

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street 17th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Date: May 8, 2026

RE: Proposed Changes to Support Standardizing of Parkland Requirements Under the Planning Act – [ERO 026-0312](#)

Comment Summary Statement

The City of Ottawa supports the objective of increasing housing density and recognizes that encumbered land (e.g., underground parking, utility corridors, servicing infrastructure) and Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) can be valuable tools for urban livability. To ensure these spaces are functional, cost-effective, and equitable, the City recommends the Province consider the following measures in the new legislation:

1. **Negotiation Tools:** Enable strata and maintenance agreements to clearly define liability and upkeep for encumbered sites.
2. **Standards to Support Sustainability:** Establish clear standards while maintaining fiscal stability through strategic Cash-in-Lieu (CILP) authority.
3. **Process Alignment:** Use existing Site Plan Control and Draft Plan of Subdivision processes to identify parkland and prevent project delays.

Detailed Comments

1. Negotiation tools for complex parkland arrangements

To successfully integrate encumbered, irregularly shaped, or marginal parkland into the urban fabric, municipalities require robust tools to ensure these lands can still support active recreation.

- **Operational Success:** By allowing for specific strata agreements, the City can ensure that play structures, tree plantings, and sports facilities, which require specific clearances, are designed safely around underground services.
- **Optimizing Strategic Growth:** Maintaining the City's prerogative to secure parkland in strategic instances ensures that high-density and underserved communities still receive funding for large-scale amenities (like recreation centres or sports fields) that encumbered, or "remnant" pieces cannot accommodate.

- **Natural Heritage Integration:** The City seeks to work with the Province to ensure that park blocks within natural heritage features are utilized in ways that balance environmental protection with active community use, avoiding "sterilized" land that cannot be programmed or undesirable impacts to natural heritage features.

2. Establish clear standards to support long-term sustainability

Standardizing suitability criteria provides an opportunity to create high-quality urban parks, provided the framework accounts for the unique lifecycle costs of encumbered lands and clear eligibility standards.

- **Clear Standards:** To keep maintenance costs manageable and meet council-approved policy requirements, the City recommends that standards include things such as minimum soil volumes, maximum slopes, and minimum public road frontages. This will help to ensure these assets remain a community benefit and do not create long-term financial liabilities for the City.
- **Shared Responsibility Models:** For POPS and encumbered sites, the City proposes clear maintenance agreements. This ensures that when encumbered land must be accessed for repairs (e.g., fixing an underground pipe), there is a clear, equitable process for reinstating park amenities without overburdening the taxpayer.
- **Fiscal Stability & CILP Authority:** Aligning CILP collection with park master plans and other planning policies will help the City remain financially equipped to deliver on council-approved recreation spending. Preserving CILP authority in specific areas (like industrial or rural zones) ensures that the City is not forced to accept land where physical park blocks do not serve the actual needs of the community.

3. Streamlining administrative and legal procedures

The City aims to integrate these new provincial changes into a "one-window" development review process to reduce red tape and prevent duplicative work for both staff and developers.

- **Timeline Synchronization:** To avoid disrupting projects, the City recommends aligning the 90-day parkland determination with existing Site Plan (60-day) and Subdivision (120-day) timelines.
- **Complete Application Integration:** Requiring parkland identification at the "Complete Application" stage, rather than up until the building permit, provides developers with certainty much earlier in the process. This prevents late-stage redesigns and limits the need for costly and time-consuming Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) proceedings, ensuring a faster path to delivery.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and are available if further discussion or feedback is required.

Sincerely,

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