Shifting Conceptions of Nature in Toronto: A Comparative Study of High Park and Rouge Park

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Abstract

Since their inception, parks have constantly been evolving and reflect social change. Beginning as gardens in the 18th Century to becoming a means to escape the harsh conditions of the city in the 19th Century, parks have now turned into the equivalent of the backyards of city dwellers. In this research paper, High Park and Rouge Park are used as case studies to answer the following question: *What is the aesthetic shift of parks and green spaces in Toronto?* This paper approaches the topic by examining environmental aesthetics of natural landscapes, post-colonial aesthetic imprint on parks, changing demographics, ecological awareness of natural landscapes, aesthetic justice in parks and, culturally entangled aesthetic values. With the use of first-hand accounts and perceptions of those in knowledge-based and decision-making positions, this research finds that the emerging natural park is the new face of urban parks.

Foreword

This research is directly related to my Plan of Study. It connects the ideas and concepts that I formed in the beginning of my program and has guided me to fulfill components and objectives of my Plan of Study. With my major research paper, I understand the concepts and theories related to parks. By conducting thorough research on urban-environmental landscapes, I fulfilled objectives 1.1.1. and 1.1.2. of my first component – urban environmental planning – as I used the post-colonial history of parks to understand how they have been planned within the built environment.

My second component – environmental aesthetics – is fulfilled because I have achieved objectives 2.1.1., 2.1.2., and 2.1.3., as my interest in High Park and Rouge Park has made me aware of the changing cultural values in parks. This has resulted in my understanding that these changing values have been reflected through park use, thus influencing the human experience of nature in urban parks. The environmental aesthetic component has made me aware of aesthetic justice in parks through park users participating in the park definition while working alongside planners, designers and others at the decision-making capacity. Such knowledge has given me awareness of the intrinsic values related to the aesthetic of parks and that has prepared me for future opportunities to work in park planning positions.

My third component – sustainable park design – is fulfilled through my achievement of objectives 3.1.1. and 3.1.2. In order to understand where present day parks are shifting towards in the future, I researched how and why parks came

to be. I used a historical lens to examine the progression of parks through the 18th Century to present day 21st Century parks. This historical background enables me to understand how parks achieved the current form and design that we experience in the present day. In addition to this, through my research interviews, I understand not only the theoretical aspects but also the practical application that influence current parks and give an opportunity to the newly emerging sustainable park design. This experience has enabled me to understand how I would use the theory and knowledge I have learned through this paper in future park planning capacity.

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Chapter 1   Introduction

From the early 18th Century to present day, parks have played a significant role in forming our urban landscapes. These natural landscapes were created at a time of need for escape from the everyday workings of the city. In the present day, in some ways and forms, parks still play this role of allowing users to fully immerse in a natural setting amidst the concrete jungle of an urban environment. Within busy, bustling city centres, park users may feel completely removed from the urban environment in a well-planned park.

Parks today have changed from the 18th Century. They are presently more accessible and inclusive of different uses. The present day multi-use parks have a variety of options for every user. Parks offer both active and passive recreation. The wide array of activities found in present day parks include facilities for active recreation (tennis courts, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, swimming pools etc.); as well as picnic areas, manicured gardens, and trails among other amenities for more passive recreation. There are many different scales of parks that can be found in urban environments including smaller neighbourhood parks to larger scale urban parks. Additionally, there has been a noticeable emergence of parks that have been created for specific purposes. Examples of such parks are off-leash dog parks and butterfly gardens.

There has recently been an increase in educational awareness of ecological functions within the park and the role ecology plays in urban environments among park users. This has contributed to park users having a shift in their aesthetic taste

in parks and responding with active involvement and requests for more ecologically sustainable parks (Interview 16, 2015). Budgetary constraints in local municipalities have furthered the desire for more naturalized landscapes as municipalities have reduced mowing in an effort to decrease cost. Thus, the natural park with a focus on ecological sustainability has emerged.

Cities have experienced an increase in migration with globalization. As a result parks are exposed to users from all around the world who have different personal understandings and perceptions of what nature is and how it should look like. The different viewpoints of nature are understood as the aesthetic entanglement of nature, which speaks to the notion that people from a variety of backgrounds, with different upbringing, and individual experience with nature which influences the way they feel how nature should appear and be interacted with. This means that cities are increasingly catering towards different uses of parks for groups who want to use parks with specific functions in mind.

Present day parks are also seeing an increase in communities coming together and voicing their opinions in how they want to define parks. This is known as aesthetic justice, "the distribution of aesthetic welfare in society" (Mattila, 2002, p.132). Working alongside park users, planners and others at decision-making positions are able to be inclusive of the requests of current and future park users and be helpful in identifying ways for diverse park users to participate in the design and experiential qualities of parks.

Chapter 2   Research Question and Methodology

My major paper examines urban parks in the post-war era. I have researched the shift in urban parks from being pristine and manicured in the European era to present day where natural landscapes are increasingly accepted. This shift in park design has occurred through changing demographics, increased ecological awareness of natural landscapes, aesthetic justice in parks, and aesthetic values being culturally influenced.

My research paper examines the question – What is the aesthetic shift of parks and green spaces in Toronto? To achieve my research I use two case studies, High Park and Rouge Park. Both of these parks are unique in their own way. Rouge Park is mostly natural with parts that are closed off to the public because they are deemed too ecologically significant for human intervention, and parts that are open to the public use and support trails. Being mainly natural, Rouge Park attracts users with its beautiful viewscapes and beach area. High Park on the other hand has a balance of both pristine and manicured areas that have flowered beds and mowed lawns, as well as areas that have been naturalized, support trails, and have been deemed ecologically sensitive. In addition to this, High Park supports recreational facilities for active uses such as tennis courts. Furthermore, my paper delves into ideas of the sustainable design of parks and the aesthetic value of parks with underlying factors influenced by culture.

I have conducted a literature review on the environmental aesthetics of parks, the post-colonial shift in park planning and design, cultural entanglement due

to the diversity of park users, changing demographics, aesthetic justice and ecological design of parks. For my literature review, I have used a mix of academic books, journal articles and government websites. For the profiles of High Park and Rouge Park I have used online websites and published reports to describe park details. In order to understand the current design and aesthetics of parks I have conducted 16 interviews with staff at High Park and Rouge Park, groups affiliated with both parks respectively and, landscape architects. Interview details are recorded in Appendix 1. My interview participants include people from the private, public and non-profit sector. I have specifically chosen the participants for interviewing based on their knowledge of High Park, Rouge Park and parks in general.

Chapter 3   Literature Review

3.1.   Environmental Aesthetics of Natural Landscapes

3.1.1. What is Environmental Aesthetics?

Environmental aesthetics is the appreciation, pleasure and sense of awe one experiences in natural settings. Author Stephanie Ross explains that over the years one of the ways that humans have tended to land is through aesthetics – to create beauty (Ross, 2007, p.252). As described by Arnold Berleant, "environmental aesthetics examines aesthetic experience and value in the environment" (Berleant, 1992, p.22). In her book, *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment*, Emily Brady explains, "aesthetic value is a non-instrumental value, and that it is an important environmental value because it captures an immediate, common and distinctive way in which we appreciate our surroundings" (Brady, 2003, p.6). I agree with Emily Brady. I believe that aesthetics is important because it enhances the appreciation of natural environments. Aesthetics in the environment is not only comprised of the pleasant but also the unpleasant as authors Emily Brady (2003) and Yuriko Saito (2007) point out, these unpleasant experiences are found in our everyday aesthetic interaction. Authors Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson (2007) explain that in the aesthetic appreciation of nature, there are

> "ideas that have shaped the emergence of the aesthetic appreciation of
> human environments – ideas about the picturesque appreciation of nature,
> about nature as an inspiration for art and about the design of gardens and

landscapes in tune with nature – all focus on the concept of nature" (Berleant & Carlson, 2007, p.17).

They further explain that "the concept of nature itself has undergone significant changes, and environmental aesthetics has come to employ the idea of environment rather than nature as its basic concept." (Berleant & Carlson, 2007, p.17). In my major paper, for understanding environmental aesthetics in the context of parks, the pleasant experience gained through interaction with natural landscapes is pursued.

3.1.2. Aesthetics in our Everyday Lives

Aesthetics are part of our everyday lives. Author Yuriko Saito believes, aesthetics can be involved in every day decisions and can be tangible (Saito, 2007). Tangible aesthetic decisions are those such as selecting particular flowerbeds or flora for park design purposes and preparing signage in parks. In the environmental aesthetics of parks and green spaces, tangible and intangible aesthetics are important to discuss because of the extent that aesthetics is integrated into everyday life. In manicured parks, the selection of flowers from the type, to the colour and placement is all chosen through aesthetic preference. In landscape, the aesthetic attraction as described by Saito for the general public tends to be towards the unfamiliar and the spectacular such as national parks (Saito, 2007, p.61). Saito explains that the "'picture-like' aesthetic, still seems to govern our taste" (Saito, 2007, p.61). I agree with Yuriko Saito when she explains how we

"tend to admire those landscapes which can be made into a nice picture (today often in the form of a photograph), but remain indifferent to other parts of nature which do not lend themselves to a nice pictorial composition

due to a lack of sufficient complexity, variety, harmony, or eye-catching features" (Saito, 2007, p.61).

I too believe that the aesthetic preference of landscape is heavily based on the natural beauty and what is perceived to the individual person as beautiful and picturesque. This particular aesthetic preference I believe is formed by personal experiences and draws attention to the idea of aesthetic value. The notion of aesthetic value is important in the case of parks as when landscapes are seen to have aesthetic value, there is more of a justification or push to preserve the natural environment. In contrast, areas with notably perceived low aesthetic value such as wetlands and prairies are likely to undergo development as the "perceived lack of any aesthetic value contributes to the public's eager attitude towards such transformation" (Saito, 2007, p.63). In her book, Yuriko Saito raises a very interesting point about the "perceived need for protecting scenic wonders, but not ecological integrity, from cultivation and development" (Saito, 2007, p.63). Saito explains that as a result, "protection of unscenic lands for ecological reasons historically [has been] met with resistance and sometimes even with ridicule" (Saito, 2007, p.63). I think that Yuriko Saito raises a very crucial observation about how picturesque landscapes are closely intertwined with aesthetic value and that has resulted in a lack of interest in preserving ecologically significant landscapes that are aesthetically less appealing.

3.1.3. 'Aesthetic Elitism'

The importance of environmental aesthetics according to the author J. Douglas Porteous (1982) is dependent on social class. In other words, in the case of parks, the middle class population has a higher aesthetic value for park design, use

and natural landscapes compared to their working class counterparts (Porteous, 1982, p.86). Reasons for this as explained by J. Douglas Porteous is that while the majority (working class) is focused on 'standard of living', a very small minority consider 'quality of life' (Porteous, 1982, p.86). The difference of environmental aesthetic preference due to social class brings to light ideas of 'aesthetic elitism' (Porteous, 1982, p.87). This 'aesthetic elitism' may bring upon undesired effects to parks planning. In the present day, environmental aesthetics has become increasingly influenced by public participation, whereas past environmental aesthetic decisions in parks were made solely through policy makers and planners (Porteous, 1982, p.87). This means that in a case where parks are being planned and there are opportunities for public participation, those who are unable to participate in such events because of 'aesthetic elitism' are overlooked in creating the aesthetic definition of natural environments, in this case, parks.

3.2.   Post-colonial Aesthetic Imprint on Parks

As explained by Maano Ramutsindela, "postcolonialism, as a body of knowledge, generally refers to those societies that were once dominated and/or oppressed by western powers" (Ramutsindela, 2004, p.1). Thus in the case of parks, this paper is using post-colonialism in the context of the shift in park aesthetics following the European colonial era.

3.2.1. *Evolving Landscapes*

During the 18th century, nature began to be appreciated through art. Elegant and idealized landscapes were found in paintings (Brady, 2003, p.31). However, the

wild natural environment was not appreciated (Brady, 2003, p.31). Un-manicured

landscapes were seen as hostile wilderness (Brady, 2003, p.31). The 18th Century

saw nature with ideas of beautiful, sublime and picturesque while the nineteenth

century experienced the romanticism of nature. Author Kenneth Woodbridge

expresses that in the 18th Century, Édouard André, a leading French landscape

designer distinguished between three genres of landscape including "noble or

grand, gay or smiling, and picturesque or wild" (Woodbridge, 1984, p.19). For the

purpose of this paper, the picturesque or wild genre of landscape applies because in

the case studies of High Park and Rouge Park, both have wild and picturesque

characteristics. Woodbridge further explains that in the 14th to 18th Centuries, the

trends of gardens may be summarized as "from horticultural to architectural

emphasis; from closed to open form; from the obviously artificial to the seemingly

natural" (Woodbridge, 1984, p.20). The significance of these trends is that they

illustrate the aesthetics and design of gardens through the 14th to 18th Century.

These trends explained by Woodbridge are commonly connected with terminology

such as renaissance, baroque and picturesque (Woodbridge, 1984, p.20).

Woodbridge further explains that while the terminology of 'renaissance' and

'baroque' were not used as stylistic terms at their time of development, 'picturesque'

has always been applied to style (Woodbridge, 1984, p.21). He further explains that

"from the start, the concept of the 'picturesque' embraces irregularity and is

associated with the 'natural' as opposed to the 'artificial' (Woodbridge, 1984, p.21).

This means that picturesque has always been considered the beauty of natural

landscapes. The picturesque notions of landscape led to the romanticized

landscapes in the 19th Century.

3.2.2. *Shift from Gardens to Parks*

The English landscape garden in the 18th and 19th Centuries formed the

aesthetic basis for public parks (Streatfield, 1981, p.3). In the 18th Century, the

"traditional view of aesthetic experience was formulated by a number of European

philosophers, most notably, Kant, Hume, Hutcheson, Shaftesbury and Burke" (Brady,

2003, p.8). In the 19th Century aesthetics, there was less of a philosophical interest

(Brady, 2013, p.117). This meant that there was more of an emphasis on aesthetics

being the tangible rather than intangible. Moving forward from 19th Century

romantic gardens, there was a rise in natural gardens as they were cheaper to

maintain than the traditional Dutch–French gardens (Streatfield, 1981, p.10). This

was the beginning of the change from gardens to larger open natural landscape

areas.

Emily Brady explains that in the 18th and 19th Century,

"changes in the European and North American landscape tastes made
appreciation of the sublime possible in the first place, with fear and hatred of
mountains, deserts, and other wild places becoming tempered by admiration
and reverence" (Brady, 2013, p.184).

Due to this new found appreciation of landscapes, citizens began to maintain

personal gardens. This was followed by the early 18th Century seeing that

"cemeteries were the first landscaped areas to be enjoyed by the public" (Baeyer,

1984, p.6). Brady further explains that the "new taste was made possible by a

number of economic, social, religious, and technological factors which enabled many

people to have direct and relatively safe access to such places" (Brady, 2013, p.185). This means that over time, landscapes were no longer feared and more accepted as public use areas.

3.2.3. Sublime

Emily Brady describes that the 18th Century sublime consists of a range of objects from "nature, including animals, to human character, poetry, architecture, painting, and music, with qualities sensed through sight, hearing, and even smelling and tasting" (Brady, 2013, p.33). In the 18th Century, the sublime aesthetic incorporated a more philosophical treatment, thus colour, sound and smells became apart of the sublime aesthetic (Brady, 2013, p.35). Therefore, both of these ideas of sublime qualities created more accepted pristine and manicured natural environments. At the same time however, author Edwinna von Baeyer explains that in the 20th Century, "parks functioned as local beauty spots, but were promoted rather as urban breathing spaces offsetting the adverse psychological effects of ugly crowded cities in the throes of industrialization" (Baeyer, 1984, p.3). Parks therefore, were seen as a means to escape the daily city life by the public.

3.2.4. Natural Landscapes within Built Environments

In the book *The Aesthetics of Human Environments* by Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson (2007), they explain that

> "in England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the garden designs of William Kent, Lancelot ("Capability") Brown, and Humphrey Repton deliberately shaped landscapes emulating the beauty newly recognized in uncultivated nature and even incorporated distant views as 'borrowed landscapes'" (Berleant & Carlson, 2007, p.17).

These views on the beauty of natural landscapes came following the changing tastes in landscapes as described previously by Emily Brady (2013). Berleant & Carlson also explain that "over the past two centuries the aesthetic appeal of landscapes and environments has broadened still further to include other environments that humans have fashioned" (Berleant & Carlson, 2007, p.17). The authors are speaking to the notion of creating a built environment with the natural landscape in mind. A concept thoroughly discussed by Michael Hough (2004). Furthermore, Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson explain that the change in landscapes now

> "encompass not only picturesque rural landscapes and gardens but also the more general results of landscape and architectural planning and design practices, as well as the city itself with its residential, commercial, and industrial cityscapes" (Berleant & Carlson, 2007, p.17).

This discussion of the changing natural landscapes within the built environment is important as built environments have influenced natural landscapes within cities and, in the case of this major paper – parks.

3.3. Cultural Entanglement in Parks

3.3.1. Historical Gardens

Author Stephanie Ross explains that over the years we have seen different gardens from different parts of the world all of which have their own garden traditions (Ross, 2007). These unique gardens have historically played a role in forming the global understanding of nature. She speaks to the need of how we should "look as much to climate, topography, and native flora as to intellectual and cultural factors in accounting for history of garden styles" (Ross, 2007, p.253). These

gardens explained by Ross are Italian villa garden, French formal garden, English landscape garden, Islamic paradise garden, Chinese scholar garden and Japanese Zen garden (Ross, 2007, p.254). Stephanie Ross further explains that there are also gardens that belong to lost civilizations and these lost civilizations include the likes of ancient Egypt, ancient Rome, Babylonia, Mayan, Incan and, Aztec empires (Ross, 2007, p.254).

The Italian gardens as described by Stephanie Ross, "usually occupied steep hillsides descending from aristocratic villas" (Ross, 2007, p.253). She describes "terraces, stairways, balustrades, statuary, parterres, and fountains were typical features" (Ross, 2007, p.253) in Italian *villa gardens*. French *formal gardens* are expressed to be "similarly formal, [but] quite different in feel and use" (Ross, 2007, p.253). Gardens are characterized as being "spread laterally, with axes and goosefoot avenues extending towards the horizon, and majestic canals helping to demarcate and subdivide the terrain" (Ross, 2007, p.253). It is also explained that in gardens, the "statuary and design contributed to the glorification of the monarch" (Ross, 2007, p.253).

Over the course of the 18th Century, the English *landscape garden* increasingly began to include naturalized designs which were an "alternative to and rejection of things French, ornate, and popish!" (Ross, 2007, p.253). The English garden is characterized as having "rolling green lawns, naturalized lakes and clumps and bands of trees" (Ross, 2007, p.253). Author Stephanie Ross also explains that "great garden traditions arose much earlier in the non-Western world" (Ross, 2007, p.254), and that the "word 'garden' has its etymological origins in Persia" (Ross,

2007, p.254). The *paradise garden*, was the garden reflected in the Islamic world. It

is characterized as being "an enclosed domain with a central pool or fountain" (Ross,

2007, p.254), and "trees and flowers were planted in geometric patterns within the

grid" (Ross, 2007, p.254). In the case of Chinese and Japanese gardens, Ross explains

that there were walled gardens, "but the motivation here was less to escape an

inhospitable climate than to create spaces for contemplation, retreat and private

socializing" (Ross, 2007, p.254). Ross explains that in China "imperial gardens

proclaimed dynastic poser while more intimate scholar gardens promoted

meditation on the essence of nature and fostered the integration of the arts of

poetry, calligraphy, landscape poetry and gardening" (Ross, 2007, p.254). In

addition to having imperial and private aspects, traditional Japanese *Zen gardens*

were characterized as replacing "most of the live material we expect to find in

gardens with rocks and rake sand" (Ross, 2007, p.254).

