

**To:** David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer  
**From:** Brian Connors, Director of Parks & Recreation  
**Re:** City of Woodstock Parks Plan

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**AIM**

To present City Council with the City of Woodstock Parks Plan.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2024, the City of Woodstock initiated the Parks Plan to assess the need for active and recreational parkland within the City through to 2034. The primary objectives of the Parks Plan are to fulfill the statutory requirements of Sections 42 and 51.1 of the *Planning Act* and to establish a categorization of parks and asset/service levels within Woodstock's Parks system.

**COMMENTS**

As mentioned, the Parks Plan guides parks planning until the year 2034 and reflects the amendments to the *Planning Act* as of October 2024. The Plan outlines a recommended parkland hierarchy and policy framework. It analyzes both the current and future needs for parkland to meet the needs of Woodstock residents, based on the City's existing inventory of municipal parks. Additionally, the Plan broadly identifies where and what types of parks are needed, as well as the methods for acquiring parkland. The study categorizes parks into three types: Parkettes, Neighborhood parks, and Community parks. This categorization will aid staff in addressing the standards for park provision and service levels.

The Parks Plan supports the Official Plan policies, and a municipal by-law related to parkland conveyance (parkland dedication) as a condition of the planning approval process. Identified Action Items requiring Council approval will be brought forward in subsequent reports as necessary.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Woodstock City Council receive the City of Woodstock Parks Plan report as information.

*Authored by: Brian Connors, Director of Parks and Recreation*

*Approved by: David Creery, M.B.A., P.Eng., Chief Administrative Officer*



City of  
**Woodstock**

# **Parks Plan**

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**April 2025**

**MONTEITH  
BROWN** ▶  
PLANNING CONSULTANTS



**City of Woodstock**

**Parks Plan**

**April 3, 2025**

**Prepared by:**



# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Policy Basis .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Parkland .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Parkland Conveyance &amp; Acquisition .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Parks Plan Actions .....</b>	<b>27</b>

## **Appendix A: Recreational Parkland Inventory**

# 1 Introduction



# Section 1: Introduction

This section summarizes the Parks Plan purpose, methodology, and community demographics.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Parks Plan

The City of Woodstock Parks Plan analyzes the need for active and recreational forms of parkland required to the year 2034. The purpose of this Parks Plan is to:

- recommend a parkland hierarchy and policy framework;
- analyze the current and future need for parkland to meet the residents of Woodstock based on the City’s existing inventory of municipal parks; and
- broadly identify where and what types of parks are required, and how to acquire parkland.

This Parks Plan is prepared to meet the statutory requirements of Section 42 and 51.1 of the Ontario *Planning Act*. The Parks Plan supports Official Plan policies and a municipal by-law applicable to parkland conveyance (parkland dedication) as a condition of the planning approval process. The Parks Plan reflects amendments to the Planning Act as of October 2024.

## 1.2 Defining Recreational Parkland

In the context of this Parks Plan, the terms “park” and “parkland” are used interchangeably. The City’s recreational parks vary in size, design, amenities provided, and intended uses. Recreational parkland, as defined in this Parks Plan, consists of:

- Land that is owned, leased or managed by the City and is primarily used for active or programmed recreation.
- Land that is suitable for a park or recreational development (e.g., sports fields, play structures, etc.).
- A parcel of land with defined boundaries and is named a park.
- Land that does not have restrictions (e.g., environmental preservation). It is recognized that some areas of a recreational park may have naturalized areas or features, or other restrictions that are considered to be part of the park.

While conveyance of encumbered land is now permitted under certain conditions, naturalized parkland is not an area of focus for this Parks Plan; needs and policies for naturalized lands are assessed through environmental and natural heritage studies carried out by the City.



## 1.3 Methodology

### Planning Process & Documents

The Parks Plan involved a review of the City's existing parks and those identified in active planning applications, historical and forecasted populations, as well as relevant planning policies and frameworks.

The scope of work for this Parks Plan excludes analysis of recreation facilities and program needs, trail networks, departmental service delivery practices, etc.

### Note About Other Open Spaces

In addition to recreational parkland, there are other open spaces found in Woodstock that are owned and operated by conservation authorities, schools, and private landowners (e.g., golf course, cemeteries, etc.). The City recognizes that the role of these open spaces contributes to the opportunities available for the public. However, the degree of public access and functions may vary and can be different than what the City delivers through its own parkland.

### Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Lands

The function of conservation lands are primarily geared towards the protection and conservation of ecological systems within them. While conservation lands are focused on preservation, public access tends to be available. Upper Thames River Conservation Area owns and manages Pittock Conservation Area and Roth Park within the City of Woodstock.

Section 28 of the Conservation Authority Act outlines that where the City is developing or expanding existing park structures within the conservation regulated area, a permit is required.

### Schools

School grounds may include play structures, sports fields, and hard surface courts. In some cases, reciprocal or joint-use agreements can be in place to allow public access under defined conditions, such as specific times and permitted types of use of school grounds/facilities.

### Private Parks

Parks held in private ownership are not considered part of the City's parkland inventory but are recognized in their ability to serve certain recreational needs under certain conditions (e.g. they may be subject to fees set at market rates, memberships, etc.).



