ATTACHMENT 3

Vaughan GSP

Task 2 | Principle Framework

February 2025

VAUGHAN O2

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INTRODUCTION

The Greenspace Strategic Plan (GSP) provides an overall framework to help guide decision-making for the planning, acquisition, development and implementation of greenspaces in the City of Vaughan. 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.[1]

This Task 2 report focuses on developing the principle framework for the Greenspace Strategic Plan and more specifically covers the following topics:

- Identification of Other Greenspace Initiatives
- Identification and Development of Greenspace Typologies
- Greenspace Provision Level, Priority Areas, Gaps and Needs Assessment

[1] 2022 York Region Official Plan

IDENTIFICATION OF OTHER GREENSPACE INITIATIVES

In addition to the GSP, the City is working on other initiatives that will impact greenspaces and therefore alignment will be needed across the multiple initiatives underway such as the Community Spaces Plan (CSP).

The review of the existing Active Together Master Plan (ATMP) has been divided into two components, the GSP is to provide guidance for the parks and greenspace system moving forward and the CSP is to provide guidance on the facilities and amenities such as sports fields and playgrounds within the parks and recreation system. The CSP is scheduled to be complete after the completion of the GSP and therefore some information will not be completely known at the time of the GSP.

The CSP will determine how much parkland will be needed for sports fields out to 2051. The GSP will need to accommodate this requirement without knowing the exact number of hectares required. This means the identified gap in parkland required to meet future parkland targets will need to be filled for both the GSP and CSP identified service levels.

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE SPACES (POPS) GUIDELINE STUDY

In addition to the CSP, the City is also undertaking a POPS guideline study. The POPS guideline study will look at setting guidelines around the design and development of POPS and look at determining what must be included in a POPS for a developer to receive 100% parkland dedication credit. Since POPS are being looked at through a separate study, the GSP will not delve into details on POPS development guidelines and the applicability of parkland credit. However, the GSP will indicate that it is the City's preference that parkland be dedicated unencumbered as a first priority because this will provide the greatest programming flexibility to the City over time.

URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The City recently completed their Urban Forest Management Plan in March 2024 along with a Woodland Management Strategy. The Woodland Management Strategy will guide the management of City owned woodlands and therefore the GSP's vision for the City's greenspace system will need to align with the Woodland Management Strategy. The Urban Forest Management Plan is a broader document that sets out goals for the City's overall tree canopy in addition to the woodland canopy. The greenspace system will play the most important role in the City's ability to meet its 25% tree canopy target by 2051. The programming and design of parks have the ability to provide space for active recreation as well as areas for more passive use. Even where sports fields are located, trees can be used to help provide shade for spectators, screening from the sport field lights and as natural fencing to keeps balls within the area of play.

MUNICIPAL NON-CONVENTIONAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES POLICY AND ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURE

As land becomes more constrained and valuable, the City is presented with alternatives to traditional stormwater management ponds. In 2024, Vaughan City Council adopted the City's Municipal Non-Conventional Stormwater Management Facilities Policy and Acceptance Procedure. The City's policy allows the consideration of non-conventional stormwater management facilities within parks and open spaces subject to technical engineering considerations and if there are no conflicts with the surface features and planned parks programming. Again, while the City has given the permission space to explore and consider alternative stormwater management ideas such as underground storage tanks, from the GSP's perspective the priority is to have public unencumbered land that will have the most programming flexibility into the future. Therefore, the consideration of an alternative stormwater management facility should be done so with the idea that park programming should maintain as much flexibility as possible into the future.

GREEN DIRECTIONS VAUGHAN

Green Directions Vaughan is the City's Community Sustainability Plan and provides overarching sustainability pillars for the City that should be reflected in plans and strategies as the City moves forward. While there are multiple objectives of the Community Sustainability Plan that the GSP ties into, the GSP most closely aligns with objective 2.2 of Green Directions Vaughan which is "to develop Vaughan as a complete community with maximum greenspace and urban form that supports our expected population growth".

IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF GREENSPACE TYPOLOGIES

Park classification is an integral part of greenspace and park management for municipalities. Classification enables municipalities to plan for their parks using a system-wide approach, identify gaps in their greenspace network, support operational work planning, and inform secondary plans and neighbourhood-level planning.

Municipalities primarily group their parks by the size and function to define a park hierarchy. The park hierarchy helps establish the park network and justifies levels of service and programming for each park within the municipality. To the public, the park hierarchy may not be well understood or even noticed. Educating the public on the hierarchy of parks within a municipality could help provide the rationale to residents about why certain amenities may not be located within particular parks and locations.

A review of Vaughan's parks dataset and aerial imagery was conducted to identify the average park size for each type of park, the types of amenities and recreational facilities offered, locational characteristics and site configuration. Other documents were reviewed, including the Vaughan Official Plan Review Policy Directions Report (February 2023), the Active Together Master Plan 2018 (ATMP), and the Parkland Dedication Guideline 2022, to understand previous recommendations put forward on park types. It is noted the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 is being updated through the new Vaughan Official Plan 2025 currently in draft form. The new Official Plan 2025 will better align with legislation, regional plans and policies and updated City plans and strategies. The ATMP is also under review and will be updated through the Community Spaces Plan project being carried on by the City. Parkland types and classifications from other municipalities with similar contexts were also reviewed to identify what types and classes are most commonly used and what considerations may be beneficial to Vaughan. Appendix A provides a summary list of park types used by other municipalities in York Region.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF EXISTING VAUGHAN OFFICIAL PLAN PARK TYPOLOGIES

The Vaughan Official Plan 2010 (VOP 2010) and 2018 Active Together Master Plan work together to outline the existing park types within the city. These park types only focus on what would be considered more active parkland. Active parkland is parkland that is usually dedicated through the land development process or acquired through the Payment-In-Lieu fund. According to the VOP 2010, active uses include playgrounds, outdoor fitness equipment, baseball, soccer, cricket, tennis, aquatics and other similar uses. Policy 7.3.1.2 of the VOP 2010 provides the existing park types and a summary of each park type's function and potential amenities. Policies 7.3.2.3 to 7.3.2.6 provide additional design criteria to be applied to the different park types. A review of each park type's opportunities and challenges is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Existing Park Types and their Opportunities and Challenges

Existing Typologies	Opportunities	Challenges
Regional Park	• Provide ample space for a wide variety of events, gatherings, activities, and sports. • Provides plenty of parking. • Provides a higher standard of sports fields that attract leagues and tournaments. • Provides larger scale facilities (toboggan hills, FIFA certified fields, trails). • Provides naturalized areas for respite.	• Needs large spaces, making land assembly and funding difficult. These are typically partially acquired through Payment-in Lieu reserves. • Activities can cause disruption to nearby residential areas (parking, lighting, noise). • Often tied together with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) lands, which causes a lack of clarity regarding the role of maintenance and long-term capital asset renewal.
District Park	• Provides a large but localized park space for citywide facilities and amenities. • Allow for a wide variety of city-led features, programs, and activities. • Provide permittable sport fields.	• Requires large spaces, making land assembly and funding difficult. These are typically partially acquired through Payment-in Lieu reserves. • Serving active and passive recreation uses can cause problems (sports fields used for dog runs, sports being too noisy, fields cannot be lit because of their proximity to residential areas). • Sports fields and courts may not have enough parking necessary.

Existing Typologies	Opportunities	Challenges
Neighbourhood Park	• Greenspace within walking and biking distance of nearby residents is provided. • Serves everyday passive and recreation activities, such as pick-up sports and games, walks, playgrounds, and small gatherings. • Smaller size makes them easier to develop. • Provide permittable sport fields.	• Use can vary by neighbourhood, impacting maintenance levels. • Smaller sizes may lack parking. • Smaller sizes can limit the potential for amenities and activities.
Urban Park	• Provides a large but localized multi-use park space for citywide facilities and amenities in intensification areas. • Provides passive recreation opportunities for areas with high population densities. • Higher population densities warrant greater funding and maintenance levels to attract visitors. • Flexible size and scope can make them easier to implement in new developments. • Can be built to accommodate intensified use.	• Intensified levels of use can limit the amount of softscaping and grass. • High levels of use require higher maintenance levels. • Hardscaping has higher capital costs, requiring larger budgets. • Compact form limits the number and location of amenities and activities available based on zoning by-law. • Developers often provide payment-in-lieu instead of parkland dedication, which makes land acquisition challenging. • Onsite stormwater management may require additional structures. • Adjacency to private development requires complex reciprocal easements, maintenance and access agreement

Existing Typologies	Opportunities	Challenges
Public Square	• Provides programmable public space for urbanized areas. • Features unique amenities that are special to Vaughan. • Size and design can vary depending on context and surrounding land uses. • Built to a higher standard to accommodate intensified use. • Small size works better for parkland dedication from developers. • Maintain exposure to street frontage to allow surveillance from the street into the space.	• Intensified use can limit the amount of softscaping and grass. • High levels of use require higher maintenance requirements. • Hardscaping and amenities have higher capital costs, requiring larger budgets. • Compact form limits the number and location of amenities and activities available based on zoning by-law. • Onsite stormwater management may require additional structures. • Adjacency to private development requires complex reciprocal easements, maintenance and access agreement

PROPOSED ATMP GREENSPACE TYPOLOGIES

The 2018 ATMP suggests expanding the Neighbourhood Park and Public Square Park classifications into two subcategories, each capturing a level of service that would be provided in a more suburban context, as well as be provided in a higher-density area. A description of each is provided below:

1 **Neighbourhood Park – Type 1 (NEW)**
These parks differ from Urban Parks in that they serve more of a Neighbourhood Park function (i.e., support a balance of active uses such as playgrounds, skate zones, play courts, etc.) and include a provision for open space. These parks are smaller and more compact than traditional Neighbourhood Parks (Type 2) and would be designed to a higher standard to support more intensified use. Thus, they would be more expensive to construct.

2 **Neighbourhood Park – Type 2 (EXISTING)**
Typically provided in greenfield areas (low density), consistent with current levels of service. These parks support a balance of active and passive uses, such as playgrounds, skate zones, play courts, unlit sports fields and social gathering spaces.

3 **Public Square – Type 1 (EXISTING)**
Typically provided in areas of intensification (high density) and consistent with the typology identified in the VOP 2010. These parks support the social and cultural fabric of Intensification Areas through the provision of highly programmed outdoor spaces. Based on land area, these will typically be the most expensive parks to construct within the parks system.

4 **Public Square – Type 2 (NEW)**
These parks are smaller and more compact than traditional Neighbourhood Parks (Type 2) and are typically less than 0.75 hectares. They are recommended in instances where a Neighbourhood Park is not necessary, but local-level facilities (e.g., playground, waterplay, seating, etc.) are required to serve a nearby development. These sites are not suitable for large features such as sports fields.

There is no need to provide sub-categories for District and Regional parks since the level of service for these types of parks is unique to the specific function of each individual District and Regional park.

Alternatives to creating sub-categories for Neighbourhood Parks and Public Squares are to reestablish completely new nomenclature and park types for each of these categories or allow greater flexibility of programming and amenities within each park type depending on context and location. Through a review of comparable municipalities and park trends, Vaughan is unique in having two park classes with two types each to be used in an urban and suburban setting. It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Park and Public Square revert to representing a single type of park. Since parks are not identical to each other even within the same class, there is no real advantage that has been identified for budgetary purposes.

PARKLAND DEDICATION GUIDELINES - URBAN PARK TYPES

The Parkland Dedication Guidelines also put forward suggestions for new park types, mostly focusing on the creation of new park types that could be used in higher-density areas. The Parkland Dedication Guidelines were developed to respond to changes to Sections 37 and 42 of the *Planning Act*, Vaughan's intensification trends and its challenges in meeting its parkland targets as its population grows. The changes to Sections 37 and 42 of the Planning Act impact the amount of parkland dedication and payment-in-lieu of parkland dedication that a municipality may receive primarily in intensification areas. At the time, the project team developed six new park types that responded to Vaughan's intensification trends and would assist with park provision in highly

urbanized areas with high land values. These park types were public commons, urban squares, promenades, connecting links, pocket parks, and sliver parks. The park types were included in the Parkland Dedication Guidelines that were presented to City Council in 2022 at a Committee of the Whole (Working Session). Council approved staff's recommendations with amendments to develop a new parkland dedication by-law, based on considerations from the Parkland Dedication Guideline Study. Descriptions of the new urban park types suggested in the Parkland Dedication Guidelines are outlined in Table 2. Due to varying levels of staff support for the suggested urban park types, these park types have not been adopted as park types within the Vaughan Official Plan.

