July 8, 2003

V. A. Coté  
General Manager of Planning and Development

I hereby certify that the Municipal Council, at its session held on July 7, 2003 resolved:

1. That, on the recommendation of the General Manager of Planning and Development, the attached guidelines for the general design of parks and open spaces BE APPROVED. (58.1.1.03) (1/16/PC)

L.M. Rowe  
Manager of Legislative Services  
/hw

cc: R. Panzer, Director of Planning  
G. Barrett, Manager III, Parks Planning and Design
11  PARKS & OPEN SPACE

11.1  DEFINITIONS
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11 PARKS & OPEN SPACE

11.1 DEFINITIONS

**Neighbourhood Parks** are intended to serve a local neighbourhood population and should be designed to support unorganized activity along with some organized youth activities and programs. Typical features include: play structures, pathways, unlit sports fields, multi-use pads, and basketball courts.

**District Parks** are intended to serve groups of neighbourhoods and are designed with an emphasis on facilities for organized sports and unorganized activities. Facilities may include lit sports fields, spray pads, tennis courts, skateboard parks, parking lots, community centres, areas, pools, and major play structures.

**Community Linkages** provide physical connections between parks, the larger open space system and community facilities such as schools, libraries, community centres and local shopping areas. They typically have asphalt pathways and maintain significant natural features and are designed to create convenient links in conjunction with local roads, storm water management blocks and school blocks.

**Natural Areas** can include Open Space Blocks, Woodlands, portions of larger Park Blocks and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA). Generally, they have been set aside for their environmental significance and may have been identified by the City through a previous study or have a development-related Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with recommendations for their protection, management and enhancement.

**Thames Valley Parkway** is the City’s multi-use pathway system which generally follows the Thames River corridor. Future extensions of the Thames Valley Parkway (TVP) will occur as lands along the branches of the Thames River come under urban development. The TVP is asphalt and typically 3-4m wide with convenient connections to adjacent neighbourhoods.

**Storm Water Management Ponds** are facilities constructed as part of the servicing requirements for development. Often located adjacent to Open Space uses, they are to be integrated with the park design or natural landscape feature.

11.2 LAYOUT

11.2.1 Neighbourhood Parks should be centrally located within the service area radius of 0.8km and serve a population of up to 5000 people. Parks should be located to be within a convenient and safe walking distance to the majority of residents and
users should not have to cross arterial roads to access their neighbourhood park. Wherever practical, neighbourhood parks should be coordinated with school sites to maximize outdoor space for school use and hard surface/parking for park users.

The parks should be from 1.5 – 4.0 Ha in size and roughly rectangular to accommodate facilities with a minimum 15m setback to adjacent houses and to reduce “blind” corners. Typically, a 30-60m minimum frontage to suit block configuration is required, with at least one secondary entrance to the park. Generally, a flat site is desirable for facility development, but some topography may provide for tobogganing, etc. Stands of vegetation should be retained where possible.

Park facilities should be separated by suitable buffers and designed to be visible from the street. Pathways should connect all points of entry into the park. All layout of pathways and facilities is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with construction.

11.2.2 District Parks should be centrally located within the service area of the District, and serve typically a 2km radius. They serve a population of up to 20,000 people but can have more regional facilities such as indoor pools. They can be integrated with schools and should be located on primary collector or arterial roads for access by public transit. The City’s Districts and existing District and Neighbourhood Parks are shown on the Planning Division’s Parks and Open Space Map.

Some degree of topography is an asset to the park as it can provide buffers between facilities and adjacent houses. Stands of vegetation are desirable features and pathways are to connect all park facilities and park entrances. All layout of pathways and facilities is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with construction.

11.2.3 The design and layout of pathways and facilities is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with construction in Community Linkages and Natural Areas.

11.2.4 The design and layout of the TVP will be done through City capital projects and through the development process where the TVP crosses developing lands. Typically, layout, design and construction of the TVP is subject detailed environmental analyses as it is sometimes routed through valley lands and ESAs. In general, convenient access points that provide visibility from an adjacent street are desirable every 500m maximum.

