

**For Closed Captioning**, turn it on using the CC icon in the bottom left of your screen. Please also use the Chat feature to send a direct message to Alex Lavasidis (tech support), so we can accommodate captioning during the breakout discussion session.



# TORONTO'S PARKLAND STRATEGY

Virtual Public Meeting  
December 4, 2024

# Welcome

# Welcome



Parks, Forestry and  
Recreation Division  
**Engagement Unit**  
Team

## Moderator



**Daniel Fusca**  
Manager  
Public Consultation

# Code of conduct

As a meeting participant, you agree to:

- Approach conversations with **curiosity** and a **willingness to learn** from others.
- Be an **active listener** and keep an **open mind** by valuing a diversity of views and opinions.
- Treat all participants with **kindness and respect**, recognizing that all voices are valuable.
- **Critique ideas**, not individuals.
- **Avoid language or behaviours** that could be considered rude, offensive, or discriminatory (e.g. cursing and derogatory terms).

To maintain a respectful and inclusive environment, offensive and discriminatory comments **are not permitted**. Participants engaging in such behaviour may be asked to leave.



# Land Acknowledgement

The land that we are meeting on today 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 acknowledge that Toronto (Tkaronto) is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

# African Ancestral Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are all Treaty peoples, including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.

# Webex orientation and how to participate

# Webex orientation



**All participants have been muted** for the presentation portion of this meeting.



**Use the Q&A feature to submit questions or click the hand icon** beside your name from the participants list on the right. (Questions will be answered after the presentation.)



**For Closed Captioning**, turn it on using the CC icon in the bottom left of your screen. Please also use the Chat feature to send a direct message to Alex Lavasidis (tech support), so we can accommodate captioning during the breakout discussion session.



**You will be able to unmute yourself during** the breakout session to share your input with your discussion group.




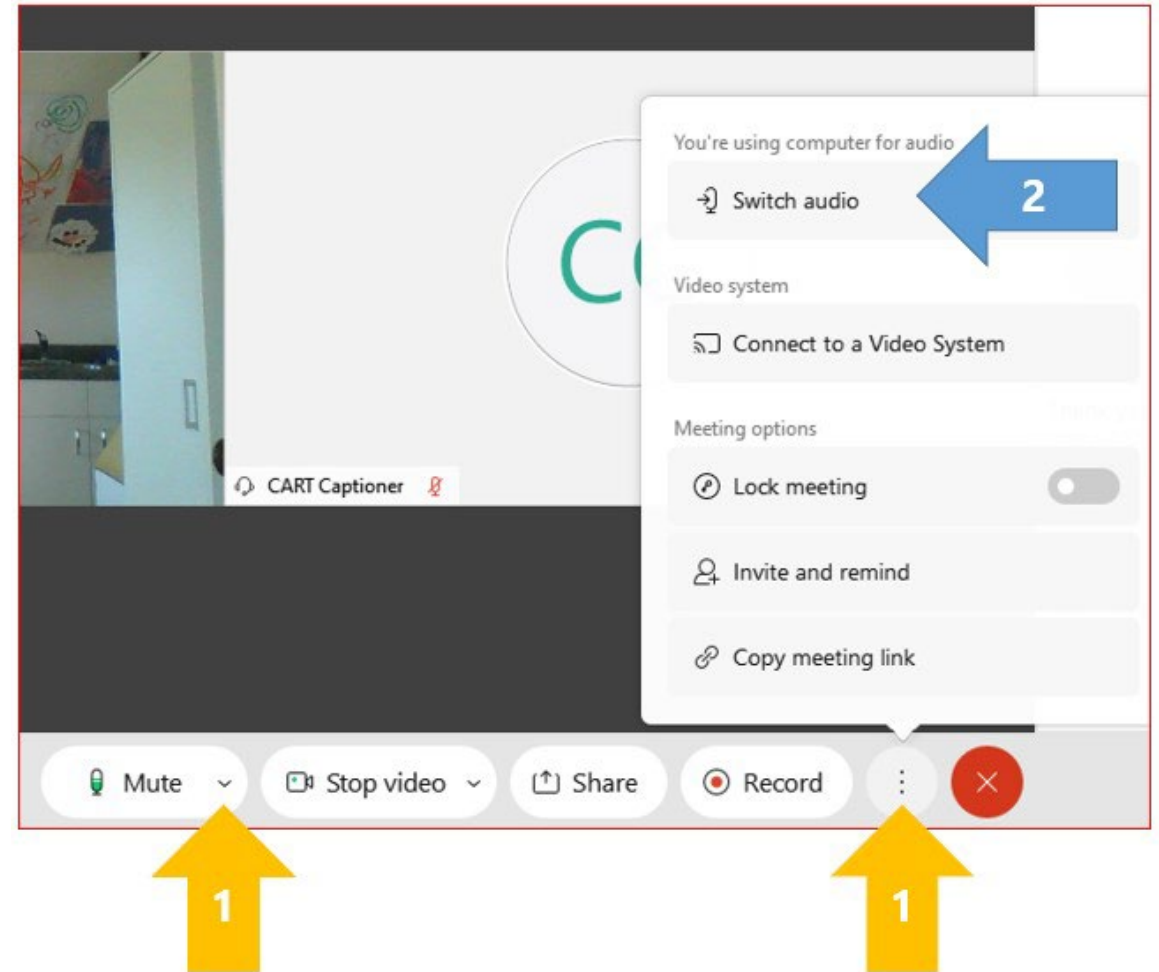
**Computer audio issues?** Use your phone for audio by calling 416-915-6530 and enter the meeting number below. Press \*3 to ask a question. Press \*6 to mute/unmute.

28665137134 (PLS2)



# Webex audio trouble?

1. Click the **More Options** button at the bottom of the screen 
2. Click **Switch Audio**
3. Use the **Call me at** function
  - a) Enter your phone number
  - b) Webex will call your phone (no long-distance charges)



# Project team introductions

# Parkland Strategy – core team



Parks, Forestry and  
Recreation Division  
**Parkland Strategy  
Team**

## Presenter



**Danielle DeMarsh**  
Sr. Project  
Manager



**Toni Papa**  
Planner (Mapping)



**Erica Beasley**  
Planner (Policy)

# Engagement collaborators



Parks, Forestry and  
Recreation Division  
**Parks & Recreation  
Facilities Plan Team**



**Matt Bentley**  
Sr. Project Manager



**Alex Lavasidis**  
Project Officer



**Vanessa Cipriani**  
Planner

**Pop-up staff...** you  
might have seen us  
at booths in each of  
Toronto's 25 wards,  
from Oct-Nov.



# Parkland Strategy – Indigenous Engagement Consultants



**Kiera Brant-Birioukov**  
Sr. Advisor



**Anton Birioukov-Brant**  
Director

# Meeting objectives and agenda

# Meeting objectives

Thank you for joining this Public Meeting on Toronto's **Parkland Strategy**!

The **objectives** of this meeting are to:

1. Provide an **opportunity for the public to learn** about Toronto's parks system and the Parkland Strategy.
2. Provide **information on engagement opportunities** for the development of a new Parkland Strategy.
3. **Engage residents on their opinions and ideas** about Toronto's parks system through a facilitated break-out session.



# Meeting agenda

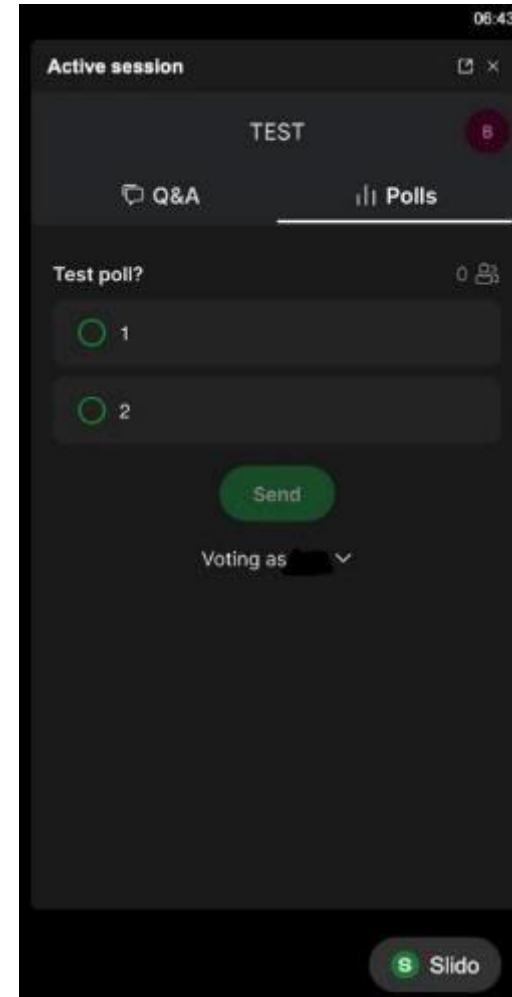
1. **Who's in the virtual room? (10 mins)**
2. **Presentation on the Parkland Strategy (25 mins)**  
*(by Danielle DeMarsh, Senior Project Manager)*
3. **Questions of Clarification (10 mins)**
  - Note: submit any questions through the Q&A feature on the right of the screen
  - These will be addressed after the presentation.
  - Please save your suggestions and comments for the **breakout discussions**.
4. **Breakout discussions (40 mins)**
5. **Report back from facilitators (10 mins)**
6. **Closing remarks (5 mins)**



# Who's in the virtual room?

# Who is in the virtual room?

Open the Slido tab in the right margin to participate!



# Presentation on the Parkland Strategy

# Meeting agenda

1. Who's in the virtual room? (10 mins)
- 2. Presentation on the Parkland Strategy (25 mins)**
  - Toronto's parkland network
  - What is the Parkland Strategy?
  - Process to develop the new Parkland Strategy
  - Measuring parkland provision
  - Prioritizing where to improve and add parks
  - Opportunities for input
3. Questions of Clarification (10 mins)
4. Breakout discussions (40 mins)
5. Report back from facilitators (10 mins)
6. Closing remarks (5 mins)

# Toronto's parkland network



# Toronto is a “city within a park”



**~13% of Toronto's  
total land area is  
parkland (8,000+ ha)\***

Toronto is a green city!

