

# Welcome!

## Parks Plan Open House

Join us to help shape the future of parks, trails and open spaces in Town.



### Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville acknowledges this land is the treaty territory of the Williams Treaty First Nations. It is also the traditional territory of other Anishinaabeg peoples, the Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. We also recognize the contributions of all Indigenous peoples to this place and commit to a continued dialogue and greater respect for the land we have come to share. Recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our community.

Learn more about  
the project here:



[www.townofws.ca/parksplan](http://www.townofws.ca/parksplan)

# About the Parks Plan

## The Town is developing a Parks Plan!

Our parks, trails, and open spaces are places for people to interact, develop social ties, and for recreation and exercise. As the Town continues to grow, a Parks Plan is being developed that will guide the development of a well-connected network of parks, trails, and open spaces to support a vibrant and healthy community for all residents and visitors.

A Parkland Dedication By-law Update will complement the Parks Plan by setting requirements for developers to provide parkland as part of new development within the Town.

## What is a Parks Plan?

A Parks Plan is a document that examines the need for parkland in a municipality and guides how the Town will provide parkland in the future, as well as maintain and enhance existing green space. The plan sets out a shared vision for the Town and actionable steps to help us get there in the face of changing legislation and the push for more housing development.

The Parks Plan is being developed using public and stakeholder input, growth projections, and the unique local context of parks, trails and open spaces in the Town.

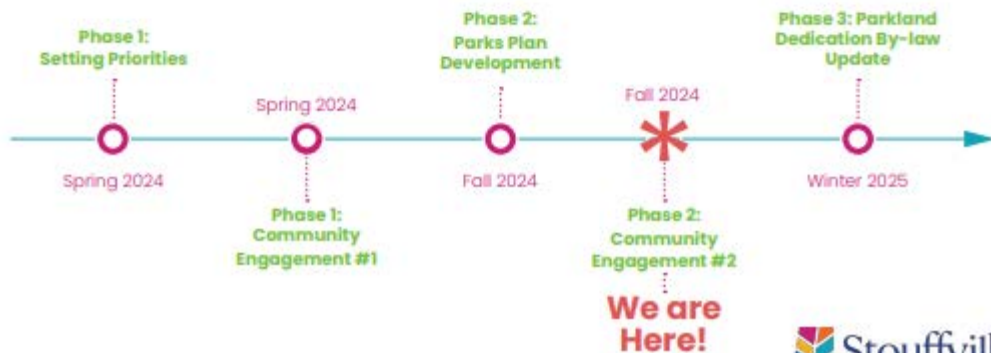
## What is a Parkland Dedication By-law?

Provincial legislation through the Planning Act gives the Town the ability to require the contribution of land or funds as a condition of development or redevelopment. In this way, growth pays for the expansion of the parkland to support new uses and a growing population.

A Parkland Dedication By-law sets the rules for how and at what rates the Town will collect these funds and land acquisitions. A Parks Plan is required to support the Parkland Dedication By-law.



