



City of Guelph Park Plan Public Focus Groups

Wednesday, January 12, 4-5:30 p.m.

Thursday, January 13, 6:30-8 p.m.

These notes are a detailed record of the synchronous, Zoom-based, facilitated public meetings related to the City of Guelph's Park Plan.

A total of 67 people attended one of the two public focus groups about the City's Park Plan. Two individuals also attended the session for developers and one person attended both public sessions; repeated/duplicated comments from these individuals are noted where possible. The consulting team (2) and City staff also attended the public sessions (7 on Jan. 12, 4 on Jan. 13). The summary below includes input from mentimeter, the Zoom chat and oral conversations from both meetings.

I want Guelph's parks to be...

- Accessible (15)
- Green/Greener (8)
- Natural (5)
- Extensive (4)
- Safe (4)
- Fun (3)
- Welcoming (3)
- Diverse (3)
- Trails (2)
- Protected (2)
- Well-used (2)
- Inviting (2)
- Interesting (2)
- Connected (2)
- Inclusive (2)
- Naturalized space (2)
- Lush (2)
- Large (2)
- Exciting
- Enjoyable
- Engaging
- Utilized
- Vibrant
- Developer funded
- Sustainable
- Resilient
- Climate resilient
- Environmentally committed
- Outdoors
- Open space
- Mostly greenspace
- Leafy
- More trees
- Ecologically diverse
- Recreational
- Good quality
- High quality
- Comprehensive
- Appropriate
- Available
- Available for all
- For all ages
- Decentralized
- Equally distributed
- Local
- All over the city
- All season
- Abundant
- Varied
- Spacious
- Functional
- Human
- Priority over development
- CLEAN. Places to dispose garbage dog poop bags
- Well maintained
- Foster connection
- Unique
- Better lighting at night
- Open

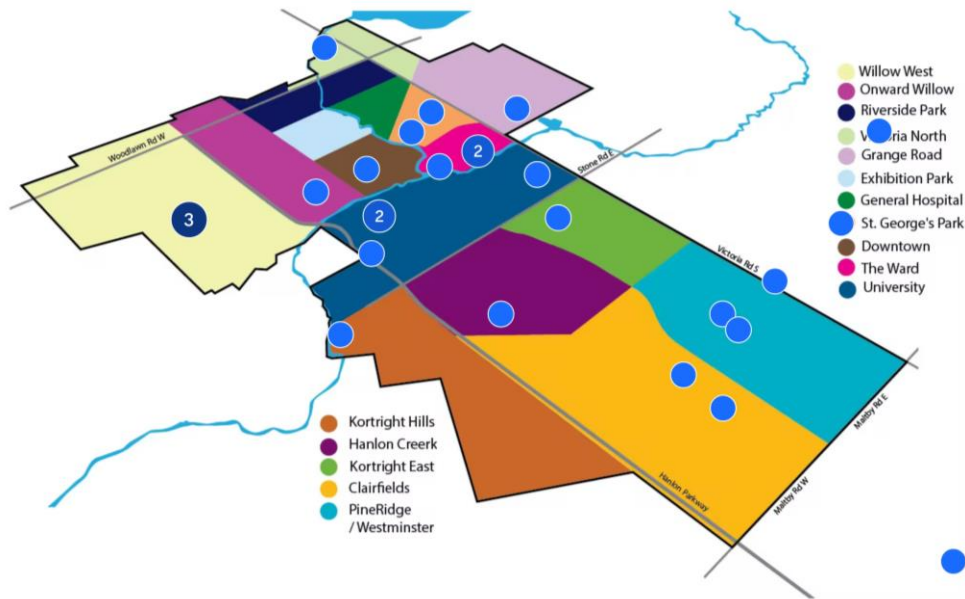
Additional comments

- I want parks to be a combination of historical preservation, wild nature and beauty. Yorklands Green Hub fulfils this.
- I want local parks to have designated areas for community gardens so that when the need arises, every community within Guelph will have access to food production without new bylaws having to be passed.

Where do you live?

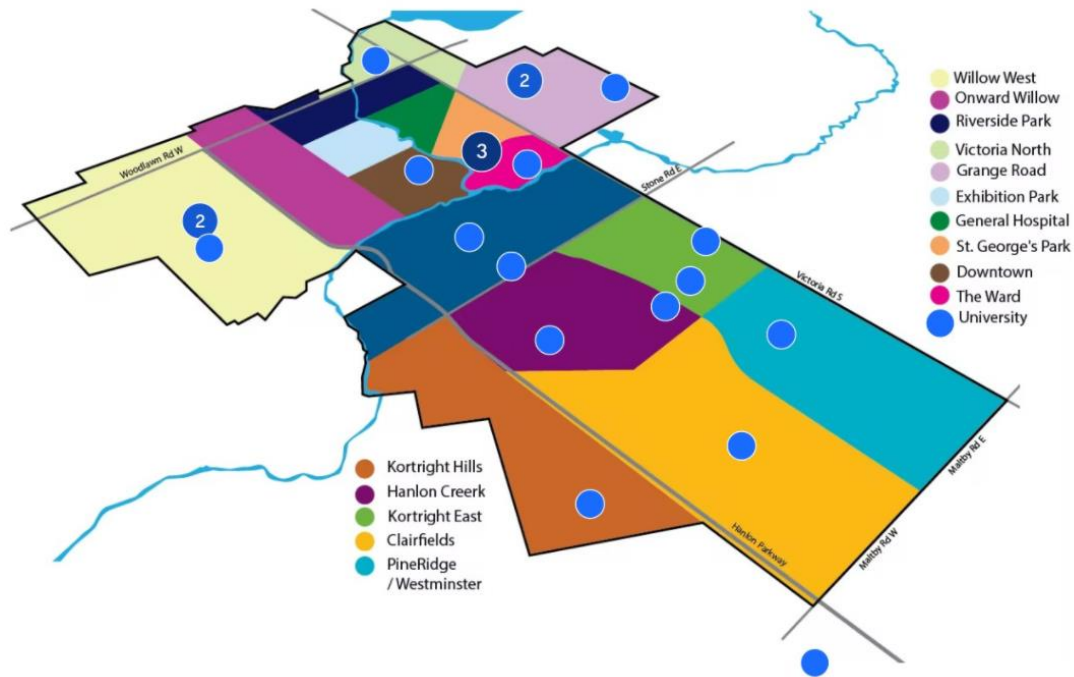
Session 1: January 12

Figure 1 Map of where people live



Session 2: January 13

Figure 2- Map of where people live



Comments

- My area in the east end of Guelph does not seem to show up on the map
- We are in downtown Guelph, in the Ward.
- I do live in Guelph but I can't locate Watson parkway, and York Rd. area on the map. 43 Creekside Drive. Watson/York rd.
- I live in South end.
- Grange Road
- I am in Grange Road area (East side)
- I am in Kortright

