

## OTF Reporting Form

### Organization Details

**Organization Name:** The Centre for Local Research into Public Space      **Org. Email:** mail@celos.ca  
**Mailing Address:** 242 Havelock Street      **Phone:** 416-533-0153  
 Toronto, ON M6H 3B9

### Financial Statements:

### Grant and Report Information

**Approved Grant Amount:** \$100,000      **Grant ID:** 105125  
**Report Type:** Final      **Report ID:** 105125\_Final\_2\_2013-02-28  
**Beginning of Reporting Period:** 28/10/2011      **End of Reporting Period:** 28/02/2013

### Who would you like us to contact if there are questions in regard to this report?

**First Name:** Jutta Mason      **Title:** Adminsitrator  
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### Grant Progress

#### What was the most important thing that happened as a result of your grant?

Describe how your community or the people you serve benefited from your OTF grant. How did it make a difference?

**(A)** The publiccommons website acquired a staggering number of new records: over 1400 documents relating to public space, with another 630 links to related websites, and almost 4500 photos. One reason for the proliferation of records is that almost every neighbourhood group we talked to resulted in some more records being added. This process continues.

The project of sorting the records in ways that would make them easy to access, and therefore of practical use, was a struggle. But in the past four months the fog has begun to settle. With the help of a range of neighbourhood groups, we began applying the following organizing principles:

(1) detailed cataloguing of common resources (like sports fields, community kitchens, rinks, field houses, campfire sites, etc.) as **tools** for community building

(2) chronicling blocked access to such tools (blocks are currently on the increase, as our grant report shows)

(3) moving the stories of one group around to other groups -- not only success stories, but also the nitty-gritty of how to find workarounds to blocked access, and how to keep up morale (and a sense of humour). The communities we want to serve have so far had only limited use from this third element of our project – it took us a long time to get on the right track (but we're on it now).

**(B)** Finding the best way of moving the stories around was also a puzzle, until the Downtown East Community Association taught us a new approach. We shifted from traditional print booklets to four-minute-to-30-minute slide/video picture-shows that could be posted online but also easily adapted for lively spoken presentations. As we began learning to use this medium (we use a version called "Prezi"), we began to see that such presentations could be "signed out" from [publiccommons.ca](http://publiccommons.ca) by many different neighbourhood groups, adapted according to local preferences. Reactions to these presentations so far have been enthusiastic

#### Is there advice that you would give to another organization doing a similar project? What did you learn? Would you do anything differently the next time?

##### What we learned, and want to pass on:

During the many talks and "prezi" picture shows relating to our grant project, we began to notice that there seem to be two factors that can really shrink a park-friends group fast:

(1) groups shrink if all the interesting projects are taken off the table because they require complex procedures or they require the volunteers to raise money for permit fees/ insurance on top of donating their work.

(2) groups dwindle if, after long meetings and multiple lists of ideas, the results are really skimpy: two more garbage cans and one more bench for the park, and staff agreeing to basic operational standards like fixing long-broken lights or water fountains.

We learned that fear of antagonizing park staff affects both park friends and city councillors. The idea seems to be that city staff may refuse all help if they get irritated by too many requests – even in a situation where many ordinary maintenance tasks are far behind. This worry leads citizens to give up too soon, and it needs to be openly talked about with all concerned (city staff too) whenever it becomes an impediment.

The other important thing is to help neighbourhood groups avoid diluting their efforts by turning their limited, practical aims into very broad aims like reducing drug use or fighting violence against women. There is far too much pressure, from city hall and also in the media, to ignore simple fixes in favour of lofty missions. Those aims may still be served -- but they come along as a byproduct.

The park groups that had the most enthusiasm were those that had **limited, practical aims** which were **within the reach of their members**, working alone or alongside a few neighbours. Young carpenters built skateboard ramps, parents strung up a bedsheet between park trees and showed movies to neighbourhood kids, semi-retired musicians stood out in cold midwinter hosing frozen grass to make a rink, and then collected skates to have on hand for kids who came without. The rest of the people nearby, without the time or the inclination to join in, were still an appreciative audience, and the friendliness spread by that appreciation is palpable -- a form of cultural capital that enriches neighbourhoods.

### Summary

**How many people directly benefited from your grant?** 1836

**If your initiative involved marketing, promotion, outreach or raising awareness, how many people did you reach/contact (do not include website hits)** 2410

**If you held a community or public event as part of your grant, please indicate how many events you held and the total number of people that attended each event.**

Type of Event	Number of events held	Total number of people attending
Festival	0	0
Arts production / performance / exhibit	1	120
Public Education Event	4	30
Sporting Event	1	25
Conference/Workshop/Training Program	1	35
If other, please specify:		
Councillor Park Talk	1	50

**How many new programs, activities or events were you able to offer as a result of your grant?**

11

**Did your initiative receive any media coverage?**

Yes

**If yes, please tell us the type of coverage received and the number of reports or stories:**

Newspaper article	8
Radio Interview	0
Television	0
Other	1

If other, please specify:

Blog Post - Project for Public Space (<http://www.pps.org/blog/whom-does-design-really-serve/>)

**In this Reporting Period, did your organization undertake any activities to recognize your Ontario Trillium Foundation grant?**

Yes

Acknowledged OTF support in publications and promotional materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recognized OTF support on website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provided link to OTF website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Used OTF logo in print and promotional materials or website link	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Displayed recognition plaque or other signage in a public location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gave verbal acknowledgement of OTF funding (e.g. during public presentations)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If other, please specify:

We met with city staff, City Councillors, provincial and federal MPs to explain our project. Talked about it until we were hoarse!

