

The Parkland Strategy & The Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan

**Presentation to the 2SLGBTQ+ Council Advisory Committee (CAC)
October 14, 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



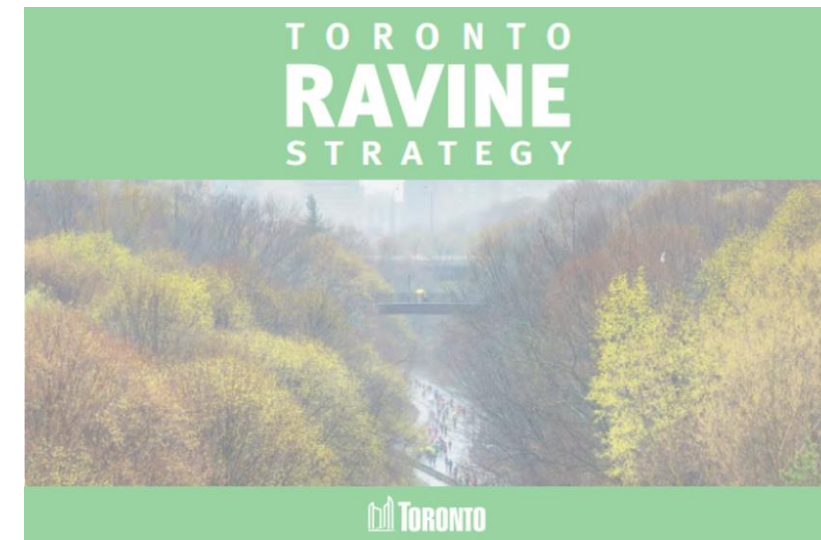
Long-term plan for the creation of **new parks and park improvements**.

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

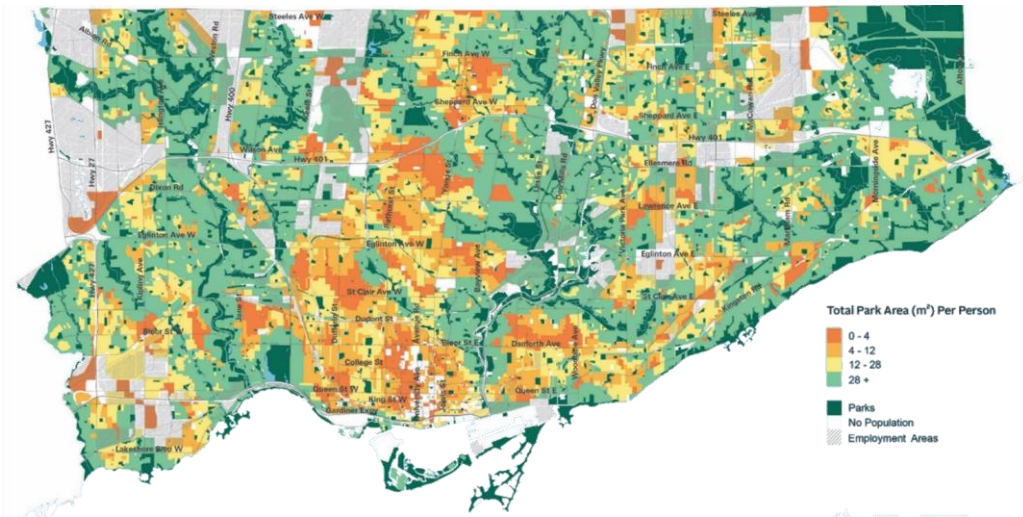


Note: The PLS informs but does not take the place of specific engagement processes that Parks and Recreation leads for each new park plan, park redesign, and improvement.

