



**Rouge National
Urban Park Initiative**
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Rouge National Urban Park

CONCEPT

June 2012



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Introduction

Rouge Park owes its existence as one of North America's largest urban parks to the foresight, dedication and engagement of a diversity of local visionaries and stewards over more than thirty years. Recognizing this legacy and rich history will be key to celebrating and protecting this special place as it becomes Canada's first national urban park.

A 2010 review of the park's governance, organization and financial structure concluded that a new model was required to give the park stronger leadership and accountability. A public opinion poll revealed an overwhelming 88% of respondents supported the concept of establishing Rouge Park under the leadership of Parks Canada.

The opportunity to establish Rouge Park as Canada's first national urban park, a new concept for Canada, is well aligned with Parks Canada's current priority to meaningfully reach Canada's increasingly diverse urban population. Building on existing community involvement and Parks Canada's world-renowned leadership in conservation and visitor experience, a national urban park in the Rouge Valley represents an unparalleled opportunity easily accessible to 20% of the Canadian population.

WHAT IS A PARK CONCEPT?

The park concept presents a vision for Rouge National Urban Park and a broad overview of how it will be established, protected and managed. It describes the study area, governance provisions, prevention, visitor safety and law enforcement strategies, and accessibility of Rouge National Urban Park. It highlights the engagement process that influenced the development of the proposed Rouge National Urban Park concept and explains the transition measures and interim management

direction that will be developed as we move forward with park establishment. Public feedback on the park concept will inform the development of recommendations on legislative process, policies and strategic plan for Rouge National Urban Park.

HOW IS THE PARK CONCEPT BEING DEVELOPED?

In the June 2011 *Speech from the Throne*, the Government of Canada announced its commitment to work towards the creation of a national urban park in the Rouge Valley. In July 2011, Parks Canada initiated a dialogue with partners and stakeholders to reach a shared understanding for a collaborative process to create Rouge National Urban Park. As stated in Budget 2012, the Government is committed to preserving Canada's natural beauty and will take action on the creation of Canada's first national urban park in the Rouge Valley in Ontario. The Rouge National Urban Park concept is the product of ongoing discussions with federal, provincial, municipal, Aboriginal and community stakeholders and partners. Highlighted throughout the document are comments received by Parks Canada from stakeholders and partners at various meetings including a visioning workshop, First Nations meetings, and a youth forum. The Rouge National Urban Park concept is intended to reflect those comments while being responsive to Rouge National Urban Park's urban setting and unique requirements, providing flexibility to accommodate a variety of land and adjacent urban uses. It also reflects Parks Canada's mandate of protection, education, and visitor experience.

Guiding Principles for Rouge National Urban Park developed by stakeholders at visioning workshop:

- "Foster a culture of community and youth volunteering, engagement, respect and partnership"
- "Inspire people to experience this park"
- "Environmental leadership in park operations"
- "Collaborate to ensure multi-modal connectivity and access"
- "Inclusive, progressive governance led by Parks Canada"
- "Respect and support sustainable agriculture and other compatible land uses"
- "Honour diversity, local heritage, cultural inclusiveness... past, present and future"
- "Maintain and improve ecological health and scientific integrity"
- "Encourage people (especially youth) to learn and connect with nature"

Parks Canada's Mandate:

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.



Creating a People's Park

What we've heard:

"Foster a culture of community and youth volunteering, engagement, respect and partnership"
guiding principle

"Collaboration and partnership underpin process"

"Sustainable, adaptable and flexible to meet needs of future generations"

"What you do is what we do—we are also guardians, guides, partners, storytellers"

What we've heard:

"Environmental leadership in park operations"
guiding principle

VISION

ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK A People's Park

Rouge National Urban Park celebrates and protects, for current and future generations, a diverse landscape in Canada's largest metropolitan area. Linking Lake Ontario with the Oak Ridges Moraine, the park offers engaging and varied experiences, inspires personal connections to its natural beauty and rich history, promotes a vibrant farming community, and encourages us to discover Canada's national treasured places.

CREATING A PEOPLE'S PARK

This section describes how Parks Canada will work together with partners, stakeholders and local communities to create and manage Rouge National Urban Park, provide engaging programming and visitor experiences, conserve its species and habitat diversity, celebrate its cultural heritage character and support its farming heritage. It also discusses prevention and law enforcement, as well as governance provisions for the park. It presents the study area currently under review for inclusion in Rouge National Urban Park and discusses current and future access to the park.

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE AND MANAGE A PEOPLE'S PARK

The existing Rouge Park was born out of a history of community activism, and there exists today a wealth of park visionaries, stewards and storytellers. Because it is a "people's park", meaningful relationships with stakeholders and partners will be an essential component as Rouge Park evolves into a national urban park. It is Parks Canada's hope that together we can build on common values and foster a culture of community and youth volunteering, engagement, respect and partnership.

The location of Rouge National Urban Park within the GTA, and its proximity to a large and diverse network of not-for-profit, public, corporate and community organizations, provides significant opportunities for new and expanded partnering and outreach opportunities to leverage networks, expertise and resources, and reach new groups. Not only will Parks Canada seek partnering opportunities but it will encourage and enable people and organizations to identify and deliver unique programming in the national urban park for the benefit of visitors.

