

August 2022

Oakwood–St. Clair

PARKS

PLAN

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Land Acknowledgement	4	The Plan	72
Executive Summary	5	Expand the parks system	73
Plan Highlights	6	Enhance parks and existing outdoor recreation facilities	76
Implementing the Plan	10	Introduce new outdoor recreation facilities	82
Introduction	11	Support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by planting more trees	88
Plan Purpose	14	Improve spaces for dogs	91
Study Area	15	Improve the public realm in collaboration with Transportation Services and Business Improvement Areas	94
Study Methodology and Process	18	Encourage and collaborate on enhancements to school yards	97
What's in this document?	22	Design and Planning Principles	99
Relationship with other City Plans, Policies, and Strategies	23		
Existing Parks and Open Space System	25	Implementing the Plan	104
Parks	25	Funding and Delivery Toolbox	105
Other Publicly Accessible Open Spaces	34	Continued Community Engagement	108
Parkland Provision and Use Analysis	39	Action Plan	109
Outdoor Recreation Facilities	48		
Canopy Cover	53		
Investing in the Local Parks System	56		
Recent Park Improvements	58		
Planned Parks, Improvements, and State of Good Repair Projects	60		
Future Recommended Recreation Facilities	64		
Study Findings	65		
Parkland provision	66		
Park walkability	66		
Recreation facility provision	67		
Park accessibility	67		
Park visibility, amenities, and design quality	68		
Canopy cover	68		
Spaces for dogs	69		
Street network	70		
Schoolyards	70		

List of Figures

Figure 1: Areas of parkland need	12
Figure 2: Walkability gaps	13
Figure 3: Study area	16
Figure 4: Study process	19
Figure 5: Existing parks	26
Figure 7: 2016 parkland provision in the Oakwood–St. Clair area	40
Figure 8: 2033 parkland provision in the Oakwood–St. Clair area	41
Figure 9: Parkland walkability gaps in the Oakwood–St. Clair Area	43
Figure 10: Favourite outdoor space of Social Pinpoint respondents	45
Figure 11: Non-park outdoor spaces used by Social Pinpoint respondents	45
Figure 12: Outdoor recreation facilities	46
Figure 13: Playground provision	49
Figure 14: Dog off-leash areas	51
Figure 15: Canopy cover	54
Figure 16: Heat vulnerability	55
Figure 17: Park and facility improvements	57
Figure 18: Park expansion opportunities	75
Figure 19: Park enhancement opportunities	80
Figure 20: Proposed new recreation facilities	86

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many 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. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

The City of Toronto Parkland Strategy identifies the area around the intersection of Oakwood Avenue and St. Clair Avenue West as an “Area of Parkland Need” primarily due to notably low levels of existing parkland. The area also includes notable “Parkland Walkability Gaps”, where residents do not have access to parkland within 500 metres of their home. Given these park gaps, the City of Toronto’s Parks, Forestry and Recreation division has identified the Oakwood-St. Clair area as a priority area for new and improved parkland.

The Oakwood–St. Clair Parks Plan is a tailored local parks plan that will enable the City to take a strategic approach to creating and improving parkland to benefit the area. The Plan is a roadmap for decision-making and capital budget allocation primarily for parks-related initiatives led by Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) over both the short and long terms. Guided by the Parkland Strategy principles of

Expand, Improve, Include and Connect, the Plan provides direction on:

- Parkland acquisitions;
- Parkland dedications from development;
- Repurposing City-owned land;
- The creation of new park facilities and amenities; and
- Improvements to park facilities and amenities.

The Plan will also be used to support and inform collaboration with partners such as other City divisions and agencies and school boards, which play an important role in the creation and maintenance of the parks and public realm network.

The Plan was informed by and reflects community feedback obtained through a variety of engagement activities, including an online survey and mapping exercise, workshops, meetings with community groups, and an open house.

Plan Highlights

This plan identifies 7 key directions and a series of related opportunities for the improvement of parks and open spaces in the Oakwood–St. Clair area.

Expand the parks system

Acquiring new parkland is a key priority of this plan. Several avenues have been identified to acquire additional parkland across the study area.

Opportunities:

- Pursue expansions of select existing parks, including Roseneath Park, Charles Brereton Park, and the new park at 261 Nairn Avenue.
- Investigate opportunities for conversion of City-owned lands to parks, including City-owned parking lots or portions thereof.
- Pursue other opportunities to acquire new parkland within or close to the study area through lot purchases and/or parkland dedications from development.

Enhance parks and existing outdoor recreation facilities

The initiatives under this recommendation deliver improvements in park visibility, design, quality, available amenities and accessibility to enhance the utility of existing parkland across the study area.

Opportunities:

- Improve Charles Brereton Park.
- Work with the community to enhance aspects of Wychwood Barns Park.
- Investigate wayfinding and other improvements to Graham Park.
- Implement improvements to the Earls court Park pathway network.
- Investigate further improving Earls court Park's interface with surrounding streets.
- Support opportunities for expansions to the community gardening network, led by the community.
- Introduce play features to informally activate parks.
- Investigate opportunities to deliver other features identified by the community in parks across the study area.

Introduce new outdoor recreation facilities

There is an opportunity to improve the provision of outdoor recreation facilities in the study area. The initiatives outlined in this section aim to address gaps in playground, skateboard facility, basketball court, and outdoor fitness equipment provision.

Opportunities:

- Introduce a playground at the new park at 261 Nairn Ave.
- Deliver additional playgrounds west of Oakwood Avenue.
- Introduce new basketball/sports courts within and/or north of the study area.
- Introduce a new skatepark or skate spot within or north of the study area.
- Investigate opportunities for outdoor fitness equipment in the south-east and north-west quadrants of the study area.

Support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by planting more trees

Expanded and revitalized green spaces, including increased tree planting in the western portion of the study area, will help address the area's relatively sparse tree canopy and higher levels of heat vulnerability, as well as improve storm water management, lower air pollution, and provide public realm benefits.

Opportunities:

- Plant more trees in existing and future parks.
- Work with homeowners and community organizations to increase tree provision on private property in the west of the study area.
- Identify opportunities for tree planting on streets, particularly in the west of the study area.
- Work with school boards to plant trees on school sites, particularly in the west of the study area.

Improve Spaces for Dogs

There is demand for improvements to the area's network of dog-related facilities to better accommodate dog owners and reduce off-leash use pressure on existing DOLAs and other open spaces.

Opportunities:

- Explore improvements to the four existing dog off-leash areas within or close to the study area.
- Work with the development industry to ensure that developments along St. Clair Avenue West provide pet amenities and spaces to reduce pressures on parks.
- Consider opportunities for future DOLAs as part of new and expanded parks, where appropriate.

Improve the public realm in collaboration with Transportation Services and Business Improvement Areas

Although the focus of this plan is on improvements to the park network, the Plan recommends investigating opportunities to reimagine streets throughout the study area to complement the area's parks system and improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Opportunities:

- Expand public space and improve the public realm on streets adjacent to parks where feasible.
- Consider public realm improvements as part of planned road reconstruction within the study area.
- Support local Business Improvement Areas in making public realm improvements.

Encourage and collaborate on enhancements to school yards

Schoolyards already play an important role in the area's parks and open space network. However, improvements can be made to make them greener and more accessible and usable for students and the broader community.

Opportunities:

- Explore opportunities to deliver improved facilities on school sites, with community access agreements.
- Support community access outside of school hours
- Share other community concerns and ideas regarding school sites.

Implementing the Plan

PFR will lead ongoing implementation and monitoring of the Plan, with support from other City divisions, agencies and partners, such as school boards, Business Improvement Areas, and private developers.

This plan is intended to guide investments and planning decisions in the area for the long term. The timelines for specific initiatives, such as the acquisition of new parkland, are difficult to guarantee, and the inter-related nature of identified opportunities will require ongoing coordination and collaboration.

That said, PFR intends to act on this plan on the short term, building on recent investments in the local parks system, including several playground enhancement projects, improvements to the Earls court Park splashpad, the new park at 261 Nairn Ave, an expansion of the Geary Avenue Park, and more. Implementation of several of the opportunities identified in the Plan is already underway, and work on others is intended to begin in the short term.

Public parks and open spaces perform a variety of critical functions that improve and maintain community and environmental health. They offer recreation opportunities to support active lifestyles, tranquil spaces for rest, spaces for social events and gatherings, and natural infrastructure for vital ecosystem services and the mitigation of climate change effects. An abundant and connected system of good-quality parks contributes to more liveable, complete communities.

The supply and quality of parkland varies throughout Toronto. Accordingly, the City of Toronto Parkland Strategy, adopted by City Council in November 2019, was created to guide long-term parks planning, prioritization, and investment throughout the city in order to ensure the expansion and enhancement of the parks system. The Parkland Strategy identifies “Areas of Parkland Need”, which are priority areas for parkland planning and acquisition determined based on factors including low park supply, low income population, and high population growth.

The Parkland Strategy identifies the area around the Oakwood Avenue and St. Clair Avenue West intersection as an “Area of Parkland Need” primarily due to notably low levels of existing parkland (Figure 1). The area also includes notable “Parkland Walkability Gaps (Figure 2), where residents do not have access to parkland within 500 metres of their home (an approximately 5 to 10 minute walk). Given these park gaps, the Oakwood–St. Clair area is considered a priority area for new and improved parkland and was identified for further study.

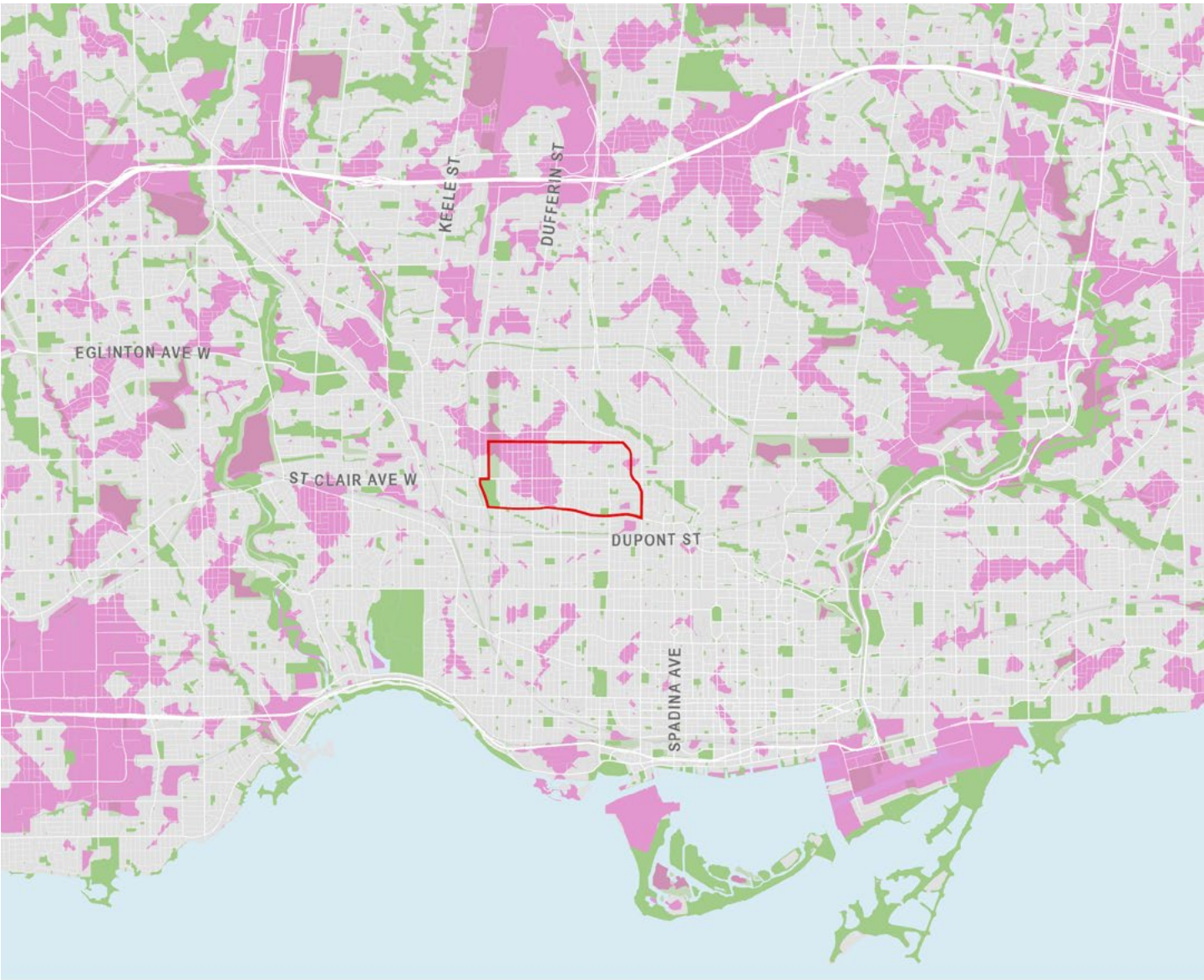
Figure 1: Areas of parkland need

Source: Parkland Strategy

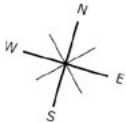
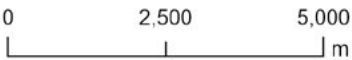


Figure 2: Walkability gaps

Source: Parkland Strategy



- Study Area
- Areas Not Served by a Park Within 500m
- Parkland
- Other Open Space



1.1 Plan Purpose

The Oakwood–St. Clair Parks Plan is a tailored local parks plan that will enable the City to take a strategic approach to creating and improving parkland in the area. It was prepared by the City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PFR) and identifies opportunities to:

- Create more parkland;
- Improve existing parks and their amenities;
- Make parks more inclusive and welcoming spaces; and
- Improve access to and connections between parks and other publicly-accessible open spaces.

The plan is intended to act as a roadmap for decision-making and capital budget allocation primarily for parks-related initiatives led by PFR over both the short and long terms, such as:

- Parkland acquisitions;
- Parkland dedications from development;
- Internal transfers of City-owned land;
- The creation of new park facilities and amenities; and
- Improvements to park facilities and amenities.

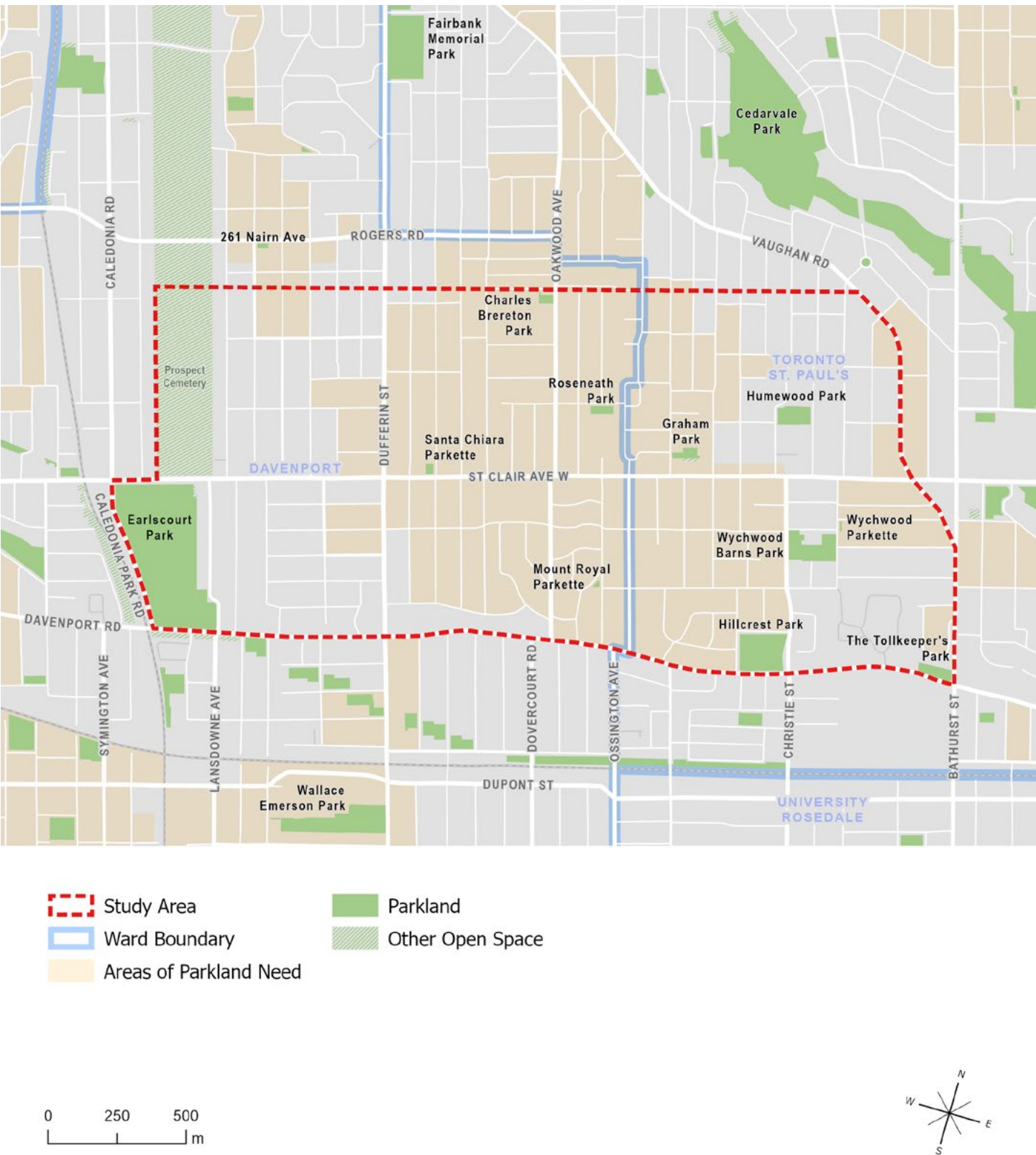
The plan and input received from the community will be used to inform PFR's operational initiatives in existing parks. The plan will also be used to support and inform collaboration with partners such as other City divisions and agencies and school boards, which play an important role in the creation and maintenance of the parks and public realm network.

1.2 Study Area

This plan provides directions and identifies opportunities for the parks and open space system in the area bounded approximately by Davenport Road to the south, Bathurst Street and Vaughan Road to the east, Earlsdale Avenue to the north, and the western edges of Earlscourt Park and Prospect Cemetery in the west, as shown in Figure 3. Improvements to the parks and open space system across this area will benefit both the priority “Area of Parkland Need” shown in yellow and adjacent areas. The study area includes a portion of two wards: Davenport (Ward 9) and Toronto-St. Paul’s (Ward 12). Approximately 36,600 people across 15,100 households live in census tracts intersecting with the study area.

Enhancements to the parks and open space system in and around “Areas of Parkland Need” to the north of the study area will be studied as part of the ongoing Little Jamaica & the Eglinton West Neighbourhoods Study. Enhancements to the parks and open space system to the south were studied and are being implemented through the Green Line initiative.

Figure 3: Study area



Most demographic indicators in the study area reflect the city-wide averages, with the notable exception of the following:

- The percentage of residents who are visible minorities is much lower in the study area than across Toronto;
- The percentage of residents who were born outside of Canada is much lower in the study area than across Toronto; and
- The percentage of residents who are low income earners is lower in the study area than across Toronto.

Source: Statistics Canada (2016)

Variable	Study area proportion (%)	City-wide proportion (%)
Live in small households (1-2 people)	62	62
Live in 5+ storey apartment buildings	13	44
Children (0-12 years)	13	13
Youth (13-24 years)	12	14
Seniors (65+ years)	17	16
Visible minority	28	52
Black	7	9
Aboriginal	1	1
Born outside of Canada	37	47
Recent immigrants	4	7
Low income earners	15	20

1.3 Study Methodology and Process

Study Process

The Oakwood–St. Clair Parkland Study was initiated in autumn 2020 and included three key phases, with two rounds of engagement, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Phase 1: Background Review and Analysis

The focus of Phase 1 was developing an understanding of the study area's existing conditions, including:

- Population (including sociodemographic composition);
- Existing and planned parks and open space assets, recreation facilities, public realm, and tree canopy; and
- Parks and recreation facility use and conditions.

Phase 2: Needs and Gaps Assessment

The focus of Phase 2 was twofold:

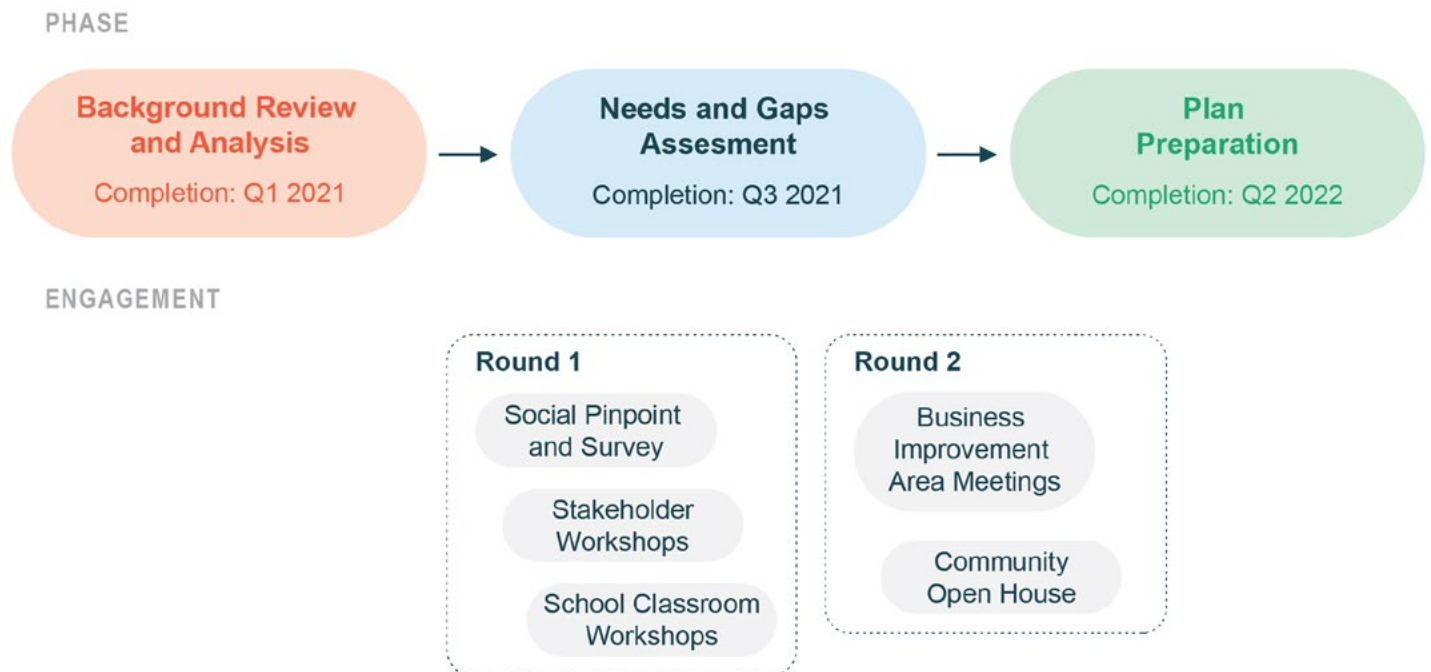
- Identifying local parks and recreation needs and gaps; and
- Understanding where needs can be addressed in existing parks and where new parks and facilities are required.

This phase of work included an initial round of community engagement to understand parks and recreation gaps and opportunities identified by the public.

Phase 3: Recommendations and Plan Preparation

The focus of Phase 3 was developing and consulting on actions to address identified parks and recreation needs and gaps.

The second round of community engagement took place near the end of Phase 3, with the goal of sharing the draft plan with the community and obtaining feedback to help finalize the proposed recommendations.

Figure 4: Study process

Community Engagement

A variety of public engagement and research tools were used in order to better understand the parkland needs and opportunities in the study area, with the objective of obtaining input from a diverse range of the study area's residents, visitors, and workers.

- **Online Survey:** An online survey was posted on the project webpage from February 17, 2021 to March 18, 2021. 1,974 people responded to the survey.
- **'Social Pinpoint' Mapping Exercise:** Concurrent with the survey, an interactive online mapping platform was used to collect feedback and ideas about specific parks and other locations within the study area. 700 comments and thousands of data points were received through Social Pinpoint.
- **School Classroom Workshops:** To understand the specific needs of local youth, City staff held online workshops with three high school classes in the neighbourhood. In total, the project team spoke to 55 students.
- **Local Stakeholder Group Workshop:** The project team held an online workshop attended by the Councillor for Davenport, Councillor for Toronto-St. Paul's, and 20 participants from 13 different community organizations on April 27, 2021. During the workshop, preliminary findings of the above-noted engagement exercises were shared, and participants began identifying key drivers and priority actions.
- **Discussions with School Boards:** The project team held meetings with staff from the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board in 2021 and 2022 in order to identify recent or planned improvements to school grounds in the study area, issues or opportunities pertaining to school yards and open spaces, and potential avenues for collaboration.
- **Meetings with Business Improvement Areas:** The project team held meetings with representatives from the Wychwood Heights, Corso Italia, Hillcrest Village, St. Clair Gardens, and Oakwood Village Business Improvement Areas between October 19 and November 9, 2021. The purpose of these meetings was to present key findings from the study to date, share recommended actions, and obtain feedback.
- **Community Open House:** A final community open house, open to anyone who was interested, was hosted by the project team on November 24, 2021 to present key findings from the study process and consultation to date, share recommended actions, and hear feedback from the community on the recommendations before finalization of the Oakwood–St. Clair Parks Plan. The meeting was attended by approximately 80 community members.

- **Meetings with Community Groups:** Throughout the course of the study, the project team met with representatives from interested community groups, including the Friends of Wychwood Barns Park, the North Corso Italia Residents' Association, the Northcliffe Village Residents' Association, the Regal Heights Residents' Association, the Regal Heights Village BIA, and St. Chad's Anglican Church on several occasions by request to further discuss local issues and priorities in more detail.
- **Email correspondence:** Project updates were posted on the study website over the course of the study, including open house materials and consultation summaries. The project team received emails from people living and working in the study area over the course of the study.

More detailed information on the engagement process, communications strategy, and findings, is available in Appendix 1 - Engagement Summary Report, Appendix 2 - Meetings with Business Improvement Areas, and Appendix 3 - Virtual Open House Meeting Summary.

1.4 What's in this document?

This document includes the following sections:

Section 1 – Introduction: Provides background for the study and an overview of the study area, process, and community engagement.

Section 2 – Existing Parks and Open Space System: Provides an overview of the existing parks and open space system, recreation facilities and amenities, and canopy cover, and summarizes parkland provision and use analysis.

Section 3 – Investing in the Local Parks System: Provides an overview of recent and planned investments in the local parks and recreation system.

Section 4 – Study Findings: Outlines the key parks and open space challenges and opportunities in and around the study area, based on analysis of the study area and community feedback.

Section 6 – The Plan: Outlines seven directions identified to improve the parks and open space system in the Oakwood–St. Clair area. Each direction is broken down into a number of specific opportunities.

Section 7 – Implementing the Plan: Provides an overview of how the plan will be implemented, including details on the funding and delivery toolbox, timelines, monitoring and more.

1.5 Relationship with other City Plans, Policies, and Strategies

This plan is informed by the City's Parkland Strategy, Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, Ravine Strategy and other City of Toronto plans and policies and furthers existing strategic directions and goals as outlined in Appendix 4 - Planning and Policy Context.



2 Existing Parks and Open Space System

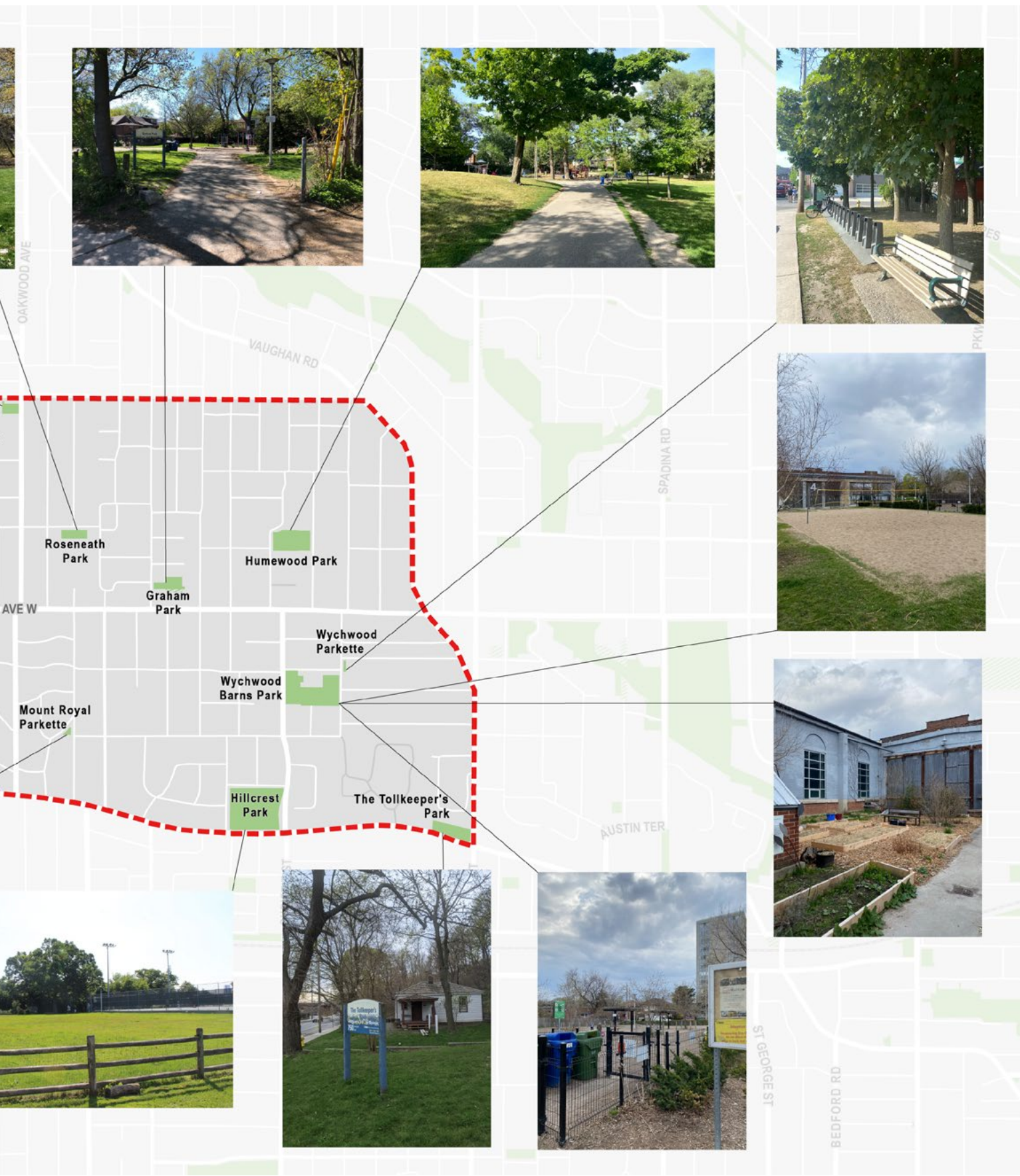
2.1 Parks

There are 11 parks within the study area, comprising a total area of approximately 18 hectares, as shown in Figure 5 and detailed below. The study area is also served by several other nearby parks, including larger parks like Cedarvale Park and Fairbank Park that offer a wide variety of amenities and recreation facilities, and local parks, including the new park at 261 Nairn Avenue.

A detailed overview of recreation facilities serving the study area is provided in Section 2.4.

Figure 5: Existing parks





Earlscourt Park

Earlscourt Park is the largest park in the study area and correspondingly provides the greatest range of recreation facilities and amenities, including the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Centre, a variety of outdoor recreation facilities, and large areas of unprogrammed greenspace.



Earlscourt Park

Park	Area (m ²)	Size classification (Parkland Strategy)	Function	Key facilities and amenities
Earlscourt Park	126,550	Legacy Park	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Baseball diamond Basketball courts Fitness equipment Multipurpose field Soccer field Outdoor track Outdoor pool Outdoor rink Tennis courts Outdoor volleyball court Splash pad Picnic site Playground Dog off leash area Fieldhouse Washroom Bandstand / Shade structure Community garden Snack stand Interpretive / education centre

Small and Medium Parks

Hillcrest Park is classified as a “medium park” (between 1.5 and 3 hectares). Humewood Park and Wychwood Barns Park are classified as “small parks” (between 0.5 and 1.5 hectares). Wychwood Barns and Hillcrest Park offer a wide range of recreational opportunities and community and civic function such as picnic sites, a bake oven, outdoor chess tables, and community gardens. Humewood Park serves the northeast quadrant of the study area and contains a playground.

Wychwood Barns Park is adjacent to Artscape Wychwood Barns, a community cultural hub that includes artist live/work studios, artist work studios, space for non-profit arts and environmental organizations, and an event venue.

Hillcrest Park also has also been home to the Mashkikii;aki'ing (Medicine Earth) Medicine Wheel Garden since 2013. The garden is an Indigenous community garden which offers men participating in programs at Na-Me-Res (the Native Men's Residence, an organization offering services to Toronto-based Indigenous men) an opportunity to learn more about gardening and Indigenous medicinal plants.



Wychwood Barns Park



Humewood Park

Park	Area (m ²)	Size classification (Parkland Strategy)	Function	Key facilities and amenities
Hillcrest Park	21,510	Medium Park	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Basketball court Fieldhouse/washroom Dog off leash area Outdoor table tennis Picnic site Playground Tennis court Wading pool Community garden Clubhouse
Wychwood Barns Park	14,530	Small Park	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Picnic site Bake oven Dog off leash area Outdoor chess tables Outdoor table tennis Shade structures Playground Splash pad Outdoor volleyball court
Humewood Park	7,620	Small Park	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Playground

Parkettes

Seven of the 11 operational parks within the study area are relatively small in size (classified as “parkettes” under 0.5 hectares). These parkettes are: Charles Brereton Park, Roseneath Park, Graham Park, Santa Chiara Parkette, Mount Royal Parkette, Wychwood Parkette, and The Tollkeeper’s Park.

These parkettes are primarily programmed for passive uses through amenities such as seating, pathways, and horticultural displays, and offer predominantly “community and civic” functionality. Many of the parkettes also contain playgrounds.

Santa Chiara Parkette is leased by the City from the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). The parkette functions part of as the St. Clare Catholic Elementary School’s schoolyard during school hours. To ensure safe use of this TCDSB schoolyard during the day, much of the parkette is fenced and access to the public is restricted during school hours. The parkette is open to the public outside of school hours.

The Tollkeeper’s Park is home to the Tollkeeper’s Cottage Museum, believed to be Canada’s only surviving tollgate from the 1800s .



Roseneath Park



Graham Park



Charles Brereton Park

Park	Area (m²)	Size classification (Parkland Strategy)	Function	Key facilities and amenities
The Tollkeeper's Park	4,540	Parkette	Community and Civic	Tollkeeper's Cottage Museum
Graham Park	2,870	Parkette	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Playground Outdoor table tennis
Roseneath Park	2,330	Parkette	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Playground Two outdoor chess tables
Charles Brereton Park	1,730	Parkette	Community & Civic	
Santa Chiara Parkette	950	Parkette	Community & Civic	
Mount Royal Parkette	350	Parkette	Community and Civic, Sport and Play	Playground
Wychwood Parkette	240	Parkette	Community & Civic	

2.2 Other Publicly Accessible Open Spaces

The parks system is supported by other open spaces that are either publicly or privately-owned and are accessible to the public with some restrictions. These spaces complement and supplement the parks system by providing additional open space, access to nature, and/or recreation opportunities wherever public use of these spaces is permitted. Key open spaces in the study area include 9 school yards and Prospect Cemetery and are shown in Figure 6.

Public access to these open spaces varies. School yards are normally available for public access outside of school hours, including for permitted use of sports fields (with some exceptions for after-school events). Prospect Cemetery is accessible to the public during the day and early evening.

In addition to the school yards and cemetery detailed above, there are other spaces that contribute to the overall open space network, including:

- The Springmount Avenue strip: a section of the public road right-of-way along the west side of Springmount Avenue, between Rosemount Avenue and the steps to Clovis John Brooks Lane. The strip is informally maintained by community members and functions as passive open green space.
- Wychwood Park roadways: an area of quiet private roadways, south east of Wychwood Barns Park, which is characterized by mature trees and contains the Taddle Creek pond. The roadways are typically open to the public for walking and cycling.

Rawlinson Community School

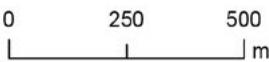
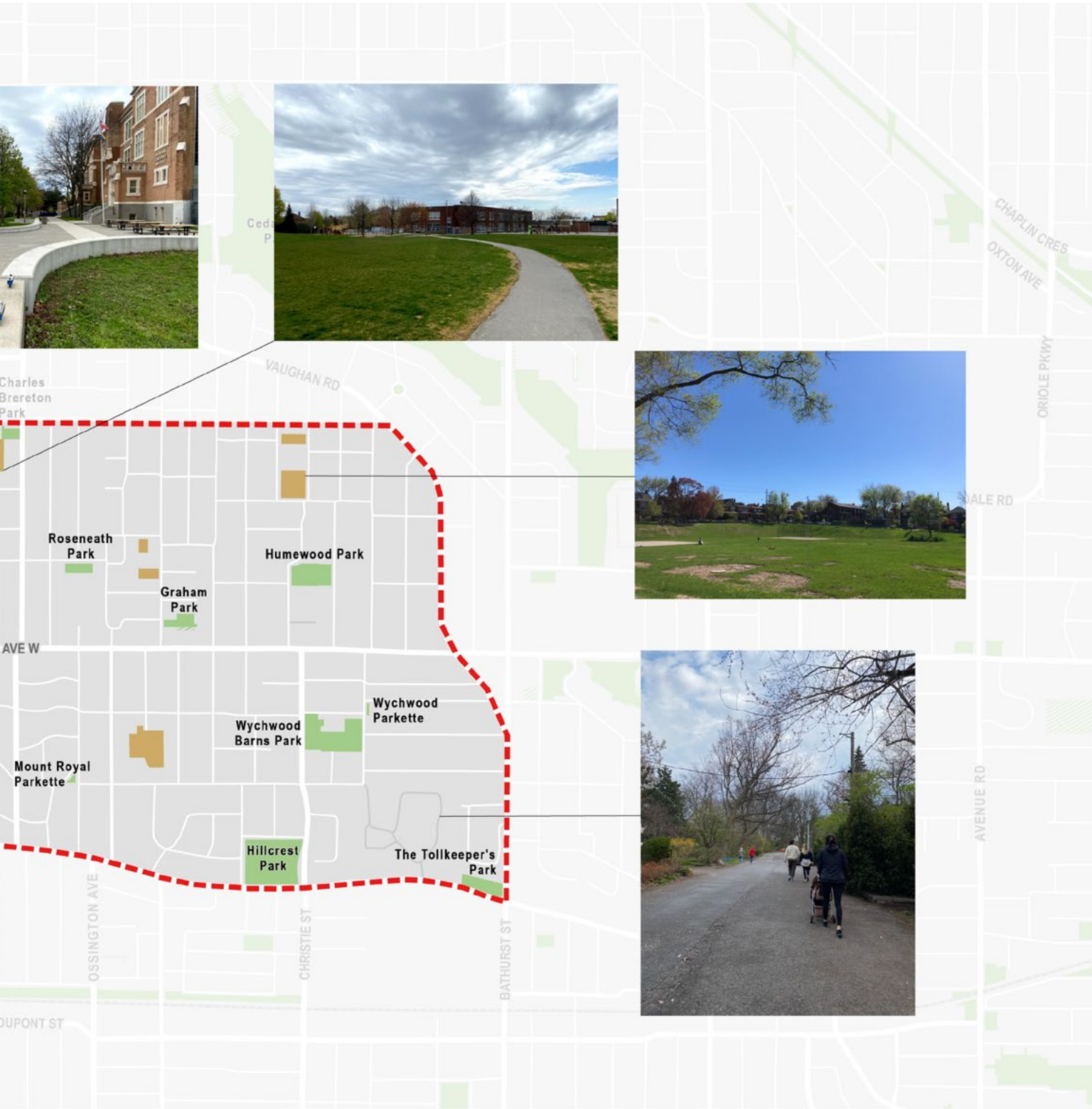
- Rawlinson Community School's outdoor spaces are being revitalized through the 'Rawlinson Community School Outdoor Area Restoration Project'.
- The project is partially funded by the City and includes a community access agreement.
- Phase 1, completed in 2020, included replacement of play equipment, asphalt surfacing, reconfiguration and updated irrigation of the sports field, and a new pathway to accommodate pedestrian traffic from Charles Brereton Park. Phase 2, scheduled for 2022, will include play equipment upgrades and a seating area.

Open space	Approximate outdoor area (m ²)	Features
Prospect Cemetery	415,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network of pathways with access points at St. Clair Avenue West, Rogers Road, Kitchener Avenue, and Eglinton Avenue West.
Rawlinson Community School	21,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball diamond and grass soccer/multi-purpose field, basketball courts, paved sports/play pads, and two playgrounds.
Oakwood Collegiate Institute	20,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer/multi-purpose grass field, a running track, and paved sports pads. • A Master Plan for new facilities and improvements to outdoor space was completed in 2017. Part of the plan has been implemented, including a public plaza along St Clair Avenue West.
McMurrich Junior Public School / Winona Drive Senior Public School	18,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball diamond, basketball court, and paved sports/ play pads. • Recent upgrades were made to the outdoor kindergarten area.
Humewood Community School	12,300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two overlapping baseball diamonds, one soccer goal post, and basketball court and paved sports/play pads
Regal Road Junior Public School	11,900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball diamond and overlapping soccer/multi-purpose grass field, playground, and paved sports/play pads.
Hudson College / Stella Maris Catholic School	8,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paved outdoor play space and a new artificial multi-purpose turf field.
Loretto College School	7,800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wading pool, baseball diamond and field. • The TCDSB is undertaking a master planning exercise for this space.
St Clare Catholic School	5,700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly paved outdoor space with sports/play pads.
St Alphonsus Catholic School	4,300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly paved outdoor space with basketball court and sports/play pads.

Figure 6: Open space network



 Study Area  Parkland  School Yards  Other Open Space





2.3 Parkland Provision and Use Analysis

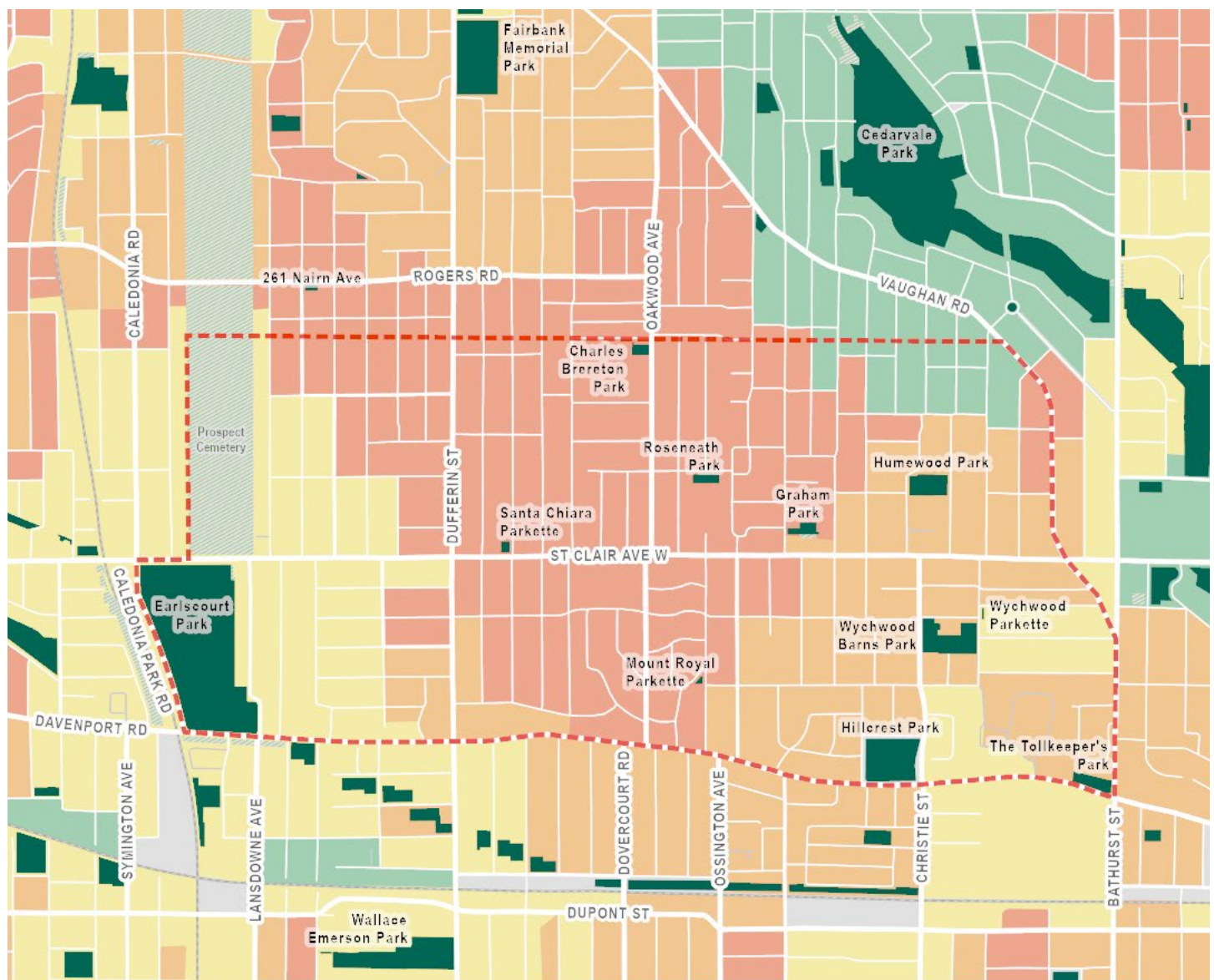
Parkland Provision

According to the Parkland Strategy, the existing (2016) parkland provision level in a large, central portion of the study area is between 0 to 4 m² of parkland per person, which is well below the city-wide average parkland provision level of 28 m² of parkland per person. As shown in Figure 7, there are slightly higher parkland provision levels in the east and west portions of the study area, but these levels are still generally below average. The future (2033) parkland provision level in the study area is projected to decline slightly, as shown in Figure 8, particularly as new developments are proposed and approved along St. Clair Avenue West and more people live and work in the study area.

