Victoria Park
Restoration Master Plan
A Heritage Strolling Park

City of London

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The Community Vision

Victoria Park is appreciated by both Londoners and visitors as a major contributor to the amenity and beauty of the downtown area. All visitors, whether from within the municipality or from out-of-town admire its green beauty within an urban historical setting. The centrally located park, which is the focus of much year-round recreational use, is a source of great pride for many Londoners.

Victoria Park has a total visitation of about 1.5 million persons per year, including about 1 million who attend special events in the Park. Over the next 15 years, use is projected to increase by about 30%. This means that changing demographics in the City will generate about 2 million people using the park annually. On peak days, visitation is estimated to be about 35,000 persons.

Tourism in London is the city's sixth-largest employer. The economic activity tourism creates is estimated at over a quarter of a billion dollars annually; the 1996 estimate is $267 million, which should increase to $320 million in 15 years. Although no tracking of the park's specific economic impact exists, it is expected that events and festivals held at the site play a major role in the projected tourism expansion for the City and downtown.

Victoria Park also forms a significant resource for archaeology in downtown London, exhibiting three critical layers of historic importance. Prehistoric remains from the native occupation of the area can be found below ground, as well as, remains from the British military occupation. The Framed Infantry Barracks which covered the northern two-thirds of the park property in the period ca. 1838-1873 represents the largest and best preserved historic site in the City of London. Victoria Park is also the City's most celebrated designed landscape from the 19th century, created by American landscape architect Charles Miller in 1874. The layout of the landscape was reminiscent of an English parkland with its drives and tree lined walks, fountains, floral areas and bandstand. Limited remains of this grand parkland era remain today.

Victoria Park thus represents a unique combination of beauty, amenity, heritage, and a solid economic contribution to the city's economy. The 6.25 hectare park is popular year-round for strolling, skating, relaxing, and a wide range of special events. However, the site planning assessment undertaken by Hough Woodland Naylor Dance in the 1996-97 study identified three key challenges which set a foundation for the preparation of the restoration master plan for the park. These include:

- The Park is currently in a state of environmental and aesthetic decline, and a rehabilitation/management approach is required to ensure that the quality of the park is re-established.
- Special events will continue to play an important role in the tourism strategy for London, and will form an essential program element for the Park.
The current level of use for the Park exceeds its carrying capacity. With increasing population changes anticipated in the City, current levels of use will continue to be detrimental to the health of the landscape.

The vision for Victoria Park was developed to address these challenges, in direct consultation with residents, stakeholders and City staff. The park planners have worked to ensure the continued presence of events in the Park, while addressing the current state of decline of trees, hard and soft landscape elements, public monuments and artworks, and facilities. The carrying capacity of the park was also defined as a guiding framework. This vision statement was created as a collaborative effort to redefine the role of the park in the contemporary urban context.

**The Vision**

Victoria Park is well appreciated by residents of London as one of the most significant designed landscapes from the 19th century in the city. The gracious green open space of this importance will recapture its role as the premier park of the city serving many contemporary community uses - regional, community, neighbourhood and civic. The park restoration plan redefines a heritage park of high design standard and establishes a rich landscape core to the historic/civic precinct. The park program recalls the history and legacy of these lands for visitors, and integrates contemporary activities with a healthy passive landscape benefiting the city long into the future.

**Conservation and Conceptual Design Principles**

On December 12, 1995 the Municipal Council approved the report *Victoria Park: Inventory and Condition Report* prepared by S. Behr, D. Poulton et al. The recommendations of this report focus on conservation as the approach to renew Victoria Park. Subsequently, the London Advisory Committee on Heritage and the Planning & Development Department produced a series of *Conservation Principles* to guide the park master planning process. Council approved these principles in 1996. They have provided a foundation for park programming and site design in this study process, however further detailing of these principles and their conceptual design specifics for the ultimate park plan are outlined below (the original conservation principle is noted in italics, and a few new principles are added).

**Spatial Definition of the Park**

"that the original design concept of a strong perimeter definition and interior open spaces be respected" ......

- protect and re-build the formal landscape perimeter of the park of Charles Miller's 1874 plan and delineate the green mass of the park from adjacent streets;
- re-establish the historical "Oval" or Green as a open lawn for park activities, and reinforce the perimeter of this space with traditional Victorian ornamental plantings;
- simplify access through these key areas to improve their visual and horticultural character.
Passage through the Park

"that all subsequent changes to the pathways support the original spatial arrangement of the Park. If necessary, paths, or pieces of paths may be considered for removal. The hierarchy of paths should be re-established".

- Reinstate the primary historical routes of the Charles Miller plan for the park (the Drive and the Ride, where appropriate), in that they support circulation through the park today and for the future.
- Establish a clear, simplified hierarchy that recognizes historical features in the park, and acknowledges new facilities such as the Bandshell, skating facility etc.
- Design the path system as a series of experiences through the park and recognize primary circulation routes versus those for more passive types of strolling. Recognize daily footpath shortcuts and the need for new connections to Reg Cooper Square, Richmond and Dundas Streets shopping, London Life etc. Change surfaces and path widths to accommodate these differences in daily and periodic use, as well as considerations for bicycling and roller blading.
- Maintain safe access and well lit primary routes.

Focal Points Within The Park

"that the rehabilitation/restoration of focal points be part of future revitalization plans. They will help to re-establish the unique status of the Park, and provide interesting destination points".

- Regain the spirit of the Victorian strolling park with focal attractions, without necessary literal re-creation (e.g. lily ponds, formal parterres, ornate fountains)
- Establish a series of focal point areas within the park and/or at the gateways to the park which provide opportunities for animation, community programming, public art/cultural displays (e.g., speakers corner, small music/theatrical programs, temporary food vending, festival courts). Build the park into the urban fabric.
- Re-organize areas for pleasant seating and gathering in small or larger gatherings (e.g. seniors seating in the shade, community dances in the courts);
- Redevelop Reg Cooper Square as a passive "garden" court and improve the quality of the space for residents and City Hall workers that could use the space daily, as well as, increase its potential for small speciality event programming. Improve its acoustic quality for noise reduction, and provide a more intimate character for garden shade seating, small scale art displays and possible commercial eating terraces.
- Establish community based projects within the park restoration plan that may engage the private sector e.g., gardens, public art features, interpretive places.

Urban Linkages and Context

- Establish and/or highlight green linkages from the park to the Richmond and Dundas Street commercial areas;
- Create a "civic storyline walk" that educates visitors about the park, links the adjacent streetscapes and the city hall;
- Emphasize the gateways/entrances to the park as broader intersection compositions;
pedestrianize, as possible, the adjacent streets of Wellington and Clarence for broadening the park “zone of influence”;
integrate the park into the bikeway routes through the area on Central and Dufferin, as a major attraction on the way to the river open space system and other heritage sites.
mark the entrance into the civic precinct at Dufferin and Wellington and into the East Woodfield District at Central and Richmond;
visually enhance the landscape foreground of the park with the northern gardens of London Life.

Horticultural Enhancements
“a strategy for new plantings is needed. It should reflect the historic patterns in the Park. Recent plant additions should be reviewed for their appropriateness of species and placement”

- establish a detailed planting strategy which protects and rebuilds the historical perimeter plantings, the oval green and associated ornamental plantings;
- remove and relocate many of the norway maple plantings that have been planted in recent installations to increase species diversity; allow areas of improved sunlight and turf/groundcover maintenance, and re-build the Victorian horticultural palette of plants that frame the interior of the green
- create contemporary strolling gardens with a major emphasis on lower maintenance groundcovers and perennials, and bold simple seasonal displays.
- protect large specimen trees that are sensitive to root compaction with non-intrusive physical barriers (sugar maples and silver maples)

Park Ornament and Furnishings
“one style of furnishings should be selected for the Park. Ideally, these furnishings would be reproductions of the furnishings seen in historic photographs”

- establish a hierarchy of primary site furnishings (bench, urns, light standards, and receptacles, bollards) based on a replication or modification of historical designs.
- incorporate sound lighting design, and possible artist/craftsman involvement in the detailed design evolution.
- enhance gathering areas with these installations to encourage park patronage and embellish the park ambiance.

Events and Tourism
- promote the restored park as an interpretive and recreation destination within a more comprehensive heritage walk/scenic route through the heritage districts of London;
- establish a events management strategy reflecting the carrying capacity of the park and administer strict set-up guidelines for events linked to landscape restoration proposals;
- protect primary landscape areas of importance in the park, and concentrate intensive uses in key locations designed to accommodate the activities;
- restrict and enforce vehicular access into the park;
• encourage the re-distribution and linkage of events into adjacent streets, parking areas and commercials areas, particularly as festivals increase in size or outgrow the park event capacity;
• assist event proponents in the relocation of events to alternative serviced sites as events increase in size or physical requirements change in future;
• all events held in the park must financially take responsibility for any damage that exists as a result of event activities;
• a park-community environmental program will be established to monitor and reduce noise, garbage, rowdiness, vandalism, traffic/parking congestion, safety issues etc.;
• financial penalties will be enforced for event participants that do not adhere to guidelines and management zoning, as well as park bylaws.

Public Art and Monuments
• Victoria Park and Reg Cooper Square could potentially support a range of public art installations reinforcing the role and master plan of the park and the following themes:
  - outstanding achievements of Londoners and the community-at-large (no special interest groups);
  - commemoration of events of national and provincial significance for London;
  - pre-history and military history of the military barracks period;
  - the Victorian park era and associated heritage features;
  - values of the existing period and aspirations for the future civic realm.
• the public art management plan for the park must include a thorough examination of the existing artworks and memorials in both sites based on the criteria included in the park plan.
• public art pieces that do not meet the previous thematic and physical criteria should be considered for relocation when an a more suitable location is found under a new city wide public art strategy.

an open and fair process will be established for all new commissions in the park.

Heritage Education and Interpretation
• interpret and educate the public about the history of the Park through educational displays, active programming and archaeological investigations, public art educational works, etc.
• establish site archaeological investigations prior to all site development and ground works (one comprehensive survey dealing with priority sites would be advantageous).

The Concept - The Heritage Strolling Park

The Landscape Framework
The physical concept for Victoria Park Restoration Plan was developed following an exploration of several alternative options for landscape rehabilitation and urban
design. Definition of the carrying capacity resulted in a landscape zoning plan determining the levels of use, and event and landscape management needed in five critical zones of the park. This zoning plan laid the foundation for all future site redevelopment and landscape rehabilitation proposals, as well as, events management decisions for the future.

