



Staff Report

Request for Decision

TO: Electoral Area Services Committee – April 16, 2026

AUTHOR: Sam Adams, Parks Planning and Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project – Washroom Structure Options**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the planning process to date and seek guidance with the next steps for the Coopers Green Park Enhancement project. This report requests Board decision to accept, reject or provide alternate direction with respect to staff's recommendations as presented below.

Recommendation(s):

- (1) THAT a Site Alteration Permit (archeology) be pursued;**
 - (2) AND THAT a qualified professional be retained to evaluate the feasibility of accommodating additional onsite sewerage disposal within the park, including identifying any repairs or modifications to the existing septic system that may be required;**
 - (3) AND FURTHER THAT a staff report outlining the results of the engineering assessment and options for next steps be brought back to the Board for consideration.**
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BACKGROUND

A staff report was presented at the April 17, 2025 EAS Committee meeting which summarized the Coopers Green Enhancement Project public consultation process and provided options for enhancements at Coopers Green (See Attachment A). Washrooms and natural play area/social space were identified as community priorities.

At the April 24, 2025, Regular Board Meeting of the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) the following resolutions were adopted:

115/25 Recommendation No. 8 Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project Options

THAT the Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project proceed with the necessary planning and designing for the construction of a washroom building with flushable toilet(s) that are not connected to a sewerage system, with any remaining project budget to be used to construct a natural play area/social space;

116/25 **Recommendation No. 9** *Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project Options*

THAT a subsequent report for the final design and cost estimate for a washroom building with flushable toilets that are not connected to a sewerage system for the Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project be brought forward to a future committee meeting prior to proceeding with construction.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Staff examined opportunities for washroom structures with flushable toilets not connected to sewerage systems¹.

Regulatory Considerations

Once a conceptual design for a permanent solution was developed, staff advanced it through the regulatory planning process. Planning in this complex regulatory environment is iterative, and changes to one project element can significantly affect the budget, schedule, and overall feasibility.

The proposed development of washrooms at Coopers Green Park faces multiple regulatory hurdles inclusive of archaeological, environmental, geotechnical, accessibility and public health concerns. These concerns present uncertainty for budgeting and must be resolved prior to detailed design.

Archaeological: The park is recognized as having a high potential for encountering archaeologically significant materials during ground disturbance activities.

Staff initiated the application process with the shíshálh Nation (SN). This included the submission of the conceptual plan and environmental report. The next step is to submit a Site Alteration Permit application and initiate an Archeological Impact Assessment (AIA).

All washroom options contemplated will require a Site Alteration Permit under the *Heritage Conservation Act* prior to construction proceeding. Timelines for issuing permits are approximately 4-6 months.

Depending on what may be discovered during the excavation process, the project could face delays of weeks to months or may even need to consider alternative locations. The potential costs and project risks associated with archaeological requirements can be reduced by minimizing ground disturbance.

Environmental: Professionals were retained to conduct an environmental review of the conceptual plans and site. The proximity to both the ocean and Kitchen Creek, prescribed setbacks from these features, tree protection zones, and the presence of a Blue Heron rookery, present siting constraints and minimize the potential locations for any proposed development in the park.

Additional environmental work, should it be required, can be done concurrently with other

¹ a "sewerage system" means a system for treating domestic sewage that uses one or more treatment methods and a discharge area, but does not include a holding tank or a privy

permits and should not cause project delays.

Geotechnical: A geotechnical review of the conceptual plan was also commissioned. Oceanic flooding hazard impacts all options and implications were included in the planning analysis and can be mitigated through design features and/or operational procedures.

Public Health: The construction of a washroom facility at Coopers Green will require approval from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) to ensure that the disposal of wastewater is conducted in an appropriate manner. VCH will only permit the use of a wastewater holding tank when it is not reasonably possible to construct or, connect to, an existing sewerage system. An engineer's report considering elements such as the capacity of the existing sewerage system, if there is space for a new system, environment and capital investment must be considered. An engineer's declaration that a holding tank is the only reasonably viable option is a requirement for the issuance of a holding tank permit from VCH.