## 1.4 Demographic Snapshot

The City's Development Charges Background identifies the population at 48,508 persons in 2024 while the County of Oxford Comprehensive Review of Population, Employment and Housing Projections forecasts Woodstock's population to exceed 60,000 by 2034.<sup>1</sup>

Woodstock is becoming "younger", contrary to aging trends across Canada with the Census recording a lower median age in 2021 compared to 2016. The number of children between the ages of 0 and 9 grew by 20% between 2016 and 2021, and youth/teens (aged 10 to 19) grew by 12%.<sup>2</sup> Children and youth populations tend to increase needs for parkland due in part to higher participation rates in organized sports (e.g. soccer, baseball, football) as well as the need for amenities geared to early childhood development (e.g. playgrounds) and positive youth development (e.g. basketball courts and skateboard parks). Parks are also used by adults and seniors and the number of Woodstock residents in all ages groups increased between 2016 and 2021.

There is a sufficient amount of research pointing to the positive relationship between higher income and active recreation participation rates. Woodstock's Census median household income was \$82,000 in 2021, which is lower than the County's median of \$87,000. The City of Woodstock is home to many lower income persons with 8.7% of Woodstock residents are classified under Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After Tax.

A factor in park usage and requested amenities is ethnicity. People from diverse cultural backgrounds may participate in non-traditional leisure pursuits. The 2021 Census recorded approximately 6,800 foreign-born living within the city, equating to 15% of the population. The top three places of birth for the immigrant population of Woodstock residents are India (1,530 residents), United Kingdom (845 residents), and Netherlands (425 residents).



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<sup>1</sup> City of Woodstock Development Charges Background Study, 2022; Oxford County Comprehensive Review: Population, Employment and Housing Projections to 2061, 2024, Figure 3-1, p.6

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Census, 2021



# Community Profile

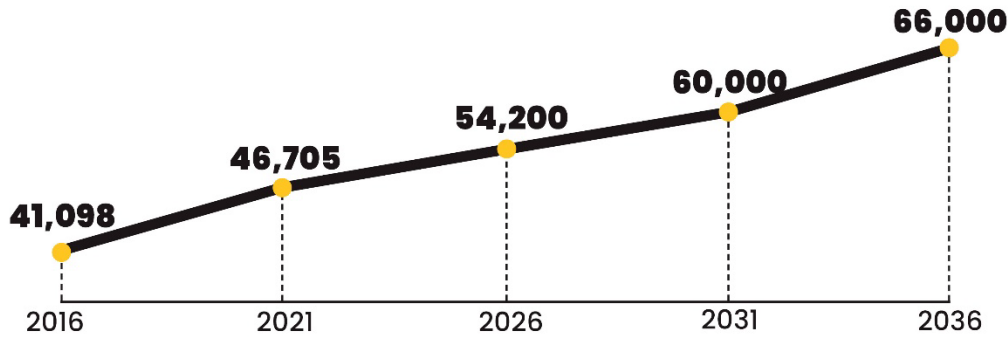
Understanding the Woodstock community and how it is anticipated to change provides insights into the need for parkland.

**48,508 persons**

**+18.6%**

population increase from 2016\*

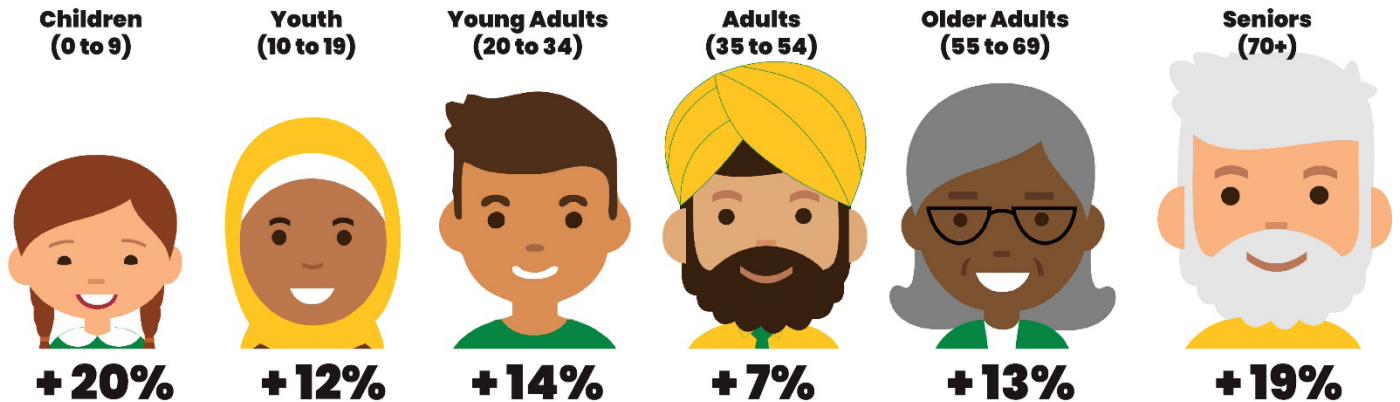
Historical & Forecasted Population, City of Woodstock, 2016-2036\*\*



**+27%**

projected population increase over the next 10 years\*\*

Population Change by Age, City of Woodstock, 2016 to 2021\*\*\*



**40.8**

median age

The City's median age from 2016 to 2021 decreased from 41.9 years to 40.8 years, slightly lower than Oxford County (41.6 years).\*\*\*

**\$82,000**

Median income, 2020\*\*\*

**13.7%**

of the population is racialized\*\*\*

\* City of Woodstock Development Charges Background Study, 2022; Statistics Canada Census 2016

\*\* Statistics Canada Census 2016 & 2021; Oxford County Comprehensive Review: Population, Employment and Housing Projections to 2061, 2024

\*\*\* Statistics Canada Census 2021

# Trends Influencing Parkland

## Parks within Urban Areas

Strong desire for “urban parks” that support social, recreation and leisure uses, economic development and urban regeneration.



