

Preliminary park upgrade designs are now on display

By JASON MISNER
The Champion

The dark brown wooden sign at Fay Park has faded from the sun.

Green paint on a steel bridge crossing a shallow ravine at David Thompson Park is scratched and peeling. A small portion of a chain link fence around Melanie Park has been bent to the ground.

Milton's community services department began in early spring carefully diagnosing the 20-year-old parks — some of the older ones in Milton — to see what could be done to bring them up to standards.

It has come up with preliminary designs, which are on public display at Town Hall and the Milton Leisure Centre until Friday. The plans can also be viewed on the Town's Web site at www.town.milton.on.ca.

Here's what's on the table.

Fay Park (0.6 ha or 1.5 acres) currently has an open space concept with some trees and no playground equipment. The Town has proposed, among other things, to relocate, widen and light a pathway, as well as add more trees and playground equipment.

David Thompson Park (2.1 ha or 5.2 acres) has an older-style swing set and a small forested area in the southeast corner. The Town has proposed, among other things, to replace the two bridges crossing the ravine and a park sign will be

erected near John Tonelli arena.

Melanie Park (2.2 ha or 5.4 acres) currently has playground equipment and a few trees for shade. The Town has proposed, among other things, to add a new asphalt pathway and add more trees for shading. Drainage and grading is proposed to be improved at Fay and Melanie parks.

Town council still has to approve the tender for the park improvements, a decision that's expected to be made at the end of August. The changes are to be phased in over time depending on the budget, said Ken McAlpine, the Town's manager of parks and special projects.

This year, he said, the Town has earmarked \$190,000 for park improvements and the objective is to address the drainage and grading issues, and the realigning of the pathways once the tender has been approved. Extensive public input was key in the preliminary design process, Mr. McAlpine said. Questionnaires indicated concerns with dogs not being on leashes, teenagers congregating at night and vandalism of trees.

"Getting the kind of feedback we did get, which is very important to the design, was a very informative process," he said, noting maintaining the character of the older parks was important.

People can still submit their opinions on the designs to the

Town by mail or e-mail.

Residents said they're encouraged by the Town's commitment to better the parks. Gail Meehan and her two children visited Melanie Park Wednesday morning. Biking or walking to the park is a habit for the family.

She said the park is a popular destination for kite flying enthusiasts in the summer and for people to toboggan in the winter since it has a hill.

"I think they (Town staff) should make this park a focal point because it's the biggest in the area," Ms. Meehan said.

Richard Edwards has been living at his Maplewood Crescent home for 40 years and his backyard abuts David Thompson Park. He remembers when it used to be an elm forest, but disease forced the Town to cut many of them down.

He said he likes what the park has since become and is happy the Town has made an effort to improve it. The only advice he has for Milton's parks staff is to protect a small forested area in the park's southeast corner. A beaten path runs through it and some tree roots are partially exposed. He'd like the Town to lay down wood chips to cover the roots so they're not exposed and trampled on.

Jason Misner can be reached at jmisner@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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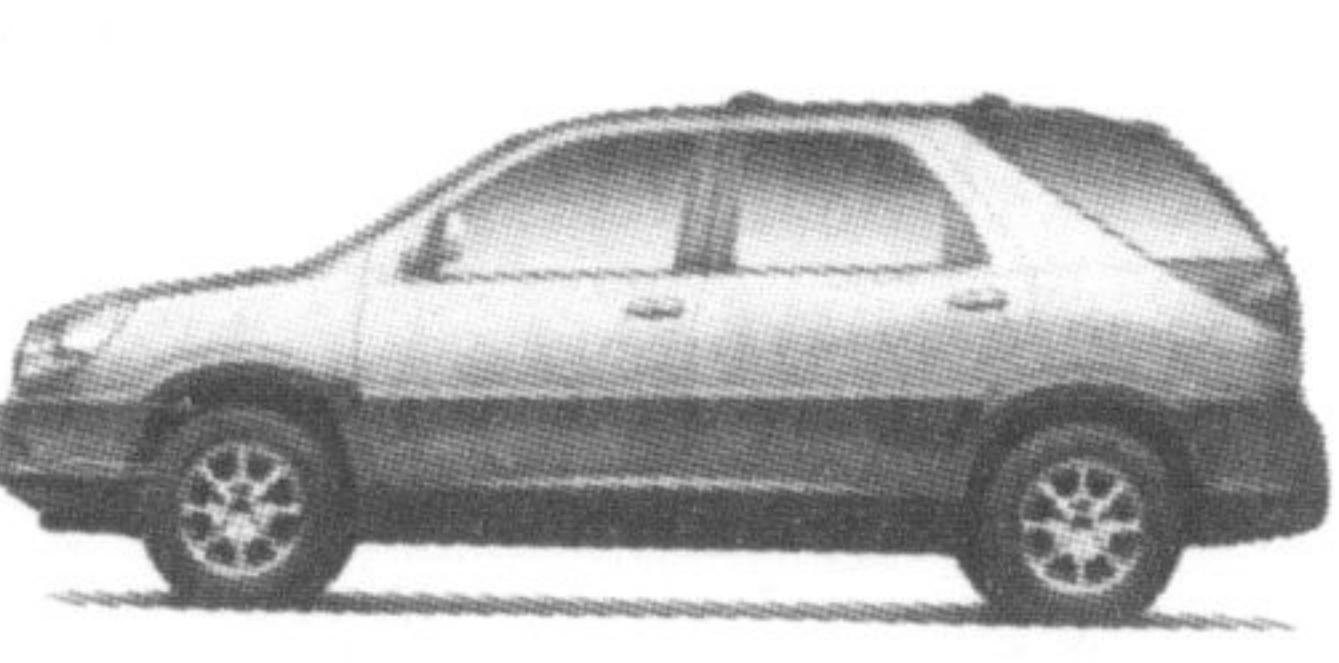


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