

City of Guelph

Facility Fit Study

Terms of Reference

March 18, 2025



To request this document in an accessible format contact 519-822-1260 extension 4138; TTY 519-826-9771.

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Introduction

One of the objectives of the Guelph Official Plan (OP) is to ensure that the City is provisioned with "a sufficient open space system of parks and trails to meet the active and passive recreational needs of residents that is accessible to all residents" (OP Section 7.3 d)). The Facility Fit Study is a tool that allows the City to evaluate whether the size and configuration of parks, trails, and open spaces are sufficient to meet the recreation needs of residents while ensuring that they are safe and well integrated into the City's existing open space system.

When is a Facility Fit Study required?

A Facility Fit Study is often required as part of the pre-consultation process for larger projects, community mixed-use nodes, and intensification corridors. Park Planning staff will determine when a Facility Fit Study is required and what park and trail amenities are required to address distributions gaps.

The plan may be required in support of any of the following applications where parkland is proposed to be conveyed to the City:

- Official Plan Amendments (including Secondary Plans)
- Draft Plans of Subdivision
- Draft Plans of Condominium
- Zoning By-law Amendments
- Site Plans

When required, the Facility Fit Study will be submitted as part of a complete planning application. Early discussions related to concept development are recommended to ensure that the scope of the study is appropriate and the results fruitful.

What is the purpose of a Facility Fit Study?

A Facility Fit Study ensures that the size and configuration of the park block is acceptable, that trails are provided where appropriate, and that open spaces are well integrated into the design solution. Linear parks are not acceptable as parkland and should instead be walkway connections or trail blocks. Many small park blocks are not an acceptable substitute for larger park blocks that can accommodate park facilities and include appropriate street frontage identified in the Zoning By-law.

The study demonstrates how proposed parks, trails, and open spaces:

- Respond to the specific park and trail amenity needs;
- Are sized and configured to allow appropriate facilities;
- Conform to relevant policies and guidelines;
- Are compatible with and contribute to the surrounding community, and
- Are connected to and integrated into the existing open space system.

The Facility Fit Study may include information presented in or be referenced by other planning submissions such as an:

- Urban Design Brief
- Arborist Report and Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan
- Environmental Impact Study

A Facility Fit Study shall be completed by a Landscape Architecture firm or a team of design professionals that includes a landscape architect who is a Full Member of the OALA with seal.

Structure and format

The Facility Fit Study should follow the following format:

Part 1

The purpose of Part 1 is to examine and understand the physical and policy context.

Step 1: Physical context

- Site attributes including location, property size, existing uses, surrounding land use, topography, vegetation, heritage features, access, servicing, etc.
- Distance from existing parks, open spaces, Natural Heritage System land, commercial areas, and urban densification nodes.
- Distance from residents served and relevant demographic information.
- Relationship to existing trails, the Active Transportation Network, and cycling infrastructure.

Step 2: Policy context

- Summarize how relevant City policies and guidelines are addressed (Official Plan, Secondary Plan, Zoning By-law, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Guelph Trails Master Plan, Active Transportation Network Study, Parks Trails and Open Space Manual, etc.).
- Address applicable external policies and guidelines (CPTED, AODA, LID, etc.).
- Address anticipated environmental constraints from external agencies (Grand River Conservation Authority, Bird Studies Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans etc.).

Part 2

The purpose of Part 2 is to describe the proposed development concept and design solutions that respond to the physical and policy context and facility and amenity requirements.

Step 1: Facility Fit Plan

- A schematic plan(s) of proposed park(s).
- Include critical dimensions of all park amenities including overall size, setbacks, safety (runout) zones etc.
- Show drainage patterns, slope transitions, and drainage areas.
- Show existing vegetation to be retained.
- Show the location of trails, multi-use pathways and walkway connections that are adjacent to the park.
- Show open space blocks that are adjacent to the park.
- Identify parking and access by transit and cars.

Step 2: Safety

- Identify all barriers to access, how they can be mitigated, and what risks to public safety that they pose.
- Show setbacks for all park amenities from property lines and proposed mitigation measures where minimum setbacks are not achievable.
- Ensure sightlines are open and appropriate.
- Identify any physical characteristics that could pose a risk to public safety such as hazard trees or steep slopes (Note, that parkland must contain a minimum of 80% table land).

Technical Requirements

Facility Fit Plan Requirements

Facility Fit Plans shall:

- Be computer generated (AutoCAD);
- Be overlaid on an aerial photograph;
- Be presented using an appropriate metric scale;
- Contain a north arrow, legend, scale bar, date, and address, and
- Have a standard page size such as 8.5x11", 11"x17, or 24"x36".