

City of Cambridge

**Official Plan Review**

**Parks and Open Space  
Draft Policy Paper**



**May 2011**

**Please note that policy numbers and cross references are subject to change when the overall draft Official Plan is prepared**



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## 1. Overview

This proposed chapter (Chapter 7) of the Cambridge Official Plan provides policy direction with respect to parks and open space, recreation, facilities and trails - the “human aspects” of the open space system. The Natural Heritage System (and Environmental Management) is separated from the Parks and Open Space chapter and is proposed to form Chapter 3. This separation of the open space system into the “natural” and “human” aspects is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2005) and the Provincially-approved Regional Official Plan (ROP) (2010). The separation of human and natural open space aspects still recognizes the mutually beneficial linkages between them, but affords greater protection to the natural open space system, and flexibility to the human open space system. Chapter 8 will further define permitted uses within the respective open space designations (Natural Heritage Open Space System; Recreation, Cemetery and Open Space).

This proposed chapter (Chapter 7) will incorporate some of the “social aspects” found in the current Cambridge Official Plan (Chapter 10, Social Environment) and will suggest deleting others. The aspects that remain have some relationship to land use, while those that are deleted are already captured within the City’s Master Plans:

- Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space 2002-2022 (and its update document, the “*Master Plan for Leisure Services / Facilities Five Year Review 2008-2013*” (January 2010));
- 2010 Accessibility Plan;
- Heritage Master Plan (June 2008);
- Bikeway Network Master Plan (July 2008);
- Trails Master Plan (June 2010); and
- Cambridge Arts and Culture Master Plan (March 2009).

These documents provide a more flexible approach to addressing Social Environment aspects than the Official Plan.

Requirements arising from the Provincially-approved ROP (2010) involve the development of an Urban Greenlands Strategy and community gardens policies.

It is anticipated that future amendments regarding “sustainability issues” may result from the work associated with the formulation of the City’s Sustainability Strategy.

Finally, this chapter (Chapter 7) proposes new policy tools and updates to address the recreational needs associated with changing demographics as well as anticipated growth and intensification.

## 2. Rationale for Changes

The proposed revisions, updates, and new parks and open space policies derive from the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) (i.e. emphasis on healthy active communities, planning for pedestrian/cycling infrastructure, and the provision of a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, open space areas, and trails).

The Places to Grow Act introduced the “complete community” concept and requires that intensification areas be planned and designed to provide high quality public open spaces with site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places. The intensification/demographics issues are addressed through the proposed policies.

The Provincially-approved ROP (2010) introduced a requirement to develop and implement an Urban Greenlands Strategy. The City must also develop policies to support community gardens.

The City’s Master Plans pertaining to parks and open space issues are noted as the implementation instruments for policies in the Official Plan.

Margin notes are included to indicate if a proposed policy is taken from the existing Official Plan or new. If the policy is from the existing Official Plan, the margin notes will indicate whether it has been revised or updated. The margin notes will also indicate the source for new policies only where the policy is based on provincial, regional or municipal policies, documents or studies.

## 3. Proposed Official Plan Policies

### Chapter 7: Parks And Open Space

Deleted “Chapter 6: Natural Environment System Introduction.”

New “Chapter 7 Parks & Open Space Introduction.”

The protection and enhancement of Cambridge’s parks and open spaces, and the acquisition of new lands to support future demands, is a priority for the *City*. Parks and open spaces are an indispensable component of a *complete community* and contribute significantly to the health, economic, environmental, social and quality of life aspects of the city. The Cambridge Official Plan recognizes existing recreational parks and facilities while protecting and enhancing the Natural Heritage System. Intensification and changing demographics will present new opportunities and challenges in parks and open spaces planning and services provision. The social aspects of the parks and open space land uses are further detailed within the Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, Open Space; the Arts and Culture Master Plan; Accessibility Plan; the Bikeway Network Master Plan, the Heritage Master Plan and Trails Master Plan.

