

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-

**A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE OF PINECREST,
FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A LAND ACQUISITION
POLICY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

WHEREAS, the Village Council wishes to enact a policy establishing a land acquisition policy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF PINECREST, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. That the Village Council hereby adopts the attached Land Acquisition Policy.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 13th day of June, 2023.

Joseph M. Corradino, Mayor

Attest:

Priscilla Torres, CMC
Village Clerk

Approved as to Form and Legal Sufficiency:

Mitchell Bierman
Village Attorney

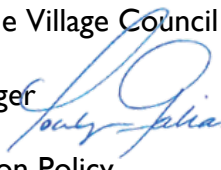
Motion by:
Second by:

Vote:



Yocelyn Galiano, ICMA-CM
Village Manager
manager@pinecrest-fl.gov

MEMORANDUM
Office of the Village Manager

DATE: June 6, 2023
TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the Village Council
FROM: Yocelyn Galiano, ICMA-CM, Village Manager 
RE: Pinecrest Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy

I hereby respectfully recommend Village Council adopt the attached resolution adopting the Pinecrest Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy. This document outlines Village Council's policy about how it will acquire land for parks, open space and infrastructure. The policy aims to set the overarching framework for acquiring new land recognizing the need for detailed planning to identify opportunities to meet current and future community needs.

Following Village Council's input as provided at its May regular meeting, Exhibit A which details the criteria that will be used in the short-term for acquisition of land was added to the policy document.

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PINECREST PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Land acquisition plays a key role in achieving the vision for Pinecrest to be a highly livable community with an excellent government, stable finances, safe streets, outstanding recreation facilities and infrastructure, a high-quality residential character with lush streetscape, excellent schools, valuable cultural assets, and sustainable operations and living, with leadership which progressively enhances opportunities for citizen interaction and participation. Pinecrest's parks, open space and infrastructure network has far-reaching social, environmental, economic and cultural benefits and it is Village Council's intent to continuously review opportunities for acquisition of land to ensure Pinecrest residents can continue to enjoy these benefits, now and into the future.

This document outlines Village Council's policy about how it will acquire land for parks, open space and infrastructure. The policy aims to set the overarching framework for acquiring new land recognizing the need for detailed planning to identify opportunities to meet current and future community needs as identified in the Comprehensive Development Master Plan.

Pinecrest acquires land for a wide variety of reasons and purposes. These can range from active parks that provide opportunity for athletic fields and sports programs to infrastructure locations that improve municipal services to small pocket parks that provide intimate settings for interaction with nature. The Land Acquisition Policy covers:

- Why Pinecrest acquires land for parks, open space and infrastructure needs
- The policies and legislation that influence Village Council acquiring land
- The methods Pinecrest uses to fund and acquire land
- How Village Council will assess whether land should be acquired for new parks, open space or infrastructure needs
- How opportunities to acquire land are prioritized
- When Village Council will consider disposing land assets

ACQUIRING LAND

The Municipal Home Rule Powers Act (Ch. 166, F. S.) grants to municipalities broad home rule powers. Section 166.021(1) states: "As provided in s. 2(b), Art. VIII of the State Constitution, municipalities shall have the governmental, corporate, and proprietary powers to enable them to conduct municipal government, perform municipal functions, and render municipal services, and may exercise any power for municipal purposes, except when expressly prohibited by law." Under this broad grant of powers, municipalities have the power and authority to acquire and dispose of real property or interest therein for municipal purposes, so long as such method of acquisition and disposal of municipal real property is for a valid municipal purpose and is not expressly prohibited by law.

Whether or not such method of acquisition and disposition of municipal real property is for a valid municipal purpose and in the best interest of the Village is a determination that the Village Council must make, based upon such considerations as the need of the property for future municipal use, the consideration, and the benefits to insure to the Village from the discharge of the reversionary or other

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lesser interests and rights in and restrictions on the use of such property. Such determinations involve factual and policy considerations and mixed questions of law and fact which are within the purview of the Village Council to make and resolve. So long as the village does not act arbitrarily, unreasonably, or in bad faith, its decision to acquire or dispose of real property or interest therein, is conclusive.

In Pinecrest, land acquisition is generally guided by the Village's Comprehensive Development Master Plan, 5-year Strategic Plan and other supporting plans (i.e. Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Stormwater Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan).

For example, the Comprehensive Development Master Plan has the following Objectives and Policies that apply to acquisition of land for Village use:

OBJECTIVE 1-1.4: ACCOMMODATE PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC SERVICES states: "... the Village shall use the capital improvement program and budget process to consider advance acquisition of land required to provide recreation, open space, and related public benefits ..."

OBJECTIVE 1-1.6: ACQUISITION OF LAND TO FURTHER THE FUNCTION AND FORM OF THE VILLAGE states: "The Village shall acquire land necessary for fulfilling vital Village functions. The land acquisitions shall be strategically located in order to maximize accessibility to populations served. Development of the acquired sites shall be consistent with specific plans designed to:

- *Achieve cost efficiency;*
- *Fulfill the spatial and functional needs of the intended uses;*
- *Enhance the appearance of the Village; and*
- *Establish highly visible Village focal points which reinforce a sense of community."*

Policy 1-1.6.3: Land Acquisition. Investigate fiscally responsible land acquisition opportunities that would, among other things, allow for the potential creation of pocket parks compatible with the surrounding area; provide additional play fields; provide for land and resource conservation; and/or create water access opportunities for recreational purposes.