**If no, why not?**

**Volunteer Contributions**

How many volunteers directly contributed to the initiative funded by your grant? Please do not give the total number of volunteers in your organization.

Volunteers	398
Hours Contributed	3233

Of these volunteers, how many were newly recruited volunteers in this Reporting Period?

New Volunteers	177
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If you provided any volunteer training, indicate the number of people directly trained in each category.

General Volunteers	256
Board Member Volunteers	9

**IMPACT**

**INDIVIDUAL IMPACT**

Did your grant result in any observed behaviour change among those individuals that directly benefited from your grant? Please check all that apply.

- Stronger cultural awareness
- A greater sense of community belonging
- Increased awareness of community resources
- Enhanced communications skills
- Participation in workforce
- Development of life skills
- Enhanced self-confidence/esteem
- Enhanced success for students and learners
- Enhanced physical activity
- Other

If other, please specify:

The silver lining to the cloud that loomed over our project is that it led to a great deal of public discussion. Since parks have no walls, the discussions were often very open-ended -- not like meetings, not media articles, but encounters between people. Conversations expanded to include strangers, leading to new connections.

**ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT**

How did your organization benefit from your OTF grant? Please check all that apply and provide details where required.

- Enhanced capacity to deliver services or programs
- Increased number of partnerships / networks formed in the community
- Increased membership in your organization
- More active participation of members in your organization
- Improved staff training and development
- Enhanced technological capacity
- Enhanced organizational and/or strategic planning
- Enhanced organizational stability
- Raised profile of your organization
- Increased funds raised
- Other

If you indicated new partners, how many new partnerships?

7

If you indicated increased funds were raised, please indicate how much:

12950

If you indicated "other", please specify:

In the current atmosphere of energetic institutional shutting down of resources and possibilities, practical goals can sometimes come into sharper focus. The pink mist of "community life" that might be invoked by real estate companies or inspirational speakers has a chance to resolve into more limited projects. People who really want to get something done can find each other in the confusing jumble of good intentions. This happened in the last 4 months of our project.

#### COMMUNITY IMPACT

How did your grant benefit your community, clients or participants? Please check all that apply.

- Created economic opportunities in your community
- Enhanced services, programs or events
- Increased participation in community life by removing barriers to participation (i.e., financial, social, cultural and linguistic barriers)
- Enhanced awareness or profile of issue
- Enhanced or strengthened the local environment (land, water, air, energy conservation, etc.)
- Increased physical access to buildings, facilities
- Enhanced volunteerism by recruiting, training or diversifying the volunteer base
- Enhanced organizational responsiveness to the community
- Made better use of community facilities or land by repairing, renovating or making them available to community groups
- Other

If other, please specify:

As is evident from the rest of this grant report, the checkmarks in the boxes are true but lukewarm for the most part. Our achievements were not as strong as we wished. Our cheerleading for various groups across the city did most likely increase some access and events; some volunteers did say they took heart from our examples; the stories we passed along from one group to another did result in the swap of some good ideas. But, surprisingly, the main benefit that we were told about, was that we were an example of "never say never." People's sense of discouragement can swamp out community gifts in the presence of too many buckets of cold water. We didn't disappear, and we made it clear that the stories we found in far-flung parks were admirable and sustaining. That seemed to help.

#### NOT-FOR-PROFIT or VOLUNTARY SECTOR IMPACT

Did your grant have any broader impact on the not-for-profit or voluntary sector in your community or in the sector in which you operate? Please check all that apply.

- Enhanced effectiveness of the broader not-for-profit or voluntary sector in your community
- Advanced the knowledge or resources available to other not-for-profits in your community
- Established a model that will be used by other not-for-profit or voluntary organizations
- Enhanced the responsiveness, resiliency and relevance of the broader not-for-profit or voluntary sector in your community
- Other

If other, please specify:

We suspect that many of the visitors to the publiccommons.ca website so far were from the non-profit sector and from within government. The clue is that surprisingly often, someone from such an agency would tell us that they had gone repeatedly to our website -- even though the website visitors overall are far below what we want to achieve. We were also contacted by university students and their teachers, who used the site for their research. Perhaps those groups were not so daunted by the large number of documents and the many headings and subheadings that represent our efforts to present the material in an orderly and accessible way. If our website offered a shortcut to advance the accuracy of information needed by non-profit groups, that's wonderful. But our other objective -- to make the website material approachable for the wider world of people who have limited objectives in their local public spaces -- is still to come. Our outdoor rinks website (cityrinks.ca), which got just under 200,000 individual visitors this past winter, is one of our testing grounds for presenting information directed to ordinary users of public spaces.

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Number of employment positions (Please report in FTEs, Full-Time Equivalents) funded in your organization through your OTF grant: 1

Financial and In-Kind Support Leveraged:

Did you receive any in-kind or non-financial support? Yes

If yes, please estimate the value of any in-kind or non-financial support your organization may have received as a

result of your grant.

Type of support received	Estimated Value (\$)
Donated space and utilities (i.e., office space, meeting space, recreation, use of phone or fax, etc.)	\$600.00
Donated services (i.e., accounting, transportation, website design, etc.)	\$96,810.00
Donated equipment, materials or supplies (i.e., office furniture or equipment, etc.)	\$450.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$97,860.00</b>
Did you generate any revenue as a direct result of your OTF grant?	Yes
In this Reporting Period, what is the estimated value of any revenue your organization may have received as a direct result of receiving your OTF grant?	
Government Sources (e.g. Federal, Provincial or Municipal)	0
Non-Government Sources (e.g. Foundations, United Way, Donors/sponsors, earned revenue)	12950
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$12,950.00</b>

### Achievements

Did you achieve all, some or none of your expected results (over the entire time of the grant)? Some results achieved

If you were not able to achieve all of your expected results in this Reporting Period, indicate why by checking all the reasons that apply:

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Delays in getting started   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Organizational or staffing changes (internal reorganization, board changes etc) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Under-estimated time to complete the work                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Under-estimated resources needed for the work                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Loss of funding or revenue from other sources                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Lack of community support or partnerships needed for the work                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| External factors beyond your control  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

If "Other", please explain:

When we got the OTF grant, we asked to meet with the general manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, to explain what we hoped to do. Most of our work was already well known by management staff at more local levels, but the general manager was fairly new, and we wanted to be clear and open about the project. Although she was a very busy head, with a yearly budget of almost \$500 million to administer, she agreed to meet. In preparation we sent her the project description.

She heard us out, not saying much except that it was too bad that we had not asked her office what the City would recommend for us to put into our OTF application.

Over the subsequent two years, it was impossible not to notice that almost every opening for collaboration was shut down. The city's \$9 billion budget included a \$150,000 cut specifically to stop recreation staff working with bake ovens and park social programs. Local city staff who had been used to working with community groups were issued warning letters. Staff discussing ideas for joint projects with non-staff was now a conflict of interest. When a part-time recreation staff member tried to describe to the Parks Committee how she and her colleagues had worked with the Dufferin Grove bake oven program for the past ten years, she was harshly silenced by the committee chair: only top management was allowed to speak, however inaccurately, about the nuts and bolts of community ovens. Long-time recreation staff were strongly discouraged from even attending public meetings where parks might be discussed.

The new rules made the partnership aspects of our grant difficult. Instead of "how do I..." our task sometimes became "how do I avoid..." We had to get used to an atmosphere of apprehension among staff and also citizens (see our report on working with park groups). Transparency of information was better or worse according to rhythms we didn't understand. The negative effects on our project were strongest in relation to the tools that support community building: e.g. bake ovens and bio-toilets, and in relation to any project that required access to public resources, like field houses or kitchens. Projects that would once have needed mainly elbow grease and sharing of know-how began to acquire the formality of a court case.

All of this meant that quite a lot of extra effort was expended in finding workarounds, keeping morale up (in our neighbourhoods, in our project group, and among those recreation program staff who didn't leave), expanding our search for information in a context of very limited transparency, and looking for ingenious ways to protect existing resources. It was not always pleasant, but it focused our minds on searching for what is do-able in these (hopefully temporary) circumstances. The surprise is how much can still be done, even in this situation.

**If there were any unanticipated results, positive or negative from your work, please describe them.**

Much of this report is about unanticipated results, and some of those results were negative, at least in the short term. There were three main unanticipated positive results --

(1) our discovery of the dynamic possibilities of slide/video presentations (using the "Prezi" software) when combined with spoken stories

(2) our discovery of a small but resolute number of ingenious people and groups who continue to find access to community "tools" like field houses, bake ovens, etc. despite the expanding blocks catalogued on publiccommons.ca. This number includes some supportive city staff as well, helping people get access in ways not explicitly sanctioned. The mode of approach of all these people fits with many of the principles of "governing the commons" enumerated by Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom.

(3) we encountered a new and interesting constituency that has joined the contest over public space: young adults with or without children, with part-time work and not much money. They seem to be mostly uninterested in the available framework of civic participation, involving fund-raising and (often token) decision-making. They use the parks as their social spaces -- sometimes as their living rooms, sometimes as self-organized town squares. Their increasing numbers surprised us, as did the active interest our project got from that constituency.

### Continuing Activities

**Do you expect the activities resulting from your grant to continue once your grant ends?**

Yes, some activities will continue

**If yes, how will this happen? Check all that apply.**

Your organization intends to continue the work:

As part of your regular activities within your existing budget

With the support of volunteers

Cost sharing with partners

Fee for service

Time-limited funding is being sought or was received from other sources to continue the project

Other community organizations will take the project over without using additional funds

Other

If time limited funding is being sought, please specify the source:

We will try to see if we can get one more year of funding from OTF, since there are so important elements of this project that are well underway but not completed.