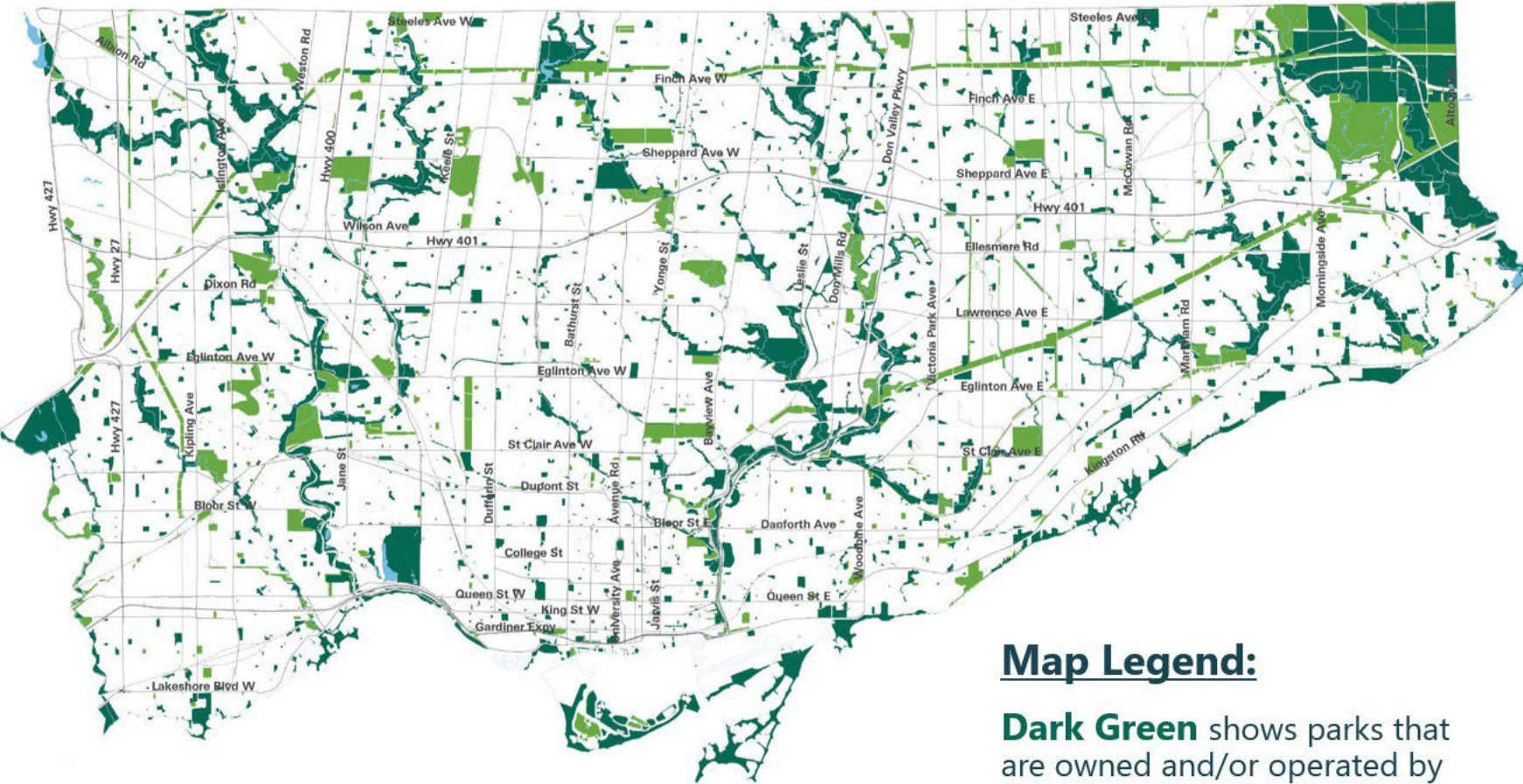
**We have over 1,500+  
parks owned or operated  
by the City of Toronto.**

**Other green and open  
spaces complement and  
support the park system  
and help connect parks**  
(e.g. hydro corridors, school  
yards, cemeteries, and  
POPS-Privately Owned  
Publicly Accessible Spaces,  
etc.).

\*Includes Rouge National Urban Park, which is  
being transferred from the City to the Federal  
Government



# Parks are located across Toronto, but are not evenly distributed



### Map Legend:

**Dark Green** shows parks that are owned and/or operated by the City of Toronto.

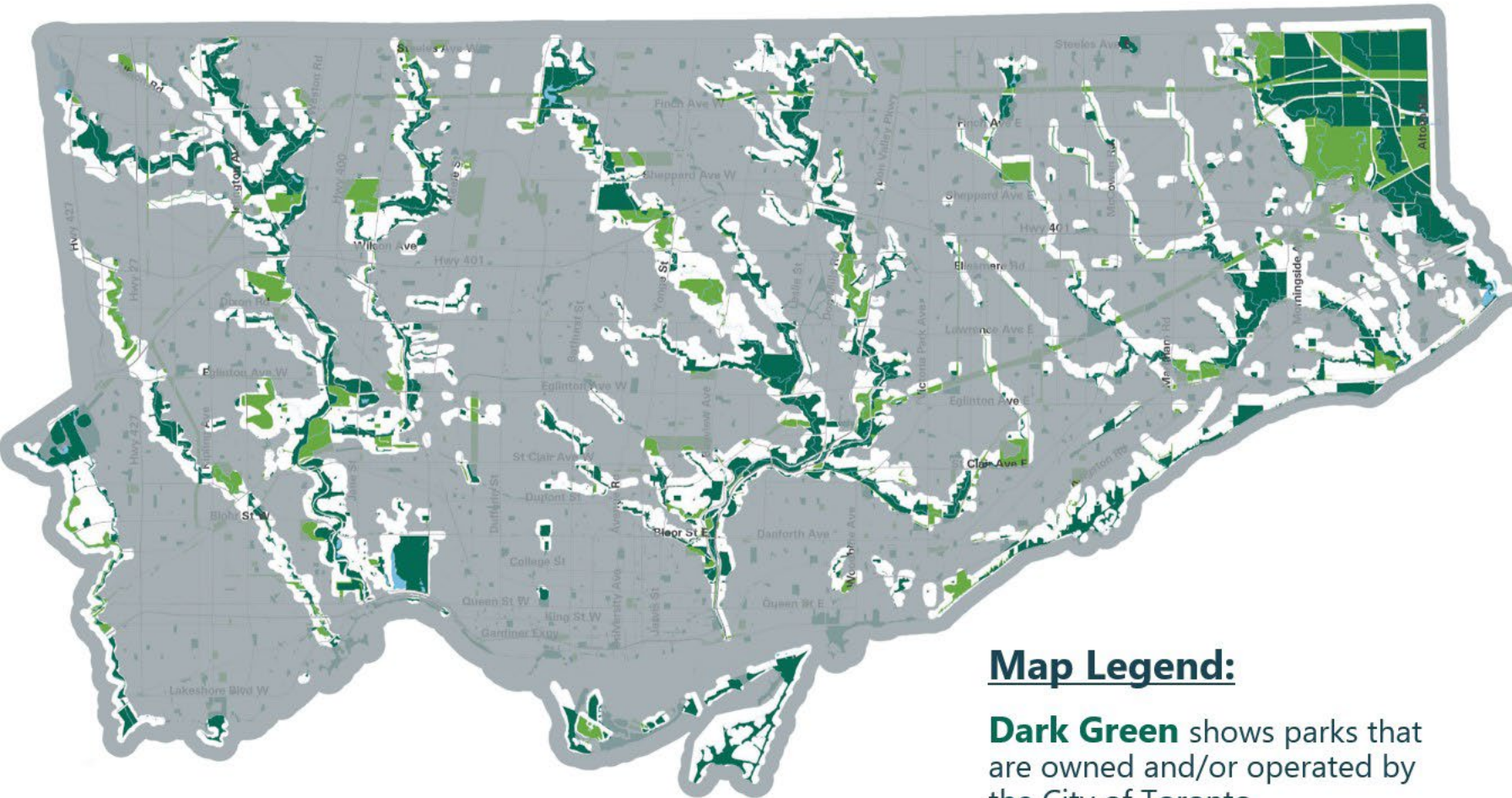
**Light Green** shows other open spaces including federally and provincially owned and operated parks and open spaces, hydro corridors, and cemeteries.