3.3.2. *Cultural Aesthetic Preference*

Thus, when it comes to what I have labelled as cultural entanglement, I

believe the different backgrounds and life experiences of park users change their

understanding and interpretation of nature. Author Arnold Berleant explains that "a

cultural aesthetic identifies how a people perceives its world" (Berleant, 1992, p.22).

He further explains "once we identify the idea of a cultural aesthetic, we can not only

study the aesthetics of individual cultures but determine whether patterns and

types emerge" (Berleant, 1992, p.22). Following this line of thinking, being able to

identify patterns and types is quite important as this would then lead us to be able

to see the newly emerging parks of the future.

Building upon the importance of personal experience and acknowledging the linkage to natural environments, scholar Kaia Lehari explains

"in aesthetic experience of the landscape, there is equally represented not only the actual perception of physical milieu and memories, imagination, knowledge but also conventions laid down in culture in the field of the scopic regime" (Lehari, 2008, p.180).

Lehari also explains that "nature and culture merge in a human being, as well as in his or her relation to the environment" (Lehari, 2008, p.180). Such observations are important to my major paper because they explore how intricately linked the natural environment is with personal aesthetic preference which in turn enables us to understand the shifting park aesthetics and use.

Adding to the discussion of the preference of aesthetics, Arnold Berleant explains "how we engage aesthetically with our landscape is a measure of the intrinsic value of our experience" (Berleant, 1997, p.16). This can be used to understand how culture is entangled with aesthetic experience. In agreement with Arnold Berleant, author Michel Conan explains that he believes that "the definition of an aesthetic experience of a garden is a question open for debate" (Conan, 2005, p.9). I agree with Michel Conan. I too believe that the aesthetic experience depends on the individual. Adding to this, Arnold Berleant further explores the subject of aesthetic preference, explaining that "this is aesthetics in practice, and it is reflected in the landscapes of different cultural traditions" (Berleant, 1997, p.16). Arnold Berleant uses this notion of different cultural traditions to explain that the distinctive character of natural landscapes in Italy, Greece, France, England, and China have all been influenced by aesthetic concern (Berleant, 1997, p.16). He

further explains that all of these other cultures "have contributed to an emerging concept of environmental landscape aesthetics in the United States" (Berleant, 1997, p.16). He describes how parks have domesticated nature and made them more accessible (Berleant, 1997, p.17). With Arnold Berleant's observations, it can be seen that the distinctive cultural traditions have formally and informally, directly and indirectly, influenced present day parks and continue to influence parks even more so as we look into the future.

3.3.3. Cultural Aesthetic Similarity and Expectation

Author Simon Bell explains, "with few exceptions, designers have been able to create landscapes that the majority of people find attractive or beautiful; it tends to be a minority, who claim to see beauty in some universally decried scene" (Bell, 1999, p.82). He further explains that we can assume that

> "there is frequently a high degree of universality in the acceptance of a sense of beauty or sublimity when people are presented with certain landscapes and that personal preferences, cultural overlays and practical involvement are all applied post-perception, to yield the nuances of moral or ethical standpoints that are commonly encountered" (Bell, 1999, p.82).

This observation by Simon Bell is important because he speaks to the fact that although the concept of cultural entanglement brings to light the differences in cultural and aesthetic preference, it also brings upon many aesthetic similarities as well. Acknowledging that there are such aesthetic similarities in preference resulting from cultural entanglement is important because this information can then be used to improve park planning and management.

Author Joan Iverson Nassauer speaks to the cultural understanding, expectations or implications of natural environments. She explains how there is a cultural expectation of lawns to be managed and aesthetically look a certain distinct way (Nassauer, 1997, p.68). Understanding the cultural expectations of natural landscapes is important for parks because coupled with the knowledge of the cultural aesthetic similarities, differences and expectations of natural landscapes, it is much simpler to design parks that satisfy a wide array of users.

3.4.   Changing Demographics

The changing demographics of Toronto have been due to the rise in immigration. This change has been reflected in High Park and Rouge Park through aesthetic preference and park use. To understand the demographics of High Park and Rouge Park, I use demographic data found on municipal websites collected through census to determine the changing demographic landscapes in and around the parkland areas. Categories in the census data were determined through the self-identification by participants. In the case of 'immigrants', the census data determines that there are three classifications of immigrant status – immigrant, non-immigrant, and non-permanent resident (StatCan, (a), 2013). Within these three classifications, non-immigrant "refers to a person who is Canadian citizen by birth" (StatCan, (a), 2013); immigrant "refers to a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant/permanent resident" (StatCan, (a), 2013); and non-permanent resident "refers to a person from another country who has a work or study permit or who is a refugee claimant and any non-Canadian-born family member living with them" (StatCan, (a), 2013). In the case of ethnicity, the census has broken down the

classification into 8 origin sections. The origin classifications include North

American aboriginal origins; other North American origins; European origins;

Caribbean origins; Latin, Central and South American origins; African origins; Asian

origins; and Oceania origins (StatCan, (b), 2013). It should be noted that in the case

of 'African origins', StatCan has explicitly stated that "'African origins' should not be

considered equivalent to the 'Black' population group or visible minority status"

(StatCan, (b), 2013).

     Knowing the demographics of High Park and Rouge Park is important to my

major paper because through the evolving demographics in areas surrounding the

parks, we can understand the changing aesthetic preference and park use resulting

from the changing cultural background due to migration.

3.4.1. *High Park*

     In the case of High Park, I have used data found on the City of Toronto

website. I first have determined that to obtain the information that I am looking for,

data from Ward 13 and 14 is required. Ward 13 encompasses High Park West while

Ward 14 encompasses High Park East, the residential area adjacent to the park.

     High Park West (Map 1) has 34% of its population born outside Canada (City

of Toronto, (a), 2014, p.1). At 3.4%, the United Kingdom is the number 1 immigrant

place of birth (City of Toronto, (a), 2014, p.7). In the period between 2001 to 2011,

High Park West had a 22.9% immigrant population (City of Toronto, (a), 2014, p.6).

In a 2011 breakdown, it is given that the total immigrant population was 33.1%

while non-immigrants were 65.5% (City of Toronto, (a), 2014, p.7). In High Park

West, 18.8% of the population identified as visible minority with the top two groups

were reported being Black at 4.2% and Chinese at 3.8% (City of Toronto, (a), 2014, p.8). Additionally, the top 10 ethnic groups were English, Irish, Scottish, Canadian, German, Ukrainian, Polish, French, Italian and, Chinese (City of Toronto, (a), 2014, p.8).

High Park East (Map 2) has 41% of its population born outside of Canada (City of Toronto, (b), 2014, p.1). At 4%, India is the top immigrant place of birth (City of Toronto, (b), 2014, p.7). In the period between 2001 to 2011, High Park East had a 39% immigrant population (City of Toronto, (b), 2014, p.6). In a 2011 breakdown, it was given that the total immigrant population was 38% while the non-immigrant population was 58% (City of Toronto, (b), 2014, p.7). In High Park East, 33.3% of the population was considered to be visible minority with the top 2 groups being South Asian at 7.1% and Black at 5.5% (City of Toronto, (b), 2014, p.8). The top 10 ethnic groups found in High Park East in 2011 were English, Irish, Scottish, Canadian, German, Polish, French, Tibetan, Chinese and, Italian (City of Toronto, (b), 2014, p.8).

Therefore, it can be seen in the area encompassing High Park, there is much diversity. As it will be discussed further in my major paper, this diversity has meant that High Park needs to accommodate for different aesthetic preferences. For example, park users with a European background prefer the pristine, manicured aesthetics of the park. In addition to meeting the needs of park users living in close proximity, High Park meets the needs of people from across the City as the park is intensively used by residents from all over Toronto.

3.4.2. Rouge Park

Rouge Park falls mainly within the City of Toronto and City of Markham with a small portion in the City of Pickering. Most of Rouge Park's visitors come from these adjacent communities and these areas have "more cultural diversity and a significantly larger visible minority population" (Rouge Park Alliance, 2008, p.30). Thus, to account for much of the park's demographic, all three municipalities have been taken into consideration. Within the City of Toronto, Ward 42 Scarborough – Rouge River and Ward 44 Scarborough East is examined. In the City of Markham, Ward 5 and 7 is examined. In the City of Pickering, Ward 1 and 3 is examined. It is necessary to use the demographics from the surrounding communities because "20% of Canada's population is within 100 km of the Park" (StrategyCorp – Hemson Consulting, 2010, p.27).

In Scarborough – Rouge River (Map 3), 64% of the population is born outside of Canada (City of Toronto, (c), 2014, p.1). At 15.4%, Sri Lanka is the top immigrant place of birth (City of Toronto, (c), 2014, p.7). In the period between 2001 to 2011, Scarborough – Rouge River had a 28.9% immigrant population (City of Toronto, (c), 2014, p.6). In the 2011 breakdown, Scarborough – Rouge River had a total immigrant population of 63.1% and a non-immigrant population of 35.8% (City of Toronto, (c), 2014, p.7). In Scarborough – Rouge River, 89.7% of the population identified as visible minority with the top two groups being South Asian at 43.3% and Black at 15.9% (City of Toronto, (c), 2014, p.8). The top 10 ethnic groups found in Scarborough – Rouge River were East Indian, Sri Lankan, Chinese, Filipino,

Jamaican, Canadian, Tamilian, British, Pakistani and, Guyanese (City of Toronto, (c), 2014, p.8).

In Scarborough East (Map 4), 47% of the population is born outside of Canada (City of Toronto, (d), 2014, p.1). At 6.2%, Philippines is the top immigrant place of birth (City of Toronto, (d), 2014, p.7). In the period between 2001 to 2011, Scarborough East had a 20.2% immigrant population (City of Toronto, (d), 2014, p.6). In the 2011 breakdown, the total immigrant population found in Scarborough East was 46.8% while the non-immigrant population was 52.6% (City of Toronto, (d), 2014, p.7). In Scarborough East, 56.5% of the population identified as visible minority with the top two groups being South Asian at 21.1% and Black at 11.8% (City of Toronto, (d), 2014, p.8). The top 10 ethnic groups found in Scarborough East are; Filipino, Indian, Guyanese, Sri Lankan, Jamaican, British, Trinidad and Tobagoan, Pakistani, Chinese and, Italian (City of Toronto, (d), 2014, p.7).

Ward 5 (Map 5) in the City of Markham has 73% of the population identified as visible minority (City of Markham, (a), 2014, p.1). In this section, 28% were reported as Chinese and 23% were reported as South Asian (City of Markham, (a), 2014, p.1). Approximately 51% of the population are immigrants and 48% of the population were non-immigrants (City of Markham, (a), 2014, p.1). Of these immigrants, 75% were born in Asia with Hong Kong being the top immigrant place of birth (City of Markham, (a), 2014, p.1). The top 2 ethnic groups found in Ward 5 are Asian at 55% and European at 26% (City of Markham, (a), 2014, p.1).

In Ward 7 (Map 6) of the City of Markham, 91% of the population is identified as visible minority (City of Markham, (b), 2014, p.1). Within the visible

minority group, 53% are South Asian and 20% are Chinese (City of Markham, (b), 2014, p.1). Approximately 64% of the population in Ward 7 are immigrants while 34% are non-immigrants (City of Markham, (b), 2014, p.1). Of this immigrant population, 81% of the population was born in Asia with Sri Lanka being the top immigrant place of birth (City of Markham, (b), 2014, p.1). The top 2 ethnic groups found in Ward 7 are Asian at 75% and European at 10% (City of Markham, (b), 2014, p.1).

For demographics of the City of Pickering, the demographics specific to Ward 1 and Ward 3 (Map 7) are unavailable. However, for the purpose of my major paper, I use the general demographics available for the City of Pickering as City residents are viewed as current and future park users. In the City of Pickering, 31.2% of its population are determined to be immigrants and 68.4% of the population were non-immigrants (StatsCan, 2014). Of all the immigrants living in the City of Pickering, 1,605 or 5.9% came to Canada between 2006 and 2011 (StatsCan, 2014). The top immigrant country of birth was the United Kingdom at 12.6% (StatsCan, 2014). The City of Pickering has a visible minority population of 35.4% (StatsCan, 2014). The top two visible minority groups in 2011 in the City of Pickering are Black and South Asian (StatsCan, 2014). The top three ethnic groups are English at 25.3%, Canadian at 21.1% and, Scottish at 16.5% (StatsCan, 2014).

This information of the distinct demographics surround High Park and Rouge Park enables us to understand the changing use and aesthetic preferences of the parks.

3.5. Aesthetic Justice in Parks

Aesthetic Justice is the notion that everyone gets an equal opportunity and voice in shaping and decision-making of the natural landscape. For the purpose of my major paper, I will be examining aesthetic justice in the context of parks. An example of aesthetic justice is communities becoming increasingly involved in the definition of parks. This notion of aesthetic justice will be examined further on in this paper as well. In the chapter written by Jennifer Foster, "Environmental Aesthetics, Ecological Action and Social Justice", she frames the idea of how childhood interaction with nature helps inform the aesthetic understanding and preference of users of the natural landscape (2009). She further explores the link between how as adults, natural landscape users with childhood interaction have become involved and are forming the aesthetic definition of the natural landscape (Foster, 2009, p. 103). My understanding of aesthetic justice has been formed by Foster's thoughts on participation in natural landscapes as she explains,

> "an important social demarcation of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in environmental planning and design processes is the differentiation of those who have rightful claims to inhabit the landscape and participated in land use decisions, including not only the spectacular disputes staged through hearings and court procedures, but more often the everyday aesthetic practices that fortify senses of belonging and incongruity" (Foster, 2009, p.105).

In the case of parks, I interpret Foster's thoughts as the ability for park users to participate in the aesthetic definition of the park. To be able to attend consultation sessions and voice their opinions on what kind of events they want in the park and how they want it to look like aesthetically. To have people in the decision-making

capacity include the input of park users and entrust park users in positions of actual decision making to create an inclusive community park designed by park users, for park users.

Foster raises an interesting juxtaposition in aesthetic justice. She gives an example of a situation where a 'citizens environmental organization leader' explains how although community members are given the opportunity to participate in the public processes, it is not necessary that community inputs are included in the natural landscape (Foster, 2009, p.106). In aesthetic justice, this situational example is a very good point because it brings to light the fact that opportunities may be given to park users to participate in the aesthetic definition of the park. However, the fact remains that there is no definite way of knowing whether those in the decision-making capacity will include the opinions of park users. Jennifer Foster further explains that

> "aesthetic justice strategies must go beyond simple concerns of distribution of pleasing environments to also build aesthetic capacities that address the conception and production of aesthetically positive experiences generated through histories, emotional responses and performances of nature" (Foster, 2009, p.110).

She further explains that "this means situating planning and design as civic practices rather than professional and expert enterprises by encouraging and honouring aesthetic expression at broad societal scales" (Foster, 2009, p.110). In the case of parks, this means that it is necessary to include park users not only for the aesthetic or emotional purposes of decision-making but also for the future development of cities and it is important to include park users in the overall planning and decision

making of natural environments. In essence, she speaks to the notion of integrating the opinions and preferences of the public in all aspects of decision-making.

Author Hanna Mattila explains that aesthetic justice is not only involving community members in the decision-making process as well but also ensuring that there is an equal distribution and access of natural landscapes such as parks (Mattila, 2002, p.132). She claims

> "aesthetic welfare cannot be distributed simply by distributing 'aesthetically good quality urban form' produced by professional designers, since defining 'aesthetically good urban form' is a political matter – not a concern to be left to architects and designers only" (Mattila, 2002, p.132).

I think that Hanna Mattila raises a very good point which affects the current day situation of natural landscapes and in the case of this paper, aesthetics of parks. It is important to note that determining what an 'aesthetically good quality urban form' is truly influenced by political decisions and interpretations. Mattila also expresses that in order to promote aesthetic justice, "aesthetic policies are needed and that the policies should be sensitive to the knowledge and values of the public – not only of the artists and artworld" (Mattila, 2002, p.133). Her point on aesthetic policies again speaks to the need of having the values and opinions of the public being represented at the decision making stage. She re-iterates her point later on in the paper when she explains that

> "instead of understanding the issue of aesthetic justice merely as an issue of the distribution of an aesthetically good environment, I suggest that we should rather focus on the collective discussion and decision-making within the aesthetic dimensions of planning and design" (Mattila, 2002, p.137).

Once again Mattila has spoken to the notion of ensuring that public opinion is included within the decision-making capacity. She furthers her point when she explains the notion of the 'right to design the city' which she explains is both "the right to participate and the right to be heard in the decision-making concerning the aesthetic shaping of the urban environment" and "the right of the inhabitants of the city to concrete aesthetic and creative activities in urban environment" (Mattila, 2002, p.137).

Aesthetic justice is central to my paper because the planning and management of current and future parks is increasingly dependent on creating self-sustaining and inclusive parks. By incorporating the public opinion and values at a decision-making scale, aesthetic justice has the potential to ensure that there is equal access and distribution in natural parkland landscapes.

3.6. Ecological Design

Ecology is the "study of interactions between organisms and their environment" (Johnson & Hill, 2002, p.1). Author Anne Whiston Spirn explains that

> "designers and planners who refer to their work as 'natural' or 'ecological' make ideas of nature central and explicit, citing nature as authority to justify decisions, to select some materials or plants and exclude others, for example, to arrange them in particular patterns, and tend the result in certain ways" (Spirn, 2002, p.29).

She further explains that "to describe one sort of landscape as natural implies that there are unnatural landscapes that are somehow different (and presumably wrong)" (Spirn, 2002, p.30). Spirn explains that the natural garden movement and the ecological design movement both have characteristics such as the stress on

"native plants and plant communities as material and model for garden design" (Spirn, 2002, p.39).

Author Richard T. T. Forman explains that ecology and aesthetics are linked in diverse ways and that "combining the perceptions of different groups of people with the array of ecological components (water, wildlife, rare plants, and so on) and at varied spatial scales produces a cornucopia of potential design and planning solutions" (Forman, 2002 p.96).

Authors Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan outline five principles of the ecological design process. These principles can be applied to the design of parks. These principles are; solutions grow from place; ecological accounting informs design; design with nature; everyone is a designer; make nature visible (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.54).

The first principle – solutions grow from place – is based on the notion that one can design through learning from history, past struggles and what has worked in that particular environment (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.59). The authors explain that it is about valuing local knowledge (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.63). The second principle – ecological accounting informs design – is based on executing ecological design while carefully accounting for all ecological costs (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.55). This is completed by tracing "the environmental impacts of existing or proposed designs" (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.82). The authors explain that ecological accounting "is a way of gathering information for making design decisions in the absence of prices that accurately reflect overall ecological costs" (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.83). The third principle – design with nature –

is based on the notion that "by working with the patterns and processes favoured by the living world, we can dramatically reduce the ecological impacts of our designs" (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.55). The fourth principle – everyone is a designer – is based on listening to every voice in the design process (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.146). This principle believes that "everyone is a participant-designer" (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.146). One means to achieve this is through community participation. The fifth principle – make nature visible – is based on "making natural cycles and processes visible" (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.160). The authors explain that knowing and understanding the natural processes of our environment for example the cycle of moon or how water gets to the tap, will enable us to create effective designs (Van der Ryn & Cowan, 1996, p.160).

Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowan's principles are important to my major paper because in the case of parks, they have outline how to design with ecological considerations while maintaining the aesthetic value. This notion of creating aesthetically pleasing parks while still maintaining the ecological sustainability is a newly emerging notion in current day parks. I was informed of this new movement through the interviews that I conducted with those affiliated with High Park, Rouge Park, and landscape architects. Additionally, the fourth principle, everyone is a designer speaks to aesthetic justice in parks where park users are able to get involved in the aesthetic definition of parks.

In the 18th Century, English landowners began seeing the way painters saw land (Crandell, 1993, p.112). As a result "they wanted the views from the windows of their estates to look like pictures" (Crandell, 1993, p.112). Landowners then

began to "apply to landscapes that had not been designed as gardens the same criteria with which they had learned to judge paintings" (Crandell, 1993, p.112). This resulted in more natural looking gardens (Crandell, 1993, p.112). This meant that "the garden was an illusion of nature, for this was a nature designed, bounded, and kept – an enclave surrounding the residence and called the 'landscape garden'" (Crandell, 1993, p.112). As it can be noted, the concept of the natural landscape aesthetic began in the 18th Century and since then has continued to present day. In present day parks however, the natural landscape aesthetic still exists but with an aim to ensure that the natural landscape aesthetic occurs with ecological sustainability in the park planning and development.

3.7.   Parks

3.7.1. Evolving Park Aesthetic

In the beginning, parks in England were "simply areas of land, sometimes comprised of natural woodland, which had been enclosed and thereby physically separated from the surrounding countryside" (Lasdun, 1992, p.5). Areas were enclosed to distinguish parks from forests (Lasdun, 1992, p.5). This was the beginning of parks and they continually progressed until the 19th Century where we saw significant changes. In the 19th Century, the industrialized England saw "dirty, vice-ridden, poverty-stricken, run-down cities" (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.2). As a way to escape, England moved to a Romantic period where songs and poems of idyllic nature were commonly used (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.2). Those who had the financial means went to the countryside with their families where they hired

designers to plan their estates (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.2) as in the 19th Century, "naturalism in landscape design signified power, wealth, and social position" (Schenker, 2002, p.71).

As landscape designers sensed that people desired relief from the every day reminder of the city, they began to "create patterns which excluded the axes, circles, squares, and other geometrical patterns which visibly organized the city" (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.2). As a result, a 'loose' organizational system associated with nature was discovered (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.2). This was followed by the appearance of lawns, meadows, and plants in their natural forms (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.2). This newly emerging idea of nature was translated into North America by Frederick Law Olmsted who observed that New York City was becoming increasingly industrialized and over crowded (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.3). Olmstead recognized that the entire population could not go to the countryside and suggested to have a rural landscape within the heart of the city for city dwellers (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.3). From his unique perspective emerged Central Park which has been translated into the distinct City parks we see today. Dahl & Molnar explain that in the beginning, *parks* were defined as "naturalized passive retreats" (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.4), while *recreation areas* were defined as "active-sport-oriented facilities – they included playgrounds, hard-surface court areas, and team sport fields" (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.4). For the most part, parks and recreation areas were kept separate. However, following World War II, there was a sudden increase for leisure areas such as park and recreational areas and that demand led to an

increasing number of parks that provided recreational areas (Dahl & Molnar, 2003, p.4).

According to Jan Woudstra and Ken Fieldhouse, "successful parks combine formal flowerbeds and naturalistic areas with a mix of recreational facilities and a variety of congenial social settings" (Jacques, 2000, p.23). This is because those parks are "best able to provide both associative and material access to a better world through providing sensory and natural experiences, a world of adventure play, and a more supportive social community where common experiences are shared" (Jacques, 2000, p.23).

Parks were developed out of a social need. The benefits associated with parks were in "physical, moral, spiritual and political terms"(Conway, 2000, p.10). It was seen that

> "parks would be the lungs for the city and would refresh the air; would improve people's health and provide places for exercise; would be an alternative form of recreation to the tavern; and would provide beneficial contact with nature, so elevating the spirit" (Conway, 2000, p.10).

Parks offered recreational opportunities for the young and old. The design of parks "enabled some to enjoy quietness and privacy, while others enjoyed group activities" (Conway, 2000, p.11). In parks, it is understood that the "vivid floral displays attracted park visitors" (Conway, 2000, p.17). However, "some recent research acknowledges that park users today place a high value on scenery and natural features" (Conway, 2000, p.17).

3.7.2. *Present Day Parks*

In the present day, "it now seems infeasible and inappropriate to build country parks in cities and the maintenance of the existing ones has become a municipal burden rather than an economic and political benefit" (Warner, 1993, p.19). Parks can "help provide relief from people's excessively narrow disciplines; they can present alternatives for leisure time; they can reduce the isolation of one citizen from another; and they can make spaces for people to exercise their imaginations" (Warner, 1993, p.20). In parks today, ecological issues are being used to create spaces that are meaningful and socially inclusive (Phillips, 1993, p.23). Parks can "significantly influence how we think about public space by incorporating human policies, individual actions, and natural ecologies" and by "supporting the constructive tension between culture and nature" (Phillips, 1993, p.23). Parks are also seen as "instruments for discovering constructive new arrangements of social values and environmental concerns" (Phillips, 1993, p.26).

Author Robert C. Weaver explains that City planners are moving away from the traditional concept of City parks (Weaver, 1969, p.25). According to Weaver, City planners are planning small parks, portable parks, are leasing vacant lots and developing parks along with neighbourhood centres, are thinking of linear parks alongside transit lines, and are using roof tops, elevated platforms and covering freeways for recreational use (Weaver, 1969, p.25). Therefore, present day parks are more innovative and are using spaces that are generally unused in cities. Author Zion adds to this opinion of the increasing requirement of nature in the city set out as small parks. Zion explains that

"Parks are not mere amenities; they are now a necessity. Where, for example, does the midtown office worker spend his lunch hour? Where can he find outdoor relaxation, chatting in the shade of a tree? Where, in our commercial districts, can the tired shopper pause for a moment's rest? The great tensions of life today demand a release from work. Furthermore the office worker who returns to his desk refreshed is a more productive worker. The shopper who can pause to rest will return to shop, whereas those who cannot will probably go home. The tourist who enjoys himself will spread the word. Midtown parks, therefore, make good economic sense" (Zion, 1969, p.74).

This opinion however of having this type of escapist nature in the city is quite conflicting with the present day parks and turn of ecological awareness of city parks. Weaver and Zion suggest nature can be created in any part of the city. They encourage the use of areas that are underused or abandoned. However, this type of nature is not truly sustainable. It provides the escape for city dwellers but for the present day parks and the progression they have seen over time, having small parks as suggested by Zion and Weaver of mainly areas with accommodation for lunch time break and the occasional tree canopy are not sustainable as these type of small pocket parks do not support habitats and are created by humans out of circumstantial need for recreation. These type of vest-pocket parks do not have the capability of natural succession and are required to be maintained by park staff at the municipal level and thus are largely seen as burdens to cities as they experience increasing budget cutbacks.

3.7.3. Park Management

In his book Parks: Design and Management (1996), Leonard E. Phillips outlines the characteristics that create successful parks. Phillips explains that "a

park's goals should include not only providing people with access to fresh air and nature for their recreation but also a place where they can meet and enjoy each other's company" (Phillips, 1996, p.3). Management is one of the features of parks that need to be given primary consideration for a park to be successful. According to Phillips, "funding should be more than adequate to ensure that the pristine glory of the park's origin is preserved and enhanced" (Phillips, 1996, p.5). The park plan is also very important. This park plan should detail the required maintenance of each park section (Phillips, 1996, p.6). In parks, picnic areas are commonly found in "wooded areas and are associated with play grounds, open space, ball fields, comfort facilities, and parking lots" (Phillips, 1996, p.9). In maintaining picnic areas it is recommended that picnic tables be repaired in the winter time, use pine needles and leaves for ideal picnic ground cover, place proper garbage receptacles near picnic tables and the road or parking to encourage waste disposal, have timely waste pick up to discourage misuse, and paved pads should be installed near picnic tables to minimize soil compaction (Phillips, 1996, p.10).

Author Ian Attridge explains that "we have seen a shift from recreation- and scenery-based orientation in park acts to one which increasingly puts priority on environmental protection" (Attridge, 1998, p.233). This I believe is important because it highlights the change in parks.

3.7.4. Designing Ecologically Sustainable Parks

Author Nina-Marie Lister explains that from an operational ecological perspective, "smaller parks cannot reasonably be self-sustaining, nor thus resilient ecosystems, unless they are functionally connected through robust landscape

linkages to other similar areas" (Lister, 2007, p.35). This analysis can be extended to small pocket-vested parks. In the case for large parks,

> "design for large parks with conflicting habitats and uses calls for a long-term, bird's eye view of the whole system, usually by a multidisciplinary team of stakeholders and designers working in collaboration, rather than domination by expertise" (Lister, 2007, p.36).

In parks, Nina-Marie Lister has generalized the concept of *adaptive ecological design* which is defined as being "sustainable design: long-term survival demands adaptability, which is predicated on resilience" (Lister, 2007, p.36). She describes this as an emerging approach "with some reference to the ecological science on which it is based, is postulated as a response to sustainability for large parks" (Lister, 2007, p.36). She further explains, "resilient, adaptive, and thus sustainable ecological design is a fitting metaphor for 'thriving', and therefore must include economic health and cultural vitality – two characteristics reflected in contemporary large parks" (Lister, 2007, p.36). Furthermore, "a park's capacity for resilience lies in the strategic design of its organizational systems and logistics – whether infrastructure, form, or modes of operation – that enables it to absorb and facilitate change yet maintain its design sensibility" (Czerniak, 2007, p.216). Lister additionally explains that "widespread shrinking of public resources is echoed by demands for public parks to be revenue-generating, thus park planners are under increasing pressure to demonstrate long-term viability and therefore economic sustainability of parks" (Lister, 2007, p.36). This means that "large parks must be designed for more and different uses by a greater range of users" (Lister, 2007, p.36). Thus, large parks must be "designed for both ecological and programmatic

complexity, for both biological and sociocultural diversity, and, accordingly, for all facets of sustainability" (Lister, 2007, p.36). To achieve such goals for large parks, we need to use the adaptive ecological design as a strategy (Lister, 2007, p.36).

Ecological design may be considered as "a critical approach to navigating the interface between culture and nature" (Lister, 2007, p.39). Ecological design "emerges from the dynamic relationship between ecology and decision making" (Lister, 2007, p.39). In current day society, human culture and nature are treated as separate realms however, when put together they offer the opportunity of "new, hybridized natural-cultural ecologies and the rehabilitation and the rediscover of others" (Lister, 2007, p.39). Author Nina-Marie Lister notes that "aesthetics has not been a priority in a discipline that bears the label of 'design'; until recently, landscape architecture has been more concerned with applied ecology for reactive remediation" (Lister, 2007, p.40). Lister explains that in the context of planning and design, "in its social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions, the 'nature' of our large parks has very much to do with socially constructed landscape values, and this must be reflected in the design, planning, and management of our parks" (Lister, 2007, p.51). As a result of this, she expresses that the "designer's role in such a process becomes one of wise facilitator" (Lister, 2007, p.51).

Author George Hargreaves explains that in current parks today,

"we are making parks from landscapes that range from the artificial (such as piers) to landscapes from blighted industrial areas (such as railway yards and waterfront parking lots and warehouses) to extremely toxic landscapes (such as Superfund brownfields and nuclear waste sites)" (Hargreaves, 2007, p.169).

3.7.5. Historical Park Types

In her book *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (1982), author Galen Cranz describes four distinct historical park types. These parks include the pleasure ground (1850 – 1900), the reform park (1900 – 1930), the recreational facility (1930 – 1965), and the open space system (1965 and after).

The pleasure ground parks (1850 – 1900) were seen as a means to get relief from the city. They were meant to "be pieces of the country, with fresh air, meadows, lakes, and sunshine right in the city" (Cranz, 1982, p.5). By 1875, pleasure grounds had shifted from being influenced by the pastoral countryside aesthetic to increasingly including active recreation such as racing, polo playing, bicycle riding, toboggan sliding, tennis and croquet, baseball and lacrosse etc. (Cranz, 1982, p.7). The incentive for making nature available to the working class was to rejuvenate the tired worker (Cranz, 1982, p.8). The goal for pleasure grounds was to "heighten the idea of naturalness with forms suggested by nature but not to rely on what nature actually provided" (Cranz, 1982, p.26). Thus, in a sense, pleasure grounds were manipulating nature into being manicured, pristine and picturesque. Commonly found in pleasure grounds were clustered trees or forests which were preferred for their aesthetic cover (Cranz, 1982, p.40). Mowed grass was seen as a basic to the pleasure ground (Cranz, 1982, p.40). Areas for active recreation such as baseball, football, and polo were a necessity (Cranz, 1982, p.40). The planting of flowers through a bedding technique was used to provide the aesthetic to the park (Cranz, 1982, p.41). Architecture such roads and walls were constructed to make the parks usable (Cranz, 1982, p.42).

The reform park (1900 – 1930) came from the urban park planners feeling the need to organize activity because they felt that the masses were incapable of undertaking their own recreation (Cranz, 1982, p.61). This need for organized activities contrasted with the "unstructured pursuits of the pleasure garden" (Cranz, 1982, p.61). The users of the new reform parks were "mostly children and adult men of the urban working class" (Cranz, 1982, p.61). The reform park "segregated the ages and sexes" (Cranz, 1982, p.63) unlike the pleasure ground which "encouraged family excursion and recreation" (Cranz, 1982, p.63). This meant that for the "first time, children became a distinct and important focus of park planning" (Cranz, 1982, p.63). In fact, the reform park movement "stemmed in part from the late nineteenth-century playground movement, and the early reform parks were often aptly called playgrounds" (Cranz, 1982, p.63).

The name 'small parks' reflects the continuity imagined between the pleasure ground which is now called 'large parks' and new park site (Cranz, 1982, p.65). In the new park, it was common to see the combining of aesthetic features with recreational facilities. This included the like of playgrounds and tennis courts among other facilities. Vegetable gardens along with public library branches near small parks also became very common (Cranz, 1982, p.77). It was around this time that "park designers, who were increasingly employees of park departments rather than consultants, shifted from artistry as design priority to utility" (Cranz, 1982, p.86). This "changing perspective is apparent in the official reports, as the length of landscape reports diminished while the playground and gym director's reports increased" (Cranz, 1982, p.86). As "playgrounds and the reform park idea became

popular, citizen groups began to request that playgrounds be inserted into existing parks, and park departments tried to integrate playground equipment and traditional park landscaping" (Cranz, 1982, p.86).

The recreational facility (1930 – 1965) came about as park facilities became an expected feature of urban life (Cranz, 1982, p.101). By that time, parks were "no longer luxuries or even amenities, they became necessary parts of every city" (Cranz, 1982, p.103). Due to general increase in demand for park services, more facilities were constructed (Cranz, 1982, p.103). The recreational facility park type came during the great depression. At this time, facilities were created to encourage use and to keep morale (Cranz, 1982, p.110). These parks encouraged festivals, dramatics, dancing and art exhibits (Cranz, 1982, p.115). There was also a demand for constructing 'rec' centres or recreation facilities for youths which offered programming directed at youth (Cranz, 1982, p.117). During this time parks were standardized and that led to the 'parkway picturesque' aesthetic where the lawn and periodic trees and shrubs along parkways became common characteristics of the era and this was "a blend of minimal standards of appearance and the desire to keep maintenance and supervision costs to a minimum" (Cranz, 1982, p.123). Parks had the use of brighter colours, placement of park benches, and more visible signage (Cranz, 1982, p.126). The recreation era "provided facilities – playgrounds, parkways, stadiums, parking lots, and open beaches – but not space, much less open space" (Cranz, 1982, p.135).

The open space system began in 1965 and signified that a "turning point in park history had been reached" (Cranz, 1982, p.135). Historically, this time period

saw the middle-class flight to the suburbs and the consideration of parks to be unsafe places meant that parks were not being used (Cranz, 1982, p.137). At this time "the city needed parks, but it needed them chiefly for imagery and inspiration" (Cranz, 1982, p.137). The open space being used as parks were spaces that had not been built up and were left open (Cranz, 1982, p.138). These open spaces were fluid and the "park flowed into the city and the city into the park" (Cranz, 1982, p.138). These open spaced parks hosted cultural events and athletic events (Cranz, 1982, p.140). Possibilities for open spaces included plazas, pedestrian walks, urban waterfronts, and bicycle paths (Cranz, 1982, p.144).

Galen Cranz explains that for the future of parks, the decision about "the function of parks will largely derive from some vision of the city" (Cranz, 1982, p.240)

Chapter 4   Case Study: High Park

High Park (Map 8) is located centrally in the City of Toronto. It is bound by Bloor Street West to the North, Ellis Park Road to the West, Parkside Drive to the East and, the Queensway to the South. It is easily accessible by car, public transit, foot and bicycle. It is 161 hectares of natural landscape found in bustling City with designated natural and manicured areas (City of Toronto, 2008, p.4). It sees more than one million visitors annually (City of Toronto, 2015).

4.1.   Formation of High Park

High Park was formed in 1873 where City resident, John Howard granted his property to the City of Toronto (High Park Nature, 2015). John Howard had the condition that the park should be kept in its natural state as far as possible, must always be called High Park and, be used for the enjoyment of Toronto Citizens as a public park (Interview 3, 2015; Interview 9, 2015). Over time, the City added facilities and amenities to the park including "roads and parking lots, restaurant and concession facilities, a zoo, playgrounds, a greenhouse and work yard, allotment gardens, recreational facilities and picnic areas, ornamental gardens, groomed turf areas, walled revetments along the pond shorelines" (High Park Nature, 2015). In 1974, the City reduced mowing to preserve the Oak Savannah found in High Park (High Park Nature, 2015). This ecological awareness of High Park was followed by an ecological study of Grenadier Pond and the surrounding areas by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The City then conducted a survey of the Ravines of Toronto and "recommended further reduction of mowing practices in order to encourage the

regeneration of the Black Oak Savannah vegetation" (High Park Nature, 2015). In 1988, the City conducted a study that aimed to create a management plan to guide the implementation of appropriate stewardship for High Park (High Park Nature, 2015). This study focused on the "transportation and traffic flow, safety and recreation, the natural environment and virtually all aspects of park use" (High Park Nature, 2015). In 1989 High Park was identified as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) (High Park Nature, 2015). In 1995 and 1996 citizen volunteers became involved in the native plant restoration (Interview 3, 2015). In the present day park, there is a High Park Resource Group which enables different groups all around the park to voice their opinions on matters relating to the park.

4.2.   Park Biodiversity

High Park has a rich natural history. It is home to an oak savannah, a combination of grasses and wildflowers with a canopy tree cover (refer to Figure 1, Appendix 4) (High Park Nature, (a), 2014). It supports rare flora and vegetation communities (High Park Nature, (a), 2014). High Park is considered to be ecologically significant because it contains rare vegetation and plant species such as "a large number of plant species with southern or prairie affinities, several species with northern (boreal) affinities, and a few species characteristic of Great Lakes shoreline habitats" (City of Toronto, 2008, p.7).

