



2021

The Canadian City Parks Report: Centring Equity & Resilience

How parks can help create more equitable, resilient cities—not only as we recover from COVID-19, but as we address another looming crisis: climate change.

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Canadians continue to face the challenges of COVID-19 as we live through year two of this global crisis.

Throughout the pandemic, city parks have played an integral role in providing relief by offering green spaces for community members to exercise, socialize and reap the benefits of nature.

Three years ago, our Foundation supported Park People to fill an information gap by gathering, analyzing and sharing data and stories about Canada's city parks system. Since that time, the annual Canadian City Parks Report has become an invaluable tool for municipal staff and volunteers to highlight challenges and share best practices with their peers across Canada.

This year's Canadian City Parks Report provides an in-depth look at how parks can help build robust and resilient cities, especially in times of crisis. To inform the report, Park People conducted an online survey garnering nearly 3,500 responses. Canadians clearly have a lot to say about their city parks. The results of the survey show the undeniable benefits of park environments for the physical and mental well-being of community members.

The 2021 report also focuses on the crisis of climate change and the role parks can play in combatting it. It illuminates the importance of climate-resilient infrastructure to mitigate the effects of a changing climate such as floods, extreme heat and loss of biodiversity. A chapter on climate justice highlights the disparity in access to green spaces in different communities and how some cities are leading the charge to address these inequities.

Thank you to the team at Park People for creating this annual snapshot of the state of Canada's city parks. Our Foundation is honoured to support this vital resource, and we are grateful to work with an organization that drives innovation and improvement in Canada's urban parks.

We would also like to thank the countless municipal staff in towns and cities across Canada who have helped bring this report to life through their contributions of data, stories and experiences. It is because of their tireless work that our parks have continued to offer a respite throughout these unprecedented times.

Reading through this year's report, I am hopeful for the future as we see the important work being done to create equitable communities, combat climate change and increase residents' connection to nature in city parks across Canada. These efforts are vital to maintain and improve the health of our natural ecosystems and, in turn, support the well-being of all Canadians.



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EMMA ADAMO - CHAIR
WESTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

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In Park People's third annual Canadian City Parks Report, we focus on how parks can foster more resilient, equitable cities—not only as we recover from COVID-19, but as we address another looming crisis: climate change.

Park use during the pandemic spiked across the country as people flooded into outdoor spaces to seek safe ways to connect with others, experience nature, and get some exercise. Parks became more important to Canadians in their daily lives, but cities also faced new challenges with rising demands and public health considerations.

The Canadian City Parks Report documents these trends and challenges by gathering key data and leading practices from across the country. Whether you're city staff, a community volunteer, a funder, a non-profit organization, a park professional, or a resident who loves city parks, we hope this report provides you with useful data and stories that both inspire and challenge you.

In this report you'll find the results of our April 2021 COVID-19 and Parks survey of nearly 3,500 Canadians, interviews with a range of experts, as well as new data and practices from 32 participating Canadian cities. Stories and data are organized by section—**Nature, Inclusion, Growth, Collaboration, and Activation**—and city-specific data is available in **City Profiles**.

Among others, you'll find stories and actionable take-aways on **how cities can advance climate action through parks**, how **Black and Indigenous leadership** can help **reframe notions of park stewardship**, and how we can **deepen the intersection of public health and parks** by **taking into account cultural experiences**.

You'll also find a special section: **Lessons From a Pandemic Year**. This section dives deep into the ways COVID-19 impacted our park systems and our use of parks during the last year—both positive and negative—and the ways we can move forward together.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO READ THIS REPORT.

It is available as an interactive website and as a downloadable PDF. The COVID-19 lessons, key insights, take-aways, and city data are included both online and in a downloadable PDF format. The stories—which share leading practices and interviews with city staff, researchers, and community leaders—are available exclusively on the website: cityparksreport.parkpeople.ca.

Parks saw high use and showed high value.

- ★ **94% of cities reported increased use of parks in the last year:** This elevated use may stick around with 82% of Canadians who indicated using parks more during the pandemic saying they expect their current use to continue or increase.
- ★ **Parks were also used more in the winter:** with 50% of Canadians saying they had used parks more during winter than pre-pandemic, and 73% expected this use to continue.
- ★ **Of all park types, Canadians say they prefer to visit:** local neighbourhood parks (71%), natural areas (61%) and trails (60%), reflecting the importance of nearby green spaces.
- ★ **Community park groups continued to animate their local parks:** with nearly 300 groups across the country putting on over 3,600 events—half of which were virtual.



New challenges brought new ways of using parks.

- ★ **City staff moved quickly to address the pandemic:** 84% instituted COVID-19 related pilots, such as temporary washrooms, one-way trails to ensure physical distancing, and keeping seasonal recreational facilities, like tennis courts, open into the winter.
- ★ **Measures that Canadians would most like to see permanent:** include winterized washrooms (57%), outdoor cafes (55%), and outdoor arts/culture events (53%).
- ★ **Cities creatively implemented these new measures, and responded to the challenges of high park use, all while grappling with increased budget pressures:** 60% of cities reported COVID-19 had negatively impacted parks operating budgets.
- ★ **Canadians want to see their parks funded well:** 85% said they would like to see more public funding of parks split between maintenance (43%), new amenities and higher quality designs (27%), and community programming (23%).



Parks were recognized as critical public health infrastructure.

- * **Increased park use reflected the benefits Canadians get from parks:** with nearly two thirds saying their appreciation of parks had increased during the pandemic, particularly for mental health (85%), physical health (81%), and social connection (71%).
- * **60% of cities said that COVID-19 had increased attention on parks as public health infrastructure:** with 89% of those cities saying they believed this would be a long-term trend.
- * **The pandemic also catalyzed new partnerships:** with 84% of cities reporting increased collaboration between parks and other departments such as public health.



The equity gap was made clearer.

- ★ **The work of community advocates was key in highlighting inequities within parks and public spaces:** such as access and safety, bringing attention to these issues throughout the pandemic.
- ★ **Cities are tuning into the impacts of systemic inequities and discrimination:** with 43% reporting that addressing these issues was a challenge—roughly the same percentage also indicated the pandemic had increased attention on these issues.
- ★ **Canadians who identified as Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour were more likely to report experiencing barriers to park use during the pandemic:** such as fear of ticketing (24%) and harassment (22%). Despite this, they were more likely to cite an increased interest in stewardship activities (70%) than white Canadians (54%).
- ★ **Canadians are thoughtful about how people may engage with parks differently from them:** with 77% agreeing that aspects of people's identity (e.g., race, gender, age) affect how a person experiences parks.



Climate action through parks is a growing priority.

- ★ **While COVID-19 consumed attention in 2020, the climate crisis is also a priority:** 84% of cities reported dealing with climate change impacts and extreme weather as a challenge.
- ★ **Cities are moving on this, however:** 72% of cities reported having a climate action plan in place. This is a rise over last year, attributable to both the inclusion of additional cities in the 2021 report and recently approved climate action plans.
- ★ **Climate change is also on the minds of park users:** 92% of Canadians said they would support climate-resilient infrastructure built into parks.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A report this size is a team effort.

First, huge thanks to the dozens of city staff that worked with us to compile city data, answer our questions, and respond to interview requests. We know this takes a tremendous amount of work and this report is not possible without you.

We'd also like to thank the parks professionals, community members, non-profit staff, and academic researchers who provided their time and expertise, including Alanah Jewell, Alina Chatterjee, Anne Pelletier, Carmen Rosen, Chad Townsend, Chuk Odenigbo, Doug Bennet, Dylan Rawlyk, Eli Enns, Dr. Fikile Nxumalo, Florence Lecours-Cyr, Geneviève Bédard, Heather Douglas, Jacqueline L. Scott, Dr. Janelle Joseph, Josh Shea, Katherine Howard, Larissa Crawford, Leya Barry, Lourdenie Jean, Manon Otto, Marica Vazquez Tagliero, Marisol Narvaez, Mary Farrar, Dr. Melissa Lem, Michael Polanyi, Nadha Hassen, Dr. Naomi Adiv, Nico Bernard, Noémie Bélanger, Patricia Collette, Pina Mallozzi, Rudayna Bahubeshi, Shannon Baker, Sheila Boudreau, Sheila Taylor, Sherry Yano, Simon O'Byrne, Susan Holdsworth, Travis Canadien, and Yvonne Yeung.

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Foundation



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Lastly, but not least, thank you to the entire Park People team for their support and input.

Last year was tough. But it was also illuminating.

We know from city staff and our survey of the Canadian public that park use during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased significantly in cities all over Canada.

In this respect, COVID-19 has shown how parks bolster community resilience by providing a place for people to stay active, de-stress and connect with others—safely. For many, parks have become a lifeline.

This shows in the numbers. Two-thirds of the nearly 3,500 Canadians Park People surveyed in April 2021 said

their appreciation of parks had increased during the pandemic. People flocked to their local parks, sought out natural areas, took more regular walks along trails, and tried new winter activities.

This greater appreciation has important health benefits: 85% of Canadians said parks had a positive impact on their mental health, 81% on their physical

health, and 71% on their sense of social connection during the pandemic—critical in addressing the isolation so many have felt during the last year.

But COVID-19 has also shown there is work to do in addressing inequities and discrimination—particularly around homelessness in parks and **anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism**.

Our survey of Canadians found that people who identified as Black, Indigenous or a person of colour were **more likely to report experiencing barriers to park use**, including concerns about ticketing, social judgement, and harassment. Additionally, 90% of cities reported homelessness in parks as a challenge, a significant rise from last year.

Park Circles, Toronto. Credit: Steve Russell, Toronto Star via Getty Images

Addressing these inequities is essential in moving towards parks where more people feel safe and see themselves reflected.

In the third annual Canadian City Parks Report, we focus on how parks can foster more resilient, equitable cities—not only as we recover from COVID-19, but as we address another looming crisis: climate change.

loves city parks, we hope this report provides you with useful data and stories that both inspire and challenge you.

Inside this report you'll find the results of our COVID-19 and Parks public survey, data and practices from 32 participating cities, and interviews with dozens of experts, including city staff, community leaders, and researchers. We have used the data to shape in-depth stories

leadership can help reframe notions of park stewardship, and how we can deepen the intersection of public health and parks by taking into account cultural experiences.

You'll also find a special section: **Lessons From a Pandemic Year**. This section dives deep into the ways COVID-19 impacted our park systems and our use of parks during the last year—both positive and negative—and the ways we can move forward together.

Parks alone cannot address climate change, racism, and public health challenges, but as the shared spaces in our cities they play a vital role in helping us learn to live together in a more resilient, equitable society.

Explore the entire report, including the city data, stories, practices, and expert interviews online at ccpr.parkpeople.ca/2021. Explore selected sections—including the pandemic lessons, key insights, and city data—in a special downloadable PDF.



Beach Volleyball, Kelowna. Credit - Tourism Kelowna

Park People puts out this report to help track the trends and challenges facing city parks across Canada. Whether you're city staff, a community volunteer, a funder, a non-profit organization, a park professional, or a resident who

that reflect what is happening around the country and push forward with new ideas.

Among others, you'll find stories and actionable take-aways on **how cities can advance climate action through parks**, how **Black and Indigenous**



FEATURE

Lessons from a pandemic year

What COVID-19 taught us about how to work towards more resilient, equitable parks.

We can't talk about 2020 without talking about COVID-19. The pandemic touched every part of our lives, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of our society.

The same was true for parks.

We saw the increased importance of parks for mental and physical health, but also troubling instances of anti-Black

and anti-Asian racism in public spaces. We saw how parks helped people stay safely socially connected, but also how unhoused people were displaced. We saw historic highs in park usage, but also the strain this put on already tight park budgets.

We covered many of these topics, and more, in a series of webinars we hosted in fall 2020, as well as numerous

resources, which are archived on a [**special COVID-19 resource page**](#) on Park People's website.

As we recover from the pandemic, the year ahead will be critical in understanding where we go from here. Will park use remain high? Will calls for more equitable approaches result in action? Will enhancements like more winterized washrooms and pedestrianized streets continue?

Here we highlight eight lessons from our pandemic year, which helped inform the stories in this year's Canadian City Parks Report, and point a way forward to more resilient, equitable cities.

Gatineau Park, Gatineau. Credit - Emily Cordonier

Inequities became impossible to ignore

90%

of cities said that addressing homelessness in parks was a challenge.

43%

of cities said addressing systemic inequities and discrimination was a challenge—roughly the same percentage also indicated the pandemic had increased attention on these issues.

22-24%

Canadians who identified as Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour were more likely to report experiencing barriers to park use during the pandemic, such as fear of ticketing (24%) and harassment (22%).

If 2020 was anything, it was a bright hot light exposing the existing inequities in our cities.

We often speak about parks as being “for everyone,” but, as many community leaders pointed out, this obscures the racism, inequitable enforcement, historic underinvestment, unequal access to amenities, and social judgment that exclude many from enjoying and benefitting from green spaces.

Community advocates were critical in foregrounding these issues, publishing research and leading activism that kept media attention high. We saw this in the **disproportionate impact of physical distancing by-laws** on Black, Indigenous and marginalized groups in public spaces, in the rising visibility of people **experiencing homelessness in parks**, and the **increase in anti-Asian racism** in Canada (half of which took place in public spaces).

Experts in Park People’s **Urbanism’s Next Chapter** webinar argued that in 2021, we need less talk about “returning to normal” and more actions that address systemic discrimination, the displacement of people experiencing homelessness, and anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in our park systems, policies and organizations.

As Canadian placemaker Jay Pitter wrote in the introduction to **Engaging Black People and Power**, the 2021 publication she co-produced with York University students and the Canadian Urban Institute: “It’s time to centre Black place-based expertise and wisdom.”

We can start by listening to and supporting Black, Indigenous and people of colour who are leading by **reframing our understanding of park stewardship**. We can also better address homelessness and parks through inclusive policies that recognize the rights of unhoused park users—a topic that we explored in depth in our **2020 Canadian City Parks Report** and a **webinar**.

Finally, we can develop new equity-based policies to help guide decision-making about where to make investments and how to better engage communities, like the ones we profile in our stories on **environmental justice**, **public health**, and **park philanthropy**.



"A PARK FOR ALL" Mural on the Don River, Toronto. Credit - Evergreen Brickworks, Claire Harvie

Park budgets were hit from all sides



Busy Riverdale Park East, Toronto. Credit - Jake Tobin Garrett

60%

of cities said COVID-19 had negatively impacted park budgets.

85%

of Canadians said they want to see more public funding invested in parks.

Even before the pandemic, city park budgets were squeezed. For the third year in a row, cities reported insufficient operating budgets as a key challenge. Shifting demographics, aging infrastructure, rising demand for programs and high quality designs—these were all pressures cities faced pre-pandemic that will only continue to grow.

As people spent more time outdoors last year, costs increased due to higher maintenance needs, new public space pilots, and increased staffing in busy parks to ensure public safety. All of these additional expenses came as cities saw revenues decrease due to cancelled park programs and events.

The bright spot, however, is the increased attention on the importance of parks by all levels of government. In a survey we did in June 2020, 94% of cities said they had seen increased awareness among city leadership of the importance of parks. And the Canadian public is highly supportive of new investments in parks, with our 2021 survey showing that 85% support more public funding.

Finally, there is potential for organizations working in parks to tap into new funding sources as part of the COVID-19 recovery, such as the **Healthy Communities Initiative** launched by the federal government in 2021.

Parks were used more than ever

94%

of cities said that park use had increased during the pandemic.

2/3rds

of Canadians said they had spent more time in parks compared to pre-pandemic, with 39% reporting their park use had doubled during COVID-19.

82%

of Canadians who said they had spent more time in parks during the pandemic expect their use to continue or even increase.

As indoor gatherings were restricted, Canadians flooded into parks in all weather. We heard this from cities who reported increased use of parks and trails, as well as from Canadians themselves.

