

Vaughan GSP

Task 4 | Greenspace Planning Framework

March 2025



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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 report is the fourth in a series of six task reports that provide the background and supporting content to be included in the GSP. This Task 4 report will review and develop a greenspace planning framework to support the work of City staff to implement the GSP.

¹ 2022 York Region Official Plan

GREENSPACE VISION AND GOALS

EMERGING VISION

The emerging vision is an ambitious description of the desired future state of Vaughan's greenspaces.

Our greenspaces are an essential asset to the city that supports our economic prosperity, the celebration of culture, and the physical and mental health and well-being of our residents. We are responsible for our greenspace system to provide ecological habitats, support climate and function as green infrastructure.

EMERGING GOALS

The following emerging goals indicate the desired outcomes that the strategy is set out to achieve. These emerging goals guide the actions, policy recommendations and service improvements to focus future decision-making and resource allocation.

Greenspace Expansion: Greenspace is acquired to meet the needs of a growing population.

Equitable Access: Greenspaces are distributed based on identified community needs.

Diverse Greenspace Experiences: A diversity of park types, amenities, and recreation opportunities are provided.

Celebrate Culture: Represent Vaughan's multi-cultural identity through its greenspaces.

Increased Tree Canopy: Greenspaces take a primary role in achieving Vaughan's tree canopy goals.

Adaptable Spaces: The function of parks and the amenities offered respond to the changing needs of the community. Ensure parks and amenities are adaptable to changing community needs while protecting and improving natural features and systems, promoting health and safety.

Climate Resilience: Vaughan's greenspaces help contribute to our climate goals.

Sustainable Funding: The acquisition, development, maintenance and lifecycle needs are funded to meet the needs of residents.

GREENSPACE SYSTEM

The City of Vaughan boasts an extensive network of parks and natural areas integral to its identity. This network includes the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Humber and Don River Watersheds, home to many of Vaughan's critical wetlands. Vaughan's protected heritage features connect to a broader system of parks and amenities through trails and open spaces.

Vaughan's greenspace system is divided into two main components and supported by complementary features. The two main components are parkland and natural open space, below is an explanation of the difference between the two components.

Parkland includes publicly owned land that is formally designated as a park and is accessible to the public, this includes Strata Parks. Parkland serves as a vital component for both active and passive recreation in the city. These parks provide diverse functions beyond recreational activities, such as social interaction, community building and informal gatherings.

Municipal parkland, classified into different types based on size, function, and service level, closely aligns with the existing parks in Vaughan. However, revisions to park classifications are necessary to meet the future greenspace vision, which will be discussed later in this report. Most parkland is acquired through the development application process, either through dedication or payment-in-lieu, and typically consists of tableland suitable for developing or installing recreational or civic amenities, such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, and gardens. These areas are used for both organized and unorganized activities and may also incorporate natural features, fostering a sense of community and belonging among residents.

Natural open space includes public lands that contain ecologically significant areas, greenways, woodlots, and public open spaces such as cemeteries and natural and conventional stormwater management facilities exclusively serving infrastructure requirements. These lands may also include hazard areas. These lands are not obtained through active parkland conveyance but rather through specific provisions such as Section 10.1.2.43 of the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 policy. According to this policy, consents to sever land designated as Natural Area and Agricultural may be permitted for purposes such as the acquisition of land by a public body for infrastructure projects, or conveyances to public bodies or non-profit agencies for natural heritage or conservation purposes, provided no separate lot is created.

In addition to the two main components of the City's greenspace system, there are complementary components that contribute to the greenspace system. These complementary components have been grouped into three categories, Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS), connections, and amenities. Below is a summary of how each of the three complementary components contribute to the greenspace system.

POPS are privately owned areas that are accessible for the public to use. These spaces can include plazas, parks or courtyards, located within private properties, such as office buildings or condominiums. POPS provide places for people to relax, socialize and enjoy outdoor recreational activity. The City of Vaughan may provide 100% parkland credit for POPS under the Parkland Dedication By-law subject to meeting criteria and conditions to be further determined through the POPS Guidelines and Standards study. As areas in Vaughan are built out as high intensification areas, POPS may become more frequent in urban centers. POPS will have their own role to play in complementing the greenspace system with active and passive facilities and thus have been separated from the other core components of the greenspace system.

The City of Vaughan is undertaking the POPS Guidelines and Standards Study to develop city-wide standards and guidelines for POPS in response to the legislative changes from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's [Bill 23](#). The study aims to integrate POPS effectively into Vaughan's open space network and set expectations regarding planning, design, maintenance and operations and eligibility for parklands credits.

Connections are pathways, waterways, trails and active mobility infrastructure not found within the other core components. Connections provide access to the greenspace system and connect different components within the system when connectivity through parkland, natural features and open space or POPS is not feasible. Connections are essential to the functionality of the greenspace system and can be provided in a variety of ways through non-creditable lands and connections.

Amenities include the structures and built features located in the greenspace system that enhance the usability of public spaces. Amenities may include, but are not limited to, gazebos, sports fields, benches, etc. The Community Spaces Plan (formerly the Active Together Master Plan) will focus on the facilities such as waterplay, playgrounds, courts and rinks, and sports fields; however, the GSP will focus on how these amenities fit together with the different components of the greenspace system.

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The Vaughan GSP, future Community Spaces Plan (CSP), and the Vaughan Official Plan work in tandem to categorize and classify parks based on their intended use and community needs. The GSP ensures that parks are strategically acquired, developed and managed to meet these classifications, promoting diverse recreational opportunities. Aligned with the future CSP, which emphasizes active living and recreational infrastructure, and guided by the Vaughan Official Plan's overall development framework, these documents collectively enhance park classification efforts. A review of park classifications was conducted as part of the Task 2 report - Principle Framework.

As we move forward with the project, these classifications will be updated based on ongoing engagement. While Task 2 explores potential park classifications based on a benchmarking exercise and proposes potential new classes, Task 4 provides recommendations on new park classes based on technical and public consultation. Feedback received to date through engagement has highlighted the need to consider allowing parks to be more adaptable and flexible in function and programming over time and between communities, to better service the needs of residents and make a greenspace system more equitable. Creating a classification system that is more flexible and adaptable means a greater range of amenities could be provided within certain park classifications. The proposed classification system outlined in Table 1, aligns with the existing park classes established in the City of Vaughan Official Plan 2010, although the way the park classes should be implemented has been modified to meet the future greenspace needs over the next 30 years.

Table 1: Recommended Park Classifications for Vaughan

Park Classification	Size	Intent	Amenities	Park Level of Service
Destination Park	Varies depending on the amenities and park character	Serves city-wide celebrations, concerts and festivals and offers an opportunity for developing region-wide recreation and leisure attractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premium recreational and sports facilities • Trails and passive uses • Outdoor learning and cultural programming • Opportunities to protect and enhance the natural heritage system • On-site parking 	This park class may include unique elements requiring specialized maintenance and potentially on-site care takers.

Park Classification	Size	Intent	Amenities	Park Level of Service
Regional Park	Greater than 15 Ha	Regional parks provide premium floodlit sport fields and recreation hubs, event centers, and environmental destinations. They are designed to attract residents city-wide and regionally for organized events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premium floodlit sports fields and recreation hubs • Event centres • Environmental destinations • On-site parking 	Specialized and premium amenities may require a more frequent level of service and maintenance based on higher usage and premium rates charged for programming.
District Park	Greater than 5 Ha	Serves residents within 2.5 km catchment. Features large format sports fields and court clusters. Co-located with schools or community centers to maximize accessibility and sharing of facilities where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premium lit sports fields • Washrooms • District type facilities • Community gardens • Five or more recreation facilities • On-site parking 	Standard level of service
Neighbourhood Park	Greater than 0.75 Ha	Serves residents within 500 metre walking distance of residents within immediate neighbourhood. Parks located in low-density traditional neighbourhoods. Co-located with school sites wherever possible. Can be adjacent to stormwater ponds or natural heritage areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior or junior sports fields • Play courts • Gathering spaces • Three to five outdoor recreation facilities 	Standard level of service.

