



WEST HANTS REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY REPORT

Information ☐	Recommendation ☒	Decision Request ☐	Councillor Activity ☐
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To: West Hants Regional Municipal Council

Submitted by: Kathy Kehoe, Director Community Development

Date: September 15, 2025

Subject: Elmcroft Play Structure Recommendation Report

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Municipal Government Act, Section 65, Powers to expend funds for municipal purpose.

RECOMMENDATION

That staff proceed with the tendering process for the replacement of the Elmcroft play structure.

BACKGROUND

Property ☒	Public Opinion ☐	Environment ☐	Social ☒	Economic ☒	Councillor Activity ☐
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At the June 24, 2025, Council meeting the following motion was passed:

...THAT STAFF COMPLETE A VISIT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AT THE ELMCROFT PARK AND PROVIDE A REPORT TO COUNCIL ON ASSESSING THE AREA TO DETERMINE IF IT IS A SUITABLE LOCATION AND EXPLORE POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR RELOCATING THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT—EITHER ON THE SAME PROPERTY OR AT A NEW SITE—WITH IMPROVED VISIBILITY TO HELP DETER DAMAGE AND EVALUATE THE CURRENT STRUCTURAL SAFETY AND PROVIDE ESTIMATES FOR REPLACING AND INSTALLING NEW EQUIPMENT TO CREATE A SAFE AND INVITING COMMUNITY SPACE FOR THE CHILDREN OF WEST HANTS.

DISCUSSION

The existing playground is currently operational due to consistent maintenance efforts by staff. However, given its age and the increasing difficulty in sourcing appropriate replacement parts, the facility is nearing the end of its serviceable life and for safety, reliability, and modernization, the playground should be scheduled for replacement. Since options to move the playground location to another property are limited, one possibility is to place a new structure on the same site but closer to Stannus Street. This would improve visibility, discourage vandalism and provide a safer, more welcoming play space.



The play structure if moved toward Stannus Street may, on a rare occasion, be subject to combined sewer overflow events. To mitigate the potential exposure risks, the surface beneath the play structure is recommended to be a rubberized safety matting which in addition to making the space accessible provides a non-porous, cleanable surface. Rubberized matting allows for thorough sanitation and disinfection.

The Accessibility Act (Bill 59) established accessibility as a human right aiming to make Nova Scotia fully accessible by 2030 and the province's strategy, Access by Design 2030 outlines a roadmap to achieving this vision.

The Built Environment Accessibility Standard targets indoor, outdoor, and recreational spaces, such as parks and playgrounds and as of April 1, 2026, all new or redeveloped infrastructure including playgrounds, must meet technical accessibility requirements.

The WHRM Equity, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility Strategy Plan Strategic Action #4 - *make municipal buildings and public spaces more accessible to people of all ages and abilities*.

Staff are recommending that this play structure be built with accessible elements and include accessible rubberized matting and accessible pathways to enable users to access the space.

While the RFP for Consulting Services for a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for Parks & Recreation Facilities has closed but has not yet been awarded, staff recommend that the replacement of the playground proceed in advance of the study's completion. The condition, age, and ongoing maintenance challenges of the existing structure warrant timely action to ensure safety and service continuity for the community.

Further, staff recommend removing the existing equipment this fall, proceed with the tender process for a new play structure with rubberized surface and accessible features for a spring/early summer installation.

NEXT STEPS

1. Pending approval, staff will proceed with the tendering process for a new play structure to replace the Elmcroft equipment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost to replace the Elmcroft Play Structure with accessible features is approximately \$350,000. The site preparation cost is approximately \$50,000 and if approved, both the play structure and site preparation can be funded through the Canada Community Building Fund.

Elmcroft Park has \$530,000 allocated to it in the five-year capital plan. Pending the result of the tender further discussions and approvals will be sought.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council can choose to not proceed with the tendering process and not replace the play structure.
2. Council can choose to defer the project to the 2026/27 budget process.
3. Council can choose to wait for the completion of the Parks & Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment to determine if a new structure is warranted.

None of these alternatives are being recommended by staff.

ATTACHMENTS

None

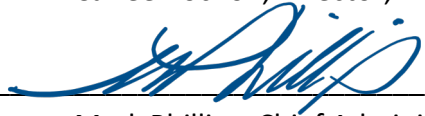
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW

I support the recommendation.

Report Prepared by: _____
Kathy Kehoe, Director Community Development

Report Reviewed by: _____
Kevin Bennett, Manager, Parks & Recreation Facilities.

Report Reviewed by: _____
Carlee Rochon, Director, Financial Services

Report Approved by:  _____
Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer

