

# Township of Southgate

## Municipal Parks & Open Space

### Standards & Policy D-7

Approved by Council: August 23, 2017



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## 1. Park and Open Space – Base Condition

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### 1.1 Criteria:

The Developer or Owner is responsible to provide all conveyed park and open space lands in a condition to the satisfaction of the Facilities Manager and the Public Works Manager.

Registration of a subdivision phase (or phases) will not be granted without the parks and open space blocks conveyed to the complete satisfaction of the Township's engineering consultants.

The following items are critical requirements of the park and open space blocks:

- i. The runoff coefficient for the park/open space block(s) must be in accordance with Storm Water Management design for the entire subdivision development;
- ii. Adequate capacity must exist in the storm sewer for the subdivision phase (or phases) to safely handle all Stormwater runoff from the park blocks and open space areas;
- iii. Stormwater management and traffic management for the park and open space blocks are to be included as part of the overall subdivision design by the developer or owner; and
- iv. All works must be completed and certified in accordance with the approved engineering and landscape drawings.

The above noted requirements as part of Township's Parks Development & Standards Policy, approved by Township of Southgate By-law.

The Township reserves the right to update the Parks Development & Standards Policy as needed to ensure that the above noted criteria are met for all development situations.

There are special situations where not all parkland requirements can be met by the Developer/Owner within the development. In such situations, the Township and the Developer/Owner will work together to determine an appropriate "cash-in-lieu" amount equivalent to the value of the typically required Park/Open Space and services. The payment of this amount by the Developer/Owner to the Township will be included within the Subdivision Agreement. This is to ensure that any base

condition requirements, required by the Township, but not able to be met by the Developer/Owner, will still be funded by the Developer/Owner. The Township also has the option to reject park proposals from Developers, where they do not meet the Township's overall parkland planning and needs, and require cash-in-lieu.

Refer to Section 9 titled "Cash Outs - Cash-in-Lieu Options" of this policy for more detailed information about the cash in-lieu process and the reasons the Township may exercise this option with the developer.

## **1.2 Introduction and Park Classifications**

Parks are an essential component of the urban area. They provide opportunities for both residents and visitors to explore and have social, educational, and recreational experiences in a designed outdoor setting.

Parks are a vital component of a well-planned community. Parkland that provides maximum benefit to the public, integrates existing natural features such as stream corridors and cultural heritage resources such as woodlots and naturalized area in a functional manner. The ideal park will have a wide range of features and facilities from open meadow to shady groves of trees and will accommodate use by residents with a variety of interests and capabilities.

## **1.3 Characteristics and Maintenance Common to All Park Types**

The location and programming of parks will be determined using a comprehensive open space approach of connecting park blocks, natural features and Township facilities with trail systems, bicycle routes and sidewalks to meet the needs of the community.

All parks will include a pedestrian circulation system including paved and granular walkways at a minimum of 3.0 metres in width connecting the main pedestrian entrances to the features and/or facilities within the each park. Walkways may also serve as an option for seasonal multi-use trail and major pathway must be a minimum 4.0 metres in width to allow maintenance vehicles a gated access to control vehicle access and allow unrestricted pedestrian flow. For municipal purposes the major pathway is a route to bring in maintenance equipment and emergency vehicles to a park infrastructure site and prevent damage to turf areas. Parks may also include existing minor walkways providing connections for secondary entrances and features.

A minimum of one vehicular access for maintenance is required for each park, and will require a street curb cut at the parkland entrance so that maintenance vehicles may use the park's major pathway.

The Township will determine the level of winter maintenance required, if any, for each park on a site-by-site basis.

## **1.3 Parks Types**

### **1.3.1 Type 1 - Community Park**

The Community Park is the largest park of the parks classification and may contain unique facilities serving or attracting the entire community. The Community Park will contain a large number of parking spaces, and may contain large formal landscaped spaces and site furniture, to act as gathering place with a community facility for indoor events, and outdoor seasonal features such as a pavilion, serviced camping, playground, nature trails, sports court, lawn bowling, swimming pool, baseball diamond, BMX and Skateboard parks.

### **1.3.2 Type 2 - Neighbourhood Park**

The Neighbourhood Park is smaller than a Community Park and is located to attract residents from smaller regions within the urban areas. It will be associated within residential developments. The park visitor may arrive by car, cycle or by walking no more than ten minutes. The Neighbourhood Park may contain active sports facilities such as non-illuminated soccer or ball fields intended for casual use or for regular matches between organized teams.

The developer must account for road designs for street parking and consider supplementary paved parking within the park area, on a site-by-site basis. The amount and location of parking is determined by the number and type of sports facilities in consultation with the municipality.

Neighbourhood Parks may contain naturalized areas to increase variety in the park's visual and ecological character. The naturalized areas may be centered on an existing woodlot, stream corridor, or may be developed as an open meadow. Naturalized areas may be designed as a buffer to protect the edge of an existing natural area or feature. Regular maintained turf areas may be provided for the active facilities in the park in consultation with the municipality based on local requirements. Neighbourhood Parks will be linked by the open space corridors systems.

Playground equipment will be provided for a wider age group, including tots as well as five to 12 year olds. The Neighbourhood Park may contain standard park site furniture, such as washrooms, potable water, benches, picnic tables, waste diversion and resource management receptacles, bike racks and signage.

Key characteristics & features to establish the Base Condition for a fully developed Neighbourhood Park will include subject to local needs of the Township:

- A variety of tree species for visual interest and providing a minimum of 25% shade cover in the park;
- Some regularly mowed activity areas with less frequently maintained naturalized areas;

- Paved and/or granular walkways areas will require LED illumination type street lighting;
- Granular trails and walkways will require some areas to have LED illumination or bollard style lighting based on site specific needs to ensure public safety at road crossing;
- Seating areas with a variety of amenities such as trash receptacles, picnic tables, benches, etc.;
- Separate children's play areas for tots (two to four years old) and five to twelve year olds;
- Additional parking for each feature;
- Defined entrances which provide easy access from the surrounding residential areas with bollards or P-gates to restrict vehicle access.
- Additional signage such as neighbourhood history, interpretive panels;
- Shade structures; and
- Amenities for the elderly.

Options for consideration based on needs of the specific Neighbourhood Park and the service area:

- Active sports facilities where possible in consultation with the Township; and
- Spray pad, multi-purpose pad, gazebo; etc where possible in consultation with the Township;

### **1.3.3 Type 3 - Linear Open Space Areas**

Utility, railway, unopened road allowance and stormwater drainage corridors provide significant opportunities for trails and open space systems. These corridors link all parts of the new expansion areas with the remainder of the Township and its surrounding environs. The trail corridors provide essential connections to the park facilities located in the Neighbourhood and Community Parks, and may provide a link between the residential, institutional, commercial business and industrial employment areas through the urban area. Where possible these linear trails will connect to park blocks providing access to all the associated park amenities.

Key characteristics & features to establish the Base Condition for a fully developed Linear Open Space areas to include:

- Corridors to vary in width as determined by the Township's requirements;
- Trail corridors integrated with storm water systems and utilities;
- 3 metre wide pathways;

- A continuous trail, minimum of 3.0 metres wide, with asphalt, hard surface or granular surfacing, LED illuminated as required, with bridges and culverts at watercourses.
- Appropriate native grasses and low maintenance vegetation with mowed grass reserved for activity areas throughout the corridor;
- Areas requiring grass to be mowed grass to be centred in the activity nodes throughout the corridor;
- No parking or vehicle access signage within a corridor that is not for use as a seasonal multi-use trail;
- Fencing required along residential, institutional, agricultural commercial, and industrial lands;
- No fencing along edge of corridor if abutting street, except where necessary for safety at entrances or special features;
- A large variety of shade trees providing 25% coverage from the use of naturalized areas or a tree planting plan;
- Interpretive and directional signage;
- Seating or rest areas with benches and trash receptacles placed at frequent intervals along the trail;
- Special interpretive wayside areas; and
- Defined entrances which provide easy access from the surrounding residential areas with bollards or P-gates to restrict vehicle access.

#### **1.4 Naturalization Landscaping Criteria**

Areas of naturalization are encouraged within all parks and open space areas. Naturalization may be in the form of a low maintenance planting area, a buffer area for adjacent natural heritage features being woodlots, meadows, wetlands, swamps and stream corridors, or a stormwater management facility. Naturalization areas will consist of either open meadows of herbaceous plants, grasses, forbs, and native wild flowers or of native woody plant material within an established woodlot. Some landscaping to allow standard maintenance activities in the naturalization areas are to be limited to the removal of invasive non-native species, and creating a minimum 1.0 metre mowed strip adjacent to all trails and walkways abutting the naturalized area.

The Township encourages the preservation of existing vegetation within park blocks, regardless of classification. To preserve this vegetation, a naturalized planting area may be required. Naturalization may also be required for park areas that abut natural heritage features, regardless of park classification.

## **2. Design**

The Developer/Owner shall prepare a Park/Open Space Concept Plan(s) to the satisfaction of the Township demonstrating that the proposed park facility program, including buffers, can be satisfactorily achieved. Sufficient space should be provided to accommodate intended activities, grading, drainage requirements and trails with benched areas.

The Developer/Owner shall also prepare a preliminary Park Grading Plan to ensure that the drainage can work with proposed facilities as shown on the Park Concept Plan. Implementation of this preliminary Grading Plan will form part of the Base Condition for the Park or Open Space Block.

The Developer/Owner shall bring all park and open space blocks up to Base Condition. Base Condition level of development will include rough and fine grading, site services if required, fencing, identification and regulatory signage, and seeding with appropriate seed mix or sodding to provide regularly maintained turf areas as required by and to the satisfaction of the Township.

## **3. Drainage**

Site drainage is to ensure positive flow within the site and economical connections to the surrounding storm drainage system designed as part of the entire development. All drainage associated with park amenities and open space shall conform to municipal grading standards and the site specific lot grading plan for the lands.

## **4. Site servicing**

### **4.1 Water**

The Township may require water services be provided to the parks; Neighbourhood Park would be a minimum 50mm service, in a Community Park a 150mm service is required, . Services would require a shut-off valve or curb stop located at the property line. Required water service size to be confirmed with Township staff prior to approval of servicing plans. Services are intended to facilitate the future addition of a drinking fountain, washrooms, yard hydrant, water play feature, or service building. Water meter chambers to be provided in order to accommodate water service equipment based on approval of park concept plan and park facility layout. Neighbourhood level parks may require a 150mm service if a water play features, a Park service building or fire hydrant could be a future consideration for this development area.

## **4.2 Electrical**

The Township may require electrical service for Neighbourhood Parkland, Community Parks and Linear Open Space areas. Minimum electrical service is required for walkway lighting and future connections within the park. Install a single phase service dropped one metre inside the park property line to be five metres (5.0m) in length located inside the property line, unless otherwise directed by Township staff.

Parks and Open Space Lighting will typically be used when park lighting is to be coordinated with a similar style street light. Lighting priority is given to multi-use trails which are seen as a link between residential areas and schools or other pedestrian/cyclist destinations. Lighting of trails will only occur when trail is adequately populated by a continuum of users and can be sufficiently viewed from residential or public areas. For example, trails through woodlots or trails that lead to an unpopulated area will not be lit. Lit trails will require single phase service drops one metre inside the property line.

## **4.3 Sanitary**

Sanitary connections will be required for Community Park level parks. For Neighbourhood Parks, the requirement for a sanitary connection will be determined on a site by site basis in consultation with Township staff. The developer is required to ensure that adequate sanitary service capacity exists for the Township's park facility within their development project based on all phases being completed.

## **5. Site Works**

### **5.1 Landscaping, Seeding and Sodding**

All Parkland and trail areas are to be finished graded with a minimum cover of 200mm of topsoil graded and vegetated as indicated in the park design indicating the areas to be seeded, terraseeded and sodded within the parkland landscape plans. Installation of I.B.'s and S.I.B.'s is required at all corners of the conveyed parks and open space blocks

### **5.2 Fencing**

Protective fencing of all park and open space blocks is required prior to preliminary acceptance of the subdivision is issued. Permanent Fencing will be required prior to Final Acceptance of the subdivision.

