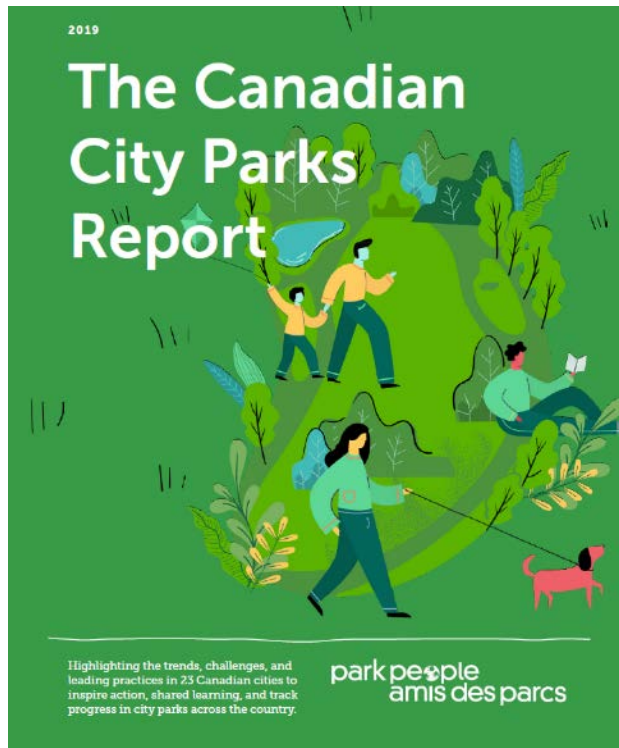


## Appendix 2:

Selected notable extracts and statistics from The Canadian Parks Report, 2019.



[https://cityparksreport.parkpeople.ca/downloads/pp\\_canadiancityparksreport\\_2019\\_web.pdf](https://cityparksreport.parkpeople.ca/downloads/pp_canadiancityparksreport_2019_web.pdf)

### Common challenges & trends in Canadian cities (page 3):

- Inadequate funding levels, especially operating budgets;
- Difficulty acquiring and developing new parks, especially in dense areas;
- Aging infrastructure;
- Increasing damage from extreme weather requiring costly repairs;
- Rising use of parks as alternative housing by people experiencing homelessness;
- Growing demand for walking trails and off-leash dog parks;
- Greater demands for unstructured gathering spaces and places for spontaneous play;
- Increased demand for naturalized spaces in parks and nature play opportunities for children;
- Changing demographics, such as an aging population, requiring new programming and designs.

## Why city parks matter (page 6):

### Environment

- Toronto's urban forest (street trees & urban parks) sequestered 46,000 tons of carbon each year, the equivalent of emissions from 31,000 cars;
- A study in Lethbridge found public trees helped divert 331,000 cubic metres of rainfall from entering the stormwater system—and that parks helped improve water quality by filtering runoff before entering rivers and lakes.

### Social

- 2017 Sparking Change report found that engagement and programming are critical to unlocking the social benefits of parks, including building civic engagement, developing leadership skills, and widening social support networks.
- A new study from the University of British Columbia of major U.S. cities found that marginalized communities often had less access to green space.
- A 2019 study found that adults were 55% less likely to develop mental health disorders if they had grown up near green spaces.
- A recent study found visiting parks boosts happiness, after just 20 minutes of use, even if people aren't partaking in exercise.

### Economic

- Parks can increase land value in surrounding areas, with one U.S. study finding that homes adjacent to parks received price premiums of 20% to 30% relative to homes that were 300 to 800 metres away. The same study also found more value was created by smaller parks or linear parks than a single large park of equal area because it allowed more people to live closer to its edge.
- A 2014 study by TD Economics found that for every dollar invested into the urban forest the return was between \$1.35 and \$3.25 in benefits and cost-savings in stormwater management, air quality, energy savings from shade, and carbon sequestration.

## Themes (page 8-70):

### Growth

- As cities grow and become more built out, proactive park planning becomes even more important to get ahead. New Park System Master Plans are focusing on connectivity within the system—for both wildlife and people—as much as acquiring new parkland.
- With space at a premium, cities are exploring opportunities to integrate streets through green connections or flexible spaces to expand public space, particularly in dense areas.

## Nature

- Parks improve resiliency and contribute to the ecological integrity of our environment, creating opportunities for people to connect with urban nature.
- Increasing biodiversity in our cities is critical for the health of natural systems and wildlife. More work to restore habitats and create connectivity within park systems is required.
- Cities are grappling with rising incidences of extreme weather damage in parks, such as flooding and droughts.
- New parks can be designed as flood protection infrastructure. This requires diverse expertise and close collaboration between city engineering, parks, transportation, and water departments.
- While many cities are experimenting with small, green infrastructure pilot projects (i.e. rain gardens), there's a need for comprehensive strategies to scale and become standard practice.

## Collaboration

- Cities engage partners to bring fresh ideas, new models, and alternative funding to support well-maintained, programmed, and inclusive parks.
- These arrangements add value but aren't a replacement for the City, which remains a crucial funding and governance partner.
- Community-led groups can lead to unique local programming and meaningful engagement, but these groups need City support, and can face barriers related to permits and permissions.

## Activation

- Parks are platforms for people to come together through community engagement and programming that invites diverse participants to get involved.
- The existence of a park is often not enough to realize social and health benefits. It requires investment in programming and engagement to connect people.
- Cities are tapping into organizations and partners, like arts groups, who may already have programs developed that can be brought to parks.

## Inclusion

- Age-inclusive fitness programs in parks can provide opportunities for social connection that are just as important as the physical activity for older adults