

City of Venice – City-Wide Elements - Open Space



Open Space is a broad-based Element that includes those areas of the City encompassing its public spaces, recreational areas, and conservation areas, natural resources, protected species and habitats. Open Space also includes addressing the City's Coastal High Hazard Areas (CHHA). This Element also includes provisions for the coordination of Open Spaces necessary to create and maintain local and regional systems. The City has defined open space as either functional or conservation

Functional Open Spaces

Vision OS-V 1 – The City of Venice shall effectively preserve, protect, maintain, manage and use open space.
(New)

Intent OS-I 1.1 – Functional Open Spaces.

The City shall use its Functional Open Spaces to provide parks and recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors. (New)

Strategy OS-S 1.1.1 – Functional Open Spaces - Defined

Functional open spaces include: parks (active and passive), public outdoor areas, golf courses, sports fields, playgrounds, public beaches, marinas, lakes, plazas, courtyards, trails, sport facilities, playgrounds, and other areas that meet the recreational, social, and leisure needs of the community. It is important to acknowledge there may be facilities that provide both functional and conservation activities e.g. walking trails around water retention facilities. (Rev. Parks Policy 2.2)

Strategy OS-S 1.1.2 – Functional Open Space Level of Service

The City's adopted Level of Service (LOS) Standard is: **7 acres of functional open space for each 1,000 functional population.** The Functional Open Space Level of Service shall be met with facilities open to the public without admission fee and is open during the same primary operating hours as City parks. All new residential development shall be required to provide the appropriate amount of functional open space to maintain the adopted LOS standard.

(Rev. Parks Policy 2.1)

Strategy OS-S 1.1.3 – Public Parks

The City shall manage its Public Parks based on the Venice Parks System Master Plan as may be updated. The Parks System Master Plan shall be consistent with the Level of Service Standard and provide additional information including:

- A. Identification and maintenance of existing facilities.
- B. Development of new facilities



- C. Develop criteria for the prioritization of funding for the acquisition, development and enhancement of public parks, with an emphasis on existing parks to facilitate projects to maintain adopted LOS standards for the Capital Improvement Schedule (CIS).

(New, partially revised Parks Policy 2.5)

Strategy OS-S 1.1.4 – Mixed Use Residential District Requirements

The City shall require open space components of Mixed-Use Residential designated areas. Within the Land Development Code, the City shall require:

- a. Functional open spaces
 - a. Amenities/recreation
 - b. Design characteristics consistent with the architectural character and landscape features
 - i. Type and function of resources.
 - ii. Location of resources in relationship to other amenities, residential dwelling units, and park or public space facilities both within the development and the surrounding area.
 - iii. Resource plan that incorporates the facility design, types, size, location, and sidewalk access, into an overall development plan. Issues to be addressed by this plan include mobility features, pedestrian accessibility and connectivity, architectural standards, and landscaping/hardscaping components.
 - c. Accessibility to open spaces.
- b. Conservation open spaces.
 - a. Design characteristics consistent with the landscape features.
 - b. Conservation initiatives.
 - c. Environmental considerations.
 - d. Accessibility to open spaces.
- c. Wildlife corridors and interconnectivity.

(New, in part revised/combined Parks Policies 2.6, 1.3, 1.9)

OS-S 1.1.5 – Planning Consistency

The City shall maintain consistency among the Comprehensive Plan, the Venice Parks System Master Plan, to address specific components of the City's parks system. *(New)*

OS-S 1.1.6 – Park and Public Space Connectivity

The City shall connect parks and public spaces through pedestrian/bike access ways including linear parks, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails, blueways (such as kayak trails), and greenways. *(Rev. Parks Policy 1.4)*

OS-S 1.1.7 – Universal Design



The City shall develop recreational facilities that are universally accessible to all residents. Update existing facilities when new construction is planned, or when renovations are undertaken to, be compliant with new City and federal regulations as they come into effect. *(New)*

OS-S 1.1.8 – Funding

The City shall pursue grants, foundations, and other public/private funding sources for the development, expansion, and maintenance of park and public space resources. *(Rel. Parks Policy 2.8)*

Conservation Open Spaces

Intent OS 1.2 – Conservation Open Spaces.

