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City of Toronto Core Services Review

Standing Committee Summary

Parks and Environment

Parks and Environment Introduction

This section summarizes our findings for the programs under the Parks and Environment Standing Committee which include:

- Parks, Forestry and Recreation*
- Toronto Environment Office

* This program reports to multiple standing committees. Information contained in this standing committee report includes only those services that are part of the Parks and Environment Standing Committee

Core Ranking

Majority of activities under the purview of the Parks and Environment Committee fall into the “Traditional” category. Safety and liability related services make up the bulk of the slim “Mandatory” minority. “Essential” services are mainly in Forestry.

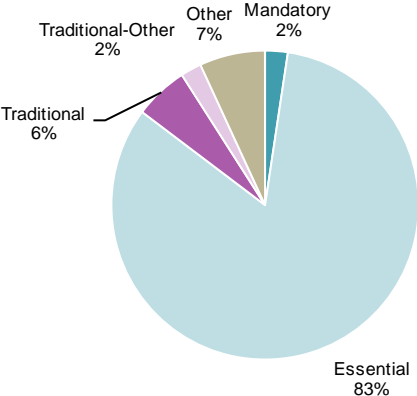


Figure 1: Core Ranking of Program Budgets (gross)

Service Levels

While some services within the two programs are being delivered at levels somewhat below standard, the majority fall into the Standard+ category. Furthermore, the vast majority of standards have been set by Council or management. As a result, the Committee may consider reducing levels of service and reviewing set standards in order to realize cost savings. Resident expectations, jurisdictional examples, and operational realities will likely inform such a review.

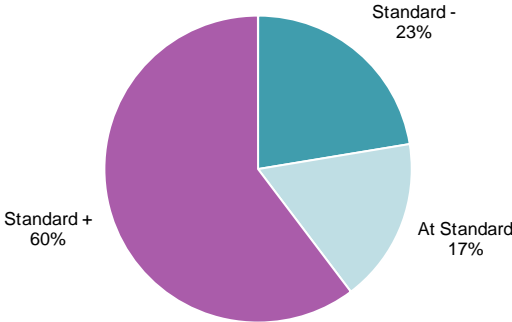


Figure 2: Service Level Ranking of Program Budgets (gross)

Parks and Environment Core Ranking

Strategic Option:

Opportunity may exist to eliminate the Toronto Environment Office, as its activities are largely discretionary. Both Environmental Support for Residents and Businesses and Corporate Environmental Support Services could be considered for divestiture or closure. Elimination of this program would impact some revenue generation and have a detrimental effect on partner organizations and volunteers involved.

Distribution of Program Cost (gross) by Core Ranking							
Program Name	Gross Budget (\$ m)	Mandatory	Mandatory – Essential	Essential	Traditional	Traditional – Other	Other
Parks, Forestry and Recreation	175.1	3.8	-	154.8	10.5	4.1	1.9
Toronto Environment Office	11.5	0.6	-	-	-	-	10.9

Key Non Core Serviced Options

- Consider eliminating horticulture activities within Parks, Forestry, and Recreation. These activities are not related to maintaining the safety of Toronto parks, but could be considered aesthetic in nature.
- Consider eliminating Urban Agriculture service. While this is a relatively new and expanding activity area that provides some residents the opportunity to grow food on city parkland, it is discretionary in nature.
- Some zoo and farm attractions could be closed, however, these are enjoyed by many Toronto residents.

Parks and Environment Service Level

Alternate Service Delivery Option:

Currently, maintenance of parks, sport fields, trails and horticulture is delivered by City staff. There may be an opportunity to contract out the maintenance of these facilities either to interested community group on a volunteer basis, or to a third-party landscaping service provider.

Distribution of Program Cost (gross) by Service Level						
Program Name	Gross Budget (\$ m)	Below Standard	Standard -	At Standard	Standard +	Above Standard
Parks, Forestry and Recreation	175.1	-	41.1	21.6	112.4	-
Toronto Environment Office	11.5	-	0.7	10.7	0.2	-

Key Service Level Reduction Options

- Consider reducing standards for grass cutting and snow clearing in order to reduce operating and capital expenditures. However, while taller grass will yield mostly aesthetic drawbacks, delayed snow removal may result in increased liability for slips and falls in the winter.
- Consider reducing the target canopy cover or extending the target timeframe to achieve, allowing a lower rate of new tree planting.
- Continuously review service standards set by management and Council to seek opportunities for cost reductions.

