



Reedy Creek Improvement District  
Comprehensive Plan

(Printed 6/5/00)

**RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE  
ELEMENT**

**Part A:  
Policies**

# INTRODUCTION

The Recreation and Open Space Element describes provisions for recreational facilities and open space within the District. Although recreation and open space elements traditionally focus on permanent residents, this element takes a broader approach. It examines both public and private recreation, and it addresses the needs of employees and visitors, as well as residents. The element consists of a “Policies” component, which includes goals, objectives, and policies, and a “Supporting Data and Analysis” component, which provides narrative text, tables, and maps describing existing and future conditions.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

### GOAL

*It is the goal of the Reedy Creek Improvement District to promote the creation of state-of-the-art vacation and recreation facilities; to maintain and expand access to these facilities; and to retain the visual, environmental, and psychological benefits provided by open space in the District.*

### Objective 1

*To promote the creation of high quality recreational facilities by the private sector that utilize technological advances, new concepts, and innovative designs.*

Policy 1.1: The RCID shall continue to maintain building codes and Land Development Regulations that permit the practical application of new and advanced concepts, designs, and ideas in recreation and entertainment.

Policy 1.2: The Land Development Regulations shall permit and encourage the integration of recreational areas, facilities, and activities in existing and new commercial uses, such as shopping centers or office development.

Policy 1.3: The Land Development Regulations shall permit and encourage a broad range of recreational experiences in the District, including expanded opportunities for cultural programs, such as the performing and visual arts.

## **Objective 2**

*To increase public access to recreational amenities in the District.*

- Policy 2.1: The District's Land Development Regulations and Building Codes shall continue to ensure barrier-free design within new recreational developments and shall include provisions for handicapped parking and handicapped-accessible transport.
- Policy 2.2: The RCID shall continue to encourage the private sector in its community outreach efforts and shall support programs that encourage access to recreational attractions by economically disadvantaged children and their families.

## **Objective 3**

*To ensure that parks and recreational facilities are adequately and efficiently provided, and that public and private resources are coordinated to meet demands for recreational facilities.*

- Policy 3.1: Representatives of the RCID and its major landowners shall meet as needed but not less than once a year to review pending plans for private recreational facilities and to determine the need for public improvements to serve these facilities.
- Policy 3.2: The RCID shall support efforts by the major landowners to construct pedestrian and bicycle trails linking the major private recreational facilities within the District.
- Policy 3.3: The RCID shall encourage the District's major landowners to maintain adequate facilities for employee recreation.
- Policy 3.4: A level of service standard of two acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 permanent residents shall be used by the RCID.
- Policy 3.5: A level of service standard of 20 acres of community parkland per 10,000 permanent residents shall be used by the RCID.
- Policy 3.6: Parkland provisions, standards, requirements, and procedures shall be set forth in the Land Development Regulations.

## Objective 4

*To retain at least 30 percent of the area outside the Wildlife Management Conservation Area (WMCA) as open space.*

Policy 4.1: For the purposes of calculating the 30 percent requirement in Objective 4, “open space” shall be defined as:

- (1) all areas that are designated for “Resource Management/ Recreation” (RM/R) uses on the Future Land Use Map;
- (2) lakes and waterways;
- (3) golf course fairways; and
- (4) all areas on the 600-acre “Fletcher” property, located west of Hartzog Road and acquired by the District for public uses in the mid-1990s.

The 30 percent calculation excludes large landscaped areas, including rapid infiltration basins, sports fields, turf areas, and buffers within hotels and attraction development parcels.

Policy 4.2: In the event the District annexes or deannexes land, the total open space requirement shall be adjusted upward or downward to ensure that a 30 percent set-aside is maintained.

Policy 4.3: The District shall maintain an “Open Space Map” (Figure 7-1) indicating the location of those areas counted towards the 30 percent open space requirement.

Policy 4.4: In addition to the areas shown on the Open Space Map, the District shall encourage the retention of open space areas within future development sites. The location of such areas shall be based on the vegetation, habitat potential, hydrological, and aesthetic characteristics of the site.

Policy 4.5: Development parcels shall not include any part of the Conservation Area nor any public rights-of-way.

