

March 18, 2022

National Urban Parks Policy recommendations

Context for CPAWS policy guidance on a national urban park system for Canada

As more Canadians choose to reside in urban settings¹, this important shift must be better incorporated in conservation planning to ensure maximum benefits to both nature and people. On the one hand, support of urban populations (where governments, media, wealth, donors, civil society, and opinion leaders are most concentrated) is critical for nature conservation. On the other hand, people living in cities are more disconnected from nature. This disconnection has a negative effect on their physical and mental health and well-being and could also lead to dwindling support for nature protection.

The creation of a National Urban Park (NUP) network not only serves as a welcome step towards addressing this problem, but also can provide a plethora of other benefits to nature, climate, and people. This includes biodiversity conservation, including the protection of biodiversity rich areas, rare habitats, and Species at Risk, which are concentrated in Canada's urban south. Urban protected areas provide excellent opportunities to utilize green infrastructure to help mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as help species adapt to climate change by improving landscape connectivity. Urban protected areas are an opportunity to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and support Indigenous-led conservation. Urban protected areas can also **improve access to nature for communities historically under-represented in outdoor spaces**, provide ample benefits to our health, mental and physical well-being, offer people a sense of place, and help bring families together while also defining a city's identity.²

Ensuring urban protected areas are well-designed and well-managed will be critical for delivering on the federal government's commitment to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and contribute to delivering on their promise to protect 30% of the country by 2030, particularly in southern Canada. Maintaining and restoring ecological connectivity in urban and near-urban environments will also be essential to ensure urban protected areas live up to their potential to address biodiversity loss and contribute to climate change adaptation. Ecological connectivity is a key quality element of Aichi Target 11/Canada Target 1, and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and is complementary to the development and implementation of a National Urban Parks Network across Canada.

Key criteria required for National Urban Parks in Canada

In developing a National Urban Parks program, Parks Canada will need to establish clear criteria to determine what distinguishes a national urban park from other urban parks, protected areas and greenspace. In other words what is required in order to consider the designation and support associated with a National Urban Park? We recommend that the following criteria should be among the basic

¹ Canada's rural to urban ratio in 1950 was 40:60 and is now 20:80, and projected to further decrease to 10:90 (<https://population.un.org/wup/Country-Profiles/>)

² Trzyna, T. (2014). Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 22, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xiv + 110pp.

criteria required for an area to be considered as a National Urban Park in Canada, and that these be embedded in framework legislation.

Protected Area: The area must meet the definition of a protected area (IUCN and Canada) including having nature conservation as the primary/overriding objective.

Additionality: Creating a national urban park must add to the current conservation value/effectiveness of the area by, for example, expanding an existing protected area; strengthening protection mechanisms or management systems; and/or by providing additional conservation capacity/resources tied to clear conservation outcomes.

Contribute to reconciliation: The proposed governing authorities must commit to early and on-going meaningful engagement with Indigenous Nations in whose traditional territories the area is located, to respecting the principles of UNDRIP, including free, prior and informed consent, and to the potential co-creation, co-governance and/or co-management of the NUP in ways that reflect the interests of the Nation(s), including Indigenous Guardians programs.

Accessibility: The area must be **open and accessible** to the broad Canadian public, and commit to developing strategies focused on supporting diversity, equity and inclusion.

Transparency: There must be a commitment from governing authorities to be transparent in decision-making and to meaningful and on-going engagement and consultation with stakeholders in the establishment and management of the park.

Prohibition of incompatible activities: As is the case for all protected areas, governing authorities must prohibit activities that are incompatible with biodiversity conservation, including industrial activities and environmentally damaging infrastructure. This means they must have the necessary authority and mechanisms to put in place these prohibitions. They must also ensure compatible activities are effectively managed.

Building on these key criteria, CPAWS has developed a suite of more detailed recommendations to inform the development of a policy framework for Canada's National Urban Parks, which are presented below.

1. Definition of a national urban park

CPAWS endorses the IUCN definition of an urban protected area: *“Urban protected areas are protected areas positioned in or at the edge of larger population centers.”*³

While, according to IUCN guidance, “National” urban protected areas are managed or governed by a national governance body and should be of national significance, CPAWS is recommending developing framework legislation to enable different governance models without the need for a single national governance body. Through framework legislation different governance models will have the necessary leverage to ensure meeting the ecological, social and cultural goals of NUPs. From CPAWS's perspective, NUPs are opportunities to provide national recognition for local ecological and cultural treasures, and for all Canadians to learn about and visit these treasures.