The black oak savannah in High Park, once found all over southern Ontario is one of the largest remnants left in southern Ontario (City of Toronto, 2008, p.7). Other vegetation supported by the black oak savannah which are now uncommon include "prairie grasses such as big bluestem, little bluestem and Indian grass, and

prairie flowers such as cylindrical blazing star, hairy bush-clover and showy tick-

trefoil, plus the wild lupine that blankets the savannah in late spring" (City of

Toronto, 2008, p.7). As a result of the significance of the natural land value, 73

hectares of High Park has been declared to be an Area of Natural and Scientific

Interest (AINSI) (City of Toronto, 2008, p.8).

The wildlife in High Park is diverse because of the "park's large size, location

near wildlife corridors, and varied habitats" (City of Toronto, 2008, p.8). Wildlife

familiar to High Park include, red fox, grey squirrel, eastern chipmunk, red squirrel,

groundhog, woodchuck, raccoon, striped skunk, brown bats, cottontail rabbits, deer

mice, muskrat, beaver, red-backed salamander, and 50 additional species of

butterflies (City of Toronto, 2008, p.10).

4.3. Park Use

Park users today use the park for a variety of active and passive recreational

uses including dog walking, picnics, using the children's playground, leisure walks,

going to the zoo, bird watching, jogging the trails, cross country skiing, cycling, using

the ice rink and swimming pool and, playing tennis, soccer or cycling (refer to

Figure 2 & 3, Appendix 4). As the demand for active recreation increased in High

Park in the 1900's, "trees were cleared to create space for playing fields and

toboggan runs" (City of Toronto, 2008, p.6).

The High Park Zoo is one of the most popular amenities located in High Park.

It is also known as the Animal Paddocks. It was established in 1893 and today it is

home to domestic exotic species including bison, llamas, highland cattle, peacocks,

reindeer, wallabies, emus, and mountain sheep (High Park Nature, 2012; Friends of

High Park Zoo, 2015). The Zoo is a very big public attraction and gets over 500,000 visitors each year (Friends of High Park Zoo, 2015).

4.4. Park Development

In the 1950's the Park saw dramatic changes due to the "increasing urbanization and the construction of various recreational facilities within the park" (City of Toronto, (b), 2002, p.15). This resulted in the construction of roads to improve access and the "planting of non-native trees and replacing the native groundcovers with turf grass (City of Toronto, 2008, p.6). In the 1950's and 60's, High Park saw the construction of many of the amenities that are prominently used by park users today including; Hillside Gardens, Grenadier Restaurant, the swimming pool, fieldhouse and outdoor ice rink complex, washrooms, picnic shelters, food concessions, and parking lots (City of Toronto, 2008, p.6). The purpose of these changes was to increase the access, appeal and comfort of High Park however, the unintended affect is that these changes came at a cost to the natural environment (City of Toronto, 2008, p.6).

In the 1980's and 1990's the City conducted studies to find that "High Park's natural environment had been greatly affected by development both inside and outside the park" (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11). The black oak savannah was significantly reduced by the "establishment of recreational facilities and planting of turf grass" (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11). It is also noted that "past park management practices, such as suppressing fire, planting non-native species and mowing, prevented the natural regeneration of native vegetation" (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11). In 1853, the construction of the rail and road corridor to the south of the park

disturbed the natural linkages between the park's ponds, marshes, creeks and Lake Ontario (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11). This meant that wetlands were lost through road development resulting in the park's ponds and creeks being polluted with runoff from industrial spills and contaminated sediments (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11). Following studies conducted by the City during this time period, they implemented the reduction of the amount of grass being used and halted pesticide use for general turf management (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11).

As the studies of High Park's ecological significance continued, public awareness began to increase leading to the awareness of natural features and areas that were endangered and in need of being restored. In 2002, the City of Toronto's Urban Forestry department unveiled the *High Park Woodland & Savannah Management Plan,* which aimed to formalize the remediation strategies and guide the long-term restoration of the park's natural areas (City of Toronto, 2008, p.11). Methods used to restore High Park's natural system are: using fire for natural regeneration, planting native vegetation, controlling the spread of invasive plant species, improving habitat for terrestrial wildlife, minimizing damage to the environment from trails, reducing impact of stormwater, naturalizing shorelines, creating additional wetlands, re-establishing healthy fish communities, and cleaning up contaminated sediments in Grenadier Pond (City of Toronto, 2008).

4.5. Park Feature: High Park Gardens

High Park is also home to ornamental gardens. This includes the Hillside Gardens (refer to Figures 4, 5 & 6), Boulevard Beds, Pollinator Gardens, Allotment Gardens, and the Sculpture Hill Garden Area. The development of these gardens

occurred after 1954 where "a shift in policy in the 1950's led to the development of facilities such as Hillside Gardens, the swimming pool, the zoo and the tennis courts" (City of Toronto, (b), 2002, p.16). Following the development in High Park, in the late 1980's "the presiding City Forester, Bill Morsink, recognized the significance of the Park's natural heritage and began to change management practices, shifting the focus to restoration" (City of Toronto, (b), 2002, p.16).

The Boulevard Beds are a wildflower demonstration garden located near the Grenadier Café. In the fall of 2000, the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program planned the Boulevard Beds with the goal to show the public High Park's native plants (High Park Nature, (a), 2010). The planting of the Boulevard Beds began in 2001 and was completed in 2004 (High Park Nature, (a), 2010).

The High Park Pollinator Garden was established in 2010 and is part of the pollinator gardens project which aims to create gardens for native birds, bees, and butterflies (High Park Nature, (a), 2011). In the Pollinator Garden, native plants are used to provide nectar, pollen, larval food and habitat.

The Allotment Gardens were opened in 1974 and "offer permitted plots to local gardeners for fruit, vegetable and flower plantings" (High Park Nature, (b), 2010). They have been fenced to prevent theft of produce and tools and expanded from their original size (High Park Nature, (b), 2010). Alongside providing enjoyable recreational activity for residents, the Allotment Gardens provide habitat for wildlife (High Park Nature, (b), 2010).

In 1967, there was an International Sculpture Symposium in Toronto with High Park's Sculpture Hill Garden as the venue (High Park Nature, (b), 2011). There

was international interest in this symposium and from this symposium, seven sculptures remain at the Sculpture Hill Garden (High Park Nature, (b), 2011). These sculptures are known as; 'no shoes', 'flower power', 'three discs', 'november pyramid', 'mid-summer night's dream', 'temple', and 'the hippy' (High Park Nature, (b), 2011).

The Hillside Ornamental Gardens are "beautiful and elaborate gardens on the west side of the park have been attracting gardening enthusiasts and amateur photographers since the 1950s" (High Park Nature, (b), 2014). These gardens are a means for visitors to enjoy the water features and plants. The Hillside Ornamental Gardens include: The Rock Garden – features a stream of waterfalls through flowerbeds (Allan, 2006, p.8); The Maple Leaf Flower Bed – features a floral display of a stylized sugar maple leaf and was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth during a visit to Toronto in 1958 (Allan, 2006, p.8); The Sunken Garden – includes a pool located between shrubs with water re-circulated from the pond (Allan, 2006, p.8); and The Hanging Garden – features a variety of hanging plants and provides a beautiful aesthetic for park users (Allan, 2006, p.8).

4.6.   Off Leash Dog Culture & Trampling

One particular concern in High Park's is off leash dogs. High Park has constructed off leash areas to "provide a controlled environment in which dogs can exercise, socialize with other dogs, and bond with their owners" (Zimmerman, 2013, p.2). However, Park users have been allowing their dogs to run free in areas designated as Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). This is an issue because it is affecting the fragile ecosystem of High Park as well as posing a serious

risk to the health of dogs through infectious diseases, toxins and poisonous plants (Zimmerman, 2013, p.2).

In a *Botanical Inventory and Evaluation of the High Park Oak Woodlands* report written by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Parks and Recreational Areas Section in 1989, it was recommended that signage be used to promote the value of the environment and to reduce the acts of vandalism such as picking flowers and digging up rare plants in the park's natural areas (Varga, 1989, p.33). High Park also in recent years has experienced the issue of trampling particularly in the off-trail recreational use of natural areas. The damage to soils and vegetation is an issue as compacted soil can lead to increased runoff, soil erosion and sedimentation (City of Toronto, (b), 2008, p.35). High Park's "sandy soil structure is particularly vulnerable, and trampling quickly leads to erosion, to destruction of grasses and wildflowers, and to degradation of trees and shrubs" (Foster & Sandberg, 2004, p.190). In different parts of High Park, the off- trail use is "leading to serious erosion problems and the channelization of runoff" (City of Toronto, (b), 2008, p.35). This is leading to all natural areas being negatively affected where there is loss of native vegetation which has also encouraged the establishment of non-native plants which are able to withstand the soil compaction, erosion and habitat fragmentation (City of Toronto, (b), 2008, p.35).

4.7.   Restoration in High Park

High Park has had an important focus on restoration. Park staff began restoration by laying tarp to kill weeds in the soil followed by collecting seeds in the park and growing them in the native plant greenhouse (High Park Nature, (c),

2011). Controlling invasive plants in High Park is important as invasives have been aggressively colonizing natural areas as invasive plants "tend to reproduce rapidly and widely, taking advantage of disturbed conditions such as path edges" (High Park Nature, (c), 2014). Strategies being used to control invasives in High Park include minimizing disturbances such as creating new paths, planting native species around edges of natural areas, and avoiding the use of soil from outside the park (High Park Nature, (c), 2014). Additionally, High Park has prescribed burns for the restoration process where controlled fire has been used as part of "Urban Forestry's long-term management goal to restore and protect Toronto's rare black oak woodlands ad savannahs" (High Park Nature, (d), 2014). This controlled fire is deliberately set and the fire "consumes dried leaves, small twigs and grass stems, but does not harm larger trees" (High Park Nature, (d), 2014). To minimize damage to the environment from park trails, High Park has created a network of trails to allow park users to access different areas of the Park comfortably and safely (High Park Nature, (c), 2010).

Chapter 5   Case Study: Rouge Park

Rouge Park (Map 9) is over 40 km² (10,000 acres) of protected land (Rouge Park, (a), 2012). It lies within Scarborough, the City of Markham, the City of Pickering, Richmond Hill and, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Rouge Park is "bounded by Lake Ontario to the south, the Rouge Valley, including the Morningside Creek to the west, and the Scarborough-Pickering Townline and the Rouge Valley to the east" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.9). It has a diverse mix of vegetation and wildlife. The park includes many "forests, meadows, ponds and wetlands in the highly populated area near Canada's largest City" (Rouge Park, 2013). Rouge Park is home to the Rouge River which is a 250 km long system found north in the Oak Ridges Moraine and its "tributaries flow south into Toronto, through the marshes at Rouge Beach, and empty into Lake Ontario" (Rouge Park, (a), 2012). The park features an active farming legacy and Rouge Park aims to protect these rural landscapes (Rouge Park, (a), 2012).

5.1.   Park Formation

Rouge Park was formed around 1994-1995 when community members came together over land and recognized that it was the only undeveloped part of Toronto (Interview 1, 2015; Interview 2, 2015). The community members formed a group called *Save the Rouge Valley System* and the grassroots citizen activism essentially convinced the government to save the land (Interview 1, 2015; Interview 2, 2015). The Federal government then provided a grant to Rouge Park to create a Rouge Park

Alliance (Interview 1, 2015). Rouge Park Alliance included members of the Federal, Provincial, and Municipal governments as well as a few non-profit groups including Save the Rouge Valley System (Interview 1, 2015). The park establishment had a few phases which began with initially focusing on protecting the lands in the City of Toronto (South of Steeles) (Interview 6, 2015). But soon, people realized that the development was moving further North and they wanted to make sure that they were connecting Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine natural system (Interview 6, 2015). By that time because there was a governing body established – Rouge Park Alliance, it was easier to put in a plan in place to define the boundaries and identify the spaces where the park would be protected (Interview 6, 2015).

5.2. Physical Landscape

Rouge Park has a beautiful physical landscape which has been manipulated by natural processes to its current state over time (refer to Figure 1, Appendix 5). An example of a natural process that has changed the landscape over time is moving water. There are different forms of moving water in Rouge Park, all which have contributed to the changing landscape. These different forms of moving water include; rivers – carving paths through valleys; flood waters – moving sediment and depositing the sediment as water drains and settles; shorelines – change with the rise and drop of lake levels (Rouge Park, (c), 2012). Over time, the Rouge River has carved its banks "exposing sedimentary layers and creating the steep sides of the riverbanks, up to 30 metres high" (Rouge Park, (c), 2012). The valleys of Rouge Park have also been influenced by water through water erosion which mainly occurs

"from mud flow in the spring when seepage from groundwater is the most active, and when there are heavy rains in the summer" (Rouge Park, (c), 2012). A human made feature in the physical landscape of Rouge Park is an old garbage dump located on Beare Road. This hill is "120 metres higher than the surrounding uplands" (Rouge Park, (c), 2012), and "vegetation has been planted to naturalize the slopes" (Rouge Park, (c), 2012).

5.3. Points of Interest

Rouge Park has several points of interest aimed at garnering park users to come to the park and interact with specific parts of the park. These points have been purposefully selected as the more ecologically significant parts of the park have been bordered off to visitors. In the public area of the park, points of interest include; Rouge Beach, Glen Eagles Vista, Twyn Rivers, Trail Heads, Glen Rouge Campground, Woodland Area, and Celebration Forest (refer to Figure 2 – 6, Appendix 5).

Rouge Beach is the area where Rouge River meets Lake Ontario. It is a different aesthetic entirely compared to the rest of the park as it is for more of a passive recreation use. The Beach features sandy areas for recreation, allows for canoeing in marshes, and provides a pleasant view of Lake Ontario (Rouge Park, (b), 2013).

Glen Eagles Vista is a 0.6 km long trail (Rouge Park, (c), 2013). It features a vista point with an outstanding view of river valleys and geologic features (Rouge Park, (c), 2013).

The Twyn Rivers Area in Rouge Park provides access to 10 km of official hiking trails including the Orchard, Mast and Vista trails (Rouge Park, (d), 2013). It is a good access point to see the Little Rouge Creek where the remains of an old dam are still visible (Rouge Park, (d), 2013). In the past, this area was once used for active recreation such as skiing (Rouge Park, (d), 2013).

The Glen Rouge Campground is located within Rouge Park. It is centrally located and provides an area for park users to connect with the natural environment of Rouge Park. The access to hiking trails and the sandy beach area is close to the campground (Rouge Park, (e), 2013). The campground features amenities such as showers, washrooms, children's playground and a barbecue/fire pit (Rouge Park, (e), 2013).

The Woodlands Area in Rouge Park is a trail area with mixed levels of intensity. The total trail is 2.7 km and it features 1.5 km of trail that is easy and flat and the remainder of the trail is moderate to challenging (Rouge Park, (f), 2013).

The Celebration Forest is a park memorial in Rouge Park opened in 2006. It can be accessed from the Twyn Rivers Area and is honouring "friends and supporters of Rouge Park, as well as those who contributed to the natural heritage legacy of the area that eventually became protected in the Park" (Rouge Park, (g), 2013). The Celebration Forest also features a short 0.5 km hiking trail.

The trail system in Rouge Park is important because it contributes to the "social and physical health of the residents of the community by providing a range of recreational opportunities and experiences" (Rouge Park Alliance, 2001, p.17). This means that Rouge Park can use the trail system as an effective educational tool to

instil in trail users "a better understanding and respect for the environmental resources of the park, which in turn will translate into the protection of sensitive resources" (Rouge Park Alliance, 2001, p.17).

Rouge Park provides park users areas to engage in a variety of activities. This includes hiking, camping, canoeing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, fishing, swimming and other beach activities, picnics, nature photography, bird watching, and cycling.

5.4. Park Feature: Park Trails

Rouge Park offers a means for park users to explore the vegetation and wildlife of the Park. Each trail is a different intensity and offers a different view of Rouge Park. These trails include; Cedar Trail, Orchard Trail, Vista Trail, Mast Trail, and Riverside Trail (Rouge Park, (h), 2013). The canoeing in Rouge Park is designated in the marsh area of Rouge Beach overlooking Lake Ontario. This unique viewscape allows park users to explore the wildlife near the beach and marsh area.

For trail development and management, Rouge Park has created trails which avoid areas of vegetation that cannot sustain disturbance or are sensitive to different levels of use; use buffers to protect special fauna habitats or nesting sites from the trails; are close to public amenities; and provide different levels of intensity to provide a variety of hiking experience for users (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.42).

5.5. Park Management

Rouge Park currently follows the 1994 Rouge Park Management Plan and the 2001 Rouge North Management Plan. The Rouge Park vision is focused on "the

protection and appreciation of the park ecosystem" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.3).

The vision for Rouge Park is based on the "premise that the functioning of significant natural systems forms a vital part of the natural environment, and that their continued health is dependent on the integrity of their habitats and on the physical connections between habitats" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.3). The goal of Rouge Park is to "protect, restore and enhance the natural, scenic and cultural values of the park in an ecosystem context, and to promote public responsibility, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.3).

Rouge Park has several park planning objectives to support and achieve its vision and goal. These objectives encompass the natural heritage, cultural heritage, land use, management, interpretation, and recreation of Rouge Park. In accordance with the Rouge Park Management Plan, the natural heritage objectives states that it is "to protect, restore and enhance the natural ecosystem of the park by ensuring the health and diversity of its native species, habitats, landscapes, and ecological processes (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.3). The cultural heritage objective is "to identify, protect and conserve the cultural heritage features of the park for their inherent value and depiction of the long term human use and occupancy of the area" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.3). The land use objective is "to ensure protection of the ecological integrity and cultural values of the park through innovative planning, management, and land use in the park and its environs" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.4). The management objective is "to manage the park to ensure the achievement of all park objectives and to provide for ongoing public involvement in park planning

and management" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.4). The interpretation objective is "to promote knowledge and understanding of the natural and cultural values of the park, their protection and management requirements, and their significance, sensitivities and interrelationships" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.4). The recreation objective is "to provide opportunities for appropriate recreational enjoyment consistent with all other park objectives" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.4).

Rouge Park uses the vision, goal, objectives and principles to focus on several key areas. For natural heritage, Rouge Park focuses on the key areas of biodiversity, sustainable functions, restoration, health and change, and first nations involvement (Rouge Park Alliance, 2007, p.3-1). In land use, the focus is on holistic view, integrity of the park environment, respect for the natural and cultural heritage, linkages and natural systems, environmental standards, and innovation, demonstration and view to the future (Rouge Park Alliance, 2007, p.3-1). For interpretation and education, the key areas of focus are comprehensive and integrated, evolutionary in focus, understanding and protection, and community involvement (Rouge Park Alliance, 2007, p.3-1). In recreation, the key areas are suitability within a unique park vision, respect for natural and cultural heritage values, and respect for residents and neighbours (Rouge Park Alliance, 2007, p.3-1). And lastly, for management, the key areas of focus are orderly and evolutionary plan for the future, partnership commitment and experienced leadership (Rouge Park Alliance, 2007, p.3-1).

The natural values of Rouge Park require protection of "both site specific natural areas, and the valley and stream corridors which extend along the waterways within the park" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.8). The park also has

Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs) and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs).

5.6.   Park Uses

The park is home to existing private residences, working farms and the Toronto Zoo. A range of other uses can also be found in the park including "industrial, institutional, recreation/open space, and utilities" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.12). Rouge Park also has several major transportation corridors running through it including Steeles Avenue East, 407 and the 401. Rouge Park has a "number of rail lines, hydro corridors pipelines, and sewer and water right-of-ways also currently exist within the park boundary" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.14).

In 2008, Rouge Park created the Heritage Appreciation and Visitor Experience Plan (HAVE). The HAVE plan is a "suite of programs, activities and services that can assist Rouge Park and its partners and stakeholders in achieving the park's mission, vision and goals" (Rouge Park Alliance, 2008, p.2). HAVE "provides visitors and supporters of the park with opportunities to explore, understand, appreciate and participate in the stewardship of the park's natural and cultural heritage" (Rouge Park Alliance, 2008, p.2). The HAVE plans is means of informing and educating park users through written material such as pamphlets and booklets. The plan creates an analysis of all park stakeholders and provides information on how these stakeholders will engage with Rouge Park. This in turn will enhance public awareness on the relationship of Rouge Park with the surrounding natural environment (Rouge Park Alliance, 2008, p.2).

5.7. Park Biodiversity

Rouge Park is "composed of a diverse, linked network of natural forests, swamps and marshlands, meadows, streams and rivers, shorelines, bluffs and human landscapes" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.25). Its ecological systems are key in the larger pattern of bioregional processes (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.25). The park is ecologically linked to Lake Ontario and inland areas (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.25). This linkage "functions as a corridor for seasonal migratory birds, fish, and mammals, as well as for the long term migration of diverse species of plants and animals" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.25). Rouge Park is known for its highly significant "diversity of species, community composition, habitat niches, moisture gradients, community structure, successional states and community interspersion" (Rouge Park, (b), 2012). Rouge Park has more than 762 plant species, 225 bird species, 55 fish species, 27 mammal species and 19 reptile and amphibian species (David Suzuki Foundation, 2012, p.8).

The vegetation management plan of Rouge Park aims to "ensure the on-going health of native plant communities, and to restore the park's vegetation to as close to a "natural state" as possible" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.25). Through nature reserve and restoration zones, Rouge Park controls the human influences to "minimize disruption of native flora and natural processes" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.26). For future park management purposes, Rouge Park uses restoration efforts to "provide ecological linkages; increase the size and viability of natural areas; improve the health of disturbed areas; increase biological diversity; and improve general landscape quality" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.26). Towards the

north end of Rouge Park, the linkages connecting natural areas are generally more

remote (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.26). This means that there are rivers, tributary

streams, intermittent streams and isolated woodlots that can be linked by "restoring

forest and wetland conditions in planned corridors and core areas" (Province of

Ontario, 1994, p.26). The creation of these linkages will "strengthen river and

stream corridors, enhance the ecological viability of the tableland woodlots, and

infill disturbed areas within otherwise continuous forested tracts" (Province of

Ontario, 1994, p.26).

Rouge Park also sees larger issues for the protection of native vegetation and

species and vegetation restoration. These include eliminating and controlling

invasive species. Invasive species in Rouge Park have invaded many ecologically

sensitive areas of the park. Invasive species such as "Dog-strangling Vine, Purple

Loosestrife, Garlic Mustard and Common Buckthorn are examples of non-native,

damaging species that have invaded several areas of the park and should be

controlled or, if possible, eliminated (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.28). The park also

has plants such as poison ivy which can affect the health of visitors.

Species reintroduction is a means for Rouge Park to take part in vegetation

restoration. Species reintroduction is the way in which Rouge Park is able to

reintroduce plants that have been documented historically but are no longer

present into the natural vegetation (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.28). Rouge Park

has also been concerned with being "actively involved in maintaining vegetation

communities or specific species" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.28). Usually,

maintaining the vegetation is left to natural succession, however, park staff provide

any extra assistance required by the natural environment in time of need (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.28).

Managing the fauna of Rouge Park requires the least possible human intervention, the protection of rare species, addressing special habitats for species, having the reintroduction of native species, and not permitting hunting and trapping in the park (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.29).

In the protection and management of the park's aquatic system, it is recommended that the "natural river and lakeshore dynamics should continue to operate and evolve within the park without interference" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.30). The park also recognizes that "in certain cases intervention will be required to restore aquatic processes or habitats which have experienced human-induced impacts" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.30). Rouge Park has also created aquatic protection and management for habitat. In this protection and management of habitat, the "aquatic habitat restoration for fish communities will be based on the long term objective of ensuring naturally reproducing, self-sustaining native populations" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.32). Aquatic species introduction and reintroduction is also very important to the park. In this case, there is a long term objective of fisheries management which aims to have "naturally reproducing, self-sustaining native salmonids in cold waters (i.e. Atlantic Salmon and Brook Trout) and native Pike, Bass, and Walleye in warmer waters" (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.32). Rouge Park also aims to control exotic aquatic species such as Sea Lamprey, Carp and Zebra Mussel (Province of Ontario, 1994, p.32).

In the *Rouge North Management Plan* (2001), there are guiding principles that provide the design guideline for the park and thus in turn forms the park's aesthetic. This includes requiring a public façade along Rouge Park and locating social centres of new communities along Rouge Park (Rouge Park Alliance, 2001, p.10).

5.8. Park Stakeholders

Rouge Park contains many different lands from multiple stakeholders. Since 2011, the Federal Government through Parks Canada has been trying to negotiate the transfer of the Provincially owned portions of Rouge Park. However, on March 12, 2015, the Provincial Government refused the transfer of land to the Federal Government because of concerns of lax ecological protection. But as it is, in its current state, these current stakeholders/landholders include TRCA, Transport Canada, City of Markham, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Ontario Realty Corporation, City of Toronto, Town of Richmond Hill, City of Pickering, Region of York, Region of Durham, Province of Ontario, Federal Government, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corporation, Canadian Pacific Railway, Toronto Zoo, Golf Courses and Ontario Hydro. Additionally, Rouge Park has agricultural lands and private dwellings. Parts of Rouge Park are also considered to be a part of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan. This has created many policies which Rouge Park has to abide by which in turn has influenced its aesthetics.

Chapter 6   Research Findings: High Park & Rouge Park

This chapter discusses my research findings on High Park and Rouge Park. I use original data obtained through interviews I conducted with participants working in different capacities in High Park and Rouge Park to understand park aesthetics and design.

6.1.   High Park

6.1.1. *High Park Aesthetic Design Changes*

In the discussion on the major design changes that High Park has seen over the years, it was understood that High Park's fundamental design came from John Howard's request to keep the land in its natural state after the land was deeded to the City (Interview 4, 2015). The increase in the original park size as the City purchased more land and designated it as parkland was also seen as a design change (Interview 8, 2015). As Interviewee 4 explains,

> "during the 1900s there were a lot of recreational facilities that were built and a fair amount of developments as well by the city. It kind of went through that development in the 1970s when the city realized the importance of the natural areas, then the design started to shift back towards ecological spaces and I think that it's getting back to words more of what John Howard had in mind when he deeded the land. Because he wanted it to be more of a wild space that everyone could come to" (Interview 4, 2015).

Therefore, it can be noted that High Park did begin to become overdeveloped but "in the 1970's, 1980's people became much more aware of the significance of the natural areas in the park and there was a push to reclaim and restore some of these

spaces that were lost" (Interview 9, 2015). The change in the park development

occurred as "Toronto began to grow and develop (and) High Park became a very

popular destination" (Interview 9, 2015). Additionally, in the 1950's "many

amenities were built including roadways, a restaurant, pool, washrooms etc."

(Interview 9, 2015).

6.1.2. High Park Design and Aesthetic Approach by Decision-Makers

For the aesthetic and design approach taken by decision makers, Interviewee

4 explains that many times "it's trying to find a balance between the ecological and

the recreational and there are times when they can be both" (Interview 4, 2015).

Interviewee 8 speaks along the same lines and explains that "before it was trying to

follow John Howard's request to make it a park and then the public's request to

make it more feasible for public use" (Interview 8, 2015). Interviewee 8 explains

that in the present day park it is different than the past as because of the knowledge

we have on the fauna and flora, there is more of a push to preserve at an

institutional level and also because of the community's awareness of their natural

surroundings, they too request more preservation of the natural environment

(Interview 8, 2015).

6.1.3. High Park Principle/Guideline Influencing Current Park Design

For a set of principles or guidelines influencing the current design of High

Park, Interviewee 8 explains "[High Park] takes into consideration the ESA and ANSI

approach on top of that we take public concern" (Interview 8, 2015). Along with the

concerns of groups operating within High Park such as the High Park Zoo, High Park

City staff need to consider "City standards that allow [park staff] to combine [group]

thoughts or suggestions with our standards" (Interview 8, 2015). In the end, the combined policies and standards enables High Park staff to direct the vision for High Park (Interview 8, 2015). Other guidelines that are used in directing the park design are management practices such as the *High Park Woodland and Savannah Management Plan*. Since High Park is a multi-use park, it has several stakeholders involved in the park. These groups include city gardeners and horticulturalists, along with other volunteer groups. The management plans in this case act as a guideline, guiding all groups on the overall park design and principles.

6.1.4. High Park Values

As a contemporary park, High Park values are focused on striking the balance between the formal and naturalized landscapes (Interview 8, 2015). The park values have the capacity to cover the interests for a diverse population. For example, the park is able to provide a wide array of recreational facilities for those seeking recreation; it is able to provide the peace and quiet to those who use the park with the intention of experiencing that; the park can provide an outlet for people to be with their pets in a natural setting; the park provides opportunities for users to be educated through the High Park Nature Centre; the park provides picnic facilities for those seeking for one and; the park is home to the aesthetically pleasing cherry blossoms (Interview 4, 2015).

6.1.5. High Park Aesthetic Design over Ecological Function/Restorative Processes

In terms of the aesthetic design of the park being given consideration over the ecological function and/or restorative processes, participants felt that because

of the focus on management and restoration of the park especially considering the Black Oak Savannah found in the park and High Park being designated as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), the ecological function and restorative processes are given focus over the aesthetic design (Interview 9, 2015). This is at least true in the naturalized area of High Park. As Interviewee 4 explains, because the park has both pristine, manicured landscapes and also naturalized areas, there is a balance found in the park as "certain areas are priority areas for restorative work and in other areas of aesthetic is a bit more of a priority" (Interview 4, 2015). The participant further explains that sometimes even if ecologically it would make more sense to leave a dead tree standing, for safety reasons, the tree has to be cut because it is seen as a hazard for park users (Interview 4, 2015).

Interviewee 8 believes that it is the opposite in High Park and that they "consider the ecological functions and restoration of the park more than having aesthetic of the park" (Interview 8, 2015). The interviewee further explains that it is the opposite in High Park because they want to "attract more wildlife we want to attract more pollinators and we are actually making pollinator beds so we can attract more insects and make it more sustainable in the future as well because it's hard to maintain a formal bed" (Interview 8, 2015). However, the participant does agree that in some parts of the park such as Hillside Garden, it is more about preserving the area as is (Interview 8, 2015).

6.1.6. High Park Destination Park

In the case of High Park being a destination park, (Interview 8, 2015) explains that the park is required to be "a certain size and in a certain location"

(Interview 8, 2015). The park is also required to have many features and activities. Interviewee 9 agrees with Interviewee 8 and explains that the different High Park amenities such as the "outdoor pool, outdoor skating rink, restaurant, horticultural gardens, natural areas, zoo, picnic areas, playgrounds, wading pool, dog off leash area, pond area" (Interview 9, 2015), appeal to a larger park user base. Interviewee 4 believes that during certain times of the year for example the Cherry Blossom time, the park can be considered as a destination park (Interview 4, 2015).

6.1.7. *High Park Changing Demographic and Cultural Entanglement*

For the changing cultural background of park visitors, Interview explains that "you do see a real diverse array of people come use the park but I don't see the programming like affecting that so much – every group that is in the park encourages everyone" (Interview 4, 2015). In addition to this, Interviewee 8 explains that in High Park, "all the staff that work here are multicultural so pretty much will understand and try to work with the public and we do not have any programming here" (Interview 8, 2015).

6.1.8. *High Park Aesthetic Preference and Cultural Value*

For the changing aesthetic preference of park users, Interviewee 4 explains that it depends on what the park user is trying to come and experience at the park. The participant explains that "the people that come to the Nature Centre and our visitors they tend to prefer a natural space" (Interview 4, 2015). The participant further explains that those park visitors come to the park to "do bird watching identify wildflowers, to go on long hikes and it's a lot more interesting to do that in naturalized spaces then it is to do in manicured areas" (Interview 4, 2015). As a

result of experiencing this, Interviewee 4 concludes that from the Nature Centre's point of view, there is a natural aesthetic (Interview 4, 2015). Interviewee 8 adds to Interviewee 4's thoughts and explains,

> "we have orientation sessions in the springtime we inform all the staff of the values and the importance of keeping the areas naturalized that way to be cautious of the plant materials they are pulling out sometimes even bringing in soil from another Park we are not allowed here. So we give them an orientation that's how they are understanding and being informed" (Interview 8, 2015).

6.1.9. *High Park Aesthetic Justice – Public Park Definition*

As for opportunities for the public to participate in the definition of High Park, Interviewee 9 explains "there are many different avenues by which the public are able to get involved with what is going on in the park system" (Interview 9, 2015). This is mostly through public participation processes. Interviewee 4 explains that through the High Park Stewards, there are several planting events that the public can get involved in which would result in them helping define the park aesthetics (Interview 4, 2015).

6.2. Rouge Park

6.2.1. *Rouge Park Aesthetic Design Changes*

As a constantly evolving park, the design of Rouge Park had a different design focus at each stage. From its inception Rouge Park was deemed as a conservation area with opportunities for park visitors to use certain areas (Interview 1, 2015). During the time period between 1994 to early 2000, "we were accumulating land we were making sure that things were solid that things were part of the greenbelt and

that we had acquired the land" (Interview 1, 2015). And because the focus was on attaining the land, there was not much of a push on the aesthetics portion (Interview 1, 2015). The Rouge Park Management plan was created to direct the design and focus of Rouge Park which mainly was conservation-based. In 2008 the Heritage Appreciation Visitor Experience (HAVE) plan was created (Interview 1, 2015). At this time, Rouge Park wanted to approach visitors in a different way,

> "people were accepted into the park and there were public use areas already in place and we were ready to embrace that and really start creating programs and things like that into the park and increasing the visually aesthetic things but not for … not necessarily aesthetics in terms of the landscape but more so just way finding for people, helping people to find their way through signage and welcoming areas and staging areas" (Interview 1, 2015).

In 2008, in addition to having an restoration and ecological based design focus, Rouge Park was able to include a visitor approach focus due to the HAVE plan (Interview 1, 2015).

The design of Rouge Park was also driven by the park's moniker 'wild in the city'. As a result, park staff participated in the "restoration and conversion of disused farmland or some active farmland restoration and a lot of tree planting" (Interview 2, 2015). Another park design change was wetland creation where deemed necessary. Rouge Park being a natural park already had many design features. These features and changes are apparent near the zoo area where the valley is less defined and that creates a change in the character of the park (Interview 2, 2015). Additionally, different parts of the park provide different features as explained by Interviewee 2,

"when you're in the south end of the park and you're in the valley lands there are some big vistas and so you get the typography and I guess sort of visual elements in the park as well as more mature forests as well. Trails have been put in and so the experiences that people have are primarily natural, Nature experiences. There are a few trails that go through open field areas or regenerating areas at this point" (Interview 2, 2015).

These changes in landscape design are also noticeable when the North end of the park is compared to the South as the North has more farmland areas. Interviewee 6 also explains that the park went through a lot of restoration especially because in some parts of the park, forest areas had been cut down in the past for farmland use (Interview 6, 2015). After hearing the concerns of farmers, the park then began to "change the design from just strictly all restoration to really more of a mixed use design" (Interview 6, 2015). This was followed by the creation of the trail system to provide people with a way into the park (Interview 6, 2015). Rouge Park staff decided to "design trails but focus on nature trails and not large-scale multiuse trails" (Interview 6, 2015). Much of the design changes in the park have been made with the realization that Rouge Park is one "that is meant to grow towards a more resilient ecosystem" (Interview 5, 2015).

6.2.2. *Rouge Park Design and Aesthetic Approach by Decision-Makers*

The design and aesthetic approach taken by decision-makers in Rouge Park mainly was a practical approach. As explained by Interviewee 1, "I think the approach was more again like I said way-finding and safety was the most important thing to establish because not a lot of people knew where Rouge Park started and ended" (Interview 1, 2015). An example of an area of Rouge Park that has been created to be visually appealing but at the same time be an area where visitors can

experience the natural area safely is the Rouge Marsh near the Beach area. As Interviewee 1 explains,

> "So we added that boardwalk in there. So if anything that would be a really good example where there was a mixture of an aesthetic appealing it's a beautiful boardwalk and it also allows that opportunity to almost feel like you are in the marsh. And it has a bench and opportunities for just sitting down and soaking in the lovely habitat that you are seeing" (Interview 1, 2015).

Another example is the trail system in Rouge Park. Where aesthetically it is more of a rustic design and provides "a very wilderness kind of experience hiking trail" (Interview 2, 2015).

6.2.3. *Rouge Park Principle/Guideline Influencing Current Park Design*

Rouge Park does not have a specific aesthetic design guideline or set of principles. Mainly, the park has been formed with principles focused on restoration and ecology (Interview 1, 2015). However, the park did see indirect influences on park design through guidelines that were ecologically focused. An example of this is having buffer systems in creek areas. The buffer system indirectly formed the aesthetic of areas where the Rouge Creek was passing through (Interview 1, 2015). Interviewee 2 believes that although there is no specific design guideline, Rouge Park "generates an aesthetic as a consequence of the approach and at the same time I think there is room for an aesthetic approach to be injected" (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 6 explains that the "whole concept of wild in the city, a natural sanctuary and protection, those were kind of the keywords that made up the principle of protecting the natural system" (Interview 6, 2015). Participant 6 also

expresses that the Green Belt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan and provincial plans and policies in general have influenced Rouge Park (Interview 6, 2015).

6.2.4. *Rouge Park Values*

Rouge Park values have been evolving to accommodate park progression. Interviewee 1 speaks to the shifting values and explains that "I think a lot of it in terms of our values is going to shift towards ensuring that as people come through and visitors come through that this is here for them and at the same time balancing those ecological principles" (Interview 1, 2015). Interviewee 2 supports Interviewee 1's observations and explains that "the predominant value has been nature and the protection and restoration of nature" (Interview 2, 2015). Participant 2 notes that the citizen activism, the one that created the park in the first place and continues to be heavily invested in the park, is another important value (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 2 explains that in Rouge Park, "there is an organization called *10,000 Trees for the Rouge*, I was at a tree planting last April [where] they had 3000 people come out for one day of tree planting" (Interview 2, 2015). Participant 2 explains that this example shows the strong community involvement in the park enhancement and restoration (Interview 2, 2015). On the topic of community involvement, Interviewee 6 explains that during tree planting season,

> "you would get thousands of people out and they would be families a lot of people, there would be new Canadians there would be a complete mix of people who had lived in Canada for generations, new Canadians coming together and kind of building of park planting trees" (Interview 6, 2015).

Participant 6 explains that this opportunity was when community members "took a real ownership of the park and a real interest and they value the park because they were a part of kind of establishing" (Interview 6, 2015).

A newly emerging value in Rouge Park as Interviewee 2 points out is the value of food sustainability. The participant explains how "the public has been really passionate about that idea about feeding the city and this is a very contemporary value now" (Interview 2, 2015). The participant also explains that there is a sense of cultural heritage in the park and First Nation groups that the park is working alongside are very "interested in rediscovering their roots with this landscape as well" (Interview 2, 2015). This has given an importance to the cultural history and heritage value of the park (Interview 2, 2015).

