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Jan 28, 2020

Submission to Budget Committee

RE: Parks, Forestry and Recreation - 2020-2029 10-Year Capital Plan Detail

This letter is a response to the 2020 Parks Capital budget on behalf of the Toronto Skateboarding Committee (TSC) which represents the skateboarding community in Toronto.

In 2013, Councillor Janet Davis advised the creation of the TSC so that the skateboarding community could advocate for the development of new skateboard parks in Toronto. Through our successful community organizing and advocacy, in 2014 and 2015, city council directed the Parks Department to consult the TSC and develop policy, operating and capital plans for the expansion of skateparks in Toronto.

Over the past 6 years, we have engaged with thousands of skateboarders and council has adopted the Toronto Skateboard Strategy and The Parks and Recreation Facility Master Plan (FMP) which outlines the provision of 4 new community skateparks and 18 smaller skatespots throughout the city. Since the FMP was adopted in 2017, we have waited patiently for the release of this years capital budget which makes budget allocations for new skateparks. We are excited and thankful that there are budget allocations for 4 new community skateparks (\$600,000 each) and 11 skatespots (\$250,000 each) for the 2020-2029 timeframe. We do have a few concerns though that we would like addressed.

1. A typical community skatepark should be about 930 sq. m in size, similar to existing community skateparks at Stan Wadlow park in East York and Eighth St. Skatepark in Etobicoke. A recent skatepark project at Neilson Park in Malvern which was 499 sq. m. in size cost \$650,000 in 2018 dollars. With ever increasing construction costs, we do not believe that the \$600,000 budget allocation for community skateparks is sufficient enough. **We request that that figure be adjusted to reflect the actual cost of building a 930 sq. m skatepark (approx. \$800,000-\$900,000 in 2020 dollars)**

2. The TSC has been advocating for investments in new skateparks as an organization since 2013, although individual groups have been advocating for many years before our formation. The 2020 capital plan outlines the phasing of new projects with construction of community skateparks occurring in 2022, 2024, 2026 and 2028. Skatespot construction is scheduled to begin in 2022. The parks department identified great demand for new skateparks through surveying over 1,700 users during the development of the Skatepark Strategy in 2016. The first community skatepark is scheduled for construction 6 years after this demand was identified and 8 years after we first started to advocate as a large organized group. Skateboarding is very popular, especially among kids and youth and as it will be featured in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics we expect participation rates to continue rising. **We request that the phasing for community skateparks be expedited to meet current demands with the construction for all 4 parks to be scheduled between 2020-2024.**

We have been advocating for new skateparks diligently since we formed in 2013. We have had many successes and we would like to keep the momentum going. Skateboarding is a great recreational activity for kids and youth and we need to make sure that we are providing them with great facilities in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Migs Bartula

Co-Chairman

Toronto Skateboarding Committee

www.torontoskateboarding.com



Toronto Skateboard Strategy



A demonstrated need

The 2015 Skatepark Survey identified a need for more skateparks, with nearly all survey respondents expressing a desire for more skateparks and skateboarding opportunities in the city.

Although PFR has taken many positive strides in recent years to build high quality skateparks, the current provision of skateparks in Toronto lags behind that of other major Canadian cities. One way to consider facility provision is square metres of skatepark per person. Using this lens, Toronto's 12 permanent skateparks¹ total 13,445 square metres, with one square metre of skatepark serving 195 people, which is lower than other Canadian cities, including Calgary and Edmonton. Skatepark provision is currently being assessed through the upcoming Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

Council direction

This Skateboard Strategy was developed in response to Council direction from 2014 and 2015 Capital Budget approval that requested PFR to work in consultation with the Toronto Skateboarding Committee to develop a strategy that incorporates policy, operating and capital plans to support skateboarding in Toronto. The Skateboard Strategy will inform the 20-year Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017-2036) on the identification of additional skatepark facilities and associated 10-year capital plans, commencing in 2018.

The survey received a total of 1,835 responses. 87% of respondents were male. The average age of respondents was 26, and 31% were over the age of 30. 70% have been involved with skateboarding for at least six years.