## Project Timeline



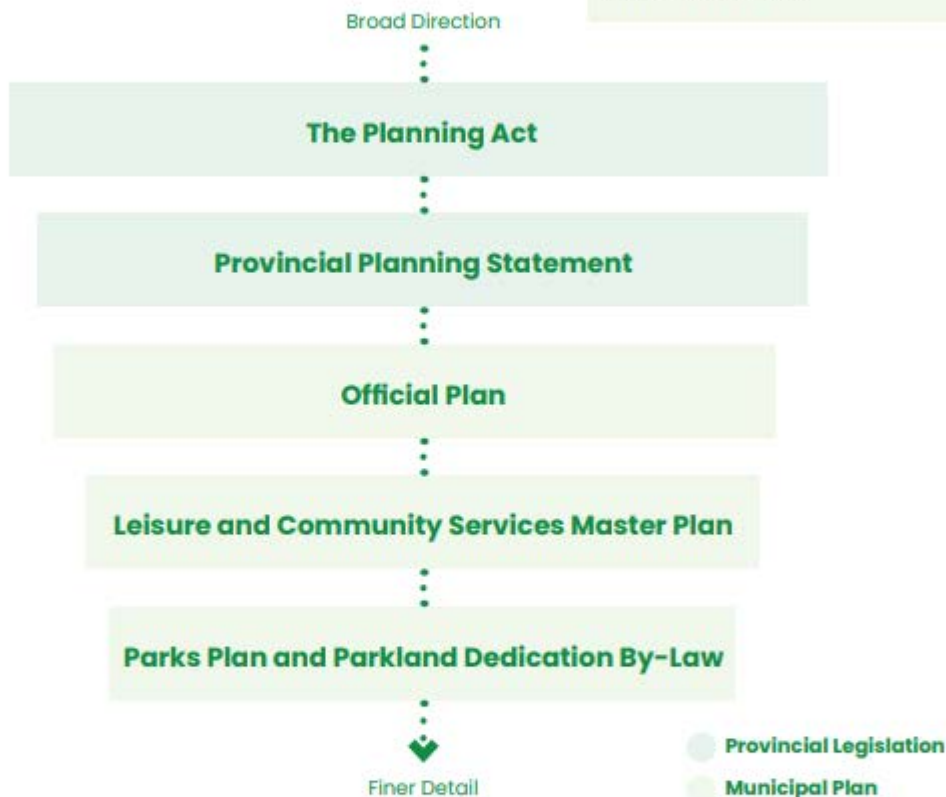
# Policy and Planning Context

## How do we make decisions about parks?

The Parks Plan is nested in a hierarchy of planning legislation and plans that guide how our Town grows and transforms over time.

Recent changes to Provincial policy have altered the municipality's tools for acquiring new parkland.

**Learn more!** Visit the *toolkit station* to learn more about current policy tools.



## The Leisure and Community Services Master Plan (2022)

The Town's Leisure and Community Services Master Plan was updated in 2022 and will work closely with the upcoming Parks Plan to create a robust park system including parks, trails and open space facilities and amenities.

### The Leisure and Community Services Master Plan guides:

- Indoor facilities like community centres and arenas
- Outdoor facilities like sports fields, splash pads and playgrounds
- Parks, trails and open space amenities
- Programming, partnerships and events

# What We Heard: Phase 1 Engagement

In April and May 2024, The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville engaged with stakeholders and residents to support the development of goals, priorities, and recommendations for the Parks Plan. Input received by Town staff, stakeholders and members of the public in Phase 1 has been used to create a **vision, principles, priorities and recommendations** for the Parks Plan.

## By the Numbers

**5** stakeholder engagement sessions

**95** public survey responses

**62** stakeholder participants

**4** key takeaways

## Key Takeaways from Phase 1 Engagement



### Building Connections

Participants would like to see improved connectivity (through trails and other pathways) to support residents' desires to cycle and walk, and to improve their access to local parks.



### Let's Play!

Participants requested enhanced access to facilities and amenities for active recreation, sports, and play. Participants expressed the perception that current facilities are not meeting demand.



### Keep It Green

Participants describe their preference to see Town parks remain places for the protection and appreciation of nature.



### Activities for Kids

Participants wish to see more activities and amenities for kids, with requests for play structures for toddlers, smaller kids, kids of all ages - even adults!

## Vision for the Parks Plan

*The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is home to a connected system of parks, trails and open spaces that are safe, accessible and welcoming to people of all ages and backgrounds. Parks act as the cornerstone for wellbeing by providing diverse opportunities for recreation, community, and connection to nature close to where people live, work and play.*

*As the Town grows, priority is given to the preservation, enhancement and expansion of this network of green infrastructure, providing opportunities for both residents and nature to thrive.*

## Share Your Feedback:

What do you like most about the vision? Is there anything you would add or change?

# Our Approach: Parks Plan Principles

## Primary Principles

The Parks Plan supports the Town in developing a park system to keep up with growth in four main ways.

### Share Your Feedback:

Which principles would you like to see prioritized?

Add a dot to your three preferred principles.

#### Expand

The Parks Plan identifies areas of need as well as tools to invest in new parks.

#### Connect

The Parks Plan identifies high level opportunities to link existing parks through new green spaces and trails.

