State of the Playgrounds Report

Research on Park Playground Planning & Management

Creating communities where children feel welcome and included bodes well for the future of our city.

Updated: November 27, 2024

City of Prince Albert

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public parks are a key place for formal and informal play. Especially amongst children, play is a foundational method for developing several skills that are necessary for later life. Through play, children develop skills associated with socialization, coordination, imagination, and cognition.

The City of Prince Albert conducted an online public survey to gather the perspectives and opinions of residents during the community engagement process when developing the Community Masterplan. One of the questions asked during the Community Services Masterplan process was, "Assuming that costs could be held at affordable levels, please indicate whether you support or oppose the following new and/or upgraded OUTDOOR facility components in Prince Albert." Playgrounds were noted to be at the top of this list of thirty-five different facility components and scored strong support at 59%, second to this was Natural Areas/Open Spaces which tied in support with Playgrounds at 59% and in third was Water/Spray Parks at 56%.

The Community Masterplan also asked, "From the list of options, what does your household consider as the TOP FIVE OUTDOOR priorities for the City of Prince Albert?" Water/Spray Parks scored a strong 38% out of thirty-five noted options and Playgrounds came in second at 33% support.

This report promotes effective playground planning and management. It seeks to identify key trends and better practices.

The report is divided into five major sections:

1. City of Prince Albert priorities

2. Parks Users and Playgrounds. An overview of park user profiles and requirements for playgrounds.

3. Benchmarked Playground planning & Management Indicators. This section is divided into seven groupings:
    a. Playground Category per 36,000 of population
    b. Playground Settings
    c. Playground Maintenance & Audit Frequencies
    d. Playground Life Periods
    e. Protective Surfacing
    f. Playground Aging
    g. Playground Costs

4. Hints & Tips in Playground Planning and Management.
5. Case Studies & Publications.

1.1 Identified Playgrounds for this Report.

Thirty playgrounds identified using four (4) different quadrants, Northwest, Southwest, Northeast and Southeast, noting that the playgrounds range in age from the late 1990s to present day.

Northwest	Southwest	Northeast	Southeast
James Isbister	Alfred Jenkins	Car Guys	Dent Park/**Loyd Smith**
	High Noon Optimist	Albright	Hogeweide/**Amy Meadows**
Nordale	Kinsmen	Miller Hill	Elks
Hazeldell	Kinsmen Water Park	Midtown/**Lee Atkinson**	Carlton
Mair	Optimist Tourist	Elks River	Erickson/**Albert E. Gosselin**
	Mahon	Little Red River	AC Howard
Lions			
			Southeast
			Longworth/**Nelson**
			Davis/**Glenn Martin**
			Agnew/**George Sutherland**
			Muzzy Drive/**Edwin G. Laird**
			Barton Coombe/**John Hall**
			Southwood/**Myron Kowalsky**

1.2 Playground Age and Supplier

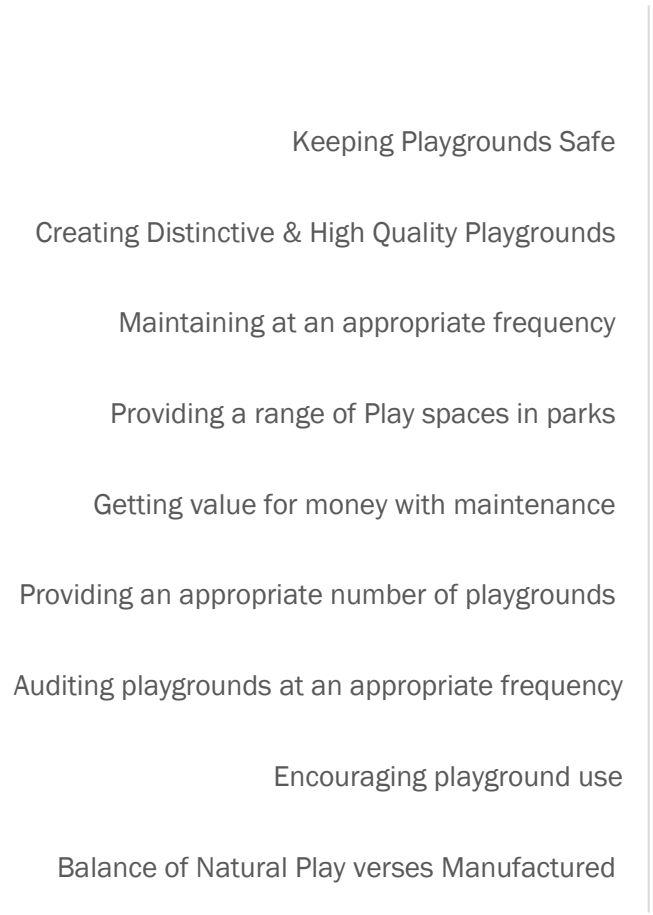
Playground	Age	Supplier
AC Howard	2021	Playgrounds-R-Us/Blue Imp
Agnew/**George Sutherland**	Early 2000's	Romper land
Albright	2007	Romper land
AJFH	2019	Playgrounds-R-Us
Barton Coombe/**John Hall**	2015	Blue Imp
Lions	2020	Playgrounds-R-Us
Carlton Community Club	2022	Pickle Ball and Basketball
Muzzy Drive/**Edwin G. Laird**	2019	Playgrounds-R-Us
Davis/**Glenn Martin**	Early 2000's	Romper land
Dent/Loyd Smith	2004	Blue Imp
Elks	2004	Romper land
Elks River	2004	Romper land
Erickson/**Albert E. Gosselin**	2000	Blue Imp
Hazeldell	2002	Romper land & Blue Imp
High Noon Optimist	2002	Romper land
Hogeweide/**Amy Meadows**	2002	Romper land

