

**Report from** Parks, Recreation and Culture Services, Business Planning and Strategic Services

**Date of Report:** January 11, 2018

**Date of Meeting:** January 22, 2018

**Report Number:** PRCS-B002-2018

**File:** 68.31.1

**Subject:** Park Renewal Plan – 2018 Update

## Recommendation

That Budget Standing Committee receive the report for information purposes.  
FORTHWITH

## Summary

This report presents an update to the Park Renewal Plan for courts and playgrounds and provides a recommended approach to the prioritization of their renewal, developed in consultation with the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee.

Management of other park amenities, including trails, irrigation, underdrainage, fences and benches require further review to provide a forecast. Washrooms and parking lots would be considered through building assessments and prioritization, and outdoor aquatic facilities through the approved Aquatics Implementation Plan.

## Background

The 2016 Capital Budget report included the condition of City playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts. At that time the capital forecast to manage the assets identified for renewal by 2020 was approximately \$5,000,000 (2016 dollars). In response to this information Council approved the following motion made by Councillor Haywood on August 22, 2016:

“That staff prepare a report and bring to the Budget Standing Committee for 2017 budget cycle to see what a five year plan to address the \$5m deficit would look like with regard to the condition of the city’s parks.”

On January 25, 2017 Budget Standing Committee received a report on a Parks Renewal Plan for information purposes (report [#PRCS-B007-2017](#)). The report outlined the City’s inventory, replacement needs and values of playgrounds, tennis courts, and basketball courts. The Budget Standing Committee referred the report to the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee (RMPAC) for their feedback on the areas of focus.

On February 21, 2017 the RMPAC reviewed the report and staff presented an evaluation criteria for park asset renewals. Based on the feedback received from the RMPAC the evaluation criteria discussed within the report is recommended.

Staff have completed a review and update of the category assignment of each court and playground based on age and condition.

## **Report**

With the acquisition of Glenridge Park and the development of Wise Guys Park, there are 72 playground, 15 tennis court and 22 basketball court locations that serve the residents of St. Catharines. This inventory level has been validated by the Recreation Master Plan as appropriate to service the community's needs into 2026.

Any renewal would take into consideration the recommendations within the Plan to support the optimization of the amenity for the community, including placement, both geographically and within the park; innovative design options, such as half courts / multi use functionality; and funding opportunities to facilitate the renewal. Any major changes to the amenity from current state would be prefaced with community consultation.

## **Funding needed for playground, tennis and basketball court renewal has increased to \$6.53 million over the next 5 years**

Total funding required for playground, basketball court and tennis courts over the next 5 years (2018 – 2022) is \$6,535,000. The 5 year forecast has risen by \$1.54 million since originally reported to Council on August 22, 2016.

The replacement recommendation based on the condition of these amenities equals approximately 39% of playgrounds, 71% of basketball courts and 80% of tennis courts to be replaced by 2022.

The risk of not proceeding with replacement of these amenities within the recommended timeframe is a compounding budgetary need each year and that amenities are deemed unsafe and are closed or removed without replacement, reducing the existing service level to the community. In addition, if the amenities are allowed to degrade and become unusable, the inventory would no longer be appropriate to service the community's needs.

The geographic distribution of these needs and asset condition evaluation and categorization into red, yellow and green categories is illustrated by asset group in Appendix 1.

The state of the existing inventory is as follows and is illustrated in Appendix 2:

## Playgrounds

The City recently added 2 new playgrounds to its inventory: Glenridge Park, part of the former Glenridge School (yellow category) and Wise Guys Park, part of a newly developed park (green category). Since 2016, based on age and condition, 9 playgrounds have moved from the yellow to red category and 7 from the green to the yellow category; and 3 were replaced, moving them from the red to green category. The updated inventory categorization, compared to 2016, is shown in the chart below. Of those that moved from the yellow to red category, 1 of them is a City wide playground that have a higher replacement cost.

Status	2018	2016	Replacement Period	Funding required within next 1-10 years
<b>Red</b>	<b>28</b>	22	1-5 years	\$3,400,000
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>27</b>	27	6-10 years	\$2,700,000
<b>Green</b>	<b>17</b>	21	10+ years	-
<b>Total 5 Year Funding</b>			<b>\$3,400,000</b>	

## Basketball Courts

The City recently added one new basketball court to its inventory: Glenridge Park, part of the former Glenridge School (yellow category). Since 2016, based on age and condition, 1 basketball court moved from the yellow to red category; 1 had the posts and nets replaced, moving it from the red to yellow category; and 2 were replaced, moving it from the red to green category. The updated inventory categorization, compared to 2016, is shown in the chart below. All of the courts in the yellow category (fair condition), previously included cost estimates for net and post replacement only and now require and have increased cost estimates for a full court renewal.

