

# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Recreation and Open Space Element for the Town of Longboat Key takes into account the unique character of the island community. The beaches, temperate winter climate, and recreational opportunities are largely responsible for past increases in both permanent and seasonal populations. The majority of active recreation facilities on the key are provided through private means. This element of the Comprehensive Plan assesses current opportunities and future needs to develop goals, objectives, and policies that will be used by the Town of Longboat Key to further the system of public and private recreation and open space sites available to the public.

The population of the community nearly triples during the peak season because of the influx of visitors and second homeowners (Table 1). As of 2010, roughly 80% of the permanent population was over 60 years of age with significant leisure time. Therefore, the need for diversity in recreational and community facilities, both active and passive, is necessary.

The beaches, which include over ten miles of gulf front shore, are overwhelmingly the most significant natural resource on the key, attracting both residents and visitors. The Town must continue to implement beach renourishment and dune protection programs in order to protect or preserve the natural resources and adjacent land uses. The preservation of Longboat Key's character depends upon the protection and appropriate use of its natural resources.

**TABLE 1**

#### **LONGBOAT KEY 1995 - 2020 POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>
Permanent Population	7,499	7,603	7,665	7,663	7,770
Peak Season Functional Population	18,632	20,413	23,500	17,089*	17,760

\* Peak season functional population is based on a multiplier of 1.78 persons per household provided by BEBR multiplied by the total number of units (residential and tourism) on Longboat Key.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Adley, Brisson, Engman, Inc.  
Sarasota County Planning Department, 1995  
Town of Longboat Key, updated October, 2011

## **II. INVENTORY: EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The Town of Longboat Key's inventory of existing facilities can be categorized by describing the type of site upon which the recreation activity occurs. The facility may also be categorized as public, private, or a hybrid with characteristics of both. Further, the facility's use may be categorized as active or passive.

### **A. EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES**

#### **1. Resource-Based and Activity-Based Sites and Facilities**

Recreational sites are frequently classified as resource-based or activity-based. The distinction between these two types is sometimes not clear-cut because resource-based recreation sites may contain activity-based facilities. Resource-based sites and facilities focus on particular natural resources and may provide opportunities for picnicking, hiking, water sports, fishing, or other means of enjoying nature.

Activity-based recreational sites and facilities are defined as sites developed for the enjoyment of particular activities such as tennis, golf, basketball, baseball, or football, and recreational programs such as aerobics, painting, cultural and educational programs, and programs for a defined population such as senior citizens and other age groups.

Both public and private sectors provide activity-based recreation sites and facilities on Longboat Key. Private activity-based recreation includes facilities available by membership, and facilities that are only for the residents and guests of a particular community or commercial establishment.

Resource-based recreation areas on Longboat Key include extensive frontage along the Gulf of Mexico and Sarasota Bay. Public access areas are provided along the gulf and bay side of the island. Public access areas are identified on Figure 1, which illustrates all of the recreational and open space land on the island.

#### **2. Passive and Active Recreation**

Resource-based and activity-based recreation sites can be described further by the type of recreation provided at the site. Recreation activities are classified as active (e.g., swimming, golf, tennis or softball) or passive (e.g., walking, picnicking, nature study). Both types of sites are enjoyed through direct utilization of facilities, with varying levels of activity.

The inventory of open space and recreation areas is summarized in Table 2, and includes whether the property is publicly or privately owned. The site locations are also shown on Figure 1.

### 3. Recreation by Age Group, Economic Structure, and Education

Recreational preferences by age group are particularly important to the Longboat Key community, which is composed predominantly of retired persons. The 2010 census indicated that roughly 80% of the Town's population is 60 years of age or older, and the median income was \$118,916. This demographic information is helpful to further understand the recreation needs of Longboat Key residents. In response to these community characteristics, the private sector has designed recreation facilities to focus on an older population.