Parks and Environment

List of Opportunities 1/2

Related program / service / activity			Options and Opportunities					
Program Service Activity	Gross Budget (\$ m)	Net Budget (\$ m)	Type	Description of Opportunity	Potential Savings*	Time Frame**	Risk and Implications	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Sport fields, Trails and Horticulture Maintenance 	109.5	101.1	ASDR	Consider partly contracting maintenance of park facilities to interested community groups. Example: Sports associations for sport fields, horticultural groups for some flower displays .	Medium (up to 20%)	2013	Medium	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Sport fields, Trails and Horticulture Maintenance 	109.5	101.1	ASDR	Consider contracting maintenance of parks .	Medium (up to 20%)	2013	Low	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoo and Farm Attractions 	1.4	1.3	NCSR	Consider elimination of the zoo and farm attractions.	High (more than 20%)	2012	Low	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Agriculture program 	0.49	0.49	NCSR	Consider eliminating Urban Agriculture program.	High (more than 20%)	2012	Low	Medium

* Potential Savings are relative to the size of the corresponding program/service/activity the option/opportunity relates to, and may include increased revenues to produce lower tax requirements. Savings will accrue to utility rates rather than taxes where noted.

** Timeframe refers to first year in which savings could be realized. Full savings may take longer.

Parks and Environment

List of Opportunities 2/2

Related program / service / activity			Options and Opportunities					
Program Service Activity	Gross Budget (\$ m)	Net Budget (\$ m)	Type	Description of Opportunity	Potential Savings*	Time Frame**	Risk and Implications	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Sport fields, Trails and Horticulture Maintenance 	109.5	101.1	NCSR	Consider eliminating horticulture activities.	Low (up to 5%)	2012	Low	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Sport fields, Trails and Horticulture Maintenance 	109.5	101.1	SLR	Consider reducing standard for snow clearing to be eight centimeters of snowfall .	Low (up to 5%)	2012	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Sport fields, Trails and Horticulture Maintenance 	109.5	101.1	SLR	Consider reducing standard for grass cutting, other than on sports fields.	Low (up to 5%)	2012	Low	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks, Forestry and Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Forestry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree Planting 	4.1	1.9	SLR	Consider reducing the target canopy cover or extending the target timeframe to achieve, allowing a lower rate of new tree planting and maintenance of existing trees.	Medium (up to 20%)	2014	Low	Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toronto Environment Office 	11.5	3.2	NCSR	Reduce or eliminate activities.	High (more than 20%)	2012	Low	Medium

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Service Profiles

Parks and Environment

The next section contains the service profiles for the programs that are under review by the Parks and Environment standing committee:

- *Parks, Forestry and Recreation*
- *Toronto Environment Office*

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

**Note: Parks, Forestry and Recreation has services that are in two standing committees; only services pertaining to Parks and Environment standing committee are mentioned in this section.*

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Urban Forestry

Standing Committee
Parks and Environment

Cluster
Cluster A

Program
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Service Type
External Service Delivery

Service Budget (\$m)

Gross	\$43.9
Net	\$31.3

Rationale for Core and Service Level Assessment

Municipalities are responsible for the trees on municipal land.

The City must maintain the trees to minimize liability from falling branches or trees.

Jurisdictional Examples



- Key Opportunities**
- Reducing the target for growth of the tree canopy would allow programs to be reduced.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Urban Forestry

Activities								
Activity Name	Gross Cost (\$m)	Net (\$m)	% Net	Core Ranking	Service Level	Source of Standard	City Role	Notes
Tree Care Maintenance	32.73	23.91	73%	2	S-	C	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not meeting target maintenance cycle. Service standard of 30-40% canopy cover vs. 20% today.
Tree Planting	4.05	1.97	49%	3.5	S-	C	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not meeting target maintenance cycle
Tree Protection	3.85	2.36	61%	1	S-	C	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It takes longer to review development applications than target.
Urban Forestry Planning	3.24	3.04	94%	2	S	IS	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves asset management and claims maintenance.

Options, Opportunities, Risks and Implications					
Type	Options and Opportunities	Risks and Implications	Potential Savings *	Timeframe **	Barriers
SLR	Consider reducing the target canopy cover or extending the target timeframe to achieve, allowing a lower rate of new tree planting and maintenance of existing trees.	Trees add to the quality of the urban environment. Adding 50% to 100% to the current urban canopy is a challenging goal.	Medium (up to 20%)	2014	Medium

* Potential Savings are relative to the size of the corresponding program/service/activity the option/opportunity relates to, and may include increased revenues to produce lower tax requirements.

Savings will accrue to utility rates rather than taxes where noted.

