

## Recreation Service Plan

### Issue

Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division is in the process of developing a 5-year Recreation Service Plan. The Plan will provide a framework for decision-making and establishing priorities and principles for investments. The plan will:

- identify current recreation service levels;
- identify gaps and areas where service improvement is needed;
- develop a mechanism to ensure that our programs and services meet the recreational and leisure needs of the City's diverse population; and
- provide a basis for decision-making and priority setting for investment.

### Background

In August 2009, Council approved four principles to guide the planning process and to ensure that all Torontonians, particularly those with greatest need, have access to high quality recreation services that support social, economic and physical health, now and in the future. The Council direction is outlined in the link below:

City Council, August 5 & 6, 2009, Item EX33.23 – Development of a City-wide Recreation Service Plan [www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/decisions/2009-08-05-cc38-dd.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/decisions/2009-08-05-cc38-dd.htm).

These principles include:

1. **Equitable Access** – providing equitable recreation access on a geographic and demographic basis for all residents of Toronto;
2. **Quality** – providing the highest quality of programs and services to enhance the health, quality of life and well-being of residents;
3. **Inclusion** – ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access and participate in programs and services that are planned, delivered, and managed to recognize diversity and encourage participation of marginalized and racialized people and groups; and
4. **Capacity building** – provides programs and services of social, economic, and physical benefit to all participants and creates a sense of community, belonging, and vitality.

## Implications

Recreation service planning is an important mechanism used to ensure that the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation programs and services remain relevant to the diverse and changing needs of residents and communities.

The Plan will review current recreation services in a comprehensive manner to identify needs, trends, gaps, opportunities and capabilities. Building on the Council-approved principles, the plan will set 5-year measurable goals and objectives to guide service delivery.

Service planning will help the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division establish consistent processes and methodologies to deliver recreation programs and services equitably across the City. The Recreation Service Plan review is the first step in a planning process that ensures that the City develops recreation programs, services, and assets equitably across the City of Toronto. It will help to ensure that the priorities for providing recreation services are better articulated to the public. The Plan will promote collaboration across a network of recreation programs and services that contribute to the quality of life and well-being of all Torontonians. It will also reflect the City's commitment to the principles of fairness, equity, quality, inclusiveness, and capacity building.

## Consultation Process – Recreation Service Plan & Parks Plan

An extensive community and stakeholder consultation strategy is being developed for both the Recreation Service Plan and the Parks Plan to ensure that Toronto's diverse communities are engaged in the development of these plans.

Consultations will be held across the City and will include local residents, diverse and newcomer communities, equity seeking groups, park and recreation user groups, internal and external stakeholders, Councillors, local businesses, funding organizations, City agencies, other owners of green space (e.g. school boards, universities, hospitals), etc. We will also develop an on-line survey with communication materials so people can interact with us individually if desired. Our aim is to consult as widely as possible in order to ensure that these plans are comprehensive and responsive to the needs of Torontonians.

Internally, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff is already playing a key role in the development of the Plan. Recreation Managers have been involved from the very early stages of the project. Staff from all levels of the Division are being asked to participate.

**Current Status and Next Steps**

Data is being collected to provide baseline information about how, when and to whom we currently deliver services. A staff engagement process is underway. A comprehensive public and stakeholder engagement strategy is being planned to provide public input into the development of the Service Plan. A staff report will be submitted to Council in February, 2011 outlining the Division's public and stakeholder engagement strategy.

**Contact**

Brenda Patterson  
General Manager  
Parks, Forestry & Recreation  
Bpatter2@toronto.ca, 416-392-8182