The City shall use its Conservation Open to provide conserved open space for its residents and visitors. *(New)*

Strategy OS 1.2.1 – Conservation Open Space - Defined

Conservation Open Space includes: protected open spaces (wetland, wetland buffers, coastal and riverine habitats), preserves, native habitats including those of endangered or threatened species or species of special concern, wildlife corridors; natural lands owned and managed by the City, Sarasota County, State (i.e., FDEP, SWFWMD) or Federal Agency that do not qualify as Open Space (Functional) defined above; rivers, lakes, and other surface waters, aquifer recharge areas. Conservation Open Spaces are envisioned to enhance the quality of the environment by preserving native vegetation that helps to reduce greenhouse gas/carbon emissions, positively impacting climate change. It is important to acknowledge there may be facilities that provide both functional and conservation activities e.g. walking trails around water retention facilities. *(Rev. Parks Objective 1, partial)*

Strategy OS 1.2.2 – Environmental Impact Mitigation

The City shall utilize the Land Development Code and review processes to ensure that development projects evaluate potential environmental impacts and provide mitigation for negative impacts. Development shall not adversely impact any threatened or endangered species of concern without appropriate permitting and/or mitigation. *(Rev. Conservation Policy 1.2)*

Wetlands

Intent OS 1.3 – Wetlands.

The City shall implement appropriate strategies to protect its wetlands, wetland buffers, and aquifer recharge areas. *(New)*

Strategy OS 1.3.1 – Wetland and Aquifer Recharge Areas Protection

The City shall protect its groundwater sources, particularly in wetland and aquifer recharge areas, through its Land Development Code and review processes by: *(Rev. Conservation Policy 1.10)*



- A. Establish site plan requirements to ensure development evaluate natural drainage features, man-made drainage structures, and impact to wetland and aquifer recharge areas.
- B. Development shall first avoid impact to wetlands and aquifer recharge areas.
- C. When impacts to wetlands and aquifer recharge areas are unavoidable, require development to minimize impact and then mitigate for impacts to wetlands and aquifer recharge areas.
- D. Limit activities/uses that are known to adversely impact such areas.
- E. Restore wetlands (where feasible) in connection with new development.
- F. Maintain the natural flow of water within and through contiguous.
- G. Maintain existing vegetation to serve as buffers to protect the function and values of the wetlands from the adverse impacts of adjacent development.
- H. Require any wetland mitigation be based upon the most current state-approved methodology.
- I. Prohibit the dredging, filling, or disturbing wetlands and wetland habitats in any manner that diminishes their natural functions, unless appropriate mitigation practices are established in coordination with and approved by local, regional, state, and federal agencies.
- J. Coordinate with Sarasota County, Federal and State review agencies on wetland designation, mitigation policies, and regulations.

Strategy OS 1.3.2 – Wetland Encroachments

The City shall require development to identify and delineate wetland boundaries with final wetland delineations to be reviewed and approved by the applicable federal and state review agencies. Wetlands of 20 acres or more shall require structures to be located outside of wetlands and wetland buffers except as provided below. Such exceptions are applicable only when the land use designation on the property permits the development of land use activity listed below; site characteristics are such that wetland impacts cannot be avoided, the impacts are limited to the minimum necessary to allow the permitted use of the property; and the site development or use complies with federal and state review agencies for permitting and mitigation. (*Prev. Conservation Policy 3.14*)

- A. Residential lots of record existing on or before the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan which does not contain sufficient uplands to permit development of a residence without encroaching into wetlands, may be developed with one residential dwelling.
- B. Resource-based recreational facilities such as trails, boardwalks, piers, and boat ramps.
- C. Private water-related facilities, such as boathouses, docks and bulkheads.
- D. Essential public services, access roads and appurtenant structures.

