

**SECTION 1:
COMMUNITY PLANNING CONTEXT
AND GENERAL GUIDELINES**



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

SECTION 1

1.0 COMMUNITY PLANNING CONTEXT AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

1.1 Planning Criteria

Parks and Open Space policies are described in the Draft Consolidated Official Plan. Parks have been described with the following hierarchy of use and land requirements.

1.1.1 Town-wide Parkland

- To be provided as may be required to meet special community-wide needs and serving town-wide functions such as a fairgrounds or major indoor and outdoor recreation complexes.
- Intended to serve as unique destination points drawing residents from the Town-wide urban and rural populations as well as visitors from beyond the boundaries of the town.
- No defined size but likely to be large blocks of land. Park size will vary depending upon intended program and function of facilities to be included. Size of Town-wide Parks to be determined through future studies undertaken by the town in partnership with community stakeholders.
- May feature civic, historic, cultural, recreational and heritage significance

1.1.2 Community Parks

- To be provided at a rate of 1.2 hectares per 1000 population.
- May be between 2 to 8 hectares in size but not normally be less than 4 hectares in size to facilitate efficient complexes of at least 2 athletic facilities.
- Community Parks are intended to serve a greater community or series of neighbourhoods.
- To be situated with appropriate separation to other Community Parks.
- May contain illuminated major sports fields, field houses, indoor recreation facilities and parking.
- To have frontage on an arterial road with minimum 100 metres of continuous frontage.
- Shall generally be integrated with one secondary school or up to 2 elementary schools where possible.
- Where possible will be integrated with natural features and will assist in the conservation and protection of those features through the design of park program and landscape.
- Where possible include clearly defined entrances to the local trail system integrating trail head locations into the designs of the park.



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

1.1.3 Neighbourhood Parks

- To be provided at the rate of 1.0 hectares per 1000 population.
- Shall not normally be less than 1.6 hectares in size except where smaller parks and local greens are town-approved within a development.
- Optimum size 2.0 hectares for provision of 1 unlighted athletic facility will be encouraged.
- Neighbourhood Parks are intended to serve the local neighbourhood with walk-to playground facilities.
- To be located centrally within the neighbourhood they are intended to serve.
- To be located within an 800 metre walking distance for the majority of residents within the local neighbourhood, without crossing any arterial roads or natural barriers.
- To have frontage on a local or collector road, minimum 60 metres continuous frontage.
- Will generally be integrated, where deemed appropriate, with one elementary school, except local greens or smaller parks as may be approved in the community design of a plan area, and where possible with natural features to assist in the conservation and protection of those features through the design of park program and landscape.
- Where possible, include clearly defined entrances to the local trail system integrating trail-head locations into the designs of the park.

1.1.4 Open Space Linkages

Parkland, as described above in all three categories is primarily intended to ensure sufficient tableland park for active recreational pursuits. Hand in hand with this dedication of parkland, are the goals of environmental stewardship and conservation. Dedicated parkland is to provide valuable physical and visual linkages to the open spaces of the town-wide natural heritage systems. Parkland shall be linked directly with open space (including storm water management facilities) and preserved environmental areas wherever appropriate, and the design of such parkland is to be environmentally responsible and is to reflect the context of the surrounding natural landscape.

Although natural landscapes occur throughout the valley lands, wetlands and non-urban areas of the municipality; passive natural areas, woodlands, environmentally sensitive areas and other natural heritage features may also occur on tableland property. Such tableland natural landscapes may be protected through mechanisms of Official Plan policy and through policies of the Regional Municipality and Conservation Authority thereby not requiring dedication as parkland under the provisions of the Planning Act. Parkland conveyance is encouraged to further protect such valuable natural assets through the sensitive and thoughtful dedication of parkland in community planning and land use design.

A clear distinction is to be made between what is preserved natural tableland by policy; and the legislated and regulated areas of lowland open space and other hazard lands intended for conservation and protection purposes. In addition to connectivity of parkland, it is the objective of the Town to provide walkway linkages and trail systems for pedestrian and bicycle use connecting parkland with valley-lands and other open space greenways wherever practicable and compatible with environmental conditions. Trail linkages may also extend to the street system for access and continuity of the trail system as an active transportation system where deemed appropriate by the Town.



