

Playground rubber surface strategy in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

AAC meeting April 18, 2023



Presentation overview

- Purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- What we have heard from the AAC to date
- Challenges with playgrounds with rubber surfaces
- Current approach to playgrounds with rubber surfaces
- What other municipalities are doing for playground surfaces
- Current rubber surface distribution
- Draft master plan recommendation
- Questions and AAC Motion
- Next steps



Parks and Recreation Master Plan (The Master Plan)

Purpose of the Master Plan

- Sets direction for parkland, recreation, facilities, and programs in Guelph over the next 10 years and beyond;
- Identifies needs and guides investment and priorities.

Why address playground rubber surface strategy in the Master Plan

- Transparency of service level between the City and community;
- Sets a standardized approach;
- Ensures long-term equitable distribution of facilities across the city.



What we have heard from the AAC to date

- The city's typical playground service level is not accessible enough;
- Individuals who use mobility devices and other wheeled devices have reported that engineered wood fibre is quite difficult to navigate;
- Park Planning staff need to consult with the AAC earlier in playground projects;
- The publication [Creating Inclusive Playgrounds: A Playbook of Considerations and Strategies](#) is an excellent framework for inclusive playground design;
- Kate's Place in Elmira, Southridge Park in Elora, Stait Park in Fergus, and Sacha's Park in L'Original are excellent examples of accessible playgrounds with rubber surfaces.

Challenges with playgrounds with rubber surfaces

- When playgrounds are replaced we try to stay within the existing playground footprint and re-use existing curbs. When installing rubber, curbs often need to be replaced;
- Rubber deteriorates faster than engineered wood fibre and requires replacement more often;
- Rubber is more expensive than engineered wood fibre;
- Height of play equipment can be restricted when using rubber surface;
- Rubber surface absorbs and holds heat;
- Project scope is often increased to support the enhanced service level – this could include: parking, additional pedestrian connections, furnishings, and shade structures.

Current approach to playgrounds surfaces

- Typical City of Guelph playgrounds include engineered wood fibre under the play equipment.
- Some playgrounds have rubber surface under the play equipment.
- In the past, Guelph has implemented playgrounds with rubber surfaces based on park type hierarchy and on a case-by-case basis. This has resulted in an uneven and unequitable distribution of playgrounds with rubber surfaces city-wide.

Locations with rubber surfaces include:

- Royal City Park
- Riverside Park
- Eastview Community Park
- South End Community Park
- Spurline Park

2023 Playgrounds to get rubber surfaces:

- Herb Markle Park
- Howden Crescent Park
- University Village Park

What other municipalities are doing for playground surfaces

- There is no established industry standard for the quantity or location of rubber surface playgrounds.
- All municipal comparators offer:
 - Engineered wood fibre as a typical playground surface; and
 - Rubber surfaces in key locations.

What we are proposing for Guelph

- Geographic distribution of playgrounds with rubber surfaces within 2.5 km of residential areas (5-minute drive or 30-minute walk).
- The geographic distribution model will ensure that:
 - Playgrounds with rubber surfaces are located within reasonable distance to residential areas.
 - Playgrounds with rubber surfaces are more evenly distributed through the city.