	2018	2016	Court Condition	Funding required within next 1-5 years
<b>Red</b>	<b>9</b>	11	Poor	\$675,000
<b>Yellow</b>	<b>7</b>	6	Fair	\$525,000
<b>Green</b>	<b>6</b>	4	Good	-
<b>Total 5 Year Funding</b>			<b>\$1,200,000</b>	

## Tennis Courts

Since 2016, based on age and condition, 1 tennis court has moved from the yellow to red category. The updated inventory categorization, compared to 2016, is shown in the chart below.

	2018	2016	Court Condition	Funding required within next 1-5 years
Red	10	9	Poor	\$1,695,000
Yellow	2	3	Fair	\$240,000
Green	3	3	Good	-
<b>Total 5 Year Funding</b>			<b>\$1,935,000</b>	

## 2018 Capital Budget includes playground and court renewal

Based on the evaluation criteria for comparing and evaluating asset renewal, developed with the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee; and the available funding of \$325,000 in the 2018 draft Capital Budget, staff recommend that the playground at Douglas Park and the courts at Pearson Park and Clifford's Creek Park be prioritized for renewal in 2018. Innovative design that maximizes inclusive and diverse use opportunities for all residents will be implemented during asset renewal.

## Alternative funding options to support Park Renewal

### Increase to the Infrastructure Levy Reserve

An increase to the Infrastructure Levy Reserve that is assigned to support for park asset renewal would provide additional funds beyond what the Capital budget can currently support for playground and court renewal.

For example, an increase of 0.5% in 2018 would be approximately \$489,000. As an illustration, this amount of funding could be utilized towards a complete park renewal at 1-2 sites that requires multiple upgrades; or provide 42% of required funding for all basketball courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years; or 26% of required funding for all tennis courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years; or provide 15% of required funding for all playgrounds requiring replacement within the next 5 years.

### Hydro Dividend

As Council considers the allocation of the Hydro Dividend to meet the significant asset renewal needs across the City for all types of infrastructure, an illustration below shows what work could be accomplished at sample levels of funding put towards park playground and court renewal.

### Examples of options of how additional funds provided can be used

Funding level	Example 1 – Complete Parks	Example 2 - Courts	Example 3 - Playgrounds
\$500,000	Complete park renewal at 1-2 sites that have court and playground assets	Provide 42% of required funding for all basketball courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years <u>or</u> 26% of required funding for all	Provide 15% of required funding for all playgrounds

	requiring replacement within the next 5 years	tennis courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years	requiring replacement within the next 5 years
\$1,000,000	Complete park renewal at 2-4 sites that have court and playground assets requiring replacement within the next 5 years	Provide 83% of required funding for all basketball courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years <u>or</u> 52% of required funding for all tennis courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years	Provide 29% of required funding for all poor condition playgrounds
\$1,500,000	Complete park renewal at 3-6 sites that have court and playground assets requiring replacement within the next 5 years	Provide 100% of required funding for all basketball courts <u>and</u> 10% of required funding for all tennis courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years <u>or</u> 78% of required funding for all tennis courts requiring replacement within the next 5 years	Provide 44% of required funding for all poor condition playgrounds

Exact outcomes depend on the overall site needs, cost estimates at the time of the construction tender, and ancillary items required to complete the park, such as accessible pathways, fences, benches, picnic tables.

### **Determining what projects to focus on if addition funding is allocated**

Additional funding beyond the 2018 Capital Forecast of \$325,000 for playgrounds and court renewal will require consideration of different strategies to most efficiently utilize funds and staff time depending on the level of funding available; such strategies could include one or more complete parks, where multiple assets are in need of renewals; or multiple like assets across the City, as outlined in the chart above. The criteria within this report would be used to prioritize to the available funding level.

Each strategy would require varying levels of public consultation and would also have different completion dates based on the overall complexity and process, including consultation of changes to asset location/orientation/features, as applicable to the site.

