

Report Date: September 12, 2024

VanRIMS No.: 08-3000-30
Submit comments to the Board

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners

FROM: General Manager, Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Inclusive and Accessible Sensory Park - Report Back

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct Staff to proceed with posting a public Request for Proposals seeking consulting services for the concept design of an Inclusive Destination Playground and Splash Pad at Memorial South Park.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on inclusive Playgrounds and accessibility updates in Vancouver Parks. The report responds to each specific requirement of the <u>January 23</u>, <u>2024 Board Motion</u>, including an overview of next steps.

BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Park Board Motions

On <u>July 4, 2022</u>, the Board directed staff to develop and implement accessible and inclusive design for new and renewed playgrounds for people with mobility, auditory, visual and sensory needs.

On <u>January 23, 2024</u>, the Board directed staff to report back on four directives related to the provision of improved inclusion and accessibility in Vancouver playgrounds and parks.

Related Park Board and City-wide Strategies and Policies

<u>Vanplay Implementation Playbook</u> indicates the first 'Approach to Action' for Parks is to: 'Improve the safety, cleanliness and physical accessibility of all parks to increase access for all.' This action is supported by several initiatives including the following:

- (P.1.2) Audit the physical accessibility of all park amenities to inform a feasibility study to consider opportunities for improvement (Universal and Inclusive Design Audit and Feasibility Study).
- (P.1.3) Design and build five additional fully accessible destination play areas throughout the city, in addition to the already in progress project of integrating accessible play features in parks.

Vanplay Guiding Principles, identifies 2040 Asset Targets for Play Areas as follows:

- Provide universally accessible play features at all play areas
- Provide at least 5 fully universally accessible destination play areas (in diverse geographic areas: NE, SE, SW, NW and Downtown).

<u>VanSplash: Vancouver's Aquatics Strategy (2019).</u> proposes a city-wide approach to planning future pools and other aquatic amenities and innovations. VanSplash identifies the vicinity of Memorial South Park for a new spray park.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation system contains 168 playgrounds, many of which were built over 30 years ago. Most of these playgrounds do not meet current principles of inclusive and universal design. In 2015, a comprehensive report was commissioned by Park Board staff to assess the state of playgrounds in the city (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Assessment of Play spaces), and to make recommendations on a plan of action to address safety and accessibility considerations. Notably, the report identified the importance of incorporating the principles of universal design in relation to future playground design and renewals for the inclusion and accessibility of all children in play spaces. The key principles of Universal Design are as follows:

- **Equitable use.** Is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in use. Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- **Simple and intuitive.** Use is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- **Perceptible information.** Communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- **Tolerance for error.** Minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- Low physical effort. Can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
- **Size and space for approach and use.** Provides appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Source: Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University

Staff ensure playgrounds are designed with these principles as key underpinnings as feasible within budgets and system wide service levels. Since the 2015 report was completed, approximately 44 playgrounds with the highest replacement need have been renewed and an additional 10 playgrounds are currently in progress at various stages of renewal. See Appendix A: Map of Completed (since 2015) and In-Progress Playground projects.

DISCUSSION

For this report, it is important to acknowledge that the terms 'accessible' and 'inclusive' can mean different things to different people. Considering this, creating a play space that is 'fully' accessible

and or inclusive for everyone is not likely possible. In general, inclusivity is a comprehensive term that encompasses issues of physical accessibility as well as sensory, emotional, cultural, and social considerations. (See Figure 1: Inclusion goes beyond access). As such, staff are recommending that the VanPlay term 'fully accessible' as it relates to the provision of the five destination playgrounds in P.1.3, be changed to 'inclusive.' The term inclusivity as it relates to play spaces will be a key discussion point guiding the Memorial South Inclusive Playground and Splash Pad project as discussed later in this report.

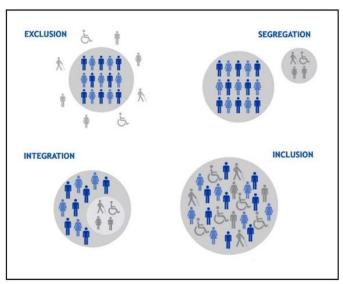


Figure 1: Inclusion goes beyond access Source: KOMPAN Play Institute, North America

This report is organized into four sections titled A through D below that correspond to the January 2024 Motion.