Policy 1-2.5.1: Public and Private Parks and Recreation Facilities (PR) states: "... The Village shall monitor the need for additional land area for public and private parks and recreation facilities to meet the changing needs of the Village."

Policy 4-1.2.2: Public Facility Evaluation Criteria. Proposed capital improvement projects shall be evaluated and ranked according to the following guidelines:

- *Protect public health and safety.*
- *Fulfill the Village legal commitment to provide facilities and services.*
- *Preserve or achieve full use of existing facilities.*
- *Increases efficiency of existing facilities.*
- *Prevents or reduces future improvement costs.*
- *Prevents multiple disruptions to the same right-of-way corridor.*
- *Promotes the accommodation strategy for Adaptation Action Areas.*
- *Provides service to developed areas lacking full service or promotes in-fill development.*

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- *Represents a logical extension of facilities and services in a manner consistent with future Land Use Element goals, objectives and policies, including the Future Land Use Map.*

Policy 6-1.1.1: Level of Service Standards for Parks and Recreation Facilities. The Village shall promote development of undeveloped and underdeveloped park land resources identified in the recreation and open space inventory and analysis contained in the Comprehensive Plan: Data Inventory and Analysis. The park development plans shall be programmed and scheduled in the capital improvement program and budget. The Village shall adopt a level of service standard for recreation sites of 3 acres per 1,000 population.

Policy 6-1.1.8: Designation or Acquisition of Natural Reservations. "Natural reservations" are areas designated for conservation purposes, and operated by contractual agreement with or managed by a federal, state, regional or local government or nonprofit agency; lands purchased under the Florida Communities Trust; sanctuaries and preserves; and monuments, archaeological sites, and historic sites. As such land, facility and improvement needs are identified, the Village shall investigate the potential of funding such conservation programs through use of public or private not-for-profit agency resources.

The 2023 Strategic Plan also states the following in terms of potential future land acquisition initiatives:

Objective 4.6 - Create an Open Space Acquisition policy that would provide more unprogrammed greenspace for residents.

And finally, with regard to land acquisition, the 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified the following strategic priority action items:

- E. Strategic land acquisition program to target and secure land acquisition opportunities, particularly opportunities larger than three (3) acres in size and/or located within the central area of the Village.*
- F. Secure targeted surplus or other Village-owned properties and strategically acquire adjacent lands or trade with other properties to amalgamate contiguous land holdings that can be used for future parks.*

The benefits of parks and open space, and how they contribute to quality of life, are summarized in the diagram below:



People do not need to visit a park or open space to enjoy all of these benefits. While people may rarely visit or ‘use’ a park or open space, they are an important part of what defines the way Pinecrest looks and feels as a place. Many people also value just knowing that parks and open space exist, and that they are protected for current and future generations to enjoy.

Some of the ways the Village’s Comprehensive Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan anticipate Pinecrest will change over the next 30 years will influence the types of parks and open space the Village will need and the land that Village Council will need to acquire. These include:

- Pinecrest is poised for a projected modest growth rate of 2.5% by 2026.
- Growth is not guaranteed due to redevelopment needs, however population growth will likely occur through higher densities along Pinecrest Parkway (US 1), increasing urban lifestyle needs such as access to open space.
- Miami-Dade TPO projects a 2045 population of 24,500 for the Village while the Village’s Comprehensive Master Plan identifies a 2030 population of 21,772.
- Four existing parks along Pinecrest Parkway are within in 1/4 mile or 5-minute walk of future bus rapid transit (BRT) stations.
- Pinecrest has a higher than state average percent of residents age 45-64 and youth age 5-24, and a significantly lower than average number of residents age 25-44 and children under age 5.
- The next ten (10) years will likely bring an increased need for senior programs.
- The Village’s current standard and existing measurement of acreage per 1,000 residents is slightly lower than peers.
- Facilities such as basketball courts and canoe/kayak launch are needed based on state standards.
- Access to neighborhood park facilities is lacking in a large area of central Pinecrest from SW 88th Street to SW 136th Street along SW 67th and SW 62 Avenues.

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SCOPE OF POLICY

Pinecrest has a network of parks and open space made up of wide variety of land holdings that include:

- Local parks
- Botanical sites
- Nature preserves
- Streets and civic space
- Shared Use Paths

Pinecrest is not the only provider of parks and open space in the area. The Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department, sports clubs, schools and other private landowners play an important role in providing parks and open space for the public to enjoy. While the Village Council seeks to support and partner with other providers of open space, this policy focuses on the role of Pinecrest in acquiring and disposing of parks and open space that it will own and manage.

Parks and open space often have synergies with the provision of community and network infrastructure. These include facilities such as community and recreation buildings (e.g. multipurpose rooms, Community Center), stormwater rights-of-way and shared use paths. Acquiring land to primarily accommodate buildings or a non-park and open space use is not within the scope of this policy. Land for buildings that are ancillary to an open space function (such as multipurpose buildings at a park, or public toilets at a neighborhood park) are within the scope of the policy.

Separate planning process identify future land requirements for other community and network infrastructure, and potential synergies between these functions and public open space will be identified through the development of the Village's open space network plans.