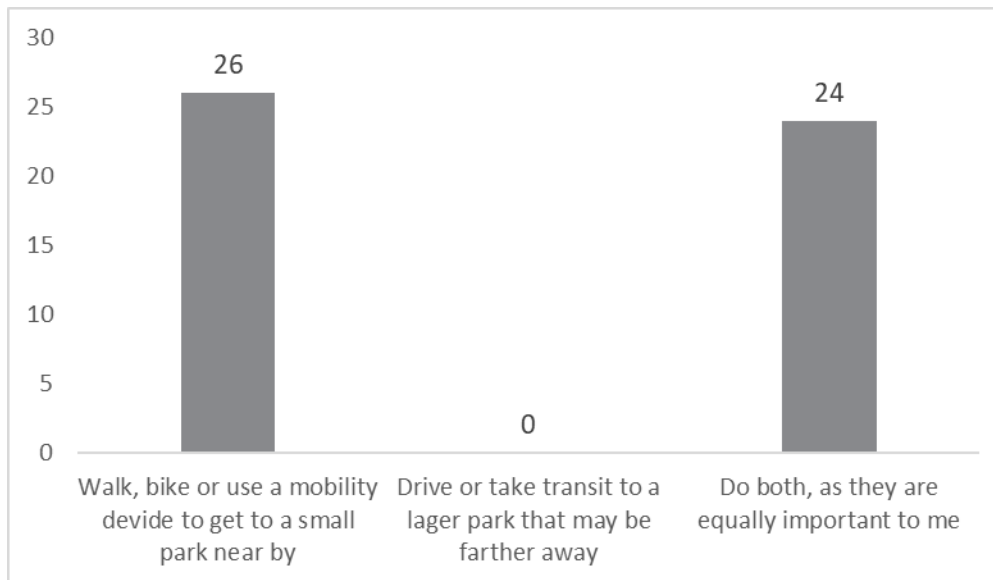
Do you:

| | Yes | Yes | No | No |
|--|-----|-----|----|-----|
| | # | % | # | % |
| Have people under 18 in your household? | 16 | 37% | 27 | 63% |
| Have access to a private green space (such as a backyard)? | 35 | 74% | 12 | 26% |
| Have a park within a 10-minute walk of where you live? | 41 | 85% | 7 | 15% |
| Have enough variety of things to do in parks in Guelph? | 28 | 60% | 19 | 40% |
| Use a park at least twice per month? | 47 | 96% | 2 | 4% |
| Want to see more parks in Guelph? | 47 | 98% | 1 | 2% |
| Want to see more parks in your neighbourhood? | 36 | 78% | 10 | 22% |

Comments

- We're a 10-minute walk from the Speed River trail.
- Clearly the people who most need parks are not part of this consultation. What about asking people in the West end – fewer parks, most needy people.

Would you rather...



Comments

- I would like to see more small parks within walking distance, if only for a green, shady place to sit or throw a ball.
- I am trying to be environmentally conscious in driving less and using areas in my near community. So walkability is important



- People who use the tennis courts drive to get there. Amenities do not speak to the needs of local people, but the city as a whole. Spread out amenities. Put them in the appropriate places. We need walkable communities
- Hear hear, we have been trying to advocate for a splash pad for many years and as a priority neighbourhood, based on the social determinants of health, there are families whose only access to green space and recreation is this park, there is no seating and supports for community [non sports] activities
- I feel we need both small (so people who don't want to go far can have space for exercise, meeting, etc.) and larger parks that have different amenities that need more space, e.g. sports (e.g. tennis, baseline, cricket, soccer, volleyball, tennis, etc. that are situated in major neighbourhood hubs
- It's often a function of time. Many people have the time to drive to a park and spend time there...but many people do not. Their "park time" is limited to the hours that they are off work.
- Distinction. Neighbourhood park or draw users based on activities, amenities. Don't draw the city (based on activity) to a neighbourhood park. Site appropriately so it's not a detraction from neighbourhood.
- Speak with the people in the area about what they want to see in neighbourhood parks

Rank these park development goals for Guelph over the next 10 years:

Participants at both public sessions ranked these goals in the same order and the votes from each session have been combined in the table.

Overall ranking

1. Protect parks
2. Create new parks
3. Add new features in existing parks
4. Improve ways to travel to parks
5. Make existing parks bigger
6. Plan activities in parks

Table 1 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Protect parks | 20 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Create new parks | 16 | 14 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Add new features in existing parks | 10 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 1 |
| Improve ways to travel to parks | 2 | 6 | 11 | 9 | 5 | 9 |
| Make existing parks bigger | 2 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 11 |
| Plan activities in parks | 0 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 8 |



Additional comments/questions

- Would the ways to travel to parks include additional or better trail connections?
- What does “protect parks” mean? From development? I was rather shocked to see that on the list at all.
- Park space is needed to increase tree canopy in an increasingly intensified city, and impacted by the heat island of climate change.
- Community needs for greenspace will never be properly evaluated until Guelph has a Green Space Master plan that includes major spaces such as the University of Guelph Arboretum. The current Parks and Recreation Master Plan – the 1997 Master Plan which has not been renewed in over 20 years – had a separate Green Space Master Plan that recognized all important green spaces not just City-owned parks.
 - I don't understand what you mean. Wouldn't it be best to under-estimate parkland? (i.e. by NOT including the Arboretum)
- The idea of a Green Space Master Plan resonates with me — I understand the narrow definition of “park” but consideration of parks within the larger context of protecting and increasing access between parks and green space/conservation areas is essential.

Rank these improvement priorities within existing parks

Session 1: January 12

Overall ranking

1. Improve connections between parks and natural areas Create new parks
2. Plant more trees and pollinator-friendly plants
3. Add more walking paths or trails within parks
4. Upgrade existing equipment and amenities
5. Add more seating and gathering areas
6. Add new equipment and amenities
7. Preserve open areas for activities

Table 2 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Improve connections between parks and natural areas | 7 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Plant more trees and pollinator-friendly plants | 7 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Add more walking paths or trails within parks | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Upgrade existing equipment and amenities | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| Add more seating and gathering areas | 0 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| Add new equipment and amenities | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Preserve open areas for activities | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 |



Additional comments/questions

- Park benches and picnic tables made out of wood are preferable.
- New equipment and amenities – in terms of accessibility, lots of parks aren't accessible for wheelchair users (i.e. wood chips as ground cover). Need to have accessible areas/zones.
- Like the rubberized surfaces made from old tires.
 - Off-gas smell
 - But better option
- Wood chips, gravel is easier on the joints. Rubber would be good too.

