

Town of Hingham

Recreation Department

210 Central St.,
Hingham, MA 02043



FAQs ON HINGHAM COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND

We thank the Hingham Community for their questions and devotion to making the Hingham Community Playground safe for our children. It is our highest priority to provide safe and accessible playgrounds and we hope these Frequently Asked Questions can provide clarity to the Hingham Community Playground project.

Q. What was the Town process in communicating this project?

A. The Hingham Community Playground Project was discussed and assessed at 20 open and public meetings since the spring of 2022, including:

- Nine (9) Recreation Commission meetings
- Six (6) Community Preservation meetings
- Two (2) Select Board meetings
- A Planning Board Meeting
- An Advisory Committee meeting
- The 2024 Annual Town Meeting

The Recreation Commission, the Community Preservation Committee, Select Board, Advisory Committee, and Planning Board all unanimously approved the Community Playground project.

The Recreation Commission alone conducted extensive additional community outreach to advertise the project including:

Fourteen (14) posts on Rec social media sites including eight (8) Facebooks posts and six (6) on Instagram between September 2023 and April 2024.

An informational playground flyer was inserted into every Hingham Municipal Light Plant bill mailed in October 2023:

Each of the 10,548 online Recreation program registrations between October 2023 - October 2024 had the option to donate to the playground presented to registrants as they checked out.

Q. Was there any local media coverage of the Hingham Community Playground Project?

A. Yes. Hingham Anchor published an article about the project in September 2023. Also, Harbor Media created and published a video and facebook post outlining the Hingham Community Playground project in November 2023.

Q. Was there any other community outreach?

A. Yes. A project information table was set up at the Rec Center’s Halloween family event in October 2023, and at Christmas in the Square in December 2023.

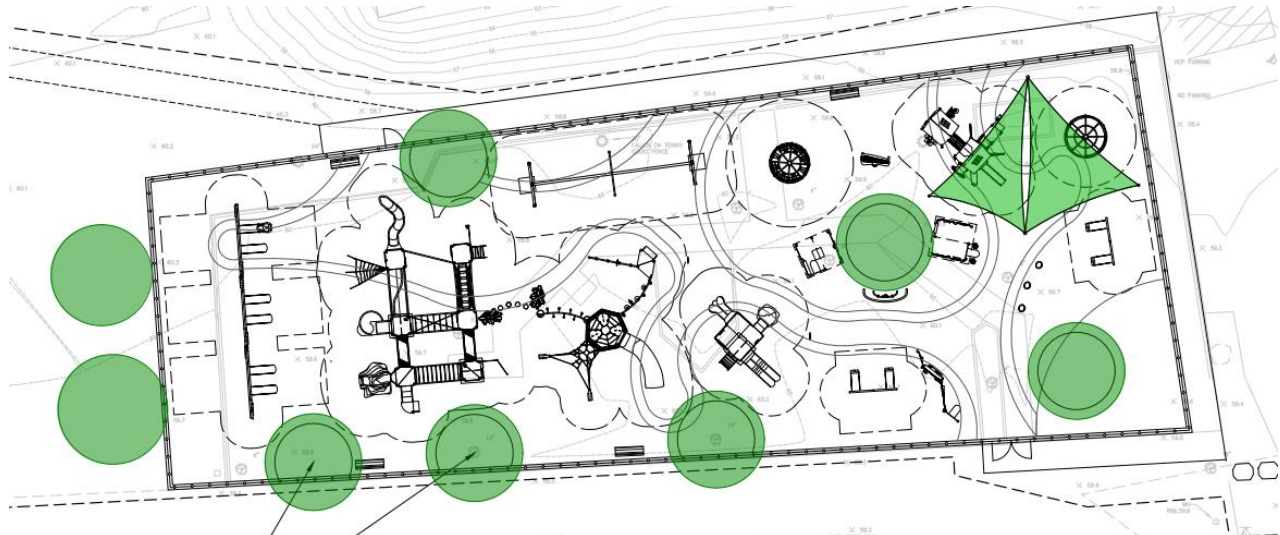
Q. Did this awareness lead to active community support for the project?

