

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Notice of Meeting on **Tuesday, January 20 2026, at 1:00 pm**
Boardroom, 6th Floor, 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC

Meeting to be conducted electronically and in-person.

T. Bolt	J. Briante	P. Danforth	M. Essery
L. Hube	Z. Lundrie	B. Manning-Jones	J. Parr
G. Robinson	E. Syring	R. Welland	M. Little (GC Liaison)

1. Territorial Acknowledgement
2. Election of Chair
3. Election of Vice Chair
4. Approval of Agenda

Recommendation: That the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of January 20, 2026 be approved.

5. Adoption of Minutes
6. Chairs Remarks
7. Presentations/Delegations

- 7.1. Presentations
- 7.2. Delegations

8. Committee Business
 - 8.1. Accessibility Reviews for three Salt Spring Island Recreation Facilities

- 8.2. Inventory Project Update
- 8.3. Disability, Inclusion & Awareness Training Update
9. Notice(s) of Motion
10. New Business
11. Adjournment

Next meeting will be held on March 17, 2026.

To ensure quorum, please advise Jessica Dorman (jdorman@crd.bc.ca) if you cannot attend.

Minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting, held November 18, 2025 at 1:00 pm, 6th Floor Boardroom, 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria BC

PRESENT:

Committee Members: P. Danforth (Chair), T. Bolt (Vice Chair), J. Briante (EP), M. Essery (EP), L. Hube, Z. Lundrie (EP), B. Manning-Jones, J. Parr, G. Robinson, E. Syring, R. Welland (1:17 pm), M. Little (GFNRC Liaison)

Staff: C. Neilson, Senior Manager, People, Safety and Culture; A. Ali, Manager, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EP); A. Hassanpour, Project Engineer, Corporate Capital Project Delivery Services; T. Pillipow, Senior Committee Clerk (Recorder)

EP – Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 1:11 pm.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Chair Danforth provided the Territorial Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

**MOVED by M. Essery, SECONDED by L. Hube,
That the agenda for the Accessibility Advisory Committee
meeting of November 18, 2025 be approved.**

CARRIED

3. Adoption of Minutes

**MOVED by M. Essery, SECONDED by T. Bolt,
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee
meeting of July 15, 2025 be adopted as circulated.**

CARRIED

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Danforth noted that the November 19, 2025, Santa Claus Parade will have accessible viewing area and live audio description provided by the Victoria Disability Resource Centre. She also spoke about incremental changes to Persons with Disabilities Benefits announced by the Province. The federal budget was also passed and includes additional positive changes.

It was noted that December 3, 2025, is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The Chair thanked all committee members who have been reappointed for 2026.

R. Welland joined the meeting in person at 1:17 pm.

5. Presentations/Delegations

5.1. Presentations

5.1.1. Jasmine Parr, Re: Accessible Transit Committee and Upcoming Transit Plan for HandyDart

J. Parr presented the Accessible Transit Committee and Upcoming Transit Plan for HandyDart.

5.2. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Committee Business

6.1. 2026 Committee Membership Update

C. Neilson presented Item 6.1. for information.

6.2. September 16th Site Visit Debrief

A. Hassanpour presented Item 6.2. for information.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- providing feedback on the design process
- consideration of members coming from the Electoral Areas when scheduling the next site visit
- thanks to staff for bringing members into the decision process at an early point

6.3. Disability & Inclusion Awareness Training

Item 6.3. was deferred to the next meeting.

6.4. Facilities and Public Meeting Accessibility Review

C. Neilson presented Item 6.4. for information.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- consideration of hinderances in relation to accessibility
- ensuring presentation slides can be easily read
- beginning a meeting with the opening question, “Is there anything we can do to make this meeting more accessible for everyone?”.
- having a camera that shows the whole room
- closed captioning for live meetings
- prioritization process for the Capital Regional District facility inventory

7. Notices of Motion

There were no notice(s) of motion.

8. New Business

8.1. Facilities Work

The Fisgard building experienced a two-week elevator outage. As a result, staff are in the process of evaluating and purchasing stair evacuation chairs. Staff would like to invite members to participate in this process. Please contact Chris Neilson if you are interested.

8.2. Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS)

Staff have been working on accessibility at this location and are looking at funding options such as the Spark Grant Program to assist with this project. More information will be coming to the January meeting of this committee.

8.3. 2026 Meeting Dates

C. Neilson shared that the 2026 meetings fall on the third Tuesday bi-monthly starting in January.

9. Adjournment

**MOVED by G. Robinson, SECONDED by L. Hube,
That the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of November
18, 2025 be adjourned at 2:26 pm.
CARRIED**

Chair

Committee Clerk

**REPORT TO ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026**

SUBJECT **Accessibility Reviews for three Salt Spring Island Recreation Facilities**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To review recommendations identified in the 2025 Accessibility Reviews for the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Salt Spring Island Rainbow Recreation Centre (RRC), Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) and Salt Spring Island Portlock Park (PP) and seek a letter of support for a grant.

BACKGROUND

In September 2022, the Accessible BC Regulation came into force requiring public sector organizations to establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan and implement a tool to receive public feedback. As of September 1, 2023, these requirements were prescribed for regional districts.

Through the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Local Community Commission's SSI Parks and Recreation Service 2025 Capital Plan, included funding to conduct an accessibility assessment for the SSI RRC, SIMS, and PP.

In September 2025, Meaningful Access Consulting was contracted to conduct a facility accessibility review of three CRD SSI facilities that were identified as having high-use public sites with known accessibility barriers reported by users.

The reviews took into consideration the perspectives of people with mobility, cognitive, auditory, and learning, sensory, and visual disabilities. The review criteria was developed by the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program and best practices offered by CSA-B651-23 guidelines. The scope of these reviews included public and staff-only areas of these two facilities including pathways, parking, entrances, access hallways, offices, meeting rooms, washrooms, change rooms, gymnasiums, pools, program spaces, playgrounds and emergency systems.

The three reports provide recommendations to improve inclusivity and enhance accessibility focusing on parking and facility access, wayfinding, lighting, emergency systems, washrooms, changerooms and program spaces. The reports do not include any cost estimates for accessibility improvements. To assist with implementation of some of the recommendations in the Accessibility Reviews, staff are seeking approval to proceed with an application for the Sparc BC Local Community Accessibility Grant program to support up to \$25,000 in funding. The next funding intake for Sparc funding is in March 2026. Recommendations exceeding available grant funding will need to be phased into future capital plans.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends the Governance and First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair provide a letter of support for the Sparc BC Local Community Accessibility Grant Program.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The Accessibility Reviews for the RRC, SIMS and PP are in alignment with the CRD Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference Purpose:

b) Identify barriers of access to CRD service and programs for persons with disabilities in the community and recommend solutions for consideration by the CRD.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Implications

The recommendations of the Accessibility Reviews are intended to increase inclusivity and reduce barriers to participation for Salt Spring Island community members to access programs and services in these two recreation facilities.

Financial Implications

The Accessibility Reviews for the RRC, SIMS and PP contain a number of recommendations that exceed available grant funding and will need to be incorporated into future capital plans for facility upgrades over several years. If the grant application is successful, the funding from the Sparc BC Local Community Accessibility Grant program could assist with implementation of basic recommendations identified in the reviews.

CONCLUSION

Accessibility reviews were completed in September 2025 for the Salt Spring Island Rainbow Recreation Centre, Salt Spring Island Multi Space and Salt Spring Island Portlock Park in accordance with the Province of BC's Accessible BC Regulation. The assessments incorporated the perspectives of individuals with mobility, cognitive, auditory, learning, sensory, and visual disabilities. The resulting recommendations are intended to enhance accessibility and promote greater inclusivity across these facilities and provide a roadmap for future capital plans for facility upgrades. Sparc BC Local Community Accessibility Grant program funding will help to support implementation of some of the recommended improvements.

RECOMMENDATION

The Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends the Governance and First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair provide a letter of support for the Sparc BC Local Community Accessibility Grant Program.

Submitted by:	Dan Ovington, BBA, Senior Manager, Salt Spring Island Administration
Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, MBA, P.G.Dip.Eng, BSc, General Manager, Electoral Area Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Salt Spring Island Rainbow Road Recreation Centre Accessibility Review

Appendix B: Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) Accessibility Review

Appendix C: Salt Spring Island Portlock Park Accessibility Review



Accessibility Review Salt Spring Island Rainbow Recreation Centre September 22, 2025

INTRO AND DISCLAIMER

Accessibility Summary

This summary report provides accessibility-related insights of the Salt Spring Rainbow Recreation Centre offering current strengths and opportunities to further include all members of the community. This review has been prepared by Marco and Karin Pasqua of Meaningful Access Consulting (MAC) following a walkthrough completed September 22, 2025.

This report takes into account the perspectives of people with mobility, cognitive, auditory, learning, sensory and visual disabilities and is based on criteria developed by the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program and best practices offered by the CSA B651-23 guidelines.

Assessment Scope

The scope of this report covers public and staff-only areas of the building, including entrances, offices, meeting rooms, washrooms, routes of access, pathways, parking facilities, change rooms, the pool, preschool space and emergency systems.

Disclaimer

It is important to note that these are recommendations only, and not intended to replace any building codes, laws, or regulations. If in doubt, please consult a building code or legal professional.

MAC is not responsible for changes to the building or venue that happens as a result of this report. The owner, tenant, manager, or operator of the building or venue should use discretion when taking any action arising from this report.

OVERVIEW

The Salt Spring Island Rainbow Recreation Centre (RRC) continues to be a cornerstone of community life, providing accessible recreation, social connection, and wellness opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities. As one of the island's most active gathering spaces, the facility plays an essential role in promoting health, inclusion, and belonging through recreation and shared experience.

Over the years, the Rainbow Recreation Centre has evolved to meet the changing needs of the community, offering a range of programs including aquatics, fitness, preschool activities, and community events. While the Centre primarily focuses on aquatics, it also offers adaptable spaces and an on-site preschool that support diverse programming and participation.

From an accessibility perspective, the building demonstrates a strong foundation, with accessible routes of travel, wide open gathering spaces, and thoughtful updates to washrooms and changerooms—including a universal changeroom and an accessible changeroom and shower equipped with an adult-sized change bench. The facility's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in both recent upgrades and future planning discussions, particularly those focused on lighting, sensory inclusion, and adaptive programming.

The site has hosted sensory-friendly swims, and staff have implemented many features that increase accessibility into and out of the pool and hot tub. The lift is well maintained, user-friendly, and provides safe, comfortable access to the aquatic amenities.

As the community continues to grow, opportunities remain to enhance accessibility, comfort, wayfinding, and sensory experience across key areas—from changerooms (including reconfiguring grab bars, adjusting door swings, and installing automatic door operators) to circulation paths, the pool deck, and spectator areas. A key recommendation in this report is to replace the fluorescent lighting with low-flicker LED fixtures, as the current lighting is uncomfortable for many community members.

The recommendations outlined in this report highlight practical next steps that build upon the Centre's existing strengths, ensuring it remains a model of inclusion, safety, and meaningful access for Salt Spring Island residents for years to come.

CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Intro and Disclaimer	2
Overview	3
Table of Contents	4
Accessibility Insights	5
Parking & Approach	5
Lobby & Reception	8
Circulation	10
Pool & Aquatic Amenities	12
Administration Areas and Reception	16
Washrooms: Lobby	18
Change Rooms	22
Wayfinding	30
Emergency Systems	32
Preschool	33
Web and Recreation Guide Content	35
Additional Support	36
Prioritization	37
Summary of Recommendations	38
Resources:	43
What is Contrast so Important	43
Why do Icons Matter	44
Lighting	45
Thank You	48

ACCESSIBILITY INSIGHTS



Parking & Approach

Parking Lot

- ✓ The signage leading to the site is obvious from the main road with a large sign that includes the name of the building and the address.
- ✓ The parking surfaces are generally level, firm, non-slip and without significant slope despite being a packed gravel lot. The ground does not appear to have significant pooling areas.
- ✓ There is a designated drop off area immediately out front of the entrance.
- ✓ There are several designated accessible stalls which are marked using vertical pole signage allowing for the stall to be easily visible at a distance.

Entrance & Wayfinding

- ✓ Access to the entrance is via a level and flush entrance threshold without the need for a ramp or set of stairs creating equal access for all.
- ✓ The sidewalk in front of the entrance is a complete curb ramp creating a path of travel directly to the parking lot.
- ✓ There is large, visible signage on the exterior of the building that provides the name of the building.
 - ✓ It is high contrast and easily visible from the parking lot.
- ✓ The main entry is covered with a large canopy offering weather protection.
- ✓ The main entrance doors have high visual contrast ensuring that they're easily seen at a distance and easy to identify.
- ✓ The glazing at the entrance doors and surrounding wall area allows for significant light to enter the facility and manage the lighting difference between the exterior and interior spaces.
 - ✓ Such gradual light adaptation is particularly beneficial for individuals with low vision, older adults, or anyone sensitive to sudden changes in brightness. By minimizing visual strain and improving overall visibility, the glazing enhances both comfort and safety at the main entry.

Entrance – Continued

- The main door is operable with an automatic door operator, located to the right of the door, out of the door swing.
- Bicycle parking is provided near the portico and out of the way of the path of travel.
- There is a power outlet near the bicycle parking area which could be used by someone with a power wheelchair or mobility scooter aiding with managing the distance from public transportation.





Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Entrance & Wayfinding

Recommendations:

- The automatic door is recommended to include a decal indicating which door will be opened when the operator button is pushed. Without a clear decal, a person may position themselves incorrectly or be startled by unexpected door movement, creating confusion or potential collision. The decal provides a clear visual cue, improving predictability, safety, and user confidence when approaching and operating the automatic door.



Accessible Parking Stalls

Recommendations:

- If ever updating the parking lot, it's highly recommended for the parking lot to be paved and for the accessible stalls to include pavement decals with the dynamic accessibility symbol with a blue square to increase contrast and visibility at a distance.

Best Practices:

- Accessible parking stalls should be at least **2600 mm** wide with an adjacent access aisle of **2000 mm** wide for stalls perpendicular to the roadway.



Accessibility Idea

Let the public know of the power outlet available at the entrance of the Rainbow Recreation Centre. The feature might be very useful to know about for people using mobility devices or considering purchasing an e-bike for transportation.

Consider allowing mobility scooters and power wheelchairs to charge for free.



Lobby & Reception

- ✓ The lobby itself is a generous and bright space that is welcoming and well-lit, thanks to large windows around the front door and through the aquatics area as well as ample artificial lighting.
 - ✓ The lobby lighting is consistent and even managing the difference between the indoors and outdoors very well.
- ✓ The main amenities including public washrooms, changerooms and access to the aquatics area is easily visible from the entrance doors and directly off of the main lobby.
 - ✓ An accessible washroom is found immediately off of the lobby.
- ✓ Seating with backrests is provided in the lobby, with options for people to pull up at tables.
- ✓ Additional benches are provided, particularly near the areas for boot and shoe storage, allowing for someone to have support with putting on and taking off their shoes.
 - ✓ Seating is placed in such a way that spectators can view the aquatics area without necessarily going into the area.

Reception

- ✓ The reception desk is clearly marked with overhead signage as well as being visually contrasted from the walls and floor.
- ✓ The reception desk features an area of lowered countertop allowing for people shorter in stature or seated to receive service at a height that works well for them.
- ✓ The staff area is equipped with ergonomic chairs and areas with knee clearance.
- ✓ Storage is at a variety of heights and a counter that is accessible in height.





Barriers & Recommendations: Lobby & Reception

Reception

- The current placement of the printer at the lowered counter creates a barrier for access from the intended purpose of the lowered counter area. It also makes the printer controls rather high for individuals who are shorter in stature.

Recommendations:

- Place the printer in another area of the reception and administration space so that the lowered counter area is left clear for information sharing between staff and a seated user or user who is shorter in stature.
- Ensure that staff understand the intention of the lowered counter so that it remains free and clear of any clutter.
- Staff who are taller or who use a mobility device may require the under-the-desk keyboard tray removed. It's highly recommended to review the ergonomic set up of the reception desk for staff and ensure it is a comfortable work-space for long periods of time.

Long-Term:

- If or when reconfiguring the reception desk, it's best practice to include knee clearance area at the lowered counter area to allow someone who uses a mobility device to pull up and complete forms, receive information etc.
 - Ideally we recommend this to be right up front at the centre of a reception desk so it's not seen as an after-through.



Circulation

Navigation

- ✓ Circulating around the facility is generally quite logical and straightforward with the primary amenities being directly off the reception lobby.
- ✓ All of the amenities are accessible by someone with a disability as this facility has no change in level.

Building Controls

- ✓ Building controls (heat, lighting, AV, door operators, etc.) are generally mounted at accessible heights.
- ✓ Controls are generally easy to use without the need for fine dexterity.
- ✓ Door handles are generally lever-style which are easier for people to use as they don't require a turning of the wrist and more intuitive during emergencies.

Lighting and Contrast

- ✓ There is ample lighting throughout the facility including overhead lighting and natural lighting thanks to the significant use of windows, particularly in the aquatics area..
 - ✓ The windows allow access and connection with nature and daylight.
 - ✓ No strobing or flickering was noticed.
- ✓ Contrast is strong throughout the building including between the floors, walls and trim. Dark trim provides high contrast to the light-coloured walls and colourful floorings.

Doors

- ✓ Where doors have been upgraded, vision panels are full-length ensuring that people of all heights can see through the window.
- ✓ Many doors swing inwards and out of the path of travel.

Flooring

- ✓ The flooring features a non-slip surface with limited glare.



Barriers & Recommendations: Circulation

Lighting and Contrast

- Some individuals who are neurodiverse can see the flicker of the fluorescent lighting, creating additional extra-sensory input which can be very difficult for some. Additionally, fluorescent lighting is known to cause headaches and increase feelings of anxiety and malaise. Fluorescent lights, especially older or poorly maintained ones, can produce electromagnetic interference (EMI) that affects the performance of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices. This EMI can cause a buzzing, humming, or static sound in the hearing aid, which is not only annoying but can also make it harder for the user to hear and understand speech.
- The bright, directional nature of LED lighting can sometimes create harsh glare, especially if the fixtures aren't properly shielded or positioned. This can lead to visual discomfort and reduced contrast perception. Ensure that all LED lighting is properly shielded or angled in such a way to reduce glare on wayfinding, computer screens, glazing etc.

Recommendation:

- It's recommended to swap any non-LED light bulbs for LED models, particularly those that have a flicker rate of at least 1000 Hz. At this rate, individuals with heightened sensory sensitivities are unlikely to pick up on the flickering effects.



Pool & Aquatic Amenities

Circulation

- ✓ The pool viewing deck is accessible through doors leading from the lobby leading to a viewing area or via the changerooms.
- ✓ Key locations including the change room and first aid room are highly visible at a distance thanks to the large signage.
- ✓ The viewing area has chairs and bench seating providing comfortable places for individuals to watch and wait for members of their party.
 - ✓ The viewing area also has a low banister that does not impede the sight lines for someone seated.
- ✓ The pool deck provides ample space for two people to pass and as without any slope or cross slope.
- ✓ There are large windows, with a film that allows lots of light into the space without being overly intense in terms of glare, heat and brightness.
 - ✓ The film also creates contrast for the windows, ensuring that no one mistakes the glazing for open doors.

Pool & Hot Tub Access

- ✓ There are a number of options for people to access the pool and the hot tub including stairs, ladders, and a provided aquatic wheelchair and accompanying overhead lift.
 - ✓ The stairs to enter the pool and hot tub have bilateral, round and graspable handrails.
- ✓ An overhead lift along with a dedicated wheeled chair is also available for individuals to access the pools and hot tubs.
 - ✓ The lift, though unique to the facility, functions well and has been approved by local inspectors.
 - ✓ The lift is comfortable to use, stable and allows for someone to comfortably enter and exit either the pool or hot tub with the assistance of a lifeguard.
 - ✓ Staff have received training in how to operate the lift.
 - ✓ The chair has locks on the wheels and a seatbelt for safety.





Pool & Aquatic Amenities

- ✓ The edge of the pool and hot tub is well contrasted against the surrounding floor making the steps and change in height easy to see.
- ✓ Staff have created a submergible platform to create shallower areas of the pool for children and infants.
- ✓ Active and vestibular play is considered, particularly with the addition of the rope swing and the floating climbing structure.
- ✓ There is level access through large glass sliding doors to an outdoor patio area with a picnic table.

Programming

- ✓ Staff informed the consultant team that sensory friendly swims have been hosted with features such as under water lighting and best practices related to lighting and sound management.





