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# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## Goals, Objectives, and Policies

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## PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Element is to ensure adequate recreational opportunities for the citizens of the Town of Sewall's Point through the provision of a comprehensive system of public and private park facilities. These facilities may include, but are not limited to, natural reservations, parks and playgrounds, trails, and public access to open spaces, and waterways.

Open space is defined as any parcel or area of land set aside, dedicated, designated, or reserved for the use and enjoyment of the property owners and/or public. Typical uses of common open space include, but are not limited to, recreation, parks, resource protection and conservation, wetlands, stormwater treatment areas, undeveloped land, and landscape buffers. Common open space areas may include such complementary structures and improvements as are necessary and appropriate as approved by the Town Commission. In no case shall common open space include required parking areas, existing or proposed road right-of-way, or drainage ditches.

The Recreation and Open Space Element is the long-range plan for how the Town of Sewall's Point will provide a high-quality system of parks, open space, recreational facilities and programs and to meet future projected demands and recreation trends. Open space, parks, and recreation are interconnected to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Beyond the provision of leisure and recreational activities, quality parks and recreation programs create safer, more desirable neighborhoods. Recreational opportunities promote healthier lifestyles and improve the mental and physical wellbeing of the residents and visitors.

As mentioned in other elements, the Town has virtually reached build out making expansion of its parks and open spaces very challenging. The demand for recreation facilities comes largely from permanent and seasonal residents. This demand is met by parks and leisure facilities within the Town boundary and is supplemented by nearby parks in unincorporated Martin County and the City of Stuart. When looking at a three-mile radius from the Town boundary, there is a total of 663.13 acres of parks and open spaces surrounding the Town. These facilities include regional parks, beach and water access, boat ramps, marinas, piers, recreation centers, and community centers.

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT – GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Town of Sewall's Point will provide strategically located special use facilities and neighborhood parks, all sensitively woven into the Town's existing environmental fabric, to meet residents' recreation and social needs.

### GOAL ROS 1 RECREATION

**Goal ROS 1** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall, to the extent possible, provide an exemplary system of special use facilities and neighborhood parks appropriately sized and designed considering their context. The Town will ensure that these facilities are convenient to citizens of all ages, and social and economic groups, in a manner that preserves and protects the fragile natural resources of the peninsula.

### OBJECTIVE ROS 1.1 RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Objective ROS 1.1** – The Town of Sewall's Point's public properties will continue to be the vehicle to provide recreational and leisure opportunities for its residents and visitors that are in harmony with and protect its natural resources.

**Policy ROS 1.1.1** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall maintain recreational and open space lands to adequately meet the needs of current and future residents, which will be measured by adopted recreation level-of-service standards.

**Policy ROS 1.1.2** – The Town of Sewall's Point shall maintain a system wide average of 0.8 acres of recreation space per 1,000 residents.

**Policy ROS 1.1.3** – The Town of Sewall's Point will continue to collaborate with all levels of government and the private sector to assist in providing ample recreational opportunities for its residents and achieve a balanced recreation system.

**Policy ROS 1.1.4** - The Town of Sewall's Point will seek to collaborate with the following entities with the goal of providing additional recreation opportunities while eliminating any duplicative efforts:

- Martin County Board of County Commissioners
- City of Stuart
- Martin County School District

## OBJECTIVE ROS 1.2 ACCESSIBILITY TO PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

**Objective ROS 1.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall look for opportunities to improve public access for persons of all abilities to its parks and open spaces.

**Policy ROS 1.2.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point will encourage the use of alternatives to the private automobile as a means of transportation to public recreational facilities and open space areas.

**Policy ROS 1.2.2** - The Town of Sewall’s Point will limit the number of parking spaces for motorized vehicles at its public spaces in a manner that complements the natural resource conservation objectives and is compatible with surrounding land uses.

**Policy ROS 1.2.3** - The Town of Sewall’s Point will look for opportunities to provide shared use paths and other informal routes to public recreation facilities and open space areas to encourage alternatives to motorized vehicle travel.

**Policy ROS 1.2.4** - The Town of Sewall’s Point will provide secure bicycle racks near its public recreation facilities and open space areas to encourage the use of bicycles to access these areas.

**Policy ROS 1.2.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point seeks to ensure that all parks and leisure facilities will be accessible to all citizens, regardless of their age or ability.

**Policy ROS 1.2.6** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall complete an annual inventory of existing recreation facilities that are accessible to the disabled. If the inventory reveals deficiencies in the number of recreation facilities for the disabled, the Town of Sewall’s Point shall plan appropriate improvements and funding within its capital improvements program to remedy any deficiencies.

**Policy ROS 1.2.7** – While developing new parks, the Town of Sewall’s Point will ensure they are designed to meet the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act by providing accessible parking spaces and barrier-free entrances and pathways.

## OBJECTIVE ROS 1.3 MAINTAINING EXISTING PARKS

**Objective ROS 1.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall ensure that its parks are well-maintained.

**Policy ROS 1.3.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall initiate a maintenance program for park facilities located within its boundaries and develop an annual budget for this purpose.

**Policy ROS 1.3.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall consider a budget in its Capital Improvements Program to add bathroom facilities at Town Commons.

## GOAL ROS 2 OPEN SPACE

**Goal ROS 2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall provide an exemplary system of green space and open spaces.

### OBJECTIVE ROS 2.1 NATURAL OPEN SPACES

**Objective ROS 2.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall maximize the preservation, enjoyment, and accessibility of natural open spaces.

**Policy ROS 2.1.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point’s Land Development Regulations shall include preservation standards for Town-owned environmentally sensitive lands.

**Policy ROS 2.1.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall seek grant funding for projects that increase public access to waterfront views and provide fishing opportunities.

**Policy ROS 2.1.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point’s Land Development Regulations shall include incentives for development applications that provide public open space areas that preserve views, vistas, and/or native vegetation.

**Policy ROS 2.1.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall consider, when opportunities arise, seeking funding to purchase, for open space use, “repetitive loss buildings” most vulnerable to storm surge and repetitive flooding.

### OBJECTIVE ROS 2.2 PUBLIC ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

**Objective ROS 2.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall maintain or increase the acreage of publicly accessed open space.

**Policy ROS 2.2.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall coordinate opportunities for public open space that will be protected and maintained in perpetuity.

**Policy ROS 2.2.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall not divert existing park land to other non-park, non-recreational or non-cultural uses except in cases of overriding public interest.

**Policy ROS 2.2.3** – A super majority vote of no fewer than four (4) members of the Town of Sewall’s Point Commission shall be required to convert publicly owned park land to other uses.

**Policy ROS 2.2.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall assure that park lands are well managed and well maintained, designed to promote public safety and discourage crime, and are accessible and convenient for park patrons.

**Policy ROS 2.2.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall maintain open space areas and conservation areas by removing any invasive, and/or nuisance vegetation, and implementing best practices that reduce or eliminate regrowth of these species.

**Policy ROS 2.2.6** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall evaluate the implementation of green infrastructure, including parks and native plants, to capture and retain stormwater and facilitate on-site retention.

**Policy ROS 2.2.7** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall design park and open spaces in a way that preserves strands and clusters of native and mature trees.

**Policy ROS 2.2.8** – The Town of Sewall’s Point will select plants for its parks and open spaces that are drought-tolerant and wind resistant.

**Policy ROS 2.2.9** – As part of its flood-control management system, the Town of Sewall’s Point shall explore locations in open spaces and pocket parks to add bio-swales and native plants.

OBJECTIVE ROS 2.3 HISTORY AND CULTURE

**Objective ROS 2.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall support natural, historical and cultural resource management to ensure high quality outdoor recreation experiences for the Town’s residents and visitors.

**Policy ROS 2.3.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point’s Land Development Regulations shall include best practices that seek to ensure sustainable use of recreational and open space land.

**Policy ROS 2.3.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall promote restoration and rehabilitation efforts for all water bodies by highlighting the importance of clean water to outdoor recreation.

**Policy ROS 2.3.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall encourage the protection of all properties that are eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## GOAL ROS 3 HEALTHY LIVING

**Goal ROS 3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall provide opportunities for its residents to experience active and healthy lifestyles.

### OBJECTIVE ROS 3.1 COMMUNITY HEALTH

**Objective ROS 3.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall develop and maintain ongoing programs and infrastructure designed to support sustainable community health.

**Policy ROS 3.1.1** – Dependent upon the existence of sufficient, voluntary easements or rights of ways, the Town of Sewall’s Point shall promote a healthy community by planning for and implementing a connected system of walkways and bikeways which will provide alternative modes of transportation while also encouraging recreation, physical activity and exposure to the natural environment.

**Policy ROS 3.1.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall look for opportunities to provide multimodal connections to its parks and open space areas that are safe for all users.

**Policy ROS 3.1.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall develop and encourage volunteer opportunities for projects that promote community health, build a sense of community, and improve the environment. (Examples of such programs include neighborhood clean-ups, and helpers for the elderly citizens or those with special needs.)

**Policy ROS 3.1.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall collaborate with appropriate local, county, and state agencies to develop effective leisure programs that educate the community on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

**Policy ROS 3.1.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall coordinate with the Martin County Health Department and other healthcare providers to develop an educational campaign regarding the benefits of healthy foods and beverages.