If ongoing funding is being sought, please specify the source:

The underlying assumption of this project is that ongoing funding for these public places should be tax-based. Taxes should be allocated transparently and with community input, not only at election time but as continuously and dynamically as possible. One consequence of good public input is that taxes are directed to the place where their benefits can be maximized for the greatest number of people -- also a likely outcome of good community collaboration.

If other, please specify:

**If no, please indicate why the work will not continue. Check all that apply:**

Project is complete (it was not intended to be ongoing)

Funding was not obtained to sustain the project

Lack of community interest

Lack of community need for the project

Lack of volunteer support

Other

If other, please specify:

### Results and Indicators

Year Expected Results	Performance Indicators	Achievements	Notes
Year Expanded 1 database capacity	<p>-Research data is enriched</p> <p>-A friendly, accessible "How do I..." section in connection with each of the issues addressed is added</p> <p>-A function that allows users to comment and</p>	<p>The research data has had about 200 records added. Moreover the data has been consolidated into a single dataset (documents) which is much easier to access (search and sort). Also these documents can be organized into administrator-created topics, whereby individual documents can be placed in several topics. This allows for very expressive organization options.</p> <p>This section has been added as a Topic (folder). The "How do I..." sections are way behind in posting – that is, there are 12 more "How do I..." subjects for which we have much material but it's still being sorted and having pictures added. Two new researchers joined or team about three weeks ago to work on getting these sections ready and publishable. This is a current priority for us, especially with the new city permit rules.</p> <p>The "Add a comment" functionality is available on our website: <a href="http://www.publicrules.ca">www.publicrules.ca</a>. There is also a "blog" capacity, which will allow interested parties to contribute a running stream of information. Our webmaster has completed a graduated system of</p>	



add information, who is allowed to post, edit, set up new sections, etc. This was a harder task than he anticipated but it works well and is ready for us to invite users.

A kind of local version of Wikipedia relating to public commons, is developed

-The "issues and stories" section of the database will have an additional 50 -70 user-contributed records to the end of the first year, cross-linked to the relevant laws, policies, guidelines, etc.

-The database will have an additional 300-400 searchable, indexed and cross-linked records based on staff reports, council minutes, and related legislation documents

All sections of the database have been combined, with very flexible capability of organizing documents in easily added topics (like folders). In the meantime (as mentioned above) about 200 new records have been added.

The issues and stories are in the queue to be organized into the "how-do-I...." subjects, see above.

About 200 new items have been added to the database.

the rights-based system is in place (needs technical and user-acceptance testing).

Another 124 in the queue.

<p>Year Working in 1 collaboration with local park users and City of Toronto staff, the findings of Elinor Ostrom, 2009 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics are applied to urban parks. In particular, Ostrom's lifetime study of diverse, collaborative approaches to using common resources will guide collaborative project work on ten projects in fourteen parks. The intent and proper application of laws, policies, guidelines, and procedures</p>	<p>Models for strengthening neighbourhoods using existing laws and policies are explored. Community learnings and benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Playgrounds in three parks (Crombie Park, Dufferin Grove, Wallace Emerson) will be more accessible for all abilities, and more attractive to families because of better staffing and some new activities.</li> <li>- Good staffing and small performance events will be supported in part by funds raised through new community cafés and skate lending in two rink clubhouses (Giovanni Caboto Rink, Christie Pits Rink) and one new café in a</li> </ul>	<p>1. Dufferin Grove is partway there, with added accessibility features at the adventure playground. We're still not finished our on-site research through visits by disabled children and youth (and their parents). We also got the City to train and hire an autistic youth to work in the playground alongside other staff. Crombie Park had to be cut from the list because our contact family moved away. Wallace Emerson is getting an accessible play centre for their winter indoor playground, currently being built by our consultant. We worked with a developmentally disabled teen at MacGregor Park and then hired her to come and work in the program at Dufferin Grove. We regard these new hires as a step in the right direction of better staffing. We also got involved with the Oriole Park playground renovation (mixed us with many accessibility features – but that was mainly to learn more, for us to convert into DIY principles for less affluent neighbourhoods).</p> <p>2. We got this done at two rink clubhouses and one new park fieldhouse with a wading pool, just as we intended – but different ones than those we had on the list. We did a Giovanni Caboto clubhouse design charette with an at-risk class from Carlton Village Middle School, but the Etobicoke administrative region made it clear they did not want to follow up. Vermont Park was unexpectedly scheduled for construction, so nothing could be added there. Christie Pits was in the news because of new permit restrictions. These restrictions upset the residents' group so much that they began making plans for reducing their volunteer work. Instead, we were able to collaborate with a city councillor to get kitchen plumbing and wiring put into Wallace Rink clubhouse and Campbell Rink clubhouse (it's also a playground fieldhouse in summer). A private donor was found, to let us equip the kitchens and purchase more skates to lend out. At MacGregor Park, new wiring and additional gifts-in-kind (appliances) made a spring/summer/fall cafe possible. The fieldhouse also became a staging area for more outdoor cooking fires, combined with arts and performance events. Free sports activities supported at these locations include BMX jumps, bike polo, tetherball, soccer, and drop-in skating (skating increased hugely with the arrival of the cafes).</p> <p>In order to use donation income through food at these places, we have met frequently with the city and with recreation staff to work out a cash-handling system that can funnel extra revenue to city programs. These planning sessions are still ongoing, but the donation transfers to the City program budget have begun.</p> <p>3. Valleyfield clubhouse is in the Etobicoke administrative district and therefore also restricted. Macgregor Park not only got a cafe (see above) but also got turned into an occasional art gallery with at-risk and disabled kids' involvement. The Greenwood Rink clubhouse took the place of Valleyfield clubhouse, with a once-a-week family corner all during the winter (scrubbed, donated furniture, art supplies, mini-cafe). The changes have not yet been publicized on our database, nor included in our workbook. However there has been media attention (the Star and the Globe did media pieces referencing our work). There were also a number of invitations to meet with other community groups, who wanted to discuss similar</p>
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will be clarified for park users, who will be supported in adapting them to facilitate increased community access to urban parks.