The landscape zoning plan, and its inherent guidelines, strictly defines the park carrying capacity or appropriate level of use. The perimeter landscape of the park will be the primary protection zone, requiring a strict landscape replanting and management scheme to rebuild the treed structure of the park. A reopening of the historic Oval or Green of the park will allow areas for passive use and events, while the heavier event traffic and vehicular set-up will be restricted to a reinstated promenade loop that defines the Oval, much like the historic drives of the Charles Miller Plan. Small gathering areas are included at park entrances and in a revitalized bandshell plaza. Once a festival exceeds the capacity of this zoning framework, organizers must relocate facilities into adjacent closed streets or alternative sites.

A Rejuvenated Park For London

Fundamental to the park concept rests the key objective to restore the landscape to an elegant, promenading park that all Londoners can enjoy for primarily passive activities.

The park will be restored to make it comfortable and meaningful for everyday users.

Events will constitute periodic activities that build on the park as a community gathering place, but "smarter use" will form the approach to ensuring landscape quality for a broader spectrum of users.

The concept scheme reinstates the primary historical routes within the Charles Miller Plan forming a new sunny green within the park. The concept includes the reintroduction of many of the traditional plantings of the historic landscape creating a softer, richer treed setting for the park throughout the seasons. Formal plantings of sugar maple and silver maple will form the outer perimeter, while the inner edges of the green or The "Oval" will be framed with Carolinian species of greater show.

Many of the paths are removed from the park, leaving only key walks, and a reconstituted "Ride" and "Drive" for pedestrian use. The main oval path serves as the promenade that connects the park to adjacent vicinities and park gateways, and provides the spine of activity for periodic festival arrangements. The route is wide enough to accommodate walkers and bicycles during warmer months, and to establish durable surfaces for vehicle set-up at event time. The promenade loop would be well lit in the evenings to allow for casual, and safe strolling for residents and visitors to the park. A simplified hierarchy of other paths provide some local walking shortcuts, and a range of experiences through shady canopies of trees, along sunny edges, through floral perennial gardens, and connecting many of the heritage features within the park.

A series of gardens and specialty landscapes would be within the park scheme. The first would be established at the southern end of the park as a passive lawn and garden.

Victoria Park Restoration Master Plan
court for London Life. This proposed garden would provide a place for bold, colourful horticultural displays and significant plantings, to build features that Victoria Park was once well known for. This garden would become a place for shady retreat and contemplation, and for public art in a garden setting.

The second focal area would include the redevelopment of Reg Cooper Square into a passive garden court or square. Streetscape improvements would connect the square to Victoria Park, improve the pedestrian “ceremonial” landscape along Wellington and “green” the existing barren podium of the Square. The Square design would include the creation of a softened green landscape that can be enjoyed by local residents and City Hall workers. Minor events and lunch time shows could help to animate the area and create a sense of place to the currently unused space.

The third gathering area to be re-designed would be the forecourt for Bandshell plaza, which would be upgraded for performances and winter skating. Winter is such a major activity for Victoria Park, that it is recommended that the skating area be redesigned around a central landscaped area, with support seating opportunities.

Two key gateways into the park and larger urban precinct include the Cenotaph Square, which has been redesigned to set a new major space at Wellington and Dufferin, and The Heritage District Gateway located at Central and Richmond, marking the transition from the park to the shopping area and to the Woodfield Heritage District.

A special linear educational walk is proposed along the northern boulevard of Dufferin Avenue to Richmond Street to provide a better connection between the Park and Downtown. This linear connection could be developed as “The Civic Garden Walk”, and include sidewalk treatment, plantings and a storyline about London’s history. Elements in the landscape are included to serve as markers for the barracks walls and footprint of the heritage structures. Ideas can be explored further to interpret the history of the site and archaeological investigations to come in future.

To improve the general urban design context of the park, and to increase opportunities to use street allowances for events and festival set-up, streetscape improvements have been proposed to both Wellington and Clarence Streets.

The Action Plan
The total redevelopment cost of the Victoria Park ranges between $2.9 and $3.3 million, varying based on the extent of underground re-servicing that may have to be done for park improvements. Reg Cooper Square totals between $800,000 and $925,000 with variables in cost due to the lack of information about courtyard subsurface suitability. Although this amount may seem a large amount of money to raise in these fiscally constrained times, Victoria Park serves as the premier landmark park within the civic precinct of London, and it is a key factor in how one perceives the City when one visits. The investment in the two parks is very important. Rehabilitating and stabilizing the green oasis in the City is critical to maintain some events and to increase its tourism role through touring and other historic education attractions.
Obviously, the City of London must make a financial commitment to set budgets in place to begin to improve the path hierarchy, reduce impacts on the existing planting and to re-construct a new infrastructure for the park including paths, primary planting structure, lighting, irrigation, plaza areas, improved skating and washroom facilities, etc. Many projects of an amenity nature could be organized as special projects for fundraising, donations, or community work programs. Some of these may include the gardens in front of London Life, the gateway plazas inclusive of walls, public art, gates and special pavings, historic interpretation features, civic walk and gardens, and park furnishings such as benches, signage, specialty lighting.

The consultation process for this study has already built a collective of interested stakeholders and potential partners for the realization of the park plan. The City should continue to build the *partner base* for the park implementation inclusive of residents associations, event organizers, the tourism and hospitality industry groups, veterans, local business owners and the arts, heritage and cultural associations. Other groups such as private corporations, education institutions, and horticultural groups should be introduced to the park concept and built into the implementation process.

City Staff will need to guide the implementation process and ensure the logical sequence of improvements, oversee the process and quality assurance that a project of this significance warrants. However, the creation of a strong *Friends of Victoria Park* group would assist as volunteers continue to be involved with the park through fundraising, public outreach and visitor services.
1. Introduction

Background Brief
Victoria Park is one of London's most significant designed landscapes from an era of gracious Victorian driving and strolling parks. Its location within steps of the civic centre, primary shopping districts and historic neighbourhoods establishes the site as an important green retreat, a place of commemoration and a symbol of civic planning excellence.

As a neighbourhood park for the Woodfield, Talbot and downtown locals this park is the only open space in the core of the city. As a district park for the downtown it is a much needed quiet landscape for office workers. As a city park the space serves as a setting for city wide events and celebrations such as Canada Day, Countdown London, and Christmas civic displays and activities. The park hosts approximately 55 events per year including 18 large regional festivals, among them the London Children's Festival, Home County Folk Festival, and the London Big Band Festival.

The park site contains three layers of heritage significance: as a pre-European archaeological site, site of the British Garrison, and later a 19th century strolling park.

The park has a long tradition of social animation and gathering, with Sunday concerts and popular winter skating fests, however, the park is now facing new demands for the future as its function evolves and popularity increases.

The broad spectrum of park functions often has confused the role of the park for many residents and decision makers. The lack of a guiding "master/management plan" for the park and the continuing high levels of use have lead to a decline in park features. The park has slipped into an uncoordinated, eclectic character losing its appeal to many users. Public art works have been installed without a view to their setting or role in the park, historic monuments are damaged and ageing, and the once gracious park trees are in a state of serious decline of health.

The residents have been concerned about the state of the park, particularly after events, and complaints have grown over the last few years. Staff and Council embarked on a study process in 1994-5 which would establish a path for assessing the
park, its community needs and a reinstated master plan for the beloved park in the heart of London.

At the outset in 1994, “municipal council resolved that on the recommendation of LACAC that the Parks and Recreation Department be requested to investigate a conservation strategy for Victoria Park to insure that the Park’s historic design integrity be preserved and that the Department be advised that LACAC is prepared to assist with this undertaking”. The City retained a consulting team, led by local landscape architect and historian Sylvia Behr, to undertake a study to compile an illustrated history of the park’s development and review its current condition. The subsequent 1995 report, entitled Victoria Park: Inventory and Condition Report (Behr, Poulton, Hannay, Pascoe, Pratt, et al) highlighted the poor condition of park features and vegetation, and uncovered the rich story of the park history. The recommendations that evolved from this report set motions in place to establish a conservation approach to renew Victoria Park. In 1996, the London Advisory Committee on Heritage and the Planning and Development Department produced a series of Conservation Principles to guide a master planning effort for park restoration.

**Where Are We Today**

*Hough Woodland Naylor Dance* were retained by the Planning and Development Department of the City of London in October of 1996 to undertake the final phase (Phase III) of the Victoria Park Master Plan. The Terms of Reference included four critical requirements:

- The preparation of a conceptual site plan which satisfies the Conservation Principles established in 1996;
- The preparation of a park strategy for tourism, events and public art.
- The development of site/event management procedures.
- Incorporation of a consultation process as these products are evolving.

The consulting team included two specialists - *Jack Ellis*, of Jack B. Ellis & Associates to prepare the studies of user analysis, population projection, tourism and financial impact analysis. *Dana Poulton*, of D.R. Poulton & Associates Inc. conducted the archaeological assessment and identified the opportunities for future education and investigations.

The study area included the 6.5 hectare park bordered by Central Avenue on the north, Dufferin Avenue on the south, Clarence Street to the west and Wellington Street on the east. The study incorporated a comprehensive review of the park and its neighbourhood context, and included the integration of Reg Cooper Square, located immediately east of the park on Wellington Street and north of the City Hall Centre.
Reg Cooper Square is a podium open space structured on roof deck over an underground parking lot. The space is approximately .625 hectare in size, and is primarily a hard surfaced place with minor raised plantings, a fountain and two small sculptures. Unlike Victoria Park, there is little social animation in the place and much of the time the fountain may not even be operating. Flanked by the Civic Centre on the south, a apartment building on the east and a community centre on the north, the large square potentially could contribute to the open space and social life of the area, particularly for City Hall workers and local residents. The Terms of Reference requires that the square be reviewed as to its potential to host events, greater integration with the park, and possible design modification.

Hough Woodland Naylor Dance’s proposal methodology was anchored in the notion that the heritage restoration objectives for the park and an updated program for the park required blending in the final restoration master plan. An intensive consultation approach was established throughout the recommended study process, incorporating a “hands-on” consultation approach with staff and the Victoria Park Community Advisory Committee.

**Process and Study Approach**

The planning methodology was based on a three stage process, beginning in October of 1996, and ending in the summer of 1997.

*Phase One* included the exploration of Park Restoration Opportunities and Issues. Based on inventories conducted in the 1995 Inventory and Conditions Report, the consultants assessed the condition of the park vegetation and physical environment, reviewed existing policies related to public art and events, analysed facilities and their use, and developed profiles for user groups and anticipated changes for the future. A primary focus of phase one was to initiate dialogue with the community. City staff conducted a series of efforts to contact park stakeholders groups and a series of public and stakeholder workshops (held in February 1997) were held to focus on discussions of park issues and priorities for change.

The *Phase Two* include the preparation of a series of restoration concept plans and options for the redevelopment of Victoria Park, and Reg Cooper Square. The Conceptual and Strategic Alternatives stage of work incorporated historic restoration approaches for the park, financial and environmental frameworks for events management, and physical redevelopment priorities for a re-visited program for the park. Strategies for public art management and vegetation management were also integrated in the two conceptual plans that were presented to the Community Advisory Committee and the public. A public meeting was held on May 13, 1997 to review the concept options and to select and comment on preferences for a final plan.

