



Park Amenities

Part of the City of Kitchener's Parks Master Plan



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Related sections

Places

Spaces

Community Health & Wellness
Dedication
Downtown Kitchener
Natural Spaces & Climate Adaptation
Park Design Approach
Play
Signature & Feature Parks
Splashpads
Sports & Games
Trails & Lighting

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A scenic view of a pond with reeds and a forest in the background, seen from a wooden deck. The sky is blue with some clouds. The foreground shows the wooden planks of the deck and a railing.

Acknowledgement

Places & Spaces is focused on the park service provided to the Kitchener community. Parks and open spaces are integral to communities, providing spaces where people play, explore, and build connections with the environment and with others.

The City is uniquely positioned to provide, care for, maintain, and secure public access to parks and open spaces for all members of its communities. The City of Kitchener recognizes that these public spaces are planned and built on land that is the traditional territory of the Chonnonton, Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Peoples. We recognize our responsibility to serve as stewards for the land and honour the original caretakers who came before us. Our community is enriched by the enduring knowledge and deep-rooted traditions of the diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Kitchener today. The significance of this land to Indigenous communities is respected, and we value the role that parks and open spaces can play in Reconciliation.

The City of Kitchener acts as a steward for almost 2,000 hectares of land as part of a parks and open space system. Through the implementation of Places & Spaces, we will work to better understand and address community needs and the barriers preventing use of these spaces, so that all community members in Kitchener might feel welcome, safe, and able to use our parks and open spaces.



Introduction

This section focuses on the background information and specific details that inform the context for the recommendations made for this topic.

Park amenities

Park amenities include both recreational and functional amenities that enhance the value of park spaces for all park users. The collection of amenities in each park is called park programming. Recreational amenities such as playgrounds, sports courts, trails and splash pads are explored in other booklets in this master plan.

This booklet explores a variety of functional park amenities that contribute to comfort, convenience, and overall enjoyment of parks and open spaces for everyone. These functional park amenities are organized into three categories:

Site furnishings

- Seating
- Shade
- Picnic tables
- Bike racks
- Waste receptacles

Electrical amenities

- E-scooters
- Power
- Wireless internet

Water amenities

- Public Washrooms
- Drinking Water

Seating and picnic tables provide resting and gathering places, while shade structures and sails relieve from the sun and heat. Waste receptacles prevent littering and accommodate various events and programming. Bike racks and e-scooter parking support alternative transportation in neighbourhoods and across the city. Publicly accessible power and wireless internet can enable public performances or entertainment, utility device charging, or simply offering another place to work or study.

This booklet will inventory current functional park amenities, outline standards of quantity and quality for each, and make recommendations for their provision in Kitchener parks.

Site furnishings

Engagement for this master plan highlighted that barrier-free shade, seating, bike racks, picnic tables and waste receptacles in parks and open spaces is a high priority for Kitchener residents. This section will highlight each of these site furnishings and what currently exists in Kitchener's parks.

Seating

Seating areas are valuable spaces to rest and recharge in parks. They are especially helpful for those with mobility needs, health conditions and, those needing more frequent rest stops. There must be sufficient seating in parks given its importance.

Most seating options fit into one of two categories: formal or informal seating.

Formal seating includes bleachers and benches with a seat, back, and arm rests. Formal seating requires a level area is typically fixed to a concrete pad, and is accessible by situating options near paths, close to playgrounds, splashpads, or other recreational amenities.

Bleachers typically only exist at sports courts and sports fields and might be fixed to concrete or placed on level turf.

Informal seating includes a variety of options such as seat walls and seating stumps or stones. Informal seating is advantageous as it can be placed in areas that may not be suitable for formal seating, or can be combined with formal seating options. Informal seating is not considered accessible.

Although current seating in parks all over the city offer a variety of options such as armour stone, bleachers, benches, seating stumps, and stones; benches are the only seating option that are considered accessible in parks.



The following table summarizes the current inventory of benches in Kitchener parks.

Park classification (total no.)	Number of parks with benches	Total benches in this classifica- tion
Signature (1 park)	1	49
Feature (4 parks)	3	41
City (10 parks)	6	43
Community (11 parks)	10	26
Neighbourhood (174 parks)	120	169



Bleacher seating



Bench seating



Seating stumps



Armourstone seatwall



Seating stones



Combination of formal and informal seating

Shade

Many regions and municipalities are making a conscious effort to provide shade in parks. Various municipal guiding documents state that shade structures are an important functional amenity. The [Region of Waterloo Public Health](#) states that parks, playgrounds, seating areas, sports grounds, and trails are priority settings for shade.

Shade in parks is important as summer temperatures increase year after year due to climate change. Shade helps protect from UV (ultraviolet) exposure, makes playgrounds more inviting and comfortable. The [City of Kitchener Official Plan 2014](#) states that shade, whether natural or constructed protects from sun exposure and mitigates the urban heat island.

