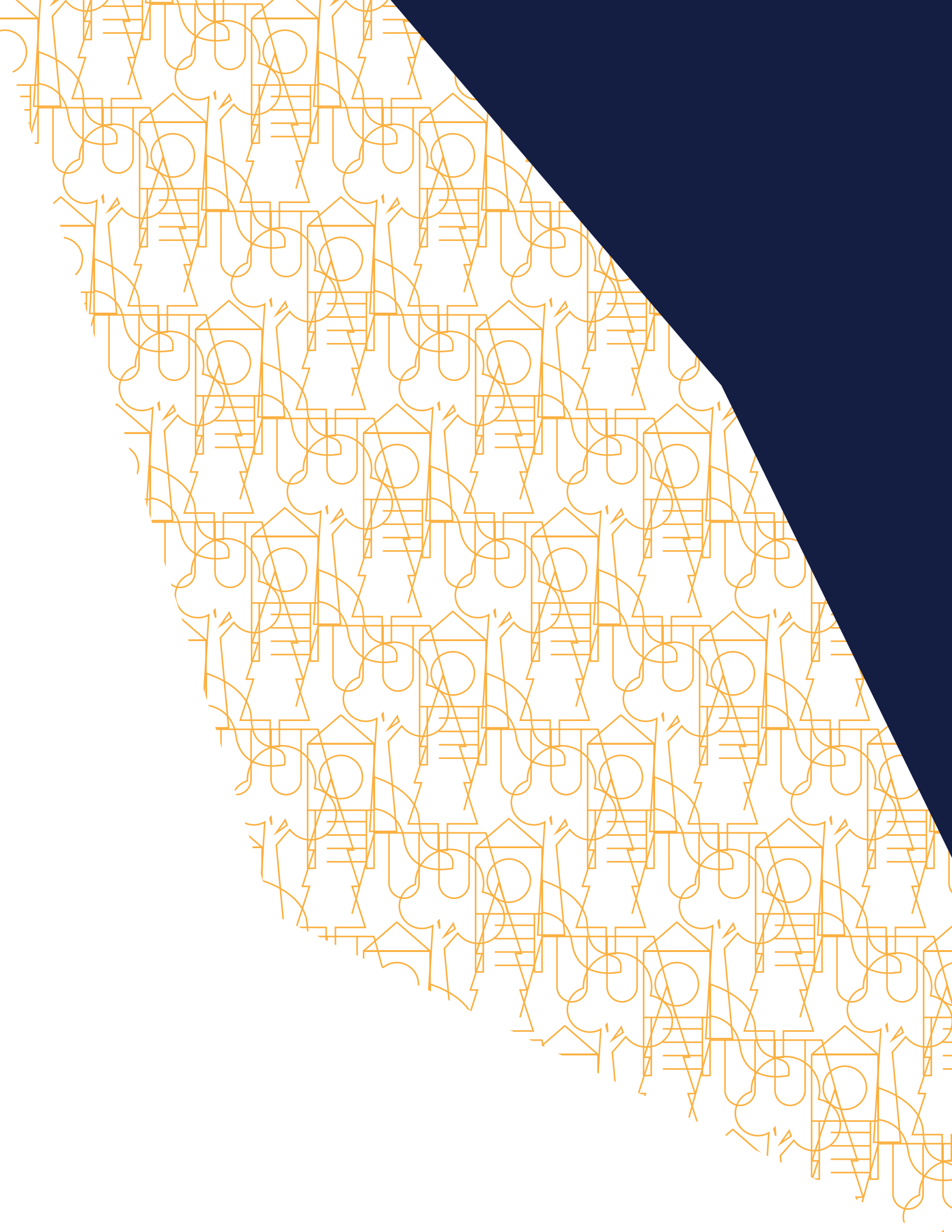# CITY OF MEDICINE HAT

PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JUNE 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Medicine Hat updated its Playground Management Plan to review the current state of outdoor play infrastructure in the city and provide a reference point to ensure future actions and investment makes the most beneficial use of available resources. The last Playground Management Plan was developed in 2007 – nearly 15 years ago. Trends, playground typologies, demands for play experiences, and our understanding of the importance of providing diverse play opportunities have evolved. The new Playground Management Plan reflects these evolutions in how we think about, plan and provide play opportunities and will ensure actions related to playground planning, management and development are best positioned for success over the next decade.

The new Playground Management Plan was informed by a variety of inputs, including:

- Public feedback provided through a survey (186 responses) and a roving "conversation cube" (156 comments were provided on topics related to play in the city).
- Discussion sessions with stakeholder groups that use playgrounds and/or provide play opportunities.
- Activity sessions with children and youth in the community.
- Playground assessments (the project team conducted on-site assessments of approximately one-third of the city's playground inventory).
- Mapping and spatial analysis.
- Review of trends and leading practices from other jurisdictions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAYGROUNDS IN MEDICINE HAT

Summarized as follows are key findings from the analysis of the current playground infrastructure in the city.
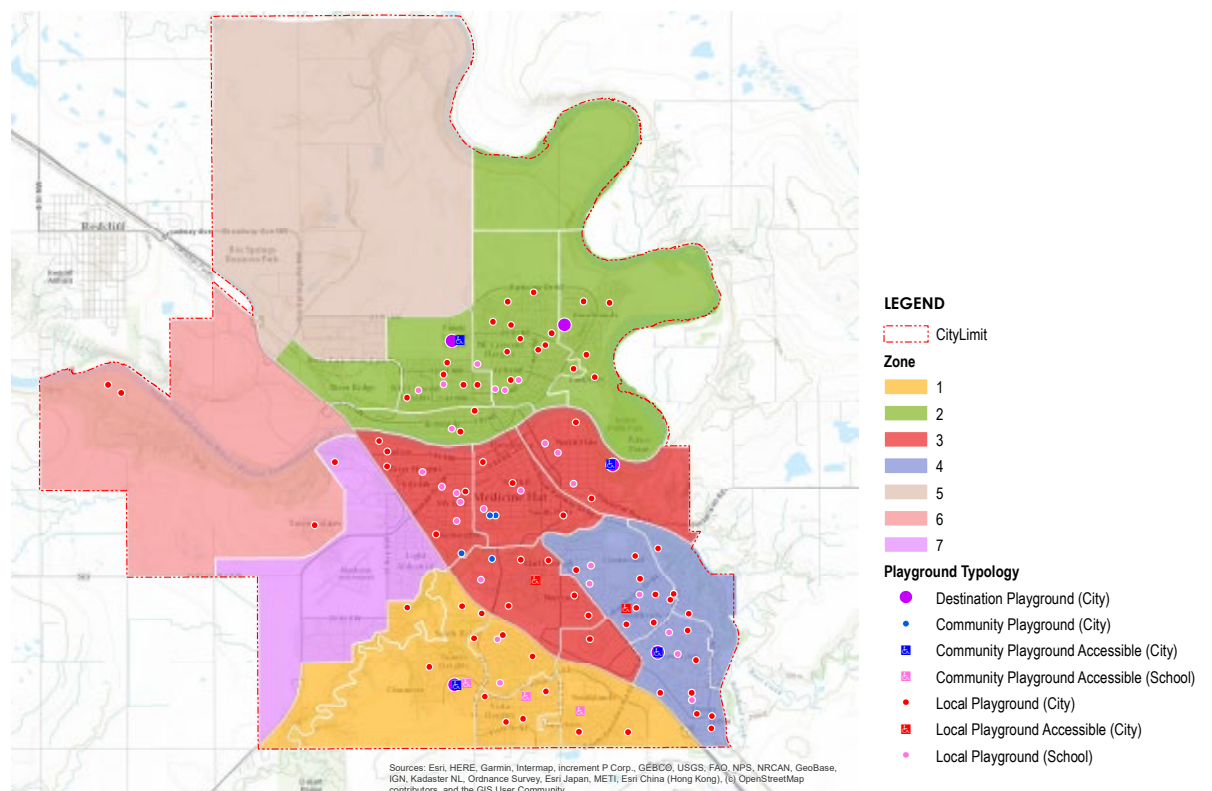
- The 2007 Playground Management Plan identified a 600 metre radius as a desired level of playground service coverage. The City has been extremely successful at achieving this target - 95% of households in Medicine Hat are currently within 600 metres of a playground.

- Medicine Hat's inventory of playgrounds is aging. The average age of the City maintained playground structures is 15 years old. Assessments conducted on City playgrounds founds that 21% of the City's inventory are in Fair to Poor condition and nearing the end of its lifespan.

- Opportunities exist to diversify play opportunities in the city. While a few select City and School playgrounds provide adventure, risky, and natural play features, most playground sites and structures in the city lack dynamic play opportunities.

- Physical accessibility is a challenge at many playgrounds in the city. Recognizing that resources limitations and existing site characteristics will make it difficult to make all playgrounds fully accessible, opportunities exist to enhance accessibility as playground renewal and new projects occur.

- Medicine Hat provides more playgrounds per capita in comparison to other cities of a similar size in Western Canada.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A NEW PLANNING APPROACH FOR PLAYGROUND PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN MEDICINE HAT

As previously mentioned, the previous 2007 Playground Management Plan was based around a target of ensuring most residents in the city had access to a playground within 600 metres. The new approach outlined in this document is focused on maintaining access while also integrating other key considerations including play diversity and a focus on play quality over quantity.

As a basis for future playground planning and management, the city has been divided into seven **Service Zones**. For planning consistency, these zones are aligned with the sectors identified in the myMH Master Plan.

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

LEGEND

CityLimit

Zone
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Playground Typology
Destination Playground (City)
Community Playground (City)
Community Playground Accessible (City)
Community Playground Accessible (School)
Local Playground (City)
Local Playground Accessible (City)
Local Playground (School)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Service Level Targets were then identified to provide a guideline for playground provision in Service Zones 1-4. *These targets are not applied to Service Zones 5-7 due to the limited number of playgrounds and residents that currently live in these areas.*

Recommended # of City Provided *Destination* Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended # of City Provided *Community* Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended # of City Provided *Local* Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended Total # of City Provided Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended # of City Provided *Accessible* Playgrounds per Service Zone
1	3	12 - 15	15 – 18	2

Evaluation tools were developed and applied to help determine recommended future **Actions** and **Game Plan** for Service Zones 1-4. In summary, implementation of these Actions and Game Plans will:

- **See a shift from quantity to quality.** This will occur by gradually phasing out a small number of lower value playground structures in neighbourhoods that have a sufficient supply of playgrounds (up to 13 sites, including 6 that have already had playground equipment removed). Undertaking this recommended approach will enable the City to focus its resources on providing more dynamic mid-sized playgrounds (Community Playgrounds).

- **Re-imagining decommissioned playground sites.** It is important to note that sites removed from the playground inventory will continue to remain within the City's parks inventory. Removing the aging playground structures from these sites presents an opportunity to work with neighbourhoods to re-image these sites and determine those uses and amenities that can provide the greatest possible benefit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Included in Section 11 of this document are a number of additional **Implementation Considerations, Tactics, and Playground Management Strategies.**

- **Community Play Profiles.** It is recommended that the City develop a play profile for a neighbourhood whenever a new school playground is being planned and to inform playground provision in new neighbourhoods (as part of the ASP development process or post-ASP to refine the types, scale and characteristics of the planned playground site).

- **Identifying and Determining Play Opportunities and Theming.** Any size and class of playground can be developed to provide elements of advanced play ("risky play"), natural play, and adventure play and serve a broad cross-section of ages. It is suggested that the City continue to monitor and inventory play opportunities by type on an ongoing basis and consider potential gaps during the vendor procurement and site specific planning (new playgrounds and renewals).

- **Enhance the collection of playground utilization data.** The City does not have a comprehensive understanding of playground utilization. Placing an emphasis on the collection and analysis of playground utilization data can help ensure future planning and decision making is data driven.

- **Work with City Communications staff to develop an engagement process specific to playground management.** Playground projects and decisions pertaining to playgrounds (removals, replacements, etc.) are important to residents. Ensuring that the public is adequately informed and consulted with will help ensure clarity on actions taken by the City and ensure decision making is informed.

- **Work with school board partners to identify playground priorities on school sites and opportunities to collaborate.** Over 30% of playgrounds in Medicine Hat are located on school sites. Working with local school divisions will help optimize the overall playground inventory in the city by reducing instances of play opportunities being duplicated in certain neighbourhoods and lead to the identification of opportunities to partner on certain mutually beneficial projects, therefore making optimal use of available resources.

- **Develop a grant program (or protocol pertaining to an existing grant program) specific to community requests for playground funding.** The City, like most municipalities, has limited resources and must make difficult decisions based on achieving maximum benefit with public funds. Further clarifying grant protocols, required data / information that should accompany grant requests, and other pre-requisites will help City Council and administration make informed decisions and evaluate requests in the most effective manner.

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1

INTRODUCTION

The City of Medicine Hat has updated its Playground Management Plan to provide a strategic point of reference that will guide how the City maintains, plans, and invests in existing and future playground spaces. The last Playground Management Plan was developed in 2007. Having a strategic approach to playground investment is important as playgrounds represent one of the most significant areas of active living infrastructure investment for the City.

PLAYGROUND QUICK FACTS

There are 101 total outdoor playground sites in Medicine Hat (77 of these are managed by the City of Medicine Hat and 24 are on school grounds) *There are 6 additional playground sites managed by the City that have had playground equipment removed.*

The average age of City's playground inventory is 15 years old

The total replacement cost of the City's playground inventory is estimated at approximately $10,000,000 (not including land purchase or support amenity costs)
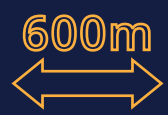
95.2% of residential parcels in the City have a playground within 600 metres

This Playground Management Plan document was developed using a number of inputs, leading to the development of a strategic approach for future playground planning and implementation strategies. The Playground Management Plan process and content is explained by the following graphic.

RESEARCH INPUTS
(Sections 2-7)

- Population indicators
- Inventory & condition assessment
- Engagement
- Benchmarking
- Trends and leading practices

PLAYGROUND PLANNING FOUNDATIONS
(Section 8)

- Vision
- Management objectives

Philisophical basis for playground provision

PLAYGROUND CLASSIFICATIONS, ZONES, AND SERVICE LEVEL TARGETS
(Section 9)

- Classification of the playground inventory
- Identification of geographic "playground service zones" within the city
- Identification of service targets for the zones

PLAYGROUND ACTION PLAN
(Section 10)

- Step 1: Preliminary Identification of Potential - Actions for Existing Playgrounds
- Step 2: Practical Lens and Adjustment
- Step 3: Service Zone Game Plans (10 Years)

ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS, TACTICS, AND PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
(Section 11)

- Strategies for Decommissioning Existing
- Playgrounds
- New Neighborhood and School Playgrounds
- Development Considerations
- Identifying and Determining Play Opportunities and Site Themes
- Additional Playground Management Strategies

It is also important to note that a number of overarching City planning and policy documents were reviewed in development of the Playground Management Plan, including:

- The Municipal Development Plan ("myMH Master Plan")
- City Council Strategic Plan 2019-2022
- Recreation Master Plan (2011)
- Community and neighborhood plans

"Quality opportunities to play, to compete, to recreate and to enjoy our environment, are available to the full diversity of our citizens; we build healthy community capacity through outdoor environments and recreation and facilities."

– From the Vision outlined in Council's Strategic Plan 2019-2022

2

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Medicine Hat has experienced modest growth of approximately 1% annually.

