

Final Report

Prepared by Sierra Planning & Management in association with Hemson for the City of Kitchener

Non-Residential Technical Background Study

Report 3: Institutional & Community Infrastructure

City of Kitchener Official Plan Review

April 28, 2025



200-206 Laird Drive, Toronto ON M4G 3W4

416 363-4443 | info@sierraplan.com | www.sierraplan.com



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	III
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Study Purpose	2
1.3 Defining Institutional and Community Infrastructure	2
2 REVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES	4
2.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2024)	4
2.2 Regional Official Plan (as Amended)	7
2.3 City of Kitchener Official Plan (2014)	9
2.4 Leisure Facilities Master Plan (2019)	13
2.5 Places and Spaces (2022)	16
2.6 Park Dedication Policy & By-law (2022)	22
2.7 Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy 2019-2028 (2019)	27
2.8 Kitchener Public Library Strategic Plan (2022)	28
2.9 WRDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan (2020)	29
2.10 WCDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan (2024)	31
2.11 Region of Waterloo Children’s Services – 2022-2026 Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan (2022)	33
2.12 Policy Review Summary	35
3 INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN KITCHENER	36
3.1 Quantifying Institutional Land Needs	36
3.2 Institutional Infrastructure Overview	37
3.3 Community Infrastructure Overview	41
3.4 Determining the Appropriate Scale of Assessment	43
3.5 Spatial Analysis of Institutional & Community Infrastructure in Kitchener	44

4	TRENDS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES	48
4.1	Kitchener’s Student Demographics	48
4.2	Developing Community Hubs	50
4.3	How Can Institutional and Community Infrastructure be Directed to Address Gaps and Achieve Complete Communities	51
4.4	The Public Realm as Community Space	57
5	BROADER POLICY DIRECTIONS	60
5.1	Co-Ordination of Growth and Institutional Land Use Needs	61
5.2	Community Infrastructure Needs	62
5.3	The Goals of Community Inclusivity	64
5.4	Community Hubs	64

Appendix A: Existing Inventory of Institutional & Community Infrastructure

Appendix B: Walkability Analysis of Existing Inventory

Appendix C: Walkability Analysis of Local Parks by Planning Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Study Purpose

The City of Kitchener's new Official Plan (OP) will be supported by several technical studies, including the Non-Residential Technical Background Study. This study will set the policy framework for promoting activities to support “complete communities” across Kitchener, including employment activities, commercial and office-related uses, as well as institutional and community infrastructure.

Hemson Consulting is leading the Non-Residential Technical Background Study, which is comprised of three subcomponents, each with its own report:

- Report 1: Commercial, Office and Future of Work, Mixed Use Study
- Report 2: Industrial and Employment Lands Study
- Report 3: Institutional and Community Infrastructure Study

This report addresses the third study and provides strategic direction on how institutional and community infrastructure uses can be planned for across the city to help support the achievement of complete communities while recognizing that changing community-related activities and environments, along with intensification, influence the need for and location of institutional and community infrastructure.

Review of Existing Policies

Provincial, regional, and municipal land use planning policy framework are reviewed within Section 2 of this report, highlighting the key goals, objectives, recommendations, and strategies as relevant to the development of the City's new Official Plan. Many of these policies are supportive of the City's goal to foster the development of complete communities.

Institutional and Commercial Infrastructure in Kitchener

Section 3 of the report provides an overview of the current institutional and community infrastructure in Kitchener. This includes an overview of the existing inventory, geographic

distribution, and how these facilities are currently planned for by the relevant entities, City or otherwise.

The report also quantifies the existing institutional land within the city (designated as such) and estimates future needs for institutional uses to be accommodated within Institutional and other designations that allow for institutional uses. The city currently has a total of 526.58 hectares of land designated as Institutional in the OP. In terms of future needs, it can be estimated that a land area of 61.7 hectares would be required to accommodate these jobs (independent of other uses), representing an 11.7% growth. This will be supplied through not only the Institutional designation, but the variety of land use designations that allow institutional uses (e.g., mixed-use, commercial, employment, etc.).

Spatial Analysis of Institutional and Community Infrastructure

This report includes an assessment of how the City of Kitchener's residential areas currently meet the principles of complete communities and walkable neighbourhoods – being able to reach a community destination, such as a park, community centre, school or library, by walking for no more than 15 minutes (or no more than 800 meters) and where gaps exist. The majority of the City's residential areas are within 800 metres of local parks and elementary schools. Fewer areas are within 800 meters of libraries and community centres, which can be explained by the nature of these facilities which are intended to serve larger areas and greater population.

The assessment is based on small-scale institutional and community infrastructure, those most relevant to the local or neighbourhood level of assessment. Large scale facilities, such as hospitals, arenas, indoor pools, or post-secondary education facilities are provided at a city-wide or even regional scale. These are not “walk-to” facilities for most residents but are provided in an easily accessible location by vehicles/transit and are not typically located in neighbourhood settings. These are typically addressed through provincial and/or regional planning and are not included within the spatial assessment of walkability related to complete communities.

Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

Section 4 of the report summarizes the trends, challenges, and opportunities related to planning for institutional and community infrastructure, specifically as it relates to the city's post-secondary student demographic, facility/amenity co-location and the development of

community hubs, the provision of these land uses in areas of intensification where land is limited, and innovations related to providing community infrastructure in unique and new ways.

Recommended Policy Directions

While recommendations on modifications to the OP language are provided in Sections 2 through 4, the final section of the report provides additional general policy direction recommendations based on the analysis of institutional and community infrastructure in Kitchener and represents a mix of land use planning and investment principles that should inform the language and policy directions of the Official Plan.

The directions identified go beyond language in the Official Plan that may speak to community facilities, parks and recreation, but should also inform official plan policy as it relates to the overall land use mix in the city, particularly in new growth areas where the requirement to maintain a breadth of land uses to meet localized needs is likely to be a key land use strategy. The new OP will need to direct new growth areas to include a range of land uses beyond residential, and a range of commercial land designations to enable the type of institutional and community uses that are often located within commercial centres – be it local services in the form of day cares, agency and government services, localised health services, places of worship and an even wider range of services that are very often part of commercial (and other) zoning designations.

The following is a summary of the key policy directions and recommendations included in this report.

Policy Directions & Recommendations
Community Infrastructure Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategically review the relevant policies of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) that address community and institutional infrastructure. Some policies of the ROP are more prescriptive than those set out by the City, and should be carefully reviewed for applicability/inclusion in the new OP.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include important standards (such as parkland standards/targets of provision) relevant to the appropriate and balanced development of complete communities.

Policy Directions & Recommendations

Community Infrastructure Needs

- The new Official Plan should include policies that inform decisions as to when and where new community facilities are developed (e.g. phasing to align with the development of schools, and the build-out of new communities).
- The new Official Plan should drive the consideration of alternative ways to address population growth-related needs including approach to land use mix, design and mixed-use development at higher density.
- Re-evaluate the inclusion of OP Policy 8.C.1.5 or soften the language to reflect the observable need for new facilities as the City grows and that such development should be guided by the necessary range of factors in planning that result in efficient use of existing and new community infrastructure. Such factors include co-location, multi-use opportunities, and new forms of development for recreation that uses smaller land footprints and higher vertical construction, potentially as part of mixed-use development projects.

Institutional Land Use Needs

- Carry forward existing policies that support maintaining institutional uses within existing residential neighbourhoods and maximizing their use through joint use and/or facility sharing with other institutions in a community hub model of development, where feasible.
- Continue to endorse the adjacency of schools and public parks, and in some cases public indoor facilities, as guidance for the development of secondary plans, and importantly, as guidance for the development and update of future indoor and outdoor facilities/parks master plans.
- Enforce the principle that a balance of land uses is essential to the achievement of the community wellbeing, environmental and climate resiliency goals of the plan. This includes the importance of retaining institutional land use designations (regardless of land value).

Policy Directions & Recommendations

- Incorporate new language that speaks to leveraging the capacity of development proponents speaks directly to the provision of public service facilities in areas of intensification, high density development, and innovatively incorporating uses into strategic growth areas, and other areas with a compact built form.

Institutional Land Use Needs

- Encourage institutional uses to materialize in intensification areas, where the highest and best use would be other institutional and commercial uses (e.g., place of worship or medical clinic will pay market rent)., rather than residential uses.
- Recognize the intention to achieve adaptive re-use and maximize use of existing community infrastructure s it relates to surplus institutional (school) sites and include language that speaks to the capacity to marry the opportunity to achieving lands and buildings that allow for multi-use recreation and community service campuses.
- The City should undertake the necessary work to establish the quantum of a variety of institutional uses. The OP can then include language that speaks to having regard for City policies with respect to the required level of development related to a variety of institutional uses.

Parkland Hierarchy

- Update the hierarchy of parkland included in the new Official Plan to be in line with the classifications identified in Spaces which reflects the distinction between passive space/open space and active park spaces.
- Clearly define all aspects of the parks and open space network (e.g., active parkland, passive parkland, open space, natural lands, stormwater management facilities, greenways, and trails) within an updated Spaces document and included in the new Official Plan to ensure that any parkland dedication the City receives is developed for active parkland.
- Ensure that future community centres are not included within the Open Space designation, as this affects the quantum of parkland and open space that is available for the public's enjoyment, even if to a small degree.

Policy Directions & Recommendations

Parkland Dedication & Acquisition

- The new Official Plan will need to reflect the changes incurred by Bill 23 related to parkland dedication (revisions to s. 8.C.1.29 and others required). The Parkland Dedication Policy and By-law also requires updating in this regard.
- The new Official Plan should speak to both parkland dedication and acquisition to address deficits in the parkland supply and provide for future parkland needs (requiring updates to s. 8.C.1.27).
- Confirm the preference for dedication of parkland over cash-in-lieu of parkland subject to the suitability and usability of the land to be conveyed and reflect in the new Official Plan. It would be appropriate for this language to be flexible, to be determined on a site-by-site basis (considering parkland provision in the surrounding areas, areas of deficit, etc.).

Public Realm & Urban Forestry

- Bolster existing policies of the Official Plan with key strategies to enhance the public realm in intensifying areas including strategies to address a lack of traditional parkland and subsequently refer to an updated Urban Design Manual and/or other more detailed documents for further urban design guidance.
- Include policies that establish the conditions under which privately owned public spaces (POPS) are appropriate to be conveyed to the City as part of parkland dedication requirements, associated design requirements, and the ability to use powers granted under the Planning Act to secure them.
- Include policies related to achieving the established tree canopy target.
- Strengthen the language within the Trees on Private Property section of the new Official Plan (s. 8.C.2.12. in particular) and expand to reflect the collaboration and partnership objectives set out in the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy (Actions 5 through 7) and the subsequent work with the updates to the Trees By-laws currently underway.
- Incorporate strategies that aim to improve the urban canopy in core and intensifying areas of the city that are most deficient. This could include retaining and maintaining mature trees (not only in downtown but city-wide), the provision of street trees, or cash in lieu of street trees, by developers as part of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, among others.

Policy Directions & Recommendations

Community Hubs

- Strive to define community hubs effectively. Community hubs can comprise several different concepts. Simply stated, a multi-use community recreation complex is a hub because of its scale and its likely role in serving community needs beyond the neighbourhood.
- Revise language to be consistent with the PPS as it relates to the importance of co-location of facilities use consistent language.
- Include flexible policies related to providing a diverse range of community hubs across the city, the scale and composition of which should be based on the needs of the area. The new Official Plan could also include language that speaks to community hubs facilitating service integration, promoting cost-effectiveness of development, and improving access to transit and active transportation.
- Adopt a flexible approach to the support of community hubs and recognise that the service area of such hubs is likely to differ depending on scale and role of the hub. The new Official Plan should direct the relevant parks and indoor facilities plans to provide detailed policies with respect to the role of existing and future centres in serving individual communities or groups of communities in the City.
- Include flexible language to best enable the development of schools and libraries uses as part of other facilities and/or considered as part of residential development plans within intensification areas.

Partnerships

- Strengthen the policy framework for which a wide variety of partnerships may occur in the future. This could consider phasing and timing requirements for not only Secondary Plans, but also large-scale developments that have the potential to accommodate non-residential uses and should involve all potential stakeholders throughout the process.
- Revise existing language in the OP (s. 8.C.1.14. and s. 8.C.1.17 through 8.C.1.19) to place an emphasis on supporting partnerships and collaboration with other public and/or private partners (e.g., school boards, libraries).

Policy Directions & Recommendations

Community Inclusivity

- Clearly establish the connection between planning for access to community facilities and the when, where, and what of community planning – more so than it may be at present.
- Consider acknowledging the student population in the new Official Plan simply as an additional population to consider in future planning by way of recognizing Conestoga College as a community of interest within the City.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The City of Kitchener is preparing a new Official Plan – known as Kitchener 2051. An Official Plan (OP) is a document that shapes the way our city grows and develops. A Provincial law, called the Planning Act, sets out what an OP can do, including:

- Directing growth and change, mostly related to how land and buildings are used.
- Guiding decisions on land use, development, transportation, physical and community infrastructure, and more.
- Implementing the City’s vision, established through the Strategic Plan.
- Providing direction for implementing tools like the Zoning By-law.

The existing City of Kitchener OP was adopted in 2014 and has positively shaped growth and development across the city over the last decade. A new OP is needed now to respond to current and future conditions and trends. Kitchener is growing fast and facing city-building challenges like the housing crisis, pedestrian and cyclist deaths and injuries, inequity, climate change, social isolation and how to pay for aging infrastructure and city services. The city is also presented with opportunities like new mobility technologies, a young and highly skilled workforce, strong neighbourhoods and communities, a rich and diverse culture, and a growing desire for urban connection. Kitchener 2051 presents an opportunity to tackle these issues head-on, ask big questions, and prepare for an uncertain future. It should reflect the City’s values and aspirations for what it can become – a thriving city that offers well-being, potential and quality of life, for everyone.

Kitchener 2051 will address conformity with Provincial policy and legislation and the Region of Waterloo OP, alongside recently completed plans for the City, such as Housing for All, Places & Spaces, and Cycling & Trails Master Plan, to set out a forward-thinking and contemporary citywide policy framework.

1.2 Study Purpose

The new OP will be supported by several technical studies, including the Non-Residential Technical Background Study. This study will set the policy framework for promoting activities to support “complete communities” across Kitchener, including employment activities, commercial and office-related uses, as well as institutional and community infrastructure.

Hemson Consulting is leading the Non-Residential Technical Background Study, which is comprised of three subcomponents, each with its own report:

- Report 1: Commercial, Office and Future of Work, Mixed Use Study
- Report 2: Industrial and Employment Lands Study
- Report 3: Institutional and Community Infrastructure Study

This is Report 3: Institutional and Community Infrastructure. It has been prepared by Sierra Planning and Management, in association with Hemson Consulting. The document provides strategic direction on how institutional and community infrastructure uses can be planned for across the city to help support the achievement of complete communities while recognizing that changing community-related activities and environments, along with intensification, influence the need for and location of institutional and community infrastructure.

1.3 Defining Institutional and Community Infrastructure

There are a range of institutional and community uses that form the basis of non-residential uses as part of a healthy city at a larger scale, and healthy neighbourhood at a smaller scale. These uses are not strictly defined in the City’s OP, as there are some uses that are permitted under the definition of both institutional and community infrastructure (e.g., health, libraries, educational establishments, religious institutions/places of worship, among others); this provides the City with an appropriate level of flexibility and should be maintained.

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions of institutional and community infrastructure apply, as referenced throughout this report, and adapted from the City’s new OP:

Institutional Infrastructure means a range of uses - from major institutional uses that serve a community or region such as hospitals, secondary and post-secondary educational facilities, long-term care facilities, and social, cultural and administrative facilities, to minor institutional uses that are compatible with surrounding land uses such as elementary schools, libraries, day care centres, and places of worship.

Community Infrastructure means lands, buildings, and structures that support quality of life for people and communities by providing public services primarily related to recreation and leisure, including community centres, arenas, pools, parks, and the amenities provided within parks.

2 REVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES

This section of the report provides a review of several key documents relevant to this study, highlighting the key goals, objectives, recommendations, and strategies. This includes policies at the provincial, regional, and municipal level. The following documents are reviewed:

- Provincial Planning Statement (2024)
- Region of Waterloo Official Plan (as Amended)
- City of Kitchener Official Plan (2014)
- Leisure Facilities Master Plan (2019)
- Places and Spaces (2022)
- Park Dedication Policy and By-Law (2022)
- Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy (2019)
- Kitchener Public Library Strategic Plan (2022)
- WRDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan (2020-2030)
- WCDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan (2023)
- Region of Waterloo Children's Services – Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan (2022-2026)

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS) took effect on October 20, 2024, and replaced the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 (Growth Plan). Municipal planning decisions and Official Plans must continue to be consistent with the PPS. There are several policies of the PPS 2024 that are relevant to this study, specifically those providing direction on institutional and community facilities (termed 'public service facilities' within the PPS).

The PPS defines **public service facilities** as land, buildings and structures, including but not limited to schools, hospitals and community recreation facilities, for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health, childcare and educational programs, including elementary, secondary, post-secondary, long-term care services, and cultural services. Public service facilities do not include infrastructure.

The PPS emphasizes the importance of building complete communities. **Complete communities** are defined in the PPS as places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and *settlement areas* that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, *public service facilities*, local stores and services. *Complete communities* are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations.

To meet the projected needs of current and future residents, the PPS promotes densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation (Policy 2.2.1c). With settlement areas being the focus of growth and development, growth is to be focused in strategic growth areas, including major transit station areas (MTSAs) (Policy 2.3.1.1). The PPS provides support for optimizing existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities (Policy 2.3.1.2b), and general intensification and redevelopment within these areas to support the achievement of complete communities and prioritizing the planning and investment in the necessary infrastructure and public service facilities (Policy 2.3.1.3). Strategic Growth Areas are to be focal areas for education, commercial, recreational and cultural uses (Policy 2.4.1.2b).

Section 3.1 sets out policies for public service facilities, where planning authorities are encouraged to provide these facilities in an efficient manner while accommodating projected needs, in a coordinated manner and integrated with land use planning and growth management. The PPS stresses the importance of ensuring that public service facilities:

- are financially viable over their life cycle (as may be demonstrated through asset management planning);
- leverage the capacity of development proponents, where appropriate; and
- are available to meet current and projected needs.

Policy 3.1.2 stipulates that “Before consideration is given to developing new *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*:

- the use of existing *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* should be optimized; and

- opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible.

The PPS also speaks to the principle of co-location, such that public service facilities are to be “planned and co-located with one another, along with parks and open space where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation.” Collaborative planning with other authorities, such as school boards, is encouraged. This includes consideration for innovative approaches in the design of schools and associated childcare facilities, in areas of intensification, as identified in Policy 3.1.5 (e.g., schools integrated in high-rise developments).

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The PPS includes several policies that stress the importance of public service facilities as an integral component of a complete community. Municipalities, including the City of Kitchener, will need to continue to plan for public service infrastructure in conjunction with residential and other land uses.**
- 2. Planning authorities are directed to first optimize use of existing public service infrastructure before building new and then consider adaptive re-use of facilities. The City of Kitchener currently has a policy that reflects this in the existing OP, however we recommend softening it or removing it altogether (see Section 5).**
- 3. The importance of co-location of facilities is also highlighted in the PPS. This concept is already included in the City’s current Official Plan, but perhaps could be bolstered to use consistent language between the PPS and the new OP.**
- 4. Leveraging the capacity of development proponents speaks directly to the provision of public service facilities in areas of intensification, high density development, and innovatively incorporating uses into strategic growth areas, and other areas with a compact built form. New language to address these issues should be incorporated into the new OP.**

2.2 Regional Official Plan (as Amended)

The Region of Waterloo adopted amendments to the Regional Official Plan (ROP, 2015) on August 18, 2022, approved by the Province in April 2023. Amendment No. 6 supports long-term growth and development in the Region in an equitable and sustainable manner. Bill 185 identified the Regional Municipality of Waterloo as an upper-tier municipality that will become an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities upon proclamation. As of January 1, 2025, the (ROP) functions as part of Kitchener's Official Plan.

Chapter 2 of the ROP, Where and How to Grow, identifies the community structure for the region's urban communities, focused on building more compact, vibrant, and complete communities, resulting in a sustainable and livable Waterloo Region. One of the main objectives identified is the concept of a 15-minute neighborhood (or complete community as referred to in this document) where people can meet their daily needs for goods, services and employment within a reasonable walking distance. For this concept to function as intended, neighbourhoods must be designed with a diversity of land uses, not just residential.

Section 2.A speaks to managing future growth in the region by integrating land use planning with planning and investment in infrastructure and public service facilities, including service delivery through community hubs, and integrating climate change considerations into these planning decisions for more resilient communities and infrastructure.

Section 2.B defines the Urban System, which defines where and how the Region will accommodate forecasted growth to 2051. This includes seven key structural components, five of which are relevant to this study – the Urban Area; Urban Growth Centres (term no longer valid with the elimination of the Growth Plan); Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs); Regional Intensification Corridors; and Local Centres and Intensification Corridors. The ROP stipulates that growth and development will be directed towards these key structural components of the urban system, with 60% of the region's new residential growth to occur within the delineated built-up areas of the cities and townships, in particular those serviced by transit (e.g., Downtown Kitchener and Major Transit Station Areas). However, any development within designated greenfield areas must have consideration for complete communities with a broad range of land uses to meet residents' daily needs.

Lands within the Urban Area and Strategic Growth Areas are identified as those with the greatest potential and capacity to accommodate growth and will serve as the primary focal area for investment in public service facilities, commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses. Policy 2.C.2.2 requires that Urban Areas are planned and developed in a manner that:

“(i) ensures the development of high quality urban form through site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant public realm.

(j) considers the wellbeing and belonging of all children and youth.

(k) expands residents’ convenient access to: ... (ii) public service facilities, co-located and integrated in community hubs; and (iii) an appropriate supply of safe, publicly accessible urban greenlands, open spaces, parks, trails, and other opportunities for recreation”.

The ROP defines **Public Service Facilities** as “Lands, buildings and structures for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health and educational programs, long- term care services, and cultural services. Public service facilities do not include infrastructure”. This is referenced as being from PPS 2020; the definition provided in the new PPS (2024) has minor modifications and will need to be reflected in the new OP and expanded to include those uses provided by the private sector (e.g., places of worship, child care/day cares, senior care facilities, etc.).

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The ROP focuses on fostering walkable and sustainable communities by strategically planning for higher-density, mixed-use development near transit hubs to reduce reliance on the automobile. To help achieve complete communities, the City of Kitchener should strategically review the relevant policies of the ROP that address community and institutional infrastructure. Some policies of the ROP are more prescriptive than those set out by the City, and should be carefully reviewed for applicability/inclusion in the new OP.**
- 2. While community hubs are referenced, they are not defined within the ROP nor the PPS. The City should seek to appropriately define community hub for**

inclusion in the new OP. Further discussion on this is provided in Sections 4.2 and 5.4.

2.3 City of Kitchener Official Plan (2014)

Section 8 of the City of Kitchener Official Plan is focused on Parks, Open Space, Urban Forests, and Community Facilities and is assessed in relation to the other policy documents reviewed for this study in Sections 2.4 through 2.11 of this report. This section reviews the relevant policies of the Official Plan that address institutional and community uses in other land use designations.

Urban Structure

The Official Plan defines the Urban Structure which provides guidance on growth management and structure for the City's Urban Area, as follows:

Structure Component	Predominant Land Use Designation
Urban Growth Area (Downtown)	Strategic Growth Areas A, B, C
Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)	Strategic Growth Areas A, B, C
City Node	Commercial Campus, Commercial, Mixed Use, Institutional, Medium Rise Residential, High Rise Residential
Community Node	Commercial, Mixed Use, Institutional, Medium Rise Residential, High Rise Residential
Urban Corridor	Commercial, Mixed Use
Neighbourhood Node	Commercial, Mixed Use
Arterial Corridor	Commercial
Community Areas	Low Rise Residential, Medium Rise Residential, High Rise Residential, Institutional, Major Infrastructure & Utilities
Industrial Employment Areas	Heavy Industrial Employment, General Industrial Employment, Business Employment
Green Areas	Natural Heritage Conservation, Open Space

Official Plan Section 15.D.3 – Residential

With residential lands being where most of Kitchener's residents live, they must support a high quality of life, as stipulated in the Official Plan. This means that these areas must be supported by community infrastructure like parks and schools, and other services that are necessary for the day-to-day activities of residents. Objective 15.3.2 speaks to encouraging the distribution of local convenience commercial uses, institutional, personal services, and other complementary non-residential uses in appropriate locations within residential areas. This is directly reflected in Policy 15.D.3.5 which stipulates that "Lands designated Low Rise Residential, Medium Rise Residential, or High Rise Residential will be planned to have a range of community facilities, institutional and commercial uses, at appropriate locations, in close proximity to housing to support a walkable and complete community".

More specifically, within Section 15.D.3, the Official Plan speaks to Non-Residential Supporting Land Uses. Policy 15.D.3.27 supports the integration of non-residential, complementary land uses at appropriate locations in the residential land use designation, by way of zoning individual properties to achieve an appropriate mix of uses compatible with the surrounding neighbourhoods. This includes day care facilities, religious institutions/places of worship, small scale community facilities, among others.

The policies of the OP encourage non-residential uses to locate together and be integrated with residential uses in mixed-use developments/building to create community focal points (Policy 15.D.3.29), while non-residential uses in High Rise Residential designation are encouraged to locate on the ground floor of any multiple residential building (Policy 15.D.3.30). As further described in Section 4.3 of this report, non-residential uses are often included in not only the ground floors, but the first few floors (depending on the floor plan/podium height) of high-rise buildings. This includes community, institutional, office, and other related uses.

Official Plan Section 15.D.4 – Mixed Use

Within mixed use land use designation, the Official Plan identifies that the intent is to ensure that there are a mix of uses and zoning will not permit a site designated as mixed use to be developed with one use exclusively. Policy 15.D.4.3 identifies the permitted land uses within the mixed-use designation – this includes institutional uses such as day care

facilities, religious institutions, and educational establishments; however it does not include community facilities, such as community centres, community hubs, etc.

Official Plan Section 15.D.7 - Institutional

Section 15.D.7 of the Official Plan sets out the policies for institutional land uses and specifies that “The primary use of land within the Institutional land use designation is intended for institutional uses that are of a community or *regional* nature”. This includes not only large-scale institutional uses, such as post-secondary educational facilities, long-term care facilities, and social and cultural facilities, but also smaller scale uses, such as elementary schools, libraries, day care centres, and places of worship. Community centres are permitted within this land use designation. Institutional lands are intended to contribute to creating and maintaining a walkable and complete community (Policy 15.D.7.5b).

The Official Plan stipulates that the City may designate small scale institutional uses as such to protect these areas for institutional use in the future to continue to support a complete community (Policy 15.D.7.3). Where an institutional use on a site ceases to exist, the City may redesignate the site to an appropriate alternative land use, only after considering a series of criteria, as identified in Policy 15.D.7.4. This includes:

- The use of the site for a suitable alternative institutional purpose;
- Acquisition of the site or a portion of it by the City for institutional or open space use, based on the park needs of the surrounding area; and
- The use of the site to meet housing targets, particularly for special needs or affordable housing.

Official Plan Section 15.D.10 – Open Space

Section 15.D.10 identifies policies related to open space land uses within. This land use category is intended to provide a connected network of parks and trails that increases opportunities for recreation and provides a buffer between land uses – supporting a complete and healthy community. This designation permits parks, active/passive outdoor recreational uses, community centres, among other uses.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

1. The existing Official Plan recognizes the importance of providing areas of residential with close access to community amenities – including but not limited to institutional and community infrastructure – supporting complete and healthy communities in the City. The policies identified above will be important for the City to uphold to ensure that there are lands designated for non-residential uses as new communities are developed, and maintained, as appropriate, and existing communities evolve over time.
2. With the mixed-use designation being largely directed towards areas of intensification (e.g., Downtown, MTSA's, City Nodes, etc.) the potential to explicitly identify the permitted uses to include community facilities as part of a mixed-use development may be warranted.
3. With the aim of protecting institutional designations and land uses, the criteria for consideration when an institutional use on a site ceases to exist, could be improved, as noted below:
 - The presumption is that land that is designated institutional would remain institutional whether public or private in nature. For further clarity, this includes the use of the site for a suitable alternative institutional purpose;
 - The stated requirements at the local / neighbourhood level as well as any City-level for institutional, community, parkland, open space, as articulated in relevant service plans/master plans;
 - Acquisition of the site or a portion of it by the City based on consideration of any of these needs or any other stated requirement for public service facilities; and
 - The use of the site to meet housing targets, particularly for special needs or affordable housing.
4. It is interesting to note that there are four (4) community centres that are located within the Open Space designation, per the City's GIS-based land use schedule. This includes Breithaupt, Chandler Mowat, Kingsdale, and Victoria

Hills Community Centres. These facilities appear to be older, while newer facilities seem to be provided outside of the Open Space designation (within the Institutional designation). While both designations are non-residential in nature, it should be recognized that going forward, ensuring that future community centres are not included within Open Space designations will be critical. This affects the quantum of parkland and open space that is available for the public's enjoyment, even if to a small degree.

2.4 Leisure Facilities Master Plan (2019)

Kitchener's most recent Leisure Facilities Master Plan (LFMP), developed in 2019, goes beyond what had been done in previous master plans which focused on building new infrastructure. The newest LFMP addressed the need to invest in existing facilities, establish public/private partnerships, and review funding models for future investment. This was a direct result of the key findings of the master plan process that emerged from the research and analysis:

- Leisure services and facilities are highly valued by the community.
- Maintaining and investing in existing facilities is a top priority.
- Residents prefer multi-use facilities that offer several programs in one place.
- Program offerings and availability play a critical role in residents' ability to participate.
- Non-traditional funding sources are necessary to maintain existing facilities and build new ones.
- Partnerships with school boards and private organizations are becoming increasingly important.

Goals of the LFMP include:

1. Lifelong Participation

- Support lifelong participation in physical and social activities from early childhood through to old age. Encourage structured and unstructured activities

to reduce sedentary behaviors, increase physical literacy and build strong communities.

- Integrate social, physical, educational, and cultural spaces for lifelong individual and community well-being and belonging.

2. Access for All

- Encourage equitable and safe participation in recreation, regardless of age, culture, socioeconomic status, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation Indigenous status or geographic location.
- Work with residents to understand the needs of the community and ensure affordable, neighbourhood-based programs and services.

3. Sustainable Environments, Infrastructure & Partnerships

- Re-invest in existing infrastructure and use spaces for multiple purposes to ensure financial and environmental sustainability.
- Build for the future by incorporating sustainable practices and aligning community initiatives through partnerships and collaboration.

The LFMP identifies 18 recommendations focused on three main categories:

- Aging recreation infrastructure.
- Partnerships with school boards and public/private community partners.
- Funding models for recreation facilities and service delivery.

In addition, the LFMP identifies future indoor and outdoor recreation facilities required in response to population growth (and recommended to be funded through Development Charges). This includes:

Indoor Recreation Facilities: Indoor aquatic centre and indoor turf facility at RBJ Schlegel Park; Huron-Brigadoon Community Centre, in partnership with WRDSB; Rosenberg Community Centre; Mill-Courtland expansion; and Forest Heights expansion.

Outdoor Recreation Facilities: Trails; sports fields at RBJ Schlegel Park; neighbourhood parks and playgrounds; sports fields (general); and city-wide parks.

