

Municipality of Chatham-Kent
Infrastructure and Engineering Services
Parks and Open Spaces

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Deborah Veccia, D.P.A.
Supervisor, Chatham Parks and Horticulture
Date: March 26, 2018
Subject: 2018 Playground Lifecycle Projects

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The list of 2018 Playground Equipment Lifecycle projects valued at an estimated cost of \$295,200 funded through the Playground Equipment Lifecycle Reserve, be approved.

Background

During the 2000 budget deliberations, Council approved the establishment of a lifecycle reserve for playground equipment replacement. For a 15-year replacement cycle for all playground equipment, it was determined that approximately \$160,000 (plus inflation) was required on an annual basis. Based on Canadian Safety Authority (CSA) standards, Chatham-Kent usage patterns, equipment age and condition, a Playground Equipment Replacement Priority List was created to guide the 15-year replacements timeframe (Attachment A).

Since 2000, approximately 98% of Chatham-Kent parks have received new playground equipment. There are only a few remaining units that require replacement within the initial 15-year cycle. Due to lower usage and good maintenance protocols, the remaining original playground units do not require replacement.

As of January 2016, the province mandated that all new units must be Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliant, where applicable. Complying with the AODA has major financial impacts on playground unit costs. In 2017, a typical accessible unit cost is \$90,000 including the unit, signage, access ramps, accessible play surface material, safety bases and bench.

New AODA Accessibility Standards - Design of Public Spaces in the Built Environment

The Ministry of Community and Social Services amended the Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), to include new standards governing the design of public spaces in the built environment.

Starting in 2016, the Standards outline new requirements that municipalities must incorporate into the design of specified public spaces, including Outdoor Play Spaces, e.g. playgrounds.

Outdoor play spaces; accessibility in design

When constructing new or redeveloping existing play spaces that will be maintained, municipalities and organizations other than small organizations, shall;

- (a) Incorporate accessibility features, such as sensory and active play components, for children and caregivers with various disabilities into the design of outdoor play spaces.
- (b) Ensure that outdoor play spaces have a ground surface that is firm, stable, and has impact attenuating properties for injury prevention and sufficient clearance to provide children and caregivers with various disabilities, the ability to move through, in, and around the outdoor play space. O. Reg. 413/12, s. 6

Accessible play equipment is more expensive than what municipalities have historically purchased. Chair-like swings that support children with limited leg use, for example, or low-and-wide playground platforms can cost up to 50 per cent more than older-model equipment with comparable play value. The softer rubberized or wood chip playground surfaces will be required to replace the more economical sand surface material, which is impassible by a wheelchair.

Some of the accessible initiatives that have been progressively incorporated into Chatham-Kent playground designs, since early 2000, include the following:

- i. **Accessible Playground Surfacing:**
Accessible playground surfaces are currently being installed. When a new unit is replaced the surfacing is being changed to engineered wood fiber. In a few larger regional-type installations, rubberized surface material has been installed. Engineered wood fibre and rubberized surfaces ensure safe and easy wheelchair access to play equipment.
- ii. **Transfer Stations:**
Transfer stations allow wheelchair or walker users with enough strength and mobility to leave their assistive device to climb onto appropriately designed sections of a play structure.

- iii. **Inclusive Components/Activities at Ground Level:**
Interactive playground features are installed at ground level and surrounded by an accessible surface that permits access for all users regardless of age or ability.
- iv. **Accessible Swings:**
Swing seats equipped with special harnesses are available that allow children with disabilities and/or requiring additional caregiver support to enjoy this popular activity.
- v. **Sensory Activities:**
Sensory, e.g. auditory, visual, kinesthetic, smell and tactile activities that encourage exploration and discovery are a necessary part of development for all children, especially those with autism or sensory processing impairments. Examples of sensory stimulating activities include the use of bright colours, spinning elements, labyrinth and kaleidoscope panels, the use of different textures, music panels, drums and other sound generating devices.
- vi. **Accessible Ramps:**
Ramps have not been a major part of the overall design of the play structures within the Municipality. However, over the last few years, transfer stations were included to provide access to units. To improve accessibility for those with mobility concerns, the installation of ramps from the ground into the play structure or adjoining two play areas is valuable. All users can access the entire structure instead of being confined to ground level activities.

