

Playground Revitalization Project Update

Presented To:	Community and Emergency Services Committee
Meeting Date:	April 23, 2025
Type:	Managers' Reports
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Recommended by:	General Manager of Community Development

Report Summary

This report provides recommendations regarding the Playground Revitalization Project and the progress made in replacing and revitalizing sites previously identified in poor condition. The report identifies the locations to be advanced in 2025. The report includes information on a commitment to donate towards the project and seeks approval to name a play structure in lieu of the donation, in line with the City's Building, Property and Park Naming Policy. The report also includes a recommendation for a minor scope change in response to community feedback.

Resolutions

Resolution 1:

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves naming of the play equipment area at VLA Playground 'The Wilkin Family Play Area', as outlined in the report entitled "Playground Revitalization Project Update", from the General Manager of Community Development, presented at the Community and Emergency Services Committee meeting on April 23, 2025.

Resolution 2:

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves the change of scope of the Playground Revitalization Project to replace the Onaping Tot Lot with one of the two Levack playground sites, as outlined in the report entitled "Playground Revitalization Project Update", from the General Manager of Community Development, presented at the Community and Emergency Services Committee meeting on April 23, 2025.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to the strategic goal 5.2 Investment in Infrastructure to Support Community Recreation with a Focus on Quality of Life as identified in the City of Greater Sudbury Strategic Plan.

This report has no connection to the Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP).

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

As part of the 2018 budget deliberation process, a business case for the revitalization of 58 playground sites identified as being in poor condition was included for Council's consideration. The business case outlined capital investment to upgrade 58 playground sites at an estimated cost of \$40,000 per site, for a total of \$2,320,000.

During the budget deliberation process, Council was also informed about the United Way Centraide North East Ontario's commitment to match the City's investment in Playground Revitalization through a fundraising campaign. The United Way's contribution would supplement the City's budget and result in an average investment of \$80,000 per playground site. The Finance and Administration Committee approved \$2.3 million for Playground Revitalization with an annual contribution from the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) funds in the amount of \$150,000 per year to cover debt payments for 25 years.

At the February 16, 2022 Community Services Committee meeting, Council received a report titled "Playground Revitalization Update 2022". The report provided an update on the capital fundraising campaign of United Way Centraide North Eastern Ontario (UWCNEO) committed to during previous deliberations. Upon receiving the report, Council approved that the City enter into a partnership agreement with UWCNEO for a modified financial commitment of \$250,000.

As part of the 2024-2027 Capital Budget, Council has approved the draw from Parks Section 50 Obligatory Reserves for the completion of remaining sites. The February 16, 2022 report identified the following 16 remaining locations which required replacement:

- VLA Playground (Ward 2)
- Black Lake (Ward 2)
- Penage Road Community Centre (Ward 2)
- Den Lou Playground (Ward 2)
- Centennial Park (Ward 2)
- Whitefish Playground (Ward 2)
- Nickel Basin Playground (Ward 3)
- Onaping Tot Lot (Ward 3)
- Pine and Fir (Ward 3)
- Daniel Tot Lot (Ward 5)
- Central Lane (Ward 7)
- Pine Street (Ward 7)
- Thomas Tot Lot (Ward 7)
- Parkinson Tot Lot (Ward 7)
- Don Lita Playground (Ward 8)
- Mountainview Playground (Ward 9)

The project description noted that staff would continue to pursue grants and other funding opportunities to lessen the utilization of Parks 50 Section funds.

Recent Developments

2024 Work Completed

Following the 2024-2025 budget process, Central Lane (Ward 7) and Don Lita Playground (Ward 8) were identified as the next phase of work, based updated condition assessments and inspection reports. Substantial completion of both sites was achieved last year, with some minor landscaping outstanding at the Don Lita Playground location.

Sites Identified for 2025 Work

Based on playground inspections and condition assessments completed by certified staff, and the cash

flows approved for the project as part of the 2024-2027 capital budget, the following sites have been identified for 2025 work. Budgets have been established based on existing footprint and play equipment on site:

- VLA Playground (Ward 2) – established budget of \$100,000
- Onaping Tot Lot (Ward 3) – established budget of \$75,000
- Daniel Tot Lot (Ward 5) – established budget of \$100,000

As has been customary through previous phases of the Playground Revitalization Project, the City will host community consultation sessions for design feedback for each location to be coordinated with the ward Councillor's availability.

