

Centennial Park

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

PROJECT TEAM FOR CENTENNIAL PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Prepared for:

City of Toronto

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PROCESS

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Illustrative Master Plan

EXISTING

- (A) CENTENNIAL GOLF CENTRE
- (B) ETOBICOKE CREEK PATH
- (C) FOREST
- (D) SHAGBARK FOREST
- (E) STADIUM
- (F) OLYMPIUM
- (G) BMX COURSE
- (H) CONSERVATORY
- (I) ARENA
- (J) OPERATIONS
- (K) STORMWATER POND / WETLANDS

PROPOSED

- 1 ACCESSIBLE PATH
- 2 SKATEPARK
- 3 ICE SKATE TRAIL / PLAZA
- 4 AMPHITHEATRE
- 5 FITNESS TRAILS
- 6 LOOKOUTS
- 7 PICNIC AREA
- 8 DISTRICT PLAYGROUND
- 9 NATURAL PLAYGROUND
- 10 PLAZA
- 11 NATIVE ARBORETUM
- 12 MEDICINE WHEEL GARDEN
- 13 NATIVE ORCHARD
- 14 STORMWATER FACILITY
- 15 MULTI-USE COURT
- 16 TOBOGGAN HILL
- 17 FUTURE OPERATION + MAINTENANCE FACILITY OR VOLLEYBALL OR POTENTIAL DOG OFF-LEASH AREA
- 18 VOLLEYBALL COURTS



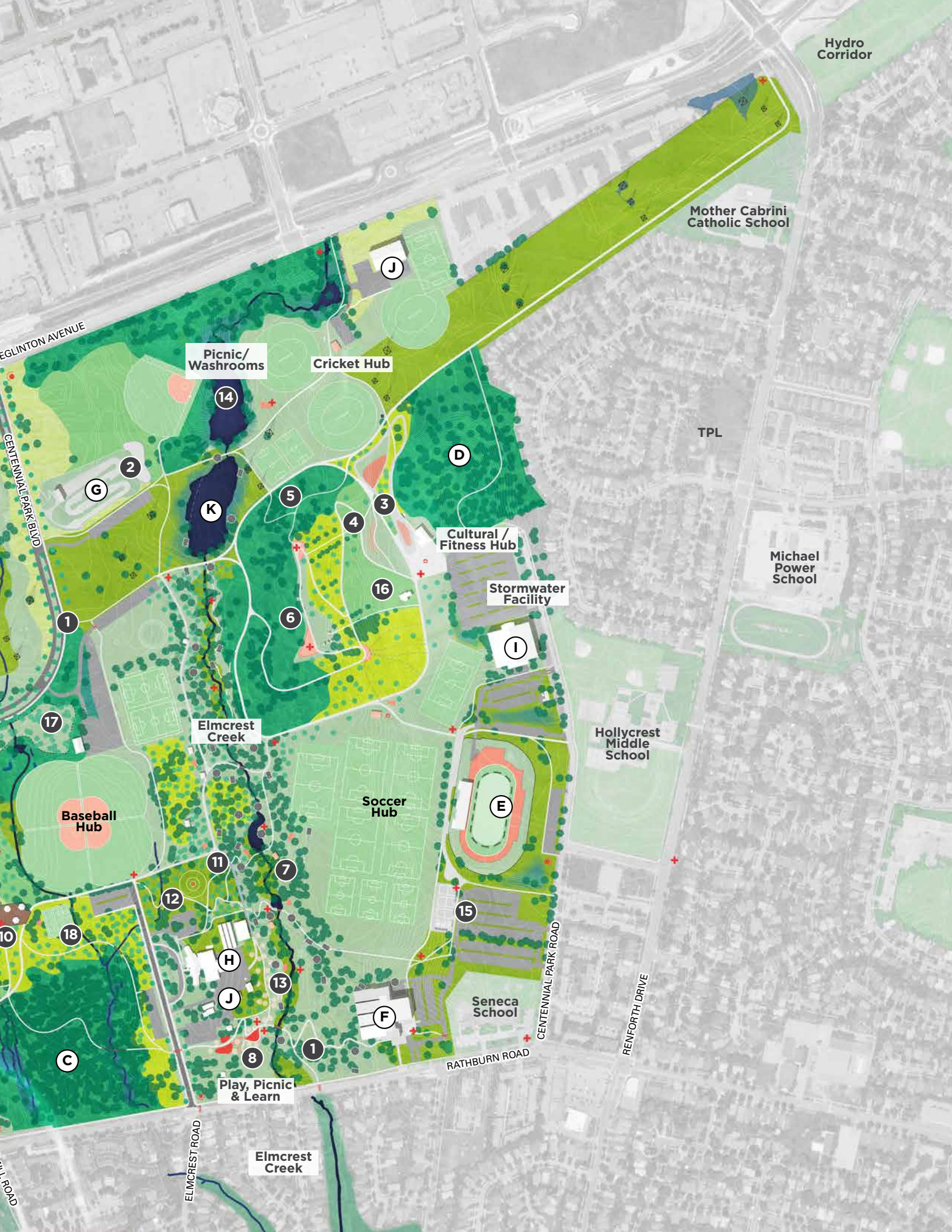
Hydro Corridor

Etobicoke Creek

ORBIT DRIVE

Nature Retreat

ETOBICOKE CREEK TRAIL



Hydro Corridor

Mother Cabrini Catholic School

EGLINTON AVENUE

Picnic/Washrooms

Cricket Hub

TPL

CENTENNIAL PARK BLVD

Cultural / Fitness Hub

Stormwater Facility

Michael Power School

Elmcrest Creek

Hollycrest Middle School

Baseball Hub

Soccer Hub

E

Play, Picnic & Learn

Seneca School

RENFORTH DRIVE

RATHBURN ROAD

Elmcrest Creek

ELMCREST ROAD

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land we are meeting on today is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. As landscape architects we recognize that this land, upon which Centennial Park sits, is part of a watershed of forest and creeks and of ancient migration routes used by First Nations people that are thousands of years older than the roads and buildings that sit here now. As this landscape evolves through the Master Plan implementation work, we hope that the story of this land can be re-imagined together.

Anti-racism Acknowledgment

The City of Toronto recognizes its responsibility to create a city that works for all residents. Confronting and removing barriers caused by Anti-Black Racism benefits all Torontonians, especially other Toronto communities experiencing racism and marginalization. However, Anti-Black Racism still exists in this city, affecting the life chances of more than 200,000 people of African descent or origin who call Toronto home. Anti-Black Racism has had detrimental impacts on the life and work of Black people in our city.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centennial Park Master Plan Update seeks to find a new balance between the natural environment and recreational facilities, addressing the existing fragmentation of the site and revealing unique features that should be cherished and preserved.

The Centennial Park Master Plan Update seeks to find a new balance between the natural environment and recreational facilities, addressing the existing fragmentation of the site and revealing unique features that should be cherished and preserved.

Centennial Park in Toronto's West District is one of the largest publicly owned parks in the city and is an integral part of the City's green and open space network. The park currently has an incredible range of activities, programs and amenities. Centennial Park draws over 1.5 million visitors a year and is now experiencing more operational demands, as well as a greater desire to protect and enhance the local ecology. In the upcoming decades, we will see a transformation of this prominent city park into a sustainable, connected, resilient urban environment.

The 2020/21 Centennial Park Master Plan is a refresh on the 2008 Master Plan, which identified a 10 year review period. Park Master Plans serve as important and dynamic long-term planning documents that provide a vision, objectives and implementable action items to guide decision making for ongoing

improvements and management of parks. For Centennial Park, this Master Plan update is particularly timely, as it comes at a moment when environmental, social and demographic shifts within the community and the city at large demand new approaches to recreation and public space.

A Vision Born Through Public Input

The new Master Plan has been developed with specific reference to the 2008 Master Plan, it's recommendations – some realized and others not – and the public engagement input gathered at that time. The 2020/21 Update builds on the back of this work and the focused public consultation conducted in 2019, as well as numerous recent studies and guidelines including: The Parkland Strategy (2019), Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017), The Toronto Ravine Strategy (2020), the Public Art Strategy (2019) TRCA studies, and the recently completed Centennial Park MP Facilities and Service Planning Assessment (2020).

In order to better understand current needs, a new round of in-depth public consultations was undertaken as part of the Master Plan

Update. These engagement events with residents, stakeholders, Indigenous leaders, youth groups, community groups, and the Anti-Black Racism Accountability Circle were held between January 2020 and July 2021 through in-person and virtual forums, as well as surveys, interviews and unique digital engagement tools.

Building Blocks: The Vision and Framework

Anchored by this far-reaching public consultation process, the new vision that has emerged is one that is inclusive and provides new opportunities for community stewardship. To support this new vision for the park and the development of design approaches, four Guiding Principles have been advanced as critical elements for Centennial Park's success:

- Activate
- Connect
- Protect & Enhance
- Collaborate & Evolve

These guidelines are key to informing the design approaches for the park, as well as the objectives that will set the tone for all future development. These master plan objectives fall under four key organizing themes that help define and organize the Master Plan:

1. Park Programming and Recreation
2. Water and Ecology
3. Accessibility and Movement
4. Art and Placemaking

These themes, represent stories or lenses through which to understand the seven objectives of the Master Plan as described in Section 4, which include:

- Consolidate Spaces
- Enhance Programming
- Improve Connectivity
- Celebrate Water
- Foster Inclusion
- Build Identity

Plan Highlights:

Recreation

The Master Plan has three recreation goals, which include 1) Concentrating recreation to specific zones within the park 2) Enhancing amenities and recreation areas; and, 3) Creating and supporting diverse and inclusive sports and recreational programming.