** Timeframe refers to first year in which savings could be realized. Full savings may take longer.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Parks

Standing Committee
Parks and Environment

Cluster
Cluster A

Program
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Service Type
External Service Delivery

Service Budget (\$m)

Gross	\$131.3
Net	\$112.2

Rationale for Core and Service Level Assessment

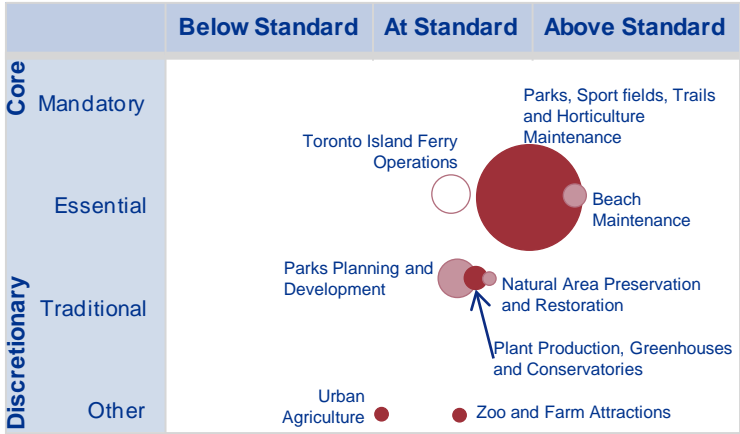
The City has a legal responsibility to keep its properties in a safe condition to avoid liability for any accidents. Relative Parks and Beach Maintenance are therefore rated as essential services. Service levels are above the level required to meet the legislative requirements. Furthermore, some specific areas within Parks provide a higher service level than required even recognizing the high level of public use.

The Toronto Island Ferry is a unique Toronto service responding to local needs.

The Zoo, Farms and Urban Agriculture services are additional enhancements to Park services in Toronto.

Jurisdictional Examples

- OMBI data indicates that:
- Toronto has less parkland per capita than other Ontario cities, and spends more per hectare of parkland to maintain it, both of which are consistent with the much higher population density.
 - 59% of residents use parks at least once a week and only 7% report they never use parks.



Key Opportunities

- There are opportunities to eliminate some non-core services, particularly the urban agriculture and farm and zoo activities.
- There are opportunities to reduce service levels, particularly in grass cutting.
- There are also opportunities to reduce costs by contracting maintenance activities, including the potential to contract with interested community groups, such as sport field user groups.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Parks

Activities								
Activity Name	Gross Cost (\$m)	Net (\$m)	% Net	Core Ranking	Service Level	Source of Standard	City Role	Notes
Beach Maintenance	2.89	2.19	76%	2	S+	M	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service being provided above what is required to keep beach goers safe.
Natural Area Preservation and Restoration	0.88	0.65	74%	3	S	M	D	
Parks Planning and Development	6.09	4.28	70%	3	S	M	D	
Parks, Sport fields, Trails and Horticulture Maintenance	109.50	101.10	92%	2	S+	M/IS/C	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some areas, standards are not met (Graffiti Removal). Service standard could be re-examined in specific areas (Weekly grass cutting and litter pick up, Clearing snow) .
Plant Production, Greenhouses and Conservatories	3.54	3.35	95%	3	S	M	D	
Toronto Island Ferry Operations	6.47	-1.14	-18%	2	S	M	D	
Urban Agriculture	0.49	0.49	100%	4	S-	M	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service standard calls for twice as many urban community gardens as are now provided.
Zoo and Farm Attractions	1.39	1.27	91%	4	S	M	D	

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Parks

Options, Opportunities, Risks and Implications					
Type	Options and Opportunities	Risks and Implications	Potential Savings *	Time Frame **	Barriers
SLR	Consider reducing standard for snow clearing to be eight centimeters of snowfall.	Current standard of clearing parking lots and pathways after five centimeters is higher than the standard for snow clearing on residential roads. There would increase the risk of slip and fall claims particularly with respect to pedestrian pathways.	Low (up to 5%)	2012	High
SLR	Consider reducing standard for grass cutting, other than on sports fields.	Weekly grass cutting may not be necessary except for high-use surfaces like playing fields.	Low (up to 5%)	2012	Low
ASDR	Consider partly contracting maintenance of park facilities to interested community groups. Example: Sports associations for sport fields, horticultural groups for some flower displays.	Parks can often be maintained at lower cost yet higher standards by groups with vested interests in the outcome. Approach would not work in all circumstances, particularly where large equipment is required.	Medium (up to 20%)	2013	Low
ASDR	Consider contracting maintenance of parks.	Routines tasks such as grass cutting can often be achieved more cheaply when contracted.	Medium (up to 20%)	2013	Low
NCSR	Consider eliminating horticulture activities.	These activities are not related to maintaining the safety of Toronto parks.	Low (up to 5%)	2012	Medium
NCSR	Consider eliminating Urban Agriculture service.	This is a relatively new and expanding activity area that provides some residents the opportunity to grow food on city parkland.	High (more than 20%)	2012	Medium
NCSR	Consider elimination of the Zoo and Farm attractions.	These are “above-standard” services, but enjoyed by many residents.	High (more than 20%)	2012	Medium

* Potential Savings are relative to the size of the corresponding program/service/activity the option/opportunity relates to, and may include increased revenues to produce lower tax requirements.