Opposite page: Visitors enjoying EarlsCourt Park.

Figure 7: 2016 parkland provision in the Oakwood–St. Clair area

Source: Parkland Strategy

Total Park Area (m²) Per Person

- 0 - 4
- 4 - 12
- 12 - 28
- 28+
- Parkland
- No Population

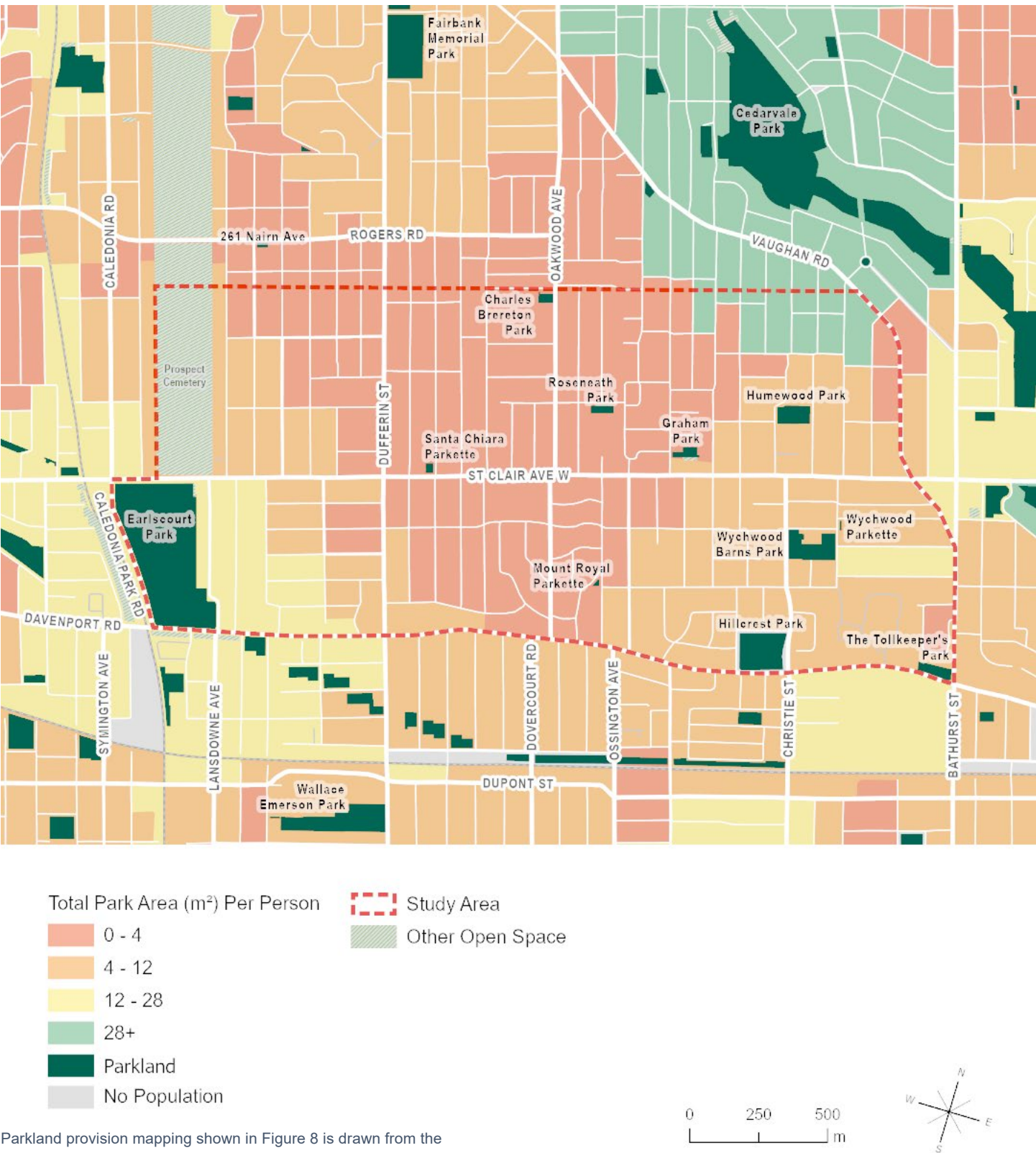
Study Area

Other Open Space

Parkland provision mapping shown in Figure 7 is drawn from the 2019 Parkland Strategy and predates the City's acquisition of 261 Nairn Avenue for new parkland.

Figure 8: 2033 parkland provision in the Oakwood–St. Clair area

Source: Parkland Strategy

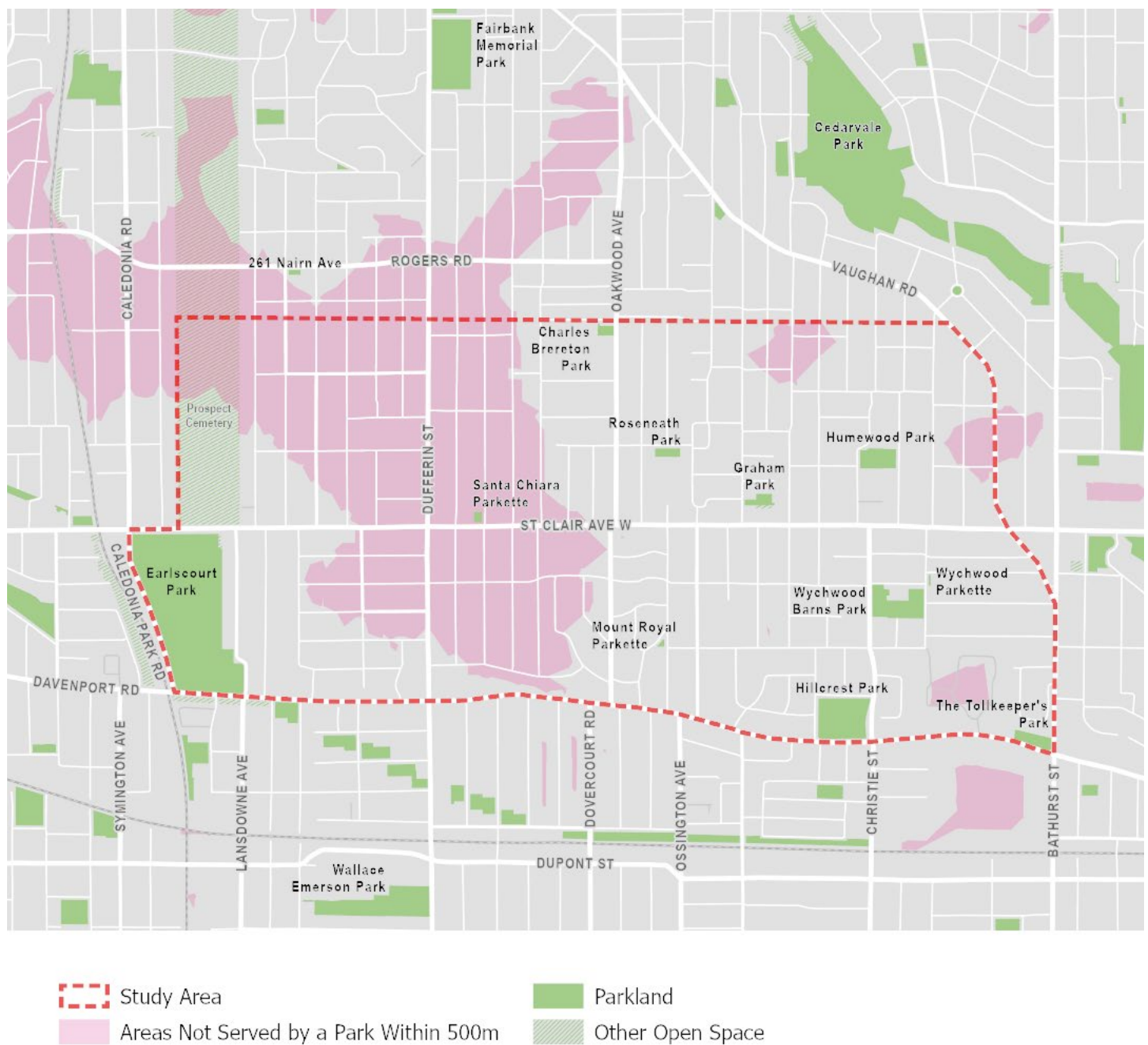


Parkland provision mapping shown in Figure 8 is drawn from the 2019 Parkland Strategy and predates the City's acquisition of 261 Nairn Avenue for new parkland.

Walkability

As shown in Figure 9, there are large areas in the western portion of the study area with poor walkability to parks. Areas of poor walkability to parks are areas where residents do not have access to a park within approximately a 500-metre distance or a 5 to 10 minute walk of their homes.

There are two key reasons for the walkability gap in this area. The first reason (and most relevant to this study) is that there are few parks in this area. The second reason is that there is a disjointed east-west road network meaning that residents living in some parts of the study area must take a long route to visit parks that are relatively close.

Figure 9: Parkland walkability gaps in the Oakwood–St. Clair Area

Walkability gap mapping shown in Figure 9 is drawn from the 2019 Parkland Strategy and predates the City's acquisition of 261 Nairn Avenue for new parkland.

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Park and Open Space Usage Patterns

Park and open space usage trends were identified through the engagement process. Most community members, including youth participating in school workshops, identified Earls court Park as their favourite and most visited park, due to the diversity of amenities in the park, as shown in Figure 10. Wychwood Barns Park, Humewood Park, Hillcrest Park, and Graham Park were also noted as favourite parks.

In terms of other publicly accessible open spaces, the Oakwood Collegiate Institute schoolyard was identified as the most well liked and used outdoor space in the community, as shown in Figure 11. This schoolyard plays a significant role in the study area's open space network and is a valuable asset to the community.

Other open spaces that tend to be well liked and used by the community are Prospect Cemetery and the schoolyards at Rawlinson Community School and Loretto College School.

Figure 10: Favourite outdoor space of Social Pinpoint respondents

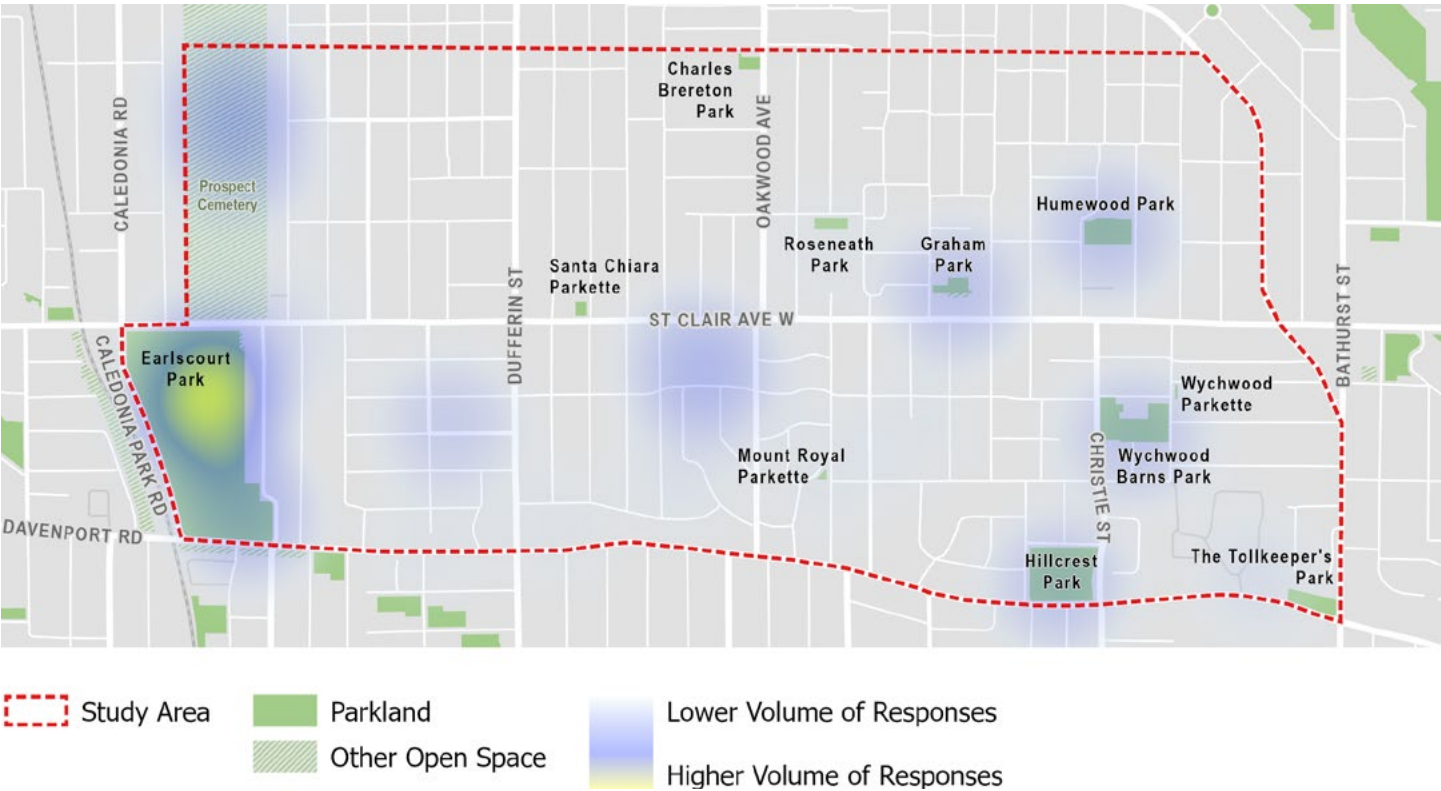
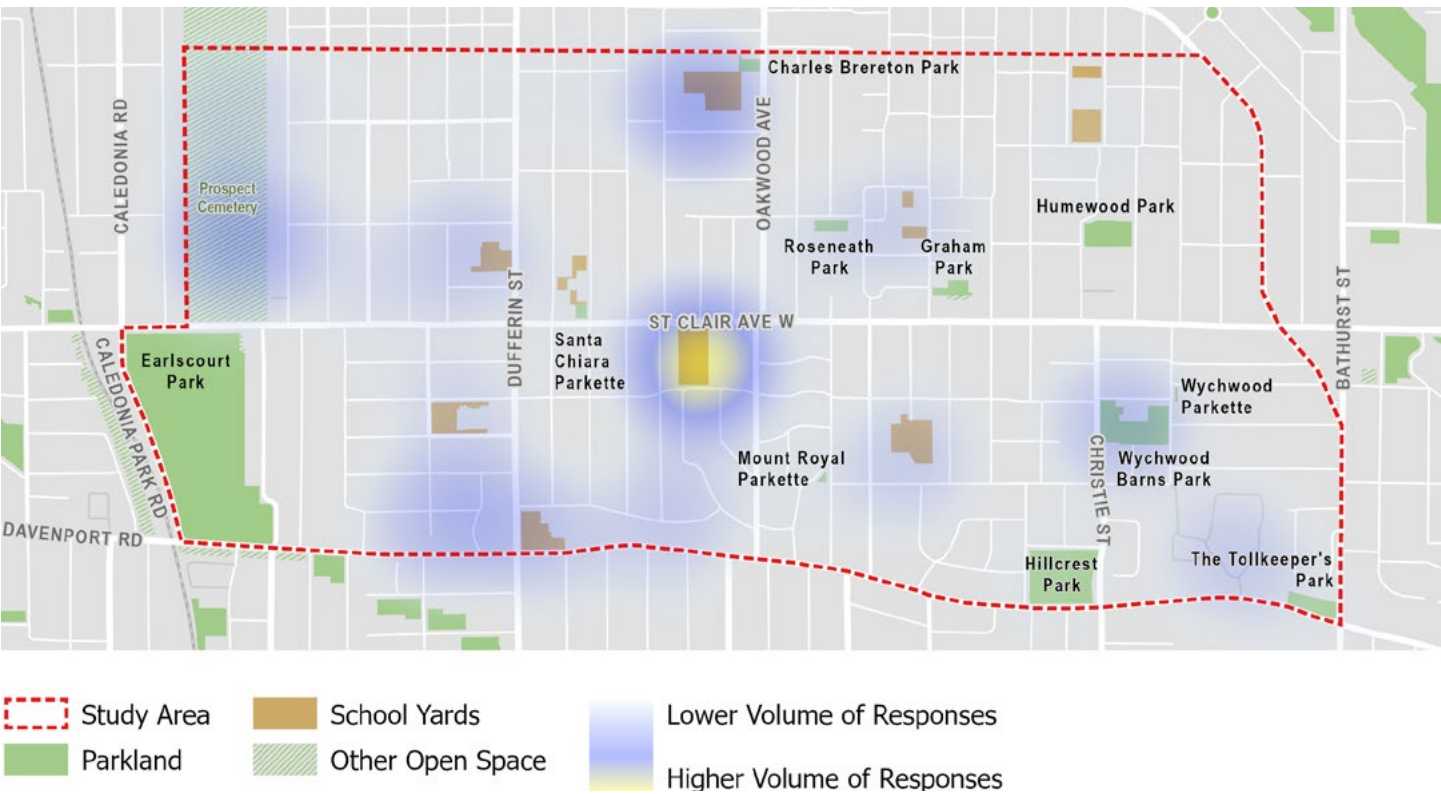
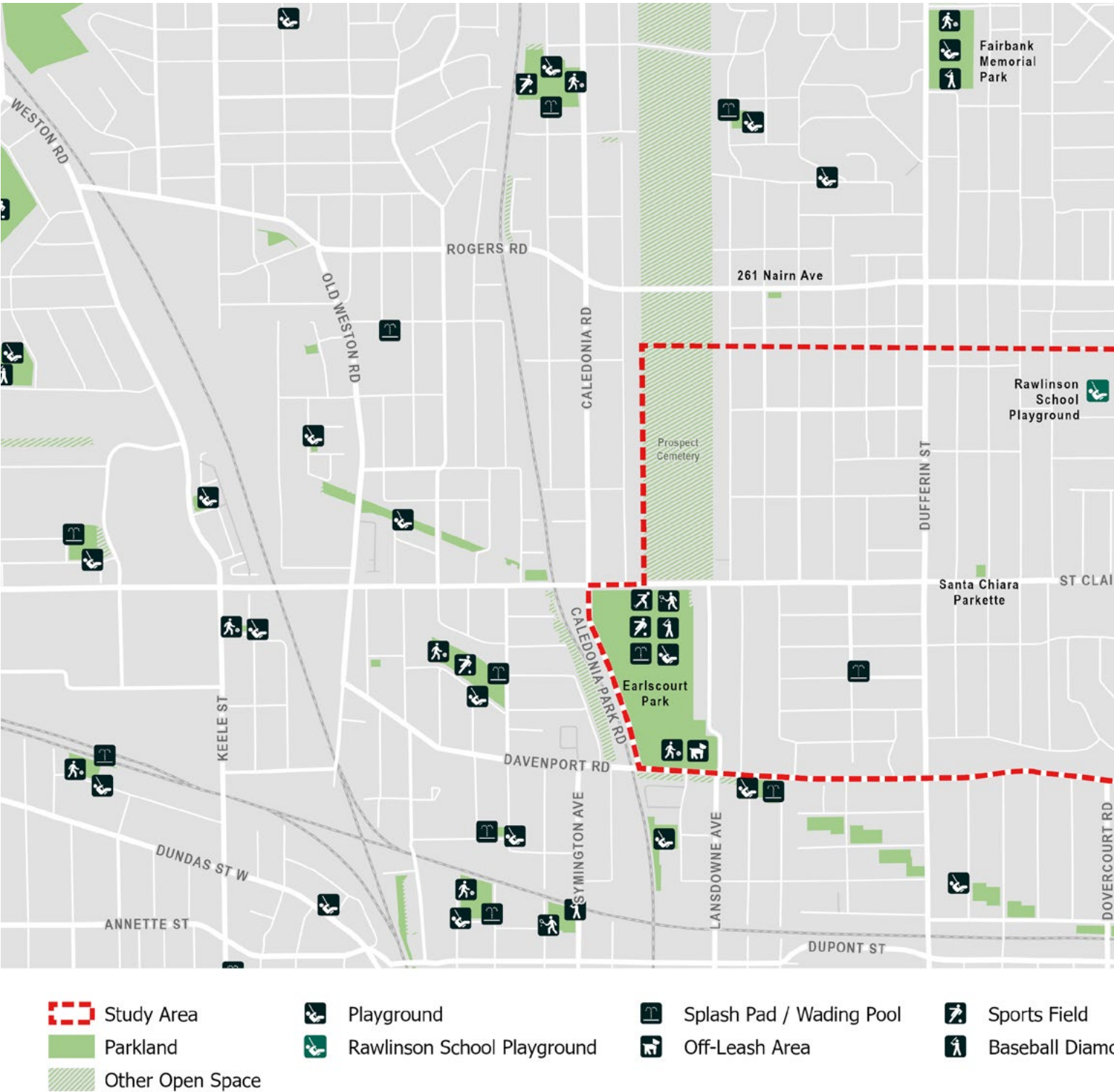