Specific sports related changes reflected in the Master Plan Update include the following:

- New stadium bubble
- 1 new cricket pitch
- 3 new soccer fields + improved and consolidated Fields
- Multi-use court / Pickleball
- New skatepark adjacent BMX
- New skate trail east of the Hill
- Reduction of 1 baseball field + improved and consolidated fields

Specific play area changes reflected in the Master Plan Update include the following:

- New District Playground
- New Natural Playground
- New small play areas dispersed throughout the park

In addition to sports and play areas, new picnic areas, fire pit locations, shelters and washrooms are proposed in the updated Master Plan.

Accessibility and Movement

The Master Plan presents four recreation goals, which include; 1) Improving existing infrastructure; 2) Designing paths to support organization, wayfinding, identity and program; 3) Improving accessibility, removing barriers and connecting gaps; 4) Taking into account sequence, views, and connections.

The overall approach for the circulation system is to provide a variety of paths and trails, encouraging multiple users (pedestrians, cyclists, and runners) access to all zones of Centennial Park.

Accessibility and movement changes proposed within the Master Plan include the following:

- A new multi-use path
- Hierarchy of paths and trails, both paved and natural materials
- Hierarchy of bike trails to support commuting and recreation

- A wayfinding program that includes gateway, directional and interpretive signage

Water and Ecology

Centennial Park is gifted with water and unique habitats; however, connection points to water are minimal and the park's ecology is fragmented.

In Section 5, the Master Plan proposes an ecological strategy of reclamation and renewal through the following three approaches:

- Consolidate natural areas to create larger and more diverse habitat patches
- Link separated natural areas (e.g. forest patches) to provide movement corridors for wildlife, and connect people to natural areas through education and outreach
- Enhance the quality of habitat to provide useful niches for a wider variety of wildlife

The approach to water within Centennial Park includes three strategies:

- Pond Naturalization through shoreline restoration including riparian and wetland planting
- Elmcrest Creek revitalization and restoration through planting and new maintenance regimes
- Improving connections and access to watercourses and water bodies (including Etobicoke Creek, Elmcrest Creek and the Pond)

Placemaking and Programming

The Master Plan proposed a variety of strategies to enhance active, cultural and passive programming and foster inclusion and a strong sense of place.

These strategies centre on the creation of programmatically themed routes and ‘hubs’, that offer seasonal and year-round events or attractions. Programming and placemaking opportunities proposed include:

- New gateway features and signage that orientate users and reinforce the park’s identity
- Experience loops that support unique activities (e.g. Fitness Loop, Creek Loop)
- Naming of places and paths to build identity (e.g. Playground, Hill Loop, Youth Plaza)
- Featured indigenous culture (e.g. Indigenous medicine garden, firepit, Wampum belt path)
- Small community events and large-scale events that build community and civic pride
- Programming opportunities through partnership with non-profits, community groups and agencies

Demonstration Plans

Demonstration Plans for the Pond, the Hill, the Heart of the Park are featured in Section 7, and are intended to set the tone for the decades of future renewal and revitalization projects throughout the 525 acre site.

The Pond: An enhanced feature space that demonstrates how local ecology can be enhanced while introducing more significant opportunities for people to engage with water and wetlands through cultural activities.

The Hill: A re-imagined signature destination within the park with year-round programming to support a new identity of an arts and culture hub.

The Heart of the Park: Builds on the area’s existing character with new District Playground that will be a key destination along with the existing Conservatory.

Key Recommendations

The following top recommendations have been advanced and are outlined in Section 7 of the report:

1. District Playground with a new water play component – a community anchor within the Heart of the Park
2. An improved trail network – with a hierarchy of paths, including a new multi-use path connecting core areas of the park
3. A park wayfinding strategy - that includes gateway, directional and interpretive signage
4. Improved natural areas and watercourses – to enhance degraded landscape and bring people closer to nature
5. Improved playing fields [and other recreational facilities] – to meet community and sport group needs
6. A reimagined Centennial Park Hill (Centennial Park Ski and Snowboard Centre) – that features new winter activities such as a skate trail, improved chalet and the repurposed lift building

Given the size of Centennial Park, achieving the final park vision will require time and an understanding of the priority projects and strategic phasing of future recommendations. It is important to note that the phasing will not be instantaneous, but has been prioritized based on budget, importance, and immediate impact. Each project as it is implemented will have continued community engagement as projects are developed and move forward. In addition, any project identified by the Master Plan will require additional design study before it is implemented.

The transformational moves identified in the phasing strategy will bring Centennial Park into the awareness of residents across Toronto and captivate and inspire park users for generations to come.





01

Introduction

1.1 Centennial Park Overview

At approximately 213 hectares (526 acres), Centennial Park in Toronto’s West District is one of the largest publicly owned parks in the City and draws an estimated 1.5 million people annually.

Established and named to celebrate Canada’s Centennial in 1967, Centennial Park was conceived in 1967 to serve as a place for city-wide celebrations. The arena, sports fields, ski hill, conservatory, among others, are part of the original construction of the park.

Centennial Park (Centennial) is a place of experience and memory. Local residents and visitors from around the Greater Toronto Area know Centennial as a place where they play soccer, watch Canada Day fireworks, learn to ski, and hold group picnics or explore trails. However, Centennial’s ability to balance programs and uses while fostering community well-being is at risk.

The park amenities, trails, circulation network and park ecosystem are in a state of decline. The decline in use of the ski and snowboard Centre and the deteriorating infrastructure, coupled with the uncertainty of a changing climate provide an opportunity to revision the ski hill area. Options for renewal or re-purposing leases at locations such as the Golf Course and Mini-Indy should be reviewed with prior to lease expiration. In this stalled state, Centennial also remains an enigma to many in Toronto. It is, paradoxically, a popular place

that lacks a clear identity or any rooted place in the city’s broader narrative. This Master Plan Update aims to bolster Centennial’s unique cultural and natural qualities to make it a well known and vital local park and destination.

Study Area and Location

Centennial Park is situated in Toronto’s west end, borders the City of Mississauga, and is bounded by Etobicoke Creek to the west, Eglinton Avenue West to the north, Centennial Park Road to the east, and Rathburn Road to the south. Adjacent land uses include:

- Natural areas of Etobicoke Creek along the west end
- Light industrial and employment areas to the north
- Residential neighbourhoods abutting the east and south ends of the park

Anchoring the southeast portion of the site are several institutions, including the Etobicoke Olympium, Seneca School, Hollycrest Middle School, and Centennial Stadium.

As Toronto grows, Centennial becomes a much-needed open space amidst its densifying context and uniquely serves as both a local and regional destination park.



Humber River

Downsview Park

East Don River

Centennial Park

Black Creek

Mimico Creek

High Park

Etobicoke Creek

Finch Ave. W.

Lawrence Ave. W.

Eglinton Ave. W.

Yonge St.

Bloor St. W.

Gardiner Expwy

427



West Don River

Sunnybrook Park

Rouge River

Morningside Park

Highland Creek

Steeles Ave. E.

Sheppard Ave. E.

401

Lawrence Ave. E.

St. Clair Ave. E.

Kingston Rd.



Pearson
Airport

401

Richview
Park

427

Mimico
Creek

West Deane
Park

Centennial
Park

Hampshire
Heights Park

Echo Valle
Park

Elmcrest
Creek

Etobicoke
Creek



**Humber
River**

**Black
Creek**

**Tom Riley
Park**

y

1.2 Context of Centennial Park

Located within the Etobicoke Watershed affords Centennial a unique opportunity to become a robust natural sanctuary for the growing and culturally diverse population in the area.

Regional Context

Centennial's sheer size and location within the Etobicoke Watershed serves as an essential link within the watershed and at the regional level, being part of the natural heritage system stretching from Lake Ontario to Ontario's Greenbelt. Consequently, the quantity and quality of natural cover are essential measures of vegetation community health and ecosystem services within the area. Further information about vegetation communities, habitats, and species drawn from the *Centennial Park Study Area: Terrestrial Biological Inventory and Assessment (2007)* authored by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), is discussed in Section 3 - Existing Conditions.

Etobicoke Creek brings a rich riparian corridor alongside the park. Although the access points between park and ravine are not well known, beyond locals, the Etobicoke Trail is a well-used route that connects to various parks and open spaces within the ravine. Similarly, Elmcrest Creek, a tributary to Etobicoke Creek which runs north-south in the eastern portion of Centennial, connects to a trail leading to other ravine parks and neighbourhoods to the south. The multi-use trail along the hydro corridor also provides a straight shot for cyclists from the park to Eglinton Avenue

West. The park's proximity to Toronto Pearson International Airport and highways, including Highway 401 and 427, allow easy access to the park by car.

