OAKVILLE

APPENDIX A

Town of Oakville

Parks Plan 2031

November 2023

The Planning Partnership

nblc

Contents

1.0 Introduction 3

1.1 Overview 3

1.2 Greenlands & Parks 3

2.0 Current Legislation/Policy Review 7

2.1 The Planning Act 7

2.2 Town of Oakville Official Plan 9

2.3 Oakville Parkland Dedication By-Law 10

2.4 Development Patterns/Density 11

3.0 The Impact of Parks on Commercial & Residential Property Values 13

3.1 Overview 13

3.2 Quality of Place/Quality of Life 14

3.3 Economic Value of Parks 16

3.4 The Impact of Parks on Commercial & Residential Property Values 18

4.0 Recommendations 25

4.1 Introduction 25

4.2 Key Town of Oakville Objectives 25

4.3 Meeting the Town's Active Parkland Target of 2.2ha/1,000 people 26

4.4 Establishing a Context Appropriate Parkland Hierarchy 28

4.5 Designing and Maintaining the Parkland System 32

4.6 Achieving the Town-wide Active Parkland Target 35

4.7 Generating Land/Cash-in-Lieu of Land 46

4.8 Options for the Ownership of the Town's Parkland System 51

4.9 Understanding Cash-In-Lieu of Parkland 54

4.10 Administration of the Town's New Parkland Dedication By-law 58

Appendices

Appendix I Summary of The Town's 5 Year Review of the 2012 Parks, Recreation and Library Facilities Master Plan (April 2017) - by Monteith + Brown, Dillon

Appendix II An Urban Park Hierarchy Within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas

Appendix III Examples of Urban Park Typologies

Appendix IV Parkland Design Guidelines

Appendix V Maintaining the Parkland System

Appendix VI Development Scenarios/Fiscal Benchmarking

Appendix VII Downtown Parks System Research

Appendix VIII Options for Ownership of the Town's Parkland System

Appendix IX Parkland Dedication Practices in Other Jurisdictions

Tannery Park, Oakville

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Town of Oakville has seen dramatic growth over the past 40 years, and while the Town continues to experience growth greenfield development in North Oakville, there is a significant shift taking place away from traditional suburban development forms to higher density developments and infill projects. This intensification is creating pressures on existing and proposed parkland, and levels of service.

In addition, the Town is also facing increased pressure to consider accepting alternative parkland spaces as land becomes more expensive and less readily available within the Town, particularly within its defined Strategic Growth Areas. In order to ensure that the growing population is well-served by its public parkland system, and that the new parkland generated reflects the evolving built form of the Town, the Town must develop and adopt a new parkland dedication regime. There are four key goals in the development of a Parkland Dedication Guideline document:

- To provide a comprehensive document for dedication, payment and use of cash-in-lieu;
- To provide a set of guidelines that incorporate best practices for dedication, payment and the use of cash-in-lieu;
- To ensure that the guidelines are responsive to the needs of existing communities and areas of growth; and,
- To provide direction to address long-term needs with changes to land needs allowing for flexibility in parks design and use.

1.2 Greenlands & Parks

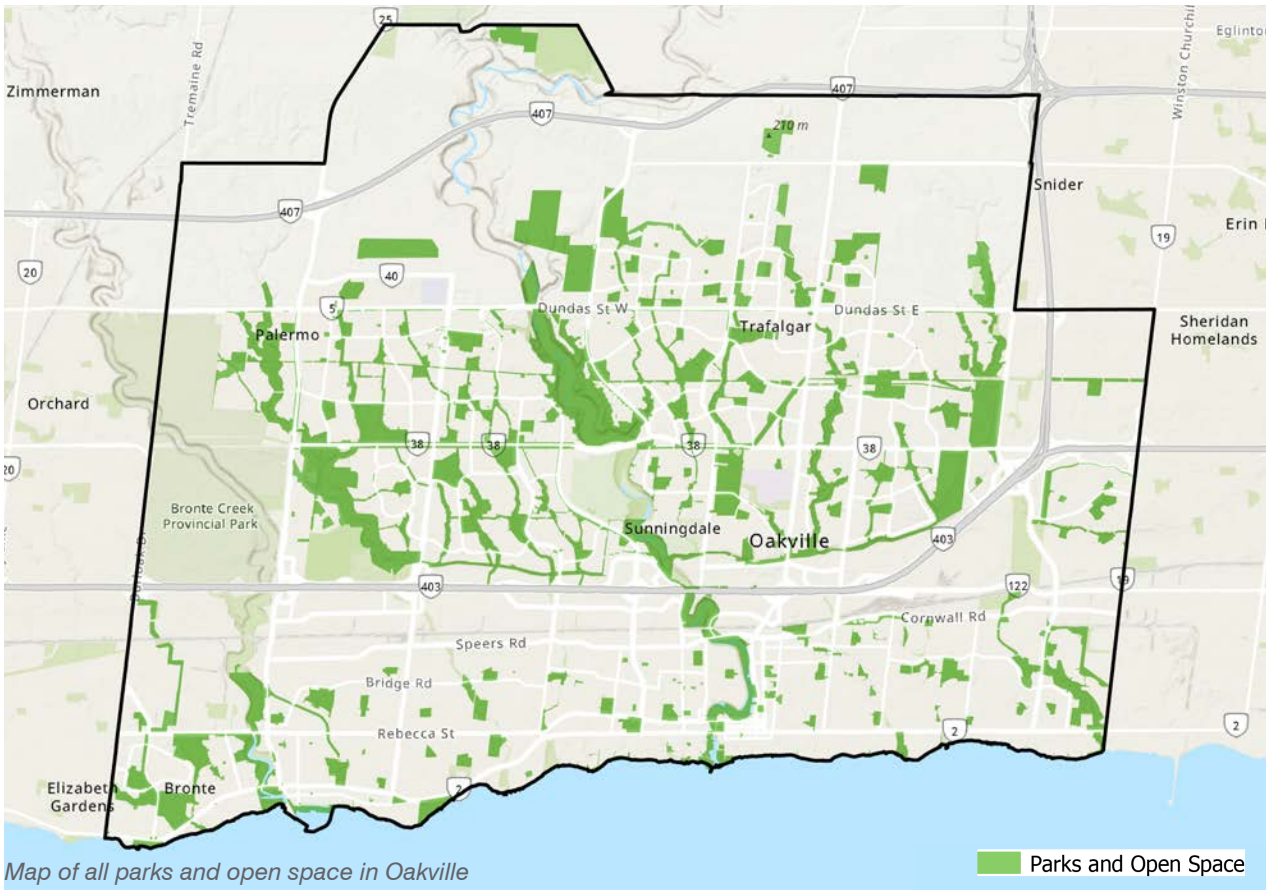
The Greenlands System includes all parks and open space lands within the Town. Parks and open space lands are generally publicly owned and provide recreational opportunities, protect natural features, provide physical linkages, and contribute to the aesthetic and environmental value in a community.

Oakville has achieved an admirable Greenlands System comprised of approximately 1,811 ha (hectares) of land used for both active and passive recreational uses, for use by schools, and lands that incorporate significant natural heritage features.

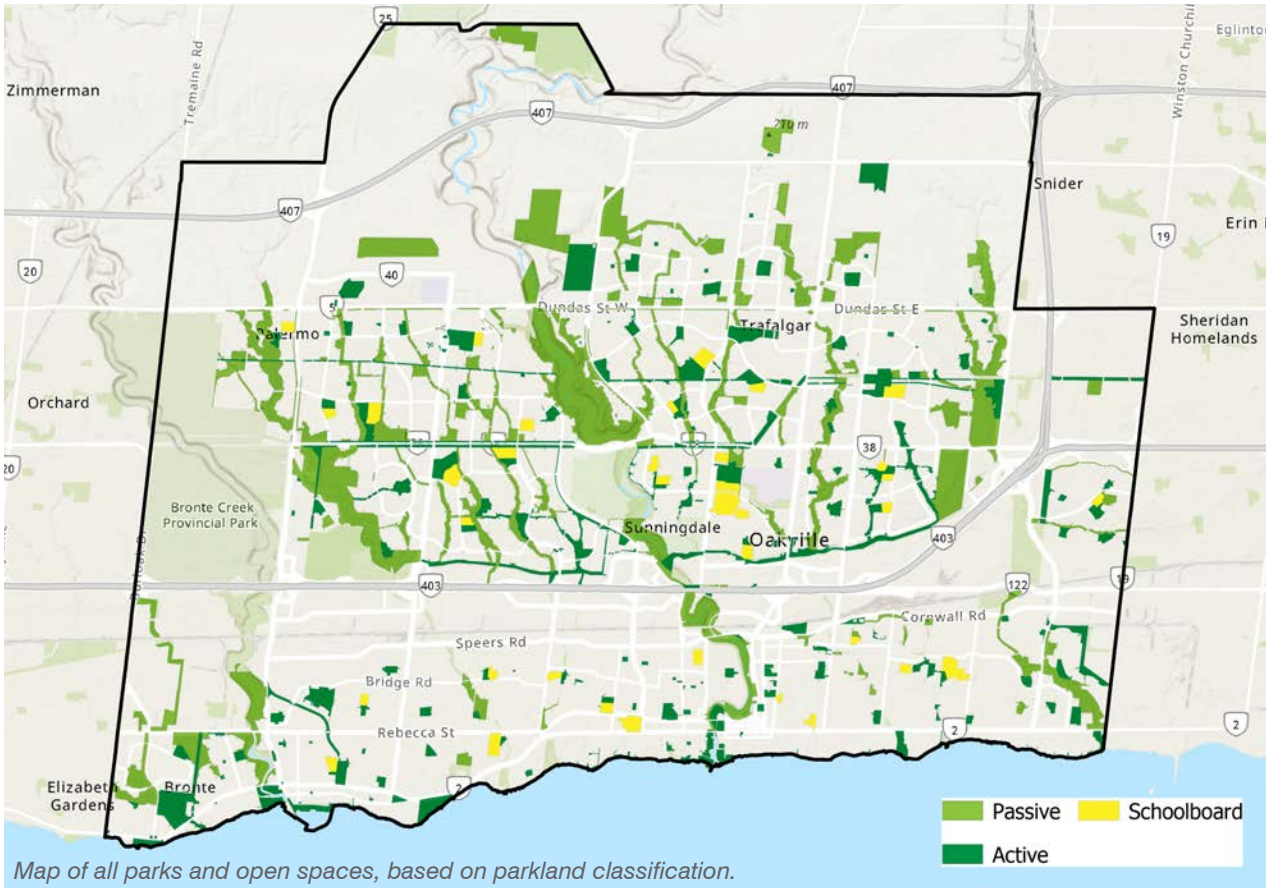
Within the Greenlands System, lands are classified as ***Active***, ***Passive***, or ***School Board***. Lands classified as *active* provide recreational opportunities, often associated with playgrounds, sport fields, splash pads, and similar facilities. Lands classified as *passive* are primarily associated with natural heritage, or may support passive recreational activities related to trail use. Lands classified as *school board* are owned by school boards, and provide a range of recreational activities and opportunities supported by the school. The first map on the following page displays all parks and open spaces within the Town.

The Concept of a “Campus of Parks”

The Town of Oakville has developed a system for *active* park lands based on the concept of a “campus of parks.” This system exclusively includes *active* park types. As previously stated, active parks can include a full range of specified recreational functions; however there is recognition that not every *active* park space is required to achieve every recreational function. For example, community parks may offer high level facilities with sports fields, while neighbourhood parks may offer more basic levels of outdoor recreation, including parkettes. Both active park types are distinct, yet necessary to creating a successful “campus of parks.” The second map on the following page displays all parks and open spaces within the Town separated into the categories of passive, active and schoolboard.



Map of all parks and open space in Oakville



Map of all parks and open spaces, based on parkland classification.

The Town's current inventory of active parkland totals approximately 576 ha, consisting of community link parks, community parks, and neighbourhood parks. Passive open space lands totals approximately 1116 ha, consisting of major and minor valleys, woodlots, and undeveloped parklands. *School board* parkland totals approximately 119 ha, consisting of parkland and recreational sites typically attached to schools.

The following tables summarize the current town-wide supply (in hectares) of active, passive, and schoolboard parks.

	Area (Ha)	Ha Per 1000 People
Active		
Community Link Park	106.64	0.47
Community Park	213.78	0.95
Neighbourhood Park	255.80	1.14
Total Active Parkland	576.22	2.56
Passive		
Buffer Block	13.34	0.06
Major Valley	263.32	1.17
Minor Valley	551.39	2.45
Tableland Woodlot	214.55	0.95
Undeveloped Parkland	73.43	0.33
Total Passive Parkland	1116.02	4.96
School Board		
Total Schoolboard Parkland	118.88	0.53

The Parks and Open Spaces system as a whole is functionally greater than the sum of its individual components. Each of the identified components of the parkland system plays a crucial role in creating and maintaining the Town's high quality of life by providing:

- Woodlots that contribute to the Town's sustainability objectives;
- River valleys and other key landforms that are unique and sustain important natural heritage functions;
- Environmental education facilities that promote a broader understanding of key natural heritage features and their ecological functions;
- An interconnected active transportation/trails network that facilitates education, recreation and an active, healthy lifestyle; and,
- The Town's parkland system, including:
  - Larger scale community parks that provide opportunities for active recreation and sports activities; and,
  - Smaller scale neighbourhood parks that add interest and opportunities for relaxation, contemplation and other more passive recreational pursuits.

It is the comprehensive parklands system, in its entirety, that creates an image of Oakville as a beautiful Town that accommodates a full range of contextual and recreational experiences for residents of all ages and abilities to enjoy throughout their lifetime.

Paris, FR

2.0 Current Legislation/ Policy Review

2.1 The Planning Act

It is a fundamental planning practice that an appropriate and equitable parkland system be planned and developed to provide for the recreational needs of the existing and future residents of the Town of Oakville. In order to achieve this, the parks system must include the right amount of space, the right mixture of park types, the right level of quality and design, and the right programming.

Achieving this balance is a complex task given the numerous realities (social, political, economic) that influence the development of urban land and the provision of parks and open spaces within cities. Legislation within the Planning Act provide municipalities with some tools to acquire parkland through development, much in the same manner as development charges are collected through development to service growth. These tools were developed primarily to address lower density subdivision style development and can have broad impacts on the viability of developing higher density residential structures when the maximum permitted parkland dedication is required by municipalities. The negative financial implication is exacerbated as density is increased.

The issue created by the Planning Act formula is the relationship between land dedication and dwelling units; which does not account for the dramatic range of residents generated by various forms and density of housing. Mitigating measures may include relating parkland dedication rates to the number of people or jobs generated by a given development or reducing the dedication rate from the maximum for higher density developments. These approaches would ensure greater consistency of the parkland per person ratio between urban and suburban forms of development.

Parkland conveyance authority is established in the Planning Act, section 42, which pertains to parkland conveyances associated with development and redevelopment, and sections 51.1 and 53, which pertain to parkland requirements as a condition of plan of subdivision approval and consent, respectively.

Bill 73

In late 2016, a number of amendments to the Planning Act were implemented through Bill 73 that impact the parkland conveyance policies. These updates are included in the description of the Planning Act policies below, and are discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this study.

Land Conveyance - The Planning Act establishes parameters for conveyances for park or other recreational purposes, as follows:

- Not exceeding 2% of land area in the case of commercial or industrial development.
- Not exceeding 5% of land area in the case of all other types of development.
- For residential purposes, the Act permits municipalities to utilize 5% of land area OR an alternative requirement of conveyance based on a maximum rate of 1 hectare for every 300 dwelling units, subject to enabling policies within the approved local Official Plan.

These three conveyance rates are identified as the maximum rate for each scenario within the Planning Act.

Payment-in-Lieu and Land Valuation - Municipalities may also accept payment-in- lieu of parkland conveyance. This payment can be made in the form cash or other reasonable alternative as the municipality deems appropriate; in either case the payment must represent the value of the land that would otherwise have been conveyed. The Planning Act policies that establish parameters for payment-in-lieu and land valuation are as follows:

- If the alternative requirement for residential development is used (1 ha/300 units), when the municipality accepts payment-in-lieu of land, a maximum rate of 1 hectare for each 500 units will instead be used.
- All cash accepted as payment-in-lieu must be deposited into a special account and used only

for the acquisition of land to be used for park or other recreational purposes, including the erection, improvement or repair of buildings and the acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes.

- Regarding land development and redevelopment, payment is to be determined based on the value of the land as of the day before the issuance of the first building permit.
- Regarding subdivision development and consents, respectively, payment is to be determined based on the value of the land as of the day before the approval of the draft plan of subdivision or provisional consent, as the case may be.

Reductions for Sustainability - As per section 42 (6.2 and 6.3), a municipality may establish policies to permit a reduction in payment-in-lieu where a redevelopment project meets certain sustainability criteria as set out in the Official Plan and where no land is available to be conveyed for park or other public recreational purposes.

Implementation of Conveyance Policy - Historically, the Planning Act provided some inherent flexibility in the way municipalities implement conveyance policies, primarily by what the Act remained silent on. With recent amendments to the Act (Bill 73), however, municipalities are now required to justify conveyance policies if the alternative requirement for residential conveyance is implemented. The following are relevant policies and notes regarding implementation:

- The Act does not prescribe which method (or rate up to the maximum) is to be applied in any situation.
- The Act does not indicate if, where, or when the municipality may require less than the maximums identified in either approach.
- The Act now specifies that prior to a municipality implementing Official Plan policies to implement the alternative requirement of conveyance for park for residential development, the municipality must produce a “Parks Plan” that examines the need for parkland in the municipality.
- The Act now also specifies that municipalities must submit, yearly, a financial statement detailing the deposits and expenditures of the special cash-in-lieu fund. This provides additional transparency that municipalities are accounting for and spending these monies appropriately.

Bill 197

In addition to the important changes to the Planning Act enacted through Bill 73, in 2020 the Province enacted Bill 197, which, among other matters, made further amendments to the Planning Act affecting parkland dedication. Bill 197 provides for additional checks and balances on the use of alternative parkland standards that the Town can apply in response to judicial interpretations that previously prohibited parkland by-law appeals. More specifically, Bill 197 proposes the following:

- Parkland rates set out by By-law can be challenged by appeal to the OLT.
- Municipalities must update their Parkland dedication By-laws by September 18, 2022.

Bill 197 also creates an entirely new regime for the use of Section 37 of the Planning Act, with the focus on achieving defined community benefits through a new Community Benefits Charge By-law which is linked to the value of the property, as well as a number of changes to Development Charges. All of these elements of change to the Planning Act, as well as Development Charges will need to be considered in the context of Oakville’s approach to defining and achieving a robust and appropriate parkland system.

Bill 109

In April of 2022, the Province enacted Bill 109, which, among many other matters, made changes to parkland dedication in order to balance the priority for building new housing in Transit Oriented Communities quickly, while continuing to create more parkland.

For Transit Oriented Community (TOC) developments, parkland dedication would be up to 10% of the land or its value for sites under five (5) hectares, and up to 15% of the land or its value for sites over five (5) hectares. In addition, encumbered parkland containing easements or underground services such as transit would be included in the total parkland dedication area. No definition of the geographical area of a Transit Oriented Community has been provided by the Province and the Town is seeking clarity with respect to which areas in Oakville are to be identified as Transit Oriented Communities.

2.2 Town of Oakville Official Plan

The Livable Oakville Plan (2009 Official Plan) was approved by the Regional Municipality of Halton in 2009, to replace the policies outlined in the previous 1984 Official Plan. This approval process deemed that the Livable Oakville Plan reflected the priorities of the Planning Act, the Growth Plan and other provincial policies such as the Greenbelt Plan and the Parkway Belt West Plan. The guiding principles of the Town's Official Plan include sustainable protection and enhancement of parks, waterfront spaces and natural heritage. These features are recognized as providing social and environmental value that greatly improve quality of life. In the Livable Oakville Plan, the municipality emphasizes the importance of an interconnected open space network that includes parks and trails, to offer recreational space to the public and conserve natural areas.

This interconnected park system is divided into three Open Space designations which determine the area's function and accessibility to the public:

- Parks and Open Space;
- Waterfront Open Space;
- Private Open Space.

Parks and Open Space

The Parks and Open Space designation delineates natural space that is accessible to all and intended to promote recreation and pedestrian movement, particularly throughout the downtown core. Attempting to offer residents a variety of publicly available open spaces, the Town requires a multitude of park types to comprise this land use designation as outlined in the Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Master Plan. This variety facilitates an interconnected network of outdoor spaces able to engage residents of different abilities, ages and interests. Within the Town of Oakville, parks and open spaces include:

- Parkettes;
- Squares;
- Community Parks;
- Neighbourhood Parks;
- Tableland Woodlot Parks;
- Community Link Parks;
- Major Valley Parks and,
- Minor Valley Parks

Despite forecasted population growth, the Town of Oakville is continuing to pursue a targeted 2.2ha/ 1,000 residents as a per capita parkland standard.

Waterfront Open Space

Waterfront Open Space may be publicly or privately owned land. It is the goal of the Town that the waterfront Open Space designation be continuous and accessible to the public. To achieve these ends, the Town may acquire privately owned land or develop land to extend the public Waterfront Open Space. These expansions of the public waterfront have the effect of maximizing its benefit as a gathering place, a recreational trail system and a natural feature to be enjoyed by all community members. Connectivity of waterfront and harbour through enhancement of walking and cycling infrastructure is outlined as a goal in the Livable Oakville Plan.

Harbours fall under this designation and the specialized community and commercial services of marinas such as the maintenance of boats may be permitted on the Waterfront Open Space designation. All Harbours are required to conform to the Conservation Authority's regulations and policies regarding the protection of aquatic ecosystems. Harbours will also require Master Plans conforming to the requirements laid out in section 17.3.6 of the Livable Oakville Plan.

Private Open Space

Private Open Spaces are not intended for public use but serve to provide recreation space in addition to the Parks and Open Space designation. The permitted uses of this designation include: legally existing golf courses; legally existing recreational facilities; trails; existing cemeteries; conservation uses including fish, wildlife and forest management; and, essential public works including transportation, utility, watershed management and flood and erosion hazard control facilities.

These three designations comprise the Town of Oakville's Open Space network and represent the Official Plan's goals to protect and enhance Oakville's natural features as well as resident access to enjoy these spaces. The Open Space land use designation is intended to serve the public through the provision of ecosystem services and social benefits that facilitate the thriving of residents and communities.

Natural Heritage

Under the Livable Oakville Plan the Natural Heritage land use designation indicates areas with natural features that require preservation and conservation such as wetlands, woodlands and valleylands. Passive recreational activities such as walkway trails and cycling paths may be permitted to facilitate the connectivity of Oakville's open space network. The feasibility of these trail systems may differ based on the ecological sensitivity of the natural heritage area as well as the safety of the trail.

Parkland Standard

Despite forecasted population growth, the Town of Oakville is continuing to pursue a targeted 2.2 hectares per 1,000 residents parkland standard. In accordance with the Planning Act, the Town of Oakville must adhere to the maximum 1 hectare of parkland per 300 dwelling units.

2.3 Oakville Parkland Dedication By-Law

Oakville's in-force Parkland Dedication By-Law (By-Law 2008-105) establishes the authority of the Town to require parkland as a condition of development or redevelopment. This By-Law was passed in 2008.

By-Law 2008-105 establishes a parkland conveyance rate for residential purposes of 5% of the land proposed for development or redevelopment, or at the alternative residential rate of one hectare for each 300 units if it would result in a greater area of land. For industrial, commercial or employment purposes, the conveyance rate is 2% of the land proposed for development or redevelopment, with no alternative rate.

Of note, parkland conveyance for subdivisions and consents are not identified within By-law 2008-105. Though subdivisions and consents are not required by the Planning Act to require the passing of a by-law in order to require parkland conveyance, it has been noted by other municipalities that the lack of more concrete policy through by-laws has impacted their ability to obtain parkland through subdivisions and consents.

The By-Law also permits the Town to, at its discretion, accept payment in lieu of land in the form of money, or a combination of land and money, to the value of the land otherwise required to be conveyed.

Recent Planning Act amendments (Bill 73) cap cash-in-lieu at the alternate residential rate of 1 hectare for every 500 units and enable payment in lieu of land for parks in additional forms than solely money (i.e. land trade elsewhere, land banking, improvements to parks, strata or POPS credits, etc.). The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 (Bill 197) introduced new reporting requirements for parkland dedication, requires that a park plan must be in place before a parkland dedication By-Law is passed, and allows the By-Law to be appealed to the Local Planning Tribunal (LPAT). The Town is required to update its By-Law to comply with Bill 197 by September, 2022.

2.4 Development Patterns/Density

Perhaps the greatest influence on modern urban development patterns in Ontario is the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). The Growth Plan works in unison with the Provincial Policy Statement, the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. These policies all contribute to creating a more compact and urban built form within the Greater Golden Horseshoe that protects existing natural resources and more efficiently utilizes space with a range of land uses.

The key directives of the Growth Plan prescribe growth and density targets for each upper tier and single tier municipality. Upper tier municipalities then prescribe growth and density targets for lower tier municipalities. Municipalities are required to delineate built-up areas, or intensification areas, where growth is to be directed and forecasted targets are to be achieved.

The Growth Plan, implemented first through the Region of Halton Official Plan requires that a minimum percentage of all residential development be accommodated through intensification opportunities. In effect these policies dictate that urbanization and intensification trends will continue and occur at greater intensities throughout the GGH. Oakville's urban structure of Centres and Corridors are the primary locations for intensification opportunity, with significant high-density, mixed use aspirations, in support of a growing transit system.

Other new greenfield development opportunities are still permitted and anticipated in Oakville, with a focus on north Oakville. The Growth Plan also mandates a minimum density target for greenfield development that is substantially higher than was has been achieved over time in Oakville's traditional neighbourhoods.

Overall, the Growth Plan policies indicate that a much denser development form, for both infill and greenfield developments, is required in order to achieve the required forecasted targets. This directly impacts how the Town of Oakville plans for development and its ability to acquire land or cash for parks. This new reality impacts the remaining supply of land within the municipality for park development and influences the potential size, location and design of new parks.

Oakville is also experiencing substantial land value increases, much higher density development and subsequent new residential needs. All signs are pointing to an evolving parkland reality within Oakville, one that will require the Town and its residents to continue to expand the definition of parkland to include a mixture of large and small spaces that are interconnected and locally unique. This evolving definition will contribute to a total parkland system that is situated in place (whether urban or suburban) and that offers a full range of experiences and uses.

Paley Park, New York NY

3.0 The Impact of Parks on Commercial & Residential Property Values

3.1 Overview

Parks are a vital component of the Town of Oakville. Parks contribute to healthy and complete communities, and offer an attractive quality of place for residents, businesses and visitors alike. Parks can improve the quality of life of residents by providing spaces for recreational activities and social gathering, as well as offering mental and physical health benefits. Proximity to parks is associated with higher levels of physical activity by nearby residents, which can reduce the incidence of certain chronic illnesses associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Beyond the physical health benefits, parks can also improve psychological health and development. In fact, the benefits of spending time in nature on physical and mental health is leading some doctors to prescribe spending time in nature and parks for children and teenagers who are experiencing obesity and mental health challenges. The value of parks has never been more apparent than during the recent pandemic which resulted in a tremendous increase in number of residents using the parks system on a year round basis.

Alongside the social and health-related benefits of parks, there are important environmental benefits for communities with green features, such as trees, integrated within the park system. Trees remove significant amounts of air pollution from our atmosphere each year, and sequester carbon, reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Further, parks and trees play an important role in combatting the urban heat island effect. A study conducted in 2019 showed that on an extremely hot day in an urban setting, parks were as much as 17 degrees cooler than other parts of an urban environment that lacked trees and greenspace (National Recreation and Parks Association, 2019). As summer days get hotter and temperatures increase annually, parks and trees will play an increasingly important role in keeping residents cool.

In addition to the environmental and health related benefits of parks, parks also offer important economic benefits to residents and municipalities. These economic benefits include increased property values, increased tourism expenditures, decreased health care expenditures, reduced storm water management costs, and savings associated with reduced air pollution.

3.2 Quality of Place/Quality of Life

Parks of all types and scales are crucial to the functional attributes of a Town. The following list explores how parks contribute to placemaking and quality of life, and then outlines the economic and environmental value of investing in the park system.

- **Healthy and Complete Communities -** Parks contribute to healthy and complete communities, and offer an attractive quality of place for residents, businesses and visitors alike. For residents in particular, the social and health benefits of parks has been well documented, and are associated with the role parks play in community development, and in creating a sense of community, community belonging, reducing the incidence of crime, promoting physical activity, supporting psychological and social development and improving environmental indicators.

- **Community Development & A Sense of Community -** In his work on Why America Needs More Town Parks and Open Space (2003), Sherer, found that parks play a role in community development by making cities more liveable, offering recreational opportunities for diverse populations and providing places for people from all socio-economic strata to gather and create a sense of community. Sherer reports that *"research shows that residents of neighbourhoods with greenery in common spaces are more likely to enjoy stronger social ties than those who live surrounded by barren concrete"*.

  Similar findings were reported in a 2008 report by The Trust for Public Land (TPL) Centre for Park Excellence on the value of Philadelphia's park space system, which found parks allow communities to build "social capital" through human relationships that promote neighbourhood strength and safety. Further, the TPL found that the act of improving or renewing a park space together as a community can strengthen "social capital".

  Taking a more historical view, Sherer found that in the late 19th century investment in parks reflected a belief in the community and the related health benefits of parks in providing opportunities for recreation and social interaction. Parks were understood as "necessities" in urban settings, not "amenities" (Sherer, 2003).

- **Greater Opportunity for Physical Activity & Reduced Incidence of Chronic Illnesses & Associated Costs -** Proximity to parks associated with higher levels of physical activity by nearby residents, which can reduce the incidence of certain chronic illnesses associated with a sedentary lifestyle. With regard to increased levels of physical activity, Sherer (2003) found that those who have access to parks exercise more, and that *"access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach produced a 48.4% increase in frequency of physical activity."* Similar findings have been reported by the Urban Land Institute (2013) and Harnik & Simms (2004).

  The correlation between physical activity and chronic illness has received a substantial amount of attention in recent years. Referencing a study from the Journal of Applied Psychology, the Urban Land Institute (2013) reported that *"communities designed for exercise can prevent 90.0% of type 2 diabetes, as well as 50 percent of heart disease, stroke, and site-specific cancers"*.

  Community design features that contribute to active living were identified and included *"public places such as greenways, multiuse trails, playgrounds, pools, athletic fields, and other recreation facilities that encourage physical exercise"* (ULI, 2013). In terms of reduced health care costs, a 2008 study by the TPL found Philadelphia's park space system generate $70 million worth of savings in medical expenses annually. *"A recent study of major U.K cities showed that when communities are surrounded by more green space, life expectancy increases significantly"* (Alan Logan, interview with Michelle Adelman, CBC News, February 22, 2014).

- **Psychological Health & Development -** Beyond the physical health benefits, parks can also improve psychological health and development. In particular, contact with the natural environment has been shown to improve both physical and psychological health (Sherer, 2003). Play is also central to learning and development in small children, connected to muscle strength, coordination, cognition, and reasoning. As put by Sherer (2003), *"exercise has been shown to increase the brain's capacity for learning"*, so creating recreational opportunities for children contributes to both their physical and psychological development.

  "People moving to towns with more parks and gardens not only report greater well-being than those without access to amenities, but their improved mental health lasts for at least three years after their move", according to results of a study published in the journal of Environmental Science and Technology by Ian Adcock of the University of Exeter Medical School.

- **Crime Reduction -** The perceived and real sense of safety contributes to a community's attractiveness and positive functioning, which can be impacted by the incidence of crime. In this regard Sherer (2003) reports that *"access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to juvenile delinquency"* by giving youth a safe environment in which to recreate, interact, and spend time. As such, *"research supports the widely held belief that community involvement in neighbourhood parks is correlated with lower levels of crime"* (Sherer, 2003). Notably, poorly maintained public spaces are associated with the exact opposite effect – that being an increase in the perceived or real incidence of crime.

- **Environmental Indicators -** Alongside the social and health-related benefits of parks, there are important environmental benefits for communities with integrated green features, such as trees, integrated within the park system. For example, *"trees reduce air pollution and water pollution, they help keep cities cooler, and they are a more effective and less expensive way to manage storm water runoff than building systems of concrete sewers and drainage ditches"* (Sherer, 2003).

  In particular, trees and shrubs improve urban air quality by removing air pollutants including nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter (The Trust for Public Land Center for Park Excellence & Philadelphia Parks Alliance, 2008). Trees also remove polluted particulate matter in groundwater naturally before this water reaches storm sewers (Sherer, 2003).

3.3 Economic Value of Parks

Public sector investment in parks can be leveraged into a private sector investment response. Park system investment is a key stimulus for change, establishing the appropriate environment for redevelopment and revitalization.

Assigning economic value to parks has historically been anecdotal. More recently, the "multiple perspectives" approach, alongside other research and case studies confirm the important economic benefits of investing in parks, and begin the move to more quantitative economic evidence.

There has been considerable work done in the United States on measuring the economic value of parks. Much of this work has been spearheaded by the California-based Trust for Public Land (TPL). In the 2009, publication by Harnick and Welle, Measuring the Economic Value of a Town Park System, an approach was developed that has since been used to assess the value of park space in several US cities, including Sacramento, Philadelphia, Boston, San Diego and Washington. The approach taken by TPL is to develop a methodology to quantify economic value according to seven distinct perspectives and discussed as follows:

- **Increased property values –** which looks at the extent to which proximity to a park space adds value to the market and assessed value of residential property;

- **Increased tourist expenditure –** which assesses the number of visitors to a community who spend more time and money in the community than they otherwise would have, because they are participating in activities in parks, or simply enjoying being outdoors;

- **Direct use value –** which measures the value that users place upon the availability of park spaces (i.e. how much they would be prepared to pay for the opportunity to enjoy parks if they were not freely available);

- **Health value –** which measures the value of the savings in medical costs to individuals and society-at-large, by virtue of the fact that people who use parks (and the broader public realm) are healthier and less likely to incur medical expenses;

- **Community cohesion value –** which measures the value to the community overall of participating in parks-related initiatives (i.e. individuals donating their time and/or money and working together on park-related projects), a concept very similar to what Jane Jacobs had identified as "social capital" in her 1961 work, The Life and Death of Great American Cities.

- **Reduced storm water management costs –** which examines the value of park spaces in helping reduce runoff during periods of heavy rainfall, and enabling precipitation to filter and recharge groundwater – the savings to the municipality in terms of fewer gallons of storm water that require treatment can be directly measured; and,

- **Value of reduced air pollution –** which examines the effect of trees and vegetation acting as the "lungs" of the Town and removing various toxins from the air, including nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, and certain particulates. The objective is to assess the extent to which park spaces in a given community have this effect – based upon the ambient air quality of the Town – and then measures the value (cost) of removing these materials from the air through technological means, such as scrubbers.

While this approach does provide a tangible way to quantify economic value, it should be realized that the benefits accrue to different parties in different ways. Some benefits are realized directly by individuals and municipalities (e.g. increased property values that benefit individual households through enhanced market values of their properties, and to municipalities through higher taxes realized through increased assessment of the same properties) while others accrue to society generally (such as "community cohesion value"). Table 1 identifies for each type of benefit, an indication of who exactly the beneficiaries are, and examples of the approach being used.

Table 1

Aspect of Economic Value Measured	Beneficiaries	Some Metrics and Examples
Increase Property Values	- Individual property owners - Municipalities (increased taxes)	Evidence based upon a large sample of parks shows that location of a residence within 500 ft. of a park will increase market and assessed value by, on average, 5.0% - and for 'really excellent' parks this added value can be as high as 15.0%
Increased Tourist Expenditure	- Businesses in the community - Municipalities (though business taxes)	Parks in San Diego were found to increase expenditures on the part of out-of-town tourists by $114 million, which resulted in $8.7 million in tax revenue going directly to the Town (2007 study)
Direct Use Value	- Society generally: Households who do not need to pay directly to use parks	A 2006 study estimated the value of parks in Boston in this regard as being equivalent to $354 million
Health Value	- Individuals and higher levels of government, through reduced health costs	In Sacramento, in 2007, a study of the value of health benefits estimated that park participation saved the local health care system just under $20 million
Community Cohesion Value	- Society generally: Households who do not need to pay directly to use parks	A 2006 study of the value of social capital attributable to participation in parks-related initiatives and projects estimated an economic value of $8.6 million in contributions and volunteer time
Reduced Storm Water Management Costs	- Municipalities	Park runoff reduction savings in a 2007 study in Philadelphia estimated savings of $5.9 million to the Town
Value of Reduced Air Pollution	- Individuals and higher levels of government, through reduced environmental remediation costs and better health outcomes	A 2005 study in Washington estimated the costs of removing pollutants from the air (had not the park system done this 'for free') as $19.9 million

In addition to the economic benefits identified, numerous studies have shown that significant public investment in park space can generate other positive impacts, some of which are related to those already identified. For example, park space can:

- **Promote reinvestment by the private sector in old and new building stock –** Experience across North America indicates that public sector investment in park space stimulates private sector investment in new buildings. Creating a beautiful park is an investment in the future. Public dollars spent secure existing tax revenues and have the potential to generate tremendous additional financial returns to all levels of government.

- **Maintain existing retailers and attract new businesses –** Success breeds success, and an enhanced park space system through a shopping district ensures the retention of current tenants and attracts new retailers. Public investment sends a strong message to the private sector.

- **Enhance a Town's reputation –** Tourism increases with an array of park spaces, activities, and events that are supported by the public sector. By identifying an area as having the potential to become a key tourist destination, its transformation enhances the Town's ability to attract tourists.

3.4 The Impact of Parks on Commercial & Residential Property Values

Real estate markets, especially residential markets, place a high value on proximity to parks and other key public realm network components as an advantage, primarily through the amenity they provide. In fact, a number of real estate studies suggest that a premium exists for residences located close to park spaces. Commercial markets also respond positively to investments in parks and the broader public realm network, which can stimulate revitalization, private-sector investment, and attract new visitors and customers to an area.

The following are some relevant and interesting points taken from studies exploring the relationship between property values and proximity to parks and other open space components.

The principle inherent to these case studies is that investment in parks is required as a key stimulus to enhance the demand for development which, in turn, will establish the appropriate environment for revitalization, redevelopment and economic prosperity.

1. Times Square, New York

In the early 1980s, Times Square was filled with illegal or illicit businesses, and was shunned by residents and tourists alike. In 1984, there were only 3,000 people in the 13-acre Times Square area involved in legitimate businesses, generating a total of $6 million US in property taxes.

In 1992, the 42nd Street Redevelopment Plan, dramatically changed the face of Times Square. Financed with over $300 million US in public money, the redevelopment has been enormously successful with more than $2.5 billion US in new private sector development built since 1995.

In 1992, when the Times Square Business Improvement District started, lease rates averaged $38.00 US/ft2, and vacancy rates were 20.0%. By 2001, lease rates had increased to $58.00 US/ft2 and vacancy rates have dropped to just under 5.0%. Today, the area is home to 280 restaurants and 670 retail stores. Tourism has increased dramatically with over 12 million theatre patrons spending $590 million US annually on tickets alone.

Times Square, New York City (Image: David McSpadden)

Dundas Square, Toronto (Image: Andrzej Wrotek)

2. Dundas Square, Toronto

In 1998, as part of its Yonge Street Regeneration Project, the City of Toronto approved the expropriation and demolition of the buildings on site and the construction of Yonge-Dundas Square. The Square is managed as a commercial venture by a broad based stakeholder group including local businesses and Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University).

The City's investment in the acquisition of the private landholdings and in the development of an urban park space has spawned extensive real estate investment along Dundas Street, has attracted new, high value retail tenants and driven out much of the criminal element that had formerly populated the area.

3. Millennium Park, Chicago

Chicago's Millennium Park is an oft-cited example of the potential economic spin-offs associated with public investment in park space. Located on Chicago's waterfront, the Park has completely transformed what was formally a desolate stretch of rail yards, parking lots and remnant industrial uses. Since opening in 2004, Millennium Park has quickly become one of the City's primary landmarks and tourist draws, in large part because of its high quality design and impressive public art collection, including works by renowned artists Jaume Plensa and Anish Kapoor.

Not only does Millennium Park generate substantial revenues from tourists who come to Chicago to experience it, but within a year of its opening, residential real estate values in adjacent neighbourhoods saw a nearly $400 US per square foot increase in value. Within that same year, approximately $1.4 billion US in residential development was directly attributed to the Park's development (as reported in a 2006 New York Times article).

Millennium Park, Chicago

Post Office Square, Boston

4. Post Office Square, Boston

For years, a two acre parcel of land in the midst of Boston's Financial District was occupied by an unsightly, 500,000 square foot concrete parking garage. But, in the early 1980s, at the urging of surrounding businesses, the City joined a unique public-private partnership to demolish the structure and create an underground garage covered by a gracefully designed park.

Most observers agree, Post Office Square has changed Boston forever. The Square has boosted the value of surrounding properties, while providing an elegant green focus to an otherwise crowded commercial area.

5. Waterfront Toronto, Toronto

Recognizing the importance of park spaces as a key component of the urban structure and as a way to demonstrate commitment to a development vision, Waterfront Toronto has been actively planning and developing parks and public spaces as part of its overall waterfront revitalization efforts. Dedicating approximately 25.0% of the waterfront area to parks and public spaces, the Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces Framework is planning an interconnected parks system with over 90 individual parks and public spaces.

To date, Waterfront Toronto has made considerable investments in park space development, with nearly 20 new or enhanced parks and public spaces opened since 2004. Three of its most recently completed park space projects, Sherbourne Common, Sugar Beach, and Underpass Park have already reached near-iconic status, cited in various publications for their innovative designs and appearing in numerous City tourism promotional campaigns.

Sugar Beach, Toronto

Underpass Park, Toronto

In addition to those specific examples, there are a range of general conclusions from the literature review that identify the economic benefits of a great public realm network, including an array of park spaces and streetscape elements:

- Sherer (2003) finds that *"quality of life is a determining factor in real estate values and economic vitality"*. He quotes a 1998 real estate industry report, which calls livability *"a litmus test for determining the strength of the real estate investment market...if people want to live in a place, companies, stores, hotels, and apartments will follow"* (Sherer, 2003).

