

Canatara Park

Master Plan



Updated: January, 2025

 **The Planning
Partnership**

LGL Limited
TCI Management Consultants



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Lake Huron

Lake Chipican

Port Huron

Point Edward

St. Clair River

Centennial Park

Point Lands Park

Bayshore Park

Downtown Core



1 Introduction

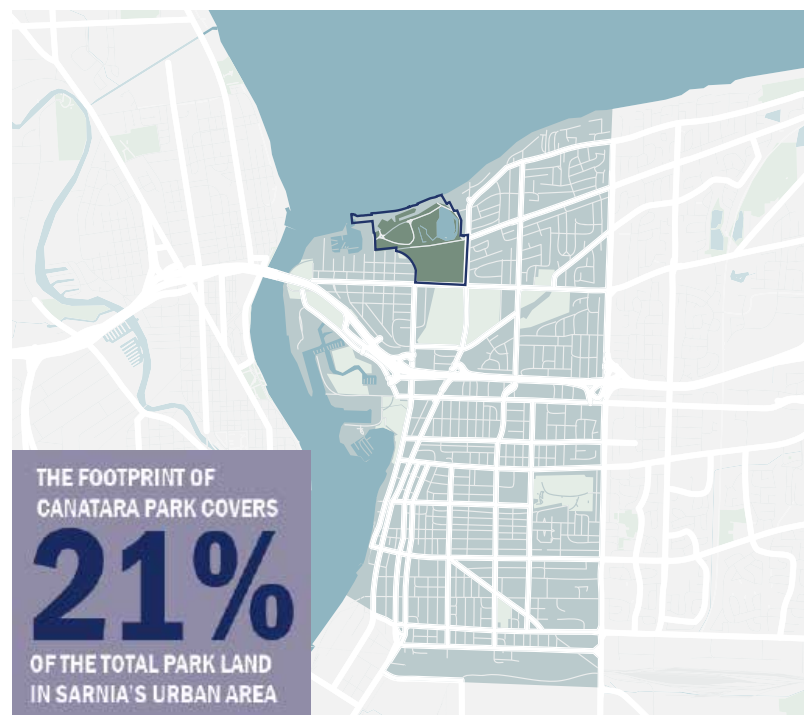
Canatara Park has established a deeply rooted identity as premier location for recreation, celebrations and events in Sarnia. From Christmas on the Farm to Easter in the Park to spaghetti eating contests to cross country runs to Canada Day celebrations to music festivals, the Park is an important hub in the City. The Park anchors the north end of the City with green space that is bookended with Centennial Park and the downtown waterfront park. Even though it's located in the north west corner of the city, it is accessible in less than 15 minutes by car from almost anywhere.

Canatara Park plays an invaluable role in the every day lives of many residents as a family gathering space, a hub for social and cultural events, a place for respite, a place to take the kids to play and swim and a place to connect with nature. The park is also the home of significant natural heritage features and one of only 16 Blue Flag beaches in Canada.

Being such a well loved park, Canatara is showing general wear and tear, and parts of the park are in need of improvement. The City recognizes the importance of regular capital work to ensure key issues are addressed and the role of a master plan to create a unified approach to its design and an even stronger park identity.

The City identified key challenges with the park including aging infrastructure, accessibility for all, conflicting uses, need to re-consider underused recreation areas and a need for enhanced education and wayfinding throughout the park.

This report summarizes the process, the preferred park concept and the implementation strategy.



Canatara Park is the largest park in the City of Sarnia.



Canatara Park features a well-loved beach with Blue Flag status.



Canatara Park....

1.1 The Site

Canatara Park (outlined in turquoise on the air photo on the facing page) is over 80 hectares and includes approximately 915 m of sandy shoreline along Lake Huron. The beach is a Blue Flag Beach, one of only 16 designated as such in Canada (year 2024).

The park also features Lake Chipican, which during normal water levels covers around 7 hectares, as well as approximately 34 hectares of forested areas. Approximately 13 hectares of the lands in Point Edward were a former landfill for municipal waste that closed in 1967. Since closing, there has been ongoing monitoring and maintenance to ensure there are no off-site impacts from the landfill.

The Canatara Park Master Plan explores opportunities for the land both north of Cathcart Boulevard (48.6 hectares) and south in the adjacent Point Edward municipality (31.8 hectares).

- covers over 80 hectares of land, which is more than 21% of the total park land in Sarnia's urban area
- includes over 915 metres (3,000 feet) of Lake Huron shoreline
- has one of only 16 Blue Flag Beaches in Canada (2024)
- is home to over 200 endangered plant and animal species
- supports a provincially significant wetland (Lake Chipican), and a colonial waterbird nesting area
- includes 5 rare ecosystems (12.2 hectares in total, and over 15% of the total park area)
- hosts over 30 community events every year
- has over 900 spaces for car parking, but only 1 designated spot for bike parking



Air photo map of the study area for Canotara Park Master Plan.

1.2 The Master Plan Process

The Master Plan was developed from February to October 2024 through a three phase process. The community and key stakeholders were involved throughout the process as described in Chapter 2.

Phase 1: Understanding Existing Conditions

The focus of the first phase was to thoroughly understand the existing conditions on the site. The team completed an inventory of:

- natural heritage
- access (roads, trails, parking, transit)
- recreation activities and events
- facilities (washrooms, picnic pavilions, life guard stations)
- signage and wayfinding

An invitation was extended to anyone to have a 15 minute one-on-one conversation with a member of the team to share views on the biggest opportunities for improvement and issues to consider. In addition, the team met with city staff and key stakeholders.

Phase 2: Exploring Options

Using the foundation of the team's understanding of existing conditions, three options were explored for the park. Each option was developed based on a number of variables to ensure they were purposefully different, allowing an exploration of the advantages and disadvantages revealed in each option.

Chapter 4 includes a description of the three options and the variables used to prepare each. The community was invited to join a design workshop where each option was co-created working with a member of The Planning Partnership team. The options were then used as the basis for an online survey to seek input on over 50 components illustrated on the three options. The options were also presented to city staff and various Committees of Council.

Phase 3: Park Concept Plan and Implementation

During the third phase, the team prepared an 'emerging preferred park concept plan' based on an analysis of input received. The "emerging preferred park concept plan" was presented and discussed at another round of engagement with the community before finalizing the concept. The final park concept was then used as the basis for estimating capital and operating costs, determining phasing and who does what.

Understanding the Site

Exploring the Options

Park Concept Plan
and Implementation

The Master Plan charts a course of action for Canatara Park over the coming decades. It will guide the City's yearly capital work in the park and direct subsequent more detailed design of specific components, and the preparation of overarching documents to direct improvements such as a catalogue of park furnishings, a wayfinding and signage strategy and an environmental management plan.

The Master Plan directs ongoing trail enhancements and upgrades to existing buildings, as well as larger capital projects such as a new lifeguard station and redesign of beach front parking to protect the sensitive dune ecosystem.

1.3 Design Principles

The Canatara Park Master Plan is grounded in a number of foundational principles that set the aspirations for the re-imagined park. The principles were derived from the team's understanding of existing conditions and uses, input received and best practices in park design.



List of Design Principles

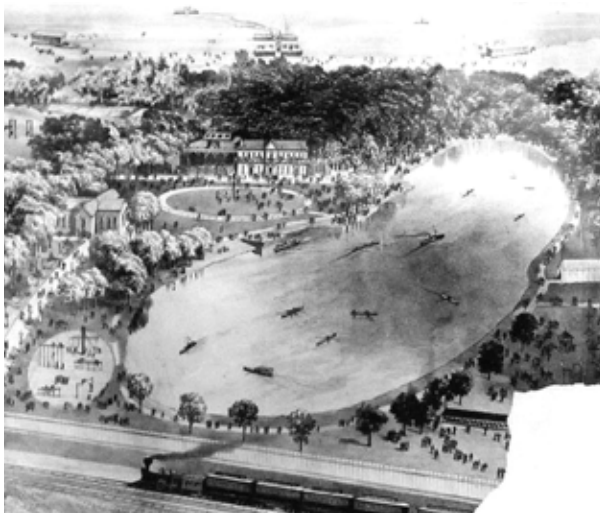
- Protect the beach and the natural heritage features
- Give priority to pedestrians and cyclists
- Balance the provision of parking with the protection of the park's ecosystems
- Continue to work with partners to provide a full range of recreation and programmed events within the framework of protecting the park's ecosystems
- Upgrade the facilities within the park
- Enable more services, such as food and beverages, to be provided in the park
- Improve wayfinding and education programming
- Slow down driving through the park

1.4 Historical Context

Canatara Park has a rich history of use for recreation and tourism. The timeline below summarizes the history of recreational use since the late 1800's.

1879

INTERNATIONAL PARK



International Park was a summer park centred around Lake Chipican. The park included pavilions, merry-go-rounds, tennis courts, picnic areas, and boat and bath houses. Almost the entire population of Sarnia visited the park for its opening day in 1879. Financial difficulties forced the park to close, only one year after its grand opening.

1890

THE BEACHES 1890-1930



The Beaches was a popular vacation spot during the late 1800's and early 1900's, and consisted of Woodrowe Beach, Wees Beach and Lake Huron Park Beach. Two great summer resorts were featured by Lake Huron Beach, in proximity to Canatara Park; the Grandview Hotel & Lake Huron Hotel. Beach visitors and hotel guests would commonly arrive by trolley ride from downtown Sarnia to experience this vacation paradise.

1932

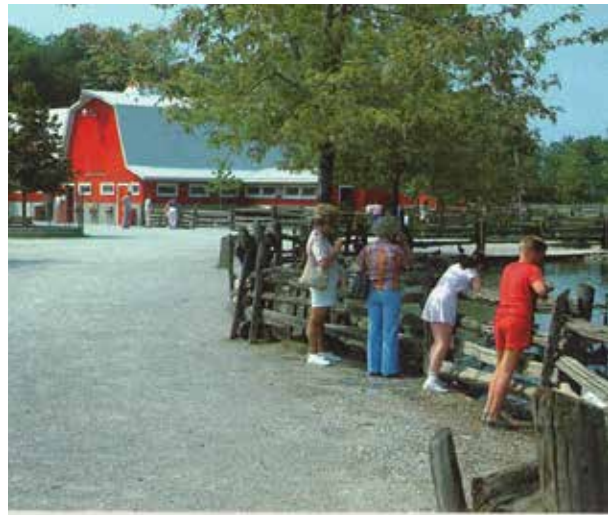
MAUD HANNA



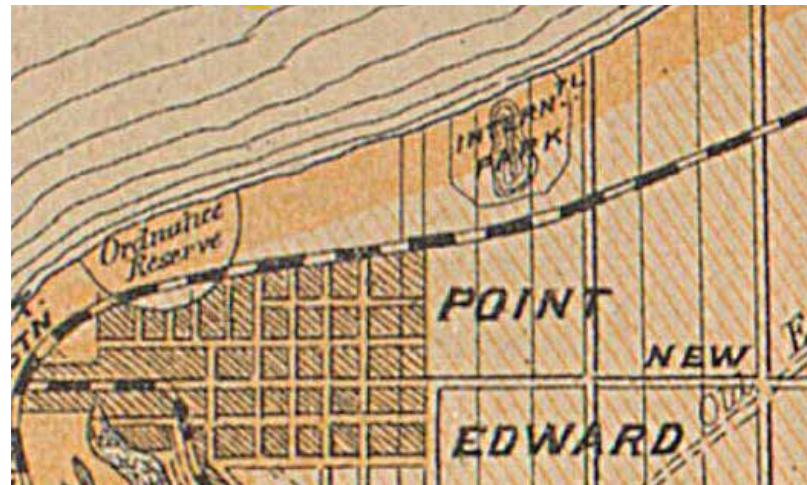
Maud Hanna, a life-long Sarnia resident and philanthropist, devoted much of her time and money giving back to her community. In 1932, Maud wanted all Sarnia's children to have a safe place to play and enjoy the lakefront. She donated \$10,000 towards the purchase of land for Canatara Park, matching the City dollar for dollar.

1964

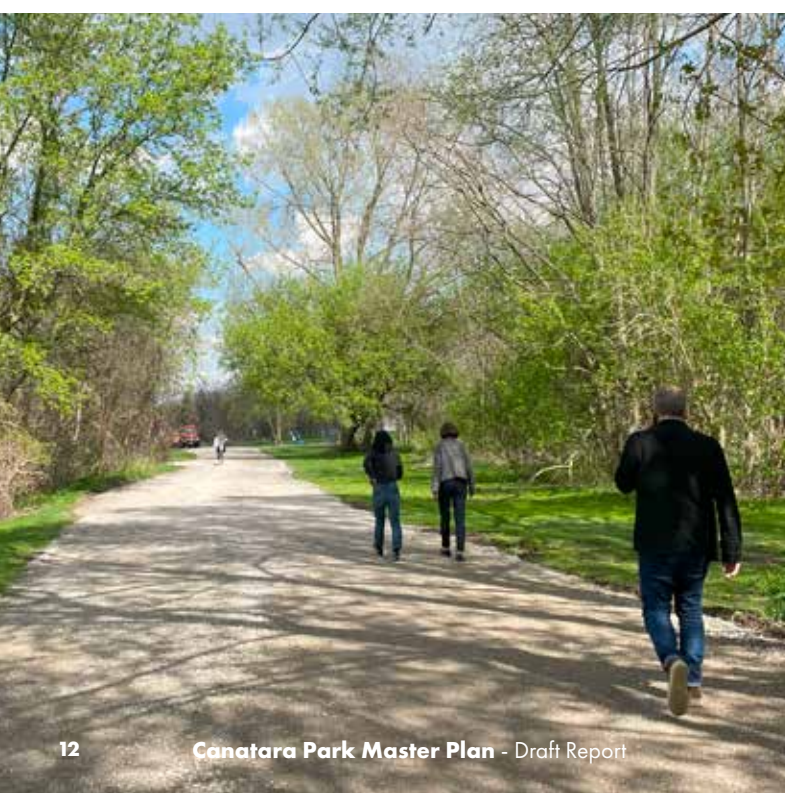
CHILDREN'S ANIMAL FARM



The Children's Animal Farm, one of Sarnia's most visited attractions, opened up in Canatara Park in 1964. Since its opening, it has offered free entry for everyone, and is supported by the Seaway Kiwanis Club, and other local organizations.







2 Engagement

The Canatara Park Master Plan was prepared within the context of broad based community input during each phase of the work. This chapter summarizes the engagement activities and the key inputs received during each activity or event.



44 One on One Conversations:

Members of the community were invited to register for a one-on-one conversation with a member of the team to discuss ideas for the park. In April and May 2024, 44 one-on-one conversations were held with residents, councillors, the mayor and representatives of key stakeholder groups. Some of what we learned from the conversations is included in Chapter 3.



15,000 Webpage Visits

The City set up a dedicated webpage on the Speak Up Sarnia site. The webpage hosted information on the background to the Master Plan, the team's work in progress, opportunities for public engagement, the project schedule and provided a link to submit comments by email. The webpage had 15,000 page visits during the course of the project.



92,800 Facebook reach

The City made 5 Facebook posts about the Master Plan process during the project duration. These posts reached a total of 92,800 people.



9,000 Instagram reach

The City made 5 Instagram posts about the Master Plan process during the project duration. These posts reached a total of 9,000 people.



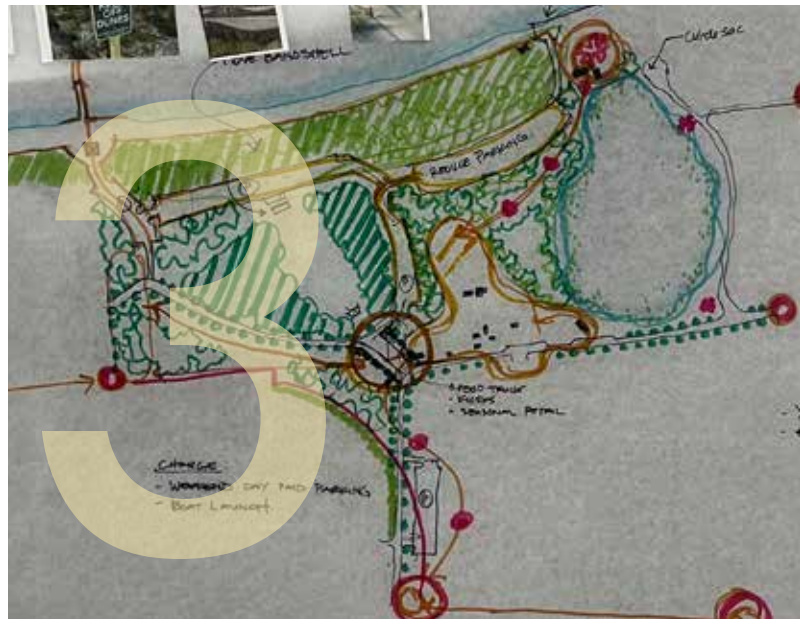
Timeline of the Canatara Park Master Plan engagement process



80 Design Workshop - Options to Consider

A public design workshop was held on May 1, 2024. Residents were invited to pre-register to attend one of two design sessions where they joined a table group and worked with a member of The Planning Partnership team. Approximately 80 residents participated in the workshop, with 40 people in each of the two design sessions. The Planning Partnership created various concept options through discussion with residents. Each table group was assigned a number of variables for key components in order to ensure purposefully different options to consider. Ideas were represented in drawings and using precedent photos from other communities that represented ideas that may be appropriate for Canatara Park.