Parks Canada hopes to lead by example and promote a greater public appreciation and understanding of the importance of environmental and cultural stewardship by reaching out to GTA residents and Canadians at large where they live, work and play, by informing them about our stewardship activities within Rouge National Urban Park and by encouraging participation from visitors, partners and stakeholders.

AREA MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The proposed Rouge National Urban Park, a "people's park", must provide varied opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and experience

the park, ensure flexibility to accommodate a variety of land uses, and respect the park's urban setting. Within this context, an area management approach will be used to recognize three distinct areas within the park that each have differing management requirements:

1. **Park areas** – areas managed for the protection and presentation of the varied natural and cultural heritage of the park. Within these areas, there will be natural, cultural and experience-based components.
2. **Agricultural areas** – areas managed for sustainable farming and to celebrate the agricultural heritage of the park. Within these areas, there will be agricultural land in production, natural buffers and experience-based components.
3. **Infrastructure and built assets** – land encompassing transportation and transmission corridors, commercial and residential properties, and other infrastructure.

The area management approach will guide decision-making within these three areas. Management across all areas will be guided by Parks Canada's mandate for protection, education and visitor experience, such that the park's goals and objectives complement rather than conflict with one another. However, the area management approach will provide for a more focused management to achieve specific

objectives within each of the three areas, such as the control of trespassing on leased farmland.

Some activities, such as hunting, poaching or trafficking in natural resources; timber harvesting; mining and extraction activities; dumping; disturbing or removing cultural or archaeological resources; and pollution, will be prohibited within park boundaries in order to ensure that Rouge National Urban Park is enjoyed by both current and future generations. Certain of these activities may however need to be permitted in limited circumstances in one or more of the areas as a means to support achievement of park objectives. Examples include the need for select timber harvesting in support of farming or clearance for hydro corridors.

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE AND HISTORY

Rouge National Urban Park will be a "people's park"—a place to gather, enjoy, discover and learn about the Rouge Valley's rich natural and cultural heritage. It will provide accessible experiences for all visitors, without entry fees, and its promotion will reflect the standards of services and products provided by Parks Canada and its partners. As part of a national network, Rouge National Urban Park will also offer a window to inspire the discovery of Canada's national parks, national historic sites, and national marine conservation areas. Parks Canada will pursue the following objectives:

What we've heard about Inspiring People to Experience the Park:

"Inspire people to experience this park"
guiding principle

"Accessible to all Canadians"

"Diversity of experiences"

"A park for people"

"National point of pride—celebrate natural and cultural heritage"



**What we've heard
about Encouraging People
to Learn and Connect
with Nature:**

"Encourage people
(especially youth) to
learn and connect
with nature"
guiding principle

"Demonstrate how urban
areas can coexist with nature"

"Accessibility/connection
to nature"

"Programming appreciates the
unique spaces and needs"

"Access to the park
for ceremonies"

"Story-telling and
traditional knowledge"

"Opportunity to tell the story
of the First People"

▲ Inspire people to experience the park

Rouge National Urban Park's diverse environments—coastal freshwater marsh, rivers, forest, wetlands, rolling hills and valleys, farm land, etc.—as well as the stories associated with its wide range of past and present human uses—recreational, agricultural, residential, transport corridor for aboriginal peoples and fur trade—are conducive to a wide array of unique opportunities for visitors and residents alike to experience. Thanks to its proximity to millions of people in the GTA, the park could be an unparalleled venue for cultural and special events throughout the year.

The current visitor experience offer will be maintained or enhanced, additional compatible experiences will be considered, and third-party collaboration will be explored to permit the delivery of unique experiences, where appropriate. One example is the opportunity to promote activities related to agriculture and food by creating new picnic areas, community gardens, or a community-based market.

Parks Canada will develop a framework to manage the many recreational uses of the park, with consideration for the needs and expectations of visitors, in a manner consistent with long-term conservation of the park's resources. The following principles will be used in an integrated manner to determine whether the activity or event will be offered or not: Respect the Character of the Place; Respect Natural and Cultural Resource Protection Goals, including farming; Facilitate Opportunities for Outstanding Visitor Experiences; Promote Public Understanding and Appreciation; and Value and Involve Local Communities & First Nations, including historic and present-day links to First Nations.

Parks Canada will explore the possibility of a range of camping facilities and make improvements to the existing trail network to increase the mobility of visitors within the park and to make better connections with surrounding communities' trail systems and transit systems. Trailheads throughout the park will be reoriented and/or rehabilitated to also serve as day-use areas, which will achieve cost efficiencies. Parks Canada will also evaluate the fee structure associated with value added services, such as camping and special programming.

▲ Connect people to nature & history through innovative programming

The park offers a variety of natural and cultural interpretation themes, enabling connections that are as diverse as the people who enjoy the park.