#### 7.0 Objectives

The following objectives provide a foundation for the parks and open space policies of this Plan:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Revised 2.2 d) Settlement Pattern  | a) To support social, cultural, artistic, heritage, educational and recreational initiatives that accommodate a range of needs;  |
| Revised 2.6 b) Social Environment by adding deleted 2.6c) emphasis on public transit.  | b) To promote the establishment and operation of facilities and services which are accessible and served by public transit where feasible;   |
| Revised 2.3 g) Natural Environment   | c) To maintain and further develop an accessible, continuous, safe and well maintained trail system;   |
| New Heritage Master Plan<br>A reference to aspects associated with parks and open space.   | d) To protect the parks, open space, gardens, private landscapes, views, vistas, and other neighbourhood characteristics and <i>cultural heritage resources</i> associated with <i>cultural heritage landscapes</i> ;  |
| Revised 2.3 f) Natural Environment   | e) To balance the needs for active and passive recreation while protecting <i>natural features</i> ;   |
| 2.3 k) Natural Environment revised to delete reference to acquiring open space through development charges, and addition of land purchase reference. | f) To pursue opportunities for additional open space throughout the city, including parkland dedications under the Planning Act, the purchase of land, and partnerships with other community interests;  |
| New - PPS and Growth Plan  | g) To develop a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings and high quality, vibrant, and attractive public open spaces and public realm design elements as components of <i>intensification areas</i> and as foundations of <i>complete communities</i> ; and |
| New – Master Plans   | h) To acquire land in order to meet future cemetery, recreation, parks and open space demands.   |

6.1.1.1 revised

## 7.1 The Open Space System

1. The open space system within Cambridge is a network of parks, open space, active and passive recreational facilities, trails, and cemeteries. The open space system includes the following key elements:

- a) *natural heritage system*;
- b) Core Environmental Features;
- c) floodplains and *hazardous lands*;
- d) *cultural heritage landscapes*;

Revised 6.1

- e) publicly-owned parks and open space;
- f) privately-owned parks and open space; and
- g) cemeteries.

12.5.1 Revised to remove references to Open Space District chapter 12 and to add Growth Plan and PPS references.

12.5.2 revised, incorporates ROP elements

New, Heritage Master Plan Incorporates the HMP vision (“re-uniting” core areas with rivers, page 13); as well as reference to past River Integration, River Activation, and Soskolne studies/plans. Builds on general Chapter 4 policies for “conserving, managing and enhancing cultural heritage resources” by introducing “public amenity along waterfront” policy thrust.  
Reference to Trails Master Plan and Bikeway Network Plan.

12.5.4 Updated

12.5.5 revised

12.4.2 revised

2. The *City* will establish a comprehensive public open space system to create healthy active communities, pedestrian/cycling infrastructure, and a full range of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, open space areas, bikeways and trails.
3. Wherever feasible and appropriate, river valleys, watercourses, utility rights-of-way, abandoned railway rights-of-way, *cultural heritage resources*, pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths, hedgerows, woodlots, cemeteries or similar features should be considered for incorporation into the design of the parks and open space system to provide for the physical continuity of and connection between different components of the system.
4. The *City* will encourage the continuation of existing, and the creation of new, publicly accessible open space along the banks of the Grand and Speed Rivers by establishing new public open spaces and enhanced trail connections, particularly in the core areas, through the development process.
5. The Trails Master Plan and Bikeway Network Plan serve as the standard for the future planning and development of an integrated trail system throughout Cambridge.
6. *Council* may pass by-laws, acquire and develop land, enter into agreements with School Boards, the GRCA, utility companies or private landowners or otherwise facilitate or encourage the management and use of lands for purposes to satisfy municipal public recreation area standards set by the *City*.
7. The *City* may acquire or enter into agreements to use lands located outside of the municipality for public recreational purposes where appropriate opportunities exist that would benefit the Cambridge community.
8. For the purposes of providing an adequate system of burial grounds, and if a sufficient amount of suitable land may not be available within the city for such purposes, *Council* may pass by-

laws, acquire and develop lands in another municipality for such purposes pursuant to the Cemeteries Act.

12.6 revised

9. The designation of privately-owned lands in this Plan as Open Space shall not be construed as requiring the *City* or any other agency to acquire such lands.

21.7 revised

10. The *City* will plan neighbourhood parks as areas of open space that provide active or passive recreational opportunities and are intended to be centrally located within a neighbourhood, provide safe and convenient pedestrian access, and where feasible will be located adjacent to schools in order to maximize multiple and shared use.

21.7 revised

11. The *City* will plan community parks which serve the recreational needs of several neighbourhoods or the entire city. These parks accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian access and facilities and are intended to provide both informal and organized recreational pursuits. Community parks may be located adjacent to larger open space such as school facilities in order to maximize multiple and shared use.

10.3 Community Space, revised  
= accessible, pedestrian and transit notions added

## 7.2 Community Space

The *City* will create, or encourage the creation of, accessible community spaces that can accommodate and promote public performances, gatherings and community events, with particular emphasis on the Community Core Areas and areas in proximity to the Speed and Grand Rivers, based on pedestrian-friendly environmental design principles, and where feasible with access to public transit.

10.1 Partnerships, revised

- added 6.1.6.7 notion of “interpretive programs and elements within the open space system.” (and recommended deletion of 6.1.6.7. in the Policies to be Deleted section below)

## 7.3 Partnerships

The *City* will advocate and practice an open, inclusive, and collaborative process for the planning and development of services, facilities, and interpretive programs and elements within the open space system, and will:

- a) work with and, where appropriate, enter into agreements with, community groups, human service agencies, school boards, and other public, private or nonprofit organizations or interests; and
- b) apply these policies through implementation of the *City’s* Master Plans and the *City’s* Zoning By-law.

10.2 Key Considerations for Services and Facilities, Revised  
- Reference to Master Plans  
- Deletion of detailed points (i.e. 10.2 a-g) as these are elaborated upon more completely within the Master Plans

## 7.4 Key Considerations for Services and Facilities

The *City* will plan and create opportunities through the applicable Master Plans for the provision of a range of services and facilities (including outdoor spaces).

## 7.5 Master Plans

New

1. The implementation instruments for the policies in this Plan include the:
  - a) Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space and its update document, the Master Plan for Leisure Services / Facilities;
  - b) Trails Master Plan;
  - c) Accessibility Plan;
  - d) Bikeway Network Master Plan;
  - e) Arts and Culture Master Plan;
  - f) Heritage Master Plan;
  - g) *City's* Corporate Policies and Procedures; and
  - h) *City's* Zoning By-law.
2. The *City* will regularly revisit and update Master Plans as appropriate and / or develop new strategic documents.

New, ROP policy 2.G.1

## 7.6 Major Urban Greenlands

Major Urban Greenlands are relatively large, publicly accessible parklands or open spaces located within urban areas that are owned and maintained by the *Region*, *City*, or the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) and the *City* values these urban greenlands for their environmental, hydrological, recreational and public health benefits, as they are intended to help maintain a balance between the built and natural environment.

New, ROP policy 2.G.2 and 2.G.3

## 7.7 Urban Greenlands Strategy

The *City* will collaborate with the *Region*, GRCA, and other stakeholders to develop an *Urban Greenlands Strategy*.

6.1.6.1  
Revised to reflect Planning Act

## 7.8 Parkland Dedication

1. The *City* will require parkland dedication from *development* applications in accordance with the Planning Act and the following formulae:

- a) 5 percent of the residential *development* application lands are to be dedicated for park or other recreational purposes, or at the rate of one hectare for each 300 dwelling units, whichever is greater;
- b) 2 percent of land proposed for *development* for commercial or industrial purposes;
- c) Cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication may be required to the value of the land otherwise required to be conveyed.

6.1.6.5 Revised removing exemption for industrial/commercial

6.1.6.2

6.1.6.4 added reference (e) to completing the Trails Master Plan network

2. *Council* may pass by-laws pursuant to the Planning Act and other applicable legislation outlining the rates of parkland dedication that are to be applied as a condition to the *development* of land for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.
3. Where parkland dedication is required by this Plan, the *City* will ensure that the land is suitable for development as a park. Generally, the parkland dedication should satisfy the following criteria:
  - a) the site satisfies the development criteria for recreation areas where appropriate;
  - b) the site is not susceptible to nuisance flooding, poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes or other environmental or physical conditions that would interfere with its potential development or use as an active public recreation area. Sites subject to these conditions may be integrated, where possible, into the development of municipal park areas by serving as pedestrian walkways, as part of a linear trail system, as passive recreation areas, or as natural areas;
  - c) the site may be suitable for expansion of the Trail Network as recommended in the Master Plan;
  - d) the site is oriented to take advantage of favourable topography, vistas and mature stands of trees where possible and desirable;
  - e) the lands should be dedicated in a condition suitable for parkland development in accordance with any applicable standards of the *City*; and

- f) the *City* will require evidence that no environmental contamination exists on the lands in conformity with section 3.B.6.2.1.4 of this Plan.

