



Corktown Common Fact Sheet

LOCATION

- West Don Lands: East of Bayview Avenue, South of King Street to the rail corridor, West of GO/CN Rail lines and the Don River

PARK SIZE

- Approximately 7.3 hectares (18 acres)

PARK FEATURES

The design of Corktown Common (formerly Don River Park) is inspired by its proximity to the Don River, its unique ecological history, its location on the area's flood protection landform and its proximity to the city.

The topography organizes the park both physically and programmatically. The river side of the park will be an extensive 3.2 hectare (7.9 acre) urban prairie purposely designed to meet regulations that restrict active recreation and plantings on the eastern slope -- or the 'wet side' of the park -- under flooding conditions. The urban prairie will include an upland meadow and a lowland wet meadow at the base of the landform that will add ecological diversity. The wet meadow will also be a crucial part of a park-wide ecological stormwater management system that will provide water for the park's onsite irrigation needs. Walking trails, multi-use bike paths, a boardwalk and off-leash dog area will allow visitors to explore this unique urban landscape.

The 3.6 hectare (8.9 acre) western city side of the park -- the dry side of the flood protection landform -- is defined by a dynamic, unfolding topography that creates varied, flexible spaces for a diverse range of passive and active pursuits. A series of open lawns provide ample space for both informal and organized sports, and create a variety of flexible spaces where an assortment of activities can be enjoyed. The spaces allow visitors to immerse themselves in nature or enjoy a range of other activities, from soccer and frisbee to bird watching, picnicking, enjoying the splash pad and playgrounds, or tobogganing in the winter.

A spacious playground occupies one of the park's central hilltops. The playground offers diverse play experiences for children of all ages and balances natural features, such as rock outcrops and woodlands, with conventional play equipment such as slides, swings, seesaws, and water play. This elevated area also affords visitors spectacular views of Toronto's skyline and distant views to the Don River and beyond, encouraging a sense of connection to the wider landscape and the city beyond the park's borders.

A striking and sustainable pavilion at the play hill serves the practical needs of the park with enclosed bathrooms, a park office and basement utility space. Demonstrating sustainable building design, the pavilion includes solar panels to supplement park power needs. It also includes a flexible multi-use outdoor community spaces for meetings, performances, and other small-scale events, as well as a kitchenette, community tables, benches, permanent bbq and a fireplace to create gathering places for the public. To the south of the pavilion is a youth athletic field that can be used for a variety of organized sports. In the winter, this area will serve as the base of a sledding hill.

A major feature of the park is its reconnection with the native ecology of the area. A large marsh - approximately 1300 square metres (13,993.08 square feet) in size – wrapped by landforms and woodland vegetation will support plant communities native to the Don River Valley. The marsh re-establishes the site’s ecological heritage as a Crown Reserve and provides habitat for wildlife and space for passive recreation. The marsh is also an essential part of the park’s ecological stormwater management system, receiving and treating runoff from the western side of the flood protection landform which will then be used for onsite irrigation needs reducing water consumption in the park.

Corktown Common is well connected to its urban neighbourhood with a series of clear entrances that invite visitors into the park from a number of points within the community. A new access point constructed under the Bala railway corridor provides direct access to the Don River Trail, connecting the park and the community to the Don River watershed, the city’s extensive trail system and the waterfront.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- The park was designed with the native ecology of the area in mind. The large marsh will support plants native to the Don River Valley and will re-establish the site’s ecological heritage as a Crown Reserve.
- All of water from the park’s water play feature and stormwater collection system will be reclaimed to feed the irrigation system and to flush the marsh. It is a closed loop system to limit input into the city’s stormwater system.
- Nearly all plants in the park are native to the Toronto area.
- The introduction of a series of diverse landscapes such as prairie lands, marsh, woodland hillsides will support wildlife habitat by offering shelter and food sources for wildlife.
- Solar panels on the pavilion will offset the park’s energy needs, with the energy harvested from them used to supplement the pavilion’s power needs.

DESIGN TEAM

- Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. (lead design firm)
- Other team members: Maryann Thompson Architects, ARUP (engineering), Pine & Swallow Environmental (planting soils), Great Eastern Ecology (ecological systems) Creative Irrigation, Trow (geo-technical), The Planning Partnership (public consultation), and Greenberg Consulting (urban connections)

BUDGET AND TIMING

- Budget: \$26,589,352 for the Park+Pavilion project
 - Federal government : \$18,004,326
 - Province of Ontario: \$ 8,585,026
- Timing: Construction on Corktown common began in August 2010. The 3.6 hectare (8.9 acre) western city side of the park opened in 2013. The 3.2 hectare (7.9 acre) river side of the park is currently under construction and will be open following completion of the remaining work on the Flood Protection Landform.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- Three public forum meetings in addition to meetings with individual stakeholder groups such as Bring Back the Don, First Nations, and the West Don Lands Committee have been held.