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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thames Centre to Establish Parklands on Newly Acquired Property

Municipality Acquires 9.13 Acres of Land in Dorchester

THAMES CENTRE – The Municipality of Thames Centre has officially acquired 9.13 acres of land in Dorchester, north of Eva Street and south of Ida Street. The primary use of this land will be to establish new parklands north of the Thames River in Dorchester.

“This acquisition will allow for new parklands and green spaces to be developed for residents to enjoy,” said Mayor Sharron McMillan. “As someone with a real estate background, I can say that today is a good day for Thames Centre. For a very reasonable price, we will be able to expand our local parklands and develop a new recreational space for local families to enjoy.”

Extending Parklands to North Dorchester; Fulfilling the Community Services and Facilities Master Plan

“We’ll establish new parklands in a part of Dorchester that needs it the most,” said Ward 2 Councillor Danielle Lockie. “New parklands will preserve the natural beauty of the area for future generations, in an area where we’ve seen a lot of interest in new development. It will also give local residents a green space that they can enjoy that’s a little closer to home.”

This land acquisition will help fulfill Recommendation #2 of the 2023 Community Services and Facilities Master Plan, which called for land to be added to the Municipality's parkland supply.

Using this site for the establishment of parklands will also address a "gap area" identified in the Master Plan, by providing more parkland on "the north side of Dorchester, north of the Thames River."

71% of Thames Centre residents surveyed during the consultation phase of the Master Plan supported investments in parks and open space.

Land Acquisition Details

The land acquired is the same land that was the site of proposed townhomes from a planning application that was not supported by Council in July 2024. The proposed development at this location has since been subject to appeal in front of the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) until the Municipality purchased the property this month.

The land was independently appraised at \$2,280,000 by Valco Consultants. Valco was retained by the Municipality after the previous landowner, Charabin Holdings, approached the Municipality with a proposal to sell the land. The Municipality negotiated a purchase price of \$1,950,000 with the previous owners also receiving a \$330,000 charitable receipt from the Municipality for donating the remaining balance of the land value.

Tax Levy not impacted, no debt required

This land acquisition does not require any increase in property taxes or external debentures. The purchase price will be covered through existing Capital Infrastructure funds and from the Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund, which was specifically established to fund new parkland development and enhanced through the Municipality's first Parkland Dedication By-Law passed by Council in September 2024.



“Proper planning has allowed the Municipality to acquire this land as a public asset, satisfying the recommendations of Council’s Strategic Plan and its Community Services & Facilities Master Plan, with no new costs to residents,” noted CAO David Barrick.

Park Naming, design, and amenities will be considered through future public meetings and budget processes. Residents are encouraged to get involved with the site development through their Members of Council or through online feedback to ensure the park’s features reflect the needs and desires of the community.

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