



Let's Play, Courtenay!

Park Playground Design Standards



City of
Courtenay

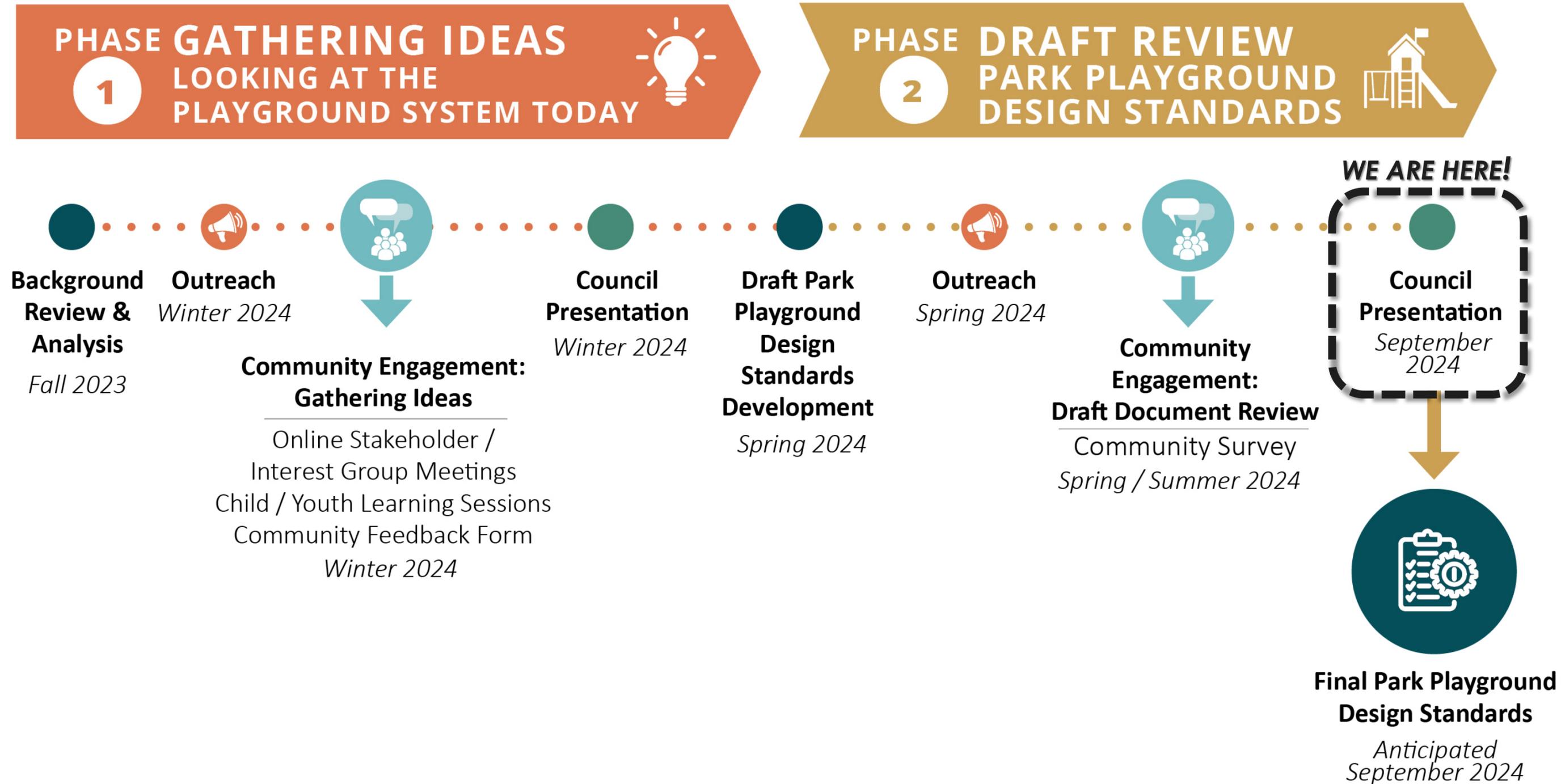
September 11, 2024 | Council Presentation

