

Submission to City Staff re Parks and Recreation Master Plan

RESTORING BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR PLANNING OF URBAN RIVER CORRIDORS IN GUELPH

Prepared by Hugh Whiteley August 2023

Required planning principles and policies

There are five Canadian cities that have identified river-valley corridors as the defining feature and framework of their open-space systems. These five cities are: Ottawa, Guelph, London, Saskatoon and Edmonton.

To give appropriate attention to the protection, enhancement and permanence of their river-corridor open-space systems each of the cities has adopted the following planning principles in their Master Plan and Official Plan policies:

- Each city has identified rivers and river valleys both as part of the City's Natural Heritage System and also as core components of the City's Comprehensively-Defined Open Space System. The defined Open Space System in these five 'riverland' cities comprises all green spaces that contribute to recreational exposure to natural or landscaped beauty – rivers and streams, parkland, natural heritage features, stormwater facilities, arboretums, golf courses, landscaped lands around major institutional buildings and business parks.
- Each city has proclaimed that the unifying and connective core of their comprehensive Open Space System is the river and tributary stream corridor system that traverses the city.
- Four of the five cities (Ottawa is the exception) have adopted a separate Master Plan for the River System portion of the Open Space System that sets out the city's intention to maintain and expand the continuity and accessibility of public space within the river-system corridors and to regulate the interface between the built structure of the city and the riverland corridors to ensure continued visual prominence and physical access to and along the river valley corridors.
- Each of the cities has, in its Official Plan, a stated intention to acquire additional land in the river corridors to enhance continuity of public access to and within river corridors.

The first bullet point, inclusion of all identified Natural Heritage Features and Areas within the Comprehensive Open-Space System, is very important as it provides recognition of the value of river-valley corridors in supporting the physical, mental and spiritual health of citizens through contact with nature and justifies Official Plan policies for expanding physical and visual access to river corridors.

Permanent recognition for river corridors as core Open Space features

The cities of Ottawa, London, Saskatoon and Edmonton have all confirmed that protecting and enhancing the value of urban river corridors requires the commitment of the city to maintain in

perpetuity the four planning instruments that identify river corridors as the core elements of the city's open-space system. The four cities have shown this continuing commitment by regular updates of their Open Space Master Plans as Official Plans are updated. In particular the cities of London, Saskatoon and Edmonton, which have separate Master Plans for the river corridors, have confirmed the necessity for continuation of these River System Master Plans by recent renewals.

Protection of river corridors in Guelph

As will be documented below, Guelph initially showed the same commitment to permanent protection and continuing expansion of river-corridor access as London, Saskatoon and Edmonton. More recently, despite initially being in the leadership, along with Saskatoon, in developing riverland policies, Guelph has diminished or extinguished the focus on river corridors in its planning.

The City of Guelph adopted its first Open Space Master Plan in 1973. The 1973 Master Plan called for creation of a linked and integrated network of open space. This network, built by joining major public, quasi-public and private open spaces into a continuous system, was to be based on the natural drainage system as the framework for the open-space plan. Preservation of this natural base and increased accessibility to the river banks was the stated objective of the 1973 Master Plan.

In 1984 an Open Space Planning Policy Review was conducted. The Review recommended retention of the river-corridor-based linked and integrated Open Space system set out in 1973.

In preparation for the 2002 Official Plan the following Master Plans were prepared and adopted by City Council.

- City Council received the Final Report of the City of Guelph River Systems Management Study June 1993. Acting on this report, Council adopted a Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives for the River Systems of Guelph based on the Final Report as a basis for the planning of the river systems. City Council also adopted the Management Master Plan set out in Chapters 8 and 9 of the Final Report to be used as a guide for the preparation of plans for future activities in the river corridors.
- In 1997 City Council adopted a Greenway Vision and Plan as a component of the 1997 Recreation Parks & Culture Strategic Plan. The Greenway Vision and Plan integrated all types of open space in a connected system using river corridors as the connective framework.

