

Parents to raise \$500,000 for new 'super playpark'

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TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Volunteers are raising a half-million dollars to replace an "iconic" playground in the heart of Riverview with one that is more accessible and has modern trappings like artificial turf and even wireless internet.

And they hope to do it by June.

The current iteration of the playground, known as the All World Super Playpark, is 24 years old and in need of replacement, said Sean Rollo, the project manager and head of the Frank L. Bowser Playground Committee.

The committee figures it will cost \$500,000 to rebuild the current wooden structure, which is shared by the elementary school and Riverview Middle School, into a modern playground that will set a new standard for accessibility and withstand the elements better than the current one.

"It's going to have a very similar look and feel ... just with newer materials that will last a lot longer," Rollo said. Many of the materials used to preserve wood playgrounds have been determined to be toxic to children, Rollo said. The current playground isn't treated with chemicals, but has started to disintegrate.

Exact elements haven't been finalized, but there are some high-level items the committee wants for sure, Rollo said. That includes artificial turf, which would accommodate wheelchairs, picnic tables and even wifi.

"So when the parents are there on the weekend, they'll have wifi accessibility," Rollo said.

The artificial turf alone is estimated to cost about \$250,000, but Rollo said the committee is positive about reaching their June deadline.

"The goal is extremely realistic if we can get the word out there and get the community out there," he said.

The group is also looking for financial commitments from the Town of Riverview, the province and federal grants, but Rollo is prepared to go it alone.

"We have the mindset that we're going to try to raise as much of it as we can and hopefully the province, town and federal government will come to the plate as well," Rollo said.

Fundraising is already well underway, starting with a Chase the Ace draw, in partnership with the Riverview Lions Club, that is entering its third week.

The committee has high hopes for the Chase the Ace. "Realistically, if we can raise somewhere around \$50,000 to \$100,000 that would be wonderful. It will just depend on the community involvement," Rollo said.

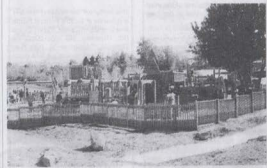
The draws happen every Sunday at 8:15 p.m. at the Riverview Lions Club on Coverdale Road. Tickets are sold every Wednesday and Friday night from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Five Bridges Pub, or at the Lions Club from 6 to 8 p.m.

"You do not have to be there to win," Rollo said.

The current playground was built in 1994, thanks in large part to a massive volunteer effort. Many of the materials were donated, and much of the labour for the project was volunteered. The completion of the project was marked by a parade of neighbourhood children.

To this day, Rollo said the structure is used by church groups, the YMCA and local daycares and summer camps in addition to the schools.

"It's just such an iconic structure ... we're really hoping that once people hear it needs replacing, that the community will come together to build this park," Rollo said.



The current All World Super Play Park located at Riverview's Frank L. Bowser School. PHOTO: FRANK L. BOWSER PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE