

## Provide a range of supporting amenities to activate park playgrounds



Esquimalt Adventure Park  
Esquimalt, BC

**Inspiration:** Inclusive washroom building



Image Credit: Berger Partnership  
Surrey Downs Park, Bellevue WA

**Inspiration:** Picnic shelter to support community gathering in close proximity to the playground area

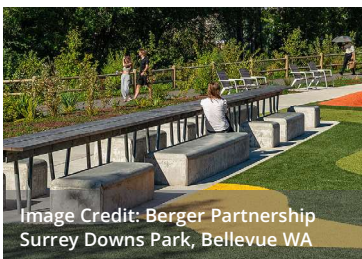


Image Credit: Berger Partnership  
Surrey Downs Park, Bellevue WA

**Inspiration:** Gathering space for individuals and groups



Image Credit: Seattle Parks & Rec  
Pratt Park Spray Park, Seattle WA

**Inspiration:** Inclusive splash pads and water play areas were well-supported by community engagement participants

### Background & Rationale:

- Many community engagement respondents shared concerns about safety and garbage / debris in gathering spaces, specifically evidence of substance use in or near playground areas. Provision of supporting amenities can encourage positive and increased activation of parks and playground spaces.
- Opportunities exist to expand the range of supporting amenities in Courtenay's park playgrounds. Research has shown that investment in public places to include elements like furnishings and public art helps enable people to feel comfortable and at ease, increasing activation and community wellbeing and decreasing negative behaviours.
- Many community engagement respondents supported the idea that playgrounds can act as gathering spaces and inclusion of amenities like washrooms, benches, picnic areas, and spaces for food trucks, kiosks, or concessions could help attract visitation and community gathering.
- The PRMP (2019) indicated a range of amenities to be included in the design of new and upgraded park areas:
  - » Seating
  - » Gathering places, with seating and spaces appropriate for picnics and group activities
  - » Celebration of local artists in parks, with more public art such as murals, mosaics, and sculptures.
- Many public engagement participants expressed desires for amenities to support all-seasons use, including shade structures during the hot summer months and lighting and covered areas during dark, wet weather.
  - » Benefits of shade include UV protection, energy conservation, heat mitigation, climate adaptation, promotion of outdoor activities, reduced air pollution (from shade trees) and extending the lifespan of outdoor furniture and infrastructure.
  - » Shade structures are important in playgrounds as children are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses and UV radiation.

## Design Standards

### Standard and Special Amenities

- Provide a range of amenities to support playground users and attract visitation, including:
  - » **Standard Amenities:** gathering spaces, waste receptacles, shade elements, signage, bike parking
  - » **Special Amenities:** washroom buildings, water fountains, splash pad / water play, picnic shelters, BBQ areas, game tables, multi-sport courts & multi-purpose paved surfaces, space for food trucks / kiosks, public art, lighting
  - » For Community Park Playgrounds, provide a mix of standard and special amenities.
  - » For Neighbourhood Park Playgrounds provide standard amenities. Special amenities to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
  - » For Nature Park Playgrounds provide standard amenities. Special amenities to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Use materials and furnishings that have a consistent character with each park, e.g., Nature Park Playgrounds should use warm, natural materials like wood and stone. Specialty finishes and custom features should be reserved for Community Park Playgrounds.
- Locate supporting amenities in close proximity to playground areas. Consider required clearance zones for adjacent activity areas (e.g. verge spaces and clearances surrounding playing fields).
- Select and locate amenities with consideration for sun exposure and thermal comfort (refer to the Shade Lookbook, see Appendix A).
- Refer to the tables on the following pages for additional information on supporting amenities, including:
  - » **Amenity Type:** Standard or special amenity
  - » **Description:** Brief overview of the amenity and considerations for implementation
  - » **Priority:** High, Medium, or Low based on community support indicated during the public engagement phase and level of community need
  - » **Capital Cost Estimates:** High-level cost ranges for planning purposes only:
    - \$ = \$0 - \$15,000
    - \$\$ = \$15,000 - \$50,000
    - \$\$\$ = \$50,000 - \$150,000 (if the cost exceeds \$150,000 a rough-order of magnitude cost is provided)

### Additional Considerations

Consider fun and playful seating options to attract gatherings and visitation throughout the year, including:

- » Swing Seats
- » Hammocks
- » Movable Furnishings
- » Illuminated / Interactive Installations



## Standard Amenities for Park Playgrounds

STANDARD AMENITY	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE
<p><b>Gathering Spaces</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>All Playgrounds:</b> Add City of Courtenay standard park benches with back rests near playground areas (min. 2 per playground area).</li> <li>» <b>Community Playgrounds:</b> Provide flexible seating areas for small group gatherings including seat walls, benches, tables, picnic tables, and custom furnishings.</li> <li>» Allocate clear zones next to all benches and furnishings for parking wheelchairs or strollers.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>	<p>All: \$ Community Parks: \$\$</p>
<p><b>Waste Receptacles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>All Playgrounds:</b> Provide double-stream waste and recycling receptacles in all park playgrounds. Select animal-proof models.</li> <li>» Locate waste receptacles in close proximity to other amenities (e.g., picnic shelters, trail connections).</li> <li>» Provide clearance zones surrounding waste receptacles for maintenance access.</li> <li>» Provide safe sharps disposal bins near park playgrounds on an as-needed basis.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>	<p>\$</p>
<p><b>Shade Elements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>All Playgrounds:</b> Provide shade trees. Locate accordingly to shade key playground areas during the warmest hours of the day. Refer to the Shade Lookbook for appropriate shade tree species (see Appendix A).</li> <li>» <b>Community Playgrounds:</b> Provide shade trees and shade structures including shade sails or covered gathering spaces (see picnic shelters).</li> <li>» Prior to implementing shade elements, conduct a solar analysis and shade audit to maximize effectiveness.</li> <li>» Plan shade sails and shade structures with the support of a structural engineer.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>	<p>All Parks: \$ Community Parks: \$\$\$</p>
<p><b>Bike Parking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>All Playgrounds:</b> Provide convenient, safe bicycle parking opportunities near primary bike paths.</li> <li>» <b>Community Playgrounds:</b> At select Community Park Playgrounds, integrate amenities to support bikes and electric bikes (e-bikes) including electric bike charging stations and bicycle repair / fix-it stations.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>	<p>All Parks: \$ Community Parks: \$\$</p>
<p><b>Signage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>All Playgrounds:</b> Provide regulatory signage indicating hours of use and codes of conduct.</li> <li>» <b>Community Playgrounds:</b> Provide welcome signage and playground wayfinding and interpretive signage to guide park users to and from the play area and provide information on the history of the park, playground, and unique design and placemaking elements.</li> </ul>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>All Parks: \$ Community Parks: \$\$</p>

