

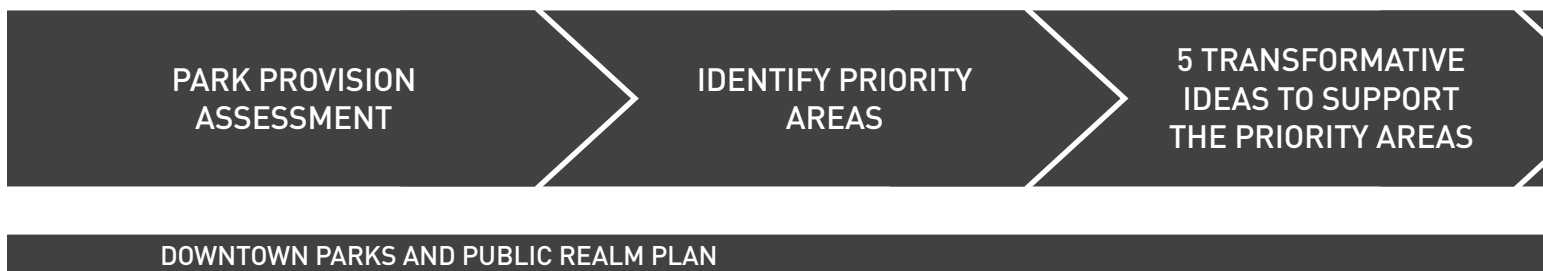
# 3. Toward Implementation

*Priorities and delivery mechanisms*

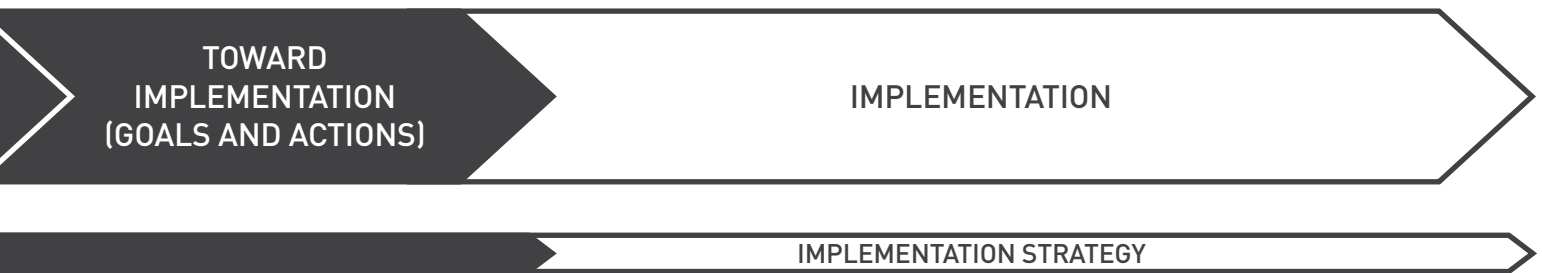
## Toward Implementation

The *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* is a 25-year integrated plan for parks, streets and other open spaces. It provides a vision for what we can achieve, a goal for future parks and public spaces and a way of addressing public space deficiencies. The Parks and Public Realm Plan contains Five Transformative Ideas that support the City-wide Parkland Strategy's principles of: *Expand and Acquire, Improve, Share and Connect*. This chapter includes the following:

- An outline of the categories of projects presented in the Plan;
- Preliminary approaches for prioritizing the range of parks and public realm initiatives presented in the Plan;
- An outline of legislative tools the City will employ to acquire and improve parkland, enhance the public realm and finance new investments;
- A call to action for the City, institutions, businesses, organizations and neighbourhoods to cooperate and shape the Downtown's future parks and public realm in accordance with this Plan's vision; and
- A proposed method for measuring success of the Plan's implementation.



A detailed Implementation Strategy will be developed as the next phase of study. It will identify specific targets, priority projects and will establish a framework to guide implementation for the Plan's initiatives over the next 25 years.



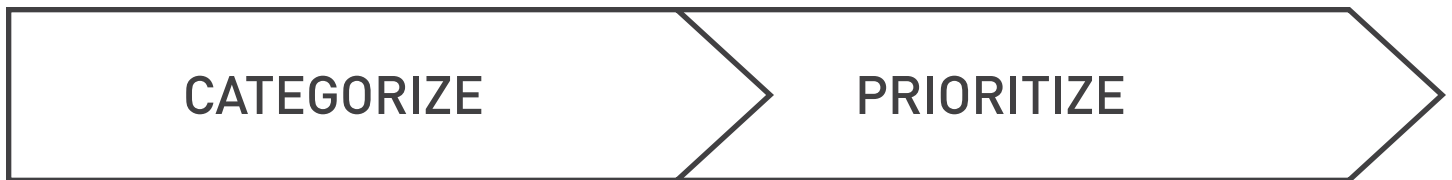
### Project Scales and Implementation Categories

The *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* is structured at three scales: regional, district and local.

The regional scale is the largest scale of Toronto's parks and public realm and includes the transformative ideas of the Core Circle, Great Streets and Shoreline Stitch. The district scale is intermediate in size and consists of parks, squares, streets and other public spaces that are integral to quality of life in Toronto's neighbourhoods. The district scale is captured in the Park Districts. The smallest scale is captured in Local Places and includes the parks and public spaces that are embedded within

communities, including parkettes, laneways, POPS, schoolyards, cemeteries and churchyards as well as other under-utilized institutional spaces. Moving forward, strategies for the timing and delivery of a project will vary based on its scale, its implementation category and its place as a priority project.

The ideas presented in the Plan range from ambitious and highly complex, to straight-forward and small-scale. The initiatives related to the more ambitious ideas may take considerable time to bring to fruition, whereas many of the smaller initiatives could be implemented



- Stage-Gate Projects
- Park District Studies
- Streetscape Studies
- Local Places Strategy
- Project Alignments

- Park Need and Population Growth
- Access to Capital Funding
- Coordinated Infrastructure Investments
- New Opportunities

CAPITAL PLANNING APPROVAL AND FINANCIAL TOOL REVIEW

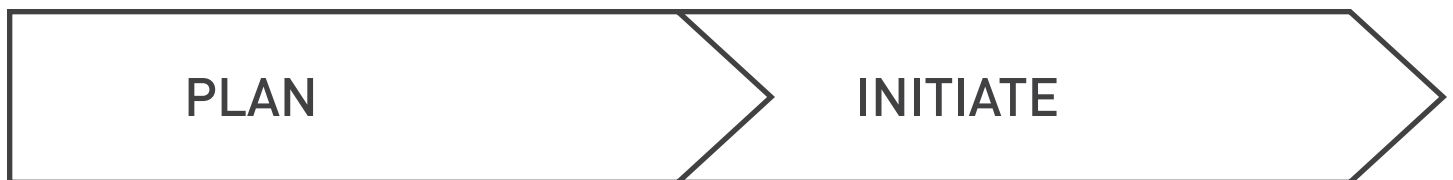
COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

within a 5-year time frame or less. Many of the complex initiatives are made up of a series of smaller projects, making a long-term strategy to sustain momentum a critical requirement for the full realization of the vision.

The initiatives identified in the Plan include a range of improvements to existing parks (such as revitalizations and re-designs), re-designing and re-thinking the use of streets, and acquiring new land for parks. Some initiatives involve a neighbourhood-wide perspective focused on the network of parks and open space; these projects can be supported by small, local improvements

that collectively can be highly impactful.

The Implementation Strategy will organize projects into categories based on the Transformative Ideas. All ideas, whether short- or long-term, have short-term actions that will mark a path to completion. For example, re-imagining University Avenue may be considered a long-term goal of the Plan, but to achieve it, planning needs to begin immediately (such as undertaking a preliminary engineering and costing study).



- Assess Feasibility
- Finalize Scope
- Establish Milestones

- Council Approval
- Budget Allocation

## Preliminary Set of Project Categories

### *“Stage-Gate” Projects*

Complex projects with longer implementation periods will be advanced incrementally via a series of approval stages. This “Stage-Gate” process provides Council, as the decision-making body, with specific points at which to approve a project as the scope, timelines and costs are finalized. “Stage-Gate” planning ensures that various technical, financial and real estate matters are addressed prior to undertaking an Environmental Assessment and advancing to a more detailed level of design. This approach is appropriate for complex, large-scale initiatives such as Rail Deck Park and re-imagining University and Bayview Avenues.