A. Design Guidelines, Van Play Initiatives, Other Initiatives and Motions, and Capital and Fundraising Estimates

i. Design Guidelines:

On July 4, 2022 the Board approved a Motion for: "Accessible and Inclusive Design Guidelines for Playgrounds", which directed staff to develop and implement accessible and inclusive design for new and renewed playgrounds for people with mobility, auditory, visual and sensory needs. Since July 2022, staff have been continuing on-going work to further enhance inclusivity and accessibility by maximizing elements that provide play opportunities for people with mobility, auditory, visual, and sensory needs while also considering the needs of caretakers. Staff utilize key reference documents as identified in this Motion, collaborate with playground manufacturers, and seek out annual professional development trainings on current trends in inclusive and accessible design for play spaces. Design guidelines for inclusive playgrounds will be developed as part of the Memorial South Inclusive Playground and Splash pad discussed below.

ii) VanPlay initiatives P.1.2. and P.1.3 Progress:

For Van Play Initiative P.1.2, which is to audit the physical accessibility of all park amenities, the Park Board hired a new Accessibility Planner in Q3, 2024. This position will develop a framework to review the physical accessibility of park amenities and continue to track accessibility upgrades

in park washroom buildings. Serving as the primary Park Board point of contact for accessibility-related initiatives and inquiries, this position will also track and support ongoing accessibility upgrade requests in park recreation facilities and work closely with the City's REFM department on developing a broader accessibility review of recreation facilities to prioritize larger-scale upgrades. They will also be responsible for reviewing the BC Accessible Act, working with various Park Board teams to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, and supporting citywide accessibility initiatives including the City's Accessibility Strategy led by the City's Arts Culture and Community Services Department. As accessibility in facilities is the highest priority, the park amenity audit will be completed after the facility work is complete in the future and the timing will be determined.

For Van Play Initiative P.1.3 – Design and build five additional fully accessible destination play areas, Staff are using the following preliminary criteria for assessing suitable sites for destination play spaces:

- Park classification (prioritizing parks classified as Destination or Community)
- Existing washroom on site (prioritizing accessible washrooms)
- Access to transit (within 30M)
- Parking lot on site
- Existing Playground condition
- Availability of funding (capital plan or donations)
- Equity Initiative Zones

See Appendix B: Potential Sites for Inclusive Destination Playgrounds – preliminary analysis

Memorial South Park is recommended as the first of the five destination play areas. This site is recommended by staff due to its access to transit, on-site parking, existing accessible washroom, and high priority renewal ranking (level 2) as indicated in the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Assessment of Play spaces (2015), and available space in a Community park setting. This site also aligns with the Board's 2023 Motion to engage with South Vancouver residents to identify desired outdoor amenities for the community and the results of this engagement. Through this precedent-setting project, staff will assemble a consultant team of landscape architects and accessibility experts and engage with the City of Vancouver People with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) and Children Youth and Family Advisory Committee (CYFAC). This project will establish key requirements for the additional four play areas including spatial requirements, technical considerations, and implementation costs.

Staff are targeting Q4, 2024 for posting a request for proposals (RFP) for consultant services for Phase 1 – Concept Design with a project kick-off targeted for Q2, 2025. A construction budget for implementation will be identified through this process and funding requested through the 2027-2030 capital planning process.

Site investigation for the remaining four sites will not commence until key findings and directions from the Memorial South Park project are concluded. Recognizing that the target indicates 2040 as the timeline, there is ample time to adjust the approach to suit innovations and learnings in inclusive playground design.

<u>iii. The status of other current initiatives, policy, previous member motions and staff</u> recommendations on the topic of inclusive and accessible parks:

Other current initiatives include a Washroom Strategy and washroom accessibility upgrades, Van Map Updates and Marpole Community Centre. *Appendix C* provides a summary of previous member Motions and the status of each item.

Washroom Strategy: The importance of accessible washrooms has been identified as a priority through the People with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), and through significant 311 feedback. The Parks Washroom Strategy, approved by the Board in November 2020, identified accessibility as one of three main criteria framing its vision to guide how park washrooms are funded, designed, and built. As short-term recommendations, the Strategy recommends the undertaking of simple upgrade work, a new standard be followed, and VanMaps updated.

