

To: Safety and Facilities Services Committee

From: Adam Grant, Commissioner,  
Safety and Facilities Services

Report Number: SF-23-39

Date of Report: November 29, 2023

Date of Meeting: December 4, 2023

Subject: Accessible Wheelchair Swings

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council Direction on June 26, 2023 and report SF-23-25:

“That staff investigate the inclusion of wheelchair accessible swings similar to that provided by the City of Burlington to Lakeview Park and all new community level parks within the City of Oshawa.”

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Safety and Facilities Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That the ‘Parks Development Design Standards’, prepared by Parks Planning and Development, be revised to consider accessible wheelchair swings for all new or redeveloped City and Community level parks within the City of Oshawa.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

Not applicable.

## **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

- City of Burlington
- Parks Maintenance Services
- Lynda Lawson, Accessibility Program Coordinator

## **5.0 Analysis**

## **5.1 Parks Development Design Standards**

The City of Oshawa's Parks Planning and Development section has a guiding document, the 'Parks Development Design Standards' that outlines standards in the design process for new park development and existing park redevelopment. These standards are applicable to the City of Oshawa's four classifications of parks:

1. Regional Parks;
2. City Parks;
3. Community Parks; and
4. Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes.

Regional parks are intended to serve residents throughout the Region and may be based upon significant natural features that provide major recreational opportunities and which serve the regional population. Regional parks vary in size and contain significant or unique physical features, or major recreational facilities and related amenities support facilities.

City parks are intended to serve residents throughout the City of Oshawa through the provision of major-park and recreational opportunities, or cultural facilities that perform a distinctive function on a City-wide basis. City parks are to be a minimum size of 12 hectares to support sports and other programmable features.

Community parks are intended to provide a range of outdoor and indoor recreational opportunities to a population base of approximately 20,000 people. Community parks are primarily intended to accommodate active sports and recreational activities, but may also include areas for passive recreation. Community parks are to be a minimum of 8 hectares to a maximum of 12 hectares in size.

Neighbourhood parks are intended to serve the residents in a neighbourhood planning area, through the provision of active and passive recreational opportunities. Park features are designed to serve a population base up to 5,000 people. Neighbourhood parks are not intended to normally attract significant numbers of park users residing beyond the local neighbourhood planning unit. Neighbourhood parks are a minimum size of 1.8 hectares except for tot lots, parkettes and other small parks within the Downtown area.

## **5.2 Wheelchair Accessible Swings**

Wheelchair accessible swings are an inclusive play feature that can be integrated into parks which allow individuals of all abilities to play together and experience the thrill of swinging. The swing features a ramp that is connected to a deck with an accessible bay that can accommodate one or two wheelchairs, depending on the model.

The City of Oshawa Parks Design Standards include accessible seat swings in all park redevelopment projects, however, there is currently no City of Oshawa park that features an accessible swing that can accommodate a wheelchair.

## **5.2 Consultation with the City of Burlington**

In 2022, with the help of a funding grant from the McNally Foundation, the City of Burlington was able to install a “We-Go-Swing” by Landscape Forms in Central Park.

The City of Burlington developed a set of criteria for inclusion of wheelchair accessible swings in their park. This criteria includes:

- The park chosen should be a destination park to serve a larger community and be accessible to everyone.
- Playground surfacing should be rubber tile or poured-in-place, to accommodate a higher level of fall impact standards required to cover the large concrete footings. Note: rubber surfacing is typically reserved for destination parks due to its prohibitive installation and maintenance costs.
- Proximity to adjacent barrier-free parking and washrooms.
- Should be part of an all-inclusive playground.
- Requires a controlled setting to discourage vandalism, i.e. fenced off, under surveillance, maintenance staff available on site.

The City of Burlington noted a number of challenges and lessons learned with installing a wheelchair accessible swing. These challenges included:

- A large learning curve for installation for Parks and Operations staff, as well as the installers.
- Elevation/grading needs to be considered during design and installation. The first installation had to be removed and re-installed at the correct height to meet accessibility standards and safety requirements.
- Accessible routes to the swing and proper drainage needs to be considered.
- Significant concrete structural foundations need to be included to support the swing.
- Impact test results were hard to achieve because of the large concrete footings extending beyond the play area footprint.
- Large concrete footings required a significant investment
- Rubber safety surfacing beside the swing became compromised and required repairs on numerous occasions.

The City of Burlington noted the inclusion of the wheelchair accessible swing has brought many positive benefits to the community. The City of Burlington noted the swing is well utilized and promotes inclusivity in the community.

#### **5.4 Lakeview Park**

Staff has completed a conceptual facility fit and concluded the approximate space required is available at Lakeview Park. The preliminary estimate, including site works, is approximately \$100,000 to \$150,000. The final price will be determined based on detailed site assessments.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications at this time associated with this report.

## **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

This report addresses many of the goals set in the Oshawa Strategic Plan, including the goal of “Economic Prosperity and Financial Stewardship” through the theme of “Safe and Reliable Infrastructure”, and “Social Equity” through the theme of “An Active, Healthy and Safe Community”, and “Environmental Responsibility” through the theme of “Proactive Environmental Management and Combat Climate Change”.

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Randy Garey,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adam Grant'.

Adam Grant, Commissioner,  
Safety and Facilities Services