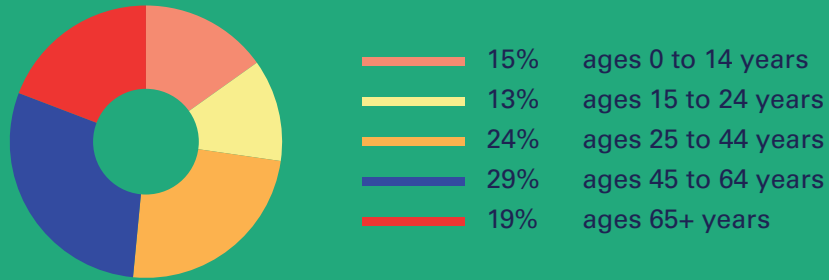
Local Context and Community Demographics

Today, the populations within the area are more culturally diverse than ever. For example, within the Eringate-Centennial-West Deane neighbourhood, 46% have a mother tongue other than English. The top three languages spoken by residents within the park area include Ukrainian, Polish, and Serbian.

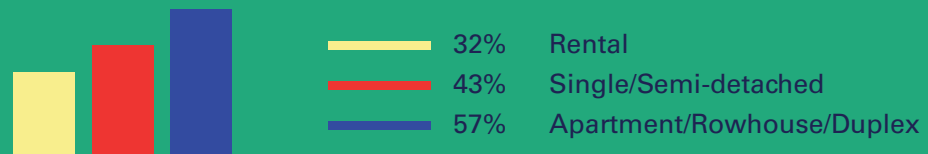
According to the 2016 census, there is also an overall upwards trend of adult and senior populations in the area and the proportion of apartment dwellers now exceeds that of home owners.

The diversity in culture, age, and economic makeup of this neighbourhood and the park's visitors naturally leads to various interests and recreational preferences within the park. Future outreach and stewardship opportunities should consider these evolving demographics and facilitating participation from diverse communities is essential.

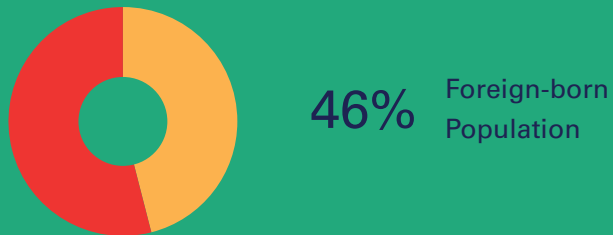
Population



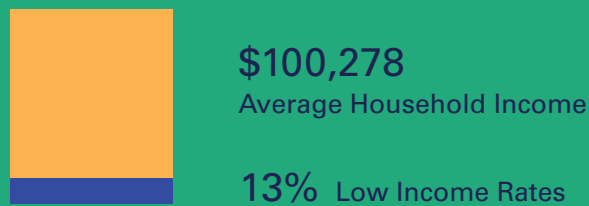
Households & Housing



Immigration + Diversity

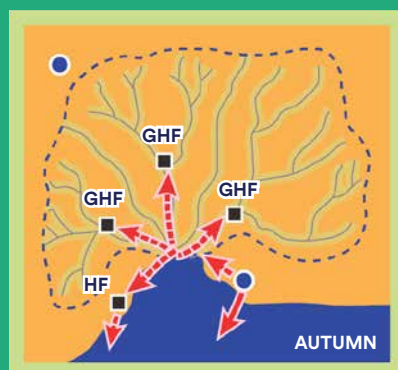
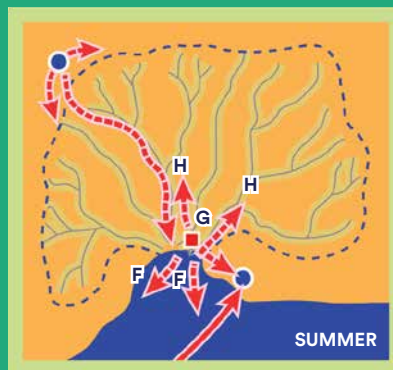


Average Household Income



Seasonally Mobile Gathering/Hunting/Fishing Peoples

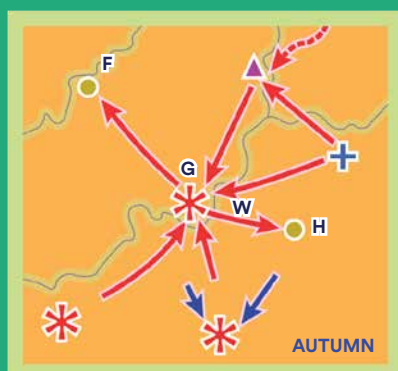
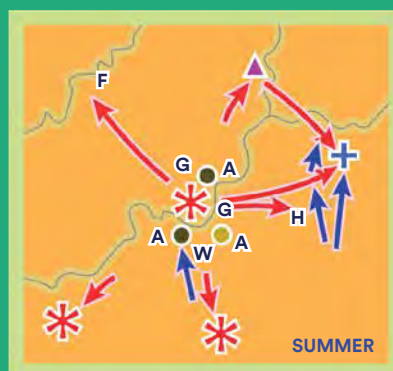
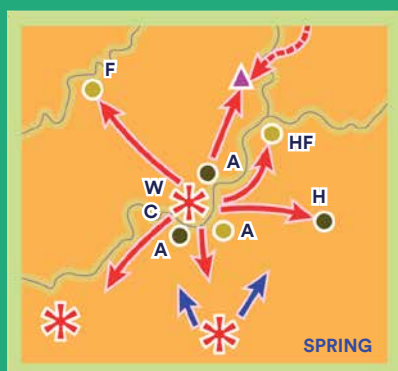
(Incl. peoples of the Archaic & Initial Woodland Periods, the Algonkians & the Mississaugas)



- Band Encampment (Several Hunting Groups Socializing)
- Nomadic Camp
- Temporary Camp
- Trading Place
- ➔ Gathering/Hunting/Fishing Peoples
- ➔ Horticultural Peoples
- - - Watershed
- Lake
- = Major Creek or River
- B Fowling
- F Fishing
- H Hunting
- G Food Gathering
- W Wood Gathering

Sedentary Horticultural Peoples

(Incl. peoples of the Princess Point, Pickering and Middleport periods, & the Wendats)



- ✱ Horticulturalist Village & Fields
- ▲ Native Trading Place
- + French Trading Place (Post-contact Period Only)
- Satellite Horticulturalist Camp
- Horticiculture
- ➔ Gathering/Hunting/Fishing Peoples
- ➔ Horticultural Peoples
- ➔ Enemy Horticulturalists
- = Major Creek or River
- A Horticiculture
- C Forest Clearance
- F Fishing
- G Food Gathering
- H Hunting
- W Wood Gathering

1.3 Site History

Understanding the natural and cultural heritage of the site, rooted in Indigenous history, paints a more holistic picture of the park and its ecological and cultural values for future development.

Indigenous Heritage

The history of Centennial Park dates back more than ten thousand years ago. Along the southwest portion of the park, the creek's name originates from "Wah-do-be-kaug" in Ojibwe Anishinaabemowin, meaning "the place where the alders grow".

The natural landforms around Centennial Park as we know today, namely Etobicoke and Elmcrest Creek Ravines, relate to the slow drain of Lake Iroquois, which influenced much of the Toronto region's significant geographical features, including Lake Ontario. Centennial Park sits within the Iroquois Sand Plain zone as part of the Etobicoke watershed, a remnant of the former Lake Iroquois shoreline. The land and soil composition would historically have been of a permeable condition which would have influenced water flows through the area.

For over 10,000 years, First Nations peoples inhabited the waterways for hunting, fishing, gathering, and travel. Like the Toronto Trail (known as Toronto Carrying Place), an important trade route along the Humber River from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe, the waterways through Centennial Park would have been essential for carrying goods.

Within 5 km of Centennial Park, several archaeological sites have been discovered, including the Antrex and Merton sites.

The Antrex site was determined to have been occupied in the late Middle Iroquoian period (A.D. 1300-1400). The Antrex Archaeological Report findings suggest a late 13th-14th century Iroquoian village comprising of middens and longhouses and material artifacts found, including ceramic shards, pipes, and tools.

The Merton site was classified within the Late Woodland Iroquoian period (A.D. 1200-1650). By this period, First Nations peoples had established the technology, social and economical way of life, and introduced horticulture to Ontario, such as cultivating crops including maize, beans, and squash—or the "Three Sisters".

Although our watersheds comprise a rich cultural heritage, past development approaches have fragmented and destroyed many archaeological sites. Today, portions of Centennial Park remain relatively undisturbed in comparison.

The majority of the park is identified as having archaeological potential, and as such an archaeological assessment is required in those areas in which development changes involve a formal application and review by the City of Toronto's City Planning Division.

Early Settlement to the Formation of Etobicoke

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 set the relationship between First Nations and the Crown and the treaty-making process. As treaties negotiations unfolded, Commissioners disguised the caveat of land surrenders in Peace and Friendship Treaties ultimately displacing many First Nations people. The Toronto Purchase (1787-1805) spurred on the land survey, which charted lot lines following the "sale" of Toronto. Etobicoke Creek is connected to this significant event, as the Mississaugas and the Crown disputed the western boundary of the Toronto purchase with the Mississaugas, contending that the Humber River be the western-most border, not to Etobicoke Creek as the British had attested. Early settlers arriving to the area were offered free land and tasked with transforming the land into a productive landscape. They leveraged land along waterways for farming and power for grist and sawmills—clearing of forest to facilitate agricultural practices and milling set into motion the effects of early urbanization. Most of the lots in the Etobicoke Creek watershed were occupied by settlers by 1821. By 1850, several towns

would amalgamate to form the Township of Etobicoke. The Township continued to grow following WWII, as farmland turned over to subdivisions with housing, stores, and a car-centric approach to designing the public realm. By 1957, the land that was to become Centennial Park was operating primarily as dairy farms.