Savings will accrue to utility rates rather than taxes where noted.

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Toronto Environment Office

Standing Committee
Parks and Environment

Cluster
Cluster B

Program
Toronto Environment Office

Service Type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Service Delivery Internal Support Services

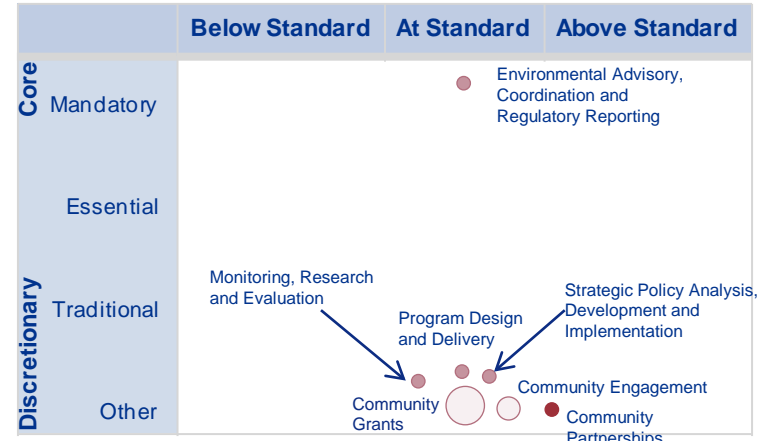
Program Budget (\$m)	
Gross	\$11.5
Net	\$3.2

Rationale for Core and Service Level Assessment

Environmental Support for Residents and Businesses are optional services that increase awareness and foster action on environmental issues.

Corporate Environmental Support Services is also largely discretionary services, with the exception of Regulatory Reporting, which is required by legislation (federal, provincial and city by-laws).

- ### Jurisdictional Examples
- Some of the comparator cities were identified as having some similar programs:
- Montreal has guidelines to assist the municipal administration in integrating sustainable development into planning and policy-making in Montréal.
 - In Chicago, the Chicago Department of Environment develops environmental policies, initiatives and programs, enforces the City's environmental code and regulations.
 - In Melbourne, The Environment Management Plan sets out responsible waste and environmental practices for all properties in the municipality.



- ### Key Opportunities
- The activities of the Toronto Environment Office are largely non-core and could be eliminated, albeit with some damage to Toronto's record and reputation in the environmental field.

Service / Activities								
Service / Activity Name	Gross Cost (\$m)	Net (\$m)	% Net	Core Ranking	Service Level	Source of Standard	City Role	Notes
Environmental Support for Residents and Businesses								
Community Grants	5.44	0.1	2%	4	S	M	F / D	
Community Partnerships	0.17	0.17	100%	4	S+	M	Mp	
Community Engagement	3.07	0.93	30%	4	S	M/F	SM / D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Animators is contracted. Funding arrangements with groups like Smart Commute North Toronto Vaughan.
Corporate Environmental Support Services								
Strategic Policy Analysis, Development and Implementation	0.93	0.56	60%	4	S	M	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental policy development and monitoring internal to the City.
Environmental Advisory, Coordination and Regulatory Reporting	0.58	0.51	88%	1	S	L/M	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 mandatory reporting requirements – 2 federally, 1 provincially, 1 ,municipally.
Program Design and Delivery	0.67	0.57	85%	4	S	M	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Assessment – 2 divisions per year.
Monitoring, Research and Evaluation	0.67	0.39	58%	4	S-	C/M	D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of the Green Initiatives Report has been delayed for review corporately.

Options, Opportunities, Risks and Implications					
Type	Options and Opportunities	Risks and Implications	Potential Savings *	Time Frame **	Barriers
NCSR	Reduce or eliminate activities.	Some activities have revenues that would be lost or contribute to cost-shared programs that could be jeopardized. Some environmental expertise is required as an input to policy development, deal with environmental regulation and anticipate the impact of environmental change. A number of programs involve partners (e.g. Smart Commute with 19 employers of 90,000 employees), and volunteers whose commitment would be challenged.	High (more than 20%)	2012	Medium

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