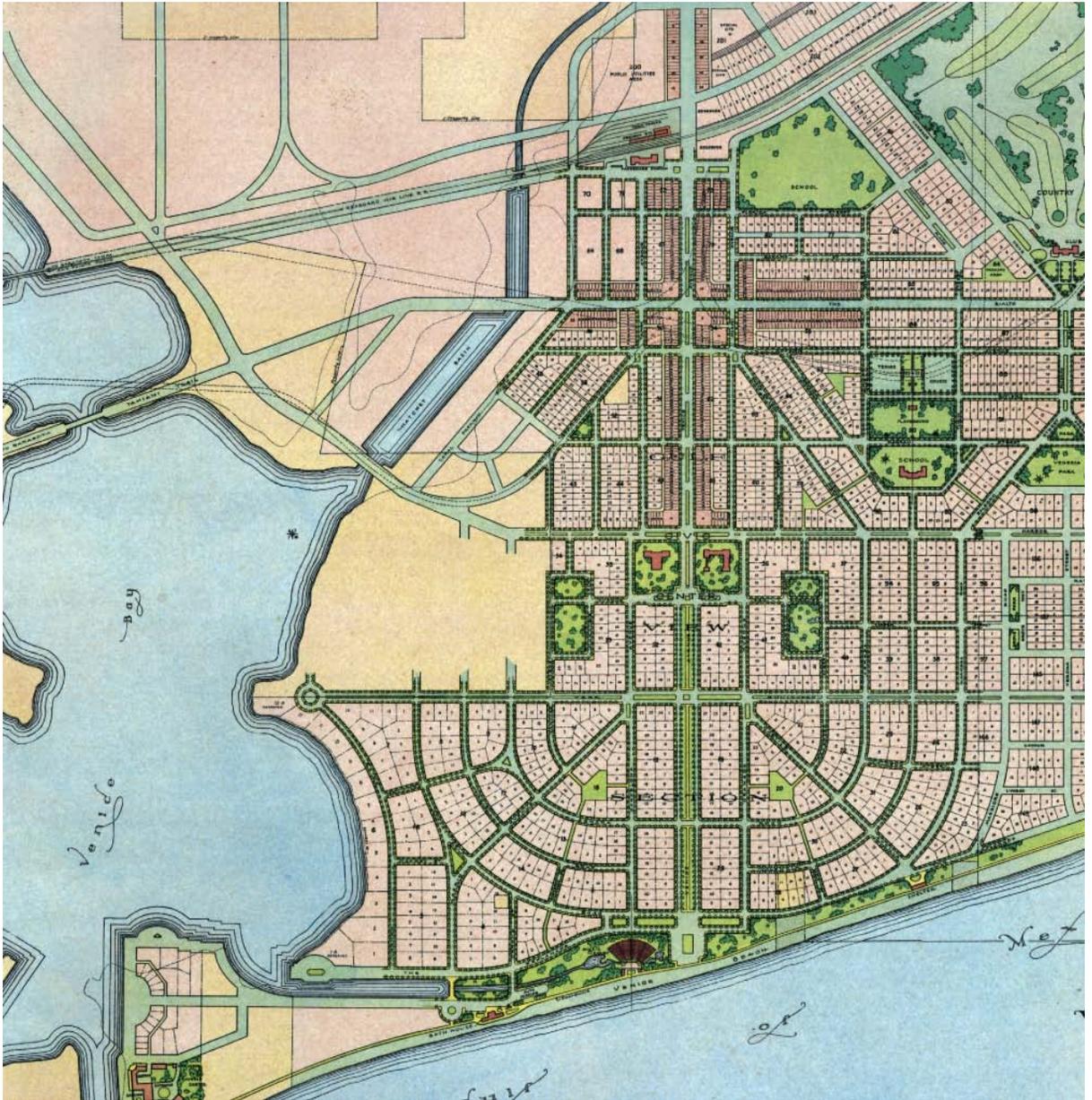


# Chapter IV



Environment





## Parks & Public Spaces Element

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**GOAL ENSURE THAT VENICE'S PUBLIC SPACES, PARKS, AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES ENHANCE THE CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS, SENSE OF PLACE, AND LIVABILITY, WHILE PRESERVING AND PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND SENSITIVE HABITATS.**

**Objective 1 Functional Parks and Public Spaces. Utilize park and public spaces to support the City's identity, sense of place, character, and recreation needs, and to enhance the quality of the environment by preserving native vegetation that helps to reduce greenhouse gas/carbon emissions, positively impacting climate change.**

Policy 1.1 Neighborhood Needs Assessment. The City shall continue to cooperate with Sarasota County on meeting neighborhood park and public space needs. These efforts shall be coordinated with recognized neighborhood organizations.