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

1.2 Assembly of Community Parkland

1.2.1 Dedication through Development

Parkland will be conveyed to the municipality by the developer in accordance with provisions of the Planning Act and the Official Plan. Land will be conveyed free and clear of any physical encumbrances above and below grade. Easements in favour of and under the control of Utility Companies or Commissions and the Regional Municipality present limitations on the land within the easement for park uses and as such shall not be considered as a part of the calculation of land dedication for park purposes.

Parkland shall possess sufficient shape, configuration, size and topography to accommodate the intent of the use for the parkland. Parkland shall be of sufficient size and configuration so as to satisfy the standards for grading, drainage, facility setback, fencing and other requirements needed to supply the recreational facilities required by the town within the development area as articulated through the Official Plan and the Community Park, Recreation & Culture Strategic Plan.

In specific cases within subdivision and site plan development, the Town at its option and discretion may negotiate an alternative of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication (in accordance with the provisions of the Official Plan, the Planning Act, and the town's Cash-in-lieu of Parkland By-law) for the acquisition of lands for park purposes elsewhere within the municipality.

1.2.2 Location of Parkland within Planning Areas

Parkland will be consolidated in a location deemed most appropriate by the municipality for the population it is intended to serve, in the interest of good community planning and the preservation and integration of the natural environment regardless of the disposition of land ownership. Parkland as a result may become a joint conveyance from two or more ownerships. In such instances where multiple landowners are involved in the conveyance of a park, the owners are to attempt to reach agreement as to their cost-sharing and performance obligations under the subdivision agreements or other planning requirements of the Town with regard to the conveyance; thereby avoiding the need for mediation from the Town in this regard.

1.2.3 Parkland Acquisition

If land required for a park and its anticipated program exceeds the available parkland dedication from development under policy, the Town may choose to acquire the balance needed, ensuring that the park location and configuration satisfies the Town's standards for facility layout, setbacks, and orientation. Such land will be subject to the same performance standards as the surrounding conveyance and developers shall be responsible to ensure the lands are free of encumbrances, fully prepared as described herein and in a condition acceptable to the Town. The Town will acquire such lands in fair and reasonable manner in consideration of policy, market value for un-serviced developable land and open negotiations with ownerships.

1.2.4 Parkland Conveyance and Registration

The timing of conveyance of parkland in accordance with the Planning Act will be stipulated in the Subdivision Agreement. The Town will typically require conveyance be made to the municipality during registration of the first phase of a subdivision. Condition of the land to be conveyed shall be as described herein or as stipulated in the Subdivision Agreement. If as a matter of necessity, and with the agreement of the Town, conveyance is to occur later in the development process, the



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

Town will secure a letter-of-credit for the value of lands to be conveyed. The Subdivision Agreement where possible is to identify development sequencing and the developer shall to the best of his ability supply the Town with an approximate schedule of timing for the development to allow the Town to forecast capital investments and manage expenditures and updating of financial planning under the Development Charges By-law.

1.3 Park/School Campus Development

1.3.1 Campus Layout

Where deemed advantageous and appropriate in community planning, the Town will endeavour to site parks and schools together in a campus layout for the benefit of continuity of public land uses, efficiency in layout of structured recreational facilities, and for the purposes of integrating or sharing facilities wherever practicable. The Town will consider the size of applicable parkland in the potential relationship with adjoining school facilities. In accordance with policy of the Official Plan and Master Plan, Neighbourhood Parks larger than 2 hectares may generally be located adjacent to one elementary school, and Community Parks greater than 5 hectares may be located adjacent to one secondary school or a maximum of two elementary schools. Smaller Neighbourhood Parks will not be considered for a campus with adjacent schools as they are intended for local, low intensity use and will be of insufficient size and function to withstand the impacts of over-use typically generated by school populations.

The Town of East Gwillimbury promotes the efficient utilization of publicly controlled parks and open spaces. In recognition of the efficiencies of joint use and campus design, the municipality encourages avoiding the installation of boundary fencing or other physical barriers at park/school boundaries; except trees and/or other naturally occurring features. Design of such campuses through site plan control and park design shall be developed to avoid unnecessary duplication of drainage and grading features between adjoining sites; creating an integration of design for structured recreational facilities and site features and amenities. In such planned campuses, consideration shall be given to allow the park to be developed independently should the applicable school board decide not to develop a school at its option. Such parks may be reconsidered by the municipality as to their role and function within the community area upon clear notice that a school shall not be developed. Planning for parks is to anticipate this eventuality and the disposition of school sites within a plan of subdivision may include options for full or partial acquisition by the Town contingent upon conditions and terms of the subdivision agreement.

