

<i>COUNCIL AGENDA</i>	
Date: <u>July 21, 2025</u>	Item: <u>7.</u>



7.

DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	June 24, 2025
From:	Kevin Woodhouse, Parks Maintenance Manager
Subject:	Recycling in Parks Program Update
File:	11-2150-2025

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1

THAT

1. the June 24, 2025 report from the Parks Maintenance Manager titled Recycling in Parks Program Update be received for information;
2. beginning in 2026, once the necessary equipment and storage infrastructure is in place, staff initiate Phase 3 (Ambleside Park) of the Recycling in Parks Program;
3. staff incorporate an increase to the Public Realm Refuse Fee in the Solid Waste Utility in 2026 to fund the \$53,500 operating costs for implementation of Phase 3 of the Recycling in Parks Program;
4. capital costs of \$162,000 for receptacles and expansion of the Ambleside Park disposal compound be funded from the Environmental Reserve Fund;
5. capital costs of \$40,000 for the purchase of an electric utility vehicle from the Environmental Reserve Fund;
6. staff report to Council 12 months following implementation on the results of diverting waste from the landfill.

OR

Option 2

THAT

1. the June 24, 2025 report from the Parks Maintenance Manager titled Recycling in Parks Program Update be received for information;
2. staff defer Phase 3 expansion pending diversion and contamination rate improvements in existing public realm recycling in parks;
3. staff be directed to continue to investigate and employ options to improve diversion and contamination rates; and
4. staff report to Council in 12 months on the results of diverting waste from the landfill and based on those results, consider expansion.

1.0 Purpose

This report provides an update on the District of West Vancouver's (District) Recycling in Parks Program. It includes an overview of program performance against key metrics including costs to date.

The report also seeks Council direction regarding the potential expansion of the Recycling in Parks Program to Phase 3 - Ambleside Park.

2.0 Executive Summary

This report provides two options for Council's consideration regarding the District's phased Recycling in Parks Program (Program) and sets out performance evaluation, costs, and a potential Phase 3 expansion to Ambleside Park. The Program supports Council's Strategic Plan and environmental goals.

Phases 1 and 2 achieved limited diversion from the waste stream at a high cost due to persistent contamination of recycling streams. The proposed expansion requires a \$202,000 capital investment and \$53,500 in annual operating costs, proposed to be funded through the Environmental Reserve Fund and a \$2.60 per-household solid waste utility rate public realm fee increase in 2026.

The report highlights the need to balance public expectations and potential for removing waste from landfill with the operational challenges of recycling in the public realm, and the financial implications of continuing to expand the Program.

3.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

District's Solid Waste Utility Bylaw 4740, 2012

A bylaw to provide for the operation and management of a solid waste utility.

District's Environmental Reserve Fund Bylaw 5188, 2022:

A bylaw to support climate action and environmental protection initiatives. A Council resolution is required for the use and allocation of the funds.

4.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

Council Strategic Plan 2024-2025

Council's Strategic Objective 1.7 is applicable to this report:

- Deliverable 1.7.1: Continue expanded recycling program in the parks. Expanding the recycling and waste diversion initiatives is supported in the Official Community Plan Section through the following policies:

2.5.9 Increase community-wide diversion rates to meet regional solid waste management objectives of 80% diversion by 2020 and work progressively towards maximizing diversion rates beyond 2020.

5.0 Financial Implications

Annual operating costs for Phases 1 and 2 were lower than originally estimated when planning for the Program. This is predominantly due to high contamination levels leading to material collected as recycling being disposed as garbage, which is the least expensive waste stream. Disposal and processing costs for Phase 1 required 30% of what was budgeted.

The ratio of cost to waste diverted is important to consider when evaluating the Program efficacy and potential expansion.

In 2024, the Parks Department disposed of approximately 262 tonnes of garbage at a total operational cost of \$576,860, or \$2,200 per tonne.

In contrast, 4.8 tonnes of recyclable material was diverted at an operational cost of \$99,600, equating to \$20,750 per tonne. Time and resources are allocated to operate the Program regardless of diversion outcome. If diversion rates improve, the cost per tonne to recycle will decrease.

In addition to the \$99,600, further Program costs include:

- \$56,000 spent on auditing the Program since 2023; and
- \$13,000 invested in public education initiatives.

The capital cost to implement Phases 1 and 2 of the Program to date has been \$187,500.