Accessibility Idea: Aquatics Programming

Sensory Kits

Sensory kits are collections of tools designed to support individuals who experience sensory sensitivities or regulation challenges, including those who are neurodivergent. They create a more inclusive and calming environment in public, educational, or recreational settings by helping individuals manage overstimulation and maintain focus or comfort.

- Providing sensory kits demonstrates a proactive commitment to accessibility and inclusion by recognizing invisible disabilities and ensuring that all community members can participate meaningfully.
- Typical items include:
 - Fidget tools (for tactile stimulation and focus)
 - Noise-cancelling headphones (to reduce auditory overload)
 - Communication boards or picture cards (for non-verbal communication support). In an aquatic environment, picture symbols can be stuck to flutter boards and used as part of swim lessons
 - Weighted lap pads or stress balls (to promote calm and self-regulation)
 - Other considerations would be small quiet activities such as colouring
- Consider developing a social story that outlines the expectations and experience to be had at Rainbow Recreation Centre, including what to expect during a sensory friendly swim.

Goggles

Goggles can be both a positive and a negative experience for individuals. Consider providing a pair or two of loanable alternative goggles such as frogglez goggles or goggles with fabric bands that are intended to be more comfortable for sensory sensitive users. (And, if well-received, consider adding them to your retail offerings).



Barriers & Recommendations: Aquatic Amenities

Pool & Hot Tub Access

- Ensure that a procedure is in place for charging the lift so that it is always available for patrons to use, without fear of disappointment of arriving on site and finding out that the resource is not available.
 - Consider ensuring the lift is plugged in as part of the centre's closing procedure.
- During staff training, it's highly recommended that staff try the lift themselves, sit in the chair and experience the feeling of being lifted into and out of the pools.
- The pool area is very echoey which can feel overwhelming for some individuals, though noise-dampening panels or treatments in an aquatic environment can be difficult to implement.
 - Consider adding regular low stimulation swim times or advertising when the pool is at its quietest.
 - There are acoustic panels that are designed for humid environments which can absorb excess sound, reducing echoes and noise. Consider reviewing whether or not these would be supportive for this environment and the community as a whole.

Patio

- Consider providing a universally designed picnic table. Universally designed picnic tables (ie. Table with extensions or areas of bench removed) are highly recommended to ensure that people using mobility devices (or someone needing a seat with a backrest) can sit comfortably with their parties.



Reference: Marco Pasqua sits at two different universally designed picnic tables



Administration Areas & Reception

Staff Room / Lifeguard Office

- ✓ The staff room is large enough for its intended purposes and furnished with a small kitchenette, a table and chairs as well as access to a dedicated change room and washroom.
- ✓ There is ample lighting including natural thanks to the windows to the exterior and the glazed walls connecting the staff room with the aquatics facility.

Staff Washrooms and Changerooms

- ✓ Within the staff room / lifeguard office there are two small single-user washrooms and changerooms. The washroom isn't designated as accessible but it would be workable for many people.
- ✓ The sink has knee clearance and a faucet is easy to operate with the soap and paper towel dispensers within reach.
- ✓ A standing shower is provided with privacy.
- ✓ Lockers at a variety of heights are provided, giving people a range of reach height options.
- ✓ The mirror is mounted at an accessible height.

Kitchenette

- ✓ The kitchen features a range of storage options for supplies, a small amount of counter space and a counter-height coffee maker and kettle.
- ✓ The sink has a soap dispenser within reach of someone using the sink and the faucet is operable with ease with the controls are within reach of people of all heights (despite there being no knee clearance under the sink).

Office

- ✓ A height adjustable desk and ergonomic office chair is provided in the office for the programmers.
- ✓ The office space features dual monitors.



Barriers & Recommendations: Administration Areas

Kitchenette

- Lower the microwave to counter height for safety and accessibility. It's currently mounted at a height that can be dangerous for many and inaccessible for people shorter in stature or seated.

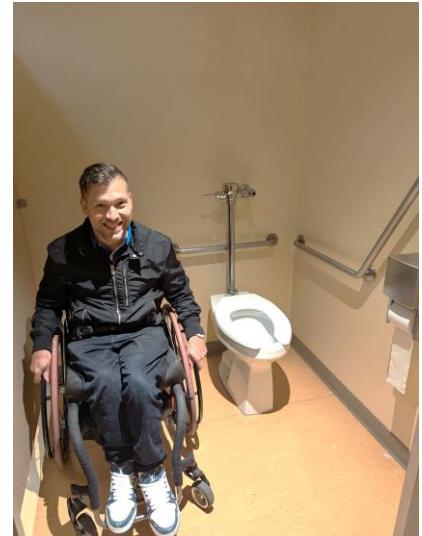
Staff Washrooms and Changerooms

- Ensure that items are kept up off the floor to maintain navigation of the space as well as prevent any tripping hazards.
- Consider frosting the bottom portion of the glazed wall to provide some privacy to the lifeguards using the space (while maintaining visibility and safety) as well as reducing the visual clutter from the aquatics area.



Washrooms: Lobby

- ✓ The washrooms directly off of the lobby feature both male and female washrooms as well as a decommissioned single-user stall. Each providing a level of accessibility that is consistent.
- ✓ Within the accessible stall, there is ample turning radius as well as the stall is sufficiently large to provide transfer space for a front transfer or a lateral transfer from a mobility device.



Signage and Access

- ✓ Signage, mounted on the wall, includes text information as well as the gender icons.
- ✓ Signage is also directly above the alcove entrance to the washrooms, visible from the reception desk.

Accessible Toilet Stalls and Urinals

- ✓ The urinal is equipped with bilateral vertical grab bars which provide additional balance and contrast for users.
- ✓ The toilet paper dispensers are open canister models and are mounted within reach of someone seated on the toilet.
 - ✓ Open canister toilet paper dispensers are easier for people with limited dexterity to operate.
- ✓ The toilets being manual flush models is appreciated as automatic flushing toilets can be very loud and uncomfortable for children and people who are neurodiverse or who have sound sensitivities.
- ✓ The accessible stall features a rear mounted horizontal grab bar and an angled grab bar adjacent to the toilet.
- ✓ The door hardware is accessible and correctly placed including a locking mechanism that works for people with limited dexterity (can be operated with an open fist) and a D-handle for ease of closing the door.
- ✓ The women's washroom features a sanitary disposal unit within reach of someone seated on the toilet, correctly mounted beneath the angled grab bar.



Washrooms: Lobby

Sink and Mirrors

- ✓ The mirrors are mounted at a height that allows someone seated or shorter stature to view themselves in the mirror.
- ✓ Knee clearance is provided at the sink to allow a seated user to access the sink safely and comfortably.
- ✓ The sink faucet controls are easy to operate without the need for fine dexterity or a turning of the wrist.
- ✓ The soap dispenser is mounted within reach of someone using the sink.



Barriers & Recommendations: Lobby Washrooms

The gendered washrooms are not marked as being accessible and the single-user washroom has been converted into a maintenance or storage space. The single user washroom remains on the facility maps, though it is not being used as a washroom and is closed to the public.

Recommendations:

Short-Term

- The washroom signage is recommended to include a raised icon and letters providing tactile information for someone who's blind and ideally Braille.
 - Mount the signage on the wall, on the latch-side of the door at a height of **1500 mm** center line from the floor.
 - Ensure that the signage includes the symbol of accessibility.
- Blade signage for this washrooms, mounted above the entrance to the washroom alcove is recommended to provide visibility at a distance.
- The current placement of the paper towel dispenser is quite high making it difficult for someone shorter of stature or seated to fully wash and dry their hands. It's recommended to move it to the adjacent wall and mount it so that the controls are at a height of **1200 mm**.
- It's highly recommended to add an additional hook at a height of **1100 mm** from the floor in each stall.
- Consider adding a backrest to provide additional trunk support and balance especially since the toilet is not a tank-style unit.
- Determine if the single-user washroom is to be used or if it's remained closed to the public. If it's intended to be closed, then remove it from the wayfinding maps and emergency egress maps. However, it is recommended or this space to be used as a washroom as this provides an additional washroom.
 - Another consideration would be to add signage near the gendered washrooms as to the location of the additional accessible washrooms found within the universal changerooms and allow someone needing to use this facility to do so without being charged a drop-in fee (assuming they are not otherwise using facility amenities.)



Barriers & Recommendations: Lobby Washrooms

Recommendations:

Long-Term

- The lighting in the washroom is highly recommended to be updated so that it is not fluorescent lighting especially given the small space.
- Automatic door operators (ADOs) are recommended for all the washrooms. If the single-user washroom will be utilized, an ADO can simply be installed on the one washroom door, if not, it's recommended for both the gendered washrooms to have a door operator kit installed.



Changerooms

This facility offers male changerooms, female changerooms and a universal changeroom most of the accessible features being found in the universal changerooms. Accessible washroom stalls are present in the gendered and universal change rooms.

The hallway to access the changerooms is sufficiently wide and is found directly off of the lobby.

Signage and Access

- There is signage mounted on each changeroom door to access the change room from the lobby and large signage mounted on the wall, easily seen from the pool-side.
- Access to the change rooms from the aquatics area is to a screened entry making for ease of access to the facilities.
- The change room signage from the aquatic side is large and high contrast making it easily visible at a distance.



Changerooms

- Within each of the changing spaces, individual stalls are provided for both showering and changing.
- Bench seating is provided to assist with changing both in the main changing area and within individual stalls.
- There are multiple heights of lockers accommodating people at a variety of heights and reach.
- The changerooms are equipped with visual and auditory fire alarms.
- The changeroom area has some areas that are large and wide open with navigable pathways to the facilities.
- There are two heights of hooks provided as well as bins at a range of heights to store personal items.

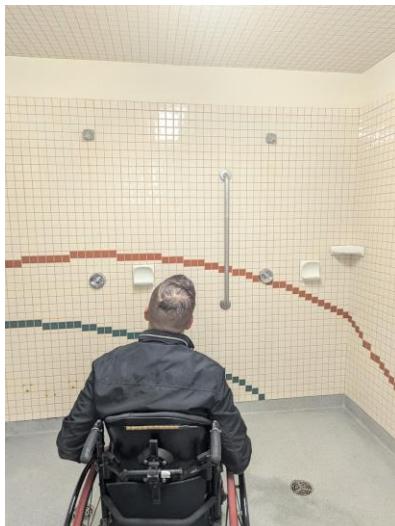
Washroom Stalls

- The accessible washroom stalls are generally well equipped with sufficient area and turning radius, rear horizontal grab bars, adjacent angled grab bars and the fixtures within reach of someone seated on the toilet.
- The blue stall doors and dividers adds visual contrast to the space.



Showers

- ✓ The showering spaces include baby seats that provide parents a safe and supportive place for their baby while they change or shower.
- ✓ There are some showers with some grab bars, both vertical and horizontal.
- ✓ Some accessibility has been considering in the showers with a portable shower chair provided in one shower area and a variety of grab bar configurations in the showers.



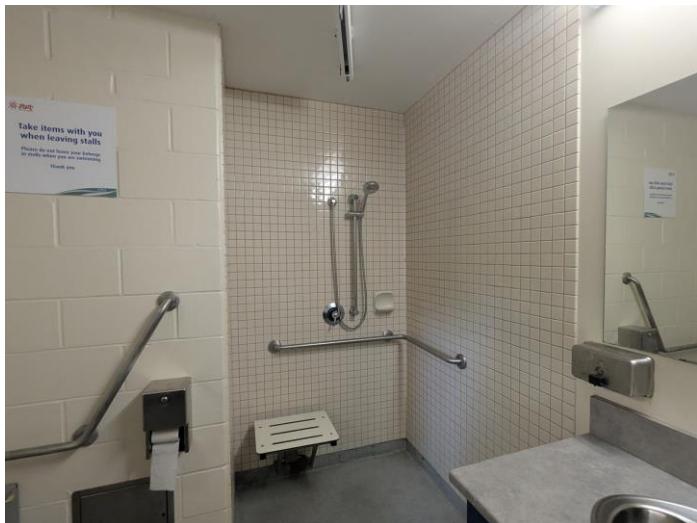
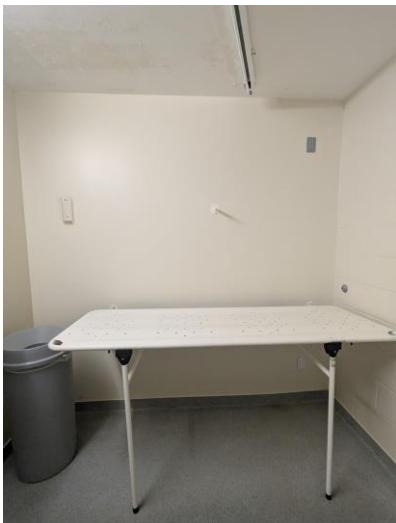


Accessibility Change Room

The Accessibility Change Room, located within the Universal Change Room space, is an all-inclusive room intended for the complete hygienic care of a participant with a disability, requiring assistance from a caregiver.

The room is large enough for its intended purpose and provides ample turning radius and transfer space that would accommodate most people's needs.

- ✓ The room is locked with signage directing users to retrieve the key from reception.
 - ✓ The space is locked to ensure that the room is maintained available for those who require it.
- ✓ The space features a range of accessible hygiene furnishings including:
 - ✓ A roll-in shower with a shower head on a shower pole, a fold-down bench and a grab bar.
 - ✓ A ceiling lift that can take someone from the shower area to the adult change bench.
 - ✓ A fold-down adult change bench is provided in the space with a weight capacity that is safe and comfortable for most adults to use.
 - ✓ The toilet includes an angled grab bar adjacent to the toilet.
 - ✓ The sink has knee clearance and the soap and paper towel dispenser within reach of someone using the sink.





Barriers & Recommendations: Changerooms

Signage and Access

- When upgrading the package, it's highly recommended to add icons/symbols to the washroom and change room signage increasing its accessibility for people with literacy disabilities as well as making the sign more obvious at a distance.
- Additional signage from the lobby is recommended to direct people towards the changerooms.
- The signage for the change rooms should be mounted on the wall, latch-side at a height of 1500 mm from the floor and include tactile letters and icons to be accessible for people who are blind.

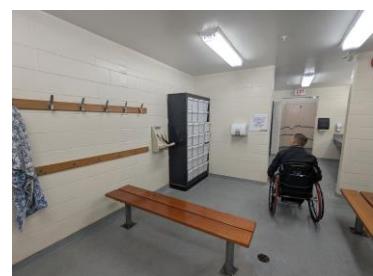
Change Rooms

- Consider adding some hooks at a height of **1,100 mm** from the floor. This would allow people seated or shorter of stature to reach a hook to place their items off the floor.
- The baby change table is mounted too high, even for someone standing so it is recommended to be lowered to approximately counter height of between **760 and 865 mm**.
- The benches are placed directly in front of the lowered lockers making it very difficult to access the bottom row of lockers. People either need to lean over them sit on them and work around their own bodies. Consider ways of opening up the space and creating greater access to the lockers while maintaining a path of travel.
 - Could the benches be relocated to beneath the hooks? Or could they be doubled up in the areas that are wider?



Accessible Toilet Stalls

- Women's changeroom accessible stall washroom door currently swings inward. It's recommended to be re-hung to swing outwards to provide the full turning radius intended within the washroom stall.





Barriers & Recommendations: Changerooms

Accessible Toilet Stalls

- Women's changeroom accessible stall washroom door currently swings inward. It's recommended to be re-hung to swing outwards to provide the full turning radius intended within the washroom stall.
- Where locking mechanisms are still the old short twisting style, it's recommended to replace these with the models that have an extension as these are more accessible for people with limited dexterity.



Showers

- Consider replacing the grab bars in the showers with ones that are of higher contrast so they are more visible to someone needing them. Right now, they fade into the wall and individuals with low vision (including those with cataracts) may not see the grab bars completely to use them.
- Adding grab bars to the showers is highly recommended to assist with balance.
- Consider adding accessible elements to the showers including a shower bench to give people more options and accommodations for showering.
- If completing a significant renovation, a roll-in shower, complete with grab bars and a fold-down shower bench in each of the gendered and the universal washroom change rooms spaces would be highly recommended as these spaces can be used by people of all abilities including seniors or people with balance disabilities.
- When renovating the showers, consider replacing the controls with lever-style controls as the current ones may be difficult for people with limited strength or dexterity to operate.





Barriers & Recommendations: Changerooms

Accessibility Change Room

The accessibility change room is configured in such a way that it is designed for someone needing a caregiver's support for hygiene purposes and doesn't truly allow for someone with a disability to shower and change themselves independently.

For example, the layout of the shower anticipates that someone will shower in the aquatics wheelchair rather than transfer onto the shower bench since the bench is not positioned under the stream of the shower. The shower bench is quite short so it doesn't provide adequate space for someone to comfortably sit and shower independently.

Short-Term

- Clarify and manage staff procedure for setting up and aligning the adult change table to prevent misuse or damage. Consider keeping it in the open position and removing the hook on the wall.
 - We understand that for safety of children and preventing storage on the table the preference may be to leave the table in its closed position, so it would be advised then to have a sign mounted and ensure that staff are familiar with how to set up the table safely.
 - Add a bench or cubbies beneath the change table is recommended to prevent it from being used for storage or clutter.
- Consider installing a mirror or lowering the current one to a height of **1000 mm** from the floor to ensure that people of all heights can see themselves reflected in the mirror.
- It's recommended to update the faucet controls to ones that don't require force to operate as the current one may be difficult for children and for people with limited strength to activate.
- Consider adding some colour to the walls as the space feels very enclosed and some colour would add contrast aiding with visual acuity and balance as well as making the space feel less clinical.



Barriers & Recommendations: Changerooms

Accessibility Change Room

Mid-Term

- Consider a small reorganization of the shower's amenities including:
 - If the controls would still be within reach of someone seated on the bench, consider replacing the current shower bench with one that is longer and mounting it on the adjacent wall. This would allow more space on the bench itself as well as offer lateral transfer to the bench while someone's mobility device remains out of the stream of water.
 - Add vertical grab bars to the walls: one placed next to the shower pole and the other mounted on the outside edge of the wall, where the bench is relocated to.
 - Ensure that the bottom edge of the shower pole is within reach of someone seated on the shower bench with bottom edge at most **1200 mm** from the floor and within **500 mm** from the edge of the bench.
 - Consider moving the soap dispenser to within reach of someone seated on the bench.

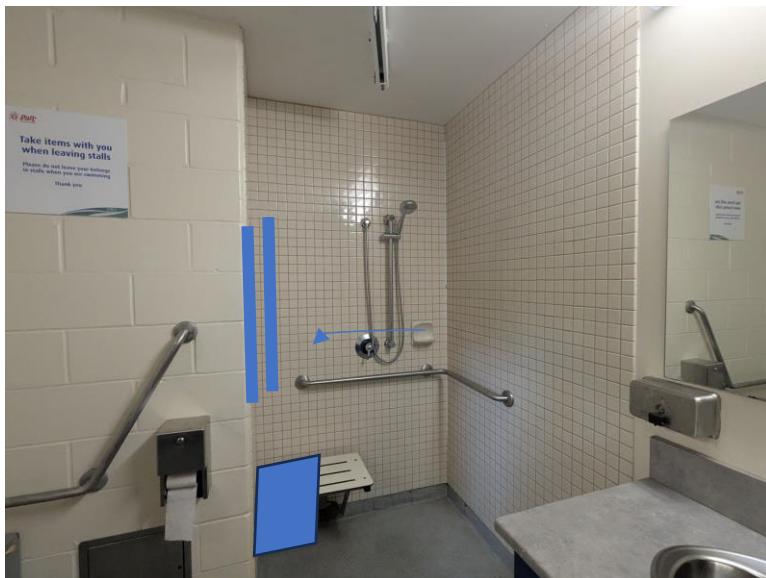
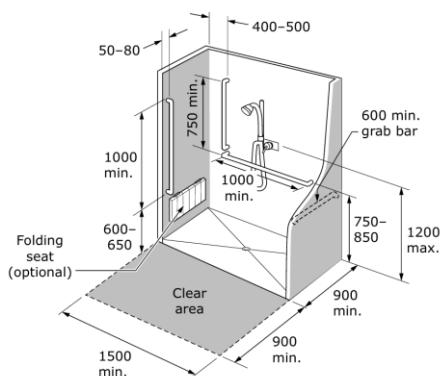


Figure 51
Roll-in shower stall
(See Clauses [6.5.5.2](#) and [6.5.5.3](#).)





