



## **Future Directions**

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# **Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan**

2024 Draft Report

**We acknowledge the lands which constitute the present-day City of Mississauga as being part of the Treaty and Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, The Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat and Wyandot Nations. We recognize these peoples and their ancestors as peoples who inhabited these lands since time immemorial. The City of Mississauga is home to many global Indigenous Peoples.**

**As a municipality, the City of Mississauga is actively working towards Reconciliation by confronting our past and our present, providing space for Indigenous Peoples within their territory, to recognize and uphold their Treaty Rights and to support Indigenous Peoples. We formally recognize the Anishinaabe origins of our name and continue to make Mississauga a safe space for all Indigenous Peoples.**

# Acknowledgements

## Mississauga City Council

- Bonnie Crombie, Mayor
- Stephen Dasko, Ward 1
- Alvin Tedjo, Ward 2
- Chris Fonseca, Ward 3
- John Kovac, Ward 4
- Carolyn Parrish, Ward 5
- Joe Horneck, Ward 6
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We would like to thank all residents, groups with interest, community groups, and organizations that participated by providing input through our surveys and various engagement events. We truly appreciate your time and input. We would also like to thank City staff who contributed directly and indirectly to the completion of this plan.

# Commissioner's Message



Parks, Forestry and Environmental services are essential areas of focus for building a world-class city where people choose to live, work and play.

Residents and visitors alike have come to expect a city where natural areas are protected and enhanced, the waterfront connects people to Lake Ontario, and where parks are gathering spaces for recreation and social interaction. Parks and natural areas create livable, sustainable cities and communities that allow people to connect socially, physically, economically, recreationally and environmentally.

Over the last few years and with the onset of the global pandemic, we have seen an increase in park usage and more variety of the types of park users and experiences they expect. We have also observed the pressure this puts on the existing system of parkland, staff and the natural environment.

I am proud to endorse this plan which embodies our values and shared vision for the future of Parks, Forestry and Environmental services. This plan will help guide decision-making and set priorities for staff and Council as we continue to build strong, resilient, healthy and active communities and environments. Thank you to our residents, staff, partners and community groups for your contributions and support in developing this plan.

Sincerely,

**Jodi Robillos**

Commissioner, Community Services

# Director's Message



The Future Directions Parks, Forestry and Environment Plan reflects the ideas, values, and vision of the people who live and work in the City of Mississauga. I am proud of the hard work and dedication that our team has put in to developing this plan. In fact, the 2024 Future Directions Plan has provided the greatest public engagement reach of any previous Future Directions Plan.

I would like to thank all staff and groups with interest who support the implementation of this plan, especially those who work in all weather conditions and in challenging environments to keep our parks, natural areas, marinas and cemeteries safe and open.

With over 500 parks, one million trees, 10 cemeteries, two marinas, 393 km of trails and 509 woodlands, I am confident that this adaptable and dynamic plan will help the City navigate the next 5 years and further into the future. It is my hope that users and readers of this plan find it practical, progressive and most importantly I hope it encourages you to stay involved as we move into implementation.

Sincerely,

**Nadia Paladino**

Director, Parks, Forestry & Environment

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

The 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan provides a strategic focus for the City of Mississauga's growing and evolving network of parkland over a five-year period with a ten-year outlook.

This direction will involve a coordinated effort to realize important investments and deliver programs related to open spaces, natural areas, and outdoor recreational facilities. The plan confronts the most pressing challenges facing parks and looks for opportunities to consider new approaches to better serve residents. The outcome of this work is to support the City in fostering an innovative, fiscally informed, and environmentally responsible system. It will further promote Mississauga's connected, vibrant outdoor public spaces and stewardship of the natural environment.

To develop this plan, the City of Mississauga engaged with residents and groups with interests through a comprehensive engagement strategy, which included virtual and in-person methods. The plan is also grounded in best practice research, benchmarking data, and mapping analyses that assess geographic access and park use.

The key deliverable of this plan is to enable the City to effectively position resources and coordinate efforts. It will also support informed decision-making over the next five years as opportunities emerge.

## Strategic Priorities

Drawing from the engagement and analysis, the plan identifies five strategic priorities representing the most pressing areas where coordinated effort and resources are needed.

- a. Growing and Connecting Parkland
- b. Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management
- c. Expand, Protect and Restore Natural Areas
- d. Efficient Provisioning for Facilities
- e. Enhancing Park Experiences



## Recommendations

**A comprehensive set of recommendations has been identified to guide the City in achieving the five strategic priorities. Actions and recommendations from other City plans are supported through Future Directions where applicable but not repeated in the Future Directions recommendations.**

### Growing and Connecting Parkland

- 1** Create easy-to-apply guidelines for Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and strata parks that can be used to evaluate dedication acceptance by the City and to determine the types of park facilities that can be accommodated in each type of park.
- 2** Redevelop the grounds of the Living Arts Centre (LAC) to increase access to parkland and facilities in the Downtown Core and identify and prioritize the redevelopment of other vacant or underutilized parkland parcels.
- 3** Prioritize the delivery of complementary and appropriate park uses like trails and unprogrammed park space within greenlands to increase access to parkland in areas that have a parkland deficit.
- 4** Develop a marina and new waterfront parkland in Port Credit to maintain the character of the area, provide residents access to additional public parkland along the waterfront, and improve the natural environment.
- 5** Prioritize facility investments and future parkland acquisition within/adjacent to 'Equity Opportunity Areas', Strategic Growth Areas and in non-residential character areas that are experiencing residential development.

## Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management

- 6** Update the City's minimum design standards for basketball, outdoor ice skating facilities, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, cricket pitches and spray pads to maximize opportunities for multi-use facilities.
- 7** Update the City's design standards for leash-free zones to enable separated sections for small and large dogs as well as standards for urban scale and neighbourhood scale facilities.
- 8** Consider converting wickets on cricket pitches to artificial surfaces where wear-and-tear is interrupting playable days in the season or is needed to accommodate extended hours.
- 9** Collect and assess park facility utilization data and sport field booking practices and identify actions to address under/over utilization to ensure there is an appropriate supply of bookable facilities. Actions could include refinements to booking policies, fees and enforcement.



*People counters*

- 10 Investigate strategies to improve information on park facility locations and facility rules/hours. Deliverables of this tactic could be in refined websites, apps, and physical interfaces such as incorporation of QR codes within parks and facilities.
- 11 Develop a framework and pilot bookable basketball courts for tournaments in identified Equity Opportunity Areas.
- 12 Explore strategies to increase public access of club-operated tennis courts and facilities with shared-use agreements to address the increased usage of park facilities by leveraging the opportunities with the existing supply.
- 13 Develop approaches to remove barriers and enable marginalized and equity-deserving groups access to more spaces within parks.
- 14 Support the creation of the City's Reconciliation Plan and actively explore the creation of a Community Circle with our Indigenous partners which will inform and guide programming and initiatives across the City.
- 15 Create design standards for unprogrammed park space. Consider the option to incorporate trees, naturalization and/or low impact development features to help define and support the functioning of space and advance climate change resiliency. As part of this work, the City should also undertake measures to promote and communicate the value of unprogrammed park space.

## Expand, Protect and Restore Natural Areas

- 16 Include naturalization and/or tree planting as a park amenity option in the City's public engagement process.
- 17 Identify priority areas to expand, protect and restore natural areas and the urban forest.
- 18 Raise awareness of conservation, biodiversity, and the role of parkland in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation through partnerships with community groups and other initiatives.
- 19 Update existing forestry and natural heritage strategies and plans to refine and adapt management to recent legislative changes and growing pressures and threats.



## Efficient Provisioning for Facilities

- 20** Extend facility provision standards to non-residential areas where residential development has been added.
- 21** Identify underutilised diamonds and implement strategies to maximise recreational benefits for residents by making specific diamonds multi-use facilities, consolidating bookings to maximize facility usage and/or decommissioning diamonds with low utilization.
- 22** In addition to the two new planned soccer facilities, add up to two new soccer facilities within Service Area E, with preference around the Downtown core. Given space constraints, boxed soccer should be considered where appropriate.
- 23** Upgrade up to two existing soccer fields with lighting and artificial turf. Preferred areas of focus should be within Service Area D, Service Area E and Service Area F.
- 24** To address organized demand, construct an additional three cricket facilities inclusive of the two planned facilities and provide amenity upgrades like shade and washrooms to three pitches with a focus on Iceland, Courtneypark Athletic Fields, and Paul Coffey.
- 25** Construct six new spray pads to address access gaps.

- 26** Build up to eight new basketball facilities to meet access provisions. It should consider partnerships with schools where possible and appropriate.
- 27** Provide four new public multi-use tennis and pickleball court locations within Service Area E (in the Cooksville area) and Service Area H (in proximity to the waterfront) as priority locations.
- 28** Upgrade one unlit public tennis court location with lighting. Preliminary candidates to assess should include Courtneypark Athletic Fields, Fairwinds Park, McKechnie Woods, and Quenippenon Meadows with spot checks to validate usage. Other courts with capacity issues could also be considered.
- 29** Install one dedicated pickleball location that could provide a consolidated facility (six or more courts) for dedicated pickleball. Add pickleball lines to all remaining public tennis courts (up to 22 courts) where appropriate (e.g., exclude courts used for tournament play and with less than the minimum setback distances)
- 30** Construct one sand volleyball court in Service Area E in proximity to the Urban Growth Centre.
- 31** Construct up to three new skateboard facilities in addition to the one planned for Lakeview Neighbourhood to address the most pronounced gaps: Service Area F, and the north and south ends of Service Area B. Address remaining gaps through smaller, beginner level additions where appropriate.



- 32** Explore establishing one mountain biking facility in partnership with community sports groups.
- 33** Add six new neighbourhood scale leash-free zones in addition to one proposed Facility in Service Area D and E.
- 34** Add two Leash-Free Zone Destination facilities (one in Service Area D and one in Service Area H) to ensure that there is one destination facility in each service area.
- 35** Provide four more outdoor ice skating facilities with a preference for refrigerated systems where appropriate and feasible. In selecting candidates, particularly for refrigerated systems, the City should incorporate the following factors: operational feasibility, locational guidelines (e.g., adjacent to community centres/washroom access), the potential for lighting, strong existing usage and/or capacity issues, and multi-modal access.
- 36** Target one disc golf course in each service area provided there is demonstrated demand.
- 37** Expand and improve existing community gardens with comfort amenities such as shade structures (and/or trees), seating and access to washrooms, where feasible and appropriate.



## Enhancing Park Experiences

- 38** Develop a permitting system to approve non-motorized watersport rentals. The process could function similarly to food truck permits.
- 39** Install electric vehicle chargers at select Destination Parks and/or highly visited community parks where appropriate.
- 40** Ensure a minimum of one permanent public art piece is provided in new and redeveloped Destination Parks.
- 41** Review use of small-capacity picnic booking permits and evolve with consideration to add more locations in high-density locations.
- 42** Strategically install signage, accessible wayfinding, and interpretive features.
- 43** Review the feasibility of expanded park animation, including music performances (additional locations for concerts in parks), food trucks, buskers, and public art. Enable the inclusion of these elements for smaller capacity event opportunities.
- 44** Ensure each service area has at least one park that can host larger events (e.g., with enabling servicing of electricity and water, amenities, and durability). To support smaller-scaled events, the City should revise rules to better promote affordability and grassroots organizing.

# Introduction





# Section 1: Introduction

**Parks promote physical activity and support psychological and social development**

The City of Mississauga provides a variety of parks that offer diverse experiences and amenities for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. The City has a growing inventory of 470+ parks that covers approximately 2,950 hectares (7,290 acres) of parkland. Parks generally contain the following types of spaces.

- Programmed Area(s): space with intended use for activities such as sports, structured play, leash-free zones, or community gardens.
- Unprogrammed Area(s): spaces that are publicly accessible without an intended primary use and permits a range of activities such as picnicking and throwing a ball around.
- Natural Area(s): publicly owned and/or managed lands within the park system, such as woodlands, wetlands, successional areas, beaches, prairies, watercourses, specialized wildlife habitat, and valley and watercourse corridors.

Parks provide space for passive recreation such as exploring the city’s vast network of trails, bird watching or picnics, gatherings, and cultural activities along the waterfront or in urban and community parks. These passive activities are highly desirable because they are especially inclusive to people of all ages and abilities.

Residents also appreciate the variety of parks for active recreation. This can include organized sports like baseball and soccer or pick-up games and activities like basketball, skating, disc golf and skateboarding.

Parks also provide space for natural areas that support biodiversity, habitat for wildlife, clean air, and climate change mitigation (carbon sequestration) and adaption (manage storm water and reduce heat). Together with cemeteries, marinas, golf courses and heritage properties, these park spaces make-up the City’s parkland network.

The 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan provides a strategic focus for the City of Mississauga’s growing and evolving network of parkland over a five-year period with a ten-year outlook. This direction will involve a coordinated effort to realize important investments and deliver programs related to open spaces, natural areas, and outdoor recreational facilities. The plan confronts the most pressing challenges facing parks and looks for opportunities to consider new



approaches to better serve residents. The outcome of this work is to support the City in foster an innovative, fiscally informed, and environmentally responsible system. It will further promote Mississauga’s connected, vibrant outdoor public spaces and stewardship of the natural environment.

To develop this plan, the City of Mississauga engaged with residents, groups with interest and partners through a comprehensive engagement strategy, which included virtual and in-person methods. The plan is also grounded in best practice research, benchmarking data, and mapping analyses that assess geographic access and park use.

The key outcome of this plan is to enable the City to effectively position resources and coordinate efforts. It will also support informed decision-making over the next five years as opportunities emerge.

## Plan Structure

All recommendations are summarized in the [Executive Summary](#) and [Section 8 - Implementation Plan](#). The recommendations are organized according to this plan’s five strategic priorities:

<b>Growing and Connecting Parkland</b>	Based on existing areas of deficit and future population growth, Mississauga’s park system will need to continue to grow. This effort will connect parks to parks as well as people to parks.
<b>Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management</b>	Mississauga needs to utilize existing park spaces to accommodate a range of evolving demands and uses. The overarching perspective is how to advance multi-functionality, increase inclusivity, and embed sustainability in designs.
<b>Expand, Protect and Restore Natural Areas</b>	The need to expand, protect and restore natural areas is embedded in the City’s Official Plan. Parkland plays a significant role in supporting these objectives through the planning and design of parks. Natural areas are also critical for supporting biodiversity and climate change resilience.
<b>Efficient Provisioning for Facilities</b>	Future Directions provides the framework and recommendations for a variety of outdoor recreational facilities. This strategic priority is focused on how best to meet demand for new facilities in an innovative, fiscally informed, and environmentally responsible way.
<b>Enhancing Park Experiences</b>	A focus on quality over quantity is important based on the limited land availability. There are several measures to enhance user experiences, thereby making the park system more enjoyable, convenient, and accessible.

The strategic priorities were identified early in the plan’s development based on feedback from residents and internal/external groups with interest and in alignment with existing plans and studies like the Mississauga Official Plan.

### **Section 1: Introduction**

Reviews the purpose of the Future Directions Plan, why parks are important and the Divisional structure, roles, responsibilities, goals, commitments, and accomplishments.

### **Section 2: Plan Foundation**

Provides an overview on how the Plan and strategic priorities align with the City’s existing plans and studies.

### **Section 3: Population Growth**

Provides existing and future population growth projections based on Service Area. More demographic information can be found in [Section 9: Appendix](#).

### **Section 4: Engagement**

Provides a summary of all feedback received from residents and internal and external groups with interest like sports groups and various committees and community groups.

### **Section 5: Existing and Future Conditions**

Introduces the plan’s first three strategic priorities and presents them as areas of focus for addressing the City’s existing and future challenges and opportunities.

**Strategic Priorities:**

- Growing and Connecting Parkland
- Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management of Parks
- Expand, Protect and Restore Natura Areas

### **Section 6: Efficient Provisioning for Facilities**

Provides an overview of each park facility that the City provides with associated recommendations.

**Strategic Priorities:**

- Efficient Provisioning for Facilities

## Section 7: Enhancing Park Experiences

Organized around several main themes where specific recommendations or options can be explored to enhance park experiences.

**Strategic Priorities:**

- Enhancing Park Experiences

## Section 8: Implementation Plan

Supports the implementation of the recommendations by identifying responsibilities and timelines.

## Section 9: Appendix

Provides additional content and information for reference purposes, including more details on the engagement results and demographic analysis.



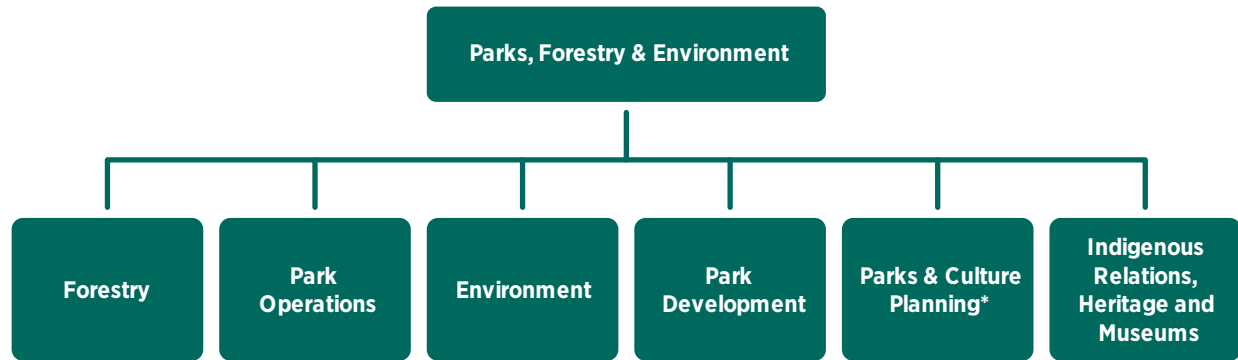
# Parks, Forestry & Environment Division Overview

The Parks, Forestry & Environment Division aims to meet community needs for open space, outdoor recreation, urban forest, and environmental actions, in collaboration with the community. This is accomplished through: expanding the park system; (re)development of parks and trails; establishment and protection of resilient ecosystems and the overall urban forest; establishment of climate and environmental sustainability actions; and the ongoing maintenance of park systems. The division is also led by an overarching vision and mission.

<b>Vision</b>	People choose Mississauga for its connected, vibrant outdoor public spaces, creating memorable outdoor experiences, and recognize it as a leader in the stewardship of the natural environment.
<b>Mission</b>	We are a dynamic team that protects the natural environment and creates great public spaces to make healthy and happy communities.

In July 2023, a Strategic Workforce Review for the City’s Culture Division resulted in a change to the organizational structure that aimed to optimize resources and improve operating efficiencies. Four units in the Culture Division, namely, Heritage Planning, Indigenous Relations, Museums, and Culture Planning have joined the Parks, Forestry & Environment Division. The remaining units including Events, Programming, Technical Services, and Creative Industries, have joined the Recreation Division to form the newly titled Recreation & Culture Division.

Future Directions is a divisional plan that looks at the goals and objectives for each section within the division and coordinates their implementation. It is important to note that while Future Directions is a divisional plan there is a strong focus on the delivery of park facilities and amenities like cricket, spray pads, park benches and trees. Through the delivery of park facilities and amenities, there is an opportunity to address cross-divisional challenges and opportunities like improving how parks are designed and managed, expanding, protecting, and restoring natural areas, enhancing park experiences, and embedding climate change action and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles in all decision making. For example, promoting multi-use facilities like tennis/pickleball not only reserves more space for naturalization but it also reduces park development, maintenance and operation costs and increase equitable access to facilities. Therefore, the Future Directions Plan does not replace or repeat other plans and studies like the Climate Change Action Plan or the Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Study but instead coordinates the collective efforts of the division to progress the goals and objectives of each section.



## Parks and Culture Planning

The Parks and Culture Planning team plans parks, expands parkland, grows and supports culture, creates vibrant public spaces through public art, leads public engagement processes for parks and culture matters, and protects City park and cultural assets. Park and cultural needs are determined based on critical planning documents such as the 2022 Parks Plan, 2019 Waterfront Strategy Refresh, Cultural Districts Implementation Plan, and Public Art Plan.

\* The Parks and Culture Planning Section was formed during the development of this plan. This plan does not include but it supports culture related recommendations which can be found in the appendix and in the 2024 Future Directions Culture Plan.

## Park Development

Park Development designs and constructs parks and park facilities including 3,932km of trails. Their work includes the establishment of park design standards in order to ensure that parks are innovative, use current technology, incorporate environmental actions & resiliency, balance quality, durability, and efficiency. Park Development also manages assets to maintain service delivery.

## Park Operations

Parks Operations is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the City's parks, trails, sports fields, horticulture features, waste management, winter snow removal, community programs, volunteer efforts, cemeteries, and marinas. Parks also offers several initiatives to promote stewardships, foster environmental awareness, and engage residents and community groups, including litter pick-ups, tree plantings, natural ice surfaces, Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Trail programs, which has seen over 3100 residents volunteering through Parks and Forestry in 2023.

## Forestry

Forestry protects, enhances, restores, and expands Mississauga’s urban forest and natural heritage system. It maintains trees on streets, parks, and natural areas, and expands the urban forest through tree planting and naturalization initiatives, such as One Million Trees. Forestry actively protects trees and natural heritage through the development and design review processes, and regulates the injury and destruction of trees on public and private property through the Public and Private Tree Protection By-laws. It leads the restoration of natural areas and the urban forest through the management of invasive species, and public stewardship and education.



## Environment

The Environment Section supports efforts to combat the impacts of climate change and promotes environmental sustainability and waste/circular economy across city divisions as well as the delivery of environmental educational and outreach programs to residents. It is guided by four key plans - the Climate Change Action Plan, Urban Agriculture Strategy, Peel Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy, and the Circular Economy Roadmap. Efforts related to the park network include the installation of community gardens for residents and community groups to grow healthy and culturally appropriate food, the roll out of City-wide litter campaign to help reduce litter in our parks and the introduction of a specialized dog waste collection program in select parks in partnership with Parks Operations. In addition, 22 public

electric vehicle (EV) chargers have been installed in municipal parking lots close to parks and park amenities.



The City also partners with other groups to promote environmental programs, events, and educational campaigns. A stand-out example is the creation of a traveling indoor and outdoor climate change exhibition called We Are Resilient developed in partnership with Museums of Mississauga. The exhibit provides residents with important information about climate change and ways they can take action in their own lives.

## Highlights:



### Services

- **Parks and Culture Planning \***
  - Ensures the adequate provision of parkland
  - Engages Mississauga residents in the park planning process
  - Ensures the provision of the right park facilities in the right places
  - Reviews development applications from a parks perspective
- **Park Development**
  - Designs and constructs parks and trails.
  - Ensures current technology and recreational amenities in park design.
  - Monitors all Parks recreational assets to ensure durability service delivery
  - Establishment of park design and construction standards
- **Park Operations**
  - Operates and maintains parks facilities including
    - 267 playgrounds
    - 11 community gardens
    - 32 spray pads
    - 373 sports fields
    - Marinas
    - Cemeteries
    - Trails
  - Delivers community programming
- **Forestry**
  - Preserves, protects, expands, and maintains the city's urban forest (street trees, park trees)
  - Works with volunteers to increase environmental literacy and stewardship.
  - Protects, enhances, restores, and expands the natural heritage system, which includes 509 unique woodlands and natural areas on City property and represents 1702 hectares of land.
  - Reviews, plans, and permits activities related to City natural areas, street trees, and park trees.
- **Environment**
  - Implements the Climate Change Action Plan, Urban Agriculture Strategy and Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy and leads and supports 12 waste diversion initiatives (e.g. shredding, textiles, batteries and scrap metal).



### Programs

- Naturalization / One Million Trees Program
- Community Gardens Program
- Natural Ice Rink Program
- Invasive Species Management
- Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Flower Bed and Adopt-A-Trail programs
- Litter pick programs
- Outreach and education
- Beautification
- Fishing
- Street and park inventory.
- Planting and maintenance
- Forest certification
- Woodland management planning
- Tree preservation and protection (Public and Private Tree By-law Enforcement)
- Fantastic Trees
- Emerald Ash Borer removals and restoration
- Block pruning
- Storm response
- Hardscape/streetscape installation



# Mississauga's Commitment

## Indigenous Communities

In 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published 94 Calls to Action to forward Reconciliation between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The City of Mississauga has committed to take action on 13 of those that are actionable by municipal governments and in addition, has taken several notable actions over the past several years in its efforts to renew and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and residents. In addition to commemorating the history and legacy of residential schools with the rest of Canada on National Truth and Reconciliation Day, the City celebrates Indigenous Peoples Day and regularly collaborates on Indigenous policy matters, and City programming and operations with Indigenous communities. The City's Indigenous partners include the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, the Huron-Wendat First Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

The City is deeply committed to the ongoing work of reversing the erasure of Indigenous Peoples, their history and culture. Reconciliation efforts have been made in every area of the Community Services department and will continue to take place. The City will also continue to ensure that the perspectives of our Treaty partners and all Indigenous communities who have stories to tell within Mississauga are included into its collective work as a municipality. This plan is just one part of the pathway forward to improving our shared future.

## Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The City's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is grounded in two fundamental goals:

- a. To create a respectful and supportive workplace that attracts, retains and develops a talented workforce reflective of our communities and residents
- b. To include EDI considerations in a meaningful manner into all City policies, programs, and services with a goal to consistently produce equitable outcomes for the communities we serve



To support these goals City has undertaken key steps:

- Developed a Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to assess the diversity and inclusion of the City's workforce and make adjustments to ensure that the workforce is

poised to continue to provide excellent quality service and engender trust with the citizens of Mississauga now and into the future

- Developed its first Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Strategy to promote the mental health of employees
- Hired dedicated Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in HR and City Manager’s Office to further its goals
- Produced EDI based learning and development curriculum/training for the corporation including all leaders
- Produced tools and resources to help all staff embed EDI considerations in all their practices
- Institute an annual reporting mechanism to Council on EDI Progress across the City

This plan, along with other developed strategies and programs, in addition to the ongoing education and training of employees, helps to support the City’s goals and its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

## Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change

As a City, Mississauga is committed to doing its part towards securing a better future by transforming into a low carbon, sustainable and resilient city. For more than a decade, the City has embraced this transformation through the City’s Strategic Plan and dozens of plans and supporting strategies, standards, and policies. More recently, the City declared a climate emergency and passed the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), which is built around this central vision, and is the City’s 10-year roadmap that outlines concrete actions that directly support building a greener, smarter, and more sustainable and prosperous city.

As part of our journey to reach these ambitious goals, the City has taken a more deliberate approach of applying a climate and sustainability lens in the development of this plan and its supporting recommendations.



# Addressing the Covid-19 Pandemic Impact

The onset of the global pandemic in 2020 fundamentally changed park visitation and how residents use parks across Canada. A national survey conducted by Park People, found an uptick in the value residents place on parks, as well as their contribution to health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup>. The survey also found over half of the cities included saw an increase in park use. The engagement undertaken as part of the 2024 Future Directions Plan also re-confirms this trend, with 49 per cent of survey respondents noting that their park use has increased since COVID-19. The Conservation Authorities in Mississauga have identified a similar spike in visitorship in their conservation area parks.

While increased visitation is advantageous for the City from a social and health perspective, it puts pressure on demand for facilities, operations and maintenance and the natural environment. For example, the City has seen a surge in requests for walkable leash-free zones, more playgrounds and to keep facilities like tennis open longer into the Fall and Winter.

Passive recreational use such as strolling along a trail was less restricted by public health orders as compared to more active recreational uses like organized baseball. This introduced residents to activities that they would have otherwise not have done and offered people a chance to relax, access nature and exercise even as gyms and other indoor facilities were closed. Engagement results show that these passive recreational uses are highly valued by the public. They also have an expectation for more supportive amenities to enhance the experience of visiting the park, including washrooms, access to shade, benches, and garbage receptacles. The public engagement and discussions with groups with interest also revealed an appetite for more programmed events in parks and opportunities to be involved through stewardship and volunteering. Post-pandemic, these activities offer a chance to reconnect in person with family, friends, and neighbours as well as experience larger group activities.

## Notable Achievements

Parks, Forestry & Environment has implemented direction from the 2019 Future Directions Plan as well as a variety of other initiatives beyond that scope. These achievements are identified below to demonstrate the commitment to Future Directions and provide a transparent way of monitoring implementation.

### Parks and Culture Planning \*

- Expanded the park system by acquiring approximately 40ha (100 acres) of additional parkland since 2019
- Reduced parkland deficit through acquisition of parkland along Cooksville Creek
- Completed the 2022 Parks Plan
- Updated the City's Parkland Conveyance Bylaw

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<sup>1</sup> Park People. Accessed from <https://parkpeople.ca/blog/covid-19-and-parks-highlights-from-our-national-surveys/>



- Completed the Waterfront Parks Strategy Refresh
- Developed comprehensive park plans for waterfront development sites:
  - 1 Port Street East
  - Lakeview Village Development
  - Brightwater Development
- Developed reference documents:
  - Park Washroom Study Refresh
  - Guidelines for the provision and location of hydration stations in parks
  - Shade Structure Criteria report
  - Inventory of Heritage Assets Found within Parks
  - Outdoor Recreation Facility Lighting study
  - Balance of Parkland study
  - Updated park classifications

# Park Development

## Installed



14 Chess Tables



9 Shade Structures



14 Outdoor Fitness Stations



5 Bench Fitness / Pavement Marking Facilities



2 Shared-Use Multi-Use Sports Courts with School Boards

- 1 Trail Distance Markings
- 2 Disc Golf Courses
- 1 Community Garden
- 1 Container Washroom
- 1 Leash Free Zone
- 1 New Landmark Navigational Flagpole
- 1 Ice Rink Concrete Pad and Picnic Area
- 1 Spray Pad

## Reconstructed/Resurfaced



18 Playgrounds



Tennis Courts in 13 Parks



7 Bridges



6 Basketball Courts



5 Improved Community Garden Sites

- Added Pickleball Lines to Tennis Courts in 4 Parks
- 3 Spray Pads
- 2 Lacrosse Boxes
- 1 Artificial Turf Field & Synthetic Rubberised Running Track with the Peel District School Board

## New Park Developments



6 New Park Developments

## New & Reconstructed Trails



Over 50km of New/Reconstructed Trails

## Park Operations

- Parks bylaw update
- Washroom pilot in Danville Park
- Rolled out split garbage/recycling bins
- Introduced specialized dog waste containers at select parks
- Expanded litter pick program (1300+ volunteers, new community groups and two new programs – Adopt a Trail and Flower Bed)
- Interim management plan for Brueckner Rhododendron Gardens completed

## Forestry

- Achieved Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification for 36 woodlands
- Completed Woodland Management Plan
- Completed Comprehensive Street and Park Tree Inventory
- Updated/ Developed Public Tree Protection By-law and Private Tree Protection By-law
- Revamped Fantastic Trees Program (formerly known as Significant Trees Program)
- 10-year Anniversary of One Million Trees Program: 80 ha new natural area created and reached the half-way mark of 500,000 trees planted
- Began work at demonstration sites from the Invasive Species Management Plan and Implementation Strategy.
- Conducted the City's largest aerial spray in 2022 to control the infestation of spongy moth, treating a total area of approximately 2,100 hectares



- Completed woodland restoration at an additional 57 areas (48 ha).
- Organized 303 events and engaged 11,166 volunteers who contributed 22,332 hours of service.
- Completed 114,963 work orders on City trees
- Planted 20,503 caliper trees on City boulevards and parklands

## Environment

- Council declared a climate emergency and approved the Climate Change Action Plan in 2019
- Council endorsed the City's first Urban Agriculture Strategy
- Council endorsed a Peel Zero Emissions Vehicle Strategy
- Installed 22 public EV chargers at three locations
- In partnership with Ecosource, have 10 community gardens including one urban teaching farm
- Introduce a City-wide litter campaign "Own Your Litter"
- Launched the We Are Resilient - a travelling indoor and outdoor exhibition designed to help raise awareness about climate change in Mississauga



A photograph of a woman and a young child in a garden. The woman is kneeling on the right, wearing a white t-shirt and dark overalls, smiling and holding a small object. The child is standing on the left, wearing a patterned dress, looking at the woman. The background is a lush garden with various plants and trees. A teal rounded rectangle is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing the text 'Plan Foundation' in white.

# Plan Foundation



# Section 2: Plan Foundation

## Developing the Plan

Every five years the City of Mississauga updates the Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan with new research, updated population forecasts, engagement feedback and other valuable inputs.

The graphic below illustrates the process for updating the plan:



A key aspect of research was in assessments of population forecasts. There may be upcoming changes to legislation, provincial policies (e.g., the Provincial Policy Statement) and Minister’s Zoning Orders that may impact the population forecasts assumed within the horizon of this plan.

An example of a recent change to legislation is Bill 112 (also known as Hazel McCallion Act) that was passed by the Ontario Government in June 2023. The legislation will effectively dissolve the Region of Peel by January 1st, 2025, and convert Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon into independent, single-tier municipalities. The 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan was developed under the context that Mississauga is part of the Region of Peel.

Any required changes to recommendations affected by updated population growth forecasts, the dissolution of regional governance or other legislation will be assessed, and the City will remain flexible and respond accordingly to ensure the continuance of high-quality facilities and services. More information on population growth can be found in [Section 3: Population Growth](#).

The 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan was also developed with a number of key inputs such as background studies and needs assessments. These studies are summarized later in this section.

The public was introduced to the Future Directions project via a comprehensive public engagement strategy, which informed the draft plan. A second phase focused on gathering feedback from the public on the draft plan. The engagement is examined in more detail in [Section 4: Engagement](#).

## Alignment with City Plans and Policies

To ensure consistent planning, the Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan considers policies and recommendations set out by other City plans. The most relevant are summarized below.

### Mississauga Strategic Plan

The City's Strategic Plan establishes the vision and priorities that define what the City wants to be. This vision is supported by five Strategic Pillars: 'Move, Belong, Connect, Prosper and Green.' These pillars represent the main objectives that drive all City actions and initiatives (including the preparation of policies and plans, such as Future Directions). The strategic pillars reflect a common purpose: a collective desire for success in leadership, quality of life, and civic pride – all of which are relevant to the Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan.

The 2024 Future Directions plan is aligned with the current iteration of the City's Strategic Plan with built-in flexibility for future alignment with the impending update which is scheduled to launch in 2024.

### Mississauga Official Plan

The Mississauga Official Plan guides how the City will grow and develop, as required by the Ontario Planning Act, and provides policies to manage and direct land use and the physical change of the city, in line with the City's Strategic Plan. Its policies address important parts of city-building that affect everyone that lives and works in Mississauga, including housing, transportation, cultural heritage, the natural environment, and the economy. The 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan was developed in conformity of these policies and in alignment with its objectives.

### City's Budget

The City works hard to achieve value for money and sound financial stewardship in the development of the annual Business Plan and Budget. The City prepares the Business Plan and Budget using a rolling four-year planning horizon for the operating budget and a 10-year horizon for capital budget planning. This multi-year approach allows the City to respond to political, economic, social, and environmental circumstances.

Management of the City's services is organized into 14 administrative service areas. Each service area prepares an individual business plan and budget in line with City priorities that are established and communicated by the City's Leadership Team. This annual process starts in May and concludes in December (in a non-election year) with Council's approval of the budget for the upcoming year. Council reviews estimates and forecasts for the full four-year period: however, when Council votes each year to authorize spending and taxation, it is for the first year of the new cycle only.



*Macewan Terrace Garden - Riverwood*

When Future Directions Plans are endorsed by Council, the funding required to implement actions identified within the plans is not approved at the same time. Instead, service areas with Future Directions Plans bring items forward for consideration during a future business planning and budget cycle. Only once these items have been approved in the budget can they move forward for implementation.

## **Parks Plan**

The Parks Plan is an assessment of the City's current parkland inventory and future needs. The amount of parkland in the City has a direct impact on service delivery for park facilities like soccer and spray pads and on service delivery for natural areas.

## **Climate Change Action Plan**

The Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) is a 10-year road map for tackling the impact of Mississauga's changing climate. The CCAP is a comprehensive plan that has two overarching goals to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase resilience and city's capacity to withstand and respond to current and future climate events. The plan is designed to support green and resilient infrastructure, innovation and low emissions mobility options in and throughout parks and natural areas.

## Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy

This strategic plan guides the management of Mississauga's natural heritage system and urban forest over 20 years. Its implementation is the key driver that supports the implementation of the Expansion, Protection, and Restoration Natural Areas strategic priority.

## Waterfront Parks Strategy Refresh

The Waterfront Parks Strategy refresh provides direction on the types of facilities are recommended and not recommended along the waterfront. This work helps shape the future of the waterfront that is currently underway and informs the recommendations in this plan.

Additional relevant City documents that align with 2024 Future Directions Plan are listed below:

- Shaping Ninth Line
- Parks Utilization Study
- Sport Field and Sport Court Facility Provision Strategy
- Washroom Study
- Invasive Species Management Plan
- Wi-Fi in Parks
- Parks Bylaw
- Urban Agriculture Strategy
- Regional Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy
- Cycling Master Plan
- Yards Master Plan
- Parkland Conveyance Bylaw
- Leash-Free Zone Guidelines
- Shade Structure Criteria Report
- Circular Economy Roadmap

## Background Studies

The City initiated a series of background studies to inform the 2024 Future Directions Plan. These studies were useful in ensuring that key areas of focus were addressed in a robust manner.

## **Balance of Parkland Background Study: Unprogrammed Space, Programmed Space, and Natural Areas**

This study determined a framework to ensure the City can ensure sufficient provision of the three types of parkland: Unprogrammed Space (e.g., mowed lawn), Programmed Space (e.g., sports fields and playgrounds), and Natural Areas (e.g., woodlands). The study assessed the impact of targets and initiatives on altering this balance and provide strategies to strengthen and prioritize access to the various types of parkland across the City.

