

Exploring Toronto's Parks and Trails City-Wide Map: 2009

Accessibility Improvement Made for People with Disabilities

Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation recently completed the process of updating its existing 2001 parks and trails resource map in order to make it more accessible to people with disabilities. This map is intended for cyclists, hikers and leisure walkers, and highlights the many trails and opportunities found throughout Toronto's parks, ravines, gardens and waterfront (an electronic version can be viewed at:

http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Parks%20Forestry%20&%20Recreation/Trails/Files/pdf/P/parksTrail_front.pdf

http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Parks%20Forestry%20&%20Recreation/Trails/Files/pdf/P/parksTrail_back.pdf)

The updates to this map were based on feedback from people with disabilities, a committee comprised of City employees from Parks, Forestry and Recreation as well as from other departments and an accessible trails expert who sits on our Division's Disability Steering committee. The accessibility improvements that were implemented into this map were:

- Printing on non-glare paper to maximize readability in the sun and for low vision readers,
- Following CNIB's recommended guidelines for colour contrast and font size,
- Showing physically accessible washrooms, those that are open year-round and those that are open in warm weather only,
- Identifying City community centres with year-round washrooms located close to trails,
- Indicating in the form of a chart, 33 top destination parks including a brief description and their street address. This address info is key for the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) WheelTrans to transport citizens with physical disabilities to specific parks,
- Providing, for the first time, street names,
- Noting TTC subway stations that have elevators,
- Describing and noting hard surface trails to help facilitate access for people with disabilities. Hard surfaces include asphalt, concrete, compacted gravel and wood boardwalks,
- Distinguishing more clearly between different map icons to minimize confusion (e.g. the titles of the City's 11 Discovery Walks are over a yellow background) and
- Including walking clubs and resources (e.g. the Safari Walking Group for people who are blind or low vision).