

**Grant Proposal**  
**All-Play: Bringing Inclusive Parks to Gladstone**  
**Meldrum Bar Park, Gladstone, Oregon**  
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**Aims**

The City of Gladstone needs an inclusive area to welcome the entire community. The overall vision is to create an area where families and children of all abilities can picnic and play while enjoying nature and the beauty of the Clackamas and Willamette Rivers.

Studies show that outdoor play is essential for healthy child development and that for children with disabilities, the usability of a playground must be taken into consideration. Since inclusion is shown to benefit both children with disabilities and children who are developing typically, providing a space where they can play together will encourage interactions and foster a greater sense of community. Additionally, the Gladstone Parks Board would like to take what is currently a barren, dirt-covered site and incorporate nature back into the site in a way that people with disabilities can enjoy.

However, Gladstone does not currently have an inclusive playground or outdoor space available. This space would provide the community a space for families and friends to gather and enjoy an under-utilized space by taking a step toward an inclusive society. The plan is to use an available site near the boat launch area to create a destination within the Gladstone park system that welcomes everyone.

The main, overarching target outcome is to create an inclusive community space where children of all abilities can gather with their families. It will consist of several picnic areas, play equipment, and native plantings. The first step in the process is seeking formal approval to pursue grant funding for this project from the Park Board at the September 2019 meeting. Next, fundraising will begin with a goal to be fully funded by spring 2020. Finally, we will celebrate Gladstone's first inclusive park space with a grand opening event to kick off summer 2020.

To make the space as user-friendly as possible, we will incorporate equipment and materials that support individuals' varying needs and abilities. This will require thoughtful selection of equipment and plantings that appeal to all the senses. We will choose equipment that can be utilized by a wide age-range of children in multiple ways during the planning. We will work with landscape architects knowledgeable in universal design and master gardeners when selecting vegetation during the planning phase of the project. To further support these choices, we will consult with special educators and therapists during the selection process to ensure our choices are sound and to gather additional input.

Finally, we hope to create a location that is a landmark for Gladstone. The site is in a prime location and the mayor's aim is for the area to become a destination not only for families seeking to enjoy the parks system but for visitors to discover what a gem the Gladstone park system is. With a five-year plan in place to refurbish established playgrounds, an inclusive space at Meldrum Bar Park will lead the way in the summer of 2020 by being an example of what these spaces should be. We will notify local and adjacent school districts of our intentions and opening dates to bring awareness to the community of this new, inclusive option for play.

In sum, we will show that: (a) playing out of doors and access to nature is healthy for all children; (b) inclusive design is necessary for children with disabilities; and (c) inclusion is

beneficial for all children. Therefore, it is well-worth the effort for the Gladstone Park and Recreation Board to add an inclusive park site to the offerings it brings to their patrons.

## **Project Overview**

### **Background**

The proposed site location is adjacent to the parking lot for the boat launch area. The plot of land is bordered on two sides by the walking path and on the fourth by a hill. It is currently being used as an unsanctioned remote control (RC) car track with several hills and berms. It is hosed down frequently, with no accommodations made for the lack of plants to prevent erosion or absence of drainage. The present view of the Gladstone Parks Board is to have the RC Club set up an official, sanctioned site, with proper supports in place to make the space functional and safe, but in a different location. The site in question is, literally, a dirt pile (Appendix C, Photos 1 & 2) and the Parks Board would like the waterfront property to be improved and so the view can be enjoyed (Appendix C, Photos 3 & 4).

At this time, the Gladstone park system lacks inclusive play facilities. Meldrum Bar Park is by far Gladstone's largest parkspace at 87 acres and one of Gladstone's most popular park destinations, with over 70% of survey respondents visiting the park annually (City of Gladstone, 2017). This data suggests that placement of Gladstone's first inclusive play area at this location will reach the greatest number of residents, creating a wide impact. For a city where one in ten youth has a documented "mental, physical or cognitive difficulty that interferes with daily life" (The City of Gladstone, 2017), an inclusive outdoor space is needed to serve these families.

