

May 14, 2026

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Planning and Housing Policy Branch

13th Floor, 777 Bay Street

Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

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

Pleased accept this letter and the following comments regarding the proposed changes to parkland dedication in Section 42 of the Planning Act and associated regulations.

While this letter contains a general summary, a chart has been attached to this submission and contains detailed comments on the ERO posting (026-0312) for the regulations.

Municipal Planning for Parkland

As a Manager of a Municipal Parks Department, I believe that municipalities should determine whether to accept parkland dedication through either land or cash-in-lieu of land, and where that parkland would be located. This supports the ability for a municipality to grow its parkland network in a way that is cohesive, strategic, and in the best, long-term, financial interest to the municipality and the public (i.e. strategic spending of capital and operating costs). Collaboration between Town staff and applicants is essential to building complete communities, of which parkland is a key pillar, as open dialogue enables win-win solutions. However, some of the proposed changes may lead to a more adversarial dynamic that will add time and costs for everyone and degrades the intended outcomes. In particular, the Town may be limited in its ability to strategically plan for larger and higher-quality parks as well as inter-connected park systems and public spaces. This could also impact other Town investments, such as recreational facilities, and how the Town supports areas that are underserved. Under the newly proposed system, site-specific private interests could end up being prioritized over the long-term public interests of current and future residents.

Factoring in Unique Local Context

Municipalities are responsible for overall parkland strategies and determining areas of parkland need and should continue to establish their own criteria for accepting parkland (either through their parkland by-law or in their Official Plan). The parkland dedication tool should support a municipality in achieving its strategic parkland priorities and should not fetter future flexibility to change programming on that land as residents' needs change overtime.

The Parkland Review Process

The proposed changes will add additional steps in the development application process. As proposed, a landowner could identify the land they propose for parkland conveyance up until a

building permit is issued, which is very late in the development application process. If parkland was identified upfront as part of the related development application, additional steps could be avoided. However, if parkland is identified on a misaligned timeframe, including at the last minute (e.g. immediately prior to building permit issuance), the additional review steps would entail a standalone parkland review process that will add complexity and time, likely delaying the development. As development review is a fee-based service, these additional steps will also likely add costs. To avoid this, the Town recommends requiring applicants to identify how they propose to satisfy parkland dedication at the same time as when their initial development application is submitted.

Parkland Agreements & Applicable Law

For all types of parkland dedications that are satisfied through some form of land, the terms and conditions for the real estate transaction are set out in an agreement that is registered on title. This has historically occurred through Section 37 Agreements, and now through site plan agreements. The proposed changes give municipalities the right to enter into parkland agreements for some types of parkland dedication, but not for all types. To simplify and create a consistent approach to securing parkland dedications, municipalities should have the ability to enter into legal agreements for all parkland dedications involving land under Section 42, rather than only certain types of parkland dedications (e.g. those with encumbrances, or POPS as parkland).

Summary

In summary, I am concerned that the proposed new system will greatly limit a municipality's ability to strategically plan a parks network that is in the best interest of their residents, and to deliver high-quality parkland for residents that can accommodate recreational facilities. Moreover, separating parkland identification from established application processes will likely have the unintended consequence of adding additional review steps that will complicate timelines and costs.

Thank you for considering my comments and feedback.