



CHAPTER 2 – PARKLAND SUPPLY



The use and access of open space by the public is influenced by the supply, distribution and quality of open space. As of 2015 the City of Windsor's open space system consists of 209 parks and natural areas, 2 golf courses, 1 cemetery, 2 Provincial Nature Reserves, Devonwoods Conservation Area which is owned and operated by the Essex Region Conservation Authority, as well as one large parcel on the airport lands of natural heritage significance that has yet to be classified, and the newly established parkland associated with the Rt. Honourable Herb Grey Parkway. All totaled the City has an area of 1,447.73 ha (3,577.42 acres) of publicly accessible land. (See Appendix 'F').

While addressing the relationship between public health and available green space in urban environments, The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that a minimum of nine square metres of green space per person (0.9 ha/1000 persons), with an optimal amount between 10 and 15 metres square per person (1.5 ha/1000persons) is the minimum standard for a healthy city. An assessment of the city's parkland and outdoor open space is important to determine if there is sufficient parkland to meet the outdoor recreational needs of the community.

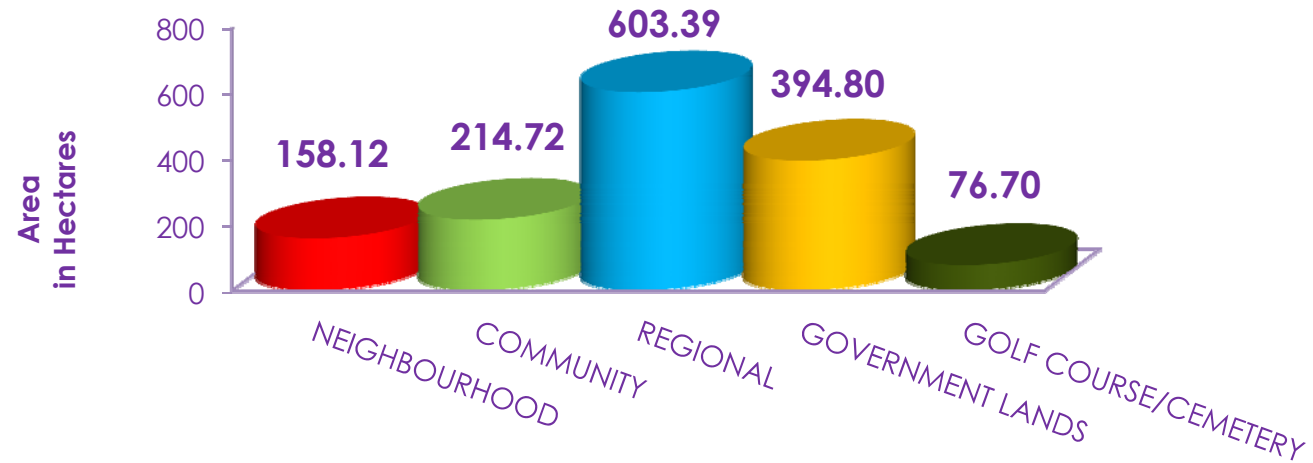


Figure 2-1: Distribution of Current Parkland Supply

PARKS & OPEN SPACE SUPPLY

The City of Windsor's population has remained relatively stable near the 200,000 mark since the mid-1960s. This figure is important in that the City's Official Plan recommends parkland supply based on population (See Appendix 'A'). The current standard in the Official Plan is 4.05 ha/1000 persons; well above the WHO standard (see Figure 2). At the time of the original Culture and Recreation Master Plan (1989) there was a deficiency in parkland supply throughout the city. The most recent census data identifies that the City of Windsor has met and exceeded the Official Plan requirements.

Evergreen Canadaⁱⁱ reviewed the municipal standards and actual area of parkland available for residents in several urban centres but did not include Windsor. demonstrates How Windsor fairs in comparison to those Canadian cities identified in that study is demonstrated in Figure 2-2.

YEAR	POPULATION	PARKLAND	TOTAL PARKS	AREA/ 1000 Pop.
1989	200,000	680.08	160	3.40 ha
1997				
2010	216,000	933.82	206	4.32 ha
2015				
with other Government Lands	210,891	1446.71	217	6.86 ha

Table2-1: Parkland Supply from 1989 to 2015

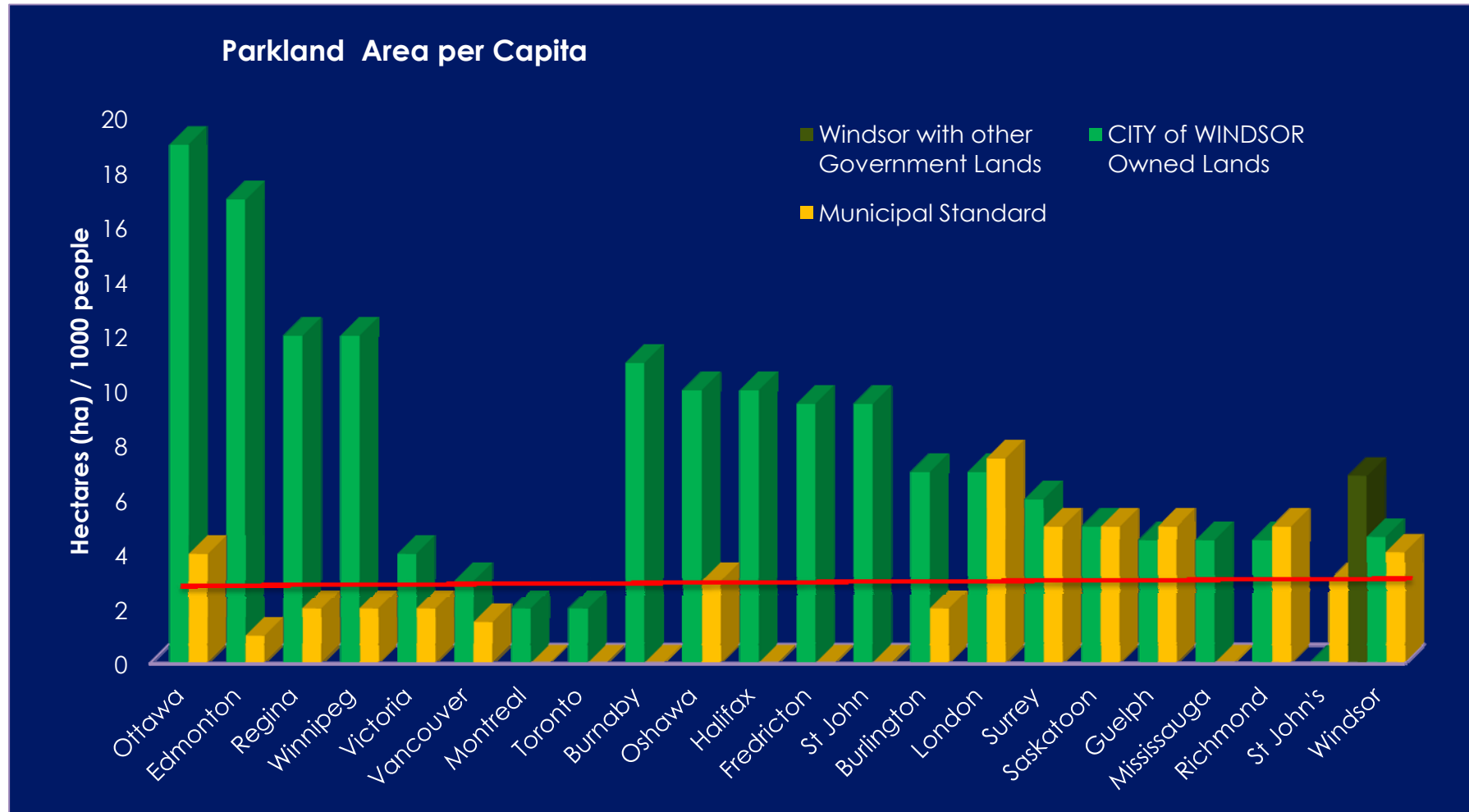


Figure 2-2: Green Space Provision and Standards in Canadian Urban Municipalities

City-wide, Windsor appears to have an ample supply of parkland, placing it between Victoria B.C. (the capital of British Columbia); and Richmond, B.C., well known for their parkland supply. However, many of the other cities evaluated include non-city owned public parkland (i.e. Provincial and Federal). By adding the non-city owned parkland (shown in olive green) the City of Windsor's parkland supply more closely matches that of London and Burlington, Ontario as well as Surrey B.C., whose population density more closely matches that of Windsor.

Parkland supply ratio directed by the Official Plan, prescribes Neighbourhood Parks to be distributed at a ratio of not less than 0.8 hectares per 1000 Windsor residents, while Community and Regional parks at 3.25 hectares per 1000 Windsor residents.

