

# Vaughan GSP

## Task 1 | Strategy Design and Current State Analysis

March 2025



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## INTRODUCTION

Vaughan is embarking on a significant journey with the development of its Greenspace Strategic Plan (GSP), recognizing the invaluable role greenspaces play in enriching the lives of residents and visitors. While the City has a strong history of effective park provision, there are identified gaps in specific neighbourhoods. Meeting Official Plan targets to provide an equitable distribution of parks and open spaces throughout the municipality necessitates a sustained and substantial capital investment. As Vaughan expands and transitions to more high-density developments, the imperative to secure, construct, maintain, and enhance greenspaces becomes even more pronounced to accommodate a growing population which is estimated to reach 575,900 by 2051.<sup>1</sup>

This task report is the first in a series of six task reports that provide the background and supporting content to be included in the GSP. The topics of the six task reports is outlined as follows:

- Task 1 | Strategy Design and Current State Analysis
- Task 2 | Principle Framework
- Task 3 | Greenspace Measurement Methodology
- Task 4 | Greenspace Planning Framework
- Task 5 | Financial Analysis
- Task 6 | Policy Framework

This Task 1 report presents a comprehensive overview of background research. It serves as a solid foundation for the initial chapters of the GSP, ensuring that the strategic planning process is based on a thorough understanding of the current state of greenspaces in Vaughan.

This section introduces the purpose of the GSP and sets a basic understanding of the terms and benefits of greenspaces to be carried forward and used throughout the GSP. This report covers the following topics:

- Recent Legislative Changes
- Park and Greenspace Trends
- Parkland and Greenspace Classifications
- Parkland Service Levels
- Parkland Acquisition Tools
- Phase 1 Engagement Summary

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 York Region Official Plan

## PURPOSE OF THE GSP

Following the completion of the Parkland Dedication Guideline Study in February 2022 and the subsequent enactment of Parkland Dedication By-Law 168-2022 in September 2022, provincial legislative changes have influenced parkland dedication tools. Despite these changes, the groundwork laid by these initiatives will inform the GSP.

This plan aims to comprehensively assess the current state of Vaughan's local parks and greenspaces, offering strategies and recommendations to guide future planning, design, implementation, and management, ensuring a harmonious balance between urban growth and the preservation of greenspaces in the city.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to add clarity to the discussion in this report and will be used to guide the GSP.

### **Greenspace**

Greenspace indicates all types of open space and parks that the City of Vaughan owns. When referencing a greenspace system, other lands owned by a public body may be included as indicated. This includes active and passive parks and Natural Heritage Networks such as tableland, woodland, valley lands, wetlands, and other open space areas such as cemeteries, stormwater management infrastructure, and City-owned golf courses.

### **Parkland**

Parkland refers to all active and passive parks, owned, leased or managed by the City whose primary purpose is to provide recreational activity. Most parkland is acquired through the development application process through dedication or payment-in-lieu. Parkland typically consists of tableland suitable for developing or installing built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, gardens, etc.) that may be used for organized and unorganized activities. However, these parks may also incorporate natural features. Excluded from this definition are open space lands.

### **Open Space**

Open space refers to greenspace areas that are not parkland and include natural areas, wetlands, woodlands and other areas that may be protected for environmental reasons.

### **Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPS)**

POPS are privately-owned lands that are open and available for the public to use. These lands have a legal framework in place between the private landowner and the City protecting the lands for

public use. At the discretion of the City, landowners may receive parkland dedication credit for POPS.

### **Supplemental Open Space**

Supplemental open space includes POPS and other lands that may be provided by the provisions of the *Planning Act* but are not parkland or open space. It may also include privately-owned greenspace, which is primarily used for park purposes and publicly owned lands such as Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) lands, cemeteries and stormwater management lands. Community gardens and urban agriculture lands may be considered as supplemental open space dependent on their location and function as public open space. Community gardens and urban agriculture that function like an agricultural operation should not be considered as supplemental open space.

## **BENEFITS OF GREENSPACES**

Greenspaces allow residents to remain active, connect with nature, relax, or socialize. From an ecological perspective, greenspaces are incredibly valuable assets. They provide opportunities for people to connect with nature, foster environmental learning, and support responsible stewardship of our natural assets. These spaces may be big or small – from your neighbourhood park to trails like the Bartley Smith Greenway or larger regional parks like North Maple Regional Park to woodlands.<sup>2</sup>

The initial research involved a thorough review of Vaughan's existing planning documents and a comparative analysis with municipalities in Ontario and Alberta. The review included the following Provincial and Municipal plans and documents:

#### Provincial Statutes and Plans:

1. *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c.13, as amended.
2. *Planning Act*, RSO 1990, c P.13
3. *Development Charges Act, 1997*, S.O. 1997, c. 27, as amended.
4. Provincial Planning Statement (2024)
5. A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)
6. Greenbelt Plan (2017)
7. Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)

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<sup>2</sup> City of Vaughan: <https://www.vaughan.ca/about-city-vaughan/projects-and-initiatives/environmental-projects/greenspace-strategic-plan>

## Municipal Plans

1. City of Vaughan Official Plan 2010
2. Active Together Master Plan (ATMP) (2018)
3. Parkland Dedication Guideline (2022)
4. Parkland Dedication By-Law 168-2022
5. City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines
6. Land Acquisition Strategy (2020)
7. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (2020)
8. Green Directions Vaughan (2019)
9. Parks Redevelopment Study (2018)
10. Great Walks of Vaughan Trail Guide (2018)
11. Facility Allocation Policy
12. Natural Heritage Network Study (2014)
13. State of the Urban Forest Report
14. Vaughan Age-Friendly Community Action Plan
15. Development Charges (DC) Background Study (2022)
16. Environmental Management Guideline (2013)
17. NHN Phase 1 Final Report (2021)
18. NHN Study Public Hearing (2014)
19. Vaughan Conservation Land Securement Strategy (2014)
20. VMC Parks Governance Decision-Making Framework
21. VMC Park and Wayfinding Strategy (draft)

Additionally, planning documents such as park and official plans for several municipalities in Ontario and Alberta, including York Region, were reviewed. Alberta was included due to previous work undertaken by O2 in the province.

In the subsequent section, we delve into the identified benefits of greenspaces, prioritizing these advantages to guide our efforts in the forthcoming stages of the GSP.

Greenspaces provide many valued services that contribute significantly to quality of life. By providing opportunities for leisure, gathering, sport, play, and connecting with nature, parks improve physical and mental health, strengthen social connections within communities, and protect our natural environments.

- **Economic Impact and Vibrancy**

Parks provide economic benefits by creating an attraction for people to enjoy, thereby attracting jobs and investment to a municipality. Parks adjacent to residential development usually generate a premium for those nearby properties compared to others in the

neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> Destination parks can also attract tourism to the region, whether for sports tournaments, festivals, or performances. Vaughan would greatly benefit from increased greenspaces, considering their value in encouraging investment by supporting new business opportunities and conclusively ensuring a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations.

- **Environmental Sustainability and Urban Resilience**

From an ecological perspective, greenspaces are incredibly valuable assets. They provide opportunities for people to connect with nature, foster environmental learning, and support responsible stewardship of our natural assets. They also provide habitat for a range of species, playing an essential role in supporting biodiversity within the city.

Further, greenspaces contain a variety of forested stands and other native vegetation, as well as a host of planted and maintained species. These vegetated areas provide permeable ground cover, helping to capture and absorb stormwater and reducing the potential for flooding. Plant life in greenspaces can also filter air and water pollution, sequester carbon, and mitigate the impacts of the urban heat island effect. Greenspaces are an essential component of the City's green infrastructure. In alignment with the Greenspace Strategic Plan, greenspaces have the potential to reduce significant amounts of energy and water treatment costs by naturally providing these functions while also supporting flood mitigation efforts.

- **Health and Well-being**

Greenspaces are essential hubs that offer opportunities for programmed sports, active play, and community events and provide benefits to physical health and mental well-being. Park accessibility is directly linked to increased physical activity, contributing to a reduction in sedentary-related chronic illnesses, stress, and anxiety levels, thereby promoting a healthier and more active community.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/april/how-much-impact-do-parks-have-on-property-values/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3710158/>

- **Community Building and Social Connection**

Greenspaces provide space for community building, preventing social isolation and encouraging informal community gatherings. These areas offer opportunities for passive recreation, cultural events, and informal gatherings that enhance social connections among residents, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Greenspaces provide immense value to Vaughan and its people. The GSP will provide the contextual framework and strategic guidance to create a viable, sustainable, and adaptable greenspace system coherent with the above-mentioned benefits.

## INTENSIFICATION AND PARKLAND SUPPLY CONTEXT

Development in Vaughan is shifting from a suburban, greenfield approach to one centred on dense urban development and intensification. Given this shift, parkland and open space acquisition, design, development, and maintenance must be reassessed to adapt to a new urban context.

The current supply of greenspaces is relatively robust when measured city-wide. However, some areas in the city currently have a deficit of greenspaces, and new growth will create additional demand for greenspaces. The GSP will provide criteria to guide the prioritization of parkland acquisition in these areas.



## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of recent legislative changes and how they will impact parks and greenspaces in the future. Over the last few years, provincial legislation in Ontario has continuously changed, affecting how communities are planned and developed. These changes have presented challenges for municipalities in planning for greenspaces, necessitating continuous adjustments. Overall, the legislative changes severely affect the ability of municipalities to acquire parkland during the land development process.

Below is a summary of the most significant Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022 legislative changes affecting the acquisition and funding of parks and greenspaces. However, not all of the legislative amendments are in force at the time of this report.

### *More Homes Built Faster Act* Development Charges (DC) Changes:

1. Historical service level calculation for DC-eligible capital costs extended from 10 to 15 years.
2. DC By-laws expire every ten years instead of five years.
3. Affordable and attainable residential units are exempt from DCs. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing now defines affordability in the Affordable Residential Units bulletin. An attainable residential unit is a unit that meets the criteria in the Development Charges Act, 1997, s.4.1(4).
4. Municipalities must spend or allocate at least 60% of the monies in the DC reserve fund at the beginning of the year on certain specified services.

### *More Homes Built Faster Act* Parkland Dedication Changes:

1. The maximum amount of parkland dedication has been capped at 10% of the land or its value for sites under 5 hectares or less and 15% of the land or its value for sites greater than 5 hectares.
2. The maximum alternative parkland dedication rate is now one hectare for every 600 units, down from one hectare per 300 units.
3. Privately owned public spaces (POPS) and encumbered parkland/strata parks could potentially count towards parkland dedication requirements. However, this provision is not in effect at the time of writing this report and is pending the issuance of regulations. This change may impact park experience, standards, and programming opportunities. Owners can appeal if a municipality refuses the parkland conveyance option to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).
4. The maximum alternative parkland dedication payment-in-lieu rate is reduced by 50% to a value of 1 hectare per 1000 units.
5. Parkland dedication will apply to new units only and exclude existing units from its calculation.
6. The parkland dedication amount is determined under the by-law on the day a site plan application is made, or a zoning by-law amendment application if no site plan application is

made, instead of on the date that a building permit is issued. This approach also impacts the valuation process.

7. Development Charges, Parkland Dedication, and Community Benefit Charges no longer apply to affordable housing units, attainable housing units, non-profit housing, and inclusionary zoning units. Definitions for these items are found in the *Development Charges Act, 1997*.

These legislative amendments have prompted municipalities across Ontario to reevaluate their strategies for providing greenspaces and parks to their communities.

### **Impacts of Bill 23 on Vaughan**

Implementing the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* (Bill 23) poses significant challenges for the City of Vaughan in meeting parkland provision requirements. Under this legislation, there will be reduced financial support, as it diminishes funding allocated for parkland and infrastructure associated with development projects.

Historically, Vaughan has primarily established parkland through parkland dedication or payment-in-lieu in accordance with the Vaughan Official Plan. Formerly, parkland dedication for new residential developments occurred at a rate of 5% of the total gross land area or 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units, whichever was greater, with payment-in-lieu as an alternative. Similarly, non-residential development saw parkland dedication at a rate of 2% of the total gross land area or payment-in-lieu if deemed more effective.

According to the Parkland Dedication Guideline, payment-in-lieu funds were to be prioritized for local parkland acquisition, followed by land acquisition in priority areas, trails, building repairs, and the acquisition of vehicles and machinery.

However, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* reduces the Development Charges (DC) rate and maximum alternative parkland dedication rate from 1 hectare per 300 units to 1 hectare for every 600 units. Additionally, the maximum alternative parkland dedication payment-in-lieu is reduced by 50%, down to 1 hectare per 1000 units. These alterations significantly decrease the amount of parkland provision for the City, while the diminished payment-in-lieu amount poses challenges for the City in acquiring lands for parkland dedication.

In a report to Council in November 2022, staff estimated that Bill 23 may result in the City losing 70% to 90% in payment-in-lieu collection for parkland, and 45% in city-wide parkland provision. The estimated reduction would be from \$608 Million to \$61 Million in payment-in-lieu reductions.

The City also estimated the city may have 60%-80% less parks locally as the city's population grows.<sup>5</sup>

Ultimately, these implications make it challenging for the City of Vaughan to achieve its current active parkland provision target of 2 hectares for every 1000 people.

## HOW ARE OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ADDRESSING THE *MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT*?

Municipalities across Ontario have responded to the *More Homes Built Faster Act* in diverse ways, categorized into several overarching themes. Municipalities have broadly sought to:

1. Quantify & Explain Impacts on Residents
2. Quantify Costs to Residents
3. Request Compensation from the Province
4. Express Discontent to the Province

Through all of these approaches, municipalities have predominantly demonstrated an initial response by emphasizing the perceived negative consequences brought about by the new Act. Many municipalities have expressed their dissatisfaction for the Act by lobbying the Province through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, for example, and municipalities have tried their best to adjust to the impacts of the Act.

It's evident that these legislative changes have triggered a range of responses from municipalities, reflecting the diverse needs and concerns of different communities across the province.

Many municipalities have focused on the financial impacts of the Act, as it reduces the amount of funding that was used to pay for parkland and infrastructure for new development. However, many municipalities also highlight the environmental damage potentially set in motion by the Act, which weakens or eliminates wetland protections, expert oversight of watersheds and protection of species-at-risk habitat, among other measures aimed at accelerating development.

These dual concerns of financial strain and environmental impact emphasize the complexity of navigating legislative changes in the realm of urban planning and development.

Vaughan's GSP will outline how the City should adapt to deal with these changes.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://pub-vaughan.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=126117>

Below is a summary of select municipalities' responses to the *More Homes Built Faster Act*. The municipalities noted below were selected to provide a breadth of geographic and political perspectives, representing a range of urban, suburban, and more rural communities, as well as a range of differing tactics and approaches in responding to the Act. While each municipality in Ontario did (or did not) respond to the Act in its own unique way, upon a broader environmental scan, it was found that these responses can largely be distilled into six overarching themes.

These themes are:

1. Development charges and infrastructure funding
2. Unbuilt housing and meeting targets
3. Revenue reduction and tax implications
4. Environmental conservation and heritage protection
5. Infrastructure upgrades and funding
6. Impacts on parkland provision

Understanding these themes provides a comprehensive view of the challenges and considerations municipalities face in responding to the *More Homes Built Faster Act*. Representative examples of each are provided over the following pages.

#### Guelph

The City of Guelph has adopted a range of actions in response to the adoption of the *More Homes Built Faster Act*. These include an increase in staff, approving a new development fee structure, and advocating for development charges to be maintained.<sup>6</sup>

#### Northumberland County

Northumberland County has explicitly called on the Province to pause implementation of the *More Homes Built Faster Act* and has created a webpage dedicated to highlighting the potential negative impacts that the Act could have on the County. These impacts include reduced municipal revenue, environmental impacts, cancelling affordable housing projects, and contributing to the loss of heritage assets. Northumberland County stands to lose \$17.4 million in revenue from development charges. A \$17.4 million shortfall could result in a potential increase to the County portion of property tax bills of about 27% over the next 2-7 years — or about \$360 for the average homeowner.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://guelph.ca/2022/11/council-approves-citys-recommendations-in-preparation-for-changes-stemming-from-bill-109-and-bill-23/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://guelph.ca/2022/11/council-approves-citys-recommendations-in-preparation-for-changes-stemming-from-bill-109-and-bill-23/>

### St. Catharines

The City of St. Catharines' Council adopted a formal resolution requesting substantial provincial investment be provided to support the decrease of development charge funding opportunities for municipalities to fund anticipated infrastructure upgrades to accommodate new intensification goals and compensation.<sup>8</sup>

### Mississauga

The City of Mississauga has produced one of the most comprehensive overviews of the impacts of the *More Homes Built Faster Act* and provides specific, calculated examples of how the Act will influence the provision of parkland over the coming years. Specifically, the City outlines how the Act caps the amount developers are required to pay for new parkland, how developers would be able to choose where to locate new parkland, and how developers would get credit for building privately owned public spaces that aren't city parks.<sup>9</sup>

### Hamilton

The City provided the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing with a summary of concerns related to Bill 23. Of note, the City is concerned about the ability to secure appropriate parkland and recreational amenities to meet community needs and is concerned about weakening the conservation of land and protection of significant environmental features. The changes outlined in Bill 23 will certainly have financial implications for the City.<sup>10</sup>

All municipalities are having to look at new methods to address the gaps created by the Province through the implementation of Bill 23.

## PLANNING ACT AND PARKLAND DEDICATION BY-LAWS

The Ontario *Planning Act* allows municipalities to require conveyances for park or public recreational purposes as a condition of land development or redevelopment through by-laws. Pursuant to Subsection 42(1) of the *Planning Act*, the prescribed amount shall not exceed 2% for commercial or industrial purposes and 5% for other purposes, such as residential development. Furthermore, municipalities can mandate parkland as a prerequisite for a plan of subdivision approval, with Section 51.1 stipulating the same percentage limits.

In lieu of parkland dedication, municipalities have the option to accept payment-in-lieu, which can be utilized to acquire parkland and develop recreation facilities. Subsection 42(3) allows

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/planning-and-development/bill-23.aspx#Response-and-Recommendation>

<sup>9</sup> <https://pub-mississauga.escrimemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=33725#page=14>

<sup>10</sup> <https://pub-hamilton.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=342836>

municipalities to establish an alternative rate, such as one hectare per 600 dwelling units or a lesser rate, as specified through a by-law.

*Smart Growth for Our Communities Act*, 2015, also known as Bill 73

This legislation amended Section 42 of the *Planning Act*, mandating municipalities to prepare a parks plan and make it available to the public before adopting official plan policies, including parkland dedication by-laws. It also adjusted the payment-in-lieu rate to one hectare per 500 dwelling units and required municipalities to provide annual financial statements on the collection and application of parkland payment in lieu of dedication.

*More Homes, More Choices Act*, 2019 Bill 108

This bill amended Section 42 and Subsection 51.1 of the *Planning Act*, clarifying that parkland by-laws and community benefits charge by-laws cannot be enforced simultaneously for the same area. It also repealed the alternatives or payment-in-lieu for parkland dedication under Sections 42 and 51.1.