### **Methodology**

Two site visits were conducted to discuss ideas and better understand the intention and scope of the project. Between the visits, attendees were the grant writer, the Mayor of Gladstone, a Gladstone Park & Recreation Advisory Board Member (GPRABM), and a representative for the design and construction company (DC rep). It was determined that the approximate size of the site is 113' N/S x 100' E/W. Bordering the south edge of the site is a walking path and on the other side of that is a large berm that needs to be cleared out to make way for a river overlook. It was determined by the DC rep that this is outside the scope of his company's expertise and should become phase two of the project. A general idea was drafted by the mayor (Appendix A, Layout 1) and built upon in conversation by the grant writer and DC rep (Appendix A, Layout 2). Due to the severe topography of the land, it was determined that design work must wait until a survey can be obtained or completed.

After much discussion between the members of the team, it was determined that the priorities for the space are:

1. Individual ADA picnic pavilions that families can enjoy along with waterfront views.
2. An inclusive space where individuals of all abilities can come together to play.
3. A return to nature while restoring any damage that may have been wrought by erosion.

Taken into consideration were the needs and desires of the community as understood and represented by the mayor and GPRABM as well as the expertise of the DC rep.

### **Analysis of Findings**

An evidence-informed *Position Statement* on active, outdoor play was developed and supported by 95% of stakeholders surveyed which reads "Access to active play in nature and

outdoors--with its risks-- is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children’s opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in...the community and nature” (Tremblay, Gray, Babcock, Barnes, Bradstreet, Carr, ... Brussoni, 2015, p. 6476). For self-directed play, Prellwitz and Skär discovered that all children like to experience similar things on a playground: familiarity, opportunities for private conversations, challenges, and equipment that lent itself to imaginative play (2007, p. 147). However, for children with disabilities, some playgrounds were found to be less usable due to design and children were not able to be with friends, sit on the swing, or engage in play activities like their typically developing peers (Prellwitz & Skär, 2007, p. 147). This suggests the solution lies in creating outdoor play areas that are usable by all children, regardless of ability, so that all children may benefit from increased outdoor play. There is some evidence that all children also benefit from inclusive settings (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011, pp. 348-349), further supporting the construction of inclusive outdoor spaces.

In addition to the inclusive play equipment itself, the individuals utilizing the site will benefit greatly from new landscaping. Dymont and Bell define green ground as “places that include a diversity of natural and built elements, such as shelters, rock amphitheatres, trees, shrubs, wildflower meadows, ponds, grassy berms and food gardens” and confirm that “children...prefer to play in natural settings” (2008, pp. 953, 959). Add to this the work done by Souter-Brown (2014) that indicates garden settings are vital to our mental and physical health as well, and we can begin to make informed choices about the types of plantings we choose to incorporate into the space at Meldrum Bar Park. Souter-Brown eloquently states “we need locally accessible safe, inclusive, engaging play spaces. Healing gardens that afford the opportunity for kids to connect socially need to be part of every urban plan” (2014, pp. 99-100). Extensive research has been done by Hussein on sensory gardens and the best ways to implement them (n.d., 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2016a, 2016b). She advises on layouts, pathways, accessibility, and features to include, as well as information on what does not work and what to avoid.

**Limitations**

The site is bound physically on three sides by barriers (the parking area and walking path) and on the fourth by a steep hill. The DC rep noted that the topography of the land makes the design a challenge. The team will need to work cooperatively to ensure safety standards are met while maximizing the impact for the community. Additionally, a landscape architect or master gardener is not yet on the team; one should be included to be certain plantings are safe for children and native to the area.

**Timeline**

Design & Planning	Ross Recreation	2-4 weeks
Estimating	Ross Recreation	1 week
Fundraising	Inclusive Park Committee	TBD - goal: fully funded by April 1, 2020
Order Equipment	Ross Recreation	6 weeks

Installation - Site Work	Ross Recreation	1 week
Installation - Equipment	Ross Recreation	1 week
Installation - Surfacing	Ross Recreation	1 week
Installation - Landscaping	Inclusive Park Committee	1 week

\*Note: Generally, with funding in place, the process is 3 months start to finish; however, the installers are currently booked 3 months out at this time.