## Evolving Community

A resilient park system is needed to accommodate inevitable demographic changes.



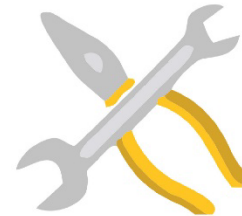
## Accessibility and Inclusion

Equitable access to parks is a key component to communities that support all ages and stages.



## Aging Infrastructure Requires Reinvestment

Park amenities that have reached their end of life require reinvestment.



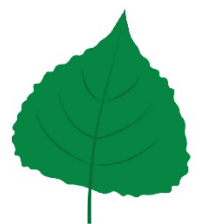
## Unstructured, Self-Directed Activities

Residents are opting for more informal, individual recreational activities that are both convenient and affordable.



## Environmental Stewardship

There is a growing demand for natural open space systems and trails for recreation.



## 2 Policy Basis



## Section 2:

# Policy Basis

This section summarizes a number of applicable provincial, county, and local policies and trends relevant to this Parks Plan.

### 2.1 Ontario Planning Act

The *Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990, c. P.13* requires that a municipality prepare a Parks Plan before passing a parkland dedication by-law should the municipality choose to enact the alternative rate for parkland dedication, prescribed under Sections 42 and 51.1. The City does not presently have a By-Law that guides parkland dedication/conveyance.

Parkland conveyance authority is established in the *Planning Act* and implemented through policies contained in the County of Oxford Official Plan. Specifically, parkland conveyance includes *Planning Act* Section 42 (which pertains to parkland conveyances associated with development and redevelopment) and Sections 51.1 and 53 (which pertain to parkland requirements as a condition of a plan of subdivision approval and consent).

In relation to parks plans, Section 42 of the *Planning Act* states:

- “Before passing a by-law under this section, the local municipality shall prepare and make available to the public a parks plan that examines the need for parkland in the municipality.” (42.4.1)
- “In preparing the parks plan, the municipality, (a) shall consult with every school board that has jurisdiction in the municipality; and (b) may consult with any other persons or public bodies that the municipality considers appropriate.” (42.4.2)

Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities may levy a **standard rate** of 2% of commercial and industrial lands and 5% of all other lands (or cash-in-lieu), or an **alternative rate** of up to one hectare of land for every 600 hundred residential units or an equivalent to one hectare of land for every 1,000 units when requiring cash-in-lieu of land. Recent amendments to the Act have instituted caps on cash-in-lieu of land (10% of land or its value for sites under 5 hectares, and 15% for sites greater than 5 hectares).

The following is a summary of proposed changes and amendments to the *Planning Act* over the past decade.

### **Bill 73**

The Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015, provided municipalities with more control over planning, gave residents more say in the future growth of their communities, and provided developers with more accountability for density bonusing and parkland dedication funds. Bill 73 changed the parkland alternative rate from one hectare per 300 units to one hectares per 500 units for cash-in-lieu.

### **Bill 108**

The More Homes, More Choice Act, 2020, introduced significant amendments to various statutes affecting municipalities, and land use planning. Substantial changes were brought to the planning and appeal processes, municipal revenues tools, and environmental protection, which aimed to encourage housing growth. While many of these changes have since been revised or repealed through subsequent legislation (such as eliminating the alternative parkland rate and the ability to collect development charges for parkland) the bill replaced the height and density bonusing provisions under Section 37 of the *Planning Act* with the Community Benefit Charge regime, which remains in effect today (with amendments).

### **Bill 197**

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020, introduced an alternative rate for parkland dedication, with the by-law setting the rate be able to be appealed. This Bill replaced bonusing provisions contained in Section 37 of the Planning Act with Community Benefit Charges (CBC). CBC will only apply to developments that are 5 storeys or 10 or more units. CBC can include costs of the development charge services or parkland. Furthermore, this bill allowed for community benefit charges to be imposed for public recreational purposes, provided that the capital costs for same are not also being charged pursuant to a development charge by-law.

### **Bill 109**

The More Homes for Everyone Act, 2020, was introduced to build homes faster by expanding approvals, streamlining development approvals processing, and facilitating faster decision-making. This bill amended various statutes with respect to housing and development. The amendments implemented a maximum and tiered alternative parkland dedication rate for municipal parkland in areas designated as transit-oriented communities. This bill also allows new by-laws to be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

## Bill 23

The More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 came into effect on November 28, 2022. This Act introduced significant changes to parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu requirements (among many other aspects of the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, etc.). Some of the changes expected to impact Woodstock are:

- The parkland alternative rate was reduced to 1 hectare per 600 units for residents (was 1 hectare per 300 units), and 1 hectare per 1,000 units when requiring cash-in-lieu.
- Affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing, and additional residential unit developments are **exempt** from parkland dedication requirements. This will reduce parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu to the City.
- **Parkland rates** are frozen as of the date that a zoning-by-law or site plan application is filed. The freeze is effective for two years after approval. This will reduce cash-in-lieu payments to the City.
- To take effect at a future date, developers will be able to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland. These lands may include **encumbered lands** and privately owned public spaces (POPs). If an agreement cannot be reached, the municipality or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This may result in less suitable lands being accepted as parkland dedication.
- There is a new requirement for municipalities to **spend or allocate** at least 60% of the monies in their parkland reserve account at the beginning of each year.

## Bill 185

The Cutting the Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, clarified certain requirements around parkland dedication notices and reporting. This bill introduced Ontario Regulation 509/20 which requires municipalities to prepare a parks plan. The parks plan is to provide an annual report to the public explaining how land conveyed to the municipality (or payment in lieu of parkland) under sections 42 and 51.1 contributed to addressing the needs for parkland.

## 2.2 Provincial Planning Statement

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS), issued under the authority of the *Planning Act*, outlines a vision for land use planning in Ontario. The PPS is an important document that provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest relating to land use planning and development. County and local planning policies, including those prescribed through the Official Plan, must align with the PPS.

Policy 3.9 of the PPS addresses Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open Space (see below).

Healthy, active, and inclusive communities should be promoted by:

- a) planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of persons of all ages and abilities, including pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity;
- b) planning and providing for the needs of persons of all ages and abilities in the distribution of a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources;
- c) providing opportunities for public access to shorelines; and
- d) recognizing provincial parks, conservation reserves, and other protected areas, and minimizing negative impacts on these areas.

Among other things, the PPS also outlines the importance of active transportation and green infrastructure, mitigating impacts of climate change, and a clean and healthy environment.

## 2.3 Oxford County Official Plan, 2023

Oxford County's Official Plan used to manage growth and development in accordance with provincial policies. The Official Plan was approved by the County on December 13, 1995, with the latest consolidation of amendments approved as of March 31, 2023. The City of Woodstock utilizes the Oxford County Official Plan to guide its municipal land use planning.

Section 7.5.2.1 of the County Official Plan outlines a Parkland Classification system for parkland within Oxford. The City no longer follows the classification system outlined within the County's Official Plan as a new classification system for Woodstock is recommended in Section 3.1.

### **Open Space Area – Section 3.2.5**

The objectives of Section 3.2.5 are:

- To maintain and enhance important ecological functions such as the linking of Environmental Protection Areas, the storage and filtration of ground and surface water, and soil conservation.
- To recognize the role of those lands having natural constraints to development in the conservation of the natural environment.
- To provide opportunities for both active recreation and the passive enjoyment of the environment in its natural state.
- To encourage the use of the Open Space designation to incorporate pedestrian and cycling pathways into proposed and, where feasible, existing development in order to link such development to other components of the Natural Heritage System or to areas of commerce and employment.

### **Parkland Acquisition – Section 7.5.2.3**

The objectives of Section 7.5.2.3 are:

- City and County Council will, as a condition of the subdivision, development or redevelopment of land for residential purposes, require that 5% of the land proposed for development be conveyed to the municipality for park or public leisure purposes, pursuant to the provisions of the Planning Act.
- Alternatively, City and County Council may require the dedication of parkland at a rate of 1 hectare (2.47 acres) for every three hundred dwelling units proposed, as provided for under the Planning Act.
- In the case of industrial or commercial development, City and County Council may require that land in the amount of 2% of the land proposed for development be conveyed to the City for park or public leisure purposes, pursuant to the Planning Act.
- City Council may require cash-in-lieu of all or part of the required parkland dedication under the following circumstances:
  - where the required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development as public parkland and cannot be integrated into a linked open space system;



- where the required dedication of land would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development; or
- where existing or proposed park and recreational facilities in the vicinity of the site are or will be, in the opinion of City Council, clearly adequate to serve the projected increase in population.

The Oxford Official Plan contains policies regarding natural heritage, in Section 3.

## **2.4 City of Woodstock Development Charges Background Study, 2022**

The Development Charges Background Study is prepared in accordance with the Development Charges Act 1997 (s.10). This study recommends new development charges policies and development-related capital requirements for Parks and Recreation Services spanning 10 years (2022 to 2031).

Appendix B.4 of the Study speaks on parks and recreation facilities provided through the Recreation Services Department. Table B.4-2 identifies the development-related capital program for Parks and Recreation includes various parkland improvements and park facilities totaling \$11.44 million in gross costs.

# 3 Parkland



## Section 3:

# Parkland Assessment

This section summarizes the City's parkland classification system, park supply, provision standards, needs and distribution analysis.

### 3.1 Classification System

This Parks Plan establishes a parks classification system for the City of Woodstock based on its recent practices in planning, acquiring, and designing parks.

The parkland hierarchy outlined below includes three typologies that are organized into their intended functions and catchment areas.

**Community Park**  
**Neighborhood Park**  
**Parkette**

The recommended parkland classification system presented in Table 1 will help guide ongoing planning and development of parks. Certain parks may not fit each element of its assigned classification depending on site or park-specific considerations that impact a park's actual size, location, or function.

The parkland classification does not necessarily imply there is an importance of one classification over another but reflects a geographic hierarchy whereby certain parks service a highly localized catchment (e.g., a neighbourhood) while others may be intended to serve the entire city.



**Table 1: Overview of the City of Woodstock Parkland Classification System**

<b>Community Parks</b>	
<b>Description:</b>	Community parks serve all residents and visitors. Community Parks support a range of multi-purpose recreational areas for active and passive needs and can support special events and gatherings. These parks should be accessible by multiple modes of transportation and visibly located in the community and on or near an Arterial or Collector Road. Community Parks can be located adjacent to secondary schools or major indoor sports facilities.
<b>Size:</b>	Size varies depending on function
<b>Provision Target:</b>	2.0 ha per 1,000 residents
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>	
<b>Description:</b>	Neighbourhood parks are intended to serve residents within walking distance and may contain active recreation facilities. Neighbourhood parks should provide two entry points and access to a park or natural features.
<b>Size:</b>	Greater than 1.0 hectares
<b>Provision Target:</b>	1.5 ha per 1,000 residents (combined with Parkette)
<b>Parkette</b>	
<b>Description:</b>	Parkettes are intended to serve the immediate neighbourhood and should support active transportation to the site. Parkettes primarily serve areas that do not have access to public areas and provide connection points and access to a park or natural features. Parkettes support passive uses and social interactions while having a limited range of outdoor recreational amenities.
<b>Size:</b>	Up to 1.0 hectares
<b>Provision Target:</b>	Combined with Neighbourhood Parks (at 1.5 ha per 1,000)

## 3.2 Supply

The City of Woodstock maintains 194.5 hectares (481 acres) of recreational parkland distributed over 56 parks. This level of service translates into **4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents** (Table 2).

