



Parc Downsview Park

Parc Downsview Park Inc. (PDP)

*Sustainability Policies
& Indicators*

*A Framework for
Downsview Park*

International Sustainability Indicators
Network Conference
Lakeshore Assembly Hall
March 14, 2003

Canada 



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Building a 21st Century Park the 21st Century Way

- The Government of Canada is creating a self-financing national urban park to be held in perpetuity and trust for all Canadians.





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Building a 21st Century Park the 21st Century Way

- A non-agent crown corporation, Parc Downsview Park Inc., has been tasked with the responsibility to develop and transform the former Canadian Forces Base Toronto into a unique urban recreational greenspace of international stature and significance.





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Building a 21st Century Park the 21st Century Way

TREE CITY Design

- Phased plan representing the realization of Canada's first national urban park
- Eventually provide 25% forest in addition to meadows, playing fields and gardens
- Environmentally self-sustaining park with 1000 crossing paths to compliment the Park and add to its accessibility
- New paradigm for parks of 21st century





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Building a 21st Century Park the 21st Century Way



- The largest undeveloped tract of land in Toronto (644 acres) and one of the largest in Canada.



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Building a 21st Century Park the 21st Century Way

Vision

"Downsview Park is a unique urban recreational green space, a safe and peaceful place, **developed according to the principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability**, for Canadians to enjoy in all seasons. The Park reflects Canada's mosaic brilliance and celebrates its past, present and future accomplishments."

Parc Downsview Park's Board of Directors, 2002

- In many ways, the circumstances demand sustainability as the only way to truly have an opportunity to achieve the mandate.



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Sustainability Indicators

- Sustainability indicators work and have generally been undertaken by municipalities.
- How can sustainability indicators serve as a guide for land and park managers and developers?
- PDP with its commercial, social and sustainability mandates has had to develop a sustainability policy and measurable indicators to assess its performance.
- Help reconcile some inherent conflicts that appear on the surface.



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Sustainability Indicators

- Sustainability indicators are needed to reconcile the diverse objectives of increasing social opportunities, increasing economic activity and enhancing the natural environment.
- PDP is challenging the conventional notion that sustainable parks in urban areas are solely islands of nature. Sustainability helps in the process – “the park as a business” and “the business as a park”. We are in the park business.
- Parks can be islands of human opportunity where economic, social and environmental sustainability objectives are mutually working together developing a new harmony.



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Sustainability Indicators

- Open space in highly urbanized environments has already been degraded by human engagement.
- Nature working purely on its own within this type of environment is probably not desirable ecologically or socially.
- Sustainability indicators play a key role in allowing PDP to assess the impacts of its actions over time - ecologically, socially and economically – to achieve balance.
- Bringing a place where we start at a “less than zero” position to a new 21st century approach in seeing the new evolution of the site with its new public mandate. Where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.



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Sustainability Indicators

- Indicators are essential in providing a base-line of information to truly monitor whether a positive change has occurred.
- In order to address the environmental, social and economic objectives, indicators have been specifically developed on a policy-by-policy basis.
- The nature of the project and its mandate has meant that many indicators be developed unique to PDP.



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Environmental Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Enhancement of the Urban Ecosystem

Indicators include things such as:

- Percent of land in forest cover
- Change in the number of non-native species in natural areas
- Quantity of herbicide and pesticide use
- Change in the number of “desired” terrestrial species
- Change in number of “desired” bird species



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Environmental Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Environmental Education & Partnerships

Indicators include things such as:

- Number of environmental education opportunities offered
- Number of people using the park

Policy: Sustainable Transportation

Indicators include things such as:

- Number of non-auto transportation opportunities provided to access the park
- Percent of trips to park by alternative transportation modes
- Change in ridership on local transit routes



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Environmental Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Sustainable Energy Use

Indicators include things such as:

- Percent of energy consumed from green power
- Number of energy conservation measures being implemented

Policy: Water & Wastewater Conservation

Indicators include things such as:

- Percent of water consumption recycled for use in park
- Percent of stormwater retained on site



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Economic Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Enhance the Capital Base of PDP

Indicators include things such as:

- Progress on establishing a Foundation to raise funds
- Change in the real estate value of lands and buildings as they relate to the park

Policy: Evaluation of Costs & Benefits of Park Activities

Indicators include things such as:

- Development and implementation of an event evaluation system



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Economic Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Innovative Environmental Practices & Leading Technologies

Indicators include things such as:

- Number of innovative environmental practices being tested and implemented at the park.
- Number of environmentally innovative businesses located at the park

Policy: Green Building Practices

Indicators include things such as:

- Number of buildings retained for alternative uses ie. Plant 2 & Building 141
- Number of new buildings developed using green sustainability practices



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Economic Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Promote Economic Development of Community
Indicators include things such as:

- Change in income characteristics of community over time.
- Degree of re-investment in local businesses and properties.
- View of the City to enhance and create positive conditions for success for the entire area
- National identity for the site and engage the process at that level too. A park for all Canadians.



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Social Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Meet Human Needs for Recreation, Relaxation, Exercise & Other Aspects of Healthy Living
Indicators include things such as:

- Number of person days in formal PDP programs
- Number of individuals visiting Downsview Park
- Percent of Tree City design implemented

Policy: Respect for Cultural Diversity & Equity of Opportunity
Indicators include things such as:

- Number of multi-cultural or cross-cultural activities
- Percent of PDP programs that are offered at no cost
- Number of person days in formal PDP Programs



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Social Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Heritage Preservation Commemoration, Education & Research

Indicators include things such as:

- Number of heritage or heritage-like structures reused
- Number of heritage education and interpretation opportunities in the park



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Social Sustainability Policies & Indicators

Policy: Encourage Public Participation & Democratic Decision-Making

Indicators include things such as:

- Number of public consultation opportunities provided
- Number of meetings of the Park Advisory Committee
- Quantity and quality of public responses on consultation

Policy: Social & Economic Impetus, Raising Quality of Life in Community

Indicators include things such as:

- Average income of surrounding neighbourhood
- Progress on the complimentary commercial agenda of the corporation



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PDP Sustainability Plan Next Steps

- Sustainability vision to be implemented through policies and screening process for proposed commercial and park uses and activities.
- A corporate sustainability assessment using the proposed indicators to be carried out annually.
- Objective: to be a global leader in sustainability urban parks.



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The Legacy

- To create a park, with a national purpose, of great magnitude and prestige for all Canadians.
- To grow Parc Downsview Park into one of the greatest parks in the world.
- To be a leader in sustainability and to have the right indicators to assess and evaluate it.

