

Parks Plan

2013-2017



Toronto's Parks Plan sets out strategies to improve the parks system. It aims to:

- ✓ Connect people and communities with parks
- ✓ Advance greening and environmental sustainability
- ✓ Improve park quality
- ✓ Strengthen the parks system as a legacy for Toronto

The Parks Plan builds on successful work already underway and sets priorities for the next five years. It will guide our delivery of service, decision-making, and inform policy. Some plan strategies depend on City Council approval of funds through the annual parks budget.

Why a Parks Plan?

Parks and trails are essential to Toronto's success. They are places for relaxation, recreation and building community. Parks connect people to nature, and contribute to the health and well-being of people and the environment. Economically, parks can attract business and tourism, raise property values and revitalize communities. As Toronto grows and changes we need a shared vision and strong planning to make sure that the parks system continues to meet people's needs and benefit the city.

What's in the plan?

The Parks Plan was developed using information from a review of City park services, research on trends and park services and results from extensive public and staff consultation, with over 4,000 residents and groups participating.

The plan describes the current state of the City's parks system and provides information on things that affect parks like relevant policies, city growth and development, and climate change. It identifies four main areas of priority:

1. Communicate & connect with users
2. Preserve & promote nature
3. Maintain quality parks
4. Improve system planning

For each area, the plan summarizes what people said, describes current activities, identifies areas for improvement and lists directions and related actions for moving forward.

How is the plan used?

Parks Plan actions are included in Parks, Forestry & Recreation work plans, and all employees have a role to play. Ongoing public involvement is also essential to this plan's success. Progress will be monitored and communicated regularly.

To learn more visit the Parks, Forestry & Recreation website at www.toronto.ca/parks/parksplan

Parks Plan - Directions & Actions

Communicate & connect with users

1. Improve communications and outreach

- Implement a communications and outreach strategy

2. Increase opportunities for resident, group and stakeholder involvement

- Establish an urban park ranger program to facilitate community involvement in parks
- Create a framework for community engagement
- Develop a centralized volunteer management system
- Expand park donations, partnerships and sponsorships

3. Improve the permitting system to enhance park use

- Increase online permitting information and services
- Review the permitting system
- Improve reporting on permits to better understand park use and achieve equity goals

Preserve & promote nature

4. Improve the management of natural areas

- Implement a program to improve the care of environmentally significant and sensitive natural areas
- Identify when parkland is being over-used and apply protective measures as needed
- Build staff knowledge and skills to better manage environmentally sensitive lands

5. Improve natural environment trails

- Develop and implement a program to plan, design, manage and maintain natural environment trails

6. Integrate emerging trends and technologies into parks operations

- Continue to improve water, energy and fuel efficiency

Maintain quality parks

7. Advance the quality and consistency of parkland and trails

- Enhance and automate the Parks Inspection Program
- Work with Municipal Licensing & Standards Division to improve bylaw enforcement in parks
- Continue to design high quality, sustainable parks

8. Improve park spaces

- Improve park maintenance and amenities, with a focus on creating social gathering spaces

9. Demonstrate, educate and inspire through horticulture and urban agriculture

- Place horticulture in high visibility areas and expand signage, education and volunteer experiences
- Increase and improve urban agriculture programming

Improve system planning

10. Develop a plan to guide facility provision and land acquisition

- Develop a 20-year Parks, Forestry & Recreation facilities plan
- Update the strategy for acquiring new parkland
- Work with City Planning and other partners on expanding the parks system
- Complete a detailed inventory and maps of parks and trails

11. Develop tools to guide and enhance the use of parkland

- Use the park classification system to plan and make decisions
- Develop policies and tools to support appropriate park use
- Improve and coordinate trail mapping, classification, maintenance, and way-finding

12. Continue to increase accessibility

- Engage disability groups in improving the accessibility of park amenities and features
- Ensure that parkland meets or exceeds provincial accessibility requirements