Alignment with other work

The Skateboard Strategy aligns with several other PFR plans and strategies:

- **Recreation Service Plan (2013-2017)** provides guidelines around the delivery of recreation programs and services including skateboard programs. It outlines the role that the City plays in meeting the recreation needs of Torontonians.
- **Youth Recreation Engagement Strategy** confirms youth as a priority area of service, and identifies the opportunity to use skateboarding as a tool to meaningfully engage youth and develop youth leadership.
- **Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan**, a 20-year plan to recommend and guide the creation of new facilities, including skateparks.

The Skateboard Strategy also aligns with other City strategies, including the **Toronto Youth Equity Strategy**, and the **Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy**.

Skatepark demand: Based on the survey and other consultations, there is a demand for skateparks and an interest in opportunities to expand the number of skateparks in Toronto. Survey respondents offered hundreds of suggested locations across the city, and indicated that locations near local parks or community centres would be a good fit. There were also suggestions to provide indoor facilities, to separate facilities for different activities such as BMX and rollerblading, and to improve existing facilities.

Skatepark Provision Levels

In 2004, Toronto paved the way with the introduction of a Citywide plan to develop new skateparks and we were at the forefront of design of modern concrete skateparks. Other municipalities soon followed our lead and by 2016, Toronto had fallen far behind other Ontario and Canadian cities in the provision of skateparks. We have the lowest provision level for a large metro area in Canada. We should address this gap by immediately investing in the design and construction of new skateparks.

Appendix

Average Municipal Facility Provision Levels, Per Capita

Facility Type	City of Toronto*	Large GTA Cities	Large Canadian Cities	Large U.S. Cities
Community Recreation Centres	34,000**	38,000	31,500	29,500
Gymnasiums	28,000	40,000	27,000	n/a
Indoor Pools (tanks***)	36,500 48,600 (locations)	35,000	27,000	76,500 (indoor and outdoor pools combined)
Outdoor Pools (tanks***)	43,500 48,600 (locations)	140,000	53,000	
Splash Pads	24,000	24,600	16,200	n/a
Wading Pools	28,400	628,000	28,000	n/a
Arenas (pads)	44,100	29,000	27,000	721,000 (indoor and outdoor rinks combined)
Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks (pads)	46,300	228,000	40,000	
Curling Rinks (sheets)	131,000	418,000	127,000	n/a
Soccer and Multi-use Sports Fields	8,900	3,200	2,000	n/a
Ball Diamonds	8,400	5,100	3,300	8,500
Cricket Pitches	102,500	104,500	355,000	n/a
Tennis & Pickleball Courts	4,800	4,500	4,600	9,600
Basketball Courts	21,200	8,100	9,500	3,800 (hoops)
Bocce Courts (outdoor)	21,900	23,000	29,600	n/a
Lawn Bowling Greens	102,500	502,000	92,000	n/a
Skateparks (outdoor)	205,000	86,500	79,500	275,000

Note: The table includes facilities that are owned and/or permitted for public use by the municipality, including facilities that are leased or under agreement.

* Based on a 2016 population estimate of approximately 2.87 million persons. Rates are rounded.

** The City of Toronto operates 123 community recreation centres, 85 of which are large multi-component and mid-size centres.

*** Some aquatic complexes may contain more than one pool tank (e.g., lane, leisure, therapeutic, diving, etc.).

Skatepark Hierarchy (Toronto Skateboard Strategy)

The Toronto Skateboard Strategy indicates that 600 sq. m. is the absolute minimum size requirement for a community skatepark. The current budget allocated to community skateparks for design and construction is \$600,000, which would barely cover the costs of building the smallest recommended size.

Skate spots

Size	Less than 600 m ² (less than ~6,500 ft ²)
Catchment	Local users within walking distance
Skill level	All, with a focus on novice and intermediate users

Skate spots incorporate skateboarding features within neighbourhood parks.

Community skateparks

Size	~600 to 2,000 m ² (~6,500 to 22,000 ft ²)
Catchment	Surrounding neighbourhoods
Skill level	All

Community skateparks typically have features arranged so that the skater can move from one feature to the next in a single run. Smaller skateparks may cater to a specific style of skating (e.g. bowl), whereas larger ones can accommodate different styles, and may therefore attract users from a greater distance.