## **Outdoor Recreation Lighting Study**

This study was undertaken as a background study to Future Directions. The study outcomes contribute to improve the safety and long-term quality of outdoor recreation facilities, provide equitable access to outdoor recreational facilities across the City, conserve energy through good design practices, and ensure efficiencies for the capital and operating costs of lit facilities. The study will inform the lighting of additional park facilities and inform updates to the City's Park Trail Lighting policy.

## **Environmental Scan**

This study provided insights into how municipalities are addressing the key areas of focus raised by the City of Mississauga. The content of the study assessed benchmarking data of parkland and facilities as well as relevant best practices for the City to consider.

## **Provisions Report**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate existing provision levels and facility design standards based on population growth. The assessment used the City of Mississauga's service area boundaries to address public and groups with interest feedback, utilization and visitation data as well as trends and best practices.

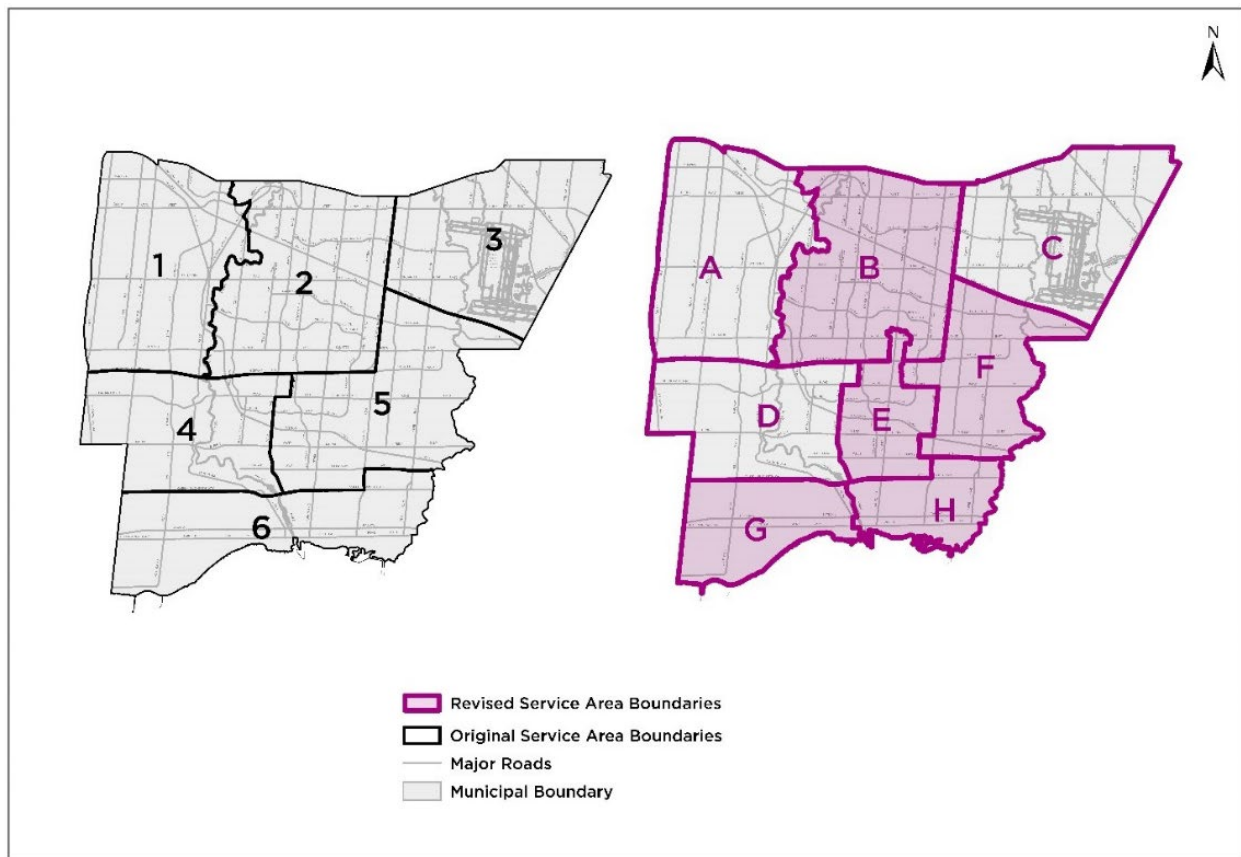
## **Planning in the Context of Growth and Change**

Since 2004, Future Directions Plans for Recreation, Parks & Forestry, and Library Services have organized the City into six functional service areas in order to provide the basis for sub-geographic analysis. In 2022, the six original service area boundaries were revisited recognizing the evolution of Mississauga's urban structure and population density characteristics. Through further analysis conducted during the 2024 Future Directions process, slight adjustments have been made to the service area boundaries and validated through a population, case-study and service level analysis that have resulted in:

- Renaming service areas using an alphabetized list rather than numbered approach to avoid confusion with ward numbers;
- No changes to the original Service Area 1, Service Area 3 and Service Area 4 which were respectively renamed as Service Area A, Service Area C and Service Area D;

- Creating a new Service Area E specifically to reflect the Hurontario LRT network and the higher densities that are found along the urban growth centre (UGC) corridor, which integrates the Uptown Major Node found in the original Service Area 2 and separates the Mississauga Valleys and Cooksville Neighbourhoods from the original Service Area 5; and
- Dividing the original Service Area 6 in half and create new Service Area G and Service Area H using the Credit River to separate the area into two districts, with the QEW remaining as the northern boundary.

The 2024 Future Directions Plan now includes eight service areas which better align with the City structure outlined in the new Mississauga Official Plan. These service areas better reflect the evolution in the City structure, transportation network and planned growth patterns. They also provide a basis to potentially differentiate service levels based on land densities and developments, account for land economics, and allow the City to tailor its strategies based on provincial legislation guiding municipal planning and funding (e.g., the Planning Act and Development Charges Act). The adjusted service area boundaries offer a balance between reflecting Mississauga’s urban structure and the City’s historical approach to planning.



*Original and New Service Area Boundaries*

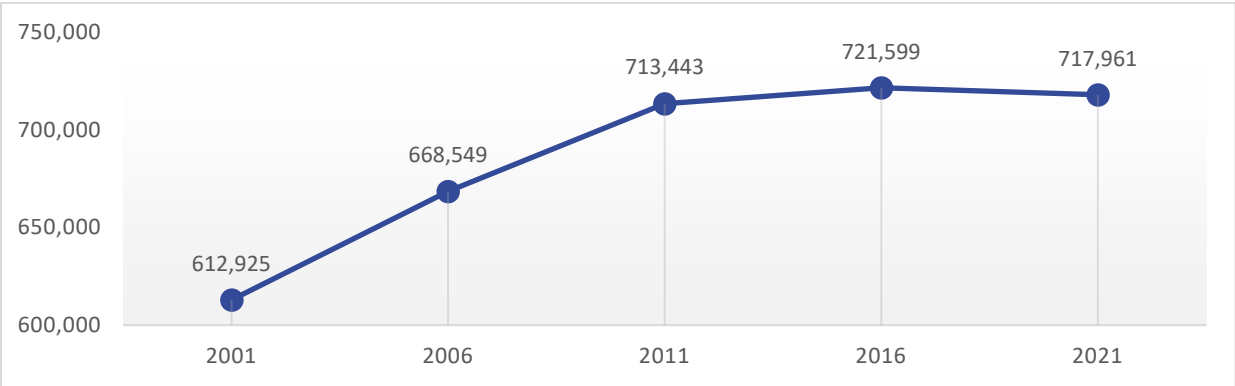
A large crowd of people is gathered for an outdoor event, likely a festival or concert. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, with many people looking towards the camera or their phones. In the background, a prominent clock tower stands on a large, multi-story building. To the left, there are modern high-rise apartment buildings. The scene is set in an urban environment with trees and other structures visible. The overall atmosphere is busy and social.

# Population Growth

# Section 3: Population Growth

## Historical and Current Population

Between the 2001 and 2021 census periods, the City of Mississauga’s recorded population grew from 612,925 to 717,961 persons (unadjusted for net census under coverage),<sup>2</sup> resulting in 105,000 more people or an increase of 17 per cent. Between 2016 and 2021, however, the City’s population declined by 3,638 persons which may be a result of multiple factors. The COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to this decline due to the construction delays affecting a large number of developments, online learning decreasing the number of post-secondary students, and restrictions limiting immigration.



City of Mississauga Census Recorded Population, 2001-2021

The annualized growth rate has been declining since 2001 which could be a result of aging population and ‘aging in place’ trends particularly in mature neighbourhoods, and/or financial barriers to home ownership. The city’s population is expected to revert to a growth scenario and catch up to the approved forecast in the short-term based on submitted planning applications and building permit activity.

## Projected Population Growth

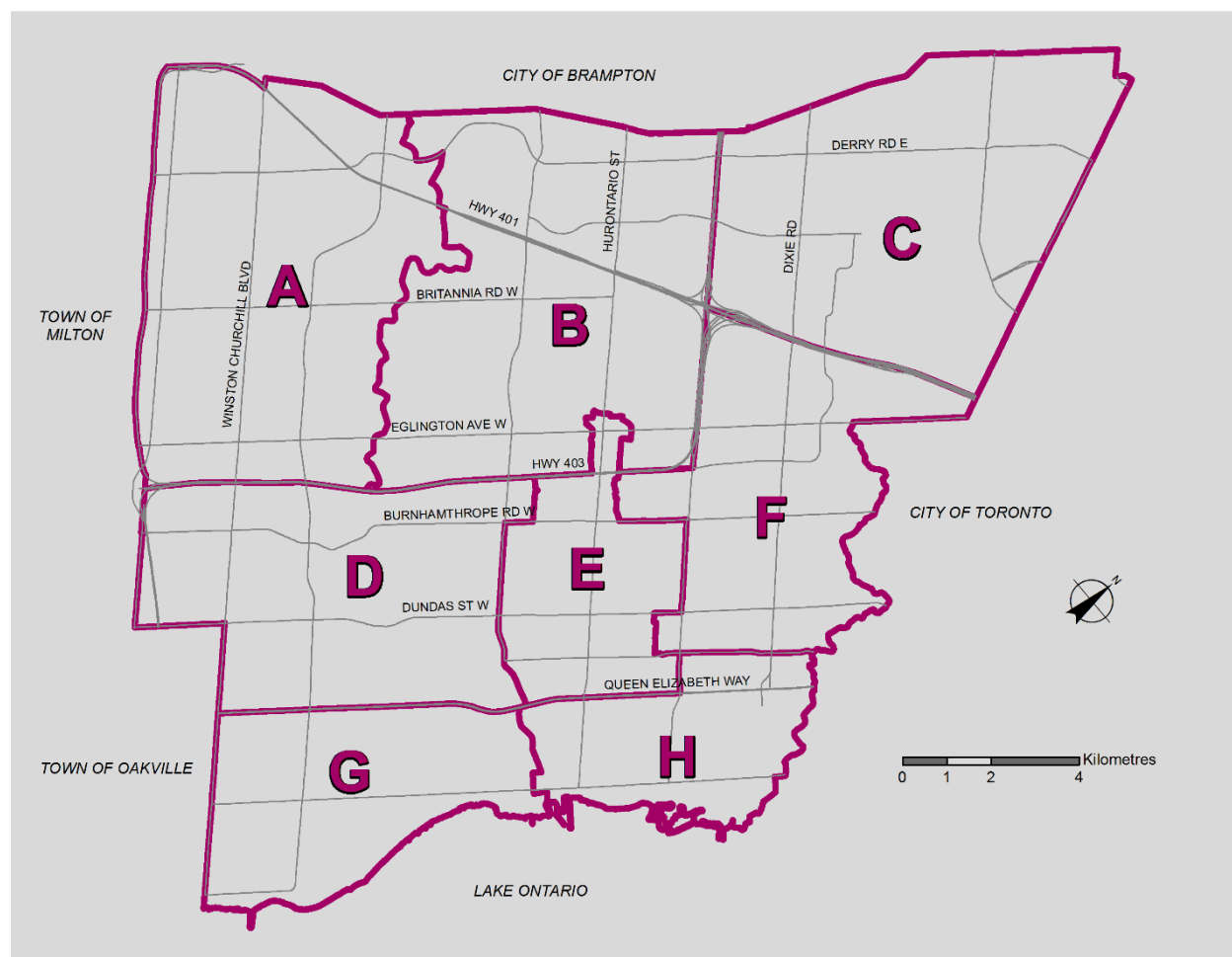
Growth forecasts show that Mississauga’s population will grow from the current year estimate of 795,040 to reach 852,060 by the year 2031. Beyond the current Future Directions planning period, Mississauga’s population is projected to reach 995,040 by the year 2051. **Table 1** illustrates the distribution of Mississauga’s population and forecasted growth by service areas.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Census, 2001 - 2021



Table 1: Forecasted Population Growth by Service Area Boundaries, 2021-2051

Service Area	2021 Population Estimate	2031 Population Estimate	2051 Population Estimate	10 Year Growth Rate (2021-2031)	30 Year Growth Rate (2021-2051)
A	187,410	195,280	209,320	4.2% (7,870 persons)	11.7% (21,910 persons)
B	159,570	161,210	167,950	1.0% (1,640 persons)	5.3% (8,380 persons)
C	39,430	39,060	40,900	-0.9% (-370 persons)	3.7% (1,470 persons)
D	102,440	101,990	107,730	-0.4% (-450 persons)	5.2% (5,290 persons)
E	140,000	172,490	226,750	23.2% (32,490 persons)	62.0% (86,750 persons)
F	74,840	75,540	91,410	0.9% (700 persons)	22.1% (16,570 persons)
G	47,640	53,480	66,450	12.3% (5,840 persons)	39.5% (18,810 persons)
H	43,710	53,010	84,530	21.3% (9,300 persons)	93.4% (40,820 persons)
<b>Total</b>	<b>795,040</b>	<b>852,060</b>	<b>995,040</b>	<b>7.2% (57,000 persons)</b>	<b>25.2% (200,000 persons)</b>



Service Area Boundary Map

The projected distribution of Mississauga's population has been analyzed for each service area. The following trends are noted:

- **Service Area A** is Mississauga's largest by population with a year 2021 estimate of 187,410 persons. The area has seen considerable development in recent years through the Churchill Meadows area in the north-west and its previously undeveloped land base is now considered to be largely built out. There are still 7,900 new residents forecasted to be added in this service area by 2031 and will ultimately add 22,000 more people in total by the year 2051. Growth is mostly located within the Central Erin Mills Major Node (nearly 50 per cent of the service area's net share of the population increase by 2031); the Ninth Line and Streetsville Neighbourhoods will experience most of the remaining growth. Notably, the Ninth Line Neighbourhood is projected to experience substantial growth as much of its undeveloped land base has approved plans of subdivision in place which will account for approximately half of this service area's population growth over the next eight years.
- **Service Area B** has a present-day population of 159,570 and is expected to grow to 161,210 over the next eight years.
- **Service Area C** contains Mississauga's smallest population total (largely because the majority of this service area is composed on non-residential character areas), with a year 2021 estimate of 39,430 persons that is projected to remain the same over the next eight years before increasing slightly to 40,900 persons by the year 2051. This is the lowest growth rate among all service areas. Virtually all of this service area's future development activity is planned to be directed to the Malton Community Node.
- **Service Area D** is forecasted to have little change in its total population – presently estimated at 102,440 persons. Growth is projected in the post-2031 period with approximately 5,300 persons to be added by the year 2051 over and above present-day estimates. The Sheridan Community Node, Sheridan Neighbourhood and Mavis-Erindale Employment Area are expected to account for 75 per cent of long-range growth.
- **Service Area E** contains the City's Urban Growth Centre which is comprised of the Downtown Core, Uptown Node, Fairview, Cooksville and Hospital Character Areas, and a number of stable areas like the Mineola and Cooksville Neighbourhood Character Areas. It has a population of 140,000 and is projected to increase by nearly 32,500 to reach a population of 172,500 by 2031. This service area will see the highest growth in the next 10 years and second highest growth in the next 20 years.
- **Service Area F** has a population of 74,840 and is projected to remain relatively unchanged, increasing 700 persons between 2021 and 2031.
- **Service Areas G and H** have a current population estimate of 91,350 and collectively forecasted to experience major growth over the next 30 years. The forecasted population will total 106,500 persons by 2031 and over 150,000 persons living south of the QEW in Mississauga by 2051 with development activity primarily being directed to the Port Credit Neighbourhood West, Port Credit Major Node, Lakeview Waterfront Major Node, and Lakeview Neighbourhood.

In May 2023, an Enhanced Minister's Zoning Order (EMZO) was released to permit increased density and other changes to Lakeview Village in Service Area H. The EMZO identifies that Lakeview Village will have a maximum of 16,000 residential units, which is double what is currently planned for in this development area. At the time of preparing this Plan, City staff are

in the process of understanding the full scale of the impact the EMZO will have on this area as it relates to projected population. Once adjusted population forecasts are developed and changes to the overall development vision is understood, future needs will need to be assessed during the next Future Directions Plan.

## Areas of Intensification

Development will be primarily directed to the City's Intensification Areas as defined through the City of Mississauga Official Plan. 50 per cent of all new residential population growth in Mississauga forecasted by the year 2031 – amounting to 26,500 people – is being directed to the Urban Growth Centre (referred to as the Downtown in the previous Official Plan) and its associated character areas. The majority of the remaining share of growth to 2031 is forecasted for Mississauga's Major Nodes (25 per cent) and Neighbourhoods (21 per cent).

- The **Urban Growth Centre** is located in Service Area E and is subdivided into four 'Character Areas' clustered around the Highway 10 (Huronario Street) corridor. Of the four areas, the Downtown Core is expected to receive 81 per cent of the growth representing over 21,400 residents forecasted by the year 2031 and another 22,500 by the year 2051 to reach a total population of nearly 81,000 persons (over double the population that currently exists).
- **Central Erin Mills Major Node** is located in Service Area A, north of Highway 403 and in between Winston Churchill Boulevard and Erin Mills Parkway. The Central Erin Mills node is forecasted to add 4,600 persons over the next 10 years and 7,350 new residents by 2051, ultimately reaching nearly 15,000 persons in total. Expected growth in this node will account for nearly one third of all growth in Mississauga's Major Nodes.
- **Uptown Major Node** is located in Service Area E, north of Highway 403 along Hurontario Street. The Uptown node is forecasted to add 5,500 persons over the next 10 years and nearly 22,500 new residents by 2051 ultimately reaching just over 34,500 persons in total. The 10-year growth in this node accounts for nearly 10 per cent of all growth to occur in Mississauga by 2031.
- **Port Credit Neighbourhood (West)** is located in Service Area G to the south-west of Mississauga Road along Lakeshore Road. Port Credit is projected to increase in population by 5,300 persons in the next 10 years and over 11,100 persons to more than four times its population in 30 years to approach 14,700 persons in total. This 10-year growth represents nearly 45

**The City's current growth forecasts estimate a 2021 population of 795,040 persons and to ensure consistency with other City reports, this figure is used as the baseline for this plan.**

per cent of all neighbourhood growth and 9 per cent of the total population growth.

- **Lakeview Neighbourhood** is located in Service Area H in the south-eastern portion of Mississauga. This neighbourhood is projected to grow by 3,800 persons over the next 10 years with an additional 9,600 persons by 2051. This growth will result in a total population of 37,500 by 2051, equating to an average annual growth rate of 1.8 per cent.
- **Lakeview Waterfront Major Node** is located in Service Area H and surrounded by the Lakeview Neighbourhood. As previously identified, the province’s EMZO identifies that Lakeview Village will accommodate 16,000 residential units, which is double what is currently planned for this area. City staff are currently in the process of understanding the impact the EMZO will have on the projected population and as a result, total population growth is currently unknown.

Table 2: Projected Growth by Character Area (Major Area of Intensification)

Character Area	2021	2031	2021 to 2031 Change	Share of City-wide Growth
Urban Growth Centre	79,650	106,170	26,520	47%
Central Erin Mills Major Node	7,620	12,200	4,580	8%
Uptown Major Node	12,090	17,570	5,480	10%
Port Credit Neighbourhood (West)	3,530	8,810	5,280	9%
Lakeview Neighbourhood	24,200	27,990	3,790	7%
Lakeview Waterfront Major Node*	0	4,460	4,460	8%

Source: City of Mississauga, 2022

\* Population forecast for Lakeview Waterfront Major Node does not reflect the Province’s EMZO impacting Lakeview Village as City staff are understanding the population impact at the time of preparing this Future Directions Plan.

# Engagement



# Section 4: Engagement

## Purposeful Engagement

The 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan was developed in consideration with the vision for community engagement at the City of Mississauga: Meaningful engagement every time. This process provides for open, two-way dialogue, offers an inclusive approach to seek diverse opinions and ensures that decision-making is well informed. To accomplish this, multiple forums were promoted to the community including focus groups, online surveys, pop-up engagements and face-to-face meetings. In addition to the range of methods used to consult residents and groups with interest, the Future Directions 'Have Your Say' engagement page was made available for translation to allow for non-English speaking members of the community to engage in the public consultation process. Regular, purposeful engagement was conducted throughout each phase of the project and outcomes have been incorporated into this plan. The open, transparent, accessible, inclusive and participatory manner with which engagement for the Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan was conducted strongly upholds the City's vision of meaningful engagement every time.

## Consultation Initiatives

Between October 2022 and February 2023, the Future Directions project team undertook an engagement process that integrated Parks, Forestry & Environment with Recreation, Culture and Library Services. This process was fundamental to the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan as it ensures priorities are refined by the public and partners who use parks and will ensure the plan better responds to their needs, challenges, and wants.

## Communication and Engagement Approach

A multi-tactic engagement approach was employed to reach a wide variety of residents and groups with interest. The City focused efforts on a strong communication push and was able to reach hundreds of thousands of views to increase awareness about the project.

The tactics used were a mix of digital tools such as an online map and survey; facilitated sessions over a video communication platform; and in-person interviews at park locations. The combination of tactics supports not only the move to new technologies but also reflects the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and an acknowledgement that sole reliance on traditional measures will get insufficient reach.

**15,000+**  
people engaged

Consultation with residents, groups with interest, staff, Indigenous groups, community groups, and Council helped shape the Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan. Input was received through the following ways:



**Public Awareness and Promotion**



**Community Survey**



**Virtual Public Engagement Session**



**Focus Groups**



**Pop Up Engagements in Parks**



**Council Interviews**



**Indigenous Communities Consultations**

## Key Findings/Themes

The feedback received provided a wealth of insight into how residents view the City's park system. The data was organized into categories to find common links and areas of focus. These themes and feedback will be used to inform recommendations through the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan. Several major themes emerged throughout the engagement. These major themes are summarized below.

1. **Recreational Facilities:** Respondents wished to see an increase in the supply of recreational facilities. The most popular included:
  - Leash-free zones that are integrated into neighbourhoods
  - Outdoor skating rinks
  - Playgrounds that are accessible, of interest to a wide age range, and innovative (e.g., nature and adventure play)
  - Outdoor fitness that is designed well for all ages and mobilities
  - More basketball, tennis, and dedicated pickleball space
  - More spray pads and pools

- More artificial and lit fields that can enable competitive play
  - More spaces and activities for all-ages.
2. **Supportive Amenities:** There was strong interest in expanding the supply of benches, washrooms, shade structures, and garbage receptacles to enhance park experiences as well as support the quality of play at sport facilities.
  3. **Passive Recreation and Unprogrammed Space:** Engagement confirmed the value and popularity of options for passive recreation (e.g., casual walks along a trail).
  4. **Access to Nature:** Natural areas and assets are highly valued by residents and organizations. Residents enjoy accessing nature in parks and support tree-planting initiatives. External groups with interest support nature-based initiatives to further connect residents with nature through education and other programming.
  5. **Accessibility and Inclusion in Parks:** Input focused on making parks more accessible to a range of mobility levels, from playground features to trail maintenance over winter.
  6. **Operational Demands:** There were two areas of focus related to operations. The first was cleanliness and maintenance, commonly associated with washroom conditions or garbage and needle debris. The second was extending the use of parks to all-season uses (e.g., more winter activities and ensuring parks are accessible in all weather). A special consideration for winter maintenance is that de-icing practices can be hard on dogs.



*Accessible playground - Jaycee Park*



7. **Sport Field Booking Allocation:** Sport groups discussed the challenges with booking sport fields and considerations for how the booking system can help to address some of the growth issues. There was also interest in integrating more drop-in play into the booking system for sport fields and public tennis courts.
8. **Stewardship, Volunteerism, and Approvals:** The engagement highlighted a desire for greater involvement in parks as well as some considerations to help existing groups operate. This includes seeking to make it easier for groups to coordinate with the City and apply for permits and volunteer opportunities.
9. **Events and Cultural Celebration:** A frequent response was to actively program or enable more events, festivals, and fun activities. Some of this direction was also related to the City's role in enabling more community-led events by adding servicing infrastructure like electrical, water, and washrooms to more parks.
10. **Getting to the Park:** A need was identified to help people get to parks. This included ensuring adequate parking supply and strengthening multi-modal options that connect parks (e.g., greened streetscapes, bike lanes, trails, crosswalks, and transit).

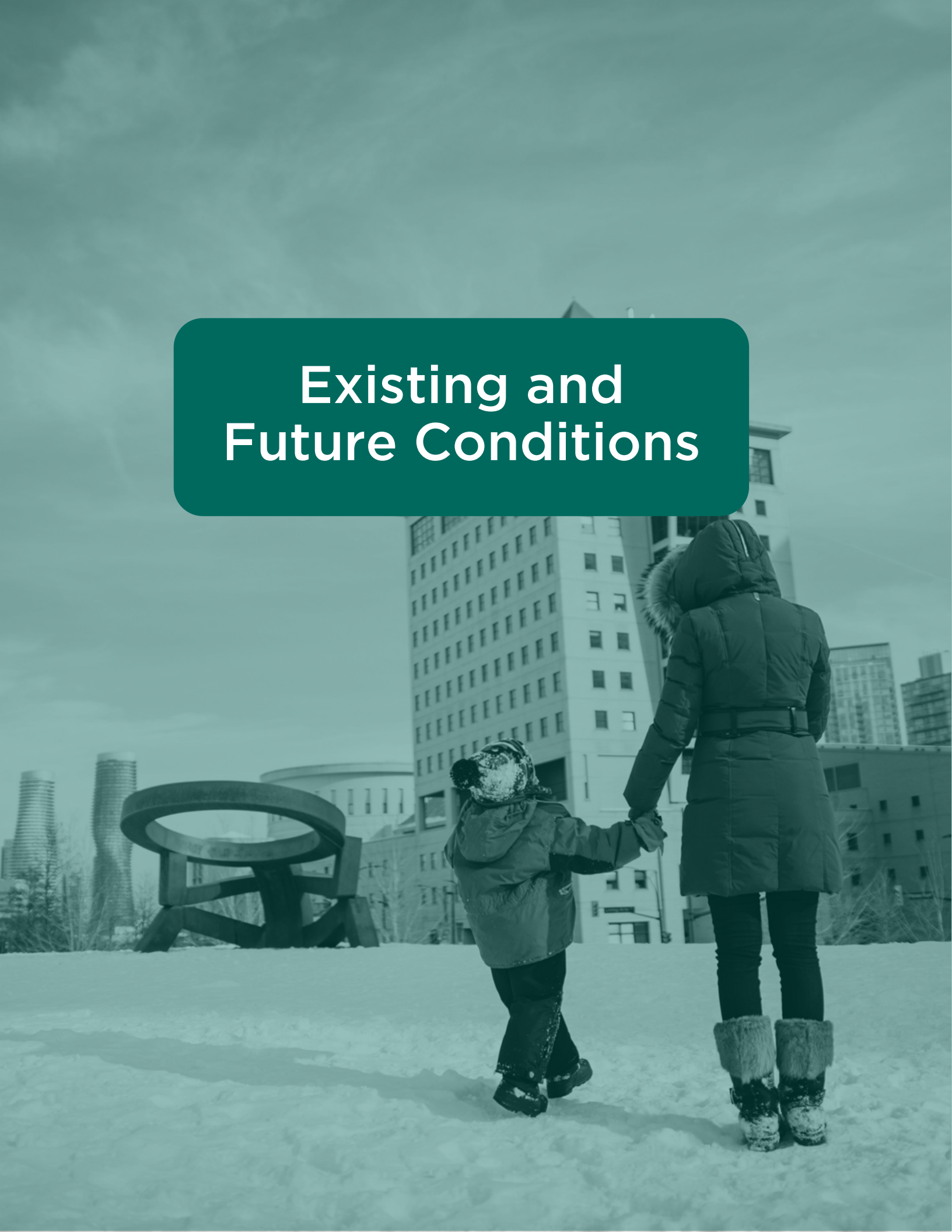
## Conclusion

The engagement sessions provided both internal and external feedback on the current and future opportunities for the park system. A comparison of the internal and external work reveals large areas of overlap. The feedback received through this engagement also follows broader trends throughout Canada. Sports that have been growing for years, such as cricket, require more investment to support more competitive play. The popularity of trails and passive recreation use are a common theme in other park plans in Canadian municipalities. The demand for supportive amenities such as washroom, lighting, and garbage receptacles likewise follow trends elsewhere.

Many of the themes were also consistent with feedback received from Mississauga's previous engagement in 2019, including the growing demand for leash-free zones and improved accessibility within parks. Other issues like the focus on shade structures and programming around events may be more recent developments.

Successfully responding to the feedback received will not require a complete rethinking of how the City of Mississauga manages park space. However, it will require new capital investment, operational adjustments, and strategies that seek to maximize the use of limited space and operational funds. This effort will be especially important in light of Bill 23's emerging impacts that will likely reduce revenue for parkland allocation, reduce overall municipal parkland acquisition capacity, and create more "non-standard" encumbered parks such as POPS and strata parks. In some cases, existing assets can be reconfigured to better serve demand, such as upgrading a minor field to a major one. In other cases, new land may need to be secured through parkland dedication or acquisition to meet gaps in demand. Other changes that require further review are more focused on policy changes or communication efforts.

# Existing and Future Conditions



# Section 5: Existing and Future Conditions

## Setting the Stage

Parks are dynamic spaces that evolve over time to reflect changes in resident expectations, priorities and needs. Since the 2019 Future Directions Plan, the City has seen a shift in the number of people who use parks and the type of experiences they expect.

By understanding Mississauga’s existing and future conditions, the City can prioritize and effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities presented. Residents want more parks, passive spaces and natural areas; they care about the environment; they want well designed and maintained parks; and they want more parks with a wider variety of facilities. A full summary can be found in the [previous section](#).

There are a set of challenges and opportunities that will grow in their impact on the management of the park network. They have the potential to change how parks are funded and planned within the City moving forward.

The strategic priorities will be the key areas of focus to address these challenges and opportunities. The strategic priorities inform a set of actionable recommendations.

This section provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities, alignment with strategic priorities, and recommendations on actions needed for an effective response.



# Strategic Priority: Growing and Connecting Parkland

## Urban Redevelopment & Funding Parkland

The current supply of parkland is relatively robust when measured City-wide. The overall parkland network provides one of the highest levels of service in the region. However, there are areas in the City that currently have a deficit of parkland and new growth will create additional demand for parkland. To address this demand, the City will continue relying on parkland dedication and acquisition. Given that Mississauga's growth is now oriented to intensification, with smaller development parcels, significant future parkland will be acquired via purchase as opposed to conveyance through the development approvals process. The City must collect cash-in-lieu of parkland (CIL) that is reflective of market value to remain competitive buyers of land.

The province's plan for growth to create 1.5 million new housing units throughout Ontario, with a particular focus on the GTHA will place additional pressure on the parks system. The estimated impacts on the City will result in about 120,000 new units over 10 years.

The province's More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) added further complexity by substantially changing the regulations around parkland conveyance, including:

- Reduced CIL and parkland dedication rates, up to a 10 per cent cap for sites under 5 ha, and 15 per cent for sites greater than 5 ha.
- Exemptions from parkland dedication requirements for affordable and attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential units.
- Parkland rates are frozen as of the date a zoning by-law or site plan application is filed for two years following approval.
- Encumbered parkland (POPS, Strata Parks) to be eligible for parkland credits.
- Landowners to be able to identify land they intend to provide for parkland, with the municipality able to appeal to the Ontario Lands Tribunal if there is a disagreement.
- A requirement to spend or allocate 60 per cent of parkland reserve funds every year.

Planning for the acquisition of additional parkland will need to consider the current implications of Bill 23, which will result in reduced CIL revenue. Bill 23 will impact areas of the City already experiencing a lack of parkland, and areas that will be experiencing rapid high-density growth of vulnerable populations. These are challenges that the City is specifically addressing through the 2024 Future Directions Plan.

Further restrictions imposed on municipalities including an inability to reject lands to meet parkland requirements will create additional challenges. Parks may not meet goals of creating connected and contiguous parkland to accommodate amenities, urban forest and climate change objectives, and meaningful contribution to park user experiences.

The specific impacts to Mississauga can be considerable given the City's growth expectations. The City's Parks Plan estimates that an additional 76.6 hectares of new parkland will need to be added to the existing network to meet the demand created by new growth.

Parks are essential to complete and connected communities and therefore they need to be prioritized, well-planned, and consistently funded. It is also important to recognize that future growth will result in additional pressure on parks and park facilities so upgrading of associated amenities and infrastructure should continually be examined. Despite the challenges the City may face in addressing growing parkland needs given the passing of Bill 23, Mississauga will continue to take proactive steps, including upgrading of existing parks to meet the needs of more users, strategic parkland acquisition, and tools provided by the province and other agencies to help maintain the level of service within the City.

The overarching approach to the Growing and Connecting Parkland Strategic Priority is to expand the City's park network. A key challenge is providing a sufficient amount and variety of parkland throughout the city.

The City will also need to adapt and respond to changes from Bill 23 regarding encumbered parkland (POPS and strata parks). The City of Mississauga should respond to the likely increase in encumbered parkland with the goal of empowering the municipality to ensure these spaces can be programmed to meet park facility needs, ensure they are accessible and inviting, and ensure they complement and/or connect to the City's park system.



*Square One Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)*

Another area of focus should be to increase access to existing parkland where appropriate. The focus of this approach is in Service Area E, which currently has a deficit of parkland and high population density. City-owned lands that are not developed yet or that are under-utilized should be prioritized for parkland development where appropriate. One example is reimagining the Living Arts Centre (LAC) grounds to make them more inviting as park space. Adding park features within this space will increase resident access to parks in an area that has a park deficit. Additional park features also have the potential to support programming and uses within the LAC building.

The Balance of Parkland Background Study recommended increasing park access within existing parkland designated as Greenlands by incorporating more trails and passive recreation. Careful attention will be needed to incorporate these measures sensitively within the natural areas to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the features or their ecological functions.

These are critical measures to quantify and include as infrastructural upgrades required to meet expected quality of life for residents and businesses. Part of this work will be to ensure alignment with the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw. It is also important to consider connecting and integrating parkland through innovative ways, including improving active transportation and mobility to park and recreation/community facilities throughout the City. Through Future Directions and supporting policy, the objective is to ensure that existing and future parkland will operate to its fullest potential.

Access to Mississauga's waterfront is also an important part ensuring a balance between natural and active parks. The potential redevelopment of a marina at 1 Port Street East in Port Credit provides an opportunity to create new waterfront parkland with safe public access, allow for improved aquatic and terrestrial environment, support marina and other business activity, and enable to site's historic marina function, which is key to the cultural identity of Port Credit.

Another consideration for prioritizing investment is through the lens of equity as well as where urban growth is anticipated. The 2022 Parks Plan already identifies areas of parkland need, but especially in light of the identified challenges with Bill 23, the City will need to carefully prioritize its investments. Equity and growth serve as useful criteria to help guide investment decisions. The latter will also help the City coordinate efforts between the Planning and Building department and the Parks, Forestry & Environment Division. Focusing on growth areas will also allow the City to leverage incoming development to support through land dedication and/or fees.

The 2024 Future Directions Plan uses the Urban Growth Centres and Major Nodes when referring to growth areas.