Revised 6.1.6.3 to add “Natural Heritage System”

- 4. Core Environmental Features, *hazard lands* and floodplain lands as described and/or identified in this Plan as part of the *natural heritage system* may not be accepted as parkland dedication.

Revised 6.2.5.4.

- 5. Stormwater management areas will be on lands dedicated to the *City* in addition to any lands required to be dedicated for park purposes under the Planning Act.

6.1.6.6 with added reference to “surplus” school sites in b)

### 7.9 School Sites and Parks

- 1. It is recognized that school sites often provide an important open space resource within the community. Therefore, the *City* will continue to co-operate with school boards in obtaining new school sites and integrating such sites with municipal parkland. More specifically, the *City* will pursue the following:
  - a) where feasible, municipal parkland will be developed in conjunction with elementary or secondary school sites;
  - b) where there is a shortage of neighbourhood or community parks and there are undeveloped and/or surplus school sites within the neighbourhood, the *City* may enter into an agreement with the respective school board regarding the *development* of the land for parks purposes; and
  - c) where municipal parkland is obtained adjacent to a new school site, such parkland shall be of a size, configuration, condition and location and have appropriate access so that it can function properly as a neighbourhood or community park in the event that the school property is not developed.

New: ROP 3.F.3; 2.G.3; 3.F.2

### 7.10 Markets and Rooftop Gardens

The *City* supports a strong local food system through its Farmers’ Market, *temporary farmers’ markets*, and *community gardens*. The *City* recognizes that *community gardens* contribute to the overall parks and open space system and access to locally grown food.

18.16

### 7.11 Community Stewardship

The *City* recognizes the importance broad community involvement in achieving the land use objectives contained in this plan. The involvement

of a variety of community interests is supported by *Council*, including the use of *Council* endorsed conservation easements, where appropriate, to protect privately owned lands and the establishment of community-based land trusts.

## 8.0 Land Use Policies and Designations

### 8.8 Open Space Designations

#### 12.1 Revised

It is proposed that two designations replace the three current open space Districts (i.e. Class 1 – (Significant Natural Features) Open Space District; Class 2 (Major Recreation) Open Space District; and Class 3 (Cemetery) Open Space District).

#### 12.2.1 revised

1. This Plan has two Open Space designations:
  - a) Natural Open Space System: – This designation consists of Core Environmental Features (3.A.3), watercourses and shorelines (3.B.6.1.2 5.), and the regulatory one-zone floodplain (3.B.6.1, 23-25).
  - b) Recreation, Cemetery and Open Space: This designation consists of lands used or proposed to be used to provide large scale public or private recreational facilities. This designation also consists of lands used or proposed to be used as a cemetery and related facilities.
2. Natural Open Space System - This Plan recognizes existing uses within this designation. Maintenance of existing uses is permitted. Expansions to existing uses will require an *Environmental Impact Statement* in accordance with the policies in Chapter 3 of this Plan. Lands identified as *natural heritage system* in Chapter 3 of this Plan and/or *floodway* shall be subject to the limitations for development imposed by applicable regulations and agencies.
3. The following are permitted uses on lands designated Natural Open Space System:
  - a) a conservation area of the GRCA;
  - b) a flood or *erosion hazard* control facility approved by the GRCA;
  - c) a wildlife, wetland or fishery management project or other ecological rehabilitation program approved by the *Province* and in conformity with policies and regulations of other government agencies;
  - d) the management and harvesting of timber in accordance with *good forestry practice*. Landowners are encouraged to protect and maintain *significant woodlands* or *natural features* containing old growth and forest interior conditions;

- e) a wildlife sanctuary;
- f) passive recreational activities, trails and outdoor education or research which do not threaten the *natural features* and their *ecological functions*;
- g) any existing agricultural activity described in Chapter 8 of this Plan where such activity is compatible with the existing natural environment of the area and where no building or structure is constructed without the approval of the GRCA; and
- h) an arboretum.

12.3, 12.4 and 12.4.1 revised

4. The following are permitted uses on lands designated Recreation, Cemetery and Open Space:

- a) neighbourhood park, community park or facility;
- b) botanical garden;
- c) golf course;
- d) major sports facilities;
- e) cemetery;
- f) mausoleum or necropolis;
- g) crematorium;
- h) place of worship or meditation provided in conjunction with the cemetery use;
- i) arboretum;

#### 4. Glossary

Please see separate glossary.

