



Parks Plan Overview

City of Toronto
Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

- ▶ In February 2010 Council approved the development of a five year plan to guide the acquisition, development, management and operation of Toronto's public parkland that will be guided by the following seven principles:

1. Parks and Trails as City Infrastructure;
2. Equitable Access for All Residents;
3. Nature in the City;
4. Place Making;
5. Supporting a Diversity of Uses;
6. Community Engagement and Partnerships; and
7. Environmental Goals and Practices

1. Parks and Trails as City Infrastructure

Parks and trails are vital components of city infrastructure and must be recognized for the contribution they make to a healthy, vibrant city. There are over 1500 named parks situated on over 8000 hectares of land, including trails. These lands comprise approximately 12% of the total City of Toronto land base and includes:

**the natural heritage system;
publicly accessible open spaces; and
Streetscapes**



High Park



Queen's Park

Other publically accessible open space throughout the city includes:



University Avenue Centre Median

- institutional lands
 - cemeteries
- commercial plazas
- school properties
 - hydro corridors

Park Classifications

Toronto's parkland is classified into 7 distinct types* within 2 categories:

A. Local Serving:

1. Parkette
2. Neighbourhood
3. Community

B. Regional/City-wide Serving:

4. District
5. City-wide
6. Destination
7. Greenway

***Any of these 7 park types could include Natural Heritage features, such as woodlots, meadows or ravines.**

Parkette ~ Primarily provide opportunities for passive recreation and retreat for nearby residents, are generally less than 0.5 hectares in size and may include:

- public art;
- horticultural displays;
- seating areas; and
- playgrounds



Berczy Park

Many of these types of parks are located in the downtown core areas and provide amenities for residents, workers and visitors.

Neighbourhood Parks ~ Provide opportunities for passive recreation and limited types of active recreation amenities within a reasonable walking distance of intended users, are generally less than 5 hectares in size and may include:

- seating areas;
- gardens;
- playgrounds;
- small sports fields;
- waterplay; and
- tennis courts



Oates Park

Community Parks ~ These tend to be larger than Neighbourhood Parks and provide opportunities for a wider range of passive and active recreational uses, are typically located in busier parts of the community, fronting on collector streets within a reasonable walking distance of nearby residential areas. These parks are generally 3 to 5 hectares in size and may include:

- sports fields;
- tennis courts;
- outdoor swimming pools;
- artificial ice rinks;
- seating areas;
- gardens; and
- areas suitable for community events



David Crombie Park

District Parks ~ Generally 5 to 15 hectares in size, near major roads and transit service, providing opportunities for a range of passive and active recreational opportunities primarily serve a broad range of residents who travel beyond their immediate communities to use the facilities in the park, including higher order facilities, such as:

- ▶ community centres;
- ▶ arenas or outdoor ice skating rinks;
- ▶ indoor or outdoor pools;
- ▶ pedestrian and cycling routes; and
- ▶ on-site parking



Trinity Bellwoods Park

District Parks are suitable to support large-scale sports and community events / gatherings.



Sunnydale Acres Park



L'Amoreaux Park

City-wide Parks ~ Provide opportunities for unique or specialized passive and active recreation activities, attract users from across the city and may contain natural heritage or cultural features of interest to all city residents. These parks are typically located on major streets with good transit access and may include:

- civic plazas and amphitheatres;
- stadia;
- ski hills or golf courses;
- conservatories/public greenhouses;
- competitive sports tournament complexes;
- major trails and significant natural areas; and
- art centres and/or unique art features



Yorkville Park



Birchmount Park / Community Centre

Destination Parks ~ Parkland providing unique features, specialized passive and active recreation amenities, natural heritage or cultural features, of interest to all City of Toronto residents, as well as GTA residents and tourists. Such parks range in size.



High Park



Sugar Beach



Toronto Islands



Rosetta McClain Park

Greenway ~ Linear parkland primarily providing major trail-related connections, with associated amenities such as rest areas, signage, public art and plantings. Such park types may not, in all cases, incorporate a developed trail corridor, but may simply exist in the form of a more natural connection between points, serving more as green habitat or linkages for wildlife.