Both the River Systems Management Master Plan and the Greenway Vision and Plan were fully incorporated into the 2002 Official Plan.

- As implementation of the above two Master Plans the 2002 Official Plan recognized river corridors as “the ‘backbone’ of the Guelph community and are a critical, integral component of Guelph’s image.” The plan promoted retention and extension of view corridors to the river corridors and improved accessibility to river corridor land. The OP specified that the Management Master Plan of the River System Management Study “will

be used as a guide for the preparation of plans within the river corridors. In doing so the City will strive to maximize access to the linear open space system”.

- The 2002 Official Plan identified the interest of the City in acquiring land to complete the linear open space system in the river corridors by “purchases, leases, easements, rights-of-way, dedications and any other applicable means.”

With the River System Master Plan and the Greenway Vision and Master Plan incorporated in the Official Plan the City of Guelph had implemented all four of the planning policies necessary for the recognition and protection of river corridors as the core framework for a comprehensive Open Space System. This full compliance with the planning principles and policies needed to properly protect and expand river-corridor open space continued in Guelph until 2012 when OPA 48 was adopted by City Council.

Procedural Defects in OPA 48

Defect One - No Approved Update in Open Space Master Plan

In preparation for the Official Plan renewal due in 2012 City Council directed staff to prepare an update of the 1997 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan and the included 1997 Greenway Vision and Plan.

In July 2009 staff presented a draft revised Master Plan to the Emergency Services, Community Services & Operations Committee of City Council/ The ESCSO received the report but identified corrections and additions that were needed and passed the following motion:

Minutes of the Emergency Services, Community Services & Operations Committee July 20 2009

Moved by Councillor Findlay, Seconded by Councillor Farrelly:

THAT the Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan and South End Study Component Study written by Monteith Brown be received;

AND THAT the Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan and South End Study Component Study be referred to staff for comment and for staff to propose a strategic implementation plan to the Emergency Services, Community Services & Operations Committee, prior to the end of 2009.

Carried

Despite the specific direction from Council to bring a corrected draft of the 2009 Recreation & Parks Master Plan back to ESCSO for forwarding to City Council for consideration and possible adoption staff have never brought the 2009 Master Plan to council for adoption. By established practice, as specified by City of Guelph planning officials if not by law, only City-Council-approved plans/studies can be used as support and justification for changes in the Official Plan.

There is no City-Council-Approved 2009 Recreation & Parks Master Plan. Any subsequent statements that changes were made in the Official Plan to implement the 2009 Recreation and

Parks Master Plan are evidence of procedures that contravene the intent of the Planning Act. Changes made on this basis must be regarded as unjustified.

As a result of the failure of staff to bring the draft 2009 Recreation and Parks Master Plan to City Council there has never been an opportunity for the public to inform City Council of their opinion about the major changes in the City's Open Space Planning Policy that the 2009 Draft Master Plan proposed.

Defect Two – 2009 Draft Open Space Masterplan Abandons Comprehensive Greenspace Master Plan

Guelph's adoption, in 1973, of a Master Plan based on a comprehensive definition of Open Space was originally a staff-led initiative. The process leading up to the 1997 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan had very extensive and intensive public engagement. One of the outcomes of this public engagement was the decision to give prominence to the City's Comprehensively-defined Open Space System by incorporating a stand-alone Greenway Vision and Plan within the overall RPCSP.

The preparation for the 2009 update of the RPCSP had similarly extensive public engagement. This engagement resulted in expressed support for an emphasis on experiencing the beauty of nature in the City's Open Space System. The top-rated priority of the public as regards open space elements was "A Connected Parks and Trails System That Inspires an Awe of Nature"

Despite the emphasis on giving priority to experiencing nature expressed by the public in 2009 the draft 2009 draft of an updated Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan proposed, in its detailed recommendations on Official Plan wording, that the City abandon the concept of a comprehensively-defined Open Space System in favour of a Parkland System that comprised only land zoned as Neighbourhood, Community and Regional Parks.