playground with a wading pool (Vermont Park). These cafés will be a collaboration between park users and part-time rink or playground staff. In these three parks there will be more neighbourhood pickup sports (including bicycle polo, cricket, dodgeball, ball hockey), which will be more inclusive because people involved in those activities will not have to pay to play.

- Two of the city's many unused or under-used park field houses (MacGregor Park, Valleyfield Park) will be scrubbed and repaired, accessibility barriers removed in cheap but ingenious ways, and the buildings made available as part-time neighbourhood clubhouses and staging areas for diverse park activities. These changes will be publicized through the database and the workbook and possibly the media, attracting the attention of other park users and park staff, including management.

- One new bake oven (Bell Manor Park) will be built with active collaboration between: park users, a nearby community health centre, local park staff,

projects. We were able to help one of the groups (Orchard Park) to get the use of their park field house as a staging area for a winter natural ice rink.

4. Bell Manor park faced so many Etobicoke administrative obstacles that they gave up trying to get an oven for now. Instead we worked with the Thorncliffe Women's Committee to write a joint grant for a tandoor oven, from the Transportation Department's "Beautiful streets" program. They received \$1500, and also the City laid down a concrete base for the tandoor. Because progress was very slow, we got a private donour to fund a portable tandoor, which was used with great fun at community events at R.V. Burgess Park while awaiting the permanent structure. We also began to use it at Dufferin Grove, to trade expertise between the two locations. City policy staff devised a bake oven policy which will make groups pay to use the ovens even if they paid for the ovens. Because it is difficult for most working people to take time off to do a deputations at City hall, we contracted a videographer to canvass oven users about the proposed oven policy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhPlcXh-FYM>. His video was posted on the web and also played for city councillors. Attempts at collaboration with City staff about policy did not succeed to date, despite involvement of all existing public ovens users.

In addition to our work re the tandoor oven, we were asked to work with staff and volunteers from LAMP (Health Centre) to help them set up a temporary bake oven for their farmers' market at Toronto Community Housing, for the summer. This worked out well and LAMP says they'll try to get a permanent oven now.

The difficulty of the Bell Manor oven project made us realize that public/community bakers need to get support and to exchange experiences. So we set up a new website, called [publicbakeovens.ca](http://publicbakeovens.ca), and undertook a "guest baker" project, baking at almost every public oven in the city:

<http://publicbakeovens.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=PublicBakeovens.FrontPage#guest>

5. All three parks (Thorncliffe, MacGregor, and Greenwood) had events using food, with either direct public health involvement or support mediated through our researchers. All involved collaboration with city recreation staff and volunteers.

6. There were seven meetings (two of them public meetings) about the Greenwood Rink renovation. We also helped curate two large information displays that were up in the rink clubhouse all winter, and one temporary display at a giant community campfire. Rink volunteers helped explain the displays. Result: changes were made to the existing plans to allow for the addition of a larger community social space and some cafe/ kitchen capacity. Building is due to begin in spring 2012, and then our follow-up will resume.

7. The City hired two consultants to do a feasibility study of the bio-toilet, which was near completion when our OTF grant started. The study concluded that if the project took account of all possible regulations – if the City "threw the book at the project" – this simple bio-toilet would cost over \$130,000 to build. The study's conclusion signalled a long delay, or permanent stop, for the project. We curated a summer-long information display about the issue. But for now we have to declare defeat.

What remains is to learn from the experience by creating a workbook section using Ostrom's principles. This is a project to learn from mistakes, or from unhappy experience – which is often a good way to learn something. Due in early spring.

8. We held four meetings with city staff to consider the helmets-for-pond-hockey policy. During this time, the city staff kept changing, right up to the top. The Parks director was transferred, then the Recreation director took a new job in Vancouver. The moves caused delays in gaining approval for setting up the consultations at the five rinks.