- In a study of residential units within 245 metres of parks in Portland, Oregon, it was estimated that a 1.0% to 3.0% property value premium could be attributed to the park space (Bolitzer & Netusil, 2000);

- In Dallas, Texas, homes facing one of 14 parks were found to be worth 22.0% more than homes more than 1.3 kilometres from such amenities (Miller, 2001);

- A study from Boulder, Colorado found that the average values of homes next to the greenbelt was 32.0% higher than those 975 metres away (Sherer, 2003).

- It has been suggested that a positive impact of about 20.0% on property values abutting or fronting a park is a reasonable point of departure, and that the impact is likely to be substantial, within roughly 150 metres;

- A study on the impacts of the Bryant Park revitalization in New York found that *"within two years of reopening, leasing activity on neighboring Sixth Avenue had increased 60.0% over the previous year"* (Sherer, 2003). As such, Sherer concluded that *"commercial asking rents, residential sale prices, and assessed values for properties near a well- improved park generally exceeded rents in surrounding submarkets"* (Sherer, 2003).

- A study by New Yorkers for Parks found that capital improvements to park spaces can increase nearby commercial and residential real estate values as well as commercial asking rents, residential sales prices, and assessed property values, as opposed to those in other submarkets (New Yorkers for Parks, Ernst & Young, 2002). Overall, the study found that *"close proximity to a quality park is a positive site attribute that can enhance the curb appeal and value of adjacent real estate" The study also found "park spaces to be community assets, with real impacts on the decision to purchase, invest, or finance a property in their neighbourhood"* (New Yorkers for Parks, Ernst & Young, 2002).

- A study by the Virginia Cooperative Extension showed that *"access to green space increased worker productivity and that greening business districts increased community pride and drew more customers"* (Kilbourne, 2009).

- Recreational opportunities and urban life can contribute to the selection of cities in which to locate corporate headquarters, as was the case in Boeing's decision to locate in Chicago (Sherer, 2003);

- A study by Credit Valley Conservation found that *"abutting a natural feature [which are often considered as natural parks] can increase property value from 1.0% to 5.0%, depending on the type of natural feature."* The same study also found that natural features in south Mississauga increase property values by an average of $8,010 per property, which is equal to over approximately 2.4% of the base property value. In north Mississauga, property values increase by approximately $10,273 or 3.6% of the base value (Credit Valley Conservation, 2009).

Bryant Park, New York City

Tannery Park, Oakville

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

The following are the recommendations of this Parks Plan - 2031 for the Town of Oakville. Some of the recommendations will be appropriate for inclusion in a new Parkland Dedication By-law, while others may be more appropriately included as an accompanying policy document, as refinements within the Official Plan, or within an accompanying park planning and design guideline. The recommendations provided are based on research from other jurisdictions, as well as from discussions with Town staff. In addition, the recommendations have been influenced by the related experience of the consulting team from planning, design and fiscal perspectives.

The recommendations are organized into the following 9 Sections, and are supported by more detailed information provided in a number of Technical Appendices:

- Key Town of Oakville Objectives;
- Meeting the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2ha/1,000 people (Appendix I);
- Establishing a Context Appropriate Parkland Hierarchy (Appendix II and III);
- Designing and Maintaining the Parkland System (Appendix IV and V);
- Achieving the Town-wide Active Parkland Target (Appendix VI and VII);
- Generating Land/Cash-in-Lieu of Land;
- Options for the Ownership of the Town's Parkland System (Appendix VIII);
- Understanding Cash-In-Lieu of Parkland; and,
- Administration of the Town's New Parkland Dedication By-law.-

4.2 Key Town of Oakville Objectives

Based on research and ongoing conversations with Town staff there was tremendous general agreement on a number of key objectives for this Parks Plan, including:

- Parks are considered to be a lifeline for people in the community. It was noted, specifically, that parks became an urban escape for people amid the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. Parks are a crucial component contributing to the quality of life of residents. Parks are a necessary component of a complete and livable community;
- Public sector investment in parks can be leveraged into a private sector investment response. Park system investment is a key stimulus for change, establishing the appropriate environment for redevelopment and revitalization;
- The Town's new approach to parkland dedication should be guided by the principles of fairness, equity, consistency and transparency. It is also important to recognize that the new Parkland Dedication By-Law must be defensible; and,
- This Parks Plan needs to be:
  - Clear, and must find the right balance between achieving a great Parkland System for the Town, and the financial feasibility of new development; and,
  - Cognizant of the inherent differences between the established neighbourhood context, and the in the context of the Town's identified Strategic Growth Areas.

To a significant extent, ongoing changes to the legislative framework under the *Planning Act* have dramatically affected the quantum of parkland that the Town can realistically achieve through the development approval process. This Parks Plan reflects the most up-to-date elements of relevant parkland dedication legislation provided under the *Planning Act*.

4.3 Meeting the Town's Active Parkland Target of 2.2ha/1,000 people

The Town's 5 Year Review of the 2012 Parks, Recreation and Library Facilities Master Plan (April 2017) - by Monteith + Brown, Dillon - recommends the continuation of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares for every 1,000 people (see **Appendix I**). Currently, the Town is achieving a Town-wide Active Parkland ratio of an estimated 2.56 hectares per 1000 people, which is a significant measure of a successful parkland acquisition strategy over the past 20 years.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Town continue to utilize the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1000 people as an aspirational objective for planning and Parkland acquisition to the horizon year of 2031, or until such time as the Target is fully reconsidered, or confirmed.

The Town of Oakville is becoming more and more "urban". As such, at some point in the future (beyond 2031) the Town's opportunities for acquiring Active Parkland will be reduced because the Town will be essentially "built-out" to its municipal boundaries, while, at the same time, more, and more intense growth through intensification will be absorbed. Because of more, and more urban growth projections, it is expected that the continued achievement of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target will become more and more difficult to achieve over time.

The current Town-wide Active Parkland Target is a snapshot of a moment in time, and will continuously modulate based on a host of factors identified in this Parks Plan. However, the reconsideration or confirmation of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target will not be necessary until after the planning horizon of this Parks Plan - 2031, or unless there are relevant changes to the *Planning Act*.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Town continue monitor its ongoing parkland acquisition achievements in the context of its current Town-wide Active Parkland Target, in order to fully inform future park planning activities. Given the importance of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target, and the anticipated urbanization of the Town over time, the Town will need to carefully monitor its parkland acquisition activities, and eventually may need to reconsider its Town-wide Parkland Target as follows:

- Rephrasing the Town-wide Active Parkland Target as an aspirational target or objective; and/or,
- Refining the definition of Active Parkland to include a more fulsome list of recreational opportunities, including non-intensive recreational activities such as trails and the enjoyment of nature. Removal of the need for only active park elements to be counted toward the Target is also an appropriate consideration.

The potential redefinition of Active Parkland would also suggest the need to consider the utilization alternative land resources including unconstrained lands within the Natural Heritage System, the acquisition of lands within the Greenbelt Plan Area, lands currently owned by the Province/Conservation Authority, as well as other innovative approaches in order to maintain the long-term achievement of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the Town consider the dedication, or acquisition of:

- Unconstrained lands within the Natural Heritage System for the purposes of public parkland; and/or,
- Provincially owned lands within the Town's boundaries, including Bronte Creek Provincial Park lands identified as within the Greenbelt Plan Area and other suitable lands owned by the Conservation Authority.

Town acquisition/dedication of these land resources would facilitate significant augmentation of its supply of parkland and is a way of ensuring the achievement of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target in the long-term, as well as providing significant programing opportunities.

Further, it is recognized that in some instances, the Town-wide Active Parkland Target will not be achievable solely through the parkland dedication provisions of the *Planning Act*, and the Town should consider a comprehensive parkland acquisition strategy, including other acquisition/securement tools.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the Town consider the preparation of a Comprehensive Parkland Acquisition Strategy that utilizes the following acquisition tools:

- The parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu provisions of the *Planning Act*;
- The Community Benefits provisions of the *Planning Act*;
- Public acquisition;
- Land exchanges;
- Donations, gifts, bequests; and,
- Other methods, deemed appropriate by the Town.

Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park, Oakville

4.4 Establishing a Context Appropriate Parkland Hierarchy

The Urban Park Hierarchy for the Strategic Growth Areas

Appendix II identifies the need for the Town to establish an Urban Park Hierarchy to apply within the Town's defined Strategic Growth Areas (identified intensification centres and corridors) and **Appendix III** provides a number of examples of each urban park type within the urban park hierarchy.

In general, urban park spaces are characterized as diverse, flexible, small and connected - There is very little private outdoor recreation space in higher density communities. Urban park spaces will therefore play a critical role in providing outdoor space in Oakville's Strategic Growth Areas. Urban park spaces have both green and hardscape design components, and are inherently connected to the public realm (ie. abutting public sidewalk system). The Urban Parkland System includes primarily public spaces that form an interconnected network. The Urban Parkland System is fundamentally different from its traditional suburban counterpart because it is:

- Animated by the people who walk from place to place and interact with the uses in the adjacent buildings;
- More heavily used and more diverse in their component parts and, as such, require a higher cost of design and development, and an enhanced maintenance protocol;
- Integrated as part of the pedestrian circulation network within a Strategic Growth Area; and,
- Flexible to accommodate different users and events, and will respond to use patterns that may be dramatically different at different times of the day.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the Town identify the following urban parkland hierarchy for implementation through the planning and development of its Strategic Growth Areas. It is expected that the majority of these Strategic Growth Areas will also be subject to and implemented through approved Secondary Plans/Block Plans:

Public Common (PC)
0.8 to 2 ha
PC spaces are the social and recreational focal points of a community. They typically meet the needs of the local residents and businesses, and in some instances, accommodate Town-wide facilities. PC spaces support a balance of active and passive uses. PC spaces shall be coordinated with urban school sites, where possible.

PC spaces should accommodate special features that add visual interest and contribute to placemaking, including locations for public art. PC spaces are intended to serve community users who are generally within a 10-minute walking distance (approximately 800 metres).

Urban Square (US)
0.1 to 0.8 ha
US spaces support community-oriented social opportunities, as well as Town-wide entertainment and cultural events depending on their size and location. US spaces may include public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street- related activities such as vendor and exhibit space. US spaces are intended to serve community users who are generally within a 5-minute walking distance (approximately 400 metres).

Promenade (P)
P spaces are substantial linear spaces that are located between adjacent building facades and the adjacent road right-of-way. They are typically only located along one side of the street, and are continuous along the length of the block. P spaces are between 6 and 20 metres in width, and are typically used to enhance the pedestrian experience along with highly activated at-grade retail spaces and restaurants. P spaces may include public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street- related activities such as vendor and exhibit space.

A robust Urban Parkland System also includes an array of smaller scale elements that add to the interest of the system, the connectivity of the system, as well as providing enhanced opportunities to animate outdoor activity and amenity adjacent to retail and restaurant businesses.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Town consider adding to the urban parkland hierarchy a number of Other Urban Park Spaces. In addition, the Town should consider recognizing these Other Urban Park Spaces as contributing to the required parkland dedication within any development proposal within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas, subject to an understanding of their individual contribution to the overall Urban Parkland System. Other Urban Park Spaces are described as follows:

Other Urban Park
< 0.25 ha
Other Urban Park Spaces support the social and cultural fabric of Oakville's Strategic Growth Areas. They are destinations for day-to-day use and are animated by their adjacent uses, such as cafés and shops. They are intended to serve a local community that is generally within a 2.5 to 5-minute walk (approximately 200 to 400 metres) of residents, visitors and businesses.

Other Urban Park spaces are small and compact spaces that are designed to a very high standard to support more intensified use. Other Urban Park Spaces may include:

- **Connecting Link (CL) -** A CL is an outdoor or indoor walkway that may be lined with retail stores, restaurants and cafés. A CL is a minimum of 4 metres in width, and may be substantially wider. When enclosed, the floor to ceiling height shall be a minimum of 7 metres. Although a CL is intended to enable pedestrians to travel through the community quickly and easily, many are destinations unto themselves with seating, restaurant and retail frontages.

- **Pocket Parks –** Pocket Parks are small, pedestrian friendly spaces that accommodate socializing in dense urban areas. They include primarily hard surface elements, but can also accommodate softer elements. Pocket Parks are destinations unto themselves with outdoor seating, restaurant and retail frontages. Pocket Parks must be a minimum of 75 square metres in size, and must be connected to, and have at least 7.5 metres of direct frontage along the public sidewalk system.

- **Sliver Parks -** Sliver Parks are narrow linear spaces that often front restaurants, cafés and retail spaces. They create plazas or forecourts between the face of the adjacent building and the street right-of-way. They are effectively small scale extensions of the public sidewalk system.

The Park Hierarchy for the Established Neighbourhoods and North Oakville

The Town's Official Plan establishes an appropriate parkland hierarchy for its Established Neighbourhoods and in North Oakville. The Parkland System in the Town's Established Neighbourhoods is characterized as public, big, green and programed - In an Established Neighbourhood there is substantial private outdoor space in the back or front yard that significantly supplements the Parkland System. In many cases, the Parkland System in an Established Neighbourhood is also at time, located in proximity to school sites. For the most part, the Parkland System in an Established Neighbourhood is owned, designed and maintained by the Town.

As noted earlier in this Parks Plan, the Town of Oakville has been extremely successful in achieving a diverse, well designed and well used Parkland System throughout its Established Neighbourhoods, and that has continued through the planning and development of North Oakville. The Official Plan currently articulates a robust Parkland System that is appropriate for the Established Neighbourhoods and has been applied in North Oakville.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the Town identify the following parkland hierarchy for implementation through the planning and development of its Established Neighbourhoods, as follows:

Community Park (CP)
>5 ha
CP spaces support a variety of recreational and athletic interests with amenities, such as sports fields and courts, large skateboard parks, outdoor skating facilities, field houses, picnic shelters, off-leash dog areas and water play facilities. CP spaces are typically co-located with Community Centres, where possible. CP spaces may accommodate specialized events and amenities may attract users from across the Town

Neighbourhood Park (NP)
0.75 to 5 ha
NP spaces support a balance of active and passive uses, such as playgrounds, skate zones, play courts, unlit sports fields and social gathering spaces. NP spaces may be coordinated with school sites, where possible. NP spaces serve a local community located within a 10-minute walk of the park space.

Parkette (P)
<0.75 ha
P spaces are recommended for instances where an NP space is not necessary, but local-level facilities (e.g., playground, waterplay, seating) are required to serve a nearby development. These spaces are not suitable for large features such as sports fields. P spaces support the social and cultural fabric of the community located within a 5-minute walk of the park space.

The Eco Park Typology

The amount of parkland necessary to achieve the Town-wide Active Parkland Target to match its 2031 growth projection is substantial. This reality may require that the Town consider accepting off-site parkland dedication for non-traditional parkland typologies. These off-site dedications may not necessarily be traditional suburban or urban park typologies, requiring a park type that is more ecologically appropriate in some contexts.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Town consider amending its Official Plan and its park planning and design documents to incorporate an Eco Park typology into the parkland hierarchy for implementation through municipal acquisition and/or off-site parkland dedications:

Eco Park
>3 ha
Eco Park spaces support environmental education, interpretation and nature-related recreation. Eco Park spaces include opportunities for linear and passive recreation and provide an ecological relief from the more urban environments in Oakville. Eco Park spaces may accommodate specialized events and amenities and will attract users from across the Town. Where possible, Eco Parks should be considered to co-locate with other park opportunities that can more appropriately accommodate active recreation facilities.

It is crucial to note that the Eco Park typology does not replace the need for a full suite of urban and more traditional suburban park typologies throughout the Town. Eco Parks are an opportunity to augment the Town's robust "campus of parks" concept - not replace it.

4.5 Designing and Maintaining the Parkland System

Designing the Parkland System

Designing the Parkland System is a crucial Town function and requires an understanding of contextual relationship with residents, businesses and built form, as well as a recognition that there are a number of key principles and general design considerations that must be included in all design decisions. The key principles and general design considerations include:

- Convenience and coherence;
- Context, heritage and placemaking;
- Accessibility;
- Safety;
- Comfort; and,
- Sustainability and resilience.

Appendix IV provides a comprehensive set of design guidelines for the Town-wide Parkland System that is articulated in this Report. This work is considered as a starting point for Town staff to use as the basis for their ongoing parkland design exercises.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the Town consider adopting a comprehensive set of Design Guidelines to more fully articulate the park system hierarchy, and to provide design guidance to the various components of the park system hierarchy. The Design Guidelines should include a discussion about the general parameters, including scale, the type of park services/facilities and the anticipated user groups for each component of the Park System Hierarchy.

Maintaining the Parkland System

Good Maintenance is Crucial

A great Parkland System is diverse, well-designed and, importantly, well maintained. A commitment to high levels of park maintenance is crucial to the success of the park system hierarchy and to the individual park spaces that comprise it. The Town of Oakville has an excellent track record in maintaining its more traditional suburban parkland network to an excellent standard of quality. **Appendix V** provides additional explanation for the recommendations that follow.

Funding + Coordinating Ongoing Maintenance

The importance of both funding and coordinating maintenance efforts of the entire Parkland System over time cannot be understated. With the addition of new scales, types and functions of park spaces, maintenance protocols will need to be more diverse and park type specific. Different demands for equipment, different planting programs and different programing objectives will make ongoing maintenance far more complex than for a typical suburban parks system:

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the Town consider clarifying roles, responsibilities and protocols for ongoing maintenance of the Parkland System for each type of park within both the Traditional/Suburban and Urban Parkland Hierarchies. The objective is to ensure a commitment and an understanding of the levels of maintenance that are both necessary and desirable. Some of the key elements of a “memorandum of understanding” for park maintenance may be:

- To include parks maintenance staff in the review of the parks design and development process to ensure that there is a full understanding and, ultimately, a clear commitment to establishing the required maintenance protocols. The intent of a park design, program and facilities need

to be clearly identified early in the process by staff to ensure consideration of issues related to their ability to maintain the plant materials, landscape surfaces and features over the long-term. Any special equipment or maintenance expertise should be identified before the park design is finalized;

- Where a decision to proceed with a complex (enhanced) design - particularly in an urban context - requiring enhanced maintenance - must include agreement among the design group, the development group and the parks maintenance group that the park and all its component parts can, and will be maintained in accordance with required best practices; and,
- The increase in maintenance budget needs to be understood and agreed to by the Town staff and disseminated to the front line staff as an agreed upon direction.

Design for Lower Maintenance - A Philosophy of Sustainability

There are opportunities to design for lower maintenance as a sustainable approach to cost savings over time. Landscape Architects can design with relatively low maintenance paving materials, furniture and plant material. Plant material in an urban setting is crucial and requires special attention for maintenance.

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that the Town consider promoting a more sustainable park space development approach that requires less maintenance over time. For example:

- Establishing a minimum tree canopy coverage for the various park types within the hierarchy;
- Selection of plant species that are drought tolerant once their root systems are established is one example of reducing the maintenance requirements for water;
- Understanding the role of soil chemistry, soil volumes and soil types is also important to support lower maintenance plant material and must be specified in tandem with plant material; and,
- Pruning requirements of plant material can also be taken into consideration in the design process, to reduce maintenance.

Working with Benefitting Landowners

There are opportunities to include other partners who can assist the Town with both establishing and performing enhanced maintenance protocols, including:

- **Business Improvement Areas -** Local BIA's have a secure funding source through a levy on property taxes that is to be used for marketing, events, enhanced maintenance and capital projects. Certainly BIA's can work with the Town's parks maintenance staff to augment the maintenance protocols of the Town. BIA's and business owners may consider assisting the Town with the maintenance of adjacent urban park components, as part of their overall property maintenance procedures;

- **Neighbourhood Associations -** While Neighbourhood Associations are not provided with a stable funding source through municipal taxation, there are jurisdictions in Canada that rely on direct local neighbourhood involvement in the design, development and maintenance of adjacent park spaces and the broader parkland network. The Town may wish to consider pursuing a direct form of relationship with Neighbourhood Associations to assist with ongoing maintenance, in collaboration with Town maintenance protocols;

- **Building Owners/Condo Corporations -** Where an urban park has been developed as part of a large scale development, and the space remains in private ownership, it shall be a requirement of any parkland dedication credit that legal agreements ensuring public access and assigning maintenance responsibility - requiring that the park be maintained to Town standards. Town standards are likely to be considered the minimum standard. For this approach to park maintenance to be successful, there will need to be a very clear definition of just what "maintained to Town standards" means;

- **Trust Funds -** In the United States, many jurisdictions have required that urban parks be maintained by a Trust Fund. Typically, the Trust Fund is established while the park is in the design and development stages. Trust Funds can be funded by the private sector (a tax deduction in the US), by the public sector, or through some combination of both. The Trust Fund Board retains maintenance contractors and takes on the responsibility to maintain the public park to a prescribed level of quality, and the Town absolves themselves of further maintenance responsibilities; and,

- **Adopt-a-Park Program -** It is important to note that an adopt- a-park program is not a replacement for the Town's ongoing maintenance of public parks or the public realm network, but an opportunity to augment existing responsibilities. Local service clubs, school groups, horticultural societies, or interested citizens/citizen groups may wish to become involved in specific park maintenance events, and/or for ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

Recommendation 12: It is recommended that the Town explore a full range of partnership opportunities to ensure the ongoing, high quality maintenance of the Parkland System throughout the Town.

4.6 Achieving the Town-wide Active Parkland Target

The Town will need to utilize a full array of planning and financial tools to achieve the stated Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people. One important tool is the use of the *Planning Act*, which allows the Town to require parkland, or cash-in-lieu of parkland through the development approval process.

The Town of Oakville incorporates a full array of development types and community contexts, and it is appropriate to consider parkland dedication in a way that recognizes those differences. This Section focuses on these differences and promotes an approach to calculating parkland dedication based on land use and density, in accordance with the legislative framework of the *Planning Act*.

Commercial and Industrial Uses

For Commercial and Industrial land use categories, the *Planning Act* states that parkland dedication shall be up to a maximum of 2 percent of the Gross Land Area proposed for development. It is important to note that in the case of the parkland dedication requirement for commercial and/or industrial forms of development is based on the land area, and not the scale or intensity of development and, as a result, there should not be an additional parkland dedication requirement for redeveloped commercial and/or industrial development, or expansions to existing commercial and/or industrial development, assuming that the Gross Land Area of the Site does not change, and that the required parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu has already been achieved by the Town.

Recommendation 13: It is recommended that the Town require parkland dedication for commercial and/or industrial development in the amount permitted by the *Planning Act* - 2 percent of the Gross Land Area, unless otherwise identified as exempt from parkland dedication. It is also recommended that for the replacement or expansion of existing commercial and industrial uses, that there be no additional parkland dedication requirement.

Notwithstanding that specific recommendation, where commercial and/or industrial development is proposed, and where no prior parkland dedication has been provided or cash-in-lieu paid, the Town may require parkland dedication in the amount of 2 percent of the Gross Land Area, unless otherwise identified as exempt from parkland dedication.

All Other Non-Residential Land Uses

For all other land uses, the *Planning Act* states that parkland dedication shall be up to a maximum of 5 percent of the Gross Land Area proposed for development or redevelopment. It is important to note that in the case of the parkland dedication requirement for all other forms of non-residential development is based on the land area, and not the scale or intensity of development, and, as a result, there should not be an additional parkland dedication requirement for redeveloped non-residential development, or expansions to existing non-residential development assuming that the Gross Land Area of the Site does not change.

Recommendation 14: It is recommended that the Town require parkland dedication for all other non-residential, non-commercial, and/or non-industrial development in the amount permitted by the *Planning Act*
- 5 percent of the Gross Land Area, unless otherwise identified as exempt from parkland dedication. It is also recommended that for the replacement or expansion of existing non-residential, non-commercial, and/or non-industrial uses, that there be no additional parkland dedication requirement.

Notwithstanding that specific recommendation, where new or expanded non-residential, non-commercial, and/or industrial development is proposed, and where no prior parkland dedication has been provided or cash-in-lieu paid (prior to 2008), the Town may require parkland dedication in the amount of 5 percent of the Gross Land Area, unless otherwise identified as exempt from parkland dedication.

Residential Land Uses

Calculating a residential parkland dedication that is applicable throughout Oakville is complex. The important question that needs to be addressed is what is the appropriate approach for Established Neighbourhoods versus an appropriate approach in an urban intensification context within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas. The goal is to identify a fair and consistent approach that recognizes the diversity of development contexts within the Town of Oakville.

Recommendation 15: It is recommended that the Town achieve a parkland dedication for residential development through the development approval processes prescribed in the *Planning Act*, as amended by Bill 23, as follows:

- Up to a maximum of 5 percent of the Gross Land Area; or,
- Alternatively:
  - Up to a maximum of 1 hectare per 600 net residential dwelling units; or,
  - Where cash-in-lieu is utilized, up to a maximum of 1 hectare per 1,000 net residential dwelling units.

Further, and notwithstanding any other recommendation provided in this Parks Plan, in accordance with the *Planning Act*; the Town shall not require parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu for residential development that is greater than:

- In the case of land proposed for development or redevelopment on a site that is 5 hectares or less in Gross Land Area, 10 percent of the land or the value of the land, as the case may be; and,
- In the case of land proposed for development or redevelopment on a site that that is greater than 5 hectares in Gross Land Area, 15 percent of the land or the value of the land, as the case may be.

Established Neighbourhoods - The Town of Oakville has historically done an excellent job in creating, building and maintaining a public Parkland System that is appropriate within its primarily low to moderate density Established Neighbourhoods. These communities have incorporated a hierarchy of park spaces that are appropriate for their context, and are enshrined in the Town's Official Plan and current Parkland Dedication By-law.

To achieve this success, the legislative tools provided by the *Planning Act*, the policy framework included in the Town's Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law have worked very well. Historically, Established Neighbourhoods have generally been developed with parkland based on 5 percent of Gross Land Area because that parkland dedication standard typically generated the greatest amount of parkland, in comparison to the previous alternative standard of 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units (now changed to 1 hectare per 600 net dwelling units).

The following Table identifies a number of parkland dedication scenarios for 350 gross hectares of residential development land within Oakville's established neighbourhoods:

Parkland Standard/Density in persons/hectare	Density in Units/hectare	Units Generated	People Generated	Parkland Generated (% of gross land area)
5% of Gross Land Area				17.5 ha (5.0%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 30 persons/ha*	10 units/ha	3,500 units		11.7 ha (3.3%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 30 persons/ha	10 units/ha	3,500 units		5.8 ha (1.7%)
2.2 ha/1,000 people @ 3ppu			10,500 people (3,500 units x 3ppu)	23.1 ha (6.6%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 60 persons/ha*	20 units/ha	7,000 units		23.3 ha (6.7%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 60 persons/ha	20 units/ha	7,000 units		11.7 ha (3.3%)
2.2 ha/1,000 people @3ppu			21,000 people (7,000 units x 3 ppu)	46.2 ha (13.2%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 90 persons/ha*	30 units/ha	10,500 units		35.0 ha (10.0%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 90 persons/ha	30 units/ha	10,500 units		17.5 ha (5.0%)
2.2 ha/1,000 people @3ppu			31,500 people (10,500 units x 3 ppu)	69.3 ha (19.8%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 120 persons/ha*	40 units/ha	14,000 units		46.7 ha (13.3%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 120 persons/ha	40 units/ha	14,000 units		23.3 ha (6.7%)
2.2 ha/1,000 people @3ppu			42,000 people 14,000 units x 3 ppu)	92.4 ha (26.4%)

**Denotes pre-Bill 23 standard*

These examples demonstrate that, based on the assumptions utilized in the Table:

- Where the gross residential density is less than 90 persons per hectare, the parkland generation metric of 5 percent of the Gross Land Area generates the greatest parkland dedication;

- Where the gross residential density is at 90 person per hectare, the parkland generation metric of 5 percent of the land area standard and the parkland generation metric of 1 hectare per 600 people generates an approximately equal amount of parkland; and,

- Where the gross residential density is greater than 90 persons per hectare, the parkland generation metric of 1 hectare per 600 people generates the greatest parkland dedication.

Further, it is also important to recognize the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people is not achieved in any scenario because it is well beyond the prescribed maximums identified in the *Planning Act*. This issue is further exacerbated as residential densities increase. To achieve the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people requires, at a minimum, that the Town utilize other parkland acquisition tools, in addition to those tools included within the *Planning Act*.

North Oakville - It is expected that the traditional hierarchy of parkland that has been implemented throughout Oakville's Established Neighbourhoods will continue to be successful within North Oakville. However, if density requirements increase within these neighbourhoods to over 90 persons per hectare (either through market pressure and/or Provincial requirements), the use of the *Planning Act* alternative parkland dedication rate of 1 hectare per 600 net residential dwelling units will begin to generate substantially more parkland than the 5 percent standard.

The Table below identifies a number of parkland dedication scenarios for 350 gross hectares of residential development land within communities that may be expected to achieve gross densities above 90 persons per gross hectare. A reduced household size assumption is utilized to test the sensitivity of the analysis - from 3.0 persons per unit in the previous table to 2.5 persons per unit in the table below:

Parkland Standard/Density in persons/hectare	Density in Units /hectare	Units Generated	Parkland Generated (% of gross land area)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 90 persons/ha*	36 units/ha	12,600 units	42.0 ha (12.0%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 90 persons/ha	36 units/ha	12,600 units	21.0 ha (6.0%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 110 persons/ha*	44 units/ha	15,400 units	51.3 ha (14.7%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 110 persons/ha	44 units/ha	15,400 units	25.7 ha (7.3%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 120 persons/ha*	48 units/ha	16,800 units	56.0 ha (16.0%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 120 persons/ha	48 units/ha	16,800 units	28.0 ha (8.0%)
1 ha/300 dwelling units @ 150 persons/ha*	60 units/ha	21,000 units	70.0 ha (20.0%)
1 ha/600 dwelling units @ 150 persons/ha	60 units/ha	21,000 units	35.0 ha (10.0%)

**Denotes pre-Bill 23 standard*

The typical parkland dedication rate of 5 percent of Gross Land Area generates 17.5 hectares under the assumptions inherent to the previous Table. In the examples in the Table above (with different assumptions), the alternative parkland dedication standard of the *Planning Act* at 1 hectare per 600 net residential dwelling units generates a greater amount of parkland dedication in the Town's lower density residential neighbourhoods, influenced by increasing densities - over approximately 90 persons per hectare - and lowering average household sizes.

Again, the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people is not achieved in any scenario because it is well beyond the prescribed maximums identified in the *Planning Act*. This issue is further exacerbated as residential densities increase, and average household sizes are decreased. As noted, to achieve the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people requires that the Town utilize, at a minimum, other parkland acquisition tools, in addition to those tools included within the *Planning Act*.

Interestingly, the limitations identified in the *Planning Act* (10 and 15 percent of Gross Land Area) generally come into play only at higher density scenarios where development achieves well over 120 persons per hectare. It is therefore concluded that the legislative authority included within the *Planning Act* provides a number of checks and balances. In general (based on a number of assumptions):

- Parkland dedication for residential development can be either 5 percent of Gross Land Area, or 1 hectare per 600 net dwelling units, whichever is greater. Where densities are lower than 90 persons per hectare, the 5 percent standard generates the most parkland for the Town;

- Where residential densities are between 90 persons per hectare, up to approximately 135 persons per hectare, the 1 hectare per 600 dwelling units is the limiting regulation, and will generate the most parkland for the Town; and,

- Where residential densities generally exceed 135 persons per hectare - likely only within the Town's identified Strategic Growth Areas - parkland dedication will be limited by the 10 or 15 percent of Gross Land Area regulation of the *Planning Act*, on the basis of the area of the development site.

Residential Intensification within Established Neighbourhoods - Modest levels of residential intensification is expected within Oakville's Established Neighbourhoods. It is important to remember that most Established Neighbourhoods already have a Parkland System within them, and many existing properties may have already contributed to parkland dedication requirements (to some degree) when they were originally developed. As such, it is the "net" residential growth that will be subject to parkland dedication, where the residential units that already exist are deducted from the total residential units proposed.

Where residential intensification is proposed within an Established Neighbourhood, additional parkland dedication can be expected with respect to new development or redevelopment, where more dwelling units in a more intense built-form are being proposed, or there is a conversion from commercial or industrial land uses to any other land use, including for residential intensification. Again, the goal is to be fair and reasonable when considering this form of intensification, while recognizing that more dwelling units will have an incremental impact on existing parkland resources.

Recommendation 16: It is recommended that the Town of Oakville, throughout its new greenfield communities and within its Established Neighbourhoods, apply a parkland dedication rate based on a rate of 5 percent of the Gross Land Area, or 1 hectare per 600 net residential dwelling units, whichever generates the greater parkland dedication to the Town. Where cash-in-lieu of a land dedication is necessary, it shall be on the basis of 5 percent of the Gross Land Area, or 1 hectare per 1,000 dwelling units, whichever is greater.

Given the significant difference between the land dedication metric, and the cash-in-lieu metric, it is recommended that the Town focus its attention toward land dedication as a first priority - NOT cash-in-lieu of land.

It is important to note that the North Oakville Planning Area is subject to its own Master Parkland Dedication Agreement, and no recommendation in this Parks Plan is designed to impact that agreement.

Residential Intensification within Strategic Growth Areas - The Town of Oakville's Official Plan identifies an urban structure that includes a number of Strategic Growth Areas. These Strategic Growth Areas are expected to accommodate higher density forms of development through significant residential intensification. In these identified locations, land areas and development sites are limited in size, and land, in general, is both at a premium and significantly more expensive than in any other locations throughout the Town.

In considering the amount of parkland dedication achieved on an individual development site, the context of the "intensification" objectives of the Town need to be considered. For the very dense and highly urban development anticipated, the approach to parkland dedication needs to be clarified, based on an understanding of what can be considered to be fair and reasonable. Fundamentally, that means finding a balance between the incentive versus disincentive impacts of the cost of the provision of parkland, as well as the desire to promote good Town-building principles including the achievement of the Town's Parkland System objectives. To a significant degree, recent changes to the *Planning Act*, including Bill 23, have established this balance, and have created metrics that may be considered to be fair and reasonable, at least from the Province's perspective.

Appendix VI proposes a number of urban development scenarios and applies a number of parkland dedication methods and metrics to each. That work is then analyzed to understand the expected fiscal impact of each method and metric, as those impacts relate to the financial feasibility of the urban development forms that are both anticipated and desired throughout the defined Strategic Growth Areas.

The analysis included in **Appendix VI** concludes that the 5 percent of land area for higher density forms of residential development is wholly inadequate for any high density, mixed-use community that is expected to be a desirable place to live.

The parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu rate to be applied to residential development within the Strategic Growth Areas is expected to generate land and/or cash to achieve a number of important Town-wide objectives related to the overall Parkland System, as follows:

- To generate land resources within the Strategic Growth Areas to ensure that residents and businesses within the Strategic Growth Areas are provided with a robust, diverse and flexible Urban Parkland System - both on-site and potentially elsewhere within the defined Strategic Growth Area; and,

- To generate the opportunity (either by providing land or cash-in-lieu of land) to provide additional parkland elsewhere within the Town in support of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people.

Recommendation 17: It is recommended that the Town consider its options for achieving long-term park needs within its defined Strategic Growth Areas, keeping in mind that its Achieved Parkland Target of 12 percent of the gross land area, within these areas is a long-term objective based on land area and the timing of development, that must be balanced against achieving the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people.

Land costs and population growth estimates within the Strategic Growth Areas will require that the Town acquire parkland outside of the Strategic Growth Areas, and may require that the Town utilize acquisition tools other than just those tools provided under the *Planning Act*.

The key is to identify a parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu standard that is fair and consistent within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas; a standard that is not a substantive barrier to ongoing investment and intensification initiatives, a standard that delivers an appropriate Urban Parkland System, and a standard that provides cash-in-lieu to the Town to acquire lands to augment the supply of parkland, or to improve existing parkland resources on a Town-wide basis.

There are a number of important Town-building objectives at play. First, what is considered to be a robust, diverse and flexible Urban Parkland System?

Second, what is a fair and consistent methodology to calculate parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu contributions? Third, how does the Town leverage its the overall Town-wide Active Parkland Target and build upon the concept of “a campus of parks”.

To consider defining just what a robust, diverse and flexible Urban Parkland System is, a number of urban “downtowns” from across North America were reviewed to understand just how much parkland is provided. **Appendix VII** is a summary of research on the Urban Parkland Systems of a number of urban centres in Canada and in the United States, as summarized in the table that follows:

	Total Land Area (ha)	Parkland (ha) (net land area)	Achieved Parkland Percentage
Downtown Minneapolis, MN	703	35	5%
Downtown Montreal, QC	269	10	4%
Lower Manhattan, NY	351	41	12%
Downtown Ottawa, ON	79	8	10%
Downtown Philadelphia, PA	549	45	8%
Downtown Portland, OR	164	17	10%
Downtown San Francisco, CA	88	6	7%
Downtown Savannah, GA	267	29	11%
Downtown Vancouver, BC	349	33	9%
Downtown Washington, DC	217	6	3%

NOTE: All numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number

The analysis of the other "downtowns" indicates that there is a broad spectrum of Achieved Parkland levels within each - ranging from a low of 3 percent to a high of 12 percent. While this assessment is very high level, it is instructive in identifying an appropriate objective for achieved parkland within Oakville's identified Strategic Growth Areas.

The other element of importance is the prior assessment that indicates that where residential densities generally exceed 150 persons per hectare (such as within a defined Strategic Growth Area) parkland dedication will be limited by the 10 or 15 percent of Gross Land Area regulation of the *Planning Act*, depending upon the size of the development site.

Recommendation 18: It is recommended that when preparing comprehensive plans (a Secondary Plan, or Block Plan) for identified Strategic Growth Areas, the Town establish an Achieved Parkland Standard (net parkland/ gross land area of the Strategic Growth Area) of a MINIMUM of 12 percent of the Gross Land Area and that the planned Urban Parkland System within a comprehensively planned Strategic Growth Area be:

- Comprised primarily of the Public Common, Urban Square and Promenade categories;
- Augmented by Other Urban Park categories; and,
- Distributed throughout the Strategic Growth Area, such that all residents are within a maximum of a 10 minute walk (800 metres) from a defined Public Common and within a 5 minute walk (400 metres) from a defined Public Urban Square or Promenade.

Also important in this analysis is that the range of urban park system elements, their inherent urban design quality and their broad distribution throughout the identified communities are at least as important as the quantum of the spaces. The table that follows identifies the existing/planned parkland within the Gross Land Area of the six individual Strategic Growth Areas within the Town including Downtown Oakville and Bronte Village, and four others that have seen development over recent years. Currently, two of the six Strategic Growth Areas do not achieve the 12 percent Achieved Parkland Standard. The other four Strategic Growth Areas include a range of between 12.0 percent and 19.0 percent, all in excess, to varying degrees, of the 12 percent Achieved Parkland Standard.

Achieved Parkland as a Percentage of Gross Land Area - Oakville

Strategic Growth Area	Parkland Area (ha)	SGA Gross Land Area (ha)	Parkland %
Palermo Village	16.6	138	12.0%
Uptown Core	15.4	114	13.5%
Bronte Village	7.2	56	12.9%
Kerr Village	5.7	71	8.0%
Midtown Core	9.8	103	9.5%
Downtown Oakville	5.5	29	19.0%
TOTAL	**60.2 ha**	**511 ha**	**11.8%**

**SOURCE: Town of Oakville*

In addition to the Achieved Parkland Standard, keys to the ongoing evolution of a Strategic Growth Area - is the establishment of new, small urban park space elements that come with large scale redevelopment. Those new elements do not significantly add to the quantum of park space within the community, but do, however add to the increasingly robust and interesting Parkland System throughout the community. The whole system is greater than the sum of its individual elements.

As such, as part of the Achieved Parkland Standard of 12 percent within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas, it is also an important objective of the Town to require all significant developments (defined as developments on sites that are equal to, or greater that 1,500 square metres in development site size) within a Strategic Growth Area make a recognizable contribution to the Urban Parkland System by requiring an on-site urban park space element. Innovation and diversity of urban park spaces is to be encouraged, and alternative land ownership strategies may be considered by the Town as the identified Strategic Growth Areas become more urban over time.

Recommendation 19: It is recommended that the Town require that, in addition to the larger scale elements of the urban parkland hierarchy achieved through Secondary Plans/Block Plans identified previously, all development on all individual development sites within the Strategic Growth Areas that are greater than 1,500 square metres in size, shall include, at a minimum, a land contribution to the Town for urban park purposes, that meet the following criteria:

- An on-site Urban Parkland System contribution of not less than 5 percent of the net developable site area for any residential or mixed-use development that includes residential uses - the remainder of the required parkland dedication/ cash-in-lieu contribution shall be used to achieve the larger scale elements of the urban parkland hierarchy within the same defined Strategic Growth Area;
- The Urban Parkland System elements considered appropriate in this context may include Connecting Links, Pocket Parks and Sliver Parks. Under no circumstances will the net area of any of these Urban Parkland System elements be less than 75 square metres;
- An Urban Parkland System element shall have frontage on a public street right-of-way; and,
- Larger sites shall include larger Urban Parkland System elements and/or multiple Urban Parkland System elements.

Within the Downtown Oakville, Kerr Village and Bronte Village Strategic Growth Areas, the provision of smaller scale urban park elements on individual development sites shall be encouraged, but not necessarily required by the Town.

It is also recommended that the Town explicitly identify that for sites less than 1,500 square metres in size, the Town may accept an on-site land contribution, an off-site land contribution (within the same defined Strategic Growth Area) and/or cash-in-lieu of land.

Mixed-Use Developments - It is anticipated that mixed-use development applications will be primarily located within the Strategic Growth Areas identified in the Official Plan. In mixed-use developments, it is desirable to include retail and service commercial, restaurants, office, institutional and/or public service facilities to create a land use diversity, and to promote good live-work, live-shop relationships. Those uses are also important elements of a complete community at the neighbourhood scale. In addition, higher density, mixed-use contexts, where the primary land use is residential, it is the residential requirement for parkland that will far outweigh the contribution from the commercial or institutional components, particularly if the calculation is based on pro-rating GFA to establish a parkland dedication formula. Where land dedication/cash-in-lieu is a desirable outcome for the Town:

Recommendation 20: It is recommended that the Town consider provisions for mixed-use development on sites within Strategic Growth Areas that identifies that for all mixed-use developments parkland dedication will be based on a pro-rated allocation of requirement that considers the various parkland dedication rates for each land use type proposed. Total Parkland Dedication shall be based on the following Mixed-Use Formula:

Total Contribution =
Residential Contribution
+
((Other Non-Residential GFA/
Total GFA)*(Site Area *.05))
+
((Commercial/Industrial GFA/
Total GFA)*(Site Area *.02))

For example, where a mixed use building includes a combination of residential, institutional and retail commercial land uses, the formula would work as follows:

Scenario 1 - Small Scale Development	
Site Area	10,000 m^2
Density	1.0 FSI (10,000 m^2 of GFA)
- Residential Component - Institutional Component - Retail Commercial Component	7,500 m^2 (75% of GFA) 37 dwelling units 1,000 m^2 (10% of GFA) 1,500 m^2 (15% of GFA)
Parkland Generated	
- Residential Component - Institutional Component - Retail Commercial Component	@10,000 m^2/600 dwelling units = 617 m2 **PLUS** (1,000 m^2/10,000 m^2) x (10,000 m^2 x .05) = 0.1 x 500 m^2 = 50 m^2 **PLUS** (1,500 m^2/10,000 m^2) x (10,000 m^2 x .02) = 0.15 x 200 m^2 = 30 m^2
Total Parkland Generated	**697 m^2**

Scenario 2 - Large Scale Development	
Site Area	10,000 m^2
Density	5.0 FSI (50,000 m^2 of GFA)
- Residential Component - Institutional Component - Retail Commercial Component	37,500 m^2 (75% of GFA) 185 dwelling units 5,000 m^2 (10% of GFA) 7,500 m^2 (15% of GFA)
Parkland Generated	
- Residential Component - Institutional Component - Retail Commercial Component	@10% = 1,000 m^2 **PLUS** (5,000 m^2/50,000 m^2) x (10,000 m^2 x .05) = 0.1 x 500 m^2 = 50 m^2 **PLUS** (7,500 m^2/50,000 m^2) x (10,000 m^2 x .02) = 0.15 x 200 m^2 = 30 m^2
Total Parkland Generated	**1,080 m^2**

Recommendation 21: It is recommended that where cash-in-lieu is considered appropriate by the Town, it shall be based on the cash equivalent of the application of the Mixed-Use Formula or the alternative cash-in-lieu of land provisions of the *Planning Act* for residential development of 1 hectare per 1,000 net residential dwelling units, whichever is less.

The primary objective of the Town is to promote appropriate mixed-use development in the appropriate locations as part of achieving the principles of good planning and Town-building, and as such, the Town should consider how mixed-use development may be incentivized.

Recommendation 22: It is recommended that where the Town wishes to incentivize mixed-use development, that where the non-residential component is not considered a significant generator of Gross Floor Area (less than 10%) within a mixed-use development, that the parkland dedication due from the non-residential component be reduced, or waived, to the satisfaction/discretion of the Town.

4.7 Generating Land/Cash-in-Lieu of Land

Based on analysis and review, Oakville is achieving its Town-wide Active Parkland Target and, historically, has done an excellent job at establishing a public open space system on the basis of a "campus of parks". Oakville remains well positioned to carry on with traditional parks planning with respect to development in North Oakville and for modest intensification initiatives within its Existing Neighbourhoods, in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act*, and as described in the recommendations of this Plan.

Importantly, as Oakville moves forward with a focus for new development within its defined Strategic Growth Areas there needs to be consideration of the metrics used to achieve parkland dedication within the Strategic Growth Areas themselves, and also to augment the Parkland System in recognition of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target. It is recognized that it is not feasible or appropriate to expect that the Town-wide Active Parkland Target can be wholly accommodated within the higher density, mixed use Strategic Growth Areas themselves given the land supply constraints and the anticipated level of density. However, through the use of the parkland dedication/ cash-in-lieu provisions of the *Planning Act*, there is an opportunity to achieve both a robust Urban Parkland System, and to generate off-site lands and/or cash-in-lieu of parkland to be used by the Town to acquire lands outside of the Strategic Growth Areas that will augment the Town-wide Parkland System, and assist the Town in achieving the Town-wide Active Parkland Target.

Recommendation 23: It is recommended that the Town generate enough parkland/cash-in-lieu of parkland to ensure that the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people is achieved Town-wide through to 2031. It is understood that the Town will establish a Parkland Acquisition Strategy that recognizes that parkland within the Strategic Growth Areas will not likely ever achieve the Town-wide Active Parkland Target within their defined boundaries. As such, the Town's Parkland Acquisition Strategy may need to consider how development within the Strategic Growth Areas delivers a robust, diverse and flexible Urban Parkland System AND provides some residual cash-in-lieu of parkland to augment off-site land acquisitions elsewhere in the Town.

To realistically work toward the achievement of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target, there is a necessity to justify the use of the maximum parkland dedication metrics of the *Planning Act* for new development within the Strategic Growth Areas - with a focus on the use of the Alternative Rates for residential development. Parkland dedication rates for non-residential forms of development are already established in the *Planning Act*.

The Table on the next page identifies parkland need based on two separate, but related metrics. First, it is estimated that based on a gross land area within the defined Strategic Growth Areas of approximately 1,067 hectares (total land area less the defined natural heritage system) which, based on the Achieved Parkland Standard of 12 percent, would generate a need for approximately 128 hectares of parkland. Importantly, that number is intended as a generally built out Strategic Growth Area, notwithstanding population growth within the 2021 to 2031 time horizon.

Second, parkland need is based on population growth between 2021 and 2031 within the identified Strategic Growth Areas. The population growth allocated to Oakville's SGA's is 43,966 people, which in accordance with the Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people would generate a need for 96.7 hectares of parkland. 43,966 people in SGA's represents about 58% of Oakville's total growth to 2031 - 75,796 people. It is also estimated that Oakville will need approximately 34,037 new dwelling units to 2031. If 58% of that demand is assigned to the SGA's, then the SGA's will need to accommodate 19,741 dwelling units. It is important to note that the population projections to 2031 for the identified Strategic Growth Areas does not represent an end state, and that there will be substantial additional growth expected in those areas beyond 2031.

SGAs that already have or exceed the Achieved Parkland Target of 12%

	Gross Land Area	Achieved Parkland of 12%, less Already Achieved Parkland*	Already Achieved Parkland	2021-31 Population Growth**	Parkland @2.2ha/1,000 people
Uptown Core	114 ha	-2.2 ha	15.4 ha	2,817 people	6.2 ha
Palermo Village	138 ha	-7.1 ha	16.6 ha	2,068 people	4.5 ha
Downtown Oakville	29 ha	-2.4 ha	5.5 ha	592 people	1.3 ha
Bronte Village	56 ha	-0.5 ha	7.2 ha	1,489 people	3.3 ha

** Negative number denotes parkland in excess of 12%*

***These growth estimates come from Appendix 'D' attached to the Update Report - Halton Region, Joint Best Planning Estimates, August 15, 2023*

Four of the twelve Strategic Growth Areas have already met the Achieved Parkland Target of 12 percent, and are therefore not considered in the growth related analysis in the Table below.

SGAs that require additional land to reach the Achieved Parkland Target of 12%

	Gross Land Area	Achieved Parkland of 12%, less Already Achieved Parkland	Already Achieved Parkland	2021-31 Population Growth*	Parkland @2.2ha/1,000 people
Midtown UGC	103 ha	3.6 ha	9.8	11,071 people	24.4 ha
Bronte MTSA	148 ha	17.8 ha	-	609 people	1.3 ha
Hospital District	75 ha	8.9 ha	-	1,034 people	2.3 ha
Neyagawa Urban Core	86 ha	10.2 ha	-	2,455 people	5.4 ha
Dundas Urban Core (W)	49 ha	5.9 ha	-	2,604 people	5.7 ha
Dundas Urban Core (E)	25 ha	3.0 ha	-	1,072 people	2.4 ha
Kerr Village	71 ha	2.8 ha	5.7 ha	2,339 people	5.1 ha
Trafalgar Corridor	232 ha	27.8 ha	-	15,816 people	34.8 ha
TOTALS	**789 ha**	**79.2 ha**	**15.5 ha**	**37,000 people**	**81.4 ha**

**These growth estimates come from Appendix 'D' attached to the Update Report - Halton Region, Joint Best Planning Estimates, August 15, 2023*

It is a requirement of the P*lanning Act* that this Parks Plan provide a justification for the Town's parkland dedication rates for all forms of development with a particular focus on residential development. On the basis of the Table below, it is concluded that the parkland dedication opportunities within the *Planning Act*, with a focus on the 5 percent of Gross Land Area and the 1 hectare per 600 dwelling units, do not provide the Town with the ability to achieve the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people. More specifically, using the 5 percent of Gross Land Area and the 1 hectare per 600 dwelling units provided in the *Planning Act* for residential development provides somewhere between 30 percent and 50 percent of the Town's parkland need, as defined by the Town-wide Active Parkland Target. Further, the need for parkland in accordance with the Town-wide Active Parkland Target is expected to continuously grow as more and more population is expected to be accommodated within the identified Strategic Growth Areas.

It is important to note that to 2021 the Achieved Parkland Target of 12% for the Strategic Growth Areas is actually slightly greater than the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people. However, this is a moment in time, representing the early development phase of many of the Town's Strategic Growth Areas, keeping in mind that the Achieved Parkland Target is a static metric, whereas the Town-wide Active Parkland Target will continue to grow as population continues to be attracted to the Strategic Growth Areas.

It is anticipated that continuous growth, beyond 2031, will continue to drive the need for parkland even after the Strategic Growth Areas have established their urban parkland system.

Comparison of Parkland Dedication Metrics
(This Table only includes those SGAs that have not yet met or exceeded the Achieved Parkland Target of 12%)

Anticipated Growth in SGAs to 2031 *	37,000 people in 14,931 dwelling units
Parkland Need - based on Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 ha/1,000 people	81.4 ha - This is reflective of 2021 to 2031 growth within the SGAs
Estimated Gross Land Area within the identified SGAs	789 ha - This is a fixed number, not expected to change over time
Parkland Acquisition Assigned to Parkland Dedication By-law	
- 5% of Gross Land Area	39.4 ha - Represents +/- 48% of the total parkland need @2.2 ha/1,000 people
- 1 ha/600 dwelling units	24.9 ha - Represents +/- 31% of the total parkland need @2.2 ha/1,000 people
- 10% of Gross Site Area (Sites 5 ha or less)	78.9 ha - Represents a maximum parkland dedication for smaller sites
- 15% of Gross Site Area (Sites greater than 5 ha)	118.3 ha - Represents a maximum parkland dedication for larger sites
Parkland accommodated in SGAs - 12% of gross land area - the Achieved Parkland Standard	94.7 ha - Represents an objective based on gross land area, and is expected to be achieved through the application of the maximum dedication caps of 10% and 15% identified above

**It is important to note that this population growth is not reflective of the ultimate growth capacity within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas, but rather, growth to 2031*

The *Planning Act* also provides additional parkland dedication caps on the basis of site size - 10 percent of Gross Site Area on Sites of 5 hectares or less, or 15 percent of Gross Site Area on Sites greater than 5 hectares. These caps on parkland dedication within the Town's identified Strategic Growth Areas appear to be useful in achieving the Achieved Parkland Standard for Strategic Growth Areas of 12 percent of the Gross Land Area, identified in this Parks Plan. Over time, however, once the Strategic Growth Areas have achieved their 12 percent parkland, ongoing population growth within the Strategic Growth Areas will generate the opportunity to utilize parkland dedication, or cash-in-lieu of land for the Town to continue to secure parkland - either for enhanced park space within the Strategic Growth Area, or through permission for off-site land dedications and/or use of cash-in-lieu for parkland acquisition elsewhere in the Town - all in an effort to work toward the continued achievement of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people.

Recommendation 24: It is recommended that the Town utilize the parkland dedication opportunities provided in the *Planning Act*, including the Alternate Rates for residential development, to the greatest extent permissible in order to achieve a robust urban park system within each of the Strategic Growth Areas, and with the opportunity to generate residual cash-in-lieu funds to acquire additional lands elsewhere within the Town, all in an effort to work toward the continued achievement of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people.

This Parks Plan is to 2031. Within that timeframe, it is recognized that the Strategic Growth Areas will generate the need for parkland within the Strategic Growth Area itself, and may, in some instances generate cash-in-lieu of land with the potential to acquire parkland elsewhere in the Town to work toward the achievement, ultimately, of the Town-wide Active Parkland Target of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 people. Alternatively, instead of generating cash-in-lieu, the Town could accept off-site land dedications.

Recommendation 25: It is recommended that the Town consider off-site parkland acquisition/dedication opportunities in order to augment its supply of parkland. Where an off-site land dedication is considered appropriate by the Town, the land area of the off-site parkland dedication shall be subject to the following criteria:

- For development within a defined Strategic Growth Area, the minimum parkland requirement has been, or can be satisfied;
- The proposed off-site land area is land that is acceptable as parkland dedication, in accordance with the requirements identified in this Parks Plan;
- The land value identified for the required parkland dedication from the proposed development site is approximately equal to the land value of the off-site land dedication site; and,
- An off-site parkland dedication shall be to the satisfaction of the Town.

The recent changes to the *Planning Act* (Bill 23) implemented by the Province, and specifically the changes to the Alternate Rate for residential development, including the absolute caps on parkland dedication for residential development, ensure that the Town-wide Active Parkland Target will be extremely difficult for the Town to maintain in the long-term. Legislative changes have dramatically reduced the Town's ability to secure public parkland through the development approval process.

Notwithstanding the legislative restrictions, or any other concerns, the Town must maximize, where appropriate, the use of the *Planning Act* parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu tools, AND must also look for alternative funding and acquisition tools to work toward achieving the Town-wide Active Parkland Target.

Recommendation 26: It is recommended that the Town establish a Parkland Acquisition Strategy that recognizes that the limitations on parkland dedication/ cash-in-lieu of parkland established in the *Planning Act*. The Town's Parkland Acquisition Strategy will need to consider:

- How development within the defined Strategic Growth Areas can deliver a robust, diverse and flexible Urban Parkland System within the defined Strategic Growth Areas themselves; and,
- How sufficient parkland and/or cash can be generated to augment land acquisitions throughout the Town.

4.8 Options for the Ownership of the Town's Parkland System

As articulated more fully in **Appendix VIII**, there are four primary approaches to the ownership/securement of the Parkland System within the Town of Oakville, as follows:

- **Fee Simple Parkland -** Fee simple parkland is land dedicated or otherwise acquired by the Town without any form of legal encumbrance or constraint. These lands are wholly owned by the Town. Throughout Oakville, it is the clear preference that all elements of the Parkland System be owned by the Town. Fee Simple ownership provides the Town with the full responsibility and associated flexibility to ensure that parkland elements are appropriately designed, maintained and programed. Fee Simple parkland elements, where achieved through the development approval process, shall count toward the required parkland dedication;

- **Strata Ownership -** Strata ownership is a form of Town ownership that is achieved through the Condominium Act. Typically, Strata Ownership identifies the horizontal layer of a multi-level development that is to be dedicated to the Town, and in this application, for public parkland purposes. Strata Ownership is Town ownership, including all of the responsibilities and associated flexibility to ensure that parkland elements are appropriately designed, maintained and programed. Usually, Strata Ownership is used where a parkland element is to be built over the top of some underground structure or facility (such as a parking garage, or a storm water management facility). Where a Strata Ownership arrangement is used, including the appropriate legal agreements, the land area of the strata park shall be counted toward the required parkland dedication, but the actual land area to be counted may be discounted to reconcile issues related to lifecycle costs - parkland over structure has a defined life span, typically related to the waterproofing membrane that separates the parkland from any below grade structure. The actual amount of the discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town;

- **Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) -** POPS are not owned by the Town. They are parkland elements that remain in private ownership yet, nonetheless, may form an important component of the overall Parkland System. The Town may consider counting POPS toward the parkland dedication requirement only where appropriate legal agreements that guarantee that the park space is designed, built and maintained to Town standards, and that it is open and accessible to the public at all times (or otherwise to the satisfaction of the Town). Where the Town chooses to count a POPS as part of the parkland dedication requirement, the actual land area to be counted shall be discounted in recognition that, notwithstanding required legal agreements, the Town does not own the land and therefore cannot exercise the full extent of control over the design, maintenance and programing of the space. Where appropriate, the actual amount of the discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town; and,

- **Use Agreements/Easements -** While not a form of Town ownership, it is important for the Town to consider constrained lands (utility rights-of-way, lands associated with highway development, or other lands owned by a utility, a school board or other government agency) as contributors to the overall Parkland System of the Town where those lands can perform a recreational function that benefits the Town. These lands, while not owned by the Town, may be designed and maintained by the Town to achieve a community benefit. While there is no need to consider the issue of any contribution toward parkland dedication requirements, these lands may be appropriately secured for public use through a use agreement or public use easement.

It is understood that municipal fee simple parkland ownership is a desirable objective of the Town. However, where the elements of a more Urban Parkland System are to be considered, the alternatives of Strata Ownership and/or POPS can become important opportunities. Refer to **Appendix VIII** for a more fulsome discussion of the opportunities and risks of these ownership alternatives. Key to the success of these alternatives to fee simple municipal ownership are the legal agreements that are established to ensure the Town's design expectations and maintenance protocols are achieved and that public access is ensured.

Ownership Options for the Parkland System within the Established Neighbourhoods, North Oakville and any other Greenfield Communities

Recommendation 27: It is recommended that the Town require, as a first priority, the Fee Simple dedication for all Parkland System elements within the Established Neighbourhoods and other greenfield communities. The Town may accept encumbered lands that are subject to a Strata Ownership Arrangement, as permitted under the *Ontario Condominiums Act,* where such lands are:

- Part of a parcel of land that abuts one or more other parcels of land on a horizontal plane;
- Subject to an easement or other restriction, or
- Encumbered by below grade infrastructure; or
- Other lands, where such interest is sufficient to allow the land to be used for park or other public recreational purposes.

Strata Ownership Arrangements shall only apply to Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes within the Established Neighbourhoods and other greenfield communities, subject to a land area discount, in recognition of life-cycle cost issues to the satisfaction of the Town, including maintenance and landscape replacement that are both expected to be higher in cost, over a shorter time frame, than fee simple parkland. The actual amount of the land area discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town.

Ownership Options for the Urban Parkland System within the Strategic Growth Areas

Recommendation 28: It is recommended that the Town, as a first priority, require fee simple parkland dedication for all Public Common, Urban Square and Promenade elements of the Urban Parkland System within the Strategic Growth Areas. The Town may accept encumbered lands that are subject to a Strata Ownership Arrangement, as permitted under the Ontario Condominium Act, where such lands are:

- Part of a parcel of land that abuts one or more other parcels of land on a horizontal plane;
- Subject to an easement or other restriction, or
- Encumbered by below grade infrastructure; or
- Other lands, where such interest is sufficient to allow the land to be used for park or other public recreational purposes.

Strata Ownership Arrangements may be subject to a land area discount, in recognition of life-cycle cost issues to the satisfaction of the Town. The actual amount of the land area discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town.

Recommendation 29: It is recommended that the Town continue to augment the Urban Parkland System within the Strategic Growth Areas with Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS). POPS may be comprised of encumbered lands, as described in the discussion of Strata Ownership Arrangements. It is recommended that the Town provide a parkland dedication credit, where the following POPS criteria are met, to the satisfaction of the Town:

- It is an integral element, and is directly connected to the broader Urban Parkland System and the adjacent public sidewalk system;
- It can be defined only as an Other Urban Park element, and is not a Public Common, Urban Square, or Promenade;
- An appropriate legal agreement has been established between the owner and the Town that guarantees that the space is designed, built and maintained to Town standards, and is open and accessible to the public at all times (or as otherwise to the satisfaction of the Town); and,
- The land area of the POPS is appropriately discounted, in recognition of the Town's lack of programing control and to the long-term viability of the POPS space with respect to the evolving commitment of the affected land owner, or Condominium Board, to the satisfaction of the Town. The actual amount of the land area discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town.

Private and Semi-Private Amenity Spaces

The publicly accessible elements of the Urban Parkland System are crucial in establishing an inspiring and diverse pedestrian experience. In addition, roof top gardens and individual balconies play an important role in creating a complete system of urban amenity space (private and semi-private) that is crucial to the quality of life/quality of space in any successful urban community.

Recommendation 30: It is recommended that the Town consider including within the Official Plan, the implementing Zoning By-Law and/or any applicable Design Guidelines the requirement for private and semi-private amenity spaces within all residential apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings that include residential apartments. Private and semi-private amenity spaces can include balconies/terraces linked to individual dwelling units, indoor community spaces, fitness facilities and swimming pools and outdoor roof top terraces, including opportunities for green roof infrastructure and dog stations. These private and semi-private spaces are not to be considered for any credit as part of the Town's Parkland Dedication By-Law.

4.9 Understanding Cash-In-Lieu of Parkland

The *Planning Act* permits the Town to require/accept cash-in-lieu of a land dedication up to the value of the land otherwise to be conveyed. The cash-in-lieu requirement shall be based on:

- For commercial or industrial land uses - up to 2 percent of the value of the land area;
- For all other non-residential land uses - up to 5 percent of the value of the land area;
- For residential land uses - up to 5 percent of the value of the land area, OR, 1 hectare for each 1,000 net dwelling units proposed. Under no circumstances shall the cash-in-lieu requirement for residential land uses exceed the following:
  - In the case of land proposed for development or redevelopment that is 5 hectares or less in area, 10% of the land or the value of the land, as the case may be; and,
  - In the case of land proposed for development or redevelopment that is greater than 5 hectares in area, 15% of the land or the value of the land, as the case may be.

There are a number of other issues to be determined in the Parkland Dedication By-Law related to who should decide when cash-in-lieu is acceptable, how the cash payment is to be calculated, and how to deal with disputes, as they may arise from time to time.

Who decides when cash-in-lieu is acceptable?

In many jurisdictions, municipalities will respond to the developer's wishes regarding whether land, or cash-in-lieu of land is provided, on a case-by-case basis. In Oakville, the Town typically determines whether land, or cash-in-lieu of land, or some combination thereof is appropriate based on the policies of the Official Plan, any applicable Secondary Plan and/or the identified needs of the community.

Recommendation 31: It is recommended that the Town continue to clearly empower itself to determine, in consultation with the landowner/developer, when cash-in-lieu is an acceptable approach, and when a land contribution will be required. It is crucial that the Town's process for determining when cash-in-lieu is an acceptable approach, and when a land contribution will be required is open and transparent.

The *Planning Act* permits the acceptance of cash-in-lieu without limitation on the type of use, the location within the Town, or any other contextual circumstance. The Town can identify the circumstances where cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication may be permitted or required. Important to the conversation about parkland dedication is a commitment by the Town to, as a first priority, acquire parkland assets through the development approval process. The decision to require land, or cash, or some combination thereof, for any specific development proposal should be part of the public process for an Official Plan Amendment, and/or a rezoning application.

Recommendation 32: For all development located outside a defined Strategic Growth Area, It is recommended that the Town identify that land dedication always be the first priority, and that cash-in-lieu only be acceptable where no reasonable alternative exists, including the opportunity for an off-site land dedication elsewhere within the Town. Cash-in-lieu of land shall only be considered under the following circumstances:

- Where the application of the parkland dedication requirements would render the remaining portion of the development site unsuitable or impractical for development;
- Where the amount of parkland dedication generated by the development proposal is insufficient to accommodate a reasonable public park space;
- Where existing public parkland is available and is deemed sufficient by the Town in quantity and quality to accommodate further development in proximity to the proposed development; or,
- Where more suitable parcels of land are available for acquisition for public parkland purposes in other locations within the defined neighbourhood, or anywhere else within the Town.

Within Strategic Growth Areas it is recognized that there will likely be a combination of a land dedication and/or a cash contribution.

How will land value be established?

The *Planning Act*, under the new Section 37 Community Benefits has established an approach to land valuation. Since that methodology will be utilized to establish a Community Benefits Charge, it would be appropriate for the Town to establish land value for cash-in-lieu of parkland utilizing the same methodology.

Recommendation 33: It is recommended that the Town identify that where cash-in-lieu is considered appropriate by the Town, it shall be based on the cash equivalent of the applicable parkland dedication requirement as established in the Parkland Dedication By-law.

Recommendation 34: It is recommended that the Town, carry out land valuation in conformity with the approach identified for Community Benefits in Section 37 of the *Planning Act.*

As an alternative approach, the Town could consider establishing a range of context specific land values that may be used instead of development application specific land evaluations/appraisals. These context specific land values would need to be updated on a regular basis to ensure that they remain valid for use in light of ongoing land value uplift (or reduction) over time.

Recommendation 35: It is recommended that the Town's Director of Planning collaborate with the Director of Parks and Open Space and the Town Solicitor, to establish a set of context specific land values for the purposes of calculating cash-in-lieu of parkland contributions. Such land values shall be identified by land use designations and/or geographic context, subject to the following:

- Town land values shall be updated by the Town's Director of Planning in collaboration with the Director of Parks and Open Space and the Town Solicitor at least every 180 days; and,
- The established Town land values shall be applied to each development application for the purposes of establishing a cash-in-lieu of land payment.

When is Cash-in-Lieu Calculated?

In determining the cash value in-lieu of a land dedication, the *Planning Act* has a number of legislative requirements that need to be recognized. The *Planning Act* provides specific direction to municipalities for "when" in the development approvals process land value is to be calculated for the purposes of the payment of cash-in-lieu.

How will cash-in-lieu be used by the Town?

The *Planning Act* requires that the Town establish a special bank account to hold funds generated through the cash-in-lieu provision. In all circumstances, it would be appropriate for the Town to have a strategy for the disposition of those funds to acquire lands and carry out appropriate improvements to parklands throughout the Town.

For example, the City of Toronto has a guideline (it is not part of their Official Plan or Parkland Dedication By-law) that states that 50 percent of the cash-in-lieu generated by any specific development be used to improve parkland in proximity to that development (25 percent for capital improvements and 25 percent for land acquisition) and the other 50 percent to be used for any parkland improvements anywhere in the City (again, 25 percent for capital improvements and 25 percent for land acquisition). While this appears an interesting approach, timing of acquisition is crucial, given the rapid pace of land value increases over time. In Toronto it appears that this funding allocation strategy has limited the City's ability to be competitive in acquiring physical land for parks in strong market locations (primarily the downtown), the cash collected does not match the cost of land, where there is a time gap between collection and acquisition.

Based on a careful reading of the *Planning Act,* suggest that undefined capital improvements to parks (whether due to nearby population growth, or other reasons) are not a fundable item for cash-in-lieu of parkland, and, where capital improvements to existing parks are necessary due to continuing population growth and changing use patterns, these capital improvements are more appropriately captured under the Development Charges By-law.

Recommendation 36: The Town has established a special account for the receipt of all cash-in-lieu of land contributions accrued through the parkland dedication/ cash-in-lieu of parkland process. It is recommended that the Town clearly articulate that the accumulated cash-in-lieu may be used for the following priorities:

- The acquisition of lands for public parkland and public recreational purposes anywhere in the Town;
- The acquisition of lands for pathways, trails and associated infrastructure throughout the Town, with a focus on missing links;
- The erection, improvement or repair of buildings used for park or other public recreational purposes; and,
- The acquisition of vehicles and equipment used for parks maintenance and other public recreational purposes.

Recommendation 37: Beginning in 2023 and in each calendar year thereafter, it is a requirement that the Town spend or allocate at least 60 percent of the monies that are in the Special Account at the beginning of the year. As such, it is recommended that the Town prepare a Comprehensive Land Acquisition Strategy and a budget for allocating funds, on an annual basis, to achieve parkland acquisition and improvements projects. The goal will be to ensure that all cash-in-lieu funds collected are spent on identified Parkland System improvements in a timely fashion, and to avoid the land cost inflation issues that occur over time.

Recommendation 38: In administering the special cash-in-lieu account, it is recommended that the Town identify the following provisions:

- Funds in the special cash-in-lieu account may be invested in securities that the Town is permitted to invest in under the Municipal Act. Any earnings derived from the investment shall be paid into the special cash-in-lieu account, and the Town Treasurer shall report on the activities and status of the account in an Annual Financial Statement relating to the special cash-in-lieu account; and,
- Funds received from the sale of land dedicated or acquired for park and other public recreational purposes shall be paid into the special cash-in-lieu account.

The Annual Financial Statement shall include, for the preceding year, an accounting of the opening and closing balances of the special cash-in-lieu account and all of the transactions relating to the account, as well as statements identifying:

- Any land or machinery acquired during the year with funds from the special cash-in-lieu account;
- Any capital improvements carried out during the year with funds from the special cash-in-lieu account;
- Any building erected, improved or repaired during the year with funds from the special cash-in-lieu account; and,
- The details of the amounts spent.

The Town Treasurer shall give a copy of the Annual Financial Statement to the Minister of Municipal Affairs (on request) and Council shall ensure that the Annual Financial Statement is made available to the public.

Is a Land Bank Appropriate?

Overall, the Town will receive cash-in-lieu of parkland, and may in some instances, receive land dedications that may not be immediately suitable for the development of a park. Land is a resource that over the past few years has been appreciating in value at a faster rate than many other forms of investment. This is a problem for the Town because the time lag between when cash-in-lieu is collected, and when a corresponding land acquisition is implemented ensures that the cash has not appreciated at the same pace as land. The result is the land area is smaller than anticipated, or additional cash is required to acquire the same amount of land.

A land bank has the potential to be a tool of value to the Town. The Town could acquire land assets based on a “respond to opportunity” approach, and that land may, or may not ultimately be used for parkland but can be available to sell for other purposes to generate the cash, or trade for lands that are appropriate for parkland at the appropriate time. The Town could also consider the acquisition of land for parks in strategic locations in advance, financing land acquisitions from a forecast of cash-in-lieu generated from future development. This might allow the Town to get “out in front” of land value appreciation, acquiring land in today’s dollars, and offsetting those costs with cash-in-lieu payments from lands that have appreciated in value later on. However, the obvious risk would be exposure to land market fluctuations.

The discussion about a land bank should be about the mechanics of how it could work, and what benefits it might provide to the Town in making improvements to the overall Parkland System over time.

Recommendation 39: Land conveyed to the Town, or acquired by the Town for park or other public recreational purposes may be sold at any time. It is recommended that the Town consider the establishment of a Land Bank for public parkland purposes, either as a mechanism to counter-act the inflationary effects of the cost of land, or to ensure that land is available for public park purposes as the Town continues to urbanize and intensify over time.

The intent of establishment of a Land Bank is to provide a vehicle for the Town to acquire land, hold onto that land, and then to dispose of it at a later date to raise funds to buy land for park purposes elsewhere within the Town.

4.10 Administration of the Town's New Parkland Dedication By-law

The following elements of this Parks Plan have been informed partly by Town staff, and partly by a review of parkland dedication practices from other jurisdictions, as summarized in **Appendix IX**.

Developers/Development Forms that may be Exempt from Parkland Dedication or Considered at a Reduced Rate

The Town may exempt certain categories of land use, or specific forms of development from the requirement to provide a parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu of land. In addition, the Town may consider eliminating or reducing the parkland dedication requirements as an incentive used to stimulate appropriate development. This could be applied site specifically, or based on achieving a number of defined public benefits, or generally within a geographic area or category of development.

Additional Residential Units - Additional Residential Units have been mandated by the Province as a desirable and permitted form of development, delivering new housing within Established Neighbourhoods. It is incumbent on the Town to facilitate this form of housing with appropriate regulatory management. Parkland dedication is part of a financial contribution which is considered a disincentive to the delivery of this form of housing.

Recommendation 40: It is recommended that the Town identify that the requirement for parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu of parkland DOES NOT APPLY to Additional Residential Units, defined as up to 3 dwelling units per lot where that lot is zoned for a single-detached, semi-detached or townhouse use, as per the provisions of the *Planning Act.*

Affordable/Attainable Rental Units - The Town needs to incentivize to the delivery of Affordable/Attainable housing, with a focus on purpose built rental housing. As part of the facilitation strategy, parkland dedication, while an important element of all forms of housing development, should be limited to a standard that is fair and reasonable - balancing the issues of cost of development versus the achievable rental rate. Parkland dedication is part of a financial contribution which can be appropriately managed by the Town to ensure the delivery of this form of housing.

Recommendation 41: It is recommended that the Town consider identifying that the requirement for parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu of parkland DOES APPLY to development that includes affordable/attainable residential units, or residential units required by an Inclusionary Zoning By-law. However, as per the *Planning Act*, the maximum amount of parkland/cash-in-lieu of parkland that may be required shall not exceed 5 percent of the Gross Land Area, multiplied by the ratio of A to B where:

- "A" is the number of residential units that are part of the development or redevelopment but are not affordable residential units, attainable residential units or residential units required by an Inclusionary Zoning By-law; and,
- "B" is the number of residential units that are part of the development or redevelopment.

Non-Profit Housing - The Town is supporting the activities of the not-for-profit sector in the delivery of affordable/attainable housing. It is recognized that the Town's Parkland Dedication By-law shall not require any parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu of land for any non-profit housing development, as defined by the *Development Charges Act*.

As part of the support strategy, parkland dedication, while an important element of all forms of housing development, should be limited to a standard that is fair and reasonable - balancing the issues of cost of development versus the achievable rental rate/price. Parkland dedication is part of a financial contribution which can be appropriately managed by the Town to ensure the delivery of non-profit housing.

Recommendation 42: It is recommended that the Town identify that the requirement for parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu of parkland DOES NOT APPLY to any non-profit housing development, as defined by the *Development Charges Act.*

Other Opportunities - There are a number of other opportunities for exemptions or reductions in order to recognize key government agencies, or service providers or types of land uses that the Town may wish to exempt from parkland dedication, or to provide a reduction.

Recommendation 43: In addition to the exemptions/limitations for Additional Residential Units, Affordable/Attainable Rental Housing and housing provided by a non-profit organization identified in earlier recommendations, it is recommended that the Town consider the following developers or development categories as exempt, or subject to a reduction from any parkland dedication/cash-in-lieu requirement:

- Development or redevelopment undertaken by a certain corporation of the Federal or Provincial Governments, the Town of Oakville including any corporation owned, controlled and operated by the Town, the Regional Municipality of Halton or a Board of Education, as defined in the *Education Act*;
- Development or redevelopment by a college or university that receives direct, regular and ongoing operating funding from the Government of Ontario; and,
- Development or redevelopment by a Public Hospital.

Recommendation 44: Notwithstanding any recommended exemption of reduction identified, it is recommended that the Town reserve the right to exempt, or reduce the parkland dedication/ cash-in-lieu requirement for any land use, development project or specific development site, at the specific discretion of Council.

Lands that should Count/Not Count for Parkland Dedication

In a general sense, the Town looks for lands to be dedicated for parkland that are otherwise considered developable. In some instances, however, it is important to remember that a diverse Parkland System includes a range of public parkland, including public parks that may not be intended to accommodate sports fields or other active recreational activities. There is more flexibility with more passive park types to accommodate slopes, woodlots, natural heritage and cultural heritage features. Lands identified as within the Natural Heritage System are not typically acceptable for parkland dedication, with the notable exception of the City of London that does accept those lands, with a significant reduction in value.

In the Town of Oakville, there are also land areas that are currently owned and managed by the Provincial government and the Conservation Authority. In some instances, these lands may be appropriate candidates to accommodate either active or passive recreational opportunities and as such, may be appropriate for consideration as parkland acquisition or dedication.

Recommendation 45: It is recommended that the Town of Oakville identify the following as fully acceptable lands for parkland dedication:

- Lands in a condition satisfactory to the Town and in accordance with the requirements of the Town's Official Plan Policies respecting the acquisition of land, including a Record of Site Condition pursuant to the Environmental Protection Act; and,
- Lands that are generally free of any/all encumbrances, except those encumbrances identified as acceptable in this Parks Plan.

Recommendation 46: It is recommended that the Town of Oakville identify the following as potentially being acceptable lands for parkland dedication, but at a reduced rate:

- Lands that are within the designated Natural Heritage System, but are not specifically identified as a core natural feature;
- Lands that include slopes between 5 percent and 15 percent, that are not included within the Natural Heritage System and/or,
- Lands that include designated cultural heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes.

Recommendation 47: It is recommended that the Town of Oakville identify the following as not acceptable lands for parkland dedication:

- Lands that are an identified core natural heritage feature as defined in the Official Plan, or an applicable Secondary Plan, or as identified in an Environmental Impact Study accepted by the Town;
- Lands that are identified as Hazard Lands, have poor drainage, erosion issues, extreme slopes (greater than 15 percent) or other environmental or physical conditions that would interfere with the lands potential development or use as a public park;
- Lands that are required to accommodate storm water management facilities. And, where lands for parks purposes include storm water management facilities, that portion of the land that includes a storm water management facility shall not be included in the area calculation for parkland conveyance;
- Lands that are deemed to be contaminated in any way;
- Lands used for utility corridors or any other infrastructure; and/or,
- Lands that are encumbered by easements or similar legal instruments that prohibit public use.

It is also suggested that the Town, notwithstanding the provisions of this recommendation, consider accepting constrained lands - lands with steep slopes, utility corridors, storm water management facilities, or highway infrastructure - for acquisition or securement via easement, or as part of the required parkland dedication. If the constrained lands are to be part of a required parkland dedication, the land area provided shall be substantially discounted in recognition of the associated constraints of the land to accommodate recreational opportunities, to the satisfaction of the Town. The actual amount of the land area discount shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, at the sole discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town.

What is the overall applicability of the New By-Law?

In general, the Parkland Dedication By-Law should be applicable throughout the Town, and for all categories and types of development, and in all geographic locations.

Recommendation 48: It is recommended that the Town, in its Parkland Dedication By-law, state that the By-law applies to all lands within the corporate limits of the Town of Oakville, and that the Parkland Dedication By-law applies to all development applications pursuant to the *Planning Act*, which are submitted and deemed complete by the Town. In addition:

- As a condition of development of land, the Town shall require that parkland be conveyed to the Town for park or other public recreational purposes; and,
- The required conveyance shall be in the form of land, or a cash-in-lieu equivalent to the value of the land required, or a combination of cash and land, at the discretion of, and to the satisfaction of the Town.

It is also important to recognize previous conveyances/payments for development, ensuring that the Town does not inadvertently extra-charge a development for parkland dedication.

Recommendation 49: It is recommended that the Town, it its Parkland Dedication By-Law identify that where land has previously been conveyed, or a payment of cash-in-lieu of such conveyance has been previously received by the Town, no additional conveyance or payment in respect of the land subject to the earlier conveyance or payment may be required by the Town in respect of subsequent development or redevelopment applications, unless:

- There is a change in the proposed development which would increase the number of dwelling units of the current use or currently approved use; or,
- Lands originally identified for development or redevelopment for commercial or industrial purposes are instead proposed for development or redevelopment for other purposes that generate a higher parkland dedication requirement.

Further, where such increase in the number of dwelling units is proposed, or where a land use conversion is proposed, from a non-residential land use to a residential land use, or from a commercial or industrial land use to any other land use, the conveyance will be subject to the increase in density/dwelling units/land use proposed and the value determined at the time of the application, and in accordance with the recommendations of this Parks Plan.

Recommendation 50: It is recommended that the Town, in its Parkland Dedication By-law indicate that nothing in the By-law shall be interpreted so as to frustrate, invalidate or supersede any existing agreements that have been previously executed between the land owners and the Town with respect to area specific parkland dedication, or the delivery and funding arrangements, provided that the proposed development proceeds in a manner set out under such agreements.

Recommendation 51: It is recommended that the Town, in its Parkland Dedication By-law, identify that parkland dedication credits may be considered by the Town where a specified land owner has over-provided a parkland dedication on one site, and then, subject to approval by the Town, may reduce the required parkland dedication on another site being developed by the same land owner. Legal agreements between the land owner and the Town may be required to facilitate the intent of this recommendation.

By whom, and how should the New By-law be administered?

Recommendation 52: It is recommended that the Town delegate to the Treasurer and the Director of Planning in collaboration with the Director of Parks and Open Space and the Manager of Realty Services the administration of the Parkland Dedication By-Law. The Treasurer and the Director of Planning, in collaboration with the Director of Parks and Open Space and the Town Solicitor shall be authorized to:

- Negotiate parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu for each development application, in accordance with the provisions of the Town's Parkland Dedication By-Law and the policies of the Official Plan; and,
- Maintain records of all lands and cash-in-lieu received and including all expenditures from the cash-in-lieu parkland reserve fund. The cash-in-lieu parkland dedication record and associated financial statements shall be reported to the Town Treasurer.

Monitoring and When should the New By-law be reviewed?

Recommendation 53: It is recommended that the Town monitor this Parks Plan and the Parkland Dedication By-law on an ongoing basis to ensure that:

- Elements of Provincial legislation are kept up to date;
- The regulatory elements of the By-law remain effective in achieving the Town's objectives over time; and,
- Its effectiveness both in terms of the regulatory context and in its consistent application is maintained.

Recommendation 54: It is recommended that the Town review this Parks Plan-2031 and the Parkland Dedication By-Law, at a minimum, in response to changes in Provincial planning policies and/or whenever the Town reviews its applicable Official Plan policies. The By-Law should also indicate that it should be reviewed at a minimum of every 5 years, or at an earlier time as prescribed by Council. The review shall include consultation with Council, other Town staff and affected stakeholders within the Town.

When should the New By-law begin to apply?

It is anticipated that the new Parkland Dedication By-Law will conform to the updated provisions of the *Planning Act* and will be substantially different than the existing practices of the Town of Oakville, and as such, the issue of when the new By-Law shall apply to all development applications pursuant to the *Planning Act* which are submitted and deemed complete on or after the Effective Date of the By-Law, as determined by the approval of Council.

Recommendation 55: It is recommended that the Town apply the Parkland Dedication By-law to all development applications pursuant to the *Planning Act*, which are submitted and deemed complete, following the Effective Date of the approval of the By-Law.

Recommendation 56: It is recommended that the Town consider the implications if any Section of the By-Law is determined by a Court or Tribunal, to be invalid, that specific portion of the By-law shall be considered to be severed from the balance of the By-law, which will continue to operate in full force and effect.

