pl	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #08	820 NW 4th Ave	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	F	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #10	1110 NE 25th St	Mini	2	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86		
Mini Park #11	1101 NE 21 St	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	7/23/86		
Mini Park #12	2445 NE 12 Ave	Mini	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	0	0	N	0	10/23/89		

no. 145 CPA-00 PB

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, March 1991.

10/6/00

Table 8. Condition of City Recreation Facilities

Park	Address	Type of Park	Basketball	Tennis	Cdn	R-ball	Cdn	Hardball	Cdn	Softball	Cdn	Soccer	Cdn	Pool	Cdn	Playgrd	Cdn	Restrm	Cdn	Rec	Cdn	Lighted	Cdn	Inventory
Oak Hill	NW 8th St. & NW 42nd Ave	Mni	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	924/05
Roper Open Space	NE 2nd St. & NE 4th Ave.	Mni	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	9/3/86
Green Acres	SW 6th Pl. & 40th St.	Neighd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	0	10/28/00
NE Union Center	1701 NE 8th Ave.	Neighd	2	G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10/28/00
NE 31st Avenue	NE 31st Ave. & 17th Terr.	Neighd	2	F	2	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
NW #1	2730 NW 35th Ave	Neighd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7/25/05
Rosa Williams	624 NW 1st St. & 6th Ave.	Neighd	4	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10/28/00
Shamila Flar Park	321 NW 10th Street	Neighd	1	G	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10/28/00
Smockey Bear	2600 NE 15th St.	Neighd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Theresa Bolen Center	516 NE 2nd Ave.	Neighd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Turbin Creek	SW 8th St. & Depot Ave.	Neighd	4	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Wx #1	500 St. SE 5th Ave	Neighd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7/15/02
Woodlawn	1910 SE 4th St.	Neighd	4	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Cona	2601 E. University Ave.	Neighd	4	P	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Anthony Range	Off State Rd. 24 - Airport	Special	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Community Plaza	101 E. University Ave.	Special	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86
Thomas Center Child	305 NE 6th Ave	Special	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/3/86

Key:

- "E" = Excellent. New or original; cannot be improved upon.
- "G" = Good. May show signs of use, otherwise close to excellent.
- "F" = Fair. Shows definite signs of use, but no repairs are needed.
- "P" = Poor. In use, but minor repairs will make item more useable, or not in use, but needs minor repair.
- "M" = Major Repair. Major repairs are needed. It is not now useable, but is repairable.
- "N" = Not Repairable. Disposal is recommended for facilities in this condition.

Undeveloped Parks

There are several city-, county-, or state-owned park properties within the Gainesville urban area that are largely or wholly undeveloped. For many of these properties, there are no plans for recreational improvements. This list shows the current status of undeveloped city park properties.

Table 9. Undeveloped/Underdeveloped City Parks

PARK	PARK TYPE	OWNER	STATUS
1. Palm Point	Local Nature**	City	City Plan
2. Hatchet Creek	Local Nature**	City	None
3. Possum Creek	Community	City	None
4. Clear Lake	Local Nature**	City	None
-	-	-	-
6. Boulware Springs	Community/Special	City	Complete
7. Waldo Road Rail	Linear Corridor	State	Complete
8. Greentree	Community	City	None
9. Conant (Colclough Pond)	Local Nature**	City	None
10. Green Acre	Neighborhood	City	None
11. Hogtown Greenway (8th Ave)	Local Nature**	City	None
12. Lake Kanapaha	Community/Regional	County	None
13. Hawthorne Rail	Linear Corridor	State	Complete
14. San Felasco - County	Regional	County	None
15. N.W. 34th St. Floodplain	Local Nature**	City	None
16. Springtree	Neighborhood	City	None

** These properties are classified as public "conservation areas" unless or until they are developed to accommodate passive recreation, in which case they will be classified as "local nature parks".

SOURCE: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development. March 1999.

FUNDING AND DESIGNING THE PROJECTS IDENTIFIED BY THE ELEMENT

Introduction

From 1990 through 1998, the Alachua County/Gainesville metropolitan statistical area has experienced a growth rate of 16.4 percent. As this growth continues, revenues in excess of what has been allocated for recreation capital improvements over the past several years will be required to meet the recreational needs identified in this Element.

In order for the City to build new facilities, existing and creative financing mechanisms will have to be used more effectively. Mechanisms (existing or potential) include general fund allocations, impact fees, user fees, and taxes earmarked for recreation and trusts. General fund and private expenditure are discussed below.

Funding of Facilities by the Public Sector

In recent years, the Recreation & Parks Department has relied almost entirely upon general fund expenditures to cover its capital and operating expenses. This has resulted in severe constraints on the City's ability to build new facilities, and to operate and maintain existing facilities. Not surprisingly, Figures 1 and 2 reveal that Gainesville's recreation expenditures are lower than those of comparable cities, according to a study completed by Florida State University and the state Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Parks and Recreation, 1997.

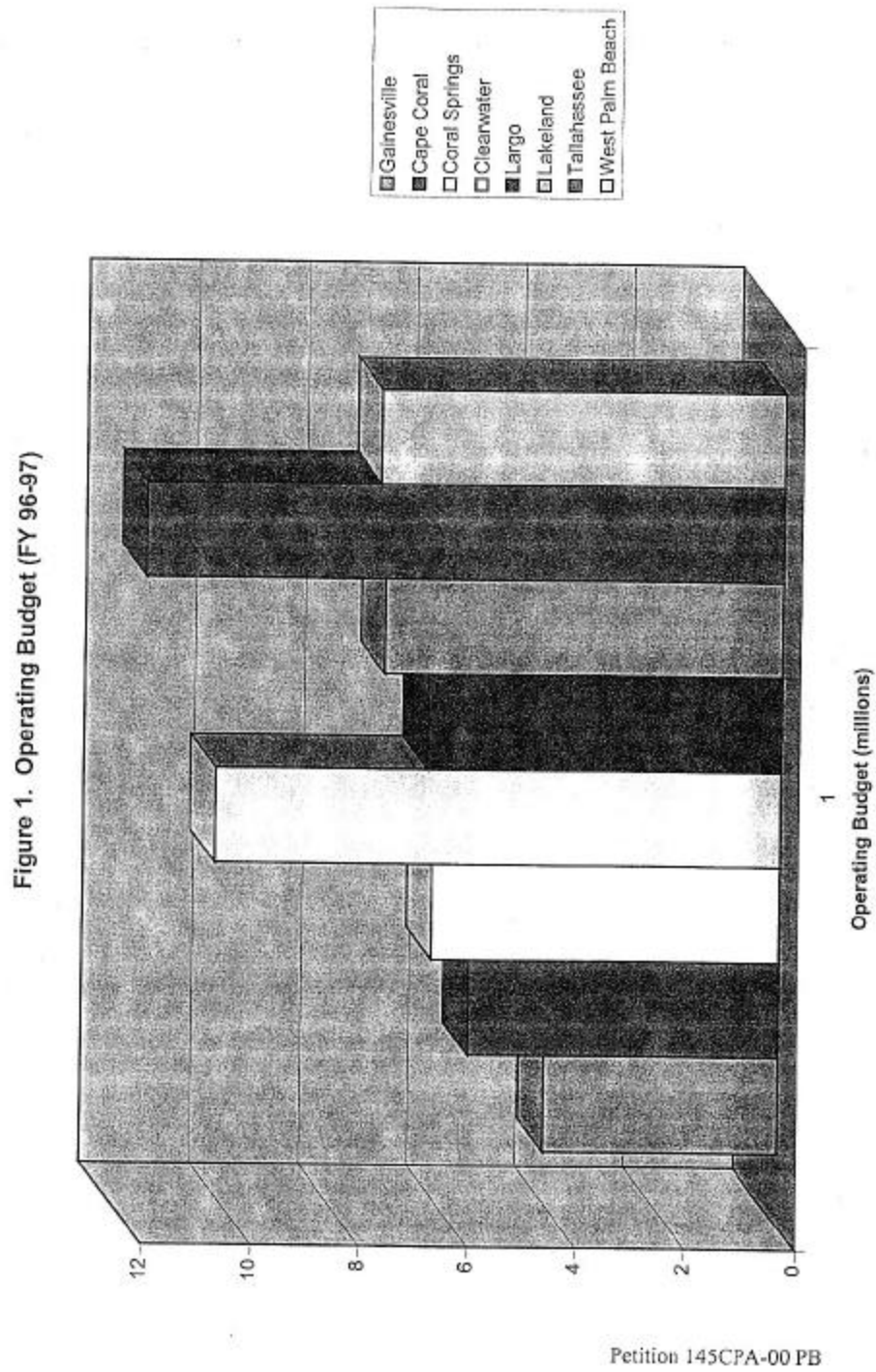
Recreational opportunities are critical to the quality of life of urban residents. Expanding general fund appropriations for recreation is one important way to improve the quality of life. This expansion should be based on appropriations found in comparable cities.

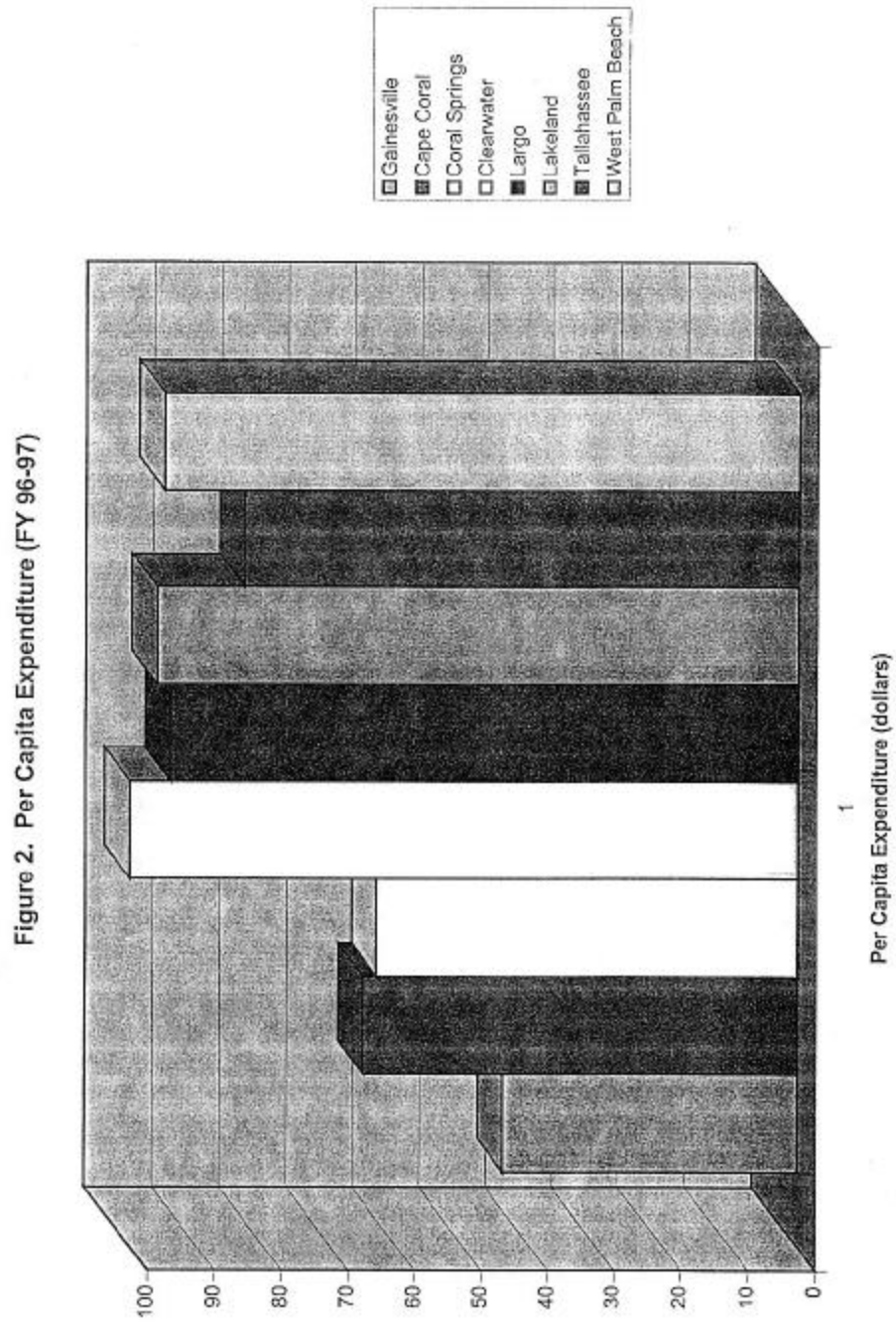
There are three broad categories of expenditures for implementation of the Recreation Element:

