

Taylor Creek Park Management Plan

Online Engagement - Summary

Objectives of Online Engagement

- Spread awareness of the creation of the Taylor Creek Park Management Plan.
- Provide an overview of the project.
- Seek community input to:
 - Contribute to goals and guiding principles
 - Identify current uses (active and passive), access points, and key issues
 - Identify criteria for prioritizing projects and policies
 - Identify potential capital project opportunities

Online Engagement Overview

An online survey and mapping tool platform called “Social Pinpoint” was used to solicit community feedback on the creation of the Taylor Creek Park Management Plan. The site was linked through the City of Toronto’s [Taylor Massey Creek Park Planning webpage](#) and was available directly at bit.ly/TaylorCreekMP. The website consisted of a map of Taylor Creek Park, with access points, the creek, and trails highlighted.

Using the mapping feature, participants were able to select access points to provide location specific feedback. Each time a participant selected an access point they were asked how often they used the access point and what information they would like the City to know about the access point. In total, 11 people commented on access points.

Participants could also use the mapping feature by dropping any of the following 5 markers into the park, with the option to then explain the placement of each marker:



Your favourite places in the Park.



Idea(s) for improving the environment.



Idea(s) for improving the creeks and wetlands.



Idea(s) for improving trails.



Idea(s) for how you would like to use the park.



Issues within the park.

In total, 77 markers were dropped onto the map.

Additionally, the online platform hosted a survey to help gain feedback on the draft criteria for prioritizing projects in the management plan; this will help determine which management projects

should happen in the short term, and which management project should happen in the long term. Participants were provided with the “Draft Criteria for Prioritizing Projects” and then posed four questions. The draft criteria and survey questions are provided in Appendix A. In total, 32 people participated in the management priorities survey.

Promotion of the Online Engagement Platform

The online engagement platform was available from July 25th to August 17th 2018. To promote the online engagement platform, the City of Toronto sent notification emails to internal and external stakeholder lists, including local councilors, and asked recipients to share the notice widely amongst their networks. The platform was also promoted through the Toronto Forestry (@TOtrees) twitter account.

Additionally, two public “pop-up” events were held to promote engagement through the online platform. Pop-up events are a method of public engagement used to intercept people who would otherwise usually not take part in a public engagement process (e.g. unlikely to go to a public meeting, be registered on project lists, or search out feedback opportunities online). These popups were held in Taylor Creek Park on July 27 and 28, 2018, north of Stan Wadlow Park, for 3 hours each day. People who stopped by the booth were provided with a project business card and told to visit the online platform to provide additional feedback until August 17th. A self-guided tour was also promoted at popups to encourage participants to think about management issues while traveling through the park (see Appendix B). In total, approximately 190 people were engaged through popups.

Summary of Feedback

The following provides a summary of the online feedback collected. This summary is organised into three sections to reflect the different types of feedback solicited through the online platform. The three sections are: access point feedback (collected through the online mapping tool), management plan priorities feedback (collected through the online survey), and strengths, opportunities and issues feedback (collected through the online mapping tool, see Appendix C).

Access Points

In total, 11 people commented on access points. Suggestions for improving access points include:

- Signage to indicate what street access points lead to.
- Signage to remind cyclists to be cautious of pedestrians, who also use the multi-use trail.
- Maps at access points to help users orient themselves within the park and larger trail system.
- Improved pavement along access points (participants noted that recent paving of access points is well received and has improved safety).
- Improve the maintenance of the access point/trail east of the Don Valley Parkway as there are many downed trees and ravine bed erosion.
- Make the Cullen Bryant Park access point accessible for a stroller or cargo bike.
- The entrance off of the Don Valley Parkway/Don Mills includes a connection on an unnamed road; this road should be named to allow for easier wayfinding and direction into the park and trail system. Improve signage along Don Mills Road to indicate the entrance to the park, and improve traffic signage to allow easier and safer entrance into and out of the park (especially for cyclists). Additionally, improve signage within the park to help users identify access points

and where they lead to outside of the park; signage should also point users to bike-accessible access points.

Strengths, Opportunities and Issues

In total, 77 markers were dropped onto the map to identify participants' favourite places in the park, ideas for improving the park, and management issues within the park.

