

**From:** VanderHyden, Scott  
**Sent:** Monday, November 28, 2022 5:48 AM  
**To:** Deborah Duitch  
**Cc:** Fehrman, Pamela <[PFehrman@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:PFehrman@bellevuewa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Newport Hill Woodlawn Playground follow-up

Dear Deborah,

I apologize for the delayed response; the additional time allowed me an opportunity to pull the information together you requested. Thank you for sharing your appreciation of the Newport Hills Woodlawn Park – it is always good to hear. We strive to create engaging experiences for users at each of our parks and prioritize the goals of accessibility, safety and inclusivity when developing parks and playgrounds that address the needs of all children young and old. Our goal is to provide a wide variety of playground options, throughout the park system's 79 parks and 45 playgrounds. We regularly review our park facilities and playgrounds for improvements, and endeavor to improve our processes and the products we deliver to the community - your input is valued and appreciated.

Although we were able to meet requirements to open the new Newport Hills Woodlawn Park in October, there remains on-going construction to finish the Park. Specific to the playground accessibility and inclusivity additional work includes:

- Fencing adjustments so ramped access to the slide is provided (the space and topography here will not support an accessible slope).
- Railings on the hillside stairs.
- Game play and music sensory engagement opportunities.

Other construction to finish in the park includes right-of-way amenities, sidewalk, crosswalk, landscaping and a few other punch list items.

You requested the current standards, guidelines and process for reviewing playgrounds, parks and recreational facilities to maximize inclusion of all individuals. The process for meeting inclusive design standards and guidelines at the City begins with a conversation with community leaders, families and inclusion advocates to identify the needs of the community who will visit our park facilities. We work together to master plan or conceptually design the overall park and playgrounds with the goal of creating inclusive play experiences that provides benefits across all developmental areas: physical, social emotional, sensory, cognitive, and communicative.

Third party Civil Engineers, Landscape Architects and play area designers help refine the master plan to create construction documentation and meet permitting requirements. Based on topography, relationships to other park site elements, environmentally sensitive areas and other site related opportunities and constraints we work to maximize the space provided to both meet accessibility requirements and create inclusive park play experiences - where children and their caregivers of all abilities can grow and learn through physical, emotional, sensory, and social experiences.

Playground elements are evaluated as to how they address the community desired design theme, accessibility, safety, play value and inclusivity. For information about specific accessible and inclusive universal design elements of the Newport Hills Playground, please see attached. Playground designs are reviewed multiple times throughout the design process by City Park staff concluding with permit review and issuance. Park staff bring architecture, landscape architecture, construction management,

operation, and maintenance as well as adaptive recreation expertise to the review process. Select City of Bellevue Park Staff participate in regular inclusive design seminars and certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) certification program. The National Recreation and Park Association CPSI certification program provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date training on playground safety, and accessibility issues including hazard identification, equipment specifications, surfacing requirements.

Ultimately City Park and playground design and development is informed by many guidelines, standards and requirements significant among them are:

- [Choices for People with Disabilities Plan \(bellevuewa.gov\)](https://bellevuewa.gov/choices-for-people-with-disabilities-plan)
- [Public Playground Safety \(cpsc.gov\)](https://cpsc.gov/public-playground-safety)
- [ADA Accessibility Standards \(enhanced single file version\) \(access-board.gov\)](https://access-board.gov/ada-accessibility-standards)
- [ParksPlan 2022-07-11 Adopted.pdf \(bellevuewa.gov\)](https://bellevuewa.gov/parksplan-2022-07-11-adopted.pdf)
- [Bellevue City Code \(municipal.codes\)](https://municipal.codes/bellevue-wa)

Work continues beyond design to ensure playground accessibility, safety and inclusivity. City construction specifications require playground equipment be constructed by Certified playground installers to warrant safe and accessible installation. When construction is complete, all playgrounds are reviewed by a third party Certified Playground Auditor for accessibility, materials, and safety requirements. When a park is open for use by the public it becomes subject to the City City's comprehensive playground maintenance program. All playground areas and equipment are inspected regularly for excessive wear, deterioration, any potential hazards, and accessibility. Issues as they arise are addressed.

Thanks again Deborah for your interest and work towards inclusivity and the opportunity to share an overview of our park design, development, and maintenance processes. As we continue toward final completion of the Newport Hills Woodlawn Park, we would be glad to keep you apprised of the improvements we make at Newport Hills Woodlawn Park.

These links to the City's web site may be what you were looking for?:

- [Disability and Diversity | City of Bellevue \(bellevuewa.gov\)](https://bellevuewa.gov/disability-and-diversity)
- [Adaptive Recreation | City of Bellevue \(bellevuewa.gov\)](https://bellevuewa.gov/adaptive-recreation)

Scott Vander Hyden, Project Manager  
City of Bellevue Park & Community Services

-----Original Message-----

From: Deborah Duitch

Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 4:56 PM

To: parkboard <[parkboard@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:parkboard@bellevuewa.gov)>

Subject: Fwd: Accessibility new Woodlawn Park facilities/equipment look

[EXTERNAL EMAIL Notice!] Outside communication is important to us. Be cautious of phishing attempts. Do not click or open suspicious links or attachments.

