



November 5, 2024

The Corporation of the Township of Brock
1 Cameron Street East
PO Box 10
Cannington, ON L0E 1E0
Via recreation@brock.ca

Dear Township of Brock Staff and Council:

On behalf of the Cannington Horticultural Society (CHS), I wish to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2024 MacLeod Park Redesign Concepts. Our consideration of this project was greatly enhanced by attending the Open House held on October 24. We appreciated the helpful and open discussions held with the Township of Brock representatives and their detailed responses to our many questions. We are providing the following proposals for the MacLeod Park Redesign:

- While we understand the ideal would be to endorse either Concept 1 or 2, we believe that features from both Concepts should be selected to develop a “Concept 3” and will explain our thinking. Our initial preference tended to Concept 2, for a number of reasons. Referring to the park areas on the south side of the river, this concept appears to provide better accessibility to the many of the park features, for example having closer or easier access for those who might have mobility issues or using strollers with children without needed to get past a baseball diamond. Additionally, we like the open space appearing to the right of the entry and have a suggestion below for such a space to be found somewhere within the overall park. However, Concept 2 requires relocating one of the baseball diamonds. We understand that the cost to relocate this diamond can be expected to be over \$500,000, based on estimates speculated on today’s costs, would likely be even more in the future and it would be very challenging to justify this cost. We encourage the Planning Team to maximize accessibility features and open play space as much as possible at entrances but do not recommend to relocate the baseball diamond. We suggest to modify the entrance area in Concept 2 to incorporate as much open space as possible rather than a “gate-like” entrance, perhaps by devoting some of the parking space to accommodate the most uncluttered, expansive entry area.
- Building on our recommendations to expeditiously initiate tree planting activities submitted on September 25, 2024 pertaining to the 2025 Capital Budget projects for Parks etc., we have a proposal for a tree design feature incorporating a “heart” shape and pathways. This proposal incorporates the established slogan for Cannington as the “heart of Ontario” and includes using larger native trees, such as red maples and a variety of other trees, and native plants to create a “park experience”. Please refer to Attachment 1 provided overleaf. This feature would be planted in an open space and would include pathways within and exit paths out to other park features and areas.

- During the Open House, we sought clarification on the parking proposals, in particular the “revitalized parking” in Concept 2. We understand that this format would incorporate boulevards and planting of trees/beds but that the overall number of parking spaces would be reduced by 30 vehicles. We question whether reducing parking is a practical proposal given that, in addition to the Cannington urban (walkable) population, there is a rural community as well as external visitors, now and well into future years, who will use the park and facilities and will drive to the park, needing parking. We recommend to find designs to optimize the overall parking area and to make it more practical and functional, i.e., more structured and conducive to good parking, while maintaining sufficient parking space. The current parking appears to rather unstructured, with parking lines only in a limited area, mix of paved and gravel, and may contribute to people parking “willy-nilly”.
- We recommend to remove vehicular access in MacLeod Park, specifically on McRae Steet and Trootie Street, for the street area beyond where houses/driveways are located. We recommend that the “roadway” should be limited to pedestrian walking and bicycles, but certainly accessible by emergency vehicles. Currently there is a disproportionate amount of space devoted to vehicular traffic (including two-way traffic and significant slopes that compromise visibility) that is alarmingly close to the play and parkspace areas, and is especially disruptive for visiting the Cenotaph. There is a wealth of parking on the south side of the pedestrian walkway and eliminating vehicle traffic in the park area on the north side of the river would provide for an infinitely safer and more peaceful space. An alternative approach would be to change the traffic direction to one-way only but certainly eliminating the vehicles is the best approach.
- While not mentioned nor represented in either Concept, we propose changes to the bollards that are in place on the south side of the park. While acknowledging that such a barrier limits and restricts access of vehicles to areas to be safely used by people only, we suggest the posts could be replaced over time by a line of trees, shrubs or hedges planted in this area. These plantings would be visually appealing and continue to provide a needed barrier. For necessary barriers, retractable bollards could be an option to use to provide flexibility.
- We note that both Concept plans propose to incorporate tree planting into Phase 2, meaning at least 4 years down the road. We believe that this activity should be started much earlier and be considered and incorporated in each phase, and in tandem with every major sub-project, taking advantage of continuous development growth and habitat for nature over the life of project. As noted in our abovementioned September 25, 2024 input, the CHS has funds set aside to be devoted to native tree planting initiatives and eagerly looks forward to partnering with the Township of Brock on such projects. Selection of trees and shrubs for addition throughout the park should be based on best practices, including sourcing locally and choosing those that grow well in our area.
- Lastly but looking to seizing early and easy “wins”, we urge the Township of Brock to immediately initiate activities to reduce mowing and increase meadow gardens and naturalized spaces in all of our parks as they exist **now**, taking advantage of smaller, easily implemented ecological and social benefits that are inherent to naturalized spaces. We recommend addition of native plants that are grown within our area/region in order to maximize the optimal biodiversity support and welcome the opportunity to provide guidance for selection of these native plants.
- We are also requesting for you to add the existing CHS gardens to the Concept Design visuals, consistent with the other existing park aspects that will be retained moving forward. We have included an edited copy of both Concepts as Attachments 2 and 3

with the gardens added to facilitate this request. The garden images are intended to be the same in both, despite the challenges in drawing each by hand.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marg Munro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marg Munro

President
Cannington Horticultural Society
Box 38
Cannington, ON. L0E 1E0

Attachment 1: Proposed Tree Design Feature for MacLeod Park



Attachment 2: Proposed Edits to Concept 1 to add existing CHS gardens – see red circles



Attachment 3: Proposed Edits to Concept 2 to add existing CHS gardens – see red circles