Census	Population Count
2016 Statistics Canada Census	63,260
2015 Municipal Census	63,018
2012 Municipal Census	61,180
2009 Municipal Census	61,097
2005 Municipal Census	56,048
1994 Municipal Census	45,892

As with most urban centres, growth has not been distributed evenly across the city. The following chart and map summarize growth characteristics for different areas of the city.[1]

Area of the City	Growth (%) (2012-2015)
West Crescent Heights	2.8%
East Crescent Heights	(0.1%)
Riverside	6.4%
River Heights/Harlow, South East & West Hill, Kensington, Downtown & Flats	4.2%
Norwood, Marlborough, Connaught, Meadowlands	2.3%
Crestwood, north of Southview Drive, east of Dunmore Road	1.6%
Ross Glen, south east of Southview Drive, east of Dunmore Road	(0.7%)
South Ridge, Saamis Heights, Southlands, Tower Estates, Cottonwood, rural	6.8%
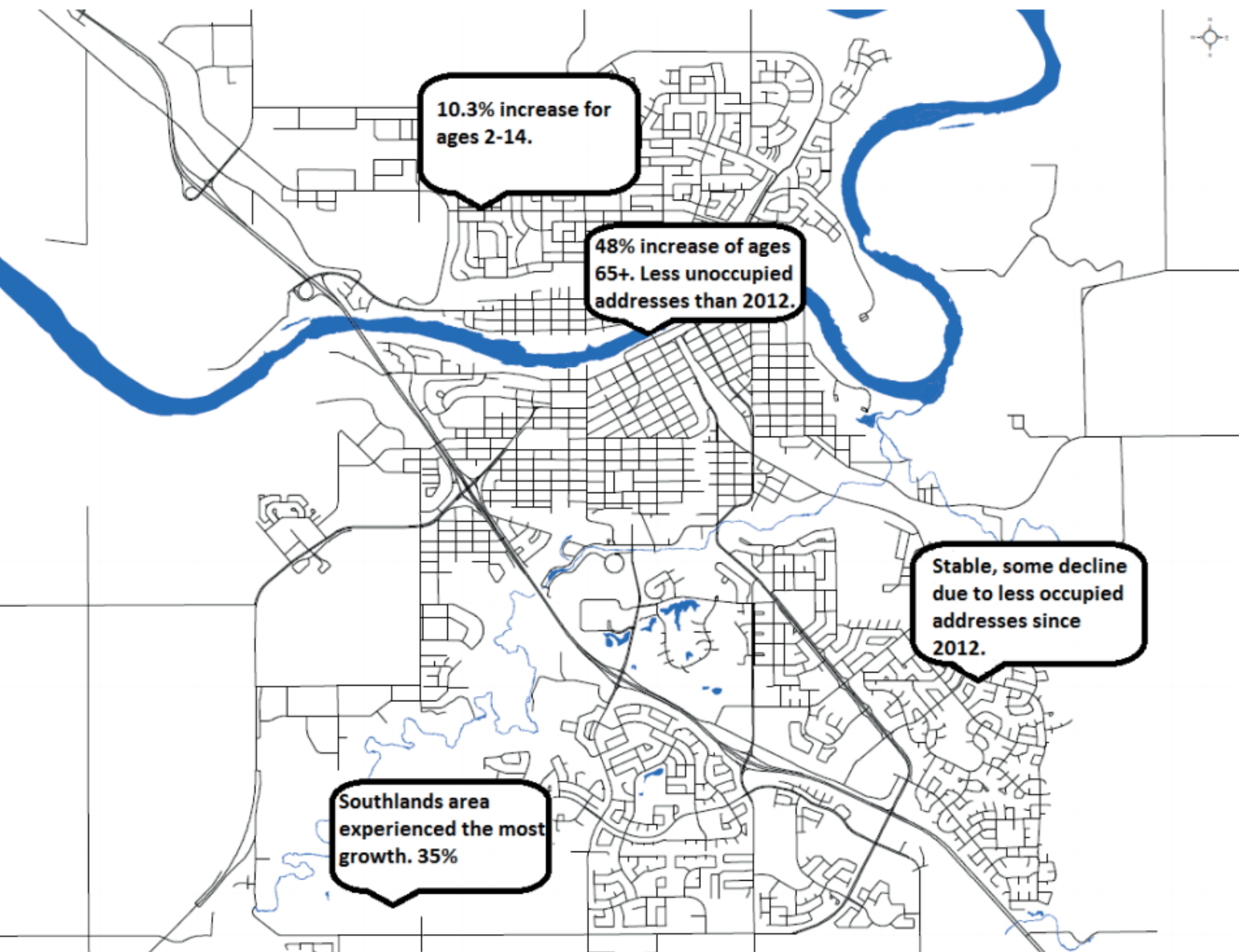
*Map from City's 2015 Census Summary Report

As illustrated by the following graph, the distribution of population by age cohort in Medicine Hat is generally aligned with provincial averages with a slightly lower proportion of children and youth.[1]

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

Legend:
- 2011 (Medicine Hat)
- 2016 (Medicine Hat)
- 2016 (Alberta)

Y-axis: 0% to 9%

X-axis categories: 0 to 4 years, 5 to 9 years, 10 to 14 years, 15 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, 35 to 39 years, 40 to 44 years, 45 to 49 years, 50 to 54 years, 55 to 59 years, 60 to 64 years, 65 to 69 years, 70 to 74 years, 75 to 79 years, 80 to 84 years, 85 years and older
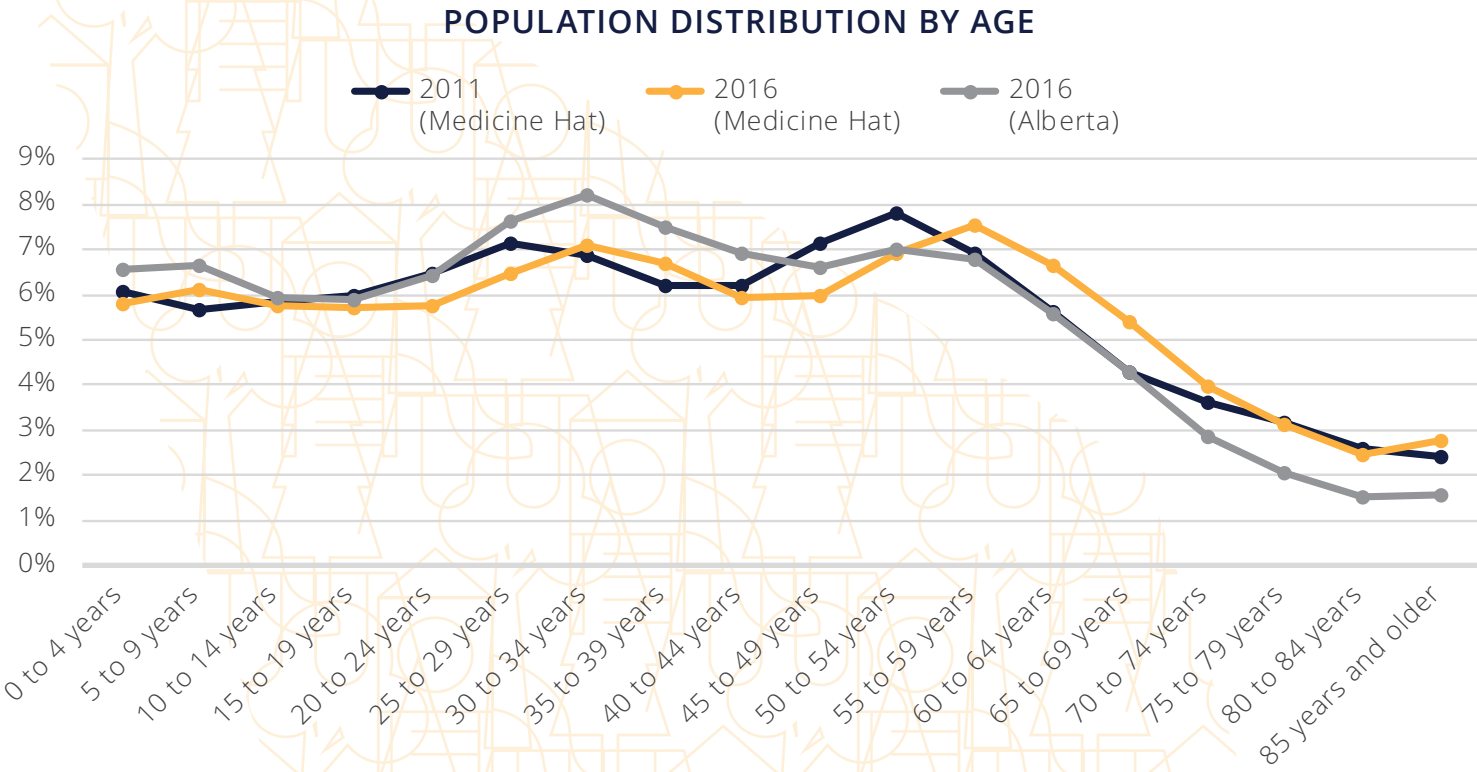
Looking more specifically at children and youth cohorts (primary playground users), the majority of population growth occurred among children ages 5 to 9.

	2011	2016	Growth (# of Residents)
0 to 4 years	3,645	3,655	+10
5 to 9 years	3,405	3,865	+460
10 to 14 years	3,495	3,630	+135

1   Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of the Population

3 THE CURRENT PLAYGROUND INVENTORY

The following chart summarizes the current supply of playgrounds in Medicine Hat. As reflected in the chart, the majority of the 101 playgrounds (including City and school) in the city are of a neighborhood "local" typology. There are six City operated playgrounds in the city that meet standards that allow for them to be officially designated as "Accessible". *Please refer to Section 9 for a description of playground types (classes).*

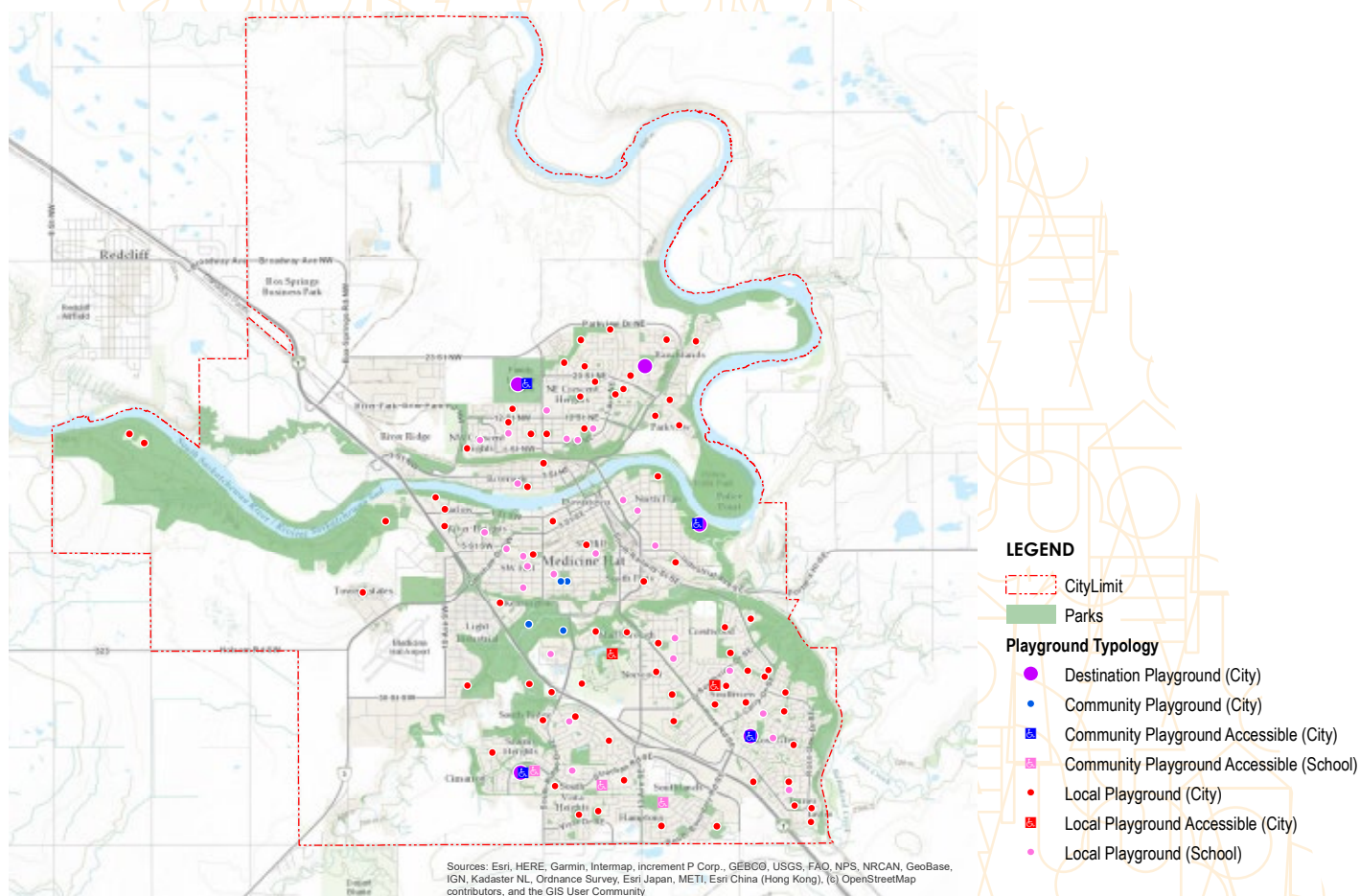| Type of Playground	Playgrounds on City of Medicine Hat Park Spaces	Playgrounds on School Grounds	Total by Type
Destination	4	0	4
Community	4	3	7
Local	69	21	90
Total	**77**	**24**	**101**

PLAYGROUND MAPPING

The following maps illustrate the spatial distribution of the playground inventory and relationships to population density and other key geographic attributes within the city.

Note: the following playground maps include City and school sites that have recently had equipment removed.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAYGROUND INVENTORY

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

LEGEND

- CityLimit
- Parks

Playground Typology

- Destination Playground (City)
- Community Playground (City)
- Community Playground Accessible (City)
- Community Playground Accessible (School)
- Local Playground (City)
- Local Playground Accessible (City)
- Local Playground (School)

PLAYGROUND RELATIONSHIP TO POPULATION DENSITY

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

LEGEND

┄┄ CityLimit

Playground Typology

● Destination Playground (City)

• Community Playground (City)

♿ Community Playground Accessible (City)

♿ Community Playground Accessible (School)

● Local Playground (City)

♿ Local Playground Accessible (City)

• Local Playground (School)

Population density per square kilometre, 2016

☐ 0-500

☐ 501-1000

☐ 1001-1500

☐ 1501-2000

☐ 2001-3000

☐ 3001-5000

☐ 5001-7000

☐ 7001-9000

Data Source:
2016 Census. Statistics Canada

PLAYGROUND COVERAGE – 600 METRE BUFFER

Note: 95.2% of residential parcels in the City have a playground within 600 metres

LEGEND

- --·-- CityLimit
- Parks
- 600m Buffer

Playground Typology

- ● Destination Playground (City)
- • Community Playground (City)
- ♿ Community Playground Accessible (City)
- ♿ Community Playground Accessible (School)
- • Local Playground (City)
- ♿ Local Playground Accessible (City)
- • Local Playground (School)

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

LEGEND

- ┅┅┅ CityLimit
- ▒ ResidentialLanduse
- ▒ 600m Buffer

Playground Typology

- ● Destination Playground (City)
- • Community Playground (City)
- ♿ Community Playground Accessible (City)
- ♿ Community Playground Accessible (School)
- ● Local Playground (City)
- ♿ Local Playground Accessible (City)
- • Local Playground (School)

OTHER NOTABLE PLAYGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Summarized as follows are additional characteristics of the City's playground inventory.

AMENITIES

- 10 City playground sites offer public washroom facilities
- 6 City playgrounds meet standards that qualify them as being "accessible" to individuals facing mobility challenges (wheelchair and mobility aide friendly).
    - o These playground sites are the Family Leisure Centre, Ross Glenn Towne Park, Strathcona Island Park, Connaught Park, Crocket Way Park, and Saamis Rotary Park

    A few school playgrounds in the City also meet accessibility standards, including the playgrounds at Dr. Ken Sauer School and Ecole les Cypress in Sammis Heights

AGE OF CITY OPERATED PLAYGROUNDS

- 36 City playground structures were built in 2010 or later (less than 10 years old)
- 7 City playground structures were built between 2005 and 2010 (10 to 15 years old)
- 33 City playground structures were built prior to 2005 (>15 years old)
- The average age of playground structures in Medicine Hat is 15 years old
- 6 playground sites do not currently have equipment (the play structure(s) have been removed)

4 CONDITION ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The project team conducted on-site inspections of 25 selected City playground sites and conducted a desktop review of 51 others (using existing City provide assessment data). Playgrounds were assessed and categorized using a 5 point scale. The following chart provides a summary of the assessments. It is important to note that a playground would only receive a '5' score if it was brand new and developed to a premium standard (a number of newer playgrounds in the city have a pea gravel surfacing and were thus not assigned a '5' score).

Score	# of City Playgrounds
5 (Very Good; 80-100% remaining service life)	0
4 (Good; 60-79% remaining service life)	4
3 - 3.5 (Fair - Good)	58
2.5 (Poor - Fair)	7
2 (Poor; 20-40% remaining service life)	3
1 (Very Poor; <20% remaining service life)	5
N/A (Equipment has been removed)*	7

Riley Park, Reynolds Park, Simpson Park, Collier Park, Jeffries Park, Herald Park, Rundle Park

As reflected in the above chart, the majority of the City's playground assets fall into the Fair to Good scoring category. The average score of the playground inventory was 3.1. The assessment also identified playgrounds that should be removed immediately or replaced within the next five years. This information helped inform the analysis and implementation strategies identified in Sections 10 and 11 of this PMP.

5 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Engagement was conducted with residents and playgrounds users to better understand current perspectives, satisfaction, the nature of playground use, and future needs. A number of different engagement methods were used to gather input from a diverse array of individuals.