Parkland Provision and Priority Areas

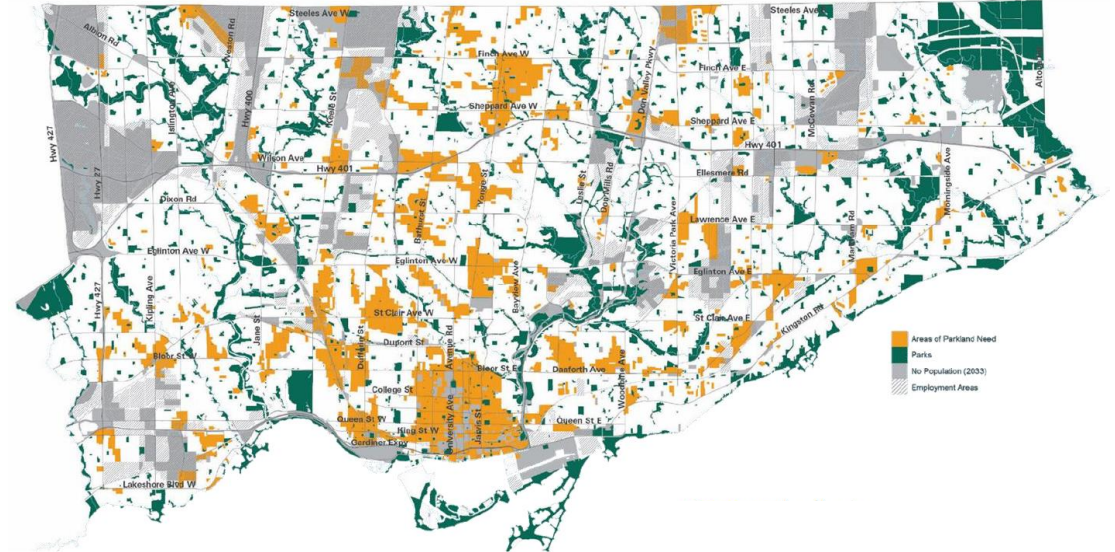
- **Parkland provision** is measured on a per person basis and is key metric used to track progress
- Provision rates are one of several inputs used to identify **Parkland Priority Areas**
- **Parkland Priority Areas** are a composite of provision and equity factors, and help focus park planning and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

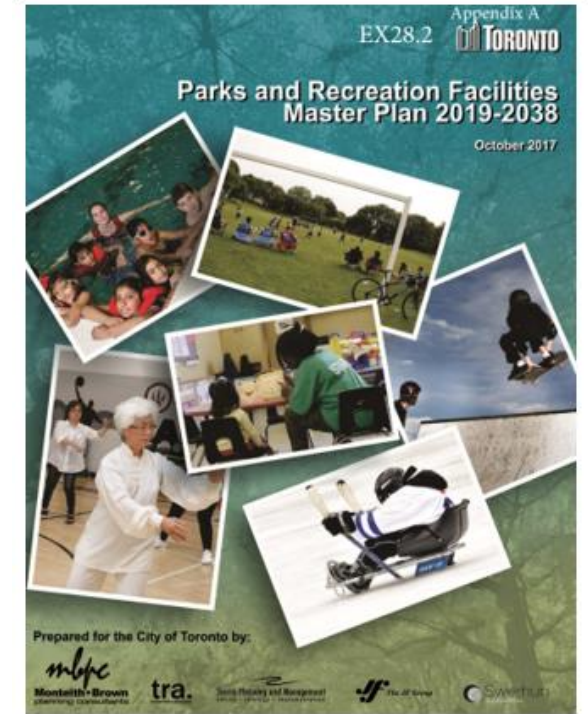
- Tennis and Pickleball Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Skateparks
- Bike Parks
- Bocce Courts
- Lawn Bowling Greens
- Dog Off-leash Areas (OLA)



PRFP Recommendations

The PRFP guides **facility investment** decisions and identifies priorities for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities across the city in 5-year increment, 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