Park Classification	Size	Intent	Amenities	Park Level of Service
Urban Park	Greater than 0.75 Ha	Serves residents within 500 metre walking distance of those within immediate neighbourhood. Generally located in Strategic Growth Areas. Co-located with school sites wherever possible. Provides local facilities designed for higher intensity of use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use courts • Public art • Flexible gathering spaces • Three to five outdoor recreation facilities 	Increased service level due to high use
Public Square	0.2 - 0.75 Ha	Serves residents within 500 metre walking distance of those within immediate neighbourhood. Parks located in areas of high visibility and high pedestrian activity, defined by public street and active building frontages. Can be located in Strategic Growth Areas or traditional low to medium density neighbourhood developments. Provides local facilities designed for higher intensity of use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible gathering and seating spaces • Multi-use courts • Public art • Two to three outdoor recreation facilities 	Standard to increased service level dependant on usage.

DESTINATION PARK

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 city-wide events.

For this reason, a Destination Park classification is recommended to be created. This classification should be used for the City's premier signature park(s) that attracts visitors from across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond, serving as a well-known destination, not only for Vaughan residents. North Maple Regional Park could be an example of this class of park. If the VMC becomes an attractive destination area in the city drawing lots of visitors, the large park that is planned in the

VMC could also potentially act as a Destination Park dependent on the design and amenities of the park.



Figure 1: Aerial view of North Maple Regional Park

Size: Varies, size would depend on the uniqueness of each park under this classification.

Frontage/Access: Located on regional roads/streets and primarily arterials.

Amenities: Offers a range of premium recreational and sports facilities, trails and passive uses, as well as outdoor learning and cultural programming for residents with supportive amenities. Provides opportunities to protect and enhance natural heritage systems.

Parking: On-site

Maintenance Level of Service: This park class may include unique elements requiring specialized maintenance and potentially on-site care takers. Non-standard maintenance costs can be expected for the unique elements and more durable material replacement.

Example: North Maple Regional Park

REGIONAL PARK

The existing Regional Park classification is recommended to remain one of the City's park classifications because it plays a pivotal role in providing clusters of higher-class sporting facilities. Regional Parks are expansive recreational and natural areas that serve as hubs for sport, recreation, and leisure. These parks offer floodlit, premium sport facilities for activities that require

larger land areas plus opportunities for indoor facilities. Regional Parks function as city-wide destinations, capable of accommodating large-scale events and attractions that draw visitors from outside the local area, such as sport tournaments and passive recreation opportunities such as multi-use trails. Regional Parks offer a natural escape while remaining accessible and inclusive to diverse interests and age groups.



Figure 2: Aerial view of Vaughan Grove Sports Park Source: Google

Size: Regional Parks will typically be greater than 15 hectares.

Frontage/Access: Located on major streets and primarily arterials.

Amenities: Clusters of premium lit sports fields, park buildings, district type facilities, recreational trails, event and gathering areas, primary or higher order type facilities. Amenities include bocce courts, premium baseball diamonds, hardball diamonds, soccer fields and artificial turf fields.

Parking: On-site

Maintenance Level of Service: Specialized and premium amenities may require a more frequent level of service and maintenance based on higher usage and premiums charged for a higher level of service or specific programming. Other items can follow a standard level of service.

Examples: Vaughan Grove Sports Park, Uplands Park

DISTRICT PARK

District Parks serve to provide a wide range of outdoor sports, recreation, and community activity space, extending its reach beyond the immediate neighbourhood supporting the diverse needs of the community. District Parks play a role in supporting communities with varying degrees of urban densities and fostering a sense of community and social connection by providing access to district level amenities, facilities and large format sports fields.



Figure 3: York Hill District Park Source: Tourism Vaughan

Size: District Parks should be greater than 5 hectares.

Frontage/Access: Located on collector or arterial roads.

Amenities: Premium lit sports fields, park washroom building, community gathering and event areas, district type facilities, primary or higher order type facilities, community-based uses such as community gardens and passive recreation. Typically has five or more recreation facilities.

Parking: On-site

Maintenance Level of Service: Standard level of service across District Parks.

Examples: Mackenzie Glen District Park, Chatfield District Park, Sonoma Heights Community Park, Carrville District Park, York Hill District Park.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

Neighbourhood Parks serve as the foundation of our parks and greenspace system. These parks support local recreation by providing a balance of active and passive uses, promote social gathering opportunities and host community events.

Typically located within a 500-metre walking distance from local residents, Neighbourhood Parks are easily accessible and inviting. They provide active and passive spaces, foster connections, promote well-being, and strengthen community bonds.



Figure 4: East Corners Park

Size: Neighbourhood Parks should be greater than 0.75 hectares.

Frontage/Access: Two streets, located on collector, local, and minor roads.

Amenities: Neighbourhood type outdoor recreation facilities, senior or junior sports fields, play courts, gathering spaces, local type facilities and passive recreation. Typically has three to five outdoor recreation facilities.

Parking: On-road

Maintenance Level of Service: Standard level of service across Neighbourhood Parks.

Examples: Glen Shields Park, Clearview Park, Maple Airport Park, Hawstone Park, Sunset Ridge Park

URBAN PARK

Urban Parks are versatile and multifunctional green spaces designed to serve high-density communities in Strategic Growth Areas. Urban Parks are distinguished by their focus on intensely programmed outdoor spaces that facilitate a diverse range of year-round recreational activities and community events. The function and programming of Urban Parks should remain flexible and may include a broad range of services and amenities: event location, sport courts, playgrounds and park amenities. These parks will service higher density neighbourhoods and will need to be constructed with usage needs in mind. Through balancing these needs, Urban Parks will provide equitable green spaces that are designed with providing areas for day-to-day passive and active uses, as well as medium to large scale events based on the size of the park. Urban Parks will require municipal infrastructure to facilitate expected uses. Durability and sustainability will be very important factors in delivering urban parks.



Figure 5: Rendering of current VMC North Urban Park design. Source: SmartCentres, Smart Urban, CCxA and Diamond Schmitt Architects

Size: Urban Parks will be greater than 0.75 hectares.

Frontage/Access: Located on at least two public streets, which can include major or minor collectors, local roads, or a combination of a public street and a mews with a public access easement.

Amenities: Neighbourhood type outdoor recreation facilities, flexible gathering spaces, multi-use courts, public art, etc. Typically has three to five outdoor recreation facilities.

Parking: On-road

Maintenance Level of Service: An increased level of service will be required due to the higher level of use.

Examples: VMC North Urban Park

PUBLIC SQUARE

Public Squares are programmed social and civic spaces designed to serve Strategic Growth Areas. Traditionally viewed as passive gathering spaces, Public Squares are evolving to incorporate robust, active facilities catering to diverse community needs that are desirable year-round. This ensures Public Squares remain relevant and vibrant, serving as local hubs for social connection, recreation and culture.

