

REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Community and Corporate Affairs Committee

REPORT FROM: Kevin Okimi, Manager of Parks and Open Space

DATE: April 24, 2019

REPORT NO.: RP-2019-0013

RE: Parkland Acquisition Strategy Update
File: A09 PA

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report RP-2019-0013 dated April 24, 2019 regarding the Parkland Acquisition Strategy Update be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the key components of the Project Charter contained within Report RP-2019-0013 be approved as a framework for the implementation of a parkland acquisition strategy;

AND FURTHER THAT the Parkland Policy Review dated January 2019 and shown as Appendix C of Report RP-2019-0013 be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the Parkland Dedication Research and Recommendations dated November 2018 and shown as Appendix D of Report RP-2019-0013 be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the key Actions A to R outlined in Report RP-2019-0013 regarding parkland acquisition be approved in principle by Council;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to prepare updates to the Official Plan and Parkland Dedication Bylaw for Council approval in accordance with the Actions B, D and F to R of Report RP-2019-0013 subject to any feedback from public consultation;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to report back to Council on the outcomes of public consultation on the Parkland Strategy, as well as recommended next steps for Phases Three to Five of the Parkland Acquisition Strategy as contained within Report RP-2019-0013;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to forward this report to the Region of Halton for consideration as part of the on-going Regional Official Plan Review.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the 2015 Capital Budget review, Council approved funding of a Parkland Acquisition Strategy study in order to address the Town's parkland needs in the next ten years. The initiative was identified in the **Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan** approved by Council in 2007 through GC-2007-0342 and has been refined through the Vision Georgetown exercise as staff plan for the future growth of the Town.

In October 2015, Council participated in a workshop which included a review of the Project Charter and the results of a Parkland Policy Discussion Paper (Appendix A), as well as providing an update on the current service provisions and existing park types in the official plan. Since 2015, staff have continued to work on a number of projects related to the Parkland Acquisition Study which were related to items that needed to be addressed due to changing legislation or trends.

In 2016 Staff began working with Monteith Brown who authored the Phase 1 Discussion Paper to refine the information from the 2015 Discussion Paper, recommend changes to the Official Plan and define the criteria that the Town should consider when evaluating potential parkland as part of a comprehensive parkland acquisition strategy. Due to ongoing Vision Georgetown coordination, and other specific issues that arose, this Parkland Policy Review document was recently finalized in January 2019, and is included in Appendix B.

In 2017, Council approved amendments to the Parkland Dedication Bylaw to bring it into conformance with changes made by the Province through Bill 73. This work was completed with Monteith Brown and Thomson Rogers, the Town's legal counsel for development projects.

In 2018, in response to issues identified with parkland dedication rates for medium and high density projects, staff retained the Planning Partnership, who are also working on the Destination Downtown Secondary Plan update, to undertake a detailed review of medium and high density parkland dedication policies and rates and make recommendations for changes to the official plan and/or parkland dedication bylaw.

In November 2018, Council approved Bylaw 2018-0068 which implemented a temporary cap of \$11,000 per unit on MD/HD parkland dedication rates for key intensification areas until the end of 2019, in order for staff to bring forward further recommendations from the results of the consultant study on medium and high density parkland dedication requirements. The Planning Partnership completed the final report on "Parkland Dedication Research and Recommendations" in late 2018, and it is attached as Appendix C.

COMMENTS:

The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Update Council on the status of the **Parkland Acquisition Study**;

- b) Reaffirm the updated **project charter** outlining a scope of work for the completion of the remaining parkland acquisition strategy;
- c) Provide an executive summary of the **studies undertaken to date, identify key policy matters** related to future parkland development and seek **Council approval on key policy matters**; and
- d) Identify a **timeline** for the next phases of the parkland acquisition strategy and the **next steps** for reporting back to Council for approvals.