Washroom Accessibility upgrades: have been achieved across Destination Parks, and staff are working through Community Parks before temporarily pausing the project for the summer 2024 season. This work is funded through the current Capital Plan. Staff are following CSA B651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment as the highest standard for accessibility, and this has informed both the implementation of simple accessibility upgrades, and the design of new washrooms.

Washroom VanMaps updates: are being made with new information on the accessibility of park washrooms. Following long-term recommendations of the Strategy, adult change tables are being considered in new Destination Park washrooms and child change stations are being provided where possible through the simple accessibility upgrade project where space allows.

Marpole Community Centre: is aiming for Rick Hansen Gold Certification and will include a sensory room accessed from the main lobby for the benefit of neurodiverse users.

iv. Capital and operating funding estimates to implement the motions and initiatives listed in items i & ii:

As the initiatives listed above in items i. and ii. are extensive, have yet to be fully scoped, and are likely to be delivered in the future, it is premature to predict capital and operating costs. However, the cost range to implement a destination playground can be estimated based on scope that is viable within resources typically available in the playground capital program, which is \$5.8 M for the 2023 to 2026 Capital Plan.

High level cost estimates for typical playground renewals are provided in the table below. Costs can vary due to site constraints, special considerations as requested by user groups, and fluctuations in the construction market. Considering the anticipated spatial and technical requirements for an inclusive playground and splash pad, it is estimated that the cost to develop the Memorial South Park Inclusive Destination Playground will be at least twice the cost of a typical playground renewal. Staff are identifying a minimum capital project budget of \$2.5M in the 2027 – 2030 Capital Plan for the Memorial South project with additional funding desired through donations.

Typical Playground Renewal Cost Estimates

Park Classification	Typical Estimated Capital Project Budget*
Neighbourhood	\$650K - \$750k (playground only)
Community/Destination	\$750k - \$850k (playground only)

^{*}Capital project budgets include both soft costs (i.e. consultant services and project management fees) and hard costs (costs for construction).

B. Fundraising and Donations for Playgrounds

The Board requested that a fundraising envelope be opened at the Vancouver Parks Foundation for private donations towards sensory park equipment, and if sufficient, a dedicated sensory park. As the Foundation has not yet been operationalized, staff will build on a successful track record for receiving playground donation funds through the existing Park Board Fundraising and Development team. The Park Board Fundraising and Development team will initiate a fundraising campaign to 'Support the Development of NEW Inclusive Destination Playgrounds' to help fill any funding gaps. This fundraising campaign will be added to the front page of the donations section of the website and titled, for example - <u>Support the Development of NEW Inclusive Playgrounds</u>. A Communications plan will also be developed to further support this campaign.

Phase 1 - Concept Design will identify the full cost for implementation and a funding ask will be made in the next Capital Plan and as part of the donor campaign.

C. Vancouver ParkFinder Website Update

The Board asked that staff update the Vancouver ParkFinder website to include accessible and sensory features currently available at each Park Board playground and ideally be updated to include a tool to search by playground feature. A list of inclusive play elements in new and renewed Vancouver playgrounds is provided in *Appendix D: Inclusive Elements in Playgrounds*. As per Board direction, this information is also being integrated into ParkFinder park pages. This work is on-going as projects are completed across the system.

D. Letter to Mayor

The Board directed the Chair to write a letter, on behalf of the Park Board, to Mayor and Council requesting up to \$5 million, subject to cost estimates provided in the report back from staff, in funding for capital and ongoing operating costs related to the implementation of the motions and initiatives listed in items A.i and A.ii. This letter was sent on February 6, 2024 and a response of acknowledgement has not yet been received.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Capital Funding Considerations

Playground renewals primarily require non-growth-related funding, with some Development Cost Levy funds (DCLs) being applicable for population growth related components of playgrounds including enlargements of play space. For new playgrounds, DCLs are the appropriate funding source for these growth-related amenities.