**City parks are found across Toronto.**

However, there are **gaps in the parkland network**, and some areas have more parks than others.



# Many parks are located within ravines



The white areas show ravines.

## Map Legend:

**Dark Green** shows parks that are owned and/or operated by the City of Toronto.

**Light Green** shows other open spaces including federally and provincially owned and operated parks and open spaces, hydro corridors, and cemeteries.

**69% of Toronto's parks are located within ravines\*.**

The City's 2020 **Ravine Strategy** provides a planning framework for these areas, which overlaps with the Parkland Strategy.



# Toronto parks have a diversity of shapes, sizes, and functions



Morningside Park



Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Park



Colonel Samuel Smith Park



Berczy Park

No two parks are the same.

Some have **natural areas**, while others are focused on outdoor **play, exercise, and gathering**.

Some are **large enough to accommodate buildings for indoor recreation** (e.g. community centres).

**Large parks are increasingly difficult to create** due to the high cost of purchasing land, especially in central and downtown areas.



# Why parks matter

# Parks are important to the well-being of Toronto residents

The physical and mental health benefits of visiting parks is estimated at \$31.9 million/year


**Parks are vital to the quality of life that residents experience in Toronto** in how they:

- Support physical and mental wellbeing
- Provide opportunities for residents to connect with land and water
- Provide opportunities for recreation and leisure
- Provide space for social and cultural gatherings
- Protect sacred and historic sites





# Parks are vital to Toronto's urban environment



**Parks provide an  
estimated \$6.6  
billion/year in  
stormwater services**

**Parks are vital to the  
quality of Toronto's urban  
environment** in how they:

- Provide stormwater and flood water retention
- Provide wildlife habitat
- Protect environmentally important areas and ecosystems
- Clean the air of pollution



# Parks will be even more important in the future

The number of days per year above 30°C is expected to increase from 18 to 29 by the 2030s, and to 54 days by the 2060s

**Parks help make our city resilient to climate change** by providing:

- Spaces and amenities that residents can use to cool down in hot weather
- Tree canopy and vegetation that act as microclimate adjusters, by shading and cooling
- Green infrastructure that will help absorb increasing precipitation



# How does the City create new parks and improve existing parks?

# Toronto's main way to create / improve parks is through contributions from new development

**Contribution is parkland on (or near) the development site**



**OR**

**Contribution is through a payment instead of land. This payment is used to purchase land for new parks, or improve existing parks**



# Examples of new parks created through developer contributions



Raccoon Park is an example of a park that the City created using land from a development site near Yonge St and Eglinton Ave E.



Nairn Park is an example of a park the City financed using cash provided from developments in the Rogers Rd and Dufferin Ave area.



# What is the Parkland Strategy?

# The City is reviewing two strategies related to facilities and parks

## Parks & Recreation Facilities Plan



Long-term plan to build and renew recreation facilities.

## Parkland Strategy



Long-term plan for the creation of new parks and park improvements.

# Parkland Strategy overview

- It was adopted by City Council in **2019**
  - City Council directed staff to review it after 5 years (2024)
- It's a **city-wide planning framework** to guide investment in parks
- It uses a **data-driven approach** to mapping parkland provision levels and determine 'areas of parkland need'
- It includes **multiple mapping layers** to analyse Toronto's parks network





