

FORMAL REPORT

To:	Mayor Strathdee and Members of Council
Prepared by:	Mark Stone, Planner
Date of Meeting:	12 September 2017
Subject:	DEV 28-2017 Thames Crest Farms Development – Parkland Dedication

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of planned parkland dedication for the Thames Crest Farms development.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT DEV 28-2017 Thames Crest Farms Development – Parkland Dedication report be received; and,

THAT staff be directed to negotiate the transfer of parklands to the Town for the Thames Crest Farms development within the same phase as the Wellington Street North extension occurs.

BACKGROUND

This report is the second of three Council reports regarding the Thames Crest Farms development and related issues including the proposed Wellington Street North extension and the protection of the Grand Trunk Trail. These reports are in response to Council's direction for staff to report back on these issues. The Background section of DEV27-2017 report regarding the Wellington Street North extension provides a detailed overview of the background to these issues however, the following is an abbreviated summary of public submissions that have led to the preparation of these reports:

June 13, 2017 Council meeting

- Dr. Emily Kelly made a presentation on behalf of Tree Protectors of St. Marys, a group created in response to concerns regarding the destruction of green space associated with the Emily Street and Ardmore Park (now referred to as Westover Place) developments. Dr. Kelly recommended that the Town remove the Wellington Street extension from the Official Plan and create an extension of the Grand Trunk Trail to link with the new subdivision, and incorporate a much needed new North Ward Park.
- Mr. Frank Krausz made a submission to the Town respecting natural protected zones, recreational zones, historic zones and development zones.
- Council passed the following resolutions:

THAT the presentation by Dr. Emily Kelly regarding Improvements to the Grand Trunk Trail at Wellington Street North be received; and,

THAT staff be directed to report back to Council regarding the history and rationale of the proposed extension of Wellington Street North; and,

THAT staff be directed to report back on the planned parkland dedication for the Thamescrest Farms Development; and,

THAT staff be directed to investigate implementing a formal forestry and tree management policy for the Town as recommended in the Town's Strategic Plan; and,

THAT staff be directed to investigate the implementation of a Natural Heritage Designation for the Grand Trunk Trail.

and

THAT the correspondence from Mr. Frank Krausz be received and referred to staff for inclusion in the forthcoming report back on the Wellington Street North extension.

June 20, 2017 letter from Dr. Emily Kelly

- Included petition with 676 signatures stating that the Wellington Street North extension is a mistake and encourages Town Council to keep new housing development connected using existing roads and new walking trails, rather than carving a channel for heavy traffic through the middle of Town.

June 27, 2017 Council meeting

- Jakob Krausz spoke to Council in opposition of the Wellington Street extension.

Based on public submissions received and the direction of Council, the following is a summary of issues to be addressed:

Issue 1 – Need for Wellington Street extension

Issue 2 – Traffic concerns due to Wellington Street extension

Issue 3 – Protection of the Grand Trunk Trail and road crossing safety concerns

Issue 4 – Protection of natural heritage along/in proximity to Grand Trunk Trail

Issue 5 – The need for a wider range of zones to protect recreational, historical and natural areas

Issue 6 – Planned parkland dedication for the Thames Crest Farms development

The following three reports have been prepared to address these issues:

DEV 27-2017 – Wellington Street North Extension

- Addresses Issues 1, 2 and 3
- Provides context and background applicable to all three reports

DEV 28-2017 (this report) – Thames Crest Farms Development – Parkland Dedication

- Addresses part of Issue 5 and Issue 6

DEV 29-2017 – Grand Trunk Trail - Natural and Cultural Heritage

- Addresses Issue 4 and part of Issue 5

REPORT

Before discussing these issues, an overview of relevant planning context and overview of proposed parkland dedication in the Thames Crest Farms subdivision is provided.

THAMES CREST FARMS DEVELOPMENT

The Application for Plan of Subdivision for the Thames Crest Farm development was originally submitted in 2005. The proposed development is bounded by Emily Street to the west, James Street North to the east, the Grand Trunk Trail to the south and the proposed Glass Street collector road to the north. The proposed concept plan submitted with the Application is provided as Attachment 1 to this report and is summarized in the following table.

