



EDWARDS GARDENS & TORONTO BOTANICAL GARDEN

MASTER PLAN AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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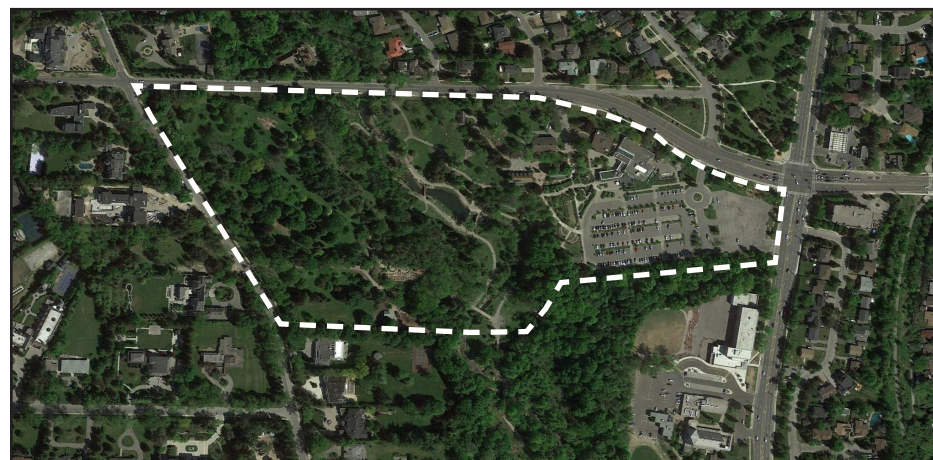
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Toronto Botanical Garden (TBG) is located within Edwards Gardens at the southwest corner of Lawrence Avenue and Leslie Street at 777 Lawrence Avenue East. Edwards Gardens is approximately 14 hectares in size, with the current lease area for TBG at 1.8 hectares. The Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden Master Plan and Management Plan has been prepared for the City of Toronto and its non-profit partner, the Toronto Botanical Garden, with the purpose of developing a globally acclaimed botanical garden in Toronto. The Master Plan and Management Plan provides a holistic long-term plan that is ecologically and fiscally sustainable, as it confirms the capability of the unified 14 hectare site to achieve international stature. By creating a seamless boundary between Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden this master plan re-imagines the existing parkland and gardens as a major cultural attraction with innovative programs, activities and events that will attract local, regional and international visitors. At this time, with its current lease area, Toronto Botanical Garden excels at nature-based education with 7500 school children and 10,000 adults participating in programs. With the increased area and enhanced facilities this education function would be expanded significantly, as would horticultural display within curated plant collections. The typical botanical garden functions of conservation and research would also find scope for implementation within an expanded garden, enabling the new botanical garden to fulfill all four pillars of its mandate - education, conservation, research and display.



SITE CONTEXT

The Edwards Gardens – Toronto Botanical Garden site connects to several natural and cultural heritage destinations. It has both broad tablelands and a ravine setting with natural riparian habitat, allowing for a broad expression and interpretation of plants and ecosystems in their many forms. A continuous, publicly accessible open-space network of trails and parks links the site south to Lake Ontario. The site is a significant gateway to the ravine system, which provides ecological connections for flora and fauna, as well as opportunities for visitors to observe and immerse themselves in nature. The ravine setting also provides the opportunity for an expanded botanical garden's conservation and research activities.

BACKGROUND

The documented site history starts with the Milne family, establishing a presence on the site in 1829. Rupert Edwards purchased the property in 1944, and then sold it to Metro Toronto Parks in 1955. The Garden Club of Toronto established the Civic Garden Centre (a precursor organization for the Toronto Botanical Garden) in 1958. The Civic Garden Centre opened in 1962, located in the old Milne House which was then destroyed by fire that same year. A new facility to house the Civic Garden Centre was designed by Raymond Moriyama and opened officially to the public in March, 1965. Two subsequent renovations to the original Moriyama building have resulted in the George and Kathy Dembroski Centre for Horticulture, Toronto Botanical Garden's present-day Visitor Centre. TBG's gardens, located on its 1.8 hectare leasehold, opened in 2006.