Session 2: January 13

Overall ranking

1. Plant more trees and pollinator-friendly plants
2. Add more walking paths or trails within parks
3. Improve connections between parks and natural areas Create new parks
4. Add more seating and gathering areas
5. Preserve open areas for activities
6. Add new equipment and amenities
7. Upgrade existing equipment and amenities

Table 3 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Plant more trees and pollinator-friendly plants | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Add more walking paths or trails within parks | 5 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Improve connections between parks and natural areas | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Add more seating and gathering areas | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Preserve open areas for activities | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| Add new equipment and amenities | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Upgrade existing equipment and amenities | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 |

Additional comments/questions

- Less lawn, more wildlife space, more pollinator gardens



Rank these priorities for locating new parks

Session 1: January 12

Overall ranking

1. Areas with high population density
2. Areas of high socioeconomic need
3. Areas with few parks
4. Areas with few recreational facilities
5. Areas slated for future growth
6. Let's update existing parks before creating new ones

Table 4 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Areas with high population density | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Areas of high socioeconomic need | 6 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Areas with few parks | 5 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Areas with few recreational facilities | 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Areas slated for future growth | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 3 |
| Let's update existing parks before creating new ones | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 11 |

Additional comments/questions

- High population density. Never build a subdivision without requiring a park. Downtown development. Need to be conscious of adding greenspace as well. Need to move forward with park anticipated on Wellington.
 - Yes to the Wellington Street Park.
- Has been some intensification in the Ward. More on Woods properly (Ferguson and Huron). Expect parkland to be included in development. City should also look at small parcels of land they own (i.e. right of ways) that could be used. For instances, there is an empty lot on Ferguson and Morris that must be old right of way. These old rights-of-ways and vacant lots could be used for small parkettes.
- Next to Dolime
- Increase in people and accommodating needs, also need to accommodate the needs of animals.
- For older people, flower gardens, like the Enabling Garden are useful for those who like to sit in a park rather than moving about a lot!
- Fan of passive parks. Space to sit and look at the water.
- We should think about co-locating parks with long-term-care and retirement homes, the way we do with schools.



- Map indicates park along Speed River. Not aware of any activities or programs that take place. Where does that fit? Is it a trail? A park? Heart of downtown. Should be developed as a park.
 - Land from covered bridge to Eramosa along speed river (west side). Existing Trans Canada trail. Not being developed as park land. Prime real estate for downtown park.
 - Underutilized asset. Can be looked into.
- Linear 'parks' should be provided along all of the main rivers in the City.
- Vancouver had a "blueways" policy that all waterfront areas had to be publicly accessible.
- Re: trails along the river. I tried to walk from the covered bridge up to Wyndham Street the other day, but that is not yet possible. Is it in the works?
- Can we put a park below the train trestle over the Speed River at Allan's Dam on the old roadbed? It would be a wonderful place to sit and look down river.
- Guelph has adopted a pro-growth philosophy. Seems to be a short-term view. Need extensive parks in the face of negative growth.
 - I heartedly agree with less expansion.
- Natural hazard – the damn. Long-term planning interest to extend flood way.
- It would be great to counter a lot of the industrial areas with heavily treed green space for climate change reasons.

Session 2: January 13

Overall ranking

1. Areas of high socioeconomic need
2. Areas with high population density
3. Areas with few parks
4. Areas slated for future growth
5. Areas with few recreational facilities
6. Let's update existing parks before creating new ones

Table 5 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Areas of high socioeconomic need | 7 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Areas with high population density | 3 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Areas with few parks | 3 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Areas slated for future growth | 5 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 0 |
| Areas with few recreational facilities | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Let's update existing parks before creating new ones | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 13 |



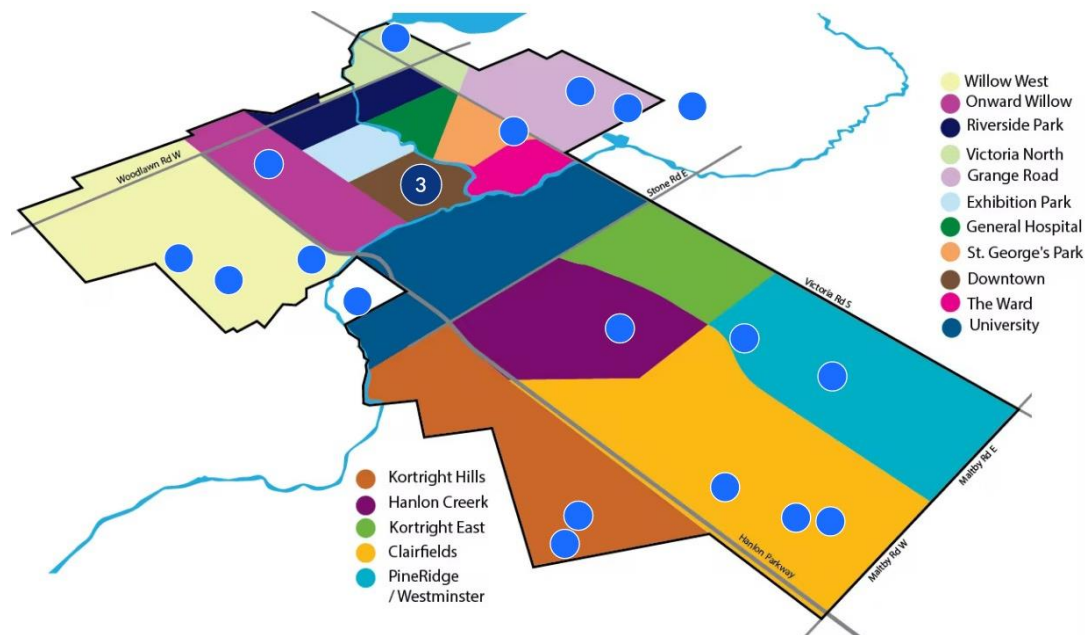
Additional comments/questions

- The East end of Guelph is rapidly growing! I believe it is the fastest growing area and density has increased tremendously in the last 5 years. Lots of families with children.
 - Very true
- I hear a new park will be added near the library on the East side which is encouraging
 - That is a very small area!
- I know we are talking about parks for Guelph people, but parks can also be a strong draw for tourists into Guelph. If we had a regional park like the OR lands, we could create an amazing tourist attraction – lots of space for everyone.