1.3.2 Shared Facilities

To further the objectives for efficient utilization of publicly controlled land and open spaces, the Town of East Gwillimbury encourages its agency partners to consider joint-use of public lands and assets. Where deemed to be in the best interest of the parties, the Town and School Boards may choose to share facilities across a common boundary within a park/school campus to provide operational and program advantages to each agency. In such instances, the Town and applicable Board may establish a mutual agreement for the purposes of negotiating the costs of capital development and future maintenance of such shared facilities. Such agreements shall ensure clarity for the parties with regard to land dedication and capital investments as they may pertain to Development Charge funding and park development (as attributable to service level calculations of future Development Charge By-laws). The Town will encourage joint-use of park/school facilities where there is no obvious interference with normal site function for either party.



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

Joint use is considered as an advantage to the community as a whole; increasing useable green space for residents while limiting the need for repetitive facilities, particularly in paved areas for parking and recreational play-court facilities. In principle, no permit cost will be charged between the parties for shared facility usage except if the costs of grounds maintenance and repair are unduly affected for one of the agencies. Such mutual agreements shall consider insurances and liabilities and the maintenance implications of the campus. It is suggested that such agreements be reviewed and modified from time to time as may be required to ensure fairness for the parties and the reasonable management of operating costs.

1.4 Tree Preservation

1.4.1 Tree Preservation Plans

Owners of lands subject to development shall be required to submit a Tree Preservation Plan and Arborist's Report for tableland forest units or individual trees within or adjoining the lands, to the approval of the Town. Tree Preservation Plans and Arborist's reports shall clearly indicate the specific measures and practices required from the owner and its agents for the effective preservation of trees and forest units identified for practical preservation in the post development scenario.

Tree Preservation Plans are to be produced in a timely way in step with engineering design for the lands in order that engineering for the lands not unduly prejudice the ability to effectively preserve trees and woodland units of significant value to the community. Tree Preservation Plans shall be produced in accordance with applicable Town policy documents and the requirements and conditions of the Draft Plan of Subdivision or Site Plan Approval processes and any applicable policies of the Regional Municipality and Conservation Authority. Pre-servicing or construction activity within a development plan may proceed only with approved Tree Preservation Plans in place and shall be conducted with regard to and in conformity with the approved Tree Preservation Plans.

Draft Approved Plans of Subdivision may contain tree preservation in conjunction with a Park Block or Open Space. Prior to the start of any type of construction activity for the development of the lands, tree preservation measures as described by the approved Tree Preservation Plan shall be installed and inspected and approved by the municipality. Preservation measures and fencing are to be routinely inspected and repaired/replaced as required for the duration of the construction process.

1.4.2 Compensation for Tree Removal and Loss

The Town will require financial compensation for the removal or damage to trees identified for preservation or in compensation for development where clear cutting of tableland forest units is required. In cases of unauthorized tree removal, the amount of financial penalty will be based on the valuation methodology outlined in the "Guide For Plant Appraisal - Current Edition" authored by the Ontario Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture but shall not exceed the maximum penalties as may be identified by Town Policy or By-law.

Compensation for tree removal enabling development of a property will be valued on a case by case basis, acting reasonably considering variables of density, species, area in question and quality of trees affected. The Town will request or require that trees removed or damaged be compensated within public initiatives for re-forestation and rehabilitation of natural landscape areas within the municipality.



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

1.4.3 Conveyance of Woodlots, Maintenance and Acceptance

Prior to acceptance of a tree preservation area by the Town, the developer will convene site inspections with town forestry staff to ascertain the extent of required arboriculture work, hazard tree removals and what general maintenance work is required for acceptance. This may include hiring the professional services of a Certified Arborist for pruning of dead branches, removal of hazard trees identified as risks to people or property, site clean-up of all debris and garbage, and removal of any other hazards identified. Completion of such works shall be considered in the release of letters-of-credit for the subdivision. The tree preservation area will be conveyed and assumed by the Town only after inspections and acceptance for compliance with Town standards. These arboriculture standards are to also be applied to preserved vegetation that will be retained in private ownership through site plan or subdivision plan development. The continued maintenance and monitoring of such private preservation areas shall not be the responsibility of the town at any time before, during or after the development process.

