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**CHAPTER 7
RECREATION
DATA, INVENTORY, AND ANALYSIS**

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15 **VII-1. INTRODUCTION**

16
17 The purpose of this element is to document the existing inventory of parks, open space, and
18 recreational facilities, identify guidelines for development, assess needs and provide a
19 framework to meet the current and projected future needs of the community through the
20 planning year 2035.

21
22 The City of Lake Helen does not have any beaches; however, they have do have several lakes
23 within the municipal boundaries.

24
25 The City of Lake Helen is blessed with an abundance of natural resources which offer a vast
26 array of recreational values to residents of the community. But as growth occurs these natural
27 resources tend to diminish in quantity and accessibility. Yet it is these quality of life features
28 that entice newcomers into an area. It is the availability and accessibility to these natural
29 resources that create that certain ambiance which characterizes a community. It is the
30 maintenance of that ambiance that ensures the continued satisfaction of these residents'
31 needs and demands for recreational and open space facilities.

32
33 Natural resources alone are not sufficient to meet the expressed needs and demands of a
34 community for recreational and open space facilities. These must be supplemented by
35 facilities that provide a means for active participation. Thus there is a requirement to
36 accommodate these needs and demands. This requirement can be met only through the
37 establishment of parks and playground areas that are properly equipped for the intended
38 purposes.

39
40 The recreational and open space needs of a community are determined by the expressed needs
41 and demands of its residents, and those needs and demands of visitors to the area. Therein
42 lies a certain dichotomy; man desires to reside within or near those natural resource areas
43 which are needed to satisfy the needs and demands of the community for recreational
44 and open space. Thus a program designed to satisfy a community's needs and demands must
45 of necessity make as its first priority the protection and conservation of the natural resources.
46 Most of these assets are irreplaceable while those facilities required to satisfy the active forms
47 of recreation can and should be located so as to be readily accessible by the populace. This
48 requires coordination of the recreational and open space effort so that it becomes an integral
49 part of the Future Land Use Plan and the Conservation Plan.

50 Recreational and open space facilities available to residents of the City of Lake Helen are
51 indeed diverse and plentiful. While not located within the corporate limits of the city there
52 are a plethora of recreational and open space facilities that are within easy access distances.
53 These facilities include state parks, federal parks, and parks and areas under the jurisdiction of
54 the County of Volusia. These facilities need to be considered as part of that which is available
55 even though they are not under the control of the City of Lake Helen. Of particular interest are
56 those areas acquired by the county as part of its Parks and Environmentally Sensitive Lands

57 Program. That program is financed by an ordinance which taxes all county residents and
58 restricts the funds generated therefrom to the acquisition of such lands. These lands are to be
59 used for recreational or open space purposes only.

60
61 In sum, recreational and open space facilities available to residents of the City of Lake Helen are
62 diverse and plentiful. While the provision of an adequate supply of facilities within the city is a
63 recognized requirement the satisfaction of that dictum is sometimes best facilitated through a
64 regional policy. The Volusia County Recreation Plan envisions local governments providing
65 those facilities needed to satisfy neighborhood needs while the county plans for and provides
66 those facilities beyond these requirements.

67
68 **VII-2. INVENTORY**

69
70 Existing Recreational Facilities

71
72 Recreational sites are frequently classified as resource based or activity based. Resource based
73 sites and facilities are defined as sites and facilities centered on particular natural resources and
74 may provide opportunities for picnicking, hiking, hunting, water sports, fishing or simply
75 enjoying nature. Activity based recreational sites and facilities are defined as sites developed
76 for the enjoyment of particular activities/sports such as basketball, baseball or football,
77 recreation programs such as aerobics and painting, senior citizen activities, and many spectator
78 sports.

79
80 Community parks are facilities designed to serve the needs of more than one neighborhood.
81 They are intended to serve a maximum of 5,000 City residents and be located no greater than
82 three (3) miles from those residents.

83
84 Neighborhood parks are facilities designed to serve an entire neighborhood or area with a
85 maximum of 5,000 City residents and be located no greater than one-half (1/2) of a mile from
86 those residents.

87
88 Regional parks are large, resource based areas that serve two or more communities or counties
89 and are usually located within an hour's driving distance of the residents they serve. They
90 typically serve a population of over 100,000 and range in size from a minimum of 250 acres to
91 as much as several thousand acres.

92
93 Utilizing the guidelines from the "State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan" for Florida,
94 2008, prepared by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the City of Lake Helen
95 has three (3) neighborhood parks and three (3) community parks.