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Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix I

Summary of 5 Year Review of the 2012 Parks, Recreation and Library Facilities Master Plan
(April 2017, Monteith + Brown, Dillon)

August 2022

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Miscellaneous

- There are 211 neighbourhood and community parks totalling 411 hectares
- Parks and green spaces have 94% customer satisfaction rating
- In the Facility Inventory (page 7-9), school soccer fields are included in the "current municipal supply"
- There is a North Oakville Trails & Parks Facilities Plan that defines the quantity and rough distribution of parkland for the area
- Build-out population forecast is 266,800, representing 20% growth or 44,000 people
- Shift to more creative, multi-use parks with intensification; also, consideration of alternative spaces as public realm (e.g. laneways, schools, rooftops)
- Shift to greater diversity within parks: accessibility, fitness, community, dogs, informal fields
- Mentions that strata parks are being considered by Toronto and Mississauga

Soccer Fields

- Currently 59 Town-owned rectangular fields for soccer/football
- Town has community use agreements for 22 school fields for public use; some artificial turf; some lit
- Because of the turf and lighting, the 81 actual fields are considered to be 93 "unit equivalencies" because of their extended use potential
- 2 Town-owned field hockey fields, 1 multi-use field
- Well distributed through Town
- Average of 1 field equivalency per 2,100 residents – exceeds GTA comparator group of 1 per 3,400
- Soccer is most popular Canadian youth sport, but peaked in 2007 and is slowly declining (-12%); Oakville's numbers are more ambiguous but generally parallel this trend
- Current Town **target** is 1 field per 100 registered youth participants; current **actual** is 1 per 72 youth and 1 per 98 total including adults
- New recommendation is 1 per 105 registered players including adults; using this formula there is a surplus of 6 soccer field equivalents currently
- Full build out will require 112.5 fields (+19.5)

Multi-Use Fields

- Football, lacrosse, ultimate Frisbee, rugby, field hockey – but they differ slightly in size/lines/season
- Field hockey growing (160-270%), lacrosse growing (18%)
- Current Town **target** is 1 field per 50,000 population
- Currently 3 fields – require 1 more for current population, 1 more to full build out, both recommended for North Oakville

Ball Diamonds

- Currently 43 Town diamonds (28 unlit), plus 8 school diamonds
- 51 total diamonds are considered to be 66 unit equivalencies of unlit diamonds
- Current supply is 1 diamond per 2,900 residents based on unit equivalencies – exceeds GTA comparator group of 1 per 5,400
- Well distributed through Town except West Oakville (1/2 supply)
- Baseball (softball, slo-pitch, fastball) participation was declining but has increased 31% from 2011-2015
- Currently adequate supply in south Oakville and a target of 1 per 5,000 in North Oakville (undersupply) – requires 6 additional unit equivalents in North Oakville

Cricket Pitches

- Currently 1 Town cricket pitch – under sized and temporary
- GTA comparator group average is 1 per 100,000 population
- Cricket is gaining popularity
- Recommend developing a short term cricket pitch across 2 soccer fields in North Oakville

Tennis/Pickleball Courts

- Currently 64 Town tennis courts + 12 club courts, a supply of 1 per 3,030 (public) and 1 per 2,550 (total) – GTA comparator group average is 1 per 5,000
- Tennis is growing, but not back to 1970s levels
- Current target is 1 court per 4,000
- Some tennis courts have been converted to baskeball or other; this can continue
- Pickleball is fastest growing sport in North America (ageing demographics)
- Recommend conversion of some tennis to pickleball

Basketball Courts

- Town supply of 12 full basketball and 3 half basketball outdoor, for an average of 1 per 14,360 population – GTA benchmark is 1 per 8,000 but varies widely
- Youth are primary users of outdoor courts
- Current target is 1 per 1,500 youth and current supply is 1 per 2,100 youth
- Requires additional 5.5 courts; 10.5 courts at full build out – provide in North and East Oakville

Outdoor Pools and Splash Pads

- Town supply of 5 outdoor pools in mature communities (older facilities) for an average of 1 per 38,800 population – GTA benchmark is 1 per 180,000
- Town supply of 15 splash pads in more recently developed communities for an average of 1 per 12,900 population – GTA benchmark is 1 per 27,000
- No new outdoor pools recommended – high cost, seasonal, and there are indoor options
- Outdoor pool use has been stable but 85% drop-in
- Consider reducing outdoor pools and modernizing others
- Town target is 1 splash pad within 1km radius of residential areas – will require 6-7 new splash pads in North Oakville

Playgrounds

- Current Town supply is 128 playgrounds within Community & Neighbourhood parks and select Village Squares
- Town target is 1 per 1,500 residents; Town spatial target is within 800m radius of residential (without crossing major road/barrier) – this is met
- Consider a 400m radius in North Oakville, believed to be achievable
- Town is pursuing barrier-free playgrounds
- Recommend providing adult exercise equipment

Skateboard/Bike Parks

- Current Town supply is 3 skateboard parks or 1 per 64,600 residents – located in East, West and SW; there are no bike parks
- GTA benchmark is 1 per 90,000
- Growing popularity
- Town target is 1 skate park per 5,000 youth
- Major skate parks 10-15,000sf, minor skate spots 2,000sf
- 2 major skate parks are recommended in North Oakville; consider minor parks as needed
- Recommend 1-2 bike park pilot projects

Outdoor Skating Rinks

- Current Town supply of 16 locations with natural ice and volunteers; numbers fluctuate
- One refrigerated ice pad under construction in Trafalgar Park as Town-wide destination

Leash-Free Dog Parks

- Current Town supply of 6 or 1 per 32,300 residents; slight gaps in West/SW
- GTA benchmark is 1 per 150,000
- Some research indicates off-leash dog parks are growing faster than any other park type
- Monitor use

Outdoor Community Event Spaces

- Recent surge in number and complexity of outdoor events; ethnic communities contributing to this
- Many events are staged in public spaces not specifically designed for them (Coronation Park, Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park, Sixteen Mile CC) – nuisance concern
- Event spaces need suitable adjacencies, infrastructure, and furniture/equipment
- Potential desire for two acres of useable event space
- Difficult to acquire in North Oakville due to negotiated parks settlement – may require loss of sports fields

Other

- Bocce in decline; Town has no courts
- 80+ new community garden plots to open
- Town needs washroom provision strategy focused on larger parks
-
- Existing Parks and Open Space Supply (see pages 84-94)

Existing Parks and Open Space Supply (see pages 84-94)

Existing Inventory

Active Parkland	
Community Park	175ha
Neighb. Park/Village Square/Parkette	237ha
Subtotal	411ha
Conveyed, undeveloped Active Parkland	83ha
TOTAL Active (existing + undeveloped)	494ha
Passive Parkland and Open Space	
Tableland woodlot	166ha
Community Link Park	121ha
Minor Valley	453ha
Major Valley	263ha
Subtotal	1003ha
Conveyed, undeveloped Passive Parkland	29ha
TOTAL Passive (existing + undeveloped)	1032ha
GRAND TOTAL (existing + undeveloped)	1526ha

Village/urban squares are a new park category introduced for North Oakville and Midtown, but not retroactively applied to the rest of Oakville

Provision Target

- TARGET: 2.2ha of active parkland per 1,000 residents (established in 1999 and recommended to continue)
- CURRENT SUPPLY: 2.12ha per 1,000 based on population of 193,832 (2016 census)

Projection

Town provision target	2.2ha/1,000
Total parkland need based on build-out population of 266,800	587ha
Current supply including conveyed + undeveloped	494ha
Proposed parkland	13.7ha
Total parkland	507.7ha
Additional parkland needed	**79.3ha**

Parkland supply for North Oakville is projected to meet the needs of this master plan, including specific large facilities for sports (soccer, cricket, bike/skate, etc.)

Parkland Acquisition

- Majority of growth in North Oakville, with some in intensification areas
- Assess parkland on an area-specific basis re: distance, local needs
- Recommends parkland acquisition at maximum applicable rate permitted by the Planning Act to achieve 2.2ha/1,000
- Do not accept natural or hazard lands as dedication
- Do not pursue acquisition of non-municipal land for park purposes (e.g. school yards/surplus schools) in areas of adequate supply
- Develop intensification area parkland strategy
- Explore acquisition and non-acquisition options (easements, land exchange, long term lease, trusts) if future parkland cannot achieve 2.2/1,000. Indoor space with outdoor-type amenities is encouraged

Cash-in-lieu

- Recommends studying opportunities and constraints of the new 1ha/500 unity rate provided by the Planning Act, and considering alternatives like capped land value, flat rates per unit, graduated scales, etc.

Intensification Areas

- Rejuvenate older existing parks in intensification areas. Explore potential for expanded recreational opportunities
- Some GTA municipalities are developing strata park policies. Strata parks have encumbrances and risk
- Semi-public space can complement but not substitute for Active Parkland
- Consider non-traditional means of securing parks

Other

- Work towards establishing a continuous Lake Ontario waterfront open space
- Pursue partnerships such as for better maintenance, sponsorships of trails/park features, integrate with surrounding municipalities, corporate Town-wide greening
- Design neighbourhood parks to rely on street parking to maximize park use

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Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix II

An Urban Park Hierarchy within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas

August 2022

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Introduction

Given the timeframe established for this project, and the identified urgency to consider the parkland dedication issues that affect “intensification” projects, this Memorandum for Discussion has been prepared to expedite some of the commentary, research and recommendations related to new development projects within the Town’s identified Growth Areas, including the Strategic Growth Areas. This Memorandum for Discussion is organized into a number of parts that provide:

PART I
The Starting Point

PART II
The Need for an Urban Park Hierarchy

PART III
Design Principles for the Urban Park Hierarchy

and,

PART IV
Preliminary Suggestions to achieve the Urban Park Hierarchy

Tannery Park, Oakville

PART I

The Starting Point

Based on our team's experience to date, it has become clear that parkland dedication is one of the key factors affecting the cost of higher-density, "intensified" development forms and the associated risks involved in the development approval process within Growth Areas across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (notwithstanding Provincial, Regional and local planning policies that promote that form of development in identified locations). It is not the only factor, but it is an important one. Some of the other factors that our team has encountered through similar projects include:

- Municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (outside of the City of Toronto) have done a good job securing, building and maintaining their public park systems in the more traditional more suburban context;

- There is a perception by the public that more parkland is always required, suggesting that municipalities should always achieve the maximum amount of parkland that it is entitled to under the Planning Act;

- There is a general recognition that securing and maintaining an urban parks hierarchy requires a different approach than the suburban approach currently in place. Urban development requires context specific parkland dedication policies and procedures with an underlying recognition that urban forms of parkland or open space include a wide spectrum of substantially different park and open space types than the more traditional suburban parkland approach. Further, alternative ownership and maintenance opportunities need to part of the municipal tool-box, including a mix of fee simple public ownership, Strata ownership and POPS (Privately Owned Public Spaces);

- A new and more robust urban parks hierarchy need to be established. It is understood that parkland dedication, design and maintenance protocols are dramatically different for urban parks vs. suburban parks – and this difference will have cost implications that may need to be funded by a variety of sources – other available tools under the Planning Act, The Development Charges Act and other relevant legislation;

- There is a sense that parks are "the gift that keeps on taking". While it is easy to argue that the municipalities should be acquiring the greatest quantity of parkland possible, it is important to recognize the significant costs of maintaining urban parkland over time, and to consider whether those funds could be used to address other municipal priorities. Notably, the cost of building and maintaining parkland is even greater for the urban park hierarchy (estimated to be 10x more expensive to build and to maintain, and the life-cycle of an urban park is typically much shorter than for a more traditional suburban park);

- With respect to parkland dedication, and notwithstanding that the Planning Act provides the legislative authority to require parkland dedication across the Province, there is no consistently applied approach to parkland dedication used in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In fact, there is a different set of regulations and procedures for virtually every municipality, and there may be a unique or negotiated approach applied on a site-specific basis within each municipality;

- There is a concern that because there is no consistency, there could be a situation where municipalities will compete for developer attention through strategic reductions in development risk

and/or cost factors, to the detriment of the public interest in achieving a GGH-wide urban structure. The corollary may also be true, municipalities may frustrate the achievement of higher density forms of development through manipulation of the key risk and/or cost factors;

- Notwithstanding the lack of consistency in approach, there is a general understanding that the application of the alternative residential parkland dedication standard of the Planning Act of 1 hectare for every 300 dwelling units (or 1 hectare for every 500 dwelling units for cash-in-lieu) has a significant financial impact on higher density residential development projects - even in locations where that form of development is required, and is appropriate. There is strong and consistent agreement within the development industry that the alternative parkland dedication standard identified in the Planning Act is simply inappropriate for application on the highest density forms of development because:

  - The amount of land generated by that standard could well be greater than the development site itself; and,

  - The cost of cash-in-lieu payable could be greater than the value of the development site itself, and in many cases may render some higher density projects financially unviable. This concern has been consistently raised by representatives of the development industry; and,

- These issues, when considered comprehensively across the Greater Golden Horseshoe may have a dramatic impact on the ability to achieve the fundamental principles of the Provincial, Regional and municipal planning documents:

  - There may be a reluctance to develop within the defined urban centres and transit supportive corridors, thereby reducing the viability of transit investment, or slowing the development of transit facilities;

  - Growth targets, particularly the intensification targets, may not be met;

  - Planned infrastructure will be underutilized and subsequently both inefficient and expensive; and,

  - There will be a continued reliance on the automobile, and an ongoing preference for typical suburban forms of development; and,

- Municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe are currently grappling with this complex issue. Overall, there is a strong desire to achieve an approach to achieving an appropriate urban parks hierarchy and associated parkland dedication procedures, design parameters and maintenance protocols that are:

  - **Appropriate** – delivers a great urban parks hierarchy that is highly integrated, connected and ultimately successful, meeting the specific needs of Oakville's existing and future urban population and business community;

  - **Equitable** – is fair and reasonable to all stakeholders, including the Town, the existing and future residents of the Town, the business community and the development industry;

  - **Consistent** – is applied equally and fairly to all applicants without the need for individual deal-making, or site-specific adjustments; and,

  - **Long-Lasting** – will serve the Town well over the coming 10 to 15 years, without the need for constant amendments.

Scholars Garden, Mississauga, ON

Towne Square, Oakville
Copyright Queen's Printer for Ontario, photo source: Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Municipal Affairs

PART II

The Need for an Urban Park Hierarchy within the Growth Areas

Growth Areas are active and diverse

The decision to live in one of Oakville's defined Growth Areas is, and will be, a decision based on balancing urban amenities with urban impacts. The Growth Areas will provide the highest order of amenities for adjacent residents and businesses – shopping, dining and nightlife, recreation, culture and arts facilities, health care and educational opportunities – as well as a full array of housing forms and tenures, including everything from townhouses to apartments.

The Growth Areas and particularly the Strategic Growth Areas will become Oakville's centres of commerce and business, and include significant opportunities to work close to where you live. In addition, the Growth Areas will be highly accessible by multiple modes of transportation, and its accessibility attributes make cycling, walking and transit viable mode options. The idea of diverse and inclusive Growth Area is that they can accommodate the broadest range of people, without regard to cultural or socio-economic status, or lifestyle choice, all living and working in proximity.

Suburban park space is characterized as public, big, green and programmed

In a typical suburban neighbourhood there is a substantial private space element (backyard/front yard), along with a park space hierarchy that includes larger scale parks that are mostly green and include sports fields. The largest suburban parks, include other major recreational facilities. In many cases, the suburban park space system incorporates school sites and community recreation centres. For the most part, the suburban park space system is owned, designed and maintained by the public sector.

Underpass Park, Toronto

Urban Park Space is characterized as diverse, flexible, small and connected

Park spaces typical of an urban centre, like Oakville's Growth Areas, includes an array of park space that can have both green and hard design components, and include crucial connectivity components, including sidewalks on public roads. The park spaces and broader public realm networks in an urban centre are more complex than the suburban park space system and include primarily public spaces, but can also include semi-public spaces and private components that all work together to form a highly interconnected network. The broader public realm network is

Post Office Square, Boston

comprised of Urban Community Parks, Urban Squares, Pocket Parks, Sliver Parks, Courtyards and/or Connecting Links, as well as the street related sidewalk/streetscape system.

Park spaces and the broader public realm network in an urban context:

- Are highly animated by the people who walk from place to place and their interaction with the uses within the adjacent buildings;
- Are more heavily used and more diverse in their component parts and, as such, require a higher cost of design and development, as well as an enhanced maintenance protocol;
- Are integrated as part of the pedestrian circulation network within the Growth Area; and,
- Are flexible to accommodate different users and events, and will respond to use patterns that may be dramatically different at different times of the day.

Sherbourne Common, Toronto

The trade-off

The high density context of the Growth Areas is a fundamental requirement to achieve the critical mass necessary to support the palette of high order amenities, transit investment, housing options and places to work. Inherently, living in a high density environment involves an understanding that there are impacts that are more acute than in a typical suburban neighbourhood. There is more noise because of increased activity on the street. There is traffic congestion, and parking issues. Privacy is reduced. Construction is always underway. It is these impacts that are traded off against the urban amenities and opportunities offered by this form of living. One of the important trade-offs between the suburban/urban lifestyle, is the nature, scale and function of the suburban park space system versus the broader urban pedestrian realm network, including its associated urban park spaces.

Just like a suburban dweller is required to travel out of their neighbourhood to acquire or utilize higher order cultural, shopping, health, education and workplace amenities/opportunities, the urban dweller will be required to go elsewhere within the Town to find organized recreational opportunities that require expansive sports fields. This is simply part of the trade-off between lifestyle choices, and the need for additional, larger scale park spaces located elsewhere within the Town.

Waterfront, Copenhagen, DK

Coal Harbour Vancouver, BC

PART III

Design Principles for the Urban Park Hierarchy within the Growth Areas

Defining Park Spaces in an Urban Context

Oakville is evolving with a focus on urban "intensification"

In recent years, Oakville has been growing with a focus on traditional "suburban" forms of development, and has established, through the Official Plan and the Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Master Plan a parkland system that includes the traditional suburban parks including Neighbourhood and Community Park types, as well as parkettes and urban squares. Comprehensively planned "greenfield" communities will continue to form a major component of Oakville's ongoing growth, and should continue to accommodate all of those traditional parkland types.

"Intensification" requires consideration of a comprehensive Pedestrian Realm Network

In addition to traditional, and successful "greenfield" development forms, Oakville continues to evolve, and, as required by Provincial and Regional planning policies, a greater reliance on higher density, "intensified" development will need to be considered. As the Town's identified Growth Areas accommodate more, and more intense forms of development, the Town's parkland system will need to promote a full range of urban parkland typologies - with different design characters, functions, scales and ownership circumstances. Importantly, strategies to achieve a robust urban "Pedestrian Realm Network", that compliments the existing and growing suburban parkland system need to be articulated.

The Pedestrian Realm Network is an integral component of the urban form of the Town's Growth Areas.

The Pedestrian Realm Network is an integral component of the urban form of the Town's Growth Areas. It is pedestrian friendly and pedestrian oriented. The Pedestrian Realm Network consists of all of the components of the defined park space hierarchy and streetscapes, as well as an array of semi-public and privately owned components that, notwithstanding their ownership, will contribute to the overall network of publicly accessible park spaces within the Growth Areas.

Important elements of urban park spaces include landmarks, gateways, public art, tree cover, lawns and other plantings, street/ park furniture, as well as other character-defining elements. Those character-defining elements all contribute to placemaking and legibility. Other elements found within the urban park hierarchy include amphitheatres, children's play areas, water features and skating rinks.

The Pedestrian Realm Network, and the urban park spaces within it, are fully accessible to all members of the public, regardless of ability. Their primary purpose is to provide a pedestrian oriented environment that accommodates everyone in a connected and coherent network of park spaces linked together by sidewalks and streetscapes.

The Pedestrian Realm Network includes a defined hierarchy of urban park spaces

The urban park space system for the Growth Areas is comprised of the following components:

Primary Park Spaces

- Urban Community Parks; and,
- Urban Squares.

Secondary Park Spaces

- Pocket Parks;
- Sliver Parks;
- Courtyards; and,
- Connecting Links.

As noted, all of these components will play vital roles in animating the identified Growth Areas throughout Oakville. Specific planning, design and maintenance considerations are required to ensure the vitality and longevity of these spaces. In addition, the components of the public realm network must be considered in concert with one another and within the context of the planned urban community.

A comprehensive understanding of how these park spaces work together and complement each other, and their adjacent uses, will lead to a more connected, accessible and logical Pedestrian Realm Network. Moving people through the Growth Areas easily and safely, and providing a variety of spaces for socializing, special events and recreation, is a priority.

Mid-Block Pedestrian Connection, Yorkville, Toronto

Primary Park Spaces

Public Commons and Urban Squares are pedestrian friendly spaces that accommodate socializing in a dense urban area. They include both hard and soft landscape elements and are equipped with ample amenities that respond to the needs of the adjacent mixed use community. It is expected that all of the Primary Park Spaces be acquired, owned, developed and maintained by the Town, notwithstanding that there may be opportunities where private ownership options are appropriate and achievable.

The two primary components of the park space system within the Growth Areas that should be accommodated are:

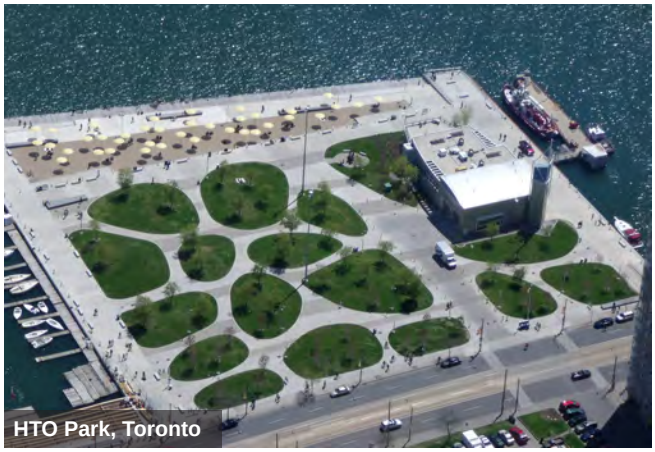
- **Public Commons** – Public Commons are the largest component of the Urban Park Hierarchy. They are expected to be greater that 8000 square metres in size, and can be much larger.

  Public Commons, where established, are intended as the primary focal point of a Growth Area. They are expected to provide multifunctional flexible space and programming for large-scale social gatherings, festivals and civic functions to accommodate facilities for the entire community.

  Public Commons may include concert venues, public markets, water play, playgrounds, and organized or unorganized sporting activities for all age groups and abilities and are to be developed with the following criteria in mind:

  - Have frontage on at least 2 public streets, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the park is appropriate;
  - Be designed such that they provide 40.0% of the area of the Urban Park in Tree Canopy Cover by the end of the 10th year after its opening;
  - Be primarily soft surfaced and green, but may include hard surface elements;
  - Include substantial programmable spaces such as small sports fields, courts and performance venues, as well as playful elements for children; and,
  - Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, facilities for dogs, facilities for seniors, children and youth, water features and public art; and,

Scholars Square, Mississauga


HTO Park, Toronto

Bryant Park, New York City

- **Urban Squares** - Urban Squares are moderately scaled components of the Pedestrian Realm Network. They are expected to be greater than 1000 square metres in size, but generally less than 8000 square metres in size.

  Urban Squares may provide multifunctional flexible space and programming for social gatherings, festivals and civic functions intended to serve community users generally within a 10-minute walking distance (approximately 800 metres).

  Urban Squares are community focal points that should accommodate special features such as public art that adds visual interest and contributes to placemaking. They are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

  - Have frontage on at least 1 public street, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the square is appropriate;
  - Require that adjacent built form have primary and active frontages facing the Square, where appropriate
  - Be designed such that they provide 40.0% of the area of the Urban Square in Tree Canopy Cover by the end of the 10th year after its opening;
  - Be primarily hard surfaced, but may include soft surface elements;
  - Include community and civic event spaces as well as performance venues and playful elements for children; and,
  - Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, opportunities for outdoor cafés and restaurants, facilities for seniors, children and youth, water features and public art.

Village of Yorkville Park, Toronto

Times Square, New York City

Post Office Square, Boston, MA

Secondary Park Spaces

Secondary Park Spaces are typically smaller than Primary Park Spaces, and are generally wholly integrated within/adjacent to buildings. It is the intent that Secondary Park Spaces may be publicly owned or privately owned. Privately owned park spaces will only be considered as part of the required parkland dedication of the Planning Act, where the Town is satisfied that the park space component is accessible to the public, has been designed to Town standards, and is to be maintained to Town standards. Legal agreements to ensure the long-term satisfaction of these requirements will need to be established.

Secondary Park Spaces are important connectors within the Public Realm Network, and provide diversity and interest within an urban centre. Secondary Park Spaces include:

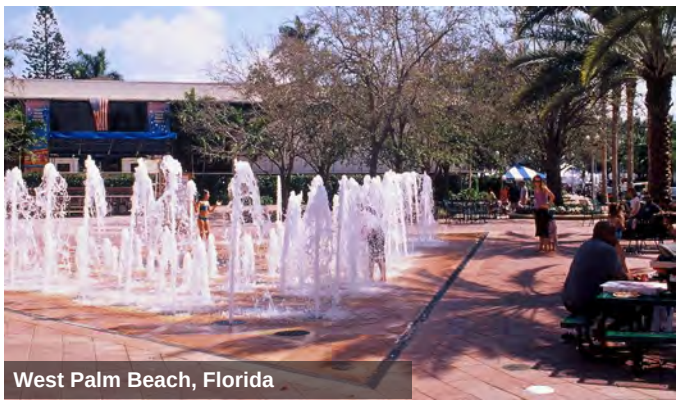
- **Pocket Parks** – Pocket Parks are small, pedestrian friendly spaces that accommodate socializing in dense urban areas. They are expected to be less than 1,000 square metres in size, but generally greater than 75 square metres.

  Pocket Parks are key components of the inter-connected Pedestrian Realm Network. They provide social spaces animated by their adjacent uses such as cafes and shops generally within a 2 to 5-minute walk (approximately 150 to 400 metres) of residents, visitors and businesses within a high-density, mixed use neighbourhood. Pocket Parks are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

  - Have frontage on at least 1 public street, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the square is appropriate;
  - Require that adjacent built form have primary and active frontages facing the Pocket Park, where appropriate;
  - Be designed such that they provide 50.0% of the area of the Pocket Park in Tree Canopy Cover by the end of the 10th year after its opening;
  - Be primarily hard surfaced, with limited soft surface elements; and,
  - Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, opportunities for outdoor cafés and restaurants, facilities that promote a passive, relaxing atmosphere, water features and public art.

Paley Park, New York City

Courthouse Square, Toronto


West Palm Beach, Florida

- **Sliver Parks** – Sliver Parks are narrow linear spaces that often front retail spaces and function as a substantially widened sidewalk, creating plazas or forecourts between the face of the adjacent building and the street right-of-way. They are, effectively extensions of the public sidewalk system.

  Sliver Parks should be established adjacent to active building frontages, wherever possible. Transparent and accessible at-grade uses adjacent to the Sliver Parks will help to animate the space, improve safety and encourage use. Sliver Parks are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

  - Require that adjacent built form have primary and active frontages facing the Sliver Open Space;
  - Be primarily hard surfaced, with limited planting and soft surface elements; and,
  - Be flexible to accommodate spill out retail space, and/or outdoor cafés and restaurants.

Chicago, IL

Winnipeg, Manitoba

- **Courtyards** – Courtyards are interior or exterior spaces that are surrounded by buildings, and are lined with small stores, restaurants and outdoor cafés. They promote a high standard of quality and pedestrian comfort. Courtyards should contribute to the logical wayfinding system and help to establish a fine-grained Pedestrian Realm Network.

  Indoor and/or outdoor Courtyards are sometimes public spaces, but are often privately owned and publicly accessible. Although they all enable pedestrians to travel through the community quickly and easily, many are destinations unto themselves with seating, restaurant and retail frontages, and unique public art. They provide valuable opportunities to improve connections between the public sidewalk system and the other components of the Pedestrian Realm Network. Courtyards are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

  - Have several egress opportunities to the public sidewalk system;
  - Require that adjacent built form have primary and active frontages facing the Courtyard space;
  - Be primarily hard surfaced, with limited soft surface elements; and,
  - Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, opportunities for outdoor cafés and restaurants, facilities that promote a passive, relaxing atmosphere, water features and public art.

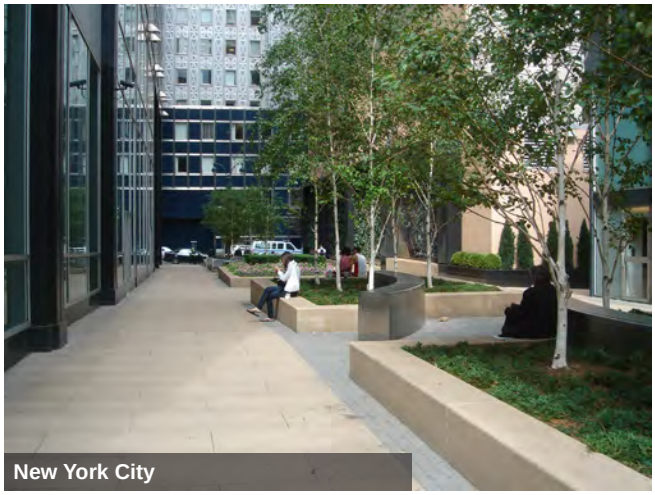
MOMA Courtyard, New York City

Recoleta, Buenos Aires

- **Connecting Links** – Connecting Links are outdoor walkways that may be lined with small stores, restaurants and outdoor cafés. These spaces are sometimes public spaces, but are often privately owned and publicly accessible. Although they all enable pedestrians to travel through the community quickly and easily, many are destinations unto themselves with outdoor seating, restaurant and retail frontages, and unique public art.

  Connecting Links provide valuable opportunities to improve connections between the public sidewalk system and the other components of the Pedestrian Realm Network. They will play an important role in creating a logical wayfinding system, and assist in the establishment of a more beautiful and inviting Pedestrian Realm Network within the Growth Areas. Connecting Links are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

  - Be provided in high pedestrian volume areas, for ease of movement as well as the creation of unique urban spaces;
  - Be located between pedestrian destinations and may become destinations themselves;
  - Have opportunities for retail along their length, or alternately a green soft landscape treatment with plantings, furnishings and lighting;
  - Be safe and secure, with adequate lighting; and,
  - Width should consider scale of adjacent buildings.


New York City

Yorkville, Toronto

Key Design Principles for Park Spaces in an Urban Context

The following is a summary of findings on how to design park spaces within an urban context, and in a way that maximizes accessibility and walkability. Complimentary to the definition of what it means to be pedestrian friendly, key considerations include, location, accessibility, size, and programming.

The Concept of "Pedestrian Friendly" Design

Achieving a "pedestrian friendly" park space system depends on well-defined measures and established design concepts. The quantifiable nature of the term "pedestrian friendly" is evident in the emergence of the Walk Score app and the concept of Pedestrian Level of Service (LOS), and is recognized throughout academic literature and professional design manuals, such as Vélo Québec's technical design manual on Planning and Design for Pedestrians and Cyclists (2010).

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators of "pedestrian friendly-ness" are also recognized by professional advocacy organizations, such as the US-based National Centre for Walking and Bicycling and the Project for Public Spaces. Based on an analysis of the aforementioned sources, there are at least six factors for achieving a pedestrian friendly place, and these include: convenience, coherence, comfort, safety, accessibility, and attractiveness:

- **Convenience** - Convenience refers to the level of effort and time required to complete a trip by foot. A key indicator for convenience is trip distance and proximity to amenities. In particular, people are most likely to choose to walk if their destination is within a five to ten-minute walk, or 400 to 800 metres. For park spaces within a larger network, the preferred distance is typically no more than a five-minute walk.

  Notably, trip length is influenced by the street pattern. A fine-grained and gridded street network provides a greater level of connectivity or permeability, which can be measured by the intersection density and block size. Greater street connectivity allows for more direct and shorter walking routes. With regard to the street or block pattern, block sizes that support walkability should be no more than 80 x 150 metres.

  Intersection conditions can also greatly impact the convenience of walking, particularly with regard to signal timing and the physical condition and directness of the crossing.

- **Coherence** - Coherence or legibility, refers to how easy it is to understand the layout of the public realm network, and to intuitively navigate from point A to point B. Coherence is influenced by the hierarchy and provision of routes between points of interest and activity, sight lines/view corridors, and wayfinding signage. Major barriers and breaks in the continuity of the pedestrian network negatively impact coherence and legibility. For example, if there is no clear path, then walking becomes a less feasible and attractive option.

- **Safety** - Safety refers to the risk of harassment, injury or death. The primary risks for pedestrians are associated with motor vehicle traffic and crime. Key mitigative measures include separation from motor vehicle traffic - taking into consideration the speed and volume of traffic, the treatment of intersections where pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic must cross, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) features with regard to visibility and access/exit pathways.

- **Accessibility** - Accessibility refers to the usability of parks for all people, regardless of their age, ability, status in life, or mode of travel. In terms of

age and ability, accessibility means planning parks for the young and old, and people with mobility impairments, in recognition that sight lines, walking speed, clearing space, endurance, and agility may vary. In this regard, Vélo Québec offers information on the characteristics of pedestrians, regarding occupied space, travel speed, climbing capacity, and field of vision.

Accessibility also means ensuring the parks and the broader public realm network can be used by people of all incomes, and all abilities by keeping park spaces free of charge and by ensuring they are equally distributed throughout the Growth Area.

- **Comfort** - Comfort refers to how pleasant, easy, and free from challenges a pedestrian trip can be. Pedestrian comfort depends on the convenience, coherence, safety and accessibility of the public realm network, and it can be enhanced through construction materials and the provision of pedestrian amenities that serve the unique needs of those travelling by foot, for example with regard to shade and/or weather protection (e.g. trees, awnings, canopies, shelters), seating, waste receptacles, washrooms, drinking fountains, information kiosks, and wayfinding signage.

- **Attractiveness** - Attractiveness refers to how inviting and interesting the surroundings are for pedestrians. In particular, well-maintained and well-lit public spaces are most attractive, as are those that are animated with street-level activity, such as from commercial, civic or recreational uses. Placemaking, which refers to community-based efforts and activities to physically reflect an area's unique character, context, assets, and history and to make it livelier, also contributes to the attractiveness of an area for pedestrians.

Although these six factors appear to focus on the characteristics of streets, other walking routes, and public park spaces, built form also has a significant impact on walkability. In addition to density and land use mix, the orientation of buildings on a parcel of land can impact trip distance, coherence, safety, and the attractiveness of walking. Based on the above six factors, the following definition of Pedestrian Friendly is proposed:

Pedestrian friendly refers to a place or design that can be easily accessed and navigated by people of all ages, abilities and incomes. Clear, safe and direct access routes, enhanced amenities to meet the unique needs of pedestrians, particularly with regard to shade, seating and weather protection, and street- level animation and interest are essential elements of pedestrian friendly design.

Location & Accessibility

Building upon the pedestrian friendly design concept, in their research article on parks planning, Forsyth & Mussacchio (2005) recommend that park spaces within the public realm network be located so that they are *"highly accessible to residents, connected to a larger open-space system, and planned with both the local climate and personal safety in mind*", Harnik (2006) also advocates for the equitable distribution of park spaces, so that they are accessible to all regardless of residence or resources. Achieving these objectives does, however, require foresight and planning, so that the configuration of the public realm network is not compromised by a disconnected development pattern – a risk identified by Forsyth & Mussacchio (2005).

In terms of metrics, Harnik (2006) finds that parks should be no further than a 10-minute walking distance apart in dense areas, and 10 minutes by bicycle in less dense areas. In an earlier article, Harnik & Simms (2004) emphasized the importance of using Active Transportation modes, rather than driving, for determining proximity standards:

> *"A distance of over half a mile to a park almost guarantees that most people will either skip the trip or they will drive. Once a standard is downgraded so that it is based on driving, it loses the "community" portion of the benefit. At that point, it no longer matters how far away the park is. The park has become a formal destination, not a place to drop in."*

In determining an appropriate proximity metric, Harnik (2006) recognized that distance alone is not a sufficient measure for park placement - physical barriers, both natural and human-made, must be accounted for. Moreover, the acceptable distance should accommodate park users of all physical abilities (Harnik, 2006).

Notwithstanding their recommendations, Harnik & Simms (2004) found there is no standard for acceptable distance from a park space, and that the most effective standards *"relate to the needs and capabilities of citizens"*. The researcher identified the following location-specific standards:

- Denver - three to six blocks (in most neighbourhoods, six blocks are 10 to 15 minutes, which accounts for barriers such as highways and valleys);
- Minneapolis - six blocks;
- Long Beach, CA – one quarter mile (400 metres);
- Seattle - one eighth of a mile (200 metres) within "urban villages"; and,
- Chicago - one tenth of a mile (160 metres) to a Pocket Park.

Within Canada, Evergreen (2004) found that at the time, Calgary, London, and Mississauga were the only three municipalities in Canada to prescribe park standards in size and in maximum distance from residential areas. Over the last decade, these metrics have become more commonly used.

In Oakville's Growth Areas, it is appropriate that every resident be located not farther than 400 metres (5 minute walk) from a Primary Park Space and within 150 metres (2 minute walk) of Secondary Park Space within a defined Growth Area.

Urban Scale & Adjacent Uses

The term urban scale includes park spaces within the public realm network with many and diverse scales and design functions. Urban Parks can be massive, like Central Park in New York City, Stanley Park in Vancouver, or High Park in Toronto. However, in the Oakville Growth Areas there are few opportunities to achieve that scale of park space, given that they are comprehensively planned and, at least partially developed, and expected to intensify incrementally over time.

More appropriately, the Town will be looking for more modest park spaces, within the definitions of Urban Community Parks, and Urban Squares as presented in this report. In addition, great urban centres also include a full array of smaller park space components that play a vital role on the quality of place, and quality of life of local residents and businesses. In this regard, the value of urban streetscapes cannot be ignored within the Growth Areas.

In their research article on Why Small Parks Matter, Forsyth & Musacchio (2005) recognize that *"as cities strive to increase densities to save energy and to reduce the consumption of land on the urban edge, small parks will become increasingly important parts of the green infrastructure of the Town and the metropolitan region"*.

In recognition of some of the challenges commonly associated with small parks, the researchers note that connecting smaller parks to other green spaces may reduce conflicts over the use of space, and that "while smaller parks may be more expensive to maintain per hectare than large parks, their per capita maintenance costs may be lower than larger, less used parks" - Forsyth & Musacchio (2005).

With respect to adjacent uses, in his February 19, 2014 article, Dan Reed states:

> *"What makes a great urban park like Dupont Circle in Washington, or Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, or Union Square in New York? They all have grassy areas and trees, and are nice places to enjoy the outdoors. But they don't exist in isolation. What happens on the edges of great urban parks is what makes them successful."*

He goes on to note:

> *"Great urban parks need people and buildings, too. Parks like Dupont and Rittenhouse sit in the middle of very dense, busy neighbourhoods with thousands of people living and working nearby. The surrounding buildings also create a frame around the space, making it an outdoor room.*
>
> *"Most of the buildings that face Dupont Circle have a store or restaurant on the ground floor. On Rittenhouse Square, there are apartment building entrances and restaurants with dining terraces opening to the square. Together, these things make a space that people are constantly using throughout the day, eating lunch, playing chess, making music, holding demonstrations, getting exercise, or just passing through."*

The concept of park space activation is crucial to ensure a successful space. Adjacent buildings need to appropriately address the spaces, and treat them like extensions of the indoor space. Parks adjacent to blank walls, or worse, the utility spaces of big buildings are destined to be unused, which means unsuccessful.

Quality of Programming

Great urban park spaces have strong functional assets. With respect to programming urban space, the key is flexibility to recognize the needs of residential users, as well as office users and retail/commercial users. Flexibility is also required to allow the park space to adapt to changing needs over time. The Primary Park Spaces – Urban Community Parks and Urban Squares – because they are larger, provide opportunities to accommodate green space, tree cover and pastoral landscapes that may include unprogrammed recreational space and other larger scale park features. In some instances, Primary Park Spaces may also accommodate small sports fields, courts, and performance venues, as well as playful elements for children.

Secondary Park Spaces will be less diverse, but still may include children's play areas, and tree cover. Programming opportunities are reduced in relationship to the scale, purpose and design of the space.

Programming Urban Park Spaces is a crucial element to ensure that they are effectively utilized for their intended purposes. The key is flexibility to recognize the needs of residential users, as well as office users and retail/commercial users. Flexibility is also required to allow the park space to adapt to changing needs over time. Parks programmed to be well used are destined to be successful.

Quality of Design

The various park components within the public realm network can provide iconic spaces that can act as Town-wide destinations, attracting residents, the local workforce and tourists. The hierarchy proposed in this report is intended to provide various opportunities and space for multifunctional and flexible programming from small social gatherings to larger festivals and civic functions.

All of the park spaces must be developed using the highest design standards and quality materials, including both hard and softscapes. They are to provide special features that accommodate the needs of all age groups, and include special features such as water fountains, public art to add visual interest and place-making qualities.

All of the park spaces are to be adaptable for year-round use, and are to be open and accessible to the public in accordance with Town By-laws. The design of these park spaces shall implement the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

In their work on Green Space Acquisition and Stewardship in Canada's Urban Municipalities, Evergreen (2004) reported that in addition to considering the size of green space and proximity to residents, it is also important to consider green space standards, including the "quality of landscape design; ecological health and biodiversity; appropriateness of design for diverse users and activities; interpretive and educational programming; and amount of green space in the surrounding region".

In reality, the quality of design must recognize the scale and context of the space. Typically, in an urban context, there is a very high degree of stress on the public realm network as a result of heavy use patterns. This reality exacerbates itself as the resident population grows and intensifies over time. *"High quality design, and high quality materials will be required, along with a diligent maintenance schedule in order to ensure that the components of the public realm network are long lasting in an urban context."*

Front St, Toronto ON

OAKVILLE

Town of Oakville

Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix III

Examples of Urban Park Typologies

August 2022

The Planning Partnership

nblc

Contents

Public Commons 2

Union Square North 3

HtO 4

Underpass Park 5

Urban Squares 6

Tear Drop Park 7

Tanner Springs Park 8

Place d'Armes 9

Promenades 10

Edge Park 11

The Boston Children's Museum Plaza 12

Front Street Promenade 13

Connecting Link 14

Mint Plaza 15

Market Lane 16

102 Bloor St W Lane 17

Pocket Parks 18

Mid Main Park 19

49th Street Park 20

Waterfall Garden Park 21

Sliver Parks 22

767 Third Avenue 23

Edible Bus Stop Pocket Park 24

22nd Street Parklet 25

Public Commons

0.75 to 2 ha

Public Common spaces are the social and recreational focal points of a neighbourhood. They typically meet the needs of the local community, and in some instances, accommodate City-wide facilities. Public Common spaces support a balance of active and passive uses. Public Common spaces should be coordinated with school sites, where possible.

Public Common spaces should accommodate special features that add visual interest and contribute to placemaking, including locations for public art. Public Common spaces are intended to serve community users who are generally within a 10-minute walking distance (approximately 800 metres).

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 to $1,000.00 per square metre*
*Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.

Union Square North

New York City, NY

Location: Broadway to 4th Avenue, East 14th Street to East 17th Street.

Size: 6.50 acres (26,345m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Frederick Law Olmsted & Calvert Vaux

Description

For nearly 170 years Union Square has been a gathering place—for commerce, for entertainment, for labor and political events, and for recreation.

Its paths, situated among lushly planted grounds, were inspired by the fashionable residential squares of London. The design emphasized the park's oval shape (enclosed by an iron picket fence) and focused on a large central fountain, which was installed for the opening of the Croton Aqueduct in 1842. As New York City's downtown expanded northward, Union Square became an important commercial and residential center. Around its borders sprang up houses, hotels, stores, banks, offices, manufacturing establishments, Tammany Hall, and a variety of cultural facilities, including music auditoria, theatres, and lecture halls. The grounds of Union Square have frequently served as a choice location for public meetings, including parades, labor protests, political rallies, and official celebrations such as the Great Metropolitan Fair of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in 1864.

In 1985 major renovations under Mayor Edward I. Koch included creating a new plaza at the south end of the park, relocating paths to make the park more accessible, planting a central lawn, and installing new lighting and two subway kiosks. In 1986 a monument to Indian political leader and social reformer Mohandas Gandhi (1986, by Kantilal B. Patel) was dedicated on a traffic island southwest of the main park. Two new playgrounds were constructed in 1993-94, and a restaurant opened in the sunken courtyard outside the pavilion in 1994.

In 1997 the United States Department of the Interior designated Union Square Park as a National Historic Landmark because of its significance in American labor history. Plans are underway to extend the park line south 14th Street, and to incorporate in the park the traffic island on which the Gandhi statue now stands.

HtO

Toronto, ON

Location: South of the Queens Quay West on the waterfront.

Size: 5.51 acres (22,300m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Janet Rosenberg Associates and Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes

Description

HtO is a popular urban beach along Toronto's waterfront inspired Georges Seurat's painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." It was designed with the intention of attracting people to the water's edge and animating Toronto's shoreline with activity. Multiple yellow umbrellas enclosed in sand and green dunes make the space very iconic from street level and from up above while the name, which is a play on the formula for water, H2O, is a way of branding the park.

A series of connected water elements accentuate the theme of water returning to its source. Each element is programmed to celebrate the intrinsic qualities of water. These include motion activated sprays, steam and fog, variations in colour and coloured ice.

The overlay of green islands provide gently sloping lawns for repose. Islands that meet residential buildings become horticultural to mediate between the public and private. The islands in the slips mediate storm water overflow. Native water's edge species act as an urban estuary to provide a living filter for micro-organisms.

The planting strategy involves three basic treatments: sloping lawns, horticultural and bio-remediation islands. Tree planting expresses a north-south gradient from a grove of multi-stem ash at the north, to wind-catching willows towards the water's edge. Planting of horticultural islands provide interest through the year, and buffer the residential or more private areas of the park. Selected species with winter berries contribute to the idea of the site as a bird and wildlife habitat.

Plants: Multi-Stem Ash, Willows

Features: Urban beach sandpit, beach chairs, umbrellas, boardwalk.

Underpass Park

Toronto, ON

Location: Under and around Eastern Avenue, Richmond and Adelaide overpass. Between Cherry Street and Bayview Avenue.

Size: 2.50 acres (10,117m^2)

Cost: Approx. $6 Million

Ownership: Public

Designed By: The Planning Partnership and Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg

Description

Underpass Park is the most extensive park ever built under an overpass in Canada, and the first ever in Toronto. Designed to transform derelict and underused space, the park takes full advantage of the concrete beams and columns of the overpasses to create a unique and inviting community asset and provide year round weather protection.

This bright new urban park will give residents of the West Don Lands and adjacent communities safe and beautiful ways to connect between the north and south sections of the neighbourhood.

A sizeable playground is located in the middle section of the park, between St. Lawrence St. and River Street. With a teeter-totter, hopscotch, 4-square, swings and playful climbing structures, the playground offers something for all ages. The area also includes a series of park benches and flexible community space that can be used for markets, festivals and seasonal public events.

The eastern-most section of the park, east of River Street, includes two basketball half-courts, and an extensive skatepark featuring a series of obstacles, rails and ledges. There is also a flexible open space that can be used for community events.

Urban Squares

0.25 to 1 ha

Urban Square spaces support neighbourhood-oriented social opportunities, as well as city-wide entertainment and cultural events depending on their size and location. Urban Square spaces may include public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street- related activities such as vendor and exhibit space. Urban Square spaces are intended to serve community users who are generally within a 5-minute walking distance (approximately 400 metres).

Capital Cost Estimate - $1,000.00 to $1,500.00 per square metre*
*Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.

Tear Drop Park

New York City, NY

Location: Lower Manhattan, in Battery Park

Size: 1.80 acres (7,284m^2)

Cost: $17 Million

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Michael Van Valkenburg Associates

Description

Teardrop Park is a 1.8-acre public park in lower Manhattan that transcends its small size, shady environment, and mid-block location through bold topography, complex irregular space, and robust plantings. Teardrop's design and construction were coordinated with the development of four surrounding apartment buildings, each ranging from 210 feet to 235 feet in height.

In the development of Teardrop Park, sustainability was not merely a goal, but rather an organizing principle that influenced everything from material selection to contractor practices. Based on decades-long research into urban soils and non-toxic plant maintenance, environmental aspects of the park's design include fully organic soils and maintenance regimes that don't rely on pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides. Treated and recycled graywater from the adjacent LEED Gold-rated Solaire Building and stormwater runoff from the site are captured in an underground storage pipe, supplying all of the park's irrigation needs.

As children are considered Teardrop's most important users, the park is designed to address the urban child's lack of natural experience, offering adventure and sanctuary while also engaging mind and body. Site topography, water features, natural stone, and lush plantings contribute to an exciting world of natural textures, dramatic changes in scale, and intricately choreographed views.

Tanner Springs Park

Portland, OR

Location: North West 10th Avenue and Marshall Street

Size: 1.0 acre (4,046m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Atelier Dreiseitl

Description

North Park Square was the working name given the second block to be developed in the Pearl District . Planning for this park began in early 2003. Atelier Dreiseitl, a renowned German design firm, and GreenWorks, P.C., an award-winning, local landscape architecture firm, were selected to design the park. A series of community workshops were held between January and June 2003, allowing the public to participate in the design process. After committee review, the name Tanner Springs was adopted in April 2005. The springs connect the park to Tanner Creek that at one time flowed openly through this area; today it flows through large pipes beneath the city streets. Since the design of the park attempts to recapture the area's past with its native wetlands and flowing runnels, the name is fitting.

The Artwall runs along the east edge of the park. It is composed of 368 railroad tracks set on end and integrates 99 pieces of fused glass inset with images of dragonflies, spiders, amphibians, and insects. The images were hand-painted by Herbert Dreiseitl directly onto Portland glass, which was then fused and melted to achieve the final effect.

Place d'Armes

Montreal, QC

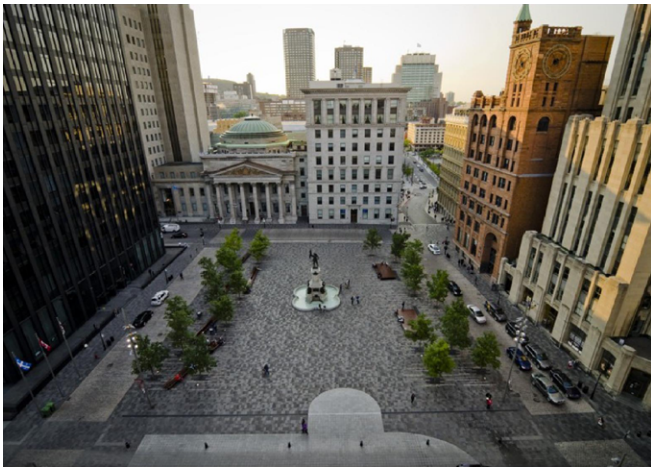
Location: In front of the Notre-Dame Basilica, between Rue Saint-Jaques and Rue Notre-Dame.

Size: 0.68 acre (2,778m^2)

Cost: $15.5 Million

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Cardinal Hardy/Teknika - HBA



Description

Place d'Armes, considered as a single heritage feature–the square itself, its central monument and the surrounding built environment–resonates with multiple historical meanings. It is, if you will, the heart of the city's historic centre, summing up its diverse heritage. The square is bordered by the Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice (whose earliest construction dates back to 1684), the great Notre-Dame Basilica (which, when completed in the 1820s, replaced the 17th-century church), the Bank of Montreal head office, two early 20th-century skyscrapers, and a modernist office tower built in the 1960s. In the centre of Place d'Armes is a monument to Montréal's founder, Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve. The work of sculptor Louis-Philippe Hébert, it portrays Maisonneuve surrounded by Charles Lemoyne, Lambert Closse, Jeanne Mance and an Iroquois brave. In the evening, Place d'Armes and the surrounding buildings are superbly enhanced by architectural lighting installed as part of the Old Montréal Lighting plan. Horse-drawn carriage tours leave from different points around the square.

Promenades

6 - 20 m wide

Promenades are substantial linear spaces that are located between adjacent building facades and the adjacent road right-of-way. Promenades are between 6 and 20 metres in width, with an average width along it length of 15 metres. Promenades are typically used to enhance the pedestrian experience along with highly activated at-grade retail spaces. Promenades are typically only located along one side of the street, and are continuous along the length of the block Promenades may include public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street- related activities such as vendor and exhibit space.

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 per square metre*

*Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.

Edge Park

New York City, NY

Location: On the Brooklyn Waterfront (North of 6th Street on Bedford Avenue.)

Size: 1.15 acres (4,665m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public

Designed By: W-Architecture

Description

The Williamsburg waterfront has been dominated by industry and its relics for over a century–making it largely off limits to the public. New zoning is changing the public interface with the water's edge by increasing density and emphasizing waterfront access. The "Edge" park seeks to bring people to the river and link the ecosystem with the fabric of the community. As landscape architect for both the new residential towers and the public waterfront park, we have the challenge of ensuring that the towers act not as symbolic fences blocking public access and views of the East River and Manhattan but as gateways to the river with corridors providing visual connection to the iconic skyline.

Our plan unites both sides of the river by using the piers to re-orient views across – especially directed toward the Empire State Building. The design emphasizes the confrontation of forces at the water edge and encourages public use. Here, the city grid and the river's ecosystem converge, mingle, and clash: the road turns into a pedestrian greenway, a garage is surmounted with a sloping lawn, piers reach gently into the water from deep within the park and stone riverbank contrasts with concrete bulkhead. This blurring of the boundaries between land and water extends the waterfront benefits inland to the community.

The synthesis and separation of private and public space, and architecture and ecology required a complex series of collaborations with community groups, the developer, the city government, and engineers. This former industrial site is now 50% permeable, planted with many native species and part of the LEED Silver rating for the project. The park was a critical part of the approvals for the project, and maintenance agreements were negotiated with the City Parks Department. The new piers underwent extensive reviews by the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Boston Children's Museum Plaza

Boston, MA

Location: Between the Boston Children's Museum and the Waterfront.

Size: 0.75 acre (3,046m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates

Description

In a world where almost everything within a city is designed for adults, the Boston Children's Museum Plaza is designed for children. Perceptions of difference, distance, size, and scale are playfully manipulated in different ways within the new plaza. Inspired by the forty-foot-tall Hood Milk Bottle, all elements of the design, from the seating and paving to the unique environments like the marble boulders or the native plant garden, are slightly oversized, undersized, overstated and boldly patterned.

With respect to its urban setting, the plaza establishes a clear outdoor area for the museum that is distinct from but fundamentally connected to the pre-existing Harborwalk and attracts attention within the seemingly boundless waterfront setting. In recognition of its significance, the Hood Milk Bottle was rebuilt in a new location in order to announce the presence of the museum from a distance and enhance its visibility from all directions. In conjunction with architectural improvements, the design of the plaza also serves to clarify the museum's entry sequence.

The combination of wood, brick, and stone present a tableau of construction materials that create associations with the natural world (trees, clay, mountains). The marble boulders were discovered in a quarry and already deemed unusable for more rationalized construction purposes. Their inclusion in this landscape alongside marble pavers and slabs references raw natural materials as well as the processes by which these materials are transformed.

Front Street Promenade

Toronto, ON

Location: Front Street east of Cherry Street

Size: 0.25 acre (approx. 1,031m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public, Managed by Canary District, a partnership of anchor institutions, small businesses and residents that creates opportunity, improves economic vitality and quality of life in the Canary District of Toronto with the primary mission of community revitalization.

Designed By: The Planning Partnership and PFS Studio

Description

The Front Street East Promenade + Park, the open space heart of the West Don Lands, is both a street and a park. It extends Corktown Common westward towards the city as a bold new green street. The Planning Partnership and PFS Studio redesigned a previously wide, axial alignment of Front Street East to an asymmetrical one to offer more pedestrian space along its northern, sunny side. As a result there is ample room for sidewalk cafes, children's play, impromptu performance and a series of public art installations. The street and park were home to the 2015 Pan American Athlete's Village proving itself a successful venue for future civic and neighbourhoods gatherings and events.

The City of Toronto was named the 2014 Intelligent Community of the Year, which featured The Planning Partnership's and PFS Studio's public realm contributions to Waterfront Toronto on the West Don Lands and the East Bayfront.

Connecting Link

Minimum 4 m wide

A Connecting link is an outdoor or indoor walkway that may be lined with small stores, restaurants and cafés. A Connecting Link is a minimum of 4 metres in width, and may be substantially wider. When enclosed, the floor to ceiling height should be a minimum of 7 metres. Although a Connecting Link is intended to enable pedestrians to travel through the community quickly and easily, many are destinations unto themselves with seating, restaurant and retail frontages.

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 per square metre*

*Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.

Mint Plaza

San Francisco, CA

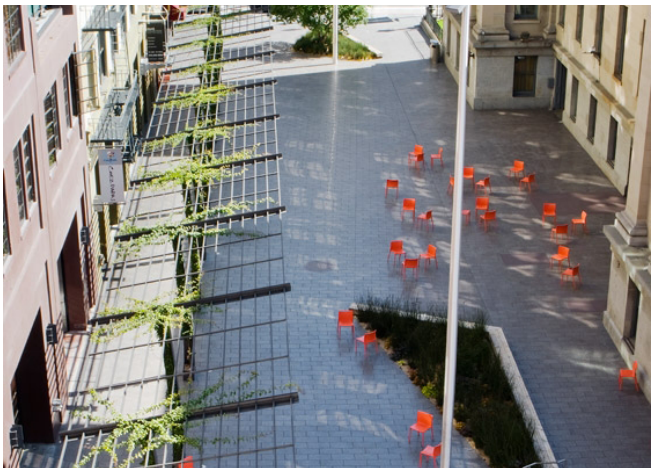
Location: Jessie Street, stretching between Fifth and Mint Streets.

Size: 0.38 acre (1,564m^2)

Cost: Approx. $3.5 Million

Ownership: Maintained and managed by Friends of Mint Plaza (FoMP), a non-profit organization. Open for the public.

Designed By: CMG Landscape Architecture



Description

In April 2007 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Mayor approved legislation to transform a 290'-long portion of Jessie Street stretching between Fifth and Mint Streets into San Francisco's newest public open space, aptly named Mint Plaza. The entire process, from concept, to financing to implementation, took just under two years to complete—quite an accomplishment for San Francisco.

Existing streets and sidewalks were demolished and replaced with a new pedestrian surface composed of composite stone pavers, a steel arbor with climbing vines, trees and several rain gardens. The Plaza was consciously designed to accommodate a wide range of uses, including art exhibitions, live music, cafés, and small festivals, while also providing a quiet, green and clean refuge for neighboring residents, downtown employees and visitors from everywhere to pause, and relax.

Mint Plaza is a special kind of public open space, designed to serve a variety of users. First and foremost, it's a community gathering spot – a green space to take a break, sit outdoors, enjoy lunch, or chat with friends.

It's also uniquely urban: a plaza framed on three sides by historic architecture and lined with cafés and restaurants, providing a great opportunity for al fresco dining. The Plaza also features a daily gourmet food truck and flower cart.

Mint Plaza is also an exciting cultural venue: a place to experience a diversity of art and music, free to the public. FoMP sponsors a variety of live-music events, art and dance festivals, and public art installations, and hopes to expand its programming to include film and food festivals in the upcoming year.

Market Lane

London, ON

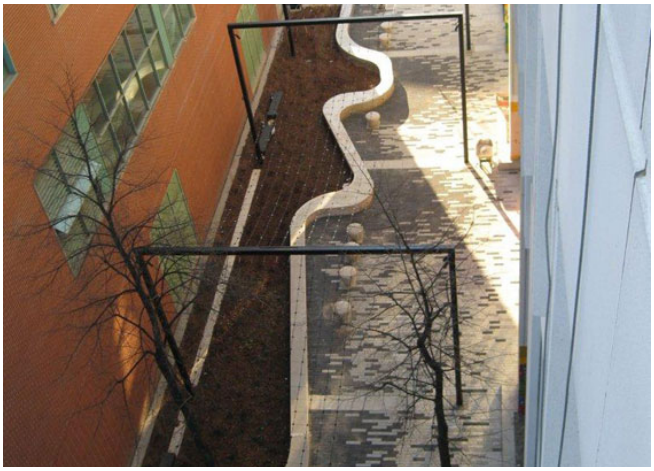
Location: A laneway connecting Dundas Street to Covent Garden Market.

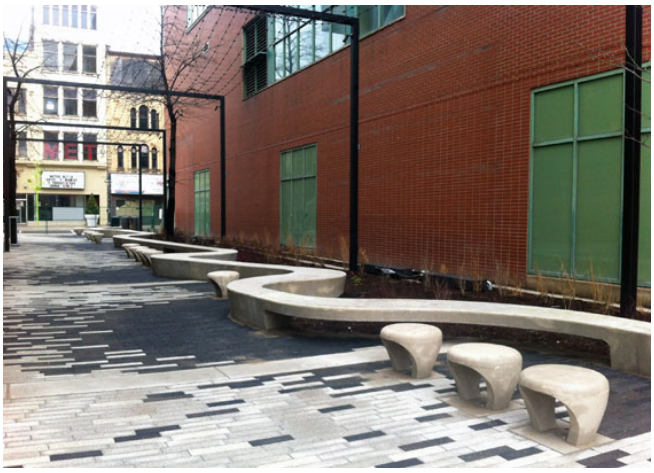
Size: 0.16 acre (679m^2)

Cost: $600,000

Ownership: Public

Designed By: Hapa Collaborative





Description

In February 2012, Hapa Collaborative won the Market Lane Design Competition. The fully realized project is set to revitalize a narrow but critical linkage in the urban fabric of downtown London.

Hapa's proposal (entitled Figure Ground) utilized a simple concept and austere palette of materials to animate the Lane, and provide a venue for the upcoming World Figure Skating Championships and the imminent arrival of Fanshawe College's Digital Media Arts program on the west edge of the Lane.

The landscape design concept drew inspiration from the local landscape of southwestern Ontario, including the Thames River valley that weaves through the city and the Carolinian forest that the site lies within, as well as the aspirations of the larger London community including it's reputation for higher learning, medicine and technological innovation. The concept also engages the design for building edges to provide a stronger indoor outdoor relationship between interior performance space and potential programming in the Lane.

102 Bloor St W Lane

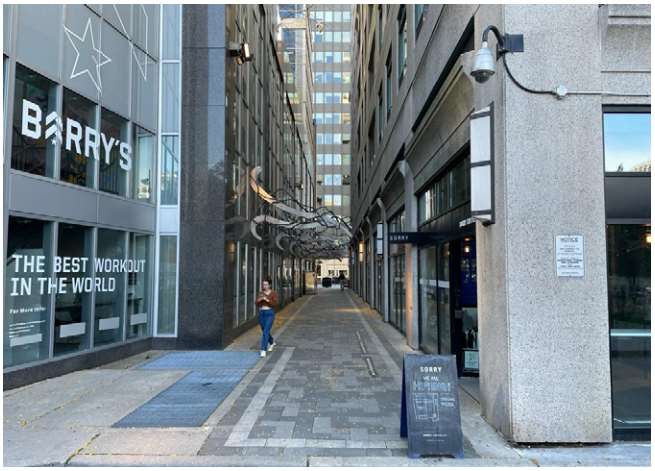
Toronto, ON

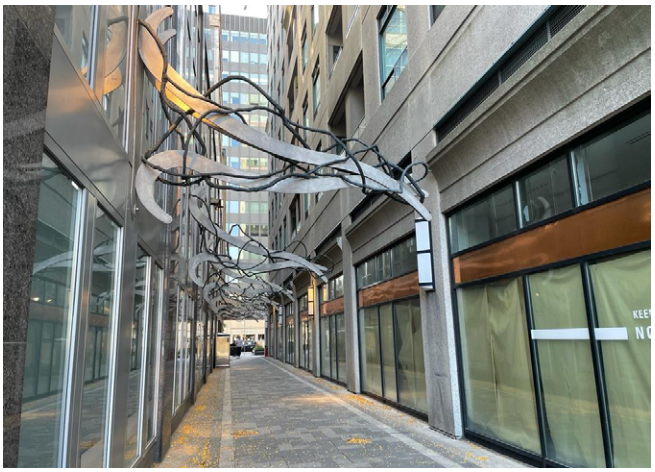
Location: A laneway connecting Critchley Lane to Bloor Street West

Size: 0.05 acre (200m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public





Description

Located between 102 & 100 Bloor Street West, this connecting link is a walkway between Critchley lane and Bloor Street lined with restaurants and retail stores for pedestrians to travel the area quickly with a logical wayfinding system for people to establish a well-connected Yorkville community within the highly urban environment.

The walkway is primarily hardscaped with an art installation for the aesthetic while promoting pedestrian comfort and safety between the two adjacent buildings.

Pocket Parks

0.075 to 0.25 ha

Pocket Park spaces support the social and cultural fabric of Vaughan's Strategic Growth Areas. They are destinations for day-to-day use and are animated by their adjacent uses, such as cafés and shops. They are intended to serve a local community that is generally within a 2.5 to 5-minute walk (approximately 200 to 400 metres) of residents, visitors and businesses.

Pocket Park spaces include primarily hard surface elements, but can also accommodate softer elements. Pocket Park spaces are a maximum of .25 of a hectare, and must be a minimum of 75 square metres in size. Pocket Park spaces must be connected to, and have at least 7.5 metres of direct frontage along the public sidewalk system. Pocket Park spaces are designed to a very high standard to support more intensified use.

Capital Cost Estimate - $1,000.00 per square metre*

*Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.

Mid Main Park

Vancouver, BC

Location: Corner of Main Street and 18th Avenue

Size: 0.22 acre (900m^2)

Cost: $450,000

Ownership: Vancouver Park Board/
City of Vancouver, Public.

Designed By: Hapa Collaborative

Description

Previously an underused slip lane within the Main Street right-of-way, HAPA produced a scheme that sits comfortably between a new six-story commercial and residential building and busy Main Street. The composition of paving, curvaceous seating walls, mounded earth, layered planting and lighting shortens the awkward long and triangular site, and encourages slower, circuitous passage with places to linger adjacent to the action of the street.

The concrete paving is patterned to the grid of the adjacent city sidewalk, but is overlaid with large, random “milk bubbles” rendered in stained concrete, that blur the edge between street, development site and park. Plaza and planting are separated by a series of curving cast concrete seatwalls that feature a custom bullnose to deter skateboarders, and continuous LED lighting at night. The seatwalls along Main Street include long, continuous yellow cedar bench backs. Bands of permeable cast concrete paving convey stormwater to a detention gallery buried in the central mound behind the main seatwall, reducing runoff rate and quantity discharged into the city’s storm sewer.

Plantings buffer the interior of the park from the busy street. Within these areas, over 90% of the existing street trees were retained, with further soil and irrigation improvements to bolster their health. In addition to the Chinese elms and littleleaf linden trees retained along Main Street, snowbell trees were installed for spring colour and eventual succession. The ground plane is richly planted with a mix of grasses and perennials.

The signature of the park is the “bendy-straw” trellis, a whimsical reference to the former Palm Dairy and Milk Bar that occupied the site from 1952 to 1989. Kiwi vines at each end will eventually drape the trellis with lush green foliage, and provide a free lunch to passers-by. North of the trellis, matching barstools recall the interior of a mid-20th-century dairy bar (complete with spinning seats).

49th Street Park

Los Angeles, CA

Location: 49th Street, South Los Angeles

Size: 0.17 acre (700m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Public park

Designed By: Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks

Description

Part of Los Angeles' 50 Parks Initiative, a public-private program designed to help revitalize some of the city's neediest, most densely populated communities the parks are designed to serve people within walking distance to offer a hyper-local community hubs. Many parks are located on foreclosed properties that cannot be rehabilitated or vacant parking lots.

The 49th Street Park was the first 50 Parks Initiative parks to open. It is the size of one lot adjacent to a surface carpark.

It has been designed into distinct sections with play equipment in one area and treed seating areas.

Bright materials have been used for the play equipment area.

Plants: Trees, no-mow grass, shrubs.

Features: Seating, grass area, play equipment, solar powered lighting, smart irrigation and to keep intruders out after hours, automatic time-lock gates and solar motion-activated cameras.

Waterfall Garden Park

Seattle, WA

Location: Main and Second Streets, Seattle

Size: 0.10 acre (445m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Open to public during business hours but privately owned

Designed By: Masao Kinoshita within the firm of Sasaki Associates

Description

Created to commemorate the birthplace of the United Parcel Service (UPS), Waterfall Garden Park is a private pocket park is almost hidden away.

Designed by Sasaki, Dawson and DeMay and constructed in 1978, the Park may be small but the space imparts a strong, lasting impression.

A modern interpretation of a Japanese garden, the central feature of the park is the dramatic 22-foot high waterfall constructed of natural granite borders. Five thousand gallons of continuously filtered and re-circulated water per minute cascade down the falls.

The park is privately managed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a security guard is present during the park's open hours, after which, the park is securely gated off by an iron fence.

Plants: Shrubs and Japanese Maples.

Features: Seating, planting, water feature, weather shelter.

Sliver Parks

Sliver Park spaces are narrow linear spaces that often front restaurants, cafés and retail spaces. They create plazas or forecourts between the face of the adjacent building and the street right-of-way. They are effectively small scale extensions of the public sidewalk system. Sliver Park spaces are small and compact spaces that are designed to a very high standard to support more intensified use.

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 per square metre*

*Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.

767 Third Avenue

New York City, NY

Location: Southeast corner of Third Avenue and East 48th Street

Size: 0.07 acre (approx. 284m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: Privately owned public space. Public access 24 hours.

Designed By: Mevlyn Kaufman

Description

The signature element of this plaza is a gigantic chessboard adorning the wall of an abutting building at the eastern edge of the space.

Oversized whimsical metal footprints track east or west on top of metal grates in the East 48th Street sidewalk.
Below the chessboard are four fixed wooden tables, each surrounded by four fixed backless wooden seats. Four additional benches flank north and south sides. To the south is an elevated platform whose approach up an overly steep ramp is rewarded by the best seat in the house.

With more than 500 privately owned public spaces, it is desirable that the public be able to distinguish one space from another. Spaces like this one developed by the Kaufman organization with its gigantic chessboard, become points of orientation and association that connect people to their physical environments.

Plants: Four trees.

Features: Seating, public art.

Edible Bus Stop Pocket Park

London, UK

Location: Lambeth Hospital Bus Stop, Route 322, Landor Road, Lambeth

Size: 0.05 acre (approx. 208m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: City owned

Designed By: Local Volunteers

Description

The vacant open space running along Landor Road was created as a result of a bomb in WW2. Members of the local community came together to object to a proposal to build new houses on the site. The community took responsibility for the land (with the support of Lambeth Council) and tidied the space, transforming it into a verdant community garden.

The new design and formalization of the space into a pocket park has seen the planting beds themselves reconfigured to fit with the new pathways and elevated for ease of gardening and to keep dogs off. The raised planting beds utilize reclaimed granite curbstones as the retaining walls that have been salvaged from other redevelopment work across the Borough of Lambeth, keeping a sense of the heritage of the area and providing a narrative to the design. Along the back wall of the garden, a uniform screen has been erected to provide vertical growing space, but also a boundary between the garden and the neighbouring properties. New seating has been introduced at key points around the garden, to enable people to stop and enjoy the space.

The re-design of the garden has been supported jointly by the London Borough of Lambeth's Neighbourhood Enhancement Program and the Mayor of London's Pocket Park scheme, of which it was the first Pocket Park to be completed, opening on May 18th, 2013.

Plants: Edible plants, 7 fruit trees and flowers.

Features: Seating, community workshop and garden space.

22nd Street Parklet

San Francisco, CA

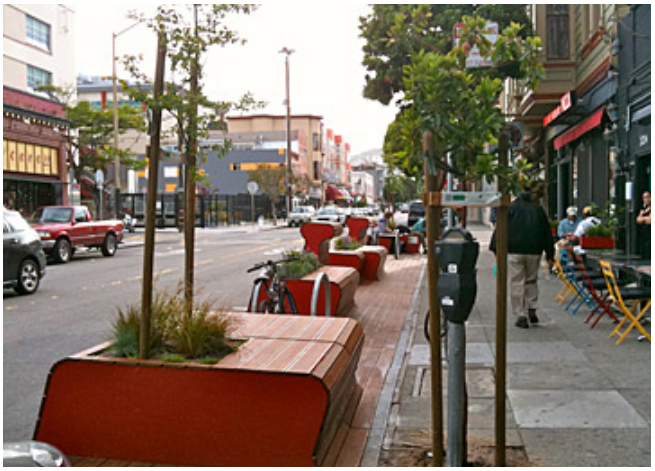
Location: 22nd Street between Bartlett and Mission

Size: 0.007 acre (approx. 30m^2)

Cost: N/A

Ownership: City owned, maintained by local businesses

Designed By: Rebar Group



Description

Parklets repurpose two to three parking stalls along a block as a space for people to relax, drink a cup of coffee, and enjoy the city around them. Parklets do this by building out a platform into the parking lane so that the grade of the sidewalk gets carried out into the parking lane.

The 22nd Street Parklet has benches, an integrated resting table, bike parking and landscaping.

Bamboo used for the surface decking is an environmentally friendly renewable resource and all landscaping used are low-water species.

The three businesses fronting the Parklet have agreed to provide daily maintenance, although all seating and bike parking is free and open to the public.

The cost of the 22nd Street Parklet was paid for entirely through donations by a local resident and the three businesses fronting this Parklet. In addition, a variety of partners have provided their products for free or at reduced cost, including a design company that designed and built this Parklet free of charge to the City with the help of many volunteers.

Plants: Low-water species.

Features: Benches, bike parking, landscaping.

OAKVILLE

The **Planning** Partnership
NBLC

OAKVILLE

Town of Oakville

Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix IV

Parkland Design Guidelines

August 2022

The Planning Partnership

nblc

Contents

1.0 Key Principles + General Design Considerations 3

1.1 Convenience and Coherence 3

1.2 Context, Heritage and Placemaking 4

1.3 Accessibility 4

1.4 Safety 5

1.5 Comfort 5

1.6 Sustainability & Resilience 6

2.0 Suburban Parks 7

2.1 The Suburban Park Hierarchy 7

2.2 Suburban Park Design Considerations 9

2.3 Suburban Park Landscape Elements 10

3.0 Urban Parks 13

3.1 The Urban Park Hierarchy 13

3.2 Urban Park Design Considerations 16

3.3 Urban Park Landscape Elements 17

1.0 Key Principles + General Design Considerations

1.1 Convenience and Coherence

Each park space should be considered as a component and expansion of the larger, Town-wide and regional parkland network. New parks can provide an amenity and destination in an area of the Town where it is presently lacking, introduce links and connections to improve accessibility through a neighbourhood, and improve visual connectivity between parks. With this larger scale in mind, the design of new parks should consider two key principles for situating the site within the overall parkland network – convenience and coherence.

Convenience refers to the level of effort and time required to complete a trip by foot. A key indicator for convenience is trip distance and proximity to amenities. In particular, people are most likely to choose to walk if their destination is within a 2.5 - to 5 - to 10-minute, or 200 to 400 to 800 metres (10-Minute Walk, 2021). For parks within a larger parkland network, the preferred distance is typically no more than a five-minute walk, and for the smaller elements of the network, a 2 minute walk. Furthermore, pairing parks with other public uses, amenities or destinations, such as recreation centres and schools, will improve the convenience of the park space and its resultant volume of visitors.

Trip length is influenced by the street pattern. A fine-grained and gridded street pattern provides a greater level of connectivity or permeability, which can be measured by the intersection density and block size. Greater street connectivity allows for more direct and shorter walking routes. Intersection conditions can also greatly impact the convenience of walking, particularly with regard to signal timing and the physical condition and directness of the crossing.

Coherence refers to how easy it is to understand the layout of the parkland network, and to intuitively navigate from point A to point B. Coherence is influenced by the hierarchy and provision of routes between points of interest and activity, sight lines/ view corridors, and wayfinding signage. Major barriers and breaks in the continuity of the pedestrian network (sidewalks and trails) negatively impact coherence, for example, if there is no clear path, then walking becomes a less feasible and attractive option.

1.2 Context, Heritage and Placemaking

The detailed design of parks contributes to the character and attractiveness of the neighbourhood in which they are situated. Attractiveness refers to how inviting and interesting the surroundings are for pedestrians. In particular, well-maintained and well-lit parks are most attractive, as are those that are animated with street-level activity, such as from commercial, civic, or recreational uses (City of Mississauga, 2015).

Placemaking refers to community-based efforts and activities to physically reflect an area's unique character, assets, and history, and to make it livelier and more of a destination. Placemaking should be considered as a site-specific and context-specific pursuit. The park should have an identity of its own, while also respecting, or enhancing, the neighbourhood character, including patterns, materials, and architectural style.

Indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage and historical values can be reflected, protected, or enhanced in the park. Where possible, incorporate public art and local artifacts into the space, including opportunities for education and interpretation (San Francisco Planning Department, 2011). Effort should be made to understand and communicate the unique culture, history, or qualities of the community in the design of the park.

1.3 Accessibility

Accessibility refers to the usability of parks for all people, regardless of their age, ability, status in life, or mode of travel. In terms of age and ability, accessibility means planning parks for the young and old, and people with mobility impairments, in recognition that sight lines, walking speed, clearing space, endurance, and agility may vary.

Accessibility also means ensuring that the parkland network can be used by people of all incomes, and all abilities by keeping park spaces free of charge and by ensuring they are equally distributed throughout the Town (City of Mississauga, 2015). Parks should avoid designs that appear to privatize the space, or elements within it.

As a reference for detailed design, parks should meet the requirements outlined in the policies of the Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), as well as the Oakville Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Policy. Accessible parks should be designed such that they:

- Accommodate a variety of activities within the space;
- Minimize changes in grade between the open space and surrounding public space, including public sidewalks;
- Where changes in grade are not avoidable, provide an accessible route that complies with AODA standards;
- Minimise protrusions into the main path of travel, including vents or grates; and,
- Visually signal the edge of the vehicular zone, or other conflicts or hazards, through pavement treatments, tactile warning indicators, and signage.

1.4 Safety

Safety refers to the risk of harassment, injury or death, and the primary risks for pedestrians are associated with motor vehicle traffic and crime. Key considerations include separation from motor vehicle traffic - taking into consideration the speed and volume of traffic, and the treatment of intersections where pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic must cross. With regard to the design of parks, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), a pro-activation crime prevention strategy, provides direction for improving the safety of a space through thoughtful design. As a starting point, parks should:

- Be located abutting and visible from public streets;
- Provide clear sightlines through the park space to adjacent streets and buildings to promote informal neighbourhood surveillance;
- Include adequate, consistent, pedestrian-scaled lighting;
- Avoid the creation of entrapment spots, blind corners, or areas that are not easily visible, including through planting design;
- Be bordered by active frontages, with windows and doors that open onto the park; and,
- Be regularly maintained at a high standard, and have considered the long-term maintenance of materials and furnishings.

1.5 Comfort

Pedestrian comfort is critical for the success of parks, and should be considered early in the design of the site. Surrounding building massing and the location of the park in relation to them will have implications on wind, solar exposure, and visual access.

Comfort refers to how pleasant, easy, and free from challenges a pedestrian visit can be. Pedestrian comfort depends on the convenience, coherence, safety, and accessibility of the entire parkland network, and it can be enhanced through construction materials and the provision of pedestrian amenities that serve the unique needs of those travelling by foot. Perceptions of space should also be considered, including providing more intimately scaled “rooms” in larger open spaces. In general, the following practices will contribute to the comfort of the open space:

- Locate the open space such that it maximizes sunlight and views to the sky;
- Provide ample seating throughout the site;
- Provide a range of exposures, including areas with shading, such as through the planting of canopy trees or other structures;
- Consider wind and noise levels throughout the site. Where necessary, use plantings and structures to lower wind and noise levels and create comfortable microclimates, without compromising safety or visibility through the space;
- Consider four-season use when selecting materials and finishes (e.g. – consider materials that retain heat, such as wood, in seating intended for use in cooler seasons); and,
- Provide site amenities that support programming in the space, including drinking fountains, bottle fill stations, washrooms, and waste receptacles.

1.6 Sustainability & Resilience

Sustainability in park design refers to a space's impact on the environment, including the interest in minimizing negative influences which may compromise the future health of the environment, and putting in place measures which may improve the health of the local ecosystem. Resilience goes further to consider the ever changing effects of climate change, and the ability of a space to persist in good health and quality over time, while also mitigating the contributing factors to climate change. When planning and designing a new parks, the needs and challenges facing the broader context, including neighbourhood and Town-wide problems, should be assessed and considered. Parks can play a role in solving larger urban and suburban problems outside of the boundary of the park (Cranz & Boland, 2004). As a starting point, sustainability and resilience can be addressed in parks in the following ways:

- Encourage active transportation through circulation design and the provision of supportive facilities (e.g. – provide ample bike racks, connect with public sidewalks, locate a park near a transit stop, etc.);
- Encourage mature tree growth to increase canopy cover, which combats urban heat island effect, improves air quality, and increases stormwater uptake;
- Increase species diversity in planting, and support local pollinator and faunal species;
- Use native and drought-tolerant plant species;
- Use permeable paving and below-grade infrastructure to harvest stormwater for reuse; and,
- Use recycled materials, or materials with sustainable lifecycles.

2.0 Suburban Parks

2.1 The Suburban Park Hierarchy

Regional Parks

Capital Cost Estimate - $50.00 to $200.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Regional parks are larger destination spaces that attract and cater to both the local community, and visitors from surrounding and adjoining municipalities. They accommodate larger cultural, recreational, and entertainment events, including festivals and tournaments. They should have a distinct, recognizable identity and character that makes them memorable and worth travelling to. The following criteria should be considered when designing a Regional Park:

- Be greater than 15 ha in size;
- Have frontage on at least 1 public street, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the park is appropriate;
- May be located adjacent to natural areas, including the Natural Heritage System;
- Be primarily soft surfaced and green, but may include hardscape elements;
- Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, facilities for dogs, facilities for seniors, children and youth, water features and public art;
- Designed to support temporary events, including festivals and markets; and,
- Provide sheltered areas and comfortable microclimates for comfortable spaces within larger site.

District Parks

Capital Cost Estimate - $100.00 to $300.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

District Parks serve the residents of the Town, accommodating a range of passive and active recreation uses. District Parks typically include one or more major recreational facility, such as sports fields, games courts, skateboard parks, off-leash dog areas, picnic areas, and field houses. District Parks are commonly associated with other community amenities, such as community centres and schools, and can attract users from across the Town. In general, District Parks should:

- Be greater that 5 ha in size;
- Have frontage on at least 1 public street, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the park is appropriate;
- Include substantial programmable spaces such as sports fields and performance venues, as well as play elements for children; and,
- Combine multiple sports facilities, including, for example, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, tennis courts, etc. (East Gwillimbury).

Neighbourhood Parks

Capital Cost Estimate - $150.00 to $500.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Neighbourhood Parks primarily benefit local communities, and can serve as an organizing element in a neighbourhood. They support a balance of active and passive recreation, such as playgrounds, skate zones, play courts, unlit sports fields and social gathering spaces, where space permits. Neighbourhood Parks should be designed with the following considerations:

- Be .75 to 5 ha in size, and serve a local community located within a 10-minute walk of the park space;
- Provide frontage on at least 2 public streets, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale permits;
- Be situated such that all residents within the neighbourhood are within a 10-minute walk of the park;
- Implement linkages between neighbourhood parks if multiple are located within a subdivision;
- Are primarily softscape, but can have some hardscape elements; and,
- May be co-located with school sites.

Parkettes

Capital Cost Estimate - $150.00 to $300.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Parkettes provide valuable neighbourhood amenities where the scale of a larger suburban open space is not required. These spaces are not suitable for large features such as sports fields. but are appropriate for local-level facilities (e.g., playground, waterplay, seating) are may be required to serve a nearby development. Parkettes support the cultural and social needs of the community, and are developed with the following criteria in mind:

- Be less than .75 ha, and support the needs of the community located within a 5-minute walk of the park space;
- Have frontage on at least 1 public street, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale permits;
- Include areas for seating; and,
- Can include hardscape or softscape elements.

2.2 Suburban Park Design Considerations

Site Design

In designing a new suburban open space the layout of the whole community needs to be taken into consideration. Given that these parks are public amenities which serve a user group that is spread over a larger area, the location of suburban parks should be such that walk time to the park for residents is minimized. Ideally, all suburban residents should be within a five-minute walking distance (approximately 500 metres) from a park (West Whitby Landowners Group, 2016).

Suburban parks should be located centrally, and street frontages should be provided wherever possible to reinforce their presence within the community, and improve access for residents and visitors. Suburban parks can be located adjacent to natural features, including existing woodlots, provided that they are designed to ensure the safety of the visitors. Additionally, linkages, in the form of sidewalks, trails, and linear open spaces, should be provided between parks wherever possible, to establish a Town-wide parkland network, encourage walking and cycling, and improve access to these spaces (Kent Design Initiative, 2006). Facilities should be provided to accommodate different modes of travel, including bike parking areas, and in the case of larger Regional and District Parks, vehicular parking areas.

Opportunities to complement, support, or coordinate with other proposed land uses with parks, including institutional uses such as schools or recreation centers, or facilities such as parking areas, should be explored. Where neighbouring land uses conflict with the park use, or where a park shares a border with private property, provide setbacks and perimeter fencing (City of Hamilton, 2020).

Programming

For parks serving suburban communities, a range of visitors should be anticipated when establishing a programming strategy. Programming and amenities should be provided for adults, families with children, including children of varied ages, and seniors.

Where space permits, a variety of active and passive programming amenities should be provided in the park. The Project for Public Spaces recommends envisioning a park as a series of “places”, each supporting a variety of activities. As a general guide, ten activities should be accommodated within each “place” (Project for Public Spaces, 2021).

Larger parks, including Regional, District, and Neighbourhood Parks, should also provide amenities that support gathering, and, where possible, events. Accommodating a range of people with different backgrounds and abilities will be central to the success of the park. In general, suburban parks should:

- Facilitate passive recreation, including sitting, walking, and socializing;
- Promote active recreation, including cycling and sports;
- Provide opportunities for individual and group recreation, both passive and active;
- Be flexible to support temporary programming, including events, festivals, and markets; and,
- Be designed with four-season programming in mind. Providing for winter programming, such as temporary skating facilities or tree lighting, will encourage use through the colder months of the year.

2.3 Suburban Park Landscape Elements

Hardscaping

Hardscaping in suburban parks plays a critical role in supporting the programming of the space. Hardscaping is associated with walking and cycling paths, plazas and pavilions with seating and gathering areas, and sport and games facilities, including courts and skate parks. Care should be given to selecting appropriate paving materials to support the intended use. Smooth, flexible surfaces, such as asphalt, are best suited for cycling routes, whereas higher quality finishes, such as unit paving and concrete, can be employed along walking routes and in gathering areas to establish a unique character for the park. In general, the selection and design of hardscaping should:

- Establish a space hierarchy within the park and support programming. Use high quality materials for feature and formal areas (e.g. – unit paving for plaza), medium quality materials for primary walking routes (e.g. – cast-in-place concrete), and cost effective, flexible materials for secondary walking routes, cycle routes, and scenic walking trails (e.g. – asphalt, granular, wood chip);
- Provide generous circulation routes to facilitate walking, running, and cycling. Consider providing separated cycling and pedestrian paths;
- Provide a continuous pedestrian route or loop to encourage walking;
- Primary walking routes should be a minimum 3 metres wide, to support accessibility needs, and groups (City of Hamilton, 2020); and,
- Hard landscape elements should highlight park entrances and to emphasize focal elements such as shade structures.

Softscaping

Softscaping, including lawn areas and planting beds, is the primary surface treatment in suburban parks, and should be designed with aesthetics, programming, and resilience at the forefront. Open lawn areas provide areas for gathering, passive recreation, and play. Gardens can be a feature element of the space, or used as a wayfinding element, such as to highlight entrances.

Suburban parks, with their abundant access to soil volume, have the capacity to support the growth of large trees, which can be incorporated as a design element, and to provide shade and visual interest throughout the year. Plant material provides numerous green infrastructure benefits, including facilitating stormwater infiltration, supporting pollinators, and providing habitat for local fauna. When designing softscaping for suburban parks, consider the following:

- Provide large areas of open lawn for passive and active recreation;
- Plant large canopy tree species, with access to a minimum of 30 cubic metres of soil per tree;
- Consider preserving existing trees and natural areas in the park;
- Tree plantings will largely reflect an informal or naturalized layout, and may include clustered groupings or trees in lawn areas;
- Include coniferous trees for winter interest;
- Select predominantly native, and where possible drought tolerant, plant species;
- Provide community gardens or opportunities for urban agriculture, such as planting fruiting trees and shrubs;
- Incorporate undulating topography in the lawn areas to facilitate passive and active recreation, such as tobogganing in the winter;

- Where a stormwater management feature is located within or adjacent to a park, treat it is as a naturalized design feature. Ensure safety hazards are mitigated; and,

- Accent planting should be focused at entrances and around primary seating areas and play areas (West Whitby Landowners Group, 2016).

Active Recreation Amenities

Suburban parks are critical programming nodes in the community. They have the capacity to support active recreation through the provision of one or more sports facility, games court, or play structure. Larger suburban open spaces, including Regional and District Parks, can include multiple, or combined, recreation facilities. Active recreation programming should be determined through discussion with the community. Active recreation facilities can include, but are not limited to:

- Junior and senior play structures;

- Splash pads;

- Multi-purpose play courts (e.g. – tennis and basketball);

- Games courts (e.g. – chess and shuffle board); and,

- Sports fields (e.g. – soccer and baseball).

When designing active recreation facilities, consider the following:

- Playgrounds and structures should create a unique character or play experience through the provision of a variety of play equipment types;

- Locate sports and games facilities in their most favourable orientation, and on relatively level grading;

- Minimize noise disturbance to adjacent land uses. Ensure adequate setbacks to account for errant balls, and provide fencing where necessary (Town of East Gwillimbury, 2009);

- Locate children's play areas set back 20 metres at their perimeter from any residential property lines or street;

- Locate children's play areas to allow for visual surveillance into the play area from the road and surroundings. Ensure that no plantings or structures are providing near the play areas that would obstruct or obscure visual access;

- Playgrounds must conform to the latest Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards for play spaces and equipment. At least one light standard must be provided at playgrounds for security (City of Hamilton, 2020);

- Ensure play area surfacing meets any relevant safety requirements, including shock absorbency. Provide non-slip concrete or rubber surfacing for splash pad areas;

- Provide play structures for various age groups. Locate junior and senior play structures such that they can both be monitored by a guardian simultaneously in the event that the guardian should have children on each structure (Kent Design Initiative, 2006); and,

- Provide barrier-free play options at all play facilities.

Seating

Seating is a primary design element that supports the programming of the park. Seating can be provided as a standalone amenity, or as a supportive element to another park facility, such as a play area. A variety of seating types can be introduced into suburban open spaces, including:

- Benches;

- Picnic tables;

- Seat walls;
- Moveable seating; and,
- Temporary or permanent sports facility stands.

In general, the following design guidelines should be considered:

- Provide seating at active recreation and sports facilities (e.g. – at playgrounds for guardians);
- Provide shading by way of trees or overhead structures (e.g. - pergolas, gazebos);
- Optimize views when siting seating elements, including views to natural elements, planting elements, or public art;
- Provide space for accessibility aids (e.g. - wheelchair, walker) alongside seating elements;
- Provide flexible seating for plaza areas; and,
- Provide dining table sets and picnic tables to accommodate small groups.

Lighting

Lighting can be used to develop the character of a suburban park, improve wayfinding, expand the hours of use, and improve safety. When designing lighting for suburban parks, consider the following:

- Lighting should be provided for larger Regional and District Parks. Lighting is generally not recommended for Neighbourhood Parks or Parkettes (City of Hamilton, 2020);
- Where lighting is used, ensure adequate, consistent lighting along pathways, per CPTED guidelines;
- Provide lighting at park structures for security (Town of East Gwillimbury, 2009);
- Where lighting is provided, a timed shutoff should also be provided (City of Hamilton, 2020);
- Use fixtures that are energy efficient and that are dark sky compliant, which reduce glare, light trees pass, and light pollution; and,
- Use a variety of lighting scales and types, including lighting bollard and pedestrian lights.

Other Features

Suburban parks should also consider including a number of other facilities that support a variety of active and passive programming amenities, including:

- Public Art;
- Dog run areas – consider providing purpose-designed dog waste receptacles;
- BBQs;
- Washrooms;
- Water Features;
- Bike Racks;
- Park identification signs and signs for information and regulations (East Gwillimbury); and,
- Waste receptacles.

3.0 Urban Parks

3.1 The Urban Park Hierarchy

Public Commons

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 to $1,000.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Public Commons are the largest urban park typology, and are intended to be social and recreational focal points of an urban neighbourhood. They typically meet the needs of the local community, and in some instances, accommodate Town-wide 'destination' facilities. Public Commons support a balance of active and passive uses and should also accommodate special features that add visual interest and contribute to placemaking, including locations for public art. Public Commons may be coordinated with school sites, where possible. Public Commons are to be developed with the following criteria in mind:

- Be .75 to 2 ha, and support the needs of the community located within a 10-minute walk of the park space;
- Have frontage on at least 2 public streets, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the park is appropriate;
- Be designed such that they provide a minimum of 40.0% of the area of the park in tree canopy cover by the end of the 10th year after its opening;
- Be primarily soft surfaced and green, but may include hardscape elements;
- Include substantial programmable spaces such as small sports fields, games courts, and performance venues, as well as play elements for children;
- Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, facilities for dogs, facilities for seniors, children and youth, water features and public art; and,
- Provide sheltered areas/microclimate for comfortable spaces within larger site.

Urban Squares

Capital Cost Estimate - $1,000.00 to $1,500.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Urban Squares are moderately scaled typology of the urban public park hierarchy commonly associated with commercial and residential land use. Urban Squares support neighbourhood-oriented social opportunities, as well as Town-wide entertainment and cultural events depending on their size and location. Urban Squares may include public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street- related activities such as vendor and exhibit space. Urban Squares are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

- Be between .25 to 1 ha in size, and support the needs of the community located within a 5-minute walk of the park space;
- Have frontage on at least 2 public streets, but may be surrounded by public streets where the scale of the square is appropriate;
- Generally follow a 1:1 proportion of length to width;
- Require that adjacent built form have primary and active frontages facing the Square;
- Be designed such that they provide between 25 and 40% of the area of the open space in tree canopy cover by the end of the 10th year after its opening;
- Be primarily hard surfaced, but may include soft surface elements;
- Include community and civic event spaces as well as performance venues and playful elements for children; and,
- Include ample seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, opportunities for outdoor cafés and restaurants, facilities for seniors, children and youth, water features and public art.

Promenades

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Promenades are substantial linear open spaces that are located between adjacent building facades and the adjacent road right-of-way. They are typically only located along one side of the street, and are continuous along the length of the block. Promenades are typically used to enhance the pedestrian experience along with highly activated at-grade retail spaces. Promenades should be developed with the following criteria in mind:

- Are between 6 and 20 metres in width, abutting, and parallel with a public road right-of-way;
- Provide a clear, continuous pedestrian path of travel through the space;
- Include a repetition of elements, such as pavers, lights, seating, planters and trees; and,
- Incorporate public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street-related activities such as vendor and exhibit space.

Connecting Links

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Connecting Links enable pedestrians in high pedestrian volume areas to travel through the community quickly and easily. Connecting Links are outdoor or indoor walkways through a development site, connecting two streets together. Many are destinations unto themselves with seating, restaurant and retail frontages. Connecting Links should contribute to the logical wayfinding system and help to establish a well-connected parkland network within a highly urban environment. Connecting Links are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

- Be a minimum of 4 metres in width, and may be substantially wider, taking into account scale of adjacent buildings;
- When enclosed, the floor to ceiling height shall be a minimum of 7 metres;
- Be primarily hardscaped, with softscape and seating elements to provide amenity and visual interest;
- Be well lit, promoting pedestrian comfort and safety; and,
- Include signage to identify adjacent buildings.

Pocket Parks

Capital Cost Estimate - $1,000.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Pocket Parks are small, pedestrian friendly spaces that accommodate socializing in dense urban areas that are designed to a very high standard to support more intensified use. Pocket Parks are destinations unto themselves that are animated with outdoor seating, restaurant and retail frontages. They include primarily hard surface elements, but can also accommodate softer elements. Pocket Parks are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

- Be a minimum of 75 square metres in size, and must, and intended to serve a local community that is generally within a 2.5 to 5-minute walk of residents, visitors and businesses;
- Be connected to, and have at least 7.5 metres of direct frontage along the public sidewalk system;
- Require that adjacent built form have primary and active frontages facing the park;
- Be designed such that they provide up to 50% of the area of the park in tree canopy cover by the end of the 10th year after its opening;
- Be primarily hard surfaced, with limited soft surface elements; and,
- Include seating and a full furniture program, such as lighting, opportunities for outdoor cafés and restaurants, facilities that promote a passive, relaxing atmosphere, water features and public art.

Sliver Parks

Capital Cost Estimate - $500.00 per square metre*

**Capital cost estimates are based on a host of assumptions related to the design treatments, level of amenity and the facilities provided within an individual park space.*

Sliver Parks are small scale, linear components of the parkland network that add to the width of the public sidewalk system, and create plazas or forecourts between the face of the adjacent building and the street. Sliver Parks are appropriate adjacent to active building frontages, with transparent and accessible at-grade uses that animate the space, improve safety and encourage use. Sliver Parks are expected to develop with the following criteria in mind:

- Be primarily hard surfaced, with limited planting and soft surface elements; and,
- Be flexible to accommodate spill out retail space, and/or outdoor cafés and restaurants.

3.2 Urban Park Design Considerations

Site Design

The introduction of new urban parks should be considered in relation to the adjacent land uses and architecture. Where a development is proposed, the relationship between the building massing and articulation, particularly at-grade, should be designed concurrently with the preliminary design of the adjacent park, to the mutual benefit of both. Urban parks should be designed to be flush with the building facades and at-grade uses so that the parks benefit from activation along their edges. Urban parks should all have physical and visual access. Active building frontages, with accessible at-grade uses, such as cafes and shops, are the ideal companion to an urban park. Active building frontages are transparent and incorporate windows, balconies, and entrances adjacent to parks to provide more opportunity for interaction between inside and outside uses (San Francisco Planning Department, 2011). Active edges help to animate the park, improve safety, and encourage use.

Urban parks should be designed to be flush with the building facades and at-grade uses. Urban parks should all have physical and visual access to the larger pedestrian circulation system, and have significant frontage onto the public sidewalk system. It is crucial that all of the urban park typologies exist and work together to create a robust and comprehensive urban parkland network.

Programming

Great urban open spaces have strong functional assets. With respect to programming urban space, the key is flexibility to recognize the needs of residential users, as well as office users and retail/commercial users. Flexibility and variety is also required to allow the open space to adapt to changing needs over time. Programming opportunities are directly related to the scale, purpose and design of the space. Because they are larger, Public Commons and Urban Squares provide opportunities to accommodate green space, tree cover and softscape areas that may include unprogrammed recreational space and other larger scale park features. In some instances, these spaces may also accommodate small sports fields, courts, and performance venues, as well as playful elements for children. Smaller open space typologies will not be able to accommodate the same diversity in programming, but still may include children's play areas, seating areas, public art, and planting elements. In general, urban open spaces should:

- Support active transportation;
- Support adjacent interior uses (e.g. – retail, office, residential, dining);
- Promote passive recreation, including sitting, walking, and socializing;
- Provide opportunities for individual and modestly scale group recreational activities; and,
- Be flexible to support temporary programming, including events, festivals and markets.

3.3 Urban Park Landscape Elements

Hardscaping

Hardscaping plays a significant role in the design of urban parks. Given the space constraints that many urban park typologies are subject to, hardscape may make up the majority, if not all, of the ground level surface. The selection and design of the paving material will affect the usability and comfort of the space, as well as its aesthetics and character. Furthermore, the selection of hardscape materials should take into consideration issues of climate change, in particular urban heat island mitigation and stormwater management. The selection and design of hardscaping should:

- Provide a safe walking surface for all users, with special implementation of universal accessibility. Walking surfaces should specify a non-skid material;
- Design hardscaping for passive cooling. Light coloured or high albedo materials, and open grid or porous surfaces help to mitigate urban heat island effect (City of Melbourne, 2012);
- Select high quality materials that contribute to the character of the space and the surrounding area;
- Where unit paving is used, ensure that differential settlement and heaving is mitigated long term. Consider incorporating a concrete base below the unit pavers;
- Select paving materials that have a long lifespan. Prepare a maintenance and repair manual as part of the design deliverables;
- Where built over structure, ensure high quality membrane materials that have a long lifespan. Prepare a maintenance and repair manual as part of the design deliverables;
- Employ wayfinding techniques, including emphasizing entrances, patios, edges, and pedestrian pathways; and,
- Provide unobstructed circulation routes through or around the space. Provided a minimum 2.1 metre wide pedestrian clearways.

Softscaping

Softscaping, including planting beds and areas of sod, help to establish the identity of the park, support passive and active recreation, and provide a range of ecological benefits. Plant material helps to lower the ambient air temperature, absorb excess stormwater, improve air quality, and support local fauna and pollinators. Perennials and shrubs provide an excellent opportunity to inject vibrant colour and texture into a space, a quality typically lacking in urbanized areas. When designing softscape areas, consider the following:

- Use planting to provide visual interest. Consider incorporating a variety of colours, textures, heights, and forms throughout the open space;
- Ensure that planting material does not obstruct visibility through the site. Utilize CPTED principles while developing the planting strategy;
- Use planting material to establish a comfortable microclimate (e.g. – provide wind and noise reduction);
- Plantings, should be low maintenance, drought tolerant, and pest and disease resistant;
- Provide planting beds that are a minimum of 600mm in width; and,
- Where non-drought tolerant species are used, provide automatic irrigation.

Urban Trees

Central to the softscape design in urban parks, and a persistent challenge, is the incorporation of trees. Trees are an invaluable piece of green infrastructure, they are the lungs of the Town. The proper selection and detailing of tree plantings will contribute to their long term health and success. Providing for increased

soil areas, native and drought tolerant species, and ample space between trees will increase their chances of reaching maturity, and increase their lifespan. Mature trees provide a range of benefits, including providing shade, reducing ambient temperatures, mitigating the urban heat island effect, and contributing to the character of the space and surrounding neighbourhood. To increase the likelihood of success:

- Preserve and incorporate existing trees where possible. Ensure existing trees are of a high quality and healthy;
- Where space is limited, place trees in a hardscape condition to maximize at grade pedestrian space. Provide a flush walking surfaced by employing tree grates or concealed paver grates and soil trenches;
- Maximize the rooting zone. Provide a minimum of 30 cubic metres of soil volume per tree. Tree planting areas should provide a minimum of 1 metre depth. The maximum planting area depth to be considered in the soil volume calculation is 2 metres;
- Where minimum soil volumes cannot be achieved in a planting area, use soil cells or structural soil to increase access to soil;
- Provide species diversity. Do not exceed 10% of the same species, 20% of the same genera, or 30% of the same family;
- Plant large caliper trees to achieve immediate visual impact, and improve the likelihood of success. New trees to have a minimum caliper of 70mm at the time of planting;
- Ensure the tree planting areas have adequate drainage, such as through the provision of sub-drains;
- Implement a watering program during the establishment period of the tree (approximately 5 years). Provide watering in times of drought;
- Avoid conflicts with underground and above grade infrastructure and utilities;
- Understand and identify capital costs to provide appropriate growing conditions;
- Understand and identify operating/maintenance costs, including a tree placement program (City of Mississauga, 2015); and,
- Use trees to establish a comfortable microclimate (e.g. – provide wind and noise reduction).

Seating

Seating is a critical amenity in all urban park typologies. Seating should be designed to be accessible, inviting, and comfortable. A variety of seating types can be introduced into urban parks, including:

- Benches;
- Seat walls;
- Fixed chair, including with a table;
- Movable chairs, including with table; and,
- Informal (e.g. – lawn, platforms, steps, etc.).

In general, seating design should consider the following:

- Provide a variety of seating types. In larger typologies, including Public Commons, Urban Squares, and Promenades, provide at least two seating types. In smaller typologies, including Connecting Links, Pocket Parks, and Sliver Parks, provide at least one type of seating;
- Provide options in both the sun and the shade;
- Provide a variety of configurations to accommodate individual users and groups;

- Where flexibility is required, consider movable chairs and tables;
- Optimize four-season comfort when selecting seating materials and finishes (e.g. – wood is more comfortable during cooler seasons);
- Orient seating to provide engaging views, encourage informal surveillance, and increase comfort;
- Provide a range of backed and backless options to accommodate a variety of users. Backed benches should be considered as a preferred accessible option; and,
- Provide spaces in seating areas to accommodate walkers or wheelchairs.

Lighting

Lighting plays a key role in the design, comfort, usability, and safety of an urban park. Lighting can be used to enhance design elements, articulate adjacent facades, facilitate wayfinding, and animate the site. Light also extends the usable hours of the park into the evening and at night. Where designing lighting for urban parks, considering the following:

- Provide adequate lighting to improve safety in the space. Consult CPTED for additional direction;
- Use fixtures that are dark sky compliant, which reduce glare, light trespass, and light pollution;
- Use fixtures that are energy efficient, with automated timers;
- Use a variety of lighting scales and types, including lighting bollard, pedestrian lights, and catenary lighting;
- Where events are anticipated, incorporate electrical hookups and event signage into the light posts; and,
- Use lighting to clearly identify the path of travel through the site.

Public Art

Public art can be used as a placemaking and programming element within an urban park. Public art presents an opportunity to integrate cultural heritage into the fabric of the park, or to establish a new narrative for the community. Well designed, engaging, and thought provoking public art has the potential to be a draw to visitors, and can contribute to the success and vitality of the space. When incorporating public art into an urban park, consider:

- The scale and location of the art. A single public art piece can serve as an organizing element for the open space or identify significant gateways or points of arrival, whereas a series of art pieces can act as wayfinding elements located throughout the site;
- Incorporate cultural heritage elements into the piece; and
- Incorporate public art into a space in the form of paving, seating, lighting, or other functional elements.

Other Features

Urban parks should also consider including a number of other facilities that support a variety of active and passive programming amenities, including:

- Playgrounds, play equipment, outdoor workout equipment
- Drinking fountains, bottle stations;
- Dog run areas;
- Waste receptacles;
- Water feature; and,
- Amphitheatre/performance stage.

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OAKVILLE

The **Planning** Partnership
NBLC

OAKVILLE

Town of Oakville

Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix V

Maintaining the Parkland System

August 2022

The Planning Partnership

nblc

Contents

1.0 Park Maintenance 3

1.1 Good Maintenance is Crucial 3

1.2 Funding + Coordinating Ongoing Maintenance 3

1.3 Working with Long-Term Benefitting Partners 4

1.4 Other Opportunities 5

1.0 Park Maintenance

1.1 Good Maintenance is Crucial

A great parkland network is diverse, well-designed and, importantly, well maintained. A commitment to the highest levels of park maintenance is crucial to the success of the network and to the individual park spaces that comprise it. The Town of Oakville has an excellent track record in maintaining its more traditional suburban parkland network to a very high quality. The results of the public survey clearly show that the public, the users of the existing parkland network, a very satisfied with the design, and maintenance of the parks throughout the Town.

As the Town intensifies over time it is important to note that urban parks and the broader parkland network within a highly urban context, due to their design complexity and use patterns, are much more expensive to maintain than suburban parks - a typical rule-of-thumb is to assume that urban parks require about 10 times the attention and cost to maintain over a suburban park space. Typically, urban parks include more varied types of park spaces, more structured planting beds (rather than just lawn/fields) and a greater diversity of plant materials to achieve visual and seasonal interest. A diverse range of paving materials and associated park furniture elements are also more complex and require ongoing maintenance.

The importance of both funding and coordinating maintenance efforts of the entire parkland network over time cannot be understated. In addition, there are opportunities to include other partners who can assist the Town with both establishing and performing enhanced maintenance protocols. Further, there are opportunities to design for lower maintenance as a sustainable approach to cost savings over time.

1.2 Funding + Coordinating Ongoing Maintenance

Property taxes, which are applied Town-wide, will be required to ensure the long-term and ongoing maintenance of the Town's parkland network. Property taxes will also be utilized to ensure the safety and security of the Town's parkland network as it evolves and intensifies. There are a variety of issues that will need to be specifically considered as the Town's parkland network is enhanced over time, with particular attention to the more urban park components:

- With increased growth will come increased taxation potential, but also a requirement that parkland maintenance protocols will need to recognize the demands of the public park spaces based on increased usage, and incremental land additions to the network;

- With the addition of new scales, types and functions of park spaces, maintenance protocols will need to be more diverse and type specific. Different demands for equipment, different planting programs, different programming objectives will make ongoing maintenance far more complex than for a typical suburban parks system; and,

- A more complex and more expensive maintenance protocol will require enhanced coordination among the various Town departments involved and, of course, the exploration of new partnership opportunities, that may include BIA's, Neighbourhood Associations, Volunteers and/or Trust Funds.

Ongoing and enhanced maintenance protocols are essential to the long-term quality of the Town's parkland network. Field maintenance, snow removal, garbage pick-up, urban planting, plant/tree watering and maintenance, sidewalk cleaning and street furniture/play structure replacement and maintenance are some of the duties required to ensure a clean and well-functioning parkland network. Without a commitment to ongoing maintenance, there is no point in creating a beautiful parkland network.

In the evolving urban context, there is, in some instances, an information gap between those who

are responsible for park design and development and those who will be responsible to maintain those parks once completed. It is understood that the Town of Oakville is primarily responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the existing parkland network, but also in collaboration with other public/non-profit organizations and some of the major landowners, who look after their own properties. Ongoing maintenance will have a tremendous impact on the appearance, and ultimately the property values in proximity.

It is recommended that the Town consider clarifying roles, responsibilities and protocols for ongoing maintenance of the Town parkland network. Some of the key elements of a memorandum of understanding may be:

- Include parks maintenance staff in the review of the parks design and development process to ensure that there is a full understanding and, ultimately, a clear commitment to establishing the required maintenance protocols. The intent of a park design, program and facilities need to be clearly identified early in the process by staff to ensure consideration of issues related to their ability to maintain the plant materials, landscape surfaces and features over the long-term. Any special equipment or maintenance expertise should be identified before the park design is built;

- A decision to proceed with a complex (enhanced) design - particularly in an urban context - requiring enhanced maintenance, must include agreement among the design group, the development group and the parks maintenance group that the park and all its component parts can, and will be maintained in accordance with required best practices; and,

- The increase in maintenance budget needs to be understood and agreed to by the Town staff and disseminated to the front line staff as an agreed upon direction.

1.3 Working with Long-Term Benefitting Partners

Business Improvement Areas

Local BIA's have a secure funding source through a levy on property taxes that is to be used for marketing, events, enhanced maintenance and capital projects. They have a mandate to assist in the maintenance of commercial business areas. Certainly BIA's can work with the Town's parks maintenance staff to augment the maintenance protocols of the Town. At the very least, BIA's and business owners should be asked to assist in maintaining adjacent urban park components, as part of their overall property maintenance procedures.

The BIA members will be a direct benefactor of an enhanced park network. As benefactors of the anticipated investment in the park spaces and the broader public realm, it is important that the BIA play a partnership role in providing capital funds for physical improvements, as well as providing support for an enhanced maintenance protocol.

Planting programs, streetscape enhancements, including area specific street furniture programs should be at least partially the responsibility of the BIA. Cost sharing programs between the BIA's and the Town need to be fully explored.

Neighbourhood Associations

While Neighbourhood Associations are not provided with a stable funding source through municipal taxation, there are jurisdictions in Canada that rely on direct local neighbourhood involvement in the design, development and maintenance of adjacent park spaces and the broader parkland network. The Town should consider pursuing a direct form of relationship with Neighbourhood Associations to assist with ongoing maintenance, in collaboration with Town maintenance protocols.

Building Owners/Condo Corporations

Where an urban park has been developed as part of a large scale development, and the space remains in private ownership, it shall be a requirement of any legal agreement that ensures public access and assigns maintenance responsibility that the park be maintained to Town standards. Town standards are

likely to be considered the minimum standard. For this approach to park maintenance to be successful, there will need to be a very clear definition of just what "maintained to Town standards" means.

For each park space developed in as part of a higher density, mixed-use building or condo corporation context, the Town will need to establish a park maintenance protocol that can be measured, and ultimately enforced. The park maintenance protocol may include the following requirements:

- Maintain, in accordance with approved protocols, all plant materials, paving materials, furniture, structures and art installations;
- Expeditiously (within 30 days) replace any dead, dying or damaged plant materials;
- Expeditiously (within 30 days) replace or repair any damaged or uneven paving materials, park furniture and/or art installations;
- Remove graffiti, scratchiti, debris, animal waste and empty garbage containers as necessary, but at least on a daily basis; and,
- Remove snow and properly salt (or other appropriate material) all paved areas as required.

1.4 Other Opportunities

Trust Funds

In the United States, many jurisdictions have required that urban parks be maintained by a Trust Fund. Typically, the Trust Fund is established while the park is in the design and development stages. Trust Funds can be funded by the private sector (a tax deduction in the US), by the public sector, or through some combination of both. The Trust Fund Board retains maintenance contractors and takes on the responsibility to maintain the public park to a prescribed level of quality, and the Town absolves themselves of further maintenance responsibilities.

Adopt-a-Park Program

It is important to note that an adopt- a-park program is not a replacement for the Town's ongoing maintenance of public parks or the public realm network, but an opportunity to augment existing responsibilities.

Local service clubs, school groups, horticultural societies or interested citizens/citizen groups may wish to become involved in specific park maintenance events, and/or for ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

The Town should consider expanding the existing adopt-a-park program where individuals or groups can become the guardian of a specific park or some component part thereof.

The Town would need to establish an individual protocol, and prepare agreements to facilitate this type of intervention. The program could simply be to raise funds to retain a maintenance team, or there could be a strategy to utilize the sweat equity of these groups. Nonetheless, the Town would need to retain management control, while harnessing the tremendous enthusiasm and potential of service clubs, school groups, horticultural societies or interested citizens/citizen groups.

Design for Lower Maintenance - A Philosophy of Sustainability

Landscape Architects can design with relatively low maintenance paving materials, furniture and plant material. Plant material in an urban setting is crucial and requires special attention for maintenance, for example:

- Selection of plant species that are drought tolerant once their root systems are established is one example of reducing the maintenance requirements for water;

- Understanding the role of soil chemistry, soil volumes and soil types is also important to support lower maintenance plant material and must be specified in tandem with plant material; and,

- Pruning requirements of plant material can also be taken into consideration in the design process, to reduce maintenance.

The maintenance requirement for watering of plant material is important to consider early in the design process. Landscape Architects can work together with Architects and Engineers to identify opportunities for water sources from adjacent buildings, for example, such as recycled rain water from roof tops (which provide the cleanest source of rainwater) that can be stored in cisterns, filtered and reused for irrigation. It is important to note, however, even drought tolerant plant material needs irrigation to become established (the first year or two) and maintenance plans also need to prepare for extended drought periods to keep planted areas healthy and attractive.

The Town should promote a more sustainable park space development approach that requires less maintenance over time.

OAKVILLE

The **Planning** Partnership
NBLC

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Town of Oakville

Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix VI

Development Scenarios/Fiscal Benchmarking

August 2022

The Planning Partnership

nblc

Appendix VI

Development Scenarios/Fiscal Benchmarking

SCENARIO ONE STATS

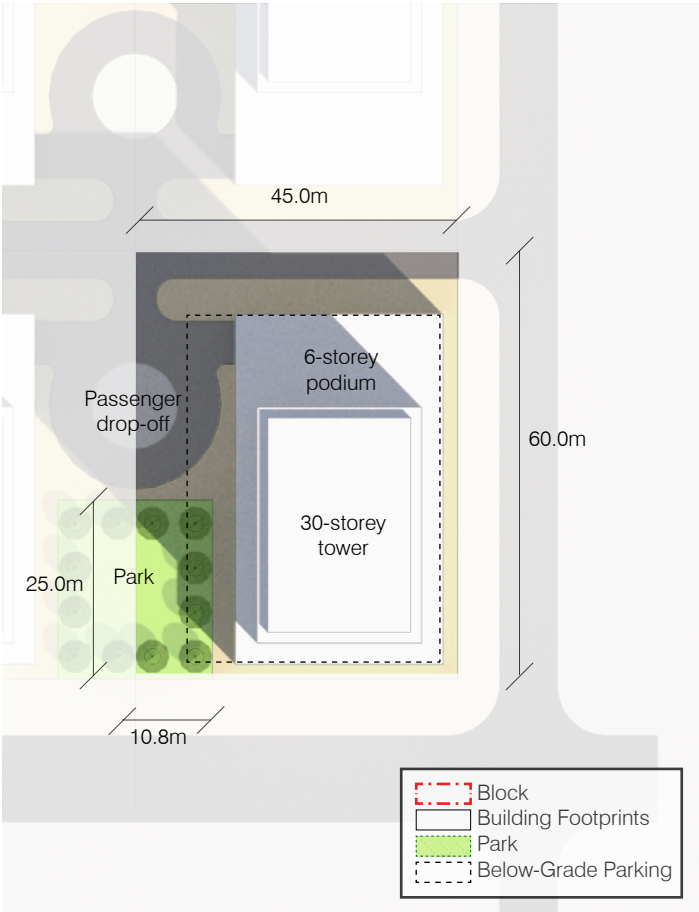
This scenario illustrates an 30-storey tower on a 6-storey podium with below-grade parking and a shared passenger drop-off area.

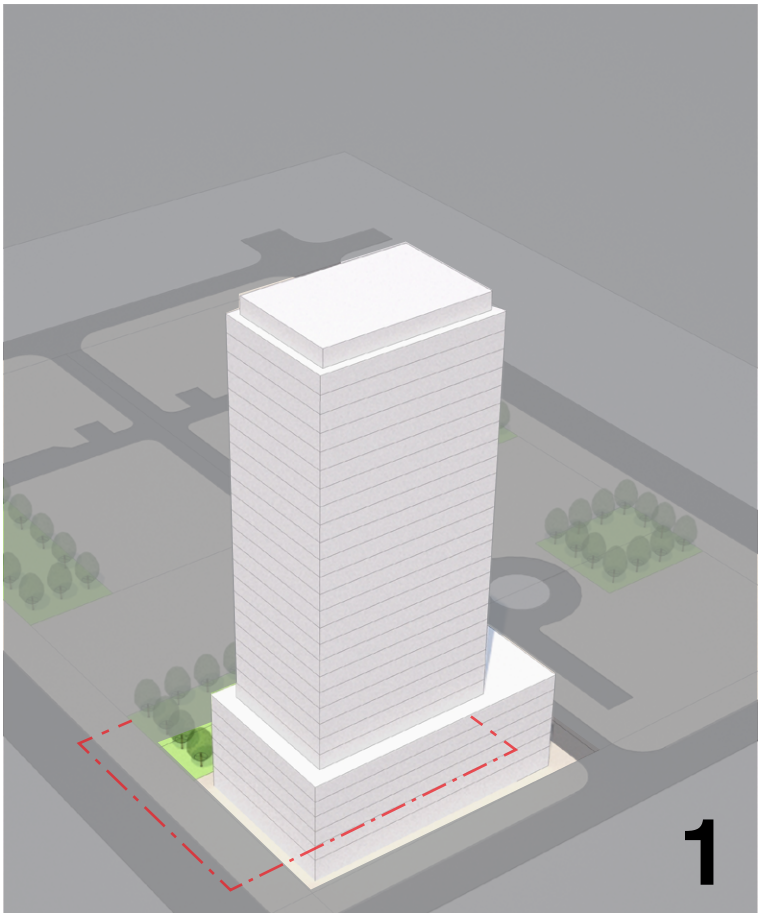
Lot Area	2,700 sm
Units	302
Building Height	30-storeys
Total GFA	26,580 sm
FSI	*9.84*

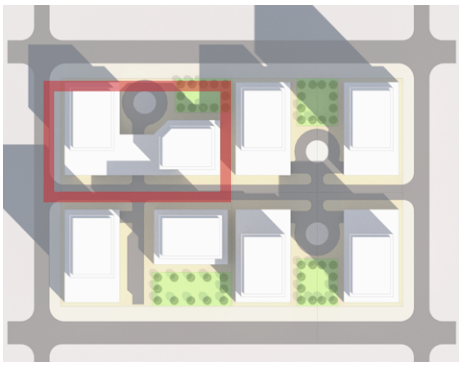
Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	6,040 sm	224%	$5,225,000	$17,300	9.44%
5% Land Area Cap	140 sm	5%	$340,000	$1,100	13.00%
25% Land Area Cap	680 sm	25%	$1,468,000	$4,900	12.18%
100% Land Area Cap	2,700 sm	100%	$3,897,000	$12,900	10.41%
30% Land Value Cap*	6,040 sm	224%	$3,067,000	$10,200	11.01%
Graduated Approach	4,490 sm	166%	$2,326,000	$7,700	11.55%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate







SCENARIO TWO STATS

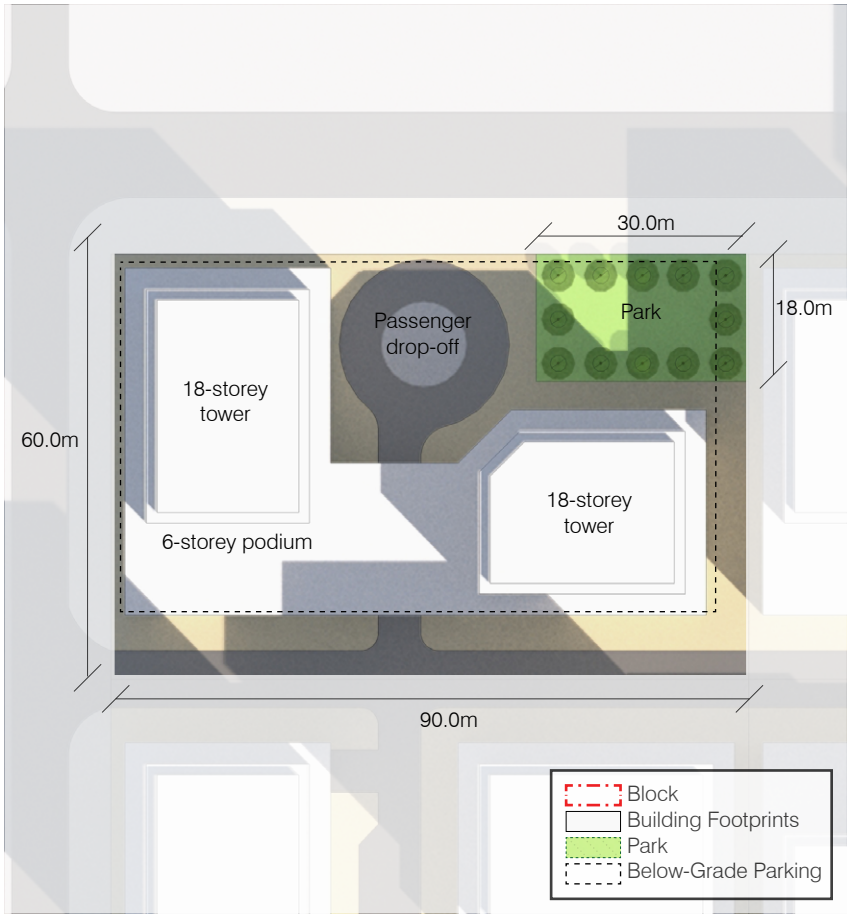
This scenario illustrates two 18-storey towers on a 6-storey podium with passenger drop-off and below-grade parking.

Lot Area	5,400 sm
Units	386
Building Height	18-storeys
Total GFA	33,965 sm
FSI	*6.29*

Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	7,710 sm	143%	$7,029,000	$18,200	11.08%
5% Land Area Cap	270 sm	5%	$575,000	$1,500	14.70%
25% Land Area Cap	1,350 sm	25%	$2,479,000	$6,400	13.63%
100% Land Area Cap	5,400 sm	100%	$6,539,000	$17,000	11.36%
30% Land Value Cap*	7,710 sm	143%	$3,784,000	$9,800	12.90%
Graduated Approach	7,290 sm	135%	$5,437,000	$14,100	11.97%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate



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SCENARIO THREE STATS

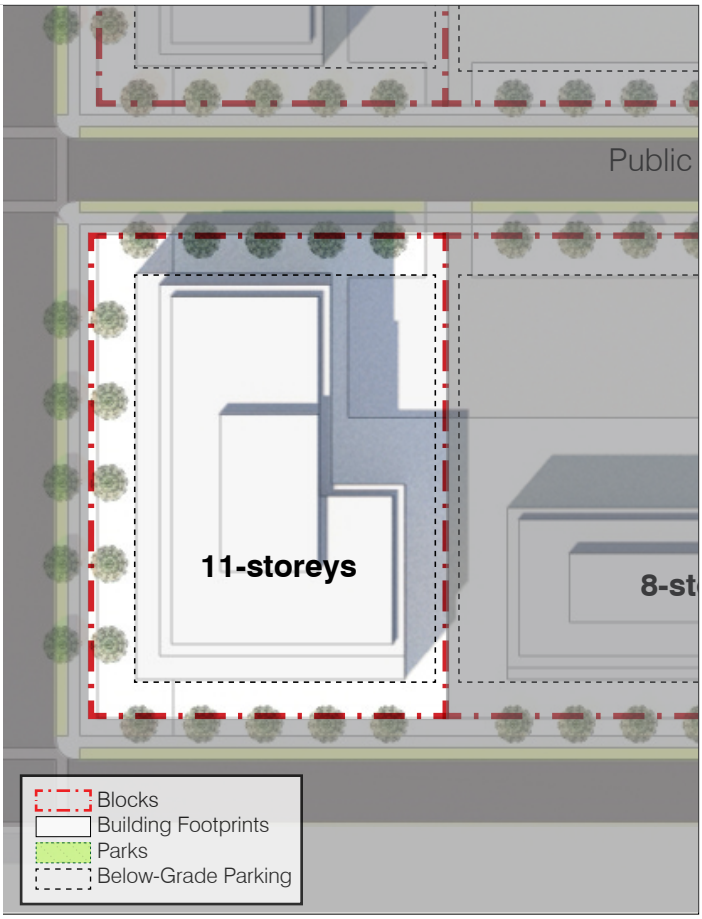
This scenario illustrates an 11 storey condominium apartment development.