Staff have utilized the financial results of Phases 1 and 2 to provide an estimate of cost associated with moving forward with Phase 3.

Recycling in Parks Program Costs		
	Capital	Annual Operating
Phase 1 (2023)	\$138,900	\$80,700
Phase 2 (2024)	\$48,600	\$99,600
Audits		\$56,000
Public Education		\$13,000
Total to date:	\$187,500	\$249,300
Phase 3 Proposal (2026)	\$202,000	\$53,500

It is important to note that projected costs are estimates and subject to change based on inflation, tariffs, and other factors. Costs for the service vehicle and construction of a service area will require further review before implementation.

Should Council direct staff to initiate a further expansion of the Program, the following funding approach is proposed for the 2026 capital budget process:

- Capital costs of \$162,000 for receptacles and expansion of the Ambleside Park disposal compound be funded from the Environmental

Reserve Fund. If the Environmental Reserve Fund is not to be allocated for this cost, the District's Capital Asset Reserve would need to be utilized.

- Capital costs of \$40,000 for the purchase of an electric utility vehicle to be used for collection within Ambleside Park funded from the Environmental Reserve Fund.
- The purpose of the Environmental Reserve Fund is to fund one-time initiatives or projects that move the District towards its climate action goals. Use of the Environmental Reserve Fund Bylaw for the capital costs to implement the Program meets the criteria of Section 4.2(b)(d) of the bylaw as the Program supports the reduction of waste to the landfill and the use of an electric vehicle will reduce GHG emissions from corporate operations.
- Additional annual operating costs of \$53,500 proposed to be funded through an increase to the Solid Waste Utility's Public Realm Refuse Fee, as ongoing operational costs must be funded in a sustainable way.
- The estimated increase to the Public Realm Refuse Fee in the Solid Waste Utility to support the Program expansion would be \$2.60 per household

Should Council direct staff to expand the Program into the Ambleside Park area, the increase to operating costs would be included in the Solid Waste Utility budget and rate projections for 2026. Utility rates typically come forward for Council consideration each fall.

6.0 Background

6.1 Previous Decisions

Council, at its December 7, 2015 regular meeting, passed the following resolution, absorbing public realm waste into the solid waste utility and establishing a public realm refuse charge beginning in 2016:

THAT proposed "Solid Waste Utility Bylaw No. 4740, 2012 Amendment Bylaw No. 4863, 2015" be adopted.

Council, at its December 12, 2016 regular meeting, passed the following resolution approving funding to launch a streetscape recycling pilot in 2017:

THAT proposed "Solid Waste Utility Bylaw No. 4740, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 4923, 2016" be adopted.

Council, at its December 11, 2017 regular meeting, passed the following resolution to include budget provisions in the Solid Waste Utility allowing for expansion of streetscape recycling initiatives:

THAT proposed "Solid Waste Utility Bylaw No. 4740, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 4954, 2017" be adopted.

Council, at its December 13, 2021 regular meeting, passed the following resolution:

THAT Proposed “Solid Waste Utility Bylaw No. 4740, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 5150, 2021” be adopted; and Solid Waste Utility fees be adjusted for 2022 to the amounts set out in Schedule A in the bylaw amendment.

Council, at its July 25, 2022 regular meeting, passed the following resolution to adopt the 2023 solid waste utility rates:

THAT proposed “Solid Waste Utility Bylaw No. 4740, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 5191, 2022” be adopted.

Council, at its September 28, 2022 special meeting, passed the following resolution to adopt the amended 2023 solid waste utility rates to account for additional operating costs associated with phased introduction of recycling in select parks:

THAT proposed “Solid Waste Utility Bylaw No. 4740, 2012, Amendment Bylaw No. 5220, 2022” be adopted.

Council, at its September 11, 2023 regular meeting received a report titled Phased Recycling Program prepared by the Senior Manager of Parks and approved the following resolution:

THAT

- *staff be directed to initiate a modified Phase 2 of the multi-phased recycling program in District of West Vancouver’s destination waterfront parks, starting in 2024;*
- *staff be directed to incorporate an increase to the Public Realm Refuse Fee in the Solid Waste Utility by an additional \$7.32 per household in 2024 to fund the \$153,000 operating costs for implementation of Phase 2 of the Recycling in Parks Program;*
- *staff submit capital costs of \$239,000 to implement Phase 2 of the Recycling in Parks Program in the District’s 2023 Phase 2 capital funding request; and*
- *staff report to Council on the results of the Phase 2 Recycling in Parks Program 12 months after implementation to seek additional direction on future phases.*

6.2 History

In December 2015, Council endorsed a recommendation to consolidate all District refuse activities, including public realm waste, within the Solid Waste Utility effective January 2016.