When combined, the two park classifications provide for a city-wide open space ratio of 4.05ha per 1000 population. Presently, Windsor exceeds this ratio across the City (5.29ha) however, at the ward and Planning District level it was determined that publicly accessible parkland is not evenly distributed throughout the city. (see Figures 4 and 5)

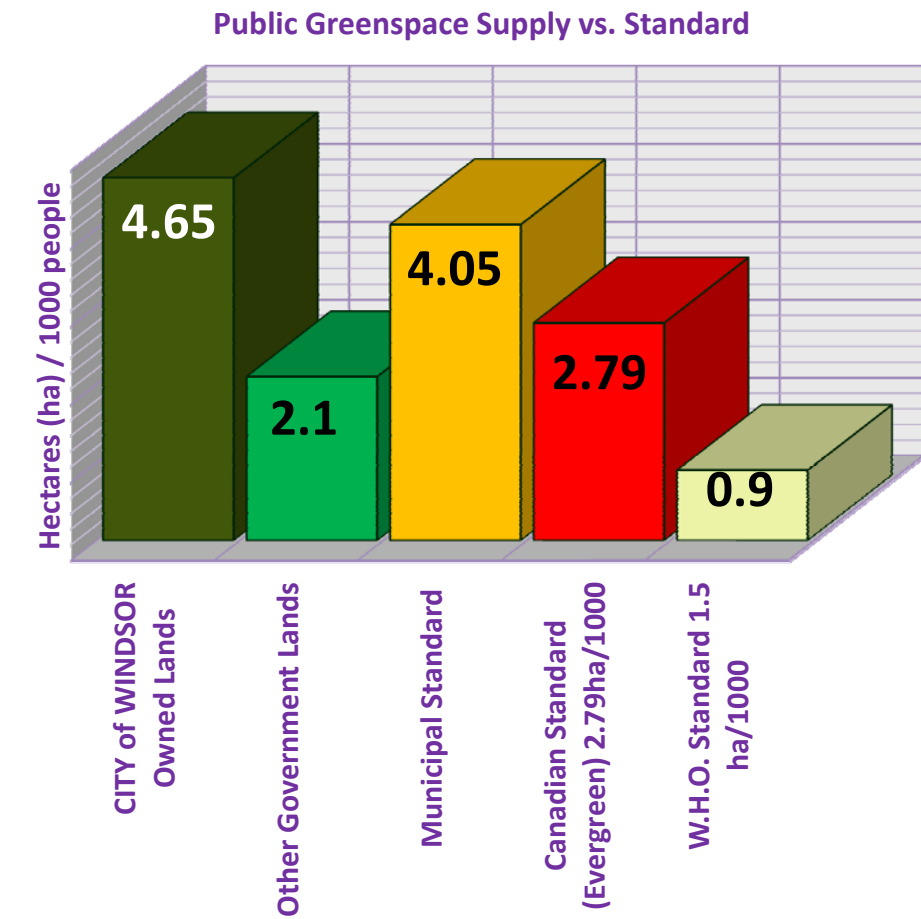


Figure 2-3: Detail of Public Greenspace in the City of Windsor as compared to the Canadian and World Health Organization Standards

DISTRIBUTION

In general the distribution of open space in the City of Windsor is good, and efforts should be made to expand or acquire additional open space for neighbourhood and community parks in the core of the city, or other areas where increased density is contemplated. With the exception of the City Centre in Ward 3, the predominant housing type in the city is single family detached homes. As the latest census demonstrates, Windsor population is becoming increasingly aged with 27% over the age of 55yrs. Some areas of the City are well over 1/3 in this age demographic.

At the Ward level, the older areas of the City exhibit the greatest deficiency. The greatest amount of parkland is found in Wards 1 and 9, where significant tracts of natural forest and parkland have been preserved in efforts by the City, ERCA and the Province. (see Appendix 'G' for a complete breakdown of parkland by Ward)

Though Ward level deficiencies are obvious, they represent more electoral boundaries than physical communities. When looking at parkland supply at the Planning Districts level, it is evident that there are concentrated areas of deficiencies in each of the deficient Wards. (See Figures 2.4 & 2.5). Districts of greatest concern are City Centre (in Ward 3), Walkerville (in Ward 4), and Fontainebleu (straddling Wards 5 & 8). There is very little opportunity to expand parkland physically in these districts due the current infrastructure of the urban environment. Opportunities which may arise in these areas should be sought; while any development that may compound areas with a current parkland deficit needs to be diverted.

The other five districts also have public parkland and open space not owned by the City. These districts are; University (Ward 2 and partly Ward 3), South Cameron (Ward 10), South Windsor, Roseland (both straddling Wards 1 & 9), and Devonshire (completely in Ward 9),. The risk is that those parcels of parkland can be removed from public access or eliminated entirely, which would leave those districts in a deficient state. (see Appendix 'H' for a complete breakdown of parkland by Planning District)