*Phase Three*, the Restoration Action Plan, builds all the work conducted to date together to form a final plan for implementation and an action-based list of recommendations and tasks to set the project in motion. Implementable packages and a set of priorities for construction and community based projects were established incorporating volunteers and many London groups and associations.
A more detailed outline of the consultation process for the study is included in the appendix. Several questionnaires, and forms of media coverage were conducted for the project to raise public awareness of this important project and to solicit interest and comments from a broad range of citizens.

**Community Issues and Ideas**

The meetings and questionnaires that were conducted early in the study process identified issues that the public insisted must be addressed in the current park planning. Several specific directions for the consultants work evolved out of this input as follows:

- Establish *policies for event and festival use* of the Park based on size, duration, and activities relative to a defined carrying capacity for the Park. Alternative downtown venues for events should be identified.

- Determine the carrying capacity of the Park.

- Include horticultural displays that reflect the Park’s original design intent, recognizing modern uses and pressures of activities.

- Maintain the essential character of Victoria Park in a simple, authentic restoration plan, reflecting the existing conservation principles.

- Determine design methods to integrate Reg Cooper Square into a larger civic open space, while recognizing its structural and contextual limitations.

- Establish a public art policy for existing and future works and monuments within the park and Reg Cooper Square.

- Ensure a continued focus on the community gathering role of park, recognizing the balancing of all park issues.

- Determine a plan for the park and square that upgrades park facilities providing a more desirable year-round space. Special emphasis should be placed on the daily user and passive strolling activities.

**The Alternatives**

The consultants presented two alternative concepts to the Advisory Community and public in May of 1997. Both schemes included common themes related to the conservation and design principles outlined earlier in this report. However, Concept A - the Heritage Strolling Park included a “softer” design solution while Concept B - The Urban Civic Park scheme responded in a structured “harder” response with more hard surface gathering areas located internally within the park. The public, without exception, preferred Concept A, the Heritage Strolling Park, with its loop promenade system replicating the Charles Miller Plan, and the primary focus of the park interior...
on more passive "romantic" landscapes. The latter scheme relies on events and festival set up concentrated on the Oval and loop pathway, and improvements to boundary roads for other event activities.

Both concepts linked Reg Cooper Square to the Park and established garden rooftop landscapes within the space. The public preferred the scheme illustrating a large central shade garden, and were quite open to programming of small events of an informal type (lunch-time music, informal art exhibits). All agreed that the commercial/retail area at the base level of the apartment complex required animation and some type of cafe outlet to improve the outdoor residential activity and profile from Wellington Street.
2. The Heritage of the Place

Site Significance
Background studies demonstrate that Victoria Park forms the single most extensive area of archaeological potential in downtown London. Below-ground heritage remains include prehistoric material relating to the native occupation of the region, and historic archaeological remains relating to the both the British military presence and to the later development of the property as London's first public park.

Research further indicates that the Framed Infantry Barracks which covered the northern two-thirds of the park property in the period ca. 1838-1873 represents the largest and best preserved historic archaeological site in the City of London. This complex included several dozen buildings and other facilities. Among them were some of the most substantial buildings of the day, such as the soldiers' quarters, constructed to house 750 men. Given the importance of the role played by the British Garrison in the social and economic development of early London, this site represents an archaeological resource of great significance.

Interpretive Potential
Background research indicates that the archaeological resources of Victoria Park have a tremendous potential for education and tourism. This potential derives from the following considerations.

- Given that the military garrison played a vital role in the history of early London, the archaeological remains of the Framed Infantry Barracks could serve the public as an introduction to the whole subject of the 19th century development of the Town of London.

- A wealth of historical documentation is available to assist in the identification and interpretation of the archaeological remains in Victoria Park, including visual aids.
such as contemporary plans, water colours and/or photographs of many of the buildings and the early park.

- The historic nature of the archaeological remains of the barracks and early park further indicate that any future interpretive planning would benefit from the assistance or participation of a wide variety of local institutions and agencies within the community. Examples include local boards of education, the University of Western Ontario (Departments of History and Anthropology, Regional Room of D.B. Weldon Library), the London Public Library system (London Room), the London Regional Art and Historical Museum and the London and Middlesex Historical Society, to name but a few.

- The downtown location of Victoria Park and its popularity as a destination for people from throughout the region and beyond would guarantee that any archaeological interpretive programming set here would have a high profile. This could only help to raise public awareness of the value of archaeology and archaeological resources as part of our collective non-renewable heritage.

Options for on-site public interpretation are many and varied. One means would be the use of signage to provide details on the history of the property. A second would involve the installation within the park of scale models of the Framed Infantry Barracks and the early park. These would be manufactured from durable material to withstand the effects of vandalism and weather. A third and very simple option would be to use limited archaeological excavations to locate segments of the foundations of key military buildings or other facilities, such as the stockade, powder magazine or soldiers' quarters. This approach has been used to good effect on several British military sites. Materials such as concrete or compact stone dust can then be used to mark the location, size and shape of the structures. The result would provide the public with a visual frame of reference for the military complex at relatively little cost, and with no impediment to regular maintenance and other activities within the park.

Another approach would involve the preparation of an exhibit devoted to the history of the Victoria Park. Options for such this would include a temporary exhibit in an existing facility (such as the London Regional Art and Historical Museum) or in a purpose-built interpretive centre (perhaps situated off Reg Cooper Square in the nearby City Hall complex). The preparation of such an exhibit would allow the use of a wider range of visual materials such as historic maps, and would also provide a place for the display of artifacts recovered by future archaeological excavations within the park.

A final option for realizing the educational potential of the below-ground heritage remains in Victoria Park would be to use the property as the site for one or more archaeological field schools. These could be conducted at the public, high school and/or university level. The park offers several advantages to this use. One is the central location of Victoria Park within the city. A second is the broad range and effectively limitless supply of the archaeological remains present. A third is the potential for linkages with other disciplines, including the study of local history.
Altogether, these factors suggest that Victoria Park represents an ideal site for an ongoing archaeological field school.

**Park Planning Issues**

*General Considerations*

Most of the major and minor development impacts within Victoria Park over the past century have been situated in areas which did not happen to contain significant documented archaeological remains. These include everything from the construction of the fish pond in 1890 to the Boer War Monument in 1912, the Cenotaph in 1934, the first bandshell in 1950, the new bandshell in 1991, and the Women's Monument in 1994. In hindsight, it is apparent that the historically documented archaeological remains within the park have survived to a remarkable degree, but that they have survived by accident rather than design.

The Victoria Park master plan study has had two significant consequences for future archaeological planning within the property. One is that it has provided a much more detailed picture of the known and potential archaeological remains within the park. The other is that it has greatly enhanced the public and civic awareness of the importance of those remains as both heritage resources and planning concerns. Together with the formulation and implementation of appropriate management strategies, these two factors should help ensure that archaeological concerns will be addressed in any future long range planning within the park.

In many ways, the planning concerns for archaeological resources within Victoria Park are very different from those involved in other, more visible elements of the park. For example, the soil compaction from the overuse of the park which is of such great concern for other aspects of park planning has no direct relevance whatsoever for the archaeological resources, as those lie too deep to be impacted by the traffic generated by the myriad of events held in the park every year. However, part of the problem with soil compaction is that the ageing irrigation system which criss-crosses the entire park is buried less than 18 inches deep, too shallow to permit the use of a deep soil aerator to help relieve the compaction. One solution would be to replace the existing irrigation system with deeper service lines, but any such infrastructure project could entail significant impacts to the subsurface archaeological resources.

The above illustrates the fact that the solution to the problems facing one resource within the park can pose another problem to an altogether unrelated resource. The corollary is that no one planning issue can truly be divorced from another. In effect, from the point of view of planning, the various elements that make Victoria Park a special place function something like an ecosystem, where everything is related, however indirectly. As a result, any successful management strategy for the park must grow from an awareness of these interrelationships.

*The Need for Archaeological Field Assessment*

Current information is sufficient to demonstrate the general archaeological potential of Victoria Park, and to indicate the approximate location of various historically documented below-ground heritage resources. However, no archaeological field
assessment has ever been carried out of the property as a whole. In consequence, a
detailed archaeological field assessment would have to be conducted in order to
establish the presence and nature of prehistoric and historic archaeological remains in
any given area.

Options for Future Archaeological Resource Management
As detailed in the discussion of public interpretation (above), options for future
archaeological investigations within the park include limited excavations oriented
toward public education and tourism. Regardless, it may be assumed that additional
archaeological investigations would also have to be carried out in order to address and
mitigate archaeological planning concerns raised by future developments within the
property. These developments should include any proposed construction that would
disturbance the topsoil and/or subsoil, from something as simple as the investigation of
a proposed site for a piece of public art to something as extensive as an assessment of
the proposed replacement of the entire irrigation system.

In order to satisfy municipal and provincial regulations and concerns, any such
archaeological resource management project would have to be carried out by a
licensed archaeologist. In addition, it would have to be conducted in accordance with
the Stage 1-3 archaeological technical assessment guidelines formulated by the

Theoretically, there are two basic options for the implementation of future
archaeological resource assessments within Victoria Park. One is to carry out
assessments of individual works projects on an ad hoc basis. The other is to conduct a
detailed survey of the entire park, with the intent of locating and assessing all
archaeological remains within the property.

In practice, an extensive survey of the park would not necessarily preclude the need for
the archaeological assessment of monitoring of individual works projects, as topsoil
stripping could well be needed to confirm the presence or absence of subsurface
archaeological remains in any given area. That said, there is a great deal to recommend
a more general survey of Victoria Park, especially if it were carried out as part of a
multidisciplinary project including limited test excavation, remote sensing and more
detailed archival research.

One advantage would be that a limited program of survey and test excavation could
pinpoint most or all of the major buildings and other structures of the Framed Infantry
Barracks. This would allow us to anchor in space the majority of the areas of concern
for archaeological resource management. Information of this nature would be
invaluable in identifying options for the avoidance or mitigation of archaeological
resources subject to potential impact from any range of future developments.

Another advantage of a more general archaeological assessment of the greater property
would be that it would provide the kind of information needed as the basis for public
interpretation. Clearly, the interests of both resource management and public education
and interpretation would benefit from any activity that resulted in a better
understanding of the nature and distribution of significance archaeological resources
within the park.
3. Market Evaluation

Overview of Current Park Use
London's Victoria Park is currently experiencing a high level of use, by both casual users of this beautiful and historic central city park, and by visitors and participants in many special events. Total annual use is estimated as 1.5 million persons \(^1\). This use is estimated as about 500,000 casual users making relatively unstructured use of the park and its facilities, and 1,000,000 who attend and participate in a long list of major and minor events.