### 4. Recreation and the Private Sector

The private sector provides the majority of active recreational facilities on Longboat Key, including facilities for tennis and golf. The Longboat Key Club is a private club, which currently provides 45 holes of golf and 20 tennis courts for its members. There are many additional tennis courts, swimming pools, and other recreation facilities provided by tourism and condominiums developments, homeowners' associations, and time-share developments.

Due to the linear configuration of Longboat Key, most developments have water frontage that allow beach or bay access for the residents of the developments. A few tourist developments also provide beach access to their patrons.

### 5. Recreation Center

The Town of Longboat Key's Bayfront Park Recreation Center (Center) provides indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, both organized and self-initiated. Indoor recreation activities include aerobic classes, training seminars, dancing, and card playing. Outdoor activities include soccer, softball, basketball, and tennis. The Center has a multipurpose field accommodating soccer and other sports, two tennis courts, one multi-sports court, playground equipment, and a multi-purpose building.

In 2007, Sarasota County purchased over three acres of land immediately adjacent to the Center, including a lot remnant directly on the west side of Gulf of Mexico Drive, with the intent of collaborating with the Town on the redevelopment and expansion of the Center's facilities, including an adjacent Town-owned parcel north of the Center. At the time, the future land use classifications of this land were Limited Commercial (CL), Medium Density/SF Mixed Residential (RM-3), and Medium Density/SF Mixed Residential (RM-4), with underlying zoning designations of Limited Commercial (C-1), Single-Family Low-Medium Density Residential (R-3SF), and Single-Family Medium Density Residential (R-4SF), respectively. In 2011, the Town amended the future land use designation and future land use map for these properties to Open Space-Active (OS-A) for utilization as part of the Center. These changes will allow the Town to incorporate these lands into the redevelopment project.

Subsequent to the Sarasota County purchase, the Town and County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the purchase, design and development costs. The Town held public meetings in conjunction with County parks' staff on February 5 and 12, 2009, and on March 4, 2009, to gather public input on the design and facilities to be constructed. Public meetings were also held by the Town and County Commissions to discuss and select an initial conceptual development plan that may be modified or changed in the future. As a result of these meetings and the agreement reached between the Town and County, the County's land will form an important component of the expansion plans for the Bayfront Park Recreation Center, as agreed upon by the Town and County. The County's addition of this acreage to the Center and the expansion of facilities will significantly increase and enhance cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities in the Town available to the public. If the plans for the expansion of the Center are not brought to fruition, the County lands will still be designated as open space-active and will provide an important addition of open space provided to the public at the Center. The lands increase the amount of open space in the Town's open space inventory and, if developed as anticipated in the future, will increase the Town's recreational facilities inventory. However, the Town will have a 3.67 acre deficit in the Town-owned and -controlled open space level of service for the planning period unless further lands are purchased.

## 6. Leisure Services

The private sector offers many leisure opportunities for the community. The Longboat Key Library is a self-supporting institution funded through annual membership fees. The library has seasonal hours reflecting the fluctuation in seasonal population.

The Longboat Key Art Center has instructors offering classes in painting, drawing, jewelry making, pottery, sculpture, and lapidary. Membership fees are required to enroll in classes, and the galleries are open to the public for viewing.

**TABLE 2**  
**TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY**  
**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY**  
**(Updated June 2012)**