Development Charges in Vaughan

Following the examination of the impacts of Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act (2019), as outlined in Hemson's Development Charges Background Study released in July 2022, the City of Vaughan undertook a review of its development charges. The updated development charges were increased to reflect inflation, the increase in capital costs, the increased cost of land, a better understanding of the City's future road requirements, and the elimination of the 10% statutory discount for all soft services (library, development-related studies, and community services) (Hemson, 2022).<sup>11</sup> As a result, the City passed the 2022 City-Wide Development Charges By-Law 109-2022, which updated and increased its development charges for new developments and additions to reflect the new legislative framework for development.

*Plan to Build Ontario Together Act*, 2019, Bill 138

This legislation repealed the amendments introduced by the *More Homes, More Choices Act*, 2019, reinstating the use of parkland dedication alternatives or payment-in-lieu for parkland by-laws and plans of subdivision under Sections 42 and 51.1.

Vaughan's Parkland Dedication By-law 168-2022 and Parkland Dedication Guideline

The City of Vaughan's Parkland Dedication By-law 168-2022 was adopted by Vaughan Council on June 28, 2022, and serves as a tool for the City of Vaughan to address both the present and future requirements of its communities. This By-law offers a clear framework to tackle long-term parkland needs in alignment with the provision levels outlined in Vaughan's Active Together Master Plan 2018 (ATMP).

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<sup>11</sup> Hemson's Development Charges Background Study

The By-law outlines conditions for receiving full (100%) credit, including lands meeting parkland requirements, encumbered lands, and privately owned public spaces (POPS). However, certain lands are deemed unacceptable for receiving full credit due to adverse physical conditions or restrictions on public programming.

In cases where on-site dedication is not feasible, off-site dedication may be considered. Additionally, the City may opt for payment-in-lieu under specific circumstances, such as when dedication renders the site unusable or does not align with the City's long-term planning goals of that area.

Section 4 of By-Law 168-2022 provides direction on the option for a payment-in-lieu of parkland dedication:

- **City's Discretion**  
The City can choose payment-in-lieu when land dedication is not feasible. Reasons include making the remaining land impractical for development, not meeting parkland definitions, or having sufficient existing parks for development.
- **Calculation of Payments**  
Payments are calculated net of any land conveyed towards the parkland dedication requirement. The payment-in-lieu amount equals the value of the land required to be conveyed.
- **Rates for Residential Units**
  - 1) For multiple-unit buildings, the payment is the lesser of land value at 1 Ha/500 units or a set rate per unit.
  - 2) For stand-alone residential additions, there is a fixed rate per unit.
- **Payment Increase**  
The unit rates increase annually, starting from March 1, 2023, with a 4.25% increase each year after March 1, 2025.

Lastly, no parkland dedication is required for places of worship, long-term affordable housing, not-for-profit, City or Regional land or buildings, educational institutions, hospitals, repairing a building following a catastrophic event, enlargement of an existing single- or semi-detached residential dwelling, additional residential buildings up to 5 units, enlargement of existing commercial, industrial or institutional sites.

While the Parkland Dedication By-Law 168-2022 was enacted in 2022 after the completion of the Parkland Dedication Guideline Study, subsequent provincial legislative changes have influenced

parkland dedication tools. Vaughan's Parkland Dedication By-law has already addressed many of the items brought forward in the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, such as POPS and off-site dedication. However, the By-law does not reflect the new caps placed on land dedication and payment-in-lieu. The insights gained through this review will contribute to the development of the GSP.

## COMPARISON OF MUNICIPAL BY-LAWS AND REGULATIONS

### Parkland Dedication Regulations

**Table 1: Parkland Dedication Regulations**

City	Parkland Dedication Regulations
Toronto	<u>Conveyance Tools</u> : Toronto mandates dedicating 5% of developable land and 2% for non-residential uses. Parkland acquisition priority areas have an alternative rate – the greater of 5% of developable land or 0.4 hectares per 300 dwelling units subject to five considerations identified in the Section 415-23 of the Toronto Municipal Code. Priority areas consider factors like low parkland provision, supply, growth impact, and low-income residents.
	<u>Payment-in-lieu</u> : Payment-in-lieu may be required if the size, shape, or location of the land is deemed unsuitable, with maximum amounts for payment-in-lieu determined by site size and Transit Oriented Design (TOD) designation. The calculation method is unspecified. The allocated funds can be utilized for land acquisition or improvements, with the option to split equally between the two. Alternatively, the entire payment-in-lieu amount can be directed solely toward either land acquisition or improvements within the district where the funds were generated.
Markham	<u>Conveyance Tools</u> :  Non-residential development shall convey 2% of land proposed for development. For medium and high density residential development land shall be conveyed at a rate of 0.55 hectares per 500 dwelling units. For all other residential development, land shall be conveyed at the greater of 5% developable land or one hectare per 300 dwelling units.
	<u>Payment-in-lieu</u> : Targeting 60% of the dedication requirement be achieved through land dedication and the remaining 40% through payment-in-lieu, with the payment-in-lieu component based on land values updated annually through a City-led appraisal and based on an average across the entire Secondary Plan Area.



City	Parkland Dedication Regulations
Hamilton	<p><u>Conveyance Tools:</u> Hamilton aligns parkland dedication with development specifics. Rates range from 2.5% for rural single dwellings to 0.5% per 300 dwelling units for high-density residential. Commercial (2%) and non-commercial/residential (5%) have set rates. Expansion/redevelopment follow similar principles.</p>
	<p><u>Payment-in-lieu:</u> The City may require the payment of money to the value of the lands required to be conveyed.</p>
Ottawa	<p><u>Conveyance Tools:</u> Ottawa mandates a maximum land dedication of 2% for commercial/industrial developments and 5% for other developments, including residential and mixed-use developments. For residential developments, an alternative rate allows up to 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units.</p>
	<p><u>Payment-in-lieu:</u> Under the parkland funds policy, payment-in-lieu funds collected through the development review will be allocated as follows: 60% to the ward in which the development is located and 40% for citywide purposes. In a special administrative area identified in the Parkland Dedication By-law, 100% of the funds paid will be allocated to use in the special administrative area where the development is located.</p>
Kingston	<p><u>Conveyance Tools:</u> Kingston specifies rates based on residential density, varying from 5% to 1.2 hectares per 1,000 people. Commercial/industrial follows 2% dedication. Long-term care home rates are pending definition. Mixed-use projects are allocated based on proportional allocation.</p>
	<p><u>Payment-in-lieu:</u> The payment-in-lieu alternative can be utilized when providing adequate parkland, which is not feasible because the land is too small, unsuitable, or impractical. It is also applicable when the City identifies more suitable land, particularly in cases involving waterfront, well-served areas, or rural severance. Payments, equivalent to the land value, go to the Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Reserve Fund. If the conveyed land falls short, the balance is supplemented with a payment-in-lieu payment.</p>
Richmond Hill	<p><u>Conveyance Tools:</u> Richmond Hill requires 2% for commercial/industrial development or redevelopment; 5% for residential. For residential developments, an alternative rate allows up to 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units.</p>

City	Parkland Dedication Regulations
	<b>Payment-in-lieu:</b> Richmond Hill allows dedication or payment-in-lieu, 2% for commercial/industrial, 5% for residential or alternatively 1 hectare value per 500 dwelling units or a lesser rate as specified by by-law.
Aurora	<b>Conveyance Tools:</b> Aurora permits 2% for commercial/industrial dedication and 5% for other non-residential uses. Residential options include 5% dedication or 1 hectare per 600 dwelling units, whichever is greater.
	<b>Payment-in-lieu:</b> The Town may require the payment of money to the value of the lands required to be conveyed.
East-Gwillimbury	<b>Conveyance Tools:</b> East-Gwillimbury follows the provisions of the <i>Planning Act</i> with a minimum 5% dedication or 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units. Commercial/industrial maintains 2%.
	<b>Payment-in-lieu:</b> Payment-in-lieu is collected when parkland isn't required.
King	<b>Conveyance Tools:</b> King's residential dedication varies (5% for lower density, 1.2 hectares per 1,000 people for higher). Commercial/industrial uses follow 2%. Long-term care home dedications are at 2%.
	<b>Payment-in-lieu:</b> It is in the Township's discretion to accept payment-in-lieu for parkland instead of land in various scenarios, such as no suitable parkland opportunities, small or impractical land, and identification of better land by the Township. Payment equals land value if needed, and any shortfall in conveyed land is met with a cash payment. These payments contribute to the Payment-in-lieu of the Parkland Reserve Fund, and approval-based payments may change if no permit is issued within a year.
Newmarket	<b>Conveyance Tools:</b> Newmarket mandates 2% for commercial/industrial and offers cumulative rates for mixed-use. Residential dedications vary (1 hectare per 300 units outside urban centers, 0.7 hectares per 1000 residents inside urban centers). All other uses follow 5% dedication. Additional requirements for urban centres include a 7.5% contribution for larger residential sites.

City	Parkland Dedication Regulations
	<u>Payment-in-lieu</u> : Payment-in-lieu is applicable when land dedication requirements can not be met.
Whitchurch-Stouffville	<u>Conveyance Tools</u> : Whitchurch-Stouffville specifies 2% for commercial/industrial and 5% for residential dedications.
	<u>Payment-in-lieu</u> : The Town may require the payment of money to the value of the lands required to be conveyed.

### OFF-SITE CONVEYANCE AND TRANSFER OF OVER-DEDICATION CREDITS

Various approaches to fulfilling parkland conveyance requirements are evident across different jurisdictions. Richmond Hill's Official Plan provides flexibility by allowing the City to accept off-site conveyance for parkland dedication. Specifically, under By-law 123-22, the conveyance of a strata park to the City is permitted, with the potential to contribute towards meeting parkland dedication requirements, subject to the City's discretion. Notably, the value attributed to such conveyed strata parks is set at 80% of the land's value required for parkland, acknowledging the inherent limitations in their use.

A similar stance is adopted by the Town of Aurora, as articulated in its Park and Recreation Master Plan of 2023, which advocates for the utilization of off-site conveyance, particularly in priority areas such as areas that are below the recommended parkland ratio of 2 hectares per 1,000 residents, strategic growth areas (areas that are expected to grow over time and include a mixture of uses including residential to achieve long-term parkland targets).

In contrast, King Township explores alternative acquisition measures, such as the option of over-dedicating parkland associated with new developments or infill areas, thereby fulfilling the parkland dedication within the municipality.

Meanwhile, the City of Kingston permits the conveyance of non-contiguous land to fulfill parkland requirements, provided that the value of the off-site land is approximately equivalent to that which would be conveyed on-site. However, their by-law does not sanction over-dedication of parkland. Conversely, Brampton introduces the provision of parkland dedication credits for over-dedication, incentivizing developers to contribute additional parkland beyond the prescribed requirements, thereby fulfilling the parkland dedication requirement within the city.

These varied approaches underscore the nuanced strategies employed by municipalities to balance development needs with the preservation and expansion of greenspaces.

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## APPROACH/ STRATA PARKS AND ENCUMBERED PARKLANDS

Across various municipalities in Ontario, the treatment of POPS in relation to parkland credit varies significantly. The City of Toronto and the City of Mississauga stand firm in their stance, not recognizing POPS as eligible for parkland credit. In the case of Mississauga, while these spaces are acknowledged as "complementary," they do not fulfill the City's parkland needs due to their limitation in being solely developed and programmed by the city.

In contrast, the Town of Aurora adopts a more nuanced approach under By-law 6534-23; strata parks are eligible for a maximum of 50% credit, while POPS receive full credit (100%) towards meeting parkland requirements. Similarly, the Town of Newmarket accepts POPS at 50% of the value of secured land through an easement, alongside strata parks at 80% of the required parkland value, demonstrating a balanced approach to incorporating different types of greenspaces into its urban fabric.

Richmond Hill, diverging from the parkland credit approach, opts for crediting Community Benefits Charges instead, offering an alternative incentive for the use of POPS without releasing obligations for parkland dedication, thereby maintaining a balance between development interests and public space provision.

Conversely, the City of Vaughan's 2022 Parkland Dedication By-law embraces a comprehensive approach, allowing full credit for various encumbered lands towards meeting parkland dedication requirements. These include strata parks, lands encumbered by vital infrastructure like stormwater facilities and utility corridors, as well as those forming part of natural heritage networks, floodplains, sustainability features, and protected areas like the Greenbelt or Oak Ridges Moraine.

In the case of privately owned public spaces, Vaughan mandates that owners enter into agreements with the city, ensuring adherence to city standards in design, development, and maintenance, along with guaranteeing public accessibility and compliance with additional criteria outlined in the City's Official Plan or Secondary Plan. This requirement underscores the municipality's commitment to maintaining quality standards and ensuring public benefit from such spaces.

## BROADER PARK AND GREENSPACE TRENDS

Analyzing current and emerging park trends in Vaughan and Canada at large provides valuable insights for anticipating spatial, programmatic, and design requirements in greenspace planning. While comprehending present trends is crucial, it's equally vital to acknowledge the evolving preferences of the population. This underscores the necessity of creating adaptable greenspaces that can evolve in tandem with shifting community dynamics. In essence, these seven themes encapsulate the diverse and evolving needs, as well as the multifaceted roles of greenspaces in land use planning. These include:

1. Technology Use in Parks
2. Amenities, Sports and Recreational Activities
3. Accessibility
4. Maintenance
5. Equity and Inclusivity
6. Biodiversity and Sustainable Practices
7. Health and Well-being Focus

Understanding these trends not only informs current planning efforts but also ensures that greenspaces can adapt to meet future community needs seamlessly.

## TECHNOLOGY USE IN PARKS

Technology plays a crucial role in optimizing the potential of greenspaces. It not only enhances the functionality of these areas but also facilitates data-driven management. Through data analytics tools, cities can track visitor flow, ensuring efficient resource allocation and improved safety measures. Additionally, technology aids in the implementation of smart variable lighting systems and advanced waste management strategies, contributing to the overall sustainability of these spaces.

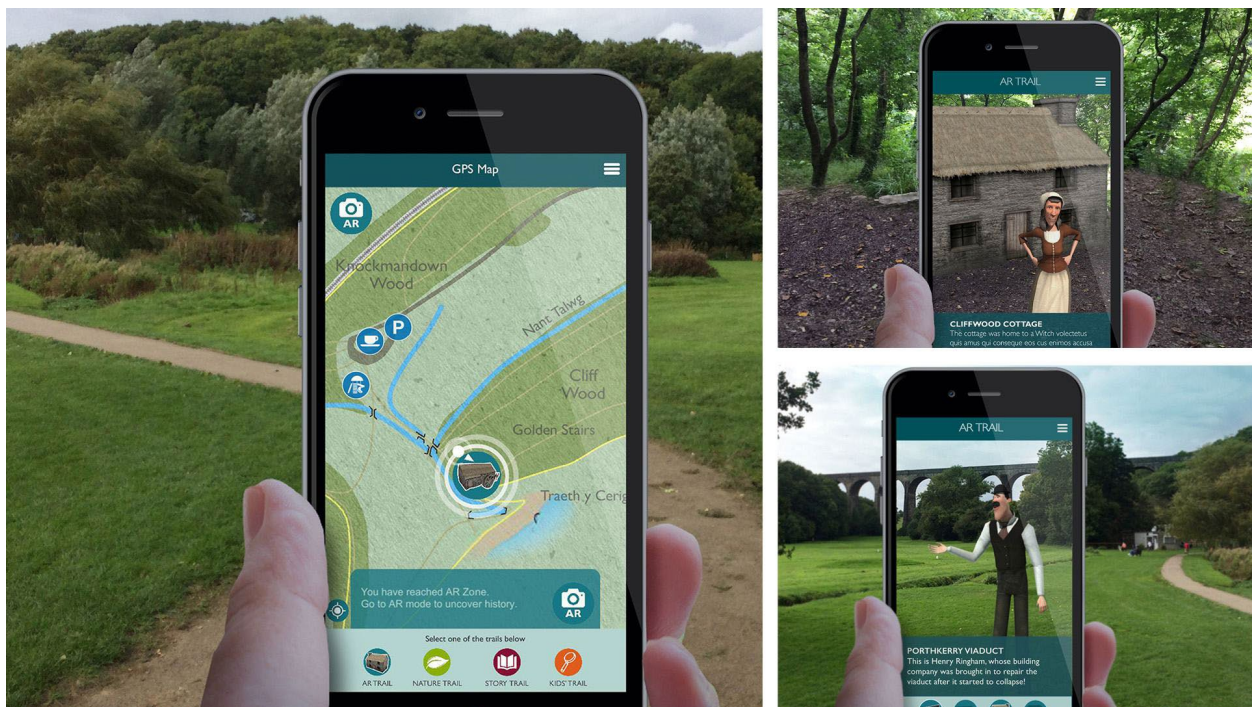
Some enhancements are more inherently tied to new technologies or innovative processes. For instance, City of Mississauga's specialized dog waste program collects dog waste and converts it into energy, leading to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Augmented Reality (AR) tools present another avenue for technological integration into parks. These tools support wayfinding, interpretive content, and interactive games, offering park users a novel and engaging experience. Within the context of interpretive content, AR offers a cost-effective and creative opportunity further to promote aspects of local Indigenous history and archaeology.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://usay.ca/indigitrails/>

To take a more innovative example that shows promise, Porthkerry Country Park in Wales found that user knowledge of their park was limited even though it was a popular destination. As a solution, they hired a software company to create an app that not only provides digital wayfinding but also provides interpretive content in an AR format, an example of the App is illustrated in Figure 1. This illustration demonstrates how park experiences can be ‘elevated’ through virtual reality without negatively impacting other visitors’ experiences. Users can see and hear a past architect speak about the park as they hold their phone overviews.<sup>13</sup> As this case suggests, AR provides significant potential for storytelling and wayfinding within parks. As the latter was traditionally delivered through signs that can lead to dollars spent on capital costs and can cause clutter within a landscape, an AR approach could also bring benefits to the municipality. There are likely several other avenues that AR may lead to in the future such as gaming, events, and socializing.



**Figure 1: Example of AR App used in Porthkerry Country Park, Barry, UK. Photo credit: jamcreativestudios.com.**

Transitioning to technology's role in improving access to park spaces, online apps, websites, and QR codes have been employed to facilitate bookings, offer instructions, and provide information on facilities. This tech-savvy approach ensures efficient use of park resources while enhancing the overall visitor experience. Technology can be used in parks and greenspaces to enhance the functionality of the park and greenspace. This can be done by integrating free Wi-Fi and charging stations into parks to entice people who do not want to disconnect from the internet to use parks

<sup>13</sup> [http://jamcreativestudios.com/index.php/portfolio\\_page/porthkerry-country-park/](http://jamcreativestudios.com/index.php/portfolio_page/porthkerry-country-park/)



more often. Other ways to increase the functionality of parks are to create interactive educational displays throughout the park or incorporate apps that provide interactive activities to complete in the park.<sup>14</sup>

Expanding on the theme of technology supporting climate mitigation and adaptation goals, cities are now installing public EV chargers, supporting the uptake of EV vehicles. Vaughan has a few city-wide stations, and extending this network into parks not only provides a park amenity but signals the City's commitment to addressing climate change.

Another use of technology in parks is through interactive play structures. These play structures further showcase technology's potential in enhancing the experience of greenspaces that encourage children to learn more about the world. They can take a geography quiz or practice reciting and recognizing words in a new language. This education tool can be used in outdoor programs accessible to anyone, building an overall more vibrant and inclusive space. Features like the 'Fono DJ Booth' illustrated in Figure 2 offer an innovative outdoor experience, allowing individuals of all ages and abilities to creatively express their identity and engage with their community through music and play.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to interactive play structures, technology such as LED lights can be used to create interactive lighting displays that are synced to music or adjusted if someone walks by the structure.



**Figure 2: Example of the Fono DJ Booth. Photo credit: StudioMRC**

In addition to enhancing user experience, technology provides innovative solutions for municipal management. Advanced data analytics tools enable visitor flow tracking, while safety enhancement features like smart surveillance cameras and emergency alert systems significantly improve public safety. Street lighting adjustments based on real-time factors contribute to both

<sup>14</sup> <https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/ParksWeb020218.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://mrcrc.com/blog/fono-booth>

safety and energy efficiency. Efficient waste management tracking systems, such as solar-powered recycling bins with sensors, optimize waste collection routes, promoting a cleaner urban environment. While technology can be a benefit, it can also come with challenges around privacy concerns, especially if it is tracking the movement of people. It may be harder to achieve community buy-in for the use of some technologies due to privacy concerns such as tracking visitor flow.

In summary, incorporating technology into parks and greenspaces improves their functionality, accessibility, and attractiveness. The GSP will address these aspects to enhance visitor experience and safety, streamline City management, and establish guidelines for achieving energy efficiency.

## AMENITIES, SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Amenities, sports and recreational features enhance the greenspace experience to cater to a wide range of community needs. Amenities provide and support a variety of recreation, from more active recreation, such as sport and outdoor play, to more passive recreation, such as picnicking, sunbathing, fishing, and quiet contemplation.

To further underscore the significance of connected greenspace, it's crucial to emphasize how such linkages contribute to the overall quality of urban life. In the case of VMC (Vaughan Metropolitan Centre), the intention is to leverage various elements like trail connections, mews, and open spaces to interconnect greenspaces, thereby forming cohesive green corridors that traverse the urban fabric. As a part of the larger connected system, the parks and greenspaces in Vaughan can collectively shape the city's narrative as vibrant green corridors.

By creating inviting spaces equipped with amenities such as skating rinks, splash pads, and enhanced seating, the aim is to foster community engagement and recreation. Moreover, recognizing the importance of connectivity, concerted efforts are being made to improve trail connections between parks, enhancing accessibility for both pedestrians and cyclists. This strategic approach not only enhances the overall livability of the city but also promotes active lifestyles and sustainable modes of transportation, contributing to the well-being of residents and the vitality of the urban environment.

For example, the City of Markham recognizes the relationship between park spaces and neighbouring land uses in enhancing the urban environment. By integrating adjacent land uses, the City aims to enliven the edges of greenspaces with active urban activities and facilities, contributing to the overall improvement of outdoor spaces.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> City of Markham Parks Plan July 2022



Moreover, greenspaces provide space for passive recreation, such as exploring the city's vast network of trails, bird watching, family picnics, informal gatherings, and cultural activities in urban and community parks. These passive activities are highly desirable because they are especially inclusive to people of all ages and abilities.

The challenge of accessing recreation for older adults and individuals with disabilities due to inaccessible built environments is a pressing issue. To address these barriers, inclusive designs play a pivotal role in removing obstacles to play, ensuring that all children can participate fully. Legislative efforts in states like New York, New Hampshire, and Hawaii are actively working to enhance playground accessibility through measures such as mandating handicap-accessible equipment and providing grant programs for municipalities.

Additionally, accessible trails are recognized as essential resources for promoting physical activity, active transportation, and connecting with nature. Ensuring accessibility in trail design, construction, and maintenance is vital to creating inclusive recreational experiences for all users. Proposed legislation in states like Vermont, Massachusetts, and New York is geared toward expanding access to accessible trails. Initiatives include requiring a portion of newly constructed trails to be accessible and establishing working groups dedicated to maximizing trail accessibility for people with disabilities and older adults. These efforts collectively aim to create more inclusive and accessible recreational opportunities, fostering healthier and more vibrant communities for individuals of all abilities.<sup>17</sup>

The emphasis on sports and recreational activities within greenspaces is notable. Beyond traditional facilities, there's a keen interest in incorporating diverse options such as skateboard parks, disc golf, pickleball courts, and yoga spaces. Additionally, the popularity of outdoor rinks and dog parks highlights the community's evolving recreational preferences. There is also an increased demand for more flexible, multi-generational recreational spaces and multi-purpose facilities, considering the lack of available park space and funding. Many municipalities have responded to this demand by boosting unstructured activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, and utilizing greenspaces to learn new skills in one's own time.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, Vaughan's commitment to comprehensive planning is evident in the ATMP, which guides various City departments in providing open space areas, parks, recreation programs and facilities, and library services for both short and long-term objectives. Collaborative efforts involving Parks Development, Recreation Services, and Vaughan Public Libraries are dedicated to

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.astho.org/communications/blog/accessible-community-design-support-physical-activity-outdoor-recreation-people-all-ages-abilities/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/2023-09/masterplansstudies-Hamilton-Parks-Master-Plan.pdf>

updating the ATMP, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in guiding the provision of parks, recreation, and libraries from 2018 to 2023.<sup>19</sup>

In tandem with efforts to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in outdoor recreational spaces, the update of Vaughan's Official Plan is advocating for high-quality greenspaces. This initiative aims to improve both the quality and quantity of parks and naturalized greenspaces throughout the city. Moreover, the public engagement report emphasizes the importance of promoting active transportation and expanding opportunities for sustainable travel methods. Furthermore, the Official Plan will prioritize fostering the development of complete communities to foster a sense of community and cater to the needs of residents.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, Halifax and Edmonton have implemented Story Walk programs to engage their communities in outdoor literacy and recreation. In Halifax, Point Pleasant Park hosts a Story Walk trail, where families can enjoy reading a book while strolling through the scenic surroundings. Similarly, Edmonton's River Valley Park system features Story Walk installations along its trails, combining the joys of reading with the pleasures of outdoor exploration for residents of all ages. These programs, such as those implemented in Vaughan, involve placing laminated pages from children's books along designated greenspace trails, encouraging outdoor storytelling experiences and community engagement during challenging times.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, forward-thinking initiatives like Edmonton's City Farm demonstrate a commitment to addressing community needs through greenspaces. What began as a pilot project in response to food insecurity during the pandemic has evolved into an annual initiative, transforming fallow land into a garden to grow food for local food banks and partner agencies.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, Vaughan's Community Garden Policy outlines the operation of Allotment and Collective Community Gardens, providing further opportunities for greenspace utilization and community engagement.<sup>23</sup> In conclusion, evidence-based approaches to greenspace design and programming offer promising avenues for enhancing mental health and fostering community well-being. By embracing emerging trends and implementing innovative initiatives, municipalities can ensure sustained positive impacts on community health.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.vaughan.ca/about-city-vaughan/projects-and-initiatives/community-projects/active-together-master-plan>

<sup>20</sup> <https://forwardvaughan.ca/opr>

<sup>21</sup> Vaughan Public Libraries, StoryWalk Project

<sup>22</sup> City of Edmonton, "City Farm," [https://www.edmonton.ca/residential\\_neighbourhoods/gardens\\_lawns\\_trees/city-farm.aspx](https://www.edmonton.ca/residential_neighbourhoods/gardens_lawns_trees/city-farm.aspx).

<sup>23</sup> City of Vaughan, Community Garden Policy

The GSP will complement the ATMP by focusing more specifically on the greenspace system and the components included, whereas the ATMP will provide a focus on the facility and amenity components included in greenspaces.

## ACCESSIBILITY

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) sets out requirements for barrier-free public spaces in Ontario through the design of public spaces standard. For example, the design standards apply to recreational trails, picnic areas, outdoor play spaces and parking spaces. In addition, Annex H of the Canadian Standards Association provides accessibility guidelines to the Children's Playspaces and Equipment Standard that must be followed. An example of a universally designed playground is the playground at Earl Bales Park in Toronto illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Accessible playground in Earl Bales Park in Toronto.**  
Photo credit: [Accessible Playgrounds Ontario Website](#)

In Vaughan, accessible playgrounds can be found at Sonoma Heights Community Park, Thornhill Regional Park, and Mackenzie Glen District Park to name a few locations.

The call for increased accessibility involves providing barrier-free environments and universal design principles, with a commitment to creating spaces that cater to the diverse needs of children, seniors, and people of all abilities.<sup>24</sup> To meet the diverse needs of neurodiverse children,

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.rickhansen.com/sites/default/files/2020-03/sch-35913-guide-creating-accessible-play-spacesen2020web.pdf>

including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder and children with mobility challenges, Vancouver is planning to establish its first fully inclusive and accessible sensory park. The proposed park will feature sensory-rich play zones, inclusive and accessible equipment, and safe pathways, making it a flagship recreational space aligned with federal and provincial legislative goals.<sup>25</sup> Edmonton offers an interactive, mobile-friendly map for residents to locate specific types of parks, trails, washrooms and activities. Edmonton, in its Access Design Guideline (2021), suggests incorporating tactile maps and audio map systems, which are helpful for people with low vision.<sup>26</sup> Further to this, the City is undertaking the VMC Parks and Wayfinding Master Plan to guide the development of parks and open space in the VMC which includes a VMC Signage Pilot program that aims to make it easier to locate key destinations and institutions in this area.

The GSP aims to incorporate accessibility guidelines for parks and greenspaces, thereby enhancing the overall visitor experience by ensuring barrier free access and making visitors feel welcome.

## MAINTENANCE

The never-ending funding challenges municipalities face in capital and operating maintenance has led to some outside the box thinking about addressing the maintenance of greenspaces. This section provides some examples of how partnerships can be leveraged to relieve some of the maintenance burden on a single group.

Partnerships with Business Improvement Areas (BIA) may assist with park maintenance. While maintenance is usually provided by the municipality, a BIA may assist in the maintenance of special amenities within park space located in the BIA and may assist in the daily cleanup. The City of Toronto previously partnered with the Queen Street West BIA to improve placemaking for some of the parkettes in the area.

Richmond Hill actively engages its community in the preservation of open spaces through various stewardship programs, often in collaboration with the public sector and non-profit partners. One such initiative was the Park Ambassadors Program, where volunteer residents played a vital role in maintaining the cleanliness and safety of city parks.<sup>27</sup>

The Friends of Algonquin Park, a non-profit Canadian registered charity, coordinates the Adopt-A-Trail program. This program enlists volunteers to ensure the interpretive walking trails in Algonquin

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<sup>25</sup> <https://parkboardmeetings.vancouver.ca/2023/20231211/MOTION-CreatingVanFirstInclusiveAccessibleSensoryParkChildren-20231127.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.edmonton.ca/public-files/assets/document?path=PDF/AFE-AccessDesignGuide.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/shared-content/resources/Appendix-A\\_2022-Parks-Plan---2022-06-02---AODA.pdf](https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/shared-content/resources/Appendix-A_2022-Parks-Plan---2022-06-02---AODA.pdf)

Park remain in excellent condition, providing an attractive experience for park users. The Friends of Algonquin Park also focuses on educational and interpretive programs to nurture current and future stewards of the park.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, in Hamilton, the Adopt-a-Park program involves volunteers from various sectors, such as businesses, service groups, schools, and neighborhood associations. This program, operating year-round, aims to preserve greenspaces, ensuring parks, dog parks, woodlands, and trails are well-maintained for everyone's enjoyment.<sup>29</sup> Vaughan had a similar program that was wrapped into the Green Guardians program, however it was difficult to maintain volunteers.

A council advisory committee: 'Active Transportation and Trails Committee' in East Gwillimbury plays a crucial role in providing guidance and resources related to trail development and usage. The committee aligns its efforts with the Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan (ATTMP). The committee's objectives encompass collaborating with the East Gwillimbury Community, Parks, Recreation, and Culture staff to provide input on ATTMP updates. They identify annual trail development priorities, working closely with staff to ensure alignment with the ATTMP. Additionally, the committee supports staff in creating a long-term capital work plan, prioritizing projects such as property acquisition, new trail construction, existing trail improvements, and roadway development.<sup>30</sup>

Acknowledging the crucial role of well-maintained greenspaces, there is a dedicated emphasis on their upkeep and maintenance to guarantee they function at their best. Routine maintenance tasks encompass landscaping, waste management, and infrastructure checks. In summary, aiming to uphold parks' aesthetic charm, protect their ecological equilibrium, and ensure visitor safety, the GSP plans to introduce structured maintenance objectives tailored to the requirements of different parks and greenspaces. This initiative aims to sustain their appeal and safety for the community's enjoyment.

## EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

Fostering inclusive spaces accessible to individuals of all ages and abilities is a key objective in the design of greenspaces, emphasizing equity. Unlike traditional approaches that aim for equal distribution of greenspaces, this strategy tailors features and programs based on surrounding demographics, integrating greenspaces as vital components of diverse communities. Disparities in

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<sup>28</sup> [https://www.algonquinpark.on.ca/visit/recreational\\_activites/adopt-a-trail.php](https://www.algonquinpark.on.ca/visit/recreational_activites/adopt-a-trail.php)

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.hamilton.ca/home-neighbourhood/environmental-stewardship/community-environmental-initiatives/adopt-park>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.eastgwillimbury.ca/en/government/committees-boards-and-groups.aspx#Active-Transportation-and-Trails>

greenspace access, particularly evident in poorer and racialized neighborhoods, underscore the importance of this approach.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, safety and inclusivity for all park users, especially women, the 2SLGBTQI+ community, and BIPOC populations are paramount concerns. Research indicates that psychosocial conditions like safety, community engagement, psychological ownership, and sense of belonging are linked to intergroup contact within parks. Efforts to address racism and discrimination in park settings can enhance safety and promote positive interactions among diverse users. Collaborating with neighborhood organizations and organizing culturally relevant events are effective strategies for fostering community engagement and inclusivity.<sup>32</sup>

Acknowledging the significance of outdoor spaces for BIPOC communities is essential. Despite historical connections, systemic barriers have limited their access to nature. Encouragingly, initiatives like the Outdoors Empowered Network and grassroots organizations such as Outdoor Afro and Latino Outdoors work to make outdoor spaces more accessible and inclusive through community-led efforts. Regular outdoor activities not only provide wellness benefits but also empower individuals to express their authentic selves, contributing to the ongoing fight against social inequities.<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, creating space for the 2SLGBTQI+ community in outdoor settings is crucial for fostering inclusion and diversity. Community-led events and programs, such as the Sparking Change initiative in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, provide training, funding, and support for equity-deserving groups to transform parks into hubs of community development. These efforts include specialized events like 2-Spirit Storytelling and DIY Skate Crew, catering to the specific needs and interests of the 2SLGBTQI+ community.<sup>34</sup>

Additionally, it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of young teenage girls' presence and engagement in parks and greenspaces. Understanding the gender dynamics affecting their access to and enjoyment of public spaces is imperative. A well-designed park environment for adolescents

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<sup>31</sup> [https://d2023.ccpr.parkpeople.ca/uploads/202307\\_CCPR\\_EN\\_796fd3f604.pdf](https://d2023.ccpr.parkpeople.ca/uploads/202307_CCPR_EN_796fd3f604.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Samantha L. Powers et al., "Exploring the Conditions that Promote Intergroup Contact at Urban Parks," *Journal of Leisure Research* 53, no. 3 (2022): 426-449, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2021.1910089>

<sup>33</sup> "BIPOC Communities in the Outdoors: Insisting, Resisting, and Persisting," University of Victoria, accessed January 31, 2024, [https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/15723/Girgrah\\_Reem\\_MSW\\_2023%20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/bitstream/handle/1828/15723/Girgrah_Reem_MSW_2023%20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

<sup>34</sup> "Creating Space for the 2SLGBTQI+ Community in Canada's Outdoors," *Explore Magazine*, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://www.explore-mag.com/Creating-Space-for-the-2SLGBTQI-Community-in-Canadas-Outdoors>

should not only encourage visitation and physical activity but also accommodate the developmental needs of young girls.

The built environment plays a pivotal role in shaping youth development, health, and overall well-being. However, studies indicate that adolescent girls are less likely to utilize parks and other public spaces compared to their male counterparts. Addressing this disparity is vital for fostering inclusivity and ensuring equitable access to recreational opportunities.

In light of these findings, the report "Measuring Park Quality for Youth 13-19" (August 2021) offers two key recommendations for park planning:

- Recognizing and catering to the passive recreation needs of adolescent girls, thereby creating spaces that resonate with their interests and preferences.
- Utilizing quality assessments in conjunction with equity-based spatial analysis to enhance park provision in historically underserved neighborhoods. This approach aims to address disparities in access and ensure that all communities have access to high-quality greenspaces.<sup>35</sup>

Some considerations for the GSP have been noted below in a scan of other practices around equity in parks and greenspaces.

- Employ geospatial data to identify underserved areas that require increased park investments by layering different factors to develop a deeper understanding of distinct areas that may require targeted investment.<sup>36</sup>
- Several plans consider investment in under-invested or high-needs areas.<sup>37</sup> The City of Boston's Urban Forest Plan - Neighbourhood Strategies takes an equity-first approach to prioritize tree planting.<sup>38</sup> The plan provides a spatial analysis of each major neighbourhood to identify which areas are Environmental Justices Communities (economic and ethnic diversity), existing low canopy coverage, Heat Event Hours (where sun exposure is strong and lasting) and Historic Marginalization (housing discrimination and disinvestment). The sum of these analyses was then used to create priority zones for forestry investment.

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<sup>35</sup> [Measuring Park Quality for Youth 13-19 - Final Report \(website-files.com\)](#)

<sup>36</sup> <https://ccpr.parkpeople.ca/2023/stories/embedding-equity-in-park-planning>

<sup>37</sup> See Winnipeg Parks Strategy. City of Vancouver VanPlay and NYC Parks: Framework for an Equitable Future 2014

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2022/09/NeighborhoodStrategies\\_2022.pdf](https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2022/09/NeighborhoodStrategies_2022.pdf)



Through this structured approach to equity, Boston has a clarity of purpose extending beyond increasing tree canopy or diversity. The City of Toronto recently completed a tree equity study across Toronto's neighbourhoods. The areas identified with low equity scores have been prioritized for future planning.<sup>39</sup>

- Indigenous inclusion: Two examples where Indigenous inclusion enhanced the development of a park include Spirit Garden in Thunder Bay, which was co-designed with Indigenous communities as a gathering space for traditional ceremonies as well as non-Indigenous events.<sup>40</sup> In the second example, the Misaskwatomina Project in Saskatoon included volunteer plantings of Saskatoon berries with the intent to enable newer generations to experience traditional berry harvesting.<sup>41</sup> Both projects reveal the value of integrating groups within the process of developing the park. Another example in progress is the City of Kitchener, which is currently looking at incorporating Indigenous involvement into the design of the Huron Natural Area.