This recommendation of the Draft Plan involved a large change in policy in the Official Plan. One of the most important changes was the implied separation of the Natural Heritage System green spaces from being considered as open space. The result of this change would be a deemphasis of the role of Natural Heritage System elements in fostering an experience on nature in residents and visitors to Guelph.

Defect Three - Proposing Changes in the Official Plan without consultation or background study

According to the principles of public engagement of the City of Guelph every major change in land use policy should be subject to an open and effective process of public engagement before a decision on implementing the change is made by City Council. The standard process is the preparation of a policy document, in this case a Master Plan, and the presentation of the draft Master Plan to meetings of Guelph City Council for consideration with ample opportunities for public comment before a decision is made.

In the preparation of OPA 48 major changes in Official Plan open space policy were drafted, based on the unapproved Draft 2009 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan. The public had been denied the opportunity to express opinions on the Draft 2009 Plan's policy

changes because it was not brought to City Council. During the preparation of OPA 48 there was no opportunity for public engagement and no consultation with the City's River Systems Advisory Committee which was charged to advise the City on open-space policy.

When the final draft of OPA 48 was opened for public comment in January 2012. The following changes were proposed:

- That the Open Space System in the Official Plan no longer be based on the 1997 Greenway Vision and Master Plan based on a comprehensively defined Open Space System with river corridors as the framework structure. Instead, the Open Space System comprise only Neighbourhood, Community and Regional Parks and explicitly exclude all "Natural Heritage System and conservation lands" from the Open Space System.
- That the requirement to use the Management Master Plan of the River Systems Management Study (June 1993) as a guide for the preparation of plans within the river corridors, and, in doing so, to maximize public access to the linear open space system, be removed from the Official Plan.

The description of OPA 48 provided to the public in January 2012 did not mention that OPA 48 contained two proposed major changes in the Open Space section of the Official Plan. There was also no justification in the form of reference to adopted plans or studies provided to support these major changes. Both changes reversed Official Plan policies that had been approved by City Council through the adoption of the River Systems Management Master Plan in 1993 and the Greenway Vision and Plan in 1997. Both these Master Plans had been adopted as permanent elements in development of Official Plans and neither had been updated prior to the release of the OPA 48 revisions of the Official Plan.

OPA 48 was presented to City Council for a decision on June 5 2012. Despite the lack of announcement of changes in Open Space planning policies there was expressed public concern about these changes. The Chair of the City-Council-appointed River System Advisory Committee submitted a letter to City Council requesting a delay in consideration of OPA 48 because RSAC had not been consulted in the preparation of OPA 48. RSAC was directly affected by OPA 48 because RSAC's mandate was to provide guidance on the implementation of the River System Management Plan and OPA 48 proposed the abandonment of the RSMP.

At the June 5 2012 meeting of City Council dealing with OPA 48 six delegations addressed City Council. All expressed concern about the elimination of the River System Management Master Plan from the Official Plan and the lack of emphasis in OPA 48 on the importance of river corridors in the open space of Guelph. The delegations supported the request of RSAC for a delay in the approval of OPA 48 until the issue of proper consideration in OPA 48 of the value of river corridors as open space was reviewed.

In response to the delegations' expressed concerns and the request from RSAC the following motion was voted on:

5. Moved in Amendment by Councillor Bell seconded by Councillor Guthrie

THAT Official Plan Amendment 48 be referred back to staff to address the open spaces issues with the community

VOTING IN FAVOUR: Councillors Bell, Furfaro, Guthrie and Van Hellemond (4)

VOTING AGAINST: Councillors Burcher, Dennis, Findlay, Hofland, Kovach, Laidlaw, Piper, Wettstain and Mayor Farbridge (9)

Defeated

City Council then voted to adopt OPA 48 as presented. This decision resulted in the removal from the Official Plan of the Greenway System as recommended in the Greenway Vision and Plan and removal from the Official Plan of the River System Management Plan as the guide for city activities in the river corridors.

Current Situation

Guelph has been proceeding without an updated Recreation, Parks and Culture Master Plan for fourteen years. During this time, as a result of the absence of a Council-approved update in the Open Space Master Plan, unjustified changes were made in the Official Plan in OPA 48. These changes in the Official Plan removed all four of the planning principles which Guelph and other Canadian ‘riverland’ cities have found to be important in developing a planning structure that protects and expands the open-space value of the river corridors that are the framework of each city’s open-space system.

This gap in guidance on Open-Space-Planning policy is unprecedented. For over forty years, beginning in 1973, the City of Guelph followed the practise of including an Open Space Master Plan as a component of a succession of Recreation and Parks Master Plans. This succession of Open Space Master Plans, including the most recent 1997 Master Plan, were all constructed on the framework of the valleys of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers and their tributaries as the major open spaces and the primary connective elements of the Open Space System. Throughout this period the Open Space System was defined to comprise all green spaces, public or private, that contribute to recreational exposure to natural or landscaped beauty in the City. This comprehensive definition of greenspace explicitly included all Natural Heritage areas and features as Open Space.

The drastic changes in Open Space policy made in 2012 with the adoption of OPA 48 are contrary to the direction being taken elsewhere in Canada and internationally. As noted above Ottawa, London, Saskatoon and Edmonton – Canada’s other leading ‘riverland’ cities – all have maintained a comprehensively-defined Open Space System in which river valleys are the defining framework.

The Province of Ontario has given emphasis to the importance of urban river valleys as Open Space areas by designating Urban River Valleys as a specific category of land eligible for inclusion as a component of the Greenbelt. Currently the Province is adding 13 additional Urban River Valleys to the Greenbelt. The Federal Government created the first Urban National Park in

the Rouge River Valley and is currently considering two additional river valley National Parks in Saskatoon and Edmonton.

The lack of advocacy for an Open Space Master Plan that includes Natural Heritage Areas as accessible Open Space is also out of touch with current thinking about the relationship between contact with nature and physical, emotional and spiritual health. Both the World Health Organization and United Nations Environmental Program have recently published reports that extol the value of urban “green and blue areas” to both human health and biodiversity. Urban river valleys combine both green and blue features and thus are of primary importance. (See Green and Blue Spaces and Mental Health WHO 2021 and Convention on Biodiversity Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework. Target 12 of the framework calls for action to *“increase the area and quality and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity”*).

Corrections Needed in the 2023 Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The current draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan is missing the key component of all previous Recreation, Parks & Culture Master Plans - an Open Space Master Plan containing a comprehensive definition of Open Space and giving prominence to Guelph’s river valleys as the central and defining framework of the Open Space System. This major defect must be remedied before the Master Plan is adopted.

The decision of City Council, in adopting OPA 48, to abandon the established practise of basing Open Space planning on a comprehensive definition of what constitutes open space and exclude Natural Heritage areas being counted as Open Space was contrary to the repeated expression of citizens giving priority to provision of access to natural areas as an Open Space objective. The exclusion of NHS features from Open Space also is contrary to the direction followed in all other ‘riverland’ cities in Canada. This is the time to reverse this decision and restore Guelph’s position as a ‘riverland’ city.

Two recent policy documents of the City of Guelph show a recognition of the need for the restoration of comprehensive Open space planning in which the human values and services of the Natural Heritage System are given proper weight. Both the Natural Heritage Action Plan (2018) and the Comprehensive Zoning By-law (2022) state that the NHS has two objectives (1) protecting and advancing biodiversity through preserving the integrity of natural features and ecological services and (2) providing opportunity for leisure recreational activities and aesthetic enjoyment for residents and visitors by experiencing nature. The recognition of the Open Space values of the NHS in the NHAP and the Comprehensive Zoning By-Law correctly reflect the collective wisdom on what is needed for a healthy city.