Lot Area	2,800 sm
Units	196
Building Height	11-storeys
Total GFA	17,230 sm
FSI	*6.21*

Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	3,910 sm	141%	$4,030,000	$20,600	11.29%
5% Land Area Cap	140 sm	5%	$320,000	$1,600	15.47%
25% Land Area Cap	690 sm	25%	$1,380,000	$7,100	14.28%
100% Land Area Cap	2,800 sm	100%	$3,633,000	$18,600	11.76%
30% Land Value Cap*	3,910 sm	141%	$2,086,000	$10,700	13.49%
Graduated Approach	3,730 sm	134%	$1,896,000	$9,700	13.70%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate



SCENARIO FOUR STATS

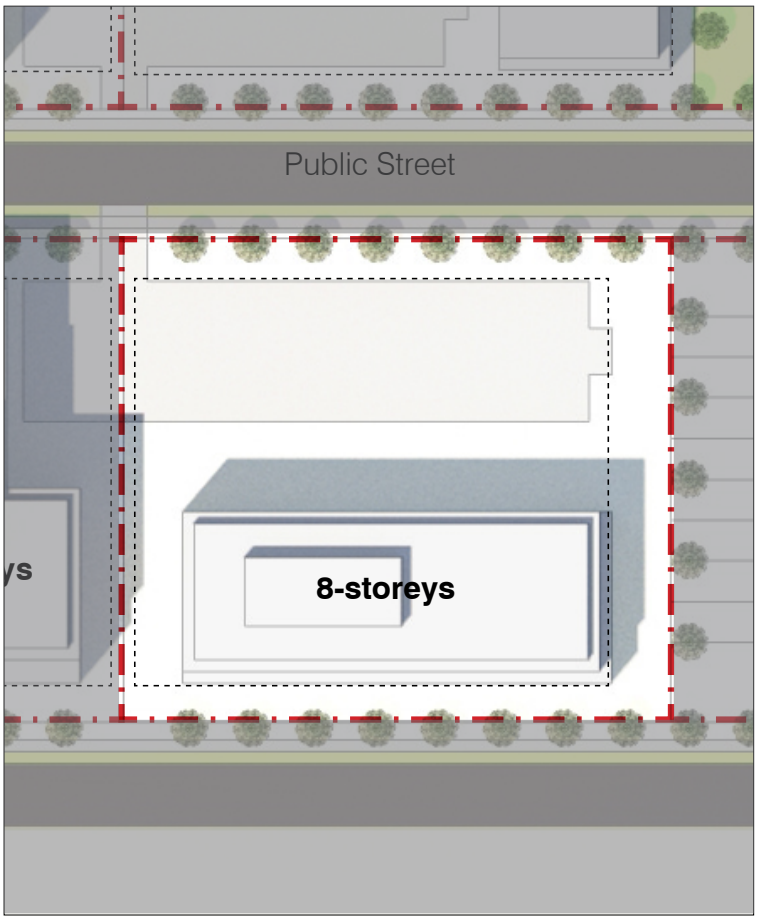
This scenario illustrates an 8 storey condominium apartment development.

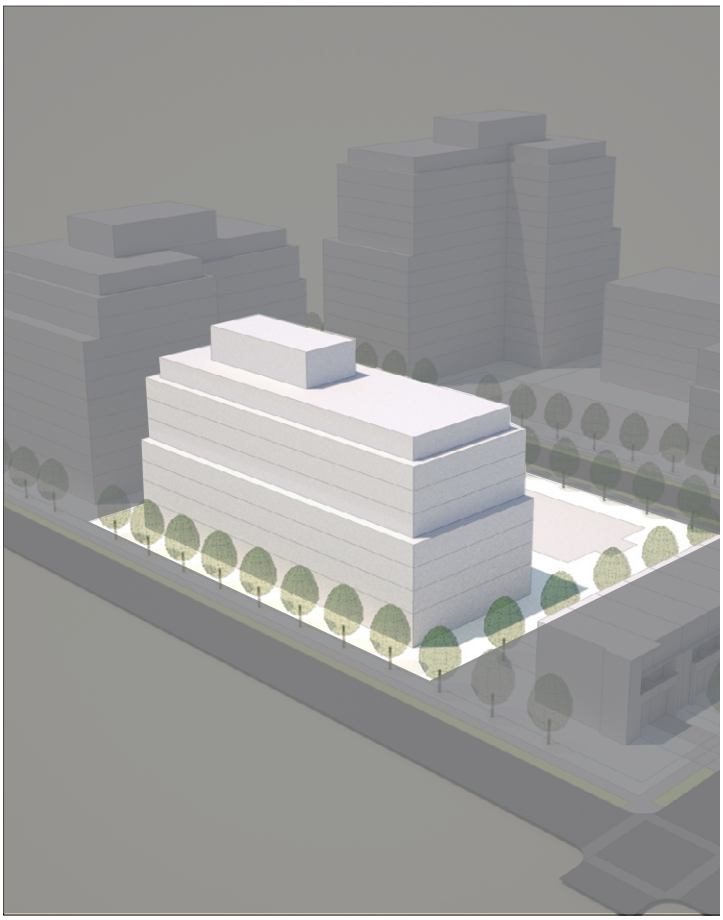
Lot Area	4,5000 sm
Units	103
Building Height	8-storeys
Total GFA	9,025 sm
FSI	*2.01*

Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	2,050 sm	46%	$1,105,000	$10,800	13.78%
5% Land Area Cap	220 sm	5%	$174,000	$1,700	15.78%
25% Land Area Cap	1,120 sm	25%	$749,000	$7,300	14.54%
100% Land Area Cap	4,490 sm	100%	$1,970,000	$19,200	11.91%
30% Land Value Cap*	2,050 sm	46%	$445,000	$4,300	15.20%
Graduated Approach	3,570 sm	80%	$995,000	$9,700	14.01%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate





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SCENARIO FIVE STATS

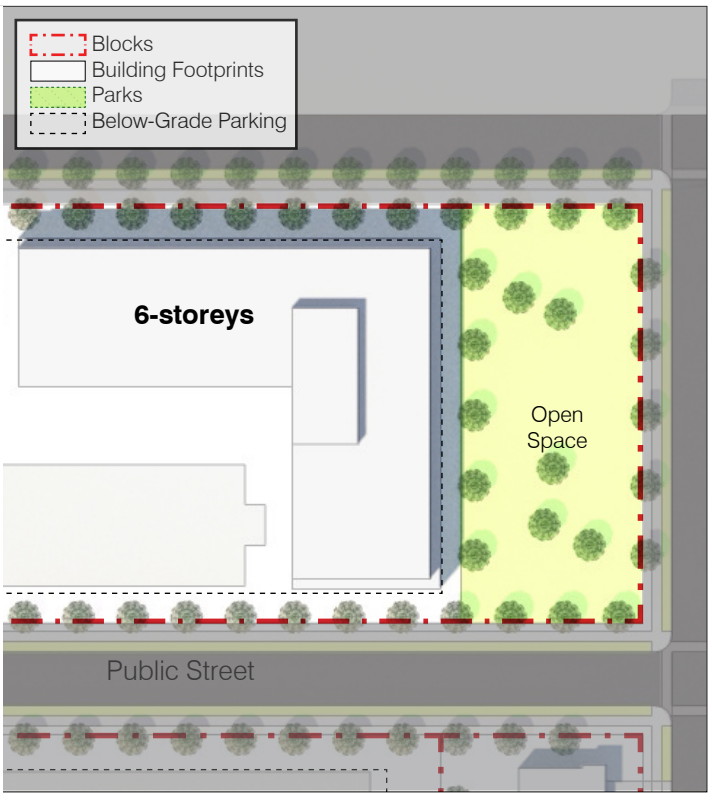
This scenario illustrates an 6 storey condominium apartment development.

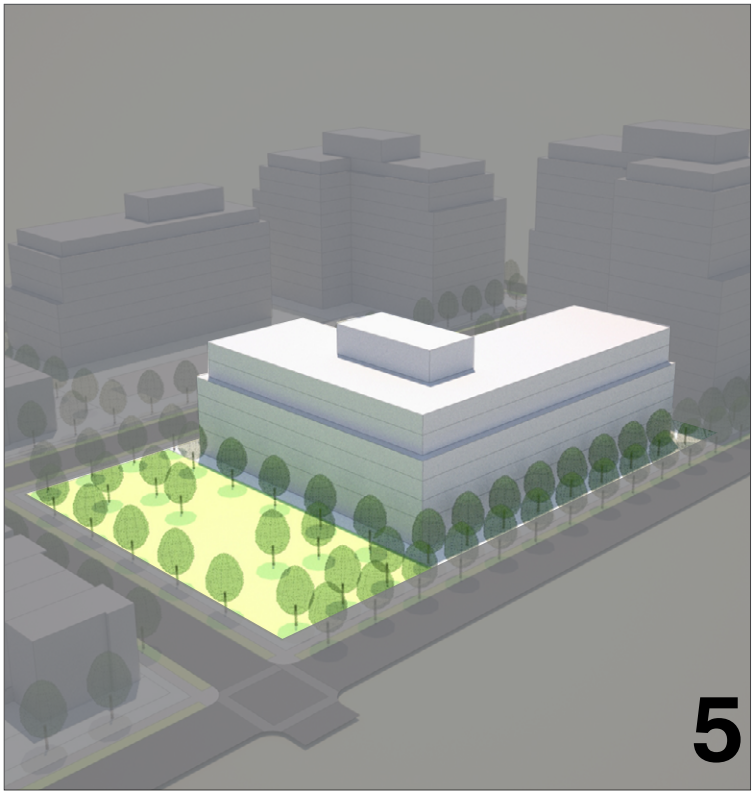
Lot Area	6,300 sm
Units	112
Building Height	6-storeys
Total GFA	9,900 sm
FSI	*1.57*

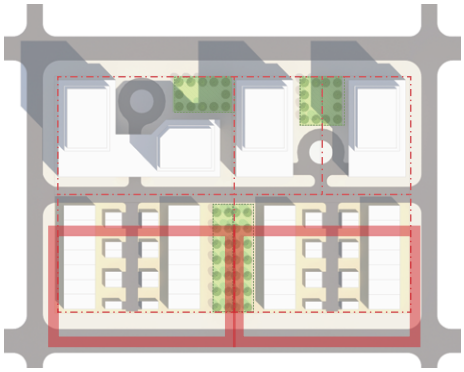
Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	2,250 sm	36%	$1,073,000	$9,500	14.80%
5% Land Area Cap	220 sm	5%	$206,000	$1,800	16.60%
25% Land Area Cap	1,580 sm	25%	$889,000	$7,900	15.19%
100% Land Area Cap	6,300 sm	100%	$2,339,000	$20,800	12.19%
30% Land Value Cap*	2,250 sm	36%	$422,000	$3,800	16.15%
Graduated Approach	5,100 sm	80%	$1,517,000	$13,500	13.89%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate







SCENARIO SIX STATS

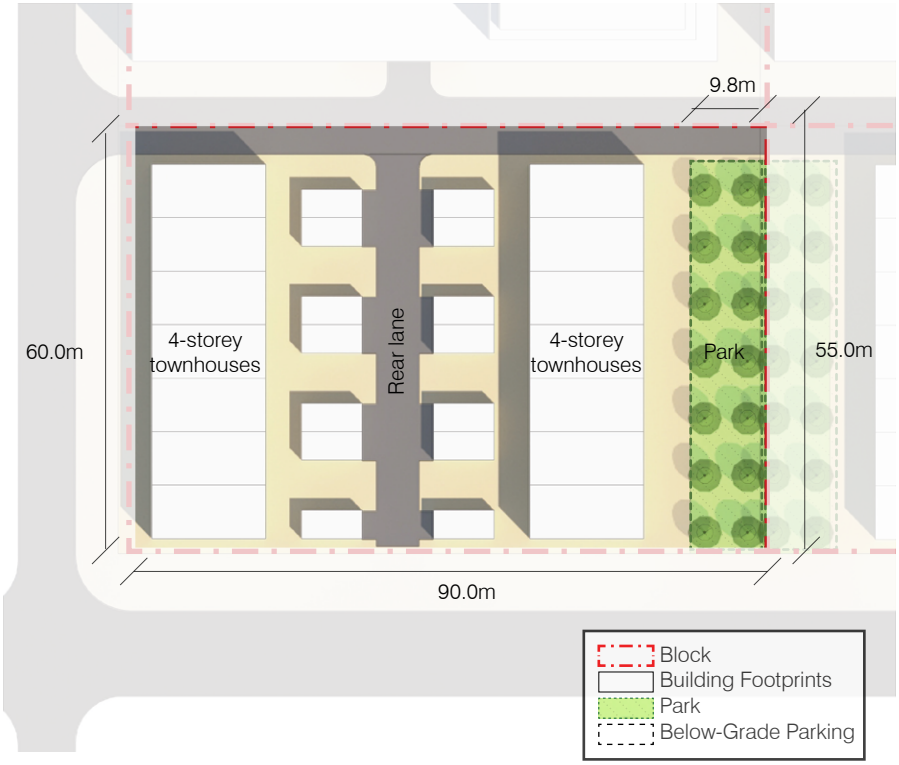
This scenario illustrates a series of 4-storey stacked townhouses.

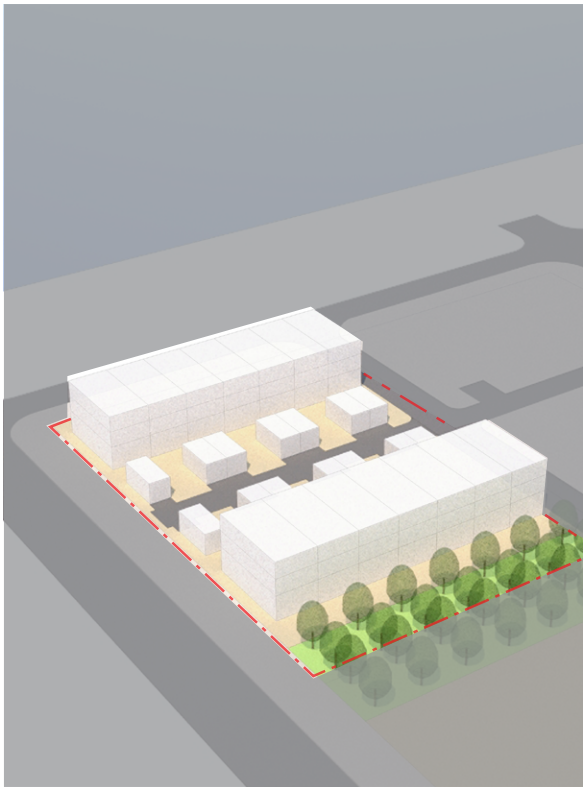
Lot Area	4,000 sm
Units	48
Building Height	4-storeys
Total GFA	5,128 sm

Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	960 sm	24%	$1,029,000	$21,400	17.91%
5% Land Area Cap	200 sm	5%	$264,000	$5,500	20.78%
25% Land Area Cap	1,000 sm	25%	$1,135,000	$23,600	17.51%
100% Land Area Cap	4,000 sm	100%	$2,962,000	$61,700	10.65%
30% Land Value Cap*	960 sm	24%	$374,000	$7,800	20.37%
Graduated Approach	2,140 sm	54%	$998,000	$20,800	18.02%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate





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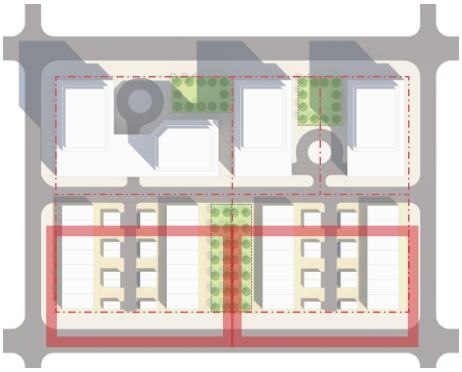


SCENARIO SEVEN STATS

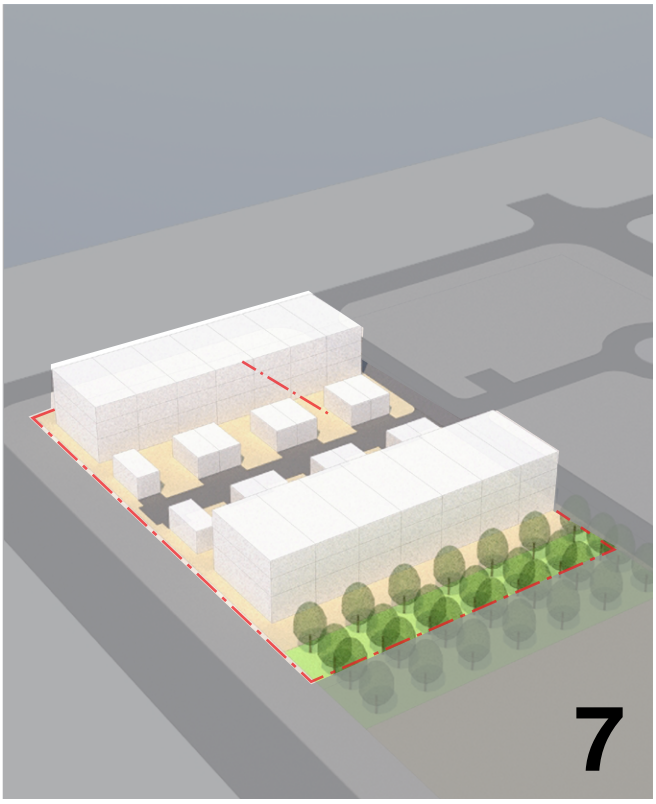
This scenario illustrates an a series of 3.5-storey townhouses with rear lane access.

Lot Area	4,000 sm
Units	24
Building Height	3.5-storeys
Total GFA	5,040 sm

Parkland Standard Alternatives

	Parkland Generated	Percent of Lot Areas	Cash-in-Lieu Generated	Cash-in-Lieu per Unit	Residual Profit
1 ha/500 du	480 sm	12%	$606,000	$25,200	19.83%
5% Land Area Cap	200 sm	5%	$287,000	$12,000	21.30%
25% Land Area Cap	1,000 sm	25%	$1,231,000	$51,300	16.95%
100% Land Area Cap	4,000 sm	100%	$3,214,000	$133,900	7.81%
30% Land Value Cap*	480 sm	12%	$209,000	$8,700	21.66%
Graduated Approach	1,800 sm	45%	$935,000	$39,000	18.32%

*Cash-in-lieu calculation uses 30% of total land value @ 1 ha / 500 dwelling unit rate



Financial Sensitivity Analysis Summary

1.0 Introduction

N. Barry Lyon Consultants ("NBLC") was retained by The Planning Partnership to assist in their evaluation of parkland dedication policies, for a range of prototypical development forms and densities in order to consider their associated impact on development viability in the Town of Oakville ("the Town"). This memorandum summarizes a financial sensitivity analysis intended to provide a basis of information to support policy decision making related to parkland dedication policies within strategic urban growth locations in the Town.

The analysis illustrates the impacts that alternative parkland dedication methods may have on hypothetical development scenarios in the Town (quantified through cash-in-leu of parkland payments, or CIL). Currently, the Town's policy for parkland cash in lieu is as per maximums outlined in the Planning Act (the equivalent value of 1 hectare of land per 500 residential units).

This analysis considers a total of six calculation methods as developed by The Planning Partnership, which are applied to seven built form prototypes::

- Method 1: 1 ha/500 du
- Method 2: 5% Land Area Cap
- Method 3: 25% Land Area Cap
- Method 4: $22,500 Per Unit Cap
- Method 5: 30% of total land value at the 1 ha/500 du rate
- Method 6: Graduated Approach

The final CIL method (Method 6) incorporated in this review is a graduated approach, whereby the required dedication would be determined by the density of the development, as per the schedule outlined below. However, this approach could be recalibrated in a variety of ways.

- 0 – 3.0 FSI: 1.2 ha/ 1,000 persons
- 3.0 – 6.0 FSI: 0.8 ha/ 1,000 persons
- > 6.0 FSI: 0.4 ha/ 1,000 persons

Higher parkland dedication costs (or other development fees) can impact the feasibility of a high density development by:

- Reducing the profit/return a developer can expect to achieve; or,
- Reducing the value a developer will be willing to pay for land; or,
- A combination both.

For developers who have already purchased lands for development (i.e., have a fixed land cost) assuming one set of municipal fees, a significant increase in these fees will impact the profitability of the planned development. In the extreme, the profitability can be reduced so as to make the development unviable. In these instances, time for market transition is essential so that in-progress development activity can proceed.

For land owners marketing a property for high density development, a change in development costs can have a direct bearing on the value of their land. Developers, unwilling to reduce their expected rate of return on a property, will expect the vendor to absorb these costs in their sale price. However, significant downward pressure may mean that fewer transactions occur, limiting the supply of land for new residential development.

Where the market illustrates upward elasticity in pricing, these costs could be offset by future increases to the purchase price of new housing units. However, there are broad choices in the GTA's high density residential marketplace, and we assume that developers are always charging the maximum price that the market will bear. Further, recent economic shifts (significant inflationary pressure and rising interest rates) are likely to impact the buoyancy of residential pricing in the near term.

2.0 Summary Results and Recommendations

NBLC developed a financial model to assess the impact each of the three parkland dedication methods could have on the land value and profit of the hypothetical development concepts. To estimate land value, we forecast revenues and subtract costs and developer profit – the residual is the supportable land value. To assess impacts on developer profit we undertook a separate analysis that fixes land costs based on estimates of each site's likely range in land value based on a review of residential land transactions. The assumptions used in the financial analyses represent a snapshot of local residential market conditions based on a survey of conditions in December 2020. This allows us to benchmark key assumptions and findings from the analysis against recent experience in the local market area.

The Current Approach

This analysis illustrates that the existing Planning Act standard for payment in lieu – calculated by using a rate of one hectare per 500 dwelling units – is likely a disincentive to investments in high density development throughout Oakville. For developers who need to acquire land at current market rates, the profitability of development is likely near the low end of the typical acceptable range – particularly for dense apartment formats. Profit margins in the order of 15% of gross revenue are typically targeted. We note that based on our experience with the development community, a profit margin in ownership (condominium) residential development of 10% to 20% is generally considered to be a reasonable range, with 10% representing increased project risk. Of note, it is likely that new purpose built-rental development is further strained in instances where land has recently been acquired.

The calculation methodology does not scale well with increasing development density and is not appropriate as an approach in a high density residential development context. In built form Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 – the model results demonstrate that a development might be obligated to contribute a payment in lieu equivalent to between 155% and 250% of the site's land value.

The financial review demonstrates that when applied to developments with comparatively lower densities (versus the 30, 18, and 11-storey scenarios tested as part of this review) the existing Planning Act standard is more effective, producing stronger land value and profit results. This is a common finding with this methodology across most Ontario municipalities, as demonstrated through the stacked and traditional townhome results in this review.

Alternative Approaches

As development densities continue to increase and land values improve over time, it is likely that a percentage based approach or a graduated method would be preferable from a developer's point of view, as well as the Town's. This analysis demonstrates that the moderate 25% cap on CIL (Method 3) works reasonably well in allowing for an increase in the amount of value collected for parkland purposes where land values allow, while maintaining development viability for high density development and encouraging intensification.

Of note, Method 2 (5% of land value) demonstrates how a capped land value approach could perform at various ends of this spectrum. The 5% approach would likely act as an incentive for most development forms, whereas the current approach, or even a 100% cap on land value, would not be fair or reasonable for medium density development.

Method 4 considers a per unit capped rate of $22,600 based on the Town's current understanding of the parkland service provision and merging needs based on population growth and parkland acquisition costs throughout various strategic growth areas. This capped approach does appear to be effective at moderating impacts to dense projects relative to the Town's current approach while also balancing needs for parkland acquisition,

Method 5 seeks to maintain a form of the current 1 hectare per 500 unit formula, but is then applied to a discounted land value (30% of land value estimated at time of permit issuance). This standard does improve financial viability versus the existing approach for CIL

in high density forms. The approach effectively acts as a cap on land value, allowing the existing Planning Act approach to better scale to high density forms.

In our view, a cap on alnd value or a version of the graduated method tested in this analysis could be effective as a fair and reasonable approach for calculating payment in lieu of parkland. As tested in this review, the graduated approach scales downwards with increasing density, balancing the Town's need to collect an appropriate parkland levy, developer financial considerations and broader municipal planning objectives for encouraging intensification. This approach could also be modified further with additional graduations to reflect development forms emerging throughout the Town, if warranted. The downside with this approach is that is more complex (in relative terms) to estimate than a cap. A flat per-unit cap, calibrated to parkland needs and population growth, is likely a more straightforward method to achieve similar results so long as the rate is regularly indexed with market reality.

For medium density development forms (stacked and traditional townhomes), the current CIL approach may remain reasonable as a method for calculation (e.g., the value equivalent to 1 hectare per 500 units).

Other Considerations

It is important to highlight that while a new alternative parkland dedication methodology could likely be implemented as a means to improving linkage between parkland need and high density development viability in Oakville, parkland levies are not the only factor affecting the economics of residential development. Parkland rates ought to be considered within the full context of other future adjustments to development charges and levies within Oakville (as well as at the Regional level), and also relative to other competitive market locations in the GTA.

Another major consideration for any parkland CIL approach that relies on land value as a metric for calculation the parks payment is how, and when, land values are calculated and set for a particular site.

Given diversity in the Town's residential market and development conditions – e.g., greenfield conditions, mid-market transit-oriented sites and upscale compact urban conditions – a land comparable ("comps") approach may not be appropriate unless a very high level of granularity is applied in the evaluation of each transaction being applied as a comparable. Moreover, Oakville's high density market is in some ways still emerging, so there is not the same depth of market acquisition activity to rely upon as there is in comparatively more urban GTA municipalities.

For instance, sites where there are less complex development conditions, or where speculative investment activity has occurred would skew values upward relative to other more challenging development sites. An alternative approach would be to apply a land residual approach on a site-by- site basis; however, this is labour intensive and requires a degree of precision that likely exceeds the resource capacities of municipal staff.

So, a preferred method might be to conduct a periodic survey of land transactions (e.g., annually, semi-annually, or, quarterly) by development typology/ submarket in order to standardize land values more generally within varying planning contexts. This creates certainty for all involved and allows for land values to pace with market reality. This approach could also be combined with a mechanism for site specific evaluation, where warranted.

Table 1: Built Form Scenarios & Assumptions

Matrix of Test Stats & Key Model Assumptions							
Built Form Scenario:	**Scenario 1** 30-Storey Condo Apartment	**Scenario 2** Two-tower 18-storey Condo Apartment	**Scenario 3** 11-Storey Condo Apartment	**Scenario 4** 8-Storey Condo Apartment	**Scenario 5** 6-Storey Condo Apartment	**Scenario 6** Stacked Townhomes	**Scenario 7** Traditional Towns
Lot Area (SM)	2,700	5,400	2,773	4,490	6,300	4,000	4,000
Total GFA (SM)	26,580	33,965	17,230	9,028	9,900	5,128	5,040
Population (Persons Per Unit)	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	2.63
Units	334	427	217	113	124	57	24
Average Net Unit Size (SF)	700	700	700	700	700	975	2,260
Building Height	30	18	11	8	6	4	3.5
Required Parking Stalls (per residential unit)	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	0.00
Required Visitor Parking Stalls (per residential unit)	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.00
Residential Index Price (PSF)	$825	$825	$825	$825	$790	$642	$500
End Price (calculated)	$577,500	$577,500	$577,500	$577,500	$553,000	$625,950	$1,130,000
Parking Revenue (per stall)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Retail Index Price ($30 PSF @ 6.5% Cap rate)	$392	$392	$392	$392	$392	$0	$0
Above Grade GLA Construction Cost (PSF)	$283	$273	$273	$273	$235	$190	$165
Above Grade GLA Construction Cost (PSF) Commercial	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	$0	$0
Below Grade Parking Cost (PSF)	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	$160	$0
Absorption Rate (sales per month)	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00	30.00	10.00	8.00
Construction Period (months)	48.00	48.00	36.00	36.00	30.00	24.00	24.00

Table 2: Financial Sensitivity Results

Pro Forma Results: Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Sensitivity Analysis - Oakville UGC							
Built Form Scenario:	Scenario 1 30-Storey Condo Apartment	Scenario 2 Two-tower 18-storey Condo Apartment	Scenario 3 11-Storey Condo Apartment	Scenario 4 8-Storey Condo Apartment	Scenario 5 6-Storey Condo Apartment	Scenario 6 Stacked Townhomes	Scenario 7 Traditional Towns
Development Statistics							
Units	334	427	217	113	124	57	27
GFA (sf)	286,105	365,596	185,462	97,177	106,563	55,200	54,250
FSI	9.84	6.29	6.21	2.01	1.57	1.28	1.26
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	700	700	700	700	700	975	1,975
Avg. Unit Price (psf)	$990	$990	$990	$990	$975	$770	$630
Avg. Unit End Price	$693,000	$693,000	$693,000	$693,000	$682,500	$750,750	$1,244,250
Site Area (ha)	0.27	0.54	0.28	0.45	0.63	0.40	0.40
Physical Park Space that would be Required (ha)							
Method 1: 1/500	0.668	0.854	0.433	0.227	0.249	0.113	0.055
% of land area	248%	158%	156%	51%	40%	28%	14%
Method 2: 5% cap	0.014	0.027	0.014	0.022	0.032	0.020	0.020
% of land area	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Method 3: 25% cap	0.068	0.135	0.069	0.112	0.158	0.100	0.100
% of land area	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Method 4: $15k / Unit	0.270	0.540	0.277	0.449	0.630	0.400	0.400
% of land area	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Method 5: 1/500 @ 30% of LV	0.668	0.854	0.433	0.227	0.249	0.113	0.055
% of land area	248%	158%	156%	51%	40%	28%	14%
Method 6: Graduated	0.498	0.807	0.413	0.395	0.555	0.253	0.206
% of land area	184%	150%	149%	88%	88%	63%	52%
Parks Levy if provided as Cash in Lieu ^							
Method 1: 1/500	$15,827,000	$16,865,000	$10,138,000	$2,704,000	$3,935,000	$1,291,000	$896,000
CIL per unit	$47,400	$39,500	$46,800	$23,800	$31,600	$22,800	$32,600
Method 2: 5% cap	$887,000	$1,130,000	$700,000	$361,000	$633,000	$271,000	$349,000
CIL per unit	$2,700	$2,600	$3,200	$3,200	$5,100	$4,800	$12,700
Method 3: 25% cap	$3,869,000	$4,929,000	$3,036,000	$1,564,000	$2,735,000	$1,167,000	$1,504,000
CIL per unit	$11,600	$11,500	$14,000	$13,800	$22,000	$20,600	$54,800
Method 4: $15k / Unit	$5,012,000	$6,405,000	$3,249,000	$1,702,000	$1,867,000	$849,000	$412,000
CIL per unit	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000
Method 5: 1/500 @ 30% of LV	$8,745,000	$8,184,000	$4,969,000	$1,015,000	$1,423,000	$447,000	$290,000
CIL per unit	$26,200	$19,200	$22,900	$8,900	$11,400	$7,900	$10,600
Method 6: Graduated	$6,650,000	$11,747,000	$4,522,000	$2,255,000	$5,028,000	$1,177,000	$1,280,000
CIL per unit	$19,900	$27,500	$20,900	$19,900	$40,400	$20,800	$46,600
Residual Land Value (Present$)							
Method 1: 1/500	$5,813,000	$9,604,000	$5,950,000	$4,948,000	$9,157,000	$4,216,000	$6,014,000
$PSF buildable / unit	$20.32	$26.27	$32.08	$50.92	$85.93	$74,467	$218,942
Method 2: 5% cap	$16,097,000	$20,341,000	$12,840,000	$6,676,000	$11,633,000	$5,005,000	$6,436,000
$PSF buildable / unit	$56.26	$55.64	$69.23	$68.70	$109.17	$88,404	$234,306
Method 3: 25% cap	$14,045,000	$17,749,000	$11,135,000	$5,789,000	$10,057,000	$4,313,000	$5,546,000
$PSF buildable / unit	$49.09	$48.55	$60.04	$59.57	$94.38	$76,181	$201,905
Method 4: $15k / Unit	$13,257,000	$16,742,000	$10,979,000	$5,687,000	$10,708,000	$4,558,000	$6,387,000
$PSF buildable / unit	$46.34	$45.79	$59.20	$58.52	$100.49	$80,508	$232,522
Method 5: 1/500 @ 30% of LV	$10,688,000	$15,528,000	$9,723,000	$6,193,000	$11,040,000	$4,868,000	$6,481,000
$PSF buildable / unit	$37.36	$42.47	$52.43	$63.73	$103.60	$85,984	$235,944
Method 6: Graduated	$12,130,000	$13,097,000	$10,050,000	$5,279,000	$8,337,000	$4,305,000	$5,718,000
$PSF buildable / unit	$42.40	$35.82	$54.19	$54.32	$78.24	$76,039	$208,166
Residual Profit Analysis based on Typical Estimated Land Acquisition Costs & Development Costs in Today's Market (Percentage of Gross Revenue) ^^							
Assumed Land Acquisition Cost - Low ($PSF / Per Unit)	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$50.00	$50.00	$185,000
Method 1: 1/500	15.05%	16.25%	16.88%	20.21%	23.59%	21.68%	23.42%
Method 2: 5% cap	22.06%	22.03%	23.61%	23.40%	27.71%	24.23%	25.14%
Method 3: 25% cap	20.66%	20.63%	21.94%	21.77%	25.09%	21.99%	21.50%
Method 4: $15k / Unit	20.13%	20.09%	21.79%	21.58%	26.17%	22.78%	24.95%
Method 5: 1/500 @ 30% of LV	18.37%	19.44%	20.56%	22.51%	26.72%	23.79%	25.33%
Method 6: Graduated	19.36%	18.13%	20.88%	20.82%	22.22%	21.96%	22.21%
Assumed Land Acquisition Cost - High ($PSF / Per Unit)	$70.00	$70.00	$70.00	$70.00	$90.00	$90.00	$250,000
Method 1: 1/500	9.82%	11.03%	11.64%	14.97%	18.26%	16.10%	17.73%
Method 2: 5% cap	16.84%	16.80%	18.36%	18.16%	22.38%	18.65%	19.46%
Method 3: 25% cap	15.44%	15.41%	16.70%	16.52%	19.76%	16.41%	15.82%
Method 4: $15k / Unit	14.90%	14.87%	16.55%	16.33%	20.84%	17.20%	19.26%
Method 5: 1/500 @ 30% of LV	13.15%	14.21%	15.32%	17.27%	21.40%	18.21%	19.64%
Method 6: Graduated	14.13%	12.90%	15.64%	15.58%	16.90%	16.38%	16.52%

^ Calculation of CIL is based on residual land value method, using estimated land value at time of permit.

^ ^ Calculation of Residual Profit uses comparable market transactions to inform typical site acquisition costs in today's market. This cannot account for realities associated with historical land transactions, potential fluctuations to the land market after the incidence of policy change, or other economic shifts.

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Parks Plan - 2031

Appendix VII

Downtown Parks System Research

August 2022

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Study Methodology

The research conducted for this project was completed in three phases:

1. Phase one was comprised of identifying the cities that would be surveyed.
2. Phase two involved defining the urban area boundaries for the purpose of the study.
3. Phase three consisted of data collection and analysis.

Identifying the Subject Cities

Specific cities were identified in order to present a broad array of parkland distribution within highly developed urban cores. Emphasis was placed on urban areas without the presence of a single large park but with a varied distribution of parkland through different sized parks and open space.

Cities were also chosen amongst those that ranked well in terms of city-wide parklands percentage in the 2010 City Park Facts prepared by the Trust for Public Land. Selection included major Canadian Urban Centres and two European examples of recently developed/redeveloped Central Business Districts.

Proposed and Planned Urban Areas were selected from the most significant/highly publicized in recent Greater Toronto Area development plans in various municipalities.

Defining the Study Area

Within each of the selected cities, the study area was further refined as "Existing Urban Core Areas". These study areas are typically Downtown Cores of the selected cities as well as some other highly developed business and commercial districts. The common traits that these areas share are the intensity of development and mix of uses contained within their boundaries, expected to be similar, in time, to the Mississauga Growth Area.

Data Collection

For the "Existing Urban Core Areas" data collection was conducted through the use of Google Earth Pro in order to calculate the General Area of the urban core that was under analysis, as well as identify and calculate the parklands contained within the defined boundaries. Parks included in these calculations were those identified through data available in Google Earth Pro as well as through an analysis of the areas via satellite images and Google Streetview. The numbers collected through this methodology were then used to derive a percentage of the study area that was occupied by parklands.

It is important to note that the park spaces identified do not represent the entire range of pedestrian realm components, but rather, just park spaces. The same approach was used in reviewing the park supply of the Town of Oakville, and as such the data is considered reasonably comparable.

Urban Parkland Statistics

	General Area (ha)	Parklands (ha)	Parkland %
Downtown Minneapolis, MN	703	34.66	4.93
Downtown Montreal, QC	269	9.57	3.6
Lower Manhattan, NY	351	40.61	11.56
Downtown Ottawa, ON	79	8.19	10.36
Downtown Philadelphia, PA	549	45.1	8.2
Downtown Portland, OR	164	16.83	10.26
Downtown San Francisco, CA	88	5.83	6.63
Downtown Savannah, GA	267	29.08	10.8
Downtown Vancouver, BC	349	33.3	9.6
Downtown Washington, DC	217	6.26	2.88

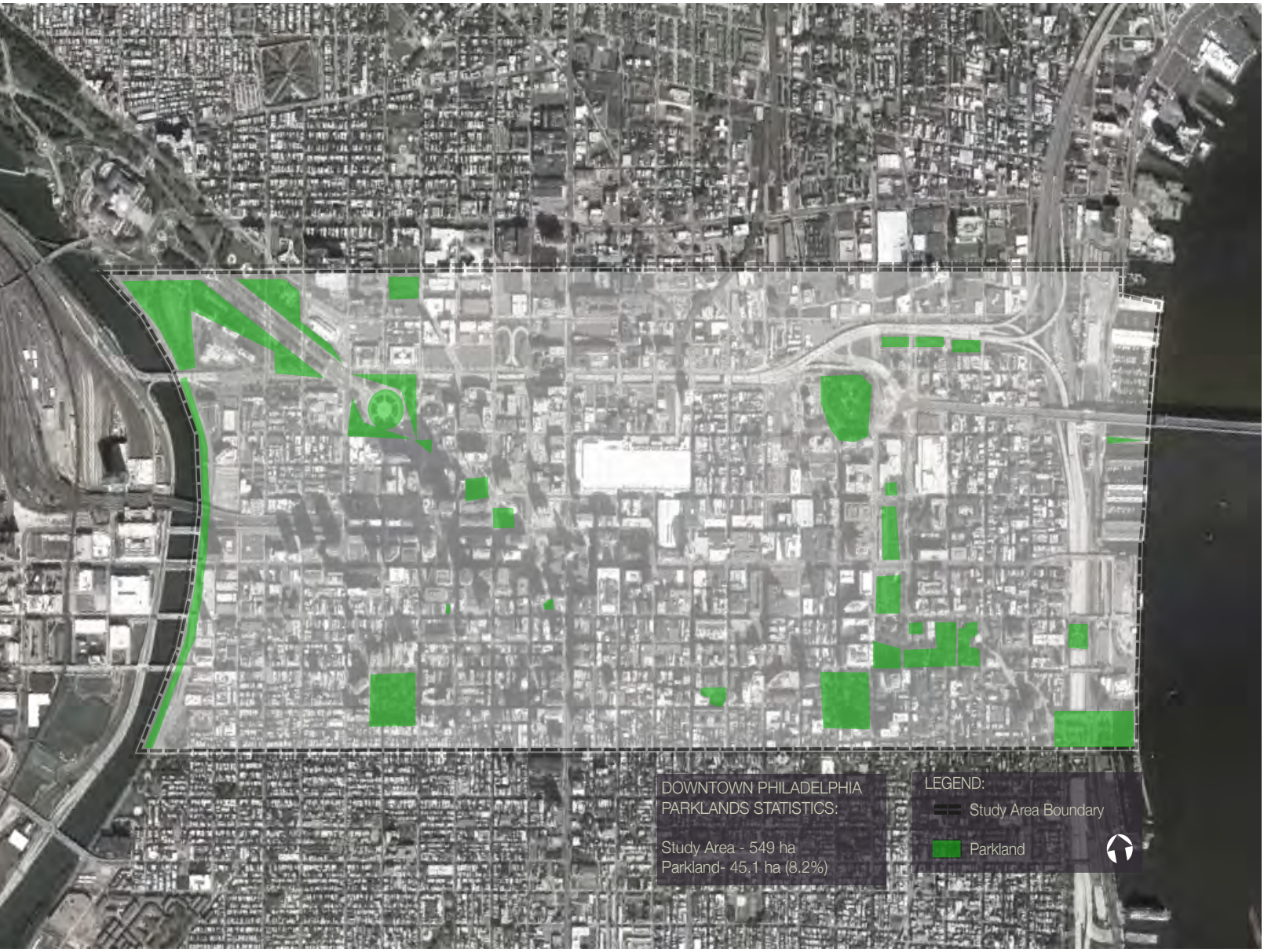
Downtown Minneapolis, MN

Downtown Montreal, QC

Lower Manhattan, New York, NY

Downtown Ottawa, ON

Downtown Philadelphia, PA



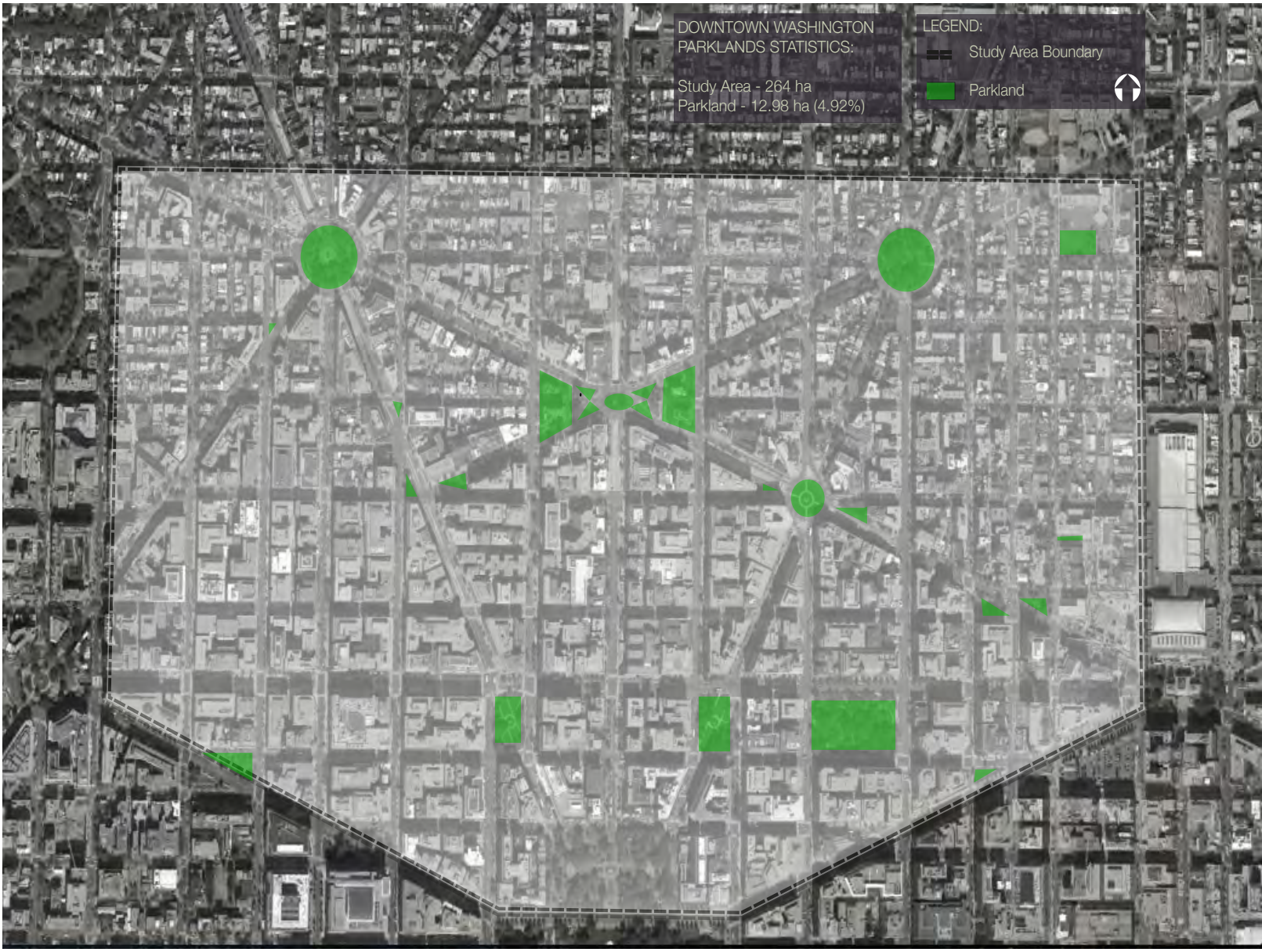
Downtown Portland, OR

Downtown San Francisco, CA

Downtown Savannah, GA

Downtown Vancouver, BC

Downtown Washington, DC



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Appendix VIII

Options for Ownership of the Town's Parkland System

August 2022

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Strata parks and Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) are part of an evolving conversation about the provision of public space in rapidly urbanizing environments. Strata Parks and POPS are site and scenario specific, likely only to be considered appropriate when land for parks is needed and, where available land is scarce or unaffordable for municipalities to purchase. In no circumstance would these spaces become the standard for all types of parkland within the Town's parkland hierarchy, however the Town may consider these ownership alternatives to assist in achieving smaller and diverse urban spaces.