Native Habitats, Conservation Lands, and Natural Resources

Intent OS 1.4 – Native Habitats, Conservation Lands, and Natural Resources.

The City recognizes the importance of its native lands and habitats and shall implement preservation strategies that protect native habitats, conserve environmental lands and natural resources, and minimize environmental pollution, and increase public awareness of the harmful effects of non-native species. (*Rev. Conservation Objective 3*)



Strategy OS 1.4.1 – Native Habitats Inventory and Assessment

The City will coordinate with Sarasota County to inventory and assess significant native habitat remaining within the City limits. (*Rev. Conservation Policy 1.6*)

The City will also require development and redevelopment to determine the existence of any significant native habitats and such information will be added to the inventory.

Strategy OS 1.4.2 – Protection of Native Habitats

The City shall protect significant native habitats through its land development code and review process including the following: (*Rev. Conservation Policy 1.5*)

- A. Preserve existing native vegetation and natural areas including threatened native habitats
- B. Encourage development forms that provide protection of native habitats such as clustered development and alternative roadway designs (i.e., reduced rights-of-way) where feasible.
- C. Development shall first avoid impact to native habitats.
- D. Mitigate adverse impacts whenever areas of native habitats are involved in the development of property.
- E. Require development to first impact lower quality habitats and resources before impacts to higher quality habitats and resources are considered and used.
- F. Native habitat shall be used whenever possible to fulfill open space requirements.

Strategy OS 1.4.3 – Endangered or Threatened Species

The City shall protect threatened or endangered native species by requiring that proposed new development and redevelopment (where applicable) be examined for location of Listed Species. The City through its Land Development Code and review processes will:

- A. Coordinate with Sarasota County, Federal, and State agencies for the identification and protection of endangered and threatened species.
- B. Require applicants to consult with the appropriate agencies, to use recognized sampling techniques to identify listed species, and to provide documentation of such coordination and compliance prior to City approval to conduct any activities that could disturb listed species or their habitat.
 - 1. If endangered or threatened species, or species of special concern are found, such species' habitat shall be identified on the proposed site plan and a plan for mitigation shall be discussed in the site plan narrative.
 - 2. Such information shall be addressed through the project staff report.
- C. Coordinate with Sarasota County Environmental Services' Resource Protection Programs.
- D. Promote connectivity and minimize habitat fragmentation.

Strategy OS 1.4.4 – Non-Native Invasive Species

As financially feasible, prevent the spread of non-native invasive vegetation, wildlife, insects, and other species and protect the health and well-being of the native environment through: (*Rev. Conservation Policy 3.6*)



- A. Removal of existing non-native invasive species in coordination with City initiated work projects and replacement with native Florida plant species.
- B. Prohibition of the use of non-native invasive species.
- C. Removal of non-native invasive species through conditions of approval for site and development review. Removal of non-native invasive species shall be maintained in perpetuity.
- D. Public awareness about the harmful impacts of non-native species into the environment.
- E. Regional, state, and federal partnerships on efforts to eradicate invasive species.

Unique Habitats

Intent OS 1.5 Unique Habitats *(New)*

The City recognizes the importance of its unique habitats and shall implement preservation strategies that protect and conserve their environments consistent with applicable laws and regulations

Strategy OS 1.5.1– Marine Habitats

The City shall partner with local, regional, state, and federal marine environmental agencies to maintain or increase the amount of native marine habitats, particularly those located within the Coastal Planning Area by: *(Prev. Conservation Policy 3.8)*

- A. Retain and as possible reestablish marine habitats.
- B. Maintain the City's natural shorelines.
- C. Prevent the intrusion of invasive species which provide inferior habitat.
- D. Protect and replenishing (where feasible) mangrove habitats.
- E. Provide water quality treatment, as possible, to minimize runoff pollutants before they enter water bodies with the City.

