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**RECR 4400**  
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**March 24, 2024**

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 1
Executive Summary.....	Page 2
Background and Context.....	Page 3
Literature Review .....	Page 3-10
Methodology .....	Page 10-15
Research Findings and Analysis.....	Page 16-20
Recommendations.....	Page 21-25
Conclusion.....	Page 25-26
Appendix A: Interviews.....	Page 27
Appendix A1: Interview Questions.....	Page 28
Appendix A2: Interview with Kim Kristensen.....	Page 29-30
Appendix A3: Interview with Colleen Eschner.....	Page 31-33
Appendix A4: Interview with Robin Wilson.....	Page 34-36
Appendix A5: Interview with Laura Grant .....	Page 37
Appendix A6: Interview with Justin Powell.....	Page 38-39
Appendix A7: Interview Attempt with NS-ACDI.....	Page 40
Appendix B: Observations.....	Page 41
Appendix B1: Observation Checklist #1 Accessibility Baseline Panorama Park .....	Page 42-45
Appendix B2: Observation Photos Panorama Park .....	Page 46
Appendix B3: Observation #2 Panorama Park .....	Page 47-48
Appendix B4: Observation #3: Cates Park .....	Page 49-52
Appendix C: Content Analysis .....	Page 53
Appendix C1: Documentation.....	Page 54
Appendix C2: Content Analysis Checklist.....	Page 55
Appendix C3: Notes from Content Analysis from the NS ACDI Letter to Council.....	Page 56
Appendix C4: Content Analysis E-mail Event Programmer 2 and Supervisor.....	Page 58
Appendix C5: Content Analysis on Live and Local Event Series Survey Results.....	Page 60
Appendix C6: Content Analysis NVRC Vision and Mission Statements.....	Page 61
Appendix C7: Content Analysis NVRC Accessibility Plan 2023-2026.....	Page 62
Appendix C8: Content Analysis on Corporate Policy Manual .....	Page 63
References.....	Page 64-68



## Introduction

Outdoor events provide mental and physical health benefits (Swaim, 2023). However, 63% of working-age people are less than likely to reap those benefits due to mobility-related disabilities (Government of Canada, 2023). Studies indicate that "individuals with disabilities show higher levels of accomplishment and growth while participating in outdoor activities than individuals without disabilities" (Derakhshan et al., 2024, pp. 2). With such a large population facing limitations preventing participation, it is crucial that at an organizational level, accessibility policies and practices are evaluated and evolve with the developing needs of the community.

This research paper explores the accessibility of park events in North Vancouver with respect to those facing mobility issues. It provides valuable recommendations to help close the gap between outdoor special events in parks and accessibility issues. By assessing "*what creative solutions NVRC can offer to members of the general public who use physical mobility aids to make outdoor special events in parks more accessible?*" valuable insights will be discovered and be the basis for providing applicable solutions to help community members using mobility aids to access special events in parks, all while advancing North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission's (NVRC) mission to build health individuals, families and communities (NVRC, 2023).

Issues about using physical mobility aids, including Walkers (Four-wheel and two-wheel), Wheelchairs, Canes, Crutches, and electric Scooters, are explored. The paper goes on to uncover the experiences and challenges of mobility aid users in accessing events held in municipally run parks, including community and neighbourhood parks, city-wide parks and greenways. Further research on this topic will be conducted with support from the sponsoring agency, North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission (NVRC), and Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson. The highlighted sections of this paper are: Introduction; Executive Summary; Background and Context; Literature Review; Methodology; Research Findings; Implications of the Research Findings; Recommendations; Conclusion.

Operationalized terms in the research question (RQ) include:

Park, special event, accessibility and physical mobility aid. In the context of this research, the terms above have been operationalized as follows:

- "Park" includes any municipally run park in North Vancouver, such as a community park, neighbourhood park, city-wide park, or greenway.
- The term "accessibility" means that "environments, services, and products can be accessed by as many people as possible, in particular, people with disabilities" (North Vancouver, 2023, pp. 8).

- The term "physical mobility aid" refers to devices used to help people with physical disabilities who are unable to walk independently. Mobility aid devices included in the parameters of this research are Walkers (four-wheel and two-wheel), wheelchairs, electric scooters, canes, and crutches.
- The term "special events" refers to a municipally planned gathering that joins people with the intention of supporting or participating in a community, cultural, creative, social, recreational, sport or other type of experience for a singular period.
- The term "physical disability" refers to a health condition that leads to an impediment, causing the affected person to have limitations on their physical functioning, mobility or dexterity, and has a long-term, negative effect on their ability to do daily activities.
- While not included in the RQ, the term barrier often comes up throughout the research. The term "barrier" refers to anything that hinders full and equitable participation in society. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications, or technologies and are affected by intersecting forms of discrimination and ableism (North Vancouver, 2023).

## **Executive Summary**

This paper identifies and discusses the barriers to participation in outdoor special events that mobility aid users in North Vancouver face. Key points include a description of mobility aid users, the parameters of mobility issues, the type of barriers to access they face, and the root of those barriers. Further, the root of those barriers is discussed and broken down into categories, accompanied by recommendations on how to lessen the barriers and increase participation and representation of mobility aid users in outdoor settings.

Further insight into NVRC employees' personal experience with accessibility issues at its events, as well as the many successes and challenges of the organization in terms of accessibility, is needed. The research discusses the necessity of greenspaces for physiological, psychological, and social benefits. It contrasts this necessity with the reality of poor planning considerations to accessibility and realistic use for all community members, thus resulting in mobility aid users having unequal opportunities to participate in outdoor events in North Vancouver.

Recommendations to address the various research findings include accessibility amendments, a gap in transportation, parking congestion leading to community frustrations, further understanding of the preferences, needs, and usages of mobility aid users, and equipment transportation solutions.

## **Background and Context**

The research paper discusses accessible solutions for outdoor events at parks in North Vancouver. The primary research observations were conducted at Panorama Park in North Vancouver in the community of Deep Cove. Findings and Recommendations were based on that area. Panorama Park is a 2.5-hectare waterfront park and marine destination. Its various amenities include grass lawns, playgrounds, a watersport rental shop, washrooms and changerooms, accessible viewpoints, trails, picnic shelters and more (Canada Travel, 2023). In the Deep Cove area, 82% of the population are 55+ (Government of Canada, 2021), 53% of people that attended outdoor events in parks in 2023 were between the ages of 55-64, and 50% of event attendees drove to the event location (NVRCa, 2023).

The research concerned the sponsoring organization. NVRC. NVRC has a mission to "improve the health and well-being of all North Vancouver individuals, families and communities, and inspires residents through quality recreation and arts opportunities" (NVRC, 2023), while their vision statement states that "Recreation and arts are vital to North Vancouver becoming the most vibrant, diverse, active, creative, and connected community" (NVRC, 2023). The research was conducted to further the sponsoring organization's mission and vision with support from the agency supervisor and Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson.

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction:**

Over the course of the past two decades, much research has been done to identify the needs and accessibility issues of people using mobility aids in outdoor recreation settings. Research highlights the necessity of greenspaces for physiological, psychological, and social benefits; and contrasts this necessity with the reality of poor planning considerations to accessibility and realistic use for all community members. These planning practices acts as systemic barriers to accessibility for people who use mobility aids, a population who already report below average levels of physical activity. Despite this, people with mobility issues still seek to visit a city park as often as possible (Wojnowska-Heciak et al., 2022). As North Vancouver boasts gorgeous scenery, nature and wildlife, the opportunities for community members to capitalize on their surroundings through outdoor events and recreation are plenty, but more challenging for those that use mobility aids (Government, 2022).

This literature review will identify the impacted community group, their barriers to accessibility, the benefits for people in parks, the impacts and influences of their park utilization, areas of controversy, and discussions of best practices. It will be the basis of further research into the question "*what*

*creative solutions can NVRC offer to members of the general public who use physical mobility aids to make outdoor special events in parks more accessible?”*. This literature review will provide supporting evidence, areas of controversy, gaps in research, and an overall view on how the topic and question are situated within community recreation.

### **A Profile of Mobility Aid Users:**

McDiarmid & Morris (2021) discuss the parameters of mobility issues as those extending to mobility, flexibility, and dexterity challenges. Researchers Burns & Graefe further detail the life experiences of mobility aid users as being disproportionately more challenging than their able-bodied counterparts in a recreational context, from struggles with “access to facilities and equipment and the need for individualized services” (Burns & Graefe, 2007, pp. 159). Limited flexibility, dexterity and mobility can make every day things like getting dressed, going grocery shopping and getting around in the community exponentially more challenging.

While a plethora of current public-health issues exist, Yu, et al., (2021) highlights the relationship between health and wealth in city centers. Socialization and health inequalities have persisted, demonstrating a stark difference of health in relationship to wealth. Yu et al., (2021) continues to show how health inequalities disproportionately impact people with disabilities. Researcher Schwed, (2021) proposes a possible solution to these inequalities by detailing how an increase in outdoor recreation opportunities has the potential to increase health benefits across various wellness domains, leading to a financially friendly solution. Using parks and other greenspace to provide health benefits through organized outdoor recreation and socialization opportunities could be ideal for community members who use mobility aids.

Furthermore, “studies indicate that individuals with disabilities show higher levels of accomplishment and growth while taking part in outdoor activities compared to individuals without disabilities” (Derakhshan et al., 2024, pp. 2). Due to accessibility issues, equal access for all members of the community faces unique obstacles that hinder their participation. Universal access to outdoor recreation opportunities with a specific focus on events and social opportunities can be achieved by making the built environment (man made environments such as washrooms, sidewalks, outdoor facilities and more) accessible to everyone, thereby improving the quality of life of mobility aid users (Schwed, 2021).

Darcy & Harris discuss the varying perceptions of the term “accessible”, breaking it down from its common perception of physical building adaptations. They go on to discuss how both adaptive

environments and internal systems will create the definition of true accessibility, where “a person with a disability can freely express their independence, and one in which any impediment to integration is removed” (Darcy & Harris, 2003, pp. 44).

In the Parks Research Report, findings and practices regarding the usability of its outdoor park spaces, move congruently with the opinions expressed by Darcy and Harris (2003) regarding accessibility. As cited by (Parks, 2021 and Darcy & Harris, 2003), elements involved in the ideal accessible space should not only span the physical environment, but the internal system controls including, but not limited, to communication, employment, education, transportation, external pathways and community awareness. In an ideal world, special access provisions would not be necessary if the physical environment is designed to adequately reflect the needs of the community.

### **The Benefits for People in Parks**

As outdoor greenspaces provide a financially friendly option for members of the community to experience wellness benefits, it is crucial to ensure these spaces are accessible. Separate surveys conducted by B.C Parks (2021) and Wojnowska-Heciak et al., (2022) detail high ranking priorities in park use, including: “accessibility and quality of pathways (a desire for “more smooth paths and walkways), visibility and widths of entrances and steps, parking, toilets in parks nearest to municipalities or urban areas, alternative transportation options, and longer traffic stop lights near parks” (Parks, 2021, pp. 7).

Preferred activities in the parks include meeting relatives and friends, walking, and social activity that increase integration and inclusion. It is preferred by people using mobility aids to visit parks for short periods of time, however, day use preferences shift to nature appreciation and connecting with specific places (Parks, 2021). In addition, Wojnowska-Heciak et al., (2022) states the importance of resting places, like benches located near entry ways, and popular pathways as crucial elements to the usability of parks. Koppen et al., (2014) continue to highlight how understanding the motivating factors for people with mobility aids to visit parks, and understanding what their utilization preferences area will determine what modifications can be made to create a truly accessible environment. Assessing the type of usage and most frequently used areas of Panorama Park will help to tailor solutions to create an environment representative of community needs in North Vancouver.



## **Barriers to Park Use**

Koppen, et al., (2014) discuss the many barriers that exist for people using mobility aids, despite the recognition of the positive relationship between outdoor recreation and public health. Barriers ranging from environmental, built, societal, attitudinal, financial, perceptual, and policy still persist. The three barriers that are covered in most depth throughout the literature are physical barriers, perceptual barriers, and barriers to transportation.

Physical barriers can begin before event attendees arrive. Considerations when planning events should factor in accessible options for those that don't have the same traditional means as other community members. Derakshan et al., (2024) describes various physical barriers ranging from access to transportation, the number of accessible parking spaces close to amenities to washroom navigation and misleading accessibility signage. Koppen et al., (2014) furthers this statement noting that policies regarding distance to outdoor recreation areas focus on pedestrians and walking distance, resulting in a lower threshold for mobility aid users taking advantage of the area for outdoor recreation.

The thoughts of both Derakshan et al., (2024) and Koppen et al., (2014) demonstrate how on the surface these barriers are physical in nature, however they are deeply rooted in systemic issues. Policies are designed with ambulatory people in mind who can walk the designed distances. The thought behind the built (man made) environment left out a subset of the community, and presents a physical barrier born of oversight and ableism.