96
97 Federal and State Facilities

98

99 Although there are no state or federal facilities located within the city limits, resource based
100 facilities are within commuting distance and include Blue Springs State Park and Hontoon Island
101 State Park.

102
103

104 The City of Lake Helen currently provides a variety of recreational and open space facilities.
105 These facilities are situated throughout the city and accommodate activities which fall into
106 three broad categories which are discussed below.

107

108 Class I - User-Oriented Outdoor Recreational Activities. Facilities within this category are
109 designed to meet user-oriented outdoor recreational needs. The potential array of facilities
110 that can be provided to satisfy these needs is virtually limitless. The more common activities
111 that fall within this class are golf, tennis, baseball/softball, football/soccer, basketball,
112 handball/racquetball, shuffleboard and outdoor swimming pool use. The activities are, for the
113 most part, structured, rule-oriented, and in many instances conducted as part of a formal, local
114 program under the supervision of trained staff. The facilities themselves are not dependent
115 upon any natural resource setting and can be located, space permitting, on any open site. The
116 emphasis should be on the locating of these facilities in such a manner as to be fully accessible
117 and convenient to the users for whom a demonstrated need exists for the facility. There are
118 facilities within the city to accommodate each of these activities with the exception of golf and
119 an available swimming pool. However, there are golf and swimming pool facilities available
120 within a fifteen minute travel time.

121

122 Class II - Resource-Based Outdoor Recreational Activities. These areas accommodate a wide
123 variety of specific recreational uses that do not require intensive development. They provide
124 for such activities as camping, picnicking, fishing, water sports, nature walks and outdoor games
125 not requiring extensive equipment or facilities. There are facilities within the city to
126 accommodate each of these activities.

127

128 Class III- Community Outdoor Recreation Activities. These areas are designed to accommodate
129 the larger groupings of participants. Included in this category are equipped play areas ("tot"
130 lots), neighborhood parks and community parks as well as open space. Facilities of this type
131 are available within the city.

132

133 The City of Lake Helen is fortunate to have facilities that fall within each of these categories. A
134 discussion of these resources follows.

135

136 A. Class I - User-Oriented Outdoor Recreational Activities

137

138 There are several facilities located within the City of Lake Helen that are designed to meet
139 demonstrated needs for these Class I recreational areas. The extent of these facilities is
140 discussed below; an analysis of these resources is provided in the subsequent section.

141

142 Blake Park - This park area contains many resource-based facilities and activities as well as user-
143 oriented facilities and activities. The principal user-oriented activities are basketball, tennis, and
144 shuffleboard.

145
146 Melissa Park - This is a small, 1.25 acre area that provides a variety of activities for the local
147 population but primarily for the younger generation. It includes facilities for basketball.

148
149
150 Royal Park - This facility provides for fishing as well as various resource-oriented outdoor
151 activities. A boat ramp is located at this site. Although the park area is small - only one-half
152 acre - it nonetheless provides access to a lake that is approximately eighteen acres in size.
153 Limited freshwater swimming can be accommodated but there is no beach, per se.

154
155 Lake Helen Multiuse Event Facility- This five acre park is devoted to a recreational need that is
156 somewhat unique; an arena. Given that the community of Lake Helen has a tradition for
157 horsemanship it is only appropriate that an arena be provided so that the many riders within
158 the area have an opportunity to partake of this recreational activity. Annual shows and
159 competitions are held.

160
161 Mitchell Brothers Sports Complex. This recreational complex is located on a ten acre site that
162 is centrally located. Present facilities include a regulation Little League baseball field; a softball
163 field; and a building with restroom facilities and storage.

164
165 Except as noted above there are adequate user-oriented facilities within the city to meet the
166 demonstrated needs of the residents. There are, however, constraints upon the continued use
167 of some of the facilities. These constraints will be addressed in the analysis section which
168 follows.

169
170 B. Class II - Resource-Based Outdoor Recreational
171 Facilities and Activities

172
173 Facilities to satisfy demonstrated needs for resource-based recreation are dispersed
174 throughout the city. Many of these facilities are co-located with user-oriented facilities.
175 Cumulatively these facilities form parks of varying sizes. The following are recreational areas
176 within the city that contain one or more Class II recreational facilities.

177
178 Asa Gray Park- This park of two and one-half acres in size is located in the center of the city and
179 provides both active and passive activities. It is, in general, a "free play" area that contains
180 facilities for picnicking and related forms of relaxation. A pavilion and utility building is located
181 at the site. Although the facility is privately owned and operated by the Lake Helen Garden
182 Club it is committed to recreational use by that organization.