### Budget

Item	Description	Cost
Permits	Construction permits	\$650
Site preparation	Clearing, excavation, grading	\$60,000
Hardscaping	Pathways, cement pads for picnic areas	\$100,000
Play structure	Play equipment for varied ages	\$150,000
Structures	Picnic shelters	\$50,000
Landscaping	Sensory and native plants	\$50,000
Rate Increase for 2020	5-7%	\$25,200
Total		\$435,850

### Budget Justification

- **Permits:** Permits are required to perform work in Gladstone.
- **Site preparation:** The site as it stands currently consists of hard-packed earth. It must be graded and leveled out, prepared for installation of equipment and new surfacing, and readied for new plantings. This will require heavy equipment and operators, as well as materials to ensure proper drainage and erosion control.
- **Hardscaping:** Cement pads to build the picnic shelters upon and concrete paths to connect them will create accessibility. The pathways will also tie into the existing walking path and the parking area in order to increase functionality.
- **Play structure:** Inclusive play equipment will increase the usability of the space and encourage families to linger and enjoy the space.
- **Structures:** Covered picnic shelters make use of the space where play equipment cannot be installed due to mature trees and offer another activity for families to combine with enjoying the waterfront.

- **Landscaping:** Since this is a park, landscaping will bring nature back into the space as well as provide visitors with all the benefits of being surrounded closely by nature.
- **Rate Increase:** Playground equipment rates are expected to increase in the next calendar year by 5-7%. Given that funds are not anticipated to be raised by year-end, we must account for this increase.

### **Abstract**

The aim of All-Play is for the City of Gladstone to take an underutilized space by the waterfront and provide its residents with an inclusive space where families can enjoy individual, covered picnic shelters and children of all abilities can play side-by-side on inclusive play equipment. After approval and fundraising, design and planning work can be completed through site visits and collaboration between a team made up of community members and professionals. The work of consulting with experts in their fields should also be initiated at this time to ensure that the best design, equipment, and materials are procured and installed. Installation selection should be thoughtfully considered, giving weight to age ranges, universal design, sensory experiences, safety, and relevance to native habitat. Upon installation, Gladstone will be able to partner with schools to share with the community the example of inclusion found at Meldrum Bar Park, potentially attracting more visitors.

## Team Members



Mindy Garlington, Gladstone Park & Recreation Advisory Board Member

Mrs. Garlington has served on the Board for 3 years, including 1 year as Vice-Chair. She has been a member of the Gladstone community for 28 years and has raised her family here, now taking her grandchildren to the same parks her children enjoyed. Mrs. Garlington has served the City of Gladstone for 10 years on various committees, including 9 years on Friends of Gladstone Nature Park, and has a vested interest in ensuring all citizens are able to fully participate in the Park system.



Cathi Spratlen, Grant Writer

Mrs. Spratlen is a Graduate Student at Portland State University pursuing a Master's Degree in Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. This grant was written as part of a research course under Dr. Samuel Sennott.



Ben Stanford, Ross Recreation Planning & Design Representative

In addition to his expertise in the recreation design industry, Mr. Stanford is a native Oregonian with a passion for making a tangible impact on local communities.



