

# **The Parkland Strategy & The Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan**

**Presentation to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory  
Committee  
September 3, 2025**

# Why we're here today

- Receive feedback that will inform the new Parkland Strategy and Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan. To facilitate this, we will provide the following context:
  - Introduce the Parkland Strategy and Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan, including project timelines
  - How we have engaged with communities to-date (Phase 1)
  - What we have heard from communities to-date (Phase 1)
  - Community engagement (Phase 2)
  - Emerging directions for how each document will be updated
  - Next steps

\*\*A member of the project team will be taking notes on your feedback today\*\*

# Parks & Recreation Strategic Documents

## Parkland Strategy



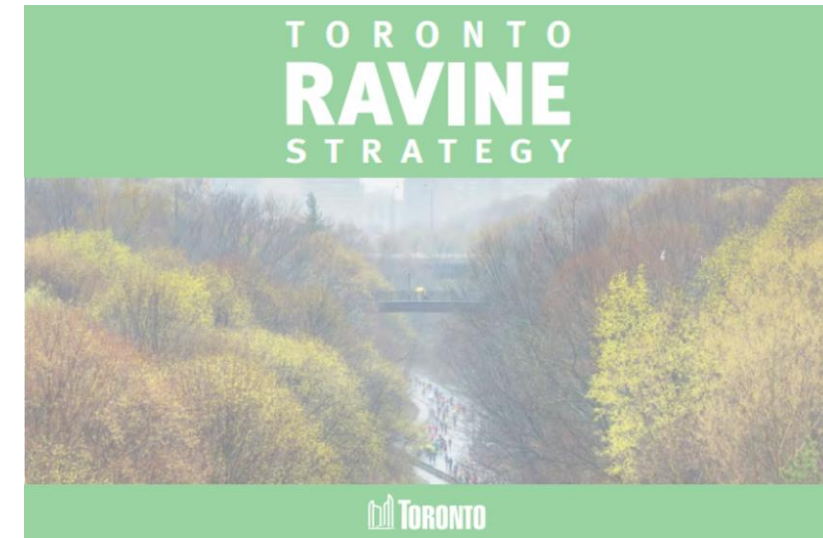
Long-term plan for the creation of **new parks and park improvements**.

## Parks & Recreation Facilities Plan



Long-term plan to build and renew **recreation facilities**.

## Ravine Strategy



Long-term plan that guides management, use, enhancement, and protection of parks in the ravine system.

# What is the Parkland Strategy (PLS)?

- Approved in 2019, it's a **city-wide**, 20-year planning framework to **direct investment** in parks
- The current document has four guiding principles: **Expand, Improve, Connect, Include**
- **Data-driven**: it includes multiple maps to analyse Toronto's parks system in different ways (e.g. current parkland provision rates, future parkland provision rates, park walking gaps based on 500 m pedestrian distance, etc.)
- **Supports Parks and Recreation staff with assessments and decision making**, including: reviewing development applications, making parkland acquisition recommendations to City Council, providing local parkland analysis for area studies, etc.
- Identifies considerations that make for a **high-quality park**, shown below