## **Perceptual**

When evaluating perceptual barriers, Derakshan et al., (2024, pp. 10) illustrates how “perceptual barriers such as the societal view of people using mobility aids in outdoor recreation settings being at risk” can be a deterrent. Parks (2021) adds the users perceived ability and perception of safety also contribute to reluctant behaviors towards participation, along with “the association between mobility aid usage with physical decline and aging, ultimately leading to stigmatizing attitudes” (Resnik et al., 2009, pp.77). Literature discusses the impact that outside views of participation from mobility aid users can impact their community engagement and leads to the need for solutions around creative ways to eliminate barriers to participation in community social settings such as special events in parks.

Parks, (2021) furthers this sentiment by highlighting the influence that park managers have toward change. The managers in this situation are those that have the potential to create lasting impact on accessibility if they recognize that parks accessibility is more than infrastructure and signage, it is

about embodying the principals and attitudes of accessibility, and adopting that into organizational culture. (run on sentence – break into two)

## **Transportation**

Scholars Unsworth et al., (2017), Remillard et al., (2022) and Parks (2021) discuss the increasing levels of transportation barriers faced by community members who use mobility aids. Unsworth et al., 2017 states how vital public transportation is for mobility device users as it provides an affordable means of maintaining community connections, quality of life and being a visible part of the community. Challenges experienced by this group include “utilizing public and private modes of transportation related to availability; accessibility; safety; and advanced planning” (Remillard et al., 2022, pp. 101209).

Furthering the sentiment, the Parks Research Report (2021) details how transportation issues extend far beyond getting to and from a park, but “over half of Canadians with a mobility related disability consider themselves housebound, with 20% saying it’s because accessible transportation isn’t available”. Literature demonstrates how mobility aid users rely on public transportation as an affordable means to participate in community and special events, however the challenges to its access are great. The mental and physical health benefits are being missed by the increased difficulty in accessing viable transportation options.

## **Area of Controversy:**

Within Deep Cove, there has been an ongoing dispute about how to deal with the issue of parking. The opposing sides of this issue extend further than residents and visitors. Councilmen, businesses, residents, and visitors need help finding a harmonious solution to this issue so all parties can meet their needs. There is a point of contention over whether suggested parking solutions will adequately address the needs of those involved or if there is more sway in one direction (Laba, 2024).

Additionally, council members need help agreeing on which direction to go with a parking solution. Some councillors have advocated for stricter parking regulations that favour residents by creating more residential permit parking spaces similar to what has been done in Kitsilano and Horseshoe Bay. In contrast, other councillors advocate for a strategy that includes everyone needing accessible parking. Residents are in favour of more permitted parking. Some council members are looking to re-examine shuttle services, while others are steering clear due to previous service failures and doubts that it will be an effective solution for the second time (Laba, 2024).

There are debates around resident and visitor parking. Residents feel that they should be prioritized, and visitors prioritize finding accessible options close to popular attractions like the marina, local businesses, and eateries. Tourists become frustrated by the parking situation, resulting in negative experiences and a negative reputation for the community (Laba, 2024).

Businesses want to prioritize more street parking for visitors and customers as they patronize their businesses. Businesses rely on convenient parking for their customer as an asset to keep people coming back to their establishment. At the same time, residents fear leaving their houses on a sunny day because they may not get their parking space back. There are further disagreements about how effective enforcement and timed parking measures would be concerning the impact of the measures on reducing congestion (Laba, 2024).

Visitors and businesses want to keep the parking free while residents want more pay parking and stricter enforcement of the area, however they do not see enforcement being effective as it has not fixed the problem in the past. These conflicting interests are put under a microscope when efforts to address parking in Deep Cove appear to sway further in one direction, resulting in frustration, further tension and a continued unsolved problem (Laba, 2024). The continued debate around a parking solution demonstrates how further research into this topic is needed in the area of North Vancouver not just for those who use mobility aids, but for the community as a whole.

### **Gaps in Literature:**

Literature indicates that more sufficient information needs to be found about the preferred activities and types of interactions people with mobility aids choose at outdoor events. While plenty of information was found about mobility aid users in parks, not enough information was available about mobility aid users and outdoor events. This subset of the community is an integral part of the community picture. While the District and City of North Vancouver have accessibility plans in place, more in depth research needs to occur to fully understand the challenges, preferences and priorities of this group to make effective recommendations towards sustainable accessibility solutions

### **Creative Solutions**

#### **Best Practices**

To increase accessibility in parks, universal design guides have been created by BC Parks, breaking down accessibility into nine (9) categories: Vehicular Access; Access Route; Accessible Campsites; Park Furniture; Pit Toilets, Toilet-Shower Buildings and Changerooms; Signage and Wayfinding; Picnic

Shelters; Viewing Areas, Docks, Fishing Piers; and Trails. Parks, 2021 cites the need for universal design to improve upon physical barriers in the above categories. While not every category will apply to municipal parks, there valuable universal design guides surrounding vehicular access including but not limited to: Unique signage, placement requirements, directional signage and more that could be directly applied to NVRC.

Additionally, Williams et al., (2004) evaluates an internal approach proposing change initiatives from facility managers and programmers to enhance participation by offering and promoting tailored outdoor recreation programs for people using mobility aids to disarm public perception of safety risks. Williams et al., (2004) also suggests consulting with people with mobility issues and advocacy groups to further identify barriers to participation and provide specific training to staff to address unique challenges of mobility aid users. Examples of advocacy groups available to NVRC are the North Shore Accessibility Committee on Disability Issues (NS-ACDI) and Disability Alliance BC who assist prescribed organizations meet the Accessible BC Act.

McDiarmid & Morris (2021) advocate for a better understanding of the age of onset limitations in order to better serve the community, resulting in improved coordination of programs and services. This advocacy for having more tailored programs and services work is in conjunction with what fellow academics Darcy & Harris (2003) discussed in their works, complementing their foundational view on how people with disabilities interact with the environment. The two state how the way built and social environments exist are not conducive to fluidity, ease of access, or equal opportunity for socialization or recreational opportunities.

Furthering this, Best et al., 2017 adds that additional partnerships, community engagement practices, service program funding and health policy changes are needed to enhance community-based programs to better serve people with mobility issues. As an extension of improvement to community programs, sustainable transportation methods will provide the potential to provide more intentional and tailored experiences, however this has been deemed a challenge within the industry (Ballarno et al., 2022). The above demonstrates how understanding the demographic and having a reliable means of transportation is key to more efficient use of manpower, that coupled with community partnerships would result in the ideal coordination efforts to meet the needs of the community in question.

The above literature has covered the importance of adapted recreation options for people using mobility aids, highlighting the positive benefit including mental health, physical health and social wellbeing, and

has presented the need within community recreation as pertinent due to the lack of available of accessible services for mobility aid users. Research goes on to highlight the meaning of accessible services, and highlighting the need for an inside out approach with systemic changes leading to external amendments. The literature review goes on to highlight the various barriers faced by community members utilizing mobility aids in the form of physical, perceptual and transportation barriers. Lastly, the research highlights the need for accessible services, recommendations for potential changes and areas of opportunity going forward that the research question will address.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, literature depicts mobility as a layered issue that involves many moving parts ranging from physical, perceptual and transportation barriers, highlighting the need for accessible options for mobility aid users to interact with ease in built and natural environments. As the literature reviews demonstrates, understanding mobility aid users is key to meeting their needs, addressing their barriers and designing outdoor events for optimal usability. Environmental design whether intentionally done or not ultimately signifies who is accepted and who is not.

## **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Outdoor events provide increased mental and physical health benefits (Swaim, 2023) to various communities. However, 63% of working-age people face mobility-related disabilities (Government of Canada, 2023) that present barriers to benefiting from these attributes. The following primary research assessed the accessibility of outdoor special events in North Vancouver parks to bridge the gap between accessibility and outdoor events. Research methods included interviews, content analysis and observations to help answer the question, "*What creative solutions can NVRC offer to members of the general public who use physical mobility aids to make outdoor special events in parks more accessible?*", and advance NVRC'S mission to build healthy individuals, families and communities (NVRC, 2023).

The research allowed the findings and influence on the research topic to be demonstrated and method selection justified. Further, the research piece ensured the comprehension of the importance of primary research and highlighted additional areas of research required. Highlighted areas include Methodology and primary research plan, Interviews, Observations, Content Analysis, Additional Research, and Conclusion.

## **Overview**

The methodology consisted of interviews, content analysis and observations. Observations took place across two popular parks in Deep Cove where accessibility was assessed. Internal documents were assessed for language, tone and sentiment to determine the belief and action around accessibility measures, and lastly, NVRC personnel were interviewed to obtain varying perspectives and experiences around events programming with accessibility considerations.

## **Interviews:**

Four (5) phone interviews took place with the following people. Collen Eschner., Lynn Valley Village Event Assistant; Kim Kristensen, Event Programmer 2; Robin Wilson, Event Programmer 2; Laura Grant, Arts and Culture Programmer 2; and Justin Powell, Precise Park Link Parking Solutions Representative. NVRC interview contacts were provided through agency supervisor Robin Wilson. The interview method was chosen as it allowed for richer qualitative data, inclusive of nuanced attitudes that would not be understood using other methods (Clements & Legal, 2023). The subjects were chosen based on varying experience levels and seniority in the organization as well as niche experience with transportation and parking systems which is a great struggle for NVRC. Each person held a different position and was able to provide different experiences with accessibility issues and impacts, which resulted in a layered understanding of the scope of accessibility practices for outdoor events at NVRC.

The Interview questions were selected to provide insight into the current state of accessibility at NVRC, understand potential barriers and accessibility solutions, and understand how community members who use mobility aids interact within parks. Data was transcribed and compared to secondary research to analyze similarities and differences to provide a holistic view of accessibility. Questions were curated to provide context to the findings in secondary research. For example, questions regarding transportation and financial barriers were asked, as those areas were found to be limitations to accessibility. Completed questions and answers can be referenced in Appendix A, A1-A5. Potential issues noted during phone interviews include the omission of body language. However, voice cues such as pauses and inflections helped to contextualize responses.

In the structured interview with Robin Wilson, the interviewer asked a set of predetermined questions about accessibility at NVRC outdoor special events in parks. The interviewer provided any necessary clarification, and the interviewee provided answers to the best of her ability. The interview subject, Robin Wilson, was selected because she has in-depth experience in the planning and strategy aspect of outdoor special events at NVRC and was able to provide well-rounded answers to all questions asked

**Observations:**

The observation technique was selected because it was not contingent on availability and allowed the researcher to witness behaviour under specific circumstances (Choudhury, 2015). This helped to contextualize other primary research methods and allowed for a comparative analysis of secondary research from Parks, BC. Data collected during observations was compared to secondary research findings from Parks BC, which was foundational to the creation of the accessibility checklists, referenced in Appendices B1-B4 to draw a baseline understanding of accessibility and park use. For example, secondary research stated that one main priority of mobility aid users was to have bathrooms near park entrances (Wojnowska-Heciak et al., 2022), so physical locations of amenities were noted.

**Observation #1)** took place at Panorama Park as that park hosted the most planned events of the five locations of NVRC outdoor events. The weather was overcast and five degrees Celsius. There were two separate observations at this location. The checklist used was referenced from the Universal Design Guide referenced in Appendices B1-B4 and focused on the physical elements of the park.

**Observation Checklist:**

Areas assessed: Washrooms, signage and wayfinding, vehicular access, picnic shelters, and walkability. The above elements were observed to gain an understanding of baseline accessibility at Panorama Park. It is important to note that the weather on that day was overcast and rainy. The completed checklist can be referenced in Appendix B1. Potential issues included park closures, construction, and detours. To mitigate this risk, the operating hours and road conditions were researched the day before and on the day of the observation.

**Observation two** took place at Panorama Park. The weather on that day was five degrees C and sunny. The objective of observation two was to observe how community members with mobility aids use the park. The parking lot, popular walking paths and viewing areas were observed. These areas were chosen to demonstrate the ease of use in arriving, using the area in a mobile capacity and using the area in a stationary capacity. Observation elements included the number of people using mobility aids, type of mobility aid, type of park use, and duration of use.

Potential issues included no patrons using mobility aids at the park during the observation period. To mitigate that risk, observation was conducted when the weather was at its high of the day, which increased the probability of diverse groups using the park. If the intended group were not present, people using strollers, buggies, or wagons would be observed as they faced similar circumstances when

navigating outdoor environments and required accommodations. Completed checklists can be referenced in Appendix B3.

**Observation three** occurred on Saturday, March 9, at Cates Park in North Vancouver. Cates Park was considered a potential location for NVRC's outdoor events. In previous interviews, transportation was noted as a significant barrier to accessibility. Using the Parks BC Universal Design Guide checklist, the assessed elements include the amount and type of parking stalls, illumination, wayfinding signage and access routes. Potential issues include park and road closures. All conditions and operating hours were researched prior to observation. Completed checklists can be referenced in Appendix B4.

