



# Playground Development/Equipment Replacement: Community Partnership & Funding Program Policy & Procedures

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## **Policy Statement**

The primary objective of the Policy is to provide the parameters and guidelines to establish a process for community organizations, service clubs and neighborhood groups (“applicant”) to participate in a Playground Development and or Equipment Replacement Community Partnership and Funding program within the City’s neighborhood, community and city wide Parks. This policy will support public desire to donate funding towards the development of new or replacement of playground equipment. This policy will provide appropriate oversight and understanding of the approval process, partnership and cost-sharing funding, design standards, installation and administration responsibilities.

The City of Sarnia, through its Parks & Recreation Department maintains Park Playgrounds and administers and supports a municipal Playground Development and Equipment Replacement program based on annual Council approved capital funding.

## **Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of the policy is to outline the guidelines that allow for the provision of Playground Development and or Equipment Replacement for the citizens of Sarnia within parks owned and maintained by the City of Sarnia and as agreed upon by the Parks and Recreation Department.

This policy will also provide the Parks and Recreation Department with clear direction on how to effectively deal with inquiries from community organizations, service clubs and neighborhood groups in regard to receiving donation and joint funding requests for the development and installation of new playground equipment and or replacement of playground equipment within City parks and open spaces.

This document will support the applicant in undertaking capital improvements to community playgrounds. The City is committed to supporting those who would like to invest in delivering recreational playgrounds and equipment to all parks.

Responsibility for the procurement, installation and maintenance of the playground equipment, within specific parameters, is provided for by the City as identified in this policy.

This document will establish the criteria for the development and funding to construct or enhance playground equipment that will serve the needs of the City both now and in the future.

### **General Guidelines and Criteria**

To protect park resources, values and the park visitor experience, playground development and installation shall respect this policy, as well as the priorities, purpose and integrity of the City parks. Playground Equipment shall contribute to the visitor experience and preserve the visual character of the park setting.

Limitations to the sites for playground equipment are provided in recognition of the fact that such installations can interfere with active sport facilities, park design parameters, affect the growth habit of trees and interfere with maintenance operations.

This program is designed to increase public enjoyment through active and inclusive participation in the City's parks. The City of Sarnia believes that people with disabilities must have the same access to playgrounds and equipment as any other. New playground and equipment installations will be built to support inclusive and universal design and will meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities that visit the park. It is important to note that it is impossible to be completely accessible to everyone but design standards will address the common needs of people with: auditory; intellectual; physical; developmental; visual; and learning disabilities.

Sarnia City Council annually establishes a capital budget amount to be distributed under this policy through the annual Parks & Recreation Department - Park Infrastructure Capital allotment.

## **Procedures**

The following criteria, processes and procedures shall be considered when submitting an application for the development, replacement and or Community partnership funding in relation to playground equipment on City parkland:

### **Evaluation Criteria & Approval Process:**

- Applicants wishing to participate in the Playground Development and Equipment Replacement and Community Partnership Funding Program may do so by completing an on-line application form, attached as Schedule "A";
- Applications shall be submitted annually to the City by March 31<sup>st</sup> for consideration in that year subject to budget availability or by July 31<sup>st</sup> for consideration in the following year;
- Applications shall clearly identify the desired Park and outline the scope of work and rationale, describe the community benefit that the specific playground will provide, demonstrate substantial neighborhood support, including ideal demographics, demonstrate project sustainability and identify the proposed location of the playground within the desired park;
- Eligible projects must be on City Parkland and result in the development or enhancement of fixed recreation assets including playground equipment and or park furniture;
- Applications shall clearly show that the existing playground (if any) does not meet the current and future needs of the neighborhood;
- Parkland has been identified in the Parks and Recreation Department Asset Management plan and Park Inventory;
- Applications will be received and reviewed by the Manager of Recreation and Planning and or designate;

- Manager of Recreation and Planning or designate will provide an approval in principle prior to the launch of the community and neighborhood fundraising campaign. An On Site meeting with the applicant to identify and discuss the parameters as outlined in this document will be arranged prior to final approval;
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Playground Development and Equipment Replacement Agreement with the City of Sarnia;
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Community Partnership Funding Agreement with the City of Sarnia once the applicant has raised and secured the necessary funding;

Notwithstanding the general requirements, all requests will be received and evaluated on their own merits in terms of the positive contribution the installation may have on the neighboring community.

Community Partnership & Funding Model:

- The City may fund up to 50% of the playground cost to a maximum of \$50,000.00 per eligible project, pending annual Parks and Recreation Department - Park Infrastructure Capital budget allotment, approved annually by Sarnia City Council;
- City support may be through a combination of cash and in-kind contribution;
- Equipment installed under this policy will become property of the City of Sarnia;
- In years where requests are greater than the funding available, eligible projects will be prioritized based on the degree to which the application meets the policy criteria and towards the playground projects already identified within the Parks and Recreation Capital Plan;
- Equal geographic distribution of funds will be considered when reviewing applications in order to prevent a disparity among playgrounds within the parks system;

- All funding must be secured and a letter of commitment received from the applicant prior to any site work commencing;
- Installation costs for new playgrounds shall include all site works including grading, drainage, engineering, AODA accessibility requirements, access, playground surfaces and a contingency;
- The City may approve all, part, or deny any request received;

Inclusive Outdoor Play Space Design Standards:

When developing new or re-developing existing playgrounds, the following standards shall be considered and discussed directly with the applicant prior to approval:

- All new construction of playground equipment and or surfacing must comply with the Canadian Standards Association - CAN/CSA Standards Z614 – Children’s Playspaces and Equipment and subsequent standards;
- Incorporate accessibility features and comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Design of Public Space Standards;
- Incorporate the City of Sarnia’s “Inclusive Outdoor Play Spaces Design Standards” (attachment “B”) within new installations and include consultation with the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC) on design specifications;
- Incorporate and supply adequate sub surface and surface material into all projects as identified by the Canadian Standards Association - CAN/CSA Standards Z614;
- Whenever possible, UV protection should be considered;
- Proposed playground equipment will not duplicate area park playground equipment and follow general Park Design Standards;
- Parks & Recreation staff will provide the applicant with applicable equipment options within the proposed budget;
- Parks and Recreation staff will procure both the purchase and

installation of the equipment;

Location Consideration:

While the community or neighborhood group may suggest a specific park and playground location, certain requirements shall apply as noted below. The Parks & Recreation Department shall make the final and precise determination of location within the park, also abiding by the criteria below:

- The location does not interfere with any active park facility and or sports field;
- The park location can adequately and safely accommodate the proposed equipment. Not all parks are created equally and some pose challenges not conducive to certain playground structures and equipment including but not limited to the following items:
  - Poor access;
  - Inaccessible pathways and routes;
  - Insufficient drainage;
  - Underground utilities and services;
  - Insufficient amount of space;
  - Insufficient parking.
- The location would be considered appropriate in accordance with design criteria related to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED);
- New playground location will be vetted through the City's Engineering and Planning Departments and Sarnia Police Services prior to location approval;
- Playground equipment will be located to promote inclusive use for the community;
- An adequate drainage plan to be developed and approved in consultation with the City Engineering staff;



- The location does not interfere with approved park design including horticultural or arboricultural components or displays;
- The location is near existing path of travel and is accessible;
- Impacts to the access of the Park space for maintenance will be considered.

#### Installation & Maintenance:

The City shall be responsible for the procurement of the playground equipment including the installation of the playground through consultation with the applicant and the City's Accessibility Coordinator and in accordance with the following parameters:

- Installations are seasonal and are completed as weather and ground conditions permit under the timelines as identified under the Approval Process;
- Due to concerns for risk management insurance, maintaining quality and safety of product and installation, 'do-it-yourself' work shall not be permitted. Installations shall be completed by certified playground equipment installation companies;
- Routine maintenance and annual Standard Playground Inspections will be conducted and completed by the Parks & Recreation Department.

