



G: Parkland & Open Space Assessments

Parks planning is an important function of the Town’s Community Services Department, providing guiding efforts to ensure that Milton benefits from high quality and functional public open spaces that provide venues for community activity, sport and recreation, cultural events and general respite from the built environment. Parks planning also plays an integral role in sustaining ecosystem health through fulfilment of long-term conservation and preservation goals. This Appendix examines the policy framework guiding parks planning in Milton and determines the required supply of parkland to guide the Town’s parkland acquisition efforts over the next five years.

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An Overview of Milton's Parks System

The Importance of Parks

Parks are dynamic places. They are hubs of activity, creating focal points for the community that allow people to interact with each other and their environment, to access opportunities for physical activity, and to simply get fresh air. Parks create a sense of place, creating identifiable points of reference that are specific to a neighbourhood, community or the Town as a whole.

Research undertaken by Parks and Recreation Ontario shows that eight in ten households in Ontario use public parks while 97% of households realize some degree of benefit from local parks (including those who never use parks), demonstrating their importance in daily life.¹⁵ Milton's 2013 Community Profile Survey also revealed that parks used for individual and/or family activities were the second most popular recreational service in Milton (only behind walking/cycling trails), with 59% of the sample reporting use in the past year and another 26% of the sample reported using parks for the purposes of sport, which was seventh highest. Satisfaction ratings were also high, ranking 90% and 89% for parks used for individual/family use and those used for sport, respectively.¹⁶

Providing opportunities for 'play' among residents of all ages is desirable. Parks contain playgrounds, hard surface courts, sports fields, cultural space, etc. that allow for a broad range of recreational, cultural and social pursuits. Physical activity is an important part of healthy lifestyles, reducing the propensity for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, etc. In addition to recreational opportunities, parks also offer arts and cultural pursuits and opportunities that can stimulate creativity and mental health. According to the NRPA, parks located close to home result in more physical activity and health for citizens,¹⁷ something that bodes well for Milton given the excellent distribution of parkland that it has been able to achieve particularly through recent urban growth initiatives in the Bristol and Sherwood Surveys.

Parks also help time pressed commuters (56% of those with a usual place of work travel outside of the Town for their jobs¹⁸) and newcomers to meet established residents, preventing a sense of isolation. Well designed parks offer a range of social, environmental, health and economic benefits to municipalities; as such, residents, businesses and governments all benefit from the provision of high quality public parks. While the health benefits to



¹⁵ Parks and Recreation Ontario. *Use and Benefits of Local Government Recreation and Parks Services: An Ontario Perspective – Research Summary*. 2009.

¹⁶ Town of Milton. *Community Profile – Final Report*. p.48 and p.54. August 2, 2011.

¹⁷ National Recreation and Park Association. *The Benefits of Physical Activity Provided by Park and Recreation Services: The Scientific Evidence*. 2010. This report cites a number of studies which show that the likelihood of participation in recreational activity is greater for persons living closest (generally within a mile) to parks and that higher numbers of parks in proximity to certain populations also results in greater physical activity compared to those without close or sufficient access to parks.

¹⁸ Town of Milton. *Community Profile – Final Report*. p.24. August 2, 2011.

individuals are clearly defined, governments also have an interest in terms of reductions in healthcare spending. With many people leading busy lifestyles and having limited amounts of free time, parks respond to the need for spontaneous, drop-in forms of leisure.

The *environmental* aspect of parks greatly contributes to the ecological health of a community and region, through their role in the carbon cycle (by removing carbon dioxide and adding oxygen), offering habitat for urban wildlife, promoting indigenous plant species, contributing to biodiversity, etc. Creating a linked system of parks and open space has been recognized as being beneficial to certain animal species while also serving a dual role of creating ‘active transportation’ corridors connected by sidewalks and trails to serve residents using non-motorized forms of travel. Making appropriate use of Milton’s woodlots and natural areas, in a manner that is not detrimental to their function, is a means to further the Town’s efforts in improving neighbourhood and community-level connectivity. The *economic* impact of parks includes savings in healthcare, bolstering property values (many people prefer to live close to parks and trails), and drawing tourists into the Town. Sport and nature tourism are becoming viewed as excellent economic development tools, while hosting festivals and special events bolsters the cultural appeal of a municipality.

Social, health, environmental and economic factors play into one key aspect of the human experience – Quality of Life. Parks provide urban dwellers with natural settings, an instinctual appeal for most and providing respite from the built environment and the fast pace of urban life. As municipalities such as Milton plan higher density communities, personal ‘backyard’ space is shrinking with more people who live in condominiums, apartments, and town homes increasingly depending on public green spaces to fulfill their leisure needs. As the Town moves forward, greater emphasis will need to be placed on not only designing attractive new parks but also enhancing and rejuvenating older parks in established areas of Milton. Part of this process can involve moving away from “cookie-cutter” templates in favour of defining sense of place through parkland, repositioning parks to meet evolution in the demographic profile of the neighbourhoods that surround them, or re-adapting parks to respond to densification and intensification that is occurring in Milton. Neighbourhood and District Parks are ideal venues to create distinctive parks. The Town has already started to embrace this philosophy as evidenced with unique design elements. While moving away from standardized templates can represent a cost (in terms of sourcing and maintaining non-standard parts), sound business planning can garner efficiencies and generate intrinsic values such as community pride.