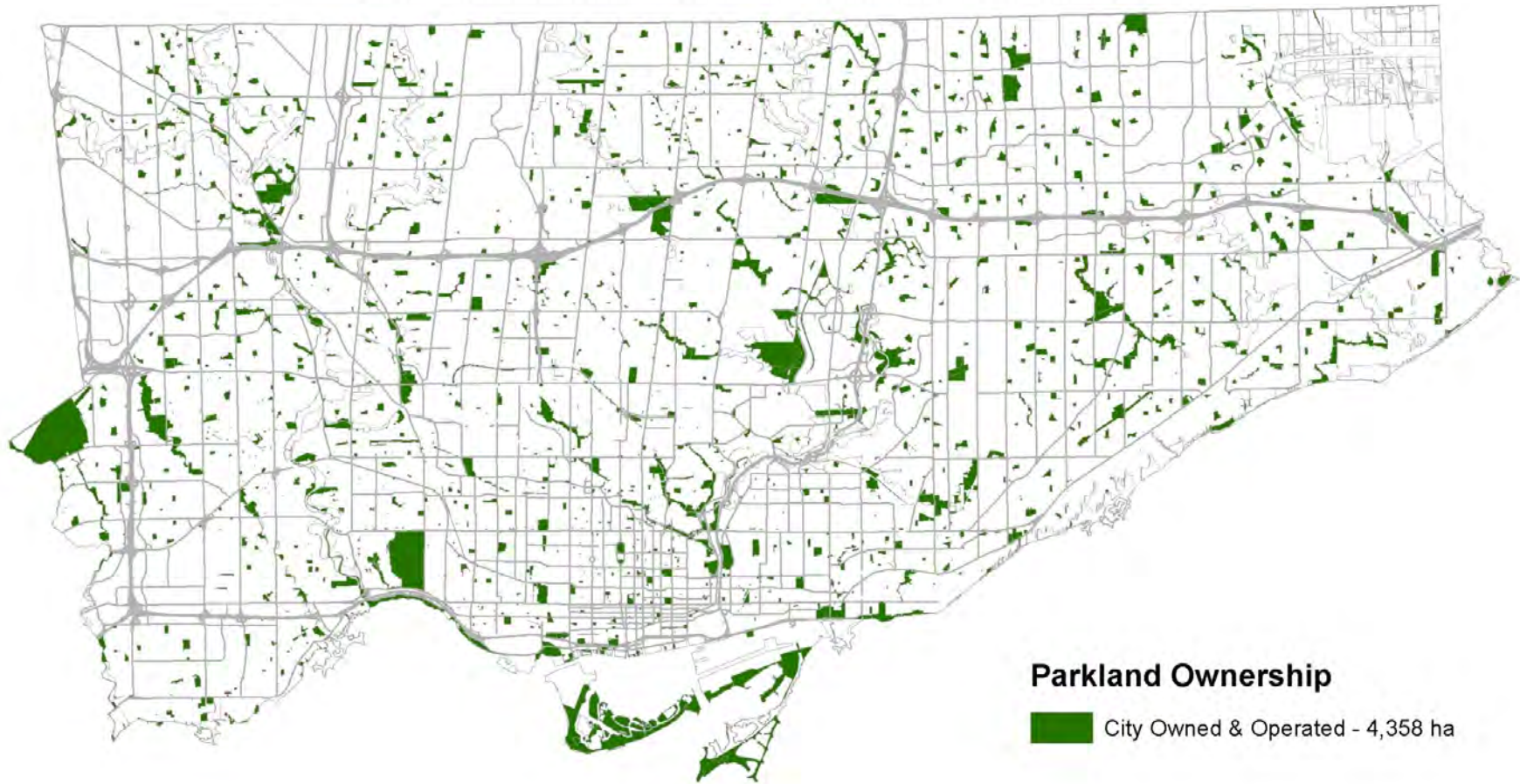
Beltline Trail

Greenways typically serve neighbourhoods located along their lengths as local parks for walking, biking and passive enjoyment. They also serve a more city-wide function of providing connections with other neighbourhoods using off road trail and bikeway systems and other natural areas. Greenways are generally 10 to 30 metres wide and vary in length.



West Toronto Rail Path

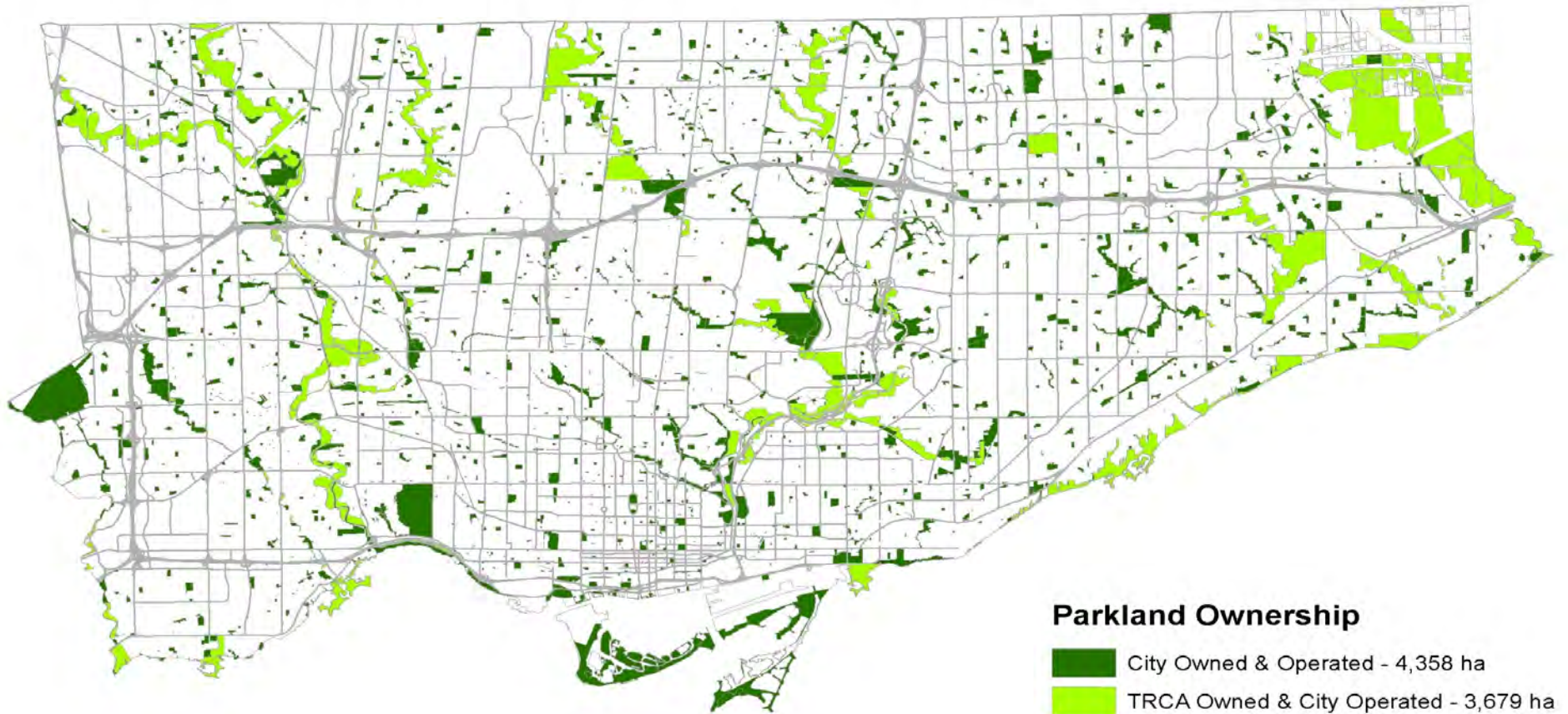
City of Toronto Owned & Operated Parkland





Source: Parks GIS Layer & TRCA GIS Layer
June 2011



City of Toronto Owned & Operated and TRCA Owned & City Operated Parkland



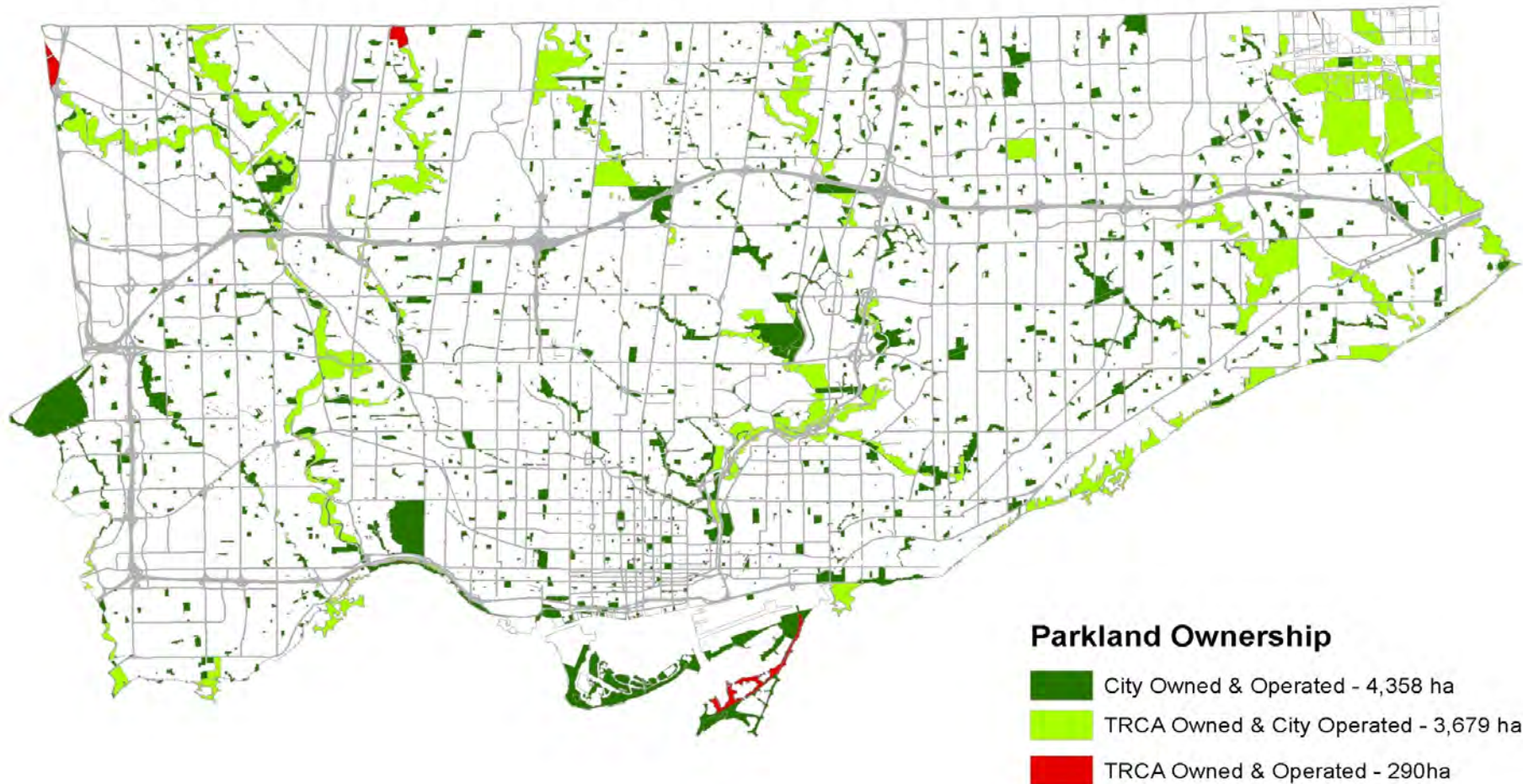
Parkland Ownership

-  City Owned & Operated - 4,358 ha
-  TRCA Owned & City Operated - 3,679 ha

Source: Parks GIS Layer & TRCA GIS Layer
June 2011



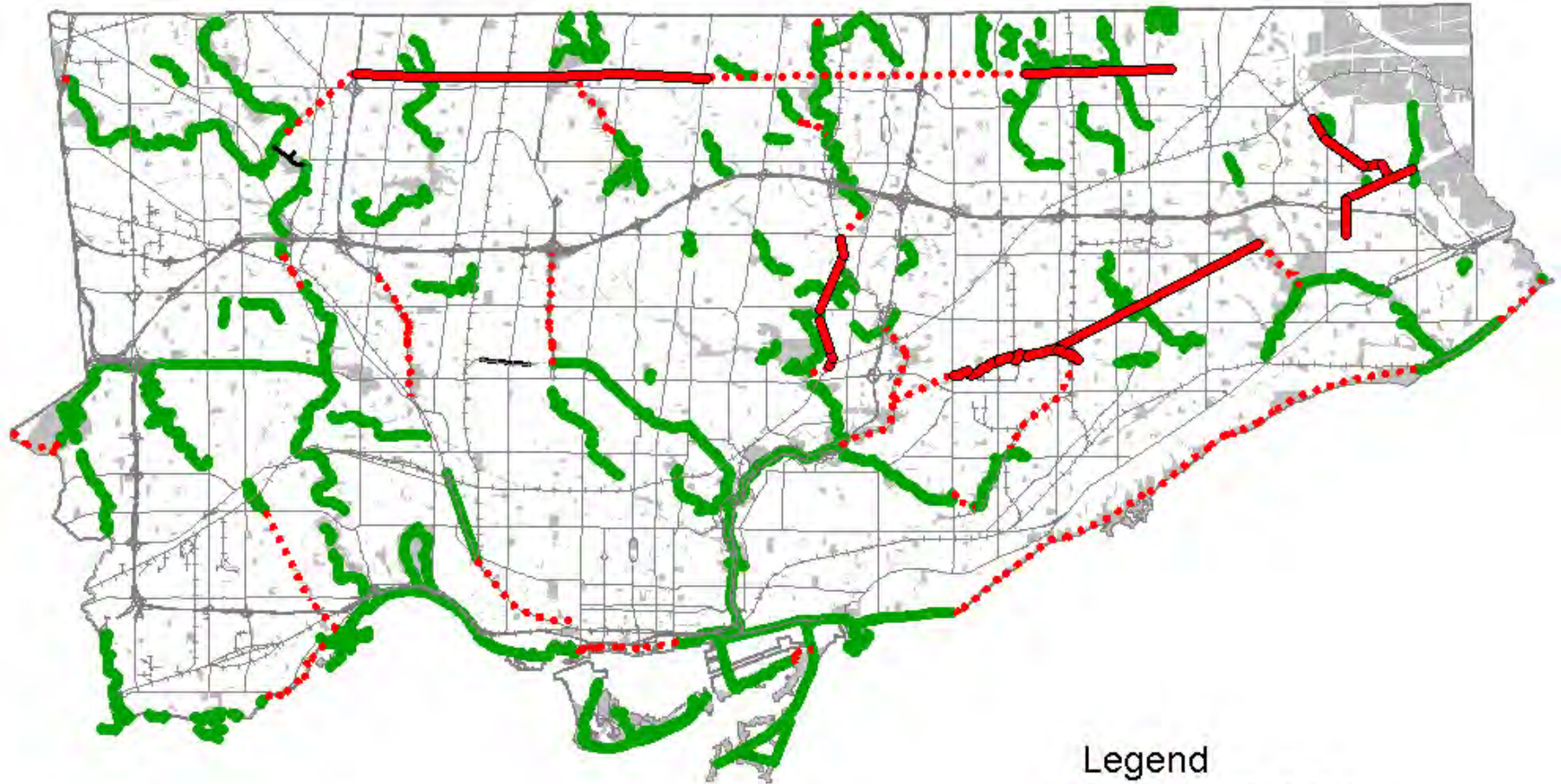
City of Toronto Owned & Operated and TRCA Owned & Operated Parkland