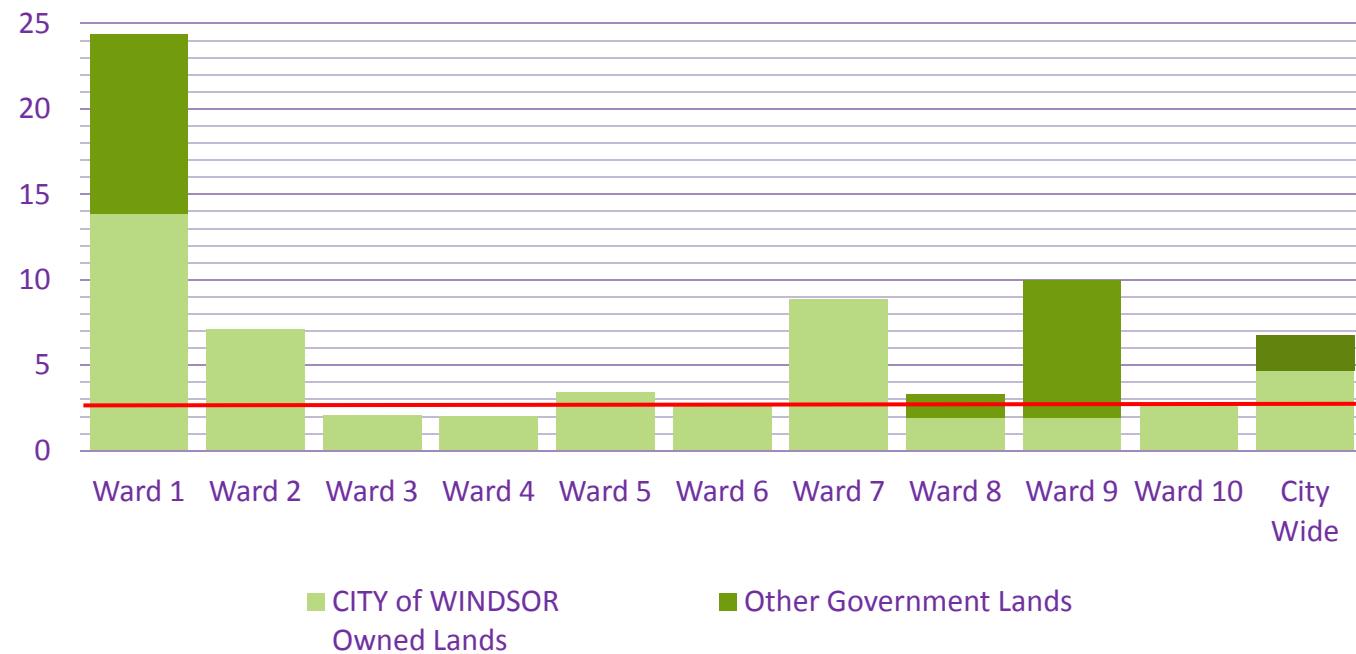


Figure2-4: Parkland Supply Ratio by Wards

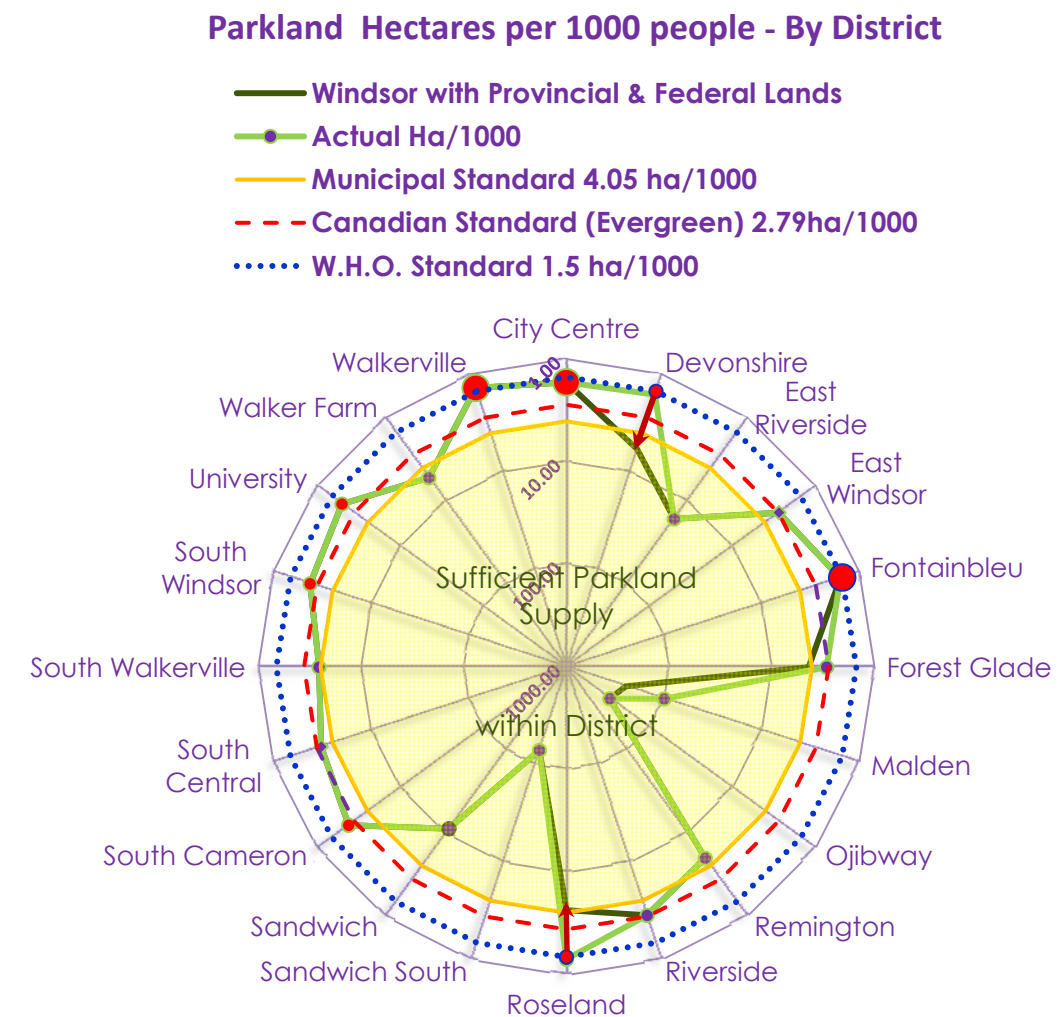
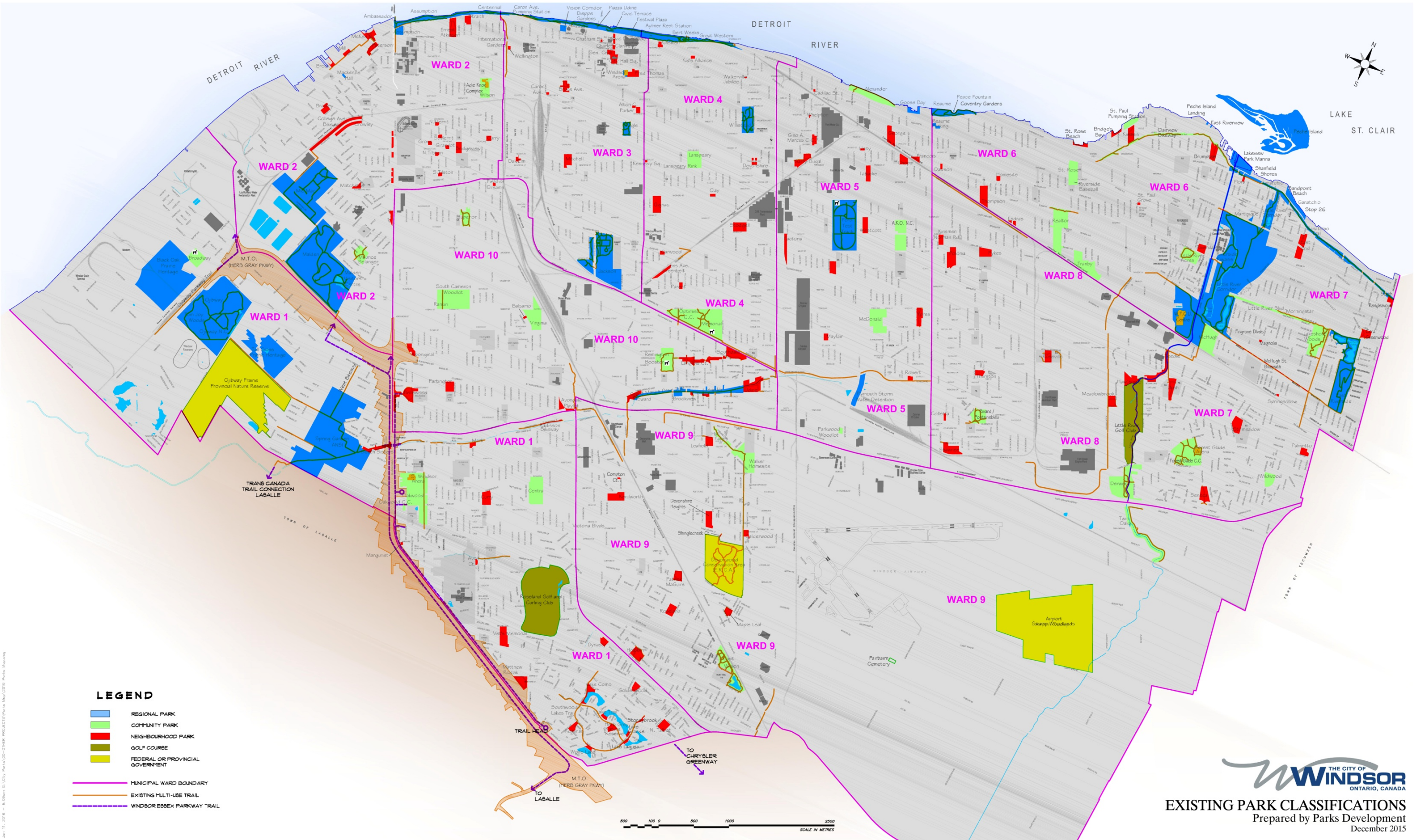


Figure2-5: Parkland Supply by Planning District



- LEGEND**
- REGIONAL PARK
 - COMMUNITY PARK
 - NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK
 - GOLF COURSE
 - FEDERAL OR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
 - MUNICIPAL WARD BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING MULTI-USE TRAIL
 - WINDSOR ESSEX PARKWAY TRAIL

THE CITY OF
WINDSOR
ONTARIO, CANADA

EXISTING PARK CLASSIFICATIONS
Prepared by Parks Development
December 2015

Figure 2-6: Existing Parks Classification

CURRENT PARKS CLASSIFICATION

Parkland classification is defined by the *City of Windsor's Official Plan; Section 6.7: Open Space*. Open space in the parks system is defined in two categories:

- **Public Open Space** - that which is owned by the Municipality, the federal or provincial governments or the Essex Region Conservation Authority, and
- **Private Open Space** - that which is owned by persons other than the Municipality, federal governments or the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Access to private open space is at the discretion of the owner.

The *Official Plan* classifies public open space in two categories; Community / Regional Parks and Neighbourhood Parks.

Open space is well distributed across the city with most residents within 0.8 km of a park.(see Figure2-10). The plan identifies minor gaps in residential areas and the balance of the gaps are located in commercial or industrial/manufacturing lands. We have a **deficit** of **22.22ha** in neighbourhood parkland and a **surplus** of **144.38ha** in community/regional parkland. The combined total of neighbourhood and community/regional parkland provides for an overall surplus in the open space system of **976.22ha**, not including other government lands.

The neighbourhood and community/regional park deficiencies identified in Tables 2 and 3 are a result of parks being undersized for the population that they serve. Park size is especially an issue in Wards 2, 3 and 4 as these parks are located in older, higher density neighbourhoods that did not have the benefit of the existing parkland dedication standards when development occurred. The undersized parks make the provision of space for activities such as, sports fields, trails and unstructured open space difficult to accommodate. Gaps and deficiencies of neighbourhood and community/ regional park land can be addressed through the consolidation or acquisitions of open space lands as opportunities arise.