Barriers & Recommendations: Changerooms

Accessibility Change Room

Long-Term

- Consider installing an automatic door operator on both the Accessibility Change Room door and the door to enter the universal change rooms to ensure a complete path of travel that is independently accessible.
- An extension to the ceiling mounted track is advised so that someone can be safely lifted and transferred from their wheelchair or from the change table to the toilet.
- When funds allow, an upgraded adult change bench is highly recommended, ideally one that is height adjustable and designed to support at least 250 kg is recommended.

Best Practices:

- An adult change table should be at least **760 mm wide by 1830 mm** long with a surface height that can be adjusted from between **450/500mm and 850/900 mm**.



Wayfinding

- ✓ Rooms are marked with signage (though mounted on the door) includes the name of the room and a logical numbering system.
- ✓ Signage throughout the recreation is limited but does include room signage for key amenities such as the changerooms, washrooms and administration office.
- ✓ Washroom signage includes icons and the universal changeroom door includes the symbol of accessibility.
- ✓ There is signage directly above the reception desk directing visitors immediately to the desk.



Recommendations: Wayfinding

- Consider developing a consistent wayfinding strategy that encompasses an Island-wide consistent use of icons, tactile elements and braille.
- Consider installing either decals or blade signage for key amenities areas such those located down corridors, including the changerooms.
- Where room signage is found mounted on the door, it makes it inaccessible when the door is opened as well as not available for those with low vision. It is recommended to mount signage on the wall, latch-side, at a height of **1,500 mm** centerline. The room signage would also benefit from ideally both braille and tactile components, but at minimum tactile icons and language.
- Ensure that the icons accurately reflect the features found within the washroom stall. Where washrooms are not accessible either due to turning radius or lack of grab bars, note these as either limited mobility or single user stalls.

Understanding Wayfinding

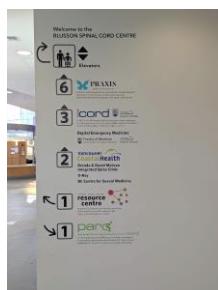
Imagine navigating a complex building with ease, feeling confident and in control rather than overwhelmed. This is the result of a thoughtfully designed wayfinding system, which incorporates braille, tactile elements, high-contrast signage, and intuitive icons strategically placed throughout the space.

For individuals who are blind or have low vision, tactile signage with raised characters and braille is essential. It enables them to independently access critical information, including room numbers, directions, and emergency exits, enhancing their autonomy and safety within the environment.

High-contrast signage, with light text on a dark background or vice versa, makes it easier for people with visual disabilities to read and comprehend information quickly.

Intuitive icons and pictograms are another powerful tool for accessibility. They transcend language barriers and provide a universal understanding of key features and directions. For individuals with cognitive disabilities or anxiety, these visual cues can help break down complex information into manageable chunks, reducing stress and confusion.

By providing clear, unobstructed paths and directional signage at appropriate heights, we ensure that everyone can navigate the space with ease. When the signage is visible at a distance, it allows people to make decisions on their path of travel and ensure they are using the most efficient and effective route of travel to their intended destination.



Did you know?

Sans serif fonts are considered the most accessible since they streamline the reading process by eliminating visual distractions, making them the go-to choice for maximum readability and accessibility.



Emergency Systems

- ✓ The entire facility is equipped with auditory and visual fire alarms including in the change rooms.
- ✓ Emergency maps are clear, well-placed, non-reflective, and easy to read. They are mounted at accessible heights and are generally low-glare.
 - ✓ They include maps which are very clear marking the pool locations and the assembly areas.
- ✓ Exits are well marked with overhead signage.
- ✓ There are many accessible emergency exits that have a level and flush threshold and connects directly to the exterior of the building.
- ✓ Safety equipment, including fire extinguishers and fire pull stations are well-marked and generally located in accessible locations and mounted at accessible heights.



Barriers & Recommendations: Emergency Systems

Long-Term

- If completing more significant renovations, it is highly recommended to provide visual fire alarms the accessible change room area as someone may be using this space alone.
 - Ensure that the perspectives of people with disabilities is included in our emergency management planning including having staff open locked doors to ensure that no one is inside during an evacuation rather than just knocking on the door.
- When completing a more significant renovation, consider replacing the current red exit signs with green 'running person' models. Using the green running person exit signage throughout the buildings is recommended as well as including the signage that features the accessibility icon to note accessible egress routes.
 - The running person pictogram is an intuitive, universally recognized symbol that clearly conveys the message to exit quickly in an emergency. It relies less on language comprehension compared to text-only "Exit" signs and therefore benefits people with cognitive disabilities, low literacy, or those who speak different languages.



Preschool

Access

- ✓ Access to the centre is provided via a ramp or a set of stairs leading to the entrance.
 - ✓ Both the ramp and stairs are equipped with bilateral graspable handrails.
 - ✓ There is a non-slip surface on stair treads.
 - ✓ There is some contrast present on stair nosings (though could use repainting).
 - ✓ The ramp grade is comfortable and functional, meeting best practices.
 - ✓ The top landing of the stairs features cane detectable attention tactile walking indicator strips in high vis yellow.
- ✓ locations and mounted at accessible heights.

Preschool Space

- ✓ The preschool space itself is bright, well-equipped, and comfortable.
- ✓ The space is easy to navigate with ample space between activity stations.
- ✓ Items are mounted heights that are accessible for children, without the need to climb, reach or be lifted.
- ✓ There are quiet spaces with carpets for comfort and sound management.
- ✓ There is good contrast between the floors and the wall as well as the walls and the trim.
- ✓ Temperature management is provided with an AC unit and a heat pump.
- ✓ Shade is provided in the play area.
- ✓ A variety of sensory play is provided both indoors and outdoors including direct access to the natural environment.

Washroom

- ✓ The washroom includes a standard-sized toilet with grab bars (rear horizontal and adjacent 90° angled), a step stool, and potties available for children.
- ✓ The urinal is lowered and features bilateral grab bars.
- ✓ The toilet paper dispenser is within reach of someone seated on the toilet (adults).
- ✓ Fixtures appear to meet good general standards of accessibility for adults.
- ✓ Knee clearance is provided at the sink along with an accessible height mirror, soap and paper towel dispenser in reach of someone using the sink and a step stool for children.



Barriers & Recommendations: Emergency Systems

Access

- It's recommended to update the paint on the nosing of the stairs to increase the contrast and visibility on the descent.

Preschool Space

- If ever completing a renovation of the space, a lowered sink would be recommended for children to be able to wash their hands with independence.
- It is highly recommended to exchange the fluorescent lighting for LED lighting to reduce the visual stimulation caused by the flicker of the lights.

Washroom

- If ever completing a more significant renovation or expansion of the childcare space, consider adding a child-height toilet with corresponding grab bars to support self-transfer and independence.



Web & Recreation Guide Content

When communicating the accessibility features of a physical location or space, let potential visitors know of what enhancements are available, as opposed to assuming what might be “accessible” for them. This will give them an opportunity to decide for themselves if the accessibility of the site meets their own particular needs. Rather than telling the public that something is accessible, tell them what features are available and where to request more information or additional accommodations.

Highlighting accessible features on websites and in newsletters or recreation guides increases the public’s awareness and the likelihood of usage of the recreation centre facility.

Include information about:

- ✓ The availability of accessible washrooms and showers and how to access them;
- ✓ The location of the accessible parking stalls;
- ✓ Any special features like lifts, aquatic wheelchairs, specialized equipment;
- ✓ The availability of access options (stairs, ramps, lifts, ladders) into pools;
- ✓ The location of accessible viewing areas;
- ✓ The availability of an adult change table;
- ✓ Upcoming accessible and inclusive programming;
- ✓ Your sensory kits;
- ✓ When the centre might be busiest or quietest;
- ✓ Information on where to request additional information related to the accessibility of the site; and
- ✓ Any barriers to accessing the site even if temporary. (Ie the elevator is out of service, the automatic door operator isn’t functioning, a washroom is being renovated.)

Don’t be afraid to tell the public about newly updated or upgraded accessibility features. Did you install a new door operator? Tell people! Did you receive a new lift? Share it! People like to know that accessibility is being considered and why it matters.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Sensory Kits

- Sensory kits are collections of tools designed to support individuals who experience sensory sensitivities or regulation challenges, including those who are neurodivergent. They create a more inclusive and calming environment in public, educational, or recreational settings by helping individuals manage overstimulation and maintain focus or comfort.
- Providing sensory kits demonstrates a proactive commitment to accessibility and inclusion by recognizing invisible disabilities and ensuring that all community members can participate meaningfully.
- Typical items include:
 - Fidget tools (for tactile stimulation and focus)
 - Noise-cancelling headphones (to reduce auditory overload)
 - Communication boards or picture cards (for non-verbal communication support)
 - Weighted lap pads or stress balls (to promote calm and self-regulation)
 - Sunglasses or visors (to help manage light sensitivity)
 - Other considerations would be small quiet activities such as colouring
- Consider developing a social story that can be shared with teachers or available on the website as a downloadable resource. These stories allow people of all ages to understand what to expect from an environmental perspective and also what the expectations are for social interactions and behavior. Social stories are usually written in the first person, using positive, reassuring language. They often include pictures and simple language.



PRIORITIZATION

When considering making changes to increase accessibility, thinking about the entire 'path of accessibility.' That is, is the complete process of accessing and using a space accessible? Where possible, we advocate for creating complete accessible spaces rather than adding piecemeal accessibility supports. For example, we advocate for a singular accessible washroom rather than a number of washrooms with a variety of accessibility features.

Our recommended priorities based on both access and impact include:

Highest Priority

- One of the highest priority accessibility recommendations would be to replace the fluorescent lighting with LED as this was brought up a number of times as a point of concern and discomfort from staff.
- Improve wayfinding and signage consistency, including adding tactile room signage mounted on the wall for primary spaces including washrooms, changerooms, community rooms and other public-facing spaces.

Short Term

- Provide more information on the recreation centre's website on the accessibility features available at Rainbow Recreation Centre including information about the lift, sensory friendly swims and reduced rate for the leisure access program.
- Add blade signage to the washrooms and change rooms to increase visibility.
- Make adjustments in the change room washrooms including the door swing on the accessible washroom door and the locking mechanism.
- Add signage to the adult change table and instructions for how to use it and create a procedure for staff to ensure the lift is charged.
- Create a loanable sensory kit.

Long Term

- Install an automatic door operator on both the Accessibility Change Room door and the door to enter the universal change room door.
- Upgrade all of the lighting to LED lighting.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Parking & Approach

Entrance & Wayfinding

- Install a decal on the automatic entrance door indicating which door opens when the operator button is pressed.
- Ensure bicycle parking remains clear of the travel path and continue providing power access for mobility devices.
- Maintain clear and direct access routes from the parking lot to the entrance with consistent, firm, non-slip surfaces.

Accessible Parking Stalls

- Pave the parking lot and add pavement decals with the dynamic accessibility symbol on a blue background for contrast and visibility.
- Maintain vertical pole signage for accessible stalls to ensure visibility at a distance.
- Highlight the availability of the outdoor power outlet for charging mobility devices or e-bikes.

Lobby & Reception

- Relocate the printer from the lowered counter to maintain clear workspace and accessibility for seated users.
- Keep the lowered counter free of clutter and available for visitor service.
- Review ergonomic setup at the reception area to ensure comfort and accessibility for staff.

Long Term

- Include knee clearance at the lowered counter during future reconfigurations to accommodate mobility-device users.

Circulation

Lighting and Contrast

- Replace all fluorescent lighting with high-quality LED fixtures operating at or above 1000 Hz.
- Ensure LED fixtures are properly shielded or angled to reduce glare on signage, screens, and glazing.
- Maintain consistent contrast between floors, walls, and trim throughout the facility.

Pool & Aquatic Amenities

Pool & Hot Tub Access

- Implement a procedure to charge the pool lift daily to ensure continuous operation.
- Include hands-on lift training for staff to promote safe and confident use.

Programming

- Schedule low-stimulation or sensory-friendly swim times and communicate quiet periods clearly.
- Evaluate options for sound-absorbing materials suitable for aquatic environments to reduce echo.

Patio

- Provide a universally designed picnic table that accommodates wheelchair users and individuals needing back support.

Administration Areas and Reception

Kitchenette

- Lower the microwave to counter height for safe and accessible use.

Staff Washrooms and Changerooms

- Keep floors and pathways clear to prevent tripping hazards and maintain accessibility.
- Frost the lower section of glazed walls to increase privacy and reduce visual distraction.

Washrooms: Lobby

General

- Confirm the status of the single-user washroom. If closed, remove it from facility maps; if reopened, ensure it is clearly signed and available for use.
- Add signage near gendered washrooms indicating the location of accessible washrooms within the universal changerooms.

Signage and Access

- Add blade signage above the washroom alcove for visibility at a distance.
- Install tactile and Braille signage on the wall, latch-side of each door, mounted at 1500 mm centreline height.

Accessible Toilet Stalls and Urinals

- Add backrests to toilets to improve stability and comfort.
- Mount additional hooks in each stall at 1100 mm height for reachability.
- Lower paper towel dispensers so controls are no higher than 1200 mm from the floor.

Sink and Mirrors

- Ensure mirrors are mounted at a height suitable for both standing and seated users.
- Maintain knee clearance at sinks for seated users and ensure faucets operate without fine dexterity.

Long Term

- Replace all fluorescent lighting with LED fixtures to reduce flicker and glare.
- Install automatic door operators on washroom doors to improve independent access.

Change Rooms

General

- Add additional hooks at 1100 mm height for seated or shorter users.
- Lower baby change tables to 760–865 mm height.
- Reposition benches to improve access to lower lockers while maintaining clear travel paths.

Signage and Access

- Add icons and symbols to washroom and changeroom signage to improve recognition.
- Include tactile letters and icons mounted on the wall, latch-side at 1500 mm height.

Accessible Toilet Stalls

- Rehang the women's changeroom accessible stall door to swing outward for improved turning radius.
- Replace short-turn locking mechanisms with lever-style locks to support limited dexterity.

Showers

- Replace existing grab bars with higher-contrast models for improved visibility.
- Add additional grab bars and fold-down shower benches in shower areas.
- Incorporate roll-in showers with lever-style controls in future renovations.

Accessibility Change Room

- Clarify staff procedures for setting up and securing the adult change table.
- Add cubbies or bench space beneath the change table to prevent clutter.
- Install or lower a mirror to 1000 mm height for full visibility.
- Replace faucet controls with low-force models to increase ease of use.
- Add colour contrast to improve visibility and create a more welcoming environment.
- Extend the ceiling-mounted lift track to provide full transfer between toilet, bench, and shower.
- Replace the adult change table with a height-adjustable model rated to support at least 250 kg.

Mid-Term

- Reorganize the shower layout to support independent use by repositioning the bench and adding vertical grab bars near the shower pole.
- Relocate the soap dispenser within reach of the shower bench.

Long Term

- Install automatic door operators on both the Accessibility Change Room and Universal Changeroom doors.
- Extend the ceiling-mounted lift track to provide full transfer between toilet, bench, and shower.
- Replace the adult change table with a height-adjustable model rated to support at least 250 kg.

Wayfinding

- Develop a consistent wayfinding system with standardized icons, tactile elements, and Braille.
- Install blade or wall-mounted signage for changerooms, washrooms, and other key spaces.
- Move door-mounted signage to wall-mounted placement on the latch-side at 1500 mm height.
- Include tactile icons and Braille on all room signage, ensuring icons accurately reflect available features.
- Identify washrooms with limited accessibility and mark them clearly.

Emergency Systems

Long Term

- Install visual fire alarms in the accessible changeroom.
- Integrate accessibility considerations into emergency procedures, ensuring all rooms are checked during evacuations.
- Replace red “EXIT” signs with green running-person signage featuring the accessibility symbol to indicate accessible egress routes.

Preschool

Access

- Repaint stair nosings to increase contrast and visibility.

Washroom

- Add a child-height toilet with grab bars to promote independence during future renovations.

Preschool Space

- Install a lowered sink for children’s independent handwashing.
- Replace fluorescent lighting with LED fixtures to reduce sensory discomfort.

Web and Recreation Guide Content

- Include details on accessibility features such as accessible washrooms, parking, lifts, and adaptive equipment.
- Highlight accessible programming, including sensory-friendly swims and quiet hours.
- Provide clear contact information for accessibility inquiries and updates on temporary barriers.
- Offer downloadable social stories and sensory guides to support inclusive participation.

WHY IS CONTRAST SO IMPORTANT?

Contrast to support people with Low Vision

- Contrast makes things easier to identify and distinguish. High contrast between an object and its background helps those with low vision better perceive shapes, edges, and boundaries.
- It improves legibility and readability. When there is strong contrast between text and its background, it is easier for people who have low vision to read and interpret letters, words, and symbols.
- Contrast provides visual orientation. Things like doorways, handrails, and signage stand out better when there is significant contrast with surroundings. This aids navigation and independence.
- Reduced contrast contributes to eye strain and fatigue. Insufficient contrast makes visual tasks more difficult and tiring for those with low vision.

Contrast for Balance

- Contrast highlights edges and boundaries. When moving from seated to upright, high contrast along the edges of steps, floors, and thresholds makes these changes in level clearly visible. This prepares the body for adjustments.
- It defines spatial orientation. Contrast provides visual cues that help the brain orient itself in space, allowing for better balance control such as knowing where a wall, handrail or counter is helps stabilize our vision.
- Distinct edges guide movement. Clear definition where surfaces change, facilitated by contrast, guides body motions like getting up from a chair or exiting a vehicle.
- It draws attention to tripping hazards. Significant contrast makes irregularities in floors, pavements, ramps readily apparent so they can be navigated safely.
- Low contrast obscures surroundings. With inadequate contrast, visual environment blends together, depriving brain of key reference points needed to maintain equilibrium.

WHY DO ICONS MATTER?



Iconography

Icons are important for accessibility because they provide visual cues that can be quickly and easily understood by a wide range of users, regardless of their language skills, cognitive abilities, or sensory impairments.

Universal understanding: Well-designed icons transcend language barriers and can be interpreted by people from diverse backgrounds including folks who don't speak English as a first language.

Cognitive accessibility: Icons can help people with cognitive disabilities or learning difficulties to better understand and navigate their environment. Simple, clear icons reduce the cognitive load required to process information.

Wayfinding assistance: Consistent use of standardized icons throughout a building or site can aid in wayfinding, especially for individuals with intellectual disabilities or those who are unfamiliar with the space.

Benefit for people with low vision: When designed with high contrast and sufficient size, icons can be more easily perceived by people with low vision compared to text alone.

Supports non-readers: Icons can convey important information to individuals who have difficulty reading, whether due to a visual impairment, learning disability, or language barrier.

Key Considerations

- Use internationally recognized symbols, like the International Symbol of Access.
- Ensure adequate size and contrast for visibility.
- Place icons on signage that is mounted at an accessible height and providing clear floor space for approach.
- Utilize tactile icons with braille labels on signage to support users who are blind or have low vision.
- Maintain consistency in the design and use of icons throughout a site.
- Incorporate well-designed, universally understood icons to create environments that are more intuitive, easier to navigate, and accessible to a broader range of people.

Lighting for Comfort, Safety, and Well-Being

Appropriate lighting design plays a crucial role in creating safe, comfortable, and inclusive environments. The type of light, its colour temperature, and overall quality can significantly affect visual comfort, mood, and overall well-being. The following guidance provides best practices for selecting LED lighting that supports accessibility and user comfort across different settings.

Warm White Lighting for Comfort and Relaxation:

Recommended colour Temperature: 2700K–3000K

Warm white LED lights within this range produce a soft, yellowish glow similar to natural sunset light. This tone promotes relaxation, reduces visual fatigue, and minimizes glare sensitivity, making it ideal for residential areas, lounges, bedrooms, and dining spaces.

Key Benefits:

- Supports a calm and welcoming atmosphere
- Reduces eye strain and glare-related discomfort
- Mimics natural evening light, helping regulate circadian rhythm

Cool White Lighting for Productivity and Focus:

Recommended colour Temperature: 5000K–6500K

Cool or “daylight” white LEDs provide a bright, crisp illumination that enhances alertness and focus. These higher colour temperatures are well-suited to task-oriented spaces such as home offices, workshops, or study areas.

Key Benefits:

- Improves concentration and visual acuity for detailed work
- Simulates daylight conditions for improved energy and attentiveness

Considerations:

- Cooler lighting may feel harsh in relaxation zones and can disrupt sleep when used during evening hours. Where possible, limit use to daytime or work-specific settings.

Technical Considerations for Comfort and Safety

Flicker Control: Select LEDs with a low flicker percentage and low flicker index. High flicker levels can contribute to headaches, fatigue, and discomfort, particularly for individuals with light sensitivity or neurological conditions.

colour Rendering Index (CRI): A high CRI (90 or above) ensures accurate colour perception, contributing to safer navigation, improved aesthetics, and a more comfortable visual experience.