	Name	Address	County	Owner	Acres	Waterfront Access (Width)	Principal Use Code	Description
1	Atlas Street ROW	4795 GMD	Manatee	Town	0.24	Gulf-40'	OS	Sandy beach with parking and dune walkover
2	Bayfront Park Recreation Center	4110, 4052 GMD	Sarasota	Town	4.87	Bay-800'	Active Recreation	Recreation building and community center, baseball, lighted tennis courts, basketball court, parking, fishing pier, and playground
3	Bayside Drive ROW	6930 Bayside Drive	Manatee	Town	0.50	Bay	OS	Mangrove
4	Bicentennial Park	2730 GMD	Sarasota	Town	1.00	-	OS	Picnic table, botanical garden, and trails
5	Broadway ROW	See Broadway	Manatee	Town	0.20	Bay-80'	OS	Fishing Pier
6	Broadway ROW	100 Broadway	Manatee	Town	0.82	Gulf-80'	OS	Parking, dune walkover, and sandy beach
7	Longboat Key Public Tennis Center	561/590 Bay Isles Road	Sarasota	Town	3.87	two parcels on Bay Isles Road	Active Recreation	10 tennis courts, bathrooms, and parking
8	Coral Avenue ROW	100 Coral Avenue	Manatee	Town	0.06	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach
9	Emerald Harbor Lots 108, 136 through 140	821 Binnacle Point Drive	Manatee	Town	1.26	Bay-550'	OS	Mangrove
10	Emerald Harbor Lots 114 through 134	5945 Binnacle Point Drive	Manatee	Town	7.46	Bay-1,300'	OS	Mangrove
11	Gulfside Road	6399 Gulfside Road	Manatee	Town	0.41	Gulf-110'	OS	Sandy beach
12	Hibiscus Way ROW	695 Hibiscus Way	Manatee	Town	0.50	Bay-50'	OS	Mangrove
13	Hilton Place ROW	3210 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.50	Bay-50'	OS	Australian Pine
14	Jackson Way ROW	755 Jackson Way	Manatee	Town	0.50	Bay-50'	OS	Mangrove
15	Joan M. Durante Park	5550 GMD	Manatee	Town	32.64	Bay-900'	OS	Gazebo, hiking trails, playground, botanical garden, bathrooms, fishing piers and parking
16	Joy Street ROW	7119 Joy Street	Manatee	Town	0.34	Pass-50'	OS	Mangrove
17	Linley Street ROW	755 Linley Street	Manatee	Town	0.20	Bay-60'	OS	Fishing pier, boat ramp and parking
18	Longview Drive ROW	3490 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.50	Bay-50'	OS	Parking

**TABLE 2**  
**(continued)**

**TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY**  
**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY**  
**(Updated June 2012)**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Waterfront Access (Width)</b>	<b>Principal Use Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
19	Longview Drive ROW	3495 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.21	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach, dune walkover, and parking
20	Lyons Lane Parcel	505 Lyons Lane	Manatee	Town	10.90	Bay-1,200'	OS	Mangrove
21	Magnolia Road ROW	755 Magnolia Road	Manatee	Town	0.50	Bay-50'	OS	Mangrove
22	Monroe (Mayfield) Street ROW	3175 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.23	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach and parking
23	North Shore Road ROW	100 North Shore Road	Manatee	Town	0.50	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach and parking
24	Open Space	5810 GMD	Manatee	Town	3.90	-	OS	Mostly wetland
25	Pandora Street ROW	2825 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.21	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach
26	Quick Point Nature Park	100 GMD	Sarasota	Town	35.73	Pass-1,500' Bay-1,800'	OS	Mangrove, boardwalks, hiking trails, and fishing pier
27	Seabreeze Avenue ROW	7055 Seabreeze Avenue	Manatee	Town	0.50	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach
28	Sister Keys	Sister Keys	Manatee	Town	64.80	-	OS	Island (boat access from Sarasota Bay)
29	Town Islands	4333 Sarasota Bay	Manatee	Town	18.78	Bay-107'	OS	Mangrove island (boat access from Sarasota Bay)
30	Westfield Street ROW	3410 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.50	Bay-50'	OS	Australian Pine
31	Westfield Street ROW	3355 GMD	Sarasota	Town	0.28	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach and parking
32	White Key	4555 Sarasota Bay	Manatee	Town	17.24	-	OS	Mangrove island (boat access from Sarasota Bay)