183 Blake Park - This recreational area might logically be classed as a community park. Within its
184 7.5 acres are many resource-based as well as several user-oriented facilities and activities. It is
185 located in the center of the city and provides optimum accessibility to all residents. The area is
186 ideal for general outdoor activities due to the large trees within the area which provide shade
187 and protection from the sun yet offers adequate space for many outdoor games to be
188 conducted concurrently. Included on the premises are a pavilion, comfort facilities, grills for
189 picnicking, and playground equipment.

190
191 Melissa Park - This small neighborhood park contains Class I (basketball) and Class II
192 facilities (picnicking). In addition, there is a "meeting hall" at the site.

193
194 Royal Park - This facility is one of the smallest in size yet offers one of the greatest potentials for
195 use. It is at this point that residents avail themselves of the natural resources of one of the
196 larger lakes within the city - Lake Helen. To optimize this location the city has provided a boat
197 ramp, picnicking facilities, a pavilion and comfort stations.

198
199 In sum, there are many facilities within the city to meet the resource-based outdoor
200 recreational needs of the residents.

201
202 C. Class III - Community Outdoor Recreational Activities

203
204 There are some 65 acres of lakes within the corporate limits of the city. In addition, there are
205 more than 500 acres that are in effect pristine in nature. These natural resources, along with
206 the magnificent trees that dominate the area, are perhaps the city's greatest assets. The
207 recreational and aesthetic value of these resources to the quality of life for the residents and
208 visitors to the area defies computation. This expanse of urban open space with its natural
209 beauty provides a unique opportunity for hiking, horseback riding and nature study.

210
211 D. Summary.

212
213 Table 7-1 contains a summary of the current Parks and Recreation Facilities. . Map 7-1 depicts
214 the general location of the city's parks. Map 7-2 depicts the general location of federal, state
215 and regional parks and Map 7-3 depicts Open Space areas.

216
217
218 **Table 7-1: Parks and Recreation Facilities**

219

<u>Parks</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Active/ Passive</u>	<u>Resources & Facilities</u>
<u>Community</u>			
<u>Blake Park</u>	<u>7.5</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>Lake Helen Creative Arts Café, 2 tennis courts, community building, 14 shuffleboard courts, pavilion, 2 basketball courts, children's equipped</u>

			<u>play area, and parking</u>
<u>Lake Helen Multiuse Event Facility</u>	<u>5.0</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Outdoor arena, announcer’s booth, horse stalls, practice arena, restroom facilities, picnic area, exercise trail, trailhead, playground and parking</u>
<u>Mitchell Brothers Sports Complex</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>3 baseball/softball fields, practice field, viewing stands, announcers booth, concession stand, restroom facilities, playground area, trail, and parking</u>
<u>Neighborhood</u>			
<u>Lake Macy</u>	<u>2.47</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Dock, primitive boat ramp, educational trail, restroom facilities, playground, picnic areas, and parking.</u>
<u>Melissa Park</u>	<u>1.25</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>1 Basketball court, equipped play area, horseshoe pits, picnic areas, meeting hall, restroom facilities, and parking</u>
<u>Royal Park</u>	<u>.50</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Pavilion, picnic areas, restroom facilities, boat ramp</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>26.72</u>		
<u>Private</u>			
<u>Asa Gray Park</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>Passive</u>	<u>Pavilion, trail</u>

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VII-3. ANALYSIS OF INVENTORY

Park Development Guidelines

Site guidelines are a set of general criteria for determining the specific types and amounts of parklands necessary to accommodate the recreational needs of the local community. State and national standards generally establish a classification of parks and open space areas. The criteria define the facility type, service area, and population served and the facilities available for various types of community recreation sites. The City will utilize the overall guidelines suggested in the “Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008”.

The guidelines for park development and facility standards are outlined in Tables below.

Park Guidelines

Park Facility	Location	Service Area	Area Per 1,000 Population	Population Served	Park Adjoining School	Separated Park	Facilities
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood area adjacent to elementary school when	1/4 - 1/2 mile	2 acres	5,000 maximum	Minimum of 2 acres	Minimum of 5 acres	Play structures, recreational buildings, court games, hard

	feasible						courts, tennis courts, internal trails, shuffleboard, volleyball courts, picnic area, open area, landscaping
Community Park	Usually serves two or more neighborhoods	1/2 - 3 miles	2 acres	5,000 maximum	Minimum of 5 acres	Minimum of 20 acres; Optimal is 20-50 acres	All the facilities found in a neighborhood park plus informal ball fields, swimming pools, archery ranges, disc golf areas, ornamental gardens, open space and facilities for cultural activities