**Policy ROS 3.1.6** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall collaborate with community partners to reduce any barriers that prevent citizens from accessing physical and mental healthcare.

**Policy ROS 3.1.7** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall facilitate programs that educate youth on the natural environment and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation.

**Policy ROS 3.1.8** – The Town of Sewall’s Point will continue to provide a sharing library program at Town Commons to promote literacy and increase access to reading materials for all ages.

**Policy ROS 3.1.9** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall support bike safety education programs offered by the Martin County Sheriff, the Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other agencies for all ages.

## GOAL ROS 4 CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

**Goal ROS 4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall increase and promote recycling in its parks and open spaces.

### OBJECTIVE ROS 4.1 PROMOTE RECYCLING

**Objective ROS 4.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall coordinate with its solid waste provider to increase recycling among private businesses and citizens.

**Policy ROS 4.1.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall facilitate and promote recycling at Town Commons and Town Hall.

**Policy ROS 4.1.2** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall provide educational material on proper recycling techniques, ways to reduce contaminated recycling, and the importance of recycling for the future generations.

**Policy ROS 4.1.3** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall seek funding sources for materials, containers and resources needed to implement the recycling objective.

## GOAL ROS 5 FUNDING FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

**Goal ROS 5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall plan adequate funding for parks and open spaces.

### OBJECTIVE ROS 5.1 FUNDING FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

**Objective ROS 5.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall leverage local tax dollars by pursuing other funding mechanisms that can be used to expand and/or improve its parks and open spaces.

**Policy ROS 5.1.1** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall properly preserve and maintain existing parks and leisure facilities by adequately funding operating budgets and implementing proper management techniques.

**Policy ROS 5.1.2** – As part of the Capital Budget processes, the Town of Sewall’s Point shall conduct an annual review of the funding needs for active and passive recreation facilities.

**Policy ROS 5.1.3** – To avoid duplication of efforts to provide recreation opportunities, the Town of Sewall’s Point will continue to collaborate with the public and private sectors.

**Policy ROS 5.1.4** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall explore the provision of volunteer programs such as “Adopt-a-Park” to support the maintenance and beautification of its parks.

**Policy ROS 5.1.5** – The Town of Sewall’s Point shall explore grant funding opportunities offered by state and federal agencies such as the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), Federal Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and other grant funding sources to support and expand its park system.



## DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

**Community Centers** – A place where people from a particular community can meet for social, educational, or recreational activities.

**Federal Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** - The LWCF State and Local Assistance Program (often referred to as “LWCF Stateside”) is administered by the National Park Service, and provides matching grants to state, local and tribal governments to create and expand parks, develop recreation facilities, and further local recreation plans. Each year, funds are distributed to every U.S. state and territory using a population-based formula. Ranging from active recreation facilities to natural areas, these funds are a vitally important tool to renovate existing sites, develop new facilities, acquire land for state and local parks and promote statewide recreation planning.

**Level of Service (LOS)** – Level of Service Standard, the number of units of capacity per unit of demand.

**Mixed Use Recreation** – A category for a public recreation facility that provides a variety of options for physical and outdoor activities.

**Neighborhood Park** – Intended to provide activities that, overall, are used more frequently and have a shorter duration of use. They should be located close to the area served. Neighborhood parks are typically smaller and are not highly visible from main roadways. They usually provide little to no parking and are typically used most heavily by the immediate surrounding neighborhood.

**Open Space** – Any open piece of land that is undeveloped (has no buildings or other built structures) and is accessible to the public.

**Park** – An area of natural, semi-natural or planted space set aside for human enjoyment and recreation or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats.

**Recreation Space** - For the purpose of Level of Service, “recreation space” means publicly owned space that is open to the public.

**Regional Parks** - Regional parks are large, highly visible parks. They service the County and communities outside of the County. They are typically commuted to by users from all over the County and beyond for use of their specific facilities such as baseball fields, tennis courts, RV Campground, golf course or other specific amenities. They typically offer a wide variety of activities and amenities for a large range of user types.

**Repetitive Loss (RL) Property** – Any insurable building for which two or more claims of more than \$1,000 were paid by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) within any rolling ten-year period, since 1978.

**Special Use Facilities** - In many cases, recreation is a secondary function. Some of the uses that fall into this classification include resource-based parkland and schools. Multi-Use Bike/Pedestrian Trail - Trails are designed to provide walking, bicycling and other non-motorized means of linking various parts of the community. To be distinguished from unimproved paths, trails shall contain at least 6 feet width of stabilized base.