### *Park District Studies*

The Plan defines and identifies several Park Districts. Some will require further study, such as a district-wide landscape Master Plan, to inform an implementation approach and to realize the districts’ full potential. This is already a standard process of due diligence for master planned communities. Expected outcomes of a Park District Study would be to identify priority park improvements, park acquisition opportunities, street network analysis, and opportunities to establish shared space agreements.

### *Streetscape Studies*

Studying and understanding user needs and physical constraints and opportunities are key components to

streetscape studies. They will include Environmental Assessments when required, and ongoing consultation with the community. Streetscape Studies will be an appropriate process for several of the Great Streets and streets within Park Districts.

### *Local Places Strategy*

This process will establish a clear approach to implement improvements to Local Places. With a focus on parkettes and laneways, the implementation strategy will recommend a “system” approach for improving local places, rather than a “one-off” approach. For example, it may explore the possibility of setting a 5-year goal to improve an established number of parkettes and will identify a strategy for how to achieve it.

### *Alignments*

Implementation of the Plan will be aligned, where possible, with other projects that have a public realm component. This approach to implementation offers an economy of planning exercises in that objectives of both the subject project and this Plan can be met through a single process. Examples of such alignments are the future use of Old City Hall and the renewal of the Civic Precinct, delivering the Great Streets re-design and reconstruction with the planned upsizing of water mains along street segments throughout the Downtown and considering how the Moss Park Revitalization could capture the landscape potential of the Garden District.

“We need to make this city pedestrian- and cycle-friendly. Not only do we need trails and parks, we need seating and gathering places.”

– TOcore Consultation



*University Avenue, Toronto, Canada*

## Prioritizing Initiatives

The Five Transformative Ideas will inform decisions about parkland dedication and acquisition, park improvement, programming and design of new and renewed streets, and budget allocation. The magnitude of the number of projects that will be generated by the transformative ideas exceeds the capacity of the participating City Divisions (City Planning, Parks Forestry & Recreation and Transportation Services, and others) to undertake all projects simultaneously. Accordingly, the Implementation Strategy will develop a set of criteria to prioritize projects. These criteria will apply a strategic lens and provide a rationale for advancing different initiatives at different points over the 25-year lifecycle of the Plan.

When an initiative aligns with one or more of these criteria, it will provide a clear rationale to be prioritized and presents greater opportunity for implementation.

The draft set of criteria are as follows:

- Addressing Park Need and Population Growth;
- Eligibility for Capital Funding;
- Coordinated Infrastructure Investments through:
  - Synchronized City Infrastructure Projects;
  - Partnerships with Third Parties; and
- Emergent Opportunity / Quick-win.

### 1. Addressing Park Need and Population Growth

In Chapter 4: Park Provision and Need in the Downtown, the map, *Park Area Within 500 metres, 2016* shows areas of the Downtown that have very low parkland supply per person using a Park Catchment Tool (total park user population compared to total park area within a 500 metre catchment). This methodology also uses City Planning's Development Pipeline to measure where parkland need will intensify based on new development. This enables the City to prioritize areas for parkland expansion and improvement based on geography. Where there are existing areas of low provision, the City will consider opportunity sites for park acquisition and expansion. In areas where growth is occurring and the parkland need is intensifying, the City will use the appropriate planning tools to secure parkland and public realm improvements through the Development Approvals Process. These tools are detailed further in the next section.

### 2. Eligibility for Capital Funding

The City's capital program covers the City's \$76 billion in physical assets. Identifying new capital projects is a complex process, but in general, a project may be eligible for capital funding if it meets one of the following criteria: investing in new infrastructure, and maintaining existing assets.



The Implementation Strategy will prioritize projects based on the outcomes of the Park Provision Assessment and review if those projects are aligned with items approved for the 10-year capital plan. Where there is identified need for new park or public realm infrastructure, but no capital plan alignments exist, recommendations can be made for initiatives to be included in the 10-year capital plan. Where new projects are identified, the costs will be outlined, sources of funding will be determined and the appropriate City Division will make a submission for approval through the City's capital budget process.

### 3. Coordinated Infrastructure Investments

#### *3a. Synchronized City Infrastructure Projects*

Effective implementation of the Plan will ensure that City Divisions leading infrastructure projects engage with City Planning, Parks Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services when working within the TOcore boundary. This can be facilitated by the Municipal Capital Infrastructure Coordination office within the City. When an initiative of this Plan is aligned with planned below-grade work, the City should make every attempt to advance the public realm improvements as part of project completion. An example of this would be the alignment of the planned water main replacement on many Downtown streets (as outlined in the Water Strategy) with the Great Streets identified in this Plan.

The Implementation Strategy will outline specific projects that can be synchronized. It will detail a process for ensuring that coordination and communication among City divisions and with other organizations that develop and operate utilities and infrastructure occurs.

#### *3b. Partnerships with Third-Parties*

Infrastructure investment can come from other levels of government or government agencies, boards and commissions. The City of Toronto works in partnership with these organizations to leverage investment and participation in priority projects. Examples of these partnerships include transit planning and infrastructure with Metrolinx, school boards, and institutions. Elements of this Plan that align with existing initiatives underway by third parties should be prioritized to seize the opportunity to integrate expansion of the parks and public realm system within existing projects. An example of this is the proposed decking structure for Rail Deck Park which has been envisaged to enhance the planned Metrolinx Front / Spadina Regional Express Rail station.

### 4. New Opportunities

There are concepts in the Plan that may not meet all or some of the above criteria, but should be prioritized based on an emergent opportunity or possibility of a quick-win to showcase an element(s) of the Plan.

For example, the City could advance the public realm improvements to Pembroke Street in line with the Master Plan exercises already underway for Allan Gardens and Moss Park. Pembroke Street is not in the area of highest parkland need; however, completing the connection between the two large parks at each end of the street would demonstrate the place-making potential of a Park District. Quick-wins may also arise through the development approvals process when a land dedication to base-park condition can be enhanced to improve the functionality of the space.

The Five Transformative Ideas presented in this Plan are a blueprint for the Downtown's parks and public realm that builds on the assets of all areas in and adjacent to the core to establish a clear vision and approach for Downtown's future. The Implementation Strategy will be designed to be nimble enough to enable the City to capture opportunities that were not explicitly contemplated by this Plan, but that align with its overall vision and the Five Transformative Ideas.

### Realigning Tools to Meet Today's Realities

Downtown's parks today are challenged to meet the range of needs and land area required to serve residents, employees, students, and tourists. Parks in Downtown must serve local populations, and by virtue of their location within the core, near attractions and employment centres, many parks draw visitors from elsewhere in the city and beyond. This places increased pressure on these spaces to provide amenities to support the park needs of local populations and itinerant users. The degree to which the City's parks system keeps pace with residential and employment growth can be improved by adjusting and making better use of the tools the City has at its disposal.

Bringing the *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* to fruition will involve using a number of different tools. A primary tool for the acquisition of parkland and improvements to existing parks stems from the legislative authority of the Planning Act. The City can also leverage existing real estate assets to contribute to the vision of this Parks and Public Realm Plan. Other tools at the City's disposal for improving parks and streets include Development Charges and the tax base. Open space secured on development sites can be secured both through the planning approval process and during detailed site design.

Some implementation will be incremental through individual development applications (such as acquiring

new parkland in the Park Districts) and others may be through larger exercises that will require further study.

#### 1. Parkland Dedication as a Condition of Development Approval

As enabled through Section 42 of the Planning Act, Toronto's primary planning instrument for acquiring new parkland is through land dedications or cash-in-lieu of parkland as a condition of development or redevelopment. Section 42 of the Planning Act sets out a standard rate for parkland dedication of 2 percent of the land area for commercial or industrial development and 5 percent of the land area for residential development.

The Planning Act also permits municipalities to set their own alternative parkland dedication rates (within limits set by the Planning Act) by by-law to enable the City to require parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu as a condition of development and redevelopment over and above the Planning Act minimums. Prior to passing a new by-law that includes an alternative rate, an Official Plan is required to be in effect that contains specific policies dealing with the provision of lands for park or other public recreational purposes and the use of the alternative requirement. A Parks Plan is also required to be made publicly available prior to the adoption of Official Plan policy. The Parks Plan must examine the need for parkland in a city or specific geography.

The *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* meets the criteria under the Planning Act, to be the Parks Plan for the Downtown.