### **Development of a Revenue Generation Strategy to support contributions to the Infrastructure Levy Reserve**

Additional external funding opportunities are expected to be realized for court and playground renewal through the development of a Revenue Generation Strategy by a third party, as supported by Council and received by the Budget Standing Committee on [November 6, 2017](#). Upon funding and development of a strategy, executed sales would result in new sponsorship and advertising revenue being allocated to the Infrastructure Levy Reserve and committed for asset renewal for similar assets as outlined in the

approved Policy. The Niagara Region has expressed interest in partnering on this shared services opportunity, including funding, as received by the Budget Standing Committee on [November 6, 2017](#).

### **Grants are pursued by staff as they become available**

Staff pursue infrastructure and related grants as they become available, utilizing available approved Capital funding or requesting approval of Council for reallocation of funds, to support any required matching contributions. Recent examples include the award of Niagara Region Lakefront Enhancement Strategy Funding and Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program Funding that supported the overall Lakeside Park renewal, including the playground; and leveraging the City funded playground renewal at West Park as a portion of the matching funds to support the development of a splash pad and washroom with awarded Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program Funds. There are no known grants that staff are pursuing at this time for the renewal of playgrounds and courts; staff will continue to pursue grants that support playground and court renewal as they become available.

### **Criteria for prioritizing asset renewal approved by Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee**

Asset condition, including health and safety considerations, is the greatest factor in determining renewal priorities, with the assets in the poorest condition being prioritized for replacement.

The following secondary criteria have been created to evaluate and prioritize renewal of assets that are in the same condition to determine which projects should be pursued first:

1. Ability to obtain external funding – providing the greatest opportunity to maximize the City's funding.
2. Ability to bundle with other asset replacements at same site for a complete park renewal
3. Anticipated usage (e.g. park use and classification, population served by asset, user data)
4. Proximity to marginalized neighbourhoods
5. Geographic distribution – considers the condition and availability of nearby assets, including those owned by the City and other organizations (e.g. school boards, other municipalities, etc.).
6. Geographic distribution – the value of recent and upcoming investment in similar assets nearby
7. Consideration of budget limitations

## Financial Implications

The funding required for the renewal of park playground and courts amenities exceeds the City's current funding allocation. There is a risk of closure or removal of amenities without replacement within the forecasted timeframe, reducing service levels provided to the community. Funding will continue to be considered as part of the capital budget process beyond 2018. Alternative funding options to further current Capital Budget limitations are presented within this report for the Budget Standing Committee's consideration.

## Relationship to Strategic Plan

The Park amenity renewal needs referenced within this report support the following Actions:

- 4.1: Prioritize and implement recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with a focus on balancing recreation services for all ages, demographics and abilities.
- 2.4 Optimize capital infrastructure through effective asset management and sustainable investment.

## Conclusion

The funding required for the renewal of park playground and courts amenities exceeds the City's current capacity to fund them, as with other City assets. There is a risk of closure or removal of amenities without replacement within the forecasted timeframe, reducing service levels provided to the community.

Staff have included as much funding as available within the current and forecasted Capital budgets to the prescribed debt levels and will continue to pursue alternative funding sources within current staff capacity to supplement the required funding and proceed with required asset renewals. The City's development of a revenue generation strategy, by a third party, is expected to create opportunities for external funding to support a portion of this asset renewal.

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Stuart Green, Landscape Architect / Planner