Several of these initiatives have now been implemented and/or are in the planning and design stages.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The concept of local, neighbourhood-based access (complete communities) to community infrastructure was confirmed as important through the LFMP exercise. This approach is appropriate to be applied to certain recreational infrastructure – those that typically serve a neighbourhood or planning community (Kitchener is structured with 55 planning communities across the city), while major infrastructure (e.g., arenas, pools, major sports fields, etc.) are typically City or regionally serving and are often centralized into fewer locations across a municipality.**
- 2. The LFMP emphasized the need to focus on optimizing and reinvesting in existing community infrastructure before developing new infrastructure (beyond those identified in the LFMP as previously being committed to). While this is in line with PPS policies, the realities of cost-effectiveness must also be considered. The City may wish to re-evaluate the inclusion of OP Policy 8.C.1.5 or soften its language (see Section 5.2 for further details).**
- 3. The importance of providing multi-use facilities that deliver a variety of spaces and programs was highlighted in the LFMP and is currently provided for within the OP (s. 8.C.1.6). Multi-use community facilities are becoming common place in many municipalities, creating “one stop shops” for recreation, leisure and other City services. While some concentrate on recreation services, providing a variety of recreation amenities at one location where a family can attend together and each do their own activity, there are other examples that go beyond recreation to provide complementary uses and services in the same location. This could include a recreation facility with a library, childcare space, and even processing for some standard City services through a service desk (e.g., garbage tag sale, pet registrations, property tax payments, among others).**

4. **One of the key areas of emphasis for the LFMP was partnerships and collaboration with other public and/or private partners (e.g., school boards, libraries). Existing language in the OP (s. 8.C.1.14. and s. 8.C.1.17 through 8.C.1.19) could be bolstered to further support this. The City of Kitchener already has several examples of infrastructure where partnerships have been successful – this includes schools, community centres, and/or libraries in one centralized location within the community.**

2.5 Places and Spaces (2022)

Places and Spaces is an update to the Parks Strategic Plan adopted in 2010. It is a two-part document with Places focused on the quality of parkland - placemaking and creating diverse and functional spaces; and Spaces focused on quantity of parkland – what currently exists and what is needed in the future and where. Spaces was completed in 2022, while Places is targeted to appear before Council in January 2025. The document identifies the values that parks bring to a city including wellbeing, social wellness, environmental role, economic benefits, and quality of life attributes. These are important values that should be reflected in the new OP.

Places and Spaces is premised on six guiding principles:

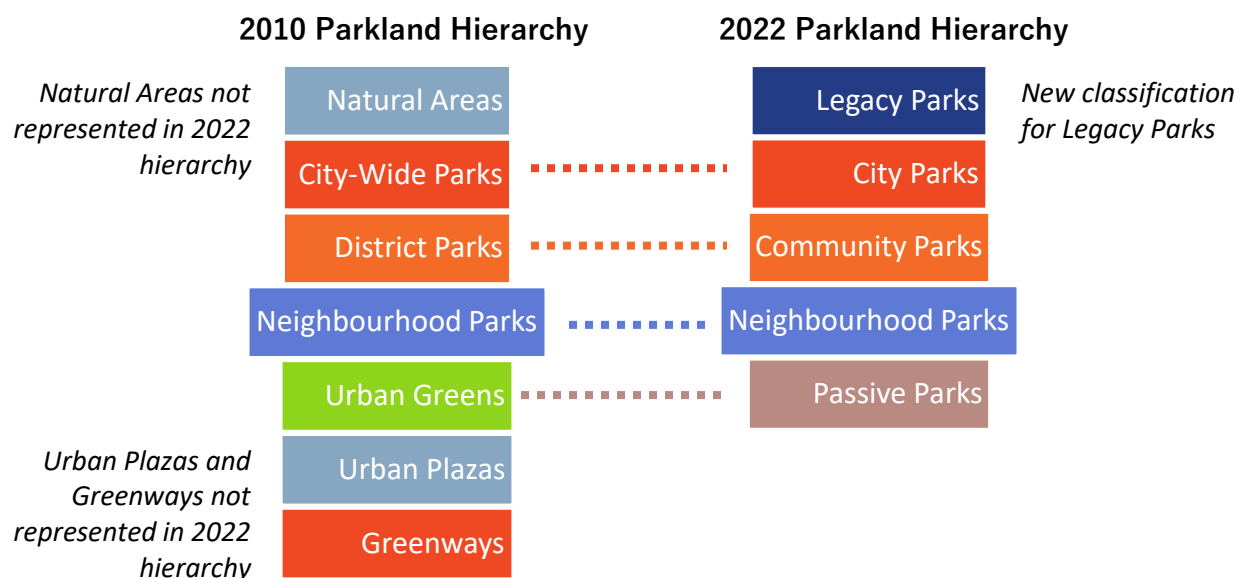
1. **Include** everyone by providing spaces that are accessible for people of all ages, genders, cultures, abilities, and incomes.
2. **Expand** the parks system strategically with a focus on community level park services and existing gaps in that service level.
3. **Improve** existing parks and the recreational components within them.
4. **Integrate** climate change actions within park planning and improvements.
5. **Adapt** park uses to suit current and future needs of established and growing communities.
6. **Connect** all types of parks within the system through planning, physical and visual connections”.

The 2010 Parks Strategic Plan identified a parks classification system and hierarchy, which is reflected in the existing OP (s. 8.C.1.25.). Spaces provides an updated and simplified framework for classifying parkland, consisting of:

- a) **Passive Parks** - No active programming present or possible. Typically trail corridors or greenways.
- b) **Neighbourhood Parks** - Various outdoor active uses with direct connection to immediate neighbourhood.
- c) **Community Parks** - Enhanced outdoor features, community gathering facilities and amenities.
- d) **City Parks** - High intensity programming for City and Region wide activities (e.g. pools, arenas, stadiums)
- e) **Legacy Parks** - Unique landscapes with significant natural, cultural, or heritage value.

For ease, the two hierarchies are directly compared below with observations noted:

Figure 1: Parkland Hierarchy Comparison

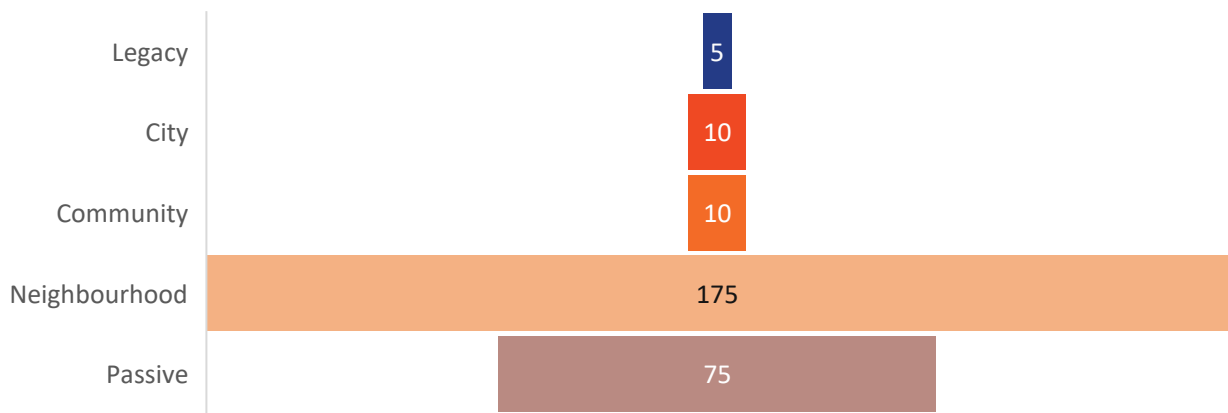


While the classifications in Spaces are simplified resulting in fewer categories, it is recognized that some of the connectors and more urban spaces are not readily apparent.

More specifically, spaces identified within the existing Urban Plazas classification (s. 8.C.1.25.f.) as “an open area designed for public use, generally defined by surrounding buildings and/or streets. Urban Plazas function to encourage a diversity of opportunities for social interaction, activities and public gathering, provide relief and relaxation, and expand and reinforce the public realm. They are generally located within intensification areas.” and Greenways classification (s. 8.C.1.25.g.) as “linear greenspaces providing linkages among parks, trails and other open space areas and public realm elements within the urban environment. These may be associated with watercourses, utility corridors, servicing easements and mid-block pedestrian walkways and typically service the immediate area but may also form part of the broader multi-use pathway network augmenting district or city-wide open space connections”.

Typically, a parkland hierarchy should have the fewest number of parks at the top of the hierarchy (Legacy Parks in Kitchener’s case) and the greatest number of parks at the lowest end of the hierarchy, in this case Neighbourhood and Passive Parks. Parkland Classifications have been assessed based on the number of parks classified under each category (based on data from the City of Kitchener GeoHub). This is the case in Kitchener, considering that Passive Parks primarily comprise trails and greenways where programming is not or cannot be provided.

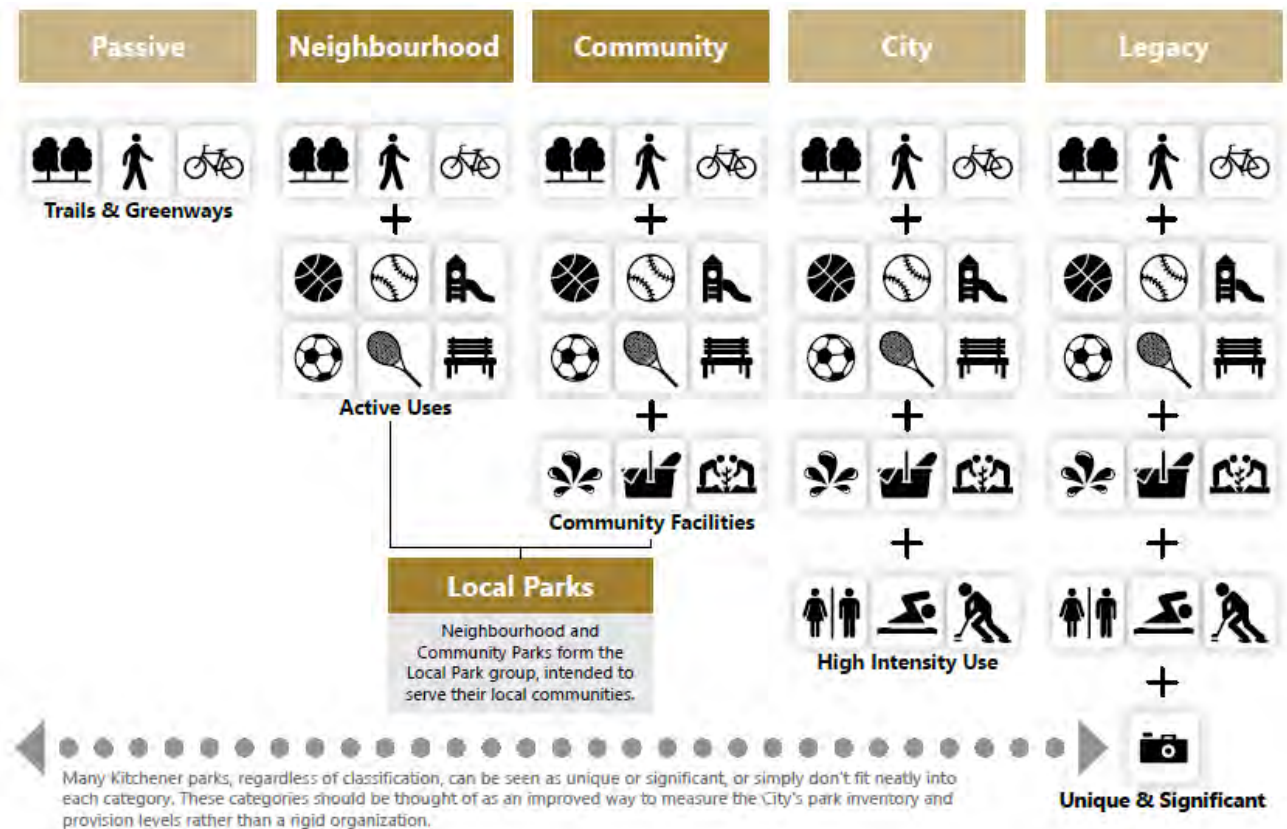
Figure 2: Number of Parks in Each Category within New Parkland Classification



Local Parks, consisting of Neighbourhood and Community Park classifications, are intended to serve their local communities. Neighbourhood Parks generally consist of trails and greenways as well as active recreation uses such as fields, courts and playgrounds.

Community Parks include these elements, as well as community facilities such as splash pads, community gardens and picnic facilities. The following excerpt from Spaces graphically shows the types of uses by parkland classification.

Figure 3: Excerpt from Spaces – Typical Uses by Classification

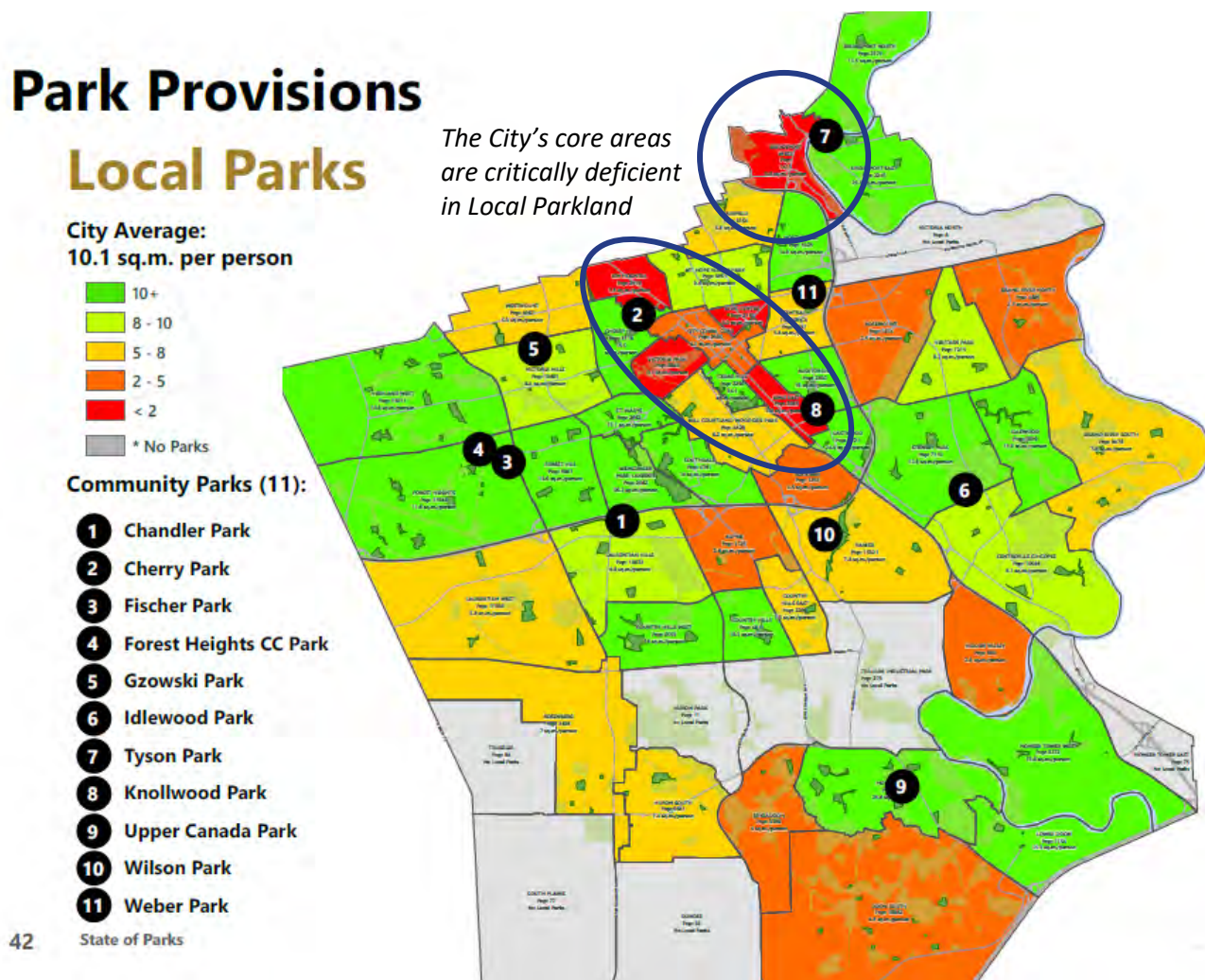


Spaces provides an analysis of the parkland inventory on a per population basis. Of relevance to the notion of complete communities is the consideration for the provision of local parks that provide a walk-to level of amenity. This is assessed based on the City's planning communities. Several planning communities were identified as having less than the average amount of Local Parks (based on 10.1 sq. m per person city-wide average). Those communities that are most deficient in Local Parks include:

- Victoria Park (0.1 sq. m/person).
- Civic Centre (0.2 sq. m/person).
- Bridgeport West (0.6 sq. m/person).
- King East (0.6 sq. m/person).
- KW Hospital (1.5 sq. m/person).

The above communities, in addition to Pioneer Tower East, are identified in Spaces as in critical need of parkland (Bridgeport West was identified as having a high need). The following excerpt shows the planning communities and how they meet (or do not meet) the Local Parks average provision level.

Figure 4: Excerpt from Spaces –Provision of Local Parks by Planning Community



As it relates to school grounds, it is noted that “School properties are publicly accessible open spaces that share many of the same features of Neighbourhood and Community Parks”. While it is recognized that these facilities are not accessible to the public during the school day, they provide additional opportunities for recreation within residential areas.

Spaces provides the background details as it relates to the Parkland Dedication Policy and By-law, which was developed as a subsequent initiative by the City and is reviewed below as part of this assignment. It is important to note that Spaces was developed prior to the enactment of Bill 23 which reduces the amount of land or cash-in-lieu that can be secured through parkland conveyance (the park provision target identified in Spaces exceeds the amount that can be secured through park dedication and subdivision and therefore other means of acquiring parkland would need to be considered). Bill 23 changes are fully described in Section 2.6.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The hierarchy of parkland included in the existing OP will require updating because of the classifications identified in Spaces which reflects the distinction between passive space/open space and active park spaces. While the classifications in Spaces are simplified resulting in fewer categories, it is recognized that some of the connectors and more urban spaces are not readily apparent. Specifically, those spaces identified within the existing Greenways classification (s. 8.C.1.25.g.).**
- 2. Spaces puts a focus on the strategic expansion of the parks system within the Community-level Park classification and addressing gaps that exist in this service level. Spaces identifies the City’s planning communities that are deficient in this level of parkland, and geospatial analysis conducted as part of this assignment identifies gaps based on a complete community level of analysis (walkability to Local Parks). The new OP should speak to both dedication and acquisition to address these gaps and future needs (requiring updates to s. 8.C.1.27).**
- 3. Many of the most deficient areas are both densely populated, and parkland is in low supply. There is a need for an acquisition strategy (we understand this is now underway) and/or access to alternative open space in these areas. A**

variety of alternative open space within the city are identified, including golf courses, cemeteries, conservation lands, Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS), hydro corridors, school grounds, and other public spaces. Spaces recognizes the importance of these ‘other’ public open spaces, as well as their limitations compared to publicly owned and operated active park lands. POPS are relevant for inclusion in the OP and are detailed in the Parkland Dedication Policy discussion that follows.

4. Spaces recognizes that while “school grounds are not considered park space, in established parkland-deficient communities, formal recognition and partnership with specific schools may be a preferred alternative to limited acquisition opportunities”. This further confirms the importance of partnerships with school boards (to avoid duplication), as identified in the LFMP and other policy documents. Co-locating municipal parkland for joint use with school grounds is becoming more common across the province. This not only reduces duplication but also aims to efficiently utilize lands in areas where parkland availability is limited.
5. The City should seek to clearly define all aspects of the parks and open space network (e.g., active parkland, passive parkland, open space, natural lands, stormwater management facilities, greenways, and trails) within the new OP to ensure that any parkland dedication the City receives is developed for active parkland. The Spaces document does not currently include definitions of the various types of parks and open spaces; any update to that document should be consistent with the new OP in this regard.

2.6 Park Dedication Policy & By-law (2022)

The City’s former Park Dedication Policy and associated By-law were repealed and replaced based on a comprehensive update with critical changes outlined in Spaces to create the current Park Dedication Policy and By-law 2022-101. Municipalities are authorized to require the conveyance of land for park or other public recreational purposes as a condition of development, redevelopment, or approval of a plan of subdivision through the Planning Act.

Section 2 of the Park Dedication Policy reads “The following principles of park dedication shall be followed when applying dedication requirements to development applications:

1. All development impacts the communities living and working in Kitchener. Public park space is intended for use by all communities in Kitchener, whether living or working in the city, and is vital to support complete communities. Public park space is focused on areas where public use and access to is greatest – typically in residential areas. As a result, all development should contribute toward the provision of public park space, but the nature of some development should contribute more significantly.
2. Park land will be evaluated based on a metric of square meters per resident, which both targets and policy guidelines will unify under.

In all circumstances parkland dedication in the form of land is preferred over alternative forms of dedication, such as cash in lieu of land;

- a. Plans of subdivision must yield developable land for park purposes with no constraints to active park use and the provision of park facilities, unless otherwise determined by the City of Kitchener.
- b. Infill development, or development within identified park land deficient communities, must make every effort to provide parkland where park land is deemed necessary by the City of Kitchener”.

Section 6 specifies that “in all cases, the City will seek land through Parkland Dedication. Where the maximum land requirement cannot be achieved, a blend of land and cash in lieu of land will be sought. Cash-in-lieu will be calculated by the remaining hectares of land required”.

The Policy identifies parks as “Planned Parks that are publicly owned, managed, and constructed with intent to serve as a recreational amenity”. Other forms of parkland that are recognized include:

1. **Natural lands, hazard land and environmentally significant lands.** These lands are not considered eligible for park land dedication.
2. **Privately Owned Public Space (POPS).** These are lands held in private ownership that have public access without restriction. The Policy states that “The City recognizes the value of POPS in addition to public park space where no alternative option exists and may provide credit towards the park land dedication requirement”.

A number of similar communities have provisions for POPS included within their planning documents (OPs and Dedication Policies, etc.),

3. **Strata Parks.** Defined as “Publicly owned park spaces located in top of buildings or structures, including but not limited to parking garages”. The Policy stipulates that “The City does not currently consider public park use over infrastructure as contributing toward Parkland Dedication”.
4. **Other Open Spaces.** These spaces “contribute over and above a basic provision of publicly owned and managed parkland spaces” and therefore, “Parkland Dedication is not considered appropriate”.

The Park Dedication Policy & By-law includes criteria for reductions, exemptions, and limitations, which do not include reference to *intensification* as specified in the OP (s. 8.C.1.30). Exemptions are limited to other public entities (e.g., hospitals, hydro authority, the Region, etc.), while reductions are only applicable to properties that include supportive housing (100% reduction), affordable rental housing (85% reduction), and POPS (up to 25% reduction).

The Park Dedication By-law indicates that “dedicated stormwater areas are considered eligible land area for use in calculating park dedication within Plans of Subdivision” (s.273.1.4.1.b.ii). It is worth noting that while lands containing stormwater management facilities are included in the net land area that is used to calculate the required parkland dedication, they are not acceptable as suitable park space for public use.

Bill 23 Changes to Parkland Conveyance

Requirements for parkland conveyance have been amended through Bill 23 in 2022. These changes came into effect after Spaces, Parkland Dedication Policy and the enacting By-law were developed, are in conflict and therefore need updating.

Bill 23 introduced amendments to sections 42, 51 and 51.1 of the Planning Act with respect to parkland, which ultimately reduces the parkland dedication requirements and introduces a new framework for parkland to be identified by the landowners, subject to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). The amendments, as relevant to the new OP, included the following:

- Landowners are no longer required to provide parkland dedication associated with the following:
 - a) the portion of the development that includes affordable housing units, attainable housing units, and/or inclusionary zoning housing units;
 - b) non-profit housing development; and
 - c) development of up to three residential units on a single lot (subject to meeting certain conditions).
- Amendments in relation to the alternative requirement for parkland conveyances and payments in lieu including reducing the alternative rate to one hectare for each 600 net residential units if parkland is taken, and one hectare for each 1,000 net residential units if cash-in-lieu of parkland is taken. Rates are subject to a cap of 10 percent of the land for sites five hectares or less, and 15 percent of the land for lands more than 5 hectares in size.
- New subsections 42 (4.30) to (4.39) set out a framework for owners of land to identify the lands to be conveyed to a municipality to satisfy the parkland dedication requirements. This includes lands that are encumbered by easements or below-grade infrastructure (e.g., privately owned public spaces (POPS) and strata parks). The framework permits owners to appeal to the OLT if the municipality refuses to accept the conveyance of the identified land.
- A new subsection 42 (16.1) is added, which requires a municipality to spend or allocate at least 60 percent of the reserve funds collected for parkland.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

1. **The Park Dedication Policy & By-law specifies the preference for land dedication over cash-in-lieu and provides for the dedication of land off-site if mutually agreed upon by the Developer and the City. Language within the new OP could be updated to reflect the preference of land over cash-in-lieu of land subject to the suitability and usability of the land to be conveyed (s. 8.C.1.32).**

2. Considering the changes that Bill 23 has on the parkland dedication and conveyance requirements, the City will need to confirm their preference of land over cash-in-lieu. It is likely that flexibility in this regard would be most appropriate, to be determined on a site-by-site basis (considering parkland provision in the surrounding areas, areas of deficit, etc.).
3. The new OP will need to reflect the changes incurred by Bill 23 related to parkland dedication (revisions to s. 8.C.1.29 and others required). The Parkland Dedication Policy and By-law also requires updating in this regard.
4. OP language related to POPS (s. 8.C.1.34) requires careful consideration, as the City's stance on this form of parkland contributing to parkland dedication requirements has evolved per the Park Dedication Policy & By-law. There are many examples of policies which permit the conveyance of POPS in full or partial satisfaction of parkland dedication requirements in similar municipalities, and relatively few municipalities where POPS are not accepted as dedication.
5. City staff has indicated that the support for and degree of Park Dedication credit provided through POPS should reflect the value of the space to the City. In order for developers to receive the 25% credit currently provided by the City, there needs to be full public access easement and a review of the space by the City to ensure there are usable amenities. As part of future updates to the Parkland Dedication Policy & By-law, there is an opportunity to develop a continuum of POPS spaces – from access only and as associated small parkland dedication credit, to full parkland dedication credit involving full public access easement, detailed building and landscape review, City input into the programming of the space, and requirements to achieve City maintenance standards. Further Policy and By-law changes could also consider full City ownership of a public park located within a condominium strata. The City should consider Official Plan policies that establish under what conditions privately owned public spaces are appropriate, associated design requirements and the ability to use powers granted under the Planning Act to secure them.

2.7 Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy 2019-2028 (2019)

Kitchener developed its first long-term strategy for the City's urban forest in 2019 with a vision for a sustainable urban forest that reads "Kitchener's urban forest will be healthy and resilient, benefitting its residents and the environment, today and into the future." The goal of the Strategy is to "maximize the economic, environmental and social benefits of the urban forest while minimizing the associated costs and risks." The Strategy is structured within five branches of a sustainable urban forest, as follows: Plan, Engage, Maintain, Protect, and Plant, under which 15 actions are identified.

The Engage branch of the Strategy identifies that about 54% of the urban forest is found on private lands, that these lands provide the greatest opportunities to increase the canopy and are therefore play a key role in the planning, maintenance, protection and planting of the private urban forest. Actions 5 and 6 address collaboration at the community and neighbourhood level, while Action 7 is to "increase communication and build collaboration" with stakeholders seeking to build partnerships and synergies in this regard.

Action 13 speaks to the need to "...set a tree canopy target and develop a long-term plan ensuring a vibrant and resilient tree canopy for future generations". The Strategy recognizes that the city had 26% existing canopy in 2019 and suggested that further work was required before setting a specific target.

Further Work by the City related to the Urban Forest

Tree Canopy Targets: In January 2022, City Council approved a tree canopy target of 30% in each ward by 2050 and a target of 33% across Kitchener by 2070. This targeted approach to growing the tree canopy over time is based on providing more equity in canopy across the city, and will involve new tree planting, as well as increasing the maintenance of existing trees. The staff report (INS-2022-002) is supplemented with a technical background report dated to July 2021 which includes a geographic assessment of tree canopy across the City of Kitchener based on data gathered in 2019. The City anticipates updated satellite imagery data in 2025 to be able to reassess the tree canopy and progress towards the target.

Tree Conservation Processes: A 2023 staff report (DSD-2023-161) included a review of tree conservation processes in Kitchener and identifies specific enhancement opportunities to improve the current processes and tools. The work to update this is currently underway.

Any strategic outcomes from this review could be considered in the Official Plan Review, as relevant.

Tree By-laws: Updates to the tree bylaws (both that apply to trees on public and private properties) and the tree management policy are currently underway. Better protecting city and privately owned trees is one way the city is working towards the recommendations of the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy and tree canopy targets.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The development of an Urban Forest Management Strategy was an identified policy direction (s. 8.C.2.2.) in the 2014 OP, which has now been completed. In addition, the existing OP identified developing a “tree inventory and an update of the Woodland Management Program”. A tree canopy target has now been identified and could be considered for inclusion in the Official Plan Review.**
- 2. Language within the Trees on Private Property section of the OP (s. 8.C.2.12. in particular) could be strengthened and expanded to reflect the collaboration and partnership objectives set out in the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy (Actions 5 through 7) and the subsequent work with the updates to the Trees By-laws currently underway.**
- 3. Related to the above, it is likely that core and intensifying areas of the city are most deficient in urban tree canopy due to denser development patterns. The new OP could speak to strategies/targets that aim to improve this in several ways, including retaining and maintaining mature trees (not only in downtown but city-wide), the provision of street trees, or cash in lieu of street trees, by developers as part of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, among others.**

2.8 Kitchener Public Library Strategic Plan (2022)

The Kitchener Public Library (KPL) is guided by a strategic plan. The existing Strategic Plan was published in 2022, covering the period 2022 to 2024. It should be noted that KPL is currently in the process of developing a new Strategic Plan that is expected to be published in 2025.

KPL's Strategic Plan vision is "to inspire and enrich for life." Its values have a lens on equity, inclusion, and belonging, and are rooted in collaboration, ideas, service excellence, responsibility, and innovation. Strategic directions identified in the Plan include:

- Creating shared spaces
- Reflecting the community
- Learning together
- Removing barriers

One of the major strategic initiatives relevant to this assignment is the development of a new library branch in the city, the Southwest Community Library, which is set to open in early 2025.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. Many of the existing library branches in Kitchener are co-located with either a community centre or a school. Examining the ways in which KPL interacts with and provides services to the community is ongoing. This includes the potential for smaller opportunities for KPL services (e.g., self-serve library lockers and kiosks) as a component of broader recreation or community facilities – one example of this in practice is the J. Wesley Graham Patient and Family Resource Centre at the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre, which provides a small collection and is staffed by hospital volunteers. With library planning often occurring as part of Secondary Planning processes, the opportunity within the new Official Plan is to recognize the importance of these facilities at the community level and recognize the need to consider joint planning and collaboration which could take on a variety of forms.**

2.9 WRDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan (2020)

The Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) developed for the Waterloo Region District School Board cover the period 2020 to 2030 and provides recommended actions related to short- and long-term student accommodation and capital investment needs. A series of guiding principles provide the foundation upon which the recommendations are based – those relevant to this assignment are excerpted below:

2. Ensure access to sustainable, quality and equitable public education in every community served by the WRDSB.
5. Be based on enrolment projections that use current planning methodologies and demographic information.
9. Consider partnership and community hub opportunities.

LTAP notes that the City of Kitchener has 44 Elementary School and 6 Secondary Schools and identifies Southwest Kitchener as one of four areas of the region where growth is concentrated. The LTAP identifies a series of capital priorities for 2019-2021, including funding approval for a new South Kitchener (Ormston) Elementary School.

Recommendations for other areas in Kitchener over both the short (1-5 years) and medium terms (6-10 years), include:

Short-Term Recommendations:

- Request Capital Priorities Program funding for:
 - Rebuild of Sunnyside PS
 - Trussler North (Benninger Dr) elementary school
 - Kitchener Secondary VII secondary school

Medium-Term Recommendations:

- Request Capital Priorities Program funding for:
 - New Rosenberg I (Rosenberg Way) elementary school
 - New Rosenberg II (Gehl Pl) elementary school
- Explore partnership and collaboration opportunities with the WCDSB and community partners.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

1. The WRDSB LTAP includes recommendations to “investigate opportunities to increase the proportion of eligible walkers within the Review area” which indicates that this is already a consideration in their planning for schools in neighbourhoods, supporting the City’s goal for complete communities. The

spatial analysis of elementary schools completed as part of this study is provided in Section 3.4.

- 2. Several designated school sites are identified within the LTAP, mainly located in areas identified for development and/or growth, including Huron South, Rosenberg I and II, South Kitchener, Trussler North, and Kitchener Secondary VII. Going forward, these designated sites will need to be recognized and incorporated into City planning initiatives at a variety of scales (including Secondary Plan).**

2.10 WCDSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan (2024)

The most recent Long-Term Accommodation Plan (LTAP) for the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) was developed in 2024 and “presents district-wide demographic and enrolment information, and a multi-year pupil accommodation strategy. Future accommodation initiatives include new schools, and additions / renovations, and potential boundary reviews”. The LTAP is premised on several guiding principles, including to “consider partnership opportunities where practical and feasible” and “consider the impacts on student transportation and walkability”.

The LTAP includes specific strategic recommendations related to accommodation alternatives (boundary changes, school closures, portables, partnership agreements); capital projects; land acquisitions; and land dispositions. The Plan notes that Kitchener has the highest enrolment in elementary schools (45% of total), and that Kitchener has the highest proportion of enrolment in secondary schools over the forecast period (consistently over 50%).

Approved capital projects in the City of Kitchener include:

- East Kitchener 7-12 – 1,400 pupil place Grade 7-12 school. This facility is currently under construction.
- New Rosenberg CES – 527 pupil place elementary school co-build with a City of Kitchener community centre (includes a childcare centre).

Future proposed immediate and medium-term capital priorities identified in the City of Kitchener include:

- New Doon South CES, Kitchener
- New Dundee North CES, Kitchener
- New West Rosenberg CES, Kitchener
- Identification of Kitchener – Waterloo core area elementary accommodation solution.
- Identification of West Kitchener elementary accommodation solution.

Several sites are identified within the LTAP as planned future school site purchases – these are at varying stages include draft plan under review and/or site interest confirmed/to be confirmed in secondary plan. The LTAP clearly articulates the site areas planned for each of the strategic priorities identified above which are in the range of 5.0 to 6.0 acres, as well as the timing of acquisition.

Bill 98 Changes to Disposition Process for School Board Property

Bill 98 brings into force the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023 which makes amendments to the Education Act, Ontario College of Teachers Act, and Early Childhood Educators Act. The acquisition and disposition of real property by a school board is now governed by O Reg. 374/23 (the New Regulation) replacing the previous process included in O Reg 444/98. Noted changes in the New Regulation, as relevant to this assignment, include:

- Bill 98 provides for increased discretion of the Minister of Education, including oversight, engagement and control in the disposition process and at an earlier stage.
- The Minister has the power to mandate the disposition of school board property if a board has identified the site as not currently being used and will not be needed to meet the current or future pupil accommodation needs over the next 10 years.
- As it relates to the notice of disposition process, the New Regulation stipulates that the determination of bodies to whom an offer shall be made is solely that of the Minister instead of the process set out in the Old Regulation. The ‘priority list’ of bodies potentially entitled to receive an offer has been reduced, to include (1) school boards, (2) the Ontario Crown, and then (3) persons or bodies who require the property to achieve such provincial priorities as have been identified for the purpose.

This removes municipalities from the priority list as a distinct entity and are now included in the third broad category.

Under the Old Regulation, disposition to a private individual or body was not possible until after the formal notice of disposition process was complete and a long list of public bodies had been notified. This means that municipalities will now need to make their case against other potential bodies (public or private) when it comes to intent to purchase and future use.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. Just as the sites identified to be designated for future schools by the WRDSB will need to be recognized and incorporated into City planning initiatives, as will those sites identified for purchase by the WCDSB.**
- 2. It is noted that areas of intensification and infill (core area or otherwise) have limited lands available for development of school grounds in the traditional sense and alternative methods of delivery may need to be sought. This is where partnerships and leveraging high-density residential development could be beneficial to the successful implementation of schools in these more constrained environments.**

2.11 Region of Waterloo Children's Services – 2022-2026 Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan (2022)

The 2022-2026 Early Years and Child Care (EYCC) Service System Plan provides a multi-year framework that is intended to “support the creation of a vibrant, inclusive, and high quality EYCC system and world-class community for children and families”. The Plan is based on four pillars that are needed for a strong EYCC system, including access, affordability, quality, and equity and responsiveness. As it relates to access, the Plan identifies that “only 15% of children between 0 to 4 years old in the City of Kitchener have access to a licensed childcare space” and “childcare spaces are not equitably distributed across Waterloo Region”.

While early years and childcare services are not directly provided or overseen by the City of Kitchener, but rather by the Region, these services are recognized to be critically important for its residents. Strategic priorities identified in the Plan that are relevant to this

assignment include: “Advocate for capital and operating funding for new spaces” (Strategic Priority 1(b)), and “Support new childcare centres and EarlyON programs in schools through key partnerships” (Strategic Priority 3(c)).

The Plan recognizes that Kitchener has experienced substantial growth and is projected to continue to experience growth, and as a result, the need for a significant number of additional childcare spaces that will be required in the future.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The potential inclusion of early year and childcare services within school properties and/or as part of joint use or standalone community infrastructure facilities within neighbourhoods could be considered in the future. The existing language of the OP (s. s. 8.C.1.14. and s. 8.C.1.17 through 8.C.1.19) can be strengthened in the new OP as it relates to encouraging and supporting partnerships that create “hubs” for community and institutional infrastructure (multiple amenities and services provided in one location).**
- 2. It should be recognized that there are additional considerations when locating childcare facilities compared to other institutional and community uses. This includes legislative requirements such as the amount of windows/sunlight available, amount of play activity space provided, that the facility is on the second floor or below, security systems, access to private and enclosed outdoor space of a certain size ideally away from cars, among many other considerations identified in Ontario Regulation 137/15.**
- 3. While the Plan was looking at childcare needs from a region perspective, a deficit of childcare spaces in Kitchener was identified. This deficit will only increase as the population grows. The City should undertake the necessary work to establish the quantum of a variety of institutional uses. The OP can then include language that speaks to having regard for City policies with respect to the required level of development related to a variety of institutional uses.**

2.12 Policy Review Summary

Based on the objectives and recommendations identified in the documents reviewed, planning for future indoor community and institutional facilities is set to advance as multi-functional facilities that can accommodate a wide variety of uses and users and provide an array of programs and services in one location. This creates a campus of community uses acting as a focal point for communities – community hubs. This planning philosophy can be applied to large scale assets (such as ice arenas and pools, which are not deemed to be walk-to facilities, but city-serving or regional in scale), but also facilities on a more localized level, such as local parks (Neighbourhood and Community Parks) where a broad array of recreation facilities are provided. These centres already exist in Kitchener and based on the recommendations of the LFMP and other background documents review, over the next 10 years the City and other public entities intends to focus on investment in these existing assets going forward.

The importance of co-locating complementary uses by encouraging and supporting partnerships with public and private community partners was a theme that was reiterated in each of the planning and policy documents reviewed. It is recognized that there are some challenges with implementing these joint planning efforts due to a variety of factors, including the need for funding and timing alignment among stakeholders to achieve a joint project. In this regard, strengthening the policy framework for which a wide variety of partnerships may occur in the future will be important. This could consider phasing and timing requirements for not only Secondary Plans, but also large-scale developments that have the potential to accommodate non-residential uses and should involve all potential stakeholders throughout the process.

3 INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN KITCHENER

Section 3 provides an overview of the current institutional and community infrastructure in Kitchener. This includes an overview of the existing inventory, geographic distribution, and how these facilities are currently planned for by the relevant entities, City or otherwise. The spatial assessment is focused on those assets that are relevant to complete communities.

3.1 Quantifying Institutional Land Needs

Existing Supply of Designated Institutional Land

Based on the City's existing land use designations, as detailed in the online GIS mapping, the city currently has 526.58 hectares of land designated as Institutional in the OP. This is assumed to include lands where there are existing institutional uses as well as lands that are designated but have yet to be built out/developed.

At the time of writing, we do not have access to the existing number of people employed in institutional designations per the Watson memo. Applying an average site coverage ratio of 0.35 to these lands, the estimated institutional building space associated with these lands is 1,843,030m². Application of an institutional employment density of 50m² of Gross Floor Area (GFA) building space per job¹ would equate to an existing 37,000 people currently employed within designated Institutional lands.

Future Demand for Designated Institutional Land

Using the estimates of Institutional forecast employment growth reported in Study 1 (per the Watson memo), institutional employment is forecast to grow by 12,300 jobs by 2051. Based on an estimate of 50m² of GFA building space per job, the forecast for institutional building space is estimated at 617,400 m². At a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 1.0, a land area of 61.7 hectares would be required to accommodate these jobs (independent of other uses)

¹ Floor space per worker assumptions based on the City of Kitchener 2022 Development Charges Background Study.

representing an 11.7% growth. This will be supplied through not only Institutional designations, but the variety of land use designations that allow institutional uses.

Regardless of whether or not there is a lack of space at present (further work is required in this regard), the City must be able to build for and accommodate future growth in this sector.

Understanding the Economics of Institutional Uses

The City can be quite prescriptive on where publicly supported land uses are located, through secondary planning exercises for example. While the range of private institutional uses are much more difficult to dictate in their location. They are usually part and parcel of non-residential and/or commercial development projects. The City should bolster the language in the new OP to promote a balance within a mixed-use designation. Setting targets for the inclusion of institutional uses is relevant at the secondary plan, zoning and development approvals levels.

3.2 Institutional Infrastructure Overview

Existing Conditions

Sierra Planning and Management has developed a series of inventory schedules for institutional infrastructure as relevant to this assignment - this includes libraries and elementary schools. Secondary schools were included as part of the inventory mapping for Technical Memo 1 but are not included here as they are determined to be a function of a larger population and are provided on a more city-wide scale. Schools are community assets and often include spaces that are used by the community outside of school hours, depending on the school, this often includes such spaces as the gymnasium, classrooms, outdoor fields and ball diamonds, playgrounds, swings, open lawn areas, etc. Libraries are slightly different in that they do not provide dedicated outdoor space but are often located next to parkland or school grounds. The existing inventory and distribution across the city are provided in Appendix A.

General observations related to existing institutional infrastructure indicate that existing library branches, including the new Southwest Branch set to open in early 2025, are equally distributed across the city; and existing schools within the city are generally well distributed within residential areas.

Current Approach to Planning: Libraries

Libraries are often assessed on a square footage per capita, with many municipalities utilizing figures in the range of 0.6 to 1.2 sq. ft. per capita. Discussions with Kitchener Public Library (KPL) indicated that they do not currently employ a per capita standard but rather are typically planning for libraries to be serving a population within 2.5 to 5.0 km of the branch. However, if the low end of the per capita standard were to be used to assess future need, the result would be an addition of more than 94,000 sq. ft. of library floor space by 2051 based on the most recent population forecasts. If the higher end standard were to be used (1.2 sq. ft. per capita), there would be a need for an additional 188,000 sq. ft. of library floor space by 2051.

KPL indicated that while they provide 6 branch locations across the city, they are continually seeking ways in which they can provide services in other locations to serve a broader population. For example, they have two new community library lockers at community centres, namely Chandler Mowat and Victoria Hills, that enable patrons to pick up/return books to these locations. Further expanding library services across the city could take on a variety of forms, with the potential for kiosks (e.g., Bibliotheca), open study areas, providing prayer spaces (recent initiative), among others to be incorporated into community centres, community hubs or other community infrastructure (e.g., small kiosk at J. Wesley Graham Patient and Family Resource Centre that is manned by volunteers and fully integrated into the KPL system).

It is also noted that KPL provides equipment borrowing for recreational purposes at some locations. Future co-location of city recreation facilities/services and KPL services in this regard could be leveraged to provide a concentration of complementary services in one convenient location for residents. The KPL is exploring other ways in which to streamline user experience, including striving to provide more services online through digital tools, enhance residents' digital literacy, and through outreach to senior communities. In terms of additional capacity needs, it is noted that the Central Library is experiencing the most pressure due to the social issues that are occurring in Downtown Kitchener.

It is noted that the KPL does not have a master plan in place to guide future priorities for investment. This is something that they are looking at developing within the short to medium term.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. Future planning by KPL would need to determine the preferred approach to the provision of library services, from localized points of access to co-location opportunities with other institutional and/or community infrastructure. The new Official Plan and its policies related to library-specific institutional uses will need to be flexible in this regard and allow for a range of measures to be implemented.**

Current Approach to Planning: Schools

As part of this study, the Consulting Team facilitated a joint meeting that included representatives from the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), and Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, the French Public School Board (FPSB). The French Catholic School Board was also invited to participate.

For the English school boards, future school needs are based on the detailed Long-Term Accommodation Plans (LTAPs) developed by the school boards that incorporate population projections identified within the Educational Development Charges (EDCs) Background Study as well as in-progress/active development applications to determine the composition of the population and anticipated timing that development will occur. School boards track all new developments to determine the potential composition of the community going forward (e.g., family-oriented, smaller units geared to seniors, etc.). Using this information, the LTAPs identify where new sites may be required in terms of site needs, the boards collect EDCs at the subdivision registration stage, but potential school sites need to be owned by the board before applying for capital funding from the province, meaning acquisition is required. The boards strive for as many “walkers” as possible for elementary schools, generally defined as those within 1.6 km of the school (as noted during engagement with the school boards), however these walkability distance thresholds differ by grade. Beyond the appropriate distance thresholds, students are eligible for transportation services (bussing to school). Additionally, it was noted that future schools are built to consider long-term viability not peak demand, meaning that they will require portables and other innovations to accommodate students at peak.

On the other hand, the FPSB can submit a request for a site when a new facility is required. Discussions indicate that one new site has been requested in Kitchener, however no funding has been assigned to it at present.

With recent policy shifts related to provincial priorities, including a focus on the provision of housing and affordable units, there is provincial direction to continue to utilize the existing inventory of schools. This means that schools will not be closed, but that existing facilities are to be maximized and potentially expanded as necessary. There are some planned expansions/rebuilds in the City of Kitchener, as identified in the LTAPs, and as of September 2024, the school boards submitted capital requests for additions to 4 schools and 1 new build.

The WRDSB has several public partnerships currently in place. This includes community use of schools, whereby the community uses indoor and outdoor school facilities (e.g., use of secondary school gymnasiums is high) booked and paid for through the City. An example of where a public partnership has resulted in the development of a new facility is Oak Creek Public School. This facility is co-located with Huron Community Centre, and a YMCA EarlyON childcare centre. It is noted that these types of partnerships are difficult to implement due to funding/timing misalignment.

Some of the challenges expressed by the boards, and which are not represented in the LTAPs, include opportunities in the core area (ION transit corridor). The older school stock in these areas were closed and sites were sold, however, now there is a growing demand for these types of facilities. The school boards are looking at how to rethink and reimagine how to get schools back into the core area, indicating that a traditional approach is preferred (e.g., partnerships with other public entities) over private partnerships which have proven difficult in other jurisdictions the boards oversee. Similarly, the community profile in some of Kitchener's older residential areas are now experiencing a re-emerging need for schools located in these neighbourhoods.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. Flexibility in terms of how schools and libraries get developed, ideally through partnerships with other public and potentially private entities will be important going forward. The new Official Plan could include language to best enable development of these institutional uses as part of other facilities and/or considered as part of residential development plans within intensification areas.**

3.3 Community Infrastructure Overview

Existing Conditions

Many of the reference documents speak to co-location and partnerships, and this often results in a campus style of community infrastructure (multi-functional hubs as focal points in neighbourhoods and communities). These centres already exist in Kitchener and based on the recommendations of the LFMP, over the next 10 years the city intends to focus on investment in these existing assets going forward.

For detailing the existing inventory of community infrastructure, a streamlined approach has been employed, whereby Indoor Community Centres and Local Parks (includes Community Park and Neighbourhood Park classifications) are considered the community and/or neighbourhood level of infrastructure that is relevant to complete communities. These are spaces where a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor facilities and amenities are provided that serve local residents on a daily basis.

General observations related to existing community infrastructure indicate that existing indoor community centres are generally well distributed across the city with many located in existing residential areas (due to the historic pattern of development of these centres); while local parks are generally well-distributed within existing residential areas.

Current Approach to Planning

Several metrics of assessment are typically undertaken to gain a full understanding of the future needs, opportunities, and implications for planning of future community recreation facilities. This includes:

- Supply and inventory details, including geographic distribution across the city;
- Population- and/or participation-based standard of provision / level of service;
- Facility utilization;
- Facility condition and capital requirements;
- Participation trends;
- Any future planning already in place; and

- Community and stakeholder input.

Any future update to the Leisure Facilities Master Plan should include a full needs assessment based on the above metrics. In the context of a growing urban area, the use of standards, both population- or participation-based, represents only one of the effective means to understand when new facilities will be required. Changes to the rate of growth of the community do not alter the standards but instead impact the point at which population growth triggers the need for investment. An appropriate use of standards can aid in decision-making well in advance of achieving the population triggers that justify new facilities; however, standards alone are not sufficient and must be taken as partial guidance only and considered with the other lenses of assessment. While we recognize that this exercise is not a recreation master plan, this population-based measure provides an indication of the theoretical number of residents served by each facility (by type) regardless of whether they use the facility or not.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. With significant population growth projected, there will be a need for additional and/or expanded community-based infrastructure over the course of the planning horizon. The locations and ways in which these can be delivered will need to be carefully considered. It is noted that the City is currently developing a parkland acquisition strategy to address future needs and ways in which these needs can be satisfied. The new OP and its policies should address the need for acquisition of land for not only parks but also other community infrastructure (e.g., neighbourhood community centres, multi-use recreation facilities).**

Section 4 of this report speaks to some of the trends, challenges and opportunities for delivering this infrastructure.

3.4 Determining the Appropriate Scale of Assessment

To appropriately assess the distribution of institutional and community infrastructure relevant to the development of complete communities, the Consulting Team first looked at the range of scale of these assets. The scale of these types of facilities varies, as does their relevance to contributing to complete communities.

As identified in the Official Plan (Section 15.D.7), the Institutional land use designation can relate to large scale and small-scale facilities. This applies to community recreation infrastructure as well. There is a continuum of institutional and community uses that form the basis of non-residential uses as part of a healthy city/region at a larger scale, and healthy neighbourhood at a smaller scale.

Large scale facilities, such as hospitals, arenas, indoor pools, or post-secondary education facilities are provided at a city-wide or even regional scale. These are not “walk-to” facilities for most residents but are provided in an easily accessible location by vehicles/transit and are not typically located in neighbourhood settings. These are typically addressed through provincial and/or regional planning and are not included within the spatial assessment of walkability related to complete communities. It should be noted that arenas and indoor pools, as community infrastructure, were assessed at a high-level in Technical Memo #1 as part of this assignment and were determined to be beyond a walkable neighbourhood scale of facility provision.

On the other hand, small scale facilities are often found within residential areas and are compatible with surrounding land uses (e.g., residential). This includes elementary schools, community centres, libraries, and local parks which have some level of walkability for residents and comprise the neighbourhood supply of institutional and community infrastructure. These facilities have been included in the spatial assessment completed as part of this assignment.

Other small scale institutional uses include day care centres and places of worship, among others. While it would be ideal if these facilities are located within residential areas to form part of a complete community, the reality that these types of uses may be permitted in other land use designations does not enable an accurate assessment of walkability. For example, day care centres are sometimes located in private homes, commercial storefronts, employment areas, and places of worship; while places of worship are sometimes located in commercial storefronts, employment areas, among others. Places of worship are also highly

dependant on denomination and does not mean that residents of a certain area would access this infrastructure (as opposed to a food store, for example). It is for these reasons that a walkability assessment has not been undertaken for these facility types.

3.5 Spatial Analysis of Institutional & Community Infrastructure in Kitchener

Spatial Analysis Methodology

A walkability analysis was undertaken to assess the extent to which community and institutional infrastructure in the City of Kitchener is within a 15-minute walk (or an 800-metre walking distance) of residential areas. In this analysis, community and institutional infrastructure includes the following types of facilities and parkland:

- Indoor community centres (Community Centres),
- Local parks (Community & Neighbourhood Parks),
- Libraries, and
- Elementary schools.

The walkability network was generated using the ESRI Integrate Proximity Analysis in ArcGIS – the Generate Travel Areas, which is designed to calculate the area that can be reached within a specified travel distance along a street network. This travel mode allows travel on paths and roads that allow pedestrian traffic and restricts travel on roads where pedestrians are prohibited, such as highways. The walkability analysis finds optimized travel options for pedestrians within the defined distance of 800 meters.

The results of the analysis for community and institutional infrastructure locations accessible from residential areas are shown on the maps provided in Appendix B at a city-wide scale, and Appendix C at the planning community-level for Local Parks. The maps show institutional and community facilities as points (Local Parks shown as polygons), and those areas within an 800-metre walk of these locations by way of reachable streets.

Spatial Analysis Outcomes

Based on the definition of walkability – being able to reach a destination by walking for no more than 15 minutes (or no more than 800 meters), the majority of the City’s residential areas are within 800 metres of local parks and elementary schools. Fewer areas are within 800 meters of libraries and community centres, which can be explained by the nature of these facilities as they serve larger areas and greater population.

At a quadrant level, the following table summarizes the coverage of the assessed institutional and community infrastructure based on the spatial analysis completed. It is important to note that this assessment does not consider institutional or community infrastructure beyond the City’s municipal boundary.

Figure 5: Quadrant Reference Map for Spatial Analysis Outcomes



Figure 6: Summary Table of Spatial Analysis (based on 800m walkability)

Infrastructure	Northwest	Northeast	Southwest	Southeast
Community Centres	Generally good coverage; some deficient areas in the western portions of Highland West and Forest Heights.	Deficient in the eastern portion of Grand River North and Grand River South.	Good coverage of existing residential areas.	Deficient in Pioneer Tower West, and the southern portion of Doon South.
Local Parks	Deficient in the southeast and northwest corners of Forest Heights.	Notable deficiency in the west side of Rosemount, south Idlewood, and some portions of Grand River North.	Good coverage of existing residential areas (except for western end of Laurentian West) and within Rosenberg SPA (assessed based on park locations, in absence of walking network).	Deficient in Brigadoon, some portions of Doon south (northeast and southwest).
Elementary Schools	Excellent coverage in the eastern portion of the quadrant, less so to the east in Highland West and Forest Heights.	Deficient in Bridgeport East, Grand River North, Idlewood, and portions of Centreville Chicopee.	Deficient in western portion of Laurentian West. Good coverage within Rosenberg SPA (school locations, not walking network).	Deficient in Hidden Valley, Pioneer Tower West, Lower Doon, the southeast area of Doon South, and a portion of Brigadoon.
Libraries (based on 2.5 km distance)	Generally deficient in northern and western portions of quadrant.	Deficient in Bridgeport North, Bridgeport West, Bridgeport East, Centerville Chicopee, and south end of Grand River South.	Deficient in Huron South. Some gaps noted in Laurentian West, and Laurentian Hills.	Deficient in Pioneer West, Hidden Valley, and southern portion of Doon South.

Based on the walkability assessment completed above, there are some commonalities in areas that are deficient in some types of institutional and community infrastructure assessed. This includes:

- **Northwest Quadrant:** Highland West and Forest Heights being the planning communities with the most gaps in the infrastructure assessed. It is noted that the LFMP called for the expansion of the Forest Heights Community Centre and the WCDSB called for a solution for K-W core area and West Kitchener elementary accommodation.
- **Northeast Quadrant:** Bridgeport East, Centreville Chicopee, Grand River North and Grand River South having the most gaps in the infrastructure assessed.
- **Southwest Quadrant:** Laurentian West has deficiencies in the infrastructure assessed.
- **Southeast Quadrant:** Pioneer Tower West, Hidden Valley, and the southern portion of Doon South have the most gaps in the infrastructure assessed. It is noted that the LFMP called for the inclusion of a new school (WRDSB) as part of the Huron-Brigadoon Community Centre development and WCDSB called for a new elementary school in Doon South.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

1. **The areas identified above as having gaps in the relevant institutional and community infrastructure may be candidates for the future development of institutional and community infrastructure, potentially developed as community hub locations (co-location of facilities and services). Section 4.3 identifies ways in which these gaps can be addressed.**

4 TRENDS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

This section of the report summarizes the trends, challenges, and opportunities related to planning for institutional and community infrastructure, specifically as it relates to the city's post-secondary student demographic, facility/amenity co-location and the development of community hubs, the provision of these land uses in areas of intensification where land is limited, and innovations related to providing community infrastructure in unique and new ways.

4.1 Kitchener's Student Demographics

Kitchener, as part of Waterloo Region, is one of several Ontario communities that is home to a number of post-secondary educational institutions – the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga College (located in Kitchener). Based on the Year-End 2023 estimates developed for Waterloo Region, as of November 2023 there were 90,800 post-secondary students enrolled in full-time programs within Waterloo Region, at Conestoga College, the University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University. From previous work undertaken for Conestoga College, we understand that the Doon Campus has about 11,000 students enrolled and is projected to grow.

It is estimated that over 73,400 of the post-secondary students enrolled in programs in the Region, live within the Region. For Kitchener specifically, the temporary student population residing in the city is estimated at over 10,000 students.

This puts the city in a unique position of having a large student population with potentially different needs than the permanent population. This certainly affects needs for rental housing to accommodate student populations, but also in terms of institutional and community facility needs related to recreational pursuits. International students, in particular, require a range of amenities including the provision of culturally appropriate sports facilities (such as cricket and synthetic turf). While the post-secondary institutions are responsible to accommodate students' recreational needs within their own facilities, the City's recreational facilities also play a part in the day-to-day recreational pursuits of those students, particularly those living off-campus. Research undertaken by the Consulting

Team point to the range of sports which are popular amongst colleges in Canada, identified as the following:

- Ice hockey;
- Lacrosse - which has gained momentum since its recognition as a Summer Olympics sport;
- Canadian football;
- Rugby; and
- Cricket - cricket has been one of the fastest growing sports in Canada as of 2023. According to sources, there are approximately 40,000 cricketers in Canada and there are a number of wide-ranging projections of its growth. We prefer, as consultants, to deal with more reasonable estimates of demand and, in so doing, our advice is to follow the strong growth of cricket at the community level which is a gateway to further development in future years at the more elite level leading to international success. The fact that Canada's men's cricket team has regained full Associate status with the ICC is helpful in this regard.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. Based on the above, it can be assumed that students would be more likely to use large scale facilities such as sports fields, arenas, indoor pools, field houses, etc. As the student population changes in the future, there will be a continued need to address the needs of students both on-campus by the College (as the primary provider of student facilities and programs), and off-campus by the city to address the needs of all residents (including student populations). The student population could be acknowledged in the new Official Plan simply as an additional population to consider in future planning by way of recognizing Conestoga College as a community of interest within the City.**
- 2. Continuously changing student demographics, sport participation trends, and recreational needs should be monitored by the City on an ongoing basis to ensure that facilities and programs provided address the needs of not only**

permanent but also student populations to some degree. This should be completed as a core component of updates to the Leisure Facilities Master Plan.

4.2 Developing Community Hubs

The term community hub can be defined in several ways. They include multi-use community recreation centres that provide a variety of amenities and services in one location. These facilities often have the terms ‘wellness’ and/or ‘leisure’ in their names denoting their importance to overall community health and wellbeing. These recreation centres can also include other public services such as libraries, dedicated older adult facilities, among others. Community hubs also refer to centres for recreation combined with social and cultural facilities and services. This could include such social services as employment services, newcomer services, community health services, among others, sometimes co-located with a school or library as well. These two forms, and other variations, of community hubs are relevant to the new OP.

While community hubs provide for a variety of amenities and services in one centralized location, this can sometimes mean that they serve a broader population base and larger geographic area (depending on design) and therefore somewhat conflict with the principles of complete community and easy neighbourhood access. However, locational considerations could potentially mitigate these issues if facilities are provided in a shared and convenient location for one or several neighbourhoods.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The new Official Plan could include flexible policies related to providing a diverse range of community hubs across the city, the scale and composition of which should be based on the needs of the area. The new Official Plan could also include language that speaks to community hubs facilitating service integration, promoting cost-effectiveness of development, and improving access to transit and active transportation.**
- 2. It is important to note that providing a series of community hubs at the localized or neighbourhood scale may not be feasible from a financial perspective. Planning for hubs to serve larger populations may necessitate larger scale facilities. Density also must be considered in the need of a particular area..**

4.3 How Can Institutional and Community Infrastructure be Directed to Address Gaps and Achieve Complete Communities

Existing Residential Neighbourhoods

Kitchener's urban area is largely comprised of existing residential neighbourhoods. As indicated in the spatial analysis completed for this assignment, these areas have generally been developed with good access to schools, indoor community centres, and parks. Any future changes to these neighbourhoods would likely occur gradually through intensification and infill development on a site-specific basis. There may also be larger sites that come available for redevelopment (e.g., commercial, institutional, etc.), in which cases consideration must be had for the needs of the neighbourhood and surrounding community as it relates to institutional and community uses, among others.

Residential neighbourhoods tend to go through demographic and lifecycle changes over time, which means that the need for institutional and community infrastructure may change over time. Regardless of how the neighbourhood changes over time, maintaining institutional lands within existing residential neighbourhoods remains important. Elementary schools are a good example of this. Per provincial direction, school boards are to maximize use of existing school sites and facilities prior to building new, where available. It should be noted that facility sharing between publicly funded school boards through co-ownership, lease, or other arrangement is a priority for the Ministry of Education and the WRDSB.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

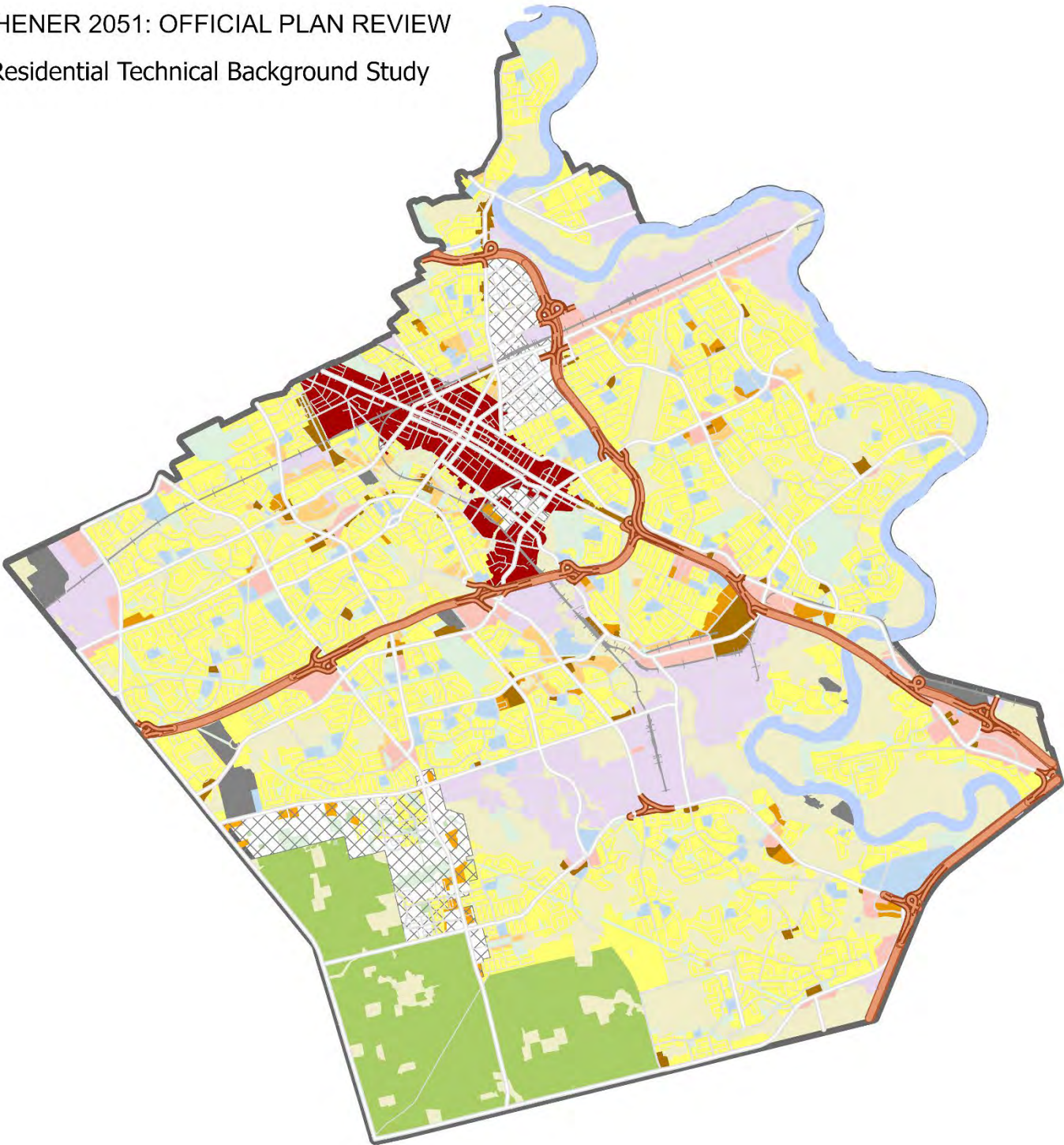
- 1. The new Official Plan should carry forward existing policies that support maintaining institutional uses within existing residential neighbourhoods and maximizing their use through joint use and/or facility sharing with other institutions in a community hub model of development, where feasible.**

Greenfield Residential Areas

The existing Official Plan designates residential land uses and areas for future development (e.g., Secondary Plan Areas), per the land use schedule below.

KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

Non-Residential Technical Background Study



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Land Use



Legend

Land Use Category

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Employment
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Natural Heritage Conservation

- Open Space
- Residential
- ROW
- Strategic Growth Area
- Utility
- Secondary Plan Area

1 Kilometers



Data Source: City of Kitchener

As a major area of greenfield residential currently under development, the Rosenberg Secondary Plan Area is an example of a new neighbourhood that has accounted for institutional and community land uses by identifying school sites adjacent to Neighbourhood Parks to enable joint use of outdoor facilities, and two planned community centre/library sites. The community centre/library sites are not contiguous with the school locations; however, it is understood that the Rosenberg Catholic Elementary School is integrated with the new Williamsburg Community Centre, while the new Southwest Branch could not be accommodated on the site and has been developed as a stand-alone facility on an adjacent property to the school/community centre site (separated by a hydro corridor). Both facilities are scheduled to open in 2025.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. It is clear that the City and partner organizations are continually seeking opportunities to collaborate on new facilities and this should continue..**

Intensification Areas

As defined in the City's current Official Plan, the areas that are set to accommodate intensification efforts include the Downtown, MTSA's, City Nodes, Community Nodes, and Urban Corridors. These areas will see significant change over the years, and therefore have the potential to accommodate not only residential, but non-residential land uses supportive of complete communities. To reiterate the point made earlier, Policy 15.D.4.3 identifies the permitted land uses within the Mixed Use designation – this includes institutional uses such as day care facilities, religious institutions, and educational establishments; however it does not include community facilities, such as community centres, community hubs, etc. With the Mixed Use designation being largely directed towards areas of intensification (e.g., Downtown, MTSA, City Nodes, etc.) the potential to expand the permitted uses to include community facilities as part of a Mixed Use development may be warranted.

The City of Kitchener recognizes that school sites and facilities play a broader role than education alone. For one, they are used by the community for recreational programming outside of school hours, but also provide services for the students and their families and outdoor space and play facilities for neighbourhood residents when school is out (as identified in Spaces). Schools often serve as community focal points whether in areas of intensification or not. This is true for libraries, community centres and parks, places of worship, among other institutional and community uses, as well.

Per provincial direction, school boards are to maximize use of existing school sites and facilities prior to building new, where available. While it was noted through discussion that some of the school sites that existed downtown were previously sold, there may be opportunities to maximize use at existing schools within/near the downtown (e.g., King Edward PS, Courtland Avenue PS, Suddaby PS, and others) to support other community uses, including community hubs.

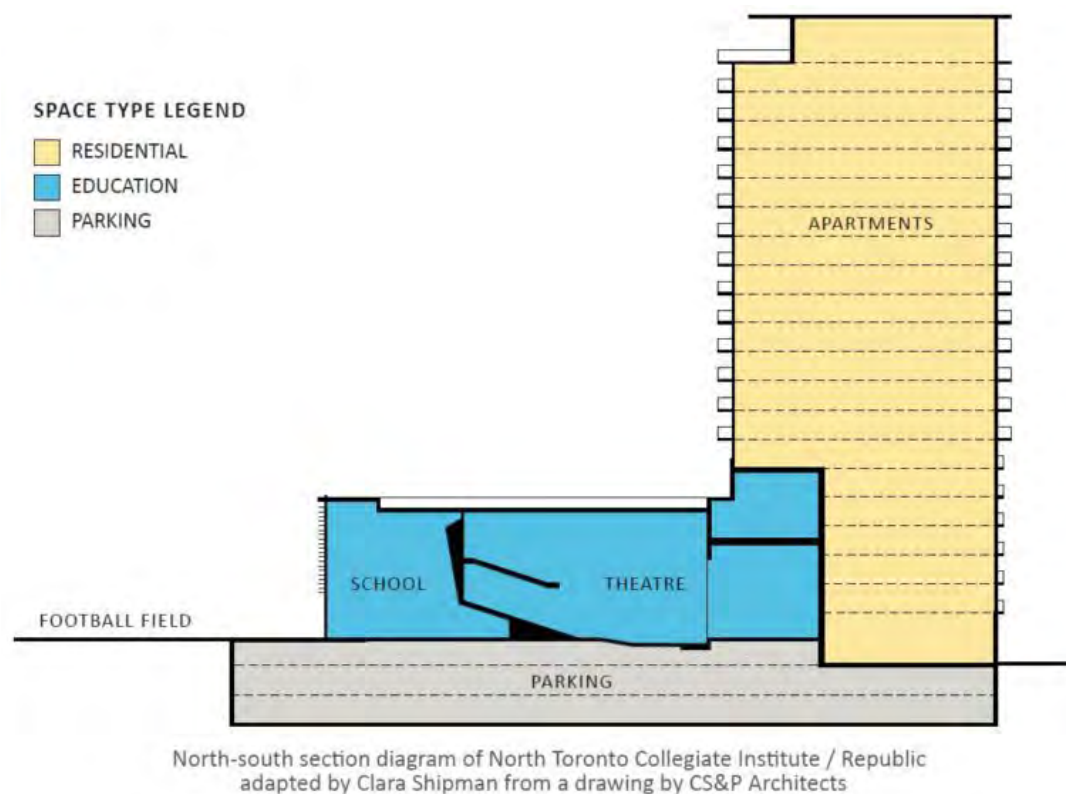
There are several examples of where schools and other community infrastructure has been integrated into private developments within areas of intensification. Two leading examples are provided below for information.

Integration of Institutional Uses: North Toronto Collegiate Institute Redevelopment

Prior to its replacement in 2012, North Toronto Collegiate Institute (NTCI) was one of the oldest buildings in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) portfolio and had fallen into disrepair. Due to a limited budget from the school board, external funding sources were necessary to make replacement a reality. The project was made possible through partnership between the TDSB and Tridel, where construction funding for the school was leveraged from the residential development. Today, the project serves as a role model for integrated public/private development in leveraging institutional funds through development (residential or otherwise).

The redevelopment integrates a four-storey high school (1,200 students) with two condominium towers (450 units in total), and includes a roof garden, 600-seat theatre, library, triple gym, an artificial turf football field and underground parking.

Figure 7: NTCI Development Building Cross Section



Integration of Community Uses: One Yonge Development

As part of a new master planned community near Toronto's waterfront (Pinnacle International's One Yonge), the developer was required to provide a public recreation facility within the private residential development to serve the needs of the area's residents. The One Yonge Community Recreation Centre is located within the podium of the development's first phase condominium tower (496 units).

The 51,000 sq. ft. facility is accessed from the ground floor through a distinct and separate entrance from the condominium with amenity space provided on the second floor. The facility includes media rooms, a teaching kitchen, fitness studios, a six-lane, 25-metre swimming pool, and a double gymnasium.

This project serves as a role model for the integration of public recreation space into private development in densely populated urban areas.

Figure 8: Detailed Floor Plan of One Yonge Recreation Centre

Level 02

1. atrium
2. reception / lobby
3. administration
4. dance / fitness studio
5. change rooms
6. pool
7. gymnasium
8. washrooms
9. multipurpose room
10. teaching kitchen
11. program room 1
12. program room 2
13. program room 3
14. media room

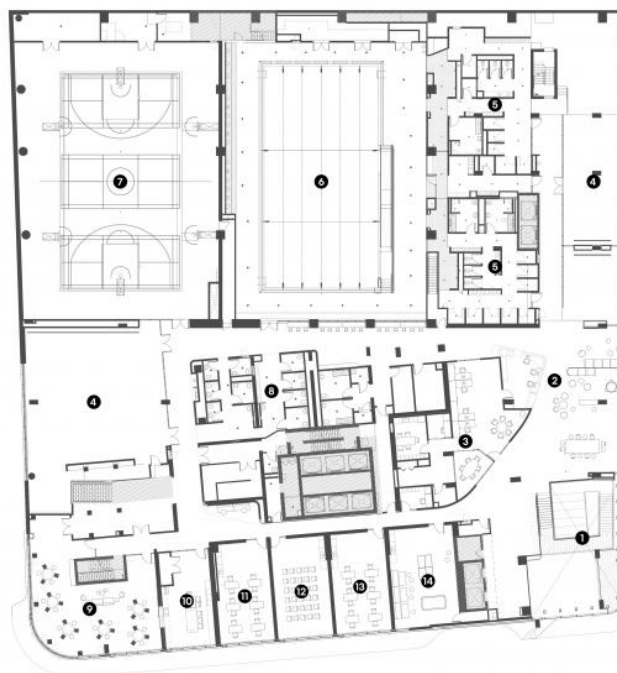


Image Credit: Perkins&Will

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

1. The City should encourage the WRDSB and WCDSB to work with the development community to initiate early and continuous coordination during the development review process. This can help to inform facility priorities and development considerations. In addition, the City should work with the school boards to discuss ways in which improvements to the coordination of development (funding and timing) can be facilitated related to shared use of space for facilities and open space within new developments. Official Plan policies in this regard, could be strengthened to prioritize partnerships and strive to enable coordination between public and/or private entities to facilitate projects being actualized.
2. Additionally, the City should encourage institutional uses to materialize in intensification areas, where the highest and best use would be other

institutional and commercial uses (e.g., place of worship or medical clinic will pay market rent)., rather than residential uses.

- 3. The province, through Policy 3.1.5 of the new PPS, specifies “planning authorities, in collaboration with school boards, should consider and encourage innovative approaches in the design of schools and associated childcare facilities, such as schools integrated in high-rise developments, in strategic growth areas, and other areas with a compact built form”. Therefore, the importance of developing partnerships and co-location opportunities to create a form of development that maximizes the efficiency of land is evident.**

4.4 The Public Realm as Community Space

Section 15 of the City’s existing Official Plan addresses institutional and community uses in other land use designations, and provides policies related to the public realm and placemaking, specifically:

- All development or redevelopment will have regard for the contribution to the public realm through the design of public, semi-public and private spaces and buildings (Policy 15.D.2.16).
- The City will encourage the design of public, semi-public and private spaces and buildings to be linked with special events, public art and cultural programming in order to celebrate and enhance the cultural experiences in each of the areas of the Downtown and to create vibrant people spaces (Policy 15.D.2.17).
- The City will encourage and promote the use of sidewalks and/or streets for people activity, such as outdoor retailing, restaurants, performance spaces and festivals (Policy 15.D.2.18).

As Kitchener’s downtown core continues to densify with new residential developments, providing sufficient space for needed community and recreational amenities or facilities should be a top consideration. For example, Toronto’s Liberty Village Public Realm Strategy (2024) places a priority on improving linkages to existing park sites, renewing and/or redeveloping existing parks, and implementing urban design practices that enhance connections with park/open space elements.

Other key strategies that are in place elsewhere (Toronto and Vaughan are examples) to enhance the public realm in intensifying areas include strategies to address a lack of traditional parkland. This includes but is not limited to:

- Creating new parks and open spaces but also enhancing connections to existing parks and open spaces (within downtown and/or beyond).
- Pedestrian-priority design and converting streets to shared/flexible spaces (the redevelopment of King Street is a good example of this).
- Increasing soft landscaping by improving the tree canopy (to help meet the canopy targets of the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy). This will also help to provide additional user comfort in using the public realm as open space.
- Incorporating urban format parks and spaces for socialization, gathering and celebration. This could include for example, large planters, movable and permanent street furniture, lighting at various scales, trees, among other items.
- Creating a fine-grain circulation network for pedestrians that link streets, parks and open spaces. This includes maintaining any existing and further developing mid-block connections. These spaces provide respite from busy city streets and provide moments of pause where patios, artwork, and other design features can be implemented.
- Expanding the public realm by blurring the delineation between the public and private realm, by way of defining appropriate building setbacks and block massing for example. Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Open Spaces (POPS) are a good example of how this can be successful. These spaces, such as courtyards, patios, gardens, pocket parks, etc., link the public realm network and add to the fine-grain network's interest.
- Developing strata parks.
- Reimagining traditional churchyards as neighbourhood assets through partnerships.

Kitchener's Urban Design Manual speaks to the design of complete streets, parks and open space, shared spaces, among other areas in a general sense, and does touch on some of the points identified above; however, the new Official Plan has the potential to further expand on policies for the public realm and its contribution to placemaking initiatives. These could then be incorporated into any updates to the Urban Design Manual in the future.

Relevance to the new Official Plan:

- 1. The key strategies identified above, among others that may be deemed appropriate, could be used to bolster existing policies of the Official Plan and subsequently refer to an updated Urban Design Manual and/or other more detailed documents for further urban design guidance.**

5 BROADER POLICY DIRECTIONS

In addition to the conclusions highlighted in the preceding sections, this section of the report provides additional, general policy direction recommendations based on the analysis of institutional and community infrastructure in Kitchener. The following represent a mix of land use planning and investment principles that should inform the language and policy directions of the Official Plan.

These directions go beyond language in the Official Plan that may speak to community facilities, parks and recreation, but should also inform official plan policy as it relates to the overall land use mix in the city, particularly in new growth areas where the requirement to maintain a breadth of land uses to meet localized needs is likely to be a key land use strategy. By this we refer to the ability of the Official Plan to direct new growth areas to include a range of land uses beyond residential, and the range of commercial land designations to enable the type of institutional and community uses that are often located within commercial centres – be it local services in the form of day cares, agency and government services, localised health services, places of worship and an even wider range of services that are very often part of commercial zoning designations.

The need for sufficient large scale institutional land use designations stemming from secondary planning exercises and plans of subdivision – to enable places of worship, and schools in particular, represent a different level of planning. The development of schools, parks and community facilities is controlled to a greater degree by the City and school boards and these can be planned for in advance through the various processes that exist already – master planning for parks, open space, trails, community recreation and other community facilities (normally zoned as public uses), and school board facilities planning which is often based on the hierarchy of elementary, middle and high school catchment zones.

It should also be remembered that the goals of community infrastructure and institutional development is to enable community wellbeing and the development of complete communities – accordingly, it should be recognized that the municipal sector is only one provider of these community amenities. Commercial designations should be encouraged to provide a range of opportunities for recreation, health and wellbeing, cultural expression and community gathering. To flesh this out into clear examples, commercial fitness centres,

hotels, banquet and community halls, educational spaces of all kinds, cultural centres and commercial outdoor recreation represent just some of the connections in land use terms.

The distinction in planning terms between community uses and commercial uses is therefore less binary and represents a continuum that offers an organic way to achieve the concept of complete communities at a district or neighbourhood level.

5.1 Co-Ordination of Growth and Institutional Land Use Needs

- **Connecting School Growth Planning with Institutional Land Use Needs –** Historically the adjacency of schools and public parks, and in some cases public indoor facilities, is observable. The new Official Plan should continue to endorse this approach as guidance for the development of secondary plans, and importantly, as guidance for the development and update of future indoor and outdoor facilities/parks master plans. The latter documents should be informed by the general policies of the Official Plan but these detailed policies and plans will benefit most from official plan language that is not overly prescriptive on the form, location and delivery mechanisms for the range of community recreational services. All recreation plans should be guided by the overall growth management strategy and land use plan for the municipality, but the approach to defining parkland hierarchy, and the approach to delivering indoor facilities and services is a matter that should be primarily driven by the Places and Spaces and the Leisure and Facilities Master Plan processes.
- To further this point, in the context of development control planning and the adjudication parkland conveyance options open to the City in response to development applications, it is essential that the choice of approach (dedication, cash-in-lieu, alternative rate application, acquisition of additional parkland, treatment of POPs and encumbered lands) is informed by the recommendations of the relevant City master plan. In addition, this integration of effective planning should result in secondary plans that effectively deliver an appropriate framework of parks and open spaces, and future indoor community facility needs by neighbourhood that can guide the approval of individual plans of subdivision and other development approvals.

- **Importance of Retaining Institutional Land Use Designations (Regardless of Land Value)** – as general guidance the new Official Plan should, in the relevant sections, enforce the principle that a balance of land uses is essential to the achievement of the community wellbeing, environmental and climate resiliency goals of the plan.
- **Approach to Surplus Institutional (School) Sites and Policy Provisions to Ensure City Rights of Purchase** – This approach aligns well with the intention to achieve adaptive re-use and the maximization of use of existing community infrastructure. Existing policies to the effect of enabling cities to purchase surplus school sites existing at both an operating level for the school boards and City. However, with respect to the capacity to marry the opportunity to achieving lands and buildings that allow for multi-use recreation and community service campuses, this is an important objective to include in the relevant sections of the new Official Plan.

5.2 Community Infrastructure Needs

- **Approach to Recreation and Community Facilities Planning (to inform OP)**
 - Section 8.C.1.5 “The City will encourage the optimization of existing community infrastructure uses and opportunities for adaptive re-use, wherever feasible, before consideration is given to developing new community infrastructure”. This policy is problematic from a number of perspectives:
 - Notwithstanding any reference to the importance of seeking the maximization of existing community infrastructure as provided for under provincial guidance, the reality is that this is a broad policy goal relevant to all kinds of public infrastructure.
 - In the specific context of planning for new growth areas, it is inappropriate to assume that renovation and re-use is a necessary precursor (in short, finding a continuation use of now functionally obsolete recreation facilities) to planning for new community infrastructure.
 - Adaptive re-use before new development (beyond a laudable policy principle) will also challenge the concept of new development to better create walkable community infrastructure.

- It is recommended that the City consider softening this policy to reflect the observable need for new facilities as the City grows and that such development should be guided by the necessary range of factors in planning that result in efficient use of existing and new community infrastructure. Such factors include co-location, multi-use opportunities, and new forms of development for recreation that uses smaller land footprints and higher vertical construction, potentially as part of mixed-use development projects.
- **Role of OP in Guiding Future Municipal Recreational Infrastructure**
Planning – careful attention is required to the thresholds under which new community facilities are planned. These are population-related targets, based on defined provision standards (level of service) approved under the relevant master plan or strategic directive of the City. The new Official Plan should inform the decisions as to when and where these new community facilities are developed (e.g. phasing to align with the development of schools, and the build-out of new communities). The new Official Plan should not prescribe matters that are best left to the implementing master plans (for example the number, type and form of indoor or outdoor facilities) but should include important standards (such as open space standards) relevant to the appropriate and balanced development of complete communities. The new Official Plan should also drive the consideration of alternative ways to address population growth-related needs including approach to land use mix, design and mixed-use development at higher density.
- **Parkland Hierarchy as key to the OP Parkland and Open Space Policies** – One particular area of direct transfer from a lower order plan (in this case Spaces) to a higher order plan (the City's Official Plan) is the approved parkland hierarchy. This is a governing statement as to how all existing and future parks and open spaces should operate as an integrated system. It speaks to the standards of provision, accessibility of parks to individual households, the role of local versus district serving, versus city-wide and regional destination parks, open spaces, shorelines and more. It speaks to the City's role in events and festivals, sport tourism and public celebrations spaces. It speaks to the efficiencies of operation and maintenance to ensure

a viable municipal level of service, and should help guide development control applications approvals, and capital planning for amenities.

- It is importantly a fundamental part of the determination as to what amenities (development) on the parkland system is growth-related and therefore potentially eligible for development charges funding.

5.3 The Goals of Community Inclusivity

- **Aligning Community Infrastructure to Broader Goals for Accessibility** – Accessibility is defined in a number of ways including both physical and accessibility to buildings and spaces, as well as cognitive and other accessibility challenges. Differences among the population in terms of transportation access are often important considerations for community facility planning. The Official Plan includes the overall municipal goals for transit and transportation systems including active transportation, in the city. Accordingly, this important connection between planning for access and the when, where, and what of community planning should be clearly established – more so than it may be at present. This is important because planning for new facilities is often challenged by the separation of it from forward planning for transportation to achieve maximum inclusivity.

5.4 Community Hubs

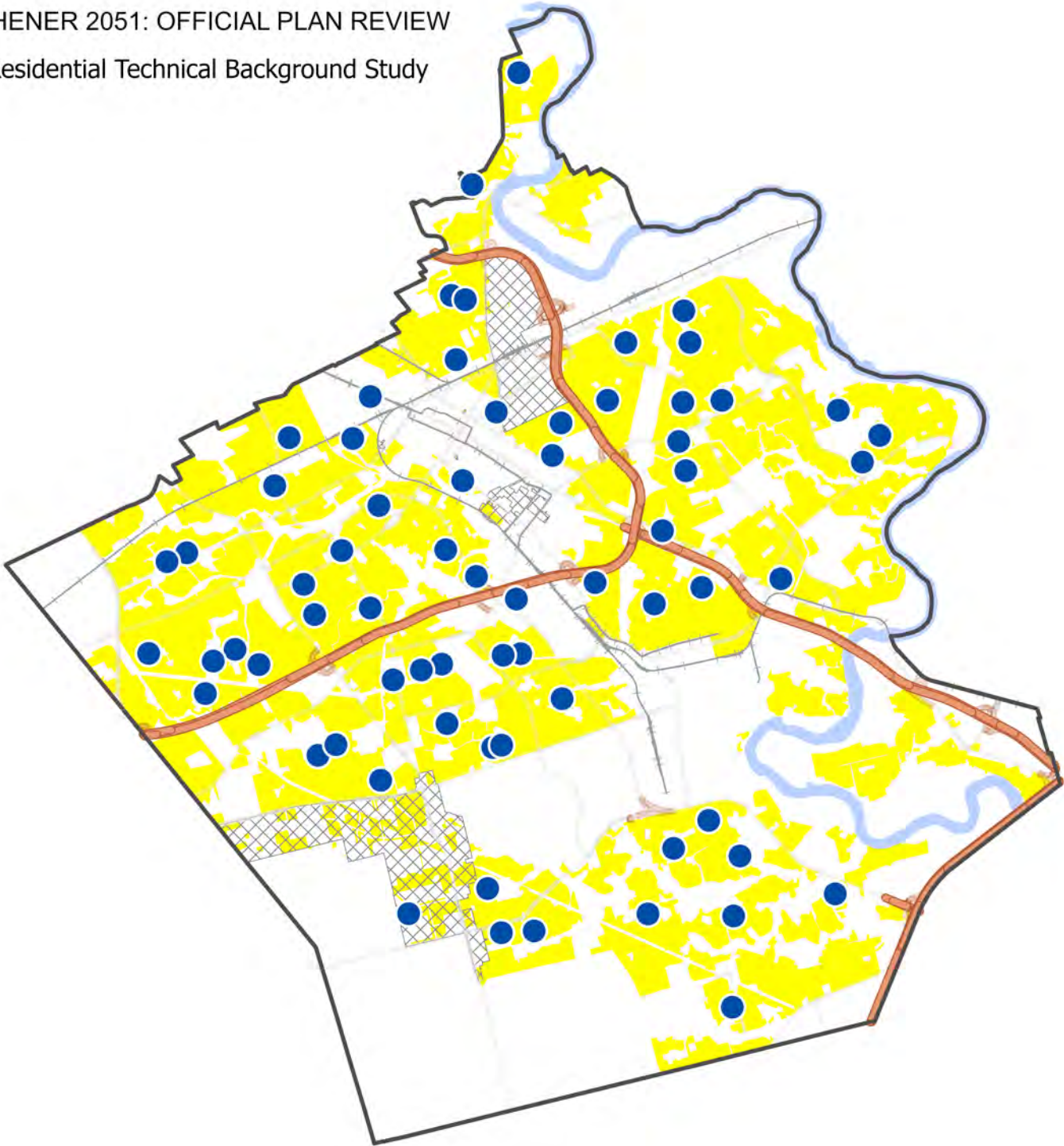
- The new Official Plan should strive to define community hubs effectively. Community hubs can comprise several different concepts, as described in Section 4.2. Simply stated, a multi-use community recreation complex is a hub because of its scale and its likely role in serving community needs beyond the neighbourhood.
- Additionally, community hub concepts, developed over the last 15 years, include a wider range of development forms and function. As examples, the notion of a community hub can be more geared to achieving services in proximity to populations in needs. It can include community support services more generally and involve public and non-profit service providers. It can include both new development and adaptive re-use. Central to the concept – whether more recreationally focused or community support-driven, is co-

location and the beneficial outcomes that arise. The new Official Plan should adopt a flexible approach to the support of community hubs and recognise that the service area of such hubs is likely to differ depending on scale and role of the hub. The new Official Plan should direct the relevant parks and indoor facilities plans to provide detailed policies with respect to the role of existing and future centres in serving individual communities or groups of communities in the City.

- The criteria for success of these hubs can include a range of metrics: breadth of services, breadth of populations served, innovative forms of real estate development (may not be traditional); may involve private sector institutional and other services as distinct from commercial; walkability as appropriate; and anchored with municipal and/or school core uses.

Appendix A: Existing Inventory of Institutional & Community Infrastructure

KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW
Non-Residential Technical Background Study



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Facilities:
Elementary Schools**

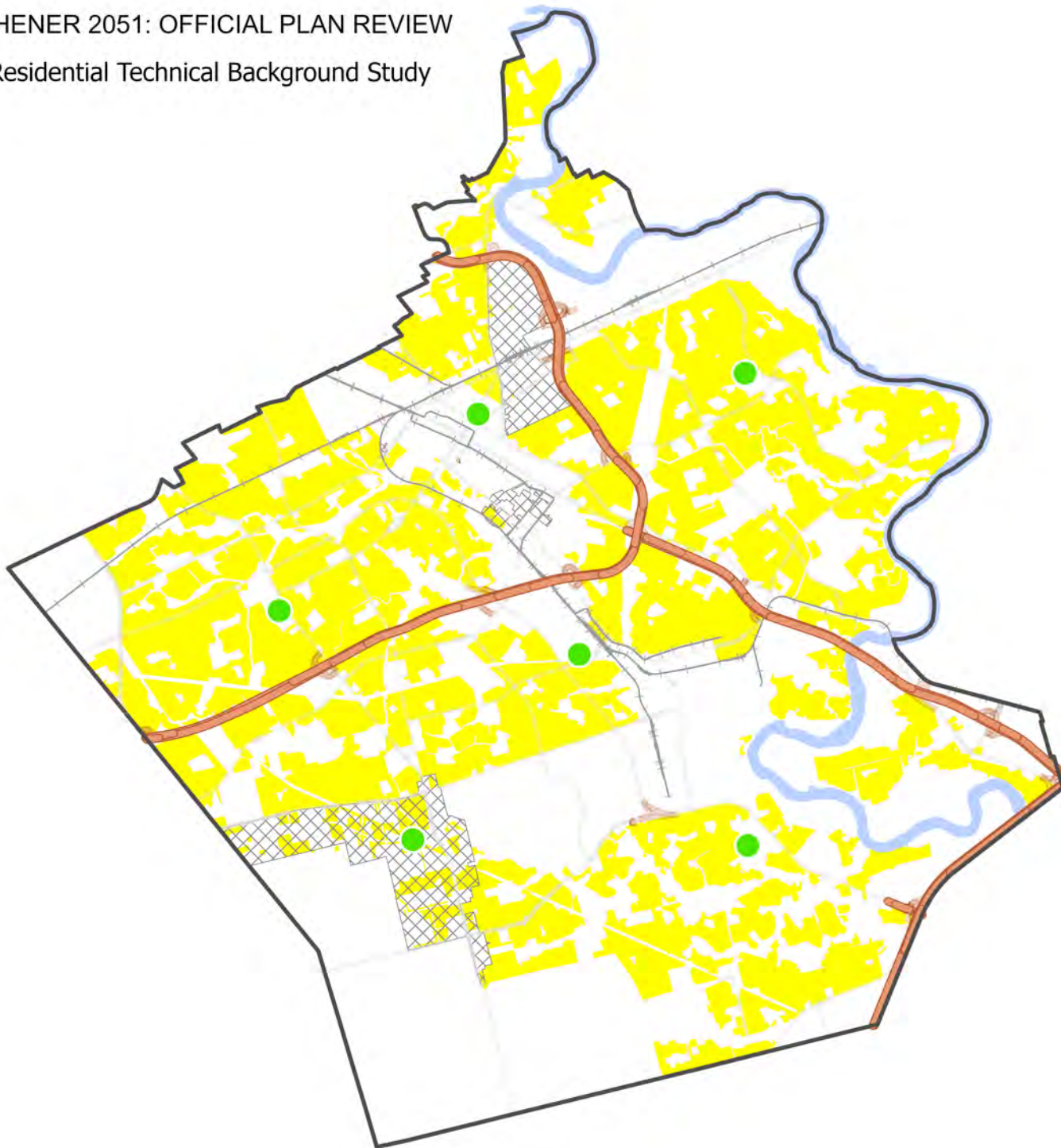
- Legend
- Elementary Schools
 - Residential Land Use
 - ▨ Secondary Plan Area



1
Kilometers






KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW
Non-Residential Technical Background Study

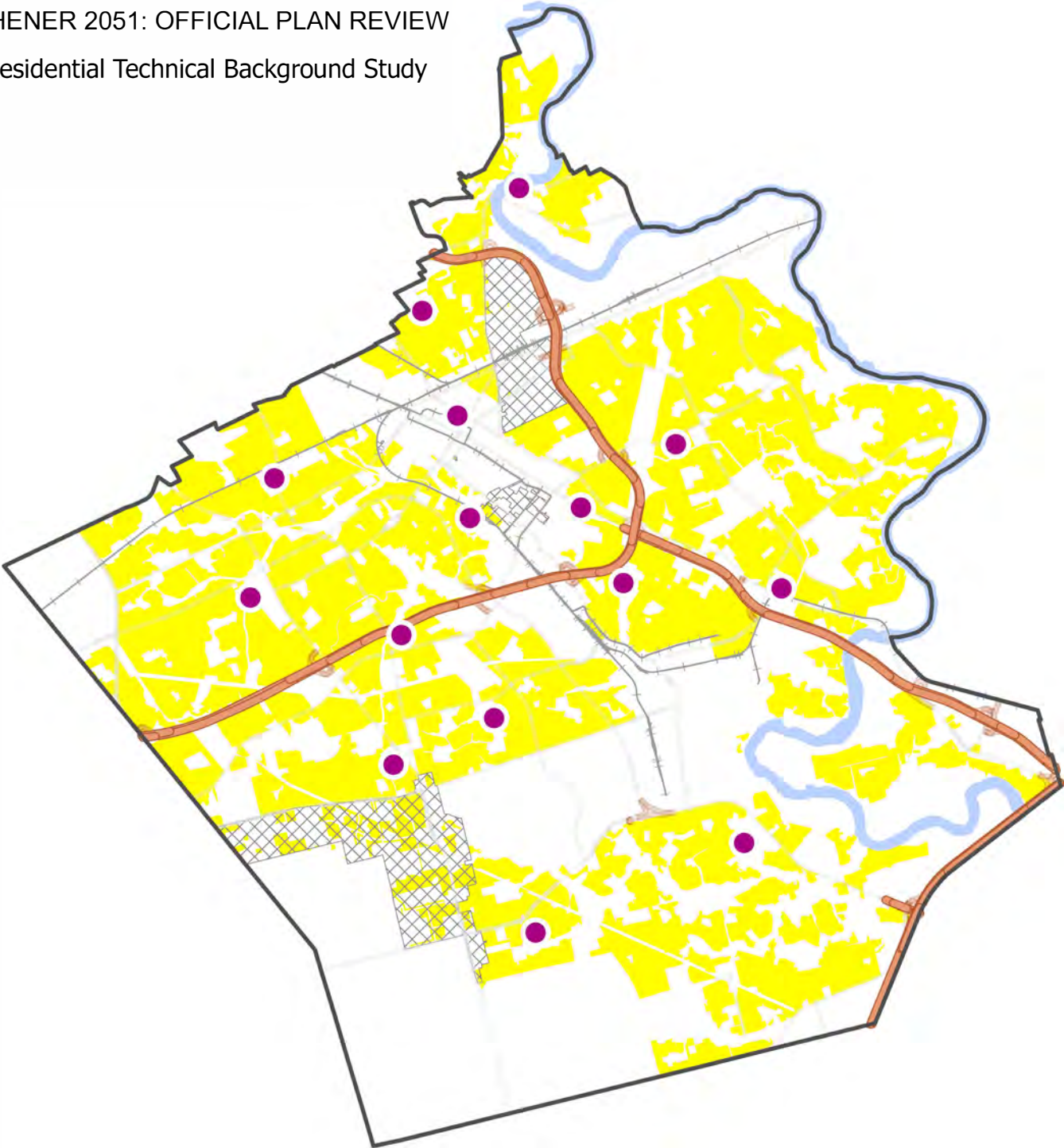


INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Facilities:
Libraries**

Legend

-  Libraries
-  Residential Land Use
-  Secondary Plan Area



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Facilities:
Community Centres**

