

Report from Parks, Recreation and Culture Services, Business Planning and Strategic Services

Date of Report: May 2, 2017

Date of Meeting: May 31, 2017

Report Number: PRCS-B010-2016

File: 60.2.15

Subject: The Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund

Recommendation

That Budget Standing Committee receive the Payment-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund Expenditure Policy, provided in Appendix 1; and

Further that Budget Standing Committee refer this report and the Payment-in-Lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund Expenditure Policy to City Council for approval.

FORTHWITH

Summary

The Budget Standing Committee's motion from June 20, 2016 seeks to utilize the Parkland Dedication reserve as a sustainable funding source to meet the City's park renewal needs.

Staff agree that identifying funding sources for park renewal is a priority and have considered the Committee's recommendation of using the Parkland Dedication Fund to accomplish this. A further review was also completed by staff into alternatives such as the Capital Budget, Infrastructure Levy Reserve and one time revenue sources. After much consideration it has been determined that these alternate sources ultimately offer a greater opportunity to achieve the Committee's goal of sustainable funding for park revitalization.

These financial support options have the ability to fund the City's park renewal needs without hindering the City's ability to purchase land for parks and recreation. To provide clarity on the recommended use of the Parkland Dedication Fund and consistent future application, an expenditure policy that reserves the Fund's use for land acquisition is recommended for approval (Appendix 1).

Background

At its meeting on June 20, 2016 the Budget Standing Committee approved the following motion by Councillor Haywood:

"That staff be directed to prepare a report regarding the implementation of an \$800,000 cap on the Parkland Dedication Fund, any funds in excess of this

amount be dedicated for use as a Parks Renewal Fund and on the feasibility of this implementation.”

Collection of funds-in-lieu of parkland dedication and expenditures of these funds are regulated by the Ontario Planning Act and the City’s related by-laws. The Planning Act requires that funds collected are “paid into a special account and spent only for the acquisition of land to be used for park or other public recreational purposes, including the erection, improvement or repair of buildings and the acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes.”

Current Parkland Dedication Fund balance

As of January 17, 2017, the Fund’s balance is \$1,116,091. Of this, \$134,205 has been committed by Council to specific projects or geographic areas resulting in an unrestricted balance of \$981,886. The balances of comparator municipalities are shown in Appendix 2, Table 1.

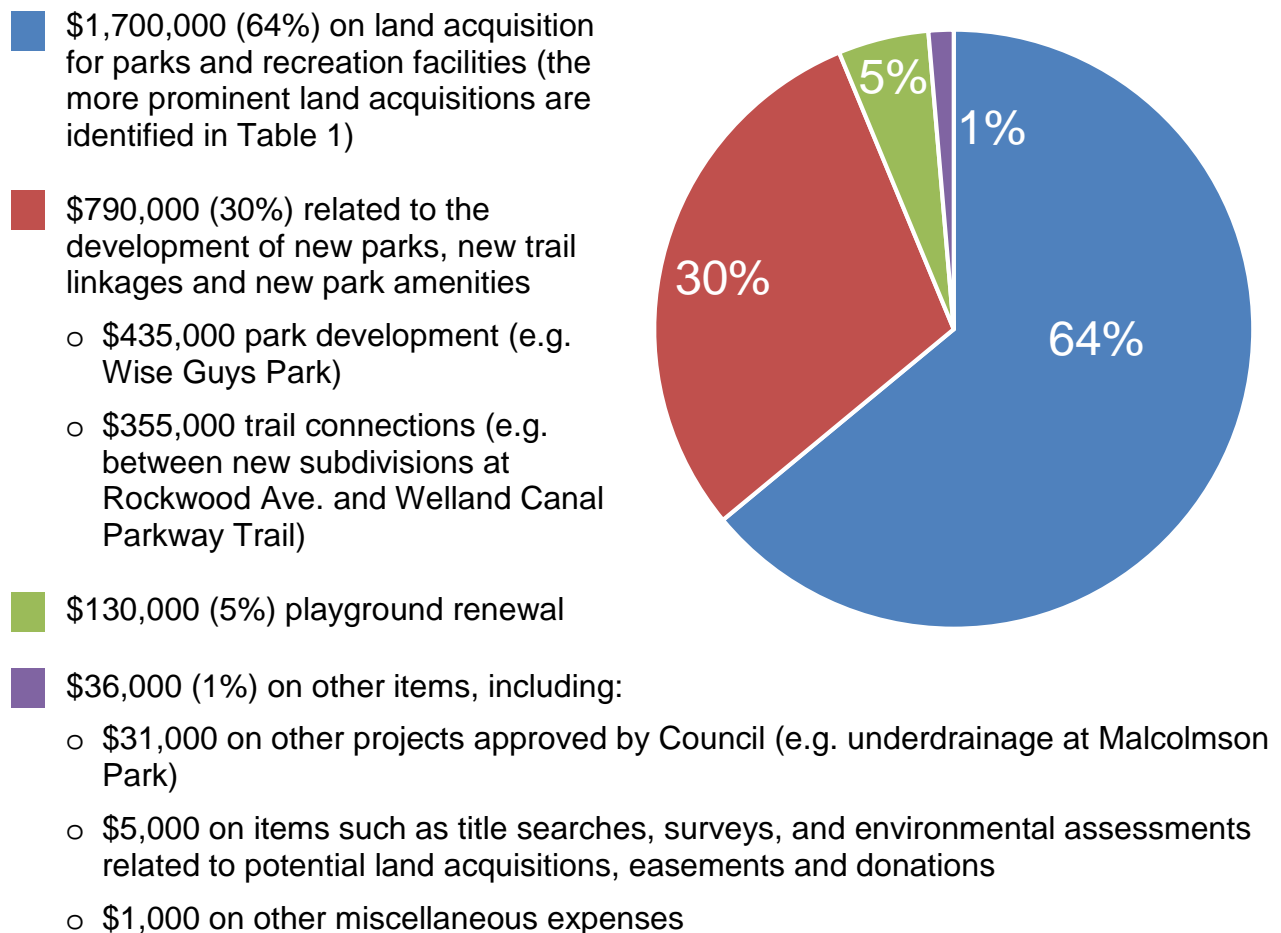
Past Parkland Dedication Fund growth

Between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 2016 approximately \$2.59 Million has been added to the Parkland Dedication Fund through revenues (including deposits and interest). Over this period the average annual revenues into the Fund were \$181,827 (in 2016 dollars, estimated at annual inflation rate of 3%); the annual revenues are outlined in Appendix 2, Table 2.

History of Parkland Dedication Fund expenditures

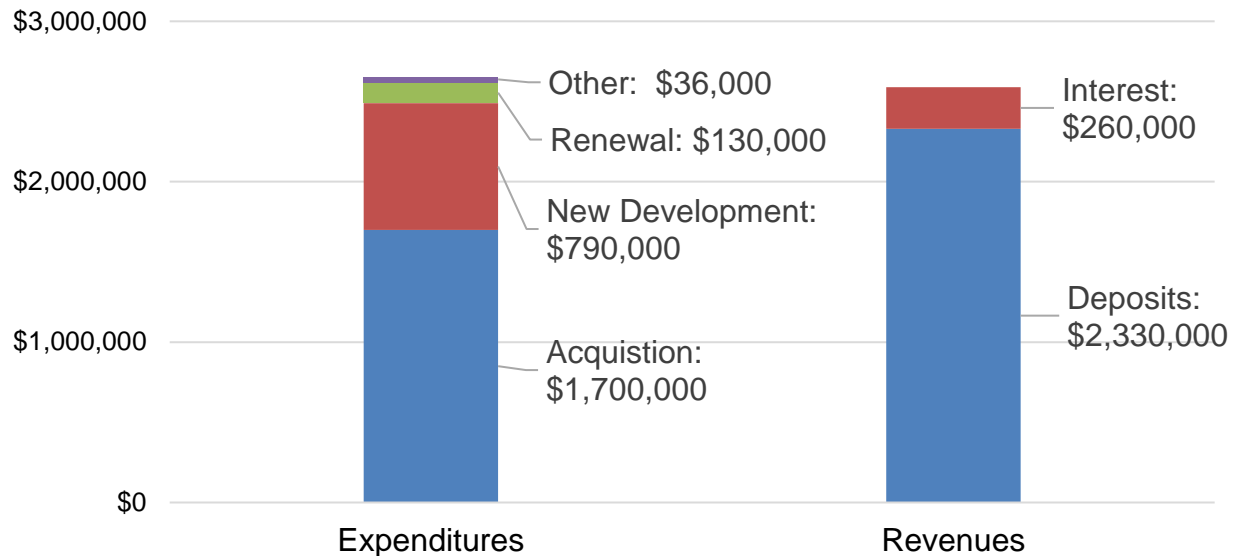
Between 1999 and 2016 approximately \$2.65 Million was spent from the Parkland Dedication Fund. This is a good indication that the Fund is being used, however it should be understood that expenditures vary from year to year depending on the acquisitions needs of the City and availability of lands for purchase.

The Parkland Dedication Fund expenditures since 1999 can be broken down as follows:



Between 1999 and 2016 the Parkland Dedication Fund has been used to acquire land for some of the City's most prominent parks and recreation facilities, including Lester B. Pearson Park, Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre (including the artificial turf field and skate park), and the Meridian Centre. Examples of some of the land acquired through the Parkland Dedication Fund are provided in Appendix 2, Table 3.

The following chart compares Parkland Dedication Fund revenues and expenditures between 1999 and 2016. The information illustrates that since 1999 the City's expenditures and revenue are of similar magnitudes.



Park renewal needs

On January 25, 2017 the Budget Standing Committee received a report on the City's Park Renewal Plan to address the need for playgrounds, tennis courts and basketball courts ([PRCS-B007-2017](#)). Management of other park amenities, including trails, irrigation, underdrainage, fences, and benches require further review to provide a forecast. Washrooms and parking lots are considered through building assessments and prioritization, and outdoor aquatic facilities through the approved Aquatics Implementation Plan. A report on the Recreation Master Plan Committee's prioritization of playground and courts renewal is forthcoming.

As indicated in this report the total capital funding required for playgrounds, basketball courts and tennis courts between 2017 and 2020 is \$5,045,000. The 2017 Capital budget approved \$178,000 towards renewal of courts and playgrounds; and the capital forecast for 2018 through 2020 includes an additional \$1,000,000: \$375,000 in 2018, \$350,000 in 2019, and \$275,000 in 2020. This leaves an unfunded need of \$3,867,000 between 2018 and 2020, as follows.

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Renewal need | \$5,045,000 | |
| <i>less</i> | Approved funding | \$ 178,000 | <i>(2017 Capital Budget)</i> |
| <i>less</i> | Forecast funding | \$1,000,000 | <i>(2018 – 2020 Capital Forecast)</i> |
| <i>equals</i> | Unfunded renewal need | \$3,867,000 | |

Report

Parkland acquisition needs

The Garden City Plan, the Parks Policy Plan, and the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan are the City's key policy documents that identify parkland acquisition priorities. Excerpts from these documents that speak to parkland acquisition priorities are provided in Appendix 3.

The Parks Policy Plan identifies neighbourhood, district and city-wide parkland deficiencies in different areas of the City, and forecasts a combined parkland deficiency in north and central St. Catharines. That Parks Policy Plan further notes that these variations in service standards are difficult to rectify and recommends focusing on a specific list of park acquisition priorities instead of trying to address historic deficiencies on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis. From this recommendation, the Garden City Plan, Parks Policy Plan, and Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan work together to identify priority land acquisitions (Appendix 3).

