

weston Loop

Appendix A Existing Park Conditions

November 2025

Existing Conditions Along Weston Road

To those passing through Weston by car or bus, the park system within the valley remains largely hidden from view. While glimpses of the dense tree canopy are visible between high-rise buildings, the amenities, programming, and natural beauty offered by these parks are not immediately apparent or accessible.

Weston Road serves as the primary spine of the neighbourhood. The park system is set back from Weston Road, often obscured by residential or commercial frontages and separated by a steep grade transition into the Humber River Valley. Wayfinding and visibility remain key challenges. Signage from Weston Road is either minimal, outdated, or unclear, offering little to no indication that a vast green network lies just beyond. Among the parks in the Weston Loop, only Cruickshank Park features prominent street-facing signage on Weston Road that signals an entry to the Humber River, but this signage is outdated and in need of maintenance (Figure 36). This lack of visible, welcoming gateways limits broader awareness and usage of the parks, particularly for newcomers or passersby.

While streetscape-level wayfinding falls outside the immediate scope of this Master Plan, there is a clear opportunity to align with broader city initiatives, such as the Weston Complete Streets program, Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy, and Weston Village BIA Master Plan, to enhance the parks’ visibility from Weston Road. In tandem, the Master Plan’s proposed park entrance upgrades and cohesive branding strategy will further strengthen the identity of the Weston Loop and improve accessibility for all users. This issue is critical, as the 74 acres of parkland currently provide only one universally accessible entrance - located at Weston Lions Park - with a slope below 5% gradient.



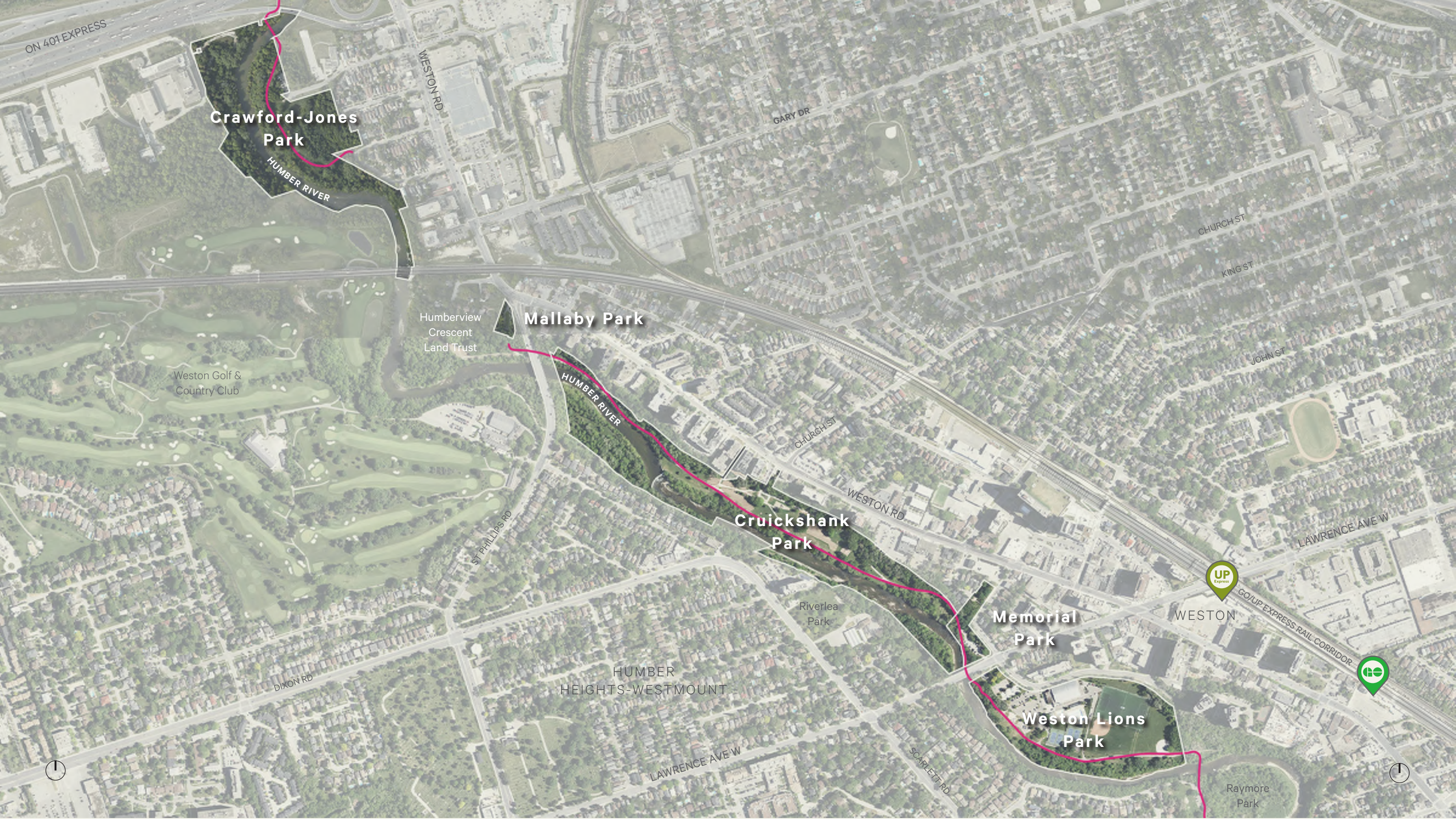
Figure 36: Existing signage conditions at Cruickshank Park