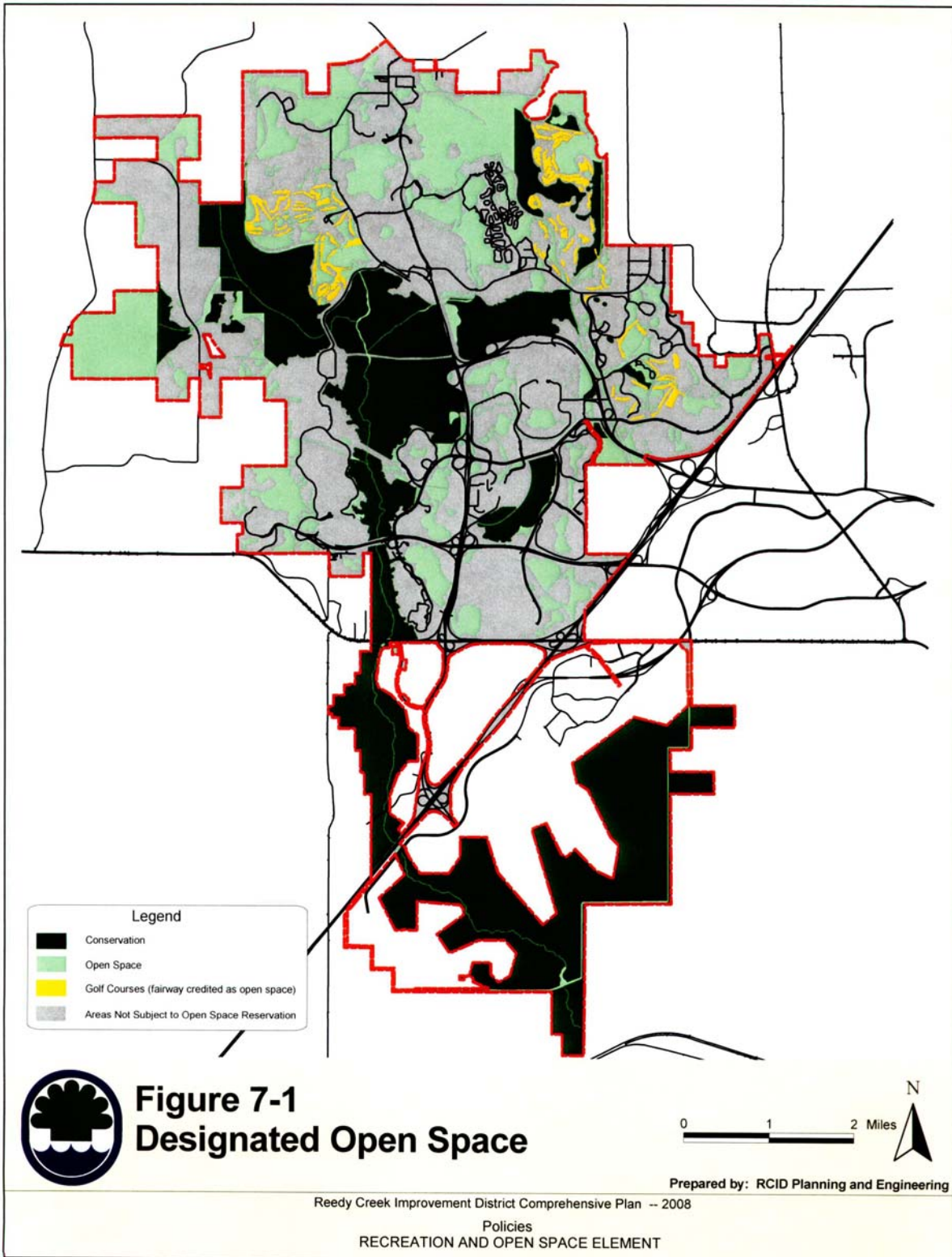
Policy 4.6: Subsequent versions of the Future Land Use Map shall continue to designate wetlands and other sensitive natural areas in a manner that ensures their retention as open space. Wetlands permitted for impacts under the District’s Long Term Permit may be designated for urban uses, since mitigation for these impacts has already been approved and provided.

Policy 4.7: In the event that permanent residential areas are created in the District, a method of maintaining common open space areas shall be required as a condition of development approval.

## **Objective 5**

*To incorporate provisions for visitor access to lakes and creeks within any development that encompasses or adjoins waters identified as belonging to the State of Florida.*

Policy 5.1: New development adjacent to Bay Lake, Seven Seas Lagoon, Little Lake Bryan, Reedy Lake, Lake Mable, South Lake, Village Lake, Lake Buena Vista, and Reedy Creek shall make provisions for visitor access to shoreline areas. Such provision shall be comparable to those that have been made at existing development on the shores of these waterbodies.



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Reedy Creek Improvement District  
Comprehensive Plan

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**RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE  
ELEMENT**

**Part B:  
Supporting Data and Analysis**

# PURPOSE

The Recreation and Open Space Element assesses the need for recreational facilities and open space within the Reedy Creek Improvement District. The element reflects the unique role of the District as a public service provider to one principal landowner, as well as that landowner's unique role as a private service provider in the international market for resort and entertainment facilities. The District's principal land use - Walt Disney World - was established to provide a unique recreational experience and to create a dynamic laboratory for testing innovative concepts in leisure activities. These concepts involve a broad spectrum of recreational uses that serve cultural, educational, entertainment, relaxation, and physical fitness functions.