James Isbister	2022	Musco/Playgrounds R-Us
Kinsmen	2017	Playworks/Blue Imp
Kinsmen Water Park	2004	Romper land
Car Guy's	2011	Blue Imp
Longworth/**Nelson**	2001	Romper land
Little Red River/**Rotary Adventure**	2023	CAD Rec & Playgrounds-R-Us
Mahon	2011	Romper land
Mair	2004	Romper land
Midtown/**Lee Atkinson**	2024	Playgrounds-R-Us
Miller Hill	2004	Romper land
Playground	**Age**	**Supplier**
Nordale (Structure #1)	2004	Romper land
Nordale (Structure #2)	2008	Romper land
Optimist Tourist	2000	Romper land
Southwood/**Myron Kowalsky**	2004	Romper land

***Supplier** *"Romper land"* **is no longer in business making 59% of all our playground equipment obsolete.**

2. CITY OF PRINCE ALBERT PRIORITIES

Figure 1. Challenges with Playgrounds

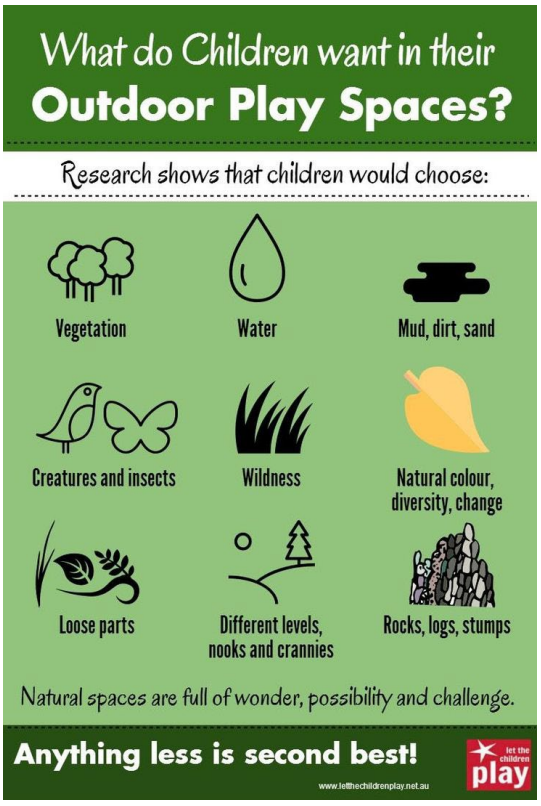


The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department aims to prioritize safe, distinctive, and sustainable play environments that foster socialization, coordination, imagination, and cognitive development. However, achieving this within a municipal context presents challenges. Risk management, budget constraints, and community demands can often hinder the realization of these ideal goals.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AT PLAYGROUNDS

Proper maintenance of playgrounds, equipment and appropriate protective surfacing material reduce playground injuries. Similarly, supervision of children is vital to safe play. A shared responsibility exists among users, owners/operators, and manufacturers.

“Ensuring playground safety is a crucial concern, particularly when addressing issues like vandalism and the visibility of many playgrounds.”



3. ACCESS

Looking at access to parks within the city, there is indication that users may choose to bypass several closely available playground units to utilize their preferred facility (newer, bigger, better, variety of activities, etc.).

While looking at means of access and information from other Municipalities, it shows that in many communities over 47% of users will drive a car to the park, while 49% would prefer to walk and the other 1% would use public transit.

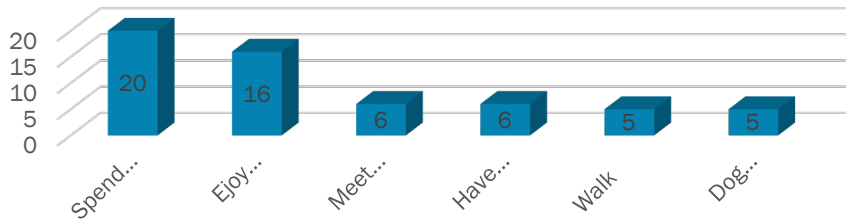
This same research shows that the median distance travelled is 1 km and median time travelled is 5 minutes, information from our own research here in Prince Albert seems to collaborate this information.

The Community Services Masterplan process engaged the community through the survey process by asking, "For each amenity listed below, please indicate how many times your household has used these OUTDOOR facilities in the past twelve months." Community playgrounds were noted as having 21% of respondents indicate that they visit a community playground 21+ times per year out of 30 Outdoor Facility options, only second to the Rotary Trail which saw 41% of respondents indicate 21+ times per year.