11.2.5 The technical requirements and design of storm water management facilities is approved under Section 6 of this manual. Through that process, integration with adjacent parks or open spaces may be desirable. Where storm facilities are located and designed to integrate with parks and open spaces, additional land around the
pond may be required beyond the minimum setback to property lines to permit suitable pathways systems and/or EIS requirements that meet Park Planning & Design approval. Refer to the figures in Section 6 for an example of integration design requirements.

Facilities located away from parks and open spaces and not intended to be used as a community amenity are not subject to these additional setback requirements.

11.3 GRADING

Park grading for Neighbourhood and District Parks and Community Linkages shall integrate with the surrounding lands and provide positive flow from all facilities and adjacent private lands. Drainage from private lands may be directed to parkland if it can be accommodated within the park drainage design.

Pathways shall be set as high points through the park with positive drainage away from them. Limited amounts of sheet flow may be permitted to cross pathways in certain circumstances.

Park grading shall be smooth flowing and shown with contours, with spot elevations as required to demonstrate desired slopes, top-of-bank, field corners, and hard surface grades. Swales are to curve to suit facility layout, pathway alignments and natural topographical design.

Specific grading standards are:

- Sports fields – 1.5%, directed to suit field layout and site conditions
- Pathways – 1 – 2% cross slope, up to 8% linear (4% preferred)
- Swales – 1.5 – 4%, for a maximum length of 150m
- Topography – 3:1 maximum with undulating surfaces. 2:1 is permitted if an area is to be naturalized

Retaining walls are generally unacceptable within a park block unless they are required to maintain existing grades of adjacent facilities or for the protection of significant vegetation.

Grading plans for new subdivisions are to be included in Engineering Packages and meet all applicable requirements from the Subdivision & Development Division. The completion of grading, servicing and seeding of park blocks is typically required prior to the issuance of building permits within the subdivision.

Grading for “natural areas” (may include some Community Linkages) is to be kept to a minimum and subject to review on a case by case basis. Grading of parks and open spaces adjacent to natural areas and ESAs to be delimited by upgraded silt fencing and/or as directed by a site specific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
Grading within storm water management ponds is approved by ESD. If ponds are to be integrated with parks and open space areas, pathway grades (as above) and pond side-slope grades should mesh and compliment adjacent landforms.

All rough grading for parks and open spaces is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with fine grading.

11.4 SERVICING

Park and Open Space Blocks generally require storm sewer systems and occasionally sanitary sewers and water lines to service community facilities such as field houses and pools. For specific sewer design requirements, refer to Section 3 - Sanitary Sewer Collection System, Section 5 - Storm Sewer Collection System and Section 7 - Water Distribution System.

11.5 SEEDING

Seeding of park blocks is carried out in accordance with the specifications in the Standard Contract Documents for Municipal Construction Projects.

Maintenance of the turf is the responsibility of the developer up to assumption. This includes mowing to maintain a height of no more than 63mm, weed control and over-seeding, if required. Inspections for assumption will only take place between May 30 and October 15. At assumption, the turf must be healthy and vigorous, cut to 50mm height with very few bare patches or weeds.

11.6 FACILITIES

With the exception of soccer fields, park facilities as described in Section 9.1 are not generally installed by a developer as part of park development. Occasionally, developers will proceed with a certain level of facility development to provide an amenity within their subdivision. Requirements for these facilities are outlined in the Standard Contract Documents for Municipal Construction Projects.

11.7 TREE PRESERVATION

In many Parks, Community Linkages and Open Space Blocks, existing vegetation is to be maintained as an amenity feature. Where this is the case, the following requirements apply:

- Grading alterations should be generally restricted to outside the “drip-line” of existing vegetation.
- The limits of grading where the slope is toward existing vegetation is to be fenced with upgraded silt fencing and/or as directed by a site specific Environmental Impact Statement. Where grades slope away from existing vegetation, 1.2m high “construction fencing” is required.
- Hazard trees and or limbs are to be removed from the edges of woods and over existing or proposed pathway/trail locations.
- Additional requirements may be specified through a Tree Preservation Plan produced to fulfill the conditions of a subdivision agreement.