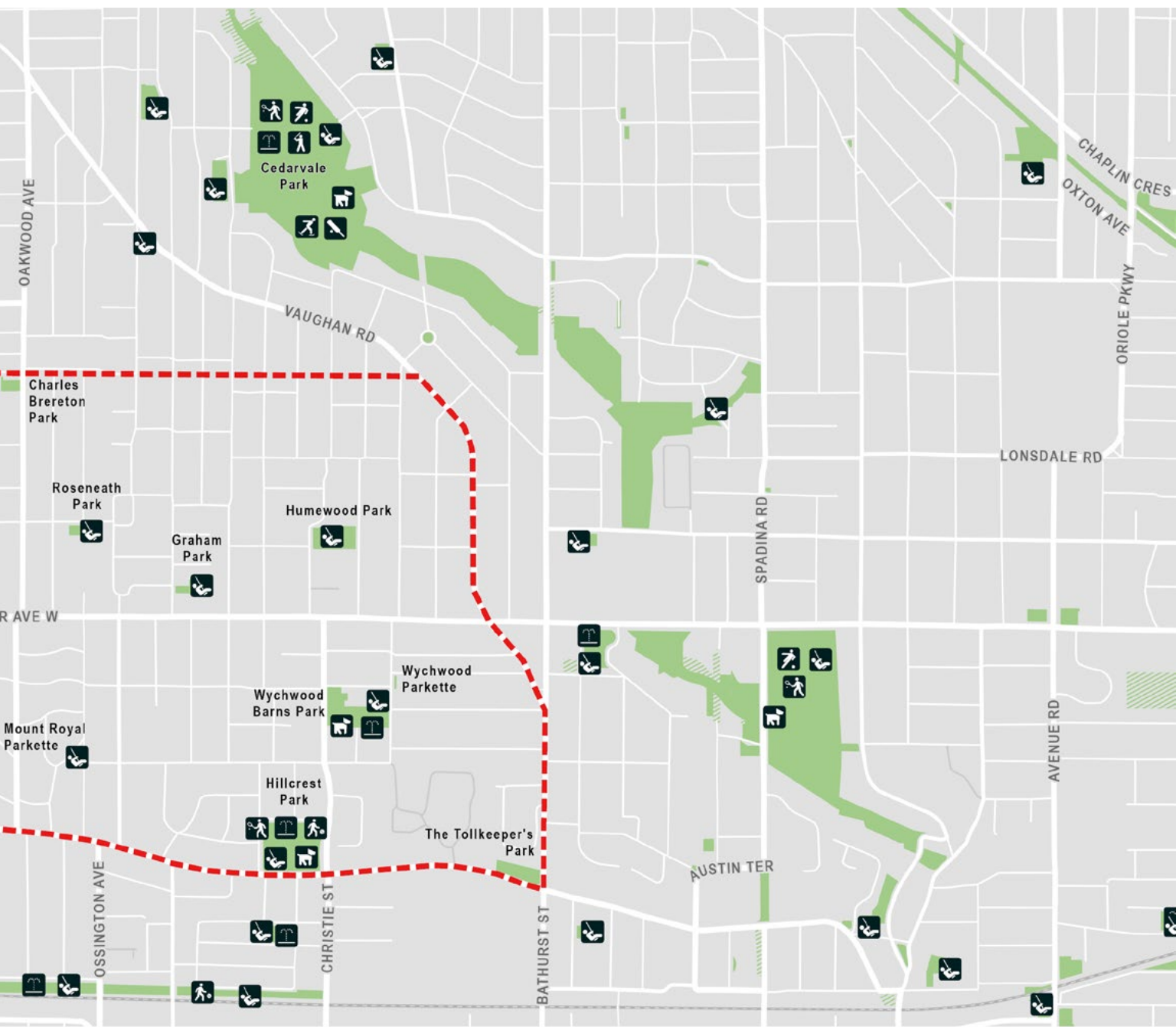
Figure 11: Non-park outdoor spaces used by Social Pinpoint respondents



2.4 Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Figure 12: Outdoor recreation facilities





- | | |
|--|--|
|  Cricket Pitch |  Basketball Court |
|  Artificial Ice Rink |  Tennis Court |

One of the key roles of parks is to provide opportunities for active recreation and play. The provision of outdoor recreation facilities in the Oakwood–St. Clair study area was evaluated by examining the recommended service catchment areas defined in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019-2038 (FMP), which are approximately 2 kilometres for most facility types.

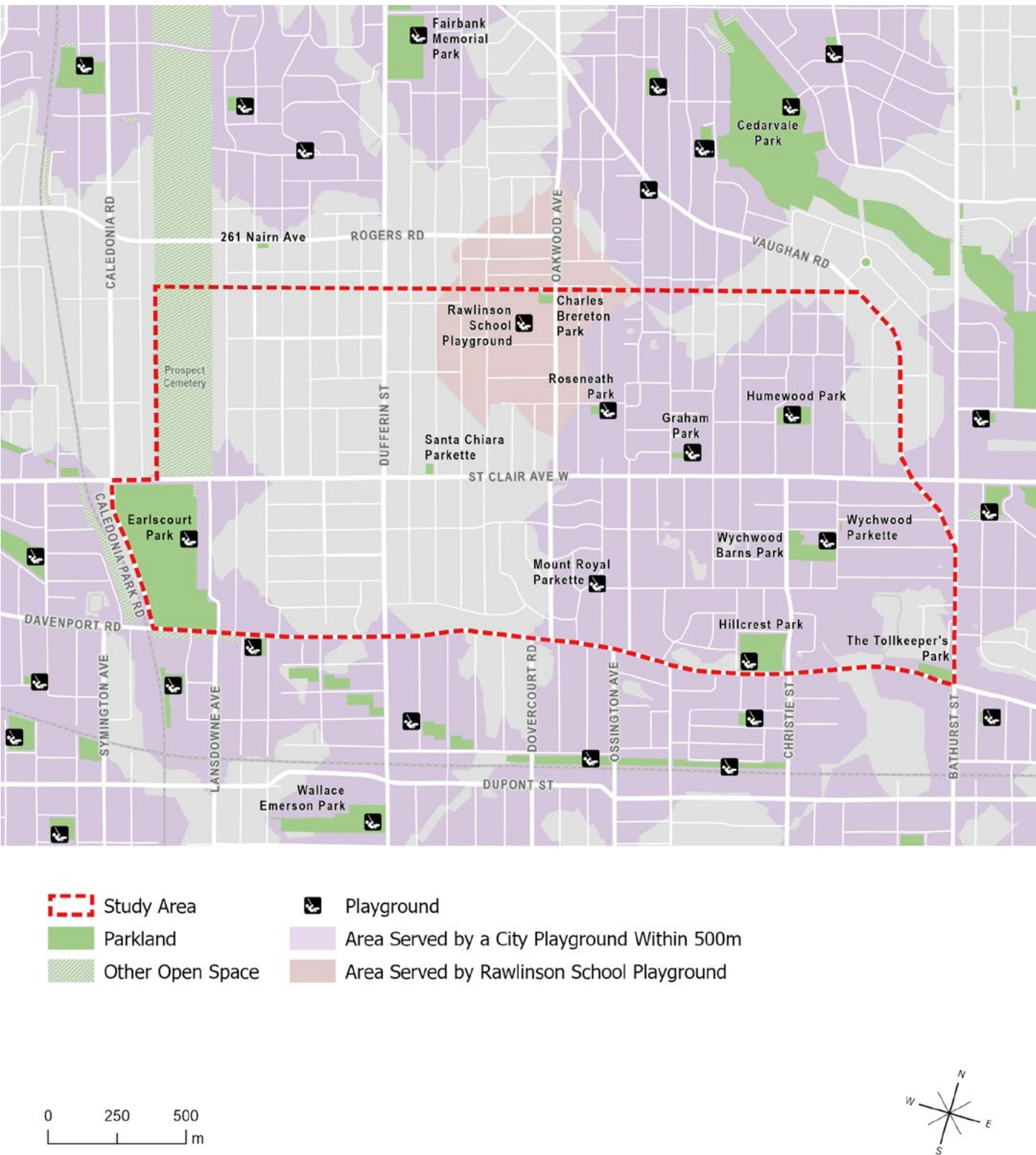
As shown in Figure 12, the study area is geographically well-served by most types of outdoor recreation facilities, meaning that there are various facilities located either within the study area or within a short walk from the study area. In addition to facilities assessed through the FMP, the study area also includes three outdoor volleyball courts (one at Wychwood Barns Park and two at Earls court Park), and one outdoor fitness equipment station in Earls court Park. There is an additional outdoor fitness equipment station approximately 400 metres east of the study area in Cedarvale Park.

The notable exception in the provision of park-based facilities in the area is playgrounds. Figure 13 shows a clear gap in the western portion of the study area. This gap does not account for playgrounds on non-City lands, namely schoolyards with the exception of the playground at Rawlinson Community School, where a community access agreement is in place.

In addition to the area's outdoor recreation facilities, there are four community recreation centres located within or near the study area: Joseph J. Piccininni Community Centre, Hillcrest Community Centre, Wallace Emerson Community Recreation Centre (scheduled to be rebuilt beginning in 2022) and Fairbank Memorial Community Centre.

Permit data for soccer/multi-purpose fields and baseball diamonds in the study area was assessed for 2017-2019. The high-quality (Premier and Class A) soccer fields at Earls court Park are very well used – among the busiest in Toronto; however, the Class C baseball diamond at Earls court Park sees very low use compared to city-wide averages. User data like this can inform future decisions to upgrade, relocate, or replace facilities.

Figure 13: Playground provision



Dog Off-Leash Areas

There are four existing dog off-leash areas (DOLAs) that serve the study area – at Earls court Park, Wychwood Barns Park, Cedarvale Park, and Hillcrest Park. Most of the DOLAs are fully fenced, with the exception of the one at Hillcrest Park, which is partially fenced. The area's access to DOLAs will be improved when a new DOLA is delivered at the expanded Geary Avenue Parkette in 2023.

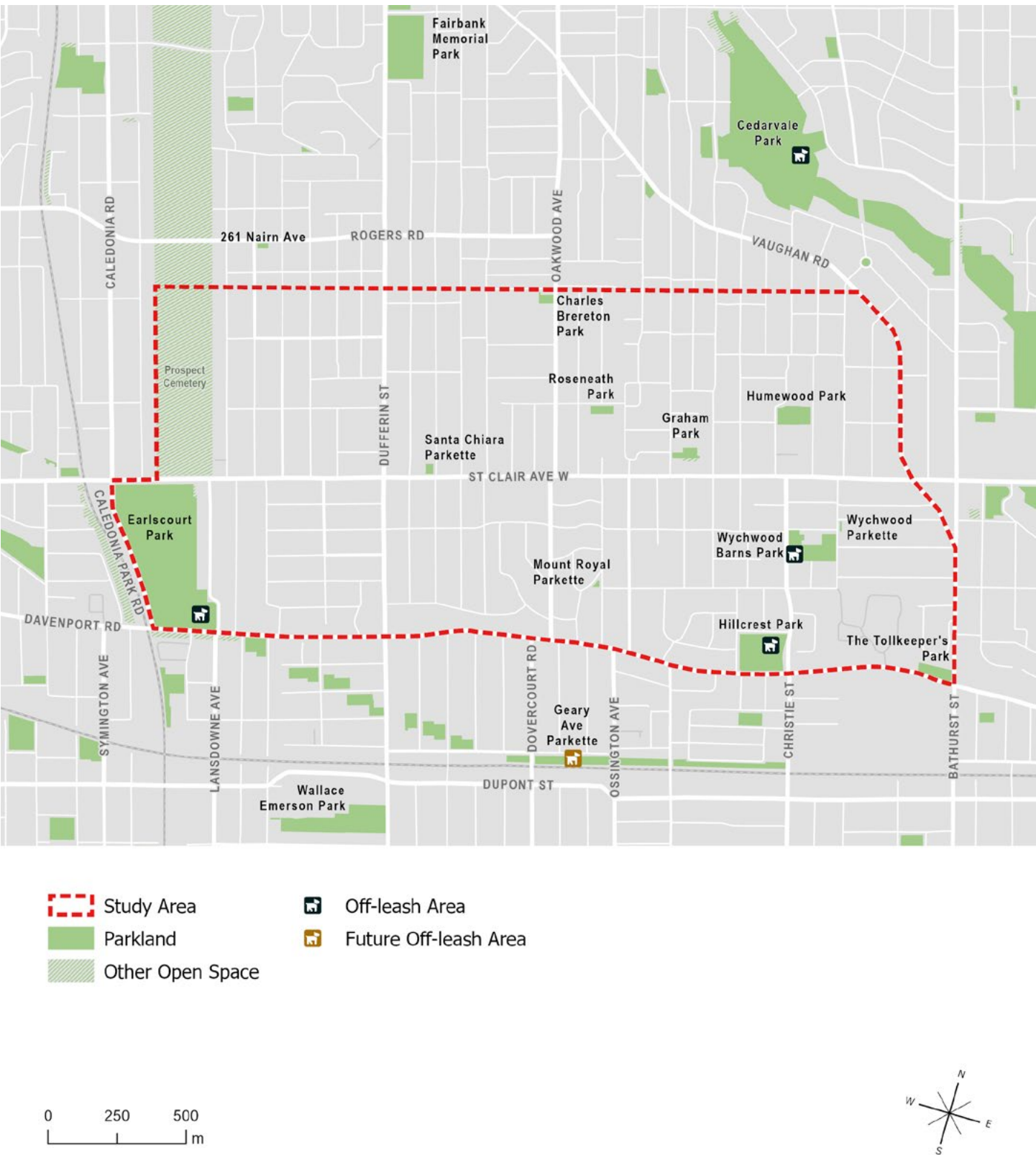


Cedarvale Park dog off-leash area



Earls court Park dog off-leash area

Figure 14: Dog off-leash areas



Community Gardens

There are 2 parks within in the study area with community gardens, and 3 near the study area, including at:

- Earls court Park;
- Hillcrest Park;
- Frankel Lambert Park;
- Garrison Creek Park; and
- Cedarvale Park.

The Frankel Lambert Park and Garrison Creek Park gardens use an individual plot based model, and the rest are collectively maintained. The Mashkikii;aki'ing (Medicine Earth) Medicine Wheel Garden at Hillcrest Park is coordinated by the Stop Community Food Centre in partnership with the Sagatay program from Na-Me-Res (Native Men's Residence) and prioritizes participation by individuals who identify as Indigenous and/or are clients of Na-Me-Res. All of these gardens are operated by members of the community.

The Frankel Lambert Park and Garrison Creek Park gardens are fully subscribed, with recent expansions immediately filled. The average wait time for a plot is 3 years. At the gardens using a collective model, the maximum number of garden volunteers is flexible; however, demand is high and growing.



Mashkikii;aki'ing (Medicine Earth) Medicine Wheel Garden

Starting a Community Garden

Community Gardens provide access to land within the City parks system for groups who wish to grow their own plants. They are community driven – initiated and maintained by the community.

To start one, a group of at least 5 community members committed to the upkeep of the garden must submit a formal written request to the City. The City provides support with the site selection process, considering adjacent land uses, proximity of other community gardens, compatibility with the park's design, exposure to sunlight, proximity to water sources, etc. There is no direct cost to acquiring the space for a community garden but soil tests, tools, compost, compost bins, fencing, or plant material require funding or donations. If resources are available, the City may assist with the installation of the garden and provide ongoing technical support.

2.5 Canopy Cover

Treed streets, yards, and open spaces can complement the parks network, providing benefits to the environment, human health, aesthetics, and overall quality of life.

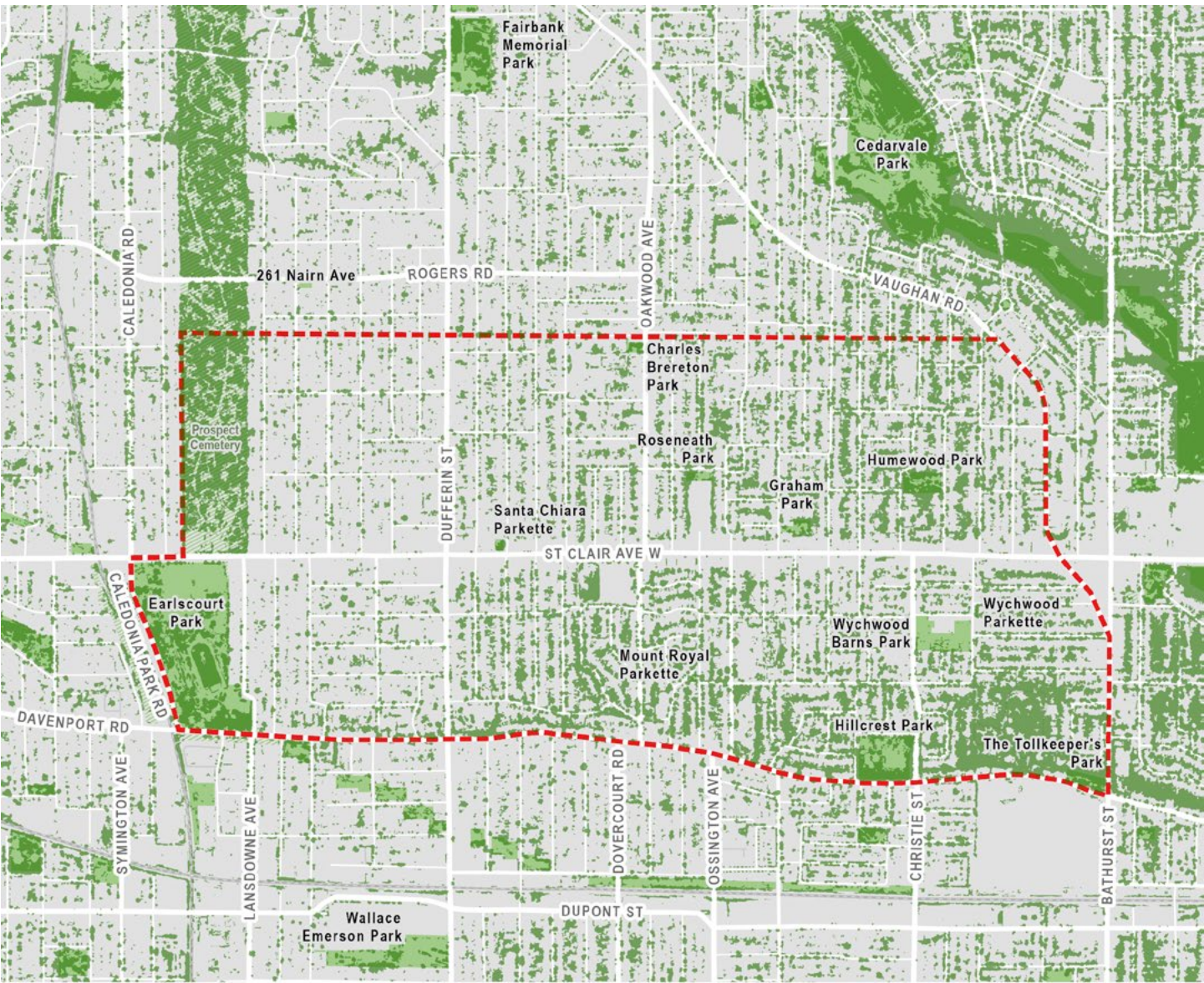
Tree and shrub land cover, or canopy cover, in the study area is on par with the city-wide average of 28.4% - 31% canopy coverage. However, there is significant variation in canopy cover across the study area, as shown in Figure 15. Neighbourhoods to the east of Dufferin Street have significantly higher cover than areas west of Dufferin Street.

There is some correlation between canopy cover and neighbourhood heat vulnerability. The residential areas west of Dufferin score 4 and 5 on the Toronto Public Health Heat Vulnerability Index, and are also the areas with the lowest canopy cover. The easternmost areas of the study area have comparatively good canopy cover, and score 2 on the Heat Vulnerability Index.

Heat Vulnerability Index

The Heat Vulnerability Index was developed by Toronto Public Health in 2011 to characterize the geographic patterns of vulnerability to heat in the City. Vulnerability to heat is defined as a combination of exposure to heat (the likelihood that a person will encounter heat, how hot it is, and for how long – affected by things like presence of shade and greenspace) and sensitivity to heat (the decreased ability to cope with hot weather, usually because of individual physiological, medical, behavioural, and social factors).

Figure 15: Canopy cover



-  Study Area
-  Parkland
-  Canopy Cover
-  Other Open Space

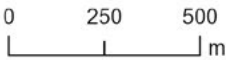
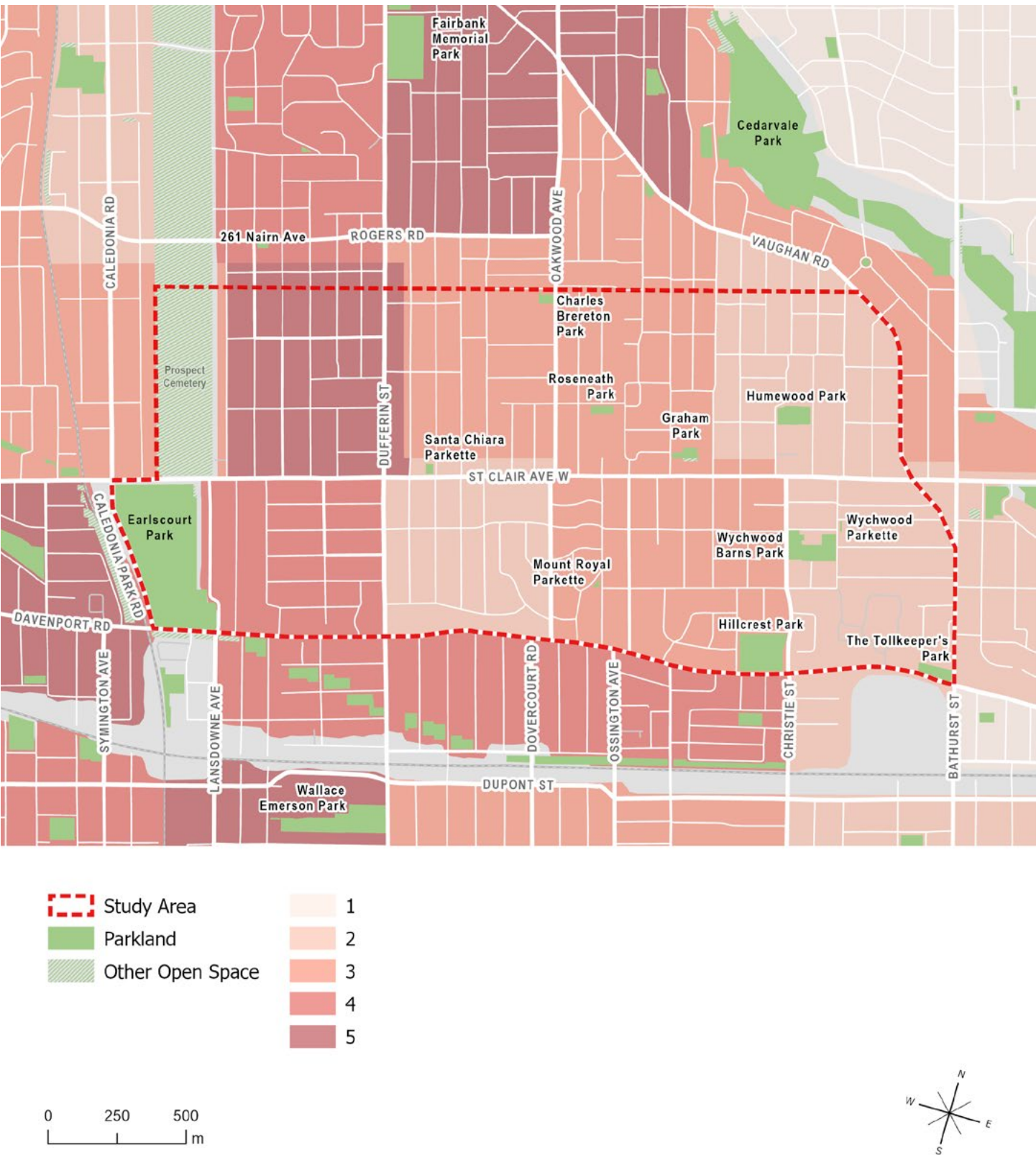


Figure 16: Heat vulnerability



3 Investing in the Local Parks System

The City is continually investing in park improvements in communities across Toronto, guided by the City's Parkland Strategy, Facilities Master Plan, and local needs. In the Oakwood–St. Clair area, a number of recent park improvements have been recently completed or are planned for the near term that will enhance the function, safety and enjoyment of local parks.