The Standards Council of Canada released a report called, [Thermally Comfortable Playgrounds: A review of literature and survey of experts](#) in which roughly 38% of respondents stated that artificial shade structures should be highly prioritized and 40% of respondents stated that shade structures in general should be prioritized.

Shade is also provided by a healthy tree canopy. The City of Kitchener's [Sustainable Urban Forestry Strategy](#) (SUFS) includes an urban tree canopy target of 30% in each ward by 2050 and a target of 33% across Kitchener by 2070. The strategy relies on planting new trees as well as maintaining the existing urban forest canopy of around 27%. Shade provided by tree canopies is both cost-effective and environmentally friendly; however, trees require significant time for growth and do not meaningfully provide shade for many years. Given the limitations, investment in trees is a good long-term solution for shade and climate adaptation.

Constructed shade options are more costly to install than trees and offer a more immediate solution to a need for shade with recreational amenities. Both shade structures and sails are installed in some parks throughout Kitchener, although not consistently. Due to cost and historical park design approaches, only around 14 structures exist in 275 parks city-wide.



Picnic tables

Picnic tables help support various park uses and are a great place to rest or connect with others. They are placed in all park types and are often installed based on demand. The [Canadian City Parks Report](#) outlines how picnic tables and other similar functional amenities contribute to the reason people use parks. Without them, park spaces have limited recreational options, the quality of a park's function suffers.

[The Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity](#) journal article summarized observed park use and found that the most common activities were sitting or picnicking. These activities are supported by adding more opportunities within parks. Moveable furniture allow visitors of all ages and abilities to rearrange furnishings based on their needs and preferences. Fixed picnic tables are immovable providing a consistent seating option over time. Both moveable and fixed picnic tables are valuable to park spaces and should be considered for implementation whenever possible and practical.



Moveable picnic table



Fixed picnic table



Bike racks

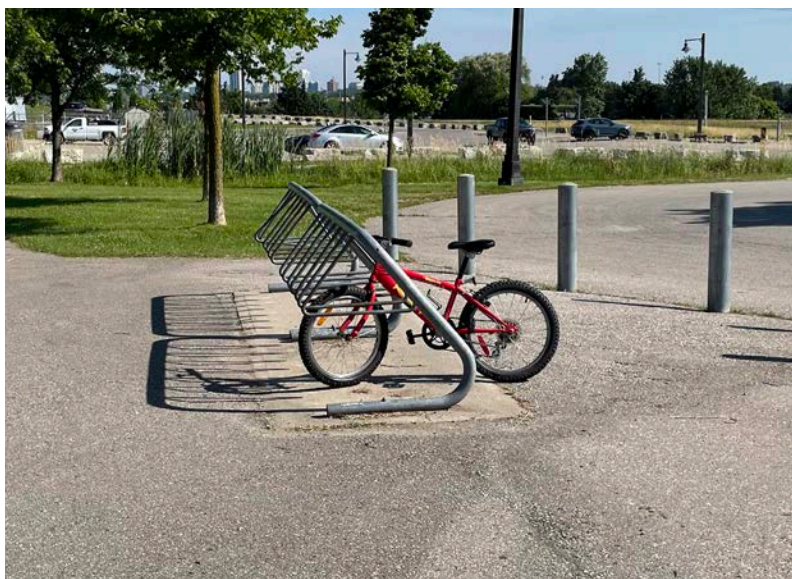
As outlined in the [Cycling and Trails Masterplan 2020](#), the City of Kitchener is focused on providing safe, walkable, and bikeable neighbourhoods and supporting health in all its forms. As the City of Kitchener continues constructing bicycle infrastructure connecting the city's major active transportation networks, it is important that parks provide bike parking to ensure the park system is also connected to those networks. The current inventory of bike racks is limited. There are no provisional guidelines to meet when providing bike racks within parks.

The number of bike racks can vary based on the type of bike parking options. Here is the breakdown of the number of parking spots available with each bike rack:

- **Ring-and-post style (and similar):** 2 spots
- **Spiral rack:** 2 spots
- **Multi-bike rack:** 8 spots

With the development of the Downtown Cycling Grid in Kitchener, ridership increased by 164%, totaling 54,781 cycling trips within the first seven months of

2023. When ridership increases, functional amenities for bikes must keep up. A person may request a bike rack through the City of Kitchener website, however, high-demand areas such as commercial districts, recreation centers and libraries have been generally prioritized. It is important for Kitchener to support the growing ridership with infrastructure and amenities by including more bike racks in parks and open spaces.