\*Includes public easements and rights-of-way

**Total Town Owned or Controlled Open Space/Recreation by Acreage: 210.15**

**TABLE 2**  
**(continued)**

**TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY**  
**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY**  
**(Updated June 2012)**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Waterfront Access (Width)</b>	<b>Principal Use Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
33	Buttonwood Point	3655 Perimeter Canal	Sarasota	State	2.90	-	OS	Mangrove
34	Multi-purpose Pathway	100/4134 GMD	Sarasota	State	4.85	-	Active Recreation	8-foot wide, 5-mile long paved path, bicycling, jogging, and walking activities
35	Multi-purpose Pathway	4134/7300 GMD	Manatee	State	4.85	-	Active Recreation	8-foot wide, 5-mile long paved path, bicycling, jogging, and walking activities
36	Overlook Park Gulf of Mexico Drive ROW	111 GMD	Sarasota	State	1.50	Pass-600'	OS	Picnic, fishing, and parking (near Charthouse)
37	Perimeter Channel, south end	1666 Perimeter Channel	Sarasota	State	4.40	-	OS	Mangrove
38	Wake Island	875 Hideaway Bay Drive	Manatee	State	5.90	-	OS	Mangrove island (boat access from Sarasota Bay)
39	Whale Key	3999 Sarasota Bay	Manatee	State	1.40	-	OS	Mangrove island (boat access from Sarasota Bay)
40	Public Beach (beach seaward of the Town's Erosion Control Line (ECL))	Town-wide	Sarasota/ Manatee	State	17.10	Varies	OS	Beach access locations located throughout the Town on the Gulf of Mexico

**Total State Owned Open Space/Recreation by Acreage: 42.90**

**TABLE 2**  
**(continued)**

**TOWN OF LONGBOAT KEY**  
**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION INVENTORY**  
**(Updated June 2012)**

	Name	Address	County	Owner	Acres	Waterfront Access (Width)	Principal Use Code	Description
41	Greer (Beer Can) Island Beach Park	111 North Shore Road	Manatee	County	22.40	Gulf-800' Pass-150' Bay-1,400'	OS	Sandy beach, mangrove, Australian Pine, and swimming/boating/fishing
42	Triton Street ROW	3055 GMD	Sarasota	County	0.17	Gulf-50'	OS	Sandy beach
43	Bayfront Park Recreation Center	4000, 4000A, 4001, 4016, 4100 GMD	Sarasota	County	3.18	Bay-100'	Active Recreation	Trails, lighted tennis courts, basketball court, parking, and playground

**Total County Owned or Controlled Open Space/Recreation by Acreage: 25.75**  
**Total Publicly Owned or Controlled Recreation/Open Space by Acreage: 278.80**

	Name	Address	County	Owner	Acres	Waterfront Access (Width)	Principal Use Code	Description
44	Harbourside Golf and Tennis	3000 Harbourside Drive	Sarasota	Private	257.00	-	Active Recreation	27-hole regulation golf course, 20 tennis courts and parking
45	Islandside Golf Course	301 GMD	Sarasota	Private	136.82	-	Active Recreation	18-hole regulation golf course
46	Islandside Tennis Courts	341 Longboat Club Road	Sarasota	Private	9.24	-	Active Recreation	18 courts, pro shop, and parking
47	Perimeter Channel ROW	3888 Perimeter Channel	Sarasota	Private	5.00	-	OS	Mangroves

**Total Privately Owned Recreation/Open Space by Acreage: 408.06**  
**Total Recreation/Open Space by Acreage: 686.86**

## **B. EXISTING OPEN SPACE**

The Open Space land use category designates areas that may contain environmentally sensitive publicly owned lands. For the purpose of this section of the Recreation and Open Space Element, open space is defined as “land suitable for recreation or conservation uses.” The Town adopted a Parks and Open Space Land Acquisition ordinance (creating the Land Acquisition Fund) to implement a process to achieve the adopted level of service. Fees collected under this ordinance are placed in a reserve account in trust for the acquisition, improvement, and expansion of Town -owned and -controlled parks and open space.