As such, the importance of the parks and open system as an asset cannot be understated. The Town of Milton provides a robust system of parks and open spaces offering over 625 hectares of active parkland and passive open space suitable for various forms of recreational use. These parklands encourage physical and social activity, wellness, and informal use opportunities, all of which are paramount considerations in the design of local parks in order to encourage use and facilitate activity levels.

The Town of Milton’s Official Plan provides the overarching framework that guides park planning activities. The C.S.M.P. Update examines and builds upon this framework, along with other supporting documents such as the Engineering & Parks Standards Manual, to provide additional information to inform planning and implementation of park-related objectives in Milton.

Parkland Classification System

Existing Park Hierarchy

The parkland hierarchy is fundamental to adequately planning for parks in Milton. This system of classification distinguishes between the different forms and functions of parks, recognizing that some uses and intensities may be appropriate for certain parks but not others. Section 2.5.3.5 of the Town of Milton Official Plan specifies ‘Parkland Standards’ that consist of the parkland hierarchy and the general level of provision. Table 1 in the Milton Official Plan establishes a hierarchy consisting of the following five classifications.

Table 3: Existing Town of Milton Official Plan Parkland Hierarchy

Level	Description
1. Community Park	Community Parks serve residents of the Town. Community Parks may include, in addition to the full range of active and passive recreation uses, significant natural or physical features such as the Mill Pond, or unique attractions such as formal gardens, museums, display greenhouses, animal farms or other specialized public leisure functions. These areas will be between 20 and 50 hectares in size.
2. District Park	District Parks serve one or more Planning Districts and include the provision of major sports facilities such as athletic fields, outdoor rinks, outdoor pools, baseball diamonds, softball diamonds, tennis courts and limited spectator facilities. The minimum size of such parks will be 6.0 hectares.
3. Neighbourhood Park	Neighbourhood Parks serve neighbourhoods within a Planning District. They will contain Park facilities such as athletic fields, outdoor rinks, outdoor pools, screened baseball diamonds, softball diamonds, tennis courts and limited spectator facilities. The minimum size of such parks will be 3.0 hectares.
4. Urban Square	An Urban Square will be located as part of a focal point for a Planning District or a Neighbourhood. It will provide primarily a passive recreation area for aesthetics and rest areas. Urban Squares will typically be 0.5 to 1.0 hectares in size.
5. Village Square	A Village Square will be located as a focal point for a sub-neighbourhood. Such facilities provide primarily a passive recreation area for aesthetics and rest areas, but may also include children's play equipment, informal play areas, or public service facilities including mail kiosks, etc. Village Squares would typically be between 0.2 and 0.5 hectares in size.

Source: Town of Milton Official Plan, 2008 Consolidation - Table 1

The C.S.M.P. Update provides an opportunity to revisit the existing park classification in the context of recent parkland developments. Increasingly, park blocks being received through the development process do not always result in the size or ability to accommodate active recreational uses as set out in Table 1 of the Official Plan. Review of the existing parkland hierarchy defined in Table 1 of the Official Plan in conjunction with recent park development activities suggests the following:

- Parks such as the Escarpment View Lands are examples of a trend to negotiating parkland acquisition outside of the Secondary Plan Areas (S.P.A.) that they are intended to serve (Milton Community Park was the last park of this nature to be conveyed within a Secondary Plan boundary). Parks located external to their S.P.A.s are a positive contribution to the entire community largely due to their acreage. However, they face an added challenge of being outside of the Town’s urban growth boundary which in turn presents constraints from a planning approval and servicing perspective, along with topographic constraints that impacts their development potential (i.e. they are not unencumbered tableland parcels that otherwise allow for cost effective development for active recreational use and may in fact have legislative constraints pertaining to natural heritage, Greenbelt/Niagara Escarpment Plan policies, etc.).

- District Parks continue to be provided, however, their land base is increasingly being consumed through the construction of community centres. While co-location of indoor and outdoor community facilities remains appropriate, it is unclear whether the quantum of land being consumed for indoor facilities and associated site works (e.g. parking, stormwater management) is impacting the service level of actual parkland.
- Neighbourhood Parks also continue to be provided, however, they tend to be smaller than the established 3.0 hectare minimum which is due in part to certain land use planning decisions (e.g. through the Ontario Municipal Board) that has fragmented planned larger parcels into smaller and more dispersed ones, as well as the Town's own onsite parking and stormwater management requirements. The result is that recreation facilities once envisioned for this park typology may no longer fit within the neighbourhood park setting. A review of the Town's park inventory reveals that a number of Neighbourhood Parks are as small as parkettes (in the 0.2 to 0.8 hectare range) and only a few exceed 4 hectares in size. Of note, the Town's Engineering and Parks Standards Manual identifies an optimum park size of approximately 3.0 to 4.0 ha, or as required based on a facility fit drawing of proposed recreational needs for the site.
- Urban Squares are blended under the Village Square category, as the majority of parkette developments are associated with the latter. The number of these small parkette developments has increased the distribution and access to certain neighbourhoods (particularly in the Bristol Survey), which in turn has largely benefitted the considerable population of young families looking for playgrounds. It carries a double-edged sword in that these highly manicured parks are challenging the operational resources of the Town by greatly decentralizing maintenance activities and their size limits both facility opportunities and the flexibility to adapt or transition to accommodate future facility needs as the area neighbourhood evolves.
- The Town has developed some Linear Parks, which do not have a formal definition within the Official Plan, to bolster off-road pedestrian and cycling connectivity and active transportation objectives. Typically, they consist of tableland located in relation to physical features such as watercourses, former rail lands or utility encumbrances. As tableland, development for multi-use trails is not as restricted as it is on passive open space lands.

The Official Plan's parkland hierarchy encompasses both tablelands and natural open spaces within each of the five classifications. Tableland is generally flat, unencumbered land suitable for the development of recreation and leisure facilities such as sports fields, gardens, hard surface courts, etc. Natural open space provides fewer opportunities for recreational activity due to its topography and terrain, and typically is intended to function as areas of conservation, buffer blocks, utility corridors and servicing easements. Due to the introduction of enhanced natural heritage system policies through Regional Official Plan Amendment 38, it is no longer necessary to include consideration of these lands as parkland in the Town's Official Plan policy. Rather, lands within the Natural Heritage System will be conveyed to the Town through the development process and will complement the Town's parkland.

Existing Park Level of

The Milton Official Plan states that "The standards for the provision of parkland in addition to the Open Space Linkages, shall be based on the general provision of 4 hectares (10 acres) of tableland per thousand population" and that the parkland provision standard "excludes lands in the Greenlands Area designations, school lands...private recreation facilities, walkways, storm drainage systems and buffer areas between conflicting land uses."¹⁹

¹⁹Town of Milton. December 1997. *Town of Milton Official Plan (Consolidated August, 2008)*. Section 2.5.3.5 "Parkland Standards". p.55.

Service Standard

The parkland level of service is consistent with planning practice across North America for the past three decades, based upon guidelines initially published by the United States National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) that suggest “a park system, at minimum, be composed of a core system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres (equal to 2.5 to 4.2 hectares) of developed open space per 1,000 population” while the amount of ‘adjunct’ parkland will vary from community to community based upon the total amount needed to achieve a well-rounded parks system.²⁰

Consistent with the NRPA guidelines, work conducted regionally and throughout the G.T.A. suggests that a Town-wide provision level of 2.2 to 2.5 hectares of active (or ‘developed’, as termed in the NRPA standard) parkland within developing residential areas is supported based on considering outdoor facility needs and their associated space requirements. Active parkland does not include school sites and excludes valleylands, woodlots, community linkages, natural heritage areas and land for community facilities (noting that Milton’s past practice has been to include indoor community facilities lands within negotiated parkland acquisitions and dedications).

The Milton Official Plan’s overall parkland provision standard is further subdivided to provide level of service direction specific to each classification contained in the park hierarchy. The following table illustrates the supply and service level of each type of park.

Table 4: Supply and Service Level by Existing Park Classification, 2014

Park Classification	Supply (hectares)	Official Plan Standard (hectares per 1,000)	Service Level Achieved (hectares per 1,000)
Community Park	43.9	1.0	0.4
<i>Community Park - Escarpment View Lands Portion*</i>	164.7		1.6
District Park	83.4	2.0	0.8
Neighbourhood Park	72.9	1.0	0.9
Village Square	18.8		
Linear Park	17.4	undefined	0.2
Passive Open Space*	60.6		0.6
Total	461.7	4.0	4.5
<i>Total excluding Escarpment View Lands</i>	<i>297.1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>2.9</i>

Note: Official Plan combines service level standards for Neighbourhood Park and Village Squares. Service Level total may not add up due to rounding.

* Includes areas within parks that cannot be developed for active uses but excludes 36.2 hectares of woodlots which are not reflected in the supply

Through recent parkland negotiation and acquisition processes, the Town has successfully obtained a broad spectrum of parkland within the hierarchy and has adhered to its Official Plan’s provision target for the parks system as a whole. There has been a growing shift in recent years whereby natural open spaces constitute a greater portion of the targeted quantum as a means to balance the needs of all community stakeholders and to achieve Milton’s overall greening and conservation efforts; this is exemplified by acquisition of the Escarpment View Lands that are considered to be “Community Parks” but whose function is presently more aligned with passive natural open space (though future development of these parcels, if permitted and feasible, may allow a broader range of recreational activity to take place).

²⁰ Lancaster, Roger. May 1983. *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. National Recreation and Parks Association. p.56-57.

The Town’s success in bolstering its supply of natural open spaces has meant that less tableland has been obtained, the latter of which has been historically used to meet active recreational needs of Milton’s young and growing population. In fact, many of the parks falling under the existing hierarchy have passive open spaces that are reflected in the overall quantum of parkland but are not necessarily suited for many passive recreational uses sought by residents (e.g. picnicking, leisurely walking, etc.). Such areas are more functionally aligned with the “Greenlands System” established in the Official Plan, a designation that reflects the natural heritage system that is oriented to conservation/preservation rather than recreation.

While the Official Plan’s parkland hierarchy emphasizes active recreational usage to a greater degree than passive use, about 50% of the Town’s parkland supply presently consists of passive open space or undeveloped areas.