Four discovery hubs will be instrumental in providing visitors with a "sense of arrival" and center their visit around varying themes and experiences. These hubs will also provide the opportunity to interact with welcoming staff to plan visits and receive information that will make visits enjoyable and safe. Discovery hubs further provide strategic placement for park signage, messages and interpretation, and easy access to the park's trail network. Their proximity to public transit services will be utilized to build interconnections within the park and with surrounding communities. Each hub will provide site-specific programming and could also include special programming that will feature the best programs and activities Parks Canada and its partners have to offer. When designing these spaces, Parks Canada will make use of leading environmental architecture techniques and will involve surrounding communities in the process.



Located in a high-use area, the main hub will be a multi-purpose facility with exhibits employing a variety of engaging media. Its educational and innovative program offerings will facilitate learning, discovery and enjoyment of Rouge National Urban Park. As the main visitor centre of the park, it will be used as a central venue for outdoor concerts and events. This hub will also be a platform for showcasing Parks Canada's other treasured natural and cultural heritage areas.

A second discovery hub, at the shore of Lake Ontario, will provide visitors with the opportunity to experience and learn about the park's beach and wetland features. The hub will be situated near a public transit station and be linked to the park via the trail system.

A third discovery hub near Bead Hill National Historic Site will be the welcoming point for the discovery of the rich Aboriginal history of the Valley. Working with First Nations, Parks Canada will explore the development of First Nations themes and programming for the hub. Visitors will learn about First Nations history, culture and current issues in an interactive and relevant way, with a focus on engaging youth. This hub will also be located next to a campground and will provide access to the trail network.

A final discovery hub, in the predominantly agricultural area in the north of the park, will celebrate food and farming. Exciting new experiences could be developed such as community gardens, learn-to-grow/pick-your-own programs and picnic areas.

▲ Enable stewardship

Hosting a wide range of involvement and volunteering opportunities will be key to people adopting Rouge National Urban Park as part of their lives. Currently, Rouge Park attracts more than 7,500 volunteers on a yearly basis for different activities. Through active participation, volunteer opportunities create a sense of connection for those involved. Parks Canada will continue to work with volunteers and to develop new ways for them to contribute to the success of the national urban park.

Rouge National Urban Park can be an outdoor classroom for thousands of young people and it will continue to be an entry-point to connect youth to nature and history. By facilitating occasions for them to experience the park and be engaged on their own terms, the park can



contribute to fostering the next generation of stewards. Offering opportunities for GTA youth to get involved in park activities will be a priority, whether in their leisure time, through their school or community associations, through summer employment or as part of a Youth Leaders' Council. By getting involved, youth will be able to complement their formal education, support citizen science initiatives, enjoy and shape recreational opportunities, lead innovative projects that relate to recent technologies, enliven public spaces within the park using art or special projects and share their experiences with their peers on social networks.

CONSERVING NATURAL HERITAGE

Rouge National Urban Park is ecologically significant, with a diverse combination of lower Rouge Valley habitats, lakeshore marshes, and adjacent uplands that form the largest system of connected natural areas along any of the river valleys draining into northwestern Lake Ontario. These linked natural areas represent the largest contiguous natural park area in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Rouge National Urban Park is situated on the eastern edge of the Carolinian Forest Zone, an ecologically significant area covering less than 1% of Canada, and included within the park's study area is a site identified as a critical natural area by Carolinian Canada. Rouge National Urban Park is home to 760 plant species, 225 bird species, 55 species of fish, 27 mammal species and 19 species of reptiles and amphibians. Some of these species are provincially listed as rare and 23 are listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada

What we've heard about Enabling the Next Generation of Stewards:

"Youth want to explore nature through technology"

"Youth want to learn in a fun, unique and integrated way outside of a traditional classroom"

"Youth want to discover the park from a new perspective, well beyond the traditional park experience, with their peers"

"Youth want to recreate and rejuvenate in their 'backyard' doing activities that are unique to the National Urban Park"

What we've heard about Conserving Natural Heritage:

"Maintain and improve ecological health and scientific integrity"
guiding principle

"Ecological management through science-based, fair, just decisions"

"Natural systems-based approach to planning"

"Healthy, vibrant, thriving natural ecosystem people included"

(COSEWIC). Two significant landforms are also present in the valley: the glacial Lake Iroquois Plain and the South Slope region. The biodiversity in this area reflects the variety of ecosystem types and associated ecological processes not found elsewhere in Ontario but present here in an evolving urban landscape. In addition to the abundant natural diversity, Rouge National Urban Park also has a unique complement of working farms, built heritage, provincial and municipal infrastructure and transportation corridors, making its biodiversity all the more important.

The unique location, landscape, and ecological and cultural milieu of Rouge National Urban Park requires a tailored conservation approach that celebrates both the conservation and community values of Rouge Valley and encourages people to connect with natural areas. Past and current stewards of Rouge Park have made great strides in protecting and improving its ecological health. In order to continue to protect the variety of habitats within the park for generations to come, Parks Canada will adopt a conservation approach that fosters the interaction of people and nature while also maintaining and restoring species and habitat diversity. This approach is in keeping with best-practice guidance for the management of parks and protected areas by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The goal for natural heritage conservation in Rouge National Urban Park is for it to be a place where native ecosystems are conserved to allow people to connect to nature in an urban setting. A framework for meeting this goal will be informed by Parks Canada's demonstrated experience managing conservation values within national parks, taking

into account the urban context, and will significantly engage a diversity of local stewards. Research and monitoring will inform science-based decision-making. Parks Canada will pursue the following objectives for conserving natural heritage in the park areas of Rouge National Urban Park:

▲ Conserve and enhance the diversity of native ecosystems

Rouge National Urban Park has a network of different habitat types that are uncommon in the GTA. These habitats offer a refuge for both common and rare plants and animals. The diversity of the Rouge Valley's native upland habitats will be maintained and restored within Rouge National Urban Park. Sensitive ecosystems (e.g., areas containing rare plant species), unique landforms (e.g., Iroquois Plain) and conservation hotspots (e.g., wetlands) will be protected and showcased.

▲ Maintain and improve aquatic and riparian ecosystems

The riparian corridor along the Rouge River is of crucial conservation value and performs important ecological services for the GTA, such as water purification. These aquatic values will be protected and restored. Conservation efforts will promote the maintenance of water quality and quantity in the Rouge River and larger creeks, as well healthy aquatic conditions in support of native fish and benthic communities. Other aquatic habitats (e.g., wetland, marshes, shoreline) that are key to a healthy environment will also be a priority.

Some ecosystems in the existing Rouge Park are not abundant enough to be considered functioning or alternatively have been compromised over time. These ecosystems within natural park



lands will be prioritized for restoration to complement the diversity and abundance of available habitat. Accepted, scientific ecological criteria (e.g., naturally reproducing, self-sustaining populations of native species, natural restoration, elimination of invasive species) will be used to assess and prioritize ecosystem restoration. Habitat links between terrestrial and aquatic habitat in the Rouge Valley will be maintained to foster connection between Lake Ontario and the Oak Ridges Moraine. Partnering arrangements with land stewards, conservation groups, schools and academic institutions will be formed to conduct restoration activities and adaptive ecological research and monitoring in this distinctive urban park.

▲ Protect species at risk

Rouge National Urban Park contains both federally and provincially listed species at risk. As a leader in rare species conservation and recovery, Parks Canada will continue to meet legal and conservation obligations under the *Species at Risk Act*. Community involvement will be encouraged within natural park lands in the survival and recovery of rare species, as well as the control of non-native invasive species.

▲ Engage the local community

Parks Canada's conservation approach will encourage and promote active community stewardship, recognizing that Rouge National Urban Park will flourish not in spite of but because of the presence of people. There are plentiful opportunities to engage the local community in conservation-related activities, such as citizen science projects, restoration initiatives, monitoring, and serving as ambassadors to showcase the importance of the Rouge National Urban Park to a broader audience.

CELEBRATING CULTURAL HERITAGE CHARACTER

Rouge National Urban Park has a diversity of cultural resources, including archaeological sites, heritage buildings and landscapes that speak to the agrarian life of the early European settlers and the travel routes and settlements of Aboriginal people. The park contains hundreds of known and catalogued archaeological sites, ranging from pre-contact lithic sites and Aboriginal villages, through to stone foundations and mill races from colonial-era industrial sites. Discovering



and learning about the rich heritage of the Rouge Valley is essential to understanding the importance of its current landscape.

Bead Hill, a 17th century Seneca village, is recognized as a National Historic Site. It is one of the few remaining 17th century Seneca sites in Canada and it includes the historic Seneca village, an associated burial area, and an Archaic period campsite dating from roughly 3000 BCE. Portage routes used by Aboriginal people are also a part of the park's landscape and history (as has been recognized by the designation of the Toronto Carrying Place, portage routes connecting the Humber and Rouge Rivers with the Holland River, as a national historic event). Heritage farmsteads and ongoing agricultural use speak to changes in the area since the first European settlers began cultivating the land over 200 years ago.

Parks Canada, as the custodian of many cultural resources across the country, has developed a suite of guidelines and policies that provide a framework to protect these resources. Parks Canada will use this framework to achieve the following objectives for conserving cultural heritage character in Rouge National Urban Park:

▲ Conserve and celebrate cultural heritage landscapes

In Ontario, many municipalities have developed inventories and management plans for cultural heritage landscapes, which can be loosely defined as a means for preserving places that have special character and meaning to the community. Cultural heritage landscapes can then serve to guide in responsibly planning for the future. Inherent in the idea of cultural heritage landscapes is an

What we've heard about Celebrating Cultural Heritage Character:

- "Respect the culture and history, including agriculture"
- "Celebrating Aboriginal culture and history by holding community events"
- "Tell the story of the First Peoples"



understanding that these areas are dynamic and will change. Sharing the special character and meaning of the Rouge Valley through story-telling and celebrating its rich heritage are important components of Rouge National Urban Park. The park's discovery hubs will present the many stories of the Valley and bring visitors on a journey that illustrates how the past has influenced the present.

Built heritage contributes to the value of the landscape and to telling stories of the past. Over eighty buildings in the park have been given heritage recognition by local municipalities under the Ontario Heritage Act. While provincial

legislation does not apply to federal lands, the local value these buildings have is acknowledged. Parks Canada will work with the municipalities that designated the buildings to ensure that heritage buildings continue to be used in a financially sustainable manner, which is the best way to ensure their ongoing conservation. Community support and involvement will continue to be essential to safeguarding and celebrating local built heritage.

According to the Treasury Board Policy on Management of Real Property, all federally owned buildings older than 40 years are to be evaluated to determine if they have heritage value. Before there is any transfer of land to Parks Canada for Rouge National Urban Park, all buildings older than 40 years will be evaluated prior to acquisition. A designated building will have a heritage character statement written to explain why it was designated and which of its character defining elements must be preserved in order to protect its heritage character.

▲ Protect and present Bead Hill National Historic Site

Bead Hill National Historic Site is not publicly identified as a site, either by a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque or by any interpretive panels. Working with First Nations, Parks Canada will develop a strategy for the appropriate interpretation of the site and its relation to the historical presence of Aboriginal

people, while ensuring the site's protection as a nationally important cultural resource. The discovery hub located near Bead Hill National Historic Site will present the rich Aboriginal history of the Valley, explore how the past is linked to current First Nations issues and celebrate the culture of First Nations in ways that engage and educate visitors to the park.

Bead Hill National Historic Site's cultural fabric will be managed to ensure that the site's heritage values are respected, its resources are not impaired or under threat, and the reasons for its designation as a national historic site are effectively communicated to the public. The engagement of the community in these endeavours will be respectful of these goals while ensuring Aboriginal voices are able to tell their own stories and share a window from the past to the present.

▲ Conserve archaeological resources

The archaeological resources of the Rouge Valley provide a direct and tangible link to the past and help us understand the rich cultural heritage of the valley. Parks Canada will complete an inventory of known archaeological resources and evaluate them for their historic value to determine how the resources will be managed.

Unless there is a specific research need or other planned intervention that requires excavations, archaeological resources will be monitored to ensure their safekeeping, but will otherwise be left undisturbed. The exception will be if the resources are threatened in some way, such as by erosion, and then excavations will be conducted to mitigate against the loss of any artefacts. Public archaeology programs could also be offered in the future.

▲ Enable connections to cultural heritage

Working with First Nations, the farming community and local historical societies, Parks Canada will develop a range of opportunities and expanded interpretive products and programs to enable residents and visitors to connect with the rich stories and cultural heritage of the Rouge Valley.



SUPPORTING FARMING HERITAGE

Rouge Valley's two hundred years of agricultural history are an essential component of its character and cultural heritage, with intrinsic value that depicts the long-term human use and occupancy of the region. Farming remains today an extremely important land use within the Rouge National Urban Park. Approximately 75 working farms can be found within the study area, constituting about 60% of the total land base. The over-riding goal for farming within the park is one where the agricultural heritage of the valley is celebrated, and where sustainable farming practices are maintained and promoted into the future.

The management approach will support conditions for farming to be sustained within the agricultural areas of Rouge National Urban Park. Long-term leases will provide the lessees with increased security to invest in new farming equipment and crop management technologies while at the same time providing a fair return to the Federal Crown. Within the terms of individual leases, farmers will have the flexibility to dictate what and how they farm. Best management farming practices will be encouraged that conserve soil, water and biodiversity (i.e. wetlands, significant natural features, etc.). The requirement for environmental farm plans will continue to apply to farmers who lease land in the park.

Farming within Rouge National Urban Park will continue to contribute to the broader regional vision and priorities for agricultural production in the Golden Horseshoe. Within this context, Parks Canada will pursue new lease opportunities with vacant farmland that will help diversify agricultural activities within the park. Future partnering opportunities will be considered, for example, that could support entrepreneurial and learning opportunities for new farmers, permit

the production of a diversity of local food crops that meet the interest of the GTA's varied ethnic communities, and provide for community-shared agriculture that links resident growers with a local food supply chain.

A discovery hub within Rouge National Urban Park centered around agriculture will provide targeted interactions involving the farming community and park visitors focused on growing, buying and enjoying food. Farmers' markets in particular can provide a destination for visitors to the park, while providing resident farmers with a local outlet to sell their produce. Community gardens, suppers and barbecues, developed in partnership with interested community associations within and surrounding the park, would also be excellent ways to connect with area residents and welcome them to the park.

Partnership opportunities will be sought to facilitate teaching farms and other experiential farming activities that can help inform and educate the public about food, farming and the agricultural heritage of the Valley. These initiatives can in turn help meet broader regional objectives to raise awareness within the GTA about sustainable local farming and the benefit of healthy food choices.

Administering an agricultural landscape will be new to Parks Canada, requiring specialized skills and expertise. The involvement of the farming community and other partners that have expertise in this area will therefore be essential. Park management decisions with particular implications for agricultural leaseholders (i.e. restoration activities, trail location, etc.) will be conducted on a consultative basis.