#### **Administration of Policy and Program:**

The Manager of Recreation and Planning is responsible for the implementation of and compliance with this policy. Under the direction of the Manager, Staff will work directly with the applicant on all aspects of this program including Council notification and public consultation. The Manager will ensure inter-departmental collaboration with the Engineering Department, Accessibility Coordinator and others as required as well as consultations with affected Committees;

- A Playground Development and Community Partnership Funding Agreement between the City of Sarnia and the applicant will be developed and approved by Sarnia City Council.
- Playgrounds in an outdoor setting have a reasonable lifespan of 20 years. The dedicated playground agreement will be for a period of 20 years. Within this time, the Parks and Recreation Department will maintain and repair as deemed necessary by the department during its useful life. The City reserves the right to relocate or remove the playground equipment if unforeseen circumstances arise due to its location or setting or prevents safe usage.
- This document will be reviewed from “time to time” and may be amended if deemed necessary;
- Nothing in this policy shall limit the ability of any individual, organization or corporation to make a monetary donation to the City for the provision of playground equipment installation at the discretion of the City or to be held in a reserve for future replacement of playground equipment.

# Inclusive Outdoor Play Spaces Design Standards

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The Corporation of the City of Sarnia is committed to providing quality goods, services, and facilities that are accessible to all persons and is guided by the four core principals of Dignity, Independence, Integration and Equality Opportunity. The City is dedicated to removing barriers to accessibility and ensuring that all the requirements in the Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces Standards of the Accessibility for Ontarian's with Disabilities Act (AODA) are fulfilled.

The City of Sarnia believes that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to public spaces including playgrounds as all other people. Creating accessible standards, such as this one, will streamline the process and ensure that all play spaces are built to support inclusive and universal design and meet the needs of children and adults with disabilities that attend the park. However, it is important to note that it is impossible to be completely accessible to everyone but these standards will address the common needs of people with:

- Auditory disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Visual disabilities
- Learning Disabilities
- Mental Health Disabilities

All City of Sarnia Play spaces will include requirements by the CSA and Building Code.

## **Consultation Requirements**

Consultation on new or redeveloped play spaces is required with people with disabilities and/or with the Sarnia Accessibility Advisory Committee (SAAC) under the AODA's Design of Public Spaces Standard. \*This standard will assist in streamlining the consultation process.

## **Design Requirements**

When constructing new or redeveloping existing play spaces:

1. incorporate accessibility features, such as sensory and active play components, for children and caregivers with various disabilities into the design of outdoor play spaces
2. Ensure that outdoor play spaces have ground surface that is firm, stable and has impact attenuating properties for injury prevention and sufficient clearance
3. Ensure that there is at least one accessible route to all levels of the play spaces that is a minimum of 1525 mm wide and a maximum slope of 1:16 as per CSA guidelines (note: transfer systems in play spaces do NOT meet the City of Sarnia accessible standards for play spaces)
4. Ensure there is adequate turning radius of a minimum of 1500 mm on all levels of play spaces
5. Ensure a minimum space of 1100 mm between play equipment and features for easy passage of mobility devices
6. Incorporate accessible path of travel that connects to adjacent walkways and paths for caregivers and users of the playground
7. Ensure adequate seating areas around the play spaces for caregivers and users that meet the City of Sarnia Accessible Design Standards for benches
8. When possible, incorporate fencing or barrier around play area where there is a risk of danger to a child i.e. play space is near road or pond and consult with parent group and SAAC regarding the location and need for the barrier
9. Incorporate play feature for adults with disabilities such as adult swings and sensory features

## **Swings**

When constructing or redeveloping swings to play spaces:

1. Consider providing swings that are equipped with a harness
2. Consider swings that move in linear and circular motions
3. Consider swings in a variety of swing sizes from both children and adults
4. Include a ratio of 1/8 for adaptive, "birds nest" and accessible swings designed for people with disabilities of various types

5. Consider adding accessible swings to flagship parks such as Germain, Centennial, Canatara, and Mike Weir
6. Add additional adaptive swing upon request from user groups and individuals
7. Ensure the surface below the swings is firm, stable and has impact attenuating properties for injury prevention and sufficient clearance