Table 2: Urban Park Types from the Parkland Dedication Guidelines

Additional Urban Park Types	Hectares	Description	Staff Support
Public Commons	0.75 – 2	Public Commons spaces are to accommodate special features that add visual interest and contribute to placemaking, including locations for public art.	Staff expressed this park type warrants further consideration as it may provide additional flexibility in Strategic Growth Areas.
Urban Squares	0.2 - 1	Urban Square spaces may include public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas and places to eat, as well as street-related activities like vendor and exhibit space.	Urban Squares are deemed unnecessary by staff since they duplicate the Public Square park type.
Promenades	Varies	Promenades are between 5 and 25 metres in width, with an average width along its length of 15 metres.	Promenades are not supported as dedicated parkland. However, this type is supported as a method to improve connectivity in the greenspace system.
Connecting Links	Varies	An outdoor or indoor walkway that may be lined with small stores, restaurants and cafés. A Connecting Link is a minimum of 4 metres in width.	Staff do not support parkland dedication for Connecting Links because they offer minimal opportunity for recreational amenities and will increase the operation and maintenance of the greenspace system disproportionately to the benefit provided.

Additional Urban Park Types	Hectares	Description	Staff Support
Sliver Parks	Varies	Narrow linear spaces that often front restaurants, cafés and retail spaces.	Staff do not support parkland dedication for Sliver Parks because they offer minimal opportunity for recreational amenities and will increase the operation and maintenance of the greenspace system disproportionately to the benefit provided.
Pocket Parks	0.075 to 0.25	Pocket Park spaces include primarily hard surface elements. Pocket Park spaces must be a minimum of 75 square metres in size and must be connected to and have at least 7.5 metres of direct frontage along the public sidewalk system.	Staff do not support parkland dedication for Pocket Parks because they offer minimal opportunity for recreational amenities and will increase the operation and maintenance of the greenspace system disproportionately to the benefit provided.

The Public Commons typology was proposed as a 0.75-to-2-hectare public space that sought to accommodate the needs of the nearby community, special features for placemaking, and citywide facilities. The typology received partial support as it could add flexibility in public parkland spaces within Strategic Growth Areas.

Urban Squares were another proposed small public space to support neighbourhood-oriented social opportunities and entertainment and cultural events in urbanized areas. However, the park typology was deemed unnecessary as it was seen as duplicating the existing Public Squares typology in the Vaughan Official Plan 2010.

Promenades were proposed as linear spaces between 5 and 25 metres in width that sought to enhance the pedestrian experience along highly activated at-grade retail spaces and streets. They allow for public art, small outdoor game areas, seating areas, and places to eat. Staff supported the use of Promenades for connections between public park spaces to create a connected park network however did not support parkland dedication credits.

Connecting Links, Pocket Parks, and Sliver Parks were proposed as small park spaces for urbanized areas to provide improved connectivity between buildings and additional space and amenities around these areas. However, staff did not support the use of parkland credits for any of these typologies as they offer negligible ability to accommodate recreation facilities and may increase operations and maintenance costs.

Aside from particular challenges with each individual suggestion, a review of other municipalities indicates fewer park types are more common than a long list of different park types. Another challenge of having many urban park types is that the level of service and function of each type is very narrow in scope and would leave less flexibility for the City to implement or vary in design. Including fewer urban park types allows a variety of urban park designs that can address the challenges that any given site context may create.

OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGIES

Park typologies are reserved for active parkland that is primarily acquired through parkland dedication at the time of development, in some cases municipalities also formally identify open space typologies that are used for lands that are not dedicated as parkland. Policy 7.3.1.3 of the VOP 2010 identifies open space types to be used in the city, including greenways, nature reserves, woodlots, stormwater management facilities, and cemeteries. Existing greenways in Vaughan are used as active parkland and have been included as part of the City's parkland calculation.

Other open space types may be acquired through land dedication as a natural area, as a utility, and as undevelopable land. Cemeteries would likely be purchased by the City. Other open space types have limited or no opportunities to be used as active parkland and their main function is different than active parkland. Most municipalities reviewed, identify various open space types by the common name of the space such as a woodlot, valley lands, etc. From a parks and greenspace system perspective there is no need to formally create other open space types.

Stormwater management facilities may support the open space network however, including stormwater management infrastructure as an open space type either creates issues with the operation and maintenance of such facilities due to access requirements or limits the usability of space due to safety and maintenance issues.

Similarly, cemeteries are also not usually considered an open space type since the main function is to provide a burial place and are not a socially acceptable location to recreate for some people.

Formally naming other open space types could be useful for internal budgeting purposes. However, natural areas, woodlots, valley lands, and similar spaces can be grouped together for budgetary considerations.

PROPOSED GREENSPACE TYPOLOGIES

The number of park classification types varies across the researched municipalities as their purposes range in specificity. For example, Mississauga only has three classes (destination, community, and greenlands), while Ottawa has seven (district, community, neighbourhood, parkettes, urban parkettes, woodlands, and linear parks). Classification is dependent on the city context and its preference for management style. One thing in common across municipalities is that park types are used only for lands that are owned or designated as part of a municipalities own park system. Conservation Authority and Provincial Parks are not included in municipal park classifications. Having fewer park classes means the nature of the park classes will be more general as they will encompass a wider variety of parks, while a greater number of park classes means that the classes are more specific and encompass fewer parks. Table 3 illustrates park types used by comparable municipalities in Ontario.

Table 3: Park Types Used Amongst Six Comparable Municipalities in Ontario

Ottawa	Kingston	Brampton	Oakville	Hamilton	Toronto	Vaughan
	Citywide Parks			Citywide Parks		
District Parks	Regional Parks	City Parks	Community Parks		Legacy Parks	Regional Park
Community Parks	District Parks	Community Parks		Community Parks	City Parks	District Park
Neighbourhood Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	Large Parks	Neighbourhood Park
		Urban Parks			Medium Parks	Urban Park
Parkettes				Parkettes	Small Parks	
Urban Parkettes/ Urban Plazas					Parkettes	Public Square
Woodland Parks						
Linear Parks		Linear Connector	Community Link Parks			

The advantage of fewer park classes is that they allow for purpose, amenities, and funding levels to change over time without changing the park classification. This creates a more flexible park classification system that can adapt to the changing needs of the community and the changing demand for parks over time. In contrast, a greater number of park classes can restrict park changes because their classification does not include the desired change, so an existing park would have to be reclassified.

The disadvantage of fewer park classes is that they can create uncertainty for municipalities to define in terms of maintenance, funding, and planning. If a park class encompasses a wide range of park types, then a municipality must determine the size, amenities, funding, and maintenance needs on a case-by-case basis as parks are planned or upgraded. In contrast, a greater number of park classes means each park class is more specific and provides better direction for the municipality to follow.

In response to Vaughan's park context and classifications, the existing five park classes serve the City well and align with municipal park classification practices. Three new park classifications are put forward for consideration. The three new park classes, include Destination Park, Linear Park and Ecological Park. These classes could provide Vaughan with the necessary number of classes to expand its greenspace network while allowing an adequate level of flexibility that doesn't restrict parks from adapting to changing conditions over time. It is also suggested that two sub-categories be used for the Linear Park class. The Linear Park type sub-categories would differentiate between a more greenway/naturalized Linear Park and a more manicured, constructed Linear Park.

Table 4 identifies Ontario municipalities that utilize the most common eight park classifications found. This research provides background information to inform the proposed park types for Vaughan.

Table 4: Benchmarking Study: Park Classifications of Different Municipalities Across Ontario

Park Class	Municipality	
Destination/ Regional Park	• Markham • Richmond Hill • Hamilton • London	• Vaughan • Whitchurch- Stouffville • East Gwillimbury
District Park	• Toronto • Ottawa • Vaughan • London	• Markham • Richmond Hill • King
Neighbourhood/ Community Park	• Toronto • Ottawa • Hamilton • Vaughan • London • Richmond Hill • Brampton	• Aurora • East Gwillimbury • King • Whitchurch-Stouffville • Newmarket • Georgina
Parkette	• Toronto • Hamilton • Ottawa • Markham	• Aurora • Whitchurch-Stouffville • King
Urban Park	• Vaughan	• Brampton
Urban Plaza/ Square	• Ottawa • Markham • Newmarket	• Aurora • Richmond Hill • Vaughan
Linear Park	• Ottawa • Burlington	• Richmond Hill • Brampton
Ecological Park	• Ottawa • Whitchurch-Stouffville	• Aurora • Burlington

Prior to outlining the suggested park classifications for Vaughan, Table 5 provides a matrix describing the overall differences between the different classifications being suggested. This provides a quick overview for comparison.

Table 5: Potential Vaughan Park Classifications

Park Class	Location Context	Catchment	Cost per Hectare	Access	Landscape	Programmed	Size
Destination	Varies	Citywide and beyond	High	Arterial and Major Streets	Mostly Soft	Yes	Large
Regional	Suburban	Regional	Low	Arterial and Major Streets	Mostly Soft	Yes	Large
District	Varies	Regional	Medium	Major and Collector Streets	Mostly Soft	Yes	Medium to Large
Neighbourhood	Varies	Local	Low	Local and Collector Streets	Mostly Soft	Yes	Small to Medium
Urban	Urban	Varies	High	Major and Collector	Soft and Hard	Yes	Varies
Public Square	Urban	Local	High	Major and Collector	Soft and Hard	No	Small
Linear	Varies	Regional	Low	Varies	Soft	No	Medium
Ecological	Suburban	Regional	Low	Varies	Soft	No	Varies

DESTINATION PARK – UNDER CONSIDERATION

Figure 1: View of North Maple Regional Park Source: Tourism Vaughan

Description: The emergence of Destination Parks is the result of years of engagement and planning focused on creating unique places that support principles of healthy lifestyles, equity, diversity, ecology, restoration, education, and culture. Destination Parks provide experiences, amenities, and attractions designed to draw visitors from a broader geographic area. They can serve to protect natural and cultural resources, host educational programs, and provide spaces for physical activity, passive recreation, festivals and citywide events.

Size: Varies

Capital cost: The cost per square metre is to be determined as the GSP is developed.

Examples: North Maple Regional Park (Vaughan), Spencer Smith Park (Burlington), Centennial Park (Barrie).

Why does Vaughan need this?
Destination Parks are parks that attract tourists and visitors from within and outside of a municipality. These parks usually offer unique amenities that differ from other park classes and may require one off maintenance and operation procedures. Vaughan is in the process of creating a unique opportunity with North Maple and should look at offering one to two destination parks that

have been designed to draw people from all over the GTA. These parks can also provide additional economic benefits to the community by drawing people into the city for the day at and near these locations.

REGIONAL PARK

Figure 2: Sports field at Vaughan Grove Sports Park. Source: City of Vaughan

Description: Regional Parks are unique park sites that provide tourist attractions, high-quality facilities, and functions that are considered municipally, regionally, provincially, and/or nationally significant park destinations. They are often large areas of land and can be associated with unique natural, historic, or cultural features that initiated their acquisition and guided their development. The attractions and events found within these parks draw residents together from across the city and act as tourism destinations for visitors. Features can include panoramic views and trails, high-quality sports facilities, bandstands, fountains, statues, gardens, and pristine natural features. Regional Parks differ from urban or district parks due to the recreation amenities and facilities provided, they are usually the higher class of facilities, which in turn requires different levels of maintenance.

Size: 15+ ha

Capital cost: $50-$200 per square metre, [2] However, the cost varies based on the size and amenities of the park. The City's development charges utilize an average cost of $54.93 per square metre for land development costs inclusive of 31% for contingency, consultancy, tax, admin and labour recovery, this does not include sports fields, playgrounds and other amenities.

Examples: High Park (Toronto), Trinity Bellwoods (Toronto), Regent Park Athletic Grounds (Toronto) Toronto Island Park (Toronto), Major's Hill Park (Ottawa), Hog's Back Park (Ottawa), Confederation Park (Ottawa), Confederation Park (Kingston), Victoria Park (London, ON) and Gage Park (Hamilton).

Why does Vaughan need this?