The six concept options generated at the workshop were then synthesized by The Planning Partnership into **three options** that represented the results of the workshop and used as the basis for the online survey. Chapter 4 describes the three options.



First public workshop in May 2024



2478 Online Survey Respondents

An online survey was prepared to seek input on the various components of each of the three options. The survey was live from June 5, 2024 to June 28, 2024 and was posted on the Speak up Sarnia web page. The survey was promoted regularly on the City's social media.

The survey had 2478 respondents with 113,819 data points. The following is a summary of who completed the survey:

How old are you?

- 18 and under **2%**
- 19-30 years old **17%**
- 31-45 years old **35%**
- 45-60 years old **22%**
- over 60 years old **23%**

How often do you visit Canatara Park?

- Every day **19%**
- A few times a week year round **37%**
- A few times a month year round **33%**
- Only visit in the summer **5%**
- A few times a year **6%**

Do you live within walking distance to Canatara Park?

- Yes **38%**
- No **62%**

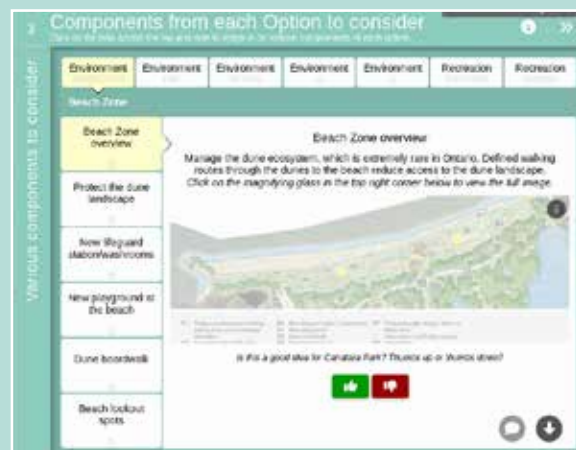
What is your household structure?

- Family with young children **29%**
- Family with teenagers/young adults living at home **21%**
- Couple, no children living at home **36%**
- Single **14%**

How long have you lived in Sarnia?

- Less than 5 years **6%**
- 6-10 years **5%**
- 10-20 years **12%**
- More than 21 years **77%**

The first part of the survey asked respondents to indicate how they would generally rate each of three options on a five star rating, with five stars being the highest. The second part of the survey asked respondents to indicate their support by choosing thumbs up (agree) or thumbs down (disagree) to 52 key components of the concept options.



Pages from the online survey

The results of the survey and other inputs helped the team shape an emerging preferred concept that was shared with the community at the second in-person public engagement session.

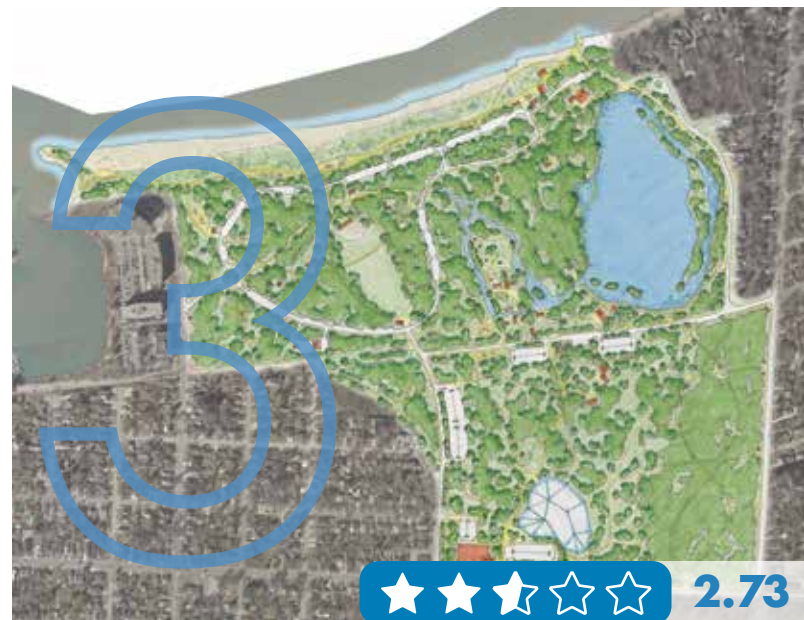
The intent of the online survey was to seek a general response to each of the three options (see Chapter 4) in their entirety. Respondents were asked to rate each option on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high)

Option 1 - Environment focus: average of 3.07

Option 2 - Recreation focus: average of 3.16

Option 3 - Tourism focus: average of 2.73

The team considered the most preferred components from Concept 1, Concept 2 and Concept 3 when preparing the emerging preferred concept plan presented at the public information session on July 2, 2024.





130 Public Information Session

A public information session was held on July 2, 2024 to present and discuss the emerging preferred concept plan for Canatara Park. Approximately 130 people attended one of two sessions. Each began with a presentation to describe the concept plan, followed by questions and answers and table group discussions. Participants were invited to record their comments on work sheets showing the concept plan with space for notes on each one of the 5 park zones. Approximately 70 work sheets were received.



9 Stakeholder Meetings

During the study process, members of the team also meet with Committees of Council, the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, the Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton, the Sarnia & District Humane Society, Friends of Canatara Park Tourism Sarnia-Lambton and the Revelee Music Festival.



40 Emails Received

Approximately 40 emails were received over the course of the project providing ideas for Canatara Park, the options and the emerging preferred concept plan.

Council Consultation

As an early step in the park planning process, councillors and the mayor were invited to a one-on-one conversation with the team's project manager to discuss opportunities for change and challenges to consider in the park.

A council presentation was made on July 8, 2024 to present and discuss the emerging preferred concept plan. A final council presentation was made on October 28, 2024 to present the discuss the draft master plan report.

Project Stakeholders Provided Input



Committees of Council

- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Sarnia Bluewater Trails Committee
- Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee



Ministries *

- Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks



Agencies

- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority



City Departments

- Parks and Facilities Operations
- Planning
- Engineering
- Environmental Services
- Public Works
- Economic Development



Stakeholder Groups

- Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton
- Sarnia & District Humane Society
- Friends of Canatara Park
- Tourism Sarnia-Lambton
- Revelree Music Festival

* Input provided through City staff.



3 Existing Conditions

Canatara Park supports a broad assemblage of ecosystems, including beach, dune, prairie, wetland, lake and woodland communities. This high diversity of habitats are home to numerous plant and animal species, including many species at risk. The Park also includes manicured areas of lawn and areas of surface parking.

The park is a beloved space for recreation, family gatherings and city wide events. Generations of families have enjoyed the park. The park is also one of the city's premier tourist attractions with the beach and Children's Animal Farm being key destinations.

The master plan addresses a diversity of site and neighbourhood characteristics and conditions, existing built facilities in the park and seeks to understand the user requirements.

There are both competing and complementary interests with respect to:

- Major events and small private events;
- Natural heritage and habitat preservation;
- Recreation;
- Access and parking;
- Green space and passive recreation; and,
- Tourism and economic development.

This chapter describes the existing conditions and activity in the park. It also includes some of what we heard during the first phase of the master plan with respect to opportunities for change and issues to consider. This provides the basis for considering options for the park that are described in Chapter 4.



The many naturalized areas in Canatara Park are well-loved places for recreation.



The Children's Animal Farm is one of Canatara Park's main tourist attractions.



Canatara Park is one of Sarnia's prime locations for community events.



LEGEND

- Regulated Area (SCRCA)
- Natural Interest
- Natural Hazard

3.1 Natural Heritage Framework

Approximately 40% of Canatara Park (36,8 ha) is comprised of areas of natural interest - woodlands or wetlands. Hazard lands occur within Canatara Park including erosion areas along the Lake Huron shoreline, wetlands, floodplain and areas regulated by the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (Ontario Regulation 41/24). The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) has a regulated area (yellow line on the map above) within which permits are required for construction or development activity. The area within the Regulated Area includes land along the shoreline, Lake Chipican and drainage areas. The dashed red line indicates the area identified as Natural Hazard within which flooding, erosion, and moving beaches can affect activity. Construction within the area identified as Natural Hazard requires approval by the Conservation Authority.



The Canatara shoreline is regulated by the SCRCA.

“ Some of what we heard

Canatara is probably the only park in Sarnia that has the naturalized feel - would like to keep it that way.

Bring Lake Chipican back to life - introduce bog area to filtrate water.

Maintain the integrity of the natural environment, but make it more accessible to people.

”



3.2 Site Drainage

Canatara Park supports a Provincially Significant Wetland - Lake Chipican - and a colonial waterbird nesting area. Drainage in the park naturally flows west to another wet area located in and around the Children's Animal Farm, and then towards the event lawn.



Lake Chipican is considered a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW).



Some areas of the park floods during winter time.



3.3 Ecological Land Classification Communities

Canatara Park supports a broad assemblage of ecosystems, including beach, dune, prairie, wetland, lake and woodland communities. This high diversity of habitats are home to numerous plant and animal species, including extensive species at risk.

The forested area south of Cathcart Boulevard is referred to locally as Tarzanland. It is a dense Carolinian woodland comprised of sugar maple, black, red, white and swamp white oak, black cherry, pin cherry, beech, yellow birch, serviceberry, black walnut, butternut, shagbark hickory, black ash, tulip tree, and alternate-leaved dogwood. This mixed oak vegetation community is considered rare within the Province.

The beach/dune community is one of the few remaining vegetation communities of this type along the entire Lake Huron shoreline. The grassed dune, shrub dune and treed dune vegetation communities are considered extremely rare to very rare within the Province. These rare vegetation communities host numerous species at risk, listed on the following page.

Ecological Land Classification (ELC) Communities

CGL_2	Constructed Greenlands - Parkland
CVI_1	Transportation
FODM1-2	Dry – Fresh White Oak Deciduous Forest
FODM1-4	Dry-Fresh Mixed Oak Deciduous Forest
FODM2-1	Dry – Fresh Oak – Red Maple Deciduous Forest
FODM4-5	Dry-Fresh Manitoba Maple Deciduous Forest
FODM4	Dry-Fresh Upland Deciduous Forest Ecosite
FODM7-9	Fresh-Moist Exotic Lowland Deciduous Forest
M	Manicured
MAMM1-2	Cattail Graminoid Mineral Meadow Marsh
MEGM3	Dry - Fresh Graminoid Meadow
OA0	Open Water
SAF1-1	Water Lily – Bullhead Lily Floating-leaved Shallow
SBOD1-3	Beach Grass - Wormwood Open Graminoid Sand Dune
SBSD1	Shrub Sand Dune
SBTD1-2	Balsam Poplar Treed Sand Dune
SBTD1	Treed Sand Dune
SHOM1	Mineral Open Shoreline
SWDM3-1	Red Maple Mineral Deciduous Swamp
SWDM4-1	Willow Mineral Deciduous Swamp
SWDM4	Mineral Deciduous Swamp
SWTM2	Dogwood Mineral Deciduous Thicket Swamp
THDM2-1	Dry-Fresh Sumach Deciduous Shrub Thicket
WODM2-1	Dry White Birch-Trembling Aspen Deciduous Tallgrass
WODM4-4	Dry - Fresh Black Walnut Deciduous Woodland
WODM4	Dry - Fresh Deciduous Woodland
WODM5-4	Fresh - Moist Hawthorn / Apple Deciduous

Some Species at Risk



- Dense blazing star
- Riddell's goldenrod
- Fern-leaved yellow foxglove
- Willow-leaved aster



- Red headed woodpecker
- Prothonotary warbler
- Eastern meadowlark
- Bobolink
- Least bittern
- Eastern whip-poor-will



- Butler's Gartersnake
- Eastern massassaga
- Blanding's turtle
- Spiny softshell turtle



- Northern madtom
- Black redhorse
- Wavy-rayed lampmussel



Canatara Park features extremely rare dune vegetation communities.

“ Some of what we heard

Sometimes naturalized gardens can look a bit messy - include signage to help people understand their purpose.

Need to remove the invasive species in the park, especially around Lake Chipican.

Create environments that supports native nature.

Keep off leash dogs out of the Carolinian Forest.

Would not like to see any development in Meadowland and Tarzanland. These areas should stay naturalized.

”



3.4 Pedestrian and Cycling Access

Canatara Park is well used by pedestrians and cyclists who currently use shared trails throughout the park. The pedestrian and cycling trail system features several running/walking loops, used for everyday recreation as well as organized events. The park's trail system is also part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, which follows the extension of Cathcart Boulevard through the park (blue line on the map above).

Most pedestrian and cycling trails are separated from vehicular traffic by armourstone or green wooden posts. Main trails are paved, and trails in the naturalized areas are generally mulched.

“ Some of what we heard

Love all the trails, lucky to have such a nice park so close in Sarnia.

Some sidewalks are a bit too exposed to traffic.

Make the park more accessible for bikes, add bike parking.

Entrance from Christina Street not safe for pedestrians.

”



Main pedestrian/cycling path along Lake Chipican Drive.



One segment of the park's trail system is part of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail.



Beach mats for accessible beach access.



Mulched trail around Lake Chipican.



Armourstone separation between pedestrian path and vehicular path.



Pedestrian entrance from Christina Street N.



Mulched trail through forested area (Tarzanland).



Pedestrian/cycling/park service road by the Children's Animal Farm.



3.5 Vehicular Access

Canatara Park is easily accessible by vehicles. The two main vehicular entrances are located at the Christina Street North and Cathcart Boulevard intersection, and Sandy Lane. The main vehicular route is along Lake Chipican Drive, which provides access through the entire park, from east to west. Cathcart Boulevard also provides direct access to the Children's Animal Farm. Parking is distributed across the park in parking lots and in road side parking. Armourstone and green wooden posts delineate the edge of road side parking, and work as a deterrent for vehicular traffic on some pedestrian paths and natural areas.

Park service roads provide access for event organizers, city operations staff and emergency vehicles, but are not open to the general public.

“ Some of what we heard

Bus to drive through, or at least close to the park - not everyone has a car.

What about one way traffic to allow more space for active transportation?

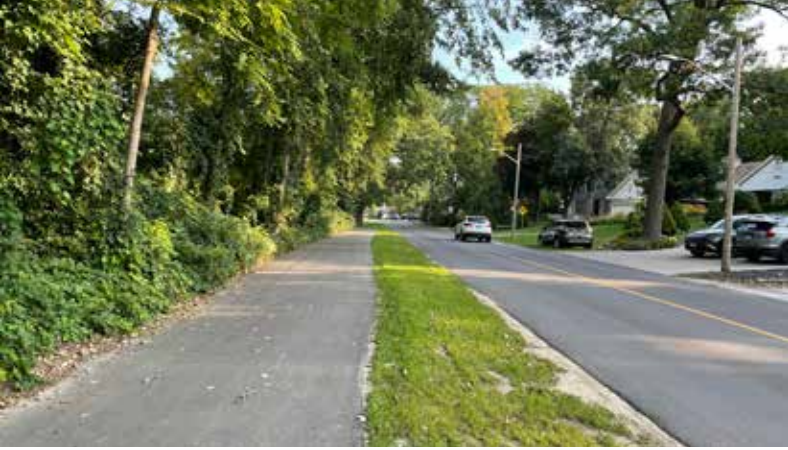
Some trails should be widened for maintenance vehicles.

Limit cars as much as possible.

Parking lots are used for drag racing during late hours.

Cars are going way too fast on Lake Chipican Drive.

”



Lake Chipican Drive.



Beach parking lot.



Parking along Lake Chipican Drive by central lawn area.



Gravel parking area by Sandy Lane entrance.



Green posts deterring vehicular access to naturalized areas.



Speed bumps at Beach parking lot.



Extension of Cathcart Boulevard towards the Children's Animal Farm.



Service road north of the big central lawn area.



LEGEND

-  Washrooms
-  Lifeguard building
-  Accessible beach access
-  Car parking
-  Food truck spot
-  Kayak/Canoe launch point



3.6 Canatara Beach



The beach at Canatara Park is one of only 16 **Blue Flag** Beaches in Canada (year 2024). A Blue Flag is regarded by the public as a symbol of excellence for environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria.

A central focus of the Blue Flag program is connecting people with nature so they can learn about their environment. The Blue Flag standards ensure that Blue Flag beaches are clean and environmentally sustainable and provide the facilities and services that tourists are looking for around the world.

The World Health Organization, the World Tourism Organization, and the United Nations Environmental Program embrace the Blue Flag program. Every year Blue Flag beaches must reapply to maintain the credibility of the Blue Flag program, meeting standards for:

- Water Quality;
- Environmental Management;
- Environmental Education; and,
- Safety and Services.

This area is also the location of the beach/dune community, one of the few remaining vegetation communities of this type along the entire Lake Huron shoreline. The grassed dune, shrub dune and treed dune vegetation communities are extremely rare to very rare within the Province.

The beach has approximately 560 parking spaces that are within a short walk of the water's edge. There is one lifeguard station at the east end of the beach with washrooms in a building that's in poor condition. There are washrooms, a beach pavilion and bandshell stage at the west end of



the beach. Food trucks currently park at one end of the parking lot, centrally located on the beach. Canoes and kayaks generally launch from the parking area off of Sandy Lane.



Canatara Beach Lifeguard station with washrooms.

“ Some of what we heard

Make point at the cove more accessible.

Do what we can to preserve the shoreline.

The beach gets pretty congested in the summer. Many visitors coming from out of town.

Would be nice to see some picnic tables with umbrellas on the beach.

They used to have a concession stand at the beach. That was very nice.

Designated spot for canoe and kayak launch would be appreciated.

Some people are not respecting the sand dunes, they walk across them, and drive on them.

Beautiful beach, but the amenities there are pretty slim, and old.

”



3.7 Recreation Amenities

The park has a playground that includes fitness stations north west of the central lawn, close to the entrance off Sandy Lane. The park also has several locations with single swings or slides.

The Children's Animal Farm campus includes a playground, fitness stations and a BMX track. A short Choo Choo train also operates at the Farm.

“ Some of what we heard

Introduce more natural play elements in the park.

Park furniture are old and in need of an upgrade.

More activities please! Pickleball, beach volleyball, basketball, frisbee golf.

Please add more and better lighting in the park.

More seating is needed.

Introduce some colour to the park furnishing palette.

Having a designated barbecue area - they did not use to be as scattered as they are now.

”



Event pavilion by the Children's Animal Farm.



Picnic area by the central lawn.



Bandshell stage and beach pavilion.



Small pork pavilion.



Large playground by the central lawn.



Fitness stations by the Children's Animal Farm.



Smaller playground by the Children's Animal Farm.



BMX track by the Children's Animal Farm.



3.8 Park Buildings

Canatara Park has six public washrooms, two of which are open year round. Many of the washrooms are in need of replacement and upgrades. There are three park pavilions, a bandshell stage, one beach pavilion, a lifeguard station and the Terry Fox building (primarily used during events). The Children's Animal Farm Campus has a collection of buildings, used for the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the Animal Farm, programming and office space. The campus also features the famous Log Cabin, the Ted Leaver building (formally used as an information centre), and a larger event pavilion (located at the southwest edge of Lake Chipican).

“ Some of what we heard

The park has enough washrooms, but they need to be upgraded.

Additional storage on the Children's Animal Farm Campus.

Add gender neutral washrooms and a larger family bathroom.

Many facilities could be used more than they are today.

Life guard station needs to be rebuilt.

LOVE the Children's Animal Farm!

Replace the pens in the Children's Animal Farm.

Bigger barn on the Children's Animal Farm is needed to fit all of the animals.

”



Home of the Choo Choo train.



The Log Cabin.



Thrasher building.



Washrooms southwest of the central lawn area.



Service building by the Children's Animal Farm.



Beach washrooms.



Ted Leaver building.



Children's Animal Farm.



3.9 Park Events

Canatara Park is one of the city's premier locations for events. The park is used for events run by the city and other event organizers almost year round. Key events include Canada Day celebrations, Christmas at the Farm, a Fright Night for Halloween, and Easter in the Park. Since 2022, Canatara park also hosts the Revelree Music Festival, attracting thousands of people to the central big event space.

Other important park events include charity runs, walks, car shows, birding events, movie nights, and clean-up days, occurring throughout the year.

“ Some of what we heard

Park events are great, but not a fan of having a bunch of concerts - too noisy!

Limit big events to certain time slots - to cause minimum disruption to Canatara wildlife.

Event organizers are doing a great job cleaning up after the events.

There is a good mix of events and activities at the park currently.

Would be nice to have some areas you did not need to book in advance.

Glad to see activities in the park, but would not like to see something that attracts 10,000 people.

The park is in need of better power outlets for events.

”



Private birthday celebration at Canatara Park (2024)



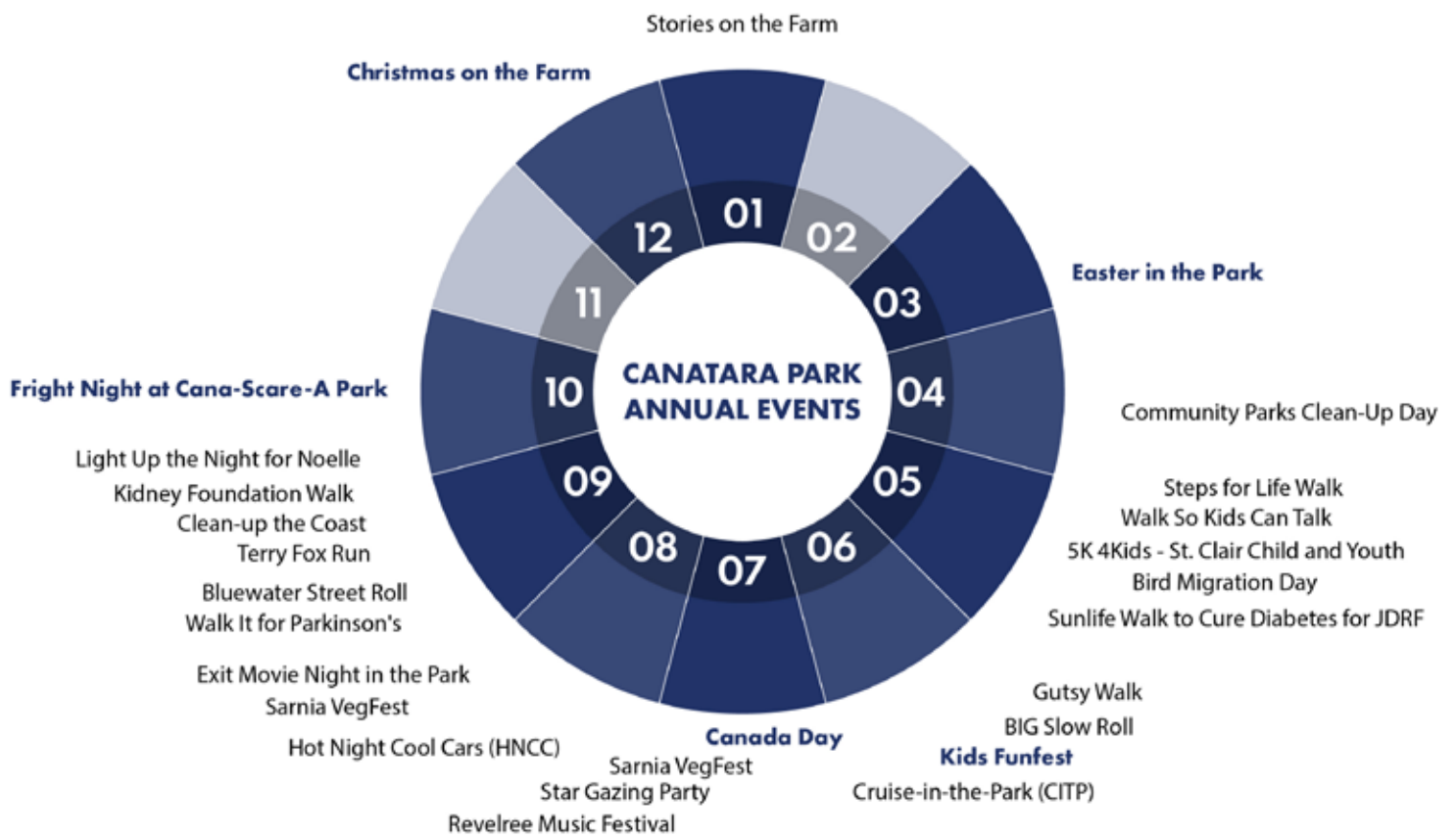
Hot Night Cool Cars by the beach parking lot (2024)



The Canada Day Parade at Canatara Park (2024)



Terry Fox Run at Canatara Park (2024)





One of the current park wayfinding signs.



Digital park info sign by the main entrance.



Current information on the park's natural heritage.



Choo choo train sign.



Current information on the park's natural heritage.



Current commemoration of Maud Hanna.

3.10 Signage and Wayfinding

The park has many different types of signage with different designs, layout and graphics. There are also limited wayfinding signs and the many trails in the park are not clearly marked. Many of the existing information signs would not be considered fully accessible.

Canatara park currently lacks overall park maps to help orient its visitors and broaden awareness of facilities in the park.

There are information signs speaking to the park's rich natural heritage. However, these are generally small, and their layout and text size makes them difficult to read.

Maud Hanna is currently commemorated in the park, but in a hidden, non accessible location close to the main park entrance.



Some of what we heard

It is not easy finding your way to a specific area of the park as a first time visitor.

Give Maud Hanna the recognition she deserves!

Add QR codes to park signs with links to the history of the park - educate people.

More signs to tell people not to disrupt the wildlife.

Introduce learning opportunities for future generations by showcasing the site issues.

Monuments in the park are not marked up.

Clearly marked trails would be nice.





4 Exploring Options

Options were explored for the park through consideration of existing conditions and current use, conversations with the public and the team's suggestions for park improvements.

A Design Workshop was held on May 1, 2024 to develop options for the park. Residents were invited to work alongside other residents, and a member of The Planning Partnership team in one of three table groups each tasked with developing one of three options. An afternoon and an evening session was held enabling approximately 80 people to participate.

Each group was preassigned variables for each option as described in the table below. Participants were welcome to join the group of their choice. The drawings that were generated during each session of the Design Workshop were used as the basis for the team to synthesize three options.

The three options provided the content for an online survey where respondents were asked to rate each option on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) and to respond whether the key components of each option were suitable for Canatara Park. The options are illustrated on the following pages and responses to the survey are included in Chapter 5.

	Option 1: Environment Focus	Option 2: Recreation Focus	Option 3: Tourism Focus
Environment	<p>Environmental focus for all actions</p> <p>Enhance natural areas: woodland, meadows, dune, wetland</p> <p>Create positive drainage</p> <p>Enhance Lake Chipican and its connection to Lake Huron</p> <p>Improve wildlife habitat</p>	<p>Enhance natural areas: woodland, meadows, dune, wetland</p> <p>Enhance Lake Chipican and its connection to Lake Huron</p> <p>Improve wildlife habitat</p>	<p>Enhance natural areas: woodland, meadows, dune, wetland</p> <p>Enhance Lake Chipican and its connection to Lake Huron</p> <p>Improve wildlife habitat</p>
Access	<p>Reconsider location of roads and parking</p> <p>Context sensitive trail design in naturalized areas</p> <p>Close access to areas where habitat needs to be restored</p>	<p>Maintain roads generally where they are located</p> <p>Re-organize parking</p> <p>Establish trail/cycling loops</p> <p>Re-introduce public transit to the park</p>	<p>Maintain roads generally where they are located</p> <p>Re-organize parking</p> <p>Establish trail/cycling loops</p> <p>Re-introduce public transit to the park</p>
Activity	<p>Locate facilities only in locations that do not interrupt the natural heritage/drainage system</p> <p>Size and type of event only in locations where there is no impact on natural heritage; many of events are relocated to downtown locations</p>	<p>Broad spectrum of recreation activities: pickle ball, basketball, beach volleyball, beach rentals, canoe/kayak launch, exercise stations, adventure based playground</p> <p>Year round events</p> <p>Food trucks, seasonal food</p>	<p>Node to re-establish a small area for tourist accommodation, year round restaurant, centre for events</p> <p>Maybe yurts or camping in Tarzanland</p> <p>Year round events</p>



4.1 Option 1: Environment Focus

This option envisioned the park as a predominantly natural environment. It seeks to maximize opportunities for the restoration of the natural landscapes (beach dunes, forests, meadows). Within this context, public access is maintained, paved parking areas are minimized and opportunities for nature-based recreation and interpretation are promoted. Key elements of this option include:

- Significant dune landscape restoration;
- Dune boardwalk and lookout spots;
- Termination of Lake Chipican Drive;
- Relocation of the Children's Animal Farm out of the flood zone and re-creation of a naturalized wetland landscape;
- Reorganized roads and parking to minimize impact on important ecosystems;
- A new Nature Information Centre and native educational gardens;
- Limited access to forested areas to allow restoration;
- Implementation of a forest management plan for Tarzanland; and,
- Creation of distinct and native meadow landscapes.



4.2 Option 2: Recreation Focus

This option envisioned the park as a recreation-based destination with a variety of activities for Sarnia residents, the broader community and visitors. Key elements of this options include:

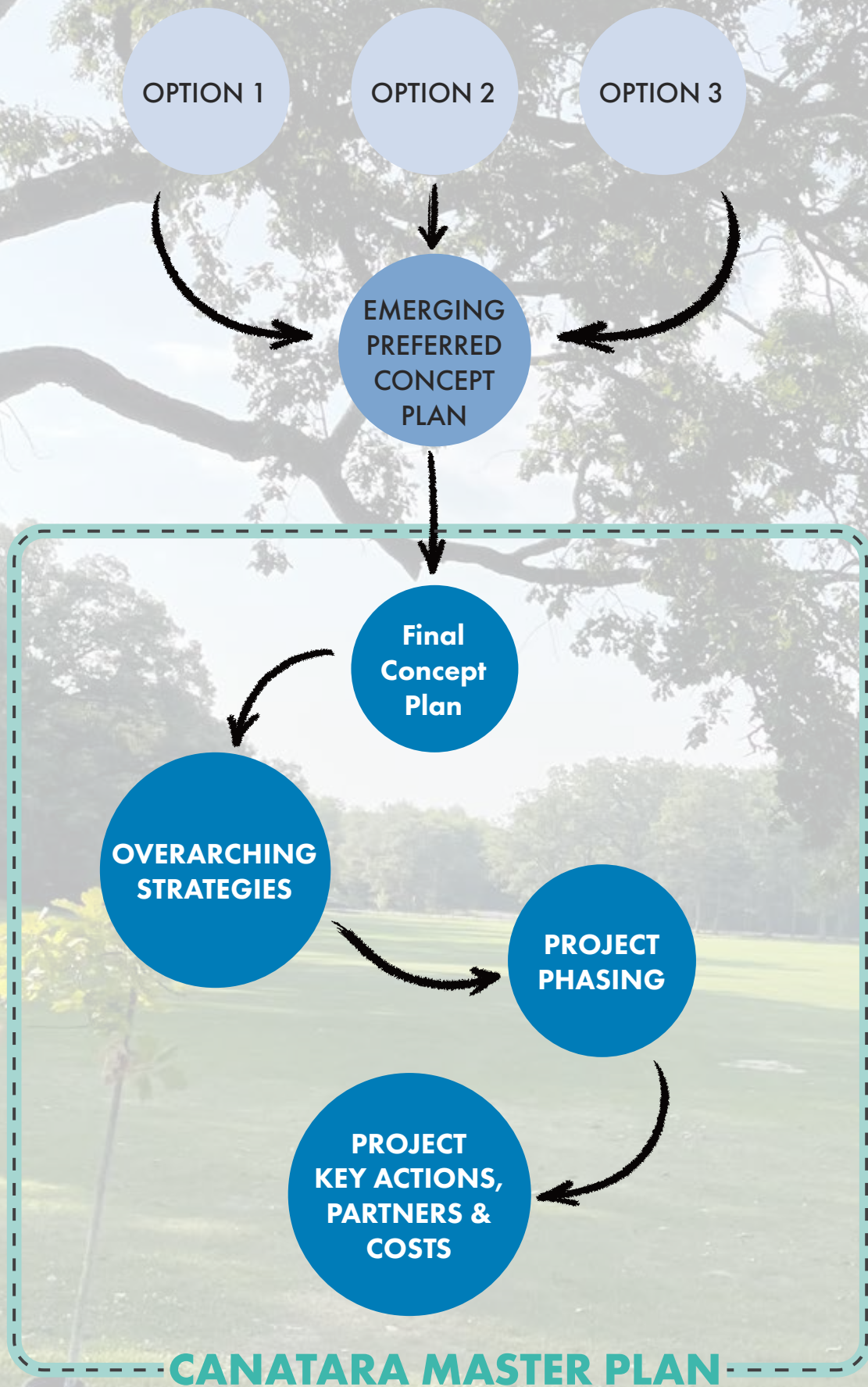
- Disconnected roads through the central portion of the park;
- Cycling facilities (parking, rentals and signed cycling loops), separated from vehicular traffic;
- A small (non-motorized) boat launch;
- Dune landscape restoration;
- Dune boardwalk and lookout spots;
- Creation of more opportunities for accessible beach access;
- Prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists by limiting driving through the park;
- A new Nature Education Centre and Day Camp;
- Creation of new themed play areas for children of all ages;
- Creation of more opportunities for recreational activities, including beach volleyball, disc golf, fitness stations, canoe/kayak launch, and walking and cycling loops;
- New covered stage with power connection; and,
- A tree canopy walk in the forested *Tarzanlands*.