³ Trzyna, T. (2014). Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and best practice guidelines. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 22, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xiv + 110pp.



2. The key principles and values of a NUP must be centered on conserving NATURE while providing benefits to PEOPLE in a way that fosters RECONCILIATION and respects the leadership and sovereignty of Indigenous nations.

2.1 NATURE

NUPs must meet the definition and guidance (IUCN/Canadian) for a “protected area” (*A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values*), including:

- a. A primary/overriding objective of **conserving nature** (maintaining and restoring ecological integrity through protecting natural ecosystems and processes).
- b. Be managed in ways that support enhanced climate change resilience and adaptation for ecosystems and people, and for carbon storage, ensuring consistency with the overriding nature conservation objective.
- c. A strong focus on active ecological restoration, including for Species at Risk.
- d. Should contribute to landscape connectivity (may consist of several separate parcels).
- e. Should contribute to existing and planned natural and green infrastructure both within the NUP and in the adjacent landscape matrix.
- f. Environmentally damaging activities, including industrial activities, and infrastructure not in keeping with the park conservation objectives, must be prohibited.
- g. In agricultural areas, where beneficial to maintaining and restoring ecological integrity and connectivity, NUPs could include existing compatible non-industrial agricultural lands.

2.2 PEOPLE

NUPs should be welcoming, accessible and inclusive spaces for **all people** living in urban areas to improve community socialization and access to nature. To reduce accessibility barriers in NUPs, Parks Canada and any other governing/co-governing/managing authority should commit to:

- No visitor entry fees.
 - Providing basic amenities and designing infrastructure for all ages and abilities.
 - Supporting diverse activities to attract different users (i.e., arts and culture events, educational programs, recreational activities).
 - Building partnerships with community organizations, such as libraries, youth groups, and other community organizations to create inclusive programming.
 - Representing community culture, history, art and identity in the NUP.
 - Engaging local communities in NUP planning and management processes.
 - Working with government and community partners to develop active and public transportation routes to NUPs.
 - Developing inclusion strategies for each NUP to address specific accessibility barriers.
- a. NUPs should serve as a gateway for urban people to connect with nature and experience its benefits for their health and wellbeing.
 - b. Acknowledging the important role urban natural areas play in providing shelter for homeless populations, a sensitive, pro-active approach to addressing the needs of houseless people is essential for NUPs, working with all levels of government and other partners and experts.



Example: Rouge National Urban Park has taken steps to support creative housing solutions.⁴

- c. NUPs should offer a variety of low-impact recreational activities (i.e., hiking, picnicking, swimming, running, biking, canoeing, kayaking, camping, etc.) for urban people to explore and enjoy nature.
- d. NUPs should provide educational programming for urban people to learn about outdoor activities, biodiversity conservation, Indigenous Peoples and history, and protected areas across Canada (i.e., national parks, provincial parks, Indigenous-led conservation areas, etc.)
- e. NUPs should display clear wayfinding and interpretive signage, including welcome areas, access points, trail maps, and transit signs, that can be understood by all urban park users.

Example: Sydney's Royal National Park⁵ relies on signage with symbols rather than words to communicate with its diversity of visitors.

- f. NUPs should act as safe spaces for families, friends and communities to gather and socialize outdoors, particularly in the context of COVID-19. Visitor infrastructure and activities should be designed to accommodate large groups.
- g. NUPs should provide urban people a sense of place and connection to their immediate surroundings, their region, and the planet.
- h. NUPs should serve as a launch pad for urban people to develop an appreciation for nature and find opportunities to engage in conservation and stewardship within the NUP and beyond.
- i. Visitor infrastructure and all activities should be designed, managed, and operated to support the primary objective of maintenance/restoration of ecological integrity within the NUP. Park managers should also strive to ensure infrastructure demonstrates cutting edge practices for green infrastructure and/or building retrofits.

2.3 RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

For thousands of years, the lands and waters now referred to as Canada have held cultural, spiritual, social, and subsistence significance for Indigenous Peoples. As all NUPs will be situated on ancestral Indigenous territories, it is paramount that processes that explore NUP establishment are inclusive of the Indigenous Treaty partners of the area and resources are provided to support their participation.