6.2.5. *Rouge Park Aesthetic Design over Ecological Function/Restorative Processes*

To achieve an aesthetic design, parks often overlook the ecological functions and/or restorative processes. In the case of Rouge Park, the discussion overwhelmingly was that this was not the case in theory nor in practice. When speaking about the past Rouge Park to the urban park transition, Interviewee 1 explains

> "in Rouge Park past I don't think this has ever become an issue only because like I said a big mandate was ecological functions of things but I don't think anything is going to change in terms of that because I think they can really go hand-in-hand" (Interview 1, 2015).

The participant further explains how this is possible by giving the following example,

"in Bob Hunter Park we have an area where we want to increase the amount of hibernacula so that snake, they hibernate in the winter. Well we want to provide opportunities for snakes to hibernate in the winter. We were thinking about how to do this. You know a pile of rocks my not be so pretty but it also offered interpretive purposes. So in Bob Hunter Park, if you ever get a chance to see it, there are rock piles that had been strategically placed throughout the meadow areas and they are visually appealing, they're something to look at, but they serve strictly for the purpose of creating snake habitat" (Interview 1, 2015).

To ensure that there is a balance between ecological function, restorative processes and aesthetic design, an ecological assessment is done. Interviewee 2 provides an example on the maintenance of viewscapes in Rouge Park. The participant explains that in the case of two lookouts, one in Tywn Rivers and the other in Glen Eagles, there is a "fantastic view over the valley and some of these geomorphological features" (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 2 explains that in these areas,

"the trees are starting to obscure the view - what do you do then? So far nothing has happened but here is an example where there is an opportunity for people to experience the landscape in a way that's unique and dramatic and that would again and again enhance their appreciation for it. Do you or do you not? And again it's such a small thing maybe trimming trees are removing some trees" (Interview 2, 2015).

Therefore, although the park does not set out to choose aesthetic design over the ecological function or restorative processes, during the growth and maintenance of park, it is something that Rouge Park is having to respond to. Interviewee 6 further explains that choosing aesthetic design over ecological function and/or restorative processes would typically occur in high intensity areas and in the case of Rouge Park there are not many high intensity areas (Interview 6, 2015). The participant

provides two examples where this does occur. The first is in the parking lots shared

with the Toronto Zoo which has been designed around providing functionality for

people. This design was followed by the aesthetic part which includes "putting trees

around the parking lot and then trying to maybe create a nice experience that's

maybe not so wild and natural but it's a little bit more human-made as you go to say

a viewing platform" (Interview 6, 2015). The second example given is that of the

campground in Rouge Park. The campground is more maintained, manicured and

mowed (Interview 6, 2015). However, over time, park staff have created "larger no-

mow areas just naturalize it a little more" (Interview 6, 2015). The Participant

further explains that some of the maintenance is done for safety purposes as there

are "too many areas that were separated and closed views then you could have

some illegal unwanted activities happening" (Interview 6, 2015). Furthermore,

Interviewee 5 explains that, concessions have been made in the park where part of

the trails have been paved to extend equal access to all park users (Interview 5,

2015). It should be noted that all participants have a focus on maintaining ecological

functions and restorative processes however, over concern of park user safety and

equal access to the park, in rare occurrences, the aesthetic design has been given

priority depending on the need.

6.2.6. *Rouge Park Destination Park*

On the City of Toronto website, Rouge Park has been labelled as a featured or

destination park. In discussion with participants, they spoke about the Rouge Park

post-transition as a destination park. Interviewee 1 explains that in transitioning

into a National Urban Park, Rouge Park will need to navigate the increased park

visitors (Interview 1, 2015). Interviewee 2 explains that as a part of Parks Canada, the transitioned Rouge National Urban Park will be looking into the visitor experience. This includes creating more signage, trail marking, way-finding, marking major entrances, ensuring that there are sufficient washroom amenities in the park etc. (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 6 believes that as a destination park it is about balance between the park's ecological integrity and user functionality (Interview 6, 2015).

6.2.7. *Rouge Park Changing Demographic and Cultural Entanglement*

The changing demographic of park users is a prominent discussion in the development of Rouge Park. Being that Rogue Park is located in the GTA, it has a much different demographic than the surrounding areas. Interviewee 1 explains that for Rouge Park, it is about being able to "learn from the cultural differences and to show people of different cultures that this is the way we see the parks and this is how you can experience things and get the same pleasure that we do as Ontarian and or Canadian to experience those places" (Interview 1, 2015). The participant explains how the programming of Rouge Park is changing to include the diverse groups. Interviewee 1 gives an example of a program that Rouge Park is working on which is a "garden plot where people from different cultures can come in and plant their own types of vegetables" (Interview 1, 2015). This type of programming is seen as an opportunity to embrace the culturalism of the GTA (Interview 1, 2015). The participant also explains that another project Rouge Park is thinking of getting involved with is the creation of a native medicine wheel which would be "the first type of pre-structured plant garden" (Interview 1, 2015). Interviewee 2 explains

that the Parks Canada Parks are seeing different uses with the diverse cultural backgrounds. The participant uses the example of Trent-Severn Waterway to explain the changes in use being seen there. The participant explains that emerging uses of the park are group picnicking; fishing where it is different than traditional recreational fishing and there is a drive to be able to eat the fish; and kite flying (Interview 2, 2015). In addition the participant explains that there are cultural practices such as different ceremonial practices that occur in the park (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 2 further explains that sometimes the different practices may be a problem. For example in the case of kite flying, at times people tie shards of glass onto the kite string and this can be a negative wildlife impact (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 6 expresses that the changing cultural demographics provide an opportunity for the park to communicate to the larger community in different languages in signage and programing (Interview 6, 2015).

6.2.8. *Rouge Park Aesthetic Preference and Cultural Value*

In terms of the aesthetic preference of park visitors, participants explain that it is an area that they still need to learn more about. Interviewee 1 explains that " it is in eye of the beholder so who are we to say that because we think that natural beauty is beautiful that not everyone is going feel that way" (Interview 1, 2015). Interviewee 2 also has similar thoughts and explains,

> "I'm not sure we do. We don't understand a lot about our visitors now we're just starting to get information on what their interests are and what they do. There's no direct kind of question relating to aesthetics I think we can only infer and of course different cultures have different aesthetic sensibility as well" (Interview 2, 2015).

Interviewee 2 further explains that even within cultures, people have different views but the participant acknowledges that

> "you can change the views and I think that's part of it again and if we think of aesthetics, and then deeper meaning in terms of landscape meaning you know whether it's in our farming landscape or whether it's a natural landscape that we increased the ability for people to come to their own conclusions on the importance of these landscapes" (Interview 2, 2015).

The participant expresses that a person's own cultural experience will deepen their connection to the landscape in ways that is relevant to them (Interview 2, 2015). Interviewee 2 concludes by explaining that

> "I think that is the answer there's no one aesthetic. I think the common nominator at least for me anyway in terms of aesthetics is that it's tied to meaning. And that the visual and of course again the aesthetics isn't just visual, it is smells, touch, hearing all of these things and this is a very noisy landscape. You know there's the 401 there are trains and there's traffic and so on. But there's also running water when you get into the secluded part of the park. So that informs the aesthetic as well" (Interview 2, 2015).

6.2.9. *Rouge Park Aesthetic Justice – Public Park Definition*

Public participation in the park definition is an emerging topic. In the case of Rouge Park, the public has the opportunity to participate through public consultations especially during the park transition period (Interview 1, 2015; Interview 2, 2015; Interview 6, 2015). In the future of Rouge Park, especially for landscape planning, it is understood that there will be opportunities for park users to participate in the definition of the park (Interview 2, 2015). Park users also have the opportunity to participate in the definition of the park through the restoration processes and tree planting events (Interview 5, 2015).

To ensure that Rouge Park is mitigating any 'aesthetic elitism', the park has "set up lines of communications to difference levels of the community or society to engage them a little bit and even to provide a way to get to the park" (Interview 6, 2015). Interviewee 6 further explains that one example of this is through covering fieldtrip costs of school children through a program when parents are unable to do so (Interview 6, 2015).

Chapter 7   Park Planning and Design

In this chapter, the opinions of those working in landscape architect capacities and other professional capacities are used through first-hand interview accounts conducted to understand the opinions of those currently working in decision-making positions.

7.1.   Aesthetic & Design Changes of Parks

In the discussion on the major aesthetic and design changes parks have experienced, each participant has their own opinion. Interviewee 12 explains

> "there are two directions you can go and one is obviously the trend towards more naturalization and that trend initially was catalyzed and not by people recognizing the naturalized areas were valuable but more as a result of the desire of the municipalities to reduce the amount of maintenance they were doing" (Interview 12, 2015).

The main reason behind this desire was fiscally driven and the outcome was naturalization in parks. In the case of Toronto, Interviewee 12 explains that the city designed much of the naturalization process for parks (Interview 12, 2015). The City implemented naturalization programs that looked forward to what the landscape would evolve into (Interview 12, 2015). Interviewee 13 believes that, North American cities have increasingly

> "come under greater and greater scrutinization on the way in which funds are spent and I think at one point of time sort of manicured parks were kind of the name of the game everybody wanted to see pristine grass and the sod

and no weeds so there's been sort of a relaxing of that in a general sort of way" (Interview 13, 2015).

The participant explains, that in the present day, cities across the world have a

> "parks classifications where they basically look at parks and the functions that they perform and divide them into a number of those functions and then manage the parks according to what the function of the parks are and then kind of in a general sort of way there is sort of recreation, natural and the third category would be leisure or low impact recreation" (Interview 13, 2015).

This classification system varies from city to city but it provides a general overview of park organization (Interview 13, 2015).

According to Interviewee 14, in Toronto, parks have "found themselves in for higher density situations than they were or when they were first established" (Interview 14, 2015). The participant explains that many urban parks "now find themselves very heavily used by a far denser population and need to be redesigned and reconstructed to be able to withstand the kind of use and the kind of heavy use that really densely populated areas create" (Interview 14, 2015). Interviewee 14 further explains that "one of the main issues currently in parks in Toronto is densification downtown and it's trying to figure out how best to make a park interesting, useful and attractive to many, many people, robust enough to withstand their use" (Interview 14, 2015).

Interviewee 15 also adds to this discussion and believes that "parks aren't subject to the same sort of trendy, aesthetic preoccupations is what I'll call them as anybody else or as anyplace else" (Interview 15, 2015). The participant speaks of

the notion of fixed versus evolutionary design ideas and provides the example of restoration ecology to explain

> "And you know the ideas that, you know if you look at restoration ecology as a practice the focus of restoration ecology is all on creating evolutionary landscapes where you put a suite of native species and success is measured actually by the rate at which they reproduce themselves and the rate at which the landscape evolves into a system that resigned goals" (Interview 15, 2015).

Interviewee 16 explains that historically parks have been designed with a recreational focus however, following public responses to a city survey, it can be seen that there is a trend towards people wanting more nature or nature experiences in the City (Interview 16, 2015).

7.2. Design Principle/Guideline for Current Park Design

In the case of the design principle and/or guideline for current park design, Interviewee 12 explains that "Toronto is one of the few municipalities that actually has a naturalization group within their parks forestry and recreation department" (Interview 12, 2015). As the participant explains, the staff there is "tuned into what is required to implement naturalization programs or projects successfully" (Interview 12, 2015).

Interviewee 13 explains that we are increasingly concerned with the "operational impact i.e. how parks impact our operating budget and our ability to maintain them" (Interview 13, 2015). Furthering the conversation, Interviewee 14 explains that the City has a parks plan that outlines the policy of how parks planning

and design is done (Interview 14, 2015). The participant further explains that the plan is a strategic plan and that it is:

> "sort of the basic framework that we would use to make decisions about how to design parks but that's very broad often for every time we are investing in like capital investments for the improvement or establishment of a new park, we will sort of figure out what are the design principles and guidelines for that particular park" (Interview 14, 2015).

Interviewee 15 explains that the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) "have taken this conversation a huge distance in terms of creating essentially something that is like a lead for landscape" (Interview 15, 2015).

7.3. Influence of Changing Aesthetic Preference on Aesthetics & Design of Parks

For the discussion on the influence of the changing aesthetic preferences of park visitors on the design and aesthetics of current day parks, each participant again has their own opinion. Interviewee 12 believes that "the aesthetic preferences of visitors of park are as diverse as the communities that use the parks, so demographically there are different expectations" (Interview 12, 2015). The participant explains that

> "the preferences would range from people that are more environmentally intuned would have a preference towards a more naturalized aesthetic and thus a lower maintenance regimented where as people who come from somewhere else you know what notably Europeans expect to a higher level of maintained pastoral landscape because that is their landscape tradition" (Interview 12, 2015).

Interviewee 12 further explains that "every community would have a different expectation as to what the part should look like and how it should be used"

(Interview 12, 2015). Interviewee 12 explains that next it comes down to the design

and location of the park. The participant explains that if a park is in a high density

urban area, factors such as the patterns of use and level of impact are important for

the park (Interview 12, 2015). In the end the participant observes that there is

"aesthetic preference of a demographic pushing against what is sustainable in the

urban landscape" (Interview 12, 2015). In line with Interviewee 12's observation,

Interviewee 13 explains that designers are influenced to a certain degree with the

changing aesthetics however, it ultimately falls onto those in the decision-making

capacity to set the trend and show the public (Interview 13, 2015).

To this matter, Interviewee 14 explains that the changing aesthetic

preference also embraces innovations in technology and explains that "sustainable

technologies and I would say is one of the major influences in how we design parks

is about the level of maintenance that we can expect of the park" (Interview 14,

2015). The participant explains that it is about catering to the new desires and how

"with the demographic shift, a lot of that has to do with interest and new kinds of

sports, skate parks, BMX runs etc." (Interview 14, 2015).

Interviewee 15 believes that "the biggest impact on parks these days is

related to two different ideas. The first, it's not so much aesthetic preferences as it is

recreational preferences" (Interview 15, 2015). The participant believes that "the

fact that there is so many people coming in into parks like to walk their dogs which I

think it is a by-product of so many people who grew up in the suburbs and are

moving into the city" (Interview 15, 2015). Interviewee 15 expresses the belief of

how people spend their time recreationally is formed by culture and that "it's not so

much informed by the aesthetic sensibility as it is informed by their recreational cultural sensibility" (Interview 15, 2015). The participant then provides a supporting example of a situation where to support larger picnic areas for family groups, situations had to be created "where people could drive their car up and park next to a large grassy area and essentially tailgate" (Interview 15, 2015).

Interviewee 16 explains that the City is in constant flux and residents are always moving around within the City (Interview 16, 2015). To this, Interviewee 16 adds that the City has learned to not over design parks because when that is done, one ends up with a park with specific uses and if there is constant migration within the City of park users, the designed park use may not be useful for the new demographic using the park (Interview 16, 2015).

7.4. Park Aesthetic Design over Ecological Function /Restorative Process

In the discussion of instances where the aesthetic design of parks was given consideration over ecological function or restorative processes, Interviewee 12 differentiates that there are two parks types which are typified as decoration parks versus parks that have function (Interview 12, 2015). The participant describes decoration parks as being parks that are aesthetically beautiful and function well in terms of a recreational, social and cultural perspective (Interview 12, 2015). Parks that have a function according to Interviewee 12 are those which also provide an ecological function (Interview 12, 2015).

In Interviewee 13's opinion, at this point of time, parks are designed with an emphasis on ecological function and aim to protect, enhance and maintain the park (Interview 13, 2015).

Interviewee 14 believes that ecological function/restorative processes and aesthetic design are not mutually exclusive which would mean that both can be done simultaneously (Interview 14, 2015). The participant further explains

> "I don't think that we see that's contradictory. So often when people are doing ecological restoration or planting trees or restoring streams people that are doing that are doing it with an aesthetic sensibility. And when people are designing parks, aesthetic designs they often include natural areas or natural plantings that can provide habitat or plantings that require less water etc" (Interview 14, 2015).

Interviewee 15 notes that it is first important to understand the diversity of parks and "the kinds of land management objectives that are embedded in parks" (Interview 15, 2015). The participant explains that

> "some parks are about restoration, about natural systems, some parks are about health outcomes, but every park what I'm finding at least in our world is every park except for you know some parks that are very small where it is just unrealistic to have more than one set of values express in the park. That every park that I know of there are competing expectations on the part of the public" (Interview 15, 2015).

7.5. Balance of Aesthetic Focus & Ecological Process

In terms of finding a balance between aesthetic focus and ecological processes, Interviewee 12 explains that

> "it comes down to the underlying principles of design so typically when we take on a park project we're looking at a multiple-objective approach. We

first design what are the objectives in terms of recreational programming, aesthetic value, cultural interaction, ecological processes and we would strive to achieve all of those objectives in a balanced way" (Interview 12, 2015).

This notion of striking a balance is expressed by all research participants.

Interviewee 12 further explains that the reality is that there is "a huge urban influence around a lot of these parks so setting lofty ecological goals that cannot be attained is not sustainable either" (Interview 12, 2015). Interviewee 13 adds to Interviewee 12's thoughts as the participant explains that "we tried to fold both pieces together wherever possible and there is more and more of a focus on balancing rather than keeping them separately" (Interview 13, 2015).

Lastly, Interviewee 15 explains that park users will appreciate the ecological functions that you are doing but they will still want to continue to do what they are doing. The example that Interviewee 15 uses is people walking their dogs. The participant explains that

> "you are always having to be realistic and meet the public partway, because we all as public managers exist to serve the public so there are many situations where you have to strike a compromise between and agency mandates or individual parks mandate and the evolving nature of public, the public's interest in public land" (Interview 15, 2015).

7.6. Participation in Park Definition (Aesthetic Justice)

In terms of opportunities for the public to participate in the definition of the park, Interviewee 15 explains that creating an ongoing interaction between designers and the public around the design of the park is important because not

only can you get feedback on the plans, but also, during the design process, there is an opportunity to educate the public about park values (Interview 15, 2015). Interviewee 15 explains that the

> "process of community engagement is a two-way conversation. And it's not simply an opportunity for us to get the public's ideas which are important but it's also an opportunity for every park maker to educate the public about the place and about our mandate and about you know some things that they might not be aware of" (Interview 15, 2015).

The participant further explains that "it's got to be a dialogue and you know we tend to focus really a lot on young people and educating young people because it's just vitally important now to be able to focus on that and to think of the future of our planet and young people" (Interview 15, 2015).

7.7. Future Design and Aesthetics of Parks

In order to understand the future design and aesthetics of parks, each research participant (all of whom were in one way or another connected to the development and management of parks) were asked where they felt the future of parks is in terms of design and aesthetics. The following are their visions;

Interviewee 8 sees more community involvement in parks. The participant explains that the vision being seen is "the community trying to get themselves together through the park" and the formation of community groups because they want a garden in the park (Interview 8, 2015). Interviewee 8 concludes by explaining that the future has a push for historical preservation and awareness of the importance of history.

Interviewee 11 believes that there will be parks moving towards the natural and un-manicured design. The participant sees that emerging park ideas will challenge other park ideals. Interviewee 11 also believes that educational awareness about the natural environment will enable park users to understand the decisions make by park managers on the ecological function of the park.

Interviewee 7's future vision of parks are ecologically restored environments, while Interviewee 12 would like to see more diversity in parks. Although the participant does not believe that there will be a specific trend, the participant believes that it will be "more about relationship to context and demographics" (Interview 12, 2015).

Interviewee 13 believes that parks will "always continue to have just those three things i.e. leisure activity, recreation and natural environment" (Interview 13, 2015). The participant explains that "I think that there is a greater recognition that we need to enhance and maintain these natural areas and protect them from over use" (Interview 13, 2015). Interviewee 13 then speaks to the ideas of the protection of ecologically sensitive natural environments (Interview 13, 2015). The participant also speaks to finding a balance within an urbanized landscape between the needs from a recreational and leisure point of view in natural areas with the use of management strategies (Interview 13, 2015). The participant believes that future parks will combine "horticultural interest with the desire for the public to experience different things, sensory gardens" and that "horticultural stuff can be used to teach people about certain plant communities, ways to grow plants

communities, ways to lower your maintenance but still improve the natural

environment" (Interview 13, 2015).

In Interviewee 14's opinion the dream park future would be if parks are seen

more as a resource of "community managed or common property resources that

have a kind of decision-making around them that is well-informed and organized by

a community of people as better stewards" (Interview 14, 2015). The participant

believes that

> "likely the involvement trying to figure out models of how to manage the
> involvement of non-city, non-bureaucratic, non-agency, actors in the park
> and how they can take part in managing it in a way that is helpful and
> positive and results in beautiful places. I think that's probably the next hurdle
> that needs to be overcome in how you design parks and I think we are sort of
> muddling towards it, but I think that the understanding what these large
> pieces of land and what the commons represent and how can they be
> governed it's probably the next big question " (Interview 14, 2015).

Interviewee 10 expresses the ideal vision of seeing "more community gardens more

naturalized spaces more aggressive tree planting programs for succession"

(Interview 10, 2015). The participant also believes that the pressure on parks is

increasing in urban environments due to people in the cities living in condos and as

a result no longer owning gardens or backyards (Interview 10, 2015).

Finally, Interviewee 15 believes that the future of parks is "about really

engaging deeply with a broad cross-section of people in the community to get their

input and to develop new park forms that are responsive" (Interview 15, 2015). The

participant expresses that

"it's really important you know the world changes so quickly now and people's tastes change so quickly that it's really important that we be aesthetically nimble and that we create Park landscapes that are adaptable and flexible and less rigid I think that you find that the most successful parks are adaptable and flexible and parks that aren't successful are less flexible" (Interview 15, 2015).

Interviewee 15 further explains that

"you go to parks sometimes and you see these antique playgrounds that don't relate to contemporary play appetites and you know they're sitting there forlorn and empty and underutilized and you know that's because people's sense of what recreation looks like really changed and the parks aren't able to respond to them because the landscapes in the first place weren't adaptable. So I think adaptability is a really important thing because people's values and cities are really changing very rapidly" (Interview 15, 2015).

Furthermore, Interviewee 15 believes that "we have just begun to consider the impact of technology on park making" (Interview 15, 2015). The participant believes that "weaving ecological thinking into our aesthetic sensibility and also into the way we approach design and the way we approach park management is vitally important and an area where there is a huge opportunity for park makers to experiment in a really interesting way" (Interview 15, 2015). In the case of technology, the participant believes that

"it's just reality and you know the reality is it goes back to the comment I made earlier that cultural change has a big impact on park form well one of the hugest forms of cultural change that is going on in our society right now is the impact of new technology on our athletic sensibilities on the way we experience space, on the way we experience time, on the way we do or don't experience the outdoors. So I just think that there's a huge, huge potential

impact that we've only begun to scratch the surface of understanding as landscape architects. But there's also the way in which technology shapes and changes our experience of the out doors and even our leisure time preferences. People have developed completely different ways they want to spend their time and that has an impact because parks are all about leisure, and so if your notion of what you want to do for fun changes that has a very direct impact. And if you don't want to spend your time outdoors for example, that potentially has a huge impact on parks. Not because the park have stopped being relevant but because you changed your expectations or preferences for what to do when you have free time" (Interview 15, 2015).

Chapter 8   Conclusions: Ecological Literacy, Multicultural Park Design and Community Involvement

The present day natural parks have transformed the landscape, pun intended. The emphasis of ecological sustainability on natural landscapes has changed the approach decision-makers have taken towards landscapes. The increasing ecological awareness through education coupled with the culturally entangled aesthetic values has driven decision-makers to bring changes to park design, resulting in the creation of shifting park design. Additionally, the ecological awareness of natural landscapes, paired with increasing public participation, is defining park aesthetics through aesthetic justice.

The various management plans, policies, and acts influence park design and aesthetics. These plans, policies and acts, outline what municipalities can build within natural landscapes and how they are allowed to do so. They provide a means to protect wildlife and preserve natural landscapes by defining the rules and regulations for different land uses. In my opinion such plans, policies and acts will continue to define the aesthetics of parks and future parks will be created following such documents that outline the design and management style practices for natural parkland landscapes. Additionally, unless aesthetic justice does take place in a way that park users are truly able to provide their opinion and not only just be heard but in reality see that their opinions are being implemented, the plans, policies and acts will be created by people or organizations having vested interests leading to certain aesthetic features preferred over others in future parks.

Parks are also starting to include multi-use activities in order to cater to a greater park user base. The future of parks in achieving high number of park users while still maintaining ecologically significant and sensitive features depends on management plans and the use of specific fauna and flora that can withstand heavy use as we have seen that the reality is that park users today want to be able to access all parts of the park and I see this drive intensifying in the future.

To answer my initial question – what is the aesthetic shift of parks and green spaces in Toronto? – I believe that the aesthetic shift of parks and green spaces in Toronto is towards a naturalized landscape. This answer really is just scratching the surface. This paper is exploring the new found natural landscape and the ideas and implementation strategies that come with it. The next question to really ask is where is the future of parks in Toronto. I believe that the future direction is toward the creation of inclusive parks with ecological focus. These future parks will be aware of the culturally entangled aesthetic values and respond through the environmentally aware park users who aim to participate in the definition of the park using aesthetic justice as a means.

I believe that parks are moving towards an era where they are becoming increasingly dependent on environmental stewardship and community engagement. I also believe that parks do not necessarily mean green spaces anymore. Any space in the concrete jungle from an abandoned lot to an underpass can have recreational facilities and can be considered to be a park.

This research reveals six important findings found in present day parks that are gaining momentum in future parks. The findings were determined through the

interviews conducted for this research. These findings include: ecological awareness through education; community involvement in parks; design of parks with a balance between aesthetics and ecological functions; culturally influenced aesthetic values; the influence of park management plans and policies on park aesthetics and design; and the use of technology in parks.

In the first finding of ecological awareness through education, I have learned first-hand from my interviewees that an increased awareness of park users through programming and other means such as personal education and experience has led to park users requesting and understanding the natural landscapes. In certain situations, interviewees have explained to me that at times there is resistance by the general public to decisions made for the park by those in decision-making positions. However, when park staff take the time to explain to park users why such decisions were taken and how such decisions are helping the park fauna and flora, many park users are eager to learn more and encourage park staff to continue to make decisions which positively affect wildlife and habitats in urban environments.

For my second finding of community involvement in parks, my interviewees explained to me that having community involvement in parks is a recent phenomenon. However, community involvement in parks is quickly gaining momentum as more park users are becoming involved at the decision-making stage. In the academic world, this community involvement contributes to aesthetic justice. When there is meaningful participation by community members, there are opportunities where community input is heard and applied in decision-making levels and, there is equal access to park resources. In parks across Toronto,

community engagement has led to the emergence of unique facilities, resources and recreational opportunities being available in parks. Community ovens and ping-pong tables are examples of what can be achieved through community engagement.

My third finding is the emergence of parks being designed with a balance of ecological function and aesthetic design. Parks in the past have generally been developed without much consideration given to the ecological repercussions. However in more recent years, there have been studies and more awareness of the importance of ecological functions to park health in urban environments. My interviewees explained to me how this awareness has led to the design of parks with a balance of ecological sustainability and aesthetic desire. Landscape Architects in both Rouge Park and High Park have begun to design dual purpose areas which are aesthetically pleasing to the park users and also assists in maintaining park health through sustaining park flora and fauna.

My fourth finding of culturally influenced aesthetic values is becoming evident because of the increasingly diverse populations using urban parks. According to my interviewees, cultural influence is impacting the aesthetic preferences and usage of parks. This has meant that in the case of Rouge Park and High Park there is different aesthetic value given to each park. Park users from different parts of the world and who have had various experiences with nature share diverse aesthetic preferences. At the same time, park users also have used the park in different ways because of the cultural influence. For example, High Park and Rouge Park see changes in park use due to the cultural influence in passive recreation preference over active recreation preference. Park uses such as having

large family picnics on the weekends is new to park staff and considerations are being made to accommodate issues such as providing park users with higher capacity picnic tables.

My fifth finding is the influence of park management plans and policies on park aesthetics and design. From my extensive research and interviews I have found that the awareness of the importance of the ecological functions has resulted in the creation of park management plans and policies to guide park development. In the case of Rouge Park, it was created as a natural park and so the management plans were heavily used from the inception of the park. In the case of High Park, it was created without much consideration to the natural functions however once the realization set in on the importance of the natural functions, management plans were created and followed. The management plans and policies are quite important to the design and development of current and future parks because these plans are increasingly directing park authorities on how to protect, preserve and promote growth of ecological functions, fauna and flora in urban parks. These plans also are increasingly influencing the design and aesthetic look of the parks because they tend to emphasize, pursue and focus on promoting sustainable ecological growth in urban parks.

My sixth and last finding is of technology in current day and future parks. The concept of technology is very new in parks. My interviewees have emphasized to me that there is a great potential for using technology to encourage park users of all ages to interact with parks and learn more about the natural environment.

According to my interviewees, future are parks that are self-sustaining, and have park users and community members taking the lead in the development of parks. This type of ownership is seen to be empowering park users and encouraging them to make positive changes and requests for improvement of park services. The value of parks as green infrastructure is ever increasing in the urban environment. Park users working in conjunction with multiple partnerships at the municipal and non-profit level are also seen as the future of parks. Parks are a means to bring people together and to overcoming physical and language barriers. They are a way for park users to enjoy natural landscapes in urban settings and provide a means for community engagement.

My personal view on the future of parks is an inclusive park that incorporates community involvement; breaks down barriers; educates park users on the natural environment; uses technology to access park users and promotes knowledge of natural landscapes; is respectful of the cultural influence and values of natural environments; and most importantly, is designed with an aesthetic focus while still maintaining the importance of natural ecological functions and sustainable park design.

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Appendix 1 Interview Details

Participant	Interview Code		Occupation	Organization	Interview Date
1	Interview 1	–	–	Parks Canada	January 14, 2015
2	Interview 2	–	–	Parks Canada	January 16, 2015
3	Interview 3	Sharon Lovett	Chair, High Park Stewards + Co-chair, High Park Nature	High Park Stewards + High Park Nature	January 27, 2015
4	Interview 4	Jon Hayes	Family Programs Coordinator	High Park Nature Centre	January 29, 2015
5	Interview 5	Leigh Paulseth	Environmental Projects Coordinator	Friends of the Rouge Watershed	January 29, 2015
6	Interview 6	Mike Bender	General Manager, Rouge Park	TRCA	January 30, 2015
7	Interview 7	Terry Fahey	Landscaper	City of Toronto	February 10, 2015
8	Interview 8	Karinthia Battig	Park Supervisor	City of Toronto	February 11, 2015
9	Interview 9	–	–	City of Toronto	February 11, 2015
10	Interview 11	Victoria Taylor	Landscape Architect		February 12, 2015
11	Interview 10	–	–	TRCA	February 12, 2015
12	Interview 12	Mark Schollen	Landscape Architect	Schollen and Company Inc.	February 12, 2015
13	Interview 13	Garth Armour	Horticulture and Greenhouse Operations Manager	City of Toronto	February 18, 2015
14	Interview 14	Netami Stuart	Project Coordinator, Landscape Architect	City of Toronto	February 18, 2015

| 15	Interview 15	Michael Boland	Landscape Architect	Presidio Trust	February 24, 2015
16	Interview 16	Yafit Rokach	Program Standards and Development Officer	City of Toronto	March 18, 2015

Appendix 2   Interview Questions

High Park & Rouge Park Interview Questions

1. Describe how the park was formed.

2. What are some of the major design changes that the park has seen over the years?

3. How would you describe the design and aesthetic approach taken by decision makers?

4. Is there a specific design principle or guideline that has influenced the current park design?

5. As a contemporary park, what are some of the current values related to the park?

6. Are there instances where the aesthetic design of parks is given consideration over ecological functions or restorative processes?

7. Can you speak to the park as a destination park?

8. Is the changing cultural background of park visitors reflected in park use? How have park staff responded to these visitors through programing?

9. How does park staff understand the aesthetic preference of visitors? And how does parks staff reflect this information in relation to the current design and aesthetic of the park?

10. Are there opportunities for the public to participate in the aesthetic definition of the park?

Park Design and Aesthetics Interview Questions

1. Can you speak to the aesthetics of High Park/ Rouge Park?

2. What are some of the major aesthetic and design changes that parks have seen over the years (Toronto specific + in general)?

3. How would you describe the design and aesthetic approach taken by decision makers for parks?

4. Is there a specific design principle or guideline that influences current park design?

5. How have changing aesthetic preferences of park visitors influence the design and aesthetics of current day parks?

6. Are there instances where the aesthetic design of parks are given consideration over ecological function or restorative processes?

7. With the rising awareness of ecological significance of landscapes, how are parks designed with a balance of aesthetic focus and ecological processes?

8. Where is the future of parks in terms of design and aesthetics?

Bob Hunter Memorial Park Questions

1. Describe how Bob Hunter Memorial Park was formed.

2. What are some of the prominent design decisions the park has seen?

3. How would you describe the design and aesthetic approach taken by decision makers?

4. Is there a specific design principle or guideline that has influenced the park design?

5. Were there instances where the aesthetic design was given consideration over ecological functions or restorative processes?

Appendix 3   Maps
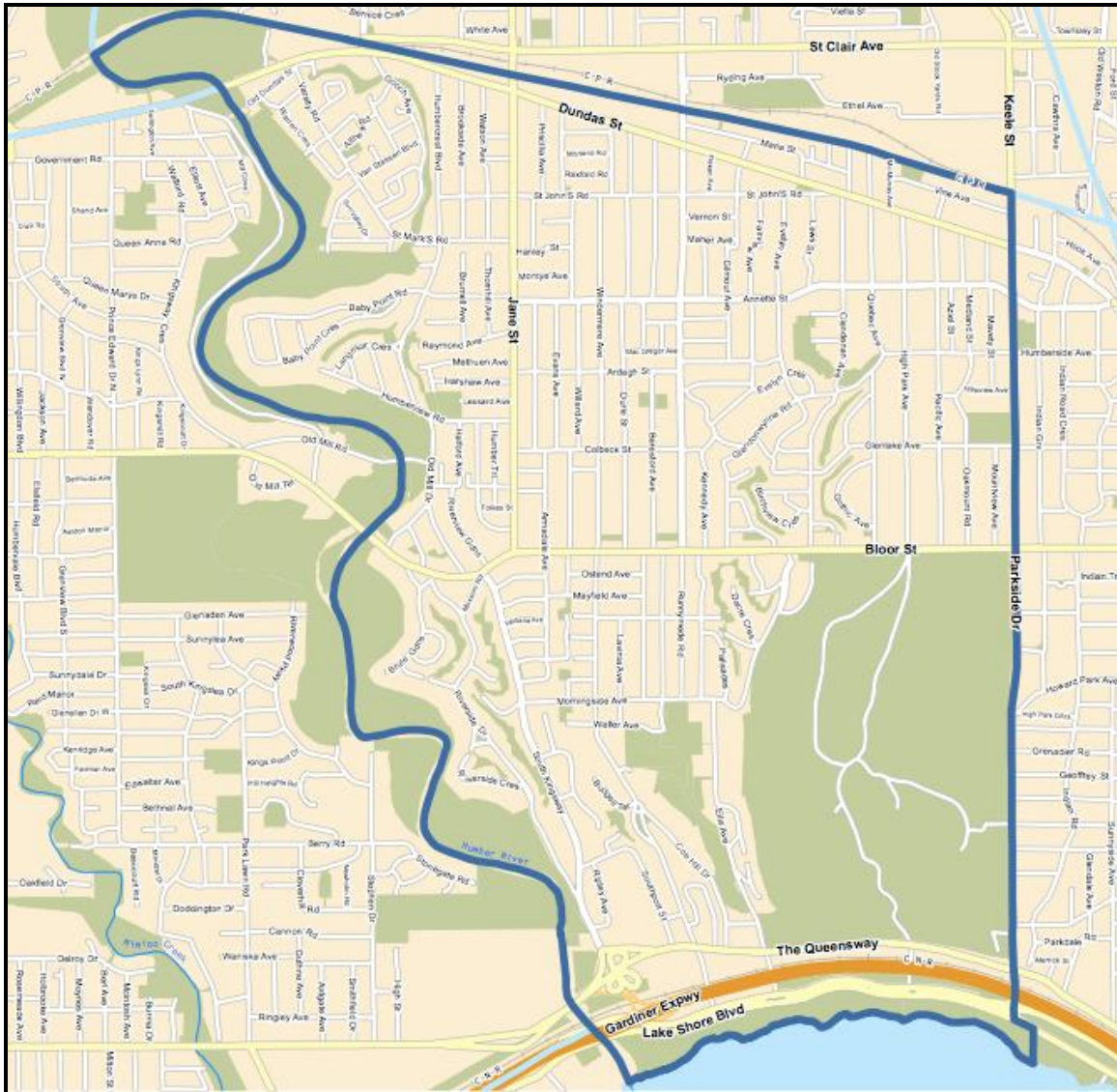
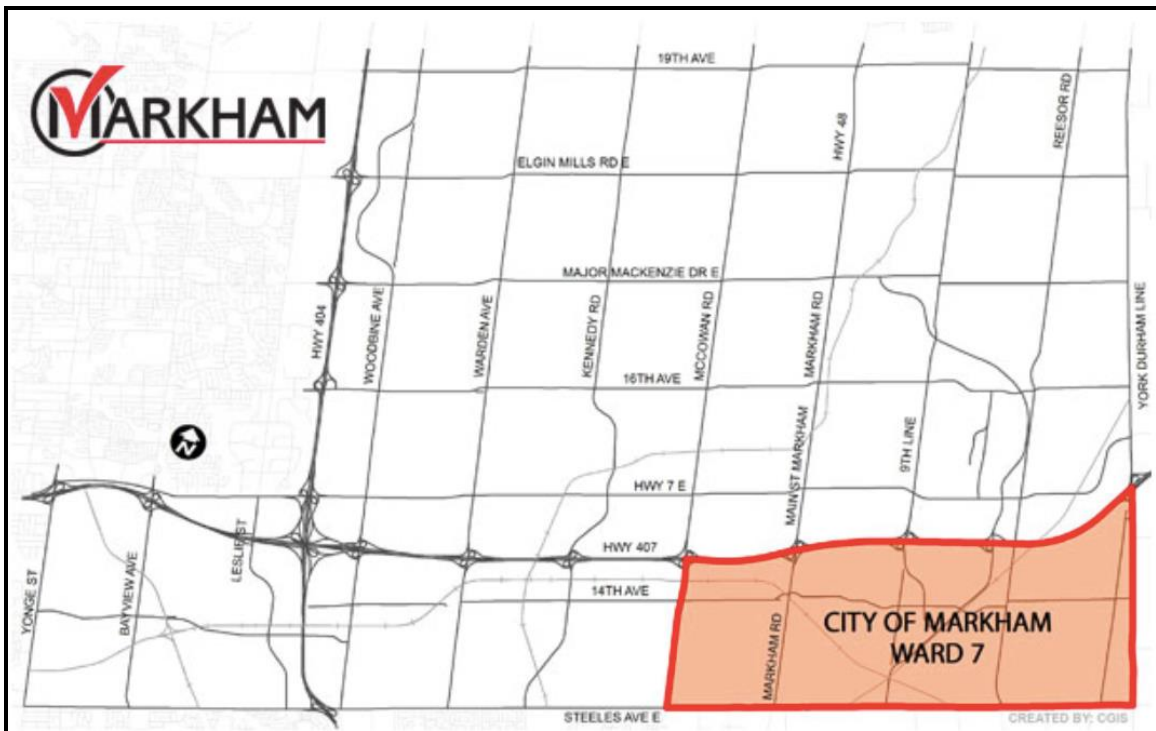Map 1. High Park West.