# The Parkland Strategy sets a vision for Toronto's parks



## Vision

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

*(excerpt from the Parkland Strategy)*



# The vision is guided by four 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.**

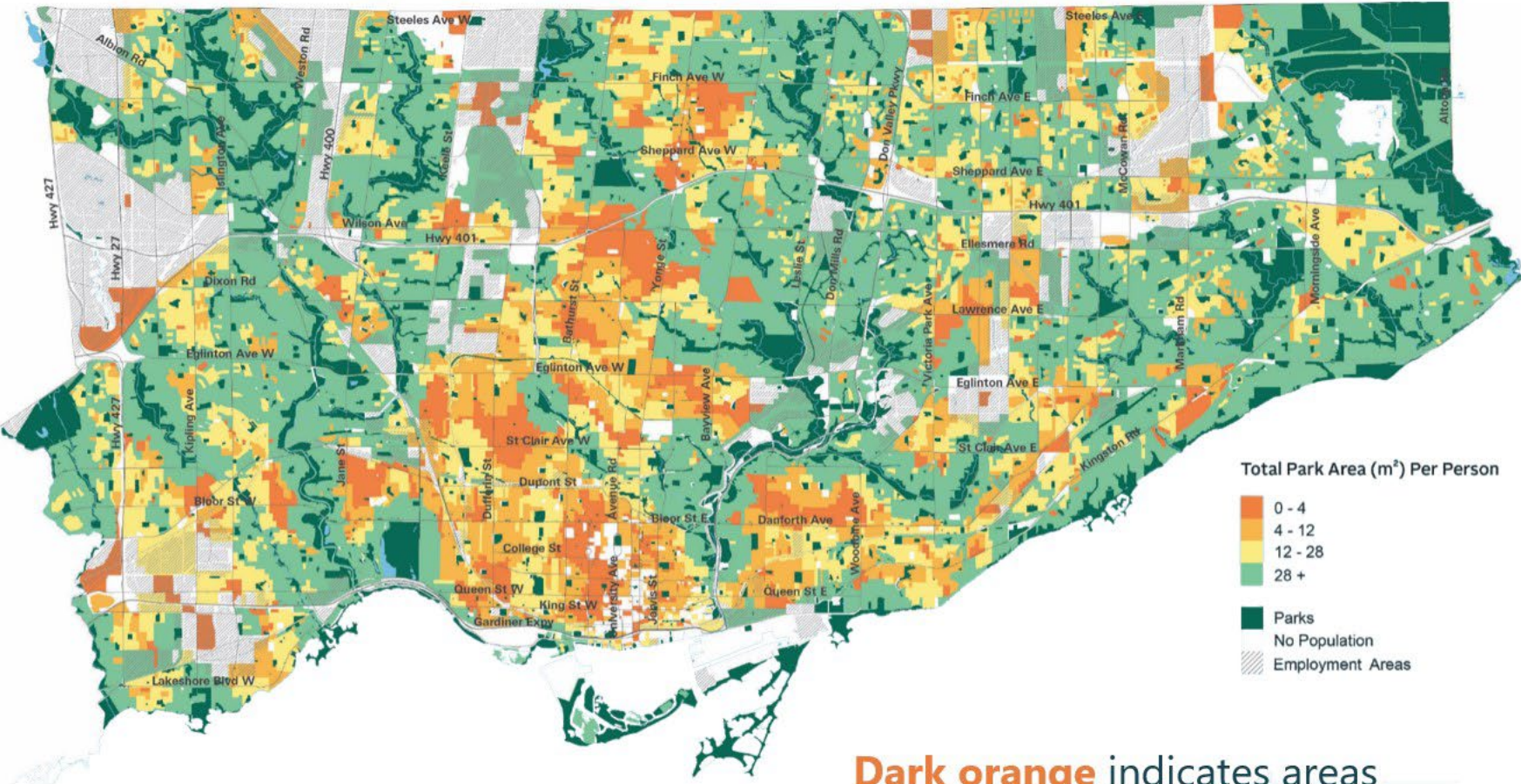


## INCLUDE

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.



