



**Rouge National
Urban Park Initiative**
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Rouge National Urban Park

2015 Farmland Forum

March 27, 2015



Parks
Canada

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Canada

Canada

An Integrated, Collaborative Approach

- Since the national urban park was announced in 2011, Parks Canada has engaged 150 organisations and 15,000 Canadians in its planning for the Rouge
- Collaboration is the key to the park's future success
- Its mixture of landscapes and resources require a new approach to protection
- There is overwhelming support for linking the protection of the Rouge's nature, culture and agriculture.



Farmland in a National Protected Area

- Farming families have been in the Rouge Valley for more than 200 years
- For the first time in Canada's history, a national protected area, Rouge National Urban Park, will include working farms and protect large tracts of Class 1 farmland, the rarest and most fertile in the country.
- This a unique opportunity for Canada
- A vibrant farming community in the Rouge will be built on community relationships, economic viability, diversification and environmental stewardship
- Parks Canada and farmers recognize that the viability and sustainability of park farming can be achieved in a collaborative manner, along with protecting and presenting the park's natural and cultural heritage, and connecting Canadians to this heritage



Vision

Rouge National Urban Park celebrates and protects, for current and future generations, a diverse landscape in Canada's largest metropolitan area. Linking Lake Ontario with the Oak Ridges Moraine, the park offers engaging and varied experiences, inspires personal connections to its natural beauty and rich history, *promotes a vibrant farming community*, and encourages us to discover Canada's national treasured places.



Accomplishments To Date

- Funding Commitment & Park Concept Launch (May 2012)
- Public Engagement Program Phase 1 (June to October 2012)
- Interim Management Agreement with TRCA (April 2013)
- Federal-Provincial Agreement (June 2013)
- Transport Canada/Parks Canada MOU (June 2013)
- Tabling of the Act (June 2014)
- Release of the Draft Management Plan (June 2014)
- Multi-Party Land Assembly Agreement with the TRCA and Municipalities (June 2014)
- Effective First Nations and Stakeholder Relations (On-going)



Bill C-40

- Tabled in the House of Commons on June 13, 2014
- Legislates a new type of protected area to be managed by Parks Canada; 100% specific to the Rouge
- Legislative protection superior to any previous legislation for the park
 - Like the Greenbelt Act, Bill C-40 speaks to both agriculture and nature, but does not place one above the other
 - Bill C-40 goes beyond the Greenbelt Act, however, to obligate the Minister to protect natural ecosystems and cultural landscapes, and to maintain the park's native wildlife and the health of those ecosystems
- Establishes the park for the purposes of protecting and presenting natural and cultural heritage, promoting a vibrant farming community, and encouraging Canadians to discover and connect with their national protected heritage areas
- Passed by the House of Commons on January 26, 2015
- Currently in 3rd reading in the Senate



Management Plan

- Bill C-40 requires that a management plan is prepared for the park and that stakeholders, First Nations and the public have an opportunity to participate in its development
- The management plan is the guiding document for managing Canada's first national urban park through 10 years of establishment, transition and day-to-day management and operations
- A draft plan has been developed through a combination of internal and external expertise and public feedback
- Since the release of the draft plan in June 2014, thousands of Canadians have been consulted and the response to the plan has been overwhelming positive
- This feedback is now being reviewed in order to finalize the plan for Ministerial approval and tabling in Parliament



Management Plan Strategies

1. A new way of thinking about protected areas in urban setting (***A Canadian First***)
2. A rejuvenated, resilient landscape where the park's mosaic of natural, cultural and agricultural values are managed in an integrated manner (***Dynamic, Cohesive Rouge***)
3. An environment that facilitates the strengthening of existing connections and the creation of new connections on the landscape and with park visitors, communities, First Nations, and Canadians at large (***Connected, Relevant Rouge***)
4. An environment conducive to partnering and engagement (***Success Through Collaboration***)
5. From Rouge Park to Rouge National Urban Park – a solid foundation for the future (***Enduring Spirit of the Rouge***)



Key Plan References to Agriculture

- **Strategy 1 (A Canadian First)** Farming is integrated with other park objectives in a way that supports the park farming community as a permanent and valued part of the park
- **Strategy 2 (Dynamic, Cohesive Rouge)** A sustainable, vital park farming community will be built on community relationships, economic viability, diversification, and environmental stewardship
- **Strategy 3 (Connected, Relevant Rouge)** Weaves agricultural themes into welcome areas, involves farmers in trail network planning, and connects visitors and local communities to agriculture
- **Strategy 4 (Success through Collaboration)** Engages the park farming community in park management and establish clear lines of communication with regular mechanisms for dialogue
- **Strategy 5 (From Rouge Park to RNUP)** Discusses the development of a leasing strategy, including long term leases and collaboration with farmers and other park lessees



Next Steps

Land Assembly

- Undertake due diligence work related to land transfer (e.g. title searching, surveying, environmental assessment)

Planning

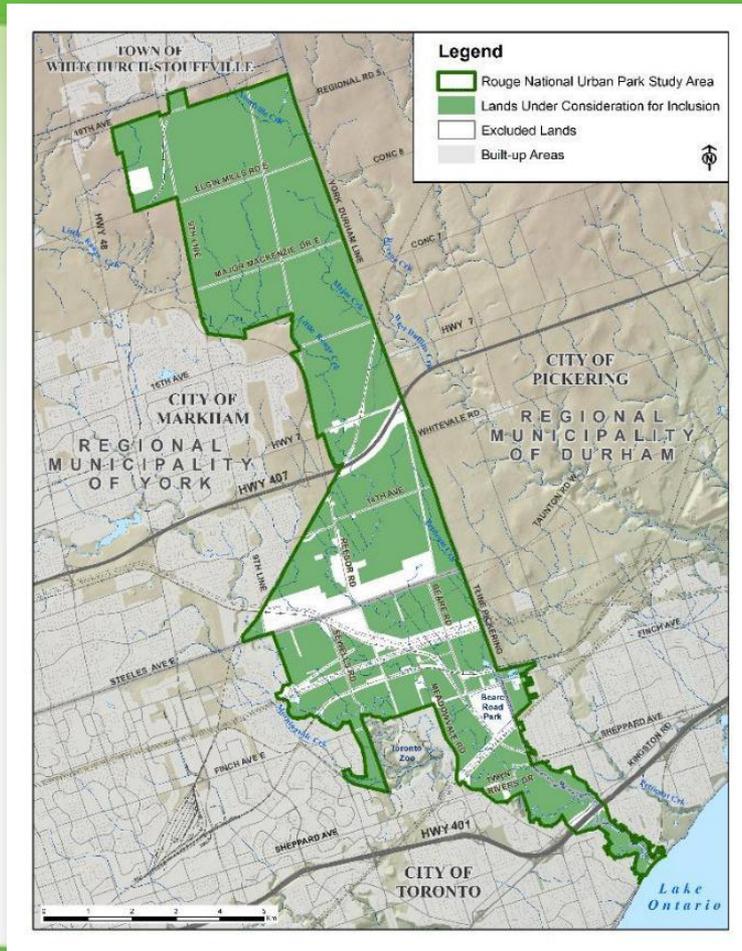
- Finalize the management plan

Leasing

- Continue to work with farming community to finalize leasing strategy



Rouge National Urban Park



Once established, the park will:

- take its place as a new category in the Parks Canada family (along with national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas)
- inspire, inform, enrich and engage the urban spirit in a celebration of protected nature, culture, and agriculture
- be a window on Parks Canada and a place to showcase protected areas throughout Canada