- a. NUPs should be established with the free, prior, and informed consent of the Indigenous Nations whose traditional territories the NUPs reside on.
- b. NUPs could be nominated by Indigenous Nations and, in some instances, also be designated as Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas.
- c. NUPs should include Indigenous Nations, individuals or communities/groups in co-management and stewardship, where possible. This should include supporting Indigenous Guardians programs within the park and being inclusive of Indigenous People's knowledge and aspirations in designing management plans.
- d. NUPs should include a land acknowledgement and information on the Indigenous Peoples and history of the area, as desired by regional Indigenous organizations.

⁴ <https://bluedoor.ca/2020/09/unique-partnership-builds-a-home-and-future-for-markhams-homeless-and-marginalized/>

⁵ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-022.pdf>, p.14



- e. Indigenous groups should be identified and encouraged to be involved in governance. They should also be consulted on allowable activities, infrastructure, addressing the impacts of urbanization, and guidance on plans for transitional sites.
- f. The establishment and management of NUPS should foster ethical space where Indigenous knowledge systems and Western Science can interact on equal footing.

3. Governance/management/co-management:

Governance Models:

- a. As a fundamental starting point, the rights of Indigenous Peoples in whose traditional territories NUPs are located and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must be respected in establishing and managing NUPs, regardless of the governance model applied.
- b. Given the varying contexts across Canada, a range of governance models could be considered for NUPs, from full ownership and management by Parks Canada (e.g., Rouge National Urban Park) to ownership and management by other authorities, in partnership with Parks Canada. Governing authorities could include federal, provincial, Indigenous, regional or local, and partnerships with private enterprises (e.g., individual, cooperative, or NGO ⁶). In all cases, where there is interest from Indigenous governments and/or communities on whose traditional territory the area is located, Indigenous or co-governance options should be explored as a priority.
- c. In all cases, ensure ethical spaces exist for engagement with Indigenous Peoples from the beginning of discussions about a NUP.
- d. The preferred mechanism for establishing/managing NUPs would be through legislation. This would best ensure the ecological, social and cultural goals of NUPs are met over the long term and provide the strongest public accountability.
 - We recommend creating a new federal framework/enabling legislation that clearly articulates the goals, objectives, and criteria for a NUP, including options for governance/management.
 - Several prominent National Urban Park models across the world have seen legislation as the driving force to addressing protection, restoration, and negative impacts to valued landscapes.

Examples: Greater Stockholm; Yongsan Park project (Seoul)⁷; Western Sydney Parklands⁸; Rouge NUP.

- e. Regardless of the governance model, enforceable establishment and on-going funding/management agreements need to be in place with all governing authorities that include requirements to meet NUP criteria/standards, as well as implications if the governing authority(ies) do not meet these standards.
- f. As recognized in the [Pathway to Canada Target 1 Decision Support Tool](#) for protected areas and OECMs, it is essential that governing authorities have mechanisms and the authority to ensure that activities that are incompatible with biodiversity conservation do not occur, and

⁶ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/pag-021.pdf> pg. 26

⁷ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331360035_The_Process_of_Creating_Yongsan_Park_from_the_Urban_Resilience_Perspective

⁸ <https://www.westernsydneyparklands.com.au/assets/POM2030/PlanOfManagement2030-Final.pdf>



that compatible activities are effectively managed. This will be particularly important in the complex urban environment.

- g. Establishment of External Advisory bodies to ensure transparency, monitoring, and evaluation of activities and management effectiveness is important. In their various forms (councils, committees, panels, roundtables etc.), external advisory bodies contribute to good governance and provide a variety of benefits, from greater transparency and broader access to information, to ensuring knowledge, expertise and experience play a central role in shaping advice to the decision-making and planning process. There is flexibility in how these advisory bodies can be structured, with a few important considerations:

- Given the structure of the National Urban Park Network, a two-level advisory system is likely to be most effective: Park level advisory body and National level advisory body.
- A clear terms of reference (TOR) for each advisory body, detailing the mandates and responsibilities of each, as well as outlining how they interact with each other.
- Principles for forming advisory bodies should be clearly defined. These groups need to be resourced and financed to ensure the means of participation.

Example: Marseille – Calanques National Park⁹ (Administrative Council; Scientific Council; advisory Economic, Social and Cultural Council).

- h. Regardless of the governance model, all new national urban parks must meet a criterion of “additionality” in delivering conservation outcomes and builds upon existing efforts to protect and restore these sites. In other words, involvement in each NUP must lead to clear and meaningful conservation outcomes, such as upgraded legal protection, land acquisitions, commitments and capacity for ecological restoration and monitoring etc.