Source: Parks GIS Layer & TRCA GIS Layer
June 2011



City Parkland Multi-Use Trail System



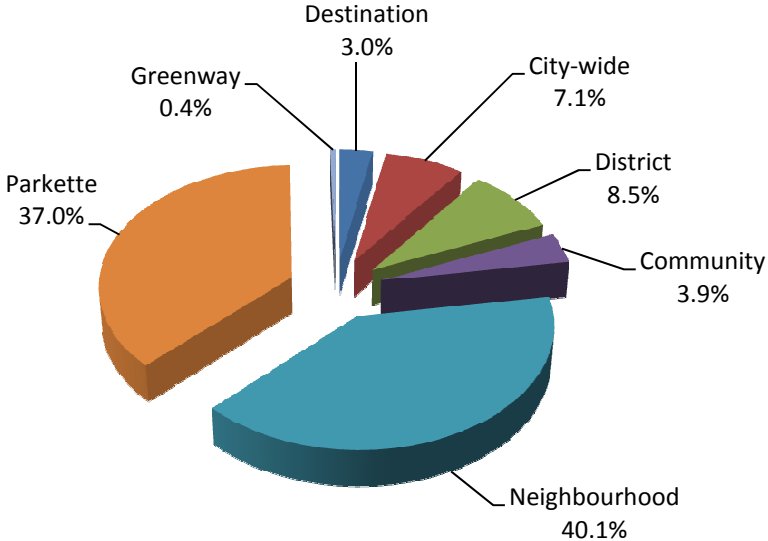
Legend

- Existing Park Trail System
 - 2011 Proposed Corridor Trail
 - Proposed Future Trail
 - City Parkland
- June 2011