Strata Parks and POPS have unique characteristics and have the potential to play a unique role in achieving a diverse and robust urban parkland system. However, they can also add complexity and financial risk compared to traditional fee simple parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu models. These park ownership models are tools that the Town can add to their park system toolbox to employ when required to address a complex development scenario.

It is the intention of this paper to ensure that the Town is adapting to the evolving urban development realities with the full suite of available park provision options and with eyes wide open to the benefits and risks associated with alternative park conveyance tools in order to make the most informed decisions regarding what is best for the Town today and into the future.

Strata Parks

What is a Strata Park?

A Strata Park is a public park developed above infrastructure, typically subways, parking garages, or storm water management facilities (public or private). The park space is deeded to the municipality by the property developer, and is thus publicly owned (and typically publicly operated), whereas the underlying infrastructure may be maintained within private ownership. This is not a new innovation or phenomenon, however there is a rise in the frequency that this arrangement is being requested by developers and accepted by municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), reflecting the need for land efficiencies in higher density urban contexts, where land values are elevated and available land supplies are constrained.

Strata parks are only being discussed and planned in municipalities that are experiencing a particular type of development scenario - high density development that requires underground parking, where development sites are not large enough to dedicate a portion of land for an unencumbered tableland park. Strata parks can be useful tools in this scenario, particularly where a municipality has determined that obtaining publicly owned urban park space on-site is a high priority.

What is Strata Title?

Stratified ownership of land, often simply called "strata title", refers to fee simple ownership of land divided not just two dimensionally (parcels that are next to one another), but three dimensionally as well (parcels that are above and below one another). Normally, an owner of land conceptually owns all the land below the surface of the ground and all the air above it, often referred to as "heaven to the centre-of-the-earth" ownership. Strata title allows one owner to own above a certain height, while another owner owns below that height. Strata title is most often used, for example, in the creation of condominiums where fee simple ownership of a parcel of land is essentially divided into boxes in the air, to secure "air rights" above a certain height for a different owner than the owner of the land at ground level, or to create underground structures owned by one owner

while the surface and above is owned by someone else, often the case for a parking garage or subway.

“Air rights” are perhaps the best known application of strata title and the legal framework applicable to strata parks is identical. The only differences between strata parkland and “air rights” are practical ones: strata parkland is generally at or near grade level and “air rights” typically exist at some significant level above grade. Similar easements (in particular rights of support and servicing) are necessary to make effective use of any strata arrangement.

Strata parcels of land are created through the same Planning Act mechanisms (i.e. Plan of Subdivision, Consent) that implement any other subdivision of land, usually with the assistance of a strata reference plan that uses a two dimensional reference plan to depict three dimensional parcels.

Appurtenant easements are not automatically created when a strata parcel is created. Therefore, for example, there may be no realistic way to access or use a strata parcel for “air rights” if that parcel exists above a height of 50 metres without easements or the voluntary cooperation of the owner of the parcel below 50 metres. That is why it is common for easements to be created simultaneously with strata parcels (and for Committees of Adjustment and other Consent approval authorities to insist on it), to allow the strata parcel(s) to be effectively used in perpetuity, regardless of what happens with the parcels above or below it, as the case may be. The same logic applies to strata parkland. If for example, an above-grade strata parcel exists for parkland without rights of support from the below-grade strata parcel directly beneath, the parkland parcel might be susceptible to being unusable if, for instance, the water holding tank below it wasn’t being properly maintained. The park use might be interrupted every time the water tank requires servicing or replacement. Well written and thoughtful easements for rights of support ensure that the parkland use above-grade can continue even if major maintenance or reconstruction of the below-grade infrastructure is taking place every 20 years.

A typical example of a strata park arrangement is the creation of two strata parcels, one beginning 1.5 metres below ground level and extending “to heaven” (the “parkland parcel”), and the other beginning 1.5 metres below ground level and extending “to the centre-of-the-Earth” (the “parking garage parcel”). The parkland parcel would extend below the ground level far enough to allow for tree planting, soil, water lines, and other associated infrastructure to service the parkland. The parking garage parcel would be subject to a support easement, meaning that even if the garage were demolished, support for the park above would have to be maintained. The parkland parcel might also be subject to easements for services (i.e. utilities) to travel through the below-grade portion of the parkland parcel to reach the parking garage parcel and all infrastructure underlaying the parkland parcel. A reciprocal agreement between the two parcel owners that sets out how and when work that intrudes on the other parcel can be done, including provisions for emergency repairs, cost sharing, etc.

A reciprocal agreement may establish dispute resolution mechanisms, such as arbitration or mediation, but the enforcement of easement terms could also be pursued in the normal manner through the Superior Court of Justice. Unlike other real estate law concepts, the common law does not form the legal basis of strata title. A large volume of case law does exist in Ontario concerning strata title disputes between adjacent parcel owners, but most is very site specific and typically relates to business disputes, or oversights in the creation of the parcels, or their appurtenant easements. The concept and application of strata title is well established and is generally not controversial.

There is no limitation on what other entity may own the strata parcel beneath a strata park parcel. The below grade strata parcel may therefore include common elements of a condominium corporation, and often does. Technically, land that forms part of the common elements is owned by the condominium owners, not the condominium corporation, who typically only manage the common elements. The condominium common elements can be subject

to the same easements necessary to protect and make the strata park work operationally that any other land beneath a strata park can be subject to:

- Maintenance and other reciprocal agreements entered into between the Town and developer should always include clear clauses that will bind subsequent owners, including any future condominium owners. The Town may insist on easements that make disturbance of the above-grade strata park unlawful;

- Rights of support are commonly written in a manner that does not make exception for reconstruction or renovation of the below-grade parcel. In those circumstances the above-grade strata park would not need to be disturbed even if the below-grade portion were renovated. Whether the below-grade owner wishes to absorb that additional cost and inconvenience would be part of the discussion as to whether a strata park is an appropriate option on a specific site; and,

- The Town would deal with the condominium as a neighbour, as it does elsewhere where the Town owns land adjacent to a condominium corporation – in this case they would just be a neighbour vertically. As with any other strata ownership relationship, if the appropriate easements were not in place, it would be problematic. As with any easement or agreement, they will only be as effective as the Town's willingness to enforce their legal rights pursuant to them.

Many other GGH municipalities request and accept strata parks. The methods by which it is secured varies. Many have used Site Plan Agreements to secure strata parks, while other municipalities rely on Section 37 Agreements (pre-Bill 197), even if only as a legal convenience. Most agreements appear to be generally well done. However, additional useful provisions are sometimes negotiated with developers and incorporated into implementing agreements that would be useful, for example: the strategic use of restrictions pursuant to Section 118 of the Land Titles Act, additional certifications from structural engineers, and better protection for the Town in circumstances in which the use of the strata park may be interfered with.

Can Strata Parks be eligible for a Parkland Dedication Credit?

Section 42 of the Planning Act permits the municipality to pass a bylaw requiring the conveyance of parkland, or cash payment-in-lieu thereof, as a condition of development or redevelopment of land. There is no legal impediment to the Town's implementing a parkland by-law allowing for the acceptance of strata parkland in satisfaction of that requirement.

The Planning Act parkland dedication rates refer to fee simple "heaven to centre-of-the-Earth" ownership. Therefore, if the parkland dedication requirement for a proposed development is 5%, strata parkland that covered 5% of the surface area of the development would not fully satisfy the parkland dedication requirement. In that case the applicant would either be required to provide additional cash-in-lieu equivalent to the value of the strata parcels below the strata parkland to make up the difference, or to convey additional above-grade strata parkland of that value to make up the difference (as described in Figure 2).

Some municipalities have, to-date, provided parkland dedication credits to developers for strata parks, however they have done so on an ad hoc basis and typically do not have specific policies in place to determine appropriate credits. Both Richmond Hill and Mississauga all recognize that strata parks are a new urban reality where parkland is required in high density developments. Mississauga and Guelph are actively studying how to respond to strata park requests.

Privately Owned Public Space

What is a Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)?

POPS are privately owned spaces that are publicly accessible via legal agreements between the property owner and the municipality, and are privately operated and maintained. Municipal programming and overall control of these spaces is more limited than traditional fee-simple parks or strata parks. In essence a POPS is an extended component of the Town's open space network, but is not a public park space.

POPS are more common than strata parks across the GGH. They are generally seen as a good deal for municipalities as the park augments the existing park system at no cost to the municipality. The land is held in private ownership The park is held within private ownership, is maintained privately, and all risk and liability lie with the property owner.

It is the Town's lack of ownership and control of the POPS that are the primary reasons for POPS to not be counted as equal to fee simple parkland, or even to Strata Ownership arrangements. Fully public parkland elements are under the complete control of the Town - they are able to be retrofitted through time to accommodate park facilities that are in line with trends of active and passive recreation as needed. Further, fully public parkland elements are open to hold civic and public programs and events that are meaningful to a larger population.

It is also important to identify that while POPS are considered an important part of a diverse and robust urban parkland system, The Town has no legislative authority to compel a developer to provide them within any development project. One way to incentivize their provision is to provide some level of parkland dedication credit, albeit potentially at a discounted rate.

What are some of the legal instruments to achieve POPS?

Leases, licenses and easements are other options that many GGH municipalities have utilized to create parks where fee simple ownership of new parkland is not desired or possible. These legal agreements are the basis for establishing POPS, and include:

- Leases and licenses are essentially time-limited permissions to use a portion of the subject lands (usually, in the case of parkland, the above-grade portion only) for certain specific parks purposes only. Licenses can typically be revoked at the will of the owner, whereas leases can provide a greater level of security for a specified time frame. When parks licenses or leases expire, there is generally no obligation for the owner to renew the lease or license. Even if expropriation is then considered, the costs to the municipality to do so can be prohibitive; and/or,

- An easement is another mechanism that can be used to secure parkland in some circumstances, in particular if the parkland in question is a trail or path. An easement can be created in perpetuity but is limited to the uses described in the easement. In this context the terms of the easement would have to be worded in a careful and flexible manner to ensure that the fee simple owner could not object to increased or changing use of the parkland over time.

Can POPS be eligible for a parkland dedication credit?

Until recently, POPS had been typically secured through Section 37 bonusing agreements (pre Bill 197), or informally by agreement between the municipality and the developer. In addition to Oakville, only Kitchener and Guelph have provided parkland dedication credit for the development of a POPS, however no one municipality has a standard policy to credit POPS. Richmond Hill noted that, although they have not provided dedication credits for POPS to-date, some credit may be appropriate. Kitchener noted that fiscal transparency with parkland funds is important, and that they would prefer to pursue a normal parkland dedication and then pay the developer to construct a POPS or for a lease/easement for public access through cash-in-lieu funds.

If some form of POPS is the site-specific parkland preference, Section 42 of the Planning Act would allow the conveyance of the lease, easement or license that creates the POPS to be conveyed as "payment in lieu" of the conveyance of fee simple

land. The appropriate value of the POPS (likely considerably less than the fee simple value of the same amount of land) would have to be determined at that time. It appears that only a small number of municipalities in Southern Ontario provide parkland credits for POPS and often purchase or acquire public access to the space through Section 37 (pre Bill 197). In the case of Kitchener, they would consider using cash-in-lieu of parkland to then pay the developer for the lease/license of the POPS as opposed to accepting it directly as the payment-in-lieu in order to maintain fiscal transparency.

It is important to note that recent changes to the Planning Act have changed the Section 37 provisions to a Community Benefit Charge. POPS are specifically identified as being something that may be included in a municipal Community Benefit By-law.

Key Considerations for Privately Owned Public Spaces and Strata Parks

Quality of Engineering and Construction

Poor engineering and/or poor quality construction affect all aspects of a park's function and lifecycle, and they are both fundamental considerations in this discussion. For the most part, the lifecycle terms that are discussed in this report will be dramatically reduced where engineering and construction is of a sub-standard quality. There are best practices and higher quality materials available to ensure maximum longevity. The key is to find or develop appropriate municipal standards from an engineering, design, construction and installation perspective, and require the use of high quality materials.

Waterproofing Membrane

Good quality membranes now claim a 30 to 40 year lifecycle. Experience has shown that membranes used in the past last approximately 20 years. The quality of the installation of the membrane, the quality of the membrane itself, the design of the park space, the maintenance protocols and the characteristics of the underlying infrastructure will all have an impact on how long a membrane will and should last. In a general sense, it is expected that a modern urban park built over structures/infrastructure will last as long as the membrane beneath it – about 30 years. At which point maintenance on specific sections of the membrane or complete replacement of the membrane will be required.

Cost of Park Development

A typical suburban park space, with landscape planting, trees, grass, sports fields and play structures can cost up to $95.00/per square metre, with an average cost of about $55.00/square metre. In comparison, a typical urban park, although usually much smaller, that includes hard surfaces, trees, landscape plantings and seating can cost up to $1,500.00/square metre, with an average of approximately $545.00/square metre.

Urban parks built over structures/infrastructure tend to be very cost comparative to a typical urban park. The key additional cost element for an urban park built in a strata scenario is the cost of the roof

structure and required membrane, not necessarily the park itself. It is important to note that the costs for both suburban parks and urban parks vary widely due to the design details of the park.

Maintenance Protocols

Park maintenance protocols that utilize salt, or other corrosive chemicals will affect (shorten) the lifecycle of the waterproofing membrane. Further, and in a general sense, urban park spaces require a much more robust maintenance protocol than a typical suburban park space, regardless of whether or not it is built over top of a structure/infrastructure.

Suburban parks need to be maintained between once or twice a week, depending on the level of use. Busy urban parks need to be maintained every day, and sometimes more than once per day, depending upon use. With respect to ongoing maintenance, there is a substantial difference between a typical suburban park and a typical urban park. The difference between a typical urban park and an urban park built over a structure/ infrastructure is not significant, and varies depending upon the level of park use, although care must be taken to ensure the lifecycle of the membrane.

Non-legal and site-specific considerations will usually dictate which of the above alternatives is the best approach in any particular circumstance. Considerations may include: the Town's desire to acquire parkland onsite or offsite, the Town's interest in acquiring payment in- lieu or parkland, whether the Town desires full ownership of the parkland versus private ownership, maintenance considerations, the size of the parkland or public space, or the desired programming, among others. These scenarios are described below.

	Length of Time	Flexibility of Permitted Uses	Park Use Subject to Interruption	Termination	Costs
Non-stratified Fee- Simple Park (typical Town Park)	Indefinite	No limitation	None (unless land is subject to easements by adjacent land owners)	N/A	Town owned, maintenance of park only
Strata Park	Indefinite	No Limitation	Yes (land is subject to easements and Reciprocal agreement that may interfere with park use)	N/A	Town owned, maintenance of park only
POPS - Lease	Time limited – typically less than 99 years.	Only uses specified in lease	Specified in lease (sometimes none, sometimes significant)	At end of term or upon occurrence of certain events as specified in lease	Lease payments, typically maintained by owner
POPS-License	Time limited – typically less than 99 years.	Only uses specified in license	Yes (at will of owner, or subject to terms of the license)	May be terminated at any time	License fees, typically maintained by land owner
POPS-Easement	Time limited or indefinite	Only uses specified in easement	Yes (as set out in Easement)	Possibly trigger event or time specified in easement, if any	Public access secured through easement, maintained by land owner, or as specified in the easement

Figure 1: Comparison of Various Alternatives to Secure Parkland

	Size of Park Area (or equivalent Payment in Lieu)	Maintenance of Park	Future Increase in Value of the Land
Fee Simple Parkland Conveyance	500 m2 (5% of the development land, "heaven to centre of the earth")	All Town parks budget, to the extent new and ongoing capital and operating funds are available.	Belongs entirely to the Town, (however the Planning Act prevents the Town from using the dedicated Parkland for any other purpose).
Above-grade Strata Parkland Conveyance Example 1	750 m2 (greater than 5% if the development land, above grade only, because the value of the above-grade only does not fully satisfy the 5% parkland dedication requirement)	All Town parks budget, to the extent new and ongoing capital and operating funds are available.	Above-grade parcel belongs to Town, below-grade to other owner. However, market value depressed because practical usefulness of strata title is less than "heaven to centre of the earth" ownership.
Above-grade Strata Parkland Conveyance Example 2	500 m2 (5% of the surface area, but not in full satisfaction of the parkland requirement because it does not include below grade. Additional payment provided by developer to make up the difference.)	All Town parks budget, to the extent new and ongoing capital and operating funds are available.	Above-grade parcel belongs to Town, below-grade to other owner. However, market value depressed because practical usefulness of strata title is less than "heaven to centre of the earth" ownership.
POPS Lease or Licence	1000 m2 (much greater than 5% of the development land because the value of a lease or licence is much less than the fee simple value of the same area of land)	High end improvements installed and maintained by the owner entirely to specified Town standards and at the owner's sole expense.	Belongs entirely to private owner.

Figure 2: Comparison of Examples for Parkland Dedication Tools

Overall, the following conclusions are drawn:

- A strata parkland conveyance can be the best alternative to fee simple parkland for both the developer and the Town when the Town insists on owning that parkland, but the developer also needs the space to provide parking and can do so below-grade.

- Easements are often appropriate when the proposed parkland area is for a specific purpose that is suitable for an easement, such as a pathway that connects two public spaces where the intended use is primarily pedestrian ingress and egress, and the area will still be considered to be and maintained as if it is part of the park.

- Licenses and leases can be the most appropriate if, for example, the proposed park includes special decorative elements, such as paving or a fountain, and the Town wishes to ensure that the full obligation and costs to maintain those elements are with the developer, rather than the Town who may not prefer to take on the additional cost or responsibility for maintenance.

- The value of POPS can qualify as "payment in lieu" of fee simple parkland conveyance, as set out in Section 42 of the Planning Act. The value of these tools would be assessed on a case by case basis, but would normally be a fraction of the fee simple value of the same area of land. A value of any obligations of the developer for ongoing maintenance to specified standards would also be quantified, if applicable.

Conclusions

The ultimate decision regarding which tools to include in a parkland acquisition toolbox lies with the Town, however the contemporary urban realities facing most of the GGH (Growth Plan targets driving intensification, increased land values, reduced land supply in areas of intensification) will continue to progress in Oakville and ought to consider all available tools in order to ensure that the park system continues to flourish and serve the Town's existing and future residents. Future development in the Town will require new approaches to providing a diverse and flexible parks system to accommodate the new densities of urban dwellers.

Part of this equation is the consideration of the value of attaining parkland in dense areas versus the cost of purchasing other land near to densifying areas that require parkland. Strata parks and POPS are two potential options to address this, and they carry additional benefits as well as risks and costs to the Town. These two parks securement tools should be considered as alternatives to acquiring fee simple table land parks, not as a new baseline. Strata parks and POPS will provide a different type of urban park, and contribute to a varied urban park system. In contrast, and as discussed throughout this memorandum, there are a number of other considerations regarding strata parks and POPS, including:

- Strata parks require sound legal agreements that delineate ownership between to the two vertical parcels of land. These agreements need to balance the risks of Town ownership of the park above private infrastructure and recognize that the park will require public investment to maintain. The Town must also be prepared to enforce the contract should the eventual condo corporation be unwilling or unable to conduct repairs and maintenance on their infrastructure without ensuring the park is unaffected or compensating the Town for disturbances and loss of service due to their infrastructure failures.

- Strata parkland is inherently encumbered, thus an appropriate parkland conveyance credit that is less than 100% is required to be established. This extends to both strata parks located above private infrastructure (e.g. parking garage), and layered infrastructure that is assumed by the Town as a utility (e.g. park above an underground storm water management facility). A fixed number for every scenario of a strata park may not be most appropriate, as the Town may want flexibility to negotiate these agreements based on the value of the public space that is proposed and the balance of other Town initiatives.

- The adoption of design standards for strata parks and POPS would provide the Town with minimum enforceable requirements for these park types ensuring high quality product, materials and construction that will serve to extend the life of the park and the waterproofing liner by reducing the opportunity for failures.

- Strata parks ensure that the Town is in full ownership of the park in perpetuity. This enables the Town to design and program the park, however on-going maintenance and long-term large-scale maintenance are both the responsibility of the Town. Strata parks often require a more sophisticated maintenance program than typical terra ferma parks and require higher frequency and types of maintenance. The park will also require substantial replanting and reconstruction once the waterproofing layer requires replacement (every 30 years or so). A large scale reconstruction will require the loss of service for approximately a season, however if the park is available for 30 years, then this trade off may seem reasonable.

- POPS and strata will sometimes be located adjacent to private residential condos and in the long term, there is concern that the residents may consider the public park a nuisance. In this regard, the legal agreement may be required to be enforced to either ensure the park remains publicly accessible (or within public ownership in

the case of strata) or that the owner be required to compensate the Town for the loss of the park (potentially through repayment of the parkland conveyance credit or other credit type provided by the Town to the original developer).

- A POPS removes public ownership from the equation, which is beneficial to the Town as they do not have to assume legal risks or financial obligations of on-going and long-term maintenance of the park. The trade-off is that the park is not truly public. It is publicly accessible and the terms of public access will be established in the contract, however there is a limit to the power the Town will have regarding design, maintenance standards, programming, long-term public access, and public expression within the park.

- In order to ensure that the use of these alternative parkland acquisition tools are fair, consistent and appropriately contribute to the overall system, a number of considerations must be taken into account moving forward, including:

  - Determination of which parkland acquisition tool is appropriate for specific scenarios;
  - Assessment of risks and determination of mechanisms to mitigate risks;
  - Responsibility for the cost and quality of initial engineering, park design and construction;
  - Responsibility to ensure that the Town has the necessary expertise to establish appropriate design and development standards and inspection requirements;
  - Responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the park itself, to an appropriate urban standard, with a particular concern where the park is connected with a residential condominium;
  - Ensuring ongoing and unencumbered public access to the space, particularly where the park is connected to a residential condominium;
  - Recognition that the park space will need to be replaced about every 30 years;
  - Determination if/when urban strata parkland and POPS will count toward parkland dedication requirements, and whether the value of the parkland is pro-rated versus a typical urban park space; and
  - Ensuring that a legal framework and reciprocal agreements and liabilities are in place that satisfy all party's needs.

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Appendix IX

Parkland Dedication Practices in Other Jurisdictions

August 2022

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In order to understand current parkland dedication policies and best practices, a review of numerous municipalities parkland dedication by-laws was undertaken. The review focused on municipalities across Ontario who are experiencing comparable growth and funding pressures.

Definitions - All of the municipalities reviewed provide definitions within their Parkland dedication by-law. The number and detail of these definitions vary by municipality, but the definitions generally touch on the following topics:

- Land uses;
- Development and redevelopment;
- Building types;
- Gross floor area and total land area; and,
- Municipal tools.

Exemptions - The majority of the by-laws reviewed provide parkland dedication exemptions. Many of the exemptions are similar across all the municipalities but may include slight modifications in order to reflect each municipality's unique circumstance. The following exemptions were found in multiple municipalities' parkland dedication by-laws:

- Land, buildings and structures owned by and used for the Town, region, municipality, province and federal government;
- Institutional uses such as schools including post-secondary institutions, hospitals and some health care facilities, libraries;
- Renovations to an existing residential buildings provided it does not increase the number of dwelling units;
- Creation of an additional dwelling unit (previously known as secondary suites);
- Replacement of any building that was destroyed due to accidental causes; and,
- Enlargement of a commercial, industrial or institutional building.

Unacceptable Lands - All of the municipalities surveyed provide a statement within their parkland dedication by-laws that state the location and configuration of land required to be conveyed will be determined by the Town and that lands being conveyed will be free of all encumbrances. Generally, municipalities will not accept hazard or environmentally constrained or significant lands. This includes:

- Valleylands or watercourse corridors;
- Woodlands;
- Natural heritage system lands and associated buffers;
- Stormwater management ponds;
- Hydro lands and utility corridors;
- Significant cultural heritage features;
- Significant hydrologic features;
- Easements; and,
- Floodplain lands.

London and Newmarket were the only two jurisdictions surveyed that indicated they would accept constrained lands as part of the parkland conveyance. Newmarket will only accept floodplain lands if written approval is received from Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the lands are deemed acceptable by the Town.

London has taken this a step further by quantifying credits for hazard lands and other open space or constrained lands (e.g. woodlots or wetlands) throughout the municipality. As per their by-law, London will credit dedicated hazard lands at a ratio of 27 hectares for every 1 hectare of table land required, and will credit open space lands at a ratio of 16 hectares for every 1 hectare of table land required.

Offsite Conveyance - Accepting offsite parkland conveyance is not common among the municipalities reviewed. The Town of Toronto, Kingston and Newmarket were the only jurisdictions that included policies for offsite conveyance. These policies include:

- The value of the off-site dedication is equal to the value of the on-site dedication that would otherwise be required;
- The off-site dedication is a good physical substitute for any on-site dedication ; and,
- Newmarket only allows off site dedication in areas within the Urban Centres Secondary Plan.

Parkland Calculation Techniques & Standards - Generally, there are varying dedication rates for residential uses, commercial/industrial uses, mixed uses, and other land uses. Please see Appendix 1 for a complete overview of the parkland conveyance requirements for each municipality.

- **Residential -** As per the Planning Act the conveyance standard for residential development is 5% of the land being developed or the alternative rate of 1 hectare for 300 dwellings units. Some municipalities include sliding scale rates, for example if you have less than 30 dwelling units then a certain rate applies, if you have more than 30 dwellings then a different rate applies.
- **Commercial and Industrial -** As per the Planning Act, 2% of the gross land area is the standard seen across all municipalities surveyed.
- **Mixed-use -** For mixed-use developments, each use within the building or site is subject the parkland provision for that use.
- **Other -** 5% of the land to be developed is standard for all other uses, while the Town of Toronto is the only municipality surveyed who uses a 2% standard for other land uses.

Approach to the Determination of Land Value - When a municipality determines that cash-in- lieu will be required, the Planning Act requires that the value of that payment be equivalent to the value of the land that is otherwise required to be conveyed and the determination of the value is to be based on market rates as of the day before the issuance of the building permit or the day before the approval of the draft plan of subdivision. The question remaining is whether a municipality prefers to require new appraisals for every development and plan of subdivision or whether standard unit rates are used for the development type to determine the overall value of cash dedication required.

The majority of the municipalities reviewed identified that they require appraisals for determining land value. This evaluation is paid for by the owner of the property, and approved by the Town. Some municipalities complete these appraisals in house, while others require external professional appraisers to complete the appraisal.

The Town of London provides standard unit rates for low, medium and high density residential developments as well as for open space and hazardous lands. Richmond Hill also applies standard unit rates (or expected land conversion rates) for multi residential, stacked and town-house developments. Hamilton also applies standard unit rates for multiple dwelling units and townhouses, with the unit rates varying based on location.

A key consideration in the use of standard unit rates is updating the rates to reflect market fluctuations in land value. In this regard, there is no universally correct frequency for updates, and the timing is likely set to reflect the fluidity of local land markets. London conducts new appraisals every two years, while Hamilton updates their rates annually.

Eligibility for Cash-in-Lieu - Few municipalities provide criteria for when cash-in-lieu is preferred over conveyance. Generally, if the shape, size, location is unsuitable for parks or recreation purposes, if the area in which the proposed development is already well served by parkland, or if the Town has identified land

in a more appropriate or accessible location and that has been or is to be acquired by the Town, then they will accept cash-in-lieu over parkland conveyance.

Locational Rates - Some of the municipalities surveyed provide different conveyance and cash-in-lieu requirements for different areas within their jurisdiction.

There are three different areas within Hamilton that have different cash-in-lieu requirements for residential dwellings. As illustrated in Table 1, Hamilton provides different standard unit rates per location and residential dwelling type. In addition, Hamilton also provides an alternative rate for Brownfield sites located within certain areas of the Town, requiring a dedication rate of 5% regardless of the density of the proposed building on that site.

Area	Cap per Townhouse Dwelling Unit	Fixed Rate per multiple dwelling unit
1 (Ancaster, Flamborough, Dundas, Westdale)	$10,000	$8,000
2 (Lower Hamilton excluding Downtown CIP Area)	$9,000	$7,000
3 (Upper Hamilton, Stoney Creek, Glanbrook)	$8,000	$6,000
Downtown CIP		2020 - $2,000 2021 - $3,500 2022 - $5,000

Table 1: City of Hamilton Cash-in-Lieu Requirement

In Ottawa, certain lands located in Kanata, a large suburb located west of the Town's downtown, are not subject to the parkland dedication provisions due to an agreement between the Town and developer that 40% of the total land area being developed is open space.

Ottawa also has an alternative rate for lands located within the South Nepean Town Centre Secondary Plan where parkland is dedicated for residential purposes at the rate of 5% of the gross land are being developed.

Newmarket provides different conveyance standards for lands located outside urban centres and lands inside urban centre. For a complete review of the various conveyance requirements please see Appendix 1. Further, lands that are located within the Urban Centres Secondary Plan that include residential uses on sites greater than 1000 square metres in size must provide a physical land contribution of a minimum of 7.5% of the developable site area and/or an Urban Square, Plaza, Pocket Park, Silver Space or Pedestrian Mews.

The Town of Toronto provides an alternative rate for land for residential uses in a parkland acquisition priority area. Owners of land within parkland acquisition priority areas shall convey either 5% of the land to be developed or 0.4 hectares per 300 dwellings, whichever is the greater amount provided that:

- Sites that are less than 1 ha in size, parkland dedication will not exceed 10% of the development site;
- Sites that are 1 ha to 5 ha in size, parkland dedication will not exceed 15% of the development site; and,
- Sites that are greater than 5 ha in size, parkland dedication will not exceed 20% of the development site.

Dispute Resolution - Not every municipality surveyed includes dispute resolution policies within their by-laws. Generally, if the Town and the owner cannot come to a resolution on the value of land required to be conveyed or the amount of land or payment of money in lieu, then either parties can apply to the LPAT to have the value determined.

Ottawa also includes a dispute resolution policy that if there is a disagreement with the land value used to establish the payment of money in-lieu of parkland conveyance, the owner may request a review of the valuation by an independent appraisal, which must be undertaken at the owners expense and review by the Town to determine its acceptability.

Uses	Kingston	Brampton
	Parkland Conveyance Requirements	
Residential	• 30 Dwelling Units per hectare or less = 5% • Greater than 30 Dwelling Units per hectare, 1.2 hectares per 1000 people not to exceed 1 hectare per 300 Dwelling Units, the conveyance generated shall not exceed a maximum of 10% of the Gross Land Area • For a single residential lot created by consent to sever for the purpose of developing a single residential dwelling, a flat rate shall be applied » Rural Area $1,129 per new residential lot » Urban Area $1,732 per new residential lot » A land conveyance may still be required if it is adjacent to a water body, an existing park or trail plan	• At a rate of 5% of the land being Developed or Redeveloped, or 1 hectare for each 300 Dwelling Units proposed, whichever is greater
Commercial, Industrial or Institutional Use	• 2 % of the Gross Land Area shall be conveyed (commercial & industrial)	• 2% of the land
Mixtures of Uses	• For mixed uses on a site, the land to be conveyed shall be the sum of the requirements proportionate to the site area allocated to each use • For mixed uses within a building, the land to be conveyed shall be the sum of the requirements proportionate to the Gross Floor Area allocated to each use	• Each component is subject to the provisions for that use
Other	• When land is developed for Long Term Care Home use, 2 % of the Gross Land Area shall be conveyed to the Town	• All Other uses land in the amount of 5% of the land to be Developed or Redeveloped

Uses	London	Markham
	Parkland Conveyance Requirements	
Residential	• The greater of either 5% of the land within the development application or an amount of land that is in the same proportion to the number of dwelling units proposed as one hectare bears to 300 dwelling units	• The land be conveyed to the Town at the rate of one hectare for each 300 dwellings proposed
Commercial, Industrial or Institutional Use	• Commercial purposes, land in the amount of two percent 2% of the land within the development	• Commercial or industrial purposes, 2% of the same land shall be conveyed to the Town
Mixtures of Uses		
Other	• All other land uses in the amount of 5% of the land within the development	• For purposes other than commercial or industrial, 5% of the said land shall be conveyed to the Town

Uses	Newmarket	Ottawa
	Parkland Conveyance Requirements	
Residential	• 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units, or 5% of the land area proposed for development or redevelopment, whichever is greater (outside urban centre) • 0.7 hectares per 1000 residents, or the alternative residential requirement of the Planning Act, whichever is less, up to a maximum of 50% of the developable area of any site; or cash-in-lieu equivalent (inside urban centre).	• Less than 18 dwellings per net hectare 5% of the gross land area of the site being developed • Densities of 18 dwellings per net hectare or more 1 hectare for every 300 dwelling units, but for apartments, this parkland conveyance will not exceed a maximum of 10% of the land area of the site being developed
Commercial, Industrial or Institutional Use	• 2% of the land area proposed for development or redevelopment (commercial and industrial outside urban centres) • 2% of the land area proposed for development or redevelopment (commercial and industrial inside urban centres)	• Parkland requirement calculated as 2% of the gross land area of the site being Developed (commercial & industrial)
Mixtures of Uses	• The cumulative amount for the various uses proposed at their respective rates (outside urban areas) • The cumulative amount for the various uses proposed, at their respective rates up to a maximum of 50% of the land area proposed for development or redevelopment (inside urban areas)	• Where land is developed for a mix of land uses that are located on discrete parts of the site, the parkland will be calculated based upon the proportion of the site devoted to each use • Where land is developed for a mix of uses within a building, the parkland requirement for each use will be based upon the rates prorated proportionally to the gross floor area allocated to each use.
Other	• All other uses 5% of the land area proposed for development or redevelopment	• All other uses parkland requirement calculated as 5% of the gross land area of the site being developed

Uses	Richmond Hill	Toronto
	Parkland Conveyance Requirements	
Residential	• The greater of: 5% of the land proposed for development or redevelopment or • The lesser of: » 1 hectare of land for each 300 Dwelling Units proposed or 1 hectare of land for each 730 persons to be housed within the Dwelling Units in the proposed development based on the following rates: i) 3.51 persons per Dwelling Unit in a Single Detached Building; ii) 2.88 persons per Dwelling Unit in a Semi-Detached Building; iii) 2.83 persons per Dwelling Unit in a Townhouse; and iv) 1.92 persons per Multi-Residential Dwelling Unit.	• Land equal to 5 % of the land to be developed
Commercial, Industrial or Institutional Use	• 2 % of land proposed for development or redevelopment for Commercial or Industrial Uses	
Mixtures of Uses	• The owner shall be required to convey land at the rate applicable to the predominant proposed use of the land and all of the land proposed for development or redevelopment shall be included for the purpose of calculating the amount of land required to be conveyed	
Other		• For non–residential uses, land equal to 2 percent of the land to be developed

Uses	Hamilton Parkland Conveyance Requirements
Residential	• less than 20 units per hectare 5% of the Net Land Area • 20 units per hectare to 75 units per hectare 1.0 hectare of the Net Land Area for each 300 dwelling units proposed • 75 units per hectare to 120 units per hectare a rate of 0.6 hectare of the Net Land Area for each 300 dwelling units proposed • Density greater than 120 units per hectare, dedication of land at a rate of 0.5 hectare of the Net Land Area for each 300 dwelling units proposed • Maximum parkland dedication of 5% of the Net Land Area will apply to developments of single and semi-detached lots, duplexes, street townhouses fronting on a public street where such developments are not part of a registered plan of subdivision, and a maximum of six dwelling units above a commercial use in a building that existed as of March 8, 2017.
Commercial, Industrial or Institutional Use	• In the case of lands proposed for development or redevelopment for commercial purposes, including a golf course or driving range, land in the amount of 2% of the Net Land Area to be developed or redeveloped
Mixtures of Uses	• In the case of lands proposed for development of more than one use, dwelling type and/or at varying residential densities, a prorating of the dedication rates applicable to the respective use and/or density
Other	• Use other than commercial and residential, land in the amount of 5% of the Net Land Area to be developed or redeveloped

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Appendix X

BILD's Cross-Jurisdictional Position on Parkland Dedication

August 2022

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The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) has a cross-jurisdictional position on parkland dedication in part informed by a 2019 study BILD commissioned on Parkland Dedication and Cash-in-Lieu Policies in the GTA. The report, prepared by Altus Group Economic Consulting, presented estimates of parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu dedication contributions for hypothetical high-rise and low-rise developments in municipalities across the GTA.

The introduction of Bill 197 has meant that municipalities have a 2-year window to pass a new Parkland Dedication By-law in order to continue charging alternative parkland rates (September 2020 – September 2022). To provide a consistent BILD position for these upcoming municipal reviews, on December 9, 2020, BILD invited its Chapter members to attend an internal consultation for Parkland Dedication in the GTA and Simcoe. The discussion resulted in the formulation of a BILD Parkland Policy Position organized in 8 key themes (note: these policy positions represent BILD's point of view and are not necessarily endorsed by the Town of Oakville).

Aligning Provincial, Regional & Municipal Objectives

- Explore opportunities to standardize core aspects of parkland processes and requirements across levels of government, which would also improve predictability; and,

- Parkland policies should not act as a barrier to increasing the supply of more affordable homes, creating opportunities for a mix of unit sizes/types, or impede the ability to achieve Provincial intensification targets.

Creating a Plan

- Consider existing inventory and what new acquisitions can be reasonably maintained by the municipality;

- Consider early and large land acquisitions, avoiding purchasing land at a late point in time with the highest land cost; and,

- Municipalities should accept off-site parkland dedication, especially in an urban infill context. This ability to provide off-site parkland dedication should not be encumbered by overly complex criteria.

Defining Parkland

- Municipalities should not restrict parkland dedication to unencumbered land and accept new forms of parkland dedication. This could be established by creating a broader definition of parkland that includes both active and passive parkland;

- Active parkland should include urban forms of parkland, strata parks, trails, woodlots and valley lands, and parks in the greenbelt, especially when they provide public recreational opportunities; and,

- Passive parkland should include land capable of providing public recreational purposes like trails and nature walks, and some consideration should be made for condominium amenity areas that have a similar function to public parkland.

An Efficient Use of Land

- Allow Low Impact Development (LIDs) and Green Development Standards in parks, including examples like bioretention swales, underground greywater storage tanks, infiltration chambers or dry detention ponds.

Methodology

- Adopt predictable methods of parkland dedication costing such as fixed rates or percentage caps, with rates applying for a minimum 5-year term;

- For application of an alternative rate, parkland dedication rates should be multi-dimensional (i.e. a sliding scale whereby the greater the

density the lower the rate) to account for the variability of development types and densities, but also predictable and fair;

- Create a cap on the maximum amount of parkland which is well below the statutory maximum;
- Allow a reduction in the amount of cash-in-lieu of parkland payments if sustainability features are included in redevelopment proposals;
- Publicize fee schedules and any related formulas so they can be factored into the early planning stages of the development planning process;
- Be transparent in plan to use parkland reserve funds in a 5-year term and publicize in a public report; and,
- Do not impose parkland dedication requirements for adaptive re-use/renovation projects.

Dialogue and Decision-making

- Parkland dedication processes should allow for more opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, to give applicants more opportunity to discuss key aspects of parkland dedication such as placement, land value and alternative use opportunities – before a decision has been made;
- Once parkland decisions have been made regarding an application, the rationale should be made very transparent, and built-in opportunities should be provided for those decisions to be openly discussed to avoid appeals;
- When a decision is made to require land over cash-in-lieu, municipalities should not prejudice (or discount) the collection of certain types of land over others; and,
- There should be no criteria as to what is and is not acceptable unencumbered land that is being dedicated for parkland purposes as long as it is accessible and inviting.

Collecting Parkland

- Be upfront about what a municipality wants, whether that be land or cash-in-lieu and make this clear through municipal reporting and any pre-consultation discussions; and,
- Accept cash-in-lieu and off-site dedications in cases where provision of land cannot be achieved.

Timing of Collection

- Take land or cash-in-lieu as a condition of approval, and not delay it to the building permit stage.

OAKVILLE

The **Planning** Partnership
NBLC