Furthermore, the City of Vaughan has undertaken various initiatives to promote inclusivity and address the needs of diverse communities within its area. The Older Adult Task Force, for instance, has provided recommendations aimed at supporting aging individuals with dignity, respect, and independence, thereby ensuring their full inclusion in all aspects of community life. This effort aligns with the City's Older Adult Recreation Strategy of 2016, which advocates for Vaughan's transition into an age-friendly city.

Additionally, the City has embarked on the Addressing Anti-Black Racism Community Engagement and Action Plan project to collaborate with Black individuals, organizations serving Black communities, and community leaders. The goal is to identify and overcome barriers hindering the Black community's meaningful participation in city services, programs, events, and overall city life. Vaughan's Reimagining Black Futures in Vaughan: Addressing Anti-Black Racism Action Plan 2024 includes objectives such as developing and maintaining spaces that honour the contributions of Black communities. It emphasizes involving Black artists and designers in the planning and developing public spaces.

Key actions outlined in this strategy pertinent to the GSP involve:

- Introducing inclusive signage in parks to showcase Black history, culture, and art.
- Regularly reviewing multilingual and culturally relevant signage every two years.

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-173560.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> <https://brookmcilroy.com/projects/spirit-garden/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://cpaws-sask.org/community-feature-kevin-wesaquate/>



- Engaging Black artists in designing public spaces through programs like the Public Art program and future Social Procurement Policy.<sup>42</sup>

By addressing systemic barriers and embracing diversity, urban parks can genuinely become inclusive spaces for all community members.

## BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

The new Science-Based Targets for Nature program announced at COP28 signifies a significant step towards addressing cities' environmental impact. This initiative recognizes cities as major drivers of environmental change and aims to guide them toward achieving net-zero emissions, biodiversity enhancement, and climate resilience. Greenspaces within urban areas play a crucial role in meeting these targets, serving as essential components of nature-positive cities. By providing guidance and support to cities worldwide, the program seeks to accelerate progress toward sustainability and ecological restoration, ensuring a healthier and more resilient future for all.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) emphasizes responsible land use, resilient ecosystems, and inclusive community engagement as critical for the longevity and health of greenspaces. By aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in local initiatives, cities can achieve a harmonious coexistence between human activities, environmental health, and biodiversity conservation, contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future.<sup>44</sup>

Numerous initiatives exemplify this commitment, ranging from biodiversity strategies and more sustainable building facilities. These efforts extend to sustainable practices such as green infrastructure, Low Impact Development (LID), and pesticide-free environments. Energy-efficient park facilities utilize renewable energy sources, optimize thermal efficiency, and incorporate smart controls, sensors, and water-efficient practices. Simultaneously, active user engagement through education and participation ensures a sustainable and eco-friendly urban environment. Additionally, naturalized landscapes bring multiple benefits, enhancing ecological function, biodiversity, and climate change resiliency while reducing long-term operational maintenance costs. Calgary's biodiversity plan provides a strategic direction for conserving biodiversity over the next decade, aligning with international, federal, and provincial initiatives.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.vaughan.ca/about-city-vaughan/accessibility-and-diversity/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/addressing-anti-black-racism>

<sup>43</sup> <https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/news/news/first-science-based-targets-for-cities/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.calgary.ca/content/dam/www/csps/parks/documents/planning-and-operations/biodiversity-report-2014.pdf>

Parks and greenspaces play a crucial role beyond recreational purposes; they are integral contributors to biodiversity and sustainability. On April 24, 2019, the Vaughan's Council declared a climate emergency, following which the council recommended a series of actions to address the climate emergency. These actions involved:

- Creating a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast
- Setting emission reduction target
- Developing a Local Action Plan
- Implementing the Local Action Plan

Moving forward, the GSP will continue to evolve, aligning with global initiatives to ensure a sustainable and eco-friendly urban environment in Vaughan. Through ongoing implementation and adaptation, the GSP will contribute to achieving nature-based targets, enhancing biodiversity, and promoting climate resilience within the city's greenspaces.

Vaughan's Natural Heritage System Study (2012) assessed the city's native biodiversity and recommended ecosystem targets. However, in light of the changing climate, it is increasingly important to consider non-native biodiversity targets. The [Urban Forest Management Plan | City of Vaughan](#) includes tailored strategies and actions to address specific pressures on Vaughan's urban forest, including those related to urban development, climate change and extreme weather, invasive pests and asset management.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, the Vaughan Official Plan, currently undergoing an Official Plan Review, will incorporate policies that encourage green infrastructure and energy efficiency to reflect overall Provincial and Council direction on climate change. The updated plan will also include updates to the Agri-Food Network and expand agriculture, agriculture-related, and on-farm diversified use policies. Cycling and active transportation policies will be added to help create complete communities and lower GHG emissions. Moreover, efforts will be made to integrate Indigenous Peoples' knowledge into the management of the environment and Natural Heritage Network. Close alignment with all other city-wide plans, strategies, and policies will ensure a comprehensive approach to sustainable development in Vaughan.

Below are some specific examples being employed in other locations, as well as some being employed in Vaughan:

- Using animals to help with weed control and reducing invasive species<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> <https://www.vaughan.ca/residential/parks-and-trees/forestry-operations/urban-forest-management-plan>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.calgary.ca/our-services/goats-targeted-grazing.html#:~:text=Goat%20grazing%20on%20Nose%20Hill,m%20vegetation%20has%20entered%20dormancy.>

- The City of Toronto has created informational booklets on biodiversity subjects<sup>48</sup>
- Naturalization and tree-planting initiatives<sup>49</sup>
- Urban agriculture as an effort to help develop sustainable local food systems.
- Community gardens and orchards as part of local food production<sup>50</sup>
- Cities developing a biodiversity action plan<sup>51</sup>

In addition to these initiatives, Vaughan implements its [Sustainability Metrics Program](#) as a fundamental aspect of the development application process, evaluating sustainability in new developments. This program utilizes a point-based system, wherein development proposals accrue points based on their adherence to various criteria and metrics across categories such as built environment, mobility, natural environment, parks, infrastructure/buildings, and innovation. Vaughan mandates minimum sustainability scores that development proposals must attain.

The GSP, working alongside the Natural Heritage System Study and the Urban Forestry and Woodland Management Plans, will incorporate measures for sustainable practices and biodiversity conservation within greenspaces.

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOCUS

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, greenspaces have emerged as crucial resources for promoting mental health and well-being. Recognized for their significant benefits, greenspaces offer opportunities for physical activity, socialization, and exposure to nature, providing relief from stress and enhancing overall well-being.

Research has increasingly highlighted the profound impact of greenspaces on mental health. One notable trend involves the integration of meditative spaces within greenspaces, catering to individuals seeking respite from urban stresses. Exposure to natural environments has been shown to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression, promoting psychological resilience.<sup>52</sup> Meditative spaces within greenspaces offer visitors opportunities for mindfulness practices, relaxation, and rejuvenation, contributing to improved mental health outcomes.

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<sup>48</sup> [https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/969e-Biodiversity\\_ButterfliesBook-Division-Planning-And-Development.pdf](https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/969e-Biodiversity_ButterfliesBook-Division-Planning-And-Development.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/GrowGreen/Pages/Valley-Renaturalization.aspx>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/recreation/facilities/community/community-orchard>

<sup>51</sup> <https://engage.hamilton.ca/biodiversityplan>

<sup>52</sup> Bratman, G. N., Hamilton, J. P., & Daily, G. C. (2012). The impacts of nature experience on human cognitive function and mental health. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1249(1), 118–136.

Another emerging practice gaining traction is forest bathing, rooted in Japanese tradition. Forest bathing involves immersing oneself in natural environments, such as forests, to promote mental and physical well-being. Studies have demonstrated its ability to reduce stress hormone levels, lower blood pressure, and enhance mood.<sup>53</sup>

Ontario healthcare providers have embraced the therapeutic benefits of greenspaces, offering "Parks Prescriptions" through programs like PaRx. Spending time in nature has been recommended to combat depression and enhance memory, creativity, and work satisfaction. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health advocates spending 15 to 20 minutes per day outdoors, emphasizing nature's nurturing effect on mental health.<sup>54</sup>

Municipalities across Canada are integrating innovative greenspace initiatives to enhance urban living. For instance, cities like Vancouver and Toronto have been embracing forest bathing areas within their parks and natural reserves. In Vancouver, places like Stanley Park offer designated forest bathing zones where residents and visitors can immerse themselves in the calming ambiance of the forest, experiencing the restorative benefits of nature. Similarly, Toronto's High Park features designated areas for forest bathing, providing urban dwellers with opportunities to reconnect with nature.

By considering the trends noted above, the GSP will aim to recognize new opportunities and identify new priorities for parkland provision. In this way, the priorities and recommendations advanced in the Plan will be evidence-based and respond to the dynamic needs across the entire city.

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<sup>53</sup> Li, Q. (2010). Effect of forest bathing trips on human immune function. *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine*, 15(1), 9–17.

<sup>54</sup> Ontario Ministry of Health, "Ontario Prescribing Parks Program," <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000073/ontario-prescribing-parks-program>.

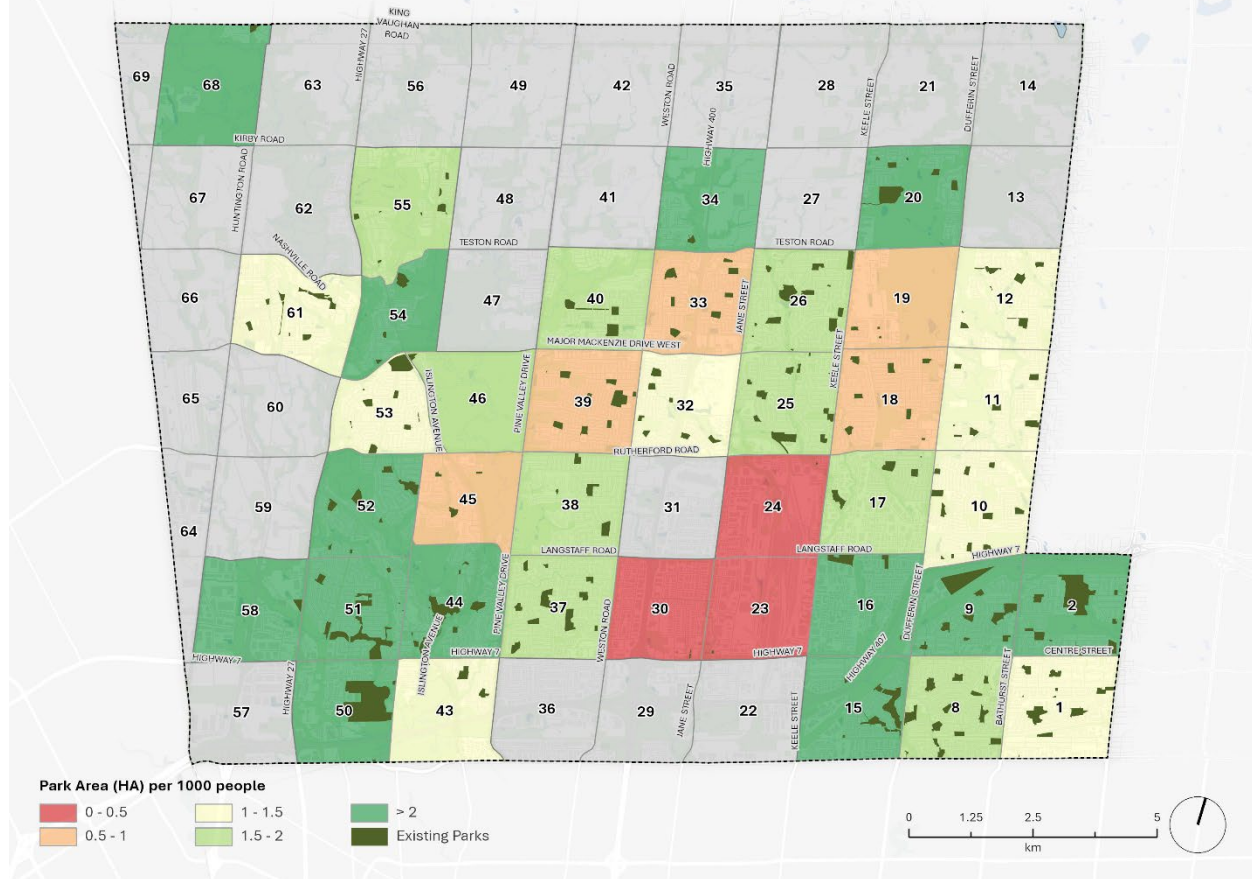
## PARKLAND SERVICE LEVELS

### VAUGHAN

The City of Vaughan is centrally located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Ontario. The York Region Official Plan 2022 is planning for significant growth, forecasting that Vaughan will reach a population of 575,900 by the 2051 planning horizon. While experiencing growth in new greenfield development areas, a noticeable shift towards higher-density developments and infill projects puts pressure on existing and proposed parkland.

The City faces challenges in achieving its Active Parkland Target of 2 hectares for every 1,000 people, established in the 2018 ATMP. The Canadian 2021 Census of Population indicates the City of Vaughan has a population of 323,103. Based on 635.6 hectares of parkland open to the public in 2024, the City's active parkland rate is below 1.97 ha/1000 people when population growth since 2021 is considered. Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes comprise 61% of the inventory, while District and Regional Parks represent the remaining 39%. The map in Figure 4 identifies the City's current parks area per thousand people for each block. The gray areas indicate locations where there is no parkland within the block. Blocks 30, 23, and 24 where the VMC is located, are highlighted as the most deficient. To address future demands, the City must continue its commitment to parkland acquisition and explore creative partnerships with the development sector and interested parties, considering the challenges posed by intensification and evolving population dynamics.

## Parkland Provisioning per Planning Block 2021



**Figure 4: 2021 park provisioning by planning block in hectares per 1000 people.**

## BENCHMARKING LOCATIONS

The table on the following page summarizes the existing and target service levels for a few municipalities, focusing on those within York Region. Yardstick and Park People measure parkland as parks, natural areas and greenspaces that are publicly accessible, owned, leased, or managed by the municipality. This excludes golf courses, school yards, cemeteries, sports stadiums, parking lots and POPS. However, even within parkland categories, each municipality has a different method of classifying and counting parkland related to service level targets. For example, most municipalities identified in Table 2, only include parks that can primarily be used for active recreation. At the same time, other municipalities such as Whitchurch-Stouffville may also include passive and natural areas in their parkland calculations. Caution should be used when comparing municipalities because parkland and targets may represent different measurements from each other.

A key outcome of the City of Vaughan's 2018 ATMP update was a projection of active parkland needs by 2031. This target was based on a recommended provision target of 2.0 hectares of active parkland per 1,000 population applied to future growth. The target provides the City with an indicator of the land base required to accommodate needed outdoor recreation opportunities and parkland across the City. However, it may lack the ability to provide adequate provisions in a localized context, especially in high-density areas.

However, for a quick comparison, most municipalities meet or exceed targets illustrated in Figure 5. The average target service level is just over 2.4 ha/1000. Target service levels range from as low as King's target of 1.09 ha/1000 to the highest level of 4 ha/1000 shared by Kingston, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. Markham reports the lowest existing service level (1.41 ha/1000 people). Correlating to these targets, the following are the definitions of parks for each of these municipalities:

**Kingston** – Park means any land owned, leased or controlled by the City, designated or used as parkland or as a trail, including gardens, playgrounds, sports fields and beach areas.<sup>55</sup>

**Newmarket** – The Parks and Open Space System consists of major parks, conservation areas, trail systems, and river corridors.<sup>56</sup>

**East Gwillimbury** – These areas are intended to serve as distinctive destinations, attracting residents from both urban and rural areas within the town and visitors from beyond its boundaries. Parklands come in varying sizes, typically encompassing large blocks of land, and their size is determined based on the intended programs and functions of the facilities to be included. Additionally, parklands may feature civic, historic, cultural, recreational, and heritage significance.<sup>57</sup>

**Markham** – The parkland system in Markham includes parks and open spaces, multi-use trails and pathways, valley lands, vegetation protection zones, and natural heritage features.<sup>58</sup>

When comparing Vaughan's existing and target parkland service level target to neighbouring municipalities, Vaughan compares favourably with a higher level of parkland per 1000 population.

Although this table shows most municipalities are meeting or exceeding targets, many report they are finding it challenging to meet parkland dedication requirements as their population grows and

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<sup>55</sup> City of Kingston - Parks & Recreation Bylaw - 2009-76

<sup>56</sup> Official Plan of Newmarket, 2009

<sup>57</sup> [Microsoft Word - 2098Parks Design Manual-dec.doc \(eastgwillimbury.ca\)](#)

<sup>58</sup> City of Markham Official Plan, 2014



other municipal pressures, such as providing land for affordable housing (Park People's 2023 Canadian City Parks Report). The *More Homes Built Faster Act* of 2022 will make it harder to meet targets due to decreased parkland dedication and payment-in-lieu requirements. Measuring parkland in the future will become more challenging as municipalities begin to include non-traditional parkland to meet the demands and needs of current and future residents.

