

Parks Master Plan Terms of Reference

A. THE DELIVERABLES

The City of Cambridge is seeking to retain the services of a qualified consultant team to

- I. analyze and assess current City parks;
- II. effectively engage with Council, the public, and other stakeholders; and
- III. create a 30-year Parks Master Plan (PMP) that aligns with existing City policies and growth plans and to help to inform a future review of the City's Official Plan.

The City's maximum budget for this work is \$200,000 exclusive of HST.

Background

The City of Cambridge is one of the largest municipalities in the Region of Waterloo with a 2020 population of 140,850 ([Region of Waterloo/Invest Cambridge estimate](#)) and is currently forecasted to grow to 176,000 by 2031. Stage 2 of the ION Light Rail Transit line is currently being planned (Kitchener to downtown Cambridge service), and will have a profound effect on the way the City grows over the coming years, adding population density and more jobs surrounding the proposed LRT stations and along the ION route. Simultaneously, the City anticipates growth and transformation in the Galt core and Hespeler Rd Corridor both areas with little existing park services and properties. The City currently manages over 100 park properties and many of these properties are located within floodplain and/or ecologically sensitive lands. Additional park properties are planned to be developed as the community continues to grow. We anticipate growth will reflect a changing demographic with increased ethnic diversity, growth in both older adult and youth population, and an increased population density in key areas, with new expectations on parks and associated infrastructure.

The City of Cambridge is seeking an experienced firm to develop an innovative and comprehensive Parks Master Plan (PMP) and financial implementation strategy that will allow the City to manage the direction of parks planning and operations over the next 30 years in alignment with the Official Plan.

The PMP will reflect community values, priorities and expectations, evolving standards, policies and parks trends. It will propose an equitable and consistent service delivery model across neighbourhoods within the Cambridge community. The PMP will need to recognize the changes in demographics, projected population densities, potential development infilling and intensification areas, while also recognizing the need for flexibility within the City's parkland inventory to meet future and yet-to-be-known demands. The PMP will provide a framework and standards to manage, sustain and develop new parks, redevelop existing parks, open space and related amenities in a

cost effective, proactive manner, consistent with leading industry standards, best practices, and asset management regulation.

Council, resident and stakeholder consultation will form a significant portion of the PMP development process. Consultants will be expected to lead a consultation process with the community in new and innovative ways to ensure substantial and meaningful engagement takes place. A detailed engagement strategy will be developed that targets consultation with a wide variety of groups including park and recreational trail users.

Objectives

The PMP will document the goals and strategies that will shape and guide the delivery of an integrated parks service plan over the next thirty (30) years to align with, and help inform, the City's Official Plan. The PMP is also intended to meet all the requirements of the Ontario Asset Management Regulation 588/17.

The PMP has the following general objectives:

- I. Identify strategic priorities that define the future direction, philosophy, policies, Service Levels, and actions for the provision of parks and associated infrastructure.
- II. Prepare a parks growth plan that anticipates population growth, develops a hierarchy or classification of parks from urban to active recreation spaces and passive natural areas, addresses development and intensification pressures on providing new parks and impacts to existing parks, and which will be based on the desired future Service Levels as approved by Council. Service Levels need to be defined in terms of a number of criteria including walking distances, land areas required for recreation, asset management requirements, priorities in acquisition, equity, protection of natural areas, and climate change. General financial impacts of the range of Service Levels options should follow from the results of consultation and details of the PMP and be available for Council's consideration and approval.
- III. Identify which parks are likely to undergo a transition to support growth through intensification. Prepare a representative sample transformation plan from a park in its current state to a park supporting a much higher urban density. The implications for development charges and parkland dedication cash-in-lieu should also be outlined.
- IV. Define current Service Levels and recommended Service Levels options for consideration by Council. Quantify the resources required to maintain parks and amenities at current and recommended options for future service levels for consideration and approval by Council.
- V. Prepare a long-term financial plan to support parks at the approved Service Levels over the next 30 years with projections for the initial 10 years in capital

and operating budgets. The operating impacts of capital budgets (and Service Levels) needs to be understood in terms of the park classifications and for asset management.

- VI. Provide a parkland dedication by-law in alignment with the PMP recommendations and Planning Act. It is anticipated that a parkland dedication by-law will be considered by Council concurrently with the PMP.
- VII. Update current Parks By-law 162. Review of current parks programming, park use policies and strategies. It is anticipated that the revised Parks By-law will be considered by Council concurrently with the PMP.
- VIII. Development of Parks Classification System parks inventory database with identified specific improvements and uses to parks.
- IX. Ensure PMP alignment with other strategic documents.

