



REPORT

Special Council

Meeting Date: November 5, 2024

FROM: Community Services Commission

DATE: October 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan

LOCATION:

WARD: Town-wide

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the October 22, 2024 report from the Recreation and Culture Department, Parks and Open Space Department and Oakville Public Library entitled: Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan, be received;
2. That the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan dated November 5, 2024 be approved in principle;
3. That the financial implications of the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan recommendations be referred to future capital budget discussions; and,
4. That the request for report from Council on May 25, 2021 regarding recovery of sport in Oakville be considered complete with key areas addressed in the Master Plan and work with Community Organizations.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Public and community organization consultation took place prior to the development of recommendations between March and June 2023.
- A draft Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan was presented to The Oakville Public Library Board on May 9, 2024 and Town Council on May 13, 2024 for feedback with additional public input on drafted recommendations collected in May and June 2024.
- Taking into consideration the input from Council, the Oakville Public Library Board and community input, The Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan is now being submitted for Council's endorsement.

- The analysis on the PRLMP is based on the town's housing pledge and the 2023 Joint Best Planning Estimates (JBPE's). A population review undertaken in 2024 led to a revised population estimate of 388,000 by 2051. As the new number is a preliminary estimate that requires more detailed analysis, the town will use a minimum and maximum population range of 388,000 to 442,000 for long-term planning purposes.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Oakville and Oakville Public Library (OPL) have developed a new Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan (the master plan was last updated in 2017) to ensure the town's facility portfolio is responsive to the current and future needs of the community. The plan will strategically guide the town for the next ten years, with a planning horizon that considers major capital needs until the year 2051 in alignment with the latest provincial growth policies. While the focus of the plan is on parks, recreation, and library infrastructure, it also provides direction for related service delivery elements, ensuring flexibility to respond to changing needs. The plan leverages community input, existing assets, data analysis and leading research to establish future directions. The town hired Monteith Brown Planning Consultants with support from MJMA Architecture & Design, Tucker-Reid & Associates, Ron Koudys Landscape Architects, Rose Vespa Consulting and Largo Facility Management Consultants to prepare the plan.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

To support the development of the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan, the Town of Oakville hosted an online community survey that was available over a period of nearly seven weeks between April and May 2023 to initiate the planning process. A total of 2,050 unique responses (representing approximately 6,400 residents) were received. In addition, six open house sessions were held to introduce the master plan to the Oakville community and seek input into its development. In total, over 80 participants attended the sessions to discuss their ideas with the consulting team and town/library staff. Furthermore, a series of eight virtual workshops were held to engage key stakeholders and solicit their input on a range of topics such as participation trends, facility utilization, satisfaction levels, current and future facility and programming needs, opportunities to partner, and more. The distribution list included approximately 110 user groups, community organizations, service providers, and partners involved in the delivery of parks, recreation, and library services across Oakville. Nearly 20 organizations participated within these sessions.

In May and June 2024, the draft Town of Oakville Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan underwent a comprehensive feedback phase to ensure the proposed directions were thoroughly tested and refined before finalization. Engagement

tactics consisted of an online survey and sessions with community stakeholders. Community feedback was also solicited through the project website where the draft plan was posted for review. The online survey – chosen for its accessibility and capacity to engage a broad audience – played a key role as the primary means of collecting feedback on the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan. The survey launched on May 28 and closed on June 30, 2024. The survey sought to gauge the level of agreement to selected high priority and shorter-term actions within the draft master plan. Respondents were asked if they agreed, disagreed or were neutral on these selected actions and could provide additional feedback in a comment box if desired. The survey garnered a total of 1,579 responses.

To boost engagement with the Master Plan survey, the town launched a social media campaign, during the public feedback collection period in June 2024, inviting residents to share their feedback on the draft plan and recommendations via email and/phone. Emails were sent to over 22,000 subscribers, achieving a 61% open rate. Additionally, the town placed posters and digital screens in all community centres and set up mobile signs in all wards throughout the survey period. The campaign generated over 46,000 social media impressions and prompted several emails regarding recommendations for outdoor pool facilities and splash pad service provisions. Another email suggested exploring new methods to engage with newcomers.

Staff hosted two stakeholder group consultation sessions to gather feedback on the draft recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Library Master Plan, which were presented to Town Council in May 2024. The sessions were held on the evening of June 11, 2024 and during the day on June 19, 2024. Invitations were sent to over 100 organizations, including all groups previously invited to the consultation sessions in May 2023. Nine groups attended the consultation sessions.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

The Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan includes 101 recommendations.