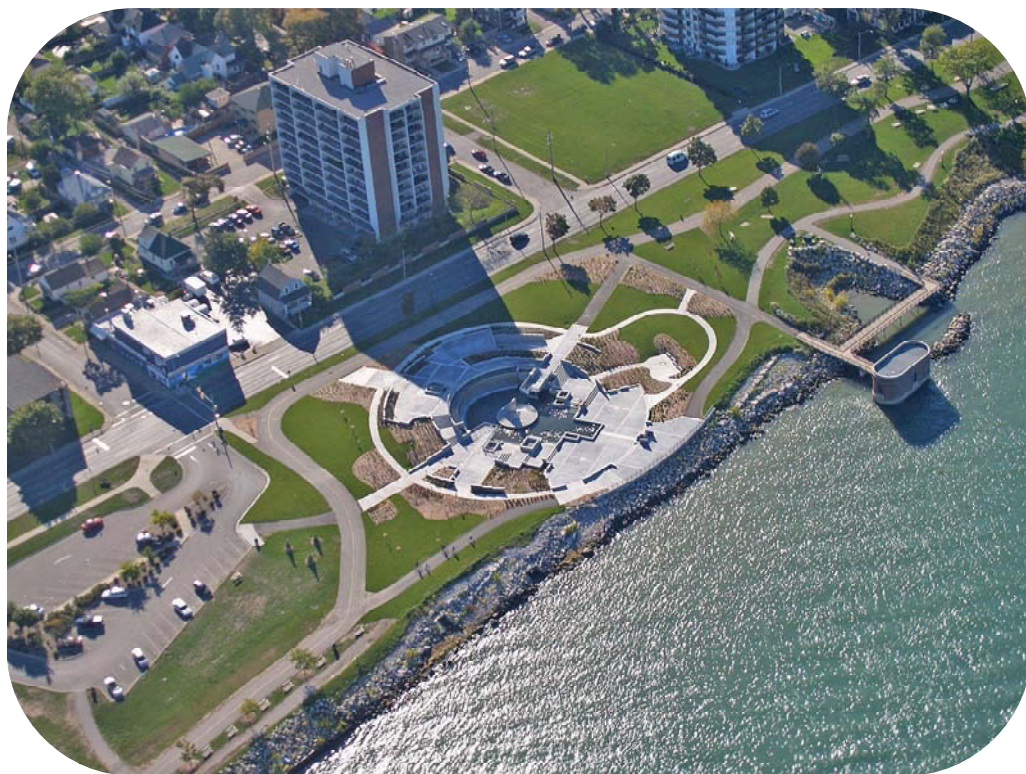


Figure 2-7: Bert Weeks Memorial Fountain



Figure 2-9: Windsor Sculpture



Figure 2-8: Horticultural Display along E.C. Row Expressway

WALKING DISTANCE

Based on the long held standard of 0.8km (1/2 mile) distance for people to walk comfortably to parks, the distribution of parks within the City of Windsor appears to be adequate and adopted into the City's Official Plan. However recent studies have taken into consideration the aging population of many North American cities, as well as the growing suburban development. These studies have found that those demographics are only willing to walk half of that original distance in lower density areas. One study also indicates that neighbourhood parks serve approximately 1,500 people adequately. that study also concludes that both quarter-mile and half-mile distance goals are valid but within different

demographics. Within denser urban population areas, it is impractical to provide a single park for every 1,500 persons. Urban dwellers tend to be more transit oriented and less reliant on vehicles, opting to walk greater distances. It is here where the half-mile (0.8 km) distance rule more appropriately applies.

In the future, it may be necessary to determine whether current walking distances are adequate for the demographics that may present themselves. Until then the 0.8km walking distance is acceptable.

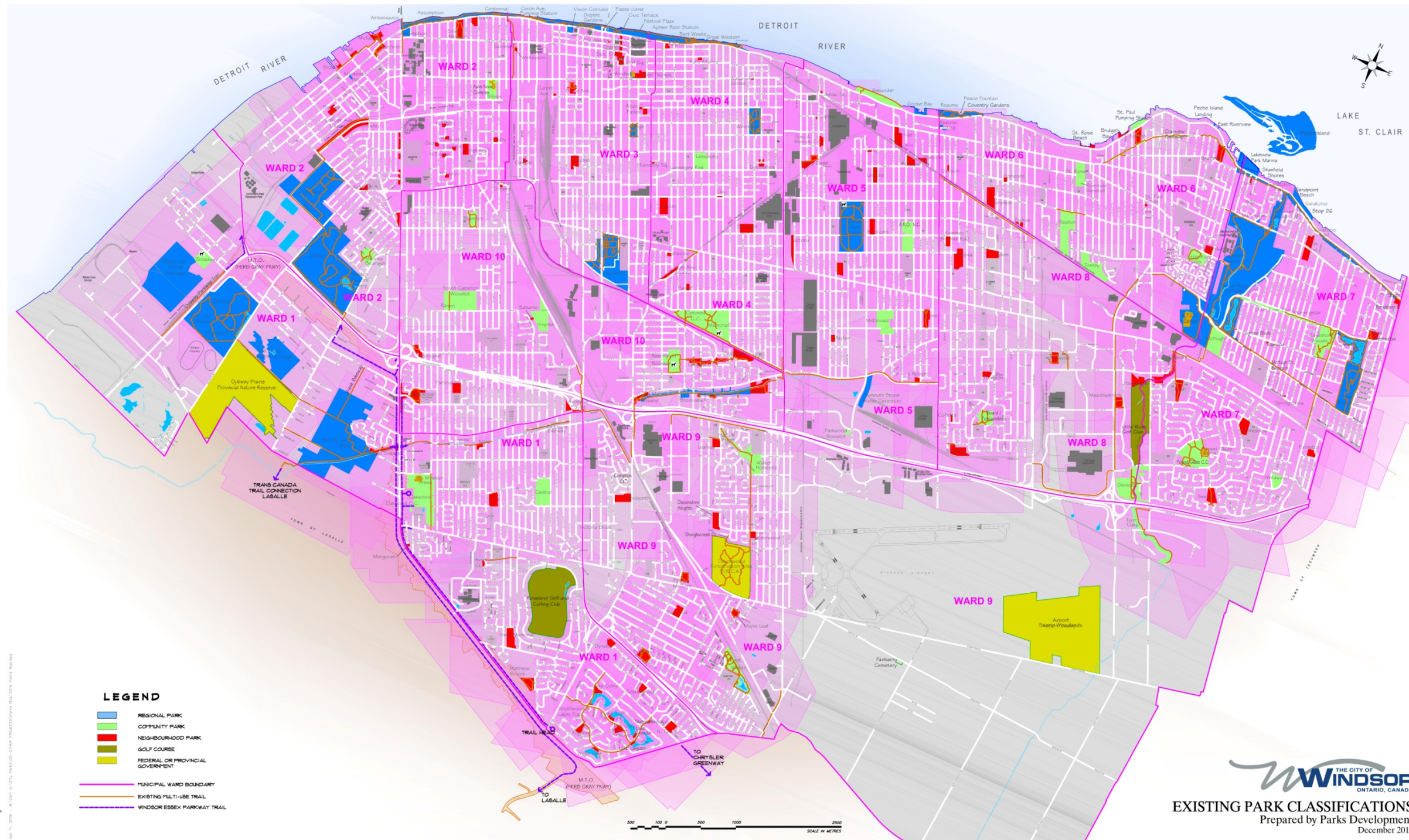


Figure2-10: Catchment area of Windsor parks at a 0.8km (1/2 mile) walking distance

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

As per the Official Plan, Neighbourhood Parks are designed for the recreation and leisure activities of residents within a defined service radius of Windsor. These are local parks that serve their local residences within a comfortable walking distance, and usually focus on passive recreation activities with open spaces of grass, trees for shade, and may include pathways, small playgrounds, benches, picnic tables, and possibly a single sports field (either baseball or soccer) which is used primarily for casual use and not generally rented out for organized sports games or tournaments.

ANALYSIS

There are 142 neighbourhood parks throughout the City of Windsor which constitute the largest class of parks in the parks system, however given the average size of such parks is between 0.6 to 1.2 hectares (1.48 to 2.97 acres) they actually are the smallest class by area. The city currently has an overall deficit of neighbourhood parks in 7 of the 10 Wards (see Table 2) by Ward.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	No of Parks	Population 2011	Parkland Required in Hectares (0.8 ha/1000 people)	Total Provided In Hectares	Deficit (-) (in Hectares)	Surplus (+) (in Hectares)
WARD 1	19	22,071	17.65	16.48	-1.17	
WARD 2	21	20,066	16.05	19.11		3.06
WARD 3	15	21,419	17.14	11.48	-5.66	
WARD 4	11	24,126	19.30	8.43	-10.87	
WARD 5	17	18,407	14.73	17.20		2.47
WARD 6	13	23,305	18.64	12.26	-6.38	
WARD 7	13	23,058	18.45	13.24	-5.21	
WARD 8	11	18,780	15.02	19.51		4.49
WARD 9	10	19,945	15.96	14.48	-1.48	
WARD 10	11	19,698	15.76	14.29	-1.47	
TOTALS	141	210,875	168.70	146.48	-22.22	Deficit

Table 2-2: Neighbourhood Parks Supply

STRENGTHS

- Currently serve the entire city by catchment area (see Figure 2-10)
- Generally maintained to a satisfactory level.

WEAKNESSES

- Several parks are too small to provide more than green space.
- Many do not have trees or means of shade.
- Deficit of parks in 7 of 10 Wards.
- Current operations resources have found reduction in level of service such as grass cutting, or programmed activity.
- Those planned in the 1970's focused on quantity and not quality of the space resulting in many underutilized parks.
- Many are not accessible, or lack activity for seniors.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Communities are focusing on green space to provide leisure activity.
- Neighbourhood organization groups to champion them and become involved.
- Community Garden Collective.
- Naturalization due to a better understanding of the benefits and needs.
- Low Impact Design.
- Parks can provide a focus for the neighbourhood through programming and design.

PRESSURES

- Vandalism
- Poor image created by the media focusing on negative and not the positive.
- West Nile Virus.
- AODA Legislation requires all municipal parks to be accessible.
- Liability due to perceived lack maintenance or neglect.
- "Not In My Back Yard" vs. "Yes In My Back Yard" attitudes towards change.
- Climate change.

COMMUNITY / REGIONAL PARKS

As per the Official Plan, **Community and Regional Parks** are designed for the recreation and leisure activities of all Windsor residents and/or a broader regional population.

Community Parks are larger scale parks ranging from 2 to 6 hectares (4.94 to 14.83 acres) serving a greater catchment area and still offer the base recreational services of a Neighbourhood Park, but with a broader range of amenities including such items as splash pads, picnic shelters, accessible playgrounds, and organized sports fields to mention a few. Such parks may also include a small arena, pool, a community centre or library as an anchor facility. There are instances in the city where community parks can be associated more closely with a school to provide a joint cooperative use.