LANARC

Presentation Outline

- **Project Process Overview**
- **Community Engagement Round 2**
 - Process
 - What We Heard
- **Park Playground Design Standards Overview**
 - Document Sections
 - Standards Organization
 - Standards Examples
- **Final Steps**

Project Process



Phase 2:
Engagement
Highlights
What We Heard





Phase 2 Engagement Summary

- **Input Received:**
 - Between June 20 – July 12, 2024
 - Draft document posted on the City's project website
 - Referrals to interest groups and community members
 - Online and hard-copy survey
 - Input from City staff
- **Feedback Areas:**
 -  Safety
 -  Fenced Play Areas
 -  Shade and All-Seasons Use



Addressing Safety

- **Concerns about substance use in or near playground areas**
- **“Safety and comfort are key” guiding principle**
 - Provide a wide range of activities, programming, and gathering spaces (Standard 8,9)
 - Increase opportunities for safe garbage disposal (Standard 8)
 - Integrate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in playground planning and design (Standard 2)
 - Lighting in select locations (Standard 8)
 - Placemaking elements including public art and signage to strengthen sense of place (Standard 8)



Addressing Boundaries & Enclosure

- **Fences:** Revised to include requirement for fully-fenced playgrounds (enclosed on all sides) in immediate proximity to highways, arterial, or collector streets.



Addressing Shade

- **Shade Structures:** Revised Supporting Amenities Section to include shade trees and shade structures at *ALL* park playgrounds (not just Community Park Playgrounds)
- Consideration for alternative shade methods while trees establish.

Park Playground Design Standards Overview



Document Sections



- **1: Planning** - *Framing the Standards*
- **2: Design** - *Digging into the Details*
- **3: Implementation** - *Moving Forward*



Section 1 Planning: *Framing the Standards*

- Project Purpose
- Related Plans and Initiatives
- Project Process
- What We Heard
- Playground System Today
- Park Playground Classifications
- Needs Assessment
- Vision and Guiding Principles



Section 2 Design: *Digging into the Details*

- **Park Playground Design Standards Overview**
- **Park Playground Design Standards**
 - 1 Accessibility and Inclusivity
 - 2 Siting the Playground
 - 3 Pathways and Connectivity
 - 4 Boundaries and Enclosure
 - 5 Playground Surfacing and Edging
 - 6 Play Elements and Opportunities
 - 7 Trees and Planting
 - 8 Supporting Amenities
 - 9 Programming

Provide safe, well-connected paths of travel to access park playgrounds



Inspiration: Accessible paths of travel for all



Parkgate Community Centre
Playground, North Vancouver, BC

Inspiration: Pathways can provide play value in the form of “stop and go” loops for early walkers and striders, with grade changes to navigate including bridges and humps



Image Credit: Decomark
Browning Park, Saanich BC

Inspiration: Pathways provide opportunities to enhance placemaking, including custom markings and integrated public art

Background & Rationale

- Increased connectivity to parks and recreation opportunities was identified as a priority in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019).
- Public engagement participants identified opportunities to increase safe access to Courtenay’s park playgrounds by active transportation, including walking and rolling (cycling, rollerblading, skateboarding, wheelchair / scooter / stroller travel).
- Integration of supporting amenities can encourage active transportation to park playgrounds (e.g., bike parking and water fountains).

