



2024 Budget Request

Request: Accessibility Enhancements at Recreational Facilities

Department: Community & Environmental Services

Request ID: CES2024BUDGET-C-09

Financial Ask: \$1.38M with no Capital Grants (\$483,000 with Possible Capital Grants)

Funding Source: Capital – General Parks Reserve and Possible Capital Grant Funding

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Background and Strategic Priority

Increase Available Community, Recreational and Social Opportunities

The Township of Georgian Bluffs is committed to building community through investment in recreation and community centres, and flexible use of community centres and playgrounds.

Objectives:

4.1 Provide enhanced recreational opportunities for residents.

(c) Implement recommendations arising from Recreation Master Plan.

(d) Continually improve public/open spaces to ensure accessibility and safety

The Townships **Recreation and Trails Master Plan** commits to addressing the needs of all the community and enhancing its spaces to meet the needs of accessible users and all ages and abilities.



The **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan** highlights the need to address accessibility in many areas, such as in the Design of Public Spaces. This request specifically addresses actions 6, 7 and 9, Design of Public Spaces.

Analysis

1) Shouldice Park Surface Accessibility Improvements

Shouldice Park at Shallow Lake Community Centre is the Townships largest and most diverse play area offering an array of equipment that provides for a range of play experiences. It has play equipment designed for a range of age and ability and several pieces of equipment provide for accessible play. However, the safety surfacing is pea gravel, which is not accessible.

Pea gravel is an approved safety surface, although its use is increasingly uncommon. While it does provide minimum surface attenuation for users, it is difficult to manage, uncomfortable for users and provides minimal benefits. It is hoped that through this project, all the pea gravel can be removed and replaced with EWF (Engineered Wood Fibre). This is much easier to manage, is cost effective and is recognised as an accessible surface.

However, while EWF is designated as an accessible surface type for play areas, it is far from readily accessible to all users with accessible needs. This budget request would allow for the replacement of the pea gravel in the junior play area with a rubberized surface. These are widely acknowledged to be the most accessible surfaces, though they do come with a high initial cost and a relatively short asset lifespan (around 7 years).

2) Shallow Lake Ball Diamond/Shouldice Park Accessible Washroom

In 2020 the washrooms were enhanced at Sarawak Family Park to provide a modern and accessible facility for park users. The washrooms at the Shallow Lake Ball Diamond, that also serve the Shouldice Park, are older in nature and in need of renovation. This project will see the existing washrooms renovated and modernised to fully accessible standards similar to Sarawak Park. Staff will ensure that modern and clean facilities are developed that incorporate the highest standards of accessibility to support recreation in Shallow Lake.

3) Sarawak Family Park Accessible Play Equipment

Sarawak Family Park is the busiest park in the Township, used by residents and visitors alike. In 2020, the washrooms at Sarawak Family Park were enhanced to be accessible. In 2023, an accessible trail through the park was developed and a 'mobi-mat' to enable access to the water across the beach was purchased. The playground at Sarawak is one of the oldest in the Township.



Staff hope to replace the play equipment at Sarawak Family Park with a new and modern play area equipped with a range of play equipment that meets the needs of a range of ages and is focussed on enhanced accessibility. A link trail from the new Sarawak Trail will connect to the play area to ensure accessibility and the surface will be upgraded to a rubberized surface for maximum accessibility of the play equipment.

Financial Impact

Staff estimate that the re-surfacing of the play areas at Shouldice Park to enhance accessibility will cost approximately \$200,000 of which most of the costs will be associated to the rubberized surfacing in the junior play area.

The estimated costs, based on the renovations at Sarawak Family Park, for the washrooms at Shallow Lake will cost \$200,000.

The costs for a new playground, with rubberized surfacing at Sarawak Family Park is estimated at \$750,000.

These are all estimated costs and subject to tendering. A 20% contingency has been added to reflect cost volatility for a total budget of \$1.38M.

Staff believe it is highly likely that grants can be secured to offset some of these costs or to further enhance the projects. The 'Enable Accessibility Grant' can provide up to 65% (\$897,000) of project costs for a project such as this is currently open, which would potentially reduce the budget impact to \$483,000. While it may not be possible to secure this grant, other grants for the project, as a whole or parts of it, may reduce the impact to the Township's financial contribution to the project.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Budget Request Accessibility Enhancements.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Nov 14, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Samantha Buchanan, Treasurer

Niall Loble, Director of Community Services