
REGIONAL PARKS FACILITIES

Effective Date: February 14, 2017

Approved By: MVRD Board

Policy No. PK-004

PURPOSE

To establish the types of facilities that Metro Vancouver will provide to facilitate passive outdoor activities located within regional parks and connect people with nature.

DEFINITIONS

“Regional Park Lands” – All properties held by the GVRD as regional parks or greenways.

“Facility” – A collection of constructed elements introduced to a park by Metro Vancouver in order to provide visitor access to a natural area for leisure activities. Facilities include major elements such as trails/paths, picnic shelters, grass fields, parking lots, washrooms, etc.

“Element” – A single constructed piece that in aggregation forms a park facility. Elements may be major (e.g. a trail) or minor (e.g. a water fountain).

“Passive Outdoor Activities” – These leisure pursuits primarily have the following characteristics:

- Enable people to connect with and experience nature;
- Are unstructured, self-directed and use a large, natural setting;
- Minimally disturb natural values;
- Occur on a day use basis; and
- Are non-motorized.

POLICY

The “2014 Regional Parks Service Review” report, adopted by the GVRD Board in November 2014, confirmed that the Regional Parks Service exists primarily to protect the region’s important natural areas while also seeking to provide opportunities for people to connect with, enjoy, be active within and learn about the region’s natural environment. It also confirmed that the facilities provided in regional parks are intended to facilitate passive outdoor activities in nature which complement the active outdoor recreation provided in municipal park systems. Examples of the types of active outdoor recreational facilities provided by municipalities include sports fields, courts for racquet sports, outdoor swimming pools, playgrounds, and skateboard parks.

There are historical instances where the Regional Parks service has built or acquired land with pre-existing facilities or activities inconsistent with the list that follows. It is recognized that these facilities are special cases and do not establish a precedent for their expansion within the system. The status of these facilities will not be affected by adoption of this Policy.

PARK FACILITIES

Metro Vancouver provides facilities that connect regional park visitors to nature to enable them to enjoy and learn about the environment or be active through passive outdoor activities during their leisure time. The following lists the typical facilities provided in regional parks to connect people to nature, where and when suitable in a particular regional park:

- Pedestrian trails;
- Multiuse trails for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians;
- Picnic areas and group picnic shelters;
- Launching facilities for non-motorized vessels;
- Day use and staging areas;
- Beaches;
- Access facilities for fishing;
- Group campgrounds;
- Nature centers;
- Viewpoints, blinds and viewing structures; and
- Interpretive features.

In the event that a facility not on the above list is proposed, the facility will be evaluated based on all relevant factors to determine if it is consistent with Metro Vancouver's definition of passive outdoor activities and suited to the proposed location.

The provision of and arrangement of facilities within a regional park is specified in the *Park Management Plan* for each regional park.

Attachment:

Table 1: Typical Elements Associated with Regional Park Outdoor Facilities

Other Related Guidance Documents:

The Regional Parks Services June 9, 2010 *Accessibility Commitment Statement*.

Table 1: Typical Elements Associated with Regional Park Outdoor Facilities

<p>Pedestrian trails</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails are primarily unpaved (but may be paved under certain circumstances) • Includes boardwalks, stairs and bridges
<p>Multiuse trails for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently unpaved trails or roads on dykes within regional parks • Trails must meet shared trail and equestrian standards (see design standards and guidelines) for width, grade, sight distances, etc. as appropriate • Horse trailer compatible parking, watering stations and tying post(s) if appropriate • Gates and fencing as required • Regional trails and/or greenway routes connecting to trails outside of a regional park may be paved, especially if connecting to paved trails • Bicycle racks • Includes boardwalks, stairs and bridges • Bicycling trails within regional parks are not lighted
<p>Picnic areas and group picnic shelters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic tables and natural grassed areas • Picnic shelters • Commonly associated with day use and staging areas • Commonly associated with open air group campgrounds
<p>Launching facilities for non-motorized vessels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple water access (to put in vessels) • May include floats, docks and/or natural or modified landing spots • May include vessel rental facilities where suitable • Commonly associated with day use or staging areas
<p>Day use and staging areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Typical location of many basic facilities • Frequently associated with group picnic shelters and picnic areas, beaches, group campgrounds, park buildings, fishing access, non-motorized vessel launching facility, interpretive displays, features, and nature discovery areas* • Sometimes associated with concessions and equipment rentals.

BOARD POLICY

<p>Beaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach or waterfront access, grassed areas, changing facilities, and concessions, if warranted • Swimming is unsupervised (i.e. no lifeguards and associated facilities) and the opportunity to swim is dependent on natural water quality and shoreline configuration • Often associated with group picnic areas as well as day use or staging areas
<p>Access facilities for fishing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water access and fish cleaning station • Fishing float or dock may be offered • Frequently associated with day use or staging area
<p>Group campgrounds;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tent pads and/or natural grassed gathering areas & BBQs • These areas may be associated with facilities for picnicking, fishing access, beach access and non-motorized vessels
<p>Nature centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually buildings or structures designed or adapted to support understanding of natural areas found within park • May be open air on occasion • Typically associated with day use or staging areas
<p>Viewpoints, blinds and viewing structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings, structures or areas designed to support viewing or nature study in regional parks • Sited adjacent to natural feature with high nature study or viewing value • May include interpretive feature(s)
<p>Interpretive features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes signage, landscape exhibits or other installations intended to enhance public connection to nature or the regional park • Sited adjacent to park feature meriting interpretation • May be composed of a single or multiple elements • May change seasonally or evolve over time
<p>Basic Facilities</p> <p>All outdoor activities require the provision of the following basic facilities at the appropriate scale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrooms/toilets, waste/recycling receptacles, drinking water standpipe/tap/fountain, benches, way finding signage, connecting paths, vehicle parking and related park access elements (e.g., bollards, gates, fencing, stiles, etc.)

**Nature discovery areas are discretionary features that may be suitable for provision within regional parks on a case by case basis.*