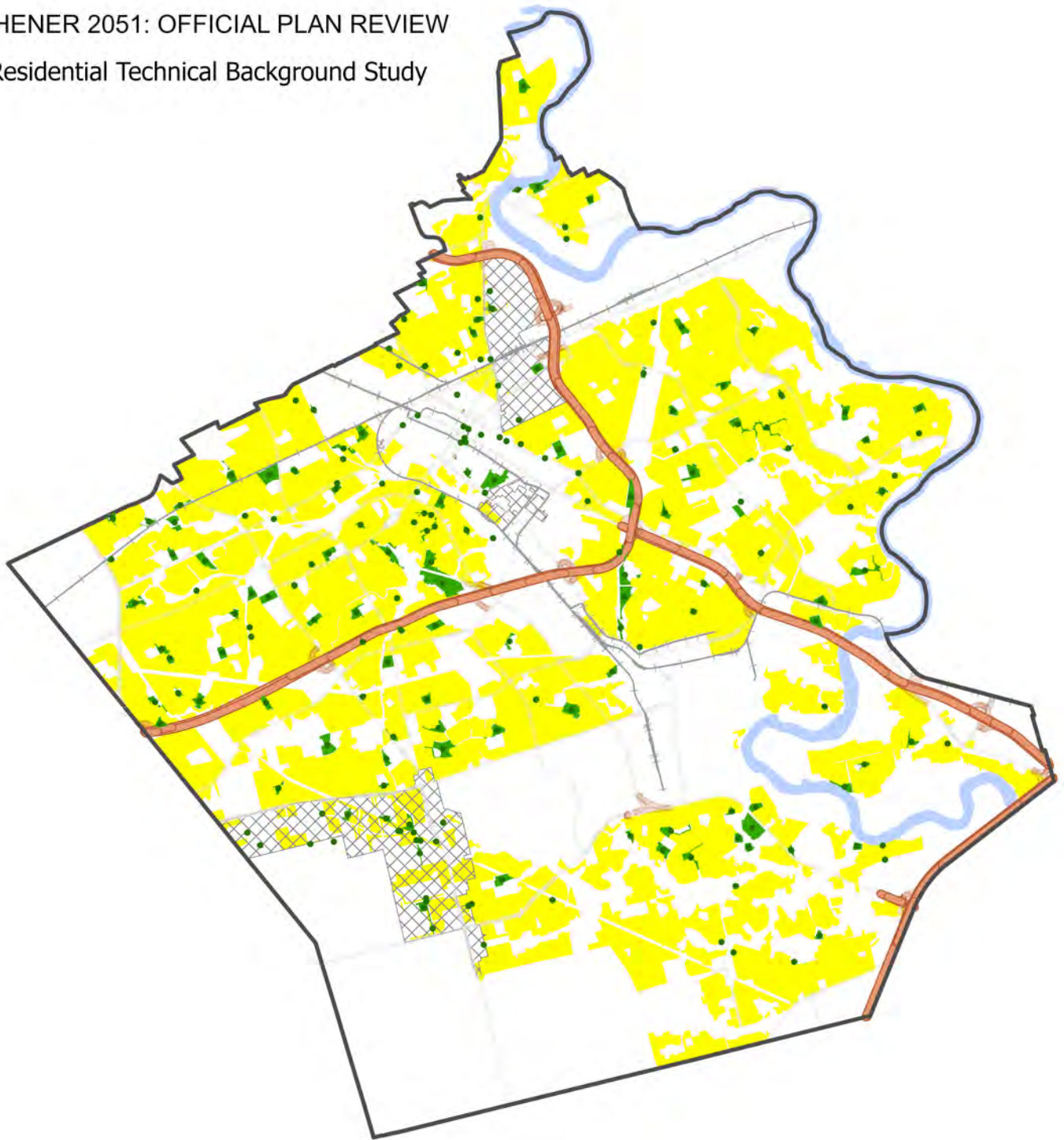
- Legend
- Indoor Community Centres
 - Residential Land Use
 - Secondary Plan Area



1
Kilometers





KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW
Non-Residential Technical Background Study



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

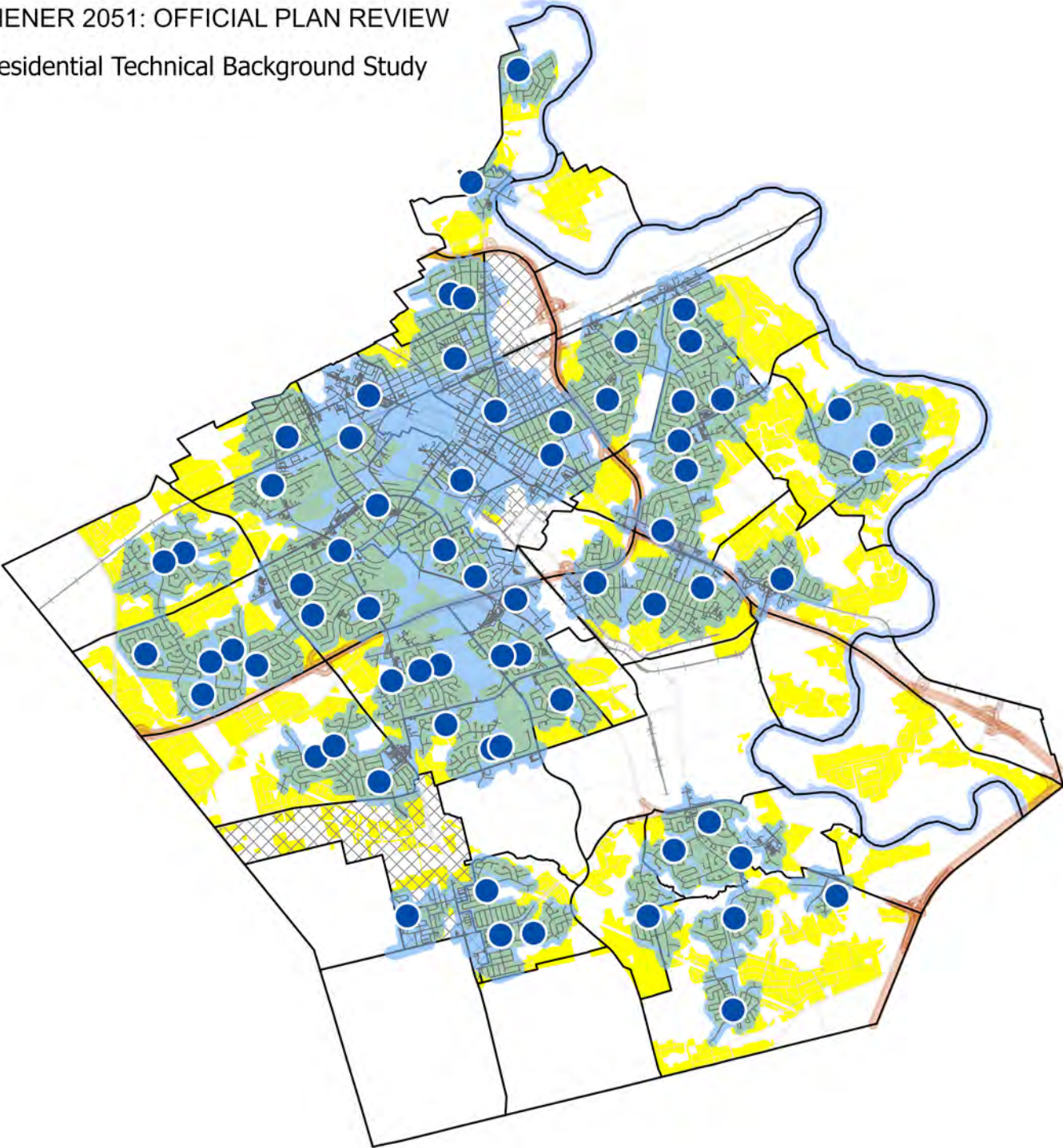
**Map of Facilities:
Local Parks**

Legend

-  Local Parks
-  Residential Land Use
-  Secondary Plan Area

Appendix B: Walkability Analysis of Existing Inventory

KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW
Non-Residential Technical Background Study



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Elementary Schools**



Legend

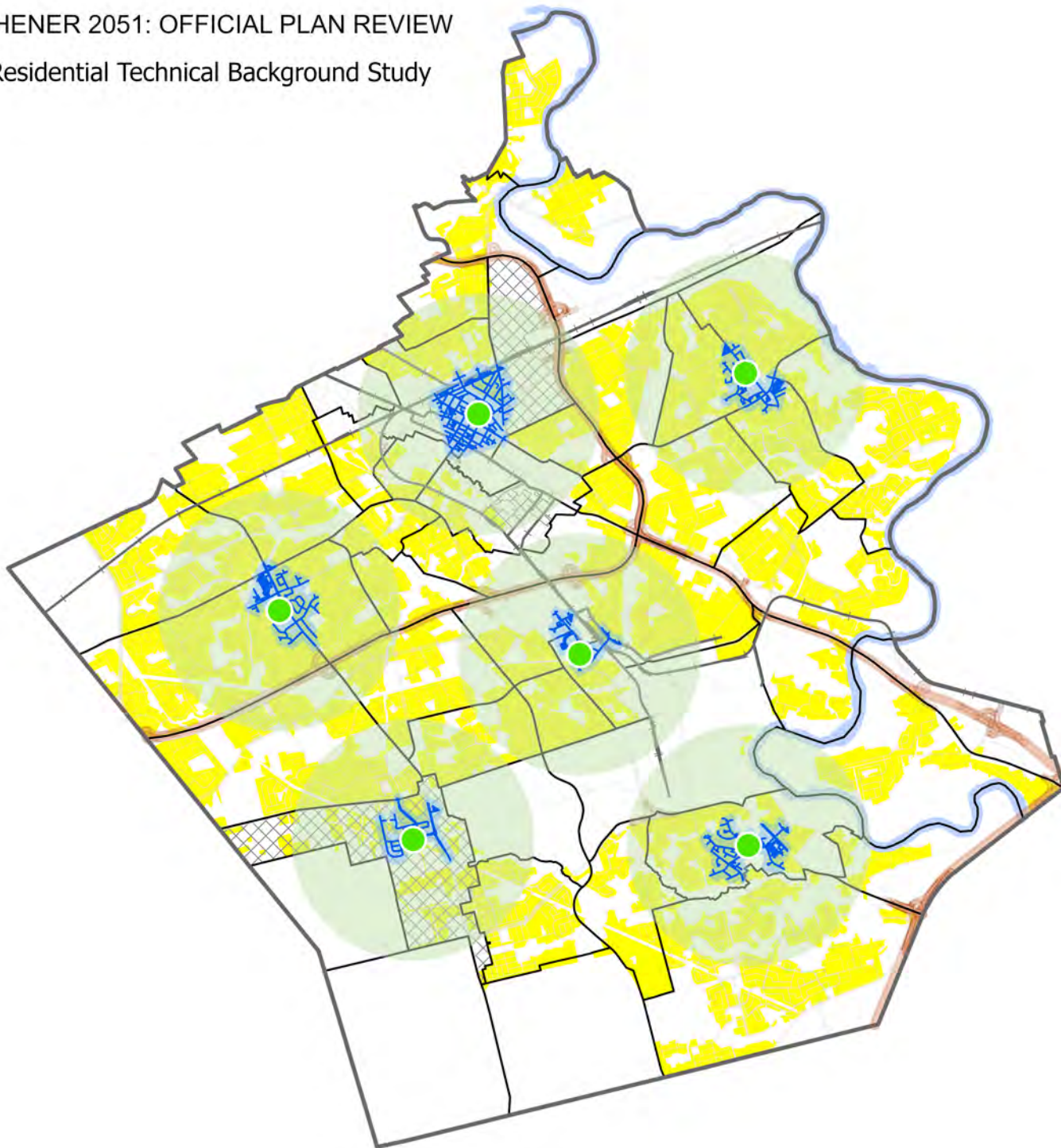
- Elementary Schools
- Planning Communities
- Residential Land Use
- ▨ Secondary Plan Area

- 800m Walkability to Elementary Schools
- Reachable Streets

1
Kilometers



KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW
Non-Residential Technical Background Study

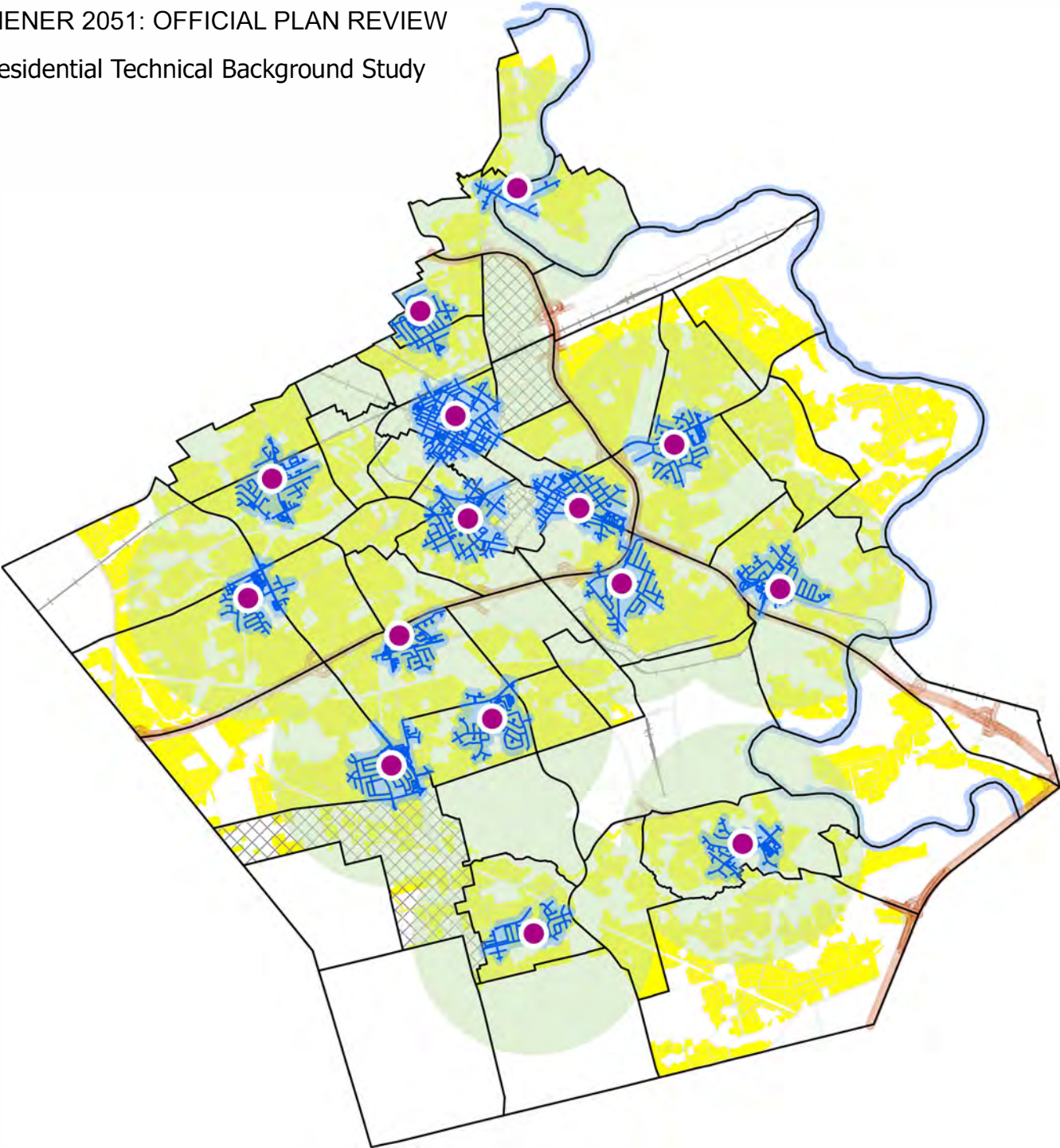


INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Libraries**

Legend

- Libraries
- Planning Communities
- Secondary Plan Area
- Residential Land Use
- 2.5km Distance to Libraries
- 800m Walkability to Libraries
- Reachable Streets



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Community Centres**



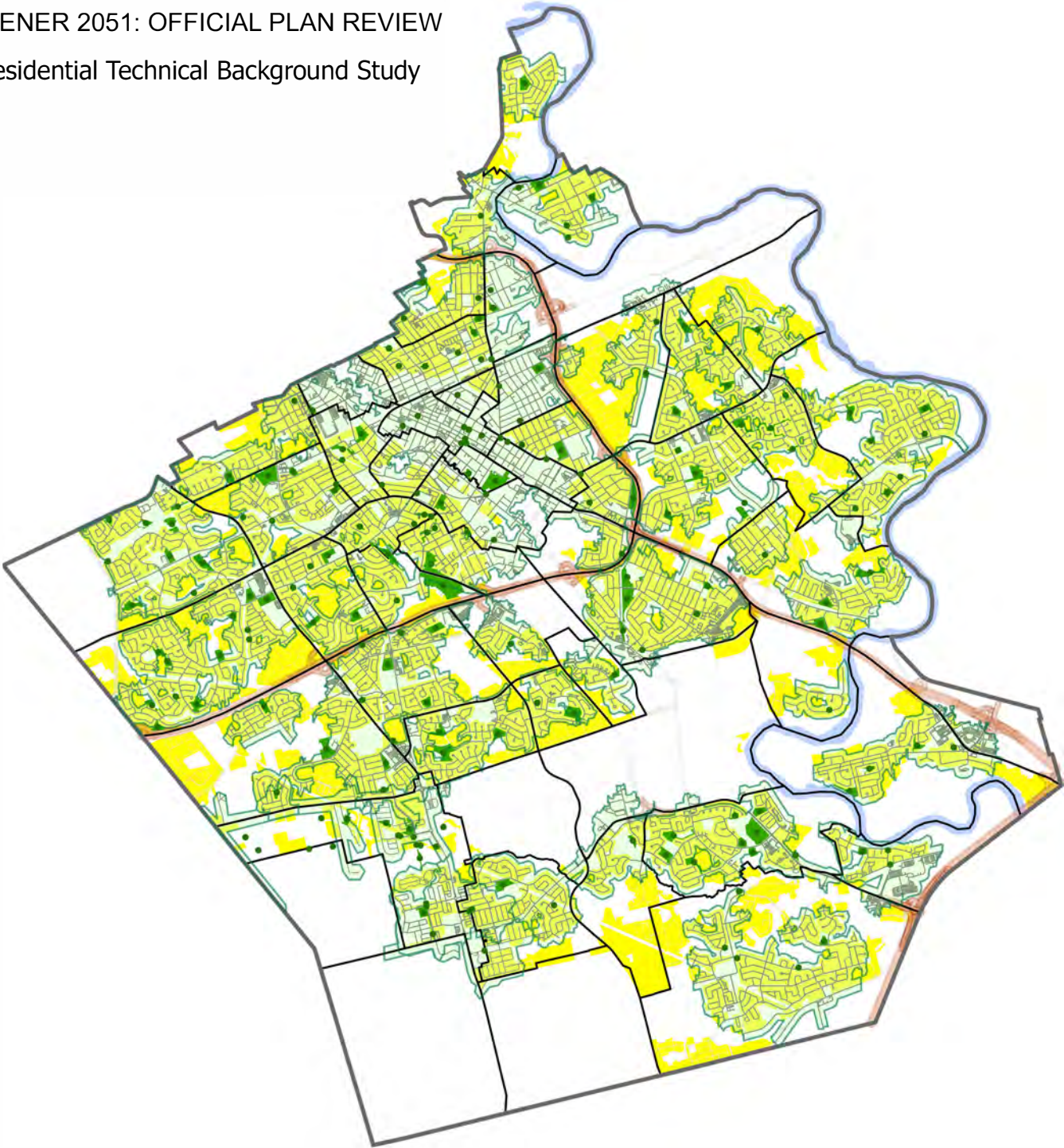
Legend

- Community Centres
- Planning Communities
- Residential Land Use
- Secondary Plan Area

1
Kilometers



- 2.5km Distance to
Community Centres
- 800m Walkability to
Community Centres
- Reachable Streets



INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

Legend

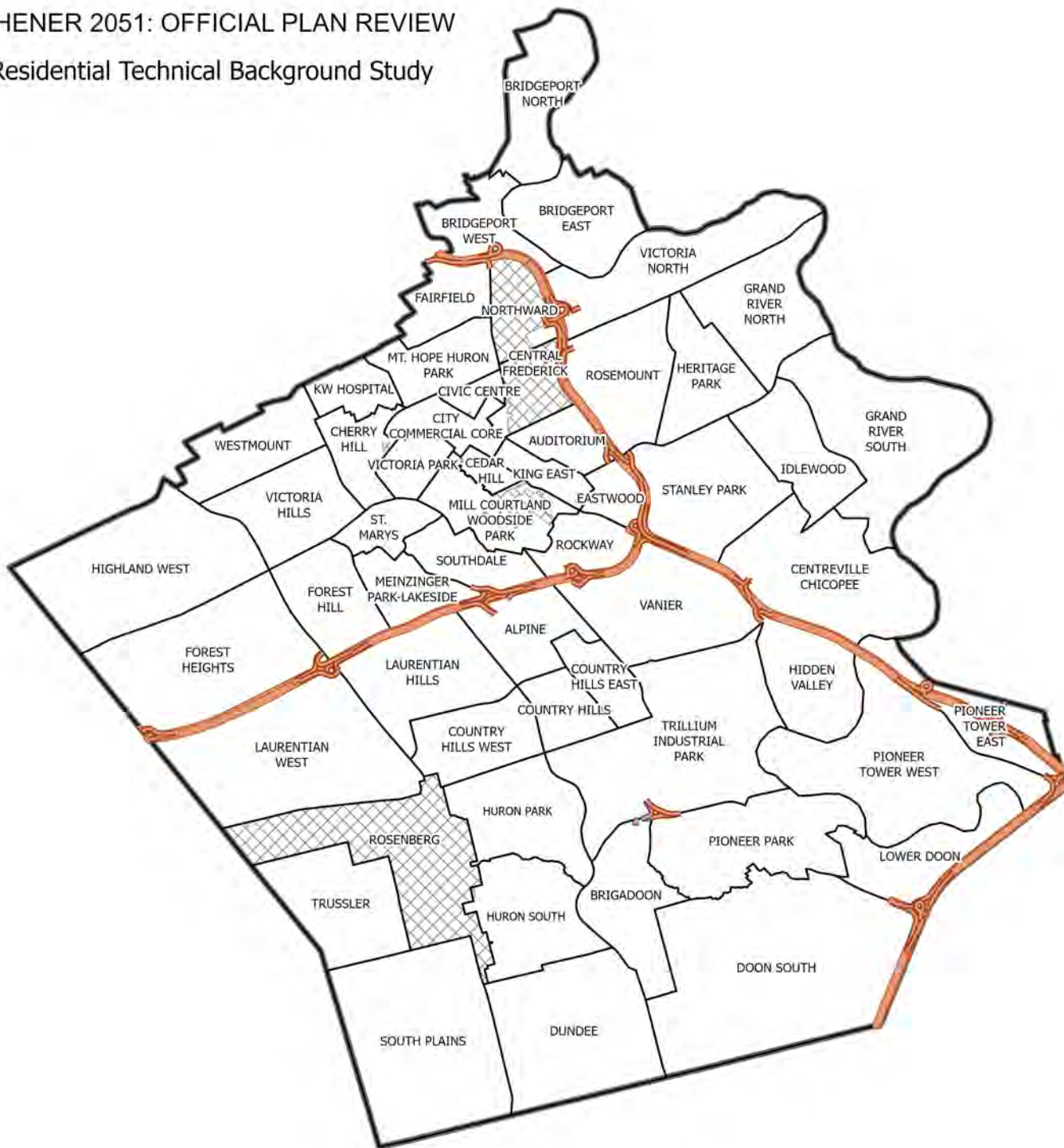
- Planning Communities
- Residential Land Use

- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

Appendix C: Walkability Analysis of Local Parks by Planning Community

KITCHENER 2051: OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

Non-Residential Technical Background Study

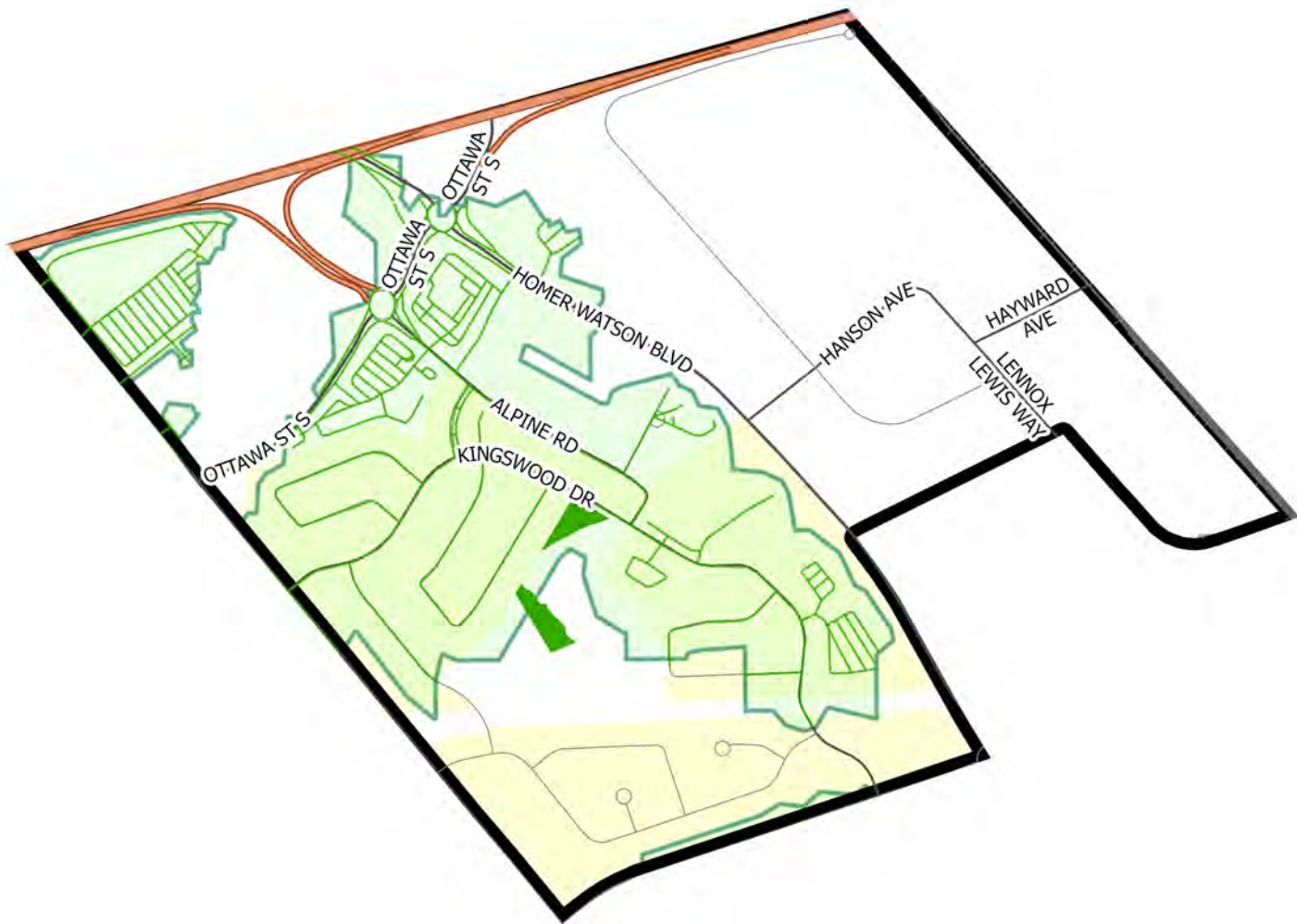


INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Planning Communities Key Map

Legend

- Planning Communities
- Secondary Plan Boundary



Planning Community: ALPINE

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

Legend

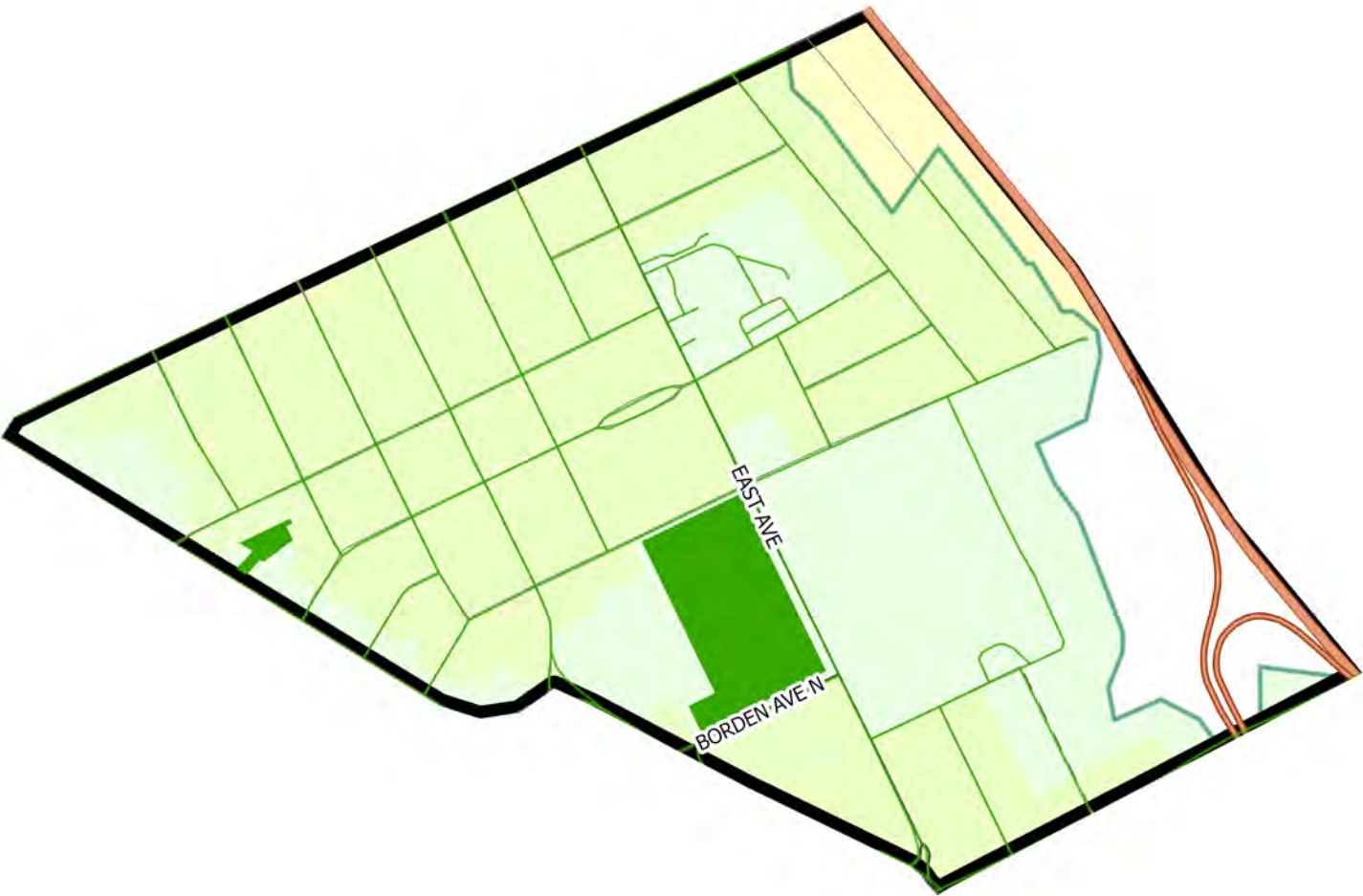
- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.15
 Kilometers