Insights from industry professionals highlight why users attend playgrounds and consider possible travel to a larger setting if available. Factors include:

- A lack of diverse playground facilities in close playgrounds. Many smaller local playgrounds cater for a limited range of playground experiences. Anecdotal evidence indicates that children will quickly tire of a small playground unit. Smaller units may also have insufficient diversity to cater for differing age groups within a family or group of children.
- The "play" experience extends beyond the playground unit. The most popular playground settings feature adjoining facilities to cater for all ages (Alfred Jenkins) for example). Popular features associated with a playground setting include comfortable seats, picnic facilities, landscaping; open areas to kick/throw a ball, toilets, shade, parking, and potable water. These features provide for a wider array of recreational opportunities.
- Meeting friends and socializing is often an important activity for playground users and children. This requires travel to a predetermined location that is likely to be further than the closest playground.

Figure 2. Industry Research
Median % of Other Reasons/Activities Playground Users Visit Parks



3.3 Better Family & Service Provision

There are several areas that have been identified for improving facility and service provision within parks. The most significant opportunities relate to playground equipment and protective surfacing, other areas for enhancement include adding shade and shelter, benches and picnic tables, potable water, fences, and barriers.

Better Service Provision Area

Playground (upgrade, maintenance, and protective surfacing)

Shade & Shelter (provide incorporated picnic areas and update existing)

Benches/Picnic Tables (incorporate around park, keeping them clean and in good condition)

Potable Water (In areas where we can make it available, provide the opportunity for potable water options)

Fences/Barriers (Securing our playgrounds, fixing, and installing fencing where it makes sense, near vehicles, major roadways, etc.)

BBQ's (Where provided, replace/fix)

Garbage Bins (Provide animal proof bins and increase the frequency of emptying)

Access (parking lots to provide for handicap parking, fix potholes, more parking considerations)

Soft Landscape (More trees, shrubs, cut and maintain grass, landscape, and green space)

General Maintenance (Clean-up, resolute staff in larger parks such as Kinsmen, removal of glass, sharps, paint where applicable, etc.)

To ensure better service provision, looking at housing density in areas and the importance of the number of playground units that exist cannot be understated. Playground units in multiple smaller local parks are costly to establish and maintain, given their levels of under-utilization, if

playground units are not integrated around other recreational opportunities. The practice of selecting and establishing "stand alone" playground units in multiple smaller local parks could be considered uneconomical when compared to the opportunity cost of utilizing capital funds to establish one larger playground setting in a centrally located area of the community.

4. BENCHMARKED PLAYGROUND PLANNING & MANGEMENT INDICATORS

4.1 How to use this Data

As we move forward with the development of our open spaces, we want to show that the work outputs are aligned with the Community Services Masterplan, and are meeting community requirements, while being delivered in an efficient and effective manner. Quantifiable management indicators should be used for monitoring and benchmarking. The indicators are to identify:

- Measurement of progress towards achieving desired outcomes
- Provision of information for addressing tough questions
- Addressing (cause and effect)
- Directing Priorities
- Promoting accountability through transparency
- Drawing attention to negative trends
- Improving awareness of conflicts between goals
- Promoting adaptive management and continuous learning

Engaging the community helps identify and provide feedback on indicators, comparing that feedback to other organizations and, recent successes to help direct and shape the future of the Parks System can be one of the keys to promoting a healthy parks and playground system within the city.

4.2 How these Indicators have been selected

Developed indicators should have the following considerations:

- Meaningful/relevant – important to the city
- Measurable
- Achievable/Feasible
- Understandable
- Predictable
- Valid
- Flexible

These indicators should also be:

- Part of the management cycle and not an end to themselves.
- Developed with all those involved in management cycle; and
- Focused on the use of information, not necessarily the gaining of it.

4.3 Playground Type

Benchmark for twenty-nine playgrounds per 36,000 population based on 2016 census. Many of the playgrounds were designed for young children's play, although elements of toddlers and older children's play can be found at many of these locations. Teenager, access for all playgrounds and Natural Playgrounds are less prominent.

Table 2. Playground Category per 36,000 - population census

Playground Category	Age	Count	Location
Natural Playground	N/A	0	N/A
Toddlers & Young Children's Playground	8 months – 5 Years	22	John Hall, Loyd Smith, Hazeldell, Kinsmen, Car Guy's, Nordale, AC Howard, George Sutherland, Albright, AJFH, Lions Park, David G. Laird, Albert E. Gosselin, Hazeldell, High Noon Optimist, Amy Meadows, Nelson Miller, Myron Kowalsky, Kinsmen Water Park, Lee Atkinson, Glenn Martin, Elks
Older Children's Playground	5-12 Years	24	AJFH, Lions Park, David E. Laird, Glenn Martin, Loyd Smith, Elks Park, Elks River, Albert E. Gosselin, Hazeldell, High Noon Optimist, Amy Meadows, James Isbister, Kinsmen, Kinsmen Water, Car Guy's, LRRP, Nelson, Mahon, Miller Hill, Mair, Lee Atkinson,

			Miller Hill, Nordale, Myron Kowalsky
Teenager Playgrounds	13-19	2	Rotary Adventure, AJFH
Access for All Playgrounds	18 Month – 12 Years	1	AJFH

These figures, when broken down highlight that many of our playgrounds per 36,000 head of population cater to children aged 18 Months to five years and five years to 12 years of age. This provides the opportunity for the city to develop more integrated, strategically placed, extensive playground settings that reflect the needs of the community.

