



REPORT

To: Mayor and Council
From: Chief Administrative Officer
Subject: For Your Decision: Service Delivery Review - Playgrounds
Date: November 14, 2023

Issue

Service Delivery Review - Playgrounds (and Outdoor Recreational Spaces)

Facts

- According to the 2020 Asset Management Plan, the Municipality currently has an annual funding gap of \$5.6 million between what should be spent to maintain assets and what is spent. This is the equivalent of \$2,156 per household, or more than double the current annual average levy on each house. The number is considered on the lower end of reality as it does not include all asset classes. Furthermore, inflation has increased significantly since the plan was developed, especially for Municipal infrastructure.
- By July 2025, Asset Management Planning legislation requires municipalities to determine current and future levels of service, the costs associated with that level of service and a plan to fund it. The legislation will, in essence, require municipalities to "live within their own means" by setting levels that are affordable and attainable long term. Not being compliant with this requirement will affect Municipal transfer funding.
- Grant funding programs have been shifting to take into account a Municipality's strategy in closing the asset gap and current state of funding their assets (i.e. the more the Municipality is addressing the deficit, the more likely a funding is to be approved. The less a Municipality is working to close the gap, the less likely they are to be approved for funding)
- Council directed staff to undertake Service Delivery Reviews (SDR) on all Municipal services. This is an evaluation process in which a specific municipal service is systematically reviewed to determine the most appropriate way to

provide it. The SDR process focuses on setting priorities and, where possible, reducing the cost of delivery (to the Municipality) while maintaining or improving services and service levels. At times, service levels may have to be cut.

- A part of SDR process is to consider how to enhance services through greater efficiency or process changes without added costs to the Municipality. In many cases however, Council will either need to reduce costs or increase revenues (fees & charges or levy) significantly to address the infrastructure gap and plan for the future. While doing so, the increased complexity of operating services needs to be taken into account. Therefore, it is only possible to reduce costs to the level required by reducing services and/or assets that Greenstone maintains.

Analysis

Please see attached Playgrounds (including Outdoor Recreational Spaces) Service Delivery Review Report

How does this tie to the Strategic Plan?

1.0 Build Financial Capacity

To create the financial capacity to invest in capital infrastructure and equipment to meet service level expectations and statutory requirements, and to allow flexibility to enhance existing and future service delivery options.

1.1 Service Delivery Review (SDR): Council has approved the commencement of a service delivery review. The SDR will look at current and future levels of service for program delivery and asset maintenance. With the completion of each SDR, develop business plans to ensure that the services meet the strategic service level objectives of Council in a fiscally prudent manner.

Recommendation

1. THAT Council direct Administration to engage a consultant to develop a playground renewal plan including undertaking public consultation and with the aim of reducing the total number of playground sites to approximately 8 locations while enhancing service features.

AND THAT the 2024 Budget shall include project funds for the renewal plan.

2. THAT staff seek funding for playground infrastructure replacement.
3. THAT Council direct the decommissioning of playground structures no longer in use at the former Geraldton and Nakina Daycare facilities and the lighting infrastructure at the Geraldton Community Centre ball field.

4. THAT policies and procedures be developed in 2024 to formalize inspection requirements for recreational assets, and that auditing be implemented to understand public demand for recreational assets.
5. THAT the Baseball Policy be updated and user group agreements be developed.
6. THAT the Crown Land Use Permit for recreational properties in Jellicoe be renewed and land ownership acquisition be pursued.

DATE	TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023
SUBJECT	SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW – PLAYGROUNDS (AND OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES)
REPORT NO.	SDR-09

RECOMMENDATION

That Council of the Municipality of Greenstone approve the following directives to Staff:

1. THAT Council direct Administration to engage a consultant to develop a playground renewal plan including undertaking public consultation and with the aim of reducing the total number of playground sites to approximately 8 locations while enhancing service features.

AND THAT the 2024 Budget shall include project funds for the renewal plan.
2. THAT staff seek funding for playground infrastructure replacement.
3. THAT Council direct the decommissioning of playground structures no longer in use at the former Geraldton and Nakina Daycare facilities, and the lighting infrastructure at the Geraldton Community Centre ball field.
4. THAT policies and procedures be developed in 2024 to formalize inspection requirements for recreational assets, and that auditing be implemented to understand public demand for recreational assets.
5. THAT the Baseball Policy be updated and user group agreements be developed.
6. THAT the Crown Land Use Permit for recreational properties in Jellicoe be renewed and land ownership acquisition be pursued.

SERVICE SUMMARY

SERVICE PLAYGROUNDS & OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	
DEPARTMENT	
SUMMARY	<p>The Municipality of Greenstone is responsible for the effective management and operations of 20 playground sites (among a broader inventory of greenspace identified for public recreation). There are six active ballfields and one skate park.</p> <p>Greenspaces that include trails, beaches, pavilions, municipal boat launches and docks, washroom facilities and the municipal band shell will be addressed under the Service Delivery Review for Greenspaces scheduled in 2024.</p>
MANDATORY	The operation and management of recreational parks and playgrounds is not a mandatory service.
LEGISLATION	<p>AODA</p> <p>O. Reg. 191/11: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS under <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11</i></p> <p>amended by O. Reg. 413/12: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS</p> <p>The AODA includes prescribed standards for the Design of Public Spaces. Playgrounds (and the surrounding space) are included under this legislation.</p> <p>All playground infrastructure must be CSA (Canadian Standards Association) compliant to meet the national standard for public-use playground equipment.</p> <p>Asset Management Plans</p> <p>In many Ontario municipalities, existing infrastructure is degrading faster than it is being restored or replaced, putting service delivery at risk. To assist with this issue, the Province implemented the Asset Management Planning for Municipalities, Regulation 588/17, effective January 1, 2018. This regulation is meant to improve the approach to infrastructure planning, building on the progress municipalities have made.</p> <p>The regulatory timelines associated with O.Reg. 588/17 Amendments to the Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure regulation have been amended to:</p> <p>July 1, 2022 (previously July 1, 2021): Date for municipalities to</p>

	<p>have an approved asset management plan for core assets (roads, bridges and culverts, water, wastewater and stormwater management systems) that identifies current levels of service and the cost of maintaining those levels of service.</p> <p>July 1, 2024 (previously July 1, 2023): Date for municipalities to have an approved asset management plan for all municipal infrastructure assets that identifies current levels of service and the cost of maintaining those levels of service.</p> <p>July 1, 2025 (previously July 1, 2024): Date for municipalities to have an approved asset management plan for all municipal infrastructure assets that builds upon the requirements set out in 2024. This includes an identification of proposed levels of service, what activities will be required to meet proposed levels of service, and a strategy to fund these activities.</p>
BY-LAWS	<p>By-law 17-43 to adopt a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2018-2023) and Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy</p> <p>RES 04-150 Baseball Policy</p> <p>By-law 19-22 to adopt a Strategic Asset Management Policy</p> <p>By-law 22-82 to adopt a Disposal of Municipal Assets Policy</p>
FEES/CHARGES	None at present. Baseball field rentals may be a consideration.

2023 BUDGET SUMMARY

2023 Expenditures: \$44,120

2023 Revenues: \$0

Net Budget: \$44,120

Figure 1. Service-Specific Budget

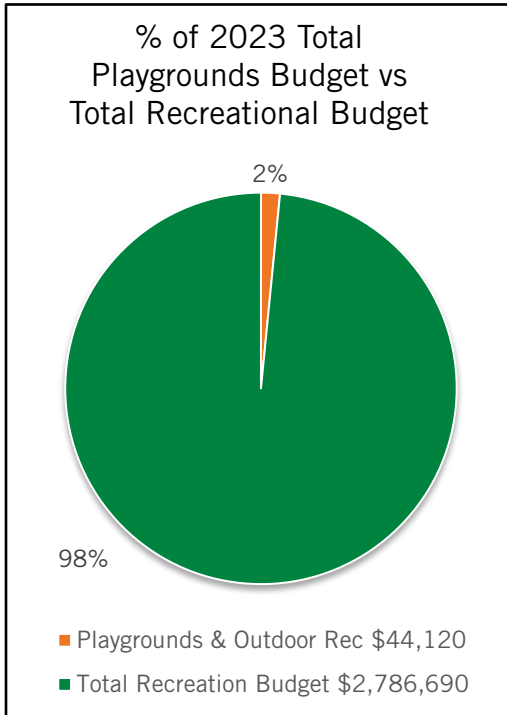
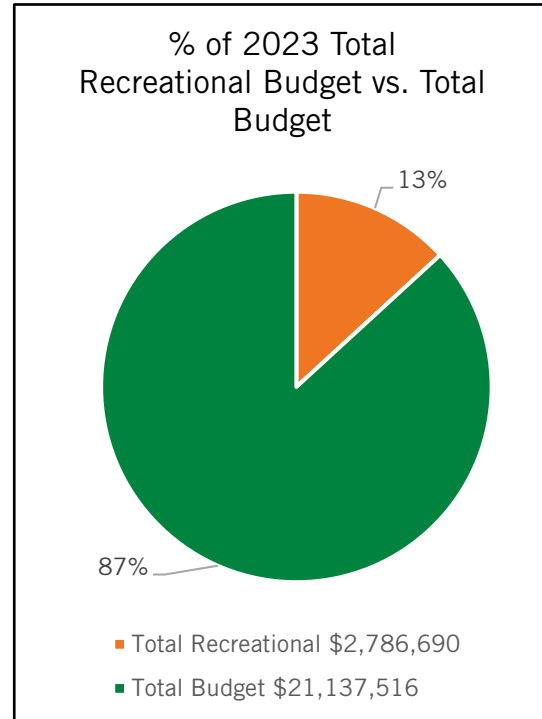


Figure 2. Overall Recreational Budget



Figures 1 and 2 refer to “Total Recreational Budget”. This represents all operating funds allocated towards Recreation Facilities, Parks and Campgrounds, Recreational Programming, and related Human Resources.