Land purchase opportunity timeframe

Depending on land ownership the timeframe available to review and act upon potential acquisitions can be very limited. In the case of surplus school sites the City must submit an expression of interest to the school board within 90 days of receiving notice that a property is available for purchase and an agreement must be reached within 180 days. In the case of surplus federal lands the City has 30 days to identify its interest and an additional 90 days to confirm the interest, supported by a financial commitment. The timeframe of lands purchased through development applications varies depending on the application but could be as short as 3 months. Private lands that become available for purchase have no set timeframe, and could be sold to another interested party at any time. During this timeframe staff must circulate the opportunity, evaluate the benefits and costs of acquisition, and report to Council. Failure to act on a potential acquisition in a timely manner can result in a lost opportunity. Given that some properties only become available for purchase every few generations, or are subsequently developed following acquisition, if an acquisition is missed because of lack of funds, it is possible that the opportunity will not be available again in the future.

Acquisition opportunities require sufficient reserves

Staff do not support using the Parkland Dedication Fund on projects, such as park asset renewal, that can be prioritized, forecasted and financed through the capital or operating budget process, or through other external funding avenues. Given the relatively small size of the Parkland Dedication Fund (relative to comparator and other Ontario municipalities and the cost of land), its growth history, and the rising cost of land, past staff recommendations have been to maintain the Fund as a reserve for priority land acquisitions; staff recommend this continue to be the priority. These acquisition opportunities cannot be planned and budgeted for as they emerge spontaneously. The use of the Parkland Dedication Fund on asset renewal may undermine the City's ability

to acquire these properties when they are available and with the nature of acquisitions missed opportunities may not be available again in the future. As such, it is recommended that the use of Parkland Dedication Fund be limited to the acquisition priorities identified in the Garden City Plan, the Parks Policy Plan, and the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan (recommended policy provided in Appendix 1)

Use of Fund for assets with an end of life limits the legacy

An important consideration is the future financial value of what the City obtains from the Parkland Dedication Fund. For example, if the Fund is used to purchase land, that land will be available indefinitely for public use and the value of that land will increase annually. If, however the Fund is used to purchase equipment, such as a playground, the value of that equipment depreciates each year and at the end of its lifecycle needs to be replaced at a greater cost than what it was originally purchased for with no long-term net gain of the Fund's use.

Parkland Dedication Fund Expenditure Policy recommended

Appendix 1 provides the recommended Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund Expenditure Policy. This policy proposes to limit use of the Parkland Dedication Fund on the acquisition of the following priority lands (simplified from the Garden City Plan, Parks Policy Plan, and Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan):

1. Waterfront

Lands to complete gaps in the trail system along the Lake Ontario waterfront, increase public access to the waterfront, and improve waterfront parkland.

2. Playing fields and recreation facilities

Lands for playing fields and recreation facilities to accommodate recreational demand defined within the Parks Policy Plan or the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan.

Example: 240 St. Paul St. West (Seymour-Hannah)

3. Trails and linkages

Lands to link, connect and extend the City's Green Space and cultural heritage landscapes and routes, and link together with other local municipal and upper tier government or agency parkland, open space, natural and cultural heritage areas and corridors.

Lands to establish, extend and link active transportation connections between the City's Green Space, the Downtown, residential, employment, commercial and mixed use neighbourhoods, community facilities and other activity use areas.

Example: Surplus rail lines for trail development

4. Urbanized core area (e.g. downtown)

Lands to establish special urban parks to support the creation of parkettes, urban squares and plazas in urbanized core areas and at nodes.

Lands to support streetscape improvements (beyond standard provisions of the City's standard road profiles and complete streets policies).

Example: Land required to develop a civic square

5. External agency parkland

Lands that are within the City's current park and recreation inventory, that are operated or managed by the City but owned by other agencies, upon being declared surplus by those agencies. These lands are integral to the park and recreation system and the City should be prepared to purchase these properties should these agencies declare these lands surplus to their needs. This situation is similar to how the City obtained Lester B. Pearson Park and Sunset Beach (previously Municipal Beach), which were previously leased to the City by the federal government and St. Lawrence Seaway Authority (respectively) but declared surplus by those bodies.

Example: Lakeside Park, Grantham Lions Park

Expenditure policies of comparator/other municipalities

The policies and by-laws that speak to the use of Parkland Dedication Funds varies widely and in this context do not provide an appropriate model for St. Catharines. This is due to differences in Fund balances and historic growth, as well as forms of development. For example, parkland acquisition needs for municipalities with significant greenfield development are focused in areas of development growth and parks are typically developed through a combination of parkland dedication and development charges. This is not the case in St. Catharines so modeling an expenditure policy after a municipality with predominantly greenfield development would not meet the City's unique needs.

Feasibility of an \$800,000 cap

The Budget Standing Committee requested a report on “implementing an \$800,000 cap on the Parkland Dedication Fund, with any funds in excess of this amount being used for parks renewal”. Staff were unable to find an example of a similar cap in other municipalities.

An appropriate cap that exceeds the value of the City’s parkland acquisition needs could be one approach to ensure that the Parkland Dedication Fund remains available for acquisition priorities in the future. Unfortunately, it is challenging to accurately estimate the value of the City’s parkland needs and rather than implement an \$800,000 cap staff are proposing an alternate approach. This method includes the use of the alternative funding sources previously detailed in this report and through the attached policy found in Appendix 1. Applying the proposed policy would still reserve the Fund’s use for land acquisition while accommodating for the fact that acquisition opportunities cannot always be planned and budgeted for.

Next steps: Update parkland dedication by-law

A comprehensive review and update of the City’s parkland dedication by-law, which addresses the collection of funds, is on the work plan for Planning and Building Services, Legal and Clerks Services, and PRCS. This review will consider such items as the collection of parkland dedication on non-residential properties and how land value is calculated to determine cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication amounts. The proposed expenditure policy would be reviewed and updated, if required, at that time.

Other funding sources better suited to parks renewal

The renewal of parks courts and playgrounds is a cyclical process that can be planned for. The use of funding sources that are stable to support this cyclical renewal is ideal to stabilize the financial impact year over year and to ensure consistent service levels to the community. To accomplish this, it is recommended that the Capital budget be the primary source of funding for the Parks Renewal Plan for playgrounds and courts. The Capital budget will better meet the funding needs for parks renewal without hindering the City’s ability to achieve future acquisition accomplishments.

Recognizing the significant asset management needs for all City assets, additional one time funding sources to supplement the Capital budget are recommended, including revenue transfers, grants, sponsorships and donations. Staff continue to pursue these one-time funding opportunities; and when successful, these revenues supplement the current compounded funding needs. Once the current court and playground inventory is up to date these one-time funding sources could support the reallocation of planned Capital funding for other asset management priorities.

Financial Implications

Excess funds will not meet park renewal needs

As reported to the Budget Standing Committee on June 20, 2016 and January 25, 2017, staff have assessed the condition of playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts at all City parks. Approximately \$5,000,000 is required between 2016 - 2020 to meet the current renewal needs of these assets. This forecast only includes playground, tennis and basketball needs and does not include complete park renewals/redevelopments and other items such as trails, sport fields, ball diamonds, fences, park furniture, and outdoor aquatic facilities. This also does not include washrooms and parking lots, which are considered through building assessments and prioritization, or other requests identified by Council, user groups, and the public.

If a cap is implemented the value of the excess funds would be no greater than the annual growth of the Parkland Dedication Fund (deposits plus interest less any funds used for acquisition). From 1999 to 2016, the average annual revenue into the Parkland Dedication Fund was \$181,827 (in 2016 dollars). Given the renewal needs identified above, the use of the Parkland Dedication Fund in excess of the cap would be expected to address an average of 18% (\$181,827) of the annual renewal needs for playgrounds and tennis and basketball courts only, leaving a significant funding gap for park asset renewals, while potential limiting the ability for any acquisition opportunities that arise.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

This report is related to:

- Social sustainability action item 4.1, prioritize and implement recommendations from the Recreation Master Plan with a focus on balancing recreation services for all ages, demographics and abilities.
- Economic sustainability action item 2.1, update financial controls and debt management strategy to better manage escalating costs of City operations and services.
- Economic sustainability action item 2.4, optimize capital infrastructure through effective asset management and sustainable investment.