Forced Land Surrenders, the Toronto Purchase Treaty (No. 13 + 13A), Head of the Lake Purchase Treaty (no. 14)

Centennial Park sits on the western boundary of the land surrendered in the Toronto Purchase Treaty No. 13 and the eastern edge of 13A (1805) and the eastern boundary line of Head of the Lake Purchase Treaty no. 14 (1806).

In 1787, Sir John Johnston, Superintendent General of the Indian Department, met with several Mississaugas at the Bay of Quinte, where the Mississaugas of the Credit purportedly sold the lands of the Toronto Purchase Treaty. However, the deed was later found blank, with no description of the purchased land, which raised the agreement's legitimacy issues. In addition, it is believed that the deed outlined no boundaries in the "purchase" and that many settlers did not have legal titles to their homesteads. Finally, after ten years, a new agreement was negotiated with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



On August 1, 1805, the Crown purchased 250,830 acres of land for the total sum of 10 shillings while the Mississaugas reserved the right to exclusively fish on Etobicoke Creek. The Mississaugas of the Credit filed a claim that the 10 shillings paid in the 1805 Agreement do not reflect a reasonable sum for purchasing the lands and were unlawfully acquired. The Toronto Purchase Claim and Brant Claim were settled in 2010 for the largest amount in Canadian history at that time – \$145 million. (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (La Première Nation des Mississaugas de Credit), <http://mncfn.ca>).

The Head of the Lake Purchase treaty came directly after the Toronto Purchase Treaty No. 13 and 13A. It included selling 70,784 acres of land for the equivalent of only 10 shillings in trade goods and the sole right of fisheries at 12 and 16 Mile. However, once non-indigenous settlers took the property in the area, access promised in the Treaty was made impossible to the Mississaugas for hunting and fishing.

Williams Treaties First Nations Settlement Agreement

In 1923, members of the Alderville, Chippewas of Beausoleil, Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Rama, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nations signed treaties, known as the William Treaties, after decades of requests by First Nation Leaders to address matters of settlers encroaching on their traditional lands. The treaties reflected inadequate compensation

in the form of payment and dedicated reserve lands. The right to harvest was also significantly compromised by the exploitative treaties.

Understanding and acknowledging these treaties are part of the process of relocation and eliminating rightful title to the land.

Centennial Projects (1867-1967) and Etobicoke’s Centennial Park

The Centennial Celebrations propelled a period of cultural growth in Toronto and nationwide. The Confederation Centennial Act of 1962 allotted funding to encourage communities and organizations to initiate legacy projects across Canada. The construction of Centennial Park was projected to cost \$6.2 million (approximately \$47.8 million in 2020 dollars). The cost breakdown included the acquisition of the 525 acre land area, the Centennial Arena, the Etobicoke Olympium multi-use sporting facility, the Conservatory and Arboretum, the Artificial Ice Rink, and a Par-Three Golf course. In 1968, work on the park continued, including the ski hill and tennis court, while Raymond Moriyama Architect was retained to assess the feasibility of the original park plan.



Caledon

Brampton

Mimico Cr.

Etobicoke Cr.

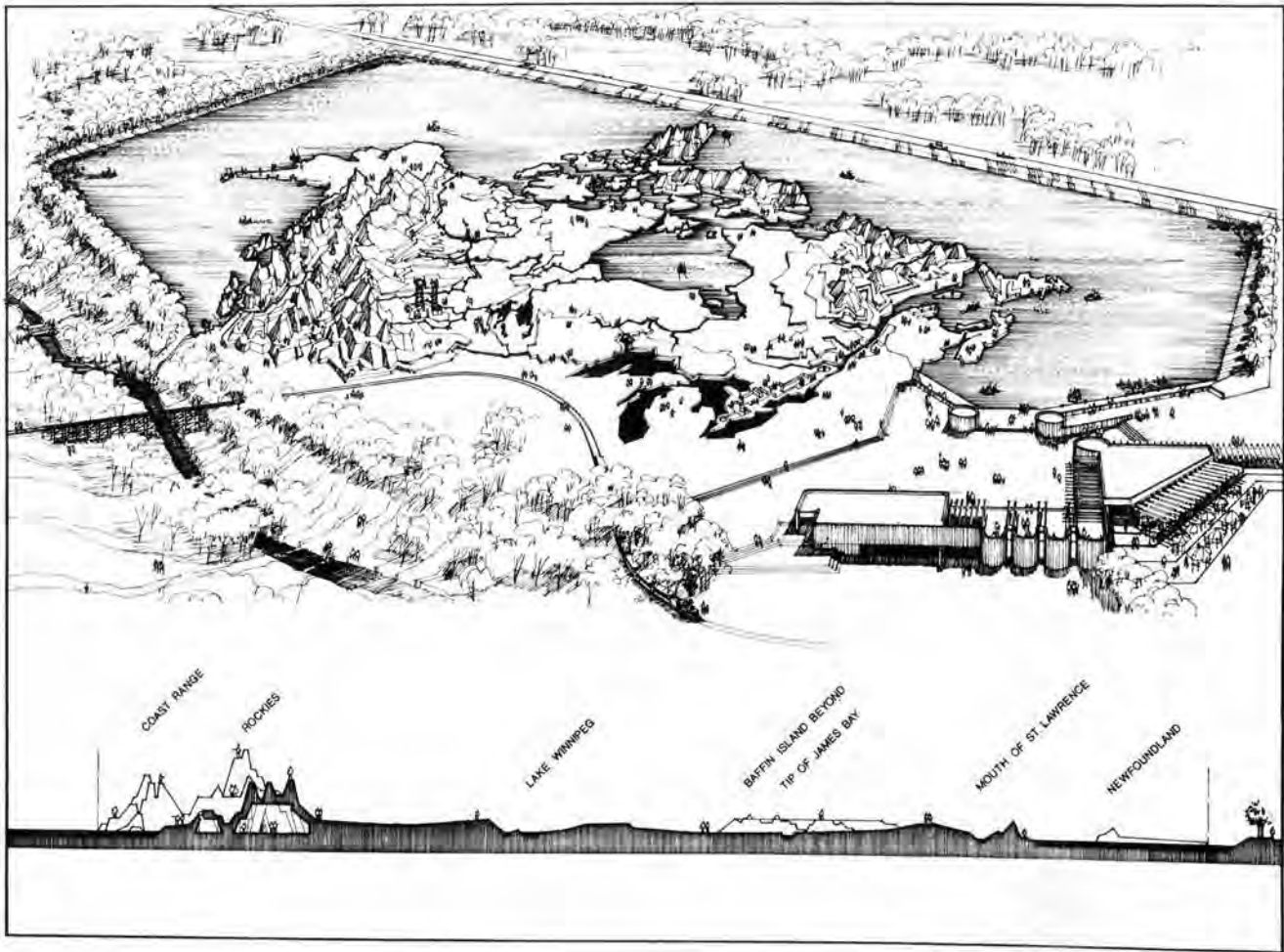
Toronto

Mississauga

Centennial Park

Humber Bay Parks

Marie Curtis Park



1968 Relief Map of Canada Proposal, Raymond Moriyama

Newspaper articles during the time the park was constructed allude to the ski hill being rapidly constructed with “Three million cubic yards of industrial waste...Refrigerators, radios, old cars, defunct television sets, tons of paper...” This place for community, sports and recreation would proudly host high profile sporting events, including the 1976 Olympiad for the Physically Challenged.

The 2008 Centennial Park Master Plan delves into the planning history of Etobicoke of being Ontario’s first planned community, including the process of planning for Parks and Centennial Park itself.

Ongoing Development

In 1967, Mimico, New Toronto and Long Branch amalgamated with Etobicoke to form the new Borough of Etobicoke, which later became the City of Etobicoke in 1983. Centennial Park’s identity as an active park remained intact, as park uses continue to expand and evolve to meet the demands of various park users— from the new Pan Am BMX Centre, the Go-Karts Mini-Indy, to the Centennial Park Ski Hill and Chalet. As Etobicoke’s population grew, so did its park and transit system and residential development. The Mississauga Transitway along the northern portion of the park was completed in 2017 and is anticipated to bring in more regional visitors to the park.

1.4 Purpose of the Master Plan Update

Meeting current needs and challenges requires new approaches and a more accessible and inclusive engagement process.

Why Refresh the 2008 Master Plan?

Over the past decade, Centennial Park and its surrounding context have continually evolved and grown, necessitating a refresh of the park's guiding vision to ensure that the park meets the needs of its users today. Since the 2008 Master Plan, the City's engagement approach has also shifted to more accessible and inclusive consultation, resulting in new strategies and planning initiatives that seek to remove barriers for parks and other open spaces to create inclusive and equitably accessible spaces for people of all ages, cultures, genders, abilities and incomes.

Engagement processes and planning have also changed with the emergence of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, which has urged individuals and all levels of government to reflect and commit to meaningful consultation with Indigenous peoples, building respectful relationships, and evaluating ways for economic development projects to provide sustainable benefits to Indigenous communities.