Strategy OS 1.5.2 – Manatee Habitat Protection Zones

The City shall coordinate with Sarasota County, West Coast Inland Navigation District, and other state and federal agencies to ensure that areas of critical manatee habitat are posted and maintained as manatee protection zones pursuant to state law. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 3.9)*

- A. New and expanded motorized boating facilities shall not be located in or adjacent to areas of significant manatee habitat.
- B. New and expanded motorized boating facilities shall not adversely impact the manatee.

Strategy OS 1.5.3 – Sea Turtle Habitats

The City, through its Land Development Regulations, shall protect sensitive sea turtle habitats and coordinate with Sarasota County, Mote Marine Laboratory, and other public and private environmental organizations to ensure that: *(Prev. Conservation Policy 3.10)*

- A. Nests are identified, monitored, and protected.
- B. Nest protection devices are installed and maintained.



- C. Public is made aware of dangers to sea turtle nesting habitats through appropriate education programs.
- D. Directional and turtle friendly lighting is utilized during nesting season.

Strategy OS 1.5.4 – Beach and Dune Habitats

Maintain, restore, and preserve the health of beach and dune natural habitats. Beach area projects should include continuing, maintaining, and expanding the City's efforts to: *(Prev. Conservation Policy 3.11)*

- A. Re-nourish beach areas and natural shore features
- B. Provide dune walkovers for pedestrian traffic.
- C. Prohibit vehicular traffic on all beach areas.
- D. Protection of sea turtle habitats and nest monitoring.
- E. Restore and preserve the dune line by planting appropriate coastal vegetation.

Strategy OS 1.5.5 – Florida Scrub-Jay, Gopher Tortoise, and Other Sensitive Habitats

The City shall continue to coordinate with Sarasota County on the implementation of a county-wide Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), including scrub-jay, gopher tortoise, and other sensitive habitats. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 3.12)*

Open Space Corridors

Intent OS 1.6 – Open Space Corridors.

The City will establish open space corridors to facilitate the movement of people and wildlife. *(Rev. Conservation Objective 2)*

Strategy OS 1.6.1 – Open Space Corridors - Defined

The City's open space corridors shall provide habitat for wildlife that are able to live within urban development areas and coexist with human populations. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 2.2)*

Strategy OS 1.6.2 – Open Space Corridor System

Through the land development review process, the City shall continue to identify opportunities to: *(New, Rev. Conservation Policy 2.3 and Policy 12.4)*

- A. Create an interconnected open space corridor system that links existing open spaces, greenways, public right of ways, and trails including new open space corridors.
- B. Provide connections from adjacent development to existing or planned open space corridors where appropriate.
- C. Connect parks and civic resources where feasible (i.e., Community Center).
- D. Provide low-impact natural activities such as walking trails, benches, picnic areas, and canoe launches.
- E. Connect the City and Sarasota County's open space corridors where feasible.
- F. Require that open space corridors minimize the fragmentation of significant wildlife habitat.



Corridors widths shall be defined based on their targeted habitat/species; however, are generally considered to be a minimum of 25 feet.

Strategy OS 1.6.3 – Open Space Crossings

Road construction, reconstruction or other similar improvements encroaching or crossing an open space corridor shall incorporate crossing design features and where appropriate and feasible, provide for alternative roadway design standards.

Crossings shall be designed in accordance with the recommendations of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Mining Considerations

Intent OS 1.7 Mining Considerations

Minimize potential negative impacts from mining activities. *(New)*

Strategy OS 1.7.1 – Mining Regulatory Oversight

The City shall coordinate with local, regional, state, and federal mining regulatory agencies to ensure that new and existing mining operations meet all governmental requirements. Fugitive dust, noise, illumination, and truck traffic should be minimized to avoid unnecessary impacts to abutting or nearby properties. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 1.15)*

Strategy OS 1.7.2 – Reclamation Plan

Upon discontinuation of mining activity, the City shall require mining operations to produce a reclamation plan to eliminate or mitigate post-mining environmental concerns. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 1.16)*

Coastal Waterway Conservation and Protection

Intent OS 1.8 – Coastal Waterway Priorities.

