

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS PROJECT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is an accessible playground?

Accessible playgrounds are designed to meet the needs of children and families of all abilities. The playgrounds consider all disabilities and developmental stages to enable children of all abilities to play together. They also enable parents and caregivers with physical disabilities to be nearby and play with their children.

Why is this project important?

All children need to play. Without accessible playgrounds, children with physical and developmental disabilities may spend their entire childhood without experiencing what it feels like to play on a playground with their peers. These accessible playgrounds will be enriching and inclusive environments which enable children with disabilities and without to play, learn and grow together.

How did this partnership come together?

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Canada approached 2010 Legacies Now to discuss options for developing accessible playgrounds. 2010 Legacies Now then engaged the remaining partners, including the venue cities, to ensure the project was a success. 2010 Legacies Now also worked to secure funding for the project.

Who is paying for the playgrounds?

The three partners are investing \$1.2 million to fund the design and building of the three playgrounds: the Province of B.C. has committed \$750,000, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Canada has contributed \$300,000, and the Rick Hansen Foundation has provided \$150,000 (split across the three locations).

In addition to the initial project funding, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, City of Richmond and Resort Municipality of Whistler will provide in-kind investments, including the land space and overseeing the building and ongoing maintenance of the playgrounds.

How much will these playgrounds cost?

The playgrounds will showcase best practices in playground design and numerous types of accessible and inclusive play-spaces. Through initial consultations with Shane's Inspiration, a high and low-range budget was developed for each site. We are within the range of this budget for each of the playgrounds.

The estimated minimum costs for each of the playgrounds are:

Vancouver playground: \$500,000

Whistler playground: \$650,000 (this is part of a larger redevelopment of the Celebration Plaza)

Richmond playground: \$400,000 (this is part of a larger redevelopment of the riverfront)

Where are the playgrounds located?

The playground in Richmond is being built along the riverfront walkway near the Olympic Oval. This playground will be designed as a "walk and play", with three separate accessible features along the walkway.

The Whistler playground will be located in the Whistler Village at the Celebration Plaza.

The Vancouver playground will be built at Kitsilano Beach Park near the outdoor basketball court where an older, less accessible playground is currently located.

When will the playgrounds be finished?

The Richmond playground and 60 per cent of the Whistler playground will be completed in time for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The playground in Vancouver will be completed by summer 2010.

Why were these three communities chosen?

Vancouver, Whistler and Richmond, as the venue cities for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, are in a position to showcase local programs and projects leading up to, during and beyond the Games. These accessible playgrounds will set a new standard by which playgrounds throughout B.C., Canada and the world can be measured. They will be true Olympic and Paralympic legacies left behind after the Games for residents and visitors to enjoy in these communities.

Why were these sites picked?

Each venue city provided possible locations for consideration for these playgrounds. The final sites were selected based on their potential for creating a long-term legacy for the communities.

How does this link to the 2010 Winter Games?

Many Olympic sponsors are seeking ways to make long-term investments in the host cities for Olympic and Paralympic Games. As a proud sponsor of the Games, McDonald's has a tradition of giving back to the host country, which continues in 2010 with a donation from Ronald McDonald House Charities of Canada that will help fund the construction of three accessible playgrounds.

For RMHC/McDonald's spokespeople to elaborate on point above

The partnership between RMHC and McDonald's dates back to the inception of RMHC. McDonald's Restaurants of Canada and their Owner/Operators are the largest of many donors of Ronald McDonald House Charities. Without their support we simply couldn't reach as many Canadian children and families as we do. McDonald's Canada covers 100 per cent of the operating and administrative costs for RMHC. That means 100 cents of every dollar, directly donated, goes directly to helping kids and supporting families. Since January 2004, McDonald Canada and their Owner/Operators have donated 10 cents from the sale of every Happy Meal purchased across Canada, every day of the year. To date, over \$25 million has been raised for RMHC, through the 10 Cent Happy Meal Program.

Isn't this just more Olympic spending?

No. While creating community legacies from the 2010 Winter Games was the inspiration for these playgrounds, the funding comes from outside Olympic spending.

Why is Ronald McDonald House Charities involved in this project?

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Canada is a national charity that is dedicated to helping children with serious illnesses or disabilities, and their families, lead happier and healthier lives. This project will ultimately allow RMHC to further its mission and reach more children and families.

Why is the Rick Hansen Foundation involved in this project?

The Rick Hansen Foundation is a registered charitable organization that works to create accessible and inclusive communities for people with spinal cord injury and champion research for a cure for spinal cord injury. The Foundation supports its goals by connecting people and resources across relevant sectors to deliver effective and lasting results - and to make change possible.

Let's Play, a joint initiative of the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Province of B.C., is a program dedicated to ensuring young children with physical disabilities have the same opportunities for play as their peers. Let's Play offers grants for the creation of accessible public play spaces for children aged 0 - 6 in B.C. and builds awareness about accessible play and related best practices. The Rick Hansen Foundation is happy to support the accessible playgrounds project, helping to promote accessible and inclusive communities that will benefit children of all abilities for years to come.

Why is 2010 Legacies Now involved in this project? What is its role?

These accessible playgrounds align with 2010 Legacies Now's mandate to work with communities to create inclusive opportunities and sustainable legacies to benefit British Columbians as a result of hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. 2010 Legacies Now will work with all the partners involved to oversee the project and ensure the playgrounds are completed to everyone's satisfaction, as well as share the learnings from these playgrounds with communities throughout B.C.

The playground in Vancouver is being built in Kits - isn't that just giving more money to an already wealthy community?

The Kitsilano Beach Park location attracts more than three million visitors from communities throughout Metro Vancouver each year, making it an ideal location for an accessible playground. Kitsilano Beach Park was also on the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation's priority list for upgrading the existing playground. This project will ensure the new playground is accessible for all children and their families.

Who is Shane's Inspiration? How were they chosen?

Shane's Inspiration is a California-based non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children with disabilities. Shane's Inspiration has designed and developed over 40 accessible playgrounds throughout the United States and the world. These three playgrounds will be their first constructed in Canada.

Shane's Inspiration responded to a Request for Proposals issued by 2010 Legacies Now in April 2008 to obtain consultation services on the scope of a possible accessible playgrounds project. Shane's Inspiration's was selected for this consultation process because of its experience and knowledge in designing and building universally accessible playgrounds. Following this consultation phase, Shane's Inspiration offered its services, free of charge, to design the playgrounds in Vancouver, Whistler and Richmond.

Why was a local company not chosen for this project?

Shane's Inspiration emerged as the most qualified applicant during the Request for Proposals process based on its experience in designing and building universally accessible playgrounds. Shane's Inspiration is designing the three playgrounds free of charge.

Will any community consultation be done on the design and building of these playgrounds?

Yes. Each community will undergo a community consultation process lead by Shane's Inspiration, in partnership with the local parks board. Children and community members are invited to participate in a session to identify priorities for an accessible playground in their community. This consultation process will help to shape the planning for the playground and ensure the playground is specific to each community's needs. Richmond and Whistler has completed this consultation process; Vancouver's is scheduled for this fall.