What we've heard about Supporting Farming Heritage

- "Respect, integrate and support sustainable agriculture and other compatible land uses"
guiding principle
- "Preserve agricultural land in production"
- "Enables farming sustainability-environmental and economic"
- "Celebrate family farms"
- "Diverse land uses"

It is argued that short-term leases on land are a deterrent to long-term investment in its productive capacity and maintenance. Short-term leases do not give sufficient security of tenure to allow for capital investments in farm buildings or in enhanced environmental practices. Similarly, they do not allow for investment in higher value crops with longer growing cycles.

Governance, Organization and Finance Review of the Rouge Park Alliance (February 2010)

Maintain and preserve agricultural production on public lands including the new Rouge Park

Increase local food literacy with a focus on youth

Priority strategic actions identified in the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021

VISITOR SAFETY

In the spirit of promoting safe and enjoyable experiences for all visitors, Parks Canada will apply a comprehensive visitor risk management strategy. A proactive approach to preventing visitor safety incidents before they happen is the foundation of the program, supported by a well defined and effective response plan in cases where incidents do occur. This strategy includes in-depth analysis through activity-based risk assessments, incident response planning and effective communication with the public and our partners in the community.

What we've heard about Prevention and Law Enforcement:

"Continuum: Education, prevention, law enforcement... If they love it, they won't harm it"

What we've heard about Governance of Rouge National Urban Park:

"Inclusive, progressive governance led by Parks Canada"
guiding principle

"Model of partnership"

"An inclusive governance model"

"Single governance model under Parks Canada"

PREVENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Parks Canada will assess the legislative tools and regulations required to manage certain activities or concerns related to its mandate. This assessment will be based on past and present use of the park and also additional activities or enforcement requirements that may arise from the creation of Rouge National Urban Park.

An initial assessment of the types of regulatory needs to come could include: regulations for managing the types of permitted or non-permitted activities that take place within the park; for managing recreational fishing or other resource harvesting activities; for dealing with visitor experience issues or camping-related management needs; or, for certain issues pertaining to the illegal collection of natural or cultural objects, including but not limited to live plants or animals.

A comprehensive and integrated prevention and law enforcement planning process will be implemented to ensure that the cultural and natural resources of Rouge National Urban Park will be enjoyed for generations to come. All Parks Canada employees play an important role in implementing prevention strategies. The management team will identify and prioritize visitor experience and resource protection issues, analyze options, develop strategies and plans, and implement those plans on a local level.

Visitor experience staff will take the lead on most proactive prevention measures including informing and educating visitors. They will also undertake certain reactive measures related to compliance with administrative requirements.

Park wardens will have the lead role in enforcing regulations related to resource protection (natural and cultural) and visitor experience when proactive measures are not sufficient. External enforcement partners will also play an important role in law enforcement service delivery for the park with regard to incidents involving public peace, traffic and similar types of infractions, which are under the responsibility of the local police service of jurisdiction.

GOVERNANCE OF ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Parks Canada will be the park management authority and will be responsible for day-to-day operations in Rouge National Urban Park. The park will be premised on federal authority, Ministerial accountability and federal land ownership.

Taking Parks Canada's practices as a model and building on the existing Rouge Park's history of community activism and multi-jurisdictional co-operation, the Minister will form an advisory committee to provide strategic advice and guidance on park management. It will consist of senior officials from partner and stakeholder groups that could include municipal governments, regional organizations and First Nations as well as representation from the education, environment, recreation, tourism, agriculture and cultural heritage sectors. Appointments will be made by the Minister.

Parks Canada will establish a First Nations Council to provide advice and input on the planning and management of Rouge National Urban Park and to insure that the views of First Nations continue to inform our processes.

Parks Canada will also establish a Youth Leaders' Council to insure that youth voices will be heard on an ongoing basis and so that Rouge National Urban Park is relevant to youth and the legacy of those who lobbied for the park lives on in future generations.

ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK STUDY AREA

The study area currently under review for inclusion in Rouge National Urban Park spans a total area of approximately 5,600 hectares (see Appendix A—Study Area Map). This land was chosen as the study area for Rouge National Urban Park because it fulfils the original vision for a

contiguous network of natural lands and open space following the Rouge Valley from Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine. The total number of hectares may vary once exclusions are made for roads, hamlets, and private land holdings.

In November 2011, the Landholders Table was established in order to bring all public landholders and the current Rouge Park managing authority together to discuss and come to an agreement on the land to be included in or excluded from the park. The public landholders represented at the Landholders Table include the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, the Town of Markham, the City of Pickering, and the Regional Municipalities of York and Durham. Rouge Park Alliance is also represented.

A Statement of Intent is in the process of being endorsed by the organizations represented around the Landholders Table. This Statement of Intent expresses a commitment by the participants to work together towards a recommendation on the park boundaries and to take the necessary steps to establish Rouge National Urban Park. Once an agreement is reached, the process of transferring land to Parks Canada will commence. Once the final boundaries are determined, Parks Canada will communicate and work with existing leasehold tenants located within the park.

In determining the final boundaries, flexibility will be required to meet the current and future infrastructure requirements of the surrounding communities. Accordingly, transportation corridors will be excluded from the park boundaries. Parks Canada will collaborate with the appropriate jurisdictions with regard to the planning of new infrastructure and the expansion of existing infrastructure.

The Toronto Zoo and the Beare Road Landfill site will also be excluded from the boundaries of the park. The close working relationship between the Park and the Zoo will continue and additional opportunities for synergies related to joint programming will be explored.

Privately owned land within the study area will also be excluded from the park. No private land holdings will be expropriated for the purposes of



establishing the park. Should the acquisition of land for the purposes of the park be required in the future, it will be done on a willing seller, willing buyer basis.

Parks Canada will work with the owners of adjacent public and enclave lands toward land uses that are compatible with the national urban park.

COLLABORATE TO ENSURE MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS

For Rouge National Urban Park to be a “people’s park”, a place where people can gather and enjoy, access for GTA residents and all Canadians is of paramount importance. This is particularly relevant for connecting youth to nature.

With current infrastructure, Rouge National Urban Park will be accessible by GO Train, bus, car, bicycle, and, for local residents, by foot. Its discovery hubs, trail network and their proximity to public transit services will be used to build interconnections with surrounding communities. To fully maximize its proximity to Canada’s largest urban center, access needs to be enhanced. Parks Canada is committed to working with provincial and municipal governments to ensure that access to Rouge National Urban Park is considered in future transit plans.

Linkages within Rouge National Urban Park are also important. Parks Canada will develop a trail network and investigate options, such as a community bicycle program, that facilitate exploration of the park.

What we’ve heard about Collaborating to Ensure Multi-Modal Access:

“Collaborate to ensure multi-modal connectivity and access”

guiding principle

“Accessibility to, through and within the park”

“Sensitivity to transport corridors—access to park”

What we've heard about the Engagement Process:

"Glad Parks Canada has engaged early"

"Heart warming to know that it is a broader community effort now"

"This is not the end of the process, this is the beginning"

"I trust these people (Parks Canada), they will love this park as much as I do"

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Public involvement is a cornerstone of policy, planning and management practices at Parks Canada. Parks Canada made a commitment to work with provincial, municipal, First Nations and community partners and stakeholders and the public to reach a shared understanding for the creation and management of Rouge National Urban Park.

Beginning with the *Speech from the Throne* in June 2011, a phased-in public engagement approach was adopted to ensure a broad range of partners and stakeholders were engaged early in the establishment process, with a commitment to allow opportunities for citizen input through public involvement.

To help shape the vision and concept for Canada's first national urban park, Parks Canada conducted bi-lateral meetings to seek input from more than 100 organizations representing various interests. In Fall 2011, it initiated an engagement process with interested First Nations to share information and begin a dialogue about their future involvement in the planning, establishment and presentation of the national urban park. Meanwhile, a visioning workshop was held with key stakeholders to get their perspectives at an early stage. In February 2012, a youth forum was held to ensure Parks Canada obtains insight from the next generation of stewards. Input from these meetings has guided the development of the proposed Rouge National Urban Park concept. In May 2012, the proposed concept was shared with First Nations, stakeholders and partners for further input.

Meetings are ongoing with several local and regional agricultural organizations to better understand and further explore some of the

issues and opportunities associated with the future management of leased farmland within the park. Tenants of the new Rouge National Urban Park will also be consulted separately to meet their unique and specific needs once park boundaries are agreed to.

It is important to note the development of the Rouge National Urban Park concept marks not the end but the beginning of public involvement. Parks Canada will continue to invite and encourage public participation as we move forward with the establishment, planning and presentation of Rouge National Urban Park. Ongoing public participation will be key to developing effective policies and management direction.

TRANSITION MEASURES

Since 1994, the Rouge Park Alliance, a voluntary partnership of groups and agencies, has had the mandate to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Rouge Park Management Plans and advocate for the protection, enhancement and restoration of the Rouge River watershed. At the end of July 2012, the Alliance will be disbanded.

Transition measures will be developed to allow for interim governance of the park during the establishment process and until a permanent governance structure is created and the land has been transferred to Parks Canada. During the transition period, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) will serve as the managing organization for operations in the park.

A Transition Advisory Committee will be created and chaired by Parks Canada. The role of the Transition Advisory Committee will be to provide





Parks Canada with advice and input on the establishment process and interim management of the park. One of the first objectives of the Committee will be to guide the development of interim management direction for the management and operation of the park for the period between the establishment of the park and the implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan. Composition of the Transition Advisory Committee will ensure that the diversity of interests is reflected.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Interim management direction will guide park management and operations from the day that Parks Canada assumes responsibility for operating Rouge National Urban Park until the day that the park has a strategic plan. The interim management direction is intended to address immediate management issues, guide management priorities and provide a framework for effective and consistent decision-making during the first years of park operations while the planning process is under way. Before a strategic plan can be developed, a baseline of information regarding the park's natural heritage, cultural heritage and visitor services is needed. The interim management direction will serve as the primary planning and management document for Rouge National Urban Park, guiding the gathering of that baseline information and helping to direct interim management decisions until a long-term governance framework can be completed.