Updated Project Charter for Parkland Acquisition Strategy – Key Components

The original project charter from 2015 has been updated to reflect the current status of the project, and is included in Appendix D. A summary is included below:

Goal

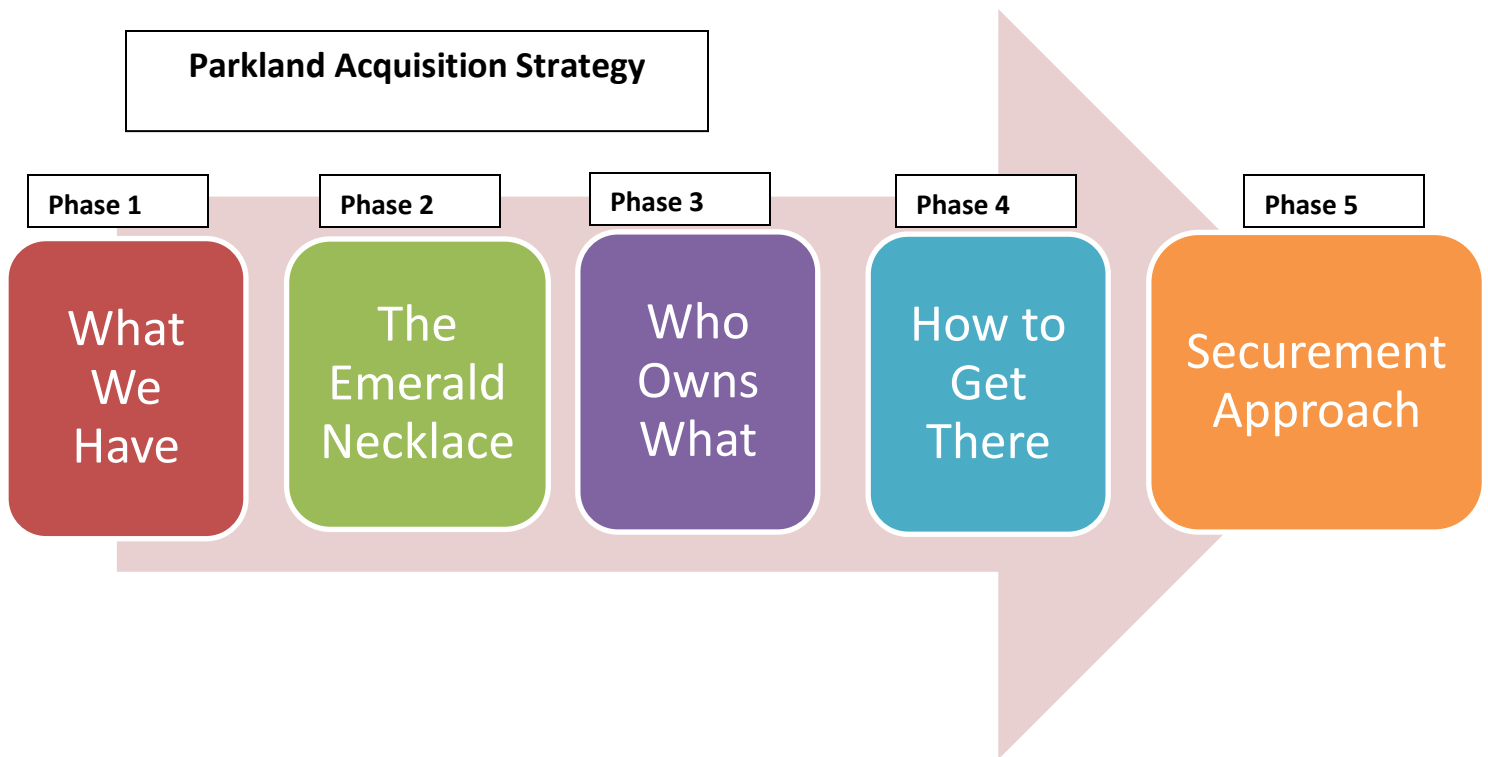
To create a parkland acquisition strategy that will address the Town's parkland needs till 2031.

Objectives

- Determine appropriateness of current Official Plan parkland/population ratios based on municipal best practices and recent OMB decisions for inclusion in the Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan;
- Update current needs assessment based on Town's parkland inventory and future needs based on projected growth to 2031 (build out of Vision Georgetown study area);
- Develop land acquisition criteria and identify potential land holdings for future parkland development outside of the Vision Georgetown study area;
- Identify an implementation plan outlining funding sources, scope of approvals, conceptual plan, capital budgeting and securement approach.

Deliverables

- Parkland Policy Discussion Paper on parkland policies as a framework for updating the Official Plan, Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law
- Implementation strategy for Town wide parkland acquisition (budget, approvals, funding)
- Terms of reference for securement approach
- Confidential Council report(s) on potential land acquisition(s) strategy



The Parkland Acquisition Strategy is broken into five distinct phases:

Phase One – What We Have, Where We’re Going

- Confirm parkland ratios and designations based on other municipal best practices, OMB decisions, and a fair, equitable approach to achieving Provincial, Regional and Town policy objectives.
- Identify need for Town wide park(s) based on existing parkland inventory, projected Vision Georgetown requirements, and range of uses outlined in Town’s current Official Plan.

Phase Two – Striving for the “Emerald Necklace”

The “Emerald Necklace” refers to an integrated system of natural open space, parks and related facilities that create a continuous corridor of green space that promotes pedestrian linkages and recreational opportunities.

- Develop criteria and related ranking for Town wide parkland needs considering such factors as parcel size, location, connections to Town lands and natural areas, cultural significance and key planning constraints (land use compatibility, current Official Plan designations, zoning and feasibility of servicing). The criteria may inform/amend the existing Official Plan

Phase Three – Who Owns What

- Identify ownership of key land holdings within the context of major development initiatives: GTA West Corridor, Trafalgar Road North Widening, Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan, Greenbelt Plan Review (10yr review 2017), Growth Plan (2031-41)

Phase Four – Implementation Strategy: How to Get There

- Determine major steps required to acquire and develop future Town wide parkland
 - Land acquisition budget
 - Scope of studies
 - Timing of approvals
 - Conceptual design and capital construction framework
 - Funding options

Phase Five – Securement Approach

- Develop terms of reference for securement approach including landowner approaches, negotiations and terms of purchase(s)

Executive Summary of Reports Completed:

Parkland Policy Discussion Paper (2015) – Monteith Brown (Appendix A) & Parkland Policy Review (2019) – Monteith Brown (Appendix B)

Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants was retained to prepare a **Parkland Policy Discussion Paper** and a **Parkland Policy Review** as the first two phases of the Parkland Acquisition Strategy, and to address the following objectives:

1. Review the Parkland Development Policies of the Town's Official Plan and inventory of existing parkland sizes and designations, as well as **projected parkland needs** from the Vision Georgetown review.
2. Outline the **parkland ratios and designations applied by comparative municipalities** and those within Region of Halton and distinguish between policy requirements and actual parkland inventory (i.e. is the historic 4ha/1,000 residents an achievable target).
3. Identify any other best practices by comparative municipalities and those within Region of Halton to provide a **comprehensive parkland classification system** that could inform an update to the Town's existing Official Plan policies.
4. **Confirm the need for a Town wide park(s) to 2031** based on existing parkland inventory, projected Vision Georgetown requirements, and the range of uses outlined in the Town's current Official Plan.
5. Make recommendations for **proposed changes to the Town's Official Plan** with respect to **parkland policies**.
6. **Identify key criteria** to be considered when reviewing potential parkland for acquisition

Parkland Dedication Research and Recommendations (2018) – Planning Partnership (Appendix D)

The Planning Partnership was retained to complete a specific **review of medium and high density parkland dedication** requirements currently in place, and to make recommendations on **changes to policies and procedures**. The review also included a detailed **fiscal analysis of various development scenarios** and a review of Parkland Dedication **best practices** in other Ontario municipalities in order to better inform the policy recommendations considered.