#### Preserve

The Parks Plan supports the Town in integrating existing natural features into communities.

#### Enhance

The Parks Plan supports the Town in enhancing existing parks where it is not feasible to acquire additional parkland.

## Additional Principles

Four additional principles will guide the Parks Plan. These four principles were generated from feedback received in Phase 1 of engagement, and will work together to ensure that future and retrofitted park spaces will better serve residents.

The additional principles will be enabled primarily by the Leisure and Community Services Master Plan.

#### Celebrate

Enable opportunities for events and programming that support community connection and the Town's identity

#### Welcome

Support parks with design, maintenance and operations considerations that emphasize these spaces as safe and welcoming for all

#### Serve

Design and operate parks as multi-functional for daily use and adaptable to seasonal changes

#### Engage

Involve community members early and often to ensure the park system is tailored to the community needs

### Share Your Feedback:

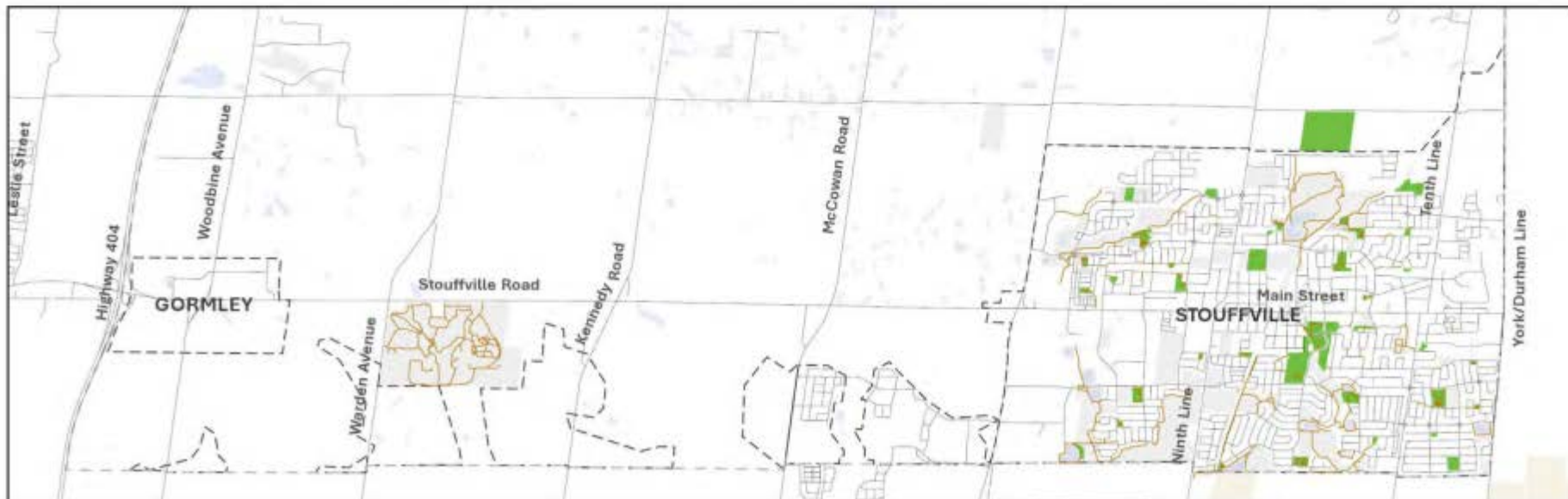
Is there anything you would add or change about the principles?

# Parks in Whitchurch-Stouffville

- Municipal Parks
- Waterbodies
- Road Network
- Settlement Area
- Publicly-owned Open Space
- Road Network
- Trails



0 1 Kilometers



## Park Stats

**39** parks

**81.4** hectares

# Parkland Provision

Municipalities measure parkland provision to track how much parkland is provided to residents, and how this metric changes over time as the municipality grows.

Parkland provision is often measured in **hectares per 1,000 people**.

## The Town's Current Provision

The Town currently has **1.6 hectares of parkland per 1,000 people**.

## The Town's Future Provision

In 2051, with an increase in the Town's population, the resulting provision rate is anticipated to be **0.8 ha of parkland per 1,000 people**.