# Mapping parkland provision rates across Toronto



**Dark orange** indicates areas with the lowest parkland provision rates, measured per person.

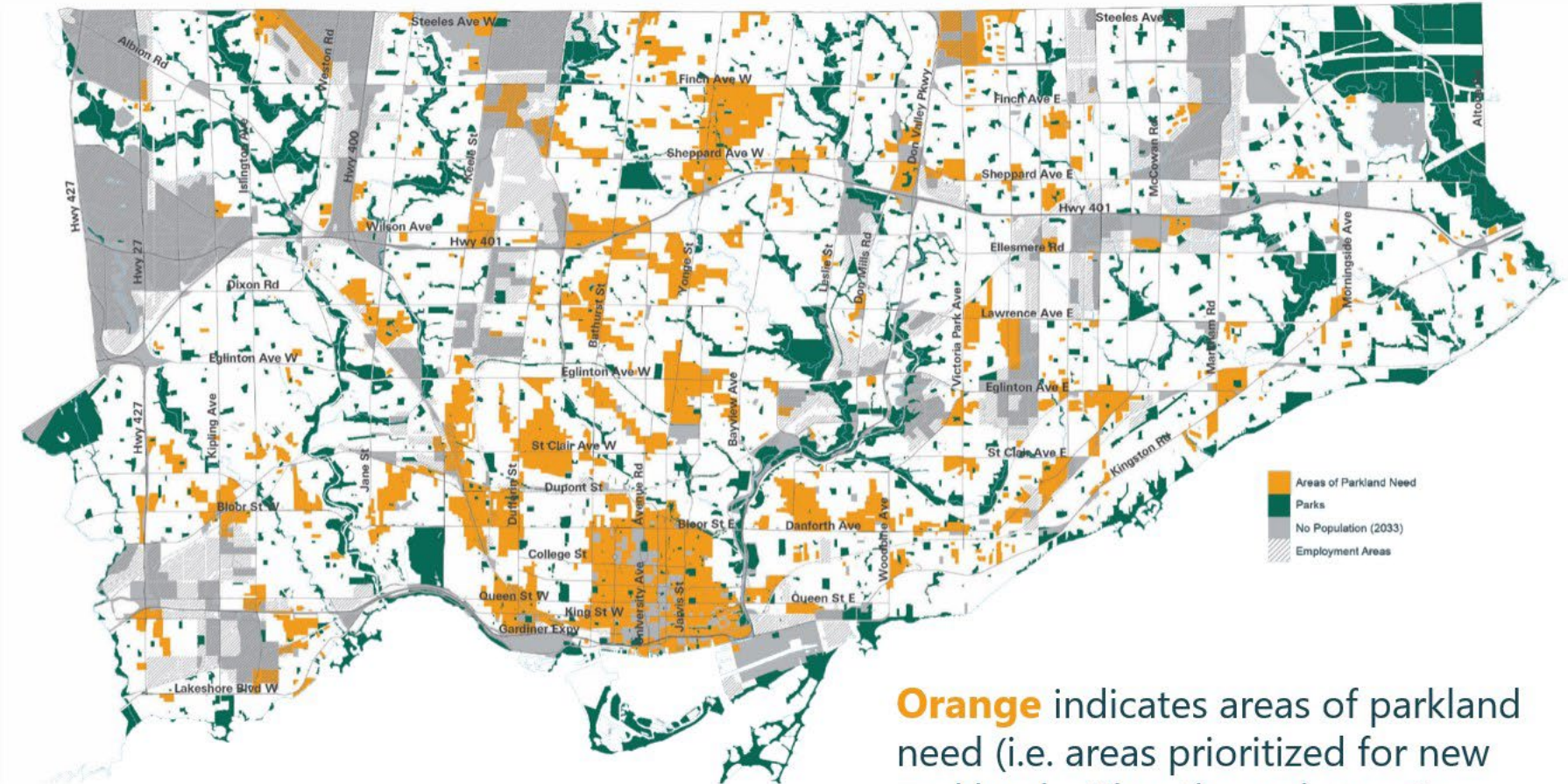
Parkland provision is measured on a per person basis. **The average rate for Toronto residents is 28 m<sup>2</sup> of parkland per person.**

**The rates vary across Toronto.** Some areas have zero m<sup>2</sup> while others have over 100 m<sup>2</sup> per person.

**Areas with higher population densities tend to have lower rates,** while areas close to ravines and large parks tend to have higher rates.



# Areas of Parkland Need are identified through mapping



**Orange** indicates areas of parkland need (i.e. areas prioritized for new parkland, either through on-site developer dedications or strategic acquisitions).

**Areas of parkland need** have low projected provision rates (less than 12 m<sup>2</sup> per person in 2033), and **ALSO** meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ✓ **Low park supply**  
(less than 1.5 ha total park space within 500 m in 2016)
- ✓ **High projected growth**  
(areas projected to have over 5,000 people/ha in 2033)
- ✓ **Low-income residents**  
(25% or more of residents are low income in 2016)

*\*Note: the City also invests in parks across the City through other programs, including State-of-good-repair work – but the “Areas of parkland need” help establish where the City does a deeper dive to assess the parks need and how it can be met.*



# Expanding the equity lens



The City is working on expanding the parkland equity lens to consider **ethnicity, language, newcomer status**, and other socio-economic variables.

Bathurst Quay Common



# Considerations for a high-quality park

The Parkland Strategy identifies **key considerations for creating a high-quality park**.

## PROMINENCE & VISIBILITY



Parks need to be **prominent, and visible features** of the public realm, to support **safety, security, accessibility, and livability**.

## IDENTITY & CHARACTER



Parks need to take advantage of **character-defining elements** that contribute to creating a **sense of place**.

## USER EXPERIENCE



Parks need to attract a **wide range of users**, and entice people to stay by providing a **wide range of activities**, by **supporting vegetation**, and by providing **inclusive spaces**.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS & THERMAL COMFORT



Parks need to be **safe and secure**, support a range of **passive and active** programming, enable **year-round activities**, and be accessible **for people of all ages and abilities**.

# How is the Parkland Strategy implemented?

## Development Review

When City staff review applications for new development, they use the Parkland Strategy to **evaluate if the developer should contribute land or cash for parks**.



## Parkland Acquisition

City staff **evaluate whether to purchase land to create new parks** based on acquisition criteria in the Parkland Strategy.

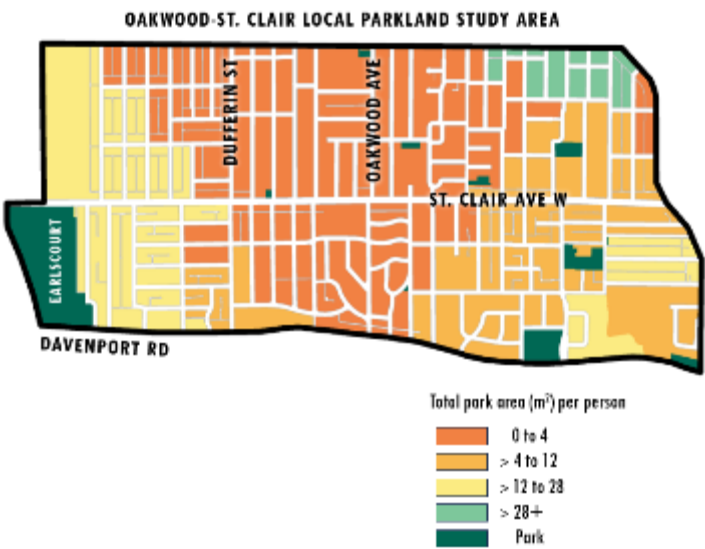
PRIMARY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA			
EXPAND + INCLUDE	Is the site in a parkland priority area?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IMPROVE	Is the site suitable for parkland purposes (e.g. size, shape, and utility)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONNECT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

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

## Local Area Planning

When the City develops an area plan (e.g. Secondary Plan, or Local Parks Plan), the Parkland Strategy helps inform **analysis and recommendations for the area**.