SCRD Building and Bylaw: Generally, washroom structures that sit on a foundation would be classified as a building under both the BC Building Code and the SCRD Building Bylaw. This requirement limits the scope of available structures as some are designed as temporary units for construction sites and would not meet the BC Building Code.

A development permit would be required for any washroom structure connected to a sewerage system but would not be required for a structure not connected to a system.

Accessibility: Public washroom buildings must comply with accessibility regulations to ensure the facilities are available for universal use. As result, the range of options when designing or selecting prefabricated washroom facility that meet these criteria are limited, however would not result in project delay.

Washroom Types

Staff explored two options for washrooms not connected to a sewerage system during this phase of planning: Permanent facilities and Portable facilities. All washroom types would be connected to utilities (electrical and water), have a holding tank, flushable toilets and sinks with running water, and include accessibility considerations.

Capital cost estimates provided below are in orders of magnitude and include a 30% contingency. Ongoing operating cost estimates include repair, maintenance, utilities, servicing including technical inspections, caretaker services and regular pump outs of holding tanks.

Washrooms with holding tanks would be a new service level for SCRD Parks and therefore the resources and budgeting would need to be closely monitored.

Permanent Washroom Structures with Holding Tanks:

Permanent washroom facilities with holding tanks can range from precast concrete vault units to prefabricated modular buildings to site-built structures. These systems may incorporate holding tanks located either below or above ground and are available in a variety of sizes, configurations, and cost ranges.

All such structures require a foundation and are therefore classified as buildings under the BC Building Code and the SCRD Building Bylaw.

The anticipated lifespan of these structures' ranges from 15 to 30 years. Capital cost estimates range from \$200,000 to \$900,000, while annual operating costs are estimated between \$37,500 and \$69,500. Notably, lower-cost structures tend to incur higher annual operating costs due to increased servicing requirements associated with smaller holding tank capacities.

Portable Washroom Trailer:

Portable washroom trailers are mobile, self-contained units mounted on wheels, allowing for relocation as needed. Due to their mobility, these units typically do not require building permits.

The expected service life of a manufactured portable washroom trailer is approximately 15 years, depending on factors such as frequency of use, construction quality, and materials.

The estimated capital cost for this type of unit is approximately \$185,000. Annual operating costs are estimated at \$50,000.

Washroom Connected to a Sewerage System:

While connection to a sewerage system was outside the scope of the current directive, staff note that, given public health requirements and the ongoing operating costs associated with holding tanks, this option may warrant further consideration.

Connecting a washroom facility to a sewerage system would greatly reduce the frequency of pumping, transport, and disposal of effluent, thereby significantly lowering annual operating costs. These savings have the potential to offset the higher upfront capital investment associated with sewer system installation and/or upgrades, however, would be dependent on site-specific factors, unknown costs related to sewer system repair or replacements, and potential archaeological requirements.

Both washroom types described above are available in configurations that can be connected to a sewerage system, should this be determined to be the most technically feasible solution for the park.

A performance inspection of Coopers Green Park sewerage system conducted in fall 2025 determined that the system is not operating as intended. Several components were identified as requiring further investigation, repair, or replacement. Currently, it is also unclear whether the existing system has the capacity to accommodate additional sewerage demand.

Options for Board consideration are presented below:

OPTION 1 – Proceed with an application for Site Alteration Permit (archeological) and retain a qualified professional to assess potential sewerage system options.

In this option, staff would proceed with the Site Alteration Permit process, which is necessary for all options. This process can run concurrently with other planning activities.

Furthermore, it is recommended that a qualified engineer be retained to assess the capacity of the existing sewerage system, identify required repairs and associated capital investments to ensure proper operation, and evaluate the feasibility of accommodating additional sewerage

servicing within the park. The assessment is required to meet the requirements of VCH and the results would provide the necessary information to inform next steps.