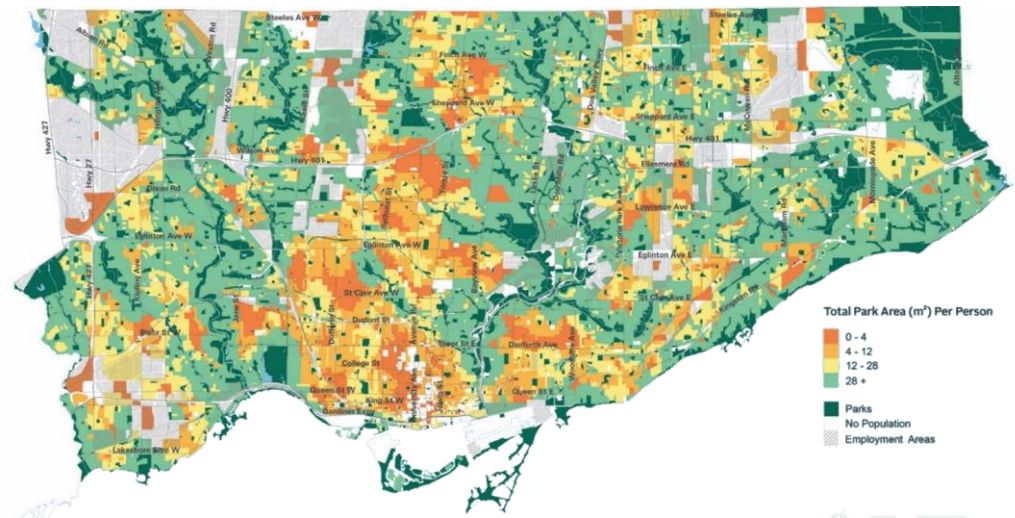


Note: The PLS informs but does not take the place of specific engagement processes that Parks and Recreation leads for each new park plan, park redesign, and improvement.

# Parkland Provision and Priority Areas

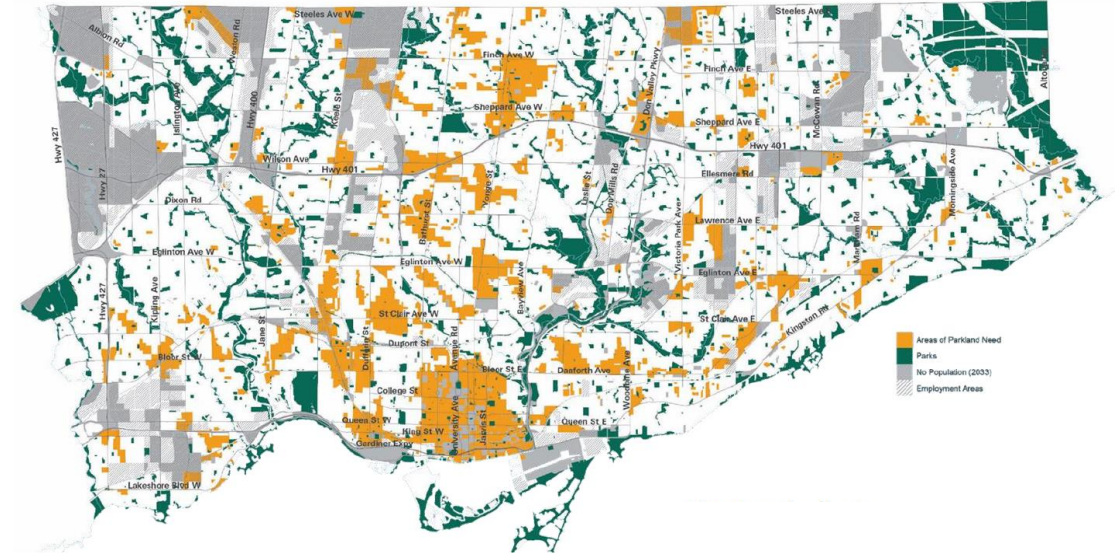
- **Parkland provision** is measured on a per person basis and is key metric used to track progress
- Provision rates are one of several inputs used to identify **Parkland Priority Areas**
- **Parkland Priority Areas** are a composite of provision and equity factors, and help focus park planning and acquisition

Map: Total Park Area Per Person (2019)



**Dark orange** indicates areas with the lowest parkland provision rates

Map: Parkland Priority Areas (2019)



**Orange** indicates Parkland Priority Areas

# What is the Parks & Recreation Facilities Plan (PFRP)?

The **Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan (2017)** and **Implementation Strategy (2019)** are Council-approved 20-year plans to build and renew recreation facilities to meet changing and growing needs across the City. Facilities in the plan include:

## Community Recreation Centres

- Gymnasiums
- Indoor Pools
- Multi-purpose Spaces



## Ice Facilities

- Arenas
- Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks (Airs)
- Skating Trails
- Curling Facilities



## Outdoor Aquatics

- Outdoor Pools
- Splash Pads and Wading Pools



## Sports Fields

- Soccer and Multi-use Fields
- Ball Diamonds
- Cricket Pitches
- Support Buildings
- Sport Bubbles