Regional Parks generally attract users from all across the city and often attract users from outside the city boundaries, or even beyond Essex County. Like Community Parks they provide the base services of a Neighbourhood Park. Since the volume of users is potentially greater, the level of services is also greater. They have a significant draw which can also foster commercial opportunities (such as; carnivals, festivals, art shows, or special events). Regional parks provide recreational services with of a more organized sports focus; a large arena complex that may provide indoor facilities, an example being the WFCU Centre.

Regional Parks also vary in scale and activities, as do the amenities they encompass. Examples of these amenities may include tourist attractions (such as the floral display gardens in Queen Elizabeth II Gardens, Dieppe Gardens and Coventry Gardens), natural woodlot and prairie of the Ojibway Complex, the ribbon of parks along the Riverfront or the significant heritage aspects of Willistead Park.

ANALYSIS

The city currently displays a surplus of Community/Regional parks due to the large tracts of protected natural land in the extreme east (Ward 7) and west (Wards 1&2). Seven of the ten City Wards show acute deficiencies of 25% to 74% of that which is required by the Official Plan (see Table 3).

COMMUNITY/ REGIONAL PARKS	No of Parks	Population 2011	Parkland Required in Hectares (3.25 ha/1000 people)	Total Provided In Hectares	Deficit (-) (in Hectares)	Surplus (+) (in Hectares)
WARD 1	9	22,071	71.73	234.49		162.76
WARD 2	6	20,066	65.21	123.50		58.29
WARD 3	7	21,419	69.61	33.52	-36.09	
WARD 4	6	24,126	78.41	40.65	-37.76	
WARD 5	5	18,407	59.82	44.71	-15.11	
WARD 6	8	23,305	75.74	52.82	-22.92	
WARD 7	13	23,058	74.94	216.13		141.19
WARD 8	2	18,780	61.04	16.90	-44.14	
WARD 9	5	19,945	64.82	24.92	-39.90	
WARD 10	6	19,698	64.02	42.08	-21.94	
TOTALS	67	210,875	685.34	829.72	Surplus	144.38

Table 2-3: Community/Regional Supply by Ward

STRENGTHS

- City is currently well served.
- Surplus lands are a result of cooperative efforts with the Province and ERCA to preserve natural heritage sites (Ojibway Complex and Little River Corridor).
- Diverse type of parks and activities provided through the city.
- Focus on Accessible playgrounds in Community and Regional parks.
- Focus on showcase parks (Riverfront, Jackson, Willistead) as floral display areas with skilled horticultural staff.
- Larger parks provide greater diversity in activity and ability to provide organized sports.
- Greater potential for engaging more of the public in same location..
- High approval rating by users.

WEAKNESSES

- Current OP designation creates a very broad array of park types in this classification resulting in confused priorities with respect to level of service.
- Breadth of diversity does not facilitate equity in level of service between park types.
- Deficit of parks in 7 of 10 wards due to uneven distribution.
- Demand of organized sports fields is maintenance intensive.
- Operating costs require prioritization of services leaving some parks underserved resulting in a negative perception by users.
- Many do not have trees or means of shade.
- Low annual budget for the volume of parks.
- Life cycle costing is not reflected in preservation of amenities found in many regional parks.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Community support for these spaces is positive.
- Potential highly visible Legacy projects to entice private investment through partnerships.
- Naturalization in cooperation with ERCA.
- Other municipalities taking some of the organized sports burden away allowing for concentrated efforts on those areas which the community has responded as desirable (i.e. passive recreation types).
- Community Garden Collective.
-

PRESSURES

- Vandalism.
- Poor image created by the media focusing on negative and not the positive.
- West Nile Virus.
- AODA Legislation requires all municipal parks to be accessible.
- Liability due to perceived lack maintenance or neglect.
- "Not In My Back Yard" vs. "Yes In My Back Yard" attitudes towards change.
- Climate change.
- Competition from neighbouring municipalities to provide similar park venues.
- Aging population.

There are several avenues to consider when restructuring the current parks classification structure. Having only 2 classifications has lead to some ambiguity in what constitutes different levels of service operationally. It is therefore important to consider a reclassification that is based on:

- o Size
- o Use patterns
- o Demand
- o Natural resources of the park

The following reclassification of parks is recommended:

- *Neighbourhood*
- *Community*
- *Regional*
- *Natural*
- *Recreationways*

Within these broader classifications, sub-classifications will be necessary to further define level of service. (see Appendix 'I' for a complete list of parks by current classification)

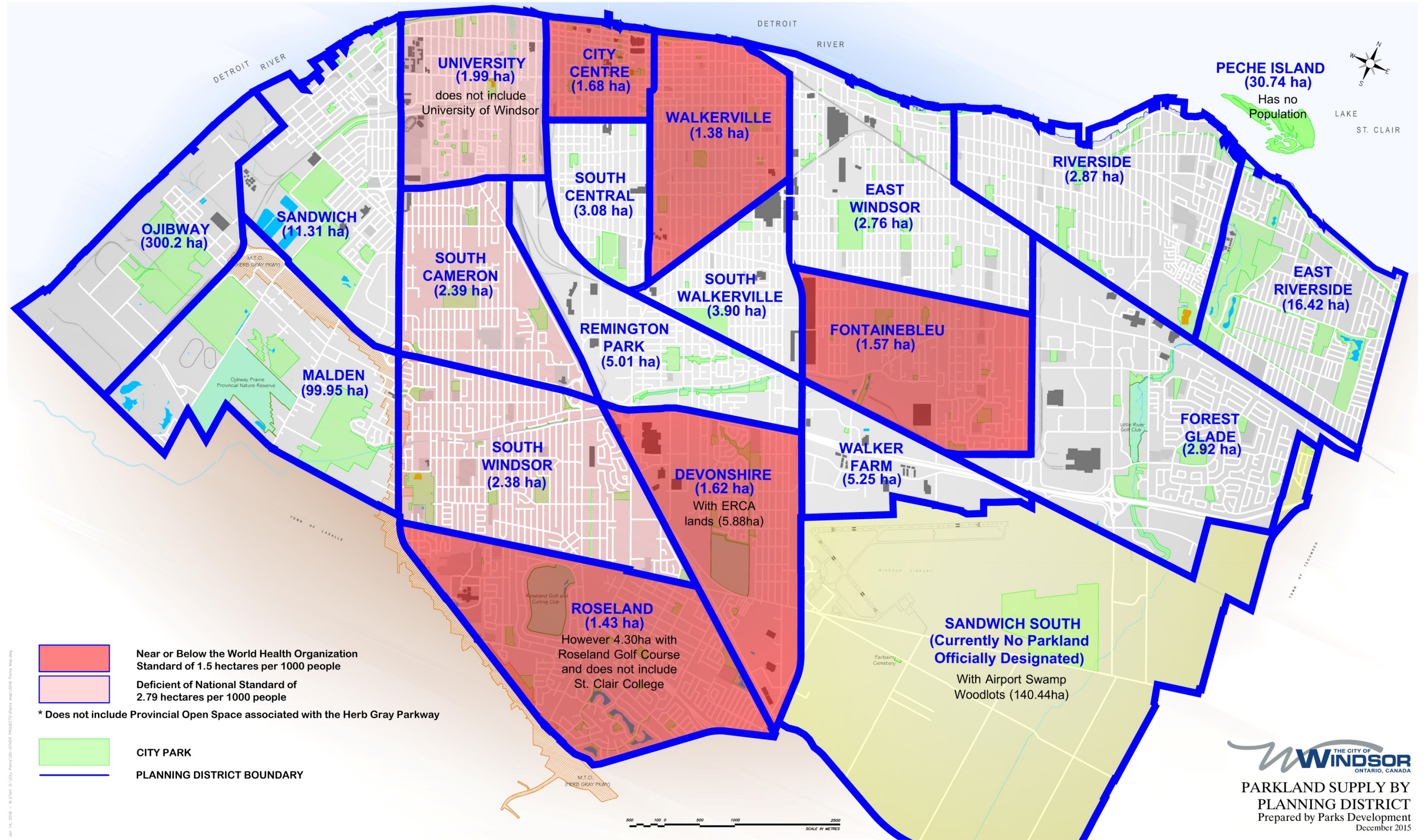


Figure 2-11: Parkland Supply by Planning District

HERITAGE RESOURCES

Windsor has long valued its parks and recreational facilities. As a result, very little of the cultural and natural heritage value has been lost due to a respect for the achievements that the city has made in this area, over the Legacy of the Parks System. Many of the memorials and features remain in their original state or have been rehabilitated to ensure their survival. When achievable, the natural heritage areas have been absorbed into the city's parks system and preserved through bylaw, provincial and federal legislation, cooperation with partnerships and other government agencies, and by identifying policy and buffers to ensure resources are maintained.

CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

There are several sites listed on the City of Windsor Cultural Map to assist people in finding various monuments, sites and heritage resources. With funding support from the Government of Ontario's *Creative Communities Prosperity Fund*, the City of Windsor has completed a Cultural Mapping Project.