Planning Community: AUDITORIUM

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
 Kilometers





Planning Community: BRIDGEPORT EAST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.15
 Kilometers





Planning Community: BRIDGEPORT WEST BRIDGEPORT NORTH

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.15
Kilometers





Planning Community: BRIDGEPORT WEST BRIDGEPORT NORTH NORTHWARD

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

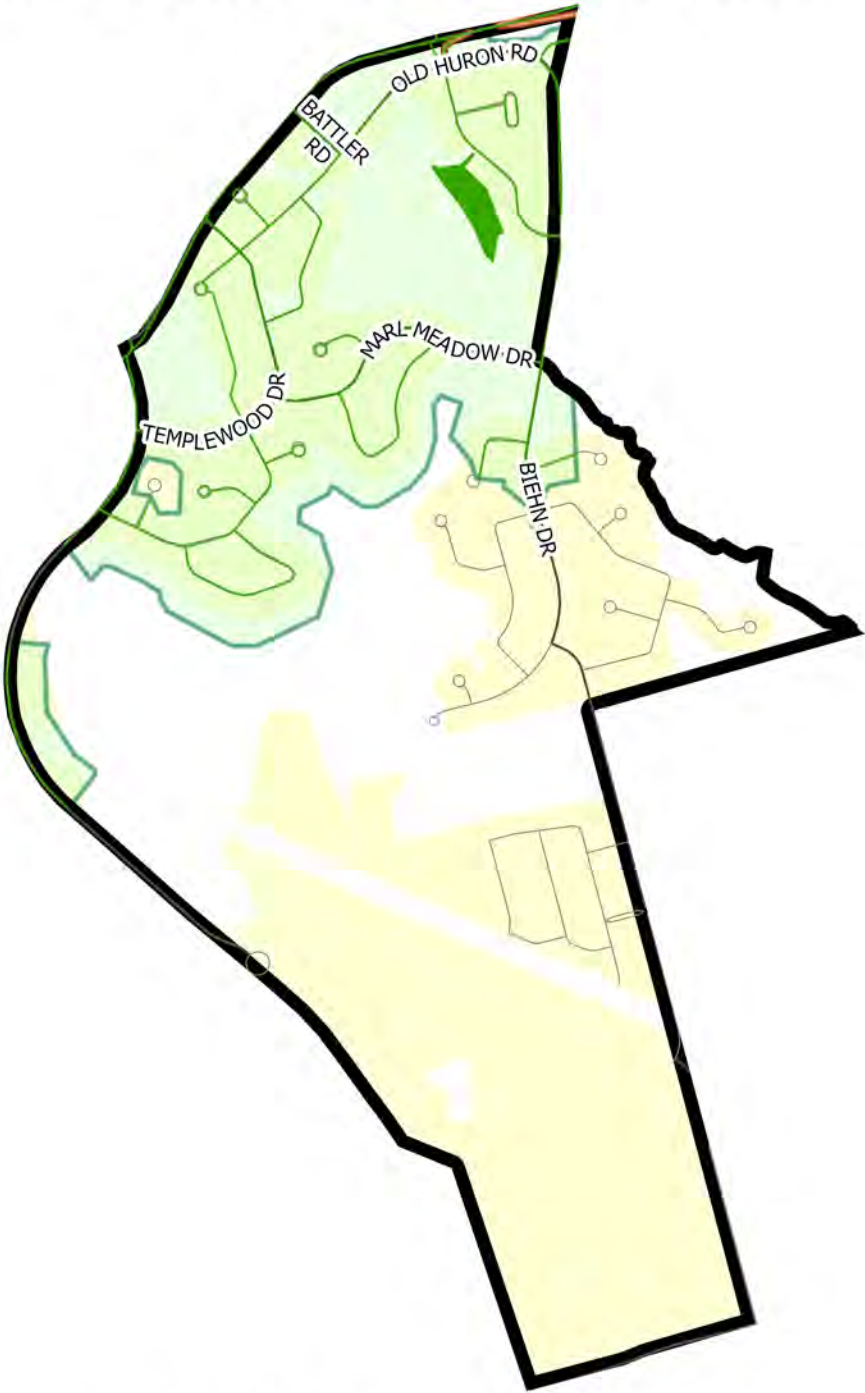


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
Kilometers





Planning Community: **BRIGADOON**

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

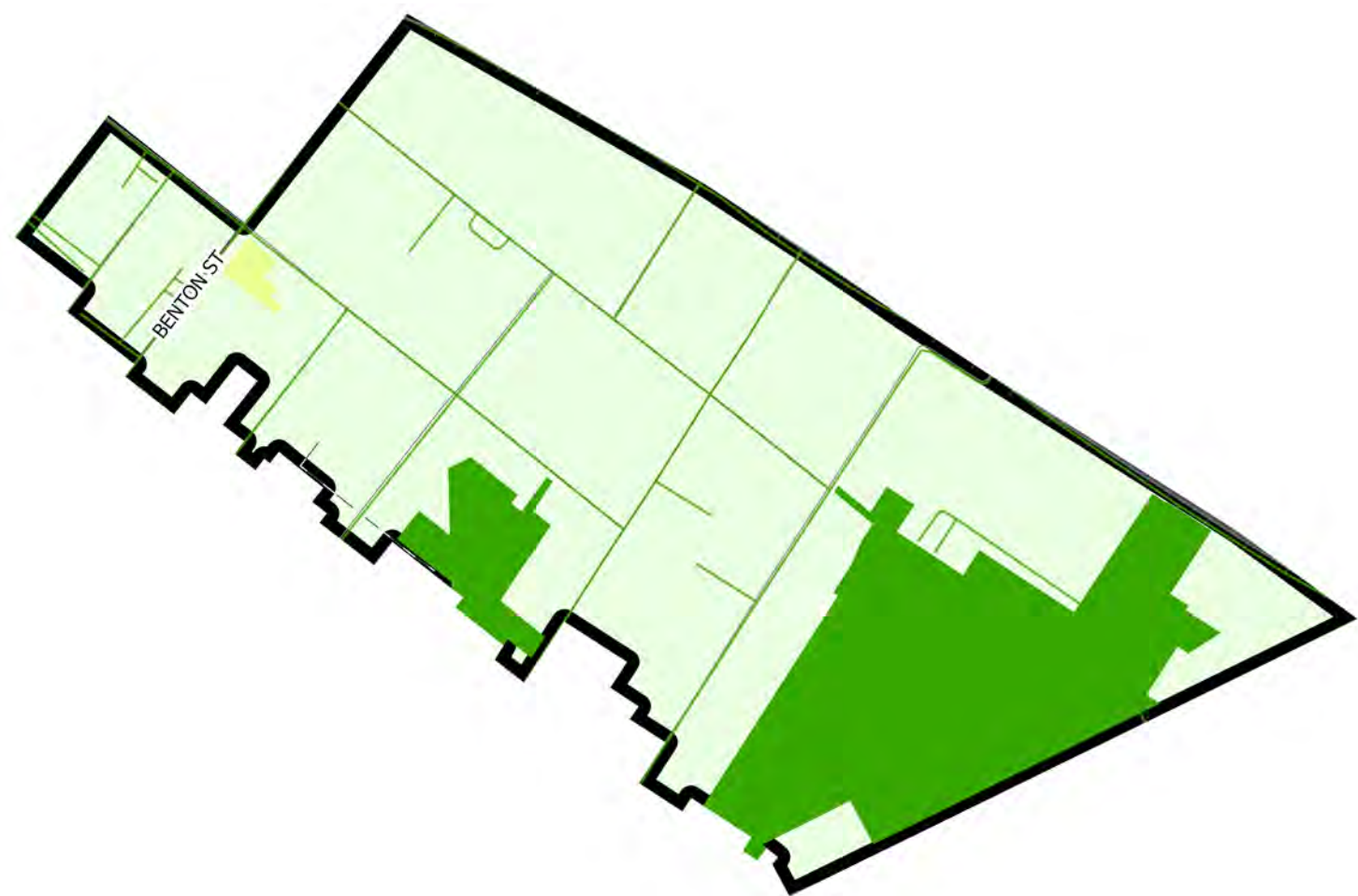


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
Kilometers





Planning Community: CEDAR HILL

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.08
 Kilometers





Planning Community: CENTRAL FREDERICK NORTHWARD

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

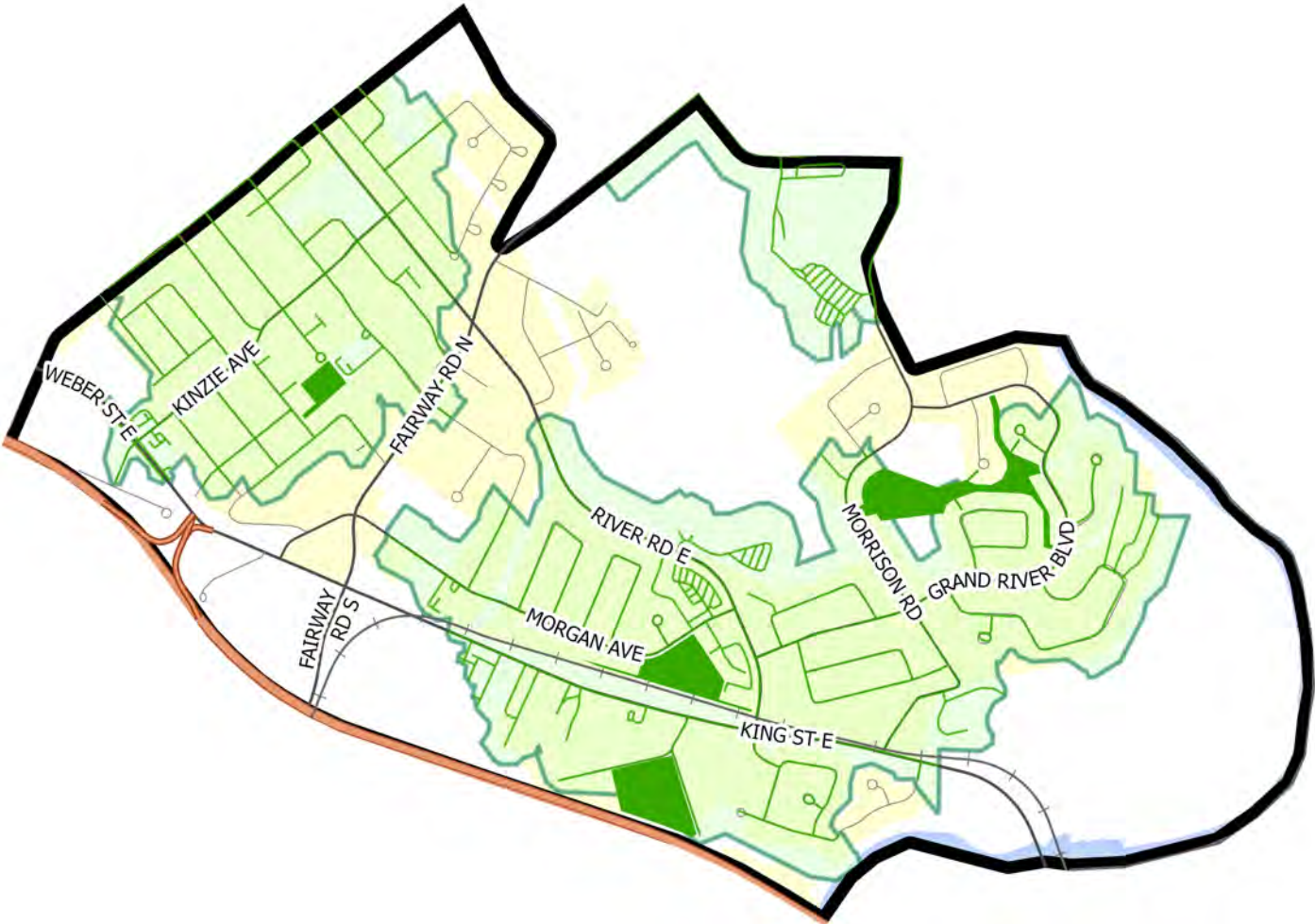


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: CENTREVILLE CHICOPEE

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
Kilometers





Planning Community: CHERRY HILL

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

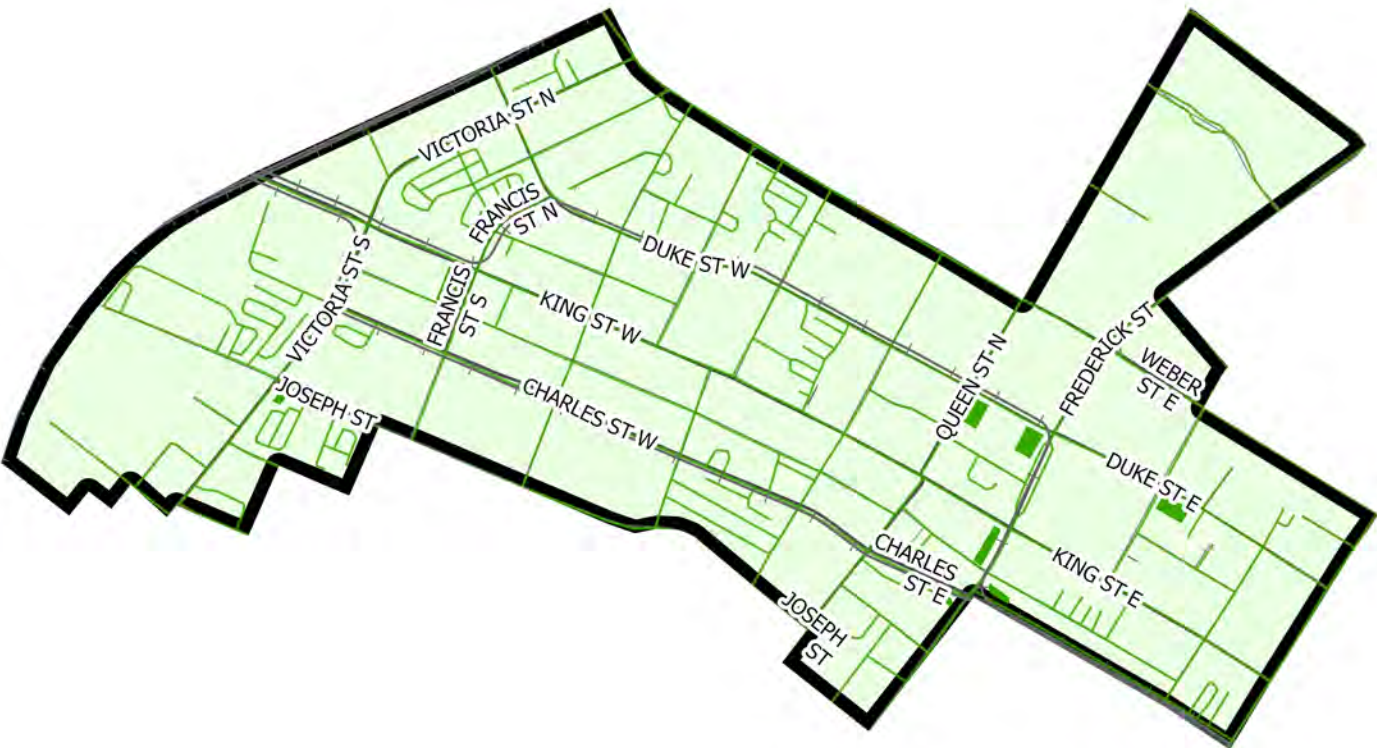


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: CITY COMMERCIAL CORE

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

Legend

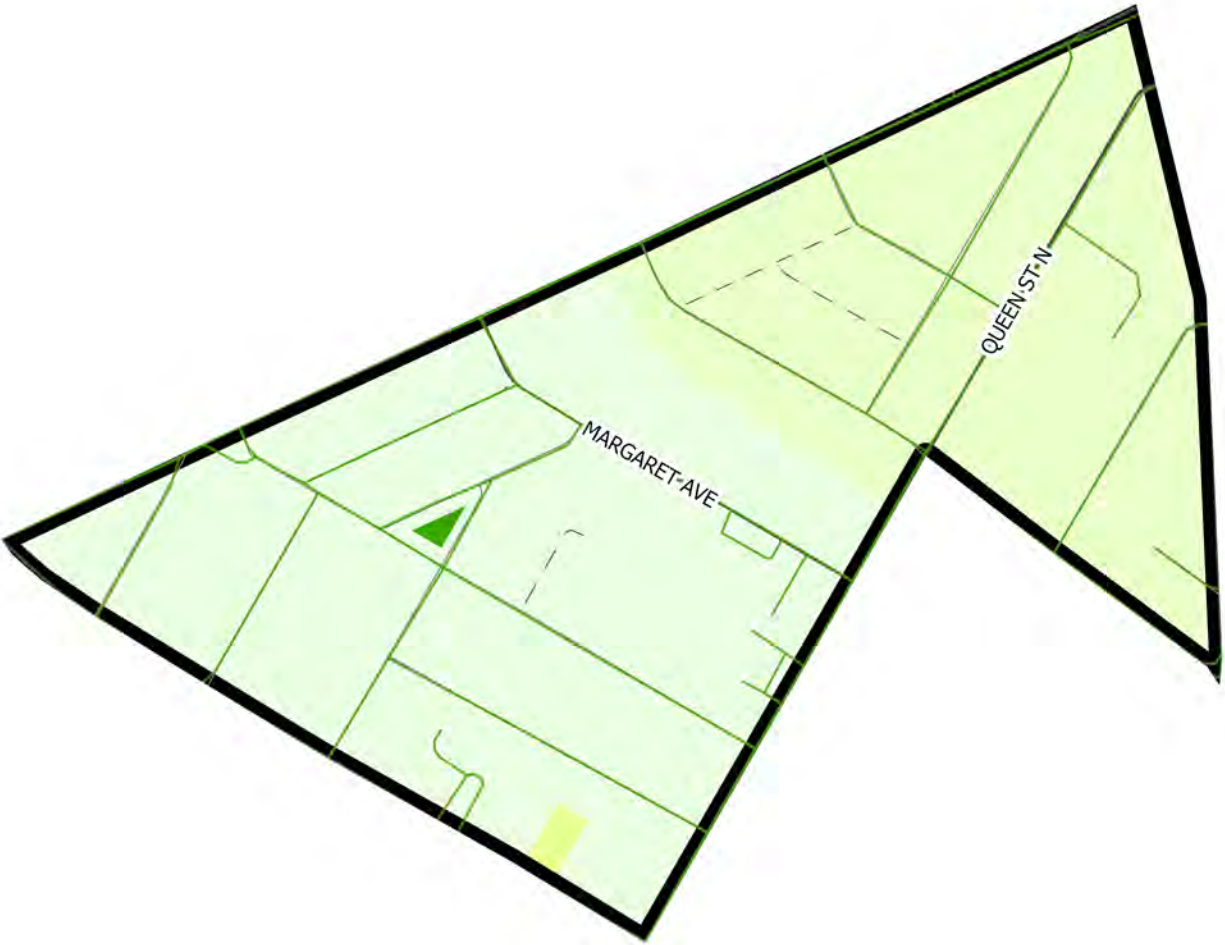
- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: CIVIC CENTRE

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

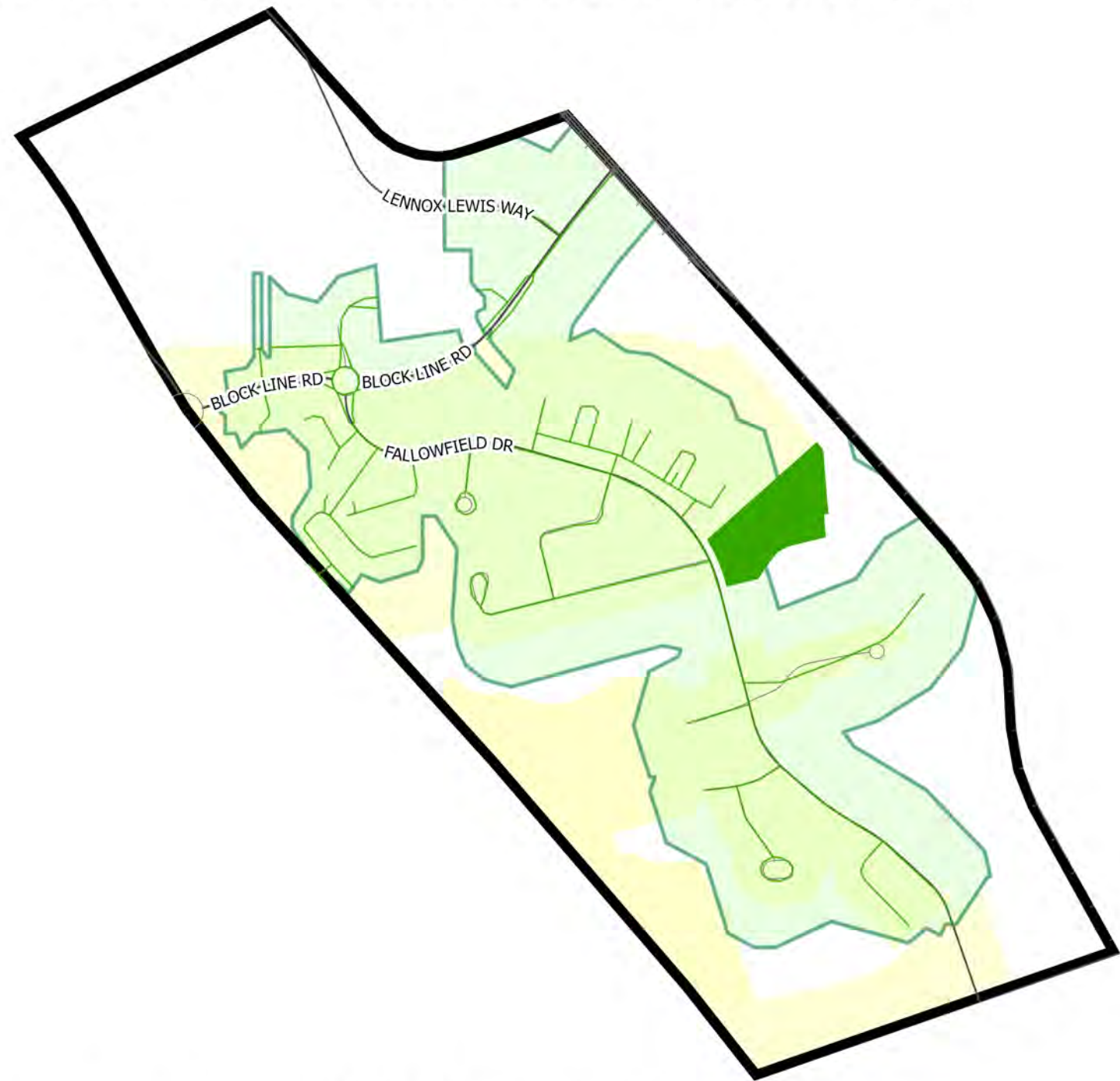


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.08
 Kilometers





Planning Community: COUNTRY HILLS EAST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



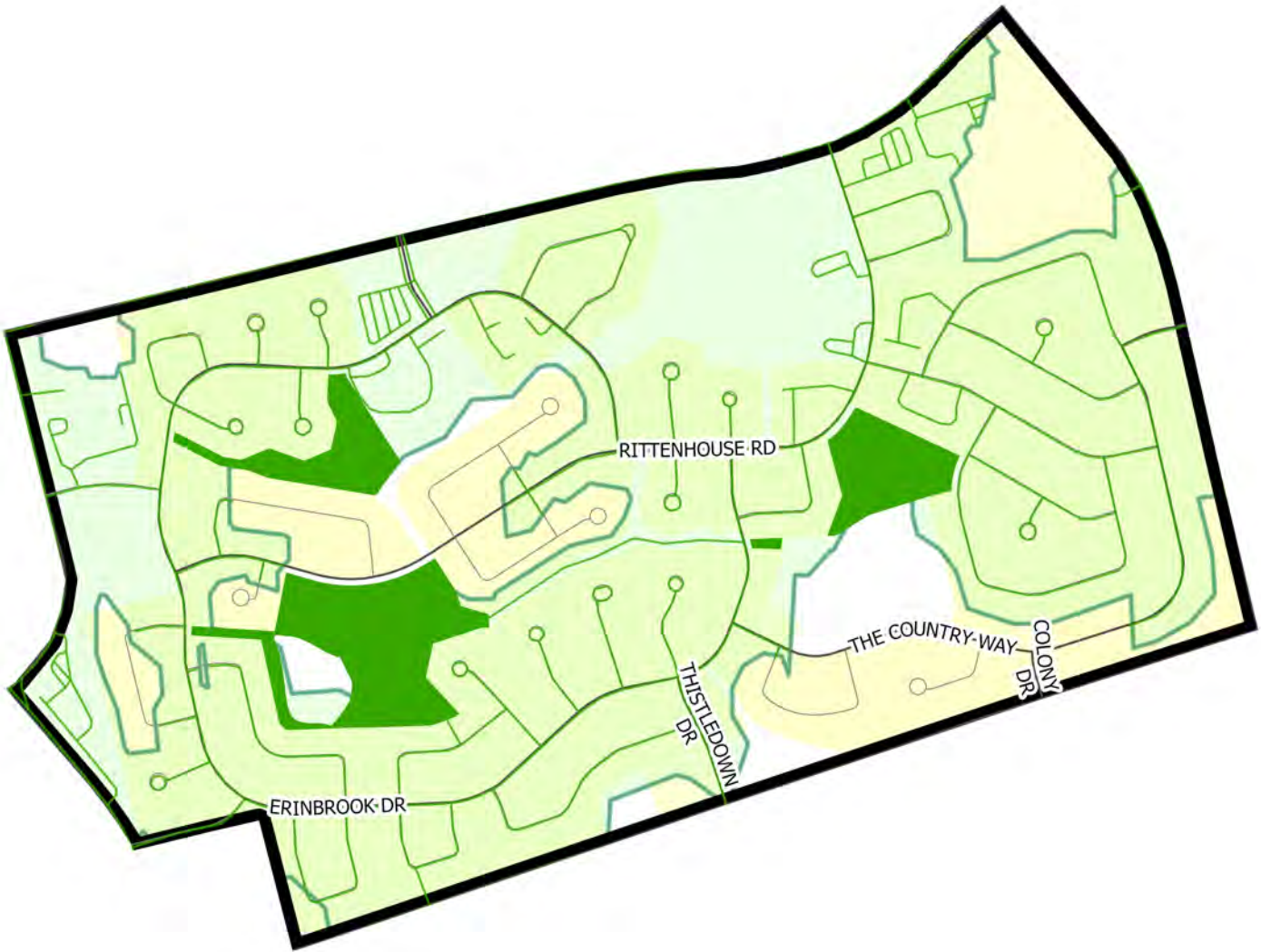
Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
 Kilometers





Planning Community: COUNTRY HILLS WEST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: COUNTRY HILLS