City-wide skateparks

Size	Over 2,000 m ² (over ~22,000 ft ²)
Catchment	Large geographic area - a "destination" skatepark
Skill level	All

City-wide skateparks often have zones to accommodate different styles of skateboarding. They can accommodate a greater number of users and multiple types of uses. These skateparks are appropriate for special skateboarding events and can accommodate a large number of spectators.

Two very popular existing community skateparks in Toronto are large enough to offer a diversity of terrain that caters to beginner, intermediate and advanced riders. The current budget allocated to community skateparks is not sufficient to build the types of facilities

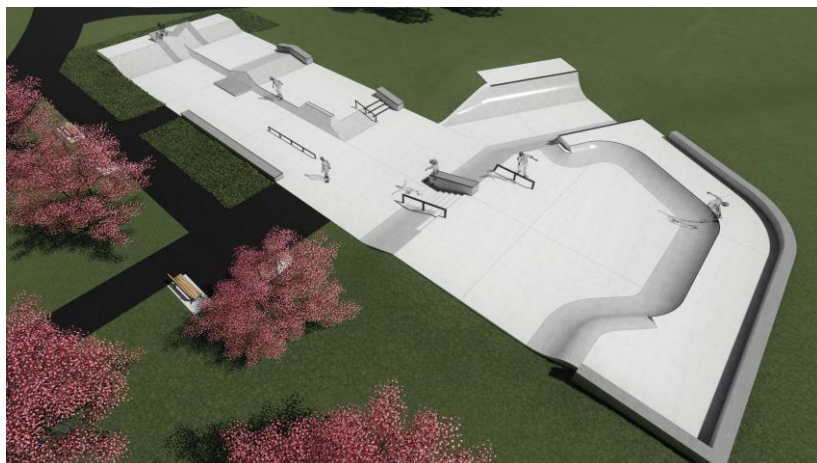


Stan Wadlow Skatepark
East York
930 sq. m



Eighth St Skatepark
Etobicoke
930 sq. m

Recently Built Skateparks in Toronto



Neilson Park BMX/Skatepark - Scarborough.

Size: Phase 1 :499 sq. m . Construction completed fall 2018.

Phase 2: not built, approx. 100-150 sq.m

Budget (design/construction) : \$650,000 in 2018 dollars.

The park was not fully built as the construction tender went over budget.

Full build out was estimated to be around \$850,000, which includes all earthworks and additional park landscaping and amenities such as benches, asphalt pathways and tree planting.

The park was funded through an individual budget motion.



Fundy Bay Park Skatepark - Scarborough.

Size: Approx 550 - 600 sq. m . Construction completed fall 2019

Budget (design/construction) : \$500,000-\$700,000

This was a feature within a larger park redevelopment with the skatepark funded through section 37 funding.

2020 Parks and Recreation Capital Plan

2020-2029 Skatepark Budget Commitments

Community Skateparks: 4 new skateparks, \$600,000 each for design and construction.

Skatespots: 11 new skatespots, \$250,000 each for design and construction

2020-2024 Skatepark Budget Commitments

North District Skatepark - \$600,000, construction in 2022. Location to be determined.

East District Skatepark - \$600,000, construction in 2024. Location TBD.

Skatespots – 4 x \$250,000 each, Construction 2022-2024. Locations TBD.

The capital commitments are spread over a very long period of time taking into consideration that Parks and Recreation was first asked by council to develop capital plans for skateboard parks in **2014**. Recently completed projects, namely the Malvern Skatepark and Fundy Bay skatepark indicated that a budget allocation of \$600,000 for a community skatepark is insufficient, especially considering the constantly increasing cost of construction in Toronto.

2020 Parks Capital Plan

Project Code	(In \$000s)	2020 Budget	2021 Plan	2022 Plan	2023 Plan	2024 Plan	2025 Plan	2026 Plan	2027 Plan	2028 Plan	2029 Plan	2020 - 2029 Total
PR026	Christie Hits Park - New Basketball Lights	20	180									200
PR027	York Stadium Turf Improvements	200										200
PR028	FMP-Basketball Full Court (1) Design & Construction		70	647	193	332	193	332	193	350	332	2,642
PR029	FMP-Skateboard Park (1) North District		40	560								600
PR030	FMP-Skateboard Park (2) East District				40	560						600
PR031	FMP-Skateboard Park (3) South District						40	560				600
PR032	FMP-Ward 2 Skateboard Park (4)							40	560			600
PR033	FMP-Skate Spots Construction Program		50	475	250	250	250	250	275	500	475	2,775
PR034	FMP-Bike Park (1) Scarborough							50	700			750
PR035	FMP-BMX Features (2 Sites)				15	235	15	235				500
PR036	FMP Soccer Field (4 Sites)			25	495	25	495					1,000