- * Programs, Maintenance, and Administration
- * Development of New Facilities
- * Acquisition of Recreation and Open Space Land

Revising the apportionment of expenditures among the three categories presents a dilemma. Communities such as Gainesville, which are experiencing pressure to develop land for private use, are acting prudently if land acquisition is emphasized to the extent possible. This is because it is much less expensive for a community to acquire recreation and open space early in its development—before urban fringe and infill development significantly increases the cost of such acquisition.

Although the acquisition of recreation and open space lands is very important, the development of facilities at existing parks is also important. Continued underdevelopment of existing facilities could dampen public enthusiasm for acquisition of additional recreation and open space lands.





Petition 145CPA-00 PB

The question of facilities versus park acquisition was highlighted in a 1985 survey of city residents which found that:

- * "purchasing land for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas" or "recreation facilities"; and
- * the city "recreation facilities are inadequate"

were two of the most important areas of citizen concern. There was an unusually high level of agreement among residents on these two issues. The survey also found a significant increase from 1981 to 1985 in the number of residents who felt recreational facilities were inadequate.¹

-Minimum Facility Design Standards

The purpose of minimum requirements for recreational facilities is twofold: First, the requirements ensure residents that the new facilities proposed for construction will meet minimum requirements for such factors as facility size and quality. In addition, such requirements ensure that in instances where a private developer is required to build new recreational facilities (or voluntarily chooses to build such facilities), the new facilities will be designed and built in accordance with city recreational objectives.

Table 10 contains the minimum design standards for recreational facilities called for by the Recreation Element. Note that "LOS Facility" refers to those facilities that are mandated through the Recreation Element by LOS standards, and that "Substitute Facility" refers to those facilities that can substitute for neighborhood park, basketball court, tennis court, or racquetball court deficiencies (see "Park and Facility Substitution" section for more information). Note also that these are minimum requirements, rather than ideal requirements. In many instances, the quality of facility design and construction will exceed these proposed requirements.

Supplemental Park and Facility Design Considerations

The following are additional considerations when designing and constructing a park or recreational facility in Gainesville. These considerations are recommended, but are not mandatory:

Adaptive Reuse

Facilities should be designed to permit a change in use of the facility if the activity that the facility accommodates declines in popularity.

TABLE 10. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR RECREATION FACILITIES

LOS FACILITY	MINIMUM DIMENSIONS	RECOMMENDED MATERIALS	FLEXIBILITY	COMMENTS
Softball Field	Outfield fences at least 275' from home plate. Backstop 25' from home plate.	Fencing should be galvanized steel chain link.	Should also accommodate youth baseball, women's softball.	Infield should be skinned. Consider accommodating football, rugby, lacrosse.
Soccer Field	150' x 300' play area. 195' x 330' total area.	Frames for goals. (aluminum)	Should accommodate football, rugby, lacrosse.	Must be graded for level surface and storm runoff. Consider accommodating softball.
Swimming Pool (25M & 50M)	27 sq. ft. of water surface area per swimmer. Ratio of 2:1 deck vs. water.	Concrete and granite.	Should accommodate water slide, handicapped swimmers.	Consider accommodating diving boards.
Basketball Court	42' x 77' play surface per half court. 3' clearance on all sides.	Concrete or asphalt surface.	Should accommodate volleyball, badminton, roller-skating.	Consider accommodating tennis, shuffleboard.
Tennis Court	27' x 78' single & 36' x 78' double. 12' clearance on sides. 21' clearance on ends.	Concrete or asphalt surface.	N/A	Consider accommodating basketball, racquetball, shuffleboard, volleyball.
Racquetball Court	20' x 34' play area. 20' overhead clearance. At least 3 walls.	Concrete surface.	Should accommodate handball.	Consider observation platform for 4-wall courts.
Trail	3' width for walking trail. 8' width for bicycle trail.	Variable. Depends on activity to be accommodated. Typically permeable or seal-permeable surfaces such as mulch or lierock.	Should accommodate strollers and wheelchairs.	Consider accommodating walking, jogging, bicycling, horseback riding. Provide access for long-term repairs.
Gymnasium	Basketball Courts 94' x 50' with 10' unobstructed area around court.	Concrete block wall.	Should accommodate aerobics, dance, jogging, bleachers, basketball, gymnastics, badminton, volleyball.	Consider accommodating weight training, offices. Should contain restrooms, game room for pool and table tennis, concessions, spectator seating. Floor should be suitable for dancing.

LOS FACILITY	MINIMUM DIMENSIONS	RECOMMENDED MATERIALS	FLEXIBILITY	COMMENTS
Botanical/Vegetable Garden (substitute facility)	One-quarter acre of arable land.	Irrigation equipment for continuous watering.	N/A	Should contain soil suitable for a wide range of plants & located for large amounts of sunlight. Consider storage facility for tools, equipment, and greenhouse facilities for germination on severe weather conditions.
Nature Center (substitute facility)	1500 sq. ft. of floor area with office, storage and restroce space.	Rough-cut wood interior or natural materials.	Wall space for exhibits, cases, displays.	Interpretive information concerning natural environment. Information about immediate vicinity preferred.
Recreation Center (substitute facility)	Enclosed building with 3000 sq. ft. of floor area.	Concrete/brick block.	Should accommodate meetings, dance, aerobics, table games, small concerts, arts and crafts, kitchen.	Consider providing restrooms.
Volleyball (substitute facility)	30' x 60' & 6' clearance on all sides.	Sand, wood chips, asphalt, concrete, natural soil, sand-clay, clay-gravel.	Should accommodate badminton.	Soft surface preferred.
Picnic/Pavilion/Playground (substitute facility)	4000 sq. ft. playlot, 4 picnic tables, 1 pavilion large enough for 1 table. 1/2 acre picnic area.	Concrete or PT wood for tables.	Should accommodate retrofitting by new playground equipment.	Consider using sand or wood chip surface. Incorporate passive/natural design techniques if possible.
Picnic Area	20' x 36' Pavilion, 6 tables, 2 grills	Concrete Pad. Concrete or PT wood for tables.		Consider using sand or wood chip surface. Incorporate passive/natural design techniques if possible.
Interpretive Pavilion (substitute facility)	500 sq. ft. of floor area.	Rough-cut wood interior or natural materials.	Wall space for exhibits, cases, displays.	Interpretive information concerning natural environment. Information about immediate vicinity preferred.

Source: City of Gainesville, Department of Community Development, October, 1990.
File: "CIP Proj". FW2

Flexibility

When feasible, facilities should allow multiple activities. For example, softball fields should be able to accommodate soccer fields, and tennis courts should be able to accommodate basketball courts, when appropriate.

Safety

Sites should be designed so as to minimize or eliminate the need for pedestrians or bicyclists to cross major roads.

Access

Sites should be designed so that non-auto access is both safe and convenient. Modes to consider: pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian, bus, para-transit, mopeds, elderly, and handicapped.

Free-Form

Consider the development of "free-form" activity areas which feature minimal facilities, and play areas and meeting places at the human scale. Such facilities encourage creativity.

Maintenance

Maximize the use of highly durable, easy-to-maintain facilities, which do not require large amounts of energy or maintenance for operation.

Vegetation

Maintain vegetation (especially tree cover) whenever possible. Dusty, excessively paved, or shade-less parks are not inviting, especially on hot summer days. The site should, to the extent possible, be designed so as to minimize disturbance of the natural environment. Native vegetation is encouraged, as is xeriscaping.

Drainage

Minimize the use of impervious surfaces. When feasible, use pervious surface alternatives.

Noise and Visual Quality

Noise and visual intrusions should be minimized or mitigated when designing passive recreation areas.

Awareness

Maximize visual and physical access to important natural, historic, and cultural features of a site when such access will not significantly degrade the features. Consider using the feature(s) to give the park its own unique identity.

Linkages

Consider linking the site to other recreation sites and residential areas through the use of linear corridors and other non-auto connectors. It is especially important to investigate linkages to "rail trails" and other regionally significant corridors.

Signs

Park entrance signs should be designed both to maximize visibility to those passing by the site, and to be in harmony with the natural surroundings.

Age Flexibility

Parks should be designed to accommodate activities for all age groups.

Lighting

To maximize use of facilities and improve safety, lighting for facilities should be provided where appropriate. Nearby residential areas should be protected from spillover (nuisance) lighting.

Public Information

Consider using information centers, such as kiosks, which are designed for both public information and public input. Also, consider public hearings to give neighborhoods a chance to offer park design suggestions.

Special Facilities

Consider developing facilities, such as boardwalks or pavilions, which are not required by the level-of-service standards.

Service Radius

Before selecting facilities for a site, check the service radius maps of the Recreation Element to avoid providing a facility that the residential area may already have access to.

Passive Acreage

As a rule of thumb, landscaped or natural acreage for passive activity is recommended at a ratio of roughly one-acre for passive use to two acres for active use to maintain a "park-like" atmosphere at activity-based parks.

Critical Mass

There is a "critical mass" of facilities at which attractiveness to league play, attractiveness to remote users, and ability to charge a fee is reached. This clustering of the same facility at one park (i.e. four tennis courts at a park, rather than one) is most important for such facilities as tennis courts, racquetball courts, softball or baseball fields, soccer fields, and basketball courts. In general, the critical mass would be a cluster of four or more of these facilities at a park site.

Provision of Facilities by the Private Sector

If a proposed development will lower the level of service for recreational facilities and the City was unable to construct facilities to prevent this lowering of service, the Recreation Element permits the private developer to provide facilities or fees as a condition for the issuance of a development permit. The Element was structured so that by 1997 a proposed development need only concern itself with recreational deficiencies within its own planning area. For example, a proposal in northeast Gainesville would need to avoid lowering levels of service in two areas:

- * Urban Area
- * Northeast Quadrant.

Any existing deficiencies in the other quadrants would not be relevant to the proposal.

