



REPORT FOR ACTION

Parkland Strategy Final Report

Date: October 29, 2019

To: Executive Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation; Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The City of Toronto's parks system is integral to its identity as a global, liveable city and contributes to health, quality of life, social cohesion and ecological sustainability. As the city continues to grow and intensify, the parks system will need to contend with the increased use of, and need for additional high-quality park space that is functional and accessible.

The Parkland Strategy (The Strategy) is Toronto's new city-wide strategic parks planning framework, which will ensure that Toronto's parks system grows and evolves to support the needs of a liveable city. It replaces the current "LPAC" approach, which is outdated because that methodology was based on Toronto's 1996 population, and did not account for the impact of growth or development intensity. This report recommends adoption of the Parkland Strategy, which provides the City with a long-term vision and framework to inform future parks planning, decision-making, land acquisition, and park investment and development for the enhancement of Toronto's parks system.

The Parkland Strategy is guided by four principles and strategic objectives:

- **Expand:** Ensure Toronto's system of parks expands as the city grows and evolves.
- **Improve:** Invest in park improvements to support a range of functions and meet the changing needs of users.
- **Connect:** Extend the park experience by connecting parks to each other and between other open spaces, to create a seamless public realm.
- **Include:** The diversity of Toronto is reflected in its system of parks.

The Strategy was informed by extensive public and stakeholder consultation that occurred over two phases between spring 2017 and fall 2018. An equity lens was applied throughout the planning and consultation process, so that under-served and equity-seeking communities were represented and issues understood.

The Parkland Strategy undertook a thorough examination of parkland need by considering six lenses appropriate to Toronto's mature and evolving urban environment:

- Parkland provision: a new methodology to measure total parkland supply available to residents within walkable access which will replace the current Local Parkland Assessment Cells (Official Plan Map 8A).
- Impact of growth: considering population growth and the impacts on the capacity of parks to support new and existing residents.
- Equity: improving use and activation in the parks system across the city to provide equitable access.
- Distribution and diversity: understanding the relationship between the range of parks and programming has a direct bearing on the capacity of the parks system to meet needs.
- Accessibility and connectivity: the ease of access to parks and the role of other open spaces to ensure a connected and versatile parks and open space network.
- Climate change: recognition that parks play a crucial role as green infrastructure to assist in adapting to and mitigating climate change.

The Parkland Strategy will provide direction for the City of Toronto to make informed decisions about how to expand, improve and connect the parks system so that it grows and evolves in an equitable manner. Twenty-five strategic actions have been identified through the Strategy's principles. Four strategic implementation tools will guide decision-making on parkland planning, acquisition and investment, they include:

- The Park Catchment Tool, a new parkland provision measurement methodology which measures the total amount of parkland available to residents within a 500 metre walking distance and accounts for the impact of growth so that future parkland pressures are considered (Figure 2);
- Updated city-wide and local parkland provision mapping (Attachment 2 and 3) that shows relative parkland need and defines low parkland provision as 12m² and less per person;
- Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Areas mapping (Attachment 5) that is determined by low parkland provision plus three additional criteria of low existing parkland supply, high growth and high percentage of low income households; and
- A Parkland Acquisition Assessment Tool that evaluates sites in a consistent, transparent manner and applies Parkland Strategy principles to guide investment decisions (Figure 5).

There is no internationally recognized standard of parkland provision per person. The new parkland provision measurement methodology determines that Toronto's city-wide average parkland provision is 28m² of parkland per person, including all parks within ravines and the City's Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs). When the parks within ravines and ESAs are excluded from the analysis, Torontonians have on average, 8.7m² of locally-serving parkland per person. Toronto's parkland provision rates vary significantly across the city, with some areas seeing average parkland provision as low as 2m² of parkland per person.

Toronto's parks are as diverse as the people who use them. There is not a one-size fits all solution to preserving, building and supporting Toronto's parks system across the city. Therefore, the Parkland Strategy provides a multi-faceted approach to addressing

the range of parkland need, so that the City can ensure that the parks system remains sustainable in the face of increased development intensity and evolution of the urban environment.

The Parkland Strategy is the City's new, strategic park planning framework that provides:

- Park Catchment Tool: New methodology for measuring parkland provision and need that is responsive to growth and other factors, and replaces the current Local Planning Assessment Cells approach.
- Parks Planning Priorities: priorities for the development of city-initiated local-level parks plans in areas of need.
- Acquisition Prioritization: areas for parkland acquisition and shared-use agreements with other public agencies.
- Development Review: a framework to support the review of development applications and assist in the implementation of the City's Official Plan.
- Planning Studies: framework to inform studies including new and under review Secondary Plans and Site and Area Specific Studies.
- Partnerships: Strategic development of partnerships to leverage opportunities to support Toronto's parks system.
- Community Benefits Strategy: Support future community benefit strategy work as required through Bill 108.

Amendments through the More Homes, More Choice Act (Bill 108), once proclaimed, will replace the mechanisms by which the City funds and acquires parkland, namely Sections 37 and 42 of the Planning Act and Development Charges. The implementation of the Parkland Strategy will evolve as the City begins to address these new legislative tools and requirements. As such, the Parkland Strategy does not make recommendations on an updated parkland dedication alternative rate given that the tool may no longer exist. Rather, the Parkland Strategy will inform the future development of a Community Benefit Strategy, which will be required in order for the City to collect Community Benefits Charge from new development. The Community Benefits Charge will likely be a key funding mechanism for parkland acquisition and improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division recommend that:

1. City Council adopt the Parkland Strategy as Toronto's parks planning framework, as presented in Attachment 6 to this report.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to use the principles, Park Catchment Tool methodology and framework developed through the city-wide Parkland Strategy to direct and inform:
 - Development of city-initiated local-level parks plans in Parkland Priority Areas.

- Prioritization of land acquisition for parks purposes.
 - Review of development applications, and preparation of planning studies including new and under review Secondary Plans and Site and Area Specific Studies.
 - Strategic development of partnerships to leverage opportunities to support Toronto's parks system.
3. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation to present the Parkland Strategy to school boards, other city agencies including CreateTO, Toronto Region Conservation Authority, and other stakeholders, including the building and development industry, as appropriate for consideration in their facility and service planning and real estate strategies.
4. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to City Council on the advancement of the Parkland Strategy's objectives every five years.
5. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, in consultation with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to use the findings on parkland need through the city-wide Parkland Strategy to inform the future Community Benefits Strategy as required by Bill 108.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The Parkland Strategy Final Report does not include recommendations for funding capital or operating investment to acquire, improve or otherwise address the City's park system:

- Capital funding for parkland acquisition and development will be included in the annual Capital Budget and Plan submission for consideration based on current capital budget planning processes.
- Operating impact of maintaining new parkland will be addressed as part of future year budget processes for City Council approval.

Currently, parkland acquisition and improvement is primarily funded through tools in the Planning Act including Section 42 (parkland dedication and alternative rate cash-in-lieu) and Section 37 (density bonusing); and the Development Charges Act. These planning tools represent primary funding sources for new parkland, and park and recreational improvements to support development, and account for approximately 56% or \$1,066 million of the 2019-2028 Capital Budget and Plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

Approximately \$697 million in Development Charges funding is allocated to growth-related parks capital projects in the 2019-2028 Council Approved Capital Budget and Plan (excluding carry forwards) for Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Section 37 community benefits and Section 42 Alternative Parkland Rate cash-in-lieu account for approximately \$369 million in Parks, Forestry and Recreation's 2019-2028 Capital Budget and Plan.

The Province's Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, received Royal Assent on June 6, 2019. Bill 108 proposes to repeal the tools municipalities currently use to secure community infrastructure including Section 37, Section 42, Section 51.1, and the growth-related park and capital infrastructure component of development charges. In its place, the Province proposes to introduce a new consolidated tool, the Community Benefits Charge ("CBC"), essentially blending local and city-wide growth-related tools.

The potential impacts of the changes cannot be fully understood until the final regulations are released by the Province. The Province has indicated the CBC tool will be revenue neutral for municipalities to ensure growth continues to pay for growth. City staff will continue to assess the impacts of the proposed legislation and provide additional comments to Council when the regulations have been released. Preliminary comments and analysis were provided to Council on May 15, 2019. Item CC7.3: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.CC7.3>

The Parkland Strategy provides key input into establishing a robust Community Benefits Strategy that is calibrated to meet future needs.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been provided the financial impacts associated with parks acquisition and development and the operating impact of maintaining new parkland as part of the 2020 budget process for review.

DECISION HISTORY

In May 2019, Staff prepared a preliminary analysis of the release of Bill 108, the More Homes More Choice Act, 2019. Council adopted recommendations that, among other matters, enabled Staff to provide feedback and engage with the Province on regulations related to the changes to the Planning Act, Development Charges Act, and Local Planning Appeals Tribunal Act. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.CC7.3>

In July 2018, Council adopted the 'Midtown in Focus: Final Report' and OPA 405 for the Yonge-Eglinton area. The OPA included a replaced the existing Secondary Plan with a new Secondary Plan for the area which included policy directions related to the provision of parks and open spaces and was supported by the Council endorsed Midtown Parks and Public Realm Plan. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG31.7>

In May 2018, Council adopted the adopted the 'TOcore: Downtown Plan Official Plan Amendment' staff report and Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 406. Among other matters, the OPA introduced a new Secondary Plan for the Downtown area. The policy directions in the Secondary Plan addresses the provision of parks and open spaces and was supported by the Council adopted Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.4>
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.5>

In November 2017, City staff also presented the 'Review of the City's Alternative Parkland Dedication Rate under Section 42 of the Planning Act' for the Executive

Committee's consideration. Staff were directed to use the findings of the report to review the Official Plan's Parks and Open Space policies.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX29.4>

The Parkland Strategy Phase 1 report was presented at the November 17, 2017, meeting of Executive Committee. The Phase 1 report included analysis of the Local Parkland Assessment Cells (LPACs) and a new measurement methodology for parkland provision. The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning were directed to report back with a Final Parkland Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX29.3>