Conclusion

The Planning Act allows the Parkland Dedication Fund to be used for acquisition of land for park or other recreational purposes and the erection, improvement or repair of buildings and the acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes. Given the small balance of the City's Parkland Dedication Fund (relative to comparator and other Ontario municipalities), the City's acquisition priorities, and the cost of land, it is recommended that the Parkland Dedication Fund be reserved for land

acquisitions. Acquisition opportunities can emerge spontaneously, and as such cannot always be planned and budgeted for. Without an adequate reserve fund these acquisition opportunities could be lost and may not be available again in the future. The proposed Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund Expenditure Policy (Appendix 1), reserves the Fund's use for land acquisitions and is recommended for approval.

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Submitted by: Amy Tomaino, Manager of Business Planning and Strategic Services

Approved by: Phil Cristi, Acting Director, Parks, Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund Expenditure Policy

Policy From: Parks, Recreation and Culture Services

Issue Date: **Revision Date:** ----

Review Date:

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to identify the purposes for which funds in the Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund shall be used. The acquisition priorities defined in this Policy are informed by the Garden City Plan, Parks Policy Plan, and Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan.

This policy is in addition to the City's Policy for Reserves and Reserve Funds.

Policy

Use of Funds

Funds in the Payment-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund shall:

1. Only be used for eligible expenditures as provided for under the Planning Act (as amended) and defined within this Policy.
2. Be free for use for any eligible expenditure defined by this Policy, except for the following:
 - a. Funds that are subject to an appeal.
 - b. Funds that Council committed to a specific geographic area or use, prior to the passing of this Policy.
3. Not be used to offset, or as a substitute for, normal yearly budgets for parks and recreation growth, repair or renewal.

Eligible expenditures

Parkland dedication funds shall be reserved for acquisition of lands to achieve the following priorities, which are implemented on an opportunity basis:

1. Waterfront

Lands to complete gaps in the trail system along the Lake Ontario waterfront, increase public access to the waterfront, and improve waterfront parkland.

2. Playing fields and recreation facilities

Lands for playing fields and recreation facilities to accommodate recreational demand defined within the Parks Policy Plan or the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan.

3. Trails and linkages

Lands to link, connect and extend the City's Green Space and cultural heritage landscapes and routes, and link together with other local municipal and upper tier government or agency parkland, open space, natural and cultural heritage areas and corridors.

Lands to establish, extend and link active transportation connections between the City's Green Space, the Downtown, residential, employment, commercial and mixed use neighbourhoods, community facilities and other activity use areas.

4. Urbanized core area (downtown)

Lands to establish special urban parks to support the creation of parkettes, urban squares and plazas in urbanized core areas and at nodes.

Lands to support streetscape improvements (beyond standard provisions of the City's standard road profiles and complete streets policies).

5. External agency parkland

Lands that are within the City's current park and recreation inventory, that are operated or managed by the City but owned by other agencies, upon being declared surplus by those agencies.

Policy Review

A review of this policy shall be initiated two years from the date of issue and every five years thereafter.

A review of this policy may be recommended following:

1. An update to the City's strategic policy documents, such as the Garden City Plan, Parks Policy Plan, or the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan
2. Any significant changes to the City's urban boundary
3. Any significant changes to the City's growth forecasts.