The four missing elements that are required to make the Parks and Recreation Master Plan acceptable are:

1. A commitment to prepare, and maintain in perpetuity, a comprehensive Open Space Master Plan for Guelph that includes all the Natural Heritage System components in the Open Space System.
2. A prominent declaration in the Official Plan that Guelph's River Corridors form the defining structure for the comprehensively-defined Open Space System.
3. Inclusion in the Open Space Master Plan of a River System Master Plan for the valleyland corridors.
4. A declaration that the City remains committed to acquisition of additional riverside property to expand accessibility and connectivity.

Remove misleading references to the unapproved draft 2009 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan

In presenting the 2023 updating of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for public review it should be clearly stated that the previous Master Plan being replaced is the 1997 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan. The draft plan of 2009 was never completed and was never presented to City Council for possible adoption. This incomplete unapproved draft plan was not approved by City Council as a policy guide and has no authority in discussions of policy options.

The specific changes needed in the draft 2023 text are as follows:

Page 34 left column 1st paragraph line 2 to 4: remove ~~*“identified in the 2009 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Master Plan”*~~

Page 34 left column last paragraph line 2: remove ~~*“set in 2009”*~~

MEMO TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: HUGH WHITELEY

DATE OCTOBER 24 2023

RE COMMENTS ON PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

This is a significant meeting of City Council. For the first time in twenty-six years City Council is adopting an updated Master Plan for the City's Parks and Open Space Infrastructure System,

The draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan you are asked to adopt is a major departure from previous Master Plans as this Master Plan does not contain an Open Space Master Plan component.

To understand why the absence of an Open Space Master Plan is a serious defect it is important to recognize the two land use components that comprise the Green and Blue infrastructure that form the Parks and Open Space system.

Past City of Guelph Parks and Recreation Master Plans defined these two components as:

- (1) 'Parkland defined as Neighbourhood (P2), Community (P3) and Regional (P4) parks used primarily for playing fields, play apparatuses and community recreational and leisure facilities and
- (2) 'Open Space/Conservation Lands' defined as including lands protecting the City's Natural Heritage System, unprogrammed residential, commercial and industrial green spaces, aesthetically pleasing landscapes, historical and culturally recognized spaces and structures, vegetated linkage corridors not part of the NHS.

To ensure oversight is provided for both of these components of the Parks and Open Space System the first three Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plans adopted by the City included an Open Space Master Plan that included all types of Open Space.

The third Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Plan adopted in 1997 included a separate Open Space Master Plan titled Greenway Vision and Plan. This Greenway Plan was individually adopted and its components, including all NHS lands, approved by Council.

The Greenway Vision and Plan was incorporated in the City's Official Plan as Schedule 7 in 2001 and remained in the Official Plan until March 2018 when OPA 48 came into effect.

In 2007 City Council directed staff to prepare an updated Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan. A draft of a new Master Plan was considered by the Emergency Services, Community Services and Operations Committee of City Council in July 2009. The ECO Committee received the draft Master Plan and sent it back to staff for comments and revisions with a return date of December 2009.

Since a revised 2009 draft Master Plan was not presented to ECO as directed and was never received by City Council nor adopted by City Council this plan has no standing as a City plan/study. Staff have used this study as a guide for action for fourteen years and this study was presented to the public as the Master Plan being updated by the 2023 draft. This use and presentation of an unapproved plan is not appropriate in my view.

Despite the lack of authority of the unapproved 2009 Draft Plan it is useful to examine this plan in order to see what led to the removal of an Open Space Master Plan in the 2023 draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Defect in 2009 Draft Master Plan

The 2009 Draft Plan did not contain a separately identified Open Space Master Plan and did not identify this as a departure from the 1997 Master Plan which it was intended to replace.