The largest single "event" is the Winter Wonderland, which runs from early December to mid-March (after the school spring break). This event draws an estimated 350,000 persons to a combination of activities and attractions, highlighted by decorative winter lighting of the park and its trees, and by public outdoor skating on an artificial ice surface.

Some seven other major events draw between 20,000 and 100,000 persons, and last from one to five days in the spring and summer seasons. These are:

- Gus Macker Basketball tournament - late May - 3 days - 30,000 attendees;
- London International Children's Festival - early June - 5 days - 100,000 attendees;
- Ontario Basketball Association 3 on 3 Tournament - late June 3 days - 30,000 attendees;
- Canada Day Committee - July 1 - 1 day - 25,000 attendees;
- Home County Folk Festival - mid-July - 4 days - 80,000 attendees;
- Boys and Girls Rib Fest - early August - 3 days - 80,000 attendees.

Peak-day attendance at the foregoing events is in the range of 10,000 to 27,000 persons. While many events place minimal stress on the park environment, such as the

\(^1\) Source: Victoria Park Inventory and Condition Report, October 1995.
basketball tournaments which use mainly the bandshell and adjacent hard-surfaced areas, other events involve the use of sales stands and tents which leave significant patterns of wear on turf areas and occasional ancillary damage from truck and other access. These events require a high level of park infrastructure for water and power outlets, and create significant costs in park rehabilitation.

**Demographic Factors Affecting Victoria Park**

The location of the park in the central area of London makes it an unusual asset to the downtown cityscape. It also serves as a local or community park for a large population that resides either locally (in the Central London Planning District) or in relatively close proximity (adjacent Planning Districts: North London, Carling, East London, South London, and West London). The key role of the park in the life of the City of London also means that its appeal reaches essentially all of the City's population, particularly for special events.

This section presents some of the salient demographic characteristics of the local and adjacent areas, and contrasts them with the characteristics of the City of London as a whole. These findings indicate that the park serves a somewhat distinct market than might be expected for a park in other locations.

The local market area (Central London Planning District) is characterized by an older population structure than the city as a whole, with many fewer children, more young adults and seniors. There are also many more single persons, smaller households, and a higher proportion of apartment dwellers. The adjacent areas exhibit similar differences compared to the city overall, but to a lesser degree.

The following chart shows the age profile of the population in the Central area, adjacent Planning Districts, and the City of London. The smaller proportions of children and the higher proportions of those in their twenties and the elderly can be seen clearly.

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2 Source: 1991 Census Data, disk supplied by the City of London Department of Planning and Development.
Table 1: Age Structure of the Central City and London Overall

The table below shows some of the significant differences of Victoria Park's market area in respect to the percent of population that is single, separated, widowed or divorced; the percent having a mother tongue other than English or French; the proportion who rent their homes; and the average number of persons per household. The data shows that the prime areas the park serves have significantly high shares of single-status persons and renters, along with lower household size. There is, however, no significant difference in the proportion of "ethnic" residents.

Table 2: Key Social Characteristics, Central Area, Adjacent Districts and London Overall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1991 Census Data</th>
<th>% Single, Separated, Widowed, Divorced</th>
<th>% Language Other than English /French</th>
<th>% of Homes Rented</th>
<th>Average # of Persons per Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central London</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent Districts</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Overall</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future Population Trends
The population of London is projected to grow over the next 15 to 20 years, at a rate higher than the Province of Ontario overall. The "reference scenario" (the result of assumptions about future population growth forces that are considered most likely to
Residential Boom Downtown

Over the past three years, downtown London has seen a boom in residential development. This key ingredient for downtown revitalization leads to busier streets at night, the growth of a community with a residential stake in the core and additional demand for goods and services downtown.

In 1996, there were 2,700 residential units in the downtown; now we have 3,800 with plans to build 700 more (500 this year, and 200 more in the next one to three years).

- Drewlo – 440 residential units available at Dundas and Waterloo,
- Tricar – 80 luxury condo units at Pall Mall and Wellington,
- Old Oak Properties – 175 apartments at Talbot and Kent Streets
- Varsity Towers on Ann Street – 137 units
- Sterling Place – 37 residential units at Clarence and York Streets
- Picton Place – 140 luxury apartment units

Meanwhile, a number of building owners continue to convert unused upper floors to residential space.

Revitalization Indicators

The evidence suggests that Downtown London is “taking off”. A recent report prepared by the Planning Division in 2003 showed the following:

1. The value of Building Permits associated with private sector development during this time reached an all-time high of $31.6 million, up 69% over previous expenditures of $9.5 million in 2000.

2. The period 2000 through 2002 saw significant private sector investment in existing building stock with “Alteration” and “Installation” Building Permit expenditures totalling $28.6 million and $17.6 million respectively.

3. Since 2000, improvements to properties along Wellington Street and Dundas Street have accounted for 61% of the total construction value of all core area Building Permits. York Street recorded the third highest dollar investment over the period (5.6%) with alteration, installation and addition permits for Copp Building Supply, the Via Train Station and the Sun Media Building accounting for the greater proportion of these expenditures.

4. Average sales values for free hold and condominium properties have risen steadily since 1996/1997, reversing the trend of decline experienced in Central London through the early to mid 1990’s.

5. 2002, and the first quarter of 2003, saw the highest average sales values for free hold residential properties in the ten year period under review - up 12% from 2000 and 28% from a period low in 1997.

6. Average sales values for condominiums in 2003 are equally impressive, up 20% from 2000 and a full 31% from a period low in 1996.
What Downtown has to Offer

Downtown London has a significant amount to offer any investor. Considering the revitalization phenomenon that is currently occurring in the Core, now is the time to invest. A recent survey by Accumen Research revealed many positive attitudes toward Downtown London.

Survey Results

- 353 respondents randomly sampled from all urban and suburban areas across the City of London.

Sample Characteristics

- Most respondents were female (62%), and close to half were between the ages of 35 to 54 (40%).
- A wide range of total household incomes are represented by the sample surveyed:
  - 27% = Under $30,000
  - 22% = $30,000 - $49,999
  - 35% = $50,000 - $99,999
  - 16% = $100,000 +
- 60% of respondents are married, in common law arrangements or are engaged. 12% are divorced, separated or widowed, and 28% are single.

Working Downtown

The likelihood of working downtown decreases with age:

- 24% who work downtown are 18 - 35 in age
- 19% who work downtown are 35 - 54 in age

The majority of respondents who work in downtown earn between $30,000 to $99,999 per year:

- 38% earn $30,000 - $49,999 per year
- 40% earn $50,000 - $99,999 per year

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Survey Results

Visiting Downtown

Winter
• 31% made 2 - 5 visits
• 16% made 5 - 10 visits
• 15% made 15 + visits

Summer
• 27% made 2 - 5 visits
• 17% made 5 - 10 visits
• 15% made 15 + visits

Recommended Changes

Respondents were asked, "If there were one thing that could be changed that would influence you to spend more time downtown, what would it be?"

• 24% said Range of Services.

Downtown Experience

What downtown has to offer:

• Entertainment, Dining and Courtesy of Staff received favorable ratings. In each case, over 60% of people offered a rating of 4 or 5. (With 5 being high and 1 being low)

General shopping experience in downtown London:

• Business hours, range of services and competitive prices received ratings that were generally neutral.

• Atmosphere, cleanliness and safety received lower ratings, but more than half of respondents did give these factors at least a 3 out of 5. (With 5 being high and 1 being low)

Downtown Revitalization

• 84% of respondents believe that it is important to revitalize downtown London, and 58% believe that the general appeal of the downtown area has improved in the past couple of years.

Business Opportunities

Conclusions:

• Over 80% of respondents agreed that revitalization of the downtown is important. Revitalization is a process, and many Londoners are beginning to notice that this is taking place since well over half of respondents agreed that the general appeal of the downtown had improved over the past couple of years.

We at MainStreet London are very encouraged by the survey results. Londoners are telling us they value the downtown and there are some concrete actions we can take to increase feet on the streets downtown. Revitalization is working and continues to be a priority for us all.
Downtown Attractions

Downtown Facts

• The John Labatt Centre is ranked third in Canada in terms of ticket sales, behind The Air Canada Centre in Toronto and the Bell Centre in Montreal with over 600,000 ticket sales in its first year and that number is growing. It is ranked in the top 40 venues in the world according to Pollstar. They are attracting big name artists like Shania Twain, Rod Stewart, David Bowie, REM and Cher.

• Sports marketing efforts in London are strong, winning a recent bid to host the Memorial Cup in May 2005. We have attracted top events like the Figure Skating Championships and the Scott Tournament of Hearts, a major curling event.

• The London Knights Junior A Hockey team is attracting over 8,000 people per game at the John Labatt Centre and are mostly selling out or standing room only at their games (over 9000 people). In 2004 they won the OHL regular season championship and had their best season in recent history. The Knights have generated unprecedented excitement and attract thousands of enthusiastic fans to our downtown. They are poised for a great run this year.

• Downtown area festivals attract hundreds of thousands of people throughout the year, with a growing contingent of ethnic festivals attracting new customers and new businesses downtown.

• The newly renovated London Public Library attracts over 100,000 people per month.

Business Opportunities

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## Downtown Attractions cont'd.

### Downtown Facts

- Covent Garden Market attracts 37,000 people per month, even more when festivals and farmers markets are happening on site.

- Sales results are trending up significantly over last year.

- The London Convention Centre celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2004. It continues to attract large conventions and conferences such as the Ontario Planners (OPPI), the Royal Canadian Legion, Canadian Association of University Business Officers, and so on. It has also acted as a catalyst for expansion of conference facilities at the Best Western Lamplighter, the Four Points Sheraton, and the Western Fair.

- Cultural highlights in the downtown area include Orchestra London (Centennial Hall) and the Grand Theatre, as well as the Wolf Performance Hall at the Central Library and the Spriet Family Theatre (Covent Garden Market) where Original Kids rehearse and perform. The John Labatt Centre also hosts Broadway shows, festivals and many other non-sporting events. Downtown London plays host to film festivals and the Fringe Theatre Festival every year. It is the heart of our city. Our growing arts community includes The Arts Project, Forest City Gallery, Michael Gibson Gallery, Jen Li Gallery, London Arts Council and featuring Jonathan Bancroft-Snell Interiors, a destination store downtown that offers arguably the best representation of contemporary ceramics and pottery in Canada.

### Business Opportunities

- City of London investment in Covent Garden Market and the new UpCity bring large numbers of people to the area.

- The London Convention Centre has grown London's capacity to handle large conventions.