Blue Light Management: Blue light exposure, especially in the evening, can affect sleep quality and visual comfort. To mitigate these effects:

- Choose warm white or “tunable” LEDs that can adjust colour temperature throughout the day.
- Consider bulbs with built-in blue light filters to reduce eye strain and support healthy sleep cycles.

Why Avoid Fluorescent Lighting

Traditional fluorescent lighting, while once standard, presents several health and comfort concerns that make it less suitable for inclusive environments:

Flicker and Visual Fatigue: Fluorescent lights operate on alternating current, producing subtle but continuous flicker that can trigger headaches, eye strain, and nausea, especially for individuals sensitive to light.

Auditory Distraction: The low-level buzzing sound common in fluorescent fixtures can cause discomfort or distraction, particularly for individuals with auditory or sensory sensitivities such as autism or ADHD.

colour Quality: Fluorescent bulbs typically have a lower colour Rendering Index (CRI), which can distort colour perception and reduce visual clarity.

Environmental and Safety Concerns: Fluorescent tubes contain mercury, requiring special disposal and posing a hazard if broken.

As such, fluorescent lighting is not recommended for environments prioritizing accessibility, inclusion, and overall occupant well-being.

How LED Lighting Supports Neurodiverse Users

LED technology provides several advantages that make it especially supportive for neurodiverse individuals and others with sensory sensitivities:

- **Stable and Consistent Light Output:** High-quality LEDs with low flicker and even brightness help prevent sensory overload and visual discomfort.
- **Adjustable colour Temperature:** “Tunable” LEDs allow users to modify brightness and tone throughout the day, empowering people to create lighting conditions that match their sensory comfort levels.
- **Quiet Operation:** Unlike fluorescents, LEDs operate silently, eliminating ambient noise that can be distracting or overstimulating.
- **Customization and Control:** Integration with dimmers or smart systems enables personalized lighting zones, reducing sensory stress and supporting focus or calm as needed.
- **Improved colour Accuracy:** A high CRI ensures natural colour rendering, reducing confusion and enhancing comfort for users who are sensitive to distorted lighting environments.

By prioritizing LED solutions that minimize flicker, reduce blue light, and allow user control, spaces become more inclusive for people with sensory sensitivities, autism spectrum conditions, and other neurodiverse experiences.

THANK YOU

for choosing Meaningful Access Consulting

We are pleased to work with you and to present this review of the Salt Spring Island Rainbow Recreation Centre which outlines accessibility recommendations from mobility, hearing, learning, sensory, cognitive and sight perspectives. We are so encouraged that Salt Spring Island is truly activating on their intention to create meaningful and accessible experiences for the community members of all ages, abilities and disabilities.

We continue to applaud the District and your efforts in working towards universal design and accessibility for all.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out! We are here to help.

Thank you again,



Marco & Karin Pasqua

Universal Design Accessibility Consultants

www.meaningfulaccess.com





Salt Spring Island Accessibility Review – Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) September 22, 2025

INTRO AND DISCLAIMER

Accessibility Summary

This summary report provides accessibility-related insights of the Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) offering current strengths and opportunities to further include all members of the community. This review has been prepared by Marco and Karin Pasqua of Meaningful Access Consulting (MAC) following a walkthrough completed September 22, 2025.

This report takes into account the perspectives of people with mobility, cognitive, auditory, learning, sensory and visual disabilities and is based on criteria developed by the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program and best practices offered by the CSA B651-23 guidelines.

Assessment Scope

The scope of this report covers public and staff-only areas of the building, including entrances, offices, meeting rooms, washrooms, routes of access, pathways, parking facilities, change rooms, the gymnasium, multi-sensory spaces and emergency systems.

Disclaimer

It is important to note that these are recommendations only, and not intended to replace any building codes, laws, or regulations. If in doubt, please consult a building code or legal professional.

MAC is not responsible for changes to the building or venue that happens as a result of this report. The owner, tenant, manager, or operator of the building or venue should use discretion when taking any action arising from this report.

OVERVIEW

The Salt Spring Island Multi Space (SIMS) has emerged as a vibrant example of how an existing community asset can be thoughtfully reimagined to serve the evolving needs of island residents. Once the Salt Spring Island Middle School, the facility has undergone a dynamic transformation into a multi-use hub that brings together creativity, social connection, and resilience under one roof. The familiar acronym "SIMS" remains, now standing as a symbol of continuity and renewal for a space that has become the heart of local collaboration and activity.

Today, the halls that once echoed with the sounds of classrooms now host an array of community-driven programs representing the full spectrum of island life; from music, dance, and visual arts to recreation, literacy, and social services. The building provides a home for groups such as Salt Spring Literacy, Transition Salt Spring, and the Capital Regional District (CRD) Emergency Program. Each contributes to a shared vision of a facility that is not only active but adaptive, one that fosters creativity, learning, and well-being for all who enter.

From an accessibility standpoint, SIMS demonstrates a meaningful commitment to inclusivity by providing accessible routes of travel, adaptable multi-purpose spaces, and areas that encourage rest, reflection, and connection. The building's repurposing represents more than just adaptive reuse; it embodies the principles of universal design and the values of community resilience.

The site already features ramps, an accessible washroom, ample lighting and seating as well as connection to the outdoors via large windows. Considerations for the dance room have already been made as have accommodating access to most spaces via lifts.

As with any evolving public facility, there remain opportunities to enhance the experience further especially through improvements to signage, upgrades to lighting, and thoughtful considerations to sensory inclusion. This report highlights both the successes already achieved and the pathways for continued growth, ensuring that SIMS remains a model of accessibility and meaningful access for Salt Spring Island's residents and visitors alike.

CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Intro and Disclaimer	2
Overview	3
Table of Contents	4
Accessibility Insights	5
Parking & Approach	5
Lobby	14
Circulation	15
Stairs	20
Courtyard	22
Gymnasium	23
Multi-Purpose Rooms	24
Community Kitchen	26
Administration Areas and Reception	27
Washrooms: Gendered	30
Washrooms: Accessible/Universal	33
Change Rooms	35
Wayfinding	36
Emergency Systems	39
Prioritization	42
Summary of Recommendations	43
Resources:	51
What is Contrast so Important	51
Why do Icons Matter	52
Lighting	53
Thank You	56

ACCESSIBILITY INSIGHTS



Parking & Approach

Parking

The parking lot is accessed by a shared roadway and is somewhat shared between the SIMS building and the adjacent Salt Spring Island Elementary School. The signage leading to the site is relatively well considered and the address of the building leads you directly to the parking lot when using the GPS.

- ✓ The parking surfaces are generally level, firm, non-slip and without significant slope.
- ✓ There is one designated accessible stall that is well-marked using both vertical pole signage as well as pavement decals allowing for the stall to be easily visible when a car is parked within the stall and at a distance.

Entrance & Wayfinding

- ✓ There is one sign directing people to the SIMS building, located at the fork in the road between the SIMS building and the Learning center.
- ✓ There is signage on the exterior of the building that provides the name of the building.
- ✓ The main entry is covered with a canopy offering weather protection.
- ✓ The main entrance doors have high visual contrast ensuring that they're easily seen at a distance and easy to identify.
- ✓ The glazing at the entrance doors allows for significant light to enter the facility and manage the lighting difference between the exterior and interior spaces.
- ✓ The main door is operable with an automatic door operator, located at the top of the ramp and out of the swing path of the door.
 - ✓ The use of the wood adds additional contrast to the door operator button making it easy to find.
 - ✓ The automatic door is indicated with the use of a decal.



Parking & Approach

Ramps

- ✓ There are two main ramps that facilitate access to the building with one being the primary access point and one having been a previous entrance which is now decommissioned.
- ✓ There's a ramp at the rear of the facility attached to an emergency exit. This door is or was operable with an automatic door operator and features round, graspable handrails on both sides of the ramp.
 - ✓ This ramp is very long and does feature regular landing areas allowing for people to rest.

Secondary Entrance (Decommissioned)

- ✓ The ramp features round, bilateral and graspable handrails.
- ✓ The area in front of the secondary ramp is painted with hatch-marks preventing cars from parking in the space.
 - ✓ This ramp provides access to the exterior playground area.

Primary Access Ramp

- ✓ The ramp to access the main entrance of the building is part ramp and part slope, integrated into a pathway that meanders through the trees and leads to a dedicated ramp.
- ✓ Once you access the steeper portion of the ramp, there is a round and graspable handrail that extends to the landing.
- ✓ There is a short additional ramp to compensate for the two steps up to the main entrance doors which is a good slope and features a cane detectable handrail.

Stairs

- ✓ The main stairs to access the main entrance of the facility are on the primary path of travel and feature round and graspable handrails on both sides of the stairs.



Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Transit & Pedestrian Access

- Transit on Salt Spring Island is limited which limits people's mobility and accessibility to access spaces like the SIMS building and its respective programs. Consequently, individuals are reliant on walking, cycling, e-bikes, mobility scooters and vehicular transportation to access the space.

Recommendation:

- It's therefore recommended to review the parking space provided at this site and ensure that it meets the needs of the program users including offering sufficient space for vehicles with accessibility requirements.

Entrance & Wayfinding

Recommendations:

- More robust signage on the exterior of the building is recommended as the name of the building cannot be seen until you are already quite close to the entrance. Consider making the signage larger with greater visibility at a distance.



Pathways

Recommendations:

- Adding lighting is highly recommended, along the pathways leading to the main entrance to elevate safety and visibility at night.



Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Accessible Parking Stalls

- The current accessible stall is located parallel and against rock face which is awkward and difficult to use. Its location prevents it from being truly accessible as the environment creates a narrowed space, especially for people needing transfer space for a mobility device (walker, wheelchair or cane).
- Additionally, the location of the ramp leads people to believe that the main entrance is on the right-hand side of the building with the visible ramp rather than the left-hand side.

Recommendations:

- It's highly recommended to relocate the accessible stall to a flatter, wider location closer to the ramp.
- When updating the paint, or signage, It is recommended to use the dynamic accessibility symbol and add a blue square to increase contrast and visibility at a distance.
- Consider offering additional temporary accessible parking for key programs or events

Best Practices:

- Accessible parking stalls should be at least **2600 mm** wide with an adjacent access aisle of **2000 mm** wide for stalls perpendicular to the roadway.
- For stalls parallel to the roadway, a rear access aisle of at least **2000 mm** long is recommended and an unobstructed area for side embarkation, on a pedestrian right-of-way of **2000 mm by 5500 mm**.



Did you know?



Using the dynamic accessibility symbol instead of the traditional symbol helps break down attitudinal barriers and helps redefine how we look at people with disabilities.



Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Ramps

Secondary Entrance (Decommissioned)

- The ramp leading to the decommissioned entrance is the most obvious ramp for visitors, especially those unfamiliar with the site. It is narrow and has significant cross slope, making the ascent difficult for wheelchair users. The top of ramp leads to a set of stairs which is not easily visible from the base of the ramp.
 - This causes visitors to take this ramp thinking it is the main entrance and then requiring them to double-back once they see the sign posted on the door indicating the location of the main entrance.



Primary Access Ramp

- The main entrance ramp is not easy to see at a distance, nor does it feel like it is the primary access to the site.
- The primary ramp has some tree-root damage making the surface uneven, especially at areas where someone may need to pull to the site to take a moment to rest.



Best Practices:

- Exterior ramps should be at least **1200 mm** wide with a running slope of between **8.33%** and **5%** (aiming to be closer to 5% than 8% for independent access) with level landings every 9000 mm.
- Landing should be at least **1700 mm** long and as wide as the ramp.
- Bilateral handrails are recommended for all ramps with a slope of 5% or greater.



Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Recommendations:

- It's highly recommended to add directional signage to the parking lot highlighting the main entrance of the building, preventing people from navigating unnecessarily towards the decommissioned entrance. Signage at the base of the ramps is highly recommended.



Secondary Entrance (Decommissioned)

- Add some contrast to the nosing of the steps and transition at the bottom of the ramp to better highlight the tripping hazards.
- Consider adding a small ramp to the area to access the playground as there is currently a step up to the playground. Adding a small ramp here would create greater access for people using mobility devices including both children and caregivers as well as parents pushing strollers.
 - This would also make the ramp up to this area more purposeful and useful.



Primary Access Ramp

- Consider extending the handrails to offer more balance support further down the ramp, particularly around the corner by the tree. This will help people navigate the tree root damage as well as assist mobility device users in pulling themselves up the ramp.
- When completing a larger renovation of the site, creating landings is highly recommended to ensure people have the ability to rest when navigating up the ramp.
- Increase the level of edge protection, ensuring cane detectability and keeping mobility device users on the path. This could be done with environmentally-appropriate edging such as stones or bricks.
- The ramp that connects the landing to the entrance landing would greatly benefit from an additional handrail mounted along the wall and, when completing a more significant renovation, replacing the current handrail with one that is round.
- Consider relocating the bike rack at this currently placed at the top of the intersection between the stairs and the ramp to prevent accidental barriers in the path of travel.



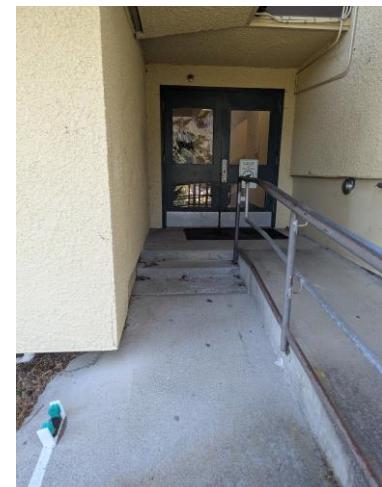
Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Emergency Exit Ramp

- The top landing of the emergency exit ramp at the rear of the facility has a very strange layout with two steps on one side which currently do not lead to any designated path of travel and the entrance to the ramp. This could be quite confusing for people especially those unfamiliar with the site or during an emergency as it is not clear that the steps do not leave anywhere.
- With the steps not having any contrast or handrail dedicated to them they could be invisible particularly when people are moving quickly during emergency.

Recommendations:

- Consider blocking these steps off with a gate or handrail in similar design to the current one to prevent people from using the steps.





Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Stairs and Steps

The current stairs are a 'wash of grey' particularly in the evening, when lighting levels are low or during high sun where there is an inconsistent appearance to the ground surface due to shadows.

The stairs at the back of the building have some deterioration of the tread which could cause tripping hazards.

Recommendations:

- The stairs leading to the entrances would benefit greatly from contrast on the nosing, both tread and rise.
 - Without a contrasting strip on the nosing, the step edge can visually disappear when ascending, especially in glare or low-light conditions. It is recommended to install durable, slip-resistant, high-contrast nosing on both the tread and riser, spanning the full width of each step. This does not need to be high-visibility yellow; a neutral or branded colour is appropriate, as long as it provides strong visual contrast.
- Repair any inconsistencies in the concrete ensuring that no gaps remain and that the tread is even and stable.





Barriers & Recommendations: Parking & Approach

Stairs and Steps - Continued

Recommendations:

- The stairs leading to the main entrance would greatly benefit greatly from contrast on the nosing, both tread and rise.
 - Without a contrasting strip on the nosing, the step edge can visually disappear when ascending, especially in glare or low-light conditions. It is recommended to install durable, slip-resistant, high-contrast nosing on both the tread and riser, spanning the full width of each step. This does not need to be high-visibility yellow; a neutral or branded colour is appropriate, as long as it provides strong visual contrast.
- It is highly recommended to install attention tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI), preferably as truncated domes with contrast on the top landing for ALL stairs. This feature not only increases the contrast and visibility of the stairs but also support individuals who are blind in locating the stairs and identifying the area as having a change in grade.
 - The TWSIs do not need to be "high vis yellow" necessarily, just a colour that offers contrast to the surrounding floor. Yellow is frequently used for its visibility at night as well as it being the last colour that is lost when someone is losing their sight.



Photo demonstrates the correct placement of TWSIs at the tops of stairs.



Example of dark stud-style TWSIs that provide both contrast and tactile information.

Truncated domes, the raised circular patterns found at the edge of ramps and crossings enhance safety by providing tactile, visual, and sometimes auditory cues that signal a change in environment. The contrast in colour and texture helps people with low vision detect transitions, while the texture underfoot or under a mobility aid alerts users to potential hazards such as streets or drop-offs.



Lobby

- ✓ The lobby itself is a generous and bright space that is welcoming and well-lit. thanks to large windows, artificial lighting.
 - ✓ The lobby lighting is consistent and even managing the difference between the indoors and outdoors very well.
- ✓ There are washrooms easily visible from the entrance doors and directly off of the main lobby.
 - ✓ An accessible washroom is found immediately off of the lobby.
- ✓ A variety of seating styles and heights is provided in the lobby with both backrests and armrests, offering supported places to pause at convenient intervals and making sit-to-stand safer and more comfortable for people who benefit from extra leverage.
- ✓ There are tables that provide knee clearance for someone using a mobility device.
- ✓ The large mural adjacent to the seating area allows for placemaking and creating an easy way to identify where you are.
- ✓ The flooring can also act as a wayfinding cue as there is a distinct difference between the carpeted flooring in the gathering area and the typical linoleum of the corridor.



Did you know?

Distinctive visual elements like unique lighting fixtures, art pieces, windows, or water features act as memorable landmarks that help people associate different areas of a building or site. These artistic wayfinding markers make it easier to construct a mental map of the space and stay oriented.



Circulation

Navigation

- ✓ Circulating around the facility is generally quite logical and straightforward with the primary amenities being directly off of a circular corridor.
- ✓ The majority of amenities are accessible by someone with a disability including a stair lift being provided to descend the stairs to the dance room.

Building Controls

- ✓ Building controls (heat, lighting, AV, door operators, etc.) are generally mounted at accessible heights.
- ✓ Controls are generally easy to use without the need for fine dexterity.
- ✓ Door handles are generally lever-style which are easier for people to use as they don't require a turning of the wrist and more intuitive during emergencies.

Lighting and Contrast

- ✓ There is ample lighting throughout the facility including overhead lighting and natural lighting thanks to the ample frequency of windows.
 - ✓ The windows allow access to the exterior courtyard, providing staff and patrons connection with nature and daylight.
 - ✓ Access to daylight and outdoor views is found throughout the site.
 - ✓ No strobing or flickering was noticed.
 - ✓ Many spaces within the SIMS building offer direct connection to windows with many offices including window shades. The shades support with managing glare, lighting and heat while maintaining connection to the natural environment. This also support with managing the overall lighting intensity without dramatic adjustment to changes in lighting levels.
- ✓ Contrast is excellent throughout the building including between the floors, walls and trim. Dark trim provides high contrast to the white walls and coloured floorings.
- ✓ There is good colour contrast between walls and floors in most areas, which supports wayfinding, while door frames in contrasting colours make doorways easy to identify.



Circulation

Doors

- ✓ Where doors have been upgraded, vision panels are either full-length or elongated, ensuring that people of all heights can see through the window.
- ✓ Many doors swing inwards and out of the path of travel.
- ✓ The doors are high contrast and frequently feature sidelights.

Flooring

- ✓ The flooring features low-pattern, non-slip surfaces that help prevent visual fatigue or dizziness.
- ✓ The flooring is non-slip and consistent throughout the space.
- ✓ Where carpeting is used, it is low-pile and easy to navigate with a wheeled mobility device.

Amenities

- ✓ Water fountains are accessible in height and approach.

Interior Stairs

- ✓ Stairs generally have graspable bilateral handrails and non-slip treads making them safe and supportive for those with balance disabilities.
- ✓ The stairs have closed risers.
- ✓ The stairs have non-slip strips on the tread.
- ✓ The stairs are generally well lit thanks to the balance between artificial lighting and large adjacent windows.



Circulation

Lifts

- There are two lifts located at this site to compensate for two areas where a change in level occurs.
 - One is decommissioned at the stairs leading from a previous accessible entrance
 - Another is provided to descend and ascend the steps that connect the lower level where the dance room is located with the main upper level.
- The lift equipped with a chime and visual indicator notification which provides audio and visual feedback to draw attention to the lift being in use.
- Once a user has the key, it is independently operated.
- The lift platform is sufficient large for a manual wheelchair user and a companion or someone using another smaller mobility device such as a walker. It is not likely large enough for a person using a mobility scooter or power wheelchair.
- The barriers to prevent someone from rolling off of the platform function as intended.
- The lift provides a level threshold for a user to navigate onto and off of the lift.





Barriers & Recommendations: Circulation

Lighting and Contrast

- Some individuals who are neurodiverse can see the flicker of the fluorescent lighting, creating additional extra-sensory input which can be very difficult for some. Additionally, fluorescent lighting is known to cause headaches and increase feelings of anxiety and malaise. Fluorescent lights, especially older or poorly maintained ones, can produce electromagnetic interference (EMI) that affects the performance of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices. This EMI can cause a buzzing, humming, or static sound in the hearing aid, which is not only annoying but can also make it harder for the user to hear and understand speech.
- The bright, directional nature of LED lighting can sometimes create harsh glare, especially if the fixtures aren't properly shielded or positioned. This can lead to visual discomfort and reduced contrast perception. Ensure that all LED lighting is properly shielded or angled in such a way to reduce glare on wayfinding, computer screens, glazing etc.

Recommendation:

- It's recommended to swap any non-LED light bulbs for LED models, particularly those that have a flicker rate of at least 1000 Hz. At this rate, individuals with heightened sensory sensitivities are unlikely to pick up on the flickering effects.

Doors

- Many doors, including access to multi-purpose rooms and the accessible washroom still use knobs as door handles. Lever-style door handles offer a more inclusive and user-friendly design than traditional round knobs. Their simple push-down motion allows people with limited grip strength, arthritis, or full hands to open doors with ease, sometimes even using an elbow or forearm. By reducing the need for fine motor control, levers make every entry point more accessible and dignified for all users.

Recommendation:

- It's highly recommended to replace any existing knobs with lever-style handles.
- It's recommended to prioritize the accessible washroom.



Barriers & Recommendations: Circulation

Lifts

Main Lift

Recommendations:

- Since a key required for operation, it's imperative to establish a clear process for access.
 - Post visible laminated signage explaining lift operation and key retrieval.
 - Include procedure in rental agreements for user awareness.
 - Ensure renters or staff receive training and possibly sign-off for lift use.

Decommissioned Lift

This lift was told to us that it is no longer functioning but was part of the building when I was used as a school.

Recommendations

- If possible, it's highly recommended to repair this lift, if possible, and use this entrance as an alternative entrance for folks with disabilities.
- If the lift is not easily repaired, consider removing it as it does not serve the function it's intended to serve and simply prevents someone from using the handrail to exit the building.
- If neither is feasible, consider adding a small sign indicating that the feature is not available and to redirect people towards the main entrance.



Accessibility Idea

Develop a posted quick-guide for safe lift use using both visuals and text to ensure comprehension by all patrons especially since it isn't completely clear on where to use the key and that the button must be pushed for the entire length of the trip.



Stairs

In General

- ✓ Bilateral, graspable and continuous handrails are provided on all interior stairs.
- ✓ The stair treads have rubberized non-slip textured material.
- ✓ The stairs to the dressing room area have significant contrast on the ascent with the rise being treated with a black rubberized trim making them very visible.



Barriers & Recommendations: Stairs

Dressing Room Stairs & Upstairs Office/Meeting Room Stairs

- Access to the green rooms and dressing rooms behind the gymnasium as well as the upper-level office/meeting room are only available by stairs with no alternative.
- While the hand rails are graspable they are not best practice in that someone's fingers do not completely wrap around the handrail to provide complete balance support. Additionally, the hand rails do not have extensions on the landings which are used for people to transition from an incline to a level position as well as being available to provide tactile information to people who are blind

Recommendations

- Ensure that renters are made aware that the green rooms and dressing rooms are only available by stairs and consider providing alternatives shared you be made aware of a performer with a disability.
- When completing a more significant renovation it's highly recommended to ensure that the handrails are round and graspable as well as have a minimum of **300mm** of horizontal extension on each landing.



Recommendations: Stairs

Best Practice

- It is highly recommended to install attention tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI), preferably as truncated domes with contrast on the top landing for ALL stairs. This feature not only increases the contrast and visibility of the stairs but also support individuals who are blind in locating the stairs and identifying the area as having a change in grade.
 - The TWSIs do not need to be “high vis yellow” necessarily, just a colour that offers contrast to the surrounding floor. Yellow is frequently used for its visibility at night as well as it being the last colour that is lost when someone is losing their sight.
 - This recommendation also extends to the stairs within the viewing stands of the arena.



Courtyard

- ✓ The entrances to the courtyard are available via a relatively level and flush thresholds of doors leading from the main corridor.
- ✓ The courtyard offers access to the outdoors and a calm place to meet or enjoy a break. There is shade and opportunities for beautiful landscaping, activities and rest.



Barriers & Recommendations: Courtyard

- Consider ways of activating the space with greater intention such as creating a variety of heights of planters, including sensory elements such as an herb garden and updating the seating and picnic tables.
- Raised and varied height planters for universal access to the rooftop urban agriculture area would be recommended. Planters at a variety of heights as well as some with knee clearance would be recommended to ensure that all members of the community could participate in the community garden regardless of their ability to stand, bend or reach.



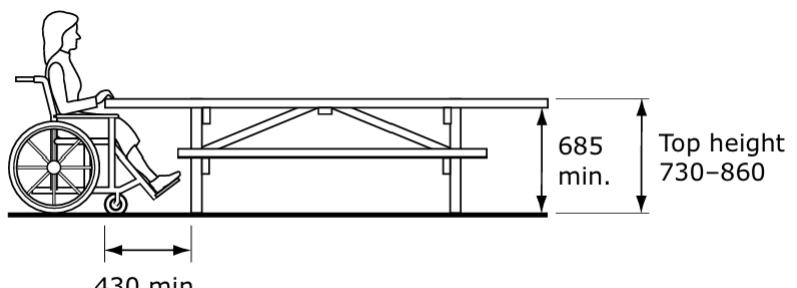
Reference:
<https://kidsgardening.org/resources/designing-a-school-garden-create-an-accessible-garden/>

Long term

- Consider installing an automatic door operator on a set of doors leading into the courtyard.



Reference: Marco Pasqua sits at two different universally designed picnic tables



Reference: CSA B651-23
Figure 64a



Gymnasium

The gymnasium is a highly utilized multi functional space that is the hub and core of this facility.

- ✓ The entrance is recessed, and the doors open outward, keeping swing paths out of the main corridor, which reduces accidental collisions with passersby.
 - ✓ The double doors include one set of doors that are operable with an automatic door operator with the included decal noting which door will swing open.
- ✓ Benches are available along the side, giving players and caregivers a place to sit between activities.
- ✓ There is additional spectator seating thanks to the fold-away bleachers.
- ✓ Curtain used to divide the space functions but is available for multi-purpose use.
- ✓ Lighting levels are manageable and reconfigurable with additional colourful and fun options being provided for activities such as roller skating.
- ✓ The AV system in the gymnasium is quite comprehensive with lighting and sound options.
- ✓ A stage is provided though not frequently used.



Barriers & Recommendations: Gymnasium

- The curtain is heavy, dirty, and dusty which creates air quality and maintenance issues. Review ways of having the curtain cleaned or replaced with a barrier that serves the same purpose but is easier, safer and healthier for the staff team to maneuver.
- Sound can build up during busy programs. Consider adding acoustic treatments such as ceiling baffles or acoustic panels on high walls to reduce echo, improving communication and reducing overall acoustic stimulation.
- The change rooms for the gymnasium have been more or less decommissioned and turned into storage. Long-term, it's highly advised to review the change rooms and upgrade them so that they can be used for their intended purpose of providing hygiene and personal items storage for activities being held in the gymnasium.
- It's also highly recommended to investigate the opportunity to install a lift or elevator to access the changing rooms or relocate a changing and showering facility to elsewhere in the building that is already physically accessible.



Multi-Purpose Rooms

In General

- ✓ The rooms are wide and open, which makes it easy to set up different activities and still keep clear paths for movement and passing.
- ✓ Some of the rooms include large windows bringing in daylight, with shades available to control glare during presentations or quiet activities.
- ✓ The multi-purpose room's ceiling panels are noise-dampening, which helps reduce echoes overall volume.
- ✓ Doors are frequently equipped with lever dial handles and fully glazed vision panels for ease and safety of doors opening and closing.
- ✓ Room spaces are marked with consistent room signage, generally mounted on the wall on the latch side of the door.

Dance Room

- ✓ The dance room floor was upgraded to a floating floor which required it to be raised. Access was maintained to the space thanks to the inclusion of a small ramp.
 - ✓ The ramp is short and well managed with a very reasonable slope.
 - ✓ The edges of the ramp have been marked with high visibility tape.
- ✓ The space is large and provides ample space for dance, movement and yoga-type activities.
- ✓ Nearly full-length mirrors are provided

Music Room

- ✓ The space is large and provides ample space for music and the storage of musical equipment.
- ✓ Sound dampening materials already installed on walls and ceiling.



Barriers & Recommendations: Multi-Purpose Rooms

Short-Term

Dance Room

- The other two exit doors, though infrequently used, still have a step that is unexpected when exiting or entering the dance space. It's highly recommended to add a contrast strip to the nosing of the step and consider adding a small sign at eye level on the door indicating the presence of a step.

Music Room

- Additional sound management may be needed between music and dance rooms as this has been expressed as a concern by both staff and users.

Upstairs Office / Counselling Space

- Add a safer locking mechanism for the emergency exit window.



Accessibility Idea

Collaborate with local yarn/knitting clubs to create wall tapestries that provide both sound dampening and aesthetic enhancement.

Long-Term

- Lighting remains as primarily fluorescent, which can cause eye strain, headaches, or discomfort for some users. Consider assessing the fixtures and replacing them with low-flicker, high-quality LED lighting, so the room is comfortable for longer stays and easier on the eyes during detailed tasks or movement activities.



Community Kitchen

- ✓ The room is wide and open with clear paths for movement and passing around tables and cooking equipment.
- ✓ There are large windows bringing in daylight and connecting people to the exterior environment.
- ✓ Cupboards are varied in height with most storage options being in the bottom cabinets.
- ✓ There are microwaves at multiple heights including some which are placed on the counter with counter space available to place hot items.
- ✓ Stoves have counter space directly next to them, allowing for the placement of hot items quickly being taken out of the oven.
- ✓ Sinks have easy to operate faucet controls with the soap dispenser within reach.
- ✓ A large mirror over the instructor's table provides visibility for students, overhead.



Barriers & Recommendations

Short-Term

- Move microwaves to counter height, ensuring that people of all heights can easily and safely remove hot items.
- Consider providing a step stool for anyone shorter of stature.

Long-Term

- When replacing the ranges, consider purchasing ones with the knobs on the front panel rather than the rear preventing people from reaching over hot elements to adjust the stove's temperature.
- When possible, it's recommended to replace one table with a height adjustable table allowing for an ergonomic set up for people of various heights and accommodating a power wheelchair user.
- Where possible, provide knee clearance under at least one sink community kitchen; this can be done by creating a cut-out section behind cabinet doors rather than removing them.



Administration Areas & Reception

Service Window

- ✓ The counter height at the service window is accessible to people of all heights despite there not being an area designated of lowered counter or knee clearance.
- ✓ The administration offices are marked with signage mounted on the service window.

Staff Offices

- ✓ Offices are large enough for their intended purposes and furnished with ergonomic office furnishings including adjustable height desks, office chairs with wheels and additional lighting.
- ✓ Sit-to-stand desks are available where it makes sense and upon request.
- ✓ There is ample lighting including natural thanks to the windows with shades and artificial overhead fluorescent lighting.
- ✓ Offices include seating for guests, where appropriate.
- ✓ The presence of plants creates a bright and welcoming atmosphere.

Staff Washroom

- ✓ Within the administration area, there is a small single-user washroom. The washroom isn't designated as accessible but it would be workable for many people.
- ✓ The sink faucet is easy to operate with the soap and paper towel dispensers within reach.
- ✓ The toilet is tank model offering additional back support.

Lunchroom

- ✓ The kitchen features a range of storage options for supplies, a significant amount of counter space and a counter-height coffee maker.
- ✓ The sink has a soap dispenser within reach of someone using the sink and the faucet is operable with ease with the controls are within reach of people of all heights (despite there being no knee clearance under the sink).
- ✓ The fridge door swings open towards the counter surface.



Administration Areas & Reception

Meeting Room

- All chairs are ergonomic wheeled office chairs with armrests allowing for the space to be easily configured based on need.
- Tables provide adequate knee clearance and are also on wheels allowing for a reconfiguration as preferred.
 - Note: The most accessible meeting room set up is u-shaped which allows people to see each other when speaking supplementing auditory input with the ability to see facial expressions and lip reading.
- The room is well-lit including large windows and overhead lighting. The glare and heat from the windows is well managed thanks to the exterior tree canopy.
- The white-board is mounted at an accessible height.



Recommendations

- A hearing loop in the meeting room is highly recommended to support those with auditory disabilities in receiving the information directly into their hearing aids or cochlear implants.
- Consider providing some chairs that are without wheels or have wheel locks as wheeled chairs can be very disorienting for someone who is blind.

Barriers & Recommendations: Administration Areas

Staff Offices

- The reception desk counter is quite high, especially for someone shorter of stature or seated but the service counter would offer this accommodation rather than recommending a lowered area of counter at the reception desk.
- Staff commented on the intensity of the lighting and not liking having the overhead lights turned on due to the lighting all being fluorescent. Staff have brought in their own lighting to use rather than the overhead lights.

Recommendations:

- It's highly recommended to upgrade all lighting to LED

Staff Washroom

Recommendations:

- The space can be made more accessible by making a few updates (though the washroom is still too small for someone using a wheelchair to use independently):
 - Replace the door knob with a lever handle.
 - Add an angled grab bar on the wall adjacent to the toilet to provide some additional balance
 - Lower the mirror (to **1000 mm** from the floor) and paper towel dispenser (to **1200 mm** from the floor) to support someone shorter of stature or seated.

Lunchroom

Recommendations:

- Lower the microwave to counter height for safety and accessibility. It's currently mounted at a height that can be dangerous for many and inaccessible for people shorter in stature or seated.
- It's highly recommended to move the paper towel dispenser to within reach of someone's using the sink (or provide an extra roll/dispenser near the sink). It's currently mounted at a height that would be out of reach for a person of shorter of stature or someone seated.

Best Practices:

- Where possible, provide knee clearance under the sink in the staff kitchen; this can be done by creating a cut-out section behind cabinet doors rather than removing them.
- When replacing the stove, a model with front mounted controls is highly recommended to ensure that people are not reaching across hot surfaces.



Washrooms: Gendered

Signage and Access

- ✓ Signage, mounted on the wall, includes text information as well as the gender icons.

Toilets and Urinals

- ✓ The toilet paper dispensers are generally within reach of someone seated on the toilet.
- ✓ The urinals extend all the way to the floor ensuring that they are accessible by people of all heights.
- ✓ There is sufficient approach to the urinals to provide accessibility for people with limited mobility or who are using mobility devices.
- ✓ The toilets being manual flush models is appreciated as automatic flushing toilets can be very loud and uncomfortable for children and people who are neurodiverse or who have sound sensitivities.

Sink and Mirrors

- ✓ The mirrors are mounted at a height that allows someone seated or shorter stature to view themselves in the mirror.
- ✓ The soap dispenser and paper towel are mounted within reach of someone using at least one sink.
- ✓ A step stool is provided and is very much appreciated by children, allowing them to wash and dry their hands with independence and without relying on an adult to lift them.





Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

Gendered washrooms

The gendered washrooms do not have an accessible stall and are not marked as being accessible. When considering a significant renovation upgrading one of the stalls in each of the banks of washrooms to an accessible stall would be highly recommended.

Entrances into the washrooms are narrow but serviceable especially given the complete accessibility of the single user washroom located across the lobby.

Recommendations:

Short-Term

- The washroom signage is recommended to include a raised icon and letters providing tactile information for someone who's blind and ideally Braille.
 - Considering including a baby symbol to indicate the availability of a baby change table within the washroom.
 - lower the signage to **1500 mm** center line from the floor.
- Blade signage for this washrooms, mounted above the door is highly recommended to provide visibility at a distance particularly given the strange layout of the washrooms with entrances being located both off of the hallways and the lobby.
- The current placement of the sanitary disposal units and toilet paper units are quite high and is recommended to be mounted at a height of between **600 mm and 800 mm** from the floor and the toilet paper dispenser within **300 mm** of the front edge of the toilet.
- It's highly recommended to add an additional hook at a height of **11 00 mm** from the floor in each stall.
- The locking mechanisms are highly recommended to be replaced with ones that does not require fine dexterity.
- The lighting in the washroom is highly recommended to be updated so that it is not fluorescent lighting especially given the small space.
- Consider installing additional soap dispensers so that individuals have soap dispensers within reach of more than one sink.
- Additional mirrors in front of the other sinks in the men's washroom would be recommended allowing for more than one user at a time to see themselves reflected in the mirror.



Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

Recommendations:

Short-Term (Continued)

- Consider providing bilateral vertical grab bars for at least one of the urinals to provide additional balance and safety for individuals with limited stability.

Long-Term

- The faucets on the sink are difficult to operate especially for children and people with limited dexterity. It would be highly advised to replace this with faucets that do not require a turning of the wrist or significant force.
- Knee clearance at, at least one of the sinks in each of the gendered washrooms would be highly recommended.
- Given the nature of the facility, it would be highly recommended to provide a toilet and sink that are at child height.



Washrooms: Accessible/Universal

Signage and Access

- ✓ The washroom is marked with the symbol of accessibility on the door.
- ✓ The door is very highly contrasted from the adjacent wall space being dark green against a light beige wall.
- ✓ The washroom space provides good turning radius and allows for an accessible approach to the toilet both in front and laterally for transfer.

Toilet

- ✓ The toilet features a horizontal grab bar behind the toilet and an angled grab bar adjacent to it. The toilet also includes a tank which provides back rest and trunk support for those who require it.
- ✓ The toilet paper dispenser is within reach of someone seated on the toilet.
- ✓ The toilet seat height is comfortable and meets best practice for accessibility.

Sink and Mirror

- ✓ The mirror is mounted at a height that allows someone seated to view themselves in the mirror.
- ✓ The washrooms features a sink with easy to operate controls and provided knee clearance as well as the soap and paper towel dispensers within reach of someone using the sink.
 - ✓ Having the soap and paper towel dispenser within reach of someone using the sink is highly appreciated as this allows someone to completely wash and dry their hands before touching any mobility devices or equipment.
- ✓ The provision of paper towel dispenser rather than a hand dryer is appreciated as many members of the disability community are highly sensitive to noise and hand dryers can be deeply uncomfortable for many. Additionally, those with health disabilities or who have additional hygiene needs appreciate the availability of paper towels.



Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

Accessible washroom

The configuration of the grab bars is a little bit strange and inadvertently creates a barrier preventing people from successfully transferring to the toilet using a side transfer from mobility device as the grab bar going from the wall to the floor impedes on the intended lateral transfer space.

Short-Term

Recommendations:

- The washroom signage is recommended to be mounted on the wall latch-side and include the icon of a toilet and the universal symbol of accessibility. The signage should include a raised icon and letters providing tactile information for someone who's blind and ideally Braille.
 - Room signage is recommended to be mounted on the latch side of the door to ensure that it is visible whether the door is open or closed and available consistently for someone who is blind.
 - If considering upgrading the washroom signage to be a universal washroom it's highly recommended to use a symbol of a toilet or both gender icons as opposed to the split icon as this icon can be difficult for those with cognitive disabilities to understand.
- Blade signage for this washroom mounted above the door is highly recommended to provide visibility at a distance particularly from the lobby and down the hallway leading from the lift.
- The doorknob is highly recommended to be replaced with a lever handle which is easier and more intuitive for people to use either during an emergency or for those people with limited dexterity in their hands.
- Given the configuration of the rear wall mounted horizontal grab bar and the adjacent angled grab bar it's actually recommended to remove the two extra grab bars that go from the wall to the floor. Removing these two grab bars would actually increase the turning radius within the washroom and the accessibility of the toilet itself.
 - If community members require an additional grab bar a folding grab bar is recommended which can be used when necessary unfolded away to allow the user access to the lateral transfer space.





Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

- The current placement of the sanitary disposal unit is quite high and is recommended to be mounted beneath the grab bar
- It's highly recommended to add an additional hook at a height of **1100 mm** from the floor.
- The locking mechanism is highly recommended to be replaced with one that does not require fine dexterity.
- A small shelf near the sink would be recommended to allow people to store personal items while washing their hands.
- The lighting in the washroom is highly recommended to be updated so that it is not fluorescent lighting especially given the small space.



Long-Term

- Whenever possible, it's highly recommended to install an automatic door operator for this washroom to provide independent access for someone using a mobility device.