1.5 Storm Water Management Facilities

1.5.1 Storm Water Management Ponds

Storm water management facilities required for new developments shall not be acceptable as parkland dedication under the Planning Act and Official Plan. As such, storm water ponds or extended detention facilities shall be located within the boundaries of lands conveyed as tableland parks. Storm water facilities are considered as hazard lands and shall occur on lands intended specifically for such purposes. Engineering requirements of the Town and Conservation Authority shall define the land requirements and location for such facilities. Ponds are commonly located in close proximity to other hazard lands and as such may form part of a continuous open space system adjoining park facilities. In such instances, care shall be taken in the design and sizing of pond blocks to assure that any required grade transition areas do not offer undue risk to park users.

1.5.2 Storm Water and Overland Flow Facilities

If no other storm water management alternatives are available, and at the developer's expense, storm water controls such as overland flow routes may be accommodated within parks with the approval of the Town. Such requirements will be accommodated where they will not compromise the full use of the park program as planned by the Town and offer no risks to park users in the routine use of the park and its facilities. All recreational facilities must be uninterrupted and above top-of-bank and/or the 100-year storm event. If overland flow routes cannot be accommodated without compromising the use of the park, the developer will be required to red-line the plan of subdivision to consolidate additional lands with the park to satisfy both requirements. Should there be no other engineering design solutions; and underground sewer systems or other utilities be required to pass through the vicinity of the parkland, alignments will be reviewed and approved by the Town for conformity with the park design program. Where red-line adjustment to the plan of subdivision proves unworkable, such lands encumbered by the presence of the utility or easement shall be deducted from the calculation of dedicated parkland and compensation provided to the municipality based upon the market value of serviced land.

1.5.3 Ponds and Passive Recreation

The Town encourages the use of storm water ponds for additional purposes of continuity of green space and to potentially provide pedestrian linkages to adjoining open space systems, provided such use can be accommodated with appropriate public safety. Storm water management facilities are viewed as open space assets to the community and are to be designed as an integral



PARKLAND DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL

part of the public land system of open spaces. Their design will consider opportunity for passive recreational uses such as pedestrian trails or linkages to larger trail networks within the open space system and shall also provide opportunities for interpretation and public education regarding the purposes and roles of storm water facilities.

1.5.4 Ponds as Natural Systems

Ponds are to be designed as naturalistic landscapes utilizing native plant materials and planting designs that emulate the natural environment of local plant communities. Where ponds are a continuation of adjacent natural landscapes they shall be designed to extend any readily apparent natural system of forest or meadow community. Where the edges of an existing habitat are dominated with invasive or exotic species of plant the development of the pond shall ensure the removal of such species and the replacement of foreign vegetation communities with native planting design for the purpose of rehabilitation of the land.

1.5.5 Urban Area Pond Aesthetics

When storm water ponds are situated within an urban area of high visibility within the streetscape, their design will provide a complementary design with high quality of aesthetics and present a visual benefit to the community. The shared boundary of the pond and street shall feature a continuous maintenance strip of sod at least 2.4 metres in width and safe and manageable grading with slopes with a steepness of 5:1 or less. Designs of this type of pond shall still be dominated by native selections of plants and will provide the opportunity for the integration of streetscape features, community theme elements and trail connections where appropriate.

1.5.6 Landscape Maintenance

All pond designs are to be developed with an emphasis on sustainable design utilizing locally available and recycled materials wherever possible. In general terms ponds are intended to appear to be natural landscapes and are to be designed to minimize maintenance requirements for the municipality. The hierarchy of maintenance is to be clearly understood by the public and designs are to provide a clear maintainable interface (mowing strip) with any adjoining fence-lines of residential properties. While the passive use of the land surrounding the ponds is considered a public resource, recreational use of the ponds themselves will be discouraged for public safety reasons. Town standard restrictive warning signage will be supplied by the developer and posted for warning purposes upon the initial excavation of the pond and prior to occupancies for the subdivision or site plan development.