The following alternatives are available to a developer who would lower existing levels of service for recreation:

- * A per-dwelling-unit impact fee paid by the developer to fully or partially finance the cost of providing recreational facilities sufficient to avoid lowering levels of service;
- * On-site or off-site provision of recreational acreage and facilities by the developer. The developer is credited for all or part of the acreage and facilities provided, depending on the degree of public access and City approval of facility quality and design.

In addition, the Recreation Element should call for the use of mandatory subdivision exactions or dedications for neighborhood parkland or trails. Such an exaction or dedication would obligate the City to establish land development regulations, which require land or fees as a condition for final plat approval.

Countywide Recreation Master Plan

Alachua County is in the process of hiring a consultant to develop a recreation master plan. It will identify existing active and passive recreational facilities and programs throughout Alachua County, determine what the current and future recreational deficiencies are and recommend economically sustainable plans to meet the identified current and future recreational needs. The plan will include all recreation providers in the County including the municipalities, the state, and commercial, private, not-for-profit and other organizations.

RECREATION LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

During the past decade, the United States has experienced a continuing liability insurance crisis that has had a profound impact on how products and services are offered. Not surprisingly, many cities have responded to this crisis by becoming much more conservative in the range of recreational services that they provide to their residents. Park hours have been shortened, the freedom of park users to partake in various activities has been curtailed, and the range of facilities offered has declined—all in an effort to reduce the liability (risk) that the city carries in the area of recreational opportunities.

Unfortunately, public demand for various recreational activities is, at most, only moderately related to the risk of participating in such activities. As a result, cities are often unable to afford to provide for highly popular activities (such as skateboarding) even though the capital outlay is minimal. Those wishing to pursue such activities are forced to either provide their own facilities, hope that a private firm will provide for them, or recreate illegally.

Court cases involving liability suits indicate that service provider responsibilities are much stricter than they once were. Some of the multi-million dollar awards have been based upon the failure of government employees to warn adequately or to instruct properly. It is the responsibility of the local government to provide the proper instruction and warning for staff and recreational users. It is absolutely essential that participants: (1) receive full information regarding the proper manner in which to engage in activities; (2) understand how to participate safely within their individual physical and emotional capabilities and skill level; and (3) be told of the likelihood of accidents resulting in injury or even death. Inadequate instructions have been alleged in suits for injuries resulting from a basketball drill, a speed test in a gymnasium, and gymnastics.

Some service providers have tried to reduce their liability by using waivers and releases, but in most cases these forms are of no value in a court of law. One problem is that minors cannot sign contracts, and therefore cannot execute valid waivers. When properly written for certain adventurous activities such as white-water rafting, however, waivers have been held valid.

The courts have traditionally recognized four basic defenses against liability suits involving accidents in park and recreation areas: (1) immunity from suit; (2) assumption of risk; (3) contributory negligence; and (4) due care. The first three defenses have not held up in the courts in most cases. The fourth—due care—is the most effective preventive strategy and the strongest defense against charges of negligence. The phrase "due care"

implies a professional standard of care. This standard of care, though, cannot be defined in an itemized list of steps to follow in planning, developing and operating a park.

If an accident leads to a liability suit, however, there are several management practices that courts typically examine to determine whether proper consideration was given to the safety of recreational facility users. Many of these are cited as policies in the "Goals, Objectives and Policies" section of this Element. These practices are discussed below:

Liability Management

Abating Inherent Hazards

An inherent hazard is a natural feature of the environment that is potentially dangerous (deep pools of water, rockslides, dead trees, poisonous snakes or other dangerous wildlife). Municipalities can in this case choose to (a) remove the hazard; (b) limit public access, set up safety barriers, or use lifeguards and guides; or (c) provide clear and adequate warning to park visitors.

The City should inventory all natural features of its passive parks, and determine both the potential for injury and steps necessary to minimize or eliminate the possibility of such injury.

Conforming with Standards Set by a Sports League or Competition-Sanctioning Organization

It is generally advised that official layout and development criteria for each sport facility be carefully followed.

The City should review any existing guidelines used for designing facilities such as softball fields, and determine whether such guidelines are up-to-date and approved by regional or national organizations.

Complying with Public Safety Codes and Regulations.

The municipality should be aware of changing standards. Standards change in response to technological advances. In some instances, such documents as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission manual ("General Guidelines for New and Existing Playgrounds") have been used in liability suits against municipalities.

This Element recommends that when repairing or replacing dysfunctional recreational facilities, priority should in part be given to those facilities that represent a safety hazard. In addition, the selection process for new facilities should give consideration to those facilities least likely to represent a safety hazard, either in regard to its normal operation or any hazard due to facility deterioration over time.

Providing Facilities for Emergencies

Park and recreation areas should have emergency facilities designated for circulation, communication, first aid, emergency dispatch and fire-fighting.

The City should inventory its recreation areas to determine whether adequate circulation, communication, first aid, emergency dispatch and fire-fighting capabilities exist.

In addition to these recommended risk management practices, two policies for personnel training and responsibilities are advised:

- (1) Designation of a Park Safety Officer.
- (2) Providing Safety Training for Staff.

Several states have enacted legislation which provides public agencies with limited immunity for injuries occurring while using recreational facilities. Virginia and Kansas have statutes which require a plaintiff to allege

gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct, rather than mere negligence, to sustain a claim for an injury sustained while using public recreational facilities. An example of this is Section 75-6104(n) of the Kansas Tort Claims Act, which states that:

A government entity or employee acting within the scope of the employee's employment shall not be liable for damages resulting from: (n) any claim for injuries resulting from the use of any public property intended or permitted to be used as a park playground or open space area for recreational purposes, unless the government entity or employee therefore is guilty of gross and wanton negligence proximately causing such injury.

In 1999, the Florida Legislature passed a bill that limits the liability of municipalities that choose to provide facilities for skateboarding, inline skating and freestyle bicycle riding activities. Section 316.0085, Florida Statutes, expands sovereign immunity on public property for such purposes. The intent of the bill is to encourage local governments to make land available for these types of activities. Exemptions to sovereign immunity include cases where the governmental entity fails to warn of a dangerous condition of which the participant has no notice, cases of gross negligence by the governmental entity and cases where the governmental entity fails to obtain written consent of the parents of a child under age 17 and allows them to participate, unless the participation occurred in violation of posted rules governing the hours of authorized operation of the designated area. The City is currently planning to provide skateboard facilities at 5 city parks, due in some measure to the reduced liability as well as advocacy efforts of the local skateboarding community.

Additional Recommendations

Where feasible and advisable, the City should:

- (1) Follow the four recommended risk management practices related to planning and developing parks and recreation.
- (2) Follow the General Guidelines for New and Existing Playgrounds (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission).
- (3) Start a program to monitor potential safety problems through staff and citizen input.
- (4) Prioritize facility repair or enhancement when failure to do so would result in a significant liability risk to the City.
- (5) Work with the County School Board to facilitate the most efficient and effective implementation of liability policies.

ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Included among the many suggestions for reducing the influence and cost of government has been a call for the "privatization" of services. Privatization can include a range of alternatives such as tax incentives, subsidies, vouchers, volunteers and contracting.

Contracting is the most common form of private service delivery. These are instances where the municipality draws up a formal agreement with a private firm to provide specified services. The municipality pays the firm and monitors the performance of the firm thereafter.

In contrast, many municipalities use "franchising", wherein a firm is granted permission to deliver a service to a particular group of municipal residents, and instead of being paid, the firm collects revenue from residents using the service. Because of this, franchising will only function when there are easily identifiable users. A current example of this in Gainesville is the "Youth Soccer, Inc." firm, which provides a program for soccer players in the city. In the past, the City Recreation Department had been in contact with a Colorado-based firm, which develops municipal softball complexes. The firm builds the complex and then provides staff, programming, and public relations for seven-year period. After the seven years, the municipality assumes ownership of the complex, thus offering a substantial cost savings to both the municipality and softball users seeking such facilities.

Advocates of privatization point out that firms can offer capital facilities and services more cheaply than the municipality, and that smaller firms, because of their size, can change more quickly in response to service or capital needs.

On the other hand, it has been pointed out that firms are prone to seeking profits at the expense of the public good, that firms may discriminate against individuals or groups, or that the municipality may find out after contracting with a firm that the service could have been more cheaply provided by the local government. Privatization may also result in a reduction in municipal flexibility to respond to new service needs.

To summarize, the arguments supporting privatization of services are as follows:

- * Firms may be able to reduce the cost of service delivery below the level at which the municipality could provide such service;
- * Some firms, such as the softball organization, provide some or all of the capital outlays that would ordinarily be provided by the municipality;

- * Some firms, because of their smaller size or expertise, are able to more quickly adjust or initiate programs than a municipality; and
- * Privatized recreational activities reduce the effort that the municipality needs to devote to planning and operation of such activities.

Some of the arguments against privatization of services include:

- * There are instances in which the municipality can provide the service for a lower rate than private firms, yet not realize this until citizen complaints lead to an exploration of municipal alternatives;
- * Private firms are more likely to seek increased profits at the expense of service quantity or quality;
- * Private firms are more likely to engage in illegal activities in their attempt to secure lucrative contracts and increase their profits;
- * Private firms are more likely to discriminate against certain groups or individuals;
- * Contracts reduce the flexibility that a municipality needs in instances where community service needs have changed quickly and substantially;
- * If privatization results in decreased salaries or layoffs for municipal employees, strong opposition by municipal employees may be expressed; and
- * Private organizations are generally not covered by the "Sunshine Law" and are therefore less open to public scrutiny.

This Element recommends that recreational privatization of services be limited to the more "unique" activities, such as softball or baseball complexes, park beautification, and skateboarding. The following safeguards should also be adhered to:

- * The City shall reserve the right to regulate and monitor the level and quality of services provided, and set limits on the costs charged users;
- * The City shall only seek privatization in situations where a thorough study has revealed that cost savings or other benefits will be significant;
- * Contracts shall be written to allow adequate flexibility by minimizing the length of contractual periods when appropriate, as well as other techniques which reduce the obligation of the City to remain committed to the restrictions of the contract; and

- * The City shall consider and resolve any negative effects of privatization on city employees.

Recommendation

- * The City should consider a revision of subdivision regulations in order to require dedication of land for parks or trail easements.
- * Regulations for the development of multi-family housing should include requirements for the provision of recreational facilities and programs.
- * The City should more fully study both the impact of private recreational facilities on recreational deficiencies, and what guidelines are necessary in instances where the City would be obligated to assume responsibility for previously private facilities.

COORDINATION OF CITY-COUNTY RECREATION PLANNING

There are currently two public agencies responsible for the planning and operation of recreation and open space in the Gainesville urban area. Such a situation can lead to inefficient and ineffective provision of services.

Approximately one-third of the urban area population lives within the unincorporated area outside of city limits. Recreational facility and program development has not kept pace with the growth of this population. Without an adequate recreation program, these residents are usually obligated to use city facilities. As a result, city taxpayers are subsidizing the use of recreational facilities by non-city residents.