While the Gulf of Mexico Drive (GMD) corridor’s primary purpose is automobile transportation, it also provides for multimodal traffic by forming a link between recreational, commercial, tourism, and residential areas. The multi-purpose path on the east side of Gulf of Mexico Drive is used for cycling, leisure walking, and jogging.

## **III. ANALYSIS: DEMAND AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

### **A. POPULATION GROWTH AND FUTURE RESIDENTS**

Future recreation demands are expected to be similar to the existing demand in both type and amount. The private sector is expected to continue to be the primary supplier of active recreation facilities.

As mentioned earlier, the winter peak-season population is nearly three times the number of the permanent population. The 2010 decennial census showed that roughly 80% of the population was over 60 years of age. This reflected an increase from the 2000 census figures, which indicated that 71% of Longboat Key’s population at that time was 60 years of age or over. In 2010, the median household income was approximately \$118,916. Therefore, the greatest demand for recreation and leisure facilities continues to be for affluent, mature adults.

### **B. CURRENT RECREATION NEEDS**

The Town’s age and affluence drives the recreation needs of Longboat Key. That is why the existing inventory far exceeds many accepted standards for supply of those recreation facilities. For example, in 1978 there were 69 tennis courts on Longboat Key. In 2006, there were over 140 public and private courts. The commercial nature of the recreation inventory, at locations such as the Longboat Key Club and Resort and the Colony Beach and Tennis Resort, is expected to continue to attract visitors to Longboat Key. Private memberships to organizations such as the Longboat Key Club and Resort and individual condominium associations also provide recreation opportunities.

Past trends in recreation demand have indicated a preference for active sports over passive pursuits. Tennis and golf continue to be the most popular active pursuits for residents and visitors. Other activities such as fishing, yachting, bicycling, swimming, and walking play a significant role in the Longboat Key lifestyle.

## C. FUTURE DEMANDS FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

### 1. Recreation Facilities

Based on the 2006-2007 Evaluation and Analysis Report (EAR) process, the needs assessment for the Town is an acreage based level of service (LOS) rather than facilities based. The Town's goal is to have regional consistency. The Open Space land use category designates areas that may contain environmentally sensitive publicly owned lands. For the purpose of this section of the Recreation and Open Space Element, open space is defined as "land suitable for recreation or conservation uses". The Town adopted a Parks and Open Space Land Acquisition ordinance (creating the Land Acquisition Fund) to implement a process to achieve the adopted level of service. Fees collected under this ordinance are placed in a reserve account in trust for the acquisition, improvement, and expansion of Town-owned and -controlled recreation and community facilities, parks and open space.

While the Gulf of Mexico Drive (GMD) corridor's primary purpose is automobile transportation, it also provides for multimodal traffic by forming a link between recreational and residential areas. The multi-purpose path on the east side of Gulf of Mexico Drive is used for cycling, leisure walking, and jogging.

The Town of Longboat Key shall utilize a recreation LOS of 12 acres of Town-owned and -controlled land per 1,000 people (LOS 12/1000). This standard was determined to be the best unit of analysis, which recognizes the Town's unique characteristics, both on a qualitative and quantitative basis. While the Town will continue an acreage-based level of service, it will also seek to improve the existing facilities on those lands that are Town-owned and -controlled, as funds are available and as suitable to the location.

### 2. Open Space

The open spaces provided by the natural resources on Longboat Key add significantly to the island character. The future maintenance and protection of the beaches is very important and the continuation of beach renourishment programs or other projects to protect or maintain the beaches will be vitally important to the future of Longboat Key.

Acquisition of land to accommodate existing and future development will continue through the land acquisition program because additional recreation and open space areas will continue to benefit the Town. Additionally, the uses permitted for land acquisition funds should include not only acquisitions, but also the improvement of existing and future Town-owned and -controlled recreation and open space properties.