2020 Capital Budget

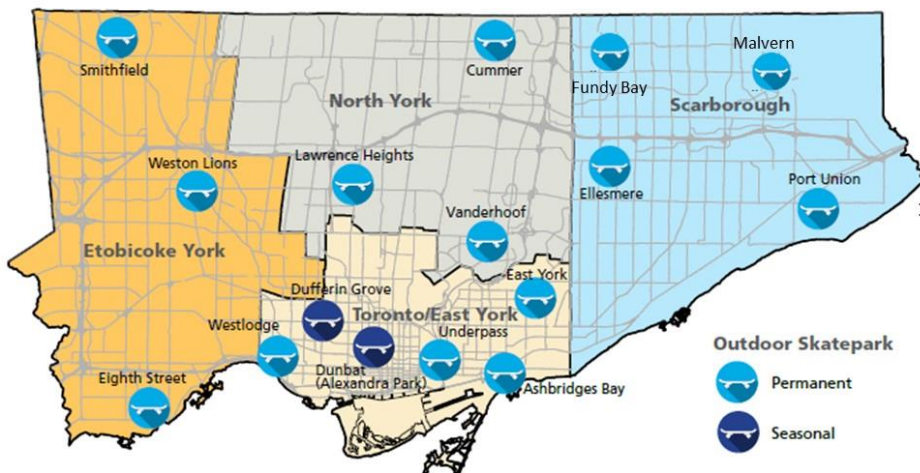
4 new skateparks 2020-2029



11 new skatespots 2020-2029



Toronto's Skatepark Network



TSC Timeline of Skateboard related Council Motions.

The Toronto Skateboarding Committee was formed in 2013 with assistance from Councillor Janet Davis.

City Council January 29, 2014

10a - Motion to Amend Item (Additional) moved by Councillor Janet Davis (Carried)

That City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Toronto Skateboard Association, to develop policy, operating and capital plans to support program development, state-of-good repair and expansion of skateboard facilities in Toronto prior to the 2015 budget process.

City Council March 10, 2015

9c - Motion to Amend Item (Additional) moved by Councillor Janet Davis (Carried)

General

City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with the Toronto Skateboard Association, to develop policy, operating and capital plans to support program development, state-of-good repair and expansion of skateboard facilities and for possible inclusion in 2016 Capital budget and/or the Recreation Facilities Plan.

City Council Feb 17, 2016

4b - Motion to Amend Item moved by Councillor Janet Davis (Carried)

Parks, Forestry and Recreation - Capital Budget

That City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation:

- to undertake the planning and design work for new skateboard facilities in 2016, with costs to be funded from the 2016 Capital Budget for facility planning,
- to include \$500,000 construction costs for new skateboard facilities in the 2017 capital budget submission such new locations to be determined by Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff, in consultation with the Toronto Skateboard Committee; and
- **to provide recommendations for an annual capital program for new skateboard facilities in the 2017 – 2026 capital budget to be brought forward at the same time as the Toronto Skateboard Strategy in 2016, in time for the 2017 budget.**

City Council November 8, 2016

City Council adopt the Skateboard Strategy - Appendix A to the report (October 5, 2016) from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

City Council November 7, 2017

1. City Council adopt the "Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019-2038" as set out in Appendix A to the report (October 10, 2017) from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Summary of Recommendations - Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019 - 2038

FACILITY PROVISION STRATEGY

Skateboard Parks

39. Evaluate options for skatepark renewal and replacement.
40. Consider the development of indoor skateparks within repurposed arenas.
41. Provide four (4) additional community-level skateparks, one in each district.
42. Develop up to 18 skate spots within smaller gap and growth areas across the city. The planning of these features should consider the site selection criteria identified in the City's Skatepark Strategy, public input and park redevelopment opportunities.