Scope of Work

The successful respondent shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

Milestone #1 - Inventory, Review, Assess and Define Parks Service Levels and Policies

- I. Coordinate with City GIS Staff to map the “parksheds” and determine walking distance service levels. Explore and define “park service areas” by aggregating “parksheds”. The “park service areas” will be used to define demographic and statistical parameters for the purpose of analysis and implementation recommendations. It is also assumed that this exercise and its analyses will aid in defining Service Levels as a baseline;
- II. Establish definitions of park lands, amenities, facilities, and features that identify clearly what features are considered elements of a public parks vs recreational facilities. These definitions are to be used throughout the master plan and recommendations with the intent of clarifying land dedication requirements, service levels, funding, and in alignment with future Official Plan updates, By-Laws, and Policies;
- III. Coordinate with City Asset Management, determine the data dictionary hierarchy and definitions of parks types, their function and amenities/facilities, asset valuations (replacement values), document current Service Levels / Key Performance Indicators associated with the provision of parks (e.g. sq. m of parkland per capita, hectares of parkland per 1,000 persons, hectares of parkland per unit type, km of formal maintained trails per person, etc.) and report on these indicators based on the results of the “park service areas” mapping. Include all open spaces and their amenities owned and/or operated by the City,

but also provide information on Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) properties, schools, and other publicly or privately-owned properties that contribute recreational amenities within “parksheds” and “park service areas.”;

- IV. Include current available development applications (as appropriate, e.g. draft-approved subdivisions or major redevelopment applications with publicly-available information) within the inventory phase and parkshed mapping component. Include 30-year population forecast data and in alignment with the Official Plan;
- V. Provide a summary table review of relevant GRCA and school board standards and policies that affect City parks and operations standards, agreements, and services;
- VI. Provide a summary table review of applicable City planning, strategic, and master plan documents as defined by the project team (e.g. draft Secondary Plans such as Hespeler Rd. Corridor Secondary Plan, but also Council-approved Plans, such as the Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Open Space 2002-2022) and comment on how these aspects will be addressed in the Parks Master Plan;
- VII. Provide a summary table review of City of Cambridge park service levels, policies, operational capacity, other relevant benchmark criteria and compare with other municipalities (for example, Newmarket, Kitchener, Waterloo, Toronto, Richmond Hill, Guelph, Brantford, Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills, Vaughan etc.);
- VIII. Review and assess accessibility requirements in new parks, and accessibility improvements in existing City parks, based on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and City of Cambridge Facility Accessibility Design Standards Manual (FADS) and best practices and benchmarks;
- IX. Review and define the City’s current and future demographic profile with respect to recreational, educational, economic, social and attitudinal trends, and their impact upon, and their relationship with, existing and future park needs. Identify current and future trends in park use, potential challenges and opportunities including but not limited to: shifting demographics and changing demands for parks and trails along with their various amenities;
- X. Identify the opportunities to align the recreational demand for sports activities with demand for public spaces and amenities and operational efficiency;
- XI. Identify and inventory the natural heritage features within existing parks as well as natural feature parcels and valuations of natural features. Provide a Service Level of area (sq.m / hectares) of natural areas versus “maintained” park types;

- XII. Identify key stakeholders and partnership opportunities with community groups and organizations involved with parks (e.g. school boards) and document consultation with these groups noting issues and responses for PMP development and in a table for Council's consideration;
- XIII. Review current and propose new linkages (sidewalks, pathways, and cycling facilities) between parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities;
- XIV. Conduct any and all field work as necessary to adequately ground-truth, inventory, and complete the review and assessment; and
- XV. Provide summarized options of Service Levels and policies for Council consideration.

Milestone #2 – Parks Policy & Guidelines

- I. Review Official Plan, and draft Secondary Plan policies, compare to reference municipalities' policies, and provide policies to be incorporated into the 2022 Official Plan review process and current draft Secondary Plans processes;
- II. Review the City's existing park by-law (162-10) and policies, identifying gaps and opportunity for policy development;
- III. Review the climate adaptation aspects of parks and natural areas, the community and corporate climate change plans, and outline resiliency, roles, and vulnerabilities of the City's green infrastructure within the Parks Master Plan;
- IV. Review leading practices for parkland and open space acquisition, disposal and consolidation in comparable municipalities and recommend the methodology that best fits the City based on its future needs, trends, demographics and operational abilities. Develop a policy on parkland acquisition and disposal, and make recommendations for future related policies and strategies and amendments to the Purchasing Land Sales By-law 74-95. Provide priority acquisition criteria to be used when considering parkland acquisitions. Recommend the appropriate stage in the development process for the City to take conveyed lands for parks and/or trails. This should also form the basis of recommendations for a parkland dedication by-law;
- V. Provide policy recommendations on emerging alternatives to traditional parkland provision, such as Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPS), urban squares, strata parks, and pop-up parks in intensification development scenarios and the core areas;
- VI. Develop Service Levels for future park development that includes park hierarchical structure, minimum and optimum park sizes, maximum walking distances to parks, suggested programming based on expected use and

minimum setback standards from property boundaries and adjacent land uses. The standards should be able to be incorporated into the Engineering Development Standards Manual and Zoning By-law;

- VII. Consult and provide recommendations on providing public art in parks, and establish a hierarchy for determining which parks are suitable for public art;
- VIII. Explore storm water ponds as part of the municipal open space system and develop policy recommendations;
- IX. Review Provincial Policy Statement regarding “community hubs” and Official Plan policies and evaluate current practice of co-locating parks and schools; and
- X. Review current applicable park and related policy and identify any systemic barriers.