Operating Expenses

An estimation of \$1,456 per week of staff time is dedicated to regular maintenance of playgrounds, sports fields, and skate park during the snow free season. This accounts for site inspections, garbage removal, tilling of playground sand surfaces, minor repairs, and lawn maintenance for ball fields. The annual third-party inspections will cost approximately \$5,000 in 2023 and can be expected to increase with regular inflationary adjustments over time. The historical trend for operating expenses reflects a \$10,000 annual investment. These costs however will increase incrementally with aging infrastructure.

The overall annual maintenance and renewal costs to date (including labour) are therefore calculated as \$44,120 per year, with zero revenues.

Capital Expenses

No capital infrastructure replacements have been made since the installation of the

Municipality's playground infrastructure in 2003, with the exception of the Family Resource Centre. While repairs have been made, the full replacement of playgrounds must be addressed in future budgets and the Financial Plan.

Other outdoor recreational spaces are generally in good condition, with the exception of the Geraldton Ball Field fence which is critical to replace.

This fence was originally installed without the involvement of a professional fencing company and was put in place improperly resulting in early failure. Aside from the poor condition of the fence, the fence is a hazard presenting risk to the public and the Municipality. Financial details are as follows:

2024 Capital Budget Item - \$100,000
Geraldton Baseball Field Fence Replacement

Supply and install the following galvanized chain link material for new ballfield fence including backstop. Approximately 900' of 4' high chain link fence for first and third base line fencing as well as outfield fence. Approximately 80' of 8' high chain link fence to go in front of dugouts for player protection. For this fencing all posts will be driven into the ground. Outfield fence will include two 3-1/2" foul ball posts which will be set in concrete. Price also includes one 12' high plus 4' overhang backstop with a 20' wide back section and two 20' side wings. There will be 7 backstop posts that will be set in 18" diameter x 5' deep footings. Price includes all mobilization costs associated with the scope of work. Price is based on the Municipality removing old fencing and filling in any footing holes.

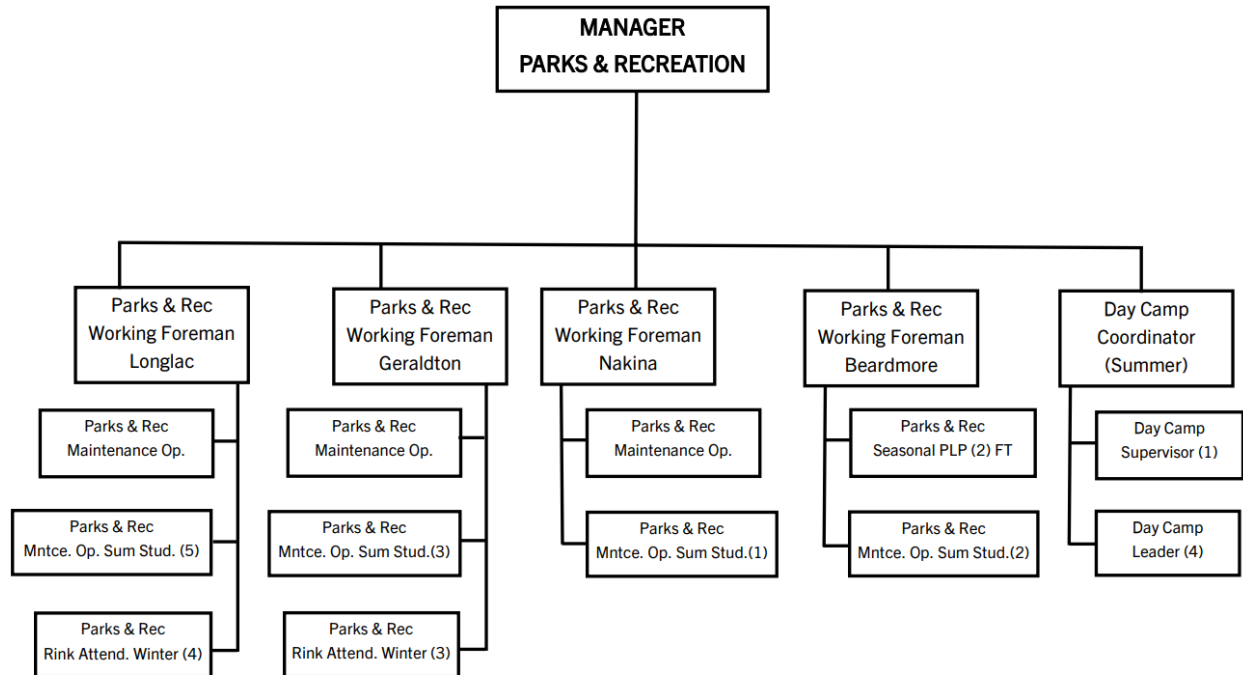
STAFFING

General maintenance and upkeep of all municipal greenspace and infrastructure is the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation Department. Contractors are utilized for infrastructure and facility upgrades, replacements, and repairs requiring qualified tradesmen, as coordinated by the Manager of Facilities, who is also responsible for capital projects and major repairs at other Municipal facilities.

Summer positions for students are offered as Parks & Recreation Maintenance Student Positions. The Municipality posts nine summer students positions: one in Nakina, three in Beardmore, two in Geraldton, and three in Longlac.

Organizational Chart

Figure 3. Municipality of Greenstone Parks and Recreation Organizational Chart, July 2023 (not including pool staff)



The management of public-use playgrounds requires a high degree of maintenance and documentation of site inspections to adhere to safety standards and limit risk. Weekly and monthly site inspections are conducted by staff and annual inspections are completed by a third party certified in playground inspection. Playground site maintenance performed by Parks & Recreation staff includes inspecting the sites in accordance with a playground inspection checklist, making minor repairs or adjustments, rototilling and raking the playground surface material (sand), removing waste, and maintaining the surrounding greenspace (whipper snippers, push mowers and riding mowers). Among the numerous greenspaces in the Municipality’s land inventory, playground sites are a priority for weekly maintenance.

Table 1 illustrates the average staff time commitment per week to address maintenance needs of greenspaces with outdoor recreational assets. Travel time is a cost factor in some cases, especially if staff are working outside their home Ward.

Table 1. P&R Staff Hours per Week for Recreational Site Maintenance

LOCATION	WORKFORCE HOURS – PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS AND ROTOTILLING ONLY BY 1 STAFF PERSON	WORKFORCE HOURS – PLAYGROUND + GREENSPACE	WORKFORCE INVOLVED	ESTIMATED COST <small>(Operator Wage x1 + Student Wage for Workforce multiples)</small>
BEARDMORE				
Baseball Field at Community Centre		4 hrs	1 hr	\$128.00
Playground at Poplar Lodge Park	1.5 hrs	0	1 hr	\$48.00
TOTAL	1.5 hrs	4 hrs	2	\$178.00
CARAMAT				
Baseball Field & 2 Playgrounds	1 + 2 hrs travel time round trip	9 hrs	3	\$282.00
TOTAL	3 hrs	9 hrs	3	\$282.00
JELLCOE				
Main Street Playground	1 + 1.5 hrs travel time round trip		1 hr	\$80.00
TOTAL	2.5 hrs		1	\$80.00
GERALDTON				
Ballpark Crescent Playground	1 hr	0	1 hr	\$32.00
Geraldton Trailer Park Playground	1 hr	0	1 hr	\$32.00
Baseball Field & Playground at Community Centre	1 hr	10 hrs	1 hr	\$352.00
Rotary Park Playground	1 hr	0	1 hr	\$32.00
Geraldton Waterfront Playground	1 hr	0	1 hr	\$32.00
TOTAL	5 hrs	10 hrs	5	\$470.00
LONGLAC				
Skate Park	1 hr	0	1 hr	\$32.00
Lions Park	2 hrs	0	1 hr	\$64.00
Longlac Waterfront - George Blouin Park	1 hr	0	1 hr	\$32.00
Jeff Gauthier Park	1 hr	12 hrs	3 hrs	\$280.00
Ron Beaulieu Baseball Field	0	12 hrs	3 hrs	\$248.00
TOTAL	5 hrs	24 hrs	9	\$656.00
NAKINA				
Northwood Park Playground	1 hr		1 hr	\$32.00
Algoma Park	1 hr		1 hr	\$32.00
Ball Field		8 hrs	1 hr	\$256.00
TOTAL	2 hrs	8 hrs	3	\$320.00
SUMMARY TOTAL	31.5 hrs / week	198 hrs / week		\$1456.00

SERVICE BACKGROUND

In 2003 the Municipality was the recipient of Ontario Superbuild (Sports, Culture and Tourism Partnerships) Funding to support a \$597,000 investment to replace 17 play structures throughout Greenstone as a health and safety priority. The funding application stated that all of the play structures were at least 10 years old and none of them met CSA Guidelines. Several of them were identified for decommissioning as a result of their condition.

The playground infrastructure assets replaced through the grant are now 20 years old or older and are at the end of their asset lifecycles and standards have changed significantly. The Municipality does not have a capital plan specific to manage the infrastructure over time and cannot rely on funding to sustain service delivery. Asset Management legislation requires that municipalities incorporate future service level expectations along with annual costs and a sustainable financial plan in their Asset Management Plans by July 2025.