The Chatham-Kent Accessibility Advisory Committee provides consultation on all proposed designs.

Comments

An on-site evaluation of all playground equipment scheduled for replacement in 2018 has been completed. Existing units that are still CSA compliant will be reviewed in 2019.

Playground equipment projects were reviewed in context with the following priorities:

- Safety
- Mandated/legislated design requirements, e.g. CSA, AODA
- Cost avoidance

Administration has identified priority projects to be completed in 2018 (Attachment A). A contingency has been included in the total estimated cost for quote overages, emergency repairs or replacements.

Safety Surfacing Upgrades:

Existing sand protective surface in five playground units will be replaced with Engineered Wood Fibre (EWF). EWF is in compliance with ASTM F1951, the standard for accessibility. As both wheelchairs and strollers can traverse over the product, EWF meets the Corporation's AODA obligations by allowing those with physical limitations to access play equipment.

- Optimist Park – Community of Wallaceburg
- Ross Babcock – Community of Chatham

Safety Surface Top –Up:

The following parks are highly used and require a semi-annual top up of Engineered Wood Fibre. Safety surfacing upgrades are required as part of an ongoing maintenance program to adhere to fall height protection as required in the CSA Playground Guidelines.

- Kingston Park - Community of Chatham
- Landings Park - Community of Chatham
- Kinsmen Park - Community of Chatham

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendation in this report supports the following areas of strategic focus:

Economic Prosperity:

Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy

A Healthy and Safe Community:

Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth

People and Culture:

Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community

Environmental Sustainability:

Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendation in this report supports the following critical success factors:

Financial Sustainability:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable

Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:

The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership

Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors

Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Financial Services has verified the current balance in the Playground Equipment Lifecycle Reserve for the 2017 year-end.

All Facility Supervisors were consulted for their priorities and any outstanding projects yet to complete.

The Chatham Central Neighbourhood Association has been advised that administration will work in cooperation with them to add an additional play opportunity in Francis Moore Park.

During the procurement process, replacement play structure designs will be submitted to the Accessibility Advisory Committee for review and comments.

Financial Implications

The following is the status of the Playground Equipment Lifecycle Reserve:

2018 Playground Equipment Lifecycle Reserve

2017 Balance Forward	\$663,433
2018 Lifecycle Allotment	\$188,418
Total Funding Available for 2018 Projects	\$851,851
2018 Requested Playground Projects	(\$295,200)
Balance Remaining in Reserve 2018	\$556,651

The balance remaining in the Playground Equipment Lifecycle Reserve at the end of 2018 will be used for future lifecycle projects.

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Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

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Attachment: A – 2018 Playground Equipment Lifecycle Projects

- c. Recreation Facility Supervisors
Brock Priddle, Financial Analyst, Financial Services

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2018 Playground Equipment Lifecycle Projects

Community	Park	Item
1. Community of Wallaceburg	Glassford Park	The existing piece of playground equipment was installed in 2003 and has undergone a number of welding repairs. A new unit will ensure an accessible safe play opportunities for children in this neighbourhood into the future.
2. Community of Wallaceburg	Bill McDougall Park	The existing unit was installed in 2003 and has also had welding repairs done. This playground is frequented often by school students due to its close proximity to the high school. The installation of a new accessible unit will serve this area well.
3. Community of Chatham	Francis Moore	Existing park has only one climber and a swing, due to vandalism over the years. This would allow the addition of a new playground item to be added to enhance the current equipment already on site.
4. Various	Optimist Park Ross Babcock Kingston Park Landings Park Kinsmen Park	Safety Surfacing Upgrades & Top Ups
Total		\$295,200