

Refreshing the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan & Building a Cricket Strategy



Presentation to the City - School Boards Advisory Committee

June 2024

Agenda



The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan & the 5-Year Review



Developing a Cricket Strategy



Opportunities for Collaboration: Cricket and Beyond

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff here today

Matt Bentley – Project Manager, Facilities Master Plan, Parks Planning and Strategic Initiatives

Alex Lavasidis – Project Officer, Parks Planning and Strategic Initiatives

Chistina Iacovino – Director, Client Business Services

Cathy Vincelli – Interim Director, Community Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP)

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP)

The **Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP) 2019-2038** is a Council-approved 20-year plan to build and renew recreation facilities to meet changing and growing needs across the City.

Community Recreation Centres

- Community Recreation Centres
- Indoor Pools
- Gymsnasiums
- Multi-Purpose Space



Ice Facilities

- Arenas
- Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks (AIRs)
- Skating Trails



Outdoor Aquatics

- Outdoor Pools
- Splash Pads & Wading Pools



Sports Fields

- Soccer & Multi-Use Fields
- Ball Diamonds
- Cricket Pitches
- Support Buildings
- Sport Bubbles



Sport Courts & Zones

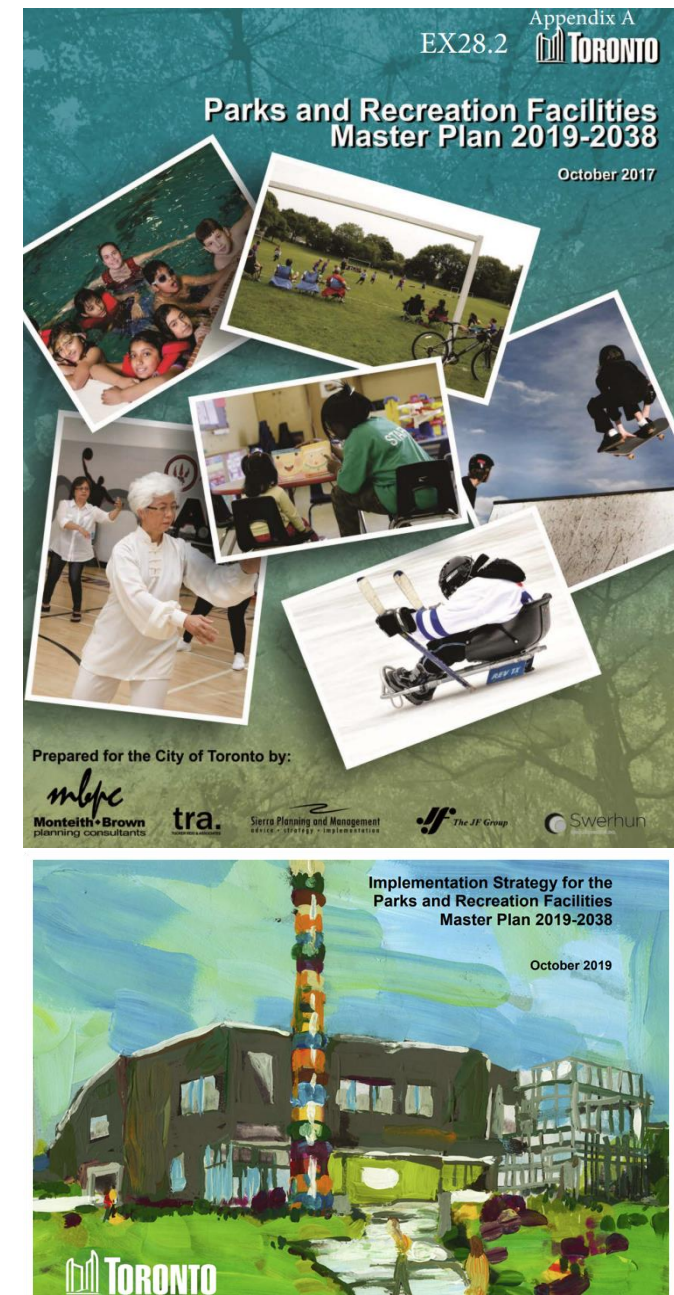
- Tennis & Pickleball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Skateparks
- Bike Parks
- Bocce Courts
- Lawn Bowling Greens
- Dog Off-Leash Areas (DOLAs)



FMP Recommendations

FMP recommendations direct:

- **Reinvestment** in existing facilities through replacement, repurposing and state of good repair renewal
- **Addressing facility gaps** caused by geographic distribution or large waitlists
- **Responding to future facility needs** that will arise due to population growth



The FMP and School Board Relationships

The FMP(2019) recommended multiple goals and actions related to City-school relationships, to increase public use of and access to lands and facilities for recreation (e.g. *pools, multi-use fields, sports fields, and more*).