Importantly, any alternative rate established by the City only reflects the expectation of the amount of parkland, or cash-in-lieu of parkland, that development is expected to contribute; it is not necessarily representative of the total amount of land that would be required to meet the City's need for new parkland.

New developments will be expected to contribute parkland commensurate with growth. A new alternative rate will be established for the Downtown that is based on intensity of development, rather than the current static requirement of a percentage of the size of a site that does not account for the range of development intensity the Downtown is experiencing. This new rate will be established by by-law, and brought forward with the Implementation Strategy, in 2019. The key principle that will be applied is that the more intense the development, the more parkland that will be required to be provided.

#### *1a. Land Dedications*

Where sites are large enough to accommodate new parkland, on-site land dedications will be prioritized. The City also has the ability to request that development provide its dedication outside of the property itself,

referred to as an “off-site” contribution. Given the size and location of development sites in the Downtown, off-site land dedications will be pursued to ensure the provision of parkland is concurrent with growth and in areas that enhance and increase accessibility of the existing parks system in accordance with this Plan.

#### *1b. Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland*

Where the City exercises its right to accept cash-in-lieu of parkland, the alternative rate provision will be used to implement parkland acquisition and improvements serving the Downtown. This may include parkland and improvements outside the Secondary Plan area that serve the area.

### 2. Development Charges

The Development Charges (DC) Act enables municipalities to collect fees from developers at the time of building permit to help fund essential growth-related infrastructure. Under the City’s proposed 2018 Development Charges By-law, parks and recreation accounts for 12 percent of residential development charges and 2 percent of non-residential development charge allocations. The Development Charges Act precludes cities from using DC funding for parkland acquisition; however, costs associated with parks development and improvements in the Downtown may be eligible for DC funding.

### 3. Section 37

Section 37 of the Planning Act enables a municipality to secure community benefits in exchange for increased height and density of development otherwise permitted by a Zoning By-law. This tool will continue to provide important contributions for achieving the Five Transformative Ideas identified in this Plan.

### 4. Site Plan Control

Development proposals on individual sites will be subject to Site Plan Approval under Section 114 of the City of Toronto Act. Site Plans reflect the detailed design and technical aspects of a proposed development, including open space associated with the development. The Site Plan Control process will be an important tool to implementing the Downtown’s public realm elements that will be located on private property, such as POPS, generous setbacks, and stormwater retention, species selection, and other matters.

### 5. Agreements to Enable Public Access

There are many spaces in the Downtown that improve the public realm and may supplement the parks system. These spaces are listed in Transformative Idea 5: Local Places. They include POPS, laneways, church yards / cemeteries, overlooked spaces, university grounds and

schoolyards. These are important public space assets in the Downtown. Some of these spaces are located in the areas of lowest parkland provision. Shared use agreements and other partnerships will be needed to allow these spaces to remain or become publicly-accessible.

## Getting it Done

The *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* represents a vision that can be refined and enriched over time. It is a shared framework and a practical, action-oriented manual to guide decision-making among individuals, institutions, businesses, organizations, neighbourhoods, and a wide range of parties participating in shaping the future of the Downtown. It calls for the sustained leadership, support and engagement of all parties to foster the long-term vision. Partnerships within the City and with outside stakeholders will be key to the successful implementation of this Plan. Some of Toronto's most successful public realm projects are those that have been implemented through partnerships. Examples of successful partnerships in the Downtown and other parts of the city include:

- Bloor Street Revitalization – Bloor-Yorkville BIA and City of Toronto
- Scarborough Centre Civic Green – TDSB, Toronto Public Library and City of Toronto
- Dundas Street West Parkettes - DUWest BIA and City of Toronto
- Roncesvalles Renewed – Roncesvalles Village BIA, Residents Association and City of Toronto
- Grange Park – AGO, Grange Community Association, Philanthropy and City of Toronto
- The Bentway – Philanthropy, Waterfront Toronto and City of Toronto

## Measuring Success

The Parks and Public Realm Plan was launched with a Public Space Public Life (PSPL) Survey (*refer to companion document, Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan: Public Space Public Life Survey*). This form of research provided a clearer picture of how public space is being used in the Downtown and by whom. The data gathered through the study established a baseline against which future parks and public realm investments, acquisitions and improvements can be assessed. Continuing to gather Public Space Public Life data at regular intervals will provide the City with insights into how the implementation of this Plan has improved the experience of the public realm in the Downtown.

The Implementation Strategy will recommend periodic reviews of the Plan. These reviews will include, at minimum, the following analysis:

- An update to the park provision assessment, including parkland need and future need based on City Planning's Development Pipeline;
- An assessment of where growth has occurred during the review period and how parks and the public realm have been expanded, improved and connected commensurate with that growth;
- Updates on the Public Space Public Life Surveys that have been undertaken during the review period;
- A review and update of the priority projects and associated actions for the next 5 years and beyond; and
- An inventory of uninitiated projects and priorities, and a review of their relevance when the impact of other opportunities and investments have been factored into the park provision assessment, Implementation Strategy and Public Space Public Life data.

“Make sure that the public realm is inviting and liveable, with high-quality public spaces.”

– TOcore Consultation



*Water feature in the revitalized Grange Park, Toronto, Canada*





## 4. Park Provision and Need in the Downtown

*Addressing park provision and need in the Downtown*

# Park Provision and Need in the Downtown

## Guiding Policy and Aligned Initiatives

The development of this *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan* has been informed by provincial and local policy, and a number of aligned initiatives.

### *Provincial Policy*

The Province sets out the overarching policy direction to guide land use planning decisions in the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017). These documents recognize the importance of planning for parks and the public realm. They set the expectation that municipalities will align planning for new parkland when approving new development and explicitly recognize providing expanded and convenient access to an appropriate supply of parks and open spaces will support the achievement of complete communities. The policy documents signal that:

- Parks and the public realm are integral elements of an active transportation network and the provision of green infrastructure;
- A full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation is needed; and
- The provision of parks and public realm contribute to energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### *Toronto's Official Plan*

Official Plans are long-term visions for how a city should grow and are the most important vehicles for implementing provincial policies and plans.

The City's Official Plan recognizes that Toronto's waterfront, ravines, watercourses, parks and other open spaces connect to form an extensive web of green spaces across the city, and that our parks and open space system will need to expand as the city grows and changes. It highlights that ongoing reinvestment in Toronto's parks and open space system is as important to city-building as creating new parks and open spaces. It directs that:

- New parks and amenities, particularly in growth areas, will be added, in addition to improving and expanding existing parks;
- Parks need to be designed to be of a high quality and provide a variety of amenities to promote user comfort, safety, accessibility and year-round use and to enhance the experience of "place";
- Access to existing publicly accessible open spaces will be protected and expanded; and
- The use of private open space and recreation facilities is promoted, including areas suitable for community or allotment gardening, to supplement the City's parks, facilities and amenities.

The Official Plan also recognizes that the public realm is a defining component of great cities, and the characteristics and qualities that makes cities great places to visit, also makes them great places to live.

#### *City-wide Parkland Strategy*

In 2017, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation division launched the City-wide Parkland Strategy. The Strategy is a 20-year plan that will guide the planning of the park system – including new parks, expansions, improvements and enhanced access to existing parks. It will support decision-making and prioritization of investment in parkland across Toronto.

The *Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan's* vision and Five Transformative Ideas are supported by four principles of the City-wide Parkland Strategy:

- **Acquire and Expand:** Downtown has a parkland provision 67 percent below the city-wide average. As the Downtown population continues to grow, creating new parkland and making existing parks bigger, where possible, is required. Acquisitions and expansions will be undertaken to address the notable gaps in the inventory of types of parks in the Downtown. In particular, this will include park spaces that are large enough to accommodate a range of programming and functionality, which is critical infrastructure needed to support Downtown's continued evolution and growth;
- **Improve:** Improvements to parks can be transformative; existing parks can serve a wider range of park users when investments to the infrastructure within the park are made to increase their utility and potential to meet local needs. Investing in parks can contribute to meeting parkland needs to support growth;
- **Share:** Downtown has high quality and signature open space assets owned and operated by other public agencies (such as the Universities) and private landowners. Its cemeteries, existing and improved schoolyards and privately-owned publicly accessible open spaces (POPS) contribute to Downtown's public realm, but do not replace the need for new and enhanced parkland. Collaboration and partnerships are needed to ensure the existing and future population have access to these spaces. Securing new POPS through development, for example, will contribute to expansion of the public realm; and
- **Connect:** A well-connected system of parks and open spaces increases access to these valuable assets. The Plan recognizes that the existing street grid presents the opportunity to establish a network of active transportation routes and pedestrian

connections. It uncovers opportunities to provide better access to existing parks and open spaces and to expand the park experience beyond the park boundary itself thereby creating a cohesive green network and support community life.