### **Content Analysis:**

Content analysis was selected to evaluate the meaning and relationships of words, tones and attitudes in written content. This allowed the researcher to conclude biases in content. The content analysis conducted included six documents. Documents were sent via e-mail by agency supervisor Robin Wilson and obtained independently through online searches. The following documents were used: A letter to the council from The North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (NS-ACDI), the North Vancouver Accessibility Plan 2023-2026, e-mail communication between the Event Programmer I and her immediate supervisor, Karen Pighin, the Live and Local event series survey results, the District of North Vancouver corporate policy on events in public open spaces, and lastly, the NVRC vision and mission statements.

These documents were selected because they exemplified the accessibility goals and recommendations of the NS-ACDI and if city staff responded to those recommendations with what frequency and degree. Additionally, the documents demonstrated the accessibility plans of the city, if those plans align with corporate policy, and if the accessibility plans and policies align with the mission and vision of the city.

The selected documents illustrate the attitude towards accessibility when the public can and cannot see. Any discrepancy in tone, sentiment, and language would highlight areas of opportunity. All content analysis can be found in Appendices C1-C8. Potential problems included password-protected or encrypted internal files creating a barrier to access. To mitigate that risk, all files were checked beforehand for access restrictions. No problems occurred while accessing content.



## **Research Findings**

### ***Interview Three: Robin Wilson, Events Programmer 2***

An in-depth phone interview consisting of 15 questions was asked, with time to answer approximately ten of those questions. One key finding from the interview was that adding accessibility equipment, such as adapted activity equipment, is contingent on the space available in the vehicles of event staff. Event staff are expected to transport equipment in their vehicles. This information was discovered because it came directly from an employee or volunteer of the NVRC events team. This is a crucial finding as it changed the direction of recommendations from what equipment to add to the logistics of how that equipment will be added. This finding will help to answer the research question by introducing new avenues to consider that, previous to interviewing Robin, were not a part of the accessibility considerations the researcher was assessing.

### **Content Analysis: *Live and Local Event Series Survey Results***

**Description of method:** An assessment of tone, language, and sentiment was conducted using the live and local event series survey results. This document was compared to other similar documents for consistency in tone, language, and sentiment. Those comparisons allowed the attitudes around accessibility and commitment to action and forward movement to be understood. Further, the results of the event series were analyzed to assess what type of disabilities are most prevalent at events, which demonstrated what types of creative solutions are most in need. The completed checklist and notes can be referenced in Appendices C2 and C5.

One key finding throughout content analysis is that the main accessibility issue at NVRC events (concerts in particular) was a lack of accessible parking. Creating more accessible spaces has logistical consequences as many people need parking in the area, so potential solutions to accessibility may be rooted in administrative changes like reservation systems rather than physical changes such as additional spaces. This is supported by the 52% of drivers who attended outdoor special events in the park and noted that accessible parking was a big issue (NVRC, 2023a). This is a crucial finding as it has reframed the ideas around solutions from physical adaptations to new organizational systems to allow equitable access. This finding has given a new direction to potential solutions for NVRC's special events in parks.

### **Observation One: Panorama Park Accessibility Assessment**

Initial observations occurred at Panorama Park, where physical elements were observed, including the parking lot, washrooms, pathways, signage, and picnic shelters. The researcher examined the areas and took notes while referencing the BC Parks Universal Design guide. The selected elements were chosen to

assess Panorama Park's baseline accessibility standing. Firsthand information and understanding of the area were crucial for the researcher to provide effective recommendations to NVRC.

One key finding from the Panorama Park observation was witnessing the parking situation. This helped to provide context to previous interviews, understand the severity of the circumstance, and provide practical recommendations. The experience at Panorama provided redirection in the thought process of creative solutions for NVRC. The possibility of reorganizing systems rather than redistributing spaces became evident as the scarcity of parking stalls was highlighted. The parking space issue is not specific to those who need accessible spaces; it affects everyone. Taking spaces from one group and giving them to another will not solve a problem. Instead, it will create a new one.

### **Additional Research**

To obtain the best information possible, more content analysis on adapted outdoor recreation equipment and guidelines will need to occur, as well as vehicle rental assessments for equipment transportation and various parking reservation systems. In addition, interviews with volunteers or employees who use mobility aids will be beneficial in adding differing perspectives and context to the research question. While attempted, interviews with the NS-ACDI were not possible during the time constraints of the research paper, which can be referenced in Appendix A7.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, interviews, content analysis and observation research methods provided a unique understanding of the impacts of accessibility on the communities of North Vancouver and Deep Cove, and contextualized secondary research. Research revealed a clear understanding of community, and the nuances of accessibility challenges. Through the research the root of accessibility issues within NVRC outdoor special events in parks was revealed to be physical space limitations in terms of equipment transportation and parking. Primary research was crucial in understanding location specific details that would not have been grasped through alternative research methods. Research findings have guided the thought process towards reorganization of resources and doing more with less.

## **Research Findings and Analysis**

### **Finding 1: A Need for Accessibility**

When looking at the primary research, much was discovered about the positive and forward direction NVRC has taken with accessibility. As the community's needs evolve, NVRC has evolved along with it. The accessibility efforts are demonstrated through the District of North Vancouver's Accessibility Plan for 2023-2026, highlighting ongoing goals stemming from internal attitudes. This is a crucial point for sustainable change because meeting community needs does not start a physical change to a building; it sustains itself through a continual commitment to learn about and meet the community's needs. NVRC's commitment to improving upon accessibility was also highlighted through the recommendations that the NS-ACDI sent to the council and the immediate response and action follow-up taken by Events Programmer 2 and her immediate supervisor.

Secondary research findings demonstrate how scholars such as McDiarmid & Morris (2021) advocate for a better understanding of the community group to improve coordination of programs and services. Darcy & Harris (2003) similarly discuss how the way built and social environments exist does not make ease of access, or equal opportunity for socialization or recreational opportunities equally accessible for mobility aid users and that understanding the recreational needs of mobility aid users would be beneficial in evolving what can be offered in terms of accessibility.

Comparing the accessibility plan to the interviews with staff, interviewees were happy to discuss NVRC's progress towards accessibility and were honest about potential opportunities. Staff's honesty regarding a need for a systematic change in how they handle parking and the potential to be more inclusive through more diverse equipment highlighted the need for accessibility and inclusion amendments, but it also gave insight into potential organizational changes that will allow for alternative equipment transportation to provide event activities that are accessible to everyone.

The primary and secondary research states that continuous changes need to be made to meet the community's needs. Primary research has shown significant momentum towards accessibility amendments but has also highlighted areas of opportunity, which begs the question, "*What creative solutions can NVRC offer to members of the general public who use physical mobility aids to make outdoor special events in parks more accessible?*"

## **Finding 2: A Gap in Transportation**

In secondary research, many vital points surrounding mobility aid users' participation opportunities were highlighted. Secondary research dictates that mobility aid users have unequal opportunities for participation, socialization, community interaction and overall wellness benefits as their able-bodied counterparts (Wojnowska-Heciak et al., 2022). Additionally, secondary research shows physical barriers before participants arrive on location.

As cited by Derakshan et al., (2024) and Koppen et al., (2014), considerations of physical barriers ranging from access to transportation, the number of accessible parking spaces close to amenities to washroom navigation and misleading accessibility signage distance to outdoor recreation areas from transportation drop off zones and bus tops, should be factored into planning and decision-making. Remillard et al., (2022) detail how issues in transportation availability, accessibility, safety, and advanced planning exist, preventing mobility aid users from interacting in the parks system and engaging in socialization.

Secondary research demonstrates the case for mobility aid users to access parks, yet primary research needs to reflect that use. This finding indicates that there are obstacles mobility aids users are facing that prevent their access to parks. The discrepancy between secondary and primary research findings leaves an opportunity for creative solutions to address the gap in park usability and access to outdoor events in parks.

Observation demonstrated minimal accessible parking in the area, limited street parking, no transportation options provided by the city, minimal resources for accessible information, and the nearest transit stop being a five-minute walk on sloped ground as potential reasons why mobility aid users may not be utilizing Panorama Park to its full potential. When mobility aid users are in the park, the pathways are accessible and easily traversed. The low number of mobility aid users in the park partially reflects the transportation barriers facing the community.

## **Finding 3: Parking**

After analysis of various pieces of internal documentation, including the Live and Local Event Series Survey results, recommendations from the NS-ACDI, DNV Accessibility Plans 2023-2026 and e-mail communication between the agency supervisor and her immediate supervisor, it is clear that the sentiment of the organization is to advance accessibility needs forward, and that the physical, perceptual and transportation barriers exist within the community of Deep Cove. Live and Local Survey results indicate

that 52% of drivers who attended outdoor special events in the park noted that accessible parking was a big issue (NVRC, 2023a).

This matches the personal experience of interviewee and agency supervisor Robin Wilson, who stated, “Parking is a big problem; we have had people that have not been able to find parking spaces, so they have left their vehicles in the middle of the street [...]. This whole situation indicates an accessibility issue because there is not enough parking. This situation draws attention to people who use mobility aids and cannot find parking a few blocks away (Wilson, 2024). The survey results and personal experiences from primary research corroborate the transportation barriers expressed above by Remillard et al., (2022).

The research findings indicate a more specific transportation issue of lack of parking. While there are other issues around transportation, like alternative methods to serve those who do not have a support network for transportation or cannot drive themselves, the lack of parking is the most common transportation issue at Panorama Park. It is felt by the entire community, not just those with accessibility issues. This finding leaves room for the accessibility needs of the general public to be re-evaluated.

#### **Finding 4: Understanding the User Group**

Both primary and secondary research indicate that more is needed to know about mobility aid users and how they interact at special events in the parks. While some first-hand observation-based information may be known, not enough mobility aid users or people with accessibility issues are represented in primary research conducted by NVRC, such as the Live and Local event series. Because only 6.25% of event attendees experience mobility issues, it is challenging to get a well-rounded view of the issues (NVRC, 2023a).

Secondary research corroborates this view as the lack of information about preferred activities and types of interactions people with mobility aids choose at outdoor events. While plenty of information was found about mobility aid users in parks, more information was needed about mobility aid users and outdoor events. The lack of mobility aid users contributing to survey results leaves room for creative solutions to increase the accessibility of events so NVRC can gain valuable input. The more accessible an event is, the more likely people with accessibility needs will participate.

### **Finding 5: Equipment Transportation**

Throughout primary research, equipment was noted to be a significant issue. Interviews showed that equipment transportation is limited to staff's personal vehicles, resulting in limited abilities to provide additional equipment that would benefit community members with mobility issues. The space constraints of the personal vehicles limit how much equipment can be transported, forcing the staff to pick and choose the most important equipment to include. Space restraints force employees to leave out adapted equipment, as it is often larger or has more components.

Secondary research states that transportation is a foundational piece of successful events, especially when implementing new infrastructure and physical amendments, and it has noted the industry-wide challenge of effective transportation methods when sustainability is becoming the forefront of planning practices. The need for an effective transportation solution will help to address the creative solutions that NVRC will be able to provide to community members with mobility issues and elevated accessibility needs, as increased spatial parameters will equate to increased equipment options.

### **Implications of Findings**

#### **Secondary Research**

Findings have shown five critical areas of opportunity in accessibility measures as expressed by the community of Deep Cove and literature. A need for accessibility, A gap in transportation, Parking, Understanding the user group, and Equipment transportation. The above data analysis implies that there is a need for accessibility amendments to special events at NVRC. Key findings can be examined in two groups: Understanding the needs of mobility aid users and adequate transportation.

Secondary research has highlighted the psychological and physiological health benefits of outdoor events and opportunities for socialization, with particular mention of the increased benefit to those with disabilities (Burns & Graefe, 2007). It is noted that there is a need to continuously adapt and address the needs of mobility aid users within parks systems (Wojnowska-Heciak et al., 2022) to provide realistic and effective solutions.

Secondary research has also indicated the industry-wide challenge of transportation as sustainability has become a focal point in society. This research finding means the challenges experienced within NVRC are not specific to NVRC but are part of a more significant, industry-wide challenge of continuous efforts to understand and adapt to community needs and evolve our practices and procedures as the community grows.

## Primary Research

Primary research has shown the lack of accessible space for event attendees at Panorama Park, which results confirmed by the Live and Local event survey. These results indicated that 52% of drivers who attended outdoor special events in the park noted that accessible parking was a big issue (NVRC, 2023a). Each interviewee who works for NVRC further corroborated this, and the researcher also observed the parking lot at Panorama Park on an overcast day to be completely full.

Observational research and a comparative analysis of Panorama Park and potential secondary event site Cates Park indicated stark differences in parking and transportation issues. Both sites were assessed for the number of available parking stalls and accessible spaces, the proximity of transit options, and the proximity of parking and seating/resting spaces to event locations.

