

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE REQUEST:**

What advice could you give Council in terms of allocating additional money for parkland knowing that [the changes to legislation impacting] the Parkland Dedication By-law will not suffice what we need in some of our Strategic Growth Areas?

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- That the information be received.

### **KEY FACTS:**

- Legislative changes in the past few years have added a limit to what municipalities can collect from development for Parkland Dedication.
- In April 2024, Council passed an updated Parkland Dedication By-law (By-law 2024-034) and endorsed *Parks Plan 2031*. These two documents, along with the Parkland Dedication Procedure and the *Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan*, help to guide the town's approach to parkland.

### **BACKGROUND:**

There are a number of key documents that outline the town's approach to parkland acquisition.

- The *Parks Plan 2031* is a strategic document that identifies long-term needs for Oakville's parkland, how it will be delivered, an urban parks hierarchy, and mechanisms the town can consider as it endeavours to match the amount of parkland commensurate with new development. The *Parks Plan 2031* consists of a series of recommendations that Council can employ in order to acquire parkland and support the town's growing population. The recommendations reflect the changing legislative framework and provides options for the town to continue to deliver on its "campus of parks" over the short term – until 2031. The *Parks Plan 2031* also serves to inform the *Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan*.
- The Parkland Dedication By-law is used to implement the *Parks Plan 2031* recommendations.
- The Parkland Dedication Procedure is to establish the guidelines and process for the administration of the Parkland Dedication By-law. This procedure results in the conveyance of land or payment in lieu of land for parks in accordance with

the Parkland Dedication By-law and the key objectives outlined in the *Parks Plan 2031*.

- The *Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan* (PRLMP) considers the *Parks Plan 2031* and the town's service levels relating to increasing needs. The PRLMP also contains more specific recommendations that help guide the town's approach to amenities, including for parks, as the town continues to grow.

The Town's approach to land acquisition for Parkland:

- The town's first priority is to obtain land for park purposes (fee simple) in the area of development. Section 3 of the Parkland Dedication Procedure includes the following:
  - *Where land is to be considered as a parkland dedication contribution under the Planning Act, 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 SGAs.*
- The town may also accept other lands which are accessible to the public for park purposes such as Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS).
- In situations where it is not possible, or preferable, to obtain land in an SGA, the town receives payment-in-lieu of parkland. Section 8 of the Parkland Dedication Procedure outlines the prioritization of the use of these funds, beginning with the acquisition of land within the area of development, followed by the acquisition of land throughout the town.
- In addition to the items collected under the Parkland Dedication By-law, the town may also look to tools such as Community Benefits provisions of the *Planning Act*, acquisition of lands using the town's own resources, land exchanges, receipt of lands from others (ex. bequests).
- To assist in identifying priorities for land acquisition, the town is working on a parkland acquisition strategy.

## **COMMENTS/OPTIONS:**

Staff advice to Council:

- Staff recommend opportunities to acquire land or require payment-in-lieu of land through the development application process. Council decisions relating to the development of land allows the town to acquire parkland which contributes to the overall "campus of parks".
- In the town's greenfield areas, staff identify future parkland and recreation needs as defined through the PRLMP and work with the development industry to deliver the amenities that support the population in new communities.
- The town seeks to acquire the maximum amount of land or payment-in-lieu of land, as defined by the *Planning Act*. Where there are opportunities to augment the town's parks and open space system through strategic acquisition, these

recommendations are brought to Council for further consideration. Acquisition is supported through the parkland reserve fund.

- Through the endorsement of the *Parks Plan 2031*, Council has set the town's priorities to acquire land as opportunities come up, commensurate with the timing of growth and development and the nature of the needs identified in the PRLMP. For example, this may involve purchasing land in advance of growth if the opportunity arises.
- Staff keeps Council apprised of opportunities, and implements Council direction to acquire land, subject to the availability of both land and funds. For example, this may involve accepting a combination of POPS and payment-in-lieu to achieve multiple objectives in keeping with the "campus of parks" approach.
- Council will need to consider the various tools outlined in this memo and how to use them strategically, in light of other considerations (financial and otherwise). In the near term, the Parkland reserve fund is healthy, with a projected balance of \$92.1 million available for land acquisition at the end of 2024. This is comprised of \$0.8 million allocated to specific locations, \$21.5 million unallocated in the Parkland Acquisition project (52212407) and \$69.8 million is the remaining balance in the Parkland Reserve Fund.
- In addition, Council could consider the use of the town's capital reserve to supplement the lands acquired/paid through development. However, any use of the capital reserve would need to be evaluated against the other uses of this reserve, including infrastructure requirements and other key strategic initiatives, as well as the long-term financial sustainability of the reserve.
- Staff are working to complete the Parkland Acquisition Strategy which will prove helpful in these situations along with the annual Parkland Acquisition project. The Strategy will become important in assisting staff and Council in navigating which lands are priorities based on the *Parks Plan 2031* and the PRLMP.
- Staff monitor lands that are listed for sale in Oakville and if an opportunity arises to acquire lands that Parks considers appropriate for future park uses, those opportunities are brought to Council for consideration. A recent example of this was the Town's purchase of the land at 482 South Service Road East, where lands were acquired for future park and road uses. Any potential purchases would follow the town's process of bringing a confidential report to Council for approval.