



## Section Three: Recreation & Parks Needs

### 3.4 Parkland Assessment

#### 3.4.1 Parkland Supply and Needs



The Town of Halton Hills' locally adopted Official Plan (September 2006) defines a hierarchy of parkland according to two broad categories: Local Parkland and Non-Local Parkland. Each category is further broken down into specific classifications, which are defined according to their size, location, the types of recreational activities they can accommodate, and their service radius. According to the Official Plan:

- Local Parkland, to be provided at a rate of 1.2 ha per 1,000 residents, consist of *Parkettes* and *Neighbourhood Parks* (ranging in size from 0.2 hectares to 2.5 hectares) which serve a radius between 200 metres and 800 metres; and
- Non-Local Parkland, to be provided at a rate of 2.5 ha per 1,000 residents, consist of *Community Parks* and *Town-Wide Parks* (ranging in size from 6.0 hectares to over 11.0 hectares) which serve a Secondary Plan Area/Urban Hamlet Area to the entire Town.

The Town of Halton Hills currently provides over 145 hectares of parkland and open space across 54 municipal sites. Total parkland and open space is provided at a rate of 2.65 ha per 1,000 residents – the Town's supply of Local Parkland is currently provided at a rate of 0.85 ha per 1,000 residents while Non-Local Parkland is provided at a rate of 1.73 ha per 1,000 residents. As such, both classifications of parkland are falling short of the targets established in the Official Plan.

To meet the level of provision suggested by the adopted Official Plan, the Town would presently need to provide a total of 66 ha of Local Parkland. With an existing supply of 47 ha of Local Parkland, an additional 19 ha are currently required to meet the 1.2 ha per 1,000 standard. By the year 2016, a total supply of 80 ha of Local Parkland would be needed.



Similarly, the provision of Non-Local Parkland would need to be 137.5 ha to meet the mandated 2.5 ha per 1,000 standard. With 95 ha of Non-Local Parkland in its current supply, the Town is deficient by 42 ha of parkland. A total supply of 167.5 ha of non-local parkland will be needed by 2016. Upon final build-out of the Acton Sports Park and Trafalgar Sports Park, however, the current deficit would likely be eliminated.

### **3.4.2 Parkland Acquisition / Disposal Considerations**

If the Town were to focus on acquiring only Local Parkland for its dedication through Planning Act applications, it is likely that they would be able to achieve the standard of 1.2 hectares per 1,000 population standard. However, there are three concerns:

1. On a "go-forward basis", Non-Local Parkland (Community and Town-wide parks) would have to be achieved through alternative parkland acquisition methods (this amounts to approximately 25 additional hectares over the next ten years);
2. Parkland dedication would not contribute to reducing the current deficit (approximately 21 hectares) of Local Parkland that exists in Halton Hills; and
3. Changes to school planning and the new education funding formula will restrict the Town's ability to develop new parkland, especially neighbourhood parks, to the degree that it was achieved in the past.

With this in mind, it is recommended that the Town develop a framework to guide decision-making relating to parkland acquisition and access. This framework should build off of the findings of this Strategic Action Plan and provide more detailed direction regarding the future acquisition of non-local parkland. The following provides preliminary direction in this regard.

In assessing the distribution and provision of municipal parkland, particularly when making decisions related to park acquisition or disposal, the Town should consider factors such as the following:

- Overall supply – Depending on the size and location of the parkland in question, the Town should consider how its acquisition/disposal would affect both Town-wide and community-specific supplies. At present, parkland supplies per capita are relatively similar between the communities of Georgetown, Acton, and the rural areas, but are lagging behind the standards established in the Official Plan.
- Park type – The type of park is also a consideration and should be examined against the provision standards established in the Official Plan. For example, is it a parkette, neighbourhood park, community park, or town-wide park? While provision standards for all of these park types are not currently being met, the greatest pressure is on the need for more Local Parkland (i.e., parkettes and neighbourhood parks).
- Distribution – The success of a parks system is not only measured by its total land area, but also its distribution. In order to apply the recommended provision standard of one playground within a 500 metre radius of built-up residential areas in major settlement areas (without crossing any major barriers such as a waterway, railway line, or arterial road), a fairly even distribution of municipal parks is required. Although this goal may be more difficult to achieve in established built-up areas, it is worthwhile to pursue as opportunities arise. The Town will have to continually update its population estimates by sub-geographic area in order to assess whether parkland provision standards are adequate in meeting the park-related needs on a neighbourhood level.
- Land for needed facilities – This Strategic Action Plan identifies several priorities for the future development of indoor and outdoor facilities. The Town needs to be cognizant of the land area required to accommodate these facilities – as well as the general vicinity in which they are required – in order to ensure that adequate parkland is available for them. Future





park sites must also be of adequate size, configuration, and quality to create a meaningful park parcel that can accommodate its intended usage. The dedication of land for park purposes should only be required in cases where the Town intends to develop the land for park purposes; cash-in-lieu should be obtained where additional parkland is not required. The Town should also continue its policy of not accepting valleylands, woodlots, and hazard land as part of the required parkland conveyance (instead taking ownership of these lands via negotiation and voluntary conveyance).

- Access to non-municipal spaces – In some cases, alternatives to non-municipal parks may be available that offer reasonable access to a very similar range of activities found within a Town park. These opportunities must be recognized and considered when making decisions relating to park planning.
- Community profile – In the Town’s smaller communities (e.g., Stewarttown, Glenwilliams, Norval, Hornby, Limehouse, etc.) consideration should be given to the local demographic composition, as this is likely to have a significant bearing on the need for local parkland. When dealing with smaller population numbers, the acquisition or disposal of just a few acres of land can have a dramatic impact on per capita provision levels.

Given that the Town’s current parkland supply is below that recommended by the Official Plan, it is unlikely that there is significant desire to declare any parks surplus to municipal needs. With that being said, situations could arise where the Town is asked to consider disposing of certain lands, particularly if they are undeveloped parcels or are not very well used by the community. Park parcels could be considered for disposal if they have no frontage on a public road or if they satisfy all of the following criteria:

- the park overlaps with the service area of another park (e.g., two municipal parks/playgrounds within approximately 300-metres);
- the park has no facilities, rights-of-way, or is severely under-utilized;