## Sport Courts And Zones

- Tennis and Pickleball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Skateparks
- Bike Parks
- Bocce Courts
- Lawn Bowling Greens
- Dog Off-leash Areas (OLA)

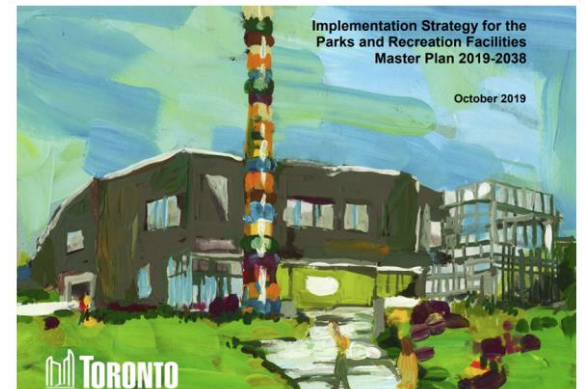
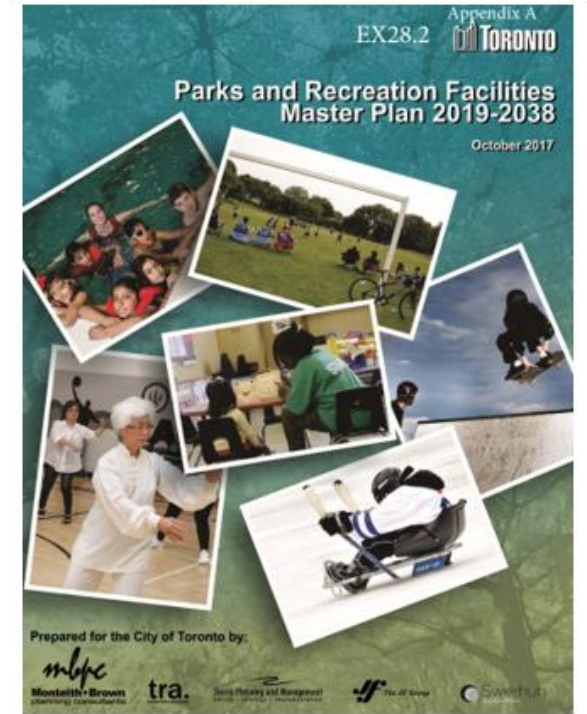


# PRFP Recommendations

The PRFP guides facility investment decisions and identifies priorities for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities across the city in 5-year increments, to 2038. The recommendations in the PRFP guide future capital budgets and determine when and where to:

- **Reinvest in existing recreation facilities** through replacement, repurposing, renewal, when facilities reach their end of life or are under-used.
- **Address recreation facility gaps** where there is a lack of facilities or large waitlists
- **Respond to future recreation facility needs** based on estimated population growth

The PRFP is focused on facility recommendations to address equitable programming across the city.



