



Meeting Date: May 7, 2025

Prepared By: Scott Mairs, Director of Community Services

Report No: CMS-03-2025

Subject: Bryanston School Playground

Recommendation:

THAT Report CMS-03-2025 re: Bryanston School Playground be received;

AND THAT Council provide direction to staff to proceed with one of the options listed below.

Purpose:

To seek Council direction with respect to the Bryanston School Playground.

Background:

To ensure the highest standards of safety and compliance, regular inspections of the municipal playgrounds are carried out by an independent third-party provider. This approach supports an objective assessment of the playground's condition and ensures adherence to relevant health and safety regulations and playground safety standards.

Third-party inspectors are qualified professionals with expertise in playground safety and risk management. Their inspections cover all equipment, surfacing, access points, and surrounding infrastructure. Detailed reports are provided following each visit, identifying any safety concerns, wear and tear, or maintenance needs.

With the recent Council decision to maintain the Bryanston School property, staff requested the services of Playscape Inspection & Consulting Service Inc. (PICS) to complete an assessment of the Bryanston Playground.

The attached inspection report concludes that while the playground equipment and surfacing are in fair condition given their age, attention to the identified issues is necessary to maintain compliance and safety. The municipality is advised to carry out the recommended repairs to address all non-compliant features, particularly those marked with a high priority.

Additionally, given the equipment's age and the advancing standards for public playgrounds, staff is recommending commencing planning for future upgrades or full replacement of the playground infrastructure.

Analysis:

The playground inspection conducted on March 25, 2025, performed by Playscape Inspection & Consulting Service Inc. (PICS) provides a thorough evaluation of the site's condition, surfacing, equipment compliance, and overall safety. The inspection was performed by Dave Jackson, a certified inspector with (PICS).

The playground is surfaced with pea stone, which was confirmed to meet safety standards through impact attenuation testing. However, the report advises a top-up and general maintenance such as rototilling to restore the surface's performance, particularly in high-wear zones like slide exits and swing bays. The average depth of the surfacing is 16 centimeters. The site includes both wood and poly retainers; while the wood is showing signs of minor deterioration, the poly sections pose a trip hazard and are recommended for removal.

The equipment, manufactured by PlayPower LT and APE, was originally installed in 2001, making it 24 years old at the time of inspection. This age exceeds the expected lifespan for typical composite play structures, which is generally between 15 and 20 years. While some components remain compliant with CSA Z614 standards, several deficiencies were observed that require corrective action. The equipment was installed under the CSA Z614:1998 standard, though current observations reference the updated CSA Z614:2020.

Several pieces of equipment were identified as non-compliant. The dual slide presented an entanglement hazard where toggles or cords could become caught between the slide and its platform or hood. A sharp point was noted on the same slide where a missing label left an exposed bolt. The poly retainer adjacent to the swing set created a trip hazard due to partial removal. Loose hardware was observed on the counter panel and on multiple barrier panels, which, while stable at the time of inspection, should be tightened to prevent future safety risks. A poly arch component above the wave slide was missing hardware, posing a risk of structural instability. Protruding hardware on this same component also presented a hazard. Although the swings themselves, including a three-leg, three-bay structure with six seats, were compliant, other issues with the play structure demanded immediate or near-term attention.

The surfacing, although technically compliant at the time of testing, is subject to natural wear such as compaction, contamination, and displacement. A limestone screening layer may also develop beneath the pea stone, which can negatively affect impact performance if not addressed through routine maintenance. The absence of updated manufacturer and age-appropriate labels does not present a safety risk, though the option to request replacement labels remains open to the municipality.

The inspector concludes that while the playground equipment and surfacing are in fair condition given their age, attention to the identified issues is necessary to maintain compliance and safety. The municipality is advised to carry out the recommended repairs to address all non-compliant features, particularly those marked with a high priority. Additionally, given the equipment's age and the advancing standards for public playgrounds, it is recommended that the Municipality of Middlesex Centre begin budgeting and planning for future upgrades or full replacement of the playground infrastructure.

Council Options

When considering the future of the Bryanston playground, several options are available, each with different implications for safety, cost, and community value:

1) Update Existing Equipment:

This option would involve a budget amendment to allocate additional funds from the Building & Facility Reserves to repair the current playground equipment, improving safety and extending its lifespan.

2) Remove Equipment/Not Replace:

If the equipment is deemed outdated or unsafe and not worth upgrading, removal may be a viable solution to eliminate potential risks and ongoing maintenance costs. The cost to remove the unit would be absorbed through the existing operational budget and the unit would be auctioned off. Costs with this option are very low.

3) Remove and Replace Equipment (Preferred):

This option involves the complete removal of the existing playground equipment and installation of new, modern equipment to be funded by the Building & Facility Reserves through the 2026 budget process. This option provides an opportunity to upgrade the play space with improved safety features and inclusive designs while maintaining the playground's established presence within the community.

This option would require further discussion and consideration given to potentially relocating the playground next to Bryanston Community Centre or elsewhere in the current park setting. Investing in brand-new playground equipment and relocating it near the Bryanston Community Centre could enhance accessibility and better serve local families as part of a broader community space. A public consultation is likely required to assist staff and Council with this decision.

Financial Implications:

Option 1: Update Existing

To address current safety and maintenance needs at the Bryanston playground, the following costs have been identified:

Estimated Costs:

- Wood Retainer Wall: \$17,500
- Pea Stone Top-Up: \$3,500
- Play Equipment Repairs: \$6,800

Total Estimated Cost: \$27,800

Option 3: Remove and Replace Equipment:

Current costs to build a new playground and base are estimated at \$225,000 based on recent tenders received for similar type of projects. Depending on the final location of the playground, additional site servicing costs may be required.

Total Estimated Cost: \$225,000 (not including any additional site servicing that may be required)

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services
- Responsive Municipal Government

Attachments:

A1 – Playscape Inspection & Consulting Service Inc. – Playground Inspection Report for Bryanston School