Multi-bike rack



Ring-and-post style bike rack



Ring style bike rack



Bench and bike rack

Waste receptacles

There are currently two types of waste receptacles in Kitchener parks: above-ground and subterranean waste receptacles. Above-ground waste receptacles can be permanently fixed in place, or moveable within the park so long as they can be accessed and serviced. The volume of waste held, however, is limited in these waste receptacles. Subterranean waste receptacles hold significantly more waste and need to be serviced less frequently, but are permanent and can only be located on a route accessible by maintenance vehicles. Therefore, the ideal solution is a hybrid approach that includes both above-ground and subterranean waste receptacles.

The City currently provides 406 above-ground, and approximately 100 subterranean units. These are located throughout parks and open spaces. Prior to 2023, above-ground waste receptacles were removed from parks and open spaces during the winter months. Council direction since then means most above-ground waste receptacles are now available all year. In winter, the number of above-ground units is reduced, and locations may shift to park frontages along snow cleared pedestrian routes.

Placement of subterranean waste receptacles have parameters to enable suitable and safe use for the public and for maintenance operations.

Subterranean units must be:

- Placed along a route accessible to maintenance vehicles. An accessible route is a paved park trail with an entry and exit point and an appropriate turning radius to allow service trucks to access the waste receptacles. Park trails must be at least three meters wide and maintained throughout the winter. Alternatively, waste receptacles can be placed at the park frontage without obstructions above or around them. This ensures that service trucks can remove the waste safely without interference.
- Barrier-free for everyone including those with mobility needs, those using mobility devices, and people of varying heights. It is best practice that people should not have to reach into a waste receptacle past their wrist to dispose of waste.



Above-ground waste receptacle



Subterranean waste receptacle

Recycling in parks

Kitchener parks do not have separate containers for recycling. This is because in public places, many non-recyclable items are often thrown into recycle bins and contaminated recycling is not accepted at waste management facilities. All contaminated recycling is diverted as regular landfill.

Circular materials

Circular Materials is a national not-for-profit organization managing Ontario's recycling which has transitioned to an extended producer responsibility (EPR) model. This transfers the responsibility of recycling management from municipalities to packaging producers. This recycling model holds producers accountable for their product's footprint throughout its entire life cycle. It was initiated by the Blue Box Regulation in June 2021, the transition began in July 2023 and will continue on until December 2025. Starting in January 2026, producers will be fully accountable for their products. The goal of this initiative is to create a consistent and efficient recycling system across the province.

The City of Kitchener will continue to support the advancements of the EPR model and Blue Box Regulation and work with producers to ensure a seamless transition.



Electrical amenities

E-scooters

E-scooters offer an alternative mode of transportation to walking and cycling which help keep people connected to the City's major destinations. There is currently no E-scooter parking in parks, and no consideration given to E-scooter parking needs.

Power

Publicly accessible power outlets within parks are important as they allow for more events and activities, increase the number of park visitors, allow for longer and safer park visits, and ensure people with mobility devices can recharge.

Publicly available outlets do exist in general park settings and sportsfields specifically and are determined case-by-case based on local use and improvement budgets. There is currently no mandate nor requirement to provide outlets in Kitchener parks.

Wireless internet

More and more park users rely on electronic devices for navigation, communication, education and entertainment.

Publicly accessible wireless internet provides a service for everyone, particularly of benefit to those without reliable internet access. The integration of wireless internet in outdoor public spaces such as parks encourages connectivity, and supports the streaming needs of sport tourism activities.

Public wireless internet access is currently available in three parks, in addition to community centre locations: Victoria Park, McLennan Park, and RBJ Schlegel Park. There is currently no standard nor requirement to provide wireless connectivity in Kitchener parks. However, wireless internet is considered when budget is available during park renovations.





Water amenities

Accessible public washrooms and drinking water support inclusion, convenience, and a welcoming environment in parks and open spaces. For some, the duration of park visits are extended when access to washrooms and water is provided. Public washrooms and water access are especially beneficial in parks that contain sportsfields, splashpads, picnic areas and other amenities that increase park usage. Visiting parks at all may not be an option at all for some without having access to washrooms.

This section focuses on standalone washroom facilities located in public parks and open spaces. These are facilities specifically dedicated to providing restrooms in with active and passive recreational amenities. Other types of facilities can provide the same service for park users (e.g., community centres or libraries) and will be considered as part of the overall recommended strategy but are excluded from any of this master plan's recommendations.

Washrooms in parks

There are several different types of washroom facilities in Kitchener's parks, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. The current public washroom inventory in Kitchener parks and open spaces consists of **brick-and-mortar facilities** and **portable washrooms**.

A third **semi-permanent** option has emerged in recent years - pre-fabricated facilities placed on grade and plumbed. There are no semi-permanent facilities in Kitchener at the time of writing this master plan.