Due to the extended time and different consultants that have been involved in the various studies, staff have summarized the key information and action items from all the studies in the following section to provide a consolidated set of action items for Council's approval. It should also be noted that not all of the recommendations in the consultant reports are recommended to be advanced based on staff review.

The key aspects of the consultant reports that staff recommend Council endorse are as follows, with references to specific pages and sections of the full reports from the Appendices:

PHASE 1 – WHAT WE HAVE

The Parkland Policy Discussion Paper reviews and discusses the origins of the parkland service standards (p.2-3) that are included in the Town's official plan, similar to many other municipalities. The existing standards of 3.7 hectares per 1,000 population were generally consistent with many other municipalities, but it can be challenging to compare due to differences in park classification. The standard is largely based on historical standards that blended active and passive parkland, however, in the current regulatory framework; it is preferred to focus the standard on active parkland needs. Some municipalities have lowered their service levels due to the inability to meet the higher standards that are currently in their approved policies. The Policy Paper recommends consideration be given to a standard of 2.2ha of usable parkland per 1000 population.

Need for a Town wide park

A key outcome of the Discussion Paper (2015) and Policy Review (2019) highlights that the need for a future Town wide park in Halton Hills will be largely influenced by an inability to meet future recreation and parks facility requirements within existing or planned parks or the need to create a concentration of like-facilities for improved programming, competitions and tournaments. There is also an increasing demand for non-programmed passive park space which results in additional land needs. While the next phases of the Parkland Acquisition Study will identify specific parcels for consideration, it is possible that land outside of the existing urban boundary will need to be considered.

Based on the current standards for parkland provision, the following table outlines the requirements for parkland to 2031.

Parkland Totals	Area (ha)
Current usable parkland in 2018	188.40
Assumed minimum parkland from Vision Georgetown	20.0
Subtotal	208.40
Parkland requirement to 2031 (population 91, 885) at 3.7ha/1,000 persons	339.97
Anticipated Parkland Shortfall	131.57 ha or 325.12 acres

PHASE 2 – STRIVING FOR THE ‘EMERALD NECKLACE’ – Key Actions

The following Actions are from the *Monteith Brown Policy Review 2019*:

Action A: Adopt the updated service provisions standards for key recreation and parks facilities (Section 3.2 p. 12-17).

The service standards identified by Monteith Brown represent a more current assessment than the original 2007 Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan. These updated standards should be used until the 2019-2020 Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan is adopted by Council.

Action B: Adopt an overall parkland provisional standard of 2.2 usable hectares of parkland per 1,000 persons (1.2 ha local parkland, 1.0 ha non-local) (Section 3.3 p. 18).

Based on the challenges in realistically achieving the existing standard of 3.7ha of parkland per 1,000 people, it is recommended that the standard be updated to reflect the current provision of usable parkland, and to use that going forward. Usable parkland would exclude open space lands, non-developable lands and woodlots. This change would also require staff to reclassify the existing park areas to include only the usable park areas.

Based on the proposed updates to the service provision levels for parkland recommended in the studies, the following is the summary of the parkland projected to be required by 2031, after the parkland in Vision Georgetown is included.

Parkland Totals	Area (ha)
Current usable parkland in 2018	126.69
Assumed minimum parkland from Vision Georgetown	20.0
Subtotal	146.69
Usable parkland requirement to 2031 (population 91, 885) at 2.2ha /1,000 persons	202.15
Anticipated Parkland Shortfall	55.46 ha or 137.04 acres

Action C: Approve the Key Criteria for a Town Wide Park Site (Section 3.4 p. 20)

It is recommended that the key criteria outlined in detail in the report be used as the guiding principles as the Town considers potential properties for parkland acquisition.