#### 5. Mapping Updates

The proposed revisions involve updates and changes to the Open Space layer (two designations proposed) which may involve new designations for floodplain, Core Environmental Features, and currently zoned but not designated open space lands. Mapping will consist of the Open Space layer on Map 2 – General Land Use.

#### 6. Policies Recommended for Deletion

The following policies are recommended for deletion:

***Social Environment 2.6 a)***

*To promote social harmony and cultural diversity throughout the community;*

**REASON:** This is beyond the scope of a land-use focused document.

***Social Environment 2.6 c)***

*To provide or support a range of artistic, cultural, recreational and other social facilities throughout the City which, where possible, are served by public transit;*

**REASON:** Policy 7.0 b) incorporates the above and adds an “accessibility” component (i.e. to the facility/facilities) beyond service by public transit.

***Social Environment 2.6 d), e), f), and g)***

*d) To encourage the establishment of training and other educational facilities;*

*b) To support the provision of other services, such as neighbourhood-based programs, which contribute to the health of the social environment;*

*f) To support other specialized needs of citizens such as those of individuals with developmental and physical disabilities, seniors, youths and new residents to the community; and*

*g) To co-ordinate with other local planning bodies and organizations where possible in the provision of social facilities and services of public and private sector organizations operating in the community.*

**REASON:** The above are focused upon services provision and not land use and are more suitable to reside within a Strategic or Master Plan.

***Natural Environment 2.3 h)***

*To promote the natural environment as a key element of the community’s tourism strategy, including trail systems and the preservation of scenic vistas; and*

**REASON:** relates more to non-land-use issues such as tourism strategy and promotion of the natural environment. Preservation of scenic vistas, specifically scenic values of roads is addressed in Section 3.G.27 of the Region Official Plan and may be addressed through a new policy proposed for the City Official Plan (Cultural Heritage Resources, Chapter 4).

**6.1.6.7** *The City will cooperate with the Province, the Region, the Grand River Conservation Authority, other government agencies, the private sector and community interests to develop interpretive programs for elements within the open space system.*

**REASON:** relates more to programming than land-use aspects. However, the “*interpretive programs for elements within the open space system*” notion is retained in 7.3 Partnerships.

***Chapter 10: Social Environment***

*The social environment of a municipality refers to the context within which the community’s needs for services affecting quality of life are met. These services may range from education to recreation to health care. In the City of Cambridge, human services are provided by diverse*

*groups of public, non-profit and private organizations, using a variety of facilities and settings. It is the intent of the policies in this plan to establish the land use planning framework within which these services and facilities may be provided.*

**REASON:** this is an introduction to the chapter, definition of “social environment,” and the broad intent of the Official Plan, not a specific land-use policy.

**10.2 Key Considerations for Services and Facilities** (policy retained in 7.4 but detailed points below recommended for deletion)

- a) take into account the diverse needs and abilities (both existing and future) of all segments of the population, including children, youth, seniors, families and individuals;*
- b) are affordable to their users and accessible to people with a range of abilities and mobility;*
- c) are, wherever possible, served by public transit and linked by pedestrian/cycling routes;*
- d) are distributed in an equitable manner throughout the community and are in proximity to the population which they serve;*
- a) are concentrated where appropriate in Community Core Areas or in Nodes;*
- b) implement, wherever possible, partnerships in the allocation of human, financial and physical resources; and*
- c) promote multiple uses of spaces and facilities.*

**REASON:** The above details are more completely addressed in the Master Plans, in some cases are not land-use focused, and to some extent duplicate previous policies (e.g. public transit/pedestrian, concentrated in Community Core Areas, etc.)

#### **10.4 Cultural Heritage Resources**

**10.4.1** *It is the policy of the City to encourage and where possible assist in the preservation of cultural heritage resources relating to Cambridge.*

**10.4.2** *The City may establish or assist in establishing advisory committees, boards or other bodies in the interests of preserving cultural heritage resources.*

**REASON:** Cultural heritage resources are covered in Chapter 4 and are more appropriate in this section than in the Parks and Open Space chapter. The two policies above are captured in the Chapter 4 Objectives and the multiple references to the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee throughout the chapter.