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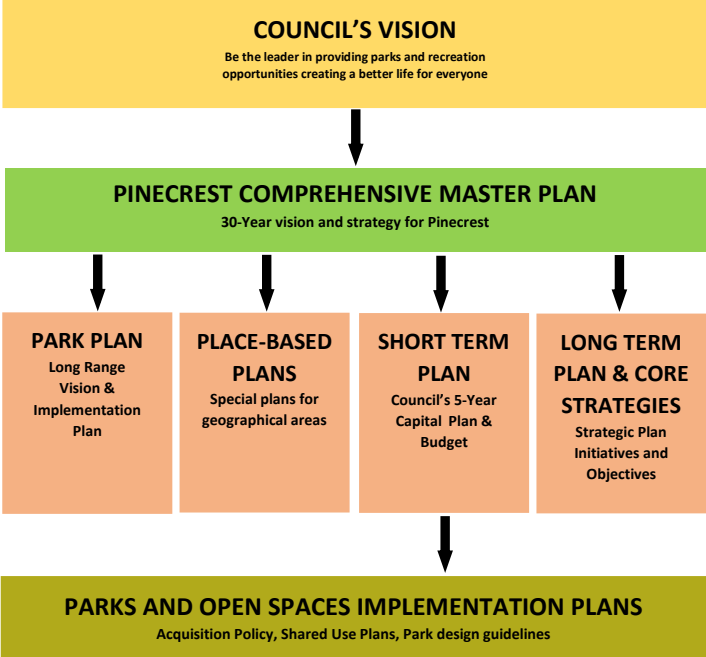
The Comprehensive Master Plan's Open Space Element identifies the priorities and actions for parks and open space that Village Council will focus on over the next 10 years.

The Comprehensive Master Plan recognizes that acquiring land to extend the parks and open space network will be required to meet the Pinecrest's recreation and social needs. A number of actions relate to land acquisition:

- Develop policy to guide the acquisition of parks and open space
- Planning future requirements for parks and open space by developing open space network plans
- Manage an ongoing land acquisition program

The Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy is the key implementation guideline for all future open space purchases. The other aforementioned plans, such as the Comprehensive Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Stormwater Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan will also play an important role in informing decision making on acquiring new parks and open space. The diagram below shows how all these components fit together:

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LEGISLATIVE CONTENT

A range of legislation determines how Council must acquire or dispose of parks and open space. These cover a number of important matters including how acquiring new parks and open space is funded, methods of acquisition, consultation and requirements for how parks and open space can be disposed. The table below outlines some of the key legislation and administrative policies and their relevance to Council’s role in acquiring or disposing of parks and open space:

KEY LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC LANDS	
Debt Management Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Village will confine long-term borrowing to capital improvements or projects that cannot be financed from current revenues. • When the Village finances capital projects by issuing bonds, it will pay back the bonds within a period not to exceed the estimated useful life of the project. • The Village will strive to have the final maturity of general obligation bonds at, or below, thirty (30) years. • Whenever possible, the Village will use special assessment, revenue, or other self-supporting bonds instead of general obligation bonds. • The Village will not use long-term debt for current operations. • The Village will maintain good communications with bond rating agencies regarding its financial condition. The Village will follow a policy of full disclosure on every financial report and borrowing prospectus.

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<p>Municipal Home Rule Powers Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 166, F. S. grants to municipalities broad home rule powers. • Municipalities have the power and authority to acquire and dispose of real property or interest therein for municipal purposes, so long as such method of acquisition and disposal of municipal real property is for a valid municipal purpose and is not expressly prohibited by law. • Valid municipal purpose and in the best interest of the Village is a determination that the Village Council must make, based upon such considerations as the need of the property for future municipal use, the consideration, and the benefits to insure to the Village from the discharge of the reversionary or other lesser interests and rights in and restrictions on the use of such property.
<p>Park Impact Fee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 8.1 of the Village’s Land Development Regulations provides for the Village’s ability to implement an impact fee for Parks and Recreation. Any application for building permit for residential development activity within the corporate limits of the village shall be subject to the assessment of a parks and recreation impact fee in the manner and amount set forth in the code. No such building permit shall be issued by the village until the applicant has paid the assessed impact fee.
<p>2016 Florida Statutes TITLE XVIII - PUBLIC LANDS AND PROPERTY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 274.04, F. S. Property acquisition — Whenever acquiring property, the governmental unit may pay the purchase price in full or may exchange property with the seller as a trade-in and apply the exchange allowance to the cost of the property acquired. • Whenever acquiring property, the governmental unit may best serve the interests of the county or district by outright sale of the property to be replaced, rather than by exchange as a trade-in, it may make the sale in a manner otherwise prescribed in this act for the disposal of property. • The receipts from the sale may be treated as a current refund if the property to be acquired shall be contracted for within the same fiscal year of the governmental unit in which the property sold is disposed of.
<p>Florida State Constitution, Article X, Section 6, Eminent Domain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires the payment of compensation only for the taking of private property for a public purpose. • Publicly owned property shall be acquired without monetary payment when the intended use is consistent with the use for which it was dedicated or acquired.
<p>1990 Miami-Dade County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miami-Dade County’s Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program’s focus is the protection and conservation of endangered lands. • Concerned about the continuing loss of pinelands and other natural areas, Miami-Dade County voters approved a property tax that was collected between 1990 and 1992 to fund the acquisition, protection and maintenance of environmentally endangered lands. The EEL Program identifies and secures these lands for preservation. • Annually, the EEL program considers proposed acquisition sites by the public. Proposals by government agencies are reviewed