Figure 37: Entryway conditions into Cruickshank Park



Figure 38: Welcoming street signage signifying the entrance to Weston Village near the intersection of Weston Road and Oak Street.



**Crawford-Jones
Park**

HUMBER RIVER

Humberview
Crescent
Land Trust

Mallaby Park

HUMBER RIVER

**Cruickshank
Park**

Riverlea
Park

**Memorial
Park**

**Weston Lions
Park**

Raymore
Park

ON 401 EXPRESS

WESTON RD

GARY DR

CHURCH ST

KING ST

JOHN ST

CHURCH ST

WESTON RD

LAWRENCE AVE W

DIXON RD

HUMBER
HEIGHTS-WESTMOUNT

LAWRENCE AVE W

SCARLETT RD

WESTON

GO/UP EXPRESS RAIL CORRIDOR



Crawford-Jones Memorial Park

Crawford-Jones Memorial Park, herein referred to as Crawford-Jones Park, is named in honour of Jim Crawford and Herb Jones, who rescued approximately 50 people from the rising Humber River during Hurricane Hazel. At 9.4 hectares, Crawford-Jones Park is one of the largest green spaces in the Weston area, yet its presence is largely hidden from view. Tucked behind a residential cluster and set at a lower elevation than surrounding streets, the park reveals itself only through the dense canopy visible from Weston Road. It serves as the neighbourhood’s sole public green space, and is an essential amenity in an area otherwise enclosed by barriers including the ON-401 highway, a rail corridor, Weston Road, and the Humber River.

Located at the northernmost extent of the Weston Loop, the park can be accessed from two steep entrances off Weston Road. Both exceed 5% slopes, descending sharply to a parking lot at the north end and to the trailhead at the south, where the Humber River Recreational Trail connects to the northern portion of the Humber River trail network. A revitalized underpass trail beneath the ON-401 has improved connectivity to the north, linking this once-isolated park to the broader trail system.





Historically, Crawford-Jones Park has been separated from the broader Humber River park system and from the surrounding community of Weston. Today, the Humber Trail guides users out of the park and onto Weston Road – a busy arterial corridor with narrow sidewalks, no cycling infrastructure, and an underpass where fast-moving traffic poses a significant safety concern. Users must navigate these conditions before rejoining the trail via a staircase at Mallaby Park.