PROJECT SCOPE

A consultant team, led by Scott Torrance Landscape Architect, a division of Forrec, including W. Gary Smith Design, Lord Cultural Resources, Matrix Solutions Inc., Moriyama and Teshima Architects, Urban Forest Associates Inc., and A.W. Hooker Associates Ltd., worked closely with staff from Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Heritage Preservation Services, Toronto Water, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Toronto Botanical Garden.

The project spanned from September 2016 to April 2018 and included five phases:

Phase 1 – Project Start-up – communications and consultation plan.

This phase included facilitation and engagement with City of Toronto staff, TRCA staff, Toronto Botanical Garden staff, stakeholders and local residents.

Phase 2 – Background Review – site inventory, analysis and consultation. This phase included review of all relevant background materials, existing conditions, programming, and overall functionality of Edwards Gardens and Toronto Botanical Garden. Public and stakeholder meetings consulted on the vision and program for the project.

Phase 3 – Master Plan – Development of conceptual design options and



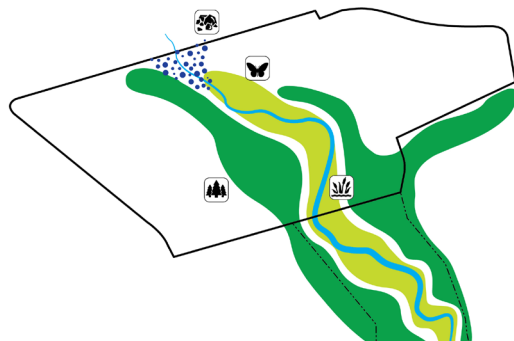
consultation.

This phase started the development of a master plan that promotes building a resilient ecosystem, upgrading park amenities, improving overall functionality and accessibility, and increasing public programming and opportunities. As part of this phase options were presented to the local residents and stakeholders for their input through meetings and surveys. The input gathered was analyzed, and the preferred master plan evolved as a blend between concepts based on the comments received.

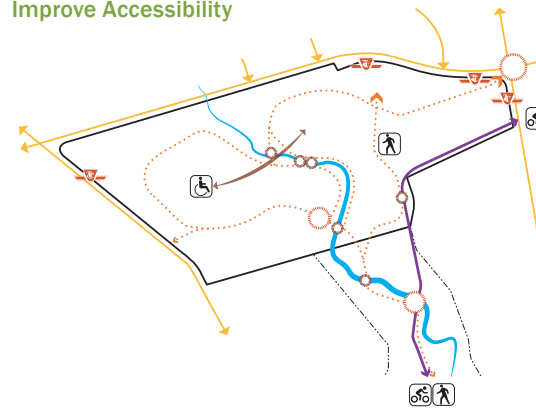
Phase 4 – Master Plan – Design development, feasibility, phasing and consultation.

With Phase 4 the preferred master plan was presented to local residents and stakeholders for their feedback. Following consultation, the master plan design was more fully developed through the design phase. Circulation, feasibility, proposed phasing and preliminary costing were also completed for the resolved conceptual design.

Contribute to Resilient Ecosystem



Improve Accessibility



Phase 5 – Management Plan and Coordination.

In this phase the Management Plan was developed, promoting the long term ecological, operational, and fiscal sustainability of the site. This management plan provides the rationale for the proposed governance structure, and coordination between agencies on all topics from operational functionality to partnership and revenue generation, through the phases of implementation of the master plan. This is an adaptive management plan and will respond to changes as needed.

MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

The master plan has been developed from extensive consultation between partners and stakeholders as well as the public. This consultation resulted in the following unifying vision: **An internationally recognized botanical garden within the City of Toronto.**

The “Big Moves” of the master plan include:

1. Connecting the western and eastern tablelands, through an enhanced accessible trail infrastructure.
2. Expanding the amenities and programs on both the eastern and western tablelands to take advantage of existing activities, features, vistas, and future opportunities.
3. Providing a grand gateway entrance, visible from the street and connecting the pedestrian and vehicular entrances to the site.
4. Respecting sensitive natural features and processes, and regulations relating to floodplains, slopes, ravines and Environmentally Significant Areas. Enhancing and restoring degraded areas within the Wilket Creek floodplain.
5. Creating safe circulation for the public by considering maintenance vehicles and the required access needed for operations, as well as separated cycling access through a garden bypass trail to which connects to the ravine valley multi-use trail system.
6. Creating a separate area for maintenance on the southwestern edge of the site, so these functions can be relocated from where they are currently, surrounding the event space and are intermingled with display gardens.
7. Increasing parking.



Master Plan Key Components



Key ideas received through the consultation process resulted in the following master plan guiding principles, each with associated priority actions (refer to pages 80-87):

- Celebrate a Unique Sense of Place
- Contribute to a Resilient Ecosystem to Enhance Ecological Services
- Improve Accessibility
- Establish a Culture of Stewardship to Reconnect with the Land, Exchange Earth Knowledge and Demonstrate Green Infrastructure
- Improve Operations Functionality
- Improve Amenities
- Improve Facilities to Expand Programming, Education, Activities and Ceremonies
- Enhance Visitor Experience.

Master Plan Key Components (these are illustrated and discussed in detail on pages 94-105):

1. The Greensward
2. East Main Gardens and Welcome Plaza
3. Circuit Path Connecting the Tablelands
4. Pedestrian Bridge
5. The Celebration Place
6. West Main Gardens
7. Teaching Garden
8. Tree House

9. Maintenance Yard

10. Parking

Also included with the master plan are considerations for phasing (pages 106-115) and implementation responsibilities and priorities, as well as partnerships and fundraising strategies (pages 118-123).

PHASING

Phase I will focus on the Barn area immediately adjacent to Toronto Botanical Garden. Renovation and enhancements to this historic area can begin with the relocation of the maintenance yard that sits within it to the western tablelands in the southwest corner of Edwards Gardens.

Phase II will have the site's ravine lands and riparian habitat as its essential focus. Circulation and access will be addressed by creating switchback paths to bring people up and down the ravine slopes, as well as a pedestrian bridge spanning the ravine. A long process of ravine restoration will commence during Phase II.

Phase III will address the western tableland's potential for enhanced Event Space, as well as a more significant Teaching Garden and a new Woodland Garden there. On the eastern tableland, the existing TBG gardens will be expanded in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre, and a parking structure and Garden Gateway will be built .

Phasing and timing are dependent on the success of Toronto Botanical Garden's capital campaign, with expectations of support from all levels of government and significant private sector support. Further detailed design will refine cost estimates provided within the scope of the Master Plan and Management Plan Study.

MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Ownership of Edwards Gardens is held by the City of Toronto. As part of the purchasing agreement, the land is to be preserved in perpetuity as parkland, with free public access.

With the implementation of the master plan, a variety of new and enhanced facilities and gardens will be created, providing new opportunities for programming, engagement and income generation, but also requiring new consideration of operations, regulation and management.

The management plan (page 124 – 170), provides recommendations regarding a revised governance structure, efficient use of staffing and

volunteers, and continued partnership and community involvement. Considerations for resource management of plant collections and ecosystems as well as preservation of heritage features are included. Detailed recommendations concerning ecological management, water resource planning within the floodplain, and climate change and resilience have been provided by the expert sub-consultants in these fields on the consultant team. Operationally, maintenance, event planning, plant and landscape care, maintenance yard and parking are considered with detailed recommendations. Fiscal sustainability is a key part of the vision, and revenue generation, earned income, contributed income, and government support recommendations are also included. Lastly, the visitor experience recommendations include circulation, signage and wayfinding, marketing, branding and website and social media, and these considerations conclude the management plan.

The management plan document is an adaptive management plan which will be modified as necessary to accommodate changes in governance, responsibilities, phasing and priorities as the project is implemented.

An amended Management Agreement will define the partnership between City of Toronto and Toronto Botanical Garden, unleashing the strengths of both partners as it facilitates the creation of a globally acclaimed botanical garden.





Photo: Paul Zammit