Map 2. High Park East.
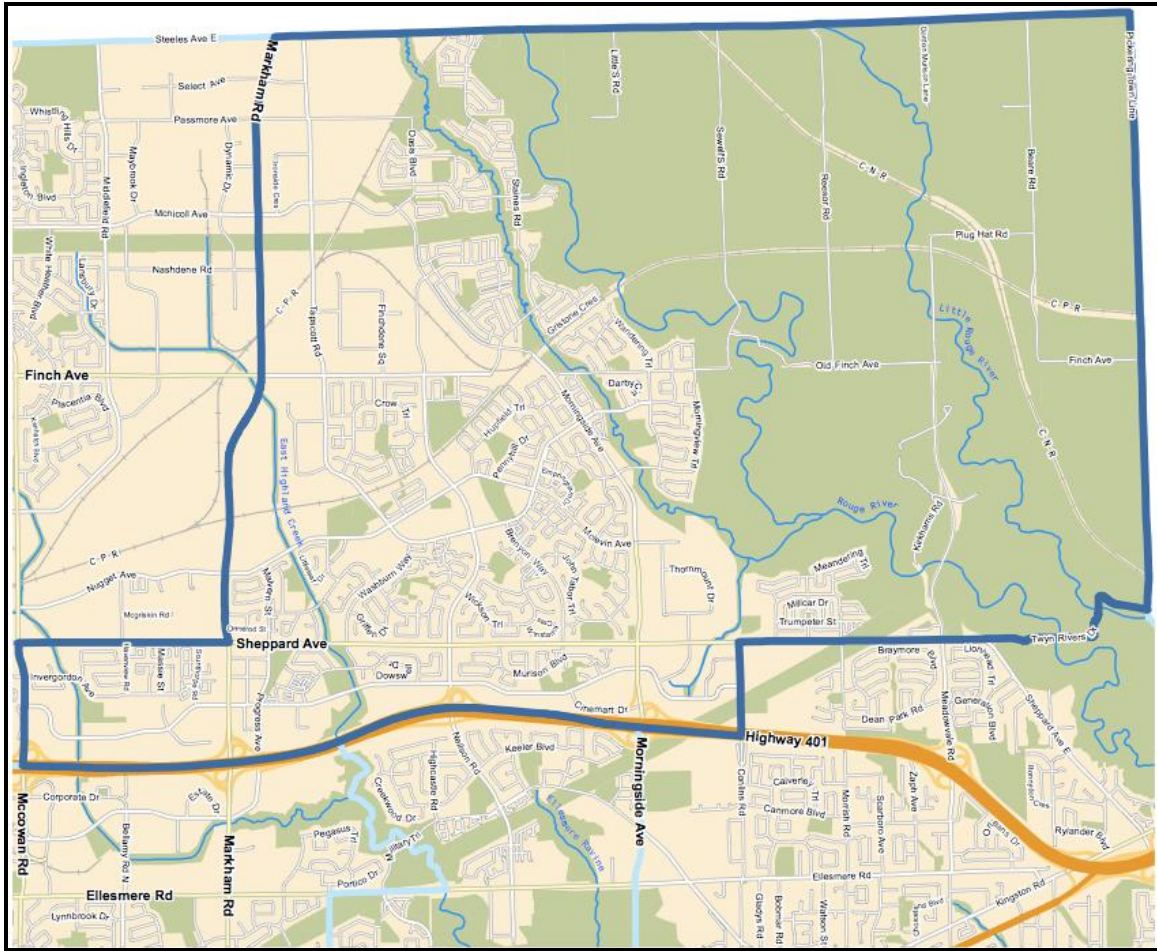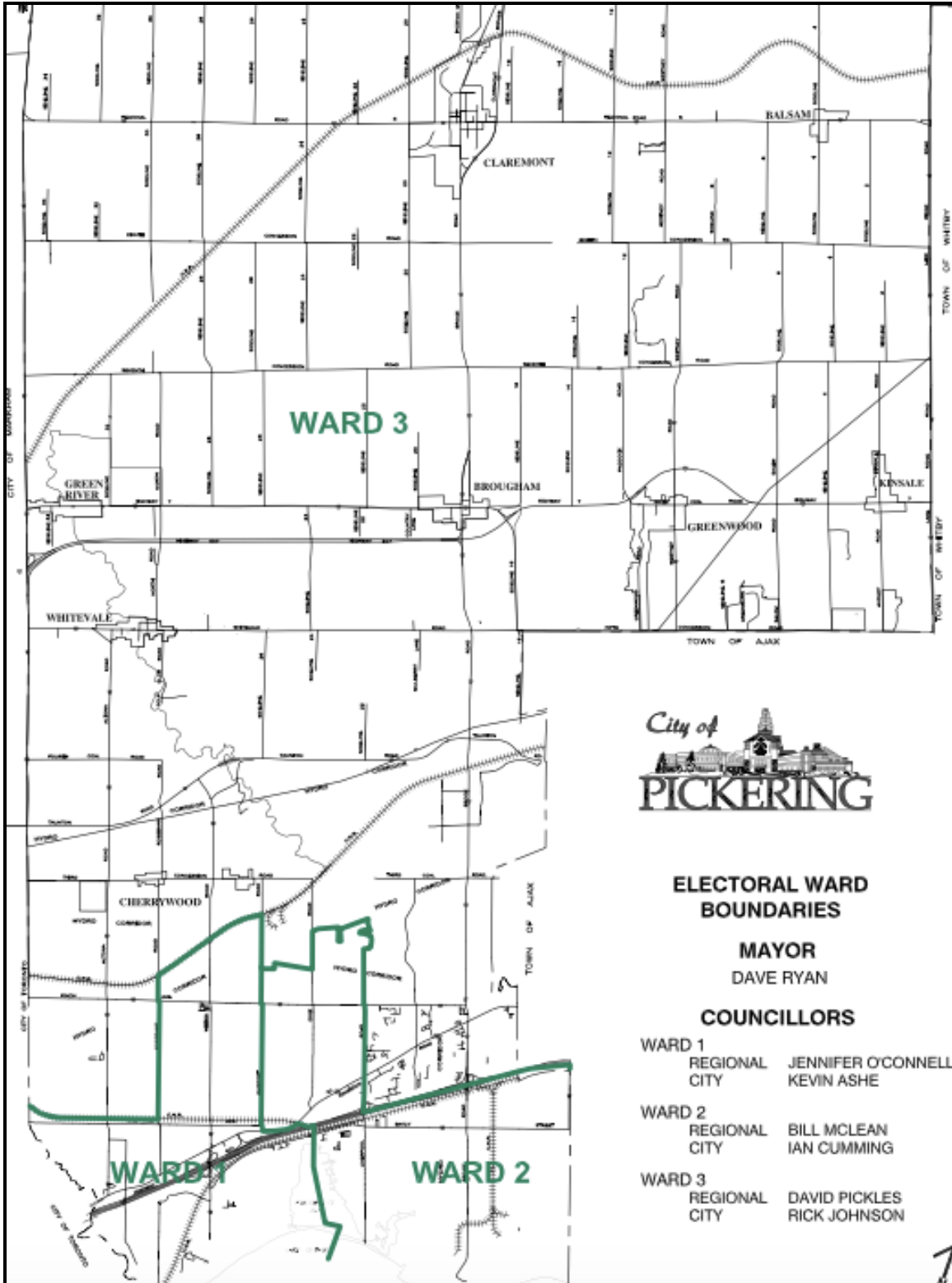
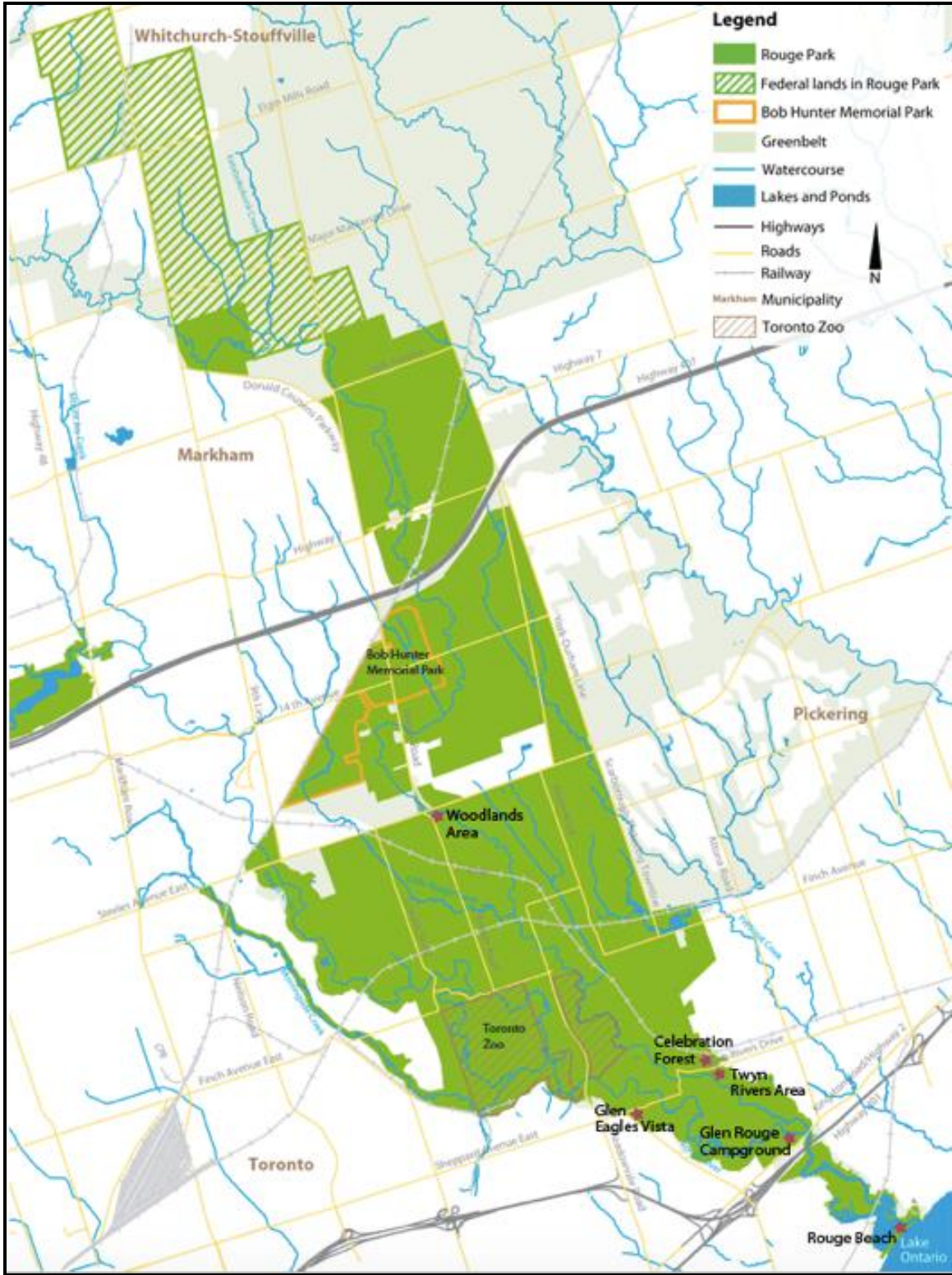Map 3. Scarborough – Rouge River.
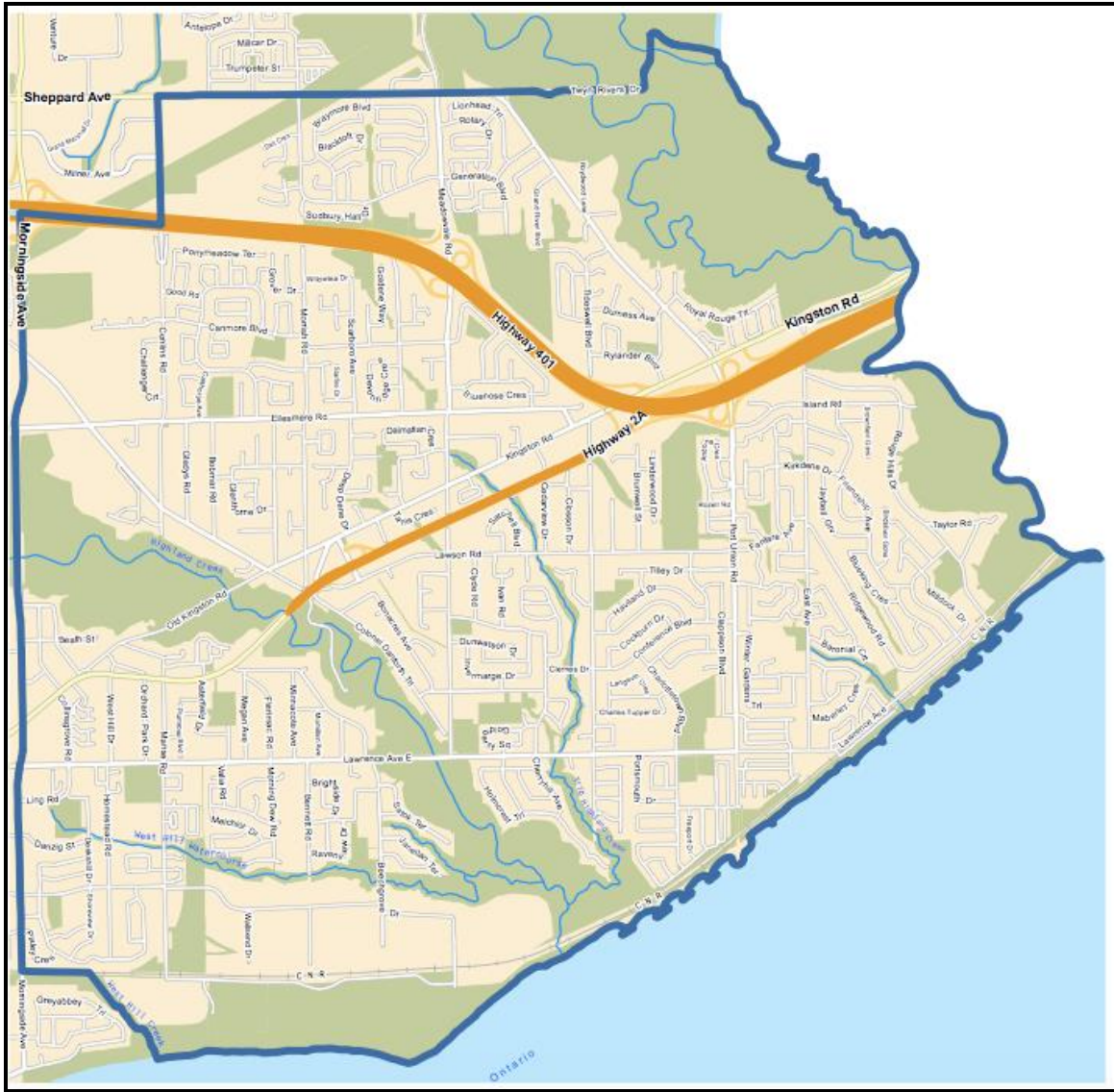
Map 4. Scarborough East.
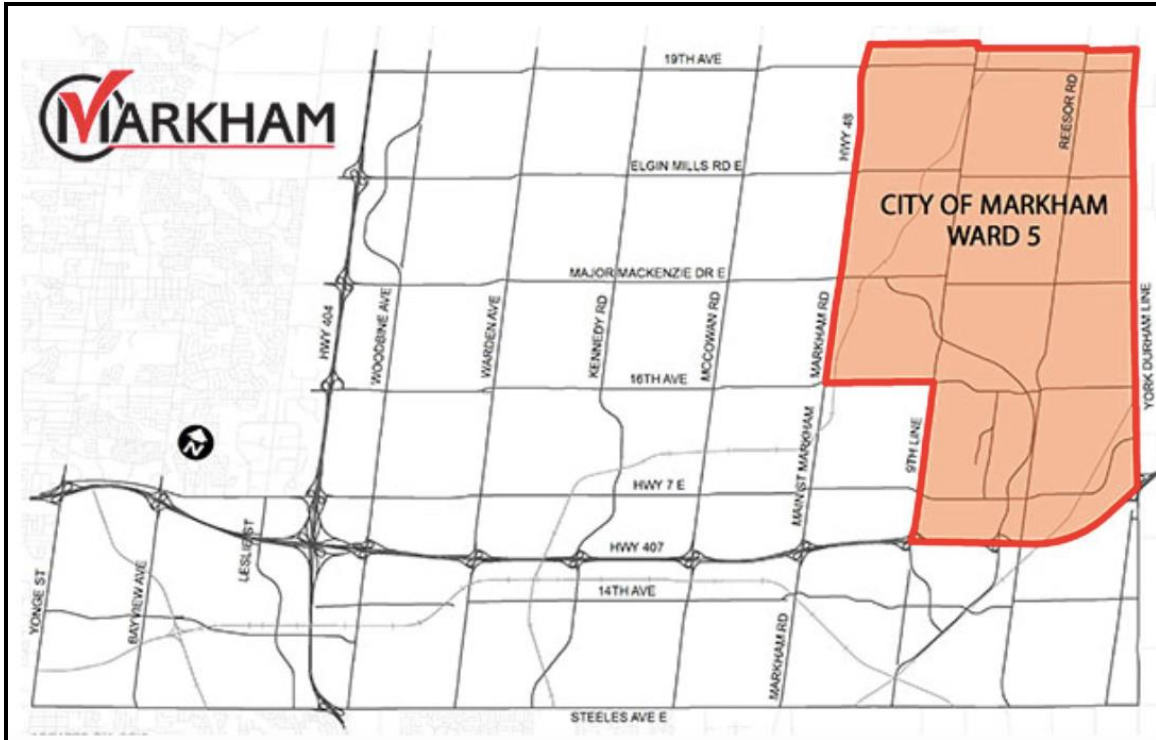
Map 5. Ward 5. Markham

Map 6. Ward 7. City of Markham.

Map 7. Ward 1 & Ward 3. City of Pickering.

Map 8. High Park.

Map 9. Rouge Park.

Appendix 4   Site Visit High Park

Figure 1. Woodlands Area.

Figure 2. Children's Playground.

Figure 3. Tennis Court.

Figure 4. Hillside Ornamental Garden. The Maple Leaf Flower Bed.

Figure 5. Hillside Ornamental Garden. The Hanging Garden.

Figure 6. Hillside Ornamental Garden. The Sunken Garden.

Figure 1. Natural Landscape.

Figure 2. Rouge Beach.

Figure 3. Twyn Rivers Area.

Figure 4. Glen Rouge Campground.

Figure 5. Woodlands Area.

Figure 6. Celebration Forest.