Table 1. Parkland dedication – fund balance

| Municipality | Fund Balance¹ |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Barrie | \$4,400,000 |
| Cambridge | Deficit |
| Guelph | \$3,543,150 |
| Kitchener | \$1,000,000 |
| Kingston | \$623,109 |
| Niagara Falls | Info not available |
| Oshawa | Info not available |
| St. Catharines | \$1,116,091² |
| Thunder Bay | \$310,431 |
| Waterloo | \$14,700,000 |
| Windsor | Info not available |
| Average | \$3,211,598 |

¹ Fund balances dates for comparator municipalities varies between May and July 2016

² Fund balance includes commitments and restricted use deposits

Table 2. Parkland dedication – annual revenue (deposits plus interest)

| Year | Revenue | Inflated to \$2016 (3%) |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2016 | \$234,889 | \$234,889 |
| 2015 | \$200,457 | \$206,471 |
| 2014 | \$154,012 | \$163,392 |
| 2013 | \$154,236 | \$168,538 |
| 2012 | \$189,279 | \$213,035 |
| 2011 | \$106,624 | \$123,606 |
| 2010 | \$90,377 | \$107,915 |
| 2009 | \$92,535 | \$113,806 |
| 2008 | \$224,924 | \$284,927 |
| 2007 | \$205,193 | \$267,731 |
| 2006 | \$110,055 | \$147,905 |
| 2005 | \$188,692 | \$261,194 |
| 2004 | \$116,170 | \$165,631 |
| 2003 | \$93,332 | \$137,061 |
| 2002 | \$78,267 | \$118,386 |
| 2001 | \$110,132 | \$171,582 |
| 2000 | \$156,764 | \$251,561 |
| 1999 | \$81,835 | \$135,260 |
| Average (1999 – 2016) | \$143,765 | \$181,827 |

Table 3. Example of lands purchased with the Parkland Dedication Fund since 1999

| Land | Ward | Details/Benefits |
|--|---------------|---|
| Portions of Johnson Park | St. Patrick's | Land purchased from a private landowner to meet the parkland needs of a growing residential neighbourhood. |
| 40 St. Paul St. (Meridian Centre) | St. Patrick's | Land purchased from a private landowner required to construct the pedestrian access from St. Paul St. to the Meridian Centre. |
| Maplecrest Park | Merritton | Purchased from DSBN following closure of Maple Crest Elementary School. |
| Portions of Pic Leeson Park | Merritton | Purchased from St. Lawrence Seaway to maintain public access to parking lot. |
| Lester B. Pearson Park | St. George's | Purchased from federal government to meet neighbourhood and district park and playing field needs. Property contains Kiwanis Aquatics Centre and Dr. Huq Family Library Branch, two soccer fields, splash pad, playground, and two tennis courts. |
| 240 St. Paul St. West (Seymour-Hannah) | St. Andrew's | Land purchased from a private landowner to construct Seymour-Hannah Sports and Entertainment Centre, Kiwanis Artificial Turf Field, and the skate park. |

Garden City Plan (2012)

Park Acquisition (section 13.1.3)

Parkland acquisition to achieve the objectives of the Parks Policy Plan and the Recreation Master Plan may occur through purchase, donation, bequest, expropriation, and dedication,

- i) the City should establish incentive programs, including preferred or beneficial zoning, to encourage acquisition of parkland.

a) Priorities for Acquisition

Parkland acquisition priorities that should be implemented on an opportunity basis include:

- i) lands to link, connect and extend the City's Green Space and cultural heritage landscapes and routes, and link together with other local municipal and upper tier government or agency parkland, open space, natural and cultural heritage areas and corridors;
- ii) lands to complete gaps in the trail system along the Lake Ontario waterfront, increasing public access to the waterfront, and improve waterfront parkland;
- iii) lands to establish special urban parks to support the creation of parkettes, urban squares and plazas in urbanized core areas and at nodes;
- iv) lands to establish, and link to, greened gateway initiatives and opportunities at key entrance locations into the City's urban fabric, the Downtown, and residential, employment, commercial and mixed use neighbourhoods;
- v) lands to establish, extend and link active transportation connections between the City's Green Space, the Downtown, residential, employment, commercial and mixed use neighbourhoods, community facilities and other activity use areas;
- vi) lands to support streetscape improvements;
- vii) lands for playing fields to accommodate recreational demand.

Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan (2015)

Parks, Beaches, and Trails (section 4.11)

From a fiscal and land availability perspective, there are few opportunities to add significant amounts of open space to the existing supply of parkland due to a shortage of available land and the high cost of land. In moving forward with the implementation of the Parks Policy Plan, the City should continue to emphasize the following:

- Providing parkland in new residential growth areas and any potential gap areas, using parkland dedication set forth in the Ontario Planning Act where permissible to do so. This may include identifying areas where there may be shortfalls in certain parkland typologies (e.g. District Parks, particularly since the noted deficit in rectangular sports fields may place a greater requirement for these types of parks).
- Striving to acquire ‘lands to complete gaps in the trail system along the Lake Ontario waterfront, increasing public access to the waterfront, and improve waterfront parkland’ as per Section 13.1.3 of the Garden City Plan.

Recommendation 36

Continue to implement the Parks Policy Plan, along with its parkland classification system and service levels, as a guiding document that directs investment and management within the municipal parks system. Specific attention should be paid to pursuing parkland dedication and acquisition objectives of the Parks Policy Plan and the Garden City Plan, while outstanding Priority One and Priority Two trail-related actions should also be implemented where feasible, to continue to move towards an interconnected and comprehensive parks and active transportation system.

Recommendation 38

Continue to enhance public access, experience and connectivity within waterfront areas through strategic land acquisitions and park/trail improvements as per above.

Parks Policy Plan (2005)

Parks and Open Space Assessment – Action Items (section 5)

Recognize that there will be variations in the service standards throughout the City due to a historic difference in supply (e.g., core area lacks park space) and a shortage of available land that the City cannot easily rectify. Focus on addressing a specific list of park acquisition priorities rather than trying to address historic deficiencies that exist in some neighbourhoods.

Parkland Supply (section 5.2)

This inventory includes some park spaces that are owned by other agencies, but which are the subject of service agreements with the City. These spaces include Charles Ansell Park, Municipal Beach (owned by the Seaway Authority) [now owned by the City and named Sunset Beach], Grantham Lions Park, and the newly reclaimed, Glenridge Quarry (owned by the Region). Should changes to the role of mandate of any of these organizations/agencies change in a manner that affects the availability of these areas for public use, the City may need to initiate discussions regarding possible acquisitions.

New Park Development: Acquisition and Development Strategies (section 6.2)

Based on the assessment of parkland supply, and public and staff input, a number of parkland acquisition priorities have been identified, including the waterfront, land to complete the City's trail system, and additional greening in the core areas (including the Downtown, Merriton, Port Dalhousie and West St. Catharines). Identified acquisition priorities should be reviewed when land becomes available and should be considered during the land development process as a guide on whether land or cash-in-lieu should be sought. Where lands cannot be acquired to address deficiencies, then alternative greening opportunities should be pursued.

There is a desire to 'green' the downtown core. Through the policies that encourage the creation of 'special urban parks' and the changes to the current parkland dedication requirements, the City will be in a better position to accomplish this goal.

The following are parkland acquisition priorities that should be implemented on an opportunity basis:

1. Waterfront: The City should continue to assign a high priority to completing gaps in the waterfront trail, increasing public access to the waterfront and improving waterfront parks.
2. Land to Extend the City's Trail System: In neighbourhoods where the supply of parkland is less than the desired municipal standard, priority should be assigned to completing identified gaps in the linkage system as a way of increasing the functional supply of parkland. (Trail Improvement priorities are detailed in Section 7)
3. Core Area: As the City seeks to transform its core areas, greening has been identified as a priority. The City should seek to increase the amount of park space in the core area through the development of special urban parks as land becomes available through the land development process. The City should consider the projects and priorities established in the Comprehensive Development Strategies as a guide.
4. Land for Playing Fields: There is a high demand for soccer fields. Should the City not be able to accommodate this demand through the reallocation/redevelopment of some currently under-utilized ball diamonds and through agreements with the School Boards, there may be a need for additional land for playing fields.