Figure 17: Park and facility improvements



3.1 Recent Park Improvements

Playground Enhancement Projects

Four playgrounds within or near to the study area were upgraded recently as part of the City's playground enhancement program, including at:

- Humewood Park (completed in 2020);
- Bristol Avenue Parkette West (completed in 2020);
- Hillcrest Park (completed in 2020); and
- Cy Townsend Park (completed in 2020).

Earlscourt Park Improvements

The existing concrete wading pool at Earlscourt Park was recently converted to a splash pad. Construction was completed in late 2021 and the splash pad will be open for summer 2022.

The refreshment booth in the north-west area of the park will also be repurposed and reactivated in 2022 by MUSE Arts, an artist-run community arts organization focused on engaging communities in hands-on arts education. The building will serve as their Creative Lab, a space for emerging artists from equity-deserving groups to showcase their work, access professional development opportunities, and engage with communities.



New Earlscourt Park splash pad

Graham Park Improvements

Improvements were made to Graham Park in 2021, including the installation of benches, accessible picnic benches, and a ping pong table.



New table tennis at Graham Park

3.2 Planned Parks, Improvements, and State of Good Repair Projects

Several new parks, the expansion of one park, and several park and facility improvement projects are already approved to be completed over the next several years within or near the Oakwood–St. Clair study area. Several state of good repair projects (projects that include the maintenance, repair or replacement of existing assets) are also planned for park facilities throughout the study area, including the Earls court Fieldhouse and Washroom in 2021-2022.

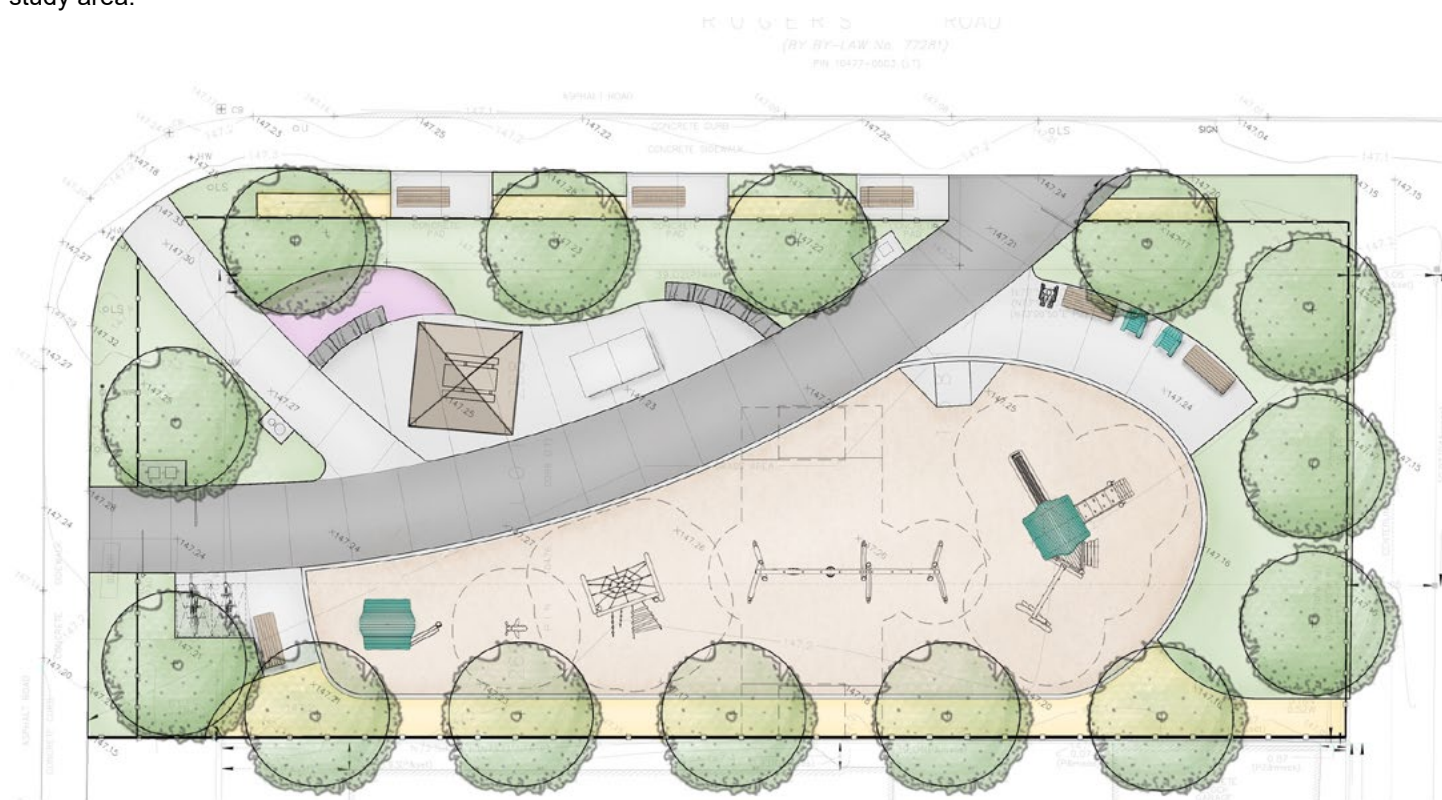
New Park at 261 Nairn Avenue

The approximately 800 m² site located at 261 Nairn Avenue was acquired by the City in 2018 for the purposes of a park. It is temporarily in “Base Park” condition (the former building has been demolished, the site is sodded, and benches have been installed) until construction to bring it to completion begins in late 2022.

Public engagement informing the ultimate park design included a park pop-up event, virtual community meeting, and online survey in the fall of 2021. The preferred concept design was shared with the community at the final open house on February 22, 2022. This new park will significantly reduce the parkland walkability gap in the west end of the study area.

New Parks at 32/40 Raglan Avenue, 1528-1530 Bathurst Street and 498 St. Clair Avenue West

Approximately 1670 m² of new parkland across three parks will be delivered to the neighbourhood through the redevelopment and intensification of sites just to the east of the Oakwood–St. Clair study area. The design of the parks will be informed by community engagement beginning in summer 2022, as well as the findings of this study and park and facility needs identified for the neighbourhoods to the east of the Oakwood–St. Clair study area. The parks are anticipated to be open to the public in 2024-2025.



New park at 261 Nairn Avenue concept plan

Geary Avenue Park Expansion and Playground Enhancement

The Geary Avenue Park Expansion will transform a segment of the hydro corridor running parallel to Geary Avenue, between Delaware Avenue and Westmoreland Avenue, into new park space. The expanded park will include a new dog off-leash area and streetscape improvements to connect to the existing Barlett Parkette at Salem Avenue. The design builds on the conceptual master plan design guidelines established through community consultation for the Green Line Implementation Plan and project-specific consultation carried out through 2020.

The project is being undertaken in parallel with the Geary Park Playground Enhancement, with both projects planned to be complete in late 2022. The final design for the playground was informed by a survey carried out in fall 2021.



Rendering of the Geary Avenue Park expansion



Rendering of the new Geary Avenue Park playground

Earlscourt Park Pathway and Frontage Improvements

The City is improving the pathways in Earlscourt Park in 2022. The new pathways will connect to the existing park pathways, entrances and amenities at the west side of the park and will improve accessibility and connectivity throughout the park. The design of the pathway network was informed by community engagement beginning in 2020, with the concept plan shared in February 2022.

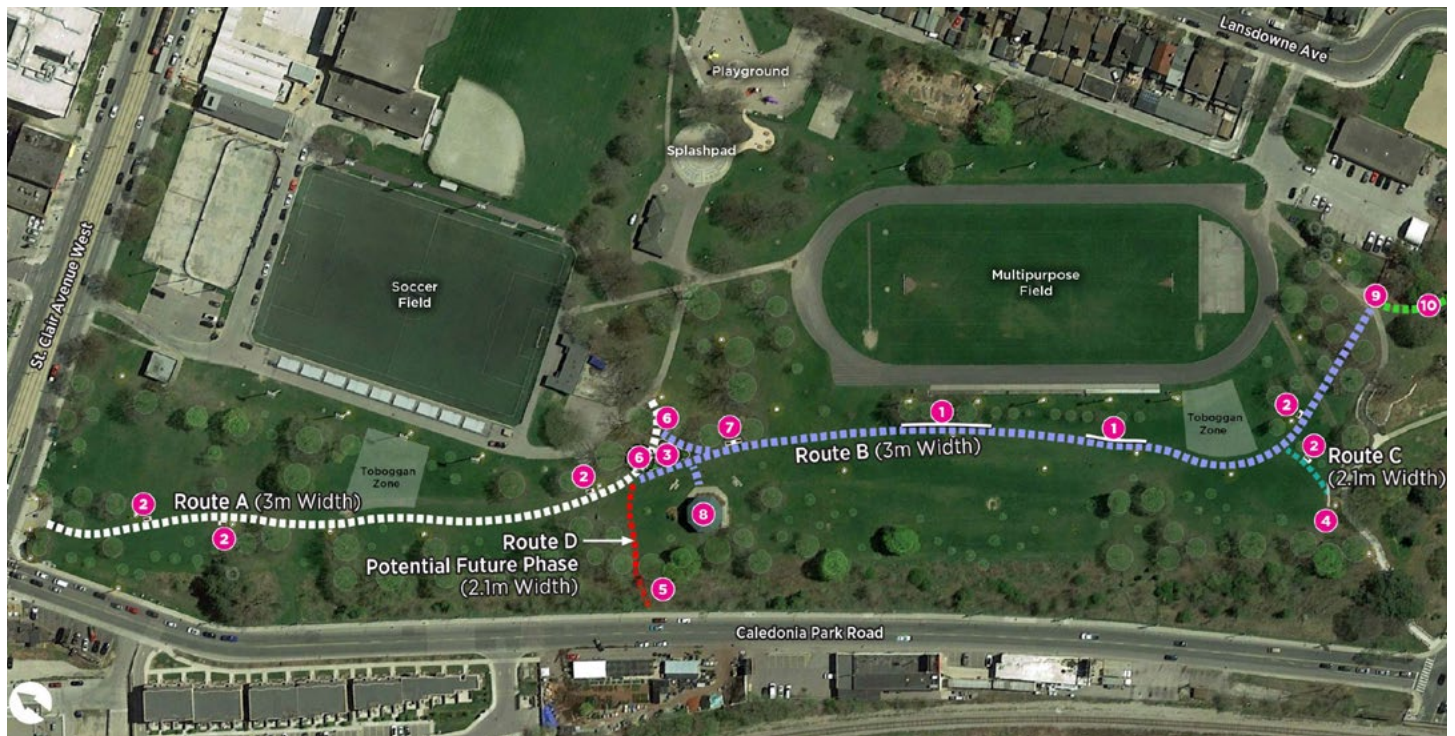
Improvements to the St. Clair Avenue West frontage, including seating and decorative paving, are also planned for 2022.

Playground Enhancement Projects

Two stand-alone playground enhancement projects are planned in the study area:

- Wychwood Barns Park Playground Enhancement (2023-2024)
- Roseneath Park Playground Enhancement (2028-2029)

The design of both projects will be informed by community engagement.



Proposed design for Earlscourt Park pathway improvements

3.3 Future Recommended Recreation Facilities

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan Implementation Strategy (2019-2038) identifies recreation facilities needed to address recreation service level gaps throughout the city over the next 20 years. The FMP Implementation Strategy identifies specific types of facilities required by geography (ward, district, or citywide) and time period: short term (2019-2023), medium term (2024-2028), and long term (2029-2038).

The FMP Implementation Strategy recommends the following future facilities that may be situated to serve the study area (by either being accommodated within or around the study area):

- One new basketball court is recommended in Toronto-St. Paul's in the short term; and
- One new skatepark is recommended in either University Rosedale or Toronto–St. Paul's in the medium term (2024-2028).

The FMP Implementation Strategy also recommends the following additional facilities to be located throughout the city, as needed and appropriate. As planning for these facilities advances at a city-wide level, they may be recommended to serve the study area:

- Multiple full-size and junior soccer/multi-use sports fields in both the short and long terms;
- Multiple cricket pitches in both the short and long terms;
- Multiple additional basketball courts in the longer term (2029 to 2038);
- Multiple smaller 'skatespots' in the longer term (2029 to 2038); and
- Multiple dog off-leash areas in both the short and long terms.

PFR is currently developing a number of facility-specific strategies to further inform implementation of the FMP. These strategies will include frameworks to guide and prioritize investment, refine design and maintenance standards, and identify priority locations for the recommendations in the FMP. In 2023, PFR will also begin the first "5-year review" of the overall FMP to update it based on progress to date, current data, and emerging needs.

The directions identified in the Oakwood–St. Clair Parks Plan have been informed by the FMP and will inform the FMP update and associated strategies in development. The findings of this study will also help guide the delivery of smaller, park-based amenities such as playgrounds.

4 Study Findings

Through analysis and community feedback, key parks and open space challenges and opportunities in and around the study area have been identified and grouped into nine themes that the Parks Plan prioritizes addressing:

- 1. Parkland provision**
- 2. Park walkability**
- 3. Recreation facility provision**
- 4. Park accessibility**
- 5. Park visibility, amenities, and design quality**
- 6. Canopy cover**
- 7. Spaces for dogs**
- 8. Street network**
- 9. Schoolyards**

1. Parkland provision

The study area's park system should be expanded to better serve the community.

This plan is focused on addressing opportunities in an “Area of Parkland Need” identified by the Parkland Strategy. There is low parkland provision throughout most of the study area, and particularly in the centre of the study area, where parkland provision is well below the city-wide average. Low parkland provision not only means less space for residents to stroll, picnic, or play informally, but also means there isn't enough space to provide needed facilities and amenities – like playgrounds and community gardens.

The new parkette at 261 Nairn Avenue will improve parkland provision in the north-west portion of the study area; however, even with the addition, provision rates in the area will remain below the City-wide average.

While there is a need for more parkland in general, there is a particular need for larger parks given the prevalence of very small parkettes with limited programming capacity in the study area. However, where large new parks are not feasible, it is important to have differently programmed smaller parks within a broader parks and open space network.

2. Park walkability

Some parts of the study area do not have any parks within a 5-10 minute walk.

There are significant parts of the study area west of Oakwood Avenue that have poor walkability to parks. Through the engagement process, many community members living in the north-west portion of the study area confirmed that walking to most parks in the area can be a lengthy trip (20+ minutes), which is especially challenging for small children and persons with mobility issues.

3. Recreation facility provision

There are opportunities for more recreation facilities within and around the study area.

There is an identifiable playground gap in the neighbourhoods west of Oakwood Avenue. This gap is partially addressed by schoolyard playgrounds but there remains a need for additional play facilities in this area that are accessible to the public at all times. The new playground included in the designs for the park at 261 Nairn Avenue responds to this identified need. There is also a need for an additional basketball court and skatepark or skate spot within or north of the study area to address gaps.

Through the engagement process, community members also indicated that more thought needs to be given to providing play opportunities for older children and teens, including when designing playgrounds. We also heard a desire for additional outdoor fitness equipment and multi-purpose open spaces.

4. Park accessibility

There are opportunities to improve park accessibility.

Some facilities and areas of parks within the study area require improvements to ensure they are equitably accessible for people of all ages and abilities. In particular, the Wychwood Barns Park Playground and the Earls court Park path network were identified as community priorities for accessibility improvements. Additionally, the Tollkeeper's Park lacks accessible seating.

5. Park visibility, amenities, and design quality

There are opportunities to improve park visibility, design quality, and the selection of amenities within parks.

There is a need to invest in improved park design and landscaping throughout the study area – both within parks and at the transitional zone between parks and their surroundings. Feedback suggests this is important to local residents - 66% of survey respondents wanted to see improved landscaping through the park system. Charles Brereton Park has been identified as being in particular need of improvements, including in the City's 2017 Oakwood Vaughan Program to Promote Economic Revitalization through Local Capacity Building report. Earls court Park and Graham Park have been identified as having poor visibility from the street and integration with their surroundings. The Tollkeeper's Park was described as a forgotten space in the community, functioning more as a museum grounds with fewer amenities than a park.

There is an opportunity through this study to improve the selection of amenities in area parks. Community gardens in and around the study area are fully subscribed with wait lists and 69% of survey respondents want to see more. Public engagement also suggests that the community would welcome additional game spaces, seating, firepits, and enhanced lighting, among other things.

6. Canopy cover

There is lower canopy cover and higher heat vulnerability in the western portion of the study area.

While canopy cover in the study area as a whole is on par with the City-wide average, coverage is visibly lower between Dufferin Street and Prospect Cemetery. Lower levels of tree canopy, and correspondingly lower levels of shade likely contribute to the area's poor score on Toronto Public Health's Heat Vulnerability Index.

Through the public engagement process, many community members also observed the need for more trees, shade, and landscaping in the study area. An expanded tree canopy and a sustainable, healthy urban forest, supporting natural systems and providing shade, are important tools in addressing infrastructure and human health related risks due to climate change.

7. Spaces for dogs

There is a need to consider provision and design of spaces for off-leash dogs.

Through public engagement it was noted that the dog population in the study area appears to be increasing. As the area's dog population grows, so has the use of dog off-leash areas and other public spaces for dog exercise and play. Based on feedback, further attention to the provision and design of spaces for off-leash dogs as well as the regulation of non-designated areas is warranted.

Many community members noted that parks and open spaces not designated for off-leash dogs were used for that purpose. In particular, respondents noted that some schoolyards tend to be used for off-leash dog exercise after school hours, particularly Oakwood Collegiate Institute because it is a mostly fenced space. The use of schoolyards intended primarily for student recreation as informal DOLAs can create challenges for students and other users, mainly due to issues related to improper disposal of dog waste and turf damage.

Some respondents noted that non-designated areas are used as off-leash areas in part because of walking distances to DOLAs from parts of the study area – in particular the north-west, which is also the area with the most substantial parkland walkability gap. As noted in the City's 2019 Pet Friendly Design Guidelines for High Density Communities, a 15 minute walk is approximately the furthest pet owners are comfortable going to access a pet amenity for day-to-day use. While much of the study area is within a 15 minute walk of a DOLA, or approximately 1 km, and choice for the neighbourhoods south of St. Clair will be further improved with the new Geary Avenue Parkette DOLA, most of the north-west quadrant is more than a 15 minute walk.

Some respondents also identified issues with the design and operations of existing DOLAs. In particular, users noted concerns around limited hours of operation, upkeep, and lack of shade and seating at the Wychwood Barns Park DOLA.

8. Street network

There are opportunities to enhance the public realm along some streets and laneways. Some engagement participants do not feel comfortable and safe while walking or cycling in the area.

Neighbourhood streets and laneways make up a significant portion of the area's public space. There is an opportunity to reimagine certain sections throughout the study area in line with the City's policies and guidelines (e.g. the Official Plan, Complete Streets Guidelines, and Vision Zero) including by greening and "rightsizing" through pedestrian realm expansions, to complement the area's parks system and improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists while continuing to accommodate neighbourhood access for vehicles.

Through the public engagement process, some community members also identified challenges to safely walking and cycling in the study area, including when accessing local parks. Identified issues include speeding vehicles and insufficient pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, such as crosswalks, seating, bike lanes, and bike parking.

9. Schoolyards

There are opportunities to improve schoolyards by making them greener and more accessible and useable for students and the broader community.

Schoolyards have been identified by the community as well-used open spaces which play a significant and valuable role in the study area's parks and open space network, and have the potential to play a greater role, given the low parkland provision in the area. However, through the public engagement process, community members noted that some schoolyards are fenced-off and not obviously open to the public outside of school hours. They also noted that schoolyards could be better activated through more programming and community spaces, such as playgrounds, benches, games tables, and play structures for older children and teenagers.

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This plan identifies a set of seven parks and open space directions and a series of related opportunities for the improvement of parks and open spaces in the Oakwood–St. Clair area, informed by the study findings outlined in Section 4 and the Parkland Strategy’s four guiding principles. These directions are followed by six broad design and planning principles to be considered throughout implementation of this plan.

Directions and Identified Opportunities

- .1 Expand the parks system
- .2 Introduce new outdoor recreation facilities
- .3 Enhance parks and existing outdoor recreation facilities
- .4 Support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by planting more trees
- .5 Improve spaces for dogs
- .6 Improve the public realm in collaboration with Transportation Services and Business Improvement Areas
- .7 Encourage and collaborate on enhancements to school yards

Parkland Strategy Principles

Parks planning and investment throughout the city is guided by the Parkland Strategy’s four guiding principles:

EXPAND the parks system by creating new parks to support growth and address gaps to ensure an effective 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 wellbeing 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 to use other open spaces so that people, communities and wildlife have abundant access to parks and open spaces and can seamlessly navigate to and through the parks and open space system.	INCLUDE everyone by removing barriers so that parks and other open spaces are inclusive and inviting places that are equitably accessible for people of all ages, cultures, genders, abilities, and incomes.
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Each direction addresses at least one of these key principles.