In general, we would like to see a balanced approach to the types of playgrounds offered.

4.4 Playground's Incorporating Setting Elements

There are a variety of perspectives around incorporating setting elements. When playgrounds are designed, park and recreation professionals may consider fencing as important, especially in cases where immediate hazards may be associated with the site. Visitors to the playground may see fencing as a means to create a more controlled environment for child supervision and protection, while enhancing opportunities for adult socializing and relaxation. On the other hand, others may feel that fencing creates a "fish bowl" which excludes opportunities for integrating play elements on either side of the boundary. Some industry research has shown that fencing of playgrounds can lead to less active parenting and temporary child abandonment in extreme cases.

"Inclusive"

"Natural"

"Teen/Adult Challenge Course"

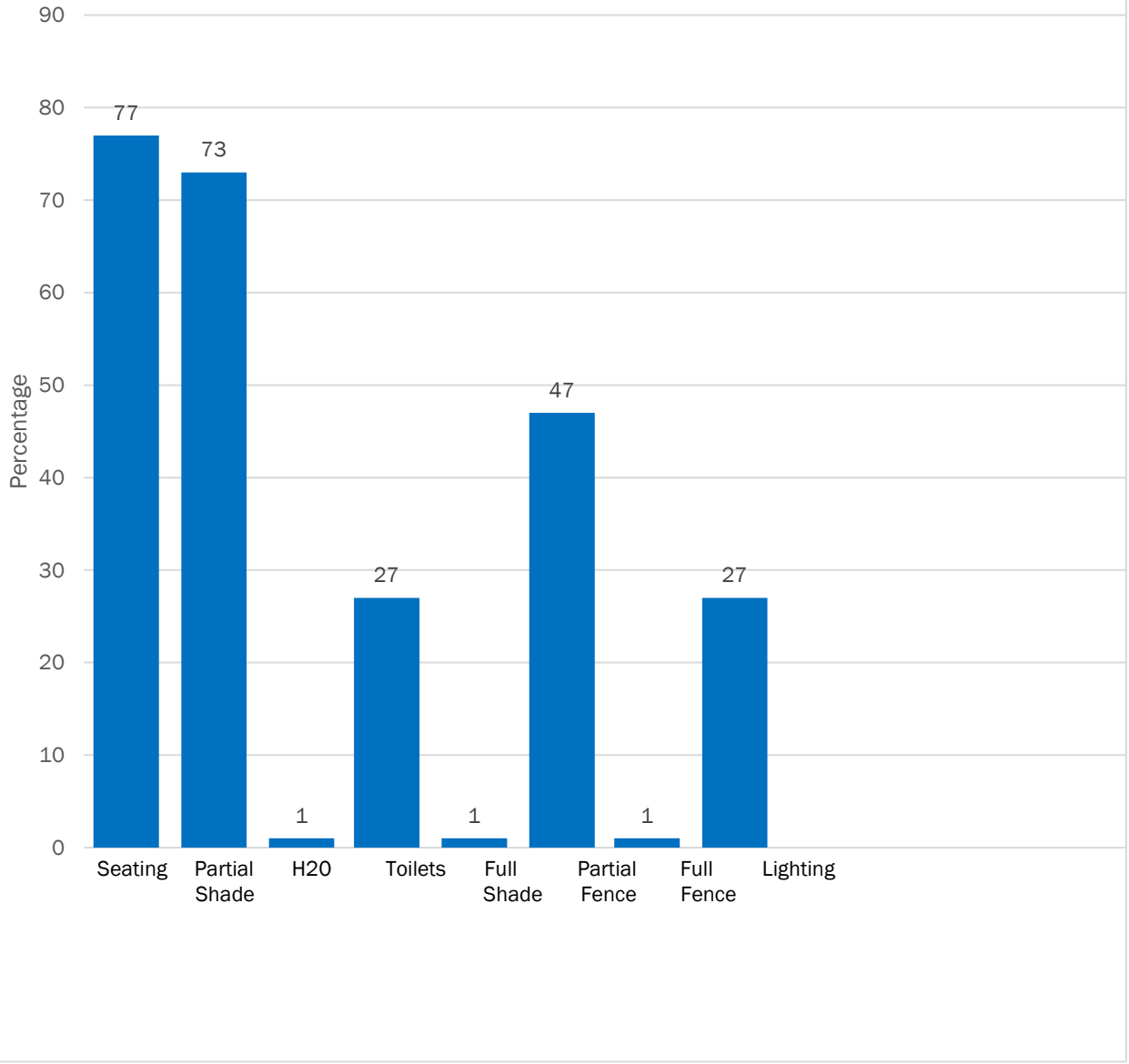
Table 3. Number of Playgrounds Incorporating Setting Elements