Rather than create an itemized list of land for acquisition, the Town adopted criteria for acquisition of open space: 1) implementation of the comprehensive plan policies that minimize risk in the Coastal High Hazard Area; 2) continuing to preserve natural landscape, native vegetation, and significant wildlife species and their habitats as adopted in the Town's Zoning Code; 3) consideration of the inventory of existing parks and open

space property; 4) located adjacent to existing publicly-owned or -controlled lands; 5) the provisions of the reserve account in trust as established pursuant to Town Ordinances; and, 6) properties that serve the public interest.

The Open Space (OS) designation is applied to all areas identified as environmentally sensitive, publicly owned open spaces, as well as some non-environmentally sensitive, publicly-owned lands. These environmentally sensitive areas shall remain in their natural state with little or no man-made disturbance as cited below. Open space areas are classified according to the intensity of their use in one of three categories: Conservation; Preservation; and, Active.

- a. Open Space – Conservation (OS-C). Open Space – Conservation areas are those areas having unique ecological, hydrological, or physiographic significance. These environmentally sensitive areas shall remain in their natural state with little or no disturbance from man in order to maintain an ecological balance and to prevent adverse impacts to the hydrologic system, especially the watershed’s capacity for holding and detaining stormwater. OS-C areas may also act as habitats for fish and fowl and support unique vegetation communities and other environmentally sensitive ecosystems. These areas may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Estuaries and Coastal Water Basins--Estuaries and coastal water basins receive direct stormwater inflow and have restricted outlets and, therefore, are subject to rapid accumulation of runoff and to extremely high flood water levels. The estuaries and coastal water basins include the shallow bays that lie behind the barrier island where trapped water may cause severe shore flooding and dangerous back flow that cuts through the sandy barrier strips that enclose the basins at times. Important ecological features are found at the upper edge of the basin. Many species of birds and wildlife benefit from the geological and botanical features of this transition area, particularly where there are shrub lines or forest hammocks.
  - ii. Saltwater Wetlands--The saltwater wetlands include saltwater marshes, mangroves, swamps, and tidal flats. The vegetation of saltwater wetlands, particularly red mangroves and cord grass (*Spartina*), provide the primary productivity that is the base of the aquatic food chain. These wetlands also help to protect the Town from stormwater flooding and storm surge. For instance, mangrove swamps have a natural capacity to reduce the severity of coastal hazards from waves and flooding. Wetland vegetation stabilizes estuarine shorelines and prevents erosion. Mangrove trees prevent erosion and can extend the land’s edge by trapping sediments causing land to accrete.
  - iii. Dunelands--Dunelands include dunes, sand ridges, and sand flats located between the beach and higher ground. Dunelands, like beaches, are inexactly balanced between the erosive forces of storm winds and waves and the restorative powers of tides, winds, and currents. Dunelands must be protected to preserve their ability to buffer the force of storm surge, store and yield sand to protect beaches and shore lands, furnish turtle and bird nesting areas, and provide valuable habitats for

certain wildlife species. Wild dunes and sand ridges provide a useful barrier to storm waves and surges. Their primary function in protecting against hazards is to replenish sand that is slowly eroded by waves or instantly torn away by large storms and hurricanes. In this manner, dunes foster the long-term stability of the shoreline by retarding beach erosion. The resilient and mobile character of a dune makes it an optimal natural structure for protecting the beach and man-made structures built behind the dunelands.