Crawford-Jones is the most ecologically rich of the five Weston Loop parks, and is characterized by a mature forest canopy lining the banks of the Humber River and a central meadow featuring younger tree plantings from a 2012 renaturalization project. Scenic and peaceful moments can be found beneath the shaded canopy, and where the river curves around the site to form a natural sanctuary supporting both local and migratory bird species. Informal desire paths cut through dense vegetation between the trail and the water, reflecting a clear community desire to connect with the river. However, the park lacks clear wayfinding and does not provide visitors with a clear indication of its presence from Weston Road.

Despite its ecological value and quiet beauty, the park remains underutilized. Invasive species dominate much of the understory. Placemaking is present in the park's namesake, but little storytelling or interpretation reflects its history or identity. Open lawn areas, groupings of birch trees, and meandering trails invite passive recreation and nature appreciation, yet steep access routes and physical disconnection from the southern parks limit its role within the Weston Loop.

Future improvements to access, circulation, wayfinding, and habitat restoration (including the Mid-Humber Gap Trail) will be critical to unlocking Crawford-Jones' potential as a northern ecological anchor within the Weston Loop.

Figure 39: Entrance drive to Crawford-Jones Park.



Figure 40: Bridge crossing into Crawford-Jones Park looking towards the Highway-401 underpass, connecting to the northern portion of the Humber Trail.



Figure 42: Informal desire path from Humber River Recreational Trail to the naturalized river's edge.



Figure 43: Existing parking lot at the northern entrance of Crawford-Jones Park.



Figure 41: View of the steep drive into the park from Weston Road.



Figure 44: View of the Humber River looking south at the river's edge.

Mallaby Park

Located at the intersection of Weston Road and St. Phillips Road, Mallaby Park occupies a unique and highly visible location within the Weston Loop. A recently reconstructed pedestrian crossing (implemented in 2021) has improved safety at the intersection; however, the sidewalk remains directly adjacent to busy traffic, with little buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. Additionally, there is no direct crossing from the north side of Weston Road, limiting safe access from surrounding neighbourhoods.

Despite being the most “front-facing” of the five Weston Loop parks, Mallaby remains underutilized due to limited accessibility, minimal wayfinding, and safety concerns. The park is bordered on three sides by a dense, mature canopy that casts deep shade, resulting in low visibility even during daylight hours. A small looping trail and several aging benches provide minimal amenities within the park’s upper area.





At the river's edge, the stairway opens to a vegetated buffer, the undisturbed naturalized meadows within the Humberview Crescent Land Trust to the north, and an underpass beneath the St. Phillips Bridge to the south which is known for its vibrant murals. This segment of the trail is both visually engaging and ecologically rich, yet perceptions of poor safety and comfort remain due to inadequate lighting and low visibility.

Northeast across Weston Road from Mallaby Park, a milling monument stands in North End Parkette, a small corner green space that acknowledges Weston's history as a milling hub (Figure 47). Just north of the park lies Humberview Crescent, a historically significant neighbourhood from Weston's milling era. One of Toronto's few remaining adobe-brick houses still stands there today, both of these elements offer opportunities for cultural interpretation and storytelling within the park context.

The park's unique topography – spanning both street level and the riverside below – offers the potential for a layered and immersive park experience. Unfortunately, the staircase leading down to the trail (Figure 45) lacks clear wayfinding, making it difficult for users to identify the connection or understand its significance within the broader trail network.

Safety is a primary concern at Mallaby Park particularly regarding proximity to busy roadways, insufficient lighting, and limited passive surveillance. Targeted improvements to accessibility, lighting, signage, and programming will be critical to transforming this space into a more welcoming and connected gateway.

Figure 45: Mallaby Park staircase leading down into the Humber Valley.



Figure 46: Entrance to Mallaby Park along St. Phillips Road.



Figure 47: View of the North End milling monument at North End Parkette.