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Facility Guidelines

Facility Guideline Standards	
Facility	Standards Based on Median Population
Tennis Courts	1 court per 2,000 population
Basketball Court	1 court per 5,000 population
Baseball/Softball Field	1 field per 5,000 population
Football/Soccer Field	1 field per 6,000 population
Equipped Play Area	1 area per 10,000 population
Hiking/Nature/Fitness Trail	1 mile per 6,750 population
Picnic Area	1 site per 6,000 population
Handball/Racquetball Court	1 court per 10,000 population
Shuffleboard Court ¹	1 court per 6,000 population
Swimming Pool	1 pool per 25,000 population
Volleyball	1 court per 6,000 population

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Source: Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008

¹ May be substituted for horseshoe pits, bocci court, or other lawn game

Although not a Level of Service (LOS) standard, in developing parklands the City may consider the facility type and facility needs for specific activities as suggested in the “Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008”. The following tables indicate future need by park type and facility need by specific activity.

Future Recreation Need by Park Type

Future Recreation Need by Park Type*					
Park Type	2015 ¹	2020 ²	2025 ³	2030 ⁴	2035 ⁵

Neighborhood	1	1	1	1	1
Community	1	1	1	1	1
¹ Based on 2015 estimated population of 2,616 ² Based on 2020 estimated population of 2,888 ³ Based on 2025 estimated population of 3,188 ⁴ Based on 2030 estimated population of 3,520 ⁵ Based on 2035 estimated population of 3,886 * Based on guideline of a maximum population served of 5,000 for neighborhood and community parks. The City currently has three (3) neighborhood parks and three (3) community parks.					

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The analysis based on these guidelines indicates that the City exceeds the park type needs through the planning period; however, based on the standards suggested in the “Florida’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan – 2008”, a community park as a separate park would require a minimum of twenty (20) acres and a neighborhood park as a separate park would require a minimum of five (5) acres. The City may want to consider adding additional lands to the existing parks, where feasible.

Future Facility Need by Specific Activity

<i>Future Facility Need by Specific Activity*</i>						
Activity	Currently Provided	2015 ¹	2020 ²	2025 ³	2030 ⁴	2035 ⁵
Tennis	2	1	1	2	2	2
Basketball	3	1	1	1	1	1
Baseball/Softball	3	1	1	1	1	1
Football/Soccer	0	1	1	1	1	1
Equipped Play Area	4	1	1	1	1	1
Hiking/Nature/Fitness Trail (mile)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Picnic Site/Area	4	1	1	1	1	1
Handball/Racquetball	0	1	1	1	1	1
Shuffleboard Court	14	1	1	1	1	1
Swimming Pool	0	1	1	1	1	1
Volleyball	0	1	1	1	1	1
¹ Based on 2015 estimated population of 2,616 ² Based on 2020 estimated population of 2,888 ³ Based on 2025 estimated population of 3,188 ⁴ Based on 2030 estimated population of 3,520 ⁵ Based on 2035 estimated population of 3,886 *Based on median population served						

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Review of these guidelines indicates that the City exceeds in providing the majority of these activity based recreation needs. The City may want to consider adding a football/soccer field, handball/racquetball court, swimming pool, and volleyball court.

Existing Park Acreage

Blake Park – 7.5 acres

273 Lake Helen Equestrian – 5 acres
 274 Lake Macy – 2.47 acres
 275 Melissa Park – 1.25 acres
 276 Mitchell Brothers Sports Complex – 10 acres
 277 Royal Park - .50 acres
 278 Total – 26.72 acres

279
 280 Privately Owned Park Acreage
 281 Asa Gray Park (Garden Club) – 2.5 acres
 282 Total – 2.50 acres

283
 284 The following outlines the estimated population and acreage needs through the year 2035 based
 285 on 4 acres per 1,000 population as the expressed desire of the City.

Year	Population Estimate	Acreage Required
2015	2,616	10.40
2020	2,888	11.56
2025	3,188	12.76
2030	3,520	14.08
2035	3,886	15.56

287
 288 The City currently provides approximately 26.72 acres in public parks. Based on the above
 289 analysis, no additional park lands are needed through the planning period.