Recreational facilities in the District far exceed what is demanded locally. All recreational facilities are privately owned and operated, but all are open to the general public and meet a "public" need for a specific type of recreation. The District contains four major theme parks (Magic Kingdom, EPCOT Center, Disney/MGM Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom) and four minor theme parks (Typhoon Lagoon, Blizzard Beach, River Country/ Discovery Island, and Disney's Wide World of Sports), several entertainment-oriented shopping areas, 26 resort hotels and timeshare properties, 99 holes of golf, an auto speedway, and a campground. It is the largest agglomeration of singly owned recreational uses in the United States and is the most frequently visited destination resort complex in the world. The entire community is oriented around recreation and leisure. Even the most ordinary activities of daily life, such as shopping, eating, and traveling, take place as recreational experiences in the RCID.

It is important to recognize the distinction between this element and the major landowners' plans for future recreational facilities. The landowners continually plan for the modernization or addition of facilities based on market forces. In this case, the public sector's role is to assist the private sector in broadening the range of recreational experiences available and to ensure that access to these facilities is made available to a wide range of socioeconomic groups. The public sector's role is also to require that adequate recreational opportunities are available for employees in the District and to establish standards for parks and open space for residential areas, should such areas be constructed in the future.

This element also emphasizes the preservation of open space in the District for aesthetic, environmental, and recreational purposes. The recreational value of the RCID is enhanced by the large tracts of open space that surround the existing developed areas. Within the District, open space creates a sense of separateness from urban life and adds to the physical beauty of the developed areas. In addition to its psychological value, the District's open space is home to numerous plant and animal species and is a significant ecological resource. One purpose of this element is to protect and enhance regional open space resources that are partially contained within District boundaries.

The Supporting Data and Analysis component begins with a description of existing recreation opportunities and open space areas, which are described in text, tables, and maps. It continues with an assessment of recreation and open space needs in the District. The Policies component which precedes this section provides goals, objectives, and policies aimed at meeting the District's need for open space and recreation opportunities. The policies focus on the relationship of recreation opportunities to other land uses, design, and access at both the local and regional scale.

# EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SITES

## EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

The 26 hotel and timeshare properties at Walt Disney World contain numerous athletic and recreational facilities, including many facilities that one might find in a neighborhood or community park. All of the hotels include swimming pools and children's play areas, most include tennis courts, and many include jogging trails, par courses, and exercise rooms. The hotels also offer organized recreational programs and provide opportunities for passive recreational activities such as fishing, hiking, and boating. Activities such as lake swimming, horseback riding, and water skiing are available to District visitors. Golf opportunities are extensive. Disney's Wide World of Sports includes facilities that one might find in a regional park, including lighted ballfields, volleyball and tennis courts, a gymnasium, and other athletic facilities.

The theme parks focus on entertainment and cultural activities, although all of the parks offer opportunities for physical or resource-related recreation. The theme parks include thrill rides, children's rides, educational and artistic exhibits, movies, shows, concerts, parades, fireworks, and a diverse array of spectator and participatory events. Both the theme parks and the resorts provide recreational shopping opportunities. Recreational shopping and entertainment are also featured at Downtown Disney, Boardwalk, and Crossroads.

Figure 7-2 shows the spatial distribution of the recreation facilities at the RCID.