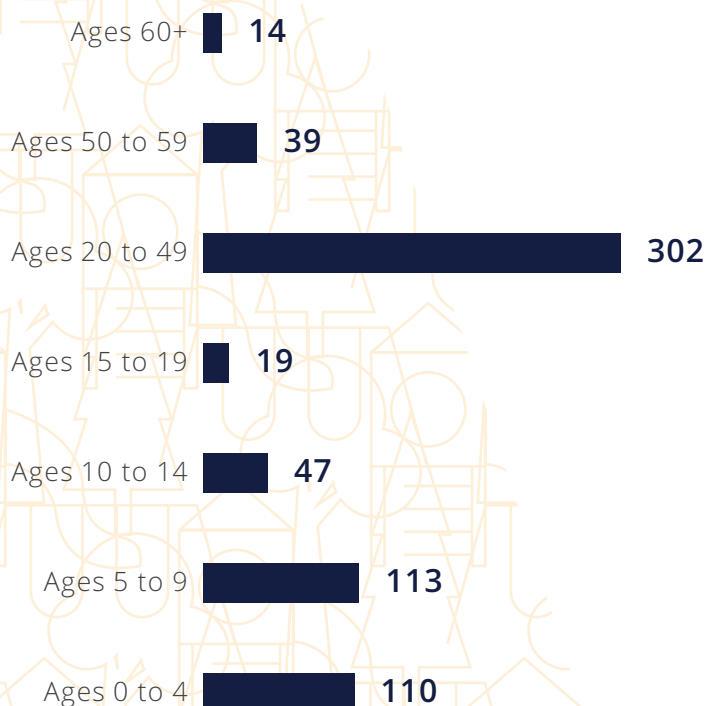### SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT METHODS AND PARTICIPATION

Engagement Method	Responses / Participation
Public Survey	186 responses
Stakeholder Group Discussions	3 sessions
"Conversation Cube"	156 comments provided
Children and Youth Focused Engagement	2 activity sessions (approximately 25 children)

PUBLIC SURVEY FINDINGS

The public survey was fielded through "Shape Your City", the City of Medicine Hat's engagement platform. As reflected by the adjacent chart and graph, respondents to the survey reside across a number of neighborhoods in the city and the highest proportion of respondents were younger adults (ages 20 to 49) with younger children (ages 0 to 9).

| Neighborhood	Number of Survey Respondents
East Crescent Heights	44 (24%)
South Ridge, Saamis Heights, Southlands, Tower Estates, Cottonwood	41 (22%
River Heights/Harlow, SE & SW Hill, Kensington, Downtown & Flats	37 (20%)
Ross Glen, southeast of Southview Drive, east of Dunmore Road	20 (11%
Other (please specify)	14 (8%)
Crestwood, north of Southview Drive, east of Dunmore Road	10 (5%)
West Crescent Heights	7 (4%)
Riverside	6 (3%)
Norwood, Marlborough, Connaught, Meadowlands	5 (3%)
Don't know or prefer not to say	2 (1%)
	186

REPORTED AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

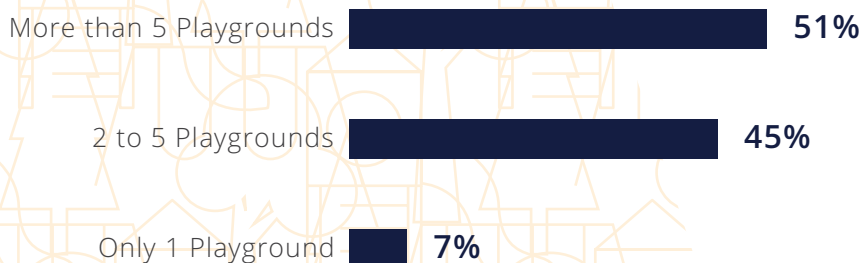| Age	Count
Ages 60+	14
Ages 50 to 59	39
Ages 20 to 49	302
Ages 15 to 19	19
Ages 10 to 14	47
Ages 5 to 9	113
Ages 0 to 4	110

CURRENT USE OF PLAYGROUNDS

Respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of playground use and the number of playgrounds that they had used in the city over the previous year. As illustrated by the adjacent graphs, the majority of respondents were weekly or daily playground users and use multiple playground sites in the city.
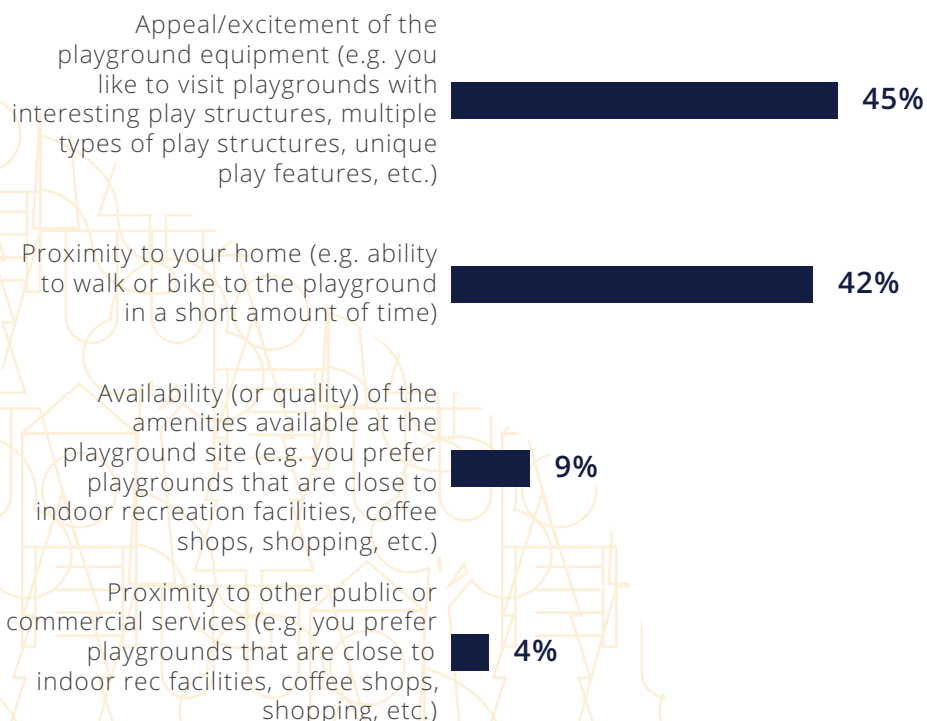
CURRENT LEVEL OF PLAYGROUND USE

Infrequently / Not at all **11%**

Monthly **23%**

Weekly **44%**

Daily **22%**
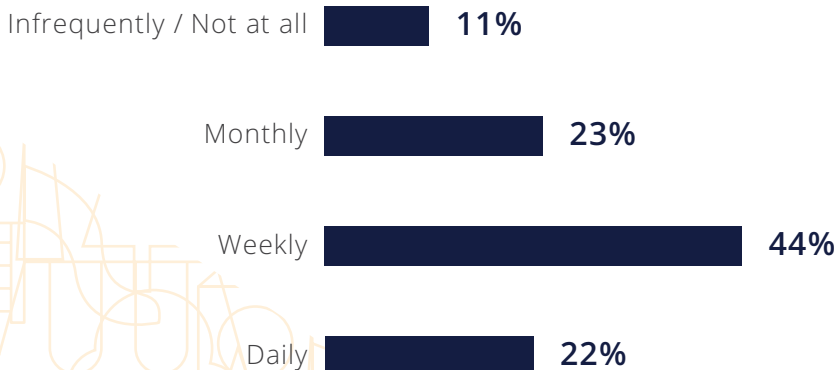
NUMBER OF PLAYGROUNDS USED IN MEDICINE HAT IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR

More than 5 Playgrounds **51%**

2 to 5 Playgrounds **45%**
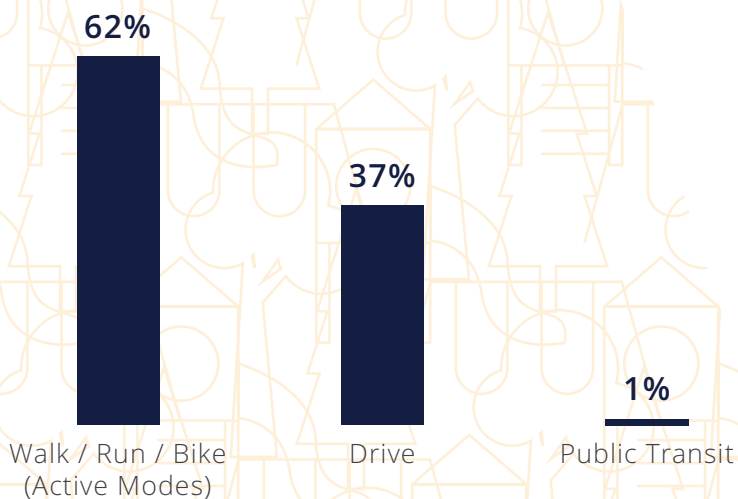
Only 1 Playground **7%**

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PLAYGROUND USE

Next, respondents were asked a series of questions to further understand the factors that influence why they choose to use certain playgrounds sites and the nature of use when at those sites. As illustrated by the adjacent graph, appeal and excitement of the playground equipment and proximity to respondents home are the two primary factors that drive playground use. While approximately two-thirds of respondents (62%) indicate that they use active modes of transportation to access playgrounds, it was also notable that over one-third of respondents (37%) drive-to the playground sites that they visit. The majority of respondents also indicated that on average their duration of stay at a playground is between 20 and 45 minutes.
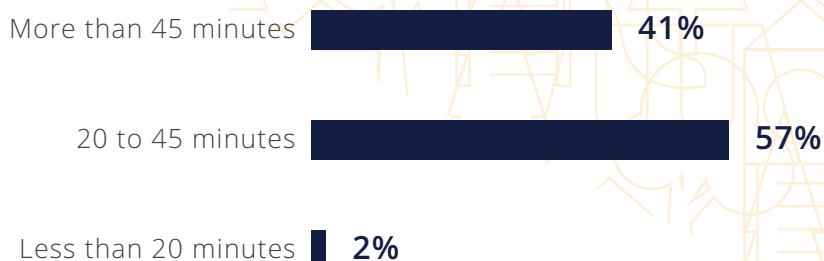
IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PLAYGROUNDS USAGE

Appeal/excitement of the playground equipment (e.g. you like to visit playgrounds with interesting play structures, multiple types of play structures, unique play features, etc.) **45%**

Proximity to your home (e.g. ability to walk or bike to the playground in a short amount of time) **42%**

Availability (or quality) of the amenities available at the playground site (e.g. you prefer playgrounds that are close to indoor recreation facilities, coffee shops, shopping, etc.) **9%**

Proximity to other public or commercial services (e.g. you prefer playgrounds that are close to indoor rec facilities, coffee shops, shopping, etc.) **4%**

MODES OF TRANSPORT TO PLAYGROUNDS

62% Walk / Run / Bike (Active Modes)

37% Drive

1% Public Transit

USUAL DURATION OF STAY AT PLAYGROUNDS

More than 45 minutes **41%**

20 to 45 minutes **57%**

Less than 20 minutes **2%**

SATISFACTION

Survey respondents were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction with different aspects of the playground experience in Medicine Hat. As reflected by the following chart, the majority of survey respondents expressed some degree of satisfaction (either "very" or "somewhat") with playgrounds in the city. Levels of satisfaction were strongest with regards to "accessibility / walkability" of the playground inventory while more moderate levels of satisfaction were expressed with regards to the "appeal and excitement of playgrounds" and the "condition of equipment".
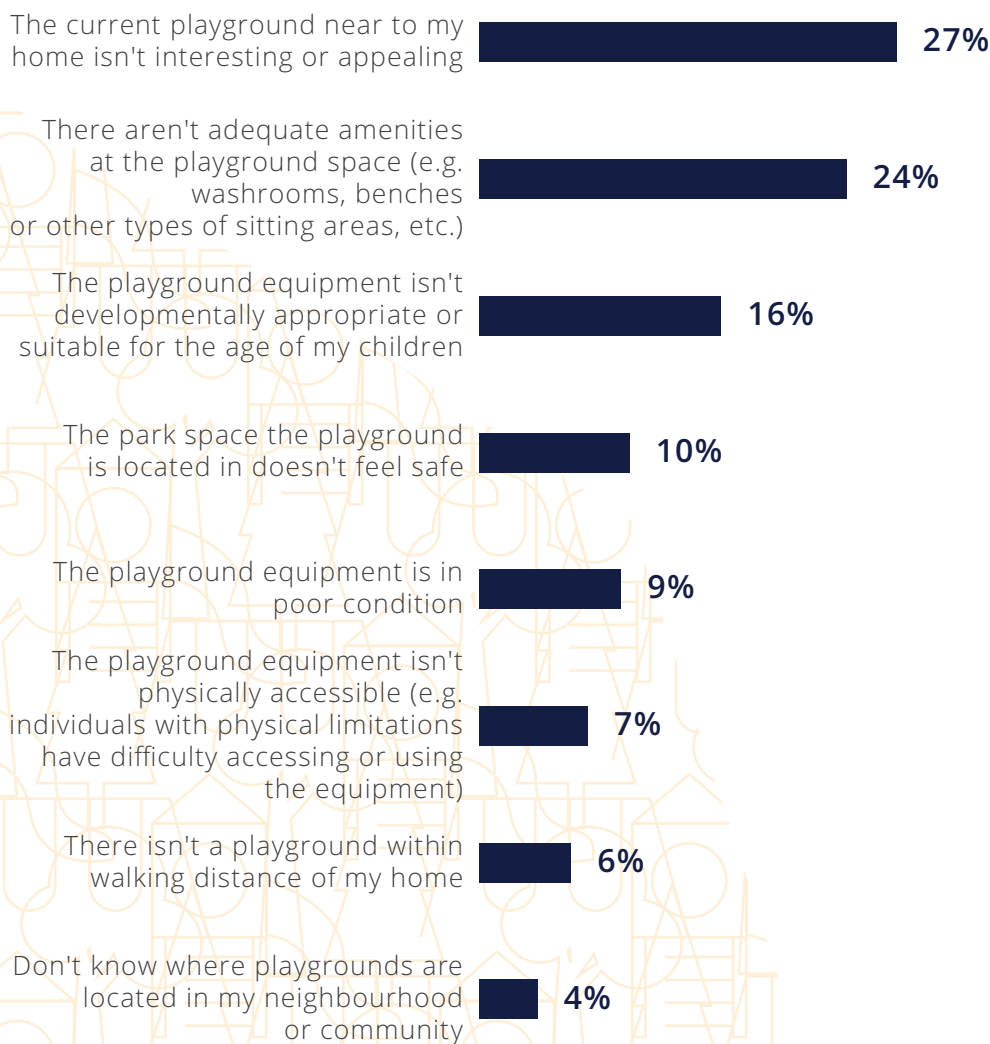
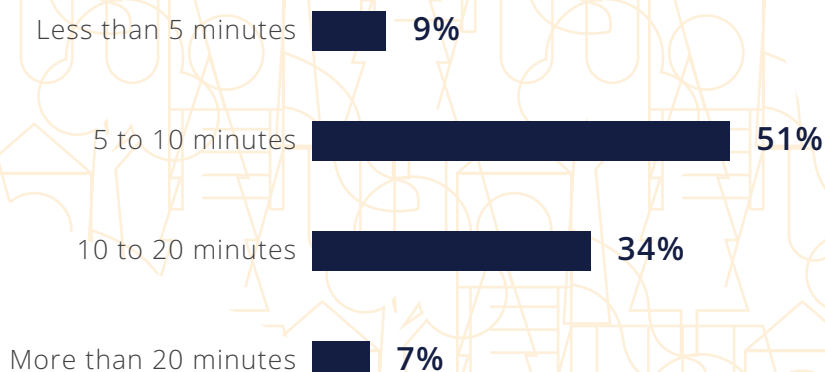|	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied	No Opinion / Not Applicable
Accessibility/walkability of playgrounds	51%	43%	4%	2%
Appeal and excitement of playgrounds	31%	61%	7%	1%
Condition of equipment	41%	51%	6%	2%

BARRIERS & WALKABILITY

No specific barrier to use was identified by more than one-third of respondents, however approximately one-quarter of respondents identified a lack of interest / appeal with playgrounds located near their home and a lack of amenities as barriers. Of note, only 6% of respondents identified that not having a playground within walking distance of their home was a barrier and only 4% of respondents identified that they were unaware of where playgrounds are located in their neighborhood. Respondents were also asked about their willingness to walk to playgrounds. Just over half of respondents (51%) indicated that they were usually willing to walk between 5-10 minutes to access a playground while 34% were willing to walk 10-20 minutes. Only 7% of respondents were willing to walk for more than 20 minutes to access a playground.

BARRIERS THAT LIMIT OR PREVENT PLAYGROUND USE

Barrier	%
The current playground near to my home isn't interesting or appealing	27%
There aren't adequate amenities at the playground space (e.g. washrooms, benches or other types of sitting areas, etc.)	24%
The playground equipment isn't developmentally appropriate or suitable for the age of my children	16%
The park space the playground is located in doesn't feel safe	10%
The playground equipment is in poor condition	9%
The playground equipment isn't physically accessible (e.g. individuals with physical limitations have difficulty accessing or using the equipment)	7%
There isn't a playground within walking distance of my home	6%
Don't know where playgrounds are located in my neighbourhood or community	4%

WILLINGNESS TO WALK TO ACCESS A PLAYGROUND

	%
Less than 5 minutes	9%
5 to 10 minutes	51%
10 to 20 minutes	34%
More than 20 minutes	7%

PRIORITIES

Survey respondents were then provided with a number of questions aimed at exploring their thoughts on future playground needs and investment priorities. First, respondent were asked to indicate there preference for one of two options: a) focusing resources on sustaining or developing more smaller, basic neighborhood playground spaces or b) focusing resources on larger playground site. As illustrated by the adjacent graph, the highest proportion of survey respondents favored the smaller neighborhood playground approach. When asked about playground typology preferences, there was a strong desire for adventure and natural playgrounds.

FUTURE PLAYGROUND PROVISION APPROACHES

Focus resources on sustaining or developing more smaller, basic neighborhood playground spaces (this approach will optimize walkability to playgrounds but may result in no or only a few larger playgrounds being developed over the next decade)
62%

Focus resources on larger playgrounds (this approach may result in some smaller neighborhood playgrounds being removed or changed to another use once they are no longer deemed safe or require major expensive repairs)
38%

COMMUNICATION METHODS

Respondents were also asked to indicate their preferences for communication method enhancements that could be undertaken to better share playground news, locations, and other pertinent information. The majority of respondents indicated that they would like to see mobile technologies developed that can share information on playground equipment and amenities that are available within the city.