Action D: Amend the Official Plan to state that parkettes will be acceptable in all zones within the Urban Areas of Georgetown and Acton (Section 4.1 P. 21)

Based on the scarcity of land, it is recommended that the Official Plan be updated to allow parkettes in all zones within the Urban Areas of Georgetown and Acton, including Stewarttown. This is consistent with the approach taken with the new Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan. The current official states that parkettes are required in higher/medium density situations where lots are smaller with less amenity space.

Action E: Reaffirm that Community Parks are the preferred typology for Hamlets (Section 4.1 p. 21)

The consultant report notes that for Hamlet Areas (i.e. Limehouse, Glen Williams), the focus for providing parkland should be for community parks, and not neighbourhood or smaller parkettes. This is in particular due to the estate and larger lot types associated with Hamlet Residential areas. Staff note that based on current discussions with the Glen Williams Community Association, it is desirable to ensure that preservation of open space areas, trails and areas for community gatherings are considered. These considerations will be reviewed in the upcoming update of the Glen Williams Secondary plan, and may warrant a broader application once they are completed.

Action F: Amend the Official Plan to include the adjusted park size and service areas (Section 4.1 p. 22)

Due to proposed changes regarding when parkettes would be acceptable, it is necessary to acknowledge in the Official Plan that parkettes can serve a larger capture area than the current policy. This change also ensures that there is no gap in park classification. The proposed changes are as follows:

- Parkette – Size 0.2 to 0.8ha serves areas within 200m-500m
- Neighbourhood Park 0.8 to 2.5ha serves areas within 500m-800m

Action G: Amend the Official Plan to include a Linear Connector Classification (Section 4.1, p. 23)

The creation of a linear connector classification in the Official Plan will support the Town's goals related to Active Transportation as supported by the Town's Transportation Master Plan (2011). These lands would not be considered parkland, but linear corridors or walkway blocks that are focused on transportation, with recreation as a secondary benefit. It is recommended that this recommendation be incorporated into the current Active Transportation Master plan that is being undertaken in 2019.

Action H: Amend the Official Plan to include lands for Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathways (Section 4.3 P. 27)

Related to Action G, Section 51(25) of the Planning Act provided that lands may be required through the subdivision approval process for bicycle and pedestrian pathways. These lands are also part of the active transportation network, and this policy amendment should also be considered in the 2019 Active Transportation Master Plan.

The following Actions are from the **Planning Partnership Review, 2018:**

Action I: Amend the Official Plan to include Urban Park types (Recommendation 1 P. 4)

The Planning Partnership study identifies the following types of park that should be considered for key urban areas such as Downtown or intensification areas: Urban Parkette, Urban Square, Strata Park, and Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS). An Official Plan amendment should be completed to detail and define the specific requirements of each park type and in what situations they would be required. The draft Destination Downtown Secondary Plan addresses urban park types in more detail, and may be adaptable to other Downtown and intensification areas.

Action J: Amend the Official Plan and Parkland Dedication Bylaw to include incentives for intensification projects (Recommendation 2 P. 5)

The financial analysis identifies that complex projects particularly in Brownfield and downtown areas, may be more impacted by fees such as Parkland Dedication. It recommends that both the Official Plan and the Parkland Dedication Bylaw be updated to formalize incentives for projects in these areas. The interim bylaw approved by Council would fulfill this Action if it was approved for it to be a permanent change.

Action K: Implement an Absolute Cap for key areas (recommendations 7 and 8 P. 9).

The interim bylaw set out a cap of \$11,000 per unit for medium and high density development in key areas of infill developments. The bylaw sets out a reasonable cap based on the information presented by the Consultant's report. It is recommended that the amendment be made permanent. It is further recommended that the cap be reviewed regularly to reflect changes in market land values, and that the authority to

amend the cap based on market conditions be delegated to the Commissioner of Recreation and Parks.