**Table 2: Parkland Service Level Benchmarking**

\*Open Space definition for municipalities in which open spaces are inclusive within the Target Service Level:

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Existing Service Level (hectares/1000)	Target Service Level (hectares/1000)	Open Space Inclusion
Aurora	62,057	2.7	2	Exclusive
Brampton	656,480	1.83	1.6	Exclusive
East Gwillimbury	34,637	-	4	Exclusive
Georgina	47,642	4.08	2.25	Exclusive
Hamilton	569,353	2.03	2.1	Exclusive
King	27,333	2.16	1.09	Exclusive
Kingston	132,485	5.1	4	Exclusive
London	543,551	2.2	2.2	Exclusive
Markham	338,503	1.41	1.4	Exclusive
Mississauga	717,961	2.28	1.2	Exclusive
Newmarket	87,942	-	4	Exclusive
Ottawa	1,017,449	2.35	2	Exclusive
Richmond Hill	202,022	1.7	1.37	Exclusive
Toronto	2,794,356	1.33	-	Exclusive
Vaughan	323,103	1.97	2	Exclusive
Whitchurch-Stouffville	49,864	1.84	2	Inclusive

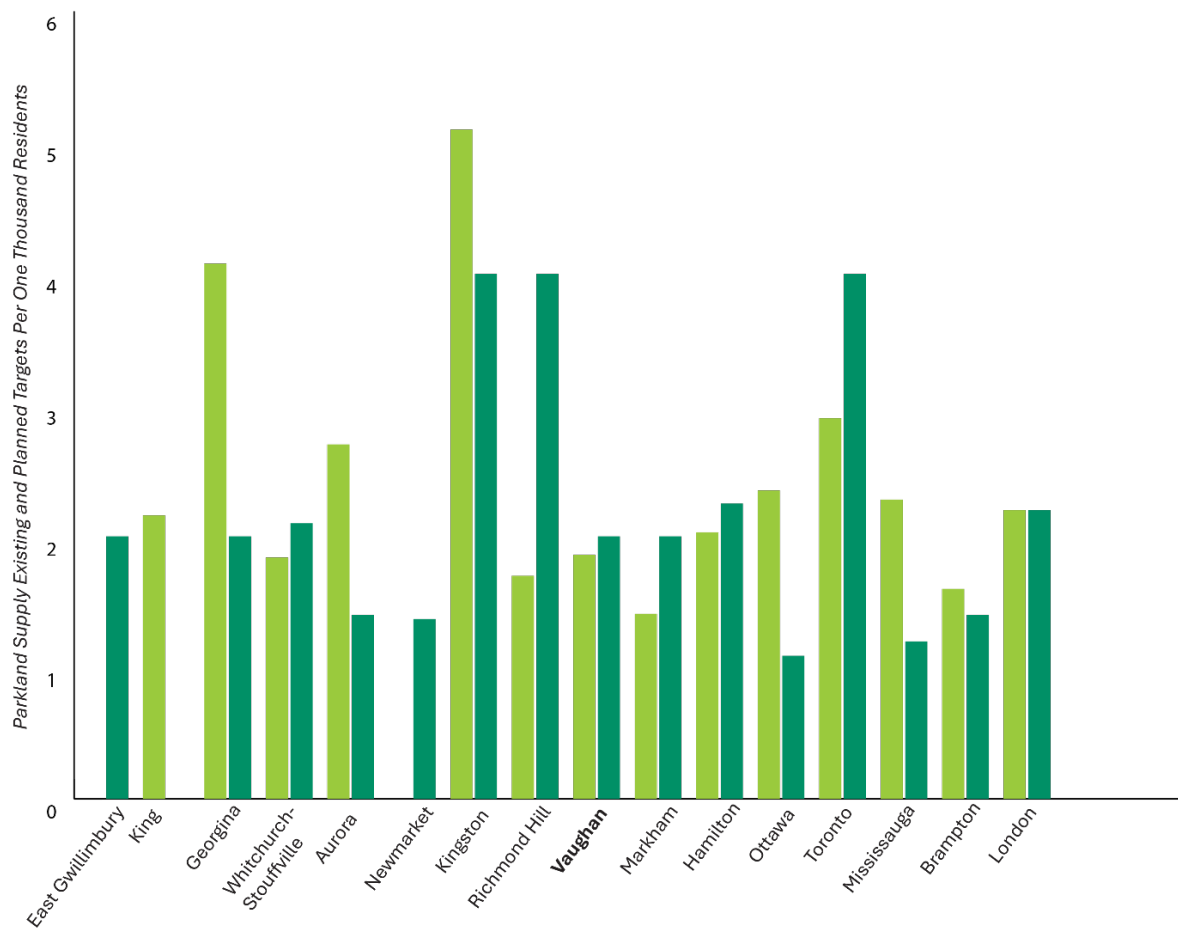
Notes: Georgina - Open Space Areas – are primarily for passive recreation. They may be developed but should generally be publicly accessible.



Whitchurch-Stouffville—Regional/municipal/local: undeveloped lands accessible to the public that contain significant natural features (e.g., woodlands, wetlands, watercourses, wildlife habitat). These spaces may include pedestrian pathways, bicycle trails, community gardens, open lawn areas, and remnant parcels of open space land.

Open space inclusion was determined through the following plans for each municipality.

- Town of Aurora Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2023
- City of Brampton Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2024
- Town of East Gwillimbury – Community Park, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan, 2009
- Official Plan, Town of Georgina, 2020
- Hamilton Parks Master Plan, 2023
- Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan, King Township, 2019
- City of Kingston – Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2022
- City of London, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019
- City of Markham Parks Plan, 2022
- Mississauga Parks Plan, 2022
- Parkland Policy Development Manual – Newmarket, 2012
- Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, Ottawa, 2022
- City of Richmond Parks Plan, 2022
- City of Toronto 2022 Parkland Strategy Refresh
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure & Community Services Master Plan, 2022



**Figure 5: Parkland Supply Existing and Planned Targets, Where Available, Per One Thousand Residents**

## PARKLAND ACQUISITION TOOLS

As the City focuses on accommodating more population growth in the existing urban area rather than the greenfield area, it will become more challenging to acquire parkland through the dedication of land. Smaller land parcels in the urban area will make achieving a suitable amount of land dedication in one location difficult. Additionally, high property values in urban areas will limit the City's ability to purchase land for park purposes.

**Table 3: Parkland Acquisition Tools Benchmarking**

<b>Provisioning/ Acquisition Tool</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Example municipalities that use this tool (<i>not exhaustive</i>)</b>
Payment-in-lieu	A financial mechanism in Ontario is where developers contribute a fee instead of providing physical parkland.	In Ontario, municipal regulations and policies require developers in high-density projects to pay a predetermined fee. This fee is used to acquire or enhance parkland and greenspaces, especially when on-site provision is impractical.	Vaughan,  Toronto, Markham, Ottawa
Community Benefits Charge	Funding mechanisms are where municipalities designate an area of the municipality where high-density developments are charged a fee.	Through a Community Benefits Charges By-Law, a fee is imposed on higher-density development to pay for capital improvements not covered by development charges or for parkland in excess of parkland covered under the Parkland Dedication By-law.	Toronto, Markham, Ottawa, Mississauga
Repurpose Surplus Municipal Lands	Assessing City-owned properties for parkland conversion, optimizing municipal lands, and increasing parkland availability.	Partnerships with public institutions (e.g., universities), Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) for park expansion, and collaborations with organizations like Create TO, Waterfront Toronto, Metrolinx, school boards, and "friends of parks."	Vaughan,  Toronto, Markham, Kingston, Richmond Hill, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, King

<b>Provisioning/ Acquisition Tool</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Example municipalities that use this tool (<i>not exhaustive</i>)</b>
Targeted Priority Acquisition	A real estate strategy prioritizing park acquisition based on specific criteria aligned with City goals.	Proactive city-wide land acquisition, focusing on parcels for parkland or other services to free up existing land for parks.	Toronto, Ottawa
Strata Parks	Acquisition of parks through a strata ownership agreement, often involving a park above underground parking.	It involves complexities with underground facilities, maintenance, and legal agreements between landowners.	Markham, Vaughan
POPS - Privately Owned Public Spaces	POPS - Privately Owned Public Spaces on private land, often emerging through development processes.	Useful in areas undersupplied with parks, often through density bonusing. Challenges include a lack of long-term City ownership and control.	Toronto, Vaughan
Land Purchases, Land Exchanges	Land purchases are funded through the parkland payment-in-lieu reserve, grants, or commonly through taxes.	Funds from the parkland payment-in-lieu reserve, grants, or taxes are utilized to acquire new land or exchange existing ones for community needs.	Markham, Aurora, East Gwillimbury, King, Vaughan
Off-Site Conveyance	Developers provide required parkland by dedicating or acquiring land at another location they own.	The city may determine suitable alternative locations that allow developers to dedicate parkland from other city-owned lands. Risks include the necessity of payment-in-lieu within the proposed development community.	Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Aurora, King, Newmarket,

Additional parkland acquisition tools used by municipalities are listed below:

1. Open/ Natural Space Conveyance

This includes reallocating natural spaces through active land securement, prioritizing staff resources using biological criteria and opportunities for potential “value-add” alignment with other City priorities.

Concerning the conveyance/dedication of the Natural Heritage System, this may also depend on whether the lands are within TRCA's regulated area. This tool includes obtaining key parcels of valley corridors and environmentally significant lands through open space conveyance as part of the development/redevelopment process. Both purchase and/or donation with tax credits can be provided to landowners if conveyed to the City outside of the development/redevelopment process. Such parcels include woodlands, wetlands, crests of slopes, and watercourses.

Examples of municipalities that use this tool are the City of Vaughan and the Town of Aurora.

2. Land Trusts

This acquisition tool involves identifying opportunities to partner with land trusts strategically positioned to acquire parcels of valley corridors and environmentally significant lands. This can be achieved through purchases or donations with tax credits and with conservation easements. In Vaughan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust is an example of a land trust within the area. The Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy are two other examples of land trusts that operate in proximity to Vaughan. Partnerships with land trusts can provide opportunities to enhance the connectivity and ecological value of the overall open space network.

Each land trust has a specific mandate which determines the type of land that should be acquired. Most land trusts are actively trying to protect the conservation of land for ecological reasons with some also providing opportunities for passive recreation such as trails and view lookouts.

3. Donation

In some cases, private landowners donate lands for linear and Natural Area Parks to the City. Land development applicants are encouraged to donate these lands as well as land encompassing other environmentally significant areas. In urban areas, land donations are encouraged to help create pocket parks and urban squares.

An example of municipalities that use this tool is the Town of Aurora.

4. Reciprocal Agreements

Reciprocal agreements between the City and schoolboards benefit both parties by allowing the use of each other's parks and recreation facilities during off-peak times. This tool requires coordination between the parties and limits flexibility. However, it has the potential to create long-term capital and operating cost savings compared to the city's construction and provision of equivalent amenities alone.

An example of municipalities that use this tool are the City of Burlington, City of Toronto.

5. Shared Use Agreements and Easements

An agreement with a landowner to allow public access to an existing open space (that is not owned by the municipality) for recreational or mobility purposes. Typically, these agreements and easements are applied to other forms of 'open space' to increase use and access, like schoolyard use outside school hours and pathways along hydro and utility corridors.

The City of Hamilton, the City of Burlington, the Town of Milton, and the City of Guelph are examples of municipalities that use this tool.

6. Expropriation

Expropriation is the taking of land expropriation authority in the exercise of its statutory powers. The expropriating authority (the Crown or any person empowered by statute to expropriate land) must compensate the owner for the land taken. Expropriation, if contested, can be a time-consuming process, and it requires the City to identify the public benefit served. The same challenge of finding the necessary funding also exists as it does with a regular land purchase.

Examples of municipalities that use this tool: All municipalities, however, use it most for road infrastructure and not as a direct means to acquire parkland.

7. Land Bank

A land bank is a city's strategic tool for acquiring land opportunistically, possibly for future park use or resale. It may also involve proactive acquisition in key areas, funded by projected payment-in-lieu revenues from future development. The bank enables the city to capitalize on current land values while bearing the risk of market fluctuations.

Examples of municipalities that use this tool: City of Markham

## PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT

The first phase of engagement allowed interested parties, City Council members, and residents to provide their perspective on parks and greenspaces and how they can be improved as the city's population continues to grow and change and provincial legislation changes how greenspace is provided and funded. Phase 1 engagement of the Vaughan GSP aimed to develop a shared vision for the future provision of parks and greenspaces in Vaughan by listening and learning about what matters to the community. Through this process, the goal was to understand how residents currently use Vaughan's parks and greenspaces and their future needs.

The engagement components with the public included in-person pop-up events, community walks, online surveys, and online interactive maps. Feedback from these tactics highlighted the importance of park connectivity and the preservation of natural spaces while suggesting new park amenities and activities. The online survey received 206 responses, while the two pop-up engagements in each ward, for a total of 10 pop-ups, received 189 participants.

Interviews with City Council members focused on legislation and policy by improving parkland acquisition, ensuring proper funding in a changing legislative environment, and tying park supply with population growth. The interviews with the City staff members provided details on existing park policies, the difficulties in maintaining parkland, the disconnects between the public and the City, and the financial tools available for supplying and maintaining parks.

Altogether, this feedback provides a comprehensive source of information that will help shape a multi-faceted strategy for shaping the future of Vaughan's parks and greenspace. A more detailed summary of the phase 1 engagement is included in Appendix 2, submitted under separate cover.

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The information and ideas provided throughout are intended to provide background information on Vaughan's existing parks and greenspace framework compared to similar municipalities. These ideas will be reviewed alongside feedback from the engagement and insight from analysis on the City's park and open space network. The next steps will include the continuation of the Task reports and build out of the GSP structure.



## APPENDIX 1 – BENCHMARKING

Benefits of green space: climate change mitigation and adaptation, health, recreation, etc.

Benchmarking Cities	Non-quantifiable benefits (quantifiable benefits not identified)	Other information source	Evidence(s)
Toronto	a) Contribution to the economy: growing Toronto needs top parks for talent retention, investments, and property value boost. b) Boosting Tourism: parks boost tourism, events, businesses, accommodations, and restaurants, fostering local economy. c) Climate change resiliency: parks enhance city resilience to extreme weather and climate change. They absorb stormwater, prevent flooding, and reduce heat impact. d) Health and wellbeing: Programmed sports, active play, community events, nature play, and biodiversity support the health and well-being for people, wildlife, and environment. e) Equity: Parks play a significant role in areas of need, removing barriers to create equal opportunities to use and benefit from public services, facilities and spaces.	-	-
Markham	<b>Physical Health</b> Park access is linked to increased physical activity, lowering sedentary-related chronic illness.	- Kaczynski et al. (2009) Association of Park Size, Distance, and Features With Physical Activity in Neighborhood Parks <a href="https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2007.129064">https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2007.129064</a>  - Sherer (2019) The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237254032_The_Benefits_of_Parks_Why_America_Needs_More_City_Parks_and_Open_Space">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237254032_The_Benefits_of_Parks_Why_America_Needs_More_City_Parks_and_Open_Space</a>  -Roemmich et al. (2014) Association of Access to Parks and Recreational Facilities with the Physical Activity of Young Children <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6860698_Association_of_Access_to_Parks_and_Recreational_Facilities_with_the_Physical_Activity_of_Young_Children">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6860698_Association_of_Access_to_Parks_and_Recreational_Facilities_with_the_Physical_Activity_of_Young_Children</a>  - Orsega-Smith et al. (2006) The Interaction of Stress and Park Use on Psycho-physiological Health in Older Adults <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287732729_The_Interaction_of_Stress_and_Park_Use_on_Psycho-physiological_Health_in_Older_Adults">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287732729_The_Interaction_of_Stress_and_Park_Use_on_Psycho-physiological_Health_in_Older_Adults</a>	- Parks within 1 km predicted significant neighborhood physical activity. - access to places for physical activity combined with informational outreach produced a 48.4% increase in frequency of physical activity. -both young children as well as older youth have increased levels of physical activity when neighbourhoods had access to more parks. -that park-based activities positively influenced moods, stress levels, and overall health of the study participants (older adults)
	<b>Psychological Health &amp; Development</b> Physical activity enhances mental health, explaining park-related positive effects. Parks also facilitate passive recreation, relaxation, reading, meditation, and socializing.	Sherer (2019) The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space <a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237254032_The_Benefits_of_Parks_Why_America_Needs_More_City_Parks_and_Open_Space">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237254032_The_Benefits_of_Parks_Why_America_Needs_More_City_Parks_and_Open_Space</a>	- contact with the natural environment has been shown to improve psychological health alongside physical health - Exercise boosts learning capacity. Recreation for kids fosters physical and psychological growth.
	<b>Healthy, Safe &amp; Complete Communities</b> Parks enrich communities, appealing to residents, businesses, and visitors. Social, health, and community benefits are well-documented. Parks foster community, safety, activity, development, and environment.	Sparkling Change, Park People (2017a) <a href="https://parkpeople.ca/cms/custom/uploads/2019/05/sparkingchangereport.pdf">https://parkpeople.ca/cms/custom/uploads/2019/05/sparkingchangereport.pdf</a>	by providing an open, accessible venue that promotes social gathering, cultural exchange, and shared storytelling, parks are important in developing a sense of community, safety, and belonging.  access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to juvenile delinquency
Hamilton (Content from the draft Hamilton Parks Plan)	<b>Mental Health Support</b>	(National Recreation and Park Association, 2015; Penbrooke, 2020). <a href="https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/088934475b124d349b76becbbe7bfc0b/2020-nrs-book-of-abstracts.pdf">https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/088934475b124d349b76becbbe7bfc0b/2020-nrs-book-of-abstracts.pdf</a>	Parks have gained recognition for their significant mental health benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parks offer opportunities for physical activity, socialization, and nature exposure, relieving stress and improving overall well-being

Benefits of green space: climate change mitigation and adaptation, health, recreation, etc.