People using parks is positive, but it also presents challenges. Cities scrambled to create new booking systems for amenities like skating rinks and manage crowds at suddenly busy splash pads.

Many cities also instituted new rules for jammed trails, creating one-way systems and trying to keep people from trampling sensitive natural areas. Montreal created a Natural Environment Protection committee to put in place awareness raising measures for sensitive areas.

While some of these pressures will ease with reduced physical distancing restrictions in the coming months, it seems that this high use of parks will stick around after the pandemic.

This increase in park use, however, was not the same for everyone. Our survey results show that Canadians who identify as Black, Indigenous or a person of colour (BIPOC) were less likely to report visiting green spaces more often during

the pandemic (59%) than white Canadians (69%). BIPOC Canadians were also more likely to indicate they spent less time in parks (25%) than white Canadians (17%) during the pandemic, likely related to the increased barriers to access that this group reported experiencing.



*Community stewardship program participants.
Credit - Ontario Streams*

Nearby nature was critical for public health

83%

of Canadians said parks had a positive impact on their connection to nature during the pandemic.

61%

of Canadians said they prefer to visit naturalized or “wild” parks or green spaces as well as trails and ravines.

58%

of Canadians became more interested in engaging in stewardship activities in natural spaces during the pandemic.



A walk through nature. Credit - Jake Tobin Garrett

As our stress levels rocketed in 2020 and Canadians' mental health declined, many sought out more time in nature. Our survey found that 85% of Canadians said parks had a positive impact on their mental health during the pandemic.

As we wrote about last year, the connection between human well-being and spending time in nature has long been **established in science**. But not everyone enjoys access to nature. Perceptions of safety and unfamiliarity can make people feel wary in natural spaces — a point we explore in our **stories about planning parks for public health**.

In 2021, we hope to see more focus on neighbourhood greening projects that insert naturalized spaces where we live our everyday lives — our streets, yards, parks, laneways and schools — perhaps by setting targets for space converted from mowed to naturalized landscapes. Paying attention to informal green spaces beyond parks is important, as 25% of Canadians said they visit these kinds of spaces most often.

As we document in this year's report, greening projects are key to increasing the climate resiliency of our communities, reducing flooding and cooling the air. But access to these green space benefits is not evenly distributed. We can act on this awareness through new investments, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods.

This must include working towards reconciliation with Indigenous land stewards by first **reckoning with the violent colonial history of our parks**, as **Future Ancestor Services Founder Larissa Crawford** told us.

"Not only are we going to be working towards the spirit of restorative relationships and having better relationships with our communities," she said. "But we're also going to tap into the plethora of expertise that Indigenous peoples have, especially with regards to the land and its sustainability, and the ecosystem and our roles as humans in that ecosystem."

Neighbourhood parks became the star of the show

71%

of Canadians said that local or neighbourhood parks are among the types of spaces they prefer to visit.

37%

of Canadians said lack of amenities such as washrooms and benches made visiting neighbourhood parks less appealing.

The pandemic heightened the importance of local parks as places of respite. Indeed, some cities reported higher use of local parks, and demand from residents for new types of all-ages amenities for biking, skateboarding, and adventure play.

We know quality neighbourhood parks are not enjoyed equally – and this has real impacts on people’s mental and physical health. BIPOC Canadians were less likely to report that parks had a positive impact on their mental and physical health or their sense of social connection during the pandemic compared to white Canadians.

In 2021, we foresee a renewed focus on quality neighbourhood parks, including an emphasis on providing basic amenities to ensure parks are comfortable and accessible. For example Charlottetown said adding more park washrooms was a 2021 priority, Richmond Hill pointed towards adding more shade structures to parks, and Kelowna noted an interest in rethinking the style and arrangement of group seating.

But we can go further. Take Richmond, which expedited the creation of new community gardens in parks to address food security. Or how markets for locally produced goods and food could aid in local economic development—a key part of the COVID-19 recovery as we **detail in this year’s report.**



Outdoor Winter Food Pantry. Credit - MABELLEarts

People engaged in new outdoor activities

89%

of Canadians said they had tried a new activity in a park in 2020, with top activities including regular walks through parks and trails (56%) and socializing with friends and family (40%).

76%

of Canadians said they want to see more community programming in parks.

79%

of surveyed community park groups said that despite a challenging year, their work in parks helped build a sense of belonging.

Along with high use, parks also saw an increase in the types of activities people engaged in, as many did outside what they used to do inside. Cities reported activities such as fitness and art classes, more outdoor eating, and even having a drink in a park. Some cities responded to these with new policies, such as a by-law passed by the City of North Vancouver to allow drinking in certain parks and expansion of park permits to cover more activities.

The heart of community programming in many parks is resident-led initiatives. Many grassroots groups struggled in 2020 as COVID-19 restricted access to park amenities and required them to keep track of fluctuating public health guidelines.

Despite these hurdles, 74% of the 273 park groups we surveyed said they had continued to provide a mix of in person and virtual events. This resulted in over 3,600 events (half virtual), put on by over 11,600 volunteers for 125,300 attendees.

We hope to see greater support for community park programming from cities. This year, just half of cities reported having a formal park group program in place and the same amount reported having a policy in place to waive permit fees due to financial need. The top two areas park groups said they will need help with were funding and re-engaging community members to participate in park gatherings.

City staff can work with communities and partner organizations to provide funding and institute policies like simplified permits that allow park groups to do more with less paperwork and fees. And rather than relying on signage and punitive by-law enforcement, cities can instead **work with local leaders** and community organizations to spread information about safe gathering practices and collaborate on programming that gets people back to enjoying the park together.



Multi-use Path, Kelowna. Credit - Tourism Kelowna

People got out more during winter

50%

of Canadians said they had used parks more during winter than pre-pandemic with 73% saying they expected this use to continue.

51%

of Canadians said they wanted to see increased access to winter recreation activities in parks.

57%

of Canadians said they wanted to see more winterized washrooms in parks.



Wellness Instructor, Kaitlin Powers, demonstrates the "Warrior II" lunge position for participants on a physically distanced yoga hike at Huron Natural Area, Kitchener. Credit - Wendy Newbery

It's often said that Canada is a winter nation, and it's true: for many months of the year our weather is wet and cold. But people continued to turn to parks and trails this past winter to keep active and lessen the winter blues.

In Regina, the city started a **new winter grant program** to support outdoor community-led programming. Prince Albert saw a 400% increase in downhill skiing and a 250% increase in cross-country skiing over 2019 levels. Calgary installed 14 portable fire pits and Brampton expanded its outdoor skating rinks.

Washrooms in particular are a critical element of accessible parks in any season, but especially during COVID-19 when access to private businesses' washrooms has been restricted. In response to busy winter use, many cities told us they had stepped up efforts to keep washrooms open during the winter or add winterized portable washrooms—an action popular with Canadians.

In order to support more winter recreation, some cities like Mississauga and Richmond Hill reported keeping certain facilities open later into the season or during the entire winter such as tennis courts, picnic shelters, pickleball courts, outdoor fitness equipment, and soccer fields and plowing more trails to keep them free of snow.

These winter recreation opportunities were appreciated by Canadians who spent more time in parks this winter, trying new activities from bird-watching to cross-country skiing. This winter use may remain high after the pandemic, presenting an opportunity to **make permanent many of these winter offerings**—an action that will depend on additional investments in park budgets.

Parks expanded and made new connections



Places éphémères, Ville de Québec

55%

of Canadians said they wanted to see outdoor cafes permanently implemented.

49%

of Canadians said they wanted to see pedestrianized streets permanently implemented.

Responding to the need for more space for physical distancing, many cities quickly “found” acres of new space in 2020, such as roadways and parking lots, to open up to people and businesses. This created more space for cycling, running, rolling, walking and dining out.

Just under half of Canadians said they had taken advantage of pedestrianized streets in the last year, and about the same amount said they wanted them to remain permanent features.

In 2021, Canadian cities should continue this creative rethinking of the space in our cities to make them more people-friendly. But we can expand it so that more neighbourhoods can benefit from slower streets, expanded public spaces, safer walking and cycling connections, and other community-identified public space needs.

We can learn from cities like Kingston, which created a pop-up market in a downtown square and Longueuil, which expanded its “ephemeral spaces” by opening up streets for people with temporary furniture. Toronto and Vancouver opened up certain streets for recreational activities and rolled out new bike lanes and curbside cafes. And Edmonton created 29 pop-up community gardens during the pandemic—a program which will expand in 2021.

Some of these initiatives lasted into the winter, while others were removed until warmer weather returned. But they point a way forward in reimagining our cities’ largest public space resource—streets—in new ways to support more people-friendly places.

This article is updated from one previously published on the Park People blog and in First Policy Response.

2021 Trends, Challenges & Covid-19 Impacts



We surveyed 32 cities about trends and challenges in the past year, including how COVID-19 impacted their work.

TRENDS

% of cities said interest in X has +increased, -decreased, or =not changed.

+90%

Said interest in interest in multi-use trails (e.g., walking, cycling) increased

0% said decreased
10% said not changed

+87%

Said interest in interest in universally accessible designs increased

0% said decreased
13% said not changed

+87%

Said interest in interest in food growing, cooking & selling opportunities (e.g., community gardens, edible orchards, farmers markets, bake ovens) increased

0% said decreased
13% said not changed

+84%

Said interest in off-leash dog areas increased

3% said decreased
13% said not changed

+74%

Said interest in adventure play (e.g., nature playgrounds, loose parts play) increased

3% said decreased
23% said not changed

+70%

Said interest in naturalized areas in parks increased

0% said decreased
30% said not changed

+68%

Said interest in indigenous engagement/programming increased

0% said decreased
32% said not changed

+61%

Said interest in green infrastructure developments in parks (e.g., rain gardens and bioswales) increased

3% said decreased
36% said not changed

+55%

Said interest in outdoor fitness equipment increased

6% said decreased
39% said not changed

+53%

Unstructured spaces to just hang out (i.e., rather than participate in organized activities)

0% said decreased
47% said not changed

+53%

Said interest in outdoor spaces for organized sports increased

7% said decreased
40% said not changed

=57%

Said interest in volunteer-based natural stewardship and education opportunities (i.e., tree planting, invasive pulling, etc.) had not changed.

43% said increased
0% said decreased

=73%

Said interest in privately-owned public space development (i.e., publicly accessible spaces secured by the municipality on privately owned land) had not changed

27% said increased
0% said decreased

=71%

Said interest in digital infrastructure (e.g., wi-fi, park-based apps) had not changed

26% said increased
3% said decreased

=74%

Said interest in park friendly groups (i.e., friends of X park) had not changed

26% said increased
0% said decreased

=60%

Said interest in private Investments in parks (e.g., philanthropy, corporate sponsorships / donations) had not changed

20% said increased
20% said decreased

CHALLENGES

% of cities said X was a challenge.

94%

Said aging infrastructure and asset management is a challenge.

90%

Said homelessness in parks is a challenge.

89%

Said insufficient operating budget is a challenge.

86%

Said protecting/enhancing biodiversity + natural environments is a challenge.

84%

Said addressing impacts from climate change and extreme weather damage (e.g., flooding, fires and droughts) is a challenge.

83%

Said collecting data on park use is a major challenge.

77%

Said revitalizing/redesigning parks to meet changing needs is a challenge.

77%

Said engaging hard to reach groups is a challenge.

58%

Said acquiring/expanding parkland to meet growth needs is a challenge.

43%

Said addressing systemic inequities and discrimination in parks is a challenge.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

% of cities said Yes.

94%

Said their municipality has seen on average higher use of parks during the pandemic

84%

Said their municipality initiated at least one new or creative park program/pilot sparked by the pandemic

84%

Said the pandemic led to increased collaboration between your parks department and other municipal departments and decision-makers

84%

Said their municipality increased by-law enforcement as a strategy to deter gatherings and enforce physical distancing guidelines and/or park amenity closures

60%

Said COVID-19 negatively impacted their municipality's parks operating budgets for 2021

60%

Said COVID prompted a greater focus on planning parks for public health

89% of cities who said yes anticipate this will have a longer term influence on park planning

53%

Anticipate COVID will change design standards/practices for new park development going forward (e.g. wider pathways, different seating arrangements, etc.)

40%

Said COVID prompted a greater focus on systemic inequities in parks (e.g., access to parks in different neighbourhoods, levels of investment, etc.)

83% of cities who said yes anticipate this will have a longer term influence on park planning

Climate Change

Hotter temperatures, increased rainfall, and more droughts are impacting how cities plan, design, and maintain our green spaces.

This has caused changes to the types of plants that can thrive, as well as strained older park designs, particularly along waterfronts, to deal with extreme weather.



Indeed, cities reported that dealing with climate change and extreme weather damage was a key challenge—one that Canadian cities are increasingly rising to address.

Whether by engineering parks to act as flood protection infrastructure, converting more paved surfaces to green space, or even switching park equipment to electric, cities are deploying a range of strategies—all of which we explore in this year's report.

It's critical to protect and enhance our urban parks in the face of climate change because parks themselves are important pieces of climate-resilient infrastructure. Parks help cities mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by acting as carbon sinks, reducing temperatures, soaking up rainfall, and supporting the social connections that strengthen communities to be more resilient in times of crisis.

But these benefits are also not spread equally throughout our cities. Canadian research shows that some neighbourhoods are greener than others and benefit from healthier environments—disparities that are often drawn along the lines of income and race. Experts we spoke with have called for new ways of planning and involving communities in green space projects—ones that ensure everyone can share in the climate-resilient benefits of healthy trees and plentiful parks.

Summarized



INSIGHTS

- ★ **Climate change is a top challenge.** 84% of cities said addressing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather in parks was a challenge. Cities are moving on this issue, however, with 72% reporting climate change plans in place—an increase over last year.
- ★ **Growing demand for naturalized space.** 70% of cities reported increasing demand for naturalization projects in parks (e.g., meadows) and 92% of the Canadian public said they wanted to see more integration of climate-resilient infrastructure in parks (e.g., stormwater management).
- ★ **The pandemic increased nature connection.** 83% of Canadians said that parks had a positive impact on their sense of connection to nature during COVID-19 and 61% said they preferred to visit naturalized or “wild” green spaces.

TAKE-AWAYS

- ★ **Enshrine climate-resilience as standard practice by developing guidelines or strategies that formalize goals,** such as rainwater capture, to guide park (re)development citywide and move beyond one-off projects.
- ★ **Develop equity-based policies within a climate change lens** to guide which neighbourhoods are prioritized for green space improvements, such as increased tree planting to mitigate heat, but also inclusive community participation opportunities.
- ★ **Recognize the importance of local actions such as tree planting and small naturalized gardens,** by enabling community-led work through supportive policies (e.g., simple applications) and neighbourhood grants.

Indicators

28%

of cities have a citywide biodiversity strategy and 50% of cities have biodiversity objectives embedded within other environmental plans.

72%

of cities have a climate change strategy in place. This is an increase over the 44% last year, reflecting both new cities in the 2021 report and new climate change strategies approved in 2020.

92%

of Canadians said they wanted climate-resilient infrastructure (e.g., stormwater infrastructure) embedded in parks.

84%

of cities said addressing impacts from climate change and extreme weather damage was a challenge, while 86% of cities said protecting biodiversity was a challenge.

83%

of Canadians said parks have had a positive impact on their connection to nature during the pandemic.

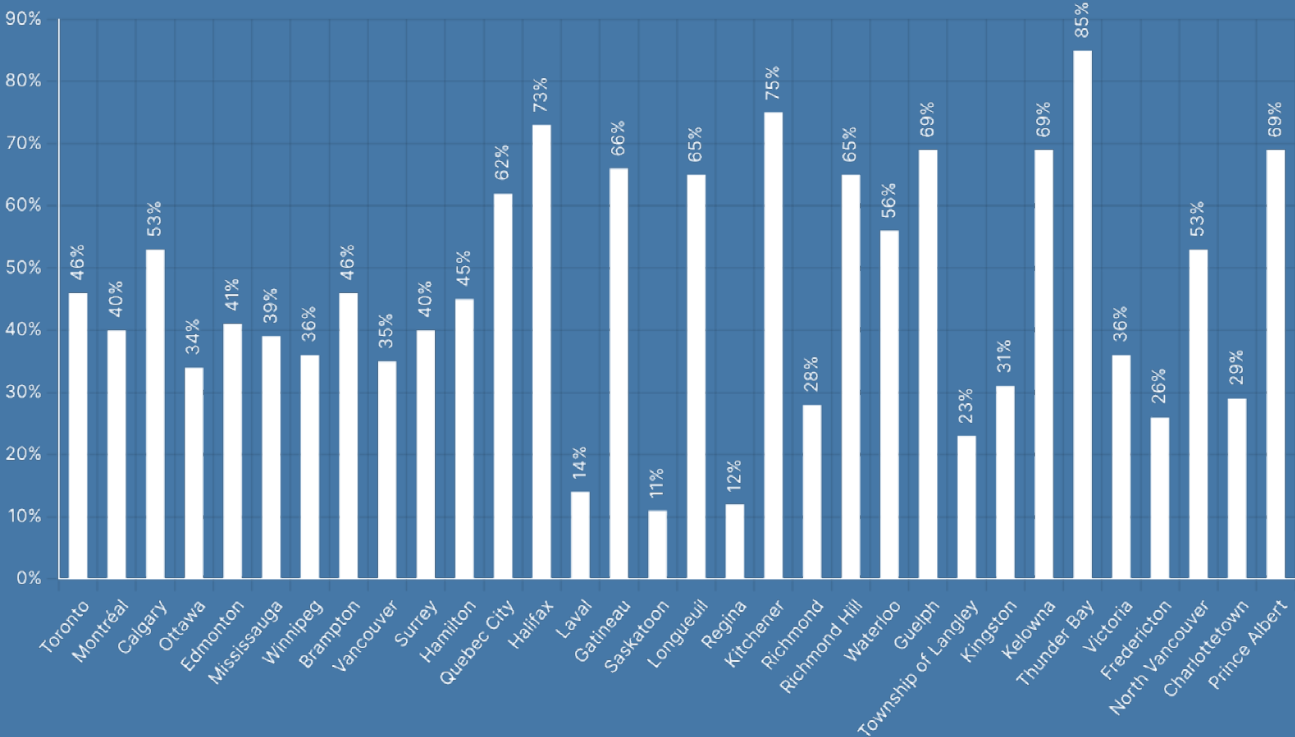
31%

of Canadians said that lack of trees, plants, or natural spaces in parks is one of the factors that makes visiting parks less appealing.

61%

of Canadians said they prefer to visit naturalized or “wild” parks or green spaces.

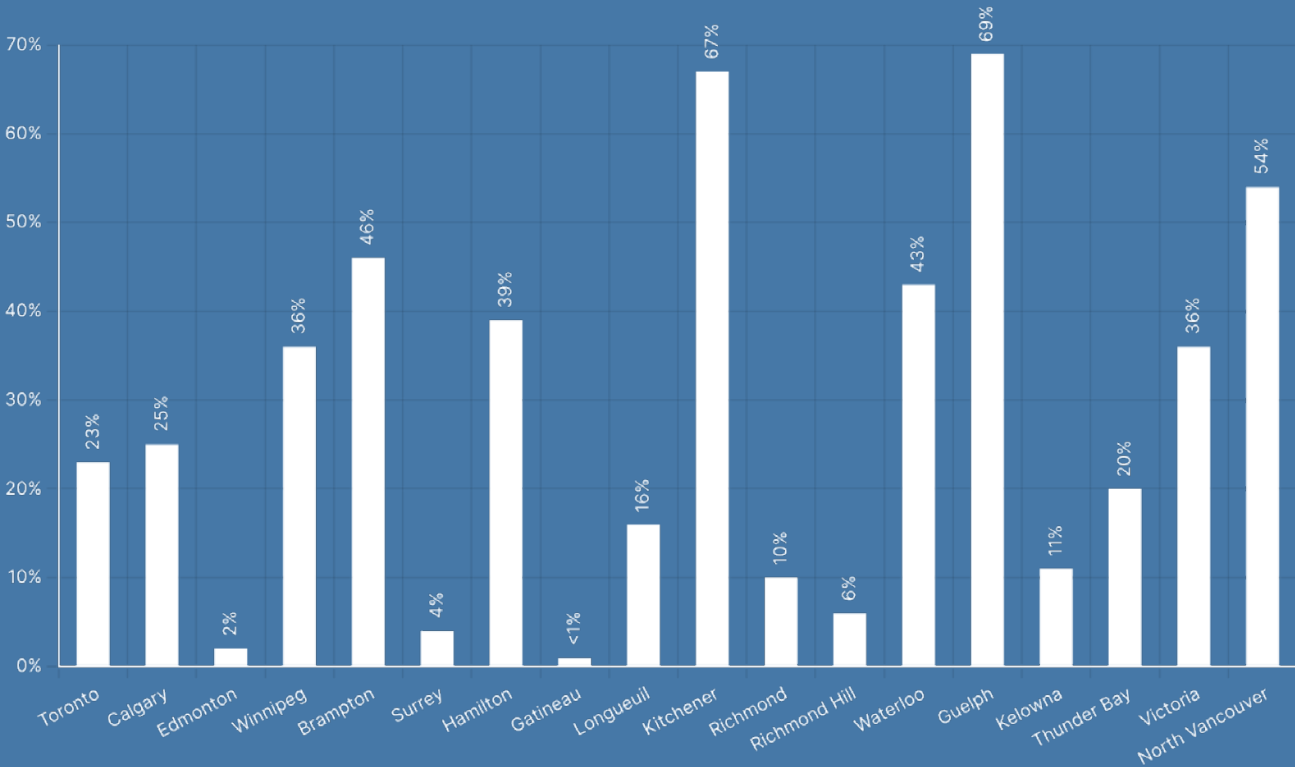
Ha of natural parkland



Park systems are made up of both manicured parks (sports fields, playgrounds) and natural areas (woodlots, meadows). As we seek to adapt to climate change and increase biodiversity, it's important to ensure we are protecting natural spaces as cities grow. On average, 46% of park systems are natural areas—a number that has remained stable over the three years of the report.

Arranged by population size

% of environmentally significant/protected areas



This chart shows the percentage of total city parkland that is under special protection as ecologically sensitive. While the policies are different in each city, it gives a sense of the quantity of protected urban habitat—12,745ha in total or equivalent to nearly 32 Stanley Parks—a number that could help contribute to Canada’s target of **17% protected land** in the country.

Arranged by population size

Data not available for Montreal, Ottawa, Mississauga, Vancouver, Quebec City, Halifax, Laval, Saskatoon, Regina, Township of Langley, Kingston, Fredericton, Charlottetown, and Prince Albert.

BIPOC Leadership

COVID-19 continues to radically impact our relationships to each other, the space we occupy, and the land we live on. It's also an opportunity to challenge our ways of thinking.

As a meeting place for engagement and civic discourse, parks are an ideal setting to think about these relationships and what we'd like them to look like in the future.



In this year's report, we reflect on some of the experiences of Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities on the lands parks occupy—how they have been integral to shaping these spaces and what it would look like to support these communities in leading the way forward. Because to do this work meaningfully in parks, a “new normal” must be one where we steward the land together.

The resurgence of movements that affirm Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation have propelled these conversations to the forefront. As they took up space in cities' green spaces, it forced municipalities, community programmers, and residents to consider how park management had a role to play in these important conversations.

So what does this “new normal” include? A “new normal” that allows for old and new relationships to green spaces. One that prioritizes Indigenous sovereignty and the safety of Black people, supports different types of access, and where cultural ceremonies are expected and permit fees are not a barrier. A “normal” that can be achieved through a mutual care for our communities, our fellow non-human beings and the land.

Summarized



KEY INSIGHTS

- ★ **There is growing interest in park stewardship.** Our public survey showed that Canadians who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of colour (BIPOC) expressed the pandemic has caused them to become more interested in engaging in stewardship activities or protecting natural spaces in their city (70%) than white respondents (54%).
- ★ **Discrimination can be a barrier to park use.** Our survey showed that Black, Indigenous, and people of colour were more than twice as likely at 22% of respondents to report harassment or discrimination as a barrier to park use than white people (8%). Additionally, 43% of cities stated that addressing systemic inequities and discrimination in parks was a challenge.
- ★ **People of colour have been, and continue to be, strong park advocates.** Despite being more likely to report harassment or discrimination as a barrier to park use, Black, Indigenous, and people of colour were more likely to express they had a voice in what goes on in their local park (46%) than white respondents (30%).

TAKE-AWAYS

- ★ **Consider how collective land stewardship can be implemented in communities by following the guidance of Indigenous Elders.** This can start with building relationships across cultures to facilitate mutual learning of the histories of this land through community-led programming.
- ★ **Listen quietly to the Black, Indigenous and people of colour who have stepped forward as park leaders.** This means compensating people for their labour, whether through their role as a consultant or a member of an internal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee.
- ★ **Challenge institutions that shape experiences in public space, such as city parks departments and non-profit organizations,** to engage with racial justice using tools such as equitable hiring policies, funding for outreach to racialized residents and accountability processes.

Indicators

90%

of cities said rising homelessness in parks was a challenge.

43%

of cities said addressing systemic inequities and discrimination was a challenge, compared to 40% that said it wasn't a challenge and the remaining unsure.

68%

of cities said there was increasing interest in Indigenous programming and engagement.

77%

of Canadians said they believe people experience parks differently based on aspects of their identity (e.g., race, gender, age).

22%

of Canadians that identified as Black, Indigenous or a person of colour reported experiencing barriers to parks due to harassment/discrimination—more than twice the rate of white respondents.

87%

of cities reported increasing demand for universally accessible designs in parks, an increase from last year. Additionally, 22% of Canadians with disabilities said that access barriers made visiting parks/green spaces in their neighbourhood more difficult.

Public Health

COVID-19 has thrust parks into the public health spotlight.

As the pandemic caused many of our shared spaces to close, including restaurants, gyms, and community centres, the toll on Canadians' mental health began to rise.

Our survey of the Canadian public shows that many turned to parks as places to restore, get exercise, and combat social isolation.



This is no surprise, as parks can be health hotspots for humans and non-humans alike. Research shows that being in greener environments can both boost mental health and prevent chronic diseases, while recreational amenities like walking trails and community gardens can support physical activity and strengthen social cohesion.

But this does not tell the full story.

Experts we spoke with highlighted that the health benefits of parks are not evenly experienced. Having a park nearby is important, but it's more than just proximity that contributes to whether people feel motivated, comfortable, or welcome visiting that park. Physical qualities such as park shape, plantings, and maintenance—as well as social ones, such as having culturally appropriate amenities and inclusive park rules—have profound impacts on well-being.

Cities we surveyed reported rising interest in planning parks as public health infrastructure, a critically important lens as cities continue to grow. In this section, we explore examples of city-led park projects that go deeper by maximizing health benefits through attention to both the built environment and cultural and community needs.

We also dive into new possibilities opened by COVID-19, including health-based partnerships, policies, programming, and funding. And how to leverage the current moment to build healthier parks and healthier communities moving forward.

Summarized

KEY INSIGHTS:

- * **Parks are crucial to health in times of crisis.** But this is not experienced equally: 88% of white Canadians said parks had a positive impact on their mental health during COVID-19, compared to only 69% and 72% of those who identified as Black and Indigenous, respectively.
- * **Embedding a health lens in park planning is the future.** 60% of cities said COVID-19 had prompted a greater focus on planning parks for public health and 89% of cities anticipated this will have a long-term impact on park planning.
- * **COVID-19 strengthened parks-health connections.** 84% of cities said the pandemic increased collaboration between parks and other city departments (e.g. public health). The same percentage of cities initiated at least one new health-focused park pilot or program during COVID-19.

TAKE-AWAYS:

- * **Set goals for both quantity and quality of parks by taking into account not only proximity and distribution,** but also experiential factors such as the restorative impact of the natural environment, and whether park amenities meet community cultural needs.
- * **Pause to reflect and engage the public to take stock of new opportunities presented by COVID-19**—such as transitioning pilot projects to permanent or formalizing health-promoting park policies—and make informed decisions about strategies to implement long-term.
- * **Invite diverse uses of parks by clarifying what's welcome.** For example, signage and social media posts encouraging different activities—like salsa dancing or Brazilian martial arts—can help signal to people that they are welcome to use the park in ways that speak to them.



Indicators

56%

of cities have park system master plans in place that have been updated within the last 10 years.

94%

of cities reported greater use of parks in the last year. This high use may stick around, with 82% of Canadians who reported increased use of parks during the pandemic saying they expect this use to continue—or increase even more—post-pandemic.

94%

of cities listed aging infrastructure as a challenge, including 71% who said it was a major challenge. Insufficient operating budgets was another top challenge (89%); however, just above one third of cities listed it as a major challenge.

60%

of cities said that COVID-19 had increased attention on parks as public health infrastructure, with 89% of those cities saying they believed this would be a long-term trend.

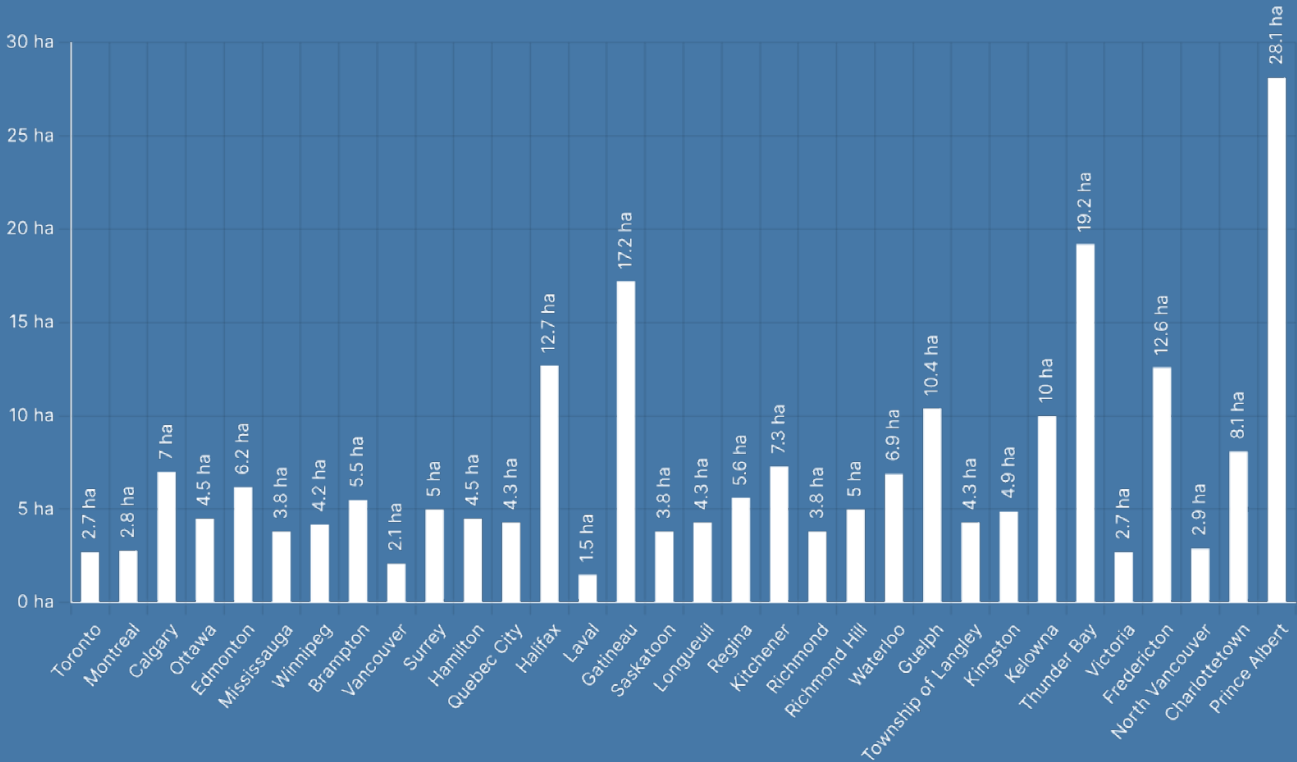
85%

of Canadians said they wanted to see more public funding go towards improving parks and green spaces, including maintenance (43%), amenities and higher quality designs (27%) and community programming (23%).