Where should we add more parks?

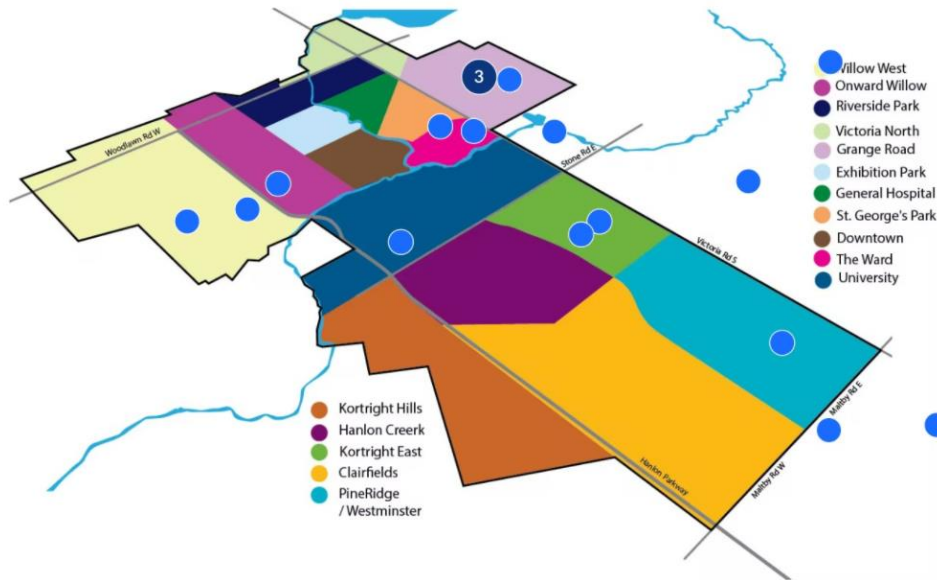
Session 1: January 12

Figure 3 - Map of places where we should add more parks



Session 2: January 13

Figure 4 - Map of where we should add more parks



Rank your preferred ways for the City to acquire more parks

Session 1: January 12

Overall ranking

1. Parkland dedication (money to buy parks) from developers and home builders
2. Repurpose existing City land
3. Increase recreational land through partnerships (e.g., schools, private landowners, GRCA)
4. Purchase land with tax dollars
5. Lease land

Table 6 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| Parkland dedication (money to buy parks) from developers and home builders | 12 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Repurpose existing City land | 7 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 0 |
| Increase recreational land through partnerships (e.g., schools, private landowners, GRCA) | 3 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| Purchase land with tax dollars | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Lease land | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 15 |



Additional comments/questions

- Question on acquisition of parks. You don't list "transfer of land" from developers. Cash-in-lieu instead of land is not working for park acquisition. We are always chasing land values and lose out in the end.
 - Parkland dedication money was used to upgrade the Victoria Road Rec centre instead of buying parkland.
- I'm not seeing conveyance of land from developers as an option here. Cash-in-lieu is not working for citizens.
 - Land is always better
 - Clarification that parkland dedication is land or money
- Does the City currently lease land?
 - Yes, City has had agreements in place (i.e. sport fields at curling club)
- What about the IMI land? Are we going to get any parkland in there?
- The land in front of the Civic Museum is considered to be "parkland" but is not owned by the City.
- Suggest repurposing existing city land. This option may be easier since land is already city property and will have more flexibility change land status and approvals etc.

Session 2: January 13

Overall ranking

1. Parkland dedication (money to buy parks) from developers and home builders
2. Repurpose existing City land
3. Purchase land with tax dollars
4. Increase recreational land through partnerships (e.g., schools, private landowners, GRCA)
5. Lease land

Table 7 - Votes per ranking for each goal

| Votes per ranking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Parkland dedication (money to buy parks) from developers and home builders | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Repurpose existing City land | 2 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Increase recreational land through partnerships (e.g., schools, private landowners, GRCA) | 3 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| Purchase land with tax dollars | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Lease land | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 9 |

Additional comments/questions

- Some of the questions are impossible to answer without background, understanding context and implications – example how to acquire more parks. Why ask us this?



- I also found this question difficult to answer without more context on how these things work
 - Developers obligated to give land or cash in lieu (equal value to land) towards parkland development. Working with fixed budgets. Proactively acquire sites. Idea to explore but have limited budgets. Need to determine priorities for community in order to deploy resources.
 - *Equal to the current value day of the land? Or the proposed value for community well-being and future value of the land?*
 - Current day value of the land
 - I would disagree with comment about a “tax on developers”. Parkland is a desirable asset for a new subdivision – they use it to sell their developments. It is also essential infrastructure for the new development and the developers should pay for that infrastructure. They certainly make enough profit on those sales!
- I don’t know how much tax dollars can buy vs parkland dedication
- I agree with above comments about the park acquisition question. I felt that I did not have the proper background or the 'big picture' to make a ranking. I was not comfortable with the idea that my limited knowledge and gut reactions could be used- even if just for considering policy. I feel like I needed more info. Thanks
- What is the city’s expectation from developers? Are the developers mandated to create park space or pay in lieu? And if they choose to pay in lieu, is the city mandated to use that money toward parks or does it just get absorbed into the coffers?
 - And does that mean those moneys may not buy parkland in that area, but rather across the city
- It might be prudent to define the difference between parkland dedication and cash in lieu. Developers would rather pay cash in lieu to maximize developable lands. If the city receives cash rather than land the challenge of having no available lands escalates.
- Concerns with sharing parkland with schools. Trails go through school property. When kids are out at recess, I was told I couldn't walk there with a dog.
 - Hear hear! I have been removed from parks by school groups
- Leased land – opportunities with GRCA

How might recent changes due to COVID etc. affect the City's plans for parks?

