

4.4.2 Mechanicsville

Laroche Park is the centerpiece of Mechanicsville's public realm and the only major City park in the Scott Street area. Residents within the neighbourhood and beyond enjoy its green space and facilities, some of which are showing their age and need upgrading. Planned development in the Bayview Station District, not to mention the growth anticipated in the Tunney's Pasture Mixed-Use Centre, over time will add thousands of new residents to the area, increasing the demands on Laroche Park to accommodate a variety of park amenities. It is time to reconsider all aspects of the park, including its size, design, facilities and programming, in response to the changes occurring around it. The recommendations and guidelines below building on general directions for the park outlined in the Baview CDP.

The proposed greenway and linear park along Parkdale, described above, will take some pressure off Laroche Park and significantly improve the west edge of Mechanicsville. A similar though smaller-scale initiative along the Transitway will enhance the south edge. The neighbourhood's narrow streets limit opportunities for streetscape improvements. Burnside Avenue, however, can be made more inviting for pedestrians and cyclists.



- ① Laroche Park Improvement
Amélioration du parc Laroche
- ② Accessible Open Space
Espace ouvert accessible
- ③ Hintonburg Pump House Site
Site de la maison Hintonburg pompe
- ④ Pathways Extending Hinchey and Carruthers
Sentiers actuels qui prolongent Hinchey et Carruthers
- ⑤ Burnside Avenue Improvement
Amélioration à la rue Burnside
- ⑥ Mechanicsville Transitway Greenway
Couloir de verdure du Transitway de Mechanicsville
- ⑦ Intersection Improvement
Amélioration à l'intersection

MECHANICSVILLE PUBLIC REALM PLAN

Laroche Park Improvements

The Mechanicsville community has been actively engaged in developing a new vision for Laroche Park to address its shortcomings, and City staff acknowledges that improvements to facilities are needed. As previously mentioned, the park is also captured in the Bayview Station District CDP, and the recommendations below are consistent with the general directions set out in the Bayview plan. The diagram at right conceptually illustrates a range of improvements identified by the community and City staff. Other design approaches are possible but at a minimum the following should be considered:

- Replacement of the field house with a larger building designed as a small community centre with meeting and games rooms, a skate change room, storage space and offices
- An artificial ice rink with lighting, suitable for hockey and recreational skating, and which can be used for ball hockey in warmer months
- Upgraded basketball court
- More playground equipment and potentially an improved splash pad
- Removal of the northern baseball diamond to create more open green space for informal games and passive enjoyment
- Space for community garden plots
- Fenced area for dogs
- Formal pathways across the park linking Mechanicsville to the future Bayview neighbourhood
- More benches and picnic tables
- Drinking fountains

As part of the improvements to Laroche Park, the dirt pathway on the east side of Stonehurst south of the park should be paved.

Given the importance of Laroche Park to the local community, and to prepare it for growth in the area, the development and implementation of a master plan should be a City priority. Area residents should be engaged in the park's re-design, and ultimately their role in managing facilities and programs in the park may increase.

Accessible NCC Open Space

The NCC is undertaking an Urban Lands Master Plan. The CDP process provided an opportunity for area residents to consider what they would like to see on the NCC lands north of Burnside. The proposal described below should be taken as a summary of the community's input to the ULMP with respect to these lands.

The population growth planned around Laroche Park will necessitate more accessible green space in the area. A neighbourhood park is planned on the north side of the Bayview Station District. Another appropriate location for accessible open space is immediately north of Laroche Park, on the NCC lands, where existing underground infrastructure will restrict development. Opening up these lands and maintaining them for access and passive enjoyment would not only add usable green space in a highly visible and accessible location; it will also improve physical and visual connections to the Ottawa River and the open space amenities along its banks.

Potential accessible green space
Expanded playground area
Basketball court improvement
Community garden

Dog area
Informal play area



Hockey rink/ball hockey pad
New field house and plaza

CONCEPTUAL IDEAS FOR LAROCHE PARK

In keeping with the character of the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway, the accessible open space would not require extensive landscaping. Amenities might include crisscrossing pathways, seating and grassy areas among the existing trees.

Hintonburg Pump House Site

The park extension on the NCC lands and the pathways within it will become important links to the site of the historic Hintonburg Pump House on the river, at the bridge to Lemieux Island. The site is being planned as a recreational spot. It is one of the few City-owned properties on the river and offers wonderful views of the skyline. Although the pumphouse was badly damaged by fire in 1989, materials from the building will be re-used as part of a commemoration of its history.

Pathways Extending Hinchey and Carruthers

In addition to the extension of Laroche Park, landscaped pathway connections could be established that visually and physically extend Hinchey and Carruther Avenues across the NCC lands to the riverfront and a future multi-use pathway on the south side of the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway. The pathways will help define parcels for future embassies or other development and ensure such uses do not create a barrier to the riverfront. Until development occurs, the NCC should be encouraged to make their lands publicly accessible by removing the fence along the south edge.



CONCEPTUAL IDEAS FOR LAROCHE PARK

① Burnside Avenue

Burnside Avenue is a critical and well-used link between Parkdale Avenue and Tunney's Pasture to the west and Slidell Street and Bayview Road to the east; however, its design favours vehicles over pedestrians and cyclists. Optimizing the existing right-of-way, the City should reconfigure Burnside Avenue to make it a complete street by accommodating two vehicular lanes, two bike lanes and landscaped boulevards with sidewalks and street trees on both sides. This would result in a minimal loss of on-street parking along two blocks on the north side.

② Mechanicsville Transitway Greenway

On the north side of the Transitway, between Parkdale Avenue and Carruthers Avenue, is a path well-used by residents to get to Parkdale Avenue and the Tunney's Pasture Transit Station. As an important connection for pedestrians, the narrow segments of the pathway should be widened and the entire length should be paved, landscaped, fitted with pedestrian-scale lights and cleared of snow in winter. In addition, the varying width of the public open space the path follows, together with the Forward Avenue cul-de-sac, should be used to create a linear park. Sitting areas and garden plots in the park would complement private backyards, which for some residents are small or non-existent. A pocket park between Hinchey and Carruthers Avenues, in particular, would establish a meeting place near two intersections joining Mechanicsville and Hintonburg. If technically and financially feasible, the park could extend over the Transitway with widened bridges, or an additional land bridge that covers the trench, to accommodate more benches and other amenities.

Mechanicsville Transitway Greenway



MECHANICSVILLE

Burnside Avenue



COMMUNITY GARDEN



GREENWAY/MULTI-USE PATHWAY