Current rubber surface distribution

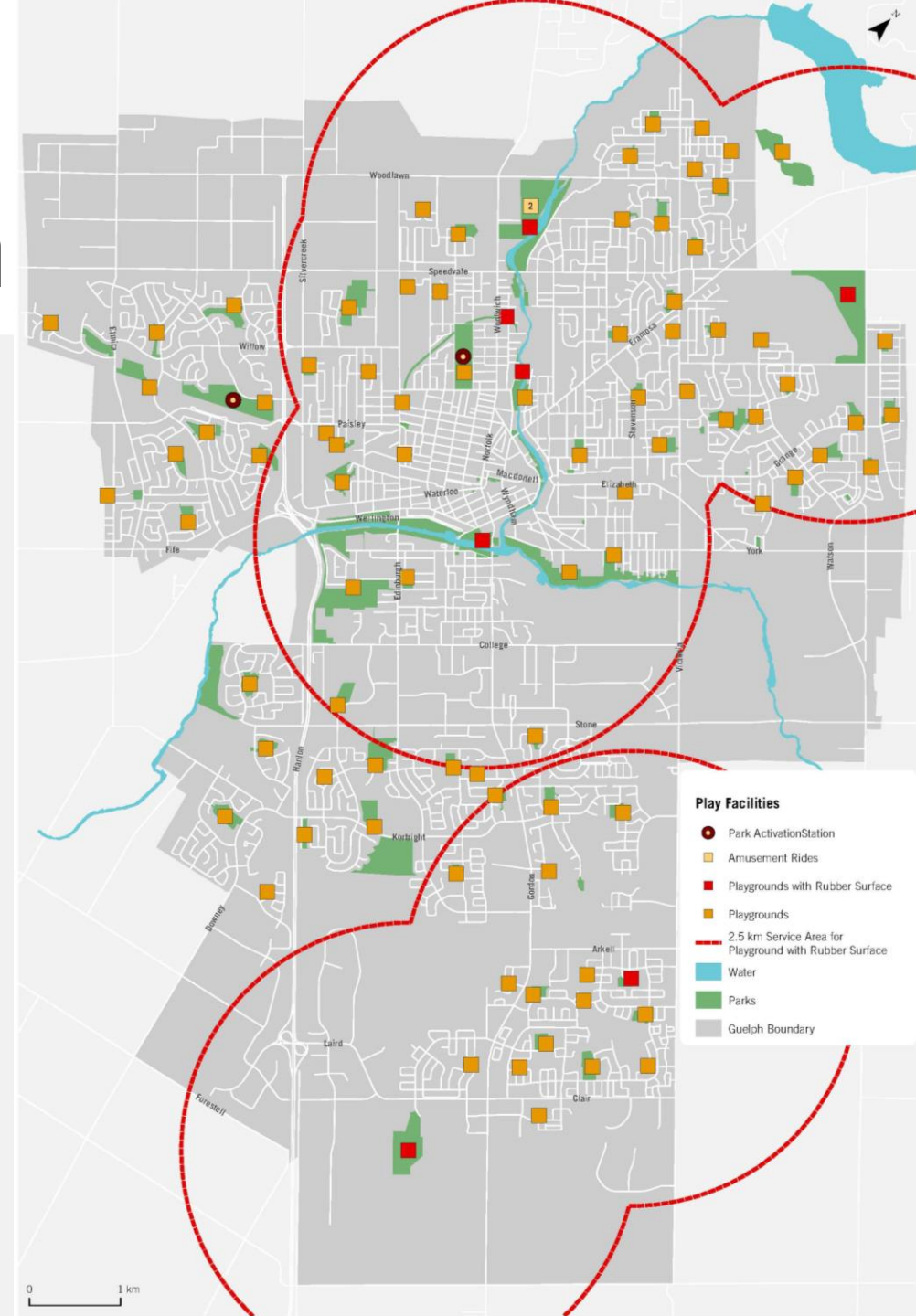
We mapped playgrounds with rubber surfaces with a 2.5 km service radius around each.

Two gaps were identified:

- One in the central area of the city; and
- One in the north-west area of the city.

To fill these gaps we are proposing:

- One playground with rubber surface at University Village Park (central area)
- One playground with rubber surface in the north-west area, with location to be determined through budget and playground replacement forecast.



Draft Master Plan recommendation

“In the next 10 years, construct two new rubber surface playgrounds to fill distribution gaps: one at University Village Park and one in the north-west end (location to be determined).”

Actions already captured by legislation and the Park Plan:

- All parks will have accessible paths.
- Continue to consult with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on park design and construction projects as per legislation.

Review timeline:

- A review and update of the master plan is planned at the five-year mark after adoption.
- A full master plan update is recommended at the 10-year mark after adoption.

Questions and motion

- Within the scope of playground rubber surfaces, are there any questions?
- We are asking the AAC for a motion recommending the adoption of the geographic distribution model for playgrounds with rubber surfaces to be added to the master plan.

Recommended motion:

That the AAC supports the adoption of a geographic distribution of playgrounds with rubber surface within 2.5 km of residential areas. Further, the AAC supports the implementation of two new rubber surface playgrounds to fill distribution gaps in the central and north-west areas of the city.



Next steps

- Receive feedback and motion from AAC on the master plan draft recommendation relating to playgrounds with rubber surfaces;
- Conduct an internal staff review of the draft master plan (Q2 2023)
- Finalize master plan draft and post for public review (Q3 2023)
- Council consideration of draft master plan (Q4 2023)

Thank you!

Thank you for your time.

Please review and comment on the draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan to be posted publicly in Q3 2023.

For additional comments or questions about the Parks and Recreation Master Plan please reach out to Mallory.lemon@guelph.ca