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Workforce & Residential Population

Day/Night Population (estimates only)

- Over 30,000 people work downtown
- As we’ve already noted, downtown London is experiencing a residential boom. We continue to work with building owners to convert upper stories of downtown commercial buildings to residential units.
- Within 3 km of downtown London, there are over 100,000 residents and this number is growing

Highlights

Vehicular Traffic (from City of London website)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intersection</th>
<th>8am - 9am</th>
<th>9am - 10am</th>
<th>10am - 11am</th>
<th>11am - 12pm</th>
<th>12pm - 1pm</th>
<th>1pm - 2pm</th>
<th>2pm - 3pm</th>
<th>3pm - 4pm</th>
<th>4pm - 5pm</th>
<th>5pm - 6pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King St.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York St.</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundas St.</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Downtown Incentive Programs

Main Street London can help you find one or more incentive programs that will save you money. The following is a description of incentives that you can access to help you invest.

City of London

1. Façade Restoration Loan
   • A City of London program that assists downtown property owners interested in improving their building façade.
   • Qualifying property owners may be eligible for a ten-year, interest-free loan up to a maximum of $25,000 or half the value of the façade improvements being proposed.

2. Upgrade to Building Code Loan
   • A City of London program that assists downtown property owners with interior improvements that relate to Fire and Building Code requirements.
   • Qualifying property owners may be eligible for a ten-year, interest-free loan up to a maximum of $50,000, or half the value of the work being proposed.

3. Rehabilitation Grant
   • A City of London program that provides an economic incentive for the rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of commercial and residential buildings in the core.
   • If your property taxes increase as a result of a rehabilitation and/or redevelopment project, the City will grant back a portion of that tax increase every year, for ten years.

MainStreet London

1. About Face Façade Improvement Grant
   A MainStreet London program that provides grant money for building and business owners who want to improve the façade of their building, including:

   • Design and planning – part of the cost of retaining a designer
   • Storefront improvements – restoration or appropriate renovations
   • Repair or restoration of heritage elements – brick and stone repointing, window restoration, cornice work
   • Signage, lighting and awnings – new lighting, replacement of back-lit signs, new awnings
   • Exterior improvements – repainting brickwork or masonry.

Program details and applications for both City of London and MainStreet programs are available at the MainStreet London office.

An overview of one of our façade improvement projects, and fact sheets for these programs, are repeated on the following pages.
Table 4: Projected Population Age Structure

Overview of Tourism in London
London is favourably situated within a day's drive of about 150 million people living in Ontario, western Quebec, and the north-eastern United States. It has several fine attractions for tourists, and special events and festivals form a definite part of the attraction.

Tourism generates economic activity in London totalling over a quarter of a billion dollars annually. It is the City's sixth largest employer. It is important to London to nurture this activity, and to see that it can grow without harming the amenities of the City as a whole. Tourism, in fact, has been seen as a factor which has contributed to the amenity of London for its own residents over the past years, through the support of many more dining and entertainment outlets, and supporting a diverse and attractive array of shopping facilities.

After some years of slow or negative growth in the recessionary years of the early 1990s, tourism is again becoming a growth sector in London. Recent efforts of the City's tourism industry and Tourism London centre around strategies to make London even more worthy of its motto: London, the city that loves to host.

Tourism Markets and Economic Impacts of Tourism
The value of economic activity generated by tourism in London is significant and growing. The following table illustrates just how significant it is to the City:
Table 5: Projected Economic Impact of Tourism in London

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto Related</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transit</td>
<td>$64</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>$66</td>
<td>$67</td>
<td>$68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>$42</td>
<td>$43</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>$61</td>
<td>$62</td>
<td>$63</td>
<td>$64</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$19</td>
<td>$19</td>
<td>$19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Retail</td>
<td>$32</td>
<td>$32</td>
<td>$33</td>
<td>$33</td>
<td>$34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Tourism</strong></td>
<td><strong>$267</strong></td>
<td><strong>$271</strong></td>
<td><strong>$275</strong></td>
<td><strong>$279</strong></td>
<td><strong>$283</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The tourism market for London is diverse and widespread. Only a bare majority of the tourists are Canadian, with the rest coming in increasing proportions from the U.S.A. and abroad.

The following table shows the tourist origins over the past years, as measured at London's three tourist information centres:

Table 6: Tourism Origins, 1994-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>47.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Canadian</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism London, Information Centre Reports

Tourism planning in London identifies five different tourism market segments:

- Individual visitors
- Group tours
It is fair to say that the general amenity of the downtown core is important to all of the above market segments, and this definitely includes the amenity provided by Victoria Park. It is likely to be the individual visitors and the special interest groups who will make proportionately the most direct use of the park, however. Individual visitors experiencing downtown London can see Victoria Park as a green oasis and a heritage site, right next to the downtown shopping area and hotels. Many individual visitors will also be in London specifically to partake of one or other special event that takes place in the park. Special interest groups form one segment that may come to London solely for a special event or festival, and a significant share of such events in London are, as noted in the previous section, held in Victoria Park.

It is worthy of note that the 1993 event, London 200, created a significant increase in the number of individual visitors to London and its downtown area. In that year, the well promoted event overcame the effects of difficult economic times to create a surge in such visits by individuals.

**Events Tourism and Victoria Park**

The whole sector of tourism that responds to the attraction of festivals and special events has been targeted in the strategic planning for London's tourism industry. This takes the form of a strategic direction and several strategies, some of which are quoted below:

*Strategic Direction*

*Increase the number of visitors to the City of London by promoting London as a premier destination for tourism, with emphasis on events and festivals.*

*Strategies*

- *Encourage the development of existing events to major status and identify new special events and festivals in London.*
- *Position London as a major year-round tourism and motor coach destination to Canadian, American and International travellers.*
- *Increase the number of regional, provincial, national, and international sports-related tournaments and special recreational events.*
- *Increase the local awareness of the economic benefits of visitor and motor coach spending in the local economy*


It is appropriate to note that tourism planning recognizes the increased importance of sports complexes such as "Dreamers" and "Sportsplex" in developing this market.
There is an understanding that venues throughout the city need to be developed for sports events, and for special events and festivals of all kinds. It is also the case that several of the most prominent special events have Victoria Park as their venue, and are likely to continue to use it.

The implication of this for planning of Victoria Park is that more use will want to occur, not less. The question for the planning of the future park is: how can this be channelled into smarter use, placing less actual pressure on the park even while user numbers may increase?

**Summary of Effects of Demographic and Tourism Trends on Victoria Park**

There is no doubt about the key role that Victoria Park plays in the City of London:

- a major open space resource for the residents of the central area
- a major heritage resource for the city as a whole
- a major amenity for visitors to London
- a major venue for special events and festivals for Londoners and tourists

Other key facts are:

- the park currently receives over 1.5 million visitors per year
- peak days of special events draw about 27,000 persons.

In future, use pressures are likely to increase by 30% or more over the next 15 years:

- annual attendance could be about 2.0 million
- peak-day use could be about 35,000 persons

The park plays a key role in the tourism industry of London, which:

- is the city's sixth largest employer
- creates economic activity of about $270 million annually
- is planned to increase, based partly on special events and festivals.

Not all uses of the park are damaging in proportion to their numbers of participants. Some events that are not the highest attendance create more damage than others with fewer attendees.

Planning of the park will require a clear determination of the landscape carrying capacity in order to avoid unnecessary deterioration of the gracious green setting for all types of visitation. A balancing of the increased use of the park and the numbers and types of events will require a change in current strategy. Balancing higher use and demands for visitation over the next few years will require program alterations that build on the park landscape strengths, yet creatively allow event activities and tourism programs that attract local and regional visitors all year round.
4. Environmental Evaluation  
- the park carrying capacity

In determining the carrying capacity of Victoria Park, the consultant team established the “the level of use that the park landscape can withstand while providing a sustainable quality of environment and recreational experience”. Implicit in this definition is the premise of a quality environment and a quality recreation experience. The balancing of these two objectives, in an urban landscape that is already seriously declined complicates the challenge of finding the appropriate balance of use and management.

The following criteria was used to evaluate the level of sensitivity of the landscape elements and the sensitivity of recreational experience. Once the degree of sensitivity and decline is determined, a carrying capacity and strategy can be set which protects and improves those features/elements of the landscape of value to the recreational experience.

A landscape zoning plan has been prepared which sets strict limits on those areas of future protection and improvements thus setting the carrying capacity of the park. Only strict adherence to these management zones as a framework for park redevelopment and maintenance will sustain a quality park landscape into the future for all to enjoy (see Figure 3 - Landscape Zoning).

Vegetation Evaluation  
- Size, Health And Condition Of Trees In The Park

Based on an assessment using data from the Phase I Inventory Report (Behr et al.), more than 1/3 of all trees in Victoria Park are in fair to poor condition (109 trees). Of these trees over 50% of the large trees in the park are showing signs of stress due to soil compaction, poor pruning practises, and sites stresses. The level of use at the site in all areas around the trees has contributed to a serious decline in the condition of the planting in the park, although many of the largest trees are
ageing and are not being replaced with equivalent species. Refer to HWND’s Vegetation Assessment in the Appendix.

- **Heritage Value**
  The perimeter tree structure of the park is losing its form as the dominant species of sugar and silver maple decline or are removed. These species, as well as the Carolinian species that ring the historic Oval or Green are highly sensitive to soil compaction. These historic tree structures of the park will soon be not recognisable as the remaining trees die. The historic vegetation structure around the outer perimeter of the park, along the former Drive and Ride, and within the Oval is highly sensitive to alterations and loss of prime specimen trees.

- **Urban Design Integrity**
  The green image of the park is in decline as the large tree canopy is fragmented and the species mix shifts to dominating Norway Maple. The lack of planting structure in the park reduces the visual interest throughout the seasons. The green structure of the park is a highly significant element in the civic/historic precinct of London.

- **Vegetation Sensitivity To Soil Compaction**
  Soil compaction is substantial in the park and is detrimental to plant health, particularly the sugar maple and several of the Carolinian species that are highly sensitive to this type of ongoing condition around the root system.

- **Soil Porosity/Compaction**
  The degree of low soil porosity, high compaction and extensive areas of heavy shade within the park also creates a situation where turf is difficult to maintain to a healthy resilient condition. This situation will only worsen as the park planting matures and Norway Maples and lindens dominate the canopy of the park. High sensitivity to shade, lack of sun, and compaction for turf areas throughout the park landscape.

- **Planting Diversity For The Park**
  In more recent years the new planting has focused on Norway Maples and lower branching ornaments, and less on native species and Carolinian species so abundantly representing the mature trees of the park. The park landscape is sensitive to the lack of new planting diversity that will not only enhance the site visually, but will establish a healthier ecological environment for the long term landscape.

**Archaeological Evaluation**

- **Sensitivity Of Potential Archaeological Resources/Interpretive Potential**
  The archaeological resources within the park are of a high significance for the City of London. Due to the fact that many of the remains are to be found within 8 -12 inches below grade the resources are extremely sensitive to encroachment and
damage through all forms of excavation, construction, servicing tunnelling and even event set-ups.

