

1 Purpose and Background

1.1. Purpose and Methodology

A Strategy to develop Beryl Gaffney Park was initiated through the Planning and Development Section of the Parks and Recreation Department, City of Nepean, in September, 1998. The purpose of the project was:

"To advance a framework or strategy to develop Beryl Gaffney Park as a City-wide, family oriented park based on:

- ▶ *consolidation of existing principles and information;*
- ▶ *demand and trends analysis;*
- ▶ *site inventory/ constraints and opportunities confirmation*
- ▶ *characterization and consolidation of community preferences."*

The proposed methodology is detailed in Appendix A and includes these steps:

- ▶ Synthesis of Relevant Reports and Data
- ▶ Trends and Demand Analysis
- ▶ Site Inventory, Constraints and Opportunities
- ▶ Community-Based Park Characterization
- ▶ Draft Design and Consensus
- ▶ Park Development Strategy

Anne Robinson, of Anne Robinson & Associates, in collaboration with Steve Sunderland of Corush, Sunderland and Wright, were contracted to develop the Concept Design for Beryl Gaffney Park and Implementation Strategy. The Strategy is intended to not only reflect past traditions in Nepean, but anticipate future recreation interests and needs and have the flexibility to allow for a possible 20-year development horizon.

1.2. Background - The Open Space System in Nepean

Nepean is renowned for its parks and recreation amenities, including 120 parks, conservation lands covering 607 hectares of grassed area and 65 hectares of bush, 90 sports fields, 100 ball diamonds, 2.6 km of outdoor multi-purpose trails, and 25.8 km of paved trails.¹ The City's recreation reputation is not coincidental as Nepean's priority on parks, sport and cultural opportunities has been evident for much of the last forty years. As the 1982 *City of Nepean Parks and Recreation Planning Guide* noted:

*"The open space system in Nepean has developed rapidly over recent decades and evolved into one of the Region's most integrated and better planned systems. Open spaces in Nepean provide a wide range of opportunities for the residents of the City. From active, highly developed spaces such as Craig Henry and Wessex Parks to more passive, natural areas such as the woodlots along the Jock River, the citizens of Nepean have a variety of spaces to satisfy their needs."*²

The *Planning Guide* categorized the open spaces by three geographic types:

- **Open Spaces in the Urban Area** including municipal parkland, educational institutions, linear corridors such as railway or hydro rights-of-way, leased National Capital Commission lands
- **Open Spaces in the Greenbelt** including active areas such as Shirley's Bay and Bruce Pit areas, passive spaces emphasizing conservation and interpretation such as Stoney Swamp and Pinhey Forest and inaccessible areas such as the western farm sector or Department of National Defense lands. In 1982 this land totaled 6,400 acres of the Greenbelt designated for some form of passive or active leisure activity. Total Greenbelt lands are over 18,000 acres or almost 36% of the total area of Nepean.
- **Open Spaces in the Rural Area** including urban type parks located in the rural area, natural areas such as the Jock and Rideau corridors, inaccessible farmland and extraction areas. In 1982 the City owned about 400 acres of land along the Jock and Rideau Rivers, most of which had been zoned for conservation.

¹City of Nepean Recreation Facility Master Study, 1995

²City of Nepean Planning Guide, 1982. P.168

The 1982 *Planning Guide* enunciated Open Space Planning Principles which have been the cornerstone of Nepean 's Park System, incorporating:

- ▶ a broad definition of open space including rural, urban and Greenbelt lands
- ▶ emphasis on quality open space versus quantity
- ▶ sound preservation, conservation and management practices
- ▶ affordable recreation opportunities
- ▶ accessible to Nepean residents by car, bicycle, foot or boat
- ▶ an open space system used year round with winter use promoted
- ▶ a linked network, connecting land resources with water resources
- ▶ parkland as a "public good", provided by government

There were also several key recommendations in this Planning Guide which have driven open space planning decisions since 1982:

- ▶ the development of a classification system of neighbourhood, community and city-wide open spaces;
- ▶ the linkage of urban, rural and Greenbelt areas of the city, providing easy movement from one area to another and an emphasis on linking activity nodes;
- ▶ "take full advantage of the potential of the Ottawa, Rideau and Jock Rivers, and therefore "tie" the land resource of Nepean to the water resources of Nepean."

1.3. A Shortage of City-Wide Parks

This 1982 Planning Guide noted a shortage of City-Wide Open Space and established a prioritized Acquisition Strategy and suggested a ratio of 7 acres per 1000 people. In addition the Plan noted:

"Not all city-wide open spaces allow recreation and leisure opportunities as a primary function. Where recreation and leisure play a secondary and tertiary role in the city-wide system, such lands will:

- *create an image of a city that links rural areas to the built up area.*
- *act as a buffer between conflicting types of land uses;*
- *protect buildings and surrounding lands of cultural and historic significance*
- *protect environmentally sensitive lands."* ³

³Ibid, p. 192

The two areas identified for the development of Nepean City-wide parks were Andrew Haydon Park, formerly Waterfront Park on the Ottawa River and Beryl Gaffney Park, formerly Riverbend Park on the Rideau River. At that time, the Township of Nepean, with great foresight, began actively ensuring that both areas would eventually be developed as unique, City-wide parks.