COMMUNICATION METHOD PREFERENCES

Mobile technologies such as an app that has locations of playgrounds and information about the type of equipment and amenities available
59%

Signage in community facilities with information on playgrounds (e.g. enhancements, new playgrounds, general information, etc.)
37%

More and better information about playgrounds on the City website
29%

GENERAL COMMENTS

To conclude the survey, space was also available for respondents to comment generally on playground topics and issues (or expand on their previous response). The most prevalent themes from the comments provided were:

- The importance of shade and washrooms
- Safety concerns and importance (especially comments pertaining to slides and base materials)
- Water spray parks (desire for more or enhanced)
- Desire for more variety within the playground inventory in the city

STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION SESSIONS - KEY THEMES

Three in-person discussion sessions were convened in early March with the following three stakeholder groups:

- YMCA Child Care and Summer Programming
- Medicine Hat Adaptive Sports Association
- Medicine Hat Be Fit for Life Centre

These three groups were identified as they provide unique perspectives into the importance of play and physical literacy development. Summarized as follows are key themes that emerged from these discussion sessions.

PLAYGROUND SELECTION

- Organizations that use playgrounds for their programs and activities typically choose sites that are closest to their main program facilities (proximity is a main driver of playground selection).

- Many parents with special needs children tend to prefer larger "hub" playground sites with better physical accessibility (e.g. Strathcona). Often, these parents organize "play dates" and have regular groups that they visit playgrounds with.

- Shade form the sun is believed to be another significant driver of playground selection and impacts enjoyment and length of use.

ISSUES

- Syringes in parks are a commonly perceived issue, however varying viewpoints exist on whether the degree to which the issue actually exists vs perception of the issue.

- The larger, "destination" playgrounds in the city become very busy at peak times. This factor becomes a challenge for some parents and program providers, especially those with children that require higher levels of supervision.

FUTURE PRIORITIES

- All stakeholder groups indicated that the City should continue to work at expanding offerings of natural and advanced ("risky") play. The physical literacy and cognitive development benefits of providing these types of play opportunities were cited as rationale for investment.

- There are a number of good playground initiatives already ongoing in the community ("Play Days", organizations facilitating play groups / dates, etc.). It was suggested that the City should continue to support and foster these initiatives wherever possible.

- Divergent perspectives existed on whether the City should focus on sustaining smaller neighborhood level playground vs focusing investment on larger "hub" sites. In general, all of the stakeholders believed that both types of playgrounds are important but had different opinions on which should be a priority.

- The idea of a "bookable" outdoor playground was brought forth during the discussions. Conceptually, this playground could have controlled access and be reserved by groups for programming, birthday parties, or ongoing "play dates". One rationale provided for this type of playground space was that it would provide a safer, more manageable environment for parents and program providers with children that require higher levels of supervision or face barriers to using playgrounds.

THE CONVERSATION CUBE

A standing installation, termed "The Conversation Cube" was developed and set-up at the Sunshine Home & Garden Show from March 6-8 and the Family Leisure Centre lobby from March 10-15.[1] The Conversation Cube included information on the project and fostered thought and comments by asking a questions related to current use, like and dislikes, and future playground wishes.

In total, 156 wide-ranging comments were provided. Summarized as follows are themes from the comments.

COMMONLY IDENTIFIED ISSUES

- Lack of washrooms
- Safety issues at certain park locations (e.g. needles and other sharp objects)
- Lack of seating areas and tables for parents supervising children

DRIVERS OF CURRENT USE

- Location (proximity to home)
- Surface types; quality and safety (preference for softer surfaces such as rubberized surfaces and wood chips)
- Appeal of the playgrounds structure

FUTURE WISHES AND PRIORITIES

- Strong preference for natural and climbing / bouldering playgrounds
- The importance of physical accessibility was identified as both an issue with some current playgrounds and an important future priority
- A handful of comments provided ideas for playground "themes" of unique amenities that could be included

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1   The Conversation Cube was intended to be available for a longer duration of time but the onset of COVID-19 resulted in the closer of public facilities, including the Family Leisure Centre.
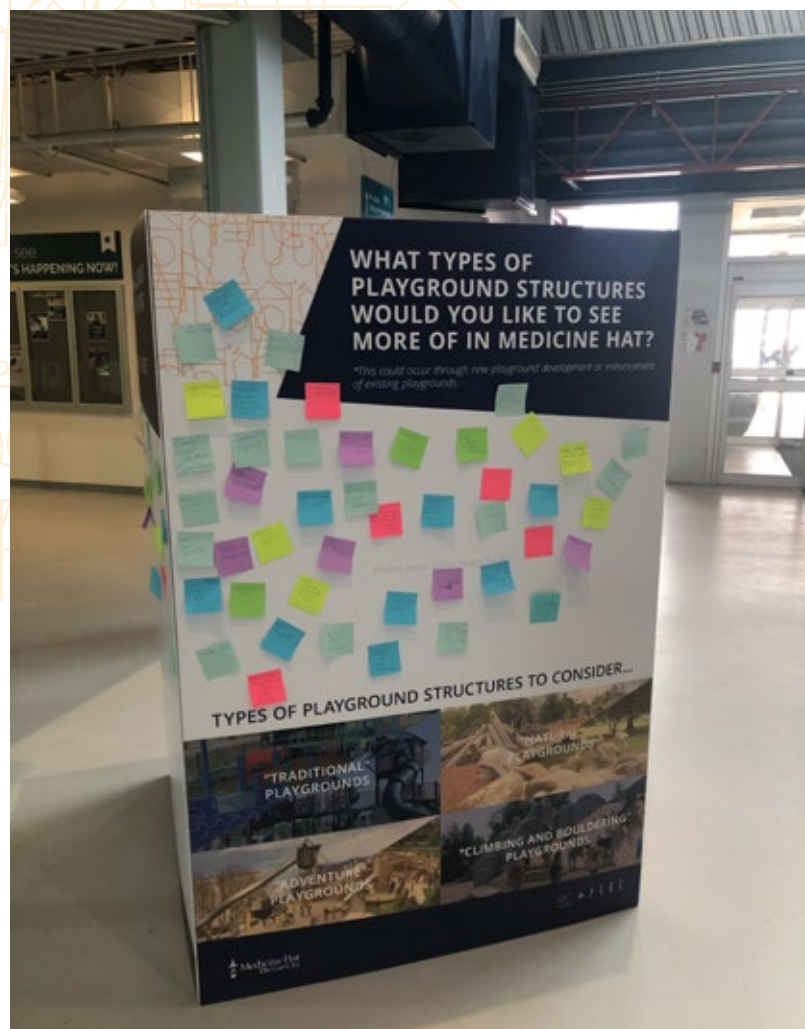
CHILDREN AND YOUTH FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

While the perspectives of children and youth were captured to some degree through the other engagement mechanisms, the project team was also keen on engaging directly with younger residents that use playgrounds in Medicine Hat. The project team facilitated two sessions at the start of the "Busy Boys" and "Girls on the Move" programs that take place at the Family Leisure Centre. The sessions were approximately 20 minutes and involved small groups of 5-7 youth rotating between 3 activity stations. The nature of the stations and themes from the activity sessions are summarized as follows.

STATION 1: PLAYGROUND USE

At this station the youth were asked to identify the seasons in which they typically use playgrounds, not including time during the school day. The majority of the participating youth expressed that they use playgrounds frequently in the spring and summer but less so (or not at all) during the fall and winter.

STATION 2: PLAYGROUND TYPE PREFERENCES

On a sheet of paper, two types of playgrounds were described: a) a larger playground with lots of different features and play structures, but that their parents would need to drive them to visit or would require a long bike ride or walk; and b) a smaller playground in their neighborhood that they could quickly walk or bike to whenever they want, but that had less features and play structures. The youth were asked to identify which type of playground they preferred (by placing a sticky dot on their preference) and engaged in a quick discussion as to why they selected one type over the other. The majority of youth expressed a preference for the larger, more dynamic play space and commonly expressed that these types of playgrounds are "more interesting", "more fun", and provide "a challenge".

STATION 3: "DESIGNING A PLAYGROUND"

At this station, youth were asked to help design a playground but identifying the types of play features they would like to see included. A key theme from this exercise was a strong preference for "risky play" features such as monkey bars, ropes, platforms, and hanging and spinning apparatus".

6 BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking research was undertaken to contrast how playground provision in City of Medicine Hat compares to other similarly sized municipalities. The following charts provide an overview of playground quantity by overall number and provision ratio (number of residents per playground). As reflected in the charts, Medicine Hat provides a higher quantity of overall playgrounds in comparison to the other cities. It is important to note however that playground benchmarking, while providing valuable insight and information for consideration, is challenged to provide a complete picture of playground provision across the various municipalities. Unlike a more defined and consistent recreation asset (e.g. ice arenas or pools), playgrounds have a wide range of sizes, amenities, and characteristics that influence the true experience provided to residents. As such, this quantitative benchmarking exercise should be taken in the proper context with these limitations recognized. *The inventories identified in the chart for all of the comparator communities include playgrounds located on both municipal and school sites.*

OVERALL QUANTITY OF PLAYGROUNDS

Municipality	Population	Total Number of Playgrounds	Destination Playgrounds (Does not include splash parks)	Notes / Context / Other Notable Characteristics
Lethbridge	92,729	122	8	• The City provides playgrounds in partnership with the school divisions. • Destination Playgrounds: Legacy Regional Park, Indian Battle Park, The Sugar Bowl (Ravine Park), Henderson Lake Park, Coalbanks, Nicholas Sheran Park, Tartan Park • A large number of playgrounds in Lethbridge would be consistent with the "Community" classification as outlined in this document. • Strong focus on playground theming throughout the inventory.
St. Albert	65,589	73	2	• Destination Playgrounds: Lions Park, Rotary Park • 54 playgrounds are located in City park sites, 21 on school sites
Grande Prairie	63,166	123	2	• Large number of tot lots in the city. • Destination playgrounds: Lions Park, Muskoseepi Park Playground, • Number of new school playgrounds that have "destination" playground elements. • Natural and climbing features integrated into a number of smaller community and neighborhood playground sites.
Kamloops	90,280	74	5	• 44 operated by the City, ~30 on school sites

Municipality	Population	Total Number of Playgrounds	Destination Playgrounds (Does not include splash parks)	Notes / Context / Other Notable Characteristics
Airdrie	61,581	76	5	• 5 playgrounds sites are officially designated at joint use sites with the public school district • Destination Playgrounds: Cooper Crescent Playground, R.J. Hawkey School, Kings Height Playground, Bayside Soundpiper Park, Windsong Height School • A number of new school playgrounds include elements of "destination" playgrounds (R.J. Hawkey School and Windsong Height School playgrounds are included in the "destination" playground count)
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (primarily Fort McMurray)	71,589	102	N/A	
Prince George	74,003	80	5	• Plan to remove 20 of the 66 City operated playground from the inventory over the next five years. • Destination Playgrounds: Blackburn Park, Duchess Park, Strathcona Park, Cpl. Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Park, Heather Road Park
Okotoks	28,881	49	2	• Destination Playgrounds: Riverside Inclusive Park, Okotoks Recreation Centre playground
Average	**74,134**	**87**	**4**	
Medicine Hat (if school playgrounds included)	**63,260**	**101**	**4**	
Medicine Hat (City playgrounds only)	**63,260**	**77**	**4**	

PROVISION RATIOS

Municipality	Population	# of Residents per Playground	# of Residents per Destination Playground
Lethbridge	92,729	760	11,591
St. Albert	65,589	898	32,795
Grande Prairie	63,166	514	31,583
Kamloops	90,280	1,220	18,056
Airdrie	61,581	810	12,316
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (primarily Fort McMurray)	71,589	702	N/A
Prince George	74,003	925	N/A
Okotoks	28,881	589	14,441
Average	**74,134**	**848**	**16,849**
Medicine Hat (including City and school playgrounds)	**63,260**	**626**	**15,815**

ADDITIONAL BENCHMARKING FINDINGS

Identified as follows are other findings that were identified during the benchmarking research. These findings reflect notable strategic directions, initiatives, and other playground management approaches being undertaken by the comparator communities.

- Consistent with broader trends in playground development (as further outlined in Section 7), a number of the comparator municipalities are placing an emphasis on playground theming. The City of Lethbridge in particular has made playground theming a key focus across the inventory as new and replacement playground projects have been undertaken.

- All of the comparator communities publically identify school playgrounds as part of their inventory.

- Airdrie and Lethbridge provide fitness playgrounds geared towards older children and adults.

- The City of Prince George's recently completed (2017) Parks Strategic Plan identifies that 20 of the 66 playgrounds located on municipal park sites will be removed while 25 will be replaced within five years. This initiative is based on desire to shift investment from quantity to quality.

- The majority of the comparator communities have some form of interactive playground feature on their website that allows residents to virtually visit playgrounds and learn about the amenities that are available.

TRENDS AND LEADING PRACTICES

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PLAY SPACES

Increasingly, many municipalities and play space providers are focusing on creating "destination" play spaces that provide opportunities across a wider range of ages, ability levels, and interests. Expanding the seasonality of use also feeds into this trend as there is a demand for sites that can be used in winter climates beyond 4 or 5 months of the year. Playground planners are expanding meeting these demands by creating playground spaces that include a wide range of equipment, better support amenities, and integration of other community spaces (e.g. adjacent indoor facilities, skating areas, outdoor aquatics features, etc.).

Rotary Park (Whitecourt, AB). Source: Calgary Playground Review

NATURAL PLAY

In recent years the playground landscape has seen significant expansion in the types of equipment and structures that are available. Leading this trend are "natural play spaces", which are intended to replicate aspects of natural environment such as forests, rocks, crevices, slopes and other outdoor elements. Societal concerns over children and youth disconnection with nature is leading this trend, especially in urban environments. In some instances entire playgrounds are constructed using entirely natural play equipment, while in other cases playgrounds include a mix of traditional and natural play equipment. Natural playgrounds are also credited with having significant cognitive benefits to children, forcing them to manage complexity as they maneuver around the play space whereas traditional playgrounds tend to be more suggestive.

Borden Park (Edmonton, AB). Source: Calgary Playground Review

Spruce Grove Natural Play Park (Spruce Grove, AB). Source: City of Spruce Grove website.

ADVANCED PLAY

Often termed "risky play", there is a growing recognition that encouraging children and youth to push the boundaries of play can have significant benefits to cognitive and physical development. Researchers have identified that children should be allowed to experience some level of play risk across the following areas:[1]

- Play at heights
- Play at speed
- Play with dangerous tools
- Rough and tumble play
- Play near dangerous elements
- Play where children can "disappear"

It is important to note that perceived vs real risk are not the same and must be managed when providing advanced play opportunities. In other words, the concept of advanced play is that in reality the risk of serious harm to children is low and mitigated in play environments, however their perceived level of risk is high relative to traditional play experiences. Natural and adventure playgrounds are increasingly being designed to provide these types of play experiences.

1   https://activeforlife.com/six-types-of-risky-play/

ADULT PLAY AND FITNESS INTEGRATION

Another emerging phenomenon in outdoor play is the development of spaces and equipment focused on older youth, teens, and adults. While not yet commonplace, these spaces are starting to receive more consideration due to increasing societal demands for unique recreational opportunities that integrate elements of fun, challenge, and social connection. As reflected in the images below, these spaces can also be developed to a variety of scales and typologies.

Source: https://voiceofplay.org/blog/move-kids-playground-adults/

East Lake Green Gym (Airdrie, AB). Source: City of Airdrie website

BOULDERING PLAYGROUNDS

The inclusion of bouldering and climbing features is also increasingly popular. These features can help meet playground needs for older children and provide amenities that balance levels of risk (while falls can of course happen, the nature of bouldering playgrounds is such that the fall is unlikely to involve "catching" on another object). As reflected by the accompanying images, bouldering playgrounds can be developed as the central theme of a play space or a simple amenity addition within a larger traditional play space.

Source: Project Team Files.

Source: Calgary Playground Review

Source: Town of Banff website

PLAYGROUND THEMING

Developing playgrounds with unique and distinguishable features provides the opportunity to create excitement and maximize the appeal of a play space. Playground vendors and providers are increasingly looking at theming when developing both new spaces and undertaking replacement projects. In some communities, theming can also provide opportunities for sponsorship, create a catalyst theme for a park redevelopment project, or "place make" by connecting the community to its heritage.

Tartan Park (Lethbridge, AB). Source: City of Lethbridge website.

Dinosaur Park (Blackfalds, AB). Source: Town of Blackfalds website.

Nicholas Sheran Park (Lethbridge, AB). Source: City of Lethbridge website.

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ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

When designing playgrounds, steps should be taken to ensuring inclusivity and accessibility within the playground design. Integrating inclusive and accessible designs will encourage and enable both disabled and non-disabled children to engage within one another in play and discovery. While equipment should be procured that meets or exceeds accessibility guidelines, a key aspect of ensuring inclusivity is integration. In other words, playgrounds should not include "special" sections allocated for children with limitations, but rather inclusive playgrounds are designed around creating accessibility for all children without the need to point out differences.

While children with developmental or physical barriers may interact with play spaces in a different manner, it is important to note that unique differences or ranges of ability exist. As such, playground designers need to consider a range of design characteristics when ensuring maximum inclusivity and accessibility. Specific examples of these considerations include:

- Integrating rubber mats and ramps instead of sand pits and steps that pose a challenge for wheelchairs or other assisted mobility devices;
- Integrating natural play features and avoiding playground equipment with sensory overload that may pose a challenge for children on the autism spectrum; and
- Developing play sites with varying levels and challenges of play that can accommodate children with limitations in the same environment with children that do not have these challenges.

A number of sources provide guidance on the design and operation of inclusive play spaces. Identified below are a couple of these industry resources.

- Me2 Play 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design (PlayCore)[1]
- Let's Play Toolkit (Rick Hansen Foundation)[2]

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1 https://www.playcore.com/programs/me2

2 https://www.rickhansen.com/sites/default/files/downloads/letsplaytoolkit.pdf

UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FROM THE RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION: A GUIDE TO CREATING ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

1 EQUITABLE USE

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

2 FLEXIBILITY IN USE

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

3 SIMPLE AND INTUITIVE USE

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or education level.

4 PERCEPTIBLE INFORMATION

the design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient condition or the user's sensory abilities.

5 TOLERANCE FOR ERROR

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequenses of accidental or unintended actions.

6 LOW PHYSICAL EFFORT

The design can be used effectively and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.

7 SIZE AND SPACE FOR APPROACH AND USE

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach and manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

SURFACING CONSIDERATIONS

Directly related to inclusivity and safety, playground surfacing is a common point of discussion when looking at new playgrounds or replacement projects. Surfacing can also add significant cost to a project, react differently in different climates, and have an impact on these types of uses that are popular. When looking at natural surface types such as pea gravel or wood fiber, sufficient depth of surfacing is important both to maximize fall safety and drainage. Rubberized surfacing is increasingly preferred for larger "destination" and adventure playground sites. In addition to the safety advantages that rubberized surfaces can provide at these sites, there are also opportunities for surface artistry and features as well as other unique elements (such as the mounds in the picture example below). However, when considering rubberized surfacing it is important to ensure that resources exist for an adequate maintenance program and that environmental factors such as heat of the surface due to sun / shade factors and overall wear and tear are considered.

Source: Project Team Files

SUPPORT AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

Across recreation and leisure there are increasing expectations for the quality of experience provided in public facilities and spaces. Playgrounds are no exception, especially as it pertains to support amenities. Including washrooms that are safe and functional in major park spaces, ensuring adequate seating areas, and providing shade (natural or built) are all examples of support amenities that can have a significant impact on both the perceived experience and overall level of utilization. Many municipalities are also looking to find ways to provide these amenities and others in ways that create a sense of "place" and generate interest. Provided as follows are examples of creative park and playground amenities.

CREATIVE PARK WASHROOM DESIGN – WINNIPEG, MB (ASSINIBOINE PARK)

Source: http://www.wolfromeng.com/Projects/Play-Work/Assiniboine-Park-Washrooms.html

CHESS BOARD AND SITTING AREA – EDMONTON, AB (MONSIGNOR WILLIAM IRWIN PARK)

Source: Project Team Files.

PARK MURAL COMPETITION – FORT MCMURRAY (LIONS PARK)

Source: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo website

LEADING PRACTICES IN PLAYGROUND MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Identified as follows are additional best practices in the maintenance and management of playgrounds.

- **Capital Reserve and Lifecycle Reserve Contributions.** The relatively short lifespan of playground structures suggests that it is important for municipalities to prioritize the funding of a reserve for future replacement, refreshment, or major upgrades to playground structures and surfacing. A suggested best practice is to budget 2-5% of the playground inventories replacement value on an annual basis. If this practice is undertaken on an inventory with a replacement value of $10,000,000; there would be requirement to set aside $200,000 - $500,000 annually.

- **Annual Inspection and Maintenance Program.** Putting into place an annual inspection program can help ensure safety issues are addresses and mitigated. Canadian Playground Safety Institute accredits playground inspectors and provides a wealth of tools and other resources to support this important work. An annual inspection and maintenance program can also help protect a municipality's significant investment in playground infrastructure. Fixing small structure and surfacing issues before they become more significant can help mitigate future major repairs and extend the lifespan of a playground.

- **Collaboration with Developers and Municipal Policy Development.** The development of playground spaces at a neighborhood and community level is often influenced by local development dynamics, policies, and points of leverage (e.g. local demand for residential real estate). Amongst many residential developers there is a growing recognition that providing quality community amenities can help increase the appeal of a new community. As a best practices, municipalities are encouraged to develop policies, bylaws, and other procedural documents that ensure adequate input into the theming and design of community amenities such as playgrounds. Doing so will ensure that new playgrounds complement the existing inventory and avoid duplication within a geographic area of the city.

- **Municipal Reserve.** Related to the above best practices, municipalities should ensure that municipal reserve taken from developers is suitable. Specific to playgrounds, there is a shift away from accepting small parcels of "tot lot" land to concentrating MR in such a manner that allows for more functional and multi-dimensional park spaces.

- **Ongoing Resident Engagement and Communications.** Engaging with residents should occur on an ongoing basis, not just as capital projects are being conceived. Engaging with residents and communicating playground maintenance schedules, rationale for decision making (e.g. removal and replacement decisions), and future priorities can help mitigate issues and lead to better outcomes.

PARK ANIMATION: CREATING MULTI-DIMENSIONAL AND APPEALING SPACES

Parks for All, An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community identifies that "parks have the potential to bring people together into a more cohesive future" and articulates a number of benefits that are accrued by providing quality parks experiences. In recent decades, the parks sector has increasingly come to understand the important of creating parks spaces that are dynamic, diverse, and well-suited to accommodating active living opportunities for residents of all ages and ability levels. More specific to playgrounds, this fundamental attitude shift in park space provision suggests that the creating play environments needs to be about more than just the playground structure itself. **The built infrastructure and overall animation of a park should encourage play of varying types throughout the entire park space.**

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PLAY OPPORTUNITIES – VANCOUVER, B.C. (DAVID LAM PARK)


Source: Project Team Files

Identified as follows are trends and leading practices that can help maximize the appeal and benefit of community parks spaces.

- **Diversity of park space provision.** Many municipalities are striving to create service level consistency across their parks inventory (e.g. establishing a classification system for parks that outlines design standards and maintenance guidelines). While this practice is justified and highly beneficial, it should not be allowed to result in generic park space provision. Consistent service levels and park space diversity can both be achieved by ensuring that park classification systems and service level guidelines / policies provide ample flexibility and articulate the value of diversity across the parks inventory.

- **Functional Inventory of parks spaces.** Municipalities should inventory their park spaces on a regular basis and capture both quantitative and qualitative as part of this exercise. This inventory should capture the suitability and appeal of the parks inventory for all age cohorts, individuals facing barriers to use, and the suitability of the park space to foster multiple types of activities.

- **Amenity Connectivity.** Parks spaces should be accessible via active transportation networks (trails and pathways). Further to this point, there should be strong integration between parks and trails planning with a focus on connectivity. Amenity connection within a park space is equally important. Playground structures should connect well with sport courts, forested areas, and support amenities to create a cohesive park space that can be easily navigated.

It is also important to recognize that community and neighborhood demographics can impact and change the use of a park space over time. Creating park spaces that are truly multi-generational can ensure that these spaces remain relevant and beneficial throughout the cycle of a community. Furthermore, park spaces with a multi-generational and multi-dimensional appeal can contribute to ensuring that a community remains attractive to current and prospective residents of all ages and interests.

USE OF INTERACTIVE AND MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES

The City of Medicine Hat website provides an overview of 26 playground sites in the city which includes pictures, identification of available amenities and features, and location information (address).
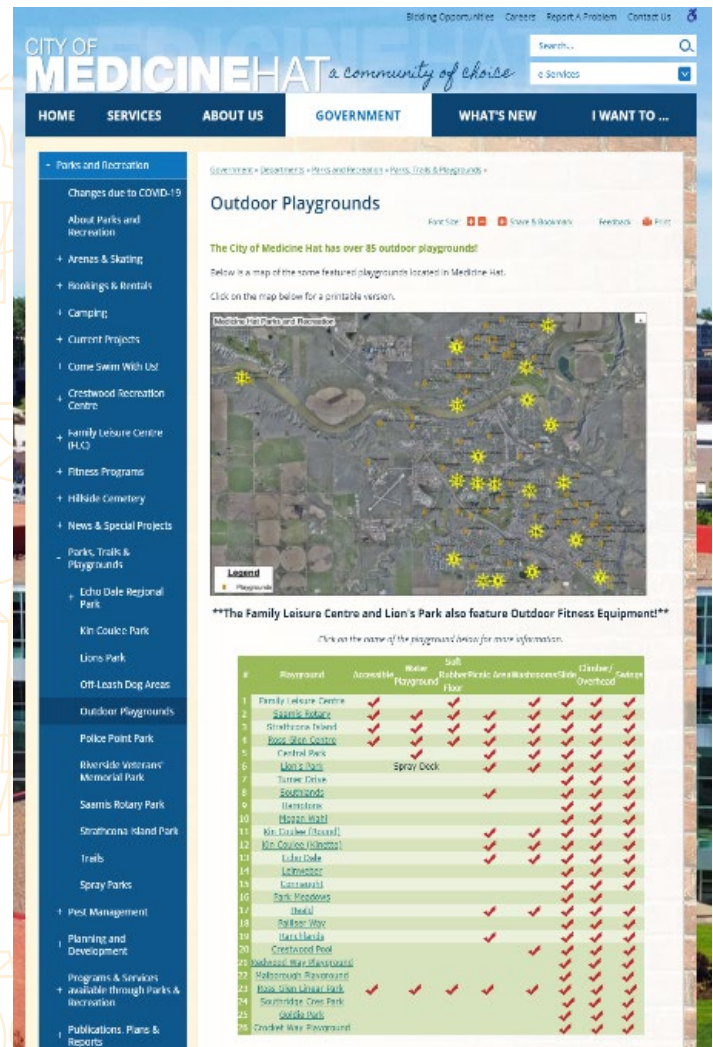
While the City of Medicine Hat currently provides more online playground information than many other similarly sized urban municipalities, opportunities exist to further take advantage of mobile and interactive technologies. While not yet widespread, the use of mobile 'finder' apps is starting to become a priority for many municipalities as they look to more effectively link residents to city services and supports. As is a general trend within mobile technologies, the majority of apps are being designed to integrate seamlessly with mass use mapping apps such as Apple Maps (standard on the Apple operating system) and Google Maps.

LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLE: MY SURREY MOBILE APP
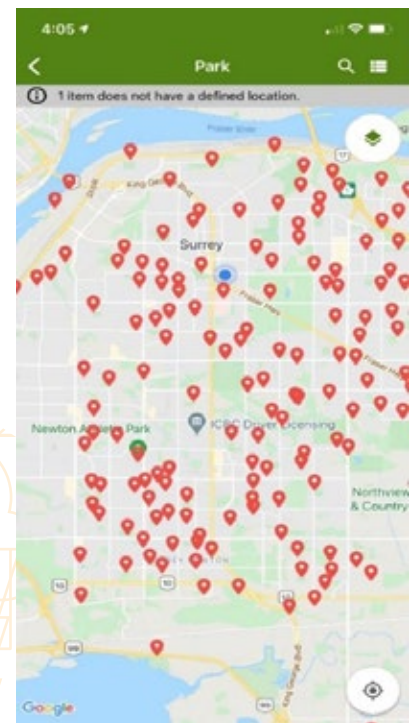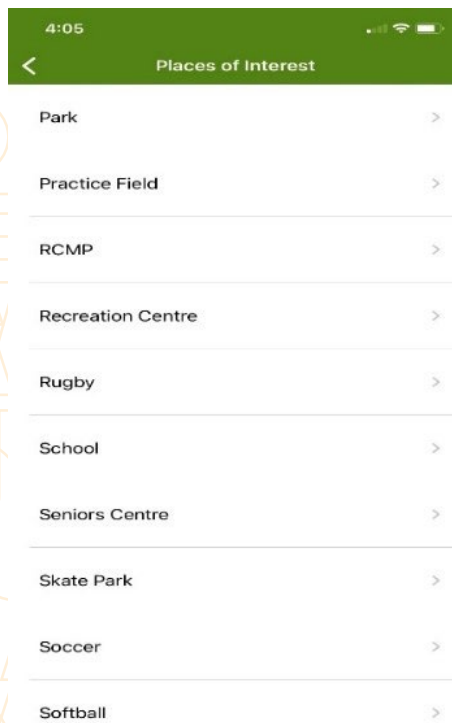
8 PLAYGROUND PLANNING FOUNDATIONS

Provided in this section is a **Vision** for playgrounds in Medicine Hat that outlines and **Playground Management Objectives**. These elements of this planning document provide a high level foundational basis from which future planning and investment into playgrounds should be rooted. More specifically, the strategic content contained in Sections 9-11 of this document will build off of, and outline approaches to execute on, the Vision and Playground Management Objectives.

A VISION FOR PLAYGROUNDS IN MEDICINE HAT

The City's ongoing investment in playgrounds will be focused on ensuring that children and youth have access to quality and diverse play spaces that foster physical, cognitive, and social development.

PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Objective	Description
Inclusion and Access	The City will continue to ensure that all residents have access to a playground within a reasonably walkable distance. The City will ensure that physically accessible playground opportunity exists throughout the city. Playgrounds in Medicine Hat are for all residents. Messaging and communications related to playgrounds will focus on themes of inclusivity.
Diversity of Play Experiences	The City will work to diversify the types of play experiences that exist throughout the city. This will occur through alignment with broader playground trends as new and replacement playgrounds are being planned. The City will ensure that all children and youth in the city have access to advanced and natural play opportunities.
Quality	The City will focus on quality over quantity in the provision of playgrounds. While this approach will need to be balanced with geographic access, the City will proactively address playgrounds that do not meet a sufficient standard of safety or play experience and will focus resources on enhancing the inventory.
Maximizing Resources	Recognizing that resources are finite, the City will be strategic with its investment in playgrounds with a focus on achieving maximum benefit. The City will also identify opportunities to leverage and maximize available funds through partnerships, grants, and community fundraising.
Suitability and Sustainability	The City will develop playgrounds that complement their surrounding environments and help foster sustainable use of parks and other public spaces.

9 PLAYGROUND CLASSIFICATIONS, ZONES, AND SERVICE LEVEL TARGETS

The future planning and management of the playground inventory in Medicine Hat will be based on three interrelated planning concepts.

- **A Playground Classification System –** A hierarchy for playground typologies and support amenities that identifies key attributes and characteristics. While the City will seek to ensure diversity across the playground inventory, this classification system provides some general guidelines on the size, amenities, and other characteristics of each type / level of playground space.
- **Service Zones –** The city has been divided into six (6) geographical playground service zones as a basis for planning. The intent of identifying these service zones is to ensure equitable playground provision across areas of the city.
- **Service Level Targets –** The targets provide a guideline on the numbers and types of playgrounds that should be provided within the aforementioned Service Zones.

Each of the above aspects of playground planning and management are further explained as follows in this section.

PLAYGROUND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

	Destination Playgrounds	Community Playgrounds	Local Play Spaces
Role and Function	*Regional play spaces provide special play experiences unlikely to be available in local or community playgrounds. They provide opportunities for group outings and more intensive play. Visits are likely to be of moderate or extended duration.*	*These play spaces will have a variety of use characteristic, supporting both longer duration group visits and shorter duration quick "play stops". These playgrounds are also likely to be in the "hub" park spaces for a quadrant or community within the city and thus the nature and duration of use will be varied.*	*Local play spaces support social and family recreation. They are important for children old enough to walk or cycle to playgrounds independently as well as parents with young children that need short duration play opportunities. Local play spaces can also help make up for a lack of private outdoor spaces in higher density communities. Visits are likely to be of short duration for younger children, but longer duration for older children that may view the space as a local "hang out" area with friends.*
Playground Size	750 – 1,000 sq. m.	350 – 750 sq. m.	200 – 300 sq. m.
Park Space Characteristics	City-wide or regional park with multiple destination features (>4 hectares)	Community "hub" park space, often connected to school sites or major pathway networks (0.4 – 4 hectares).	Pocket park, small neighborhood infill park, or on a school site (0.2 – 0.5 hectares)
Catchment Area	City-wide (and potentially a broader region)	Sub-area within a city (1-3 km)	Immediate neighborhood (<1 km)
Preferred Surfacing and Curbing	Surface: Rubberized Curbing: Concrete	Surface: Fibre Mulch, Rubber Crumb or Rubber Curbing: Concrete	Surface: Pea Gravel (Fibre Mulch, Rubber Crumb or Rubber may be considered based on park or play structure specific characteristics)
Play Space (s) Characteristics	Large and dynamic play areas, these playgrounds usually contain multiple large play structures with unique features and play experiences that are not commonly found at other sites in the community. Destination playground are typically geared towards youth ages 5 to 12 and provide both basic and higher challenge play elements.	Community playgrounds may have advanced and unique play elements found at "destination" playgrounds, but are smaller in scale with less diversity of play (one large play structure or 3-5 smaller ones). Larger playgrounds within this category may have potential for upgrades to "destination" playgrounds. These playground usually serve ages 2-12.	Smaller play spaces with typically one to three basic play structures. These play spaces are typically found in local parks and on school sites. These playgrounds will likely serve all children age cohorts to some degree but are usually more appealing for younger children ages 2-5.