There are four broad categories of alternatives: (1) compel the County government to devote a greater portion of its budget to recreation and open space within the unincorporated urban area; (2) significantly increase user fees for unincorporated residents using city recreational services (or prohibit such residents from using city facilities); (3) consolidate the planning and operation of recreational services under one agency by establishing a single park taxing district for the urban area; and (4) annex the entire urban area into the city. These alternatives are discussed as follows:

- (1) Compelling the County government to devote a greater portion of its budget to recreation and open space in the unincorporated area would probably be the result of political pressure from unincorporated area residents. This pressure would, however, be unlikely as long as most residents are able to conveniently and inexpensively use city recreational services. Moreover, there are few effective ways for the City to unilaterally restrict recreational service access to city residents only.

- (2) Increasing user fees for unincorporated residents using city services (or prohibiting their use by such residents) would be one way in which the City could reduce the use of city recreational services by unincorporated residents. However, it is often extremely difficult to differentiate between city and non-city residents in order to assess a higher fee to non-city residents, or prohibit use. Even when differentiation can be made, there are only a small number of recreational services for which a fee could feasibly be charged, or prohibitions on use enacted.
- (3) Consolidating the planning and operation of recreational services in the urban area through a single urban area park taxing district offers several advantages over the above two alternatives. Potential duplication of service is significantly reduced, as is the tax burden to be borne by city residents. Planning and operation is enhanced due to the more comprehensive area to be considered when devising strategies and long-range plans. In planning for recreation facilities and services, administrators would be able to take into consideration the unincorporated population currently using city facilities without being concerned about tax inequities.
- (4) Gainesville, through the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act, has been given increased authority to annex unincorporated urban areas outside city limits. Annexation would clearly unify the planning and development of recreation within the urban area. Annexed areas would be within the city taxing district, and thus tax inequities would be removed. While annexation is the preferred alternative, potential service provision constraints or citizen opposition to annexation may limit the extent of annexation.

COORDINATION WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD

It is recommended that cooperation between the City and the School Board of Alachua County (SBAC) be extended in the area of recreation facility agreements, and that this expanded cooperation be based upon maintenance agreements and a satisfactory resolution (through inter-local agreement or other mechanism) of the added liability that will be borne by the SBAC.

For the construction, maintenance, and use of SBAC facilities, a policy of contractual agreements should be implemented. However, a drawback to establishing contractual agreements is that such agreements are difficult to adjust in the face of frequently changing school policies or programs. Therefore, devising non-contractual agreements on a school-by-school basis for recreational programs (in contrast to agreements concerning school facilities) will provide the flexibility necessary to adjust for the variations between schools.

Use of School Board Facilities

It is clear that improved coordination between the City and the School Board is needed. In the past, the City has included school acreage and facilities in analyzing the need for parks and recreation facilities. However, school facilities are certainly not fully available for City programs and the problems of coordinating with the

School Board have been complicated by liability issues. Nevertheless, school sites are used by the public for recreation purposes, and it is unlikely that the City will be able to afford to meet any adequate standards for recreation facilities and programs without including school facilities in the inventory of available community resources.

MINI-PARK PROBLEMS

The City has long recognized that several of its classified mini-parks are not functioning properly. This dysfunction has been attributed to the inadequate size of some sites, inappropriate or unsafe site location, lack of sufficient population density or population of children near the site, excessive vandalism at the site, lack of funding for site maintenance, and insufficient site facilities. In response to these problems, the City Recreation Department has recommended that City maintenance of such "problem" parks be phased out. This Element recommends that the following steps be taken to address this issue:

- * Conduct an inventory of all mini-parks, which will be used to help determine whether the present mini-park locations are appropriate. If a location is inappropriate, steps should be taken to convert the site to a non-recreational public use, or passive neighborhood landscaping or open space.
- * Those mini-parks which are deemed to be of inadequate size should be assessed as to whether there is a potential for expansion. Future mini-parks would be at least 0.5 acre in size, unless the location is within an unusually dense residential or commercial area.
- * New mini-parks should not be established unless there is a clearly demonstrated need.
- * In instances where the mini-park facilities suffer from vandalism, it is recommended that a two-pronged approach be taken (unless the park is inappropriately located, in which case it should be converted to a non-recreational public use):
 - (a) The site should be assessed to determine what steps need to be taken to increase the popularity and defensibility of the site (using such measures as enhanced visibility, design, and facilities); and
 - (b) The site facilities should be replaced if a more durable substitute is available, and removed if such an option is not available.
- * In order to enhance mini-parks, park-type furniture and fixtures should be provided in such a way as to develop a focal point or park identity. This focal point would serve to promote the park as an attractive gathering place where people could sit and visit. In addition, consideration should be given to the use of certain portions of mini-parks as ornamental or vegetable gardens, where appropriate.

- * Mini-parks that are not amenable to any of the above considerations should be considered for possible sale and conversion to private management. Money from such sales should be used solely for recreational purposes within the community.
- * Funding should be provided in order to establish at least one paid position which would carry the responsibility of maintaining all mini-parks which remain in public ownership.
- * Effort should be devoted toward working with the residents of neighborhoods containing mini-parks in order to determine the best possible use of the parks. This could entail the use of public workshops designed to develop a park plan aimed at meeting the needs of nearby residents.
- * Small, unused city properties should be evaluated by the City for use as "satellite ecological education centers." The satellite system would educate citizens about the various urban ecological communities in Gainesville, would require low operation and maintenance costs, and could contribute to the ecological health of nearby neighborhoods.

The Recreation and Parks Department is currently conducting an environmental assessment of mini-parks of 2 acres or more. The land will be evaluated for biological value, environmental features and environmental sensitivity. Each parcel will be assigned values with separate pocket park criteria and environmental park criteria. Those parcels with a certain environmental value may be classified as open green space while those parcels without those environmental features may be considered suitable for the development of pocket parks.

RESULTS OF A SURVEY ABOUT FAMILY-FRIENDLY CITIES

A survey of more than 300 local government officials and community leaders was conducted by the National League of Cities (NLC) at the Your City's Families (YCF) Conference in Los Angeles, CA in September of 1997. The question asked concerned what these officials believe are the characteristics of a family-friendly city. Education, community safety and recreation were the characteristics of a family-friendly city most often cited by survey respondents. Almost 40 percent of all respondents said that a family-friendly community would have rich and varied recreational opportunities. There would be an array of outdoor and indoor facilities including parks, open space and swimming pools. There would be a variety of programs for all ages and segments of the community, as well as activities aimed towards families. Special events such as concerts, fairs, celebrations, and festivals for families would be numerous. Entertainment opportunities and nearby outdoor recreation such as bike trails, hiking, and ball parks would also be important to many of the respondents.⁶

⁶ Nation's Cities Weekly, July 13, 1998, page 9.

PARK INVENTORY METHODOLOGY

Overview of Park Access as an Inventory Criterion

All public or private land set aside for aesthetic, recreational, educational, historic, environmental or cultural use can potentially be considered a public park. In Gainesville, such parks contribute to the inventory of public recreation only if they provide some form of public access. Also, only outdoor parks and facilities are inventoried. Exceptions to this rule are facilities such as public gymnasiums or recreation centers.

Publicly owned properties that contain environmentally significant features but are not yet developed to accommodate passive recreation are classified as "public conservation areas." These properties are considered parks (either regional or local nature parks) only if they are developed to accommodate passive recreation.

"Semi-public" and private parks, which are privately owned and allow access only on a restricted or fee basis, are generally not included in the inventory of public recreation facilities.

Inventory of School Facilities and Acreage

Another form of "semi-public" park is a School Board of Alachua County (SBAC) site. SBAC schools are frequently used by Gainesville residents, even though the school is not officially classified as a public park. However, public access is limited when school children are using facilities for school programs, and since the School Board is concerned about increased liability and maintenance when schools are used by non-students, SBAC schools contribute only partially to the public recreation inventory:

The question of how to incorporate School Board facilities into the planning analysis for recreation has posed problems for decades. There has yet to emerge a clear solution to this issue. Reasons to accept inclusion are: (1) Urban areas may be constrained for land or funds available for recreation, and cooperative agreements with schools may reduce the need to build new facilities; (2) many schools provide outdoor facilities not used by the school, particularly at night or in the summer; (3) county schools are built with public monies (from several levels) that provide some justification for public recreational access and (4) almost all outdoor basketball courts at SBAC schools were built with City of Gainesville monies.

Reasons to exclude school facilities are: (1) Schools may acquire additional liability with increased public accessibility; (2) programs that include school facilities for public use are often too optimistic about the degree of access, and thus underestimate facility deficiencies; and (3) many school facilities are inherently less available for public use owing to school-related use of those facilities.

This Element takes the position that an intermediate approach is appropriate. This approach includes the following:

- * Private schools are completely excluded from the recreation inventory and analysis of deficiencies. This is justified primarily by the fact that such facilities cannot be planned or developed by the public sector, nor can the public sector exert much influence in the shaping of private membership or "use-of-facility" rules and regulations.
- * Schools owned by the state are also excluded, except for the University of Florida, Santa Fe Community College, and P.K. Yonge, which possess such a significant range of recreational facilities that some form of use by several individuals not related to the schools is inevitable. State schools other than these three are excluded because of the minimal public access allowed by the state.

Without the cooperation of the SBAC, the City would find it much more difficult (or impossible) to meet recreational needs. Primarily, the City gains use of the gymnasiums and ballfields. There is only one City-operated gymnasium (the Martin Luther King Multi-Purpose Center), and use of school gyms is either on a limited basis or too unreliable to offer the City much of an opportunity to run recreation programs. In regard to ballfields, the City gains use of about 13 SBAC ballfields for its spring baseball program, which supplements the two City-owned league fields. Reciprocally, the City offers pools, fields, tennis courts, and racquetball courts for use by the SBAC.

The following SBAC recreation facilities have been financed by the City of Gainesville:

<u>School</u>	<u>Facility</u>
Jones (A.Q.)	* Basketball Court Lights * Baseball Softball Field * Restrooms * Playground * Parking Lot & Landscaping
Duval	* Basketball Court Lights * Baseball/Softball Field Lights * Restrooms
Littlewood	* Basketball Court Lights * Baseball/Softball Field
Metcalf	* Basketball Court Lights * Baseball/Softball Field
Sidney Lanier	* Basketball Court * Baseball/Softball Field
J.J. Finley	* Basketball Court * Baseball/Softball Field
Stephen Foster	* Basketball Court * Baseball/Softball Field

Rawlings	* Basketball Court * Baseball/Softball Field
Lincoln/Williams	* Basketball Court * 2 Baseball/Softball Fields (one lighted) * Playground & Landscaping * Restroom
Howard Bishop	* Basketball Courts
Westwood	* Baseball/Softball Field
Kirby Smith	* Basketball Court

Inventory of State Parks

Because public access is integral to the Recreation Element, careful consideration must be given to the inventory of certain state parks. Careful consideration is necessary because certain types of state parks are more difficult to access and are less oriented toward recreation than municipal or county parks.

In the Gainesville urban area, state parks are mostly large in size and offer passive forms of recreation. The Recreation Element classifies them as regional nature parks. Only those that are wholly or predominantly inside the Gainesville urban area are inventoried. Only land designated for (or developed for) public recreation is counted toward meeting recreational needs. (Substantial state park acreage is designated for conservation, which largely excludes public access.) Lake and conservation acreage is not counted.

Gainesville contains railroad abandonments (linear corridors) owned by the state. These corridors are counted as city trails up to the urban area boundary.

