

6.
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE
ELEMENT

Introduction

This Recreation and Open Space Element includes Goals, Objectives and Policies that apply to the main campus in Gainesville and the Lake Wauburg Recreation complex in Alachua County. The remaining Alachua County Satellite Properties do not provide general-purpose recreation facilities.

The Department of Recreational Sports is a department of the Division of Student Affairs. Their mission is to offer experiences that enrich the lives of University of Florida students through excellence in facilities, fitness, sport, adventure and play. Emphasis is placed on providing a safe environment while enhancing quality of life through activities that promote physical fitness, sportsmanship, leadership opportunities and the development of a life-long pattern of recreational activity. By providing opportunities through structured activities for leadership, socialization, self-actualization and enjoyment, the Department contributes to the educational mission of the University and strives to enhance the quality of life for each student. The Department of Recreational Sports is overseen by a Board of Directors consisting of students, faculty and staff.

The Department of Recreational Sports operates extensive indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that are available for casual use and organized departmental programs. In addition, four swimming pools (three outdoor and one indoor) are jointly managed for shared use among the Department of Recreational Sports, Stephen C. O'Connell Center, College of Health and Human Performance, and the Department of Housing and Residence Education. The Florida Pool and O'Connell Center swimming pool and weight rooms are used for both recreation and teaching. Funding for construction of recreation facilities comes from tuition fees that are released through the Capital Improvement Trust Fund. Recreation programs and facility operation and maintenance are funded through a variety of sources including student Activity and Services fees as well as other user fees.

The University Athletic Association, Inc. (UAA) provides and operates facilities on campus that serve intercollegiate sports. The UAA exists to advance the University of Florida's teaching, research and service missions, and is responsible for the intercollegiate athletics program at the University of Florida. The Athletics Director reports directly to the University President and retains overall responsibility for the health and stability of the program. In addition, the UAA is governed by a Board of Directors that provides guidance and direction through approval of policies, procedures and the budget. In addition to operating intercollegiate athletics programs, UAA provides sports camps for youth and adults. The UAA supports development of the university's academic advising center and the O'Connell Center, which also serves as a physical education teaching facility.

University employees are permitted to use the casual outdoor recreation facilities, such as tennis courts and basketball courts on a space available basis when the facility is not reserved for organized teams or events. Employees can purchase a Recreational Sports membership, which includes access to the Southwest Recreation Center, Student Recreation & Fitness Center and events, programs and services held in those facilities. The facilities of Lake Wauburg and Lake Wauburg South are available to employees and their guests free of charge. The indoor swimming pool, track and weight rooms at the O'Connell Center are available to employees and their families during designated open recreation hours. The University Golf Course is also available to all students, faculty,

staff, alumni and their guests with fees typical of other public or private courses.

Open spaces on the main campus include lands placed in the Conservation, Green Space Buffer and Urban Park land use classifications on the Future Land Use map. These areas provide opportunities for quiet study and passive recreation including hiking, picnicking, Frisbee, bird watching and reading. Linear trail connections between and through these open spaces, as depicted in Figure 1-4 “Open Space Connections”, may also facilitate jogging, bicycling and inline skating. Consistent with the terms and conditions included in the Florida Administration Commission Final Order Number AC-98-012, the University has designated the site northwest of Lake Alice and south of the private Golf View neighborhood as “Urban Park” and “Green Space Buffer” to maintain the area in open space for passive recreational use including retention of the bat houses and student gardens in their existing locations. The function and management of the open space areas are detailed in the Urban Design Element, Future Land Use Element and Conservation Element.

Active recreation areas on campus may include built environments such as gymnasiums and recreation centers as well as open facilities such as soccer fields. The Future Land Use Element defines two types of active recreation facilities to distinguish between those that are part of the built environment and those that are part of the open space fabric of the campus.

The Future Land Use Element defines the recreation land use classification as follows:

- **Active Recreation:** *The Active Recreation land use classification identifies those areas on the campus that are appropriate for recreation sports and athletics building development. Accessibility of the site to its customers (general public, students, etc.) is a primary location criterion for Active Recreation land use. Proximity to other recreational uses, housing and parking are also important location criteria aimed at integrating recreation areas into the campus development pattern. Ancillary uses associated with an active recreation facility, such as utilities, service drives, user and disabled parking, and functional open space are allowed within the Active Recreation land use classification. Development densities, heights and patterns in the Active Recreation land use shall respect pedestrian connections, historic context (where applicable), adjacencies to other land uses and creation of functional open space while maximizing the efficient use of building footprints to the extent feasible within construction budgets and program requirements.*
- **Active Recreation Outdoor:** *The Active Recreation Outdoor land use classification identifies those areas on the campus that are appropriate for recreation sports and athletics facility development such as sports fields, courts and swimming pools. Accessibility of the site to its customers (general public, students, etc.) is a primary location criterion for Active Recreation Outdoor land use. Proximity to other recreational uses, housing, parking and open spaces are also important location criteria aimed at integrating recreation areas into the campus development pattern. Allowable structure development shall be limited to locker rooms, ticket booths, rest rooms, equipment storage sheds, outdoor seating and other support structures associated with an active recreation use on conditions that their size, scope and function are related to and compatible with outdoor active recreation activities. Ancillary uses associated with an active recreation facility, such as utilities, service drives, user and disabled parking, and functional open space are allowed within the Active Recreation Outdoor land use*

classification. Development densities, heights and patterns in the Active Recreation Outdoor land use shall respect pedestrian connections, historic context (where applicable), adjacencies to other land uses and creation of functional open space while maximizing the efficient use of building footprints to the extent feasible within construction budgets and program requirements.

The University recognizes that its active recreation facilities and open space resources provide benefits for university programs as well as the community at large. Shared use of facilities by the community is limited due to funding, operation and security concerns on the campus. However, recreation facilities may be made available to the public through special programs such as community leisure studies courses or youth sports camps. In addition, the University's open campus policies allow the public to experience its open space resources so long as that access does not interfere with the enjoyment and safety of the campus community. To the extent that university faculty, staff and students comprise a large percentage of community residents, these individuals are granted more extensive access to the university's recreational resources. However, there are no university-owned recreation facilities that are incorporated in the host local governments' comprehensive plans. The University recognizes the limitations of public recreation amenities within its host community and University Context Area. Therefore, the University commits to expanding its recreation resources to serve its constituencies and lessen the burden of campus populations on community recreation resources.

Goal 1: Provide Recreation and Open Space Facilities In Close Proximity to the University Population to Support Healthy Lifestyles, and Adequately and Efficiently Serve the Instructional, Active and Passive Recreation Needs of the University Population.

Objective 1.1: To provide recreation facilities that meet the health and wellness needs of the university population and support a signature student experience.

Policy 1.1.1: New recreation facilities shall be provided consistent with the Future Land Use Element, Capital Improvement Program Element and other policies of the master plan and depicted on Figures 6-1 and 6-1.a of this Element.

Policy 1.1.2: Student recreation facilities shall be provided to meet existing and future enrollment that are equal or better than national comparative data and address the needs of students, faculty and staff considering different cultures, diversities and social interests.

Policy 1.1.3: The Department of Recreational Sports shall pursue expansion of recreation facilities at Lake Wauburg that make efficient use of the land resource yet are compatible with the environmental setting of the lake area and its natural resources.

Policy 1.1.4: The Department of Recreational Sports shall coordinate with the appropriate federal, state and local governmental agencies as well as related academic departments to monitor the success of the eagles' nests at Lake Wauburg when present.

Policy 1.1.5: The University shall seek to enhance areas designated in the Urban Park Future Land

Use classification, particularly those identified on Figure 1-5 of the Urban Design Element, for the purpose of ensuring adequate areas for passive recreational pursuits.

Policy 1.1.6: The University shall continue to explore opportunities to maximize facility utilization and accessibility through partnerships between the Department of Recreational Sports, Department of Housing and Residence Life, UAA, O'Connell Center and College of Health and Human Performance such that shared use of facilities is provided without compromising the programmatic needs of one entity over another.

Policy 1.1.7: The University shall encourage and educate its faculty, staff and students about healthy lifestyles including physical activity, and shall increase availability of recreational resources to faculty and staff.

Policy 1.1.8: The University reserves the right to monitor the use of University facilities to ensure that the University population is given preference in the use of its facilities at all times.

Policy 1.1.9: The University shall maintain and operate safe recreation facilities that provide life/safety and ADA code compliance, and shall prioritize projects that enhance safety and the useful life of existing recreation facilities.

Objective 1.2: To ensure accessibility of recreation resources, particularly by non-automobile transportation modes.

Policy 1.2.1: New recreation facilities shall be provided consistent with the Future Land Use Element and as depicted on Figures 6-1 and 6-1.a of this Element, which strives to locate active recreation facilities in proximity to student housing, adjacent to academic land uses for those recreation facilities that support academic programming, and near the campus perimeter to be accessible to students living off-campus both to the west/southwest and east/northeast of campus.

Policy 1.2.2: The University shall continue to work with RTS to ensure continued transit service to Lake Wauburg and Lake Wauburg South with schedules and routing that facilitate student accessibility.

Policy 1.2.3: Recreation facility locations and site design shall seek to take advantage of access provided by bicycle and pedestrian facilities, both existing and proposed, and shall seek to enhance those facilities whenever feasible. These bicycle and pedestrian facilities are depicted in Figures 8-2, 8-3, 8-4 and 8-5 of the Transportation Element including both on campus and off-campus linkages.

Objective 1.3: To engage the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, School Board of Alachua County and other community partners for mutual benefit to address the recreational needs of the campus and community.

Policy 1.3.1: The University shall consider cooperative agreements, when appropriate, on a case-by-case basis, with public, semi-private, private and non-profit entities to provide recreation and open space facilities, programs and/or maintenance consistent with applicable provisions of Chapter 253 Florida Statutes and policies of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund for properties owned by the State of Florida.

Policy 1.3.2: The University shall work with Alachua County, City of Gainesville and the School Board of Alachua County to identify off-campus sports fields and other outdoor active recreation non-instructional sites that may be appropriate for joint active and/or passive recreation programs and facilities. The University shall consider interlocal agreements and memoranda of understanding as needed to provide for the joint use of identified sites, facilities and programs as appropriate.

Policy 1.3.4: The University shall meet with the City of Gainesville, Alachua County and any pertinent committees or interest groups as needed to discuss and coordinate on issues related to the provision of recreation and open space facilities and services.

Policy 1.3.5: The University shall continue to work with the City of Gainesville and Alachua County to mitigate adverse effects of special events, including sporting events, on the surrounding community.