In most cases, washroom service hours are linked to the park opening hours. Most washroom facilities are not open during the winter months as not all existing facilities are winterized due to changes in demand over the winter months depending on the park context.

The following map shows the nine brick-and-mortar washroom facilities available to park users. Although Kiwanis Park has a washroom facility, it is not included in the inventory map because it is not open for public use due to restricted pool access and associated entry fees.



Permanent washroom facilities in Kitchener parks (2024)



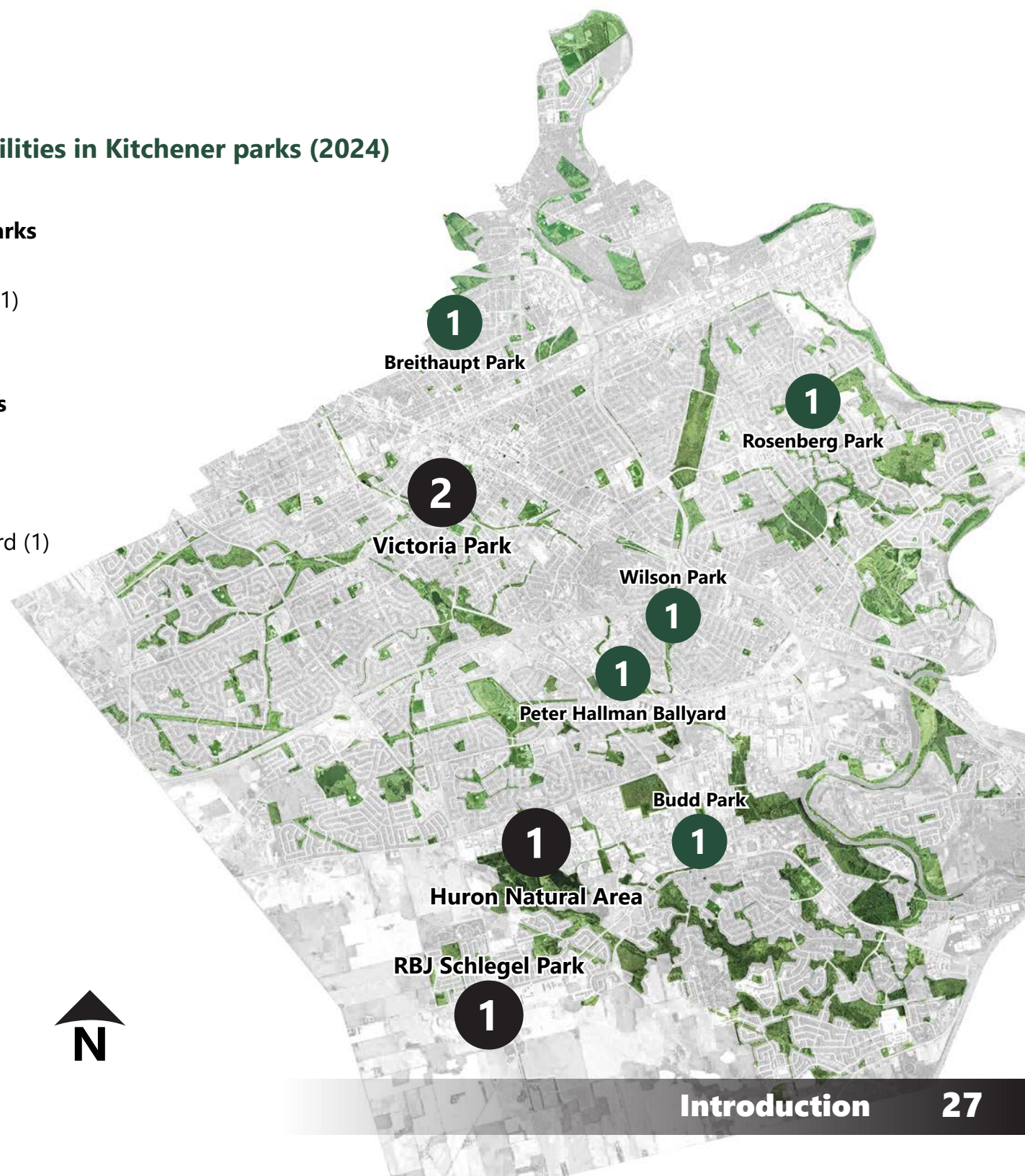
Signature & Feature parks

- Victoria Park (2)
- Huron Natural Area (1)
- RBJ Schlegel Park (1)



All other park locations

- Breithaupt Park (1)
- Rosenberg Park (1)
- Wilson Park (1)
- Peter Hallman Ballyard (1)
- Budd Park (1)



Permanent washroom facilities

There are currently nine permanent, standalone brick-and-mortar washroom facilities in Kitchener parks. These facilities offer a “traditional” approach to providing high-quality, accessible washroom facilities.