**Recreational Experience Evaluation**

- **Sensitivity Of Passive Use Within The Park**
  The once gracious landscapes of the park have seriously lost their scenic quality and rich diversity through the seasons. The park has become a place of cluttered elements, unorganized and often unattractive. The appearance of the park after events is poor for more passive activities, and the park has lost the structure of meandering walks, attractive seating areas and floral displays. The passive experience of the park is highly sensitive to the current declining condition of the general hard and soft landscape.

- **Sensitivity Of Active Use Of The Park And Events For Visitors**
  The more active uses within the park are primarily centred on winter skating and events/festivals within the park. A wide range of events occur during the seasons, many of the smaller scale concerts, performances rely heavily on the green ambiance of the park to establish the setting and attraction. The larger events although still sensitive to the green setting and convenience of the downtown location of the park, are equally in need of sites that are well serviced, have parking provisions, and provide a range of landscapes for heavy activities and other softer areas for seating, eating etc. These events are less sensitive to the site location although the park is a desired place. The events could benefit from improved facilities and expanded premises as attendance grows.

The landscape zoning plan is based on 6 (six) key zones within the park, refer to Figure 3 for zoning diagram.

- **Zone 1 Primary Protection Zone** - includes four small areas of ornamental and exotic trees that form the frame of the Victorian “Oval”.

- **Zone 2 Secondary Protection Zone** - includes the perimeter plantings of the park which form the edges and historic alleys of the park.

- **Zone 3 The Open Green** - or historic “Oval” will be reconstituted in the park plan to allow for open sunny lawn environs. An intensive management effort to horticulturally redefine a lawn and remove tree species that do not form the heritage language of the park.

- **Zone 4 Gateways & Focal Areas** - include a range of new gathering areas and plazas designed and surfaced to withstand activities for events and community festivals.

- **Zone 5 Linear Corridors** - includes restructured formal paths and promenades to withstand heavy foot, bicycle and roller blading activities, and periodic set-up for seasonal events and festivals.
London Life

Legend

1. Primary Protection Zone
2. Secondary Protection Zone
3. Open Lawn Zone
4. Gateway Areas
5. Linear Setup Area
6. Archeological Protection Zone

Victoria Park Restoration Master Plan

Landscape Zoning - Events Management

Date: July 1997

Figure 3
**Zone 6: Archaeological Protection Zone** - includes most of the park landscape where potential remains from the native occupation and British Garrison periods. It requires site protection from activities and redevelopment construction. Site investigations for remains must be conducted prior to construction activities in this zone.

Further detail of management recommendations and guidelines are found in section 5 of this report.
5. The Restoration Action Plan

The Development Plan

The concept for the Heritage Strolling Park has been described as a full concept earlier in this report. The park will be restored as an elegant, promenading park and community gathering place, within a rich, attractive landscape. The concept focuses on the reinstatement of the historic Green or “Oval” from the Miller Plan of 1874, and restructures the path system to reconnect Richmond Street at Central to Wellington Street and the City Hall corner. A simplified pathway system in the park reduces the amount of existing surfacing in the park, and strengthens the primary connections through the park to surrounding buildings and street corners.

The Green, or “Oval” as it was called historically, will provide a sunny attractive place for passive picnicking or more formal gatherings for events and public forums. The replanted park perimeter landscape will constitute a richer, shaded enclosure and includes another series of secondary paths and seating areas meandering through gardens, gathering plaza, and historical interpretive areas.

Several gathering areas within the park precinct have been re-designed to renew their function in the plan and to improve the environs for casual everyday use of the park, as well as, special needs during events and festivals. These areas include - the establishment of a garden landscape for Reg Cooper Square, the rehabilitation of a new Bandshell/Skating Plaza and the creation of two new “gateway” gathering areas at Cenotaph Square and the Heritage District Gateway (corner of Central and Richmond).

An attractive educational walk has been proposed connecting Richmond and Clarence through on the west side of the park to the Civic Hall area. This route would attract visitors to the area, and include streetscape improvements, linear garden plantings and
The Heritage Strolling Park
Victoria Park Restoration Master Plan
Victoria Park Restoration Master Plan
Precedents
Victoria Park Restoration Master Plan
Precedents
storyline educational information, perhaps public art, telling the “story” of London in the form of a “Civic Garden Walk”.

The concept for the Park is presented in Figure 4, and the ideas of the plan are illustrated in a series of design images or precedents researched by the consultants during the course of concept development. The precedents evoke a sense of spatial quality, and experience that the site plan can illustrate. They also set guideline aspirations for the quality and richness of details that must be carried forward into the design phases of work beyond this study. The precedents include ideas of:

- Promenades and Paths
- Plazas and Urban Gathering Areas
- Winter Skating (with social gatherings places)
- Contemporary Floral gardens
- Nightscapes
- Public Art, Commemoration, and Educational Features
- Crafted Furnishings

The concept plan is grounded in the principle that excellence in design and execution is a priority in the implementation of this plan. This master restoration plan and accompanying management strategy forms the foundation for structure of the park. However, many tasks must be undertaken to implement this plan with continued community involvement. The primary tasks include three categories of effort:

Capital Works - Design and Redevelopment
Ongoing Management
Community Liaison and Fundraising

Within these categories there are some initial tasks to be undertaken to set this project in active motion.

**Capital Works - Design and Development**

- The Planning and Development Department must lead the project development and management aspects of the park plan.
- A Victoria Park Action Committee or “team work group” must be formed internally within the city to co-ordinate regular decisions about ongoing upgrading works, daily management and monitoring of the park. The group could form as an extension of the study Advisory Committee, and would include community representation as required. This group should meet regularly to manage the progression of the plan implementation as well. This team may be augmented during the course of the project implementation to include other department specialists (e.g. engineering/works), specialist community group (e.g. public art representative), or outside consulting specialists to assist on specific matters as the plan evolves.
- The Park and Reg Cooper Square require detailed surveys of all site features completed in anticipation of contract documents and detailed design efforts. (Current mapping of the site and underground services is inadequate).
• Special studies need to be completed soon in order to inform the design
  development process including a archaeological survey of the site and a detailed
  engineering report on the condition of the existing sub-structure and
  membrane/drainage system
• Initiate detailed design of primary park infrastructure improvements e.g. the paths,
  drainage system, the promenade, priority lighting.

_Ongoing Management_
• Set staff assignments based on the initiatives set out in the following management
  programs for landscape, public art and events.
• Set a priority for detailed landscape maintenance changes related to immediate
  alterations in events management. Events site plan submissions must be altered in
  the interim to protect the most highly sensitive areas of trees. Build
  communications with event organizers to adhere to the principles of the landscape
  zoning plan, and to take interim measures on a case by case basis to improve site
  arrangements and reduce impacts. Assistance from staff will continue to be an
  important part of the City’s role in fostering “smart use” of the park.

_Community Liaison and Fundraising_
• Continue to build the organization of a “Friends of Victoria Park” through
  continued public awareness efforts for the new Park Plan, and raise public
  knowledge of the resources of the park through continued community education –
  keep the “story” of the park going in newspapers, newsletters etc.
• Build the partner base for the park as discussed in following report sections.
• Establish City-based capital development and management budgets to serve as the
  foundation “catalyst” for the park restoration and rehabilitation. Financial
  leadership must come from the City with other community organizations assisting
  in the initiatives.

_Guidelines and Recommendations_
The following guidelines and recommendations provide the essential components of an
integrated management plan for Victoria Park. The management strategy has been
divided into three main categories - landscape, public art, and events and tourism
programs.

_The Landscape Program_
• establish a detailed planting plan which protects and rebuilds the historical
  perimeter plantings, the oval green and associated ornamental plantings.
• remove and relocate many of the Norway maple plantings that have been planted
  in recent installations to increase species diversity, allow areas of improved
  sunlight and turf/groundcover maintenance, and to re-build the Victorian
  horticultural palette of plants that frame the interior of the green.
- create contemporary strolling gardens with a major emphasis on lower maintenance groundcovers and perennials, and bold simple seasonal displays.
- protect large specimen trees that are sensitive to root compaction with non-intrusive physical barriers (sugar maples and silver maples). Place heritage bollards and light chains around areas directing foot-traffic where necessary.
- replant the old “grand” tree species in the park to re-establish the gracious light canopies and tree structure of past landscapes, particularly the sugar maple and silver maple.
- conduct a detailed soil watering, turf management, and soil aeration program in association with the events management plan. Reinforce the turf where necessary around inside green perimeter.
- eliminate and reduce where possible, paths and hard surfaces areas located within drip lines and adjacent to tree trunks; increase porous path pavements (fine and chip paths where possible).

A detailed planting plan must be prepared based on six key landscape zones within the park, determined in the carrying capacity review:

**Primary Protection Zone**
These zones include the ornamental and exotic species that formed the frame of the Victorian “Oval”.
- protect existing plantings of oak, hackberry, sycamore, locust, etc.
- remove and relocate existing footpaths to increase soil porosity and reduce compaction
- remove and relocate recent plantings of Norway maple
- provide tree based maintenance program for these zones (pruning, aeration programs, fertilization, disease control where necessary)
- replant Carolinian species to restore planting structure and display of the Oval edges

**Secondary Protection Zone**
These zones include the perimeter plantings which form the edges and historic allees of the park.
- protect linear zones of the park from development, and reinstate the planting structure of silver and sugar maples in this zone;
- reduce paved surfaces where possible close to root systems of existing trees, and increase soil porosity;
- remove existing plantings of Norway maple in this zone, and allow opportunities to open canopy for grass and groundcover/garden regeneration;
- re-establish a formal urban planting language for the street face of the park;
- provide individual tree-based maintenance program for speciality/historic trees within the zone

**Open Green**
The Oval needs an intensive maintenance effort to redefine the lawn and remove species that do not form the heritage language of the green (Norway maple, ash etc.)
- open the space to the sun, include possible new irrigation system;
- establish rigorous turf maintenance to ensure healthy lawn areas and visual quality
- reinforce the lawn areas on the inside of the primary Oval paths to allow for events and heavier traffic set up, tents etc.

**Gateway/Focal Areas**

- Redesign these areas to improve the function and attraction of the gathering areas of the park. Formalize plantings of large trees associated with plazas, park entrances and bandshell/skating plaza. Use of evergreen plantings must be introduced to screen the bandshell area, and to increase seasonal interest. A bold “winter garden” notion could be interesting for activities during the Winter and Christmas high use period.

- Create lush display gardens with creative combinations of perennials, groundcovers and various levels of maintenance. The proposed “Civic Garden Walk” in front of London Life would include shade tolerant display gardens with hosta, lilies, astilbes, ferns etc. The roof gardens of Reg Cooper will incorporate a variety of low sun and shade tolerant species for the garden concepts. All planting for the Square would have to be developed for roof garden constraints.