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

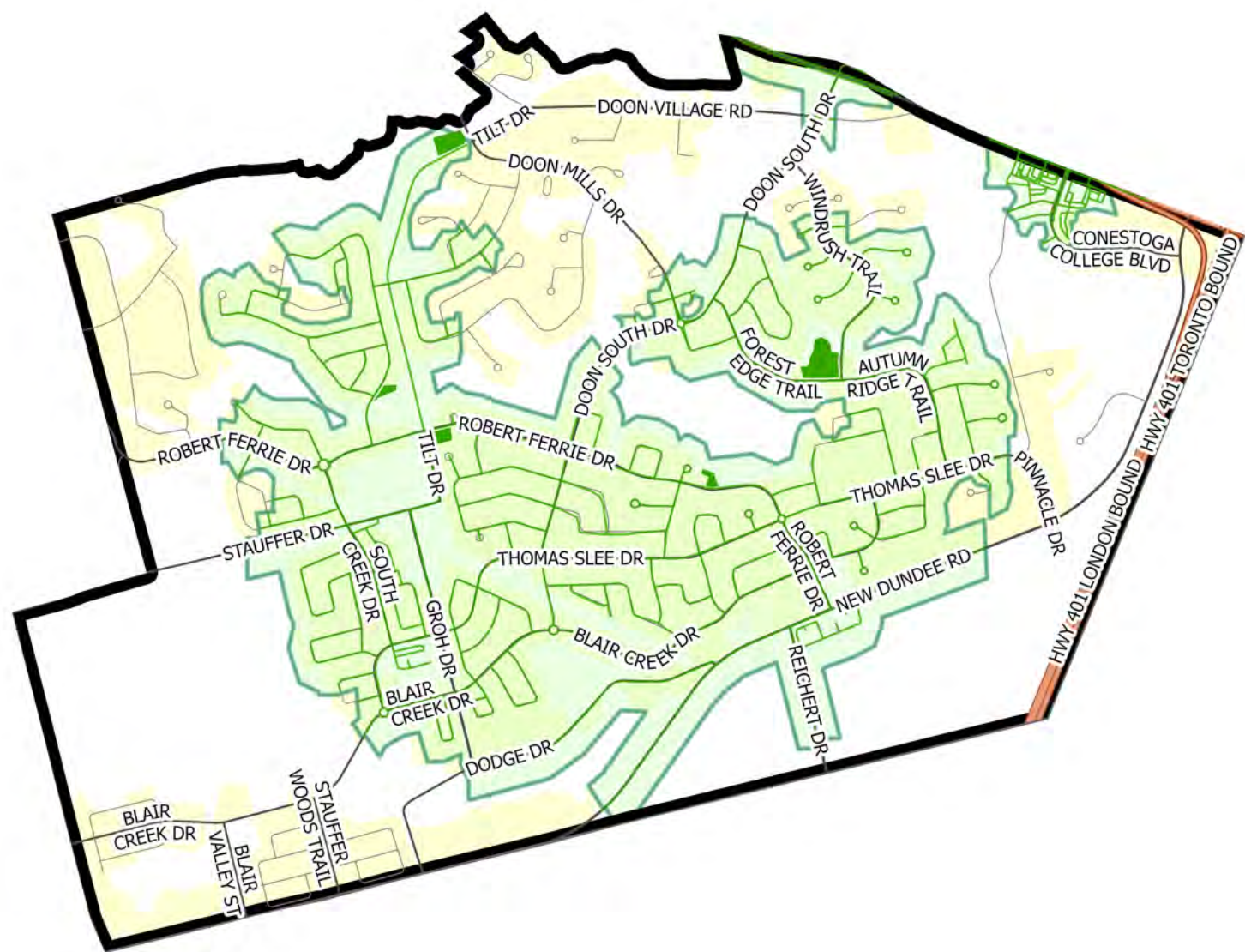


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
 Kilometers





Planning Community: DOON SOUTH

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.25
Kilometers





Planning Community: EASTWOOD

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

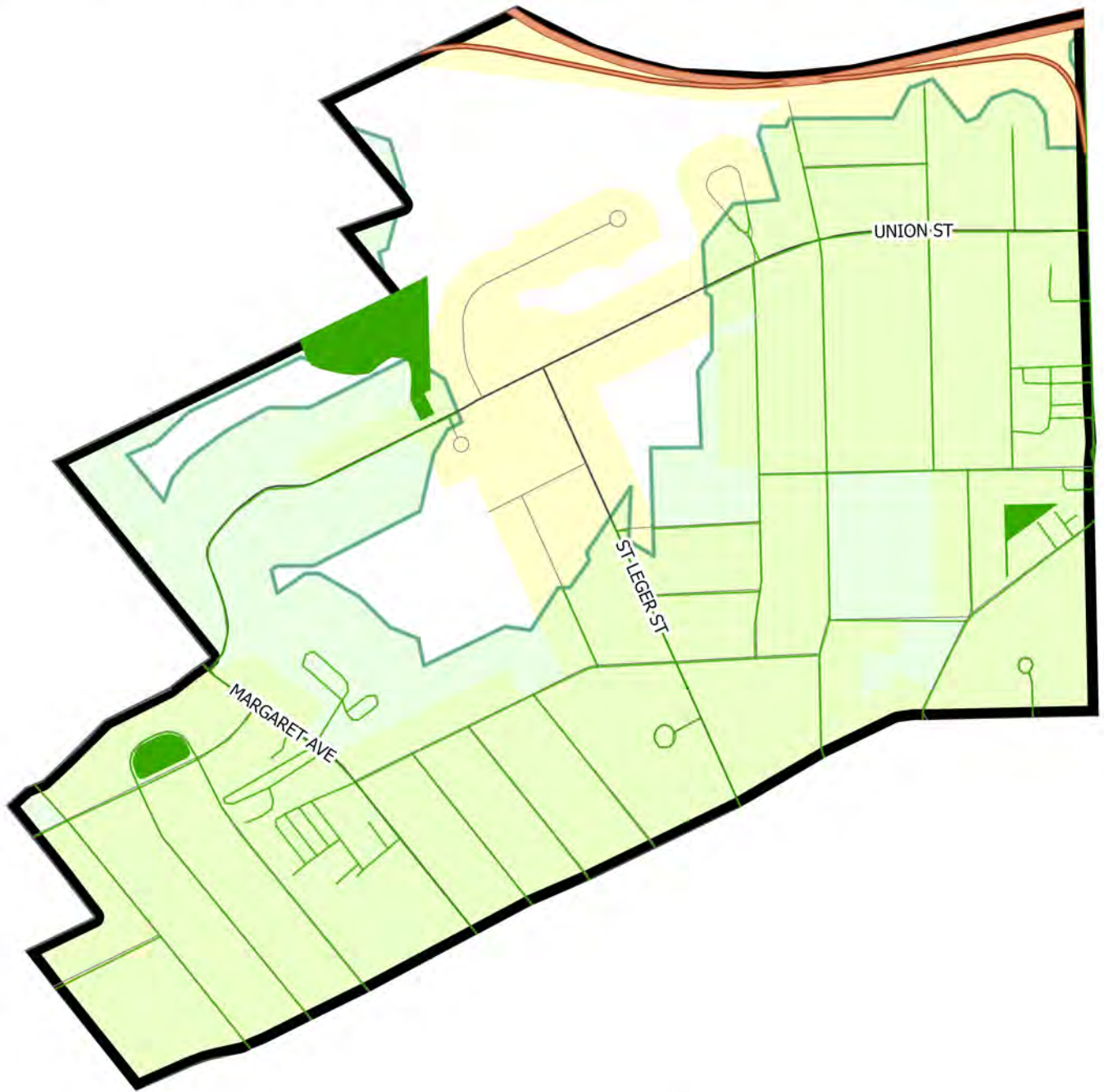


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.08
Kilometers





Planning Community: FAIRFIELD NORTHWARD

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
 Kilometers





Planning Community: FOREST HEIGHTS

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.25
Kilometers





Planning Community: FOREST HILL

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

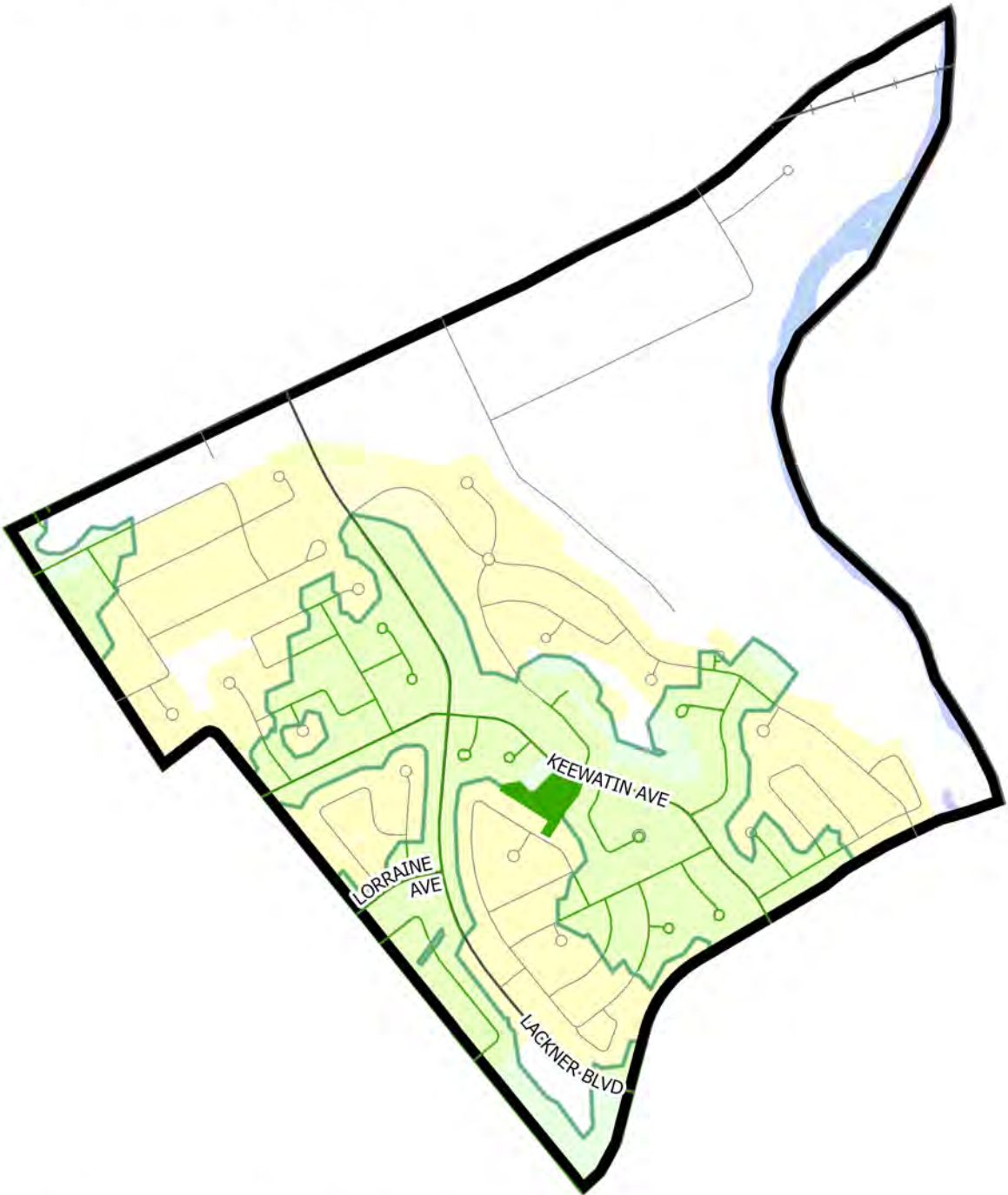


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: GRAND RIVER NORTH

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
Kilometers





Planning Community: GRAND RIVER SOUTH

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

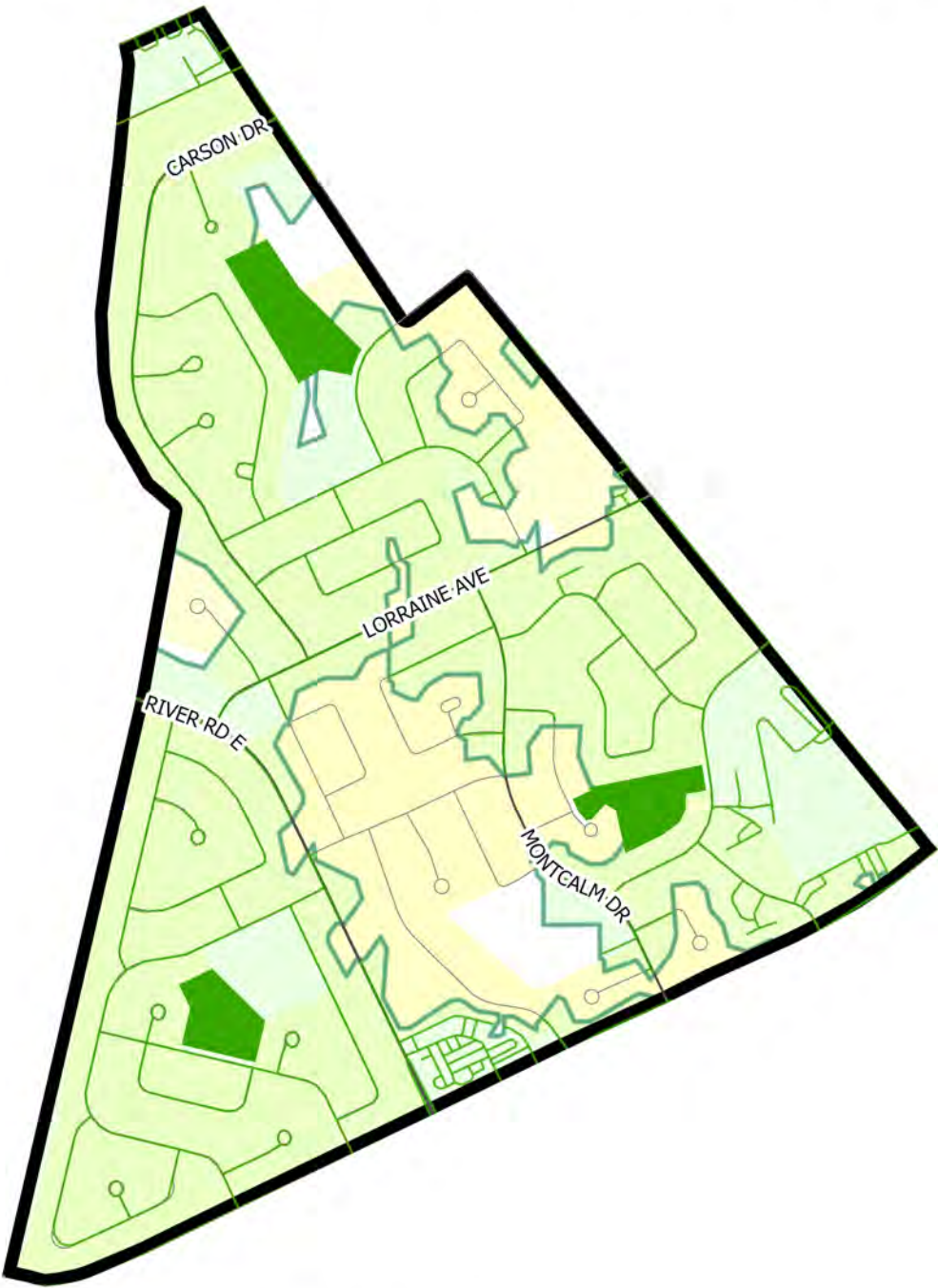


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
Kilometers





Planning Community: HERITAGE PARK

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

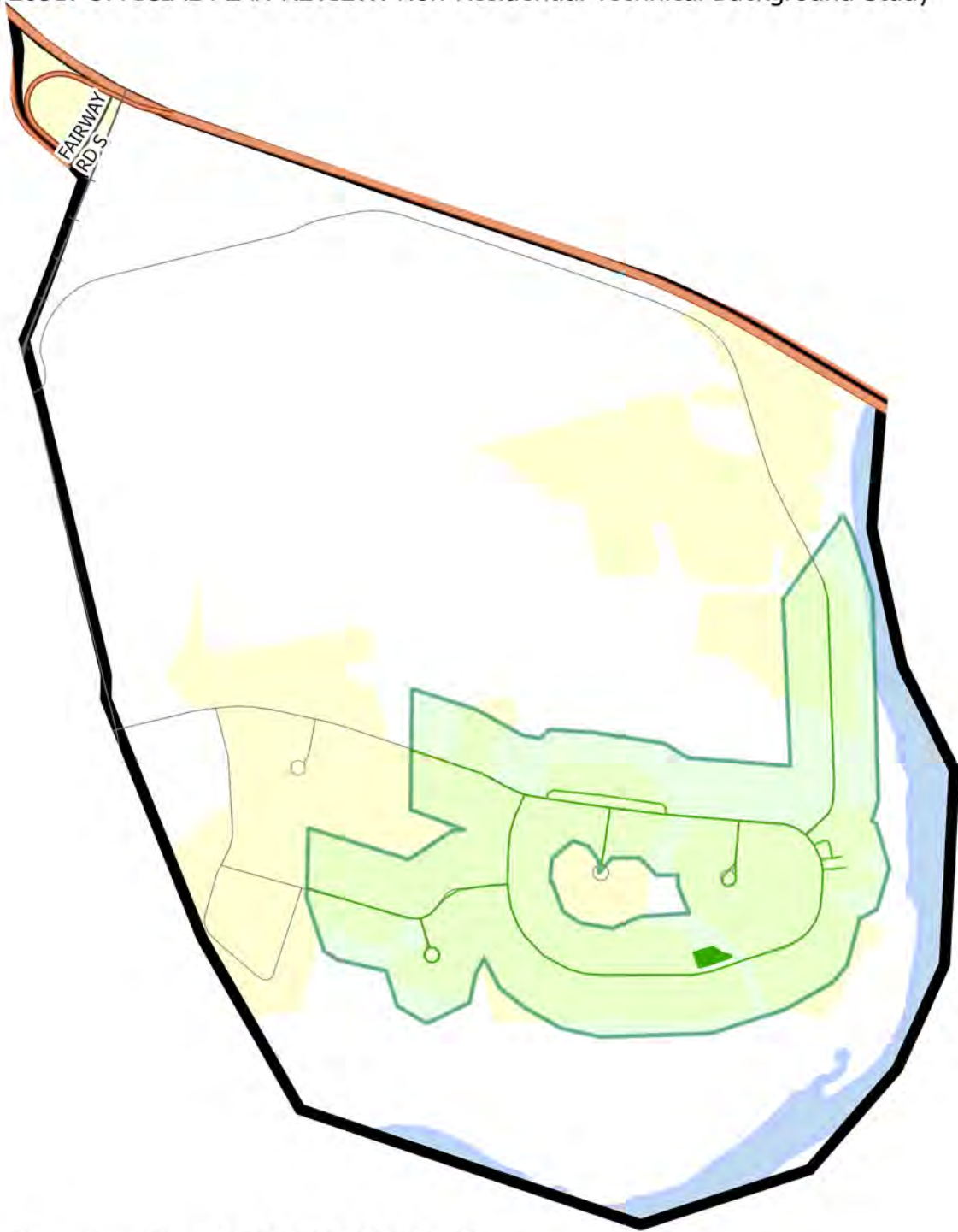
Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.15
Kilometers





Planning Community: HIDDEN VALLEY

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: HIGHLAND WEST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

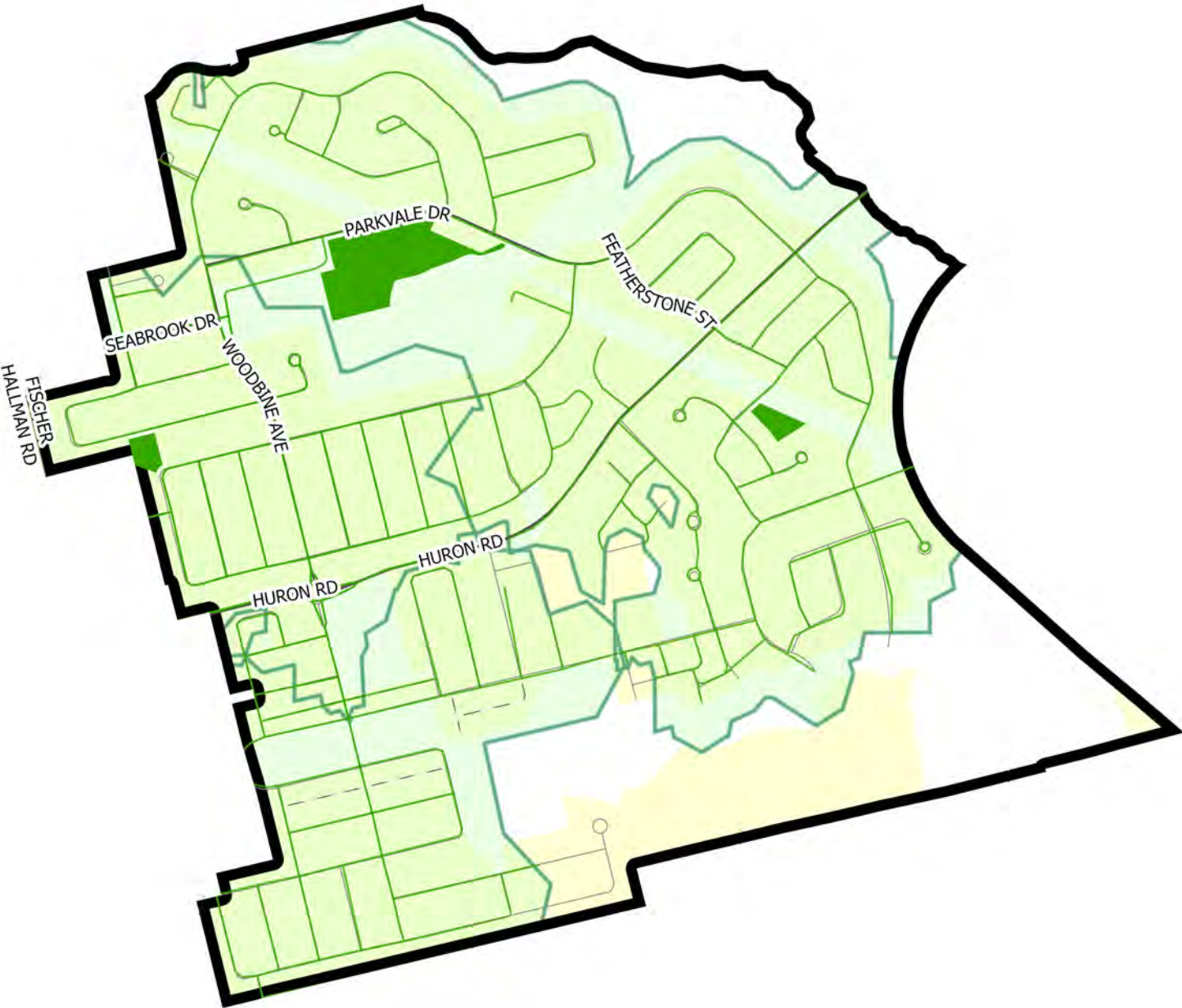


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.25 Kilometers





Planning Community: HURON SOUTH

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

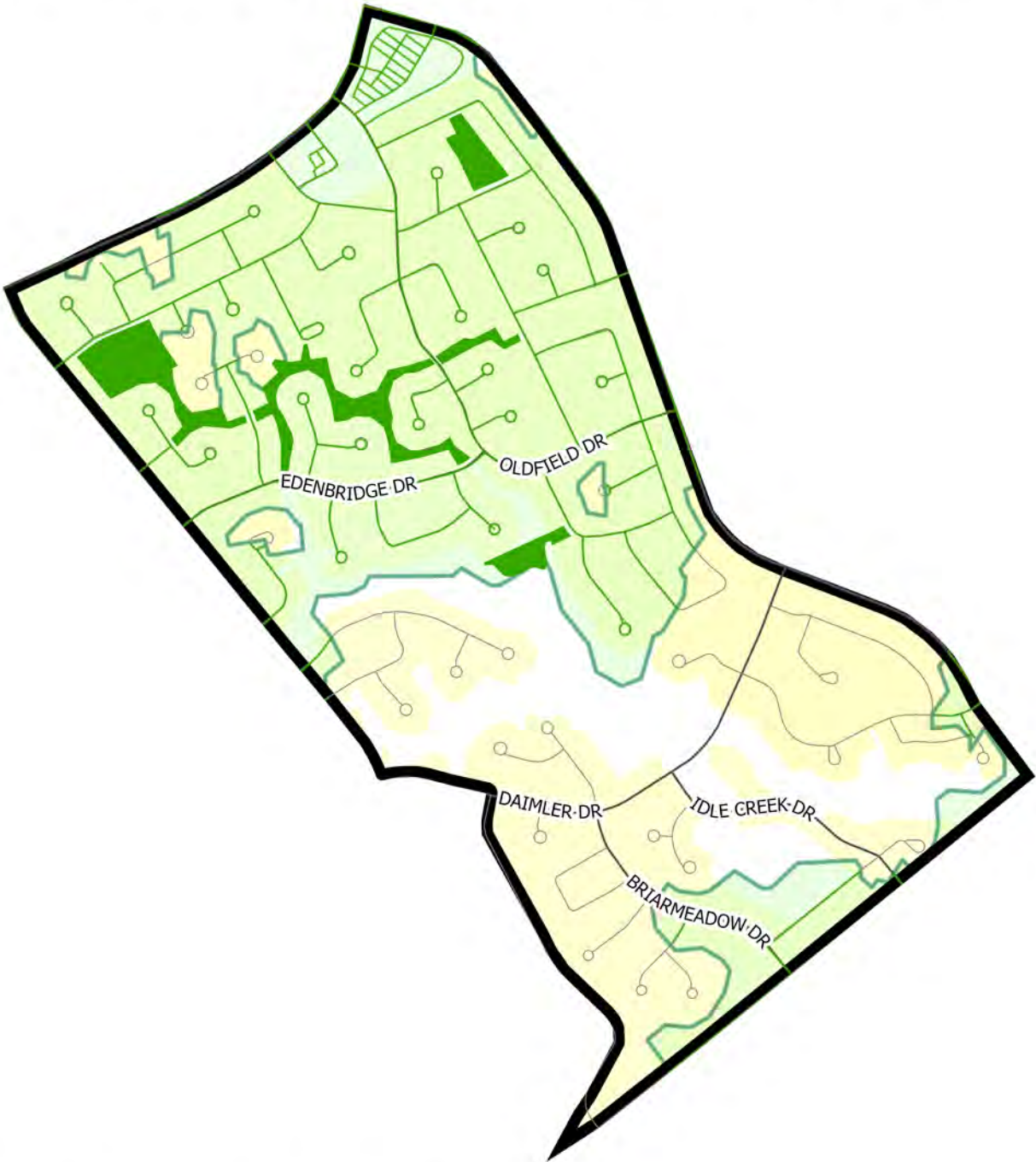


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
Kilometers










Planning Community: IDLEWOOD

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

Legend

-  Planning Community
-  Residential Land Use
-  Local Parks

-  800m Walkability to Local Parks
-  Reachable Streets



0.15
 Kilometers





Planning Community: KING EAST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

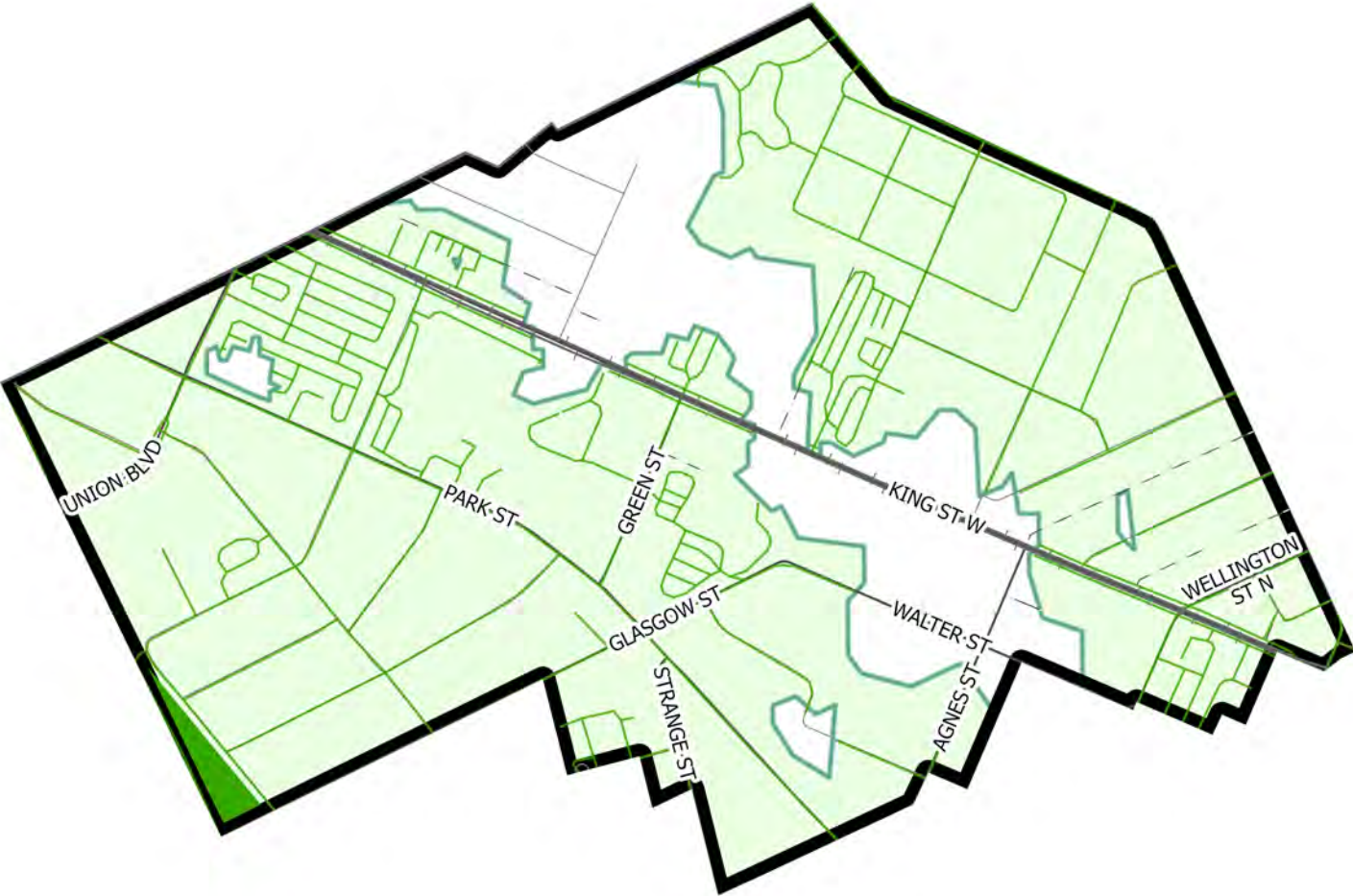


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
 Kilometers





Planning Community: KW HOSPITAL

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

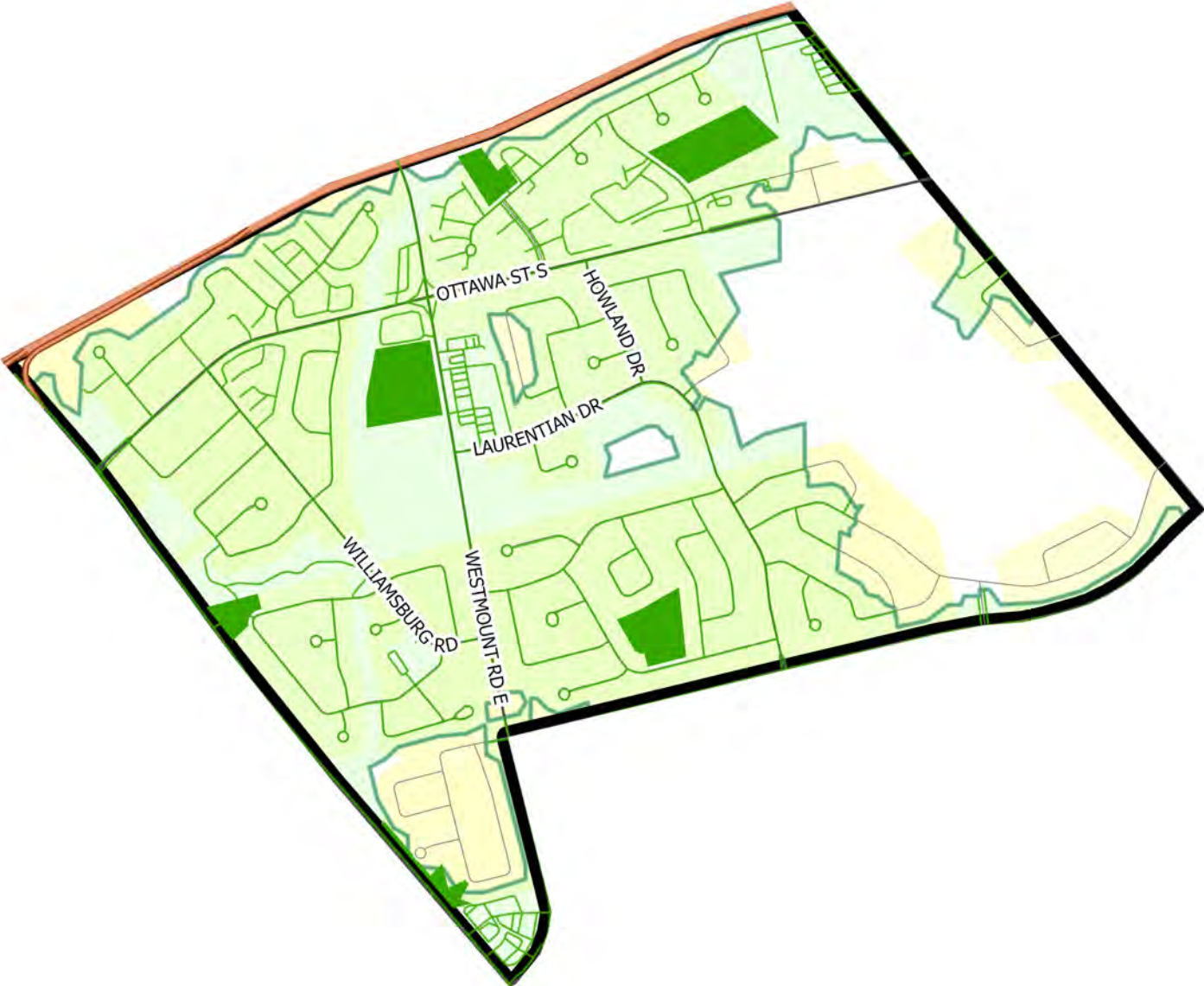
Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.1
 Kilometers





Planning Community: LAURENTIAN HILLS

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

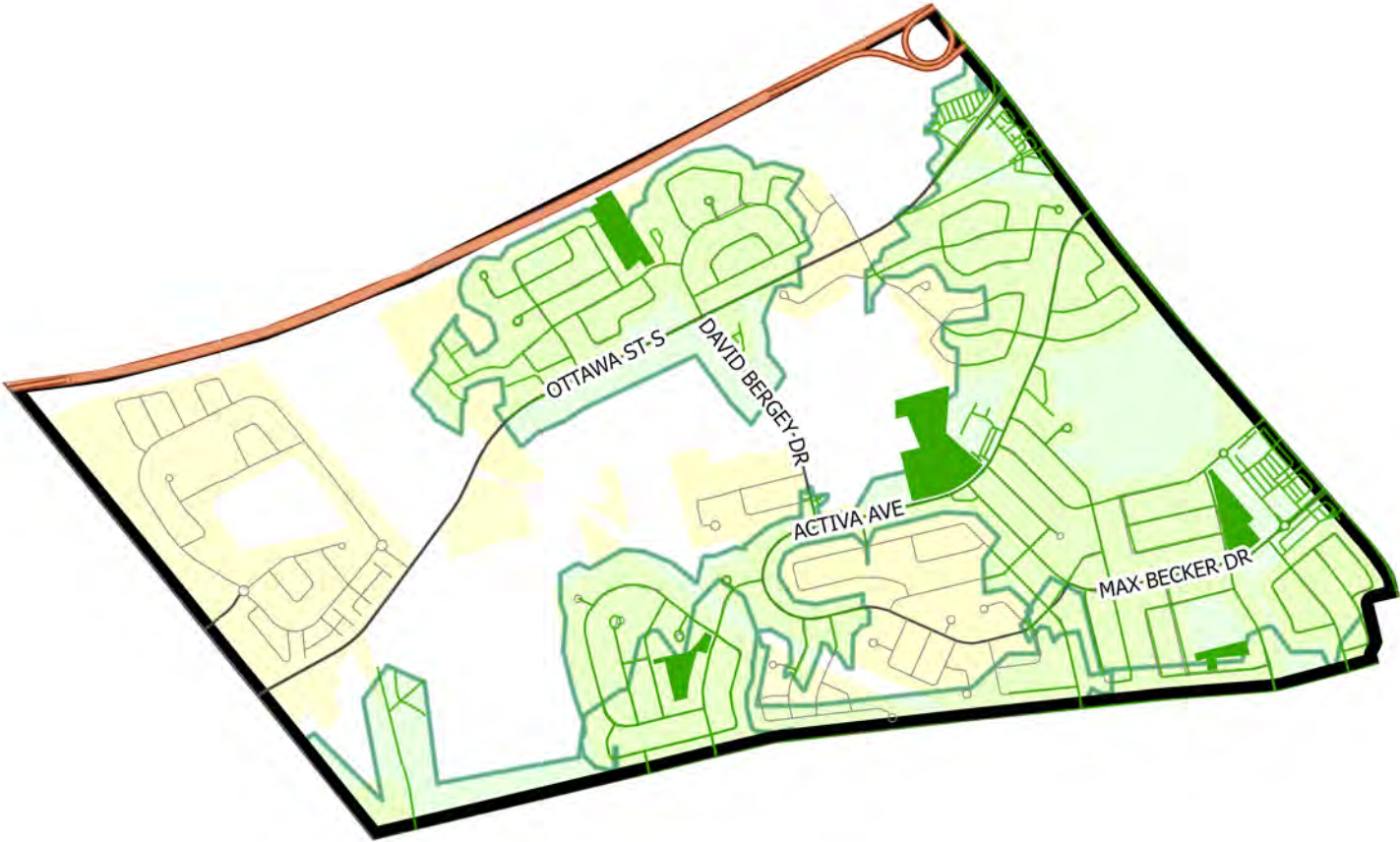


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
Kilometers





Planning Community: LAURENTIAN WEST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.25
Kilometers