Policy 1.2 Master Parks Plan. By 2013, the City may utilize the assistance of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to develop a Master Parks Plan including active and passive parks and park facilities, open and Florida friendly green spaces, unique habitat protection and conservation, and trails in coordination with Objective 1 and related policies of the Community Linkages and Design Element.

Policy 1.3 Neighborhood Character and Design. Ensure that the design of neighborhood parks is consistent with established architectural character and native landscaping features.

Policy 1.4 Park and Public Space Connectivity. Utilizing the development review process, the City shall continue to evaluate opportunities to connect parks and public spaces through pedestrian/bike access ways including linear parks, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails, blueways, and greenways. This connectivity should integrate the City's parks, public spaces, public rights-of-way, community neighborhoods, and activity centers.

Policy 1.5 New Resources. Evaluate opportunities to acquire and create additional City owned parks, public spaces, and habitat conservation areas including aggressive tree replacement and planting of native vegetation.



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- Policy 1.6 Dog-friendly Parks and Facilities. Include dog-friendly neighborhood park areas where appropriate.
- Policy 1.7 Cultural Resources. Utilize park and public space resources and facilities to expand the community's cultural identity and preserve its history.
- Policy 1.8 Special Event Facilities. Continue to meet the community's needs for special events and ensure resources and facilities are available to meet those needs.
- Policy 1.9 Bicycle Facilities. The City will strive to provide bikeways to link open space and parks. Bicycle parking facilities will be conveniently located within parks and placed at visible locations. The City will investigate the feasibility of requiring new and existing commercial development to provide bicycle-parking facilities.

**Objective 2 Service Standards. Establish level of service standards that address condition, utilization, distribution, and financial needs of the City's parks and public green spaces.**

- Policy 2.1 Recreational Level of Service. Maintain at least a minimum level of service of 7 acres of parks and public green spaces for each 1,000 functional population. Residential development shall be required to provide the appropriate amount of park and public green space in relationship to the 7 acre standard.
- Policy 2.2 Park and Public Green Spaces. Parks and public green spaces may include: active and passive park space, plazas, courtyards, trails, sport facilities, playgrounds, and other areas that meet the recreational, sport, social, and leisure needs of the community. The Recreational Level of Service may be met with facilities and amenities owned by the City of Venice, the Sarasota County School Board, and private entities, provided that the City has an intergovernmental, interlocal, or contractual agreement with the entity establishing the conditions under which recreation facilities will be available to the public, is open to the public without admission fee or going through a private gatekeeper or guard, and is open to the public during the same primary operating hours as City parks.
- Policy 2.3 Resources for All Neighborhoods. Ensure that all new residential and mixed-use developments have appropriate park, recreation, and public green space resources based upon project size and community needs.



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- Policy 2.4 Pedestrian Accessibility. The City shall have a variety of park, recreational, and public space resources within a mile of all neighborhoods based upon financial feasibility. Neighborhood parks should be located within a 1/4 mile of the neighborhood so that residents may access parks by walking and/or biking.
- Policy 2.5 Resource Inventory. Annually maintain, update, and implement the City of Venice Parks and Recreation Inventory to ensure that the City's park system addresses the current needs of the community.
- Policy 2.6 Variety of Needs, Array of Resources. Utilize the site and development process to ensure all developments provide an array of park and public space resources to meet the community's needs. The following issues should be addressed by each new development:
- A. Amount of land needed for the number of residents, types of dwelling units, and location of development with the City.
  - B. Type and function of park, recreation, and public space resources.
  - C. Location of resources in relationship to other amenities, residential dwelling units, and park or public space facilities both within the development and the surrounding area.
  - D. Park and public space plan that incorporates the facility design, types, size, location, and sidewalk access, into an overall development plan. Issues to be addressed by this plan include mobility features, pedestrian accessibility and connectivity, architectural standards, and landscaping/hardscaping components.
- Policy 2.7 Facility Ownership. Public, semi-private/quasi-public, and privately owned lands that are open and available for public use (without obstruction by gates or guards) shall be counted to meet the adopted LOS for parks provided that the City has an intergovernmental, interlocal, or contractual agreement with the entity establishing the conditions under which recreation facilities will be available to the public, is open to the public without admission fee or going through private gatekeepers or guards, and is open to the public during the same primary operating hours as City parks.
- Policy 2.8 Funding. The City shall pursue grants, foundations, and other public/private funding sources for the development, expansion, and maintenance of park and public space resources.

