

NEWS RELEASE

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Vehicle access changes at Westwood Lake Park

Additional improvements coming to popular park

Summary

The City is implementing access changes to Westwood Lake Park in advance of park improvements which are planned for construction this fall and winter.

Starting this week, the third (and final) gate access into the park at the end of Westwood Road will be accessible to boat launch traffic only.

All other vehicle traffic wishing to enter the park must now do so through the new parking lot on Westwood Road. The gravel parking lot close to second beach is also accessible through the new parking lot.

Park users are asked to follow on-site signage and flaggers will be on-site this week and through the Canada Day long weekend to help parks users get used to the change.

This change is being made along with minor beach maintenance including the removal of the old metal railing at the rear of the beach, topping up of beach sand and the installation of a temporary pop-up parkette in what was the parking lot just behind first beach.

Strategic Link: Providing enhancements to our parks and open spaces supports a livable community.

Key Points

- Westwood Lake Park is one of the busiest and most popular places to visit in Nanaimo. The Park is in the process of undergoing a variety of phased improvements over several years. Ahead of the busy summer season, the City of Nanaimo is planning beach maintenance activities and early beach expansion into a portion of the park that will no longer be used for parking.
- In 2023 the "Westwood Lake Amenity Improvement project Phase one" saw improvements to access at the Park including the construction of a new accessible parking lot with natural storm water management system.
- A phase two project is planned for this fall winter 2024/25 and will include improvements to first beach, the addition of shade, beach amenities and new universal washrooms.
- The changes taking place this week are temporary and are to help park users get used to the changes that will come as part of the phase two project which will see the pedestrianisation (converting a street or an area to pedestrian-only use) of the area behind first beach to all but boat traffic along with many accessibility improvements.

Quotes

"Access to Nanaimo's waterfront is one of the most commonly requested community park requests. Improvements to the beach and amenities at Westwood Lake Park will make water access easier and safer for fun, fitness and relaxation."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- Westwood Lake Park is a prime destination for swimming, walking, running, paddling, biking, fishing, nature appreciation and public events.
- Council approved a multi-phased Amenity Improvement Plan for Westwood Lake Park in 2021. Phase 1 improvements focused on an accessible and expanded parking lot that opened in 2023. The new lot features an integrated storm water management system that captures and filters rainwater, new emergency access, new sidewalks, a bike lane and marked raised crosswalks for safe park circulation.
- Phase 2 improvements are expected to begin this fall and will include an expanded sandy beach with universal access to the water, picnic areas, seating, shade, green space and accessible inclusive washrooms.
- Other future work may include children's play equipment, improved fishing facilities, park buffers and recreation amenities including some for mountain biking. Improvements to other locations in the 208 hectare park and an overall park strategy may be considered by City Council at a future date.

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