

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

I wholeheartedly support the relocation of the Community Park currently planned for Clair-Maltby to the site adjacent to Hall's Pond, currently occupied by the Springfield Golf Course.

This fulfills the intent of Section 8.3 of our Official Plan: **Landmarks, Public Views and Public Vistas**, and meets the community's repeated requests for visual access to Hall's Pond.

I do not support Recommendation #2: ***That the final parkland recommendations may be impacted and revised based on the Financial Impact Assessment to be completed for the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan in its entirety.***

Parkland is critical urban infrastructure. We would never contemplate building only 60% of the required road or wastewater infrastructure due to financial constraints. Nor do we work based on targets or "ranges" for this infrastructure. We build what is required for the actual population.

I think the question of whether or not we can afford to develop Clair-Maltby at all is a valid one, but if we can't afford to provide the required parks, then we can't afford to develop at all.

The addition of a 20 ha regional linear park - the moraine ribbon - is an excellent development, but we are still short on required parkland. According to our Official Plan minimums, we should have 2 community parks for 15,000 people and 3 for 25,000 people. Community Parks play a specific role in our community in providing space for organized sports.

There is nothing to indicate that we have a city-wide surplus of parkland according to the required minimums. In fact a detailed analysis completed by Ward 4 citizen Matt Saunders two years ago uncovered serious errors in the City's parkland inventory and pointed to a deficit in the range of 25% - 40% less parkland than we should have.

<https://mattsaunder.ca/missing-parks>

The deficits identified by Mr. Saunders have never been addressed by City Staff. If Mr. Saunder's assertions are true, then we should be establishing extra parkland in Clair-Maltby to make up for existing deficits.

I am hard-pressed to think of a proposed high-density development that has not sought to exceed the allowed zoning. Recent history has shown that for these developments, the density almost always exceeds what was planned for. Given this pattern, we need to prepare for the upper population range for Clair-Maltby - 25,000 people. Parkland needs to be set aside at the beginning of the process. It can't be added in later.

The "opportunistic" use of stormwater management areas for recreation is a creative accounting exercise - one that will potentially benefit developers, but not citizens.

Both our previous Parkland Dedication By-law and current By-law specifically exclude stormwater management areas from being counted as parkland conveyance.

I would underline that stormwater management areas are intentionally designed to protect the health of streams, lakes and aquatic life. They do this by creating a space where sediment and contaminants can settle out. These contaminants can include metals, oil and grease, pesticides and bacteria from pet and other animal feces. These are NOT areas where we should be encouraging human recreation. In fact, it would seem that there could be potential liabilities associated with this initiative.

Moreover, we do not build road in areas which are subject to flooding. Why would we put recreational facilities in such areas? Especially within the context of climate change, we could find that many areas are unusable for significant portions of the year.

Clair-Maltby sits atop a glacial moraine. We should be preserving as much undeveloped land as possible to allow the moraine to continue to perform its critical water filtration functions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the critical importance of park infrastructure. I will close by quoting from this article:

The Power of Parks in a Pandemic:

For city residents, equitable access to green space is more than a coronavirus amenity. It's critical for physical, emotional and mental health.

<https://www.citylab.com/perspective/2020/04/coronavirus-nature-city-park-funding-accessibility-location/609697/>

Parks aren't usually in the news this much.

With half of the world now living under lockdown, the ability to go outside and get some fresh air has never been so important, or so fiercely contested. As those who can afford to do so converge on green spaces, seeking exercise and solace amid the coronavirus pandemic, parks have become stages for collective joy, anxiety, and social-distancing infringement crackdowns. The multiplicity of benefits parks have always offered us — physical and mental health relief, community building, and free public open space in tight, increasingly privatized urban quarters — seem not only like an added bonus right now, but rather, a critical lifeline for cities and their residents.

Susan Watson