Public Squares are ideally strategically located in mixed-use, high-traffic areas and can be adjacent to active frontages such as retail, food and beverage and public facilities, supporting neighbourhood-oriented social opportunities. Public Squares should be located where there is high pedestrian activity and be clearly visible from adjacent streets. They may feature public art, a variety of seating opportunities, canopy trees, active facilities and a balance of soft and hard landscaping. Contextual driven design will always consider micro-climatic conditions and foster year-round protection to users and leverage adjacent active frontages. Hardscape and softscape planting will support social gathering spaces that will provide flexibility for day-to-day users and organized events.



Figure 6: Edgeley Park

Size: Public Squares will generally range from 0.2 to 0.75 hectares.

Frontage/Access: Two public streets, or mews with public access easement.

Amenities: Neighbourhood type outdoor recreation facilities, flexible gathering and seating spaces, multiuse courts, public art. Typically has two to three outdoor recreation facilities.

Parking: On-road, no on-site parking.

Maintenance Level of Service: An increased level of service may be required due to the higher level of use.

Examples: Edgeley Park

OTHER PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Based on further discussions and feedback on the Linear Park and Ecological Park classifications discussed in the Task 2 report, it has been determined these park classifications are not suitable for Vaughan. The Linear Park classification was determined to not be appropriate for Vaughan due to concerns with accepting parkland dedication for narrow strips of land that would not meet park programming objectives. To mitigate this concern, a minimum width could be instated for Linear Parks. It was determined this could be accommodated under the Neighbourhood Park classification, and for this reason there is no need for the Linear Park classification.

Throughout engagement, feedback was received suggesting any park classification could incorporate ecological functions. It is also the practice of the City to not accept woodlots or natural heritage areas as parkland dedication. Based on these two points, it was determined an Ecological Park classification was unnecessary and if the City were to consider parkland dedication in the Greenbelt, the park classification of a Regional or District Park would be more appropriate given the programming options the City would want to consider for land that is accepted as parkland dedication.

It should be noted that the provision of amenities for natural spaces and Ecological Parks should be restricted. Where amenities are provided in natural areas, they should be limited to features that cause minimal disturbance to the area. These may include pathways, trails, benches, lookouts, and garbage receptacles. Additionally, opportunities for natural play, meditative walks or circles, and art features can also be compatible and well-integrated within this classification. Access to natural areas may also be limited depending on the location of the natural area. Some natural areas may be accessible through multiple modes of travel.

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES AND STRATA PARKS

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES (POPS)

POPS are not part of the City's parks classification system; however, it is important to consider them as complementary elements of the City's greenspace system when meeting parkland credit eligibility and filling the gap in local needs. POPS are privately held spaces that are publicly accessible. These spaces should include both hardscaped areas for social connections and amenities for active recreation, and they may also be programmable for events. POPS may be in higher density intensification areas where land dedication may not be practical but where publicly accessible space may be fitting rather than Payment-in-lieu (PIL) as an alternative. Smaller active recreation spaces may be provided depending on the size of the space. These spaces should include landscape elements such as flowers, trees and shrubs. Part of Transit Square at the VMC is a POPS example.

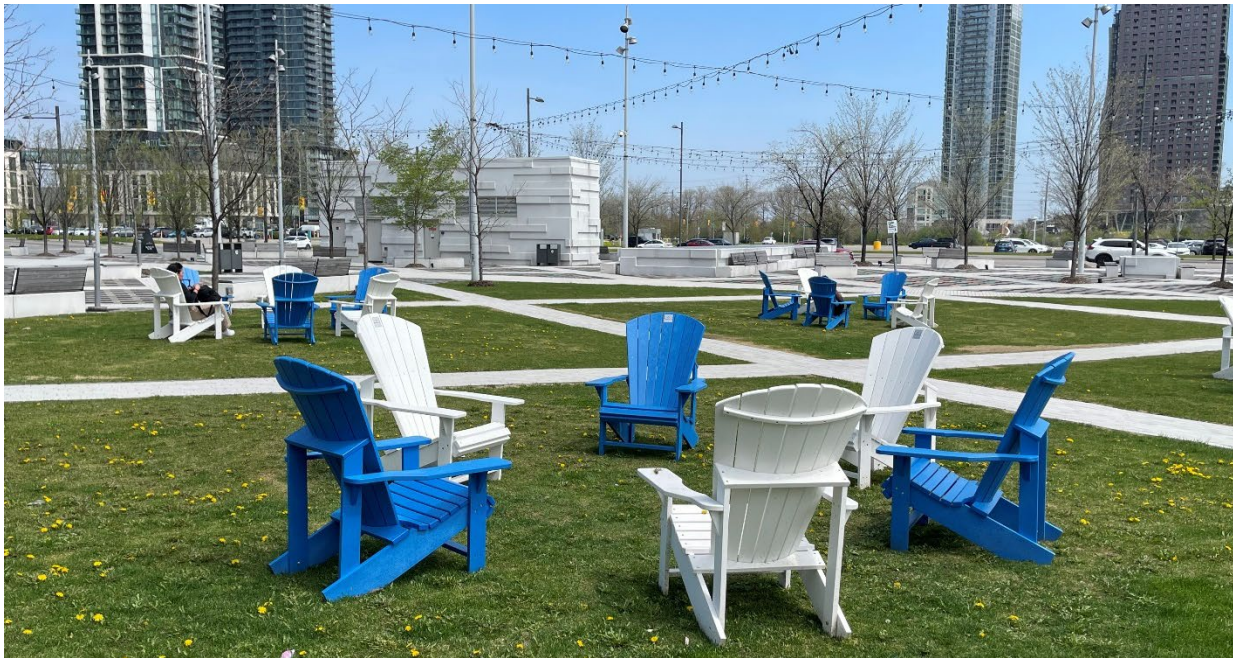


Figure 7: Transit Square in the VMC

Size: The size of POPS will vary; however, POPS should be similar in size to Public Squares. The POPS Guidelines and Standards Study will determine the size guidelines in relation to land dedication credits.

Amenities: An agreement between the private landowner and the City will outline the types of amenities that should be provided within a specific POPS. These amenities are more likely to include passive recreation areas, such as social spaces, but may also include unprogrammed active recreation areas. For detailed guidelines and standards, please refer to the ongoing Vaughan POPS Guidelines and Standards Study.

Access: POPS will be located in urban areas and therefore multiple modes of travel should be available.

STRATA PARK

A Strata Park refers to a volume of area owned by the City that sits within a multiple ownership structure on a single parcel. Although the City may own the park and has more freedom to program the park than a POPS, similar limitations exist due to infrastructure constraints imposed by the development either above or below the park area. Agreements with strata owners will be required to define operations and maintenance responsibilities, liabilities access, lifecycle replacements and ownership limits.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Most municipalities operate and maintain their parks based on their park classification system. Cities such as Richmond Hill, have adopted a Destination Park classification that contain features and facilities not found anywhere else in the city and attract visitors from outside of the city. Given these unique qualities and higher levels of use, Destination Parks warrant a higher level of maintenance.

Currently, outdoor maintenance in Vaughan is managed by the City's Public Works department and the most recent park maintenance levels are provided by the *2024 Outdoor Maintenance Program* (the Program). The Program lists the type of maintenance, the service level, and the maintenance month(s) for each park asset, such as playgrounds, splashpads, sport fields and stormwater ponds. Service levels in the Program often depend on the nature of the park asset. For example, playground servicing/repairs are done as needed while grass cutting is done on a 14-day cycle across all parks in Vaughan.