Milestone #3 – Consultation & Branding

- I. Create an innovative and engaging marketing brand for the study. The proponent will be expected to coordinate with the City’s Communications Division to ensure successful delivery of the various aspects of the branding and marketing strategy associated with the Parks Master Plan.
- II. Groups requiring targeted consultation will include, but not be limited to:
 - School Boards
 - Sports groups & organizations
 - Diversity and Inclusion Services
 - Grand River Conservation Authority
 - Region of Waterloo
 - Neighbourhood Associations
 - Cambridge Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee
 - Cambridge Environmental Advisory Committee
 - Cambridge Cycling and Trails Advisory Committee
 - Youth Advisory Committee
 - Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
 - The Galt, Preston and Hespeler BIAs
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Economic Development Advisory Committee
 - Regional Tourism
 - Waterloo Region Home Builders’ Liaison Committee
- III. Engage Council providing an overview of public input, current Service Levels, Service Level expectations heard from public engagement, anticipated impacts of

intensification on existing parks, amenities, and trails and paths. This shall include the presentation of Service Level options to Council to provide direction on what option should be applied to the PMP. Service Level options presented shall include an estimate of cost and resource impacts relative to current allocated costs; and

- IV. Develop clear and concise guiding vision and mission statements for the provision of parks and recreational trails based on the results of the consultation and guided by the Service Levels approved by Council. The consultation process should introduce a number of additional visionary guiding principles for consideration including but not limited to “parks as green infrastructure,” “universal design,” “8/80 parks,” accessibility and inclusiveness, Major Urban Greenlands, maintenance of service levels in the face of increasing density and population, and changing demographics and park amenities.

Milestone #4 – Parks Master Plan

- I. Develop a 30-year Parks Master Plan. The Parks Master Plan should be consistent with the 3-year City Strategic Plan. The Parks Master Plan’s long-term strategic objectives and specific policies should align with, and contribute to, the 30-year horizon of the Official Plan. The Parks Master Plan should outline detailed actions that could be incorporated into the 10-year capital budget, 4-year operating budget, and the Development Charges Study and By-law;
- II. The Parks Master Plan should align with the Asset Management Plan and its timelines, and align with requirements of Ontario Asset Management Regulation 588/17;
- III. The Parks Master Plan is expected to align with the Cycling Master Plan and other City Master Plans or identify specific conflicts based on new information and inputs through the development of the PMP;
- IV. The Parks Master Plan should outline the staffing and financial resources required to implement each recommendation in a table format as is the convention with City Master Plans. A service model should be developed for delivering the Parks Master Plan in terms of future operational, planning, design and development of parks and recreational trails. The service models of other municipalities should be provided as a comparison and these details should be provided in a matrix table;
- V. The Parks Master Plan will develop policies for the Parkland Cash in Lieu Reserve Fund and examine innovative ways of financing;
- VI. The Parks Master Plan will recommend universal policies, an equity policy and lens, acquisition strategies, and park development standards that may be incorporated into all ongoing and future Secondary Plans;

- VII. The Parks Master Plan will develop a park redevelopment process, with timing and policy about changing demographics of the City's older established parks. The consultant will outline the various processes the City uses to plan and develop new parks as well as redevelopments and recommend standard operating procedures for:
- ☐ new park development;
 - ☐ park redevelopment following lifecycle and asset management best practices; and,
 - ☐ procedures for responding to redevelopment requests for amenities in existing parks.
- VIII. The successful respondent will recommend the appropriate Official Plan policy additions, draft corporate standard operating procedures for new and redevelopment situations, and draft by-law clause recommendations (i.e. Parks by-law 162-10, parkland dedication by-law, and Purchasing Land Sales By-law 74-95) in order to formalize the processes for consideration, consultation, decision-making, financing, and other criteria involved with developing new or redeveloping existing parks;
- IX. Develop policy (e.g. a parkland dedication reserve fund policy for allocating cash-in-lieu to priority recreation deserts), timing, acquisition potential, and/or other mechanisms to address "recreation deserts" and identified below Service Level areas;
- X. Recommend Key Performance Indicators to evaluate trends, derive future actions on a year-to-year basis and assist in long-term planning within current capacity of Park Operations. These indicators will be used to measure success regarding short-term and long-term operations and trends for parks services; and
- XI. In addition to the policies, by-laws, strategies and procedural updates developed for the Parks Master Plan the consultant will provide a list of Recommended Next Steps for those items that are outside the scope of this project and will not be fully developed within the plan.