The park size is guided by the classification system, with the largest parks being a community park, and the smallest parks being a parkette. Parks can have various functions which depend on park size and classification. Each park classification has an associated catchment area that is based on a reasonable travel distance to access the park. Appendix A outlines the City's recreational parks supply along with their respective park sizes and recommended classification.

An appropriate supply and distribution of parkland is critical to ensuring a high quality of life and maximizing access to services and amenities that achieve community objectives. As the City grows, there will be a growing need for more recreational parkland to serve the future residents.

**194.5 hectares**

The City maintains 194.5 hectares in 56 parks.

**Table 2: Supply of Parkland in Woodstock**

Park Type	Hectares	Number	Average Size	Service Level
Community Parks	113.2 ha	6	18.9 ha	2.3 ha per 1,000
Neighbourhood Parks	79.3 ha	40	2.0 ha	1.6 ha per 1,000
Parkette	2.0 ha	10	0.2 ha	0.04 ha per 1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>194.5 ha</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>3.5 ha</b>	<b>4.0 ha per 1,000</b>

As of November 2024, the City anticipated receiving approximately 10.9 hectares of new parkland through active land development applications. Additional parkland can be expected through future dedications as land development applications are processed. Most of the proposed future parkland is acquired through development applications (Plan of Subdivisions) with some parks planned for acquisition through municipal purchase of land. With the recent amendments to the *Planning Act*, developers can include encumbered lands into their parkland dedication totals. Although encumbered lands are not part of the recreational parkland count, they can still be used for passive uses (e.g., trails).

Many of the future parks currently identified in active planning applications are under 0.6 hectares in size. Such smaller parcels will not be large enough for higher-order recreation facilities such as sports fields, hard surface courts, skateboard parks, community event areas, etc. where larger park sizes are needed to due to fit and/or setbacks to mitigate noise/lighting impacts.

### 3.3 Provision Standards

Municipalities across Ontario target their parkland provision rate based on their parkland supply, size of their geographic territory, level of population density, community values put on public parkland, funding capabilities, and unique characteristics of their urban structures. Most municipalities use population-based targets when calculating and planning parks. A park provision target is important for many reasons but mainly due to the complexity of securing quality parcels for parkland.

As identified in Table 2, parkland service levels are 2.3 per 1,000 residents for Community Parks, 1.6 hectares per 1,000 for Neighbourhood Parks, and 0.04 hectares per 1,000 for Parkettes. This results in a total service level of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 Woodstock residents. To ensure the City is acquiring and developing the right types of parks, specific service targets for each park type are recommended. The recommended provision target is deemed appropriate based on:

- An understanding of the forecasted population projections and provision targets in comparable municipalities.
- A review of existing park inventory and recognizing that the existing supply is generally meeting the residents needs and is providing surplus parkland.
- Recognizing the recent amendments to the *Planning Act* and that the City will likely receive neighbourhood parks and parkettes through the parkland dedication process. Alternative acquisition methods will be needed to secure larger community parks that support most sport field needs (rectangular fields, ball diamonds, cricket fields, etc.).

The recommended parkland provision targets are outlined in Table 3. This Parks Plan recommends a parkland provision target of 4.0 ha per 1,000 residents. This target is to guide the City and to make sure there is enough parkland into the future.

**Table 3: Recommended Parkland Provision Target by Park Type**

Park Type	Recommended Target
Community Park	2.0 ha per 1,000
Neighbourhood Park & Parkette (combined)	2.0 ha per 1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.0 ha per 1,000</b>

### 3.4 Needs

Woodstock’s recreational park system is made up of properties that are of different shapes and sizes. With the City’s population forecasted to grow from 48,508 in 2024 to an 63,600 by 2034,<sup>3</sup> the needs of the current and future residents will influence the amount and types of parks in Woodstock. It is important to provide an optimal level of parkland that supports active and passive recreational activities for the City’s growing population base.

Table 4 illustrates that the current overall parkland supplies are in-line with the provision target of 4.0 ha per 1,000 residents. Based on a total provision target of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents, in 2034 the City will require a total of 254.4 hectares of recreational parkland, which will require an additional 49.0 hectares above existing and anticipated supplies.