VLA Playground Donation

The City was recently approached about a potential financial contribution towards developments at VLA Playground. Following meetings with City staff, the Wilkin Family has generously committed to contributing \$35,000 to support the planned revitalization of the play equipment at VLA Playground (Attachment 1 – Letter of Commitment from Wilkin Family). Patti and Doug Wilkin have volunteered at VLA Playground and in the community for over 30 years. The family has asked that the \$35,000 be used towards enhancing the City's planned budget to provide more play opportunities. The Wilkin Family has also requested that upon the completion of the project that the asset be named 'The Wilkin Family Play Area'.

The City of Greater Sudbury's Building, Property and Park Naming Policy notes that when there is a large financial support that exceeds 35% of the total capital contribution towards new or redeveloped facilities and properties, the naming of a municipal facility or property may be brought forward to Council for approval. The policy also provides for the naming of individual elements (components) within a park or facility.

Request to Reconsider Investment in Onaping Tot Lot

The Leisure Services Division has received feedback from community members with respect to the multiple sites identified in Onaping as part of the Playground Revitalization Project and the lack of modern play equipment in the neighbouring community of Levack. This input has been received from the Onaping Falls Recreation Committee (Attachment 2 – Correspondence from Onaping Falls Recreation Committee) and members of local Community Action Networks.

Staff have been requested to consider directing funds allocated for the Onaping Tot Lot to one of the existing playground sites in Levack. Staff are supportive of this change of scope of work, pending Council approval, with the following rationale:

- Investment has already been made at the Gil Loop Playground which is approximately 350 meters from the Onaping Tot Lot site. The established provision level for playgrounds is to provide one playground within an 800-meter service radius.
- The Pine and Fir Playground location has been identified for a future phase of playground revitalization which is approximately 650 meters away from the Onaping Tot Lot location.
- Investment is being made at the Onaping Tot Lot location through the Outdoor Court Revitalization project which will see the two tennis courts on site refurbished and revitalized based on community feedback on local needs for hard court sports and Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan guidance.
- The existing playgrounds in Levack (Fourth at Beach and Levack Tot Lots) are in marginally satisfactory condition with limited play value.
- The budget identified for the Onaping Tot Lot is deemed to be sufficient to complete work at either Levack location.
- If the City were to reallocate funds from the Onaping Tot Lot playground equipment, it would be with the understanding that when existing equipment reaches end of life, it would be removed and not replaced. The area in question would be landscaped and left as open space.

This approach has been reviewed with the respective ward Councillor who has expressed support. If Council approves the change in scope of work, the City will meet with stakeholders and conduct community engagement on the preferred Levack site for revitalization.

Summary and Next Steps

Community consultation sessions for design feedback will take place for locations identified in the report.

City staff will continue to explore grant and other funding opportunities for project funding to reduce draws on Parks Section 50 reserves.

Future phases of Playground Revitalization will continue in future years as per the capital project description and cash flows previously approved by Council. Sites will be prioritized based on staff inspections and condition assessments.

Resources Cited

By-Law 2012-256 Building, Property and Park Naming Policy

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/linkservid/8F25AAA3-0426-C0B9-FA5F45022272D23C/showMeta/0/>

2024-2025 Budget Document, Playground Revitalization Project Description (page 450)

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/budget-and-finance/2024-2025-budget/proposed-budget1/proposed-2024-2025-budget/>

Playground Revitalization Update 2022, Community & Emergency Services Committee (February 16, 2022)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=43500>

Playground Revitalization Update 2020, City Council (September 22, 2020)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=39075>

Playground Revitalization Update 2019, Community Services Committee (May 11, 2019)

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=7&id=1353>

Playground Revitalization Update, Community Services Committee (September 25, 2018)

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1247&itemid=15433&lang=en>

Playground Revitalization Final Report, Community Services Committee (December 5, 2017)

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=3&id=1155>

Playground Revitalization Incremental Report #1, Community Services Committee (June 19, 2017)

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=5&id=1152>

Playground Revitalization Report, Finance and Administration Committee (April 12, 2017)

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=1169&itemid=12145>

Playgrounds Report, Finance and Administration Committee (September 20, 2016)

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=7&id=973>