Increased need/usage (24)

- Need/demand for parks has changed during COVID. Need for regional/local parks
- Shows the need for wide open spaces – people need to be outdoors – either alone or with friends and families – outdoor spaces are therapeutic
- Outdoor activities are ideal for social distancing. Let's encourage more parks, better parks



- Need to have more parkland. Need to make sure parkland grows with the population. Parks are infrastructure. They have a maximum carrying capacity. Parks were almost "loved to death" during the pandemic. Adequate parkland will protect natural areas
- Increased interest in local parks and trails
- Covid and fast sense growth have highlighted the need for large open, natural space
- People were told to travel less and so likely went to more local parks.
- Parks are crowded
- It has shown the need for space. Important to plan for less crowding and less density in parks. It has shown the need and important of parks on mental health. Parks and green space are crucial for individual and community health.
- Parks are now more important than ever as safe outdoor places to gather and for kids to socialize and play.
- A huge increase in numbers of people using parks and trails since Covid. This is great and we can assume and hope it will continue. This indicates a need for more park, green space, trails and accessibility.
- They become more important. It's hard to monitor and rely on parents to monitor
- Diverse and increased demand for parks has also revealed the need for conflict management.
- All residents, of all ages have re-discovered or have escalated their activities outside, in our parks, on our trails. City's park planning must address linkage, parks, heritage and natural areas.
- Use of school groups of parkland and trails.
- More green space is needed for people to get outdoors therefore more parks please!
- Put more emphasis on them
- Emphasizes need for open spaces for people to recreate.
- More local parks/green space/trails.
- More winter use of parks
- Residents of all ages are rediscovering or escalating their outdoor activities because of activities. City planning must recognize and integrated to create a functional 'park system' – linkage, parks, natural and heritage. Examine City of Ottawa.
- I know that there are other demographics represented here, but having a local, even relatively small park in our neighbourhood was essential during COVID for families with young children because these parents felt very isolated. A lady in our neighbourhood organized a caregiver and tot group that matured into a pizza party in the park on Fridays the past summer
- Removed from City park by school staff. Can't use trail if being used by school groups. People are afraid to use parks when schools are using them. Can't social distance. *(Similar comment made by same individual was noted during discussion on land acquisition.)*
- We need more flexible space! Space for small bookings, large bookings and lots of space for distancing to accommodate many different events and activities outside.



Trails (7)

- More urban forests with trails.
- When the City develops the Natural Heritage land adjacent to the Springfield Golf Course, please put in walking trails through the forests, not just active transportation trails between the woodlots, so that people can take a "walk in the woods".
- More trails and open space with clear, consistent signage.
- More local parks/green space/trails.
- Biking and walking has taken off during covid so trails and connecting parks with trails across the city should be prioritized.
- Parks link via green space & trails. Spread out collecting areas.
- Connections to/through nearby natural areas needed

Features/amenities (7)

- More benches at right angles to each other, to encourage conversation, especially with shade trees.
- We need more floral area, like the sunken garden at Riverside park
- Make better use of existing outdoor spaces by adding amenities.
- Pollinator gardens can do a huge amount to increase mental health and local biodiversity
- In our area no city land for a community food garden, would like to see the city purchase to address food insecurity in the long term
- Covid has shown options for movement are vital (not just 1 path) – relates to the amount of space. Space is important – not just movement but places to sit/reflect. (e.g., benches, labyrinths) Being outside is crucial for mental health!
- Small outdoor spaces needed

Accessibility (6)

- We are going to have many more disabled people, and we need to plan for this – both in terms of accessibility, and in terms of healthy activities available.
- People have needed parks more during Covid, and accessibility is more important than ever – both for those in wheelchairs and those trying to walk to parks without going through crowded areas. Wider trails have been helpful.
- Accessibility to nearby outdoor space; connections and walkways through natural areas
- We need parks more, especially for disabled people who are high risk and can only safely socialize outdoors.
- Access to recreation and sport for healthy lifestyles.
- In our priority neighborhood poverty has deepened, WERC recreation programs are \$ inaccessible, array of uses of parks other than sports is needed



Picnic/sheltered areas (4)

- COVID has demonstrated the need for us to have more sheltered picnic areas. This is particularly important for high density areas including condo and apartment dwellers.
- More covered picnic structures and gazebos.
- Need more outdoor gathering areas. In terms of physical structures, this could be picnic areas and shelters. Greenspaces (grassy areas) could also be better landscaped to be more welcoming for picnics on the ground (e.g. bring blankets, chairs)
- More covered gathering areas are needed year round.

Washrooms (3)

- Definitely more washrooms everywhere, not just a sports fields.
- Washrooms in parks are very important, especially when they are not available in nearby businesses because of closures.
- We know just how essential they are – upkeep, winter maintenance was so important – and bathrooms are important

Biodiversity/ecology/ (3)

- Need for more biodiversity focus. A lot of lawn, not used as a field or rec space. Could be reforested, native gardens. Dedicate space to trees and pollinators. Create a city within a park.
- The ecological factors also need to be considered – parks as areas that process water saving amount of surface water processing.
- Concerns about climate; trees and vegetation have been shown to cool dense parts of a city (see Montreal as example)

Dogs (2)

- More people getting dogs, so dogs in parks are a big concern, Some dogs need to run free so more space than the small leash free areas.
- Need strong clarity regarding dogs in parks and on trails. They are often a danger to people with walking problems (and I have a dog)

Other

- It's a shame that access to parks for the public has been reduced during COVID
 - Washrooms are needed. Then those that are built should not be locked.
- Accelerate acting on intentions and implementation.
- It has also shown the importance of continual up keep (due to natural causes, storms, environmental damage, etc.) Preservation Park, for example, has hundreds of trees that have fallen. I understand that it can be natural and necessary, but too many. When there are too many trees that have fallen for unnatural reason, there gets to be a point that



some need to be removed. Some questions referred to updating , but this is more maintenance

- East-end looks like fasted growing area in Guelph, Love the area. No longer low density. Lots of families with children. Need space. Space is disappearing in our area, Taken for roads, development. Old OR property is already used as a parkland. Don't want to lose that space.
- The expanded definition of recreation is just so, so important. Let's get kids and adults who are not sports enthusiasts out into activities. Besides walking – lol
 - Try roller skating! Haha

What creative possibilities could keep parks accessible to and enjoyed by Guelph's future residents?