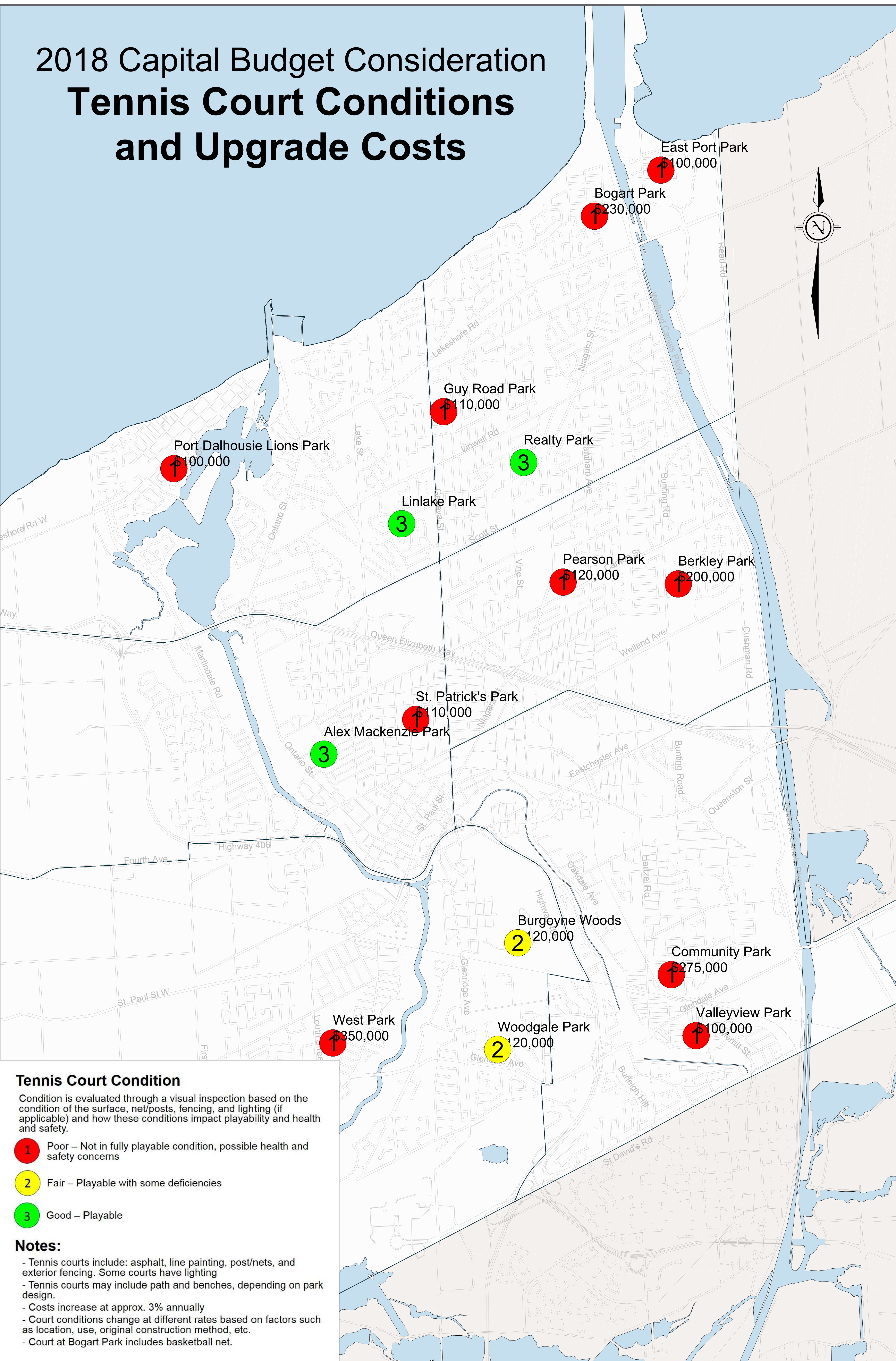
**Submitted by:** Amy Tomaino, Manager of Business Planning & Strategic Services

**Approved by:** Phil Cristi, Director, Parks, Recreation and Culture Services



# 2018 Capital Budget Consideration

## Tennis Court Conditions and Upgrade Costs



### Tennis Court Condition

Condition is evaluated through a visual inspection based on the condition of the surface, net/posts, fencing, and lighting (if applicable) and how these conditions impact playability and health and safety.