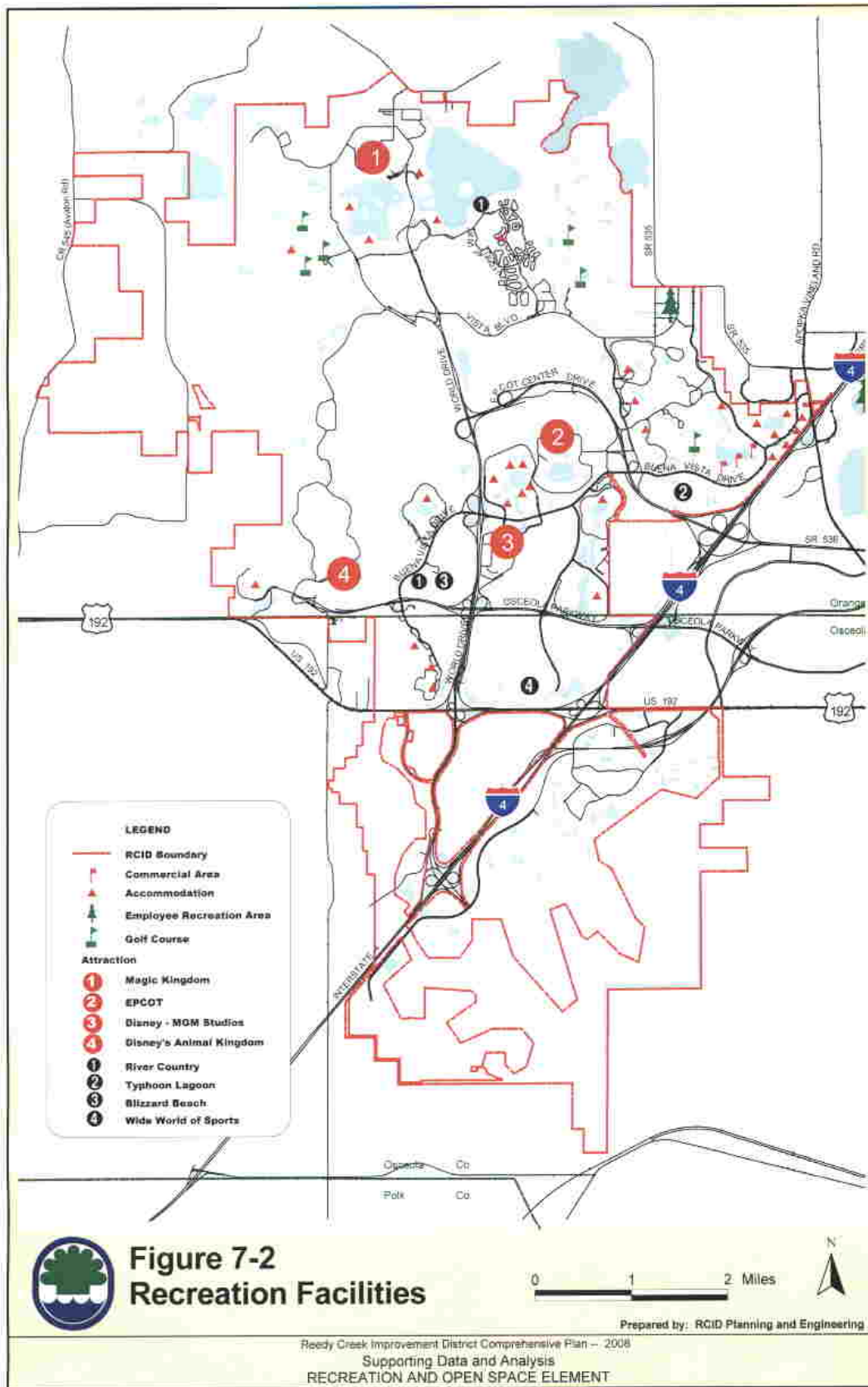
### Types of Recreation Facilities

The recreation facilities at the RCID may be broadly grouped into five categories.

**Private Facilities with Admission Charge.** Most of these facilities are considered "gated attractions" and are accessible to the general public with payment of an admission fee. These facilities and their associated parking areas cover 2,100 acres in the RCID, or about 8 percent of its total area. A variety of admission fee structures are available, including daily passes for admission to a single attraction, multiple day passes with unlimited admission to the largest attractions, and reduced rates for young children or senior citizens. During certain seasons, discounted fees are also available for Florida residents.

The gated attractions include major theme parks and minor theme parks. The major theme parks are:

- *Magic Kingdom*, a theme park offering rides, shops, and live entertainment based on favorite Disney themes
- *EPCOT Center*, a showcase for technology and international culture
- *Disney/MGM Studios*, a theme park oriented to the movie and television industries
- *Disney's Animal Kingdom*, a theme park featuring live animal displays and adventure rides through themed wildlife areas.



The minor theme parks are:

- *River Country* and *Discovery Island*, with the former being a water-oriented park for swimming and sunning, and the latter being an island nature preserve.
- *Typhoon Lagoon*, a water-oriented park featuring water slides and water thrill rides with a “tropical island” theme.
- *Blizzard Beach*, a water-oriented theme park featuring water slides and water thrill rides with an “alpine” theme.
- *Disney’s Wide World of Sports*, a 184-acre complex comprised of a major league baseball park, four major league baseball fields, two little league baseball fields, four softball fields, a football field, four soccer fields, twelve tennis courts, and five volleyball courts. The complex also contains a field house and ballpark building (for spectator seating), batting cages, office and retail buildings, and accessory buildings.

Special recreational and cultural events are held throughout the year at the gated attractions. These include fine art exhibits and cultural displays at the EPCOT Center pavilions; evening firework and laser shows at EPCOT Center, Magic Kingdom, and Disney/MGM Studios; daily appearances by special guests at the Disney/MGM Studios; and special performances by song and dance groups from around the world at all of the attractions. Public use of the facilities at Wide World of Sports is permitted for various groups on a reservation and fee basis. The public has access to spectator sporting events at the complex, including both free events and ticketed events.

In addition to the gated attractions, private recreational facilities also include the *Disney Speedway* (WDW Indy 200), two miniature golf courses, five 18-hole championship golf courses and one 9-hole golf course. The speedway is a racetrack which hosts an annual three-day spectator event as well as a year-round attraction in which guests experience NASCAR auto racing first-hand.

**Private Facilities with No Admission Charge.** The District contains several commercial developments that serve dual retail and recreational functions. Each of these areas is accessible to the general public without payment of an admission fee (or, in the case of *Pleasure Island*, payment of a fee only after 7 PM). The public also has access to spectator sporting events such as the annual *Disney Marathon* (some of these sporting events require admission fees).