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	<p>semiannually. Each site is inspected by county staff and citizen volunteers who are members of the Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC). Following a public hearing, LASC recommends sites for purchase to the Board of County Commissioners.</p>
Florida Forever Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Forever funding under section 259.105, Florida Statutes. • Funding for the acquisition and management of conservation lands in Florida is provided by a variety of institutions, including federal and state governments, regional governments, local governments, and private non-governmental entities. • The Florida Constitution authorizes the issuance of tax -supported bonds to finance or refinance the acquisition and improvement of land and water areas for the purposes of conservation, restoration of natural systems, water resource development, outdoor recreation, and historic preservation
Florida Statute Chapter 337: Contracting Acquisition, Disposal and Use of Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If lands, buildings, or other improvements are needed for transportation purposes, but are held by a federal, state, or local governmental entity and used for public purposes other than transportation, the department may compensate the entity for such properties by providing functionally equivalent replacement facilities. • The provision of replacement facilities under this subsection may only be undertaken with the agreement of the governmental entity affected.

CONSULTATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Planning for new parks and open space generally includes public engagement, through the preparation of open space network plans and needs assessments. These processes seek to identify general requirements and priorities for land acquisition at a non-property specific level of detail.

Village Council generally considers and negotiates the acquisition of specific properties for parks and open space confidentially. Acquiring land typically involves negotiation between private landowners and Village Council. In order to protect the privacy of private landowners and to ensure the negotiation process occurs according to fair commercial practices, this process is undertaken confidentially within parameters agreed to by the relevant elected members.

The Village will only release information relating to the acquisition or disposal of specific properties for parks and open space when it is no longer confidential in accordance with Florida State Statute, Chapter 166.045. Specifically, in terms of the (a) Appraisal reports, offers, and counteroffers are confidential and exempt from s. 119.07(1) until an option contract is executed or, if no option contract is executed, until 30 days before a contract or agreement for purchase is considered for approval by the Village Council.

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METHODS AND FUNDING TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

ACQUISITION METHODS

Pinecrest can use a variety of methods to acquire land for parks and open space depending on the specific situation. These are summarized in the table below:

METHODS OF ACQUIRING LAND FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE	
Willing Seller – Willing Buyer	Direct negotiation occurs between the Village and the landowner. Terms of sale, including the price paid for the land is determined through the negotiation process.
Compulsory Acquisition	The Village Council has the ability to compulsorily acquire land for parks and open space (which are a form of public work), with or without the agreement of the landowner. The landowner is compensated in accordance with applicable law.
Gifting and Bequeathing	Landowners approach the Village Council to gift or bequeath land for parks and open space. When deciding whether to accept the proposal to gift or bequeath land, council must consider the need for the land, how much it would cost to develop and the ongoing maintenance costs.
Vesting	Land is vested in Pinecrest as a park or open space due to a requirement in the land development regulations such as those relating to subdivisions. In some cases, Pinecrest would pay for the land to be vested and in other examples the land would be at no cost.
Land Exchange and Transfer between Public Uses	<p>Opportunities may arise for the mutually beneficial exchange of land between neighboring landowners through boundary adjustments of outright “swapping” of lands.</p> <p>Pinecrest owns land for a variety of purposes such as Community Center, Municipal Center and parks and open space. At the end of life of an asset, or due to changing needs, land may become available for an alternative public use such as a park.</p>
First Right of Purchase Agreement	Pinecrest and the landowner enter into an agreement that Village Council has the option to purchase the property prior to it being offered for sale in the open market. The agreement outlines the terms and conditions under which the property will be offered to the Village Council for purchase. An encumbrance is recorded on the property title to acknowledge the first right of purchase agreement.

In addition to the outright acquisition of land, Pinecrest may use other means of protecting or obtaining public access to land, such as obtaining easements or covenants. The acquisition of easements or covenants for open space purposes will be assessed against this policy.

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FUNDING OPTIONS

Pinecrest obtains funding to acquire land for parks and open space from a variety of sources. These are summarized in the table below:

FUNDING SOURCES FOR ACQUIRING LAND FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE	
Rates	Village Council can fund the acquisition of land for parks and open space from rates levied on property across the Village. Rates funding has few restrictions on how it can be spent to acquire land for parks and open space.
Targeted rates	Village Council has the ability to levy a targeted rate on a group of properties for a defined purpose, such as acquiring parks and open space. A targeted rate must be spent on the purpose for which it is collected.
Grants	The Village can tap into several grant opportunities both at the state level as well as the federal level to fund all or partial acquisition of a property. Grant programs such as the Florida Communities Trust grant, the Florida Recreation Acquisition and Development Grant and the Florida Land Conservation Grant as examples.
Financial contributions	The Park Impact Fees allow Council to collect financial contributions when land is developed to mitigate the effects of growth.
Development contributions	Florida Statutes allows Council to require a contribution from new developments to provide infrastructure required due to growth, such as land for new parks or development of park infrastructure. Development contributions can only be spent on growth related infrastructure, in accordance with Pinecrest’s development contribution policy.
Proceeds from the disposal of parks and open space	If Village Council disposes of an area of park or open space it may choose to utilize the proceeds from any such sale towards acquiring new land for parks and open space.