Planning Community: LOWER DOON

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
 Kilometers





Planning Community: MEINZINGER PARK-LAKESIDE

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

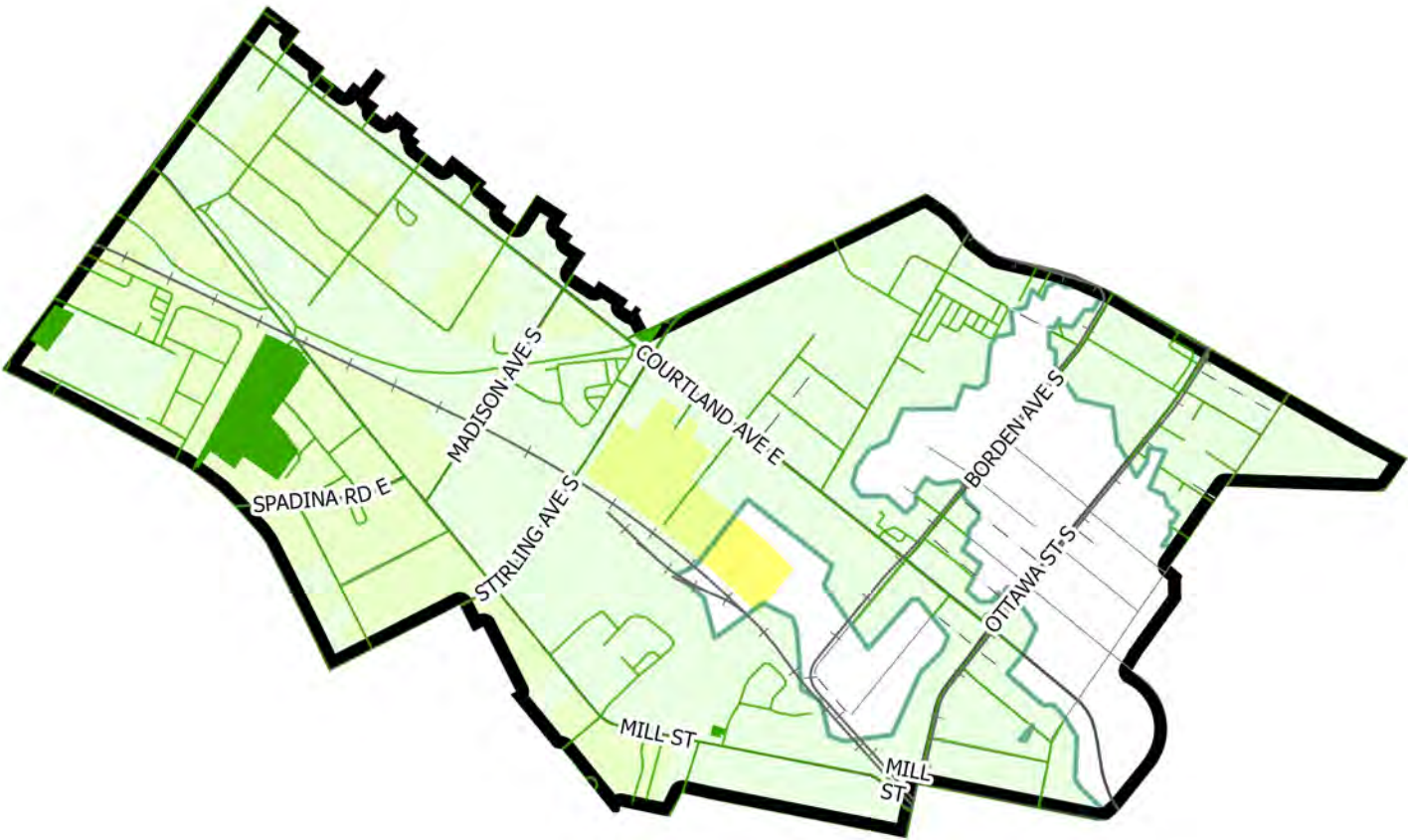


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: MILL COURTLAND WOODSIDE PARK

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
Kilometers





Planning Community: MT. HOPE HURON PARK NORTHWARD

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: CENTRAL FREDERICK VICTORIA NORTH BRIDGEPORT

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: PIONEER PARK

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

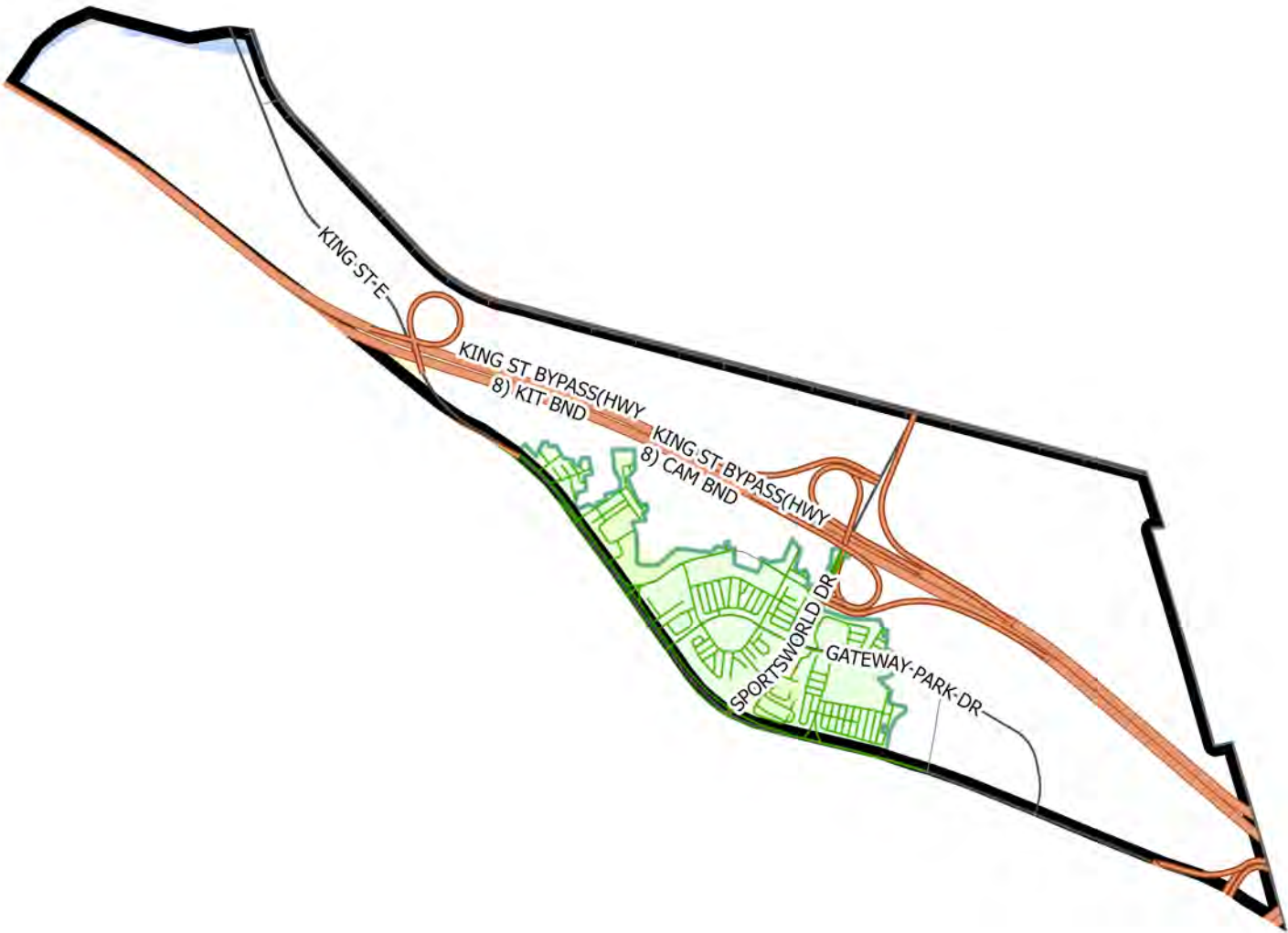
**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets





Planning Community: PIONEER TOWER EAST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets





Planning Community: PIONEER TOWER WEST

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

Legend

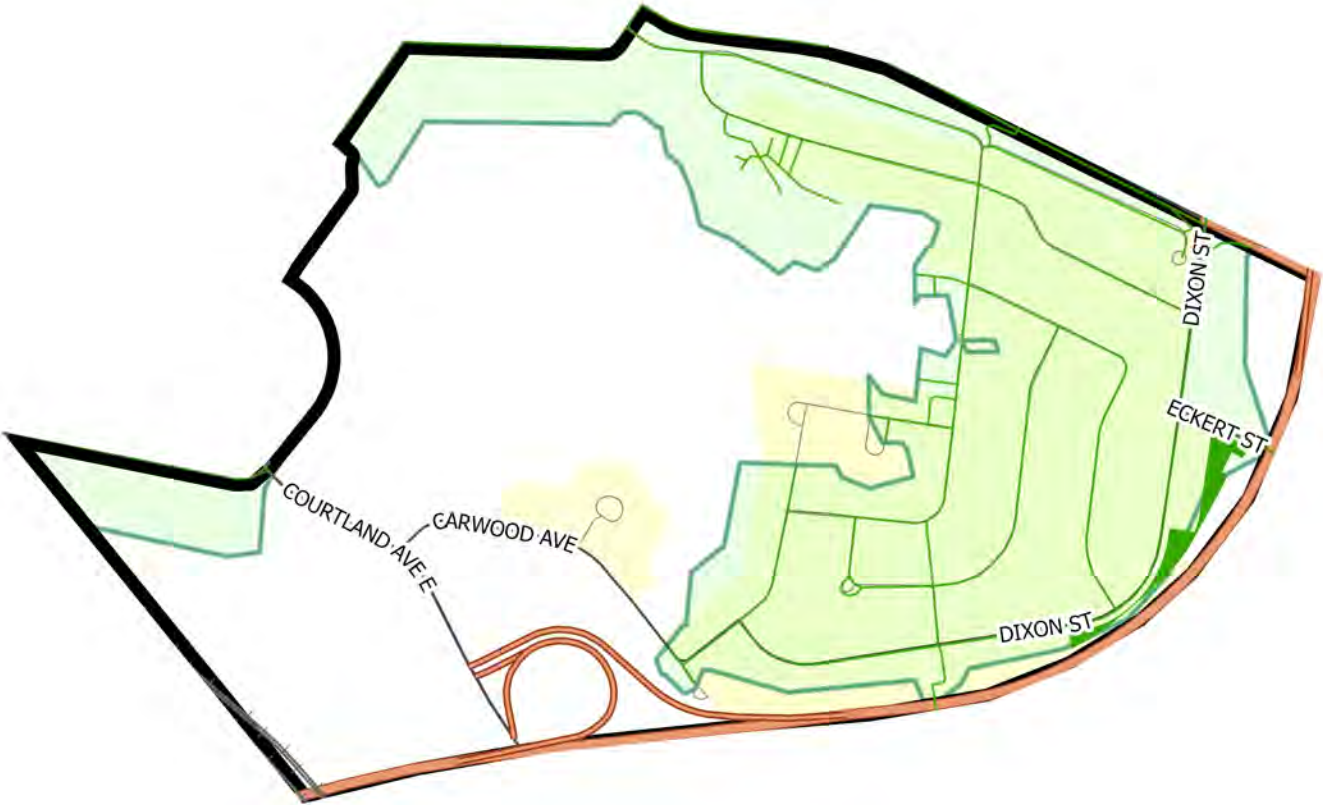
- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.3
 Kilometers





Planning Community: ROCKWAY

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



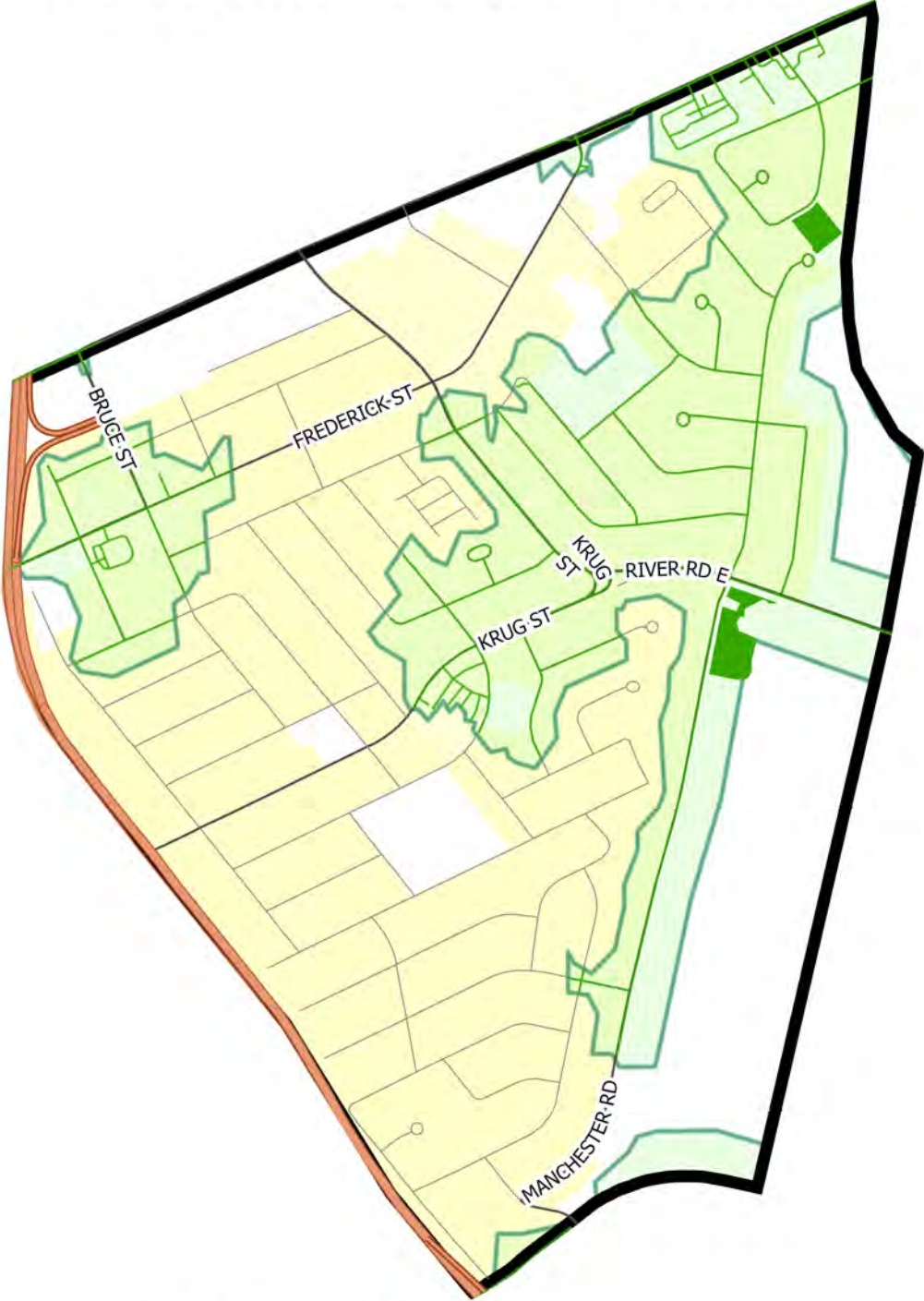
Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: ROSEMOUNT

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability:
Local Parks

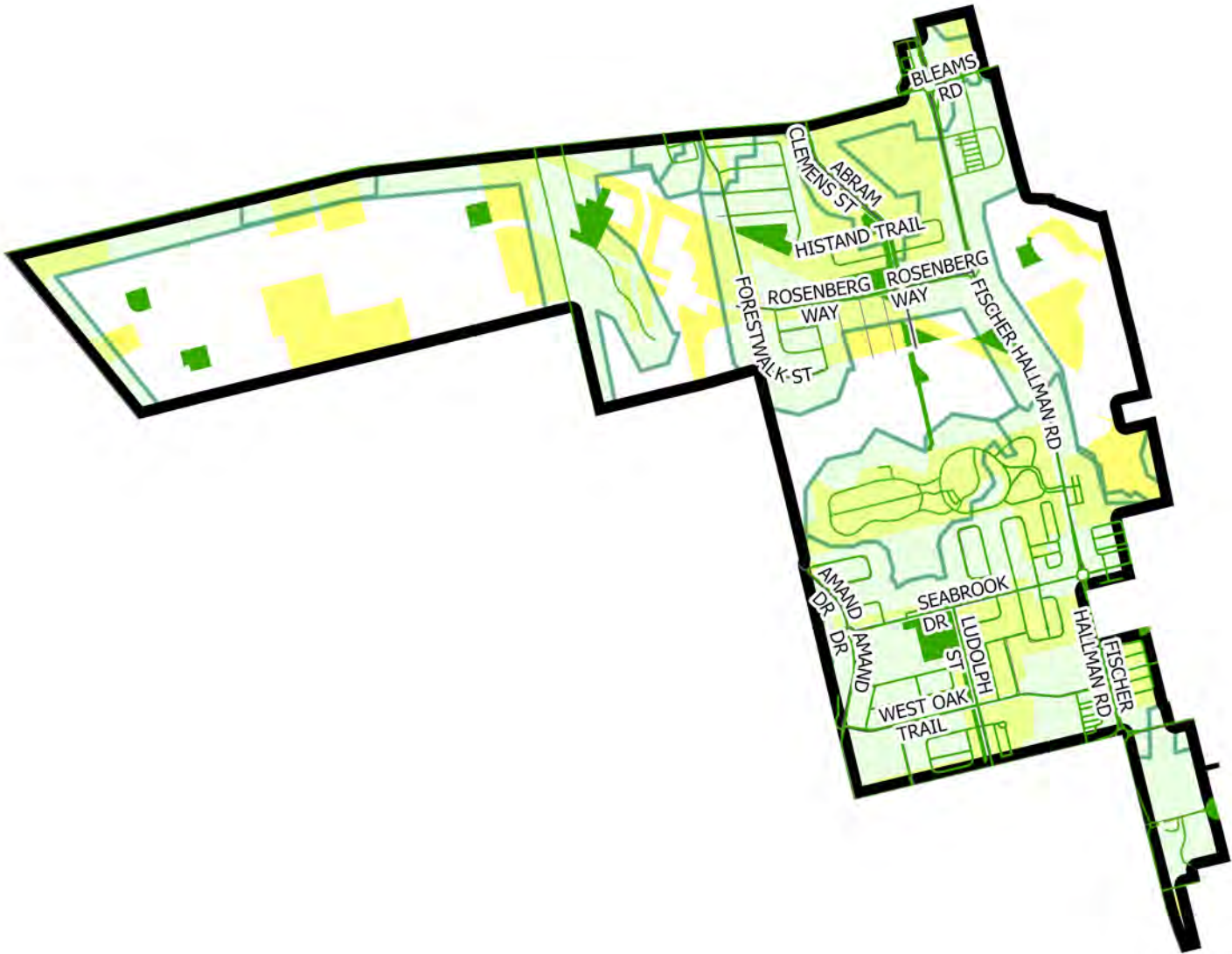


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
Kilometers





Planning Community: ROSENBERG

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.25
Kilometers





Planning Community: SOUTHDALE

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

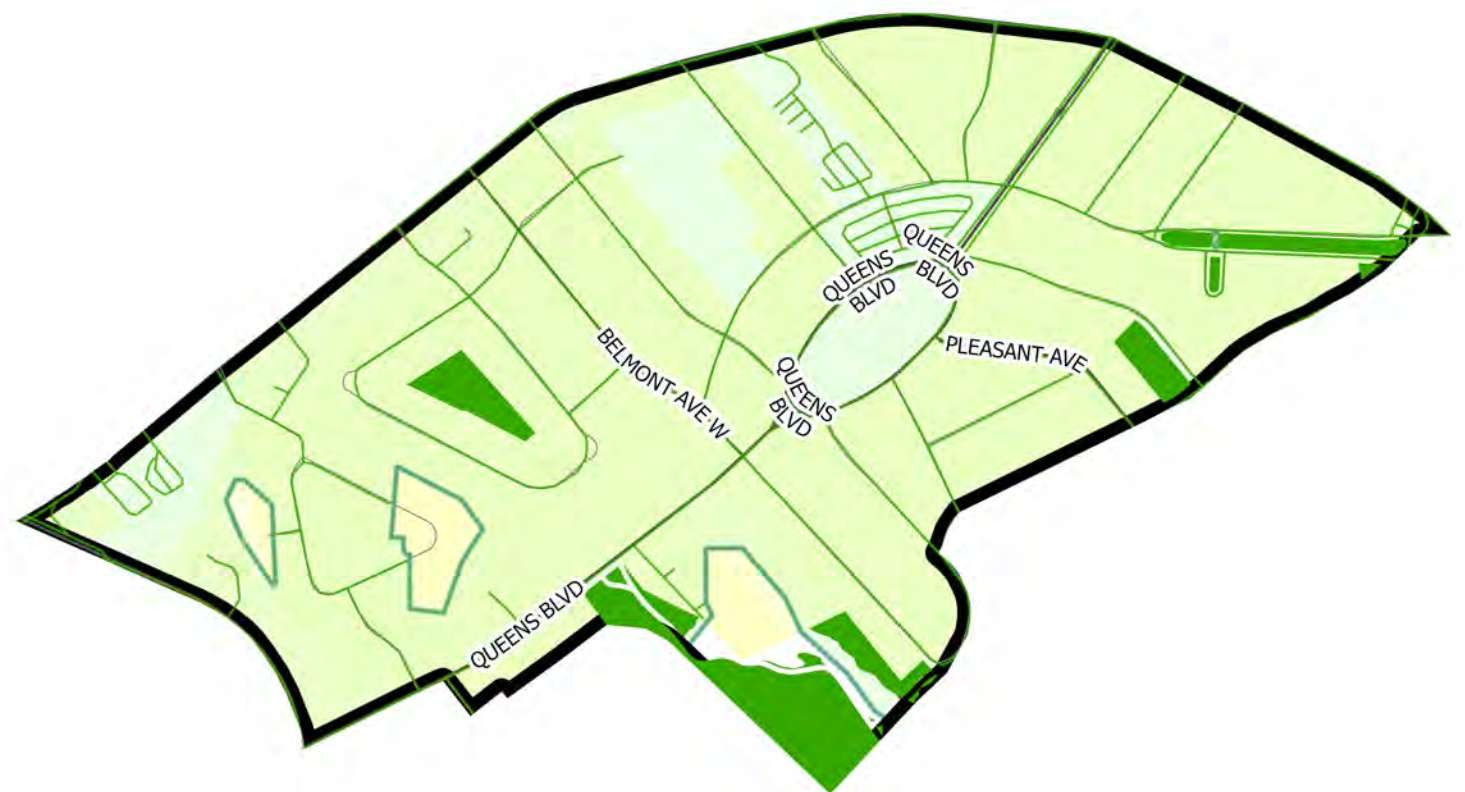


Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
 Kilometers





Planning Community: ST. MARYS

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks

- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.1
Kilometers





Planning Community: STANLEY PARK

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
 Kilometers





Planning Community: VANIER

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.2
 Kilometers










Planning Community: VICTORIA HILLS WESTMOUNT

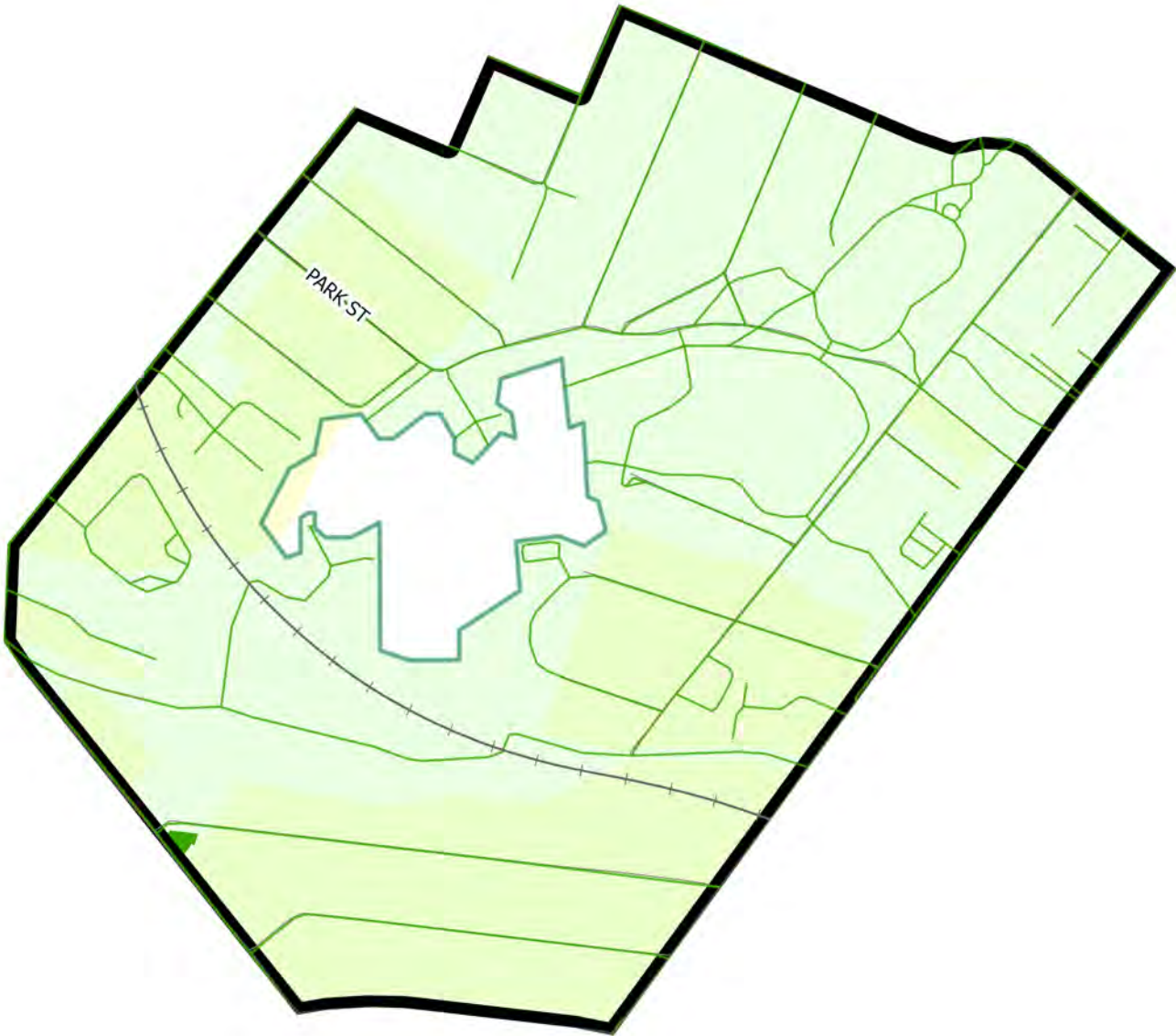
INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

Map of Walkability: Local Parks

Legend

-  Planning Community
-  Residential Land Use
-  Local Parks

-  800m Walkability to
Local Parks
-  Reachable Streets



Planning Community: VICTORIA PARK

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**

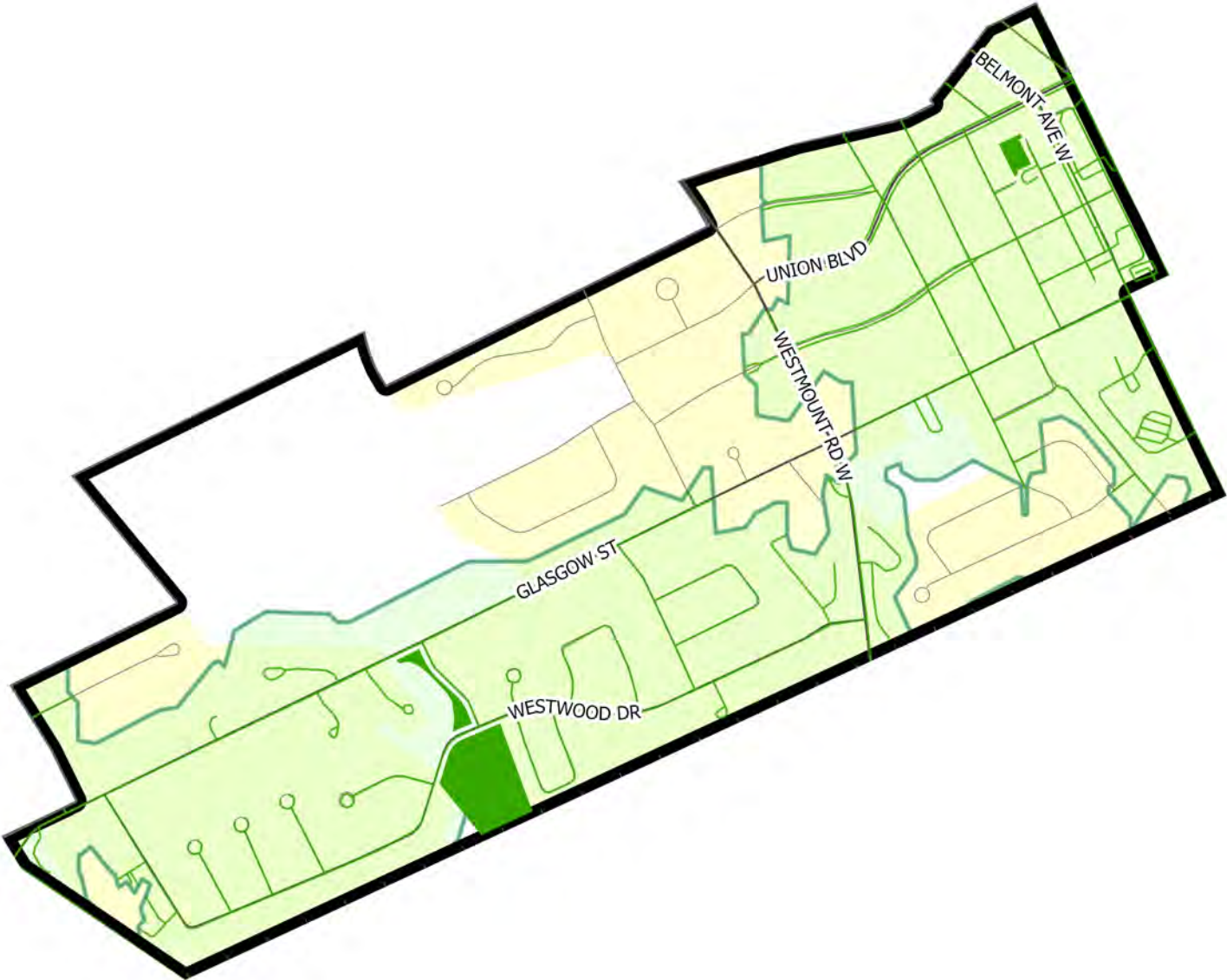
Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets



0.09
 Kilometers





Planning Community: VICTORIA HILLS WESTMOUNT

INSTITUTIONAL & COMMUNITY
INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY

**Map of Walkability:
Local Parks**



Legend

- Planning Community
- Residential Land Use
- Local Parks
- 800m Walkability to Local Parks
- Reachable Streets

0.15
Kilometers