# Why are we developing a new 2025 Parkland Strategy?



# City priorities have evolved since adoption of the 2019 Parkland Strategy



Developing a new Parkland Strategy is a chance to align park planning with **recently adopted City documents, and new ones that are in progress**, including:

## Adopted:

- (2019) Toronto Resiliency Strategy
- (2020) Ravine Strategy
- (2021) TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Action Plan 2026-2030
- (2022) Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032
- (2023) 10 Year Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism

## In progress:

- Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan review
- Thermal Comfort Guidelines



# Toronto has new people and new parks



This is a chance to update data and mapping based on:

- The latest **census** for population and socio-demographic data (2021 census)
- **Estimates of future population** (based on planned development projects)
- Mapping **how the parks network has changed** (new parks, and parks that have been removed)

New park on Wellington Ave, and construction site on King St



# Population growth puts added pressure on parks



Our city's growing population is increasing the pressure placed on parks.

Toronto's population was 3,025,647 million in 2022. **An additional 700,000 residents are expected by 2051.**



New **development and densification is occurring at a fast pace**, especially in central and downtown areas (many of which already have low park provision). New development is also occurring in some areas that have not previously seen development.



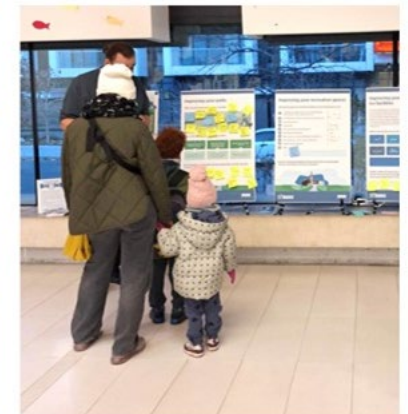
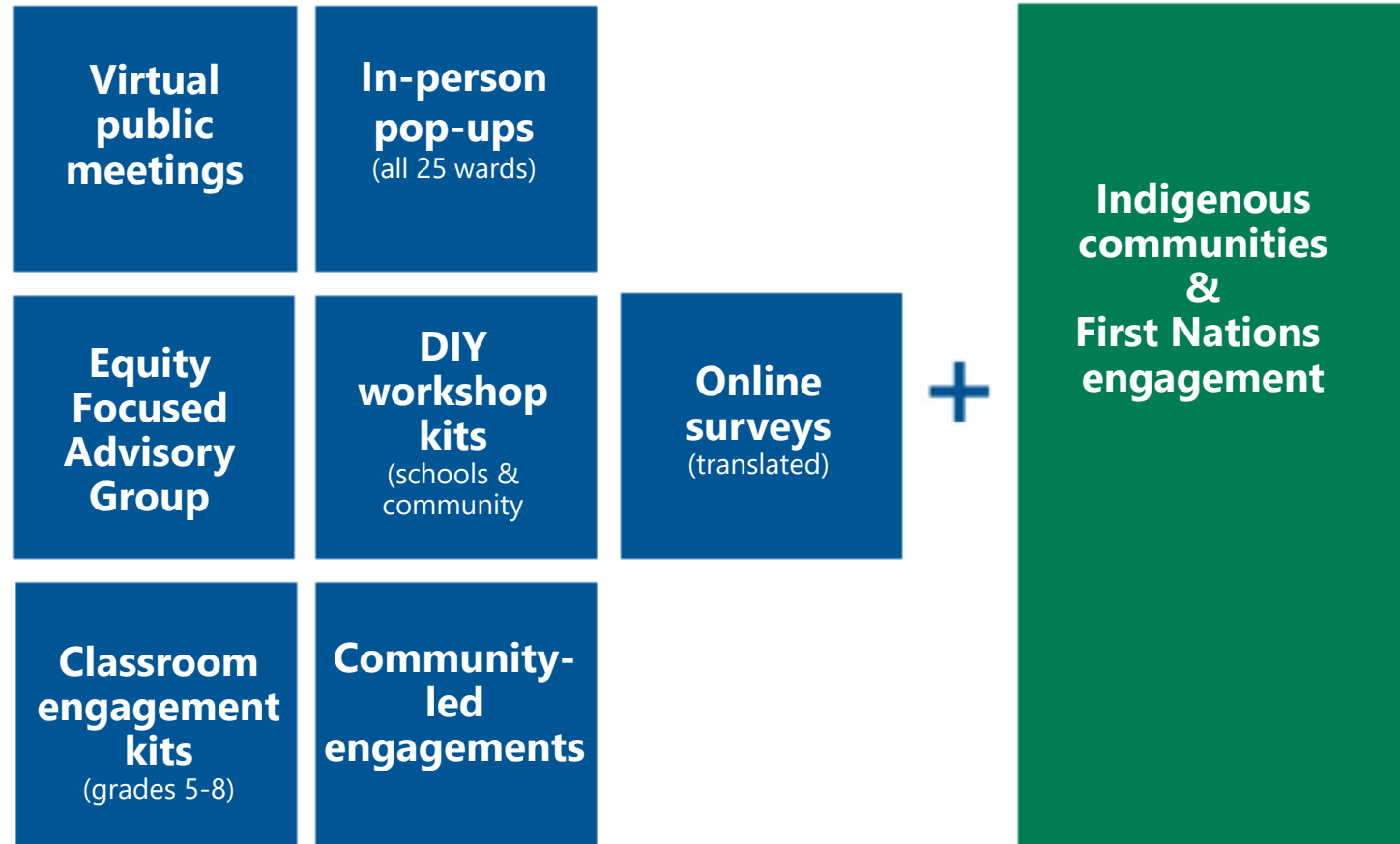
The **Province has changed the legislation** that enables municipalities to grow parkland, reducing tools the City has used in the past. As a result, we need to achieve more with the parks that we have.