11.8 NATURAL AREAS

Natural Areas, Open Space Blocks, Woodslands or Environmentally Significant Areas have stringent design requirements, often specific to the area. Generally, through the land development process they have been set aside for their environmental/ecological significance and through the preparation of an EIS will have recommendations for their protection, management and enhancement that are to be accommodated in Engineering plans. Some of the City's ESAs have Conservation Master Plans that would also outline specific requirements.

Typically, standard grading, servicing and development requirements do not apply, but pathway/trail development is usually required and will require some level of design and construction as directed by the City.

Prior to assumption of natural areas, all hazards such as tree forts, old fencing, construction materials and general debris must be removed from the block. Hazard trees along existing or proposed trails and pathways and abutting adjacent lands should be removed.

11.9 BIO-ENGINEERING

Within Parks, Open Spaces, Natural Areas and ESAs, bio-engineering is used as the preferred approach for slope stabilization, channel creation or restoration, storm outlet design and any other “engineered” feature. Limited use of rip-rap or other erosion control materials is permitted where the situation warrants if used in conjunction with other “natural” approaches.

Conveyance channels from storm water management facilities that outlet into parks and open spaces require suitable bio-engineered design to blend with the surrounding landscape.

Bio-engineering design may require specialized consultants to successfully implement parks standards and/or EIS recommendations.
11.10 TREE PLANTING

Tree planting within parks, open spaces, linkages, natural areas and stormwater management facilities is to be carried out in compliance with Section 12. More detailed planting and monitoring requirements for stormwater management ponds is found in "Guidelines for Landscape Planting & Monitoring" available from the Planning Division.
Hi Patricia:

Dave Antonsen (Parks Planning) forwarded your name to me. I am currently compiling all of the guideline documents for planning and engineering for the City of London and all associated council resolutions adopting and amending these documents (as per Rob Panzer’s request). Dave recently gave me the general guidelines for the design of parks and open space (adopted by council on July 07, 2003), however, he told me that since then these guidelines have been revised and that to his knowledge the amendments to this guideline document did not go to council (i.e. no council resolution).

Could you bring me up to speed on what has happened to this document since it was originally adopted in 2003? I will need to explain this to both Rob and Doug.

Many thanks,
Margaret
11 PARKS & OPEN SPACE

11.1 DEFINITIONS

11.1.1 Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks are intended to serve a local neighbourhood population and should be designed to support unorganized activity along with some organized youth activities and programs. Typical features include: play structures, pathways, unlit sports fields, multi-use pads, and basketball courts.

11.1.2 District Parks

District parks are intended to serve groups of neighbourhoods and are designed with an emphasis on facilities for organized sports and unorganized activities. Facilities may include lit sports fields, spray pads, tennis courts, skateboard parks, parking lots, community centers, arenas, pools, and major play structures.

11.1.3 Community Linkages

Community linkages provide physical connections between parks, the larger open space system and community facilities such as schools, libraries, community centers and local shopping areas. They typically have asphalt pathways and maintain significant natural features and are designed to create convenient links in conjunction with local roads, storm water management blocks and school blocks.

11.1.4 Natural Areas

Natural areas can include Open Space Blocks, Woodlands, portions of larger Park Blocks and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA). Generally, they have been set aside for their environmental significance and may have been identified by the City through a previous study or have a development-related Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with recommendations for their protection, management and enhancement.

11.1.4 Thames Valley Parkway

Thames Valley Parkway is the City's multi-use pathway system which generally follows the Thames River corridor. Future extensions of the Thames Valley Parkway (TVP) will occur as lands along the branches of the Thames River come under urban development. The TVP is asphalt and typically 3-4m wide with convenient connections to adjacent neighbourhoods.

Environmental and Engineering Services Department
The Corporation of the City of London
Updated: December 2005
11.1.5 Water Management Ponds

Stormwater management ponds are facilities constructed as part of the servicing requirements for development. Often located adjacent to Open Space uses, they are to be integrated with the park design or natural landscape feature.

11.2 LAYOUT

11.2.1 Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks should be centrally located within the service area radius of 0.8km and serve a population of up to 5,000 people. Parks should be located to be within a convenient and safe walking distance to the majority of residents and users should not have to cross arterial roads to access their neighbourhood park. Wherever practical, neighbourhood parks should be coordinated with school sites to maximize outdoor space for school use and hard surface/parking for park users.