In addition to residential waste collection service, the Solid Waste Utility absorbed public realm waste collection programs for general waste

collected from parks, streetscapes, and civic buildings. A Public Realm Refuse Fee was created within the utility to fund these programs and is charged to residential households on quarterly utility bills.

There is a public expectation to see more recycling opportunities in District parks based on the greater awareness of the environment. This expectation is recognized by Council and is incorporated in Council's Strategic Plan 2024-2025.

However, public realm recycling initiatives are particularly challenging to implement successfully due to high levels of contamination. When material collected as recycling is heavily contaminated, it cannot be processed as recycling and is disposed as garbage. Recycling programs are more costly to operate than garbage collection, whether or not they are effective at diverting waste. Therefore, staff work to balance the public expectations with ensuring the Program can achieve the policy goal of effective waste reduction. An ineffective recycling program risks damage to the District's credibility and commitment to waste reduction, as well as management of funds.

The Program currently includes:

- Phase 1 areas - Millennium Park, John Lawson Park, and Dundarave Park
- Phase 2 areas - Whytecliff Park and Horseshoe Bay Park.
- In addition, the Parks Department has assumed responsibility for collecting three-stream recycling and waste from the streetscape, a service previously provided by a contractor. Bringing this service in-house as of April 2025 has allowed for greater flexibility in servicing, better integration with existing waste collection routes, and associated cost savings.

To assess the Program's effectiveness and explore opportunities for future expansion, staff continue to work with a specialized consultant to conduct audits of garbage and recycling bins in parks and along the streetscape.

Recycling in Parks Program Timeline	
May 2022	Baseline Audit
July 2022	Report to Council - Phased Recycling Program in Parks
May 2023	Phase 1 - Millennium Park to Dundarave Park
June 2023	High Season Audit
July 2023	Phase 2 – Horseshoe Bay Park
August 2023	Report to Council – Phase Recycling Program
April 2024	Recycling Mid-Season Audit

July 2024	Phase 2 – Whytecliff Park
August 2024	Recycling High-Season Audit
January 2025	Recycling Low-Season Audit
April 2025	Parks in-houses Streetscape Garbage and Recycling
July 2025	Report to Council – Recycling in Parks Program Update
August 2025	Recycling High-Season Audit (Scheduled)
January 2026	Recycling Low-Season Audit (Scheduled)

7.0 Analysis

7.1 Discussion

This section outlines key performance indicators and challenges associated with Phases 1 and 2 of the Program. It provides an analysis of contamination and diversion rates, operational efficiency, and infrastructure requirements - setting the foundation for the proposed Phase 3 expansion to Ambleside Park. The findings highlight both the persistent barriers to effective public recycling and opportunities for improvement.

Operational Findings of Phases 1 and 2

The primary measures for success of the Program continue to be:

- **Contamination Rate:** material collected as recycling that is actually recycled.
- **Diversion Rate:** how much material is actually removed from the garbage.

Contamination

Contamination is a key challenge for recycling programs. This occurs when items are incorrectly sorted into marked recycling receptacles.

It is well documented that people are particularly challenged at sorting their recycling in public spaces. To ensure effective waste reduction at special events like Harmony Arts Festival, the District engages a specialized contracted event waste specialist that positions team members at recycling stations to educate attendees and ensure materials are sorted into the correct streams.

Over five audits between May 2022 and January 2025, average contamination of containers and organics streams in the Program is displayed below:

Average Recycling in Parks Contamination (Portion of material contaminated that does not belong in that stream)	
Containers	36.9%
Organics	18.5%

While tolerance varies by waste stream, a widely accepted maximum threshold of 10% contamination is used by many commercial recycling and organics processors. The container stream can accommodate higher levels of contamination due to the effectiveness of mechanical sorting technologies used during processing. In contrast, the organics/food waste stream has a much lower tolerance for contamination, as mechanical sorting is significantly more difficult. In both streams, staff frequently observed contamination rates exceeding this 10% threshold.