Action L: Require on site land contribution for key areas (downtowns, corridors, etc.) of a minimum of 7.5% of the developable site area and an Urban Square (Recommendation 9 P. 10)

In recognition of the general shortage of parkland in downtown and key redevelopment areas, the report recommends that a minimum sized urban type of park be required for **all** developments to ensure that some type of public open space is provided for residents in the immediate area of the new developments. This is further detailed in the draft Destination Downtown Secondary plan and may be applied to other areas. There may be some merit to allow the size of the urban square to be flexible based on site specific applications, which will be further refined through the Destination Downtown Secondary Plan and the final Official Plan Amendment.

Action M: Include Strata Parks as acceptable parkland conveyance (Recommendation 11 P. 10)

Given the likelihood that medium and higher density projects will include underground parking or similar particularly in constrained urban areas, it is recommended that the Town update the Official Plan and Parkland Dedication Bylaw to include provisions whereby the Town could accept parkland constructed on top of structures (Strata Parks), provided that maintenance, increased capital costs, and long term use are secured by appropriate agreements. In this application, the Town does not own the land, but only the park elements that are built on the parking structure. It is recommended that a discounted credit be provided for this type of parkland. The full details of legal agreements required would be finalized in conjunction with the Town's legal Counsel, and would be subject to Council approval at the time they would be considered. This is also supported by the draft Destination Downtown Secondary Plan.

Action N: Allow Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) to be considered as parkland dedication (Recommendation 12, P. 10)

Similar to Action N, POPS can provide appropriate spaces for use by the public, and when secured by agreements can be considered as part of the parkland dedication. This type of parkland is highly specific to certain higher density areas, and would be reviewed by staff on a case by case basis to determine its appropriateness. It is recommended that the Official Plan and Bylaw be updated to reflect what requirements and discounting would be required to accept this type of parkland. The full details of legal agreements required would be finalized in conjunction with the Town's legal Counsel, and would be subject to Council approval at the time they would be considered. This Action is also supported in the draft Destination Downtown Secondary Plan.

Action O: Prorate CIL of Parkland Mixed Use Developments (recommendation 14 P. 12)

In order to provide a reasonable and fair approach for mixed use developments, it is recommended that the Parkland Dedication Bylaw be updated to outline that mixed use developments will be prorated based on the GFA or site area dedicated to each type of use. The Planning Partnership report notes that the primary portion of Parkland Dedication will be determined by the residential component, and recommends only using the residential portion. Staff have determined that prorating the entire development represents a more balanced approach to mixed use sites. The Monteith Brown Policy Review also recommends this prorating approach based on different uses (Proposed Policy Amendment #6, p.26).

Action P: Allow off-site land dedications and reduced rate for certain lands (Recommendation 18 and 19, P. 14)

The Official Plan and Parkland Dedication Bylaw should be updated to be clear that off-site land dedications (of developable parkland) will be allowed, and that certain types of land (i.e. plantation woodlots not part of the natural heritage system) could be accepted at a discounted rate subject to Council approval.

Action Q: Provide Guidelines for use of CIL of Parkland funds (i.e. local neighbourhood shortfalls and Downtown) (Recommendation 21 P. 15)

The report recommends that the Town develop specific guidelines to be included in the Parkland Dedication Bylaw, which identify the distribution and use of CIL of parkland funds collected. This will need to be considered in more detail by staff and Council to prepare specific criteria for how funds will be used.

Action R: Implement a mechanism where Council can approve significant caps and incentives for “affordable” housing projects.

In light of discussions around affordable housing, the Consultant also advised that it could be considered by Council to consider more significant caps or incentives for true “affordable” housing projects as defined by specific criteria desired by Council. It is recommended that the details of this type of incentive or policy should be considered by the Council as part of the affordable housing review currently underway; as any type of incentive is based on what level of support Council wishes to provide. This type of incentive may best be implemented through a Community Improvement Program (CIP) similar to the existing programs for Brownfields.

Based on the key outcomes from the various studies as outlined above, Staff will prepare consolidated Official Plan and CIL of Parkland By-law amendments to include all of the Actions above for final approval by Council.