63%

of Canadians believe that their city parks and green spaces would benefit from more staff.

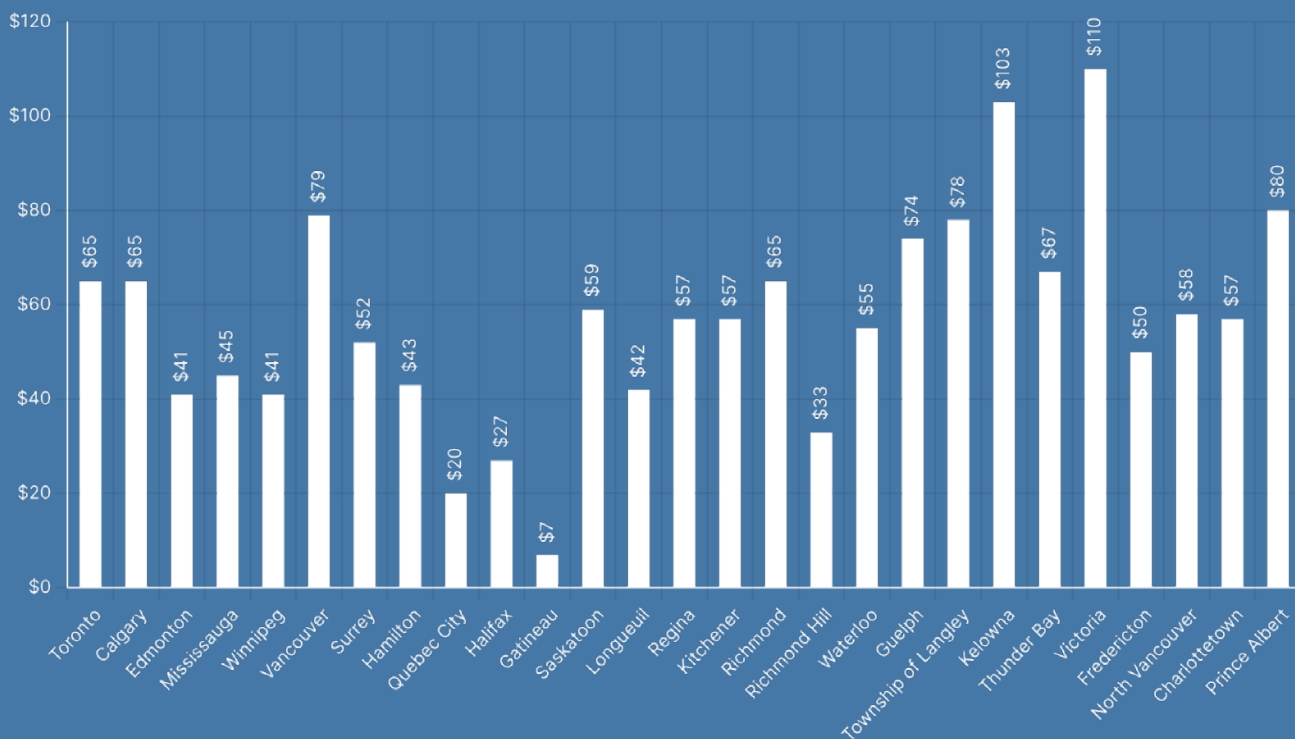
Ha of parkland/1000 people



This chart shows the amount of parkland for every 1,000 residents. While there is no “correct” amount of parkland per population as it depends on local context, looking at similarly sized cities can reveal common trends. For example, many of Canada’s major urban centres, such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, show lower levels of parkland per population as they deal with higher densities and development pressures—each sitting below the average for cities above 500,000 residents of 4.4 hectares per 1,000 people. Ensuring these numbers do not decrease as populations grow will be key to meeting future parkland needs.

Arranged by population size

\$ in park operating dollars/person



As with parkland per population, there is no “correct” operating budget amount. Tracking dollars spent per person over time helps shed light on whether budgets are keeping pace with population growth, which puts additional pressures on park systems. The average operating budget spend has remained stable for the past three years at \$57 per person, despite additional pressures placed on parks last year due to COVID-19 measures. Cities have identified operational budget pressures as an ongoing challenge throughout all three years of the report.

Arranged by population size

Data not available for
Montreal, Ottawa, Brampton,
Laval, and Kingston.

Partnerships

By their very nature, parks are shared spaces.

They can be platforms where we build strong relationships to the natural world around us, as well as to others in our community.



For some this may prompt them to give back to their favourite parks, whether through money, time, or expertise. Regardless of the method, the process involves the sometimes messy world of learning how to work together and share responsibility.

In this year's report, we explore philanthropic interest in parks—individual gifts, foundation grants, and community-led initiatives—and how cities can better ensure these investments are made in a way that is accountable and equitable.

We also profile how community-led groups and non-profits are working to improve the natural environment in their parks by building partnerships with city staff and other organizations, launching their own citizen science initiatives, and deepening our responsibility to the land.

Summarized



KEY INSIGHTS

- * **COVID-19 has reduced volunteer opportunities.** The average number of volunteers per thousand dropped from 11.6 to 2.7 compared to last year's report, reflecting reduced opportunities for park volunteering due to the pandemic.
- * **Volunteer interest is likely to rebound.** 58% of Canadians said that COVID-19 had caused them to become more interested in getting involved in stewardship projects, suggesting new interest in city, non-profit, and resident-led volunteer programs post-pandemic.
- * **Private investment is stable.** 60% of cities reported that interest in private investment in parks, such as philanthropy and sponsorships, was unchanged, with the remaining 40% split between increasing or decreasing.

TAKE-AWAYS

- * **Build partnerships from a unique strengths perspective by acknowledging what each party can bring**—such as specific expertise, funding, or programming—and document these strengths through outlining clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- * **Create transparent frameworks for assessing private park funding,** evaluating proposals based on factors such as community and city priorities, ongoing required maintenance, and citywide needs.
- * **Increase the accessibility of park grants, whether city or foundation/non-profit-led,** by reviewing which communities have historically received funding, as well as potential barriers to access, including eligibility requirements and language.

Indicators

57%

of cities reported that interest in volunteer activities, such as natural stewardship, was staying the same, while 43% said it was increasing.

58%

of Canadians said that since the pandemic began they have become more interested in getting involved in stewardship activities in their city, such as tending a community garden or assisting with invasive species removal.

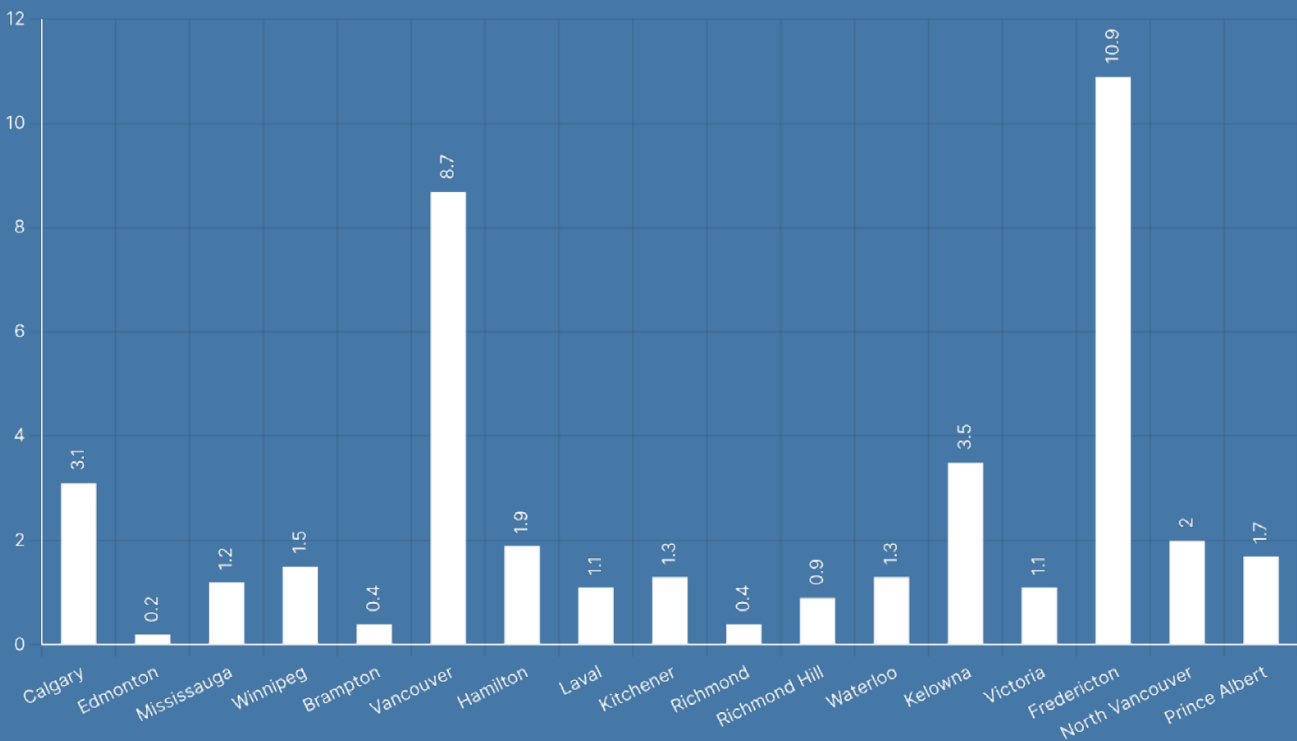
41%

of Canadians do not feel that they have a voice or the ability to influence what goes on in their local parks, compared to 34% that said they did and the remaining unsure.

\$6M

was raised in private funding for parks (e.g., philanthropy and sponsorships) by the 12 cities in the report that provided numbers.

volunteers / 1000 people



This chart shows the amount of volunteers engaged in city parks programs per 1,000 residents. Compared to last year, the average number of volunteers dropped significantly from 11.6 to 2.7 volunteers per 1,000 people. This shows the impact that COVID-19 restrictions had on volunteer opportunities. However, we expect these numbers to rebound post-pandemic with 58% of Canadians saying they have become more interested in park volunteering due to the pandemic.

Arranged by population size
Data not available for
Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa,
Surrey, Quebec City, Halifax,
Gatineau, Saskatoon,
Longueuil, Regina, Guelph,
Township of Langley,
Kingston, Thunder Bay, and
Charlottetown.

Community Resilience

With many indoor community spaces shut down the past year, the role of parks as neighbourhood hubs shone like never before.



Our survey found that 70% of Canadians said parks helped them feel connected to their community during the pandemic. Parks became places where people could safely socialize with neighbours, access food, and even find employment, forming the backbone of community resilience during a period of social and economic hardship for many.

In this section, we hear from park group leaders about how the pandemic challenged them to step outside of their usual roles to meet urgent community needs—like ensuring access to fresh food, or providing wellness check-ins. And how cities can nurture and tap into the vital social networks of park groups to ensure resilient responses to future challenges.

We also profile the work of community organizations spearheading creative park-based employment models that showcase the potential of parks to address economic inequities that have deepened during COVID-19.

Summarized



KEY INSIGHTS

- * **Parks are essential social infrastructure.** 73% of Canadians who self-identified as struggling with social isolation during the pandemic said that parks had a positive impact on their social wellbeing, compared to 64% of those who did not experience isolation.
- * **COVID-19 opened people's eyes to new uses of parks.** 89% of Canadians said they tried a new activity in parks during the pandemic, and 50% said their winter park use increased. 76% of Canadians said they wanted to see more community programming in parks moving forward.
- * **Parks can help support local economies.** Canadians said they wanted to see outdoor cafes in parks (55%), park space used by local businesses like restaurants and retailers (44%), public wifi in parks (39%), and park-based coworking spaces (19%).

TAKE-AWAYS

- * **Strengthen relationships by connecting with park volunteers,** which can allow cities to engage rapidly and be more responsive to future challenges. This could include grants or a city-supported community park group program—something only 50% of cities surveyed have in place.
- * **Integrate parks into economic recovery plans through creative employment opportunities in parks that can help to address economic inequities exacerbated by the pandemic.** Cities can help to scale up successful park-based employment models initiated by community organizations.
- * **Prioritize underserved communities when designing policy for employment opportunities in parks.** For example, allowing the sale of produce grown in small-scale community gardens, or simplifying permits for street vendors who lack start-up capital for a storefront.

Indicators

50%

of cities reported having a community park group program in place and the same amount said they had a policy in place to waive park permit fees for financial need.

81%

of cities reported having a community grant program in place that can be used for parks.

71%

of Canadians said that parks have had a positive impact on their social wellbeing during the pandemic.

79%

of park groups said that despite a challenging year, their work contributed to a sense of belonging in their communities.

89%

of Canadians said they tried a new activity in parks during the pandemic, such as more regular walks, visiting natural areas, socializing with friends/family, and eating meals.

50%

of Canadians said their winter park use increased during COVID-19 compared to past seasons. Of this group, nearly three-quarters expect that their higher park use will continue or increase further in post-pandemic winter seasons.

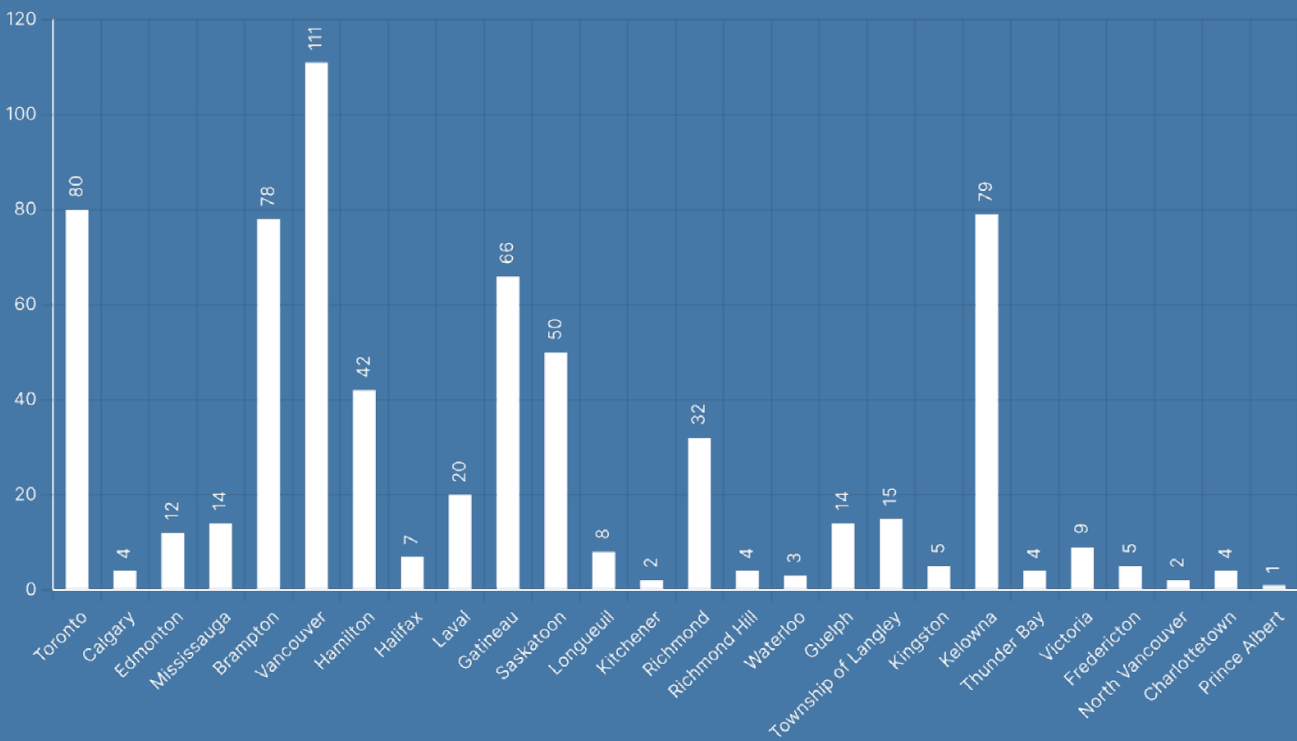
51%

of Canadians said they wanted to see increased access to winter recreation activities in parks and 57% of Canadians said they wanted to see more winterized washrooms in parks.