The absence of an Open Space Master Plan is surprising since the 2009 draft uniformly describes the system it is applied to as the "Parks and Open Space" system. The term 'Open Space' occurs 74 times in the text.

Under the heading of Goal 6 A Connected Parks and Trails System that Inspires an Awe of Nature there is the note that:

Recent surveys for the City have placed parks, natural spaces and trails near the top of the list in terms of both satisfaction and areas that the community should continue to invest in. Guelph residents have high expectation for the City's parkland and open space system and there is a need to continue to enhance and protect these valuable resources.

Under the heading Service Objectives Contributing to Community Wellness the 2009 Master Plan lists as Objective 5:

To plan, implement and maintain parks, trails, open space and facilities; to provide active spaces as well as spaces for reflection and rejuvenation

There must be a balance in the provision of open spaces in a community. While it is important to provide spaces for **sports** and physical activity, it is equally important to provide natural environments. The natural environment provides simple sights and sounds that enhance reflection and rejuvenation.

These and other references within the 2009 Master Plan to enhancing contact with nature seem to me to support the inclusion of a comprehensively defined Open Space Master Plan as a central part of the Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plan. If the plan had been brought to Council for approval I expect the omission of an Open Space Master Plan would have been identified and remedied,

Defects in 2023 Draft Master Plan

The 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan has a much-reduced focus on open space areas with natural features compared to the 2009 draft Master plan. The term ‘open space’ occurs only 10 times in the text compared to 74 times in the 2009 draft.

There are nevertheless two entries that support the inclusion of an Open Space Master Plan in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Page 94

Demand for outdoor programs and activities ballooned during the pandemic and remains on the rise. This shifting trend requires recreation providers to think outside facility walls and reduce reliance on built features and amenities. Instead, providers need to consider creative ways of animating open spaces and incorporate natural environments into program design. Growing connections with the natural environment also help foster stewardship and creates opportunities to embed nature education and participatory practices into recreational programs. This provides an opportunity to support synergies with other City strategies, like the Guelph Trail Master Plan and Natural Heritage Action Plan, that will improve local environmental outcomes and enhance residents’ quality of life.

Page 138

According to respondents the top three priorities for the future of our park and open spaces are: 1) connecting parks with trails, sidewalk or greenways, 2) obtaining more land for parks in the form of small pocket parks in existing areas, and 3) adding more trails in existing parks and natural areas.

Remedy for Defect in Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The immediate decision to be made by City Council is whether or not to adopt the Parks and Recreation Master Plan as presented.

Although the Master Plan lacks an important component it is clearly better to adopt the Plan as is rather than extending the 14-year long period of directionless guidance Guelph has experienced.

Following adoption, the challenge to City Council is for Council to give direction to staff to remedy the absence in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan of guidance for the Parks Department's stewardship of the "850 acres of Natural Heritage System (NHS) and 130 kilometers of trails" listed on page 26 of the Master Plan.

In the preparation of the Master Plan the following two questions were asked of the Natural History Advisory Committee:

Do you agree that the Natural Heritage System has recreational value?

How should the city connect people to nature?

These important questions were not answered by the NHAC, were not asked of the general public and are left unanswered by the Master Plan.

These two questions, together with a third unanswered question given below would form a good basis for an investigative study to be undertaken by the City with public input.

- Are Master Plans for Open Space and Master Plans for Urban River Corridors effective for guiding stewardship of urban natural heritage systems?

In an investigation of these questions there should be attention paid to the experience of the five Canadian cities that have recognized river-corridor-based Greenspace Systems.

These five are Ottawa, Guelph, London, Saskatoon, Edmonton. In 2009 all five cities had adopted an Open Space Master Plan that included all types of green open space and specifically included the Natural Heritage System. All the cities, with the exception of Ottawa, had also adopted a separate Master Plan for River Corridors.

In 2023 all these cities, with the exception of Guelph, have made the Master Plan for Open Space and the Master Plan for River Corridors a permanent part of their suite of infrastructure Master Plans. As a possible consequence of this decision to give prominence to their river valleys as contact areas for nature both Saskatoon and Edmonton are currently being considered for National Urban Parks in a portion of their river corridors.

In terms of worldwide recognition of the importance of contact with nature in enhancing human and ecosystem health the World Health Organization has recently published Green and Blue Spaces – New Evidence and Perspective for Action.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, at a recent meeting in Montreal, published the Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework. Target 12 of the framework specifically calls for enhanced contact with nature in green and blue spaces in urban areas.

APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF FACTS REGARDING PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Compiled by Hugh Whiteley October 2023

1. City of Guelph policies for management of the City's infrastructure are determined by development and adoption of Master Plans for the City's various infrastructure systems. Individual Master Plans are time limited. Continuity in oversight is preserved by updating of Master Plans at regular intervals.
2. Beginning in 1973 the City of Guelph has maintained a series of Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plans. Each of these Master Plans contained an Open Space Master Plan for the management of the City's Green Spaces Infrastructure.
3. The most recent Recreation Parks and Culture Master Plan adopted by City Council is the "Recreation Parks & Culture Strategic Plan" adopted by City Council on October 20 1997. The Open Space Master Plan component of this Master Plan was individually adopted by City Council as the "Greenway Vision and Plan", whose purpose was "to integrate all types of open space".
4. The Greenway Vision and Plan (1997) acknowledges and incorporates the "Management Master Plan for the River Systems of Guelph" adopted by City Council on October 18 1993 "as a guide in the preparation of plans for future City activities in the river corridors".
5. In 2007 Council directed staff to prepare a new Master Plan for recreation parks and culture for the period 2009 to 2019 to replace the 1997 Master Plan. On 20th 2009 the draft Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan/South End Centre Component Study was received by the Emergency Services, Community Services and Operations Committee of City Council.
6. The ECO Committee passed the following motion at its July 20th 2009 meeting: THAT the Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan/South End Centre Component Study written by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants be received; AND THAT the Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan/South End Centre Component Study be referred to staff for comment, and

for staff to propose a strategic implementation plan to ECO prior to the end of 2019.

7. There is no record of any further consideration of the 2009 draft Master Plan by ECO. The 2009 draft Master Plan was never received by City Council and never adopted by City Council.
8. In the preparation of an Official Plan the policies of the Official Plan are to be based on strategic directions and plans/studies approved by City Council. Until a plan/study has been approved by City Council it cannot be used as a supporting document for Official Plan policies.
9. Until March 2018, when OPA 48 came into effect, Section 7.12.26 of the City of Guelph Official Plan required City Council to do detailed planning and development of open space areas through the implementation of the 1997 Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Plan.
10. Furthermore Section 7.12.27 stated “It will be the policy of Council to continuously monitor and review the implementation of the ‘Strategic Plan’ to be sure the goals and objectives are being achieved. In the period 2009 to 2018, in the absence of an approved update of the ‘Strategic Plan’, these two Sections of the Official Plan were not being followed by staff and City Council.

APPENDIX B

The Corporation of the City of Guelph Emergency Services, Community Services & Operations Committee

Monday, July 20, 2009, 5:00 p.m.

A meeting of the Emergency Services, Community Services & Operations Committee was held on Monday, July 20, 2009 in Council Committee Room at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Hofland, Farrelly, Findlay, Laidlaw and Mayor Farbridge

Also Present: Councillors Beard, Bell, Burcher and Wettstein

July 20, 2009

**Emergency Services, Community Services &
Operations Committee**

Page No. 3

Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan/South End Centre Component Study

Ms. A. Pappert

4. Moved by Councillor Findlay Seconded by Councillor Farrelly
THAT the Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan and South End Centre Component Study written by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants be received;

AND THAT the Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Master Plan and South End Centre Component Study be referred to staff for comment, and for staff to propose a strategic implementation plan to the Emergency Services, Community Services and Operations Committee, prior to the end of 2009.

