

NEWS RELEASE

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First phase of the Westwood Lake Park Improvements are almost complete

The new parking lot will open on Thursday, June 1

Summary

Westwood Lake Park, one of the busiest and most popular places to visit in Nanaimo, is in the process of undergoing a variety of phased improvements over several years.

Phase 1 improvements are almost complete and focus on the park entrance off Westwood Road. The new features enhance park access, vehicular circulation, parking and safety.

The new parking lot will be open from Thursday, June 1.

The area remains an active construction site. Park users are asked to follow on-site signage and in the coming weeks, will notice changes to the parking lot entrance and exit points with modified access to the gravel parking lot and non-motorized boat launch.

Phase Two improvements are slated to begin in late 2024 and will include beach widening and a new amenity building including universal washrooms.

Further details and information about future phases of the Westwood Lake Park improvements for First Beach and the Westwood Road entrance will be posted on-site this summer and can be found at <https://www.getinvolvednanaimo.ca/>.

While the work is between phases, park visitors can expect interim conditions.

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

Key Points

- The Westwood Road parking lot is expanded with a total of eight accessible and 86 standard parking stalls. This new parking lot is safer for parks users and the environment. Features include an integrated storm water management system that captures and filters rainwater, new emergency access, new sidewalks, a bike lane and marked raised crosswalks.
- Phase one of the multi-phased Westwood Lake Park Improvement Concept is almost complete. Though the area remains an active construction site, the new parking lot will be open from Thursday.
- Phase two of park improvements will include an expanded sandy beach with universal access to the water, picnic areas, seating, shade and green space, a completed loop trail and accessible and inclusive washrooms contained in a new amenity building.
- 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.

Continued... First phase of the Westwood Lake Park Improvements are almost complete

Quotes

"Making park access easier and safer helps us all enjoy one of Nanaimo's favourite places for fun, fitness and relaxation. The beautiful natural surroundings of Westwood Lake attract locals and visitors year-round and continues to grow in popularity year after year."

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.
- Construction work occurred in a disturbed area of the park that was already cleared of vegetation. Very few trees were impacted; wood from 12 trees (maple, apple, pear and cedar) was milled by the Mid Island Woodworkers Guild and will be given to local schools for future use. Phase 1 also includes replanting of 16 trees and over 2800 shrubs.
- New accessible parking stalls are designed to accommodate both rear and side loading vans as suggested through public engagement.
- The budget for this first phase of improvements was \$1.6 million.

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