Downtown Disney is oriented towards visitors to the theme parks and features specialty shops, entertainment retailing, themed restaurants, theaters, and live entertainment. The complex includes three “districts,” with attractions that include *Cirque de Soleil*, *Disney Quest* (a virtual reality attraction), the *House of Blues*, *Planet Hollywood*, and a 24-screen movie theater. In addition to its indoor amenities, Downtown Disney includes park-like features such as waterfront promenades, outdoor performance and eating areas, fountains, sculpture, and gardens.

Special recreational events are held throughout the year at Downtown Disney. The *Masters Art Festival* is held annually, with nationally recognized artists and artisans participating. The *Marketplace* is also the site of an annual boat show, automobile show, and Christmas pageant, as well as other special events open to the public. Most of these events are offered free of charge.

Another commercial development, *Crossroads*, is a community-scale shopping center serving visitors, employees, and residents from nearby neighborhoods. While *Crossroads* is less recreational in its function and design, it integrates landscaped open space, water features, and pedestrian trails to create an attractive

and leisurely environment for shopping. The 130,000 square foot center includes a grocery store, restaurants, and a variety of specialty stores and services.

The Boardwalk Hotel also includes entertainment retail attractions at the promenade level. In addition to restaurants and arcades, the promenade includes an "Atlantic City-style" dance hall.

**Resort Accommodations with Restricted Admission.** Each hotel or timeshare property offers privately owned recreation facilities for its guests. There are a total of 26 hotels or timeshare properties within the District, ranging in size from 288 rooms to 3,056 rooms. Paid guests staying in the resorts generally have unlimited access to the recreational facilities available at their hotel. Guests may also have access to facilities at the other hotels, such as the golf courses at Shades of Green, Lake Buena Vista, and Eagle Pines/Osprey Ridge. Accommodations also include nearly 1,200 campsites at Fort Wilderness. The campground offers tennis, biking, hiking, swimming, horseback riding, boating, water skiing, and live shows.

Typical hotel facilities include tennis courts, jogging trails, swimming pools, and evening music and dance clubs. Many hotels also provide children's playgrounds, arcade rooms, exhibits, and movies. Freshwater beach swimming is offered at the Contemporary, the Polynesian, the Grand Floridian, the Caribbean Beach, the Dolphin, the Swan, the Yacht and Beach Club, Wilderness Lodge, and Fort Wilderness. The Grand Floridian includes a health spa and club. Disney Institute includes a cinema, auditorium, amphitheater, and rock-climbing wall. The Institute also offers extensive recreational, educational, and cultural programming for guests and residents of Central Florida.

The hotels host special events throughout the year. A professional golf tournament is held annually in Lake Buena Vista and national water ski championships are held on Bay Lake.

**Employee Recreation Facilities.** The Walt Disney World Company provides recreational facilities for the exclusive use of its employees and their families and guests at no admission cost. Most of these facilities are located adjacent to Little Lake Bryan, in an area that was deannexed from the District in the early 1990s. The Little Lake Bryan complex is equivalent to a large community park, and includes a clubhouse, two swimming pools, a screened pool room, volleyball courts, picnic and barbecue pavilions, basketball courts, three tennis courts, a soccer field, four softball fields (including two lighted fields), a sandy beach and lake (with boating and swimming), and a fitness trail. In addition to these facilities, Walt Disney World Company also provides athletic fields within District boundaries in the Administration Area at the north end of Vista Boulevard.

The District's principal employer offers a wellness program and encourages employee participation in athletic activities, arts and crafts programs, and organized outings. Some of the hotels set aside time for employees to use their facilities. Walt Disney World organizes many recreational events for employees. These events include softball, volleyball, and basketball competitions; aerobic classes; canoe races; nutrition classes; special movie screenings; craft classes; scuba classes; and special employee days at attractions. These events are all offered at very reasonable prices - usually a modest sign-up fee or discounted admission.

Employees also are permitted to enter the theme parks without an admission charge, and have limited access to the new athletic fields and facilities at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex.

**Free Admission to Public Facilities.** Currently, there are no publicly owned recreation facilities in the District. There is no need for public parks serving the District population because the permanent population is

very small. Residents of the District's 17 dwelling units reside in a very low-density wooded setting and have immediate access to open space around their homes. These residents also have access to the theme parks and employee facilities. Providing parks to serve the local population would be inefficient, because they would duplicate private sector facilities.

If residential development occurs in the future, it will become necessary to provide neighborhood parks and recreation sites in these areas. Standards for recreation in new development areas are provided later in this element.

### **Recreation Needs of Special Groups**

The District's principal employer provides recreational opportunities for many groups of people, including small children, parents, young adults and teens, singles, families, and senior citizens. Hundreds of organized tour groups, representing a diverse range of interests, cultures, and socioeconomic groups, visit the District each year. Special programs are available for learning disabled and physically challenged individuals. All activities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

### **Access to Beaches and Shores**

Lakes within the developed portions of the District are used for recreational activities, including swimming, boating, fishing, and water-skiing. Shoreline access consists of waterfront trails, beaches, or promenades, and is provided within all lakefront hotel properties, including the Grand Floridian and Polynesian Village on Seven Seas Lagoon; the Contemporary Hotel and Wilderness Lodge on Bay Lake; the Dolphin/Swan Hotels, Boardwalk, and Beach/Yacht Club Hotels on Club Lake; and the Disney Institute on Village Lake. The Caribbean Beach, Dixie Landings/Port Orleans, and Coronado Springs resorts contain an extensive network of lagoons and lakes which include shoreline trails and water activities such as paddle boating. Downtown Disney includes lakefront promenades and boat landings; boat rental at Disney Village is available to the general public.