After assessing both sites, the Cates Park location was more accessible in terms of parking availability and accessible spaces, with both locations offering transit locations within a five-minute walk of the location. However, Panorama Park is on a downward slope and is more challenging to navigate as a mobility aid user than the Cates Park location. The consideration of Cates Park corroborated the observational findings as a potential event site for future NVRC outdoor events. It is noted that Cates Park had illumination issues with malfunctioning lighting systems that prevented in-depth observations of the accessibility of the washrooms.

Additional primary research through content analysis showed the commitment to improving accessibility options for the community through recommendations from the NS-ACDI and actionable steps NVRC took to implement the recommendations. Documentation can be referenced in Appendices C3-C5. Interviewees furthered this by discussing recent accessibility amendments made at Panorama Park in the form of an accessible viewpoint that was added (Pastega & Grant). These findings give reasons to pursue the research question, “*What creative solutions can NVRC offer to members of the general public who use physical mobility aids to make outdoor special events in parks more accessible?*”. Recommendations regarding needs assessments, community partnerships, parking reservation systems and vehicle and storage solutions will help answer the research question.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Recommendation Finding 1 and 4- Community Partnerships and Needs Assessments**

To effectively provide sustainable solutions for mobility aid users, NVRC must fully understand their successes and challenges in mobility, what current measures are working, and their preferred use and interaction within events. As per the Disability Consultation Report (2014), people felt that municipalities would benefit from consulting more with the disability community to understand accessibility better.

Understanding the needs of mobility aid users can be challenging as mobility aid users were underrepresented in the Live and Local event series survey results, indicating that less than 7% of attendees identified as having a mobility issue (NVRCA, 2023). For further understanding of this group and the event, it is recommended that surveys and needs assessments be conducted through one of the following: Face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, and a questionnaire/written survey. These methods have been chosen as the most effective methods of collecting information for the older population, which is more likely to use mobility aids than any other age group (Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, 2014).

Questions that offer valuable insight into the community's needs include: "Have you attended community events before? If yes, what events have you attended? Do you frequent parks and outdoor spaces? If yes, which parks and outdoor spaces do you visit? Would you like to attend outdoor concerts or events on the North Shore? Is there anything that prevents you from attending outdoor events in the community? What is your primary mode of transportation? Have you ever used a shuttle service? What would make an outdoor space accessible?"

To execute this recommendation, NVRC could further access its partnerships with the following organizations to conduct surveys/assessments:

- Lionsview Seniors Planning Society
  - *Lionsview Seniors Planning Society aims to promote the participation of seniors in planning processes such as community planning, health planning and social services. Lionsview coordinates networking opportunities between local seniors' organizations and agencies (NVRCA, 2023).*
- Lynn Valley Services Society (LVSS)
  - *Lynn Valley Services Society (LVSS) offers various senior programs with several drop-in activities from book club, arts and crafts fitness and more (NVRCA, 2023).*
- North Shore Neighborhood House



- *Neighbourhood House delivers seniors programming at the John Braithwaite Community Centre, in conjunction with the City of North Vancouver and NVRC.*

Further, an additional organization that would be beneficial to partner with to get a sense of the needs of community members with disabilities is the Disability Alliance BC. The government of BC funds DABC and assists over 750 prescribed organizations to meet the requirements of the Accessible BC Act. The potential for continuous growth and forward momentum towards the accessibility goals outlined in the Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 could be expedited with assistance from DABC (DABC, 2023).

### **Recommendation Finding 2- Community Partnerships for Shuttle Services**

Primary research has indicated that the organization of a ride-share service or partnering with outside organizations that offer similar services has yet to be considered (Pastega & Grant, 2024). Therefore, partnerships with local organizations such as Silver Harbour are recommended. Silver Harbour offers a service to coordinate transportation for special events. To meet the criteria, participants must be 65+ and have limited transportation. Services are available free of charge during the day on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the densest areas of North Vancouver. Partnerships to extend special destination trips via pickup and drop off through Silver Harbour will expand the attainability of event participation for those with mobility issues.

Utilize partnership with Parkgate Society Community Services to provide accessible transportation to clients in need. NVRC currently has a partnership with Parkgate Society. This partnership could be capitalized to offer a unique event series transportation option. Parkgate Society currently offers the following bus services: The Seymour Access Bus for older adults who need assistance with transportation, getting out of the house, and monthly leisure trips and excursions. NVRC and Parkgate could collaborate and offer additional outings through Parkgate Society to NVRC's Live and Local event series to facilitate participation opportunities that would otherwise be difficult to access or out of reach to those who would benefit most from the partnership. These partnerships would help to further the mobility strategy of the District of North Vancouver by reducing the impact on the environment and climate change (City of North Vancouver, 2023).

The Parkgate bus service is mainly available after 5 p.m. and open on weekends, permitting the availability of drivers. It can accommodate up to 18 people, including caregivers/companions, on the bus. A central pickup location is required. Rates are \$2.50 per km and \$32/hr for the bus driver, plus a 15% administration fee and GST.

### **Recommendation Finding 2 and 3- Community Transportation Cork Board**

Because transportation and parking are ongoing issues, a resource board can be created to help empower community members to consider alternative routes. A big sign at Panorama Park currently encourages people to carpool, take transit or visit during non-peak times. While this is a good start, some people may need easy access to those options.

Having a resource corkboard at NVRC and North Vancouver community centers, neighbourhood houses, non-profit societies, and gathering places with posters and flyers from different organizations that assist with transportation could be beneficial. This could include HandyDart booking information, different taxi numbers for the taxi companies serving the North Shore (North Shore Taxi and Sunshine Cabs), ride-hailing services (Uber, Lyft), and information on route changes/disruptions for commonly used transit routes that would affect community members that generally use the transit options.

### **Recommendation Finding 3- Parking Personnel**

Panorama Park has limited parking spaces that are further reduced for event days as the lower lot is reserved for performers, contractors, and staff. To help control traffic flow, NVRC can consider adding event personnel positions and designate one person as a parking patrol person. This can be organized through casual summer staff. In previous conversations with NVRC employees, it was noted that volunteers or whoever is available at the time had been utilized for that purpose; however, they were only available, time permitting.

A consideration of an auxiliary seasonal position to assist with parking can be created. This person will help direct the traffic flow and indicate when lots are total by posting signage to indicate to incoming cars the capacity status (complete or not) and information on where to park when the lot is entire. There is a more considerable lot with four (4) hour parking five minutes away at Deep Cove Park. The parking patrol person can answer questions, provide direction and act as an enforcement officer when people use accessible spaces, ensuring they need them.

Additionally, outside contractors can be brought in to assist with parking lot management at Panorama Park. Organizations such as Precise Park Link can be brought in to provide the following services: Enforcement and ticketing, pay machines rentals, sections for timed parking, signage and tow alternatives such as wheel clamps (Pastega & Powell, 2024). In discussion with Justin Powell of Precise Park Link,

similar strategies have been implemented in Coquitlam and Harrison Hot Springs to remedy increasingly dense and populated areas.

As stated in the interview referenced in Appendix A6, a significant issue with enforcement through the municipalities is that it falls to law officers who already oversee a large area. Law officers frequently need more time or resources to deal with every parking infraction on top of their other responsibilities. Bringing in a contractor would ensure urgency and efficiency in dealing with parking issues and create a more equitable and accessible space for the increased number of visitors. Having enforcement and patrol officers would also help to oversee the credible use of accessible stalls and ensure that people who need them are using them and people who do not are not.

Costs for this solution vary depending on the combination of services required. Rates vary depending on the time of year and are broken down into the following considerations: labour rate, signage cost, installation cost, machine rental, and enforcement revenue. Revenues are split between the contractor and the hiring party, with a larger amount of the revenue going to the contractor.

### **Recommendation Finding 5- Equipment Transportation**

As referenced in secondary research, equipment transportation is an industry-wide issue that many organizations face, especially in terms of sustainability. Options to effectively transport event equipment, increase the offering of NVRC's adapted equipment, and cater to more diverse abilities include equipment van rental and lease. Equipment van purchase is not being considered for this option as events run seasonally and will be most in demand in the warmer months. Leasing or renting will allow for a more sustainable and economical option for NVRC.

**Van rentals** are available at various locations, including Home Depot, Enterprise and U-Haul.

Home Depot has cargo vans that carry up to 3,000 lbs with up to 543 cubic feet of storage space with seating for two. The interior is 10.5' in length, 4.6' in width and 4.7' in height. There is 47 sq. ft. of floor space and 309 sq. ft of loading space. A daily rental fee is \$119.95, not including taxes (Home Depot, 2023).

The enterprise cargo vehicle can carry up to a 1,850 kg payload, has two-person seating, and comes with an available bulkhead option. This option is best suited for medium—to heavy-duty cargo transportation. The interior dimensions are 320cm x 142cm x 139cm (126" x 56" x 55") (LxHxW). This option costs \$80.00 per day plus additional taxes and fees, totalling approximately \$40.00 (Enterprise, 2023).

U-Haul cargo vans can carry the equivalent of a one-bedroom apartment and are suitable for deliveries. The inside dimensions are 9'6" x 5'7" x 4'7" (LxWxH) with a door opening of 5'1-1/2" x 4'1-1/2" (WxH). Rental rates are \$19.95 an hour plus \$0.79/km and optional collision coverage for \$16.00 at a deductible of \$150.00 (U-Haul, 2023).

Vehicle lease programs are a possible solution to aid NVRC's goals of creating accessible events. A lease would benefit business operations, and lower vehicle lifecycle costs through usage-based payments (Pattison, 2023). Organizations like Jim Pattison and Driving Force are good options. With Jim Pattison, there are open-end leases and close-end leases.

An open-end lease will allow the selection of terms, and the organization will structure a package that matches the industry and application. The closed-end lease is a structure that allows the organization to budget its fixed lease payments with no residual risk. The leasing organization assumes the risk for the residual value at the end of the lease. Pricing for both options will depend on how long the lease is, what type of van/vehicle is needed and where the vehicle will be driven (locally or not) (Pattison, 2022). Additionally, specialized equipment such as lifts and ramps will increase the price of the vehicle.

Having a vehicle that can haul more equipment would allow NVRC to invest in adapted equipment to accommodate diverse community members and increase the accessibility of events. Some adapted equipment that would benefit NVRC, such as mobility mats (Access Revolution, 2023) and composite mats which can be found through CMS Mat Systems and Access Revolution, and adapted equipment for plaza events like adapted bocci and croquet (Flaghouse, 2023). These recommended items provide a glimpse into what is available through online stores such as Flaghouse and CDS Boutique, which are used to supply long-term care and adult day centers with activity supplies.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the text demonstrated how accessibility is a layered and complex issue that impacts the community of North Vancouver as a whole rather than one subset of that community. Research has shown how valuable outdoor events are to people who use mobility aids and how accessible environments benefit all of North Vancouver's citizens. The research has indicated accessibility successes and challenges in popular parks in North Vancouver, such as Panorama Park and Cates Park, and highlighted areas of opportunity that, if amended, would lessen accessibility issues in outdoor greenspaces and physical environments.

Research evaluated "what creative solutions NVRC can offer to members of the general public who use physical mobility aids to make outdoor special events in parks more accessible?" and led to five recommendations that will help NVRC: Further understanding of the needs and preferences of mobility aid users through needs assessments conducted at partnering organizations; An accessibility cork board to provide the community with information about alternative transportation options; A continued partnership with Parkgate Society to offer potential shuttle services to and from events; Parking personnel to control and direct the flow of traffic for events; Equipment transportation rentals or leases.

Through primary and secondary research methods, it is be understood that the increasing accessibility measures to meet the needs of the community members who use mobility aids will help to give equal opportunity to those members as well as benefit the rest of the community. The recommendations in the research paper allow for a better understanding of the community group facing accessibility challenges.

Each recommendation ensures that as the community's needs change, the organizational efforts are adapting along with it. By providing alternative methods of transportation through partnerships, providing more information on alternative methods of transportation, enforcing equitable access to resources such as parking, and having the ability to transport more equipment as an organization, NVRC can increase its accessibility through each stage of the event experience. Considerations of accessibility need to increase the usability of space for everyone and make an event more inviting, equitable and inclusive.

## **Appendix A: Interviews**

## **Appendix A1: Interview Questions**

1. Can you tell me about accessibility measures at your outdoor events?
2. What feedback have you received regarding your events and accessibility from the community, and from employees?
3. Can you speak to any barriers to accessibility that your organization faces in terms of environmental, built, societal, attitudinal, financial, perceptual, and policies?
4. Is there an accessibility committee?
5. Can you speak to what the priorities of mobility aid users are for outdoor events in parks? If not, what are the cities priorities in providing usable and accessible spaces for that community?
6. Can you speak to challenges in the past or present regarding accessibility and outdoor events?
7. If yes, how are they being addressed? If no, can you tell me about the successes regarding accessibility at outdoor events?
8. How big of a role does transportation play in accessibility to your outdoor events?
9. If transportation is an issue to accessibility to outdoor events in parks, what solutions are available to the public, especially those using mobility aids that may not be able to access transit options as easily as other community members?
10. Are you aware of any financial stressors regarding access to outdoor events in parks?
11. What practices do you currently have in place make outdoor events accessible to people who use mobility aids?
12. If you could change something about the way that your events currently take place, what would it be and why?
13. What are the biggest challenges to implementing successful changes to your accessibility practices?
14. Can you tell me about staff training in terms of providing assistance to clients that use mobility aids?
15. What policies in your opinion make accessibility more challenging?

## Appendix A2: Interview with Kim Kristensen, Community Events Programmer II

Date: Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>

Time: 4:15 p.m.

1. Can you tell me about accessibility measures at your outdoor events?
  - NVRC is wanting to create a presence where there is a gathering spot for people. That being said, in creating a gathering space for people we have to make that space accessible. One issue with our deep cove area is the parking in the area. For that reason, I do see a need to increase our accessibility measures. This is something that needs to be in our criteria of assessments when we are planning events.
  - Accessing deep cove can also be an issue, as is planning events in deep cove because the area wants a certain type of events in their location, but they want it during a certain time of year, and during the summer the area is so busy without events scheduled that they almost don't want to have events during the summer.
2. What feedback have you received regarding your events and accessibility from the community, and from employees?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
3. Can you speak to any barriers to accessibility that your organization faces in terms of environmental, built, societal, attitudinal, financial, perceptual, and policies?
  - Societal and attitudinal issues around cultural events
4. Is there an accessibility community?
  - I am unsure if there is one outside of NVRC, this may be a better question for Robin.
5. Can you speak to what the priorities of mobility aid users are for outdoor events in parks? If not, what are the cities priorities in providing usable and accessible spaces for that community?
6. Can you speak to challenges in the past or present regarding accessibility and outdoor events?
  - Parking is a huge issue in deep cove. There isn't enough of it either in the lots or on the street.
7. If yes, how are they being addressed? If no, can you tell me about the successes regarding accessibility at outdoor events?
  - Part of the consideration is evaluating who we have on hand at the time. Do we have casuals and volunteers that will be able to come out and help to direct traffic? However, I don't love that solution because it feels short sighted to pull on who we happen to have available, and doesn't really speak to the problem. Part of the draw to events in North Vancouver is that the city is walkable, or scootable, or easy to maneuver around.



8. How big of a role does transportation play in accessibility to your outdoor events?
  - We have noticed that most people walk down and live in the area, that being said, the parking lots are always full, even when the weather isn't the best, so it's definitely still a challenge even though a good number of people walk down.
9. If transportation is an issue to accessibility to outdoor events in parks, what solutions are available to the public, especially those using mobility aids that may not be able to access transit options as easily as other community members?
  - In an ideal world, we could have something like a school drop off zone that would be specific for event attendees
10. Does financial stress play a role in access to outdoor events in parks? If yes, can you explain how that presents itself?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
11. What practices do you currently have in place make outdoor events accessible to people who use mobility aids?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
12. If you could change something about the way that your events currently take place, what would it be and why?
13. What are the biggest challenges to implementing successful changes to your accessibility practices?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
14. Can you tell me about staff training in terms of providing assistance to clients that use mobility aids?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
15. What policies in your opinion make accessibility more challenging?
  - So far no, however it is my hopes that if we are presented with a policy that presents challenges to accessibility, that we would adapt and learn from the experience

**Appendix A3: Interview with Colleen Eschner, Lynn Valley Village Events Assistant**

Date: Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>

Time: 12:30 p.m.

1. Can you tell me about accessibility measures at your outdoor events?
  - Referring to the various sites that NVRC operates within, I feel that NVRC has a good handle on accessibility issues. All the events that NVRC runs with facilities or plazas typically have a good handle on their accessibility measures.
2. What feedback have you received regarding your events and accessibility from the community, and from employees?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
3. Can you speak to any barriers to accessibility that your organization faces in terms of environmental, built, societal, attitudinal, financial, perceptual, and policies?
  - From my observations we have a good handle on it, there is one door inside of our facilities that one person has an issue with regarding the weight of the door, however at most centers we have automatic or push-button doors, ramps, or the curbs are adjusted to bring mobility scooters, wheelchairs and walkers to level ground, and the curbs are widened with an easy drop off for ease of access.
4. Is there an accessibility committee?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
5. Can you speak to what the priorities of mobility aid users are for outdoor events in parks? If not, what are the cities priorities in providing usable and accessible spaces for that community?
  - **Unable to answer, defer this question to Events Programmer 2, Robin Wilson**
6. Can you speak to challenges in the past or present regarding accessibility and outdoor events?
  - I think each facility and each supervisor is doing a great job. Something though that is a challenge that needs to be considered when designing event spaces for people that use mobility aids is consideration of shadows. When you go from a dark surface to a light surface or vice versa, there is an appearance or disappearance of your shadow, which can be disorienting to the person using the mobility aid and can be hard to navigate because people that already have balance and gait issues are more susceptible falls, so a shift in perception could trigger a misstep which could lead to a fall
7. How big of a role does transportation play in accessibility to your outdoor events?

- At deep cove we have handicapped parking, we have enough parking in deep cove and Rogers Plaza, in front of JB, Lion's gate and Lynn Valley are good. If you are getting there in your own vehicle or a ride share service it is fine, however TransLink is the hiccup
8. If transportation is an issue to accessibility to outdoor events in parks, what solutions are available to the public, especially those using mobility aids that may not be able to access transit options as easily as other community members?
- **Ran out of time**
9. Does financial stress play a role in access to outdoor events in parks? If yes, can you explain how that presents itself?
- The only financial stressor would be the ability of people to get from point A to point B
10. What practices do you currently have in place make outdoor events accessible to people who use mobility aids?
- **Ran out of time**
11. If you could change something about the way that your events currently take place, what would it be and why?
- I have worked events for about 10 years outside of covid. There is so much thought that goes into the planning process of events, the barriers to access and inclusion. We are running into situations where we will be on a site, and we will run into cultural biases from patrons on the site. We run into biases mainly around LGBTQ2IA+.
  - This is a huge challenge for NVRC, because our events are for everyone, so while we create events that are welcoming and celebratory of the LGBTQ21A+ community, that may go against the cultural beliefs of a large community group within North Vancouver, so there is backlash there. Then, if we do not do programs to cater towards the LGBTQ2IA+ community, there will be backlash there. So the question becomes how do you create events and programs for subsets of your community that have strong cultural differences.
12. What are the biggest challenges to implementing successful changes to your accessibility practices?
- **Ran out of time**
13. Can you tell me about staff training in terms of providing assistance to clients that use mobility aids?
- No, however we do a dementia workshop to better understand the aging population that utilizes our services. Other than that, working with mobility aids and specific training for that is mainly reserved for aquatics regarding use of chair lifts. We have a lot of clients with various disabilities

that arrive in wheelchairs. They have staff that come with them from group homes and or have support service workers with them. We are not specifically trained in that, and I think that that is okay. I think that it is such a specific situation, that having support staff or family there to assist with them is fine.

- Additionally, how we do first aid at events has changed. We are technically not supposed to do first aid on site. This is an opportunity to iron out. If we have first aid people on hand, how
14. What policies in your opinion make accessibility more challenging?
- **Ran out of time**

**Appendix A4:** Interview with Events Programmer 2, Agency Supervisor Robin Wilson

Date: Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>

Time: 12:00 p.m.

1. Can you tell me about accessibility measures at your outdoor events?
  - I see a need to do more with our accessibility efforts. We are looking to expand our events and do a travelling event series through Cates Park called Culture paths where groups of 20 people would get an usher to escort them to different areas throughout the park for performances. It is essentially a travelling event. We would partner with Centennial theatre and figure out how to make this accessible. Possibility to have specific accessibility times where performances are in more accessible areas than others.
2. What feedback have you received regarding your events and accessibility from the community, and from employees?
  - Parking is a big problem, we have had people that have not been able to find parking spaces, so they have left their vehicles in the middle of the street, that when confronted by district staff they have become verbally aggressive with staff, which led to the police having to get involved.
  - This whole situation indicates that there is an accessibility issue because there is not enough parking. While this particular community member was not using a mobility aid and would have been able to park a few blocks away, this situation draws attention to people that do use mobility aids who are not able to find parking a few blocks away. Deep Cove is already on a hill and it is already a very challenging area despite the parking situation
3. Can you speak to any barriers to accessibility that your organization faces in terms of environmental, built, societal, attitudinal, financial, perceptual, and policies?
  - Environmentally, the outdoor parking we have for panorama is not enough, we would have to partner with parks to come up with a better solution than to temporarily add more accessible parking, which logistically can be a challenging situation because we only have two staff on site. Moreover, the lower lot of the panorama park parking lot is completely reserved for staff, performers and other contractors during events. If there are extra spots there is potential to release those spots to the public.
4. Is there an accessibility committee?

- Yes, there is the NS-ACDI. We use their recommendations to improve upon accessibility measures.
5. Can you speak to what the priorities of mobility aid users are for outdoor events in parks? If not, what are the cities priorities in providing usable and accessible spaces for that community?
- Mainly when people with mobility aids come to our events, they want to participate in the activities just like everyone else, however I have had instances of community members with mobility aids at events being asked by staff if they wanted to participate in an activity and the community member replied that he couldn't due to his mobility issues. This led to the realization that our activity stations are not as user friendly to people with mobility issues.
6. Can you speak to challenges in the past or present regarding accessibility and outdoor events?
- Making sure that everyone can participate in everything. Rounding out activities to make them more accessible. If we are able to have that offering, we can advertise it, then maybe we can reach more people of that community.
  - **There are no employees or volunteers that use mobility aids working for NVRC within the events department**
  - Lack of staffing/resources for transportation of equipment. Staff is expected to transport event equipment to and from the event site, so it is limiting to how much equipment can be used at events as it depends on the space in the personal vehicles of staff.
  - Every event we plan, we try to make it as impactful and simple as possible. When we do want to make things more accessible, it can create a lot of more set up and additional equipment. We also don't have storage at the event sites for our equipment either. Possibility to rent a van or purchase a van. Staff has had their cars broken into and events equipment stolen.
7. If yes, how are they being addressed? If no, can you tell me about the successes regarding accessibility at outdoor events?
- We are looking to make a request for an events van to rent or buy for the 2025 year.
8. How big of a role does transportation play in accessibility to your outdoor events?
- Last year, we were able to close the lower lot but because they changed the configuration and direction of traffic, we were no longer able to completely close it off, so we had to put cones up on each parking space and tell people where they could and couldn't park, and that has made it challenging because unless there is staff there to make sure people obey the parking restrictions, people have thrown the cones in the bushes and parked there anyway. People in the Deep Cove area are not very considerate about parking rules.

- To mitigate this, I am considering splitting the events in two. Last year we did four events in deep cove, this year we are doing two and two in Cates Park. Cates has significantly more parking, so it will be much easier to accommodate a lot of people who have accessibility problems. There is also much more parking near the stages [at Cates Park] where the concerts will be.
9. If transportation is an issue to accessibility to outdoor events in parks, what solutions are available to the public, especially those using mobility aids that may not be able to access transit options as easily as other community members?
- **Already answered above**
10. Are you aware of any financial stressors regarding access to outdoor events in parks?
- We don't do shuttles or any other service that takes people to events, they would have to have their own sources of transportation. Bus services would not be an option through the city, but there may be opportunities to research locally what is available through HandyDart or Transit, or local care homes that have the bus and staffing to assist with getting people to and from.
11. What practices do you currently have in place make outdoor events accessible to people who use mobility aids?
- Ran out of time
12. If you could change something about the way that your events currently take place, what would it be and why?
- Ran out of time
13. What are the biggest challenges to implementing successful changes to your accessibility practices?
- Ran out of time
14. Can you tell me about staff training in terms of providing assistance to clients that use mobility aids?
- Ran out of time
15. Can you speak to any policies that in your opinion present challenges in terms of accessibility?
-

## **Appendix A5: Interview with Laura Grant**

Date: Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Time: 2:45 p.m.

1. Can you tell me about your experience working outdoor events regarding accessibility?
  - Our outdoor events are generally pretty good, although transportation is constantly an issue for one of our sites. The Deep Cove area is always a challenge for people to find enough spaces to park their vehicles.
2. In terms of outdoor events, how are barriers to accessibility dealt with?
  - We have an accessibility plan in place that we are following, as well as a new document that is coming in 2025 to make sure that we are constantly developing our strategies and community needs evolve. We have also added a viewing platform at Panorama Park to make events more accessible to people with mobility aids. Currently, we are getting a new building at Harry Jerome as our old building is terrible in terms of accessibility. There are areas of the building that if you were to be in a wheel chair, you could only get into the lobby and that's about it.
3. Can you tell me about strategies that have been implemented in the past to help deal some of the troubles you've experienced regarding accessibility to outdoor events?
  - Part of the appeal to our community events is that we host them in places that are generally walkable areas, so the intention is that most people that will be attending our events will be walking there, or using a mode of transportation that is not a car. We have tried to be strategic with where we have hosted our events to make them as centrally located as possible, however there will always be people that for one reason or another will need to use a vehicle. Part of the strategy we may be considering is changing the number events we host in certain places like Panorama Park that has a notorious parking situation.
4. Has NVRC or the district ever considered a ride share situation, or any form of community organizing?
  - We do have signage up that encourages people to carpool and find alternative sources of transportation to Panorama Park. We have never considered organizing a ride share service or partnering with anyone else that has those services available.
5. Is there anything else you feel would be helpful to deal with the transportation situation?
  - I have seen elsewhere that there has been a high usage, or peak time parking system where during certain hours the allocation of parking stalls change. That could be something that might be helpful.



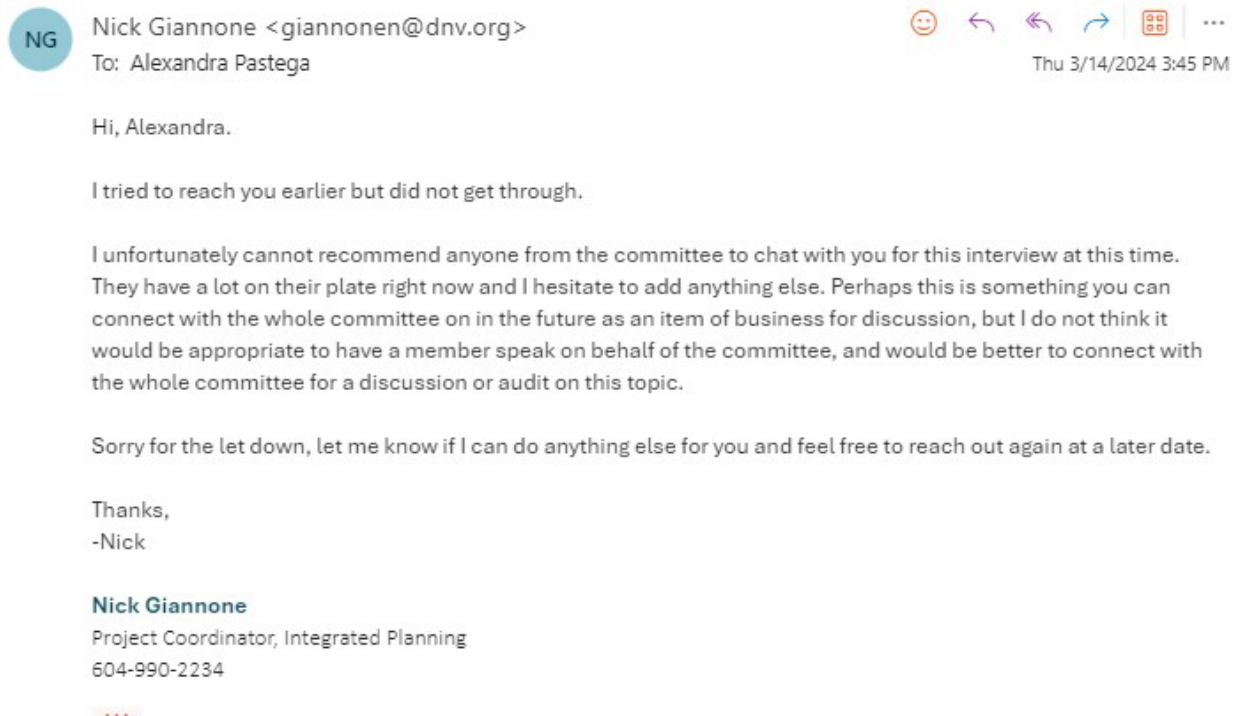
## **Appendix A6 Interview with Justin Powell of Precise Park Link**

- 1) What range of services does your organization offer?
  - We offer parking solutions for various locations from public to private spaces, faith sites parks and recreation and more.
- 2) Have you provided your services for municipalities? If so, what was your experience like?
  - Yes, we are very familiar with working in the municipal system. We have worked with City of Coquitlam, the District of North Vancouver, Harrison Hot Springs and are currently doing a proposal for Port Moody
- 3) What has your experience been like working with the municipalities? Can you speak to your successes and challenges?
  - We have had a great working relationship with all of the municipalities we've worked with, but one in particular is Harisson Hot Springs. The congestion in that area over the last five years has grown exponentially, and it is partially attributed to covid. When everything was closed and people had no recreational facilities to go to, a lot of folks went to the parks and to outdoor greenspaces. Since covid has tapered down, park use didn't taper down with it, if anything it grew at a very quick pace. Because of this Harison brought us in to try to control the increased congestion in the area.
  - Since being in Harison, they have noticed a decrease in congestion, an increase in turnover and more people have been able to utilize and enjoy their space.
  - The challenges of implementation are usually rooted in community push back. No one likes the person that is putting up pay parking and writing tickets, however, ultimately this system increases use for the community as a whole and makes opportunities more equitable rather than luck based as it has been in the past with free parking.
- 4) How do you deal with people that overstay the posted times or people that don't pay?
  - We have gone back and forth on how to deal with this issue, and for our organization it is more effective for us to use alternative solutions to towing. Rather than removing someone's vehicle, we use wheel clamps instead. The reason behind that is because if a vehicle is towed, depending on the time of day and the means of that person, it can be impossible for them to retrieve their vehicle and may put the person in an unnecessarily stressful situation. With wheel clamps, we post stickers on the windshield with our information, the owner of the vehicle call's the number and makes a payment either over the phone or in person when our guy comes down to remove the wheel clamps, and then they have their vehicle ready to leave after the violation ticket has been paid.

5) Do you have any recommendations for smaller spaces with high congestion?

- My best recommendation is to hire a contractor to help with the parking management. In my experience working with municipalities, the reason why contractors are brought in is because if its not us, it is by law officers that are doing parking enforcement. By law officers deal with everything by law related, not just parking infractions. Because of that, they are very busy and don't always have the time to come down for a parking issue. It may not be a pretty truth, but the fact of the matter is no one wants to touch parking. It's a tough job to do and the enforcement officers get a lot of flak for doing their jobs, so even if by law officers had the time, they don't always want to go down and deal with it. When you have specialized services that deal with this type of work day in and day out, they work with urgency and efficiency.

## Appendix A7: Potential Interview With NS-ACDI Committee Member



Sample E-mail Communication Regarding Interview with NS-ACDI (Pastega&Giannone, 2024)

## **Appendix B: Observations**

## **Appendix B1**

### **Observation Checklist #1 Accessibility Baseline Panorama Park**

Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>

Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

#### **Who/what was observed.**

The physical environment was observed to obtain a point of reference on accessibility measures at Panorama Park in Deep Cove, North Vancouver. The observation was a **general public observation**. Elements observed include: Vehicular access; Washrooms; Signage and Wayfinding; Picnic shelters; Walkability.

#### **Location observed**

Panorama Park in Deep Cove, North Vancouver. Weather: Overcast with light rain. Nine degrees Celsius.

#### **Observation Checklist**

In secondary research, much information was discovered regarding the large-scale issue that transportation poses on accessibility to parks and special events held in park. In the Accessibility Research Report, it was stated that “barriers to accessibility in parks exists prior to arriving on location in the form of transportation options, reliance on personal care networks, proximity to park space, and the cost of visiting parks (Environment, 2021). Therefore, when Panorama Park was observed, the major component that was assessed was the walkability of the area, parking, transportation options and accessibility information posted.

As an additional resource taken to the observation site, the B.C. Parks Universal Design Guide was also referenced. With the design guide, additional aspects of park accessibility were observed, such as access requirements for sinks and counters, accessory placement within washrooms, and signage content and placement.

#### **Field notes and checklist**

##### **Area of observation: Transportation**

- The first observation noted was that the parking situation was terrible. The parking lot was full on an overcast day with light rain. The street parking situation was also terrible. Minimal street - parking, most signs were for one- or two-hour parking, which is insufficient for event attendees. Other parking restrictions in the area included 15 minutes drop off zones, no parking zones and

permit and resident parking only areas. As well, the amount of street parking in the area is extremely limited, with most areas only being able to facilitate parking for at maximum five cars, while the accessible parking zone could only facilitate one car.

- Looking at the parking lot itself, there were 38 parking stalls in the upper lot including two accessible stalls. There were three accessible stalls that were painted over poorly, resulting in the visibility of the universal symbol for accessibility still visible to the general public, but no longer designated for accessible use. There were two spaces that were designated for a private community transportation service.
- The access map in the upper lot was placed over a curb and in the middle of a patch of grass, which can be difficult to access for people with mobility aids, especially walkers, wheelchairs and canes for people with visual impairments.
- In the lower lot, there were 18 stalls with one accessible stall and two stalls dedicated for staff. The map in the lower lot was located uphill from the accessible parking stall and did not include any accessibility related information, rather it was a trail map.

### **Area of observation: Washrooms**

The following checklist was used to assess washroom accessibility: The Universal Design Guide for Front-Country Parks

#### **5.3.2 Overall Access Requirements**

- a) If the washroom is not accessible, a directional sign to the nearest accessible washroom should be posted.
- b) Accessible washrooms must be designed to provide maneuvering space sufficient for a person in a wheelchair to access each type of fixture.
- c) Each washroom should provide for all types of users, including parents with children, gender non-binary individuals, or people with an attendant or a spouse. If this is difficult, universal washrooms can be used.
- d) Automatic door closers on entry doors must be adjusted to the minimum resistance setting of max 5 lbs. on all 3 settings: latch, back-swing and hold. Door closer units installed on washrooms should be low-resistance, delayed action closers and set to at least a 3 second delay or be eliminated completely
- e) Signage for washrooms should use standardized symbols consistently throughout the facilities and have raised lettering or symbols within the sign. Lettering should be raised 1 - 3 mm in height. Signs should be mounted 1200 – 1350 mm above the floor, on the wall - on the latch side of the door where doors are present – not on the door itself. Where there is no entry door, signs should be located on the left as the user enters the washroom. For more detail, see section 6.3.2.
- f) Accessories must be within easy reach of the accessible sink, at an operating height of between 915 mm and 1050 mm AFF, and approximately 760 mm from the center of the sink. This technique is most easily achieved on sinks closest to the corner wall.

V.3. last updated March/12/2021

BC Parks 2021

(Parks, 2021, pp. 29)

*When the washrooms were observed for a comparative analysis, the following findings occurred*

- Referencing the parks accessibility guidelines, **Section 5.3.2, letter B** states that all washrooms need to be accessible in every feature. In the washrooms at Panorama Park, only one washroom was found to be accessible. The other areas in the washroom such as benched seating areas and change stations were not adapted in any way, and had the same width as an average washroom stall (Parks, 2021, pp.29).
- **Referencing Section 5.3.2, letter F** states that all accessories must be within an easy reach of the sink. Accessories such as the garbage can and the hand dryer were found to be on the opposing wall furthest from the accessible washroom stall. The parks accessibility guidelines state that the wall in the corner of the bathroom closest to the accessible washroom stall is the easiest placement to have all washroom accessories (garbage can, hand dryer, paper towel dispenser, vending machines) (Parks, 2021, pp. 29).
- **Referencing point 5.3.3 on access requirements for sinks and counters**, letter G states that pipes should be protected or insulated as they could pose a burn risk to people in wheelchairs. The pipes at Panorama Park washrooms are no insulated or covered (Parks, 2021, pp. 31).

#### 5.3.3 Access Requirements for Sinks and Counters

- a) The counter surface for the lavatory area of the washroom must have a minimum of 735 mm clearance under the front edge of the counter/ sink;
- b) have a center line not less than 460 mm from a side wall;
- c) have its rim not more than 865 mm above the floor;
- d) have a clear area centered under the wash basin not less than 760 mm wide and reducing to not less than 685 mm high at a point 250 mm back from the front face of the apron;
- e) have a further clear space 250 mm above the floor to a point 500 mm back from the front face of the apron;
- f) have a clear floor space centered in front of the wash basin not less than 800 mm wide and 1100 mm deep, exclusive of space under the wash basin;
- g) have pipes insulated or otherwise protected where they may constitute a burn hazard to persons in wheelchairs;

(Parks, 2021, pp. 31)

Referencing point 5.3.4, letter H states that feminine hygiene receptacles must be on the side wall under the grab bar (Parks, 2021, pp. 33). The washroom at Panorama Park has the receptacle on the opposing wall.

- b) Toilet paper dispensers must be within easy reach from the sitting position. An ideal location is approx. 50 – 100 mm below the mid-point of the side grab bar.
- c) Conventional open roll dispensers must be used for all toilet paper dispensers in accessible pit toilets and stalls.
- d) Toilet flush handles must be located on the transfer side of the toilet – the side opposite to the wall.
- e) A sliding style of deadbolt lock must be capable of being latched from the inside with a closed fist.
- f) A coat hook must be mounted not more than 1100 mm above the floor on a side wall and projecting not more than 50 mm from the wall.
- g) The toilet stall door must have a graspable pull on the inside face of the door, at least 140 mm long, located with the midpoint between 200 mm and 300 mm from the hinge edge of the door and between 800 mm and 1000 mm AFF.
- h) Feminine napkin disposals must be located on the side wall under the grab bar and near the front edge for the toilet, not the rear wall.
- i) Stalls must be located with the center line of the fixture between 420 mm and 480 mm from the side wall carrying the grab bar, and at least 900 mm from any obstruction on the non-grab bar side.

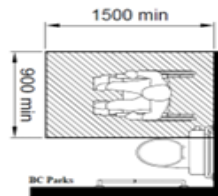


Figure 15: Transfer Area

- j) The seat must be 430 mm to 480 mm above the floor, and must not be the spring-up type.
- k) Where tank-type water closets are provided, tank lids must be bolted down.
- l) Where tank-type water closets are not used, a toilet seat cover must be provided that rests against the grab bar at an angle of between 95° and 110° to provide back support.

(Parks, 2021, pp. 33)

- Section 6.2.2 letter D states that there must be a high contrast of at least 70% and it is optimal to have light lettering on a dark background, i.e. white letters on black background. The panorama park sign is light on light.

## 6.2 General Signage

### 6.2.1 General Guidelines

All signage, including electronic displays, should be placed at decision-making points along routes of travel, including exits and entrances, and junctures in trails. The signage must be consistently located and be facing the direction of travel.

### 6.2.2 Access Requirements

- a) Signs must use only Arabic numerals and sans-serif lettering.
- b) All signs must have a glare free surface and not be mounted on reflective backgrounds or beneath Plexiglas.
- c) Signs should be mounted so that a person using a wheelchair, as well as people with vision impairments, can see them easily. Overhead signage alone is ineffective for most people who have vision impairments. The midpoint height of a sign should be at approximately 1350mm
- d) Signs must have characters and symbols in colours that highly contrast with the single coloured background of the sign. Colour-contrast should be at least 70%.



(Parks, 2021, pp. 38)

**Appendix B2, Photos from Observation #1**



Opposing wall of accessible washroom



Wall nearest to the accessible washroom



Panorama Park Sign

## **Appendix B3: Observation #2 Panorama Park**

Date: Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### **Who/what was observed**

Park patrons using mobility aids were observed to gain understanding of type and ease of use at Panorama Park in Deep Cove, North Vancouver. The observation was a **general public observation**. Areas observed include: Parking lots, popular walking trails, and viewing points.

### **Location observed**

Panorama Park in Deep Cove, North Vancouver. Weather: Overcast with light rain. Nine degrees Celsius.

### **Observation Checklist**

In secondary research, literature stated that the preferred use of parks by mobility aid users was to use the pathways/walkways and to socialize with their friends and families (Environment, 2021). Therefore, walkways and pathways were observed for ease of use, frequency and type of resting spaces were observed for ease and type of use.

### **Field notes and checklist**

#### **Area of observation: Parking Lot- Ease of Use**

- The lower parking lot is on an immediate downward slope towards walkways. The first resting space nearest the accessible parking stall is a picnic table on even terrain. From the accessible parking space on the upper lot, there is an immediate pathway leading to the walkways into the park. The most immediate resting space to the upper lot accessible parking space is adjacent to the park, which is not convenient to the user if they need to promptly rest. The deterrent for ease of use in the parking lot is the angle of the terrain. There were no hand railings, which may make things easier for those using canes to use safely.

#### **Area of observation: Walkways/pathways**

Many patrons were utilizing pathways with ease. One Park patron was using a cane and walked the pathway extending from Panorama Park to Deep Cove Park. This included inclines, declines, changes in terrain and stopping at viewpoints. Many other Park patrons were using the pathways with strollers and wagons and were travelling with young children. The walkways and pathways were used bi-directionally with ease by multiple users at the same time. Users that had large strollers had some difficulty with the

inclines of the area, however it can be assumed that was due to the increased weight as users with canes and smaller wagons and buggies did not experience the same difficulty.

**Area of Observation: Viewpoint**

The elevated viewing point was observed for type of use. Mainly ambulatory patrons walked up to the platform to share a moment together. Patrons leaned against the railings, some held hands at the platform, and some patrons brought their strollers up the platform. The platform is a wooden, even surface with minimal crowding or obstructions around it.

## Appendix B4: Observation #3: Cates Park

Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Observed areas include:** Parking lots, pathways, park furniture, accessible signage, signage and illumination.

### **Parking Lot:** *Referencing section 1.2.2 of the BC Parks Universal Design Guide*

- Several available lots. In the upper lot, 40 spaces total, zero accessible. In the middle lot, 75 spaces available inclusive of five accessible spaces. In the overflow lot, there were a total of 53 spaces, zero accessible. In the lower lot, a total of 46 spaces including three accessible spaces.
- In the lower lot, accessible parking is adjacent to a pathway with an accessible ramp.

#### 1.2.2 Access Requirements

a) Designated parking spaces for people with disabilities must:

i) be easily identified;



Figure 1: Vertical Accessible Parking Sign

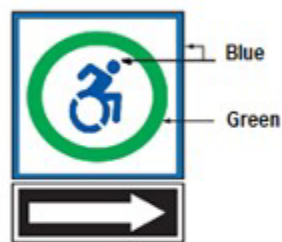
- ii) located within 30 metres of an access route and;
- iii) be connected to an access route to main park features park via an accessible pathway;
- iv) be a minimum of 3900 mm wide for cars, which includes 2400 mm for the vehicle plus 1500 mm for transfer space, which can be shared between two parking spaces;

V.3. last updated March/12/2021

BC Parks 2021

(Parks, 2021 pp.7)

- Referencing section 1.2.2 letters E,F and H, accessible parking must be located in a shady area to prevent from heat related injuries, and located near an entryway of a lot with posted signage. The accessible spaces were near the entryways in all lots, and all had painted markers **and** accessibility signage. Accessible stalls in middle lot had tree cover for shade.
- Accessible parking signs should be posted at the entryway of the park. This was not the case at Cates Park and is a great opportunity for NVRC if they are seriously considering Cates Park. The park has five separate lots; An upper lot; A middle lot; A lower lot; A lot reserved for recreation vehicles only that is not open to the public; And an overflow lot. Accessible parking signage would help meet the needs of event attendees.
  - e) Parking spaces should be located in various locations throughout the park, including shady areas, since people with disabilities may be hypersensitive to heat.
  - f) Signs should be located at the entrance(s) to parking area to indicate where the accessible parking stalls are located.



*Figure 4: Directional Parking Signage*

- g) Provide short-term parking spaces (10 to 15 minutes) near an entrance to prevent double-parking and reduce congestion where needed.
- h) Provide designated parking stalls with full coverage from weather.
- i) Provide courtesy or limited mobility parking for older people, parents with young children.

(Parks, 2021 pp.9)

- Referencing section 2.2.2, a pathway must have a no-slip surface and be on a continuous stretch with no changes of structure like stairs or steps, or have any changes in level (Parks, 2021). This was not the case at Cates Park. There was a no-slip surface in the parking lot from the accessible stalls directly to a pathway with a ramp. However, the ramp on the access route in the middle lot was cracked and had an uneven incline which could be a tripping hazard. As the user continues to walk, more cracks appear down the pathway. This is cause for concern more people with walkers, canes and wheelchairs, as well as ambulatory folks that may have balance or gait issues. Reference of policy below.

### 2.2.2 Access Requirements

- a) Pathways to at least one main park entrance and all ancillary areas that are required to be accessible must:
  - i) be a continuous plane, not interrupted by steps or abrupt changes in level; and
  - ii) have a permanent, firm and slip-resistant surface.
- b) Pathways are to have an uninterrupted width of not less than 1200 mm, and a gradient no more than 1 to 20.
- c) Pathways must not have a cross slope greater than 2%.
- d) Level landings and rest areas must be provided along a pathway when a grade exists. The steeper the pathway the more often landings must be provided.
- e) Seating must be provided at regular intervals, preferably every 30 to 100 m, and be located on a level area that does not encroach in the circulation route. The seating area must have clear space for person using a mobility aid and have a clear space for a service animal to

V.3. last updated March/12/2021

BC Parks 2021

(Parks, 2021 pp.13)

- When looking at park furniture, a good mix of both benches with and without arm supports were available near walking paths, as well as picnic tables. A good mix of picnic tables were along a concrete path, making it a great place for user with mobility issues to sit to enjoy an event. There were a minimum of three picnic tables that were situated in the grass with no landing pad underneath. These would not be ideal for mobility aid users to access.

### 4.2.2 Access Requirements

- a) All picnic tables must:
  - i) be located on a level and firm surface that extends at least 1200 mm on all sides;
  - ii) be located adjacent or connected to an access route;
  - iii) have sufficient clear ground space measured from the back edge of the seats or benches of at least 915 mm;
  - iv) have an overhanging portion with knee clearance of at least 750 mm wide x 480 mm deep x 680 mm high.
- b) Picnic table pads must be built in such a way that there is not a transition of surface materials within 1500 mm of the picnic table base at overhanging area. The difference in grade between the pad and the adjacent surface should not exceed 13 mm.
- c) All picnic tables must have an accessible overhanging end.

(Parks, 2021 pp.21)



- Assessing the signage at Cates Park, all signage met the requirements of Arabic numerals and sans serif fonts. Readability was good with a glare free surface and high contrast colours, however there were no braille on any of the signs, and no information about accessible areas. This is a point of consideration for NVRC if events were to take place at Cates, especially considering how much greater in size Cates Park is compared to the other locations that outdoor events commonly take place at like Panorama.

### 6.2.2 Access Requirements

- a) Signs must use only Arabic numerals and sans-serif lettering.
- b) All signs must have a glare free surface and not be mounted on reflective backgrounds or beneath Plexiglas.
- c) Signs should be mounted so that a person using a wheelchair, as well as people with vision impairments, can see them easily. Overhead signage alone is ineffective for most people who have vision impairments. The midpoint height of a sign should be at approximately 1350mm
- d) Signs must have characters and symbols in colours that highly contrast with the single coloured background of the sign. Colour-contrast should be at least 70%.

(Parks, 2021 pp.38)

- Illumination was observed while at Cates Park. It is worth mentioning that bathrooms were unable to be assessed because there were no functioning lights in either men or women's washrooms, and no light switches.
- There were no light posts around the park, that for events that may run later in the evening, depending on the month, it may pose a risk to event attendees.
- Section 6.5 states that lighting must be available during day and evening, especially if there are areas designed for interpretive evening programming.

## 6.5 Illumination

### 6.5.1 General Guidelines

Although uncommon in parks and campgrounds, lighting is helpful for these people in these circumstances. Lights outside toilet/shower buildings are common and must have photovoltaic or timed sensors to make travelling to the bathroom at night safe and easy.

### 6.5.2 Access Requirements

- a) Where possible the busiest pathways, ramps, and stairways must be well illuminated for safe use both during the day and night, especially in areas where there are amphitheatres designed for evening interpretive programming
- b) Lighting must be evenly distributed to minimize shadow and reflective glare.
- c) Task and local lighting control must be provided such that lighting levels can be localized.
- d) Interior lights in toilet/shower buildings can be equipped with motion activated sensors.

(Parks, 2021 pp.42)

## **Appendix C: Content Analysis**



## **Appendix C1**

### **Documentation**

The content analysis included six documents. These documents were sent via e-mail communication by agency supervisor Robin Wilson, as well as obtained independently from the internet. The following documents were used: A letter to council from The North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (NS ACDI), the North Vancouver Accessibility Plan 2023-2026, e-mail communication between the Event Programmer I and her immediate supervisor, Karen Pighin, the Live and Local event series survey results, the District of North Vancouver corporate policy on events in public open spaces, and lastly, the NVRC mission and vision. All content analyzed is in the context of the events department at NVRC, not NVRC as an entire department.

These documents gave valuable insight to how well-aligned (or not) NVRC was to its accessibility goals by comparing corporate policy to public statements such as the mission and vision of NVRC, as well as how well NVRC responded to recommendations from outside organizations on accessibility and to what degree and frequency. In secondary research, Wojnowska-Heciak et al., (2022) cited the benefit to socialization and use of public spaces for community members who use mobility aids. Outdoor special events are a perfect example of the type of organized outdoor recreation that would benefit community members who use mobility aids, and the above documents show the efforts towards making it happen.

### **How the documents were accessed (include date and time they were accessed)**

Documents were accessed via e-mail communication with agency supervisor Robin Wilson. Documents were accessed at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 28, 2024.

### **What framework/checklist you (the researcher) created to analyze these documents.**

Content analysis to identify the tone of communication and words used that mention accessibility and inclusivity in a public facing medium, like the NVRC mission and vision and accessibility 2023-2026 plan. Further comparison of those documents to corporate policy, internal e-mail communication, and event surveys to see if there is consistency across what the public can and cannot see. A table was created to track the similarities and differences in tone, language and sentiment of each document. The content analysis of the above documents will compare the three elements to assess alignment.