Playground Setting Element	Parks with Setting Elements
Playgrounds with Seating	23
Partially Shaded Playgrounds (Trees, Man-made structures)	22
Playground with Drinking Water	2
Playgrounds within fifty meters to a public toilet	8
Fully Shaded Playgrounds	2
Partially Fenced Playgrounds	14
Fully Fenced Playgrounds	3
Playgrounds with Lighting	8

"Bench Seating"

"Wind sails (Shade)"

Figure 3. **Percentage of City of Prince Albert playgrounds Incorporating Setting Elements**



4.5 Playground Maintenance & Audit Frequencies

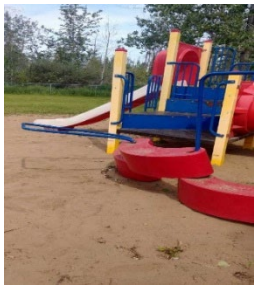
Working towards a higher level of annual routine maintenance service frequencies and ongoing investment in **training** of staff is key to practical, firsthand experience when applying the CAN/CSA Z614 Children's Play spaces and Equipment Standards. Understanding these standards will help the City of Prince Albert set regular inspection requirements, identifying hazards and playground risk analysis and ensure equipment is compliant with an end goal to keep children safe.

Table 4. Annual Playground Maintenance, Inspections & Audit Frequencies

Type of maintenance	Current Frequency	Proposed Frequency
Routine Maintenance	Yearly	Monthly
Structural Inspection (Documented)	Yearly	Monthly
Playground Inspection (Documented)	Yearly	Monthly
Visual Inspection	Monthly	Weekly
Playground Audit (Documented)	Yearly	Yearly (end of season)


Mair Park


Kinsmen Park


Hazeldell Park


Carlton Park

4.6 Playground Life Periods

Playground life periods will vary according to several factors including:

- Usage Levels
- Quality of construction materials & practices
- Quality of design standards
- Use beyond design specifications!
- Soil Movement
- Tree root expansion
- Quality of Maintenance
- Vandalism/accidental damage
- Natural disasters (e.g., fire, flood, tornadoes, plow winds, snow overload, etc.)

The median life period for metal and wood playground units is 15 years.

Table 5. Playground equipment Life period

Playground	Life expectancy (Years)	Year Built	Current Age	Replacement Consideration	Equipment Obsolete
AC Howard	25 +	2021	3	2046	No
Agnew (**George Sutherland**)	15	2000	24	2030	Yes
Albright	15	2007	17	2032	Yes
AJFH Jumpstart/Expansion	25+	2019	5	2045	No
AJFH Ninja Park	25+	2021	3	2046	No
Barton Coombe **(John Hall)**	25+	2015	9	2042	No
Lions Park	25+	2020	4	2045	No
Car Guy's	15	2011	13	2035	No
Carlton Community Club	15	2022	30	2052	Yes
Davis (**Glenn Martin**)	15	2000	24	2027	Yes
Dent (**Lloyd Smith**)	15	2004	20	2031	No
Elks	15	2004	20	2026	Yes
Elks River	15	2004	20	2031	Yes
Hazeldell	15	2000	22	under review	Yes
Erickson (**Albert E.Gosselin**)	15	2000	24	2028	No
High Noon Optimist	15	2002	22	2028	Yes
Hogeweide (**Amy Meadows**)	15	2002	22	2029	No
James Isbister	25+	2022	2	2047	Yes
Kinsmen	25+	2017	7	2042	No
Kinsmen Water Park	15	2004	20	2029	Yes
Longworth (**Nelson**)	15	2001	23	2026	Yes
Little Red River	25+	2023	1	2048	No
Mahon	15	2011	13	2030	Yes
Mair	15	2004	20	2026	Yes
Midtown (**Lee Atkinson**)	25+	2024	NEW	2049	No
Miller Hill	15	2004	20	2025	Yes
Muzzy (**Edwin G. Laird**)	25+	2019	5	2046	No
Nordale (#1)	15	2004	20	2032	Yes
Nordale (#2)	15	2008	16	2032	Yes
Optimist Tourist	15	2000	24	2025	Yes
Southwood (**Myron Kowalsky**)	15	2004	20	2027	Yes

4.7 Playground Aging

Usually the older an asset item, the higher the level of maintenance (e.g., replacement or reconditioning of worn parts).

The percentages for the age of playgrounds varied from 10% for less than 5 years to 37% for over fifteen years. Unless the playground is refurbished and well maintained, playgrounds over fifteen years old may be considered passed their use – by industry standards. A notable exception to this rule is the structural components associated with some of the new equipment being developed and provided through companies like Playgrounds-R-Us and Blue IMP brands among others are engineered for longer life periods (25+ years).