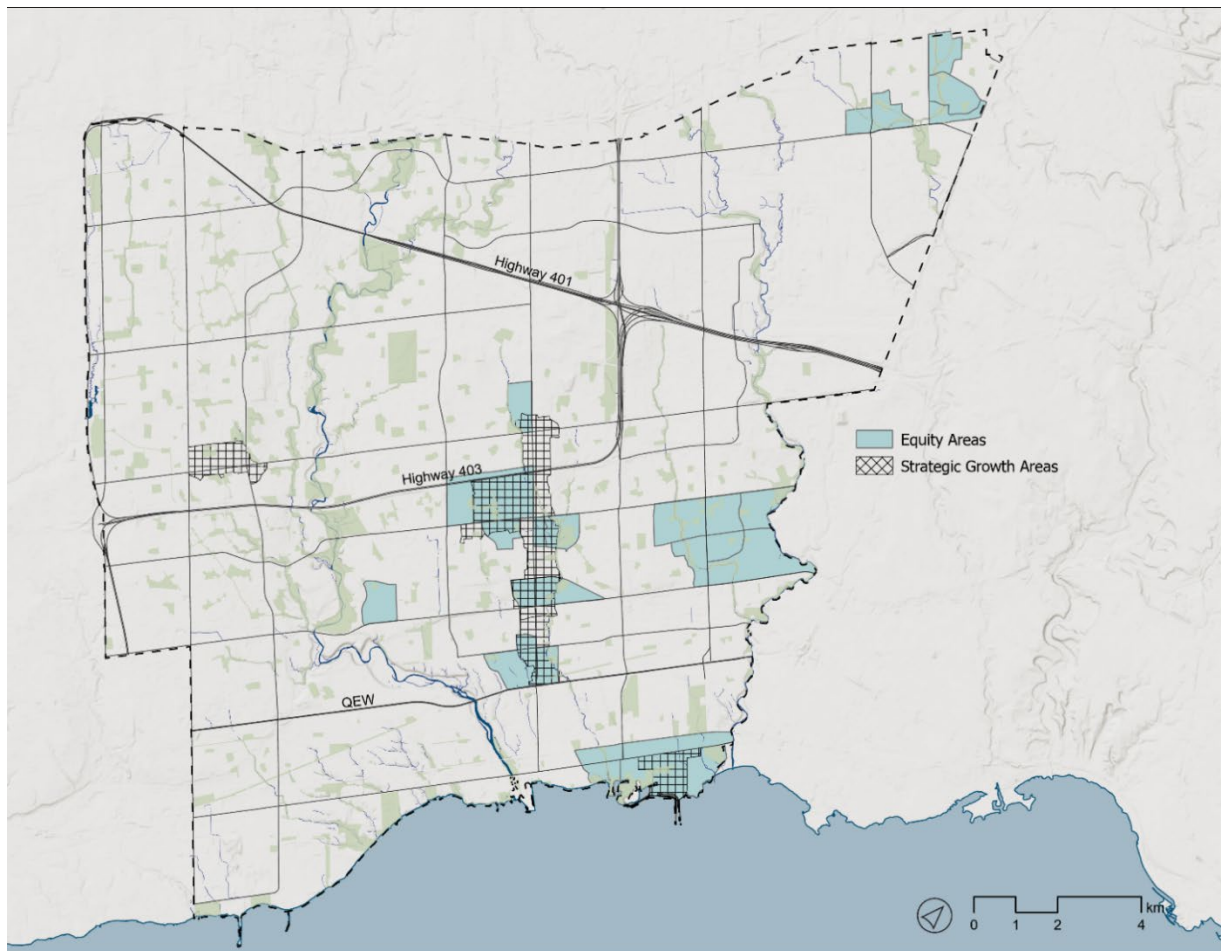
For Equity Opportunity Areas, the 2024 Future Directions Plan draws from the Region of Peel's Neighbourhood Index. The Neighbourhood Index provides a measure using the following set of indicators to measure well-being. The neighbourhoods that scored Low are considered as Equity Opportunity Areas within this study. Where investments fall within or adjacent to these zones, this added consideration is identified for prioritization.

Region of Peel's Neighbourhood Index Indicators:

1. Socio-demographics: population information such as age, immigration, and ethnicity.
2. Economic opportunity: income, housing costs, employment, and education.
3. Resident engagement and belonging: information about how connected people feel to their neighbourhood.
4. Health: how healthy people feel and children's readiness for school.
5. Safety: crime rate in the neighbourhood.
6. Physical environment: housing conditions and how close people live to places like parks.

The delivery of parkland and facilities should be prioritized in these areas as they can ensure investments have the most impact in terms of utilization and social benefits.

Figure 5.0



## Recommendations

- 1** Create easy-to-apply guidelines for Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and strata parks that can be used to evaluate dedication acceptance by the City and to determine the types of park facilities that can be accommodated in each type of park.
- 2** Redevelop the grounds of the Living Arts Centre (LAC) to increase access to parkland and facilities in the Downtown Core and Identify and prioritize the redevelopment of other vacant or underutilized parkland.
- 3** Prioritize the delivery of complementary and appropriate park uses like trails, and unprogrammed open space within greenlands to increase access to parkland in areas that have a parkland deficit.
- 4** Develop a marina and new waterfront parkland in Port Credit to maintain the character of the area, provide residents with access to the waterfront, and to improve the natural environment.
- 5** Prioritize identified facility investments and future parkland acquisition within/adjacent to 'Equity Opportunity Areas', Strategic Growth Areas and in non-residential character areas that are experiencing residential development.





# Strategic Priority: Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management of Parks

## Shifting Use and Expectations

Parks within Mississauga are experiencing a greater number of users. This change is not only due to population growth, but the City observed an increase of park usage as a result of the pandemic. The global pandemic in 2020 fundamentally changed park visitation and how residents use parks across Canada. A national survey conducted by Park People, found an increase in the value residents place on parks, as well as their contribution to health and wellbeing. The survey also found over half of the cities included in the survey saw an increase in park use. The engagement undertaken as part of the 2024 Future Directions Plan also confirms this trend, with 49 per cent of survey respondents noting that their park use has increased since the pandemic. The conservation authorities in Mississauga have identified a similar increase in users in their conservation area parks.

While increased visitation is great for the City from a social and health perspective, it puts pressure on demand for facilities, operations and maintenance, and the natural environment. For example, the City has seen an increase in requests for neighbourhood leash-free zones, more playgrounds and to keep facilities like tennis open longer into the fall and winter.

Passive recreational use such as strolling along a trail was less restricted by public health orders compared to more active recreational uses like organized soccer. This introduced residents to activities that they would have otherwise not done and offered people a chance to relax, access nature and exercise since gyms and other indoor facilities were closed. Engagement results show that passive recreational uses are highly valued by the public. They also have an expectation for more supportive amenities to enhance park experiences and comfort like washrooms, access to shade, benches, and garbage receptacles.

The public engagement and discussions with groups with interest also revealed an appetite for more programmed events in parks and opportunities to be involved through stewardship and volunteering. Post-pandemic, these activities offer a chance to reconnect in person with family, friends, and neighbors as well as experience larger group activities.

Residents are also expecting more from their parks. This expectation includes an interest in using parks longer throughout the days and seasons. It also includes more demand



for programming, events, and activations throughout the network. There is a growing perspective that parks play a key role in contributing to positive community goals, such as equity, diversity and inclusion. It is important to identify how parks can contribute to these EDI goals and ensure that any socio-economic and physical barriers are addressed.

Future public engagement work for parks should be undertaken in collaboration with culture planning staff and other culture-focused City teams. Engagement work can be aligned with other similar initiatives including placemaking and placekeeping initiatives and activations, and culture staff expertise in consulting with hard-to-reach groups can be leveraged to support all projects. Parks also play an important role in climate change mitigation/adaptation. Changes to the City's design standards or management of the park system will also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Strategies can include incorporating storm water management features, different materials, LED lights on a timer or electric maintenance equipment. The result is a parks system that is varied, active, and responsive.

These dynamics are a positive development. For instance, more park usage means more people enjoying the many benefits that parks play (e.g., health, relaxation, and community togetherness). On the other hand, it is important to recognize that there is also increased pressure and impacts on the park system and this in turn places higher responsibilities on the City. More usage can cause more wear-and-tear, more garbage and more ecological damage. It can also mean capacity issues, which can create negative experiences and undermine access (e.g., more rest days for natural grass).

The City can improve on how it designs and manages existing park spaces and facilities to meet the shifts in usage and resident expectations. Promoting multi-functionality will be critical as it allows the City to serve more interests within the same amount of space. Mississauga already has experience in this work (e.g., shared tennis and pickleball courts), but there are more opportunities to embed this principle throughout facility planning and design.



Finding opportunities to extend playing seasons and times will also be important to meet demand. This approach will include taking measure to have longer operations to services provided by park facilities. The addition of more lit fields will assist in increasing operations for several uses including, baseball, cricket and soccer. As such, Mississauga's recently completed Outdoor Recreation Lighting Study, recommends fields be considered 1.5 equivalent to 1 unlit field. Another measure the City can take to increase play times among its fields will be to transition playing surfaces to artificial turf. The conversion of fields to artificial turf ensures lower maintenance and provides consistent playing conditions with no rest periods required it is a concept that also aligns with the priority placed on upgrading spaces ahead of building more facilities, except where access provisions are not being met. Given land availability in Mississauga, this concept will help strategic investments.

**Design Standards:** Another avenue for design is to add elements to promote sustainable design and climate change resilience as a way of addressing wear-and-tear and ensuring that park assets can withstand the impacts of climate changes such as flooding and extreme weather events. This approach can include using different materials as well as examining operation and maintenance standards. A portion of these recommendations are included below whereas others are advanced through Section 6: Efficient Provisioning for Facilities and Section 7: Enhancing Park Experiences. Design and location criteria updates should also enable the City to locate facilities more readily. For example, it could be easier to install more leash-free zones (LFZ) by creating design standards and location criteria for community and urban scale facilities. These strategies will help the City achieve its access-based provisions and address resident feedback for more walk-to facilities. Smaller facility footprints can also contribute to climate change adaption by ensuring that there is more space for naturalization and tree planting. It is also important to provide LFZ facilities that accommodate both small and large dogs.

**Booking Capacity:** Based on feedback from user groups, the City should monitor bookable sport facility usage and examine ways to address under/over utilization. Depending on the outcomes of the utilization data, strategies can include changes to policies, fees and/or enforcement. Changes to how the city manages sport field booking has the potential to address capacity issues without needing new facilities.

**Bookable Basketball:** Of the cities reviewed in the environmental scan, basketball was most commonly a non-bookable space that supports drop-in play. This approach is consistent with how Mississauga manages its courts.

However, as discussed in the Efficient Provisioning for Facilities Section 6, basketball is a popular sport in Mississauga and some courts are busy. Courts could have a limited bookable option to enable tournament play. This approach would further promote awareness of the sport and offer opportunities for players to compete. As there are also courts within Equity-Zones, tournaments could serve as a chance to partner with local community groups and add further programming to local spaces.

The implementation of this recommendation is to test bookable basketball tournaments through a piloting system. In so doing, the City will have the opportunity to receive public feedback through service requests and undertake refinement. The implementation is also intended to be limited as the City's inventory of courts does not support broad adoption for

permitting. The City should continue to ensure there is sufficient opportunities for drop-in play, which will support EDI as permits process and costs may act as a barrier to some users.

**Shared-use and Awareness:** Another way to increase capacity is to maximize utilization through effective management and promotion of existing park assets. The City provides a wide variety of soccer fields, track and field facilities and hard surface courts on lands owned by the school boards. Shared-use agreements with the school boards are an effective strategy for delivering park services on non-City owned lands especially in the context of the City's parkland deficit and Bill 23. Residents are not always aware that these facilities are publicly available during specific days/times, and they are not currently visible on the City's "find a park" webpage which shows a map of all park facilities that are available to residents.



**Public Tennis:** There is also an opportunity to increase the capacity of underutilized tennis courts that are managed by tennis clubs. The City should explore opportunities to set days/times where these club courts are publicly available or to explore a management approach similar to soccer and baseball where organizations book facilities instead of exclusively managing them.

**Indigenous Spaces:** Access to open, public spaces within the City is critical to Indigenous Peoples who have a connection to the land. Rights to hunt, fish and gather and to safely and securely be themselves and be with the land are inherent rights which are protected and upheld. The City of Mississauga is committed to exploring better access to the parks and open spaces for Indigenous Peoples.

These approaches support the City's EDI goals by making park facilities more physically and socio-economically accessible.

**Unprogrammed Space:** a key outcome of the Balance of Parkland Study is the benefit to strengthening the planning around unprogrammed areas within parks. These spaces enable a variety of flexible uses and can often accommodate shifts in resident interests without major design shifts. The engagement also highlighted the popularity of these spaces among residents.

The City's approach to unprogrammed area can be twofold: (1) formalize unprogrammed area within policy and design guidelines and build awareness about the importance of these spaces. And (2), consider opportunities to improve how these spaces can contribute to natural

area/tree planting as well as climate change mitigation. Natural features and low impact development design features can help the City manage the impacts of extreme weather events like flooding and torrential rain. Defining unprogrammed park spaces through design and/or signage also signals to the public that these areas aren't vacant park space where park facilities could be added. These two strategies will support the City in planning a balanced park system while also promoting opportunities for multi-functionality. As such, these improvements also support Strategic Priority: Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management.

## Recommendations

- 6** Update the City's minimum design standards for basketball, outdoor ice skating facilities, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, cricket pitches and spray pads to maximize opportunities for multi-use facilities
- 7** Update the City's design standards for leash-free zones to enable separated sections for small and large dogs as well as standards for urban scale and neighbourhood scale facilities.
- 8** Consider providing artificial turf wickets at fields where wear-and-tear is interrupting playable days in the season or is needed to accommodate extended hours.
- 9** Collect and assess park facility utilization data and sport field booking practices and identify actions to address under/over utilization to ensure there is an appropriate supply of bookable facilities. Actions could include refinements to booking policies, fees and enforcement.
- 10** Investigate strategies to improve how the City provides information on park facility locations and facility rules/hours. Deliverables of this tactic could be in refined websites, apps, and physical interfaces such as incorporation of QR codes within parks and facilities.
- 11** Develop a framework and pilot bookable basketball courts for tournaments in identified Equity Opportunity Areas.
- 12** Explore strategies to increase public access, awareness and promotion of club-operated tennis courts and facilities with shared-use agreements to address the increased usage of park facilities by leveraging the opportunities with the existing supply.
- 13** Develop approaches to remove barriers and enable marginalized and equity-deserving groups access to more spaces within parks.
- 14** Support the creation of the City's Reconciliation Plan and actively explore the creation of a Community Circle with our Indigenous partners which will inform and guide programming and initiatives across the City.
- 15** Create design standards for unprogrammed park space. Consider the option to incorporate trees, naturalization and/or low impact development features to help define and support the functioning of space and advance climate change resiliency. As part of this work, the City should also undertake measures to promote and communicate the value of unprogrammed park space.

# Strategic Priority: Expand, Protect and Restore Natural Areas

## Competing Priorities and Limited Space

The Balance of Parkland background study was undertaken to support the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan. The study focuses the right balance among the following types of spaces within parks.

- **Natural Areas:** Refers to publicly owned and/or maintained lands within the park system, such as woodlands, wetlands, successional areas, beaches, prairies, watercourses, specialized wildlife habitat, and valley and watercourse corridors.
- **Programmed Park Spaces:** Refers to a park (or portion of a park) of any size which is primary intended use for sports, structured play, leash-free zones, or community gardens.
- **Unprogrammed Park Spaces:** Refers to a park (or a portion of a park) of any size that is publicly accessible without an intended primary use and permits a range of activities such as picnicking and throwing a ball around.

Future Directions plays a key role in establishing provision standards and recommendations that determine what facilities should be provided in a given area or park. Future Directions also provides guidance on the expansion, protection and restoration of natural areas. However, the Forestry equivalent of provisions standards and more nuanced guidance and recommendations are addressed through the Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy.

While much of Forestry's work is directed outside of Future Directions, it is the role of Future Directions to ensure that the delivery of park and forestry services are not only aligned but implementable. The amount of park facilities (programmed and unprogrammed park spaces) and natural areas is largely limited by the supply of parkland that all three of these uses occupy. Therefore, a key outcomes of the Balance of Parkland study is to provide guidance on how to balance these priorities through Future Directions without compromising the integrity of either service. The outcomes of this study support the City's new park provision standards (Section 6 Efficient Provisioning for Facilities) and the creation of unprogrammed park space as a park amenity with opportunities for tree plantings and naturalization built into the design. The implementation of the One Million Trees Program continues to be a priority and its implementation will be supported through the identification of priority areas for naturalization.

It is important to note that while priority areas for park facilities and naturalization are identified and considered through Future Directions, site specific conditions and other nuanced considerations were not assessed. As a result, further investigations are required through future studies and/or at the time of development with consideration for these higher-level principles around achieving the right balance of parkland. Updates to the Natural Heritage System and Urban Forest Study is one appropriate means to progress this work.

The balancing of priorities will also need to consider the impact of adjacent uses on natural areas in addition to external factors such as legislative changes, fiscal pressures and emerging science around climate change adaptation and resiliency.



## Climate Change Resiliency and Mitigation

Recent results from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – a group of climate change experts and scientists brought together by the United Nations – have delivered a stark reality – it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the planet, widespread and rapid changes have occurred, and the climate is warming faster now than in previous decades. Mississauga is already experiencing the impacts of climate change through intense heat waves and other extreme weather events such as flooding and ice storms. Over the last several years, Mississauga has also experienced poor air quality as a result of climate-related forest fires in Northern Ontario. The City should be prepared to continue to experience these extreme weather events amplified in frequency and impact.

While accelerating actions to deeply reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) will stave off the worst effects of climate change, making our community more resilient (adaptation) to the effects of these changes in climate and extreme events is paramount. That is why, among other reasons, Mississauga has adopted a system-based approach to the protection and enhancement of the Green System, which consists of the Natural Heritage System, Natural Hazard Lands, the Urban Forest and Parks and Open Spaces.

Mississauga's green infrastructure plays a critical role in making the City more resilient, safe, equitable and livable. The supply of parks, woodlands and natural areas, how they are designed, what features are included (such as low-impact developments) and the City's tree canopy cover and how invasive species are managed will directly impact the City's ability to

withstand more intense climate-related events. These efforts can reduce the heat island effect to keep residents cool and reduce electricity usage and they can also help manage storm water to minimize flooding and erosion.

The City's approach not only considers the benefits of addressing climate change, but it also supports human health and well-being (e.g., improves air quality, provides shade, temperature moderation and improved mental health), it also supports plants, animals and microorganisms that create rich biodiverse and functional ecosystems.

Supported through the Balance of Parkland Report, the City will examine how park assets will be able to provide further resiliency through the objectives outlined in the City's Climate Change Action Plan. Building "Resilient & Green Infrastructure" has already helped influence several initiatives to date, including the One Million Tree Program (2012), Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy (2014), Vulnerable Assessment of Three City Parks (2018) and the Cooksville Parkland Long Term Property Acquisition (ongoing), which all directly relate to the improvements of parks throughout the City. Climate change mitigation has become a key component of all analysis and planning policy projects. The Balance of Parkland Report was not launched to address deficit of parks or climate change, however its impacts to support the City's environmental objectives is very important to its recommendations.

Future Directions supports the expansion, protection and restoration of natural areas by enabling the implementation of existing strategies and initiatives like the One Million Trees program by ensuring a balanced approach with regard to the development of parkland. For example, based on the number of trees that have already been planted, approximately 116 to 145 ha of parkland is needed to achieve the One Million Trees project goal. Given the size of the park system, these values are considered feasible but only if provision standards for programmed and unprogrammed park spaces enable enough land to be reserved for naturalization.

There is also an opportunity to plant trees and naturalize areas within a park that reserved primarily for programmed and unprogrammed park spaces. The City should consider adding tree planting and naturalization as a park amenity option when parks are being developed or redeveloped instead of limiting options to typical park facilities like soccer and tennis. Trees can be added as comfort amenities for shade and to help manage storm water and to reduce the heat island effect, as natural obstacles to support disc golf or to define park spaces like trails and unprogrammed space.

This approach ensures that the City allocates enough parkland for the City to achieve its tree planting objectives while also applying a forestry and climate change resiliency lens to all park planning and development activities.

Naturalization should be prioritized in areas that support equity, biodiversity and climate resiliency. The following areas have been identified for consideration and are subject to further detailed review.

The first area is in the north and southwest of Service Area A and south of Service Area B (Lisgar, Meadowvale, Churchill Meadows, Hurontario) based on these areas having a lower-than-average amount of natural area. In these areas, the City can consider naturalizing the sites decommissioned baseball diamonds.





The second area is around Service Area C (Malton) based on this area’s lower-than-average natural area and opportunity to expand the Malton Greenway. A challenge will be ensuring there is sufficient space to fit new and upgraded facilities. Unprogrammed space will play an important role in providing a healthy balance between natural area expansion, active and passive uses, particularly around the Malton Greenway. Linkages and adjacent parks will require study to see if conversion of unprogrammed spaces are in keeping with contextual parkland objectives and needs.

The third area is around Service E (Uptown and Cooksville) based on this area’s lower-than-average natural area coverage. A challenge will be locating sufficient space based on competing needs for new facilities and the area’s existing parkland deficit. The recommended strategy is to focus on land acquisition/dedication, integrating natural features in the design of programmed and unprogrammed park space or as standalone park amenities and improving access to existing natural areas where possible.

### Recommendations

- 16** Include naturalization and/or tree planting as a park amenity option in the City’s public engagement process.
- 17** Identify priority areas to expand, protect and restore natural areas and the urban forest.
- 18** Raise awareness of conservation, biodiversity, and the role of parkland in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation through partnerships with community groups and other initiatives.
- 19** Update existing forestry and natural heritage strategies/ plans to refine and adapt management to recent legislative changes, growing pressures and threats.



# Efficient Provisioning for Facilities

# Section 6: Efficient Provisioning for Facilities

## Strategic Priority: Efficient Provisioning for Facilities

A core service that the Park, Forestry & Environment Division provides is the delivery of park facilities like soccer fields and spray pads. The City and residents can refer to this section of the report to determine what facilities are needed, where they are needed and when. Provision standards for each outdoor recreation facility is assessed using a set of data sources: engagement results, best practices and inventories from other municipalities, City-staff insight, and usage/utilization data. These sources allow the City to determine whether a facility may have unmet demand.

The City has historically used “per capita provision standards” to determine the standard level of service. For example, the standard level of service for soccer is 1:3,000, which means that the City should provide one soccer field for every 3,000 residents. This is one of the most common approaches for determining a City’s standard level of service. It enables the City to



plan for future park facility needs based on population growth projections. It also enables the City to benchmark and compare its level of service to other municipalities, which is important for ensuring the City remains competitive.

One of the challenges with the historical per capita provision standard is that the City of Mississauga is approaching a population where there is not enough parkland to continue tying standard levels of service with population growth. This challenge is evident in the 2019 Future Directions Plan where Service Area 5 (which is now Service Area E and Service Area F) is “deficient” in virtually all park facilities because the per capita provision standards are not implementable due to the high population growth and density in the City’s Urban Growth Centre (UGC). The issue is complicated further by the City’s existing parkland deficit and Bill 23. As the province directs population growth expectations through Minister Zoning Orders (MZO) and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), the City expects this trend to impacts service areas outside the City’s UGC.

Another challenge with per capita provision standards is that they do not consider the actual usage of the facility. The popularity of a sport and its demand often changes over time. For example, the City has been maintaining a 1:5,000 standard level of service for baseball diamonds, which aligned with the sports’ high popularity in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Currently, baseball diamonds are among the most underutilized and least requested facilities but the per capita provision standards suggest that the City should build more and/or reinstate existing ones that have reached the end of their lifecycle.

Lastly, since per capita standards are largely based on benchmarking with neighbouring municipalities and on historic levels of service, this approach does not always consider the local context or changes in resident needs/demand.

## Provisioning Approach

### Provision Measure Options



**Access**

**E.g. Basketball**



**Permit Demand**

**E.g. Baseball**



**Location Criteria and/or Demonstrated User Demand**

**E.g. Mountain Biking**

- With consideration for:**
- Overall Context (parkland deficit, Bill 23, City goals and objectives)
  - Benchmarking with other Municipalities
  - Per Capita Supply
  - Service Requests
  - Opportunities (funding/partnerships)

As discussed in the previous chapter, the City’s ability to provide programmed and unprogrammed park spaces is largely limited by the supply of parkland and by competing priorities for the same parkland. Some of these challenges are addressed in the Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management section by increasing utilization of underutilized park facilities on school board lands and by designing more multi-use facilities.

To address the challenges with per capita provision standards, the City is moving towards an “access-based” provision standard. Rather than tying the standard level of service to population, it is instead tied to its “access,” as measured by the distance to those facilities. For example, the standard level of service for spray pads recommended later in this section is 3 km. This means that the City will



work towards providing a spray pad within 3 km of residential areas, as a general target. Working towards this goal will ensure the equitable distribution of park facilities by prioritizing underserved areas.

Access-based provisions also mitigate the issue of over-supply and under-supply because the number of facilities is tied to a fixed variable - distance. Each park facility has a different access-based provision depending on Mississauga’s specific context. The distance-based provisions were developed along with the following factors:

1. **The Size of the Facility:** The more area required for a facility, the fewer opportunities to locate new facilities.
2. **Multi-use Potential:** The potential for it to be multi-use enables the pairing with other facilities and increases the opportunities to locate new facilities.
3. **Location Requirements/Restrictions:** When facilities are best located in certain configurations (e.g., adjacent to community recreation centres), it limits their opportunities.
4. **Facility Cost:** Facilities like outdoor refrigerated ice facilities have high capital, maintenance, and operating costs so they cannot be provided as readily.
5. **Resident Expectations and Needs (Service Requests and Public Engagement):** Some facilities are more suited as walk-to destinations within a neighbourhood, whereas others are visited by users City-wide such as with some sport leagues.
6. **Compatibility with Adjacent Uses:** When a facility can be adjacent to a range of other facilities or types of parkland (e.g., natural areas) it increases the opportunities to find suitable locations).
7. **Alignment with City Goals and Objectives:** Some investments support broader initiatives and plans such as equity, diversity and inclusion and climate changes adaptation and mitigation.

It is also important to note that access targets may not fully address capacity challenges or meet demonstrated demand in areas with high densities and population growth. For example, one spray pad within 3km will serve significantly more residents in an urban area versus a non-urban area. Rather than reduce the access target to 2km for Service Area E, a more flexible and efficient allocation strategy is to locate additional facilities based on where there is available land and/or to provide enhanced/larger facilities. This approach is primarily limited to Service Area E and supports investments by addressing growth impacts and supports equity.

Notwithstanding, it was determined that certain facilities are not appropriate for access-based provisions. For example, facilities like baseball are largely operated by leagues where users typically travel farther distance to play games. While baseball diamonds will have an access provision of 8 km, the focus will be on aligning the supply of bookable diamonds with permit demand from leagues. Other facilities -- like sand volleyball or mountain biking -- have other considerations like restrictive location criteria, and/or relying on volunteers to operate. In these cases, facilities will be categorized under one of the following:

1. Permit Demand: This metric is based on seeking to meet the needs of leagues and other avenues of organized play by drawing from utilization data and feedback from leagues from the engagement phase.
2. Location Criteria and/or Demonstrated User Demand: In some cases, provisioning will be based on location criteria and demonstrated user demand. This approach recognizes that some facilities require specific geographic conditions and/or enough interest from residents to ensure facilities are well utilized.

The City should collect and monitor the number of service requests received for facilities where the provision standards are based on demonstrated demand.

## Requests for New Facilities

When a new request for a park facility is received, staff should assess the request by referring to the following checklist.

- Is there a pattern of requests for this facility?
- Is this request already satisfied by the private sector?
- Can this activity be undertaken without support from the public sector?
- What are the relevant capital and operational costs associated with this facility?
- Does the activity help progress or support the City's strategic priorities?

## Data Sources



### Data Sources

The contents of the data sources are illustrated below. This approach is employed and summarized for each facility and referenced throughout this section.

- **Benchmarking:** To compare Mississauga with current trends, data was compiled of the number of facilities in six other cities: Toronto, Markham, Burlington, Hamilton, Vancouver, and Winnipeg. The cities were chosen based on their proximity to Mississauga or similar sizes and trends. This indicator is known as the Facility-to-population ratio (or per-capita provisioning). Unlike the metrics, this data is not used to drive decision-making, as it does not indicate the relationship between supply and demand.
- **Usage Data (Utilization and Visitation):** Some facilities within Mississauga can be booked by residents and leagues. This data was collected and analyzed to assess interest in the sport over the last five years. Within this report, this data is sometimes referred to as utilization data or bookings data. For most of the other facilities, visitation data was used using large, anonymized datasets from cellphones that provide a high-level sense of how many people visit a facility.
- **Engagement Data:** The City collected feedback from the public and groups with interest. This content provides a sense of emerging interests, concerns, and aspirations regarding the park system.
- **City Staff Subject Matter Expertise:** City staff provided feedback on facility provisioning within Mississauga by drawing on their knowledge and experiences, as well as other sources such as service request reviews.
- **Best Practice:** Research was conducted to identify common standards, emerging trends, and innovative approaches to address issues relevant to the City of Mississauga.

## Metrics



### Metrics

- **Access Catchment:** This metric measures how many residents live within a set distance from a facility. In this plan, access is based on the road and pathway network within Mississauga. The value is represented as a percentage: x per cent of people are within x metres of a certain type of recreational facility. Some facilities cater more towards drive-to destinations for organized play. In these cases, access is not used as a primary metric.
- **Organized/League Play Demand:** This metric is based on seeking to meet the needs of leagues and other avenues of organized play by drawing from utilization data and feedback from leagues from the engagement phase.

- **Locational Criteria/Demonstrated User Demand:** The metrics above are not appropriate for all facilities. In some cases, provisioning will be on a request or opportunity basis. To support such cases, the report provides criteria to guide where that facility should generally be located to (e.g., near community centres).

The facilities that are recommended for provisioning are assessed based on the benchmarking comparison, current and future provision levels, engagement feedback, and utilization and visitation data. The resulting recommendations are tailored to the needs of each service area. As a result, the recommendations vary. One key lens is seeking to address historically underserved areas as well as locations where there is anticipated to be high concentrations of use. As an example, these two factors are important drivers for Service Area E.

The transition toward ‘access’ still references service area boundaries, which splits the City into different zones that share similar contexts. By employing geographic-based service areas, the 2024 Future Directions Plan can understand or differentiate service levels and needs in relation to land use/urban structure, population, political or other unique characteristics associated with the smaller areas.

## Provisioning within Non-Residential Areas

Mississauga’s growth pattern will continue to be oriented towards redevelopment, which will encourage greater utilization of employment lands to fulfill growth. Park and facility provisioning has traditionally been focused only in residential areas – as that is where people reside. With residential developments moving into employment lands, the City will need to decide how to deliver park services in these areas.

Since provisioning is seeking to address residential demand, the recommended approach is to treat employment lands that have residential growth the same as residential areas. Parkland should be acquired through the development application process or through direct purchase where appropriate.

### Recommendation

- 20** Extend facility provision standards to non-residential areas where residential development has been added.



# Provisioning for Park Facilities

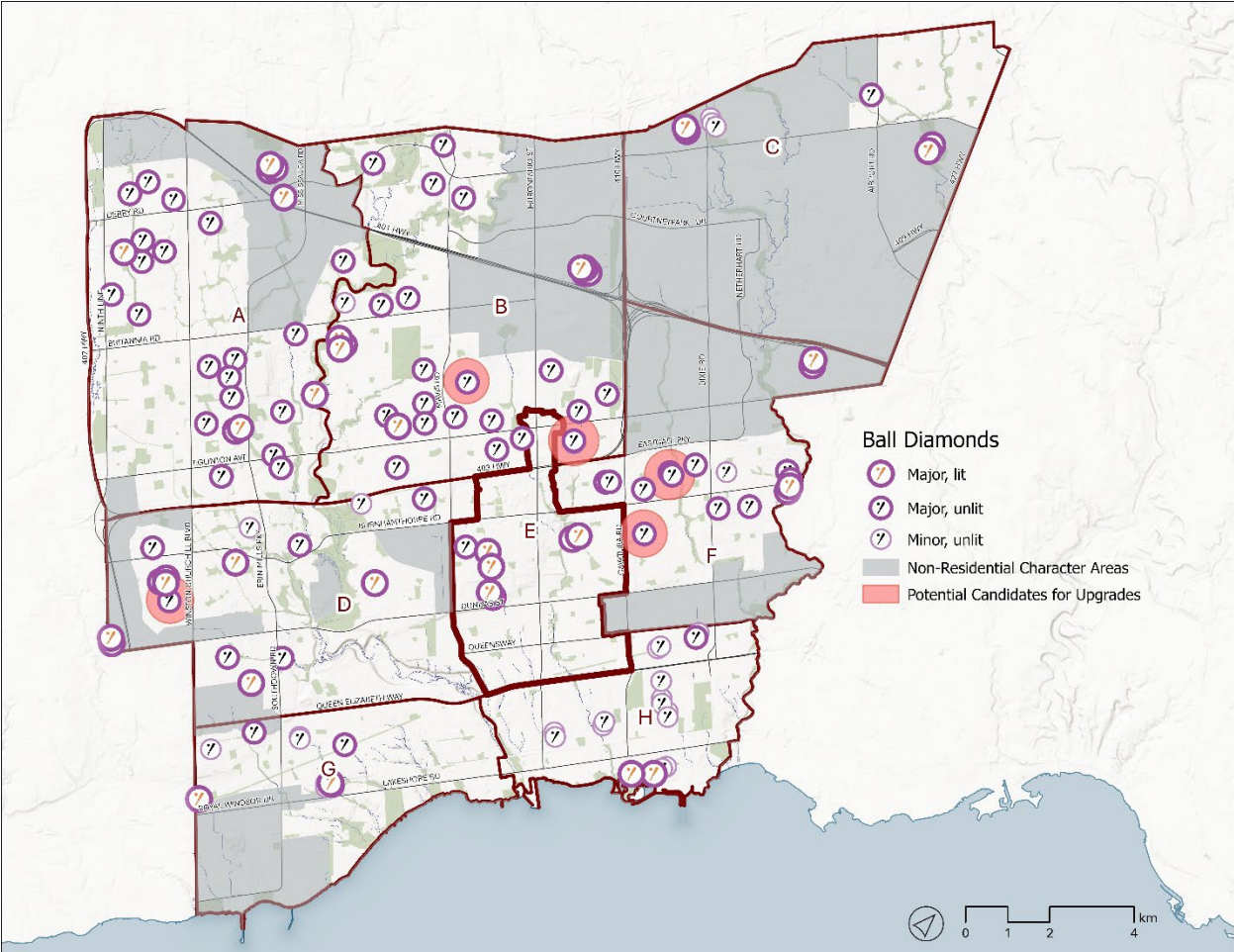
The City of Mississauga provides a wide range of park facilities to serve the needs of its diverse population. The City's core park facilities include:

1. [Ball Diamonds](#)
2. [Soccer \(rectangular Fields\)](#)
3. [Cricket](#)
4. [Outdoor Aquatic Facilities](#)
5. [Basketball](#)
6. [Tennis](#)
7. [Pickleball](#)
8. [Outdoor Fitness](#)
9. [Sand Volleyball](#)
10. [Skateboarding and BMX Facilities](#)
11. [Mountain Biking](#)
12. [Leash-Free Zones](#)
13. [Skating Facilities](#)
14. [Disc Golf](#)
15. [Community Gardens](#)
16. [Play Sites](#)
17. [Additional Facilities](#)

Each section provides an overview of the facility, a summary of feedback from residents and groups with interest and the provisioning approach (how many to supply and where).

# Ball Diamonds

Figure 6.1 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 42 lit diamonds + 87 unlit diamonds = 129 total diamonds.



**Overview:** Ball diamonds are generally used by sport organizations. Booking data from 2019 to 2022 shows utilization has decreased from approximately 61,000 hours annually to approximately 52,000. However, in 2017 and 2018, hours were 59,000 and 62,000, respectively. Given the impact of the pandemic, it is difficult to assess how much of this change is due to shifting demand and interest in the sport. The most highly utilized facilities are generally associated with premier lit diamonds. The most utilized diamonds are Ninth Line Sports Park (hardball), AE Crookes Park (softball), and Douglas Kennedy Park (hardball).

However, there are several diamonds that receive less than 150 hours of booking every year. There are several reasons that could explain the comparatively lower utilization such as temporary closures, the pandemic and limitations with the booking data and cell phone data collection method. The City should therefore collect sport field usage data and implement strategies to increase capacity and/or utilization by reviewing booking policies, fees and/or enforcement.

**Engagement Insight:** During the engagement, baseball was not raised directly by the public. However, during the sports user group session, baseball sport organizations envisioned a large outdoor facility to host national events. There was also a suggestion to upgrade some minor fields by adding lighting. Sport organizations also suggested that there are instances where groups travel outside Mississauga to access fields in times of high demand. The City's record of baseball service requests indicates that feedback for new facilities or upgrades primarily come from sport organizations except when residents are requesting for underutilized ball diamonds to be replaced with another facility. The benchmarking comparison suggests that Mississauga is around the average for the number of lit diamonds provided based on its population. An investment in more lit diamonds to replace unlit fields would address feedback from sport organizations while also moving Mississauga into a more leading position for lit fields. Consideration will need to be given to finding fields that will not receive neighbourhood complaints about lighting.

**Provisioning Strategy:** The City currently has a supply of 122 baseball/softball diamonds. These facilities are geographically spread out and league use functions on a large catchment basis, provisioning based on facility-to-population ratios and access is not recommended. Instead, the focus should be on meeting demand from sport organizations while employing strategies to address diamonds that are underutilized. Strategies can include making specific diamonds multi-use facilities, adjusting allocation to maximise field time and/or decommissioning specific facilities. The removal of facilities should be informed by engagement with community, utilization data and aligned with lifecycle replacement. These approaches ensure that existing parkland is managed efficiently.

To address demand from sport organizations, the City should collect sport field usage data and implement strategies to address any identified challenges with booking policies, fees and/or enforcement to increase capacity. If booking improvements do not sufficiently address the demand for high-quality diamonds for organized play, the City could consider adding lighting to five unlit diamonds or provide new facilities that can accommodate lighting if existing facilities are not suitable for lighting. For the latter, the City should then review opportunities to provide more diamonds at Dunton Athletic Fields and Meadowvale Sports Park as well as opportunities to acquire land in employment areas.