Land Use	Units	Area (hectares)
Single detached dwellings	315	28.0
Multiple dwellings	115	2.35
Commercial (at southwest corner of Glass Street and James Street North)		0.51
Regional parkland (at northwest corner of Glass Street and James Street North)		10.3
Storm water management facility (at northwest corner of Grand Trunk Trail and Wellington Street North extension)		2.57
TOTALS	430 units	43.73 hectares

In 2007, a revised draft plan of subdivision was submitted showing the replacement of the proposed regional parkland with future residential development. A new 2.92 hectare parkland block was also identified adjacent to the Grand Trunk Trail (east of Wellington Street North), replacing proposed residential development on the original concept plan. A copy of the revised plan is provided as Attachment 2 of this report. The proposed parkland block is linear in shape and would extend along the north side of the Grand Trunk Trail from James Street North to the Wellington Street North extension. The park is designed to have multiple access points including James Street North, Wellington Street North and future internal local roads.

Based on the total landholding of 43.73 hectares, the two percent requirement for commercial and industrial development and five percent for all other uses under the Planning Act equates to a parkland requirement of approximately 2.17 hectares (0.51 ha x 2% + 43.22 x 5%).

A storm water management report was prepared in April 2002 by M.J. Davenport and Associates Ltd. in support of the proposed development. The following is a summary of key findings of this report:

- the natural location for a storm water management pond to service the proposed development is in the area of the extension of Wellington Street, north of the Grand Trunk Trail
- the proposed pond will have a maximum permanent water depth of 1.0 metre in both the forebay and main portion of the pond
- side slopes of facility have been designed a maximum slopes of 7:1 with the exception of the lowest 0.5 metres in the permanent pool which will have a slope of 3:1
- the 7:1 slope will not necessitate fencing around the pond for public safety
- A naturalized planting scheme will be completed

PLANNING CONTEXT

Planning Act

Sections 42 and 51.1 of the Planning Act provide municipalities with the ability to require land for park or other public recreational purposes as a condition of development or redevelopment, in an amount not exceeding two percent for commercial and industrial purposes, and five percent in all other cases.

Section 42(3) of the Planning Act provides an alternative option of one hectare for each 300 dwelling units or at a lesser rate as specified by by-law, provided there are policies in the Official Plan to facilitate the alternative rate/approach and there is a park plan that examines the need for parkland. The Planning Act also permits municipalities to receive cash in lieu of parkland based on the value of the land.

Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development, including the protection of resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. The following is a summary of PPS policies relevant to this report.

Section 1.1.1 of the PPS states that healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses including recreation, park and open space.

Section 1.5.1 of the PPS states that healthy, active communities should be promoted by: planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction and facilitate active transportation and community connectivity; and planning and providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and, where practical, water-based resources.

St. Marys Strategic Plan

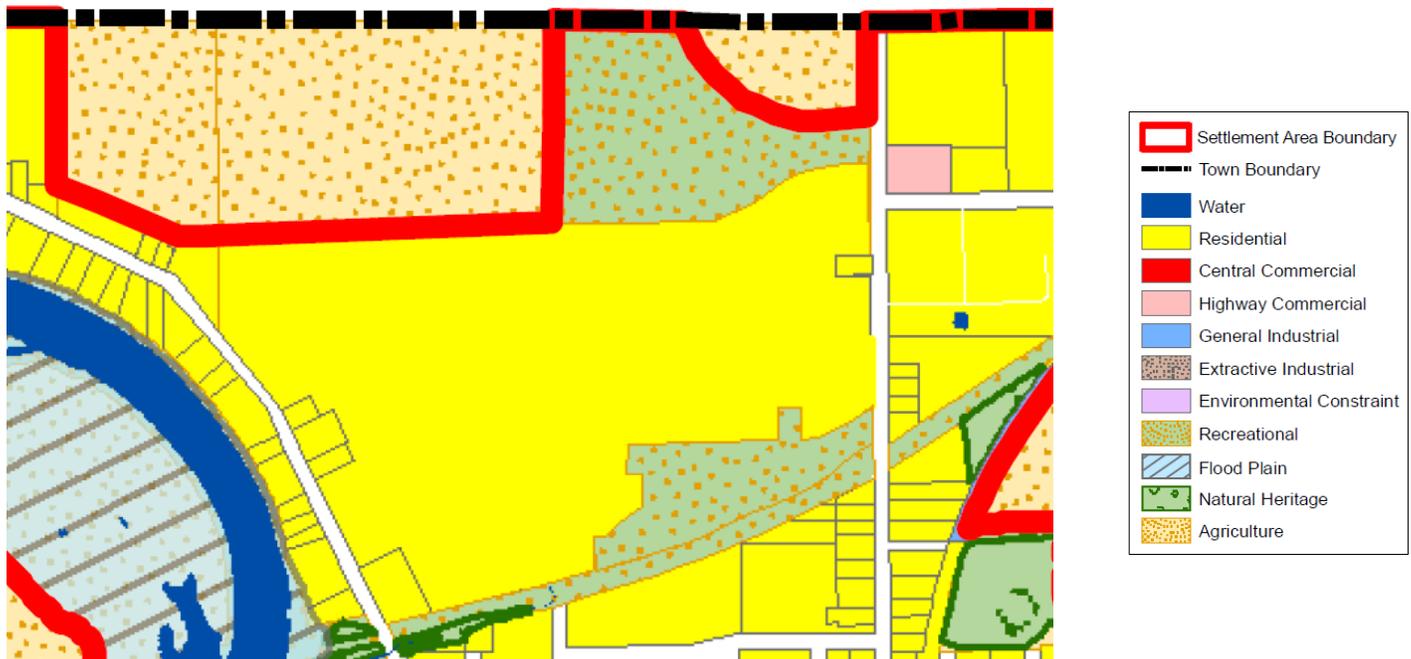
In 2017, the Town updated the Strategic Plan to meet new public needs and expectations. Key priorities of the Town are reflected in six key strategic pillars: infrastructure, communication and marketing, culture and recreation, economic development, growth and housing.

Under Strategic Pillar 4 – Culture and Recreation, a strategic priority is a focused parks strategy that would involve tying the Grand Trunk Trail to Milt Dunnell Park in the short term, and investigating the implementation of a forest and tree management policy for the Town in the mid term.

Official Plan

The current Official Plan was adopted by Council in 1987 and approved by the Province in part in 1993 and entirely in 1999. The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of relevant policies of the Town Official Plan.

The Thames Crest Farms lands are designated Residential and Recreational in the current Official Plan permitting the development of these lands for a range of residential dwelling types, and recreational uses such as parks and trails. The northwest quadrant of the subject lands is located outside of the settlement area boundary and designated Agriculture.



The Grand Trunk Trail, the proposed regional park in the 2005 concept plan and the proposed park along the trail in the 2007 concept plan are all designated Recreational. The objectives of the Recreational designation include:

- promoting a healthy, active community by providing a range of recreational activities
- recognizing and promoting existing recreational facilities and the establishment of new facilities
- integrating recreational uses with all designations within the Town
- promoting community festivals, celebrations, and gatherings
- recognizing the Town's Recreational areas as an instrument to promote economic development, tourism, and education/awareness programmes

Section 2.6 of the Official Plan encourages actions/initiatives that support a healthy community including:

- c) subdivision designs that include suitable open space areas, incorporate walkways, and provide space for active living;
- d) the linking of neighbouring residential and commercial areas with open spaces and the watercourses, where appropriate;
- e) the development of recreational facilities, open space areas, and trail systems to cater to the recreational and healthy lifestyle needs of the Town's residents; and
- f) encourage the use of and sustain existing trails and open spaces throughout the Town and linkages with those in Perth County.

Sections 3.7.2.4 and 7.15.2 of the Official Plan state that “the development of hiking, walking, and bicycle trails is a significant resource to the Town”. The Plan also states that “opportunities to develop new trails or extend existing trails throughout the Town will continue to be encouraged” and “the use of public lands, the floodplains adjacent to the watercourses, and private lands may be used to develop or extend the trail system”.

Section 3.7.2.3 – Park Classification of the Official Plan sets out the Town’s current hierarchy of service levels for the park system in the Town. The draft Recreation and Leisure Master Planning Context Report (dated April 2017) provided a summary of the current classification system in the following table.

Table 4: Existing Parkland Classification System, Town of St. Marys	
Town Park	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to serve the Town and surrounding areas (1,500 to 10,000 residents). • Permitted recreation uses include lit sports fields, golf courses, community centres, concessions, washrooms, seating, and more. • May be serviced by water, sanitary, and hydro. • Size generally ranges between 10 hectares to 50 hectares in area. 	
Neighbourhood Park	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to provide recreational areas and open space to serve residents within a 2 kilometre service area (or 1,000 to 2,000 residents). • Permitted recreation uses includes playground equipment, seating, green space, and water fountain. • Size generally ranges between 0.5 hectares to 4 hectares in area. 	
Parkette / Tot Lot	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The smallest form of open space to serve residents within 500 metres (or 50 to 100 residents), without obstruction of physical boundaries. • Permitted recreation uses include a playground • Smaller than 0.5 hectares in area 	
Open Space	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive open spaces and parks, including walking and biking trails, natural areas, gardens, storm water management area, cemeteries, elementary and secondary school open space. 	

Sections 3.7.2.5 and 7.15.4 state that “Council recognizes that need for the establishment of a new Town Wide park in the north Ward. Opportunities to develop such a facility, in conjunction with private land developers, will be explored when considering any new development applications”.