	Destination Playgrounds	Community Playgrounds	Local Play Spaces
Role and Function	*Regional play spaces provide special play experiences unlikely to be available in local or community playgrounds. They provide opportunities for group outings and more intensive play. Visits are likely to be of moderate or extended duration.*	*These play spaces will have a variety of use characteristic, supporting both longer duration group visits and shorter duration quick "play stops". These playgrounds are also likely to be in the "hub" park spaces for a quadrant or community within the city and thus the nature and duration of use will be varied.*	*Local play spaces support social and family recreation. They are important for children old enough to walk or cycle to playgrounds independently as well as parents with young children that need short duration play opportunities. Local play spaces can also help make up for a lack of private outdoor spaces in higher density communities. Visits are likely to be of short duration for younger children, but longer duration for older children that may view the space as a local "hang out" area with friends.*
Accessibility & Inclusion	A sufficient supply of playgrounds that meet CAN/CSA Z614-07 Annex H minimum safety requirements should exist across all categories and geographic areas of the city. All destination playgrounds in the city should have nodes and components that meet CAN/CSA Z614-07 Annex H requirements; however accessible play environments and structures should not solely be limited to just those major playground sites and integrated into a diverse mix of smaller, medium sized, and larger playgrounds.		
Support Amenities	Washrooms Benches with seating areas Parking Other amenities that support longer duration stays (e.g. drinking water fountains) Shaded areas	May have washrooms and parking (often dependent on other site amenities) Benches with seating areas Shaded areas	Basic amenities (typically only benches)

SERVICE ZONES

To provide a basis for future playground planning and service level assessment, the city has been divided into seven Service Zones. Practically speaking, the vast majority of the city's current population lives in four of the Services Zones (1-4). **These zones have been aligned with the City Sectors identified in the myMH Master Plan document and based on the following attributes.**

- Population distribution (the four residential zones each represent between 21-26% of the city's current population)
- Barriers and constraints (natural and built barriers such as roadways, the river, elevations and other factors that create practical sectors within the city were considered)
- Geographic size similarity (the zones were sized to have a relatively similar geographic size)

As the population and geographic growth and evolution of a city is dynamic, it is suggested that the Service Zones by revisited and where necessary adjusted every 5-10 years.

The following chart and map provide an overview of the seven Service Zones. To further assist with analysis and planning, each Service Zone has also been divided into sub-service zones (identified as A through E in the map). *Please refer to the Appendices for a listing of the current playgrounds by Service Zone.*

Zone	Neighborhoods, Boundaries and Constraints	Population (2016)
1	Neighborhoods: South Ridge, Southlands, Major Boundaries and Constraints: • Trans-Canada Highway • Southern City Boundary	15,830
2	Neighborhoods: NW Crescent Heights, NE Crest Heights, Ranchlands, Riverside Major Boundaries and Constraints: • South Saskatchewan River • Industry Boundary to North • Connectivity issues with park space and major roadways	16,455
3	Neighborhoods: River Heights, SW Hill, SE Hill, Downtown, North Flats, Norwood Major Boundaries and Constraints: • South Saskatchewan River • Trans-Canada Highway • Valley Transition • Railway Tracks	16,813
4	Neighborhoods: Southview, Ross Glen Major Boundaries and Constraints: • Trans-Canada Highway • Valley Transition	13,452

Zone	Neighborhoods, Boundaries and Constraints	Population (2016)
5	North Employment Sector	0
6	Western Residential Sector Major Boundaries and Constraints: · Trans-Canada Highway · South Saskatchewan River · Surrounding light industrial and agricultural activity	710
7	West Employment Sector	0

SERVICE ZONES MAP

LEGEND

CityLimit

Zone
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

Playground Typology
- Destination Playground (City)
- Community Playground (City)
- Community Playground Accessible (City)
- Community Playground Accessible (School)
- Local Playground (City)
- Local Playground Accessible (City)
- Local Playground (School)

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

SERVICE LEVEL TARGETS

The Service Level Targets identified in the following chart provide a guideline for the number of playgrounds that should be targeted for each of the four primary residential Service Zones in the city (the targets are not deemed applicable for Service Zones 5, 6 and 7 given the limited population in these areas). **It is important to note that these targets only pertain to the provision of City of Medicine Hat managed playgrounds.** School playgrounds are excluded from the Service Level Targets based on the rationale that the City has limited ability to influence provision characteristics (typology / classification, support amenities, etc.). However, the provision of school playgrounds is considered in the analysis of future actions within each Service Zone (Section 10) and recommended strategies are provided to ensure collaboration and maximum alignment between City and school operated playground sites (Section 11).

Recommended # of City Provided *Destination* Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended # of City Provided *Community* Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended # of City Provided *Local* Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended Total # of City Provided Playgrounds per Service Zone	Recommended # of City Provided *Accessible* Playgrounds per Service Zone
1	3	12 - 15	15 – 18	2

WHAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR THE SERVICE LEVEL TARGETS?

- Shift investment focus from quantity of provision to quality of provision over the next decade (benchmarking suggests that the City provides more playgrounds per capita than comparator communities).

- The value of the City's playground inventory is estimated at approximately $10 M dollars. Available resources are limited and the City may not be able to replace every playground in the inventory when it nears the end of its safe and functional lifespan.

- The City has successfully achieved strong geographic balance within the playground inventory (over 95% of resident land parcels are located within 600 metres of a playground). Removing a small number of unsuitable playgrounds from the inventory will have a minimal impact on accessibility and will help ensure resources can be focused on high-value playground sites.

- Engagement and trends suggests that playground appeal factors such as available amenities, diversity of play, and accessibility are key drivers of playground use. While accessibility remains important, the City needs to focus investment on the quality of play opportunities provided.

The following chart summarizes current playground provision by Service Zone and provides an initial overview of variance from the Service Level Targets (shown as + or – from the Service Level Target). As previously indicated, the Service Level Targets have not been applied to Service Zones 5, 6, and 7 given the limited population in these areas of the city. *Note: the existing playground figures reflected in this chart includes both active (cites with equipment) and non-active playground sites (sites that have had equipment removed).*

Service Zone	# of Destination Playgrounds	# of Community Playgrounds	# of local Playgrounds	Total	# of Accessible Playgrounds
Service Level Targets	1	3	12 – 15	16 – 19	2
1	1 (0)	0 (-3)	13 (-2 to +1)	14 (-2 to -5)	1 (-1)
2	1 (0)	0 (-3)	22 (+10 to +7)	23 (+4 to +7)	1 (-1)
3	1 (0)	3 (0)	17 (+2 to +5)	21 (+2 to +5)	2 (0)
4	1 (0)	1 (-2)	19 (+4 to +7)	21 (+2 to +5)	2 (0)
5	No playgrounds				
6	0	0	3	3	0
7	0	0	0	1	0

10 PLAYGROUND ACTION PLAN

The following graphic summarizes the process used to establish a strategic approach for each Service Zones as further detailed in this section.

STEP 1
PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR EXISTING PLAYGROUND

STEP 2
APPLICATION OF A PRACTICAL LENS AND ADJUSTMENT

STEP 3
SERVICE ZONE GAME PLANS (10-Year)

The details, process, and tools with each step are further described on the following pages.

STEP 1: PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS

To provide an initial basis for the identification of potential actions within each of the service zones, all playground sites in the City were analyzed and categorized into the following four categories: "Remove", "Replace"; "Sustain", or "Enhance". The following chart provides an overview of how this analysis and preliminary action was determined.

Preliminary Action	Description	How was this course of preliminary action determined?
Remove	These playgrounds should be removed from the inventory in the short to medium term (0 to 5 years) and not replaced. While it is suggested that the park site will no longer have a play structure, it should continue to provide a community benefit and may be retrofitted with amenities and features that encourage social gathering, natural play / physical literacy, or other leisure purposes. *Tactics to achieve these objectives are provided in Section 11.*	Playgrounds that could be considered for removal or replacement were scored (see the scoring metric on the following pages and the scoring results in Appendix B). The following types of playgrounds were included in this analysis: • Playgrounds with an assessed current condition rating of less than 2.5 out of 5 • Sites that have already had play structures removed • Other playground sites that have previously been identified as potential candidates for removal by the City
Replace	These playgrounds should be replaced with new structures.	**Playgrounds that scored 8 points and above were deemed suitable candidates for replacement pending further review in Step 2 (application of a practical lens).**
Sustain	These playground should be sustained within their current classification (Destination, Community, or Local). The City should sustain these sites through regular inspections, maintenance, and other asset management protocols. The playground structures at these should be replaced once they are at, or nearing, the end of their lifespan.	Playgrounds with an assessed current condition rating of 2.5 out of 5 or better are given automatically given a recommendation of "Sustain" (reflecting that the playground has sufficient lifespan remaining). *Playgrounds that have previously been identified for removal such as Connaught Park and Shannon Park are exceptions and were included in this removal/replacement evaluation even though their condition rating is >2.5 out of 5.*

Preliminary Action	Description	How was this course of preliminary action determined?
Enhance	Playgrounds that fall into this category have potential for enhancement to a higher classification of playground. Potential enhance sites include: • Existing playground sites that are deemed as being candidates for being upgraded do to the park size and characteristics, existing amenities, current playground structure, and other considerations • Other park sites that do not currently have playground equipment but have been identified as strong candidates for a community or destination playground	A scoring metric was developed to assess the suitability of a site for a Community and/or Destination Playground (see following pages for the scoring metric and Appendix C for the site scoring results).

REMOVE OR REPLACE SCORING METRIC

See Appendix B for the scoring results.

Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Service Area Analysis (City Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are 2 or less other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 3-4 other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 5 or more City playgrounds in the same sub-zone.	3
Condition Assessment	2 pts: The playground has a current condition rating of 2.5 or better 1 pt: The playground has a condition rating of 2 0 pts: The playground has a condition rating <2 or the playground structure has been removed	2
Service Area Analysis (School Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are no school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 1-2 school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 3 or more school playgrounds in the sub-zone.	2
Park Site Considerations	2 pts: The park site is well suited for a playground 1 pt: The park site is moderately suited for a playground 0 pts: The park site is not well suited for a playground Consideration: playground classification standards, overall park size, other existing amenities, sightlines and visibility	2

Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Additional Community Considerations	1 or 2 additional points can be awarded for additional factors that could include: • The local community has strongly advocated for retaining or replacing the playground • Density of immediate service area (large number of multi-family dwellings within 400 metres) • Active transportation barriers in the neighbourhood that limit access to other playgrounds (e.g. lack of pathways or trails, accessing other nearby playgrounds would require crossing a major roadway) • The site and/or existing playground structure has a special characteristic (e.g. high level of accessibility)	1

ENHANCE CANDIDATES SITE ASSESSMENT METRIC

*See Appendix C for the scoring results.

Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Park Site Suitability **If a playground received a "0" score it would be disqualified from further scoring.*	2 pts: The park site is highly suitable for the potential upgraded class of playground being considered (sufficient support amenities already exists, good park accessibility, site conditions support enhanced structure and use, etc.) 1 pt: The park site is moderately suitable for the potential upgraded class of playground being considered (beyond the playground structure itself; development or enhancement is needed to upgrade some amenities, accessibility, and/or some other park site amenities may require relocation of adaptation). 0 pts: The park site is poorly suited for the potential upgraded class of playground being considered (park site is too small or otherwise unsuitable, too small for sufficient support amenity development, etc.). **The playground classification system provides a basis for this assessment. Re-scoring of this criteria may be required based on a more thorough technical review of the site.*	3
Service Area Analysis (City Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are 2 or less other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 3-4 other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 5 or more City playgrounds in the same sub-zone.	3

Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Service Area Analysis (School Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are no school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 1-2 school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 3 or more school playgrounds in the sub-zone.	2
Existing Playground Provision	2 pts: There is an existing playground on the site (therefore enhancement would further leverage and optimize an existing play site) 0 pts: There is no currently a playground on the site.	1
Additional Community Considerations	1 or 2 additional points can be awarded for additional factors that could include: • The immediate service area has special population and demographics attributes that suggest a higher need for play opportunities. • The local community has strongly advocated for an enhanced playground.	1

STEP 2: PRACTICAL LENS AND ADJUSTMENT

While the Step 1 scoring and assessment provides an important reference point for determining potential actions, the application of a practical lens is required to establish a future 10 year game plan for each Service Zone that further takes into account the existing context and other practical considerations. The application of this practical lens recognizes that service level disparities exist between some Service Level Zones (e.g. Service Zone 1 has significantly fewer current playgrounds than Service Zones 2, 3 and 4) and within the sub-zones (each of the four residential Service Delivery Zone consists of five sub-zones lettered A-E). The Service Level Targets are not intended to result in a drastic, short term redistribution of playgrounds from one area of the city to another as this would not be a prudent or beneficial use of available resources.

Listed below are a set of rules that have been applied to the Step 1 scoring in order to establish a future strategy that is balanced and achievable. In essence, these rules suggest instances in which some deviance from the Step 1 scoring and the Service Level Targets may be justified.

- To avoid drastically reducing service levels and play opportunities in any specific area of the city, recommended playground removals will be adjusted if undertaking the removal would result in either (or both) of the following to occur:

  » More than 3 removals per sub-zone

  » Playground provision in the sub-zone would be reduced to less than 3 playgrounds

As previously noted there are five sub-zone lettered A-E within each of the four residential Service Zones

- To avoid an unequitable concentration of playground resources in a specific area of the city, only one playground per sub-zone will be considered for enhancement to a higher class (e.g. from local to community).

- School playground provision also needs to be factored into the identification of the recommend actions outlined in Step 3. As with City playgrounds, school playground provision is not equally distributed across the city. Increasingly, many new school playgrounds are also being developed to level that is consistent with a "Community" level playground and may even have aspects of a "Destination" level playground. To avoid duplication and make optimal use of available resources, the City may deviate from the Service Level Targets if:

  » A new school playground exists that offsets the need for the City to undertake the capital development of one (e.g. a new school playground generally meets the standards of a "Community" level playground in a Service Zone where one is required to meet the Service Level Targets)

  » There is a high or low concentration of school playgrounds in a Service Zone

STEP 3: SERVICE ZONE GAME PLANS (10 YEAR)

Presented as follows are <u>ten year game plans</u> **for each service zone.** As a next step, specific timing for the suggested actions will need to be refined based on available City resources.

SERVICE ZONE 1 GAME PLAN

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SERVICE ZONE 1

- Of the four residential Service Zones, Service Zone 1 currently has the fewest playgrounds.
- The following actions would be required to directly align with the Service Delivery Targets:
  - » Destination playgrounds: no action required
  - » Community playgrounds: addition of 3
  - » Local playgrounds: sustain current service levels (current provision is generally consistent with the Service Level Targets)
  - » Accessible playgrounds: one additional accessible playground is required
- There are two school playgrounds in Service Zone 1 that are consistent with a Community level classification (Notre Dame Academy and Ecole St. John Paul II School)
- In total, there are 4 school playgrounds in Service Zone 1. Notably, Service Zone 1 has the least overall number of school playgrounds compared to the other residential service zones.

RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTIONS

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Remove	None	0
Replace	It is recommended that the following playgrounds be replaced: • Moose Ball Complex • Reynolds Park (currently no playground equipment) • Shannon Park *All of these sites scored above the "Replace" threshold (see Appendix A).*	3

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Enhance	The Service Level Targets suggest that Service Zone 1 is deficient by three Community playgrounds. As two Community playgrounds exist on school sites, it is recommended that the City add one Community Playground to the inventory. Based on the scoring of potential sites, one of the two following options should be pursued: 1. Development of a new playground at South Ridge Community Park 2. Expand / enhance Celebration Park to a Community level playground site Both of the above sites scored as "strong" candidates for a Community level playground. The decision on which of the above two options to pursue will require more detailed analysis and should consider: a cost comparison of the two options, local community perspectives (engagement with neighborhood residents), and other pertinent park site considerations (addition assessment of synergies with existing or planned park amenities).	1
Sustain	The following playground sites should be sustained through ongoing maintenance, upkeep and repair. • Saamis Rotary Park • Celebration Park (also a strong enhance candidate) • Crescent Park • Somerset Park • Hamptons School Park • Tourist Centre • Sunset Playground • Megan Wahl Memorial Park • Strachan Park • Cottonwood Coulee • Stein Park Assessment data and ongoing inspections should inform future replacement planning.	10 or 11*
Number of playgrounds in the Service Zone if recommended action are taken		**14 or 15* (Increase of 1 or 2 from current)**

Depending on the approach to adding one Community playground (development at South Ridge Community Park or enhancement of the existing playground site at Celebration Park).

OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE LEVEL 1

• One additional accessible playground is required in Service Zone 1. Developing the suggested new Community level playground to align with accessibility guidelines is a logical course of action.

• As further discussed in Section 11 and reflected in the trends and leading practices (Section 7), opportunities to diversify play and playground theming should be considered as further planning and vendor procurement is undertaken for all suggested replacement and enhancement projects.