76%

of Canadians said they wanted to see more community programming in parks moving forward.

of community park groups



The number of community park groups varies widely across cities. Two thirds of cities reported demand for this type of involvement is stable, while one quarter of cities say demand is increasing. Our survey of nearly 300 park groups across the country found these groups had delivered 3,600 events in 2020—half of which were virtual. Support for these groups varies among cities, however. Only half of cities reported having a formal park group program in place (such as an adopt-a-park program), which can offer support and networking for park volunteers.

Arranged by population size
Data not available for
Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg,
Surrey, Quebec City, and
Regina.

Methodology

PROCESS

- * This year's report contains 32 Canadian cities—an increase of five over 2020—including 25 returning cities, and seven new cities. We aimed for diversity in size, geography, and official language, and prioritized cities that were returning from 2020, contacted us to participate, or filled a gap.
- * We distributed questionnaires to park staff, available in both French and English, that included questions on statistics, policies/plans, and projects/practices. The questionnaire included a confidential section about challenges, allowing us to report on cross-country trends.
- * To ensure data quality, we verified some responses independently or followed up with questions. All cities had a chance to verify their City Profile data pre-publication.
- * We also undertook secondary research of media and scholarly sources. To ensure rich analysis and capture diverse perspectives, we conducted expert interviews with city staff, academic researchers, park professionals, non-profit staff, and community members.
- * Finally, we created and launched a public survey in April 2021 on COVID-19 and Parks that builds on the findings of our June 2020 survey. This survey was open to the general Canadian public and was promoted through our newsletter, social media, and partner networks. We received nearly 3,500 responses, including representation from all provinces and territories.

CHALLENGES AND LEARNINGS

Part of what makes Canada's landscape of city parks so exciting is its variety.

Climate, topography, and governance are just a few factors that make cities unique—but that comes with challenges for comparability. Differences in which cities participated in the 2019, 2020 and 2021 reports also made cross-year comparability of data challenging, so we focused on overall trends.

Variations within city data:

Cities are also in very different places regarding what metrics they track, how they track them, and how they coordinate data internally. For some cities, certain numbers were not available, or were only available as best estimates (e.g. number of volunteers). Data were collected largely in February 2021.

We've tried our best to ensure consistency and context. For example, we've used methods that standardize for city size (e.g., hectares of parkland per 1,000 people). In cases where there are important influencing factors that affect the data, we've noted these directly on the City Profile for transparency.

Ensuring common definitions has been another challenge. We refined some of our definitions this year based on city feedback, and will continue improving them.

Public survey demographics:

For the COVID-19 and Parks public survey, the distribution of respondents across sociodemographic variables is worth noting: 66% identified as women and 49% were between the ages of 30-54. This means that these demographics are slightly overrepresented when compared to the general Canadian population.

If you have a suggestion or a comment, please [get in touch](#).

Definitions

TOTAL PARKLAND

Includes both natural and maintained parkland that is owned, leased, or under a management agreement by the municipality.

NATURAL PARKLAND

A natural area is a green space which receives a relatively low level of maintenance and supports natural or naturalizing vegetation. Natural areas may include trails or walkways as well as parking areas and washrooms.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT/ SENSITIVE AREAS (ESAS)

Areas designated under special policy protection to preserve important environmental attributes, such as rare flora and fauna. Only includes hectares of ESAs/protected areas within the public park system.

TOTAL POPULATION

Total population of the municipality based on 2019 sources, unless otherwise noted.

OPERATING BUDGET

Direct operating expenditures (not including revenues) for the Current Budget Year for maintaining parks and natural areas. This includes:

- * *planting & maintenance of trees in park/natural areas*
- * *graffiti & vandalism repair*
- * *management, administration & operational staff salaries*

- * *consultant/contractor costs*
- * *parks horticultural plantings*
- * *maintenance of closed cemeteries if carried out from the Parks Operating Budget*
- * *parks litter pickup & waste disposal*
- * *inspection & maintenance of splash pads, playgrounds & outdoor fitness equipment*
- * *maintenance & replacement of park furniture*
- * *public toilets where maintained from parks budget*
- * *sports field maintenance*
- * *snow clearing & ice control for parks & natural areas*
- * *any other parks/green space maintenance costs except cemetery costs where the cemetery is "active"*

CAPITAL BUDGET

Capital expenditure for all capital items related to land improvement works, planned for completion during the current financial year. It includes both new and renewal work, capital items carried forward from previous years, and salaries and wages for all staff involved in the design, planning and delivery of capital projects.

COMMUNITY GARDENS/URBAN FARMS

Food-growing gardens available for the public to use that may require membership. This includes community orchards.

OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

Includes both standalone dog parks and off-leash dog areas within parks.

VOLUNTEERS

Includes only volunteers who have worked directly with the municipality (not external organizations). Programming refers to publicly accessible activities and events (e.g., yoga classes, nature walks, park clean-ups, farmer's markets, festivals, celebrations, etc.). Programming does not include any large commercial activities, such as a private party.

COMMUNITY PARK GROUP PROGRAM

A formal municipal program through which residents can get involved in parks. An example of this would be an adopt-a-park program. The roles of these groups may include environmental stewardship (e.g., clean-ups), social/recreational programming (e.g., festivals, yoga in the park), etc. Does not include one-off volunteer opportunities (e.g., volunteering at a specific event).

COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

A monetary grant offered by the municipality that residents and community groups can apply for, and can be used for the purposes of improving or programming parks.

NON-PROFIT PARTNERSHIP

An ongoing partnership between the city and a non-profit organization that includes a programming or maintenance agreement in a park.

PARKS SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

An overall plan or strategy dealing with the municipality's current and future park/greenspace provision needs. It usually includes an analysis of current provision against population and a review of future park/greenspace acquisition/disposal needs.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The design of parks or park amenities to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized modification. This would include people of all ages, and those with and without disabilities.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Also known as low-impact development. The engineering of natural systems that capture, hold, and treat rainwater where it falls. It may include features such as bioretention ponds, rain gardens, and bioswales.

City Profiles

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Kelowna
Township of Langley
North Vancouver
Richmond
Surrey
Vancouver
Victoria

ALBERTA

Calgary
Edmonton

SASKATCHEWAN

Prince Albert
Regina
Saskatoon

MANITOBA

Winnipeg

ONTARIO

Brampton
Guelph
Hamilton
Kingston

Kitchener
Mississauga
Ottawa
Richmond Hill
Thunder Bay
Toronto
Waterloo

QUEBEC

Gatineau
Laval
Longueuil
Montreal
Quebec City

NEW BRUNSWICK

Fredericton

NOVA SCOTIA

Halifax

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown



Kelowna

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 127,380 (2016 DATA)

ANALYSIS

- * Kelowna has the third most park groups overall at 79 groups, but has the most out of cities with less than 500,000 in population.
- * Kelowna is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 69%.
- * Kelowna had the second highest capital budget of cities smaller than 500,000 residents with \$22.3 million slated to be invested into parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Kelowna recently completed a master plan of **Pandosy Waterfront Park**. With a focus on paddle sports for people of all ages and abilities, it will feature universally accessible design elements—including the pier, washrooms and change rooms, plus a mechanical boat lift on site.
- * A **new public art feature** is one of **several upgrades** coming to Kelowna's popular City Park. Selected from an international competition, the outdoor digital panel will promote emotional connection to cycling.
- * Kelowna continued the beloved **Pianos in Parks program** in summer 2020, installing pianos in five different parks, allowing people to enjoy music while following appropriate safety protocols.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

10

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 1268

69%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 874

11%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: 139

6%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 21777

Recreation Parks - serve 45,000 people within a radius of 5 km

Community Parks - serve 12,000 people within 3 km

Neighbourhood Parks - serve 2,000 people within 1 km

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

7

of dog parks

10

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

3.5

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 448

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

79

of community park groups

Clean water programs (Adopt-a-Stream & Yellow Fish Road)

Community park group program

Partners in Parks

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$103

Operating budget / person
Total: \$13,140,000

\$22,302,300

Capital budget

\$24,000

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

5%

5% of the land area of subdivision type development or cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund parkland through Development Cost Charges.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

**Our Kelowna as We Take Action: Community
Climate Action Plan 2018**

Agriculture Plan 2017

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

**Community For All: Kelowna's All Ages and
Abilities Action Plan**

OTHER

Parkland Acquisition Guidelines 2011

Linear Parks Master Plan 2009

Township of Langley

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 134,600

ANALYSIS

- * Township of Langley is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.
- * Township of Langley is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.
- * Township of Langley is one of 63% of cities that has a seniors strategy that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * A new **Climate Action Strategy** was approved in 2021, after **a public survey found 72% of respondents** were in support of the new plan.
- * **Two new parks** are planned for future school sites, as part of the Township's ongoing efforts to develop "joint access" parks that increase the green space available for local elementary schools, while also creating new neighbourhood parks open to the public.
- * Local agrologist Les Clay is **donating a collection of rare and valuable plants** to Langley Township's Derek Doubleday Arboretum.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.3

Increase from last year due to inclusion of Milaster and Nathan Creek Park lands.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 573

23%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 132

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: N/A

2%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 31600

3.4 ha / 1,000

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

6

of dog parks

9

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

Volunteer opportunities reduced due to COVID-19.

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

15

Many of these groups were not active in parks this year due to COVID-19.

of community park groups

Adopt-a-Program

Community park group program

Neighbourhood Initiative Program

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$78

Operating budget / person

Total: \$10,438,000

\$8,804,000

Capital budget

\$10,087

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

5%

5% of the land area of subdivision type development or cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund parkland through Development Cost Charges.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Wildlife Habitat Conservation Strategy 2008

Greenway Amenity Policies

Climate Action Strategy 2021

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Age-friendly Strategy 2014



North Vancouver

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 58,985 (2020 DATA)

ANALYSIS

- * North Vancouver is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 53%.
- * North Vancouver is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * North Vancouver has the highest number of community gardens relative to population size—more than twice the average.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * North Vancouver passed a bylaw in October 2020 to **allow alcohol consumption** in designated parks during the pandemic, which received “overwhelming support from both residents and businesses.”
- * North Vancouver continued public engagement on all park projects in 2020, using creative methods such as posting information boards in **parklets** and installing a tent outside of city hall where people could speak directly with park planners.
- * North Vancouver added seating, including picnic tables and benches, to parks to support increased demand for social uses of parks during the pandemic.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

2.9

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 169

53%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 90

54%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: 91

14%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 1183

3 ha / 1,000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

5

of dog parks

12

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

2

Includes Park Steward program only.
of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 120

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

2

of community park groups

City Park Stewards

Community park group program

Living City Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$58

Includes costs for street tree maintenance.
Operating budget / person
Total: \$3,416,498

\$2,800,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

5%

5% of the land area of subdivision type development or cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund parkland through Development Cost Charges.
Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Master Plan 2010

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Invasive Plant Management Strategy 2013

Corporate Climate Action Plan Update 2017

Integrated Stormwater Management Plan
2016

OTHER

Urban Agriculture & Food Security Strategy
2012

Child, Youth and Family Strategy 2014

Richmond

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 231,689

ANALYSIS

- * Richmond has the third most community parks groups of cities under 500,000 in population.
- * Richmond is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.
- * Richmond is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Richmond expedited construction of new community gardens in response to **growing demand** during the pandemic.
- * The **new Alexandra Neighbourhood Park**, which will link together the North and South sections of the Alexandra Greenway, is coming to Richmond thanks to a \$1-million COVID-recovery grant from the province.
- * A **new plan is proposed** for Richmond's Minoru Park, which would see the park's lakes renewed and made smaller but deeper.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

3.8

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 871

28%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 240

10%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected
Ha total: 90

7%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 12927

City-wide: 3.1 ha / 1000 population

City Centre: 1.3 ha / 1000 population

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

14

of dog parks

11

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

0.4

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 89

N/A

The city of Richmond doesn't issue park permits and therefore there are no fees.
Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

32

of community park groups

Partners for Beautification

Community park group program

Parks, Recreation and Community Events Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$65

Operating budget / person
Total: \$15,091,407

\$6,764,616

Excludes parkland acquisition and repayment.
Capital budget

\$25,000

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

5%

5% of the land area of subdivision type development or cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund parkland through Development Cost Charges.
Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

2022 Parks and Open Space Strategy

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Ecological Network Strategy 2015

Community Energy & Emissions Plan 2014

Integrated Rainwater Resource Management Strategy 2018

2045 Public Tree Management Strategy

Invasive Species Action Plan 2015

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines 2018

Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan 2019

OTHER

Community Wellness Strategy 2018

2010 Trails Strategy

2009 Waterfront Strategy

Homelessness Strategy 2019-2029

Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019-2024



Surrey

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 587,000

ANALYSIS

- * Surrey is one of 28% of cities with a biodiversity strategy.
- * Surrey is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Surrey sits just above the average of hectares of parkland per thousand people for cities over 500,000 in population.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Surrey led weekly **pop-up park clean-up events** throughout the summer of 2020 where residents could stop by a tent set up in their local park to grab litter pickers, compostable bags, and gloves provided by the city.
- * Surrey's **new modular park washrooms**, installed in two parks and planned for two more, have been praised for their design, which integrates universal accessibility, hands-free features, solar power configuration, and space for public art.
- * In November 2020 Surrey launched the **Light Where You Live campaign** which brought additional lights to parks to help boost spirits for the holiday season.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

5

Decrease from last year related to improved data accuracy.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 2934

40%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 1188

4%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 123

9%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 31640

Overall: 4.2 ha / 1000 people

Community: 1.0 ha / 1000

City class: 1.2 ha / 1000

Neighbourhood: 1.2ha / 1000 in secondary plan areas

Nature preserves/corridors: 0.8 ha / 1000

Distance to park: 10 min walk in town centres and urban areas

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

16

Doesn't include one additional off-leash area that is privately owned and operated.

of dog parks

10

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

N/A

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

N/A

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Neighbourhood Enhancement Grants

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$52

Budgets are from 2020. 2021 totals were unavailable at time of survey as they had not yet been broken down by department.

Operating budget / person

Total: \$30,383,000

\$15,850,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

5%

5% of the land area of subdivision type development or cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund parkland through Development Cost Charges.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Rec and Culture Strategic Plan 2018-2027

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2014
- Environmental Guidelines for Planning, Design, Development and Operations of Parks
- Climate Adaptation Strategy 2013
- Greenways Plan 2012
- Shade Tree Management Plan 2016
- Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy 2019

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

- Age-friendly Strategy for Seniors 2014

OTHER

- Dog Off Leash Area Strategy 2012 - 2021



Vancouver

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 646,700 (2016 DATA)



ANALYSIS

- * Vancouver is one of 28% of cities with a biodiversity strategy.
- * Vancouver reported the most park groups at 111 groups.
- * Vancouver had the second highest number of volunteers relative to population at nearly 9 volunteers per thousand people.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The park board is **piloting “no-mow areas” in 18 city parks** to support pollinator habitats in a creative response to reduced operational capacities due to COVID-19.
- * Alcohol consumption **may soon be permitted** in 22 Vancouver parks, after the Park Board approved a new plan in summer 2020.
- * A new mural project called **Blanketing the City** is coming to Vancouver’s Cathedral Square. Featuring the work of Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Musqueam artists, the project involves “the first large-scale public art collaboration between weaving artists.”