Table 6. Percentage of Age of Playgrounds

Playground Age	Average	Count
Less than 5 Years Old	31%	9
5 - 10 Years of Age	7%	2
10 - 15 Years of Age	7%	2
Above 15 Years of Age	55%	16

4.8 Protective Surfacing

Significant variances occur within and between surfacing types including:

- Cost (e.g., synthetic surfacing is usually more expensive to install)
- Maintenance levels (e.g., sand & bark surfacing often require raking/topping up in high wear areas)
- Overheating (e.g., Black synthetic surfacing becomes too hot in warmer, unshaded conditions.
- Vandalism (e.g., Synthetic surfacing being ripped up or set on fire – costly to repair, sharps in sand/bark)
- Replacement life (e.g., Synthetic surfacing has a longer replacement life)
- Public perception
    - Aesthetics – a wide spectrum of opinion amongst users
    - Sharps risk (e.g., hidden glass & needles in sand & bark)
    - Cleanliness (e.g., bark can accumulate dirt and other fine particles)
    - Hygiene (e.g., sand being used for cat defecation)

Wood/bark mulch (47%) is the most used loose fill product of our thirty playgrounds. According to the Canadian Safety Standards (CAN/CSA Z614-14), synthetic/rubber and engineered wood fibre (EWF) are considered the safest fall surface materials. For example, with 300 mm depth of

material, EWF has a critical fall height of more than three meters whereas wood/bark mulch has a critical fall height of up to three meters.

Critical Fall Height – "the maximum height from which a life-threatening head injury would not be expected to occur. Therefore, the fall height of the equipment should not exceed the critical height of the surface in the design of playgrounds and the type and depth of surfacing used under the equipment.

Table 9. Percentage of surfacing type in playgrounds

Surfacing Type	Average	Count
Wood/Bark Mulch	47%	14
Sand	57%	17
Grass	7%	2
Synthetic/Rubber	7%	2
Mixed Types of surfacing	17%	5
No surfacing	0	0
Engineered wood fiber (EWF)	0	0

"Synthetic Rubber Surfacing"

"Sand"

"Fiber/Wood Mulch"

4.9 Playground Costs

The median annual playground repairs and maintenance expenditure per capita is $2414 ($70,000 per year), and playground capital replacement since 2015 has seen nine full playground replacements at a cost of $325,000. The newest additions to completion were Rotary Adventure Park in 2023 at a cost of 1.3 million, and Lee Atkinson/Midtown at a total investment of $650,000.

Kinsmen Playground

Muzzy Drive Playground

Barton Coombe Playground

Alfred Jenkins Playground

5. TIPS IN PLAYGROUND PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Playground planning should recognize that each playground experience is unique to each child, and each playground (natural or commercial) is unique in its site features, layout, design components, and visual appeal. The information supplied below is in consultation with industry professionals.

5.1 Maintenance

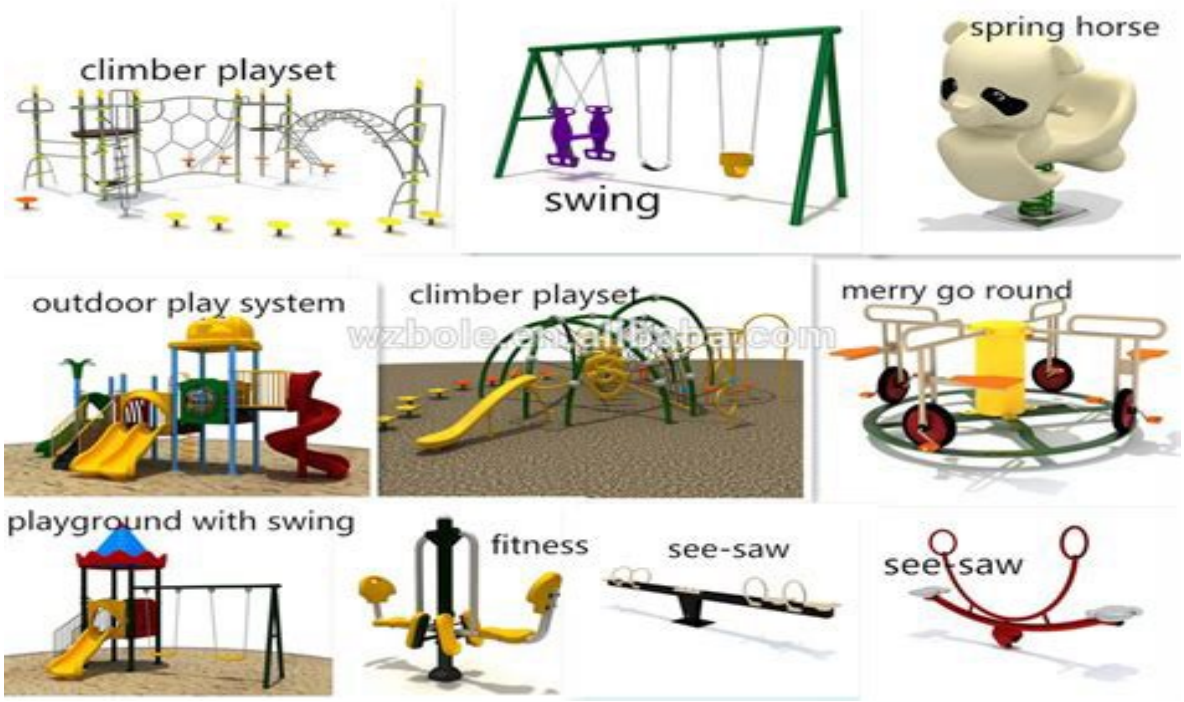
- Do what can be done on-site, avoid leaving. Repair work when it can, be done on-site.
- Carry a good supply of regularly required. Spare-parts.
- Document maintenance systems, Standards and processes ensuring quality and Future planning.
- Have general park maintenance crews visually.