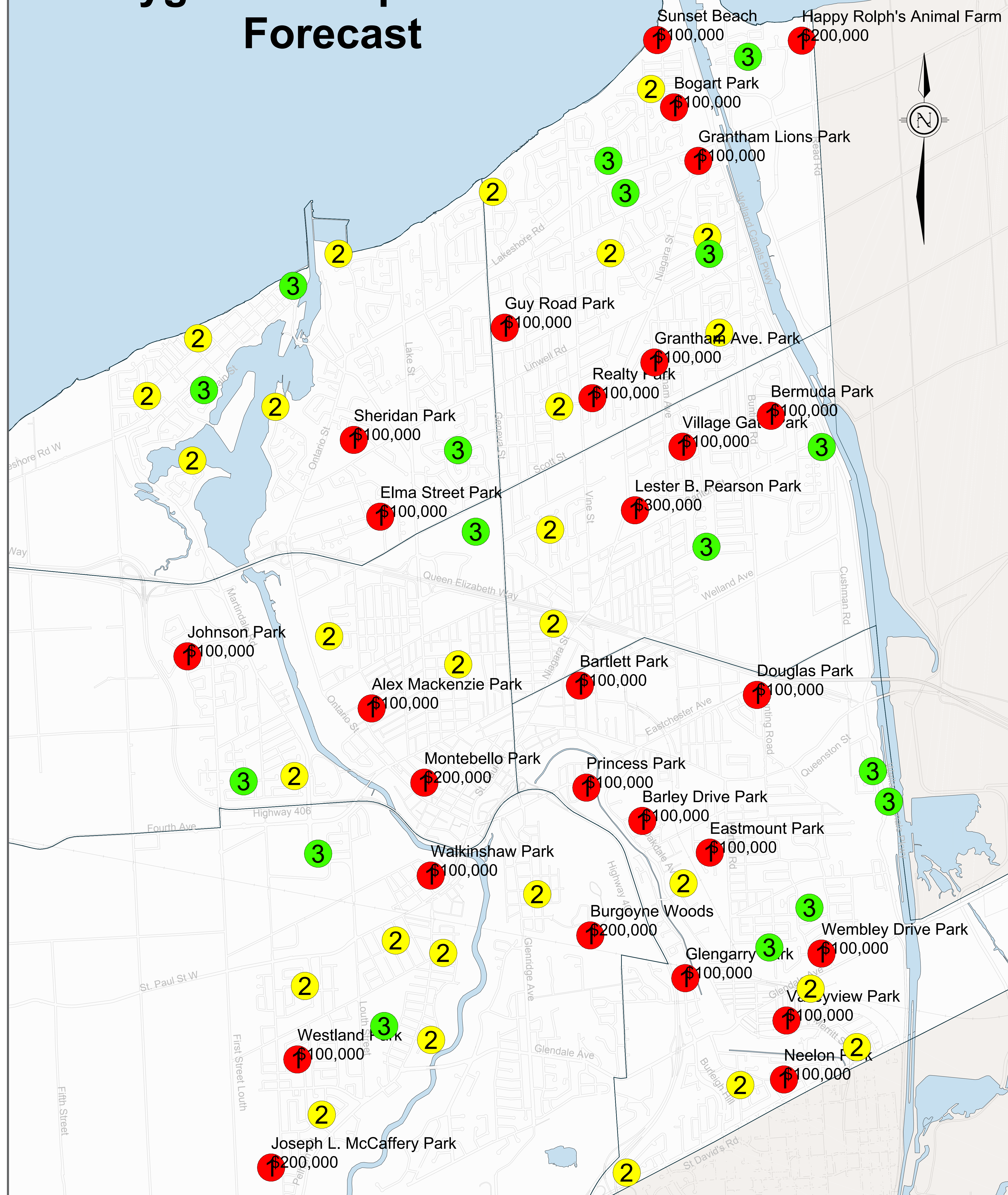
- 1** Poor – Not in fully playable condition, possible health and safety concerns
- 2** Fair – Playable with some deficiencies
- 3** Good – Playable

### Notes:

- Tennis courts include: asphalt, line painting, post/nets, and exterior fencing. Some courts have lighting
- Tennis courts may include path and benches, depending on park design.
- Costs increase at approx. 3% annually
- Court conditions change at different rates based on factors such as location, use, original construction method, etc.
- Court at Bogart Park includes basketball net.



# 2018 Capital Budget Consideration Playground Replacement Forecast



## Playground Equipment Replacement

- 1 Replacement expected within the next 5 years  
(2018 – 2022)
- 2 Replacement expected in the next 5 to 10 years  
(2023 – 2027)
- 3 Replacement not expected within the next 10 years  
(2028 and beyond)

Replacement year is prioritized based on condition (assessed by a Playground Practitioner in accordance with CSA standards), project coordination opportunities, and the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan decision making matrix (e.g. partnerships, community factors, etc.).