The majority of Village Council’s funding for acquiring land for parks and open space comes from the general fund supported by property taxes. Florida Statutes allows Village Council to collect development contributions to fund planned infrastructure required to accommodate growth, including parks and open space. Any land acquired for parks and open space funded from development contributions must

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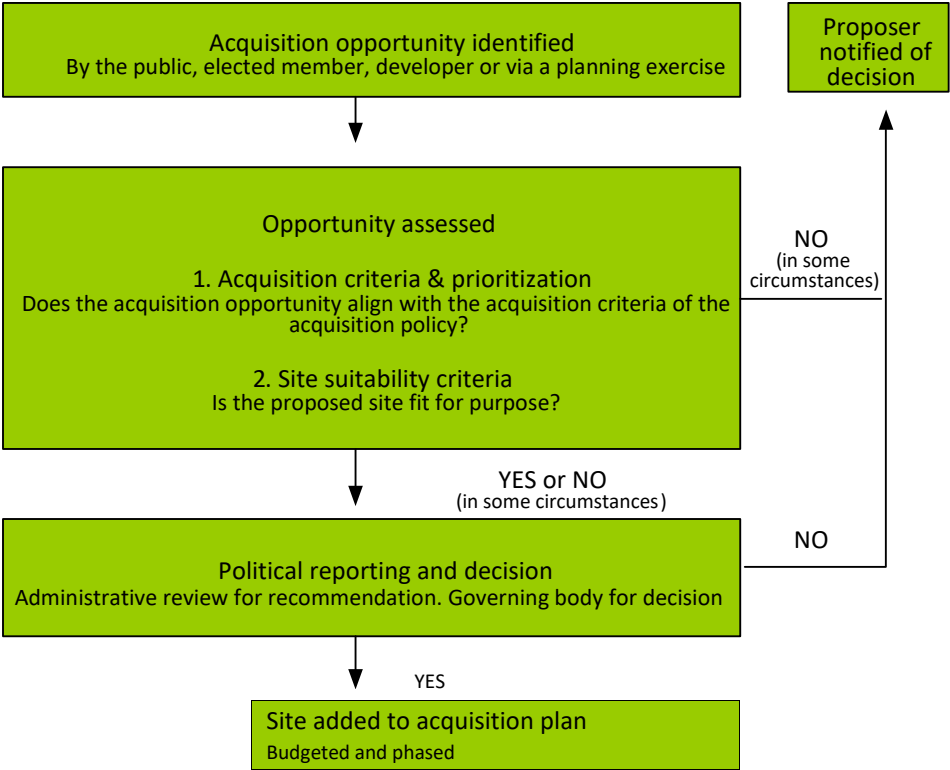
therefore directly relate to meeting increased needs and pressure from growth. The proportion of the cost of acquiring a new park or open space that may be funded by development contributions is determined by the cost allocation methodology established in the Land Development Regulations.

ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Village Council receives numerous requests to acquire land for parks and open space from the public, community groups and elected members. Additionally, the need to acquire land for parks and open space is identified when areas of the Village are being planned and developed.

As responsible stewards of public funding, Village Council must make decisions on which land to acquire that will best achieve the vision and strategy set out in the Comprehensive Master Plan and the priorities of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

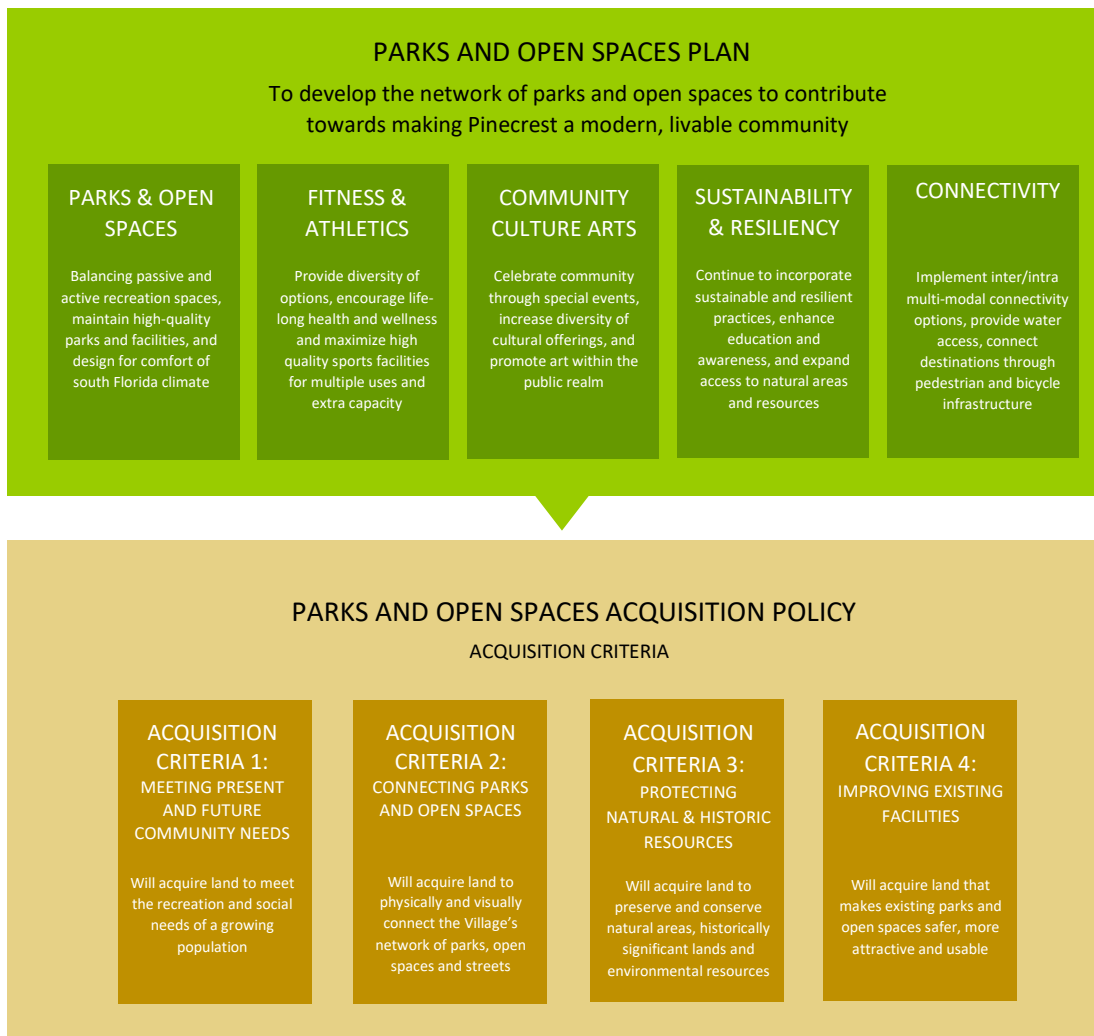
This policy sets out the steps that Village Council will use to assist with the process of assessing acquisition opportunities, selecting sites and weighing up priorities. The process is summarized in the following diagram and the criteria used to assess acquisition opportunities are explained in further throughout the remainder of this document.