Building on key Council-approved foundational strategies which include the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017) and Implementation Strategy (2019), The Parkland Strategy (2019) and The Ravine

Strategy (2020), these documents have played an essential part in helping to identify opportunities for future enhancement of the park. The Master Plan Update provides an opportunity to demonstrate how these varying strategies can be realized through action oriented goals and objectives.

With an understanding that many of the elements of the 2008 Master Plan were not implemented, recent public and stakeholder input and analysis of existing site conditions presented adjustments that can better meet current needs. Key considerations include a legible network of connections, natural restoration and enhancement strategies, and design moments and placemaking strategies that aim to help bolster the identity and image of the park.

Centennial Park MP Facilities and Service Planning Assessment, 2020 (CPFMP)

The purpose of the CPFMP was to inform the Master Plan update and implementation strategy for the next 20-30 years. The study focused on the facility planning and investments within Centennial Park and how these fit within the broader city-wide park and recreation system. A summary of the main recommendations from the CPFMP includes:

Suggested Improvements:

- Replacement of ski hill activity
- Ski Chalet
- Space for large-scale events
- Trails, playgrounds, open space, ponds, picnic areas & shelters
- BMX Park partnerships

Suggested Additions:

- Splash Pad and District Playground
- Seasonal winter dome for stadium
- Community-level skatepark
- Lit multi-use hard court
- Cluster, improve, possibly increase fields (soccer and cricket)

- Cluster, improve, light, possibly decrease ball diamonds
- Other small-scale park-based amenities
- Enhance winter programming opportunities

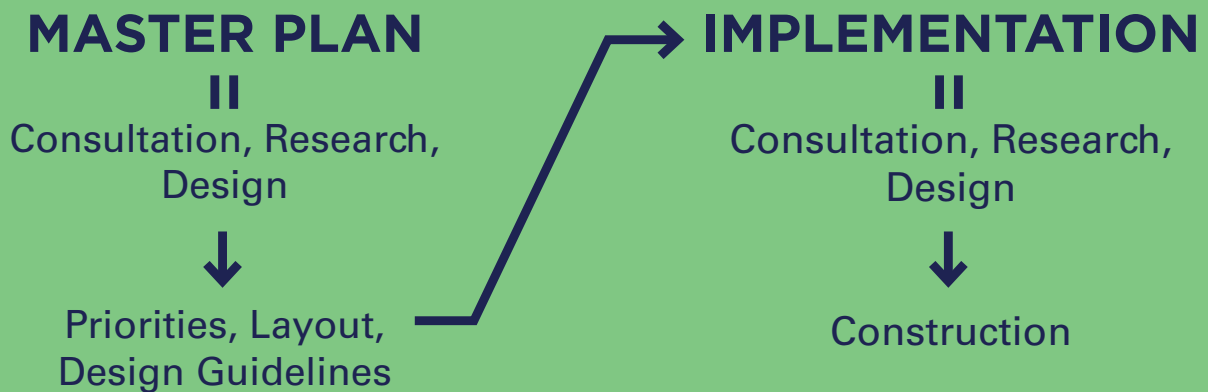
Suggested Removals:

- Ski lifts and snowmaker
- Wading pool



WHAT IS A PARK MASTER PLAN?

A **park master plan** is a dynamic and long-term planning document that provides a vision, objectives and implementable action items to guide decision making for ongoing improvements and management of parks.



1.5 The Master Plan Process

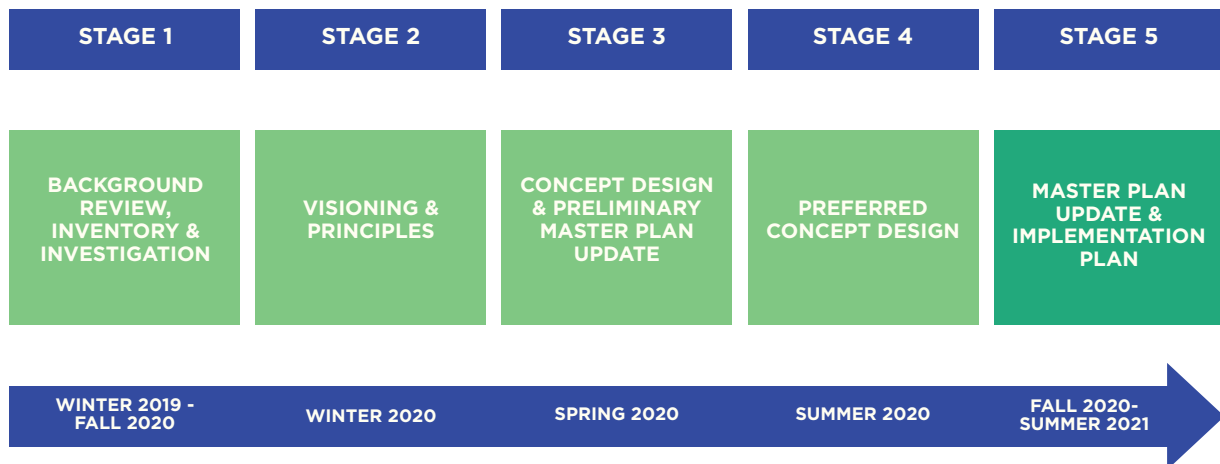
In early 2019, PROCESS lead initial conversations about Centennial Park with the community; Building off of this, a more robust consultation was developed with the landscape architecture team and community facilitator.

Master Plan Development

The development of this Master Plan builds on previous consultation work from November 2019. New consultation with residents, stakeholders, Indigenous leaders, youth groups, community groups, and the Anti-Black Racism Accountability Circle were essential contributions to the Master Plan development.

- Stage 1 - the project team inventoried existing site conditions and initiated Public Life Studies to gather initial input from the public
- Stage 2 - the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) members and the public were invited to participate in a visioning workshop to identify the public’s current needs and priorities
- Stage 3 - Input from the workshops and relevant documents were integrated into preliminary concept options and was presented which aimed to co-develop and fine tune various options into a preferred concept
- Stage 4 - a preferred concept design was established and presented to the public, SAC members, youth members, Indigenous community leaders, and the Anti-Black Racism Accountability Circle for further feedback
- Stage 5 - the finalizing of the plan was presented to the public in an online open house format

Master Plan Process



Engagement and Outreach Process

The engagement and communications process for the Master Plan Update is grounded in an integrated approach rooted in equity, creativity, collaboration, community and inclusion. Key principles to this engagement approach include:

- Incorporating communications and outreach mechanisms that reach a myriad of people
- Prioritizing the user experience in all aspects of the process
- Building long-term community capacity and involvement

The inaugural stakeholder and public workshop was undertaken as an in-person consultation in March 2020. This was followed by a transition to an interactive online format to respond to COVID-19. In-depth Engagement Process and Summary Reports from the various consultations can be found in Appendix A.

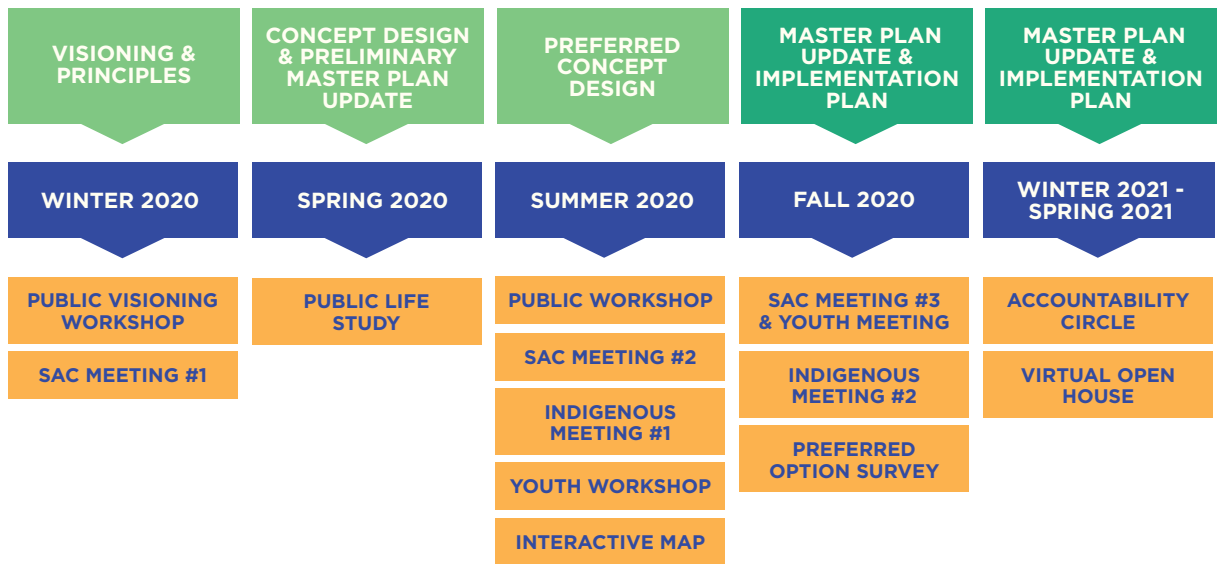
Indigenous Engagement

The Centennial Park revitalization team acknowledges that Indigenous engagement in revitalizing public open space is important in affirming the City's commitment to the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action (TRC Report 2015). As part of this effort, the City of

Toronto's Parks and Environment Committee is developing an "Indigenous Place-Making (Keeping) Framework". For the Centennial Park Master Plan Update, this commitment to the TRC's calls to action has been responded to through a process in which the team and Indigenous engagement specialist, Trina Moyan Bell engaged the Indigenous community with the aim of building long-lasting partnerships with the project of renewing Centennial Park.