FMP goals and actions include:

- Increased collaboration and partnerships
- Co-location
- More consistent and improved access and use agreements



Recent Partnership Examples

Canoe Landing Community Recreation Centre

- Official opening in September 2021
- Located west of Spadina, south of Fort York Boulevard
- An agreement between the City of Toronto, the TDSB and TCDSB established that both boards will lease the land from the City. Partners found capital and operational efficiencies by sharing spaces and maximizing the open space.
- Facility includes:
 - City of Toronto - Canoe Landing Community & Recreation Centre and child care centre. Includes gym, track, kitchen, multipurpose rooms, indoor playground and more.
 - TDSB - Jean Lumb Public School, serving 500+ students K-8
 - TCDSB - Bishop Macdonell Catholic Elementary School, serving 500+ students K-8



Davisville Community Aquatic Centre (CAC)

- Planned construction: 2024 – 2027
- Located east of Yonge Street on Davisville Ave.
- The Davisville CAC will share facilities with the Davisville Junior Public School next door, through a partnership with the TDSB. The school will have access to the aquatic facility's swimming pools and the City will have access to the school's double gymnasium and underground parking garage outside of school hours to support City recreation programming.
- In July 2016, the City and TDSB entered into an agreement to:
 - Lease land from the TDSB to build an aquatic community recreation centre that will be owned and operated by the City of Toronto.
 - Invest in the redevelopment of the Davisville Junior Public School to gain shared use of space to the school's new gymnasium, ancillary spaces and underground garage.

Field Partnership Examples

Mary Ward Catholic Secondary School and L'Amoreaux Community Recreation Centre Fields

- Located North of McNicoll Ave, East of Kennedy Rd
- An agreement between the City of Toronto and TCDSB. City leased lands to the TCDSB to accommodate the school and the TCDSB leased lands to the city to accommodate the field facilities.
- The agreement separates maintenance of the Field Facilities and Grounds Maintenance.
 - Field Facilities:
 - Costs are split based on proportionate contribution resulting from previous years proportionate permitted hours.
 - Ground Maintenance:
 - Includes cutting grass, lawn and garden maintenance, annual plants and shrubbery, fertilizing, snow removal and general maintenance of the walkways, driveways and parking.
 - The costs incurred by the City will be borne by the parties equally (50/50).



Additional Partnership Examples

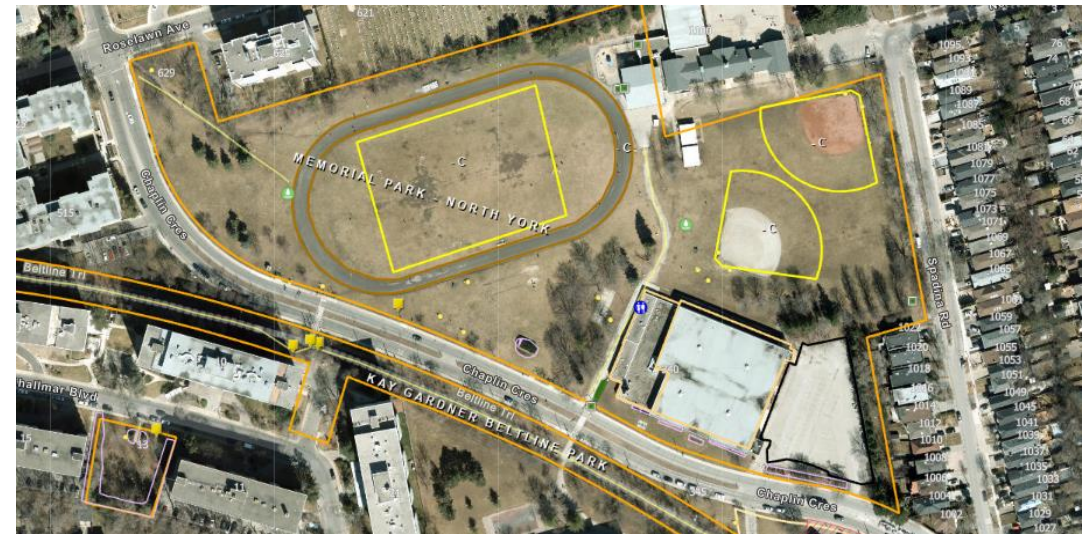
Valley Park Middle School – Cricket Field

- Located northwest of Don Mills Rd and Overlea Blvd
- An agreement between the City of Toronto and TDSB:
 - City licenses land from Hydro One then sub-licenses to TDSB for school use as a cricket field



Memorial Park – Shared Parkland and Facilities

- Located northeast of Bathurst St and Eglinton Ave W
- An agreement between the City of Toronto and TDSB:
 - TDSB is the property owner but licenses to the City to be used as parkland.
 - The City maintains the land, and PFR permits the sports field and parkland outside of school hours. School uses the park during school hours.