This assumes that the Town does not add any new parks to the system.

## Thinking About the Right Target for Stouffville

The Parks Plan will identify a parkland provision rate that is appropriate for the Town's context and anticipated growth. We can consider several factors to help us to set the right target for parkland.

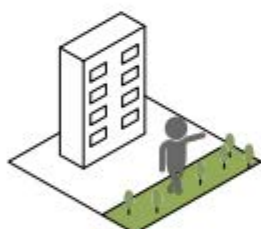
How much additional parkland is needed to support the provisional target set in the Leisure and Community Services Master Plan?

What is feasible and affordable for the Town?

What is possible based on existing opportunities and constraints in Town?

What are other municipalities doing?

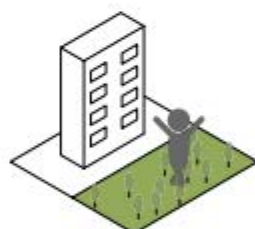
What types of amenities does the Town need?



**1 ha per 1,000 people**

Stouffville's current provision rate

**1.6 ha per 1,000 people**



**2 ha per 1,000 people**

## Lower Provision Rate

### + Pros:

- lower investment required to acquire parkland

### - Cons:

- residents may not have adequate access (or have inequitable access) to parks in their community
- parks may experience crowding or have difficulty booking amenities

## Higher Provision Rate

### + Pros:

- residents have access to parks in more communities in Town
- residents are less likely to experience crowding or have difficulty booking amenities

### - Cons:

- significant investment required to acquire sufficient parkland across Town

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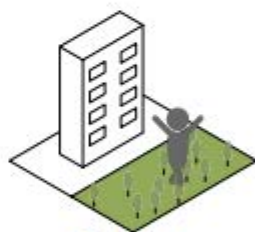
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# Growing the Park Network

## Current Park Types

### Town Park



Memorial Park

- designed to serve the entire Town
- provides a wide range of recreational, cultural, social and ecological activities
- characterized by large size, diversity of amenities and role in connecting communities

### Community Park



Vanderhof Park

- designed to serve the needs of a local community
- accommodates local recreational activities and neighbourhood events
- often located along major roads and intersections, and may be connected to a library or community centre

### Neighbourhood Park



Coultice Park

- designed to provide spaces for immediate neighbourhood
- may include amenities like sports courts, playgrounds and splash pads
- typically located near or within residential communities

### Parkette



Aspen Crescent Parkette

- designed to provide localized recreational, social and aesthetic benefits
- provides space for play, recreation and small community events
- typically located in residential and commercial areas

## Our Park System

The graphics below display the park system in terms of the number of each park type and the proportion of the system each park type represents.

### 39 parks



### 81.4 hectares



The Town's current park system contains a high number of parkettes, yet these do not contribute significantly to the amount of parkland (in hectares).

### Share Your Feedback:

The Parks Plan may consider prioritizing larger park spaces like Town Parks or Community Parks to balance the composition of park types.

**Do you agree with this approach?**

#### Learn more!

The "Toolkit" panels share more information about the policy tools that can be implemented through the Parks Plan to acquire new parks of all sizes in the future.

# Growing the Park Network

## New Park Types Under Consideration

The Town is considering the addition of three new park types that would support a broader range of amenities and functions.

### Eco Park



Eastbourne Park,  
Brampton

- designed to support environmental education, interpretation, and nature-based recreation

### Urban Farms + Agricultural Parks



Guelph Urban Organic Farm,  
Guelph

- designed to integrate food systems and educational opportunities; can include community gardens, food forests, pollinator gardens and more

### Linear Park



Rose Fitzgerald  
Kennedy Greenway, Boston

- narrow parks that have an extended length; designed as green corridors, recreational spaces and to provide connectivity within the park system

## Share Your Feedback:

What are your thoughts on the three new park types under consideration?

## Alternative Ownership

As the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville continues to grow, there is a need to enhance existing parks and open spaces and to create new parks and open spaces. As part of development, many municipalities allow for two new parkland arrangements to be provided during the development application process.