1.4. Nepean's Cycle and Trail Network

Another principal feature of the recommended Open Space system was a linkage system or trail network., sometimes referred to as a linear park system. See Figures 11.1, from the 1982 *Planning Guide*, which illustrates the basis of this network..

A subsequent Report in 1988, prepared by Wheeler/ Douglas set the foundation for Nepean's trail system and recommended that the linkages:

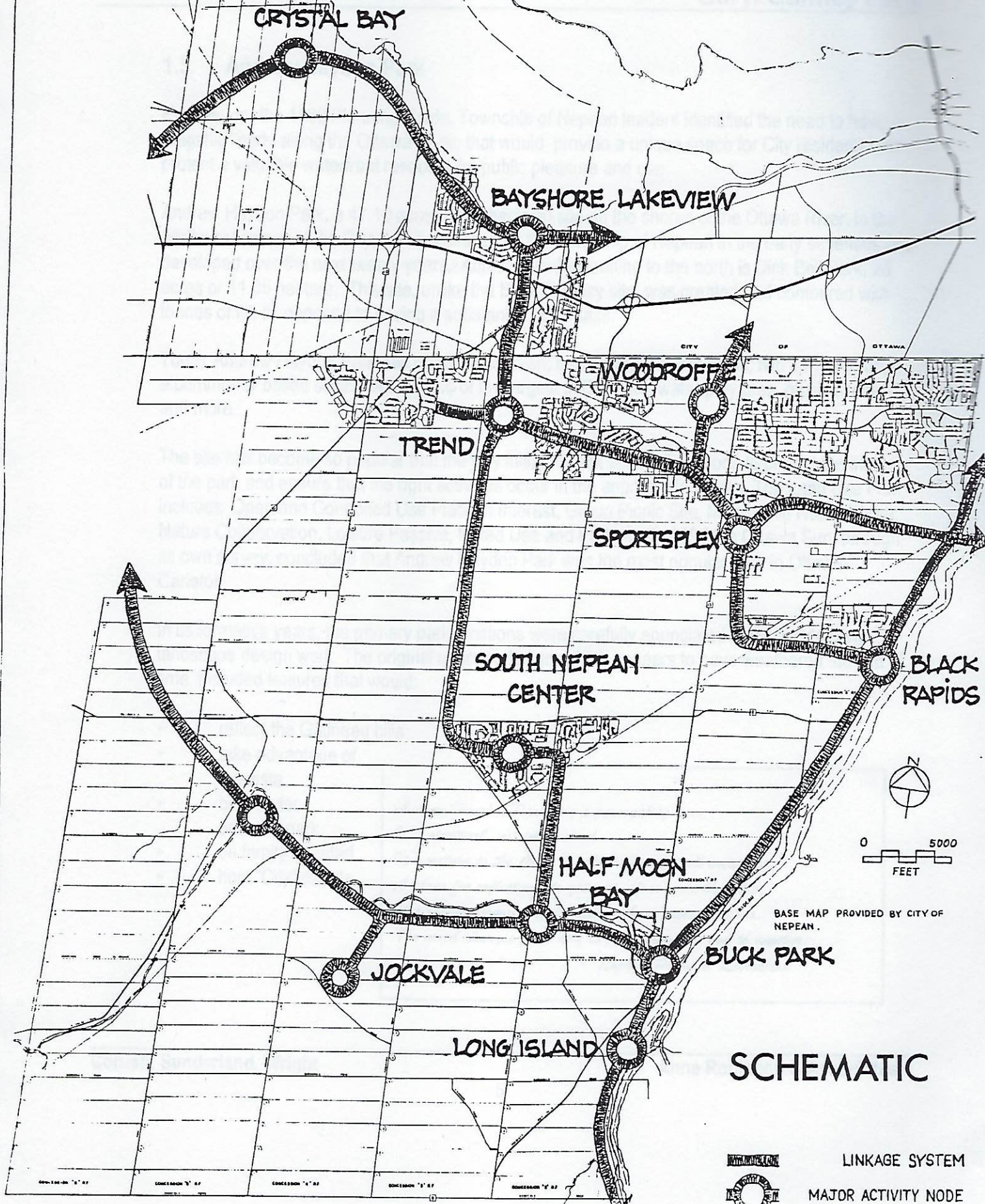
- connect park nodes and major activity centres for recreational purposes;
- link the South Urban Community with other built-up areas of Nepean, Kanata, Ottawa and Manotick for commuting cyclists;
- provide access to waterfront parkland;
- offer scenic diversity and interest, contributing to the enjoyment of nature.

More specifically, recommendations relating to Beryl Gaffney Park, from this report, *City of Nepean, Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes*. May, 1988, by Wheeler Douglas Associates, Landscape Architects, included:

- Greenbank Road recommended as the north-south bicycle commuter and recreational pathway facility;
- A recreational pathway along the Rideau River strongly recommended because of the major recreational opportunities e.g. views, boating, fishing, extending from Manotick to Black Rapids. Some areas would utilize side roads and where it was close to Hwy 16, special designs would be used
- Connections to other parks were recommended such as Long Island Locks, Nicols' Island, Heart's Desire Park and Black's Rapids pathway.
- Highlighted the Jock River Corridor as potential for a major linear park system across the southern portion of the City

A current map of Nepean's comprehensive cycle and trail system can be found in Appendix B.