Improvement to the booking system would subsequently allow for a recommended target of up to five new or converted lit facilities through the following tactics in order of priority:

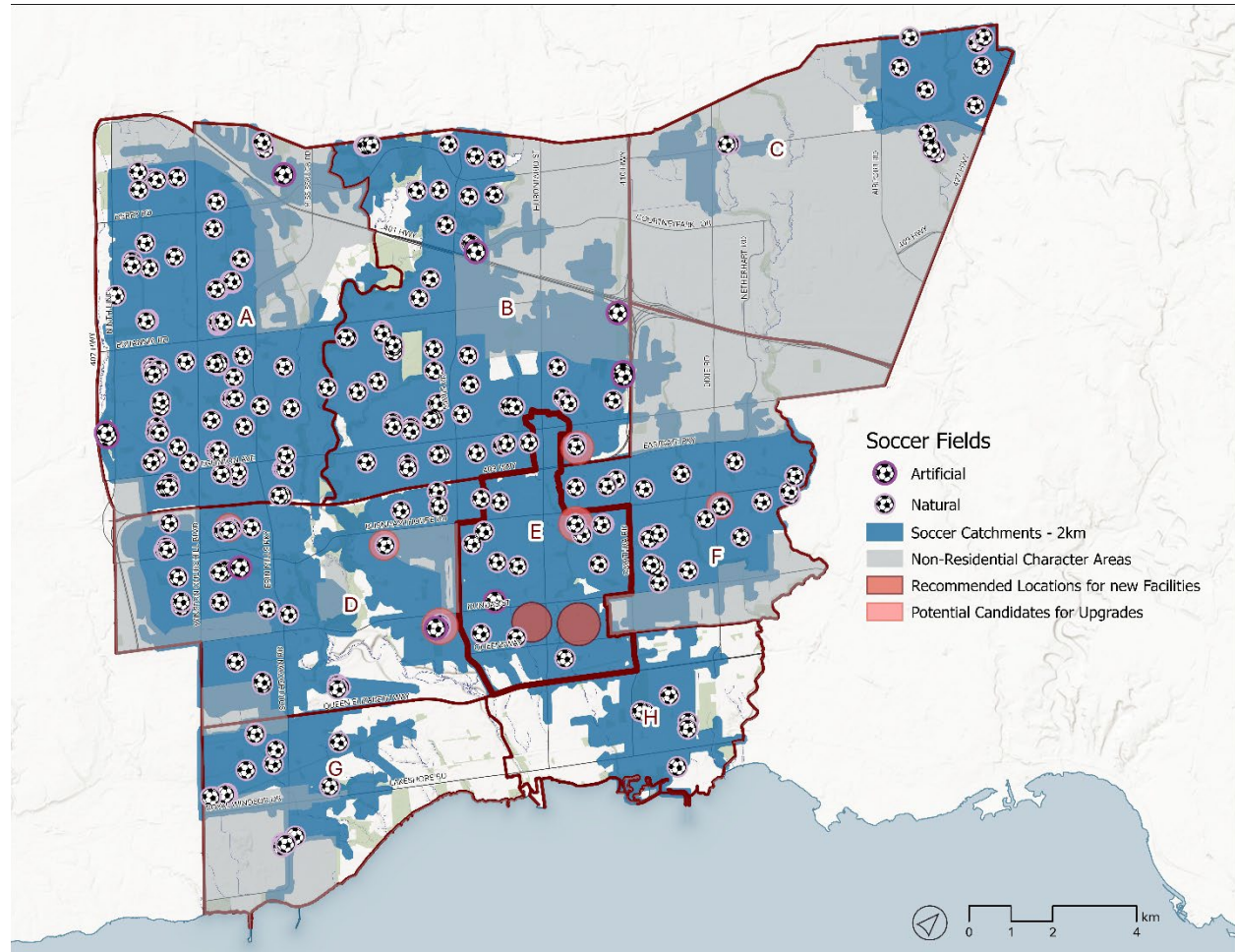
- Review well-used major unlit fields (see Figure 6.1) for potential upgrade to lit facilities by considering setbacks from residential properties.
- Seek opportunities to expand at or near diamond complexes at Dunton Athletic Fields and Meadowvale Sports Park.
- Pursue opportunities to acquire land in employment areas

## Recommendation

- 21** Identify underutilised diamonds and implement strategies to maximise recreational benefits for residents by making specific diamonds multi-use facilities, adjusting allocation to maximise field time and/or decommissioning diamonds with low utilization.

# Soccer (Rectangular Fields)

Figure 6.2 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: Eight Artificial fields, 10 lit fields, 229 unlit fields. Two new fields planned in Service Area C.



**Overview:** Soccer fields have generally broad distribution throughout the City, and they have the capacity to be multi-use (e.g., can be used for field hockey and ultimate frisbee) as well as preserving a permeable surface to capture and slowly release stormwater. Soccer fields can be booked by organized soccer leagues, and they are also popular for pick-up style play given the relatively low amount of equipment needed and flexibility in team sizes. For league play, there are varying degrees of booking demand. Overall, the number of hours for soccer has declined since 2019, from approximately 51,000 hours to 38,000 hours. However, between 2017 and 2019 total bookings hovered between 51,000 hours and 49,000 hours. It is unclear to what extent the decline is due to COVID-19. Some fields are highly utilized, and these tend to correspond to premier facilities with lighting. The top two locations for soccer are Mississauga Valley and Iceland Arena and Sports Park. On the other hand, there are several fields with less than 150 hours booked annually, with the three least used being Windwood Park (5 hours average across each field), Ridgewood Park (21 hours), and Four Winds Hollow (57.5 hours). While these are valuable indicators, booking does not fully represent actual usage, as the former does not account for spontaneous play as well as potentially unused booking.

To accommodate demand, the City has extended the playing season until Thanksgiving. While positive in enabling more play, this change puts pressure on maintaining natural fields. Since lit and artificial fields tend to serve league play, the City should generally align the supply of these types of fields with league/organized demand. This approach is explored further below.



**Engagement:** Soccer was not frequently mentioned during the public and community group engagements. One example was a suggestion for more soccer by a member of the public during an onsite interview in Service Area E. A need for an adequate supply was also referenced during the sports group session in the context of the supply of diamonds and fields overall. City staff have also confirmed that soccer is generally not commonly requested by the public. On the other hand, City staff anticipate a surge of interest in the sport in 2026 due to the World Cup being

hosted in North American cities. To support addressing these potential surges, the City should employ strategies to guide residents to fields with greater capacity such as signage and communicate real-time usage information. Installing temporary/pop-up facilities is another option to increase supply in a nimble and cost-effective manner.

**Provisioning Strategy:** The benchmarking comparison and historical provisioning suggests that Mississauga has a healthy supply and distribution (particularly of unlit fields City-wide), yet the booking data suggests there are several underutilized fields. As a result, it is not expected that future population growth will necessitate an increase in supply. Therefore, the historical per-capita target of 1 field per 3,000 residents City-wide should no longer drive service delivery. Instead, the City should pursue an access-based target to ensure equitable distribution of facilities as well as ensure demand from soccer leagues is addressed. The approach is summarized below:

- Access target generally by two kilometres, but some areas outside of this access distance (e.g., such around Mineloa and Lorne Park) can draw on existing soccer fields within school fields. This distance supports broad convenient access based on general utilization of fields, their multi-functional application (e.g., field hockey, ultimate frisbee), and unprogrammed use.
- To meet community league demand, the focus should be on upgrading existing facilities and making improvements to the booking system. The following location criteria should be used as a reference. The candidate field should be:
  - Already well used.
  - Existing or feasible for lighting
  - Can accommodate multiple uses
  - For artificial upgrades, its potential for partnerships to help offset the costs.

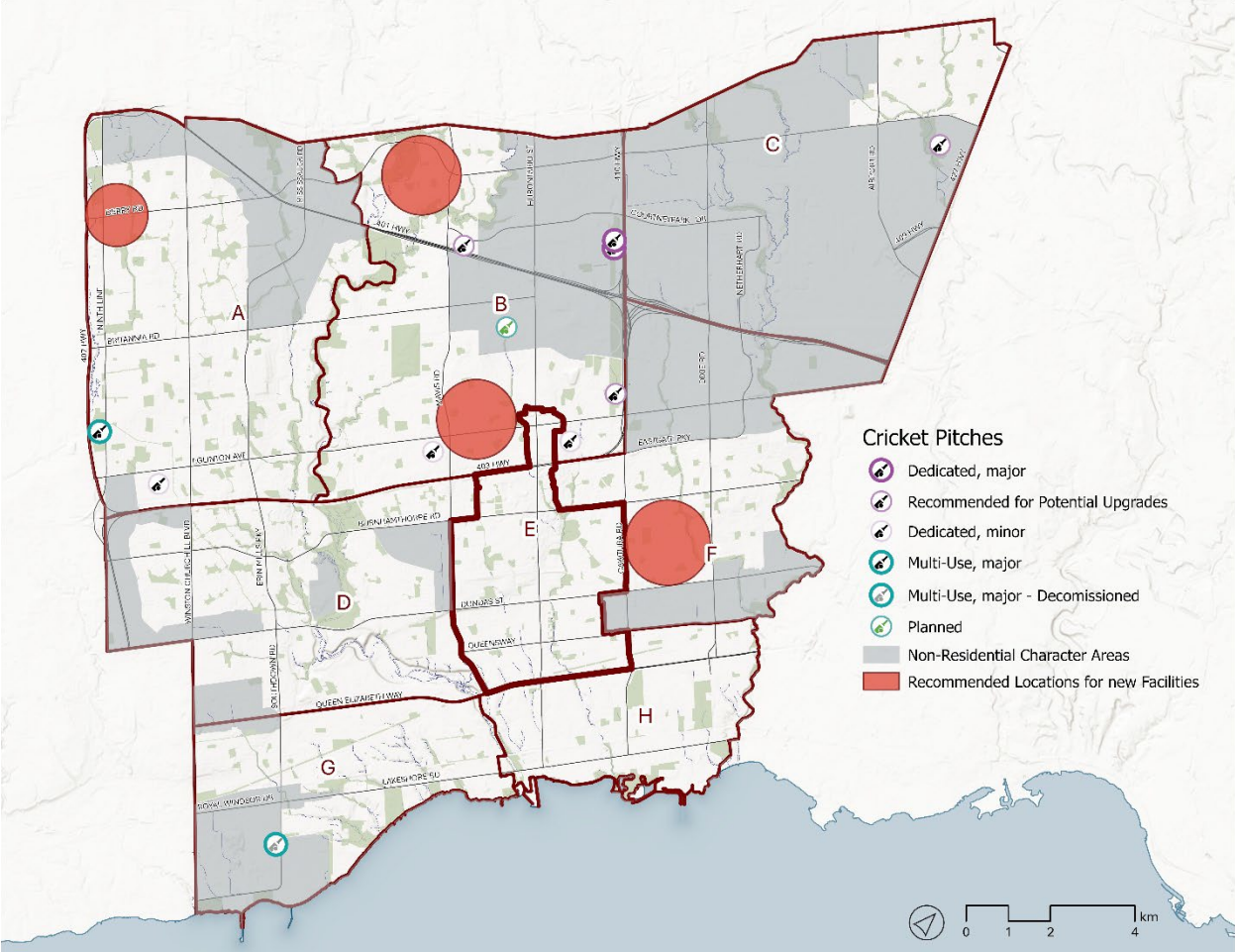
- Service Area E has fewer fields per capita and a demonstrated demand for increased supply through service requests. Additional supply through increased boxed soccer is supported.
- The City should discuss with community leagues why there is potentially less uptake in Windwood Park, Ridgewood Park, and Four Winds Hollow and how best to shift use to these fields.

## Recommendations

- 22** In addition to the two new planned soccer facilities, add up to two new soccer facilities within Service Area E, with preference around the Downtown core. Given space constraints, boxed soccer should be considered where appropriate.
- 23** Upgrade up to two existing soccer fields with lighting and artificial turf. Preferred areas of focus should be within Service Area D, Service Area E and Service Area F.

# Cricket

Figure 6.3 = 2023 Snapshot Inventory: Five dedicated fields and one shared youth pitch. Planned work: One field planned at Saigon Park and Bloor Athletic Field. Petro Park pitch will be decommissioned so it is not included in the count.



**Overview:** Cricket continues to grow as a sport in Canada. The supply of pitches in Mississauga is comparatively low to baseball and soccer fields. This is largely due to historical demand for soccer and baseball. Cricket facilities are also much larger in size and therefore more difficult to locate. City staff have noted that cricket users often use baseball diamonds and other open spaces in parks to play. Booking data shows that cricket has been steadily increasing from 2017 to 2022 (from approximately 3,000 hours to 8,000 hours) and reveals no major shifts from COVID-19. Booking demand for cricket is largely driven by adult play.

The booking data also shows that no cricket field has below 150 annual hours, which was the value used as a threshold for low usage with baseball diamonds and soccer fields. The top three most used pitches are Iceland Area and Sports Park (dedicated), Paul Coffey Park (dedicated), and Courtneypark Athletic Fields (dedicated). The City should monitor usage and make changes to booking policies, fees and enforcement, where appropriate, to maximize capacity.

Maintaining cricket fields can be relatively costly, particularly around the pitch and wickets. These cost impacts should be considered as part of the provisioning approach.

**Engagement:** During the engagement, cricket user groups spoke of the strong utilization of pitches (at least during the weekends), and the hope to upgrade existing facilities with supportive amenities including washrooms/change rooms (or clubhouse), lighting, shaded viewing areas and batting practice areas.

Regulation-size cricket pitches and associated buffers require a large amount of vacant parkland. These spatial requirements present a challenge in finding new locations for pitches. Beyond unanticipated opportunities to acquire land within an employment zone, there is likely only land capacity for one or two more facilities. Cricket pitches also cost more to maintain because of a higher service for grass cutting. Practice areas such as batting cages offer a way to help respond to user groups' requests while reducing the pressure on larger facilities like regulation-sized pitches.

The City of Brampton to the north is an outlier in providing significantly more cricket pitches for its population. However, the benchmarking comparison (which does not include Brampton) indicates that Mississauga has an above-average supply of cricket pitches. As a result, the broader trend supports Mississauga's approach to seek increases in supply where possible but does not suggest a major deficit.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Given the challenge of finding locations for new facilities (including cost of land for parcels large enough to accommodate cricket) and the willingness of league players to travel longer distances to play, provisioning should not be tied to supply per population ratios nor access targets. Instead, the primary driver should be in improving existing facilities in terms of quality and consideration for amenities (e.g., washrooms, lighting, shaded viewing areas and batting practice areas) where appropriate and adding one to two new facilities, which aligns with Mississauga's spatial capacity. The City should also encourage the use of underutilized baseball diamonds for casual cricket play and practice.

Another important way of improving existing pitches is to make them more durable to handle greater and longer usage. The amenities noted above will support this approach and can be supplemented by incorporating design features and materials that can reduce damages and likewise maintenance costs. Artificial wicket areas, for instance, can decrease the impact from play such divots and rips in the turf grass. As a result, the frequency of repairs and replacement turf would be lowered.

The recommended investments below are focused on meeting organized/league demand while also advancing the strategic priorities, particularly for growing and connecting parkland and efficient parkland development operations and maintenance. The central objective is to ensure users can access opportunities primarily for recreational play to serve local leagues. Given the pressures on limited parkland, and increasing impacts on maintenance, the intent is not to create the type of facilities that are oriented to serve as an international hub for competitive play. The only circumstance where these types of facilities are recommended for consideration is where the private sector is able to approach the City with a stand-alone or joint venture partnership.





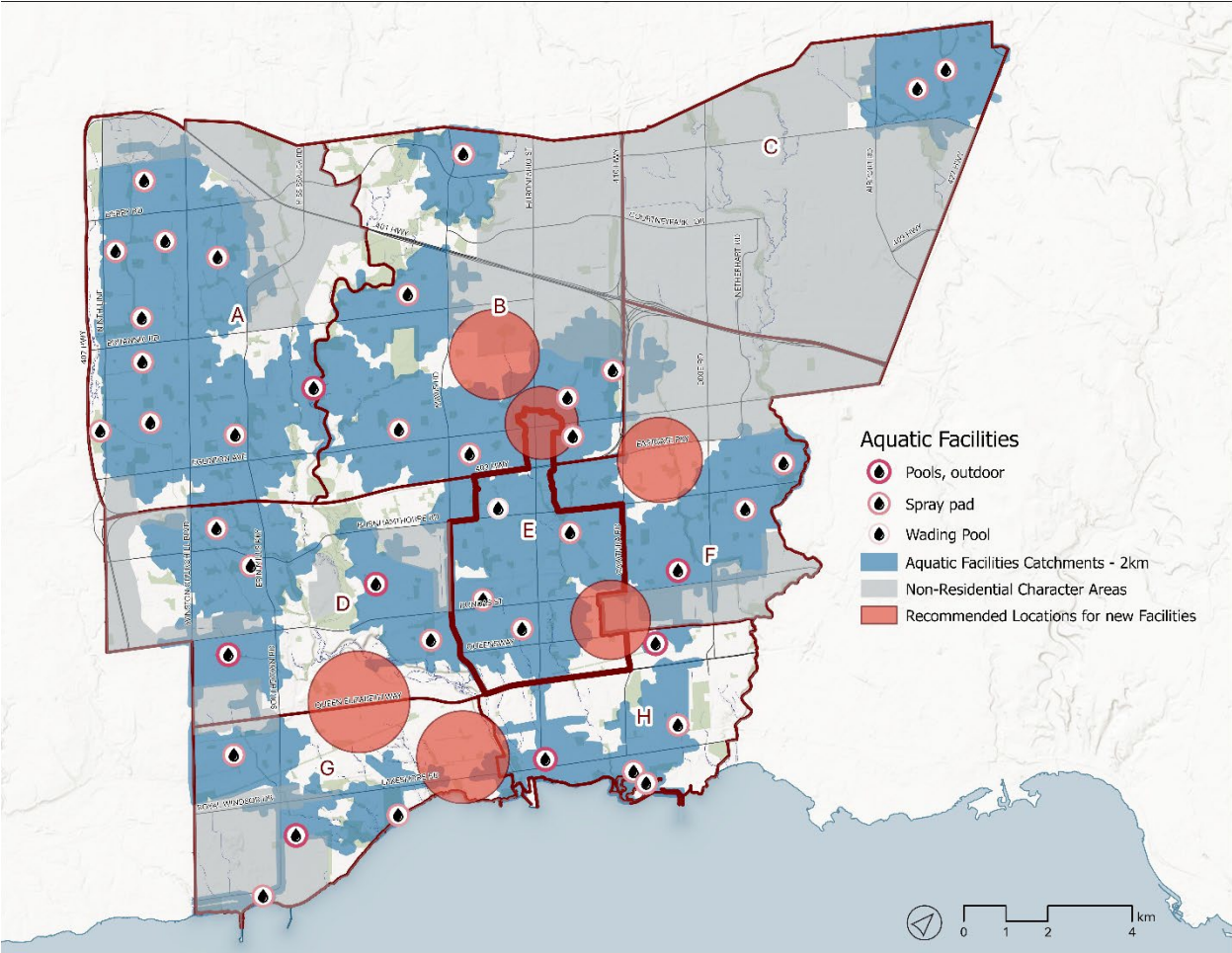
## Recommendations

- 24** To address organized demand, construct an additional three cricket facilities inclusive of the two planned facilities and provide amenity upgrades like shade and washrooms to three pitches with a focus on Iceland, Courtneypark Athletic Fields, and Paul Coffey.

Note: See Section 5 for a recommendation on considering artificial wicket areas

# Outdoor Aquatic Facilities

Figure 6.4 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 32 spray pads, one wading pool and seven outdoor pools.



**Overview:** Outdoor aquatic facilities in Mississauga are composed of spray pads, wading pools, and outdoor pools. Spray pads are especially popular among residents as one of the most requested facilities. These facilities will play an increasingly important role as more frequent periods of extreme heat are anticipated and spray pads offer relief to cool off. This is particularly important for residents who do not have air conditioning.

Wading pools are generally not supported as a facility beyond what is provided at Celebration Square, as they have special operational requirements (e.g., lifeguard staffing). Outdoor pools are incorporated in the mapping inventory in the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan as a reference, but direction is provided through the 2024 Future Directions Recreation Plan.

Based on mobile data, the top used water facility is Celebration Square (by a magnitude of five compared to the next most popular). The facilities with the least visits are the pool at Westacres Park and the spray park at A.E Crookes Park.

The challenge in providing more spray pads is primarily due to the capital, operating, and maintenance/lifecycle costs. To ensure park budgets continue sustainably, these facilities cannot be provided in every park, but they should be accessible within a reasonable distance of residential areas.

**Engagement:** For spray pads, City staff have noted that there is a growing expectation for these facilities to be within walking distance of residential areas. During the engagement, suggestions for new spray pads were raised by the public during onsite interviews as well as groups with interest during sessions. City staff have noted there is also a high quantity of service requests for new water play facilities, particularly in what was formerly Service Area 4.



City staff and the engagement suggest that there is also a desire for these facilities to have more interesting design features as well as supportive amenities where appropriate such as washrooms, shade structures, and seating. To help with better utilization to support the investment, the City should consider constructing neighbourhood spray pads that can enable ice skating around the features in winter. While precedents exist in Ontario, a design constraint is the mechanical features including ground jets and spray features while still providing unimpeded skating.

**Provisioning Strategy:** The City should provide as a general target access to spray pads within 2 km of residential areas to address growing demand while also recognizing the capital, operating and maintenance challenges. As a result, prioritized gaps to be addressed have been identified by considering distances, population densities, and demonstrated demand.

Once gaps are largely addressed, the focus should be on upgrading certain facilities by considering new features and supportive amenities. For the latter, the City should review any spray pads that are understood to be busy or well-used to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of adding washroom access, shade, and seating. The spray pad at Floradale Park for instance could benefit from seating, and shade from structures or trees. Neighbourhood sprays pad are oriented to serve the neighbourhood, so there is generally an expectation that residents would be within access to their home washroom. However, temporary washrooms (portable toilets) could also be considered.

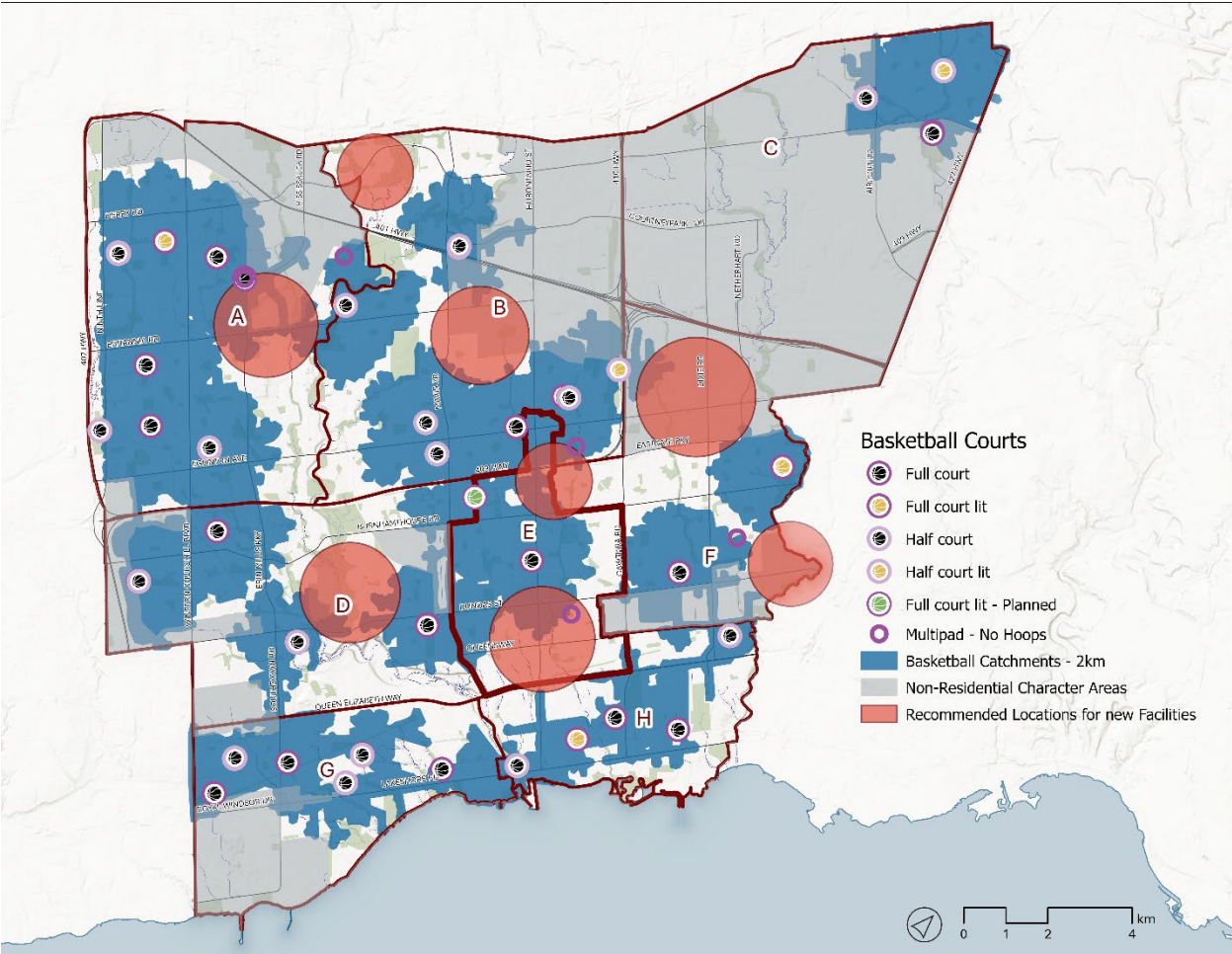
While the benchmarking comparison is not used as a driver for provisioning, it nonetheless supports the recommended additional investment in spray pads.

## Recommendation

- 25 Construct six new spray pads to address access gaps.

# Basketball

Figure 6.5 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 25 unlit full courts, four lit full courts, 23 unlit half courts, and four lit half courts. Planned work: a new court at Zonta Meadows.



**Overview:** The City of Mississauga provides full court multi-purpose pads and half-court basketball pads with hoops. There are currently also four pads that do not have hoops. The City recently built enhanced basketball courts in Malton. It was sponsored by Nav Batia, who is known as the Raptors Super Fan. The benchmarking comparison suggests that Mississauga has a slightly below average provision overall for outdoor basketball. Based on income, basketball can be a relatively inclusive sport because it does not require expensive equipment. It is typically played by a younger demographic so non-vehicular accessibility (walking, biking, skateboarding, etc.) is important.

The sport is not currently a bookable facility, though City staff have noted they receive requests for this ability from leagues and community organizations. Organized play can provide benefits such as training, but it may also run the risk of obstructing drop-in accessible play for all levels. To offer a balance, the City should consider allowing residents to book a basketball court for tournaments on a limited basis. While no insight can be drawn from bookings, the visitation data suggests differences in the busyness of these courts. The highest

visited courts are Colonial Terrace, Bella Vista (full court), Paul Coffey Park (four full courts), and Lake Aquitaine Park (full court). Lower visitation was identified at Dellwood Park (full court) and Malton Village Park (full court).

**Engagement:** During the engagement, basketball was requested through onsite interviews and focus group conversations with youth. City staff have also noted that basketball is a commonly requested facility, with some interest in permitting courts to help manage play availability. In addition to encouraging exercise and fun, basketball courts can be inclusive spaces for youth.



*Basketball Court - Churchill Meadows.  
Credit: Scott Norsworthy*

There are important considerations in planning more basketball courts. Noise and the potential for lighting can necessitate sufficient setbacks from residential properties. Acoustic buffers should be considered in cases where this is not possible, but cost is a constraint to wide use of these amenities. On the other hand, users benefit from closer walkable access to courts that can have a neighbourhood reach (as opposed to larger City-wide facilities) that do not require parking.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Given demand and to support walk-to facilities, the City should broadly seek access around 2 km. Where space and buffers allow, preference should be to install full courts. To support multifunctionality and efficient use of space, new courts should consider enabling uses for ball-hockey, pickleball, tennis, fitness, lacrosse, and ice-rinks in the winter. Additional guidance is summarized below:

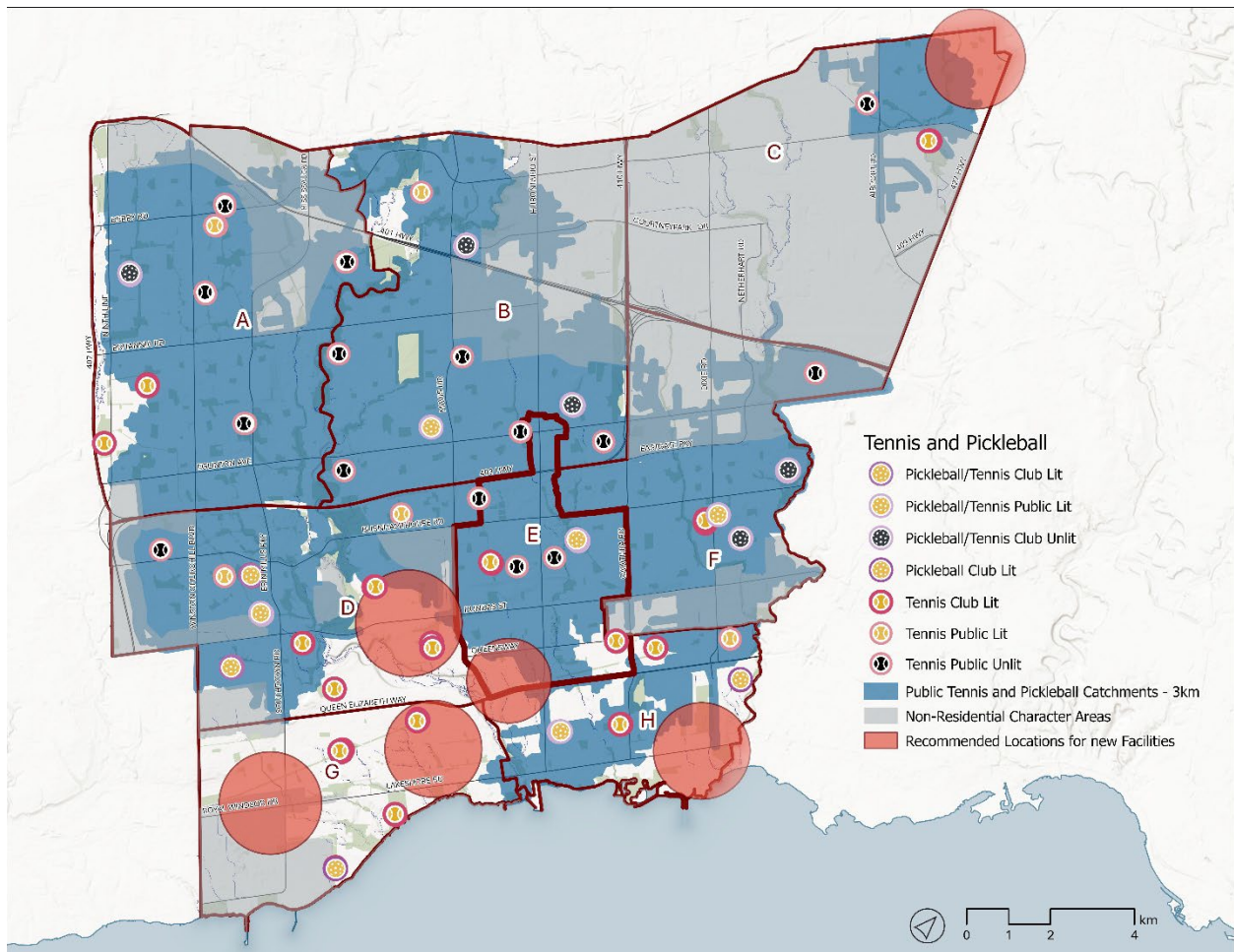
- Basketball courts are currently not lit in Mississauga. If this feature is considered in the future, it is recommended that it be contingent on increased setbacks from residential areas. This approach is intended to address noise pollution at later hours.
- The City should pilot two strategies to advance usage and allocation: (1) allow residents to book courts for tournaments on a limited basis, and (2) initiate a new system to encourage more regular turn-over and allocation of use at one of the City's most visited courts (see above). Strategies could include new signage encouraging turn-over, a sign-up sheet for games, or QR codes to book timeslots.
- To support EDI, consider aligning hours of operations for courts with hours of operation in the parks by-law, in instances where courts are not immediately adjacent to residential properties (>60m setback).

## Recommendation

- 26** Build up to eight new basketball facilities to meet access provisions. It should consider partnerships with schools where possible and appropriate.

# Tennis

Figure 6.6 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 159 courts



**Overview:** Outdoor tennis is provided through City-operated public courts and club-operated courts. Club courts are intended for more competitive and/or dedicated play. Residents are willing to pay a fee to have enhanced amenities like club houses and lighting. While some public courts also have lighting, it is not the City’s standard.

Benchmarking comparisons suggest that Mississauga successfully supplies tennis courts in line with other municipalities. Utilization data was not available to assess usage, however mobile data indicates the shared tennis and pickleball courts at Quenippenon Meadows have relatively high visitation. On the low end of visitation is Meadowwood Park (shared club tennis), Max Ward Park (public tennis) and West-acres Park (club tennis). Staff have noted that demand tends to be concentrated in the evening after work or school. The 2019 Future Directions Plan also noted under-utilized courts in Malton as well as several club courts south of Dundas Street. Amalgamation continues to be a recommended option.

City staff have also noted requests for better facilities and more year-round usage. While the City has enabled year-round play on the outdoor courts, their use would be weather

dependent (e.g., no snow). Lighting would support extended play into the shoulder seasons with earlier sunrises/sunsets. A more costly alternative is to install domes/bubbles, which residents have suggested for the area of Meadowvale. The City generally does not support bubbles/domes, except for cases already under consideration. This position generally follows current practices found in the environmental scan and benchmarking data.

**Engagement:** City staff have said that tennis is a commonly requested facility, usually due to existing courts being at capacity and residents desiring more courts to be built. During the engagement, suggestions were noted to make tennis more accessible to the public in general and to youth in particular. While the supply of public courts and club courts is relatively even, there are differences in distribution across the City. Clubs require a membership to join, which could be a deterrent for individuals and families with lower incomes. To ensure a level of public access, club courts are currently required to host at least five free open houses where courts are available to the public. Scheduling and promotion currently rely on the clubs.

**Provisioning Strategy:** The focus of the City should be to increase public access to courts through several interweaving approaches. These approaches are outlined below. In addition, converting underutilized club courts to public facilities should continue to be part of the provisioning strategy. To inform a future decision, the City should discuss current and trending utilization with tennis clubs and associations as this will support identifying any potential locations. Overall, this approach aligns with making efficient and effective use of existing spaces as outlined under the Strategic Priority Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management.

- Target access to public tennis courts within 3km of residential areas. Since club courts may not be serving residents purely by catchment, it is recommended to not include these within access targets. However, access to club courts should be considered based Service Areas.
- At public courts with demonstrated capacity issues, the City should consider upgrading courts with lighting where appropriate and on a case-by case basis. The City should also pilot approaches to direct users to alternative, less busy courts nearby and/or alternative times (e.g., signage). Finally, the City could consider piloting a reservation app that can be used on a mobile device.
- The City should explore strategies to increase public access to club operated courts and shared use facilities. This should include:
  - A review of club rental rates
  - Potential rebates for lower income groups
  - City-led promotion or piloting different approaches to public access days (e.g., reserving at least one court for public use on certain days)
  - Conversions of club courts to public courts. The geographic focus of this tactic should be in Service Area D, Service Area G, and Service Area H, which have a higher share of club tennis
  - Promotion of shared-use facilities
- The supply and utilization of indoor tennis should be assessed for capacity in the recreation component of the 2024 Future Directions Plan.



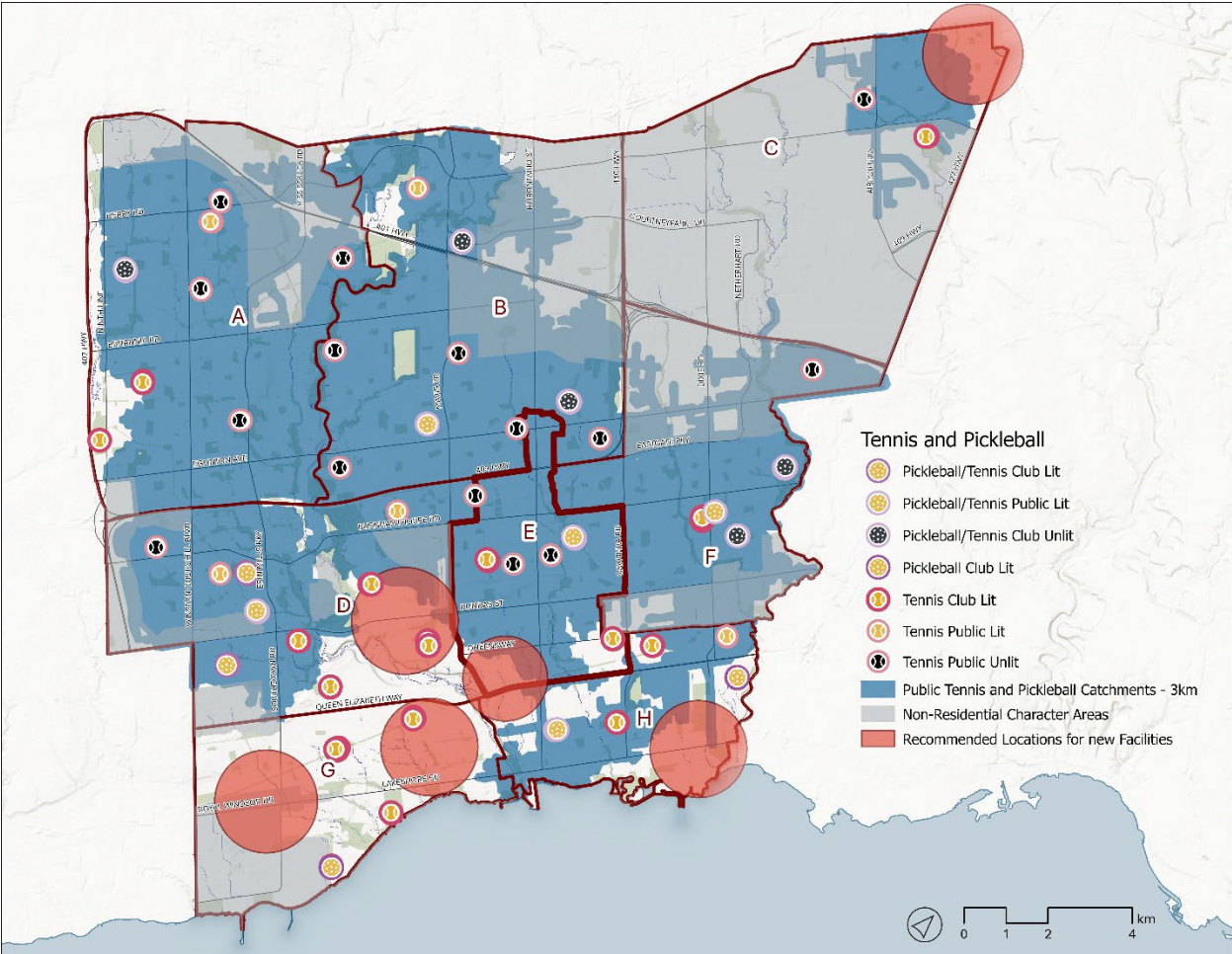
## Recommendations

- 27** Provide four new public multi-use tennis and pickleball court locations within Service Area E (in the Cooksville area) and Service Area H (in proximity to the waterfront) as priority locations.
- 28** Upgrade one unlit public tennis court location with lighting. Preliminary candidates to assess should include Courtneypark Athletic Fields, Fairwinds Park, McKechnie Woods, and Quenippenon Meadows with spot checks to validate usage. Other courts with capacity issues could also be considered.



