PARKLAND STRATEGY

Growing Toronto Parkland

What is the Parkland Strategy?

The Parkland Strategy is a long-term plan that will guide the planning of the park system — including new parks, expansions, and improved access to existing parks. It will support decision-making and prioritization of investment in parkland across the city.

Toronto is globally known for its parks and natural environment. Our park system helps build community and quality of life. However, there are gaps in the system; areas in the city where more must be done. We must reinvest and re-invigorate our existing green space. Toronto is a growing city. As the demand on parks grows, we must increase our parkland supply to ensure a livable Toronto for today, and for future generations.

Toronto's open space system is comprised of much more than official city parks; it includes conservation lands, ravines, hydro corridors, schools and other privately-owned, publicly accessible lands. Together, these lands form a green network in the city.

Why are parks important?

» Parks are an **extension of the home**. They are an important outdoor living and entertaining space for residents.

» Parks **build social cohesion** by providing space to gather, socialize, and create the city's identity.

» Parks **enhance ecosystems** and support biodiversity.

» Parks **improve resident health** by providing publicly accessible places to be active.

» Parks are **urban infrastructure**. They absorb rain and stormwater, prevent flooding, and reduce the heat island effect.

» Parks have a **positive economic impact** on property values and are essential to grow local investment.

» Parks **boost tourism**. Parks are high on the list of top things to do in Toronto.

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Project Timeline

Phase 1:
Understanding Parkland Needs
SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Background Review: Reviewed national and international best practices in parkland supply, and how other municipalities measure their parkland.

Parkland Supply Approach: Developed the Park Catchment Tool to measure how much parkland is available.

Stakeholder Engagement: Connected with stakeholders to discuss challenges and opportunities.

Public Consultation on, Supply, Gaps and Needs Analysis: Informed the study by engaging with the general public to understand perceptions and gaps.

Phase 1 Report Approval (Nov 2017): Executive Committee approved Phase 1 findings found in "Preliminary Report Primer – Nov 2017"

Phase 2:
Planning for Implementation
FALL 2017 TO SPRING 2018

Review Park Planning Approach: Review and refine the park planning approach, including acquisition and development.

Develop Policy Framework and Financial Strategy: Analyze legislative tools and policies that will enable targets and priorities to be met.

Consultation: Inform implementation by re-connecting with stakeholders and the general public to test proposed approaches to parkland planning.

Develop Implementation Strategy: Outline the requirements for success over the long term, as well as the first five-year monitoring period.

Final Report: Final report to guide long-term planning, prioritization and investment in parkland across the city.

Present Parkland Strategy to City Council

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What We Heard

The Parkland Strategy will address the supply and distribution of parkland across the city through three lenses:
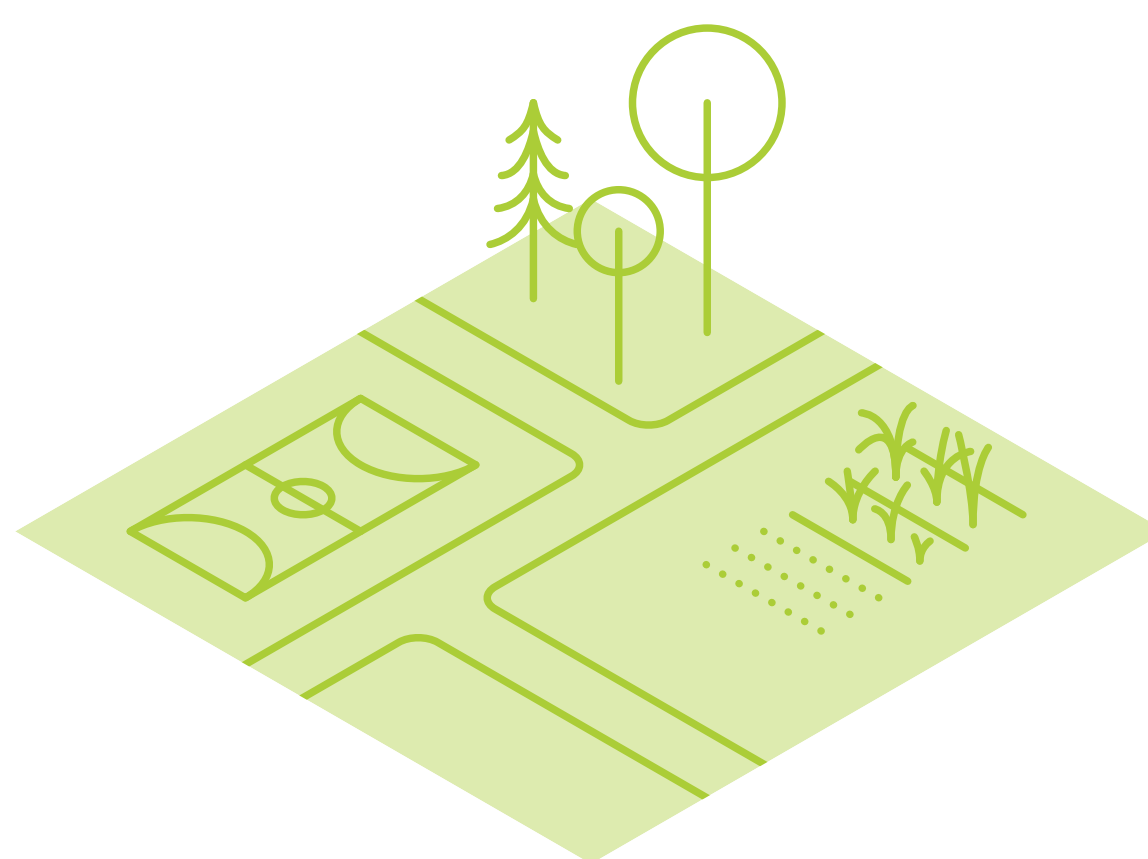
Expand