Herein lies a fundamental challenge with the Official Plan’s existing parkland hierarchy in that it does not offer clear guidance regarding the desired “mix” of tableland versus natural open space within the type of parklands falling under the hierarchy’s 4.0 hectare per 1,000 service level. Despite the parkland hierarchy emphasizing active recreational usage to a greater degree than passive use, nearly 50% of the 461 hectares of parkland presently consists of passive open space or undeveloped areas. The parkland hierarchy largely focuses on recreational uses through the provision of structured and drop-in format facilities (ranging from sports fields to playgrounds to rest areas) in all park classifications, with an emphasis on “passive recreation uses, significant natural or physical features...or unique attractions” noted only in the Community Park category. To address challenges posed within the existing parkland hierarchy, adjustments are being proposed in the C.S.M.P. Update with respect to: a) differentiating between tableland parks and natural open spaces; b) the park classifications themselves; and c) the service level standards for each typology (these are discussed in subsequent pages).

Proposed Revisions to the Parkland Hierarchy & Service Level Standards

As will be discussed in the following paragraphs, four adjustments are proposed as part of revising the existing parkland hierarchy contained in the Town of Milton Official Plan:

1. Emphasizing that tableland parcels will constitute the composition of parks identified in the parkland hierarchy, except for proposed new classification of Passive Open Spaces

It is the intent of the parkland hierarchy to guide the Town of Milton in securing not only the amount of parkland required but also the type and quality of parkland that it provides. The hierarchy should reflect a clear distinction between unencumbered tableland and naturalized parks. With about 50% of the existing parkland supply consisting of developed/developable lands and the other 50% consisting of undeveloped (or encumbered) lands, the classifications within the parkland hierarchy should be explicitly clear about the quality of parkland that the Town wishes to assume for tableland park purposes. Accordingly, tableland parcels should represent the Community Park, District Park, Neighbourhood Park and Village Square typologies that focus on active recreational activities and manicured parkland, and thus should consist of unencumbered tableland (i.e. the majority of the park should be developable for the purposes of facilitating a broad range of recreational and/or cultural facilities and uses). Linear Park parcels may also be included in the tableland portion provided that they do not have any inherent encumbrance whether natural feature, utility or infrastructure or policy restriction.

The proposed revised hierarchy recognizes encumbered and non-tableland areas suitable for passive recreational use by proposing a new classification. The new classification should reflect the importance of non-manicured green space in Milton, providing structure within the park hierarchy to account

for non-developable open space in the community. Passive Open Spaces are still intended for limited recreational functions and thus should not be confused with the Natural Heritage System (i.e. designated Greenlands) whose primary function is to protect environmentally significant lands consisting of key factors, buffers and enhancement areas. As such, the Natural Heritage System is independent of any Passive Open space lands. As with current Official Plan policy, Greenlands, Passive Open Space and any encumbered Linear Park designations should be excluded from the calculation of the level of service standard as these parcels have a fairly narrow recreational focus but instead are intended more for the purposes of utility or servicing needs.

2. Revising the description of the Community Park classification

Building upon the quality versus quantum of parkland discussion, Community Parks have evolved from the Town's historical parks in the established area (e.g. Rotary Park, Centennial Park) to the Bristol model (Milton Community Park) and most recently to primarily passive lands such as the Escarpment View Lands (recognizing the latter could possibly be developed for certain active recreational use pending approval from the Niagara Escarpment Commission). While the current Official Plan definition of Community Parks recognizes these as special purpose parks serving a broad range of Town-wide needs, in line with the previous paragraph the description of such parks should be revised to emphasize that the intent of Community Parks is to continue to serve recreational and cultural needs through provision of tableland areas that are capable of being programmed for a diverse range of organized and unstructured activities, as opposed to solely passive recreational or conservation-related uses (as is the case with the Escarpment View lands). This action will require reclassification of some existing Community Parks to Passive Open Spaces, such as the Escarpment View Lands until a time if/when they are redeveloped in a manner where active recreational or cultural uses become the predominant function (beyond conservation and limited passive uses such as hiking). It is noted that this would simply involve an internal reclassification of the park typology and not an Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law Amendment provided that the lands are designated to permit active recreational uses in the first place.

3. Combining the Urban Square and Village Square classifications

The third adjustment proposed as part of a revised park hierarchy is consolidation of Urban Squares and Village Squares into a single classification. The rationale stems from a couple of main reasons, the first being the redundancy in their respective functions. The only difference in the Official Plan's current definition of Urban Squares and Village Squares is that the former is intended to be the focal point of a "Planning District or Neighbourhood" while the latter is a focal point for a "sub-neighbourhood"; furthermore, most of Milton's parkettes generally follow a similar design template rendering a fairly minimal distinction between the two classifications. Additionally, the Official Plan's service level standard consolidates provision of District Parks and Urban Squares (at 2 hectares per 1,000 residents, collectively) and Neighbourhood Parks and Village Squares (at 1 hectare per 1,000, collectively). While the consolidation of the latter has some merit due to the catchment areas they serve, District Parks and Urban Squares function very differently while their catchment areas are at a very different scale, thus grouping their collective service levels together is not appropriate. Accordingly, it is recommended that Urban Squares and Village Squares be consolidated into one classification known as Village Square.