# Pickleball

Figure 6.7: (Same as figure 6.6)  
 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 41 shared courts; four dedicated



**Overview:** Pickleball continues to be a growing sport around Canada and within Mississauga. The City of Mississauga provides a combination of shared-use courts with tennis as well as a smaller supply of dedicated courts. Benchmarking suggests that the City of Mississauga currently provides access beyond the average, while in general leaning more on shared facilities.

One of the challenges with building more pickleball courts is finding sufficient setbacks or acoustic dampening amenities to address noise. Sharing courts with tennis is a positive way to maximize the use of courts, but at very busy locations, there could be competition for the courts between the uses.



**Engagement:** During the engagement, a desire for more pickleball was raised through the onsite interviews and as well as a meeting with resident groups. City staff have also indicated that they have received service requests for more dedicated courts. Given the continuing growth of the sport nationally, demand is anticipated to rise.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Like tennis, the provision of pickleball can be considered based on access. To be consistent with tennis, it is recommended that pickleball

courts use 3 km catchment areas. The priority should be to advance the conversion of public tennis-only courts by adding lines for pickleball and encourage the same at club courts.

The preference for shared-use courts with tennis is recommended. This approach supports an efficient use of limited land as dedicated facilities between the two sports would require more space. This approach also allows the City to increase access to the two sports more feasibly as it can draw on existing court conversion.

On the other hand, the City should support one location for a consolidated node of dedicated pickleball courts. This single location can facilitate tournaments while acting as a hub for pickleball users, ideally located in an accessible area. It also responds to resident demand for dedicated courts while generally maintaining the overall approach to shared facilities.

New shared and dedicated courts should have sufficient setback distances from residential land uses. This approach is recommended where possible. Where not possible, acoustic dampening through fencing material or berms is recommended.

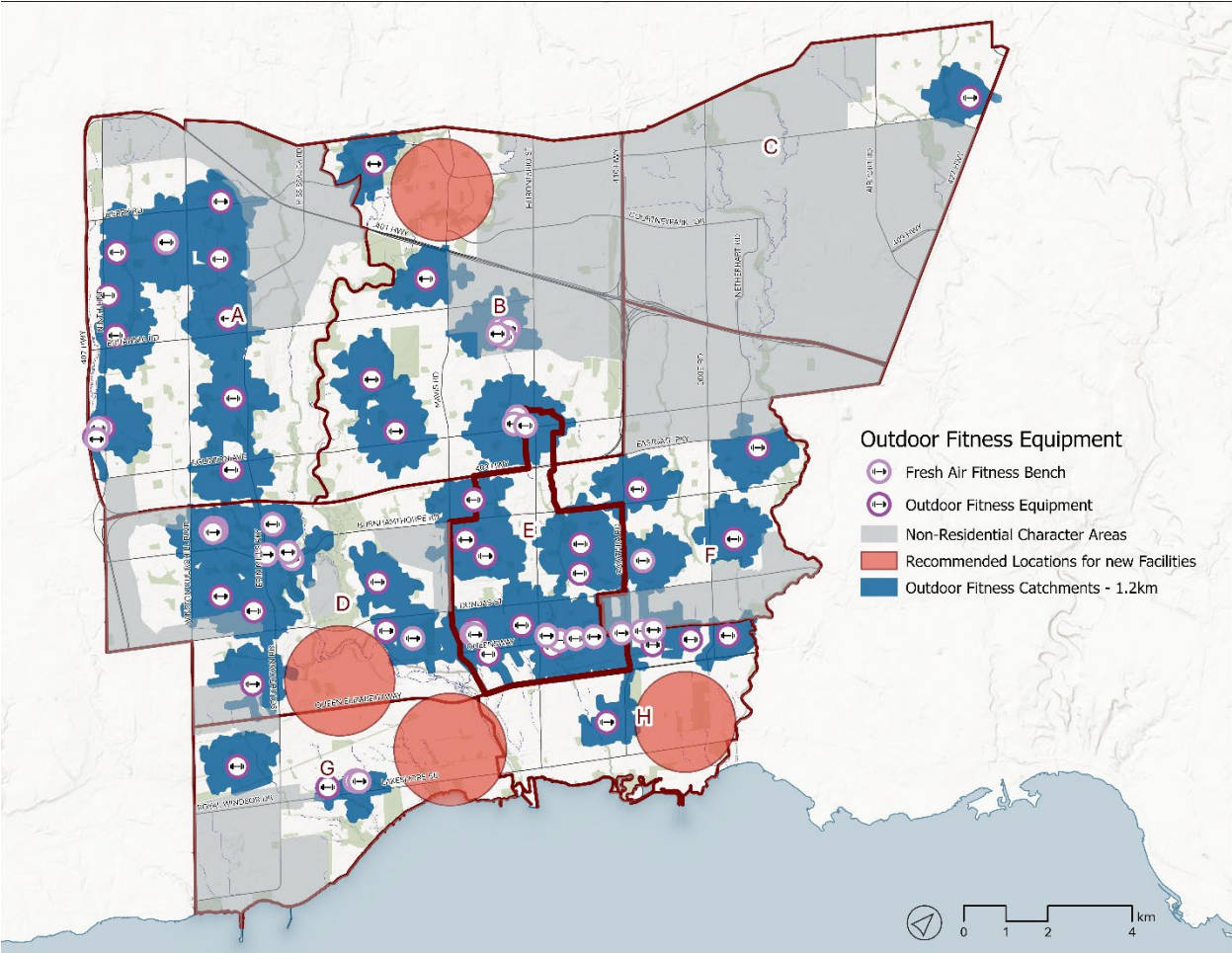
## Recommendation

- 29** Install one dedicated pickleball location that could provide a consolidated facility (six or more courts) for dedicated pickleball. Add pickleball lines to all remaining public tennis courts (up to 22 courts) where appropriate (e.g., exclude courts used for tournament play and with less than the minimum setback distances).

Note: Pickleball shares a recommendation with tennis to add four new court locations. See the Tennis section for further detail.

# Outdoor Fitness

Figure 6.8 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 32 locations



**Overview and Benchmarking:** The City of Mississauga has now installed multiple outdoor fitness locations within each service area, except for Service Area C (Malton), which has one. The benchmarking comparison suggests this quantity is above average.

**Engagement:** City staff have noted an uncertainty about the extent of utilization for these facilities. During the engagement, suggestions for more outdoor fitness facilities were raised during onsite interviews and a discussion with youth. City staff also noted it is a popular request.

From a design standpoint, City staff have noted that the facilities work best when combined with other facilities, such as walking loops and playgrounds. Several manufacturers of these facilities focus on the benefits for older demographics and other individuals with limited mobility. The outdoor fitness equipment typically relies on body weight and thereby offer a relatively accessible system that encourages a more physical activity and promotes health. However, a study has noted when these facilities do not include instruction, there can be a higher risk of misuse and accidents.

Facilities in other cities also show a variety of new designs that are emerging, from new machines to circuits that appeal to younger demographics. A notable example is Bondi Beach in Sydney AUS, which includes a variety of features and is popularly used for workouts.

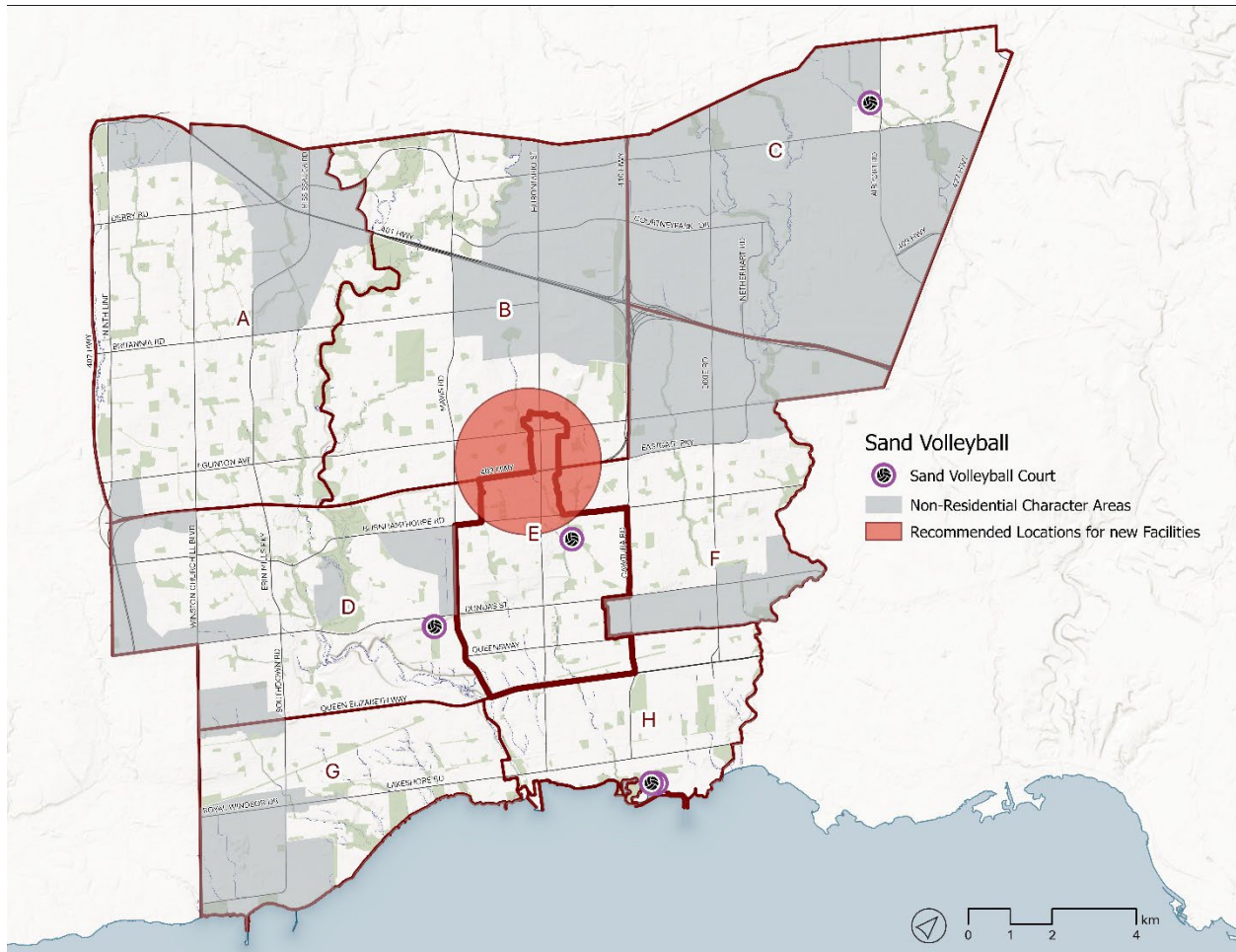
### Provisioning Strategy

- Provisioning for outdoor fitness stations should be based on demonstrated demand as well as location criteria. This approach is based on the uncertainty around how well the facilities are used and provides flexibility for the City to plan for this facility. As such, there are no recommended investments at part of the 2024 Future Directions Plan, but new investments may be put forward as opportunities arise over the next five years. The following location criteria should be considered:
- The following location criteria should be referred to when considering new facilities:
  - Consider creating circuits along trails
  - Ensure the location is accessible for a variety of users as well as visible
  - Encourage locating facilities adjacent to other facilities to create nodes
  - Consider park locations that have higher usage.
  - Encourage good geographic distribution relative to existing outdoor fitness stations
  - Align with the lifecycle replacement of playground and/or park development and redevelopments.



# Sand Volleyball

Figure 6.9 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: Eight courts at four locations



**Overview:** The City of Mississauga provides eight sand volleyball courts at four locations. At Huron Park, booking totalled approximately 400 hours, which is double the hours vs. 2016.<sup>3</sup> Annual permitting at Lakefront Promenade Park has been stable since 2017 at approximately 1,500 to 1,600 hours.

Some areas in Canada have seen the sport recently grow in popularity, particularly with a younger demographic. Spot checks previously undertaken by the City of Mississauga suggest a typical age profile for the sport is within 15 to 39 years of age. Like basketball and soccer, sand volleyball can also be played with relatively little equipment that is also affordable and easy to transport. It can also be played recreationally with varying amounts of players. It is of benefit to the park system to ensure there are facilities that are engaging residents within the age range noted above.

<sup>3</sup> 2019 FD Plan, 71

Sand volleyball is also relatively low cost as a facility for the City to provide given its modest infrastructural features and size. However, maintenance can be challenging (e.g., wind blowing sand on to adjacent grass). Alternative design approaches include installing permanent nets on grass rather than sand and installing pop-up netting for temporary programming.

The benchmarking comparison also underlines that not all cities have municipally provided outdoor volleyball. As such, it should still be considered a niche facility that adds to the variety of park uses (particularly along the waterfront) but not necessarily a core provision for the City of Mississauga.

**Engagement:** During the engagement volleyball was suggested once (during onsite interviews). However, City staff have noted a few volleyball service requests, but this may be a pandemic-era trend. It is unclear the extent to which this surge in interest is temporary as indoor volleyball facilities were closed.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Given the current niche nature of sand volleyball, utilizing access-based provisions is not recommended. Instead, the focus should be on considering new facilities only where there is demonstrated demand (e.g., through service requests) and location criteria. The following location criteria should be considered:

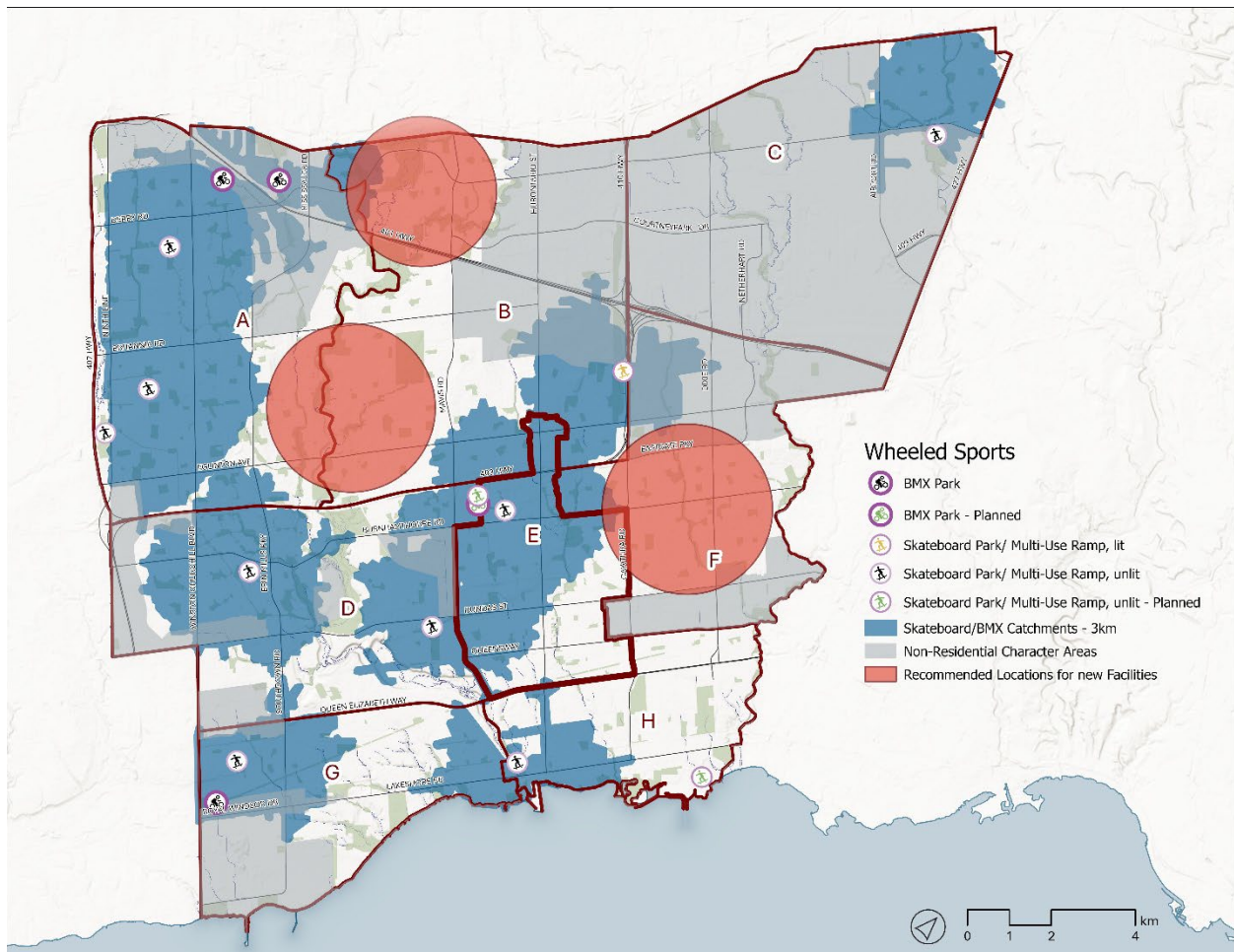
- Consideration should be given to the feasibility of installing pop-up nets on grass by programming through community recreation centres.
- Locate new facilities sufficiently away from other park facilities that will be impacted by sand migration.

## Recommendation

- 30** Construct one sand volleyball court in Service Area E in proximity to the Urban Growth Centre.

# Skateboarding and BMX Facilities

Figure 7.10 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 10 Skateboard parks; two BMX parks. Planned work: a new skateboard park in Lakeview Village Neighbourhood and several new beginner-level facilities in parks like Old Ridge park and Gulleden Park. There is also a new BMX Pump track planned at Zonta Meadows Park.



**Overview:** Skateboard facilities and BMX pump tracks are generally youth-oriented, though demographic analyses conducted beyond Mississauga underscore that there are users beyond age 18. As such, convenient access beyond the automobile is particularly important.

Following the new skate park at Mattamy Sports Park, the City of Mississauga now has 10 skate parks and 2 BMX parks. The benchmarking comparison suggests that the City of Mississauga is providing a supply of skateparks and BMX facilities beyond the average of comparable cities.

The proposed approach to the 2019 Future Directions Plan was to reduce the pressure on major facilities and increase overall access by installing more smaller-scale beginner-focused facilities within neighbourhoods. This approach continues to be supported in principle in the current plan, but usage of these facilities should be established through spot checks. These visits could also be used to gather more feedback from users.

**Engagement:** These facilities were not mentioned during the engagements. However, City staff have noted that there is a growing expectation to provide walkable access to skateboard parks. The skateboard community has also requested more interesting and enhanced facilities (from types of features as well as lighting). Currently the only lit facility is at Iceland Arena. As with other facilities, lighting is important for extending the hours of use. As a space for youth in the evenings and given safety considerations around skateboarding at night, lighting at major facilities near community centres is supported but should be examined on a case by case basis.

City staff have also noted that service requests for new facilities are generally concentrated in Streetsville, Port Credit and Downtown. These considerations are overlaid along with an access-based provision assessment below.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Skateboarding parks and BMX pump tracks attract a younger demographic, including those that do not have a car. This context as well as demand support using access targets to track provisioning. It is recommended to seek 3 km access.

Skateboard parks are currently not lit in Mississauga with the exception of the facility at Iceland Arena and Sports Park. If this feature is considered in the future, it is recommended that it be contingent on increased setbacks from residential areas. This approach is intended to address noise pollution at later hours.

The following guidance should also be considered:

- Before constructing a new facility, engage with the local skateboarding community as well as a specialty designer consultant to determine how best to approach features and site design.
- In locating sites, consider the option for skate parks near City-owned buildings like community centres, libraries, and fire stations. Being close to these facilities supports safety and adult supervision, which is important as a youth-oriented activity where injuries occur. It also supports additional, supportive amenities such as washroom access and water fountains.
- New facilities should be located in accordance with design guidelines for skateboard parks.

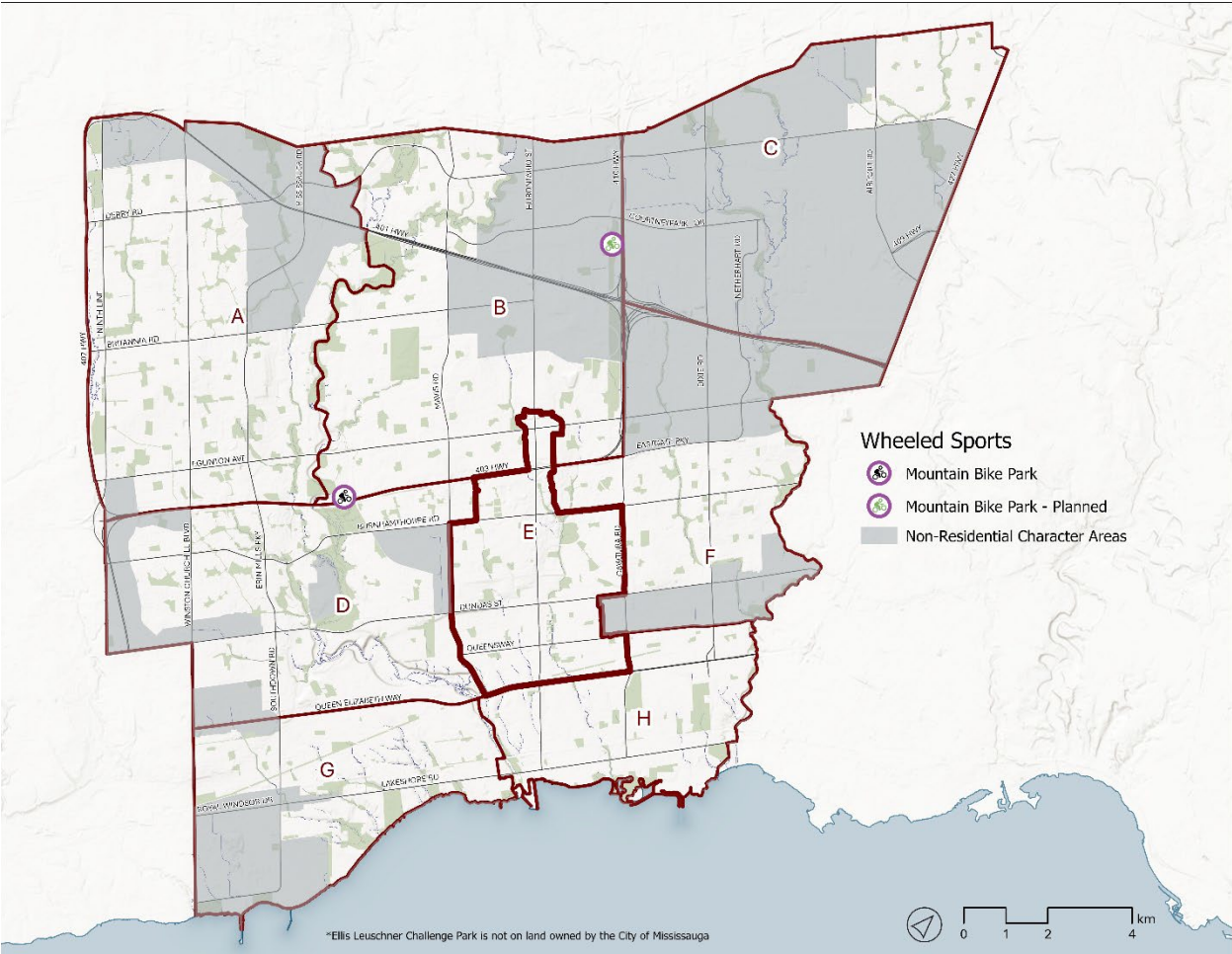
## Recommendation

- 31** Construct up to three new skateboard facilities in addition to the one planned for Lakeview Neighbourhood to address the most pronounced gaps: Service Area F, and the north and south ends of Service Area B. Address remaining gaps through smaller, beginner level additions where appropriate.



# Mountain Biking

Figure 6.11 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: One location where mountain biking is a formally acknowledged use. Planned facility: Danville Park.



**Overview and Engagement:** The City has one area where mountain biking is a formally acknowledged use: Ellis Leuschner Challenge Park. However, it is, not on City-owned land. There is therefore limited potential to redevelop the facility.

City staff have also noted requests received for more mountain biking facilities, including from a newly registered group (Mississauga Mountain Bike Association). Interest is in locating a facility in natural areas because they often provide the most sought-after riding experiences, given the variable inclines/declines, weaving through trees, and immersion within nature. However, it is a strategic priority to protect natural areas and therefore introducing active recreational uses within natural areas is not supported.

The cities reviewed as part of the benchmarking comparison generally have a location or locations somewhere within a natural area with single-track trails that are permitted. However, like Mississauga, these are not publicized and promoted on City websites nor are single-track trails included within official trail maps. Instead, user databases such as Trailforks.ca can help

determine where single-track trails exist, though these sites are not appropriate from an environmental standpoint. Reviewing these databases within Mississauga suggests that there are several unofficial existing single-track loops, including within Erindale Park and along Etobicoke Creek.<sup>4</sup>

Locating a new facility to meet this demand can be challenging, given the risk of ecological damage. There are options the City can employ to help guide use to a new location and seek to stop or limit use in areas that are prioritized for conservation or restoration. These options may not stop use in these areas but can support the City in offering a balance between recreational demand and natural preservation. These options include (1) collaborating with local user groups to encourage members, (2) signage and enforcement, and (3) promoting the new location through websites, trail maps, and investing in supportive amenities (e.g., seating at the trail-head).

**Provisioning Strategy:** Given the limited supply and the special locational requirements, access metrics are not recommended. Instead, the approach over the next ten years should be to install a new facility and seek to manage the officially promoted use while de-commissioning trails that are contributing to the degradation of natural features. The location currently under consideration is Danville Park.

Once a new facility is established, the following is guidance to support managing mountain biking:

- Consider adding supportive amenities to encourage usage at the new facility, including parking/active transportation access, signage, and seating at the trail head.
- Conduct ecological assessments on known popular mountain bike (MTB) locations to determine which are (and are not) contributing to the degradation of natural features.
- It is recommended to host a workshop with representatives from MTB associations to discuss results of assessments and opportunities to best manage use in these areas. One potential avenue is to decommission/re-naturalize certain trails.

## Recommendation

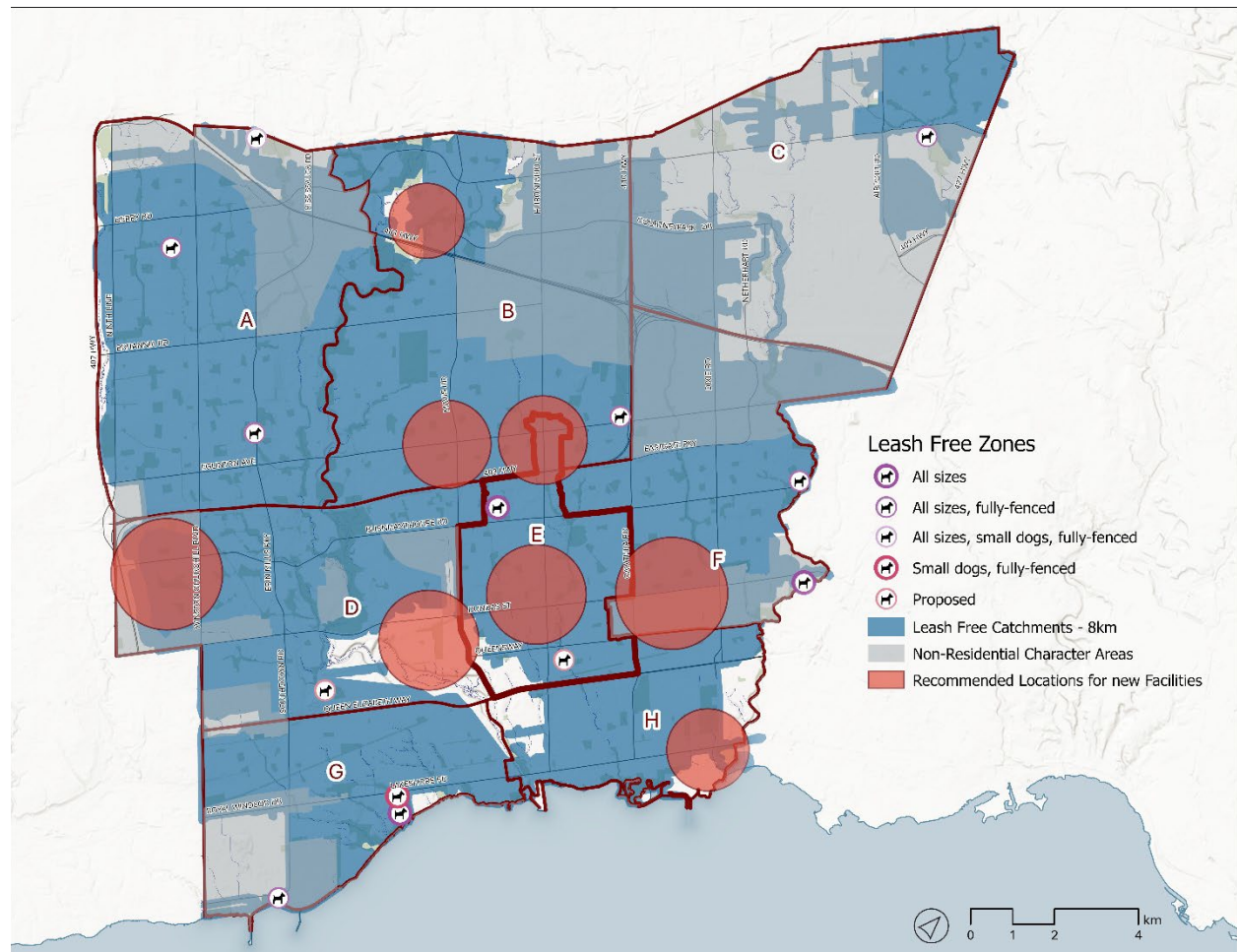
- 32** Explore establishing one mountain biking facility in partnership with community sports groups.

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<sup>4</sup> Singletracks.com, Strava, and Trailforks.ca were reviewed to identify the most popular trail routes in Mississauga.

# Leash-Free Zones

Figure 6.12 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 10 facilities. Planned work: One in Service areas D and E.



**Overview:** The City of Mississauga has created 10 leash-free zones (LFZ) across the City, of which responsibilities are shared with the volunteer group, Leash Free Mississauga. Moving forward, the City of Mississauga will take a more leading role. The City is in the process of developing a new LFZ at Danville Park. There are also other candidates that are under consideration: a location within Service Area E and Service Area D.<sup>5</sup> The benchmarking comparison currently places Mississauga behind the average although these two proposed facilities would not change its position within the comparable list).

Mobile data suggests that the three most visited LFZs are Etobicoke Valley, Totoredaca Park, and Iceland Arena and Sports Park. The three least visited are Paul Coffey (though this may be because it is new), Union Park and Jack Darling Memorial Park. City staff have suggested that Jack Darling may be one of the busier LFZs, as well as Lakeside. As a result, it is recommended

<sup>5</sup> The list of locations is not finalized and still under consideration.

that spot checks be undertaken to validate the mobile data analysis. However, recommendations below are not tied to visitation data.

**Engagement:** City staff report that LFZs are one of the most popular resident requests. There has been an increase in dog ownership since the pandemic, which could at least contribute to a short-term increase in demand. Dog ownership rates should be monitored over time to gauge long-term demand. During the engagement, LFZs were raised repeatedly in the context of facilities that residents use and would like to see more of. Although LFZs have been historically considered drive-to facilities, City staff note that the expectation is growing for LFZ to be a walk-to facility.

Creating new LFZs can be challenging based on the amount of area required and the setbacks from other uses. The City of Mississauga has a LFZ policy from 2020, that restricts LFZs from being located immediately adjacent to sports fields, playgrounds, splash pads, natural areas, gardens, and burial grounds. Destination facilities are also assessed based on having sufficient parking, though the City is generally focusing on adding new community-scale, walk-to facilities. The City continues to advance its planning of LFZs by classifying facilities into three categories: destination facilities, neighborhood facilities, and urban facilities. This will enable the City to provide targeted policies and guidelines that reflect the scale on the context of the facility.



**Provisioning Strategy:** the recommended approach is two-fold. For destination facilities, it is recommended that the City seek one location in each service area, with the option to add an additional location if the facility is not centrally located. This approach acknowledges spatial requirements, and the longer distances residents are willing to travel.

The other aspect of the provisioning strategy is to support more smaller walk-to facilities within neighbourhoods. Provisions for these community facilities should be based on demonstrated demand and location criteria. These decisions should be predominantly driven by considering gaps within a 2 km network, as this will highlight where new facilities could serve the most residents. Areas with high-density should be prioritized given the lower rates of private backyard spaces. Some of these areas also overlap with the Equity Opportunity Areas. As a result, these investments support equity in that they are adding access to a facility that is particularly valuable for residents without private backyards.

The City should also consider the following in the design of facilities:

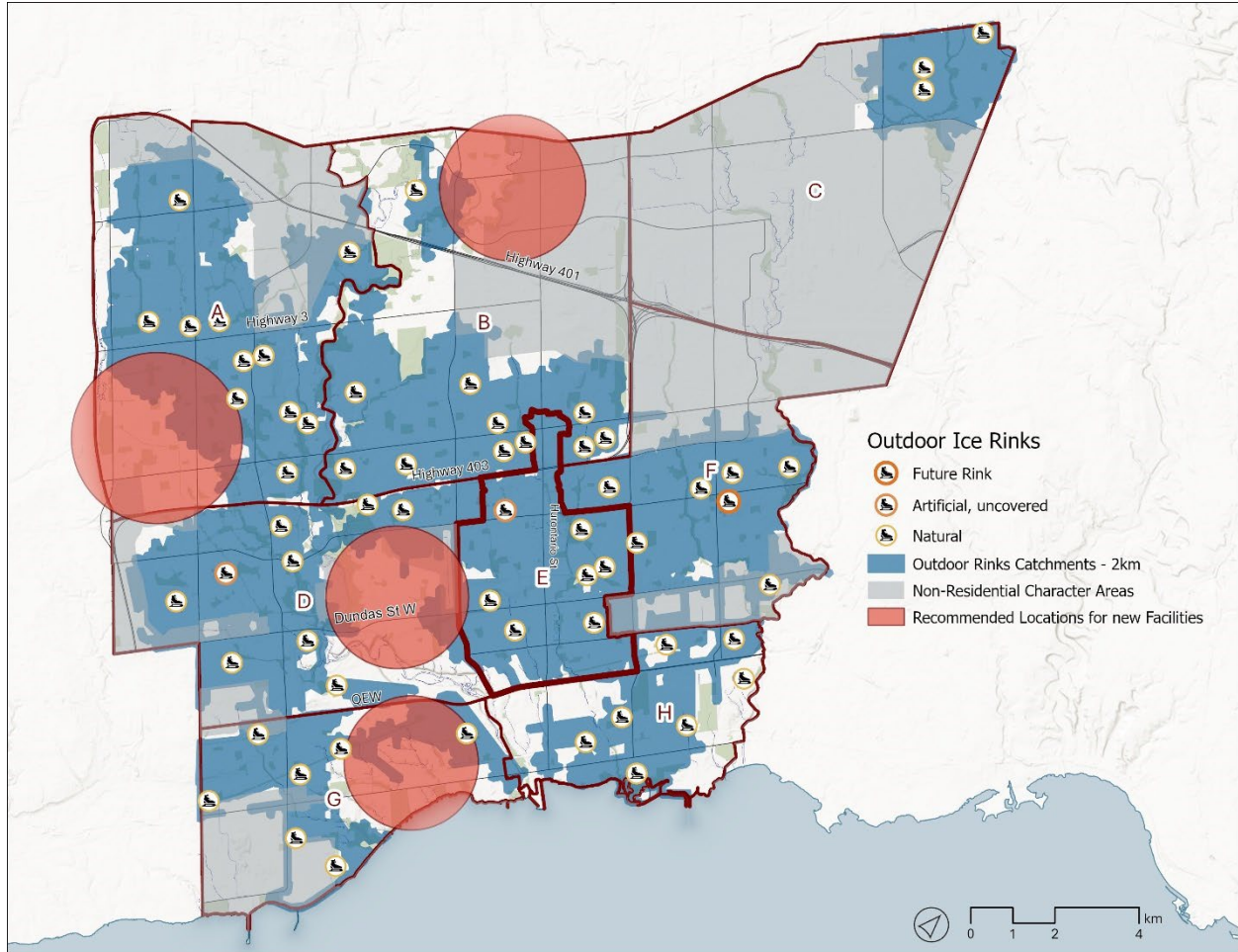
- LFZs should not be lit due to safety concerns that are difficult to address due to cost and technical challenges with meeting minimum illumination requirements. LFZs are also a noisy facilities so night-time use is not encouraged.
- The City should ensure spaces for small and large dogs in new facilities as well as establish a classification distinction between urban and neighbourhood-scale facilities

## Recommendations

- 33** Add six new neighbourhood scale leash-free zones in addition to one proposed Facility in Service Area D and E.
- 34** Add two Leash-Free Zone Destination facilities (one in Service Area D and one in Service Area H) to ensure that there is one destination facility in each service area.