Regional Parks are an existing park classification used by Vaughan and have been working well for the City. Vaughan has designated four sites, including the Uplands Golf and Ski Centre, as Regional Parks, and is currently improving the North Maple Regional Park to further become a regional attraction to accommodate a variety of events and activities. As Vaughan continues to grow, Regional Parks will play an important role in providing a large park space that acts as a hub for the city and beyond.

[2] City of Oakville. (2023). Parks Plan 2031. https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/209b4351-1cef-43cf-8636-4f68d79e6f0d/planning-oakville-parks-plan-2031.pdf

DISTRICT PARK

Figure 3: North Thornhill District Park in Vaughan, ON.

Description: District Parks are intended to provide a range of active and passive recreation activities and serve multiple neighbourhoods. Their recreation amenities are often of higher quality than those found in Neighbourhood Parks. For example, District Parks will feature parking lots to host recreational sporting events, and their passive recreation facilities will be built to accommodate a higher level of activity and will, therefore, be more durable. District Parks are located along higher-order streets and have multi-modal transportation access, including pathways or route connections for transit and cycling.

Size: 5-15 hectares

Capital cost: $100-$300 per square metre. [3] The City's development charges rates utilize an average cost of $62.28 per square metre for land development costs inclusive of 31% for contingency, consultancy, tax, admin and labour recovery, this does not include sports fields, playgrounds and other amenities.

[3] City of Oakville. (2023). Parks Plan 2031. https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/209b4351-1cef-43cf-8636-4f68d79e6f0d/planning-oakville-parks-plan-2031.pdf

Examples: Riverdale Park (Toronto), Coronation Park (Toronto), Mooney's Bay Park (Ottawa), Lake Ontario Park (Kingston), and George Richardson Park (Newmarket).

Why does Vaughan need this?
Vaughan's park classification currently includes District Parks, which is a classification that is recommended to be preserved. District Parks are large parks that provide high-quality amenities, programming and lit sports facilities that cannot be provided by Neighbourhood Parks because of varying factors such as size, noise or lighting impacts on surrounding properties. Examples include rubberized playground and swing areas, large splash pads, shade structures and outdoor entertainment areas. They also differ from regional parks because they do not warrant the same level of funding and attention.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

Figure 4: Woodrose Neighbourhood Park in Vaughan, ON.

Description: Neighbourhood Parks are local hubs for recreation and gatherings within walking distance of the surrounding community. They provide a small variety of amenities and sports facilities while balancing passive and active recreation, including playgrounds, small sports fields,

and tennis courts, for example. They can also serve as links between neighbourhoods and trails, and the park's open spaces should be located next to schools and community facilities to maximize open green areas to help reduce heat islands within neighbourhoods and improve local microclimates.

Size: 1-5 ha

Capital cost: $150-500 per square metre. [4] The City's development charges rates utilize an average cost of $47.51 per square metre, for land development costs inclusive of 31% for contingency, consultancy, tax, admin and labour recovery. This does not include sports fields, playgrounds and other amenities.

Examples: Palladium Park (Burlington), College Manor Park (Aurora), Roxborough Park (Hamilton), Champlain Park (Ottawa), Drew Doak Park (Newmarket), and Jamie Simpson Park (Toronto).

Why does Vaughan need this?
Vaughan's existing classification includes Neighbourhood Parks, which are recommended to be preserved in the new classification. Neighbourhood Parks play an integral role in providing greenspace within walking distance to the surrounding community. As such, they are often smaller and cannot accommodate large parking lots or sports fields that are provided by District Parks. However, their size allows for more naturalized areas (trees and green open spaces) and amenities (play structures and small sports facilities) compared to urban parks and public squares.

[4] City of Oakville. (2023). Parks Plan 2031. https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/209b4351-1cef-43cf-8636-4f68d79e6f0d/planning-oakville-parks-plan-2031.pdf

URBAN PARK

Figure 5: Thornhill Green Park in Vaughan, ON. Source: Google Images.

Description: Urban Parks are small to medium-sized greenspaces located in higher-density neighbourhoods and typically feature greater degrees of hardscaping to accommodate the density but still have traditional park features (such as green open spaces, seating areas, playgrounds and small sports facilities). Urban Parks will usually include more amenities than Neighbourhood Parks to meet the service needs within the intensification area. They enable flexible, multi-purpose programming (such as festivals, farmers' markets, and concerts) but are also designed for spontaneous everyday use. Their size varies between 0.5 and 5 hectares in order to allow for the flexibility of implementing them in intensification areas through parkland dedication or City-led acquisition where land is highly valued and for larger existing parks that are currently experiencing intensification pressures.

Size: 0.5 – 5 ha

Capital Cost Estimate - $500- $ 1,000 per square metre. [5] The City's development charges rates utilize an average cost of $283.38 per square metre for land development costs inclusive of 31% for contingency, consultancy, tax, admin and labour recovery. This does not include sports fields, playgrounds and other amenities.

[5] City of Oakville. (2023). Parks Plan 2031. https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/209b4351-1cef-43cf-8636-4f68d79e6f0d/planning-oakville-parks-plan-2031.pdf

Examples: HtO Park (Toronto), Corktown Common (Toronto) Dundonald Park (Ottawa), McBurney Park (Kingston), and St. James Park (Toronto).

Why does Vaughan need this?
Urban Parks are currently within Vaughan's classification system, and they are recommended to be preserved in the new classification system. Urban Parks are designed to provide neighbourhood-level parks and greenspace features within walking distance of the surrounding neighbourhood. Urban Parks differ from Neighbourhood Parks by featuring a greater degree of hardscaping, more amenities and maintenance levels to accommodate for the higher intensity of use. Therefore, they should be planned near or within intensification areas. As such, their size and design will greatly depend on the amount of land available to the City through parkland dedication or City-led land acquisition.

PUBLIC SQUARE

Figure 6: Edgeley Park in Vaughan, ON. Source: City of Vaughan.

Description: Public Squares are small areas primarily located in highly urbanized areas to provide parkland where a Neighbourhood Park may not be achievable or necessary. Features may include seating areas, public art, fountains, statues, and other unique features and attractions to create a vibrant urban environment. Public Squares are primarily hardscaped to accommodate the heightened levels of use they attract but feature natural elements, such as trees and flowers, in planters or in-ground soil cells.

Size: 0.2 – 0.5 hectare.

Capital Cost: $1,000 to $1,500 per square metre. [6] The City's development charges rates utilize an average cost ranging between $205.99 and $602 per square metre, for land development costs inclusive of 31% for contingency, consultancy, tax, admin and labour recovery. This does not include sports fields, playgrounds and other amenities.

Examples: Place d'Armes (Montreal), Yonge-Dundas Square (Toronto), Edgeley Park (Vaughan) and Springer Market Square (Kingston).

Why does Vaughan need this?
Public Squares are recommended to be preserved in the new classification system. They differ from Urban Parks in that they are usually smaller and feature a hardscaped open space to provide a flexible area for special events and gatherings. Kingston's Springer Market Square demonstrates how Public Squares can provide an array of opportunities for events, such as outdoor skating in the winter, concert festivals, farmer's markets, and community events.

LINEAR PARKS – UNDER CONSIDERATION

Figure 7: Byron Linear Tramway Park in Ottawa, ON. Source: MIV Photography.

Description: Linear Parks are long and narrow greenspaces that primarily serve as active transportation connections and passive recreation areas. They should be planned to cut through and between subdivisions or located along roadways to provide additional space for pathways and greenery. They can be built along public access easements and utility corridors, as well as privately owned lands, using lease agreements to formalize existing informal trails. They feature multi-use pathways, seating areas, lookouts, small play areas, and farmers markets where sufficient space exists.

[6] City of Oakville. (2023). Parks Plan 2031. https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/209b4351-1cef-43cf-8636-4f68d79e6f0d/planning-oakville-parks-plan-2031.pdf

It is recommended that Vaughan adopt two types of Linear Parks to best fit its context. Type 1 would be more naturalized and feature an asphalt or concrete multi-use path bordered by trees to primarily provide active transportation access between neighbourhoods. Type 2 would be an urbanized form of the linear park and feature a greater degree of hardscaping, including wider paths (greater than 3 metres), more seating areas, planters and soil cells for trees. Type 2 Linear Parks would be found in urban areas and along streets.

Size: Vary in length, with a minimum width of 6 metres.

Capital costs: $ 500 per square metre. [7]

Examples: Byron Linear Tramway Park (Ottawa)**,** Breakwater Park (Kingston), Front Street Promenade (Toronto).

Why does Vaughan need this?
Improved park connectivity and safe active transportation routes were predominant recommendations from the first phase of public engagement. Linear Parks can be used to improve park and active transportation connections to create a better parkland system that supports passive and active recreation. While active transportation connections can be acquired through methods other than parkland dedication credits during the development process, connectivity between parks and trails is integral to the promotion of active transportation and a successful park network. However, there are concerns that extending parkland credits to Linear Parks may limit the City's ability to secure programmable space to meet outdoor facilities needs of local communities. The City should continue to secure these key connections as part of the development process.

Furthermore, Linear Parks can be designed in a way that creates attractive passive recreation opportunities. For example, the Byron Linear Tramway Park in Ottawa provided a 2.5-kilometre-long park that featured a multi-use path, trees, benches, war monuments, and farmer's markets during the summer. The park was a central feature of the Westboro neighbourhood and supported active transportation along a busy arterial road. Vaughan could use this park type to improve existing informal transportation connections, such as utility corridors, and extend the park and active transportation network through the development process.

[7] City of Oakville. (2023). Parks Plan 2031. https://www.oakville.ca/getmedia/209b4351-1cef-43cf-8636-4f68d79e6f0d/planning-oakville-parks-plan-2031.pdf

ECOLOGICAL PARK – UNDER CONSIDERATION

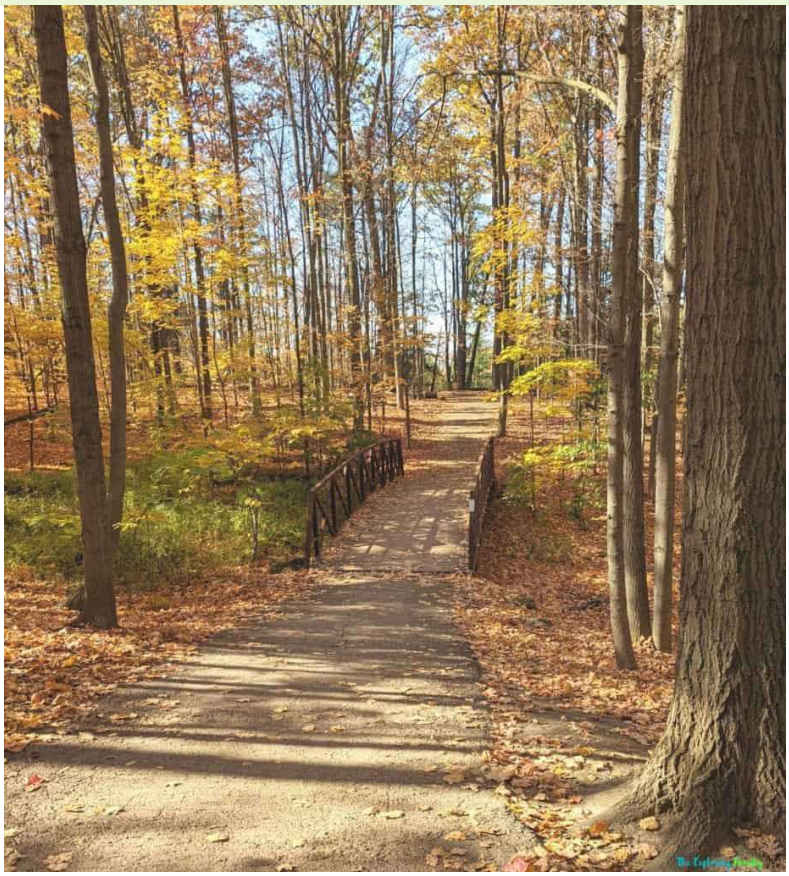

Figure 8: Lion's Valley Park in Oakville, ON.

Description: Ecological Parks are greenspaces that are predominantly in a natural state and provide ecosystem services. They may include passive park usage such as trails, seating, and lookouts, as well as environmentally beneficial amenities such as bird houses, bat boxes, pollinator gardens, and educational displays. However, these features must be designed in a way to minimize negative impacts on the surrounding natural areas. They should refrain from building large recreation amenities or sports facilities in order to conserve the natural area. The goal of Ecological Parks is to formalize public access to naturalized areas in an ecologically friendly way. In doing so, this will increase Vaughan's parkland while promoting park stewardship and interaction with nature. Opportunities for community tree planting can be provided.