The parks should be from 1.5 – 4.0 ha in size and roughly rectangular to accommodate facilities with a minimum 15m setback to adjacent houses and to reduce “blind” corners. Typically, a 30-60m minimum frontage to suit block configuration is required, with at least one secondary entrance to the park. Generally, a flat site is desirable for facility development, but some topography may provide for tobogganing, etc. Stands of vegetation should be retained where possible.

Park facilities should be separated by suitable buffers and designed to be visible from the street. Pathways should connect all points of entry into the park. All layout of pathways and facilities is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with construction.

11.2.2 District Parks

District Parks should be centrally located within the service area of the District, and serve typically a 2km radius. They serve a population of up to 20,000 people, but can have more regional facilities such as indoor pools. They can be integrated with schools and should be located on primary collector or arterial roads for access by public transit. The City's districts and existing district and neigbourhood parks are shown on the Planning Division's Parks and Open Spaces map.

Some degree of topography is an asset to the park as it can provide buffers between facilities and adjacent houses. Stands of vegetation are desirable features and pathways are to connect all park facilities and park entrances. All layout of pathways and facilities is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with construction.
11.2.3 Pathways and Facilities

The design and layout of pathways and facilities is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with construction in Community Linkages and Natural Areas.

11.2.4 Thames Valley Parkway

The design and layout of the TVP will be done through City capital projects and through the development process where the TVP crosses developing lands. Typically, layout, design and construction of the TVP is subject to detailed environmental analyses as it is sometimes routed through valley lands and ESAs. In general, convenient access points that provide visibility from an adjacent street are required every 500m maximum.

11.2.5 Storm Water Management Facilities

The technical requirements and design of storm water management facilities is approved under Section 6 of this manual. Through that process, integration with adjacent parks or open spaces may be desirable. Where storm facilities are located and designed to integrate with parks and open spaces, additional land around the pond may be required beyond the minimum technical setbacks to property lines to permit suitable pathway systems and/or EIS requirements that meet park planning & design approval. Appropriate compensation will be provided for additional land requirements.

Facilities located away from parks and open spaces and not intended to be used as a community amenity are not subject to these additional setback requirements.

11.3 GRADING

Park grading for neighbourhood and district parks and community linkages shall integrate with the surrounding lands and provide positive flow from all facilities and adjacent private lands. Drainage from private lands may be directed to parkland if it can be accommodated within the park drainage design.

Pathways shall be set as high points through the park with positive drainage away from them. Limited amounts of sheet flow may be permitted to cross pathways in certain circumstances.

Park grading shall be smooth flowing and shown with contours, with spot elevations as required to demonstrate desired slopes, top-of-bank, field corners, and hard surface grades. Swales are to curve to suit facility layout, pathway alignments and natural topographical design.
Specific grading standards are:

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Retaining walls are generally unacceptable within a park block unless they are required to maintain existing grades of adjacent facilities or for the protection of significant vegetation.

Grading plans for new subdivisions are to be included in engineering packages and meet all applicable requirements from the Development Services Division. The completion of grading, servicing and seeding of park blocks is typically required prior to the issuance of building permits within the subdivision.

Grading for “natural areas” (may include some community linkages) is to be kept to a minimum and subject to review on a case by case basis. There may be requirements to grade within “natural areas” to suit future pathways. Grading of parks and open spaces adjacent to natural areas and ESAs to be delimited by upgraded silt fencing and/or as directed by a site specific Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). There may be requirements to grade within “natural areas” to suit future pathways.

Grading within storm water management ponds is approved by EESD. If ponds are to be integrated with parks and open space areas, pathway grades (as above) and pond side-slope grades should mesh and compliment adjacent landforms.

All rough grading for parks and open spaces is to be reviewed and approved on site by the City prior to proceeding with fine grading.

11.4 SERVICING

Park and open space blocks generally require storm sewer systems and occasionally sanitary sewers and water lines to service community facilities such as field houses and pools. For specific sewer design requirements, refer to Section 3 - Sanitary Sewer Collection System, Section 5 - Storm Sewer Collection System and Section 7 – Water Distribution System.

