

## Forever Green - Artificial Turf in Parks Playground

On September 15, 2007, a new community park, 'The Park at the MacBain Community Centre' was opened in the City of Niagara Falls. The park, with a total budget of approximately one million dollars is located directly next to the new MacBain Community Centre in Niagara Falls. It was planned and designed to be a fully accessible park with a variety of amenity areas for arts, culture, leisure and play. It opened with not only the traditional ribbon cutting by the local dignitaries but was truly a celebration with many children anxiously awaiting to try the brand new park equipment.



One unique aspect of the park design was the first time use by the City of Niagara Falls of **artificial turf** for the protective play surfacing for all three (3) playground areas; main playstructure; toddlers; and swings. The artificial turf looks like grass and for the many visitors it took them walking on the artificial turf and feeling it with their hands to address their curiosity. The children immediately began rolling and crawling within the play areas, the artificial turf being just as much a play amenity as the equipment itself.

The idea for the artificial turf came about as a result of plans by the City to install an artificial turf soccer field at one of the City parks. Through discussions with the artificial turf company the concept of using the artificial turf as a playsurface option was introduced to the Parks Design staff whom requested data on the products technical aspects, safety and conformance with the CSA standards for playgrounds. Testing was done on the impact attenuation of the artificial turf product for drop heights at 8' and 10'. The results were well within the CSA requirements for playgrounds and after consultation with staff and user groups it was decided to proceed with the artificial turf surfacing for the play areas.

The landscape development team, and team leader Jeff Claydon, landscape architect with Parks, Recreation & Culture coordinated the park development with the artificial turf company, Artificial Grass & Landscaping, along with the company providing the playground equipment, Little Tikes Commercial Playsystems so that layout and CSA standards were adhered to for the play areas.

The park is nearing the one year old mark and it is a buzz of activity with the community, local visitors as well as the YMCA summer camp programs which are key partners at the MacBain Community Centre. The City has also provided a number of tours upon request of other municipalities also interested in taking a similar design approach and the including the utilization of artificial turf.

In addition to the accessible play areas, the park has a large park shelter for picnic lunches, a natural stone amphitheatre for library story times and summer camp activities, and a new splash pad area scheduled to open mid July 2008.

For additional information on this exciting park project please contact:

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