## **EXISTING OPEN SPACE AREAS**

Existing open space areas in the RCID are tabulated in Table 7-1 and appear on the Existing Land Use Map in the Future Land Use Element. In 1998, agriculture, conservation areas, water, and undeveloped land encompassed two-thirds of the District's area. In addition, many of the "developed" areas have an open space character, including some 940 acres of golf courses, 750 acres of rapid infiltration basins, landscaped areas around the resorts and within highway rights-of-way, most of Disney's Animal Kingdom, and the Wide World of Sports athletic field complex. If such areas are included, the portion of the District area in open space is currently greater than 75 percent.

As of 1998, agriculture (citrus groves, pasture, and nurseries) comprised about 4 percent of the District, while water bodies covered just over 6 percent. About 31 percent of the District is contained in a designated Conservation area that roughly corresponds to wetland areas in the 100-year flood plain of Reedy Creek. The Conservation area historically has been protected from development because of its sensitive environmental conditions. Environmental and wildlife research and observation facilities, utility and transportation rights-of-way, and agricultural uses are permitted in the Conservation area. The remaining 6,000 acres of open space - nearly 25 percent of the District -- consists of lands which are generally forested and include a mixture of

uplands and wetlands. Some of these lands are suitable for development; others are not. A majority of the open space is privately owned and is not accessible to the general public. Access to the private land is restricted by signs, fencing, and the absence of roads.

**Table 7-1: Existing Land Uses Within the District - 1998**

Land Use		Acres	Percentage of Site
Developed Uses		<b>8,705</b>	<b>34.9</b>
Residential		11	0.0+
Commercial		248	1.0
Hotel/Resort		3,073	12.3
Entertainment		2,252	9.0
Support Facilities		689	2.8
Public Facilities		867	3.5
Roads		1,565	6.3
Open Space Uses		<b>16,252</b>	<b>65.1</b>
Agriculture		1,012	4.0
Undeveloped Open Space		6,096	24.4
Conservation		7,617	30.6
Water Bodies		1,527	6.1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>24,924</b>	<b>100.0</b>

SOURCE: Sedway Consulting and RCID, 1999

(\*) approximately 940 acres of the Hotel/Resort category consists of golf courses, and 750 acres of the Public Facilities category consists of rapid infiltration basins, both developed uses with an open space character.

# ANALYSIS

## EXISTING NEED FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The permanent residents of the District have more than adequate recreational facilities available for their use. As stated previously, residents have unlimited use of all theme parks and employee recreational facilities. There is no perceived need for neighborhood, community, or regional parks to serve the local population.

The RCID serves a global need for a special type of recreation. While it is difficult to estimate the existing need for private recreational facilities in the RCID because of the diversity of the market served, the current supply of private recreational facilities appears sufficient to meet public demands, at least for residents of the Orlando metropolitan area.

## FUTURE NEED FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

As a public agency, the District ensures that sufficient recreational opportunities are provided for residents and employees, that private recreational facilities are safely designed, and that open space is conserved for natural resource management. The District will continue to pursue these goals in the future. Anticipated recreation and open space needs through 2008 are discussed below.

### Public Facilities

Population projections for the District indicate that no increase in the permanent population is anticipated between 1998 and 2008. Consequently, there is no anticipated need for additional public recreational facilities to serve this population. A later section of this element addresses the standards to be applied if historic trends change and residential development occurs within the District.

### Private Facilities

Based on historic trends and projected increases in leisure time, it is very likely that additional private facilities will be supported within the District by 2008. If trends of the 1980s and 1990s were to continue through the next decade, more than 500 additional acres would be developed (or under construction) with new attractions before 2008.

Plans for several new facilities - primarily additions to the theme parks - have already been announced. Although these facilities will meet a broad "public" need for recreation, they will continue to be operated and owned by the private sector. The District's responsibility is to ensure that land and infrastructure can be made available to facilitate construction of these facilities, and that the facilities are sited and designed in a manner that protects public health and safety. Approximately 3,400 acres of land have been designated for Mixed Use development, a category that permits the construction of additional resorts and attractions. New recreational development is also likely on "infill" sites within already developed theme parks and resort areas. If current trends continue, approximately one-third of the area shown for Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map (Figure 2-1) would be developed with new recreational attractions while about two-thirds would be

developed with resorts or golf courses. New recreation facilities will be accommodated on a variety of sites in a variety of natural settings within these areas. Many of these facilities may designate large areas within the “development site” as passive or landscaped open space.