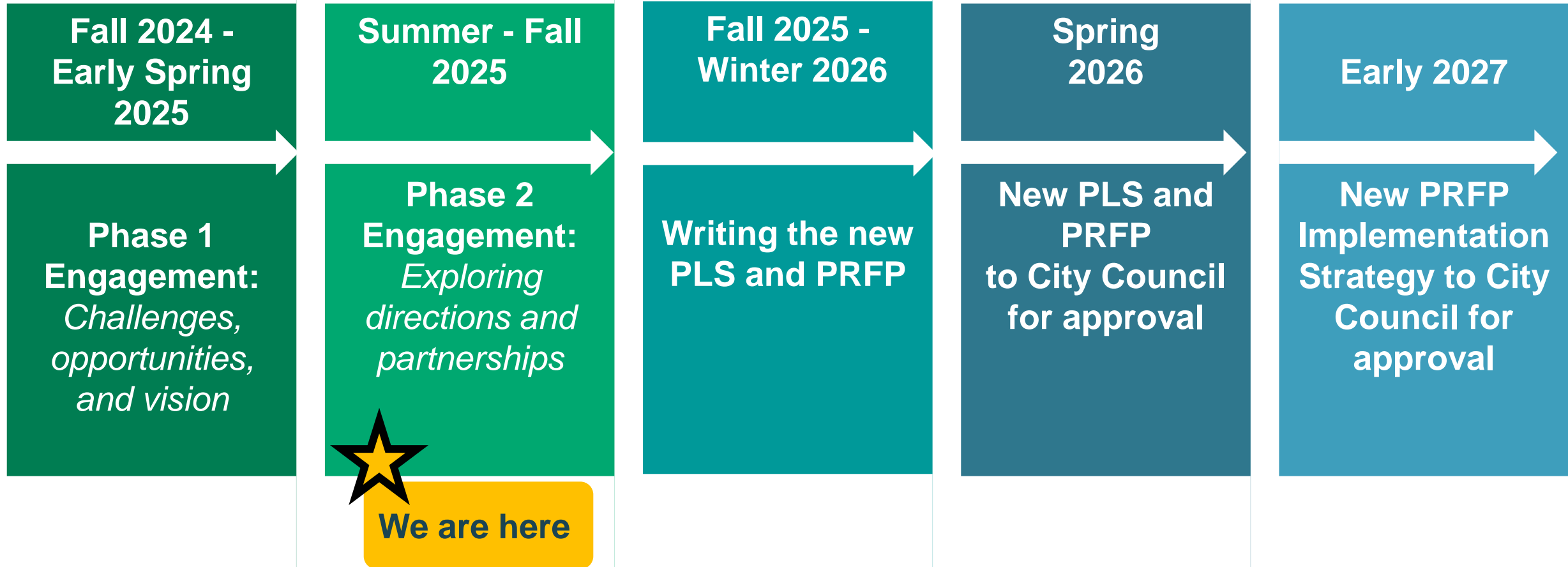
# Review: Updating the PRFP and PLS

The City is reviewing the PRFP and PLS to reflect:

- Changing resident needs and priorities
- A growing population
- Provincial legislation changes and the impact on funding to the City
- New city-wide policy directions
- Current accessibility and environmental standards
- More comprehensive data sets that provide a better analysis of equity factors

A multi-phase, city-wide engagement process is informing the reviews.

# High-level Timeline



# Phase 1 Engagement Activities

*Over 10,000 people engaged!*

4 online public meetings

Equity Deserving Advisory Group Meeting

Classroom workshop kits  
(200+ student participants)

Online surveys  
(8,800+ responses)

Visit existing City Advisory Bodies (ongoing)

Seniors Forum

Lived Experience Advisory Group

P&R Community Disability Steering Committee

Urban Indigenous communities & First Nations engagements (ongoing)

Community led DIY engagements with equity focus, through SDFAs Community Coordination Plan Clusters (Includes Black Resilience Cluster)

(12+ events)

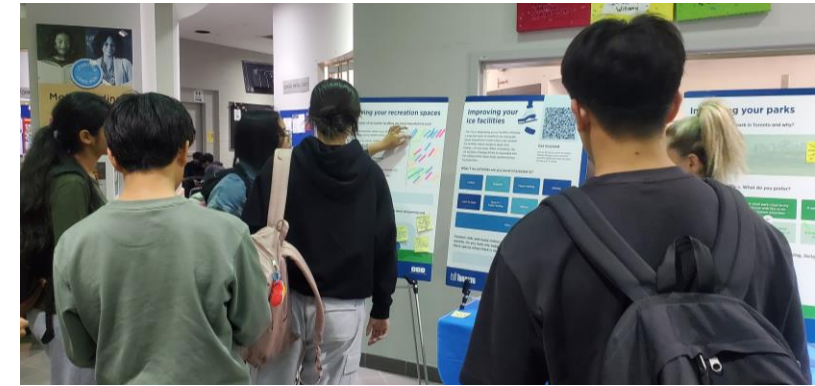
In person pop ups in all 25 wards

3,000 + interactions

Additional engagement for Ice Facilities Strategy

One online public meeting

Online survey  
(2,800 + responses)



