

1.2 PLANNING DOCUMENT REVIEW

Three planning documents were reviewed to inform the Parks and Recreation Master Plan effort:

1. **2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan Update**
2. **Lowndes County Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) (2015)**
3. **Valdosta-Lowndes County Comprehensive Parks + Recreation Master Plan (2013)**

Below is key information derived from each.

1. 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan Update

The County's Comprehensive Plan outlines how community goals related to land use, transportation, and housing will be accomplished through a series of projects and policies. Major issues particularly relevant to formulation of the CPRMP include:

- Connecting existing and new development through the improvement and augmentation of the pedestrian/bicycling environment;
- Integrating green/open space into new and existing development;
- Controlling growth to safeguard rural and agricultural areas/character;
- Educating citizens about recreation opportunities and natural processes, and educating developers about incentives available; and
- The need for new recreation facilities such as a swimming pool, entertainment venue, and hiking/biking trails, and greater recreational amenities in underserved areas.

Section VIII. Land Use Element describes character areas across the Greater Lowndes Community, intended to serve as guidance for future land use and development. Two character areas directly relate to this Master Plan: Linear Greenspace and Trails (totaling 2,429 acres in 2016) and Park/Recreation/Conservation Area (35,277 acres in 2016):

- **Linear Greenspace and Trails** are protected areas of open space for pedestrians and bicyclists, linking ecological, cultural, and recreational amenities. Their purpose is to promote and conserve natural resources as well as provide alternative transportation options. Based on Character Area maps, these appear to only extend north-south in the Valdosta area.
- **Park/Recreation/Conservation Areas** are undeveloped lands with significant natural features. These areas should be promoted for passive-use tourism and universally designed recreational destinations. Rural character in these areas should be maintained, such as through implementing conservation easements. These areas appear in many communities across the county, often branching out from developed areas into rural agricultural land.

Strategies in the Land Use Element also discuss the need for:

- Creating connections from most all Character Areas (including Community, Downtown, Institutional, Neighborhood, and Regional Activity Centers and all Residential Areas) to regional networks of greenspace and trails, available to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians for both tourism and recreational purposes.