5.1 Expand the parks system

Acquiring new parkland is a key priority of this plan, not only to address the low parkland provision levels and walkability gaps that characterize much of the study area, but also to enable the implementation of many of the other recommendations that follow in this section (e.g. providing new playgrounds). However, given that it requires a willing seller or the transfer of City-owned property deemed surplus by another division or agency, the acquisition of new parkland is a process for which it is difficult to guarantee timelines. For this reason, a number of different avenues have been identified to acquire additional parkland across the study area, prioritizing areas with especially low parkland provision. This multi-pronged approach with multiple opportunity sites increases the potential that provision will be improved over time.

The City will continue to pursue new parkland in this area over the long term, re-evaluating the plan periodically against walkability gap and parkland provision indicators. Parkland acquisition will remain a priority until improvement is clearly demonstrated throughout the study area.

Themes Addressed

- **Parkland Provision:** The study area's park system should be expanded to better serve the community.
- **Park walkability:** Some parts of the study area do not have any parks within a 5-10 minute walk.

Parkland Strategy Principles

- **Expand**

Opportunities

- Pursue expansions of select existing parks
- Investigate opportunities for conversion of City-owned lands to parks, including City-owned parking lots or portions thereof
- Pursue other opportunities to acquire new parkland within or close to the study area through lot purchases and/or parkland dedications from development

Opportunities in Detail

Pursue expansions of select existing parks

Based on existing park configurations, several parks in the study area have good potential for expansion. Expansion not only provides additional parkland, but also space for additional recreation facilities and other park amenities.

The parks identified in Figure 18 are candidates for expansion. These parks were selected because of their location within areas of particularly low parkland provision and their smaller size, meaning that even a small expansion could significantly improve their functionality. Expansion of existing parks, rather than the acquisition of stand-alone properties and the creation of new parks, is generally preferable for the same reasons.

Investigate opportunities for conversion of City-owned lands to parks, including City-owned parking lots or portions thereof

Within the study area, City-owned lands principally comprise public parking lots operated by the Toronto Parking Authority (TPA), ranging from approximately 360 m² to 1,600 m² in size. In the longer term, some of these sites, or portions thereof, may have potential to be converted to parkland, where parking demand is adequately met and subject to coordination with the TPA and other City divisions and agencies.

Where feasible and appropriate, the narrowing of public streets or the closure of street segments may provide opportunities for expanding existing parks or creating new park spaces. This approach leverages the significant proportion of land in the study area that comprises the public right-of-way.

Pursue other opportunities to acquire new parkland within or close to the study area through lot purchases and/or parkland dedications from development

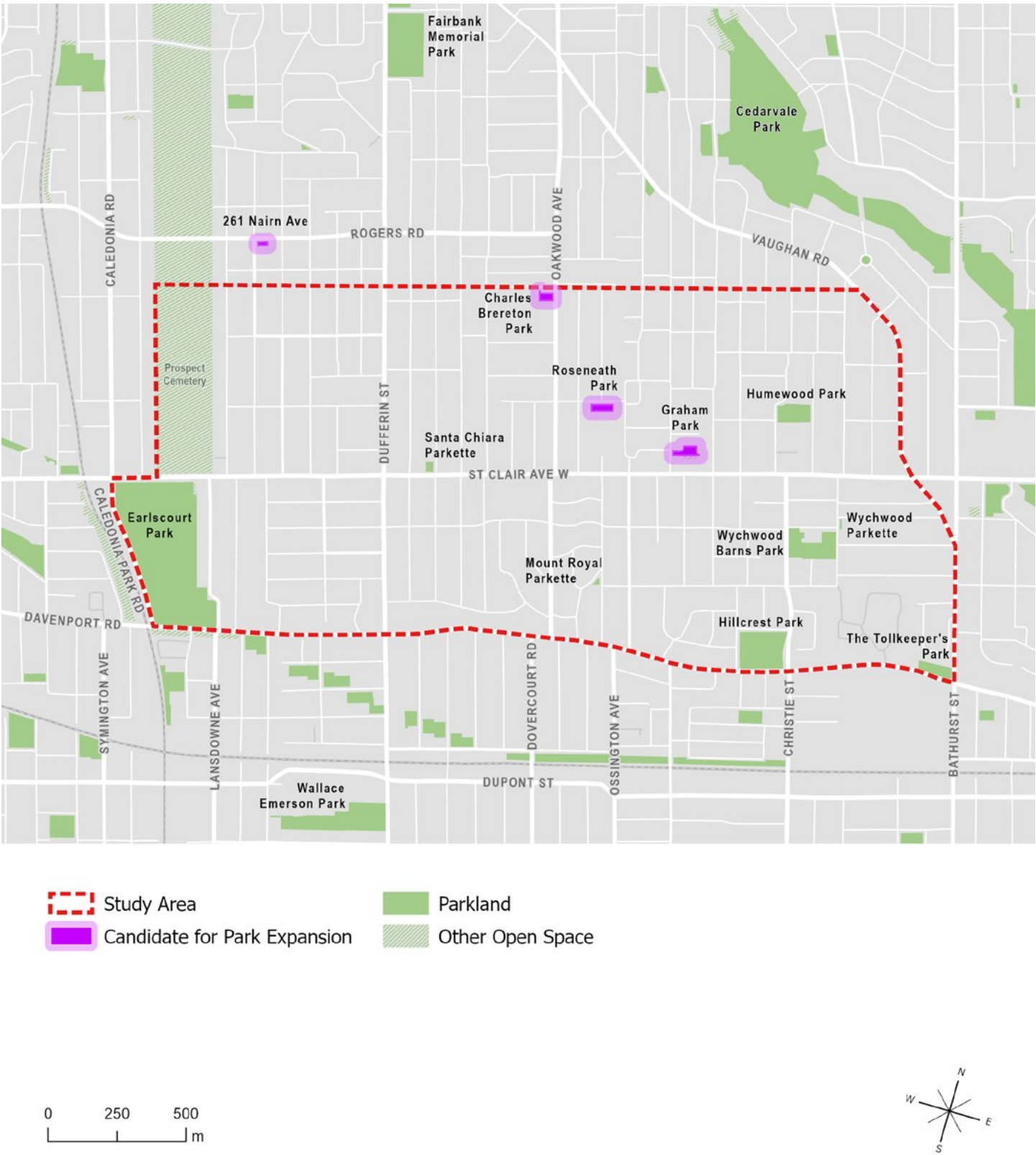
In addition to investigating existing City-owned opportunity sites and sites that can expand existing parks, the City will explore and monitor opportunities to create new parks through either lot purchases and/or parkland dedications from development within and close to the study area. The location and configuration of new parkland is guided by the policies in Toronto's Official Plan Section 3.2.3 and the Parkland Strategy's Parkland Assessment Tool. Parks generally must be free of encumbrances unless approved by City Council, be visible and accessible from adjacent public streets, and be of a usable shape, topography and size, amongst other factors.

While the Plan cannot provide commentary on real estate-related discussions with specific private land owners, the City is actively seeking new parkland in the study area and has engaged some land owners in order to understand their willingness to sell lands to the City for parks purposes. The City is taking into account suggestions for new park sites that were provided through public engagement.



View of Roseneath Park from south

Figure 18: Park expansion opportunities



5.2 Enhance parks and existing outdoor recreation facilities

The initiatives under this recommendation deliver improvements in park visibility, design quality, available amenities, and accessibility. They are focused on enhancements to existing parks and facilities, but also include recommendations for the types of amenities to include in new parks where feasible. There are a wide variety of initiatives ranging from large-scale park revitalizations to small scale interventions like new benches. Some are location-specific and some are area-wide that will require further investigation to determine the best locations for implementation.

Themes Addressed

- **Park accessibility:** There are opportunities to improve park accessibility.
- **Park visibility, amenities, and design quality:** There are opportunities to improve park visibility, design quality, and the selection of amenities within parks.

Parkland Strategy Principles

- **Improve**
- **Include**

Opportunities

- Improve Charles Brereton Park
- Work with the community to enhance aspects of Wychwood Barns Park
- Investigate wayfinding and other improvements to Graham Park
- Implement improvements to the Earls court Park pathway network
- Investigate further improving Earls court Park's interface with surrounding streets
- Support opportunities for expansions to the community gardening network, led by the community
- Introduce play features to informally activate parks
- Investigate opportunities to deliver other features identified by the community in parks across the study area

Opportunities in Detail

Improve Charles Brereton Park

Charles Brereton Park, one of two small parkettes in the north-west quadrant of the study area, has been identified as a priority for investments to improve its design, functionality, and relationship to surrounding spaces. Community desire to see improvements on this site has been communicated through public engagement and the July 2017 Oakwood-Vaughan Economic Revitalization Plan.

Improvements may include a rethink of the park to provide improved seating and a central gathering space, refreshed paving and landscaping, better lighting, a small play opportunity, and preservation of the park's beautiful mature trees. Improvements should also consider an improved relationship to the Rawlinson school grounds and with the laneway to the south which is used only to access the rear of the school, not for regular vehicle traffic. The opportunity to include some of the other amenities identified by the community (as noted below) will also be investigated.

The design process for improvements to this park will include community engagement.

Work with the community to enhance aspects of Wychwood Barns Park

The Wychwood Barns playground has been identified by the community as a priority for accessibility improvements. Working with the community and Councillor, the project has already been moved up from an original target date of 2027-2028 to 2023-2024. This plan recommends continuing to work with the local Councillor and community to deliver the planned playground enhancement for this park with additional improvements to shade, plantings, public art, and inclusive gathering spaces.

Investigate wayfinding and other improvements to Graham Park

Graham Park is a well-loved park that has undergone some recent improvements in response to community requests, including the addition of accessible picnic tables, a ping pong table, and benches.

In addition to the recommended expansion described in section 5.1, the park can be further improved by replacing the tall chain link fencing along the laneway with a lower barrier to improve visibility, access, and the park's appearance. The City will investigate opportunities to improve access to the park from the east by adding wayfinding signage at laneway entry points at Atlas Avenue and Feel Good Lane and providing enhanced lighting in the laneway.



Fence between Graham Park and laneway

Implement improvements to the Earls court Park pathway network

As noted in Section 5, the Earls court Park pathway network has been identified as needing accessibility improvements to ensure people of all abilities are able to easily travel through and around the park. This plan recommends progressing work to design and implement improvements to the pathway network in the short term, including providing a paved connection to the intersection of St. Clair Avenue West and Caledonia Road. In the future, this plan recommends implementing an additional pedestrian connection to Lansdowne Avenue in the southern portion of the park (to the north of the beach volleyball courts).

Investigate further improving Earls court Park's interface with surrounding streets

As noted in Section 3.2, improvements to Earls court Park's St. Clair Avenue West frontage will be delivered in 2022. In the long term, however, there is an opportunity for a broader re-think of how the park and the facilities located along its north end (e.g. the tennis court, outdoor pool, and community recreation centre) interact with the street, possibly in conjunction with a potential future revitalization of the community recreation centre. This rethink should prioritize visual and physical permeability, improving the pedestrian experience for people moving from the street into the park.

Support opportunities for expansions to the community garden network, led by the community

Community gardens in the area are well used, and demand exceeds capacity. This along with community feedback suggests that expanded community garden provision would be beneficial.

Community garden coordinators at their respective gardens noted that expansion would be well received at Earls court Park and Cedarvale Park, but would be challenging and could conflict with other park uses at Hillcrest Park, Frankel Lambert Park, and Garrison Park.

As community gardens in Toronto are generally initiated, operated, and maintained by the community, this plan recommends the City play a supporting role in providing expanded community gardening opportunities in the area.

This could include actions to:

- Pre-identify the potential to expand the existing community gardens at Earls court Park and Cedarvale Park and, if feasible, communicate the opportunity to the current community gardening management groups to determine interest; and
- Consider protecting space for future community gardens in new or expanded parks in the areas north of St. Clair Avenue West.

In both cases, new community gardening space must comply with existing City policy regarding location, design, group eligibility requirements, and conditions of use.

Introduce play features to informally activate parks

Features that can be used for informal play, including boulders, grass mounds, play/fitness paths, and interactive panels, can enhance the study area's playground network, by providing more creative ways for people of all ages to interact with their parks, including those that may not have the space or configuration to accommodate a full playground. These features can be considered for all parks in the study area, with a focus on those without playgrounds, such as Charles Brereton Park, and should be designed to reflect and enhance the park's identity.



Bentway play path
(Source: Jack Landau, courtesy of The Bentway)



Briar Hill fitness loop

Investigate opportunities to deliver other features identified by the community in parks across the study area

Through the engagement process, the community identified a number of features that they would like to see included in the area parks system. After initial investigations, the following items are recommended for inclusion in the area's park network pending further study:

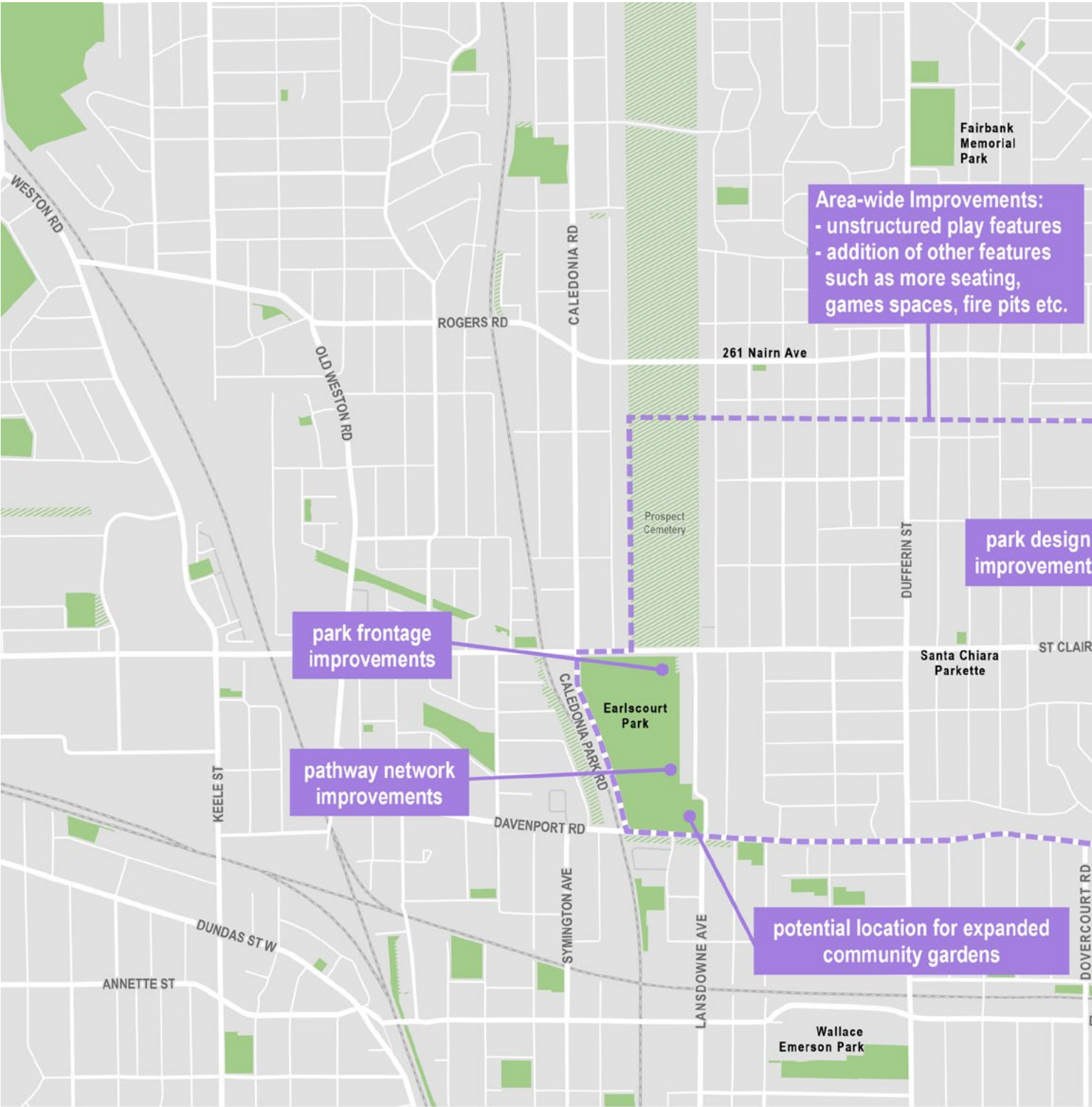
- More accessible seating: Can be considered for all existing and new parks. Priority should be given to parks with limited seating, such as The Tollkeeper's Park.
- Winter-focused amenities (e.g. fire pits): Best suited for larger parks, like Hillcrest or Earls court Park.
- Game spaces (e.g. table tennis): Can be considered for all existing and new parks, but should be prioritized for parks with adequate space and limited other functionality, such as Charles Brereton Park.
- More multi-purpose open space: Can be considered for new parks.

Further investigation is necessary before implementation to confirm siting and design of these elements. Some items can be integrated into other recommended initiatives – for example providing game spaces at a revitalized Charles Brereton Park.

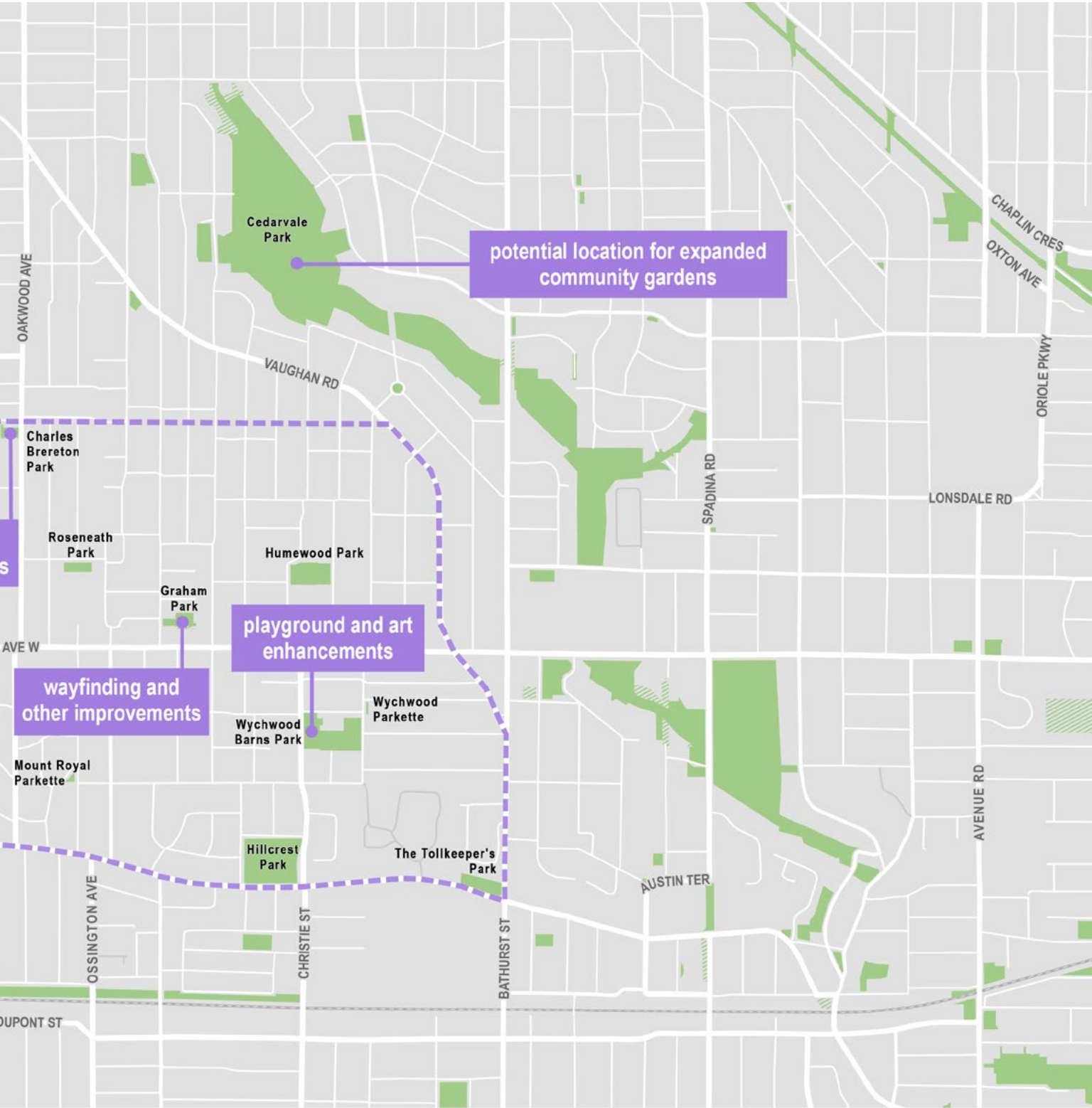


Dufferin Grove fire pit

Figure 19: Park enhancement opportunities



Study Area Parkland Other Open Space



5.3 Introduce new outdoor recreation facilities

There is an opportunity to improve the provision of outdoor recreation facilities in the study area. The initiatives outlined in this section aim to address gaps in playground, skateboard facility, basketball court, and outdoor fitness equipment provision.

In the Oakwood–St. Clair study area, most existing parks are small parkettes, with limited space for new facilities. For this reason, delivering additional recreation facilities will require a combination of:

- Introducing smaller facilities, such as playgrounds or play spots, into existing parks where appropriate. These initiatives can be accomplished in the short term;
- Introducing facilities into new or expanded parks, as opportunities arise; and
- Working with school boards to deliver new or improved facilities with guaranteed community access outside of school hours.

In delivering these recommendations, the City will focus on delivering recreation and play opportunities that are inclusive for all ages and abilities. Based on community feedback, attention will be given to better meeting the play needs of older children and tweens. This will be partially addressed by the types of facilities added (e.g. skate parks and basketball courts), but also by considering their preferences when designing new and revitalized playgrounds and play opportunities, for example through the inclusion of features like climbing walls.

The design of new recreation facilities will include community engagement at the relevant time.

Themes Addressed

- Recreation facility provision: There are opportunities for more recreation facilities within and around the study area.

