



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Heather Kaufmann, Community Development Supervisor –
Community Partnerships and Sport Development

DATE: June 12, 2025

MEMO NO.: CSE-2025-005

SUBJECT: Update on Eighth Line Park Expansion – Community Sport and
Recreation Infrastructure Fund Outcome and Next Steps

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an update on the Town's recent application to the Province's Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) for the Eighth Line Park Expansion project, and to outline preliminary next steps that Town Staff will undertake in light of the funding application outcome.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2024, Council endorsed [Report No. CSE-2024-010](#), authorizing Town staff to submit a funding application to the Province's CSRIF program. The Town submitted a request for \$4 million toward the estimated \$8 million cost of expanding Eighth Line Park, previously referred to as the Gellert Park Expansion.

As part of that approval, Council also directed that the project remain unfunded in the Town's capital budget unless:

1. The Town received external funding (e.g., through CSRIF); and
2. Council approved the financial approach outlined in Confidential Report CSE-2024-011, which includes a Mayor-led fundraising campaign.

In September 2024, Council approved Confidential Report No. CSE-2024-011 regarding the financial strategy to be implemented, if the CSRIF funding was received.

In October 2024, the CSRIF application was submitted in alignment with the program's Stream 2: New Builds/Signature Builds, which provides up to \$10 million for transformative recreation infrastructure projects.

The Eighth Line Park Expansion project was developed in response to well-documented shortfalls in community parkland and outdoor sport infrastructure across Halton Hills.

The project concept includes:

- Redevelopment of a major existing soccer field;
- Construction of pickleball and multi-purpose sport courts;
- Installation of a youth-oriented pump track;
- Outdoor fitness zones and a natural playground;
- Beach volleyball courts and supporting infrastructure; and
- Preparation for future seasonal amenities (e.g. air-supported dome, park washroom or outdoor skating facility).

The proposed park would serve as a community hub for active recreation, complementing the adjacent Gellert Community Centre and supporting growth in the Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan area.

The project directly supports multiple Council-approved strategic documents, including:

- Council's Strategic Plan (2023-2026);
- Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan (2020);
- Outdoor Court Sports Strategy (2021);
- Parkland Acquisition Study (2025 update in progress); and
- Forthcoming Outdoor Sports Strategy (2025).

COMMENTS:

In late May 2025, at the Strategic Plan Healthy Environment and Community Committee meeting, the Committee gave a direction to staff to report back on phasing and implementation options to advance the Eighth Line Park project as, at that time, no response had been received from the Province on the Town's grant application.

In early June 2025, the Town was informed that its CSRIF application was not selected for funding. The Province received more than 400 applications, with a total grant allocation of \$200 million available and up to \$10 million per project.

Although Town Staff received positive feedback from the Ministry of Sport regarding the quality of the submission, the application was not successful in this round. The project was considered competitive and aligned with program objectives and will remain a strong candidate should future intakes become available.

Despite the funding outcome, Eighth Line Park remains a priority project due to its:

- Central location within the Town and proximity to high-growth areas;
- Alignment with key Town strategies;
- Role in addressing gaps in recreational service delivery;
- Capacity to serve a broad range of user groups and age demographics; and
- Contribution to the Town's long-term vision for complete, active communities.

As other significant recreation projects are considered, including the Gellert Community Centre Expansion and the Acton Indoor Pool, the Eighth Line Park Expansion remains critical in the Town's recreation infrastructure plans.

1. Next Steps

In light of the CSRIF outcome, but recognizing the importance of this project and available staff and financial resources, Town staff will undertake a number of follow-up steps over the coming months to explore viable paths that can advance the Eighth Line Park Expansion project – for Council's consideration.

1.1 Phasing Review

Town staff are evaluating the feasibility of delivering the park through a phased approach, prioritizing core and high-impact amenities that can be constructed independently. This includes consideration of key infrastructure components required for the initial delivery of the park. This work will include:

- Identifying key major servicing and infrastructure items required to be installed at the project's outset;
- Initial key program components such as multi-purpose and pickleball courts, the playground, and outdoor fitness stations;
- Considering options to defer or phase elements such as the BMX pump track, plaza, etc.; and
- Identifying cost-saving opportunities related to site preparation, servicing, or bundling components with other capital projects.

The goal of this review will be to determine what can be realistically delivered within existing or near-term funding limits, while maintaining design integrity and long-term functionality.

Any phasing strategy will have to consider an equitable approach to the provision of additional amenities, recognizing the pent-up demand for new recreation facilities across community sport organizations, and ensuring that future phase elements have adequate infrastructure in place to support future development with minimal impact to initial park phases.

1.2 Financial Strategy Assessment

Town staff will assess a range of potential financial tools and funding scenarios to support phased delivery. Among other items, this may include:

- Confirming Development Charge (DC) timing from growth in Vision Georgetown;
- Assessing debt capacity and debenture options, if aligned with Council priorities;
- Assessing the Eighth Line Park expansion against other priority projects, and the need to manage existing Town assets and invest in State of Good Repair.
- Supporting the development and implementation of a scoped Mayor-led fundraising campaign linked to a Town-led financing strategy, and exploring corporate and community sponsorship opportunities to offset capital costs or to enhance specific amenities (e.g. named courts, donor recognition walls); and
- Consideration for a designated 'Recreation & Park Facility Levy' or permit fee surcharges to fund Eighth Line Park and/or future recreation facilities.

1.3 Grant Readiness

Although a CSRIF grant was not awarded to the Town in this intake, staff will ensure that the project remains shovel-ready for immediate resubmission should a new intake be announced. Key actions include:

- Maintaining updated concept plans and advancing detailed designs including Class B or C cost estimates, and site servicing information; and
- Tracking new and upcoming funding programs.

1.4 Community Engagement and Communications

Town staff will collaborate with the Mayor's Office and Communications to:

- Provide timely updates to the public and sport organizations regarding the project's status, revised timelines and potential phasing;
- Develop and launch a scoped community-facing fundraising strategy, positioning the park as a shared community investment - subject to approval of a Town financing strategy; and
- Engage with local stakeholders, developers, and business partners for donor and sponsorship conversations.

Staff anticipate returning to Council in Q3/4 2025 with a comprehensive update, including:

- Revised cost estimates for phased options;
- Implementation scenarios based on available and projected funding and available staff resources (given current workplans and other priorities); and
- Proposed financial strategy that balances community needs and expectations with fiscal limitations.

The above next steps are intended to guide future decisions regarding timing, funding, and prioritization of project components – recognizing existing staff and financial limitations. In the interim, per earlier Council direction, the Eighth Line Park capital project and other related capital projects were to remain as unfunded in the 2026 Capital Budget & Forecast as no complete funding strategy (covering the required \$8 million) is currently in place.

CONCLUSION:

While the Town's CSRIF application for Eighth Line Park was not approved, the project remains a high-value community investment that aligns with the Town's strategic goals and addresses critical service gaps. As outlined above, staff will report back with the outcome of the next steps, including a potential implementation, resourcing and financial strategy.

Reviewed and approved by,

Damian Szybalski, Commissioner of Community Services

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer