

Chapter 8

Strategic Plan for HAVE Services



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Introduction

A Simple Strategic Plan for Rouge Park’s HAVE Program

A strategic plan is a management tool that helps an organization or program to:

- focus its energy
- ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals
- help to assess and adjust the organization’s direction in response to a changing environment

This chapter is supplemental to those identified in the plan’s proposal. It is a disciplined effort to identify fundamental actions and approaches that shape and guide what Rouge Park’s HAVE program does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. It follows a process that produces a set of strategies that will guide the development of the HAVE program into the future..

Mission

A mission statement is like an introductory paragraph. It lets overall park management, HAVE staff, program partners, and program participants know where the HAVE program is going. A mission statement must communicate the essence of the HAVE program. Any program’s ability to articulate its mission indicates its focus and purposefulness. A mission statement typically describes an organization or program in terms of its:

- purpose
 - why the program exists, and what it seeks to accomplish
- business
 - the main method or activity through which the program tries to fulfill this purpose
- values
 - the principles or beliefs that guide a program

Vision

A vision statement presents an image of what success will look like.

With the interim mission and vision statements such as those identified in this chapter, the HAVE Program has a coherent idea of what it is strategically planning for.

Situational Assessment

A situational assessment requires a frank review of the factors affecting the future success of the HAVE program, as they relate to the program’s vision and mission.

The assessment looks at the current conditions at Rouge Park and the HAVE program’s ability to develop, deliver, and support effective services that will achieve the its mission and vision.

The proceeding chapters of this HAVE Plan are a major section of a situational assessment for the HAVE Plan. Those chapters cover:

- the foundations of the HAVE program, and all related groups and organizations
- a review of the park’s natural and cultural features
- a review of what is known about existing and potential program participants
- the program’s purpose and messages (themes and subthemes)
- a review of the methods and media that can be used to deliver theme-based HAVE services

In the situational assessment section of this chapter, the information gathered earlier is reviewed and key issues that need to be addressed are identified.

Strategies, Strategic Goals, and Objectives

Strategic goals and objectives have been developed to deal with the issues identified in this chapter and are presented.

The product of strategy section is an outline of the HAVE Program’s strategic directions and responses to critical issues. These strategies will steer the development of the planning in the following chapters.

The Park Vision

“The Rouge Park will be a special place of outstanding natural features and diverse cultural heritage in an urban-rural setting, protected and flourishing as an ecosystem in perpetuity. Human activities will exist in harmony with the natural values of the park. The park will be a sanctuary for nature and the human spirit.

The primary focus of the vision centres on the protection and appreciation of the park ecosystem. The vision 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. Where appropriate, interpretation of natural, scenic, historic, archaeological and architectural values will be provided.”

Rouge Park Management Plan 1994

The Goal for the 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.

Rouge Park Management Plan 1994

Mission of the Rouge Park HAVE Program

“Humans need connections with nature and their own history, for their physical, mental and spiritual health. The mission of the Rouge Park HAVE program is to enhance the experience of visiting the park, and living near the park, through the provision and facilitation of heritage appreciation and visitor experience services that increase the awareness, appreciation and understanding of the park’s natural and cultural heritage. The HAVE program will also inspire and involve park users in stewardship of the park related resources within the greater park ecosystem.”

Our Guiding Principles are:

- Inclusion of the diversity of park visitors and neighbours
- Do no harm to the environment and historical features of the park
- Focus on enabling discovery of the park’s landscapes, ecology and human heritage
- Encourage and enable life-long learning
- Focus on learning for stewardship
- Through engagement, empowerment and promotion of environmental literacy of individuals and groups, enable them to make informed decisions about their behaviour in the park and in making contributions to the park’s care and stewardship
- Include current issues such as climate change and urbanization

Vision of the Rouge Park HAVE Program

The vision of this program is:

“A dynamic public and schools program where local citizens visit regularly to relax, recreate, learn and contribute to the care of this wonderfully diverse park and the greater park ecosystem that supports it.

Because the park’s HAVE program includes learning, caring and doing, the citizens of the GTA are better able to plan and act towards a sustainable future.

Situational Assessment

This is an assessment of the current conditions at Rouge Park and the HAVE program's ability to develop, deliver and support effective services that will achieve the its mission and vision. Most of the information needed for this analysis has been gathered in the findings of earlier chapters of this plan.

Foundations

The first three chapters of this plan review the foundations of:

- Rouge Park (Chapter 1)
- members of the Rouge Park Alliance, its partners, and the groups that deliver education and interpretation programs in the park (Chapter 2)
- the Rouge Park HAVE Program (Chapter 3)

Foundations of Rouge Park

The review of Rouge Park's foundations (Chapter 1) came to the following conclusions:

Rouge Park's three managements plans (Rouge Park Management Plan: 1994, Rouge North Management Plan: 2001, and Bob Hunter Environmental Area Master Plan: 2006, provide clear direction and support for HAVE services.