# Skating Facilities

Figure 6.12 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 59 natural ice facilities (fluctuates year-to-year based on volunteers), two refrigerated. Planned work: refrigerated ice facility at Gulleden Park and a refrigerated skating trail at Port Credit Memorial Park.



**Overview:** There are four general approaches to skating facilities.

- Natural ice facilities rely purely on weather/outdoor temperatures to maintain the ice.
- Refrigerated systems use pipes to cool and maintain the ice rather than purely rely on weather.
- Synthetic ice facilities use a plastic-based material in lieu of ice.
- Covered ice facilities have a roof structure

The City of Mississauga operates a refrigerated ice facility at Celebration Square. There is also a larger supply of natural ice facilities within neighbourhoods operated by volunteers. One neighbourhood rink has a refrigerated system (Woodhurst). City staff noted that there was increased demand during the pandemic, leading to a record amount of natural ice facility.

The benchmarking comparison suggests that Mississauga's total supply of ice facilities (inclusive of natural and refrigerated systems) is slightly above average. There is also a relatively wide variance among Canadian cities reviewed, with Edmonton and Winnipeg on the high end, the GTHA cities in the middle, and Vancouver on the low end.

Mississauga was found to be below the average relative to its population in its provision of refrigerated ice facilities. However, this is skewed by Toronto, which is an outlier in providing a much higher share of refrigerated systems (around 50 per cent of its outdoor ice facilities compared to Mississauga's ~five per cent).

The other artificial approach is with synthetic surfaces (e.g., plastic). Synthetic surfaces are largely provided by the private sector in malls and hotels. However, they do not provide the same skating experience as regular ice. Among the benchmarked municipalities in this study, the only case of use in a park space was in Burlington. However, a broader scan reveals a few other precedents in North America and Europe where synthetic ice skating facilities have been employed on a seasonal basis within public parks and plazas.

Some municipalities also provide covered skating facilities. Covered ice facilities require extra capital and operational costs while only offering around four days of extra skating per year. Covered skating facilities also impede the experience of skating outdoors by obstructing views of the sky, sunlight, and snow fall. There also isn't broad consensus among residents that covered skating facilities should be prioritized.

Maintaining and increasing the supply of ice facilities can be challenging. Climate change is adding more fluctuations in weather throughout winter and shortening the season for natural skating facilities. Refrigerated systems as well as synthetic ice facilities address these issues but are costly. Other potential costs experienced in other cities include lighting (as daytime is reduced in winter) and clubhouses/warming huts.

One way to support efficient investment is to upgrade natural ice facilities as multi-use facilities in the warmer months. For example, the rink at Woodhurst, is also a tennis court and the planned skating facility in Gulleden Park will provide play elements for children in the summer. Other cities have similar shared facilities for basketball courts and roller hockey. This strategy also makes it more worthwhile to invest in lighting and clubhouse/warming huts as they can be used year-round.

**Engagement:** City staff have also noted outdoor skating ice facilities are a highly requested facility. During the engagement, increasing the supply of skating facilities was repeatedly suggested in the onsite interviews and raised during a meeting with residents groups.

**Provisioning Strategy:** The bulk of the ice facility supply will continue to rely on natural skating facilities, which is a more cost-effective approach to provide broad access. Refrigerated systems will continue to correspond to highly utilized/destination facilities, and the focus should be strategically and feasibly increasing this supply where possible.

- The City should discuss with community groups whether a barrier to skating is the cost of equipment. If confirmed, the City could consider piloting a free skate rental program at its highest visited facilities.<sup>6</sup>
- The City should encourage ice facilities to provide access around 2 km for residents. This action is dependent on volunteer and neighbourhood interest. Therefore, the City should engage with the communities that currently have a gap to better understand interest and barriers.
- The City should look at upgrading a limited number of natural ice facilities to refrigerated ice facilities. To inform this decision, the City could conduct spot-checks and discussions with community associations over winter 2023/2024 to determine a potential candidate list. Candidates should then be assessed by considering factors such as feasibility and ensuring good distribution city-wide.
- Neighbourhood ice facilities in Canadian cities often operate on a drop-in basis where free skate and games of recreational shinny both occur. If balancing these two types of uses becomes challenging at the more popular rinks, one low labour-intensive option is to install signage with a daily schedule that reserves certain time slots for each.

## Recommendation

- 35** Provide four more outdoor ice skating facilities with a preference for refrigerated systems where appropriate and feasible. In selecting candidates, particularly for refrigerated systems, the City should incorporate the following factors: operational feasibility, locational guidelines (e.g., adjacent to community centres/washroom access), the potential for lighting, strong existing usage and/or capacity issues, and multi-modal access.

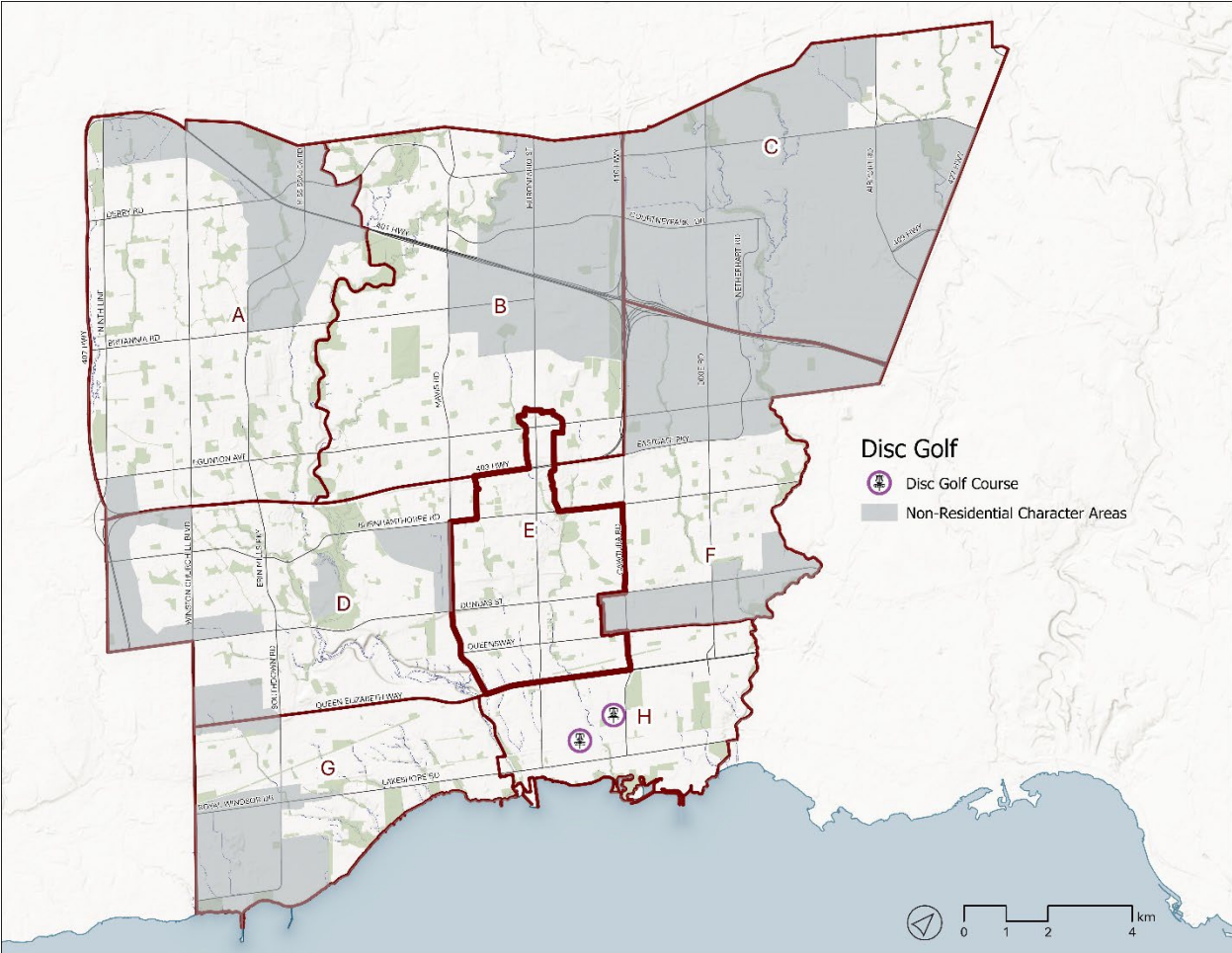
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<sup>6</sup> See City of Edmonton and City of Brampton for precedents.



# Disc Golf

Figure 6.13: 2023 Snapshot Inventory: Two courses



**Overview:** Disc golf is an emerging sport. The City of Mississauga has constructed two-disc golf courses: one at Dellwood Park and one at Spruce Park. City staff have noted that the facilities have been well received by residents and there are requests for new facilities (such as one in the north end of the city). During the engagement, disc golf was not raised.

Disc golf provides several advantages in site selection: it has a relatively low impact on the environment and requires only minor landscaping to develop courses. It can also be located in a variety of parks and is a relatively low cost to install and maintain. The sport can also be played by a range of ages and abilities. The sport therefore supports equity through more inclusive recreation. To support the growing sport, the City could either directly or through partners consider ways to promote the availability of equipment if this is identified as an obstacle by residents.



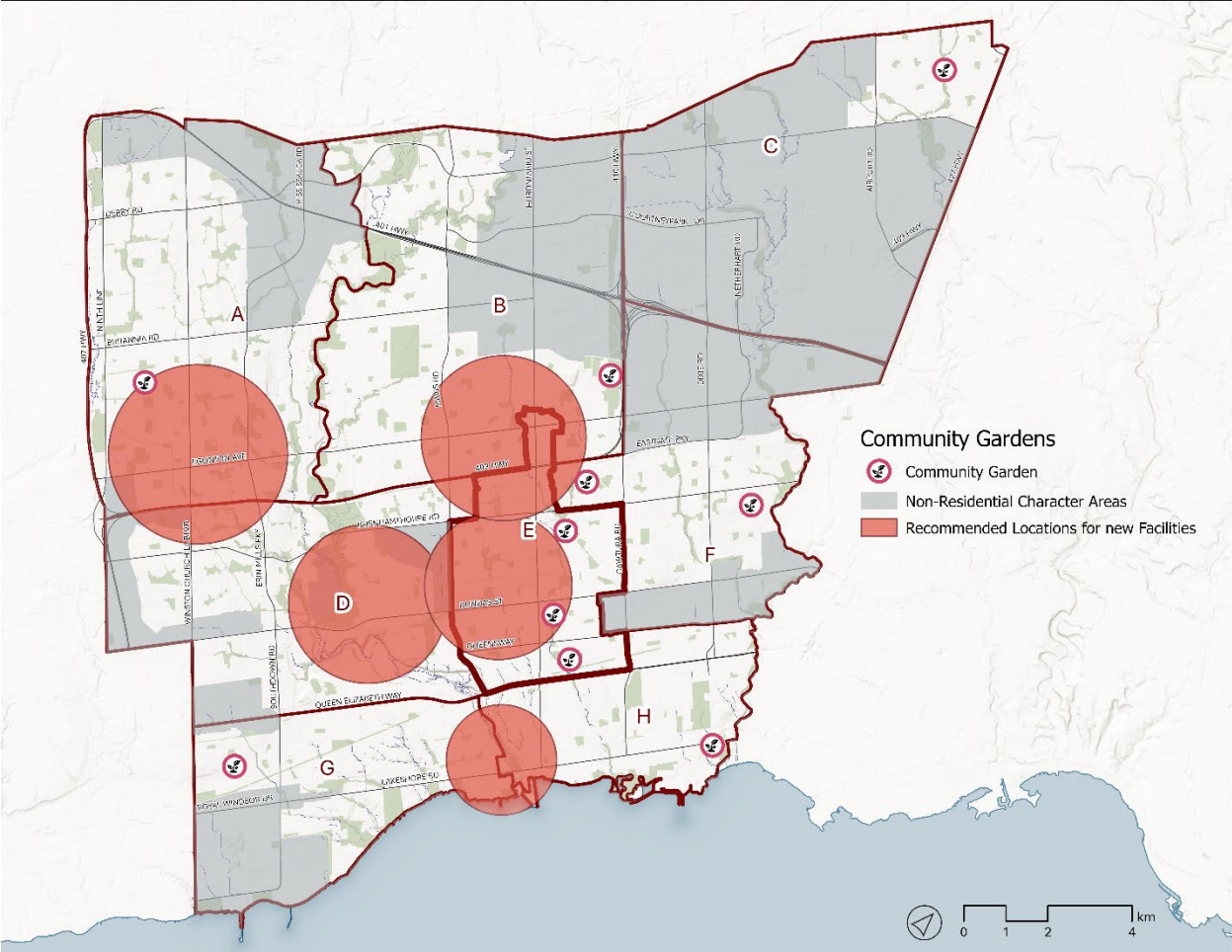
**Provisioning Strategy:** Given how new the two existing courses are, it is recommended to not set provision levels for disc golf by access but to monitor usage over time. One new course in the north part of the City should be considered. To maximize the new catchment, preference for location should be in Service Area A or Service Area B.

### Recommendation

- 36** Target one disc golf course in each service area provided there is demonstrated demand.

# Community Gardens

Figure 6.14 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: 10 garden locations (includes one teaching garden). Planned work: three planned in 2025 (two in Ward 4; one in Ward 6).



**Overview:** Community gardens are important social facilities. They provide opportunities to meet neighbours and provide physical and mental health benefits for those who may have mobility issues. They also provide food security and access to culturally specific food. From an environmental perspective, gardens support climate adaptation, biodiversity, and public education opportunities from climate change to biology.

The City of Mississauga partners with a local not-for-profit organization, Ecosource, to deliver community gardens across the City. The benchmarking comparison suggests that the City of Mississauga has a current supply that is below average, but the additional gardens planned will reduce this gap. City staff have noted that there are over 900 residents waiting to be assigned a plot, indicating a clear need to expand existing garden bed supply and the number of gardens. In addition to increasing supply, it is important to provide comfort amenities like shade and seating to protect users against extreme heat.

**Engagement:** During the engagement, community gardens were a major focus of the discussion with Ecosource. Representatives shared that there was an interest in expanding the program but noted that funding and capacity were constraints. They also spoke to the hope for more supportive amenities around the gardens such as washrooms, shade structures, seating, and water access. City staff have also noted that gardens are generally welcomed by neighbourhoods.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Community gardens are operating well in public parks. However, given the current limited supply and the need to align supply with specific demand (users renting out plots), it is not recommended to drive provisioning through access targets. Instead, community gardens should be pursued based on demonstrated demand that are assessed using location criteria.

- Location Criteria
  - Areas of high density where residents have less access to private backyards
  - High growth and Equity Opportunity Areas, where the former could consider inclusion into POPS. The latter should focus on a range of socio-economic factors from rates of low-income to potential food deserts.
  - Parks that have access to water servicing as well as potential for washrooms.
  - Relatively large gaps between existing gardens
  - Compatibility with natural areas and features. This includes adverse impacts to trees.

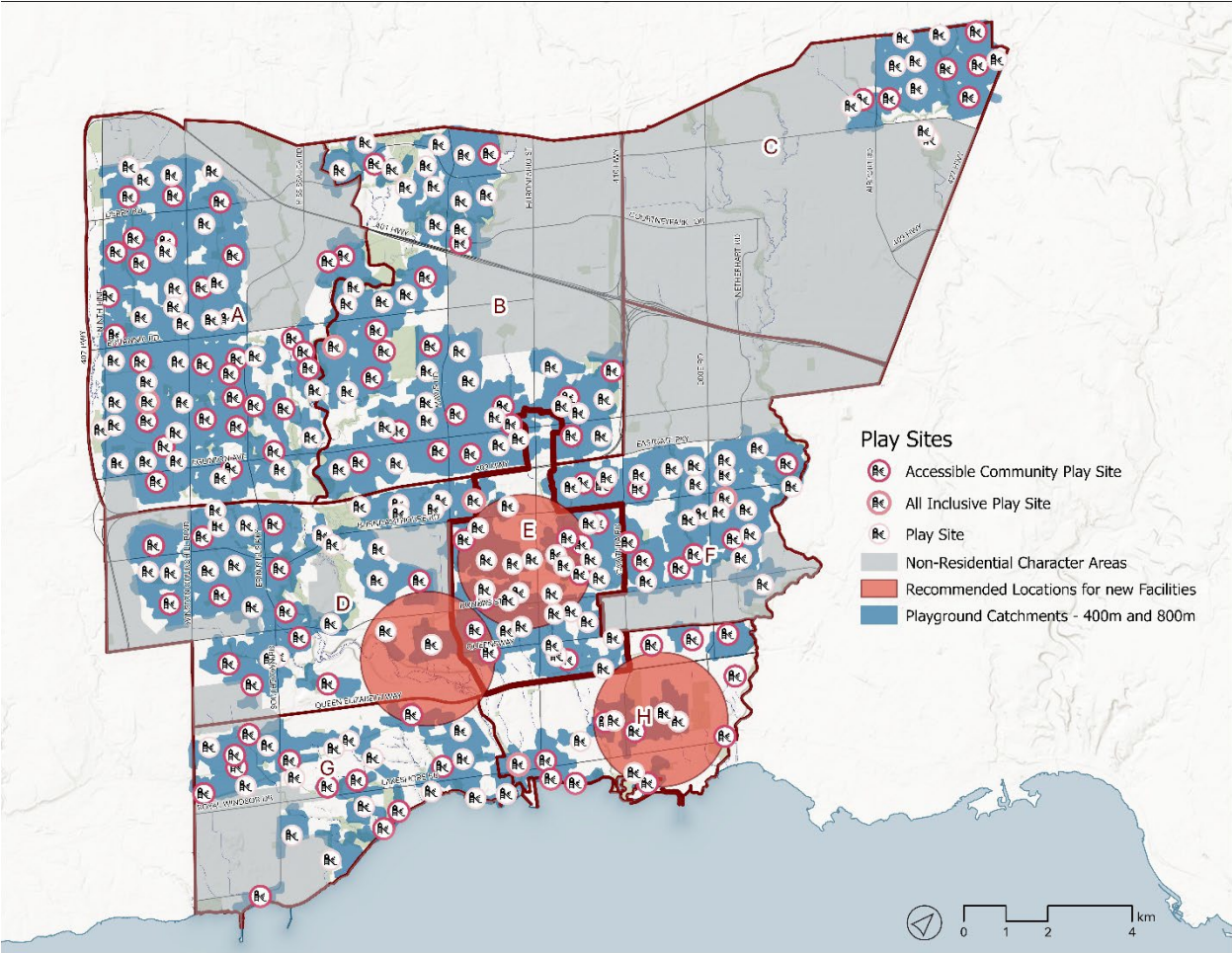


**Recommendation**

**37** Expand and improve existing community gardens with comfort amenities such as shade structures (and/or trees), seating and access to washrooms, where feasible and appropriate.

# Play Sites

Figure 6.15 - 2023 Snapshot Inventory: six accessible play sites. 267 total play sites.



**Overview:** Playgrounds are the most common park facility. The City has developed three categories of playgrounds:

- All-inclusive Barrier-free Play Sites: A “premium standard” including unique play equipment designs, rubber surfacing, parking, and proximity to accessible washrooms where feasible.
- Accessible Play Sites: Dispersed throughout the City and growing as of the Playground Redevelopment Program, these playgrounds have improved accessible standards, which may include accessible swings, equipment features, routes, and engineered wood fibre (mulch) safety surfacing in all future new or playground redevelopments.
- Community Play Sites: all other playgrounds.

There are also a variety of design approaches that serve interpretive functions: from nature-based to place-based designs, which consider the surrounding built context and community. Playgrounds also serve different age demographics.

**Engagement:** Playgrounds were not raised during the engagement. City staff have also noted that due to changing demographics and other considerations, demand is not a driving factor for provisioning.

**Provisioning Strategy:** Playgrounds should be provided in accordance with the Parks Plan, which calls for a 400m access within Strategic Growth Areas and 800m in other residential areas. There should also be a good geographic distribution of the three categories listed above. For example, while many playgrounds will over time become more accessible and/or all-inclusive, it is important to ensure this opportunity is dispersed throughout the City in the meantime.

Population densities are also an important consideration to complement the access targets above. Areas where the number of facilities to population is significantly below the average can reveal where existing play sites might be at overcapacity. Spot checks should also be undertaken to validate this insight. Where capacity issues are confirmed, the City should then consider appropriate measures such as adding an additional facility or upgrading an existing one.

Playgrounds will be added to meet gaps, and identified capacity issues on an opportunity basis as they arise. The following the additional guidance should be considered:

- For upgraded facilities there is an opportunity to increase accessibility and also add new and more innovative features. It is also an opportunity to consider place-making through interpretive theming that connects with the local area or adjacent institution (e.g., lake themes around the waterfront).
- As recommended by the Outdoor Facility Lighting Study, playgrounds should not be lit. Given the demographic focus on children, this approach should not generally be an issue.

## Additional Facilities

There are several other recreational activities undertaken in park spaces that were not included as standalone provisioned facilities. These activities generally have a niche demand that does not meet the need for City-wide targets. The proposed approach instead is two-fold: (1) rely on multi-use facilities oriented to other sports to allow a recreational level of play, and (2) consider specific investments for facilities only where demand is demonstrated.

- **Rugby, Field Hockey, and Football:** These activities were assumed to be enabled through shared fields with soccer. Therefore, improvements to the supply of soccer fields would likewise support these other activities. It is recommended that the needs of these three sports be monitored and reviewed in the next update to Future Directions. If demonstrated demand emerges in the meantime, the City could consider providing supply based on factors like the suitability of the location and potential for multi-use.

Enabling these sports may require artificial turf, particularly if the fields are highly utilized.

- **Ball Hockey:** It was assumed that if interest grows for outdoor ball hockey spaces, the City should seek usage on multi-use pads with basketball and outdoor ice skating surfaces in the winter. To start, any new multi-use pads should be designed with this potential future use in mind.

The provisioning framework set out in this section will enable the City to make targeted, strategic investments to meet demand. It also provides context and considerations to support staff in assessing requests or informing park redevelopment opportunities. Together, these provisions will support residents in having access to a variety of programmed spaces to play, exercise, socialize, and compete.

A person wearing a hat and a light-colored shirt is sitting on a wooden bench, looking out over a large body of water. The scene is framed by a wooden fence in the foreground and dense trees in the background. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

# Enhancing Park Experiences



# Section 7: Enhancing Park Experiences

Opportunities to provide the best park experiences goes beyond providing new and upgraded facilities. There is a broad range of development features that the City can employ to create positive experiences for residents and visitors, and promote the City's history, accomplishments, and cultural identities.

These improvements help to provide the most use of the existing system. It is a focus on quality over quantity. This approach is particularly important for Mississauga given the challenges in parkland availability, population growth and need for efficient service delivery. The following section is a compilation of the major features that draw from best practices or in response to feedback from public and groups with interest consultations. Together these tactics will make Mississauga's park system more comfortable, safe, accessible, and welcoming.

The park system also serves critical functions such as hosting biodiversity and supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation. Successfully balancing these functions requires a thoughtful and ongoing management of priorities and trade-offs. The Balance of Parkland background study recommends viewing the parks system as a network, which can distribute different priorities rather than seeking to accommodate everything within a single site. As such, the recommendations below should consider the context and be balanced along with the need to conserve natural areas.

## Strategic Priority: Enhancing Park Experiences

There is a wide range of strategies and features that can be employed to enhance park experiences. The following discussion draws on initiatives from other cities, and in some cases, interests raised by residents during the engagement.

Some of the recommendations are oriented to the adoption of technology, others will support more programming and activation. Some of the suggestions below are considerations rather than recommendations because further investigation is required. The commonality between all the recommendations and considerations is their support in improving park experiences from a user perspective.

# Destination Parks

**Enable Alcohol-use in Parks:** Permitting alcohol can complement the experience of having a picnic or viewing a movie in an existing park, and thereby enhance comfort and enjoyment. While alcohol is not currently allowed in Mississauga parks, several Canadian cities are beginning to pilot this approach to meet wants and expectations from the public. The City could in the future consider an approach to allow alcohol use in parks that is safe, inclusive, and efficiently manageable.



**Enable Commercial Vendors:** From plaza kiosks to restaurants and food trucks in or around parks, these businesses create nodes of activity and provide another reason for people to enjoy visiting a park. They also create more activity within the park which residents have said increases their perception of safety. There are also opportunities for commercial markets and shops to be integrated within park spaces. Bryant Park, NY, offers a well-known example, with micro retailers creating a ‘winter village.’ More common examples are pop-up events and farmers’ markets. Like food and drink vendors, these businesses add to the vibrancy of the park space while offering new experiences.



One type of commercial activity is with rental providers. In parks where not-commonly-owned equipment is needed to participate in parks, cities have turned to private operators to fulfill this demand. Perhaps the most common is with the renting of water-based equipment such as rafts, tubes, paddle-boats and PFDs. Equipment rentals have the potential to make parks more inclusive because residents can rent equipment rather than having to buy, store, and maintain equipment. Rentals also have the potential to introduce residents to activities. The City of Mississauga can

support this business environment by reviewing how it accepts applications and manages agreements with operators.

## Recommendation

- 38** Develop permitting system to approve non-motorized watersport rentals. The process could function similarly to food truck permits.

# Technology

**Test and Adopt Newer Technology in Parks:** Some enhancements are more inherently tied to new technologies or innovative processes. A standout example is the City’s specialized dog waste program. The program collects dog waste and converts it into energy, leading to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Another technology that can be incorporated into parks is through augmented reality (AR) tools that enable digital devices to support wayfinding, interpretive content, and games within parks. The benefit to users is in providing a new way to participate in parks while potentially learning or having fun. Within the context of interpretive content, augmented reality offers a cost-effective and creative opportunity to further promote aspects of local Indigenous history and archaeology that are no longer visibly seen in the environment

Another avenue is to utilize technology to improve access to park spaces. Online apps, websites, and onsite QR codes/links have been used by cities to allow users the option to book spaces to view capacity/availability, instructions on how to use spaces, and information on facilities.



Cities are also adopting newer technologies to support their climate mitigation and adaptation goals. The City of Mississauga, for instance, has developed a policy to purchase low or zero-emissions vehicles and equipment under its green fleet and equipment policy. In addition, cities are now installing public EV chargers, supporting the uptake of EV vehicles. The City of Mississauga already has a number of stations City-wide, and extending this network into parks not only provides a park amenity but signals the City’s commitment to addressing climate change.

## Recommendation

- 39** Install electric vehicle chargers at select Destination Parks and/or highly visited community parks where appropriate.

## Access and Connections

**Strengthen Accessibility:** Enhancements can also support inclusion by lowering barriers. During the engagement, respondents called for expanding accessibility through the park system for those with limited mobility. The City of Mississauga is continuing to build more accessible and all-inclusive playgrounds. Other design features that can support greater accessibility include wide pathways that provide direct connection to facilities and nodes, visual/braille cues on signage (e.g., colour contrasts), and programming that is inclusive in terms of the type of activity or cost.

**Support Multi-modal Network to Connect People with Parks:** Promoting access can also be through strengthening the multi-modal network. Residents noted that they often walk, drive, and bike to visit parks, with a smaller share also using public transit and other active modes like roller blading. The City can support park participation and access through a stronger multi-modal network connecting residents with parks. Design features could include protected bike lanes, crosswalks, filling missing sidewalks, and improvements to public transportation. By supporting these connections, the City is expanding the catchment of residents who can conveniently access existing parks. It also supports connecting parks and in so doing achieving an outcome for users that is greater than the sum of its parts.

**Public Art in Parks:** Increasing the supply of public art is also a great way to enhance a park space and in so doing promote interpretive storytelling and eye-catching installations. Mississauga has some notable art installations within its parks. Continuing to build on this work can be an effective way of making a park experience more interesting. It can also support cultural identity, placemaking, and bringing art to the public. The City should ensure that the strategies within the Culture portion of the 2024 Future Directions Plan leverage the potential of parks as art-oriented spaces. There is also a potential to design public art as a play feature, especially in urban parks where there is limited space to separate uses like a play site and public art.

Public art is also important from an EDI perspective. The stories and messages that are advanced through the art can support under-representation and Reconciliation (e.g., Indigenous histories), memorials honoring important cultural moments, and promotion of inclusive spaces. More public art can also be investments and promotion for local artists.



### Recommendation

- 40 Ensure a minimum of one permanent public art piece is provided in new and redeveloped Destination Parks

## Supportive Amenities

There are fundamental amenities to the park system that support comfort and convenience. Respondents repeatedly suggested these types of amenities during the engagement. This includes:

- Lighting in contexts such as on high traffic promenades (e.g., along the waterfront) and gathering spaces (e.g., plazas), which can enhance the aesthetic mood and sense of invitation and security.
- Seating to add a chance to congregate or find respite along a trail. And particularly at destination parks, seating can be far more than standard benches, though standard sets are important for cost effective replacements and repairs. Picnic sites also offer an enhanced experience for social gatherings that are sometimes paired with firepits and BBQs. The City of Mississauga allows residents to book these sites. The sites can be of particular importance in higher density locations given the lower share of housing units with private backyards.
- Washrooms and water fountains (at existing park buildings) to promote accessibility, ease, and longer duration of park access. Water fountains require special operational costs (e.g., such as flushing and cleaning) that must be considered. Other strategies beyond installing new permanent amenities should be explored, such as temporary installations or improved access to existing buildings. Ensuring access or installing new features adjacent to City facilities (e.g., the library) should be considered first.

The City's Park Washroom Study Refresh 2020 identifies parks suitable for new washroom facilities. It also includes recommendations to pilot new approaches such as a trailer and storage container configuration. The 2024 Future Directions Plan supports these findings.



- And finally, garbage and recycling management promotes cleanliness, reduction of litter and, in some cases, public safety (e.g., needles). The City of Mississauga already has receptacles across its park system, but given feedback from the engagement, new opportunities to evolve this work should continue.



While demand for these items were identified during the engagement, it is difficult to make cost-effective investments in these areas when looking City-wide. To support implementation, cities can consider focusing effort on the most highly visited park spaces. Parks Operations should continue to strategically place dual stream waste containers in high pedestrian areas (e.g. entrances, exits, picnic spots) as per their current review process.

By making investments in those locations, the resulting enhancements will impact the greatest number of park users. It can also help ensure these parks have the capacity to receive more visitors with projected growth in the future.

## Recommendation

- 41** Review use of small-capacity picnic booking permits and evolve with consideration to add more locations in high-density locations

**Signage:** The City of Mississauga already has a park signage system. Yet there could be opportunities to add new sign types within its existing hierarchy to support wayfinding or interpretive signage that can creatively communicate information not yet told within the public sphere in Mississauga. There is also an opportunity to partner with the Library on initiatives such as Storymaps, whereby stories are conveyed through signage along a walking route through a park. The initiative offers a great chance to create interest within a space while promoting the enjoyment of reading.

When considering new signage, the focus should include:

- Conveying Indigenous local history in consultation with groups with interest
- Promoting the services of the park system
- Support capacity issues at busy locations by informing residents about other options.
- New collaborative initiatives such as storymaps

## Recommendation

- 42** Strategically install signage, accessible wayfinding, and interpretive features.

## Programming and Activation

**Support Programming and Activation:** Engagement indicated a strong demand for additional programming and activation in parks. This demand aligns with trends in other cities that are investing in and seeking to attract more events, festivals and programming in their park spaces. Best practices suggest there are several factors that influence a healthy eco-system of cultural programming and activations including approvals, awareness and communication, coordination between event producers, and the amount and location of quality suitable sites (e.g. servicing such as electricity and water access). The design and location of event spaces should be developed in partnership with the City's culture staff, including but not limited to culture planning, public art, creative industries and culture programs teams. The 2024 Future Directions Culture Plan expresses similar goals of increasing the number of serviced public spaces across the city, reducing regulatory barriers and improving municipal processes and awareness to support cultural and creative sector uses.

A successful implementation of programming rests on partnerships, as it will enable parks to grow its impact. One opportunity is to continue to strengthen collaboration between internal business units to offer the public new or adapted programming. There is potential between Libraries and Parks, Forestry and Environment to explore these types of opportunities. For example, libraries and park departments in other cities have collaborated on walking tours through park spaces and raising awareness and education on the value of nature.

Greater programming can also support EDI. They have the potential to encourage park participation from a broad cross section of demographics, including individuals that may not typically use parks. They can also help to encourage an awareness that these spaces are inclusive to all residents. And they can also showcase the diversity of the residents of Mississauga through cultural celebrations. Important drivers when thinking about programming within parks that supports EDI is when they are affordable, clearly oriented as publicly-accessible, and their communications about opportunities are effective in reaching people. The City should also consider the degree to which grassroots, non-City groups are enabled and empowered to implement their programming.

Further work and dialogue with the large number of agencies, community associations, and other not-for-profit groups that already rely on Mississauga's park system to implement their programming will be helpful. The continued strengthening of the decentralized network of City-led and private/non-profit providers will increase and add varied offerings to the public as well as enabling a tailoring to a wide range of residents. It is therefore important that these groups are able to host their programs/events in parks spaces easily and in collaboration with the City.

## Recommendation

- 43** Review the feasibility of expanded park animation, including music performances (additional locations for concerts in parks), food trucks, buskers, and public art. Enable the inclusion of these elements for smaller capacity event opportunities.
- 44** Ensure each service area has at least one park that can host larger events (e.g., enabling servicing of electricity and water, amenities, and durability). To support smaller-scale events the City should revise rules to better promote affordability and grassroots organizing.

Together these enhancements will improve experiences, promote accessibility, equity, and enable the City to program more park spaces. These actions also align well with the Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management. A focus on quality over seeking to build new park sites can help address land availability challenges.



# Implementation Plan



# Section 8: Implementation Plan

## Implementation Guide

This implementation guide is a planning tool to be used to assess and track the completion of recommendations within the 2024 Future Directions Plan. City staff will use this implementation guide annually to monitor progress on each item and ensure that the recommendations are being incorporated into work plans.

Key elements of the implementation guide include:

**Timeframe:** Refers to the timing for implementation of a recommendation. For the purpose of this guide, four time frames are used: short-term (one to four years), medium-term (five to nine years), long-term (10+ years) and ongoing. Timing is often dependent on priority. Recommendations are listed under each area of focus in order of suggested start.

**Section(s) Most Responsible:** Identifies those business units within the Community Services Department that have a major role in implementing each recommendation. The first listed business unit is identified as the lead.

**Capital/Operating Costs:** Recommendations with capital costs are subject to the annual corporate business planning and budget processes. Some of these recommendations are already in the 2019-2028 ten-year capital budget and forecast. Recommendations that are anticipated to have an operated impact will also be reviewed through the annual corporate business planning and budget process.