Features/amenities (35)

- Pickle ball, Cricket pitches, upgrades to existing and underutilized assets and spaces, increased signage.
- For new Canadians – a cricket pitch
- Add more independent recreational features. Basketball features tennis back board, benchfit etc.
- A shelter with a dance floor (larger than the RC gazebo) where social dance events could be held for a small fee to cover costs.
- Places to sit and picnic
- Having no wood chips or sand in areas meant to be played on in playgrounds.
- Separate trails for walkers and cyclists.
- Outdoor events and venues are needed! There are very few indoor venues available in Guelph so outdoor events could bring together community and draw tourism
- More Community gardens like the one at Ignatius Loyola
- Larger parks need designated areas for community gardens.
 - Yes to community gardens
- Covered meeting areas would be helpful if we continue to need to gather in larger numbers with people outside our bubbles
- Permanent chess tables with seats, or outdoor tables for playing cards
 - Like that idea. Holland has concrete ping pong tables.
 - Vancouver has ping pong tables with a "bring your own paddles and balls" idea. Seems to appeal to all ages
 - I think ping pong tables and chess table would be a big hit
- Yes to covered picnic areas that can also be used for games and gatherings by groups.
- Plan features that are accommodating of people living without homes who gravitate to public parks. Features include washrooms, sanitation hubs, cooling and warming areas
- Maybe add some "exercise" equipment – like a playground for adults. I've seen this in some European cities



- We actually have some equipment at Guelph Parks already! Two I am aware of off-hand are Cedarvale Avenue Park and the new Dallan Park off Poppy Dr
 - Nelson, BC has amazing exercise equipment in their riverside park.
- I would like to see an outdoor exercise trail with workout sports equipment. Other cities have this.
 - For anyone interested in adult fitness equipment, please check out Cedarvale Park and Courtney, Goines and Mallott Park, I would encourage interested folks to try the equipment out and let us know if that works for you and if that is what you want to see more of.
- Some cities have pizza ovens and a lot more covered pavilions where people can gather. Riverside Park before COVID was overcrowded on weekends. The GRCA had to limit areas like the Elora Gorge because of overuse. When you have increased density in these high rise apartment buildings that have very small amenity areas you need more parks and community gardens etc. for people.
 - Pizza Ovens Yes!
 - Someone suggested a pizza oven, or bread oven, as they have in KW, would benefit families on Westwood
- What about spaces that can be used in the winter time? Toronto has parks with boarded hockey spaces that are skatable in the summer on roller skates and able to be flooded in the winter for ice skating and shinny. Ensures that people are using the space year round
- We could connect to the heritage of our city and have a mini farm with small animals at part of the Yorklands since it started as a farm... like Riverdale farm in Toronto which helped provide connection to nature through animals and an interpreter naturalist.. a bird care sanctuary.. working with the Vet College and the Sunrise Equestrian Centre... with a pony ride now and then.. draft horses used for certain public events.. great central space there for outdoor public events .. music ... east end farmers market... a people place on a small part of the 70 acres that the Yorklands want for public enjoyment and education and environmental sustainable research..
- At Mico Valeriot Park, we have a great play structure, but.... the city took away the wading pool. The plumbing is still there and a water cannon was installed, It is a rather inappropriate feature when it comes to cooling down kids on hot days. It's being used more for hydraulic excavation and for annoying other kids, rather than for a larger number of kids to be cooled down by a splash pad. Conclusion? We need a small splash pad there, please, with a recycled rubber surface.
- Great cities have a signature Park! Example: Central Park, High Park, etc. Guelph has that opportunity with Yorklands!
- What about about a campground on the Niska Lands? You can get there by bus unlike the Guelph Lake campsite It was supposed to be part of the Hanlon Creek conservation Area with 160 picnic tables. The Hanlon Creek Conservation area plan was never fully implemented. The area is diverse with 150+ bird species and an overwintering waterfowl area in the Speed River.
 - Look to Owen Sound for that idea in action. They having camping in a central park. Harrison Park, Owen Sound. Amazing place.



- I visited the Owen Sound central park this past summer. It's lovely.
- More activities in parks. Don't "love parks to death" like Royal City Park (Too many amenities crammed into too small a space). Provide more activity based amenities that don't require organised sports, e.g. tennis back board, basket ball hoops, outdoor tables that you kick balls on, more bench fit exercise especially downtown parks where demographic is increasingly seniors.
- Utilise parking lots for recreation e.g. Neeve parking lot ,supposed to be paved, include a basketball hoop.

Acquisition (7)

- Park/green space mandates per new development
- We need creative financing tools to acquire parkland up front. If it's not set aside, the opportunity to create it is usually permanently lost. Community bonds for example.
- I believed some cities have used community bonds to finance parkland up front.
- Expensive to buy parks with tax dollars. Creative financing tools. US > Community bonds. People can invest in purchase of parkland up front. Paid back from cash in lieu from developers over time. Think creatively about making the money available up front.
- Be proactive about buying parkland. We are supposed to be acquiring the land on Wellington for a riverside park. The longer we drag our heels, the more expensive it will become.
- Parkland needs to be purchased up front, otherwise there is nothing to buy. Toronto has millions of dollars in their parkland fund, but there is no land to buy.
- We need to own our own parks. Leasing parks make us vulnerable to losing them. A key example is losing the playing fields at the Curling Club property.

Accessibility (6)

- Support for trails in parks that are accessible to those in wheelchairs or mobility compromised. Surfaces are an issue.
- Having wheelchair accessible musical games or puzzle installations. Having sign options in braille.
- Protected paved paths leading from neighbourhood to parks are helpful for accessibility. I go more to the parks I can get to most safely on foot.
- We should not be doing the community push for accessibility because that puts the onus on disabled people to engage constantly rather than adhering to universal design principles set out in the ACA.
- Accessibility > Live in north end of city. Lots of natural trails and space. Fewer parks, fewer neighbourhood parks because there is natural land in that area. Not everyone in that area can partake in those trails if they're not accessible to everyone (mobility).
 - Very good point. I know trails are separate, but making them accessible (paving and looking at hill grades) would help that issue.



Parkland legacy (5)

- Has the city approached city wealthy people to leave a legacy of supporting parkland contribution?
 - I believe that Margaret Greene Park was a bequest from – Margaret Green!
 - Margaret Green park was a land donation
 - City has been approached in the past. Mainly by entities. Idea for further exploration. Not aware of City-initiating this.
- Even a full page ad in the newspapers. Online or hardcopy to encourage certain people with wealth to contact the city regarding legacy supporting city parklands.

Groundskeeper (3)

- Issue with garbage in parks. Park keeper, someone with authority that makes sure things are clean and running smoothly. People of Guelph need more education about garbage/waste.
- At the Yorklands if the superintendent's house is a public space with cafe, classroom with washrooms, the public could get in out of the rain if the weather was changing.. and a groundskeeper could be there. The OR groundskeeper lived in the gatehouse and connected with the public who came for picnics, fishing and wedding photos..
- We used to have parks groundskeepers... in the 60s. Perhaps that is needed now especially.