- *Phase 1 of the project gathered and analyzed data from City records and community input to create a working inventory of cultural assets and resources.*
- *Phase 2 of the project gave that data to the City of Windsor's Geomatics Division to develop a real interactive cultural map and working applications for use by those living in, working in, or visiting our community.*

The City of Windsor's Culture Map not only shows you the physical location of our cultural assets and resources, but it also includes full contact information and links to websites. The map has been designed to be fully accessible and includes the most up-to-date information provided at the time of the research phase including:

- Heritage Sites
- Historical Plaques
- Park Monuments
- Murals
- Sculptures
- Heritage Areas, and
- Heritage Conservation Districts

- MicMac Park Gates
- Realtor Park Gates
- Blue Heron Lake Bridge
- Lanspeary Park Gates
- Little River Corridor Bridge
- Optimist Memorial Park Gates
- Ford test Track Gates
- Jackson Park Entry Gates

GATES & BRIDGES



- Alexander Park
- Mackenzie Hall
- Devonshire Court Park
- Herb Gray Natural Reserve
- Shaughnessy Cohen Woods
- Malden Park

COMMEMORATIVE MARKERS



- Civic Esplanade - Tower of Freedom
- Lakeview Marina – Pelee Passage Lighthouse
- C.N.R. Park - Spirit of Windsor
- Lanspeary Park - Band Shelter
- Mill Street Heritage Park - Windmill

ARTIFACTS & STRUCTURES



- Derwent Park
- Drouillard Park
- Mackenzie Hall
- Mill Street Heritage Park
- Sandpoint Beach
- Matthew Rodzik Park
- Windsor Sculpture Park
- Bert Weeks Memorial Gardens

ART INSTALLATIONS



- Willistead Park
- Assumption, Ambassador & Centennial Riverfront Parks
- City Hall Square
- Dieppe Gardens
- Jackson Park
- Coventry Gardens / Reaume Park

COLLECTIONS



NATURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

The City currently has approximately 655 hectares of natural and naturalized parkland within the greenway system inclusive of municipally and provincially owned public open space, with roughly 90% being indigenous environments. These parks are primarily located in the far eastern and far western ends of the city, with a scattering of smaller vestiges of natural forest being preserved throughout the south central areas of the City.

The largest collection of natural parkland in Windsor is located in the western end of the city, collectively known as the Ojibway Nature Complex consisting of the following sites:

- Black Oak Heritage & Broadway Park
- Tom Joy Woods & Ojibway Nature Park
- Tall Grass Prairie Heritage Park
- Spring Garden ANSI & Seven Sisters Park
- Oakwood Nature Reserve
- Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve (Provincially owned)
- St Clair Prairie E.S.A. (Provincially owned)

At the eastern end of the city is the Little River Corridor which along provides a natural nucleus for several parks and trails including:

- Sandpoint Beach
- Ganatchio Trail
- Lakeshore Woods Park
- East Riverside Park and Blue Heron Lake
- East End Park
- Little River Acres Park
- WFCU & McHugh Parkland
- Bush, Teedie and Hawthorne Parks
- Little River Golf Club
- Derwent Park, and
- Twin Oaks Park



Figure 2-12: Kayaking at Peche Island

Once developed, the Sandwich South Lands can provide a further extension of this natural corridor to the Airport Swamp Woodlots

Also in the east end of the city at the confluence of Lake St Clair and the Detroit River is Peche Island. Though once a Provincial Park, the island was purchased by the City of Windsor in 1999 in order to preserve this natural heritage site. Today the island boasts its biodiversity of vegetation types and wildlife habitats; many of which are unique to the island within the Essex County Region.

Throughout the city are several isolated patches of natural forest contributing to the natural heritage of the City's Greenway System. These include:

- *Udine Park near Fogular Furlan Recreation Complex*
- *Dynasty Park*
- *South Cameron Woodlot*
- *Optimist Memorial*
- *Kenilworth Park*
- *Herb Grey Nature Reserve*
- *Parkwood Woodlot*
- *Tranby Park*
- *Lakeshore Woods & East Riverside /Blue Heron Park*

Figure 2-13: McKee Park (right)

WATER RESOURCES

Situated immediately adjacent to one of North America's busiest waterways, Windsor has in the past seen a very active water-based recreational resource. Since the tightening of the international border between Canada and United States in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the small water craft resource in the area has been greatly affected.

Global trade has impacted the Great Lakes shipping industry through improved alternate methods of shipping goods between countries. Many older Windsorites recall the days when watching boats along the Detroit River was a favourite past-time. Today the sporadic ship or sailing vessel is more of a novelty, than norm. However, as found in many other cities which have a developed waterfront there is still a desire for people to access the water, either to capture a view of the Detroit Skyline, walk along the riverfront paths, or even sit on the rocky breakwater to catch a splash of waves.

RIVERFRONT LANDS

Windsor has an award winning waterfront, providing a variety of recreational activity associated with the river, as well as habitat for many fish and aquatic birds. Though much of the shoreline along the Detroit River has been hard edgedⁱⁱⁱ, there are several locations where there are opportunities for direct access along the River. In cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources and ERCA, the City has been able to provide water access in the form of marina, rocky beaches and natural habitats where appropriate. Development along this section of the riverfront is governed by The Central Riverfront Implementation Plan (CRIP); a living document with established design principles and guidelines as standards to direct the future development of parkland, open space, built environments, as well as pedestrian and cycling circulation throughout this ribbon of parks.

WETLANDS

The term **wetland** means lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, and lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. The presence of abundant water causes the formation of hydric soils and favours the dominance of water tolerant plants.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry identifies the most valuable wetlands as Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSW) and provincially significant coastal wetlands in the City of Windsor. Significant wetlands are delineated in accordance with the Ontario Wetlands Evaluation System – a science-based ranking system. As per Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), two areas within City of Windsor boundaries have been found to contain provincially significant wetlands: the Ojibway Wetland Complex and the Windsor Airport Swamps.

Additionally, a part of the Detroit Marsh Wetland Complex lies within Windsor. This complex has been identified as a provincially significant coastal wetland (PSCW) since 1985, and stretches south along the Detroit River shore and into the Town of LaSalle.

No development is permitted within provincially significant wetlands. In instances where a development proposal is within adjacent lands to a provincially significant wetland, the City will require that the development proponent complete an Environmental Evaluation Report in accordance with the requirements of the City of Windsor Official Plan.

Areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs) describe areas of land and water containing natural landscape or features that have been identified as having life science or earth science values related to protection, scientific study, or education. ANSIs are not designated by municipalities. ANSIs lands are now incorporated in the PSW areas; therefore, no development is permitted within ANSIs.

VALLEY LANDS

Valleylands term refers to a natural area that occurs in a valley or other landform depression that has water flowing through or standing for some period of the year. There are three valleylands in the Windsor area: Detroit River, Little River, and Turkey Creek.

WATER SHED MANAGEMENT

Turkey Creek and Little River are the two major tributaries of the Detroit River within the City of Windsor. Turkey Creek starts just east of Central Avenue picking up urban stormwater runoff through Windsor before eventually discharging into the Detroit River in LaSalle. Little River originates in the area of Sandwich South, picking up runoff from agricultural lands then urban runoff before discharging into the Detroit River east of Lauzon Road. There are other opportunities for ERCA's involvement with City Parkland including potential preservation and storm water management priorities.

The City of Windsor Parks Department has integrated several wet and dry storm water management areas in parks to provide reduction in the sewage surcharge on the built infrastructure. These Low-Impact-Design facilities provide various forms of recreation and natural habitat.

To provide such stewardship, ERCA supports the concept of a 'Green Belt' of natural and naturalized areas to link the two Natural Park anchors of Ojibway Nature Complex in the west and Peche Island/Little River Corridor in the east. The major barrier to this concept is the current parkland classification of the city which defines traditional park settings, geared towards active sports recreation and the development of leisure park activities with no emphasis on the natural. The Official Plan does discuss Natural Heritage Sites, however it falls short of specific classification due to much of the potential natural lands listed in the CNHS Inventory lie on private land holds.

LITTLE RIVER

Little River Watershed covers a land area of 6490ha with 140 ha supporting natural heritage areas on the east side of the city. The river itself empties into the Detroit River opposite Peche Island near Lake St. Clair. The River watershed is managed through collaborated efforts of the City of Windsor, ERCA and a community lead volunteer organization referred to as **Lil' REG (Little River Enhancement Group)** who has participated in 120 cleanups, planted over 25,000 trees and helped in the development of nature trails and bridges that provide access for passive recreation and nature observation along the corridor. Nature lovers have spotted muskrats, turtles, eagles, owls and other wildlife in the greenway.

TURKEY CREEK

Turkey Creek Watershed covers a land area of 6112ha with 725 ha supporting natural heritage areas including the Ojibway Nature Complex, Devonwood Conservation Area and most of the natural areas in the Town of LaSalle. Connected to Turkey Creek are several floodways including the Grand Marais Floodway and the Wolfe Drain which channel water from the southern end of the city. Recent development associated with the RT, Honourable Herb Gray Parkway, will see much of the stormwater associated with these two tributaries diverted and filtered through stormwater retention ponds prior to entering the natural water system of Turkey Creek.