4.3 Option 3: Tourism Focus

This option envisioned the park as a major destination for both regional and local visitors, in addition to being a premier waterfront park in the city. Key elements of this option include:

- Extension of Front Street as a roadway into the park, connecting to Lake Chipican Drive;
- A new indigenous cultural / community centre and butterfly conservatory located at Front Street and Michigan Avenue;
- A birding centre anchored around Lake Chipican;
- Dune landscape restoration;
- Dune boardwalk and lookout spots;
- A new Community Centre, a Birding Centre and a Butterfly Conservatory;
- Creation of opportunities for cafe, food and beverage, and seasonal rentals;
- Creation of lookout spots and a floating boardwalk by Lake Chipican;
- New entrance plaza by the big lawn/event area;
- New covered stage with power connection; and,
- New park entrance and parking areas by Michigan Avenue.



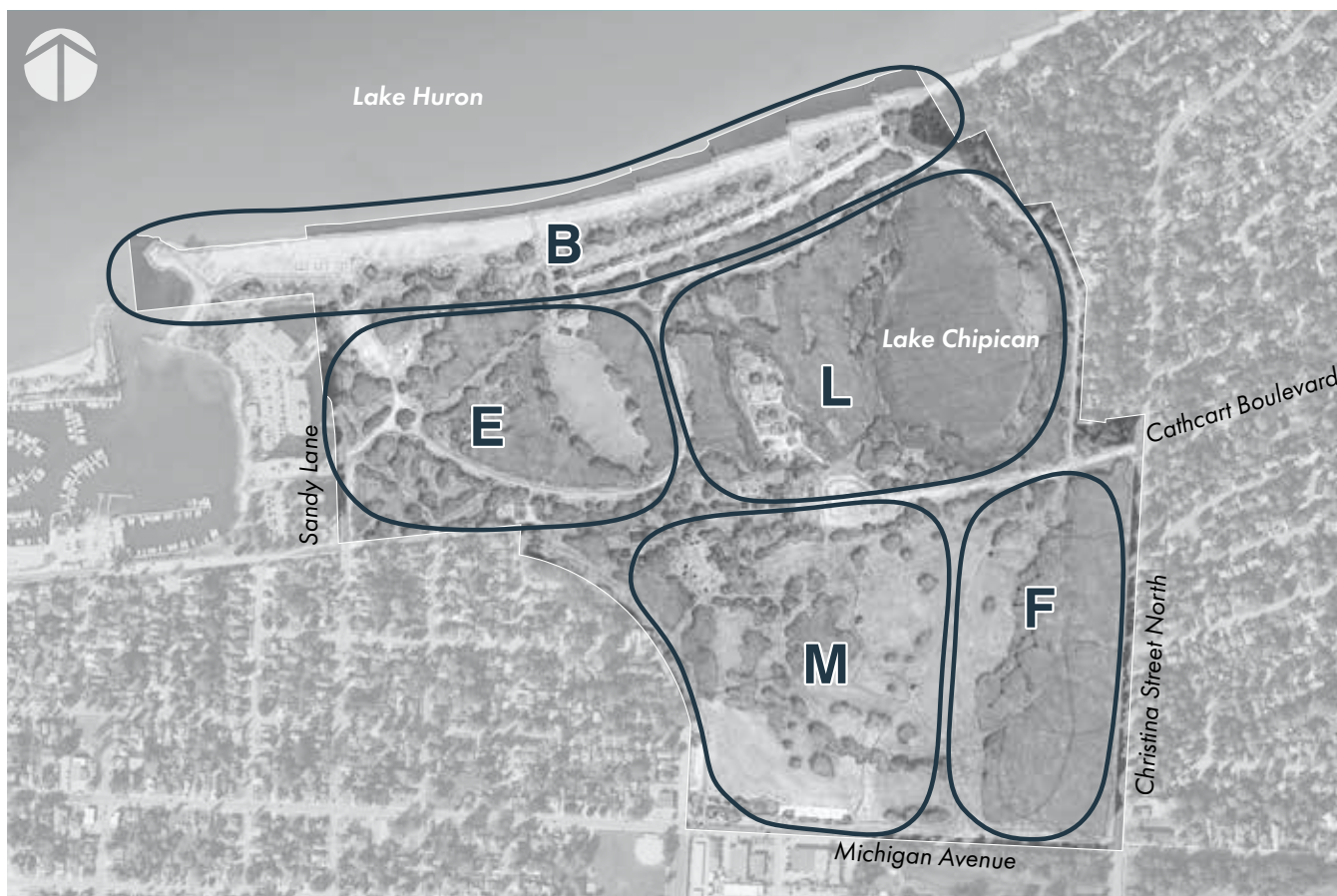
5 Final Concept Plan

The Final Concept Plan was generated through a process of first sharing an “emerging preferred concept plan” through a presentation and discussion at a public information session on July 2, 2024. Comments were also received through a council presentation, and additional meetings with key stakeholders. This chapter describes the key elements of the Final Concept Plan according to the five zones (see map below):

- **Beach (B)**
- **Events (E)**
- **Lake (L)**
- **Meadow (M)**
- **Forest (F)**

Overarching strategies that apply to the whole park are described at the end of this chapter and include:

- Environmental Management and Restoration;
- Gateways, Signage and Wayfinding;
- Pedestrians, Cycling and Accessibility;
- Vehicular Roads and Car Parking;
- Park Buildings;
- Site Furnishings, Amenities and Play;
- Lighting;
- Food Trucks and Seasonal Retail; and,
- Infrastructure for Events.



5.1 What we heard about the emerging preferred concept

Input received on the emerging concept plan is summarized as follows according to the five zones. Of note are the varying opinions on key components. The team considered all of the input received when preparing the Final Concept Plan.

The Final Concept Plan balances competing interests and presents a solid foundation for subsequent more detailed design for key areas of the park.

General

Current state is cherished

There is a strong appreciation for the way Canatara Park is used. Many feel that maintaining the park's existing features is essential, and would not like to see it change too much.

Natural Heritage

The park has a major ecological value, and is frequently used for bird watching, nature walks, and everyday recreation. Its natural heritage features are one of a kind, and essential to maintain.

Traffic, Safety & Access

The current parking is adequate except during major events. Explore alternative traffic calming measures and improved security in the park. Separated bike lanes.

Facility improvements

Better washrooms are needed. Need to improve accessibility, particularly for seniors, families with young children, and people with mobility issues.

Beach Zone

Dune preservation

Preference for maintaining and expanding dune areas to protect this important ecosystem. Features like boardwalks should be discreet and designed to blend with the natural landscape.

Parking

Preserve the dunes or accommodate parking. Some support reducing parking, others say that more parking is essential to maintain accessibility and prevent overcrowding.

Accessibility

Improve beach access. Ensure that all visitors, including those with mobility issues, can enjoy the beach and its amenities. Ensure adequate emergency access to the beach.

Amenities

Upgraded lifeguard station and washrooms are needed. General support for introducing new amenities, for example boardwalks, canoe/kayak launch, and food trucks.

Event Zone

Event Management

Focus on community-oriented events, less large-scale events. New central stage is supported. Include staging area and electrical outlets, to facilitate event setup and support vendors.

Tree Protection

Protect the trees against damage caused by vehicle traffic and parking. Support for eliminating parking under trees. Support for naturalizing areas.

Parking & Access

Support for removing parking from specific areas to preserve natural features, if alternative parking solutions are provided. Broad support for restricting vehicle access during major events.

Commercialization

Don't introduce too many commercial elements in the park. More food and beverage options are supported to improve visitor experience and offer more variation.

Lake Zone

Children's Animal Farm

The community loves the Animal Farm. Moving it from its current location is not necessary. Many suggest focusing on repairing and upgrading existing structures. Support for new farm themed play area.

Habitat protection

Strong support for protecting wildlife habitats. Ensure that any new developments or changes do not disrupt these habitats. Address issues like invasive species and water quality.

Lake Chipican

Hot spot for bird watching. Support for maintaining and improving walking paths around Lake Chipican. New lookout spots and floating boardwalk are great additions to this area.

Traffic & Safety

Support for measures to reduce speeding on Lake Chipican Drive. Install traffic calming measures and reduce speed limits to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Meadow Zone

Educational Facilities

Support for a Nature Education Centre, educational programs, and indigenous educational gardens. Concerns about maintenance and funding of these facilities.

Meadow Management

Support for establishing native meadow landscapes, which are crucial for butterflies and grassland birds. Need for extensive management to control invasive species.

Trails & Wayfinding

Interest in maintaining and improving cycling and walking paths, with support for a new cycling lane. Additional wayfinding signage and trail markings are needed.

Access & Parking

Mixed feedback on proposed new entrance and parking lot at the corner of Front and Michigan. Potential noise concerns of nearby residents.

Forest Zone

Forest Management

Tarzanland is highly valued for its natural beauty and biodiversity. Support for maintaining its critical habitats. Efforts to remove invasive species and manage dead trees are needed.

Trails & Accessibility

Preference for keeping trails mulched. Support for making some trails accessible and ensuring year-round maintenance. New entry points and sidewalk along Christina St N are great additions.

New Amenities

Positive feedback on adding new amenities like a tree canopy walk and lookout towers. Concerns about the cost and maintenance associated with these structures.

5.2 Canatara Park Final Concept Plan

The final park concept reflects modifications made to the emerging concept plan, based on feedback from the community, City staff, Committees of Council, and other stakeholders.

Lake Huron

- B1** Reduce existing paved parking area to allow dune landscape restoration
- B2** Expanded dune landscape
- B3** Existing washroom facilities
- B4** New lifeguard station and washrooms on existing building footprint
- B5** New boardwalk with pedestrian look-out spots
- B6** New beach volleyball courts
- B7** Accessible access to water
- B8** New play area
- B9** New fitness stations
- B10** New canoe / kayak rentals and launch
- B11** Upgraded parking lot
- B12** New beach picnic area

- E1** Existing multi-purpose lawn area
- E2** Paths and picnicking along forested edge
- E3** New covered stage / pavilion with power connection
- E4** New plaza area for seasonal retail, seasonal rentals, pop-ups, food trucks etc.
- E5** New staging area
- E6** Existing Terry Fox Building
- E7** Existing playground (recently revitalized)
- E8** Upgraded park pavilion
- E9** Upgraded existing washrooms
- E10** Separated walking / cycling trails
- E11** New parking pods along Lake Chipican Drive
- E12** New pedestrian crossing
- E13** Existing parks staff facilities
- E14** New pedestrian connection to Waterfront trail
- E15** New sidewalk connection and pedestrian crossing on Sandy Lane

- M1** New shade structure/welcome pavilion
- M2** New washroom facilities
- M3** New nature education centre / day camp
- M4** Potential expansion for Children's Animal Farm Campus
- M5** Existing BMX tracks
- M6** New native educational gardens / butterfly gardens
- M7** New viewing tower
- M8** New park entrance with parking
- M9** Create distinct native meadow landscapes
- M10** New cycling loop
- M11** Trail reconfigurations













- L1 Traffic calming elements along Lake Chipican Drive
- L2 Separated walking / cycling trail
- L3 New look-out spots along Lake Chipican
- L4 New floating boardwalk
- L5 Expanded existing viewing platform
- L6 Existing Children's Animal Farm
- L7 Redesigned drop-off /parking area, including reconfiguration of service road and parking pods
- L8 Visitor information (upgraded and repurposed existing Ted Leaver building)
- L9 Existing log cabin
- L10 Existing service building
- L11 Existing Choo choo train building
- L12 New farm themed play area
- L13 Extended Choo choo train loop
- L14 Upgraded existing washrooms
- L15 Existing event pavilion
- L16 New park pavilion
- L17 Potential location for new storage shed
- L18 Maud Hanna Common

- F1 Trail reconfiguration: establish a hierarchy of trail widths and paving materials, including creating an accessible forest trail
- F2 New sidewalk and pedestrian entrance nodes along west side of Christina Street North
- F3 Safety enhancement measures for pedestrian crossing on Christina Street North
- F4 New main entrance configuration
- F5 New tree canopy walk
- F6 New viewing tower
- F7 New path connection between forest and meadow
- F8 New cycling loop
- F9 New parking pod
- F10 Potential reforestation

B

The Beach Zone

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
|  | Gateway/Entrance element |  | Building / Pavilion |
|  | Interpretive/Wayfinding signage |  | Dune landscape |
|  | Bicycle parking/Rental |  | Tree canopy |
|  | Car parking |  | Walking/Cycling trail / Boardwalk |



- B1** Reduce existing paved parking area to allow dune landscape restoration
- B2** Expanded dune landscape
- B3** Existing washroom facilities
- B4** New lifeguard station and washrooms on existing building footprint
- B5** New boardwalk with pedestrian look-out spots
- B6** New beach volleyball courts
- B7** Accessible access to water
- B8** New play area
- B9** New fitness stations
- B10** New canoe / kayak rentals and launch
- B11** Upgraded parking lot
- B12** New beach picnic area

The dune is an extremely rare ecosystem and one of only a handful along the entire Lake Huron shoreline. Protection of the dune is a fundamental consideration in the Final Concept Plan. In order to protect the dune, the north portion of the existing parking lot (**B1**) is removed, enabling this sensitive ecosystem to be expanded by 1.5 ha (**B2**).

B3 -The existing washroom will remain.

B4 - A new lifeguard station and washrooms are proposed to replace the existing facility which is in poor condition. It is recommended that the new building be located on the same foot print as the existing building.

B5 - A new boardwalk is suggested to control access to and along the dune, to provide access to the beach for people in a wheelchair or using a walker, and to provide look out spots along the beach. A raised boardwalk will protect the sensitive grasses and ground covers on the dune.

B6 - There is much interest in locating beach volleyball at the park. The concept illustrates the courts in an area close to the parking on the west side of the beach in an attempt to locate them outside of the most sensitive part of the dune.

B7 - Accessible beach mats or seasonal ramps are illustrated to ensure the shoreline and the beautiful blue water is accessible for people with all abilities.

B8-B9 - A new playground and new fitness stations are centrally located between the parking lot on the west end of the beach and the lifeguard station and washrooms.

B10 - A canoe/kayak launch is suggested at the east end of the beach with an area that could accommodate rentals and storage.

B11 - It is suggested that the parking lot off of Sandy Lane be upgraded to define parking spaces and maximize the number of vehicles that can be accommodated.

B12 - A new picnic area is illustrated on the west end of the beach next to the cove.

General Strategies & Recommendations



- Implement **Environmental Management and Restoration Plan** for the sensitive dune landscapes
- Integrate permeable paving materials
- Integrate bioswales for stormwater management
- A preference for natural materials
- Play equipment should include features for all ages
- Fitness stations should include equipment for all fitness levels, as well as seniors
- Ensure pedestrian trails are accessible



ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



👍 86%

Protect the dune landscape (86% thumbs up)



👍 88%

Provide a new lifeguard station with washrooms (88% thumbs up)



👍 85%

Create a dune boardwalk (85% thumbs up)

E

The Event Zone



LEGEND

- Gateway/Entrance element
- Interpretive/Wayfinding signage
- Bicycle parking/Rental
- Washrooms
- Building/Pavilion
- Car parking
- Tree canopy
- Lawn
- Walking/Cycling trail

- E1** Existing multi-purpose lawn area
- E2** Paths and picnicking along forested edge
- E3** New covered stage / pavilion with power connection
- E4** New plaza area for seasonal retail, seasonal rentals, pop-ups, food trucks etc.
- E5** New staging area
- E6** Existing Terry Fox Building
- E7** Existing playground (recently revitalized)
- E8** Upgraded park pavilion
- E9** Upgraded existing washrooms
- E10** Separated walking / cycling trails
- E11** New parking pods along Lake Chipican Drive
- E12** New pedestrian crossing
- E13** Existing parks staff facilities
- E14** New pedestrian connection to Waterfront trail
- E15** New sidewalk connection and pedestrian crossing on Sandy Lane

The Event Zone is the area generally used for special events and celebrations. It is also the area within which picnic pavilions are rented. The zone includes the park road that remains in it's existing location and connects with Sandy Lane on the west side of the park. The round-about northeast of the big open lawn has been slightly reconfigured to provide better access for cyclists and pedestrians, as well as larger vehicles during events. A new plaza area for food trucks and seasonal rentals is added. An enhanced gateway feature is suggested at the west entrance to the park off of Sandy Lane.

E1 - The existing lawn is well used for events and for passive recreation. It is maintained.

E2 - The forested edge around the Event Zone is a sensitive area and should be managed and protected to sustain this beautiful setting for paths and picnicking under the tree canopy. This forested edge is under

significant threat from parking that occurs in this area during special events. Parking should be prohibited from the area under the trees at all times, due to serious impact on roots and concern for the ultimate health of the trees.

E3 - A new covered stage is proposed with connection to power to provide a more suitable venue for events.

E4 - A new paved surface area is proposed between this event area and the beach. This is an ideal location for food trucks and seasonal rentals that is centrally located in the park.

E5 - A new staging area is proposed north of the new covered stage, to provide easier access for larger event vehicles.

E6 - The Terry Fox Building remains. The building could be utilized more than it is today, for example as a seasonal retail facility or concession.