The general findings of the review of the park's foundations identified several important needs:

- 1) There is a clear mandate for higher-level services that enable participants to:
 - build capacity (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that enable them to work with the park:
 - to be effective stewards of the park and adjacent lands
 - to support a sustainable Rouge Park
 - to be environmentally-literate citizens
 - participate in meaningful projects that contribute to the development of an ecologically sound, sustainable Rouge Park
 - to receive recognition for participation and contributions to the work of the park
- 2) There is a clear mandate for traditional programs including:
 - programs at the awareness, appreciation and understanding levels (see sidebar: The Stewardship Development Model)
 - formal school programs in
 - environmental education/literacy
 - local history and geography
 - outdoor education

- 3) There is a limited mandate to encourage stewardship contributions from private landowners in terms of:
 - habitat restoration and enhancement on their lands
 - establishment of conservation agreements
 - land donations
- 4) There is a limited mandate to deliver education for sustainability programming.

Foundations of Alliance Members and Partner Groups

Rouge Park Alliance

The members of the Rouge Park Alliance have strong interest in encouraging and enabling:

- environmental citizenship
- stewardship of cultural and natural heritage
- sustainable living
- citizen participation and responsibility for stewardship and sustainability initiatives

Key Community Groups Active in the Park

The community groups identified in this chapter also have strong commitment to stewardship and capacity-building within the community. They have already developed participatory habitat restoration programs.

Conclusion

The HAVE program at Rouge Park can make significant contributions to the core functions of:

- the park
- the members of the Rouge Park Alliance
- the key community group partners that are active in the park.

Sidebar: Liability Insurance Status for Delivery of HAVE Services in Rouge Park

Rouge Park is not a single entity. Land within the park is held by several government agencies. Each has different insurance policies and coverage. The following is a summary of liability coverage compiled by Maryam Nasar, Manager, Interpretation & Culture, Rouge Park in May 2008.

1) Lands under title of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in Toronto

“On Rouge Park lands under Toronto and Region Conservation Authority title, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) employees, including those who are Rouge Park staff, conducting programming in the Park are covered under TRCA’s insurance; however, details about new activities planned should be discussed in advance with TRCA in case these activities need to be specified on the insurance policy, which is generally updated yearly. Specific coverage for external groups will be required before they begin using the Park for programming or other activities.” [Reference: April 2008 e-mail correspondence from Mike Fenning, Manager, Acquisitions and Sales, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority]

2) Lands under title of the City of Toronto

“In the City of Toronto, all past and present Commissions, Committees or other Bodies of the named insured, Members of Council and Board of Control, Appointed officials, partners, officers, directors, employees, volunteer workers, incumbents or shareholders with respect to acts performed on behalf of the Named Insured in that capacity.

Any person, committee, board, organization or group involved in any recreational activities, charitable organization or other similar activity and their Directors, Officers, Members, and active Non-Members while acting on behalf of such, sponsored or approved by the Named Insured.

The City’s Comprehensive General Liability policy covers all City EMPLOYEES for any third party bodily injury/property damage claims, while in the performance of their duties as City employees.

VOLUNTEERS are covered under the City’s Comprehensive General Liability policy while they are conducting duties, in good faith, on behalf of the City of Toronto.

- Acting on behalf of the City of Toronto;
- Conducting duties assigned by a City staff person under the direction or supervision of City staff;
- Do not receive remuneration;

Operative words in insurance policy to qualify “volunteers” under the City’s liability insurance policy are:

- they must be established by...
- accountable to...
- under the control of...
- answerable to...
- sponsored or approved by...

The City of Toronto.

With respect to the maintenance agreement(s) as between City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the City’s Comprehensive General Liability policy would take into account the terms and conditions of the agreement and any third party claims would be adjudicated accordingly. For example, if the City was contractually responsible for the maintenance of the location and our negligence resulted in a third party claim, the liability policy would respond to defend the action. We do not however, extend the City’s Comprehensive General Liability policy to cover any outside entities, their employees and their volunteers.”

[Reference: 28 March 2008 e-mail correspondence to Paul Dickenson, Supervisor, Parks, Scarborough District, City of Toronto from Irene Antochiw, Risk Management Analyst, Insurance & Risk Management Section, Corporate Finance Division, City of Toronto]

3) Lands under title of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in Markham, and those owned by the Town of Markham, must have specific written agreements in place to address liability and insurance issues.

4) Lands owned by the Province of Ontario

Long-term use by groups or individuals who are not staff of a municipality, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority or the Ontario Government must enter into a written agreement between the Rouge Park Alliance and its relevant partner(s), with special provisions made for all required insurance.

Ontario legislation and other information regarding general public access to public land/property, and liability, is available at

- www.search.e-laws.gov.on.ca/en/search
- www.search.e-laws.gov.on.ca/en/search
- www.search.e-laws.gov.on.ca/en/search/

In particular:

- Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.21
- Occupiers’ Liability Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.2

Liability Coverage of HAVE Staff

Rouge Park is not a separate legal entity. Instead it is made up of lands held by several members of the Rouge Park Alliance. As such, it is unclear as to the precise liability coverage for HAVE staff leading public programs (see the sidebar below).

If HAVE staff are to lead park visitors on personal interpretation and education programs, the Rouge Park Alliance must find a way to clearly ensure that all HAVE staff, volunteers under the direction of HAVE staff, and staff and volunteers of sanctioned park partners (including a future Rouge Park cooperating association) must have liability protection at least to the level found for employees of Ontario Parks and Parks Canada.

Park HAVE Partners

Currently, Rouge Park has a limited partnership portfolio. Its key partners, such as the Ontario Greenbelt Foundation, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and Ontario Streams provide funding or expertise. According to Rouge Park management, there are no formal partnership agreements between the park and those groups that currently deliver their own education and interpretation programs within the park. Neither is there a Friends of Rouge Park Society similar to the friends-of societies that support individual Ontario Parks or National Parks.

Funding will have to come from the Rouge Park Alliance. Significant funding and program assistance to HAVE services can potentially come through collaboration and partnerships with other governments (e.g., municipal parks departments, regional park systems, Toronto District School Board), NGOs (e.g., The Nature Conservancy of Canada) and existing groups that are currently delivering education and interpretation services in Rouge Park.

Developing HAVE Strategies, Goals, and Objectives

Now that Rouge Park's HAVE program's mandate (mission, vision goals, and themes) has been identified and its critical issues identified in the situational analysis, the following section addresses what to do about these issues.

Strategies are the broad approaches to be taken, and the general and specific results to be sought (the strategic goals and objectives).

These strategies, strategic goals, and objectives come from our small external consulting group. However, they could also come from individual inspiration, group discussion, formal decision-making techniques, and so on. The bottom line is that, in the end, the park's leadership must agree on how to address the critical issues. The strategies and strategic goals and objectives outlined in this chapter can be considered as an interim framework until HAVE Staff, Rouge Park management, and the Rouge Park Alliance approve them. This may take considerable time and require flexibility. Discussions at this stage will require additional information or reevaluation of conclusions reached during the situational assessment. It is even possible that new insights will emerge which change the thrust of the mission statement or other foundations of the HAVE plan.

The situational analysis (in this chapter) identifies the current environment for HAVE services including a number of issues that must be addressed in order for an effective HAVE program to take place. The following section identifies strategies required. Each strategy has one or more related strategic goals.

The strategies for initiating the Rouge Park HAVE Plan are:

1. Build and maintain park public profile
2. Identify and characterize current and potential park visitors and neighbours in detail
3. Regularly use the information gathered about current and potential park visitors to craft appropriate and effective HAVE services
4. Ensure that all HAVE staff, volunteers and partners have full liability coverage when delivering HAVE services
5. Use an action research approach when developing new, HAVE offerings