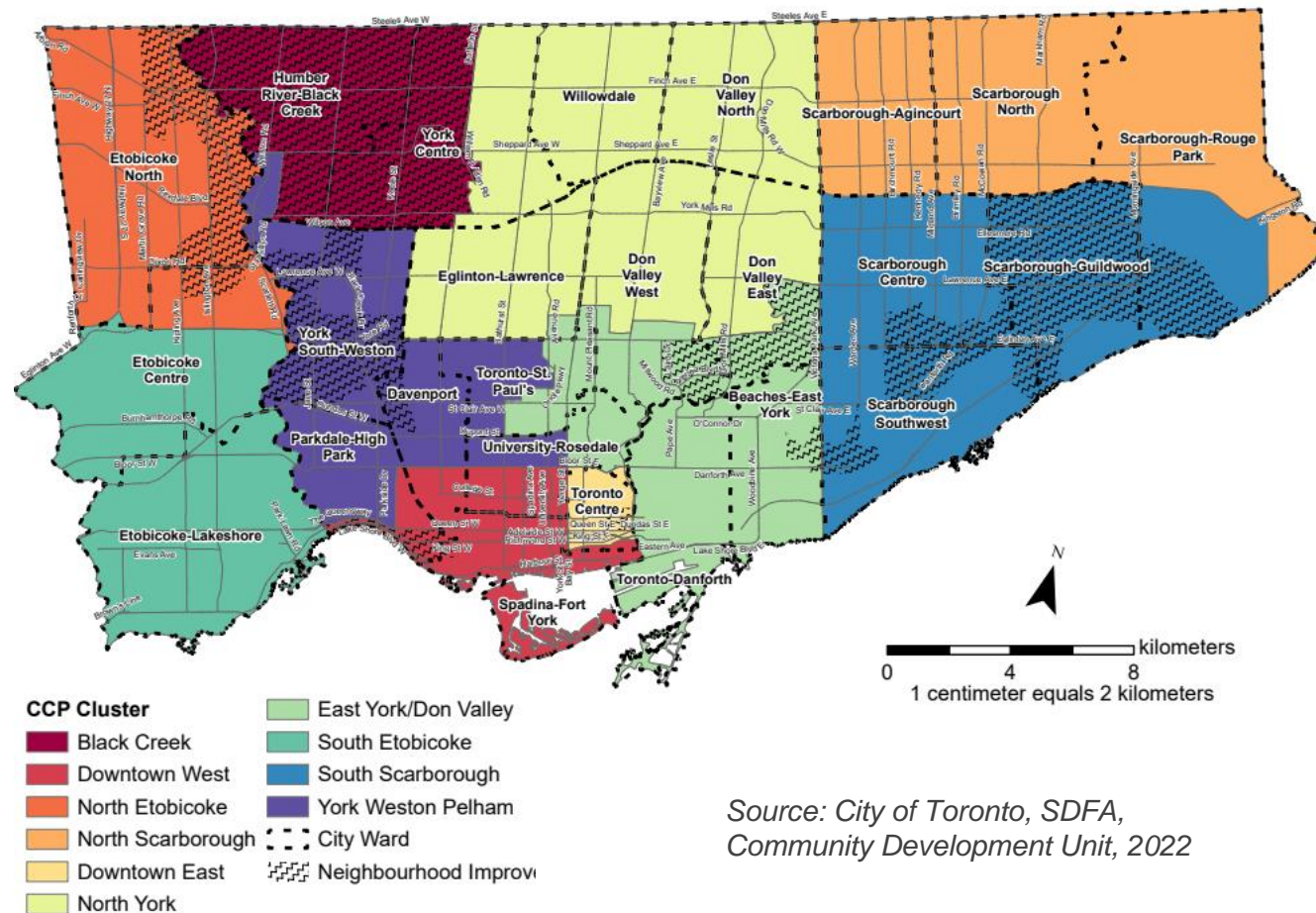
# S DFA’s Community Coordination Plan (CCP) Clusters

The CCP is a partnership model that ensures communication with **more than 400 community-based organizations** and implements service coordination and localized solutions to meet the needs of Toronto’s **equity-deserving communities**. The CCP clusters include:

- **10 geographic cluster areas** (shown on the map)
- Two city-wide clusters that focus on **Newcomers** and **Black Resilience**