E7 - The recently revitalized playground will remain in place.

E8 - The adjacent park pavilion should be upgraded with new picnic tables and improved upkeep of the structure.

E9 - The existing washroom building will remain with upgraded facilities to include a family washroom.

E10 - Separated walking and cycling trails are proposed throughout the park to enhance the safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Additional bike facilities are proposed in two locations, and a new pedestrian crossing (**E12**) is added east of the new stage and event area.

E11 - Parking is provided throughout the park and is illustrated in pods along one side of the Lake Chipican Drive park loop.

E13 - The existing parks facility building and yard will remain in its current location.

E14 - New pedestrian / cycling trail connection to the Waterfront Trail.

E15 - A new sidewalk is suggested along the east side of Sandy Lane.



ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



New covered stage with power connection (72% thumbs up)



Limit vehicular access to forested areas (52% thumbs up)

General Strategies & Recommendations



- Implement **Environmental Management and Restoration Plan** for the Oak Savannah landscape
- Integrate permeable paving materials
- Integrate bioswales for stormwater management
- A preference for natural materials
- Ensure the new stage includes an accessible ramp
- Ensure picnic areas are accessible
- Ensure pedestrian trails are accessible

The Lake Zone

LEGEND

-  Gateway/Entrance element
-  Interpretive/Wayfinding signage
-  Bicycle parking/Rental
-  Washrooms
-  Building/Pavilion
-  Car parking
-  Tree canopy
-  Lawn
-  Walking/Cycling trail



- L1** Traffic calming elements along Lake Chipican Drive
- L2** Separated walking / cycling trail
- L3** New look-out spots along Lake Chipican
- L4** New floating boardwalk
- L5** Expanded existing viewing platform
- L6** Existing Children's Animal Farm
- L7** Redesigned drop-off /parking area, including reconfiguration of service road and parking pods
- L8** Visitor information (upgraded and re-purposed existing Ted Leaver building)

- L9** Existing log cabin
- L10** Existing service building
- L11** Existing Choo choo train building
- L12** New farm themed play area
- L13** Extended Choo choo train loop
- L14** Upgraded existing washrooms
- L15** Existing event pavilion
- L16** New park pavilion
- L17** Potential location for new storage shed
- L18** Maud Hanna Common

The Lake zone consists of the area around Lake Chipican, and includes the Children's Animal Farm. One of the Master Plan conceptual options explored the potential of relocating the Children's Animal Farm. This final park concept plan maintains the Farm and Choo Choo Train in the current location in a wet area associated with Lake Chipican. The Thrasher building is being removed due to poor condition.

During conversations with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA) a concern was identified regarding impact of the Farm on two of the City's water intakes. The City should consider relocating the Farm in the long term, depending on further conversations with the Conservation Authority and the impact on the water intakes.

L1-L2 - Traffic calming elements and a separated walking/cycling trail are proposed along Lake Chipican Drive, to slow down cars, and enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

L3-L5 - To make Lake Chipican more accessible, the concept plan proposes adding boardwalk lookouts along in three locations, as well as a new floating boardwalk on the west shore that extends into the Lake. The existing viewing platform next to the event pavilion at **L15** is also proposed to be expanded.

L6 - The Children's Animal Farm remains in its current location.

L7 - The parking area and drop off was recently repaved. The concept plan illustrates further work to define vehicle circulation and drop off as separate from parking. The area should include planting and bioswales to demonstrate a more environmentally friendly approach to parking. Bike parking areas are suggested close to the areas assigned for car parking.

L8 - The Ted Leaver building requires upgrading, and could be re-purposed into a Visitor Centre.

L9-L11 - The Log Cabin, the Farm's service building, and the Choo Choo train building remains unchanged.

L12 - A new farm themed playground should replace the existing playground to be more consistent with the Children's Animal Farm.

L13 - A new loop for the Choo Choo train is created, extending into the wooded areas.

L14 - The existing washrooms should be upgraded to include a family washroom, especially given its proximity to the Children's Animal Farm and play area.

L15 - The existing event pavilion is unchanged. The pavilion includes washrooms that should be open and available for public use year round.

L16 - A new park pavilion is added to replace one of the existing two smaller ones along Lake Chipican Drive.

L17 - A new storage shed is proposed, to address the increased need for storage space within the

Children's Animal Farm Campus.

L18 - A new, stronger entrance node is created, and named Maud Hanna Common. The entrance plaza should include public art, and generous planted areas, in honour of Maud Hanna's contribution to Canatara Park.

General Strategies & Recommendations

- *Integrate permeable paving materials*
- *Integrate bioswales for stormwater management*
- *A preference for natural materials*
- *Ensure pedestrian trails are accessible*
- *Play equipment should include features for all ages*



ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS



👍 75%

Look-out spots around Lake Chipican (75% thumbs up)



👍 62%

Floating boardwalk (62% thumbs up)



👍 61%

New farm themed play area (61% thumbs up)

The Meadow Zone



LEGEND

- Gateway/Entrance element
- Interpretive/Wayfinding signage
- Bicycle parking/Rental
- Washrooms
- Building/Pavilion
- Car parking
- Tree canopy
- Lawn
- Walking/Cycling trail

- M1** New shade structure/welcome pavilion
- M2** New washroom facilities
- M3** New nature education centre /day camp
- M4** Potential expansion for Children's Animal Farm Campus
- M5** Existing BMX tracks
- M6** New native educational gardens / butterfly gardens
- M7** New viewing tower
- M8** New park entrance with parking
- M9** Create distinct native meadow landscapes
- M10** New cycling loop
- M11** Trail reconfigurations

The Meadow Zone is the area south of the park service road that extends from Cathcart Boulevard, most of which is within the Village of Point Edward municipal boundary. This area was used as an oil waste and municipal landfill for municipal waste from the mid 1920's to the mid 1960's. Remediation has been ongoing soon after the landfill closed. Today this area is mainly a meadow landscape with recreational trails.

M1 - A new shade structure and welcome pavilion provides a gateway to the park from the south.

M2 - New washrooms will provide an important amenity for users of this area of Canatara Park.



ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

M3 - A cluster of buildings are suggested as a new nature education centre and day camp.

M4 - This area could be used to expand the Children's Animal Farm.

M5 - The existing BMX track remains, unchanged.

M6 - Introducing native educational gardens to the park could help educate park visitors about plants native to this area. The gardens would also be a great complement to the nature education centre, and provide opportunity for children to learn about nature and gardening by interaction with the environment.

M7 - A viewing tower could be centrally located in this area, providing long views.

M8 - Two new vehicular entrances and two small parking lots are suggested to enhance access to this part of the public park.

M9 - The landscape should be regularly maintained as a meadow by overseeding. An Environmental Management and Restoration Plan (see Section 5.3) should be prepared for the Meadow Zone. It will be important to remove invasive species in this area.

M10 - A cycling loop is suggested through the Meadow Zone, extending through the Forest Zone.

M11 - The trail is extended out to and along Front Street to ensure access to the park from the south.



71%

Create distinct and native meadow landscapes (71% thumbs up)



78%

Native educational gardens (78% thumbs up)



65%

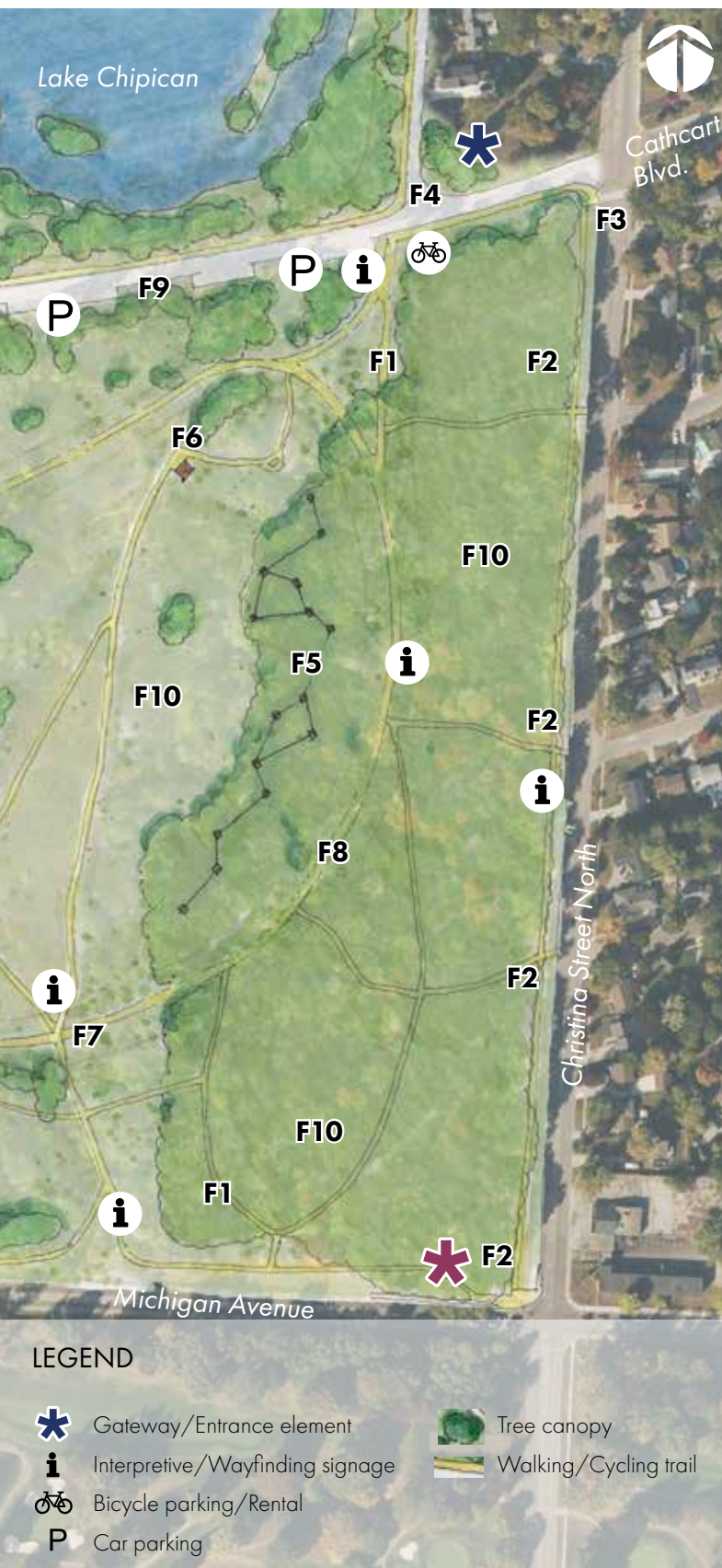
Nature Education Centre and Day Camp (65% thumbs up)

General Strategies & Recommendations



- Implement **Environmental Management and Restoration Plan** for the meadow landscapes
- Establish an agreement with Friends of Canatara Park for management of invasive species
- Integrate permeable paving materials
- A preference for natural materials
- Ensure pedestrian trails are accessible

The Forest Zone



- F1** Trail reconfiguration: establish a hierarchy of trail widths and paving materials, including creating an accessible forest trail
- F2** New sidewalk and pedestrian entrance nodes along west side of Christina Street North
- F3** Safety enhancement measures for pedestrian crossing on Christina Street North
- F4** New main entrance configuration
- F5** New tree canopy walk
- F6** New viewing tower
- F7** New path connection between forest and meadow
- F8** New cycling loop
- F9** New parking pod
- F10** Potential reforestation

The Forest Zone, more commonly known by *Tarzanland*, is a mixed Oak Deciduous forest considered to be rare to uncommon in Ontario. This is a significant area of natural interest where every effort should be made to protect and enhance the ecosystem.

F1 - A hierarchy of trails through the Forest Zone is suggested with varying widths and surface materials. Mulched or granular trails are preferred, although some paved trails might be necessary for maintenance vehicles and better accessibility. A fully accessible trail is proposed, where people of all abilities are invited to experience the natural features in this part of the park. This trail should include a wheelchair accessible trail surface, and a simple guiding hand rail for people with impaired vision. The concept plan also illustrates a new path connection (**F7**) between the forest and meadow area.

F2 - A new sidewalk and entrance nodes are suggested along the west side of Christina Street North, as well as a safer pedestrian crossing by the intersection of Christina Street North and Cathcart Boulevard (**F3**).

F4 - The plan illustrates a new configuration of the main park entrance, including directional signage and a gateway element, to help park visitors and emergency vehicles find their destination.

F5 - An elevated tree canopy walk is suggested through the Forest Zone. This helps to protect the natural heritage features on the ground.



ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

F6 - A viewing tower is suggested as a way to view this forested area.

F8 - The new bicycle route is located in the Forest Zone, that extends the route through the Meadow identified as M10.

F9 - New parking pods and bicycle parking are suggested along the south side of Cathcart Boulevard. The parking pods should be constructed with permeable material to ensure rainwater infiltration.

F10 - An Environmental Management and Restoration Plan (see Section 5.3) should be prepared for the Forest Zone in particular. It will be important to remove invasive species in this area.



👍 89%

Implement a Forest Management Plan (89% thumbs up)



👍 62%

Tree canopy walk (62% thumbs up)



👍 64%

Viewing towers (64% thumbs up)

General Strategies & Recommendations



- Implement **Environmental Management and Restoration Plan** for the Carolinian Forest
- Establish an agreement with Friends of Canatara Park for management of invasive species
- Integrate permeable paving materials
- A preference for natural materials
- Ensure pedestrian trails are accessible

5.3 Overarching Strategies for Canatara Park

Environmental Management and Restoration

Canatara Park is heavily used by the public, which places stress on the natural heritage features and has led to ecosystem degradation. The most important natural heritage features, including the dune, wetland and oak forest ecosystems, should be managed to maintain their ecological integrity, while at the same time providing opportunities for passive recreation.

Environmental management and restoration opportunities within the study area include the following:

- Providing hardened tread surfaces in the dune and wetland vegetation communities through the use of boardwalks, railings, platforms, signage, etc. to keep users on the trail system and avoid trampling of sensitive vegetation communities and erosion;
- Dune planting and restoration of the Oak Savannah landscape;
- Limiting vehicle access to hardened surfaces and preventing off-road travel and parking;
- Removing redundant roads and parking lots and restoring these areas using native, non-invasive vegetation appropriate to the local conditions;

- Enhancing natural corridors throughout Canatara Park to link the beach, dune, wetland and oak forest ecosystems in a continuous manner;
- Managing storm water and flooding using low impact development measures;
- Work with “Friends of Canatara Park” and other stakeholder groups to assist with stewardship, management and restoration activities;
- Creation of an environmental stewardship program that educates the public about the sensitivity and importance of the vegetation communities through interpretative signage and displays in public open spaces and along existing/proposed walkways;
- Conduct a detailed resource inventory of Canatara Park to establish baseline conditions and gain a better understanding of ecological functions; and,
- Employ an adaptive management approach to restoration and enhancement initiatives.
- Actively manage the Butler’s Gartersnake habitat to maintain meadow conditions.



Interpretive signage to explain the need for dune restoration.



Example of dune restoration planting.



Example of fencing to prevent pedestrian access /allow restoration.



Dune restoration planting with volunteer groups.



Environmental Management Plan for Canatara Park

An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) should be prepared to ensure the long-term sustainability of Canatara Park. The EMP should include the following information:

- The results of detailed field investigations for vegetation and wildlife conducted during the appropriate season;
- Implementation of trail facilities including location, tread surface, boardwalks, observation platforms and fencing to control access;
- Recommendations for managing access to sensitive areas such as the dune ecosystem, oak savannah and wetland complex;
- Restoration/enhancement of rare vegetation communities and wildlife habitat in disturbed areas;
- Interpretive signage and themes related to the dune ecosystem, oak savannah and wetland complex; and,
- Treatment of surface water runoff to provide quality and quantity control.

In particular, detailed prescriptions should be prepared for managing the dune ecosystem including beach access points to focus use, hardened surfaces to reduce trampling and erosion, planting plans using native, non-invasive species that are typical of dune ecosystems, strategically placed fencing to prevent wandering into sensitive areas and adaptive management measures to maintain and restore ecological health to the dune ecosystem.

Management measures should also be identified to restore and enhance the oak savannah in the vicinity of the event space. These measures would include limiting access to the oak savannah by vehicles during events, re-establishing understorey and forest floor beneath the canopy to create community structure, removing invasive species and promoting regeneration of a functional ecosystem.

Reconnecting vegetation communities and wildlife habitat should be encouraged to enhance wildlife usage, to promote wildlife movements and to create a more cohesive natural heritage setting. The natural linkage among Lake Huron, Lake Chipican and *Tarzanland* should be restored and bolstered, where feasible, to strengthen this connection.

Gateways, Signage and Wayfinding

The map on the facing page locates suggested gateways, key locations for directional signage and recommended sites for wayfinding. There are two main gateways (large yellow circles on the facing page) proposed in the park: the Maud Hanna Common by the Children's Animal Farm off of Cathcart Boulevard, and the Event Plaza by the beach parking area. Three small gateways are illustrated at the edges of the park. A special commemoration to Maud Hanna is suggested for maximum exposure to park users for a broader understanding of her contribution to the park.