Note: Under the current License of Occupation, the Halfmoon Bay Community Association is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the sewerage system. Should the system be determined to have sufficient capacity to accommodate additional demand, staff could, subject to Board direction, explore potential revisions to the lease terms with the Association.

A natural/social play area space that complements the character of the park and responds sensitively to the surrounding natural and environmental context can still be considered in the next planning phase if sufficient estimated project funding remains.

Timeline

If this option is chosen, staff would proceed with the engineering assessment and archaeological permit application. Staff would return to the Board with an update once the septic assessment has been completed and further options scoped.

The timeline for obtaining a Site Alteration permit is approximately 4-6 months, and completing the necessary assessment of the existing septic system should be able to be completed within this timeframe.

Financial Considerations

The estimated cost for the assessment of the septic system and any associated engineering design is \$10,000. The Site Alteration Permitting process and Archeological Impact Assessment is estimated to cost approximately \$30,000.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend this option. Should the Committee choose to go with Option 1, a recommendation could be considered, as provided in the Overview section on page one of this report.

OPTION 2 – Discontinue further planning for washrooms at Coopers Green Park and proceed with the construction of a natural play area/social space.

If this were the preferred option, planning for a washroom facility would be abandoned and the park would continue to be serviced through the existing porta potty washrooms onsite.

Staff would proceed with design and construction of the natural play area/social space. The application for the Site Alteration Permit would also be initiated, as the permit will be required prior to any ground disturbance.

Timeline

Planning for the natural play area/social space, including public engagement will take approximately 4-6 months, with construction following. Project completion would be anticipated by spring 2027.

Financial Considerations

It is estimated that a natural/social play space that complements the character of the park and responds sensitively to the surrounding natural and environmental context could be constructed for \$260,000 including Archaeological permitting and monitoring.

Staff Recommendation

Staff do not recommend this option. Should the Committee choose to go with Option 2, a recommendation could be considered, as follows:

- (1) THAT any further planning for washrooms at Coopers Green Park be abandoned;
- (2) AND THAT design and construction of a natural play area/social space in Coopers Green Park proceed, with a maximum project budget of \$260,000;
- (3) AND THAT the remaining unused project funds of approximately \$304,289 be returned to the unallocated pool of Area B Community Works Funds;
- (4) AND THAT the Union of BC Municipalities be notified of the reduction of Community Works Funds for the Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project;
- (5) AND FURTHER THAT the 2026-2030 Financial Plan be amended.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The approved project budget is \$633,238. To date, \$68,949 has been spent or committed to be spent on public consultation, consulting services, and technical studies, leaving \$564,289 remaining in the budget.

Proceeding with site alteration permit and engineering assessment will result in an additional \$40,000 spent on preliminary planning, leaving \$524,289 remaining for design and construction purposes. The costs associated with the options discussed above will be refined following the site alteration and engineering phases; updated figures will be presented at a future committee meeting.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

N/A

TIMELINE

It is anticipated that the Site Alteration Permit process will take 4-6 months. Procuring an engineer and assessing the septic system could be accomplished within the same timeframe. Staff would return with a subsequent report at that time.

COMMUNICATIONS

Project updates will be communicated through the Let's Talk "Coopers Green Park Enhancements Project" page, through News Releases and social media posts, as necessary.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Staff are seeking direction from the Board regarding next steps for the Coopers Green Park Enhancement Project. Based on the technical work completed to date, staff recommend proceeding with site alteration permit and undertaking a septic feasibility assessment as the next phase of analysis.

ATTACHMENT(S):

A – April 17, 2025 Electoral Area Services Committee Staff Report

Reviewed by:			
Manager	X – J. Huntington	Finance	X - A. Taylor
GM	X - S. Gagnon	Legislative	
		Purchasing/Risk	X – V. Cropp
CAO	X - T. Perreault	Manager, Asset Management Chief Building Official	X - K. Doyle X - B. Kennett