**Table 4: Parkland Needs, City of Woodstock, 2024–2034**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2034</b>
Population	48,508	63,600
<b>Community Parks</b>		
Community Parkland Supply (ha)	113.2	113.2
Actual Parkland Provision Rate (ha per 1,000 residents)	2.3	1.8
Parkland Required (at 2.0 ha per 1,000 residents)	97.0	127.2
<b>Deviation from Provision Target (ha)</b>	<b>+ 16.2</b>	<b>- 14.0</b>
<b>Neighbourhood Parks &amp; Parkettes</b>		
Neighbourhood & Parkette Parkland Supply (ha)	81.3	92.2*
Actual Parkland Provision Rate (ha per 1,000 residents)	1.7	1.4
Parkland Required (at 2.0 ha per 1,000 residents)	97.0	127.2
<b>Deviation from Provision Target (ha)</b>	<b>- 15.7</b>	<b>- 35.0</b>
<b>Overall Parkland (Community + Neighbourhood + Parkette)</b>		
Parkland Supply (ha)	194.5	205.4*
Actual Parkland Provision Rate (ha per 1,000 residents)	4.0	3.2
Parkland Required (at 4.0 ha per 1,000 residents)	194.0	254.4
<b>Deviation from Provision Target (ha)</b>	<b>+ 0.5</b>	<b>- 49.0</b>

\* 2034 parkland supply includes lands identified in active planning applications as of November 2024.

<sup>3</sup> City of Woodstock Development Charges Background Study, 2022; 2034 Population has been extrapolated from the Oxford County Comprehensive Review: Population, Employment and Housing Projections to 2061, 2024

### 3.5 Distributional Analysis

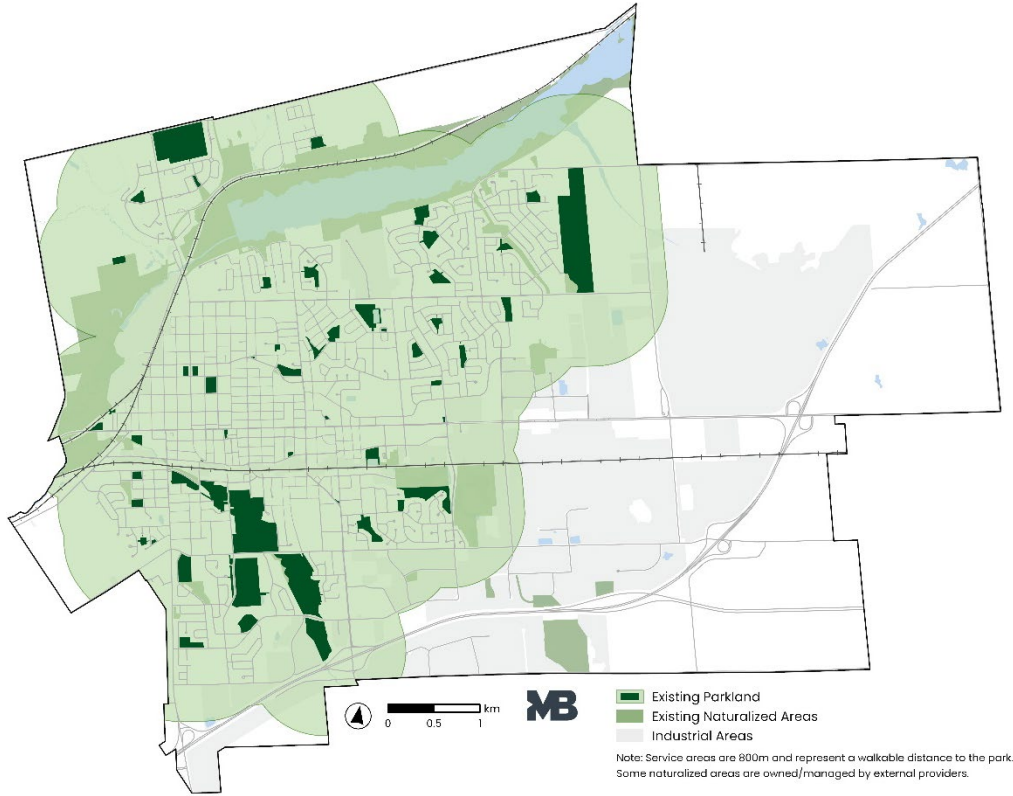
The City of Woodstock strives to distribute parks in an equitable manner that recognizes population distribution, land availability, land cost, and that certain parks may be “drive-to” destinations due to their unique functions and attributes.

A distributional park analysis was undertaken and shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The analysis applied an 800 metre service area (10-minute walkable area around each park) to the current and future parkland supply. The analysis showed that the City’s residential areas are well served by parks.