The following tables list the Municipality's Outdoor Recreational Space assets.

Table 2: List of Public Outdoor Recreational Space Assets in Greenstone

ASSET TYPE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	DESCRIPTION	SERVICE TARGET	PRIORITY FOR ASSET DISPOSAL
BEARDMORE					
Playground	Poplar Lodge Park	Municipal	Swing set and Jungle gym		TBD
Ball Diamond	Beardmore Community Centre	Municipal		General Public	TBD
CARAMAT					
Playground	Stevens Avenue	Municipal	Steel and plastic Jungle gym		TBD
Playground	Aspen Crescent East	Municipal	Swing set and Steel and plastic Jungle gym		TBD
Ball Diamond				Utilized during Caramat Fish Derby	TBD

GERALDTON					
Tennis Court	Geraldton Community Centre - 200 Wardrope Avenue	Municipal	Active but underutilized.	General Public	TBD
Ball Diamond	Geraldton Community Centre - Wardrope Avenue	Municipal	Only ball diamond with lighting.	General Public	TBD (Proposed removal of lighting)
Playground	Geraldton Community Centre - Wardrope Avenue	Municipal	Large steel jungle gym and swing set	Children and Youth	TBD
Playground	Ball Park Crescent	Municipal	Swing set and steel jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	TBD
Playground	Geraldton Trailer Park – First Street West	Municipal	Swing set and steel jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	TBD
Playground	Rotary Park – East Street	Municipal	Swing set and steel jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	TBD
Playground	Geraldton waterfront / Municipal Administration Building – Main Street	Municipal	Large Themed wooden structure	Children and Youth	Decommissioned due to safety
Playground	Twilight Crescent – MacLeod Townsite	Municipality to transfer to Greenstone Gold Mines	Swing set and steel jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	Pending purchase by Greenstone Gold Mines
JELICOE					
Playground	Main Street	Municipal	Steel and plastic jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	TBD
Outdoor Rink	Main Street	Municipal infrastructure on MNR Land Lease	Decommissioned	Youth	TBD

LONGLAC					
Ball Diamond	Jeff Gauthier Ball Park	Municipal		General Public	TBD
Ball Diamond	Ron Beaulieu Park	Municipal		General Public	TBD
Skate Park	Hwy 11 at Tourist Information Centre	Municipal		Youth	TBD
Playground	Longlac waterfront - George Blouin Park	Municipal	Swing set and jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	TBD
Playground	Bayview Park	Municipal	Swing set and jungle gym	Children Ages 5-12	TBD
Playground	Lions Park	Municipal	Swing set, steel monkey bars, steel slide and spring toys, jungle gym	Children and Youth	TBD
NAKINA					
Playground	Algoma Street	Municipal	Jungle gym with 2 rockers		TBD (Original design not kept)
Playground	Northwood Drive	Municipal	Steel and Plastic Jungle gym		TBD
Ball Diamond	Algoma Street	Municipal		Public	TBD

Table 3. Community Services facility playgrounds

ASSET TYPE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	DESCRIPTION	SERVICE TARGET	PRIORITY FOR ASSET DISPOSAL
Playground	Beardmore Public School & Early Years Centre	Joint Use Agreement	Jungle Gym	On-site enrollments	Early Years Centre facility is recommended for asset disposal
Playground	Nakina Day Care	Municipal	Assorted	Daycare clientele only	Decommission – not being inspected
Playground	Geraldton Former Day Care Facility - Third Street West	Municipal	Decommissioned	Daycare clientele only	Decommission – Facility no longer in use
Playground	Geraldton Family Resource Centre – MacKenzie Avenue West	Municipal	Swing set	Clients of the FRC only	New in 2021

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following KPI's are suggested for implementation.

1. The public has access to a playground in the communities of Beardmore, Jellicoe, Geraldton, Nakina, Longlac and Caramat within a 10-15 minute walking distance.
2. The target for playground infrastructure replacement is 10-15 years, based on the playground asset life-cycle of 10 years.
3. Usage statistics are collected to better understand service demand for recreational assets.
4. All playground assets meet an Infrastructure Condition Rating of Good to Very-Good. The Annual Playground Inspections provide condition ratings and can also be used as an appropriate reference.
5. The Level of Service provides community satisfaction.

Creative engagement processes such as surveys at schools, special needs organizations and seniors groups can be applied to obtain feedback on what playground design features are preferred.

Any underutilized or beyond service life assets should be eliminated from the inventory as part of the streamlining of assets that will be required to provide service delivery.

Documented site observations on asset use should help with determining which sites are important to the public.

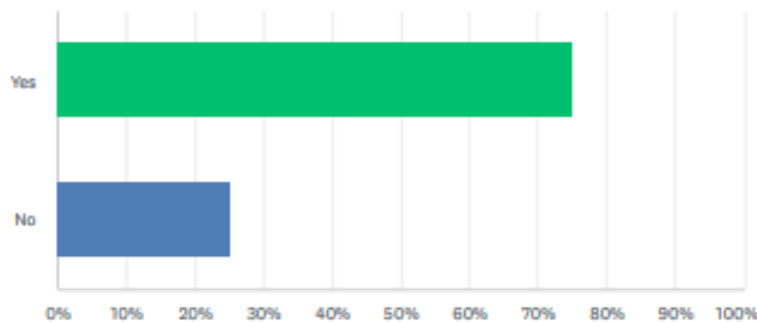
The SDR Engagement Survey question below indicates support for enhancing playgrounds at the sacrifice of a reduced number of playgrounds.

Community Input - Service Delivery Review 2023 Fourth Quarter Reviews
Playgrounds, Daycares & Fleet Management

SurveyMonkey

Q4 Is having a few large playgrounds with a variety of features better than maintaining many small playgrounds throughout Greenstone?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.08%	228
No	24.92%	75
TOTAL		301

ASSET USE

There is no legal requirement for municipalities to offer recreational services, or recreational infrastructure. Recognizing that these assets enhance the quality of life in communities, most local (municipal) governments opt to allocate tax dollars to this type of service delivery. The degree of investment varies for numerous reasons. The following information is provided to clarify some of the factors and influences in decision-making.

When should municipal infrastructure be replaced?

From a legal perspective, Municipalities need to be able to demonstrate that Duty of Care has been met or exceeded. A run-to-failure approach is not a good practice when it comes to playgrounds. Playgrounds need to be in good condition based on criteria that assesses compliance with CSA standards specific to this infrastructure.

The following article excerpt simplifies the principles of asset management:

What Is the Useful Life of an Asset?

The useful life of an [asset](#) is the estimated number of years an asset will remain in service while generating financial value.

The definition might sound a little complex, but the meaning of useful life is fairly simple. It's the period during which a machine can provide more benefits than the cost of the maintenance and repairs it demands. However, **the useful life of an asset is *not* the same as its *actual* life.**

For instance, say machine A was purchased 10 years ago for \$50,000. Over the past six months, the machine broke down four times. The repair costs totaled \$10,000.

Does it make financial sense to continue using the machine? Not quite. Is the machine still usable? Absolutely.

<https://www.getmaintainx.com/learning-center/how-to-calculate-the-useful-life-of-an-asset/>

Further analysis of the Municipality's ability to sustain its playgrounds over the next 20 years was studied. The graph in Figure 2. Forecast Lifecycle Costs and Planned Budgets for Greenstone Playgrounds was produced using CNAM Asset Management modelling software and financial data from the Parks & Recreation Department. It provides a different visual representation of the Municipality's ability to sustain playground assets using current levels of funding. The horizontal black line represents the budget available in 2022 and assumes neither an increase nor a decrease to this dollar amount over a 20-year period. The graph reflects that as of 2022, the current level of funding is not sufficient for the replacement of any of Greenstone's playground assets (indicated in orange as "Acquisition"). In the immediate future, the current level of funding is not sufficient to cover parts replacement, and by 2029 the cost of day-to-day maintenance begins to be underfunded. The graphing exercise shows the funding shortfall over time.

Figure 4. Forecast Lifecycle Costs and Planned Budgets for Greenstone Playgrounds

