



### Discussion Guide

April 2016

#### What is the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan?

A Facilities Master Plan is a tool that will be used to help make decisions about the City of Toronto's indoor and outdoor recreation investment priorities over the next 20 years.

The Master Plan will establish a framework to guide the construction of new facilities and the renewal of existing facilities based on principles that include equity, inclusion and quality. This will help the City make decisions on how to optimize the distribution of facilities across Toronto to meet both local and city-wide needs.

#### Why is the Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan being done now?

As Toronto grows and changes, the recreation needs of residents also change. Since 2004 major recreation infrastructure development has been successfully guided by our 10-year [Recreation Facilities Report](#). This report needs to be updated with current data and research in order to provide an equitable and consistent method for identifying where, how and when to invest in parks and recreation facilities into the future. The need for this update was confirmed in the Council-approved [Recreation and Parks Service Plans](#), which direct Parks Forestry and Recreation to develop a 20-year Facilities Master Plan.

The Facilities Master Plan will guide the provision of quality parks and recreation facilities across the City. The plan will consider demographic data, utilization information, trends, accessibility, legislative changes and community, staff and stakeholder inputs to inform recommendations.

The Facilities Master Plan will build upon the Recreation Facilities Report (2004), Recreation and Parks Service Plans (2012 and 2013), and ongoing planning initiatives such TOCore and more.

#### The Facilities Master Plan will help make decisions about where, when, and how to invest in the following indoor and outdoor recreation facilities:

- community centres, gymnasiums, fitness rooms, and activity rooms
- pools, splash pads, and wading pools
- arenas, outdoor ice rinks and curling rinks
- sports fields and fieldhouses
- tennis, basketball, lawn bowling, and bocce courts
- bike and skate parks
- dogs off-leash areas

Though not directly part of plan, the Facilities Master Plan will help inform:

- Parks, Forestry and Recreation programs and services
- facility operations and maintenance

Want to learn more?

[toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan](http://toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan)



# What to Consider When Investing in Parks and Recreation Facilities (1/2)

## Responding to a Changing City

Toronto is growing and changing at a rapid pace, resulting in demands for new and improved facilities. Changes in the composition and diversity of our population have major implications for facility planning. For example, certain areas of the city are growing faster than others, creating new pressures and opportunities. More older adults, persons with disabilities, and newcomers means growing demand for facilities that support age-related or cultural interests. Parks and recreation facilities are important for community health and individual wellbeing. As the city changes, so too must our facilities.



## Reshaping Facilities to Fit Evolving Needs

Interest in parks and recreation activities changes with time. Some activities – like swimming and skating – have been and continue to be popular over time. Other activities like soccer, cricket, skateboarding and off-leash dog walking have been growing in popularity.

Recreation facilities are typically built to respond to the needs of the day, often when neighbourhoods are first built. Facilities must also address legislative changes, such as the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This 20-year plan will give us a chance to look to the future to anticipate emerging needs and respond in a strategic manner.



## Providing Quality Facilities

The City operates 1,500 parks, 137 community centres, 693 sportsfields, 633 tennis courts, 40 arenas with 48 ice pads, 52 outdoor artificial ice rinks with 64 ice pads, and 65 indoor and 57 outdoor swimming pools. The City invests approximately \$70 million each year to repair, enhance, and build new recreational facilities and spends \$220 million annually to operate facilities and offer programs and recreational opportunities for all residents.

The average age of a City-owned community centre is over 40 years and there are significant pressures to keep existing facilities in good working order. Older facilities typically cost more to operate and may not be as responsive to today's demands. Barrier-free accessibility, undersized facility spaces, and a lack of support amenities are just some of the concerns often associated with older infrastructure. The Facilities Master Plan will identify strategies for improving existing facilities and recommend standards and principles for building new and re-purposed facilities.

# What to Consider When Investing in Parks and Recreation Facilities (2/2)



## Working with Others to Meet Your Needs

There are many recreation facility providers in Toronto, including the City, non-profits (such as YMCAs), schools, private businesses, and more. When investing in facilities the City must be mindful of other providers so as not to duplicate services, while ensuring that facilities are accessible to residents. To maximize investments, the City sometimes partners with other providers to develop and operate indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and/or seeks out innovative funding sources. A variety of approaches will be required to ensure that the right facilities are provided at the right time in the right places.



## Improving Accessibility for Everyone

We strive to offer parks and recreation facilities that can be used by all, but challenges still exist. Common barriers often relate to physical, financial, cultural, or other forms of accessibility. This Plan will look at how to address these barriers so that our indoor and outdoor facilities are welcoming, inclusive, and accessible.

There is a strong link between active recreation and personal, community, social, and economic wellbeing. Facilities that are accessible to all ages, backgrounds, and abilities will create healthier individuals and a stronger community.

## The Funding Challenge

The pressures on the City's budget are substantial. New parks and recreation facilities are made possible largely through funds from growth and new development, while tax dollars go toward operating and maintaining facilities. The cost of land is very high, especially in the city core. The City cannot afford to simply replace facilities once they reach a certain age, nor can new facilities be built (or existing ones upgraded or expanded) without adequate land and funding.

Current planning processes and growth patterns can create challenges to the equitable provision of facilities. For example, funding from development can support the upgrade or construction of new local recreation facilities. This can help to meet the additional demand brought on by new development, however cannot address other City-wide priorities for improving services or enhancing equitable access to recreation.

# We Need to Hear From You!

## Many Ways to Participate

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan consultation process will first focus on understanding community needs and establishing key principles.

The focus of the consultation process will then shift to testing and refining the draft Master Plan.

Visit [www.toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan](http://www.toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan) to:

- Learn more about the Facilities Master Plan and sign up for monthly e-updates
- Read summaries of what we've heard to date through a public survey and four town hall meetings
- Share your thoughts on the four questions below using an online form
- Provide feedback through our public survey (Fall 2016)



## Focus Questions

1. How do the City of Toronto's parks and recreation facilities make a difference in your life?
2. Thinking back over the past few years, has your participation in parks and recreation activities changed? What has contributed to these changes? What would increase your participation?
3. What can be done to improve City of Toronto parks and recreation facilities? Feel free to identify improvements to specific facilities or areas of the City.
4. In order to provide the right facilities in the right places in an affordable manner, what other opportunities or strategies should the City consider?

**Need to get in touch?**

[toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan](http://toronto.ca/parks/facilitiesplan)