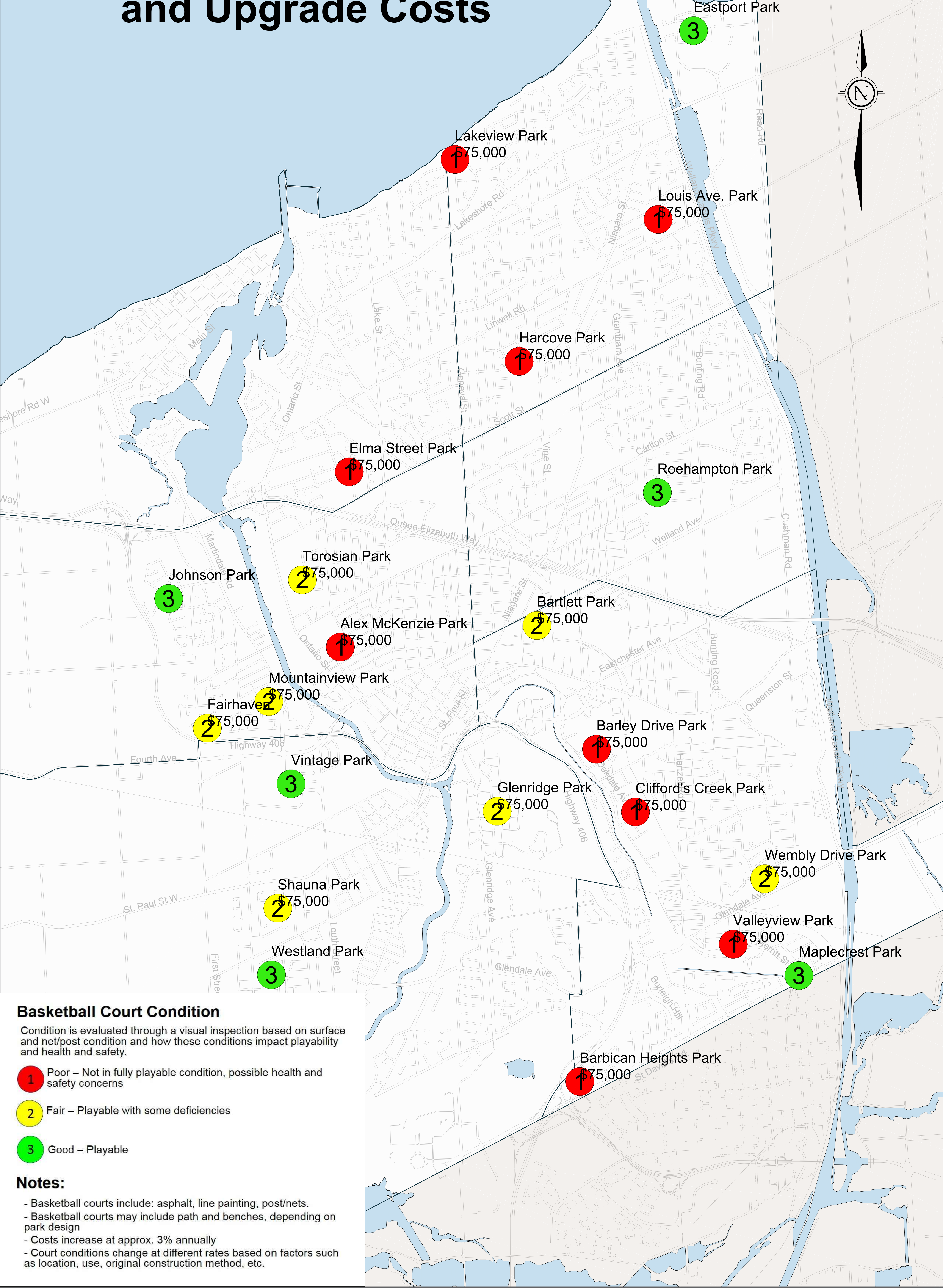
**Notes:**

- A playground will be closed if it exhibits health and safety concerns that cannot be addressed through normal maintenance and repairs.
- Playground equipment cost referenced includes: equipment, base, drainage, surface, border, grading. Additional budget required for pathways and benches depending on park design.
- Playground equipment costs vary based on size of equipment and extent of accessible features (e.g. rubberized surface is more expensive than wood chips).
- Costs increase at approx. 3% annually



# 2018 Capital Budget Discussions

## Basketball Court Conditions and Upgrade Costs



### Basketball Court Condition

Condition is evaluated through a visual inspection based on surface and net/post condition and how these conditions impact playability and health and safety.

- 1 Poor – Not in fully playable condition, possible health and safety concerns
- 2 Fair – Playable with some deficiencies
- 3 Good – Playable

### Notes:

- Basketball courts include: asphalt, line painting, post/nets.
- Basketball courts may include path and benches, depending on park design
- Costs increase at approx. 3% annually
- Court conditions change at different rates based on factors such as location, use, original construction method, etc.



## An Illustration of Asset Conditions



**Clifford's Creek Park Basketball Court** (full replacement required, Red / Poor)



**Elma Street Park Basket Ball Court** (full replacement required, Red / Poor Condition)





**Valleyview Park Basket Ball Court** (full replacement required, Red / Poor Condition)



**Pearson Park Tennis Courts** (full replacement required, Red / Poor Condition)



**Douglas Park Playground** (full replacement required, Red / Poor Condition)



**Barbican Heights Park** (new nets required, Fair / Yellow Condition)