Active vs. Passive Acreage

Each park is classified as "active" (activity-based) or "passive" (resource-based). Active parks are those that are primarily dependent upon recreational facilities like ballfields or tennis courts for their attractiveness. Passive parks depend primarily on natural resources such as a lake, creek or forest for their attractiveness.

For recently acquired and yet to be acquired parkland, a distinction is made as to the amount of park acreage that is passive and active. Passive acreage includes areas that are inappropriate for development, such as floodprone areas or areas containing other significant environmental features. Active acres include areas that

are appropriate for development, such as non-floodprone areas or areas not containing significant environmental features.

Passive acres contained by, or adjacent to active parks are double-counted as both acreage for active parks and acreage for regional or local nature parks. Parks are to be classified as active parks if the predominant use of the site is or will be for active recreation, and if there is sufficient active acreage (i.e., at least one acre for a mini-park, 5 acres for a neighborhood, 20 acres for a community park, and 15 acres for a sports-complex park). Active facilities are swimming pools, multi-purpose fields, softball fields, multi-purpose courts, tennis courts, racquetball courts, recreation centers, and gymnasiums. If any of these facilities are found at a park, that park is classified as active.

Passive public properties are classified as either regional nature parks, local nature parks, or conservation areas, depending upon their size (local nature parks are city- or county-owned and generally less than 100 acres), ownership (state- or water management district-owned parks are classified as regional), and whether they are developed to accommodate passive recreation (undeveloped local nature parks are classified as conservation areas).

Park and Facility Inventory Updates

Parks are to be inventoried at least every five years. This inventory includes: (a) an address of the park; (b) information about the type of park, the ownership and size; (c) a tabulation of all facilities that are affected by city recreation standards, including facility conditions; (d) the zoning and land use designations of the park; (e) when the park was established; and (f) when the park was last inventoried.

Special Inventory Requirements for Recreational Facilities

There are special requirements for inventorying certain recreational facilities:

Basketball Courts:	Each hoop is inventoried. Also known as a "multi-purpose" court.
Hardball Fields:	Also known as youth baseball fields. Fences are less than 275 feet from home plate.
Softball Fields:	Also known as adult/youth fields. Fences are greater than 275 feet from home plate.
Soccer Fields:	Also known as "multi-purpose" fields. Inventoried fields do not necessarily contain permanent goals. Fields may also accommodate activities such as football or rugby.

Swimming Pools: May be either 25 yards or 50 meters in length.

Trails: May allow jogging, bicycling, hiking or similar non-motorized travel. Track facilities at schools are not included.

Sports-Complex and

Local Nature Parks: Acreage may be double-counted as other park types. For example, an undeveloped 100-acre park could contain 50 acres of land suitable (and planned) for active recreation and 50 acres of passive land. Such a park will be counted in the park inventory as 100 acres of community park and 50 acres of local nature park.

DEFINITIONS

ACCESS, PUBLIC: permission, liberty, or ability to enter, approach, use, or pass to and from certain properties, which is shared by all members of the community.

ACCESS, LIMITED: private, school, or non-recreation oriented public properties which inhibit access by all or some members of the community due to: (a) concern for liability; (b) limited hours; (c) poor transportation access; (d) discrimination due to sex, race, or religion; (f) lack of student status; or (e) inability to pay.

ACTIVITY-BASED RECREATION (also known as CAPITAL-BASED RECREATION or ACTIVE RECREATION): any recreation activity that is primarily dependent on human-built facilities (e.g., a ballfield, tennis court, or swimming pool) rather than the natural environment (e.g., a prairie, forest, creek, or lake) of the recreation site. The attractiveness of activity-based parks is primarily based on the human-built recreational facilities at the site, rather than the natural environment of the site.

CONDITION OF FACILITY:

EXCELLENT: new, original; cannot be improved upon.

GOOD: may show signs of use; otherwise close to excellent.

FAIR: shows definite signs of use, but no repairs are needed.

POOR: in use, but minor repairs will make item more useable; or not in use, but needs minor repair.

MAJOR REPAIR: major repairs needed. Not now usable, but is repairable.

NOT REPAIRABLE: recommending disposal of items in this condition.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT OPEN SPACE (or FEATURES): as defined by the COS Element, consists of relatively natural creeks, lakes, wetlands; threatened and endangered species habitat; significant uplands; major groundwater recharge areas; the municipal wellfield; and adjacent land essential for the viability of such open space or features.

LEISURE: any portion of an individual's time which is pleasurable and not occupied by the pursuit of essential or compulsory activities.

OPEN SPACE: any vegetated or surface water area set aside for recreation, public gathering, aesthetics, buffering, urban definition, protection of public health and safety, preservation of ecosystem functions, or a combination of these features.

PASSIVE RECREATION: see RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION.

PRIVATE PARK OR FACILITY: a park or facility that is privately owned and restricts public access through such practices as imposition of relatively costly seasonal or yearly membership fees, or through requiring residence at a residential development associated with the park or facility.

PUBLIC PARK OR FACILITY: a park or facility that is publicly owned or leased on a long-term basis, or is privately owned and allows relatively unrestricted public access.

RECREATION: any voluntary use of leisure time which provides entertainment or relaxation either in an outdoor setting, or in an indoor setting at a recreation site.

RECREATION SITE OR PARK: any public or private land set aside for aesthetic, recreational, educational, historic, environmental, or cultural use which allows some form of public recreational access as defined by "SEMI-PUBLIC PARK OR FACILITY" and "PUBLIC PARK OR FACILITY." For the purposes of calculating level-of-service deficiencies described in this Element, this definition does not include indoor passive recreation such as museums and art galleries, or indoor, privately owned recreation sites.

RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION (also known as PASSIVE RECREATION): any recreation activity, such as boating, nature study, picnicking, or hiking, that is primarily dependent on the passive enjoyment of the natural environment. The attractiveness of resource-based parks is primarily based on the natural environment of the site. Any human-built facilities at the site are designed only to enhance the enjoyment of, or otherwise promote the preservation of, the natural environment of the site.

SEMI-PUBLIC PARK OR FACILITY: a recreational park or facility that is privately owned and allows public use, but only on a relatively restricted or fee basis. Also, any public school.

SERVICE RADIUS: the distance from a park or facility which forms an outer boundary within which a majority of the users of that park or facility would be willing and able to travel to that park or facility.

URBAN AREA-WIDE PARK OR FACILITY: a facility that is sufficiently attractive to draw people from throughout the urban area.

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APPENDIX

PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

DRAFT

A Ranking System for Recreational and Conservation Land Parcels

The procedure followed by local governments to purchase vacant parcels for recreational or environmental purposes has traditionally suffered from insufficient analysis. The process typically begins when parcels are offered to the government by developers, realtors, environmentalists, elected officials, or neighborhood organizations. Usually, these parcels are then evaluated by considering the development constraints, location or environmental values of the parcel. Unfortunately, this procedure can overlook several important factors which play a role in assessing the value of a parcel. For example, does the parcel fit into a community scheme for recreation and open space? More importantly, are there other available parcels that are more valuable as parks or open space?

To better answer these questions, and therefore improve the procedure for acquiring new park sites, a computerized land ranking system can be used to evaluate vacant parcels. This system, developed by Gainesville Planning Staff, citizens, and University of Florida academicians, catalogues vacant parcels and evaluates them with a series of 15 criteria. The criteria are designed and weighted to evaluate a parcel in two ways:

1. For the value of the parcel in comparison to other parcels; and
2. For the value of the parcel in supporting "active" recreation and "passive" recreation.

By using the same criteria for each parcel assessment, and awarding points based upon how well the parcels satisfy the criteria, the system is able to compare the value of a parcel to previously evaluated parcels.

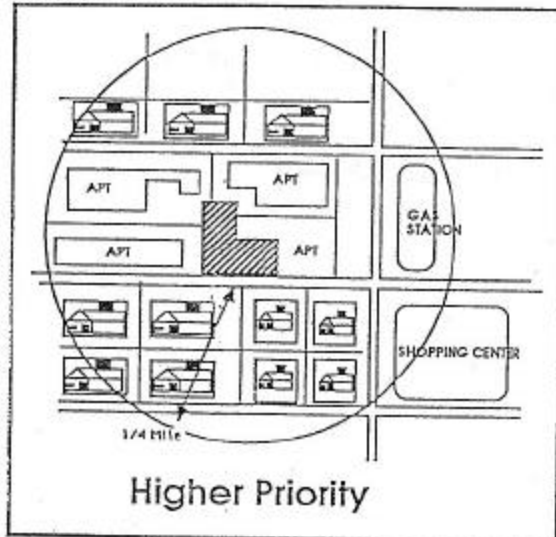
In addition, since there is no clear consensus about whether a community should acquire land based on recreational or environmental values, the system ranks parcels for BOTH categories (the active and the passive rankings). It is then up to the decision-makers to determine whether recreational or environmental values should take precedence.

PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

The Criteria

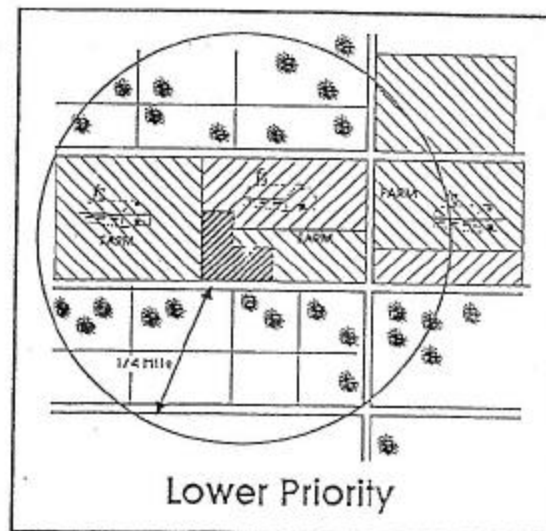
1. Density

"What is the current and expected population or development density of the area where the site is located?"



Justification

A site in close proximity to high-density commercial or residential areas provides more convenient access to a larger number of park users, and increases the visibility of the site.



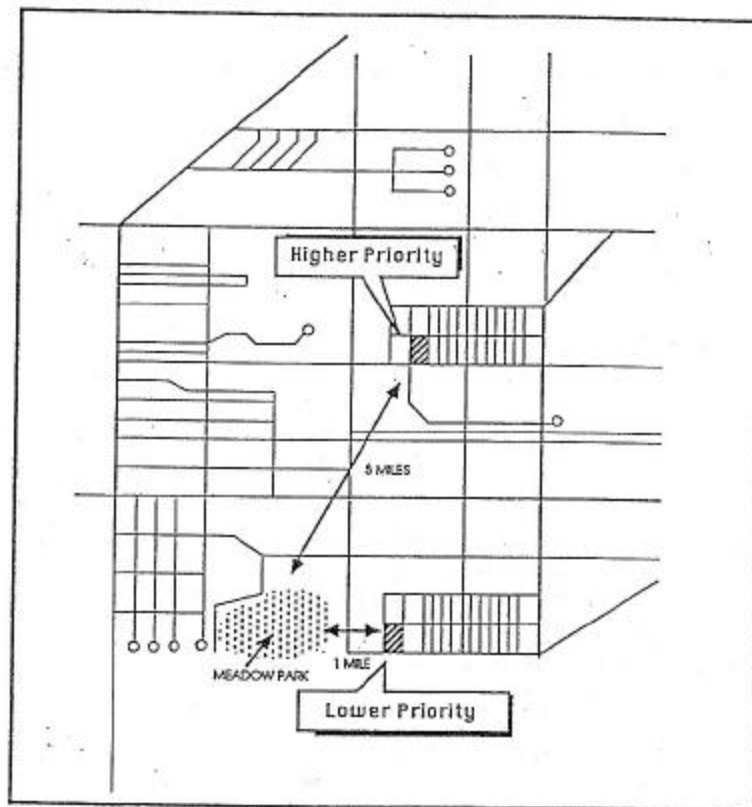
A-2

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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

2. Proximity

"What is the proximity of the site to other public parks and open spaces?"