Size: Varies depending on the geography of natural features. Larger than 3 hectares.

Capital cost: Varies.

Examples: Tommy Thompson Park (Toronto), Marshlands Conservation Area (Kingston), Riverwood Conservancy (Mississauga), Lion's Valley (Oakville), Zimmerman Park (Burlington), Petrie Island Park (Ottawa), Bailey Ecological Park (Aurora), Boyd Conservation Area (Vaughan), Langstaff EcoPark (Vaughan).

Why does Vaughan need this?

Vaughan benefits from a large amount of environmentally protected open spaces such as ravines, woodlots, and natural open spaces. However, many of these areas are not formally established as parks, even if they are used by residents. Vaughan can reclassify these areas as Ecological Parks in order to provide the amenities and facilities that residents expect from their other parks in an ecologically conscious manner. For example, many of Vaughan's woodlots feature trails; however, they are often unlit, lack proper signage, and some of these areas could be enhanced with benches, small play areas, and educational signs. Not all of these areas may suitable for additional amenities such as small play areas, however some amenities such as educational signs can be built to preserve the ecological integrity of the natural area while improving their experience among park users. Criteria would be required to outline how amenities may be able to be provided while maintaining the ecological integrity of natural areas.

PARK CLASSIFICATION CONCLUSION

The eight park classifications identified above are intended to provide Vaughan with all the park classifications necessary to encompass its diverse variety of existing and planned parks, along with the passive and active amenities and activities that the City may want to provide for throughout the greenspace system. The existing five classifications in Vaughan appear to meet the needs of citizens in the city.

Three new park classifications have been described for consideration by the City to provide additional specificity to provide park planning and maintenance direction while not providing too many classes to restrict parks from adjusting to their unique considerations. The following section will explore how these park classifications can be efficiently managed from an operations and maintenance perspective.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE FRAMEWORK

This section explores considerations for an operations and maintenance framework for the GSP. During Phase 1 engagement, maintenance concerns were raised by some individuals and the general alignment of maintenance and life cycling was also raised as an item for consideration during interviews with City staff and Councillors. High-quality greenspace maintenance is integral to preserving and providing the long-term quality of Vaughan's greenspace network. As the greenspace network adapts to increased use and demands, so must its operations and maintenance protocols.

Maintenance requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Field maintenance
- Snow removal
- Garbage pick-up
- Planting/gardening
- Plant/tree watering and maintenance
- Sidewalk cleaning
- Street furniture/play structure replacement and maintenance

In a growing urban context, parks can undergo increased stress and require higher levels of maintenance to uphold the community's and the City's standards. For example, larger suburban parks need to be maintained about once or twice a week, depending on the level of use. However, busy urban parks surrounded by high-density residential and commercial uses may need to be maintained every day.

As more urban parks are built, maintenance practices will need to adapt as well. Urban parks will have less grass and more gardens and pathways, which will shift the need for field maintenance to gardening and snow clearing. Urban parks also experience higher strain from salt used on sidewalks to melt ice, damages from snow clearing, and increased general use, which raises the need for them to be designed and maintained accordingly.

As a result, Vaughan should consider adjusting its existing maintenance and operations practices as it acquires and builds more urban parks. One observation arising from the interviews with Councillors and City staff was the suggestion for clearer clarification of roles and responsibilities while considering that jurisdictional discrepancies will be further compounded by the increased development costs of urban parks and their different ownership agreements for strata parks and POPS.

As such, Vaughan should prioritize heightened communication between City departments and external partners to ensure that maintenance costs and protocols are efficiently managed. One way of improving the maintenance of future parks is by including maintenance staff in the design stage of parks to ensure that their design is maintenance friendly. This is not to suggest that greenspace design should focus solely on ease of maintenance. Instead, it emphasizes improving communication across departments and partners to align greenspace development with

maintenance and staffing needs, while also addressing funding requirements to maintain or enhance service levels as urbanized spaces create higher demands. While Vaughan does use partnership agreements with external partners, creating more robust park partnership agreement standards with internal and external partners can help clarify which partner is responsible for what and the expectations of the greenspace function and maintenance.

Other municipalities also use partnership agreements to outline expectations. The City of Vancouver's Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) section has a partnership agreement with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. The Park Board is responsible for non-building assets (for example: playgrounds, park furniture), whilst REFM is responsible for buildings, marinas and utilities. Appendix 5 of the linked document outlines the responsibilities of each department: VanPlay appendixes (vancouver.ca).

Park Board Assets Ownership Model (for routine maintenance activities)

Park Board	REFM

• Parks
• Playgrounds
• Park fencing and Backstops
• Park furniture
  ○ Benches
  ○ Bleachers
  ○ Picnic Tables and Shelters
• Open Spaces
• Field Lighting and Pathway Lighting (including lighting on bollards)
• Accent lighting on Park Structures
• Pathways
• Pedestrian Footbridges and Overpasses
• Piers and Docks
• Pergolas, Canopies, Arbours,
• Bandshells/Band Stands
• Fountains
  ○ Drinking
  ○ Decorative
• Asphalt Maintenance
• Wading Pools and Splash Pads
• Irrigation
• EQS (Fleet Vehicles)
• Recreation Programming Equipment
	• Buildings*
	  ○ Community Centres
	  ○ Arenas
	  ○ Pools
	  ○ Field Houses
	  ○ Washrooms
	  ○ Concessions
	  ○ Golf Course Buildings
	  ○ Service Yards
	• Marinas – Burrard and Heather (including docks)
	• Utilities

* REFM Operations and Maintenance will be responsible for all Base Building equipment and systems. Building interiors and furniture *within city inventory* will also fall within the scope of work.

Figure 9: Partnership framework between Vancouver Park Board and Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) in Vancouver's parks plan

The availability of data is a necessary component of an operations and maintenance framework to create informed decisions. The same data must be readily available to the different divisions within the City to create a transparent process for decision-making. Mis-aligned outcomes will occur if City departments are using different data to make decisions. The data must also be regularly updated, and decisions must be based on recent data that will lead to good outcomes.

An effective operations and maintenance framework will also require the establishment of maintenance protocols for different park types and locational contexts. The Oakville Park Plan highlights ongoing and enhanced maintenance protocols that are essential to maintain the long-term quality of the Town's parkland network. The establishment of maintenance protocols also helps provide clarity and justification to support budget requests.

ACQUISITION DECISION FRAMEWORK

The initial project phase involved extensive background research, incorporating studies from municipalities in Ontario and Alberta. Document reviews encompassed provincial, regional, and municipal documents, benchmarking studies, interviews, stakeholder workshops and engagement findings. The insights gained were distilled into strategies and tools for Vaughan's Greenspace Strategic Plan.

The following tools were analyzed for their use in Vaughan's upcoming parkland and greenspace acquisitions:

Burlington's Development Stream Decision Making Matrix

The acquisition of parkland in Burlington is guided by strategic park planning and funding availability. To ensure transparent decision-making, a parkland decision matrix is recommended, prioritizing acquisition based on determined parkland service levels. The matrix involves two decision-making streams: one focusing on developers' contributions to parkland dedication and the other on the City's active acquisition through land purchase. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the decision matrix. Additionally, the strategy emphasizes opportunistic parkland acquisition, even in the absence of an immediate priority, to address the ongoing pressure on Burlington's park system due to population growth.

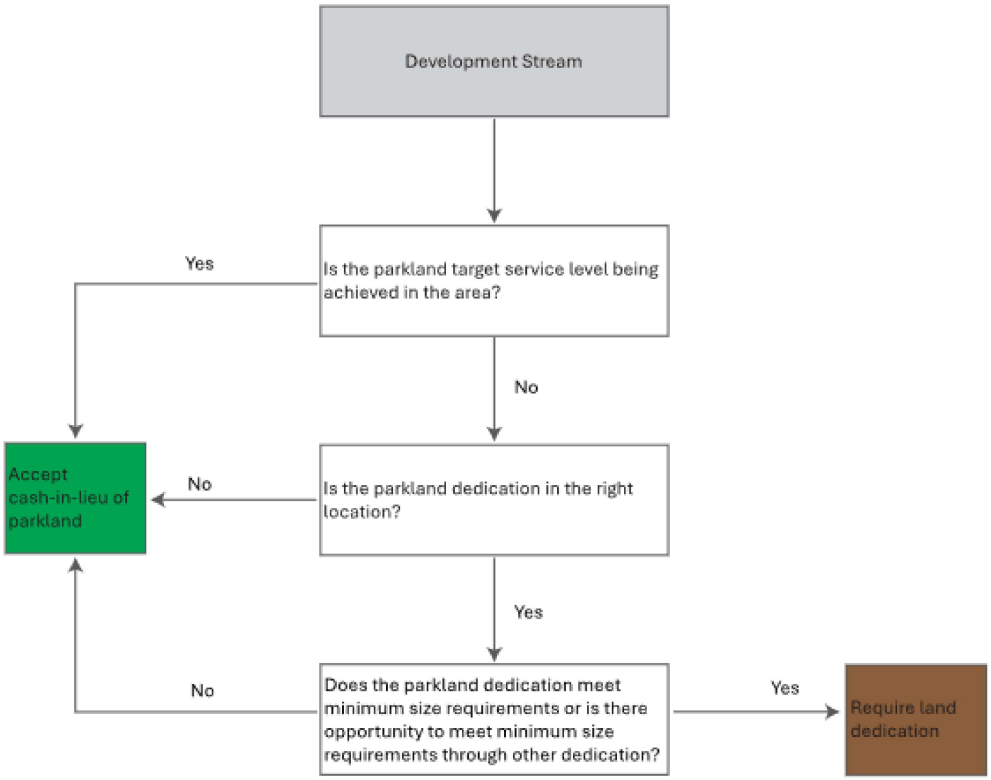

Figure 10: Development Stream Decision-Making Matrix

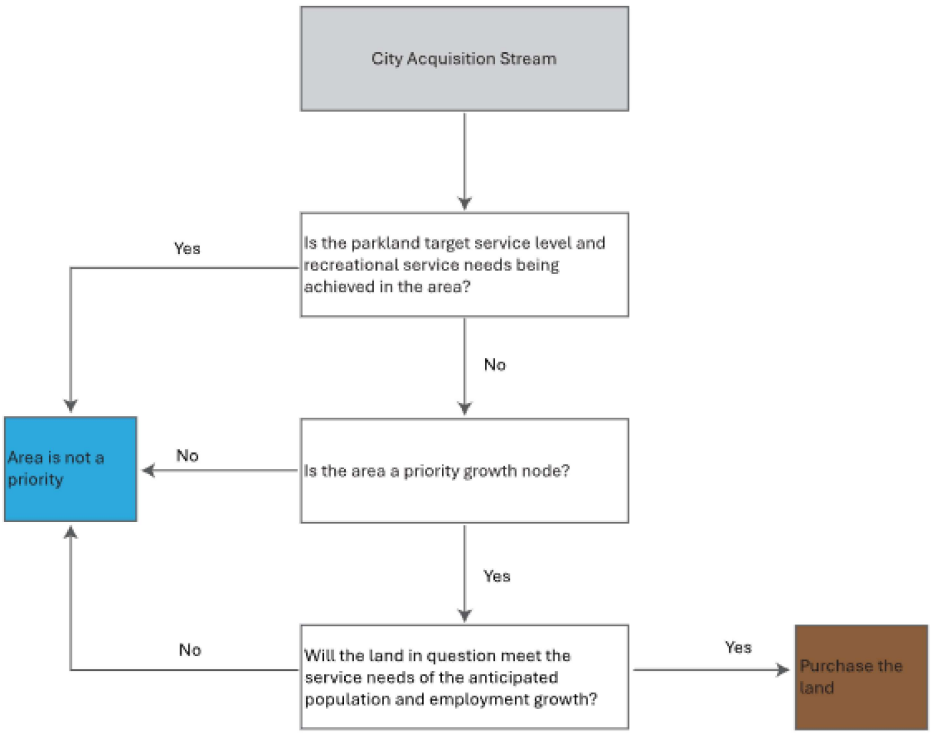

Figure 21: City Acquisition Stream Decision Making Matrix

Hamilton's Decision-Making Framework to Guide Subsequent Parkland Acquisition and Renewal

In the case of Hamilton, the proposed decision-making framework for parkland acquisition (Figure 12) aims to systematically prioritize areas lacking park access. Utilizing catchment analysis and focus factors, it guides strategic acquisition, ensuring fair and transparent decision-making. The framework identifies gaps using accessible park provision mapping and assesses potential sites based on suitability, context, and partnerships. In areas without suitable sites, alternative public realm options are explored. For existing parkland, the framework assesses ongoing needs, facilitating renewal or repurposing for municipal benefits as opportunities arise.

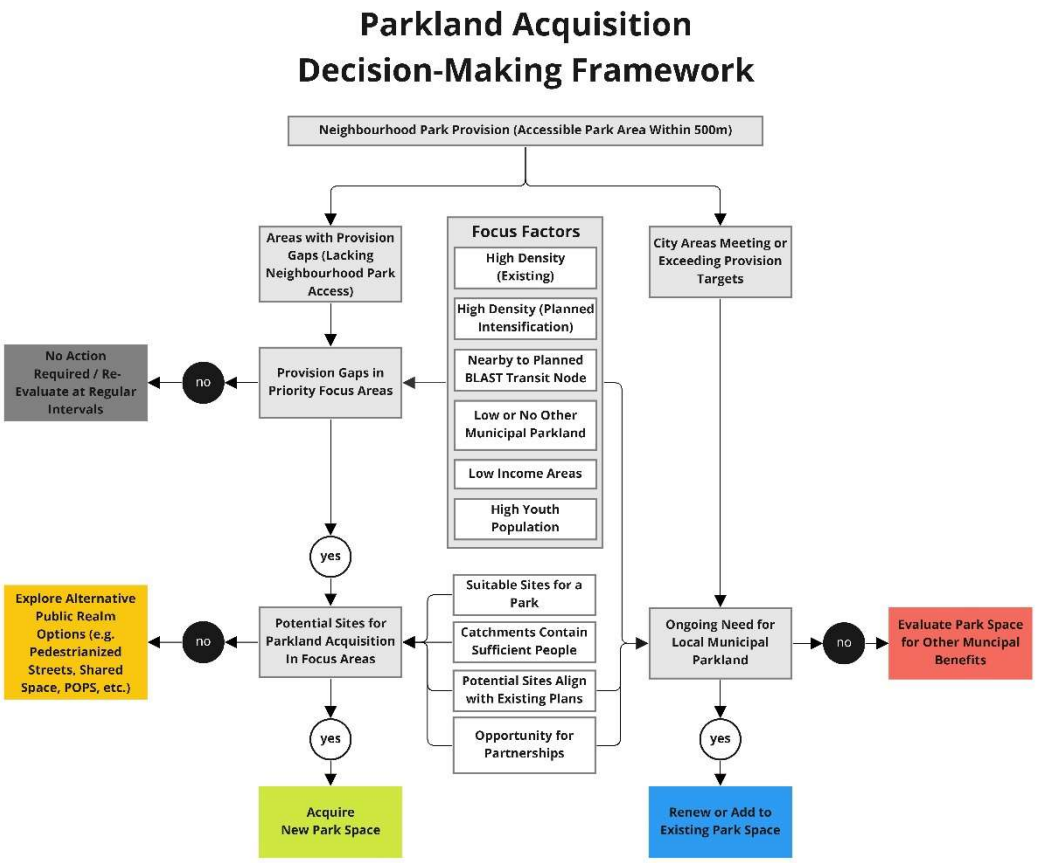

Figure 12: Proposed decision-making framework to guide subsequent parkland acquisition and renewal

Toronto's Parkland Assessment Tool

Toronto's Parkland Strategy created an assessment tool, as shown in Figure 13, that supports more strategic acquisition opportunities when the City is in a position to consider whether a site or sites should be acquired for parkland purposes. The tool uses the principles as well as the factors of parkland needs as criteria and assesses and informs the viability and value of all forms of acquisition. This assessment tool for parkland acquisition provides clarity to staff and the City Council on the priorities for new parkland. The priority areas have been identified based on the following factors:

- Parkland provision (less than 12 m^2 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)
- Low-income residents (25% or more of residents are low-income in 2016)

Indicators have been identified to monitor progress and measure the effectiveness of the Parkland Strategy. Figure 14 outlines these metrics. [8]

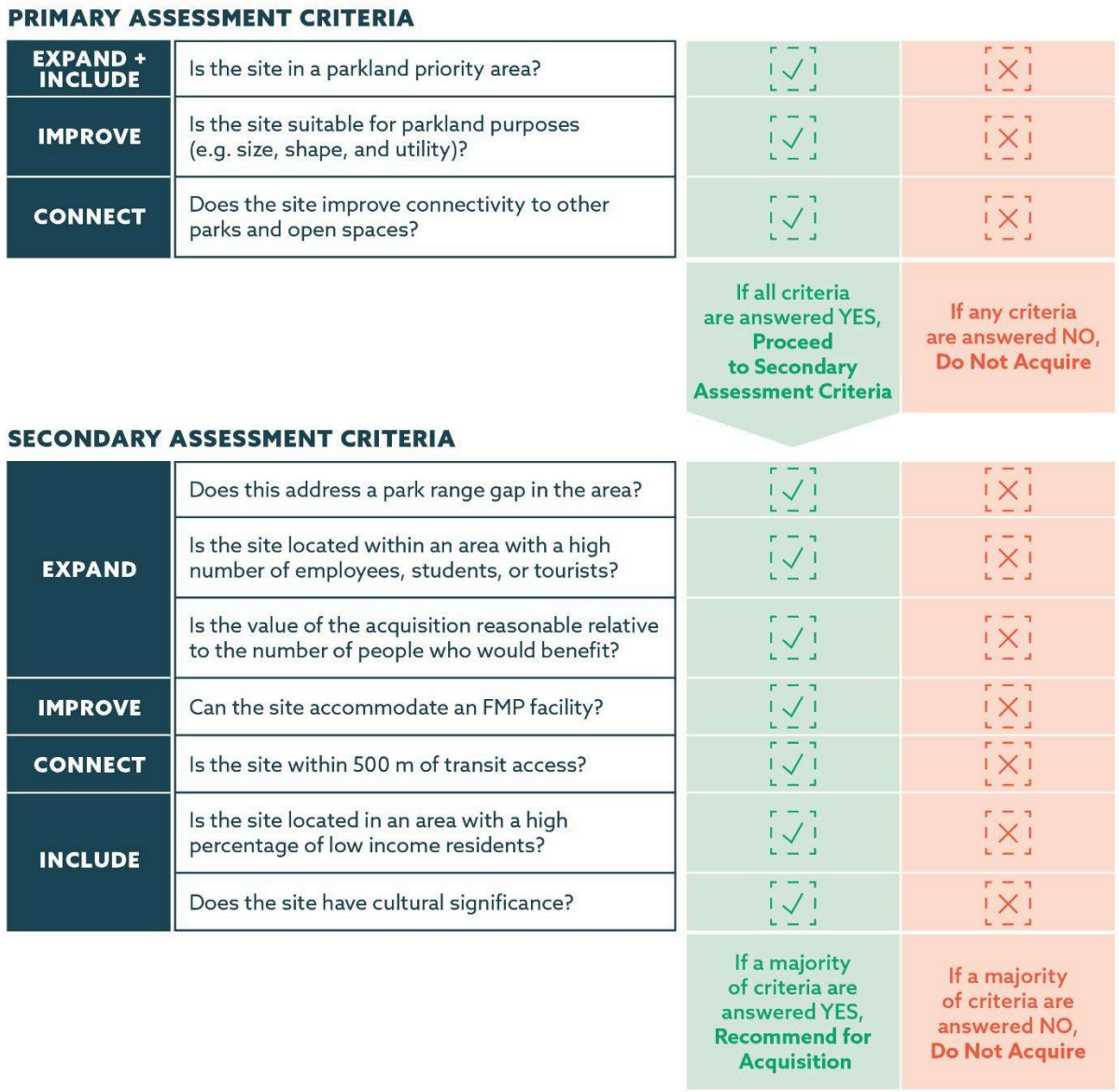

Figure 33: Parkland Assessment Tool. Toronto Parkland Strategy (2019)

[8] Parkland Strategy, Growing Toronto Parkland (2019)

Strategy Principle	Metric	Units
Expand	Park area per person	m^2
Expand	Amount of new parkland acquired	Ha
Expand	Total land area attribute to parkland	% Coverage
Connect	Number of residents within a 500 m walk of a park	Number of People
Connect	Total park area that is within 500 m of a high order transit stop, or active transportation network	Hectares
Improve	Total public spending on parks per resident	CAD $ per resident
Improve	Visitation counts at selected parks	Number of people by time period
Improve	Parks plans developed	Number of parks plans
Include	Amount of money invested in NIAs and low income areas	CAD $
Include	Average number of hours of weekly programming at selected parks	Number of hours

Figure 44: Metrics to Measure Success. Toronto Parkland Strategy (2019)

PROCESSES FOR MEASURING PARKLAND

To identify existing gaps in parkland, Vaughan can complete a catchment analysis based on 5 to 10 minute walking distances and a park pressure analysis ensuring equitable distribution in high-density areas.

1. **Catchment Analysis**
   The development of walking catchments around parks is more reflective of a person's access to parkland than calculating the number of people within a park buffer.
   - Local Parks: In most municipalities, a 400m or 500m is a standard local walking catchment to be an appropriate walking distance for people to meet their local park needs within a five-minute walk.

   - District and Community Parks: For district and community parks, a larger catchment is more appropriate to analyze spatial disbursement since these parks are designed to serve more people. Vaughan already distributes District Parks to try and create a 2.5 km catchment radius.

2. **Park Pressure Analysis**
   The park pressure analysis utilizes the catchment buffer and the federal census dissemination blocks to calculate the total number of people a park serves within the walking catchment. This method takes into consideration population density within the

walking catchments, providing a measurement of equity between the different catchment areas.[9]

In the context of Vaughan, this strategy is essential for high-density areas. Budgeting for parks in such areas is challenging, making it necessary to facilitate partnerships for new parkland and funding opportunities.

GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

To attain the City's parkland goals, there is a need for both parkland acquisition and improvements. Continuous monitoring and assessment of parkland service targets will be essential to ensure that the City is progressing toward its parkland goals.

STRATEGIC KEY ACTIONS DERIVED FROM MUNICIPAL PRACTICES

Table 6 lists strategic key actions derived from practices implemented by various municipalities. These actions aim to assist the City in achieving its parkland goals.

Table 6: Greenspace Acquisition and Development Strategies in other Municipalities

City	Greenspace Development Strategies	Greenspace Management Strategies
Burlington	- Identify lands with limited development potential for park use. - Complete comprehensive block planning in high-growth urban areas to align with approved plans and studies. - Partner with school boards for shared park opportunities. - Investigate opportunities for acquiring surface parking and derelict buildings for parkland. - Investigate opportunities for proactive land acquisition financed through future incremental tax revenue. - Purchase excess school sites for expanded parkland or potential parcels for swaps with developers.	- Work strategically with other departments and initiatives for improved parkland connectivity. - Improve connectivity through extended pathways and cycling network partnerships.

[9] Link to Burlington's Park Provisioning Master Plan

City	Greenspace Development Strategies	Greenspace Management Strategies
Mississauga	- Create guidelines for Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and strata parks. - Prioritize delivery of complementary park uses like trails in greenlands. - Prioritize facility investments and parkland acquisition in designated areas. - Install signage, wayfinding, and interpretive features.	- Prioritize facility investments and parkland acquisition in 'Equity Opportunity Areas' and Strategic Growth Areas. - Collect and assess park facility utilization data. - Create design standards for unprogrammed park space. - Review the feasibility of expanded park animation and events.
Winnipeg	- Develop a proactive strategy for parkland acquisition focus areas. - Communicate focus areas across different business units. - Support secondary amenities in Downtown and adjacent mature areas. - Improve connectivity through extended pathways and cycling network partnerships.	- Develop and implement low-cost monitoring techniques. - Conduct regular future community need assessments. - Work with other departments for improved parkland connectivity.

City	Greenspace Development Strategies	Greenspace Management Strategies
Hamilton	- Develop a proactive strategy for parkland acquisition focus areas. - Communicate focus areas across different business units. - Explore repurposing existing public space for inclusive open space and park use. - Underused City-owned land should be repurposed in high-need areas. - Seek funding opportunities from other levels of government. - Create specifications and rules for privately owned public spaces. - Complete comprehensive block planning in high-growth urban areas. - Build on existing partnerships with school boards and institutions. - Engage Real Estate staff for negotiations on surplus land sales. - Proactively pursue land purchases of parks in undeveloped areas.	- Work with other departments for improved parkland connectivity. - Improve connectivity through extended pathways and cycling network partnerships.

City	Greenspace Development Strategies	Greenspace Management Strategies
Vancouver	- Protects vital natural areas in a resilient parks system to enhance livability and preserve ecosystems. - The City will collaborate to update and complete the regional greenway system connecting natural areas and communities, determining those provided directly by Metro Vancouver through the Regional Parks Service. - Safeguards purchasing power, seeks new funding and maintains management resources to match regional parkland growth. - Partners with stakeholders to amplify the impact of its Land Acquisition Program, collaborating with member jurisdictions, First Nations, NGOs, and governments through joint planning, acquisition, and innovative agreements. - Promotes a streamlined, adaptable acquisition process, ensuring prompt decisions on identified or unexpected opportunities.[10]	- Develop and implement common policies, operating procedures and service standards. - Expand opportunities for individuals and organizations to donate and support parks and recreation activities. - Manage assets with a long-term horizon. - Collaborate with community partners to co-locate and develop convertible, scalable, multi-use facilities. - Integrate feasible sustainability concepts into design, construction, maintenance and operations. [11]
Toronto	- Advance implementation of parks and public realm plans in high-growth areas like TOcore and Midtown. - Expand existing parks by acquiring adjacent lands, especially in high-growth areas, historically deficient areas, and low-income neighbourhoods, to support complete communities and create a connected park system. - Seize key opportunities to acquire and create new legacy parks to enhance the City's identity. - Partner with school boards to expand shared park/ open space opportunities.[12]	- Design future parks to be flexible, high-quality, multi-functional and inviting year-round.

[10] https://metrovancouver.org/services/regional-parks/Documents/regional-parks-land-acquisition-2050.pdf
[11] https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/park-board-strategic-plan-presentation-20120627.pdf
[12] https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/97fb-parkland-strategy-full-report-final.pdf

KEY STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH ADMINISTRATION AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

Key actions and strategies for Vaughan that were identified during interviews with Vaughan Administration and Council are listed below. Options for these items will be explored through the GSP.

Greenspace Development Strategies

- Requirement for a mechanism for buying land.
- Collaborative strategies with developers.
- Consideration of intensification areas and exploration of vertical parks (vertical parks are green spaces built in urban settings, using vertical structures like walls or skyscrapers to incorporate gardens and recreational areas, maximizing limited space)
- Importance of acquiring land given expected future price increases.
- Collaborative utilization of spaces and fostering partnerships.
- Reevaluation of parkland dedication practices.
- Addressing the lack of event spaces/venues for gatherings.
- Park Location Prioritization
    - Prioritization of new park locations based on land characteristics.
    - Assessment of existing catchments for parks/recreation facilities.
    - Opportunities to improve parkland acquisition prioritization.
- Park Classification and Design
    - Evaluation of the current park classification system.
    - Provision of new parks and their range of sizes.
    - Consider growing trends for active or passive recreation opportunities.
- Opportunities to expand partnerships and volunteer efforts.
- Strategic Land Acquisition
    - Acquisition of northern lands crucial due to expected future price increases.
    - Acquire parkland early or before development starts.
- Integrated Planning
    - Density and land transfers, co-locating parks with municipal buildings.

Greenspace Management Strategies

- Examination of lessons or best practices for customer level of service.
- Prioritizing quality over quantity in park development.
- Focus on usability and quality of smaller parks in high-density areas.
- Consideration of environment/ecological connections in park planning.
- Strategies for mobility, noise mitigation, lighting, wildlife management, and new levels of service.
- Identification of success indicators and managing residents' expectations.
- Community Engagement and Advertising

    - More advertising, features, and activities targeted at the surrounding community.
    - Increased free programming measures.
- Revenue Generation and Sponsorships
    - Selling park naming rights.
    - Corporate community improvement programs and developer contributions.
    - Explore partnerships for sponsoring parks: Work with TRCA, developers, BIAs, and community-based stakeholders.
- Partnerships with school boards for land use after school hours.
- Bench dedication and tree naming policy.
- Policy alignment with newer amenities and emerging trends.
- Setting standards for public access and cost/premium/membership access to parks.
- Addressing challenges around safety and policing efforts in park development.
- Examination of subsidization metrics for sports fields.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

HISTORICAL AND CURRENT POPULATION

Vaughan's population has experienced remarkable growth over the years, evolving from primarily rural villages to one of Canada's fastest-growing cities. In 1974, Vaughan was formed by incorporating several rural communities, including Woodbridge, Kleinburg/Nashville, Maple, and Thornhill. Since then, rapid urbanization, fueled by expanding water and sewer services, has transformed Vaughan into a major suburban municipality. The population surged from 15,000 in 1971 to over 100,000 in 1991, reaching 249,300 residents by 2006. As per the 2021 Census of Population conducted by Statistics Canada, the enumerated population was reported to be 323,103.

Figure 15 depicts the estimated population density in 2021 across the City of Vaughan by block plan area. The dissemination areas use a constant population density throughout the entirety of the area and dissemination areas were split proportionately into each block plan area. Notable blocks with the highest existing population densities are identified as follows:

- Thornhill (Blocks 1 and 8)
- Thornhill North (Block 10)
- Maple (Blocks 26 and 33)
- Vellore (Block 39)
- Woodbridge West (Block 53)

The VMC is split across blocks that consist of industrial areas, hence why the VMC is not an existing area showing as the highest density.

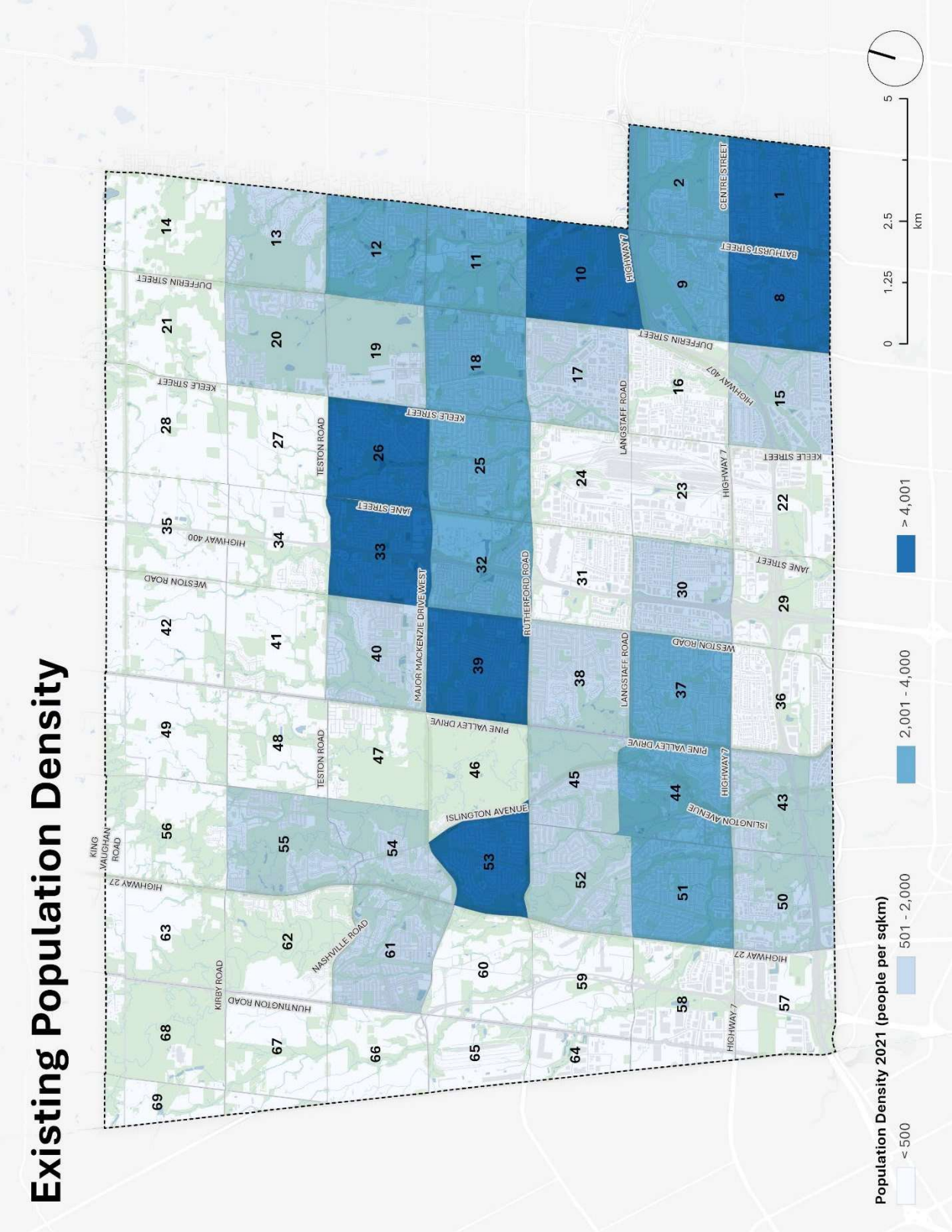

Figure 155: Vaughan's 2021 Population Density by Block

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH

The York Region Official Plan indicates the forecasted population of Vaughan by 2051 is 575,900, while the employment figures will increase to 354,300 jobs. This growth trajectory highlights Vaughan's role as a significant contributor to the Region's development. [13] The new Vaughan Official Plan 2025 will focus the majority of this increased growth to Strategic Growth Areas in the city such as the VMC and Weston 7.

Amidst this rapid expansion, it's crucial to prioritize the development, maintenance, and enhancement of greenspaces. As the city evolves, preserving greenspaces becomes vital not only to accommodate the needs of a growing population but also to uphold the natural heritage of the area. Planning for greenspaces must align with Vaughan's ongoing transformation, ensuring that residents have access to recreational areas, promoting environmental sustainability, and enhancing overall quality of life.

Figure 16 illustrates the projected 2051 population density for each block. The population projection was developed by assigning a percentage of secondary plan growth to corresponding blocks and assuming the population growth would remain stable in other blocks where significant redevelopment is not anticipated by 2051.

