



## Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee

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**Meeting Date:** April 27, 2022  
**Submitted by:** Sarah Savoie, Accessibility Coordinator  
**SUBJECT:** Dorchester Park

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### **Background:**

Per the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation: Design of Public Space Standard, there is a requirement for consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee concerning outdoor play spaces. The Municipality of Thames Centre is constructing a new accessible playground located in Dorchester Park.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, accessible outdoor play spaces are defined as areas containing:

- Playground equipment, like swings or slides
- Natural features meant for children to play with, such as sand, water, logs or rocks<sup>1</sup>

Minimum requirements include:

- a) Having a firm and stable surface to allow ease of access for those that use mobility devices or equipment
- b) Surfaces must be level, without slopes
- c) Surfaces under playgrounds should be built to prevent injury or impact
- d) Playgrounds should have clearance so children and caregivers with disabilities can move around the space
- e) The play spaces must incorporate accessibility features such as sensory and active play for children and caregivers with various disabilities, in the design

While the Design of Public Spaces Standard does not have explicit requirements, there were some recommended accessible features. Details of the accessible elements and equipment, location, access and rest areas is provided in the analysis section below.

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Thomson, Accessible Outdoor Play Space Requirements, AODA, [Accessible Outdoor Play Spaces Requirements \(aoda.ca\)](https://www.aoda.ca/accessible-outdoor-play-spaces-requirements)

## **Analysis:**

### **Attachments:**

#### **1. Thames Centre\_Dorchester Park\_2D Site Layout\_April 13 2022**

Consultation has been done regarding the Request for Proposal with the MAAC and the Municipality created an Accessibility and Inclusive Advisory Committee (AIAC) to consult throughout the duration of the planning, proposal, and construction stages. The following are some elements regarding the attachment that outline the different accessibility features.

1 – the image on the right shows where we would connect the existing asphalt walking paths to the rubber surface playground in two locations – the main entrance (towards the top of the image) and the side entrance (to the left)

2 – the image on the right shows the proposed extension of rubber surfacing (shown in bright green) from the main play area into the swing area, to provide better to the accessible swings, rather than the mulch that will be in the rest of the swing area

3 – the image on the right shows the proposed fence we would install to provide a barrier between the inclusive park and the busy parking lot

4 – the image on the right shows some ideas on where benches and picnic tables could be placed on the new cement pads

5 – the curb around the rubber surfacing is a “roll over” curb, so one that can easily be crossed with a wheelchair, scooter or stroller

6 – the image on the left shows the work that will be done to make the parking lot crossing safer (inserting tactile plates) and the transition from parking to walkway more accessible (with removal of curb and increasing the cement pad in that area).

We will also be making the first 2 or 3 spots beside the crosswalk accessible parking spaces, with the option to increase this to even more accessible spaces if whatever we do initially proves to be insufficient.

7 – We will also have at least one bike rack at the inclusive park, ideally two, along with garbage cans, etc.

### **Location, Access and Rest Areas**

The location of the playground is in the centre of the Dorchester Park, located to the right of the parking lot behind the Flight Exec Centre and Dorchester Community

Centre. There are paved pathways throughout the park that connect to the main, the ball diamonds, the school, swimming pool, outdoor splash pad and other playgrounds. The Municipality obtained an Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) grant to provide the community with access to the park using BlindSquare. This application is geared towards making spaces more accessible for people who are blind or have low vision.

Rest areas are proposed in the attachment. The Municipality of Thames Centre is seeking MAAC feedback on the attached. Consultation should be provided on:

- Location and number of accessible parking spaces
- Rest stops and benches/picnic table locations
- Any accessible features not considered or included

**Recommendation:**

THAT the Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee recommend the following consultation feedback to the Municipality of Thames Centre regarding the Dorchester Park Site Layout