At the same time, helmet problems became a hot topic in the media, and therefore public discussion on the issue began to shift. Also, our [cityrinks.ca](http://cityrinks.ca) website-use climbed steeply (we had to contract a stronger web server), and so our postings on the helmets/risk issue entered public discussion more broadly. Small discussions took place at Ramsden, Harry Gairy, Regent Park and Dufferin Grove.

However, we are not satisfied with the number of people we engaged in consideration of risk and youth/usage issues. We now want to resume and broaden our rink visits. The rinks open at the beginning of December and we have our schedule of rink visits ready.

9. Greenwood Park strengthened their permission for free events, open-access events, building on the [principles established through their community campfires. Neighbours of Monarch Park. Phin Park, and Withrow Park met with us and with each other to support free open-access events, with varying success. Neighbours of Susan Tibaldi Park and MacGregor Park had good success with their open-access events. We also collaborated with the following other groups to do such events:

Cedar Ridge  
Pelham Toronto Community Housing  
Wallace and Campbell Parks  
Dufferin and Alexandra Park (skateboard groups)

The following groups asked us to help them have free, open-access community events but they didn't succeed:

East Lynn Park  
Healey Willan Park  
Dovercourt Park



and Parks management. The building of this oven will test the potential of replacing centrally-generated policy with collaboration among the groups mentioned (using Elinor Ostrom's principles).

- Three parks (Thornccliffe Park, MacGregor Park, Greenwood Park) will have local events involving the use of home-cooked food, with support and monitoring from park users, a public health inspector, and park staff.
- One rink (Greenwood Rink) will have unusually well-informed collaboration between the city's Capital Projects staff, front-line rink staff, and rink users. In this way they can shape their rink renovation so that winter social space is enhanced for that neighbourhood, without increasing the cost. This will include joint follow-up during the building stage.
- One park (Dufferin Grove Park) will have a playground bio-toilet built for one-quarter of the cost of a conventional public toilet, and park users will have a sophisticated understanding of the steps to building and

## Christie Pits

This issue may now coalesce into a larger one citywide since City Council appears to have resolved that all community volunteers should pay to donate their work – bakers should pay to bake with kids in community ovens, musicians should pay to give free concerts etc. Our group's experience with having open-access community events may offer examples of alternative approaches, as we get into the home stretch of writing it all up in our lagging "how do I..." material.

The "how-to" items are not yet up on the website in any satisfactory way. But we have now started working with extra researchers to help accelerate this task.

This overlaps with the previous "how-to" booklet. The research is more than half-done, but the writing is not. The writer is practising by publishing one chapter a week (now up to 20 chapters)

<http://dufferinpark.ca/aboutus/wiki/wiki.php?n=DufferinGrovelsInTrouble2.ArticleList> about a single "how-to" case (Dufferin Grove). This practice exercise will influence the Ostrom workbook, but it won't be the same text.

maintaining it,  
and about how  
to the building  
code and new  
environmental  
regulations  
match up.

- The "helmets-  
for-pond-  
hockey" policy  
will be opened  
for negotiation  
at five outdoor  
artificial ice  
rinks (Glen  
Long, Regent  
Park, Harry  
Gairey, Dufferin  
Grove, and  
Ramsden)  
drawing both  
youth and  
adults, skaters  
and rink staff,  
into an active  
consideration of  
the principles of  
good risk  
management.

- Eight  
unorganized  
neighbourhood  
groups (park  
users at  
Greenwood  
Park, Monarch  
Park, Earls court  
Park,  
MacGregor  
Park,  
St.Lawrence  
Park, Susan  
Tibaldi Park,  
and two more  
not yet  
identified,  
intentionally  
leaving available  
slots) will have  
permission and  
support to carry  
out free,  
publicized,  
open-to-all  
activities in  
parks. Their  
experiences will  
be documented  
on the database,  
with a "how do  
I..." focus.

-A how-to  
"workbook"  
about the  
projects is  
produced and  
projects are  
documented on  
the database.

-a 44-page  
illustrated  
workbook will  
be half done by  
the end of the  
first funding

year. The parts that are ready will be posted on the database, and linked to the other CELOS websites, to invite comments and changes.

Year 2 More people participating in the database, a kind of local "wikipedia".

-Participation increases as reported by Google analytic.

So far the database usage has not expanded rapidly (this is below plan). From March 12, 2012 (when we started keeping statistics) , to Feb 10, 2013 (about 11 months) there were 4,748 visits of 1,863 people invoking 90,684 pageviews. Almost 40% are new visitors.  
The database capacity is unrestricted.

(a) the database can hold a variety of records, including original documents, and imported data in the form of document files (mostly pdf's), links to external websites, pictures, document extracts (such as sections of emails), and widgets (embedded html code from other websites such as youtube). These records are organized into topics (main subjects) or folders (supporting material)

(b) there is a "How do I..." section. This is one of many topics currently in the database, and can be easily expanded. Moreover, the section of home page visible first to users is "Using the Commons", which provides an even more in-depth view of getting involved with public space.

(c) members can add comments to any record in the database. In addition, the editor can authorize certain members (number unrestricted) to maintain blogs on the site. Each blog can have an unrestricted number of blog entries.