Figure 49: Vibrant art mural on the St. Phillips Bridge underpass near Mallaby Park.



Figure 50: Informal desire path along the Humber River, compacting soils and damaging the vegetation along this riparian edge.



Figure 51: Staircase descending from Mallaby Park opens into a forested area with limited sightlines, creating perceived safety concerns.



Figure 48: Forested narrow trail connecting Mallaby Park to Cruickshank Park.

Cruickshank Park

Cruickshank Park is a centrally located greenspace in Weston, providing convenient access for residents along Weston Road as well as neighbourhoods across the railway via Church Street. The park’s location, adjacent to community assets such as schools, churches, a food bank, and Weston’s public library, underscores its role as a vital gathering place – an opportunity to extend learning, foster community connections, and encourage rediscovery of the Humber.

Cruickshank Park features two primary access points (Figure 52), each offering a distinct entry experience, but neither being universally accessible. The more prominent entrance consists of a staircase at the junction of Church Street and Weston Road, marked by an arched gateway and sign that provides clear wayfinding. In contrast, the second entrance is a steep, narrow path opposite Conron Place, tucked between two residential towers. This secondary access point is unmarked and visually unassuming, presenting challenges for users unfamiliar with the site. This sloped path reaches grades as steep as 14.5%, making it difficult to navigate for cyclists, users with strollers, or





those with mobility constraints. As the midpoint between all five parks, strategic investments in accessibility at Cruickshank are necessary to leverage the existing gateways into the park network.

Programming within Cruickshank Park reflects its historical use as a passive-use space, intended for leisure, family activities, and picnicking. The park has some opportunities to connect to the river, especially at its northern weir (a low dam built across the river to regulate water flow) (Figure 52), a popular destination for fishing, salmon viewing during seasonal runs, and for enjoying the river's presence through sound and proximity.

Memorials and commemorative plaques are thoughtfully placed throughout the park on boulders, benches, and beneath mature trees. These honour community members who lost their lives to the river and hold significant emotional and historical value. Their preservation and respectful integration into future park enhancements are a key consideration in the redesign.

The main trail closely follows the riverbank, shaded by a row of iconic mature willow trees and dotted with seating areas that invite passive enjoyment of the landscape. Secondary trails branch off toward a Bike Share station, a renewed playground (Figure 56), a PollinateTO wildflower garden which includes pollinator habitat structures, and a calisthenics station, before looping back to the Humber Trail.

Figure 52: Existing Park Gateway at Conron Place and Weston Road, where the current sloped path exceeds 14.5% [Left]; Entry staircase at Weston Road and Church Street [Top Right]; Weir located at the northern end of Cruickshank Park [Bottom Right].

Further south, the trail curves around a sewer outfall (Figure 57), which, while visually intrusive and occasionally odorous, is still used for picnicking and informal gatherings on the adjacent lawn, likely due to the limited seating available elsewhere in the park. This juxtaposition highlights both a desire for social programming and the opportunity for environmental enhancement in future design phases. The southern edge of the park features the site's second parking lot and a staircase leading up to Little Avenue, offering vertical connection to the surrounding neighbourhood. From the parking lot, the trail continues under Lawrence Avenue West via the site's second underpass, before transitioning into Weston Lions Park and reinforcing Cruickshank's role as a central segment within the larger Weston Loop trail system.



Figure 53: Picnic table located in the grassy area between the Humber Trail and ravine's vegetative buffer, shaded by Cruickshank's iconic willow trees.



Figure 54: Cruickshank's stairs descend behind a pollinator garden, Bike Share station, and unprogrammed plaza.



Figure 55: Mature willow trees lining the Humber Trail and river.



Figure 56: Recently upgraded playground, tree planting and seating.



Figure 57: Sewer outfall discharging into the Humber River, offering an opportunity to improve water quality through green infrastructure.



Figure 58: Evidence of makeshift benches along the river's edge.