4. Refocusing the parkland level of service standards

The Town of Milton Official Plan emphasizes that the standards for the provision of parkland are to be applied over and above lands allocated to Open Space Linkages (proposed to be renamed Linear Parks), the Greenlands Area, schools, walkways, private recreation facilities, storm drainage areas and buffer areas between conflicting land uses. Consistent with this intent of the Official Plan, **it is recommended that the parkland service level standards**

only be applied to ‘core’ park types as previously identified through guidelines originally published by the NRPA,²¹ which in the Milton context are the Community Park, District Park, Neighbourhood Park and Village Square typologies. Therefore, it is the intent of this refocused park hierarchy that **the service level standard be applied to ‘core’ park types** whose form is primarily shaped by unencumbered tablelands and whose focus promotes a diverse range of recreational and/or cultural activity. The **Linear Park and Passive Open Space typologies are considered to be the ‘adjunct’ parks** identified by the NRPA and should thus be provided where needed to round out the needs associated with achieving a healthy system of parkland and open space.

Recognizing that encumbered adjunct forms of parkland will be a lesser focus of acquisition to meet active recreational/cultural needs, **it is recommended that the Town pursue a provision standard of 2.5 hectares of ‘core’ parkland per 1,000 residents to reflect the recommendation to exclude passive/encumbered parklands. Note that ‘core’ parkland is to consist of active, unencumbered and developable tableland, and that it is to exclude valleylands, woodlots, natural heritage areas and other community linkages, school sites and land for indoor community facilities (including their parking/servicing areas).** This is a level of service deemed to be appropriate in planning future land development areas as defined through the Town’s Official Plan, Secondary Plans and Tertiary Plans and will alleviate operational challenges of maintaining such a large and vastly distributed system of parks and passive open spaces.

‘CORE’ forms of parkland consist of active, unencumbered and developable tableland. They exclude valleylands, woodlots, community linkages, natural heritage areas, school sites and land for indoor community facilities.

After excluding Passive Open Spaces (consisting of the Escarpment View Lands and undevelopable park areas), what remains are the ‘core’ system of parkland comprising the active, tableland areas of Community, District, Neighbourhood/Village Square, and Linear Parks. The quantum of land attributable to the ‘core’ system is 236 hectares, yielding a service level of 2.3 hectares per 1,000 residents, which is fairly close to the recommended target of 2.5 hectares of core parkland per 1,000 residents. If the Escarpment View Lands Passive Open Spaces are developed to accommodate more than a basic level of passive recreational use, and become hubs of recreational and cultural activity through facilitating a number of opportunities, they may be reclassified in whole or in part back into the appropriate core parkland typology and result in an increase to the level of service. For example, developing the Escarpment View Lands (former Central Milton Holdings Land parcel only) as a sports field complex, thereby changing its function to a Community or District Park, increases the Town-wide service level by about 0.6 hectares per 1,000 based on the current population level, resulting in Milton achieving an overall ‘core’ service level of 2.9 hectares per 1,000.

By applying the active parkland provision standard, the Town will not necessarily have to reduce its focus on obtaining passive or naturalized green space. The shift is simply intended to **ensure that the Town receives high quality park parcels required to service recreation and cultural needs of the broad community while strategically pursuing passive areas on a case-by-case basis** where deemed to strengthen the parks system as a whole. It is also worth noting that regardless of how Escarpment View Lands are classified internally, the Town of Milton will still be achieving a total quantum (i.e. including active parks and passive open spaces) close its historical 4.0 hectares per 1,000 level of service.

²¹ Lancaster, Roger. May 1983. *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. National Recreation and Parks Association. p.56-57.



Proposed
Parkland
Hierarchy

Based on the preceding paragraphs, the following table summarizes the revised parkland hierarchy for the Town of Milton.

Table 5: Proposed Official Plan Parkland Hierarchy

CORE PARKLAND	Minimum Size*	Catchment	Description	Service Level (ha per 1,000)*
Community Park	20 hectares	Town-Wide	Parks consisting primarily of unencumbered tablelands that provide a full range of active and passive recreation uses, opportunities for special events and festivals. May be located adjacent to or in proximity to municipal facilities, schools, other institutional land uses, Passive Open Spaces or the Greenlands System.	0.4
District Park	6 hectares	One or more Planning Districts	Parks consisting primarily of unencumbered tablelands that include the provision of major sports facilities such as lit and unlit sports fields, hard surface courts, and outdoor aquatics facilities. Preferably located along arterial roads with parking provided onsite. May be located adjacent to or in proximity to schools, other institutional land uses, Passive Open Spaces or the Greenlands System.	1.0
Neighbourhood Park	3 to 4 hectares	Neighbourhoods within a Planning District	Parks consisting primarily of unencumbered tablelands that contain facilities such as sports fields, hard surface courts, outdoor aquatics facilities and play equipment. May be located adjacent to or in proximity to schools, other institutional land uses, Passive Open Spaces or the Greenlands System.	1.0
Village Square	0.5 hectares	Neighbourhoods within a Planning District	Unencumbered table land parks that provide passive recreation opportunities but may also contain play equipment, informal play areas, or public service facilities such as mail kiosks.	0.1
Linear Park (core)	Variable	Not Applicable	Accommodate linear forms of recreation within unencumbered lands. Linear Parks are preferably accepted under Section 51(25) of the <i>Planning Act</i> .	Not Applicable