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
<b>Growing and Connecting Parkland</b>				
1. Create easy-to-apply guidelines for Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and strata parks that can be used to evaluate dedication acceptance by the City and to determine the types of park facilities that can be accommodated in each type of park.	Empowers municipality and supports quality spaces	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	N/A
2. Redevelop the grounds of the Living Arts Centre (LAC) to increase access to parkland and facilities in the Downtown Core and identify and prioritize the redevelopment of other vacant or underutilized parkland parcels.	Provides new parkland in an area of deficit	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
3. Prioritize the delivery of complementary and appropriate park uses like trails and Unprogrammed park space within Greenlands to increase access to parkland in areas that have a parkland deficit.	Connects people with parks by increasing access and public uses	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Forestry	Capital and Operating
4. Develop a marina in Port Credit to maintain the character of the area, provide residents access to the waterfront, and to improve the natural environment	Connects people with parks	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development Forestry	Capital and Operating
5. Prioritize identified facility investments and future parkland acquisition within/adjacent to 'Equity Opportunity Areas', Strategic Growth Areas and in non-residential character areas that are experiencing residential development.	Ensures investments will have greatest impact on user needs and equity	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	N/A
<b>Sustainable and Inclusive Design and Management</b>				
6. Update the City's minimum design standards for basketball, outdoor ice skating facilities, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, cricket pitches and spray pads to maximize opportunities for multi-use facilities.	Promotes multi-functionality and efficient use of land	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	N/A
7. Update the City's design standards for leash-free zones to enable separated sections for small and large dogs as well as standards for urban scale and neighbourhood scale facilities.	Increases the opportunities to install facilities throughout city	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	N/A

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
8. Consider converting wickets on cricket pitches to artificial surfaces where wear-and-tear is interrupting playable days in the season or is needed to accommodate extended hours	Extends playing times and lowers maintenance costs	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Parks Development Parks Operations	Capital and Operating
9. Collect and assess park facility utilization data and sport field booking practices and identify actions to address under/over utilization to ensure there is an appropriate supply of bookable facilities. Actions could include refinements to booking policies, fees and enforcement.	Promotes better utilization of existing fields and supports great league/organized access to locations by freeing up capacity	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning	N/A
10. Investigate strategies to improve how the City provides information on park facility locations and facility rules/hours. Deliverables of this tactic could be in refined websites, apps, and physical interfaces such as incorporation of QR codes within parks and facilities.	Increases utilization, address capacity issues, and enhances convenience for users	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning	Operating
11. Develop a framework and pilot bookable basketball courts for tournaments in identified Equity Opportunity Areas	This action will support greater utilization and has potential to support EDI	Short	Parks and Culture Planning	N/A
12. Explore strategies to increase public access, awareness and promotion of club-operated tennis courts and facilities within shared-use agreements to address the increased usage of park facilities by leveraging the opportunities with the existing supply	Increases public access by better utilizing existing facilities	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Parks Operations	N/A
13. Develop approaches to remove barriers and enable marginalized and equity-deserving groups access to more spaces within parks.	Promotes EDI and increased parks programming	Short	Parks and Culture Planning Culture	N/A
14. Support the creation of the City's Reconciliation Plan and actively explore the creation of a Community Circle with our Indigenous partners which will inform and guide programming and initiatives across the City.	To strengthen the role of parks in supporting Reconciliation	Long Term	Parks and Indigenous Relations	Operating

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
15. Formalize unprogrammed space (e.g., mowed lawn) as a park amenity with a standard level of service within the context of the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and climate change resiliency. Also, undertake measures to promote and communicate the value of Unprogrammed Space.	Promotes a balanced parkland system to help decision making around Natural Area prioritization	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	N/A
<b>Expand, Protect, and Restore Natural Areas</b>				
16. Include naturalization and/or tree planting as a park amenity option in the City's public engagement process.	Enables growth of Natural Area system	Medium	Forestry	Capital and Operating
17. Identify priority areas to expand, protect and restore natural areas and the urban forest.	Enables growth of Natural Area system	Medium	Forestry	Capital and Operating
18. Raise awareness of conservation, biodiversity, and the role of parkland in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation through partnerships with community groups and other initiatives.	Promotes park stewardship and conservation	Medium	Forestry	Operating
19. Update existing forestry and natural heritage strategies and plans to refine and adapt management to recent legislative changes and growing pressures and threats.	Enables growth of the natural system based on updated context, approaches, and data	Short	Forestry	Capital and Operating
<b>Efficient Provisioning for Facilities</b>				
20. Extend facility provision standards to non-residential areas where residential development has been added.	Responds to growth within non-residential areas to ensure parkland and facility access based on needs	Long	Parks and Culture Planning	Capital and Operating
21. Identify underutilised diamonds and implement strategies to maximise recreational benefits for residents by making specific diamonds multi-use facilities, consolidating bookings to maximize facility usage and/or decommissioning diamonds with low utilization.	Responds to league demand and suggestions while opening up other spaces to potential new uses where the demand for baseball is low. Driver: organized play (e.g., league) demand	Long	Parks and Culture Planning	Capital and Operating

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
22. In addition to the two new planned soccer facilities, add up to two new soccer facilities within Service Area E, with preference around the Downtown core. Given space constraints, boxed soccer should be considered where appropriate.	Action responds to growth demands and ensuring there are sufficient fields. It also supports extended and quality play at a limited number of fields. Driver: geographic access	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
23. Upgrade up to two existing soccer fields with lighting and artificial turf. Preferred areas of focus should be within Service Area D, Service Area E and Service Area F.	Action responds to growth demands and ensuring there are sufficient fields. It also supports extended and quality play at a limited number of fields. Driver: geographic access	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
24. To address organized demand, construct an additional three cricket facilities inclusive of the two planned facilities and provide amenity upgrades like shade and washrooms to three pitches with a focus on Iceland, Courtneypark Athletic Fields, and Paul Coffey	Action responds to league demands and suggestions for a growing sport. The approach is to focus on quality over quantity based on the limits for finding adequate space for new facilities. Driver: organized play demand (e.g., league); focus on quality	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
25. Construct six new spray pads to address access gaps.	This action responds to demand identified in engagement. The approach is to increase access among residents by installing new facilities where there are existing geographic gaps. Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
26. Build up to eight new basketball facilities to meet access provisions. It should consider partnerships with schools where possible and appropriate.	Responds to demand identified in engagement for more basketball courts. The approach is to increase the number of residents within a convenient travel distance to courts. Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
27. Provide four new public multi-use tennis and pickleball court locations within Service Area E (in the Cooksville area) and Service Area H (in proximity to the waterfront) as priority locations.	This action responds to demand identified for more public courts Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
28. Upgrade one unlit public tennis court location with lighting. Preliminary candidates to assess should include Courtneypark Athletic Fields, Fairwinds Park, McKechnie Woods, and Quenippenon Meadows with spot checks to validate usage. Other courts with capacity issues could also be considered.	This action responds to extending play times Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
29. Install one dedicated pickleball location that could provide a consolidated facility (six or more courts) for dedicated pickleball. Add pickleball lines to all remaining public tennis courts (up to 22 courts) where appropriate (e.g., exclude courts used for tournament play and with less than the minimum setback distances).	This action addresses resident and groups with interest feedback for a dedicated facility while also efficiently increasing the amount and distribution of pickleball facilities by establishing pickleball as a multi-use facility. Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
30. Construct one sand volleyball court in Service Area E in proximity to the Urban Growth Centre.	This recommendation responds to a specific geographic demand for the sport. The intent is not to create city-wide provisioning for this sport based on limited-city wide demand for it as an outdoor facility. Driver: case-by-case	Long	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
31. Construct up to three new skateboard facilities in addition to the one planned for Lakeview Neighbourhood to address the most pronounced gaps: Service Area F, and the north and south ends of Service Area B. Address remaining gaps through smaller, beginner level additions where appropriate.	This action responds to demand identified through engagement. This approach is twofold: increase the number of residents who are within a convenient travel distance and to consult with users and design specialists to create high-quality facilities. Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
32. Explore establishing one mountain biking facility in partnership with community sports groups.	This action responds to a demand identified for a permitted location to host this sport. The approach for the City to undertake environmental assessment along with engagement with user groups to finalize an appropriate and supported location.  Driver: case-by-case	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
33. Add six new neighbourhood scale leash-free zones in addition to one proposed Facility in Service Area D and E.	This action responds to a high and growing demand for this facility. The approach is to increase the number of residents who can access a LFZ within or near their community.  The approach is intended to meet expectations and distribute usage across more locations.  Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating
34. Add two Leash-Free Zone Destination facilities (one in Service Area D and one in Service Area H) to ensure that there is one destination facility in each service area.	This action responds to a high and growing demand for this facility. The approach is to increase the number of residents who can access a LFZ within or near their community.  The approach is intended to meet expectations and distribute usage across more locations.  Driver: geographic access target	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Park Development	Capital and Operating



Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
<p>35. Provide four more outdoor ice skating facilities with a preference for refrigerated systems where appropriate and feasible. In selecting candidates, particularly for refrigerated systems, the City should incorporate the following factors: operational feasibility, locational guidelines (e.g., adjacent to community centres/washroom access), the potential for lighting, strong existing usage and/or capacity issues, and multi-modal access.</p>	<p>This action responds to a demand identified through the engagement. The approach is twofold: (1) to increase the number of residents within a convenient travel distance and (2) to better utilize existing supply by a focus on a limited number of Destination-type facilities. These steps will meet demand while balancing costs. Driver: geographic access target</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Parks and Culture Planning Park Development</p>	<p>Capital and Operating</p>
<p>36. Target one disc golf in each service area provided there is demonstrated demand.</p>	<p>This recommendation responds to the emerging demand for disc golf. Since the demand is still in a relatively early stage, the approach is to monitor usage at the two recently created facilities and use this exercise to inform the creation of a new location. Driver: case-by-case</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Parks and Culture Planning Park Development</p>	<p>Capital and Operating</p>
<p>37. Improve existing community gardens with comfort amenities such as shade structures (and/or trees), seating and access to washrooms, where feasible and appropriate.</p>	<p>This recommendation responds to the identified demand that outstrips existing supply while recognizing capacity limitations through the partnership driven model with Ecosource. Driver: case-by-case</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Parks and Culture Planning Park Development</p>	<p>Capital and Operating</p>
<p><b>Enhancing Park Experiences</b></p>				
<p>38. Develop permitting system to approve non-motorized watersport rentals. The process could function similarly to food truck permits.</p>	<p>This action enables greater access to Mississauga's water bodies as their adjacent parks.</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Parks and Culture Planning</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>39. Install EV chargers at select Destination or highly visited community parks where appropriate.</p>	<p>Chargers will promote climate change resiliency</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Environment</p>	<p>Capital and Operating</p>

Recommendation	Reason for Implementation	Time Frame	Section(s) Most Responsible	Capital/ Operating
40. Ensure a minimum of one permanent public art piece is provided in new and redeveloped Destination Parks	Promotes appealing amenities and features – can support interpretive content/storytelling	Medium	Parks and Culture Planning Culture	Capital and Operating
41. Review use of small-capacity picnic booking permits and evolve with consideration to add more locations in high-density locations.	This action will support increasing use of a popular passive recreational amenity	Short	Parks and Culture Planning	N/A
42. Strategically Install Signage, Accessible Wayfinding, and Interpretive Features	Supports accessibility and user experience	Long	Parks and Culture Planning	Capital and Operating
43. Review the feasibility of expanded park animation, including music performances (additional locations for concerts in parks), food trucks, buskers, and public art. Enable the inclusion of these elements for smaller capacity event opportunities.	More programming will meet demand indicated from engagement	Short	Parks and Culture Planning	N/A
44. Ensure each service area has at least one park that can host larger events (e.g., with enabling servicing of electricity and water, amenities, and durability). To support smaller-scaled events, the City should revise rules to better promote affordability and grassroots organizing.	This action will ensure broad distribution of suitable sites for events and enable more community uses	Long	Parks and Culture Planning	Capital and Operating

## Funding the Plan

Recommendations in the Future Directions Plan do not always require financial support; sometimes improvements can be accomplished through changes in approach or in policy. Most projects, however, require funding to proceed. Many projects are funded in the City's current business plan and budget, with many still requiring funding sources to be identified. The City must balance service provision with affordability and will thoughtfully seek funding for projects as opportunities present themselves. Capital initiatives are typically funded through a combination of sources. Existing and new sources are evaluated annually to determine the best approach for funding the City's projects. The following provides detail on currently available funding sources:

- Partnerships
- Federal and provincial grants
- Development charges
- Cash-in-lieu of parkland
- Community benefits charges
- Capital reserves
- Debt financing

### Partnerships

The City cannot fund all its Future Directions Plan projects alone. Partnerships with external agencies can provide welcome funding as well as other resources. Other opportunities can be found in the sharing of resources, such as the co-location of different services in a single facility. This can help to reduce the costs of any one agency. Similarly, there may be partnership opportunities with Mississauga's community organizations and corporations that can benefit both parties.

### Federal and Provincial Grants

The City receives funding from both federal and provincial levels of government. Much of this funding is targeted to specific programs by the granting authorities, and every effort is made to use these funds for our priority projects. Where City contributions are required, the City will determine affordability and impacts on its financial position prior to applying for grants.

### Development Charges

Funds collected under the Development Charges (DC) Act are collected and used to help offset the cost of funding growth-related capital costs. Historically, DCs were structured so that "growth pays for growth" but revenues collected through DCs are insufficient to fully address all of the City's growth initiatives.

## Cash-in-lieu of Parkland

Sections 42 and 51.1 of the Planning Act enable a municipality to require land for public recreational purposes as a condition of development. The Act allows a municipality to collect cash-in-lieu of parkland as a condition of development in instances where a land dedication may not be appropriate. The City collects cash-in-lieu of parkland on most new land development. This revenue is used for the “acquisition of land to be used for park or other public recreation purposes, including the erection, improvement or repair of buildings and the acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes,” per the Act, and in accordance with approved capital plans and land acquisition strategies.

## Community Benefits Charges

Section 37 of the Planning Act provides the mechanism for a municipality to impose community benefits charges against high density residential land developments. This revenue tool has replaced the former section 37 bonus zoning fee. The revenue collected is used to help offset the cost of funding growth-related capital costs related to the servicing needs of residential developments that are five or more storeys.

## Capital Reserves

Reserves and reserve funds are created to assist with long-term financial stability and financial planning. The City has a long history of prudently managing its reserves and reserve funds. One of the purposes for maintaining strong reserve funds is to make provisions for sustaining existing infrastructure and City building. The City has implemented an annual Capital Infrastructure and Debt Repayment levy since 2013. The rate is reviewed annually as part of the business plan and budget approval process.

## Debt Financing

Long-term financing is a critical component in funding new construction, and replacing and upgrading capital assets for the City of Mississauga. Taking on long-term debt allows the City to spread out the cost of capital projects over the useful lives of the assets. The amount of debt the City issues each year is determined by how much funding will be yielded by a portion of the capital infrastructure and debt.

Debt impacts property tax; the larger the debt that a city holds, the larger the percentage of the property tax that must be allocated to service that debt.

With all of the City’s competing priorities, choices must be made. The 2023-2026 Business Plan and Budget provides detail with respect to which Future Directions projects are currently proposed for funding. Projects identified in the plan that do not have funding sources identified will be brought forward in future budget cycles for approval as viable funding sources become available. Each year, Council will direct which projects can be funded based on business cases and project plans through the annual business planning process.



# Appendix

# Section 9: Appendix

The following chart provides a summary of recommendations from the other Future Directions Plans that support and/or impact the Park Forestry and Environment Division.

Culture Planning, Indigenous Relations, Heritage Planning and Museums	
1.1	Analyze cultural infrastructure and creative spaces needs, trends and market realities to create a vision, implementation and funding strategy for public, private sector and community organizations.
1.2	Create a Cultural District Plan for the Lakeview neighbourhood to support cultural infrastructure and creative space development.
1.3	Create a vision, programming and operating strategy for the Living Arts Centre that amplifies its role as a regional arts and culture centre.
1.4	Implement a Percentage for Public Art program for City-owned capital projects and identify strategies for obtaining contributions from private development to enable the program to grow sustainably, ensure equitable access and to better connect to strategic goals.
1.7	Create at least one new serviced public space in each Service Area to increase cultural and creative sectors use and add vibrancy across the city.
2.1	Identify new opportunities to incorporate histories, traditions, interests and art forms from the cultures representative of the lands and peoples of Mississauga in culture programs and exhibitions.
2.2	Examine opportunities to grow food and culinary arts-focused programming to support cultural diversity, health and wellness and advance the City’s Urban Agriculture Strategy
4.2	Promote and expand availability of free local artist presentation opportunities in City-owned community facilities, parks and open spaces to increase exposure and appreciation for local creators.
6.4	Create safe, welcoming and unstructured spaces for youth to increase access to all City-owned community facilities and cultural venues and opportunities for creative expression and experimentation.
Recreation	
5	Demolish the Cawthra Pool and Glenforest Pool once the replacement pools at Burnhamthorpe Community Centre and Carmen Corbasson Community Centre are fully operational.
8a	Work with school boards to install seasonal domes on existing fields.
8b	Install a seasonal dome over an existing municipal outdoor artificial turf field
Library	
6	Explore adding reading gardens at library locations.
7	Identify appropriate sites and timelines for Storywalks, aiming for one Storywalk in each service area.
19	Highlight and build on the library’s role in supporting civic engagement and climate action by encouraging an informed and active community.

## Engagement Summary

The Parks, Forestry & Environment Future Directions Plan would not be possible without the significant input shared by residents throughout Mississauga. The phases of engagement provided significant insight into the values, priorities, and needs of our community when it comes to parks, resulting in a made-for-Mississauga plan.

Central to the success of the plan was ensuring engagement reached diverse segments of residents and groups with interest. By engaging with a multi-tactic and comprehensive communications approach, the plan was developed in a way that reflects the values, priorities, and wants within the park system through the most diverse spectrum of residents possible.

The City leveraged its extensive communications to promote messaging around the plan and planning process to reach hundreds of thousands of residents in the City and increase awareness about the project. A mix of digital and in-person tools was employed to provide multiple opportunities and platforms through which the public and groups with interest could share their thoughts. Digital tools included an online map, survey, and facilitated sessions, while physical surveys, pop-up events at parks, and in-person interviews at parks all helped gather input from a range of perspectives.

The combination of tactics supported not only the move to new technologies but reflects learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic. By extending beyond traditional engagement measures the City's reach was significantly greater than would have historically been the case.

The feedback received provided a wealth of insight into how residents view the City's park system. The data was organized into categories to find common links and important areas of focus. These themes and the feedback in total will be used to inform recommendations through the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan.

## Communications Stats

- Sandwich boards were installed near or within parks to advertise the project. 14.9 million billboard impressions. 100 posters at City-facilities and 15 road signs were placed to bring attention to the project.
- Known groups with interest were contacted and made aware of the project with a link to the website.
- Over 800,000 notices advising commencement of the project and how to participate were sent to email accounts.
- The City of Mississauga created a project website to keep residents up to date. 140,000 Facebook and Instagram ad reach and 271,000 TikTok ad plays.
- Five print ads with Metroland (readership of 1 million). 60,000 digital ad impressions on Mississauga News; 40,000 digital ad impressions on off-network sites.
- 23,000 incoming calls to the City received a recorded message.



## Engagement Stats

- 26 internal groups with interest interview sessions.
- Nine external groups with interest discussions with 82 participants.
- Nine online map respondents.
- 7,026 public survey and youth survey respondents.
- Nine on-site park pop-up interviews totalling 73 respondents.





## What We Heard from the Public and External Groups with Interest

A set of tactics was used to engage a large volume and breadth of residents as well as groups with interest from park user groups (those who actively use parks as part of their programming) and non-user groups (groups that do not formally use parks in their programming), community agencies, school boards, and the Region of Peel. This engagement was undertaken between November 2022 to February 2023. Substantial feedback was gathered and organized around themes to draw out insights. The following section is a summary of what we heard sequenced by the tactic.

### Community Survey

A Community Survey was conducted between November 14 and December 30, 2022, to collect broad input on a range of topics to support various services provided by the City of Mississauga, including recreation, parks, forestry and environment, libraries, and fire and emergency services. The survey gathered information about local recreation participation, preferences, barriers, suggested improvements, priorities for investment, and more.

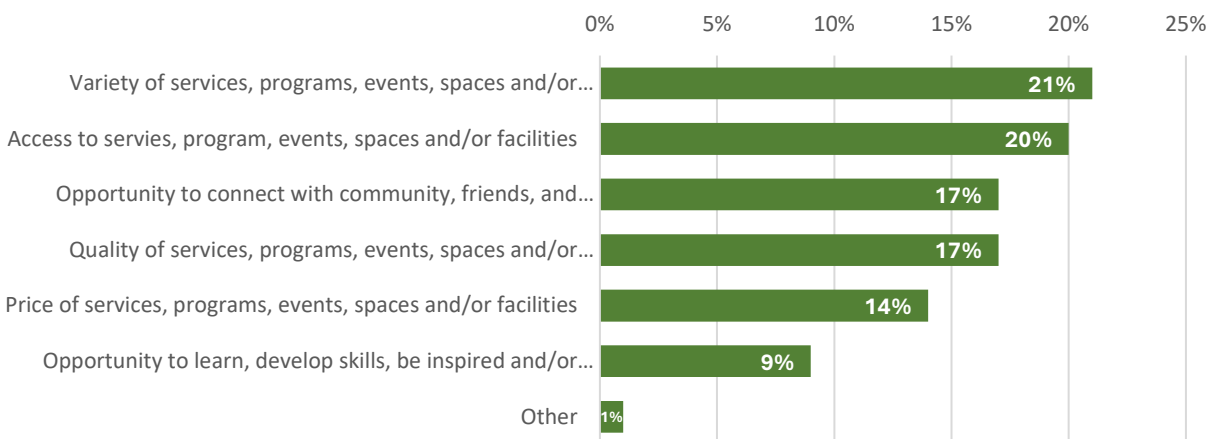
A total of 7,021 responses were received, representing people of all ages. A variety of strategies were utilized to promote the survey including, but not limited to, the City of Mississauga website, social media, digital and print advertisements, e-mail blasts, 311 telephone calls, community signage, posters within public facilities, promotion through the library, and more. As a voluntary, self-directed survey, respondents were not required to answer every question. The following is a summary of the input relating to the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan.

### Participation in Parks

Respondents were asked what they like best about parks out of a list of pre-populated options. 21 per cent of respondents chose the variety of services, programs, events, spaces and/or facilities followed by 20 per cent choosing access to those same types of offerings. Costs to use services and opportunity to learn, develop skills, be inspired, or try new things ranked lower at nine per cent and 14 per cent, respectively.

From a demographic perspective, people across all ages, gender, and income level value the same top four answers.

Figure 6: What do you like best about parks?



## Discussion

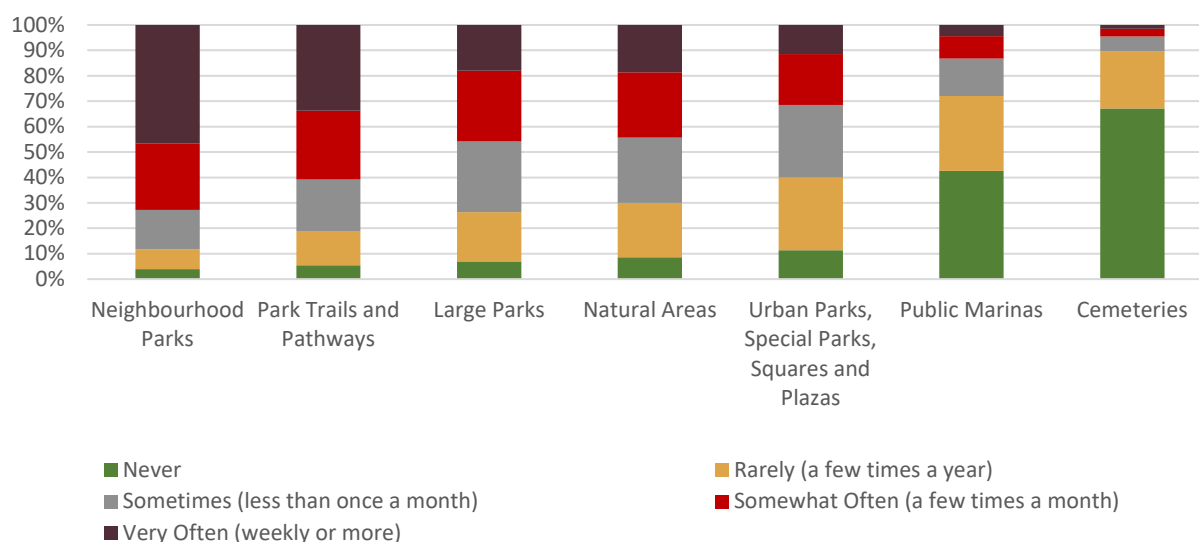
- While the favourable responses fall within a relatively narrow range (9 to 21 per cent), variety and access can be considered the top choices. This could speak to the popularity of the various types of activities and environment that exist within the park system, and that a significant share of the population sees the park system as accessible.
- Through the on-site interviews, residents proposed a variety of ideas. Further improving access to parks (e.g., through multi-modal travel options) and accessibility within parks (e.g., accessible play features) also emerged as areas where Mississauga could improve.
- There was not any significant difference in responses from different demographic groups which suggests that this response is representative of Mississauga’s population.

## Frequency of Park Visits

Respondents were asked how often they visit different types of parks. The responses diverged significantly. Neighbourhood parks and trails and pathways are most frequently visited, large parks/natural areas/and urban parks have a relatively even spread of frequency, whereas public marinas and cemeteries are visited far less often.

Age did not factor into major differences in the frequency of types of parks. Income earners from one bracket (\$30,000-\$49,999) more frequently visited marinas than others.

Figure 7: How frequently do you visit the following types of parks and open spaces?



## Discussion

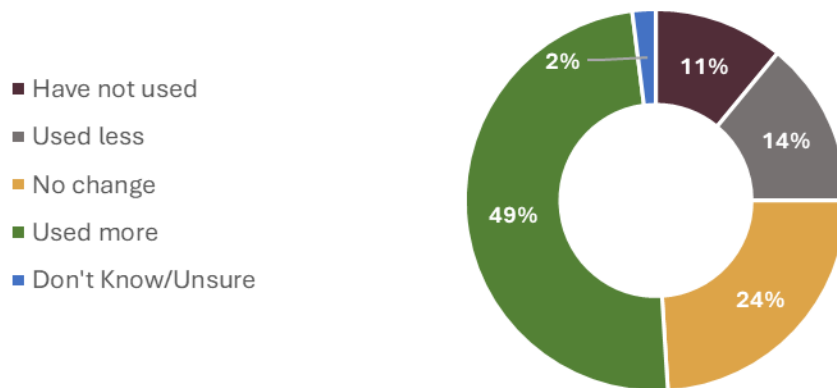
- The findings correlate with the importance of convenient access and supply and underscore the value of neighbourhood parks and trails as the foundation for the parks system.
- Likely given their special yet important purpose, public marinas and cemeteries are not visited often. While their supply is also limited, the existing low visitation is of interest as some cities have cemeteries that function similarly to other public parks (e.g., Toronto’s Mount Pleasant Cemetery).
- Updated bylaws could be implemented regarding cemetery servicing the greater public by incorporating additional programming or exploring different typologies (e.g., Mattamy memorial forest).
- In the Environics Analytics Future Directions Report: Trade Area Analysis, 2017+ 2022, there are variations in recreation participation based on age and reported ratings on nature based on service area. It is surprising to see no major variations identified based on demographics in the public survey.

## Impact of COVID-19

The survey asked respondents how their use of parks has changed since COVID-19. The results show that almost half of respondents have increased their park use, a quarter of residents did not experience any change in their use patterns and 14 per cent used parks less often.

A greater proportion of youth 10 to 14 indicated a change in use since COVID-19 than other groups, though surprisingly this was in both directions: using parks less and more. People who use ride-share or taxi as the predominant travel mode appear to have been most impacted in their use of parks during COVID-19, with a higher share indicating they visited parks less. There was no variation found across age, income, or gender.

Figure 8: How has your use of these services or attendance to programs and events changed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020?



### Discussion

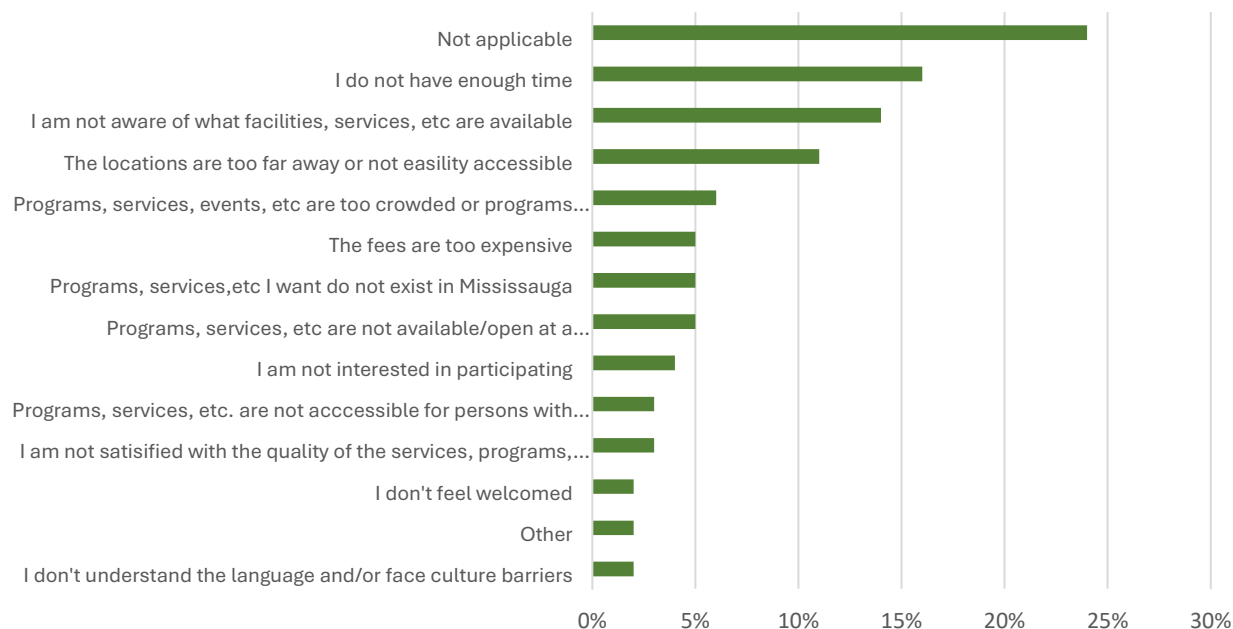
- A high number of respondents noted they use parks more through COVID-19 is consistent with the global trend of increasing park use during the pandemic.
- Aside from the demographics noted above regarding youth and ride share users, the data suggests that a large segment of the public increased their park use across the board.

### Barriers to Park Use

Respondents were provided with a list of pre-populated options on barriers to park participation. 'Not applicable' was by far the most popular choice. Not having sufficient time, lack of awareness, and that location are too far away or not easily accessible were 16 per cent, 14 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively. The rest of the options received less than 5 per cent.

Women answered this question more than men. The option for fees moves up to 5<sup>th</sup> place from 6<sup>th</sup> when answers are isolated to lower income respondents. Finally, there is a correlation between feeling unwelcome and language as a barrier with lower income levels.

Figure 9: What are the reasons you are unable to participate in each of the following community services provided by the City of Mississauga? (Select up to 3).



## Discussion

- The most popular response suggests that many do not experience barriers to park use, but roughly 76 per cent of total responses identify one. Of those that identify a barrier they are spread across several options. For example, 5 per cent of responses are related to the cost of fees.
- The lack of awareness (14 per cent) aligns with comments from the onsite interviews on the importance in promoting and educating what is available in the park system.
- Groups with Interest discussions, particularly with Community Agencies (see later in report), raised barriers related to accessibility (e.g., mobility issues in using playgrounds and trail surfaces)

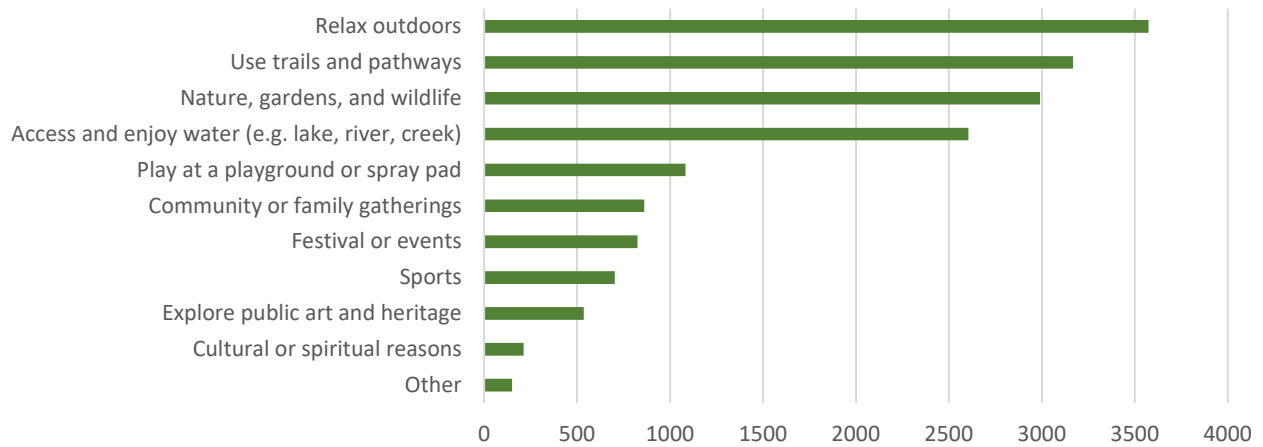
## Reasons to Visit a Park

Respondents were asked to pick their top three uses of Mississauga’s parks and natural areas using a set of pre-populated selections. The top three choices are relaxing outdoors, trails and pathways, nature gardens, and wildlife. The lower set of options include a range of more specific uses including sports, art and heritage, and festivals.

This question also allowed respondents to submit their own alternative options under the ‘Other’ choice. Recurring examples within the submissions are dog walking and exercise.

People across all ages, gender, and income levels value the same top four answers.

Figure 10: Why do you like to go to a park or natural area? What would you most like to do in a park that you cannot or find difficult to do currently?



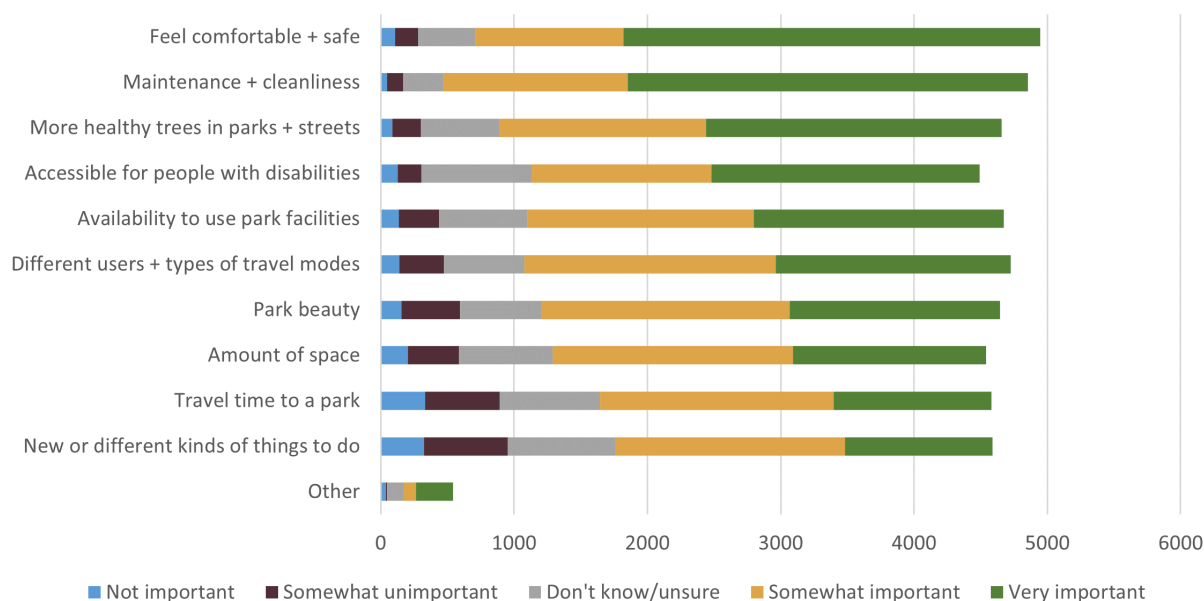
## Discussion

- The top three choices relate to passive recreational use within parks. This is consistent with a trend observed in various parks as well as comments received during onsite interviews (see later in report).
- The relative ranking of “sports” is of note given the large inventory of sport fields and types. However, discussion with sport user groups and preliminary assessments of bookings data on fields, do not necessarily indicate a major misalignment between the number of fields and the interest of residents.

## Areas of Improvement

Survey respondents were provided with a series of topics to rate along a scale of how important they were as needed improvements. Each category received a share of ratings between not important to very important. “Feel comfortable + safe,” “maintenance + cleanliness” received the largest shares of “very important” and “somewhat important.” On the other hand, “Travel time to a park” and “new or different things to do” received the least focus as a very important area for improvement.

Figure 11: What improvements are most needed in Mississauga’s parks and natural areas?



## Discussion

- Overall, the most noticeable differences are between topics that are assessed as somewhat important vs very important. On this basis, to “feel comfortable and safe” as well as “maintenance and cleanliness” can be considered the top areas where residents seek improvement.
  - In the onsite interviews, there were suggestions for more washrooms, lighting, and shade structures, which could help supporting enhancing the park experience to be comfortable and safe.
  - In the onsite interviews, there was a mix of responses on the topic of maintenance and cleanliness, with some indicating turf upkeep was an area already working well whereas issues like garbage and needle debris was an area for needed improvement.
- A second tier of “more healthy trees in parks + streets” and making spaces “accessible for people with disabilities” is also evident. This aligns with the popularity placed on natural areas and importance of physical accessibility that was heard in onsite interviews and some of the external groups with interest discussions.

## Travel Time to Parks

Survey respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with the amount of time required to travel to parks. The options were “yes,” “no,” and “did not know or am unsure.” 79 per cent of survey respondents note they were satisfied, 12 per cent noted they were not satisfied and 9 per cent responded they did not know or were unsure.

Are you satisfied with the amount of time it takes you to travel to parks?

**79 per cent** *of respondents are satisfied*

### Discussion

- A large majority of people have indicated that they are satisfied with the amount of time needed to travel to a park. In the Areas of Improvement question, “travel to time to a park” had one of the lowest shares of “very important” or “somewhat important.” While this is positive, the 12 per cent that are not satisfied could point to geographically uneven deficiencies in park provisioning across the city. While the responses do not provide insight on where those geographic areas might be, this information is an important tie to the park provision goals in the Parks Plan, 2022 and supports equity, diversity, and inclusion within Parks and Culture Planning.
- In the onsite interviews as well as in discussions with external groups with interest, there were suggestions for greater improvement of multi-modal connections to parks. One way to interpret this finding is twofold: (1) the length of time is an issue for a small segment of people and one avenue to address it could be through meeting parkland provision targets across the city, and (2) travel options and quality may have even more wide-reaching relevance to residents.