The size and location of parkland expansion, based on population growth and densification.
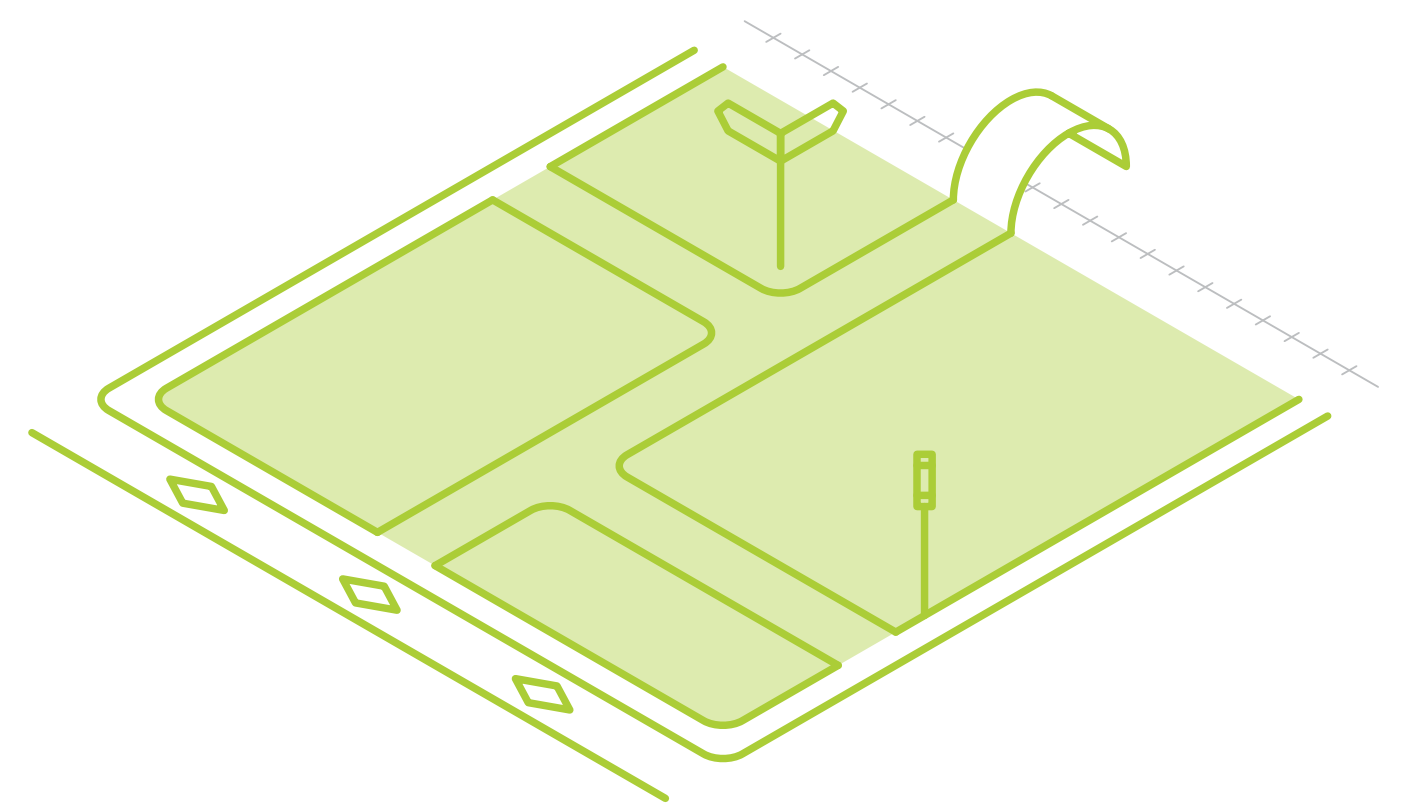
Share

The quality and multi-functionality of new and existing parkland to meet diverse interests and needs.

Connect

The access to, through and between parks to create a connected parkland network.

Phase 1: What We Heard

In Phase 1, you told us that you were generally satisfied with the amount of parkland in your neighbourhood, but that some areas of the city have parks that feel overcrowded as neighbourhoods have grown.

Phase 1: What We Heard

In Phase 1, you told us that your top two park uses were to enjoy nature and to play while keeping physically active.

Phase 1: What We Heard

In Phase 1, you told us that, in general, you can walk to your local park easily, but improvements could be made to the quality, safety, and wayfinding of those walkways and paths. New connections are also needed where barriers currently exist.

Phase 2: Next Steps

Phase 2 will explore opportunities for the City to acquire and expand parkland through acquisition and other planning tools.

Phase 2: Next Steps

Phase 2 will explore how parkland can become more multi-functional through park improvements and partnerships.
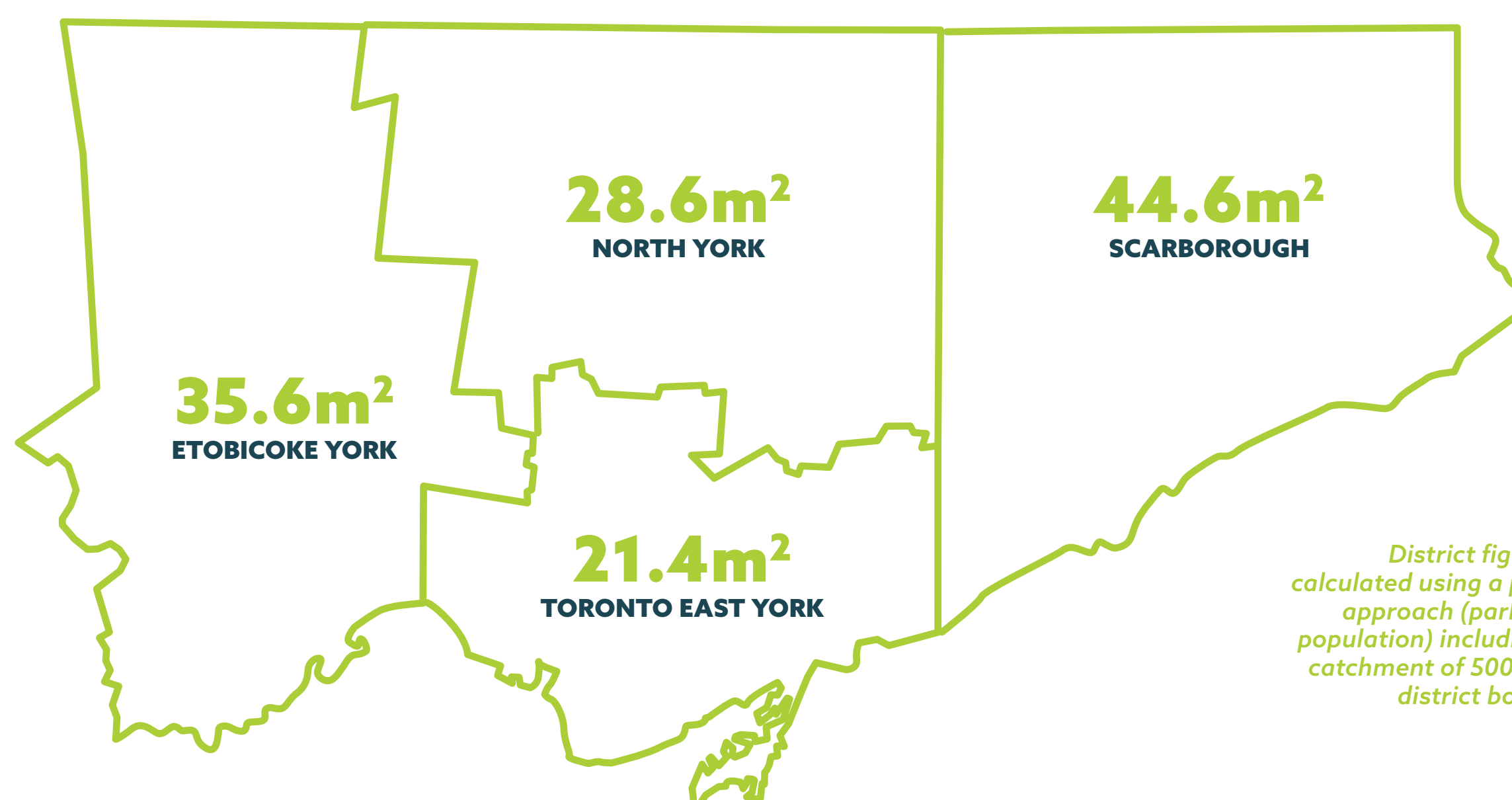
Phase 2: Next Steps

Phase 2 will explore the use of other open spaces, such as underpasses and hydro corridors, as well as connections to the active transportation network.

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How much parkland does Toronto have?

If you divided all of the City's parkland by the total number of residents, each person would have 28 m² — that's about the space under a mature maple tree.

However, although the city average parkland per resident is 28 m², some areas of the city are better served than others. Residents living in the downtown core have an average of 10.8 m² per person. This is about the size of the canopy of a patio umbrella, which is below the provision level of many other cities.
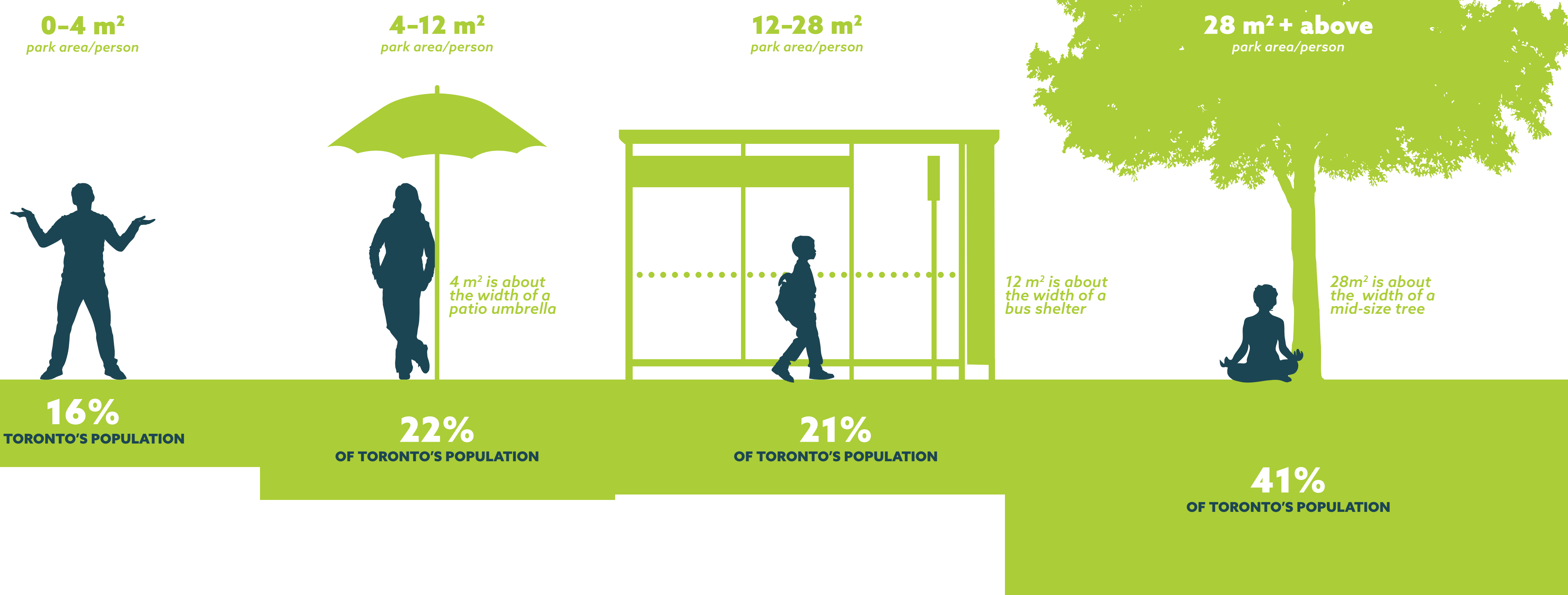
By 2032, Toronto's population is expected to increase by more than 500,000 people. As the population increases, provision levels will decrease unless new parkland is acquired. Taking into account the population growth projections, parkland provision rates will drop to an average of 23 m² if no new parkland is created by 2032.

28.6m²
NORTH YORK

44.6m²
SCARBOROUGH

35.6m²
ETOBICOKE YORK

21.4m²
TORONTO EAST YORK

District figures were calculated using a per capita approach (park area per population) including a park catchment of 500m around district boundaries.

2016
2.7 million *population*
28m² *park area/person*

2032
3.3 million *population*
23.5m² *park area/person*

The amount of parkland residents have within a five-minute walk of their home:

0–4 m²
park area/person

4–12 m²
park area/person

12–28 m²
park area/person

28 m² + above
park area/person

4 m² is about the width of a patio umbrella

12 m² is about the width of a bus shelter

28m² is about the width of a mid-size tree

16%
OF TORONTO'S POPULATION

22%
OF TORONTO'S POPULATION

21%
OF TORONTO'S POPULATION

41%
OF TORONTO'S POPULATION

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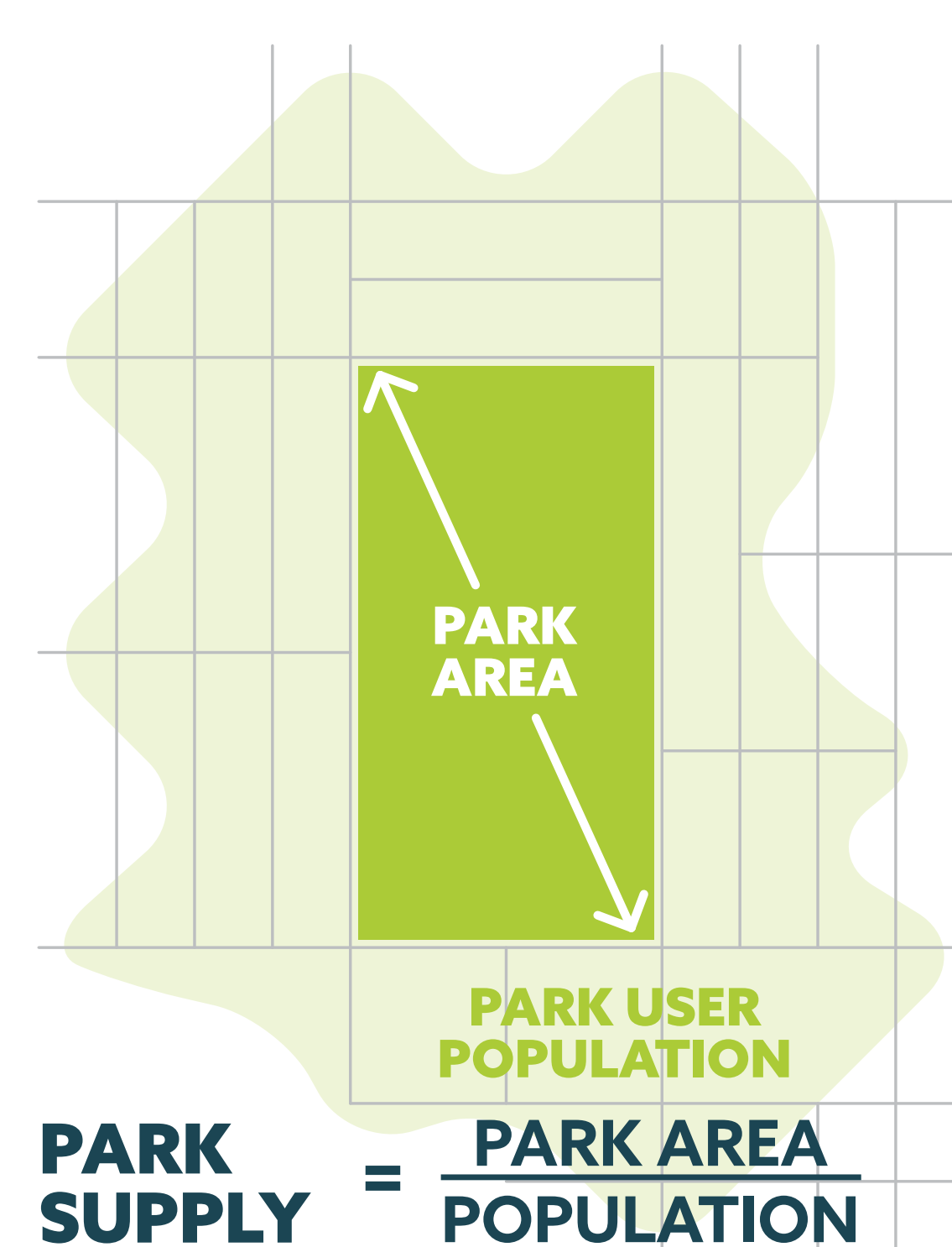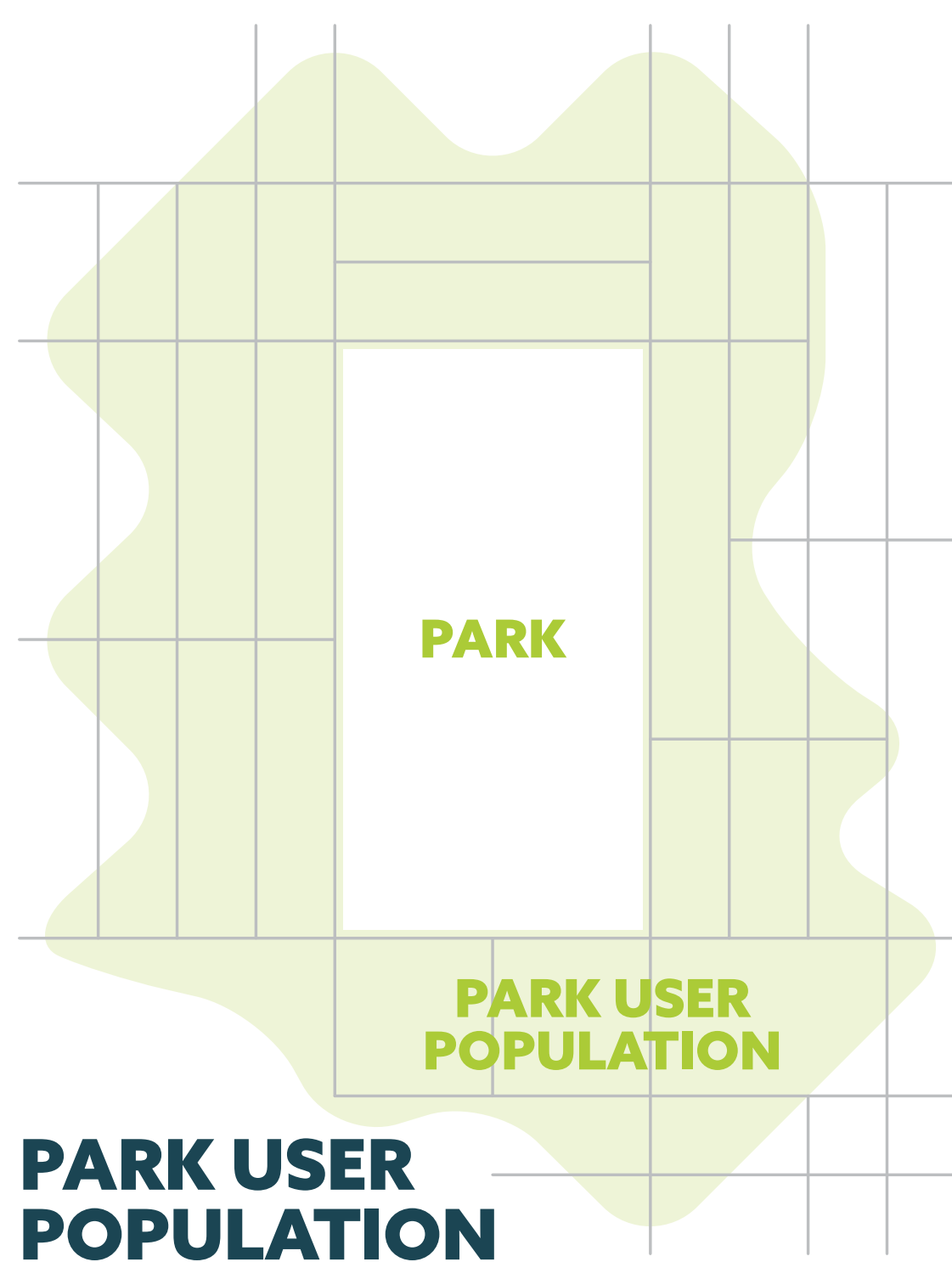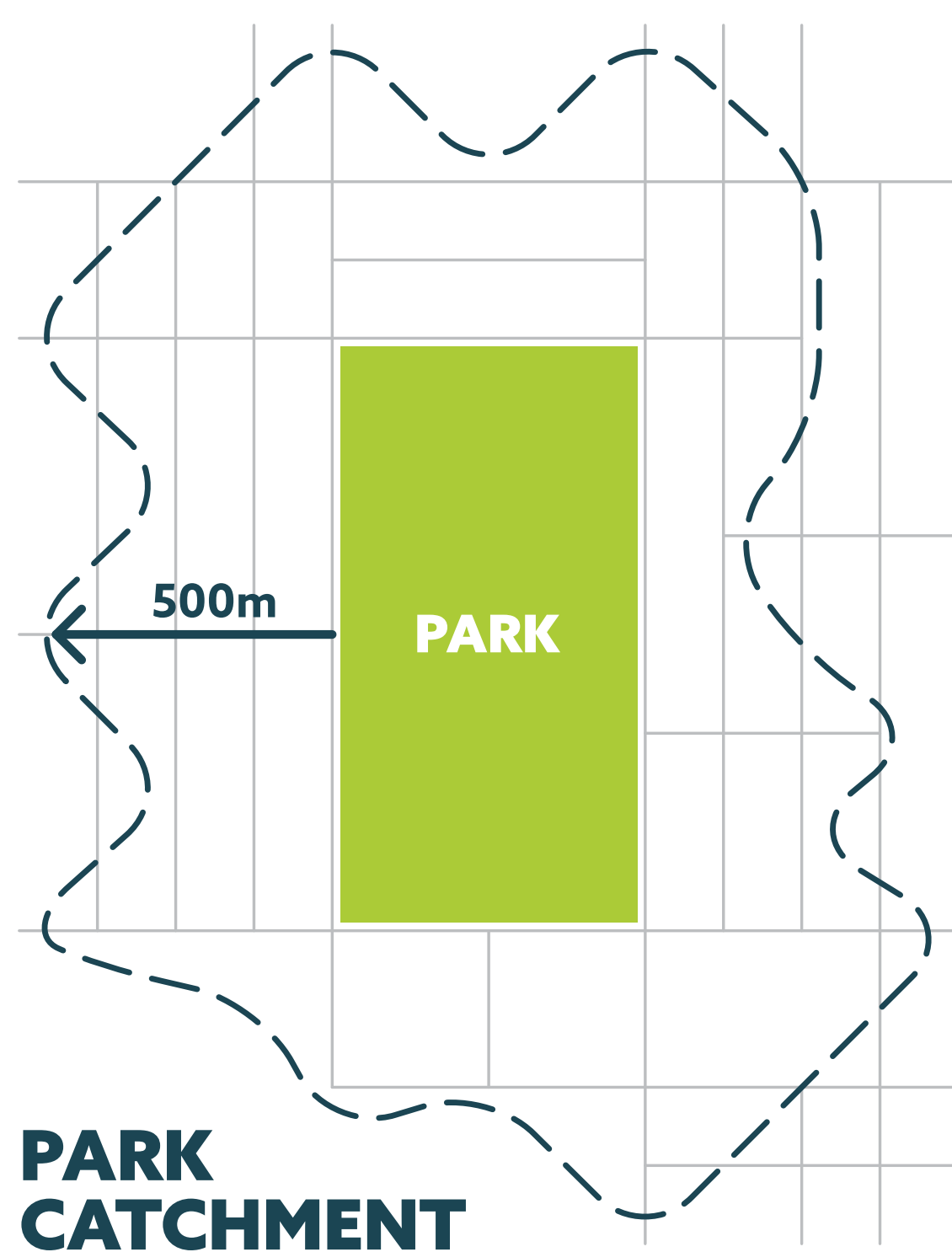
Measuring Parkland

The Parkland Strategy introduces an updated parkland measurement and assessment tool to determine parkland provision across the city.

Park Catchment Tool

The Parkland Strategy recommends using a new Park Catchment Tool to measure parkland provision based on the following process:

1. **Park Catchment:** A park catchment is determined by calculating the actual travel distance (e.g. 500 metres or 5 minute walk) to parks using the local road, sidewalk and pathway network.

2. **Park User Population:** Park user population is the number of people within the park catchment.

3. **Park Supply:** Park supply is the total amount of parkland accessible to the park user population.

This tool provides a more realistic picture of parkland provision by accounting for actual travel distances between people and the parks they use, in other words, it more accurately represents the total population that shares a park.

500m

PARK

PARK CATCHMENT

PARK

PARK USER POPULATION

PARK USER POPULATION

PARK AREA

PARK USER POPULATION

$$\text{PARK SUPPLY} = \frac{\text{PARK AREA}}{\text{POPULATION}}$$

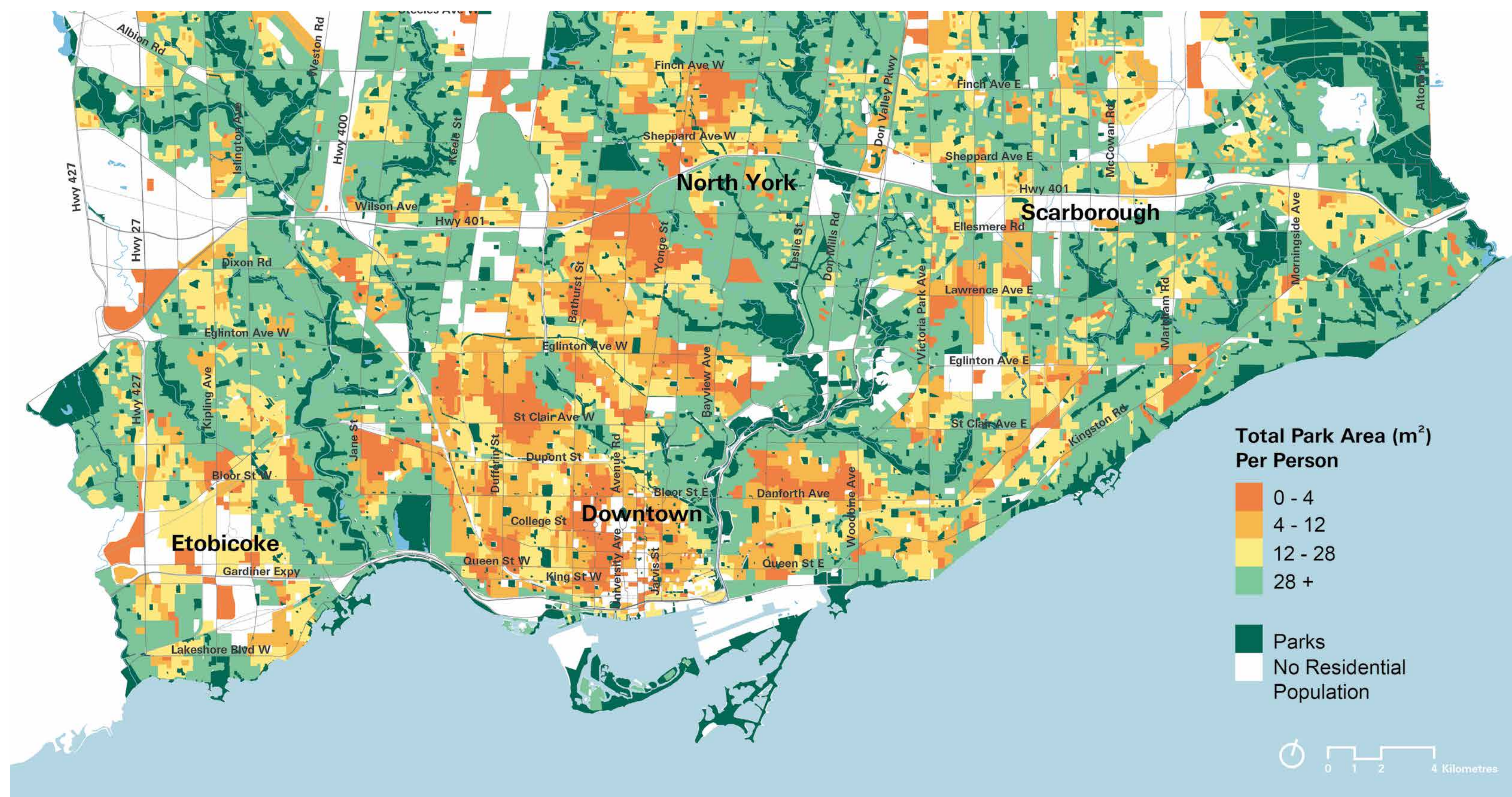**toronto.ca/parklandstrategy**

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Toronto's Parkland Provision: Residents

These maps were created using the Park Catchment Tool.

2016 Parkland Supply

The map shows the park area per resident that is available within 500 m across the city. The map uses four scales to show park area per resident in 2016 relative to the city-wide average of 28 m² per person. Areas of the city shown in light green have a parkland supply that is at or above the city-wide average. While areas in yellow and orange have a parkland supply per resident that is below the city average. Red areas have the least amount of park area available.
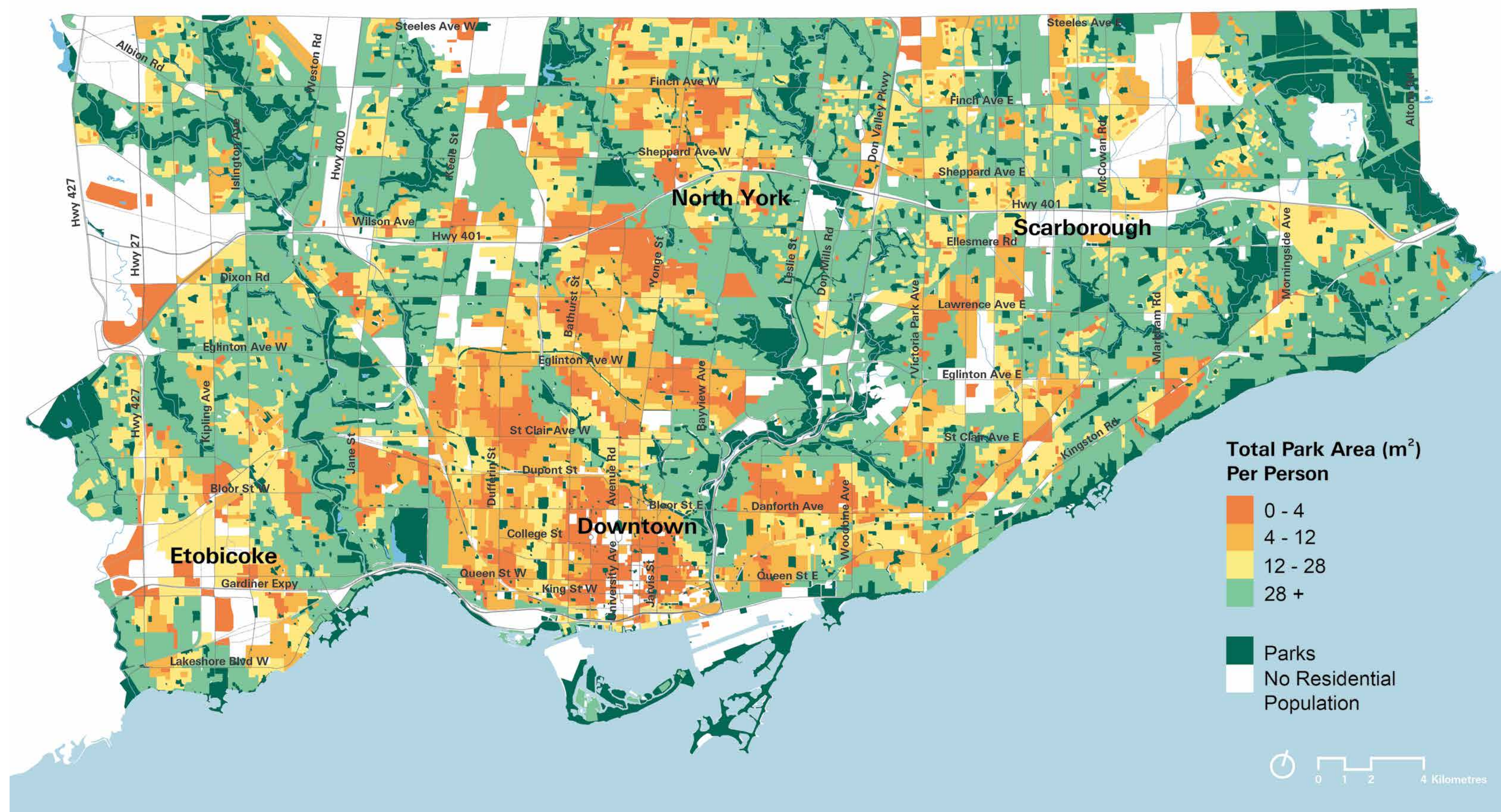
Generally, neighbourhoods adjacent to ravines or large parks have a parkland supply at or above the city average, while neighbourhoods with higher population densities and fewer large parks have a parkland supply below the city average.

Total Park Area (m²) Per Person

- 0 - 4
- 4 - 12
- 12 - 28
- 28 +

- Parks
- No Residential Population

2032 Parkland Supply

This map shows what will happen to the city-wide parkland supply in 2032 when the population increases by approximately 500,000 people and no new parkland is acquired. Under these conditions, the city-wide parkland supply would drop from 28 m² per person to 23.5 m² per person.

This map shows where population growth will have the greatest impact on parkland across the city.
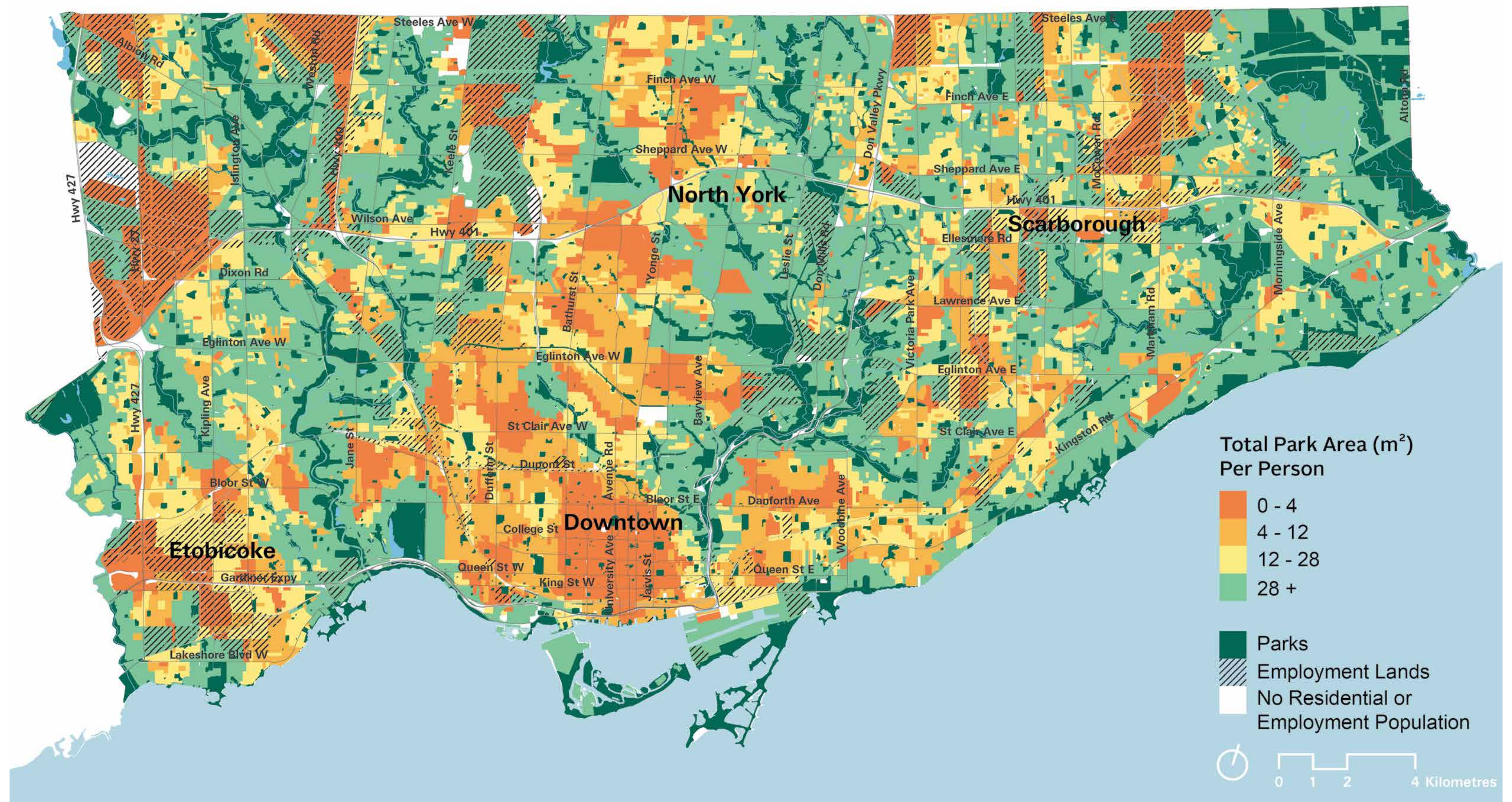

Total Park Area (m²) Per Person

- 0 - 4
- 4 - 12
- 12 - 28
- 28 +

- Parks
- No Residential Population

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Toronto's Parkland Provision: Residents + Employees

2016 Parkland Supply: Residential + Employment Population

The two Toronto Parkland Supply maps on the previous panel draw exclusively from residential populations. However, it is important to assess how employment population adds pressure to existing parkland and impacts park usage throughout the day.

This map combines residential and employment population to show the combined use of parks by employees and residents.

In mixed-use areas, such as in the Downtown core where there is large employee and resident population, there is a lower parkland supply, as illustrated by red or orange areas. Areas which the City has identified as important to maintain as employment uses are shown with a black hatch.

Total Park Area (m²) Per Person
- 0 - 4
- 4 - 12
- 12 - 28
- 28 +

- Parks
- Employment Lands
- No Residential or Employment Population
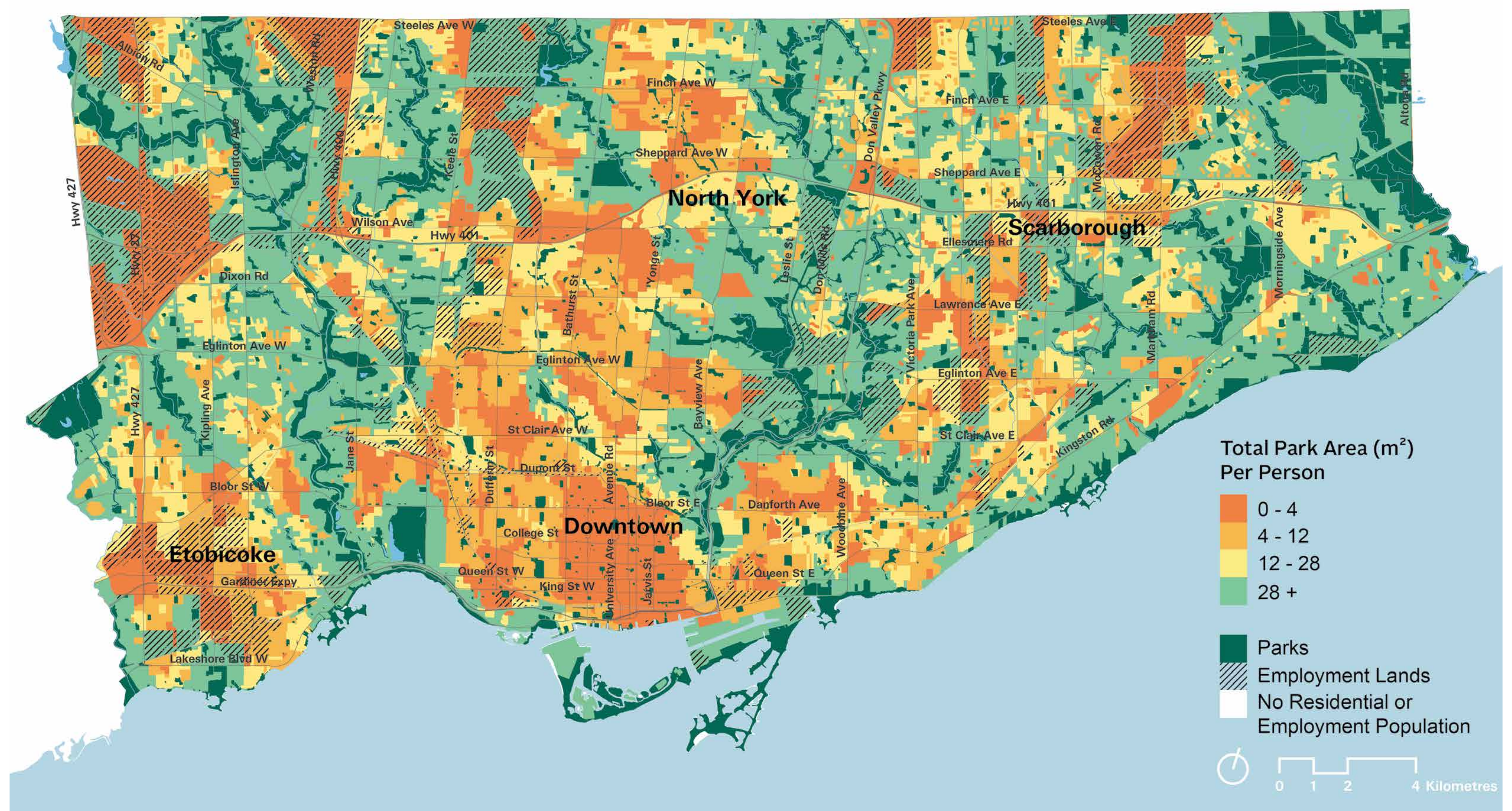
0 1 2 4 Kilometres

2032 Parkland Supply: Residential + Employment Population

This map shows what will happen to the city-wide parkland supply in 2032 if no new parkland is acquired to offset the projected increase in residents and employee population.

When the projected employment and residential population is added, areas that were previously white (in the above map) now display a level or park supply for the new residents or employees.

Overall, park area per resident and employees decreases.

Total Park Area (m²) Per Person
- 0 - 4
- 4 - 12
- 12 - 28
- 28 +

- Parks
- Employment Lands
- No Residential or Employment Population

0 1 2 4 Kilometres

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Next Steps

In the coming months, we will need your input!

Moving Forward

We are currently underway with Phase 2: Planning for Implementation. Our focus in Phase 2 will be to continue to develop a comprehensive analysis of the provision and function of parkland and provide new approaches and tools to support decision-making and prioritization of parkland investment across Toronto.

We look forward to your participation and input in this phase!

Stay Informed

Keep up-to-date as the project progresses over the coming months and find out about upcoming consultation opportunities by visiting the website below, and signing up for our newsletter.

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@TorontoPFR

parklandstrategy@toronto.ca

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