SANDPOINT BEACH

Lying on the south shore of Lake St Clair, Sandpoint Beach is a 2 hectare property at the eastern end of the city, just north of Riverside Drive. Together with Stop 26 and Ganatchio Park, (often considered one park since they are linked) these three beach sites provided local residents with the only sand beach in the City of Windsor. During the summer the spot is an active playground for sun-worshippers and those just wanting to engage in water activity from swimming, to wind surfing, canoeing and kayaking

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

The Recreation and Culture Department has been assessing sports facilities throughout the city for both outdoor and indoor programming. A full Sports Need Analysis is needed in order to properly assess the service delivery of outdoor programming and potential partnerships with sports and leisure recreation organizations.

CITY OF WINDSOR RECREATION INVENTORY



Figure 2-14: Sandpoint Beach (left)

The City Parks Department offers a wide array of recreational activities for all citizens to enjoy. While many of the ball diamonds, fields and sports courts are relatively new, there are just as many that have long served their community and are in need of revitalization or reassessment of their appropriateness which is where a sports needs study will be valuable. (See Strategic Directions)

During its establishment, the Town of Lakeshore made an observation that can readily apply to the recreational need that the City of Windsor is experiencing,

“Municipalities are coming under increasing expectations to being able to deliver a wider range of leisure opportunities, many of them involving increasingly sophisticated facilities, integrated services delivery approaches and growing long term capital, operating and financial / sustainability requirements. Society has moved to a point where there is a growing array of leisure activities that people want to be involved with, many of them involving smaller clusters / segments of individuals within the community and beyond. Also, many activities / services are subdividing into groups that want high performance experiences or individuals who just wish to try something out or have a more limited experience. In the middle, are expectations or a hobbyist or regular participant at a recreation level of interest ...”

(The Town of Lakeshore COMMUNITY SERVICES MASTER PLAN)

TOTAL	Recreation Type
74	Baseball Diamond
8	Basebal Stadium
6	Basketball Court
1	Bike Trails
4	Beach
10	Concessions
2	Cricket Pitch
6	Docking Facilities
3	Football /Rugby Field
8	Ice Rink (indoors)
3	Ice Rink (outdoors)
4	Lawn Bowling Green
1	Marina
11	Picnic Area
6	Picnic Shelter
2	Skatepark
1	Skiing - Cross Country Trails
41	Soccer Field
9	Soccer Stadium
7	Splash Pad
13	Swimming Pool
38	Tennis Court
2	Therapeutic Pool
1	Track (running)
4	Ultimate Disc Sports
14	Walking Trail

It is therefore important to consider the need for recreational diversity, and develop a strategy for parkland development moving forward, in order for people to use and *Rediscover Our Parks.*



Figure 2-16: WFCU Recreation Centre

Figure 2-15: City of Windsor Outdoor Recreational Supply

NEIGHBOURING MUNICIPALITIES RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Windsor's ability to provide outdoor recreational programming in an efficient and sustainable manner is directly impacted in the inventory of parks openspace and recreational facilities provided by the neighbouring municipalities. Though it is often seen as competition it is also an ability to assess the total resources offered by the entire region to offset any saturation that may be happening in a particular sport, or outdoor recreational service. While it is important to note these provisions, it must also be well assessed to provide appropriate recreational and cultural amenities in outdoor open spaces in our parks system. The chart below summarizes the inventory of recreational amenities in the various municipalities in Essex County.

TOWN OF LASALLE

In 2014, The Town of LaSalle completed its Parks & Recreation Master Plan, "*Connect to an Active Lifestyle*" as an update to their previous Culture and Recreation Master Plan completed in 1995. As a working document for the next 10 to 15 years, the report outlines the recreational needs and effectiveness of the current park system in the town with respect to parks, open space, trails and recreational facilities.

The LaSalle inventory of Parks and recreation facilities includes 28 Parks (excluding Vollmer Culture & Recreation Complex) covering over 40 hectares of parkland.

In addition to the individual neighbourhood parks, the Vollmer Culture & Recreation Complex recreational facilities include:

Future expansion to the south of property to increase the number of sports fields.

In the master Plan Update, trails in the town will be connected to create the "LaSalle Greenway" focusing on three key components:

- Core Natural Heritage Sites
- Natural Corridors, and
- Linkages

TECUMSEH

The Town of Tecumseh lies immediately east of the City of Windsor and has 41 Parks with 200 hectares of parkland available to its residents.

TOWN OF LAKESHORE

The Town of the Lakeshore is the largest municipality in Essex County by land mass, situated roughly 5 km east of the City of Windsor along the southern shore of Lake St Clair. It consists of 22 public parks, beaches, and lakeside parkettes, including the Altas Tube Centre. It includes 6 conservation areas designated by ERCA that total just over 100 hectares with trails, forests, wetland and beaches for a wide variety of passive nature-oriented recreational activities, 8 with waterfront access.

The Altas Tube Centre is roughly a 16, 000 square metre indoor recreation complex hosting, 3 ice pads, library, and gymnasium. A second phase to this facility is currently under construction including a large aquatic complex, a 5km outdoor walking trail, splash pad, soccer fields, and multi-use outdoor courts.

Amenity	Total in abutting Municipalities	Town of Tecumseh	Town of LaSalle	Town of Lakeshore	Town of Amherstburg	Leamington	Essex	Harrow	McGregor	Colchester	Essex County Total
Amphitheatre	2		1	1							2
Baseball	42	17	13	12	22	3	6	8	6		87
Basketball Court	19	11	5	3	3	5	2				29
Beach	1			1	2		2				5
Beach Parkettes	9			9							9
Bocce ball	0				1						1
Cricket Pitch	1			1							1
Dog Park	1			1	1						2
Drinking Water	5		5								5
Exercise Equipment	1			1							1
Food Concessions	8	5	3		1	1			1		11
Football	1			1	3						4
Marina / Boat Ramp	11	8	2	1	3	1		2			17
Pickleball Court	4	3		1	1						5
Picnic Area	31	19	8	4	3	1	2				37
Picnic Shelter	7		5	2	2	3	2	3	2		19
Playground	60	23	21	16	4	15	8	3	2	1	92
Recreation Complex	2		1	1	1	1	1	1			6
Running Track	3		2	1	2		1				6
Skateboard Park	3	1	1	1	2		1	1			7
Soccer	55	19	32	4	30		5	6	3		99
Splash Pad	2			2	1	1		1		1	5
Swimming	4		2	2	1		1				6
Tennis Courts	17	9	5	3	14			3	2		36
Toboggan Hill	1			1							1
Volleyball	6		3	3	4	1					11
Walking Trails	17		8	9	6	14	2	1			40
Washrooms	17	7	6	4	3	2	1	2	2	1	27

Figure 2-17: Recreation supply for all Essex County Municipalities outside of Windsor

OTHER AGENCY OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

Within the City of Windsor are several public open spaces not under the City Parks jurisdiction. These are primarily lands held in trust by Provincial and Federal Government agencies, the Essex Region Conservation Authority, and the various school boards. These green spaces provide many opportunities for the public to engage in outdoor recreational activity and need to be considered when assessing needs and opportunities for people to *Rediscover Our Parks*.

CITY OF WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS INVENTORY

The Windsor school systems, including Public, Catholic and both French School Boards contain outdoor space that is used by the public at the discretion of the various school boards. The estimated total of additional open space provided by elementary and secondary schools (including buildings) is **193.96ha** (479.3 acres) The inclusion of the University of Windsor and St. Clair College increases the area to 251.33ha.(621.05 acres).

PRIVATE AND NONPROFIT RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are several privately run recreational services in the city including Little River and Roseland golf courses; though the property is City owned they operate under license as private clubs. As well many of the ethnic communities operate private sports clubs especially for soccer including:

- Croatian Centre
- Fogular Furlan
- Central Athletic Park
- Teutonia Club

Many non-profit agencies including YMCA and YWCA of Windsor offer recreational facilities, however these are predominantly indoor in nature.

FEDERAL



Figure 2-18: Ojibway Shores outlined in red abutting Black Oak Prairie Heritage Park
 (photo courtesy of Windsor Port Authority)

The Government of Canada through the Windsor Port Authority (WPA) holds title to several parcels of land along the Windsor riverfront stretching from the LaSalle through the Town of Tecumseh to the Town of Lakeshore. The WPA also hold the water lot portion of all properties along their jurisdiction. To do any work along the Detroit River or Lake St Clair, will require approval from the WPA.

OJIBWAY SHORES

Within the lands held by the WPA, is a 12.9 hectare parcel of land immediately north of the Ojibway Prairie Complex and Black Oak Heritage Park. While currently available from the WPA and Federal Government as a 60 year lease for the purpose of industrial development, the land is a significant natural resource that if left in its current condition could be a valuable addition to the biodiversity of the Ojibway Prairie Complex.

PROVINCE

RT. HONOURABLE HERB GRAY PARKWAY

As part of the international gateway project to facilitate traffic between Canada and the United States, the 106 hectares (264 acres) of parkland associated with the Parkway has been designed to accommodate and support the natural heritage resources established by the Ojibway Prairie Complex. Though the parkland is not part of the civic inventory of parks and recreational trails, once established they will provide an extension to the natural corridors found in the southern and western end of the City as well as expand multi-use trails and bikeways by several kilometres.