Barriers & Recommendations: Change Rooms

In the basement, there are decommissioned change rooms and storage space along with an all-gender washroom. The space is accessed only via a set of stairs. The space is therefore not accessible and is currently only used by a small number of groups, however, when completing a more extensive renovation of the facility, it is highly recommended to add accessibility to this space by:

- Providing an accessible path of travel thanks to a lift or elevator;
- If showers are provided, ensuring that at least one is a roll-in shower with a fold down shower bench and appropriate grab bars;
- Upgrade the Gender Inclusive washroom to be truly accessible; and
- Consider investing in an adult change bench.

While the space may not be well used at the moment, the facility could be used as Emergency Operations Command or a Reception center in the case of a large-scale evacuation in the area. These features would ensure that evacuees can safely and comfortably shower and perform the basics of other hygiene needs.



Wayfinding

- ✓ Signage throughout the recreation is limited but does include room signage for key amenities such as the multi-purpose rooms, washrooms and administration office.
- ✓ Washroom signage includes icons.
- ✓ There is excellent signage providing information for available programs at the center.

Understanding Wayfinding

Imagine navigating a complex building with ease, feeling confident and in control rather than overwhelmed. This is the result of a thoughtfully designed wayfinding system, which incorporates braille, tactile elements, high-contrast signage, and intuitive icons strategically placed throughout the space.

For individuals who are blind or have low vision, tactile signage with raised characters and braille is essential. It enables them to independently access critical information, including room numbers, directions, and emergency exits, enhancing their autonomy and safety within the environment.

High-contrast signage, with light text on a dark background or vice versa, makes it easier for people with visual disabilities to read and comprehend information quickly.

Intuitive icons and pictograms are another powerful tool for accessibility. They transcend language barriers and provide a universal understanding of key features and directions. For individuals with cognitive disabilities or anxiety, these visual cues can help break down complex information into manageable chunks, reducing stress and confusion.

By providing clear, unobstructed paths and directional signage at appropriate heights, we ensure that everyone can navigate the space with ease. When the signage is visible at a distance, it allows people to make decisions on their path of travel and ensure they are using the most efficient and effective route of travel to their intended destination.



Did you know?

Sans serif fonts are considered the most accessible since they streamline the reading process by eliminating visual distractions, making them the go-to choice for maximum readability and accessibility.



Recommendations: Wayfinding

- Consider developing a consistent wayfinding strategy that encompasses an Island-wide consistent use of icons, tactile elements and braille.
- Consider installing either decals or blade signage for key amenities areas such those located down corridors, including washrooms and multi-purpose rooms.
- Develop an overall wayfinding strategy for the site that includes directional signage at decision points as well as blade signage that is visible at a distance.
 - Include key amenities such as the location of washrooms, change rooms, multi-purpose spaces and the accessible washroom.
 - Signage should be comprehensive and easily visible at a distance ensuring that people can independently determine their path of travel without doubling back and exerting additional energy.
- Where room signage is found mounted on the door, it makes it inaccessible when the door is opened as well as not available for those with low vision. It is recommended to mount signage on the wall, latch-side, at a height of **1,500 mm** centerline. The room signage would also benefit from ideally both braille and tactile components, but at minimum tactile icons and language.
- Ensure that the icons accurately reflect the features found within the washroom stall. Where washrooms are not accessible either due to turning radius or lack of grab bars, note these as either limited mobility or single user stalls.
- Where washrooms or locker rooms have been decommissioned it's highly recommended to remove the signage from these facilities to ensure that the expectations of what is provided match the functions of the site.



Did you know?



Using the dynamic accessibility symbol instead of the traditional symbol helps break down attitudinal barriers and helps redefine how we look at people with disabilities.



Emergency Systems

- ✓ The entire facility is equipped with auditory fire alarm.
- ✓ Emergency maps are clear, well-placed, non-reflective, and easy to read. They are mounted at accessible heights and are generally low-glare.
- ✓ Exits are well marked with overhead signage.
- ✓ There are many accessible emergency exits that have a level and flush threshold and connects directly to the exterior of the building.
- ✓ Safety equipment, including fire extinguishers and fire pull stations are well-marked and generally located in accessible locations and mounted at accessible heights.



Barriers & Recommendations: Emergency Systems

Short-Term

- Emergency map could be single-sided to avoid shadow confusion as currently the image on the back-side of the paper can be seen which can make the content more difficult to perceive.

Long-Term

- If completing more significant renovations, it is highly recommended to provide visual fire alarms throughout the building but particularly in spaces where people are likely to be alone such as washrooms. Visual fire alarms support individuals who are hard of hearing or are Deaf to be independently aware of an emergency situation.
- When completing a more significant renovation, consider replacing the current red exit signs with green 'running person' models. Using the green running person exit signage throughout the buildings is recommended as well as including the signage that features the accessibility icon to note accessible egress routes.
 - The running person pictogram is an intuitive, universally recognized symbol that clearly conveys the message to exit quickly in an emergency. It relies less on language comprehension compared to text-only "Exit" signs and therefore benefits people with cognitive disabilities, low literacy, or those who speak different languages.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

When speaking of accommodations

- Persons with disabilities like to know in advance of what is available to them and what accommodations might be available. Keep descriptions broadly specific and ideally provide a photo on amenities on webpages. For example, rather than saying "Completely Accessible" or "Wheelchair Accessible," give examples of what is available such as "The washrooms feature automatic door operators, grab bars adjacent and behind the toilet and knee clearance at the sink."

Listening

- Hearing loops in theatres and large lecture spaces such as meeting rooms and gyms are always advised but an individual FM system may also be supportive for an individual with a cochlear implant or hearing aids. An individualized hearing loop, is a portable device which allows for information to be sent directly from a device worn around the speaker's neck to the user's hearing device. This could amplify communications at both the information desk and in the community meeting room.
- It's good practice to ensure that closed captions are enabled for presentations (For example PowerPoint offers built in closed captions for presentations) and all videos. Many individuals including those with auditory processing learning disabilities benefit greatly from captions.



Participation

- Universally designed equipment and programs are naturally more accommodating for people of all sizes and abilities.
- Consider including a statement on program registration or RSVPs that encourage people to share any accommodations or accessibility-related needs.
- Sensory friendly kits are recommended to be available for loan.

Sensory Kits

- Sensory kits are collections of tools designed to support individuals who experience sensory sensitivities or regulation challenges, including those who are neurodivergent. They create a more inclusive and calming environment in public, educational, or recreational settings by helping individuals manage overstimulation and maintain focus or comfort.
- Providing sensory kits demonstrates a proactive commitment to accessibility and inclusion by recognizing invisible disabilities and ensuring that all community members can participate meaningfully.
- Typical items include:
 - Fidget tools (for tactile stimulation and focus)
 - Noise-cancelling headphones (to reduce auditory overload)
 - Communication boards or picture cards (for non-verbal communication support)
 - Weighted lap pads or stress balls (to promote calm and self-regulation)
 - Sunglasses or visors (to help manage light sensitivity)
 - Other considerations would be small quiet activities such as colouring
- Consider developing a social story that can be shared with teachers or available on the website as a downloadable resource. These stories allow people of all ages to understand what to expect from an environmental perspective and also what the expectations are for social interactions and behavior. Social stories are usually written in the first person, using positive, reassuring language. They often include pictures and simple language.



PRIORITIZATION

When considering making changes to increase accessibility, thinking about the entire 'path of accessibility.' That is, is the complete process of accessing and using a space accessible? Where possible, we advocate for creating complete accessible spaces rather than adding piecemeal accessibility supports. For example, we advocate for a singular accessible washroom rather than a number of washrooms with a variety of accessibility features.

Our recommended priorities based on both access and impact include:

Highest Priority

- One of the highest priority accessibility recommendations would be to replace the fluorescent lighting with LED as this was brought up a number of times as a point of concern and discomfort from staff.
- Improve wayfinding and signage consistency, including adding tactile room signage mounted on the wall for primary spaces including washrooms, changerooms, community rooms and other public-facing spaces.

Short Term

- Add contrast to stair nosings to increase visibility.
- Add high contrast, tactile walking surface indicator strips (truncated domes) to the top landings of stairs.
- Provide more information on the recreation center's website on the accessibility features available at SIMS.
- Add blade signage to the washrooms, particularly the accessible washrooms.
- Remove the extra grab bars in the accessible washroom.
- Add signage to the lift and instructions for staff on how to use it and where to locate the key.
- Create a loanable sensory kit.

Long Term

- Provide a hearing loop or similar assistive listening device at key locations, ideally in the meeting room and when possible, in the gymnasium a primary multi purpose room.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Parking & Approach

Transit & Pedestrian Access

- Review the parking space provided to meet needs of program users, including sufficient space for vehicles with accessibility requirements.

Entrance & Wayfinding & Pathways

- Add more robust exterior signage so the building name is visible at a distance.
- Add pathway lighting leading to the main entrance to enhance nighttime safety and visibility.

Accessible Parking Stalls

- Relocate the accessible stall to a flatter, wider location closer to the ramp.
- Update paint and signage using the dynamic accessibility symbol and a blue square for contrast and visibility.
- Provide additional temporary accessible parking for key programs or events.

Ramps

Secondary (Decommissioned) Ramp

- Add directional signage to the parking lot and at the base of ramps highlighting the main entrance.
- Add contrast to the nosing and bottom transition of the ramp to highlight tripping hazards.
- Add a small ramp to access the playground, replacing the current step.

Primary Access Ramp

- Extend handrails further down the ramp, especially around the corner by the tree.
- Repair uneven surfaces caused by tree roots and add edge protection (using stones/bricks for cane detectability).
- Add a wall-mounted handrail on the ramp connecting the landing to the entrance landing; replace existing handrail with a round, graspable design.
- Relocate the bike rack away from the top intersection between the stairs and ramp.
- Add landings at intervals to allow users to rest.

Emergency Exit Ramp (Rear)

- Block off or gate the unused steps beside the emergency exit ramp.

Stairs and Steps (Exterior)

- Add contrast strips on stair nosings (tread and rise).
- Repair tread deterioration and ensure even, stable surfaces.
- Install tactile walking surface indicators (TWSIs) on top landings of all stairs.

Lobby

Seating and Furniture

- Ensure that a variety of seating options with backrests and armrests continue to be provided.
- Maintain tables that offer adequate knee clearance for mobility-device users.

Visual and Wayfinding Cues

- Ensure contrast between flooring types (e.g., carpet vs. linoleum) remains strong.
- Consider adding tactile or visual cues linking the lobby to adjacent corridors and key amenities.

Lighting

- Maintain balanced lighting levels between indoor and outdoor spaces to minimize glare.

Circulation

Navigation

- Ensure circulation paths remain logical and unobstructed throughout the facility.
- Maintain accessibility of all primary amenities via clear, direct routes.

Building Controls

- Confirm that all controls (heat, lighting, AV, door operators, etc.) remain at accessible heights.
- Verify that controls can be operated without fine dexterity.
- Standardize lever-style handles on doors throughout the facility.

Lighting and Contrast

- Replace all fluorescent lighting with high-quality LED fixtures rated at or above 1000 Hz.
- Ensure LED fixtures are properly shielded or angled to reduce glare on wayfinding signage, computer screens, and glass surfaces.
- Maintain consistent colour contrast between floors, walls, and door frames.
- Use window shades to manage glare while maintaining access to natural light.

Doors

- Replace remaining knob-style door handles with lever handles.
- Maintain elongated vision panels on doors, ensuring visibility for people of all heights.
- Verify that door swings do not interfere with main travel paths.

Flooring

- Use low-pattern, non-slip flooring throughout corridors and rooms.
- Maintain low-pile carpeting in designated areas for easy navigation by wheeled devices.

Interior Stairs

- Ensure all interior stairs have bilateral, continuous, graspable handrails.
- Maintain closed risers and non-slip treads with contrasting nosings.

Lifts

- Ensure the main lift remains fully operational and includes clear, posted signage explaining key use and operation.
- Repair or remove the decommissioned lift at the previous accessible entrance.
- Provide an easy-to-read laminated quick guide for lift operation with both visual and text instructions.
- Include lift use procedures in rental agreements and provide training to staff and renters

Stairs

General

- Maintain bilateral, continuous, graspable handrails on all interior and exterior stairs.
- Ensure stair treads have non-slip, rubberized surfacing and closed risers.
- Add or refresh contrast strips on stair nosings (tread and rise) throughout the facility.
- Repair worn or uneven stair treads.
- Install tactile walking-surface indicators (TWSIs) on top landings of all stairways.

Dressing Room and Upper-Level Stairs

- Add or replace handrails with round, fully graspable designs that extend at least 300 mm horizontally at each landing.
- Notify renters that dressing rooms and certain upper-level spaces are stair-only and provide alternatives when accommodating performers or users with disabilities.

Arena and Viewing-Stand Stairs

- Apply tactile walking-surface indicators to the top landings within the viewing stands.
- Maintain consistent lighting levels on stairs adjacent to large windows to reduce glare or shadowing.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS (4)

Courtyard

- Maintain level, flush thresholds at doors leading to the courtyard.
- Introduce varied-height planters, including some with knee clearance, to support inclusive gardening activities.
- Incorporate sensory elements such as herbs or textured plants into courtyard landscaping.
- Upgrade or replace existing seating and picnic tables with models offering backrests and armrests.
- Consider adding shade structures or varied seating zones to encourage use throughout the day.

Gymnasium

- Clean or replace the heavy, dusty curtain used to divide the gymnasium.
- Add acoustic treatments such as ceiling baffles or wall panels.
- Review and upgrade change rooms adjacent to the gymnasium for renewed accessibility.
- Install a lift or elevator to access change rooms or relocate changing and shower facilities to an accessible location.
- Upgrade lighting to high-quality LED fixtures.

Multi-Purpose Rooms

General

- Replace fluorescent lighting with low-flicker LED fixtures.
- Maintain open layouts with clear circulation paths.
- Ensure large windows have functional shades to control glare during presentations or activities.
- Preserve sound-dampening ceiling panels to reduce echo and reverberation.
- Maintain consistent room signage with clear icons and contrasting backgrounds.

Dance Room

- Add contrast strips to the nosing of the two exit-door steps.
- Install signage at eye level on each door indicating the presence of a step.

Music Room

- Address sound transfer between dance and music rooms through added acoustic separation.

Accessibility Idea

- Collaborate with local knitting or craft groups to create wall tapestries for sound dampening and visual warmth.

Community Kitchen

Short Term

- Relocate microwaves to counter height.
- Provide a step stool for users shorter in stature.
- Ensure sinks have lever-style faucet controls and soap dispensers within reach.

Long Term

- Replace ranges with models that have front-mounted controls.
- Replace one standard table with a height-adjustable table.
- Provide knee clearance beneath at least one sink.
- Maintain clear pathways between counters, tables, and appliances.

Administration Areas & Reception

Reception Area

- Add a hearing loop or portable assistive listening system at the reception desk.
- Confirm the reception desk includes a lowered counter section (maximum 865 mm high).
- Ensure clear knee space under the lowered counter section.
- Provide a staff-operated portable amplifier or speech-to-text app for accessibility as needed.

Meeting Rooms

- Add portable or installed hearing loops to larger meeting rooms.
- Install dimmable LED lighting and ensure switches are located near entrances.
- Provide flexible furniture arrangements that allow a minimum 900 mm circulation path between chairs and walls.
- Add clear signage with icons for “Meeting Room” and room numbering.

Staff Offices

- Replace overhead fluorescent fixtures with LED task lighting.
- Offer individual dimmable desk lamps where possible.
- Ensure adjustable-height desks are available in shared offices.
- Maintain cable management and floor organization to reduce trip hazards in shared workspaces.

Staff Offices

- Replace overhead fluorescent fixtures with LED task lighting.
- Offer individual dimmable desk lamps where possible.
- Ensure adjustable-height desks are available in shared offices.
- Maintain cable management and floor organization to reduce trip hazards in shared workspaces.

Staff Washroom

- Relocate or reconfigure interior fixtures (sink, soap dispenser, and toilet-paper holder) for improved reach range.
- Install tactile signage with braille outside the door at latch height.
- Ensure that grab bars meet current placement and clearance standards.

Lunchroom

- Reconfigure storage and counter spaces to ensure reachability from a seated position.
- Ensure microwave and refrigerator handles are operable with one hand and require minimal force.
- Maintain at least one table with 700 mm clear knee space beneath.
- Provide a quiet zone or soft-seating area within or near the lunchroom for staff needing sensory breaks.

Washrooms & Change Rooms

Gendered Washrooms

- Replace knob-style door handles with lever handles.
- Add blade signage and tactile icons at door latch height.
- Install grab bars that meet current standards for placement and spacing.
- Ensure all stall doors are light enough to open with minimal effort and self-close slowly.
- Provide hooks and shelves within stalls at accessible heights.
- Relocate or reconfigure interior fixtures (soap dispenser and sink) to allow more than one user.

Long Term

- Replace twist/turn faucets with lever or touch-activated models.
- Provide knee clearance at at least one sink in each gendered washroom.
- Install a child-height toilet and sink (one set per gendered washroom where feasible).

Accessible / Universal Washroom

- Reposition grab bars and accessories to meet current reach standards (horizontal and angled configurations).
- Install lever-style handles on all fixtures and doors.
- Add tactile signage with braille outside the door at latch height.
- Include a low-mounted mirror and accessible-height dispenser.
- Ensure the emergency alarm cord or push button is within reach from the floor.
- Mount room signage on the latch side of the door and include raised icons, tactile lettering, and braille.
- Add blade signage above the door, visible from the lobby and hallway near the lift.
- Remove the two vertical grab bars extending from the wall to the floor.
- Retain the horizontal and angled grab bars to provide necessary support.
- Install an automatic door operator for independent entry and exit.

Long Term

- Relocate the sanitary-disposal unit beneath the grab bar and add a hook at 1100 mm height.
- Add a small shelf near the sink for personal items.
- Replace fluorescent lighting with LED fixtures appropriate for small spaces.
- Maintain the mirror at a height visible to seated and standing users and retain paper-towel dispensers.
- Retain manual flush toilets to minimize loud automatic flushing sounds.

Change Rooms

- Provide an accessible route to the change rooms or relocate them to a main-floor area.
- Add adult-change bench within the change rooms.
- Ensure showers, if present, have handheld showerheads and fold-down seats.

Wayfinding

- Develop a consistent wayfinding strategy for the facility.
- Install blade signage for key amenities such as washrooms, change rooms, and multi-purpose rooms.
- Include tactile signage with raised characters and braille on all room signs.
- Ensure signage includes high-contrast backgrounds and clear, intuitive icons.

Wayfinding (continued)

- Add directional signage at decision points and intersections.
- Mount wall signage beside doors (on the latch side), not on doors themselves.
- Ensure consistent icon placement and design across the facility.

Emergency Systems

- Simplify and standardize emergency-evacuation maps, using large print and high contrast.

Long Term

- Add visual fire alarms (strobe lights) throughout all main areas of the facility.
- Upgrade exit signage to use the universal “running person” icon, with directional arrows to clarify egress routes.
- Ensure all fire extinguishers and pull stations remain clearly visible and unobstructed.
- Review all emergency doors to confirm adequate opening force and lever handles.

WHY IS CONTRAST SO IMPORTANT?

Contrast to support people with Low Vision

- Contrast makes things easier to identify and distinguish. High contrast between an object and its background helps those with low vision better perceive shapes, edges, and boundaries.
- It improves legibility and readability. When there is strong contrast between text and its background, it is easier for people who have low vision to read and interpret letters, words, and symbols.
- Contrast provides visual orientation. Things like doorways, handrails, and signage stand out better when there is significant contrast with surroundings. This aids navigation and independence.
- Reduced contrast contributes to eye strain and fatigue. Insufficient contrast makes visual tasks more difficult and tiring for those with low vision.

Contrast for Balance

- Contrast highlights edges and boundaries. When moving from seated to upright, high contrast along the edges of steps, floors, and thresholds makes these changes in level clearly visible. This prepares the body for adjustments.
- It defines spatial orientation. Contrast provides visual cues that help the brain orient itself in space, allowing for better balance control such as knowing where a wall, handrail or counter is helps stabilize our vision.
- Distinct edges guide movement. Clear definition where surfaces change, facilitated by contrast, guides body motions like getting up from a chair or exiting a vehicle.
- It draws attention to tripping hazards. Significant contrast makes irregularities in floors, pavements, ramps readily apparent so they can be navigated safely.
- Low contrast obscures surroundings. With inadequate contrast, visual environment blends together, depriving brain of key reference points needed to maintain equilibrium.

WHY DO ICONS MATTER?



Iconography

Icons are important for accessibility because they provide visual cues that can be quickly and easily understood by a wide range of users, regardless of their language skills, cognitive abilities, or sensory impairments.

Universal understanding: Well-designed icons transcend language barriers and can be interpreted by people from diverse backgrounds including folks who don't speak English as a first language.

Cognitive accessibility: Icons can help people with cognitive disabilities or learning difficulties to better understand and navigate their environment. Simple, clear icons reduce the cognitive load required to process information.

Wayfinding assistance: Consistent use of standardized icons throughout a building or site can aid in wayfinding, especially for individuals with intellectual disabilities or those who are unfamiliar with the space.

Benefit for people with low vision: When designed with high contrast and sufficient size, icons can be more easily perceived by people with low vision compared to text alone.

Supports non-readers: Icons can convey important information to individuals who have difficulty reading, whether due to a visual impairment, learning disability, or language barrier.

Key Considerations

- Use internationally recognized symbols, like the International Symbol of Access.
- Ensure adequate size and contrast for visibility.
- Place icons on signage that is mounted at an accessible height and providing clear floor space for approach.
- Utilize tactile icons with braille labels on signage to support users who are blind or have low vision.
- Maintain consistency in the design and use of icons throughout a site.
- Incorporate well-designed, universally understood icons to create environments that are more intuitive, easier to navigate, and accessible to a broader range of people.

Lighting for Comfort, Safety, and Well-Being

Appropriate lighting design plays a crucial role in creating safe, comfortable, and inclusive environments. The type of light, its colour temperature, and overall quality can significantly affect visual comfort, mood, and overall well-being. The following guidance provides best practices for selecting LED lighting that supports accessibility and user comfort across different settings.

Warm White Lighting for Comfort and Relaxation:

Recommended colour Temperature: 2700K–3000K

Warm white LED lights within this range produce a soft, yellowish glow similar to natural sunset light. This tone promotes relaxation, reduces visual fatigue, and minimizes glare sensitivity, making it ideal for residential areas, lounges, bedrooms, and dining spaces.

Key Benefits:

- Supports a calm and welcoming atmosphere
- Reduces eye strain and glare-related discomfort
- Mimics natural evening light, helping regulate circadian rhythm

Cool White Lighting for Productivity and Focus:

Recommended colour Temperature: 5000K–6500K

Cool or “daylight” white LEDs provide a bright, crisp illumination that enhances alertness and focus. These higher colour temperatures are well-suited to task-oriented spaces such as home offices, workshops, or study areas.

Key Benefits:

- Improves concentration and visual acuity for detailed work
- Simulates daylight conditions for improved energy and attentiveness

Considerations:

- Cooler lighting may feel harsh in relaxation zones and can disrupt sleep when used during evening hours. Where possible, limit use to daytime or work-specific settings.

Technical Considerations for Comfort and Safety

Flicker Control: Select LEDs with a low flicker percentage and low flicker index. High flicker levels can contribute to headaches, fatigue, and discomfort, particularly for individuals with light sensitivity or neurological conditions.

colour Rendering Index (CRI): A high CRI (90 or above) ensures accurate colour perception, contributing to safer navigation, improved aesthetics, and a more comfortable visual experience.

Blue Light Management: Blue light exposure, especially in the evening, can affect sleep quality and visual comfort. To mitigate these effects:

- Choose warm white or “tunable” LEDs that can adjust colour temperature throughout the day.
- Consider bulbs with built-in blue light filters to reduce eye strain and support healthy sleep cycles.

Why Avoid Fluorescent Lighting

Traditional fluorescent lighting, while once standard, presents several health and comfort concerns that make it less suitable for inclusive environments:

Flicker and Visual Fatigue: Fluorescent lights operate on alternating current, producing subtle but continuous flicker that can trigger headaches, eye strain, and nausea, especially for individuals sensitive to light.

Auditory Distraction: The low-level buzzing sound common in fluorescent fixtures can cause discomfort or distraction, particularly for individuals with auditory or sensory sensitivities such as autism or ADHD.

colour Quality: Fluorescent bulbs typically have a lower colour Rendering Index (CRI), which can distort colour perception and reduce visual clarity.

Environmental and Safety Concerns: Fluorescent tubes contain mercury, requiring special disposal and posing a hazard if broken.

As such, fluorescent lighting is not recommended for environments prioritizing accessibility, inclusion, and overall occupant well-being.

How LED Lighting Supports Neurodiverse Users

LED technology provides several advantages that make it especially supportive for neurodiverse individuals and others with sensory sensitivities:

- **Stable and Consistent Light Output:** High-quality LEDs with low flicker and even brightness help prevent sensory overload and visual discomfort.
- **Adjustable colour Temperature:** “Tunable” LEDs allow users to modify brightness and tone throughout the day, empowering people to create lighting conditions that match their sensory comfort levels.
- **Quiet Operation:** Unlike fluorescents, LEDs operate silently, eliminating ambient noise that can be distracting or overstimulating.
- **Customization and Control:** Integration with dimmers or smart systems enables personalized lighting zones, reducing sensory stress and supporting focus or calm as needed.
- **Improved colour Accuracy:** A high CRI ensures natural colour rendering, reducing confusion and enhancing comfort for users who are sensitive to distorted lighting environments.

By prioritizing LED solutions that minimize flicker, reduce blue light, and allow user control, spaces become more inclusive for people with sensory sensitivities, autism spectrum conditions, and other neurodiverse experiences.

THANK YOU

for choosing Meaningful Access Consulting

We are pleased to work with you and to present this review of the Salt Spring Island Multi Space which outlines accessibility recommendations from mobility, hearing, learning, sensory, cognitive and sight perspectives. We are so encouraged that Salt Spring Island is truly activating on their intention to create meaningful and accessible experiences for the community members of all ages, abilities and disabilities.

We continue to applaud the District and your efforts in working towards universal design and accessibility for all.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out! We are here to help.

Thank you again,



Marco & Karin Pasqua
Universal Design Accessibility Consultants
www.meaningfulaccess.com





BEYOND BARRIER-FREE



Salt Spring Island – Portlock Park Accessibility Review November 2025

OVERVIEW

Located near Central, this park includes four tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, a children's playground, a 400-m track, a picnic shelter, a multi-court and the PARC Administration office. The PARC portable houses a meeting/activity room which features a ramp to access it. The park features washrooms and basic amenities including parking, park benches and picnic tables.

Thoughtfully designed parks and playgrounds are the heart of vibrant, inclusive communities. These shared outdoor spaces provide vital opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to come together, socialize, and engage in healthy recreation. On Salt Spring Island outdoor recreation including parks and trails are especially important for both residents and the many visitors drawn to the area's stunning natural beauty.

Currently, Salt Spring Island doesn't have any barrier-free parks, trails and viewpoints and there are many people on the Island who experience accessibility barriers and would very much like to stay living in the community, if the amenities were provided.

As the community grows and welcomes new residents and tourists, prioritizing universal design in parks and public spaces will be key to maintaining Salt Spring Island's welcoming, inclusive character.

Local residents informed the consultant team how valued this playground and park is for the community. It's warmer and safer than the other parks found on the Island with many residents preferring to bring their children to Portlock Park as compared to Centennial Park for a variety of reasons. They also informed the consultant team how important this park is for walking and injury recovery with the track being one of the only level and maintained trail surfaces on the Island.

With some thoughtful considerations and planning, this park could be much more accessible and provide access to outdoor recreation for many more residents including reinstating the accessible washroom, creating navigable pathways across the site and some additional benches and resting spaces.

ACCESSIBILITY OF PARKS

Understanding that outdoor recreation opportunities are highly valued on Salt Spring Island, parks and playgrounds are a large piece of that puzzle already. Choosing the right equipment, layout, surface materials and communication strategies can increase accessibility for many individuals, even if a park is not universally designed at present.

Communication and Wayfinding

Let people know what is available for them and they will determine for themselves if the park or playground will meet their needs. Consider highlighting the following features on park websites:

- Trail and pathway surface materials and indication of grade
- Equipment available in playgrounds (especially items that are more inclusive such as roller slides, saucer swings)
- Location of key amenities such as washrooms and parking
- Playground surface material

Connecting Accessible Features

When increasing accessibility in a playground or park, consider how the user will access the feature such as a bench or universal picnic table. Is there a pathway that connects to it? Does the pathway surface offer the same level of accessibility as the rest of the park? Is there a level and firm surface for a mobility device or stroller to be parked? Are there any obstructions in the way to access the amenity? What is the most logical path of travel?

Offer a complete accessible experience for a user. Consider the entire path of travel from the parking lot to the amenity and ensure that a consistent level of access is provided. A universal picnic table that is connected to a primary pathway is far more accessible than one placed in the centre of a grassy field, for example.

Maintenance is also a key factor in maintaining accessibility.



Surface Materials

Trail and playground surface materials make a considerable impact on accessibility and decisions need to be made in order to maintain both accessibility and the connection to nature and the natural environment, depending on the intention of the space.

Trails & Pathways

Paved pathways are the most accessible for users with disabilities using mobility devices and should be highlighted for the community to be made aware of and increase their usage. Other highly accessible options include boardwalks (though can be quite bumpy for some users, especially for long distances) and packed gravel. Not every pathway needs to be accessible, so it is recommended to offer information on the pathway surface via maps, websites and onsite wayfinding.

Playground Surfacing

Engineered wood chips, despite being slated as an accessible surface, are not actually an accessible surface material for playgrounds. While they provide good impact attenuation in the event of a fall, wood chips are a loose material that can be difficult for people using mobility devices to navigate.

In contrast, poured-in-place rubber or rubber tiles are considered to be the most accessible surfacing for play spaces. These surfaces are firm, stable and slip-resistant, making them much easier for people using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids to navigate. Rubber surfaces have minimal gaps or irregularities, reducing tripping hazards. They are also non-glare with low thermal conductivity, improving safety and comfort.

Who is the Target Demographic?

When it comes to accessible and universally designed outdoor play spaces, the intended target is generally thought to be the child but it's important to keep in mind the other adults in the child's life that may be taking them to the playground. A parent, grandparent or other caregiver may have a disability so consider how the adult can interact with the child on the playground as well. Places to rest, in shade are equally important as the playground surface material to ensure the inclusion of multi-generational play experiences.



Designing New Playgrounds

Ramps to Nowhere

When installing accessible features, people often just simply add ramps to structures and call it accessible. But is it? Do the ramps have a purpose such as leading to the top of a slide or an elevated engagement station?

Ramps on their own aren't fun for children using mobility devices, they need to connect the child to play with their peers in a way that is meaningful and inclusive.

How is our playground fun for a child with a physical disability, a child with low vision or a child with a hearing disability?

How can we make the playground more fun for a child with a disability?

Equipment worth Considering

- Elevated sand or water tables
- Swings with back support and safety belts
- Roller slides (recommended to support kids with cochlear implants and hearing aids as the static of plastic slides can interfere with their functioning).
- Metal slides
- Roller slides
- Transfer space for slides
- Saucer swings
- Musical equipment
- Inground trampolines
- Friendship swings
- Accessible spinners or rockers
- Diggers
- Accessible gliders (e.g. sway fun glider)
- We go round
- Transfer stations



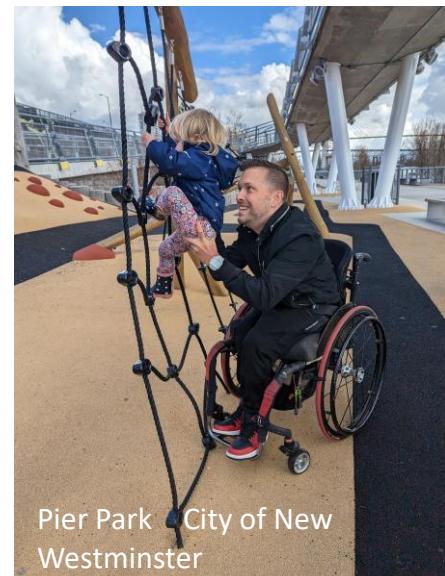
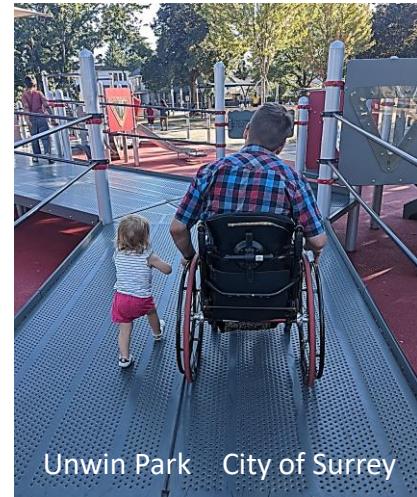
Transfer station
Reference: Landscape Structures

Note: Fencing around playgrounds can be necessity for many children and caregivers.

Consider the Users

Mobility Device Users

- ❑ Accessible paths of travel
- ❑ Multiple access routes into and out of the play space
- ❑ Multiple ways to use and access play equipment
- ❑ A mix of ground-level equipment integrated with elevated equipment accessible by a ramp or transfer platform
- ❑ Ramps that lead to a play component
- ❑ Ramp landings, elevated decks, and other areas that provide sufficient turning space for mobility devices
- ❑ Space to park a wheelchair or other mobility device beside transfer platforms
- ❑ Space for a caregiver to sit beside a child on a slide or other play element
- ❑ Transfer platform at the base of the slide wide enough so that children with mobility disabilities can transfer off the slide without blocking others from using the slide
- ❑ Seating space with back support adjacent to the slide exit where children can wait for their mobility device to be retrieved
- ❑ Back support and/or grips on certain play components such as swings
- ❑ Elements that can be manipulated with limited exertion



Hearing Disabilities

- ❑ Caregivers with hearing loss require clear lines of sight throughout the play space to observe their children and to identify when they need assistance.
- ❑ The use of plastic slides has been shown to generate static electricity that may damage cochlear implants. As a result, children are left with the choice of avoiding slides or removing their implants and playing without the ability to hear.

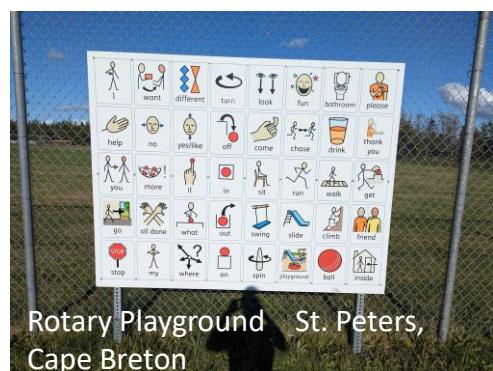
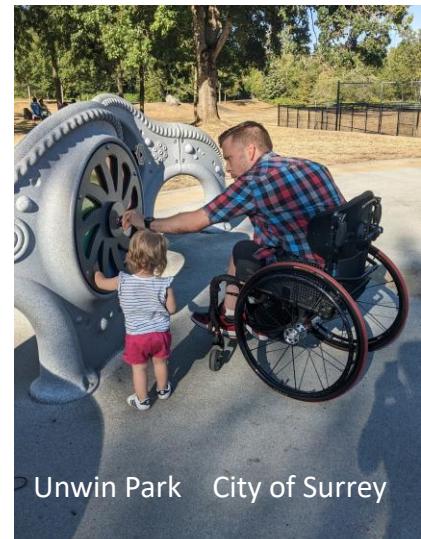


Vision Disabilities

- ❑ Appropriate use of colour, texture, and sound can help users with vision loss access and use equipment and find their way throughout a play space, and can be used to help:
 - Orient children and caregivers to different areas
 - Define different spaces throughout the play area
 - Identify different skill areas
 - Identify play element features
 - Identify pathways and changes in direction
 - Define play space boundaries and areas where children should be cautious, such as around high traffic areas like slide exits
 - Define the edges where there is a level change like at the top of the stairs or at a drop-off using a tactile warning surface

Sensory Disabilities

- ❑ Outdoor play, especially play in natural settings, has been shown to have a soothing effect on children with autism spectrum disorder. Activities that involve natural settings, motion, visual interest, and water play can be good choices.
 - Consider places that are sheltered where a child can take a moment of refuge
 - Quiet areas
 - Combinations of big energy equipment (e.g. swinging, sliding, spinning) and low-stimulation (e.g. colour wheels, digging, sensory play) is encouraged
 - Communication boards can support children with communication disabilities



More information can be found at:
www.rickhansen.com/AccessiblePlaySpaces

Portlock Park

Located near Central, this park includes 4 tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, a children's playground, a 400-m track, a picnic shelter, a multi-court for tennis, basketball, roller hockey etc. and the PARC Administration office. The PARC portable houses a meeting/activity room. The picnic shelter, as well as the portable, are available for public rental.



Parking Facilities

- ✓ Parking is primarily found within the connected parking lot. Additional parking during special events or busy times is available on the street.
- ✓ There is signage, visible from the street, indicating the name of the park.
- ✓ The paved portion of the parking surface is generally level, firm, non-slip and without significant slope.
- ✓ There is one designated accessible stall that is marked using both vertical pole signage as well as pavement decals allowing for the stall to be relatively visible when a car is parked within the stall and at a distance.





Barriers & Recommendations: Parking Facilities

- The gravel parking lot is very uneven and, because it falls so close to the watertable, it has very poor drainage.
- The drainage rocks surrounding the gravel parking lot, while necessary, are very uneven and make pushing a mobility device (including cane, walker or wheelchair) across very difficult or dangerous for some and completely impossible for others.
- The placement of the accessible parking stall is a bit peculiar in that while it's on a paved level surface, it's far away from the access points to any amenities. The placement makes it nearly invisible to visitors and inaccessible for its intended purpose.



Recommendations

- It's highly recommended to review the ability to pave the lot to prevent the water pooling and irregular walking surface.
 - If not possible, it's highly recommended to add additional crushed gravel to the areas that have potholes to create a stable and level path of travel.
- Additionally, it's recommended to find other mechanisms to provide drainage such as drainage grates to create drainage solutions that can be navigated across while using a wheeled device or when experiencing difficulties with balance.
 - If unable to remediate the entire parking lot, consider creating access paths using drainage grates along the paths of travel including between the parking lot and the entrance to the playground, the tennis courts and the pathway leading to the spectator bleachers.





Barriers & Recommendations: Parking Facilities

Recommendations

- The consultant team were informed that there is a high number of seniors and others using the accessible parking stalls and therefore we highly recommend additional parking accessible stalls at this site, ideally directly adjacent to the gate to access the playground and the tennis courts with greater ease.
- Accessible parking stalls are recommended to be **2600 mm** wide with a shared access aisle of **2000 mm**. The shared access aisle allows someone to drop a side-loading ramp and have space to turn and/or sufficient space for their mobility device to be comfortably transferred into or out of.
 - Currently the accessible stall's access aisle is essentially an access route for a vehicle with no-parking signage.
 - It's recommended to update this to include the hatch-marks to ensure that the width of the access aisle remains available.
- It's recommended to paint the accessible parking pavement decal to include the blue square as to increase visibility at a distance.
- Updating the accessible parking signage is recommended, including the use of "Accessible Parking" over "Handicapped Parking" as well as the use of the dynamic symbol of accessibility.

Proposed
Accessible
Parking Location

Proposed
Accessible
Parking Location

Current
Accessible
Parking Location





Barriers & Recommendations: Parking Facilities



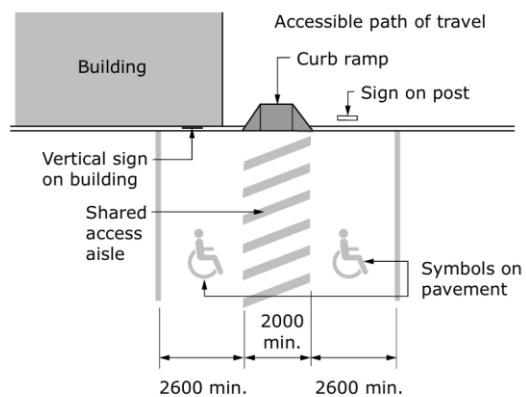
Image demonstrates an updated pavement decal and hatch marks next to the accessible parking stall to create an access aisle.



Did you know?



Using the dynamic accessibility symbol instead of the traditional symbol helps break down attitudinal barriers and helps redefine how we look at people with disabilities.



Reference: CSA B651-23
Figure 67



Park Pathways and Navigation to Amenities

Trails & Pathways

- ✓ There are paved pathways leading from the paved portion of the parking lot to a few amenities including the washrooms, storage facilities and program facility.
- ✓ There is a ramp leading to the programming facility.
 - ✓ The ramp is without threshold and is easy to navigate with independence thanks to its very accessible slope.
 - ✓ The ramp features bilateral handrails.
 - ✓ The ramp includes a non-slip surface.
- ✓ There are some waste receptacles along the path of travel without obscuring it.
- ✓ The site layout is generally quite obvious with the main amenities being clearly visible at a distance, from the parking lot.