Favourite Places

Participants shared their favourite places within the park:

ESA Zone

- Frog ponds, as children enjoy watching/catching the frogs.

Golding Zone

- The observation area on the unofficial trail because of its beauty.
- The 10-year-old tree planting by the southern trail connection to Victoria Park, as the participant took part in the tree planting.

West Zone

- The pond/wetland north of self-guided tour point #2 (see Appendix B for location) is full of frogs and often families stop here to allow children to explore and learn about frogs and their habitat.
- The wetland by self-guided tour point #3 is interesting; participants would like to know where the source of the water is. (Image Below)



- The trail by the mouth of Curity Creek is beautiful. (Image Below)



- Areas in the West Zone where the TRCA has completed wetland restoration, and frog habitat has been created.
- The playground at Cullen Bryant park (for children) and the access point to Taylor Creek Park from Cullen Bryant park.
- The fire circle close to the dog park, as it provides a place for people to meet and have a “real campfire experience” in the city.
- The area by the dog park used for the PINE Project and Forest School program (and wider use throughout the ravine by these groups). Participants noted that their children’s use of the park through these programs has connected them to nature and turned them into stewards of the environment.
- The bike trail that runs north, out of Taylor Creek Park (by the Don Valley Parkway).
- The connection to Sunnybrook Park.

Ideas for Improving the Environment

Participants provided the following ideas for improving the environment:

ESA Zone

- Create more natural plantings along the stream bank.
- Rehabilitate the former hydro station with natural species (prevent invasive species from becoming established).
- Consider removing and replacing non-native wetland grasses and Himalayan Balsam in the area along the main trail, immediately west of the intersection off the access trail to Lumsden Avenue.

Golding Zone

- The area just east of Victoria Park has a lack of natural vegetation buffer next to the creek (mainly grass). Increase natural plantings (trees/shrubs) next to the stream and expand the restoration area to the upper area of creek.
- Red ant colonies are located by the main trail in the centre of the Golding Zone.

West Zone

- Immediately west of the pedestrian bridge crossing there is a wetland-seep area. This area is populated by non-native wet grasses and is prone to flooding and eroding the nearby trail. Create a native pocket wetland, with a berm and/or boardwalk to improve biodiversity and preserve civic infrastructure.
- East of the wetland that is north of self-guided tour point 2, the area is filled with Manitoba Maple and other non-native species. Remove and replace the non-native and invasive species with desirable and complimentary species to the wetland. This will help phase a wet meadow into native forest.
- Make the wetland by self-guided tour point #3 eutrophic as there is too much vegetation, and no frogs in the area.
 - Another participant disagreed stating that the water looks healthy.
 - Animals noted by this area include fish, birds, and turtles.
- Remove the existing washroom and create a new wetland in its place.

Ideas for Improving the Creeks and Wetlands

Participants provided the following ideas for improving the creeks and wetlands:

ESA Zone

- The south side of the parking lot on the east side of the zone is subject to heavy flooding. This makes many spaces unusable well into the summer. Erosion of the creek bank by the parking lot is moving closer on the north side. Consideration should be given to how the parking can and should be shaped to deal with flooding issues, including the need for increased water storage and permeability. The creek bank may also require addressing due to flooding. Consideration should be given as to whether to extend the bike trail around the parking lot on the north side to avoid flooding.
- Ensure frog ponds beside the main trail are healthy for amphibians and other species.

(Image Below)



- A small portion of the main trail (east of the intersection with the trail that leads to the Notley Place access point) was rebuilt a few years ago but is still prone to icing over in winter as the overflow from a seep on the south side of the trail sheets across. Consider installing berms,

culverts or a very small bridge/boardwalk, which would significantly improve winter season access.

Golding Zone

- A small wetland is omitted from map slightly east of the unofficial trail that leads to the Dawes Road Access Point. This wetland includes a lot of wildlife including muskrat, duck, and turtles.
- General
- Prioritize the improvement of water quality in the creek to reduce smells from the creek, ensure children can safely play in the creek, and animals can safely use the creek as habitat.