Funding is provisionally allocated in the 2023-2026 Capital Plan through the 'New Playgrounds and Spray Parks' account to proceed with the concept design for an inclusive playground and

splash pad at Memorial South Park for Park Board decision. A draft capital project budget of \$500k inclusive of project management fees has been estimated for this work. A request will be made in the 2027 to 2030 capital plan for funding for the construction of the inclusive destination playground and splash pad at Memorial South Park, and a cost estimate will be refined through the Phase 1 concept design process.

Operating Budget Implications

The operating impact of capital for REFM and Park Operations will be based on the cost identified through the concept design process and is typically 5% of the capital project cost.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

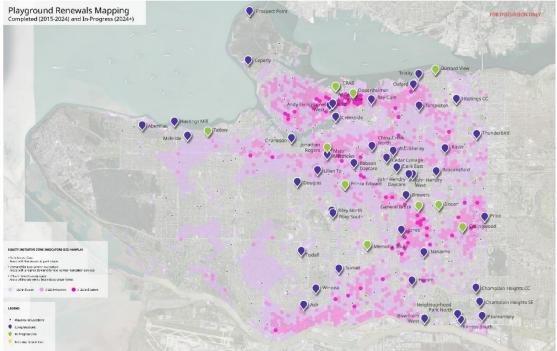
The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is committed to delivering inclusive and accessible parks and park amenities to the greatest extent achievable and are continuously working to improve delivery on this front. The numerous initiatives identified in this report illustrates commitment to inclusivity and accessibility and will help guide on-going and future work as much as possible within available resources. Specifically, to play spaces, if approved, the Memorial South Park Inclusive Destination Playground and Splash pad will help set the standard and provide a roadmap for continuous improvement in how these important amenities are designed to welcome and serve the greatest number of people across the City of Vancouver.

Pending Board Decision, next steps will include proceeding with the posting of a public RFP in Q1, 2025 for consultant services for the concept design of an Inclusive Destination Playground and Spray Park at Memorial South Park.

APPENDIX A

Map of Completed (since 2015) and In-Progress Playground Projects

und Renewals Mapping (2015-2024) and In-Progress (2024+)



Playgrounds Completed (sin	nce 2015)		
Aberthau	Clark - east	Lilian To	Riverfront - West
Andy Livingstone - East	Creekside - north edge	Major Matthews	Robson Daycare Family
			Place
Andy Livingstone - West	Douglas	McBride	Stanley - Ceperly
Ash	Hastings Community Centre	Nanaimo	Stanley – Prospect Point
Beaconsfield	Hastings Mill	Neighbourhood Park	Sunset
		North (EFL)	
		NEW	
Brewers	Humm	Oxford	Templeton
Cedar Cottage	John Hendry - Trout Lake	Price	Thunderbird Park
	CC Daycare		
Champlain Heights - south	John Hendry - West	Promontory Park (EFL)	Tisdal
trail		NEW	
Champlain Heights	Jones	Ray-Cam Community	Trinity
Community Centre		Centre	Timity
Charleson - southwest	Kaslo	Riley - North	WC Shelley
China Creek North	Kinross South Park (EFL)	Riley - South	Winona
	NEW		
In-Progress Playgrounds			
Burrard View	Jonathan Rogers	Oppenheimer	Slocan
Collingwood	Memorial South	Prince Edward	Tatlow
CRAB			
General Brock			

Potential Sites for Inclusive Destination Playgrounds City of North Vancouver Suitable Park Sites Community & Destination Parks Washroom on Site Parking Lot on Site Near Transit (within 30m) Stanley Park **Equity Initiative Zones** 2 Indicators **Burrard** Inlet 3 Indicators Playground on Site Community Center
 Quadrants Empire Fields English Bay Hastings Park Beach Park Jericho Hastings Beach Park Sunset University Endo Community Beach Park Park Kitsilano Rupert Park Beach Park W 16th Av Renfrew Community Pacific Spirit Regional Park | Vandusen Hillcrest Botanical Memorial Park Garden □ West Park Kensington Park Queen Elizabeth Memorial South Park Killarney Park Park W 49th Av Point Grey Golf and Country Club Sunset Park Oak Park Champlain SE Heights Park Mitchell Island

APPENDIX B
Potential Sites for Inclusive Destination Playgrounds – preliminary analysis

Quadrant	SE			
Neighborhood	KILLARNEY	KENSINGTON- CEDAR COTTAGE	KILLARNEY	SUNSET
Criteria	Champlain Heights Park	Kensington Park	Killarney Park	Memorial South Park
Classification	1	1	1	1
Washroom on Site	2	2	2	2
Proximity to EIZ (<200M or 5 min walk)	0	1	1	1
Ex Playground	0	1	1	3
Community Center	1	1	1	0
Recent Renewal	-1	0	0	0
Score	3	6	6	7
Scoring	Weight			
Destination Classification	2			
Community Classification	1			
Washroom on site (non-accessible)	1			
Washroom on site (accessible)	2			
Proximity to EIZ (<200M or 5 min walk)	1			
Ex Playground (Ranked 1-3 in 2015 conditions assessment)	3			
Ex Playground (Ranked 4-6 in 2015 conditions assessment)	1			
Community Center	1			
Recent Renewal (negative score)	-1			

Quadrant	SW				
Neighborhood	RILEY PARK	MARPOLE	RILEY PARK	SHAUGHNESSY	DUNBAR- SOUTHLANDS
Criteria	Hillcrest Park	Oak Park	Queen Elizabeth Park	Vandusen Botanical Garden	Memorial West Park
Classification	1	1	2	2	1
Washroom on Site	2	1	2	2	1
Proximity to EIZ (<200M or 5 min walk)	1	1	1	0	0
Ex Playground	1	1	0	0	1
Community Center	1	1	0	0	1
Recent Renewal	0	0	0	0	0
Score	6	5	5	4	4

Quadrant NE				
Neighborhood	HASTINGS-SUNRISE	HASTINGS-SUNRISE	RENFREW- COLLINGWOOD	HASTINGS- SUNRISE
Criteria	Empire Fields - Hastings Park	Hastings Community Park	Renfrew Community Park	Rupert Park
Classification	2	1	1	1
Washroom on Site	1	2	2	2
Proximity to EIZ (<200M or 5 min walk)	1	1	1	1
Ex Playground	0	0	1	1
Community Center	0	1	1	0
Recent Renewal				
Score	4	5	6	5

Quadrant	NW		
Neighborhood	WEST POINT GREY	KITSILANO	
Criteria	Jericho Beach Park	Kitsilano Beach Park	
Classification	1	1	
Washroom on Site	2	2	
Proximity to EIZ (<200M or 5 min walk)	0	1	
Ex Playground	0	0	
Community Center	0	0	
Recent Renewal	0	0	
Score	3	4	

Quadrant	Quadrant DOWNTOWN			
Neighborhood	WEST END	WEST END	WEST END	SUNSET
Criteria	English Bay Beach Park	Stanley Park	Sunset Beach Park	Sunset Park
Classification	1	2	1	1
Washroom on Site	2	2	2	2
Proximity to EIZ (<200M or 5 min walk)	1	1	1	1
Ex Playground	0	1	0	0
Community Center	0	0	1	0
Recent Renewal	0	0	0	0
Score	4	6	5	4

Appendix C Previous member Motions and status

Decision Date	Topic	Status
Jun 20/22	Accessible and Inclusive Design Guidelines for Playgrounds	In-progress & on-going: as per Report: Creating Vancouver's First Inclusive and Accessible Sensory Park for Children: Report Back
Jul 20/22	Creating a Sonic Park	On-going: Acoustic/sound elements incorporated into playground renewals as possible and within available budgets. See Appendix D: Inclusive Elements in Playgrounds
Aug 09/23	Update on Rainbow Park Slide	In progress: Detailed design for replacement currently underway. Targeting completion in Q4,2024
Oct 30/23	An Inclusive Children's Water Park at Ross Park - Bridging the Gap in an Underserved Neighborhood	In-progress: Consulting RFP under development, public posting late Q3. Targeting completion of water park and field house renewal in Q4 2027.
Apr 22/24	Stanley Park Mobility Study - Update	In-progress: Final phase of public engagement (phase III) now complete. Results of the survey will now be used to inform and refine the final options (including April 22 nd Motion items) for Board Decision later this year.
May 06/24	Removal of Cyclist Barriers and Implementation of Signage for Seawall Safety	In progress: Staff have retained the services of a transportation engineering consultant to collect data and study solution options. Data collection will occur during the peak summer period and staff will report back to the Board in Q1 of 2025.

