

3.5 Community Parkland Acquisition Criteria

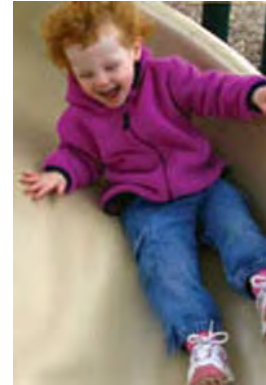
One of the challenges encountered when planning for community parks and trails is evaluating whether new acquisitions fit the needs of the overall system. To support this evaluation, community parkland acquisition criteria are proposed. These criteria will:

- Support RDN Staff and POSAC members in evaluating potential community park and trail acquisitions and making decisions about whether proposed parkland should be added to the system or if cash-in-lieu should be considered;
- Help identify appropriate classification for potential community park dedications;
- Provide developers a set of clear criteria to review in advance of proposing dedications; and
- Increase consistency and objectivity of assessments over time.

Table 26 is a Community Parkland Evaluation Criteria Checklist that provides a set of proposed criteria and value questions to be asked when evaluating potential community parkland acquisitions.

The checklist is organized under 6 categories and is designed to align with the proposed parks classes (See **Section 3.2.1: Proposed Community Park Classes**). The 6 categories are described as follows:

- **General Demographics & Public Values:** These values typically apply to all types of community parks. Parks that score high in this category may be well suited for acquisition and addition to the community parks system.
- **Neighbourhood Park Values:** These values are desirable for establishing neighbourhood parks with amenities. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for neighbourhood parks.
- **Ecological Park Values:** These values include protection and enhancement of natural environments. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for ecological park development.
- **Linear Park Values:** These values include connectivity and trail potential. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for trail development.
- **Water Access Values:** These values pertain to water sites. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for water access development.



Neighbourhood park values



Ecological park values



Linear park values



Water access values

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- **Affordability:** These values include costs for acquiring, developing and maintaining park properties and typically apply to all community parks. Parks that score high in this category will be more cost effective.
- Where review identifies potential parkland to be low in all or most of the above categories, alternatives to acquisition (e.g., cash-in-lieu) should be considered.

The CPTS recommends that this checklist be incorporated with Policy C1.5: *Review of the Consideration of Park Land in Conjunction with the Subdivision Application Process* and also used during the Rezoning Review process.

Evaluators using the table will review the criteria and decide if the subject site provides:

- **High Value:** If the site would be a significant asset or fully fulfill the evaluation criteria
- **Moderate Value:** If the site would be a good or moderate asset or partially fulfill the evaluation criteria
- **Low Value:** If the site would be a low or negative asset or does not fill the evaluation criteria

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Table 26: Proposed community park land and trails evaluation criteria checklist

Category 1: General Demographic & Public Values				
Proposed Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Assigned Value/Quality (check column)		
		High Value	Moderate Value	Low Value
1) Population Density	Is the site located in an area with substantial existing or anticipated residential density where there will be a high demand for community park?			
2) Existing Park Access	Will the acquisition provide parkland to a neighbourhood that is currently underserved by parks and recreation opportunities?			
3) Level of Public Interest	Is there a known community interest for park development in the area?			
4) Neighbouring Property Impacts	Could park development in this area have a significant negative impact on existing properties in terms of property value, privacy, noise or other undesirable impacts?			
5) Encumbrances	Is the site reasonably free of encumbrances that would impact part development such as such as geotechnical, floodplain, environmental and underground utilities?			
Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 1 =				

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 1 are valuable potential properties for the community parks system overall, as they fill gaps and/or provide parks services that are in demand. These properties should be considered for community park acquisition. Parks with moderate or low value ratings should only be considered for acquisition where there are high scores in one or more of the other categories.

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Category 2: Neighbourhood Park Values				
Proposed Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Assigned Value/Quality (check column)		
		High Value	Moderate Value	Low Value
6) Usable Space	Does the site provide at least 0.5 acres of usable park area?			
7) Slope	Are there gentle slopes for most of the site that would support a variety of active recreation opportunities?			
8) Location	Is there a significant residential population within walking distance (1 km) to the park location?			
9) Recreation Potential	Is the site suitable to provide recreational amenities that appeal to the surrounding community?			
10) Accessibility	Is the site easily accessible to surrounding population, e.g. is it connected to public roads, trails and access routes?			
11) Cultural, Historic or Heritage Values	Does that site contain any valuable cultural, historical or heritage features that warrant protection?			
12) Education or Interpretive Values	Does the site provide features with educational or interpretive value and would support interpretive development?			
Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 2 =				

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 2 are potential properties for classification as neighbourhood parks as they fill gaps and provide opportunity for amenities. These properties should be considered for neighbourhood park designation.

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Category 3: Ecological Park Values

Proposed Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Assigned Value/Quality (check column)		
		High Value	Moderate Value	Low Value
13) Sensitive Ecosystem Protection	Does the site include significant sensitive ecosystems that warrant protection?			
14) Unique Landscape Features	Are there unique or representative landscape features such as significant trees, rock formations, water features or other features that warrant protection?			
15) Endangered/ Protected Species	Are there known blue- or red-listed species occurring on the site or within the surrounding area?			
16) Potential Habitat or Wildlife Corridor	Does the site have potential to maintain or form a wildlife corridor that connects natural features?			
Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 3 =				

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 3 are potential properties for classification as nature parks as they protect unique or sensitive features. These properties may warrant consideration for natural park designation or protection through other means.

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Category 4: Linear Park Values				
Proposed Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Assigned Value/Quality (check column)		
		High Value	Moderate Value	Low Value
17) Trail Route Connection	Does the site form a potential connection to the regional or community park trail system?			
18) Community Amenity Connection	Does the proposed site link community amenities or facilities to a neighbourhood (e.g. provides access to schools, retail areas, parks or other destinations)?			
19) Max. Slope	Does the route provide gentle grades for accessible trail?			
Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 4 =				

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 4 are potential properties for classification as linear parks as they provide potential trail connections. These properties may warrant consideration for linear park designation.

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Category 5: Water Access Values				
Proposed Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Assigned Value/Quality (check column)		
		High Value	Moderate Value	Low Value
20) Shoreline or Riparian Protection	Is the site near a water body or river corridor and capable of providing shoreline protection or enhancement?			
21) Accessibility	Is the site reasonably accessible with minimum need for stair or ramp construction?			
22) Small Development Footprint	Can the park be developed to provide water access with no or minimal tree or vegetation removal?			
23) Enhanced Access	Can water accesses be combined together, or with park land to provide enhanced public access?			
Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 5 =				

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 5 are potential properties for classification as water access sites as they provide access points to water bodies – including the ocean, lakes, rivers, wetlands and streams. These properties may warrant consideration for water access designation.

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Category 6: Affordability				
Proposed Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Assigned Value/Quality (check column)		
		High Value	Moderate Value	Low Value
24) Acquisition Costs	Can the site be acquired with little or no cost?			
25) Development Costs	Is the public investment required to develop the park to a suitable standard reasonable? Are there any unusual or extensive anticipated costs?			
26) Maintenance Costs	Are the amount staff time and financial resources required to maintain the park high or low?			
Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 6 =				

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 6 may be considered for acquisition. Where parks score low in this category, considerations for off-setting costs or taking cash-in-lieu may be warranted.