# Process to develop a new 2025 Parkland Strategy

# Engagement overview

Community feedback will be **collected through multiple channels**. This helps ensure that residents have a variety of opportunities to participate, and that a wide range of perspectives, are considered.



# Project timelines



\* Timelines are subject to change

# Questions of clarification on the Parkland Strategy

Use the Q&A feature to ask questions or click the hand icon to raise your hand. A facilitator will unmute you to ask your question.

Please hold your suggestions, feedback, and ideas for the breakout discussion that will follow.

# Breakout discussion

# Breakout discussion questions

1. How do you feel about the **quantity** and **quality** of parks available in Toronto? What **types** of parks do we need more of?
2. How do you think the City can make parks more **inclusive, welcoming,** and **safe** for all residents?
3. How do you feel about the **guiding principles** of the Parkland Strategy (Expand, Improve, Connect, Include)? Are there changes or additions that you would like to see?



# Tech tips for your breakout session

1

Your room facilitator will:

- Share their screen so you can see the discussion questions and live notes.
- Facilitate the discussion, so everyone has a chance to participate.

2

Unmute yourself to speak.

3

Turn your video on if you like.

4

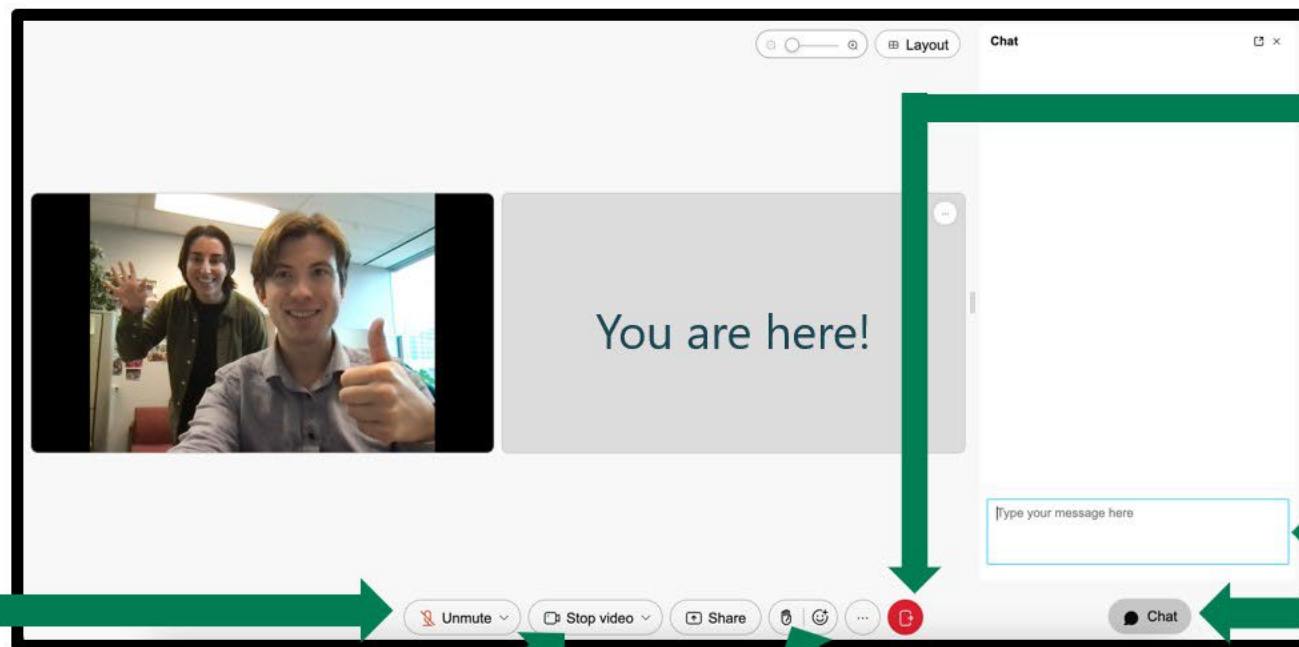
Raise your hand to speak. This helps everyone take turns so no one is talked over.

6

If you have tech problems and your facilitator cannot help, click this red button to go back to the main meeting room, where our tech team will assist.

5

You can also participate by typing your feedback into the chat.



# Reporting back

Choose several **insights or highlights** from your breakout discussion to share.

The notes from each breakout discussion will be summarized and posted to the project webpage, and included in the analysis that will inform the new Parkland Strategy.



# Closing remarks

# Next steps

- **Upcoming engagements**
  - **Online survey:** Closes on December 18  
*(available in 6 languages)*
  - **Do-It-Yourself workshop kit:** Closes December 18  
*(use with your organization or group)*
  - **Indigenous Advisory Circle**
- **Phase 2: Spring 2025**
  - Another phase of engagement to help confirm and prioritize directions for the Parkland Strategy

Visit and share the project webpage to sign up for e-updates,  
take the online survey by December 18, and more:

**[Toronto.ca/ParksAndFacilitiesPlans](https://toronto.ca/ParksAndFacilitiesPlans)**

**Thank you!**

**THANK YOU**  
**Your input is appreciated!**

**Please follow the process and join us again for future  
engagement opportunities, as we develop the new  
Parkland Strategy.**