City of Nepean Parks and Recreation Planning Guide



SCHEMATIC



LINKAGE SYSTEM

MAJOR ACTIVITY NODE

1.5. Andrew Haydon Park

Even before the 1982 Planning Guide, Township of Nepean leaders identified the need to have a "flagship" park, along the Ottawa River, that would provide a unique space for City residents and protect a valuable waterfront resource for public pleasure and use.

Andrew Haydon Park, a 47.10 acre (19.04 hectare) site on the shores of the Ottawa River, in the northwest corner of the City, was purchased by the Township of Nepean in the early seventies and developed over the next twenty years. Adjacent and extending to the north is Dick Bell Park, 28 acres or 11.35 hectare. This site, unlike the Beryl Gaffney site, was created and contoured with tonnes of fill, as opposed to having a substantial land mass.

Today Andrew Haydon Park has ponds, a canteen, bandshell, walking paths, two playstructures, a community based sailing facility (one of the largest in Canada), water play area, picnic shelter and more.

The site has become so popular that the City initiated park zoning limitations to protect the integrity of the park and ensure that the right activities occur in the appropriate places. The Land Use Plan includes: Open and Controlled Use Place of Interest, Group Picnic Site, Maintained Natural Area, Nature Conservation, Leisure Passive, Mixed Use and Parking. In 1996 the Ottawa Sun, through its own survey, concluded that Andrew Haydon Park was the most popular park in Ottawa-Carleton.

In its formative years, the primary park functions were carefully enunciated in the park's early landscape design work. The original concept design, which appears to have weathered the test of time, included features that would:

- ▶ reflect the Gatineau hills
- ▶ take advantage of the vista
- ▶ be a water-oriented park
- ▶ be family oriented
- ▶ host "City" events

*Andrew Haydon Park has a personality.....
It's spiritual, not intellectual
It's nature in the City: a calm refuge for all creatures.
A place for reflection: to get wet, float some thoughts.
It's contemporary, casual and without preconceptions.
The mood changes from day to day, from one end to another.
~ Nepean Parks & Recreation*

Beryl Gaffney Park

In 1996, Nepean developed a Vision Statement for Andrew Haydon Park, to guide future park decisions:

"Andrew Haydon Park is intended to be a special place, available for the enjoyment of all Nepean residents. It reflects the spirit of the City and in many ways represents what we appreciate about Nepean: Andrew Haydon Park is:

- ▶ *Contemporary*
- ▶ *Well planned*
- ▶ *Intimately connected to the natural environment*
- ▶ *People-oriented*
- ▶ *Operated responsibly for the benefit of the public."*

The decision making criteria and operating principles are focused around the values of: Balance, Diversity, Natural Beauty, Serenity, Sustainability and Service.

In the decade 1989-1998, the City invested over four million dollars in Andrew Haydon Park. A description of these expenses are summarized below and detailed in Appendix C.

CATEGORY	COST
Site Preparation	\$1,721,744.71
Drainage/ Water Service	\$ 106,312.13
Electrical Service/ Lighting	\$ 277,524.00
Planting/ Turf	\$ 944,882.06
Fencing/ Barrier Landscaping	\$ 18,488.00
Pathway/ Hard Surfaces	\$ 328,964.81
Site Furnishings/ Play Equipment	\$ 445,983.21
Features (Rock/ Signage)	\$ 103,475.00
Buildings/ Structures	\$ 427,900.00
Miscellaneous (Pond Aerator)	\$ 177,408.66
Total	\$4,552,682.58

Of course, these capital investments do not include land acquisition costs, the significant expense to draw the original fill that was required for the park or any expenditures prior to 1989 which were not insignificant.

The annual operating costs for Andrew Haydon Park in 1998 were estimated at \$82,700 and they are budgeted at \$91,900 for 1999. In terms of park usage, the City estimates that *Nepean Days*, an annual weekend City celebration, draws about 12,000 people when there are no fireworks and jumps to 18,000 participants when there are fireworks. At this event, between 40 and 50 community groups and individuals set up displays. The Kiwanis co-ordinate 8 to 10 food vendors for a total of 150 to 175 people working at these booths. In addition, there are 2 stages offering constant entertainment, some amateur community groups and some professional performing groups and individuals.

Andrew Haydon Park has been an increasingly popular destination site, especially for groups. Since the City began issuing group permits to parties of over 50 people, there have been at least 150-200 permits issued annually. In 1998, for the first time, Nepean also designated group picnic areas within Andrew Haydon Park and 222 permits were issued for these various designated areas. Some of these permits were for multiple times, bringing the total number of group permits to 262 occasions. Therefore, over 13,000 people used the park for group picnics in 1999. This figure does not include casual users, attendance at the outdoor concerts held regularly during the summer, art classes, boaters and other special events in the park.