The Parkland Strategy has developed an updated methodology for measuring and assessing the provision of parkland in the city based on the amount of parkland per person, where it is located and its degree of accessibility to the population. This methodology has been used in the Downtown to assess and analyze parkland provision, and is addressed in more detail, below, under *Park Provision and Need*.

#### *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*

Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation finalized the 20-year Facilities Master Plan (FMP) in 2017. This Facilities Master Plan will guide investment in parks and recreation facilities such as community recreation centres, ice rinks, and sports fields. In developing the Facilities Master Plan, consideration was given to demographics, the use and conditions of current facilities, recreation and leisure trends, facility best practices, and legislative changes together with public, stakeholder and staff input. It considered population growth in the Downtown and the rest of the city based on the projected Development Pipeline.

#### *Mobility Strategy and Parks and Public Realm Plan: Working Together*

Like the Parks and Public Realm Plan, the Mobility Strategy is one of the Infrastructure Strategies that helps support the implementation of the Downtown Secondary Plan to provide a blueprint for aligning growth and infrastructure in the Downtown over the next 25 years.

The Mobility Strategy outlines a vision and framework to enable the growing numbers of residents, workers, students and visitors in the Downtown to travel safely, efficiently, and more sustainably, while also strengthening the city's economic competitiveness and environmental resiliency. It is primarily about addressing transportation needs within a growing Downtown, but it also supports and complements rapid transit network infrastructure planning initiatives at the city-wide and regional scale.

The Mobility Strategy is organized around the following five transportation themes:

1. Complete Streets
2. Walking
3. Cycling
4. Transit
5. Motor Vehicles

The Mobility Strategy works together with all the Infrastructure Strategies, but works most closely with the Parks and Public Realm Plan, primarily on the subject of Downtown streets. Streets are some of the most important public spaces in the Downtown, and increasingly function as public gathering spaces. They form a fundamental part of the transportation system, enabling people and goods to move and circulate efficiently. Making Downtown streets more complete involves striving to achieve both mobility and placemaking objectives outlined in the Mobility Strategy and the Parks and Public Realm Plan.

It is important that the Mobility Strategy and the Parks and Public Realm Plan be read together, as they fundamentally work together in planning for a more desirable and sustainable Downtown for current and future generations.

## Parks in the Downtown

The Downtown has 121 parks and 97 hectares of parkland. A map of the parkland in Downtown is shown in the map, *Existing Parkland (right)*.

The majority of parks in the Downtown are very small; 70 percent being **less than 0.5** hectares in size. While these parks are distributed throughout the Downtown, their small size restricts the range of recreation, sports and community programming that can be found in larger parks. Some of these parks have been designed to a high standard and are in prominent civic locations such as Berczy Park (0.36 hectares), while others are located within neighbourhoods and have few features other than the basic elements of benches and drinking fountains.

There are 22 parks in the Downtown between **0.5 - 1.5** hectares. These parks have greater opportunity to provide space for a wider range of uses. Parks in this size range can be designed to support more than one park element. For example, parks in this size range could include a playground *and* enclosed dog park *and* open space. Some examples of these parks include Bathurst Quay (0.58 hectares), College Park (0.95 hectares), David Crombie Park (1.34 hectares) and Regent Park South (1.49 hectares).

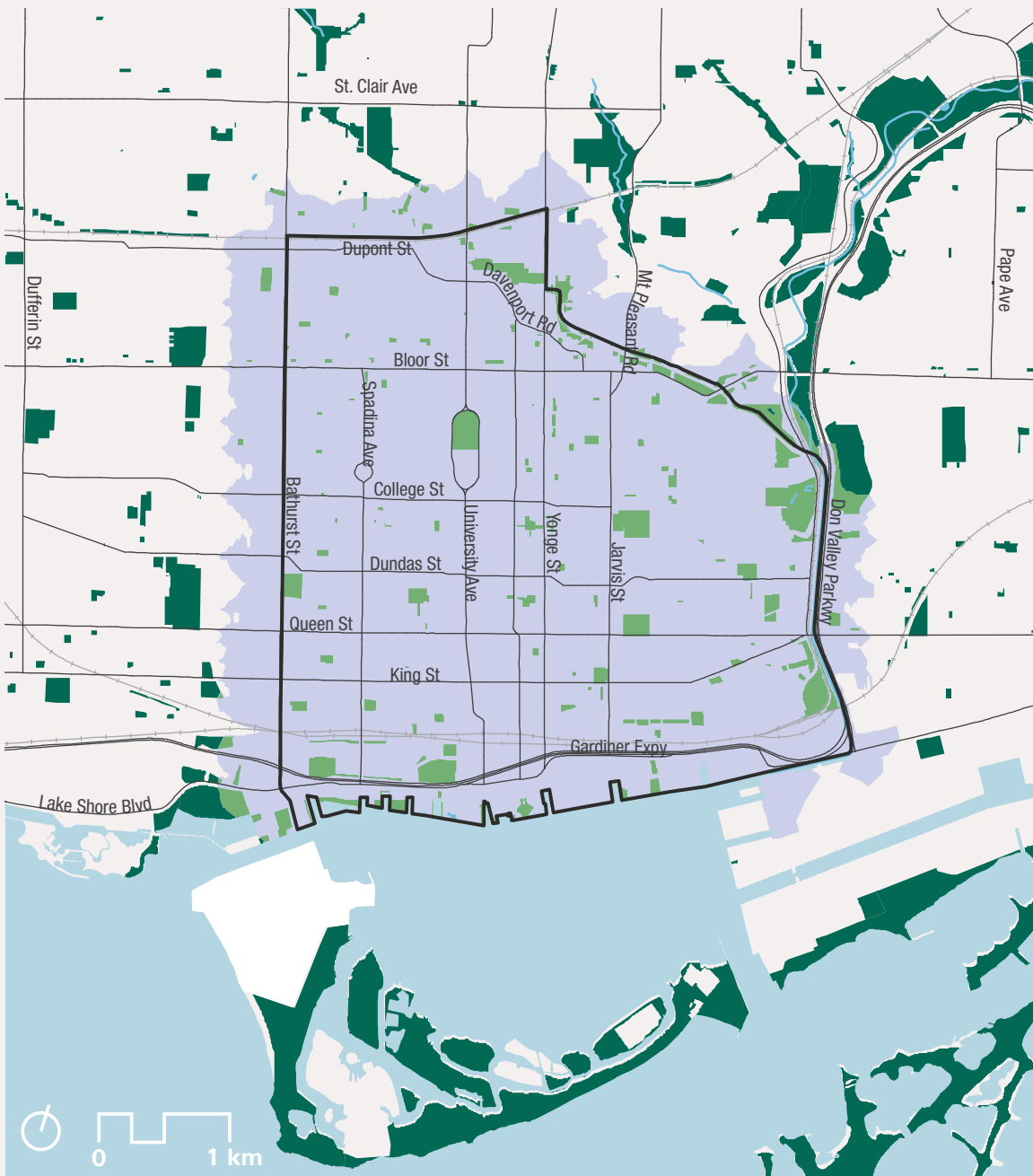
There are five parks in the Downtown between **1.5 - 3.0** hectares. These parks are Regent Park (1.75 hectares), Grange Park (1.83 hectares), Harbour Square Park (1.90

hectares), Wellesley Park (2.28 hectares) and Alexandra Park (2.64 hectares). Each of these parks are large enough to provide areas for programming, facilities and significant passive space.

There are three parks in the Downtown that are between **3.0 - 5.0** hectares in size. Parks of this size can contain multiple recreational facilities, playgrounds and passive space. The parks of this size in the Downtown are Canoe Landing (3.21 hectares), Moss Park (3.46 hectares) and Roundhouse Park (4.76 hectares). Canoe Landing includes two multi-purpose sports fields and walking paths and will support a new community recreation centre, two elementary schools and a child care centre that are currently under construction. Moss Park is undergoing a significant master planning exercise that will include a new community centre and redesigned park; it currently contains a baseball diamond, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground, a community centre and an arena. Roundhouse Park has a unique profile in that it is the location of the restored heritage locomotive turntable and other pieces of railway heritage.