[13] City of Vaughan Official Plan 2010

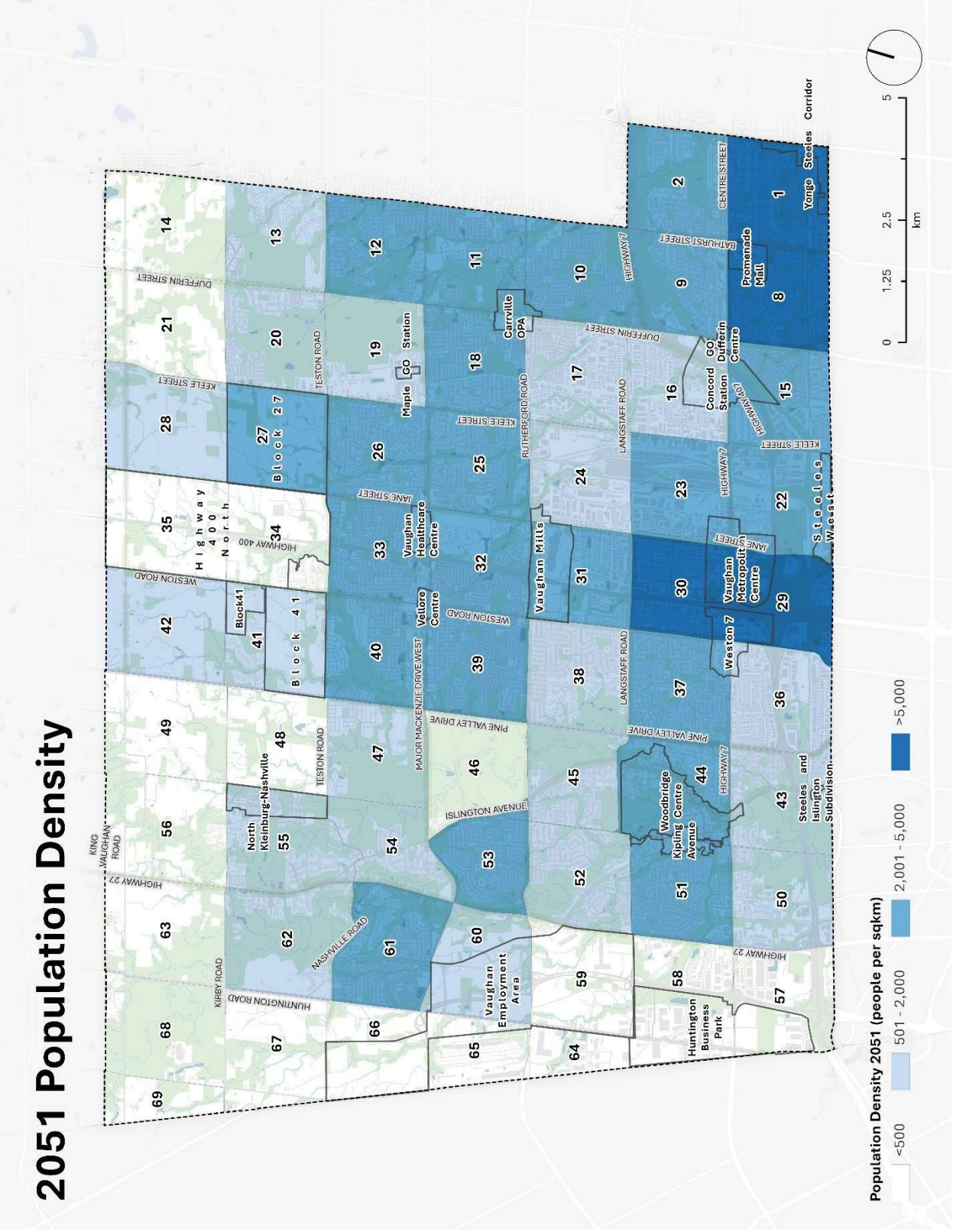

Figure 166: Vaughan's 2051 Projected Population Density by Block

AREAS OF INTENSIFICATION

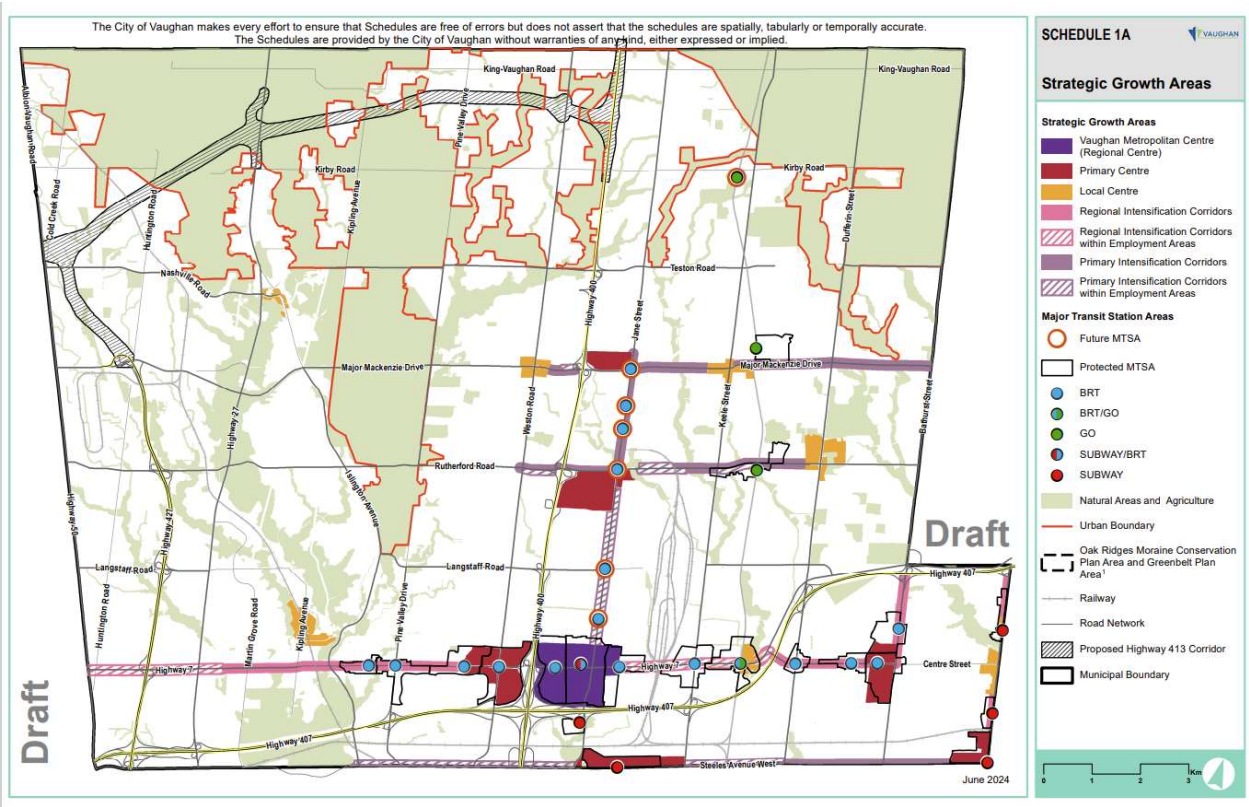

Figure 177: City of Vaughan: Official Plan Review Draft Strategic Growth Areas

Figure 17 illustrates the draft Strategic Growth Areas schedule that has been developed as part of the new Vaughan Official Plan 2025. The Strategic Growth Areas will become the areas of the city with much higher densities than the remainder of the city. The GSP will need to consider how the acquisition and development of parkland will be a greater challenge in the Strategic Growth Areas than in the greenfield areas. To address the challenges of the Strategic Growth Areas, specific parkland targets and strategic actions will need to be considered.

VAUGHAN PARK GAPS ANALYSIS

This section includes a review of existing parkland service levels using the 2021 Census population information and existing parks. Maps utilizing the Census information have been created using Statistic Canada's dissemination areas to represent different areas of Vaughan.

Also included in this section is a gap analysis that focuses on identifying areas within the City of Vaughan that lack accessible parkland and greenspace infrastructure. This report presents observations derived from GIS analysis, highlighting areas not served by walkable parks or greenspaces. The study evaluates accessibility based on specified distances for walkability and drivability.

Figure 18 illustrates how each planning block area is achieving the existing citywide target of 2 hectares per 1000 people. Again, each dissemination area has been assumed to be uniform across the entire area and the population proportionately allotted to each block area. The parkland per person in each area may be shared, and therefore, this analysis does not depict how many people a park may have captured in the walking catchment.

The mapping analysis reveals blocks 23, 24 and 30 have the biggest deficiency of parkland per person. The map also indicates blocks 18, 19, 33, 39 and 45 are meeting no more than half of the overall citywide parkland target of 2 hectares per 1000 people.

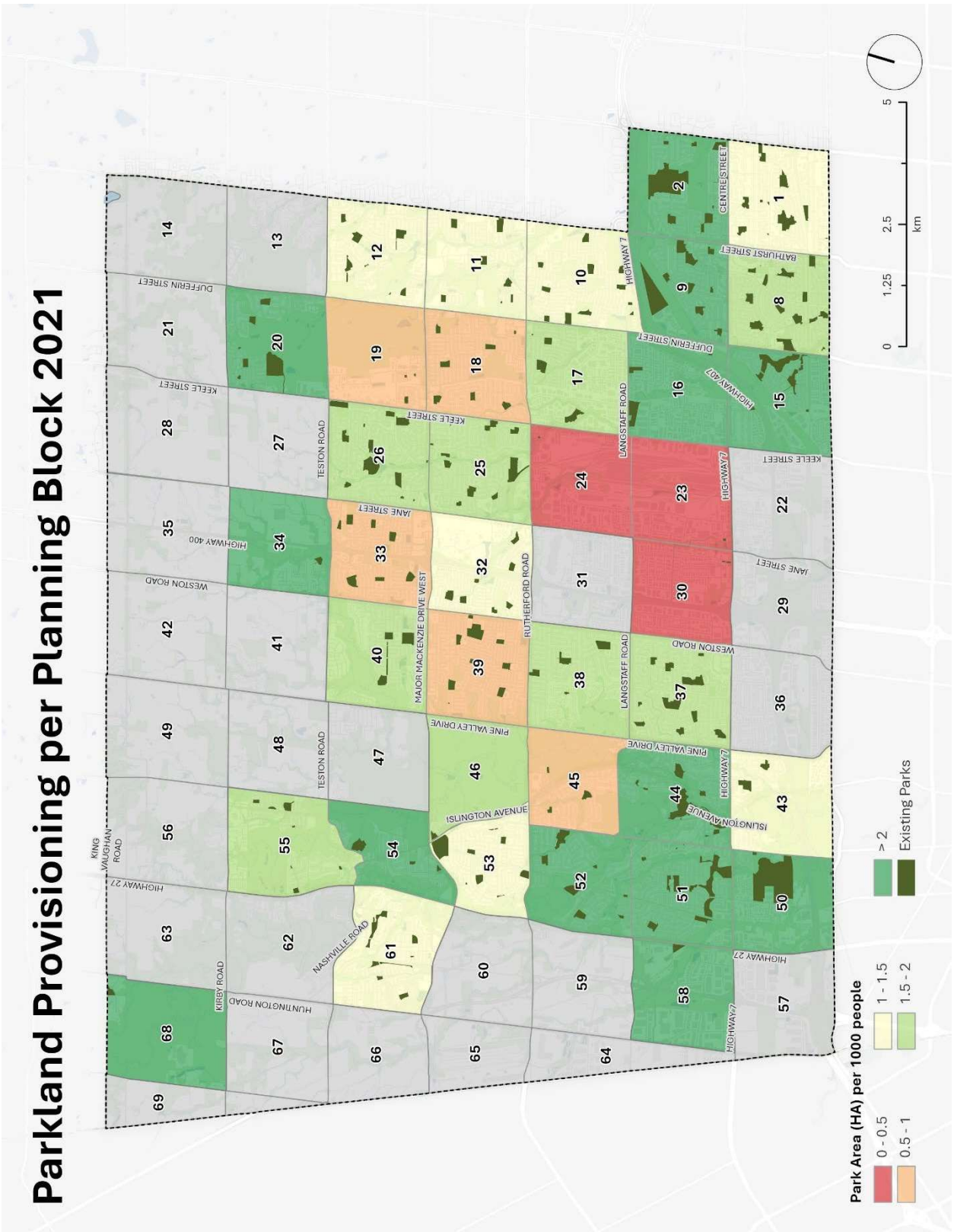

Figure 188: 2021 Parkland Provisioning per Planning Block

WALKING GAPS

In Figure 19, the walking distance to existing and known City-owned parks from residential lands in the urban area is examined. The walkability distance is set at 500m to represent a five minute walking catchment. All parks were included in this analysis since any park can serve local needs for people who live in close proximity. The areas in blue in Figure 19 indicate the areas outside of the 500m walking catchment from residential lands within the urban area.

Observations

After studying the 'Vaughan Park Gaps' map series and its data, some clear patterns emerge about where parks are lacking in Vaughan. These observations illuminate areas in our communities where the demand for additional parks and greenspaces is particularly pressing, especially within specific neighbourhoods and areas of employment. By looking at where parks are now and what plans are in place for the future, we have a better understanding of how well Vaughan is doing in providing greenspaces for its residents.

In Vaughan, the City's preference is to take payment-in-lieu for non-residential development within employment areas. As a result, there are a lack of parks in the employment areas of the city for people to use during a break or lunch. Employment lands within the following blocks do not have parkland within the employment area.

- Ward 1 – Maple/ Kleinburg (planning blocks 34, 35, 66 and 67)
- Ward 2 – Woodbridge West (Planning Blocks: 57, 58, 59, 60, 64 and 65)
- Ward 3 – Woodbridge/Vellore (Planning Block: 36) and Weston 7 Secondary plan region
- Ward 4 - Concord/Thornhill North (Planning Blocks:23, 24, 31, 30, 16, and 17)

LIMITED ACCESS TO GREENSPACE IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS:

- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre – Concord/Thornhill North (Planning Blocks: 22-Steels West, 29)
- Ward 3 – Woodbridge/Vellore (Western side of Planning Block: 38), serviced by the National Golf Club of Canada and the Greenbelt Plan Area
- Ward 2 – Woodbridge West (Planning Block: 60), incorporating natural and countryside areas.
- Ward 1 – Maple/ Kleinburg (Planning Block: 27), recognized as a 'New Community Area' in the Official Plan. However, to facilitate greenspace access in these regions, parks are planned for both Blocks 27 and 41.
- Ward 5 - Thornhill (Planning Block: 2 and the Southern edge of Block 1-Yonge Steels Corridor), serviced by Uplands Golf and Ski Club, The Thornhill Club, and several neighbourhood parks.

The analysis emphasizes the need for strategic planning and development of greenspaces, particularly in Employment Areas and select residential areas with limited accessibility to greenspaces. Addressing these gaps will enhance the quality of life for Vaughan residents and contribute to the City's overall sustainability and livability goals.

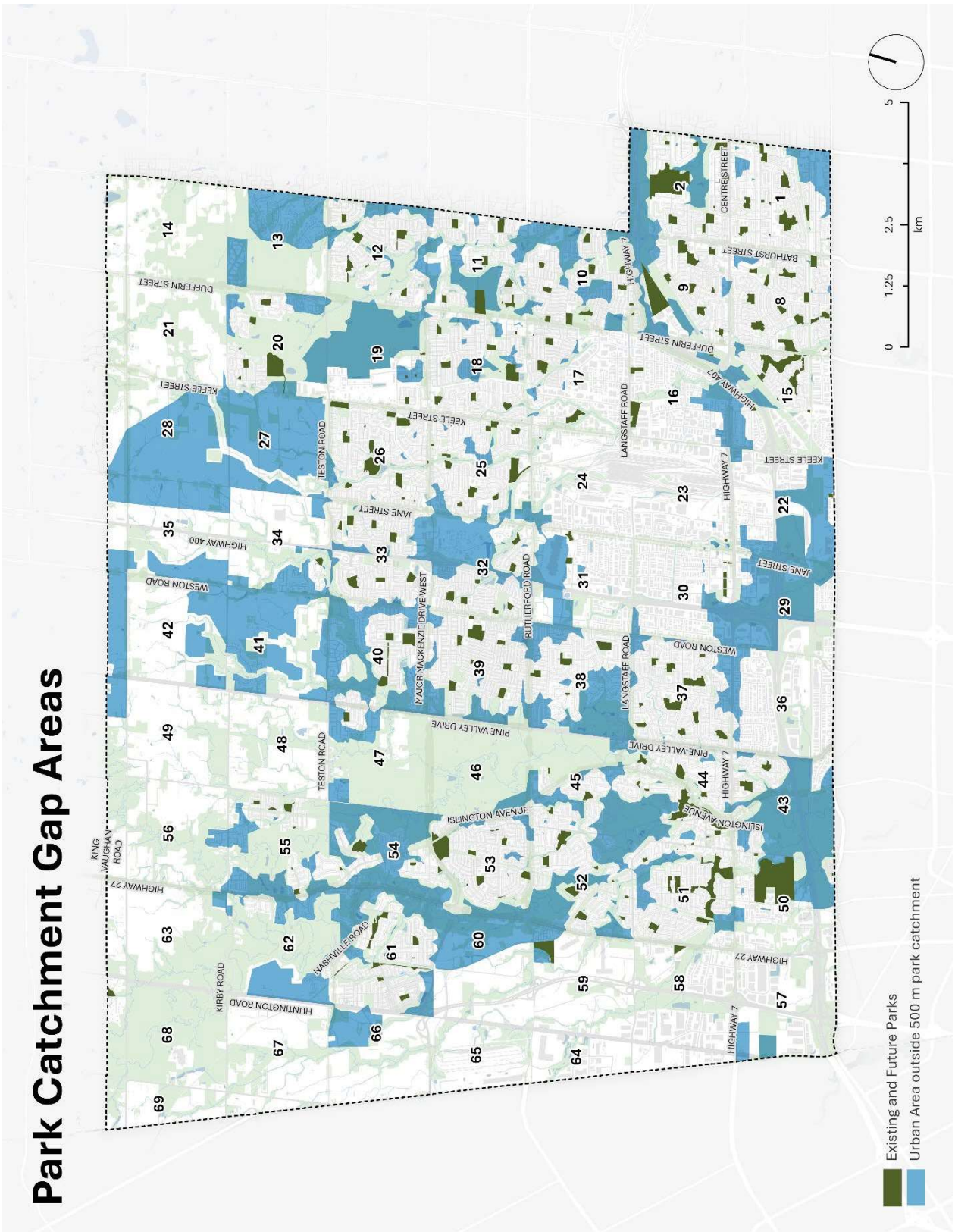

Figure 199: Park Catchment Gap Areas

PARKS AND GREENSPACE GAPS IN INDIVIDUAL WARDS

WARD – 1

In this ward, there are plans for the construction of three new parks, with one near the intersection of Highway 27 and Teston Road and the other two near Nashville Road. These developments will significantly improve park accessibility in the area.

WARD – 2

Within Ward 2, Employment Areas in Blocks 57, 58, 59, and 60, along with residential zones in Blocks 44 and 45, face a shortage of accessible parkland. However, it is to be noted that, future Saigon Park, a District Park in Block 59, will help meet parkland gaps.

WARD – 3

Blocks 40 and 38 contain areas that lack access to open space lands in the residential areas and Blocks 29, 30, 31, and 36 in the employment areas of Ward 3 lack accessible parks or greenspaces within a 500m radius. However, parks are identified for development in Block 40, promising enhanced accessibility to greenspace amenities in the area. In addition to this, it is important to note that the Weston 7 Secondary Plan area is projected to have a population of 60,000 residents by the 2051 planning horizon at full built out.[14]

10WARD – 4

Within Ward 4, Blocks 29, 31, 22, 16, 18, 19, and 10, as well as Blocks 30, 23, 24, 15, and 17 in the employment areas, lack accessible City of Vaughan parks or TRCA-owned lands within a 500m radius, highlighting a significant gap in greenspace provision in Ward 4. Subsequently, the VMC and Steeles West regions are expected to accommodate a residential population of approximately 128,000 by the 2051 planning horizon at full built out [15], considering this population projection, parks and public squares provision is necessary to cater to the recreation needs through the incorporation of central common spaces, key gathering spaces for citizens and address the passive recreation needs of residents and employees in these areas.

WARD – 5

Notably, Blocks 1, 2, and the northern edge of Block 9 in the residential areas of Ward 5 lack accessible City of Vaughan parks or TRCA-owned lands within a 500m radius, indicating a need for park infrastructure development in these areas. Block 1 will hold 46,000 at full built out of the Yonge and Steeles intersection.[16]

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[14] Vaughan Weston 7 Secondary Plan (2023)
[15] City of Vaughan VMC Park and Wayfinding Master Plan
[16] Yonge and Steeles Secondary Plan

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This summary report provides the identified parkland classifications under review for inclusion in the GSP. Additionally, proposed frameworks to be included in the GSP that will guide operations and maintenance of greenspaces and decision-making regarding the acquisition of greenspaces have been identified. This report also provides a summary of the current parkland service levels that have been reviewed and analyzed to date.

The remaining task reports will delve into the following aspects:

- More detailed exploration of other initiatives in Vaughan that can play a role in the development and management of greenspace.
- Examining the gaps and greenspace needs for the 2051 forecasted population and growth centers.
- The identification of priority criteria to guide greenspace acquisition.
- The development of Vaughan-specific frameworks to be included in the GSP to guide the development, acquisition and maintenance of greenspaces.
- Review of greenspace funding gaps to identify how specific tools can be used to supplement the gaps.

APPENDIX A: BENCHMARKING RESEARCH

REGIONAL PARK

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Toronto	Legacy Park		>8 Ha
Hamilton	City Wide Park	Significant destinations for residents and visitors offer recreation, education, and natural/historic features.	
Markham	Destination Park	Draw Markham's regional, provincial, and national residents offer unique features and vital environmental roles.	>12 Ha
Richmond Hill	Destination Park	Offer unique recreational opportunities, attract visitors, and host events. Active parkland component contributes to parkland levels.	

DISTRICT PARK

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Toronto	City Park	Parks that provide unique or specialized passive and active recreation amenities, which draw users from across the City.	5-8 Ha
Toronto	Large Park		3-5 Ha
Toronto	Medium Park		1.5-3 Ha
Toronto	District Park	Generally larger, complex parks that draw population from beyond the local community and contain general and specialized passive and recreational opportunities.	
Ottawa	District Parks	Citywide, major destinations, competitive recreational focus, serving communities, and tourism potential.	>10 Ha
Markham	City Parks	Serve park users within a 2-to-10-minute walk from residential and mixed-use neighbourhoods.	
King	Township	The highest intensity of recreational use: sports tournaments, festivals, concerts, and large gatherings. Major indoor and/or outdoor sports facilities, event space, pavilion and field houses, playgrounds, play features, specialty features and ancillary facilities.	Varies
Whitchurch-Stouffville	Town Parks	Municipality-wide and potentially Regional. Strategically located to promote public use.	Large Scale

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
East Gwillimbury	Town-Wide Park	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.	

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Toronto	Local Parkland	Intended to serve communities within a reasonable walking distance (Includes Parkettes and Local Parks).	
Toronto	Local Parks	Parks that offer a range of neighbourhood-oriented passive and active recreational opportunities	
Ottawa	Neighbourhood Parks	Local focal point, recreation, gathering, walkable for residents.	1.2-3.2 ha
Ottawa	Community Parks	Offer diverse recreation, connect communities, serve as focal points	3.2-10 ha
Hamilton	Community Parks	Multi-neighborhood focus, sports, community centers.	0.7ha
Hamilton	Neighbourhood Parks	Offer diverse recreational amenities within walking distance access, serving around 5,000 residents, minimum 2ha.	>2 ha
Markham	Community Park	Offer diverse programs, play areas, and sports, and serve nearby users within a 10-minute walking distance. Including water play, playgrounds, skateparks, basketball and tennis courts, organized sporting activities for all age groups, and supporting infrastructure such as large park pavilions and maintenance facilities.	>6 ha
Markham	Neighbourhood Park	Active Parks with sports fields, playgrounds, and low to mid-rise residential neighbourhood recreation needs.	1-6 Ha

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Newmarket	Community Park	Serve several neighbourhoods; walk/bike-to or drive to/transit-based parks; Active and passive recreation; Focal area or highlighting characteristic that distinguish the community or ecological regeneration.	5-10 Ha
Newmarket	Neighbourhood Park	Unorganized, spontaneous leisure activities; Recreational needs of residents living within their general vicinity.	1.5-5 Ha

URBAN AREA PARKS

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Toronto	Parkette		<0.5 Ha
Ottawa	Parkette	Small, central, passive & active recreation, supplementing larger park network.	0.4-1.2 Ha
Edmonton	Pocket Park	Serve local neighbourhoods, housing-specific amenities, or functions.	
Hamilton	Parkette	Minimal or no recreation is vital for open space in older urban areas.	
King	Parkette	Smaller specialized parks are suitable for high-density urban areas/ underserved areas. This includes unorganized spaces and the provision of art and cultural elements.	0.2-0.4 ha
Aurora	Parkette	Intended for neighbourhood green space, visual enhancement, and minor linkages in strategic town areas.	> 0.35 Ha

PUBLIC SQUARES

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Ottawa	Urban Parkettes/Urban Plazas	Small, inner-urban, hard surfaces, trees, seating, artistic elements. Acquired through intensification and redevelopment.	0.2-0.4 Ha
Edmonton	Civic Spaces: Squares, plazas, promenades	Paved gathering spaces, often with markets, seating, and events, are some part of the streetscape.	

City	Specific Park Type	Purpose	Size
Richmond Hill	Urban Squares	Gathering spaces within intensification areas, emphasizing flexibility. Mixed-use compatibility and distinctive hardscaping. Characterized by seating, shade, and decorative elements like gardens and public art, they contribute to place-making, acting as landmarks.	
Newmarket	Public Square	Small specialized parks; Destination parks; Recreational or cultural hubs; Unorganized, spontaneous, and passive social, cultural and leisure activities that should emphasize opportunities for the 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.	0.2-1 Ha
Aurora	Urban Squares	Within the Aurora Promenade and MTSA offering multi-purpose programming spaces to the Downtown core.	