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Chapter VII
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
SUPPORT DOCUMENT

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Evaluation and Appraisal Amendments 2017

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Continued application of concurrency for parks and open space. Review Coordination with local governments regarding common methodologies for measuring transportation facilities.

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Pursuant to F. S. § 163.3180(1), the Town is retaining concurrency over its recreation and open spaces facilities and will maintain the adopted LOS standard of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Considering the 2016 permanent and seasonal population of 4,215, approximately 14.8 acres total are needed to meet this standard. At build-out, with a projected population of 5,039, a total of 17.6 acres for the entire town will be needed. The Town currently has 147 acres of recreation and open space land, a ratio of 34.9 acres per 1,000 residents at present and 29.2 acres per 1,000 at build-out. Therefore, no additional open space or facilities are needed to satisfy current or future recreational demand through the short- and long-term planning periods.

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Natural resources identified.

To comply with F.S. § 163.3177(6)(d)2.f., the Town has identified natural resources within its parks.

The Town continues to improve and enhance its park properties, such as Ponce Preserve, Timucuan Oaks, and Wilbur Bay, and those acquired through its land acquisition program and grants from Volusia County and the State.

The forty-acre Ponce Preserve site, located at the north end of town extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Halifax River. The property, which surrounds the Green Mound State Archaeological Site, was purchased with funds from the Florida Communities Trust, and is managed by the town as a passive park. The first phase of development, which includes a parking lot, restrooms, kayak launch, 1,600-foot long river boardwalk/wildlife observation deck, and nature trails, was completed in early 2007. In the years that followed, additional facilities were constructed, including a dune walkover, picnic and playground areas, nature trails, fitness stations, a wildlife observation platform, canoe launch, river boardwalk, parking lot, and restroom facilities. Today the site is also host to environmental and educational programs including “ECHO Rangers” and the Town’s annual Earth Day celebration known as “Ponce Preserves the Planet.”

Timucuan Oaks Botanical Garden is an eight-acre park located immediately north of the Harbour Village development. The property, which includes a Native Indian midden, was purchased with funds from the Florida Communities Trust, and is managed by the town as a passive park. The site includes approximately four acres of uplands and slightly more than four acres of wetlands. In 2014 the Town completed construction of Phase 1, which includes a nature trail and a boardwalk to provide access to the Halifax River via Daggett Creek. Phase 2 of the park opened this year, featuring a rose garden, entrance pergola, fountain, formal lawn, and restrooms.

48 Since 2007 the Town has completed improvements to its other parks as well. At
49 Davies Lighthouse Park, the Town added a gazebo, replaced the aging playground
50 equipment, and refurbished and enlarged the public restrooms. In 2011, the Ponce Inlet
51 Veterans Memorial was dedicated at the park and is now the site of annual Memorial Day
52 and Veterans Day events. The memorial has been recognized by the Department of
53 Veteran's Affairs as one of the nation's Veterans Day regional sites, one of only four such
54 sites in Florida. The Town has also increased the usefulness of Pollard Park, its only active
55 recreational facility, by restriping its basketball and tennis courts to also accommodate
56 pickle-ball. The Town has created a court reservation system to ensure adequate playing
57 time for its various types of users.

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59 Ponce Inlet creates and sponsors programming to increase the enjoyment and use of
60 its parks. It participates annually in the FL Dept. of Health's "Healthy Weight Community"
61 program. The Town holds an annual healthy lifestyle program called "Shape Up Ponce
62 Inlet." This event provides various activities at the beach and in each of the Town's parks.
63 This past year, the Town co-sponsored a 5k run, half-marathon, a 4.1-mile fun run, and a
64 paddle board event. The Town also continues to add more exercise equipment to the trails.
65 This past year a four-station pull-up bar was added. The Town's annual Earth Day event
66 encourages residents to bike or walk to the event to promote a healthy lifestyle.

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68 In 2016, the Town Council established short-term future goals for its park and recreation
69 facilities:

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- 71 • Review the usage, modify, & upgrade Pollard Park.
 - 72 • Expand and continue the Town's current recreational programs, possibly establishing
73 cooperative relations with one or more private associations that have recreational
74 facilities within the Town for public use of facilities in exchange for town maintenance
75 of it.
 - 76 • Develop the Wilbur Bay wetlands to include a boardwalk & kayak launch.
 - 77 • Upgrade the Kay & Ayers Davies Lighthouse Park playground equipment.
 - 78 • Thin the tree canopy at the Happy Tails Dog Park.
 - 79 • Evaluate the need for additional staff to determine adequacy to support the Town's
80 parks & recreation programs and development.

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82 The Town has also begun exploring the possibility of creating an entrance and
83 observation area for the Green Mound at Ponce Preserve. The mound is currently
84 overgrown and hidden from public view. Improving accessibility to the mound would be
85 coordinated with the State of Florida, which owns the mound, and undertaken pursuant to
86 the State's and Town's archeological protection guidelines.

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