There are six parks in the Downtown **greater than 5.0 hectares** in size. These parks are Queen's Park (5.13 hectares), Allan Gardens (5.36 hectares), Rosedale Ravine Lands (5.51 hectares) Ramsden Park (5.54 hectares), Corktown Common (7.16 hectares) and

- Parks Within TOcore Catchment
- Parks Beyond TOcore Catchment
- TOcore 500m Park Catchments
- TOcore Boundary



Existing Parkland (map by O2 Planning + Design)

Riverdale Park West (11.05 hectares). Queen's Park is in a prominent location adjacent to the Legislature which currently has significant tree canopy and commemorative function. Allan Gardens is the location of the historic Allan Gardens Conservatory, and a number of other uses. Ramsden Park includes many recreational facilities and play spaces and is an important connection between Yonge Street and Avenue Road. Corktown Common is the centrepiece of the West Don Lands revitalization including marshland, lawns, playground areas and communal features, such as a barbeque, large picnic tables and fireplace. Riverdale Park West includes ravine lands and trails as well as large playing fields.

The Toronto Islands are an iconic feature of the city's park system and are an important city-wide park resource. However, because of the cost and obstacles associated with accessing the Islands, they have been excluded from the Downtown parkland provision analysis.

#### *Trends in parkland acquisition*

The City continues to acquire new parkland in the Downtown. This is achieved by transfers from other public agencies, land dedication from new development or acquisition by the City. Of the 18 parks that have been added to the City's inventory of parkland since 2005, eight are less than 0.5 hectares, six are between 0.5 - 1.5

hectares, two are between 1.5 - 3.0 hectares, and two are 3.0 hectares or greater in size.

The majority of new parks in the Downtown have been associated with the revitalization of the Waterfront and Railway Lands. The larger parks (Canoe Landing, Corktown Common and Regent Park) have all been developed as a result of master planning exercises where the City was able to allocate parkland through the Plan of Subdivision process to set aside large park blocks to serve a new community.

The challenge for the City is to continue to add new parkland to the parks system to keep pace with the rapid growth of the residential and employment populations in absence of the large-scale regeneration of under-utilized former industrial lands. Addressing this challenge is a core objective of this Plan.

#### *Parkland Provision and Need*

The City-wide Parkland Strategy's updated methodology for measuring the provision of parkland in the city has been used to inform the state of parkland provision in the Downtown, now and into the future. The methodology makes use of census and Development Pipeline data at the census dissemination block level (the smallest unit available) and Geographic Information System (GIS) software to accurately measure the distance to parkland from each dissemination block based



on the Downtown's actual walkable street network. This approach was presented in a Preliminary Report which was brought to the City's Executive Committee in November, 2017. The updated methodology consists of a Park Catchment Tool that measures the amount of parkland per person and is reported by Statistics Canada's dissemination blocks. The Tool is based on the following process:

1. **Park Catchment:** A park catchment is determined by calculating the 500 metre distance (or 5 minute walk) to parks using the local road, sidewalk and pathway network.
2. **Park User Population:** The number of people living within the park catchment.
3. **Park Supply:** Park supply is the total amount of parkland accessible to the park user population.

Importantly, the assessment methodology includes all City-owned parks and open spaces, inclusive of natural features and ravine lands with slopes less than 45 percent. While these contribute to our overall system of parks and open spaces in the city, they provide limited opportunities for accommodating a full range of parks programming. Nonetheless, the assessment methodology provides valuable insights into the state of parkland provision in the Downtown. Further, the Toronto Islands, while an iconic feature of the City's park and open space system, have been excluded from the

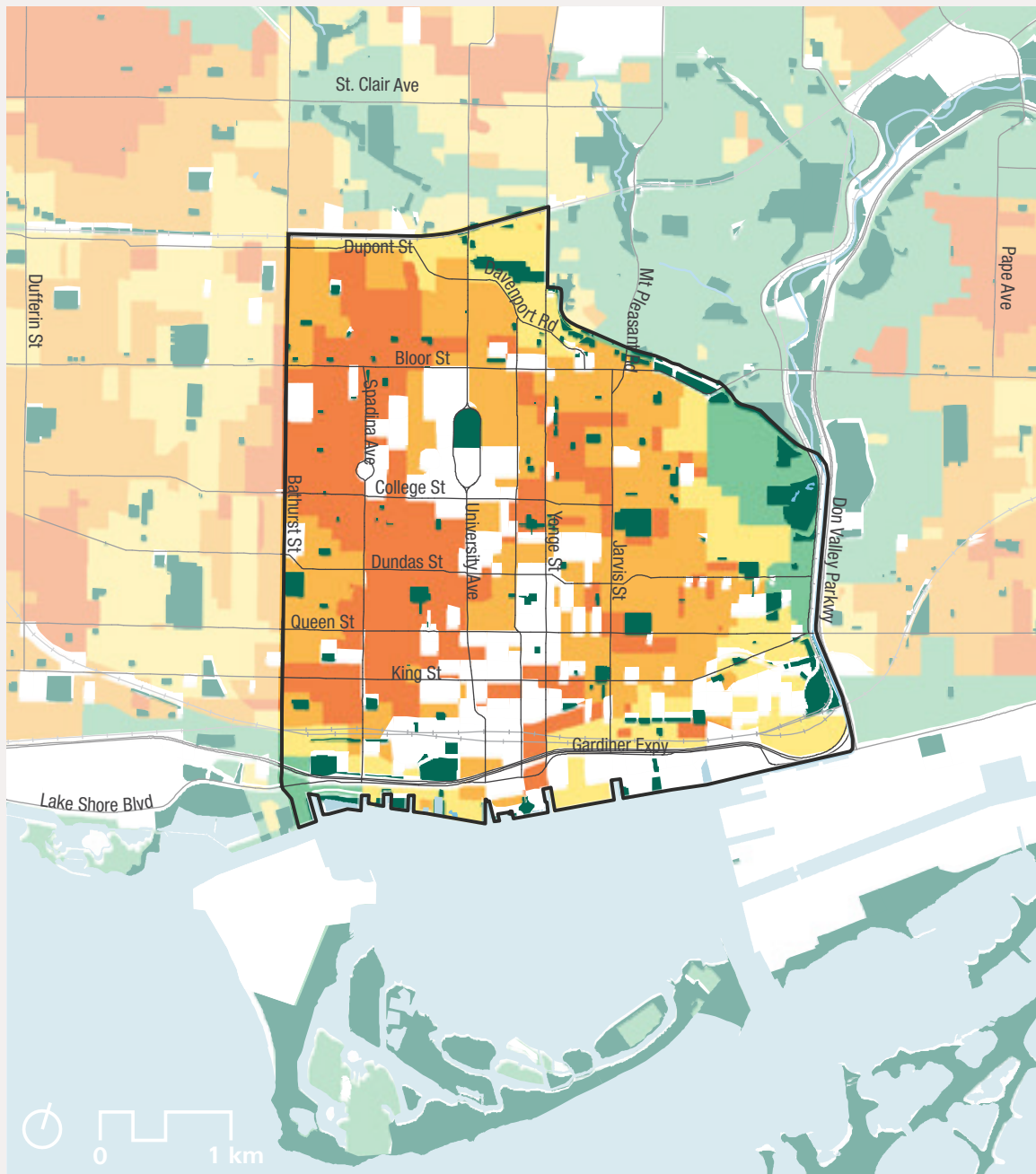
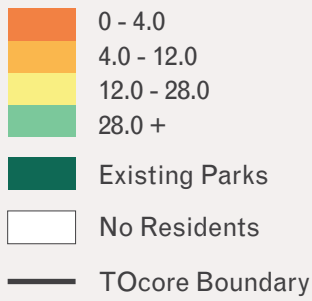
analysis due to the cost and obstacles associated with accessing the Islands.

The application of the updated methodology has shown that in the Downtown, there is 9.4m<sup>2</sup> of parkland per resident. Compared to the city-wide average of 28m<sup>2</sup> per resident, the residents in Downtown have 67 percent less parkland than the average Torontonian.

*Parkland Supply Per Resident, 2016 (next spread)* shows the parkland provision per person (residential population) in the Downtown (2016). The overwhelming majority of the Downtown currently has a very low parkland provision per person. Within the study area, only the areas adjacent to the Don River Valley parks system and near Bathurst Quay have a provision equivalent to the city-wide average.