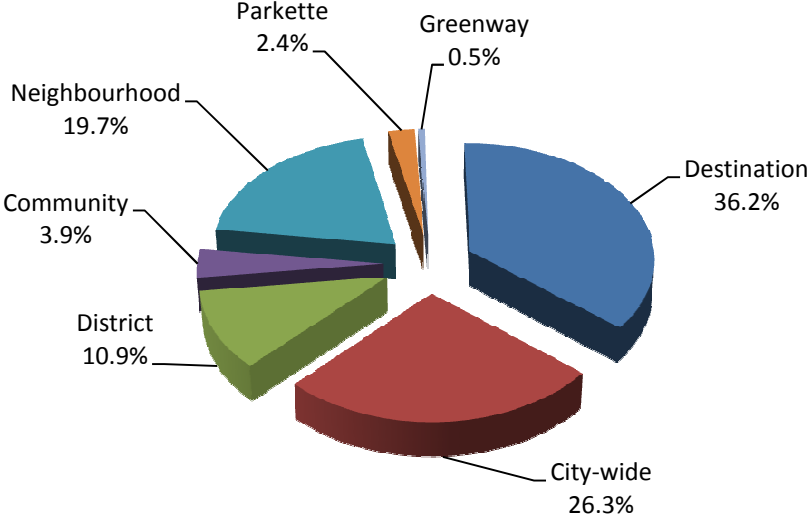


Total Parkland by Type and Area

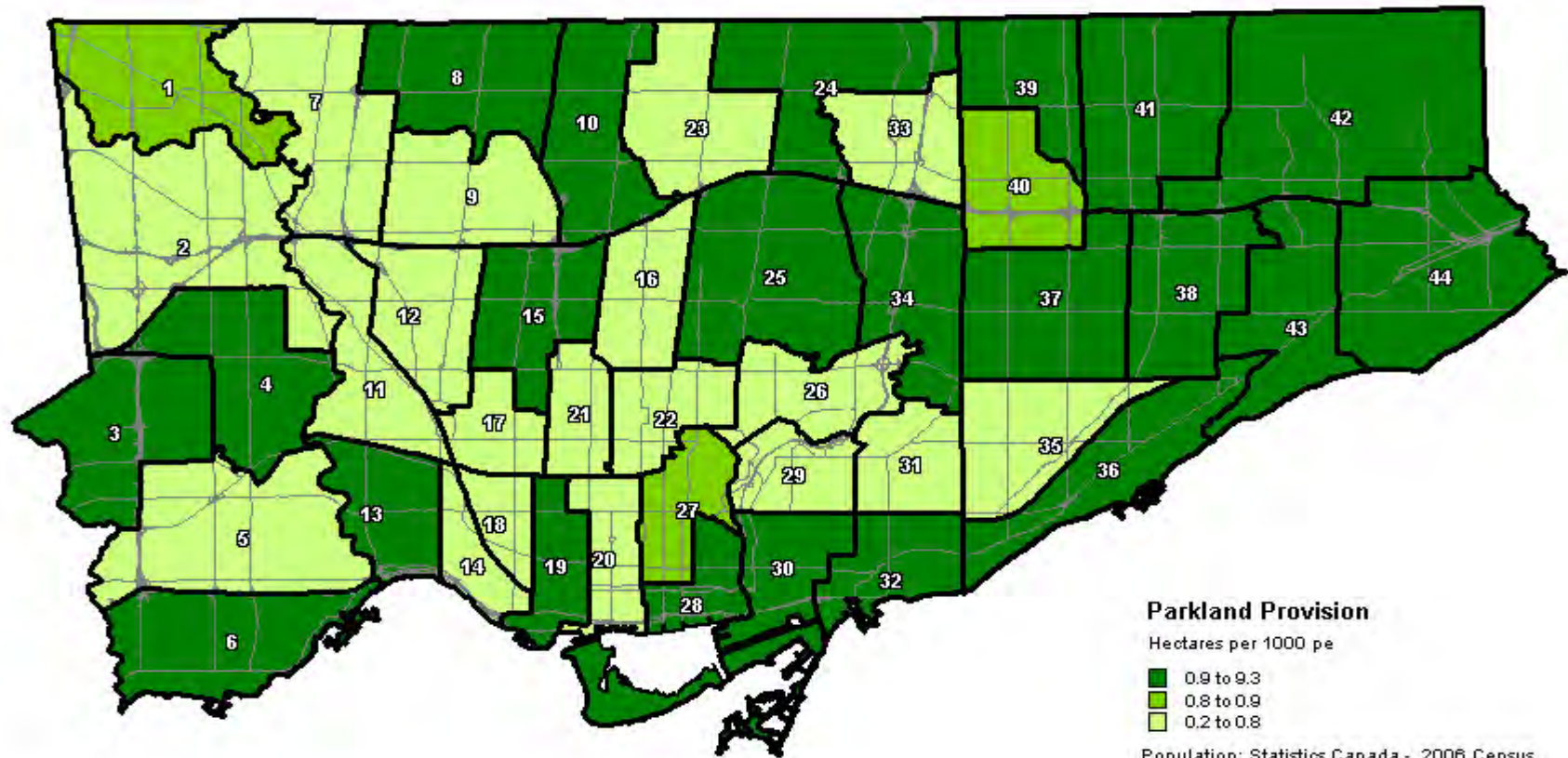
Percentage of All Parks by Type



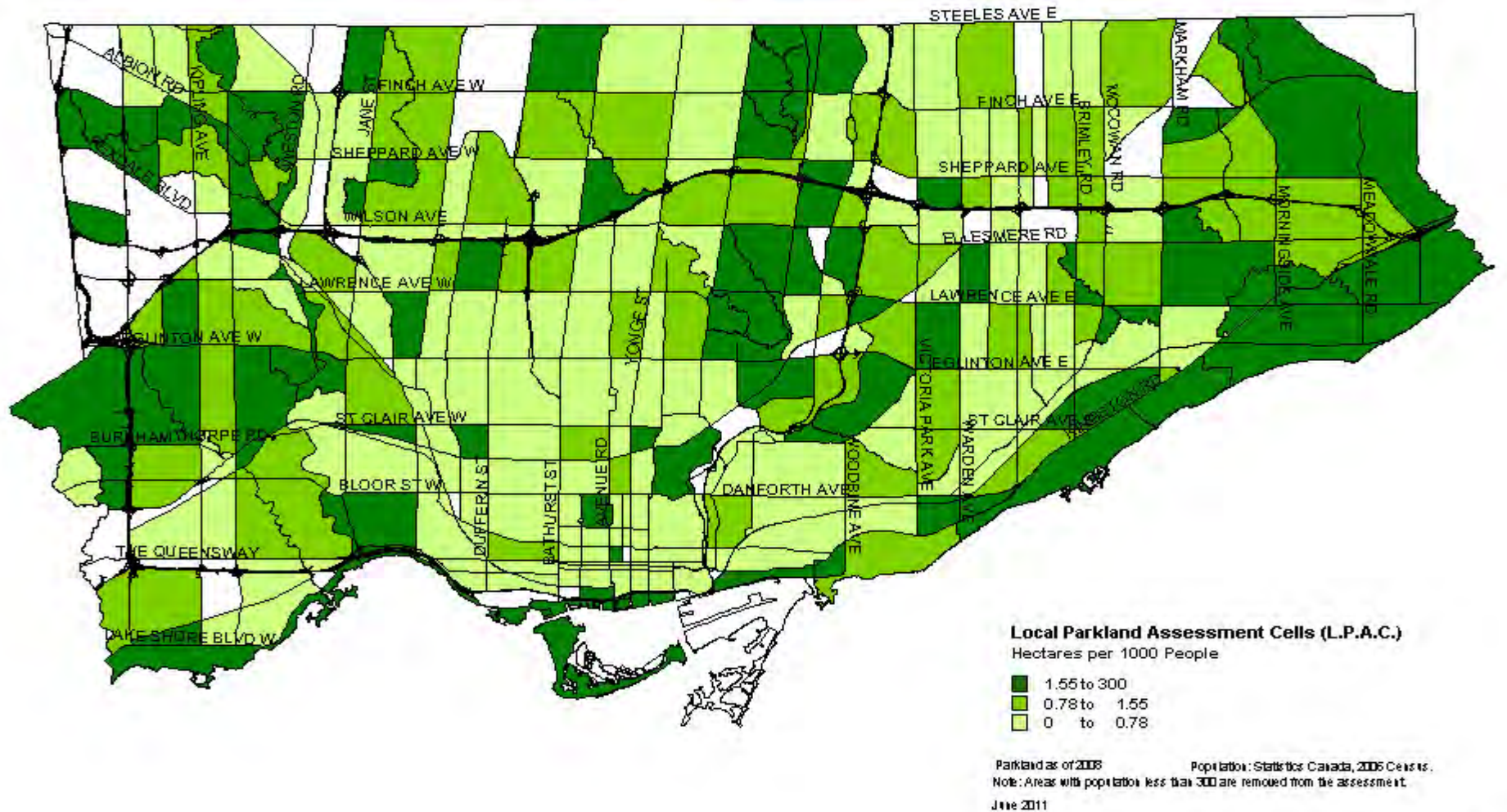
Percentage of All Parks by Area



City of Toronto Park Tableland Provision Per Ward



Local Parkland Provision Levels



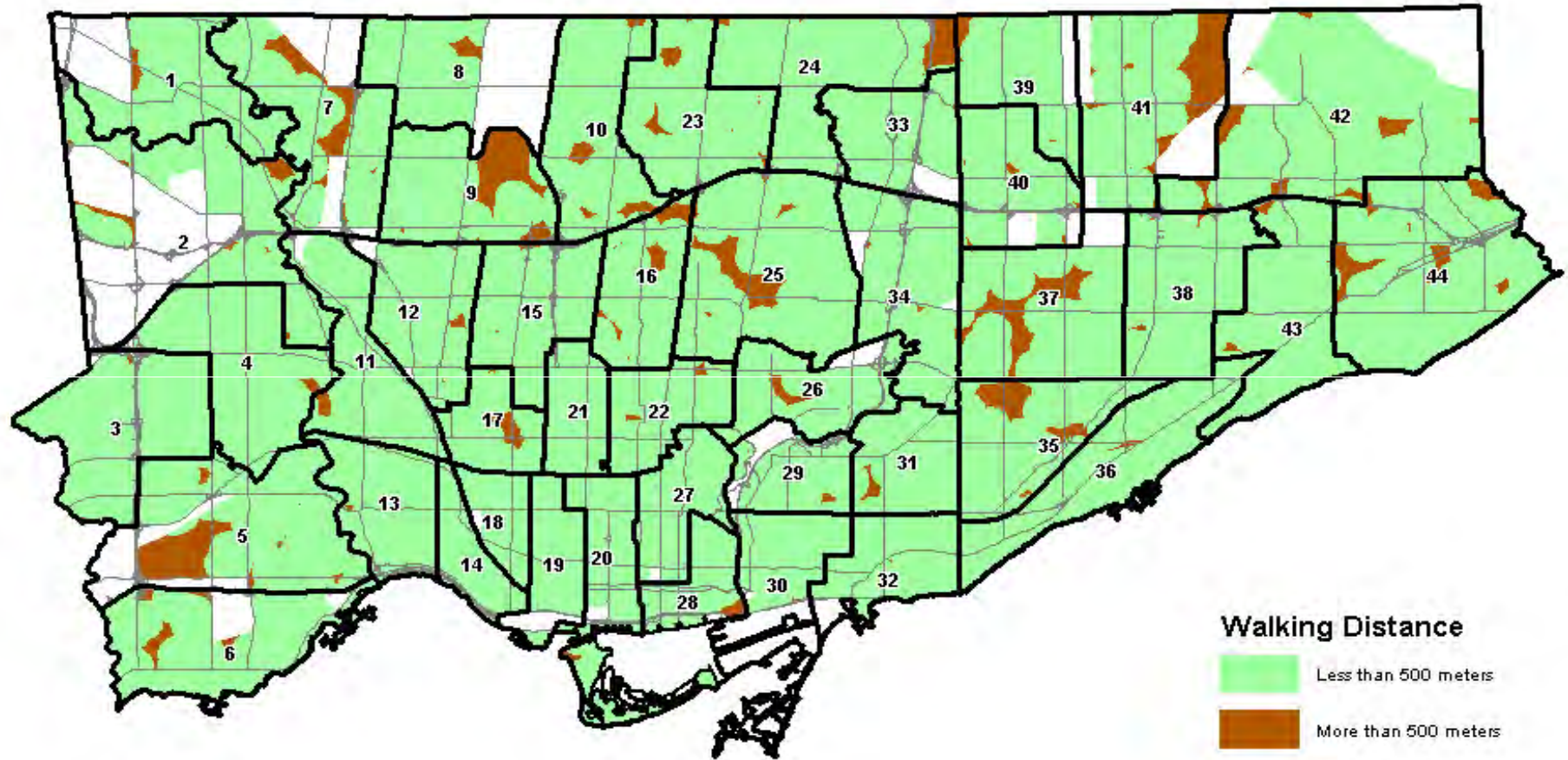
2. Equitable Access for All Residents

The system of parks and trails is a valuable city resource that must be accessible to residents in all parts of the city and must respond to the needs of a diverse population regardless of age, level of ability, income or cultural background.

The Parks Plan will examine the provision levels of parkland and park amenities in relation to various socio-economic indicators of Torontonians. These include:

- Income levels
- Age / gender
- Cultural background
- Accessibility for disabled persons (AODA legislated requirements)

Walking Distance to City Parks



Walking Distance

Less than 500 meters

More than 500 meters

Ward Boundary

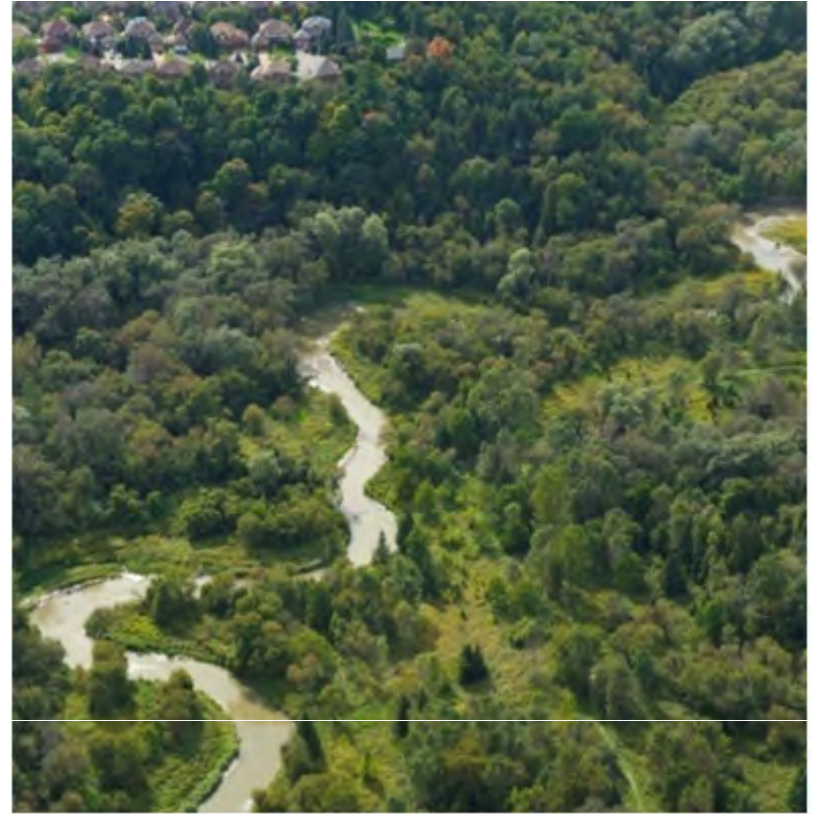
Note: Areas with population less than 300 people are removed from the assessment.

July 2011



3. Nature In The City

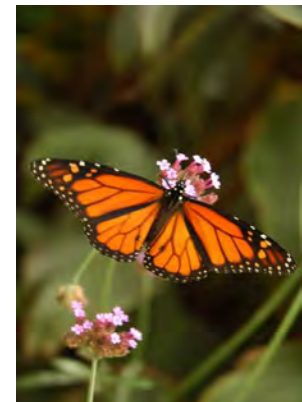
- ▶ Natural Heritage areas are an important component of the City's green space system and should be protected, restored and expanded.
- ▶ This natural framework is a component of a larger bioregion of the tree canopy, natural habitat and watersheds that extend beyond the City's borders.
- ▶ The City's Official Plan acknowledges the importance of natural heritage areas through its policies to preserve and enhance these areas.
- ▶ Parkland containing natural heritage features are subject to various statutory controls (e.g., Zoning By-law, Ravine and Natural Feature Protection Bylaw);