PASSIVE OPEN SPACE	Minimum Size*	Catchment	Description	Service Level (ha per 1,000)*
Linear Park (open space)	Variable	Not Applicable	Accommodate linear forms of recreation and connect various components of the open space system. May also contribute to objectives pertaining to active transportation and/or municipal infrastructure needs such as easements and utility rights-of-way. Linear Parks characterized by encumbered open space are preferably not accepted through parkland dedications permitted under Sections 42 and 51.1 of the <i>Planning Act</i> , but may be accepted under Section 51(25).	Not Applicable
Passive Open Space	Variable	Not Applicable	Lands that may be able to promote limited, linear forms of recreation connecting various components of the Natural Heritage System or provide a community use for lands subject to municipal infrastructure such as easements or utility rights-of-way.	Not Applicable
Natural Heritage System	Variable	Not Applicable	Open Space consisting primarily of naturalized and/or hazard lands, woodlots and buffers between areas of environmental importance. Passive Open Spaces should not be accepted through parkland dedications permitted under the <i>Planning Act</i> . Note that it is not the intent of Passive Open Spaces to form part of the designated Greenlands (or natural heritage) system.	Not Applicable

* Applies only to tableland portions contained within each park typology and excludes encumbered, naturalized or hazard areas

Action Plans

- G1. Through the review and approval of development applications, it is recommended that greater emphasis be placed on acquisition of ‘active’ or ‘core’ parkland consisting of unencumbered tablelands that are able to accommodate a more diverse range of outdoor recreational and/or cultural activities.
- G2. It is recommended that the next Official Plan review program include an examination of the continued relevance of the Town’s established parkland policy framework, particularly in light of the anticipated legislative changes arising from Bill 73. Consideration should be given to the incorporation of a broader and more flexible policy framework, and allowing implementation details with respect to typologies, facilities and programming to be addressed through the Community Services Master Plan.
- G3. Through future Secondary Planning exercises, it is recommended that consideration be given to maximizing opportunities for co-location and partnerships with respect to the provision of parks and recreational facilities though the arrangement of land uses.

Parkland Requirements

Existing Parks

As of June 2015, the Town of Milton maintained a supply of 626.5 hectares of parkland and passive open space (excluding woodlots). Under the proposed revised parkland hierarchy and service level standard, the additional 184.6 hectares in passive/adjunct open space associated with the Escarpment View Lands is recognized over and above the core supply of parkland but is not counted as part of the level of service calculation until a time if/when these lands are redeveloped to accommodate a broad range of active recreational use (potentially adding 1.9 hectares per 1,000 if redeveloped and subsequently reclassified in their entirety).

Core Typologies	236.4 hectares	2.3 hectares per 1,000 population
Adjunct – Passive Open Space (undevelopable areas)	60.6 hectares	0.6 hectares per 1,000 population
<u>Adjunct – Escarpment View Lands</u>	<u>164.7 hectares</u>	<u>1.6 hectares per 1,000 population</u>
TOTAL	461.7 hectares	4.5 hectares per 1,000 population

Future Park Needs

Based on an estimated 2015 population of 101,270 residents, the current level of service for core park typologies is slightly below the 2.5 hectare per 1,000 population standard targeted through the C.S.M.P. Update amounting to 14 hectares over and above the existing supply.

Table 6: Parkland Needs by Classification

Park Classification	Supply (hectares)	Proposed Official Plan Standard	Service Level Achieved	Difference from Proposed Standard	
				Current (hectares)	2018 * (hectares)
Community Park	43.9	0.4 ha per 1,000	0.4 ha per 1,000	+ 3.4	- 1.2
District Park	83.4	1.0 ha per 1,000	0.8 ha per 1,000	- 17.9	- 29.5
Neighbourhood Park	72.9	1.0 ha per 1,000	0.7 ha per 1,000	- 28.4	- 40.0
Village Square	18.8	0.1 ha per 1,000	0.2 ha per 1,000	+ 8.7	+ 7.5
Linear Park	17.4	n/a	0.2 ha per 1,000	<i>n/a (acquisition by opportunity)</i>	
Sub-Total: Core Parkland	236.4	2.5 ha per 1,000	2.3 ha per 1,000	- 34.2	- 63.2
Sub-Total: Adjunct Parkland	225.3	undefined	2.1 ha per 1,000	<i>n/a (acquisition by opportunity)</i>	
TOTAL CORE AND ADJUNCT TYPOLOGIES	461.7	2.5 to 4.0 ha per 1,000	4.5 ha per 1,000		

* Population estimated using a straight-line assumption based on Draft D.C. Background Study current population estimate of 101,270 and projected 2025 population of 159,240.

** Consists of Escarpment View Lands (they are naturalized areas at present) along with undevelopable parklands lands including those contained exclusively in buffers, open space blocks and easements.

Note: Totals may not add up due to rounding.