Inspect playgrounds to make safe and report any observable failures.

- Acquire regular updates on maintenance standards for playgrounds.
- Ensure all appropriate documents are provided during the handover period from the developer (e.g., construction drawings, certificates of compliance, parts list/manual).
- Regularly update manufacturers, installers, spare part suppliers contact details.
- Keep an inventory of maintenance activities for insurance purposes.
- Monitor the costs of playground maintenance.
- Repair or when applicable remove damaged playground equipment as quickly as possible.

5.1.1 Parts

- Have the proper tools necessary to do the job.
- Carry regularly required spare parts to avoid trips back to the supply compound.
- Although warranty issues may be of concern, spare parts can, in some cases, be obtained from alternative local suppliers for a much lower cost.
- At the time of awarding contracts, ensure that spare parts are readily available within a satisfactory period.
- Ensure that playground parts are engineered for longevity. For example, strong bearings and rust proof metals should be utilized rather than soft steel. Examining cheaper products often reveals inferior engineering that leads to shorter useable life.
- Ensure inventories are up to date so that spare parts are ordered within allowable lead times when supplies are low.



5.2 Asset Replacement/Restoration/Refreshing

- Playgrounds restored need only comply with the standards at the time of purchase in which the original playground was established.
- Where possible, playgrounds be restored on site using paint, spare parts etc. This saves the cost of removal, transportation, and reinstallation with new (in these situations, equipment must be in good condition and meet the standards for the current time-period in consultation with the CAN/CSA Z614 standards).
- Older playground equipment that is still in good condition after 20+ years, consideration of restoration (using it in a different area, painting it a distinct color and adding some new features) rather than replacement.
- There is excellent value in restoring as well as improving the recycling of materials.
- Continue playground inspections and audits after restoration.
- Establish a proactive and well-funded asset replacement program to minimize wear and tear failure.

5.3 Warranty

- Specify the warranty wanted, rather than the manufacturer's standard warranty.
- Include an assessment of the manufacturer's warranties within the supply assessment process.
- Check to ensure that the supplier can fulfill their warranty obligations.
- Ensure that the warranty obligations are fulfilled within a specific Period
- Check which parts are covered under warranty?
- Assess suppliers for business stability, given that if a specific supplier. closes their business warranties are not able to be fulfilled.
- Do not be afraid to challenge a warranty.

- Upon installation, have the manufacturer and installer warrant that the playground is designed and constructed according to standards.
- Retain warranty documentation.

5.4 Alternative Funding Sources

- Source grants, sponsorships, and donations to raise money for playground location.
- Involve the community in the development of a playground location. Utilize their ideas to increase local ownership in the playground.
- Develop self-help models for the establishment and maintenance of playgrounds in communities.

5.5 Encouraging Playground Use

- Provide a diverse array of age-based play settings within the space.
- Promote play spaces through brochures, media, and internet information.
- Provide direction signage to playgrounds.
- Have a playground where wireless internet connection so that older children can interact through a number of physical and social mediums.
- Integrate playground settings with other recreational settings like picnic facilities, ball-parks, soccer fields, etc.
- Facilitate education programs associated with the importance of play (thinking differently about how we use playground space in conjunction with our playground programming)
- Prepare media releases about new playgrounds and existing playgrounds.
- Invite Mayors, Councilor's, dignitaries to opening of playgrounds.
- Provide information to bloggers – e.g., external websites that focus on children's lay or parks.
- Encourage residents to write reviews and provide feedback through various medians.

- Look at the benefits of using the playground during the winter months (year-round play). Instead of abandoning the playground in the winter, get creative and safe with winter programming.

5.6 Planning & Development of Playgrounds

- Develop playgrounds away from dips and drainage.
  Lines, to avoid poor drainage.
- Keep an inventory of shade, soft fall areas, equipment,
  Edging, pictures, etc.
- Specify soft fall areas only as required.
  Over-specification, although aesthetically interesting,
  Locations can increase burden on capital and recurrent.
  Expenditures.
- Understand that “off the shelf” (tires, logs, etc.) playground.
  Settings meet only a part of the playground requirements; the whole setting should be taken into consideration.
- Well-designed placement of rocks, pipes and timber steps, logs are still worthwhile considerations in play, developing play spaces with limited funds. This can promote “Natural/Creative Play.”
- Consolidation of smaller community parks into larger centralized locations to provide better “bang for the buck.”
- Natural areas provide abundant opportunities for play. Consideration of integrating natural areas near formal play spaces or vice versa can provide opportunities for more formalized and natural play.
- Keep community expectations reasonable by discussing available funding and what can be achieved for that amount.