### POPS: Privately-Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces

575 & 585 Bloor Street,  
Toronto



Privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces are commonly referred to as POPS, which are owned and maintained by private property owners. Despite being privately owned, they are accessible to the public for use.

### Strata Parks

Nathan Philips Square,  
Toronto



Strata parks are publicly-owned parkland on top of buildings or structures, such as parking garages, storm water management systems, and more.

Limitations of alternative ownership arrangements:

- Not creditable for parkland dedication
- Often very small
- Approved on a case-by-case basis

# The Zones

The Parks Plan identified three distinctive “zones” within the Town. The “toolkit” detailed in the Parks Plan will be applied differently to each zone, which ensures growth and allocation of parkland aligns with the needs of our unique communities in Town.

## The Parks Plan “Toolkit”

The “toolkit” for the Parks Plan will outline the policy and planning tools that the Town can use to purchase or otherwise acquire land in each of the three zones below.

**Learn more!** Visit the toolkit station to learn more about these opportunities.

### Greenfield Zones

#### What?

- Greenfield Zones are lands outside of the built up area that have been designated for future development to accommodate forecasted growth

#### Where?

- Areas identified in each of the corners of the community of Stouffville, as well as within future developments.

### Infill Zones

#### What?

- Infill Zones are development within existing neighbourhoods, where additional housing units are provided of a slightly higher density than adjacent single family (or low density).

#### Where?

- Large portions of existing communities, including Stouffville, Ballantree, Vandrof and more.

### Intensification Zones

#### What?

- Intensification Zones are within existing neighbourhoods (or already built out areas) that are at a much higher density, such as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA).

#### Where?

- Along the “western approach” of the community of Stouffville along Main Street and within the Stouffville and Old Elm GO Major Transit Station Areas



**Current Population**  
**3,081**  
 in 2021

**Projected Population**  
**22,412**  
 by 2051

**Parkland Targets**  
**44.8 ha**  
 by 2051



## Share Your Feedback:

Where do you see opportunities to **expand, connect, preserve and enhance?**

Add a sticky note here, on the map above, or get creative at the mapping station.

### Expand

The Parks Plan identifies areas of need as well as tools to invest in new parks.

### Connect

The Parks Plan identifies high level opportunities to link existing parks through new green spaces and trails.

### Preserve

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### Enhance

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**Current Population**  
**35,091**  
 in 2021