A. Yes. 328 Hingham families have generously made a financial contribution to the Hingham Community Playground.

Q. Was there a shade study conducted as part of the project?

A. A shade study was not conducted. A 45ft X 32ft shade structure was part of the original playground design. In the initial design, trees were not included with-in the footprint of the playground. Generally, playground equipment suppliers, including the one hired by Hingham, [O’Brien & Sons](#), advise that over time, tree root systems tend to buckle playground surfacing creating maintenance and potential safety issues. They highly recommended not installing trees into the footprint of the playground. However, with shade trees being a source of great pride to the Hingham community, the Recreation Commission directed the design/engineer firm ([CHA](#)) to implement as many trees as possible into the design of the playground without compromising the safety surfacing. Accordingly, eight (8) trees are incorporated into the new playground design. Two (2) of the largest trees on the soccer field side of the playground are being saved, and six (6) additional shade trees of 22' - 28' feet will be planted. CHA believes that we can install these trees without compromising the safety surfacing.

Shade Plan



Q. What material is being used for the playground flooring?

A. The Hingham Community Playground flooring material will be poured in place rubber surfacing. It is the same surfacing installed at Kress Field, Hull Street Field, Powers Field, East School, Plymouth River School, and South School.

Poured in place surfaces are allowed by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) the state regulatory agency that issues requirements for public playgrounds. Hingham, like every municipality in the Commonwealth, must comply with MAAB rules.

MAAB regulations and requirements ([521 CMR](#)) are in place to ensure that public facilities are accessible, functional, and safe. MAAB regulations and case law preclude the use of engineered wood fiber, sand, pea gravel, among other materials for newly constructed public playgrounds. Poured in place rubber surfacing is one of the only options available that support both accessibility and safety.

According to CHA's letter regarding the poured in place safety surfacing:

*"It appears that the comments are based on the premise that the top layer of the proposed poured-in-place rubber surface is composed of recycled tire crumb or what is know as SBR rubber and may be, or eventually become, a loose granular material that the children could be exposed to. While some playground poured-in-place surfacing product's top layer is made from this material, **the product specified for installation at the Playground, Surface America, does not have loose SBR rubber within the top layer.**"*

*The proposed top layer material is 100% virgin (non-recycled) Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer (EPDM) rubber or thermoplastic vulcanizate (TPV) granules bound with aromatic or aliphatic urethane binder. EPDM is clean, odorless, goes through a very strict quality control program and meets OEHHA Proposition 65 Regulations for California. This is the same rubber that is used in soft children's toys and potable water fittings. This is also the same rubber and system that is used on most higher-level running tracks. This rubber is fully encapsulated in a polyurethane network that completely covers the base layer. **The only contact any patrons will have with the materials will be with this fully encapsulated virgin EPDM top surface layer.***

The proposed poured-in-place surface layer at the playground will be 100% encapsulated color rubber. There will be no loose "tire crumb" on the playground for patrons to encounter. The base layer which provides most of the shock absorbing fall protection will be varying depths depending on fall heights and is comprised of fully encapsulated recycled rubber, some of which is reclaimed tire rubber which fully meets EPA standards. This rubber is completely encapsulated in the polyurethane network and is then completely covered by the top surface layer. Once the poured-in-place rubber surface is cured, there is no off-gassing or VOC's and there is no smell. A simple maintenance procedure of re-applying the top binder coat (i.e. roll coat) will prevent any loose particles on the playground."

Q. What playground equipment is being planned?

A. After the many open public meetings discussing the design of the playground equipment, reviewing five different playground companies and talking with a variety of playground installers, the Recreation Commission chose high quality and durable Landscape Structures' playground equipment that incorporates all aspects of play into its design, including elements of sensory, motion, spin, physical (hanging, climbing, balancing, etc.), and imaginary play.

We again chose to purchase the equipment from O'Brien & Sons, a third-generation business started in 1929, as they are one of the most reputable playground companies in the industry.

We did not include a sandbox in the playground design. Our supplier recommended against doing so, as sand would rapidly deteriorate and ruin the playground safety surfacing.

Q. What if residents still have questions about the Project?

A. Residents are invited to attend the next meeting of the Recreation Commission on October 17, 2024, at 6:30 PM at Town Hall.

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