Ideas for Improving Trails

Participants provided the following ideas for improving the trails:

Golding Zone

- Connect the trail past Victoria Park (e.g. to Warden Woods Park, through the golf course, to Gus Harris Trail).
- There is an unofficial path around a wetland/pond in the western portion of the Golding Zone that is subject to heavy flooding into mid-summer and during the winter (which poses a safety risk). A boardwalk could be built to allow water to pass underneath the path; this will reduce city maintenance and liability while augmenting the natural environment and improving access.
- Eastern portions of the main trail require paving.
- Consider widening eastern portions of the trail.
- Where the access point meets the main trail on the west side of Victoria Park (at the bottom of a steep hill), consider increased signage, improving visibility around the corner, and widening the turning radius to make the intersection safer for users, as the corner is currently blind for those descending, especially on bikes.

West Zone

- Participants provided mixed feedback about the unofficial trails in this area. One participant noted that the single-track trail heading north and the west along the ridge (by Curity Creek) traverses many wet areas and steep cross slopes, which causes premature erosion, run off with high levels of sediment, and dangerous conditions for users. They suggested the trail be redirected, with rotting lumber removed (with the potential help of TORBA or IMBA). Other users would like the unofficial trails to be supported by the city (e.g. like in Crothers Woods), as many walkers and mountain bikers use those trails.
- Participants provided mixed feedback about the in-water crossings in this Zone. Some users would like to see the in-water crossings removed to reduce pollutions, invasive species, and fish barriers, lower creek temperatures, provide a net gain of natural space in the park, and reduce city liability related to the existing crossings. Other participants noted they greatly enjoy the in-water crossings as they are unique and provide fun access to the water for users of all ages, including children who enjoy playing in the water. If the crossings are removed, participants suggested consideration be given to ensuring invasive fish species barriers remain, and to providing water access for children in some other form.

General

- Improve markings and signage to help pedestrians and cyclists navigate through the park, trail system, parking lots, and into/out of access points.

Ideas for How to Use the Park

Participants provided the following ideas for how the park can be used in the future:

West Zone

- Participants provided mixed feedback on use of the trail area at the southwest end of the park. One participant suggested building a walking trail with signage and naturalized gardens of native plant species and trees, pollinator garden, experimental bee-keeping methods, permaculture, landscaping, food forest design, and art installations, while another participant would prefer to have the area remain as authentically wild as possible, citing that there are few areas of the city that are as close to wild as the ravine system.
- Improve the dog park by adding shade, interesting features, and water. One participant noted this may increase use of the dog park and result in fewer people walking their dogs off-leash in the park.

General

- Post interpretive panels about the Indigenous history of Toronto/Scarborough dating back 12,000 years. Use Indigenous languages on signage throughout the park (e.g. place names, animal and plant names, waterways). Consult with Indigenous communities whose traditional territory this is on (e.g. Mississaugas of the New Credit, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat) about what oral history or traditional knowledge might be shared with the public about this area. Other participants commented with support for this suggestion.
- Post interpretive panels about the railway history throughout the site (e.g. the Hydro right of way in the ESA Zone is a former Canadian Northern Railway right of way).
- Provide an area with a natural or soft type flooring for dogs, such as a rubberized floor made of recycled tires, separate areas for small, elderly and disabled dogs, water, and bins to dispose of dog waste.
- Add washrooms and water fountains throughout the park to allow people to stay in the park for longer periods of time.

Issues within the Park

ESA Zone

- The washroom on the eastern edge of the zone is vulnerable to flooding. Consider rebuilding this next to the parking lot and at a modest elevation to reduce the risk of future flooding.

West Zone

- In the hydro field in the south western portion of the park, a large area of trees and vegetation were allegedly removed by Toronto Hydro during nesting season.

General

- There is mixed feedback on allowing off-leash dogs on the northern, unofficial trail. Some participants note that off-leash dogs endanger flora and fauna, scare young children, and have attacked park users, and would like to see the city increase the enforcement of leash by-laws. Others would like this area open to off-leash use.
- Residents who have backyards beside the park have noticed park users lighting fires and drinking in the forest; they would like policy presence at night.

