

## Discussion Topic Information Sheet

### Discussion Group 4

## Parks

**Parks** – Lands secured by the municipality for the use, recreation and enjoyment of the community (securement by the municipality shall include lands leased, shared-use, managed and owned by the municipality).

### The Town's Existing Park and Open Space System

The Town's existing Official Plan sets out three broad distinct classifications of open space as follows:

1. Major open space areas of significance to the entire Town (Major Parks);
2. Open space areas within districts which provide for localized needs (Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes); and,
3. Hazard Lands and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

The broad classifications above are further divided into the following park/open space types:

**Major Parks** – Serve specialized recreational functions for the entire Town and/or have a regional-scale attraction. The Town has six Major Parks: Richmond Green, Phyllis Rawlinson Park (including the adjacent, recently acquired Perryman lands), Crosby Park, the collective greenspace at the southwest corner of Major MacKenzie Drive and Yonge Street (including the Lois Hancy Aquatic Centre, Mount Pleasant Park and the Central Library lands), Mill Pond Park, and the Oak Ridges Community Centre and Park site at the east end of Lake Wilcox (including Jessie Vanek Park and Sunset Beach Park).

**Community Parks** – Aim to provide a mix of major indoor community facilities (e.g., meeting spaces, fitness centres, pools, arenas) and outdoor sports facilities. In most cases Community Parks include parking, as well as opportunities for nature appreciation, and are located adjacent to school sites (which augment the provision of indoor and outdoor community facilities). Community Parks range from 3 to 8 hectares (8 to 20 acres) in size, are sited centrally to the population they serve, and generally have frontage on an arterial or collector road.

**Neighbourhood Parks** – provide a range of recreational opportunities within walking distance of homes. They almost always include a playground and one or more other sports facilities, as well as opportunities for relaxation and social interaction at the neighbourhood level.

**Parkettes** – Functionally, have been secured to provide playgrounds and greenspace (where people can meet and relax) within walking distance (800 m) of residents within areas where larger parks do not exist and/or will be difficult to secure.

**Hazard Lands and Environmentally Sensitive Areas** – Include natural areas/environmental features protected by legislation, stormwater management facilities and lands within the conservation authority regulation limit. All of the lands in this category are considered to be undevelopable lands, and hence many were generally conveyed to the municipality or the conservation authority at nominal cost.

Although hazard lands and environmentally sensitive areas are considered part of the Town's Park and Open Space System because of the passive recreational role they support via trails, they are not considered in calculations of parkland provision rates.

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plan  
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## Parkland Classification

Municipal Benchmarking Analysis has found that some southern Ontario municipalities target the provision of additional types of parks, which the Town could consider including:

**Nature Reserves or Environmental Parks** – Generally defined to have a primary ecological or environmental role (could include or exclude natural features that would qualify as Hazard Lands or Environmentally Sensitive Areas).

**Linear Parks** – Purpose is generally to facilitate pedestrian and/or cycling connections via trails and associated seating areas.

**Village/Urban Squares** – A distinct park type identified by some municipalities as having a more urban character (e.g., hard surfaces) and function (e.g., providing resting and meeting places in urban/downtown development areas).

**(District) Sports Parks** – This type of parks is specifically identified by some municipalities for major sports facility development often in the form of tournament facilities.

## Spatial Organization of Parks – Park and Open Space System Connectivity

In the past planning and acquisition of parkland has been primarily guided by target provision rates rather than qualitative goals associated with spatial organization and connectivity. Some of the more recently developed areas of the Town demonstrate that strengthening planning policies around the organization of parklands can successfully achieve a more connected system.

## Park Uses – Creating Vibrant Parks

Intensification requires the integration of land uses, and complete communities are enhanced by a vibrant public realm; therefore, a discussion around the acceptable uses of park lands is necessary. Potentially acceptable uses of park lands include:

- Sports facilities
- Play facilities
- Natural feature protection
- Trails and walkways
- Plazas and courtyards
- Community gardens
- Botanical gardens
- Educational/Training facilities
- Urban agriculture
- Stormwater management infrastructure
- Snack bars and food vendors
- Public art
- Newspaper and magazine vendors
- Farmers markets
- Sports equipment rental stations
- Libraries