The cost to construct and operate permanent facilities is by far the highest compared to portable and semi-permanent facilities. The benefits of permanent facilities are the assurance of accessible, durable, and consistent washrooms that offer safe and reliable service.

To-date there are no guidelines that determine when it is best to include permanent washroom facilities in park settings. Kitchener’s current permanent washroom inventory distribution is most influenced by active recreational park uses such as sportsfields and splashpads.

Portable washroom facilities

Portable washrooms are a common outdoor facility that offer a cost effective, flexible solution to washroom needs in parks and open spaces. There are barrier-free portable units, however the vast majority in use today are the common single portable toilets familiar to most park-goers. The use of portable washrooms are a solution to provide quick, adaptive, on the spot servicing where it is needed.

Portable washrooms are mainly used in City class parks to service sportsfield programming.

There are currently 50 portable washroom units located within City class parks in Kitchener. During sports tournaments additional units are required along with more frequent servicing.

Despite their familiarity, portable washroom facilities pose barriers. They are not accessible, they lack space and facilities for those who must be accompanied by parents or caregivers, or need privacy and basic cleanliness for personal hygiene or health reasons. They are more frequently vandalized than permanent and semi-permanent facilities. In addition to the

functional issues, portable washrooms tend to hold odors due to the small size, limited ventilation, and lack of plumbing. Some people may avoid portable washrooms altogether for any of these reasons.

Portable washrooms will continue to have a role in parks, however should not be considered a permanent solution for park washroom needs particularly in high use, high demand parks.



Semi-permanent washroom facilities

Semi-permanent washrooms have emerged as a third option to providing washroom facilities in parks. These can include single stall self-cleaning, modular prefabricated, and shipping container facilities. These facilities are often placed on grade and plumbed for permanent water and sanitary servicing.

Kitchener does not currently have any of these facility types in park spaces. The nature of their construction make them attractive options for the future of McLennan Park, and other active use parks.

Semi-permanent facilities have lower upfront costs than brick-and-mortar buildings. Facilities without plumbing carry higher operating and servicing costs and may require more frequent servicing in high use areas.

Various semi-permanent facilities are available on the market and each facility has its own benefits and disadvantages.

Self-cleaning units require large up-front costs. However, they do not require many resources to maintain compared to a traditional brick-and-mortar facility. In

addition, these facilities are designed to be accessible and are gender neutral in nature as they are often single stall facilities. Self-cleaning, autonomous public washroom facilities are becoming more widely used by municipalities.

Pre-fabricated units, such as a converted shipping container, are another such option. This style of washroom facility is rising in use and becoming more cost effective to fabricate and install as a result. They provide a similar experience as a brick-and-mortar facility for a fraction of the cost.

Kitchener's parks can benefit from semi-permanent washroom facilities as they can deliver accessible, reliable washroom services on par with brick-and-mortar facilities.

Use of public washrooms

Through Places engagement, safety and security in public washroom facilities were highlighted as a concern. Currently, washroom safety is addressed through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. CPTED is a site design approach that uses the built environment to promote natural surveillance by the community to minimize the need for traditional security measures.

The rise in vandalism over the past few years has made it more expensive and time-consuming to maintain public washrooms. Damage to fixtures, graffiti, and other forms of vandalism increase cleaning and repair costs, requiring more frequent servicing. This puts a strain on budgets and resources, making it harder to keep washrooms clean, safe, and accessible for everyone.



Public drinking water

Drinking water is not currently available in Kitchener's parks, with the exception of controllable locations such as community centres and interior public washrooms.

At the time of writing this master plan, only one Kitchener park has formal access to drinking water - RBJ Schlegel Park. It is located within an existing washroom facility that is open and closed daily, cleaned and maintained multiple times per day.

Drinking water has precedence in park settings within the province, and in Kitchener. There were drinking fountains installed in three locations within Kitchener's downtown core in the past. However, they were removed and not reinstated due to issues with maintaining sanitary conditions.







Data Sources

This section highlights the relevant sources of information and research used to develop recommendations for this topic. A total of 12 data sources, including engagement, have informed the Parks Master Plan recommendations. For more detailed information on each data source, please refer to the Places booklet.



Legislation



Equitable engagement



Engagement with the broader community



Engagement with City of Kitchener departments



Engagement with partner organizations



Comparative analysis



External research



Policy



City of Kitchener strategies



Region of Waterloo strategies



Best practices



City of Kitchener staff Experience



Findings

Several themes emerged across topic areas, engagement audiences, and data collection methods. The following section reflects major themes that cut across several datasets from engagement methods. Findings relevant to more than one theme are reflected in each. For more detailed information on the overall engagement effort, please refer to the Places booklet.

Site furnishings & electrical amenities

Accessibility

Engagement respondents noted the lack of shaded seating in parks as a physical barrier to park use. Quiet shaded spaces offer relief for those with sensory issues and should be wheelchair accessible. Members of the community generally want to see more seating and shaded areas. Picnic tables and benches without backs are inaccessible.



More accessible seating. More shade.



Inclusion

Members of the community would feel more welcome in parks if more seating and electrical outlets were available and if waste receptacles were made widely available and maintained year-round.

Environmental sustainability

Members of the community have expressed interest in shaded play equipment to mitigate the impacts of increasing summer temperatures caused by climate change. People would like to see more shaded areas in natural spaces. Respondents expressed interest in both natural and manufactured shade solutions.

Safety

Community members are concerned about the lack of visibility impacting feelings of safety in shaded areas. People are also concerned about unplanned shade such as buildings or structures casting shadows which would decrease visibility in certain areas.

Water amenities

Accessibility

Community members requested that public washrooms and public drinking water be made barrier-free to everyone, not just in location but also in the design of the infrastructure and its operation.

People have expressed that washrooms will be more accessible if automated external defibrillators (AEDs), change tables, step stools and electricity access are available.

It was also shared that washroom stalls that are labeled as accessible still present barriers. Sinks, soap dispensers and flush buttons are often out of reach. Heavy doors without automatic buttons are difficult to open and enter through. The gaps and lips between surfaces can be difficult to wheel over. Portable toilets are too small to access. Where washrooms are available, they are not open 24/7 or year-round.

Survey respondents indicated that to create a more welcoming experience for visitors with sensory needs, washrooms should not have loudly flushing toilets and should feature quieter hand dryers.



More washrooms. Open washrooms. Like waaaaaay more. Kept clean. And single use/family washrooms without loud flushing toilets and without loud hands dryers. For kids with sensory issues, these are a nightmare. They just want to play and need to pee sometimes or to clean up after an accident.



Environmental sustainability

Respondents requested that sustainable washroom options be explored where possible. Ideas include eco-friendly alternatives to washrooms including composting toilets.



Safety

People have expressed that washrooms will feel more safe if automated external defibrillators (AEDs), sharps disposal, and naloxone access is made available. Methods such as implementing a safety advisory group, community ambassadors and help buttons would create a feeling of safety without the need for traditional security presence. These security methods can be implemented in washrooms and throughout parks.



Partnerships

Engaging with park users and interested parties can help build equitable, accessible, meaningful, and sustainable spaces. Along with partnerships, there is also a need for a standardized approach to implement, maintain and operate public washrooms and public drinking water infrastructure.



Inclusion

There was also a request for more washroom options, gender neutral washroom additions, and increased maintenance of the facilities. In addition, showers and foot washing stations were requested for religious and cultural practices. Respondents stated that they would feel more welcome in parks if washrooms were well-maintained. Tent encampments and drug-use were also listed as reasons as to why park spaces feel unwelcoming.



Recommendations

This section summarizes the recommendations specific to this topic that are informed by the broad and local context, data sources, and findings. Each recommendation begins with a number representing the order in which its implementation is prioritized. For a comprehensive list of all recommendations made for this master plan update and the implementation framework, please refer to the Places booklet.

More shade and seating in parks

Establish standards to support an increase in seating and shade options in parks.

Recent feedback from community engagements has emphasized the growing need for more seating and shade in parks and open spaces. Places to sit, gather and rest comfortably are some of the most desired elements of a park space. Despite their importance to park users there are minimal guidelines mandating a minimum number of seating opportunities, shade structures, or gathering spaces in any new park renovated park.

Addressing this desire for more functional amenities is done on a case-by-case basis through park renovations and is informed by the park context and community engagement.

Criteria based on location should be created as shade and seating should be available at parks, recreational amenities and facilities. Establishing guidelines associated with each park classification and park use will provide consistency across all park spaces, and inform budgeting processes when planning upgrades to recreational amenities such as courts and playgrounds, or when developing brand new park spaces.

Refer to the Appendix for the recommended provisional guidelines.

02: Create a park washroom and hydration strategy

Develop a strategy to assess existing inventory, renovations, adaptations, future growth, alternative delivery methods, operating and staffing needs, all rooted in inclusive and accessible design at the lowest lifecycle cost.

Public washrooms are an important piece of city infrastructure as they encourage community health, recreation, and participation.

Community members have expressed interest in more accessible and inclusive washrooms equitably allocated in Kitchener parks. As the absence of public washrooms can create significant barriers for park users and it is important to create a detailed guiding document to inform how the City will provide them. A park washroom and hydration strategy will be the visioning document to assess existing public park washrooms and describe what the future of washrooms and drinking water in Kitchener parks will look like.

This document will:

- prioritize public washroom allocation and upgrades;
- establish criteria for future washrooms;
- define design guidelines that consider accessibility, sustainability, vandalism, safety and lifecycle costs;
- explore investment into existing facilities.

The strategy will be centered around infrastructure in parks however, it will also take into consideration the broader city context. Ideas shared through community engagement will inform the strategy throughout its development.

Strategy considerations

Kitchener's park washroom and hydration strategy will include short-term and long-term recommendations to:

- develop a system for renewing and building new facilities;
- ensure accessible design standards;
- establish detailed park washroom design recommendations;
- identify areas of high need.

The resources needed to install, maintain, and operate public washroom infrastructure is significant. While the benefits of having these washrooms are clear, it will be important to ensure the washrooms are appropriately resourced over the short – and long-term to keep up with changing and growing needs.



05: Public drinking water in parks

Support a pilot project to provide public drinking water at three locations and monitor their use, cost, and staff time implications. Incorporate findings from the public drinking water pilot project into the park washroom and hydration strategy.

The United Nations recognizes access to water and sanitation as a fundamental human right because of the important roles they play in human health, dignity, and prosperity. However, public drinking water infrastructure is absent in Kitchener parks. This is, in part, due to the inability to maintain existing public drinking water infrastructure. Drinking fountains in the past were severely vandalized and became difficult to maintain appropriately.

Kitchener parks can contribute to health and safety by providing drinking water access in outdoor public spaces where possible. Drinking water would be very beneficial to those in park spaces. Members of the community have voiced that the lack of water stations cause many barriers by forcing the public to pay for

water from private businesses which often sell water in single-use plastic bottles. Despite the maintenance challenges, different approaches to public water access can be explored while reducing vandalism.

An example of this is installing more water bottle refilling stations as opposed to drinking fountains as they have less bacteria, have fewer parts that can break, and still provide drinking water access.

Drinking water pilot guidelines

Given the level of community interest in public drinking water, City of Kitchener is proposing a pilot in which three selected parks will have drinking water infrastructure installed. The proposed park locations include sports fields, urban areas, and neighbourhood park locations which cover a wide variety of park uses. The purpose of the pilot is to understand the best way to offer drinking water to those who need it. The public drinking water sources would then be monitored for use, frequency, and maintenance needs.

This pilot will last 24 months and will take place following Council approval after community engagement.

The proposed drinking water pilot could inform a combined public washroom and hydration strategy, which will help guide the implementation of drinking water within parks and open spaces. The strategy will evaluate suitability of locations for drinking water, necessary infrastructure, and projected costs.





17: Power in parks

Include publicly available outlets at each new or renovated shade structure, where possible to do so.

Electrical outlets are much easier to install when connecting to an existing power source. Therefore, power can be available in Kitchener parks at each new or renovated shade structure where connection to power is feasible. This enables people to access power and shade at the same time to rest or do their homework while charging their personal, and mobility devices. Installing power when adding other amenities during park renovations is cost efficient. However, installation, operation, and maintenance of power in parks needs to be considered when planning the budget for park renovations. When installed, power is only available during park operating hours.

25: Install permanent waste receptacles


Establish a suite of standard above-ground and subterranean waste receptacles appropriate to park classifications, uses, and need. Prioritize locations for the installation of preferred waste management improvements.

The two main types of waste receptacles, above-ground and subterranean, require guidelines to prioritize where they go and budget for installation and maintenance. Above-ground waste receptacles are inexpensive to install; however, they require frequent servicing by which requires staff resources and operating budget. Subterranean units require funding to install and maintain them; however, they need significantly less maintenance given their large capacities.

Some form of waste removal is required in all parks. Since it is not currently feasible to install subterranean units in every park, above-ground receptacles are needed to support waste collection. The recommended waste disposal options for each park class are appended to this booklet.



Recommendations



Appendix: **Site Furnishings Provisional Guidelines**

Site furnishings provisional guidelines

The following chart guides the recommended minimum provision of each site furnishing by **park classification** and by **recreational amenity**.

Legend

+1

Inclusion of shade structures or sails to be determined through community engagement and assessment of mature shade trees.



Inclusion of the amenity to be determined through a future park master planning process.

Site furnishing	Park classification					Recreational amenity					
	Signature	Feature	City	Community	Neighbourhood	Playground, Destination	Playground, Local	Sport Court, Destination	Sport Court, Local	Splashpad, Destination	Splashpad, Local
Benches			3 per hectare	2 per hectare	2	4	2	4	1	6	2
Shade structures and sails				+1	n/a	+1	n/a	+1	n/a	+1	+1
Picnic tables		10	7	5	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bike racks		16	12	8	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste receptacle (permanent)	12		4	2	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Seating

Park uses that receive many visitors for a prolonged period can benefit from additional seating. The “Recommended provisional guidelines” table accounts for an increase in visitors during peak times. To ensure enough seating is provided within parks, provisional guidelines must reflect the needs of the community. Two provision guidelines are necessary to ensure that the classification of parks and amenities of each park have adequate seating.

The provisional guidelines will be applied when replacing existing seating, during new park constructions, and during existing park renovations. Along with any proposed increase in seating, a similar increase in capital budget is needed. Approximate budgets enable more seating to be implemented in the near future with a long-term plan to address inventory gaps.

Seating opportunities may be formal or informal. However, formal options such as benches should be prioritized as they are accessible. Benches should meet the following accessibility criteria; include a seat back and arm rests, situated on a concrete pad with an optional concrete curb for wheelchair access, and be 17 to 19 inches above the ground.

Shade structures

Shade opportunities such as shade sails and structures are to be prioritized in the following areas:

- Playgrounds with a focus on seating areas and sand pits;
- Seating areas and rest stops such as benches on trails;
- Splashpads;
- Sports courts;
- At a minimum, one park within a park network, defined as, a group of local parks often within walking distance from one another.

Where a new park is developed or an existing park is being renovated, shade structures should be considered based on the five criteria listed above. These shade structures will be implemented in addition to trees and plantings to provide long-term natural shade opportunities. Shade structures and shade sails will require a budget for installation, operation, and maintenance.

The criteria are balanced as they consider real challenges such as budget and limitations of natural shade (e.g., the time it takes a young tree to grow large enough to cast shade) while prioritizing areas that need immediate shade.

Picnic tables

Most current picnic tables are not accessible in design or location. Although current picnic tables may benefit some, they are inaccessible to others. Accessible picnic tables are secured to a concrete surface and have an open side for mobility device accessibility. The guidelines for picnic tables by park classification can be found in the “Recommended provisional guidelines” table appended to this booklet.

These guidelines are approximate quantities and may change based on emerging park needs. The proposed picnic table provision guidelines will be implemented:

- In new park developments;
- In park renovations;
- In park retrofits;
- During spring park clean ups;
- Based on community park demand.

This allows for additional tables to be added over time. Picnic tables may be fixed or moveable depending on visitor needs. When picnic tables are placed in parks, at least one needs to be accessible.

Bike racks

Considering the growing active transportation infrastructure, bike racks should be installed in every park class. The installation of bike racks protects park infrastructure such as benches, trees, fencing and shade structures from being damaged when there are no other bike parking options available. The recommended guidelines for bike racks by park classification can be found in the “Recommended provisional guidelines” table appended to this booklet.

Additional bike parking will be installed during new park developments, existing park renovation, and on a case-by-case basis. Installing bike racks will require a budget as they require concrete pads for installation and may need to be replaced over time.



E-scooters

E-scooters will be supported in community parks, city-wide parks, signature parks, and feature parks to enhance Kitchener's alternative transportation options. A concrete pad and signage to indicate bike parking and e-scooter parking spaces are required to support e-scooter use in parks. The concrete pad will be located beside existing bike parking. Parking will be limited to designated areas and speed limits will be lowered within parks to ensure the safety of all visitors.

Wireless internet

Internet connection is important as it allows people to navigate, communicate, find supports and services, and stay connected. It is important to add wireless internet so that parks can accommodate various needs. The interest and need for wireless internet in Kitchener parks are being determined. Wireless internet may be implemented during park renovations projects if it is deemed a priority through engagement. Wireless internet will likely not be made available in local park types such as Neighbourhood and Community class parks as these parks are close to people's homes. In park locations that meet the criteria outlined, infrastructure to support wireless internet implementation will be installed. This enables wireless internet to be installed at a later time. A separate spare conduit should be installed underground where communication lines will be accommodated.

The following criteria must be met for the infrastructure to be installed in Kitchener parks:

- Readily available power;
- Existing light poles;
- Large park area;
- Ability to install infrastructure at least ten feet high.



Recommendations summary



More shade and seating in parks

Establish standards to support an increase in seating and shade options in parks.

02: Create a park washroom and hydration strategy

Develop a strategy to assess existing inventory, renovations, adaptations, future growth, alternative delivery methods, operating and staffing needs, all rooted in inclusive and accessible design at the lowest lifecycle cost.

05: Public drinking water in parks

Support a pilot project to provide public drinking water at three locations and monitor their use, cost, and staff time implications. Incorporate findings from the public drinking water pilot project into the park washroom and hydration strategy.

17: Power in parks

Include publicly available outlets at each new or renovated shade structure, where possible to do so.

25: Install permanent waste receptacles

Establish a suite of standard above-ground and subterranean waste receptacles appropriate to park classifications, uses, and need. Prioritize locations for the installation of preferred waste management improvements.