In 2024, staff updated receptacle graphics to provide a clearer visual guide for proper sorting, building on significant public education efforts led by summer students in 2023 and 2024.

Despite these measures, follow-up audits showed minimal improvement in the public’s ability to sort waste correctly.

Based on the results seen at Phase 1 and 2 locations, it is reasonable to expect that expansion into Ambleside Park in 2026 will yield similar challenges. Staff believe it remains essential to focus on improving contamination and diversion rates while the public adapt to the presence of recycling in parks.

Diversion

Phase 1 of the Program launched in May 2023 at three waterfront parks. In its first year, the Program diverted 4 tonnes of material from the landfill.

Phase 2 expanded the Program in 2024 to include Whytecliff Park and Horseshoe Bay Park. That year, 4.8 tonnes of material was diverted from landfill. It is worth noting that recycling at Whytecliff Park was only in place from July to December 2024, not for the full calendar year.

Diversion of Material from the Landfill and Landfill from Parks		
	Recycling in Parks	Landfill in Parks
Year	(MT)	(MT)
2023	4	255
2024	4.8	262

Food waste is significantly heavier by volume than containers; however, it is important to note that the volume of containers diverted from landfill has been greater than that of food waste. Since only container recycling was introduced in Phase 2 parks, the overall weight of diverted material did not increase significantly.

To date, the total volume of recyclable material diverted from landfill through the Program remains low. The cost per tonne is provided in section 5.0 Financial Implications of this report. Efforts to improve diversion rates have not resulted in significant performance improvements. However, the potential for increased diversion remains high, provided that contamination rates can be reduced.

Current Operational Structure

Garbage and recycling collection is labour and equipment intensive. Park and streetscape receptacles are emptied manually and require loading into a vehicle for disposal. It is crucial that the number of times bags are handled from collection to disposal is kept to a minimum and made as efficient and ergonomic as possible. Additional handling increases staff time, transport requirements, accumulated costs, and most importantly, is physically demanding for staff.

The Program requires additional staff time in the parks to facilitate. Changes to receptacles and storage capacity necessitates a higher frequency of service visits by staff compared to parks without recycling. More staff hours have resulted in improved overall park litter and waste management in Program parks. Phase 3 expansion into Ambleside Park can be expected to have a similar positive impact. This is a potential near term benefit of introducing recycling while working towards greater diversion over time.

Phase 3: Expansion into Ambleside Park and Ambleside Landing

Ambleside Park generates a high volume of waste, requiring dedicated infrastructure and frequent servicing.

Ambleside Park waste collection is operated with specifically allocated staff, vehicles, equipment, and dumpsters. Dumpsters are serviced by a hauling contractor allowing them to go straight to processing with minimal handling. The volume of waste requires a compactor and two dumpsters, at a 6-day-a-week service frequency in high season.

The current disposal area and dumpsters are used to manage materials collected in Ambleside Park, as well as the garbage stream from John Lawson and Millennium Parks. It is shared with the concession operation and there is no space available for additional dumpsters within the enclosure. To accommodate recycling in Ambleside Park, the disposal area would require expansion to fit additional dumpsters for containers recycling and food waste. A \$45,000 expansion of the disposal compound is proposed to accommodate new recycling streams and improve waste handling efficiency across nearby parks.

Disposal Compound Expansion

To expand the disposal compound, staff are proposing the fenced enclosure be extended north. This location is unique in the park for being central, paved and paired to our existing operation. No other location within the park is suitable. This extension would necessitate the relocation

of a hydrant to the road edge and construction of a robust and visually appealing gated and fenced enclosure, whilst making all efforts to retain the tree within the footprint. Utility work to move the hydrant is estimated at \$12,000. The construction of the enclosure would be an additional estimated \$33,000.



Figure 1: Ambleside Park Disposal Compound Footprint



Figure 2: Ambleside Park Disposal Compound Enclosure

Garbage collected from John Lawson Park and Millenium Park is currently compiled at the Ambleside Park disposal area, whilst containers and food waste from these parks are trucked to the Operations Centre.

Expanding the Ambleside Park disposal compound could allow for the more efficient handling of containers and food waste from Millenium Park and John Lawson Park as well as additional material from Ambleside Park.

Receptacles

Ambleside Park contains a large number of receptacles. Should Council direct staff to introduce recycling in Ambleside Park, staff would strategically reduce the total quantity of receptacles while maintaining adequate service levels for each area. Aesthetics and visitor experience are important and a consideration in quantity and location of bins.