Appendix D Inclusive Elements in Playgrounds (Partial list)

Park	Inclusive Features
Aberthau	Rubberized surfacing
	Accessible path from parking lot and building entrances
	Transfer station for climbing structure
	Play hut and children's table
	Natural materials
Aab	Seating; accessible picnic table
Ash	Rubberized surfacing Accessible access from sidewalks
	Accessible access from sidewalks Compatria play attracture with ADA compliant elements.
	Geometric play structure with ADA compliant elements: Hammocks
	- Accessible belt bridges
	- Transfer points
	- Interactive sensory panels
	Passive play hut
	Natural materials
	Seating; accessible picnic tables
Beaconsfield	Rubberized surfacing
	Accessible path from sidewalk
	Variety of play spaces: cooperative or solitary options, quiet & active
	space
	Variety of play experiences: climbing, sliding, swinging, balancing, and banging.
	spinning, and hanging Variety of materials and textures
	Sun & shade areas
	Seating; accessible picnic tables
Brewers	Rubberized surfacing
	Tactile play: water runnel and sand pit
	Seating
Champlain Heights	Rubberized surfacing
	Bucket and lay down swings
	Hammock
	Acoustic play element
	Misting post
	Tactile play: water runnel and sand pit
Charleson	In-ground trampoline Distribution of automic and
Charleson	 Rubberized surfacing Accessible and multi-seat see-saw
	 Accessible and multi-seat see-saw Accessible swing – molded bucket style
	Low tandem friendship swing
	Natural materials
	Seating; accessible picnic tables
Douglas	Rubberized surfacing (partial)
•	Accessible path to playground from Community Centre parking lot
	Accessible parking spot available
	Partial fenced playground and seating located for ease of monitoring
	Accessible decking
	Variety of play spaces: cooperative or solitary options
	Variety of play experiences: climbing, sliding, swinging, balancing, and
	hanging
	Accessible play hut
	Acoustic play element Disk swing and standard swing with universal cost
	Disk swing and standard swing with universal seat Tactile play: accessible sand and water table.
	Tactile play: accessible sand and water table

	Sun and shade areas
	Seating; accessible picnic table
Jones	·
Jones	 Rubberized surfacing (partial) Accessible concrete path from sidewalk to playground
	Accessible swing Variable of materials and taxture was debit and multiple and multiple and taxture.
	 Variety of materials and texture: woodchip, sand, rubber surface, log steppers, logs, boulder
	 Variety of play experiences for senses: climbing, sliding, swinging,
	balancing, mixing, building, and hanging
	 Variety of play spaces: cooperative or solitary options, quiet & active
	space
	Sun & shade areas
	Tactile play: sand and water play
	Sensory panels
	Accessible picnic tables
Kaslo	 Accessible concrete path from sidewalk to playground
	Roller slides: multi-sensory and safe for cochlear implants
	 Variety of materials and textures: woodchip, rubber surface, boulder
	 Variety of play experiences for senses: climbing, sliding, swinging,
	stepping, and balancing
	Sun & shade areas
Kitsilano	Rubberized surfacing
	Play structure with transfer point
	Accessible sand play tables
	Roller slide: multi-sensory and safe for cochlear implants
	Metal slide: safe for cochlear implants
	Variety of swings
	 Variety of play experiences: climbing, sliding, swinging, rotating
	Variety of play spaces: cooperative or solitary options
	Sun and shade areas
	Natural features and textures
	Variety of seating
Kaslo	Rubberized surfacing
	Accessible swing
	Variety of play experiences: climbing, sliding, swinging, rotating
Pandora	Rubberized surfacing
	Accessible swing
	Variety of play experiences: climbing, sliding, swinging, rotating
Thunderbird	Rubberized surfacing (partial)
	Disk swing and standard swing with universal seat
	Tactile play: wood chips, ground play elements on climber
	Sun and shade areas
Winona	Rubberized surfacing
	Accessible swing
	Accessible sand/bark mulch table
	Graphic patterns with contrast colours
	Roller slide: multi-sensory and safe for cochlear implants
	Play structure with transfer deck and accessible belt climber
	Seating; accessible picnic tables
	- Jeaning, accessible pictile tables