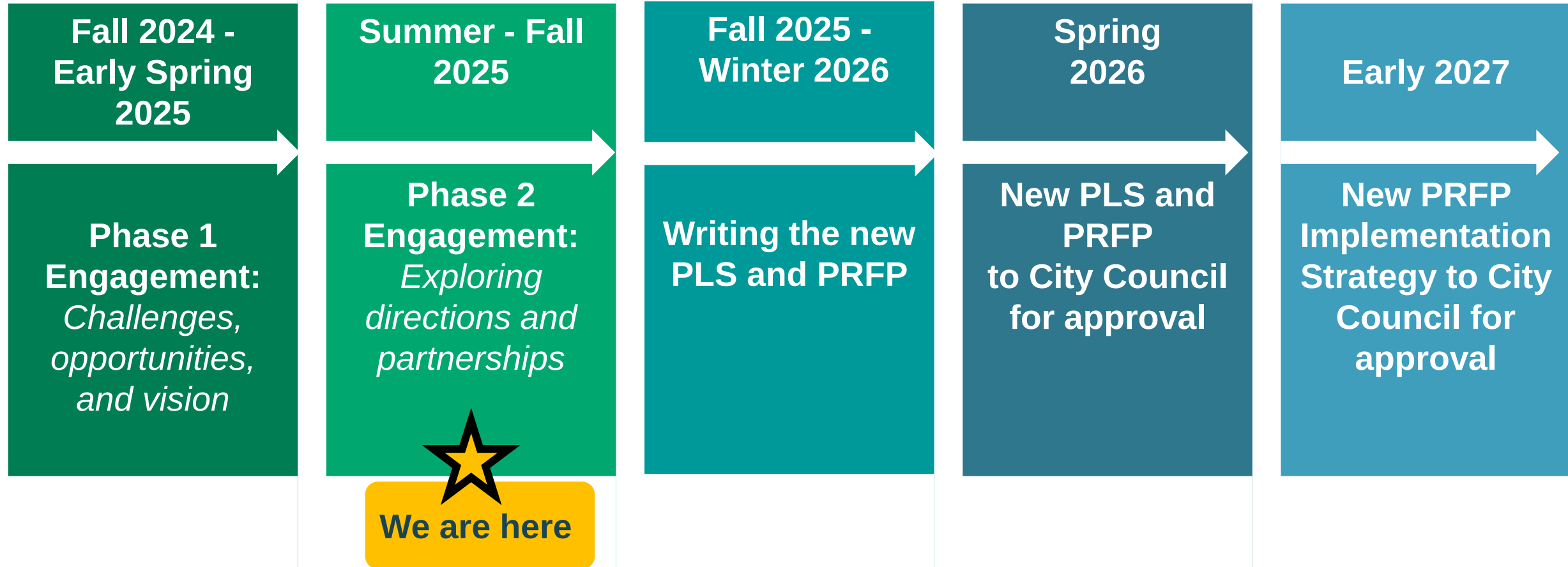
Review: Updating the PRFP and PLS

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

(12+ events)

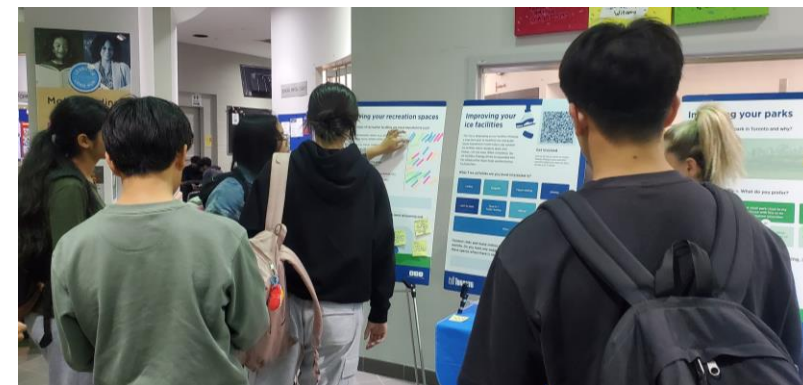
In person
pop ups
in all 25
wards

3,000 +
interactions

Additional engagement
for Ice
Facilities
Strategy

One online
public
meeting

Online survey
(2,800 + responses)



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

677 respondents to the parks section of the survey identified as 2SLGBTQ+, representing 14% of total respondents

Suggested elements to reflect in the Guiding Principles included:

Add "Naturalize" as a principle; mention protecting old growth trees and wildlife; emphasize maintenance; mention safety, access, and preventing gentrification; etc.

Top 4 areas to prioritize for creating new parks:

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

(3 of 4 same top priorities as overall respondents)

Top 4 barriers to accessing & experiencing local parks:

1. Insufficient lighting
2. Lack of convenient bike parking
3. Not feeling safe or comfortable
4. Difficult or unsafe cycling routes

(Same top 4 as overall respondents)

Top 4 park improvements to prioritize:

1. Provide more comfort facilities
2. Invest in protecting existing natural areas
3. Create more natural areas
4. Plant more trees

(Same top 4 priorities as overall respondents)

What We Heard: How to make parks more welcoming, inclusive, and safe

Suggestions from respondents who identified as 2SLGBTQ+ for making parks more welcoming, inclusive, and safe, included:

- Creating queer-friendly spaces
- Installing pride symbols (e.g. at Hanlan's Point)
- Improvements that celebrate local history (e.g. acknowledging and honouring Toronto's queer history at spaces like Hanlan's Point)
- Offering 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive programming for families and people of all ages (kids through to adults)
- Creating inclusive and educational features that reflect the diverse cultural heritage of the community

A few locations mentioned included:

- Hanlan's Point on Toronto Islands - add to the shoreline to protect the continued use of this area, as well as local ecosystems
- Queens Quay/Ferry Dock TTC Station - needs elevator on the ferry side for better and safer accessibility
- Barbara Hall Park - create a dedicated area for encampments away from the trail to reduce conflict
- High Park - reinstate vehicle use on weekends, at least to some parts, and address speeding cyclists

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 (esp. washrooms and changerooms), 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, and clear signage in support of equity-deserving groups programming (e.g. trans-inclusive skate times)
- 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, including programming developed specifically for equity-deserving groups, including 2SLGBTQ+ residents
- Clear, accessible and up-to-date communications and information
- Hire staff that represent the community a facility serves
- Support for a multitude of travel options to reach facilities (walking, biking, driving)

What We Heard: Key feedback from 2SLGBTQ+ communities members (Ice Facilities)

Respondents want more to be done to ensure women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ community members are not experiencing harassment or being intimidated on or off the ice by men and boys, especially during women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ programed ice times.

Suggested improvements to create more welcoming, inclusive and safe ice facilities include:

- Provide more dedicated ice time to and programming for equity-deserving groups including 2SLGBTQ+ community members
- Hire security guards to assist staff with enforcement
- Resurface the ice before women's program times to ensure it is cleared of other users
- Post highly visible signage about 2SLGBTQ+ programming opportunities and times, and inclusive spaces
- Improve the ease of finding information about ice facilities and programming online
- Increase staff presence and ensure enforcement of ice rules and scheduled uses, to prevent harassment, bullying, and intimidation on and off the ice
- Ensure staff are attentive and well-trained to foster a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all participants and better support staff who may not feel comfortable enforcing rules on their own (e.g. pair more experienced staff with younger staff members, hire security, etc.)
- Increase parking at some facilities

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) and increase food security (e.g. gardens, 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.
 - Example: Co-locate Community Recreation Centres with other facilities and services (e.g., libraries, schools, employment services, seniors' services, newcomer services, health services, youth services, etc.) based on a specific community's needs (determined in part, through early engagements with a community).

Next Steps: Phase 2 engagements

Complete:

- Public meetings
- Online public survey closed Sept 14
- 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)

Ongoing:

- Equity-Deserving Advisory Group meetings
- Community-led engagements through SDFA's Community Coordination Plan Clusters
- 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 you:

- Are there key suggestions you feel are missing from what we heard?
- Do you have process suggestions to ensure we are hearing key concerns and needs from 2SLGBTQ+ communities in Phase 2?
- Do you have any feedback on the emerging directions, or anything else presented?

Next Steps

If you have additional feedback, please email:

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More information about this work is available on the project webpage:

<http://toronto.ca/parksandfacilitiesplans>

Thank You!

P&R Socio-Demographic Equity Index

- Work has occurred to create a **Socio-Demographic Equity Index** that can be used **across Parks & Recreation projects** that will consider the following variables:
 - **Low income:** The percentage of the population that are living with low income according to the Census Family Low Income Measure, After Tax. **This variable is double weighted.**
 - **Dependency ratio:** The ratio of youth (ages 0 to 19) + seniors (ages 65 or older) per 100 working-age people (ages 20 to 64).
 - **Racialized – Black:** The percentage of the population that are Black.
 - **Racialized – Non-Black:** The percentage of the population that are not White, Indigenous, or Black.
 - **Indigenous identity:** The percentage of the population that identify as Indigenous to Canada.
 - **Newcomer status:** The percentage of the population that immigrated to Canada in the past five years (2016 to 2021).
 - **No knowledge of official languages:** The percentage of the population that cannot conduct a conversation in English or French.

Note: 2SLGBTQ+, people with disabilities, and women are not included as Index variables: There are no data available at the census tract or neighbourhood level to indicate where 2SLGBTQ+, or people with disabilities live. Women were not included because there is low geographic variation in this variable. A question on sexual orientation will appear on the census for the first time in 2026, and this data can be incorporated into future versions of the equity index.