The City shall develop strategies in the Land Development Code for protecting and preserving marine/beach access, water-based facilities, and natural resources. *(Prev. Coastal Objective 1)*

Strategy OS 1.8.1 – Natural Shoreline Systems

The City shall promote natural shoreline systems by utilizing the site and development process to: *(Previous Objective 3.12)*

- A. Discourage the hardening of the Gulf of Mexico and other natural waterway shorelines. This would include requiring an environmental impact study and a special City Council variance for any sea wall construction.
- B. Encourage the softening of the shorelines.
- C. Promote the installation of native vegetation and removal of existing hardening structures.



Strategy OS 1.8.2 – Docks, Marinas, and Boat Ramps

The City shall require that public docks, marinas, and boat ramps shall be preserved and allowed where appropriate. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 1.2)*

Strategy OS 1.8.3 – Public Access to Waterfront Areas

The City shall encourage developers to provide public waterfront access adjacent to the waterfront. Such access may include walkways, bikeways, water taxis, canoeing/kayaking, public spaces, dining areas, and the like. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 1.3)*

Strategy OS 1.8.4 – Conservation Easements

The City shall work with private property owners to implement conservation easements to protect sensitive natural resources such as mangroves, dune systems, and coastal tidal areas. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 1.4)*

Strategy OS 1.8.5 – Florida Native Vegetation and Features

The City shall promote the use of native Florida vegetation and protection of natural features in coastal and waterfront development. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 1.5)*

Strategy OS 1.8.6 – Publicly Owned Lands

The City shall identify opportunities to increase public ownership of the City's coastal and waterfront resources and to utilize such resources to improve the City's quality of life and community character and to preserve and protect natural resources and sensitive habitats. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 1.7)*

Strategy OS 1.8.7 – Harbor Management Plan

The City shall consider developing and implementing a Harbor Management Plan to expand and enhance boating and protect marine resources in Roberts Bay and surrounding areas. The plan should address: *(Prev. Coastal Policy 4.6)*

- A. Navigation on the City's waterways.
- B. Boating accessibility.
- C. Improved boating facilities at Higel Park.
- D. Roberts Bay mooring field.
- E. Economic considerations of transient boaters.
- F. Hurricane safe harbor.
- G. Identification, protection and restoration of seagrass beds and marine ecosystems.

Strategy OS 1.8.8 – Marine and Boating Facilities

Utilize the Land Development Code review process to require that existing and new marine and boating facilities receive and maintain the Florida Clean Marina designation from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. *Prev. Coastal Policy 4.9)*



Strategy OS 1.8.9 – Boat Discharge

Utilize the marine police patrol to prevent boats from discharging in City waterways in order to protect the natural habitats and environmental conditions. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 4.10)*

Strategy OS 1.8.10 – Fill and Dredging Activities

Fill and dredging activities shall comply with all applicable local, state and federal requirements. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 4.11)*

Conservation Design and Development Considerations

Intent OS 1.9 Conservation Design and Development Considerations

Implement design and development strategies in the City's Land Development Code and review processes that reduce the negative effects of development on water, energy, natural resources, global and climate impact.

Strategy OS 1.9.1 – Land Development Code Considerations

The Land Development Code and review processes will include the following conservation design and development considerations:

1. Green Building Strategies.
2. Tree Resources.
3. Landscaping.
4. Low impact site and development practices.
5. Water and groundwater resource protection and conservation.
6. Natural drainage channel protection.
7. Location, control, and monitoring of pollutants and hazardous substances.
8. Runoff filtration and treatment.
9. Impervious surfaces.

Interagency Coordination

Intent OS 1.10 – Interagency Coordination.