Design Standards

- Locate new playgrounds in close proximity to existing park and neighbourhood trails (see Standard 2).
- Plan pathways with CPTED principles in mind, including clear sight lines and boundaries (see Standard 4)
- Integrate a hierarchy of pathways to and surrounding the playground including primary pathways, secondary pathways, and path loops, aligning with the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan standards:
 - » All primary pathways to be 3m wide
 - » Secondary pathways to be minimum 1.5 - 3m wide
- For all primary and secondary paths, longitudinal slopes should be maximum 5%, and cross slopes maximum 2%.
- If longitudinal slopes exceed 5%, install an accessible ramp and handrails per BC Building Code standards. Maximum longitudinal ramp slope to be 1:12, with ramp landings at regular intervals.
- For Community Park Playground pathways, surfacing to be cast-in-place concrete, precast concrete pavers (including permeable pavers), or asphalt.
- For Neighborhood Park Playground pathways, surfacing to be cast-in-place concrete, precast concrete pavers, asphalt, or packed gravel.
- For Nature Park Playground pathways, surfacing to be wood chip.
- Install all pathways to suitable depth and compaction and avoid minor grade changes between pathways and adjacent surfaces, which can create tripping hazards or other mobility challenges.
- Plan pathways to provide play value, including pathway loops surrounding the play environment for tricycles, push-toys, and early walkers.
- Integrate “discovery pathways” at the periphery of playgrounds through planted areas with stepping stones to encourage a sense of discovery and surprise.
- Provide supporting amenities along playground pathways including furnishings, lighting, and signage (see Standard 8).
- Provide a different colour, finish, or type of pathway surfacing to differentiate paths from main play areas to reduce conflicts.

• Design Standards Format:

- Number and Title
- Description
- Background & Rationale
- Standards
- Additional Considerations (key sections)
- Precedent Imagery



Standard 1 Accessibility and Inclusivity

Plan welcoming, inclusive, fun play environments for all ages and abilities

- **Mobility:**
 - Accessible paths of travel
 - Open spaces next to play elements for wheelchairs
 - Mix of ground-level and elevated equipment
- **Vision:**
 - Strong, contrasting colours and textures
 - Custom braille inlays
- **Hearing:**
 - Clear sight lines for easy navigation
 - Avoid materials that create scraping / clanging sounds
- **Sensory Considerations:**
 - Separate active and passive zones
 - Calming opportunities for sensory input
 - Fencing



Standard 1

Accessibility and Inclusivity

Plan welcoming, inclusive, fun play environments for all ages and abilities

- **Intersections:** Areas where all children can safely come together and share play experiences.
 - Swings, merry-go-rounds, platforms, teeter-totters
 - Areas for observation
 - Sand play areas with universal access points
 - Tunnels or ground-oriented features with climbing above



Standard 6

Play Elements & Opportunities

Provide a wide range of play opportunities for all to enjoy

- **Age Ranges:**
 - Community Park Playgrounds: all ages
 - Neighbourhood & Nature Park Playgrounds: tot-lot, 3-5, or 5-12 based on need.
- **Standard Play Features:**
 - Swings, slides, climbing structures, monkey bars, stepping stones, bridges, tunnels, merry-go-rounds / spinners, teeter-totters, play houses, nature play
- **Special Play Features:**
 - Zip-lines, trampolines, parkour features, custom / landmark play structures, created play elements, musical play elements, exercise equipment, water play



Standard 6
Play Elements & Opportunities

Provide a wide range of play opportunities for all to enjoy

- **Nature Play:**
 - Community Park Playgrounds: 15% of total playground area
 - Neighbourhood Park Playgrounds: 20% of total playground area
 - Nature Park Playgrounds: 100% of total playground area
 - Natural climbing features
 - Nature discovery features
 - Topography and landforms
 - Water play / sand & mud play
 - Loose parts play