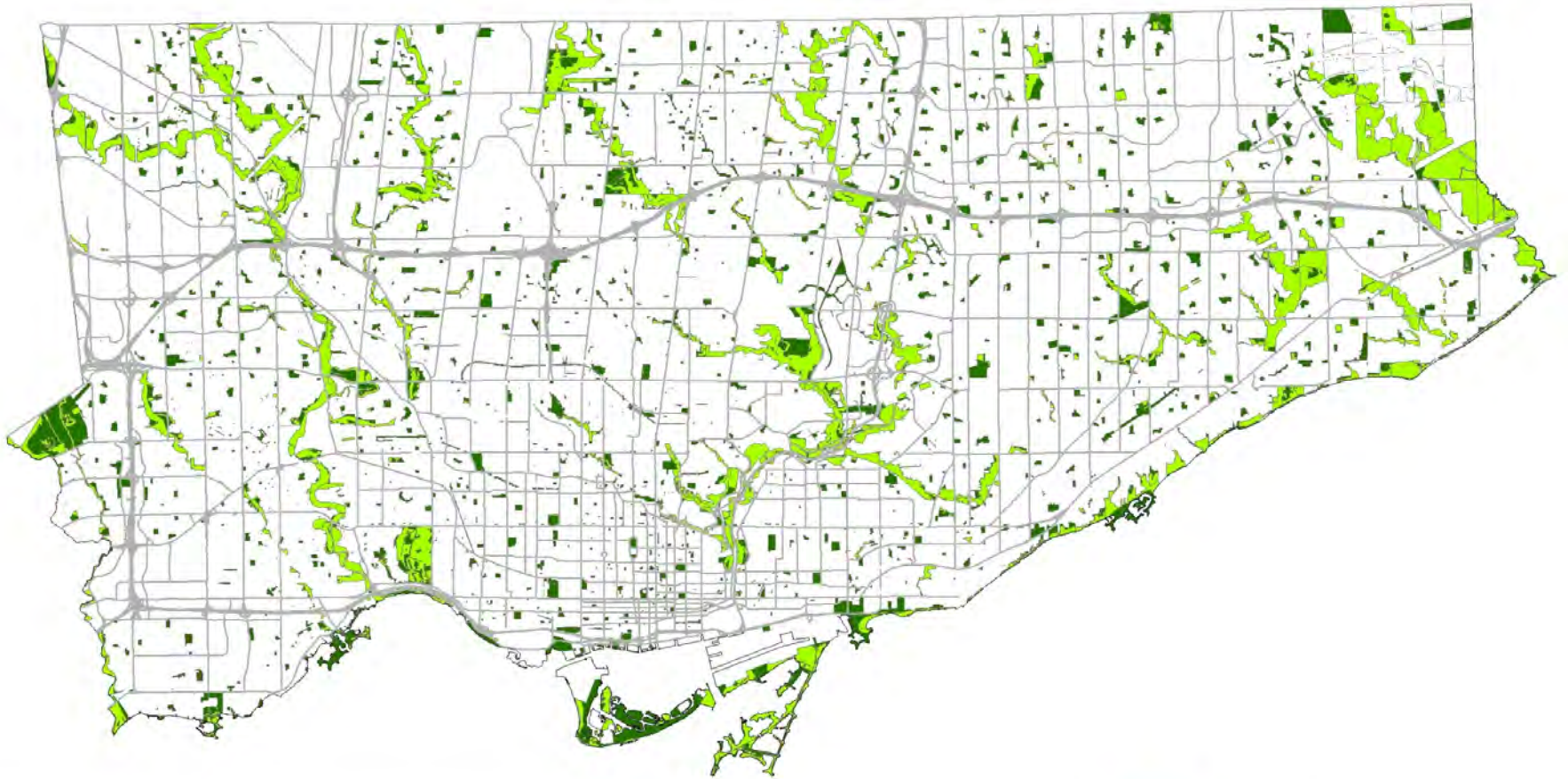
Rouge Park

Nature In The City – Urban Forest




- Toronto's Parks are home to 2.5 million trees that play a key role in helping to meet the City's tree canopy targets;
- Toronto presently has an estimated 20% tree canopy cover, representing 10.2 million trees, the majority (60%) of which are located on private property with the balance in City parks and natural areas;
- Toronto's Urban Forestry Strategy focuses on improved protection and maintenance of the existing tree inventory, protecting the forest and tree canopy and increasing tree plantings on public and private lands; and
- A key aspect for Urban Forestry is its 40 year plan to increase the current tree canopy coverage from 20% to 30% – 40% .



Parks, Forestry and Recreation - City of Toronto Parkland with Natural Areas



Source: TRCA Natural Heritage Study
Natural Heritage defined as areas with significant habitat, areas in the riparian zone and areas with a slope greater than 10 degrees

 City of Toronto Parkland
 Natural Areas in City Parks 

June 2011

4. Place Making / Quality

'Place making' is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces with the goal to create memorable places of character, function, and beauty that reflect the culture and identity of the city and respond to the needs of residents and visitors alike.



Humber Bay Shores



University Avenue Centre Median



HTO Park

The primary objectives of this principle are as follows:

- Promoting Design Quality and Innovation;
- Providing a Physical and Social Focus for Communities; and
- Providing Well-Maintained and Comfortable Parks



Music Garden

Parks Operations Standards

- PFR has developed a set of **Service Standards** for the safe operation, maintenance, repair and enhancement of parkland and park assets.
- These standards are achieved by means of:
 - Parks Inspection Program
 - Work Management System
 - Parks staff training and resource tools, ie. Parks Branch Operations Handbook, Equipment Safety Grams.



Parks Operations Standards (cont'd)

- ▶ Parks Service Standards Apply To:
- ▶ **General Maintenance** (litter picking, cleaning, minor repairs of parks and park assets and annual inspections)
- ▶ **Turf operations** (maintenance includes integrated plant health care)
- ▶ **Horticulture operations** (design, planting & maintenance of hort. displays)
- ▶ **Parks Construction** (larger construction and maintenance projects – e.g., park development, and re-development, parks infrastructure)
- ▶ **Technical Services** (smaller construction, maintenance and repair projects involving skilled trades)



Parks Operations Standards (cont'd)

- ▶ **Greenhouse operations** (production of annual and seasonal plants for seasonal displays and native plants for natural areas)
- ▶ **Conservatories** (permanent horticultural displays/ specimens and seasonal flower shows at Centennial, Allen Gardens and Cloud Gardens)
- ▶ **Golf Course operations** (turf, greens, facility and equipment maintenance)
- ▶ **Ferry Services** (PFR mandated by provincial legislation to provide regular ferry service to Island residents)
- ▶ **Animal operations** (High Park, Riverdale Farm, Toronto Island)



Parks Operations Standards (cont'd)

- ▶ **Winter Maintenance** (artificial and natural ice rinks and snow clearing of park roadways, parking lots, pathways and stairs and entrances and exits to recreation facilities)
- ▶ **Ski Hill operations** (snow making, snow grooming, ski lift operations and maintenance)
- ▶ PFR is in the process of developing **design & construction standards** for park development and re-development, based on the park classifications system.



5. Supporting a Diversity of Uses

Parks should be able to accommodate a variety of uses appropriate to their location and type, including:

- sports fields;
- swimming & water play;
- ice skating;
- skateboarding & BMX;
- picnic areas;
- playgrounds;
- dog off leash areas;
- multi-use trails;
- garden allotments;
- appreciation of the natural environment;
- community events;
- public art; &
- cultural expression.



Avonshire Park

▶ Supporting a Diversity of Uses

▶ The parks & trails system must respond to a wide range of demands from active and passive users:

- lifelong active living;
- fitness and active sports;
- passive recreation and quiet enjoyment;
- natural areas, habitat and tree canopy;
- community events;
- urban agriculture; and
- cultural expression.