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ACQUISITION CRITERIA

Acquisition criteria assess if an opportunity to acquire land for parks and open space contributes towards achieving the vision and strategy of the Comprehensive Master Plan and the focus and priorities of the Parks and Open Space Plan. The following diagram outlines how the acquisition criteria relate to the five areas of focus of the Parks and Open Space Plan:



The acquisition criteria state how Pinecrest will prioritize opportunities to acquire land by identifying when an opportunity will be considered of high, medium, or non-priority.

The acquisition criteria are not a quantitative scoring mechanism. Acquisition opportunities will be prioritized according to the highest priority achieved across any of the four acquisition criteria.

Pinecrest has a limited budget to acquire land for new parks and open space. Not all acquisition proposals that align with the acquisition criteria, or are considered to be high or medium priority will be able to be purchased.

Acquisition criteria 1: Meeting present and future community needs

Changes in Pinecrest’s needs and preferences will influence the location and amount of land the Village will need to acquire for parks and open space.

To assist with identifying current and future needs for parks and open space, Pinecrest developed the Comprehensive Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Stormwater Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan to assess the provision of parks and open space. These will help to identify where the capacity and accessibility of the parks and open space network will need to be improved to meet community needs and provide access to a diverse range of recreational opportunities.

Parks and open space are core infrastructure required to support the continued success of Pinecrest. Acquiring land where growth is expected to occur or where a need for open space has been identified are essential to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Access to recreational and social opportunities provided by the parks and open space network varies across Pinecrest. Land may need to be acquired to expand or improve the parks and open space network so that all areas of Pinecrest have equitable access to parks and open space.

New activities and participation in established sports will change over time due to population growth and changes in people’s recreation preferences. In response to this, the parks and open space network will need to adapt and develop. While existing parks and open space will be able to accommodate many new activities and uses, sometimes the Village will need to acquire new land to accommodate these.

Prioritization: meeting present and future community needs	
High priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land that will meet open space needs of communities of future development areas identified through an endorsed spatial planning process (e.g. site plan)• Land to increase the accessibility or capacity of the parks and open space network that serve areas identified as not meeting level of service standards• Land to meet a significant current and future need identified in a council endorsed needs assessment or parks and open space network plan

Medium priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land to increase the accessibility and capacity of the parks and open space network that serves areas identified as needing facilities • Land to meet a future recreational need for which there are multiple opportunities to provide for the need (e.g. alternative sites exist that could be purchased now or in the future) • Land to meet a moderate current or future need identified in an endorsed council needs assessment or parks and open space network plan
Non-priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land in areas identified as low and some change in the Comprehensive Master Plan or other master plan that already meet targeted level of service standards, have adequate access and/or capacity of parks and open space

Acquisition criteria 2: Connecting our parks and open space

Creating a physically and visually connected open space network is an important part of achieving Pinecrest’s vision – to be a modern, livable community. A connected parks and open space network, including associated trails, shared use paths and walkways, contributes to Pinecrest’s unique identity, quality of life, healthy lifestyle, and economic well-being. A connected open space network also has environmental benefits.

Parks and open space, including streets and greenways, provide opportunities to move around the village for both leisure and commuting purposes. Creating attractive and safe routes for walking or cycling, linking main destinations will assist with reducing dependency on travel by private vehicle. A connected network of parks and open space improves recreation opportunities and active travel options, assisting residents to have healthy lifestyles. Cycling, walking and running are amongst Pinecrest’s most popular leisure activities. These activities all benefit from having connected networks of parks and preserves.

A connected network of parks and open space delivers ecological benefits. Acquiring land that connects existing patches of habitat or ecosystems allow for the movement and natural life cycles of species, helping to protect and enhance Pinecrest’s natural heritage.

Prioritization: connecting our parks and open space	
High priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land that will establish a significant area of contiguous park or open space that enhances recreation, ecological or landscape values • Land required to establish regional or sub-regional recreation connections (walkways, bike trails) identified in an endorsed council plan (e.g. shared use path plan, parks and open space network plan) • Land that provides access to water • Land that connects areas of habitat of significant ecological value
Medium priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land to create local connections that enhance recreation opportunities • Land that connects areas of habitat of representative ecological value
Non-priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land that does not connect existing parks or open space

Acquisition criteria 3: Protecting natural and historic resources

Pinecrest has a unique natural environment. Parts of the Village exist on the Cutler Ridge, an ancient coral formation that stretches from South Miami to Homestead. In Pinecrest, areas along the ridge rise as high as 20 feet above sea level. Pinecrest is also home to the original Snapper Creek, a historical Indian canoe route that connected the Everglades to Biscayne Bay.

In terms of biodiversity, Pinecrest is diverse as it has areas that would be considered coastal in terms of vegetation, hammocks as well as rockland areas.

Places of significant historic heritage value enhance Pinecrest’s sense of place and unique identity. Acquiring land with historic heritage value for parks and open space allows residents and visitors to learn about these places. Bringing these areas into public ownership can ensure those properties are protected and appropriately managed for current and future generations to enjoy.

Prioritization: protecting natural and historic resources	
High priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land containing or protecting rare or threatened ecological values • Land containing historic heritage or cultural value of regional significance and that has public open space values • Land of geological or landscape value of regional significance and that has public open space values

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Medium priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land containing representative ecological values • Land with historic heritage or cultural value of local significance that has public open space values • Land of geological or landscape value of local significance that has public open space values • Land identified in a council endorsed ecological restoration plan, or open space network plan, to enhance and restore ecological values
Non-priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land with low, common or no ecological, historic heritage, landscape, geological or cultural values • Land with heritage value that does not have public open space values (e.g. buildings)

Alternative methods to protect Pinecrest’s unique features, such as planning regulations and partnerships with private landowners, should be considered alongside land acquisition. The benefits and costs of public ownership and management of a feature should be considered alongside alternative methods when the primary reason to acquire land for open space is to protect and restore.

Acquisition criteria 4: Improving existing facilities

Acquiring new land to expand an existing park is an efficient and effective way of increasing a park’s potential and value to the community. Pinecrest has many parks and open space that could perform better by improving their configuration or size by acquiring neighboring land. Small, incremental improvements can create a more flexible and adaptive network of parks and open space that will better meet the needs of village.

Acquiring adjacent land can create safer, more attractive and usable parks and open space. Acquiring land to widen entrances and create additional street frontage can improve these parks - making them safer and more pleasant for the community to enjoy.

Acquiring land neighboring an existing park or open space can increase the activities and facilities it can accommodate. As acquiring sizeable new parks becomes more difficult due to the lack of undeveloped land in the Village, increasing the capacity of the existing park network to accommodate more use and diverse range of activities will be important for meeting future community needs.

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Prioritization: improving existing facilities	
High priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land that will improve the accessibility and functionality of an existing park or open space that serves an area identified in the Comprehensive Master Plan or the Parks and Recreation Master Plan• Land that provides access to an existing park from an area with poor access to parks and open space
Medium priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land that protects the existing landscape and amenity values of significant parks and open spaces• Land that improves the capacity of parks and open space
Non-priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land in areas identified in the Comprehensive Master Plan that has adequate access and capacity of parks and open space

Land acquisition can improve the conservation values of existing parks and open space. Acquiring land to expand an existing park may buffer or bring the entire extent of a significant feature into public ownership and management. This can provide opportunities to protect and interpret a feature in its entirety.

SITE SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

If an acquisition opportunity is of high or medium priority, the suitability of specific sites for a proposed park or open space purpose will be assessed in detail. Where an acquisition opportunity involves alternative sites, a site suitability assessment will assist with selecting a preferred option.

Assessing the suitability of a site requires consideration of the following factors:

- Location and physical characteristics
- Financial aspects
- Community support
- Amenity
- Planning and legal restrictions

Location and physical characteristics

The intended purpose of a park will influence whether the physical characteristics of a site are suitable. Some activities and park functions have specific physical requirements, for example to accommodate a sports field, a site must be of a specific size, configuration and topography while also having enough room to provide for spectators, car parking and other structures.

The environment surrounding the site is also important. Well located parks and open space can become the focal point for a neighborhood. Ensuring there is adequate infrastructure capacity to cater for the

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scale of the park, proposed activities (including events) and the expected level of visitation also needs consideration.

Some sites may also be subject to hazards (e.g. contamination, flooding) that will determine their suitability as public open space or for particular functions.

Financial aspects

It is important that the cost of acquiring a site represents good value for money in order to achieve the maximum benefit from the available funding. Opportunities to acquire vacant or underdeveloped land are especially desirable as council does not incur the cost of acquiring and removing buildings on the site.

The cost of developing a site and its ongoing maintenance once acquired also requires consideration. Acquiring new parks and open space commit Pinecrest to ongoing financial costs to ensure that assets are appropriately maintained and renewed.

Community aspirations and partnerships

The community are the ultimate benefactors of acquiring land for parks and open space. Acquiring land for parks and open space is generally undertaken confidentially, however if there is known community interest in an acquisition opportunity or particular site then this should be considered when assessing an acquisition opportunity. Discussions with the Village Councilmembers and resident engagement surveys may assist in understanding community aspirations for parks and open spaces and inform consideration of acquisition opportunities.