The internal team and the SAC members underwent cultural competency training to learn about Indigenous history and its inclusion in Centennial Park's revitalization as a first step toward building relationships with the Indigenous community. The July 20th, 2020 SAC meeting included a 45-minute session led by Trina, who guided participants through an Indigenous history overview and the lands upon which Centennial Park is situated. On July 29th and November 30th, 2020 Indigenous community leaders and youth were invited to meet and share their work within Toronto and offer their recommendations to include Indigenous components and partnerships for the park. Those recommendations were integrated into site-wide and site-specific design ideas within the Master Plan.

Engagement Timeline



SAC Workshops

The City hosted three Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) workshops for the Master Plan Update on March 2nd, July 20th, and October 26th, 2020. The Centennial Park Stakeholders consisted of individuals from local organizations, park permit holders, agencies, environmental groups, local schools and invested residents. The objective of the SAC meetings was to enable key user groups to contribute ideas and provide input throughout the development of the Plan update.

Public Workshops

The public meetings occurred on March 11th and July 25th, 2020. The first public Visioning Session aimed to recalibrate the vision for Centennial and introduced participants to the interwoven themes within the park: Water, Ecology, Movement, and Culture. In the second public workshop, participants provided input on both site-wide strategies in terms of park movement and programming, ecological restoration, and site-specific recommendations around three focus areas: the Pond, the Hill, and the Heart of the Park.



Image of Activity Table from Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting

Youth Workshop

Youth workshops were intended to broaden the audience that public consultations typically reach. On July 25th, 2020, the City hosted an interactive online workshop with youth to discuss similar topics from the public workshops: the site-wide strategies and the conceptual approach for the three focus areas. Innovative ideas were generated during this workshop and incorporated into the Master Plan.

Online Survey and Social Pinpoint

In June 2020, the City shared the online community engagement tool, Social Pinpoint, to allow participants to comment and 'like' elements, flag areas of concern, and share their stories and experiences in Centennial by dropping "pins" in specific areas of the park.

The results were collected and integrated into the subsequent conceptual design phase. Further, an online survey was presented to the public to yield additional commentary for use during the preliminary design stage.

Public Life Studies and Interviews

Public Life Studies were conducted to learn how people are using the park throughout the year. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Life Studies transitioned into in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and park users.

02

Park Planning Framework

2.1 Relevant Policies and Documents

The Master Plan Update is informed and supported by key guidelines and policies.

Several policies and documents have provided the groundwork for the 2021 Centennial Park Master Plan. These include three foundational strategies, which consist of The Parkland Strategy, Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan and Implementation Strategy and The Ravine Strategy, in addition to several others that have been influential in helping to form a comprehensive Master Plan that is attuned to the broad depth of topics which concern park planning today. These include Toronto's Official Plan, Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, Public Art Strategy and Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy.

In addition, federal mandates and Acts such as The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Mandate, 2015, Species at Risk Act and Migratory Birds Convention Act, and Ontario's Environmental Protection Act were guiding policies for the Master Plan.

A description of the key documents that informed the Master Plan is provided in this section.

Toronto's Official Plan

A planning document that outlines the long-term vision for the City, which includes an approach and vision to managing change in Toronto's green space system, emphasizes

maintenance and enhancement of assets, and how these areas and neighbourhoods are knitted together by the City's transportation network, the viability of which is crucial to supporting the growing travel needs of residents and workers over the next 30 years.

Parkland Strategy: Growing Toronto Parkland (2019)

The Strategy includes a 20-year plan to guide planning for new parks and expansion and improved access to existing parks. In addition, this document recommends the decision-making and prioritization of investment in parkland across the City. To achieve equity in Toronto's park system, large parks like Centennial (an area with a high proportion of park area/person) require diverse uses for local and regional users. Non-auto access and circulation must also be improved and prioritized. Climate change and resilience are also included in this Parkland Strategy and must be considered through design and green infrastructure. For example, features such as the Hydro corridor could be used as habitat connection/extension. The 2019 Parkland Strategy highlights examples of systemic barriers that need to be addressed; including poor park access and inequitable investment in parks and programming.



PROMINENCE & VISIBILITY

Parks need to be located and designed to ensure they are prominent, and visible features of the public realm to support safety, security, accessibility, and livability of the city.

IDENTITY & CHARACTER

Parks need to be situated and designed to take advantage of character-defining elements and features that contribute to creating a sense of place.

USER EXPERIENCE

Parks need to be designed to both attract a wide range of users, and to entice people to stay and linger by providing a range of activities and seating options, reinforcing views, supporting vegetation and tree growth, and providing inclusive spaces that contribute to comfort and social interaction.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS & THERMAL COMFORT

Parks need to be designed to provide visual interest, be safe and secure, and support a range of passive and active programming and activity. Their design and size should enable a range of year-round programming, maximize sunlight exposure, provide ample shade, and be safe and accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines, 2006

A 25-year implementation plan through City projects and programs to improve water quality in Toronto’s waterways, beaches and waterfront, reduce basement flooding, protect City and private infrastructure from erosion impacts, increase public awareness of stormwater issues, and to support other WWFMP objectives. The health of Centennial Park’s ecosystem, the water quality, water quantity, natural areas and wildlife, and sewer infrastructure are being considered in the Master Plan.

Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017) and Implementation Strategy (2019)

The Facilities Master Plan builds on past efforts and strengthens the City’s ongoing commitment by establishing a vision for facility provision over the next 20 years. The plan guides decision-making and investment in parks and recreation facilities owned and or operated by the City of Toronto.



Existing Wayfinding in Centennial Park

Centennial Park MP Facilities and Service Planning Assessment (2020)

A key document guiding the big moves in the Master Plan Update. The highlighted recommendations include:

- Improve accessibility of the site by enhancing pathways, wayfinding, transportation, and gateways
- Review organization and location of facilities and services
- Improve current facilities that are working well while creating new programming as needed
- Review facilities that are at the end of their life (ski hill)
- Enhance public awareness and the Centennial Park identity
- Enhance, protect, and connect natural areas
- Create year-round attractions

The Ravine Strategy (2020)

The Ravine Strategy provides high-level input for decision making in the ravine and natural lands in the City, as the ravine lands are an essential intersection of nature and city. “A ravine system that is a natural, connected sanctuary essential for the health and well-being of the city, where the use and enjoyment support protection, education and stewardship.” Consider access, connection, restoration and protection. There are also opportunities to connect with possible partners (such as Friends of the Greenbelt), develop ongoing stewardship, wayfinding and education strategies. This document urges consideration of alternative stormwater management strategies to improve water quality in Etobicoke and Elmcrest creeks and develop a plan for protection, maintenance and invasive removal, in addition to access and design for climate change impacts.



Existing Field with Opportunities for Improvement

Toronto's First Resilience Strategy (2019)

This recent Strategy by the City of Toronto sets out a vision, goals, and actions to help Toronto survive, adapt and thrive in the face of any challenge, with a focus on climate change and growing inequities. The effort includes supporting the ability of the community to achieve resilience within and without the park. In addition, it includes strategies to create a resilient park (increasingly extreme climatic events, changing temperature impacts, changing cultural environment), reduce greenhouse emissions caused by park and park infrastructure, and create a self-sustaining park. Given the size and maintenance requirements of Centennial Park, sustainability and a self-sustaining landscape are critical. Equally important for the scale of this park is the alternative transportation options to and within the park.

Toronto Anti-Black Racism Action Plan (2017)

This plan will be implemented over the next five-year term, beginning in 2018. The plan targets priority actions that include recruitment, hiring, promotion and training at the City; meaningful, sustained investments in Black youth mentorship and employment; consistent investment in critical Black-led community services; transformative policy development using an Anti-Black Racism Analysis. The 2020 Centennial Park Master Plan integrates these ideas for promoting equity and seeking equitable opportunities within Centennial Park, aiming to amplify marginalized histories and expand engagement with marginalized designers and artists.

2.2 Land Ownership/Jurisdiction

Centennial Park historically resides on Treaty land, and is now under the jurisdiction of the provincial and municipal government, and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

Provincial & Municipal Jurisdiction

Centennial Park's land ownership is divided with Provincially owned lands that the City leases to the west side of Elmcrest and City-owned lands to the East. Within those areas, the 27 hole golf course (West side of the site), and some property in the central area of the site, including volleyball courts, Mini-Indy, and batting cages, are leased privately. There is also a Hydro Corridor Easement to the North.