## Appendix C2: Content Analysis Checklist

	ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2023-2026	NVRC VISION AND MISSION	CORPORATE POLICY	E-MAIL COMMUNICATION	EVENT SURVEY	NS-ACDI LETTER TO COUNCIL
<b>TONE</b>	Direct, professional	Direct	Formal, assertive, direct	Professional, direct	Formal, professional, direct	Professional, direct
<b>LANGUAGE</b>	Clear, accessible	Inclusive, clear, accessible to the reader, free from jargon	Industry language, clear	Clear, inclusive, considerate	Clear, free from jargon,	Clear, inclusive, accessible to the reader, free from excessive jargon
<b>SENTIMENT</b>	Hopeful, encouraging, optimistic, forward thinking	Optimistic, forward- thinking	Informative	Optimistic, action oriented	Inquisitive, optimistic	Forward thinking, optimistic

### Elements:

Tone: Formal and assertive

Sentiment: What is the general attitude and feeling of the document?

Language: Politically correct, inclusive, accessible to all readers, free from jargon

**Appendix C3:** Notes From Content Analysis from The North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (NS ACDI) Letter to Council

**Tone:** Professional, direct

**Language:** Clear, inclusive, accessible to the reader, free from excessive jargon, politically correct, considerate

**Sentiment:** Forward thinking, optimistic

- The NS-ACDI mainly looks to influence outdoor events by workshops and community participation for events like community day and accessibility awareness week. Their stance is primarily on education and awareness to influence universal design.
- Terms such as accessibility, education, awareness, workshops, community, events, people with disability, barrier, universal design, public events, outdoors.
- The general sentiment expressed in this content is one of optimism with emphasis on community building, togetherness and inclusion for people of varying disabilities with recommendations and action items to execute.
- A formal tone with a slight undertone of despondency, as previous recommendations were not implemented and led to a systemic barrier that prevented the NS-ACDI from participating in the West Vancouver Days and impeded ability to deliver its approved terms of reference purpose.
- Focus on recommendations to make events more accessible mainly around accessible terrain (mowing the grass, placing cord covers to avoid tripping and tipping), parking and transportation. Recommendation around HandyDart, designated parking zones, transportation drop off and how to make terrain more accessible to people using mobility aids, like temporary ramps, and cord covers to prevent tripping and tipping hazards.

NORTH SHORE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES

May 17, 2022

Mayor and Council,  
District of North Vancouver,  
355 West Queens,  
North Vancouver, BC, V7N 4N5

**RE: Access for all at large public events**

Dear Mayor and Council,

The North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (NS ACDI) is a tri-municipal committee of council that has reviewed significant municipal projects for over 30 years and spearhead guidelines and policies that are used by the three municipalities. NS ACDI makes recommendations to the three North Shore municipalities to "promote, develop and sustain an accessible community, free of physical and social barriers", that not only serves people with all types of disabilities but effectively and actively advances universal design to meet the changing needs of a community so that all residents and visitors can age in place and/or comfortably enjoy frequenting an area.

A major component of NS ACDI's work in advancing universal design is through educational opportunities where NS ACDI provides a forum for discussion of issues affecting people with all types of disabilities and also participates in community events or awareness activities such as Access Awareness Week or Community Day. These types of events, *particularly municipally hosted outdoor public events*, are enjoyed by a broad range of North Shore residents and are central in the committee's outreach efforts to raise awareness of the importance of accessibility across the North Shore and effectively meet

Sample e-mail communication between NS-ACID and Council  
(NS-ACDI, 2022)

**Appendix C4:** Notes Content Analysis E-mail Communication Between Event Programmer 2 and Supervisor.

**Tone:** Professional, direct

**Language:** Clear, considerate, inclusive.

**Sentiment:** Optimistic, action-oriented

- Communication between events programmer and supervisor took place via e-mail and discussed the NS-ACDI purposes and suggestions for accessibility modifications.
- Throughout the e-mail communication, the tone was formal and direct. The formatting of the e-mail broke down information into categories with bullet points and had assigned deadlines to each recommendation from the NS-ACDI.
- Supervisor asked to see what accessibility suggestions were realistic to accomplish immediately, and what can be accomplished in the coming weeks, and by who. This showed an immediate interest in implementing the recommendations made by the NS-ACDI.
- Both supervisor and event programmer 2 were taking the recommendations seriously and taking action to turn the recommendations from NS-ADCI into a reality.
- Response from events programmer I broke down information into categories of immediate implementation and future implementation. This showed an action-oriented approach to recommendations made by outside organizations as well as immediate supervisor.
- All transportation and parking recommendations were addressed, cord covers were addressed, ramps were addressed and mowing the grass was addressed.
- The end of the e-mail communication finished with the line “Let’s have a look tomorrow during our tour at the possibility of adding a ramp”. This showed immediate interest in pursuing the recommendations further and prioritizing accessibility in events at NVRC.

## Robin Wilson

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**From:** Robin Wilson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:03 PM  
**To:** Karen Pighin  
**Subject:** RE: URGENT: FW: Follow-up ACDI - Community Events Letter

### Incorporate right away:

- Use cord covers on high-capacity electrical cords on both pavement and grass to improve accessibility for wheelchair, scooter and walker users.
  - *This can be implemented immediately. We would likely need to purchase some pedestrian cable protectors, unless we already have some but I can confirm with Amanda. (\$70-\$100 on u-line, depending on the size). It would be a valuable purchase that will be used often and at every event.*
  - *In past events I would also keep electrical tape on-hand as a back up to ensure that cords are taped down and secure. We can make sure to have plenty of electrical tape at every event. This will be helpful for any last minute electrical cord rerouting (like what happened at Lions Gate Opening where we had to run a cord to the fridge).*
  - *Will also work with Kevin (Sound engineer) to ensure his sound set-up and cords are properly secured to the ground. He may even have his own cable protectors.*
- Include details around pickup/drop-off locations for Handydart users, any additional SPARK Card parking, or other drop off locations that could be used by those with limited mobility in event outreach information available online.
  - We can implement this immediately by our first event date. Can we make our own signs or would we need to work with CNV or DNV?

Sample E-mail Communication (Wilson, 2022)

## Appendix C5: Notes from content analysis on: Live and Local Event Series Survey Results

**Tone:** Formal, professional direct.

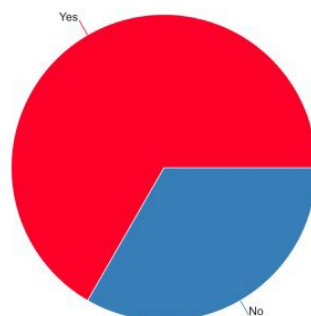
**Language:** Clear, free from jargon. It is important to acknowledge that while discussing LGBTQ2SIA+, some event respondents felt that the term itself was jargon, which was reflected in the written answers.

**Sentiment:** Inquisitive, optimistic

- The only forms of accessibility issues that were mentioned from the event attendees were people who found the event too loud and recommended bringing ear plugs for their next visit. Secondly 52% of attendees drove to the event and noted that parking was a huge accessibility issue. That being said, 85% of attendees say that they have not experienced an accessibility issue at the event.
- 70% of event survey respondents answered that they did not have any disability. Of the remaining 30% of respondents that answered yes to if they had a disability, 18.8% responded that they had mobility issues.
- When respondents were asked what they would like to see in future events to increase accessibility, respondents noted that seating, parking and volume have been issues at past events.
- Issues such as no hand railings were brought up, not enough accessible parking stalls, not enough seating/unclear if seating will be provided, unclear timelines of performers so members are unaware of when they should show up, potential to book seating as standing for long periods of time is not an option, and would prevent people having to attend hours earlier to secure a seat.

2023 Live & Local summer event series survey

1) Did you attend one or more Live & Local summer events in 2023? If No, skip to question 9.



A sample from the Live and Local Summer Series Event Survey (NVRC, 2023b)

## **Appendix C6: Content Analysis Notes on the NVRC Vision and Mission Statements**

The NVRC Vision and Mission statement are as follows:

**Vision:** “Recreation and arts are vital to North Vancouver becoming the most vibrant, diverse, active, creative, and connected community”.

**Mission** “North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission improves the health and well-being of all North Vancouver individuals, families and communities, and inspires residents through quality recreation and arts opportunities” (NVRC, 2023).

**Tone:** Direct

**Language:** Inclusive, clear, accessible to the reader, free from jargon

**Sentiment:** Forward-thinking, optimistic optimal-living

- The concepts align with what the NS-ACDI is discussing as well, albeit in slightly different language, but a similar sentiment. The NS-ACDI discusses more specifically people with disabilities, while the NVRC vision and mission statement uses the word diverse. The word diverse functions as an umbrella term that encompasses people with disabilities, but is not exclusive to only that sub-group of the population in North Vancouver. People with disabilities are under the umbrella of the term “diverse”.
- The language used in the vision statement is clear, brief and free from jargon.
- In the mission statement, the tone is conversational and assertive. There is no element of trying to convince the reader of anything, the statement is clear and to the point.
- The mission statement does not specifically address people with disabilities; however, it uses the umbrella of “residents”, which encompasses people with disabilities.
- The mission and vision are moving further away from the language used in e-mail communication, communication from the NS-ACDI, and in the event surveys. However, that is to be expected, as it is a statement to represent the community at large, not specifically one subset of the community.



## Appendix C7: Notes from Content Analysis on: NVRC Accessibility Plan 2023-2026

**Tone:** Direct, professional

**Language:** Clear and accessible. The accessibility plan does a good job explaining the various barriers that people with disabilities face. The plan explains the differences between physical, attitudinal, sensory, technological, and systemic barriers. The language lines up well with the communication by the NS-ACDI, discussing similar priorities.

**Sentiment:** Hopeful, encouraging

- The accessibility plan mentions the partnership between NS-ACID and DNV
- The accessibility plan discusses equitable access for all community members. This aligns with the NS-ACDI's prioritization of equitable access to outdoor events for community members who use mobility aids. The term "all" used in the accessibility plan would encompass people who use mobility aids and people with disabilities.
- The accessibility plan makes mention the NVRC mission and vision statements, stating how access and inclusion are pivotal to creating healthy families and communities.
- The access plan aligns well with the communication from NS-ACDI, the NVRC mission and vision statements and the internal e-mail communication discussing NS-ACID recommendations.
- The accessibility plan mentions that it will function to raise awareness and help staff to prevent barriers to accessibility by informing their practice (North Vancouver, 2023). It also mentions that the plan is not a concrete set of actions, but more so as an awareness tool to help the district embed accessibility across all of its practices. The sentiment of awareness aligns greatly with the sentiment and purpose expressed through the NS-ACID document.

### INTRODUCTION

This Accessibility Plan outlines how the DNV, NVDPL, and NVRC intend to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in North Vancouver. They will do this by changing enhancing how they deliver their services and programs. This plan covers the next three years (September 2023 - September 2026). It will be updated every three years at minimum to reflect progress, evolving community need, our growing understanding of accessibility, and future resources such as the pending release of provincial accessibility standards.

Accessibility is a cornerstone of thriving and inclusive communities. To create accessibility, it is necessary to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to participation in community and public life for people with disabilities. This means learning how to see barriers from the perspective of people with visible and invisible disabilities and make a commitment to addressing them.

Accessibility work is ongoing, iterative, and requires continuous adaptation. Therefore, the District partners committed to the goal of embedding accessibility in all District practices over time.

A sample of the North Vancouver Accessibility Plan 2023-2026 (North Vancouver, 2023)

**Appendix C8:** Notes from Content Analysis on Corporate Policy Manual Subsection Parks-General,  
Title: Community Events in Parks and Public Open Spaces

**Tone:** Formal, assertive, direct

**Language:** Industry language. Clear. No mention of: Accessible/accessibility in terms of people with disabilities; Disability/disabilities; Mobility/mobile

**Sentiment:** Informative

- The corporate policy on events focuses on the logistics and contractual obligations rather of the city more than user experience. This is not in alignment with the accessibility plan, communication from NS-ACDI, internal e-mail communication, mission and vision statements, or the event surveys.
- Potential explanation could be that there are other documents that address the user experience.



The Corporation of the District of North Vancouver

**CORPORATE POLICY MANUAL**

Section:	Parks Administration	12
Sub-Section:	Parks – General	5900
Title:	COMMUNITY EVENTS IN PARKS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES	2

**POLICY**

**Community Events on municipal property must have a Park Event Permit and adhere to the Park Event Procedures.**

**REASON FOR POLICY**

To provide information and direction on who should be allowed to hold events, what conditions should apply, how the events should be managed and to protect the organizers, community groups and the District from liability claims.

**AUTHORITY TO ACT**

Delegated to Staff

**PROCEDURE**

1. **Classification of Events**

Sample of Corporate Policy for Community Events in Parks and Public Open Spaces  
(North Vancouver, n.d.)

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