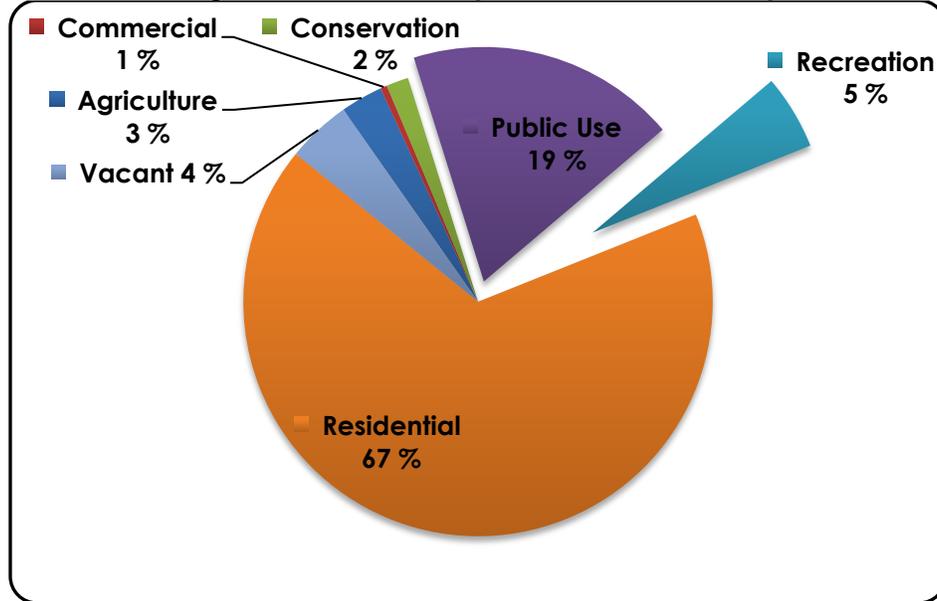


Figure 1.7
Existing Land Use at Comprehensive Plan Adoption



Source: Town of Windermere; Comprehensive Plan

Recreation and Open Space

A major component of the Comprehensive Plan is Chapter 6 the Recreation and Open Space Element; this chapter details many of the specific requirements for recreational facilities within the Town, both current and future. The chapter is also unified by a single goal “Ensure maintenance and improvement of existing public parks, recreation facilities and open space areas to satisfy the health, safety, and welfare needs of the Town’s citizens and their guests, and enhance the total quality of life within the Town, in an efficient and appropriate manner.” The following five areas: level of service; accessibility; connections; site design/safety; and funding/cooperation provide a more specific framework of considerations in the design of new recreational facilities as well as the maintenance of existing facilities.

Levels of Service

Minimum levels of service (LOS), for various recreational amenities have been adopted in the comprehensive plan. The LOS standard establishes a minimum threshold that the Town feels is necessary to provide the quality and quantity of recreational amenities essential to the desired quality of life within the Town. As the population of the Town grows the recreational facilities must remain at or above the minimums LOS detailed below in **Table 1.2**. The Town has adopted an LOS standard for five recreation facilities.

**Table 1.2
Level of Service Standards**

Recreational Facility	Level of Service Standard	Current Service	Surplus or Deficiencies 2010 Population
Park Land	2.5 acres per 1,000 pop	10.735 acres	+ 3.235 acres
Neighborhood Parks	1 park per 5,000 pop	2 parks	+ 1 park
Tennis Courts	1 court per 1,000 pop	6 courts	+ 3 courts
Boat Ramps	1 ramp per 4,300 pop	2 ramps	+ 1 ramp
Bicycle Paths	1 mile per 1,000 pop	4.67 miles	+ 1.67 miles

Source: Town of Windermere; Comprehensive Plan

As of January, 2013 the Town meets or exceeds the minimum LOS for each of the five standards adopted in the Comprehensive Plan. The addition of the Butler Bay recreational facility has increased the surplus of parkland and tennis courts.

As of 2008, the Town contained 11 parks totaling over 12 acres. The largest park, Butler Bay, was included in the total park space as of 2011, which created over 22 acres of gross park space. Additionally there were 3 tennis courts, 2 boat ramps, 1 Neighborhood Park (Windermere Elementary), and 4.67 miles of bicycle paths (Refer to **Table 1.2**).