- iv. Beaches--Beaches serve as the primary protection for property along the shores of the Gulf. The beach is the unvegetated surface of the shoreline that extends from the upper edge of the beach berm (i.e., the lower edge of the dunelands) seaward to the low-water mark. The beach system includes the backshore, foreshore, bar, and nearshore. Each part of the beach is capable of receiving, storing, and dispensing sand, depending on several constantly changing forces of the ocean system. The beach system is a major protector of the uplands and provides a unique but fragile habitat for waterfowl, reptiles, and other animals that feed, nest, and breed on the berm as well as the open beach.
  - v. Other Unique Natural Areas--Conservation areas shall also include other areas with unique conditions, including geological, hydrological, or vegetative characteristics which require special considerations in order to assure the continuance of the respective unique features.
- b. Open Space – Preservation (OS-P). Open Space – Preservation areas are comprised of lands that should maintain the natural character of the land, to the maximum extent reasonably possible, by preserving or replacing the original tree canopy after development has occurred, and by protecting the natural physiography in order to prevent future erosion, flooding, ground water contamination, and other types of environmental hazards. Preservation areas are suitable for limited urban development provided the unique environmental features of the land have been safeguarded. Preservation areas include but are not limited to the following:
- i. Floodplains--Floodplains are those lands that are contained within the 100-year flood zone as designated on the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for the Town of Longboat Key. Floodplains serve the following important functions in the barrier island hydrologic cycle as cited by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD):
    - a) Floodplains provide natural storage and conveyance of flood waters;
    - b) The water on flooded lands may recharge ground water and is a basic source of flow to rivers, streams, and estuaries;
    - c) Temporary storage of surface waters on floodplains regulates flood elevations and the timing, velocity, and rate of flood discharges;
    - d) Floodplains maintain water quality by reducing erosion, removing nutrients and other pollutants, and allowing sediment to settle; and,

- e) Natural floodplains export detritus and other food sources to open water bodies and are vital habitat for fish, birds, wildlife, and native plant communities.
- ii. Regulation of development within floodplains is necessary in order to accomplish the following objectives as cited by SWFWMD:
  - a) To minimize the potential for property damage and personal injury from flooding;
  - b) To restrict adverse interference with the normal movement of surface waters;
  - c) To maintain the optimum storage capacity of watersheds on the barrier island;
  - d) To maintain desirable ground water levels;
  - e) To maintain the natural hydrological and ecological functions of wetlands and other floodprone lands;
  - f) To prevent increased erosion and sedimentation;
  - g) To maintain water quality;
  - h) To protect the public from the economic and social disruption of flood damage;
  - i) To protect the public from the costs of flood relief; and,
  - j) To avoid the need to construct costly and environmentally disruptive flood management structures.
- iii. Other Expansive Wetland Areas--Other expansive wetlands not included in the above systems shall also be considered as Preservation Areas.
- c. Open Space – Active (OS-A). Open Space – Active is publicly-owned or -controlled open space that is designed, used, or intended to be used for recreational activities with on-site improvements, structures or other active, player-oriented facilities such as playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, and associated accessory facilities. Impervious surface coverage is limited to 30% of the lot or parcel.

### 3. Access to Open Space and Recreation

Longboat Key has approximately ten miles of gulf front beach with access provided at 15 different locations. Most access points are on the north end of the island. Access ways are primarily publicly-owned street rights-of-way. Other accesses are public easements through private property to the beaches.

Access points provide an equitable distribution of public beach access along the full length of Longboat Key. Streets and bicycle paths provide the most common methods to reach the access points. In order to increase the service provided to residents and visitors, provision of adequate and safe access should be encouraged, including accommodations for barrier-free access.

The existing supply of recreation facilities will continue to exceed the recommended facility standards through the planning period, even at peak season. Recreational amenities will continue to be supplied through the requirements of Longboat Key's land development code. Private recreational resort developments are expected to continue to provide recreational facilities pursuant to their development approvals and for lifestyle and marketing purposes.

Reliance on private enterprise to supply activity-based recreation facilities is as important today as it was in 1978 when the Town's first Comprehensive Plan was adopted. To ensure an adequate supply of recreational and open space lands, the recreational standards adopted by the Town of Longboat Key are 12 acres of Town-owned and -controlled land per 1,000 population (LOS 12/1000).

#### **IV. THE PLAN FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

As undeveloped land on Longboat Key is scarce, unless or until redevelopment and revitalization occur, very little open space land is available for purchase. The Town shall continue to pursue opportunities for acquisition of appropriate lands for open space and recreation, and will continue to maintain and enhance open space and cultural, educational, and recreational facilities.