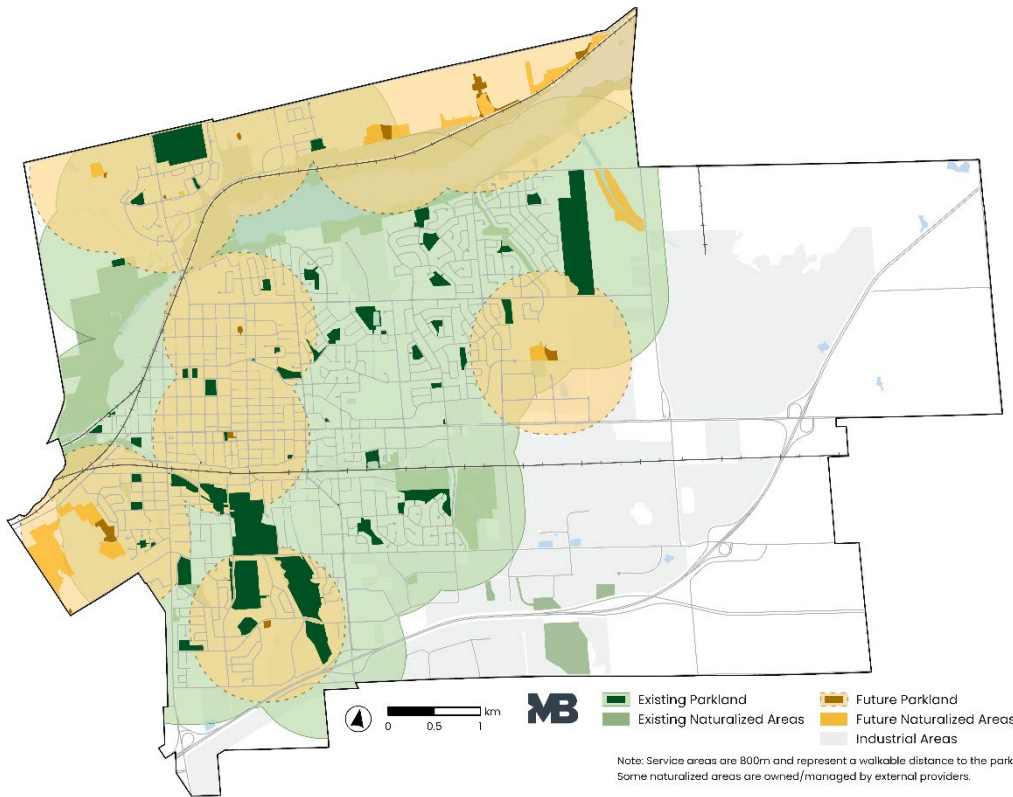




**Figure 1: Existing Parkland Distribution with 800 metre catchment**



**Figure 2: Existing & Future Parkland Distribution with 800 metre catchment**



# 4 Parkland Conveyance & Acquisition



## Section 4:

# Parkland Conveyance & Acquisition

The City of Woodstock has a number of tools available through the *Planning Act* and the *Development Charges Act* to acquire and develop parkland for recreational purposes.

### 4.1 Parkland Conveyance

The *Planning Act* can deliver on a portion of the City’s future parkland needs, but the ability to secure larger parcels for parkland is reduced within time due to land scarcity and higher land values. To meet the future needs of the community and meet the recommended parkland target into the future, the City should adopt a “parkland-first” approach that directs staff to prioritize the dedication of land rather than cash-in-lieu during the development review process.

The *Planning Act* requires a municipality to establish a by-law to require conveyance of land for recreational park purposes, or a cash-in-lieu payment as a condition of development or redevelopment of land or the payment of money to the value of land.

Before passing a by-law, the municipality shall prepare a Parks Plan, examining the need for parkland in the municipality.

**Table 5: Land Use Type & Conveyance of Land as per the *Planning Act***

Land Use	Physical Conveyance	Cash-in-lieu
<b>Standard Rate</b>		
Commercial or Industrial Uses	2% of the land	2% of the value of the land
All Other Uses	5% of the land	5% of the value of the land
<b>Alternative Rate</b>		
All Land Uses	1 ha per 600 units	1 ha per 1,000 units

Section 2.2 of this Parks Plan summarizes applicable policies of the *Planning Act* in greater detail.



## Deciding When to Take Cash-in-lieu

Policies in the Oxford County Official Plan, Section 7.5.2.3 speak to parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu of parkland. The City should consider accepting cash-in-lieu of parkland in the following circumstances as per the Oxford County Official Plan:

- where the required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development as public parkland and cannot be integrated into a linked open space system;
- where the required dedication of land would render the remainder of the site unsuitable or impractical for development;
- where existing or proposed park and recreational facilities in the vicinity of the site are or will be, in the opinion of City Council, clearly adequate to serve the projected increase in population.

In cases where the City has required cash-in-lieu of parkland, the City should require development applications to submit an appraisal of the market value of the land from a certified professional appraiser.

## 4.2 Supplemental Acquisition Opportunities

To meet the future park needs of residents, maximizing parkland dedication requirements as permitted by the *Planning Act* is recommended. With the recent *Planning Act* amendments that reduced parkland dedication amounts, it is recognized that the amount of parkland conveyed to the City will be less than what has historically been provided.

### Land Purchase, Lease and Swap

With the reduced dedication amounts, the City may need to use other acquisition methods, such as, purchasing land from developers to yield a larger Neighbourhood Park size that will be sufficient to accommodate a range of outdoor recreation facilities that serve the local residents, or purchasing lands to ensure a good distribution of parks that promote walkability. This approach is typically undertaken where conveyance under the *Planning Act* does not achieve the City's needs for parkland whether it be providing the total quantum of parkland required, addressing gaps, or fulfilling strategic objectives of the municipality.



Normally, City Staff will identify parcels of land that are in-line with the Oxford County Official Plan development standards (Section 7.5.2.1). The potential parcels are then recommended to City Council for approval. In addition to the principles and standards established in the Official Plan, the following criteria outlined in Table 6 may be used to assess the suitability of prospective park sites on a case-by-case basis.

**Table 6: Potential Park Site Evaluation Criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Site Conditions</b>	Consider topography (tableland is strongly preferred), parcel configuration (square or rectangular), drainage, and soil conditions.
<b>Size</b>	Should meet or exceed minimum standards established for park classification.
<b>Centrality</b>	Proximity to the population to be served, in keeping with the service radius and population targets of the park type.
<b>Land Use Impacts</b>	Compatibility of adjacent land uses; conformity with Oxford County Official Plan (if applicable).
<b>Connectivity</b>	Integration of trail and open space linkages or corridors.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Site has a minimum of 50% frontage on a public road (two roads), reasonable access to trails or sidewalks, etc.
<b>Partnerships</b>	Potential joint use with other municipal assets or bordering / connecting to natural features.
<b>Visibility</b>	Ability to create a local focus.
<b>Natural Features</b>	Park site is not encumbered by wooded areas or features of cultural or natural significance.
<b>Added Value</b>	Access to watercourses, viewpoints, or vistas.
<b>Constructability</b>	Parks should not be built in floodplains, stormwater overflow areas, valley lands, hydro corridors, easements, environmental lands, etc.
<b>Services</b>	Site has appropriate municipal services (e.g., water, storm sewers, and electrical services) to the property line
<b>Availability</b>	Timing of parcel availability should coincide with preferred timing of park development.
<b>Cost</b>	Reasonable land valuation (if applicable) – lands already in public ownership offer the greatest potential.