Link parks/trails (3)

- Try to link parks and trails within the City
- Link parks and trails to parts of the city
- Connecting parks up more so joggers can run through the parks. Calgary is a good model?

River banks (2)

- We have beautiful rivers Keep as much of the river banks parkland
- All river banks should be kept as public park land

POPs (2)

- Privately owned publicly accessible (POPs) needed in a high density living environment
- POPS for new high-density development should not be credited fully for parkland dedication

Growth (2)

- Population growth will not persist – are you planning for eventual negative growth?
- Noting a couple of points I made verbally: I would like to see long term planning for Guelph no longer pursuing a pro-growth policy, in other words for systematic negative



growth as population growth eases off. On this point I suggest clearing a wider floodway that would result from a catastrophic dambreak at Guelph dam.

Other

- Let's become a "city within a park" rather than having parks within our city.
- Link more daycare programs, school programs, and senior programs to parks across the city. Partnerships can be so important for broadening the use of parks, improving mental health, and changing attitudes.
- Consider the ways that new Canadians use park areas. e.g. family gatherings or group park events. So design parks with these needs in mind.
- Get Developers onside to develop green spaces vs. focused on their bottom lines!!
- Developers need to convey land to the City, not just give cash-in-lieu.
- Make use of parking lots for recreational service. Make better use of micro parks.
- Guelph should be in the Green Belt to stop so much urbanization and business parks.
- Make use of undeveloped areas such as large area at the Old Reformatory lands
- Restrictive OP and zoning
- Redevelopment needs to include parkland. An example is the proposed intensification at Willow West Mall. I don't remember any parkland being part of the plan to add several apartment buildings to that site. That area of the City is already underserved in terms of parkland.

Additional Comments

Yorklands (22)

- Yorklands Park should be a priority to keep as parkland. It is a large park, which Guelph has few, if any, of, with lots of potential for activities in the buildings.
- Accumulating large pieces of green space. Yorklands offers this huge opportunity. We should absolutely acquire as much of this property for the future. It's been obvious through the pandemic how much we need open spaces to walk in.
- We'd like to see Yorklands Green Hub as a priority for the city to preserve the naturalized areas. Studies have shown that children need these areas for their development. This is a perfect time to save this property for the whole city but particularly the east end. The ability to get outside and enjoy naturalized areas is particularly important during the pandemic. We need more undeveloped areas as opposed to parkettes with steel and plastic play equipment.
- The Yorklands is an incredible area that is currently being used as a park by the community. It would be an incredible loss if significant trails and natural areas were not preserved for community use.
- Yorklands Green Hub. Want to acquire old OR grounds on York Road and use for outdoor education.
 - Are you suggesting that the City buy this portion of the OR lands?



- It would be a terrible mistake NOT to include recreational land in the Yorklands Hub area.
- Yes to parks and protected green spaces in Yorklands. What an amazing opportunity for the city!
- The Yorklands should be deeded to the City as a 'gift' from the Province.
- The Province could donate a portion as a Regional park. WE already own it as taxpayers!
- OR would be great park
- City should ask for donation from Province without encumbrance from developer for heritage area of Yorklands – e.g. buildings, ponds, and 70 acres for Yorklands Green Hub.
- More people want to connect to nature and the Yorklands is such a great opportunity for that. Our urban forest should be part of parkland.. increasing tree canopy needs to happen. Mature trees needed to be protected as possible with more diversity added to provide keystone species for pollinators while cooling the city and offering shade.
- We would like to see Yorklands Green Hub turned into an ecological park. *(Comment from individual that attended both public sessions)*
- Yorklands Green Hub an excellent opportunity to capture parkland. Interest in historical preservation. Heritage buildings at parks. Opportunity to do something with that property in collab with the City and developers. *(Comment from individual that attended both public sessions)*
 - Well said
 - I support Greenlands Hub area to be set aside for an ecological park.
 - Me too!
 - So do I
 - I echo support for the Yorklands Green Hub/former reformatory property as a future park and community, natural, and historical amenity.
 - Yorklands Hub is a huge area, it could be both park and natural area and fishing and trails. Lots of room for all to enjoy
- I would like to add my support for retaining as much as possible of the “Yorklands Green Hub” land as a naturalized public park with accessible trails, additional trees, etc.

Aging demographic (11)

- On the topic of use...I joined you tonight because parks seem to be overwhelmingly geared to children. I would like to (non-team sport) encourage exercise facilities in parks. For users 55+
- Changing demographics in terms of age are not reflected in the types of parks that we build. Moving toward an older demographic. Amenities that are not skewed toward children all the time. A feature that many would enjoy. Need areas for exercise for older adults.
 - Even something as simple as more benches and picnic tables
 - Group exercise, tai chi, surface that is not grass but will absorb impact
 - Community gardens could appeal to older demographics as well



- Covered gathering spaces may be better for older demographics who want to safely visit with loved ones
- Biodiversity is important for all ages and for mental well-being
- Having close parking/transit would be important to an aging population (e.g., the park might be flat but there might be hills to get there). They might be tired before they even get to the park area.
- Have you looked into other communities who already have a similar demographic? (e.g. in Europe or other parts of the world)
- I would echo what was just said in terms of ages, but also there seems to be an inordinate amount of space is reserved for organized sports – not representative of the proportion of the population that plays organized sports
- There was discussion during the webinar of also meeting the need for outdoor recreation space by older persons who may be less physically active but could benefit from opportunities for socialization provided by seating and tables in the shade of trees and protected from the wind. Such areas could be included in many parks. They could also be created as what used to be called “parkettes” – small areas planted with trees and shrubs, equipped with seating, warmed by the sun. These could be included within dense, multi-unit housing and commercial areas and provide residents with a pleasant outdoor space close to home that can be easily reached on foot by those with limited mobility.

Cyclists (11 in response to one specific comment)

- Frequent park user. Trouble with cyclists. Deaf and can't hear them ring the bell.
- *What could be in place to address concern?*
 - Wear a shirt that says "I'm deaf" on the back
 - I think the T-shirt idea for trails is a good one. Thank you for bringing this up. This isn't something I've given thought to before.
 - Don't have a solution
 - Better education
 - Walkers not being able to hear them
 - Some cyclists go too fast – need to slow down and respect pedestrians
 - Separate bike lanes vs walking paths would help that issue.
 - Marked bike/walk lanes
 - Most big cities, like Calgary and Ottawa have direction guides, walkers and cyclists in separate sides
 - Regarding the cyclists, perhaps posted signs to remind cyclists about ringing their bells when they're approaching. I think public education is really important. During the pandemic it was quite frightening to have cyclists zoom by the no warning and little regard for walkers.