The GSP recommends adopting a revised park classification system to properly serve the City as its population continues to intensify. It is recommended that park maintenance levels are tied to the park class in addition to the amenities within the park class, to simplify and align maintenance protocols between the City's departments responsible for park maintenance and provision. This would require modifying the City's Public Works department's *Outdoor Maintenance Program* to reflect the park classifications proposed by the GSP. Instead of only scheduling maintenance by amenity type, as the *Outdoor Maintenance Program* does currently, maintenance plans should also be planned by park class to reflect the different levels of use that each park class experiences. In addition, aligning park class maintenance and operations expectations across the Parks, Forestry and Horticultural Operations business unit and the Facilities and Parks Delivery business unit will result in a more seamless transition from construction to operations.

When looking at the suggested classification system, service levels should be representative of the level of use of a park and the amenities provided in a park. It is recommended that a formal service level policy be developed to align with the new park classifications.

AMENITIES AND DESIGN

Parks and greenspaces need to be more multi-functional than ever before. To achieve this, the design of parks, greenspaces and the amenities provided in these spaces need to reflect the multi-functionality that Vaughan residents require. The CSP will focus on specific amenity targets such as how many tennis courts or baseball diamonds may be required. Whereas this section, outlines some of the base amenity conditions and design considerations that should apply universally across the park classifications, with exceptions noted.

New parks and the redevelopment of existing parks should be designed to provide a balance between active and passive recreation in the greenspace system. Greenspaces should be designed for year-round use and be more adaptable to changing trends and needs. Parks need to be designed with accessibility in mind considering how different people get to the park and once in the park, how do different people move around the park. Parks should be planned and designed with accessibility at the forefront.

Every park classification should be able to satisfy local open space needs. This means a play structure and informal play area should be an amenity found in all parks, except for natural areas. However, if active play amenities are provided in natural areas, they must be contextualized to maintain the character and ecosystem of the natural area. All parks should provide benches and seating areas to allow people to sit, socialize and rest. Additional amenities could include exploring opportunities to provide concessions and cafes where viable and feasible.

NATURALIZED AREAS

All parks should provide an opportunity to further the City's goals of expanding the urban forest canopy and associated benefits; protecting trees and woodlands for future generations; and partnering in urban forest stewardship consistent with the the Urban Forestry Master Plan (2024). This includes increasing plant diversity and pollinator species and providing green infrastructure. Additionally, there should be a focus on incorporating low-impact development features such as green roofs, bioswales, and rain gardens. The method and degree to which park classifications and individual greenspaces can achieve these goals will vary depending on specific functions, programming and context. As an example, a Public Square can have a small area that provides plants that attract pollinators throughout multiple seasons or trees that provide shade for the users of the park. A larger park classification, such as a District Park, can potentially provide a larger pollinator garden with many plant species that can attract a wider variety of pollinators and provide wildlife habitats.

In addition to or in conjunction with pollinator-friendly habitats, the City contains Grow Zones where the City does not mow the grass to enable more naturalized environments and encourage the growth of native species. No mow zones are especially effective adjacent to riparian areas (riverside wetlands) in the City by creating increased resiliency to flooding and erosion mitigation, and by providing improved habitat and biodiversity in an urban setting. Along with the benefits of

no-mow zones come challenges such as potential weed control issues, increased insects like mosquitoes, and a decrease in active park space. Therefore, increasing the City's Grow Zones should be applied to more ecologically significant greenspaces and passive areas of greenspaces.

To address these concerns, no-mow zones should incorporate more pollinator-friendly seed mixes rather than letting the areas grow naturally, which often results in weeds and grasses. Locating no-mow zones adjacent to other naturalized or treed areas will provide additional benefits, such as enhancing wildlife habitats, improving biodiversity, creating natural buffers, and increasing ecosystem connectivity. No mow zones can also be combined with green infrastructure features to manage stormwater on greenspaces. Except for Public Squares, no mow zones or designed pollinator gardens may be applicable in all park classifications. When implementing no mow zones in the City's greenspaces, these areas should be actively rehabilitated rather than simply no longer cutting the grass in the greenspace, although both can be successful.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

The City's Community Garden Policy affirms that the City will support community gardens by maintaining an inventory of suitable City-owned sites. Community gardens are a compatible amenity in the City's greenspace system if appropriately located. Community gardens in the City are divided into two types, allotment and collective, and may also be developed as a combination of the two types. Allotment community gardens provide designated plots that are made available for individual or organizational use. These are maintained and allotted by the Environmental Sustainability Office at the City of Vaughan. Collective community gardens generally require less space due to plots being used by a group to grow fruits and vegetables together. These community gardens are generally maintained by groups such as York Region Food Network and Human Endeavour alongside the Environmental Sustainability Office. Community gardens should be included as a potential amenity that may be incorporated in all park classifications other than a Public Square. Since community gardens operate as a more exclusive amenity, a size limitation should be implemented by considering the appropriate ratio of community garden space to the overall size of the park. The size and function of each individual greenspace will determine if a community garden is appropriate in any given location.

Community gardens are typically smaller-scale and focus on local residents growing food for personal use. Contrastingly, urban farming is a more intensive use of land than community gardens and may involve the use of greenhouses and other buildings to produce food for commercial or non-profit purposes.

PARKLAND TARGETS

Currently, the City faces challenges in achieving its active parkland target of 2 hectares for every 1,000 people, which was established in the 2018 ATMP and further supported by the Parkland Dedication Guideline 2022. These targets were developed and confirmed prior to Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* which significantly reduces the ability to collect parkland dedication from developers, making it increasingly difficult to achieve these targets. Additionally, these targets were established before the requirement for municipalities to plan toward 2051, further compounding the challenge of meeting long-term parkland needs as population growth accelerates.

With an enumerated population of 323,103 (2021 Census population), active parkland is provided at a rate of **1.99 ha/1,000 persons** based on **635 hectares** of constructed parks, including parks defined as open space. Notably, Woodbridge and Thornhill/Concord exhibit the highest per capita active parkland supplies at 2.6 ha/1000, reflecting the city's oldest communities. In contrast, newer areas like Carrville, Vellore, and Kleinburg/Nashville have lower rates of active parkland provision at 1.1 to 1.2 ha/1000.

CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING THE 2HA/1000 PARKLAND PROVISION TARGET

Cost Implications

The City's Land Acquisition Strategy, 2020 (LAS) provides a conceptual parkland acquisition cost analysis that illustrates potential impacts to acquire parkland on a fee simple basis and current PIL rates. The LAS notes an indicative funding gap of 20%-40% that exists to acquire green spaces to 2041.

With land values increasing by nearly 60% since 2015 (based on MPAC Inc. data), the conveyance of land for parkland purposes is increasingly becoming a burden on the development industry, especially in areas of intensification. It is more cost-effective for them to provide POPS for parkland credit rather than a fee simple park or PIL. Additionally, developers may encumber parkland dedication with a strata condition.² Land development process (i.e., Planning Act parkland dedication and payment in-lieu) will not provide sufficient lands to meet this target, and alternative acquisition strategies will be required.³

Land Values

According to MCAP Inc., since 2015 land values in Vaughan's intensification areas have increased by nearly 60%.⁴

² City of Vaughan Parkland Dedication Guideline Appendices (2022)

³ Active Together Master Plan (2018)

⁴ [Land Lot Value Report | MCAP](#)

It will become more difficult for the City to achieve the overall city-wide target. Park spaces within the City's intensification areas will be smaller and designed with materials and amenities to serve a higher number of people within the immediate area.