In addition to the recreational opportunities offered in Mixed Use areas, the areas designated for Conservation and Resource Management/Recreation on the Future Land Use Map could support resource-related activities that involve minimal disturbance of the natural landscape. Canoeing on Reedy Creek is already provided by the Disney Institute, and horseback riding trails have been developed around Fort Wilderness. Additional trails, fishing areas, wetland boardwalks, and nature observation areas may be created within areas designated for “open space” uses.

### **Access to Private Recreational Facilities**

The District will continue to assist the major landowners in maximizing access to private recreational facilities. Access improvements will involve: (1) improvements to the traffic circulation system (including roads, transit, and bicycle paths) that facilitate movement to existing and planned attractions; (2) maintenance of barrier-free (handicapped-accessible) design within the theme parks and attractions; and (3) promotion of programs that enable economically disadvantaged children and their families to visit the facilities.

The Transportation Element identifies the capital improvements and programs that will be required to maintain ingress and egress to existing and new recreation facilities. The RCID Building Code contains provisions for barrier-free design, so that handicapped visitors are physically able to enter all recreation facilities. The major landowners sponsor a number of programs that enable economically disadvantaged youngsters to visit the theme parks. Each year, the Walt Disney Company donates millions of dollars to charitable organizations such as the United Way, the Orange County Citizens Commission on Children, Operation Community, and the Osceola County Commission on Aging. Through its operations at Walt Disney World, the major landowners also provide outreach programs to all segments of the population in the surrounding counties. These programs promote educational, social, and economic advancement for residents of Central Florida.

### **Access to Beaches and Shores**

The lakes in the District are regarded as an important aesthetic and recreation resource. In the past, buildings along the waterfront have been oriented to maximize lake views, and site planning has emphasized visitor access to the water. The RCID will continue to promote shoreline access within new development along its major lakes. New hotels on the lakes will incorporate beaches, trails, and boat slips where appropriate. Access to Reedy Creek is limited in most locations because the surrounding lands are undisturbed and environmentally sensitive. Future access to the creek will be limited to foot trails so that the natural functions of the creek and adjacent wetlands are not impacted and their Conservation Land Use protected. Future activities on the creek itself will be limited to canoeing.

## **Physical Adequacy of Private Recreational Facilities**

The physical adequacy of the private recreational facilities is ensured through the District's building, mechanical, plumbing, fire prevention, electrical, gas, and administrative codes. The District monitors water quality at all swimming beaches, swimming pools, and water supply systems in cooperation with the Orange County Health Department. The District's standards for fire protection are among the most stringent in the state. Design and landscaping standards are maintained by both the public and private sector and ensure maintenance of a high-quality visual environment in the District.

## **Recreational Bicycle Trails**

The major landowners are assessing the feasibility of a recreational bicycle trail system linking several resorts, on-site commercial areas, and attractions. The trails would provide additional access through open space areas and along shorelines. Although intended as a recreational amenity, increased bicycle use could accomplish multiple objectives, including traffic reduction and air quality improvements. The District will continue to work with the major landowners to promote bicycle and pedestrian travel between major destinations within its boundaries.

## **Assessment of Employee Recreational Needs**

The District does not presently have standards or requirements for employee recreation areas. The private sector provides about 70 acres of recreational facilities for the exclusive use of employees (and their guests and families) off-site at Little Lake Bryan and another 10 acres on-site at the Administration Area. Employees are also provided with free access to visitor attractions. Some of the major employment centers within the District, such as the Team Disney Administration Building, have on-site recreational facilities specifically for employees. Although there are no industry standards for employee recreation areas, existing provisions District-wide are believed to be sufficient to meet employee needs. Employees have access to a much wider array of recreational amenities and opportunities than residents of a conventional city or town.

Projected increases in employment within District boundaries will result in greater demand for recreation. As the Future Land Use Element indicates, more than 17,000 new jobs may be created within District boundaries by 2008. As the number of employees grows, new employee recreational facilities will need to be developed, and additional land area may need to be acquired for employee facilities. These facilities may be within District boundaries, or they may be constructed nearby in Orange or Osceola Counties.

Although the existing facilities at Little Lake Bryan represent a substantial investment by the major landowners, they could eventually be displaced by higher value land uses. The facilities are located on a site approved for development as a 3,000-unit mixed use community. Although there are no immediate plans to remove the existing facilities, such an outcome is possible by 2008. The District has limited control over the Little Lake Bryan area but will work with the major landowners to ensure that sufficient opportunities for employee recreation are retained. In the event the facilities are displaced, replacement facilities should be provided.

Regardless of how the Little Lake Bryan facilities are used in the future, the District strongly encourages the major landowners to develop new employee recreational facilities at a rate commensurate with employment growth. Future facilities may be sited within new attractions or resorts, or in dedicated areas such as the one

at Little Lake Bryan. Employee recreational facilities within the District should generally be designated as “Support Facilities” on the Future Land Use Map.