At its meeting of October 5, 6 and 7, 2016, City Council amended item EX17.1, "Rail Deck Park - Work Plan for Official Plan Amendments and an Implementation Strategy" and requested that an update to the 2001 Parkland Acquisition Strategy be considered at the same time as the Rail Deck Park Implementation Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX17.1>

The Parks Plan (2013-2017) was adopted by City Council at its meeting on May 7, 8 and 9, 2013 and among other recommendations, directed an update to the strategy for the acquisition of parkland to continue to prioritize underserved areas and address City priorities

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PE20.1>

At its meeting of November 6, 7 and 8, 2001, City Council adopted the Parkland Acquisition Strategic Directions Report through Report No. 10, Clause 10 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee which established a general framework and approach to inform parkland acquisition directions, identified priority areas and themes and provided a basis from which to guide more detailed parkland acquisition planning.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2001/agendas/council/cc011106/edp10rpt/cl010.pdf>

Equity Impact

The City of Toronto values inclusion and diversity and aims to improve the quality of life of all Torontonians through the provision of facilities and services that are welcoming and accessible. Achieving equity in Toronto's parks system means addressing or removing systemic barriers so that all people have equal opportunity to the use and benefits from public services, facilities, and spaces. Parks play a significant role in the quality of life and livability of the city. Equity means not only access to opportunities, but also equitable benefit from the city's parks system. Parks are for everyone, and park spaces need to be inclusive for all. Parks, Forestry and Recreation and City Planning operate from an equity and diversity lens in all of their policy and program development. The Parkland Strategy will guide investment in Toronto's parks system based on principles of expand, improve, connect and include so that addressing or removing systemic barriers will provide equal opportunity to all people to use and benefit from the city's parks system. Through the development of the Strategy, Parks, Forestry and Recreation consulted and collaborated with a number of City divisions and key stakeholders to ensure the Parkland Strategy reflects equity through its principles,

objectives and implementation. This consultation has included outreach to Children Services, Equity Diversity and Human Rights, Social Development and Finance Administration, City Planning, and equity-seeking and community organizations have provided an equity lens on this analysis.

Through the application of the City of Toronto's Equity Tool, the Parkland Strategy has been analysed at the definition, planning, and development stages for potential impacts on equity-seeking groups and vulnerable residents of Toronto. Women's access to City spaces, civic engagement & community participation and safety & security will be positively impacted; low income residents' access to City spaces, access to public transit and safety & security will be positively impacted; persons with disabilities' access to City spaces and safety & security will be positively impacted; and vulnerable seniors' access to City spaces and safety & security will be positively impacted.

The City of Toronto will continue to be committed to reducing barriers and ensuring equitable access to the parks system for all Toronto residents.

COMMENTS

The Comments section of this report is organized as follows:

1. Parkland Strategy Overview and Engagement
2. Toronto Parks Planning and Policy Summary
3. A Vision for Toronto's Parks System
4. Toronto's Parks System
5. A New Parkland Provision Measurement Methodology
6. Examining Toronto's Parkland Need – Six Lenses
7. The Strategy: Implementation Tools
8. The Strategy: Strategic Actions
9. Alignment with other City Plans and Strategies
10. Measuring for Successful Outcomes
11. Next Steps

1. Parkland Strategy Overview and Engagement

The Parkland Strategy was developed in two phases, and included extensive input from the public, key stakeholders, and community, advisory and equity-seeking groups.

Phase 1: 2017

Phase 1 focused on the analysis and assessment of the long-term requirements for parkland in Toronto to meet the needs of communities across the city. This included a review and assessment of Toronto's current parkland measurement methodology and how it informed parkland acquisition and development funding, practice and policy.

The first phase of public engagement informed the analysis of park supply, distribution and functionality, and barriers to equitable access to the city's diverse parks and open space network.

The result of Phase 1 was the development of a new parkland provision measurement methodology, called the Park Catchment Tool. This tool provided an updated picture of city-wide parkland provision and informed the preliminary analysis of parkland need.

The Parkland Strategy Phase 1 Report presented this preliminary analysis and was brought before Executive Committee in November 2017. This work was used to inform a number of major City initiatives including the Rail Deck Park Implementation Plan, TOcore: Downtown Plan and Midtown in Focus Parks and Public Realm Plan.

Phase 2: 2018-2019

Phase 2 of the Parkland Strategy included the review of existing park planning processes and practices, and considered the effectiveness of current implementation and funding tools. It also undertook a thorough examination of parkland need and determined objectives and actions to better position the City to strategically plan for and invest in parkland.

The second phase of public engagement informed the development of the Parkland Strategy's vision and guiding principles, and provided key input into criteria for priority setting for parks planning and investment.

The result of Phase 2 was the development of strategic actions and city-wide priority areas for parks planning and acquisition, based on a thorough examination of parkland need.

Study Approaches and Engagement Methods

The City of Toronto acknowledges that the Parkland Strategy was developed on the traditional territory of First Nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The City also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

The Parkland Strategy is data-driven analysis using the most accurate and timely data and information provided by Statistics Canada, multiple City divisions, as well as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Parks, and Parks Canada. The demographic data from Statistics Canada is central to the park catchment tool used to measure provision. Additionally, the estimated future population data has been informed by development pipeline data provided by the City Planning Division. The development pipeline represents all active development projects for which applications have been submitted to the City. Though not all projects will be approved or built as proposed, and new projects will be submitted, generally the development pipeline provides a gauge of where development will occur and where people are anticipated to live 15 years into the future. The Parkland Strategy utilized the Q2 2018 development pipeline data for the purposes of its analysis.

An array of methodological approaches were used to reach residents across Toronto's geographic and demographic spectrum. An equity lens was applied throughout the consultative process so that voices of under-served and equity-seeking communities were brought to the forefront. The public was engaged through two online surveys, with a total of 3,784 responses, four open houses, with over one hundred attendees, over 50 pop-up events, reaching 2,152 individuals, and 1 online, live-streamed panel discussion reaching over 350 attendees and viewers to date.

Stakeholders and advisory panels were engaged through a series of workshops and presentations. Three workshops were conducted for internal and external stakeholders, which included City of Toronto staff, community groups, equity-seeking groups, arts and environment not-for-profits, and the development, business and private sector. Two workshops were held with Toronto's Planning Review Panel and two presentations were given to Toronto's Live Green volunteers. One presentation was given to Toronto's Aboriginal Affairs Committee. One presentation and two meetings were held with the development industry through Building Industry and Land Development (BILD). Over 200 stakeholders provided key input.

Two comprehensive What We Heard Reports are available on the project website: www.toronto.ca/parklandstrategy.

2. Toronto Parks Planning and Policy Summary

Ontario's policy-led land use planning system requires that local planning documents align with provincial statutes and policies. The Parkland Strategy has been drafted in accordance with Toronto's in-force Official Plan (OP). The Parkland Strategy is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS) and conforms with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (Growth Plan).

The PPS sets out a vision for strong, liveable and healthy communities that include recreation, parks and open spaces. The Growth Plan prioritizes intensification, efficient use of land, and complete communities that include high quality public open space, adequate parkland, and opportunities for recreation. To support these goals, Toronto's OP recognizes Toronto's system of parks and open spaces as a foundational component of the City's urban structure. The OP protects the parks system from encroachment by development and highlights the need to further expand and integrate the system as Toronto grows.

The City's OP also includes policies that require the provision of parkland as a condition of development. As part of the recently-passed More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108), the Province proposes to change the legislative basis for this tool within S.42 of the Planning Act, along with other tools traditionally available for parkland acquisition and improvement (S. 37, Development Charges) and replace them with a combined Community Benefits Charge (CBC). The impact of Bill 108 continues to be assessed, as the Province releases Regulations associated with Bill 108 and incrementally proclaims sections of the Bill that affect matters such parkland.

Further details on the planning policy framework as it relates to the Parkland Strategy can be found in the Toronto Parks Planning and Policy Backgrounder in Attachment 1.

3. A Vision for Toronto's Parks System

Toronto is a *city within a park*. Parks are integral to Toronto's identity as a global city, made up of unique communities and neighbourhoods. Toronto's parks are big and small, connected and pocketed, and provide a range of functions, from natural and serene to playful and urban. Toronto's parks provide a sense of belonging to a diverse population, they are for everyone.

Toronto is growing and intensifying. Its future will be characterized by growth, rebuilding, and transformation. Parks are core to a growing city and essential to quality of life, a sustainable environment and a thriving economy. As the city grows and evolves, the parks system must expand and improve with it. Growth provides opportunity to strengthen the urban fabric with parks that are the backbone of every community. New parks will be added to a thriving system and be designed to support the year round needs of a growing and changing population. Parks have become an extension of our homes, where people can gather, play, socialize, celebrate and rejuvenate. Parks provide the necessary green infrastructure to support climate change resiliency, ecological health and wildlife habitat. Toronto's vision for its parks system is connected, resilient, accessible and beautiful.

The Parkland Strategy's vision was developed through extensive engagement with stakeholders and the public, and reflects how the city's parks system should grow and evolve over the next 20 years. The Parkland Strategy Vision Statement is:

Parks are essential elements for a good quality of life by supporting personal well-being, social connection, healthy living and ecological sustainability. Toronto's park system will expand and improve as the city grows to ensure that parkland is accessible, functional, connected, and resilient.

Four Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles support this vision and guided the development of the Parkland Strategy. The principles are valuable to ensuring that future park planning and the development of future policies and recommendations are in service of the Strategy's vision:

- Expand the parks system by creating new parks to support growth and address gaps to ensure a parks system that will support the needs of a livable, diverse city;
- Improve the function of existing parks to promote community cohesion, ecological sustainability, and health and well-being through active living, access to nature, and the provision of spaces for rest, relaxation and leisure;
- Connect parks and other open spaces, physically and visually, and leverage opportunities so that people, communities and wildlife have abundant access to parks and can navigate to and through the parks and open space system;
- Include everyone by removing barriers so that parks and other open spaces are inclusive places and equitably accessible for people of all ages, cultures, genders, abilities and incomes.