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 291
 292
 293
 294 **B. Open Space Requirements**

295
 296 Given the abundance of natural resources contained within the corporate limits of the city
 297 there is a need to ensure that protective measures be instituted which will assure the
 298 continued availability of these quality of life features. The criticality of this concern has
 299 been addressed in: the Future Land Use Plan; the Sanitary Sewer, Solid Waste, Drainage,
 300 Potable Water, and Natural Groundwater Aquifer Recharge Element; the Conservation
 301 Element; and the Capital Improvement Element In essence, these natural resources are the
 302 lifeblood that give the community its uniqueness. What remains is the role of open
 303 space as a recreational asset which is addressed herein.

304
 305 The Future Land Use Plan designates some 750 acres as "Conservation" due to constraints on
 306 development imposed by soil characteristics. Development within these areas is envisioned as
 307 being restricted to that which will not have an adverse effect upon the sensitive environs. Of
 308 necessity this will result in a very low density for the areas, or no development at all due
 309 to economic considerations. Under either circumstance there will remain for the foreseeable
 310 future a vast amount of land area that will remain undeveloped. This land area might logically

311 be designated as open space. Wetlands account for some 183 acres of land area within the
312 corporate limits of the city. These areas are rigidly controlled with permits being issued only
313 after the proposed development has been approved by the St Johns River Water Management
314 District. Additionally, there are some 65 acres of lakes within the city. While these lakes are
315 naturally protected from development an additional protective measure has been imposed
316 that provides added open space while protecting against stormwater runoff. This protective
317 buffer extends for 75 feet from the water edge and includes an area of natural vegetation.

318
319 In sum, approximately one-third of the land area within the city is rightly classed as open space.
320 These areas provide a wide variety of recreational resources. Protective measures imposed in
321 other elements of the comprehensive land use plan are designed to ensure the continued
322 availability of these assets. While these protective measures are in support of other
323 requirements the results of the total effort assures the retention of these valuable resources
324 as open space areas. Utilization of these land areas as open space does not conflict with their
325 natural and intended use. Nor does it impinge upon the protective measures that have been
326 imposed. Rather it complements the protection and conservation of these environmentally
327 sensitive land areas.

328 329 C. Joint Participation Programs

330
331 The effectiveness of a recreation and open space effort can be measured by the participation
332 that results therefrom. Many small communities do not possess the fiscal capacity to meet all
333 of the expressed needs and demands of the citizenry. Standards are measures established
334 to reflect those needs that can be accommodated by a community under similar
335 conditions. Those needs that are not included in a set of standards are nonetheless needs
336 and an effort should be made to satisfy these needs. One method of resolving the
337 problem is through joint participation programs.

338
339 A joint participation program represents a coordinated effort on the part of the local
340 government and one or more other participants. These participants might be public entities,
341 representatives from the private sector, or a combination thereof. There is a need to provide a
342 mechanism to facilitate such an endeavor. A simple example of a joint participation program
343 would be an interlocal agreement between two or more local governments or public entities.
344 Such an endeavor would address a given issue from a regional basis. The planned unit
345 development is a classic example of local government working with a representative of the
346 private sector in a joint participation effort. This latter effort might logically result in the
347 developer agreeing to provide a variety of recreational facilities and open space areas as a
348 condition of the written development agreement.

349
350 There are many aspects of the recreational and open space effort that are amenable to joint
351 participation. The participants within such an endeavor is not important; it is the outcome that
352 is relevant Within this context the City of Lake Helen will coordinate its recreation and open

353 space plan with that plan developed by Volusia County so as to ascertain those areas of the
354 county plan that might be expanded to provide facilities or services needed by the city to satisfy
355 a local need for recreational purposes. The Residential Planned Unit Development concept will
356 be encouraged and subsequently used as a means of negotiating with the private sector to
357 provide facilities and areas that will satisfy these needs.

358

359 D. Accessibility to Recreational and Open Space Areas

360

361

362 All park and recreation facilities are open to all age groups and accessible parking is available at
363 all sites. Access to the park facilities is available to both pedestrian and automobiles. Bike
364 racks are provided.

365

366 There is one multi-use trail system within the Mitchell Brothers Sports Complex located off of
367 Ohio Avenue that connects to the rear of the Volusia Pines Elementary School. There are no
368 other trails within the City other than sidewalks. The City's Land Development Regulations
369 include provisions within the development review process that require applicants of site plans,
370 master development plans, and subdivisions to provide for the needs of bicycle and pedestrian
371 facilities.

372

373 In order to provide a multi-modal form of transportation and provide sustainable communities,
374 it is recommended that the City continue to coordinate with Volusia County, River to Sea TPO,
375 the Florida Trail Association, the Rails to Trails Conservancy, the Department of Environmental
376 Protection and other organizations involved in the acquisition and development of trail
377 systems.

378