TARGET SERVICE LEVELS

The City of Vaughan's anticipated population in 2051, indicated in the York Region Official Plan 2022, will be 575,900 people. A 2 hectare per 1,000 people target would require 1,152 hectares of active parkland at 2051. The City currently has approximately 635 hectares of constructed parks with additional lands under construction, lands already acquired and new parkland anticipated with new development in secondary plan areas. Table 2 indicates the 2024 forecasted city-wide parkland; however, this would still leave a shortfall of 336 hectares to meet a target of 2 hectares per 1,000 people. The additional challenge is that not all of the 336 hectares would be acquired through land dedication due to developers having the option to provide land dedication, POPS and PIL or any combination of the three. Since PIL is based on market value at the time of application, over time the City is unable to buy an equivalent amount of land due to the rising cost of land.

Table 2 – Forecasted 2024 city-wide parkland

Parkland Supply	Total Parkland (ha)
Existing Parks	635
Existing Parks + Under Construction	701
Existing Parks + Under Construction + Future Parks	745

A common theme expressed through engagement with interested groups and key partners, was the importance of parks and greenspaces and the need to incorporate greenspace into new development areas throughout the city, including intensification areas.

The determination of a new service level target based on the amount of parkland per person took into consideration the existing service level, the future proposed parks, anticipated 2051 population, engagement feedback, and the City's strategic objectives. Table 3 highlights the amount of parkland required based on various service level targets and existing parkland data. The City's future target should align with the vision for the type of city Vaughan's residents and Council aspire to create, while remaining practical and achievable. Creating different parkland per person targets for different areas in the city was also considered; however, targets for intensification areas are better suited towards accessibility rather than amount of parkland per person since more intensification continues to lower the amount of parkland per person in more confined and densely populated areas.

Various targets were tested and modeled taking into consideration a forecasted reduction of parkland conveyance based on current legislative policies. Achieving a target of 1.6 hectares per 1,000 people would require a total of 922 hectares of parkland by 2051, necessitating the addition

of approximately 200 hectares to the City's greenspace system beyond what currently exists or is under construction. A target of 1.4 hectares per 1,000 people would require an additional 100 hectares. By 2051, it is expected that the blended provision level will fall within the 1.4 to 1.6 hectares per 1,000 range, while maintaining the aspirational goal of 2 hectares per 1,000 people for active parkland, reflecting feedback from community engagement.

Table 3 – Forecasted city-wide parkland requirements to 2051

Parkland Supply or Demand	Population (estimated)	Total Parkland (ha)	Parkland Provision (ha/1,000 person)
Current Supply (2024)	323,103	635	1.99
Future Demand (2051) @ 2 ha/1,000	575,900	1,152	2.00
Future Demand (2051) @ 1.6 ha/1,000	575,900	922	1.4
Future Demand (2051) @ 1.4 ha/1,000	575,900	816	1.6

In addition to a city-wide target, it is necessary to establish a parkland area target for high intensification areas to ensure there is consistency across the spectrum of sites and there is a minimum amount of parkland that is to be provided. A target of 0.3 hectares per 1000 people has been determined for the VMC and Primary Centres as indicated on Schedule 1A Strategic Growth Areas of the Draft Vaughan Official Plan 2025 while continuing to target 2 hectares of active parkland city-wide.

Approximately 85% of current residents are within 500 metres walking distance of a park. Park and open space accessibility has been identified through stakeholder engagement as the most important target moving forward. The 2018 ATMP includes an existing target of having local parks within 500 metres of all residents. As stated earlier in this report all park classifications can provide space to meet local park needs and therefore all park classifications may fulfill the accessibility requirements. This target should also continue to apply to the provision of play structures as a core amenity. As Vaughan continues to grow and intensify, the City should strive to have 100% of all residents in the urban area within 500 metres of parkland or useable greenspace by 2051.

An additional accessibility target that should remain is the equitable disbursement of District Parks in the city to allow all residents to be within 2.5 km of District Parks. Although the provision of amenities within park classifications should become more flexible overall, the disbursement of District Parks will provide a more equitable balance across the City.

PARKLAND DEDICATION CREDIT

The City's Parkland Dedication Bylaw (168-2022) provides for a range of options when determining parkland credits ranging from traditional programmable fee simple lands to POPS. Enabling this flexibility is important as the Greenspace Strategic Plan looks towards the future since all tools can be useful in forming the City's greenspace system.

Determining what should be given credit for land dedication and what should not be given credit starts with the principle that the most effective parkland is City-owned land that has no encumbrances. City-owned land that has no encumbrances allows the City to develop and program the parkland as necessary to accommodate the needs of residents today and into the future. A second consideration for City-owned land is how much flexibility the land offers for programming and amenity options. At the other end of the spectrum, privately owned land that offers no benefit to the greenspace system should receive credit based on meeting criteria and responding to local needs.

Urban intensification will make it more challenging to consistently follow the approach mentioned above and therefore other considerations will factor into how much credit should be applied in different scenarios. Another key consideration in determining the amount of credit to be provided to a developer is if the public/private land being offered fits into the City's overall greenspace plan and objectives. More credit should be given for land and features that fit into the City's GSP objectives than land and features that do not. This means partial credit may be provided if some of the land meets the City's requirements, but other land does not.

As an example, and this is not an exhaustive list, parkland credit should not be given in the following scenarios:

- Trails, sidewalks and pathway connections that provide no other land or benefits
- Lands that should be dedicated as part of the natural heritage system for protection and conservation
- Encumbered lands that render the land unusable for human activity

OFF-SITE DEDICATION

In order to enhance flexibility and creativity in accepting parkland, off-site dedication may be a useful tool, particularly in urban intensification areas. Off-site dedication is when a developer provides land dedication in another location away from the active development application site.

The Parkland Dedication Bylaw (168-2022) and the Parkland Dedication Guideline (2022) accepts off-site dedication when other means cannot meet the parkland target, which is challenging given current and projected population growth. Therefore, seizing various opportunities to acquire lands suitable for greenspace needs becomes imperative, especially to fulfill the substantial parkland required to meet the active parkland target based on the City's 2051 population projections.

While on-site parkland dedication remains the City's preference, the Parkland Dedication Guideline (2022) suggests considering off-site options to augment parkland supply and meet targets. The suitability of off-site dedication should meet specific criteria:

- Land proposed for off-site dedication should be acceptable with the City's requirements
- City can establish high-priority areas within the City. These can become the focus for off-site parkland dedication opportunities
- The Land Value identified for the required parkland dedication from the proposed development site should be equal to the Land Value of the off-site land dedication site, either in absolute per hectare land cost, or the amount of land to be dedicated

Additionally, the City must consider constrained lands within the Settlement Area Boundary and/or consult the Region regarding constrained lands within the Provincially designated Greenbelt/Oak Ridges Moraine. These lands could offer ecologically appropriate alternatives to traditional park categories such as ecological reserves, nature preserves, conservation areas, wildlife sanctuaries, urban forests, etc.

Key areas necessitating maximum active parkland acquisition in the City include the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (19 hectares), Highway 400 North Employment Lands (30 hectares), Block 27 (17 hectares), and Blocks 28 and 42 (25 hectares). These projections are based on population estimates and steady growth patterns.⁵

OVER DEDICATION

The Parkland Dedication By-law Guideline (2022) proposes implementing parkland dedication credits through the Parkland Dedication By-Law (168-2022) to address situations where developers contribute more parkland than mandated for a particular project: resulting in over dedication. Rather than constituting an instance of "over dedication," where excess land is provided without compensation, this mechanism allows developers to receive credits for the surplus parkland. These credits can then be applied to future projects undertaken by the same developer within the vicinity, subject to approval by the City.

While providing credit for over dedication may not be desirable, it is a tool that can have benefit to the City under the right circumstances such as wanting a larger park in one particular location rather than two smaller parks. Over dedication should only be applied in an instance where land is publicly dedicated as unencumbered land and not for POPS.

⁵ Note: The provided information is based on data collected from secondary plans, 2016 Region of York population estimates, and a steady population growth between 2013 and 2018, along with the 2018 Development Charge (DC) forecast for projected new parks.

However, it is crucial to note that these credits work best in areas within a single catchment area or geographic zone. This restriction ensures that the credits are utilized appropriately and do not undermine the parkland requirements of different catchment areas. Since parkland needs and requirements can vary significantly between different catchment areas due to factors like population density, urban development patterns, and recreational demands, applying credits across separate catchment areas could lead to imbalances in parkland distribution and access. Therefore, restricting the application of credits to parcels within a single catchment area helps maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the parkland dedication process, ensuring each area receives the necessary green space to meet the needs of its residents.

Credit should not be provided for over-dedication if a developer has dedicated parkland or payment-in-lieu in accordance with the legislation in effect at the time of dedication within an area. Dedication shall be required in alignment with the applicable legislation at the time of dedication.

POPS GUIDELINES AND POLICY

In contemplating POPS for a given site, there are several considerations:

- Is the site an ideal location for POPS?
- Is there an optimal location for POPS within the site?
- What are the opportunities for open space to connect with other nearby POPS/ parks / open spaces / natural areas?
- What form or configuration of POPS is appropriate for:
 - o The catchment area's demographic
 - o The catchment area's neighbourhood
 - o The catchment area's site (constraints and opportunities)
- How does the POPS enhance the overall open space network?

A separate study at the City is currently underway to develop guidelines and design requirements for POPS. The GSP will defer to Vaughan Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) Guidelines and Standards Study on specific guidelines and requirements, including when parkland dedication credit may be eligible. However, the GSP will note that the City's first priority for parkland dedication is City-owned unencumbered parkland. This allows the City the greatest flexibility in park programming moving forward into the future. POPS programming is less flexible to change and is controlled by the private landowner.

DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

PARKLAND ACQUISITION

Following the technical analysis of identifying greenspace gaps, a transparent and consistent decision-making process is required to guide the acquisition of greenspaces. The evaluation criteria outlined by the City of Vaughan's Land Acquisition Strategy (2020) noted in Table 4, provides a good first step to help make future acquisition decisions. However, the challenge is how to make decisions that balance the development of the entire greenspace system.

Figure 8 illustrates a decision-making flow diagram to help make decisions regarding development applications. This is to help determine where and how developers should contribute to parkland dedication requirements.

From time to time there may be opportunistic scenarios that present themselves for parkland acquisition. Opportunistic greenspace acquisition should always be given consideration even if the land may not be strongly meeting the acquisition criteria at the time. Continued population growth in the city will put pressure on Vaughan's greenspace system and the City should take advantage of opportunities to add additional active, passive or natural area greenspaces. Opportunities that increase connectivity or expand functionality of the system should be the highest priority.

Table 4: Existing Parcel-Specific Acquisition Criteria outlined in the Land Acquisition Strategy.

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Detail
Suitability for Recreational Use Based on Municipal Service Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Offer significant opportunity to provide for both active and passive recreational uses that meet multiple municipal service needs outlined in the 2018 ATMP. ii. Insufficient recreational development potential exists, development will be challenging or complex.
Potential for Improvements of Visual & Environmental Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lands offer significant opportunity to augment and protect local area landscape's already high scenic quality. Multiple sightlines for urban visual relief. ii. Lands offer limited opportunity to augment and protect the local area landscape's already high scenic quality. Sightlines for urban visual relief exist. iii. Lands offer the opportunity to augment and project the local area landscape's Green Space.
Geographical/Land Use Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Site topography, grading, and servicing support the intended use for parkland acquisition with no encumbrances. ii. Site topography, grading, and servicing may require more complex infrastructure but does not conflict with applicable conservation priorities. iii. Primarily focusing on high-demand areas (inside or in close proximity to intensification areas)

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Detail
Supports a Healthy Community Environment Through Protection of Green Space and Wildlife Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Protects and enhances environmentally significant features (e.g. Greenbelt Plan lands, NHN Lands, Humber River). ii. Adjacent to environmentally significant features (e.g. Greenbelt Plan lands, NHN Lands, Humber River). iii. Does not protect or enhance a naturally significant feature but represents a natural restoration and/or tree planting potential and improves green canopy. iv. While lands do not protect or enhance a significant natural feature, opportunity to increase the existing green canopy.⁶ v. A separate Woodland Management Strategy (WMS) has been prepared as part of the UFMP, which may outline specific goals and criteria for acquisition, such as ecological value, connectivity to existing woodlands, or potential for recreational and conservation use.⁷
Supports Population Growth and Sustainable Community Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Land required to serve a new urban growth area with an existing parkland deficit. ii. Land required to address an existing parkland deficit in a high-priority area. iii. Land will enable city-wide service levels (e.g. Regional & District Park) or complete trail linkages for gaps connecting priority areas of low service level provision.
Integration with Existing Park and Open Space System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Protects and expands a continuous linkage within a city-wide system. ii. Protects for a continuous linkage within a Community open space trail system. iii. Provides multiple new primary trail opportunities within the property. iv. Provides for a single primary trail within the property.
City-wide Distribution of Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Opportunity to meet a defined local service level deficiency while enabling significant contribution to the city-wide system (e.g. Regional Park in NW Vaughan). ii. Opportunity to meet a defined local service level deficiency. iii. Opportunity to enable significant contribution to the city-wide system (e.g. Regional Park in NW Vaughan). iv. Opportunity to augment existing local service level provision.

⁶ [Urban Forestry Ten-Year Operations and Financial Plan for City of Vaughan \(2024-2034\) \(escribemeetings.com\)](#)

⁷ City of Vaughan Urban Forest Management Plan (March 2024)

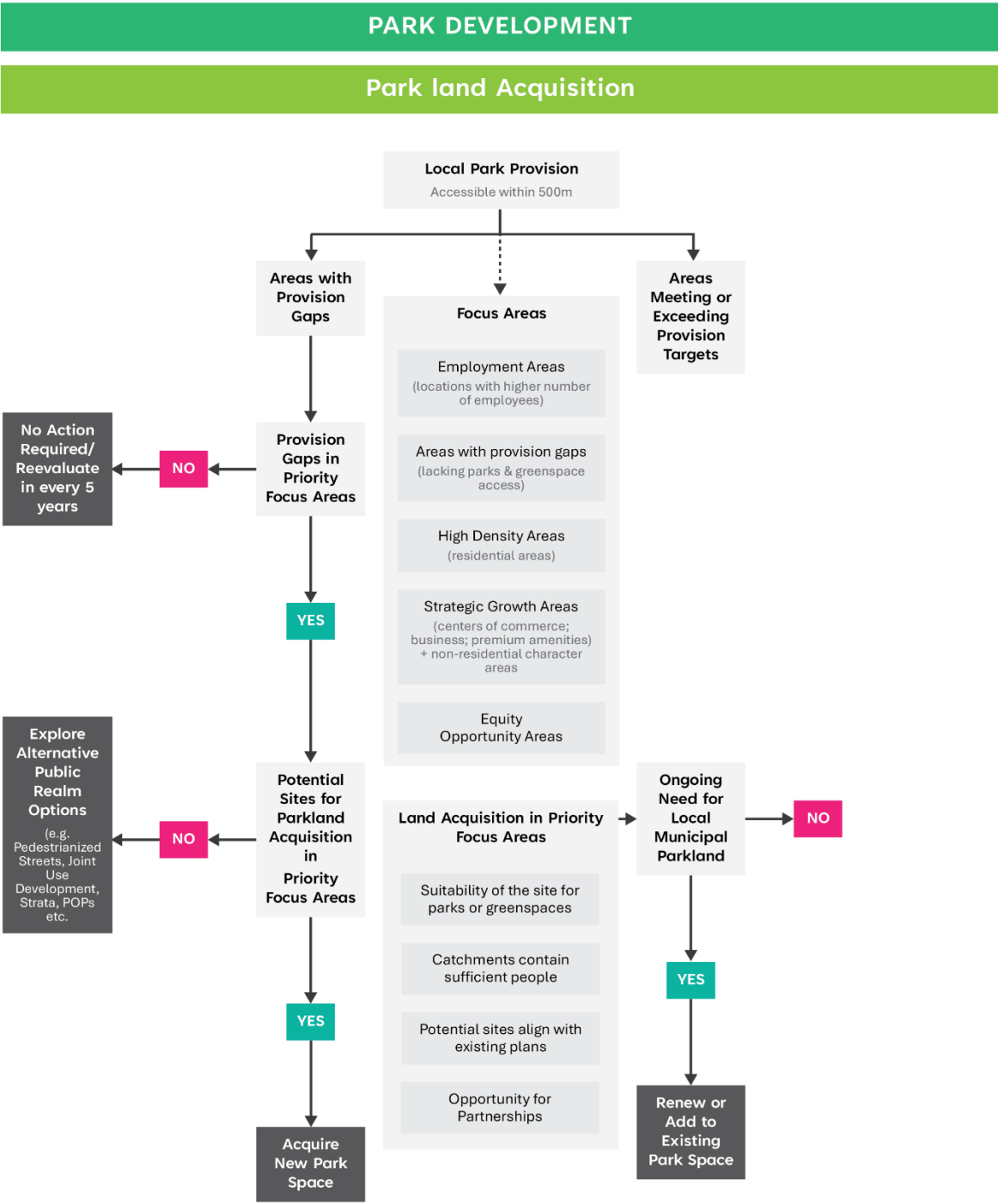


Figure 8: Decision flow chart for parkland acquisition

PARK REDEVELOPMENT

The recognition that existing parks can be improved and, in some cases, expanded, such as the newly expanded Agostino Park, will assist the City in serving new residents within the intensification and established areas of the city. If park spaces are already located in neighbourhoods experiencing growth, in some cases it may be a more strategic use of limited available funding to redevelop and/or expand existing parks to increase service capacity.

Another area of focus should be to enhance park access and address deficits in intensification areas. For this, it's crucial to focus on existing parkland. Given their high population density and insufficient park space, incorporating more trails and passive recreational amenities within these areas can effectively improve park accessibility. However, such enhancements must be thoughtfully integrated to avoid adverse impacts on natural features and ecological functions.

Furthermore, investment prioritization should consider equity and anticipated urban growth. Recent legislative challenges as highlighted in Task-1: Strategy Design and Current State Analysis report necessitate a careful re-evaluation of investment priorities. By prioritizing equity and growth considerations, the City can make informed decisions to optimize its investments in park infrastructure. Figure 9 illustrates a redevelopment flow diagram to guide redevelopment decisions.

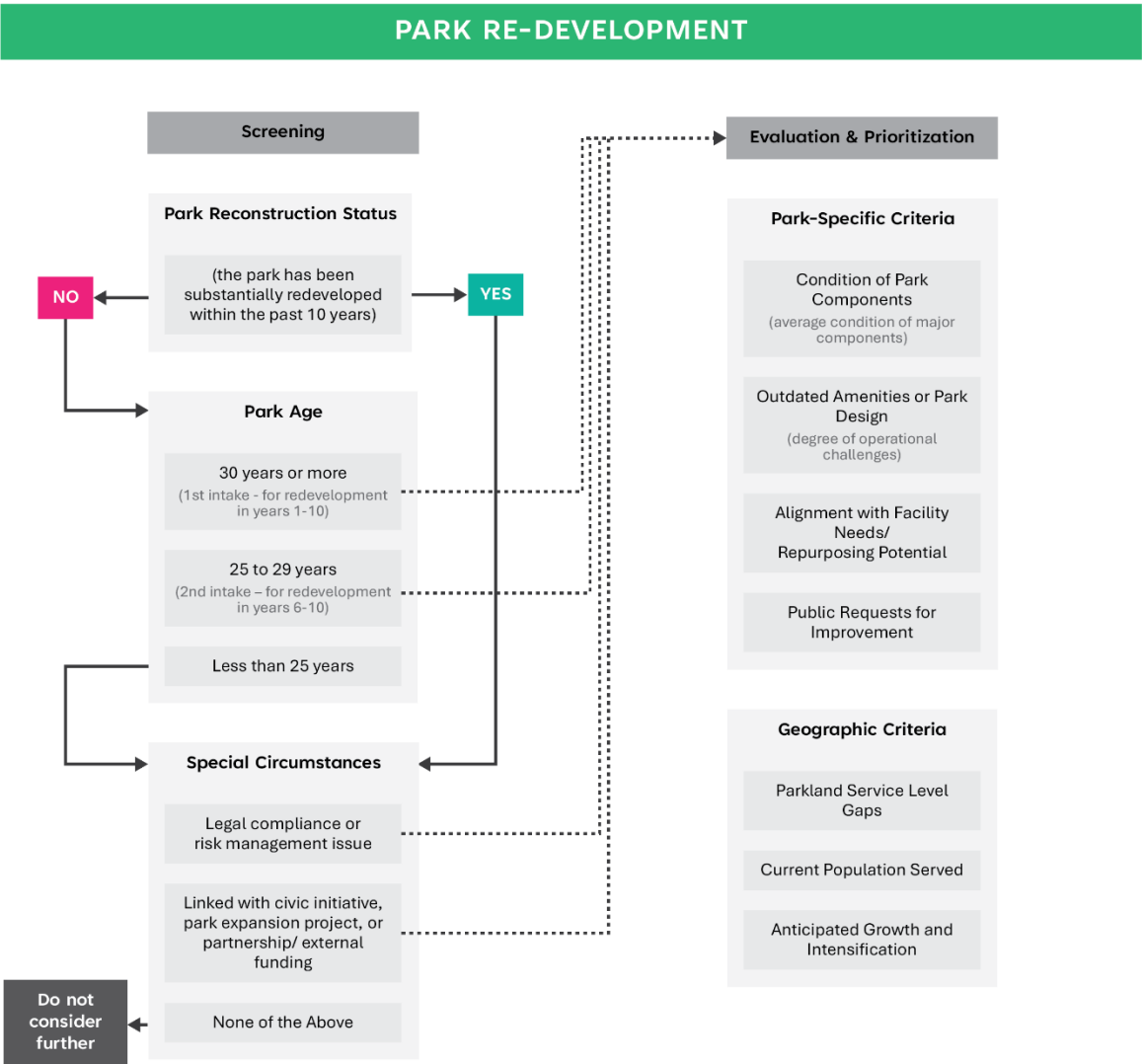


Figure 9: Decision making flow diagram to determine if a park needs to be redeveloped

SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE METRICS

The City's Sustainable Metrics Program identifies scoring criteria related to the natural environment and parks. While the criteria are used to assess the sustainability of development applications, they can also be used to inform greenspace acquisition criteria and park development measures. The following sustainability requirements can be used to enhance greenspace acquisition decision-making by creating additional factors that can separate different sites from each other:

- NE-1 Tree Conservation
- NE-4 Natural Heritage Connections
- NE-5 Natural Heritage System Enhancements
- NE-6 Supporting Pollinators
- NE-8 Park Access
- NE-12 Multi-Purpose Stormwater Management⁸

If sustainability requirements are used to enhance greenspace acquisition decision-making, then the highest standard of each metric should be strived for. Table 5 summarizes the highest standard for each metric.