Figure 59: Cruickshank parking lot and staircase leading up to Memorial Park.

Memorial Park

Memorial Park serves as the cultural and artistic heart of the Weston neighbourhood. Located just off Weston Road and set back behind an existing privately-owned parking lot, the park forms a green link between King Street Crescent and Little Avenue, both designated a Heritage Conservation District. Well-loved and frequently used for concerts, live theatre, and memorial services, the park also benefits from being situated partially outside of the Humber River floodplain. However, one of the park’s ongoing challenges is its hidden identity, as it sits behind a parking lot and remains set back from Weston Road.

Shaded by a mature, healthy tree canopy – including a prominent heritage oak – the park offers a cool, serene environment. Its edges are defined by low Humberstone walls along Little Avenue, symbolically linking the park to the Humber River. It is worth noting that while recent rehabilitation work has taken place on the walls, further improvements will require skilled contractors who understand the sensitivity of preserving and restoring this finite resource. The walls are seasonally animated with vibrant plantings of perennials and annuals that bring colour and texture to this deeply shaded setting.

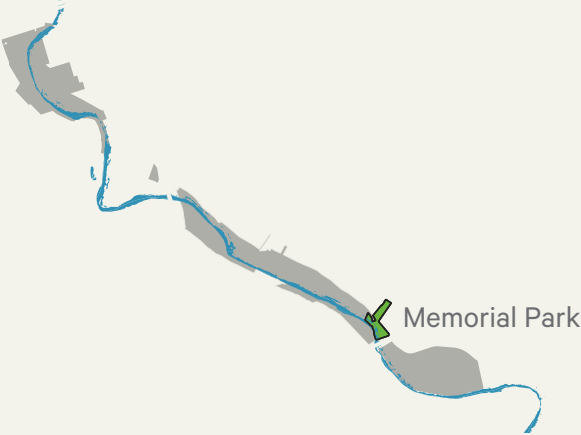




Figure 60: The revitalized entry gate (2009) gives the park identity, but doesn't connect to a path network, limiting its accessibility and usefulness as a gateway.



Figure 61: The Weston War Memorial, commemorating those who sacrificed their lives in the first and second World Wars.



Figure 62: The bandshell: a well-loved, flexible gathering space, but in need of accessible pathways and more intentional seating.



Figure 63: A weathered, narrow wooden staircase descends into Cruickshank Park from Little Ave.

The park holds cultural and historical value, with a variety of memorials and interpretive plaques commemorating significant figures and events in Weston's past. These include references to The Carrying Place Trail, the founding of Weston as a colonial settlement, and a tribute to James Gilbert Gove, a master stonemason credited with building the community's iconic humberstone walls. At the park's centre stands a prominent cenotaph, honouring the Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars.

Despite its rich historical and cultural role, the park remains largely unprogrammed, with limited pathways and only a few scattered benches. Enhancing wayfinding would improve its functionality and better situate visitors within the context of the river and Weston Loop system, while preserving its contemplative and ceremonial character.

In 2009, the park underwent a revitalization supported by collaborative efforts between the local community, the City of Toronto, and Councillor Frances Nunziata. This initiative resulted in the installation of a welcoming entry gate (Figure 60) and the re-construction of a bandshell (Figure 62), which continues to support a variety of public events, including concerts and theatrical performances through programs like Arts in the Parks. While the bandshell is a key gathering space, it currently lacks permanent amphitheatre-style seating, and audiences typically bring their own blankets or chairs to the open lawn. Even minor enhancements to accessibility and circulation would enable the park to be more fully and universally enjoyed.

With its layered history, mature landscape, and central location, Memorial Park presents a unique opportunity to further invest in arts, heritage, and passive programming, reinforcing its role as a cultural anchor within the Weston park system.

Weston Lions Park

Weston Lions Park is the most heavily programmed and actively used park within the Weston Loop, functioning as a vibrant hub for organized sports, recreation, and community gatherings. With a rich history as the site of the former Weston Fairgrounds, the park remains central to the community’s social and recreational life.