### **Standards for Future Development Areas**

Residential uses are permitted in the Mixed Use areas shown on the Future Land Use Map. While there are presently no plans to construct permanent residences in the District, this element sets forth acreage standards for parks in the event such neighborhoods are built.

A level of service standard of two acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 permanent residents has been established. Neighborhood parks should be at least two acres in size, and should have a service area radius of one-quarter to one-half mile. If a proposed residential area has fewer than 1,000 residents, three options should be considered: (1) creation of a pocket park less than two acres in size and with fewer facilities than a conventional neighborhood park; (2) payment of in-lieu fees to the District for the eventual purchase of parkland after its total population reaches 1,000 residents; or (3) provision of privately operated recreational facilities that are free to residents - such as a swimming pool or clubhouse.

A level of service standard of one community park for every 10,000 permanent residents of the District also has been established. Community parks should be 20 to 40 acres in size and should include playing fields, natural areas, picnic areas, water features, and facilities for active recreation (such as tennis courts). Community parks may incorporate sensitive environmental areas (such as wetlands) provided minimal disturbance or alteration of these areas occurs. The need for a community park can be eliminated if all residents are provided with free access to private recreational facilities - including new facilities that may be built within the residential areas, or existing facilities open to guests or employees at Walt Disney World.

### **Preservation of Open Space**

In the past, the District ensured the provision of open space within new development areas by requiring portions of large development sites to be set aside as open space. A 1991 Comprehensive Plan policy established a 30 percent open space set-aside requirement for new development sites. The policy was ineffective in practice, as it did not consider the unique character of each development site or the specific land use being developed. On some sites, a set-aside exceeding 30 percent was appropriate. On other sites, particularly in support facility areas, a set-aside of less than 30 percent was acceptable.

In the early 1990s, the District adopted an “open space map” which identified areas to be retained as open space as the District approached buildout. For the purposes of the map, open space has been defined to include all Resource Management/ Recreation (RM/R) areas, golf course fairways, upland (“Public”) areas on the Fletcher property (an area west of Hartzog Road annexed to the District during the mid-1990s), and water bodies. The map is presented as Figure 7-1 of the Plan. The definition excludes the 7,600-acre Wildlife Management and Conservation Area (WMCA), although that area will remain open in perpetuity. The District’s policy is that at least 30 percent of the area outside the WMCA will remain in open space. Presently, the RM/R areas, golf course fairways, and water bodies represent over 32 percent of the District area outside the WMCA.

In addition to the designated open space areas, the District will continue to work with the major landowners to ensure that appropriate areas within new development sites are set aside as open space for aesthetic and

environmental purposes. Extensive landscaping and preservation of native vegetation will continue to enhance the overall visual quality of development. Roads, drainageways, and utility corridors will continue to be landscaped and designed to enhance awareness and appreciation of adjacent open space areas.

There are nearly 10,300 acres in the Plan designated for Conservation or Resource Management/Recreation. Both categories are intended to protect sensitive environmental areas and are to remain undeveloped. Resource-oriented recreational uses (such as wetland boardwalks) may be built in both areas, but the land will remain without major structural improvements. Protection of these open space areas provides ecological benefits, as well as psychological and recreational benefits. Where no other alternatives are feasible for the Resource Management/Recreation Category, access and utility corridors may be allowed when reviewed and approved in accordance with the Future Land Use Element. Water will also continue to be a significant open space use in the District, comprising more than 1,500 acres by 2008.

The actual amount of open space outside the Conservation Area is likely to exceed the 30 percent required by the Comprehensive Plan. Based on drainage permit data for the District, at least 68 percent of the area within the District will remain uncovered by pavement or buildings upon "buildout." Parts of the District will retain an "open" character, although they are counted as "developed" and would not traditionally be defined as open space. Such areas include the rapid infiltration basins in the northwest part of the District, the tree farm, and large animal exhibit areas in the Animal Kingdom theme park.

There are more than 3,000 acres of vacant land designated for Commercial, Resort, Entertainment, and Mixed Use development on the Future Land Use Map. Some of this land may be developed with non-structural recreational facilities, such as new golf courses, while other areas may be used as landscape buffers or lawn areas. These open space areas are what most visitors experience at close range, while walking on hotel grounds, sitting in outdoor eating or plaza areas, or traveling between parking areas and attractions.

As detailed in the Future Land Use Element, not all of the land designated for urban uses will actually be developed by 2008. The District's policy is that undeveloped land be retained in its natural state until permits for development are issued.

The Conservation area is unique among the District's open space areas in its ecological and environmental importance. It is part of a larger ecosystem that extends beyond District boundaries into Orange County and Osceola County. Coordination with the counties will be required to conserve this area and ensure that its ecology is not compromised by development outside the District boundaries. If the land is ever acquired for public use, improvements must be limited to nature trails in upland areas and other features that minimize disturbance of wildlife habitat. Public access to the most sensitive areas, such as the nesting and breeding areas of endangered or threatened species, should continue to be restricted.