



Underpass Park - Fact Sheet

LOCATION

Under and around the Eastern Avenue and Richmond/Adelaide overpasses, between Cherry Street and Bayview Avenue. The park's southern edge is Old Eastern Avenue and the planned River Square. It will be bounded on the north side by the new east/west 'woonerf' - or pedestrian-oriented street - that is planned for the area.

Two north/south streets will traverse the park, St. Lawrence Street and an extended River Street which will connect to Bayview Avenue just past River Square.

PARK SIZE & PHASING

Total: 1.05 hectares (2.7 acres), comprised of three building blocks

Phase I - Blocks 19 & 20, east of St. Lawrence St. – currently under construction

Total: 0.6613 hectares (1.63 acres)

- Block 19 Area – 0.3240 hectare (0.8 acres)
- Block 20 Area – 0.3373 hectare (0.83 acres)

Phase II - Block 18, west of St. Lawrence St. – to be built next

Block 18 Area – 0.4383 hectares (1.1 acres)

PARK DESCRIPTION

Underpass Park will be the most extensive park to be built under an overpass in Canada, and the first ever in Toronto. Its size and scope will make it a unique public space nationwide. Located under and around the Eastern Avenue and Richmond/Adelaide overpasses, this new park will transform a derelict and underused space into a bright, new, urban neighbourhood amenity, and key pedestrian connection and passageway.

Underpass Park offers an important opportunity to remove barriers within the West Don Lands. The imposing concrete structure of the overpasses currently acts as a barrier between the north and south parts of the West Don Lands community. Underpass Park innovatively re-engineers the space under the overpasses to create an inviting public space that connects the two areas of the West Don Lands.

The redeveloped area will become available for recreational facilities, community gardens, public art and gathering places, creating recreational opportunities for children, youth, adults and seniors. Residents of the new housing developments in the north eastern

section of the community will also benefit by having a safe and beautiful way to connect with the rest of the neighbourhood.

The park's design is influenced by the massive overpass structures. These structures create opportunities for activities and planting in the open air and covered areas as well as in the unusual spaces resulting from large concrete beams and columns. One of the park's defining design features will be a series of long, narrow ribbon-like strips made from a palette of concrete and ipe wood. These ribbons, located throughout both the covered and uncovered areas of the park, will rise from the ground creating both directional cues for pedestrians as well as informal park benches and gathering spaces. Key portions of the ribbons will be illuminated by LED lights. The layout of these ribbons is influenced by both the physical infrastructure of the overpasses as well as the natural qualities of the nearby Don River.

About half of the park (0.6 hectares) is covered by the overpasses. The covered area will be defined by recreational space such as ball hockey and basketball courts, recreation facilities and playful climbing structures for all ages. It will also include flexible community space that can be used for markets, festivals and moveable cafés.

The remainder of the park (0.4 hectares) will be uncovered. In these areas, dense groves of trees, grass and other plantings will add much needed greenspace and create a natural and iconic gateway to the West Don Lands. Community gardens also make up a significant part of the southwestern edge of the park providing additional opportunities for residents to interact with each other and nature.

The park has been designed for community members of all ages and is fully accessible, with flush paving conditions for access through ribbon walls and to play equipment.

Lighting is a key feature of the park's design and will ensure the area is safe and inviting at all times of day. The park is lit by a combination of LED uplighting on the columns, shielded in-ground and in-wall lights, and illuminated concrete ribbons at the seating areas which create a variety of different illuminating effects. The more than 50 overpass columns will be colourfully lit using diffuse LED spotlights.

Public art will also play a critical role in experiencing Underpass Park. When planning the overarching public art strategy for the West Don Lands, Underpass Park was identified as a high priority public art opportunity. In late 2009, Waterfront Toronto launched its first ever artist competition to select artwork for the park. The selected artist, Paul Raff of Paul Raff Studio in Toronto, is working on an installation that will use reflectivity to draw people into and through the space. The concept is to engage the public through the playful use of light and reflection to accentuate the positive qualities of the space in an interesting and sculptural way.

PARK FEATURES

Features throughout entire park:

- **Materials**
 - Hardscape – saw cut concrete in a linear pattern; historical granite cobblestones excavated from the area will be inlayed within the community garden area.
- **Flexible Event/Community Space**
 - Flexible space for festivals, performances, markets or small community events and gatherings.
- **Seating**
 - Concrete ribbon walls rising out of the ground topped with IPE wood to provide interesting and comfortable seating

Phase I – Blocks 19 & 20:

- **Location:** east of St. Lawrence Street
- **Athletic Courts and Practice Space**
 - Location: East of River Street
 - 2 Basketball Half-Courts:
 - Size: total court size 23 x 14 metres shared between two half-courts.
 - Materials: Rubber sport court surfacing made from recycled materials on crushed rolled aggregate will be used for the ground plane. A seating edge is included around the entire court.
 - Hopscotch and 4-square
 - Material: Asphalt
- **Children’s Play and Climbing Structures**
 - Location: There is one large grouping of play equipment in the centre of the park between St. Lawrence and River Streets
 - Size: Approximately 700m²(total for all play areas)
 - Materials: Recycled rubber surfacing on crushed aggregate will be used for the ground plane. Play equipment and climbing structures are made from varying materials including stainless steel, aluminum, plastic, and rubber.

Phase II – Block 18:

- **Location:** west of St. Lawrence Street
- **Trees**
 - Kentucky Coffee and Black Locust, which are salt tolerant and have a leaf pattern that limits shading.
 - Number of trees: 54 total
- **Community Garden**
 - Six garden plots along the southern edge of the park west of St. Lawrence Street, in raised beds with concrete curbing and concrete ribbon walls with wood tops to provide seating along garden edges.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Underpass Park is part of Waterfront Toronto’s Stage 1 Gold certification under the LEED for Neighbourhood Development (ND) pilot program. Some of the sustainability best practices incorporated into the park’s design include energy efficient LED lighting; drought, salt and shade tolerant planting for minimal maintenance and irrigation; recycled material on play surfaces, and the reuse of historical granite cobbles excavated within the area.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation was an important part of the planning process for Underpass Park. Public need for recreation space in the area, including recreation facilities for seniors, helped shape the programming for the park. Stakeholders were also instrumental in the inclusion of community gardens in the park’s design.

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg of Vancouver / The Planning Partnership of Toronto

PUBLIC ART

Paul Raff of Paul Raff Studio of Toronto, the artist selected through our first ever artist competition, is an award-winning architect and artist.

PARK OPERATIONS

The City of Toronto Parks Department.

PHASE I BUDGET

\$4,692,536

Federal funding	\$4,652,144
Provincial funding	<u>\$40,392</u>
Total Funding	\$4,692,536