Accessibility

All Town beaches, parks, and recreational facilities must be accessible to all residents and their guest including those with physical handicaps. Final plans for the Butler Bay recreational facility should include the following guidelines:

- Existing levels of maintenance must be continued or improved;
- All recreational facilities must be barrier free;
- New recreational facilities must not contain any architectural barriers to access;
- The unique character or quality of recreational facilities must be maintained while providing accessibility;
- All public recreational facilities will be clearly identifiable via signs provided by the Town

Connections

Access between recreational assets and other land uses is an important aspect of the comprehensive plan. The Town details transportation connections in several areas of the comprehensive plan with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle connections in both the Transportation Element and Recreational Element. The Recreational Element of the



plan contains a number of policies detailing the expansion and provision of bicycle paths and pedestrian connections and requires provision of both in any new development or redevelopment. The following policies should be considered:

- Parks within the Town Center District (appx. 1,000 feet out from the corner of Main St. and E. 5th Ave.), need to be connected by pedestrian and bicycle pathways; while Butler Bay is not included within this area plans for bicycle parking should be to be included along with pedestrian and bicycle pathways connecting to the Town Center District.
- Orange County is encouraged to provide bikeways in areas adjacent to the Town that will connect with the Town system

Site Design/Safety

Site design and safety considerations are contained in a number of policies within the comprehensive plan and should be taken into consideration within any final plan for Butler Bay site design. Additionally there is a focus that if additional parks are needed or acquired than those parks should be focused on developing activity-based facilities, but only at a size and scope consistent with neighborhood parks. Additional parks are welcome but should not rise to the size or scale of a neighborhood park. This also includes the addition of park space that has previously been held in private ownership but which is above the scope and intensity of a neighborhood park. The Butler Bay recreational facility has been designated as a neighborhood park.

Buffers

The Town stipulates that buffers are required around not only parks but also open spaces, recreation areas, and conservation areas to protect those sites from negative impacts of other encroaching urban development. While there is no set standard for the buffer it is important to ensure that development on recreation land does not directly affect adjoining uses.

Safety

Safety issues the Town incorporates a number of policies geared towards the provision of safety within Town owned parks and recreational areas (Ch. 6; Obj. 1.4).

- Proper lighting has to be provided or the park must be closed at dusk
- Safety rules must be posted at the park
- Appropriate rails or fences
- Children's play areas must be at least 50 feet from the street, parking areas, and vehicular access points and must be separated by a fence
- Maintenance must be continued to ensure that equipment and facilities are kept in a safe, accident free condition



Funding/Cooperation

Objective 1.2 in Chapter 6 of the comprehensive plan details the Town's policies on funding sources for the improvement of Town parks and recreational facilities as well as cooperation with other public and private entities. The Objective states: "The Town shall cooperate with public agencies as well as private enterprise to fund quality improvements and enhancements to existing public parks and recreational facilities."

The following guidelines are provided:

- Coordination for cooperation shall be completed through the recreation committee
- The Town shall encourage the use of innovative site design and development techniques in order to maximize the provision of usable recreational facilities and open space areas at a minimum cost
- Should additional parks be needed or acquired, emphasis shall be placed on developing activity-based facilities, but only at a size and scope consistent with neighborhood parks
- The Windermere Rotary as well as other private individuals and groups will continue to be worked with and assisted to provide additional funding for the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities as well as new facilities and will continue to solicit grants, and donated monies for the improvement and maintenance of it recreation space
- The Town will provide adequate budgets for the improvement and expansion of all existing recreation facilities
- Funding needs will be examined annually in the Capital Improvements Plan

2012/2013 Town of Windermere Final Budget As Adopted

The 2012/2013 Town of Windermere Budget demonstrates even spending and revenue at \$4,079,475. Parks and Recreation is budgeted \$83,275 under Public Works for the operations and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. An additional \$60,700 is budgeted for the parks and recreation committee.

Capital Improvement Plan FY 2012-2013

No funds are dedicated to parks or recreational facilities in the adopted FY 2012-2013 Capital Improvements Plan. There is a total of \$545,513 scheduled in FY12/13 between roads, buildings, public works, and police with the bulk of the funds set aside for vehicle purchases for public works and police.

Recent Town Resolutions and Ordinances Affecting Parks and Open Space

Below are two resolutions and one ordinance that have been passed by the Town council in 2012. The two resolutions are non-binding but deal with health and safety issues and demonstrate the emphasis on the provision of healthy, active lifestyle that includes recreation. The first calls for greater recognition of the harmful effects of smoking, particularly in spaces where groups of children gather such as a park; the second ordinance discusses efforts by the Town to promote safer pedestrian and driver habits. The ordinance, detailed below, deals with the use of golf carts on Town streets in



hopes of promoting safety and additional access of this alternative mode of transportation.

Resolution 2012-04 Smoking in Parks

In February 2012 the Town passed a non-binding resolution to urge the State Legislature to support more power for the Town of Windermere in resolving conflicting resolutions regarding smoking in public places where children gather. Additionally, the resolution calls on all residents to acknowledge and consider the effects of second hand smoke to those around them, specifically children, and to abstain from smoking in locations where children gather. Park design should consider air quality in and around facilities designed for children's use.