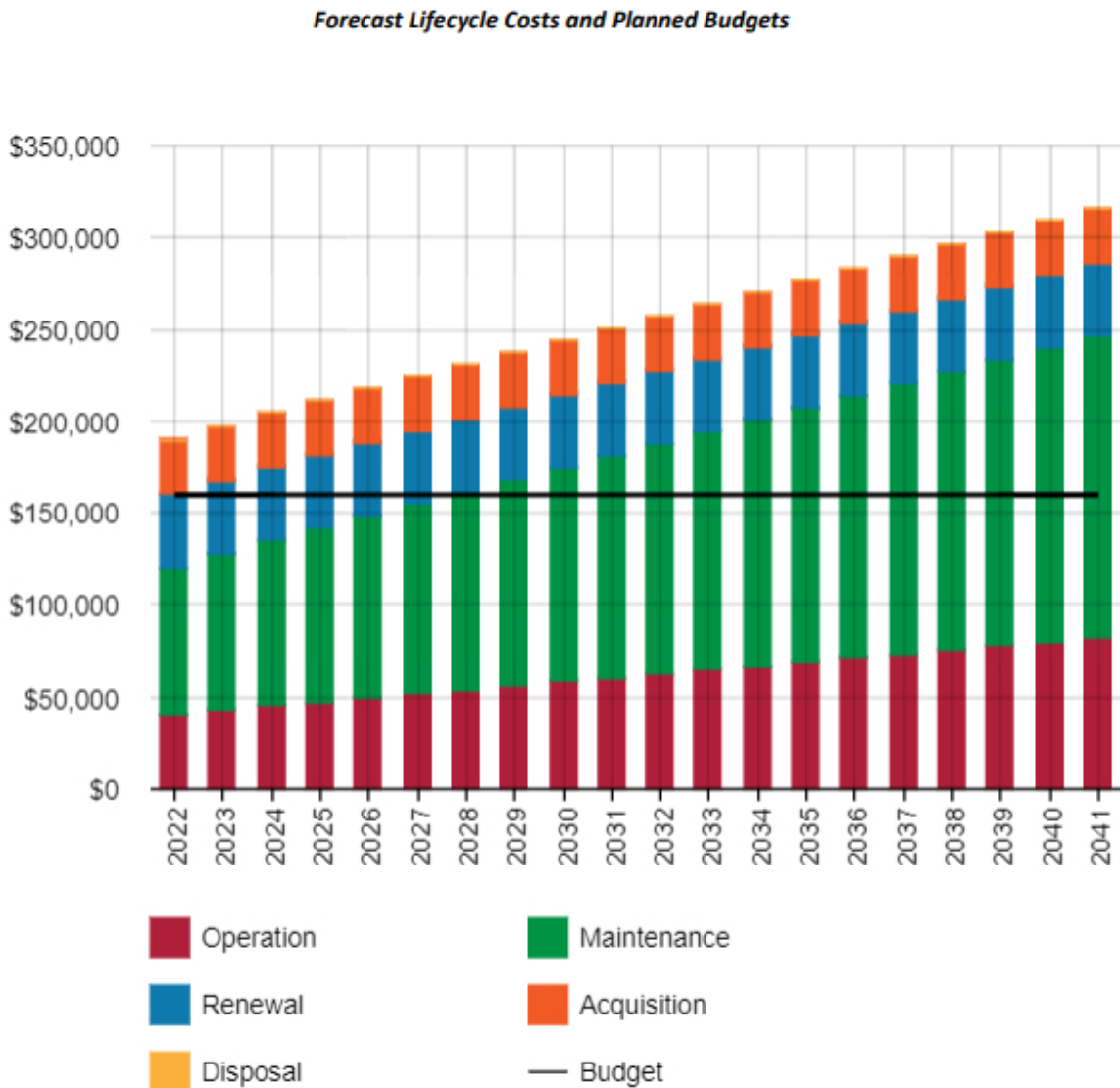


Figure Values are in current dollars.

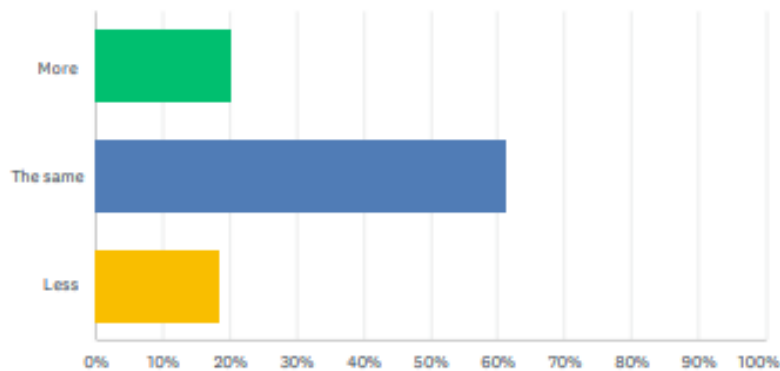
We plan to provide outdoor recreational services for the following:

- Operation, maintenance, renewal and acquisition of playground infrastructure to meet service levels set by the Municipality of Greenstone in annual budgets.
- Asset renewals for priority infrastructure within the 10 year planning period.

The recent SDR Survey on Parks & Recreation infrastructure renewal involved 301 responses. The SDR Survey asked residents to consider their comfort level in future parks and recreation investments. In consideration of the graph above, the results below from two survey questions may indicate a lack of understanding about the funds required to maintain current service delivery. Additional engagement is recommended to inform residents of the Municipality's challenges with respect to the future provision of playgrounds. According to these two survey questions, the majority of residents feel the current funding level (tax dollars) should be maintained while increasing the number of outdoor recreational spaces.

Q3 The Municipality has dedicated an average of \$215,000.00 per year to Greenspace for care & maintenance (parks, playgrounds, ballfields, etc. - campgrounds are not included in this amount) over the past three (3) years. How much investment are you willing to contribute to rehabilitate, maintain, and operate Greenstone's sports fields through taxes?

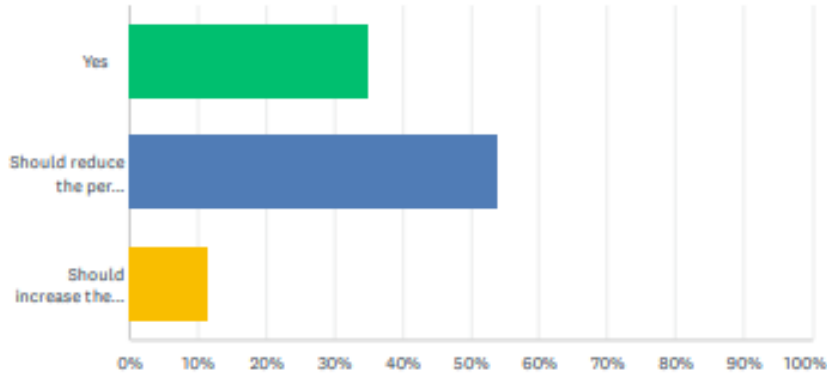
Answered: 301 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More	20.27%	61
The same	61.13%	184
Less	18.60%	56
TOTAL		301

Q7 The Ontario Recreation Facility Association (ORFA) along with many cities and municipalities use the following per capita criteria when determining needs: Tennis Courts 1 for every 4,000 residents Basketball Courts 1 for every 5,000 residents Baseball Diamonds 1 for every 4,000 residents Skate Parks 1 for every 5,000 youth Splash Pads 1 for every 5,000 youth Playgrounds 1 for every 1,000 youth Do you think that Greenstone should use this standard to determine future needs?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	34.88%	105
Should reduce the per resident/youth target to create more spaces	53.82%	162
Should increase the per resident/youth target to create less spaces	11.30%	34
TOTAL		301

Not all assets will have the same risk associated with use after a life-cycle is surpassed. The Municipality of Meaford’s maintenance strategy is provided as reference material on how to approach asset maintenance.

Maintenance Strategy

Following the determination of risk, one of three maintenance strategies are applied to each of the assets. Multiple strategies can be followed in the maintenance of assets. All assets have elements of each of these strategies incorporated into their maintenance program but one strategy is used for each asset greater than the others. For example, all park assets have a parks condition assessment conducted on them every five years and playground equipment assessed every year. From a risk point of view, it is prudent to look at the entire land parcel holistically as compared to only assessing individual

elements. This approach facilitates the long-term capital planning discussed in the next chapter. Each of these strategies is now discussed in turn.

First, a corrective maintenance strategy can be understood as a run-to-failure approach. These assets deliver important services but the risks associated with them are low and therefore it is appropriate to maintain them less than other assets. Second, a preventive maintenance strategy is used for assets where risk is moderate and scheduled inspections and preventive maintenance can lengthen the service life of these assets. Last, a diagnostic maintenance strategy is utilized for assets that carry high risk. Legal requirements or levels of service dictate that a higher-level maintenance strategy is required for these assets. Asset Maintenance Strategies defines which assets have been assigned which maintenance strategy.

Types	Strategy
Playgrounds	Diagnostic
Skate Park	Planned
Tennis Courts	Planned
Ball Diamonds	Planned

How many playgrounds should municipalities provide?

Provincial and comparable standards for the provision of playgrounds are typically 1 playground within a 500-800 m radius of urban/built residential areas. Based on this design and incorporating the existing school playgrounds it is recommended that the Municipality operate and maintain approximately 8 playground structures:

- 2 - Geraldton
- 2 - Longlac
- 1 - Nakina
- 1 - Beardmore
- 1 - Caramat
- 1 - Jellicoe
- (PLP Campground structure to remain)

For an inclusive and well-thought-out plan for the restructuring of playground service delivery, it is strongly recommended that a consultant lead the public engagement process to determine playground locations and design elements.

Images 1 through 6 below illustrate the geographic coverage of playgrounds in the Greenstone communities, based on an 800 m radius, or roughly a 2 square km area, and approximately a 10-minute walk.

Note that school playgrounds are included in the maps as reference with respect to the geographical placement of playgrounds.