The recommendations are supported by the most current information on demographic composition and growth, usage data and trends, stakeholder engagement, benchmarking against high performing municipalities, existing program and facility inventories, asset management data, current policies and funding levels, supporting studies and reports, and more. An emphasis is placed on demand-driven metrics and alignment with Council and community priorities. The plan also sets out many tools and resources that the town and public library can use to plan specific projects and to further assess opportunities that may arise during the plan's implementation. In this way, the priorities advanced in the plan are evidence-based and respond to dynamic needs across the entire town.

The master plan recommends several new and enhanced recreation and library facilities and park amenities to the year 2051. Along with new projects, those facilities that are in various stages of planning and design have been integrated into the plan where applicable. Many of these are needed to address growth related needs, while others respond to emerging demands and make it easier for residents to access the services they require. For growth-related capital actions, the plan references facility needs through the application of provision targets and gap analyses. A general population threshold is identified for all growth-related actions, which serves as a trigger for development (subject to funding and readiness). Regular monitoring of population forecasts and housing growth is required to calibrate the facility needs recommended in this plan to the timing of growth in Oakville.

The objectives of the Parks, Recreation and Library Master plan have been summarized into the following categories and themes:

Recreation

- Prioritize Facility Expansion and Revitalization
- Consider New Models for Community Space
- Re-imagine Single Pad Arenas
- Modernize Outdoor Pools
- Support Sport Tourism and Sport-Friendly Facilities

Libraries

- Embrace Evolving Roles
- Enhance and Revitalize Existing Branches
- Provide New Branches in Strategic Locations
- Evaluate Alternative Service Models
- Maintain High Quality Services
- Consider Extended Hours
- Support for At-Risk Populations
- Partner with the Town

Parks

- Optimize our Sports Fields
- Support Emerging Sports and Park Amenities
- Animate Parks and Supporting Events
- Mitigate Impacts of Reduced Parkland Dedication
- Activate the Waterfront
- Reinvest in Older Parks

- Maximize the Impact of Smaller Parks
- Enhance Trails and Outdoor Activities

Implementation

- Ensure Financial Sustainability
- Define Priorities

PANDEMIC RECOVERY:

During Town Council meeting of May 25, 2021, Council requested that staff conduct a review of the Town's Facility Allocation Policy in consultation with community sports organizations; and report back to Council on recommended policy updates including municipal policy comparator information, summary of consultation results with community sport organizations, identification of any impacts to sports organization access to town assets and alignment with the town's Recovery Framework by the end of 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unprecedented time for the parks, recreation, and library sector and many community organizations continue to be presented with challenges in this post-pandemic period. Many of Oakville's organizations were required to adapt their operating or organizational model and/or diversify their operations over the past three years. The pandemic provided some organizations a chance to change their pricing structure, diversify operations, and reassess and restructure programming.

The recovery for Town of Oakville Recreation and Culture programs has been swift. 2023 registration data has now surpassed pre-pandemic rates (an increase of 6% overall), especially for adult activities.

Progress has been made with arena and field user groups on reviewing the Facility Allocation Policy and related procedure. Updated procedures are targeted to be completed in advance of the next seasonal allocation cycle.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW:

An overview of the capital budget impacts for the major facility projects identified are presented in Table 1 below for the 10-year (2025-2034) planning horizon.

Table 1:

Recommended Capital Project	Capital Cost Estimate	General Timing	Classification	Status
Recreation & Culture				
Palermo Village Community Centre	\$29 M (land and construction)	2032-2034 (325,000 population)	Growth	Fully funded in Approved Budget & 2025 Capital Forecast
Trafalgar Urban Core South Community Centre - land	\$35 M to \$45 M (assume up to 3ha site)	Land 2025/2026 (construction 2040/2041, 375,000 population)	Growth	Partially funded in 2025 Capital Forecast (\$26.0 M for 2031-2033)
Glen Abbey Community Centre expansion/ revitalization	\$50 M to \$70 M	Detailed planning to begin 2027	Program Initiatives/Growth	Unfunded
Sir John Colborne Recreation Centre for Seniors Expansion	\$8 M to \$12 M	2028/2029 (275,000 population)	Program Initiatives/Growth	Unfunded
New South Oakville Outdoor Pool (plus pool decommissioning)	\$8 M to \$10 M (assuming owned site)	2032 (300,000 population)	Program Initiatives	Unfunded
New North Oakville Twin Pad Arena - land	\$25 M to \$45 M (assume 3ha site)	2031/2032 (~300,000 population)	Growth/ Program Initiatives	Unfunded
Oakville Public Library				
Central Branch Library Replacement	\$73 M	2026+	Infrastructure Renewal	Fully funded in 2025 Capital Forecast
Trafalgar Urban Core South Branch – land and construction	\$28 M (land, construction, collections)	2028/2029 (275,000 population)	Growth	Fully funded in Approved Budget & 2025 Capital Forecast
Bronte New Branch	\$3 M to \$6 M (renovations and collections)	2032 (300,000 population)	Program Initiative / Growth	Unfunded
Palermo New Branch	\$30 M (land, construction, collections)	2032-2034 (325,000 population)	Growth	Fully funded in 2025 Capital Forecast