Resolution 2012-07 Best Foot Forward

Best Foot Forward is a Central Florida initiative to reduce injury and death of pedestrians through education of drivers/pedestrians, stricter enforcement of rules, and better engineering. In resolution 2012-07 the Town acknowledges that it is beneficial to the community to reduce injuries to pedestrians and to provide for a safe walking environment. Furthermore the Town resolved to enhance crosswalk signage, education of drivers and pedestrians as well as to participate in high-profile enforcement of pedestrian safety measures. The Town commits to provide a "walk able, courteous, livable community."

Ordinance No. 2012-09 Golf Carts

This ordinance sets out rules governing the use of Golf carts may be used on many Town roads with the primary exclusion of Main Street and 6th avenue. There is no direct connection to Butler Bay from town streets without the use of Park avenue which is a county controlled road so drivers on this road must follow the rules set out by the State in 316.2122, F.S. State regulations are much more strict on what types of vehicles may travel along roads with a posted speed limit of less than 30 m.p.h. calling for vehicles to feature additional safety features. The governance of Park Avenue by Orange County could lead to difficulties for those with golf carts not matching the additional state requirements wanting to travel to and from Butler Bay.

Rules Governing Boat Launching Locations

Residents and property owners must obtain and display a park pass for the right to launch and recover watercraft from Town boat ramps; as of November 2012 the yearly fee for this pass was set at \$35.00. There are two Town owned locations where residents with a pass may launch and recover watercraft; all other Town owned property is prohibited from being used as a launching point for boats or crafts. The approved locations are:

- 7th Avenue at Butler Street at the Town park
- Foot of 9th Avenue at Lake Bessie

Parks and Recreation Board Minutes

The actions of the Parks and Recreation Board provide insight on the priorities of the Town and also provide a picture of the current direction that the Town is taking. Below



are discussions after reviewing over a year of minutes from the Parks and Recreation Committee with a focus on tennis and Butler Bay.

Tennis

Discussions and decisions surrounding the Town's tennis courts, both at Butler Bay and Main Street, demonstrate a strong commitment to the provision of well-maintained tennis courts for all of the Town's residents as well as keeping the courts in public hands (non-privatized). In January 2012 the board unanimously supported telling the Town council that they do not support Butler Bay or the tennis courts from becoming a commercial entity. Furthermore the board passed a motion to reimburse the Town for the cost of resurfacing the tennis courts at Butler Bay as long as it is not commercialized.

Butler Bay

Butler Bay is a large item of discussion throughout all of the minutes reviewed. The first minutes available were from July 2011 and BB was a major discussion point, specifically the existing pavilion. Discussion of whether to demolish the existing pavilion occurred within the board until May 2012 when the Town Council decided the building to be demolished. Since the pavilion was demolished the board has sought estimates for a new pavilion in the park; a proposal at \$95,000 was received and distributed to the Town council for budget considerations. Another area that garnered a great amount of discussion was the tennis court, as discussed above. The courts have been resurfaced, a fence was added, and the courts remained public and available to Town residents.

Several other areas of the park were in disrepair prior to the Town acquiring the park besides the tennis courts and pavilion including: the pedestrian bridge to the island, the electrical connections to the park, and fencing. All three of these items have been fixed over the past year with some funds for the pedestrian bridge coming from a private donor. There were concerns over the walkway to the island being ADA compliant and the board was assured that it was compliant by the Town Manager.

Funding for the Park has been discussed over several meetings in several fashions. During the June 2012 meeting it was discussed that the Windermere Rotary was ready to send a check for their \$20,000 commitment to the park; no further information regarding these funds were mentioned. The following month, July 2012, discussions of a possible art fundraiser were discussed and the board agreed to start looking for an artist to provide conceptual rendering of park for fundraiser. Finally the board has been very open to Eagle Scout projects benefiting Town parks, including Butler Bay. An Eagle Scout has proposed a project to build and provide picnic tables for the park. In total there should be about 15 tables, which will be movable so that they can be used both in the island pavilion as well as the concrete pads on the island.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS



Purpose of Public Participation Section

Overview

Methodology

Stakeholder Interviews

Fall Forum

Survey

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PART TWO: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Purpose of Public Participation Section

A multifaceted public participation process has been conducted to gather input on the Town's vision for the Butler Bay Recreational Facility and the wants and needs of the Town's overall recreation and open space network. The scope of the public participation efforts focused on project coordination, civic engagement, stakeholder feedback, a community event coined "The Fall Forum" as well as an online survey. *The intent of the Fall Forum was to ensure the entire community was given a chance to provide their input regarding the open space and parks plan for the entire town as well as specific improvements for Butler Bay.*

The Public Participation Section is structured to identify and describe the public outreach efforts and provide the outcomes of those efforts. The main purpose of this section is to document the results of these public outreach efforts as well as to make the results accessible to the Town's elected officials, staff, citizens, and businesses. Further, the results will provide a foundation for a recommended course of action for the use of Butler Bay and how that facility ties into the overall recreation and open space network of the Town.