Benchmarking Cities	Non-quantifiable benefits (quantifiable benefits not identified)	Other information source	Evidence(s)
-	<b>Connections with Nature</b> Parks with green spaces foster nature connection. Demand for outdoor activities increases. Benefits include ecology, cost efficiency, and climate resilience. Challenges include design, safety, species care.	-	-
Ottawa	<b>Health Benefits</b> Parks offer diverse health advantages: stress reduction, mental wellness, temperature regulation, pollution filtration, UV protection, noise reduction, stormwater management. Added perk: higher physical activity levels.	The Building Blocks for a Healthy Ottawa: New Official Plan Discussion Paper <a href="https://engage.ottawa.ca/8204/widgets/36458/documents/60746">https://engage.ottawa.ca/8204/widgets/36458/documents/60746</a>	Children with a park playground located within 1 kilometre of their home were five times more likely to have healthy weights. Low-income neighbourhoods with lots of greenspace had fewer deaths associated with circulatory diseases, and children had healthier weights.
Aurora	Parks enhance community success and well-being, supporting social, economic, and environmental priorities. Accessible leisure options, promoting wellbeing and inclusion are vital for health and prosperity.  Specifically: a) Improve mental and physical wellbeing b) Foster social engagement and equity c) Strengthen families and communities d) Connect with nature e) Develop critical thinking skills f) Enhance resilience to climate change g) Yield economic benefits.	-	-
Newmarket	a) Parks offer inclusive play opportunities for all ages, featuring playgrounds, sports courts, and cultural spaces.b) Physical activity in parks fosters healthier lifestyles, diminishing risks of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.c) Parks serve as hubs for recreational, cultural, and social pursuits, enhancing mental well-being and creativity.d) Proximity to parks encourages increased physical activity, benefiting individual health and curbing healthcare costs.e) Arts and cultural activities in parks contribute to mental health and stimulate creativity.f) Flexible, drop-in leisure options cater to busy schedules and limited free time.	-	-
Calgary	a) Crucial Urban Element: Vital for shaping urban character and enhancing overall quality of life. b) Diverse Acquisition Focus: Parks prioritize land for recreation, environmental conservation, and urban design, emphasizing both public and private importance. c) Multi-functional River Valleys: Valleys serve diverse roles, acting as hubs for recreation, environmental conservation, and urban design. d) Economic Contribution: Open spaces significantly boost Calgary's economy by increasing home values and providing ecological services. e) Non-Motorized Transportation Hub: Regional pathways facilitate non-motorized transit, connecting community elements. f) Utility Consideration: Utilities like stormwater facilities are secondary in specific zones, prioritizing recreational, environmental, and urban design aspects.	-	-

**Benefits of green space: climate change mitigation and adaptation, health, recreation, etc.**

Benchmarking Cities	Non-quantifiable benefits (quantifiable benefits not identified)	Other information source	Evidence(s)
Edmonton	Ecology: Open spaces support healthy and resilient ecosystems, sustaining and enhancing ecological function. Celebration: Open spaces connect people by providing places for communities to gather and thrive. Wellness: Open spaces promote healthy living and foster well-being through diverse recreation and transportation options.	-	-
East Gwillimbury	Improves personal health and reduction of healthcare costs Promotes community social cohesion Increases community spirit and pride Improves quality of life Reduces anti-social behaviours Strengthens families and neighbourhoods Improves work performance and productivity Prolongs independent living Reduces stress and better achieves balance in life	-	-

Parkland Funding and Acquisition Tools

Benchmarking Cities	Conveyance Tools	Funding Tools	Acquisition Tools	Non-acquisition tools
Toronto	For residential uses, land equal to 5% of the land to be developed For non-residential uses, land equal to 2% of the land to be developed Alternative rate (residential purposes and in a parkland acquisition priority area): Convey the greater of: 1) 5% of land or 2) 0.4 hectares for each 300 dwelling units (and specific criteria for site size and if the land is designated as a TOD) Parkland priority areas are areas with 1)low parkland provision (less than 12 m2 per person in 2033); Low park supply (less than 1.5 Ha total park space within 500 m in 2016); Impact of growth (areas projected to have over 5,000 people/Ha in 2033); and Low income residents (25% or more of residents are low income in 2016)	1) Cash-in-lieu: May require payment of cash-in-lieu of land if size, shape or location of land is deemed unsuitable (and additional maximums for value of cash in lieu based on site size and if land is designated as a TOD) Calculation not stated Allocation can be used for acquisition or improvements Split equally between acquisition and improvements and for both half directly towards acquisition or improvements within the district the funds were generated 2) Section 37 (community benefit charges) 3) Development Charges Bylaw	Cash in lieu (described in funding tools) Land Acquisition Reserve Fund - acquire surplus school property Surplus utility corridors - reuse of surplus hydro and rail corridors declared surplus for public use (such as parks)	Cash in lieu (described in funding tools) Partnerships with public institutions with open spaces i.e. universities Partner with TRCA as owners and operators of parks and interested in expanding, improving and connecting park space Other partnerships: CreateTO, Waterfront Toronto, Metrolincx, schoolboards, "friends of parks"
Markham	Condition of development or redevelopment; Commercial or Industrial - 2%; Not commercial or industrial - 5%; Alternative for residential - one ha for 300 dwellings	(1) Cash-in-lieu - payment equal to the value of the land, or combination of land and money as required by Council (2) Funding for parks and open space improvements will be in accordance with the Development Charges Bylaw (3) Servicing and grading requirements funded and provided by the development according to the subdivision or site plan agreements (4) Developers may fund park design and improvements if authorized by Council	(1) Acquisition of parks and open space will take advantage of the Planning Act (2) In intensification areas and established neighbourhoods, cash-in-lieu of parkland reserves may be needed to acquire vacant lands or built lands that can be redeveloped as public parkland to meet dedication requirements (3) May accept conveyance of land above private property as a strata park which may contribute to the conveyance requirement, at a discounted value by Council discretion. (4) Lands in Markham which are short of established parkland targets will be considered priority areas for acquisition and improvement (5) Alternative approaches include: (a) Land purchases (b) Land exchanges (c) Community benefits charges in accordance with section 10.2.4 of the Official Plan - may be relevant to funding and not acquisition (c) Partnerships and/or joint provisions of land (d) Promotion of parkland donations and conservation easements	-

Parkland Funding and Acquisition Tools

Benchmarking Cities	Conveyance Tools	Funding Tools	Acquisition Tools	Non-acquisition tools
Hamilton	Condition of development, redevelopment, subdivision, or consent: lands to be developed for residential: (a) a single detached dwelling in rural area - 2.5% of 0.405ha (1 acre) (b) residential purposes - <20 units per ha - 5%; 20-75 uph - 1 ha per 300 dwelling units; 75 to 200 uph 0.6 ha per 300 dwelling units; >120 uph - 0.5 ha per 300 dwelling units; maximum 5% for lower density developments lands to be developed for: (a) commercial - 2%, including golf courses or driving ranges (b) non commercial or residential - 5% (c) multiple uses - prorated of dedication rates by use or density Expansion - for residential based on the additional dwelling units proposed for commercial, where no land has previously been dedicated - 2% x pro rata proportion of floor area addition to total floor area Redevelopment - change of density, demolition/new construction - same principles as expansion	Community sourced capital funding partnership program for parks and recreational amenities: *does not appear to be for new parks* but must be in alignment with the City’s Recreation Masterplan, Recreational Trails Masterplan, Parks Masterplan, etc (theoretically could apply to obtaining new parks) -non city funding for capital projects that are aligned with the City's strategic directives -must serve the public interest and be: a) an outdoor recreational amenity located on a City-owned park b) open and accessible to all residents	from Parks and Open Space Development Guide: Where no Park Block is present in a proposed subdivision, a parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu is determined	-
Ottawa	a) Planning act's parkland dedication limitations:  1) Commercial/industrial: Max 2% of land area for dedication. 2) Other development: Max 5% of land area, including residential. 3) Residential alternative rate: Up to 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units. 4) City needs by-law and policies for alternative rate. 5) Policies must align with parks plan assessing local needs. Cash-in-lieu of Parkland (CIL/CILP) as alternative	Cash-in-lieu of parkland (CILP) payment (Cash-in-lieu of Parkland (CILP) Funds Policy)  Development Charges (DC)  Community Benefits Charge (CBC)  Tax Support	Targeted real estate acquisitions  The city requests land for parks when a lot is minimum of 4000sqm, the city can request that 10% become dedicated as parkland. When a lot is smaller than 4000sqm the city takes cash-in-lieu. Occurs on a lot by lot basis.  Disposal of City owned land  Maximizing new acquisitions (more smaller, fewer large)	-
Edmonton	Use full City authority in the provision of environmental reserve, municipal reserve, or municipal or school reserve, or cash-in-lieu in accordance with the Municipal Government Act (10% of lands for MR, SR, and/or MSR)	-	-	-

Parkland Funding and Acquisition Tools

Benchmarking Cities	Conveyance Tools	Funding Tools	Acquisition Tools	Non-acquisition tools
Kingston	<p><b>Parkland Dedication</b></p> <p><b>a) Residential Uses:</b></p> <p>1) Density ≤ 30 Dwelling Units per hectare: 5% of Gross Land Area to City Parkland</p> <p>2) Density &gt; 30 Dwelling Units per hectare: 1.2 hectares per 1,000 people, max 1 hectare per 300 Dwelling Units, up to 10% of Gross Land Area.</p> <p>3) Corridor &amp; Centres: 0.6 hectares per 1,000 people, max 5% of Gross Land Area.</p> <p><b>b) Commercial or Industrial Uses:</b></p> <p>1) 2% of Gross Land Area to City.</p> <p><b>c) Long-Term Care Home:</b></p> <p>1) Development/Redevelopment: Requirements to be defined.</p> <p><b>d) Mixed Uses:</b></p> <p>1) Mixed uses on a site: Conveyance based on proportional allocation to each use.</p> <p>2) Mixed uses within a building: Conveyance based on proportional Gross Floor Area allocation to each use at rates.</p>	<p>Cash - in - Lieu alternative exists when:</p> <p>a) No opportunity exists to provide suitable parkland;</p> <p>b) Applicable when land is too small, unsuitable, or impractical.</p> <p>c) If City identifies more suitable land.</p> <p>d) Relevant in cases like waterfront, well-served areas, or rural severance.</p> <p>e) Payment equals land value; goes to Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Reserve Fund.</p> <p>f) If conveyed land falls short, balance is met with cash-in-lieu payment.</p> <p>g) Payment adjusted if Development doesn't proceed within a year post site plan approval.</p>	<p>a) Prioritize active parkland via development process and dedication.</p> <p>b) Explore alternative methods for natural parkland in development.</p> <p>c) Focus on parkland type within service areas.</p> <p>d) Follow Waterfront Master Plan for strategic waterfront parcels.</p> <p>e) Seek alternatives if development-based acquisition is restricted.</p> <p>f) Match land type with parkland service areas.</p> <p>g) Collaborate with school boards for shared campuses and amenities.</p>	-
Richmond Hill	<p>By-law 123-22 - Parkland Dedication for commercial, industrial, and residential purposes:</p> <p>1) Commercial/Industrial: 2% of land or 2% of land value.</p> <p>2) Residential: 5% of land or 5% of land value.</p>	-	<p>a) Alternative Parkland Rate for residential use with Official Plan policies:</p> <p>1) Parkland Dedication: 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units.</p> <p>2) Cash-in-Lieu: 1 hectare value per 500 dwelling units or lesser rate as specified by bylaw.</p> <p>POPS</p> <p>Parkland with Stratified Title</p> <p>Off-site Conveyance</p> <p>Master Parks Agreements</p> <p>Collaboration with school boards</p>	-



Parkland Funding and Acquisition Tools

Benchmarking Cities	Conveyance Tools	Funding Tools	Acquisition Tools	Non-acquisition tools
Aurora	<p>Parkland Conveyance and Payment in Lieu:</p> <p>a) Non-Residential Purposes: 1)Commercial/Industrial: 2% of Land Area or payment in lieu, unless exempt. 2) Other Non-Residential: 5% of Land Area or payment in lieu, unless exempt.</p> <p>b) Mixed-Use Development: 1) Proportional land/payment based on mixed-use ratio.</p> <p>c) Residential Development: 1) Parkland dedication: 5% of Land Area or 1 hectare per 600 Net Dwelling Units, whichever is greater. 2) Alternative: Payment in lieu at 5% of Land Area or 1 hectare per 1000 Net Dwelling Units, whichever is greater.</p> <p>d) Strata Parks and POPS: 1) Acceptance of Strata Parks at 50% credit based on usage and ownership. 2) Privately Owned Public Spaces accepted at 100% credit, subject to legal agreements for maintenance, programming, and operations.</p>	-	<p>a) Adopt a "parkland-first" approach prioritizing land dedication over cash-in-lieu during development.</p> <p>b) Encourage on-site parkland dedication and front-end acquisition of parkland.</p> <p>c) Parkland required for developments creating park blocks ≥ 0.35 hectares, expanding existing sites, or meeting specific criteria.</p> <p>d) Cash-in-lieu still considered for unique cases (e.g., higher density or restricted sites).</p> <p>e) Dedicated lands must meet Town's satisfaction, excluding restricted areas.</p> <p>Alternative parkland acquisition strategies:</p> <p>a) Municipal land purchase or lease (priority areas, Oak Ridges Moraine), funded by cash reserves, taxes, grants, etc.</p> <p>b) Land exchanges or swaps</p> <p>c) Off-site parkland conveyance (preferably in priority areas)</p> <p>d) Creating a Parks Fund (donations for acquisition)</p> <p>e) Reallocate surplus municipal lands (or acquire surplus school sites) for parks</p> <p>f) Partner for land provision under agreements</p> <p>g) Enhance existing parks for increased local recreation near growth areas.</p> <p>Strata Parks and POPS</p> <p>1. Acceptance of Strata Parks at 50% credit based on usage and ownership.</p> <p>2. Privately Owned Public Spaces accepted at 100% credit, subject to legal agreements for maintenance, programming, and operations.</p>	-
East Gwillimbury	<p>a) As per the Planning Act, the Official Plan can impose parkland dedications at a minimum rate of 5% developed land or 1.0 hectare per 300 dwelling units, whichever is greater. Environmental Protection Areas and stormwater detention ponds should not be part of the 5% parkland dedication.</p> <p>b) Town should maintain the requirement of 2% of developed commercial and industrial lands for parkland (or cash-in-lieu).</p> <p>c) Cash-in-lieu should be collected when additional parkland is not required.</p>	-	<p>Alternative acquisition measures:</p> <p>a) Municipal land purchase or lease</p> <p>Land exchanges or swaps</p> <p>Partnership/joint provision of lands with community partners</p> <p>Reallocating surplus municipal lands to parks use</p> <p>Active and passive recreational lands are needed to balance supply and demand. Passive lands like woodlots and hazard lands should be obtained opportunistically, not via development.</p> <p>Parkland affected by stormwater management should be accepted only if deemed acceptable by the Town.</p>	-

Parkland Funding and Acquisition Tools

Benchmarking Cities	Conveyance Tools	Funding Tools	Acquisition Tools	Non-acquisition tools
King	a) Parkland Dedication 1) Residential Uses:- Density ≤ 30 Dwelling Units per hectare: 5% of Gross Land Area.- Density > 30 Dwelling Units per hectare:1.2 hectares per 1,000 people, max 1 hectare per 300 Dwelling Units, up to 10% of Gross Land Area.- Corridor & Centres: 0.6 hectares per 1,000 people, max 5% of Gross Land Area.2) Commercial or Industrial Uses:- 2% of Gross Land Area.3)Long-Term Care Home:- 2% of Gross Land Area.4) Mixed Uses:- Mixed uses on a site: Conveyance based on proportional allocation to each use.- Mixed uses within a building: Conveyance based on proportional Gross Floor Area allocation.	Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland:1) City discretion for payment instead of land, considering:- No suitable parkland opportunity- Small, unfit, or poorly located land- Land dedication impact on site's practicality- City identifies better land for acquisition- Unavailability of waterfront land- Adequate parkland service already exists- Rural area severance developments2) Payment equals land value if required.3) If conveyed land falls short, the balance is met with cash payment.4) Payments go to Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland Reserve Fund.5) Approval-based payment may change if no permit issued in a year.	Alternative Acquisition Measures:a) Municipal purchase/leaseb) Land exchanges, especially in valued natural zonesc) Off-site parkland transferd) Right of first refusal negotiationse) Surplus land reallocationf) Access to non-municipal parks via agreementsg) Encourage user group access to non-municipal spacesh) Pursue 'over-dedication' of parkland from new development and infill areas	-
Newmarket	Commercial or Industrial: a) Outside urban centres: 2% of land or cash-in-lieu. b) Inside urban centres: 2% of land.  Mixed Use: a) Outside urban centres: Cumulative rates per use or cash-in-lieu. b) Inside urban centres: Cumulative rates (using residential ratio or alternative requirement), max 50% or cash-in-lieu.  Residential Uses: a) Outside urban centres: 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units or 5% of land, whichever is greater. b) Inside urban centres: 0.7 hectares per 1000 residents or Planning Act requirement, max 50%, or cash-in-lieu.  All Other Uses: a) Outside urban centres: 5% of land or cash-in-lieu. b) Inside urban centres: 5% of land or cash-in-lieu.  Additional Requirements for Urban Centres: Larger residential sites: Provide urban park contribution (7.5% of developable site area) or urban square/plaza, pocket park, silver space, or pedestrian mews.  Sites under 1000 sqm: May include on-site, off-site land, or cash-in-lieu.	-	Official plan coherence with the Parkland Policy Development Manual under review	-

Parkland Funding and Acquisition Tools

Benchmarking Cities	Conveyance Tools	Funding Tools	Acquisition Tools	Non-acquisition tools
Whitchurch-Stouffville	<p>a) For Development or Redevelopment, land must be conveyed to the Town for park use as follows: I. Commercial, Institutional, or Industrial Use: 2% of land. II. Residential Use: 5% of land for park or recreation.</p> <p>b) If a single parcel serves both (I) and (II), rates are proportional to each use's area.</p> <p>c) Town decides land location and configuration, with conveyance free of costs and encumbrances.</p>	-	-	-
Calgary	The MGA requires 10% of lands at subdivision be dedicated for MR, SR and/or MSR; Support the dedication of additional MS where density is at least 30 units/ha	<p>Money-in-lieu Deferred reserve caveat against the title of lands Joint Use Reserve Fund - Lands set aside for a school building or a school playing field and community playing fields with facilities and grounds which are accessible to both school and non-school users</p>	-	-

Best Practices and Trends

Benchmarking Cities	Trends	Technological best practices	Interface options between Natural Heritage Network and open spaces	Community Partnerships	Demographics
Markham	1) parks as an urban escape during the COVID-19 pandemic 2) leveraging public investment in parks into private sector investment - park investment as a stimulus for change and revitalization 3) integration of adjacent land uses - animating edges with active urban uses, public facilities, promotion of join use outdoor spaces 4) prioritizing underserved areas (<1ha per 1000 people) for parkland acquisition 5) key principles and design considerations: a) convenience and coherence b) context, heritage, and placemaking c) accessibility d) safety e) comfort f) sustainability and resilience 6) distinction between parks in established residential communities and greenfield communities versus urban parks in intensification areas 7) "the parks and open space system is an integral component to the livability of Markham" (Markham Official Plan, 2014)		Open Space Lands defined in 2014 Official Plan - provide benefit to the parks and open space system beyond City Parks, but their primary function is environmental protection and natural heritage conservation, therefore not suitable as parkland dedication under the Planning Act.  The Natural Heritage System acts as an edge for the park network.	Policy - To design and develop high quality parks...that address Partnerships - to cultivate strong, positive partnerships with public, private and non-profit organizations to assist with the acquisition, development and maintenance of parks, recreation facilities and open spaces.	Integrated Leisure Management Plan, 2019
Ottawa	1) acquiring more smaller parcels rather than fewer large ones 2) Physical activity and sedentary behaviour 3) A healthier city 4) Climate Change 5) Equity considerations 6) prioritize acquisition in areas which do not meet the provision target 7) existing city parks will preserve their function, shall not be sold or built upon 8) Dogs-In-Parks Designation Policy	-	Natural lands make up part of the Urban Greenspace Network: Primary lands - natural landscape and major rivers with high environmental quality or rarity and public parks designed to provide sport and leisure functions. Supporting lands - refine, complement and expand the primary lands - include tributaries, isolated natural features, that link primary areas - public lands that potentially contribute to leisure opportunities because they permit public access. Contributing lands - enhance or augment primary or supporting lands - steep slopes, low-value natural areas, treed areas, institutional, commercial recreational or other lands that permit varying levels of public access and use.	to add play structures in school yards  method for funding the capital construction of new parks, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, replacement of facilities at end of life, and redevelopment of existing parks.  Privately owned lands - golf courses, cemeteries, grounds of public and private institutions provide open space and leisure opportunities	median age is 40 15% of population of 65+ estimated that over 22% of population will be over 65 by 2035 26% of residents identify as a visible minority in 2016