Management Requirements

- a. Maintaining or restoring ecological integrity must be clearly articulated as the first priority in managing NUPs, as is the case in the Rouge National Urban Park. This clearly articulates that NUPs meet the IUCN/Canadian definition of a protected area, and provides direction to governing authorities that NUPs must, as the first priority for all aspects of park management, strive for continuous improvement in the overall health and integrity of the park’s ecosystems, by maintaining what is there and working to restore what has been compromised or lost. As noted above, this should be embedded as an overriding principle in framework legislation.

Example: Greater Stockholm National Urban Park.¹⁰ Despite the status of an area of national cultural interest, substantial development proposals continued to put pressure on this landscape. It was this critical situation and a creative process that resulted in the Act for the National Urban Park.

⁹ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-022.pdf> pg. 24

¹⁰ <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss2/art39/>



- b. Be informed by Indigenous Knowledge and western science – creating ethical space to ensure knowledge systems and processes occur on an equal footing.
- c. Indigenous Guardians initiatives could play a valuable role in NUP management and should be supported.
- d. Management plans should be developed through transparent, public processes, with a legal requirement for a 5-year review, recognizing the intense and fast-changing pressures of an urban environment, and the need for adaptive management.
- e. Monitoring and regular public reporting on ecosystem health, and achievement of management objectives.
- f. Recognizing that “being loved to death” is a high risk for NUPs; visitor use management strategies need to be developed and implemented for all NUPs.
- g. To help control edge effects and encroachment, and to maximize the contribution of NUPs to broader landscape conservation goals, it is important to manage the surrounding landscape in a conservation-positive manner. Governing/management authorities must have a mandate to work in partnership with surrounding landowners/governance authorities to maintain or restore ecological connections with the broader landscape, and to manage edge effects and human-wildlife conflict.
- h. NUPs could be managed or co-managed under private governance¹¹, for which NGOs¹² are a typical example, through collaborative, cooperative and community efforts, including well managed and supported volunteer groups, in addition to or in place of government(s).
- i. While there are various forms of governance options/models for NUPs, core funding for park functions, education, monitoring and enforcement should be provided by the federal government through specially designed funding streams.

Examples:

- Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks (New York)¹³. As a public/private partnership, the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, Inc. (JBRPC) - formed to support the unique relationship between the City of New York and the National Parks Service - works to expand public access; increase recreational and educational opportunities; foster citizen stewardship and volunteerism; preserve and restore natural areas, including wetland and wildlife habitat; enhance cultural resources; and ensure the long-term sustainability of the parklands.
- Greater Stockholm Urban National Park¹⁴ & Cantareira Range Complex of Protected Areas (Sao Paulo)¹⁵. Social movement or social network structures - shaped by civil-society organizations - can be highly influential and drive initiatives from below, exemplifying that the protection of urban green areas can rest on an active and organized civil society rather than on legislative powers.
- Friends of Bird's Hill provincial park, MB.¹⁶ A democratic non-profit, voluntary association of individuals committed to conserving the park's natural environment, with a vision to be a “thriving organization that collaborates with partners and Birds Hill Park management to

¹¹ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/pag-021.pdf> pg. 26

¹² <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/757d/e6ee/5c0b072897b58d2af9237a10/mcb-em-2018-01-oecd-submission2-en.pdf> - pg. 240.

¹³ <http://www.jbrpc.org/>

¹⁴ <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss2/art39/>

¹⁵ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-022.pdf> (pg. 18)

¹⁶ <https://friendsofbirdshillpark.ca/>



educate the public about the park’s natural heritage and foster a healthy natural environment”.

- Multiple Indigenous Guardian opportunities, stewards, caretakers of an NUP (such as Thaidene Nene, Haida Gwaii)

4. Compatible and Incompatible Activities Within NUPs

As per international and national standards (ie. IUCN and Pathway to Canada Target 1), industrial activities must be prohibited in protected areas, including in National Urban Parks, as well as other activities that negatively impact the ecological integrity of a NUP.¹⁷ The activities permitted within the NUP must be managed by the relevant governing authorities, in a manner that is consistent with the conservation objectives of the NUP.¹⁸

All existing activities should be assessed to evaluate the degree to which they negatively or positively impact the conservation goal of the NUP. In this case, the NUP governance body must evaluate and weigh the risks and benefits associated with allowing the activity in question to continue and consider alternative options, including phasing out or relocating the activity. In all such cases, the NUP governance body should apply the *precautionary principle* to ensure the NUPs ecological integrity is not negatively affected or at risk from such activities.