Table 8.1: HAVE Strategies, Goals, and Objectives

Strategic Goals	Strategic Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
<p>Strategy 2: Identify and characterize current and potential park visitors and neighbours (continued)</p> <p>2.2: Understand cultural values, attitudes toward nature and history, and prior knowledge of the many categories of new Canadians in eastern Toronto and Markham</p>	<p>2.2.a By the end of 2009, conduct or commission a review of academic literature on the place nature and cultural history hold in the values, activities and attitudes of the major cultural groups that live in eastern Toronto and Markham.</p> <p>2.2.b By the end of 2009, have in place a continuing dialogue with all major cultural groups for communities within one hour's travel to Rouge Park, about their knowledge, attitudes and needs with respect to visiting Rouge Park and taking part in HAVE services.</p> <p>2.2.c By the end of 2009, have initiated a program to encourage academic research on the knowledge, attitudes of specific cultural and social groups of new Canadians to nature, natural parks and historic sites. This will include identification of barriers to visiting Rouge Park and in participating in HAVE services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a literature review of the knowledge, attitudes and activities of the major cultural groups in the region is completed and analysed in terms of how the HAVE plan can address the need and interests of these groups • a reliable profile of all visitors and potential visitors that is updated annually and every five years • there are positive relations between HAVE staff and the major cultural community organizations in the region
<p>2.3: Keep tabs on developments in visitor and tourist interests, behaviour and understanding</p>	<p>2.3.a Every 3–5 years, review and analyse leisure studies research, statistics, and reports relating to Markham, Toronto Pickering, southern Ontario and Canada</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reliable review of macro trends in stewardship, learning and involvement and leisure activities and civic tourism at local, regional and national scales that may affect Rouge Park and its HAVE program
<p>Strategy 3: Regularly use the information gathered about current and potential park visitors to craft appropriate and effective HAVE services</p>		
<p>3.1: Develop, deliver, evaluate and support HAVE services that are appropriate for and attractive to all current and potential visitors to rouge park</p>	<p>3.1.a As soon as it becomes available, use the new information about current and potential audiences to develop effective HAVE programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAVE programs that attract current park visitors • HAVE programs that attract and serve participants from local cultural groups in numbers proportional to their local population numbers
<p>Strategy 4: Use an action research approach when developing new HAVE offerings</p>		
<p>4.1: Follow an action research model of; consult, pilot, analyse, make adjustments, consult and pilot again. The main point is not to give up if a new offering is not successful until they succeed or why they are not working is understood.</p>	<p>4.1.a Within five years, the HAVE program will have programs aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing awareness and appreciation • developing understanding • building capacity to engage and participate • providing opportunities to take appropriate leadership and collaboration with the park in stewardship of the park's natural and cultural heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer incidents of trail and habitat damage • higher participation in park stewardship projects • establishment of a stewardship committee in the Friends of Rouge Park Cooperating Association • increased community support for and participation in park stewardship initiatives • a relatively stable and robust suite of HAVE offerings is in place for all levels of visitor engagement identified in the PPA Stewardship Model

Table 8.1: HAVE Strategies, Goals, and Objectives

Strategic Goals	Strategic Objectives	Key Performance Indicators
Strategy 5: Encourage and support appropriate and needed research in Rouge Park		
5.1: Encourage and enable academic research on the geology, ecology and natural history of Rouge Park	5.1.a By the end of 2008 HAVE staff will begin to develop positive relationships with researchers in these fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rouge Park will become an important location for research in geology, ecology, restoration biology, Canadian history and anthropology
5.2: Encourage and enable academic research on the history and archeology of Rouge Park	5.1.b By the end of 2009 HAVE staff will select one or more Rouge Park rental properties that can be used as office/lab/field station and for storage of equipment for researchers on a project-by-project basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers will feel welcomed and supported Rouge Park will have a simple, transparent policy and process about research permitted and conducted in the park.
5.3: Encourage and enable academic research on habitat restoration in Rouge Park	5.1.c HAVE staff will ensure that information gathered in research projects is shared with park visitors and the greater community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of any research permit, HAVE staff will require researchers to deliver one or public presentations on their research findings in or near Rouge Park
5.4: Encourage and enable academic research on public engagement in stewardship of Rouge Park	5.1.d HAVE staff will work with researchers to ensure that research reports for public distribution are written or otherwise presented in accessible, jargon-free language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rouge Park will have a library of research reports available for research community members, students and the public (hard copy and on-line) Local citizens and local governments will recognize Rouge Park as an important site for research on Canada's ecology and history.
Strategy 6: Ensure that HAVE program does not negatively impact the ecological integrity and ecological services of Rouge Park		
6.1: HAVE services in Rouge Park will do no harm on balance to the park	6.1.a By the end of 2008, Rouge Park will have a policy and process for an annual review of the effects (negative and positive) of HAVE offerings on the ecological and cultural integrity of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Rouge Park's HAVE program offerings increase, the park's ecological integrity remains unchanged or improves.
Strategy 7: Develop Partnership/Collaboration Policy for HAVE-Related Services		
7.1: Develop a partnership policy that is beneficial to Rouge Park's HAVE program and to its collaborators and partners	7.1.a Ensure that all collaborations and partnerships are beneficial to the park's HAVE program (e.g., fit the program's mandate and meet target audiences' needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rouge Park's HAVE program will have an effective partnership policy that includes methods for initiating, extending and exiting partnerships and collaborations
	7.1.b Ensure that collaborations and partnerships are beneficial to Rouge Park's partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rouge Park's HAVE program's partnerships and collaborations will be effective and satisfactory to all parties concerned.
7.2: Develop a process through which to implement, engage, monitor and support regulate or end collaborations and partnerships	7.2.a Make all HAVE-related collaborations and partnerships clear, easily understood and transparent to both parties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a spirit of collaboration and respect will be evident at meetings and co-held public programs as a base-line standard, participants in any program in Rouge Park will hear only neutral or positive remarks expressed about Rouge Park, staff, partner groups, etc.
7.3: Through successful and friendly partnerships and collaborations build strong community support for the HAVE program and the park	7.2.a HAVE program more budget-cut proof.	