**Projected Population**  
**41,054**  
 by 2051

**Parkland Targets**  
**82.1 ha**  
 by 2051



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### Current Population

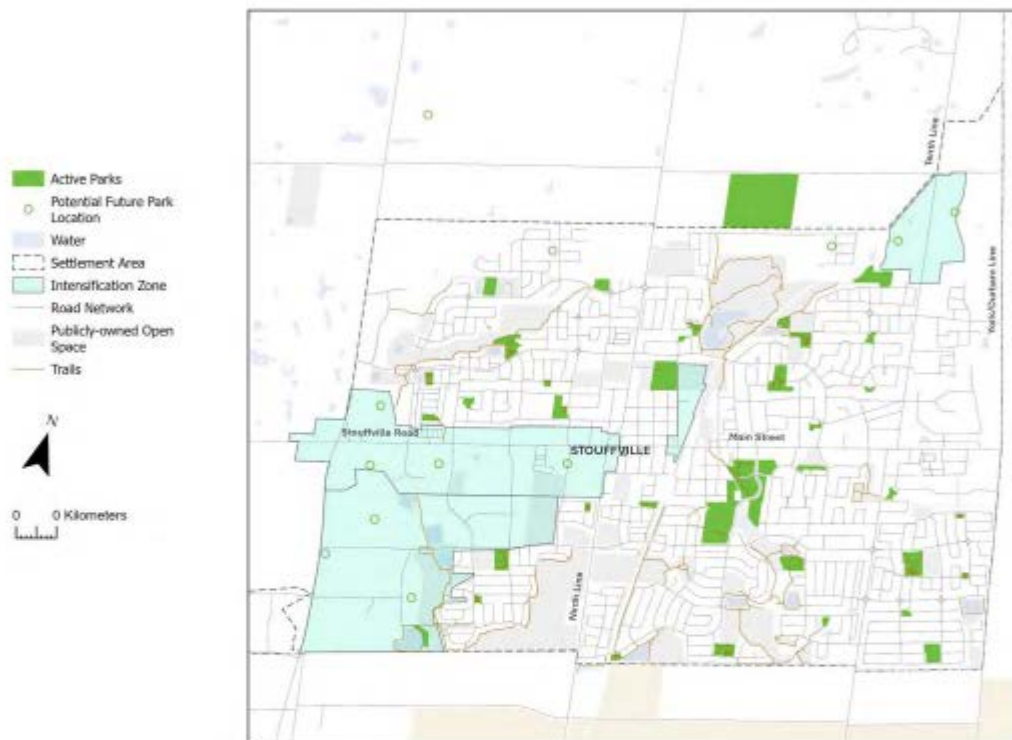
1,766  
in 2021

### Projected Population

17,190  
by 2051

### Parkland Targets

34.4 ha  
by 2051



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# The Toolkit

## Provincial Legislation Gives the Town Powers to Acquire Parkland

The Planning Act enables municipalities to require parkland dedication through the development process. To use these powers, the Town must pass a by-law that is supported by a parks plan that examines the need for parkland in the municipality.

### Parkland can be acquired in two ways:

#### Primary Goal

**Land Acquisition:** As a condition of development, the Town can require a percentage of the land developed to be conveyed as parkland.

or

**Cash-in-Lieu:** Instead of land, the Town can receive parkland dedication in cash and use that to acquire land elsewhere or for other public recreational purposes.

## Recent Changes to the Planning Act Have Altered These Powers

Changes to the Planning Act made through Bill 23 and Bill 108, passed in November 2022 and June 2019 respectively, altered the Town's ability to acquire parkland dedication through the development process. These changes directly impact the amount of parkland the Town can secure to meet the needs of a growing community.

Although the Planning Act tools are the most significant in providing parkland to accompany growth, the Town has other approaches it can use to add to and improve parkland.

## Current Policy Tools

### Parkland Dedication Rates

- Commercial or industrial development = 2% of the land
- All other development = 5% of the land\*

*\*New exemptions for affordable housing and attainable housing, non-profit housing, and additional residential units*

#### Example #1:

A 100 hectare housing development with 6,000 single-detached homes, townhouses, and condo units would be required to provide:

**5 hectares of parkland**

### Alternative Rate

- One hectare for each 600 net residential units\*

*\*Not currently in use. Alternative rate will be introduced through the Parkland Dedication By-law Update.*

#### Example #2:

A 100 hectare housing development with 6,000 townhouse and condo units would be required to provide:

**10 hectares of parkland**

### Cash-in-lieu

- One hectare for each 1,000 residential units

#### Example #3:

Instead of providing land directly, the two previous examples could provide cash equivalent to the market value price of:

**6 hectares of parkland**

*\*The Planning Act now caps contributions at 10-15% of the land or value of the land.*

## Parkland Tools

The Town relies on a set of tools to grow the parkland system. Some tools are more effective than others depending on the circumstance.

### Acquiring Through Development

Sections 42 and 51.1 of The Planning Act permits municipalities to require parkland as a condition of development.



#### Land dedication

- 2-5% of land
- 1 ha for every 800 units (potential through new by-law)



#### "Cash" in Lieu

- The value of 2-5% of land
- The value of 1 ha for every 1,000 units (potential through new by-law)

### Town-led Tools

There are additional strategies that the Town can use to grow the park system.



#### Alternative Funding Sources

- Municipal tools (e.g., levy)
- Other tools (e.g., grants, donations)



#### Partnering With Others

- Working with schools and Conservation Authorities
- Additional management agreements



#### Proactive Acquisition

- Purchasing land / land swaps / land banking
- Converting public land



#### Retrofitting Existing Parks

- Adding new amenities or features for efficient use



#### Leveraging Pathways / Active Transportation

- Connect the park network through trails or new linear parks



#### Alternative Open Spaces

- Consider the role of alternative ownerships of land (e.g., POPS and strata parks)

# Share Your Feedback

**After learning about the Parks Plan,  
is there anything else you would like to share with us?**