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

2.1

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 1343

35%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 473

N/A

The city doesn't have the power to create ESAs, however there are 1413 ha of biodiversity zones and 129 ha of no-mow areas within the city.

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: N/A

12%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 11497

1.1 ha / 1,000

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

39

of dog parks

38

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

8.7

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 5618

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

111

of community park groups

Park Stewardship Program

Community park group program

Neighbourhood Matching Fund

Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$79

Operating budget / person

Total: \$51,200,000

\$112,300,000

Capital budget

\$978,330

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

in kind or cash

Vancouver is governed by the Vancouver Charter, which provides the city the ability to collect for parkland costs through Community Amenity Contributions (in-kind or cash contributions granted to the city by a developer as part of a rezoning process) or Development Cost Levies, which are based on development square footage.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

[VanPlay: Parks and Recreation Master Plan \(2019\)](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

[Biodiversity Strategy 2016](#)

[Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2012](#)

[Rain City Strategy 2017](#)

[Urban Forest Strategy 2018](#)

[Bird Strategy 2015](#)

OTHER

[Track and Field Strategy 2019](#)

[VanSplash - Aquatics Strategy \(includes Beaches\) - 2019](#)

[OnWater - Non-motorized Watercraft Recreation Strategy 2019](#)

[People, Parks, and Dogs Strategy 2017](#)

[Urban Agriculture Policy 2015](#)

[Local Food Action Plan \(update in progress\)](#)

Victoria

BRITISH COLUMBIA
POPULATION: 94,005 (2019 ESTIMATE)

ANALYSIS

- * Victoria has the third highest number of community gardens relative to population size—nearly twice the average.
- * Victoria is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Victoria is just above the average for parkland that is protected as environmentally sensitive areas at 36%.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Victoria acquired 1,178 square metres of land in a residential neighborhood, protecting a sensitive Garry oak ecosystem, and **creating a new park**.
- * Victoria was awarded **Tree Cities of the World recognition** and increased tree planting by 40% in 2020, adding **500 new trees** in parks and on boulevards.
- * In response to COVID-19, Victoria launched the online **Fun For Life GO** platform to provide outdoor fitness and recreation activities for people of all ages to do from home.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

2.7

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 254

36%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 91

36%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 91

13%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 1947

400 m

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

13

of dog parks

14

There are an additional 4 gardens not on city lands.

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.1

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 100

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

9

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Various grants available

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$110

Operating budget / person

Total: \$10,294,220

\$5,775,000

Capital budget

\$93,805

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

5%

5% of the land area of subdivision type development or cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund parkland through Development Cost Charges.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks and Open Space Master Plan 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Urban Forest Master Plan 2013

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Accessibility Framework 2020

Seniors' Action Plan 2020

OTHER

Community Gardens Policy 2018

Calgary

ALBERTA
POPULATION: 1,283,177 (2019 DATA)

ANALYSIS

- * Calgary has the most hectares of parkland per population of cities over 500,000 with 7 hectares per thousand people.
- * Calgary is one of 28% of cities with a biodiversity strategy.
- * Of cities that reported private funding (e.g, sponsorships, philanthropy) in 2020, Calgary was second with nearly \$1.4 million raised.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * To help people get outdoors safely in winter, Calgary implemented a **new firepit program** with free 2-hour bookings and free firewood. Starting out with 14 new firepits, the city added 55 more over the next two months to keep up with demand, resulting in over 2000 bookings.
- * In partnership with Arts and Culture, Calgary Parks led Lantern Walks, lighting up one-kilometre pathways in three different parks with tealight candles, including firepits and pop-up entertainment on route.
- * Calgary became the first city in Canada to offer **ice bikes at Bowness Park**, a park that also contains a new skating trail and a **crokicurl rink**.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

7

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 8932

53%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 4776

25%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected

Ha total: 2217

11%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 84820

450 m

5 minute walk

2 ha / 1,000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

158

of dog parks

59

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

3.1

Reduced due to COVID-19 related program cancellations.

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 3968

No

Fees waived informally on a case-by-case basis.

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

4

Additional groups exist, but the total number isn't available.

of community park groups

Multiple volunteer opportunities (Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Rink, and more)

Community park group program

N/A

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$65

Operating budget / person

Total: \$83,261,232

\$36,191,691

Capital budget

\$1,395,000

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Open Space Master Plan 2002

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Our BiodiverCity 2015-2025

Climate Resilience Strategy 2018

Parks Water Management Strategic Plan 2007

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

**Inclusive Play Spaces Implementation Plan
2018**

Universal Design Handbook 2010

OTHER

Off-leash Area Management Plan 2010

Edmonton

ALBERTA
POPULATION: 972,223

ANALYSIS

- * Edmonton has the second most hectares of parkland per population of cities over 500,000 with 6.2 hectares per thousand people.
- * Edmonton is nearly 1.5 times the average of community gardens relative to population with 11 gardens per 100,000 thousand people.
- * Edmonton is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * In response to COVID-19, the city piloted **29 new pop-up community gardens**—a program continuing in 2021—and the new **City Farm** that repurposed nearly 14 hectares of land to produce food for donation to Edmontonians in need.
- * Edmonton's newly released **Indigenous Framework**, co-created with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community partners, and youth, outlines 4 roles and 7 commitments to guide city staff, including parks staff, in building relationships with Indigenous peoples.
- * To help keep washrooms open during COVID-19, Edmonton hired **washroom attendants** contracted through Boyle Street Services, a local social services agency. The attendants, who are trained in working with vulnerable populations and may experience employment barriers themselves, provided added custodial services as well as referrals to local services.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

6.2

Change from 2020 related to improved accuracy in data reporting.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 6036

41%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 2492

2%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 142

8%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 78310

500 m

10 minute walk

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

43

of dog parks

104

Includes 29 pop-up community gardens created in 2020 as part of the city's COVID-19 response.

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

0.2

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 197

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

12

of community park groups

Partners in Parks

Pop-up Community Gardens Pilot

Community park group program

Neighbourhood Park Development Program

Community Garden Grants (City funding administered by Sustainable Food Edmonton)

Neighbourhood Engagement Fund

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$41

Operating budget / person

Total: \$40,151,907

\$53,484,052

Capital budget

\$1,954,680

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

- Breathe Green Network Strategy 2018
- Urban Parks Management Plan 2006 - 2016

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

- Natural Connections Strategic Plan 2007
- Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy & Action Plan 2018
- Community Energy Transition Strategy 2021
- Biodiversity Action Plan 2009
- The Way We Green 2011
- Low Impact Development Design Guide 2014

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

- Access Design Guide 2020

OTHER

- Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy 2016
- Fresh: Edmonton's Food & Urban Agriculture Strategy 2012

Prince Albert

SASKATCHEWAN
POPULATION: 35,102 (2018 DATA)

ANALYSIS

- * Prince Albert has the most hectares of parkland relative to population with 28.1 hectares per thousand people.
- * Prince Albert is above the average of natural parkland as a percentage of total parkland at 69%
- * Prince Albert is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Prince Albert saw a 400% increase in downhill skiing and a 250% increase in cross country skiing at Little Red River Park over pre-pandemic levels, showcasing the desire for winter recreation during COVID-19.
- * Local philanthropist Malcolm Jenkins in partnership with the city is proposing to build an **6,000 sqft outdoor fitness facility** at the Alfred Jenkins Field House in 2021.
- * To support more outdoor winter recreation opportunities for children, Prince Albert approved the creation of **three new sledding hills** in city parks.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

28.1

Includes Little Red River Park, which is 400 ha.
Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 986

69%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 678

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected
Ha total: N/A

20%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 5045

N/A

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

0

of dog parks

2

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.7

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 61

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

1

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Community Grant Program

Municipal Cultural Action Plan Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$80

Operating budget / person
Total: \$2,825,490

\$1,417,000

Capital budget

\$1,000,000

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Community Services Master Plan 2018

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Forestry Management Plan 2018-2038

Little Red River Park Master Plan 2020

OTHER

Municipal Cultural Action Plan 2016



Regina

SASKATCHEWAN
POPULATION: 238,132

ANALYSIS

- * Regina is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.
- * Regina is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Regina is one of 82% of cities that offer a community grant program that can be used for parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * To improve residents' well-being during COVID-19, Regina launched **a new \$25,000 winter micro-grant program** to support community groups to host activities to get people outdoors in the colder weather.
- * Regina is among 15 Canadian cities to be recognized **with Tree Cities of the World designation** in 2021, making it their second consecutive year receiving the award.
- * In partnership with CNIB, Regina is **piloting a new program** that gives guide dogs and their handlers exclusive use of Mount Pleasant Dog Park for two hours during the first Tuesday of every month to ensure a safe and comfortable experience.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

5.6

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 1324

12%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 155

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected
Ha total: N/A

7%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 18243

0.7-1.6 ha per 1,000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

3

of dog parks

9

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: N/A

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

N/A

of community park groups

Adopt-A-Greenspace

Community park group program

Community Investment Grants

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$57

Operating budget / person
Total: \$13,589,610

\$1,060,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Recreation Master Plan 2019

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Regina Urban Forest Management Strategy
2000



Saskatoon

SASKATCHEWAN
POPULATION: 272,211



ANALYSIS

- * Saskatoon is nearly 1.5 times the average of community gardens relative to population size with 11 gardens per 100,000 people.
- * Saskatoon is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Saskatoon is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Saskatoon's new **Green Strategy** provides a vision for the city's natural and enhanced green infrastructure, including actions around cooperative governance, food production and biodiversity.
- * Released in 2020, Saskatoon's **Natural Capital Asset Valuation Pilot** maps and evaluates the natural assets within the city and the ecosystem services provided.
- * A **plan** for a new \$13M outdoor festival site at Friendship Park and River Landing Park **has been approved**, including expanding existing park space by realigning the adjacent Spadina Crescent.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

3.8

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 1046

11%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 120

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: N/A

4%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 23633

4 ha / 1,000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

11

of dog parks

30

Doesn't include an additional 25 gardens on other lands (e.g. schools, churches).

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: N/A

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

50

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Various grant opportunities

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$59

Decrease from 2020 related to improved data reporting.

Operating budget / person
Total: \$16,070,400

\$2,600,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Recreation and Parks Master Plan 2015

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Green Infrastructure Strategy 2020

Urban Forestry Management Plan (in development)

Climate Action Plan



Winnipeg

MANITOBA
POPULATION: 763,900 (2019 DATA)



ANALYSIS

- * Winnipeg meets the average for hectares of parkland per population for cities over 500,000 with 4.2 hectares per thousand people.
- * Winnipeg is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.
- * Winnipeg is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Winnipeg is developing a **new parks and recreation strategy**, set to be complete in Summer 2021, as well as a **new urban forest strategy**.
- * Winnipegggers enjoyed **30 new trails in parks** for skiing, walking, and fat-biking this winter, led by the Winnipeg Trails Association and funded by the City's new COVID-inspired **Wellness Grant** for community groups.
- * Through a partnership with the Canadian Beverage Container Recycling Association, six new city parks were **outfitted with recycling bins** in 2020 as part of an effort to reduce waste.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.2

Increase from last year related to inclusion of Assiniboine Park in 2021 data—a large park in the city under long-term operating lease.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 3201

36%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area:
1161

36%

Winnipeg protects natural areas in parks through the **Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy**. However, the policy uses a broader definition of sensitive lands that encompasses any natural area within the park system.

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 1161

7%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 47570

N/A

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

13

of dog parks

49

Change from 2020 due to improved accuracy in data reporting.

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.5

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 1110

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

N/A

of community park groups

Adopt-a-Park

Community park group program

Wellness Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$41

Change from 2020 related to improved accuracy in data reporting.

Operating budget / person

Total: \$31,252,075

\$6,395,000

Doesn't include carryover from previous years.

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

cash-in-lieu

Winnipeg parkland dedication is governed by city policy, which requires developers to provide cash-in-lieu of providing open space dedication with 75% of the funds used in the immediate community and 25% of the funds used across the city.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Strategy (in development)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Ecologically Significant Natural Lands
Strategy & Policy 2007

Climate Action Plan 2018

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Accessibility Plan 2019 - 2021

Age-friendly Winnipeg Action Plan 2014

Welcoming Winnipeg: Reconciling our
History Policy 2020

OTHER

Athletic Field Review 2018

Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan 2018



Brampton

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 700,515

ANALYSIS

- * Brampton reported the fourth most park groups at 78 groups.
- * Brampton is above the average for hectares of parkland per population for cities over 500,000 with 5.5 hectares per thousand people.
- * Brampton is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Brampton's **2020 EcoPark Strategy** strategy aims to develop a mosaic of sustainable and resilient green spaces, including parks, that connects and integrates people and the urban environment with the natural environment.
- * As part of a downtown revitalization project, the city is undertaking a **Riverwalk** project that includes long-term flood risk management, as well as putting the creek back in the heart of downtown and creating a new distinct public space.
- * Brampton Parks launched its first ever **Backyard Garden Program** in 2020 that encouraged residents to grow food in their backyard, with over 10,000 pounds of produce donated to local food banks and organizations. The program continues in 2021.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

5.5

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 3871

46%

Doesn't include natural areas owned by Conservation Authorities, which represent an additional 1,023 ha.

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 1763

46%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 1763

14%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 26940

1.6 ha per 1000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

4

of dog parks

7

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

0.4

Volunteer numbers significantly impacted by COVID-19. In comparison, there were 18,732 volunteers in 2019.

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 307

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

78

of community park groups

Adopt-A-Park

Community park group program

Advance Brampton Fund

Community grant program

FUNDING

N/A

Operating budget / person

Total: N/A

\$27,000,000

Approximation

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Natural Heritage and Environmental Management Strategy 2015

Grow Green Environmental Master Plan

Eco Park Strategy 2019

Our 2040 Energy Transition: Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

City of Brampton Municipal Accessibility Plan: 2019 - 2025

Age friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2019

OTHER

Landscape Development Guidelines 2019

Guelph

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 136,000

ANALYSIS

- * Guelph is 1.5 times the average of community gardens relative to population with just over 12 gardens per 100,000 people.
- * Guelph is above the average for natural parkland as a percentage of total parkland at 69%.
- * Guelph is one of 62% of cities with a seniors strategy.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Guelph's **Parks and Recreation Master Plan** is getting a refresh. The updated plan will provide a long-term vision for parks and recreation, including outlining where park facilities and services should be located, and how they should be funded.
- * One of Guelph's most beloved landmarks, the covered bridge, got a glow up this year. **Glow Guelph** transformed the bridge into a destination through the installation of lighting and vignettes projected on the walls and roof, inspired by local nature and the seasons.
- * Recognizing that getting outdoors was essential, the city ensured that parks were ready for visitors this winter by increasing winter trail maintenance, ice rink availability and access to portable washroom facilities.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

10.4

The definition of parkland used in this report differs from the city policy definition of parkland. Number Doesn't include additional 365ha of publicly accessible green space owned by the province, University of Guelph and other organizations.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 1411**69%**

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 975**69%**

This number captures protected lands designated within the **natural heritage system**.

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 975**16%**

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 8800

2.0 ha/1000 people

5-10 min walk

These represent city wide service levels. An additional 1.3 ha/1000 people beyond the 2.0ha/1000 is encouraged. 5-10 minute walk from residential area served is provision target in the City's Official Plan.

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

51

of dog parks

17

Number doesn't include four new community gardens that were under construction in 2020 and haven't opened yet.

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

Data not available due to COVID-19.