## Encouraging Residents to Participate in Community-based activities

There was an open-ended question on how to encourage residents to participate in community-based activities. It resulted in a large set of diverse responses. To assist in understanding common themes, the data was reviewed by a text analyzer tool, which identified and ranked the most common words and phrases. The context of these common words and phrases were then reviewed based on individual context to identify themes. The following is a summary of the top four themes that emerged.

**Awareness:** A common theme was around building awareness. Several respondents noted that people may already be potentially interested in participating in parks initiatives, however they may only hear about an event or program after it is held. Several communication ideas were raised, including emailing, newsletters, social media, and communications directed through local community groups. Reaching school-aged kids was a repeated sentiment.

**Incentive:** Another theme was on providing an incentive as encouragement. This included contests, free food, and tax or fee rebates.

**Linking to fun event:** several respondents described the appeal of linking tree planting or clean-ups as part of a broader fun event. Some feature examples included live music and food trucks.

**Communicating its impact:** To motivate individuals, several respondents noted that the City could take a more active role in communicating the benefits accrued from tree planting or clean-up initiatives.



## Discussion

- Responses suggest that residents see a role for the City to take (or build on) to encourage participation.
- The four areas above should provide a basic framework in which to assess future efforts in encouraging greater volunteerism in parks.

## Supporting Access to Parks

This was an open-ended question asking if there was anything else participants would like to share, and it resulted in a large set of diverse responses. To assist in understanding common themes, the data was reviewed by a text analyzer tool, which identified and ranked the most common words and phrases. The context of these top-tier words and phrases were then reviewed based on individual context to create a theme. The following is a summary of the top three themes that emerged.

**Events:** A common response was a desire to see more events, festivals, and other programmed activities to provide fun and a variety of experiences.

**Cleanliness:** the term 'clean' was used 111 times in reference to facility condition (e.g., washroom), and litter in parks and beaches.

**Supportive amenities:** a common theme was around more supportive amenities to enhance park experience, including more washrooms and benches.

**Parking and Access:** parking was one of the most common terms used and often in relation to the need for an available supply. There are also references to strengthen other multi-modal option such as biking and cycling to reach parks more easily.

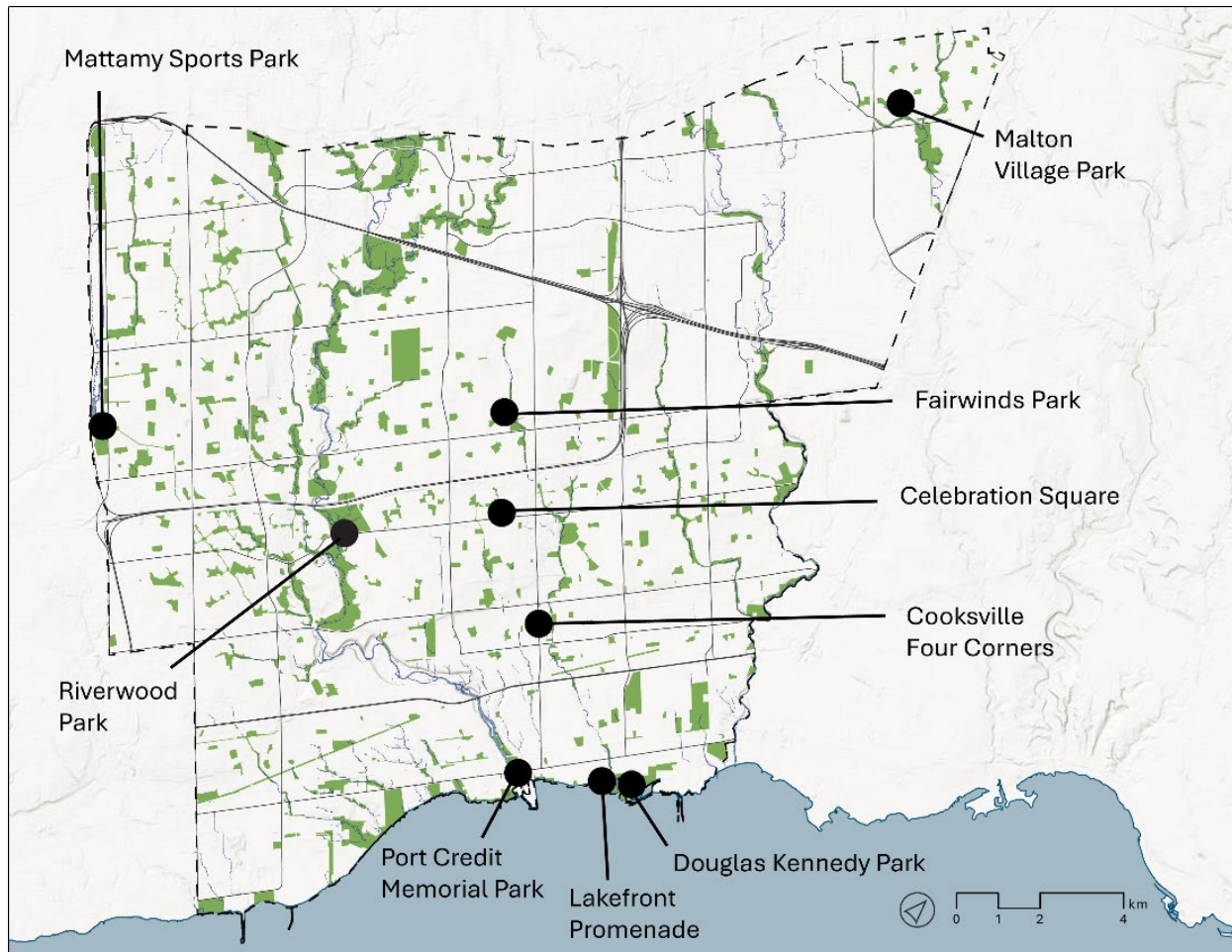
## Discussion

- There is a large demand for increased events and related programming in parks.
- Supportive amenities emerged as a theme in other engagement tactics. Its inclusion in the question above suggests items like washrooms and benches are seen as major components to enhancing park experiences.
- Parking and Access: the large response to parking suggests there is an obstacle that may not have shown up in other survey question on Areas of Improvement. Given the other responses to strengthening other travel modes, a strategy to address parking should be considered within the greater context of a multi-modal network.

## Onsite Interviews in Parks

Parks staff visited nine park sites in December 2022. Chosen sites were selected based on the intention to better understand how parkland needs vary between the different areas of Mississauga. This helps identify differentiation between urban vs non-urban, different types of parks of various sizes and areas that are well-served vs underserved by parkland. For a table noting these differences, see Appendix ii.

Figure 12: Map of parks where onsite interviews were conducted.



**Question 1** how do you typically go to parks?

The most common response was driving, followed by walking. Other responses included biking, public transit, and rollerblading.

Geographic variation: Riverwood Park was associated with higher driving in contrast to Cooksville Four Corners, Fairwinds Park, and Kennedy Park where walking and cycling were more popular.

**Question 2** What is your preferred activities in parks?

The most common response was walking, but the range of other responses can be organized around four overall uses:

1. Passive Uses: walking, biking, rollerblading, jogging and dog-walking.
2. Active Recreation: sports (pickleball, outdoor skating, soccer), play (playgrounds)
3. Nature: in addition to the passive uses which could be undertaken in natural areas, there were also more nature specific responses such as hiking and enjoying scenery.

- 
4. Open Space: free play (throwing a ball around) Geographic variation: respondents generally spoke to the types of activities that existed in the park from which they were speaking (e.g., nature in Riverwood Parks and skating in Celebration Square).
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**Question 3** what is already working well?

Respondents revealed many aspects of the park system that they like and commended the City in its management of the park system. Here are the common themes:

1. Maintenance and cleanliness were repeated several times
2. Access to a variety of recreational facilities (e.g., skating rinks, sport fields, courts, outdoor fitness, and playgrounds)
3. Access to trails as well as to nature  
Geographic variation: certain themes raised and lowered in frequency based on the park. Cleanliness was noted as a positive more frequently at Celebration Square and Mattamy Sports Park. Programmed facilities (e.g., rinks and sports) were also noted more frequently at Celebration Square whereas trails and nature were noted more at Riverwood Park.

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**Question 4** is there anything that prevents your access to parks?

A summary of questions 4 and 5 are combined below as common re-enforcing themes emerged from both.

**Question 5:** what The City could do better?

Several respondents said there was no barriers. Of those that did provide a response to barriers as well as suggests for what the City could do better, common responses identified maintenance and cleanliness as issues (e.g., poor condition of washrooms, needle-debris, and garbage).

#### **Cleanliness and Maintenance**

In the question on what is working well, cleanliness was one of the more common responses. This contradiction on cleanliness as both working well and a barrier is difficult to draw conclusions from. It does not appear to be a split among different parks. However, some possible reasons could be that respondents differ in their expectations and experiences when it comes to cleanliness and unknown differences in what cleanliness means in cases where no examples are provided (e.g., mowed standards vs garbage). However, a reasonable conclusion is that cleanliness (particularly within washrooms as well as garbage and needle debris through parks) is strongly valued by residents.

Other residents' interests and suggestions were captured, which can be grouped into the following headers along with aligned suggestions that were raised:

- **More recreation facilities.** List of ideas include skating rinks, outdoor fitness, spray pads, leash-free zones, playgrounds, walking loop, pickleball, volleyball and basketball. The onsite interviews also provided an area focus to these suggestions. In
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general, skating and leash-free zones were suggested in Service Area E and the northwest.

- **More supportive amenities.** List of ideas include washrooms, lighting, shade structures, benches, bike parking, garbage receptacles (litter and dog waste) and fountains.
  - **Promote all-year use.** List of ideas include obstacles of winter-use (e.g., ice and snow on trails, access to washrooms, warming huts) to more all-year activities (e.g., all year playgrounds) and winter activities (e.g., skating rinks).
  - **Expand activities for all ages.** List of ideas includes wanting more activities for teens, children, and seniors.
- 

The on-site interviews provided valuable responses from voices that may have not been captured by other tactics. They also provide the City with context specific and area specific feedback. For example, at least one park location was selected in each service area and a variety of different park types were selected such as urban parks, sports parks, and natural parks. The summary of themes above provides nuance through different park examples and geographic variation. This content is integrated within the Major Themes section earlier in the report.

## Online Map

An online map was live and publicly accessible throughout the engagement phase. It enabled users to drop a 'pin' within any park in the City and provide a response following similar question structures as the survey, pop-ups, and groups with interest discussions. While open to the public, it had modest use with only nine respondents. Nonetheless, this data is valuable in providing site and/or area specific feedback. The responses are listed verbatim below:

1. Jim Tovey Conservation Area: "going to be a massive new greenspace once complete and open to the public."
2. Dellwood Park: "It helps me get out of my house on a daily basis"
3. Cliff Park: "It is a close park to my house where I enjoy nature walks with family and pets"
4. Ashgate Park: suggest improvement by adding an LFZ
5. BraeBen Golf Course: "Considering how these non-public public spaces could be used during the off-season"
6. Ellis Leuschner Challenge Park: "more trees along this path would be nice. It would block some of the noise from the highway and provide shade in summer"
7. Sawmill Valley Trail: "This is my favourite trail. The tree canopy is so beautiful especially in the fall and provides much needed shade in the summer. I appreciate the length of this trail as well."
8. Green corridor North of 403: "Should turn this area into a park in the meantime."
9. *Meadowvale Conservation Area: "Access to the Credit River"*

These responses provide examples of how residents express the value of parks in their lives and reveal site-specific feedback on the park system. These responses are considered within the overall context of what we heard from the public and external groups.

## **External Groups with Interest Discussions**

Between October 2022 and February 2023, nine virtual sessions were held with park groups with interest groups. The sessions were organized with the intent to bundle similar groups together to enable focus discussions on uses and trends, priorities, challenges, and ideas for improvement. The open-ended nature of these sessions helped elicit rich conversations on the state of the park system. The following content provides an overview of the feedback collected from these discussions. Last, key takeaways frame how this information connects to the development of the 2024 Future Directions Parks, Forestry & Environment Plan.

## **Residents and Businesses**

Sessions were held with resident and business groups with additional feedback provided by email.

## **Attendees**

Lakeview Ratepayer Association, Clarkson Residents Association, Port Credit BIA, Clarkson Riverwood Conservancy, Blooming Boulevards, Meadowvale Terry Fox Run, MIRANET, Crohn's and Colitis Peel Chapter, Homeowners Association from Rockwood Village, Ratepayers Association for Cranberry Cove, Malton BIA, Older Adults groups from throughout the City, and MYAC (youth)

## Summary of Themes

Existing Park Use and Areas Working Well	<p>Responses captured a variety of interests and support for nature and tree planting, passive recreation (e.g., dog walking) to more active recreational uses (e.g., basketball, cross country skiing, community-led skating rinks).</p> <p>Areas working well also include the booking system, the grant funding system as well as certain washroom facilities.</p>
Parkland Provisioning and Park Facilities	<p>Several ideas were proposed related to park space and facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More parkland in the City Centre</li> <li>• More recreation facilities: outdoor fitness, basketball, leash-free zones, and dedicated pickleball and more public tennis courts.</li> </ul>
Supportive Amenities	<p>A variety of ideas were proposed to enhance parks through amenities. These can be grouped under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comfort:</b> (e.g., washrooms, bottle filling stations, landscaping)</li> <li>• <b>Accessibility:</b> (e.g., ensuring designs accommodate wheelchairs and steep climbs), signage (e.g., multi-lingual, wayfinding, rules and interpretive)</li> <li>• <b>Congregating:</b> (e.g., tables, benches, grill sets, fire pits, gazebos, and food stalls).</li> <li>• <b>Safety and extended use:</b> (e.g., lighting and emergency phones)</li> </ul>
Stewardship and Involvement	<p>Comments captured related to actions the City could take on encouraging stewardship and interface with communities. For residents this included a hope to support volunteering (e.g., by reducing complexity of City application form and increasing the acknowledging volunteer work within parks. Another suggestion was to improve communication with the community as the City undertakes work (e.g., decisions on park improvements or responding to tree maintenance request).</p> <p>A discussion that emerged from the BIAs is to continue to build on communication and coordination between them and the City (e.g., establishing a direct line).</p>
Getting to Parks	<p>Some residents noted that parking should be free on weekends. While others raised the importance of improving the multi-modal transportation network to make it easier to reach parks without a vehicle. This included overall streetscape investments, safety measures such as more crosswalks, and parking for ebikes, and scooters.</p>

## Community Agencies

Sessions were held with several Community Agencies operating within Mississauga. Attendees are listed below.

### Attendees

Peel Career Assessment Services, Mississauga Newcomers and Acorn Club, Global 180 Student Communications Inc., Skills for Life, Heart Comonos, Caribbean Promotions Arts and Culture Inc, COSTI, Rotary Club of Mississauga, First Hungarian Community Group, MBC, Caring for Kids, Bridgeway Family Services, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, Indus Community Services, EcoSource

### Themes

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Existing Park Use and Areas Working Well	<p>The Community Agencies highlighted a broad range of successful programming within parks. Ecosource for instance noted its programming events around Climate Action Day, the Amazing Green Race, and a clean-up around Peel Creek.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration with Parks Operations was noted as critical to delivering programs.</p>
Accessibility within and to parks	<p>Community Agencies identified the need to ensure the park system is accessible to those with mobility issues. Areas of focus included the distance from parking lots, direct connections through pathways, and accessibility within playgrounds.</p> <p>Relatedly, there was discussion on the value of connecting the park system through trails and other multi-modal transportation options (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks).</p>
Supportive Amenities	<p>A variety of ideas were proposed to enhance parks through amenities. These include shade shelters (particularly near gardens), more garbage receptacles, and access to water.</p> <p>Community Agencies also spoke about adding more servicing infrastructure (e.g., water, electricity, washrooms, etc.) to parks to enable more events.</p>
Permits and Applications	<p>Some of the Community Agencies stated that they would like to see it become easier to have events and other initiatives approved more easily by the City. One example that was provided was finding ways to make it easier to understand who at the city should be contacted based on the type of event or initiative.</p>

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Spaces for Children and Older Youth	<p>The Community Agencies spoke of the need to focus efforts on older youth through park initiatives as they tended not to have many spaces or programs in the public realm catering to them.</p> <p>Ecosource also spoke about making playgrounds more interesting (e.g., ‘nature playgrounds’ and ‘adventure playgrounds’) and/or ones that have features for a broader age range.</p>
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## Sport Groups

A session was held with several sport groups that operating leagues for activities like baseball and cricket. Some groups also provided feedback through email after the meeting. Groups in this session were very familiar with booking fields for league play, namely soccer, baseball, and cricket. The groups included non-profit and commercial providers. Attendees are listed below.

### Attendees

Gokul Universal Cricket Club, Brotherhood Softball League, Mississauga Majors, Mississauga Figure Skating, North American Premier League, Mississauga Ramblers Cricket League, Ontario Giants Baseball

### Themes

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Areas working well	<p>The Sports Groups noted the positive experiences working with the City (e.g., one case involved identifying the need move bull pens to another field), and the latter’s efforts and expertise in preparing and maintaining fields.</p> <p>The quality of the fields at Mattamy Sports Park was also noted.</p>
Allocation Permitting System	<p>Challenges were raised about booking fields and getting the times and spaces desired by groups. One issue is with a group booking several time slots but not actually utilizing them.</p> <p>Suggestions for improving this system included making it more flexible to allow for cancellations going back into a common pool that could then be re-booked or opened for drop-in play. A group also hoped that the system would not allocate any ‘grandfathered’ times to longstanding groups, and instead allocate year-to-year.</p>
Increasing Supply	<p>An overall message from the Sport Groups was that more fields that are lit are needed to meet demand. This included a hope for more artificial and lit fields that are capable of hosting competitive league play.</p> <p>Groups suggested looking at industrial areas as well as increasing multi-use fields.</p>

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Enhancing Existing Supply	Sports Groups discussed their preference to upgrade certain aspects of existing fields. For cricket, this was to develop a clubhouse, change/washrooms, shaded areas for viewing, and practice facilities next to the field. For baseball, this included repairing the condition of some bull pens, and converting some minor fields to major lit fields.
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## Other Levels of Government

Sessions were held with Conservation Authorities (CA), the Region of Peel, and School Boards to understand areas for greater collaboration and issues they are facing. Discussions explored what issues existed in relation to parks to the three groups. Given their different functions, the groups had generally different areas of focus and priorities. Where CAs were looking at the management of natural areas with a spike of visitation during COVID-19, school boards discussed their long-term considerations for their sites, and the Region of Peel explored ongoing programs and issues facing residents they serve. School Boards noted that while current arrangements for the public to use school fields off-hours can be successful, there are challenges with any use that overlaps with school hours. However, there was some indication of a willingness to consider new utilization approaches if identified by the City. Attendees are listed below.

### Attendees

Region of Peel, Credit Valley Conservation, Conservation Halton, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Peel District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde

### Themes

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Areas working well	There is a strong working relationship between the City and these groups. The Region of Peel for instance noted regular meetings to discuss ongoing initiatives. The Conservation Authorities spoke of the complementary management of natural areas, where they excel at monitoring and the City excels at park operations. Lastly, the School Boards discussed existing joint-use agreements that are working well as well support for the notion that shared resourcing could mean the delivery of facilities that cannot be provided on their own.
Access to nature	There was a common underpinning on the importance of natural areas. Conservation Areas spoke about the impacts to Bill 23 on reducing their scope of work on environmental reviews. They suggested there may be opportunities for the CAs to continue this work by collaborating with cities in some way (e.g., fee for service).  Schools suggested there could be more environmental programming in City parks to provide educational opportunities to students.

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Accessibility and inclusion in parks

The Region of Peel spoke of advancing an equitable park system through a variety of means including:

- Continued investments in tree planting near vulnerable populations,
- Expanding access to supportive amenities (e.g., washrooms, water fountains, access to sports equipment)
- Expanded availability of low cost and free park activities

The Regional Police spoke about the positive continued coordinated practices with the City (e.g., encampments in parks).

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## Discussion

The sessions organized by the City brought together a range of groups with interest and provided rich insight into how they use the park system. The themes explored above identified critical avenues to support the groups better deliver their programs, from the baseball leagues finding space for their games to support Ecosource in growing its community garden program. This feedback will help inform the 2024 Future Directions Plan content including focused recommended actions for the City to take.

## Internal Groups with Interest

The Mayor and City Council as well as thirteen business units with the City of Mississauga were engaged in October to December 2023.

Name Of City of Mississauga Business Unit or Positions	
Mayor Crombie and 11 Ward Councillors	Emergency Response and Accessibility Office
Commissioner of Community Services	Corporate Security
PF&E Divisional Leadership Team	Fire & Emergency Services
Extended Parks Forestry & Environment Leadership Team	Accessibility Office
Transportation & Works	Recreation, Culture & Heritage
Planning and Building, including Development and Design	Diversity and Inclusion
Economic Development Office	Indigenous Relations
Tourism	

## External Groups with Interest

The City invited numerous groups to attend discussion sessions. This includes over 70 community agencies, 220 sport groups, and over 140 resident and business associations. The City also followed up with groups and sent questions by email. The table below outlines the external groups that attended a meeting or provided feedback in other ways (e.g., email submissions).

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	ATTENDEES
RESIDENTS	General public
CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES	Credit Valley Conservation, Conservation Halton, Toronto, and Region Conservation Authority
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT	Region of Peel
SPORT GROUPS	Gokul Universal Cricket Club, Brotherhood Softball League, Mississauga Majors, Mississauga Figure Skating, North American Premier League, Mississauga Ramblers Cricket League, Ontario Giants Baseball
RESIDENT GROUPS, BIA, OUTDOOR COMMUNITY USER GROUPS	Lakeview Ratepayers Association, Clarkson Residents Association, Port Credit BIA, Clarkson Riverwood Conservancy, Blooming Boulevards, Meadowvale Terry Fox Run Meadowvale, MIRANET, Crohn’s and Colitis Peel Chapter, Homeowners Association from Rockwood Village, Ratepayers Association for Cranberry Cove, Malton BIA, Clarkson Seniors Association, and Mississauga Youth Action Committee (MYAC). <sup>[2]</sup>
SCHOOL BOARDS	Peel District School Board, Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
COMMUNITY AGENCIES	Peel Career Assessment Services, Mississauga Newcomers and Acorn Club, Global 180 Student Communications Inc., Skills for Life, Heart Comonos, Caribbean Promotions Arts and Culture Inc, COSTI, Rotary Club of Mississauga, First Hungarian Community Group, MBC, Caring for Kids, Bridgeway Family Services, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, Indus Community Services, EcoSource

# Demographic Summary

The following is a high-level summary of the demographic profile of households who responded to the survey.

- There were a total of 15,424 people living in responding households, representing approximately 2 per cent of Mississauga’s population.
- Compared to the 2021 Census, responding households were over-represented in infants and toddlers (under 4 years), children and youth (ages 5 to 13 years), teenagers and young adults (ages 14 to 25 years), and mature adults (36 to 50 years). Conversely, responding households were under-represented in adults (26 to 35 years), older adults (51 to 69 years) and seniors (70+ years). This is common as family households are more likely to complete a survey of this type.

Table 1: Age Group Distribution of Responding Households

Age Group*	Survey Sample		2021 Census	Difference (+/-)
	Number of Persons	%		
Under 4 Years	917	6%	4%	2%
5 to 13 Years	2,201	14%	11%	3%
14 to 25 Years	2,364	15%	13%	2%
26 to 35 Years	2,002	13%	14%	-1%
36 to 50 Years	3,441	22%	19%	3%
51 to 69 Years	3,295	21%	27%	-6%
70+ Years	1,204	8%	13%	-5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,424</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\* Note: Age categories used in the public survey are not consistent with the age categories used in the Statistics Canada 2021 Census; however, for high-level comparative purposes they are acceptable for the purposes of this analysis.

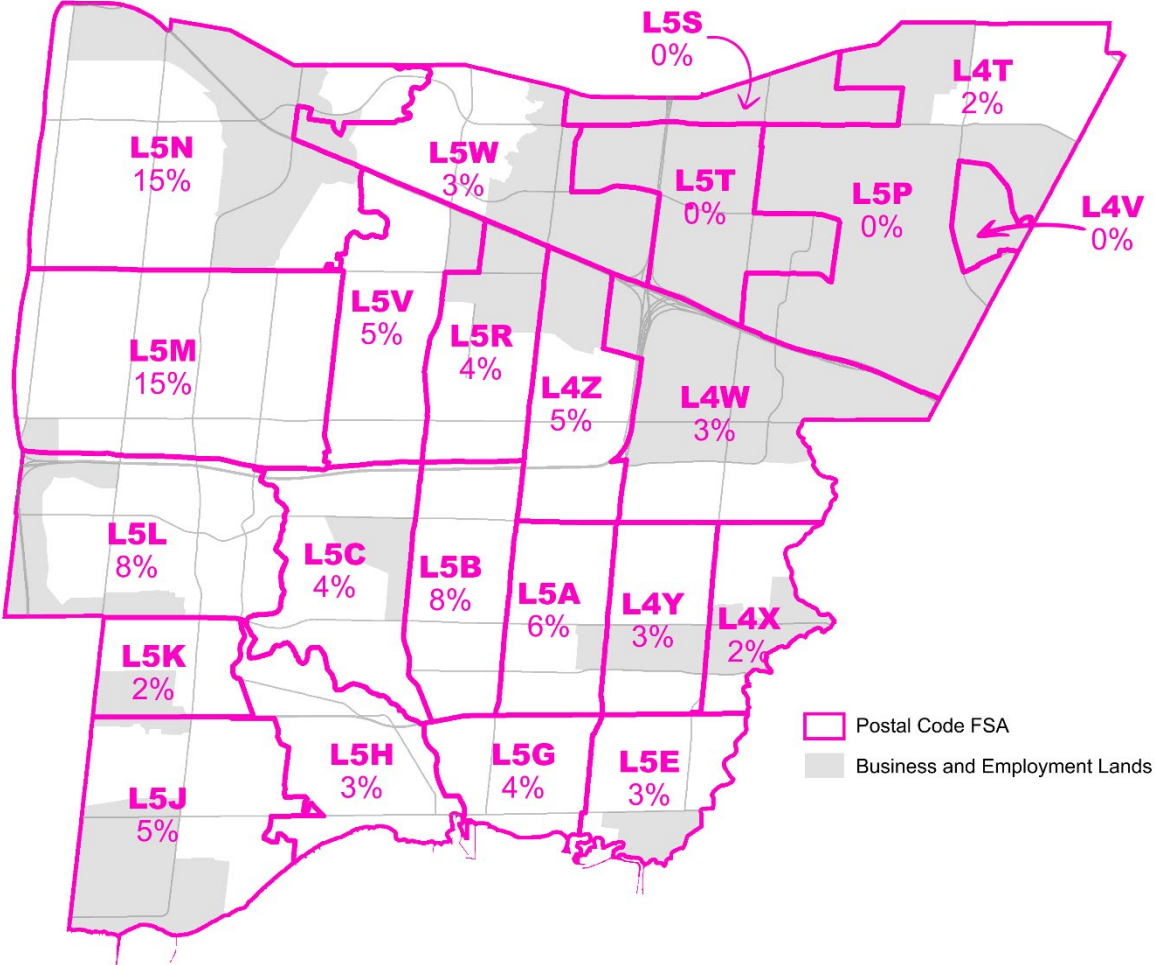
- 43 per cent of survey respondents were between the ages of 30 and 49 years.
- More than one-quarter (26 per cent) of survey respondents have lived in Mississauga for more than 30 years. One-in-five (22 per cent) survey respondents have lived in the City for 11 to 20 years. 17 per cent of survey respondents are generally considered to be new residents, who have lived in Mississauga for less than five years.
- English is the most common language spoken at home, which was identified by nine-in-ten (91 per cent) survey respondents. Other common languages included Urdu (6 per cent), Hindi (6 per cent), French (5 per cent) Arabic (4 per cent), and Cantonese (3 per cent). This is generally consistent with the 2021 Census as the most common languages spoken at home are English, Chinese (e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin, etc.), Urdu, Arabic, Punjabi, Polish, and Tagalog (Filipino).
- Responding households in the L5N postal code area were over-represented compared to Canada Post household data by Forward Sortation Area (FSA). The L5N area is bound by Highway 401 to the north, Highway 407 to the west, Britannia Road West to the south, and Levi Creek to the east. By contrast, responding households in the L5B postal code were

under-represented compared to Canada Post household data by FSA. The L5B area is bound by Highway 403 to the north, Mavis Road to the west, Queen Elizabeth Way to the south, and Hurontario Street to the east. Generally speaking, responding households are representative of the distribution of households across Mississauga. Less than one percent of survey respondents were non-residents (e.g., Milton, Oakville, etc.); experience demonstrates that this response rate from non-residents has no impact on the overall survey results.

Table 2: Distribution of Responding Households by Postal Code

Postal Code	Survey Sample		Canada Post	Difference
	#	%	Postal Code FSA	(+/-)
L5M	666	15%	13%	2%
L5N	663	15%	11%	4%
L5L	340	8%	6%	2%
L5B	337	8%	12%	-4%
L5A	257	6%	8%	-2%
L5V	233	5%	6%	0%
L5J	229	5%	4%	1%
L4Z	209	5%	6%	-1%
L5G	193	4%	4%	1%
L5C	161	4%	4%	0%
L5R	156	4%	5%	-2%
L4W	134	3%	3%	0%
L4Y	128	3%	4%	-1%
L5H	124	3%	2%	1%
L5E	119	3%	2%	1%
L5W	114	3%	2%	0%
L4T	97	2%	4%	-2%
L5K	91	2%	2%	0%
L4X	74	2%	3%	-1%
L4V	4	0%	0%	0%
L5P	4	0%	0%	0%
L5T	2	0%	0%	0%
L5S	0	0%	0%	0%
Do not know / Prefer not to answer	66	1%		
Other	36	1%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,437</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Table 3: Geographic Distribution of Responding Households by Postal Code



- Nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) of survey respondents identified as a woman and one-third (33 per cent) identified as a man. Approximately one per cent of survey respondents identified as gender non-confirming/non-binary or genderqueer and 5 per cent preferred not to answer.
- More than one-quarter (26 per cent) of survey respondents had a household income of \$110,000 or more. By comparison, the median household income in 2020 was \$102,000 or \$89,000 after tax.
- Four-in-five (80 per cent) survey respondents use a personal vehicle as their primary mode of transport, either as a driver or a passenger. Other common modes of transport included MiWay public transit (9 per cent) and walking (6 per cent).
- More than one-third (38 per cent) of survey respondents identified as a Racialized Person, which included people who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and do not include Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island/North America. Less than one per cent of survey respondents identified as an Indigenous Person of Turtle Island/North America, half (54 per cent) of whom were a First Nations Indigenous Person and nearly one-third was Metis (31 per cent).

- Nearly one-tenth (9 per cent) of survey respondents identified as a person with a disability. Among this sub-group, 43 per cent had a mobility/dexterity limitation such as a physical disability. 35 per cent had a mental/emotional health disability and 34 per cent had a chronic health condition. Other disabilities that were identified included, but were not limited to, hearing, learning or behavioural, neurological, vision, developmental, and speech/language.

## Community Profile

### Age

The 2021 Census recorded the median age in the City of Mississauga at 40.8 years, 2.3 years older than the 2011 Census, indicating the population is aging, however it is slightly younger than the 41.6 years for Ontario as a whole. Between the 2011 and 2021 Census periods, there were approximately 28,500 fewer children and teens under the age of 20 while the number of persons 55 years of age and older grew by over 57,000 persons. The 55+ age group now represents 31 per cent of the City’s population whereas the figure was 24 per cent in 2011. The number of younger adults (20 to 34 years) has been modestly increasing over the past three Census periods.

Environics Analytics reports indicate that the largest concentration of residents under the age of 10 is found in Service Area A in the northwest with over 17,000 children. Service Area A also has the largest total population. If using the proportion of any one age group as a percentage of the total Service Area population, Service Areas C and E have the highest proportion of children.

Environics Analytics reporting also shows the largest number of older adults 55+ in Service Area A and Service Area B due to their large total population. When looking at the 55+ as a percentage of the population, the highest rates are found in Service Areas F, Service Area G and Service Area H where more than one in every three persons fall under the City’s definition of an older adult.

Table 3: Age Structure by Service Area, 2021 Census

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Children (0 to 9)	9.7%	8.9%	11.5%	8.8%	10.0%	9.0%	8.8%	8.8%
Youth (10 to 19)	12.8%	12.2%	11.7%	10.2%	8.9%	9.9%	10.9%	8.8%
Younger Adults (20 to 34)	23.5%	25.1%	25.8%	23.8%	26.0%	20.8%	20.7%	19.8%
Mature Adults (35 to 54)	27.4%	26.1%	25.7%	23.2%	26.8%	25.0%	25.3%	26.6%
Older Adults (55 to 69)	18.0%	19.0%	14.6%	21.0%	16.6%	20.0%	21.0%	21.6%
Seniors (70+)	8.5%	8.6%	10.6%	13.1%	11.7%	15.3%	13.2%	14.3%

Source: *Environics Analytics, 2022.*

## Income

The 2021 Census reported that Mississauga’s average income for private households was \$126,500, higher than the Provincial average of \$116,000. Environics Analytics reports that communities located south of the QEW along with Service Area B have the highest average incomes while lower average incomes are found in Service Area E and Service Area C, the latter of which is 32 per cent less than the city wide average.<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada reports that 9.4 per cent of the population falls within its Low-Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) standard. Notably, 12 per cent of children under the age of 18 and 12 per cent of older adults above the age of 65 are living in LIM-AT households.

Table 4: Average Private Household Income by Service Area, 2021 Census

Service Area	Average Income
A	\$138,238
B	\$140,371
C	\$86,206
D	\$137,040
E	\$90,442
F	\$105,372
G	\$180,946
H	\$143,269
Citywide	\$125,736

Source: Environics Analytics, 2022

## Education

Among those age 15 years and over, the 2021 Census reported that 61 per cent of the population held a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree compared to 57 per cent across the province. 25 per cent of Mississauga’s population held a high school diploma or equivalent, slightly lower compared to the province (27 per cent). The remaining population (13 per cent) do not hold a certificate, diploma, or degree.

## Language

According to the 2021 Census, 44 per cent of Mississauga residents list English as the language most often spoken at home, a significant decrease of 16 per cent from the previous Census. This rate is consistent with the regional rate (47 per cent) although significantly below the provincial rate (68 per cent). More than one out of four residents (26 per cent) list a non-official language (e.g., other than English and French). The top five non-official languages spoken at home across Mississauga in 2021 were Urdu (5.0 per cent), Arabic (4.6 per cent), Mandarin (3.2 per cent), Polish (3.1 per cent), and Punjabi (2.9 per cent). Over the past 10 years the top five non-official languages spoken at home have remained similar although each has grown around 2 per cent.

<sup>7</sup> Future Directions Report: Environics Analytics, 2022



Table 5: Top Five Non-Official Languages Spoken by Service Area, 2021 Census

Service Area	Top Five Non-Official Languages Spoken at Home
A	Urdu (8%), Arabic (8%), Mandarin (4%), Tagalog (2%), Spanish (2%)
B	Urdu (8%), Arabic (6%), Punjabi (5%), Cantonese (4%), Mandarin (3%)
C	Punjabi (21%), Urdu (5%), Gujarati (4%), Hindi (3%), Italian (3%)
D	Urdu (5%), Polish (4%), Mandarin (4%), Arabic (4%), Tagalog (3%)
E	Arabic (10%), Urdu (5%), Polish (4%), Tagalog (4%), Spanish (3%)
F	Polish (6%), Ukrainian (5%), Urdu (4%), Italian (3%), Arabic (3%)
G	Polish (4%), Arabic (2%), Mandarin (2%), Spanish (2%), Tagalog (2%)
H	Polish (4%), Portuguese (3%), Italian (3%), Spanish (2%), Ukrainian (2%)

Source: Environics Analytics, 2022

## Immigration

Similar to previous Census periods, 53 per cent of Mississauga’s population was made up of immigrants in 2021 which is comparable to that of Peel Region (52 per cent) but significantly higher than the provincial rate (30 per cent). Recent immigrants arriving in the five-year period between 2016 and 2021 represented 14 per cent of the total foreign-born population. Service Area E has the largest proportion of immigrants (63.7 per cent), closely followed by both Service Area C and B (62.9 per cent and 62.6 per cent respectively). Even in Service Area G and Service Area H which have the smallest proportion of immigrants, more than one out of three people are reported as foreign-born residents.

The 2021 Census records 62 per cent of Mississauga’s population as being racialized, a consistent increase since 2011 and 2016 when the rates were 54 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively. In comparison to the Region of Peel as a whole whose racialized population comprises 69 per cent, Mississauga is slightly lower but is nearly double that of the province (34 per cent). In 2021, the three largest racialized cultural groups consisted of South Asian (25 per cent), Chinese (7 per cent), and Black (7 per cent) populations.

Table 6: Proportion of Immigrant Population by Service Area, 2021 Census

Service Area	Proportion of Immigrant Population
A	55.6%
B	62.6%
C	62.9%
D	50.1%
E	63.7%
F	56.7%
G	36.3%
H	35.0%

Source: Environics Analytics, 2022