Self-selected organizations in each CCP cluster were paid to host their own **community-led engagement** on the PRFP and PLS. The clusters and organizations are listed below:

Cluster	Organization Leading Engagement
Downtown West	West Neighbourhood House
East York Don Valley	Access Alliance
North Scarborough	Extend-A-Family
South Scarborough	Access Alliance
North York	Midaynta Community Services
North Etobicoke	Somali Women & Children's Support Network
Black Creek Humber Summit	Delta Family Resource Centre
York Weston Pelham	Jane Alliance Neighbourhood Services
Black Resilience	Be-initiative
Newcomer	WoodGreen Community Services
Downtown East	Dixon Hall
South Etobicoke	LAMP Community Health Centre



Source: City of Toronto, S DFA, Community Development Unit, 2022

# Equity-Deserving Advisory Group: Participating organizations

## Community Organizations:

- 8 80 Cities
- Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
- Building Roots
- For Youth Initiative
- Harriet Tubman Community Organization
- Hijabi Ballers
- Holland Bloorview
- North York Community House
- Out Sports Toronto
- ParaSport Ontario
- Park People
- Social Planning Toronto
- The 519
- The Neighbourhood Link
- Toronto Accessible Sport Council
- Tropicana Community Services
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Variety Village
- WoodGreen Community Services
- YMCA
- YWCA

## City of Toronto Resident Advisory Bodies/Cabinets/ Committees:

- Toronto Youth Cabinet
- Senior's Forum
- Lived Experience Advisory Group (Poverty Reduction Strategy)
- Parks and Recreation Disability Steering Committee

# What We Heard: About park barriers and prioritization

148 respondents to the parks section of the survey identified as Black (e.g. African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean), representing 3% of total respondents to this section

## **Suggested elements to reflect in the Guiding Principles included:**

- Maintenance of parks and ravines
- Winter maintenance
- Pedestrian/cyclist conflict management

## **Top 4 barriers to accessing and experiencing local parks:**

- Insufficient lighting
- Lack of convenient bike parking
- Not feeling safe or comfortable
- Difficult or unsafe cycle routes to reach parks

## **Top 4 areas to prioritize for new parks:**

- Areas where more people live in high-rise buildings
- Areas that don't have a park within walking distance
- Equity-deserving areas
- Areas with few existing parks

## **Top 4 park improvements to prioritize:**

- More comfort facilities
- Protecting natural areas
- More outdoor recreation facilities
- More play spaces

# What We Heard: About making parks more welcoming, inclusive, and safe

Suggestions from respondents who identified as Black in the survey for making parks more welcoming, inclusive, and safe, included:

- Addressing racism, gentrification, and police response to complaints in parks
- More inclusivity of disabled people/youth in their own neighborhoods, including through programming
- Security, employment, and volunteering opportunities
- Holding events/activities in natural areas so people can learn about and be exposed to more nature
- Better maintenance and up-keep of parks
- Supporting cycling to access parks
- More lighting
- More basic features (e.g. water, washrooms, and seating)
- Year-round washroom access
- Off-leash dog hours
- Addressing encampments and drug use

# What We Heard: Overall about recreation facilities

Support for **co-locating** community recreation centres with other community services and facilities. Libraries are most commonly suggested for co-location.

**Improving existing facilities** (maintenance, cleanliness, upgrades and updates) is of high importance – for some, more than new facilities.

**New facilities** (of a wide range of types) are needed to keep up with growing demand.

**Prioritize accessibility upgrades** (e.g. accessible walkways, ramps, elevators, lifts, seating and tables, turf surfacing, elimination of ledges and gaps, etc.) ,design for universal accessibility, and consider accessibility needs at the start of design processes (not as an after thought).

**Communications improvements** are needed to ensure communities know what recreation facilities and programs are already available to them and welcome new users into existing facilities.

*The number one reason survey respondents listed for not having used a city-run community recreation centre in the past 12 months was that they were unaware of the opportunities.*

Need for **greater 'fairness' and equity in access** to existing programs and permit times. Concerns around local community access to new centres, and women and other equity-deserving groups accessing limited permit timeslots.