Image 1: Proximity of Playgrounds in Nakina

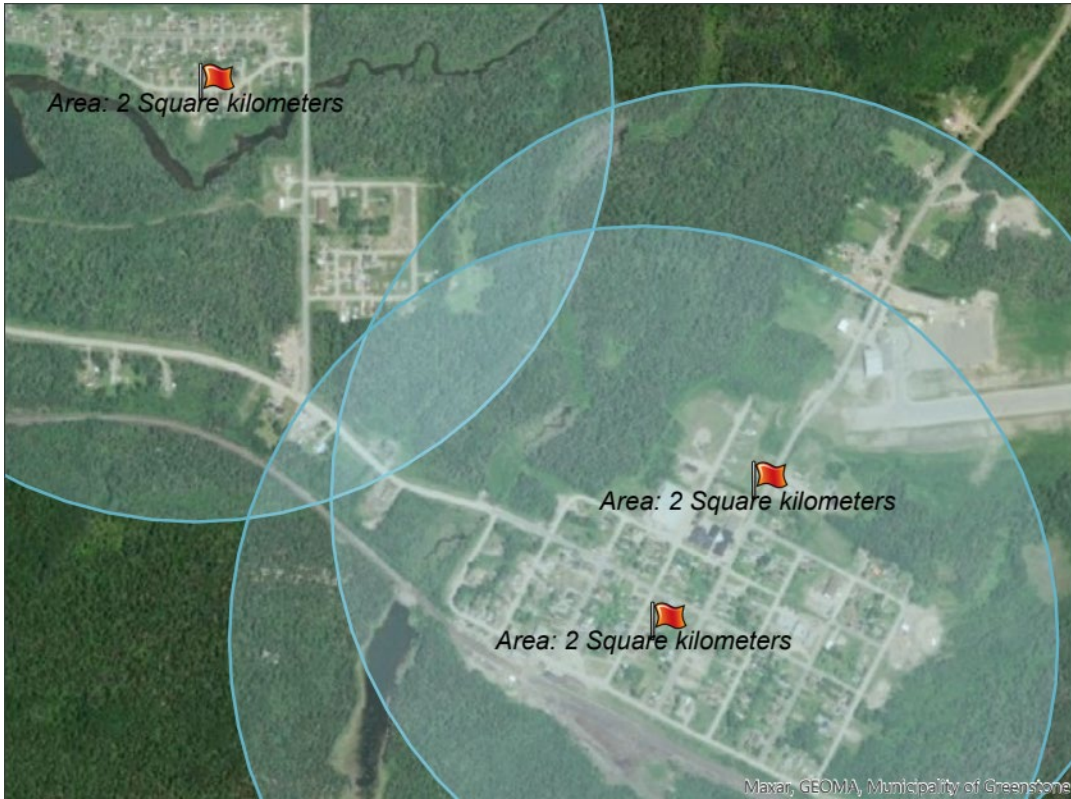


Image 2: Proximity of Playgrounds in Caramat

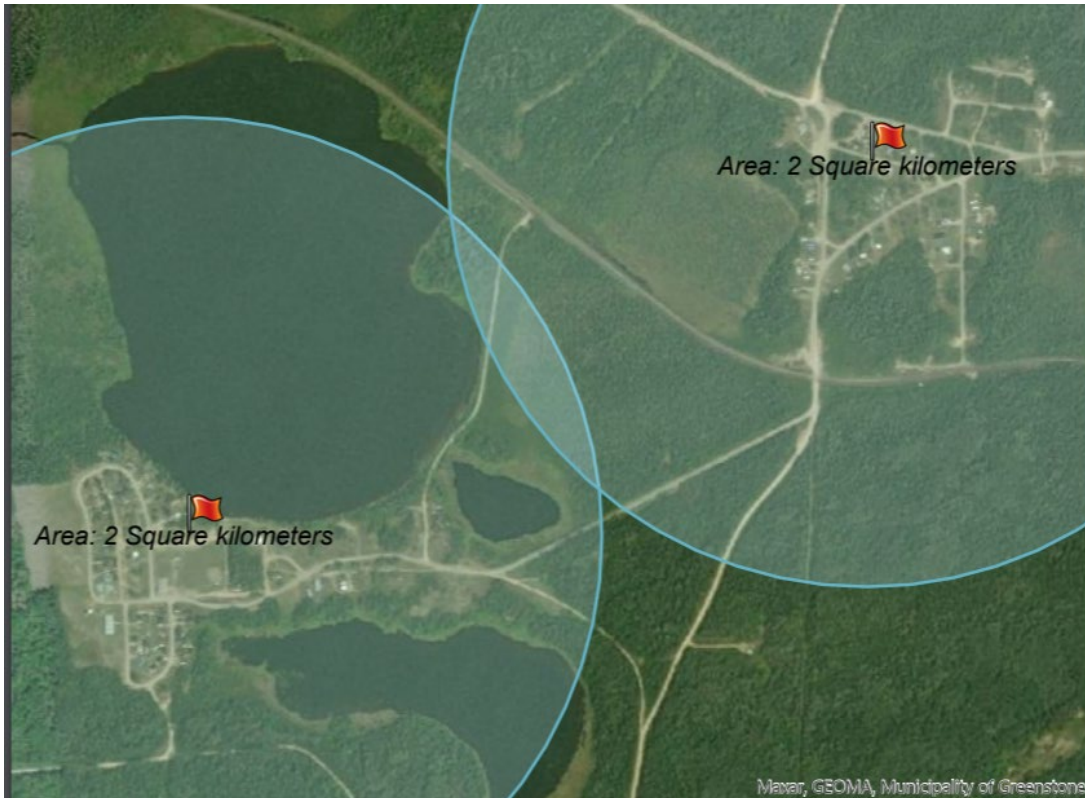


Image 3: Proximity of Playgrounds in Geraldton

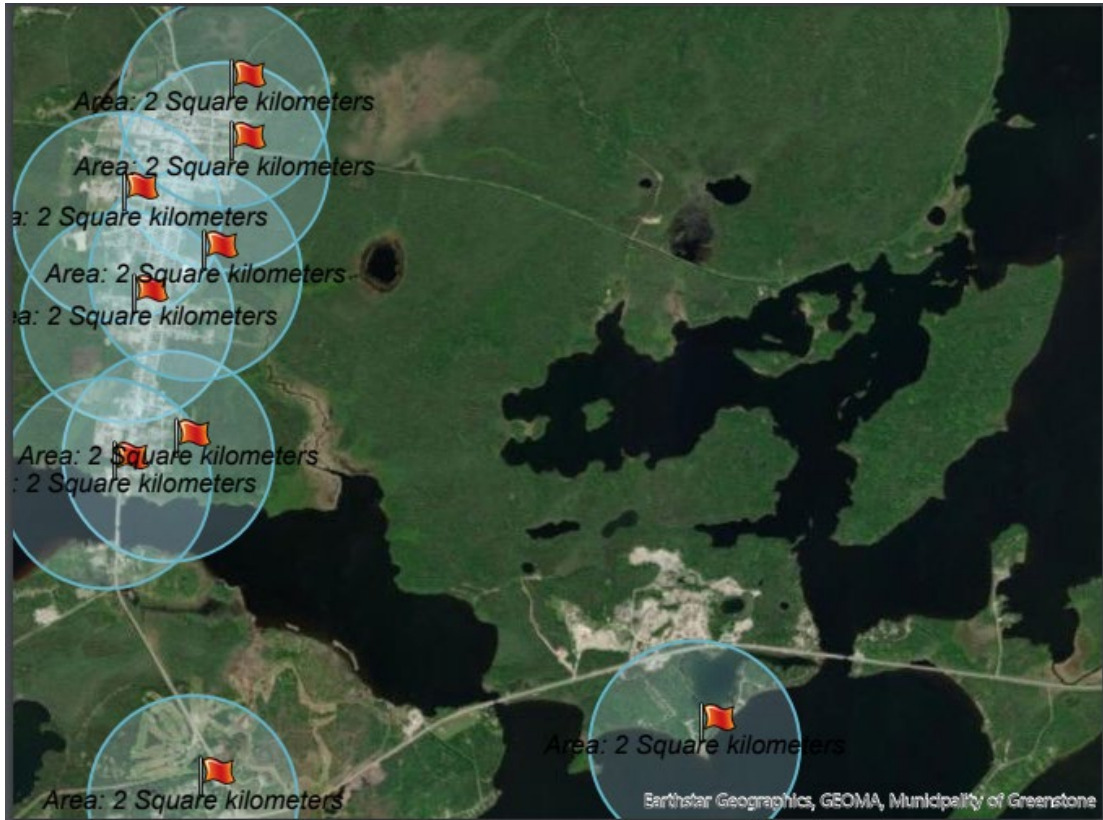


Image 4: Proximity of Playgrounds in Longlac

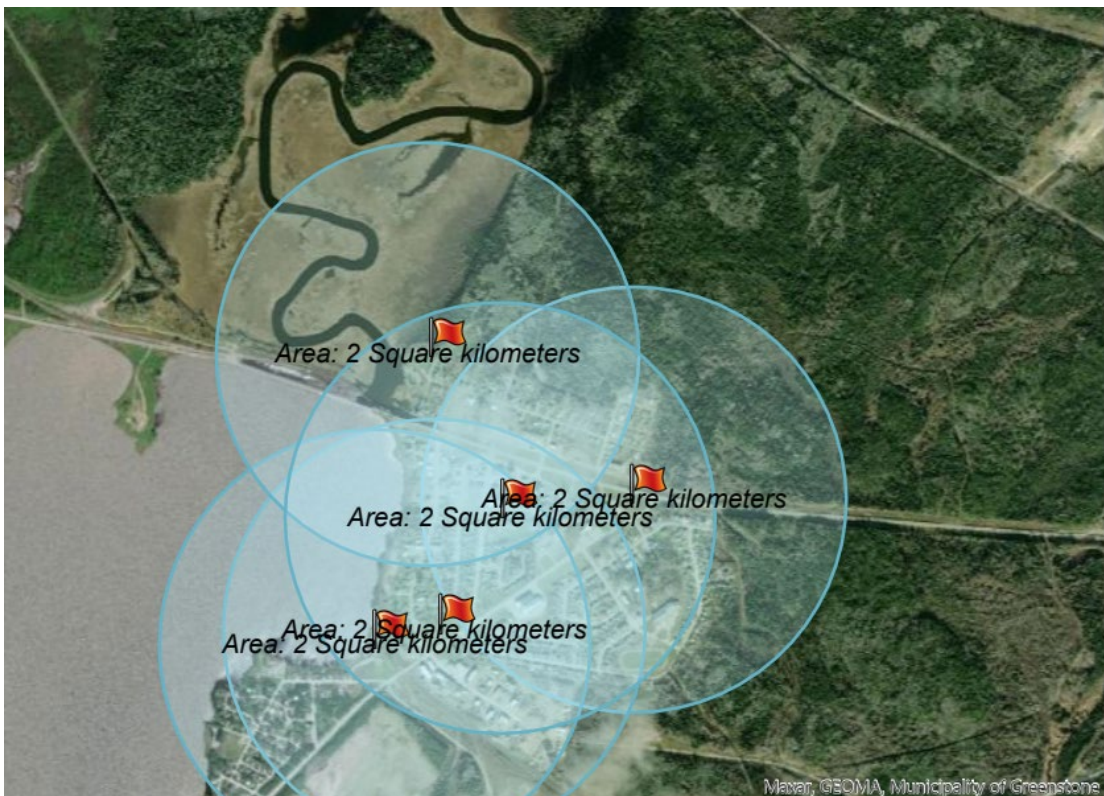


Image 5: Proximity of Playgrounds in Beardmore



Image 6: Proximity of Playgrounds in Jellicoe



Asset Comparison with Northern Municipalities

To provide infrastructure comparisons, the following data has been compiled.