Standard 8 Supporting Amenities

Provide a range of supporting amenities to activate park playgrounds

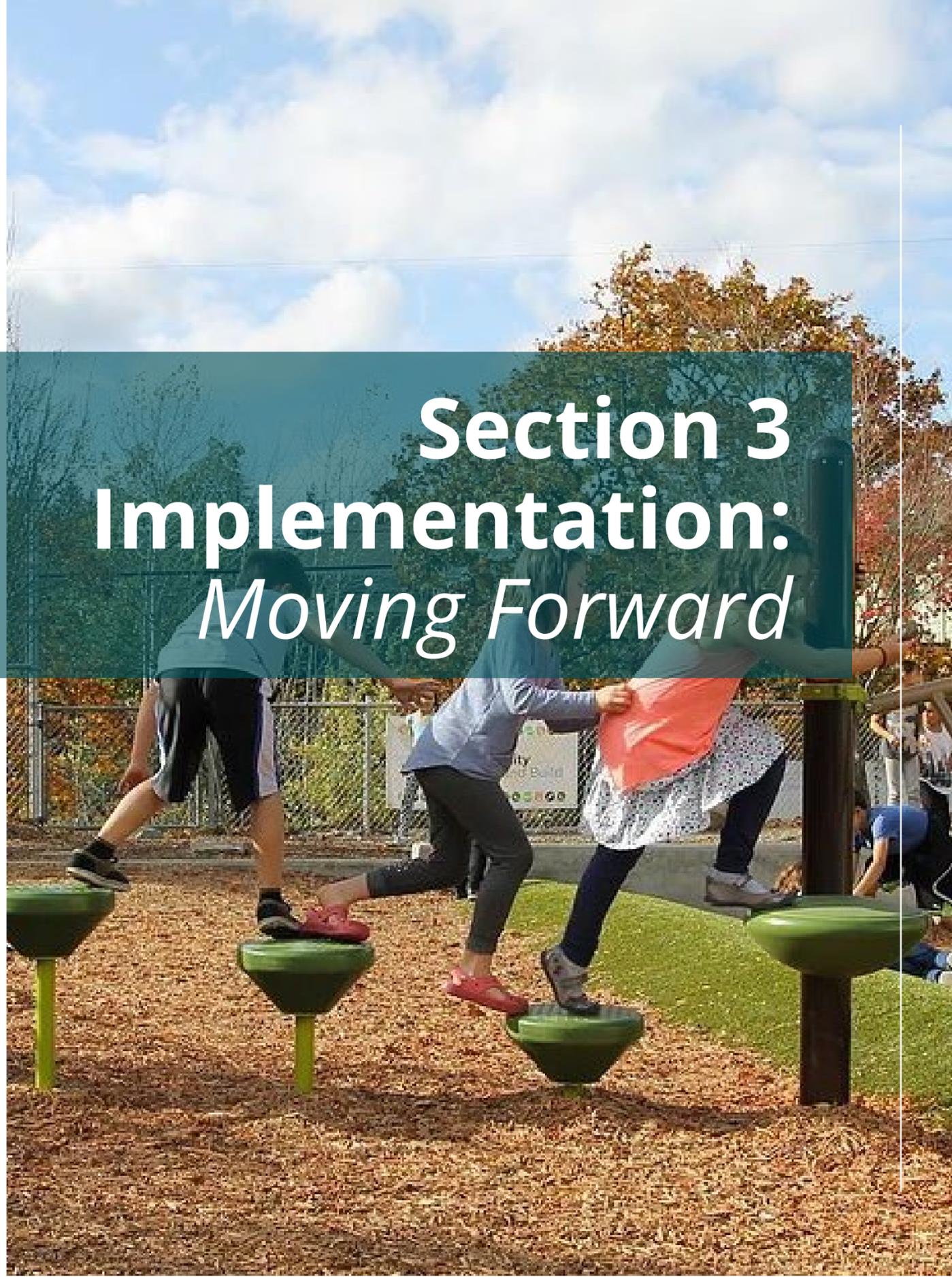
- **Background & Rationale:**
 - To encourage positive, increased activation of playground areas
 - Playgrounds can act as gathering places
 - Amenities for all-seasons use
- **Amenities Table:**
 - Standard and Special Amenities
 - Description & Considerations for Implementation
 - Priority Level
 - Capital Cost Estimate



Standard 8 Supporting Amenities

Provide a range of supporting amenities to activate park playgrounds

- **Standard Amenities:**
 - Gathering Spaces
 - Waste Receptacles
 - Shade Elements
 - Bike Parking
 - Signage
- **Special Amenities:**
 - Washroom Building
 - Splash Pad / Water Play
 - Public Art
 - Picnic Shelter
 - Water Fountain
 - Multi-sport Court
 - Pop-up Retail / Food Trucks
 - BBQ Area
 - Lighting
 - Game tables



Section 3 Implementation: *Moving Forward*

- Implementing the Standards
- Playground Asset Management Planning
- Financial Recommendations for Implementation
- Playground Design Standards Summary

Final Steps

- Park Playground Design Standards document finalized (following Council direction)
- Implement standards on all future park playgrounds and redevelopments
 - Woodcote Park Playground Renewal (2025)



Thank you!