A wayfinding and signage plan for the park is recommended to establish the branding and to finalize the location for maps, directional signs, identifier signs and interpretive panels.

An overall park map is suggested at the gateways to the park to locate “you are here” and to broaden awareness of the context of the park and its facilities and amenities..

A broad interpretive strategy with Interpretive maps, QR codes, and signage is needed to coordinate telling the story of Canatara Park and its history, cultural and natural heritage.

With respect to information signs and accessibility, the following is recommended:

- Ensuring signs and wayfinding elements are placed close to adjacent accessible paths
- Ensuring AODA compliance on all signs; and,
- Including tactile elements on interpretive panels.



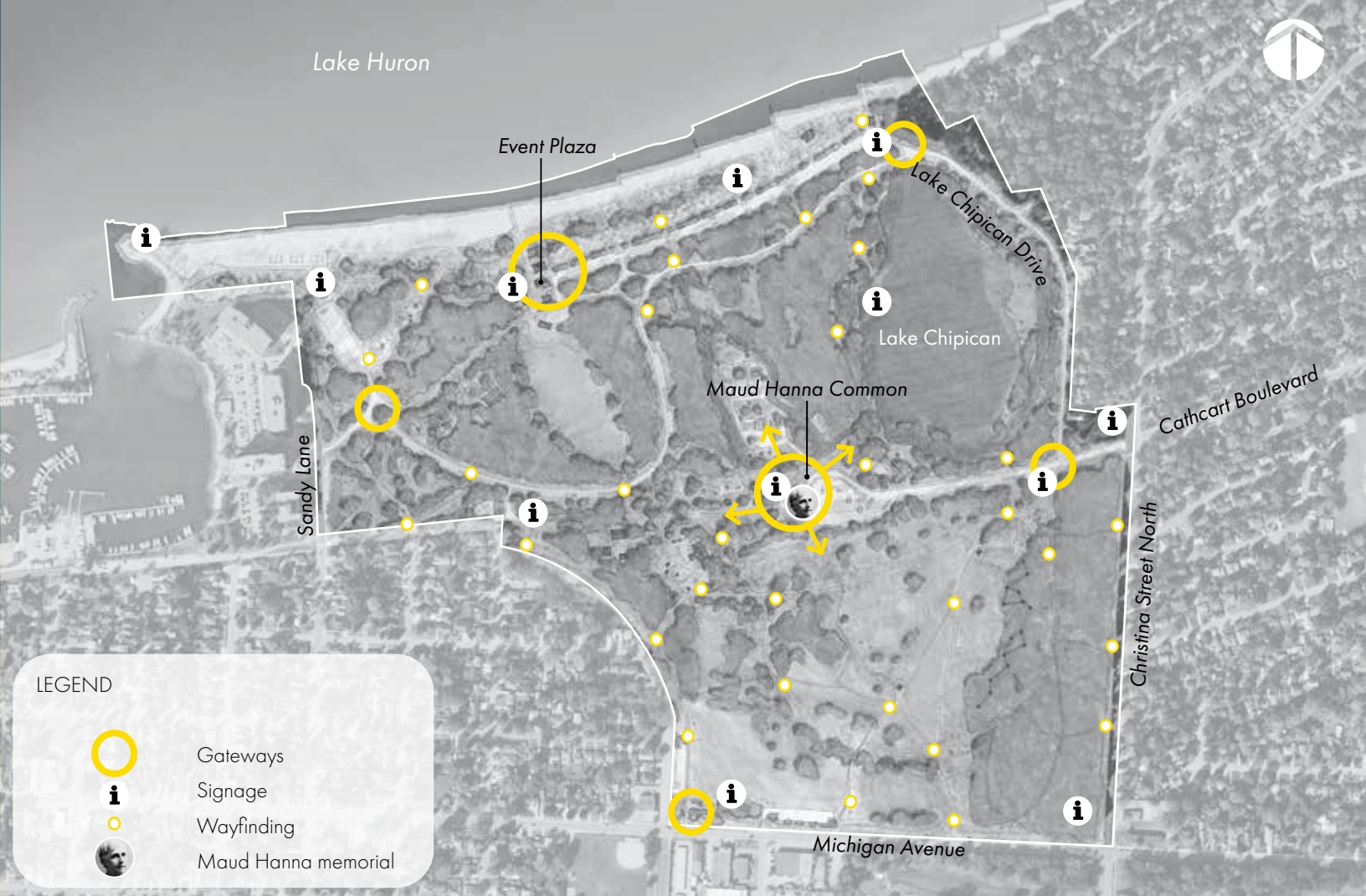
Park trails should be clearly marked up.



Example of natural heritage information sign.



Example of tactile natural heritage information sign.



Example of wayfinding signage.



A park map should be placed in proximity to the gateways.



A memorial for Maud Hanna is proposed.



Example of trail marking on tree.



Current park entrance by the Children's Animal Farm.



Visualization of Maud Hanna Common.

Pedestrians, Cycling and Accessibility

The map on the facing page locates the recommended cycling and walking routes through the park. The Final Concept Plan illustrates suggestions to make Canatara Park accessible to people with all abilities, and to enhance its current ability to offer lots of recreational opportunities for its visitors by foot, or by wheels:

- Separated pedestrian and cycling routes throughout the park;
- Accessible access to the beach in several spots;
- Safe pedestrian crossings at every park entrance;
- A route hierarchy within the natural areas of the park;
- A new cycling loop through the forest and meadow zones;
- A sidewalk to the west side of Christina Street North;
- A sidewalk to the east side of Sandy Lane;
- Bike parking in selected park areas;
- Making the beach more accessible to all by adding a pedestrian boardwalk;
- An accessible forest walk; and,
- An floating boardwalk in Lake Chipican.



Example of separated walking/cycling trail.



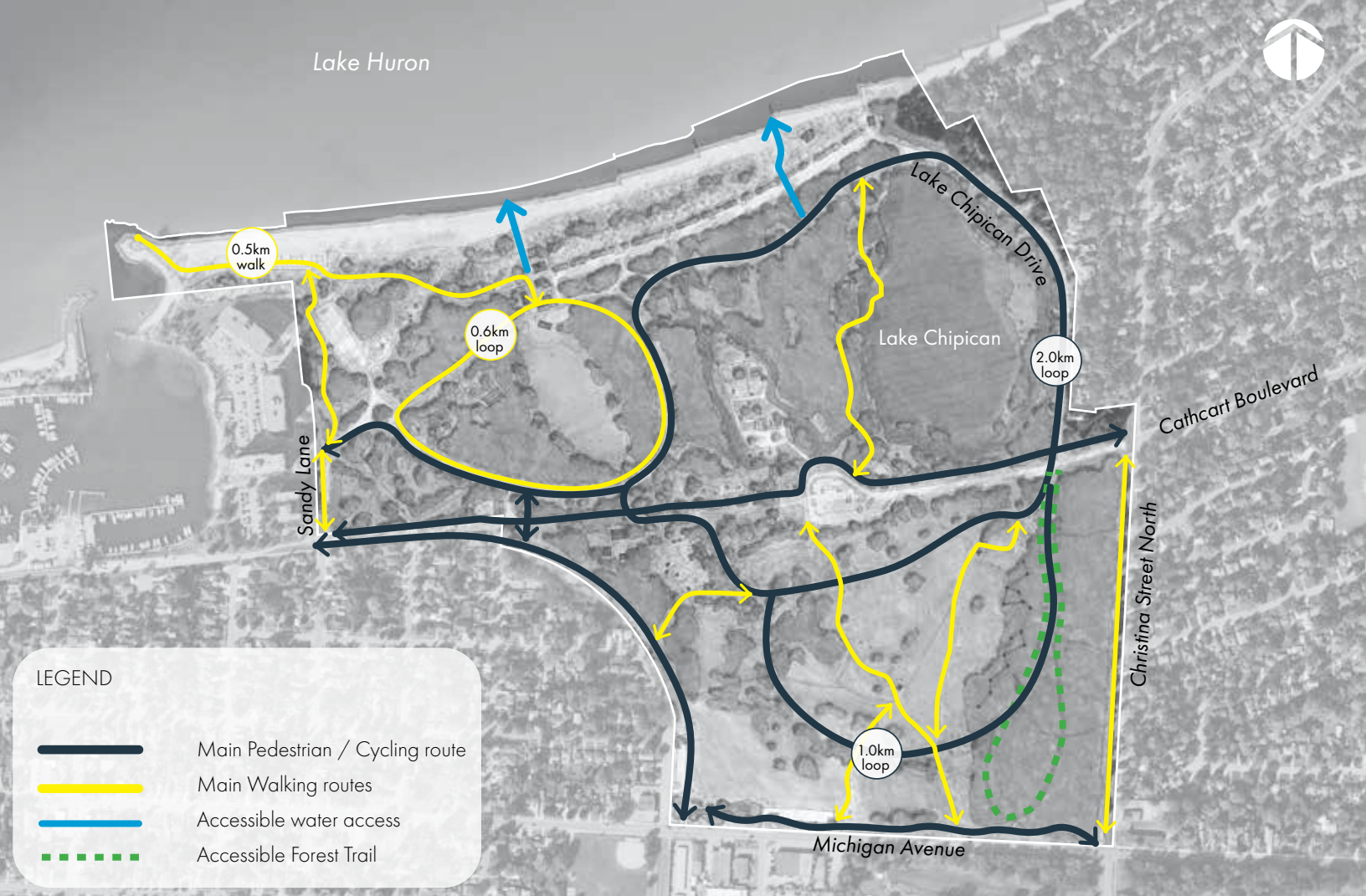
Example of floating boardwalk.



Example of accessible beach / water access with a seasonal ramp.



Example of a simple guiding hand rail for the accessible forest walk.



Example of beach boardwalk.

Vehicular Roads and Car Parking

Car parking is always an issue near the waterfront in every community. Every community develops a strategy that addresses their needs and balances a variety of interests. The variables are always the number and location of on and off street parking, the price for parking and the distance of parking to the destination.

The map on the facing page illustrates the main driving route through the park, parking areas and accessible parking.

There is in the order of 900 parking spaces provided in the park. The Final Concept Plan has removed some parking from the beach side lots in favour of restoring and protecting the sensitive dune landscape. In the order of 750 parking spaces will continue to be provided in lots and in pods along the park drive.

With respect to roads and parking, the Final Concept Plan illustrates:

- Removing some parking in favour of restoring and protecting the sensitive dune landscape;
- Parking will still be provided along the beach;
- Maintaining, and upgrading the parking lot off of Sandy Lane and defining parking ;
- Reconfiguring the parking at the Children's Animal Farm;
- Providing parking along one side of the park drive in clusters;
- Adding two small parking lots in the south end of the park;
- Accessible parking spots in proximity to important park infrastructure and amenities; and,
- Removing the existing green posts and replacing them with a wooden post and rope configuration in carefully selected areas.

It is recommended that the park's parking areas be constructed with permeable materials and with significant planted areas adjacent and between parking stalls. This will help to demonstrate a more sustainable approach to parking in this ecologically significant park.

This Master Plan recommends that out of town visitors pay for parking and that Sarnia residents be issued a yearly parking pass.



Example of car parking with integrated green infrastructure.



Example of marked parking spots on a permeable surface.



Example of wooden pole with rope as car deterrent for natural areas.



Example of vehicular road with integrated stormwater management.



Current beach parking lot.



Visualization of beach parking lot with dune landscape restoration.

Site Furnishings, Amenities and Play

It is recommended that a park standards or 'kit of parts' be prepared with a coordinated palette of site furnishings used to help brand Canatara Park. Park furnishings should include benches, picnic tables, waste/recycling receptacles and bike racks. It is also recommended that educational furnishing elements be considered, to teach Canatara Park visitors about the park's natural heritage value, its flora and fauna, its rare vegetation communities, and the endangered species in the park.

New park play and fitness areas should include accessible surfacing, and it is preferred that they include natural materials. Play and fitness equipment should include features for all ages and abilities. The play area by the Children's Animal Farm should be augmented or replaced with farm themed play structures, to enhance its current play value.



Resting areas should be provided in all park zones.



Examples of how educational furnishing elements can be integrated.

When developing the park furnishing standards, the following should be considered:

- Introducing a Canatara colour palette;
- Preference for more natural materials (less concrete and plastic - more stone, wood, metal);
- Ensuring AODA compliance;
- Including both permanent and seasonal picnic tables;
- Include amenities which help enhance the biodiversity of the park (bird houses, insect hotels, etc); and,
- Providing large recycling bins for big events.



Example of farm-themed play equipment.



Each play area should include accessible surfacing.



Example of outdoor fitness equipment.



Example of accessible picnic areas.



Large recycling bins for big events.



Example of how theme colour and branding can be integrated into park furnishings.



Example of bird houses.



Example of insect hotels.

Lighting

Wildlife respond in various ways to artificial light in their environment. Given its importance as a key location for migrating birds, Canatara Park deserves a lighting strategy that includes measures to reduce light pollution. Adopting responsible lighting practices and reducing unnecessary lighting at night, especially during the critical periods of spring and fall migration, are simple ways to help for example migrating birds, that are easily thrown off by artificial light.

The Master Plan recommends the following lighting strategy for the park:

- Ensure all new lighting fixtures are LED;
- Ensure all new park lighting is dark sky compliant;
- Install only shielded, down facing fixtures;
- Lower lighting levels at certain times of the night; and,
- Limit lighting to areas required for safety and security.



Example of dark sky compliant park path lighting.



Example of shielded, down facing accent lighting.

Park Buildings

Washrooms, change rooms, the new stage, and park pavilions should be designed as “jewels in the landscape”. Each should be well designed within the specific landscape context and building location, and each build structure should be accessible to people of all abilities.

Whether traditional or contemporary or a blend of characteristics, the structures and buildings should create a family of elements within the landscape.

The map on the facing page locates existing facilities to be maintained, existing facilities that are recommended for upgrades and new facilities

The Final Concept Plan illustrates:

- A new lifeguard building with washrooms on existing building footprint;
- A new Nature Education Centre;
- A new relocated Bandshell stage by the main lawn area;
- A new canoe/kayak storage facility by the east beach entrance;
- Two new park pavilions;
- A new washroom building by the new south park entrance
- A new multi-use storage shed for event props etc.;



Precedent for a new lifeguard building.

- Potential expansion of the Animal Farm
- Upgraded washrooms close to two main play areas, including family washrooms;
- Upgrade of the main park pavilion;
- Upgrade of the Terry Fox building;
- Upgrade of the Ted Leaver building;
- Open the Event Pavilion washrooms to the public;
- Removal of one washroom building by the main lawn area;
- Removal of the Thrasher building;
- Removal of the beach pavilion; and,
- Removal of two small park pavilions.



Example of wooden park pavilion.



Precedent for outdoor education centre / daycamp activities.



Examples of stage configurations with accessible ramp.

Examples of accessible washroom amenities.

Food Trucks and Seasonal Retail

During the course of sharing ideas for the park in public engagement sessions, there was interest in commercial, retail, food outlets and equipment rental being located in the park. This ranged from food trucks and pop-up retail at one end of the spectrum, to a permanent seasonal or year round restaurant at the other. There are several examples of waterfront parks with pop-up retail and or food trucks that can provide some insight and direction for Sarnia. No services are required for food trucks and together with pop-up commercial, can provide a pilot to test the market for more permanent food services or rentals.

The City recently amended its Business Licensing By-law with respect to food trucks. The By-law defines a food truck as any vehicle, whether motorized or manually propelled, from which refreshments and/or food is sold for public consumption. A food truck can include carts, wagons, trailers, and motor vehicles. A licence is required for all food trucks. The By-law stipulates that prior to obtaining a licence, a Licencee shall:

- Show proof of \$2,000,000.00 commercial general liability insurance coverage with respect to their Food;
- Obtain a letter of permission from the owner of the property where the Food Truck is to be situated; and,
- Where applicable, show proof of compliance with all propane safety requirements as determined by a certified inspector in accordance with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority;.

The Final Concept Plan illustrates a central location for food trucks. In developing the program for Canatara Park, the following could be considered:

- Provision of hydro and water;
- Surcharge in fees for non-Sarnia businesses;
- Identification of a selection committee and preparation of an evaluation framework to review applications; and,
- Development of procedures for set up and operations of the pop up and food truck .

It is recommended that the development of the food truck program be developed by the City's Parks and Recreation team.

Infrastructure for Events

The map on the facing page illustrates the parade route along the park drive, the main event areas, an event plaza, a new Bandshell stage and staging area, and running and walking loops.

The Final Concept Plan illustrates:

- Maintaining Canatara Park's two main event areas;
- A new Bandshell stage by the central lawn area;
- A staging area in proximity to the new Bandshell stage;
- An event plaza for food trucks, pop-ups, seasonal rentals, and seasonal retail;
- Maintaining the Canada Day parade route through the park;
- Maintaining multiple running/walking loops for the Terry Fox run and other similar events; and,
- An extended Choo Choo train loop

Canatara Park has a long history of being the premier location for large and small events year round. Understanding the significance of the wooded areas in the Park, it will be important to establish new protocols to manage parking and the impacts to lawns and meadows after high use events.