Table 5. Comparison of Number of Playgrounds in Northern Ontario Municipalities

Community	Population (2021 Census)	Number of Public Playgrounds	Number of Playgrounds per Population
Greenstone (amalgamated Municipality)	4,309	13*	1 per 332 people
Red Lake (amalgamated Municipality)	4,094	6	1 per 683 people
Sioux Lookout (amalgamated Municipality)	5,839	3	1 per 1,947 people
Terrace Bay	1,523	4	1 per 381 people
Fort Frances	7,159	8	1 per 895 people
Hearst	4,794	6	1 per 799 people

*Figure does not include playgrounds at Poplar Lodge Park, Family Resource Center and Day Care Facilities.

Types of Parks

The size of parks is another consideration. The Municipality of Meaford referenced a planning approach taken by the City of Hamilton in managing its parks. The categories of parks defined may be helpful to Greenstone in considering supply and demand for playgrounds.

“Based on the standards outlined in the City of Hamilton’s ‘Park and Open Space Development Guide,’ the following classifications have been used. Each Park has been classified as either a city-wide park, community park, neighbourhood park, or parkette in order to set a standard for what playground equipment should be put into place.

Community Parks: serve more than one neighbourhood, but are not intended to serve the Municipality as a whole. Community Parks have more intensive recreational facilities such as sports fields, and recreational and community centres. These facilities shall have good transportation access along adjacent

arterial or collector roadways and provide adequate parking to meet anticipated demand. Community Parks in the urban area should appropriately be located along transit routes.

Neighbourhood Parks: primarily cater to the recreational needs and interests of the residents living within its general vicinity. Residents can easily walk or bike to these parks. Neighbourhood Parks are generally comprised of municipal parkland, containing a mixture of passive areas, sports facilities, informal and formal play areas, and may include natural areas.

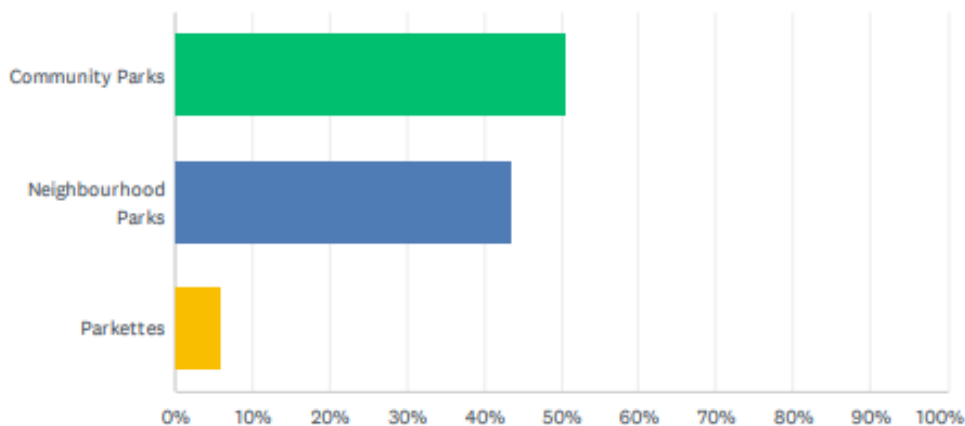
Parkettes: are small open spaces which have no or limited recreational facilities. They are generally located in the older urban areas where they serve an important function in the provision of open space opportunities.”

The size of the communities in Greenstone may not justify the use of all park types, based on best practices for park planning in urban design. A community-wide park intended to serve the entire community may take the place of some neighbourhood parks. Planning within financial means will largely determine the number and types of parks, keeping in mind that community growth provides the opportunity for further enhancements.

The SDR Engagement Survey Results on this subject are shown on the following page below.

Q2 Greenstone has three different types of parks. Community Parks which serve more than one neighbourhood but are not intended to serve the Municipality as a whole. Community Parks have more intensive recreational facilities such as sports fields, and recreational and community centres. Neighbourhood Parks which primarily cater to the recreational needs and interests of the residents living within its general vicinity. Residents can easily walk or bike to these parks. Neighbourhood Parks are generally comprised of municipal parkland, containing a mixture of passive areas, informal and formal play areas, and may include natural areas. Parkettes are small open spaces which have no or limited recreational facilities. They are generally located in the older urban areas where they serve an important function in the provision of open space opportunities. Which would you prefer the municipality invest in?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Community Parks	50.50% 152
Neighbourhood Parks	43.52% 131
Parkettes	5.98% 18
TOTAL	301

ANALYSIS

The priority need for decision-making is to address the replacement plan for municipal playgrounds.

OPTIONS:

1. Do nothing.

Operationally, this option is interpreted as a continuance of the status quo operation of repair as needed and remove when deemed unsafe, without an infrastructure replacement plan.

Implications for this option will be an increase to repair and maintenance costs followed by a complete loss of service delivery within a relatively short-time frame.

2. Remove all playgrounds immediately and budget for infrastructure replacement for all playgrounds.

AODA legislation requires that all new playgrounds are accessible for both children and adults. As there are additional costs associated with meeting this new standard, the redesign and replacement of all of the Municipality's playgrounds will come at a high cost.

Given the Municipality's challenges with funding the replacement major infrastructure in general, this option is not an affordable nor a sustainable approach.

3. Restructure playground service delivery through redesigning and replacing infrastructure for select playground sites.

This is the best option to maintain service delivery. Proper implementation of this project will require consulting services for leading engagement on design development, site selection and construction.

IMPROVING IN-HOUSE PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE:

1. Greenstone's public parks are not advertised on the Municipality's website. Parks and park improvement plans and any associated engagement can be incorporated into communication efforts on the Recreation Master Plan. Photos and maps should be included.

2. THAT policies and procedures be developed in 2024 to formalize inspection requirements for recreational assets.
3. A standard for sand/surface material for ball fields will be investigated for quality control in May 2024 (prior to the playing season) and improvements to meet compliance standards be implemented as a priority.

ADJUSTING SERVICE LEVELS:

AODA

Any new playground or playground replacement is required to meet accessibility standards.

The Pathways to Recreation Guidebook produced by Parks and Recreation Ontario is a reference for meeting accessible design standards. In brief, the guide considers the following criteria for Ontarians with accessibility needs:

- Can I get there
- Can I play
- Can I stay

These categories are used to assess accessibility of the site, accessible design and interactive features that allow for disabled participants and companions to move on, through and around the infrastructure, and whether amenities such as washrooms have accessible design.

Recreational Opportunity for all Age Groups

The Municipality of Greenstone conducted a Senior's Services Delivery Review that included opportunities for recreation. The following excerpt from the report suggests that the installation of outdoor recreational equipment for adults is a newly available feature with growing demand.

Senior's Services Review (p. 26)

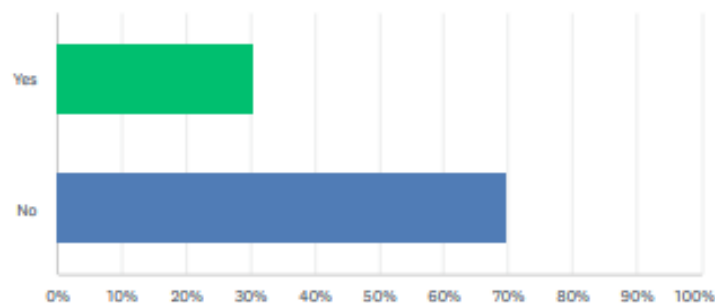
“Across Canada, playgrounds are popping up that are targeted specifically for seniors’ use. The idea originated in China where it was observed senior citizens felt uncomfortable and out of place at traditional parks where equipment and amenities were intended primarily for youth. These specialized seniors’ parks are secluded and filled with age-appropriate, all-weather exercise equipment designed to be used by retirees and older populations. The equipment typically ranges in sophistication from simple balance bars (resembling the parallel bars found in rehabilitation centers) to more complicated walking machines resembling simple

ellipticals one might find at a fitness centre. By and large, the parks have become sanctuaries where seniors can enjoy physical activity and provide opportunities for socialization. Overall, the parks aim to tailor outdoor spaces to promote healthier seniors – both physically and mentally.”

The SDR Engagement Survey Results were not favourable for this type of equipment, however we do not know the age of survey participants. Any playground renewal will require further consultation including all age groups.