Justification

Sites that are relatively remote from existing parks enhance the dispersal (and therefore accessibility) of parks. "Active" parks that are too closely spaced may suffer from underuse. "Passive" sites are weighted neutrally for this criterion, since proximity to existing passive parks is often preferable.

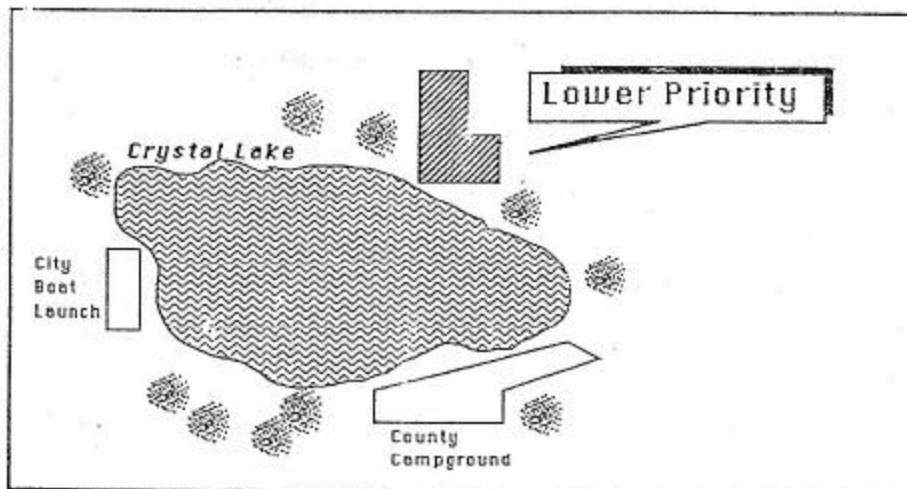
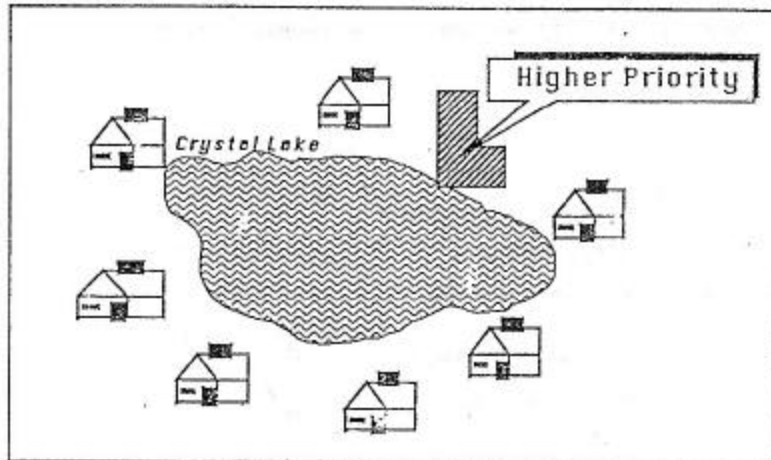
A-3

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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

3. Resource Access

"Does the site provide access to a natural resource with limited public access?"



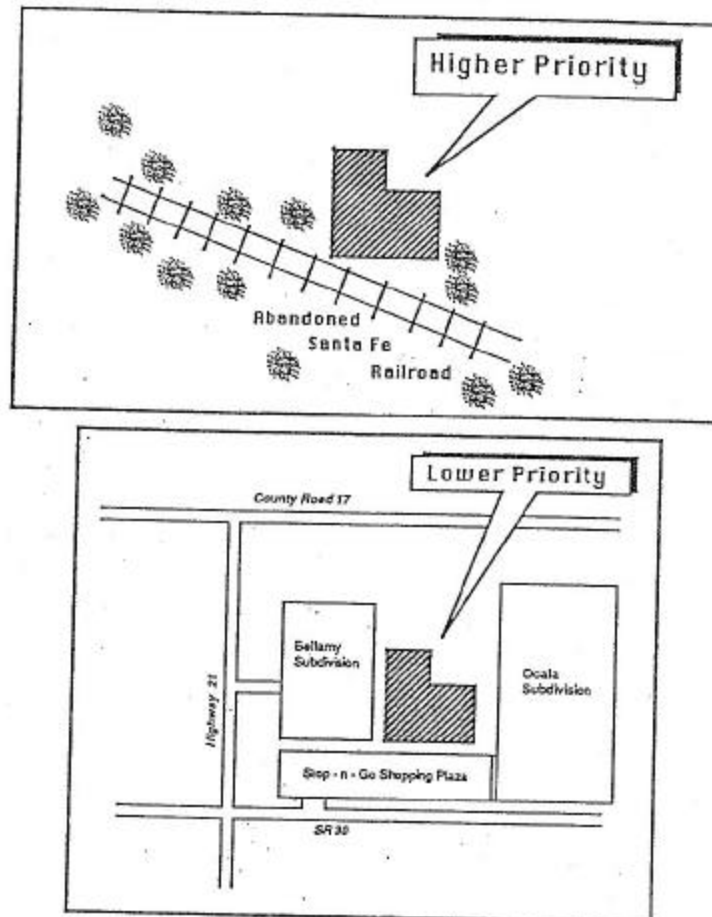
Justification

Many environmentally significant resources are not accessible or visible to citizens. As a result, it is likely that many citizens will be unaware of such resources, become apathetic about such resources, become frustrated by their inability to visit such resources, and possibly be less able to understand the value of such resources. Therefore, those sites which contain (or are near) resources that offer limited public access are more valuable.

PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

4. Trail Access

"Is the site serviced by an existing or potential abandoned railroad or utility easement right-of-way corridor, or existing recreational trail?"



Justification

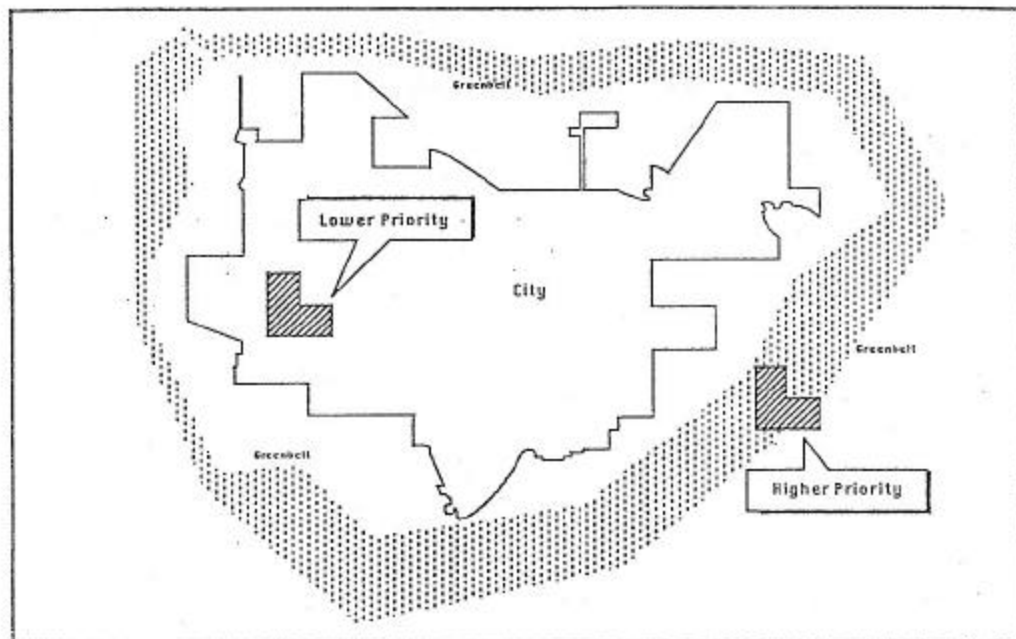
Alachua County contains several rail and utility right-of-way easements which are generally wide enough to accommodate some forms of recreational travel (bicycling, hiking, jogging), as well as provide a limited form of wildlife corridor capability. Because several rail rights-of-way are now abandoned and being purchased by the public, their potential usefulness as public travel corridors is significant. Such corridors are capable of providing pleasurable, safe, and non-motorized transportation to locations that are now only accessible by auto, if at all. Sites near these corridors would then be valuable "staging" areas, rest areas, or scenic vistas for trail users.

A-5

PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

5. Greenbelt

"Would the site be relatively useful as a component in a greenbelt network?"



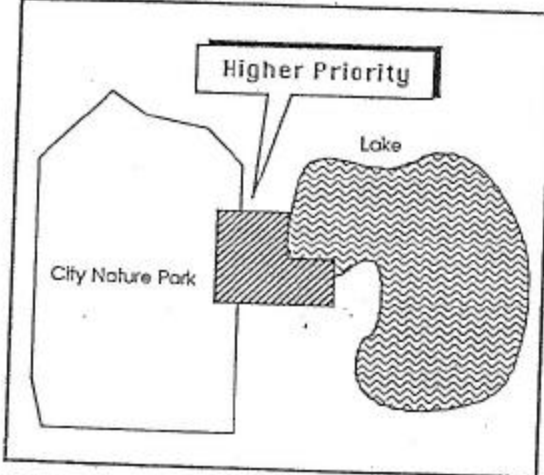
Justification

Sites that "fill in the gaps" of an urban-defining greenbelt are more valuable than those unable to serve this purpose. Greenbelts are useful in (1) controlling urban sprawl; (2) Integrating city parks into a network (such as an "emerald necklace"); (3) improving community image; (4) improving the viability of wildlife areas; and (5) improving access to the large "islands" of recreation and conservation lands surrounding the community.

PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

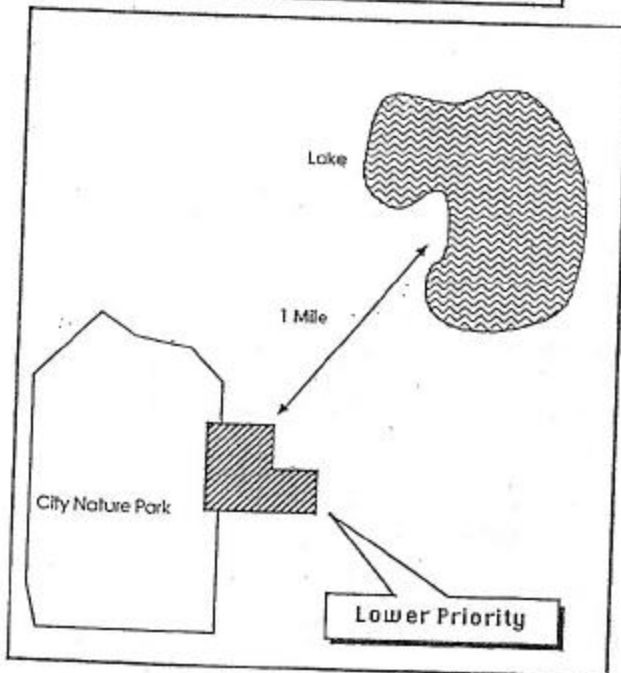
6. Connectivity

"Does the site provide a physical linkage between two or more existing public parks or open spaces, or extend the size of such parks?"



