



Subject: *Belnan Park - Playground Options*
To: Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee
Date Prepared: May 15, 2025
Related Motions: C25(55)
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Approved by: Alana Tapper, Director, Parks, Recreation and Culture

Summary

Council motion C25(55) requested staff to bring back a report regarding options for a replacement playground on PID 45332715, open space lands that were recently transferred into Municipal ownership from the Province.

Financial Impact Statement

The cost to prepare the site and add a modest playground structure including a single bay swing (2 swings) is estimated to be \$100,000.

Recommendation

Staff are seeking direction from Council based on the options provided in this report.

Recommended Motion

Move that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommend to Council that Council [insert option].

Background

The open space lands in Belnan were owned and operated by the Elmsdale and District Recreation Association. A number of years ago, the group operated a sports court and a playground at the corner of Belnan Avenue and Withrow Drive. The playground consisted of swings, spring feature components and a residential-grade wood play structure with a slide.

The recreation association is no longer operating, was struck off the Registry of Joint Stocks in January 2007 and land ownership reverted to the Province. Ownership was transferred to the Municipality in late 2024 and Municipal staff removed the swings and playground equipment as they did not meet minimum CSA guidelines and were in extremely poor condition. The sport court remains and staff are planning on clearing the trees from around the fence in 2025.

Discussion

Although the property meets the municipal distance guidance of 600m radius between playgrounds, this neighborhood park would directly service 33 households on Belnan Avenue and Withrow Drive. In comparison, Concorde Way playground services 309+ households, Logan Drive 219+, Elmwood Drive 336+, South Uniacke 250+ and the Mount Uniacke Memorial playground services 220+ households. Royal Oaks is the closest playground servicing 150+ households with 70+ lots planned in the near future. Understanding this would service a limited number of households, prior to municipal ownership, the parcel did have residential grade wood structure and bay of swings. Council could choose to construct a playground based on historically having play equipment on the site.

Options for Council to consider include:

1. Plan to add a new playground project as part of 2026/2027 budget discussions and if approved, construct in the summer of 2026 with funding options to be determined;
2. Do not add a playground until more development in the area results in servicing 80 or more households and continue to maintain the space for passive recreation opportunities.
3. Retain the open space for passive recreation only with no further infrastructure added.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The 2021-2024 East Hants Strategic Plan speaks of sustainable infrastructure and the goal is to provide infrastructure that meets the needs of the communities throughout East Hants.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The estimated costs of site preparation and playground installation is \$100,000. At present, open space funds are allocated for other projects.

If Council wishes to have this project brought forward for capital consideration as part of 2026/2027 budget discussions, funding sources would be determined at that time. As with other recreational infrastructure, Provincial and Federal grant funding opportunities would be explored.