Best Practices and Trends

Benchmarking Cities	Trends	Technological best practices	Interface options between Natural Heritage Network and open spaces	Community Partnerships	Demographics
Calgary	1) Has a biodiversity strategy 2) All washrooms are winterized/open year round 3) Allows the consumption of alcohol in certain park/areas 4) PlayBin program located in communities with a high proportion of residents facing barriers connecting with nature 5) Strong volunteer program to clean up river annually 6)Seasonal Vendor Program 7) Symbolic Tree Program to plant a tree in a park 8) Pesticide-free parks 9) Off-leash dog areas/parks (Off-Leash Area Management Plan 2010) 10) Tipis and Metis Trapper Tents	Have not implemented but are interested in increasing and improving the use of technology for optimizing service routes, tracking completed work and mapping park assets and their condition ratings.	Natural parks - combination of major/core natural environment parks and other parks, smaller stepping stones” which support natural areas and promote biodiversity Parks Water Management Strategic Plan 2007	Funding: Alberta Government Municipal Stimulus Program; Enhanced Landscape Maintenance Program Partnerships: Parks Foundation Calgary; Downtown Association; BIAs Offers sponsorships to companies and organizations to sponsor a park or program Future school sites - Calgary Parks maintains approximately 100 sites throughout the city that are reserved for future development of schools. Until such time that a school is built on its designated portion of these sites, they are usually kept as green space for the community to enjoy	Parks with playground and amenities to support different groups, but mostly focus on children: Inclusive playgrounds; Mobile Adventure Playground; Parks with fitness equipment; Natural Play Spaces Implemented accessibility and inclusivity standards through: Accessibility Strategy 2021; Inclusive Play Spaces Implementation Plan 2018
Edmonton	1) Has a biodiversity strategy 2) Most washrooms are winterized/open year-round 3) Developing Canada's first urban Indigenous cultural site within a park 4) Park wildlife monitoring research program (joint partnership with university and city) 5) City Farm - an initiative to address food insecurity and grow food for food bank and other agencies 6) Alcohol consumption permitted in some parks/sites 7) Off-leash dog areas/parks (Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy, 2016) and piloting a Pop-up dog park program and community league dog park program 8) Picnic sites 9) playgrounds and spray parks 10) Largest urban park in Canada	Offers an interactive, mobile friendly map for residents to locate specific types of parks, trails, washrooms, activities, programming	Ribbon of Green - features natural areas, paved and natural trails, and amenities Offers naturalized parks and neighbourhood parks Other environmental strategies include: Community Energy Transition Strategy 2021; The Way We Green 2011; Natural Connections Strategic Plan 2007	Funding: Neighbourhood Park Development Program; Community Garden Grants; Neighbourhood Funding; Ice Surfaces Grant; Winter Funding Opportunities Partnerships: Partners in Parks; Community Gardens	Access Design Guide 2021

Best Practices and Trends

Benchmarking Cities	Trends	Technological best practices	Interface options between Natural Heritage Network and open spaces	Community Partnerships	Demographics
Kingston	a) Create versatile spaces for diverse events and activities, spanning ages from "8 to 80." b) Design amenities for inclusive use by all ages and abilities within shared play/park areas. c) Utilize green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) in parkland design and development. d) Integrate natural elements into play areas for enhanced play and outdoor exploration. e) Innovative ways to provide recreational facilities within parks and open spaces that can help accommodative diverse recreational opportunities.	-	-	-	-
Richmond Hill	1) Focus on health and well being, particularly with an aging demographic 2) Flexibility and convenience 3) Choice and inclusivity 4) Commuter trends - pressure on prime-time activities 5) Connectedness of existing and future municipal park system 6) Climate change lens - Climate Change Framework - integrating climate change lens into park planning, design, and maintenance and operational decisions 7) pilot projects - pop-ups, multi-use facilities to respond to emerging trends in advance of investment in purpose built facilities 8) lifecycle approach to all phases of park planning, design, and maintenance	-	Open Space lands - may be within or adjacent to municipally-owned parks and contribute to the broader natural environment system, including non municipal areas such as conservation areas. No to low development potential, primarily designated for provincially significant wetlands, environmentally significant and sensitive natural areas, watercourses, or floodplains. May be used for passive recreation, not all lands may be suitable for public access. Open Space system is not a focus of the Parks Plan but adds to the connectivity of the system.  Active Parkland is municipally-owned lands that are suitable for development or installation of built recreational amenities.	Collective Gardens - run and maintained by community groups  Oak Ridges Trail Association  Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA); Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF); Ontario Streams  Engaging residents and partners in naturalizing and beautifying parks  Park Ambassadors Program	35-54 is the most common age group  55+ adults is a growing demographic, an increasing proportion of the overall population - increases pressure for park opportunities for 55+, while balancing the need for a broad spectrum of facilities, programs, and services for all ages.

Best Practices and Trends

Benchmarking Cities	Trends	Technological best practices	Interface options between Natural Heritage Network and open spaces	Community Partnerships	Demographics
Aurora	<p>Active Living &amp; Community Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Parks essential for COVID-19 recovery, support mental and physical health, community revival.</li><li>- Strong public backing; policy and funding alignment needed.</li><li>- Parks as hubs for equitable health programs, focusing on mental wellness, physical activity, and inter-generational opportunities.</li><li>- Integration of holistic health services with educational and economic benefits.</li></ul> <p>a) Combating Physical Inactivity &amp; Unstructured Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shift to unstructured participation, demand for flexible, casual activities.</li><li>- Innovation and "Instagram-worthy" experiences sought.</li></ul> <p>b) Encouraging Free Play &amp; Engaging Aging Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Designing spaces for play, walking, and cycling crucial.</li><li>- Aging population impact on recreation demand, focus on diverse older adult programming, age-friendly planning.</li></ul> <p>c) Pandemic Impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- COVID-19's effect on organized sports, decreased participation, revival needed.</li><li>- Quality sport experiences and multi-sport development key..</li><li>- Esports as a growing engagement avenue.</li><li>- Gradual programming recovery post-pandemic.</li></ul> <p>d) Emerging Recreational Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shift in youth interests (e.g., music, dance).</li><li>- Emergence of activities like pickleball, disc golf, outdoor fitness.</li><li>- Pandemic-driven demand for individual/small group spaces.</li></ul>	-	-	-	<p>Most rapidly increasing age groups are older adults (55-69). Number of young adults (20-34) has also increased.</p> <p>Greatest amount of growth is forecasted in seniors age group(70+)</p>



Best Practices and Trends

Benchmarking Cities	Trends	Technological best practices	Interface options between Natural Heritage Network and open spaces	Community Partnerships	Demographics
	<p>Inclusion &amp; Access</p> <p>a) Affordability Concerns</p> <p>b) Accessible Recreation for Disabilities</p> <p>- 1 in 5 Canadians have disabilities; barriers limit participation.</p> <p>- Importance of engagement for therapeutic relief and health benefits.</p> <p>- Accessibility mandates (AODA) for facilities and services.</p> <p>c) Gender Equity in Sports</p> <p>d) Supporting Indigenous Reconciliation</p> <p>- Recognition of Indigenous voices, history, and culture in parks.</p> <p>e) Safe Spaces for Vulnerable Populations</p> <p>- Parks' role in addressing homelessness, housing crisis.</p>	-	-	-	-
	<p>Connecting People &amp; Nature</p> <p>a) Rising Park Use During Pandemic</p> <p>b) Enhancing Nature Interaction</p> <p>c) Local Opportunities &amp; Neighbourhood Focus</p> <p>d) Supporting Active Transportation</p> <p>- Continued interest in bike lanes, cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>e) Parkland Challenges in Growing Communities</p> <p>f) Environmental Design &amp; Climate Change</p> <p>- Green practices: naturalization, native species, habitat restoration.</p>	-	-	-	-
East Gwillimbury	<p>a) Proximity to parks for higher quality of life</p> <p>b) Opportunities for non-programmed recreation and cultural activities.</p> <p>c) Focus on inclusivity, facilities for all age groups</p> <p>d) Popularity for the integration of environment features within parks</p>	-	-	-	<p>Median age is slightly older than the provincial average.</p> <p>Anticipated influx of children (under 10 years of age), younger adults (20-34) and older adults (over 55 years of age).</p>

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
Edmonton	Municipal Park: Metropolitan Park	-	-	-	-	Extensive, distinct parks, city wide and region-wide. Providing unique feature	-	-	-
-	Municipal Park: District Park	-	-	-	Offer amenities and distinctive attractions. Local needs and community resources influence scale and offerings.	Cater to the requirements of several communities, city quadrants or neighbourhoods.	-	-	-
-	Municipal Park: Community Park	May share space with Community Leagues or schools, can be operated through Joint Use Agreements or Occupancy Licenses.	-	-	-	Strategically positioned for accessibility and adaptable programming to fulfill requirements of their local catchment areas.	-	-	-
-	Municipal Park: Pocket Park	-	-	-	Usually serves one amenity such as playground, adult fitness, or seating area	Serve local neighbourhoods, housing-specific amenities or functions.	-	-	-
-	Municipal Park: Greenway	-	-	-	-	Linear, accessible, park-like, linking active transport, recreation, and social interactions.	-	-	-
-	Municipal Park: Ecological Park	-	-	-	primarily passive activities (e.g. nature interpretation, nature appreciation, etc.) with the exception of trails for walking, bicycling and jogging	Nature-centric preservation and education, fostering environmental awareness. Specifically intended to protect an area of land or water (or both) that is dominated by native vegetation in naturally occurring patterns.	-	-	-
-	Civic Spaces: Squares, plazas, promenades	-	-	-	May contain markets, event venues, or small shops and food vendors. Most include seating areas.	Paved gathering spaces, often with markets, seating, and events, some part of streetscape."	-	-	-
-	Civic Spaces: Main streets	vibrant, pedestrian-friendly avenues, social hubs, transportation links, diverse land uses, seating, greenery, vendors, parklets.	-	-	-	serve as major transportation links with a mix of active street-oriented land uses.	-	-	-
-	Civic Spaces: Pedestrian priority streets	-	-	-	-	Emphasize walking, may allow vehicles, enhance experience; permanent or temporary for events	-	-	-
-	Corridors: Connectors	pathways linking open spaces or neighborhoods, focus on access, may have park features.	-	-	-	Access between neighborhoods, roads, open spaces, and occasional additional functions.	-	-	-
-	Corridors: Roadway Greens	-	-	-	-	Public green areas within rights-of-way, along roads/walkways, turfed, planted, naturalized	-	-	-
-	Corridors: Utility Corridors	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Other Public Open Spaces: Special Purpose Facility	Significant cultural, recreational, and sports venues attracting users citywide, with higher investments, potential fees, and restrictions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Other Public Open Spaces: School Sites	City-owned school lands managed jointly, encompassing facilities, often adjacent to parks, some surplus.	Includes facilities such as parking lots and drop off areas.	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Other Public Open Spaces: Municipal Cemetery	-	-	-	-	Municipal cemeteries offer cultural services, occasionally passive recreation like parks	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
-	Other Public Open Spaces: Municipal Golf Course	Municipal golf courses may have limited access. Owned by City, potential for diverse open space uses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Other Public Open Spaces: Select Vacant City Holdings	Undeveloped lots, potential for future open space projects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Other Public Open Spaces: Utility Lots	-	-	-	-	Serve as open space, offer stormwater management, potential public access.	-	-	-
Toronto	-	-	-	-	-	-	Current, not target: 28 m2 (including ravines) parkland per person; 8.7 m2 without ravines per person	-	Park Catchment: a 500 metre walking distance (or five to ten-minute walk) along sidewalks, pathways, and local streets to a park. Park User Population: the total number of people a park serves within the 500 metre catchment. Park Supply: the total amount of parkland that is accessible to residents, and reported as park supply per person
-	Legacy Park (City-Owned and Operated)	-	-	>8ha	-	-	-	-	-
-	Legacy Park (TRCA-Owned and City Operated)	-	-	>8ha	-	-	-	-	-
-	City Park	Parks that provide unique or specialized passive and active recreation amenities, which draw users from across the City.	-	5-8ha	-	-	-	-	-
-	Large Park	-	-	3-5ha	-	-	-	-	-
-	Medium Park	-	-	1.5-3ha	-	-	-	-	-
-	Small Park	-	-	0.5-1.5ha	-	-	-	-	-
-	Parkette	Generally smaller parks with seating and other passive recreation amenities	-	<0.5ha	-	-	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
-	Local Parkland	Intended to serve communities within a reasonable walking distance (Includes Parkettes and Local Parks)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	City-wide parkland	Serve residents from across the City (Includes District Parks and City Parks)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	District Parks	Generally larger, complex parks that draw population from beyond the local community and contain general and specialized passive and recreational opportunities.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Local Parks	Parks that offer a range of neighbourhood oriented passive and active recreational opportunities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Utility corridors	-	-	-	-	Mainly consist of rail and hydro rights-of-way; Also serve as parkland, sport fields, pedestrian and cycling trails and transit facilities	-	-	-
-	Parks and open space	Are the parks and open spaces, valleys, watercourses and ravines, portions of the waterfront, golf courses and cemeteries that comprise a Green Space System (the elements). Can be further categorized as Natural Areas, Parks and Other Open Space Areas.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Green space system	Made up of parks and open spaces, the natural heritage system and a variety of privately managed but publicly accessible spaces	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Natural areas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Parks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Other open space areas	Includes cemeteries and golf courses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
Hamilton	City Wide Parks	-	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles are a requirement in the design of parks and open space within the City of Hamilton	-	-	Significant destinations for residents and visitors, offer recreation, education, natural/historic features	4.6 hectares per 1000 residents Total hectares of parkland and green space that is publicly accessible and owned, leased, or under a management agreement by the municipality. This number should capture all parks and green spaces that are perceived/used by residents similarly to parkland.	-	-
-	Community Parks	multi-neighborhood focus, sports, community centers, transport access, parking, urban transit, serve ~20,000, min. 7.0 ha.	facilities shall have good transportation access along adjacent arterial or collector roadways.  Imperative to be located along transit routed in urban areas Provide adequate parking to meet anticipated demand.	0.7ha	recreational facilities such as sports fields, and recreational and community centres.	multi-neighborhood focus, sports, community centers,	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	min 2ha	-	offer diverse recreational amenities within walking distance access, serving around 5,000 residents, minimum 2ha	-	-	-
-	Parkette	-	-		-	minimal or no recreation, vital in older urban areas for open space.	-	-	-
Ottawa	District Parks	-	-	min 10ha	-	citywide, major destinations, competitive recreational focus, serve communities, tourism potential.	2.35 hectares per 1,000 residents.	2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents	-
-	Community Parks	-	-	3.2-10ha	-	Offer diverse recreation, connect communities, serve as focal points	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	1.2-3.2ha	-	local focal point, recreation, gathering, walkable for residents	-	-	-
-	Parkettes	-	-	0.4-1.2ha	-	Small, central, passive & active recreation, supplementing larger park network.	-	-	-
-	Urban Parkettes / Urban Plazas	-	-	0.2-0.4ha	-	Small, inner-urban, hard surfaces, trees, seating, artistic elements. Acquired through intensification and redevelopment.	-	-	-
-	Woodland Parks	-	-	1.2-3.2ha	-	Preserve established woodland, minimal intervention, for well-served communities. Not classified as environmentally protected zones or urban natural features.	-	-	-
-	Linear Parks	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
Markham	Destination Parks	-	The key principles and general design considerations include: - Convenience and coherence; - Context, heritage and placemaking; - Accessibility; - Safety; - Comfort; and, - Sustainability and resilience. on one or more public streets or publicly accessible private streets	-	-	Draw Markham's regional, provincial, and national residents, offer unique features, vital environmental role.	1.33 hectares per 1,000 residents. This assessment is based on the application of dimensions and grossing factors to account for setbacks, buffers, circulation, drainage and unprogrammed areas.	A minimum rate of 1.2 hectares / 1000 people	-
-	City Parks	Acquired by the City over time using an array of acquisition tools available.	-	-	-	serve park users within a 2 to 10 minute walk from residential and mixed-use neighbourhoods;	-	-	-
-	1. City Wide Parks	-	-	>12ha	-	City-wide parks, offer diverse programs, pools, sports, preservation, infrastructure	-	-	-
-	2. Community Parks	-	-	>6ha	-	Offer diverse programs, play areas, sports, serve nearby users within a 10 min walking distance. Include water play, playgrounds, skateparks, basketball and tennis courts and organized sporting activities for all age groups and supporting infrastructure such as large park pavilions and maintenance facilities.	-	-	-
-	3. Open Space Lands	-	-	-	-	Enhance park system, differ from City Parks, not for parkland dedication under the Planning Act since they are not suitable for city park programs and facilities. Publicly accessible, include Natural Heritage Network, transportation corridors, stormwater areas, easement land.	-	-	-
-	3. Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	1-6ha	-	Active Parks Field sports, playgrounds, and low to mid-rise residential neighborhood recreation needs	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	0.5-5ha	-	Urban Squares Adaptable for gatherings, festivals, mixed-use area, art, recreation, placemaking	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	0.5-1.5ha	-	Parkettes Passive recreational space, 2-5 min walk from low-mid rise residential areas, 150-400m distance	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	0.2-0.5ha	-	Urban Parkettes Social spaces near cafes, shops, 2-5 min walk, mixed-use neighborhood, 150-400m distance.	-	-	-
Richmond Hill	Destination Parks	-	-	-	-	Offer unique recreational opportunities, attract visitors, host events. Active parkland component contributes to parkland levels	1.56 hectares per 1,000 residents.	1.37 hectares per 1,000 residents. Anticipated population growth impact on existing park system	-

Parkland Classification

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-	Community Parks	-	-	-	-	serve as social hubs, co-located with rec facilities, sports fields, playgrounds, attracting diverse residents	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	Includes Local Parks and Parkettes	-	-	-	Close-to-home play, recreation, dog walking, nature views, social gathering, sports fields, courts. 1. Local Parks - Variety of active/ passive rec. spaces 2. Parkettes - Smaller than Local Parks, focus on urban design, offer visual relief, enhance aesthetics, unique identity.	-	-	-
-	Linear Parks	Enable pedestrian and cycling connections among parks, commercial areas, transit nodes, schools, while hosting recreation nodes with play, art, fitness, and green separation.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Urban Squares	-	-	-	-	Gathering spaces within intensification areas, emphasizing flexibility. Mixed-use compatibility, and distinctive hardscaping. Characterised by seating, shade, and decorative elements like gardens and public art, contribute to place-making, acting as landmarks.	-	-	-
Aurora	Community Parks	-	Barrier-free accessibility, safety (CPTED principles), public art, landscaping and plantings, pathway connections.	4-8ha	playgrounds, major sport fields, skateboard parks, hard surface courts, outdoor aquatics facilities, horticultural facilities, amphitheatres	Servicing entire community and town visitors. Provision of various recreation facilities	2.7 hectares per 1,000 residents	2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	1.6-4ha	playgrounds, sports fields, outdoor skating rinks, picnic areas, etc.	Servicing immediate surrounding residential area accommodates various rec. facilities.	-	-	-
-	Parkettes	-	-	Min. 0.35ha	-	Intended for neighborhood green space, visual enhancement, and minor linkages in strategic town areas.	-	-	-
-	Squares and Greens	-	-	-	gardens, pavilions, memorials, fountains, concession stands.	Within Aurora Promenade and MTSA, formal spaces with hard surfaces.	-	-	-
-	Urban Squares	-	-	-	-	Within the Aurora Promenade and MTSA offering multi-purpose programming spaces to the Downtown core.	-	-	-
-	Urban Wildlife Park	-	-	-	-	Provides a special focus on ecological management and conservation in recognition of the David Tomlinson Nature Reserve in Northeast Aurora	-	-	-