To achieve the aforementioned service level to the year 2018, the Town needs to provide 282 hectares of core parkland typologies (i.e. unencumbered, developable table land), thereby requiring an additional 45.75 hectares of core parkland to meet the needs of over 11,600 new residents expected over that timeframe.

Any short-term shortfall (i.e. the difference between existing and planned) is not deemed to be of great concern unless the former Central Milton Holdings Land portion of the Escarpment View Lands are determined, through its external planning process, to be unsuitable for active recreational

usage. If the Escarpment View Lands cannot be developed as a sports field complex, alternative arrangements must be made as the Town’s ability to meeting sports field needs currently hinges upon Escarpment View Lands being available. As will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs, there are a number of alternative parkland strategies including municipal purchase of land for a sports field complex.

Additionally, the Town should continue its practice of enhancing its overall supply of parkland with naturalized parks and open spaces (i.e. adjunct parkland) to ensure that its greening objectives are realized. **This practice will continue to align municipal parkland objectives closer to the previous standard of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 in tandem with the required focus on active parkland.**

Action Plans

- G4. Annually monitor the development of the future parks and the outdoor facilities contained within them over the master planning period. A contingency plan should be formulated during the C.S.M.P. Update period in case higher order parks, such as the Escarpment View Lands, are deemed to be undevelopable for intended uses either in their entirety or a portion thereof.
- G5. Ensure that sufficient lands (i.e. a minimum of 8 hectares) are acquired for the Derry Green Community Park.
- G6. Future park developments should consider the growing demands for unstructured recreation and cultural spaces to provide flexible opportunities for picnicking, relaxation and nature appreciation, social gatherings, family activities, etc. and be supported by the appropriate park servicing infrastructure (e.g. electrical outlets, shelters, washrooms, etc.) required to facilitate such activities.

Parkland Acquisition Strategies

Parkland Dedication

The *Planning Act* establishes a framework for parkland dedication in Sections 42 and 51.1 which provides approval authorities with powers to impose parkland dedication requirements as a condition of development approval through site plan or a plan of subdivision. These Sections require that as a condition of development, redevelopment or subdivision of land, 2% for commercial and industrial land and 5% of residential lands are to be conveyed to the municipality for parkland or other public recreational purposes. In certain cases, where the approval authority has established specific policies regarding parkland dedication, the *Planning Act* allows the approval authority to require parkland at a rate of one hectare for each 300 dwelling units proposed. Alternatively, the *Planning Act* gives the approval authority to accept payment in lieu of parkland equal to the value of land required. The *Planning Act* establishes that the value of this land is determined the day or the day before the draft plan of subdivision is approved, or the issuance of a building permit.

Section 5.9.3.7 of the Town of Milton Official Plan pertains to the dedication and conveyance of parkland, and contains provisions for the dedication of 5% or 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units. The Official Plan explicitly states that the standard yielding the greater dedication amount is to be required, or cash-in-lieu thereof. The Town of Milton Parkland Dedication By-law (By-law 128-2001) also provides guidance with respect to conveyances permitted under the *Planning Act*.

Through Section 5.9.3.10, the Town’s Official Plan states lands that are not deemed to be acceptable through dedications generally include those susceptible to flooding, those intended to be used for stormwater management functions, hazard lands, and lands in setbacks from top-of-bank. The

Official Plan, through various sections, states that where new development is proposed on a site, part of which is designated Environmental Linkage Area, Greenlands Area (A or B), Environmentally Sensitive Area, such lands may not be acceptable as part of the dedication of park purposes as required by the *Planning Act*.

Alternative
Means to
Obtain
Parkland

The Town should consider employing a number of alternative acquisition initiatives to maintain an acceptable supply of parkland, supplemental to parkland supplies received through dedications. Alternative acquisition measures to consider, among others, may include:

- municipal purchase or lease of land;
- negotiating financial agreements with landowners, as is presently done by the Town;
- land exchanges or swaps, particularly if development is to occur in highly valued natural areas;
- off-site conveyance of parkland (as the Town has recently pursued with lands negotiated outside of Secondary Plan areas);
- negotiating right of first refusal;
- establishment of a Parks Foundation (i.e., community, corporate and/or municipal donations to be put toward parkland acquisition);
- reallocating surplus municipal lands to parks use;
- negotiating access to non-municipal parks and facilities (e.g. through reciprocal agreements) and/or encouraging user groups to access these spaces on their own behalf;
- seek to purchase 'over-dedication' of parkland associated with new development and/or infill areas; and
- partnership / joint provision of lands with community partners.

With a considerable supply of naturalized open space, as well as the demands that a growing population will require for recreational and cultural facilities and services, it is worth re-emphasizing that the Town should focus upon obtaining parkland for active recreational uses and social gatherings. Opportunities to obtain lands in the existing areas may arise if commercial, industrial or institutional lands become available for sale.

In terms of where parkland should be located, the Town should continue to seek parcels that have appropriate frontages along collector roads (for Neighbourhood Parks) and arterial roads (for District and Community Parks). Village Squares should be located to provide a focal point and informal gathering place within neighbourhoods. Where possible and appropriate, the Town should continue its recent practice of locating parks along on-street and off-street trail networks, and transit routes. In anticipation of intensification and build-out of the urban boundary, the Town should monitor opportunities to purchase or acquire parkland within established and developing areas, particularly along or near major road and transit corridors, in proximity to designated "Gateways" and "Nodes", and possibly co-located with schools and other institutional or mixed uses to share common infrastructure such as parking.

