

Item No. 15.5.3

Request for Council's Consideration		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Included on Agenda (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Thursday)	<input type="checkbox"/> Added Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Monday)	<input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor
Date of Council Meeting: April 14, 2026		
Subject: Review of Parkland Dedication Framework		
Motion for Council to Consider:		
That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report that:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. outlines the legislative context and practices for parkland dedications, including comparisons with other provinces;2. identifies the status of undeveloped parkland within the municipality; and3. identifies priorities and options for the development of parkland within the municipality.		
Reason: Halifax is experiencing sustained residential growth, including higher-density development in areas such as the M District, Port Wallace, and Nora Warren subdivisions. While growth is increasing demand for parks and open space, the municipality's current parkland dedication (PLD) framework is not delivering complete, usable parks for residents.		
Under Nova Scotia legislation, municipalities can require up to 10% parkland dedication only at the time of subdivision, calculated based on land area (minus roads). This results in several structural challenges:		
1. Mismatch Between Land Supply and Park Delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The municipality is successfully acquiring land (often at the full 10% dedication rate), but• There is no corresponding, reliable funding mechanism to design and construct parks on that land.• This has led to a growing inventory of undeveloped or partially developed parkland, particularly in new communities.		
2. Growth Is Not Paying for Growth		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park development costs are increasingly being funded through the general tax rate, rather than by the growth that generates the demand.• Each new residential unit increases pressure on park infrastructure, yet does not contribute proportionately to capital park development.		

- This creates a structural deficit where “every new unit puts the municipality further behind.”

3. Limitations of Current Legislative Tools

- Nova Scotia municipalities:
 - Cannot require more than 10% land dedication
 - Cannot base parkland dedication on **number of units**
 - Cannot consistently retain or direct funds to complete parks
- Density bonusing provides some contribution, but:
 - It is **inconsistent and insufficient**
 - Competes with other priorities (e.g., affordable housing)
 - Does not close the capital funding gap

4. Over-Reliance on Land Dedication

- Current policy prioritizes land acquisition over park completion
- In many new subdivisions, large areas of parkland remain **unprogrammed and unusable**
- Residents are moving into communities with expectations of parks that may not be delivered for years—if at all

5. Comparison to Other Jurisdictions

- In Ontario municipalities:
 - Parkland dedication can be **based on unit count**, not just land area
 - Municipalities collect **development charges** that directly fund park construction
 - Contributions can be **pooled and applied strategically** across communities
- This results in:
 - More complete parks
 - A steady capital funding stream
 - Better alignment between growth and infrastructure delivery

6. Equity and Public Expectation

- Residents in new communities reasonably expect access to completed parks
- There is a growing perception that:
 - Development is proceeding
 - Density is increasing
 - But **community benefits (parks) are not materializing**

7. Need for Strategic Review

Given these constraints and outcomes, a comprehensive review is needed to:

- Assess current effectiveness of parkland dedication policies
- Evaluate alternative funding tools (area rates, development charges, etc.)
- Examine legislative barriers and potential advocacy options
- Identify how Halifax can better ensure that **parkland is not only acquired—but built**

Outcome Sought: A staff report that

1. outlines the legislative context and practices for parkland dedications, including comparisons with other provinces;
2. identifies the status of undeveloped parkland within the municipality;
3. identifies priorities and options for the development of parkland within the municipality