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The recommendations contained in the PRLMP provide strategic direction for the future needs of Parks, Recreation and Library service delivery. Decisions about various initiatives and projects, including those for new facilities, will be made as part of the annual budget process. This process involves looking at a number of factors:

- Parks, Recreation and Library service levels and the impact any changes have on the overall operating budget
- The Town's Asset Management policies and plans which consider condition of assets, service levels, and maximizing the whole life cycle cost/benefit approach
- How initiatives and projects proposed in the Master Plan relate to those experienced by the town as a whole, considering council's direction on any budget increases.
- The available funding sources – the recommendations in the Master Plan would be funded by a variety of sources as outlined below.
- The levels of growth within the town and how they match with the Master Plan recommendations.

The PRLMP provides recommendations to respond to current and future needs of the community. Within the major capital needs identified, there are both growth-related costs and non-growth related costs, which have different financial considerations. The below sections provide information on the overall financing outlook for the PRLMP recommendations.

Growth related costs would be primarily funded by Development Charges (DCs), along with Parkland Dedication and Community Benefits Charges (CBCs). The town utilizes these growth funding tools (GFTs) to deliver the land and infrastructure required to maintain service levels as the town grows, while minimizing the financial impact of growth on existing residents and businesses. The analysis on the PRLMP is based on the town's housing pledge and the 2023 Joint Best Planning Estimates (JBPE's). These growth figures have been used for both the estimated DC collections and the timing of the capital projects. Should the pace of growth assumed in the JBPE's be slower, as has been seen in the growth projection analysis for the recent Midtown OPA update, staff will adjust the expectations for both the timing of the collection of DC funds and the timing of the capital projects. This could result in lower DC collections/balances and could result in some of the projects being pushed out in the 10-year forecast. Staff will monitor the pace of growth on an ongoing basis to determine its impacts to the town's long-term capital plan. This is done as part of the DC Background Study as well as part of the annual budget process.

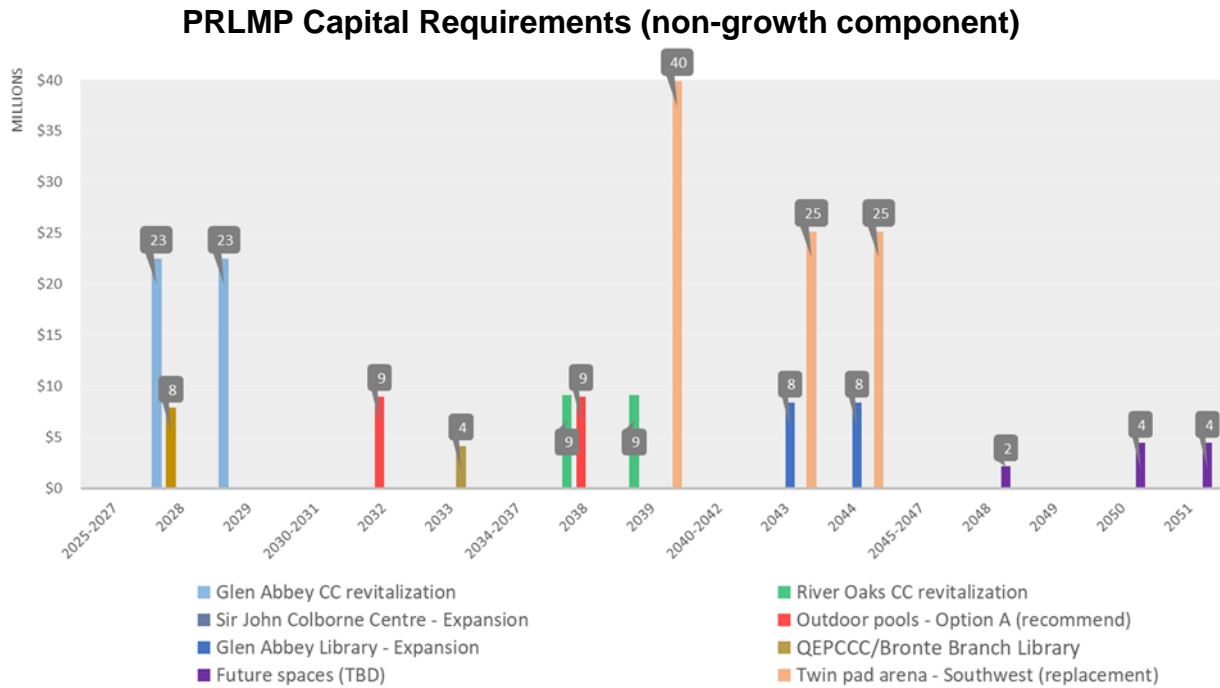
Overall, based on current DC rates, the recommendations for the future needs of Parks and Recreation facilities are affordable in the 10-year projected balances.