**Linear Corridors**

Formal planting of gracious tree allees can be introduced as part of a more contemporary path organization. Large fast growing species may be considered, as well as, the more traditional sugar maple, silver maple etc.

**Archaeological Protection Zone**

Tree removals and excavations for new plantings must consider the potential of archaeological remains prior to any new works.

**The Heritage/Archaeological program**

Once an archaeological site survey has been conducted, which tests various areas of the park for historic remains of significance, a protocol will be established for further construction and excavation works within the park.

It is recommended that although the park must be used for recreational use, potential archaeological remains could be a primary educational attraction for the park - even if more passive forms of education and interpretation are followed. “Telling the story” of the park environ through time is fascinating for park visitors of all ages and interests.

Essentially the resource needs to be examined in more site specific detail. Before specific interpretive or education proposals can be recommended. The precedents that are included in this report illustrate a range of ideas about interpreting history through public art and more traditional forms of signage and displays.
**The Events Management Program**

The city must introduce a rescheduling policy for planning events in Victoria Park, allowing more landscape rejuvenation/repair time between events (particularly important in the short term before park upgrading is completed). Two to three week intervals are recommended. Monitoring of the event impacts over the next three year-to-five year period will assist in adjusting this schedule as park management approaches change.

With the anticipated increase of demand for events, and increased size of attendance the City must actively look for alternative sites for larger venues, with an investment of services and conveniences.

The recommended strategy/policies for events are based on the six zone landscape plan, with inherent detail guidelines about levels of use and set up requirements. This zoning plan must form the basis of all event proponent site plan submissions and establishes the agreement between the proponent and the City. Permits for events and access to the park will only be permitted on strict adherence to these zoning requirements.

**Zone 1 - Primary Protection Zone**

No vehicles or tent/structural set up will be allowed in these zones.

Strict foot-traffic protection of turf and tree root system will be established with protection barriers.

**Zone 2 - Secondary Protection Zone**

No vehicles or tent/structural set-up will be allowed in zone 2.

Limited foot traffic may be allowed in this zone for small performance events only. Barriers to restrict access must be installed for large events.

**Zone 3 - Open Green**

This zone will be maintained in turf to provide set up space for small tents/structures and pedestrian access/gathering. Temporary service access for light weight vehicles will be allowed only. The green must be serviced adequately for set up of larger events.

**Zone 4 - Gateways/Focal Areas**

Gateways and focal areas will be hard surfaced and serviced to allow gatherings, temporary vehicle access and special set-ups. No large vehicles will be allowed into these places for longer term, and prime care must be taken to protect features within these urban landscapes such as walls, gates, seating, monuments, lights.

**Zone 5 - Linear Corridors**

All primary vehicular access will be strictly controlled on a wide promenade path forming the Green of the Park. The width of paving will allow truck access, some temporary parking where deemed appropriate, and adequate through access for pedestrians and emergency access. The inside area of the Promenade loop will be serviced for the set-up of tents/structures and the heaviest foot traffic attractions for events. Reinforcing of turf may be installed as needed on the inside edge of the Green. Potential linear set-up areas have been proposed for Clarence and Wellington Streets, however, staff will need to consult with adjacent landowners and church representatives to ensure that activity conflicts are avoided and that appropriate scheduling requirements are met in the immediate park vicinity.
**Zone 6 - Archaeological Protection Zone**

All temporary installations for events must limit the need to excavation or dig in the grounds of the park to protect archaeological areas of potential.

*Once events exceed this zoning capacity for Victoria Park, the event has out grown the site or must look to alternative methods to set-up outside of the park boundaries.*

As part of the assignment, the consultants undertook a brief telephone survey of Parks Departments in other major Ontario cities of roughly comparable size, in order to see if there was much consistency in their policy for permitting and charging for community event use of their parks. The cities included: Metro Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Etobicoke, Windsor, Brampton and Kitchener. It is not purported that this was a full and definitive survey, but rather a general overview of policies and their nature in various cities.

In general, there is a significant degree of similarity of policies in all of the responding cities, with some natural differences in the actual fees charged. This enables us to present the findings in point form, rather than as a table:

- the permitting process always involves an application requiring information on the status of the group and the nature of the event. Normally, groups must indicate that they have proper insurance coverage, and point out how they will deal with any anticipated special needs such as extra policing, health surveillance, etc.
- some cities have events committees to vet the permit applications, others decentralize this function to individuals; in some cases, the park supervisor involved;
- all have a "normal" schedule of charges, and give favoured rates to non-profit community groups. Typically, the favoured rate is about 1/3 that charged to quasi-commercial event sponsors. In a few cases, the rates are negotiable;
- permits normally contain a clause requiring the event sponsors to repay the Parks Department for any damage incidental to the event, such as equipment repair or turf rehabilitation. In some cases, where an event has a long enough history with the Department, an estimate of the amount likely to be required to cover such rehabilitation is charged up front with the permit fee, and is adjusted appropriately after the event.

The following list of recommendations summarizes the actions needed for events and tourism management in Victoria Park:

- promote the restored park as an interpretive and recreation destination within a more comprehensive heritage walk/scenic route through the heritage districts of London;
- establish and publicize the events management program reflecting the carrying capacity of the park, and administer strict set-up guidelines for events linked to landscape restoration proposals;
• protect primary landscape areas of importance in the park, and concentrate
  intensive uses in key locations designed to accommodate the activities;
• restrict and enforce vehicular access into the park;
• encourage the re-distribution and linkage of events into adjacent streets, parking
  areas and commercials areas, particularly as festivals increase in size or outgrow
  the park event capacity;
• assist event proponents in the relocation of events to alternative serviced sites as
  events increase in size or physical requirements change in future;
• all events held in the park must financially take responsibility for any damage that
  exists as a result of event activities;
• re-examine fee requirements for permits and holding events in the park, based on
  the necessity of infrastructure improvements to be financed by the City;
• a park-community environmental program will be established to monitor and
  reduce noise, garbage, rowdiness, vandalism, traffic/parking congestion, safety
  issues etc.
• ideally, the event themes should support the social/cultural role of the park within
  a heritage/civic precinct;
• commercialization of events will not be supported at this site;
• financial penalties will be enforced for event participants that do not adhere to
  guidelines and management zoning, as well as park bylaws;
• the role of City staff or volunteer partners will need to be expanded to include
  monitoring of events, during weekends as well.

The Public Art Program
Victoria Park and Reg Cooper Square could potentially support a range of public art
installations reinforcing the role of the park plan over time and the following themes:
• outstanding achievements of Londoners and the community at large (no special
  interest groups);
• commemoration of events of national and provincial significance for London;
• pre-history and military history of the military barracks period;
• the Victorian park era and associated heritage features;
• values of the existing period and aspirations for the future civic realm.

The intent of the plan is to provide opportunities, as interest and budgets allow, for a
variety of types of installations, preferably of an integrated or semi-integrated nature.
Opportunities exist as the design evolves to develop interesting site furnishings,
lighting, walls of commemoration, street and neighbourhood markers, beautiful gates
and garden elements, historic street mapping, and educational works.

• the public art vision for the park must include a thorough examination of the
  existing artworks and memorials in the park based on the following criteria:
  • site relationship and scale
  • legibility and visual context
  • condition - materials and maintenance
  • safety
  • constraint to other site activities/circulation
public appreciation and perceived public acceptance

- public art works that do not meet the previous thematic and physical criteria should be considered for relocation when a more suitable location is found under a new city wide public art strategy;

- as the restoration master plan moves into more detailed design stages, character and theme areas for site specific public art commissions can be developed. Community dialogue about the details of the thematics directions would help to determine what are the priority messages for new works;

- it is encouraged that new public art commissions fall under the category of integrated and semi-integrated public art, and include an interdisciplinary design process where desirable (e.g. the civic garden);

Definitions of public art types include:

- Discrete - Public art that is not integrated with the site either in a physical or a conceptual manner. Usually this type of public artwork only relates to the site from a locational and scale point of view and is created off site and moved into place.

- Semi-Integrated - Public art that derives to some degree its conceptual inspiration from some aspects of the site and displays a heightened degree of physical and conceptual integration. It should be understood that a semi-integrated public artwork may exist in a number of locations providing that all possess the same requisite physical and conceptual conditions, i.e. a piece which must be located in an open windy field condition could be located in any open windy field anywhere.

- Integrated Art - Public art that derives its conceptual and physical integration from a particular site to the degree that it could not exist anywhere else. The emphasis here being on accessing the site narrative.

- an open and fair process will be established for all new works in the park including three forms of selection; open competition, limited competition and invitation;

- a registry of local and regional artists could be developed for the City to establish a pre-qualified roster of experienced professional designers and craftpeople;

- a public art maintenance fund must be established to ensure ongoing maintenance of existing works; new works and donations must be maintained by the proponent or by alternative negotiation. A detailed conservationist should examine the existing works and assist in establishing budgets related to work requirements, and potential funding sources;

- establish a regular monitoring of the park collection to determine the ongoing worth of retention, material condition, and public relevance (de-assession or the process of removing or dismantling of an existing artwork). This monitoring will be undertaken by Environmental Services and LRAHM;

- All public art issues related to new commissions or design integration during the plan implementation will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee who will make recommendations to the City of London Advisory Committee on the Arts. The Victoria Park ad hoc committee would be composed of the following representation:
  - the Advisory Committee on the Arts;
  - the neighbourhood in which the acquisition will be located;
  - LRAHM curatorial and conservation staff;
the London Urban Design Association;
and Veterans groups (if necessary).

**Costing and Priorities (phasing and special projects)**
The total redevelopment cost of the Victoria Park ranges between $2.9 and $3.3 million, varying based on the extent of underground re-servicing that may have to be done for park improvements.

Reg Cooper Square totals between $800,000 and $925,000. Unknown costs at this time are due to the lack of information about courtyard substructure and subsurface suitability. Although this amount may seem a large amount of money to raise in these fiscally constrained times, Victoria Park serves as the premier landmark park within the civic precinct of London, and it is a key factor in how one perceives the City when one visits. The park has declined significantly over time, and requires major amounts of work to restore a setting that can support passive activities and events. Rehabilitating and stabilizing the green oasis in the City is critical to maintain a limited number of key events and to increase its tourism role through touring and other historic education attractions.

A breakdown of *capital development costs* is included in the appendix. Estimates have been outlined are order of magnitude quantities for site demolition, pavements and paths, planting, etc. Allowances only have been provided for public art elements, and customized items like interpretative features, skating facilities etc. The city will have to refine these costs estimates as design development occurs and as information on structures is forthcoming for Reg Cooper Square. Demolition or refurbishing of the existing sub-structure for Reg Cooper has not been included.