SERVICE ZONE 2 GAME PLAN

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SERVICE ZONE 2

- Of the four residential Service Zones, Service Zone 2 currently has the most City provided playgrounds (Service Zone 3 has more playgrounds if City and school playgrounds are added).
- The following actions would be required to directly align with the Service Delivery Targets:
  - » Destination playgrounds: no action required
  - » Community playgrounds: addition of 3
  - » Local playgrounds: reduce current service levels by 7 to 10 playgrounds
  - » Accessible playgrounds: one additional accessible playground is required
- There is one school playground in Service Zone 2 that is consistent with a Community level classification (Dr. Ken Sauer School)
- In total, there are 8 school playgrounds in Service Zone 2. Only Service Zone 3 has more school playgrounds.

RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTIONS

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Remove	The following six playgrounds are recommended for removal or to remain as park sites with no equipment if playground structure removal has already occurred: • Flanagan Park • Heights Park • Jeffries Park (currently no playground equipment) • Herald Park (currently no playground equipment) • Riley Park *All of the above sites scored below the "Replace" threshold (see Appendix A). The removal of these sites would also not result in a sub-zone falling below the provision of 3 playgrounds as per the practical lens rules outlined under Step 2 in this section.* Further investigation is also suggested to determine the future course of action for Holt Park, which scored right at the threshold between "Remove" and "Replace". Holt Park is in a sub-zone (2C) that is well serviced with playgrounds. The condition of the playground is also borderline between fair and poor.	5 or 6*
Replace	It is recommended that the following playgrounds be replaced: • Muir Park • Patrol Park • Perry Park *All of these sites scored above the "Replace" threshold (see Appendix A).* As per above, further investigate Holt Park as for removal or replacement.	3 or 4*

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Enhance	The Service Level Targets suggest that Service Zone 2 is deficient three Community playgrounds. As one Community playground exists on a school sites, it is recommended that the City add two Community Playground to the inventory. The following two sites in Service Zone 2 scored as "strong" candidates for a Community level playground: • Police Point Park (not currently a playground site) • Heald Park (currently a Local playground site)	2
Sustain	The following playground sites should be sustained through ongoing maintenance, upkeep and repair. • Hargrave Park • McQueen Park • Osborne Park • Ranchman Park • Palliser Park • McIntosh Park • Hughes Park • Terrace Park • Viterra Park (1) • Terri Clark Park • Viterra Park (2) • Viterra Park (3) • Family Leisure Centre *This playground may be removed as part of site development; however an indoor play structure exists in the Family Leisure Centre and will sustain play opportunity on the site.* Assessment data and ongoing inspections should inform future replacement planning.	13
Number of playgrounds in the Service Zone if recommended action are taken		**19 or 20*** **(Reduction of 3 or 4 from current)**

Pending further assessment of Holt Park for removal or replacement.

OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE LEVEL 2

- One additional accessible playground is required in Service Zone 2. Developing one or both of the suggested new Community level playgrounds to align with accessibility guidelines is a logical course of action.

- Focusing the suggested new Police Point Park playground on natural play features and elements will have strong synergies with existing site amenities, characteristics, and programming.

- As further discussed in Section 11 and reflected in the trends and leading practices (Section 7), opportunities to diversify play and playground theming should be considered as further planning and vendor procurement is undertaken for all suggested replacement and enhancement projects.

- Playground structure removal does not mean that the park sites will no longer serve a neighborhood or community benefit. As further discussed in Section 11, a plan should be developed for the applicable sites in collaboration with the community that identifies the highest value uses and opportunities.

SERVICE ZONE 3 GAME PLAN

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SERVICE ZONE 3

- Service Zone 3 has a similar level of City playground provision to Service Zones 2 and 4 but a higher level of school playground provision.
- The following actions would be required to directly align with the Service Delivery Targets:
    - » Destination playgrounds: no action required
    - » Community playgrounds: no action required
    - » Local playgrounds: reduce current service levels by 2 to 5 playgrounds
    - » Accessible playgrounds: no action required
- None of the school playgrounds in Service Zone 3 are considered to be at a Community standard.
- In total, there are 11 school playgrounds in Service Zone 3 (most school playgrounds of any Service Zone). Including both City and school playgrounds, Service Zone 3 has the most playgrounds of any Service Zone in the city.

RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTIONS

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Remove	The following six playgrounds are recommended for removal or to remain as park sites with no equipment if playground structure removal has already occurred: • Hill Park • Kensington Park • Noble Park	3
Replace	It is recommended that the following playgrounds be replaced: • Connaught Park (x2) (there are two independent playground structures at the park site) • Simon F. Scott Memorial Playground	3
Enhance	No action is required to better achieve the Service Level Targets. *Lions Park was scored and is a "strong" candidate for enhancement should an additional future Community or Destination playground be required in the future.*	0

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Sustain	The following playground sites should be sustained through ongoing maintenance, upkeep and repair. • Strathcona Island Park • Valleyview Park • Goldie Park • Kin Park • Lamb Park • Marlborough Coulee • Upland Park • Lions Park • Optimist Park • Kiwanis Playground • Kin Coulee Park (1) • Kin Coulee Park (2) • Kiwanis Central Park (1) • Ewart Park • Robertson Park Assessment data and ongoing inspections should inform future replacement planning.	15
Number of playgrounds in the Service Zone if recommended action are taken		**18 (Reduction of 3 from current)**

OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE LEVEL 3

• As further discussed in Section 11 and reflected in the trends and leading practices (Section 7), opportunities to diversify play and playground theming should be considered as further planning and vendor procurement is undertaken for all suggested replacement and enhancement projects.

• Playground structure removal does not mean that the park sites will no longer serve a neighborhood or community benefit. As further discussed in Section 11, a plan should be developed for the applicable sites in collaboration with the community that identifies the highest value uses and opportunities.

SERVICE ZONE 4 GAME PLAN

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SERVICE ZONE 4

- Service Zone 4 has a similar provision of City playgrounds to Service Zones 2 and 3 but fewer school playgrounds (6 school playgrounds; none that are consistent with a Community level classification).
- The following actions would be required to directly align with the Service Delivery Targets:
  » Destination playgrounds: no action required
  » Community playgrounds: addition of 2
  » Local playgrounds: reduce current service levels by 4 to 7 playgrounds
  » Accessible playgrounds: one additional accessible playground is require

RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTIONS

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Remove	The following six playgrounds are recommended for removal or to remain as park sites with no equipment if playground structure removal has already occurred: • Collier Park (currently no playground equipment) • Rundle Park (currently no playground equipment) • Simpson Park (currently no playground equipment) • Turner Park • Calder Park • Taylor Place Park	6
Replace	Clennel Park is recommended for replacement.	1

Action Type	Description of Recommended Actions and Playground Sites	#
Enhance	Relative to the Service Level Targets, Service Zone 4 is deficient by 2 community playgrounds. Three Local playgrounds were scored on their suitability to be enhanced to a Community playground and all three scored as "Poor" candidates (see Appendix B). To enhance playground provision in Service Zone 4, it is recommended that City pursue one of <u>the following three options</u>: 1. Enhance Kiwanis Central Park from a Community to a Destination Playground (this action would help compensate for a deficiency in Community playgrounds; Kiwanis Central Park was also scored as a "strong" candidate for enhancement). *Some work has already occurred to upgrade the playground site; continue to monitor trends and consider other options.* 2. Work with school groups to explore the development (new build or retrofit) of 1-2 school playground sites that would generally align with a Community level playground 3. Further analyze the three candidates sites (Leinweber Park, Southview Park, Turner Park) that did not score as being highly suitable for an enhanced level of playground (the scoring undertaken did not comprise of a detailed site assessment; further investigation may reveal that one of these sites is in-fact highly suitable)	1
Sustain	The following playground sites should be sustained through ongoing maintenance, upkeep and repair. • Ross Glen Towne Park • Taylor Park • Redwood Park • Ross Glen Park • Church Park • Leinweber Park • Cunliffe Park • Southview Park • Crestwood Park • Rossland Park • Crocket Way Park • East Glen Park • Gilwell Park • Kiwanis Central Park (also an enhance candidate) Assessment data and ongoing inspections should inform future replacement planning.	13 or 14*
Number of playgrounds in the Service Zone if recommended action are taken		**15 (Reduction of 6 from current)**

Depending on the Enhance Action taken (enhancement of Kiwanis Central Park or one of the other sites)

OTHER POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE LEVEL 3

- While the Service Zone is not deficient in accessible playgrounds relative to the Service Level Targets, opportunities to integrate accessible equipment into the potential new playground development that is suggested should be considered.

- As further discussed in Section 11 and reflected in the trends and leading practices (Section 7), opportunities to diversify play and playground theming should be considered as further planning and vendor procurement is undertaken for all suggested replacement and enhancement projects.

- Playground structure removal does not mean that the park sites will no longer serve a neighborhood or community benefit. As further discussed in Section 11, a plan should be developed for the applicable sites in collaboration with the community that identifies the highest value uses and opportunities.

SERVICE ZONE 6 GAME PLAN (INDUSTRIAL SERVICE ZONE)

Service Zone 6 is a categorized as an industrial service zone and therefore the Service Levels Targets don't apply. However the playgrounds were scored and assessed using the tools applied to the four residential service zones. The following future actions are suggested for Service Zone 6:

- Sustain playgrounds at the following sites: Echo Dale Natural Area, Echo Dale Regional Park, and the Gas City Campground.
  - » If ongoing planning for Echo Dale Regional Park suggests actions for the play equipment, align with these recommendations.
- Replace the playground at Tower Estates Park

SUMMARY OF THE SERVICE ZONE GAME PLANS

The following chart summarizes the net impact on playground provision in City operated parks if the recommended actions outlined in the game plans for each service zone were implemented. As reflected in the chart, undertaking the recommended action would result in a net reduction of between 5 and 7 playgrounds from the current actual total (not including playgrounds that have already had equipment removed).

Service Zone	# of Current Playground Sites (total sites; including those that no longer have equipment)	# of Current _Actual_ Playgrounds (only sites that currently have equipment)	# of Playgrounds if Recommended Action is Implemented and Variance from Current _Actual_ Playgrounds
1	14	13	14 or 15 (+1 or 2)
2	23	20	19 or 20 (-1 or -2)
3	21	21	18 (-2)
4	21	18	15 (-3)
6	4	4	4 (0)
Total	83	77	70 to 72 (-5 to 7)

It is important to reiterate that the recommended actions summarized in the previous chart are based on the following key, overarching rationale:

- To ensure sustainability of the City's large and comprehensive playground inventory (e.g. by ensuring playground replacements and asset management practices provide maximum value and benefit); and
- Increasing the quality of play in the city (e.g. by focusing resources on quality over quantity).

The following table summarizes the recommended action for each playground in the city.

Service Zone	Remove	Replace	Enhance	Sustain
1	• None	• Moose Ball Complex • Reynolds Park* • Shannon Park	<u>One</u> of the following: • South Ridge Community Park (new site) • Celebration Park (enhance existing playground)	• Saamis Rotary Park • Celebration Park (also a candidate for enhancement) • Crescent Park • Somerset Park • Hamptons School Park • Tourist Centre • Sunset Playground • Megan Wahl • Memorial Park • Strachan Park • Cottonwood Coulee • Stein Park
2	• Flanagan Park • Heights Park • Jeffries Park* • Herald Park * • Riley Park *Holt Park requires further analysis for removal or replacement*	• Muir Park • Patrol Park • Perry Park	• Police Point Park (new site) • Heald Park (enhance existing playground)	• Family Leisure Centre • Hargrave Park • McQueen Park • Osborne Park • Ranchman Park • Palliser Park • McIntosh Park • Hughes Park • Terrace Park • Viterra Park • Terri Clark Park • Viterra Park • Viterra Park

Service Zone	Remove	Replace	Enhance	Sustain
3	• Hill Park • Kensington Park • Noble Park	• Connaught Park (x2) • Simon F. Scott Memorial Playground	• None	• Strathcona Island Park • Valleyview Park • Goldie Park • Kin Park • Lamb Park • Marlborough Coulee • Upland Park • Lions Park • Optimist Park • Kiwanis Playground • Kin Coulee Park (1) • Kin Coulee Park (2) • Kiwanis Central Park • Ewart Park • Robertson Park
4	• Collier Park* • Rundle Park* • Simpson Park* • Turner Park • Calder Park • Taylor Place Park	• Clennel Park	• Potential enhancement of <u>one</u> of Kiwanis Central Park, Leinweber Park, Southview Park, or Turner Park	• Ross Glen Towne Park • Taylor Park • Redwood Park • Ross Glen Park • Church Park • Leinweber Park • Cunliffe Park • Southview Park • Crestwood Park • Rossland Park • Crocket Way Park • East Glen Park • Gilwell Park
6	• None	• Tower Estates Park	• None	• Echo Dale Natural Area • Echo Dale Regional Park • Gas City Campground

Denotes playground sites that don't currently have playground structures.

The following chart summarizes the potential financial impacts of the recommended actions.

Action Type	# of Playground Sites	Potential Financial Impacts on the City
Remove*	13 (6 of these sites have already had equipment removed)	• Removal of playground equipment is estimated to cost approximately $10,000 per site. • The net capital cost benefit of removing / not replacing the playground structures at up to 13 sites (if the inventory was reduced from 83 to 70 as recommended) could save the City as much as $1,300,000 in capital costs over the next 10-15 years (assumes $100,000 replacement cost per playground). • The 20 year maintenance cost benefit of not replacing up to 13 playgrounds could save the City as much as $13,000 annually ($130,000 over a 10 year period).
Replace*	11	• The estimated cost to replace these playgrounds is estimated at $1,100,000 (assumes average cost of $100,000 per structure).
Enhance	4	• The capital cost to undertake the four projects identified is estimated at $1,000,000 ($250,000 per project).
Sustain	51 - 53 playgrounds	• Playgrounds that are recommended for being sustained have varying remaining replacement timelines; the majority of playgrounds that fall into this category have estimated remaining lifespan that is well beyond 10 years. • The total replacement value of playgrounds that fall into this category is estimated at approximately $7,700,000 - $7,900,000 (based on assumption of 4 destination playgrounds @ $600,000; 4 community playgrounds @ $250,000; and 43-45 local playgrounds @ $100,000).

Holt Park not included in either the Remove or Replace cost impacts as further analysis on a course of action is required.

11

ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS, TACTICS, AND PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Outlined in this section are additional considerations and tactics pertaining to playground site decommissioning and the future development of new playgrounds. Additional management strategies are also provided to help the City optimize the provision of playgrounds.

STRATEGIES FOR DECOMMISSIONING EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS

The Service Zone Game Plans in Section 10 identify a number of playgrounds that should be decommissioned (have equipment removed or not be rebuilt if playground equipment has already been removed). It is important to reiterate that this recommended action is not at all intended to suggest that those park sites will no longer provide a community benefit or even a play benefit. On the contrary, it will be important for the City to identify future uses for these park spaces that balance efficiency, suitability, and appeal. Potential uses of decommissioned playground sites are numerous and could include:

- Installation of no or low maintenance basic natural play features that continue to provide a play benefit but aren't considered a formal playground or play structure (e.g. climbing rocks, tree stumps, obstacles, etc.).
- Community gardens or other plantings.
- Amenities that encourage neighborhood (benches, outdoor game stations, etc.).
- Small scale urban forests / naturalized areas (turning the space back over to nature through the planting of native species; this could be done in such a manner that promotes natural and adventure play).
- Interpretive features.

Using the City's Public Participation Policy as a guide, the Parks and Recreation department should work closely with communications staff to develop a process that explores the highest value use for decommissioned playground sites.

NEW NEIGHBORHOOD AND SCHOOL PLAYGROUND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Along with playgrounds developed by the City in existing park sites, school playground projects and the residential development process are the two other main drivers of new playground development in the city. Outlined as follows are strategies that the City can employ to reduce duplication and optimize play variety and balance across the inventory.

DEVELOP A COMMUNITY PLAY PROFILE WHENEVER A NEW PLAYGROUND IS BEING PLANNED ON A SCHOOL SITE OR AS PART OF A NEW SUB-DIVISION.

An example Community Play Profile template is provided in Appendix D.

The Parks and Recreation department should develop a Community Play Profile to help inform planning for new sub-divisions. This brief (2-3 page) document should:

- Provide an overview of the current playground inventory in the immediate catchment area (600 metres and/or sub-zones) and broader catchment area (Service Zone). Both the 600 metre catchment area and sub-zones are intended to reflect reasonable walking distances; however terrain, active transportation infrastructure (sidewalks and pathways) and other practical factors are different in each community and neighbourhood. As such, the City will need to determine which of the two walkability metrics best applies on a case by case basis.

- Identify the current types of play opportunities in the immediate and broader catchment areas.

- Provide a synopsis of demographics and other population characteristics in the Service Zone and sub-zone.

- Identify any other inputs that may suggest specific need and/or opportunity for the catchment area that the new playground is likely to serve.

- Identify where duplication or oversupply may be a risk.

The Community Play Profile can be used to inform the Area Structure Plan (ASP) process by helping to determine if a playground is needed and by providing some initial guidelines on the type, scale, and attributes of a new playground that can provide the greatest degree of benefit. Alternatively, if an ASP is already in place and identifies a future playground site, the Community Play Profile can support further refinement on the type, scale, and characteristics of the future playground installation. The development of a Community Play Profile can be equally beneficial to future school playground initiatives by providing a point of reference for the school (or fundraising group).

CREATE ALIGNMENT WITH KEY ASPECTS OF THE PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Total alignment may not be possible at all times given broader planning considerations (negotiations with developers and the ASP process) and the ability of schools to independently undertake initiatives on their sites. However, wherever possible the City should encourage alignment with key aspects of the Playground Management Plan and communicate how this alignment can be mutually beneficial. These mutual benefits include:

- Avoiding play duplication and oversupply that can cannibalize utilization across multiple playgrounds;
- Maximizing the appeal of new neighborhoods for prospective residents; and
- Reducing risk and liability.

The City can encourage alignment with the Playground Management Plan in the following ways:

1. Developing the aforementioned Community Play Profiles;

2. For school playground initiatives (replacement or new playground) that come forward to the City for grant funding, consider the Playground Management Plan analysis and planning elements (e.g. Service Level Targets, classification type) in the evaluation of these requests; and

3. Share the Playground Management Plan internally with other City partners and external organizations such as school groups and developers.

Creating alignment between the City, developers, and school playground groups in the planning and development of new playgrounds will ensure an optimal balance of play opportunities across the inventory.

IDENTIFYING AND DETERMINING PLAY OPPORTUNITIES AND SITE THEMES

Ensuring maximum diversity of play and the nature of play experiences should be a key consideration as playground investment is undertaken. Contrary to some perspectives, any size and class of playground can be developed to provide elements of advanced play ("risky play"), natural play, and adventure play and serve a broad cross-section of ages. All playground sizes and classes can also be themed.

It is recommended that the City consider the following guiding practices when determining the specific types of play experiences to be provided at new, enhanced, or replaced playground.

1. Monitor and inventory play opportunities in the city on an ongoing basis

2. Theming and opportunities to diversify play should be a primary consideration during vendor procurement and as new parks and playgrounds are designed

3. Engage with the community to determine theming and gauge preferences for play experiences

ADDITIONAL PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Identified as follows are additional recommended strategies that should be integrated into ongoing playground management practices.

Strategy	Benefits of Implementing
Enhance the collection of playground utilization data.	• Provides data that can inform decision making. • Helps better track trends.
Work with City Communications staff to develop an engagement process specific to playground management.	• Provides a transparent and consistent process for engaging the community on playground projects.
Work with school board partners to identify playground priorities on school sites and opportunities to collaborate.	• Creates alignment and avoids duplication. • Helps leverage and maximize available resources.
Develop a grant program (or protocol pertaining to an existing grant program) specific to community requests for playground funding.	• Clarifies pre-requisites for groups seeking City support for a playground project (e.g. school parent groups)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PLAYGROUND INVENTORY

CITY PLAYGROUND INVENTORY – ACTIVE SITES (WITH EQUIPMENT)

#	Name of Site	Year Installed	Typology	Service Zone	Subzone	Rating (5 - Very Good 1 - Very Poor)	Age
1	Calder Park	1990	Local Playground	4	A	1	30
2	Celebration Park	2017	Local Playground	1	E	3.5	3
3	Church Park	2014	Local Playground	4	B	3.5	6
4	Clennel Park	2018	Local Playground	4	A	3.5	2
5	Connaught Park	2008	Local Playground	3	D	3.5	12
6	Connaught Park	2008	Local Playground	3	D	3.5	12
7	Cottonwood Coulee	2006	Local Playground	1	A	3	14
8	Crescent Park	2016	Local Playground	1	C	3.5	4
9	Crestwood Park	2010	Local Playground	4	A	3.5	10
10	Crocket Way Park	2015	Local Playground	4	A	3.5	5
11	Cunliffe Park	2010	Local Playground	4	A	3.5	10
12	East Glen Park	2001	Local Playground	4	B	3	19
13	Echo Dale Natural Area	2010	Local Playground	6		3.5	10
14	Echo Dale Regional Park	2010	Local Playground	6		3.5	10
15	Ewart Park	1997	Local Playground	3	B	3	23
16	Family Leisure Centre	2011	Destination Playground	2	B	4	9
17	Flanagan Park	1998	Local Playground	2	C	2.5	22
18	Gas City Campground	2001	Local Plsyground	7		3	19
19	Gilwell Park	1987	Local Playground	4	A	3	33
20	Goldie Park	2016	Local Playground	3	D	3.5	4
21	Hamptons School Park	2010	Local Playground	1	D	3.5	10
22	Hargrave Park	2014	Local Playground	2	D	3.5	6
23	Heald Park	2000	Local Playground	2	D	3	20
24	Heights Park	1970	Local Playground	2	B	1	50
25	Hill Park	1980	Local Playground	3	A	1	40
26	Holt Park	1994	Local Playground	2	C	2.5	26
27	Hughes Park	2010	Local Playground	2	C	3.5	10
28	Kensington Park	1997	Local Playground	3	A	2.5	23
29	Kin Coulee Park	2002	Community Playground	3	A	3	18
30	Kin Coulee Park	2001	Community Playground	3	D	3	19
31	Kin Park	2016	Local Playground	3	B	3.5	4

#	Name of Site	Year Installed	Typology	Service Zone	Subzone	Rating (5 - Very Good 1 - Very Poor)	Age
32	Kiwanis Central Park	2020	Community Playground	3	B	5	0
33	Kiwanis Central Park	1999	Community Playground	3	B	3	21
34	Kiwanis Playground	2008	Local Playground	3	A	3.5	12
35	Lamb Park	2013	Local Playground	3	D	3.5	7
36	Leinweber Park	2012	Local Playground	4	A	3.5	8
37	Lions Park	2010	Local Playground	3	C	3.5	10
38	Marlborough Coulee	2013	Local Playground	3	D	3.5	7
39	McIntosh Park	2010	Local Playground	2	B	3.5	10
40	McQueen Park	2014	Local Playground	2	C	3.5	6
41	Megan Wahl Memorial Park	2004	Local Playground	1	D	3.5	16
42	Moose Ball Complex	1990	Local Playground	1	B	1	30
43	Muir Park	1996	Local Playground	2	B	2.5	24
44	Noble Park	1970	Local Playground	3	A	1	50
45	Optimist Park	2010	Local Playground	3	C	3.5	10
46	Osborne Park	2013	Local Playground	2	C	3.5	7
47	Palliser Park	2012	Local Playground	2	C	3.5	8
48	Patrol Park	1994	Local Playground	2	E	2	26
49	Perry Park	1998	Local Playground	2	E	2	22
50	Ranchman Park	2012	Local Playground	2	E	3.5	8
51	Redwood Park	2016	Local Playground	4	C	3.5	4
52	Riley Park	NA	Local Playground	2	B		NA
53	Robertson Park	1998	Local Playground	3	B	3	22
54	Ross Glen Park	2016	Local Playground	4	C	3.5	4
55	Ross Glen Towne Park	2011	Destination Playground	4	C	4	9
56	Rossland Park	2007	Local Playground	4	C	3.5	13
57	Saamis Rotary Park	2006	Destination Playground	1	B	4	14
58	Shannon Park	2000	Local Playground	1	C	3	20
59	Simon F. Scott Memorial Playground	2000	Local Playground	3	E	2.5	20
60	Somerset Park	2011	Local Playground	1	E	3.5	9
61	Southview Park	2010	Local Playground	4	A	3.5	10
62	Stein Park	2002	Local Playground	1	D	3	18
63	Strachan Park	2001	Local Playground	1	D	3	19
64	Strathcona Island Park	2011	Destination Playground	3	C	4	9
65	Sunset Playground	2006	Local Playground	1	B	3.5	14
66	Taylor Park	2018	Local Playground	4	C	3.5	2

#	Name of Site	Year Installed	Typology	Service Zone	Subzone	Rating (5 - Very Good 1 - Very Poor)	Age
67	Taylor Place Park	1991	Local Playground	4	C	2.5	29
68	Terrace Park	2007	Local Playground	2	E	3.5	13
69	Terri Clark Park	2004	Local Playground	2	C	3	16
70	Tourist Centre	2010	Local Playground	1	B	3.5	10
71	Tower Estates Park	1999	Local Playground	6		2	21
72	Turner Park	2000	Local Playground	4	C	2.5	20
73	Upland Park	2010	Local Playground	3	D	3.5	10
74	Valleyview Park	2018	Local Playground	3	A	3.5	2
75	Viterra Park	2002	Local Playground	2	C	3	18
76	Viterra Park	2003	Local Playground	2	C	3	17
77	Viterra Park	2002	Local Playground	2	C	3	18

CITY PLAYGROUND INVENTORY – INACTIVE SITES (EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN REMOVED)

#	Name of Site	Year Installed	Typology	Service Zone	Subzone
1	Collier Park	NA	Inactive - Equipment Removed	4	A
2	Herald Park	NA	Inactive - Equipment Removed	2	B
3	Jeffries Park	NA	Inactive - Equipment Removed	2	C
4	Reynolds Park	NA	Inactive - Equipment Removed	1	C
5	Rundle Park	NA	Inactive - Equipment Removed	4	C
6	Simpson Park	NA	Inactive - Equipment Removed	4	A

SCHOOL PLAYGROUND SITES

#	Name of Site	Typology	Service Zone	Subzone
1	Connaught School	Local	3	A
2	Crestwood School	Local	4	A
3	Dr Ken Sauer School	Community	2	E
4	Ecole les Cypres	Local	3	B
5	Ecole St. John Paul II School	Community	1	E
6	Elm Street School	Local	3	C
7	George Davison School	Local	1	C
8	Herald School	Local	3	A
9	Medicine Hat Christian School	Local	4	C
10	Medicine Hat College	Local	3	D
11	Medicine Hat High School	Local	3	A
12	Mother Teresa School	Local	4	C
13	Notre Dame Academy	Community	1	D
14	River Heights School	Local	3	A
15	Ross Glen School	Local	4	C
16	Saint Francis Xavier School	Local	2	C
17	Saint Louis School	Local	3	C
18	Saint Mary's School	Local	3	A
19	Saint Michael's School	Local	2	B
20	Saint Patrick's School	Local	1	C
21	Southview School	Local	4	A
22	St. Thomas d'Aquin(French Immersion)	Local	4	A
23	Vincent Massey School	Local	2	B
24	Webster Niblock School	Local	2	C

APPENDIX B: "REMOVE" OR "REPLACE" – SCORING RESULTS

SCORING METRIC

Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Service Area Analysis (City Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are 2 or less other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 3-4 other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 5 or more City playgrounds in the same sub-zone.	3
Condition Assessment	2 pts: The playground has a current condition rating of 2.5 or better 1 pt: The playground has a condition rating of 2 0 pts: The playground has a condition rating <2 or the playground structure has been removed	2
Service Area Analysis (School Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are no school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 1-2 school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 3 or more school playgrounds in the sub-zone.	2
Park Site Considerations	2 pts: The park site is well suited for a playground 1 pt: The park site is moderately suited for a playground 0 pts: The park site is not well suited for a playround Consideration: playground classification standards, overall park size, other existing amenities, sightlines and visibility	2
Additional Community Considerations	1 or 2 additional points can be awarded for additional factors that could include: • The local community has strongly advocated for retaining or replacing the playground • Density of immediate service area (large number of multi-family dwellings within 400 metres) • Active transportation barriers in the neighbourhood that limit access to other playgrounds (e.g. lack of pathways or trails, accessing other nearby playgrounds would require crossing a major roadway) • The site and/or existing playground structure has a special characteristic (e.g. high level of accessibility)	1

SCORING RESULTS

Playground	Service Zone	Service Area Analysis (City)	Condition Assessment	Service Area Analysis (School)	Park Site Considerations	Additional Community Considerations	Total Weighted Score	Preliminary Action 8 or above = Replace Below 8 = Remove
Moose Ball Complex	1	1	0	2	1	0	9	Replace
Reynolds Park	1	2	0	1	1	0	10	Replace
Shannon Park	1	2	2	1	1	0	14	Replace
Flanagan Park	2	0	2	0	1	0	6	Remove
Heights Park	2	0	0	1	1	0	4	Remove
Herald Park	2	0	0	1	1	0	4	Remove
Holt Park	2	0	2	0	1	2	8	Replace or Replace (further assessment needed)
Jeffries Park	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	Remove
Muir Park	2	0	2	1	1	0	8	Replace
Patrol Park	2	1	1	1	1	0	9	Replace
Perry Park	2	1	1	1	1	0	9	Replace
Riley Park	2	0	0	1	1	2	6	Remove
Connaught Park	3	0	2	1	1	2	10	Replace
Hill Park	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	Remove
Kensington Park	3	0	2	0	1	0	6	Remove
Noble Park	3	0	0	1	1	0	4	Remove
Simon F. Scott Memorial Playground	3	2	2	2	1	0	16	Replace
Calder Park	4	0	0	0	1	2	4	Remove
Clennel Park	4	0	2	0	1	2	8	Replace
Collier Park	4	0	0	0	1	0	2	Remove
Rundle Park	4	0	0	0	1	0	2	Remove
Simpson Park	4	0	0	0	1	0	2	Remove
Taylor Place Park	4	0	2	0	1	0	6	Remove
Turner Park	4	0	2	0	1	0	6	Remove
Tower Estates Park	6	0	1	2	1	0	8	Replace

APPENDIX C: POTENTIAL "ENHANCE" CANDIDATES – SCORING RESULTS

SCORING METRIC

Criteria	Scoring	Weighting
Park Site Suitability	2 pts: The park site is highly suitable for the potential upgraded class of playground being considered (sufficient support amenities already exists, good park accessibility, site conditions support enhanced structure and use, etc.) 1 pt: The park site is moderately suitable for the potential upgraded class of playground being considered (beyond the playground structure itself; development or enhancement is needed to upgrade some amenities, accessibility, and/or some other park site amenities may require relocation of adaptation). 0 pts: The park site is poorly suited for the potential upgraded class of playground being considered (park site is too small or otherwise unsuitable, too small for sufficient support amenity development, etc.). *The playground classification system provides a basis for this assessment. Re-scoring of this criteria may be required based on a more thorough technical review of the site.*	3
Service Area Analysis (City Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are 2 or less other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 3-4 other City playgrounds in the same sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 5 or more City playgrounds in the same sub-zone.	3
Service Area Analysis (School Playgrounds)	2 pts: There are no school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 1 pt: There are 1-2 school playgrounds in the sub-zone. 0 pts: There are 3 or more school playgrounds in the sub-zone.	2
Existing Playground Provision	2 pts: There is an existing playground on the site (therefore enhancement would further leverage and optimize an existing play site) 0 pts: There is no currently a playground on the site.	1
Additional Community Considerations	1 or 2 additional points can be awarded for additional factors that could include: • The immediate service area has special population and demographics attributes that suggest a higher need for play opportunities. • The local community has strongly advocated for an enhanced playground.	1

SCORING RESULTS

Enhance Candidates	Upgrade Potential	Service Zone	Park Site Suitability	Service Area Analysis (City Playgrounds)	Service Area Analysis (School Playgrounds)	Existing Playground Provision	Additional Community Considerations	Total Weighted Score	Level of Suitability for Enhancement 10 or above = Strong 7 - 9 = Moderate Below 7 = Poor
South Ridge Community Park	Community or Destination (no current playground)	1	2	2	1	0	0	14	Strong
Police Point Park	Community or Destination (no current playground)	2	2	1	1	0	0	11	Strong
Celebration Park	Local to Community	1	1	2	0	2	0	11	Strong
Heald Park	Local to Community	2	1	2	0	2	0	11	Strong
Noble Park	Local to Community	3	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Lamb Park	Local to Community	3	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Lions Park	Local to Community	3	1	2	0	2	0	11	Strong
Kiwanis Playground	Local to Community	3	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Leinweber Park	Local to Community	4	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Southview Park	Local to Community	4	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Turner Park	Local to Community	4	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Gilwell Park	Local to Community	4	1	0	0	2	0	5	Poor
Kiwanis Central Park	Community to Destination	3 and 4	2	1.5	1	2	0	14.5	Strong

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE TEMPLATE – COMMUNITY PLAY PROFILE

COMMUNITY PLAY PROFILE

A. COMMUNITY INFORMATION (NEW SUB-DIVISION OR SCHOOL SITE)

Name of the Community (ASP area or existing community served by the school site):	
Service Zone (as per the Playground Management Plan):	
Sub-Zone (as per the Playground Management Plan):	
Other Pertinent Community Characteristics (e.g. anticipated future population, access point, other major amenities):	

B. EXISTING PLAYGROUND PROVISION & PROJECT ALIGNMENT

	Destination	Community	Local	Accessible
Current # of Playgrounds in the Service Zone				
Current # of Playgrounds in the Sub-Zone				

What type of playground is being considered? *Refer to the Playground Management Plan for an overview of the classification types.*

- Destination
- Community
- Local

Based on the Playground Management Plan, how would the addition of a playground in the Service Zone impact the Service Delivery Targets?

- Create an oversupply
- Address an undersupply or gap
- No impact

Please identify if the following types of play infrastructure is provided in the Service Zone or sub-zone.

	Service Zone	Sub-Zone	If yes, please identify the sites and provide a brief description of the opportunities.
Natural Play	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Adventure / Risky Play	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Multi-Generational Play	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Play for individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No	

C. OVERSUPPLY ASSESSMENT

Based on the information contained in this Profile and other considerations, what is the risk of oversupplying the Service Area (5 – significant risk; 1 minimal risk).

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Please explain the rationale:

_____

_____

_____

_____

D. OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT

Based on the information contained in this Profile and other considerations, is there a type of play opportunity that, if provided at the potential play site, would significantly enhance the diversity and balance of play in the Service Zone?

_____

_____

_____

_____