Respondents value **access to standard recreation facilities** like gymnasiums, pools, weight/cardio rooms, and similar spaces.

The **ice activity** ranked as most important by survey respondents is drop-in/public skating.

# What We Heard: About making community centres more welcoming, inclusive, and safe

Overall, the majority of participants reported feeling satisfied with their local City-run community recreation centres and other recreation facilities, and reported these spaces as feeling safe, welcome and inclusive for all.

Key suggestions for making community centres more welcoming, inclusive, and safe include:

- Co-location with supportive services (e.g. Food banks, employment services, newcomer services, and mental health supports, etc.)
- Gender-neutral and inclusive facilities, with the ability to have private spaces for women based on cultural or religious needs
- Youth-dedicated spaces
- Casual gathering spaces
- Representation of diverse communities through art and signage
- Clean, better maintained facilities
- Physical accessibility improvements
- Accessible equipment (e.g. Skate supports, water wheelchairs, etc.)
- Friendly, welcoming and well-trained staff
- Affordable, inclusive programming
- Clear, accessible and up-to-date communications and information

# Parkland Strategy: Emerging directions

Internal and external engagement during Phase 1 has helped to inform the following proposed updates to content in the PLS:

- What land gets counted as parkland when measuring parkland provision rates (to better reflect the reality of the park user experience)
- The Vision and Guiding Principles, to reflect Indigenous placekeeping and the important environmental role that parks serve
- The Parkland Acquisitions Assessment Tool (which guides decisions on where to buy and accept land to create new parks) to respond to new City priorities and unique opportunities
- The method to identify Parkland Priority Areas, which will consider:
  - Additional equity criteria - e.g. age, race, Indigenous identity, newcomer status, and language (low income will continue to be considered)
  - Access to private green space
  - Access to parkland that's generally accessible to people

# Parks & Recreation Facilities Plan: Emerging directions

The Phase 1 community feedback and the City's review of existing recreation facility use led to the development of four key directions for the PRFP.

1. Seek to maximize year-round, all-day use, improve accessibility, and improve the overall resident experience by building new, renewing, replacing, or repurposing recreation facilities.
2. Use recreation spaces to provide a wider range of community benefits in addition to traditional recreation services.
  - Example: Encouraging community gathering and improving resident experience at facilities that offer food services (e.g., in Arenas and Community Centres).
  - Example: Supporting food security at recreation facilities (Example: Community Centres that include teaching gardens, community kitchens, and food banks).
3. Ensure the new Facilities Plan serves high-needs communities and reduces barriers to access.
  - Example: Prioritize the needs of Indigenous, Black, equity-deserving, and underserved communities when deciding where to place new facilities, and when to improve or upgrade facilities.
  - Example: Invest in flexible facilities that serve diverse communities' needs, including people of all ages, abilities, races, cultures, genders, and incomes.
4. Actively pursue and enhance collaboration and partnerships (e.g., schools, libraries, etc.) to better meet community needs and make the most of the land available for recreation facilities and other community services and facilities.

# Next Steps: Phase 2 engagements

## Complete:

- Public meetings

## Ongoing:

- Survey closes September 14
- Equity-Deserving Advisory Group meetings
- Community-led engagements through SDFA's Community Coordination Plan Clusters (including the Black Resilience Cluster)
- Visit existing City advisory bodies (Seniors' Forum; Lived Experience Advisory Group; P&R Community Disability Steering Committee; Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee; Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee; Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee Council Advisory Body)
- Urban Indigenous communities engagements (including visit to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee) and engagement with First Nations

# Hearing from CABRAC

Please share your feedback on:

- Emerging directions
- Suggestions on process to ensure we are reaching key groups
- Anything else presented

# Next Steps

If you have additional feedback, please email:

**Danielle DeMarsh**

Senior Project Manager, Parkland Strategy  
danielle.demarsh@toronto.ca

**Matt Bentley**

Senior Project Manager, Facilities Plan  
matt.bentley@toronto.ca

The public online survey is available until September 14 on the project webpage:

<http://toronto.ca/parksandfacilitiesplans>

**Thank You!**