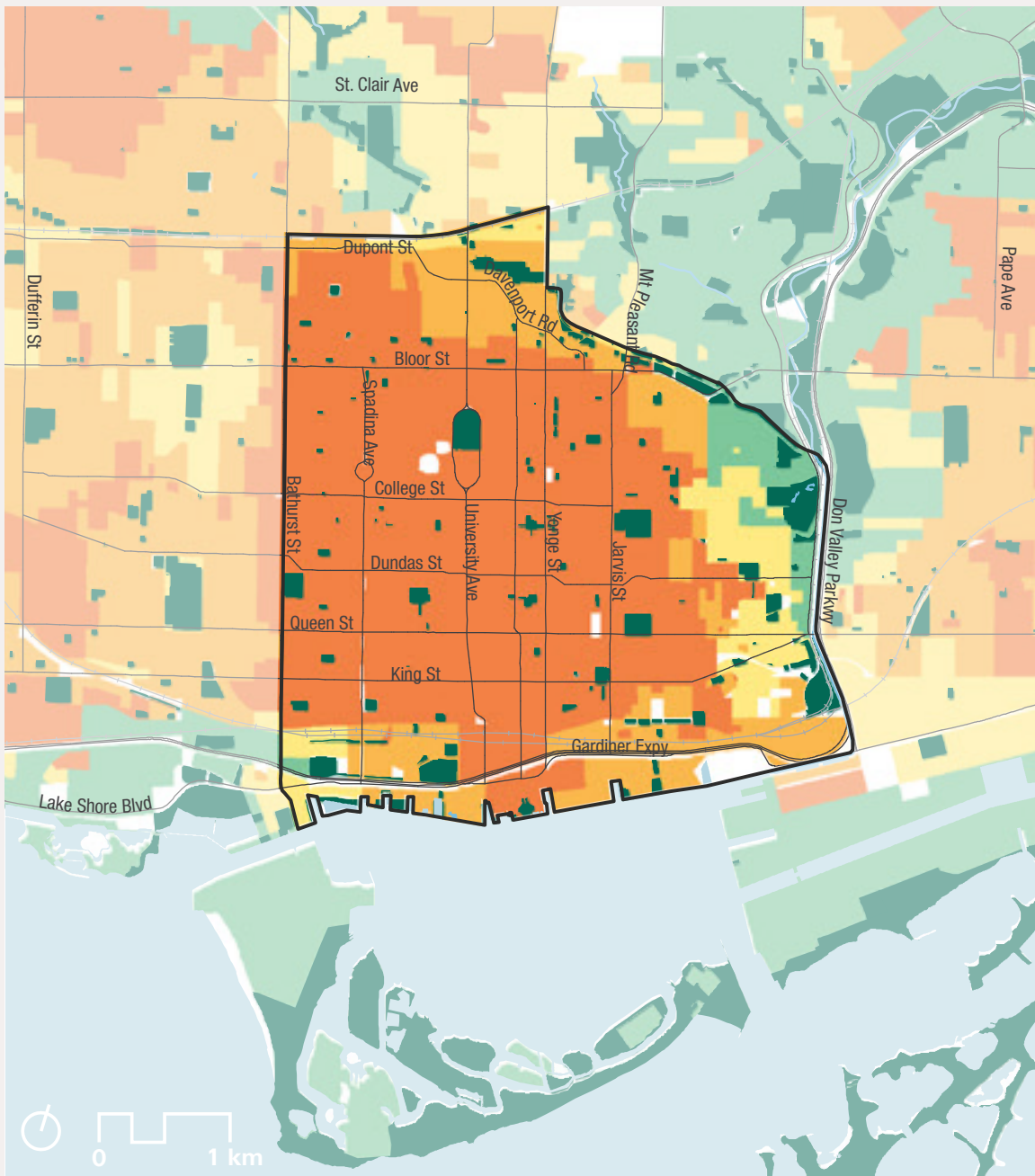
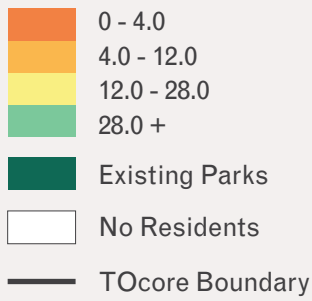
*Parkland Supply Per Resident, 2016* also shows that most of the Downtown's low-rise neighbourhoods have very low parkland provision, between 0 - 4.0m<sup>2</sup> per person. This is due, in part, to the historic development patterns of the original subdivisions and the fact that many of the parks located within low-rise neighbourhoods are also within 500 metre of growth areas. This suggests that without new parkland to support population growth, the parks within these neighbourhoods will become increasingly overburdened.

Total Park Area (m<sup>2</sup>) Per Resident (2016)



Parkland Supply Per Resident, 2016 (map by O2 Planning + Design)

Total Park Area (m<sup>2</sup>) Per Resident and Employee (2016)



Parkland Supply Per Resident and Employee, 2016 (map by O2 Planning + Design)

In the Downtown, which has the highest concentrations of employees in the city, employment populations are likewise considered when measuring parkland provision. Additional employment population adds pressure to existing parkland and impacts parkland provision, which is an important factor in the overall analysis.

*Parkland Supply Per Resident and Employee, 2016 (previous spread)* shows the parkland provision per person (residential and employment population) in the Downtown (2016). Taking employees into consideration, the parkland provision in the Downtown drops to 3.0m<sup>2</sup> per resident / employee. These figures do not include visitor or student populations, which likewise contribute to parkland demand in the Downtown.

*Parkland Supply Per Resident, 2032 (next spread)* presents the change to parkland provision based on estimated population using the Development Pipeline. The Pipeline represents all projects with any development activity between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2016. The horizon of the Development Pipeline is about 15 years, which is the approximate build-out of the projects included in this data set if they are all completed. The map shows that the rate of parkland provision declines to 6.0m<sup>2</sup> per resident if parks are not acquired to meet estimated population growth.

*Parkland Supply Per Resident and Employee, 2032 (next*

*spread)* presents the change to parkland provision based on estimated residential and employment population using the Development Pipeline. Similarly, if no new parkland is added in the Downtown within the next 15 years, the rate of parkland provision declines to 2.3m<sup>2</sup> per resident and employee.

A summary table of provision rates in the Downtown compared to city-wide:

Area	2016 (in m <sup>2</sup> )	2032 (in m <sup>2</sup> )
City-wide residents	28	23.5
City-wide residents and employees	18	15
Downtown residents	9.4	6.0
Downtown residents and employees	3.0	2.3

If no new parkland is added in the Downtown within the next 15 years, the growth-driven parkland need intensifies considerably. Within the Downtown, there are 137,000 residential units and 3.8 million square metres of non-residential development in the Pipeline. Based on the estimated residential population, the City would need to acquire over 165 hectares of additional

parkland in the next 15 years within the Downtown boundaries to maintain the current rate of parkland provision of 9.4m<sup>2</sup> per person.

Parkland need is further driven by the land requirements for new facilities identified in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. Recreation facility needs related to growth within the Downtown will be met by facilities within the boundaries of the Downtown, and in other areas that are accessible to and serve the Downtown population. The Facilities Master Plan forecasts that the Downtown will need to be served by the following additional facilities by 2038 to maintain provision levels:

- 4 mid-sized community recreation centres;
- 1 replacement community recreation centre (John Innes);
- 2 indoor pool additions;
- 1 replacement indoor pool;
- 4 splash pads;
- 10 multi-use fields;
- 1 cricket pitch;
- 1 tennis court complex; and
- 8 basketball courts.