The City shall utilize intergovernmental partnerships to expand the City's ability to protect, enhance, and maintain its open spaces and natural resources including coastal areas and those areas included in this Element. This coordination extends to the siting, land acquisition, co-location, programming design, and construction opportunities of functional and conservation open spaces. *(New; Rev. Parks Objective 3 and Conservation Objective 4)*

Strategy OS 1.10.1 – Coordinated Management

The City shall coordinate with Sarasota County to maintain and extend interlocal agreements concerning the operation and maintenance of new parks and preservation of sensitive habitats within the City. *(Prev. Parks Policy 3.1)*



Strategy OS 1.10.2 – Coordinated Functional Open Space Development

The City shall coordinate with Sarasota County to ensure that functional open spaces including parks and recreational facilities are available and maintained to accommodate the City's growth and demand for parks and public spaces consistent with the City of Venice Parks Master Plan and the Sarasota County Parks Master Plan. *(Prev. Parks Policy 3.2; Revised)*

Strategy OS 1.10.3 – Shared Facilities Cooperative Agreements

The City shall continue to develop cooperative agreements with private developments, recreational organizations, and other county-based organizations for the use, promotion, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities by the community-at-large. *(Prev. Parks Policy 3.3)*

Strategy OS 1.10.4 – Resource Co-location

Coordinate with local, regional, and state organizations, including the Sarasota School Board on the collocation, siting, and design of compatible public resources, including Functional and Conservation Open Spaces. *(Revised; Prev. Parks Policy 3.5)*

Strategy OS 1.10.5 – Regional Linear Park System

Participate with local, regional, and state organizations in the development and maintenance of a regional linear park system that includes trails, bikeways, footpaths, blueways (such as kayak trails), and sidewalks. Coordinate such efforts with the Sarasota County Master Trail Program and the Venice Parks System Master Plan. *(Prev. Parks Policy 3.4)*

Strategy OS 1.10.6 – Resource Funding

The City shall continue to pursue funding from county, regional, state, or federal sources to maintain the marine areas of the City. Specific areas in need of funding include: *(Prev. Coastal Policy 5.10)*

- A. Beach re-nourishment.
- B. Revegetation of the dune system.
- C. Outfall maintenance.
- D. Acquisition of potential sites for public coastal and waterfront access.
- E. Marine facilities.

Strategy OS 1.10.7 – Myakka River Coordination

Participate as a member of the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council to address issues related to the Myakka River Area, per the Myakka River Wild and Scenic Designation and Preservation Act, Section 258.501, F.S. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 5.9)*

Strategy OS 1.10.8 – Air Quality

The City shall support all local, state, and federal efforts to maintain a comprehensive air quality monitoring and analysis program including the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement and Florida's Energy and Climate Change Action Plan. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 4.4)*



Strategy OS 1.10.9 – Emergency Water Conservation

The City shall continue to implement emergency water conservation practices in accordance with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Such directives include the implementation of water management plans and emergency conservation directives. *(Prev. Conservation Policy 4.5)*

Strategy OS 1.10.10 – Estuarine Environment

The City shall continue to coordinate with the local, regional, state, and federal entities for the protection of the estuarine environment and water quality. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 5.1)*

Strategy OS 1.10.11 – National Estuary Program Partnerships

The City will continue to coordinate with the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program and the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program on the development and implementation of regional environmental water policies and programs. *(Prev. Coastal Policy 5.8)*

Strategy OS 1.10.12 – Boating Use Coordination

The City will continue to coordinate the boating use of Venice's waterways with local, regional, state, and federal entities. Issues to be addressed include: *(Prev. Coastal Policy 5.3)*

- A. Implementation of navigational systems.
- B. Maintenance and enforcement of manatee protection zones.
- C. Enforcement of no wake areas.
- D. Public safety and boating laws.

Strategy OS 1.10.13 – Red Tide Mitigation

Coordinate with local, regional, and State organizations to reduce red tide impacts on coastal communities. Such organizations include Sarasota County and the Red Tide Alliance of the Florida Marine Research Institute, Mote Marine Laboratory, the Florida Department of Health, and Solutions to Avoid Red Tide (START). *(Prev. Coastal Policy 5.7)*

Strategy OS 1.10.14 – JPA/ILSBA Planning Areas.

The City shall continue to review and implement the environmental standards set forth in the Joint Planning and Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (JPA/ILSBA) between the City of Venice and Sarasota County. *(New)*