There are three existing entrances to the park – an accessible entrance from Lawrence Avenue West; a pedestrian entrance adjacent to the parking lot off Hickory Tree Road; and a staircase descending from Bellevue Crescent. Notably, the Lawrence Avenue West entrance is the only fully accessible entry point across all five Weston Loop parks. However, signage at this entrance (Figure 65) directs visitors only to the York Weston Tennis Club, offering no clear indication of arrival into Weston Lions Park itself.

Upon entry from Lawrence Avenue West, visitors encounter a tall, vertical wooden sculptural art piece (Figure 71), which serves as a subtle landmark before arriving at the basketball court and skatepark,

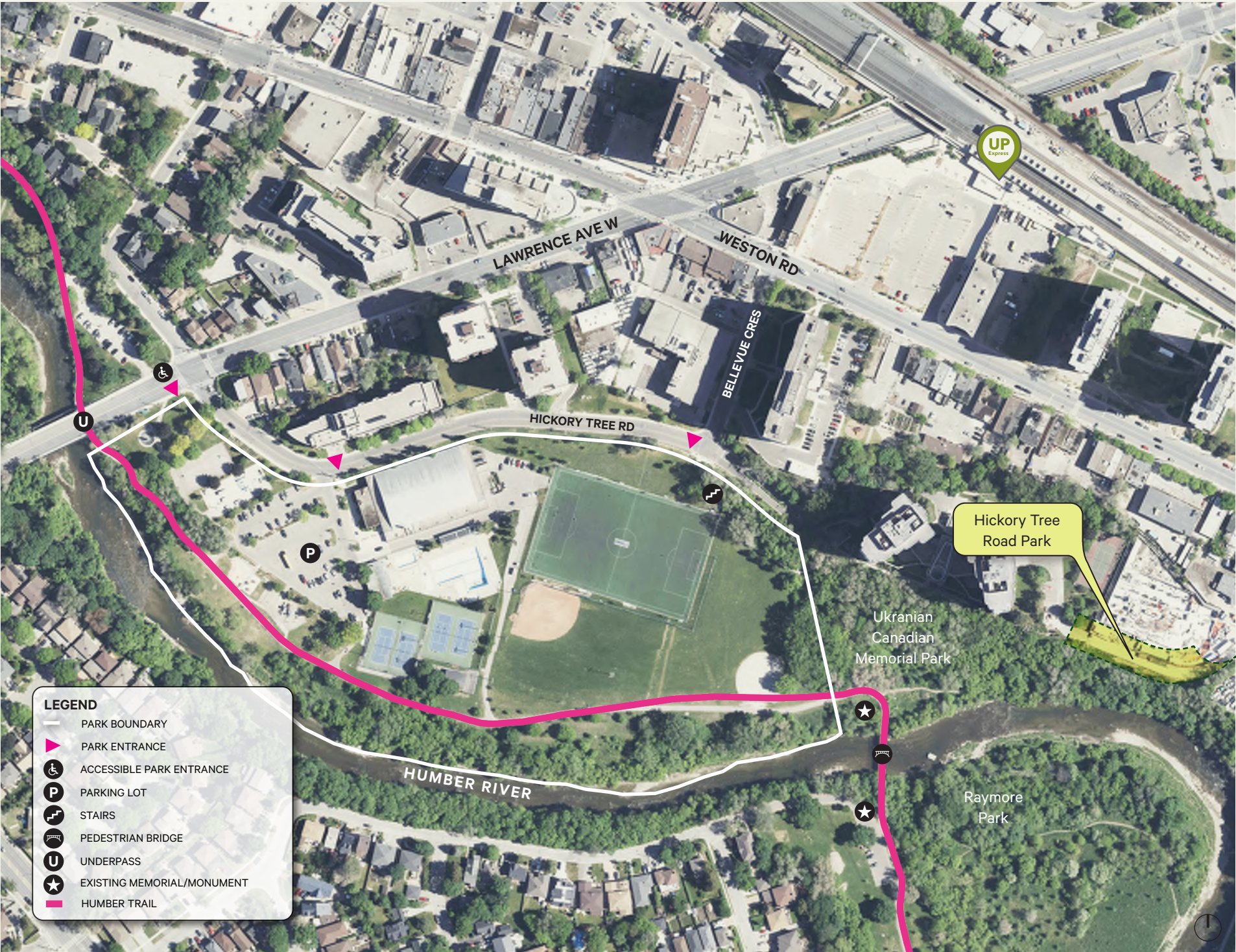




Figure 64: Weston Lions Arena main entrance.



Figure 65: Dated, illegible Weston Lions Arena signage above basketball court.



Figure 66: Weston Lions Arena interior.

which are both well used but showing signs of wear. Just beyond, a Bike Share station is located near the Hickory Tree Road sidewalk, which terminates shortly after, leaving cyclists to enter the park system via the adjacent parking lot. The internal pathway winds around a forested strip before connecting with the Humber Trail. From the underpass, users are greeted by an informal desire path that climbs a steep grade back toward the water fountain, as well as a rocky river ledge where park users often stop to feed ducks.

This section of the park contains the most amenities for young children and families, including a splash pad, playground, and shaded seating areas with umbrella tables and chairs, all branching off from the main trail. A generous lawn along the riverfront provides space for picnicking, barbequing, and social gatherings, especially during warmer months.

To the west, a large parking lot separates the playground area from the Weston Lions Arena (Figure 64-66), which remains a key community facility, offering hockey games, skating lessons, and public skating. At present, the arena operates only during the winter season. While the arena is in need of upgrades, the Weston Loop Master Plan recognizes the arena's value as a community asset, and recommends the preservation of historic features of the arena. Adjacent to the arena