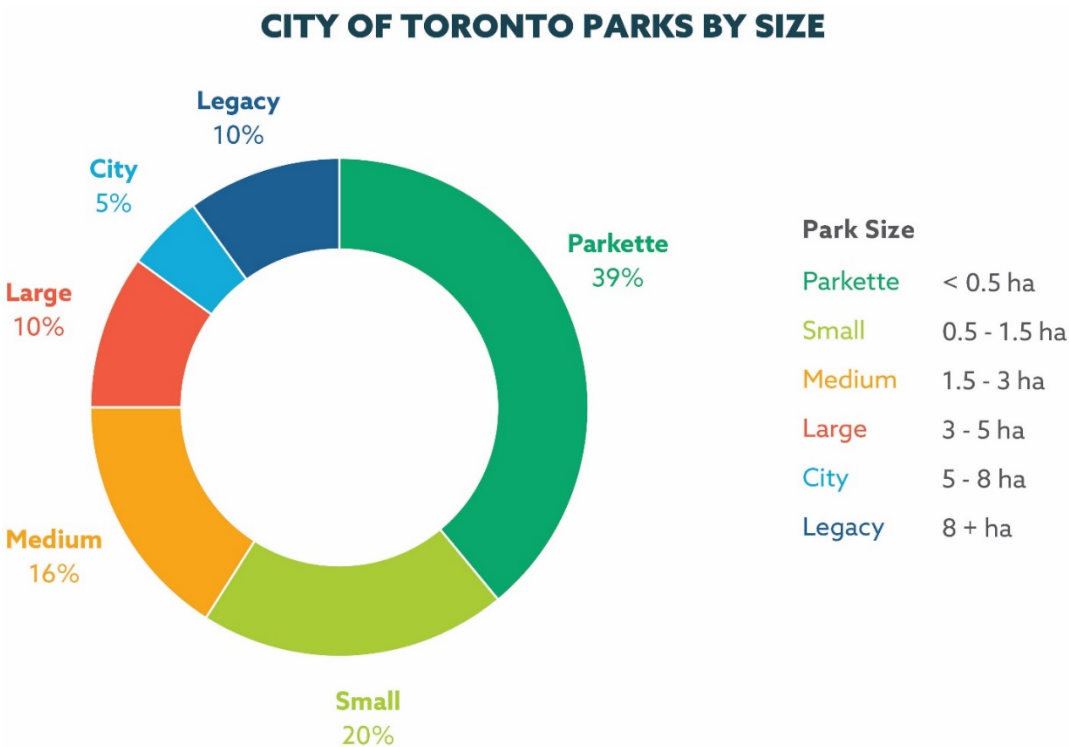
4. Toronto's Parks System

Toronto's extensive system of parks is one of the city's greatest assets and is essential to the quality of life that Torontonians and tourists enjoy. Toronto's parks system contributes to ecological, economic, and socio-cultural vitality through increasing citizen health, building community and social cohesion, acting as an extension of living spaces, enhancing and contributing to the economy, boosting tourism, and providing crucial green infrastructure for climate change resiliency. An overwhelming 99 percent of online survey respondents indicated that Toronto's parks are important to their quality of life and to Toronto's identity as a healthy, equitable and prosperous city.

Toronto's parks system covers 13 percent of Toronto's land base, over approximately 8,000 hectares, in more than 1,500 named parks. This parks system is comprised of over 3,600 hectares of lands which are City-owned and operated, and over 4,400 hectares of land which are owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), but operated and maintained by the City of Toronto.

Toronto's parks come in all shapes and sizes throughout communities, neighbourhoods, the ravines and the waterfront. A range of park sizes enables different park use across the system. Parkettes (less than 0.5 hectares) make up 39 percent of the number of parks in Toronto, and the largest parks (greater than 8 hectares) make up 10 percent.

Figure 1: Toronto's Park Size Breakdown



Within this collection of parks, there is a wide range of uses, utilities, access and functions. Parks draw local, as well as city-wide users because of a combination of their size, function, location and access. Toronto's parkland can be broadly categorized into Planned and Natural parks. Planned parks can be defined as lands that have been

acquired, designed and conceived for public use. Natural parks can be defined as lands that have been preserved in a natural state, such as Toronto's ravines, wetlands, and the natural portions along the City's waterfront. Further, the types of programming and features found in these categories generally fall into three broad functions:

- Sport and Play: organized or programmed sports and recreation, and active play
- Community and Civic: community activities and interaction, and social cohesion
- Passive and Ecological: passive recreation and nature play, biodiversity and ecological services.

While the function and character of each park varies – very few parks provide all functions. Toronto's parks work together to provide a system of parkland that responds to the diversity and needs of the city.

Toronto's ravine system is particularly unique and plays an important role in contributing to the system of parks and open space. Ravines are fundamentally natural spaces, with limited opportunity for programming. Their primary functions are to provide ecological servicing and resilience and they serve as the City's foundation for long-term sustainability. A 2018 study by the City of Toronto, in partnership with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, of ecosystem services estimated the economic value of ravines at \$822 million. This is a conservative estimate, based on the most current data and valuation approaches to monetizing the benefits to people from the ravines, including recreation, physical and mental health, air quality, and carbon sequestration.

Toronto's parks system is supplemented by a range of other public and private outdoor places like school yards, cemeteries, hydro corridors, and privately-owned publicly-accessible open spaces (POPS). These do not replace the need for public parks, but provide other opportunities for Torontonians to access open space. For the most part, these other open spaces provide limited active programming and largely offer passive recreation opportunities. While the City does not have jurisdiction over these lands, public access or use is in some cases enabled through partnerships, agreements, or easements.

5. A New Parkland Provision Measurement Methodology

For the last 18 years, the City's tool to inform decisions about parkland acquisition has been the Local Parkland Acquisition Cells (LPAC) map. The Local Parkland Acquisition Cells (LPAC) map is provided as an information map in the Official Plan (Map 8B). It informs the Parkland Acquisition Priority Areas map identified in the Municipal Code in Chapter 415-23 (Schedule A, Article III), where an alternative parkland dedication rate will be applied as a condition of development or redevelopment. The LPAC map rationale and approach resulted from the City's Parkland Acquisition Strategic Direction Report (PASDR) that was developed in 2001. The LPAC map communicated local parkland need based on census information and a weighted value for different classifications of park types. While this methodology was an effective tool for its time, some challenges exist with its use and application today. Primarily, it provided a snapshot of parkland provision based on Toronto's 1996 population (2,385,421), and did not account for the impact of growth so that future parkland pressures could be considered. Advancements in data availability and GIS tools and technology have

supported a more modern and nimble tool to guide the City's strategic decision-making related to future growth and parkland acquisition and investment needs.

Through Phase 1 of the Parkland Strategy, the Park Catchment Tool was developed to provide a current and more accurate analysis of parkland provision. It uses Census Dissemination Blocks and measures access to parks based on walkability of the network of sidewalks, local roads and pathways reflecting actual travel patterns and access. The Park Catchment Tool includes the following improvements:

- A detailed picture of local population: Using Statistics Canada's Census Dissemination Blocks, these are the smallest geographic areas of census and dwelling counts available, which provide a detailed indication of park provision;
- Application of park catchments based on a reasonable travel distance to each park (5-10 minute walk): The catchment area of parks is determined through actual walking distance, using the City's sidewalk and local road network data;
- The total amount of parkland within a walkable catchment area per person : Measures parkland provision (supply per person) based on the total park area that serves the population within actual walking distance;
- Consideration of future population: City Planning's development pipeline data is used to assess the potential changes in parkland provision based on growth with a 15-year time frame;
- Understanding parks from a city-wide and local perspective: The city-wide park provision analysis considers all parkland, regardless of size and function. This includes Toronto Islands and parkland located in Toronto's ravine system. A secondary analysis excluding parkland located within the City's ravine system and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA's) provides a picture of locally-oriented parkland provision;
- It is a replicable tool: this new methodology can be used by the City at any time to update and recalibrate parkland provision based on additional growth at the city-wide and local scale.

Figure 2: The Park Catchment Tool



The Parkland Strategy's Park Catchment Tool is the City's updated parkland provision measurement methodology. This system will replace the Local Parkland Assessment Cells (LPAC) methodology. Through the City's preparation of a Community Benefits Charge By-law, and in anticipation of the transition date to Community Benefits being January 1, 2021, staff will undertake a comprehensive review of existing Official Plan policies, maps and by-laws. Reference to the LPACs in the Official Plan and Parkland Acquisition Priority Areas in the Municipal Code will be updated and replaced through a comprehensive amendment led by City Planning. If the final Community Benefits regulation sets out a transition date later than January 1, 2021, staff may bring forward amendments to the Official Plan and Municipal Code to replace the LPAC map and adopt the Parkland Strategy Park Catchment Tool in advance of the migration to the Community Benefits regime.

6. Examining Toronto's Parkland Need – Six Lenses

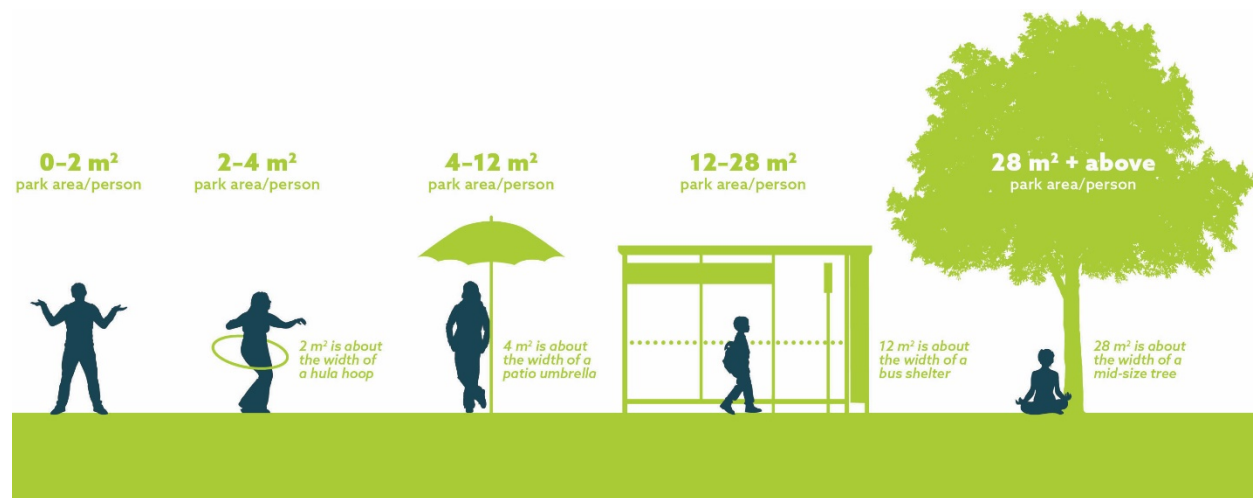
Parkland provision provides the basis for considering need for parkland acquisition, planning and connectivity, but examining parkland need in mature urban environments like Toronto requires additional criteria to be considered beyond traditional parkland provision of park area per person. The Parkland Strategy uses six lenses to consider Toronto's parkland need: parkland provision, impact of growth, park distribution and diversity, access and connectivity, equity, and climate change.

1. Parkland Provision

Toronto's Parkland Provision Map 2016 (Attachment 2) illustrates the amount of parkland available to residents in 2016 per census dissemination block. This city-wide parkland provision analysis includes all City of Toronto owned and operated parkland, regardless of size. Parkland located within the City's ravine system is included in the city-wide analysis if the ravine has less than 45% slope and where the park is within 20 metres from a sidewalk or local road. This accounts for the fact that there are barriers to entering some parks due to slopes and other physical barriers (e.g. buildings).

In 2016, on a city-wide average, residents had access to 28 m² of parkland per person. There is no internationally accepted optimal rate of parkland provision. There is significant variation in parkland across the city as a result of three key drivers: population density, park supply, and walkable access to parkland. Areas located close to the ravine system have the highest parkland provision. Areas with combinations of high population density, low park supply, or restricted access to parks have the lowest parkland provision. Further, the variations of parkland provision across the city can, in part, be attributed to how each former municipality approached city building and park planning.

Figure 3: Parkland Provision Ranges



Other populations have compounding impact on parkland provision. Employment, student and tourism population creates additional pressure on the parks system beyond typical resident uses. In the Phase 1 online survey, 63 percent of respondents reported using parks during their work day. This cumulative pressure is additionally important to consider for parks operations and maintenance.

The parks within Toronto's vast ravine system (as defined by the City's Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-law limit) provide a primarily passive recreation and ecological services function. Further, ravine parks are also more difficult to reach because of limited access points due to topography and natural cover. While some parks located within Toronto's ravines, such as High Park, Earl Bales and Sunnybrook parks, are accessible by foot, public transit and car, and include a vast range of amenities and programming, these are not typically found in ravine parks. To assess a more locally-oriented parkland provision, a secondary analysis was conducted, where all parks within ravines and Environmentally Significant Areas were removed from the park supply data. The Local Parkland Provision Map (2016) (Attachment 3) shows that parkland provision decreases from 28 m² to 8.7 m². It is important to consider provision both with and without ravines, to better inform parks planning and where there may be gaps in city-wide and locally-oriented programming and functionality.

2. The Impact of Growth

The Growth Plan forecasts 3.40 million people living and 1.71 million people working in the city by 2041. This growth will place pressure on the capacity of parks to support new and existing population. The Impact of Growth on Parkland Provision, by Percent Change Map (Attachment 4) identifies where this estimated growth will have the greatest impact on parkland provision. The decrease in parkland provision is most evident in areas of high population growth. Many of these areas are already deficient in parkland and will continue to experience a decrease in parkland supply because of increased population. However, the effects of declining parkland provision is also felt in the low-growth residential areas adjacent to growth, as residents from growth areas access parks in adjacent locales.

Assuming no parkland is added to the system, the impact of growth on parkland provision equates to 87 percent of all reporting units (Census Dissemination Blocks) seeing a decrease in provision, while 17 percent of those have a pronounced decrease of 25 percent or greater decline. Additionally, the increasingly vertical nature of development occurring in the city results in additional population having minimal private access to greenspace, resulting in an even heavier reliance on the parks system to fulfill recreational and outdoor needs. The Phase 1 online survey showed that 37 percent of respondents do not have access to private outdoor space. Today, over 90 percent of new housing is in multi-unit residential buildings greater than 5 storeys.

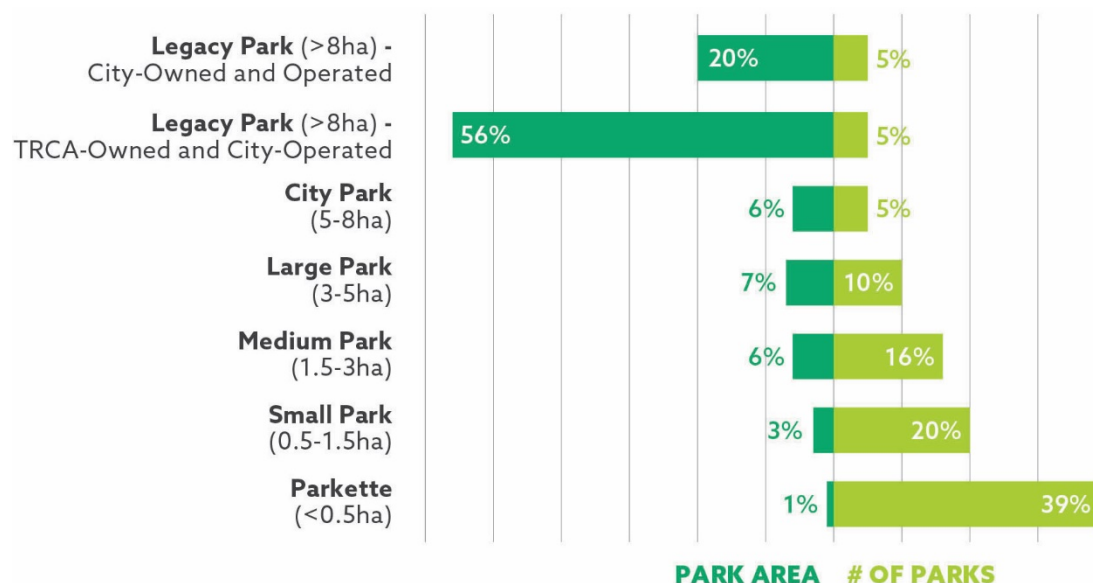
3. Park Distribution and Diversity

Toronto's parks system has a wide range of parks; from the smallest parkettes to the large, natural areas that make up our ravine system. Collectively, this network of parks is the backbone of the city.

There are however, gaps in Toronto's parks system where a lack of existing parkland results in low parkland provision in the surrounding neighbourhoods. These areas of low parkland supply see a compounding negative impact on parkland provision when high population density is also present.

Further, gaps exist related to park size and lack of larger parks that typically provide a fuller range of features and functionality that make sense to the local community and neighbourhood. Larger parks also accommodate many of the community events and gatherings that occur and are permitted in parks. Large parks play an important role from a facility-provision perspective as they are able to accommodate these and other types of land-intensive facilities, while also accommodating general park use and amenities. While essential to the park system, legacy parks (8 hectares and greater) account only for 10 percent of the total number of parks, but cover 76 percent of the total park area. Similarly, parkettes (less than 0.5 hectares) account for 39 percent of the total number of parks, but only cover 1 percent of the park area in Toronto.

Figure 4: Relationship Between Park Area and Number of Parks, by Park Size



This is an issue, as the smaller parkettes are commonly what the City is able to acquire through development review process. Where opportunities for legacy sized parks arise, the city needs to create and prioritize acquisition to meet the recreational, facility and programming needs of a growing city, that smaller parks are not capable of accommodating.

In addition to ensuring a full range of parks within the system of parks, programming and other recreational facilities are important considerations in examining need. The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (FMP), adopted by City Council in November 2017, will guide investment in parks and recreation facilities such as community centres, swimming pools, sports fields, and arenas over the next 20 years. The FMP is a plan to improve access to recreation by addressing gaps in facility provision; maintaining aging facilities in a state of good repair; and responding to future facility needs based on population growth, changing trends and increased demand.

A supply of parkland is critical to the successful implementation of the FMP. The Parkland Strategy supports the FMP through expanding available park space for recreation through acquisition but also through promoting improvements to existing parks. Some recommendations will require using existing parkland and the acquisition of additional parkland to support recreational needs. The FMP and the Parkland Strategy will be integrated to ensure that a balance of parkland uses is maintained as new facilities are constructed. A streamlined and coordinated approach will be undertaken in identifying parkland priorities for recreation facilities, informing geographic locations of facilities, and prioritizing opportunities for parkland acquisition.

While the Parkland Strategy will identify priority areas in need of parkland acquisition, there are also many areas of city which have adequate parkland that are in need of improvements, additional facilities and increased programming. The Parkland Strategy supports the importance of park improvements to meet the needs of Toronto's growing population, and the FMP is the strategy to link these specific improvements to the availability and quality of assets and recreation opportunities, to support neighbourhoods. Together, both strategies guide and direct the City, and support the improvement and increased access to both park space and recreation opportunities.

Additionally, Toronto's Ravine Strategy, in alignment with the Parkland Strategy, is critical to navigate the fine line between protection and use, and identify and prioritize the actions and investments needed. The Parkland Strategy will support the Ravine Strategy by providing recommendations to improve connections to and through ravine parks. This is particularly important in areas where nearby neighbourhoods (e.g. the Danforth) are in relatively close proximity to ravines, but have low parkland supply because of the poor access to them.

4. Access and Connections

Walkability has become an industry-standard park access measure. The ability for all residents to be able to comfortably and safely walk to a park, without the need of a vehicle, provides for a more equitable parkland system. In some areas of the city, residents do not have access to any parkland within walking distance (500m or 5-10 minute walk) of their homes. According to a walkability gaps analysis, 16.5% of

Toronto's population cannot walk to any park within 500m from their homes. Walkable access to parks is limited by physical and natural barriers such as highways, railways, rivers, and ravine slopes. Many parks are isolated, resulting in a disconnected system where people face barriers to travel to and through parks.

Toronto's parks system is supplemented by a range of other public and private outdoor places like school yards, cemeteries, hydro corridors, and privately-owned publicly-accessible open spaces (POPS). These other open spaces enrich the parks system and play an important role by improving connectivity and access to outdoor public space, as well as through enriching the "parks" experience outside of City-owned or operated parkland. While POPS contribute to the public realm, they do not replace the need to acquire functional public parkland which the City can program and improve to meet the public's needs as they evolve.

5. Equity

Achieving equity in Toronto's parks system means addressing or removing systemic barriers so that all people have equal opportunity to the use and benefit from public services, facilities, and spaces. It is important to note that equity means not only equal access to opportunities, but equal benefit from the City's parks system. Parks are for everyone and park spaces need to be inclusive for all, however, barriers to equity exist in Toronto's parks system. Through consultation with the public, stakeholders, and equity-seeking groups, the common barriers that were noted include deficiencies in park supply, lack of or poor park access and inequitable investment in park design and programming.

The Parkland Strategy has considered factors of equity across the parks system, including park supply, distribution and access, and how vulnerable populations may or may not benefit from equitable access to the parks system based on these considerations. The Parkland Strategy has incorporated the Statistics Canada data set of percentage of low income households as a key criteria to align investment to support communities comprised of equity-seeking groups. "Include" is one of the key principles of this strategy, with a number of associated actions to begin to address equity in Toronto's parks. Moving forward, these key partnerships can ensure that the City prioritizes these areas for future park improvements and plans to broaden standards in parks planning, implementation and design to bring the equity outcomes that will guide Toronto's future.

6. A Changing Climate

On October 4, 2019, Toronto City Council declared a climate emergency and committed to accelerating action to address climate change. In recent years, Toronto residents and businesses have experienced more frequent flooding and other severe weather events. Toronto's weather is expected to get hotter, wetter and wilder as climate risks are increasing. This action recognizes that Toronto, like other municipalities, is vulnerable to the stresses and shocks of increased frequency and intensity from extreme weather events caused by climate change. As the impacts of climate change increase, compounding pressure will be put on the grey, green and blue infrastructure that the city depends on for provision of urban and ecological services.

Toronto's Official Plan defines green infrastructure as natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Toronto's parks system is crucial green infrastructure that plays a critical role in mitigating the impacts of climate change and safeguarding the city from the stresses and shocks of extreme weather. Parks provide a stormwater conveyance and management function, by intercepting and absorbing water. Parks play a role as microclimate adjusters by reducing the impacts of urban heat island (UHI) by improving air quality by filtering carbon and particulate matter from the atmosphere.

The Parkland Strategy supports Toronto's Resiliency Strategy, through expanding the availability of parkland, which contributes to the city's green infrastructure and climate change resiliency. The Resiliency Strategy sets out a vision, goals, and actions to help Toronto survive, adapt and thrive in the face of any challenge, particularly climate change. Expanding and improving parks through the Parkland Strategy also helps build stronger, more engaged communities which are essential to the city's resilience.

7. The Strategy: Implementation Tools

Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Map

Building on the examination of parkland need through the six lenses, analysis was undertaken to identify where investments and planning should be prioritized across the city. While parkland provision mapping (both with and without the ravine parkland included) will act as the basis for all parks planning, the identification of priority areas will inform decision-making on priority investments in parks.

Parkland Priority Areas were determined by the application of the following criteria:

- Areas with low parkland provision (below 12m² per person in 2033)
- Areas with low existing park supply (less than 1.5 hectares of total park area within walking distance in 2016)
- Areas with high growth (more than 5000 people living in 1 hectare in 2033)
- Areas with high percentage of low income residents (25% or more low income households in 2016)

The results of this analysis are highlighted in Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Areas Map (Attachment 5). It shows the areas across the city that should be prioritized for the development of local-level parks plans, parks acquisition, and improvements in connectivity and access.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation works closely with City Planning to integrate park and recreation facility planning, into city-building studies such as Secondary Plans, Site and Area Specific Studies, block studies, and other local planning frameworks. Currently, Parks, Forestry and Recreation is working on numerous existing planning studies and major development applications that are located within or are immediately adjacent to the Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Areas. Some of these studies include: Golden Mile Secondary Plan, Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan review, King-Parliament and King-Spadina Secondary Plans, Christie's Site and Area Specific Plan and Main Street Site and Area Specific Plan. In addition, there are other Council

directed planning studies that have recently been or are anticipated to be initiated over the next year including: North-Yonge Secondary Plan, Jane-Finch, Weston and Mount Dennis. Parks, Forestry and Recreation also leads the implementation of the various parks planning frameworks that have been approved by Council, including: Lawrence Heights; Six Points/ Etobicoke Civic Centre; Don Mills Crossing, TOcore Parks and Public Realm Plan, and the Midtown in Focus Parks and Public Realm Plan. This represents a significant work program for the Division, one that is essential in ensuring that the City both plan for and implement the park infrastructure to improve the liveability of both existing and communities planned for future growth.

To enable the City to take a strategic approach to acquisitions and improvements, the Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Areas map will inform where locally-oriented parks plans are needed to be incorporated into future planning initiatives. Future parks plans should address:

- The amount of locally-accessible parkland per person;
- The range of park sizes and functions within an area;
- Population change, demographic and social characteristics;
- Estimated future development intensity including residential and employment populations;
- Opportunities for new parkland or acquisitions that contribute to the city's system of parks and open spaces, with consideration for achieving a full range of parks;
- Opportunities to leverage city-owned land for new parks and open spaces along with meeting other city-building priorities;
- Potential improvements to parks and need for recreation facilities;
- Natural features that should be protected and enhanced;
- Opportunities to commemorate and celebrate Indigenous peoples or other cultures;
- The potential to link parks and open spaces through new trails, bicycle infrastructure or public realm improvements;
- The relationship between existing and potential new parks to the urban form and street network;
- Opportunities to use parks to create community focal points to provide places for community gathering and celebration, public art, heritage interpretation and cultural expression as well as recreational opportunities;
- The potential for publicly-accessible open space to complement the provision of public parks by meeting some programmatic needs and to improve connectivity between elements of the parks and open space system; and
- Prioritization of tools at the City's disposal and the development of an acquisition strategy to implement the local parks and open space framework.

Parkland Assessment Tool

Under the current Local Parkland Acquisition Cells (LPAC) methodology, the City does not have a tool to assist in evaluating and assessing relative parkland need when reviewing proactive or reactive acquisition opportunities. An assessment tool would benefit the decision-making process, to ensure consistency and transparency in using the Parkland Strategy's principles and strategic objectives to guide investment.

The Parkland Strategy includes a Parkland Assessment Tool (Figure 5), which will assist in evaluating whether a site or sites should be acquired for parkland purposes, either in response to a request or based on a site available on the market. The tool includes criteria that reflect the Parkland Strategy's four principles and will be used to evaluate the suitability of the land to meet City needs. The Parkland Assessment Tool will provide clarity to staff and City Council on the priorities for new parkland, and will help to ensure that evaluations are conducted fairly, transparently and consistently.

Figure 5: Parkland Assessment Tool

PRIMARY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

EXPAND + INCLUDE	Is the site in a parkland priority area?
IMPROVE	Is the site suitable for parkland purposes (e.g. size, shape, and utility)?
CONNECT	Does the site improve connectivity to other parks and open spaces?
<div> <div>If all criteria are answered YES, Proceed to Secondary Assessment Criteria</div> <div>If any criteria are answered NO, Do Not Acquire</div> </div>	

SECONDARY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

EXPAND	Does this address a park range gap in the area?
	Is the site located within an area with a high number of employees, students, or tourists?
	Is the value of the acquisition reasonable relative to the number of people who would benefit?
IMPROVE	Can the site accommodate an FMP facility?
CONNECT	Is the site within 500 m of transit access?
INCLUDE	Is the site located in an area with a high percentage of low income residents?
	Does the site have cultural significance?
<div> <div>If a majority of criteria are answered YES, Recommend for Acquisition</div> <div>If a majority of criteria are answered NO, Do Not Acquire</div> </div>	

The assessment tool will be used to evaluate acquisitions through the purchase of land (proactively or reactively), jurisdictional transfers of land or land dedications through the development process. Through the evaluation process, a site must meet all criteria in the primary assessment to proceed for acquisition consideration. The site (or sites) must meet a majority of criteria in the secondary assessment for staff to consider recommending a land acquisition for parkland purposes. The assessment tool criteria will be modified and adapted over time based on staff feedback and new park planning objectives. Additional special criteria can be developed as part of the development of local Parks Plans.

Leveraging Opportunities to Enhance Toronto Parks

The Parkland Strategy will support achieving the long-term growth objectives of Toronto's Official Plan and provincial plans and policies that recognizes that parks are essential in planning for complete communities. A robust and organized implementation plan will bring the Parkland Strategy vision to life, and foster perceivable changes in neighbourhoods across the city.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation is reviewing the implementation tools and the internal processes and practices that support them and will work with other City divisions to ensure for the most effective use of the tools to meet the Toronto's parkland needs. This includes working with CreateTO to seek strategic opportunities for parkland within the City's own real estate holdings. The City will continue to partner with other land owners such as TRCA, schools boards, and institutions, to increase public access and enjoyment of open spaces, as all agencies benefit and have similar goals and values in supporting Torontonians need for outdoor space. Leveraging these opportunities is essential given the rising cost and limited availability of land for parks and other city priorities. Further, there are opportunities to review the City's current practice of using reserve funds to purchase land for parkland purposes outright, rather than as a financing tool.

8. The Strategy: Strategic Actions

The Parkland Strategy will provide direction for the City of Toronto to make informed decisions about how to expand, improve, and connect the parks system so that it grows and evolves in an equitable manner. The following city-wide actions have been identified through the Parkland Strategy's four guiding principles. There is no one-size fits all solution to preserving, building and supporting Toronto's parks system across the city. This is a multi-faceted approach to addressing the range of parkland need, so that the City can ensure that the parks system remains sustainable in the face of growth and development intensity.

Expand

A systems approach to expanding new parkland to support growth and address existing gaps is required to create a parks system that will support the needs of a livable, diverse city.

Objective: Ensure Toronto's system of parks expands as the city grows and evolves.

Expand Actions

- Advance implementation of parks and public realm plans in high growth areas, such as the recently approved TOcore: Downtown Parks and Public Realm plan and Midtown in Focus Parks Plan.
- Expand existing parks by acquiring and securing lands adjacent to existing parks and particularly in high-growth areas to improve programming potential and accommodate more use and activities.
- Establish new or expansion of existing, multi-functional parks within walking distance of growth areas, areas of historical deficiencies, and within low income neighborhoods to support complete communities, address gaps and create a connected and walkable parks system.
- Seize key opportunities to acquire and create new legacy parks over-time that will be powerful city-building moves and iconic open spaces that strengthen Toronto's identity as a global, liveable city.
- Continue to capitalize on the revitalization and regeneration areas occurring along the waterfront and the new, major park opportunities afforded by the revitalization.
- Partner with the schools boards to expand and/or create new shared park/open space opportunities that would benefit both the City and the school boards in enhancing both the quality and quantity of park space accessible for community use.
- Ensure that new neighbourhoods in both horizontal and vertical forms include new, high-quality parks to support residents and workers. These new parks should create community focal points to foster social interaction and active living and balance the amount of land set aside for streets, buildings and parks.
- Streamline parkland acquisition processes so that the City can be ready to act when new opportunities for parkland expansion arise.

Improve

The City must expand its parks system and it must also commit to improving existing parks, especially where land for acquisition is scarce. This is both practical, given the ever increasing cost of land, and critical to achieve high-quality parks that have the carrying capacity to support their use. In high-growth cities such as Toronto, parks must be high-quality and multi-functional to accommodate the needs of the diverse groups of users accessing the parks system.

Improvements to Toronto's parks will lead to great use of park spaces. Parks, Forestry and Recreation undertakes continuous improvement of the over 1500 existing parks across the city through regular capital planning and investment. The Parkland Strategy did not include a site-specific assessment of parks quality or condition, rather it recognizes that multi-functional and high-quality design is crucial for future park improvements to support the needs of the growing city, where parks act as prominent civic spaces as well as assets to the local community.

Improvements to existing parks is particularly important in low income communities where parks play a vital role in supporting quality of life and/or where access to private greenspace is limited. It is also important to improve parks in stable neighbourhoods that have historically had little-to-no revenues from growth-related tools to fund parkland improvement. Investing in parks in these neighbourhoods, as well as low income communities will ensure greater equity in the distribution of high-quality parks across the city.

Objective: Invest in park improvements to support a range of functions and meet the changing needs of users.

Improve Actions:

- Improve parks to enhance their prominence, comfort, accessibility, utility, safety, and quality of design in order to support changing parkland needs over time.
- Design future parks to be flexible, high-quality, multi-functional, inclusive, durable, and that are inviting in all seasons, for stable neighbourhood areas, low income communities, and to support increasing intensity of use in growth areas.
- Continue to advance existing Park Master Plans, including Humber Bay, Island, Centennial, Crombie Park and Eglinton Park.
- Prioritize the development of master plans for larger parks that have intense use, have not had major capital investment, are in areas targeted for growth, areas near higher order transit, or are located within NIA's with high concentrations of children and seniors.
- Recognize the interrelationship of parks within identified geographic/study areas and ensure that communities have access to a range of parks that meet the three categories of park functionality: sport and play, passive and ecological, and community and civic.
- Develop park design best practices to improve the resiliency of Toronto's parks and recognize the role that parks play in the broader resilience of the city.

Connect

Creating better connections to, and between both existing and new parks is an important part of creating a seamless parks system. In addition, connecting parks to other open spaces enables people to navigate to and through the entire parks and open space network. This initiative is crucial in all areas of the city, including suburban areas of the city where new connections will remove barriers caused by disconnected street networks, and in high growth areas where improved connectivity to parks and open space will in effect serve to increase parkland provision.

Objective: Extend the park experience by connecting parks to each other and between other open spaces, to create a seamless public realm.

Connect Actions:

- Improve connectivity through expansion of the City's Cycling Network Plan to create safe links between parks spaces that encourage exploration and physical activity.
- Improve and integrate the design of streets and other city-owned land adjacent to parks to enlarge the feeling of park spaces and make the pedestrian experience more seamless, safer and more comfortable.
- Pursue agreements with educational and other institutions to expand available open space resources for community use to create "win-win" partnerships that recognize school yards and other publicly owned open spaces as integral to the overall open space network.
- Continue to improve the public realm (streets, publicly accessible spaces) where it serves to connect and complement the parks system and support an interconnected network of parks and open spaces.

- Recognize the role and importance of parks in supporting biodiversity and as wildlife corridors, and help to contribute to that role.
- Leverage transit and hydro-corridors as opportunities to improve connection and access to parks.
- Work with the school boards to develop an improved and inter-connected park and open space system.

Include

Parks are for everyone. Removing barriers to Toronto's parks system, ensuring that parks and open spaces are inclusive spaces and accessible for people of all ages, cultures, genders, abilities, and income levels across the city is a priority. Toronto is a diverse city, rich in culture and history, and the parks system should reflect that. Creating a sense of belonging and welcoming, along with implementing universally accessible design best practices in parks will encourage more people to make use of the parks system more often. Additionally, park design and programming should reflect the needs of local communities.

Place-making, by planning, designing and managing public spaces through a people-centered lens is important as it allows for the creation of more meaningful relationships between people and the place that they call home. Indigenous place-making looks different depending on the context of its surroundings and community. Each project is shaped uniquely by the communities interacting with it. By bringing Indigenous culture and tradition into the design and stewardship of our parks and public spaces, the City aims to ensure that our First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities can see themselves and their traditions reflected in the city around them.

Objective: The diversity of Toronto is reflected in its system of parks.

Include Actions:

- Ensure Indigenous place-making is considered in park design, public art, and programming to celebrate the rich history and culture of Indigenous communities.
- Include local communities and equity seeking groups in park planning processes to ensure that different social and cultural needs are reflected in new and improved park design.
- Pursue partnerships with local communities, parks advocacy groups, and equity seeking groups to support programming opportunities that animate parks and provide space for events and festivals.
- Seek out and pursue philanthropic contributions to add resources and contribute to creative place-making in parks in all areas of the city.

9. Alignment with Other City Plans and Strategies

The Parkland Strategy supports and aligns with the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Seniors Strategy, Resilience Strategy, Facilities Master Plan, Biodiversity Strategy and Ravine Strategy. It has been used to inform the development of plans such as Rail Deck Park, TOcore, and Midtown in Focus, and will continue to inform secondary plans and area studies going forward, especially where growth is anticipated.

In particular, there is a high degree of co-dependency between the Facilities Master Plan Implementation Strategy and the Parkland Strategy. Recreation facilities require parkland, and park improvements and master plans require upgrades to existing and provision of new recreation facilities. Parks Forestry and Recreation staff have been working closely to ensure that both strategies inform each other. Future planning and design for all recreation facilities and parks will require a fully integrated implementation strategy of both the Facilities Master Plan and the Parkland Strategy. Implementing the two strategies together lends itself to aligning goals and applying a broader lens to recreation opportunities related to both existing parkland and acquisition of new parkland. This integrated approach will ensure that a balance of parkland uses is maintained as new facilities are constructed.

10. Measuring for Successful Outcomes

The Parkland Strategy is a comprehensive, city-wide strategy that directs decision-making for parks planning, acquisition and improvement over the long-term. It provides new tools and processes to support parkland investments, and evidence-based methodologies which the City can apply to assess future needs, including those that emerge from new growth estimates, partner opportunities, and future locally-based parks and public realm plans.

To measure the effectiveness of the Parkland Strategy, indicators have been identified to monitor progress. Parks, Forestry and Recreation will monitor and assess the progress and effectiveness, and provide updates every five years. These five-year reviews will serve as feedback to reassess the direction, priorities and accomplishments of the Parkland Strategy.

Figure 6: Measurement Indicators

Strategy Principle	Metric	Units
Expand	Park area per person	m ²
Expand	Amount of new parkland acquired	Ha
Expand	Total land area attribute to parkland	% Coverage
Connect	Number of residents within a 500 m walk of a park	Number of People
Connect	Total park area that is within 500 m of a high order transit stop, or active transportation network	Hectares
Improve	Total public spending on parks per resident	CAD \$ per resident
Improve	Visitation counts at selected parks	Number of people by time period
Improve	Parks plans developed	Number of parks plans
Include	Amount of money invested in NIA's and low-income areas	CAD \$
Include	Average number of hours of weekly programming at selected parks	Number of hours

11. Next Steps

The Parkland Strategy is a long-term vision and framework for the enhancement of Toronto's park system through the creation of new parks, and the expansion and improvements to existing parks. The Parkland Strategy will direct future parks planning, land acquisition, park investment and enhancement, and development review.

The new parkland provision measurement methodology – the Park Catchment Tool – is responsive and will be used regularly to update and re-calibrate parkland need to inform city-wide and local parkland priorities, reflective of the city's growth and evolution. This provides a foundational framework for the prioritization of parkland acquisition and shared-use agreements with other public agencies.

The Parkland Strategy has already been used to inform major park planning exercises, such as Rail Deck Park, TOcore, and Midtown in Focus, and will continue to inform and prioritize the development of city-initiated local secondary plans and area studies. It provides a lens for the review of development applications, and lays the groundwork for the strategic development of partnerships to leverage opportunities to support and enhance Toronto's parks system.