Sculpture



Skateboarding

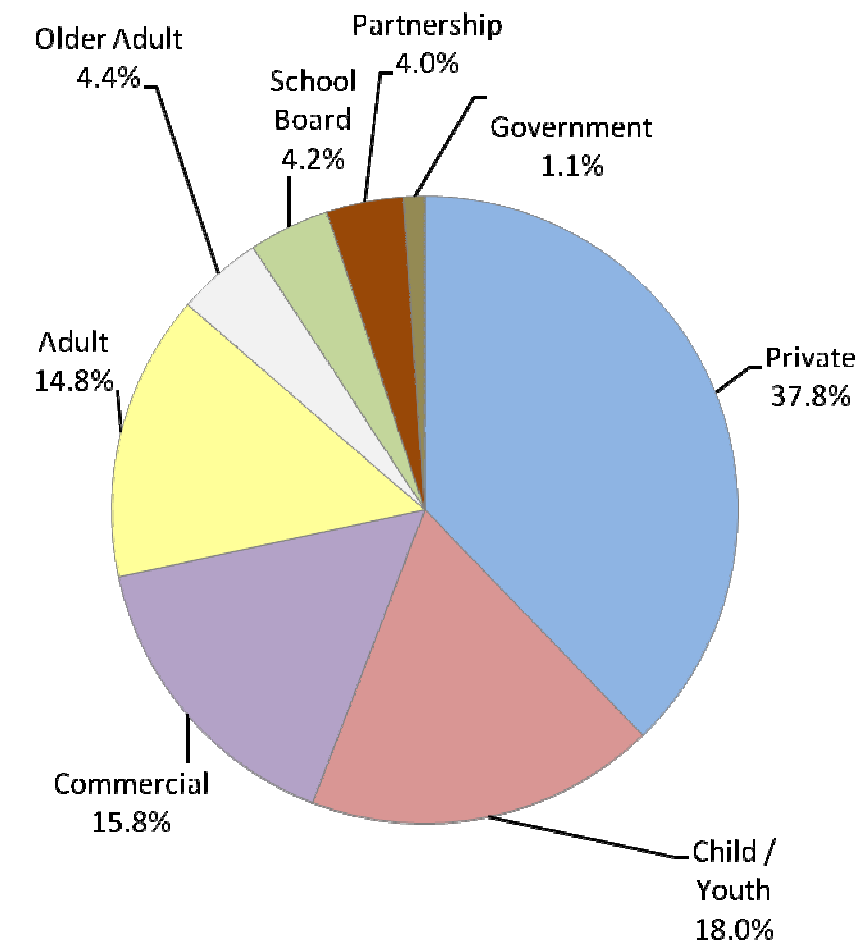


Off-Leash Area



2010 Permit Data Summary

Total Permits* by User Category (%)



- Approximately 38% of permit holders are private individuals / groups.
 - Close to one-fifth of permit holders are organized groups that serve children and youth.
 - Commercial groups represent about 16% of total permit accounts.
 - Approximately 19% of permit holders are organized groups that serve both adults and older adults.
- *Totals represent all (both parks and recreation) permits.

2010 Parks Permit Data Summary

Permits by Activity Type

- Tennis
- Baseball and softball
- Soccer
- General sports activities such as: volleyball, cricket, frisbee, lacrosse and ice hockey
- Vending / sales in parks and special events
- Other rental activities, such as: boot camp, filming, photography and camping

Permits by Outdoor Facility Type

- Sports courts (e.g. tennis courts, bocce courts and other outdoor courts)
- Sports fields (e.g. for playing soccer, cricket, frisbee, football, rugby, etc.)
- Baseball and softball diamonds
- Clubhouses managed by Parks
- Parkland / open space
- Bowling greens, stadia & ice rinks

Key Factors Supporting a Diversity of Uses

- Demographics play an important role in determining the type of recreation services and facilities the city provides.
- Toronto will experience substantial growth, with an estimated half million people expected to settle here within the next 30 years.
- Cultural diversity continues to be an important component of Toronto's character.
- Seniors 65+ is the only age category expected to increase over the next 27 years and, overall, Toronto will witness an aging population, as baby boomers become elderly.
- Overall, there is a trend away from team sports and towards low cost, casual and convenience activities.
- Similar to inline skating, freestyle BMX cycling and snowboarding, skateboarding is a popular and challenging, youth-oriented "action sport" that is part of a trend away from more organized team sports and towards more individual and unstructured activities.
- Cricket will likely continue to increase in popularity and require more facility sites.

City parks provide opportunities for community building such as:

- ▶ community and cultural festivals and events,
- ▶ outdoor food markets,
- ▶ community gardens and
- ▶ bake ovens.



6. Community Engagement and Partnerships

The Park Plan will explore opportunities to engage community and business partners to compliment our existing resources through fund raising, partnerships and sponsorships.



Neshama
playground in
Oriole Park



Community involvement is a key component in the planning, design and operation of parks and trails which should continue to be fostered.

7. Environmental Goals and Practices

- ▶ Environmentally responsible practices and green initiatives must be incorporated into the day-to-day planning, design, operation and maintenance of the city's system of parks and trails;
- ▶ the City's key environmental goals, as set out in the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan, Official Plan and other supporting legislation, are met; and
- ▶ parks and trails should be designed to meet current standards of environmental sustainability and green development.







Weston Quarry Gardens at The Brickworks

Why we need a Parks Plan:

- To help determine the parks needs of our culturally diverse population;
- To provide equitable accessibility to parkland for all City residents; and
- To guide the acquisition, management, development and operation of our parkland to better meet the changing needs of Torontonians.

Proposed Consultation Strategy for the Parks Plan

The proposed consultation strategy framework involves five methods of public and stakeholder engagement, including:

An individual **Survey** (available both on-line and in hard copy);

4 Public Consultation Meetings – 1 per Community Council district;

5 Stakeholder Consultation Meetings – 1 per Community Council district, and a fifth consultation with stakeholder groups that have a city-wide parks focus;

2–3 Focus group discussions with targeted groups (e.g., newcomers, diverse communities, low income, youth and other marginalized groups) to gain their views & identify their recreation & leisure needs; and

Self-directed consultations, whereby interested stakeholder groups will be provided with consultation materials by Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff.

All of the consultation meetings will be fully accessible to all members of the public and materials will be fully accessible to visually impaired persons.

▶ Next Steps:

- Parks Plan Consultation Strategy report to June 2011 Parks & Environment Committee and July Council;
- Parks Plan Survey and Consultations will occur in October/November 2011; and
- Final report to Parks & Environment Committee in First Quarter of 2012