



NEWS RELEASE

Town Reassesses Playground Removal at Centennial Sports Park Following Community Feedback

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2025

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is pleased to share that the playground and swings on the south side of Centennial Sports Park in Virgil will remain open following thoughtful community input and a reassessment by Town Staff.

After the initial announcement regarding the playground's removal, residents responded with heartfelt messages and personal stories expressing just how much the space means to the Virgil community. That feedback prompted Staff to pause and reevaluate the decision.

"We heard how important this playground is to the community," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. "Other options were explored by Staff, and the park is remaining open as long as its safety can be maintained."

The playground had been scheduled for removal due to a combination of factors, including its age, accessibility challenges related to the sand surface, and its location. Following renewed discussion and a detailed inspection, Staff have confirmed that while the equipment has reached the end of its expected lifecycle, it is currently safe and may remain open at this time.

To ensure continued safety, inspections will increase from monthly to bi-weekly. Any components found to be unsafe will be promptly removed, and no new replacement parts will be installed. Staff remain committed to maintaining the structure to the best of their ability for as long as it remains safe for use.

"This playground has brought neighbours together for over 20 years," said CAO Bruce Zvaniga. "While Staff's initial decision was made with the best intentions, we've heard clearly that more dialogue is needed when decisions affect cherished neighbourhood spaces. I'm proud of how quickly our team pivoted in response to the community, and we remain committed to preserving spaces that foster connection, play, and community spirit."



In parallel, Town Staff will prioritize improvements to the existing playground near the splash pad within Centennial Sports Park. Planned enhancements include accessible features, shade, and swings to ensure the park continues to serve the needs of residents of all ages and abilities.

More information and next steps will be shared in a future report to Council. The Town remains committed to listening to its residents and maintaining safe, welcoming parks for all.

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