are the poolhouse and two outdoor pools. The York Weston Tennis Club, a private year-round club, is nestled between the pools and the Humber Trail and includes four courts. Deeper within the park, visitors encounter a premier artificial turf soccer field and two baseball diamonds, rounding out the park's extensive recreational offerings. The adjacent hill is a popular spot for tobogganing during the winter months, adding year-round appeal to the park's amenities.

Importantly, Weston Lions Park is the only park in the Weston Loop with adequate lighting, supporting safe use of the park into the evenings for the soccer field and two baseball diamonds. On game days and throughout the summer, the park is filled with families, spectators, and residents - making it the most animated and socially active park in the Weston Loop.

As with the other Weston Loop parks, Weston Lions contains a number of monuments and plaques. At the park's southern end, just before Raymore Bridge, a memorial to Hurricane Hazel stands in solemn remembrance (Figure 70), incorporating a large fragment of the bridge swept away during the 1954 flood and commemorating the lives lost on Raymore Drive. These markers hold deep meaning for the community and should be sensitively addressed through the Master Plan.

Just south of Weston Lions Park, a new park has been secured at the junction of Hickory Tree Road and Wilby Crescent. Planned for development between 2026 and 2028, this future space will enhance local park access and provide an opportunity to establish a stronger southern connection to the Weston Loop.



Figure 67: Steep hill off of Bellevue Crescent, popular for watching soccer games.



Figure 68: Desire path looking at the Humber Trail from the park entrance plaza.



Figure 69: Weston Lions Arena back of house.



Figure 70: Hurricane Hazel monument and bridge fragment.



Figure 71: Sculptural fountain at the park's Lawrence Avenue West entrance.



Figure 72: Popular duck feeding spot along the Humber Trail.



Figure 73: Staircase descending from Bellevue Crescent entrance.



Figure 74: View of the soccer field and baseball diamond from Bellevue Crescent.



Figure 75: Alleyway between the arena and two outdoor pools.



Figure 76: Youth individual enjoying the skate park.