Next Steps and Timeline

The studies outlined above completed the first two phases of the overall Parkland Acquisition Study. In order to move forward with the Parkland Acquisition Strategy, staff are proposing the following next steps:



Staff would report back to Council to provide updates on Phases 3 to 5 to identify emerging issues, planning policy amendments and financial impacts. This timeline would allow coordination with the final approval phases of the Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan as well as the various highway corridor and regional road studies currently underway, and integration with the review of the Growth Plan.

This timing will also allow some focused public consultation to be undertaken as part of the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan Update to include additional feedback on parkland needs of the community, which will be included in the updated Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Parkland Acquisition Strategy aligns with the following objectives and action items of the Corporate Strategic Plan:

- A.3 To provide a broad range of educational, recreational and cultural services that meet the needs of our residents.
- A.3.(c) Implement and update the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan which provides for the development of a broad range of educational and recreational services that can meet the changing needs of a growing population.
- A.7 To establish a greenspace network for the recreational use of residents that complements the Natural Heritage System.
- A.8 To recognize that a healthy community is made up of an interconnected system of open spaces and natural heritage features.

- B.3.(e) Develop a financing strategy that supports the Town's objectives relating to;
- Land Stewardship
 - Land Purchasing
 - Property Restoration
- G.2 To ensure that new urban areas are appropriately sized and phased relative to planned growth to 2031 and in conjunction with required infrastructure improvements.
- H.1 To provide infrastructure and services that meets the needs of our community in an efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable manner.
- H.2 To ensure that infrastructure required for growth is provided in a timely manner.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The Parkland Acquisition Strategy study work was approved as part of the 2015 Capital Budget. The capital budget funding approved in 2015 will be substantially complete in 2019, and the majority of the future work will be completed by staff, or will be part of future capital budget requests. Staff will be reporting back on a funding strategy for parkland acquisition as part of Phase Four of the strategy.

There is currently just over \$5 million in the Parkland Reserve. Recent land appraisals value developable land (low density residential) at approximately \$2,600,000 per hectare (just over \$1 million per acre). With an anticipated shortfall of 55 ha (139 ac), if Council approves the recommended amendments to the Official Plan parkland provision standards outlined in this report, there would still be significant funding required to acquire that quantity of new parkland as a direct purchase within the existing urban boundaries.

The funding requirements for acquisition of parkland to meet future needs has not been incorporated into the Long Range Financial Plan, but will need to be incorporated as further detailed information on potential order of magnitude costs becomes available.

CONSULTATION:

Staff from Planning, Sustainability and Climate Change, and the Strategic Planning Section were consulted during the preparation of this report.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

No specific public engagement was undertaken as part of this report, however, general parkland issues will be included as part of the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan Update public consultation strategy in 2019.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life. The recommendations outlined in this report advances the Strategy's implementation.

The Parkland Acquisition Strategy aligns with the following pillars of the Community Sustainability Strategy: Cultural Vibrancy through providing a wide range of inviting parks, trails and green spaces; Environmental Health through development of complete communities that are walkable and compliment natural heritage systems; Social Well Being by providing opportunities to live healthy and active lives. The alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is excellent.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Staff will work with the local developers and land owners, as well as BILD (Building Industry and Land Development Association) with the outcomes of this report as related to the overall parkland acquisition study. Where appropriate, coordination with land owners within the Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan will confirm the parkland needs for the Secondary Plan area. Staff recommends that this report also be forwarded to the Region of Halton for consideration as part of the Region Official Plan Review that is currently underway, given the possibility that parkland may need to be considered outside of the current urban area.

CONCLUSION:

Staff are seeking approval to proceed with the next phases of the Parkland Acquisition Strategy as outlined in this report, and that the key Actions of the studies undertaken to date be approved by Council to inform the future phases of the project. Staff will report back on the next stages of the strategy at key decision points to allow for proper consideration of the potential planning and detailed financial impacts associated with future parkland needs.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W'.

Warren Harris, Commissioner of Recreation and Parks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

Brent Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer