



# An Inclusion Lens

## MAKES RECREATION ACCESSIBLE IN SAANICH, BC

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**THE FRAMEWORK FOR RECREATION  
IN CANADA GOALS AND PRIORITIES:**



**INCLUSION  
AND ACCESS**

## CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

Saanich is an aging municipality: by 2036, 28.2% of Saanich residents will be 65 or older. To address this shifting demographic, the municipality created an Older Adults Strategy, which was adopted by Saanich Council in June 2017. In developing the Strategy, 2,200 individuals were consulted about services and facilities for older adults offered by Saanich Parks and Recreation. One repeated suggestion was to improve access to the Recreation Centre in Lambrick Park with a paved, well-lit pathway. Many older adults and people with mobility concerns who rely on the bus to get to the park had to walk 430 meters to reach the recreation centre. The pathway was not continuous and was uneven due to different surface materials (asphalt, concrete and gravel). It was dark at night and had no benches along the way for rest. It was also difficult for people to reach Recreation Integration Victoria (RIV), an inter-municipally service that assists people with disabilities in greater Victoria and whose offices are located in the park.

Lambrick Park is a well-used Community Park. It is 13.85 ha in size, and features numerous sport facilities, a playground, a multi-use trail, as well as the Gordon Head Recreation Centre, RIV offices and other multi-purpose buildings. Therefore, access to the park is important for all residents of Saanich as well as people from across the Greater Victoria area.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Saanich Parks & Recreation Mission Statement is “Working in partnership with the community, we create opportunities for enrichment, sustain quality environments and support healthy lifestyles.” One of the core objectives is to deliver sport and recreation services to all citizens. The project to improve the pathway would help accomplish this mission and objective by allowing those with disabilities and mobility challenges to access Gordon Head Recreation Centre and RIV.

In 2017, Saanich Parks applied for Enabling Accessibility Funding from Employment and Social Development Canada to assist with the necessary improvements to the pathway. Saanich received \$50,000, which amounts to 25% of the total \$200,000 budget funds required to complete the upgrades.

There were two phases to the project. The first was the design and consultation phase, which involved the Parks Division developing the concept drawings as well as detailed design drawings. This phase included a consultation and public engagement component where parks staff consulted with the Recreation Division, RIV, CNIB, as well as recreation centre visitors. Phase Two was the construction of the pathway including the preparation of the site, paving, line painting, lighting and landscaping. It is estimated that the project will be completed in April, 2019.

By utilizing the Framework for Recreation in Canada, the Recreation Division drove the development of the Older Adult Strategy, which in turn, influenced the development of the idea to improve accessibility into the park.

The Parks Planning and Design team took a collaborative approach, involving several Park Planner/Designers, Recreation Centre staff (Receptionist, Maintenance Supervisor, Recreation Programmer, and Manager), RIV staff, and a CNIB representative. Many modifications were made throughout the planning process. Also, the Recreation Centre patrons were invited to give feedback on draft plans.

Additionally the Gordon Head Lawn Bowling Club members were invited to participate and were sent draft plans for review and comment. Although there was no formal feedback from the group, their group will benefit from the two new designated parking spaces for people with disabilities immediately adjacent to their facility, a new park bench, new landscaping and an accessible pathway leading to the club.

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upgrade other community facilities.”

## OUTCOMES

The following modifications and improvements have been made to the park:

- Continuous asphalt pathway to Gordon Head Recreation Centre and RIV offices
- Pathway was upgraded close to the lights along the road
- Lighting improvements: Installation of one solar light to assist lighting in a dark area and utilizing LED bulbs to make existing light standards brighter
- Added an extra trail section which creates an accessible walking loop
- Six benches added; all adapted (height, angling of back rests, handles) based on RIV's feedback
- Improvement for those with a visual impairment: tactile surfacing at road crossings, and a painted line running down the centre of the pathway
- Two new paved, signed and designated parking spaces for people with disabilities (total of 4) , directly outside the Gordon Head Lawn Bowling Club as well as outside the RIV offices
- Wayfinding signage indicating the pathway route and facility locations

The plan also includes the ability for staff to implement inclusive programming outside.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- It is easy to go about your daily work and not think about people with mobility or vision concerns. Working with groups who can identify those needs helps you look at a local community through a different lens.
- Use an "Inclusion lens" when looking at all aspects of your infrastructure. "I am not sure the inadequacies of this path would have risen to the top of our list for park improvements unless we had completed the Older Adult Strategy" says Julie Lommerse, Park Planner and Designer. "It has now opened our eyes to the need to upgrade other community facilities."
- Take the time to look at accessibility issues in the community and identify potential funding sources so you can get the work done.
- Don't be afraid to try to go after grant money. When you have \$50,000 on the table, there is a better chance that city council will approve a project.
- Take a collaborative approach. Working with other groups produced a very comprehensive, prioritized plan to expand on meeting the needs of the community.



## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- **Julie Lommerse or Becky Goodall**

Parks Planner + Designer

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- Active Living Alliance. Words with Dignity (pamphlet): <https://ala.ca/words-with-dignity/>

<b>Framework Goal and Priority</b>	Goal 2: Access and Inclusion
<b>Population Addressed</b>	Older adults, people with a disability
<b>Community</b>	City of Saanich is the largest of 13 municipalities within the Greater Victoria Region BC (115,000 residents) and on Vancouver Island
<b>Setting</b>	Lambrick Park—a well-used community park in a suburban neighbourhood
<b>Lead Implementer and Organization</b>	Julie Lommerse/Becky Goodall Parks Planner and Designers Parks and Recreation, District of Saanich
<b>Key Partners</b>	Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Gordon Head Lawn Bowling Club members Gordon Head Recreation Centre staff and patrons Recreation Integration Victoria (RIV)
<b>Activity Focus</b>	Increasing access to the Gordon Head Recreation Centre and RIV for people with mobility issues as well as older adults
<b>Stage of Development</b>	100% completion expected by April 2019