Land for parks is not eligible to be collected for using DCs, and instead is governed by the Planning Act. The town's Parkland Dedication by-law enables the town to require land, or cash-in-lieu of land, for parks as a condition of development. The Parkland reserve fund is currently in a healthy position, with a projected balance of \$92 million at the end of 2024. This will allow for the acquisition of parkland over the coming years for new parks. Further, a Master Parkland Agreement secured as part of the North Oakville Secondary Plan appeals, has been and will continue to provide for parkland in North Oakville. Legislative changes are having an impact on the amount of land, or cash-in-lieu of land, that the town is able to require from development. This will make it challenging for the town to achieve parkland targets without other funding sources or support from other levels of government over the longer term.

Currently the Library DCs are in a negative position and are limited due to the service cap as per the Development Charges Act, 1997 (DCA). As growth related projects are generally large and less frequent, there are periods of time where the town allows the DC balance for a specific service to go negative, while ensuring that the town's overall DC balance remains positive. Overall, the recommendations for the future needs of Library facilities are not affordable, which may require prioritization of recommended projects. During the town's next DC By-law review, Library DC rates will be updated based on anticipated infrastructure costs and growth forecasts, to ensure that Library DC revenues are being recovered to the maximum extent allowable to support the identified growth-related needs.

There are a variety of recommendations in the PRLMP that are ***not growth-related costs***. This includes projects that have a benefit to existing residents through the replacement of existing assets and enhancements or revitalizations of existing facilities. For projects that include both growth-related and non-growth related costs, high level assumptions of the growth-related portion of have been made based on past experience, and will be further refined as feasibility studies and project scopes progress. Similarly, cost estimates for projects not included in the 2025 Capital Forecast have been completed at a high level using recent land and construction costs experienced.

The below chart identifies the capital requirements from the recommended projects that are not attributable to growth (i.e., non-growth related component) based on the PRLMP planning horizon going out to 2051.



These costs would primarily be funded by the Capital reserve, along with the Building Maintenance reserve fund which is used to fund the replacement of facility assets. As discussed in the proposed 2025 Budget, there are significant financial pressures on town reserves, which could impact the timing of projects shown in the master plan.

As feasibility studies identified in the PRLMP are completed, projects would be considered as part of the annual budget and asset management planning process. To ensure that reserves are being used in an efficient manner and contribute to the town’s overall financial sustainability, revitalization projects that include the replacement of existing assets should be aligned with the Asset Management Plan (AMP) and the lifecycle requirements of those assets to the extent possible.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

The Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan involved consultation with the community including open houses, focused feedback sessions with Mayor and Members of Council, Community Organizations and staff in addition to feedback collection through online surveys.

(B) FINANCIAL

The financial implications of the Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan will be considered as part of the 2026 Operating and Capital Budget discussions.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

A multi-department steering committee was in place to ensure appropriate collaboration with other departments.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses Council's strategic priority/priorities: Growth Management, Community Belonging and Accountable Government.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

The town is committed to building resiliency to the changing climate and extreme weather patterns. We will continue to support sustainable approaches to help the town achieve its environmental goals through initiatives such as updated facility and park standards, energy-efficient retrofits, as well as a focus on the value of tree canopy, naturalization, horticulture, and more.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A – Proposed Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan
- Appendix B – Council Presentation November 5 Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan
- Appendix C – Research and Analysis Report
- Appendix D – Consultation Report
- Appendix E - Needs Assessment Report

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