As part of Phase 3, staff propose installing 28 new multi-stream receptacles while removing approximately 60 single-stream receptacles. Based on how the park is used in different areas, receptacles will be placed to suit the needs of visitors.



Figure 3: Three-Stream Receptacle

Three-stream receptacles capturing food waste, containers, and garbage are proposed for areas frequently used by those generating food waste including the concession, waterfront section of the seawalk, beachside, sports viewing areas, and the Ferry Building landing. Capital projections account for 12 three-stream receptacles.

Two-stream receptacles capturing containers and garbage are proposed for areas with high volumes of single use containers, such as adjacent sports fields, the entry and exit points of the dog park, and near fitness areas and sports fields. Capital projections account for 15 two-stream receptacles.

Single-stream receptacles will remain in several locations intended to capture waste as litter prevention.

7.2 Climate Change & Sustainability

The District is committed to regional waste reduction targets outlined in the Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan and additional local targets as established in the Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP).

The CEEP does not include objectives related to waste reduction initiatives in the public realm, however, the consolidation of solid waste activities within the Solid Waste Utility provides the opportunity to reflect waste reduction principles in public space waste collection programs.

The environmental benefits of expanded recycling in parks are to divert recyclable and compostable materials from the landfill, support long-term behaviour changes, and efforts to decrease greenhouse gas emissions

7.3 Public Engagement and Outreach

Staff apply the District's Community Outreach and Engagement Policy when communicating and engaging with the public on issues pertaining to the Solid Waste Utility.

If the recommendations in this report are approved, staff will work with the District's Communications, Indigenous & Community Relations Division to develop an educational and communication program for park users on the Program.

7.4 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

This report and the proposed implementation of recycling in District parks is a collaborative effort representing contributions from staff in the District's Parks, Culture & Community Services, Engineering & Transportation Services, Financial Services, and Climate Action & Environment.

Financial information from this report and other reports pertaining to the Public Realm Refuse Fee are included as part of communications related to overall District budget process.

8.0 Options

8.1 Recommended Option

Option 1

THAT

1. the June 24, 2025 report from the Parks Maintenance Manager titled Recycling in Parks Program Update be received for information;
2. beginning in 2026, once the necessary equipment and storage infrastructure is in place, staff initiate Phase 3 (Ambleside Park) of the Recycling in Parks Program;
3. staff incorporate an increase to the Public Realm Refuse Fee in the Solid Waste Utility in 2026 to fund the \$53,500 operating costs for implementation of Phase 3 of the Recycling in Parks Program;
4. capital costs of \$162,000 for receptacles and expansion of the Ambleside Park disposal compound be funded from the Environmental Reserve Fund;

5. capital costs of \$40,000 for the purchase of an electric utility vehicle from the Environmental Reserve Fund;
6. staff report to Council 12 months following implementation on the results of diverting waste from the landfill.

OR

Option 2

THAT

1. the June 24, 2025 report from the Parks Maintenance Manager titled Recycling in Parks Program Update be received for information;
2. staff defer Phase 3 expansion pending diversion and contamination rate improvements in existing public realm recycling in parks;
3. staff be directed to continue to investigate and employ options to improve diversion and contamination rates; and
4. staff report to Council in 12 months on the results of diverting waste from the landfill and based on those results, consider expansion.

8.2 Considered Options

Council may:

1. request further information; and / or
2. not approve the recommendations.

9.0 Conclusion

This report outlines the cost and operational requirements for the implementation of Phase 3 (Ambleside Park) of the multi-phased recycling program, beginning in 2026. Options are provided to initiate expansion of the District's Recycling in Parks Program, or to defer expansion pending diversion and contamination rate improvements in the existing program.

Recycling in parks is costly and presents ongoing challenges with contamination. To date, diversion rates remain below target; however, there is significant potential to improve these outcomes. Expanding the program without first addressing contamination pose a potential risk of eroding public trust if recyclable materials are seen as being disposed of in landfill.


Achieving long-term success will require sustained investment, communication, education, and operations. Shifting public behaviour is challenging and takes time.

Date: June 24, 2025
From: Kevin Woodhouse, Parks Maintenance Manager
Subject: Recycling in Parks Program Update

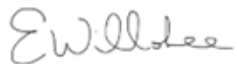
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