Interim management directions typically include short-term management objectives (e.g., gain a better understanding of the ecological, cultural and visitor experience values of the park), strategic and operational actions (e.g., conducting an analysis of the range of opportunities for visitor experiences in the park, conducting inventories of cultural and natural resources, establishing and/or strengthening relationships with partners, stakeholders and communities), and a section on monitoring and reporting on results.

The interim management direction for Rouge National Urban Park will be developed with input from the Transition Advisory Committee.

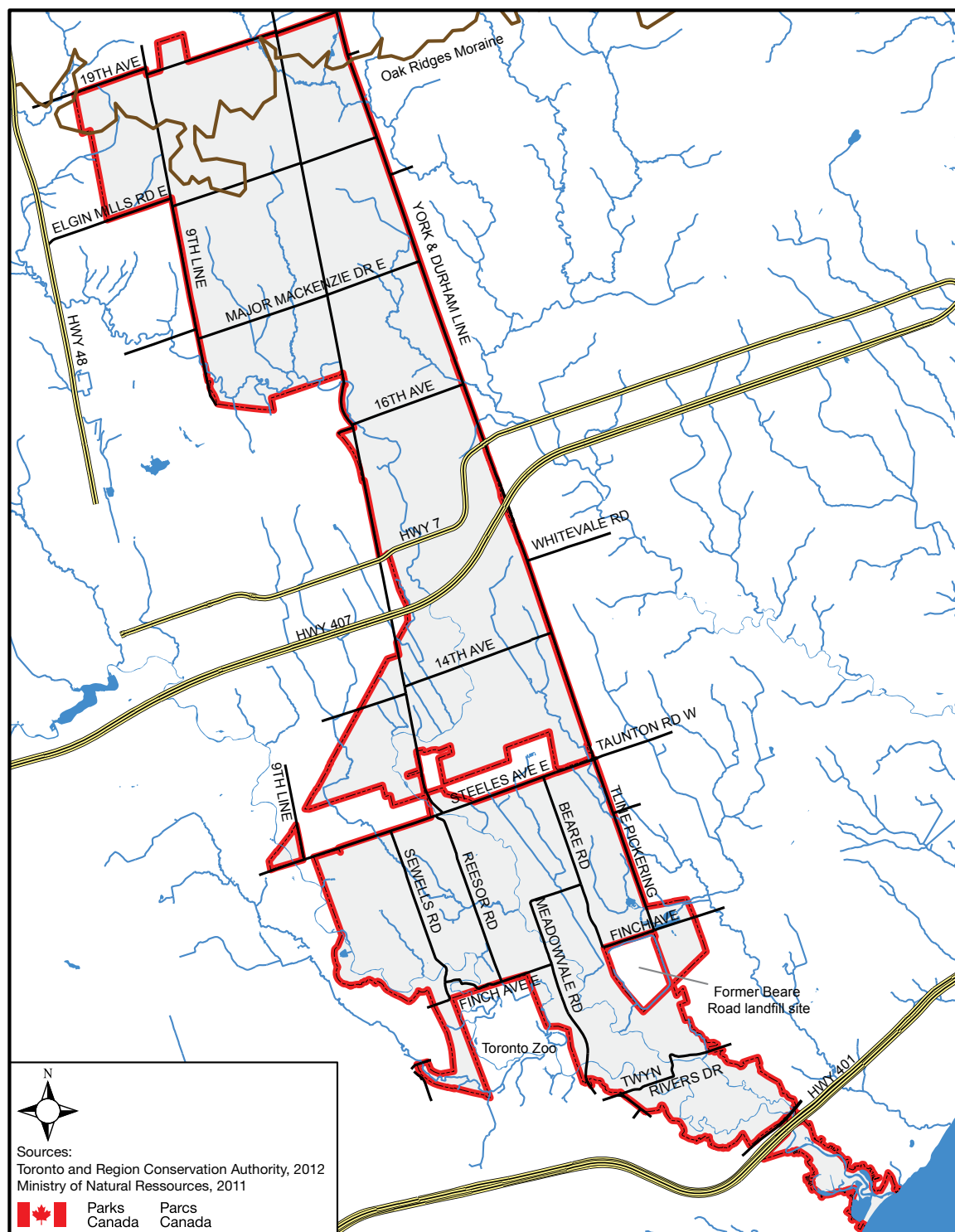
NEXT STEPS

From the end of June to September 2012, the park concept will be shared with the public. Input will be gathered via an online public engagement portal, public meetings and events, and through partner networks. The combined input from First Nations, stakeholders, partners and the public on the park concept will provide Parks Canada with guidance to make recommendations to government on the legislative process and steps necessary to create the framework for the creation and management of Rouge National Urban Park.



Annex 1

STUDY AREA UNDER CONSIDERATION BY PARKS CANADA



Note: This map is a Study Area only. The lands shown are currently under review for possible inclusions/exclusions to the national urban park.
 This map does not represent proposed park boundaries. All private lands are excluded from the study area.

May 7th 2012



Contact us:

Rouge National Urban Park Initiative
Parks Canada Agency
External Relations and Visitor Experience
25 Eddy Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0M5

Phone: 1 888-773-8888
Fax: 418-648-5994
Email: rouge@pc.gc.ca
Website: www.parksCanada.gc.ca/rouge