Overview

Civic engagement is fundamental in creating successful plans. Faga (2009) states the power of public discussion is now recognized as one of the essentials of planning. "Elected officials and public planners are beginning to value citizens' understanding of and commitment to public planning processes" (page 235). Faga goes on to state that engaging residents within a community throughout the planning process can be valuable for the following reasons:

- ✓ *Knowledge.* The public at times knows more than the planner or consultants do about what will make a project successful. Further, the community members can suggest changes that may improve the project
- ✓ *Transparency.* Community members are more likely to trust the planning process if they are involved in it.
- ✓ *Constituency.* Elected officials are only influential during their times of office, but the public can see long duration projects through implementation
- ✓ *Cost.* Reaching consensus through a public process can reduce the threats of lawsuits and general frustration.

Engaging the Town's residents and business owners will increase the likelihood that the Project will be supported by the community and will create a better Project because of this collaboration. Therefore, engaging the community is critical to the planning process.



Methodology

The participation process for the Project began with the Team attending various board and committee meetings of the Town. The intent was to introduce the Project, state the goals of the Project and establish a dialogue. The Team attended the following:

- Town Council, September 11, 2012
- Design Review Board, September 18, 2012
- Parks and Recreation Committee, October 25, 2012

In order to gather as much public input into the Project, a multifaceted public outreach approach was conducted. The goal was to reach as diverse an audience as the scope of the Project would allow. After discussion with the Town's staff and various boards and committees the following outreach mechanism were utilized:

- *Stakeholder Interviews.* Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders.
- *Visioning Session.* A community-wide event coined the "Fall Forum" was promoted and held with the intent to gain direction for the use of Butler Bay Recreational Facility and overall recreational and open space network
- *Community Survey.* A survey was conducted from December 30th to January 18th, 2013 to capture additional community feedback from individuals who were unable to attend the "Fall Forum" event. The intent behind providing this additional outlet is to allow for additional feedback on the direction for the use of Butler Bay Recreational Facility.

The outreach efforts and the results of these efforts are described and documented in the ensuing subsections.

Stakeholder Interviews

Purpose

As a part of the public participation and outreach efforts, key stakeholders were identified. A stakeholder is a person or a group of people who have a vested interest in the project. The Team asked each board or committee for a list of key stakeholders that the Team could interview. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews is to gather important information in a personalized format from key users and to communicate the Town's desire to work with the user groups to build consensus on an open space, parks, and recreation plan.

The stakeholders were asked a series of questions in order to solicit information to be used for developing a recommended implementation and action plan for the Project. The Team arranged the interview locations and conducted the interviews. Below is the list of the stakeholders that were interviewed:

- ✓ *Donna Steele:* Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee



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- ✓ *Jim O'Brien*: Councilman; Liaison to the Parks and Recreation Committee and Long Range Planning Committee
 - ✓ *Theresa Myers*: Chair of the Tree Board
 - ✓ *Richard Gonzalez*: Councilman; Liaison to the Tree Board
 - ✓ *Sergio Duarte*: Senior Environmental Specialist for Orange County

Results of the Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews identified specific themes that were helpful in determining the appropriate public participation mechanism for the Project. The information gathered through the interviews provided a foundation for the community-wide visioning event. The interviews provided the Team with background information that helped determine the framework for the community. The following themes were identified in the stakeholder interviews:

- *Community Engagement and Volunteerism*
 - *Citizen efficacy*: The Town's residents are knowledgeable of issues within the Town
 - *Town Pride*: There is a strong sense of pride within the community.
 - *Volunteerism*: The residents actively volunteer for numerous Town activities
- *Environmental Stewardship*
 - *Awareness*: The Town's residents are environmentally conscientious and place a high value on the environment
 - *Trees*: The Town has an avid history of planting and preserving native trees
- *Value Recreation*
 - *Parks and Greenspace*: The Town places a high value on its parks, recreation amenities, and greenspace
 - *Connectivity*: The Town's residents want connectivity of the Butler Bay Recreational Facility with the Town's downtown and other parks and recreation areas
- *Successful Outreach*
 - *Town Newsletter*: The Town's Newsletter has been a successful avenue for spreading the word on community events
 - *Charettes*: Planning charettes have been a successful way of engaging the citizens and various boards and committees in the past
- *Limitations*
 - *Mapping*. The Town lacks a GIS system and does not have accurate, up-to-date maps

A transcript of the stakeholder interviews is located in **Appendix B** of this report.