11.5 FENCING

All Park and Open Space blocks shall require fencing adjacent to private owned lands. Fencing shall always be located on a common property line. Fencing shall be constructed in accordance with the specifications in the Standard Contract Documents for Municipal Construction Projects. Fencing shall conform to the current...
City of London fence by-law. Fencing shall not be located adjacent to a public right of way, School Block and any other City Facility, except where fencing is required under another section of this document.

Fencing that is an integral part of a park recreational facility (ie: baseball diamonds, batting cages, etc…) are not subject to the above.

11.6 BOUNDARY MONUMENTS

Boundary Monuments shall only be used in substitution for fencing where it can be demonstrated that fencing will have a significant adverse impact on the site or fencing is not physically possible. Boundary Monuments shall always be located on a common property line and shall be constructed in accordance with the specifications in the Standard Contract Documents for Municipal Construction Projects. At minimum Boundary Monuments shall be located at every change in direction of the property line and at 30 metre intervals. Where site topography is such that the line-of-sight between the Boundary Monuments is obscured at above intervals, additional Boundary Monuments are required at these locations to the satisfaction of the City.

11.7 SEEDING

Seeding of park blocks is carried out in accordance with the specifications in the Standard Contract Documents for Municipal Construction Projects.

Maintenance of the turf is the responsibility of the developer up to assumption. This includes mowing to maintain a height of no more than 63mm, weed control and overseeding, if required. Inspections for assumption will only take place between May 30 and October 15. At assumption, the turf must be healthy and vigorous, cut to 50mm height with very few bare patches or weeds.

11.8 FACILITIES

With the exception of soccer fields, park facilities as described in Section 9.1 are not generally installed by a developer as part of park development. Occasionally, developers will proceed with a certain level of facility development to provide an amenity within their subdivision. Requirements for these facilities are outlined in the Standard Contract Documents for Municipal Construction Projects.
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In many parks, community linkages and open space blocks, existing vegetation is to be maintained as an amenity feature. Where this is the case, the following requirements apply:

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- The limits of grading where the slope is toward existing vegetation is to be fenced with upgraded silt fencing and/or as directed by a site specific environmental impact statement. Where grades slope away from existing vegetation, 1.2m high “construction fencing” is required.
- Hazard trees and or limbs are to be removed from the edges of woods and over existing or proposed pathway/trail locations.
- Additional requirements may be specified through a tree preservation plan produced to fulfill the conditions of a subdivision agreement.

11.10 NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas, open space blocks, woodlands or environmentally significant areas have stringent design requirements, often specific to the area. Generally, through the land development process they have been set aside for their environmental/ecological significance and through the preparation of an EIS will have recommendations for their protection, management and enhancement that are to be accommodated in engineering plans. Some of the City’s ESAs have conservation master plans that would also outline specific requirements.

Typically, standard grading, servicing and development requirements do not apply, but pathway/trail development is usually required and will require some level of design and construction as directed by the City.

Prior to assumption of natural areas, all hazards such as tree forts, old fencing, construction materials and general debris must be removed from the block. Hazard trees along existing or proposed trails and pathways and abutting adjacent lands should be removed.

11.11 BIO-ENGINEERING

Within parks, open spaces, natural areas and ESAs, bio-engineering is to be used as the preferred approach for slope stabilization, channel creation or restoration, storm outlet design and any other “engineered” feature. Limited use of rip-rap or other erosion control materials is permitted where the situation warrants if used in conjunction with other “natural” approaches.
Conveyance channels from storm water management facilities that outlet into parks and open spaces require suitable bio-engineered design to blend with the surrounding landscape.

Bio-engineering design may require specialized consultants to successfully implement parks standards and/or EIS recommendations.

11.12 TREE PLANTING

Tree planting within parks, open spaces, linkages, natural areas and stormwater management facilities is to be carried out in compliance with Section 12. More detailed planting and monitoring requirements for stormwater management ponds is found in “Guidelines for Landscape Planting & Monitoring” available from the Planning Division.