Special survey studies will also need to be conducted for archaeology and detailed vegetation maintenance programs. Separate costing for these services will have to be obtained specific to site conditions and budgets, however, a contingency allowance is provided for site surveys and consulting fees.

Obviously, the City of London must make a financial commitment to set budgets in place to begin to improve the path hierarchy, reduce impacts on the existing planting and to re-construct a new infrastructure for the park. The *first priority park infrastructure* phases of work must include the promenade, primary paths, primary planting structure, lighting of the oval and promenade, and drainage improvements. Secondary items for the infrastructure may include as budgets allow irrigation, plaza areas, improved skating and washroom facilities.

*Secondary and tertiary phase projects* of an *amenity nature* could be organized as special projects for fundraising, donations, or community work programs. Some of these may include the gardens in front of London Life, the gateway plazas inclusive of walls, public art, gates and special pavings, historic interpretation features, civic walk and gardens, and park furnishings such as benches, signage, speciality lighting.
The specific phasing of this project cannot be specifically scheduled until some understanding of budgeting possibilities through the City are confirmed. However, a project of this importance to the downtown economy and image for the City should plan to complete all work within a five to seven year period, with most of the infrastructure completed in the first three years. This broad guideline schedule would ensure that the appropriate provisions are made for events, and that the management infrastructure components are in place to ensure elimination of the park deterioration issues.

Detailed design and phasing should also consider the packaging of the amenity components of the park for fund raising efforts. The larger target projects may include the following:

- Reg Cooper Shade Garden $215,000
- Cenotaph Square $178,000
- Civic Garden Walk - Garden 1 - in front of London Life $390,000
- Garden 2 - in front of church $125,000
- Skating/Bandshell Plaza $450,000
- Historic Interpretation Development $115,000
- Heritage District Gateway $300,000

These are larger packages that include many elements in the places including quality paving, walls, ornamentation, planting. Public art has not been included, but needs to be conceptually included at the time of detailed design. The Planning and Development Department should provide more work on the detail layouts and quality of elements within the design if funding packages are pursued. See detail costs of possible funding in the Appendix.

Another funding option may include smaller more saleable components that the “Friends of Victoria Park” could promote. Items may include groups of benches, street markers, heritage signs, “trees” or “beds of plantings”. These donations or fundraisers may be more manageable for people at first, amounting from $500 to $5,000. They could also be marketed as lots of fun for residents and stakeholders such as --- “donate a daisy patch” or “theme groves of trees” etc. The fundraising should be creative and fun for Londoners, and will help to find a renewed sense of ownership for locals.

**Economic Benefits for the City**
The main economic benefit of Victoria Park to the City of London is its contribution to the tourism “balance of payments” of the city:

- the events and festivals held in the park definitely attract some visitors to London who would not otherwise come;
- the events, similarly, provide an outlet for Londoners to enjoy something in their own city rather than travelling elsewhere to spend their money;
- the presence of the park in the downtown core adds to the favourable "image" of the city, contributing to its general attraction to tourists, some of whom may not actively use the park;
- the presence of the park in the downtown core may contribute to lengthening the stay of some tourist visitors, thus increasing their per-capita spending in London;
- the park attracts about 500,000 casual visitors per year, each of whom, in spending some small amount, creates a fairly large economic impact in total.

The Tourism and Convention Marketing Strategy for London (October 1995) foresees an emphasis on events and festivals in order to promote London as a premier destination for tourism. While Victoria Park can be seen as only one venue to accommodate events and festivals in London, it is an important one. The attendance figure of 1,000,000 persons annually at such events, potentially growing to 1,500,000 over 15 years, is testimony to this importance.

Focusing more specifically on the possible dollar value of the economic impact of Victoria Park to London, it must be noted that the per-capita economic impact of a tourist visitor to various festivals is naturally greater than that of a Londoner, but the latter are present in such large numbers that the aggregate impact is still quite significant.

Some events, such as the Gus Macker Tournament, have quite specific data on their participants: where they come from and what they spend. For others, we must make more general estimates.

One basis for such estimates is that each $1 of sales at the events themselves typically leads to $3 of total business in London (source: M. Harris, Tourism London). A typical level of per-capita event spending might be about $5 to $10. Thus, total business impact would be about $15 to $30 per capita from the events themselves. Multiplied by the current level of 1,000,000 event attendees annually, this creates an economic impact of $15 to $30 million annually.

The per-capita spending of tourist visitors to the events is, of course, larger than their spending at the events themselves. Data from the Gus Macker attendees suggests that about $125 per capita is spent in total by event attendees from out of town. While the ratio of "tourist" to "local" attendees varies widely among the events held in Victoria Park, it is likely, considering other comparable events in other cities, that about 15% to 20% of the attendees would be non-local tourists bringing new money into London. This factor thus contributed in 1996 an economic impact of between $19 and $25 million.

The final economic impact of Victoria Park arises from the approximately 500,000 annual casual visitors to the park. While no data exist to document their spending, a level of $3 to $4 per visit seems plausible. Thus, with the multiplier effect of 3, a value of about $10 per visit can be used to estimate this impact, for a total of about $4.5 to $5 million per annum at 1996 levels.

Victoria Park Restoration Master Plan
Considering the potential for a 30% increase in event and casual use of the park over a 15-year period to the year 2011, the economic impact of the park can be summarized as follows:

Table 5: Summary of the Estimated Economic Impact of Victoria Park on the City of London

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of User/Attendee</th>
<th>Estimated Impact, 1996</th>
<th>Estimated Impact, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event Attendees</td>
<td>$15 to $30 million</td>
<td>$20 to $40 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Event Attendees</td>
<td>$19 to $25 million</td>
<td>$25 to $33 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Users</td>
<td>about $4.5 to $5 million</td>
<td>about $6 to $7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>$38.5 to $60 million</td>
<td>$51 to $80 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partners for the Plan**

The comprehensive consultation process for this study has already built a collective of interested stakeholders and potential partners for the realization of the park plan. The City should continue to build the partner base for the park implementation inclusive of residents associations, event organizers, the veterans, local business owners and the arts, heritage and cultural associations. Other groups such as private corporations, education institutions, service clubs, children’s groups and horticultural groups could selectively be introduced to the park concept and could participate in the implementation process.

Clearly, Victoria Park is an important factor on London’s tourism scene. Thus, it would be logical to involve tourism and hospitality industry groups as partners in the discussions about implementation of the plan and its management strategies for the park’s future. This involvement should not be seen as a one-way receiving of a "wish list" for tourism in the park, but rather, as a means of two-way dialogue to work out what the park can and cannot reasonably contribute to the future event-focused tourism strategy of London.

Other partners can likely be found among representatives of central business district groups. These groups can, no doubt, give a good indication of the central role that Victoria Park now plays in creating a green urban focus for the downtown, and can describe how they perceive that their businesses might be affected by changes in the park. In a dialogue setting, they would perhaps more readily see and endorse the necessity for reasonable guidelines for the park’s future development and “smarter” use.

It is recommended that the business association begin to “track” spending related to events in the park and the types of financial relationships associated with this open space amenity.
City Staff must guide the implementation process, ensure the logical sequence of improvements, oversee a fair process and set quality assurance standards warranted by a project of this significance. The creation of a strong *Friends of Victoria Park* group would also assist as volunteers continue to be involved with the park through fundraising, public outreach and visitor services.
6. References


Appendix

Vegetation Assessment
Detailed Site Development Cost Estimate
Public Consultation - Summaries, Notes, Questionnaires
Capital Site Development Cost Estimate
Special Fundraising Packages
Public Participation Process - Victoria Master Plan

As part of the development of the Victoria Park Master Plan, Municipal Council approved a public consultation process to determine user needs and concerns. An underlying premise of the Master Plan was that it was to be an exercise in public participation to ensure that the widest range of input could be integrated into the Master Plan. Consequently, consensus was attained because of the continuous input from the public. This feedback mechanism was used throughout the process, with public input influencing the staff and consultants, who then reflected back to the public the implementation of their ideas.

A number of techniques were used to document public opinion on Victoria Park including a comments wall, questionnaires, informal contacts and meetings. This multi-faceted approach has yielded tremendous insight into what the public feels should happen to the park. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the public participation process has been the public genuinely felt their concerns were integrated into the process, resulting in a broad based support for Concept A at the end of the process.

Comments Wall. Informal, indirect contact was initially used with the public in August 1996 during Ribfest with a Comments Wall. A comments wall is essentially a board with black paper and pens set up in the park to elicit anonymous written commentary. The comments were used as background information when the consultants were hired later that year.

Questionnaires. 160 questionnaires were sent to the various stakeholders in January 1997. Approximately 90 questionnaires were returned. In addition 17 responses have been received to date via the Internet. The information gleaned from the questionnaires was used as the basis for the public meetings. The questionnaires provided direction as to how to develop the Master Plan options.

Information Consultation was frequently undertaken with various stakeholders, particularly with the special events holders. These sessions were as much keeping the groups informed as gaining input on the recommendations as they were being developed. This helped in reducing any concerns the event holders may have had about the interim management policies as well as the final concept.

Public meetings on February 13 and 20 (50 members of the public) and May 13 (20 members of the public). The questionnaires sent out in January helped with the development of the issues discussion at the public meeting. These findings in turn helped in the formalization of recommendations to the consultant which would become the basis of the Master Plan. During the meetings evaluation forms were distributed to the public to give their feedback immediately to what was being presented. These forms were then reviewed and the comments incorporated into the process.

Two concepts were presented on May 13, 1997. The consultant provided an overview of the common themes distilled from the public comments, and how the concepts
addressed them. Most of the people present expressed a preference for Concept A. The Heritage Strolling Park. The consultant was directed to develop Concept A further to address some of the issues and ideas generated at the meeting. This final version was presented at a public participation session at Planning Committee.

E-mail questionnaire on Reg Cooper Square with City Staff. A questionnaire was deposited on the internal E-mail to solicit the thoughts of City Hall staff who are the primary users of Reg Cooper Square. Approximately 20 responses were received and generated many interesting ideas for improving the Square. The list of those who indicated a concern for the Square will be contacted as to their interest in participating in an employee pay role deduction fund-raiser for the square. Participants will be recognized by the City for the contributions and will be consulted on the final design concept.

Media Coverage in radio and television interviews, and newspaper articles had a very positive educational effect on the public. The media took a supportive position regarding the need to protect the park from overuse and for a proactive stance on spending money to restore the park. This created a positive climate for the public meetings which assisted in fostering consensus very quickly.

Friends of Victoria Park. It is anticipated that this level of public participation will continue through the implementation of the Victoria Park Master Plan. As part of this process, the City is organizing a volunteer, not-for-profit organization whereby volunteers can continue to be involved with the park through fundraising, public outreach and visitor services. The group is called Friends of Victoria Park. It is hoped this group will also act as an Advisory Committee for the Park as the capital projects to implement the Master Plan are undertaken.