Tammy Stempel, Mayor of Gladstone

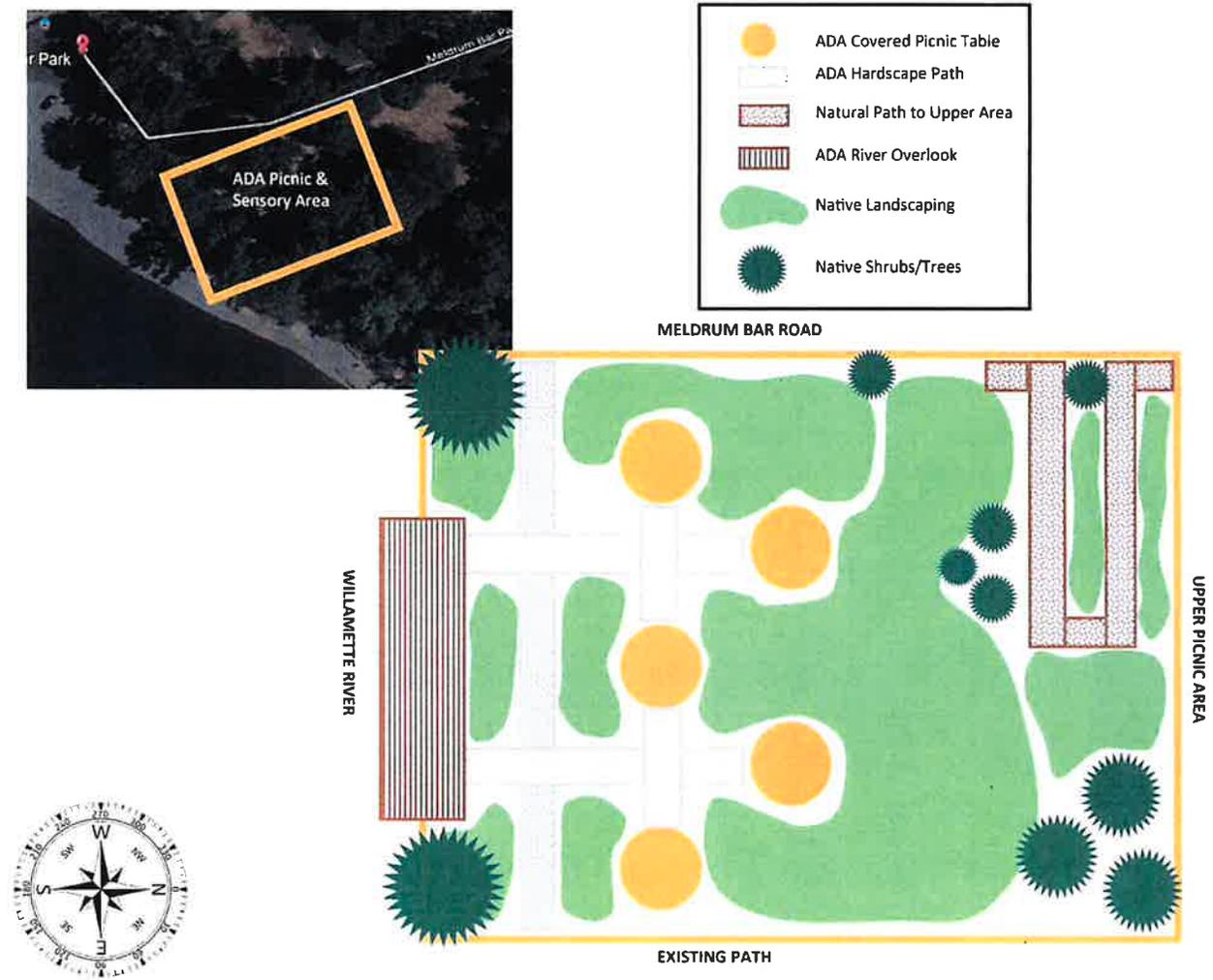
Mayor Stempel is a major advocate for inclusion. Serving Gladstone for 4 years, Mayor Stempel has proven that they prioritize the City's needs and interests.

### Landscape Architect/Master Gardener (Projected)

This individual will oversee the selection of the plants required to complete the parkspace. S/he should be knowledgeable about plant safety as well as committed to the use of native plants whenever possible.

## Appendix A

Layout 1: Map of site plan idea, courtesy of Mayor Stempel



Layout 2: Site design plan and 3D renderings in progress.

## Appendix B: Proposed/recommended play structure components

### Oodle Swing

- Can be used cooperatively by multiple children
- Can be used by a caregiver with a child
- Can be used in a supine position
- Supports motor, cognitive, and social-emotional skill development



### Rhapsody line of musical instruments

- Can be installed individually; perhaps one at each picnic pavilion
- Supports sensory play (Auditory, Proprioception, Tactile, Visual)
- Develops motor, cognitive, and social-emotional skills



### Rollerslide

- Makes use of the natural slope of the land
- Develops and supports motor, cognitive, and social-emotional skills
- Made from coated rollers to eliminate shocks
- Supports sensory play (Auditory, Proprioception, Tactile, Vestibular+)



## Appendix C: Site Photos

Photo 1: View of the RC Track showing some of the hills and berms.



Photo 2: View of the RC Track from the parking area; these fences would need to be removed and access provided.



Photo 3: A view of the water; depending on the activities taking place at the time, families can watch the boats go by, people fishing, or simply enjoy the birds.



Photo 4: Panoramic view of the water view from the proposed site.



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