PARKS PLAN: 5 Year Vision

welcoming, well-maintained, safe and sustainable parks

• sets priorities for the development, management and operation of parkland

• will result in noticeable improvements to parks across the city
TORONTO’S PARKS SYSTEM

- **1,600 parks**
- **300 km** major multi-use trails
- **300+ km** natural environment trails
- **8,000 hectares** parkland
- **12.7%** of city land area
parks system snapshot

2012

150,000 permit bookings
1.2 million ferry passengers
3.5 million trees
3,000 ha maintained turf
40 ha horticulture
636 tennis courts
22 beaches
858 playgrounds
676 sports fields
BENEFITS OF PARKS

economic

environmental

social

health
PARKS PLAN guiding principles

• Parks & Trails as City Infrastructure
• Equitable Access for All Residents
• Nature in the City
• Environmental Goals & Practices
• Placemaking
• Supporting a Diversity of Uses
• Community Engagement and Partnerships
BROAD ISSUES FACING THE PARKS SYSTEM

• Growing population on a fixed land base
• Changing ideas and expectations about parks
• Increasing requests and proposals for park use
• High demand to support community involvement
• Need to make parks more accessible for people with disabilities
• Impact of increasing recreational use of natural areas
• Climate change impacts
BROAD ISSUES FACING THE PARKS SYSTEM

recreational pressures on parkland - examples

Queen’s Park – heavy use

High Park - unsanctioned biking
BROAD ISSUES FACING THE PARKS SYSTEM

extreme weather e.g. Edwards Gardens (Wilket Creek)
BROAD ISSUES FACING THE PARKS SYSTEM

extreme weather e.g. Marie Curtis Park

April 2013 storm damage
PARKS PLAN consultation

4,000 participants
3,754 surveys, 9 meetings and 7 focus groups
14,708 individual comments and survey data

The consultation results show that Torontonians value their parks

• Nature in the city is important
• Vital city infrastructure
• Important parts of their neighbourhood
• Important city attraction
PARKS PLAN THEMES

- communicate & connect with users
- preserve & promote nature
- maintain quality parks
- improve system planning
COMMUNICATE & CONNECT WITH USERS

1. Improve communications and outreach

Draft concept model: parks listing webpage
2. Increase opportunities for resident, group and stakeholder involvement

- Urban park ranger program to facilitate community involvement in parks
- Engagement and volunteer management tools
- Expanded partnerships
COMMUNICATE & CONNECT WITH USERS

3. Improve the permitting system to enhance park use

- Improve on-line information and services
- Permitting system review
- Improved data collection
PRESERVE & PROMOTE NATURE

4. Improve the management of natural areas

- Establish a program to manage Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs)
- Staff training
- Protect parkland from over-use
5. Improve natural environment trails

- Trail planning & building
- Trail maintenance
- Stewardship & engagement

before
Crother’s Woods

after
6. Integrate emerging trends and technologies into parks operations

- Continue to improve water, energy & fuel efficiency
- Explore and use new practices and technologies

Electric Golf Carts

Children’s Teaching Kitchen
MAINTAIN QUALITY PARKS

7. Advance the quality and consistency of parks and trails

- Enhance and automate park inspections
- Improve by-law enforcement
- High quality design
MAINTAIN QUALITY PARKS

promoting design excellence  e.g. Joel Weeks Park
winner of 2013 Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Regional Merit Award
MAINTAIN QUALITY PARKS

8. Improve park spaces

• Improve basic park amenities
• Create social gathering spaces as focal points
• Increase summer maintenance in high use parks
MAINTAIN QUALITY PARKS

social gathering spaces – examples
9. Demonstrate, educate, and inspire through horticulture and urban agriculture

- High impact horticulture
- Community involvement through horticulture
- Augment urban agriculture
MAINTAIN QUALITY PARKS

high impact horticulture

Downsview Memorial Parkette
10. Develop a plan to guide facility provision and land acquisition
11. Develop tools to guide and enhance the use of parkland

- Implement the park classification system
- Develop tools to support the appropriate use of parks and trails
- Improve and coordinate trail planning
PARKS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

the five parks types are:

• Parkette
• Neighbourhood Park
• Community Park
• District Park
• City Park

classification:

• Provides a hierarchy of park ‘types’ with associated roles and characteristics
• Is a tool for parks planning, management, and operations
• Promotes a shared understanding of the park system
12. Continue to increase accessibility

- Involve disability groups in developing design standards for park amenities
- Ensure that parks and trails meet or exceed provincial accessibility standards
IMPLEMENTATION & NEXT STEPS

- Council approval
- begin implementation of initiatives not requiring funding
- report through 2014 budget process with financial requirements for approval
- implement additional initiatives based on approved funding
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full implementation will rely on investment in:</th>
<th>Annual expenditures by 2018</th>
<th>Key results over 5 years will include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>urban park rangers</td>
<td>1.54M operating</td>
<td>• increased public involvement in parks • more vibrant parks and neighbourhoods • ‘one stop’ point of contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amenities social gathering spaces</td>
<td>$5.5M capital</td>
<td>• improved seating and amenities • 120 – 150 social gathering spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural environment trails</td>
<td>$1.41M operating $0.25M capital</td>
<td>• 250km restored, sustainable trails • improved, healthier natural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horticulture urban agriculture</td>
<td>1.89M operating</td>
<td>• 220 rejuvenated flower/shrub beds • community horticulture program • additional community and allotment gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintenance</td>
<td>$0.58M operating</td>
<td>• cleaner, greener parks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE PARKS PLAN WILL...

- Connect people and communities with parks and trails
- Advance greening and environmental sustainability
- Improve the quality of parks and trails across the city
- Build a stronger park system that is a legacy for Toronto