Example of a pop-up coffee shop.



Canatara Canada Day Parade.



Example of seasonal retail.



An extended loop for the Canatara Choo Choo train is proposed.



6.1 Project Phasing

Decisions on implementation of the projects outlined in the Master Plan will depend on a whole host of variables that are difficult to anticipate. It is most important to be flexible to respond to opportunities as they may arise, such as piggy backing on other capital projects or to respond to funding programs. Variables for staff and Council to consider when deciding the sequence for implementation include:

- Co-ordination of other capital works;
- Council priorities;
- Available funding through grants;
- Allocation in the City's capital budget;
- Desire to focus on one type of improvement per year for efficiencies, for example, washroom upgrades; and,
- Immediate need.

The table below, and on the following two pages itemizes the key components identified on the Final Concept Plan and suggests timing as:

- Short term (within the next 7 years)
- Medium term (8-20 years)
- Long term (20 years +)

The letters and numbers for each component refer to the Final Concept Plan at the beginning of Chapter 5.

	Short term	Medium term	Long term
BEACH ZONE			
B-1 Reduce existing paved parking area to allow dune landscape restoration			
B-2 Expanded dune landscape			
<i>B-3 Existing washroom facilities</i>			
B-4 New lifeguard station and washrooms on existing building footprint			
B-5 New boardwalk with pedestrian look-out spots			
B-6 New beach volleyball courts			
B-7 Accessible access to water			
B-8 New play area			
B-9 New fitness stations			
B-10 New canoe / kayak rentals and launch			
B-11 Upgraded parking lot			
B-12 New beach picnic area			

	Short term	Medium term	Long term
EVENT ZONE			
<i>E-1 Existing multi-purpose lawn area</i>			
E-2 Paths and picnicking along forested edge			
E-3 New covered stage / pavilion with power connection			
E-4 New plaza area for seasonal retail, seasonal rentals, pop-ups, food trucks etc.			
E-5 New staging area			
<i>E-6 Existing Terry Fox Building</i>			
<i>E-7 Existing playground (recently revitalized)</i>			
E-8 Upgraded park pavilion			
E-9 Upgraded existing washrooms			
E-10 Separated walking / cycling trails			
E-11 New parking pods along Lake Chipican Drive			
E-12 New pedestrian crossing			
<i>E-13 Existing parks staff facilities</i>			
E-14 New pedestrian connection to Waterfront trail			
E-15 New sidewalk connection and pedestrian crossing on Sandy Lane			
LAKE ZONE			
L-1 Traffic calming elements along Lake Chipican Drive			
L-2 Separated walking / cycling trail			
L-3 New look-out spots along Lake Chipican			
L-4 New floating boardwalk			
L-5 Expanded existing viewing platform			
<i>L-6 Existing Children's Animal Farm</i>			
L-7 Redesigned drop-off /parking area, including reconfiguration of service road and parking pods			
L-8 Visitor information (repurposed Ted Leaver building)			
<i>L-9 Existing log cabin</i>			
<i>L-10 Existing service building</i>			
<i>L-11 Existing Choo choo train building</i>			
L-12 New farm themed play area			
L-13 Extended Choo choo train loop			
L-14 Upgraded existing washrooms			
<i>L-15 Existing event pavilion</i>			
L-16 New park pavilion			
L-17 New storage shed			
L-18 Maud Hanna Common			

	Short term	Medium term	Long term
MEADOW ZONE			
M-1 New shade structure/welcome pavilion			
M-2 New washroom facilities			
M-3 New nature education centre /day camp			
M-4 Potential expansion for Children's Animal Farm Campus			
<i>M-5 Existing BMX tracks</i>			
M-6 New native educational gardens / butterfly gardens			
M-7 New viewing tower			
M-8 New park entrance with parking			
M-9 Create distinct native meadow landscapes			
M-10 New cycling loop			
M-11 Trail reconfigurations			
FOREST ZONE			
F-1 Trail reconfiguration: establish a hierarchy of trail widths and paving materials, including new accessible forest trail			
F-2 New sidewalk and pedestrian entrance nodes along west side of Christina Street North			
F-3 Safety enhancement measures for pedestrian crossing on Christina Street North			
F-4 New main entrance configuration			
F-5 New tree canopy walk			
F-6 New viewing tower			
F-7 New path connection between forest and meadow			
F-8 New cycling loop			
F-9 New parking pod			
F-10 Reforestation			

6.2 Project Key Actions, Partners and Capital Costs

The following table itemizes the key actions, partners, related projects and the order of magnitude construction costs for the key components of the Final Concept Plan.

There are many partners that will contribute to implementing the ideas explored in the concept plan. The City, Point Edward, the Conservation Authority, Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton, Rotary Club Sarnia, Sarnia & District Humane Society, and all of the stakeholder groups, will contribute to the success of the next steps in implementing the ideas coalesced Final Concept Plan.

No costs have been included associated with continued landfill rehabilitation.

The construction costs are high level for budget allocation purposes only. The costs are calculated based on unit costs gleaned from similar constructed public park projects. These costs will need to be refined based on subsequent detailed design, detailed site investigations, confirmation of City led works, and supply of materials and labour at the time of tendering any part of the construction.

	Key Actions/Notes	Partners	Related Projects	Order of Magnitude Cost
BEACH ZONE				
B-1 Reduce existing paved parking area to allow dune landscape restoration	Detailed design of new parking configuration Including removal of existing asphalt surface	City St. Clair Region Conservation Authority (SCRCA)	Dune restoration	Based on an estimate of 7,100 sq. m and asphalt surface \$425,000
B-2 Expanded dune landscape	Prepare the specifications for the seed/plant mix Call out to volunteers to plant the dune Grading Fencing	SCRCA City Community Groups Residents	Parking lot	Based on an estimate of 15,000 sq. m restoration area \$500,000
<i>B-3 Existing washroom facilities</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
B-4 New lifeguard station and washrooms on existing building footprint	Detailed design of new building Community engagement on design	City SCRCA	Dune restoration Park lot	\$1,000,000
B-5 New boardwalk with pedestrian look-out spots	Detailed design of boardwalk and look out spots Community engagement on design	City SCRCA	Dune restoration Park lot	Based on 3,500 sq. m \$1,750,000
<i>B-6 New location for beach volleyball courts</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
B-7 Accessible access to water	Beach mat or ramp configuration	City	Dune restoration	\$100,000 to \$350,000
B-8 New play area	Community engagement on play components Select manufacturer	City	Fitness stations	\$500,000

	Key Actions/Notes	Partners	Related Projects	Order of Magnitude Cost
B-9 New fitness stations / outdoor gym	Community engagement on fitness elements Select manufacturer	City	New play area	\$15,000 per fitness station / element
B-10 New canoe / kayak rentals and launch	Detailed design of building to accommodate rentals OR canoe/kayak storage rack and launch	City SCRCA		\$40,000
B-11 Upgraded parking lot	Detailed design	City SCRCA		Based on an estimate of 3,200 sq m, asphalt surface: \$350,000, gravel surface: \$140,000
B-12 New beach picnic area	Detailed design	City SCRCA		Boardwalk and furnishings \$250,000
Beach Zone: Removals				
Removal of Bandshell stage				\$25,000
Removal of Beach pavilion				\$25,000
Removal of Lifeguard building				\$50,000
BEACH ZONE SUBTOTAL				\$4,820,000 - \$5,340,000

EVENT ZONE				
<i>E-1 Existing multi-purpose lawn area</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
E-2 Paths and picnicking along forested edge	Fencing to protect forested areas	City		\$45,000
E-3 New covered stage / pavilion with power connection and paved area around the stage	Confirm location Detailed design Community engagement	City Stakeholder groups	Design of the area for food trucks	\$500,000 Depends on decisions re: power, storage required
E-4 New plaza area for seasonal retail, seasonal rentals, pop-ups, food trucks etc.	Detailed design Community engagement	City Food truck operators Stakeholder groups	Design of the covered stage	\$400,000 based on an estimate of 2,100 sq. m of paved surface
E-5 New staging area	Cost included in E-3	City Stakeholder groups	Design of the covered stage	
<i>E-6 Existing Terry Fox Building</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
<i>E-7 Existing playground (recently revitalized)</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
E-8 Upgraded park pavilion		City		\$150,000
E-9 Upgraded existing washrooms	Detailed design to include a family washroom	City Accessibility Committee		\$200,000 based on High Level Building Condition Assessment Survey (2018) + 30%

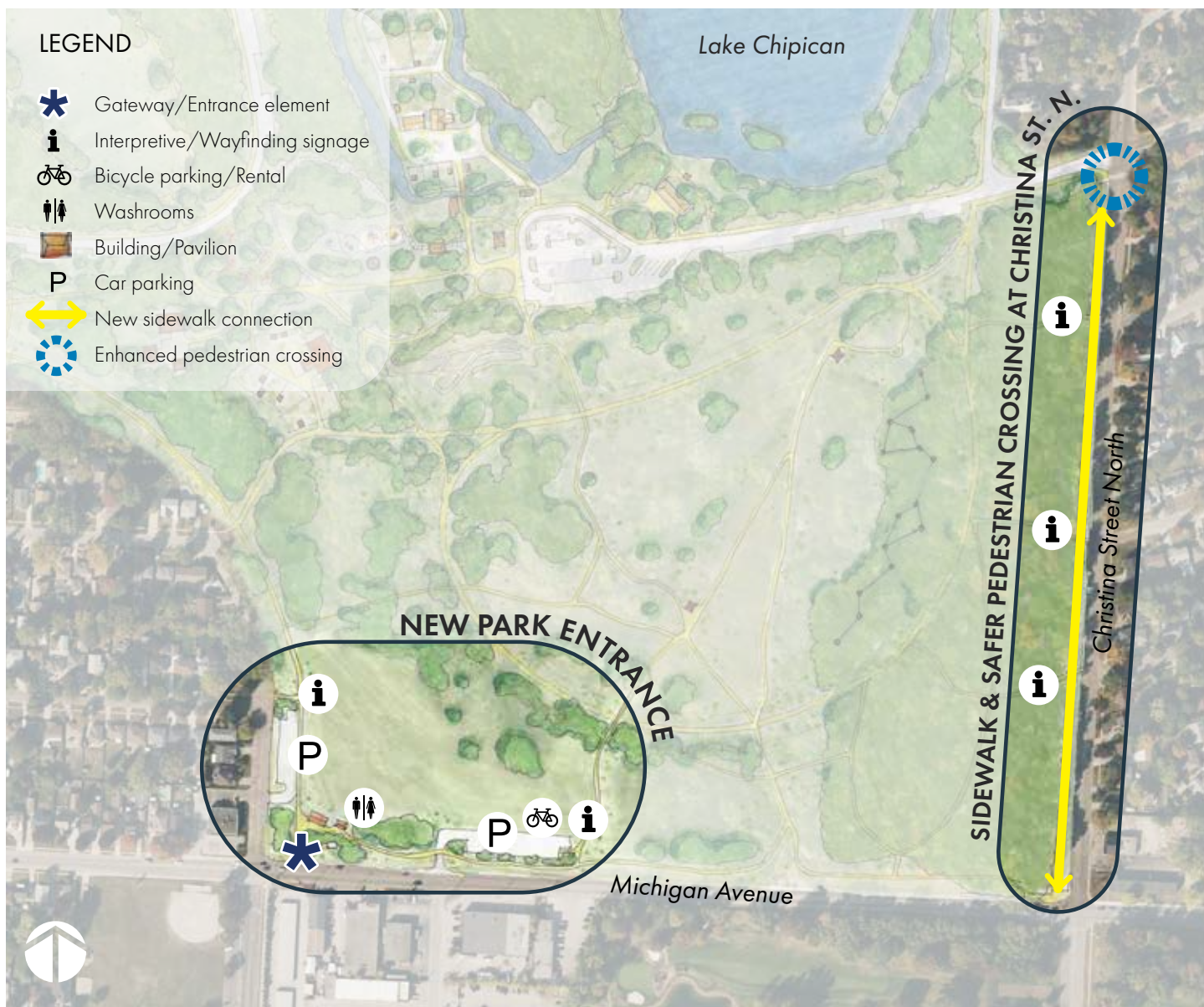
	Key Actions/Notes	Partners	Related Projects	Order of Magnitude Cost
E-10 Separated walking / cycling trails	Detailed design	City Accessibility Committee	Parking pods along Lake Chipican Drive	Based on an estimate of 4,000 sq. m \$400,000
E-11 New parking pods along Lake Chipican Drive		City	Walking / cycling trails	Asphalt surface: \$200,000, granular surface: \$90,000
E-12 New pedestrian crossing	Cost included in E-10	City	Walking / cycling trails	
<i>E-13 Existing parks staff facilities</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
E-14 New pedestrian connection to Waterfront trail	Cost included in E-10	City	Walking / cycling trails	
E-15 New sidewalk connection and pedestrian crossing on Sandy Lane	Detailed design	City	Walking / cycling trails	Based on an estimate of 140 sq. m concrete surface \$30,000
Event Zone: Removals				
Removal of existing washroom in northeast corner of central lawn				\$50,000
EVENT ZONE SUBTOTAL				\$1,865,000 - \$1,975,000

LAKE ZONE				
L-1 Traffic calming elements along Lake Chipican Drive	Speed bumps, bump outs, or road ripples	City	Walking / cycling trails	\$50,000
L-2 Separated walking / cycling trails	Detailed design	City Accessibility Committee	Traffic calming elements along Lake Chipican Drive	Based on an estimate of 3,000 sq. m \$300,000
L-3 New look-out spots along Lake Chipican	Detailed design	City SCRCA	Walking / cycling trails Floating boardwalk	Based on an assumption of 3 look out spots \$60,000
L-4 New floating boardwalk	Detailed design	City SCRCA Accessibility Committee	Look-out spots	Based on an estimate of 450 sq m \$300,000
L-5 Expanded existing viewing platform	Upgrade and widen platform Existing condition assessment	City		\$40,000
<i>L-6 Existing Children's Animal Farm</i>	<i>No cost included</i>			
L-7 Redesigned drop-off / parking area, including reconfiguration of service road and parking pods	No cost included for new design at this time, given that the City has recently paved the area. Enhancement with planted pockets in existing configuration is recommended	City Accessibility Committee	Walking / cycling trails	\$50,000
L-8 Visitor information (upgraded and re-purposed existing Ted Leaver building)	Detailed design Existing building condition assessment	City Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton	Redesigned drop-off / parking area	\$150,000

	Key Actions/Notes	Partners	Related Projects	Order of Magnitude Cost
L-9 Existing Log Cabin	No cost included			
L-10 Existing service building	No cost included			
L-11 Existing Choo choo train building	No cost included			
L-12 New farm themed play area	Community engagement on play components Select manufacturer	City Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton	Upgraded existing washrooms	\$500,000
L-13 Extended Choo choo train loop	Community engagement	City Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton		Based on a length of 400 m \$50,000
L-14 Upgraded existing washrooms	Detailed design to include a family washroom	City Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton Accessibility Committee	New farm themed play area	\$250,000 based on High Level Building Condition Assessment Survey (2018) + 30%
L-15 Existing event pavilion	No cost included			
L-16 New park pavilion	Detailed design	City		\$80,000
L-17 New storage shed		City Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton		\$50,000
L-18 Maud Hanna Common	Detailed design Community engagement Public art competition	City Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton	Redesigned drop-off /parking area	\$250,000
Lake Zone: Removals				
Removal of Thrasher building				\$50,000
Removal of 2 small park pavilions				\$25,000
LAKE ZONE SUBTOTAL				\$2,205,000

MISCELLANEOUS				
Natural heritage protection (fencing and signage)	Allowance			\$45,000
Benches (assume every 30-100 m)	Allowance			\$125,000
Bike parking areas (10)	Allowance			\$60,000
Lighting (assume every 20-60 m)	Allowance			\$500,000
Waste / recycling receptacles	Allowance			\$50,000
Signage and wayfinding	Allowance			\$100,000
Edge treatment along vehicular roads	Allowance			\$100,000
MISCELLANEOUS SUBTOTAL				\$980,000

TOTAL ORDER OF MAGNITUDE CAPITAL COSTS			\$10,745,000 - \$11,375,000
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Capital costs have not been itemized for the Meadow and Forest Zones as these are anticipated to be longer term initiatives. However, consideration should be given to providing a new park entrance with two small parking areas and a washroom building in the south east corner off of Michigan Avenue as illustrated on the Final Concept Plan. This entrance will provide park users with amenities in this area of the park. Costs would be in the order of \$700,000.

In addition, a sidewalk along the west side of Christina Street would greatly enhance pedestrian access along a safe route on the park edge. Costs for a new sidewalk would be in the order of \$175,000. A new traffic signal would also create a safer pedestrian crossing.