**Objective 3 Interagency Coordination. Partner with local, regional, and state organizations regarding the maintenance and development of parks,**



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### recreation, and public spaces.

- Policy 3.1 Coordinated Management. Coordinate with Sarasota County to maintain and extend the interlocal agreement concerning the operation and maintenance of new parks and preservation of sensitive habitats within the City.
- Policy 3.2 Coordinated Park Development. Coordinate with Sarasota County to ensure that parks and recreational facilities are available and maintained to accommodate the City's growth and demand for parks and public spaces.
- Policy 3.3 Shared Facilities Cooperative Agreements. The City shall continue to develop cooperative agreements with private developments, recreational organizations, and other county-based organizations for the use, promotion, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities by the community-at-large.
- Policy 3.4 Regional Linear Park System. Participate with local, regional, and state organizations in the development of a regional linear park system that includes trails, bikeways, footpaths, blueways, and sidewalks. Coordinate such efforts with the Sarasota County Master Trail Program.
- Policy 3.5 Resource Co-location. Coordinate with local, regional, and state organizations on the collocation, siting, and design of compatible public resources, including cultural, educational, or recreational facilities, and parks, corridors, or conservation areas.
- Policy 3.6 Regional State Park System. Coordinate, through interlocal agreements, with regional and state partners on the protection of the Venice area state parks including the Myakka Wild and Scenic River, Myakka River State Park, Myakka State Forest, and Oscar Scherer State Park.
- Policy 3.7 Transit Linkages. Coordinate with the Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) to provide bus service between major residential developments and parks and recreation facilities including beach and waterfront areas.

**Objective 4 Tree-Planting Program. Mitigate the effects of global warming, carbon emissions, heat index and related comfort level, and storm water runoff into the Gulf by instituting a substantial and concerted tree and Florida native vegetation planting program.**



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- Policy 4.1 Shade Canopy. Replace and add shade trees and Florida native vegetation throughout the City to the greatest possible extent, especially along public walkways, bike trails, picnic areas, retention ponds, coastal buffer areas, tree belts along roads/public rights of way and medians.
- Policy 4.2 New Planting. New development/new construction shall include as many trees and green plants as land allows without impeding egress or safety. The required trees and larger tree belt areas shall be added in and around commercial development.
- Policy 4.3 Climate Compatible Landscaping. When planting or approving landscape plans, the City will take into account climate considerations to ensure that plants are compatible with the City's variable climate and can be established for the long-term.

**Objective 5 Pervious Surfaces. Increase pervious surface area to protect surface water quality and groundwater supplies, to minimize flooding, and to reduce the urban heat island effect.**

- Policy 5.1 Paving and Drainage. The City will avoid the use of impervious concrete or asphalt in all public parking areas and access roads, drives, etc. serving public parks, trails, beaches and other recreational areas, with the exception of handicapped access areas, and will strive to use alternative materials such as porous concrete or pavers that allow for drainage.

**Objective 6 Climate Protection. Reduce the City's contribution to global warming/climate change.**

- Policy 6.1 City Operations and Climate Protection. The City of Venice has endorsed the U. S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Consequently, as part of the implementation of that Agreement, it will review existing City practices and enact policies and programs (e.g. its vehicle idling policy) to work toward reducing the City's global warming pollution in its operations.
- Policy 6.2 Climate Protection Partnerships. The City shall join ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives – Local Governments for Sustainability), an association of local governments that have made a commitment to sustainable development, and which provides consulting, training, and evaluation tools for setting and achieving energy efficiency objectives.



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Policy 6.3 Environmental Department. The City will consider establishing an environmental department staffed by at least one environmental specialist and utilize Sarasota County resources as available.

**Objective 7 Tourism and Air Quality. Promote ecotourism and environmentally friendly recreation.**

Policy 7.1 To help reduce carbon emissions that contribute to global warming/climate change, the City will encourage ecotourism and environmentally friendly recreation and discourage recreation that involves the burning of fossil fuels.