In February 2013 publiccommons.ca became "mobile friendly". When it detects a narrow screen it moves the sidebars to dropdowns at the top, making the required width much narrower. When this narrow it also turns off auto preview for link and pdf records to save bandwidth (users are instead given the option of seeing a preview with a click).

As of February 11, the database contains the following (a small portion are hidden from the public pending further processing):

documents: 547  
topics: 228  
blogs: 6  
blog entries: 29  
pictures: 4,458  
document files: 822  
document extracts: 47  
external links: 631  
widgets: 46  
resource folders: 171  
comments: 0

Total: 6,985 records. This far exceeds plan.

Prioritized access: In addition, we have segregated two important aspects of the database (although owing to the high volume this work is ongoing):

- first, information that is useful to readers for quickly participating in activities in public space ("Using the Commons");
- second, information is that helpful for readers who are interested in a deeper understanding of what is involved behind the scenes ("Understanding the Commons").

Year 2 Completion of sub-projects scheduled to take longer than a year

-The bake oven will be ready to operate at Bell Manor Park, the bio-toilet will be ready to start up in spring 2012, the Greenwood Rink plan will be ready for construction in spring 2012, with a working group in place for active collaboration throughout the process.

- Bake oven: Bell Manor Park has not returned to attempting a bake oven.  
- Since the Thorncliffe Park tandoor oven is committed but still not a reality after three years, CELOS continued to make our smaller, portable tandoor available to "sign out." It's located at RV Burgess Park for the moment.  
- Bio-toilet: The workbook, or slide show/video, about the blocked bio-toilet project, was put on hold because the inventor/builder moved out of Toronto to contribute her talents elsewhere. She left a great deal of documentation, posted on publiccommons, meaning that a picture show for presentations can be accomplished in the spring, even without her.  
- With the motto "it ain't over 'til it's over," our group worked with parks staff and a local cement specialist to protect the long oval bench that covers the existing foundation. This bench has become a park attraction – it's a popular meeting place for families and youth, since it can accommodate as many as 20 people in its sociable oval. A senior-friendly fitness trail (memorial for a deceased local cyclist and mother) is slated to link up with the bench later in 2013. The nearby bulletin board can be a continuing information source for waste and water issues, and when the regulations become a better fit for wastewater reclamation and composting, the foundation will still be intact, ready to resume.

See "p access:

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In Nov Toront Council a new oven p years i making to req possib buildir public (which halted Public very lii policy develo intern:

-A larger number of rink users will have a sophisticated understanding of risk management. -Risk management-related external posts on the database will have broadened to include playground replacement, campfires, folk dancing, small performances, and food.

- Greenwood rink community input: After the well-attended meetings of 2011, disappointingly resulting in only very minor changes, community participation dropped off rapidly. There were no more updates to public information: transparency was not accomplished. Some of the participants put their energies instead into starting up a very successful natural ice rink at nearby Orchard Park, with good city staff support.

- Our group made a video about the problems of limiting public input for such public building projects, suggesting alternative possibilities. The predictions of design problems and budget overruns that were made at the public meetings will be proven wrong or right in the next two years – a very important time to follow up.

- The “helmets for pond hockey” meetings needed the collaboration of city rink management to take place. Not only was city management unwilling to engage with the issue, their work of closing off local rink user connections was expanded. Local telephone contact between rink users and staff was removed in favour of a central information line/web page. This information source was often wrong, and more rink users turned to the CELOS “cityrinks” website. Usage increased to the point where we had to upgrade the server so that more volume could be accommodated. Local “rink conditions” updates sent in by rink users were not accepted by the city’s central 311 information line, and the prospect of monitoring rinks citywide without staff collaboration was not within our budget.

- We set up meetings (ongoing) with individual councillors who had outdoor compressor-cooled rinks in their wards, showing them our slide show/video “The social life of outdoor rinks,” in hopes of increasing their interest in this neighbourhood resource. In these conversations we learned that many city councillors have not thought much about the rinks at all. We also learned that many councillors are under the impression that the Parks, Forestry and Recreation operating budget has been cut most years, so that no improvements can be made. (In fact the operating budget has gone from just over \$200 million in 2002 to just shy of \$400 million in 2013.) In the light of the existing knowledge gaps, combined with a systemic unwillingness to collaborate, our idea of focusing on specific fixes like the non-consultative helmet rules (or the locked rink houses) seems sadly premature. However, the groundwork is laid. With patience and the help of our picture shows, it may be possible to enrich public conversation about good stewardship of the rinks, within the next few years.

- Cancelling of certain permit fees for volunteer-led community activities: City support for allowing park friends to contribute their gifts in their neighbourhood parks continues to be a roller coaster ride. We uploaded our “Campfires in parks” picture/video presentation as a tool for discussion. Our new “natural ice rinks” collection of photos, stories, and media material is next in line.

- The issue of community collaboration and sports fees became quite large, right across the city, during the second year of our grant. We took part in three citywide public discussions about the hands-on community management of children’s soccer and baseball in city parks and had four individual meetings with volunteers who wanted to make use of our database material. On the basis of what was said at these meetings, we created our first publiccommons.ca slide show for a Parks Committee deputation, highlighting the operational role of community volunteers in maintaining sports fields.