6.3 An Approach to Operating Costs

Current Costs for the Operation of Canatara Park

The 2023 expenditure on total parks and recreation services in Sarnia as reported by the City in the Financial Information Return (the most recent data available) was:

	Staffing	Materials	Contracted Services	Rents and Financial Expenses	TOTAL
Parks	\$3,616,340	\$2,512,152	\$307,672	\$468,301	\$6,904,465
Recreation Programs	\$397,219	\$309,788	\$9,753	\$0	\$716,760
Recreation Facilities	\$1,691,695	\$2,637,919	\$432,206	\$0	\$4,761,820
Total Parks and Recreation Expenditures	\$5,705,254	\$5,459,859	\$749,631	\$468,301	\$12,383,045

Costs attributable to the operation of Canatara Park in 2023 (supplied by the City) were:

- Utilities: \$100,000
- Maintenance: \$350,000
- Materials: \$50,000
- Children's Animal Farm Contract: \$175,000
- Staffing: \$209,000

Total: \$884,000

Accordingly, Canatara Park uses approximately **7% of the total parks and recreation budget** for the City.

Future Operating Costs of Canatara Park

The City has a full time staff person dedicated to the daily operation of the Park whose work is augmented with seasonal and other park staff. Most municipalities struggle with management of their waterfront parks because of a lack of staffing. Sarnia has demonstrated great foresight in allocating dedicated to such an important park. Three core elements are considered in estimating future operating costs:

1. **Additional Staffing Costs:** Some initiatives will incur additional costs of staff time to manage, supervise, and maintain the facilities and programs. While many of the specific elements of the Preferred Concept Plan will require no additional staff time over what the City already allocates for maintenance and operation of the park, others facilities that may be implemented in the long term such as the new nature education centre and new native educational gardens/butterfly gardens will require additional staffing.

A broad outline of the staffing requirements is:

- » **None:** no additional staff requirements, over the current allocation to the Park, are anticipated.
- » **Minor:** only very minor additional staffing needs will be incurred (likely in the form of maintenance) – on average it is estimated that only 1 or 2 hours per week would be required, and even then only seasonally – so an estimate of 1 hour per week over the course of the year is assumed – at an assumed rate of \$40 per hour, this equates to approximately \$2,000 per initiative per year.

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- » **Moderate:** these are initiatives within the Preferred Concept Plan that may require somewhat more time and effort to manage, maintain and supervise – it is estimated that 4 hours per week on average would be required translating to approximately \$8,000 per initiative per year.
- » **Major:** major initiatives will require significantly more staff time on the part of the City; each major initiative will need to be considered separately in terms of its overall additional staff requirement. For the purpose of this preliminary high-level estimate, an average staffing expense of \$25,000 is assumed for each major initiative

2. **Direct Operating Costs:** Some of the initiatives may require additional funds for operation, not currently expended by the City. For example, the new nature education centre will incur costs for its operation. Again, these are judged to range from 'none' to 'major', with the following very high-level and order-of-magnitude cost estimates:

- » **None:** no additional operating costs are anticipated.
- » **Minor:** only very minor additional operating cost may be incurred: \$1,000 per year or less.
- » **Moderate:** these are initiatives that may require somewhat more operating costs requirement: an average estimate of \$10,000 per year is assumed.
- » **Major:** major initiatives will require significantly more staff time; each major initiative will need to be ultimately considered separately in terms of its overall operating cost requirement. For the purpose of this preliminary high-level estimate, an annual average cost of \$25,000 is assumed.

- 3. Replacement Costs:** A responsible approach to the maintenance of public facilities is to recognize that they ultimately will wear out with use and exposure to the elements, and that they will need to be replaced. An amount should be set aside each year for this purpose. For example, assuming a 25-year life expectancy for any given facility, in the order of 4% of the capital cost of the asset should be set aside each year for eventual replacement – that way, at the end of the 25 years, an amount equal to 100% of the original capital cost would have built up. Assuming that the investment interest earned on the amount set aside for this purpose is roughly equal to the increase in construction costs, the fund in place at the end of the 25 years, when the facility has come to the end of its useful life, should be enough to replace the asset.

This is the theory, but it is rarely followed in practice, especially in the early years of operation of a 'new' facility, as there is no immediate need seen for refurbishment or replacement. (This is why deferred maintenance costs are so often an issue with parks and recreation facilities.) Accordingly, while we have identified replacement costs in our overall assessment of operating costs, we do not consider it in terms of a direct comparison with current operating expenditures.

In our assessment of replacement costs, we used the above metric (4% of capital costs) as an estimate of the annual replacement cost for each element of the plan. (Excluded from estimates of replacement costs were the landscaping costs - as landscaped areas are assumed to be self-sustaining - and demolition costs.) While the actual amount of the annual replacement allowance will differ depending upon the exact nature of the capital asset under consideration, at this high level of analysis the 4% average is deemed reasonable.

Estimated Operating Costs

	Additional Staffing Time Requirement	Direct Operating Costs	Annual Replacement Cost Allowance (4%)
BEACH ZONE			
B-1 Reduce existing paved parking area to allow dune landscape restoration	None	None	\$17,000
B-2 Expanded dune landscape	None	Minor	\$0
<i>B-3 Existing washroom facilities</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
B-4 New lifeguard station and washrooms on existing building footprint	None	None	\$40,000
B-5 New boardwalk with pedestrian look-out spots	Minor	Moderate	\$70,000
B-6 New location for beach volleyball courts	Minor	Moderate	\$0
B-7 Accessible access to water	None	None	\$4,000
B-8 New play area	Moderate	Moderate	\$20,000
B-9 New fitness stations / outdoor gym	None	Moderate	\$600
B-10 New canoe / kayak rentals and launch	Major	Moderate	\$1,600
B-11 Upgraded parking lot	Minor	None	\$5,600
B-12 New beach picnic area	Minor	Moderate	\$10,000
EVENT ZONE			
<i>E-1 Existing multi-purpose lawn area</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
E-2 Paths and picnicking along forested edge	None	None	\$1,800
E-3 New covered stage / pavilion with power connection and paved area around the stage	Moderate	Moderate	\$20,000
E-4 New plaza area for seasonal retail, seasonal rentals, pop-ups, food trucks etc.	Moderate	Moderate	\$16,000
E-5 New staging area (included in E-3)	Minor	Moderate	\$0
<i>E-6 Existing Terry Fox Building</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
<i>E-7 Existing playground (recently revitalized)</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
E-8 Upgraded park pavilion	Minor	None	\$6,000
E-9 Upgraded existing washrooms	Minor	None	\$8,000
E-10 Separated walking / cycling trails	Minor	None	\$16,000
E-11 New parking pods along Lake Chipican Drive	Minor	None	\$3,600
E-12 New pedestrian crossing (included in E-10)	None	None	\$0
<i>E-13 Existing parks staff facilities</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
E-14 New pedestrian connection to Waterfront trail (included in E-10)	None	None	\$0
E-15 New sidewalk connection and pedestrian crossing on Sandy Lane	None	None	\$1,200
LAKE ZONE			
L-1 Traffic calming elements along Lake Chipican Drive	None	None	\$2,000
L-2 Separated walking / cycling trails	None	None	\$12,000
L-3 New look-out spots along Lake Chipican	Minor	Minor	\$2,400
L-4 New floating boardwalk	Moderate	Minor	\$12,000
L-5 Expanded existing viewing platform	Minor	Minor	\$1,600
<i>L-6 Existing Children's Animal Farm</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-

	Additional Staffing Time Requirement	Direct Operating Costs	Annual Replacement Cost Allowance (4%)
L-7 Redesigned drop-off /parking area (enhancement with planted pockets)	None	None	\$2,000
L-8 Visitor information (upgraded and re-purposed existing Ted Leaver building)	Minor	Minor	\$6,000
<i>L-9 Existing Log Cabin</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
<i>L-10 Existing service building</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
<i>L-11 Existing Choo Choo train building</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
L-12 New farm themed play area	None	None	\$20,000
L-13 Extended Choo Choo train loop	None	None	\$2,000
L-14 Upgraded existing washrooms	None	None	\$10,000
<i>L-15 Existing event pavilion</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
L-16 New park pavilion	Moderate	Moderate	\$3,200
L-17 New storage shed	Moderate	Moderate	\$2,000
L-18 Maud Hanna Common	Moderate	Moderate	\$10,000
MEADOW ZONE			
M-1 New shade structure/welcome pavilion	Moderate	Minor	\$3,200
M-2 New washroom facilities	Moderate	Minor	\$10,000
M-3 New Nature Education Centre /day camp	Major *	Major *	\$90,000
M-4 Potential expansion for Children's Animal Farm Campus	Major	Major	\$139,600
<i>M-5 Existing BMX tracks</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	-
M-6 New native educational gardens / butterfly gardens	Major	Major	\$0
M-7 New viewing tower	Minor	Major	\$4,000
M-8 New park entrance with parking	None	Moderate	\$14,000
M-9 Create distinct native meadow landscapes	Minor	Minor	\$0
M-10 New cycling loop	None	Minor	\$6,800
M-11 Trail reconfigurations	None	Minor	\$14,400
FOREST ZONE			
F-1 Trail reconfiguration: establish a hierarchy of trail widths and paving materials, including new accessible forest trail	Minor	Minor	\$0
F-2 New sidewalk and pedestrian entrance nodes along west side of Christina St. N.	None	Minor	\$6,200
F-3 Safety enhancement measures for pedestrian crossing on Christina St. N.	None	Minor	\$800
F-4 New main entrance configuration	None	Minor	\$11,300
F-5 New tree canopy walk	Moderate *	Minor	\$10,000
F-6 New viewing tower	None	Minor	\$4,000
F-7 New path connection between forest and meadow	None	Minor	\$0
F-8 New cycling loop	None	Minor	\$6,800
F-9 New parking pod	None	Minor	\$1,600
F-10 Reforestation	None	None	\$0

* Could be considered with partners to assist with costs, operations and management.

	Additional Staffing Time Requirement	Direct Operating Costs	Annual Replacement Cost Allowance (4%)
MISCELLANEOUS			
Natural heritage protection (fencing and signage)	Minor	Minor	\$1,800
Benches	Minor	Minor	\$5,000
Bike parking areas	Minor	Minor	\$2,400
Lighting	Minor	Minor	\$20,000
Waste / recycling containers	Minor	Minor	\$2,000
Signage and wayfinding elements	Minor	Minor	\$4,000
Edge treatment along vehicular roads	Minor	Minor	\$4,000
TOTAL ADDITIONAL OPERATING COSTS FOR CANATARA PARK	\$182,000	\$256,000	\$688,500

Comparison

The table below compares the current operating costs for Canatara Park with the expected future operating costs, as a result of the Canatara Master Plan implementation.

Without capital replacement costs, this represents approximately a 38% budget increase in the operating cost of the park at the end of the development period.

As indicated, in the order of \$700K should also (in theory) be set aside at the end of the development period to pay for the eventual replacement of these assets. Note that this does not imply \$700K at the start of the period; the capital replacement fund would be built up gradually as the assets comprising the plan come on-stream.

	Current (2023) Direct Operating Costs (in \$ 2023)	Future Operating Costs + 20 years (in \$ 2023, without capital replacement - includes 2023 base costs)	Future Operating Costs + 20 years (incl. Nature Education Centre and expansion of Children's Animal Farm) (in \$ 2023, without capital replacement - includes 2023 base costs)
Staffing	\$209,000	\$340,000	\$390,000
All Other Direct Operating Costs (Maintenance, Materials, Children's Animal Farm Contract)	\$675,000	\$880,000	\$930,000
Total	\$884,000	\$1,220,000	\$1,320,000

Note: Including a Nature Education Centre and an expansion of the Children's Animal Farm would represent an operating cost budget increase of approximately 50%.

2023 Revenues Generated by Canatara Park

The City does not keep a separate record of revenues generated by Canatara Park (as the Park does not constitute a separate line item in the municipal budget). However, an estimate can be made by examining usage statistics in terms of the dates various areas of the park are rented, and the hourly or daily rental rates charged.

Note that non-profit organizations and the City's own use is charged at half the commercial rates.

The rental amounts generated by various areas in the park in 2023 are shown below.

Area of Canatara Park	Hourly Rental Rate	Total Number of Days Used in 2023	Total Non-Profit Rental Days	Total Commercial Rental Days	Total Amount Generated (rounded)	Average Amount Generated per Rental-Day
Area 1 Pavilion	\$8.75	38	9	29	\$2,924	\$76.95
Area 2 Picnic Space	\$5.00	10	4	6	\$410	\$41.00
Area 3 Picnic Space	\$5.00	6	3	3	\$305	\$50.83
Area 4 Picnic Space	\$5.00	7	2	5	\$350	\$50.00
Bandshell Stage	\$464 (per day)	16	15	1	\$3,944	\$246.50
Beach Pavilion	\$8.75	32	8	24	\$2,626	\$82.06
TOTAL		109	41	68	\$10,559	\$96.87

When compared to the operating cost of the park (\$884,000) the total revenue generated appears to be very small (about 1.2%). There may be other sources of revenue not considered, such as food truck leases. Overall, however, the total revenues accruing to the City from the direct operation of the park are still very small as a percentage of overall operating costs.

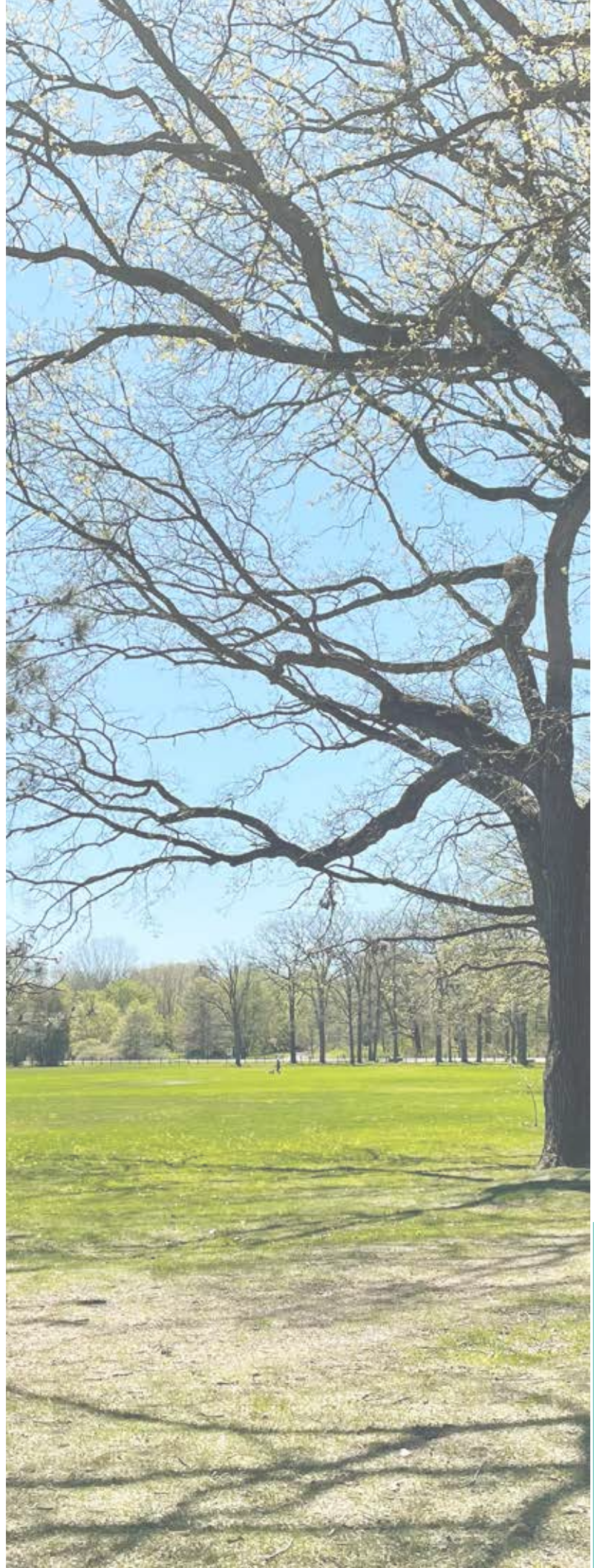
There may be some opportunity to increase rental rates with park improvements, but it will still likely be only a small fraction of overall operating costs.

Role of Stakeholders in Canatara Park

The City has a long standing arrangement with the Seaway Kiwanis Club to help fund, operate and manage the Children's Animal Farm and Choo Choo Train. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that frames the partnership should be updated and renewed annually. The MOU should clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of both the City and the Kiwanis Club in funding, the oversight through regular meetings among the City, Seaway Kiwanis and Sarnia District Humane Society, the role of the City in approval of improvements and maintenance, and expectations regarding operating cost and revenue sharing.

Canatara Park is not a separate line item in the City's budget, but to facilitate future planning and operation, it should be. The park is a large and complex asset to warrant explicit examination of costs and revenues generated in its operation. Such accounting will better enable all to understand the overall operation of the park and how their involvement affects the entire operation.

Many large municipal parks have Friends' organizations that perform various functions from fundraising to volunteer assistance to having an advisory and advocacy function. The Friends of Canatara Park and other stakeholder groups could play a more active role in the on-going operation and management of Canatara Park, especially as it may relate to an Environmental Management Plan. MOUs could also be developed to guide the work of stakeholder groups.



Canatara Park

Master Plan