Carried

APPENDIX C

Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Plan

7.12.26 Detailed planning and development of open space areas, recreation facilities and programs will be completed through the implementation of the City's "Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategic Plan". This Strategic Plan generally serves the following purposes:

- a) To prepare an inventory of all open space areas, recreation facilities and programs, and the providers of recreation services within the community;
- b) To identify recreational needs within the community;
- c) To prepare a comprehensive framework for the planning and development of recreation programs, facilities and open space areas;
- d) To set priorities for the allocation of funds for recreational services.

7.12.27 It will be the policy of Council to continually monitor and review the implementation of the "Strategic Plan" in order to ensure that the goals and objectives are being achieved and that they remain an accurate reflection of the community's needs and interests for recreational services.

APPENDIX D

On Monday, October 20, 1997, Guelph City Council passed the following:

THAT the "*Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan - Vision 2007*" which describes an active recreation, parks and culture partnership, new services and approaches, a vibrant greenway network, an alive and robust downtown, a wide variety of sanctuaries and natural areas, a city for everyone, a royal festival city, a sporting city, a number of multi-purpose shared spaces and a series of active neighbourhood centres and the thirteen major new directions and expanded roles/services, be adopted;

AND THAT City Council sends a letter of thanks and appreciation to each of the community volunteers who spent many hours developing the "*Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan*";

AND THAT the "*Greenway Vision and Plan*," which is a component of the *Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan*, to integrate all types of open space, be adopted;

AND THAT the various components of the "*Greenway Vision and Plan*" which includes environmental corridors, ecological linkages, paths, trails, streets, boulevards, major open spaces and ancillary open spaces, be approved;

AND THAT detailed recommendations of the "*Greenway Vision and Plan*" execution into the City's Official Plan be forwarded through the Community Services Committee and the Planning, Works and Environment Committee for approval and implementation;

AND THAT the "*Open Space Planning and Development Criteria and the Open Space Development Process*" to refine the open space classification system, direct the distribution of parks throughout the City, set standards and guidelines for the selection, planning and design of parks and to establish procedures for development of new parks, be adopted;

AND THAT detailed recommendations of the "*Open Space Planning and Development Criteria and the Open Space Development Process*" execution into the City's Official Plan will be forwarded through the Community Services Committee and the Planning, Works and Environment Committee for approval and implementation.

APPENDIX E

email to Eric Poole August 28 2023

Greetings

I attach a detailed report that specifies major deficiencies I have identified in the 2023 draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The central deficiency is the absence of an Open Space Master Plan as a central component of the draft PRMP.

The deficiencies I have identified require major changes to the draft PRMP. In anticipation of further discussions about the validity and necessity of the changes I believe are needed please acknowledge receiving these suggestions.

In order to facilitate future discussions, I would find it helpful to establish what may be differences in opinion on factual matters. I request that in your reply you state, point by point, whether the City agrees with the following statements.

1. Beginning in 1973 the City Council has adopted a series of Recreation, Parks & Culture Master Plans. Each of these Master Plans adopted by City Council contained an Open Space Master Plan.
2. The most recent Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan was adopted by City Council on October 20 1997. This Master Plan contained the Greenway Vision and Plan that integrates all types of Open Space.
3. The 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, when adopted by City Council, will replace the 1997 Recreation, Parks & Culture Strategic Plan.
4. The changes made to the Official Plan in OPA 48, as regards removing from the Official Plan the Open Space policies contained in the 1997 Greenway Vision and Plan, were not based on recommendations contained in any City-Council-approved study or Master Plan.

I look forward to your reply with an indication of what further discussion is proposed regarding the changes I suggest.

Best regards

Hugh Whiteley