ONTARIO PRAIRIE PROVINCIAL NATURE PRESERVE

The Ontario Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve, is owned by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and constitutes a significant component to the Ojibway Prairie Complex which also includes the four City owned natural areas of Ojibway Park, Tallgrass Prairie Heritage Park, Black Oak Prairie Heritage Park, and Spring Garden Natural Area. It is one of Ontario's largest (109.9 hectares) and most important prairie-savanna sites. Combined, the five natural areas total 334 hectares of indigenous parkland that is accessible to the public, hosting more than 700 flowering plants, some of which are found nowhere else in Ontario. Interesting and rare wildlife include the Massasauga rattlesnake, yellow-breasted chat, Butler's garter snake and over 80 species of butterflies.

ESSEX REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

REGIONAL APPROACH WITH ERCA

Section 20 of the Conservation Authorities Act, provides Conservation Authorities with the mandate to establish and undertake, in areas over which they have jurisdiction, programs designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals. In 1983, based on this mandate of renewable resource conservation, ERCA developed policies and operational objectives which relate to the conservation and restoration of habitat. As policy ERCA's mandate is *"to.. take its own initiative to carry out a program for fish and wildlife enhancement which will result in increased abundance and diversity of fish and wildlife habitat and native species..."iv.*

Operational Objectives include:

- To protect Environmentally Significant Areas.
- To Manage and increase forest resources for environmental, recreational, commercial and ameliorative purposes.
- To improve fish and wildlife resources.

Strategic Plan Initiatives include:

- Enhance Biodiversity Through Restoration and Tree-planting.
- Develop projects to create or restore wetlands in appropriate regional settings.
- Collaborate with community organizations and residents to increase tree planting in available areas.

DEVONWOOD CONSERVATION AREA (ERCA)

Though many Candidate Natural Heritage Sites have been identified, the 36.9 hectare Devonwood Conservation Area is currently the only property in Windsor totally under the jurisdiction of the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA). Eight species of oak can be found on the property, along with Eastern Screech Owls, Long Eared Owls and Little Brown Bats. Though not part of the City's inventory of parks, Devonwood is the only truly indigenous Carolinian Forest found in the City of Windsor offering, 4.5 kilometres of trails that are open to the public and provide visitors with an opportunity to engage in this natural heritage resource.

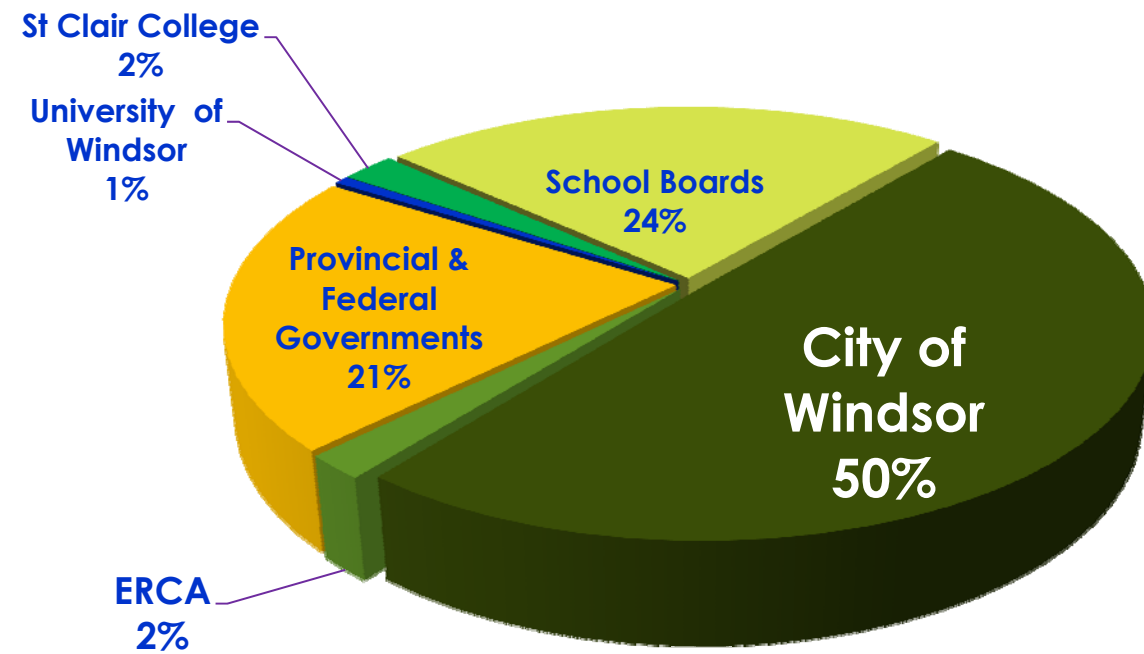


Figure 2-19: Parkland Open Space distribution by area (above)

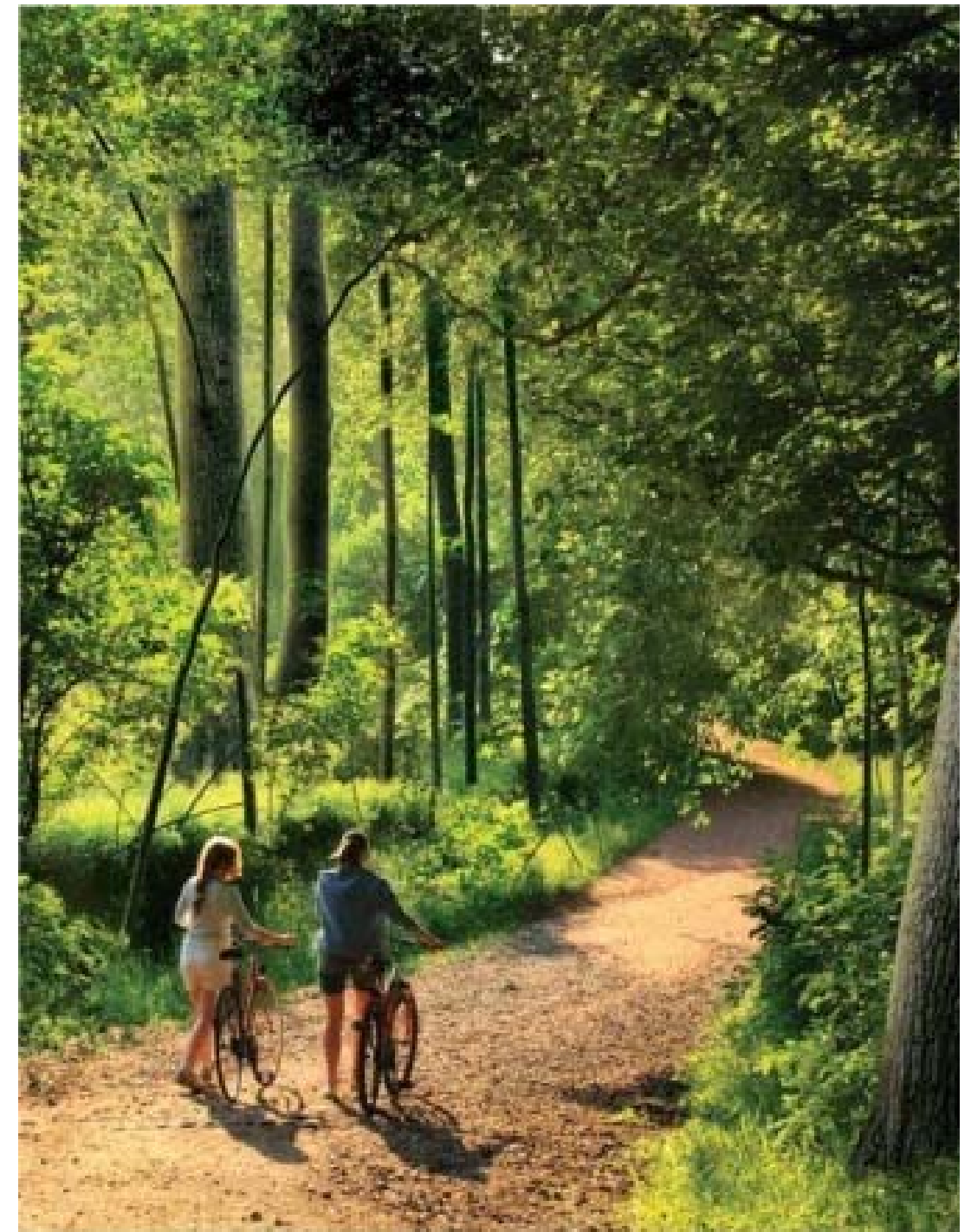


Figure 2-20: Cyclists on a trail in Devonwood Conservation Area (photo courtesy of ERCA)

ENDNOTES

- i City of Windsor Official Plan – Section 6.7 Open Space
- ii Green Space Acquisition and Stewardship in Canada's Urban Municipalities – Evergreen Canada, 2004; p8.
- iii Essex Region conservation Authority, 2012. Detroit River Shoreline Assessment. 55 pages + Appendices
- iv ERCA, 1983