In addition, the Town should review its Zoning By-law regulations that requires the provision of off-street parking (i.e. internal parking lots) within parks greater than two hectares in size. At present, the Zoning By-law requires fifteen parking spots for general park users and twenty parking spots per sports field. Given the increasing challenge of obtaining large, contiguous tableland parcels, the parking requirement erodes a considerable amount of valuable active parkland while adding considerable operational expense (relative to an open space) due to asphaltting, snow clearing, etc. This cost (both in tableland parkland acreage consumed and financial expense) is particularly notable in the context of: the limited sports field season that generally runs from June to August; limited playing hours during weekday evenings (which can sometimes only be a couple hours, especially in

Neighbourhood Parks that often have unlit fields) and some weekend use; and the fact that Neighbourhood Parks tend to be walkable and accessible by transit.

The importance of parking lots is recognized, particularly for higher order District and Community Parks, and thus the Zoning By-law requirements should be strategically considered as to what types of parks and park uses require such heavy parking loads to be met onsite. For example, the Zoning By-law requirement could be adjusted by:

- increasing the park size criteria in which the parking requirement is applied (e.g. applying it only to parks over 4 hectares, which is well above the minimum size targeted for Neighbourhood Parks in the Official Plan);
- exempting parking criteria for parks only containing only one major sports field (or none at all);
- eliminating or reducing parking requirements in high density areas where securing large and high quality parkland parcels tends to be expensive and difficult;
- opportunities to utilize on-street parking areas or factoring proximity to other municipal off-street parking areas; and/or
- revising requirements for parks having strong access to active transportation and transit networks, which supports Milton’s healthy and walkable community objectives by encouraging park users to make a choice apart from driving.

Action Plans

- G7. Investigate park and recreation needs with future intensification projects focusing provision of active recreation needs on Town property, and passive spaces for public enjoyment available within private lands, such as entrance plazas and rest nodes. Opportunities to address these needs should also consider any tools available.
- G8. Proactively monitor opportunities to purchase or acquire parkland within established and developing areas of intensification, particularly along or near major road and transit corridors, within designated “Gateways” and “Nodes”, and possibly co-located with schools and other institutional or mixed uses to share common infrastructure such as parking.
- G9. Maximize the amount of useable parkland available for recreational and cultural use, particularly within higher density and intensifying areas, by reviewing requirements for accessory facilities. At a minimum, this should involve a review of the Town of Milton Zoning By-law parking requirement for parks greater than two hectares in size.
- G10. Continue to pursue partnerships and work collaboratively with school boards and other institutions during parks planning and development processes through coordinated site plan layouts, joint funding reviews, co-build possibilities, and other appropriate opportunities.
- G11. Investigate opportunities to facilitate active and passive parks and recreation use upon non-municipal lands such as institutional lands, including the eligibility to finance facilities oriented to such uses through Development Charges or other appropriate funding mechanisms.

Natural Heritage System

Natural Heritage

With an ever-increasing amount of public attention being cast on environmental issues, Canadians are becoming more informed as to how their daily decisions impact the natural environment. Opinion polls and other forms of research suggest that greenspaces play an important role in community development, where people choose to live, public safety, tourism and overall quality of life.

Conservation Halton is a major provider of natural environment lands in Milton. Conservation areas which are located in Milton include Kelso / Glen Eden, Crawford Lake, Mountsberg, Hilton Falls, and Rattlesnake Point. The conservation authority also owns smaller parcels known as Conservation Lands, which include Burns, Campbellville, Sixteen Valley, Esquesing, and the Kelso Quarry Park. Promoting the benefits of parks and educating residents on how to properly care for their open spaces is a positive step on the way to a sustainable parks system that is enhanced through community stewardship practices. For example, Conservation Halton operates a number of outdoor learning centres (e.g., the Cameron House at Mountsberg and the Gathering Place at Crawford Lake), some of which contain meeting rooms, workshop spaces, and camping sites. They also offer a number of guided tours, activities, and events designed to increase knowledge of the local environment.

The importance of the natural environment is articulated through a number of municipal documents. Section 2.2 of the Town of Milton's Official Plan, which pertains to the environment, has a goal to:

"establish and promote an environmental management system which will conserve and protect life, property, natural features, and ecological systems while encouraging the enhancement of the environment and liveable space through the creation of an environmental/open space system, including integrated secondary use nodes."

Furthermore, the Official Plan, through Section 2.2.3.5, provides opportunities to enhance public involvement on environmental issues by providing *"means for the public to advise Council and staff on environmental priorities"* and *"encouragement of the continuation of an Ecological and Environmental Advisory Committee (EEAC) to advise and assist the Region of Halton in the management and conservation of the natural environment in Halton."* A significant focus of the Town's Official Plan Review will be to implement new and merging policy directions arising from the Provincial Plan Review and the Regional Plan Review.

Action Plans

G12. Continue to investigate ways in which to improve marketing and input opportunities specific to Milton's parks and natural heritage areas through awareness initiatives, program and event delivery, and inter-departmental/inter-agency coordination.