High-density/intensification (6)

- Multi-residential developments (small in terms of development, but lots of units). Policies suggest we don't acquire a park at that site. But what is an appropriate size park



for that size development. Smaller parks integrated into intense developments. Reach out to Willow West community group, speak to people in those areas. What are their needs?

- Parklands need to be included. Creative intensification.
- City park development guidelines need to be updated to reflect a high density community; not the old standards for a sprawling suburban context (1950s-2000s)
- There should be required on-site private development amenity areas for in-fill applications as well as public parkland provided
- Toronto has developed a policy whereby high density areas contain a private/public use area could this be achieved thru the use of section 37 of the planning act under the community benefit charge. 4% is allowed does this exceed the amount we could collect as parkland dedication.
- Value of greenspace for people in high rises, high socioeconomic needs, is much higher for those with backyards. Where is their voice? Concerned about that.

Washrooms (6)

- Lack of washrooms. Difficult for people with seniors, young children, medical conditions – everyone! Hoping this is included in park "features"
- Washrooms in parks make park use possible for individuals and families.
- Agreed about washrooms and would add that having scent-free products being used in the washrooms is an important accessibility feature.
- Porta Potties are really not accessible to all sadly.
- Washrooms in Riverside are locked in the winter, during COVID. People need access to washrooms. Understand that vandals destroy them. Locking doors is not the solution. Maintenance and supervising the washrooms needs to be part of the cost.
- Even the washrooms in the train station are closed...because the entire train station is locked.

Other

- I am glad to see that the South End Rec Centre is finally going to be built!!!
- Could you please make sure that developer input on all of these processes is reported separately from citizen input? Developers have a pecuniary conflict of interest in this matter. Minimizing parkland maximizes profit for developers, although it minimizes quality of life for citizens.
 - The input from the Developer meeting will be reported separately – there may also be developers attending these community meetings. In those cases, developer comments will not be separated out, as no comments will be attributed to those who made them
- City should provide free transit to outside City park areas. Expand opportunities for those without access to cars.
 - The City OWNS Starkey Hill?
 - Was Starkey's also purchased to protect groundwater?



- Bus routes to go to park areas
 - Free bus passes for trip to the Yorklands would be sooooo helpful.
- Willow West > Has had difficulties working with the City. Participate in conversations and plans, then would like to see report back. What's been done?. Report card of what was said, what's been done. Otherwise we are saying the same thing over and over again.
- I would like to see the idea of 'what is recreation' to broaden to include activities that are not specifically physically oriented (e.g. sports) so children and adults who are not physically inclined can get out and away from the computer. Bird watching, art plein air, science studies, picnicking, photography, that are free events
- A lot of sport fields. No space for people to gather, sit. No picnic tables in parks. Need to create a sense of community.
- I want local parks to have designated areas for community gardens so that when the need arises, every community within Guelph will have access to food production without new bylaws having to be passed.
- I want to preserve all of the GRCA owned lands in the city as parks. This includes all of the lands they own that was the former a Niska Waterfowl Park including the land on the south side of Niska
 - I agree – the former Kortright Waterfowl Park should remain a park. It is a key part of Guelph's heritage story as it was bought by Henry Mack to house his animal collection. Please do not make it a subdivision.
- Trails and networks. Access to parks. Would like access via scooters, roller skates etc. Accessibility issues with all of the gravel trails. More dangerous, especially for kids, if they have to use the roads.
- Distinction between park and natural areas. Protected woodland is not the same as a park. Greenspace will be damaged. What is guiding current park distribution?
 - Good points
 - [City response] Decisions are guided by policies. Draft policies based on values. Three factors: Existing built form, proposed population growth and park distribution. Should be able to walk to a park. Should be a certain amount of parkland available for a certain amount of people. trying to calibrate that. Capitalize on development to get new parks.
 - Sounds backwards. Rely on developers for Parkland acquisition. :(
- Investment now in parkland to prepare for future growth seems wise
- Guelph is blessed with heritage, trails and parkland.
- Preserving part of the Reformatory lands for public use is our last opportunity to create a "statement" park for the city. Preserving the trestle bridge is important to ensure trail access to the reformatory lands.
 - The old OR property is actually already being used as a parkland. So the question is do we want to lose it?
 - It would be perfect for a lease arrangement with the province.
- The policy should include heritage preservation of unique and disappearing assets like barns, farmhouses, ruins. There are great examples in the Clair-Maltby area – the last vestiges of your agricultural history. Barns would make excellent shelters for activities



like dancing, vertical farms, circus training, theatres, etc. The ruins of the Amos farm would be fascinating.

- I like the suggestion of barns for community gatherings and other activities
- Can the policy include some minimum infrastructure if there may be request from the community, e.g. access to water for community gardens/ice rinks, message board, enclosed area for off-leash dog park – in our neighbourhood, dog owners were using the pre-school enclosed area to let their dogs run loose, but they did not clean up after their dogs... :(
- The minimum infrastructure could be built into the budget for new parks and a plan in place to retrofit already established parks
- Guelph continues to experience a loss of tree canopy and of natural areas. I think that existing and future city parks provide an opportunity help mitigate these losses through the inclusion of as many native trees and shrubs as possible in the landscaping of parks.
- I appreciate that open, grassed spaces are necessary to allow for recreational activities such as soccer, baseball and other sports but the space around the perimeter of these parks could be quite densely planted with native trees, shrubs and forbs. Most often, trees in parks are planted singly, in isolation as “specimens” surrounded by mown grass. As a result, many do not survive due to damage from mowing equipment and compaction of the soil. Trees should be planted in multiples/groves and in combination with shrubs and forbs.
- More parks: Buy Armtec property. Buy/get gifted OR property(at least part designated as undevelopable). Complete Niska waterfowl park. Using the Covered bridge as the hub: develop radial trailways along the rivers to Guelph Lake, to Arkell Springs, to Niska Water fowl park, to OR property
- More micro parks/parkettes
- More passive parks in small spaces that already exist.
- Need to utilise existing small green spaces. Eramosa to Wyndham This is downtown there does not seem to be any city plan to properly develop this space.
- Placemaking is an afterthought. How is this linked to the Tourism Guelph see a "must see destination"
- Have a "design competition" for development of downtown linear strip along river.
- AG of Guelph Sculpture Park is too small for its contents. Some Items should be transferred to the city along trailways to make the urban trail experience more interesting and a destination.