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A**No**

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

14

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Community Grants

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$74

Operating budget / person

Total: \$10,050,000**\$7,900,000**

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (update in progress)

Recreation, Parks, and Culture Strategic Master Plan 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Natural Heritage Action Plan 2018

Urban Forest Management Plan 2013-2032

Stormwater Management Master Plan 2012 (update in progress)

Emerald Ash Borer Plan 2009

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Facility Accessibility Design Manual 2015

Older Adult Strategy 2012

Think Youth 2013 - 2018

OTHER

Leash-free Policy 2019

Guelph Trail Master Plan 2005 (update in progress)

Hamilton

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 578,000
(ADJUSTMENT FROM THE PROVINCE TO REFLECT GROWTH TARGETS.)

ANALYSIS

- * Hamilton is nearly 1.5 times the average of community gardens relative to population with just over 11 gardens per 100,000 people.
- * Hamilton is slightly above the average for hectares of parkland per population for cities over 500,000 with 4.5 hectares per thousand people.
- * Hamilton is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Through a program that allows residents to build outdoor ice rinks in city parks, local community members **created a large ice rink** in Gage Park in the winter of 2020.
- * To inform the development of a citywide parks master plan, CityLAB, an organization that matches post-secondary students with city staff to tackle challenges, **released their 2020 report** on engagement strategies.
- * **Green Cities Foundation** is working with local residents in the Barton Village Community on creating a natural playground and creating urban agriculture opportunities on a brownfield site and within three neighbourhood parks.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.5

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 2600

45%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 1160

39%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: 1010

2%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 112800

2.1 ha / 1,000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

13

of dog parks

65

Reduction from last year due to COVID-19. Anticipated that it will be temporary.

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.9

Includes volunteers engaged in maintenance/stewardship only.
of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 1121

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

42

of community park groups

Adopt-a-Park

Community park group program

Clean and Green Neighbourhood Grant

City Enrichment Fund

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$43

Operating budget / person
Total: \$25,032,670

\$5,221,000

Capital budget

\$108,000

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Urban Forest Strategy (in development)

Shoreline Protection Strategy 2019

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Age Friendly Plan 2014

OTHER

Leash Free Parks Policy 2003

Community Gardens Policy 2010

Recreational Trails Master Plan 2016

Kingston

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 131,700

ANALYSIS

- * Kingston is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * Kingston is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Kingston is one of 82% of cities that offer a community grant program that can be used for parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The City launched **Love Kingston Marketplace** at Springer Market Square that included vendor stalls, bistro seating, kids activities, and a night market to provide safe outdoor activities during COVID-19.
- * Due out in fall 2021, Kingston is developing a **Climate Leadership Plan** to guide decisions moving forward and lay the foundation for future generations.
- * Kingston currently has a partnership with the French school board to develop a park that is adjacent to the future school—a strategy the city uses to develop schools and parks in a more integrated manner.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.9

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 644**31%**

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 201**N/A***The city has policy to designate ESAs but data within city parks system is unavailable*

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: N/A**1%**

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 45119*4 ha per 1000 people*

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

5

of dog parks

7

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A**Yes**

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

5

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Community Garden Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

N/A

Operating budget / person

Total: N/A**\$5,850,000***Includes projects that were carried over from last year as they were not completed due to the pandemic.*

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%*Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.*

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2021

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Climate Leadership Plan (in development)

Urban Forest Management Plan 2011

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Facility Accessibility Design Guidelines 2019

OTHER

Off Leash Dog Park Policy 2009



Kitchener

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 233,222 (2016 DATA)

ANALYSIS

- * Kitchener has the second highest percentage of natural parkland as a percentage of total parkland at 75%.
- * Kitchener is more than double the average of parkland that is protected as environmentally sensitive areas at 67%.
- * Kitchener is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Kitchener opened **RBJ Schlegel Park** in 2020, which uses innovative stormwater management designs to improve its climate resilience, including the capacity to hold more than a 200-year flood event onsite and reusing water from the splash pad for irrigation.
- * Kitchener established a new **Building Parks Together volunteer role**, which is a citywide task force of volunteers to help provide insight and guidance on park strategies and development, including new policies developed in 2021 and 2022.
- * During the pandemic in summer 2020, Kitchener repurposed sports fields as informal recreational space to allow more places for people to hang out.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

7.3

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 1704

75%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 1274

67%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 1149

12%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 14020

1.5 ha per 1,000 people

play area within 500m of every resident

Target applies only to Neighbourhood parks, and not other park types (e.g. City, District, Green, etc). By contrast, the city's current provision rate of 7.3ha per 1000 people reflects all parks and open spaces, natural areas, environmental lands, trails and trail corridors.

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

4

of dog parks

14

*There are an additional **21 community gardens** not on city-owned lands, bringing the total to 35.*

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.3

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 300

No

Permit fees only apply to sportfield use.

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

2

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Love My Hood Matching Grant

Environmental Improvement Grants

Festival of Neighbourhoods

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$57

2020 actuals. Doesn't include splash pad budget.

Operating budget / person

Total: \$13,200,216

\$17,009,176

Amount may be greater than the typical year due to projects either deferred or delayed by COVID-19 and carried over from 2020.

Capital budget

\$200,000

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Strategic Plan 2010

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Corporate Climate Action Plan 2019

Urban Forestry Strategy 2019-2028

Stormwater Master Plan

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

2018-2022 City of Kitchener Accessibility Plan

Age Friendly Kitchener Action Plan 2017

OTHER

Love My Hood Strategy 2017

Cycling and Trails Master Plan 2020

Mississauga

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 782,201

ANALYSIS

- * Mississauga is one of 19% of cities with a community grant program, community park group program, and a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * Mississauga is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Mississauga is one of 72% of cities with a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * As part of COVID-19 response, Mississauga added 14 seasonal washrooms to parks. The city is also launching a pilot to use a **shipping container as a seasonal washroom** in a city park for two years.
- * To provide space for winter use of parks during the pandemic, Mississauga kept open facilities such as tennis courts, outdoor fitness equipment, and artificial turf fields. The city also allowed groups that were restricted due to indoor gathering rules (e.g., dance groups) to book outdoor city facilities like tennis courts.
- * As part of the city's climate action strategy, Mississauga is launching a pilot for the use of **electric park tools**. The pilot project will outfit a complete operational crew with two riding lawn mowers, a push mower, a leaf blower, and two trimmers.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

3.8

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 2943

39%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 1143

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: N/A

10%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 29243

1.2 ha per 1,000 people and

within 800 metres (10 minute walk)

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

8

of dog parks

9

10 additional gardens on private lands (school board, churches, etc.)
of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.2

Due to COVID-related program cancellations.
of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 970

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

14

of community park groups

Volunteer Litter Cleanup Program

One Million Trees Program

Community Group Registry Program

Community park group program

Community Grant Program

Small Project Matching Grants

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$45

Operating budget / person
Total: \$35,377,000

\$32,311,000

Capital budget

\$82,636

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks and Forestry Master Plan 2019

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy 2014

Climate Change Action Plan 2019

Living Green 2012

Credit River Parks Strategy 2013

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018-2022

Older Adult Plan 2008

OTHER

Waterfront Parks Strategy 2019

Leash-Free Zones Policy 2018

Ottawa

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 1,001,077

ANALYSIS

- * Ottawa is just above the average for hectares of parkland per population for cities over 500,000 with 4.5 hectares per thousand people.
- * Ottawa is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.
- * Ottawa is one of 63% of cities that has a seniors strategy that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Ottawa's very first **Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan** is under development. As part of the city's new Official Plan, the parks plan will lay the foundation for the development of municipal parks and recreation facilities over the next ten years to best serve the diverse needs of residents of Ottawa.
- * By redeploying recreation staff, the city created the **Park Ambassadors program** in 2020. Six pairs of ambassadors strolled through a total of 24 Ottawa parks each day to encourage safe park use and answer questions. The program was reinstated in spring 2021.
- * **Somerset West Community Health Centre** hosts activities including an after school program and seniors drop-in program from Laroche Park Field House. The city does not charge the organization rent for the use of the building and will be constructing a new space in the park in 2021 for these programs to continue.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.5

This number doesn't include provincially or federally owned/managed parkland, which is significant in Ottawa and estimated at 1,600ha

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 4466

34%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 1510

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: N/A

2%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 279600

400 m or 5 minute walk

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

237

2 additional off-leash areas on NCC property.

of dog parks

26

There are an additional 103 community gardens not on city-owned land, for a total of 129.

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

N/A

of community park groups

Adopt-a-Park

Outdoor Rink Program

Community park group program

Community Environmental Projects Grant Program

Community Partnership Minor & Major Capital Programs

Community Garden Development Fund

Community garden fund offered in partnership with Just Food

Community grant program

FUNDING

N/A

Operating budget / person

Total: N/A

N/A

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

[Greenspace Master Plan 2006](#)

[Parks and Facilities Master Plan \(under development\)](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

[Ottawa Wildlife Strategy 2013](#)

[Urban Forest Management Plan 2018 - 2037](#)

[Climate Change Master Plan 2020](#)

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

[Accessibility Design Standards 2015](#)

[Older Adult Plan 2020-2022](#)

OTHER

[Dogs in Parks Designation Policy](#)

Richmond Hill

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 210,281

ANALYSIS

- * Richmond Hill is above the average for natural parkland as a percentage of total parkland at 65%
- * Richmond Hill is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.
- * Richmond Hill is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Richmond Hill is initiating **a review of their parks plan** in 2021 to further explore the integration of climate resilience elements into the city's park system, and to improve access to linear parks and greenway systems for residents and workers along the Yonge Street Growth Corridor.
- * A Section 37 Agreement with the developer of a mixed-use condo development (the first of such agreements in Richmond Hill) will result in the development of **Sunnywood Local Park**, complete with a playground, fitness equipment, and a multi-use pathway connecting the Linear Strata Park and nearby bike lanes.
- * Richmond Hill extended seasonal use of certain park facilities in response to COVID-19, including keeping six tennis courts and all pickleball courts open through the winter to allow for winter recreation.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

5

There are an additional 935 ha of natural parkland owned by conservation authority and province.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 1043

65%

Decrease from last year due to reclassification of lands.

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 683

6%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 64

10%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 10100

1.52 ha per 1000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

2

of dog parks

8

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

0.9

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 183

Yes

Discounts between 30-50%

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

4

of community park groups

Community Stewardship Program

Community Garden Program

Community park group program

N/A

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$33

Decrease from 2020 due to transfer of staff costs from parks operations to the Snow Windrow Program.

Operating budget / person

Total: \$6,889,200

\$4,254,400

Excludes staff salaries.

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Plan 2013

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Climate Change Framework 2020

Urban Forest Planting Guidelines 2016

Urban Forest Management Plan 2020-2040

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2018 - 2022

OTHER

Community Garden Policy 2017

Thunder Bay

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 107,909

ANALYSIS

- * Thunder Bay has the highest percentage of natural parkland as a percentage of total parkland, almost double the average at 85%.
- * Thunder Bay has the second most hectares of parkland relative to population with 19.2 hectares per thousand people.
- * Thunder Bay is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Thunder Bay is working with the Thunder Bay Stewardship Council and Lakehead Region Conservation Authority to do **habitat restoration and wetland enhancements** in Fishermen's Park West.
- * Thunder Bay is partnering with Eco-Superior, an environmental non-profit, on **wild foraging and forest bathing** programming within the city's natural areas.
- * Thunder Bay has approved a new **natural materials adventure playground** in Centennial Park that will include a zip-line and a balance course.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

19.2

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 2070

85%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 1769

20%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: 414

6%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 32824

N/A

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

4

of dog parks

10

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: N/A

Yes

Fees waived for not-for-profit organizations.
Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

4

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Community Partnership Grant

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$67

Operating budget / person
Total: \$7,190,800

\$4,980,400

Capital budget

\$99,346

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

[Fit Together: Thunder Bay Recreation and Facilities Master Plan 2017](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

[EarthCare Sustainability Plan 2014 - 2020](#)

[Climate Ready City: Thunder Bay Climate Adaptation Strategy 2015](#)

[Urban Forestry Management Plan 2011](#)

[Stormwater Management Plan 2016](#)

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

[2013-2018 Multi Year Accessibility Plan](#)

[Age Friendly City Services Action Plan 2015](#)

OTHER

[Wayfinding Plan 2016-2021](#)



Toronto

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 2,961,753

ANALYSIS

- * Toronto is one of 28% of cities with a biodiversity strategy and also has a standalone pollinator strategy.
- * Toronto reported the second most park groups at 80 groups.
- * Toronto is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Toronto **launched a master plan process** for its beloved Toronto Island Park, including an **Indigenous placekeeping forum**, an interactive map allowing people to pin ideas and concerns to a map, and a collection of **Island stories**.
- * In partnership with Park People, Toronto launched **InTO the Ravines**, a new program to engage residents in the city's ravines, which included COVID-adapted programming such as art and nature-focused activities online.
- * In summer 2020, Toronto launched **ParksPlayTO** a new, free, family-focused drop-in program at select park locations in over 80 neighbourhoods around the city where city staff provide guidance on active programming.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

2.7

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 8103**46%**

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 3693**23%**

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected

Ha total: 1884**13%**

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 63406

N/A

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

73

of dog parks

79

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A**Yes**

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

80

of community park groups

*Community Natural Ice Rink Program**Community Stewardship Program*

Community park group program

*Community Investment Funding**PollinateTO Community Grants*

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$65

2019 actual spend (not 2021).

Operating budget / person

Total: \$193,775,343**\$140,308,000**

Approved 2021 budget.

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

[Parkland Strategy 2019](#)

[Recreation and Parks Facilities Master Plan
2019-2038](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

[Wild, Connected and Diverse: A Biodiversity
Strategy for Toronto 2019](#)

[Resilience Strategy 2019](#)

[Pollinator Protection Strategy 2018](#)

[Toronto Ravine Strategy 2017](#)

[Sustaining and Expanding the Urban Forest
2012 - 2022](#)

[Natural Environments Trail Strategy 2013](#)

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

[Accessibility Design Guidelines 2004](#)

[Seniors Strategy 2.0 2018](#)

[Our Common Grounds: Incorporating
Indigenous place-making in Toronto's parks
and public realm](#)

OTHER

[Dogs Off Leash Policy 2010](#)



Waterloo

ONTARIO
POPULATION: 137,420

ANALYSIS

- * Waterloo is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 56%.
- * Waterloo has an above average percentage of parkland protected as environmentally significant at 43%.
- * Waterloo is one of 50% of cities with a community park group program.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * As a way to support local artists, **Waterloo commissioned 24 original artworks** to display along the Waterloo Park Promenade in 2021.
- * Waterloo's **Trail Mix program** brought the sound of local musicians to trails in the city by placing scannable QR codes so people could listen on their phones as they hiked.
- * The city's Neighbourhood Group has **developed offerings** such as matching grants to provide funding for resident-led initiatives, and a Block Connectors program to provide resources to residents to lead community gathering initiatives and strengthen neighbourhood ties.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

6.9

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 946

56%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 530

43%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: 405

15%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 6400

Neighbourhood parks: 1ha / 1000 people

General parkland: 5 ha / 1000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

1

of dog parks

6

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.3

Decrease from last year due to COVID-19.
of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: 175

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

3

of community park groups

Partners in Parks Program

Community park group program

Neighbourhood Matching Grants and Mini Grants

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$55

Operating budget / person
Total: \$7,490,894

\$6,808,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

2-5%

Municipalities are able to require up to 5% of the land area of a residential development for parkland or, through an alternate rate bylaw, one hectare in land per 300 units or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu of one hectare per 500 units. Municipalities are also able to require 2% of commercial or non-residential development for parkland or the equivalent in cash-in-lieu. Municipalities may also fund eligible parks improvements through Development Charges and may choose to collect funding for parkland through a Community Benefits Charge, but overlap between these tools must be avoided.