Note: Notwithstanding recent amendments to the *Planning Act*, lands conveyed to the City for recreational parkland would optimally be free of encumbrances in order for them to be fully accessible to all members of the public. The *Planning Act* allows developers to select the land they intend to transfer for parkland, which may include encumbered lands or privately-owned public spaces. If an agreement cannot be reached, either the municipality or the landowner may appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Supplemental park acquisition strategies that the City can pursue are, but are not limited to:

- Municipal land purchase or lease (ideally in priority locations or expansion of existing park facilities), funded from cash-in-lieu reserves, Community Benefits Charges, general tax funding, grants, donors, etc.
- Land exchanges or swaps
- Off-site conveyance of parkland
- Donations, gifts, and bequests
- Reallocating surplus municipal lands to park use
- Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners under agreement
- If applicable, the sale or proposed sale of existing parkland (through a surplus lands policy), with the funds to be used for purchase and / or enhancement of parkland

### **Other Options**

The City has other options to acquire parkland beyond the *Planning Act* conveyances, including, but limited to:

- Inter-municipal transfers where property that is owned by the City (originally intended for another purpose) is converted to parkland;
- Securing external funding from programs that become available through regional, provincial, and/or federal levels of government;
- Community Benefits Charges (CBC) associated with growth-related needs in higher density land developments may be collected, provided that a CBC strategy and by-law has been prepared and is in effect; and/or
- Use of municipal reserves or taxes beyond the cash-in-lieu of parkland reserve fund;
- Working with community and/or agency partners to create parks by accepting donations or bequeathed lands.

# 5 Parks Plan Actions



## Section 5:

# Parks Plan Actions

The following actions are to guide this park planning until the year 2034 and beyond. These actions are based on relevant policies, consultation, and needs assessments highlighted in this Parks Plan.

- Action 1.** Adopt the Parkland Classification system consisting of Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, and Parkettes. The minimum size and function articulated in Table 1 of this Parks Plan should be pursued to the greatest degree possible.
  
- Action 2.** Maintain the City of Woodstock provision target of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents for parkland, falling under the Parkland Classification to guide parks planning, development, and acquisition.
  
- Action 3.** Parkland or cash-in-lieu obtained through conveyances permitted under the Planning Act should be primarily assigned to support outdoor park functions. Land for Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes should be secured to meet growth related needs of the City as it moves towards 60,000 residents, post 2034.
  
- Action 4.** Prepare a Parkland Dedication By-Law to acquire parkland as a condition of development.



# Appendix A: Recreational Parkland Inventory

Community Parks	Size (ha)
Civic Square (Museum Square)	0.3
Cowan Fields	35.0
Cowan Park Sportsplex	19.5

Community Parks	Size (ha)
Reeves Community Complex Park	15.1
Southside Extension	17.0
Southside Park	26.3

Neighbourhood Parks	Size (ha)
Altadore Park	0.4
Argyle Park	4.5
Burgess Park*	1.0
Broadview Park	0.6
Brompton Park	4.1
Chuck Armstrong Memorial Park	2.6
Cottle Park	1.5
Cree Ave. Park	2.1
David Lowes Memorial Park	1.3
Donald A. Thomson Park	2.6
Dr. J.J. Williams Park	0.5
Eastdale Park	0.8
Edgewood Park	1.3
Ferncrest Park	1.0
Florence Carlyle Park	0.6
Henry Street Dog Park	0.9
Homer Brown Park	3.2
Hunting Estates Park	1.4
Kintrea Park	4.0
Knightsbridge Park	1.1

Neighbourhood Parks	Size (ha)
Les Cook Park	2.2
Les McKerral Park	2.2
Ludington Park	1.6
McIntosh Park	2.8
McWhinne Park	7.1
Northland Park	1.0
Park Row Park	0.8
Richardson Park	1.8
Shanna Larsen Memorial Park	1.6
Sloane Street Park	1.7
Southwood Sports Field	2.7
Springbank Park	0.6
Sudsworth Park	6.3
Sutherland Park	2.1
Trevor Slater Park	1.0
Vansittart Ave. Park	0.6
Victoria Park	2.0
West End Park	1.0
William Dutton Park	2.4
William Grey Park	2.3

Parkettes	Size (ha)
Bexley Park	0.2
Broadway Parkette	0.03
Burtch Street Parkette	0.2
Charlie Tatham Peace Park	0.8
Fletcher Parkette	0.05

Parkettes	Size (ha)
Hillside Parkette	0.2
Marlboro Parkette	0.1
North Park Cres. Parkette	0.2
Springbank Snow Countess Cow Monument	0.1

<b>Total Parkland – All Classifications</b>	<b>194.5 ha</b>
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\* Burgess Park excludes the woodlot portion of the site which is expected to remain in a natural state.



City of  
**Woodstock**

**MONTEITH  
BROWN**   
PLANNING CONSULTANTS