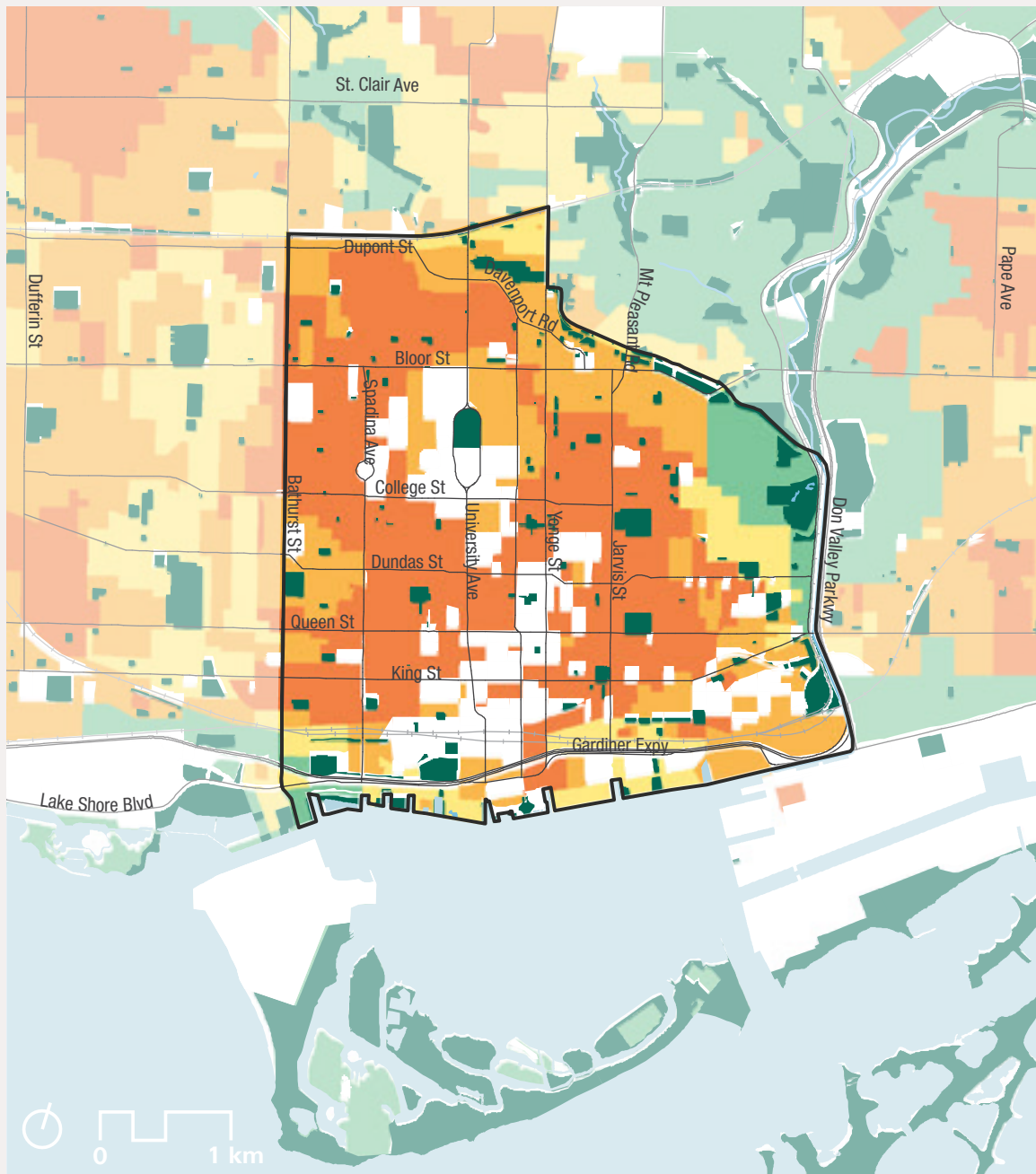
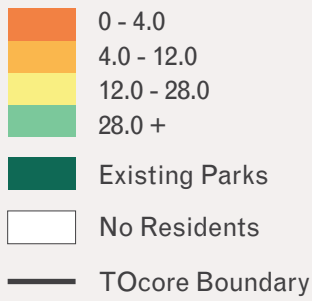
Although some facilities will be built on existing City parkland, additional land is required. It is estimated that an additional 15 hectares of land will be required to serve the facility needs of the Downtown.

#### *Addressing Park Provision and Need in the Downtown*

The availability of sites in the Downtown limits how much parkland the City can acquire. The small parcel fabric would require complex land assemblies throughout the Downtown to achieve larger park blocks, which would still not generate close to 165 hectares of new parkland. As such, every available opportunity for providing new parkland, from small to large, is increasingly important. All opportunities available to the City need to be capitalized on to meet future demand. This also emphasizes the need for increased accessibility to existing parks to improve their function and utility.

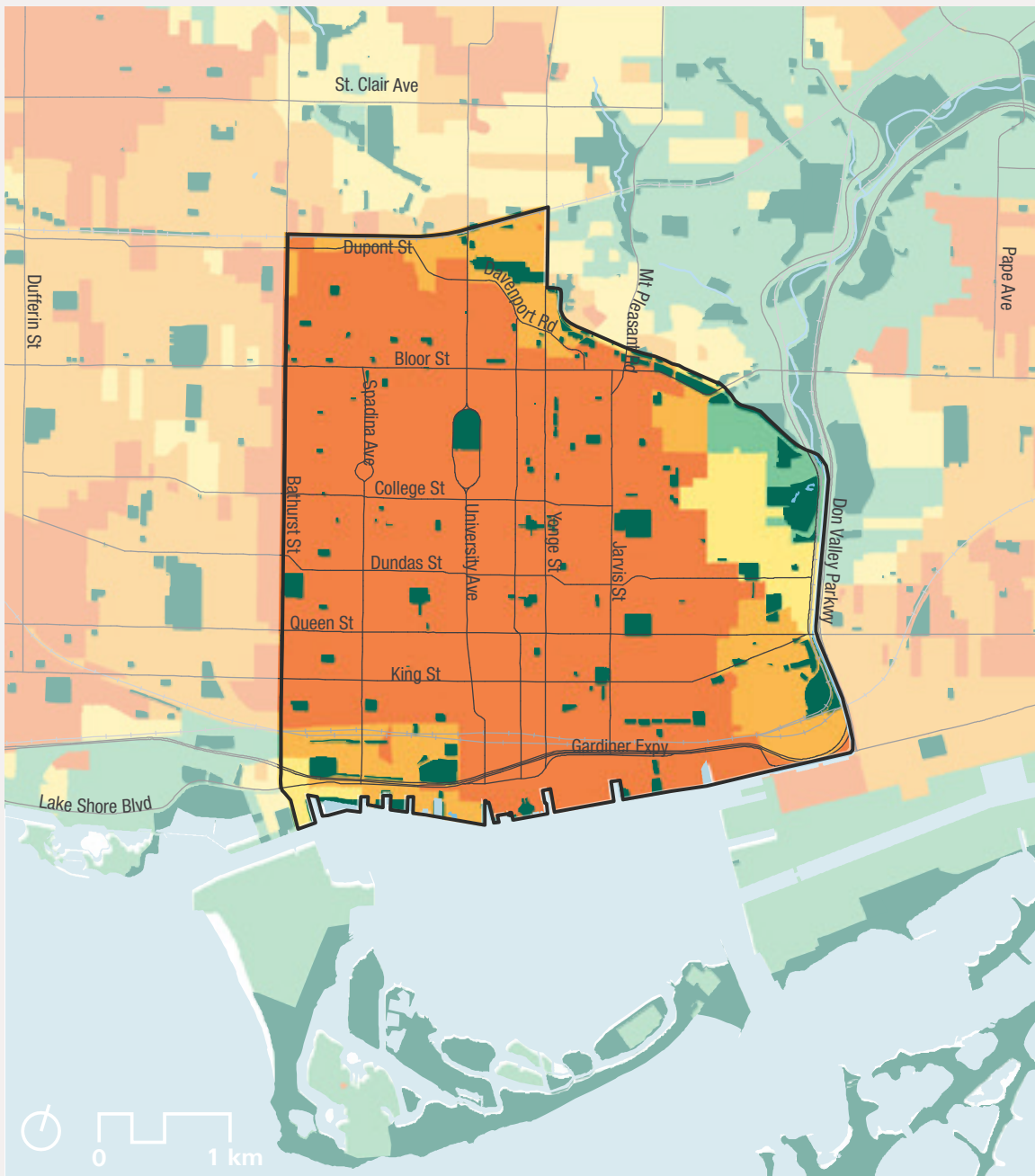
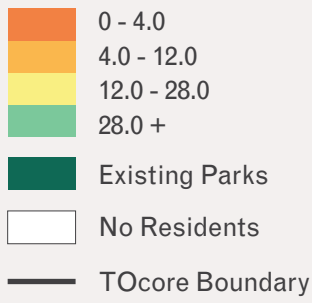
The Planning Act enables the City to require parkland dedication as a condition of development or redevelopment of land. Despite this legislative authority, the City is challenged to acquire enough parkland to meet demand based on the intensity of the vertical development experienced in the Downtown. The City's current policy for parkland dedication ties the amount of parkland required to the size of the development site. It was implemented at a time when the City was experiencing modest growth. The impact of increases in development intensity is a widening gap between development-driven parkland need and the amount of parkland that is required as a condition of approval. The implementation measures proposed in this Plan will seek to address the widening gap.

