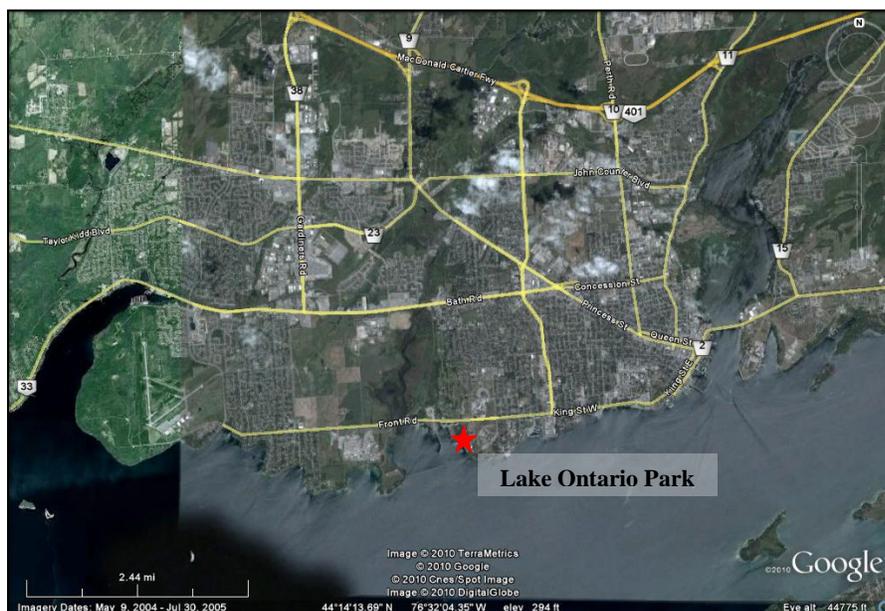


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates the current Lake Ontario Park and its proposed design found in the 2009 master plan, *Lake Ontario Park: Restoring Vitality* (2009). The main research questions are: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the existing Lake Ontario Park with respect to accessibility and connectivity? Does the proposed design maintain existing strengths and address the weaknesses?



City of Kingston
Photo source: Google Earth

METHOD AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Research involved three methods: direct observation, activity mapping, and the review of maps and photographs. These were selected to provide data about the usage and features of the park and its proposed design. An evaluative index was selected based on *A Comparison of five inner-city parks: Implications for planning* (City of Toronto, 1988) and *Regeneration: Toronto's waterfront and the sustainable city: Final report* (Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, 1992). The evaluation criteria were divided into two groups – connectivity and accessibility – as seen in the table on the following page.

Connectivity	Accessibility
Surrounding land uses Street views Transportation Greenways Legibility	Physical accessibility Transportation and parking Amenities Safety

ANALYSIS

Each criterion was evaluated and given a qualitative ranking based on how well the park and proposed design met the criteria. The following four point scale was used:

-  Poor
-  Fair
-  Good
-  Excellent

The following table indicates how well the park and its proposed design met each of the criteria.

	Criteria	Current Park	Proposed Park
Connectivity	Surrounding Land Uses		
	Street Views		
	Transportation		
	Greenways		
	Legibility		
Accessibility	Physical Accessibility		
	Transportation and Parking		
	Amenities		
	Safety		

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed design for Lake Ontario Park has the potential to build a very successful waterfront park in the City of Kingston as it improves upon many of the shortcomings observed in the current park.

The proposed design will strengthen connectivity by improving the design and visual interest of the greenway into Elevator Bay Park and investing in its connections to the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail and the City of Kingston's Waterfront Pathway through added signage and aesthetics. New fencing and an arrival plaza at the main entrance will add to the attractiveness of the park from nearby properties. A new parking lot, an increased number of paved roads and paths, and bicycle facilities will allow more options for park visitors when entering and travelling through the space. Finally, more effective signage and a more understandable pathway system will improve upon the illegibility of the current park.

Weaknesses in the proposed design related to connectivity include a lack of connection to properties northeast of the park on the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail/City of Kingston Waterfront Pathway and a substantial amount of nearby open space which may compete for visitors with Lake Ontario Park. The largest focal points in the park, the pavilion and children's play area, are close together and do not divide the park into identifiable subsections which could provide greater orientation to users.

The proposed design will increase accessibility by repaving the parking lot and roads and the parking lot will have outlined handicapped spaces. All paths in the park will have hard surfaces to better accommodate mobility challenged users and many walking paths will be wider and less steep to allow all visitors access to the waterfront. Accessible amenities and improved safety measures, including more lighting and route choices, will contribute to more enjoyable experience than currently offered at the park.

Weaknesses relating to accessibility found in the proposed design include a lack of wheelchair accessible transit to the park, the potential for gendered washrooms instead of preferred unisex facilities, very limited natural surveillance after dark from surrounding properties and the secluded forested area of the park which may act as an entrapment zone.

Recommendation 1: Place a large map of the entire park at all entrances.

Recommendation 2: Educate visitors about significant sites near Lake Ontario Park.

Recommendation 3: Encourage persons at Providence Continuing Care and St. Lawrence College to visit the park on a regular basis.

Recommendation 4: Features along the perimeter of the park should permit clear views into and out of the park.

Recommendation 5: Focal points should divide the park into identifiable subsections to increase orientation.

Recommendation 6: Provide information about accessibility on all buildings and paths.

Recommendation 7: Transit routes serving Lake Ontario Park should be wheelchair accessible.

Recommendation 8: Provide a safe means of crossing King Street West to enter the park.

Recommendation 9: Build unisex or individual washrooms.

Recommendation 10: Provide extensive lighting and safety features in the forested valley area of the park.