



MARKHAM SUBCOMMITTEE

ITEM 3.1: SWAN LAKE PARK DESIGNATION

Wednesday June 18, 2025

9:00 – 11:00 am

THANK YOU TO OUR FINANCIAL PARTNERS



UA LOCAL 46
SUPERIOR PIPING SKILLS SINCE 1890

CaTECH
CONNECTING THE PLANET

WALKER PARKER
— REAL ESTATE —

AMICA
SWAN LAKE

Reclassification of Swan Lake & Swan Lake Park

CURRENT

PROPOSED

GREENWAY SYSTEM (1)

**Other Greenway Lands
including naturalized
stormwater facilities**



**Natural
Heritage**

CITY PARK CLASSIFICATION (2)

**Community
Park**



**City wide -
Special Purpose**

Summary of Staff Commentary

- 1) Greenway System Review of Classification
 - Underway
- 2) Park System Classification
 - Though currently classified as a “Community Park”, Swan Lake Park does not meet the criteria under 2014 Official Plan
 - Park classification criteria to be reviewed as part of Official Plan review

THANK YOU!

Greenway System Reclassification

- Swan Lake is not a stormwater pond, but Swan Lake Park is classified as “Other Greenway Lands, including certain naturalized stormwater management facilities.”
- Both Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park satisfy the significant features criteria considered for Natural Heritage status

Significant Features	Swan Lake Park	Swan Lake
Size	14 ha	5.5 ha
1) Ecologically Significant	Yes	Yes
2) Habitat for Species at Risk	Yes	Yes
3) Key Hydraulic Feature		Yes

FOSLP Submissions for Classification Review

1) FOSLP Reports

- a) “Reclassifying Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park Under the 2025 Official Plan” (June 2025)
- b) “ Celebrating the Biodiversity of Swan Lake Park” (June 2025)
- c) Designating Swan Lake Park as Natural Heritage Lands (Revised Nov. 2023)

2) Community Input

- a) Natural Heritage Status and Destination Park Questionnaire (June 2025)
- b) Shoreline Enhancement Questionnaire (June 2024)
- c) Eco Park Questionnaire (March 2022)
- d) Park Improvement Survey (March 2021)

Destination Park Features

- Large and unique parks which attract residents from across Markham and the Region
- Includes conservation areas and lands associated with the Rouge Park
 - Example: Milne Dam Conservation Park
- **Swan Lake Park does not meet the criteria**
 - Too small
 - No facilities to support influx of large numbers
 - Large infusion conflicts with preserving biodiversity

Typical Features of City-wide Parks

City-wide Parks (in excess of 12 ha.)

- a) Provide programs and facilities for entire city beyond those found in community or neighbourhood parks, sports tournament parks, and include structures such as stadium seating and parking [**Not appropriate**]
- b) *May also include special purpose parks that are generally designed to preserve natural heritage features and cultural heritage resources. [Recommended]*

FOSLP Revised Request

- As consistently reflected in every community survey undertaken by FOSLP, the primary value of Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park rests in their ecological value, to both the wildlife and the users of the park.
- FOSLP has reviewed the general features outlined in the 2014 Official Plan and recommends that the appropriate designation for Swan Lake Park is:

City-wide Park: Special Purpose

Classification Review:

Provide Guidance on Community Role

- Primary objective: Preserving Biodiversity
- Balancing Integration of natural and human elements
- Components that support human engagement:
 - Bird watching, fishing, canoeing, kayaking
 - Forest Therapy, Accessibility
- Natural asset plan to address integration of water elements
 - Brampton's Lake Enhancement Strategy

Brampton's Framework for Integration of Land and Water

An Example of Community Driven Goals



Eco Park Principles

1. Maximize ecological value
2. Provide opportunities for social services
3. Make nature visible
4. Design with nature
5. Integrate with surrounding community
6. Support innovation
7. Reflect local identity

Markham – similar concepts



LAKE ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

Lake Enhancement Goals (14 Lakes)

- A. **Natural Heritage:** Improve lake habitat and water quality
- B. **Parks:** Connect people with lake
- C. **Recreation:** Expand sustainable water-related programming
- D. **Communications and Engagement:** Engage community and park users and build awareness of Brampton lakes.