Table 4: Standard Amenities for Park Playgrounds

## Special Amenities for Park Playgrounds

SPECIAL AMENITY	DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PRIORITY	CAPITAL COST ESTIMATE
<b>Washroom Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Provide universally accessible facilities.</li> <li>» If locating in a Community Park with a splash pad or other recreational activities, consider integrating change room facilities.</li> <li>» Prioritize Community Parks with existing water / sewer connections in close proximity to the playground area to reduce costs and construction impact.</li> <li>» Consider composting or pit toilets if capital budgets or infrastructure do not allow for water / sewer connections.</li> <li>» Update maintenance / operational capacity to reflect additions</li> </ul>	High	~ \$250,000 - \$500,000
<b>Splash Pad / Water Play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Prioritize implementation of a new splash pad at a Community Park on the east side of town (to complement existing amenity at Lewis Park).</li> <li>» Splash pads should be universally accessible with a range of interactive spray features.</li> <li>» Consider alternative use of splash pad area during winter months (e.g., multi-purpose paved space for recreational use).</li> <li>» Use effective water-management systems including high-efficiency nozzles and on-demand activation, Consider water re-circulation systems.</li> </ul>	High	~ \$200,000 - \$350,000 (+)
<b>Public Art</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Integrate public art in the form of sculptures, murals, and interactive installations within or near playgrounds.</li> <li>» Integrate Indigenous art and storytelling within play spaces.</li> <li>» Feature local artists from Courtenay and the surrounding region.</li> </ul>	High	<b>TBD based on capital budgets</b>
<b>Picnic Shelter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Place covered picnic areas in close proximity to the playground and gathering space to accommodate small community gatherings.</li> <li>» Provide universally accessible surfacing and access routes to and from the picnic area.</li> <li>» Provide a range of furnishings including picnic tables and longer community tables.</li> <li>» Integrate clear zones next to tables for wheelchairs and stroller parking.</li> <li>» Consider integration of lighting to support evening use.</li> </ul>	Medium	<b>\$\$\$</b>
<b>Water Fountain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Locate new drinking fountains in close proximity to gathering and / or picnic areas.</li> </ul>	Medium	<b>\$</b>

<b>Multi-sport Court</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Upgrade existing multi-sport courts.</li> <li>» In select Community Parks, consider addition of new pre-fabricated sports courts or flexible paved areas near park playgrounds, with lining for basketball, floor hockey and other recreational activities.</li> <li>» Provide fencing or sideboards around court areas to contain balls, as needed.</li> <li>» Provide benches.</li> </ul>	Medium	<b>\$150,000 - \$300,000</b>
<b>Areas for Food Trucks / Retail Kiosk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Provide paved open areas for food truck parking or pop-up retail kiosks. Allow for vehicular access from adjacent roads or parking areas.</li> <li>» Locate near gathering spaces, waste receptacles, and shade elements</li> <li>» Provide electrical connections compatible for food trucks.</li> <li>» Consider reviewing Business License Amendment Bylaw No. 2847, 2016 to identify other park locations for Food Trucks than those established in the bylaw (i.e. near playgrounds).</li> </ul>	Medium	\$
<b>Lighting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Add or upgrade pedestrian-scale lighting at playground entries and along primary park trails.</li> <li>» Integrate building-mounted lighting at washroom buildings and picnic shelters.</li> <li>» Consider addition of low-level lighting recessed in seat walls or mounted to the underside of benches or furnishings.</li> <li>» Use energy-efficient fixtures (e.g. solar LED lights) and consider integration of timers.</li> <li>» Design lighting for dark-sky compliance to avoid light trespass onto habitat areas and adjacent residential neighbourhoods.</li> </ul>	Medium	\$\$
<b>BBQ Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consider raised charcoal BBQ grills in close proximity to picnic shelters / gathering areas.</li> <li>» Ensure surfacing and furnishings materials directly surrounding grills are non-flammable.</li> <li>» Provide counter tops or tables for placing food and cooking utensils adjacent to grills and coal disposal canisters for safe removal of unused coals.</li> <li>» Provide regulatory signage related to BBQ area codes of conduct.</li> </ul>	Low	\$\$
<b>Game Tables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consider game tables near playground gathering spaces (e.g., chess tables, ping pong, foosball).</li> <li>» Seek opportunities to partner with the K'omoks First Nation to develop spaces for traditional games.</li> </ul>	Low	\$

Table 5: Special Amenities for Park Playgrounds