- "Off the shelf" (tires, logs, etc.) play equipment should be seen as part of a play setting, not as the total play setting.
- Whilst it may be more aesthetically pleasant to select color schemes for playgrounds that blend in, bright colors assist with the development of contrast definition for younger children, allowing them to identify and negotiate around play elements.
- An inclusive access playground should provide diverse play opportunities for children with mobility, vision, hearing, and intellectual and develop disabilities. A barrier-free accessible path of travel should link the playground and its equipment to the site entrance, other facilities, and transport arrival points. Not every piece of play equipment is required to be fully accessible however the choice and layout of equipment and safety surfaces should provide access to a wide variety of play sensations – e.g., swinging, revolving, rocking, elevation, tactile, sensory, creative. The layout of equipment should facilitate social integration and engagement of children of many ages and abilities.

5.7 Risk Management

- Encourage families to use natural spaces as Places to explore and play.
- Look at how people use space. Document, Make right and/or manage the observed risks.
- Determine what level of risk the city is willing to accept.
- Minimize risk through regular visual playground. Inspections through weekly, monthly documented playground inspections and yearly documented audits. All inspections should be reviewed using playground manufacturer's specifications and the CAN/CSA Z614-14 standard.
- Increase fencing where a playground is adjacent to roads, water bodies, etc.
- Higher color contrast also improves visual security as a risk management factor. A child in difficulty can be more easily identified and a perpetrator more likely to be observed.

5.8 Soft Fall/Surfacing

Falls are the leading cause of injury on the playground; therefore, surfacing is extremely important for the safety of children and youth.

- Engineered Wood Fibre (EWF) is a viable alternative to other loose fill options as it is more resilient to scuffing and weather event displacement is considered an accessible surface. It is less likely to degrade (dust up) compared to other loose fill options.
- Initially it is more expensive than other loose fill options, but it lasts longer.

- According to the standard CAN/CSA Z614-14, it has greater fall protection than wood chip/bark mulch, pea gravel and sand.
- EWF has a different appearance and feels like barking mulch with some saying that it feels sharp.
- Use of lighter colors when using synthetic surfacing to help in reducing the heat from direct sunlight.

"Sand" (Loose fill)

"Synthetic Surfacing"

"Wood bark/Mulch"

6. GLOSSARY

Category	Description
Access for All Playground	An access for all playground designed to suit a number of disability ranges. Typically, it consists of solid surface ramps 90suitable for wheelchair access, tactile facilities for the visually impaired, and a range of other disabled facilities (e.g., special swing(s) for disabled children). Accessibility to the playground (hard surfaces, curb crossovers etc.), to suit disability ranges, should also be considered. A synonymous term to Access for All playgrounds is Engagement for All playgrounds. This term reflects the inclusion of activities for disable within the playground.
Annual Recurrent Expenditure	Ongoing expenditure over a fiscal year that is required to sustain regular organizational activities. Included is general maintenance and structural inspection.
Children's Playground	Equipment designed for the specific age group (5 – 12 years). The age grouping is indicative and may vary for a child's capability.
Critical height	the maximum height for a surfacing material that yields a peak deceleration of 200 g or a head injury criterion (HIC) of one thousand; the maximum height from which a life- threatening head injury would not be expected to occur.
Current Value	The depreciated value of an item or group of items. It reflects the amount of value an asset loses over a period and after use.
Fall Height	The vertical distance between a designated play surface or a location otherwise specified in the standard and the protective surfacing beneath it.
Formal Play	Structured play that adheres to a set of predefined parameters.
General Maintenance	General Maintenance includes activities undertaken by a maintenance crew or person including cleaning, graffiti removal; patch up painting, minor structural repair, sand raking, and general visual inspections.
Inclusive Play	Inclusive play allows children of all abilities to grow together.
Informal Play	Structured play that adheres to a set of predefined parameters.

Intergenerational playground	Facility containing equipment that caters for older adults (e.g., grandparents) taking children to parks along with playgrounds that contain coordination & balance equipment (e.g., balance beam for improving gross motor skills), seating and shade.
Mixed Age Playground	A playground setting that caters for a range of age groups.
Natural Playground	The **natural** play scape (or **natural playground**) defined as a space with as little man-made components as possible. Using native plants, rolling hills, trees; representing a **natural** place such as a forest. Design with the intent of bringing children and people back to nature.
Park Playgrounds	Playgrounds, located in parks within the City of Prince Albert city limits.
Playground Inspection	Observation and written evaluation of a playground
Playground Supervisor	A person (e.g., parent, caregiver, teacher) who supervises children using a playground.
Playscape	A designed and integrated set of playground equipment, often made of wood.
Publicly Accessible Playgrounds	Accessible to the public within the City of Prince Albert, this includes all parks managed by the city.
Replacement Value	The value of an item or group of items purchased and installed as new. This amount should be greater than or equal to its current value.
Soft Fall	A safety surface beneath and surrounding play apparatus
Structural Inspection	Structural Inspection is a specific task that assesses the structural integrity of a facility (it is more thorough than a visual inspection associated with a normal general maintenance cycle). Playground structural inspections include assessing of conformance to Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI) – CAN/CSA Z614-14 “Children’s Play Spaces and Equipment”.
Teenage Playground	A playground designed to suit older children who are in the 13 - 19 years. The age grouping is indicative and may slightly vary for a child or teen’s capability.
Toddler/Pre-School Aged Playground	Equipment designed for the specific age group (18 months – 5 years). The age grouping is indicative and may vary depending on a child’s capability.