Parkland Classification

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East Gwillimbury (2019 - Parks master plan)	Town-Wide Parkland	a) Prioritize active and wellness-oriented park design and promote physical activity and informal use. b) Enhance appreciation for natural, indigenous features. c) Implement CPTED principles for safety. d) Engage ambassador programs with local police for park vigilance. Shall include adequate parking	-	-	may contain major indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities, arts and cultural facilities, community and special event facilities, horticultural attractions and/or be oriented to natural features	-	-	4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents	-
-	Community Parkland	- Shall include adequate parking	-	2-8ha	organized sporting activities for all age groups	Parks for local communities and rural areas, link to trails, offer diverse recreation, ecological stewardship, parking, natural heritage.	1.2 hectares per 1,000 residents	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	min. 1.6ha	passive and active recreational facilities such as field sports, playgrounds and the recreational needs of neighbourhood residential areas	serve local areas, link to trails, passive & active recreation, enhance natural heritage	1.0 hectares per 1,000 residents	-	-
King	Township	-	Linked to the overall parks/green space system:  Feature adequate street frontage for visibility and safety, Include CPTED principles. May abut/ provide linkages to trails, stormwater, management facilities to form contiguous green space parcels and provide opportunities for pedestrian activity.	Variable (reflective of program needs)	Highest intensity of recreational use: sports tournaments, festivals, concerts, large gatherings. Major indoor and/or outdoor sports facilities, event space, pavilions and field houses, playgrounds, play features, speciality features and ancillary facilities. Should have adequate parking and direct access to an arterial or collector road and public transportation.	Serve residents throughout the municipality and visitors.	2.16 hectares per 1000 residents	1.09ha/ 1000  Service level is based on a current population of 26,697. Current supply does not include passive spaces.	-
-	Community	-	-	7.5-25ha	Variety of active and passive recreational and cultural amenities. Major/ minor outdoor sports facilities, formal playgrounds, water play features, unstructured green spaces and natural areas.  Well draining table land for where sports facilities are allocated. Should have adequate parking and direct access to an arterial or collector road and public transportation.	Serve the rec. needs of individual communities, as community focal areas.	3.57acres per 1,000 residents	3.7 acres per 1,000 residents	-
-	Neighbourhood	-	-	2.5-7.5Acres	Unorganised, spontaneous leisure activities. Low to intermediate sports facilities.	Wal/bike-to parks catering to residents in vicinity	1.17 acres per 1,000 residents	2 acres per 1,000 residents	-

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
-	Parkette	-	-	0.5-1Acre	seating areas, unstructured green spaces.	Smaller specialised parks, suitable for high density urban areas/ underserved areas. Includes unorganised spaces, provision for art and cultural elements.	0.9 acres per 1,000 residents	-	-
Whitchurch-Stouffville	Town (Regional) Parks	-	a) Maximize street frontage for visibility and connectivity. b) Prioritize public safety through block size and fixture placement. c) Ensure safe pedestrian access from residential or environmental areas. d) Minimize impact on neighboring areas with landscaping and buffers. e) Integrate natural heritage features and open space linkages. f) Mitigate urban heat with shade features and tree cover. g) Enhance accessibility with lighting, seating, pathways, and entrances. h) Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). i) Connect to trails, cycling routes, natural corridors, and drainage systems. j) Preserve mature trees and add shading for user comfort. k) Address climate change with cooling amenities like splash pads and shade.	-	Features include diverse recreation, cultural value, events, sports fields, tourist orientation, year-round programming. Not specified. However, the venue requires to be accommodated for tourism. Should have enhanced accessibility with lighting	Municipality-wide and potentially Regional. Strategically located to promote public use.	1.84 hectares per 1,000 residents	2 hectares per 1,000 residents	-
-	Community Parks	-	-	-	Combination of active/passive uses; intensive recreation: sports fields, courts, playgrounds, water play; centralized amenities. On-site parking (adequate for the uses the park provides)	Local: Equitable distribution of parks serving neighborhoods, some elements for municipality-wide use, others for community	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	-	Combination of active and passive recreation uses. Including minor sports fields, multi-purpose sports courts, playgrounds and informal play areas;	Local: For nearby residents, walk/bike accessible, considering overall accessibility	-	-	-
-	Parkettes	-	-	-	Small open spaces, limited recreation, passive: seating, temporary gathering	Local: located in urban/residential areas, connecting to larger parks and open spaces	-	-	-
-	General Open Spaces	-	-	-	Accessible undeveloped lands for active/passive recreation, pathways, trails, gardens, open areas	Regional/ municipal/ local: Accessible undeveloped lands with significant natural features like woodlots, wetlands, wildlife habitat.	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
-	Natural Open Spaces	-	-	-	Accessible undeveloped lands with natural features, limited passive recreation to protect ecological functions.	Regional/ municipal/ local: Accessible undeveloped lands with significant natural features like woodlots, wetlands, wildlife habitat	-	-	-
Newmarket	Park classification: Overall parkland and open space	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.0 hectares per 1000 residents for active parks and passive green spaces	-
-	Park classification: Town Parks	-	Linked to the overall parks/green space system; Trail system; Regard for best management practices for environmental sustainability; accessibility standards; and CPTED principles. Abut stormwater management facilities to form contiguous green space parcels Parking provision not mentioned, but are considered accessible by vehicular use and require adequate parking and direct access to an arterial or collector road and public transportation	Variable	Major indoor and/or outdoor sports facilities, off-leash dog parks, events space, pavilions and field houses, universally accessible playgrounds, water play, skateboard or BMX parks, picnic areas, historic or cultural features, arts facilities, horticultural attractions or natural areas, ancillary facilities (washrooms and concession)	Serve residents and visitors; Accommodate and concentrate high intensity sports and recreation, arts and culture, and/or ecology uses and facilities	-	1.0 ha per 1,000 residents	N/A

Parkland Classification

Benchmarking Cities	Parkland and greenspace classification	Definitions	Design Criteria	Size	Amenities	Purpose	Existing Service Levels	Established Target Service Levels	Catchment or service area
-	Park classification: Community Parks	-	Linked to the overall parks/green space system; Trail system; Regard for best management practices for environmental sustainability; accessibility standards; and CPTED principles. Abut stormwater management facilities to form contiguous green space parcels; Where sports facilities are allocated, eighty percent (80%) of the site should be comprised of well draining table land with a configuration sufficient for facilities accommodation. Parking provision not mentioned, but are considered accessible by vehicular use and require adequate parking and direct access to an arterial or collector road and public transportation Lit sports fields as long as any adverse impacts on adjacent residential or natural heritage lands are minimal.	5.0 to 10.0 hectares	Organized/permitted major indoor and/or outdoor sports facilities; formal playgrounds; Unstructured green space and natural areas. Grouping of multiple higher order facilities (e.g. natural or artificial turf sports fields)	Serve several neighbourhoods; walk/bike-to or drive to/transit based parks; Active and passive recreation; Focal area or highlighting characteristic that to distinguish the community or ecological regeneration	-	0.5 ha per 1,000 residents	1000 metres (1 km)
-	Park classification: Neighbourhood Parks	Also includes suburban parkettes	Linked to the overall parks/green space system; Trail system; Regard for best management practices for environmental sustainability; accessibility standards; and CPTED principles. Abut stormwater management facilities to form contiguous green space parcels; Where sports facilities are allocated, the site should have sufficient well draining table land and an appropriate configuration for facilities accommodation adequate street frontage for visibility and safety	1.5 to 5.0 hectares	Low to intermediate-level sports facilities (max. of one unlit junior or intermediate sports field; informal and formal playgrounds; unstructured green space and natural areas	Unorganized, spontaneous leisure activities; Recreational needs of residents living within their general vicinity.	-	0.7 ha per 1,000 residents (combined with Urban Squares and Plazas)	800 metres (0.8 km)

Parkland Classification

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-	Park classification: Urban Squares & Plazas	-	Linked to the overall parks/green space system; Trail system; Regard for best management practices for environmental sustainability; accessibility standards; and CPTED principles. Abut stormwater management facilities to form contiguous green space parcels; Where sports facilities are allocated, the site should have sufficient well draining table land and an appropriate configuration for facilities accommodation; Designed to possess a higher level of quality and/or durability, relative to other forms of parkland, in order to withstand pressures associated their located in areas of high density and the heavy intensity of use. Higher density urban areas (e.g. Yonge-Davis Secondary Plan Area, Downtown Core or other higher use nodes and corridors) or within underserved areas where the acquisition of larger parks is not possible Along main pedestrian routes with high visual exposure and include a minimum of one (1) street frontage for visibility and safety.	0.2 to 1.0 hectares	Greater degree of hardscaped elements or built features; Informal and formal playgrounds, seating areas, and unstructured green space. Parks may be located in private spaces that provide for public access.	Small specialized parks; Destination parks; Recreational or cultural hub; Unorganized, spontaneous and passive social, cultural and leisure activities that should emphasize opportunities for provision of public art and cultural expression. They are intended to supplement the recreation needs of high density neighbourhoods and ensure walk-to access to parkland	-	0.7 ha per 1,000 residents (combined with Neighbourhood Parks) though provision is dictated by distribution and opportunity	500 metres (0.5 km)
-	Park classification: Passive Green Space	Generally, <b>not</b> considered for parkland dedication under the Planning Act.	Abut or provide linkages to stormwater management facilities to form contiguous green space parcels.	Undefined	Public access is limited; Areas may be for the purposes of conservation and/or preservation. Where suitable, passive leisure opportunities including trails, seating areas, gathering spaces, and interpretive facilities.	Form part of the Natural Heritage System; Environmental lands (woodlands, wetlands, hazard areas, etc.); Environmental resources with ecological and biological functions; Opportunities for nature appreciation; Comprised of service corridors (utility/hydro) and support connectivity of the overall parks and green space system and foundation for a Town-wide trail system	-	By opportunity (not at the expense of active parkland)	N/A

Parkland Classification

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-	Trail Classification: Multi-use pathways	Off-road, hard paved trails intended to accommodate the widest range of users, offering an easy to moderate level of difficulty that addresses both recreation and utilitarian needs. They serve as the foundation for a Town-wide trails system, connecting key destinations, providing appropriate cross-town connections and links to the Regional trails system, as well as access to and within the overall parks/greenspace system.	Hard Paved: Asphalt or Concrete; And should be maintained in the winter season Within the boulevard of a public right-of-way, or within linear Passive Green Spaces such as valley lands, river corridors, and utility/hydro corridors	3.0m minimum; 3.0m minimum vertical clearance; 1.0m clearance adjacent path surface	-	Walking, hiking, cycling, inline skating, cross-country skiing (for recreational or utilitarian use)	-	-	-
-	Trail Classification: Primary trails	Off-road pathways oriented to recreational use; serve as feeders to Multi-Use Pathways and provide access to and within the overall parks/greenspace system	Hard or Soft Paved: Asphalt, Compacted Granular, or Mulch; Do not need to be regularly maintained in the winter season Located within Passive Green Spaces, including valley lands, river corridors, and utility/hydro corridors.	2.4m minimum; 3.0m minimum vertical clearance; 0.5m clearance adjacent path surface	-	Walking, hiking, snowshoeing (primarily for recreational use)	-	-	-
-	Trail Classification: Secondary trails	Secondary Trails are off-road, soft paved pathways oriented to recreational use and offer varying degrees of difficulty dependent upon site conditions; They serve to enhance pedestrian circulation at the neighbourhood level, though cycling may be permitted. They may be looping, or form side trails to the Multi-Use Pathways and the Primary Trails, providing opportunities for short term hikes, additional scenic experiences and access to historic, cultural or ecological points of interest.	Soft Paved: Compacted Granular, Mulch or Natural (no treatment); Do not need to be maintained in the winter season Determined through the development application process and pursuant studies to ensure appropriate sub-neighbourhood circulation and connections to other trail routes are achieved.	Width: 0.75m-1.5m; 3.0m minimum vertical clearance; 0.3m clearance adjacent path surface	-	Walking, hiking (primarily for recreational use)	-	-	-
-	Trail Classification: On-road bike lanes	A facility located in the traveled portion of the roadway and is designed for one-way bicycle traffic. Bike lanes are normally denoted by pavement marking and signage.	Hard Paved: Asphalt	Width: 1.2m – 2.0m dependant on road edge treatment (curb or shoulder); vehicular traffic speeds and volume; and parking	-	Cycling (for recreational or utilitarian use)	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

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-	Mentioned in parkland bylaw, but not park of classification system: Pocket Park	A small park that accommodates passive recreation activities and other unstructured activities	Hard surfaced with limited soft surface elements On at least one street	70-2500 square metres	-	-	-	-	-
-	Mentioned in parkland bylaw, but not park of classification system: POPS	Physical space that is privately owned but appears and functions as public space	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Mentioned in parkland bylaw, but not park of classification system: Sliver Space	Physical space that adds to the width of the abutting sidewalk system. They create plazas or forecourts between the face of the building and the abutting right-of-way	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Mentioned in parkland bylaw, but not park of classification system: Pedestrian mews	Short, pedestrian-only laneway	-	Minimum width of 6 metres	-	-	-	-	-
-	Mentioned in parkland bylaw, but not park of classification system: Strata Park	Publicly owned parkland or a publicly accessible privately owned open space located in top of builds or structures, included but not limited to parking garages	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Calgary	Athletic Park	-	-	≥200,000 sqm	-	-	-	-	-
-	Linear Park	-	-	≥120,000 sqm	-	-	-	-	-
-	Regional Park	-	-	≥50,000 sqm	-	-	-	-	-
-	District Park	-	-	≥24,000 sqm	-	-	-	-	-
-	Community Park	-	-	≥2000 sqm	-	-	-	-	-
-	Neighbourhood Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Sub neighbourhood Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Parkland Classification

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Georgina	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.08	2.25 ha/1000 population (Municipal standard includes Neighbourhood Parks, Community Parks, Village Greens and municipally owned special open space areas; Excludes those park lands and open spaces owned by other levels of government or agencies)	-
-	Community parks	-	-	Minimum area of 4 ha	-	Primarily serve the broader community area; Designed to offer more play opportunities than neighbourhood parks	-	1.0 ha/1000 population	-
-	Neighbourhood Parks	-	-	Minimum area of 1.5 ha	-	Serve local residents generally within walking distance to local residential areas and will be designed to offer active and passive play opportunities	-	1.25 ha/1000 population	-
-	Village Greens	-	-	As small as 0.5. ha	Planned as active spaces that facilitate active play for people of all ages (playgrounds and walking paths)	Service established higher density areas where the provision of a neighbourhood park is not practical or feasible and may have more of an urban character; not intended to take the place of neighbourhood parks in planned future communities	-	None	-
-	Open Space Areas	-	-	No standard	-	Primarily for passive recreation uses; They may be developed, but should generally be publicly accessible	-	None	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-3.5 hectares per 1,000 residents (When considering only the active, usable parkland space)  - 5.1 ha per 1,000 residents (The City's current overall parkland service level)	4.0 hectares per 1,000 new residents.	-



Example Projects

Document Name	Benchmarking Item	Overlapping benchmarking items	Measures	How to test
<a href="#">Burlington Park Provisioning Master Plan Reduced</a>	Parkland acquisition and redevelopment	2.3 More Homes for Everyone Act	Parkland dedication on designated Transit-Oriented Communities Act:  Development sites less than or equal to five hectares: 10% of land dedicated for park or its value for CIL  Development sites greater than five hectares: 15% of land dedicated for park or its value for CIL  Burlington’s residential parkland dedication rate for land is the greater of 5% of total land area or one hectare for each 300 dwelling units.	-
-	Parkland acquisition tools	Section 2.6 provides the various Parkland acquisition tools	Hectares of population per 1,000 residents, or as square metres per individual person	-
-	Greenspace development/ provisions	Section 4.1 summarises the Parkland Provision Levels, Measures and Targets of Comparable Municipalities	-	-
-	Parkland and greenspace classification	Summary of Section 4.3 could be used for Privately Owned Public Spaces & Strata Ownership Parks	-	-
-	Parkland acquisition tools/ alternative provisioning	Section 4.4 - Summary of Alternative Provisioning and Acquisition Tools	-	-
-	Parkland and greenspace classification	Section 6.3 Proposed Updated Parks Classification System	-	-
-	Parkland acquisition tools	Acquisition and redevelopment	Non-residential development shall provide money equal to the value of 2 per cent of land proposed for non-residential uses unless the development approval requires 2 per cent of the land to be conveyed for park purposes.	-
<a href="#">City of Ottawa Greenspace Master Plan_2006</a>	-	Appendix A: Land Securement Tools lists techniques and example municipalities or organizations	4.0 ha of total greenspace (i.e., natural land and open space and leisure land) for every 1000 residents	-
-	-	Could summarize action items for 'Section 3: Achieving the Vision	2 ha of park and leisure land for every 1000 residents	-
-	-	Bruce Trail Association and Niagara Escarpment mentioned for land securement techniques but no Vaughan benchmarking cities	eight to ten per cent of developable land area dedicated park space	-
-	-	-	no target for the amount of natural land (it is counted as greenspace)	-
-	-	-	In residential areas, all homes will be within 400 metres of a greenspace, or roughly within a five-minute walk.	target was tested using the 2005 Land Use Survey, by drawing a 400-metre buffer around active and passive recreation lands owned by a public body.

Example Projects

Document Name	Benchmarking Item	Overlapping benchmarking items	Measures	How to test
-	-	-	In residential areas, all homes will be within 250 metres of a greenspace (More appropriate for younger and older populations/accessibility; A shorter distance may also be appropriate in areas of higher density, where there may be less private outdoor space and an increased need to access public greenspace)	target was tested using the 2005 Land Use Survey, by drawing a 250-metre buffer around active and passive recreation lands owned by a public body.
-	-	-	Assessing the greenspace identified in community design plans against City targets and confirming the land delivery as the community develops	-
-	-	-	Monitoring the total area of natural land secured for environmental purposes through public ownership or other means	-
-	-	-	Reporting at five-year intervals on the number of kilometres of multi-use pathway provided by the City and partners and the number of parks and other greenspaces networked by the pathway	-
Mississauga Parks Provisioning Report v2	Provisioning tools	3.3 Facilities Provisioning	City of Mississauga has assessed its supply of facilities by a facility-to-population ratio (e.g., 1 field: x people).	-
<a href="#">vanplay-inventory-and-analysis-full-report</a>	Provisioning tools	Neighbourhood Park Provision	acquire and assemble land to provide 1.1ha (2.75 acres) of "neighbourhood parkland" per 1,000 residents.	measured park provision ona citywide basis and included all Park Boardspaces.

APPENDIX 2 – WHAT WE HEARD REPORT (SUBMITTED UNDER SEPARATE COVER)