



TOWN STATEMENT

Listening, Learning and Improving Our Parks and Playgrounds

For Immediate Release

June 4, 2026

The Town recognizes that parks and playgrounds are important gathering spaces for local families and understands that some residents have expressed concerns and disappointment with the new playground at Simcoe Park, while others have shared positive feedback and appreciation for the improvements. We appreciate the feedback we have received regarding accessibility, inclusivity, play opportunities, and the future of recreation spaces across Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Residents have shared a desire for more adventurous, engaging, and inclusive play experiences, and those perspectives are important. Council and Staff continue to listen and learn from community feedback. Community input helps shape decisions and plays a valuable role in the continued evolution of parks and recreation spaces throughout Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Importantly, the Town has demonstrated that resident feedback directly influences decision-making. Following public input regarding the proposed playground replacement at Memorial Park, located just down the street from Simcoe Park, the Town paused the project after hearing concerns that the proposed design did not meet community expectations and that residents were seeking a more substantial park enhancement. Staff and Council listened to that feedback, secured additional funding, and worked with designers to explore a more ambitious vision for the space.

The recent improvements at Simcoe Park were designed to replace the existing playground by providing two separate play structures tailored to different age groups, supporting children ages 1.5–5 and 5–12. The playground also includes accessible swing features and a variety of play opportunities intended to support children at different developmental stages and abilities.

The Town is committed to continually enhancing parks and recreation spaces across Niagara-on-the-Lake. While it is not always possible to incorporate every suggestion



received from the community, resident feedback remains an important part of the decision-making process. Community input often reflects a wide range of perspectives, priorities, and expectations, and Council and Staff must carefully balance those viewpoints alongside available funding, accessibility considerations, operational requirements, long-term planning objectives, and the needs of the broader community. With every project, Council and Staff strive to make thoughtful decisions that deliver meaningful benefits for residents today while supporting the community's future needs.

As with many municipal infrastructure projects, playground improvements are planned and budgeted years in advance while balancing funding, operational priorities, and the needs of neighbourhood parks throughout the municipality. Simcoe Park was designed as a neighbourhood playground and community gathering space that complements the surrounding heritage district, walking paths, historic buildings, and green space. While its role differs from that of a larger destination-style playground, the Town recognizes the community's interest in expanded recreational opportunities and continues to explore those opportunities through broader park planning initiatives and future investments.

At the same time, the Town is continuing to evolve its broader approach to playground planning and park design. Through ongoing initiatives identified within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the Town is undertaking future-focused planning work to help establish a longer-term vision for parks and recreation spaces across the community. This includes exploring how parks can become more inclusive, accessible, interactive, and reflective of the evolving needs and expectations of residents and visitors alike.

The Town is also taking a renewed approach to park planning and design. Rather than viewing playgrounds as standalone amenities, the focus is increasingly on creating complete park experiences that are welcoming, accessible, engaging, and reflective of the unique character of each community space. This includes considering how play opportunities, accessibility features, natural elements, gathering spaces, and recreational amenities can work together to better serve residents of all ages and abilities.

Community feedback received through this discussion and through ongoing engagement across Niagara-on-the-Lake will help inform future park planning initiatives and continued implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



The Town appreciates the community's continued engagement and remains committed to creating parks and recreation spaces that reflect the needs, aspirations, and experiences of residents across Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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