Justification

Sites that are adjacent to, or are in close proximity to existing parks act synergistically to improve the recreational and ecological value of both sites. For example, if an existing park is enlarged, a greater range of recreational activities can be accommodated, and existing ecological attributes are more easily preserved. Also, connections between parks serve to improve the accessibility to such parks.



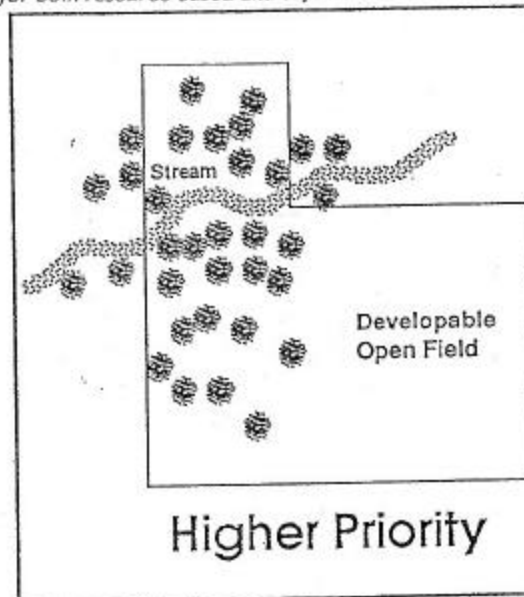
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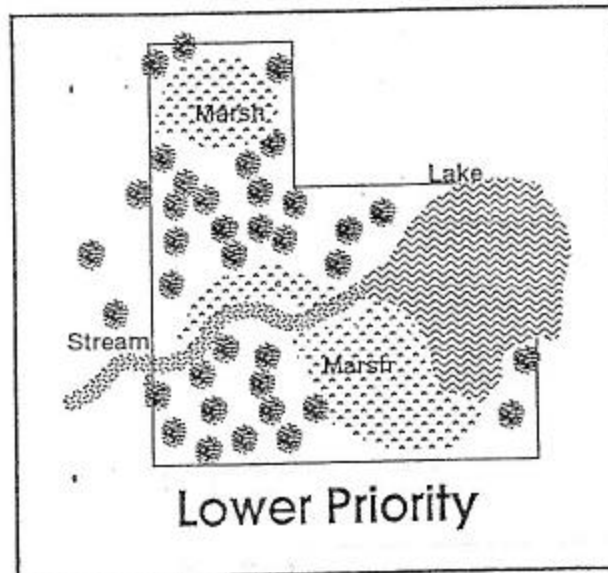
PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

7. Multi-Uses

"Is the site suitable for both resource-based and capital-based recreation?"



Justification
It is usually less costly for a community to acquire park acreage that offers a range of both "active" and "passive" forms of recreation, rather than buying several "single-use" parcels.



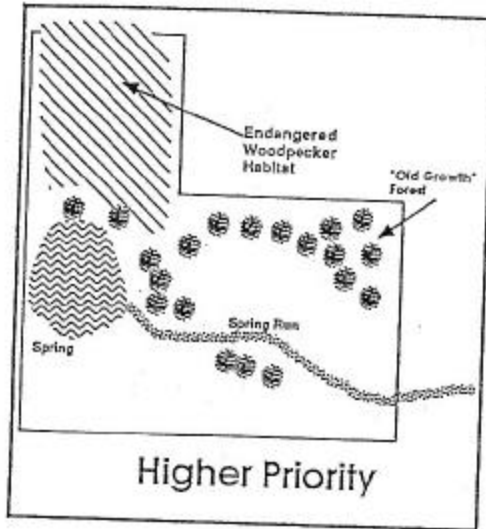
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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

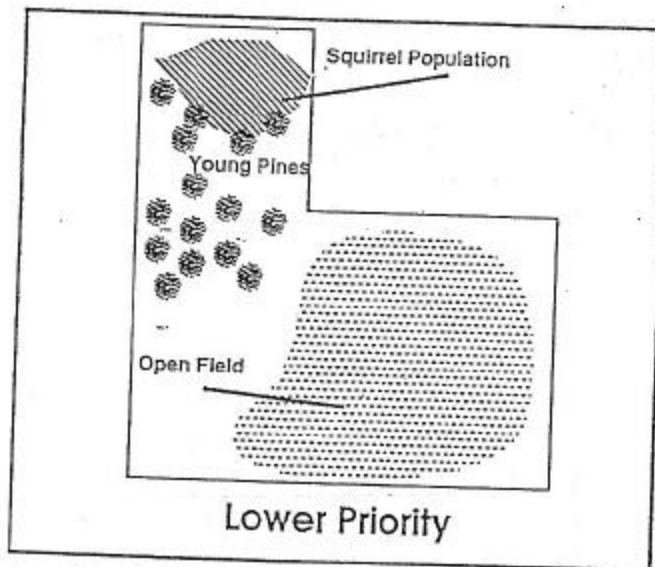
8. Rarity

"How unique is/are the natural attributes of the site?"



Justification

Sites which contain rare or significant natural attributes are valued more highly than those that contain more common attributes. Significant resources found on a site are generally more likely to be protected if purchased and managed by a public agency.



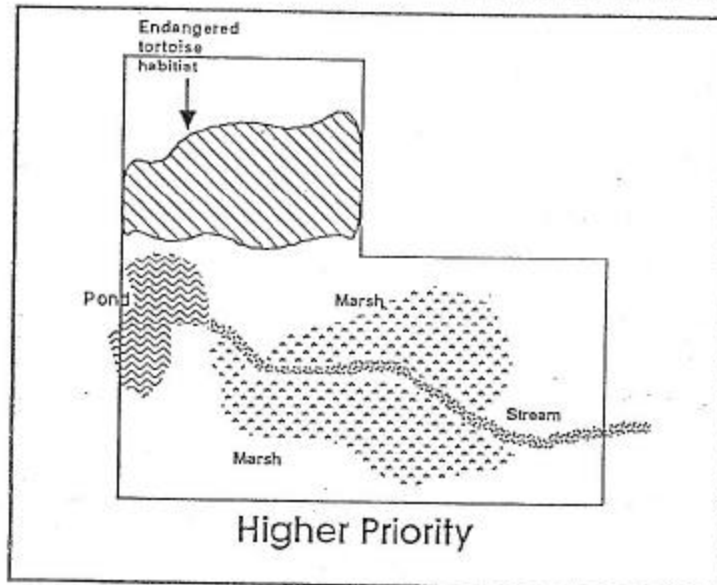
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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

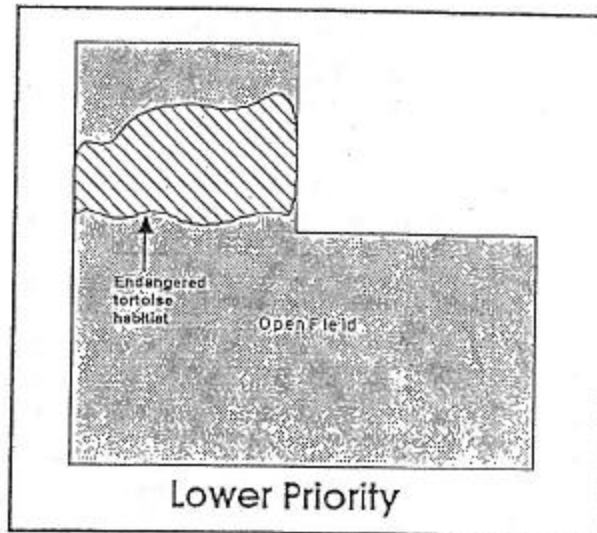
9. Diversity

"How much diversity does the site possess in regard to natural attributes?"



Justification

Sites with a relatively high degree of natural species diversity generally demonstrate high ecological "quality". Sites that are relatively diverse are often more interesting, aesthetically pleasing, and likely to possess ecological communities that are able to resist extinction.



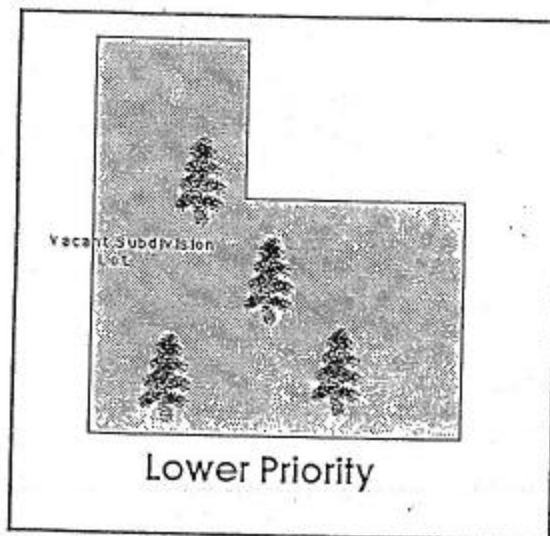
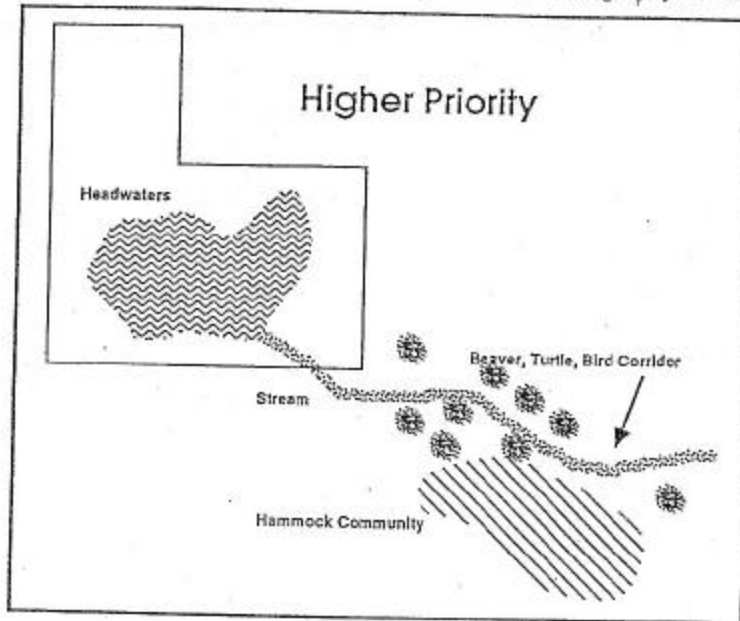
A-10

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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

10. Ecosystem

"How critical are the natural attributes of the site to the integrity of an ecosystem?"



Justification

Sites which contain significant natural attributes are valued highly since public acquisition and management would improve the likelihood of these attributes being protected. The attributes identified by this criterion are, when functioning properly, able to sustain regionally significant ecosystems.