Opportunities may exist for partnership with between Pinecrest and other organizations to secure new open space and the ongoing involvement in the management of new open spaces. Partnership opportunities need to meet the acquisition criteria to ensure that new open space align with Village Council's strategic direction.

Acquiring a new park or open space can also create opportunities for the community to work together on a project. This may involve participating in activities such as providing input into the design of the park, volunteering at a planting day or establishing a community garden. Parks and open space can also provide opportunities to learn about the natural world and Pinecrest's heritage. Parks can accommodate ecological restoration programs, interpretive information and courses. Opportunities for community involvement and education are important outcomes that should be considered when assessing the suitability of a site.

Amenity

A core value of parks and open space is to provide opportunities for rest and relaxation. Parks provide pleasant areas to escape the hustle and bustle. They also provide "green" visual relief. The environment surrounding a site will influence the amenity of a park and what type uses it is suitable for. A pleasant outlook can contribute to the quality of a park. The degree to which the amenity of a site will influence its suitability depends on its purpose. For example, when acquiring land for an intensive sporting use, such as an artificial turf sports fields, the amenity of the site will be somewhat less important than when acquiring land for a local informal recreation park.

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Planning and legal restrictions

Planning restrictions (such as zoning or designations) or encumbrances on the property title (covenants, easements) will influence what type of activities can occur on a site and how easy it will be to develop. Some sites may be owned by trusts that are restricted in how they can dispose of assets. These elements can influence the value of land, how long it may take to acquire and how it may be used. A thorough investigation of planning and legal restrictions is required as part of the site assessment process.

ACQUISITION PLAN AND PROGRAM

Pinecrest will prepare an acquisition plan every five years (see Exhibit A) that identifies opportunities to acquire land that align with the acquisition criteria of the Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy. Legacy council acquisition plans and policies, parks and open space network plans and the parks and open space provision guidelines will inform the development of a Village-wide acquisition plan.

Pinecrest undertakes an on-going, phased program of potential and committed land acquisition projects. When the Village Council endorses an acquisition proposal it is added to Pinecrest's parks and open space acquisition program and progressed according to its relative priority, available budget and purchasing strategy.

Adjustments in growth projections and development affect the timing of when new parks and open space are required. Funding to acquire land for parks and open space must compete with Village Council's other priorities and projects, such as transport initiatives, community program or new public facilities. Changes in the amount of funding available to acquire land for parks and open space may mean that Village Council will periodically review priorities.

The timing of when land is acquired can be difficult to predict. Where land is available to purchase on the open market, Village Council may be able to secure it relatively quickly. On other occasions, negotiations can be unsuccessful, or be a protracted process over a number of years if the property owner is unwilling to sell their land. The length of time it may take to secure a site will influence the prioritization of an acquisition project in relation to the available budget.

Village Council may decide not to attempt to acquire a site straight away, even if the acquisition proposal is identified as being a high-priority. Due to a range of factors, such as fluctuations in the property market or the situation of the property owner, Village Council may decide it is beneficial to wait and attempt to secure the site in the future.

POST PURCHASE

After Village Council has acquired land for parks and open space public access will be provided as soon as practicable so the community can enjoy the new park or open space.

Developing a park or open space involves a number of steps that need to be worked through. Before work can begin on constructing park facilities, a budget needs to be allocated, the design and

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management of the park or open space needs to be agreed with the community, resource consents obtained, contractors engaged and equipment and materials ordered.

In the interim period between acquiring land and developing a new park or open space, Pinecrest will undertake minor works so the public can safely access and use the site. This may involve removing buildings from the site, addressing any hazards to public safety and installing basic assets such as fences and signs.

Village Council will rezone land acquired as parks and open space or as public service zoning designations.

DISPOSAL OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Village Council may consider proposals to dispose of parks and open space that do not have the ability to meet current needs and do not have the potential to do so in the future.

Disposing of public open space must be treated cautiously as parks and open space can be difficult and expensive to replace, and future demands difficult to predict.

There are a range of issues for Village Council to consider when disposing of parks and open space, including:

- Whether the site contributes towards achieving the vision and strategy of the Comprehensive Master Plan and priorities and actions of the Parks and Open Space Plan
- The acquisition criteria of the Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy
- The future development of the area and what demand there may be for parks and open space in the future
- Opportunities to secure alternative land for parks and open space in the surrounding area
- Community views and preferences
- The financial benefit of disposing of the land, including the cost of the disposal process

Village Council must comply with the requirements of various legislation when disposing of parks and open space including Article 7 in the Miami-Dade County Charter. These determine the public consultation process, who obtains the proceeds from disposing of land, rights to purchase land once council indicates it is surplus, how the proceeds from disposal can be spent and the process that must be followed.

Proposals to develop buildings on a park or open space that are not ancillary to the purpose of a park or open space will be considered as a disposal and assessed against this policy.

Exhibit A

Based on the Village's current park and open space needs, the following are the high priority, short-term criteria that will be utilized to identify opportunities for acquisition of land:

- Large properties of 3 or more acres that may be developed as parkland
- Properties with water access to provide opportunity for new amenities to the community
- Small properties that can be converted to neighborhood pocket parks in areas that have poor access to parks and open space
- Land that will establish a significant area of contiguous park or open space that enhances recreation, ecological or landscape values
- Land containing or protecting rare or threatened ecological values
- Land that will improve the accessibility and functionality of an existing park or open space