Average cost \$2.5 - \$5 m
(Swan Lake \$1.8 - \$3.4)

Markham – No similar program, seen to discourage interaction

Request of Markham Subcommittee

1) That Markham's Official Plan review consider reclassification of Swan Lake Park under Markham's Park Classification system as a:

“City-wide Special Purpose Park” designed to preserve natural heritage features and resources.

2) That the classification review provide guidance on community objectives and the role of the park including the strategies addressing the interaction between land and water elements for both the wildlife and the residents



FOCUSED ON REHABILITATION OF SWAN LAKE AND SWAN LAKE PARK

THANK YOU TO OUR FINANCIAL PARTNERS



UA LOCAL 46
SUPERIOR PIPING SKILLS SINCE 1890

CaTECH
CONNECTING THE PLANET

WALKER PARKER
— REAL ESTATE —

AMICA
SWAN LAKE

June 2025: 313 Respondents

Natural Heritage and Destination Park Questionnaire

A) Natural Heritage Status and Expanding the Naturalized Areas

Natural Heritage status is given to areas that contain natural features and serve as corridors for natural migration. Most of Swan Lake Park is categorized as “Natural Spaces, Wildlife Places”, meaning no mowing or spraying and “letting nature do its thing”.

- 1) Are you concerned about the loss of birds and biodiversity in Swan Lake Park?
- 2) Do you believe Markham should be doing more to preserve the bird and wildlife habitat in Swan Lake Park?
- 3) Would you support conversion of the open lawn areas along Williamson Road to “Natural Spaces, Wildlife Places” if it would help support the biodiversity of the park?
- 4) Would you like Markham to designate Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park as Natural Heritage areas?

B) Destination Park Status and Possible New Amenities

A Destination Park is expected to serve the broader community throughout Markham and to support visitors to Markham. Swan Lake Park already attracts bird watchers from across the area but is classified as a “Community Park”.

- 5) Are you concerned about the impact of the increased Mt. Joy population on Swan Lake Park?
- 6) Are you concerned about any increase in visitor traffic to Swan Lake Park on the wildlife?

	Percent All Responses			Percentage Decided	
	YES	NO	Don't Know	YES	NO
1) Are you concerned about the loss of birds and biodiversity in Swan Lake Park?	93%	3%	4%	97%	3%
2) Do you believe Markham should be doing more to preserve the bird and wildlife habitat in Swan Lake Park?	95%	2%	3%	98%	2%
3) Would you support conversion of the open lawn areas along Williamson Road to “Natural Spaces, Wildlife Places” if it would help support the biodiversity of the park?	86%	4%	10%	96%	4%
4) Would you like Markham to designate Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park as Natural Heritage areas?	88%	4%	8%	96%	4%
5) Are you concerned about the impact of the increased Mt. Joy population on Swan Lake Park?	72%	15%	13%	83%	17%
6) Are you concerned about any increase in visitor traffic to Swan Lake Park on the wildlife?	71%	16%	13%	82%	18%

Questionnaire: Possible New Amenities



June 2025: 313 Respondents

Natural Heritage and Destination Park Questionnaire

7) The following new amenities have been discussed to support Swan Lake Park’s role as a Destination Park. Which ones would you support?

a) In 2023, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority recommended recreational nodes to provide improved access to the lake. Do you support features such as recreational nodes to enhance shoreline access?	54%	33%	14%	62%	38%
b) Another suggestion was to increase locations for viewing, fishing and extending the pathways by building a boardwalk across the lake, from the southwest to the central outcrop. Would you support building a boardwalk across the western part of the lake?	43%	47%	10%	48%	52%
c) One proposal for improving oxygen levels in the lake is to circulate water through the North Channel. This could be designed to include one or two waterfalls. Would you like to see a waterfall in the park?	81%	9%	11%	90%	10%
d) Markham has established Forest Therapy areas in four other parks – areas to relax and reflect with nature. Would you support the creation of a “Forest Therapy” area in the raised wooded areas in Swan Lake Park?	78%	14%	9%	85%	15%
e) There is limited parking near Swan Lake Park. The original plan for Swan Lake Park included a parking lot on the south-west corner along Williamson Road. Do you support additional parking within Swan Lake Park along Williamson Road?	45%	43%	12%	51%	49%
8) Would you support having Swan Lake Park declared a “Destination Park” and promoted throughout Markham and to visitors to the city?	54%	33%	13%	62%	38%