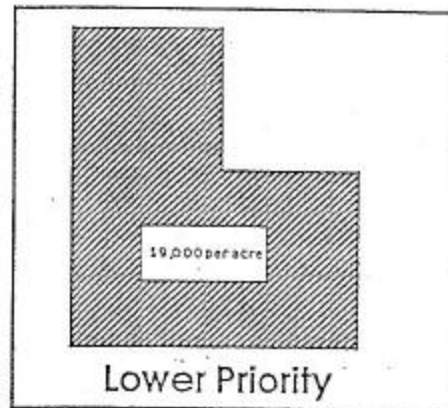
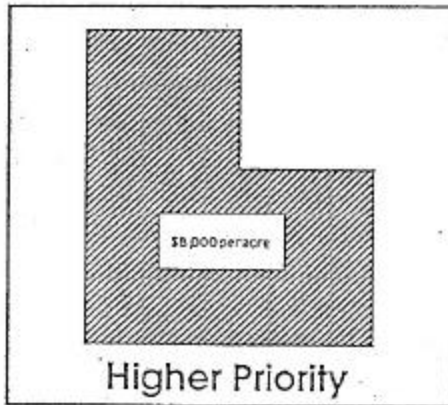
A-11

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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

11. Cost

"What is the per acre cost to acquire the site?"

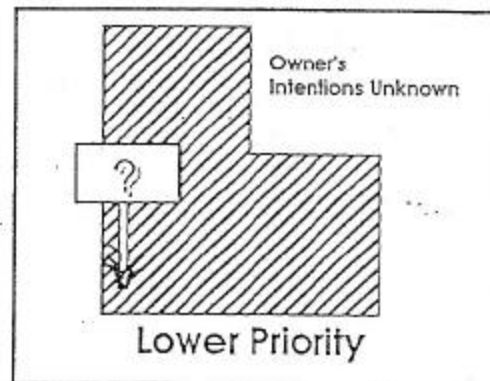
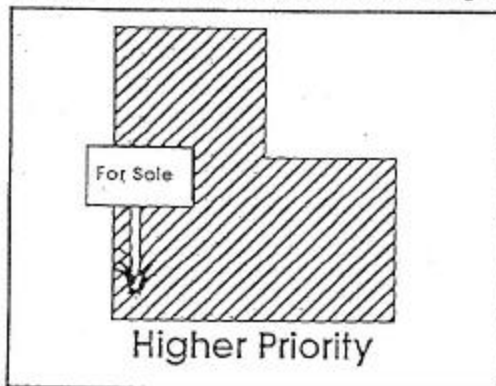


Justification

Due to budget constraints, local governments are limited in their ability to purchase sites. Therefore, in order to maximize the number of sites a community can purchase, those sites which are relatively inexpensive are valued most highly by this criterion.

12. Availability

"Is the site owner relatively interested in selling the site?"



Justification

Sites that are officially for sale are often those which carry the most agreeable and flexible terms for acquisition. Conversely, owners unwilling to sell are likely to be uncompromising and may seek an unreasonably high price for the parcel.

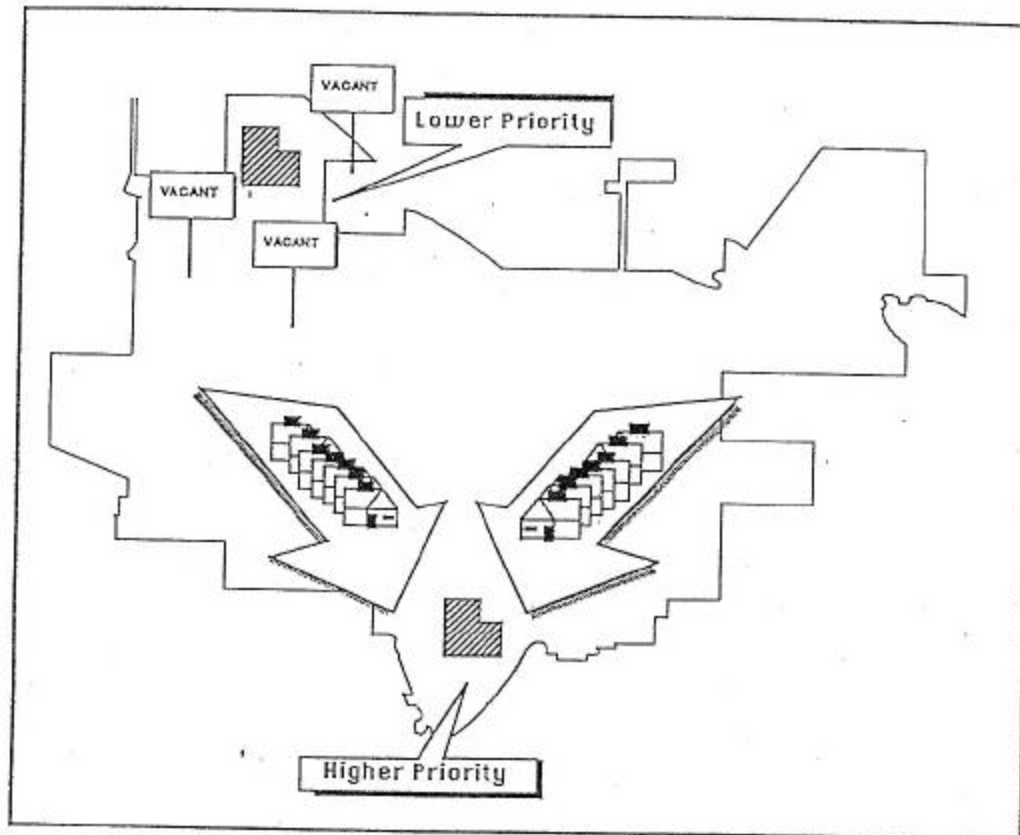
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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

13. Pressure

"When is the site likely to be developed?"



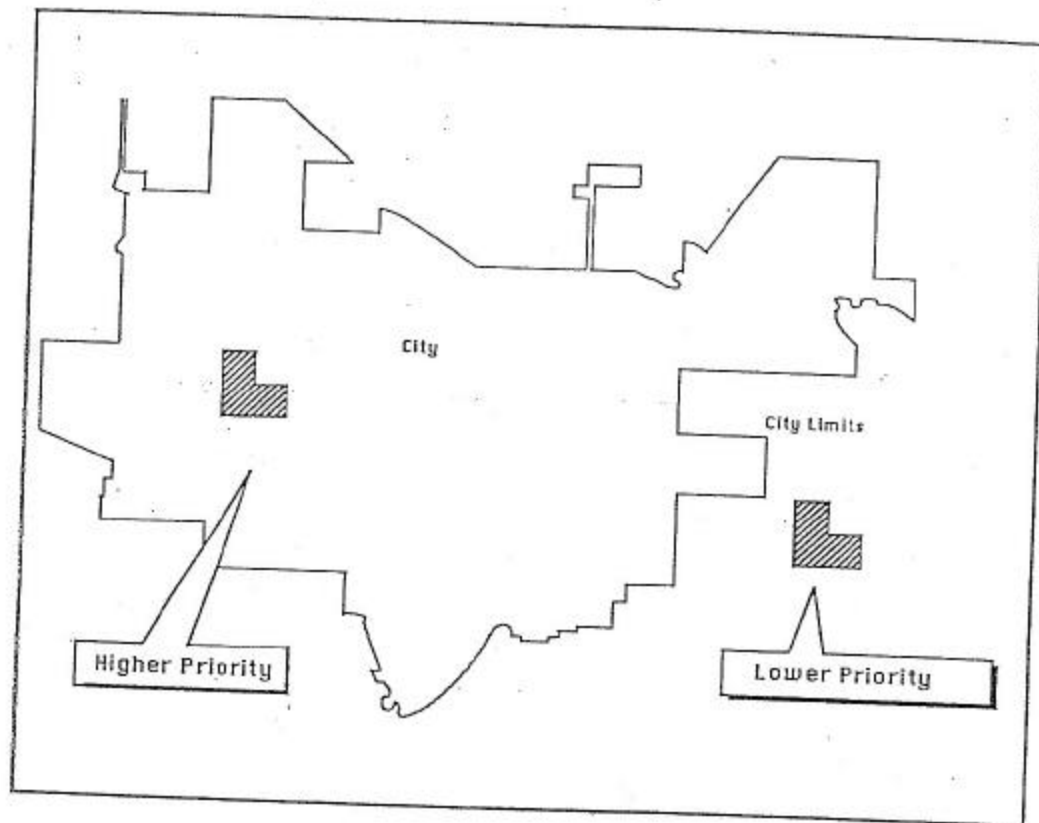
Justification

Sites that are in the path of residential, commercial, or industrial development are more likely to be developed in the near future. Sites likely to be developed in the near future must be prioritized for acquisition in order for the public to avoid losing any recreational or environmental attributes of the site.

PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

14. Jurisdiction

"Is the site within or near city limits?"



Justification

Sites that fall within the city limits offer greater management control and flexibility of use for the city, since city regulatory codes apply to lands within city limits. In addition, sites that are within or near city limits are more accessible to city residents.

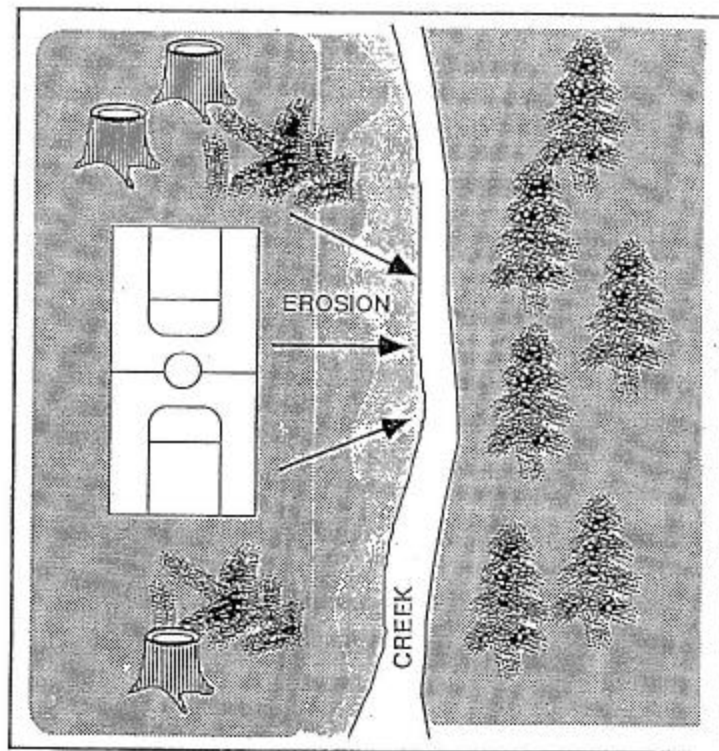
A-14

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PARCEL RANKING SYSTEM

15. Environmental Degradation

"Will development of the site for active recreation result in significant degradation of important environmental features?"



Justification

Certain sites contain important environmental features. However, building facilities such as tennis or basketball courts at the site can damage these features by causing erosion, removing large areas of vegetation, disturbing wildlife, and other harmful impacts. Since some sites are generally unable to accommodate active recreation without damaging natural features, it is necessary to lower the value of the site when ranking it for "active" recreation. The "passive" ranking is unaffected by this criterion.

A-15

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