Dear Parks Board members,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about accessibility at the new Woodlawn park in Newport Hills.

I am pleased to see the completion and opening of the new park. I recently visited the park. I enjoyed walking on the pathway and utilizing the outdoor fitness equipment. However, I noticed a family with a child in a wheelchair leaving the park with disappointment on their faces. I took a moment to have a conversation with them. I was saddened to learn that our brand new Children's playground had limited, to no, access for this child.

I retired as the BSD Director of Early Learning in 2019. In that position and prior to that when serving as the YMCA AVP of youth and family programs and a member of the National Diversity Team, I became familiar with the principles of Universal Design. Universal design focuses on access-building an environment that values the abilities of all by proactively removing barriers and providing accommodations for full participation.

In examining the playground and equipment, I came to the realization that it was true that there was little that this child could do on this new playground. And from my perspective, a few changes in equipment and materials would have enabled significantly more access for children with limited mobility.

I would like to request information and action:

1. The current standards, guidelines and process for reviewing playgrounds, parks and recreational facilities to maximize inclusion of all individuals.
2. A review of the Woodlawn playground for possible adaptations to allow for greater inclusion of individuals with special needs.

I have visited additional playgrounds in the city. The downtown playground is exceptional in its design. I recognize that not all playgrounds can be this extensive. However, I believe every playground should be evaluated for accessibility to allow for identification of possible adjustments and adaptations that would provide more children with the opportunity to be included in playing with others.

The city has committed to have our diversity work rooted in the principles of equity, access, inclusion, opportunity and cultural competency. I urge the city to begin to take the necessary steps to ensure new playgrounds are built to reflect this work, and to increase children's and family's access to these city amenities.

Thank you for forwarding this communication to the appropriate city staff in the Parks and Community Services department. I look forward to hearing from you and others on how we may work on this effort together-for everyone.

Sincerely,

Deborah Duitch

Bellevue

Sent from my iPhone



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March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Greetings!

The Newport Hills Playground is designed to not only be an immersive, natural playground, but also to promote inclusivity and diverse play between children of all abilities. Our natural play sculptures are designed specifically with inclusive opportunities in mind that provide non-scripted play opportunities. Below is a summary of the site and play opportunities in the Newport Hills Playground Design as it relates to accessibility and inclusivity.

### Site Considerations

- **Safety Surfacing** – Engineered Wood Fiber Safety Surfacing meets ASTM F1951 as an ADA accessible safety surface.
- **Routes of Travel** – The NH Playground incorporates ADA accessible routes of travel in and around each of the play features.

### Play Equipment

Inclusivity is central to the design of the NH Playground as specific equipment features detail:

- **Ragged Wilderness** – Creates an ascending ground level play circuit with elements starting very low to the ground. Users with some upper body mobility can pull themselves onto the ground level log. The nets connecting each boulder create an opportunity to pull a ground-based user through an area and a sensory experience as they hold onto a flexing rope to experience the energy of play around them.
- **Charlotte's Web** – Is specifically designed to inspire unstructured over/under play for children of all abilities. Children that are just beginning their play adventure and are more ground based can socialize with children open to the challenge of climbing up to the webbed surface as it provides unobstructed visibility throughout.
- **Eagle's Nest** – Play is all about progressing challenge, and the Eagle's nest allows for a similar play experience to Charlotte's Web with increased challenge level for the most adventuresome. The large underneath space create an opportunity for ground based children to be at the center of the play experience. Ground level talk tubes continue to the upper leave of the tree roots so that children on top of the structure can socialize and interact with those above.
- **Erosion Sphere** – At the center of the play area, the Erosion Sphere creates a visual entry into



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the play space as a feature stimulating visual interest. Children can transfer into the center of the sphere which acts as a cozy place for children with sensory issues.

- **Cone Spinner with Floor** – A rotating motion piece that incorporates a solid platform for children to safely sit or lay on as it spins. The net provides a safe barrier while also allowing for children to challenge their abilities to climb or hold onto as the feature spins. Play is entirely social, as children divide roles between spinning, climbing, and sitting as they play together.
- **Nuvo Swing** – The large platform is perfect for children of any ability to enjoy the swinging motion as they can sit, stand, or lay on the supported swing seat. Social play is encouraged as the platform seats multiple users together.
- **Stump Table** – Is accessible for able bodied users to sit on the form stumps and also provides open entry for wheelchair users to sit and use the table in their mobility devices.
- **Themed Play** – The natural theme of the playground provides an imaginative backdrop inspiring role playing.
- **Tactile Experience** – The formed bark and rock of each play sculpture provides a different tactile experience for children to touch and feel varied surfaces that provide unique interactions that enhance the richness of the play experience.

### Adult Fitness Equipment

The fitness equipment layout includes multiple stations specifically designed to incorporate users of all abilities:

- **Chest Press / Lat Pull** – Allows for users in a mobility device to remain seated in their device while engaged in strengthening their backs, shoulders and biceps with the Lat Pull Down, and their chest, triceps and shoulders with the Chest Press. Able bodied users can also stand and use the activities.
- **Pull Up Station** – Incorporates bars at varied heights so that users can activate their upper body from a standing or seated position.

Yours Truly,

*Chris McGarvey*

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