Q5 Outdoor fitness equipment is like being in a gym but you get to enjoy the outside surroundings! Many municipalities lack adult related equipment as it is usually thought of as just for kids, but with outdoor fitness equipment it expands to a larger audience. The equipment is suitable for all levels of activity, from the beginner athlete to the experienced athlete. Some of the equipment examples could be balance beams, dip bars, leg press, stretching stations, and cardio equipment (stationary bikes, elliptical, etc.). Would you be interested in additional financial investment in Greenstone to transform existing park spaces to include outdoor fitness equipment?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30.23%	91
No	69.77%	210
TOTAL		301

Standardizing Site Infrastructure

1. Benches

Park Policy can describe the level of service to be provided at each location, specifically what equipment is to be made available at each site to provide infrastructure for an inclusive experience.

Park benches are an important amenity for any public park. They provide a place for people to rest, relax, and socialize. They also encourage people to spend more time outdoors, which can have a number of benefits for physical and mental health.

Article: <https://www.gametime.com/news/the-value-of-a-place-to-sit>

2. Signage

Signage is recommended for all playground sites to point kids and adults to age-appropriate play areas (infrastructure design is geared to age-groups). This should be addressed with any infrastructure renewal. Playground signage may also display the playground rules, park hours and playground owner contact information. Traffic signage is recommended to identify playground zones and may include speed limits.

COST AVOIDANCE: OPERATING COSTS AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS:

Procurement Options

Procurement of equipment and materials should include sourcing through group purchasing options. Canoe Procurement offers specific purchasing programs that include a Playground Supply Program and a Skatepark Program.

Asset Management Considerations

Greenstone's 2023 Strategic Plan provides a Goal and Objective for Asset Management:

“To manage current and future municipal capital assets on a life-cycle basis, meeting service level expectations while mitigating risk factors in an effective and cost-efficient manner.”

The current Service Delivery Review process is being undertaken, in part, to determine actions that will resolve the Municipality's underfunding for capital infrastructure replacement. Restating the Municipality's annual infrastructure deficit of \$5.6 million for existing assets, there is an immediate need to establish a sustainable level of service to meet the upcoming AMP deadline for the facility asset classification.

Five types of existing outdoor recreational assets require consideration as part of this SDR:

1. Ball Fields

Continued maintenance of six ball fields is recommended as upkeep is low-cost and achieves good value for the service provision. Fencing and building infrastructure must be addressed, but there is good return for the capital investment for the longevity of the assets.

Available usage statistics in 2023 for organized baseball programming only are as follows:

- Youth

Geraldton - 66 kids – 3 divisions – Every Tuesday and Wednesday (8 weeks)

Longlac - 59 kids – 3 divisions – Every Tuesday and Wednesday (8 weeks)

School user groups had 2 tournaments in Longlac in June. They also used our fields for practices.

- Adults

Adult League in Geraldton - 3 teams – Every Monday and Thursday (summer months)

Adult League in Longlac - 6 teams – Every Thursday – both fields (summer months)

Greenstone Gold Mines - Every Friday in Geraldton (summer months)

Currently there is no rental fee structure in place for the municipal ballfields.

Some of the ball fields are also used for soccer programming.

It is recognized that User Group agreements are needed and will be developed for adult leagues.

2. Tennis Courts

The one existing tennis court receives little if any use.

The lack of use should not be interpreted as a drop in service demand, but rather a change of community interests. Decision-making should include how to utilize this space in the future (repair, remove or repurpose)

3. Skate Park

The skate park is modest in comparison to other municipal skate parks. It is a low maintenance asset however is subject to periodic vandalism (spray paint). There are no other playground features at the Longlac Tourism Information Centre.

The Greenstone skate park is 11 years old. According to the Public Skatepark Development Guide, steel (as opposed to concrete) skate parks have an estimated eight-year life span.

4. Outdoor Rink

This facility is located at the Community Hall in Jellicoe. The rink boards were removed in 2022 due to their poor condition the asphalt surface still remains in place. The rink has not been used as an ice surface for over 10 years.

The continued use of this site (and the Community Hall facility) requires evaluation as the Municipality holds a Crown Land Use Permit for the properties which expire February 2027.

Image 7: General location of Crown Land parcels at Jellicoe Community Hall, Outdoor Rink and Playground



A decision on appropriate recreational investment in Jellicoe is needed. The Service Delivery Review for Community Centres in 2024 will also make reference to these

assets.

5. Playgrounds

Analysis of the Municipality's ability to sustain playground infrastructure is important for two main reasons:

- 1) Understanding the level of risk and liability, and
- 2) Addressing financial capacity.

Risk and Liability

Public playgrounds are associated with a high level of risk. A claim brought against the Municipality in the event of an incident involving sub-standard maintenance could have significant financial consequences. In recognition of this issue, as a first step, the Municipality scheduled the demolition of the themed play structure at the Geraldton waterfront. The 2023 Annual Inspections have been conducted and reports are forthcoming this year. Recommendations to mitigate risk for public playgrounds from an insurance perspective are provided as a separate attachment.

Financial Capacity

In light of the age of all of the Municipality's public play structures, it is time to consider the ability to fund the replacement of infrastructure at each site. The current level of spending allocated for playgrounds is severely inadequate for lifecycle replacements. A rough estimate for new infrastructure for the current number of playground sites can be expected to exceed \$4 million for acquisition and installation if \$200,000 is allocated for each site. The Municipality does not have the capacity to install playgrounds in-house, therefore significant additional costs would be incurred.

For comparison, the Town of Fort Frances installed new playground infrastructure in 2023 at a cost of \$150,000 for two structures and wood fibre surface material. Installation was performed in-house over a 4-week period. The town representative noted the wide variation of design options impacting cost.

Image 8: New large play structure, Fort Frances, 2023



Image 9: New small play structure (installation phase), Fort Frances, 2023



In 2021 the Municipality of Greenstone upgraded the playground at the Family Resource Centre at a cost of \$22,433.89. The former infrastructure was deemed hazardous and removed. Replacement costs included a two-person swing structure, rubber surface material, freight and installation (Photo 1). A funding application for this project was submitted to Grants Ontario, but not approved.

Accessible playground equipment is more expensive than like for like replacements (the parts for which are becoming obsolete). Chair-like swings that support children with limited leg use, or low-and-wide playground platforms can cost up to 50% more than older-model equipment with comparable play value. The softer rubberized or engineered wood fibre playground surfaces will be required to replace sand material that presents mobility restrictions for wheelchairs. Maintenance costs such as mid-season application of additional wood surface material needs to be accounted for. A budget for cyclical capital replacement needs to include contingency funds.

Image 10: \$22,433.80 Playground replacement (2021), Geraldton



ENHANCING AND EXPANDING SERVICE LEVELS:

Four topics are presented addressing legislation, tourism, satisfaction with existing assets and the addition of new infrastructure concepts.

1. Address AODA legislation (Design of Public Spaces).

The “Pathways to Recreation, Learning about Ontario’s Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces Guidebook” is a useful reference to understand

accessibility requirements.

2. Invest in enhancing a select greenspace(s) to develop them as Destination Parks, making them an attraction to residents and visitors alike.

Destination playgrounds have the unique ability to bring a community together as well as draw in people from other communities. Because of their uniqueness, people are willing to travel to these destination playgrounds to provide their children with a one-of-a-kind play experience. Destination playgrounds typically incorporate a theme, honor local history, or include unexpected elements while providing a place for all ages and abilities to gather.

3. Enhance existing infrastructure.

The enhancement of existing infrastructure can be considered based on usage and financial sustainability.

Infrastructure comparison with the Municipality of Sioux Lookout is provided for the Municipality's skate park, showing different materials.

Image 11. Longlac Skate Park, Municipality of Greenstone



Image 12. Skate Park, Municipality of Sioux Lookout



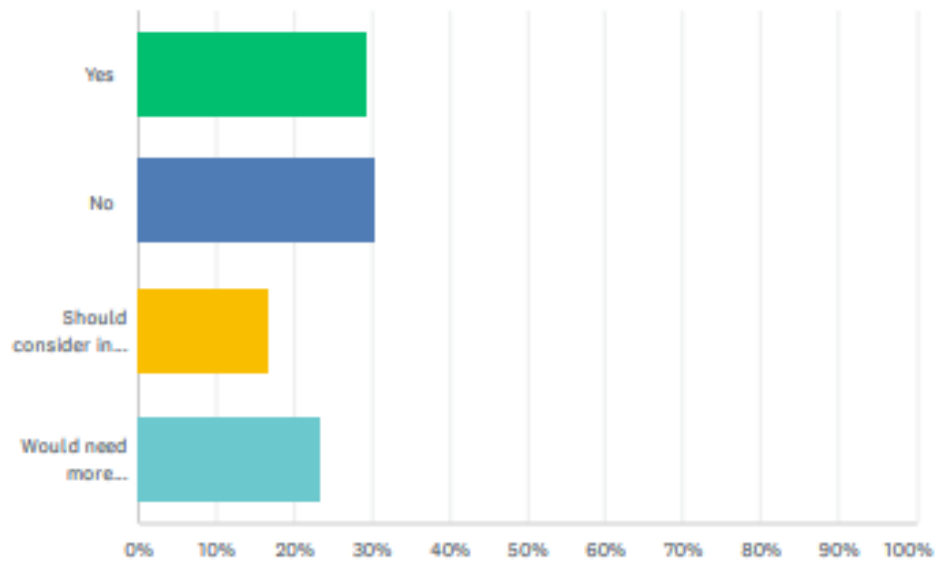
<https://www.siouxlookout.ca/en/explore-the-hub/recreation-facilities-and-programs.aspx#>

4. Provide new infrastructure.

As per the recommendation of the Seniors' Service Delivery Review, consider the addition of senior-friendly outdoor fitness equipment to an existing playground as a pilot program. Survey Results of the SDR Engagement Survey on the question of building a splash pad indicate divided opinions as shown.