Zoning By-law

This portion of the Grand Trunk Trail, the proposed regional park in the 2005 concept plan and the proposed park along the north side the trail are zoned Open Space (OS) and permits the following uses:

- cemetery
- dog park
- golf course
- hiking trail
- multi-use pathway

- passive recreational use
- public park
- sports field, baseball diamond
- swimming pool
- tennis court
- accessory uses, buildings, and structures

However, Section 5.27 states that the provisions of the Zoning By-law do not prevent the use of any lot for the purpose of public services, which would include water, sanitary and storm water services, and roads.

Recreation and Leisure Master Plan

At the June 20, 2017 Strategic Priorities Committee Meeting, the draft Recreation and Leisure Master Planning Context Report (dated April 2017) was presented. The Recreation and Leisure Master Plan will be a guiding document that provides direction with respect to the Town's needs and priorities with respect to recreation and leisure services. Some of the findings from the Report are informative for the review of parkland requirements for the Thames Crest Farms development. In the report, it states that the majority of comments received during the consultation process regarding improving outdoor parks pertained to improving or enhancing the Town's trail system including establishing trail linkages to connect residents to the north end of Town, lighting pathways, constructing washrooms, installing fitness equipment along walking routes, and providing or enhancing wayfinding signage.

The next phase of the Master Plan process will evaluate current and future parkland needs based several inputs including projected population growth, parkland distribution and other variables. The next phase of the Master Plan process will investigate, at a conceptual level, the need for new active transportation routes and linkages to supplement the Town's existing network, with emphasis given to connecting destinations and developing linkages through future residential areas.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

As noted earlier, six main issues have been identified, two of which are discussed in this report:

Issue 5 – The need for a wider range of zones to protect recreational, historical and natural areas

Issue 6 – Planned parkland dedication for the Thames Crest Farms development

Issue 5 – The need for a wider range of zones to protect recreational, historical and natural areas

With respect to the suggested need for a wider range of zones to protect recreational areas, the Town has already applied the Open Space (OS) Zone to the Grand Trunk Trail, the proposed regional park in the 2005 concept plan and the proposed park along the north side of the trail. The OS Zone implements the Recreational designation under the Official Plan that also applies to the Grand Trunk Trail, proposed regional park and proposed park along the trail.

Issue 6 – Planned parkland dedication for the Thames Crest Farms development

The provision of recreational opportunities for residents, including parks, open space and trails, are important to:

- combat society's growing sedentary lifestyles that has contributed to increased obesity and other health conditions and chronic illnesses

- provide affordable, sustainable and non-polluting means of transportation
- increase social interaction
- contribute to the ecological health of communities and reduce heat island effects

A review of the Town's Official Plan and initial findings from the ongoing preparation of the Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan reveals the following key considerations:

- the development of recreational facilities, open space areas and trail systems are important to support the recreational and healthy lifestyle needs of residents
- opportunities to develop new trails or extend existing trails throughout the Town will continue to be encouraged
- public lands, floodplains adjacent to the watercourses and private lands may be used to develop or extend the trail system
- the community has identified the need to improve or enhance the Town's trail system including establishing trail linkages to connect residents to the north end of Town

The purpose of this discussion is not make specific recommendations on the future park and trail system in the Town given the ongoing preparation of the Recreation and Leisure Master Plan. However, this discussion focusses on responding to ideas presented and outlining possible options regarding the establishment of parks and trails in the Thames Crest Farms development.

In light of the key considerations identified above, there may be some concerns with the establishment of the regional park in the northeast quadrant of the development area as identified in the 2005 plan submitted with the Plan of Subdivision Application since it would not be located in a central location and would not provide the opportunity for a direct connection to the Town's parks and trails system. If the Town were to decide it not prudent to establish a park in this location, the Recreational designation that currently applies to these lands and the policies regarding the need for a Town Wide park would require future assessment through the Town's ongoing Official Plan review project.

Although a park located along the Grand Trunk Trail as shown in the 2007 concept plan would not be centrally located in the Thames Crest Farms development area, it would be centrally located in relation to the broader area encompassing the new and existing residential areas north and south of the trail. In considering the location and design of parks and the trail system in this area, it is important to also consider opportunities to provide convenient access to as many users as possible. This park location could provide direct connections to the Grand Trunk Trail and would also provide convenient access and visibility from Wellington Street North and James Street North, along with direct connections to local roads and future residential.

Another option to consider is a redesign and/or relocation of the planned park space to meet the objectives of providing a central location, meeting the need for a larger park space and more seamless integration with the Grand Trunk Trail.

Considering a trail and/or walkway connection along the Wellington Street North extension has merit since it would provide a direct connection between the northern parts of the Thames Crest Farms development and the Grand Trunk Trail. This approach may also provide an opportunity for a looping of trails and/or other pedestrian routes (e.g. sidewalks, walkways) through the Thames Crest Farms development area.

Although not accepted as part of parkland dedications, storm water management facilities, ponds and channels, can be integrated into the parks and trails system by providing opportunities for connections and passive recreation, and natural habitat support where appropriate. Features such as seating areas, paths linking to the overall trail system and educational opportunities are possibilities. Maintenance access can also be integrated with trails. An example of an integrated maintenance access route is provided in Attachment 3. Inlet structures can be designed as a public space (e.g. overlook, seating area, etc.). Public safety must continue to be a key consideration through the use of signage and fencing where appropriate.

Given the location of the storm water management facility, there may be the opportunity to provide additional trails opportunities in this development area with connections to the Grand Trunk Trail and a looped pedestrian system.

SUMMARY

This report has been presented at the request of Council to provide information related to parkland dedication as a part of the Thames Crest Farms development. The following areas of concerns were reviewed:

Issue 5 – The need for a wider range of zones to protect recreational, historical and natural areas

- The Town has applied the Open Space (OS) Zone to the Grand Trunk Trail, the proposed regional park in the 2005 concept plan and the proposed park along the north side of the trail. The OS Zone implements the Recreational designation under the Official Plan that also applies to the Grand Trunk Trail, proposed regional park and proposed park along the trail.

Issue 6 – Planned parkland dedication for the Thames Crest Farms development

- There may be some concerns with the establishment of the regional park in the northeast quadrant since it would not be centrally located and not provide direct connections to parks and trails.
- A park located along the Grand Trunk Trail would be more centrally located in relation to new and existing residential areas north and south of the trail, and would provide more direct connections to the Grand Trunk Trail, adjacent roads and neighbourhoods.
- The Town could also consider a redesign and/or relocation of the planned park space to meet the objectives of providing a central location, meeting the need for a larger park space and more seamless integration with the Grand Trunk Trail.
- Considering a trail and/or walkway connection along the Wellington Street North extension would provide connections to the northern parts of the Thames Crest Farms development and the Grand Trunk Trail.
- The proposed storm water management facility could be integrated into the parks and trails system by providing connections and passive recreation, and natural habitat.

Moving forward, it is too early to make specific recommendations on the future park and potential integration of the trail system that will be created through the Thames Crest Farms parkland dedication. It is staff's recommendation that consideration be given to negotiating the transfer of parklands to the Town from the developer within the same phase as the Wellington Street North extension occurs.

Once the parklands are conveyed, the options for developing the parklands can be considered. The parkland design process will consider the recommendations of the forthcoming Recreation and Leisure Master Plan which will contain a number of guiding recommendations to assist the Town with planning for future recreation needs. In addition, at the time of considering the parkland design, a public engagement process can occur to determine if there are any further specific public interests for the proposed park.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this time.

STRATEGIC PLAN

- ☒ This initiative is supported by the following priorities, outcomes, and tactics in the Plan.
 - Pillar #4 Culture and Recreation:
 - Outcomes:
 - Assessing the real needs of residents in terms of providing the right fit for recreational services provided by the Town will require contracting out for a consultant who specializes in this area given the exhaustive analysis to be performed in providing key recommendations.
 - St Marys' parks are not only a prized asset, but it are also natural gathering places that can be optimized and incorporated into enhancing the cultural profile of St Marys.
 - Tactic(s):
 - Implement the key recommendations as required, and ensure that they align with concurrent policies and plans.
 - Perform an initial assessment of necessary [parks] improvements (beautification, accessibility, etc.).

OTHERS CONSULTED

None.

ATTACHMENTS

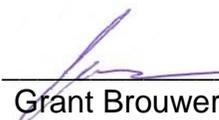
1. Thames Crest Farms Plan of Subdivision (2005)
2. Thames Crest Farms Plan of Subdivision (Revised 2007)
3. Example of integrated maintenance access route

REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the Department



Mark Stone



Grant Brouwer

Planner

Director, Building and Development

Recommended by the CAO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BKittmer', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brent Kittmer
CAO / Clerk

ATTACHMENT 3

Integrated Maintenance Access Route Example

(Source: Richmond Hill Stormwater Management Landscape Design Criteria and Implementation Guidelines - May 2016)



Headwaters Park - Richmond Hill. This maintenance access route also provides opportunities for the public to overlook the facility (portions of the railing are removable).