Total Park Area (m<sup>2</sup>) Per Resident (2032)



Parkland Supply Per Resident, 2032 (map by O2 Planning + Design)

Total Park Area (m<sup>2</sup>) Per Resident and Employee (2032)



Parkland Supply Per Resident and Employee, 2032 (map by O2 Planning + Design)

### *A Full Range of Parks*

Toronto did not benefit from a pre-determined master plan for the provision of its parks and open spaces. The city has grown and evolved organically, with each development era providing different kinds of parks and approaches to the provision of parkland. The Downtown's urban fabric is also the product of waves of development and redevelopment.

In a master planned context, a full range of parks and open spaces would be delivered that caters to the needs of people and affords a breadth of park experiences. There would be a series of large multi-functional, signature parks and open spaces, natural areas, a range of community-oriented parks that vary in size and programming, with gaps in the urban landscape filled in with small parkettes, plazas, squares and other open spaces. This range of parks and open spaces would be well-connected by linear open spaces that expand the parks system to create an interconnected open space system.

*Park Area Within 500 metres, 2016 (next spread)* shows the total amount of parkland that is accessible to residents within 500 metres by size of park. This measurement shows only the supply of parkland available, and does not factor in the demand that population places on Downtown parks, as shown in the previous maps. It shows that there are districts within the Downtown,

most notably west of Yonge Street, where residents have access to less than 1.5 hectares of parkland within 500 metres. In these areas, residents and employees have the narrowest range of park sizes available to them. Conversely, areas east of Parliament Street nearer the parks that are connected to the Don River have access to the broadest range of park categories within 500 metres.

This demonstrates that there is the need for strategic acquisition and investment strategies for all types of parks in the Downtown. For instance, the area to the north of the Union Station rail corridor and to the west of Spadina Avenue (the King-Spadina neighbourhood) has access to an average of 0.5 - 3.0 hectares of parkland, but has one of the most rapid rates of population growth in the city. This underscores the need for a large park in this area, which the City is currently advancing through the plan for Rail Deck Park.

Other insights from *Park Area Within 500 metres, 2016* relate to the area bounded by Bathurst Street, Bloor Street West, Spadina Avenue and College Street. This area has the lowest amount of parkland in the Downtown. It is mostly comprised of stable, low-rise neighbourhoods. However, given the rate of growth in surrounding areas, an expansion and improvement of neighbourhood parks in this area will not only address the historic low rates of park provision in this area, but

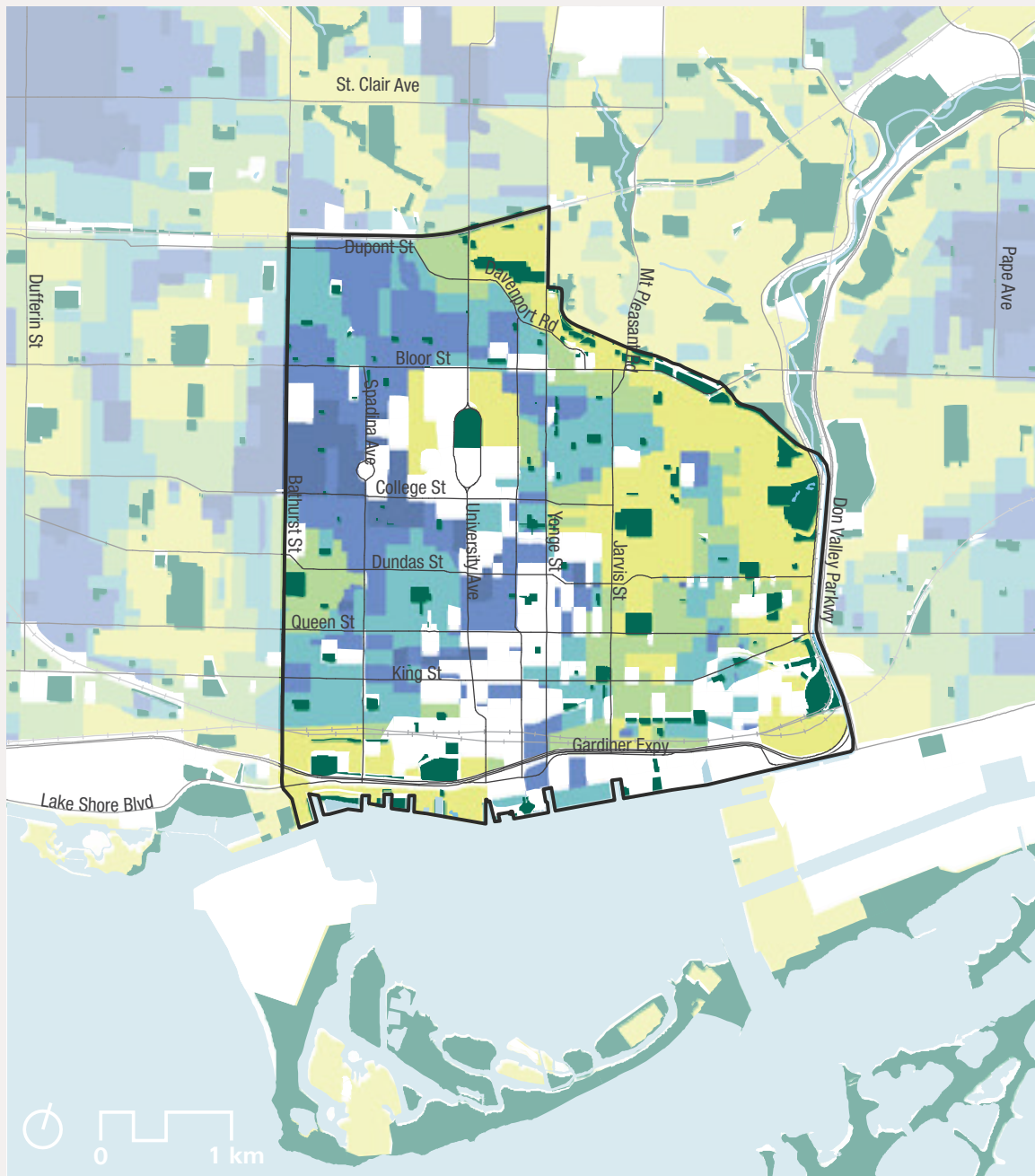
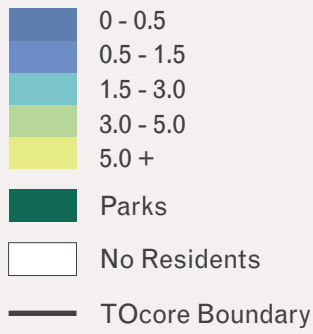


support growth elsewhere in the Downtown.

*Park Area Within 500 metres, 2016* also illustrates where there are opportunities to improve connectivity to, and expand existing parks to increase accessibility to parks within a 500 metre catchment. It highlights the opportunity to reinforce connections between the core and waterfront areas of the Downtown by creating a series of connected parks and other public spaces.

Some areas of the Downtown have benefitted from master planning exercises, such as Regent Park and Alexandra Park. They demonstrate the importance of improving connections in and through an area by re-introducing historic street grids that were disrupted through 20th century social housing developments. The success of these revitalization efforts are apparent: Regent Park has become an area with one of the highest rates of accessibility to parkland. As revitalization efforts continue to unfold in Alexandra Park, improved connections with new streets will increase the access to parks for all residents within the 500 metre catchment area.

Total Park Area (Ha) within 500m (2016)



Park Area Within 500 metres, 2016 (map by O2 Planning + Design)

In the Downtown, there are 9.4m<sup>2</sup> of parkland per person, which is 67 percent lower than the city-wide average of 28m<sup>2</sup> of parkland per person.

CONCEPTUAL RENDERING



*The King-Spadina neighbourhood has an average of 0.5 - 3.0 hectares of parkland accessible to residents within 500 metres, but has one of the most rapid rates of population growth in the city; showing Rail Deck Park, Proposed Concept*

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