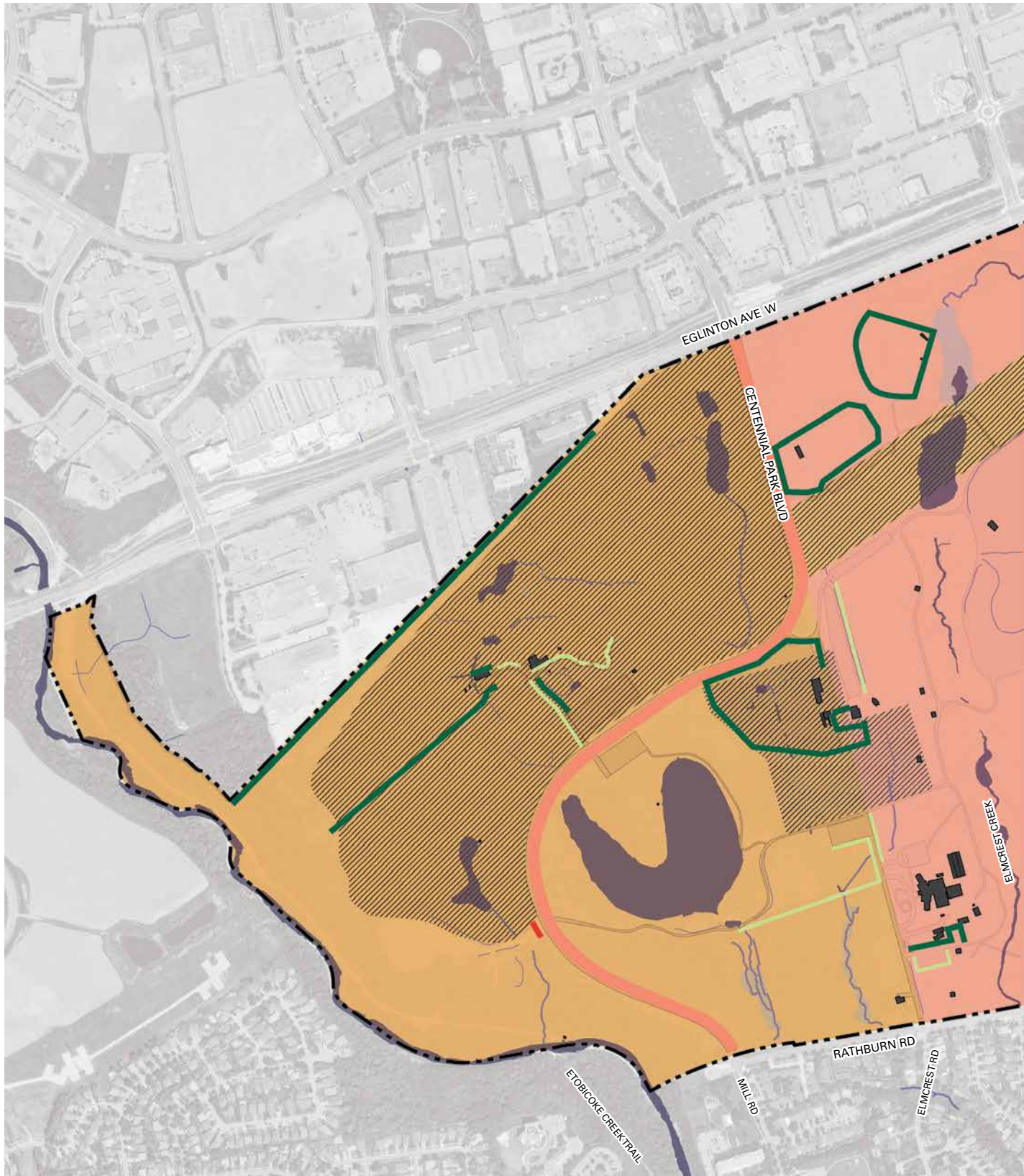
TRCA Jurisdiction

Etobicoke Creek and wooded areas of Centennial Park are part of Toronto's Natural Heritage System and are regulated by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. Etobicoke Creek is an important regional linkage corridor for wildlife moving through the City from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. TRCA has set a target to naturalize 75% of Etobicoke Creek's riparian zone by 2025 and transition this naturalized area to forest after 2025. TRCA has also established a target of 30% forest cover in the Toronto Region as a whole. While the Etobicoke Creek has been highly urbanized (low natural cover

and poor surface water), the natural cover along streams increased from 2013 – 2018.

In 2007, TRCA reviewed the environmental health of Centennial Park in the Terrestrial Biological Assessment Study. The Study found the habitat patch size and connectivity to be poor. However, given these limitations, there was a good diversity of habitat types and many uncommon or sensitive species. Uncommon species include 21 plant species and 14 bird species of regional concern. Many of the rare wildlife species are sensitive to development/urbanization. The Study recommends restoring manicured areas of the park to natural cover, controlling invasive species, and managing/formalizing human interactions with the natural areas.

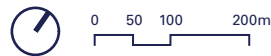
Ownership / Leasing





Legend

-  Project Boundary
-  Provincially Owned Lands, Leased by City
-  City Owned Lands
-  Leased / Easement Lands
-  Boundary Demarcation (Impermeable)
-  Boundary Demarcation (Permeable)
-  Boundary Demarcation (Retractable/Movable)



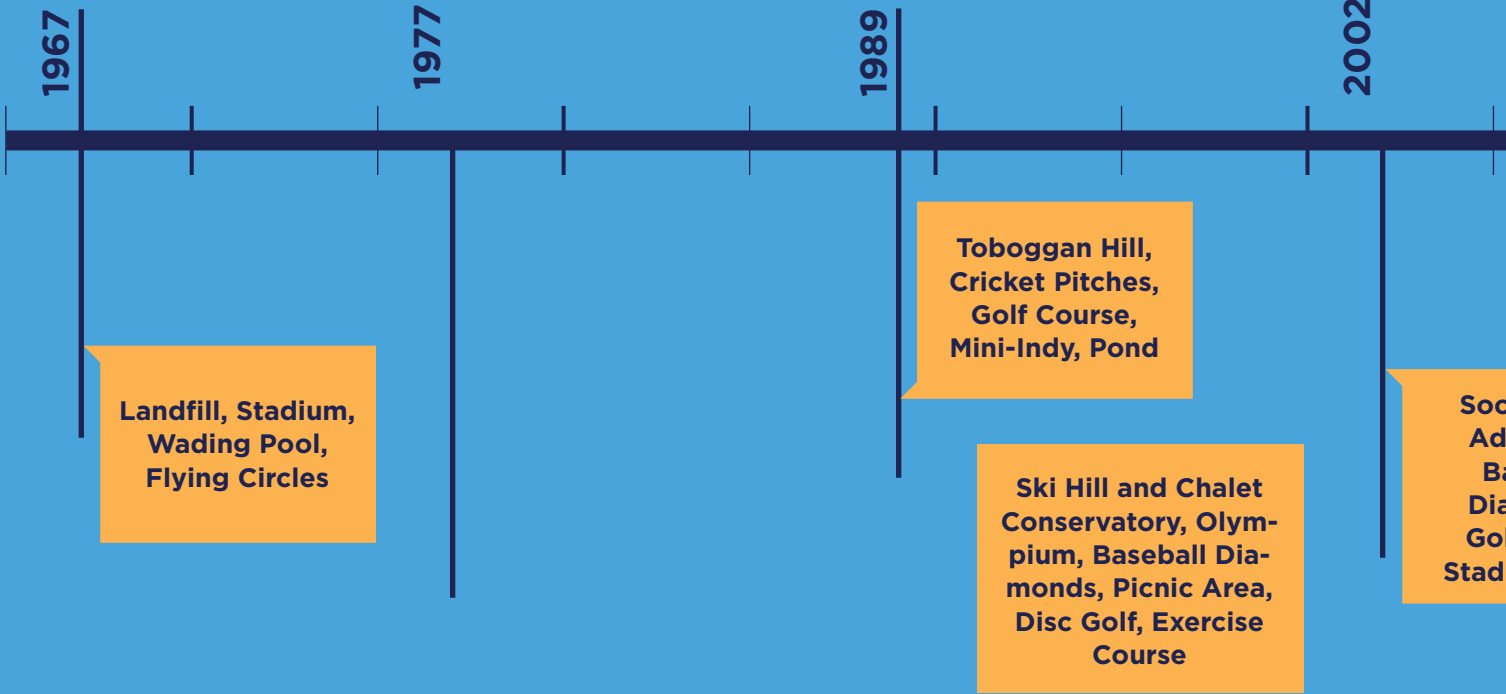
Ownership/Leasing is comprised of Provincially owned lands (leased by the City), City owned lands, as well as zones belonging to a leasing agreement. Centennial Park also has a number of fences/boundary markings within the property – this is shown on the map through the different line colours. Various boundary markers are shown through permeable markers – such as timber posts for example; through less permeable boundaries – such as chain link fences; and through retractable fencing blocking vehicular access.

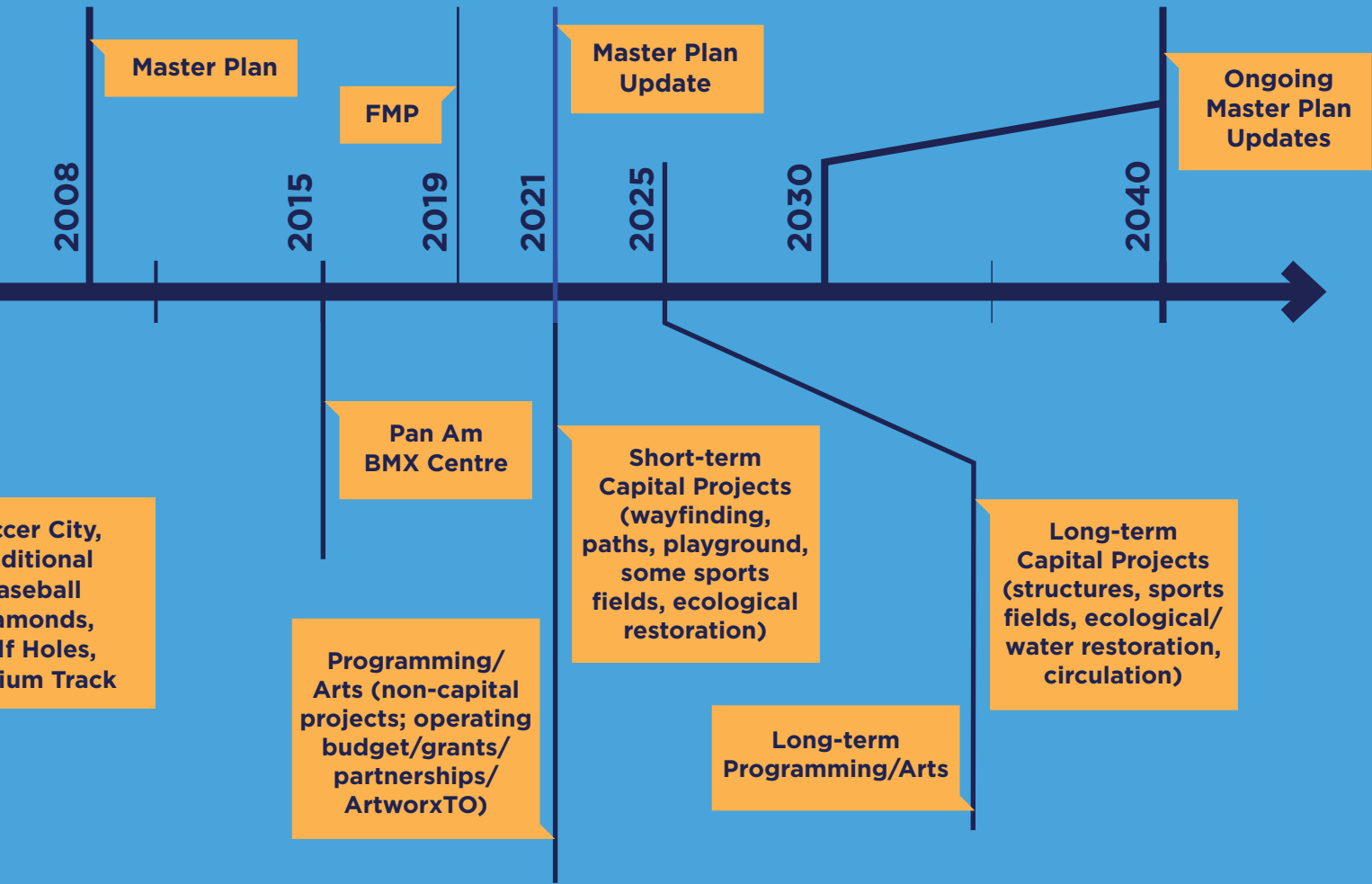
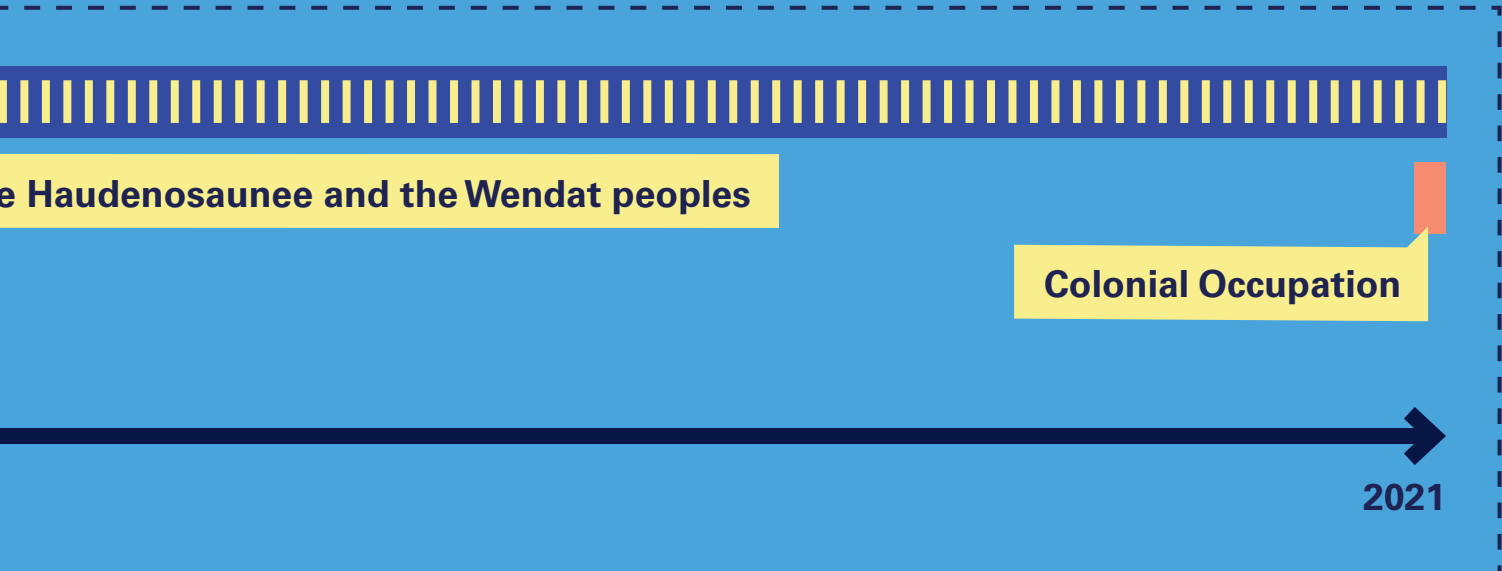


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Etobicoke Centennial Park



Summer Programs

In addition to the many scheduled and non-scheduled sports activities that take place in Centennial Park, some other rather unique programs operated by the Parks and Recreation Department are found there during the summer months.

SENICOKE DAY CAMP for retarded children and teens and **CAMP NEW HORIZONS** for physically handicapped children are two of the specialized summer day camps whose sites have been located on the west side of the Park. This valley area has provided an ideally sheltered and shaded area for campers who are supervised by specially trained leaders. Centennial Park is an ideal location for such camps, since it is easily accessible in case of emergencies, centrally located to serve the entire Borough, and close enough to community facilities that campers can go on excursions and learn how to become more involved in the community.

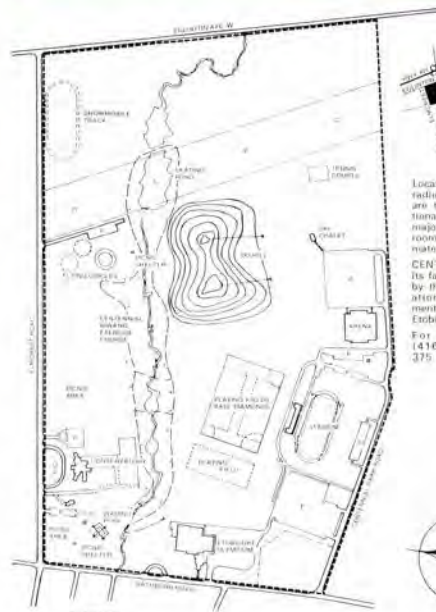


SUMMER FOR SENIORS is another unique program begun as a pilot project in 1975. It was conceived by a group of Senior Citizens as an opportunity for senior citizens of Etobicoke to enjoy the warm summer days out of doors where they could take part in any number of activities ranging from just sitting in a shady area chatting, playing chess, cards and other

quiet games to more active things like croquet, miniature golf, etc.

The summer "day camp" is centred around the recreation centre where the group can utilize the main level of the chalet if it is too hot or rainy outside. Future plans are to eventually include physically handicapped adults in the summer programs at Centennial Park.

Centennial Park Facilities



Located within a 2 mile radius of Centennial Park are the Toronto International Airport and many major hotels with guest rooms totalling approximately 4,000.

CENTENNIAL PARK and its facilities are operated by the Parks and Recreation Service Department of the Borough of Etobicoke.

For information call (416) 626-4161, local 375.



1967 Centennial Park Brochure

2.3 Centennial Park Master Planning History

The last two Master Plans were completed in 1965 and 2008.

The Original Centennial Park Master Plan by Sasaki, Strong and Associates

In 1965, Sasaki, Strong and Associates Ltd (SSA) were retained to prepare a park plan that offered amusement and recreation for every age and category.

This original Centennial Park Master Plan proposed a main attraction based on the idea of the “Relief Map” showcasing “the wealth and diversity of human and natural resources in Canada” —from the Rocky Mountains to the Northwest Passage. Despite such grand aspirations, Sasaki’s vision never broke ground.

Funding was dedicated to the construction of the ski and sledding hill. In 1967, the park officially opened with a program of sporting events and the laying of the foundation for Centennial Stadium.

2008 Centennial Park Master Plan

The most recent Centennial Park Master Plan that laid out the framework for future decision-making on the improvements and management of the park was completed in 2008, developed by a team led by The Planning Partnership. The Plan acknowledged the challenges the park faced in balancing competing recreational interests with environmental protection and enhancement.

The Master Plan proposed a phased long-term implementation plan (spanning 20-30 years) with an estimated 90 million dollars to complete the entire Plan. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons the entirety of the plan could not be realized. The vision and objectives of the 2008 Plan are detailed further in Section 4.1. Refreshing the 2008 Master Plan Vision.