Table 5: Summary of the highest standards of each sustainability metric

Metric Name	Metric Intent	Requirements
Tree Conservation	To support the conservation of healthy mature trees and the associated ecological, economic, and healthy benefits. Preserving trees can be a cost-effective method to improve the overall appearance of a community while providing ecological and climate change benefits.	Preserving percentage of healthy mature trees and hedgerows in situ on site. Preserving up to 50% of healthy mature trees and 100% of healthy hedgerows in situ on site.
Natural Heritage Connections	To provide connections to nature and green spaces to benefit human health through proximity or access, and to minimize the amount of the natural heritage that is back-lotted by residential development.	Providing physical public connections to 25% to 50% of the length of the natural heritage system.

⁸ [2023 Sustainability Metrics Guidebook for the City of Vaughan.pdf](#)

Metric Name	Metric Intent	Requirements
Natural Heritage System Enhancements	To improve natural heritage system, particularly with respect to wildlife habitat and/or ecological functions	Provide habitat structures for species at risk. Provide a form of natural heritage restoration/enhancement that provides a net ecological gain, Design and deliver a linear continuous/ uninterrupted naturalized corridor that is not yet identified in Schedule 2 – Natural Heritage Network of the Draft Vaughan Official Plan 2025.
Supporting Pollinators	To provide landscape materials that support and provide habitat for pollinators (e.g. birds, bees, butterflies). Without pollinators, much of the food we eat and the natural habitats we enjoy would not exist. Pollinators are under increasing stress due to habitat loss, invasive species, diseases, pesticides, and climate change	Provide native plants that support pollinators making up 25-50% of total quality of plants on-site.
Park Access	To promote visual and physical access to public parks and to make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to integrate physical activity and social interaction as part of their daily activity.	The land will have a significant percentage of public street frontage, with a sustainability requirement of 50-70% for District Parks and similar parks. This enhances accessibility, safety, community engagement, and property values. However, due to conservation and specialized access needs, this requirement may not apply to natural areas, regional, and city/destination parks.

Metric Name	Metric Intent	Requirements
Multi-Purpose Stormwater Management	To integrate stormwater management systems that provide both functional benefits, such as reducing flooding and erosion, and ecological co-benefits, such as habitat creation, water quality improvement, and aesthetic enhancements.	Incorporate stormwater management features that achieve multiple objectives, including flood mitigation, water quality treatment, and ecological enhancement. At least 30% of stormwater management areas should include naturalized features such as wetlands, riparian buffers, or native vegetation to maximize ecological and community benefits.

Identified in the City's Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP, 2024), Vaughan has a tree canopy target of 25% by 2051. The UFMP indicates that within the city's parks and open spaces a 20% canopy cover exists with a target of 28% canopy cover over the next 30 years. The city's natural areas have a current canopy target of 66% with a target of 69% over the next 30 years. The acquisition criteria should be amended to more explicitly incorporate a criterium that speaks to increasing the city's tree canopy.

GREENSPACE METRICS

In the 2018 ATMP, several recommendations related to park design were identified. In Table 6, performance metrics are identified that can be used to track over time how well parks are meeting design requirements.

Table 6: Performance metrics

Parkland Design, Maintenance and Redevelopment Recommendations (ATMP, 2018)	Performance Metrics
Incorporate spaces and amenities encouraging physical activity, wellness, and informal use opportunities for people of all ages	Number of recreational facilities (e.g., playgrounds, sports courts/fields), percentage of park area designated for active use/ passive use
Consider the needs of a diverse and aging population through the provision of various amenities	Accessibility rating, number of accessible facilities installed.

Parkland Design, Maintenance and Redevelopment Recommendations (ATMP, 2018)	Performance Metrics
Preserve, conserve, restore, rehabilitate, and emphasize cultural and natural heritage environments, including adaptive reuse and/or interpretive content	Number of cultural heritage landscapes and sites preserved, number of interpretive panels or exhibits installed, visitor engagement with interpretive content
Follow accessibility legislation and guidelines to accommodate persons with disabilities	Compliance with accessibility standards, accessibility audits conducted, feedback from persons with disabilities on park accessibility
Apply CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles	Crime statistics in the park area, reported incidents of vandalism or crime, surveys on perceived safety from park visitors
Promote designs that encourage sustainable maintenance practices	Water usage for irrigation, energy usage for lighting and facilities, amount of waste generated and recycled
Incorporate native and drought-resistant vegetative features that are biologically robust	Percentage of native plant species used in landscaping, water usage reduction from drought-resistant landscaping, biodiversity surveys
Utilize materials that are robust, durable, and mindful of future maintenance requirements	Lifespan of park infrastructure, maintenance costs for different materials, survey on durability and maintenance needs from maintenance staff
Seek innovative and engaging initiatives that encourage naturalization and environmental stewardship	Participation in environmental education programs, number of volunteers engaged in stewardship activities, impact assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem health
Encourage public art	Number of art installations, public engagement with art installations (e.g., social media mentions, visitor feedback), economic impact assessments of art installations on local community
Encourage active transportation connections and a linked open space system	Usage data for active transportation routes (e.g., bike paths, walking trails), connectivity index measuring accessibility of parks via active transportation, surveys on transportation preferences and usage habits

Similarly, metrics are required to understand how the greenspace system overall has improved. Metrics to track the overall performance of the greenspace system are identified in Table 7.

Table 7: Overall greenspace performance metrics

Indicator	Metric
Access to parkland	Number of people within 500 metres of active/passive parks. Number of people within 2.5 kilometres of a District Park
Amount of parkland	City-wide park area per person and park area per person in the VMC and Primary Growth Areas as indicated in the Vaughan Official Plan
Urban tree canopy in greenspaces	Percent of overall greenspace tree canopy
Parks and greenspace satisfaction	Percent of satisfied respondents to the City's Citizen Survey for parks and greenspace related items

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This task report outlines the components of the planning framework to be included in the GSP necessary to ensure alignment between the different City departments and the activities each department carries out in the planning, acquisition, design, construction, operations and maintenance of greenspaces to achieve the vision and goals of the GSP.

The emerging vision and goals set the foundation for a greenspace system comprised of two core components, parks and natural open space, and is complemented by other open spaces. An analysis of park classifications and the current development context of Vaughan has led to the recommendation of six park classifications:

- Destination Park
- Regional Park
- District Park
- Neighbourhood Park
- Urban Park
- Public Square

These park classifications will provide Vaughan with the flexibility to meet the service needs of residents today and into the future while maintaining a simplified classification approach. Along with the park classifications, is the need for an enhanced level of transparency/documentation and understanding of the operations and maintenance associated with park classifications and amenities. The intention is to become more flexible in park design and programming by providing a greater range of amenities over time, specific to the needs of communities.

Following this is the requirement to establish parkland targets that are aspirational yet still pragmatic. Maintain a city-wide parkland target of 2.0 hectares of active parkland per 1000 people and a VMC and Primary Centres target of 0.3 hectares of active parkland per 1000 people is suggested to maintain a greenspace system that can meet the passive and active recreation needs of residents. Based on growth plans and within the current parkland dedication policy context it is likely that the City achieves a rate of 1.6 hectares of active parkland per 1000 by 2051. In addition to the targets focused on the amount of greenspace, a target of having all residential units within 500 metres walking distance from a park and a target of all residents living within 2.5 kilometres of a District Park are also recommended to ensure parks are accessible.