Example: Rouge’s NUP vision of a vibrant farming community: Parks Canada and park farmers will work hand-in-hand to shape a key role for park farming as part of a vital and diverse protected landscape, as a contributor to the maintenance or restoration of the park’s ecological integrity, as a provider of educational opportunities for visitors, and as a supporter of the food sustainability of the larger region.

For clarity, CPAWS recognizes that special provisions for homeless populations will be needed (see recommendation 2.2.b)

New/Planned and Existing Infrastructure

As part of the management planning process of NUP creation, existing infrastructure – infrastructure that would be deemed prohibitive within a new NUP - should be catalogued and assessed for potential mitigation and/or compensatory measures that could effectively minimize, manage and enhance its impact to the designated features (native flora and fauna, cultural heritage, diverse landscape etc.) of the NUP.

New/Planned infrastructure development inside the park should be limited to NUP operations/visitor experience (e.g. welcoming center, etc.) and should not compromise the restoration and maintenance of ecological integrity. Natural and green infrastructure development should be prioritized, and the development of invasive and harmful grey infrastructure should be avoided, if possible, including in the immediate proximity to the NUP and within its buffer zone.

¹⁷<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5c9cd18671c10bc304619547/1553781159734/Pathway-Report-Final-EN.pdf>

¹⁸<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5c94cb199140b7492eaaad735/1553255193848/Pathway+to+Target+1+Decision+Support+Tool+%28EN%29.pdf>



Consideration of new/planned infrastructure development within close proximity to critically important ecological, cultural and broader landscape features of NUPs should be assessed through a biodiversity and sustainability lens within the framework of the planning approval process and associated NUP policies/guidance. For any new/planned Infrastructure critical to park operations, within or adjacent to a protected area, development should again be assessed through a biodiversity and sustainability lens (sustainable materials, height and footprint), be in keeping with park surroundings (visual landscape), is as optimal for ecological and cultural preservation as possible, and be determined in accordance and balance with relevant local planning policies, park policies/frameworks and best practice for development within or adjacent to protected areas.

New/Planned infrastructure projects in NUPs should follow the same guidelines as with other National Parks.¹⁹ This includes applying Parks Canada's Decision Support Framework under the Impact Assessment Act, with the bulk of the projects subject to either Pre-approved Routine Impact Assessment, Basic Impact Assessment, or Detailed Impact Assessment. This also includes engaging with stakeholders and following a transparent and regulated consultation process.

Examples:

- Special committees formed in the EU and the UK oversee the transition from grey to green infrastructure.
- In the EU, the Natura 2000 Network is being further strengthened by the development of a connecting Green Infrastructure Network (a Trans-European Nature Network).²⁰
- National Urban Park Act (Stockholm): "In an NUP, new built-up areas and new installations may be created and other measures taken only if this can take place without encroaching on the park landscape or natural environment and without the natural and cultural values of the historical landscape being otherwise damaged".²¹

5. Zoning

NUPs are primarily created to protect critically important ecological and cultural ecosystems, while at the same time covering significant recreational areas, warranting a tiered system approach to protection. Therefore, an application of a zoning system (possibly using the zoning system applied by Parks Canada in Canada's national parks) is highly recommended. This is necessary due to the additional pressures on NUPs, including proximity to large urban centers, the generally small size of the remaining natural habitat parcels, and the overall higher hostility of the surrounding matrix in more developed and densely populated urban areas.

A given NUP may have any number of zones, depending on its unique values, goals and challenges. From a management planning perspective, it is critical that zoning is an integral part of the planning process.²² Zoning is essential for optimal design and management of NUPs due to the often patchy

¹⁹ <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/nature/eie-eia/processus-process/projet-projet/itm1b-2>

²⁰ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/green-infrastructure/building-a-coherent-trans-european>

²¹ Schantz, P. (2002) Summary. Nationalstadsparken – The National Urban Park – An Experiment in Sustainable Development. Studies of values, law application and developmental projects.

In: Lennart Holm, Peter Schantz (ed.), Nationalstadsparken – ett experiment i hållbar utveckling.:

Studier av värdefrågor, lagtillämpning och utvecklingslinjer (pp. 249-261). Stockholm: Formas

<http://gih.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:742/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

²² http://rem-main.rem.sfu.ca/theses/TheDeAmy_2011_MRM517.pdf pg. 104



and disconnected nature of the ecosystems the NUP is being created to protect. As with National Parks, any change to a NUP's zoning constitutes a major amendment to the NUP management plan and may only be made following an environmental assessment, public notice and public participation in the decision.

It is likely that the various parcels comprising the NUP will not be immediately adjacent to each other. Therefore, connectivity goals, criteria and principles should be set at the onset and a buffer zone encompassing the entire NUP should be delineated and managed as a critical component of the NUP, especially where ecological, cultural and/or other landscape features are present and/or intend to be restored.

Examples:

- Parks Canada's zoning system as part of Management planning process for National Parks.
- Bukhansan National Park (Seoul), Special Protection Zone layers within parks²³.

6. Integrating into the Surrounding Landscape. Buffer zones and connectivity.

Although protected areas lie at the core of nature conservation, on their own, they are insufficient to protect most ecosystems and prevent biodiversity loss. Active measures must be taken to maintain, enhance and restore the "surrounding matrix" - the areas around these core conservation sites as well as improving the connectivity between them. We recommend doing so either by actively managing the surrounding landscape around the NUPs and/or by designating a buffer zone.

Active management of the surrounding landscape or a specific buffer zone for a NUP will also help alleviate threats tied to urbanization. Located within and at the edge of urban centres, NUPs will be subject to more urbanization effects compared to traditional protected areas. These include but are not limited to: a higher edge effect, which results in a higher frequency of fires, creates more exposure to pollution, noise, vandalism/crime, invasive species, and human-wildlife conflicts. Other threats include urban sprawl and encroachment, as well as the added pressure of accumulation of several of these threats at the same time (cumulative effects).

A buffer zone or an active management zone must be designed at the time of park establishment and must be defined and agreed to by the parties. Management practices within the zones must contribute to conservation and prevent encroachment of the NUP. Ideally, buffer zones should not be considered part of a NUP and should be incorporated into local planning policy in perpetuity and in accordance with best practice and national/international guidance. Should buffer zones be necessary within NUPs, they must be designed in such a way that ensures a strong buffer protects core ecological and cultural features from any existing neighbouring incompatible activities.

Implementation is critical to the success of buffer zones and active management zones. Due to the establishment of a protected area and the limitation of further construction within its boundaries, the displacement and greater density of development in its immediate boundaries could be an unintended result without effective management²⁴. This displacement could have a further "*barrier*

²³ <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-022.pdf> pg. 33

²⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989420308325> section 4.2



*effect that limits the dispersal of species, leading to reduced landscape connectivity and increased protected area isolation*²⁵.

NUP design and management should also consider connectivity as a critical quality component. Well-designed and managed ecological/connectivity corridors will help facilitate wildlife movement and support ecosystem processes, particularly important within the highly urbanized southern landscapes. It is, therefore, important to integrate Parks Canada's NUP program with the Agency's Ecological Corridors program, as both are linked, and to make sure any other relevant federal government projects are aligned to and contribute to meeting their objectives.

7. "Transitional" NUPs

Allows the option for sites that do not currently meet IUCN standards for protected areas to be inscribed as "transitional" sites. The transitional sites would need to have special management plans that would effectively demonstrate how the site will meet protected area standards (with specific conditions and timelines), for example, through restoration of ecological integrity. This transition plan should be built into the NUP establishment agreements, with measurable outcomes and key performance indicators. Only once these agreed outcomes and indicators have been met should the "transitional" NUP status be removed.

It is very important that transitional reserves do not lead to designated protected areas of lower quality or value, nor an increase in infrastructure plans/proposals - including industrial activities - during this period that would otherwise be subject to greater scrutiny or prohibited. City parks with lawns and flowerbeds must never be considered as urban protected areas.

8. Monitoring and evaluation. Indicators of success.

The effectiveness and contribution of NUPs to conservation, social, and other goals should be measured through clear and transparent indicators, which should be developed as part of the National Urban Park management planning process. The National Urban Park management planning process, conducted every five years, is the key tool for developing a management strategy for the NUP to reach its established goals and objectives. By following Parks Canada's management planning process, it allows for extensive and meaningful public and stakeholder engagement. Given the collaborative nature of the NUPs, additional provisions might be added to the management planning process for even broader consultations and engagement during management planning.

External Advisory bodies (both national and park-specific) will help with monitoring and evaluation of activities, while ensuring transparency and management effectiveness. Additional monitoring and evaluation processes applicable to NUPs include the biannual Minister's Roundtable on Parks Canada, which would allow the general public and stakeholders to provide feedback to the Minister on his work with regards to the NUPs.

²⁵ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989420308325> section 4.2