- Accessible playgrounds: Using our Trillium funding, our researchers built a portable playground structure allowing easy play access to children in wheelchairs. This is finished and ready to travel in spring – it can be “signed out” by others (parents, caregivers or staff) wishing to try it in their local outdoor or indoor playground. - We contracted a broadly-connected family with a disabled child as consultants to help us with our playground accessibility research.

- As we began to focus on staffing, we continued to work intensively with two developmentally challenged youth so that their talents would be put to best use working at playgrounds. Both now have jobs as part-time city’s recreation staff – after a complex and rather frustrating process for our researchers, learning (successfully!) to negotiate the municipal accessible hiring rules so our group could help the second youth to get hired.

- Kitchens, cash handling

The three new community kitchens had wide use in their first season, as did the two new skate lending operations. In the fall of 2012, after quite a few meetings, cash-handling for three of four community cafe/ skate lending operations was transferred to the city. Our group initiated the transfer but had some strong doubts about the city’s cash-handling system. Rather than keep trying (unsuccessfully) to make the case for a more collaborative approach, we took the transfer as an opportunity for empirical research, to document the effects of the city’s cash-handling methods when applied in practice.

food programs and community kitchens

- Food in parks: Although the three parks listed in our grant all had food programs, with the help of the grant, and some of it was home-cooked, the newer enabling food rules are still fragile and poorly worked out. A public kitchen seems to be preferred by most community cooks. CELOS mapped existing community kitchens in park buildings and city community centres, and tried to track down their current uses and

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availability.

- portable kitchens: In summer 2012, one of the grant researchers spent two weeks working for a Luminato project that featured ingenious temporary soup kitchens, with festival participants drawn into cooking (and then eating) various kinds of soup. Every morning, the kitchen components were assembled and bolted onto ordinary shopping-cart frames. At the end of this very popular project, CELOS received three sets of the prep and cooking kits as a donation.

- Field house use: After it became evident that the city was not interested in opening any of the field houses for community use, we began mapping these resources for the database. So far we have catalogued 26 solidly-built field houses/seasonal change houses that are either permanently locked (two years to ten years) or used for less than one-third of each year (but heated year-round, in some cases, to prevent plumbing damage in winter).

- Some of the shuttered field houses are adjacent to outdoor compressor-cooled rinks. We made a slide show with some video footage, called "The Social Life of Outdoor Rinks," showing inexpensive ways to bring these field houses back in use, and have been using this as a talking tool to acquaint city councillors with the publiccommons.ca website.

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Year Completion,  
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Phoenix for a  
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run.

We changed the workbook format to visual presentations instead of paper texts:  
please see "notes." We bought a video projector – more sophisticated than one we  
borrowed at the beginning of the project, at a quarter of the cost – and over the past  
year we made "prezi" picture shows on the following subjects: "Campfires in  
parks", "A Park Conservancy," "Sports fields and volunteer support," "Ice-making  
story" (our first one with professional sound, done pro bono at a nearby film  
studio), "Wading pools in summer 2012," and "The social life of outdoor rinks." In  
addition, we made two films: "The Greenwood Rink Renovation," and "Bake oven  
policy" and one animation: "Good Rinks." More are in the hopper.

- We're still learning about modifying the "prezi" picture shows, but we think we're  
on the right track. The capacity of these picture shows to be used by park  
enthusiasts in other parts of the city, even to be quickly adapted to fit their needs, is  
of real practical value and contributes to our ability to grow the publiccommons  
library.

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**Conditions**

**No Conditions**

**Requirements**

**No Requirements**

**Financial Table**

**Grant Budget Year 1**

<b>Expense Item</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Actual</b>
project coordinator/workbook writer	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
workbook printing	\$0.00	\$0.00
web development (1)	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
web development (2)	\$10,800.00	\$10,800.00
sub-projects coordinator/ field work	\$21,000.00	\$21,000.00
legal researcher	\$10,000.00	\$7,300.00
environmental teacher/coordinator	\$2,500.00	\$500.00
consultation lead/building resource teacher	\$2,600.00	\$1,600.00
workbook production	\$2,500.00	\$1,100.00
office	\$700.00	\$700.00
apprentice researchers	\$4,900.00	\$5,400.00
video/picture show equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00

**Grant Budget Year 2**

<b>Expense Item</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Actual</b>
project coordinator/workbook writer	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
workbook printing	\$2,100.00	\$0.00
web development (1)	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
web development (2)	\$1,800.00	\$1,800.00
sub-projects coordinator/ field work	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
legal researcher	\$0.00	\$2,700.00
environmental teacher/coordinator	\$2,500.00	\$163.00
consultation lead/building resource teacher	\$2,600.00	\$477.00
workbook production	\$4,000.00	\$6,623.00
office	\$0.00	\$0.00
apprentice researchers	\$0.00	\$5,737.00
video/picture show equipment	\$0.00	\$2,100.00

**Additional Information**