The Facilities Master Plan 5-Year Review and Refresh

A 5-year review and refresh of the FMP(2019) will begin this summer and extend to spring 2025.

The refresh will ensure the FMP reflects changing resident needs and priorities, population growth, and financial and policy changes.

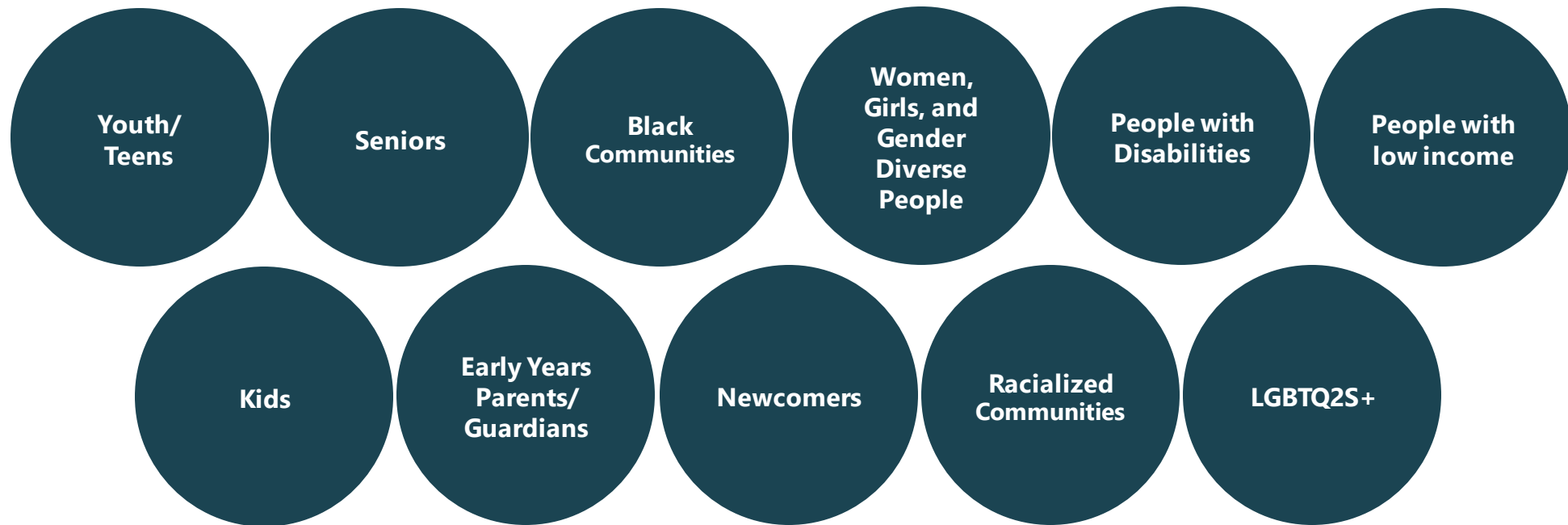
The City of Toronto will be conducting city-wide community engagement to inform the FMP review and refresh.



FMP 5-Year Review and Refresh: Community Engagement

Engagement opportunities will take place both virtually and in-person, in every city ward. All interested community members will have opportunities to participate.

The equity-focused engagement approach aims to produce a refreshed FMP that reflects the needs of equity-deserving communities, addressing barriers to access and participation. Specific approaches will be used to engage equity-deserving communities, including:



Extensive engagement with Indigenous communities will also take place, and the needs and priorities of Indigenous communities will be a key input into the refreshed FMP.

FMP 5-Year Review and Refresh: Community Engagement



Above: Student designs for a new neighbourhood park.

Youth voices must help inform the FMP refresh. Students will be encouraged to provide anonymous feedback to help inform updates to the FMP.

With the school boards' assistance, we hope to digitally distribute:

- **Do-it-yourself engagement kits:** A fun, downloadable youth-focused activity kit that teaches students about how the city plans for recreation and collects feedback on their recreation priorities.
- **Family-friendly online surveys:** Students can complete the surveys with their families or caregivers to share feedback on their recreation priorities.

The Cricket Strategy

The FMP and the Cricket Strategy



Above: A young cricket player.

The FMP(2019) recommended the following actions related to cricket, over 20 years:

- Upgrade three existing cricket pitches
- Create up to five new cricket pitches

Recognizing that cricket is one of the fastest-growing sports across the region, a new **Cricket Strategy** is being developed to better meet this growing demand. The new Cricket Strategy will inform the 5-year Facilities Master Plan review and refresh, and help the city:

- Understand the needs of the cricket community, including facility needs, field design, locations, unstructured play options, and supporting amenities.
- Build relationships with the cricket community and other partners and ensure that the cricket community is fully engaged in the process.
- Support the growth of cricket across Toronto's communities through programming and partnerships.

The FMP and the Cricket Strategy - Accomplishments

- **Pitch improvements to:**

- **Cedarvale Park** – *Added artificial turf pitch*
- **Flemingdon Park** – *Replaced artificial turf pitch*
- **Gracedale Park (Practice Pitches)** - *New artificial turf and fencing repairs/additions*
- **Humber Arboretum** – *Extended and repaired pitch*
- **Summerlea Park** – *Extended and added artificial turf pitch*
- **Thackeray Park** - *Repairs and new jute mat*

- **Beginner Cricket Programming offered at 4 locations in Spring 2023 and 3 locations in Fall 2023.**

- Programs are full with waitlists

- **Funded 2024 - 2025 projects include:**

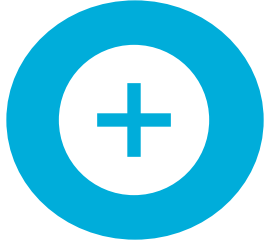
- **G Ross Lord Park and Sunnybrook Park (Practice Pitches)** - Replacement
- **McCleary Park** – A full size cricket field will be re-introduced between the existing Class A ball diamonds. This will be Toronto's only lit cricket field, and is supported by 2 existing practice pitches and field house. (Ward 14)
- **Parma Park** – A community sized cricket field will replace the existing under-used Class C ball diamond. This field is adjacent to the O'Connor Community Centre, providing enhanced programming opportunities. (Ward 19)
- **Farquharson Park** - A practice pitch will replace the existing under-used baseball diamond (Ward 23)
- **Byng Park Practice Cage** - Additional practice cages (Ward 20)

- **Exploring**

- **Corvette Park** – Conversion of a baseball diamond(s) to a full-sized cricket pitch (Ward 20)

Overview of the Draft Cricket Strategy

Informed in part by community input, the Cricket Strategy focuses on the three goals below. Actions highlighted in yellow identify key opportunities for collaboration between the City and Schools.



More Fields

1. Re-evaluate the Cricket Provision Target in the FMP 5 Year Review
2. **Pursue full size fields**
3. **Convert underutilized baseball diamonds**
4. **Light fields when possible**
5. **Pilot Grass Pitches**
6. **Pursue a range of cricket field sizes**



Better Fields

1. Improve existing fields
2. Establish a Cricket Field Classification
3. Encourage cricket representatives to join the Sports Organization Reference Group (SORG)
4. Cut the grass shorter/more often
5. Establish Design Standards for Pitch and Practice Pitches to improve player safety and reduce the need for repairs
6. Reduce repair time to maintain play
7. Improve staff knowledge of cricket



More Opportunities to Play

1. Invest in practice pitches
2. **Explore programming to broaden participation**
3. Improve Permit Allocation Practices

Cricket Opportunities

Demand for youth cricket programs and access to cricket facilities is increasing in many communities across the city.

The City is looking to continue discussions with school board staff to identify opportunities to:

- Invest in the construction of new cricket facilities on school properties for school and community use
- Explore opportunities to increase student access to cricket programming



Next Steps

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Connect with school board staff to identify opportunities to:

- Invest in the construction of new cricket facilities on school properties (including conversions of underused ball diamonds or fields)
- Create community use agreements to maximize cricket field use by students and community members
- Explore opportunities to increase student access to cricket programming

The City is open to discussing opportunities related to any in-demand recreation facility!

Connect with School Board communications teams to:

- Discuss promotions and engagement to inform the 5-year review

Questions?

Appendix

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and Schools



The FMP(2019) recommended multiple goals and actions related to City-school relationships, over 20 years. These focus on greater collaboration and/or improved partnerships and agreements to increase public use and access to land and facilities for recreation:

- Evaluate the potential to **negotiate public access to facilities** supplied by other providers in areas of the city that lack municipal recreation facilities, for example at schools and YMCAs.
- Strengthen and **modernize agreements with local school boards** for achieving guaranteed and adequate public access, consistent maintenance and greater municipal oversight for needed parks and recreation facilities.
- Encourage partners – including school boards – to assist in meeting parks and recreation facility needs through the **protection and renewal of community assets**.
- **Prioritize co-location and shared space** with other City services and community partners and seek partnerships that enhance public access to needed spaces.
- A **new model of collaboration** is required to ensure that school pools are available to the communities that need them.
- Provide access to 45 new soccer and multi-use fields over the next twenty years. Possible strategies include **collaborating with school boards to improve facilities and community access**, ball diamond conversions, field upgrades and planning for a future sports complex.
- Provide access to up to five new cricket pitches within the next twenty years... A variety of strategies such as **partnerships with large landholders** (e.g., schools, industrial areas, etc.), land acquisition and/or park redevelopment may be required to achieve this goal.
- Consider the needs and strategies put forward in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan in the **evaluation of surplus school sites**.