Benches and Picnic Tables

- ✓ There are a variety of seating options in the park including park benches, with back rests and armrests.
- ✓ The park offers a picnic shelter with picnic tables under whether protection.



Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

Trails & Pathways

- The pathways around the park are primarily natural and not developed or maintained to a high level of accessibility. The resulting pathways are more of a 'cow path' rather than a true path of travel. Consequently, the primary paths of travel are not accessible, despite the track being a clear attraction for people as a comfortable walking surface.
 - It was highlighted to the consultant team that the track is a key Island amenity for people to use as a safe and level walking surface, particularly for seniors and for those recovering from injuries.
 - It was also brought to the consultant team's attention that the pathways around the park are not accessible for wheeled mobility device users and that users have fallen when navigating the nearly invisible threshold from the path to the track.
- The bike rack located next to the pick-up window may have people's bikes parked in such a way that it blocks the path of travel, especially for someone relying on the paved pathway.

Recommendations

- Consider offering other options for bicycle parking and move the current bike rack to another location to ensure that the path of travel remains unobstructed.
- It's highly recommended to create an integrated network of pathways connecting key elements via level and accessible pathways.
 - If paved is not possible, then we highly recommended packed crusher dust that is well maintained or alternatively a removable surface such as a mobi mat.
- Pathways should connect to all key amenities and provide a complete path of travel for users. Consistent, stable, level and firm pathways should be considered for the following locations, from the parking lot with:
 - Access to at least one tennis and pickle ball court.
 - Access to through the playground area, including the bench located near the young children's playground area.
 - Access to the track (ideally on both sides of the tennis courts).
 - Access to the picnic shelter.
 - Access to the bleachers.

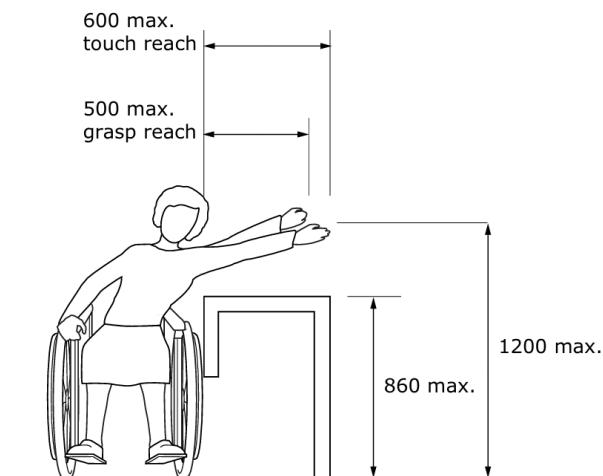


Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

Trails & Pathways

Recommendations

- When redeveloping the park's pathways, widening them to a minimum wide of **1200 mm** is recommended.
- Improve wayfinding and signage for accessible routes. Let people know what the most accessible routes of travel are, especially if not able to remediate all the pathways leading from the parking lot to key amenities.
- Add benches along the paths of travel to provide people opportunities to rest, watch children play or view the games or matches with comfort.
 - Place benches along the path of travel.
- Additional trash cans / waste disposal bins along the path of travel are highly recommended.
 - When installing waste disposal bins, ensuring that the controls are easily accessible by a wheeled mobility device user (note the reach requirements in the figure below.)



Reference: CSA B651-23

Figure A. 4

Demonstrates lateral reach ranges over an obstacle.



Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

The image below provides guidance on where accessible paths of travel should be considered. Primary paths of travel are marked in **pink**, a secondary path of travel marked in **blue** and bench recommendations are noted in **yellow**.





Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

The images below demonstrate the inaccessible pathways found across the park and demonstrate where accessible path of travel ideally would be located.





Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

Benches and Picnic Tables

A significant barrier to access is the limited number of benches and the distance they are from key amenities such as the playground where seniors and caregivers may need to rest while supervising children.

Another significant barrier is that the picnic shelter is actually inaccessible due to the step up to the concrete pad from one side and the significant slope on the other.

Recommendations

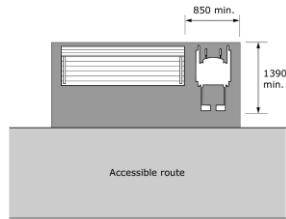
- Increase number of benches or resting spots along pathways and around the track.
- Consider informal seating options (e.g., tree stumps, rocks) where benches are not feasible.
- Ensure benches are placed within proximity to key play areas and washrooms to support caregivers or older adults.
- For the picnic shelter, we highly recommend installing a small ramp that connects to path of travel to the concrete pad which will make the picnic shelter accessible to not only those using mobility devices (wheelchairs and walkers) but also parents pushing strollers as well as individuals who struggle with balance or a step up.



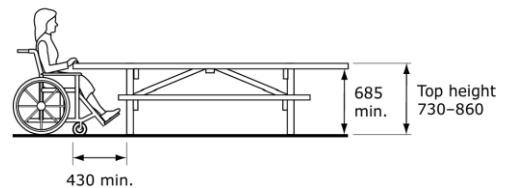


Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

- Additional benches with armrests and backrests would be recommended. Ideally these benches would be along to a path of travel with an adjacent clear area of at least 850 by 1390 mm to allow for space for a mobility device or stroller to be out of the route of travel.
- Accessible benches should have a seat height between 430 and 485 mm from the floor.
- Universal picnic benches should also be considered when replacing or supplementing current inventory. These picnic tables should be placed on a firm and level surface extending 2000 mm on all sides, adjacent to an accessible route of travel.
- It's highly recommended to update at least one picnic table within the picnic shelter to a model that is universally designed.



Reference: CSA B651-23
Figure 57



Reference: CSA B651-23
Figure 64A



Photos demonstrate a variety of picnic table designs.

The top left photo would benefit from a path connecting the picnic table to the main path of travel.





Barriers & Recommendations: Pathways and Navigation

Seating offering should be varied in height, style and meeting a variety of needs. When it comes to benches provided, best practice is to offer benches (or seating of some type) every **30 m**. Additionally, when choosing benches, the following are best practices to keep in mind:

- Benches should have a seat height between **430 and 485 mm**
- Provide clear space next to the bench of **850 mm by 1390 mm** for a mobility device or stroller to be placed out of the path of travel
- Be located adjacent to the path of travel or connected to the primary path of travel via a pathway.
- Be of a contrasting colour to the ground surface colour.
- Selecting creative seating with a smooth and level surface, clear space and good contrast will ensure that they amplify accessibility in addition to seating with backrests and armrests. Natural elements can help elevate seating options.



Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

- The washrooms are not accessible at all and in fact, the accessible washroom was converted into a janitorial closet. Unfortunately, this makes it very difficult for anyone with limited mobility to attend events in the park or stay for any length of time.
 - The optics and the perception this creates is such that accessibility is not a priority in the community and that people with disabilities are neither prioritized nor considered.
- The gendered washrooms have significant accessibility limitations including the ability to enter the facilities with a mobility device and close the door.
- The washrooms are difficult to see at a distance and would benefit from some additional wayfinding including larger signage on the exterior of the facility.

Recommendations

- The gendered washrooms should greatly benefit from some small adjustments that would make the washrooms more accessible for people of all abilities and disabilities, these include:
 - The soap dispenser and paper towel dispenser are recommended to be lowered so that their operating controls are mounted no higher than **1100 mm** from the floor. This will allow someone shorter in stature, including children, be able to fully wash and dry their hands independently.
 - The threshold to enter the woman's washroom is recommended to be leveled and made even. It currently has a gap that can be difficult for some navigating across with a walker or cane.
 - Additional signage including overhead blade signage is recommended to draw attention to the location of the washrooms.
 - The washroom signage is currently mounted on the washroom door and is therefore illegible when the door is open and doesn't include contrast or tactile elements. It is highly recommended for washroom signage to include a raised icon and letters providing tactile information for someone who's blind and ideally Braille.
 - Mount the signage on the wall, on the latch-side of the door at a height of **1500 mm** center line from the floor.



Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

The most significant recommendation of this report is to update the accessible washroom and returned it into operation for its intended purpose. The janitorial supplies should be stored elsewhere in the facility, providing access to a universal washroom would greatly improve access at the park and resident's feelings of accessibility and inclusion as a priority of the district.

We understand that the turning radius and transfer space within the washroom may not meet current best practices but the space is significantly larger than the current gendered washrooms and, with some updates, the space would provide a significant amount of accessibility for people with limited mobility including cane, walker and wheelchair users.

It's highly recommended to reinstate the accessible washroom and complete its accessible features with the following elements:

- An angled grab bar on the wall adjacent to the toilet and a horizontal grab bar mounted on the wall behind the toilet. A toilet with a seat lid or back rest is highly recommended.
- The toilet paper dispenser within reach of someone seated on the toilet.
- The flushing mechanism should be mounted on the transfer side of the toilet.
- A hook mounted no higher than **1200 mm** from the floor.
- A locking mechanism that does not require fine dexterity and can be operated with an opened or closed fist. It's worth noting that electronic controls facilitate use by a wider range of people.
- The soap dispenser, sharps disposal unit and hand dryer or paper towel dispenser are recommended to be placed so that their operating controls are mounted no higher than **1100 mm** from the floor.
- An open canister style of toilet paper dispenser is more accessible for people with dexterity disabilities.
- An additional fold-down grab bar on the transfer side of the toilet is also recommended.
- Knee clearance, offset and insulated piping and easy to use faucet controls are recommended at the sink.



Barriers & Recommendations: Washrooms

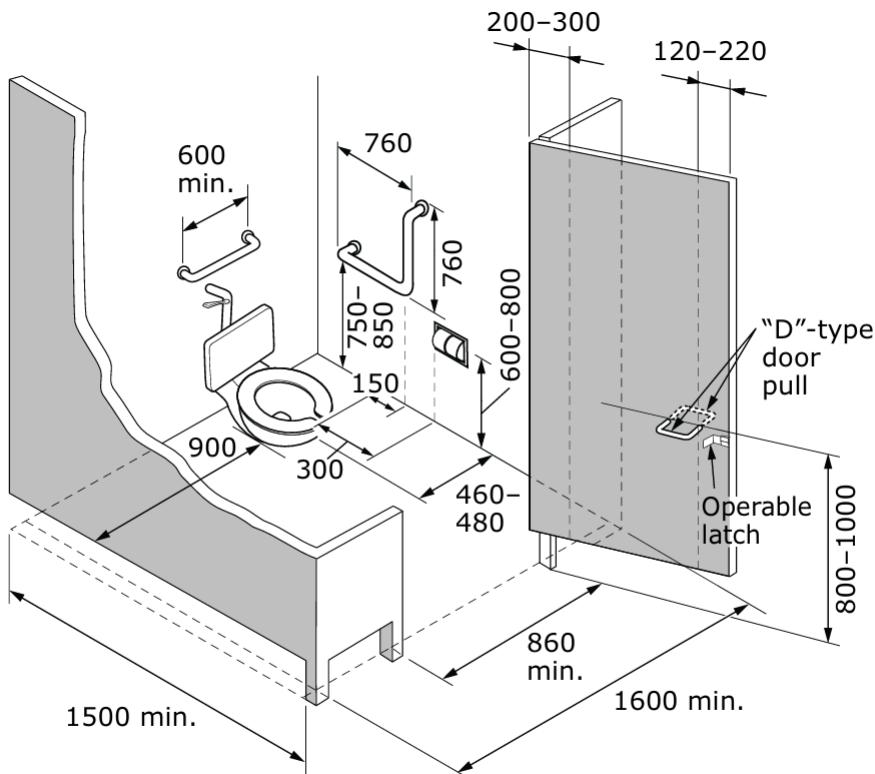


Image demonstrates best practices for an accessible toilet stall with provided measurements for the correct placement of washroom facilities.

Reference: CSA B651-23

Figure 46



Park Amenities

Tennis Courts

- ✓ Access to the tennis and pickle ball courts is sufficiently wide for mobility device users including a wheelchair user with a wheelchair of typical size to access comfortably.
- ✓ The surface material is consistent, firm and without slope or gaps making it for a very accessible athletic surface.

Track

- ✓ The track is a key feature of this park. Residents informed the consultant team that it is one of the few places that offers a place outdoors without significant slope and with additional safety features such as lighting and a washroom for people to walk.
- ✓ The track is highly used and valued by the community.
- ✓ The track, while not yet completed being packed, is navigable with a wheelchair, though with difficulty.

Playgrounds

- ✓ There are two playgrounds at this site including one designed for older children and one designed for younger children.
- ✓ There is one bench that is relatively near to the younger children's playground.
- ✓ The playground provides ample opportunities for children to engage with large, gross-motor and vestibular play.
- ✓ The sight-lines for caregivers are consistent across the playgrounds.



Barriers & Recommendations: Park Amenities

Tennis Courts

- Creating an accessible path of travel to at least one tennis court is highly recommended. This means that a level surface, without gap or threshold is provided ideally from the parking lot and from the entrance closest to the track. Pickle ball and tennis are sports that are highly accessible in nature, with pickleball in particular, growing in popularity and accessibility.
- Consider widening the access gate to the pickleball court to accommodate a sports wheelchair.

Para Pickleball is now being played in different parts of the country. Players in wheelchairs can and are playing in singles or doubles as in regular pickleball or, in teams made up of a wheelchair player partnered with a standing player. A few modifications have been made for the wheelchair athlete. A double bounce is allowed for the wheelchair athlete, and the front wheels of his chair can cross the non volley line.

These athletes are a joy to watch...they are fast, they are accurate, they are competitive and mostly...they are thrilled and proud to have a new sport in which they can excel and have fun. Pickleball Canada is committed to the development of the sport in Canada for all demographics throughout the country. Help make this a truly National pastime.



<https://pickleballcanada.org/play-and-learn/para-pickleball/>



Barriers & Recommendations: Park Amenities

Tennis Courts





Barriers & Recommendations: Park Amenities

Track

- It's highly recommended to improve the threshold / grade transitions between the track and the path of travel to ensure accessible entry to the track and prevent people of falling.
- Adding signage to mark accessible routes to the track, even if it's simple directional signage without the wheelchair symbol is highly recommended, especially if choosing to make one pathway accessible over another route of access.
- Ensure the designated accessible route is built and maintained and that the connection to the track is maintained.
- Consider adding an additional bench to the far side of the track to support walkers with limited stamina or strength.
- The bleachers are highly recommended to be reviewed and updated when possible.





Barriers & Recommendations: Park Amenities

Water Fountains

- A public water fountain is highly recommended at this park to provide visitors access to clean drinking water.

Playground Equipment

- Consider include accessible outdoor fitness equipment in the plan when updating this park given how well used the park is and how few accessible outdoor recreation opportunities there are on Salt Spring. Consider elements that don't require someone to transfer out of their wheelchair or that have dual functionality, providing fitness for someone with or without mobility disabilities.
- The playground surface is pea gravel which is not an accessible surface, preventing a wheeled mobility device or stroller from being pushed easily on the surface. The uneven surface is also very challenging for people with balance disabilities including those that use mobility canes. The playground surface prevents caregivers with disabilities from getting close to their playing child to assist and prevents children with disabilities completely from playing at this playground.
- More benches, particularly ones that are placed closer to playground equipment is highly recommended to allow caregivers to be close to playing children, while also providing a place to rest.
- When updating the playground equipment, consider adding:
 - A saucer swing or high-back swing;
 - A roller slide;
 - Tactile and musical elements;
 - A place where children can hide or provide distance from stimulation;
 - Sensory play (water, sand etc.).
- It's highly recommended to consider fencing in the younger playground to help keep children who tend to run off safe.
- When completing a significant upgrade, making the playground surface accessible (rubberized) is highly recommended.



Learn more about inclusive outdoor fitness and active aging: [Inclusive Fitness Whitepaper](#) and [Active Aging Whitepaper](#)

Recommendations: Wayfinding

- There is very little signage on site, making it difficult for visitors to be aware of the amenities onsite as well as be able to find the most efficient routes of travel to get to the amenity they are seeking. Signage indicating the location of amenities is highly recommended along with supplemental directional signage. Signage should include all recreation and leisure amenities as well as public washrooms and ideally accessible parking stalls. A full map of the park is recommended as well as directional signage at key decision points.
- Washroom signage should be mounted on the wall at a height of **1500 mm** from the floor and include tactile and braille elements along with recognizable symbols.
- Blade signage for washrooms is also recommended to improve visibility at a distance.



Example of a civic complex map
Reference: Oshawa This Week News



Example of trail signage
Location: City of Richmond

Understanding Wayfinding

Imagine navigating a complex building with ease, feeling confident and in control rather than overwhelmed. This is the result of a thoughtfully designed wayfinding system, which incorporates braille, tactile elements, high-contrast signage, and intuitive icons strategically placed throughout the space.

For individuals who are blind or have low vision, tactile signage with raised characters and braille is essential. It enables them to independently access critical information, including room numbers, directions, and emergency exits, enhancing their autonomy and safety within the environment.

High-contrast signage, with light text on a dark background or vice versa, makes it easier for people with visual disabilities to read and comprehend information quickly.

Intuitive icons and pictograms are another powerful tool for accessibility. They transcend language barriers and provide a universal understanding of key features and directions. For individuals with cognitive disabilities or anxiety, these visual cues can help break down complex information into manageable chunks, reducing stress and confusion.

By providing clear, unobstructed paths and directional signage at appropriate heights, we ensure that everyone can navigate the space with ease. When the signage is visible at a distance, it allows people to make decisions on their path of travel and ensure they are using the most efficient and effective route of travel to their intended destination.



Did you know?

Sans serif fonts are considered the most accessible since they streamline the reading process by eliminating visual distractions, making them the go-to choice for maximum readability and accessibility.

WHY DO ICONS MATTER?



Iconography

Icons are important for accessibility because they provide visual cues that can be quickly and easily understood by a wide range of users, regardless of their language skills, cognitive abilities, or sensory impairments.

Universal understanding: Well-designed icons transcend language barriers and can be interpreted by people from diverse backgrounds including folks who don't speak English as a first language.

Cognitive accessibility: Icons can help people with cognitive disabilities or learning difficulties to better understand and navigate their environment. Simple, clear icons reduce the cognitive load required to process information.

Wayfinding assistance: Consistent use of standardized icons throughout a building or site can aid in wayfinding, especially for individuals with intellectual disabilities or those who are unfamiliar with the space.

Benefit for people with low vision: When designed with high contrast and sufficient size, icons can be more easily perceived by people with low vision compared to text alone.

Supports non-readers: Icons can convey important information to individuals who have difficulty reading, whether due to a visual impairment, learning disability, or language barrier.

Key Considerations

- Use internationally recognized symbols, like the International Symbol of Access.
- Ensure adequate size and contrast for visibility.
- Place icons on signage that is mounted at an accessible height and providing clear floor space for approach.
- Utilize tactile icons with braille labels on signage to support users who are blind or have low vision.
- Maintain consistency in the design and use of icons throughout a site.
- Incorporate well-designed, universally understood icons to create environments that are more intuitive, easier to navigate, and accessible to a broader range of people.

PRIORITIZATION

When considering making changes to increase accessibility, thinking about the entire 'path of accessibility.' That is, is the complete process of accessing and using a space accessible? Generally, we advocate for creating complete accessible spaces rather than adding piecemeal accessibility supports.

Short Term

- Improve wayfinding and signage in the parks highlighting key amenities and pathways.
- Include accessible equipment into the equipment replacement cycle and review opportunities to upgrade some playgrounds elements to be more accessible.
- Augment the number of accessible parking stalls and update the signage to meet current best practices.
- Remediate the threshold between the track and the attached access path.
- Add additional benches with armrests and backrest.

Long Term

- Develop a plan to create one fully inclusive playground on Salt Spring Island ensuring that families with disabilities can play in their community in a space that meets their needs.
- Upgrade the washrooms to provide an accessible washroom onsite for all visitors to use.
- Create a network of pathways across the park that connect people from the parking lot to the various amenities within the park.

THANK YOU

for choosing Meaningful Access Consulting

We are pleased to work with you and to present this review of Salt Spring Island's and Portlock Park which outlines accessibility recommendations from mobility, hearing, learning, sensory, cognitive and sight perspectives. We are so encouraged that the CRD is truly activating on their Accessibility Plan to continue to support everyone of all abilities in being able to access the exceptional services and programs provided in this beautiful area of the world.

We continue to applaud the CRD and your efforts in working towards universal design and accessibility for all.

If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out! We are here to help.

Thank you again,



Marco & Karin Pasqua

Universal Design Accessibility Consultants

www.meaningfulaccess.com