Q6 An adequately designed and constructed splash pad which would include 4-6 different focus areas, would cost between \$600,000 and \$1M to build. Operating costs would be an estimated \$75,000 to \$110,000 annually. Understanding the costs involved, do you think Greenstone should invest in a splashpad?

Answered: 301 Skipped: 51



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.24%	88
No	30.56%	92
Should consider in more than one community	16.94%	51
Would need more information	23.26%	70
TOTAL		301

Other types of recreational assets can be introduced on existing municipal properties through a capital budget and long-term financial planning process.

For example, Bocce Courts are recreational asset offered in some small municipalities.

<https://www.siouxlookout.ca/en/explore-the-hub/recreation-facilities-and-programs.aspx#>

Image 13. Bocce Courts, Municipality of Sioux Lookout



NEW REVENUES:

Ball Diamond Rental

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout charges a rental fee for Tournaments or Special Events for the use of the Baseball Diamond and Concession Stand. The current rental fee per hour is \$33.90 for Adult and \$22.60 for Youth.

<https://www.siouxlookout.ca/en/explore-the-hub/recreation-facilities-and-programs.aspx#Ball-Diamonds>

ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY INCLUDING SHARED SERVICES OR CONTRACTING OUT:

The contracting out of playground and greenspace maintenance could be explored. The number of properties to maintain can under certain circumstances pose challenges for the current staff complement.

SERVICE STRUCTURE AND STAFFING REALIGNMENT:

No changes to staffing are recommended at this time.

The P&R organizational structure has a minimal number of full-time staff; where staff are not available to work it is sometimes necessary to draw staff from another Ward to provide work coverage. Difficulties with staff recruitment in 2023 resulted in service delays at times.

A reduction of recreational assets should not be interpreted as presenting a lack of work for staff; the Municipality has had to rely on contractors from time to time to help maintain levels of service.

Specifically, a reduction in playground infrastructure is recommended to sustain service delivery within the regulatory framework.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

New Revenues

N/A

Cost Avoidance

Less playgrounds and outdoor recreational sites will reduce in-house costs associated with maintenance.

Contracting Out

N/A



Risk Management Considerations for Playgrounds

A three year old child fell eight feet from a slide and sustained a brain injury. The slide did not meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards when it was installed nine years prior to the incident. The municipality failed to take any corrective action and was thus liable for the injury.

The owner of the premises and playground structures has a duty, as an occupier, to keep the equipment and property in a safe condition to accommodate its intended purpose. The Canadian Standards Association produces guides outlining the minimum suggested standards for playground equipment. Obtain and keep a current copy of the standards for your reference when inspecting and maintaining municipal playgrounds. Comply with this standard as it forms the basis of litigation.

Major liability concerns with playgrounds include:

- Equipment in need of repair.
- Play surfaces where falls can happen on hard surfaces.
- String and toggle entanglement.
- Head and neck entrapment.

On playground surfaces the most commonly found hazards include:

- Exposed concrete footings.
- Tightly compacted surfaces.
- Too shallow surfaces.
- Eroded surfaces.
- Unsanitary surfaces.
- Surfaces requiring replenishing.

Creative Play Structures

Creative play structures bring a new set of hazards. Creative play structures are those in which “two or more playstructures [are] attached or functionally linked to create one integral unit that provides more than one play activity” (CSA Children’s Playspaces and Equipment Guide Z614-07). An example of a creative playstructure is a combination climber, slide and horizontal ladder.

The most common hazards found in creative play structures are:

- Exposed end pipes.
- Protruding nuts and bolts.

- Sharp edges.
- Cracked or vandalized tube slides.
- Lack of/ineffective guard railings.

Statistics

- Every day 23 children visit emergency with injuries sustained in a playground (2004-2005). This equalled 8,734 hospital visits in 2004-2005.
- 44% of playground injuries occur in June, July and August (2004).
- 31% of injuries occur due to maintenance issues (2004).
- 54% of those injured are between the ages of five and nine years (2004).
- 58% of those injured are male (2004).
- Orthopaedic injuries (broken arms and legs) are the most common injury at 51%, with broken arms, wrists and elbows showing up most often (2007).
- Head injuries account for 22% of injuries sustained at playgrounds (2007).

Risk Management Considerations

Location of the Playground

- The location of the playground needs to be well thought out.
- The playground shouldn't be close to any natural hazards, such as natural bodies of water, drop-offs or cliffs.
- Playgrounds should not be located close to busy roadways.
- There shouldn't be any large wooded areas near the playground, as children can easily get lost in them and it provides a natural cover for predators.
- Bushes, shrubs, and other foliage should be trimmed or removed from the playground area to eliminate hiding spots for predators, muggers, vandals, etc.
- The path to get to the playground must be free of hazards.

Purchase/Installation of Equipment

- All equipment purchased should meet current CSA standards.
- Any necessary replacement parts should also be CSA approved.
- Equipment should be installed by a licensed technician with knowledge of CSA standards.

- Call the playground equipment manufacturer if you have any questions regarding the equipment and whether it is up to date with CSA standards.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for equipment that does not meet the CSA standards.

CSA Standards

- Always follow the standards provided by the CSA.
- CSA standards change – ensure your equipment meets the most current standards.
- Remember, the CSA standard will form the basis of litigation.

Swings

- S-hooks should be fully closed at all times and never re-used.
- Be aware of what is around the swing. Properly distance play equipment so that swingers aren't in danger of hitting anything else.
- Wooden, hard plastic or metal swing seats should not be used.
- Approved cloth or rubber sling style swings are safer and more forgiving if the seat hits a child.
- The vertical distance between the underside of a swing seat and the protective surfacing should not be less than 12 inches.
- The horizontal distance from side-by-side swing seats should not be less than 24 inches.

Inspection

- Establish a comprehensive policy regarding playground facility inspections.
- Perform regular, if not daily, inspections of the playground.
- Create a standard playground inspection checklist and have inspectors document everything they inspect and file it with the municipality.

Maintenance

- Establish a comprehensive policy regarding playground facility maintenance. An example of this would be:
 - Comprehensive Maintenance Plan
1. Check the entire playground for hazardous debris and litter.
 2. Check all equipment for damage.

3. Check for broken or missing handrails, guardrails, rungs on ladders, etc.
 4. Check for damage to fences, benches, etc.
 5. Check for and remove strings or ropes of any kind, especially if they're attached to equipment.
- Create daily, monthly, and seasonal maintenance schedules and follow them strictly.
 - Provide immediate repair and replacement where necessary and remove all hazards.
 - If a hazardous or unsafe condition is discovered that cannot be repaired immediately, set up barriers to prevent children from using the equipment.
 - Dispose of any and all homemade equipment that may appear.
 - Document all maintenance and other actions taken and keep a record of them.
- Signs must be maintained and should give information such as:
 - Children should be supervised.
 - The age group the equipment is designed for (i.e. 5-12 years old).
 - Location of the nearest telephone – 911 is a free call.
 - Who maintains the playground and municipal contact information. Make sure you acknowledge all calls.
 - Warnings of any danger.

Signage

- Signs should be posted around the playground in highly visible locations.
- Signs should be written in simple language so that children can read and understand them.
- Use language such as “don’t” and “no” rather than “caution” and “warning” so children understand.

Claim Case Studies & Legislation Playground Equipment and the Importance of Documentation

Facts

The Municipality ordered playground equipment, which included a slide. They ordered it from a reputable company that was known for creating equipment that met the CSA standards. During the time that the Municipality was ordering the slide, the CSA standards changed and the slide no longer met the CSA standards.

Ten years later a three year old boy fell off the slide and suffered a severe brain injury.

Issue

Was the Municipality responsible for the boy's injury for failing to ensure that their playground equipment met CSA standards?

Findings

The Municipality looked to the company that they had purchased the equipment from. The company's stance was that they shared no part in the liability as the equipment was owned by the Municipality who should have been inspecting it for the past ten years. All equipment that is CSA approved has an approval stamp put on by the manufacturer. The company had not given this slide a CSA approval stamp.

The Municipality then began to look into the inspection records for the playground. The playground was inspected every week during the park season (spring through fall). This particular year, spring had come early. It was warm, the grass was growing and Municipal employees had seen children using the park. However, they did not initiate the inspection protocol. Since the park inspections had not yet commenced, that also meant that the footings had not yet been tilled. This meant that the surface that the boy fell onto was very hard and compacted with no give.

Examination of the records showed that it was unclear as to whether anyone had ever checked the equipment for the CSA stamp. The inspection reports were checklists and it appeared as though most reports had simply been 'checked off' with one big check. This type of incomplete documentation is not suitable or appropriate for Municipal documents that could be used in the event of a claim. The Municipality settled the claim for approximately \$400,000.

Lessons Learned

When ordering new playground equipment, always be sure it is CSA approved. Check the equipment on arrival for the CSA stamp. This should be a routine part of the ordering and receiving process.

If a claim goes to court, the main body of evidence in any proceeding is based on the documents. The Municipality must present documentation to prove that the standard of care was met. The plaintiff will challenge the veracity of the documents. Accurate, timely and thorough record keeping is therefore crucial to a successful defence. Unfortunately, record keeping is often neglected. For more information on documentation, see our article 'Risk Management Considerations for Documentation'.

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