Amendments through the More Homes, More Choice Act (Bill 108), once proclaimed, will replace the mechanisms by which the City funds and acquires parkland. The implementation of the Parkland Strategy will evolve as the City begins to address these new legislative tools and requirements. The Parkland Strategy will inform the future development of a Community Benefit Strategy which will be required in order for the City to collect Community Benefits Charge from new development. The Community Benefits Charge will be a key funding mechanism for parkland acquisition and improvement.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Parks Planning and Policy Backgrounder

Attachment 2: Toronto's Parkland Provision (2016) Map

Attachment 3: Local Parkland Provision (2016) Map

Attachment 4: Impact of Growth on Parkland Provision, by Percent Change Map

Attachment 5: Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Areas Map

Attachment 6: Parkland Strategy Final Report

Attachment 1: Toronto Parks Planning and Policy Backgrounder

The existing parkland provision framework in Toronto is based on Official Plan policy aimed at expanding and improving Toronto's parks and open space system through the use of a variety of legislative tools, the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan. The Parkland Strategy has been drafted to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and conform to the Growth Plan.

Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2014) is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act. All decisions affecting planning matters are to be consistent with the PPS. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land and supports the provincial goal to enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians. It provides clear policy direction to promote strong and resilient communities, a strong economy and a clean and healthy environment. The PPS focuses growth and development within settlement areas while ensuring the effective use of existing and provision of necessary infrastructure and public service facilities, such as parks. It also seeks to protect natural and cultural heritage resources. It recognizes that official plans are the most important vehicle for implementing the PPS.

The PPS requires that healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by accommodating recreation and park and open space, among others. It also requires that healthy, active communities should be promoted by planning and providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, public spaces, open space areas, trails and linkages, and where practical, water-based resources. A new draft PPS has been prepared by the Provincial government, and is not yet in force. The reference to recreation, parks and open space has been brought forward from the 2014 PPS to the updated draft PPS that has been circulated for public comment.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan (2019) provides a three-pronged framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe that includes directions for where and how to grow, the provision of infrastructure to support growth, and protecting the natural environment and cultural heritage resources. It provides a strong emphasis on intensifying urban areas, and in particular areas associated with transit, while also achieving well-designed, complete communities that meet people's daily needs. It recognizes the need for convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, public service facilities and a full range of housing. It also recognizes the importance of active transportation and ensuring adequate parkland to support quality of life and human health. The Growth Plan (2019) will affect where the City will experience growth and development pressures necessitating the need for additional parkland and improvements to existing parkland.

Official Plan

The Official Plan is the City's long-term vision for how the city should grow. The vision of the Plan is about creating an attractive and safe city where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy a good quality of life. It directs growth to compact, transit-oriented, mixed-use communities that can make effective use of existing infrastructure assets, while also acknowledging the need for parks and open spaces of all sizes that bring people together with a wealth of recreational opportunities that promote health and wellness. The Official Plan recognizes that Toronto's system of parks and open spaces as foundational component of the city's urban structure and protects the parks and open space system from encroachment by development. It highlights the need to expand parks and open spaces as Toronto grows, and acquire new linkages between elements of the system. It also sets out the requirements for parkland dedication as a condition of development. Parks and open space areas policy directions are found throughout the different sections of the Official Plan. Chapter 5 of the Official Plan refers to the importance of strategies to the implementation of the Official Plan to realize the Plan's overall vision, to ground its policies and to ensure its priorities are addressed.

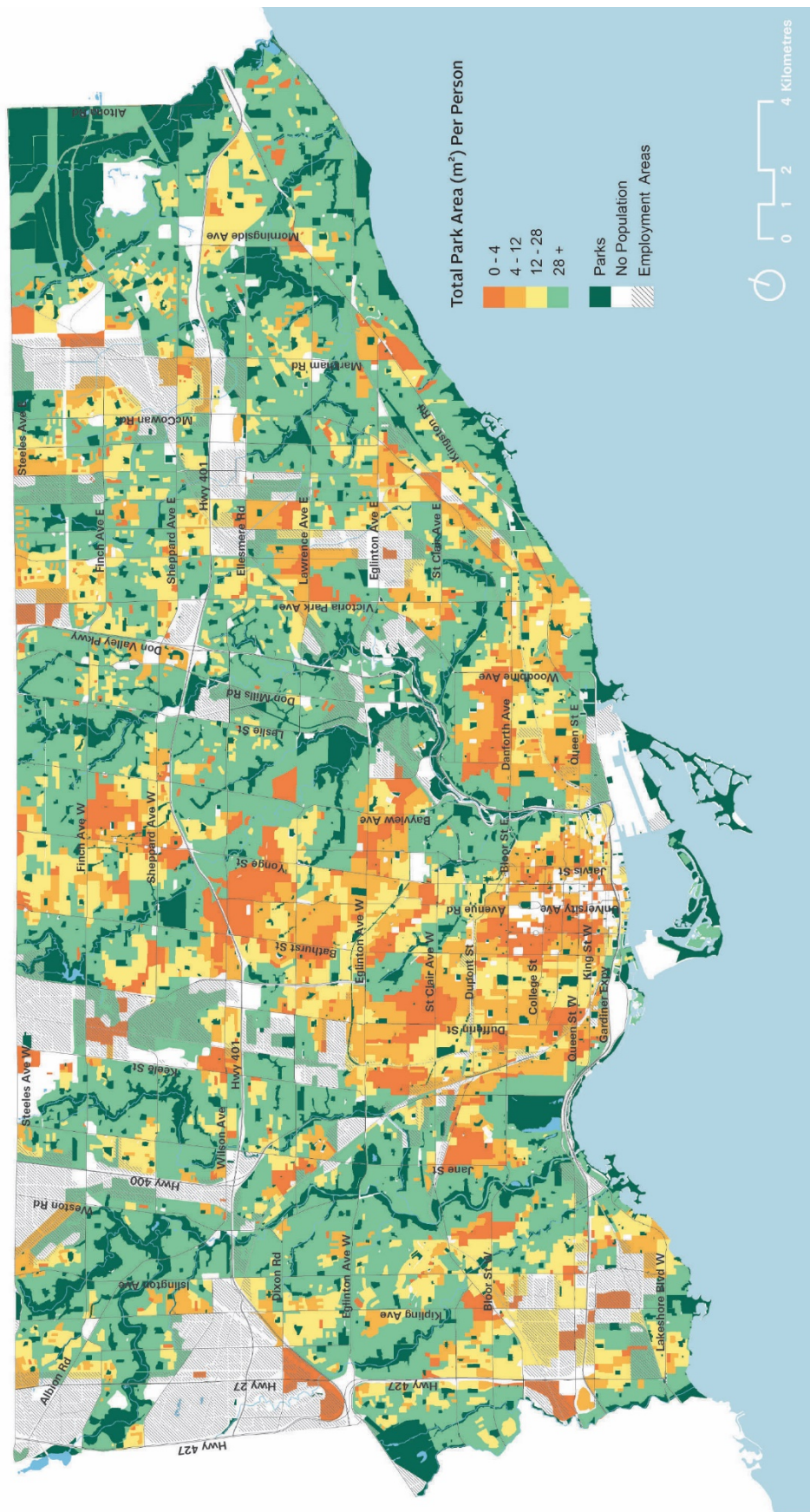
The More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108)

Bill 108, which received royal ascent in June 2019, will have significant impacts on how the City can fund and acquire parkland. Bill 108 removes traditional funding tools in Planning Act (Section 42 - parkland dedication and alternative rate and Section 37 - density bonusing) and the "soft infrastructure" elements of the Development Charges By-law, and replaces them with a new single source of funding, the Community Benefits Charge (CBC) that will be applied across most types of development and redevelopment. Municipalities will be able to levy the CBC if there is a CBC By-law in place, supported by a Community Benefits Strategy.

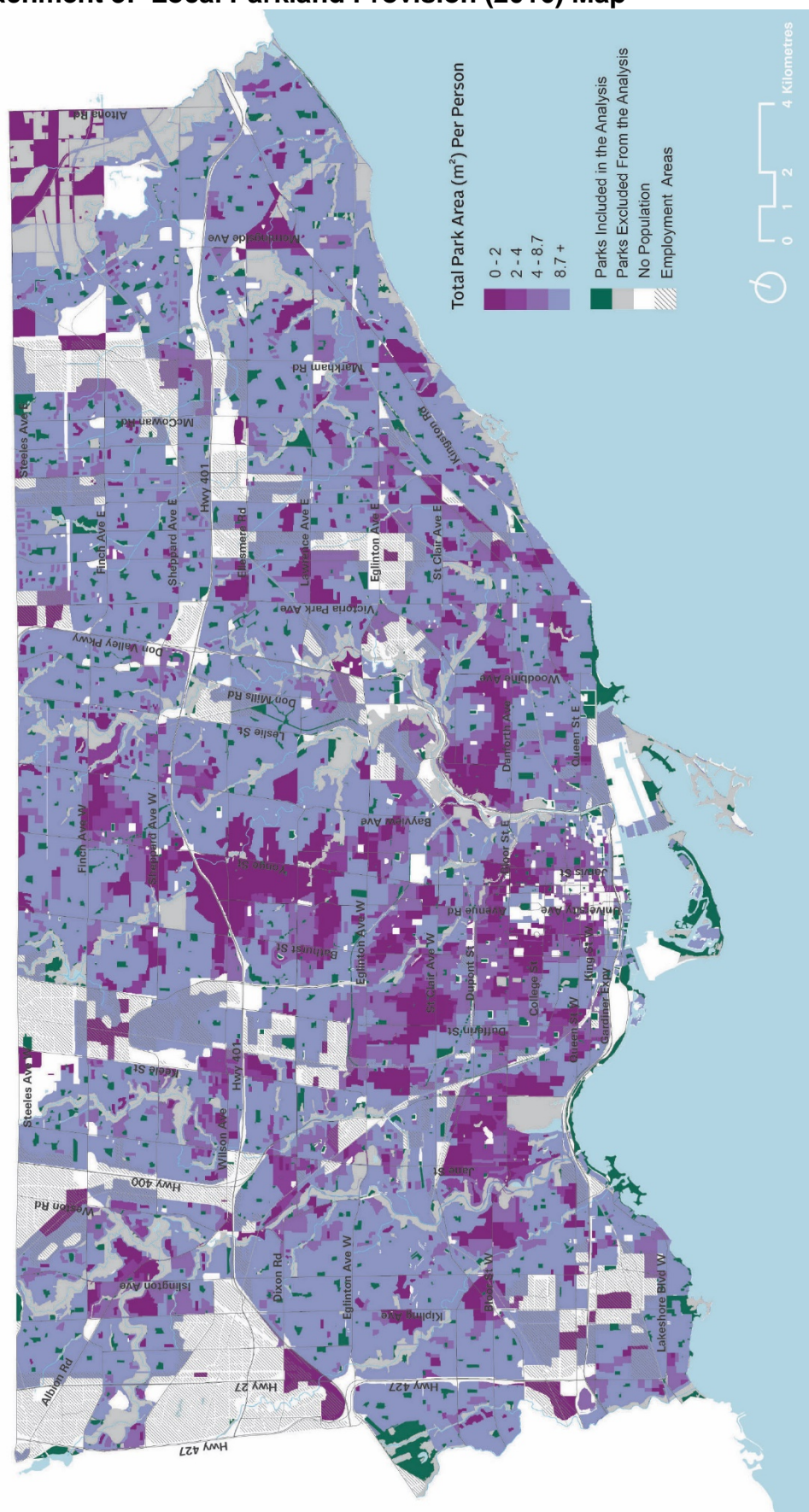
The financial impacts of transitioning to the CBC will not be fully understood until the Provincial regulations setting out the details of the CBC formula are finalized and subsequently evaluated by the City. The Province has committed to maintaining municipal revenues through the proposed changes under Bill 108.

Going forward, the Parkland Strategy will inform the development of the City's Community Benefit Strategy and By-law to implement the new CBC.

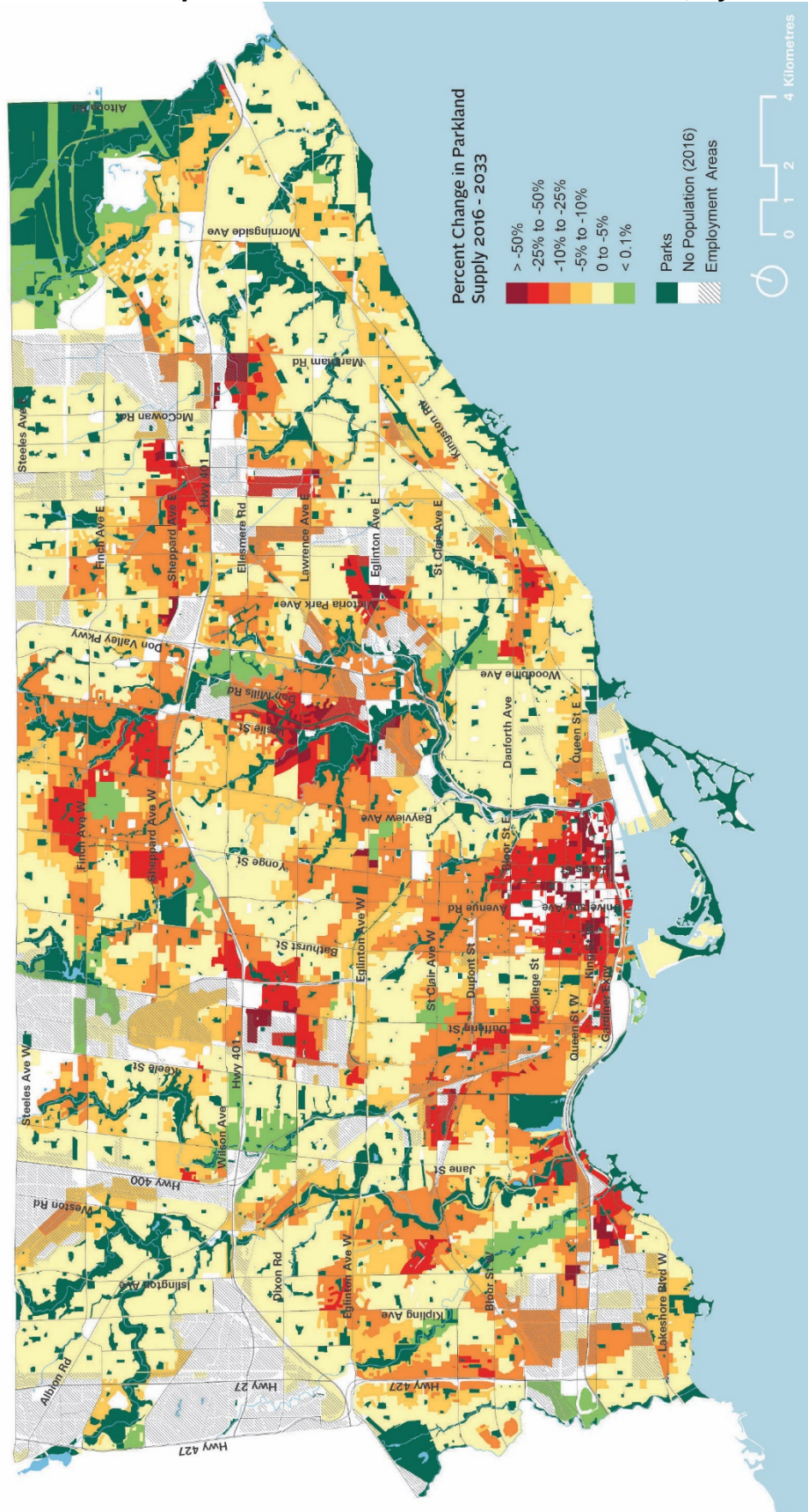
Parkland Strategy Final Report



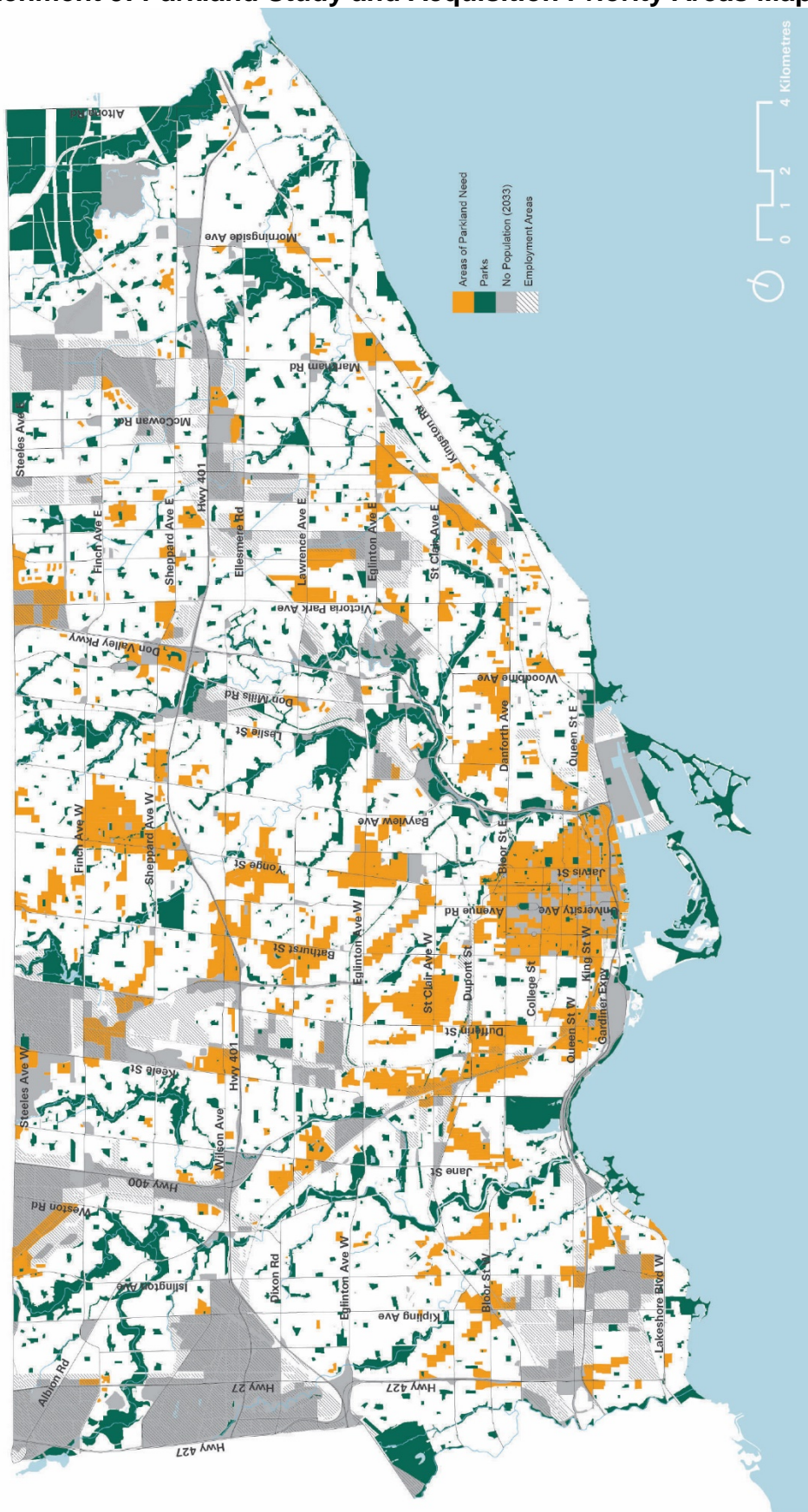
Attachment 3: Local Parkland Provision (2016) Map



Parkland Strategy Final Report



Parkland Strategy Final Report



Attachment 6: Parkland Strategy Final Report

(Attached separately as a PDF)