### **5.3 Signage (regulatory and identification)**

The Developer/Owner is responsible for supplying and installing interpretive and regulatory signage related to the public use of woodlots, stormwater facilities, trails, parks and open space as required by the Township.

## **6. Open Space Linkages & Walkway Blocks**

### **6.1 Criteria**

The Township requires that the Developer/Owner provide safe linkages/access to public areas such as parks, stormwater management areas, and other open space to achieve the overall vision of park and trail connections within their development and adjacent public areas/linkages. These linkages provide access in the form of a corridor contained within an open space which link to walkway blocks, naturalized areas and parkland or in conjunction with a Servicing Blocks required to satisfy overland/sewer flows for stormwater management, or any other utility or infrastructure service. Open space linkage and walkway blocks will not be considered as part of the parkland dedication for the development.

| The Township will determine the level of naturalization and landscaping to be provided for each linkage on a site-by-site basis.

### **6.2 Design**

Linkages to parks, open space and other public accessible areas will be designed on a site-by-site basis and will include the following considerations:

- i. Mode of travel anticipated;
- ii. Maintenance access and requirements;
- iii. Access control features such as bollards, signage and gates; and
- iv. Type of activity and programming within the linkage block; and
- v. Priority of access, specifically a determination of whether the linkage is a main or minor entrance to the desired public space.

Minimum standards for parks and open space linkages include:

- Fencing along all perimeters which abut agricultural, commercial, industrial, institutional and residential properties; (See Township's Municipal Servicing Standards for fencing specifications).
- Open space linkage/walkway blocks, a minimum 4.0 m wide with a minimum 3.0 m clear width of walking area cover with stone dust compacted to a depth of 150mm.
- Public access sidewalks from municipal road allowance be constructed to a minimum 1.8 m clear width of concrete as required.
- Non-paved or hard surfaced areas abutting walkways to be vegetated to the approval of the Township.
- Regulatory and maintenance signage is required.
- Lighting requirements for linkages as defined earlier in the document.



## **7. Accessibility**

In accordance with the Ontario for Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (OADA), 2005, the Township will require facilities and park designs to be sensitive towards groups with special needs. Designs will be considered on a site-by-site basis in order to evaluate the need and application of “accessible designs”. The Township may consider a special, dedicated facility within a park to accommodate a variety of users.

All new trails and walkways within the Township’s parkland, parks and park facilities will be designated to provide barrier free access to wheelchair users and others with mobility limitations. Each park will contain a pedestrian system of walkways, trails, bridges and ramps to provide continuous direct access from the access or entry point at the edge of the park or parking lot to the park facilities.

## **8. Playground Equipment**

The design of play areas shall consider accessible paths to the play area from the rest of the park, as well as, accessible surfacing to access the play equipment.

As a minimum, playground equipment will be selected to allow for children who are wheelchair users to have access to the play equipment by means of a ramp or transfer platform used with the assistance of a parent or caregiver. Specific play components will take into consideration the needs of limited-mobility users, other special needs, and age groups.

## **9. Cash Outs - Tax-in-lieu Options**

The Township of Southgate may agree to a Developer/Owner of a development project to accept developed park and open space lands to be conveyed to the municipality.

The Township of Southgate may at its discretion propose and require, a cash out or cash-in-lieu option, from a Developer/Owner instead of receiving park and/or open space lands. The cash out funds received for parkland development would then be used by the Township in other park locations or placed in a Park reserve fund for future use at the municipalities at their discretion. The cash out - cash-in-lieu would eliminate the need to have the Developer/Owner to complete all base condition works in the park and/or open space block within the development lands. The cash out - cash-in-lieu, also ensures that the Developer/Owner’s financial obligations to contribute parkland development are met.

The Township of Southgate may at its discretion propose and require, the Developer/Owner the flexibility, for the Township to receive parkland cash out - cash-in-lieu funding, and still require the developer to create walkway and connecting trails through their development project’s open space area.