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parkland Strategy (in development)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Corporate Climate Change Adaption Plan
2019

Stormwater Management Master Plan 2019

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Accessibility Standards 2016

Older Adult Recreation Strategy 2015

Gatineau

QUEBEC
POPULATION: 290,239

ANALYSIS

- * Gatineau has the third highest amount of parkland relative to population at 17.2 hectares per thousand people.
- * Gatineau is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 66%
- * Gatineau is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Gatineau launched the **"Un Été Sans Pareil" campaign** which offered 675 free recreational and cultural activities to residents, ranging from zumba classes to **art installations using recycled materials**.
- * When Gatineau had to cancel its annual Day to Celebrate Cultural Diversity due to COVID-19, the city created the Intercultural Rendezvous—a series of smaller-scale shows hosted 4 evenings per week in different parts of the city, which allowed 40 local musicians of different cultural backgrounds to perform.
- * Gatineau's parks are well taken care of by the community through partnerships with the city. For example, **Club canin Aylmer** et **Association des propriétaires de chiens de Buckingham** manage the responsible use and advocacy of off-leash dog areas, and **Fondation de la Forêt Boucher**'s mandate is to preserve, protect and educate the public on the importance of the Boucher forest.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

17.2

Doesn't include close to 2,300 hectares of provincial and federal green spaces in the city.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 5000

66%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 3310

<1%

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 10

15%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 34194

800 m distance to park

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

5

of dog parks

20

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

66

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Community garden grants

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$7

Excluding salaries, benefits, hydro and gas.

Operating budget / person

Total: \$1,934,985

\$5,780,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Plan de développement du plein air urbain à
Gatineau (en voie d'élaboration)

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Politique environnementale

Plan de gestion des arbres et des boisés 2013

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Multiples plans d'accessibilité universelle

Politique du patrimoine

OTHER

Plan directeur des infrastructures récréatives,
sportives et communautaires (mise à jour en
cours)

Cadre de soutien : Jardins communautaires
et collectifs 2016

Laval

QUEBEC
POPULATION: 439,754

ANALYSIS

- * Laval is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * Laval is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Laval is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Laval's **Green and Blue Framework** revolves around three pillars: an urban forestry plan, a master plan for parks and public spaces and a conservation plan. These three plans will work together to achieve the city's goals of 27% canopy cover and 10m² of parkland per person by 2035.
- * A **master plan is under development** for Laval's **Centre de la nature**. The plan will guide the development of the park over the next 25 years, including the types of programming and activities offered in the city's largest park.
- * Laval launched their **DEHORS** (OUTDOORS) campaign in 2020, which was designed to promote safe and free outdoor activities in the city's parks, forests and shores, including temporary infrastructure installations.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

1.5

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 680**14%***Doesn't include the area of publicly accessible forest.*

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 97**N/A**

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: N/A**3%***Includes land and water. 247 km² if only land is included.*

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 26600*10 m² of recreative area/ distance, and a distance of less than 800 m from a residential area to a public space.*

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

6

of dog parks

1

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

1.1

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 500**Yes**

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

20

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Multiple grants available

Community grant program

FUNDING

N/A

Operating budget / person

Total: N/A**N/A**

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%*10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu*

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Plan directeur des parcs et des espaces publics 2020

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Plan d'adaptation aux changements climatiques 2016-2020

Plan de foresterie urbaine 2020

Plan de conservation et de mise en valeur des milieux naturels 2020

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Plan d'action pour les personnes handicapées

Plan d'action Municipalité amie des aînés 2019-2021

OTHER

Cadre de référence : Soutien aux initiatives de démarrage de jardins communautaires et collectifs

Politique alimentaire 2019

Politique de l'activité physique

Longueuil

QUEBEC
POPULATION: 252,226

ANALYSIS

- * Longueuil is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 65%.
- * Longueuil is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * Longueuil had the highest capital budget of cities smaller than 500,000 residents with \$27.1 million slated to be invested into parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Longueuil's Environmental and Landscape architecture department appointed a senior expert advisor in climate change in 2020 to work on developing a greenhouse gas reduction and climate change adaptation plan.
- * New playgrounds are coming to **nine Longueuil parks** to replace aging play structures, at a cost of \$2.03 million.
- * Several parks and public spaces in Longueuil received ephemeral activations, including pedestrianized streets and playful outdoor seating. The spaces were popular, and the city is working on improving the program for 2021.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.3

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 1,087

65%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 708

16%

There are an additional 91 ha of land that isn't owned by the city. The city uses a different name to refer to environmentally significant areas.

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected

Ha total: 178

9%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 12300

1 ha / 1,000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

4

of dog parks

9

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

8

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

N/A

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$42

Operating budget / person

Total: \$10,500,000

\$27,100,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Plan directeur des parcs et espaces verts 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Politique de protection et de mise en valeur
des milieux naturels 2005 (Révision en cours)

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Plan d'action à l'égard des personnes
handicapées et mesures en matière
d'accessibilité universelle 2020-2021

Plan d'action municipalité amie des
aînés 2018-2021

OTHER

Politique d'agriculture urbaine 2020

Politique en saines habitudes de vie 2016

Politique familiale 2017

Montreal

QUEBEC

POPULATION: 1,704,694 (2016 DATA)

ANALYSIS

- * Montreal is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * Montreal is one of 56% of cities with a park system master plan updated within the last 10 years.
- * Montreal is one of 63% of cities that has a seniors strategy that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Following an extensive public consultation process, Parc Jean Drapeau's newly released **Conservation, Design and Development Management Plan** will guide the signature park's development over the next ten years, including a focus on conservation and nighttime use.
- * Montrealers stayed busy this winter, with 26 **winter stations**, new **cross-country ski trails** set up in several large parks, as well as other **winter activities**.
- * A new **"urban forest" park** is coming to Montreal's downtown Quartier Des Spectacles neighbourhood, with a budget of \$8.5 million and planned completion in 2024.

Note:

The city is made up of 19 boroughs that are responsible for managing about 1,300 local parks. The boroughs also have separate powers and budgets to see to the cleaning of public spaces and offer social development initiatives, sports and cultural activities and urban planning services to the local population. Each borough can decide on how it breaks up these services.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

2.8

There are an additional 1800 ha of publicly accessible green space on institutional lands not owned by the city.

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 4831

40%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 1912

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected

Ha total: N/A

13%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 36520

2.44 ha / 1000 people

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

62

of dog parks

97

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

Yes

Depends on the borough.

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

N/A

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

N/A

Community grant program

FUNDING

N/A

Operating budget / person

Total: N/A

\$294,100,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

**Plan directeur du sport et du plein air urbains
2018**

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Plan climat 2020-2030

**Plan d'adaptation aux changements
climatiques de l'agglomération de Montréal
2015-2020**

Six plans d'action pour la biodiversité 2020

**Vers une gestion durable des eaux
municipales 2013**

Plan de foresterie urbaine 2009

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

**Plan d'action municipal pour les personnes
aînées 2018-2020**

Multiple plans d'accessibilité universelle

OTHER

Plan de gestion du coyote 2019



Quebec City

QUEBEC
POPULATION: 550,326

ANALYSIS

- * Quebec City is above average for percentage of parkland that is natural area at 62%.
- * Quebec City meets the average for hectares of parkland relative to population for cities over 500,000 with 4.3 hectares of parkland per thousand.
- * Quebec City is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * The city presented plans for their new **parc des Grandes Rivières de Québec**, which will integrate and enhance spaces adjacent to several rivers in the city to create a 30km² naturalized park with recreation, culture and heritage programming, as well as environmental protection.
- * To accommodate responsible outdoor gatherings and reduce social isolation, Quebec City allowed the **use of barbecues and alcohol consumption** (if accompanied by a meal) in select parks and green spaces.
- * Quebec City was one of seven Quebec municipalities that **created artificial snow this winter**, including on toboggan hills, to keep the outdoor fun going regardless of the weather.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

4.3

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 2350

62%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 1452

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected

Ha total: N/A

5%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 45428

Percentage of residents who have access to a public space (or to a natural area) within 5-10 min. walk from home (400 et 800 m).

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

2

of dog parks

34

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: N/A

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

N/A

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Places éphémères

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$20

Proposed budget for "la Division du plein air et de l'animation urbaine du Service des loisirs, des sports et de la vie communautaire."

Operating budget / person

Total: \$10,800,000

\$30,665,000

Increase from 2020 related to improvement in data reporting.

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Stratégie de développement durable 2021

Place aux arbres 2015-2025

INCLUSION STRATEGIES

Guide pratique d'accessibilité universelle
2010

Plan d'action 2021-2024 en matière
d'accessibilité universelle

OTHER

Plan de mise en valeur des rivières 2020

Plan d'action en agriculture urbaine 2020-
2025

Fredericton

NEW BRUNSWICK
POPULATION: 64,180

ANALYSIS

- * Fredericton had the highest number of volunteers relative to population at nearly 11 volunteers per thousand people.
- * Fredericton sits above the average amount of parkland per population with 12.6 hectares of parkland per thousand people.
- * Fredericton is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Management plans for **Odell Park and Killarney Lake Park** were finalized in 2020, both of which focus on improving access and equity, as well as partnering with ecologists to restore significant habitats and improving wayfinding and education.
- * In summer 2020, the city piloted **Nature Day Camps** in Killarney Lake Park and Odell Park, which taught youth about tree identification, park history, and more. The two one-week pilots were so successful that they added a third.
- * The **Artist in Residence program** will be returning for the third year in 2021. The program allows artists to implement creative installations in Odell Park or Fredericton Botanic Garden. One of last year's artists, Sasha French, created the **"Lost and Found Art"** project where art was hidden amidst the trees for visitors to find.

INVENTORY / AMENITIES

12.6

Ha parkland / 1000 people

Ha total: 809

26%

% of total parkland that is natural area

Ha total Natural area: 211

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected

Ha total: N/A

6%

% of total city land area as parks

Ha total: 13410

N/A

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

2

of dog parks

5

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

10.9

of volunteers / 1000 people

Total: 700

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

5

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

N/A

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$50

Budget increases due to the completion of six park plans in 2020. A number of projects related to those plans are budgeted for implementation this year.

Operating budget / person

Total: \$3,177,000

\$2,866,000

Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

8%

8% of the development site or cash-in-lieu

Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Recreation Master Plan 2008

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2020

OTHER

Park Improvement Plans



Halifax

NOVA SCOTIA
POPULATION: 450,586

ANALYSIS

- * Halifax has the third highest percentage of natural parkland as a percentage of total parkland at 73%
- * Halifax sits above the average amount of parkland relative to population with 12.7 hectares of parkland per thousand people.
- * Halifax is one of 72% of cities that has a climate change action plan that includes parks.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Halifax's 2021 parks and recreation budget **received a boost**. Part of the funding will go towards **supporting outdoor events** and performances as part of COVID-19 recovery.
- * Halifax is developing a **Playing Field Strategy**, with a final draft expected in 2021, to guide the future of sports fields and ball diamonds over the next 15 years to ensure facilities best meet community needs.
- * The city crafted a fact sheet on **The Benefits of Nature** to support one of their 2018 **Green Network Plan** objectives of promoting parks and open spaces for health and well-being. The webpage connects Haligonians with opportunities to explore nature in the city through several local organizations



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

12.7

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 5721

73%

2019 data
% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 4185

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/protected
Ha total: N/A

1%

~75% of the area is undeveloped, containing vast areas of crown land and lakes, which yields a very small percentage of parkland.
% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 592700

N/A

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

39

Includes dedicated seasonal off-leash areas.
of dog parks

25

of community gardens/urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: N/A

No

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

7

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

N/A

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$27

Operating budget / person
Total: \$12,281,900

\$10,010,000

Excludes salaries/wages.
Capital budget

N/A

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of subdivision type development site or cash-in-lieu
Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Urban Forest Management Plan 2013

Park Naturalization Strategy (pilot phase)

HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together

OTHER

Halifax Green Network Plan 2018



Charlottetown

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
POPULATION: 36,000

ANALYSIS

- * Charlottetown has the second highest number of community gardens relative to population size, or twice the average.
- * Charlottetown is one of 50% of cities that have a policy to waive permit fees for groups that show financial need.
- * Charlottetown sits above the average amount of parkland relative to population with 8.1 hectares of parkland per thousand people.

HIGHLIGHTS

- * Charlottetown opened 12 outdoor ice rinks this winter, including the new **Gordie Griffin Rink** and, in some rinks, installed a **special new lining** that helps maintain the ice in the event of a thaw.
- * The University of Prince Edward Island's **Climate Lab** Provincial Coastal Erosion Monitoring Project has installed some monitoring stations in Charlottetown parks. The project will measure annual fluctuations in coastal change to better understand the impact of climate change on PEI's coastal regions.
- * The city noticed a shift in park use in 2020, including more trail use and an increase in interest in neighbourhood parks. They shifted staff focus to trail management and hope to make neighbourhood parks more enjoyable for all ages, rather than a previous focus on child-friendly spaces.



INVENTORY / AMENITIES

8.1

Ha parkland / 1000 people
Ha total: 291

29%

% of total parkland that is natural area
Ha total Natural area: 85

N/A

% of parkland that is Environmentally sensitive/ protected
Ha total: N/A

7%

% of total city land area as parks
Ha total: 4429

5 minute walk

Parkland provision goal (distance to park / ha per 1000 people)

3

of dog parks

6

of community gardens/ urban farms

PEOPLE / PARTICIPATION

N/A

of volunteers / 1000 people
Total: N/A

Yes

Policy to waive permit fees for groups with financial need

4

of community park groups

N/A

Community park group program

Community Sustainability Micro-grant Program

Community grant program

FUNDING

\$57

Operating budget / person
Total: \$2,034,936

\$2,704,850

Excluding a bridge construction.
Capital budget

\$0

\$ philanthropy/sponsorship

10%

10% of the development site or cash-in-lieu
Provincially legislated tools available for parkland dedication, acquisition and/or development

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Parks Master Plan 2007

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

Integrated Community Sustainability Plan
2017

OTHER

Waterfront Master Plan 2012

Victoria Park Master Plan 2013

Next Steps



We didn't write the Canadian City Parks Report so it can sit on a virtual shelf—we want it to be used.

In order to help that process, we will be rolling out a series of **webinars, workshops, and other learning opportunities** in 2021 centred around the stories in this report. If you want to stay in touch about these, please subscribe to our **newsletter**. You can also follow us on Twitter at [@park_people](#). If you're interested in a custom workshop, you can find more information [here](#).

You can find video recordings as well as key take-aways from the webinars we held for the 2020 Canadian City Parks Report on our website, including sessions on homelessness, deepening the conservation conversation, community programming, small-scale biodiversity projects, and more.

If your city was not included in this year's report, but you would like to see it included in 2022, please **get in touch**. We're always looking for new cities to join.

Finally, we'd love your feedback to improve this report and its usefulness to city staff, professionals, and community members. Please take 5 minutes to fill out this **feedback form**.

Thanks for reading.

Park People is a Canadian charity that supports and mobilizes people to help them activate the power of parks to improve the quality of life in cities across Canada.

We support a national network of park group volunteers and community organizers, non-profits, park professionals, and funders across Canada, through networking events, grants, toolkits, research, resources, and professional services.

Founded in 2011, Park People has since helped community park groups undertake more than 3,000 events supported by 23,000 volunteers. Thanks to our generous donors, we have directed investments of more than \$6 million in parks and park programming.

Through support from the Weston Family Foundation, we're able to bring you the third edition of our annual Canadian City Parks Report. The report tracks challenges, trends, and opportunities in Canadian city parks both through numbers and the stories that inspire action, progress, and shared learning.

COULD YOU USE PARK PEOPLE'S SUPPORT IN ACTIVATING THE POWER OF PARKS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Whether you're a park professional, a non-profit organization, or city staff, check out our **professional services** to learn more. Or you can **email us to chat**.

ARE YOU A PARK PERSON? THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

Sign up for our Newsletter

Join the Park People Network

Use our **Research and Resources** to help you make awesome things happen in your park.

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