Management Plan Priorities

In total, 32 people participated in the Management Plan Priorities survey (Appendix A). Twenty-two people said they agree with the draft criteria for prioritizing projects. Eight said they do not agree, and two said they prefer not to answer. Twelve people provided written feedback in addition to their selection. Suggestions for improving or altering the draft criteria for prioritizing projects include:

Natural Systems

- Maintain natural systems protection and creek health, but also provide space for recreation (e.g. children's programs).

Creek Health and Stormwater Management

- Refer to the combined sewer/ storm water overflow into the creek.
- One participant noted that addressing flood waters was a very important priority.

Trails, Recreation and Cultural Heritage

- There was disagreement over the priority to “afford a variety of experiences”. While some participants support the idea of providing space in the park for recreation (e.g. children’s programs and camps), others would prefer the natural setting be preserved, and that the space not be used for off-trail recreation (especially those that require facilities).
- Set a higher priority on improving trails to better support multiple uses (e.g. biking and hiking).
- Explicitly mention education as a priority, to help improve the public’s understanding of the values of ravines.
- Improving facilities for dogs within the park.
- Ensure criteria allows for the continuation of the PINE project that currently operates in the park.

Appendix A – Draft Criteria for Prioritizing Management Projects and Survey Questions

DRAFT CRITERIA FOR PRIORITIZING PROJECTS:

Natural Systems

- Protects best quality habitat and features (Foundation)
- Reduces fragmentation/ establishes reconnected system (Foundation, Interface)

Creek Health and Stormwater Management

- Improves flood storage, attenuation or water quality (Infrastructure)
- Improves bank stability (Foundation)

Trails, Recreation and Cultural Heritage

- Contributes to a connected trail system (Infrastructure, Parks + Green Spaces)
- Affords a variety of experiences (Parks + Green Spaces, Experience + Quality)

Note: These draft criteria connect to the City's [Ravine Strategy](#). The text in parentheses above highlights how each criteria connects to the Ravine Strategy's conceptual framework.

Questions:

1) Do you agree with the above Draft Criteria for the Taylor Creek Park Management Plan? Yes

- No
- Prefer not to answer

[Space provided to allow for explanation of choice.]

2) If you do not agree with the Draft Criteria above, what would you change?

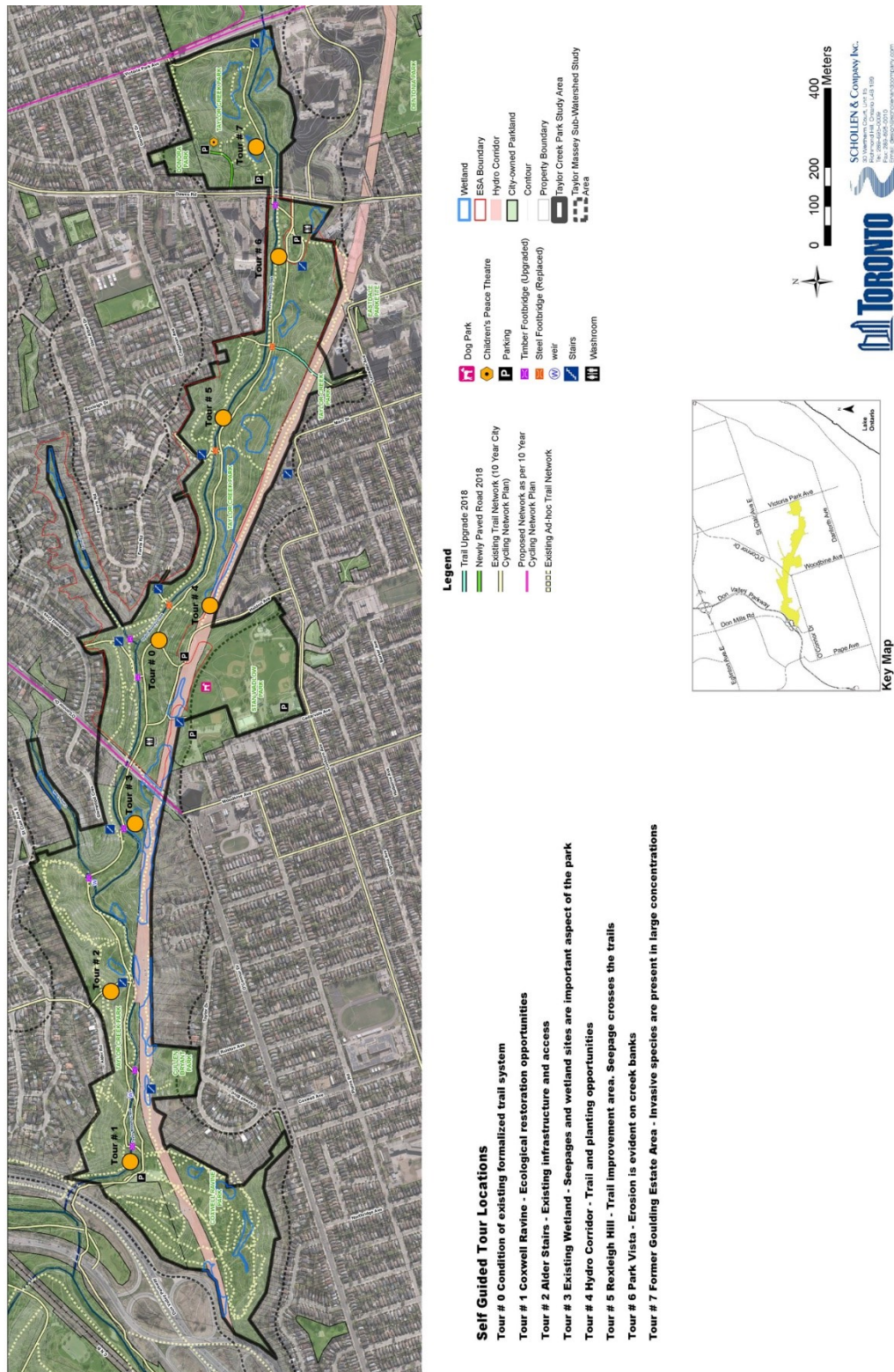
3) What are the first 3 characters of your postal code?

4) Does your household include any of the following?

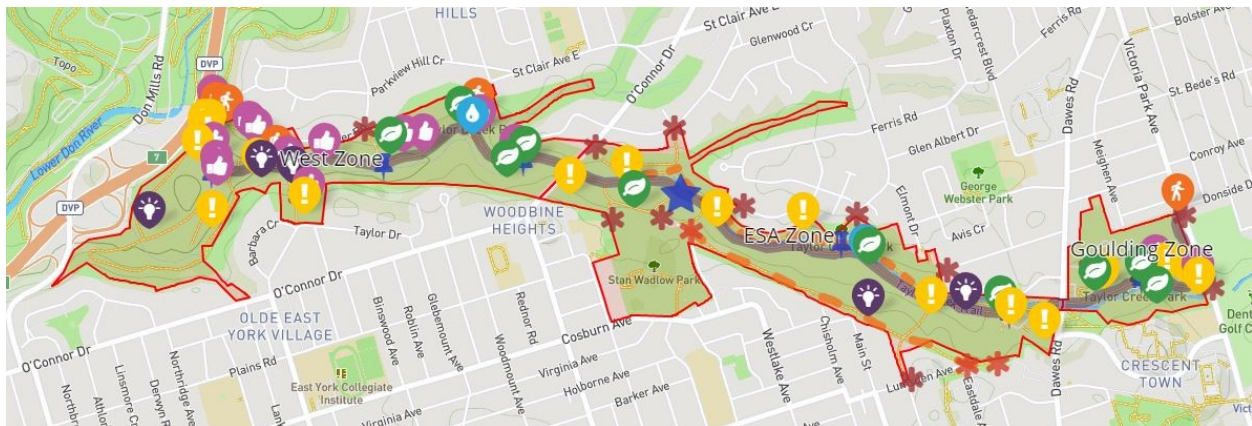
- Adults (ages 20 – 65)
- Children (under 20 years)
- Seniors (over 65 years)
- Dogs

Appendix B – Self Guided Tour Map

Taylor Creek Park Management Plan Opportunities and Constraints



Appendix C – Online Engagement Feedback Points



Your favourite places in the Park.



Idea(s) for improving the environment.



Idea(s) for improving the creeks and wetlands.



Idea(s) for improving trails.



Idea(s) for how you would like to use the park.



Issues within the park.