Parkland Strategy Principles Addressed

- Improve
- Include

Opportunities

- Introduce a playground at the new park at 261 Nairn Avenue
- Deliver additional playgrounds west of Oakwood Avenue
- Introduce new basketball/sports courts within and/or north of the study area
- Introduce a new skatepark / skate spot within or north of the study area
- Investigate opportunities for outdoor fitness equipment in the south-east and north-west quadrants of the study area

Opportunities in Detail

Introduce a playground at the new park at 261 Nairn Avenue

A new playground with accessible play equipment is included in the design of the recently-acquired park at 261 Nairn Avenue. The park and new playground is scheduled to be open in late 2022. This new playground will partially address the playground gap in the north-west portion of the study area.

Deliver additional playgrounds west of Oakwood Avenue

Additional playgrounds are recommended in the western portion of the study area to fully address the existing playground gap, in addition to the new playground at 261 Nairn Avenue. Given the absence of existing parkland suitable for a new playground, these will be delivered as part of a new or expanded park, or on a school site through collaboration with school boards. While the preference is to locate new facilities on parkland, given uncertainties inherent to the land acquisition process, school sites will be evaluated for their potential in parallel.

Introduce a new skatepark or skate spot within or north of the study area

Although the study area falls within the FMP-established catchment areas for skateboarding facilities, existing facilities are not easily accessible from the study area, particularly from the northern portion, and community engagement suggests that there is local demand for a facility in the area. A new skate facility would also provide additional variety in terms of recreation and play opportunities for youth.

In this area, a new skate facility could take the form of a skate park or skate spot. A skate park is a larger facility (over 600 m²) with a variety of features that accommodate all skill levels. A skate spot is smaller (under 600 m²) and designed to serve all skill-levels, but with a focus on novice and intermediate users.

Fairbank Memorial Park north of the study area has been identified as a preliminary candidate for a new skatepark, pending further investigation and community engagement.



Ashbridges Bay skatepark



West Lodge Park skate spot

Introduce new basketball/sports courts within and/or north of the study area

As noted above for skateboarding facilities, although almost all of the study area is within the catchment areas of existing basketball courts as defined by the FMP, a new basketball court within or north of the study area would provide additional recreation opportunities for youth, and depending on the location, significantly improve walking access. Further, support for a revitalized basketball court was demonstrated through TDSB engagement on the Oakwood Collegiate Master Plan. As such, the plan recommends considering new courts within and/or to the north east of the study area as part of the FMP 5-year review. Potential locations include Cedarvale Park, future new or expanded parks, and schoolyards, subject to community access agreements.

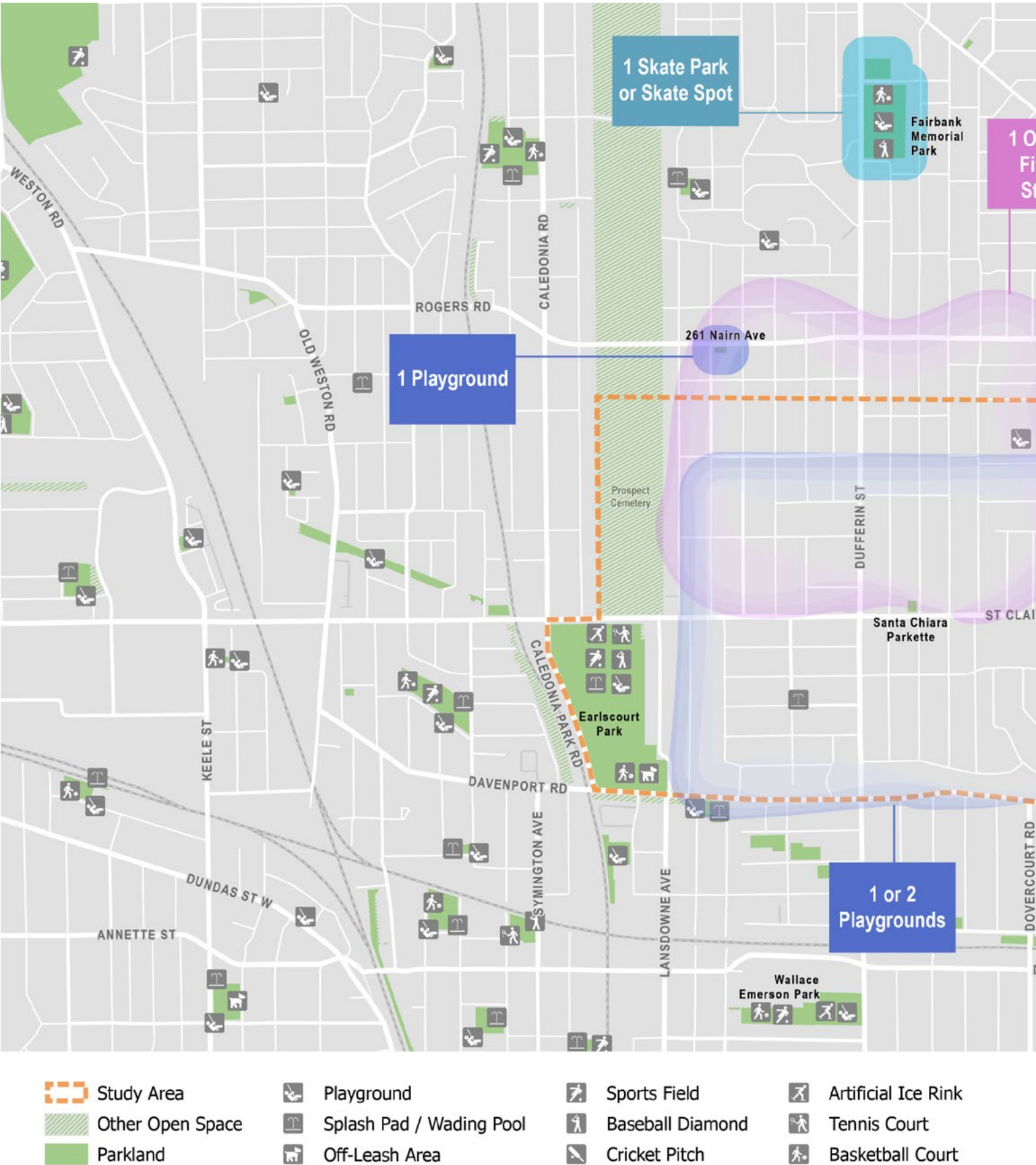
Investigate opportunities for outdoor fitness equipment in the south-east and north-west quadrants of the study area

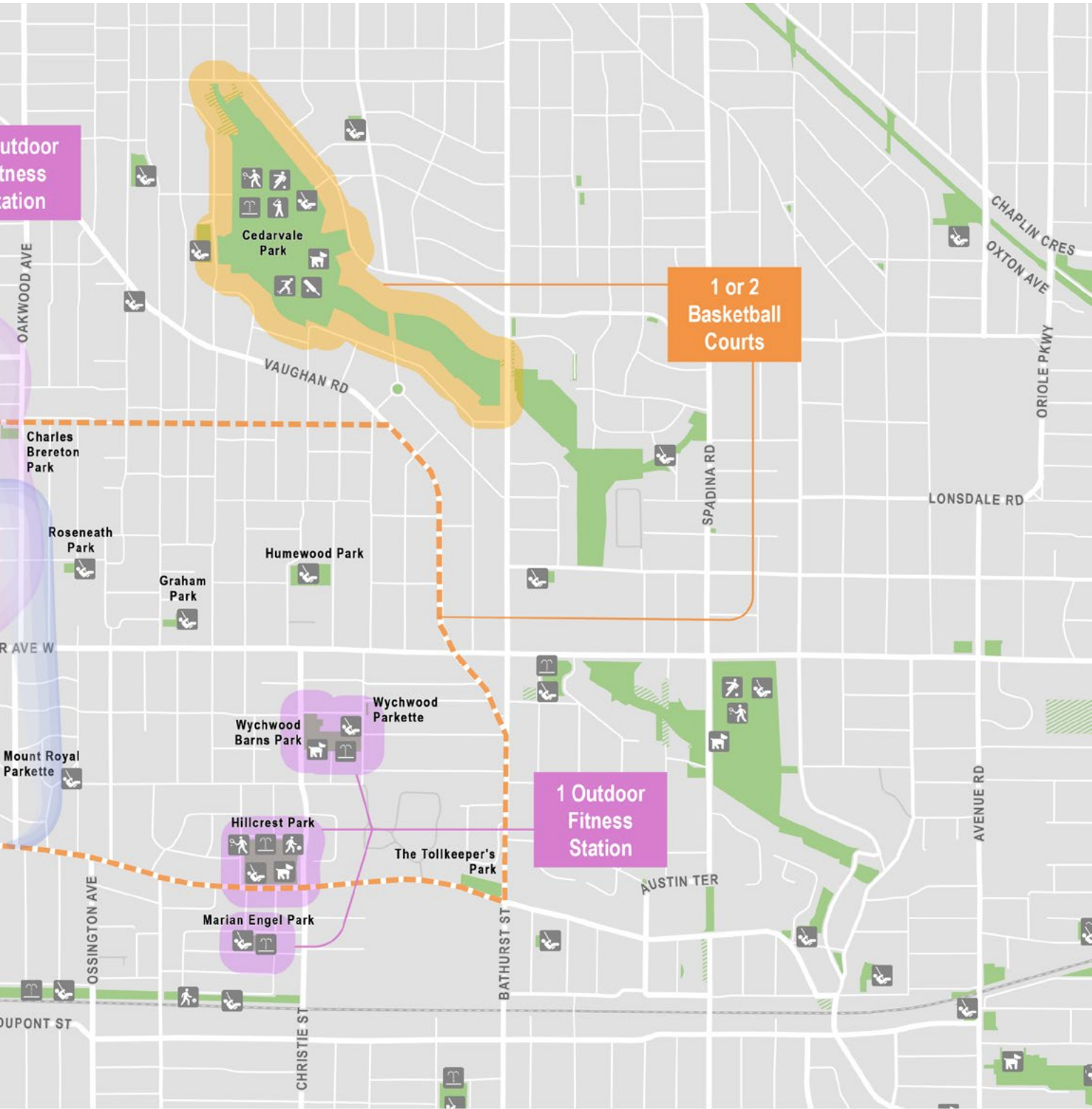
Outdoor fitness equipment provides self-guided recreation opportunities focused on physical health for teens and adults. The study area is currently served by outdoor fitness stations at Earls court Park and Cedarvale Park. To improve access for residents in the south-east quadrant of the study area, an additional fitness station is recommended for Hillcrest Park, Wychwood Barns Park, or Marian Engel Park. To improve access for residents in the north-west quadrant, fitness equipment should be considered as part of any new or expanded parks.



Earls court Park outdoor fitness equipment

Figure 20: Proposed new recreation facilities





5.4 Support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by planting more trees

Increased tree planting focused on the western portion of the study area would help address the inter-related issues of comparatively sparse canopy cover and higher levels of heat vulnerability. Expanded and revitalized parks and increasing tree provision could provide a number of co-benefits, such as improved storm water management, lower air pollution, carbon sequestration, more resilient habitats and public realm benefits, particularly when planted in parks or along streets. Similar benefits should be targeted through other design and maintenance improvements within public parks (see section 5.8).

Given the dense, built-up nature of the area between Oakwood Avenue and Prospect Cemetery with limited space available for planting, a multi-pronged approach focusing on opportunities in parks, along roadways, in schoolyards, and on private property is recommended to increase the area's canopy cover as much as possible. Following established City of Toronto Urban Forestry policy and practices, plantings will generally incorporate a diverse selection of large growing native species.

Themes Addressed

- Canopy cover: There is lower canopy cover and higher heat vulnerability in the western portion of the study area.
- Street network: There are opportunities to enhance the public realm along some streets and laneways.

Parkland Strategy Principles Addressed

- **Improve**
- **Connect**

Opportunities

- Plant more trees in existing and future parks
- Work with homeowners and community organizations to increase tree provision on private property in the west of the study area
- Identify opportunities for tree planting along streets, particularly in the west of the study area
- Work with school boards to plant trees on school sites, particularly in the west of the study area

Opportunities in Detail

Plant more trees in existing parks

More trees will be planted in existing parks in the short term, including in the new park at 261 Nairn Avenue, Earls court Park, and Wychwood Barns Park.

Tree plantings are also recommended for all future parks in the study area.

Work with homeowners and community organizations to increase tree provision on private property in the west of the study area

Plantings on public property are only a small part of the puzzle – plantings on private land, which makes up a significant proportion of the land in the west of the study area will also be supported to maximise potential growth in the area's canopy cover. This initiative will encourage tree planting in both front and back yards.

The City will work with community organizations and homeowners to support tree planting through established programs, including:

- **The Residential Street Tree Planting Program:** The City owns a portion of land between roadways and private properties, known as the road allowance. Urban Forestry plants and maintains trees on the road allowance to help grow Toronto's urban forest. A property owner can submit a tree planting request for the road allowance in front of their home or business by calling 311 or visiting toronto.ca/311.
- **Urban Forestry Grants and Incentives:** The City supports a number of programs to encourage and support tree planting on private property. The two most applicable for this area include:

- The Neighbourhood Tree Giveaway Program: Supports community-led tree giveaway events through financial support, free native trees and shrubs, and technical support and training.
- Backyard Tree Planting Program in collaboration with LEAF: Subsidized trees with optional planting service.

Promotion of these programs with homeowners and community organizations in the west of the study area is recommended for the short term.



New tree

Identify opportunities for tree planting on streets, particularly in the west of the study area

Parks, Forestry and Recreation will work with Transportation Services and the community to identify opportunities to plant additional street trees, particularly in the west of the study area. As opportunities are currently limited due to the existing configuration of most of the road rights-of-way (including exclusively concrete sidewalks and asphalt roadway), the planting of street trees will be a long-term process with opportunities generally considered in conjunction with road reconstruction that provides the opportunity to construct curb bump-outs and continuous soil trenches. Opportunities to implement similar interventions on roadways adjacent to parks will also be considered in conjunction with PFR capital projects.

Work with school boards to plant trees on school sites, particularly in the west of the study area

The City has a long history of working with school boards to increase tree canopy on school sites, including in the Oakwood–St. Clair area. This plan recommends continuing this collaboration and investigating opportunities for additional “quick-win” plantings on school sites in locations where trees would not conflict with programmed space like sports fields. In the longer term, opportunities to break up hard-surfaced areas, including parking lots or underutilized paved play areas, with tree plantings should be considered.

5.5 Improve spaces for dogs

The dog population in the study area appears to be increasing, and there is demand for improvements to the area's network of dog-related facilities to better accommodate dog owners and reduce off-leash use pressure on existing DOLAs and other open spaces, including school yards. This pressure appears to be especially acute in greenspaces within walking distance of the north-west quadrant of the study area, much of which is more than a 15 minute walk from existing dog off-leash areas (DOLAs).

Providing an additional DOLA that serves the north-west quadrant of the study area is recommended as the best solution to help reduce pressures on existing parks and open spaces and conflicts with other park users. Unfortunately, given the overall shortage of park space in this area, providing an additional DOLA to address this issue is dependent on the acquisition of new parkland of a suitable size and configuration, following the process detailed in Section 5.1. Furthermore, it must be balanced with the identified need for other park amenities within the limited park space. Existing schoolyards are not recommended for full or partial conversion to DOLAs due to existing school programming needs and health and safety concerns. This plan thus recommends evaluating opportunities for a new DOLA that serves the northwest quadrant when sufficient new and expanded parkland is acquired, while recognizing that the provision of dedicated pet facilities has to be balanced with other park needs.

In the shorter term, opportunities for design improvements and to investigate expanding hours of operation to better serve users in the short term will be investigated. Additionally, the City will work with the development industry to ensure that developments along St. Clair Avenue West provide pet amenities and spaces to prevent additional pressures on the area's park and open space network.

Themes Addressed

- **Spaces for dogs:** There is a need to consider provision and design of spaces for off-leash dogs.

Parkland Strategy Principles Addressed

- **Improve**
- **Include**

Opportunities

- Explore improvements to the four existing dog off-leash areas within or close to the study area
- Work with the development industry to ensure that developments along St. Clair Avenue West provide pet amenities and spaces to reduce pressures on parks
- Consider opportunities for future DOLAs as part of new and expanded parks, where appropriate

Opportunities in Detail

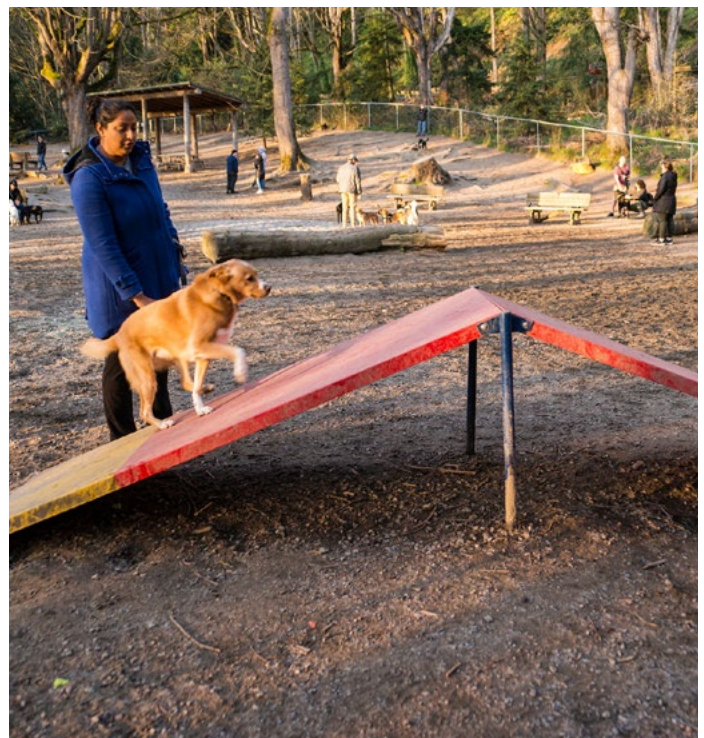
Explore improvements to the four existing dog off-leash areas within or close to the study area

In consultation with the local community and DOLA users, improvements to the design and operations of existing DOLAs will be explored in the short term. Improvements could include:

- Extending hours of operation of the Wychwood Barns DOLA;
- Investigating changes to the Wychwood Barns Park DOLA surface material;
- Improving the shade structure at the Wychwood Barns Park DOLA;
- Adding additional seating; and
- Adding agility play features.



Dog agility play tube (Source: Seattle Parks and Recreation)



Dog agility ramp (Source: Seattle Parks and Recreation)

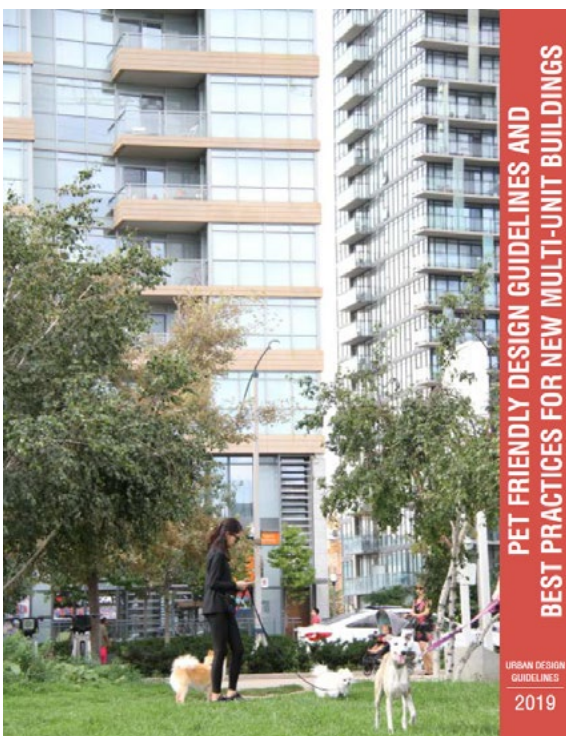
Work with the development industry to ensure that developments along St. Clair Avenue West provide pet amenities and spaces to reduce pressures on parks

The City will work with the development industry to ensure that pet-friendly designs are incorporated when planning new buildings and the surrounding urban environment, in line with the City's 2019 Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for High Density Communities. This is intended to help reduce the impact that future population growth has on existing neighbourhood DOLAs and to help prevent additional informal use of spaces such as schoolyards as off-leash areas. Key amenities to consider that may help reduce pressures on parks include: private pet relief areas, private off-leash areas, and privately-owned public spaces that include off-leash areas.

Consider opportunities for future DOLAs as part of new and expanded parks, where appropriate

Recognizing that improvements to the existing DOLAs and amenities delivered through private development will not address the issue of walking distance for residents in the north-west quadrant of the study area, DOLAs will be considered for new and expanded parks within 1 kilometre of this area. The decision to deliver a DOLA as part of a new or expanded park will be made in line with Toronto's 2010 People, Dogs and Parks – Off-leash Policy, which requires the consideration of the following criteria:

- Neighbourhood characteristics (adjacent land uses, population density, housing types, licensed dog population, proximity of existing and other potential off-leash areas located within a 15 minute walk or one kilometre);
- Compatibility with the park's design, established uses, features and components;
- Potential impacts on the park's functionality, condition and natural environment;
- Proportion of park to be taken up by the proposed off-leash area; and
- Proximity to residences and off-leash area exclusions.



City of Toronto Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for High Density Communities

5.6 Improve the public realm in collaboration with Transportation Services and Business Improvement Areas

Although the focus of this plan is on improvements to the Oakwood–St. Clair area’s park network, the Plan recommends investigating opportunities to reimagine streets throughout the study area to complement the area’s parks system and improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Given that streets make up a significant proportion of the study area’s public realm network, a rethink of neighbourhood streetscapes could offer significant benefits to the community by providing “park-like” spaces that offer some of the functionality of parks – providing places where people meet, linger and socialize. This initiative could also provide environmental benefits through increased canopy coverage (drainage, cooling, biodiversity etc.) and help address reported traffic safety issues.

This work requires a continuation of the ongoing inter-divisional collaboration with Transportation Services and the City’s Business Improvement Area (BIA) office.

To increase the impact of investments in this area, improvements adjacent to parks and improvements where road reconstruction projects are planned are prioritized. Improvements on St. Clair Avenue West and Oakwood Avenue can also be made in collaboration with the local BIAs, as detailed below.

Aspects of these initiatives could also be trialled in a flexible manner, with temporary interventions like planters and pavement painting for “bump outs”.

Themes Addressed

- Canopy cover: There is lower canopy cover and higher heat vulnerability in the western portion of the study area.
- Street network: There are opportunities to enhance the public realm along some streets and laneways. Some engagement participants do not feel comfortable and safe while walking or cycling in the area.

Parkland Strategy Principles Addressed

- Connect
- Improve
- Include

Opportunities

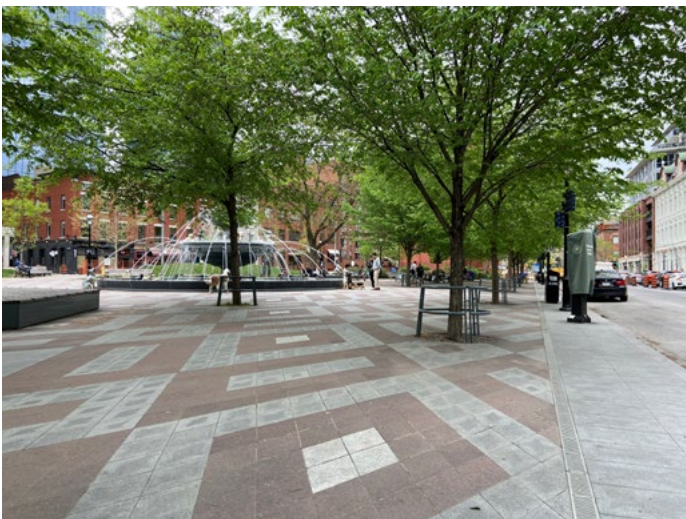
- Expand public space and improve the public realm on streets adjacent to parks where feasible
- Consider public realm improvements as part of planned road reconstruction within the study area
- Support local Business Improvement Areas in making public realm improvements

Opportunities in Detail

Expand pedestrian space and improve the public realm on streets adjacent to parks where feasible

PFR will work with Transportation Services to identify streets adjacent to parks where improvements could be made to improve access to the parks and create a more seamless and welcoming public space – in a sense, reimagining the sidewalks and rights-of-way adjacent to parks as parkland. Specific interventions could include a narrowed right-of-way to increase the park boundaries, a narrowed roadway to increase pedestrian space, safe pedestrian crossings, additional plantings, enhanced paving and additional seating. Locations identified for further investigation include the streets and laneways adjacent to:

- Roseneath Park;
- The new park at 261 Nairn Avenue;
- Mount Royal Parkette; and
- Charles Brereton Park.



Berczy Park

Consider public realm improvements as part of planned road reconstruction within the study area

In addition to making improvements to streets adjacent to parks, this plan recommends integrating public realm improvements into road projects across the study area where feasible, with a focus on projects west of Oakwood Avenue. Interventions could include wider sidewalks and/or curb bump outs to enable tree planting and other landscaping on streets, street furniture such as benches, and permeable paving. Laneway reconstruction programs can consider green laneway treatments, such as removal of asphalt and additional space for planting.



James Canning Gardens bump out

Support local Business Improvement Areas in making public realm improvements

Business Improvement Areas along St. Clair Avenue West and Oakwood Avenue have the opportunity to take a leadership role in placemaking and public realm improvements within their precincts, with City support through the BIA Office. Support can include funding to develop a master plan, funding to implement improvements through a capital streetscape project, and project coordination support.

Streetscape elements that are permanent and within the City's right-of-way are eligible under the capital cost-share program. Examples of eligible elements include art installations, benches, sidewalk treatments, planters, and lighting.

5.7 Encourage and collaborate on enhancements to school yards

Schoolyards play an important role in the area’s parks and open space network by providing green space functions outside of school hours for the community; however, improvements can be made to make them more accessible and usable for students and the broader community. While the City does not have direct jurisdiction over school properties and is limited in its ability to make investments in improvements to school sites, PFR will continue to advocate for increased community access to schoolyards outside of school hours and other improvements to address the themes outlined in this plan. The City will also investigate the potential to deliver needed recreation facilities on school sites in areas where City parks cannot accommodate them.

Themes Addressed

- Recreation facility provision: There are opportunities for more recreation facilities within and around the study area.
- Schoolyards: There are opportunities to improve schoolyards by making them greener and more accessible and useable for students and the broader community.

Parkland Strategy Principles

- Improve
- Include
- Connect

Initiative List

- Explore opportunities to deliver improved facilities on school sites, with community access agreements
- Support community access outside of school hours
- Share other community concerns and ideas regarding school sites

Initiatives in Detail

Explore opportunities to deliver improved facilities on school sites, with community access agreements

The City and local school boards have a history of successful collaborations in delivering improvements to facilities on school grounds, with guaranteed community access outside of school hours. As noted in Section 2.2, a recent example of collaboration between the TDSB, City, and community in the Oakwood–St. Clair area is the Rawlinson Community School Outdoor Area Revitalization project, which is delivering sports field, playground, and seating improvements. Additional partnerships of this nature can be considered in areas where the existing parks system cannot accommodate needed facilities.

Support community access outside of school hours

While most schoolyards in the study area are easily accessible to neighbourhood residents outside of school hours, there are a few sites where access may be restricted. Given the shortage of public open space in the study area, the City will continue to work with school boards and the local Councillor to increase community access to these sites. This could include improved physical permeability where possible (e.g. through fence removals), the posting of schedules when schoolyards are open to the public, and improved operations practices to ensure locks are unlocked.

Share other community concerns and ideas regarding school sites

Many concerns and ideas related to school sites came up through the engagement process. These included concerns about the use of school yards as dog off-leash areas, ideas about increasing greenspace by reducing parking lot areas, and improved seating. This plan recommends continuing to share these ideas with the local school boards.

5.8 Design and Planning Principles

The following design and planning principles will guide implementation of this Parks Plan.

Improvements should build on existing strengths, consider the local context, and contribute to the sense of place

Opportunities to reflect the area's natural history (e.g. the former headwaters of Garrison Creek) and human stories, including narratives not typically featured, should be integrated into initiatives where possible – whether it be through design choices, interpretive signage, or naming choices.

In particular, in line with the City's 2022 Reconciliation Action Plan, opportunities to celebrate Indigenous cultures and histories, in partnership with Indigenous communities and individuals, should be prioritized. This can include, but is not limited to, designing spaces to accommodate ceremony, elevating Indigenous languages in park names and signage, integrating Indigenous art and design motifs into structures, and providing space to grow medicines.

Garrison Creek

Named for its proximity to the garrison built in 1793 at Fort York, Garrison Creek is one of Toronto's many lost waterways, long buried in an underground sewer. The eastern branch of the creek's headwaters rose near what is now Humewood Park, flowing through Roseneath Park and joining the western branch near Davenport Road and Oakwood Avenue.



Historical map of Garrison Creek

Seek opportunities to preserve and enhance the ecological health and integrity of parkland and enable climate change mitigation and adaptation through the implementation of this plan

Toronto's parks are critical components of the City's biodiversity, climate change mitigation and resiliency efforts. A consideration of opportunities to preserve and enhance the ecological health and integrity of parkland and enable climate change mitigation and adaptation should be integrated into the implementation of this plan.

Adapting to climate change

Because of climate change, Toronto's weather is getting hotter, wetter, and wilder. Parks can play an important role in enhancing the City's resiliency to these changes. Parks, and particularly trees in parks, absorb stormwater and filter it naturally before it reaches waterbodies or the water table. This helps prevent flooding and supports clean rivers and lakes. By increasing the amount of greenspace, urban areas can also minimize the heat-island effect and reduce the intensity of heat waves.

Several of this Plan's directions, most notably "expand the parks system", will inherently further the City's resiliency goals. However, it is important to consider how all directions in this Plan can be implemented so they are themselves resilient and also contribute to increased community resiliency. For example, materials used in park furniture should be resistant to damage from high heat, and parks should offer ample shade for neighbourhood residents to take advantage of during extreme heat events. Similarly, new outdoor facilities should be designed to intentionally function as blue-green infrastructure that can manage storm water during extreme rain events.

Between 1976 and 2005 Toronto could expect to see approximately 12 days of +30°C weather, 786 mm of precipitation, and 7 heavy precipitation days every year. In the near future (2051-2080), we can expect to experience up to 55 days of +30°C temperatures, 854 mm of precipitation, and 8 heavy precipitation days.

Source: Toronto Resilience Strategy

Mitigating climate change

While some changes to Toronto's weather due to climate change are unavoidable, the City has committed to reducing emissions to minimize human-caused climate change.

The implementation of directions identified in this report should consider greenhouse gas emissions and how they can be reduced or offset. For example, the embodied carbon of materials should be considered when designing of park features or outdoor facilities, and lower-carbon materials used.

Protecting, restoring, and enhancing biodiversity

Climate change, urban growth, and increased park use continue to put pressure on local biodiversity.

Implementation of directions in this plan should consider opportunities to help protect, restore, and enhance local biodiversity and increase awareness of nature. For example, opportunities to increase native planting and to plant pollinator gardens in partnership with community groups should be explored.

Enable spaces to be multi-functional and all-season

Where possible, spaces and facilities should be planned and designed to be multi-seasonal and multi-functional to ensure we get the most out of our limited open space.

Consider the public realm beyond parks' edges

Planning and design for new parks, park expansions, and significant improvements to existing parks should seize the opportunity to enhance the park's edges, creating a seamless transition between surrounding streets, laneways, and open spaces.

Plan and design improvements to be universally accessible and/or deliver accessibility improvements in conjunction with their implementation

The City recognizes that design barriers are a form of discrimination. Using accessible and universal design principles prevents and removes barriers for everyone so that dignity and independence can be sustained without impediment. To this end, where relevant, improvements contemplated in this plan should comply with the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines.

Design improvements for beauty, as well as function

The implementation of initiatives outlined in this report should also be leveraged as an opportunity to improve the beauty of the area's park system. Opportunities to support community-driven art initiatives, both temporary and permanent, should be considered. Improvements to park landscaping should be considered alongside other capital projects.

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6 Implementing the Plan

This section provides an overview of how this plan will be put into action – identifying some key considerations, tools, high-level timelines and cost estimates.

The Parks, Forestry, and Recreation division (PFR) will lead ongoing implementation and monitoring of the plan, which will be supported through an annual review of:

- The status of recommendations and initiatives; and
- Needs and priorities to guide resource allocation.

While this plan is intended to act as a roadmap for investment and capital planning for PFR, full realization of this plan will require partnerships and coordination with other City divisions and agencies and other parties, such as schools boards, Business Improvement Areas, and private developers.

It is important to note that this plan is intended to guide investments and planning decisions in the area for the long term. The timelines for specific initiatives, such as the acquisition of new parkland, are difficult to guarantee. It is also important to note that due to the inter-related nature of many of the identified opportunities, in some cases one must be undertaken to allow for another (e.g. the acquisition of new parkland is a pre-requisite for the delivery of additional recreation facilities), and in others one can be leveraged for the delivery of others (e.g. the delivery of a new playground is an opportunity to improve landscaping in the vicinity).

That said, this plan is not intended to sit on a shelf. As noted in the following sections, several of the identified opportunities are already underway, and work on others is intended to begin in the short term.

6.1 Funding and Delivery Toolbox

The mechanisms outlined below will be used to deliver the new and expanded parks, park improvements, new facilities, and other public realm improvements contemplated in this plan. The majority of park projects in the Oakwood-St. Clair area are expected to be delivered through PFR-led acquisitions, transfers, capital projects and through development. Additional delivery mechanisms such as partnerships and philanthropy can also be used to deliver parks projects as opportunities arise over time.

It is important to note that this plan is not an immediate commitment to spend. Specific financial decisions are made as part of the City's annual budget process, namely PFR's ten-year capital plan. This plan, along with other plans such as the Parkland Strategy and Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, will help inform those decisions.

Acquiring New Parkland

New parkland in the Oakwood-St. Clair area can be acquired via three key methods:

- Parkland Dedications through Development;
- City-led Acquisitions; and
- Internal Transfers of Public Land.

Parkland Dedication through Development

Section 42 of the Planning Act allows the City to require parkland dedication associated with the development and redevelopment of land. Parkland may be provided on the development site, off-site on a nearby parcel, or through equivalent cash contributions, known as 'cash-in-lieu', which can be used to purchase land or make park improvements.

City-led Acquisitions

If there is a willing seller, the City can directly purchase land for the purpose of a park in an alternate location using the above noted Section 42 cash-in-lieu contributions from development. City staff pursue strategic acquisitions in line with criteria set out in the Parkland Strategy and the priorities identified in parks plans such as this one.

Internal Transfers of Public Land

City-owned lands are used and maintained by different City divisions and agencies. Sometimes, the jurisdiction of City-owned lands can be internally transferred from one entity to another when the original division or agency no longer has a need for those lands or when there is Council-approved direction to implement a new use on the lands.

Improving Parks, Outdoor Recreation Facilities, and the Public Realm

PFR's Capital Program

The City's capital budget funds infrastructure that supports service delivery. It pays for the construction and repair of transit, roads, community centres, and parks, amongst other things. The capital budget is primarily funded from reserves, contributions from development, property taxes, other levels of government, and debt.

PFR's capital program will be used to deliver many of the recommended park improvements. Some recommended improvements are already included in PFR's Council-approved 10-year Capital Budget and Plan (e.g. development of the new Nairn Park and planned playground enhancements). There is also funding earmarked for additional park improvements in this area in the current 10-year Capital Plan to be allocated to specific projects following the conclusion of this study. As the development of the PFR Capital Budget and Plan is an iterative, annual process, additional funding can be allocated to projects in this area in the coming years pending funding availability and emerging priorities.

Collaboration across the City

Certain improvement initiatives require collaboration across City divisions to deliver – particularly those related to public realm improvements on streets. PFR has worked with Transportation Services in the development of this plan, and will continue to work closely with them in its delivery. One of the key avenues for collaboration is aligning projects across divisional capital plans. For example, road work and park frontage improvements can be aligned to minimize disruptions to the public realm, and provide a seamless design between the street and the park.

External Partnerships, Philanthropy, and Idea Sharing

This plan will be most successful if neighbourhood partners – school boards, residents associations, BIAs, and individual residents – partner in its delivery.

Collaborative ventures between the City and external organizations can leverage both limited funding and limited open space to meet mutual mandates and interests.

Partnerships can include joint funding of amenities, open-space and facility shared-used agreements, and shared funding and maintenance of public realm improvements - potentially reducing capital and operating costs and delivering improvements desired by the community that are outside of the City's typical scope of operations.

In the Oakwood-St. Clair area, significant opportunities for collaboration exist between the City and school boards, Business Improvement Areas, and community groups such as "Friends of Parks" and residents associations.

As noted in Section 2.2, the Oakwood – St. Clair area already has examples of partnerships between the City and school boards to provide publicly accessible park space and recreation facilities – including at Rawlinson Community School and St. Clare Catholic Elementary School. By continuing to explore and identify opportunities to partner with schools for improved recreation facilities with community access agreements, the City can help expand and connect the parks and open space system for residents to use and enjoy.

Some of the plan's recommendations require or would greatly benefit from community involvement to drive them forward. Occasionally, community groups may have access

to grants and funding sources (including fundraising) not available to the City. Community groups can also leverage their networks to facilitate initiatives like tree planting on private property. There are examples of successful community-driven campaigns in the area for improvements to the parks and public realm system (e.g. accelerated improvements to the Wychwood Barns Playground).

On commercial streets, like Oakwood Avenue and St. Clair Avenue West, where the City does not have planned capital projects, BIAs can take a leadership role in advancing placemaking and public realm improvements, with City support through the BIA Office. Support can include funding to develop a master plan, funding to implement improvements through a capital streetscape project, and other resources necessary to execute improvement initiatives.

Toronto has also been fortunate to enjoy a long history of philanthropic support for parks and public realm initiatives. Donations, whether in the form of land, cash, or other resources, continue to contribute to the successful implementation and ongoing operations of many of the city's well-loved public spaces. These contributions supplement but do not substitute more regular and stable resources such as development charges and parkland dedication. Examples of local improvements that have been supported by philanthropy include community gardens and local parks as well as large-scale initiatives, such as The Bentway, St. George Street and the Don River Valley Park.

6.2 Continued Community Engagement

Community input shaped this plan, and will continue to be sought to inform its implementation. The community will be engaged through the implementation of this plan on a project-specific basis – for example, during the design process of a new playground or new park. Depending on the scale of the project, the community will be notified of engagement opportunities through a combination of councillors' newsletters, direct notices to community organizations, mail outs, social media, and signage.

6.3 Action Plan

This Action Plan identifies responsibilities, high-level cost estimates, and estimated timeframes for opportunities identified in this Plan, as well as noting priority items.

Timeframe

The below timeframes are estimates for public initiation of the project (e.g. installation or design start for larger projects). Internal work (e.g. adding something to the capital plan) may begin sooner. Timelines are subject to change depending on circumstances.

- **Underway:** Fully-funded projects already in design or construction.
- **Immediate (1-3 Years):** These smaller and less complex items can be started in the next three years.
- **Short term (4-10 Years):** These items would be recommended for future funding.
- **Long term / subject to acquisition opportunities:** Longer-term items without specific funding strategies and allocations or items contingent on land acquisition or redevelopment.

Cost Categories

The following are the estimated cost categories:

- **Low:** < \$100,000
- **Medium:** \$100,000-500,000
- **High:** > \$500,000

Priority Items

Several opportunities have been identified as priorities for action. Opportunities were identified as priorities if they:

- Address parkland deficiency;
- Address a clear facility gap; or
- Are an effective way of addressing a key community need identified through engagement or other prior studies.

Implementation Matrices

Expand the parks system

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Pursue expansions of select existing parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roseneath Park Charles Brereton Park 261 Nairn Ave Graham Park 	PFR	Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM)	High	Partially	Yes	Short term
Investigate opportunities for conversion of City-owned lands to parks, including City-owned parking lots or portions thereof	Throughout study area	PFR	Toronto Parking Authority (TPA), CreateTO	Low	No	Yes	Long term
Pursue other opportunities to acquire new parkland within or close to the study area through lot purchases and/or parkland dedications from development	Throughout study area as opportunities arise	PFR	City Planning, CREM	High	No	Yes	Long term

Introduce new outdoor recreation facilities

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Introduce a playground at the new park at 261 Nairn Avenue	261 Nairn Ave	PFR		Medium	Yes	Yes	Underway
Deliver additional playgrounds west of Oakwood Avenue	Potential locations TBD	PFR	TDSB, TCDSB	Medium	No	Yes	Long term
Introduce new basketball / sports courts within and/or north of the study area	Potential locations TBD	PFR		Medium	No		Long term
Introduce a new skatepark / skate spot within or north of the study area	Fairbank Memorial Park identified as a potential candidate.	PFR		Medium-High	Yes		Short term
Investigate opportunities for outdoor fitness equipment in the south-east and north-west quadrants of the study area	Potential locations in the SE include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillcrest Park • Wychwood Barns Park • Marian Engel Park • New parks in NW 	PFR		Low	No		Short term

Enhance parks and existing outdoor recreation facilities

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Improve Charles Brereton Park	Charles Brereton Park	PFR	Oakwood Village BIA	Medium	No	Yes	Short term
Work with the community to enhance aspects of Wychwood Barns Park	Wychwood Barns Park	PFR	Friends of Wychwood Barns Park	Medium	Yes	Yes	Underway
Investigate wayfinding and other improvements to Graham Park	Graham Park	PFR	Transportation Services	Low	No		Short term
Implement improvements to the Earls court Park pathway network	Throughout Earls court Park	PFR		Medium	Yes	Yes	Underway
Investigate further improving Earls court Park's interface with surrounding streets	Earls court Park – St. Clair Ave West frontage	PFR		Medium	No		Long term
Support expanded opportunities for community gardening, led by the community	Potential expanded gardens: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earls court Park • Cedarvale Park Gardens to be considered for all new or expanded parks north of St. Clair Ave W.	PFR	Community Garden Groups	Low	No		Short term
Introduce play features to informally activate parks	All parks. Priority for smaller parks including Charles Brereton Park.	PFR		Low	No		Short term

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Investigate opportunities to deliver other features identified by the community in parks across the study area	Accessible seating – all existing and new parks	PFR		Low	Partially		Immediate
	Winter-focused amenities like firepits – larger parks	PFR		Low	No		Short term
	Games spaces (e.g. table tennis) – priority for parks with limited existing functionality	PFR		Low	No		Short term
	Multipurpose open space – new parks	PFR		Low	No		Long term

Support climate change mitigation and adaptation, including by planting more trees

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Plant more trees in existing and future parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 261 Nairn Ave Park • Earls court Park • Wychwood Barns Park 	PFR		Low	Yes		Underway
	All future parks	PFR		Low	No		Long term
Work with homeowners and community organizations to increase tree provision on private property in the west of the study area	Private property and front yards (within road ROW) west of Dufferin Street	PFR	Resident Associations	Low	Yes	Yes	Immediate–long term
Identify opportunities for tree planting on streets, particularly in the west of the study area, in collaboration with Transportation Services	Road ROW. Priority is area west of Dufferin Street, excluding front yards.	PFR	Transportation Services	Low	Yes		Immediate–long term
Work with school boards to plant trees on school sites, particularly in the west of the study area	School yards. Priority is area west of Dufferin Street.	PFR	TDSB, TCDSB	Low	Yes		Short term

Improve spaces for dogs

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Explore improvements to the four existing dog off-leash areas (DOLAs) within or close to the study area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wychwood Barns Park • Earls court Park • Hillcrest Park • Cedarvale Park 	PFR		Low	Partially	Yes	Immediate–short term
Work with the development industry to ensure that developments along St. Clair Avenue W provide pet amenities and spaces to reduce pressures on parks	All major developments within and near the study area	PFR	City Planning	Low	Yes		Long term
Consider opportunities for future DOLAs as part of new and expanded parks, where appropriate	New and expanded parks large enough for DOLAs that serve the NW quadrant	PFR		Medium	No	Yes	Long term

Improve the public realm in collaboration with Transportation Services and Business Improvement Areas

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Expand pedestrian space and improve the public realm on streets adjacent to parks where feasible	Locations identified for further investigation include the streets and laneways adjacent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roseneath Park • Mount Royal Parkette • The new park at 261 Nairn Avenue • Charles Brereton Park 	PFR	Transportation Services	Medium–High	No	Yes	Short term–long term
Consider public realm improvements as part of planned road reconstruction within the study area	Any location undergoing planned road works	Transportation Services		Low–High	No		Short term–long term
Support local Business Improvement Areas in making public realm improvements	Along St. Clair Avenue W and Oakwood Avenue	BIAs	TS, PFR	Low–High	No		Short term–long term

Encourage and collaborate on enhancements to school yards

Initiative	Projects and locations	Lead	Partners	Est. cost	Funded	Priority	Timeframe
Explore opportunities to deliver improved facilities on school sites, with community access agreements	Locations TBD	PFR, TDSB, TCDSB		Medium	No		Long term
Support community access outside of school hours	All school sites	PFR	TDSB, TCDSB	Low	Not applicable	Yes	Underway
Share other community concerns and ideas regarding school sites	All school sites	PFR	TDSB, TCDSB	Low	Not applicable		Underway