



# The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

## REGULAR COUNCIL REPORT

For the Regular Council meeting on Monday, March 24, 2025

Re: Parks Bylaw Amendment for Childcare

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### **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. That Bylaw No. 2155, Central Saanich Parks Management and Control Amendment Bylaw No. 3, No. 2155, 2025, be introduced and read a first and second time.
2. That Bylaw No. 2155 be read a third time.

### **PURPOSE:**

To seek Council support on an amendment to the Parks bylaw to permit park use by groups of children in care.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Central Saanich's Child Care Inventory and Action Plan was adopted in 2020. The Project was conducted in partnership with six municipal partners—Central Saanich, Highlands, North Saanich, Oak Bay, Saanich and Sidney—who worked together to develop a childcare inventory, gap analysis, and develop local action plans, funded by the Government of BC through the Union of BC Municipalities.

One of the identified actions was to amend Bylaw No. 804, the current Parks Management and Control Bylaw to 'allow park use by groups of children in care.'

### **DISCUSSION:**

The internal Childcare Working Group includes staff representation from Corporate Services, Facilities, Planning and Building. The intent of the group is to identify opportunities to increase childcare in the District and work towards implementing the Childcare Action Plan. To date, 22 of the 31 recommendations have been completed. This bylaw amendment would see that rise to 23. Of those recommendations not yet completed are multi-faceted, with work underway in many of them either individually or as part of other projects (e.g. the Zoning Bylaw review).

Since its kick-off, the Working Group has:

- Worked to facilitate the opening of a childcare center in the former Centennial Park caretaker facility ([November 21, 2024 Press Release](#))
- Participated in the creation of the Zoning Bylaw survey, to ensure daycare uses were considered amongst the proposed changes
- Communicated to staff and Council regarding the Saanich Fairgrounds childcare ALC application, and then request for ALC reconsideration.

- Participate in the review of development applications that may have daycare potential as community amenities or commercial space, including the approved redevelopment of 1183 Verdier (CRHC) and the anticipated non-profit childcare space in that facility
- Updating information availability on our website to inform potential childcare operators of key information, including the conversion of non-accessory dwellings to daycare uses

Childcare licensing, through Island Health, requires access to outdoor space and the majority of childcare operators spend considerable time outdoors and in nature. Access to additional spaces, particularly those with the assets of our parks (e.g. playgrounds, trails, washrooms, natural areas, open space, learning opportunities) and anticipated future projects for park improvements (e.g. wayfinding and informational signage, splashpad, accessible playground equipment etc.).

Central Saanich parks likely already host many daycares informally, and the impact is therefore anticipated to be minimal. Most childcare operators are only able to access those parks that are accessible on foot by the children. The bylaw amendment is worded to prohibit the primary location as the District's parks, and instead only as an occasional use. The only current operator who has the District parks as their primary location is the Peninsula Recreation Commission, as Panorama operates may camp opportunities (summery and spring break) based only out of the parks (primarily Centennial Park). This is done with the permission of the District, and therefore this amendment would not change their ability to offer these programs.

## **IMPLICATIONS:**

### **Strategic**

One of Council's strategic priorities is to: Facilitate increased public amenities by leveraging resources and seeking partnerships, including childcare, recreation, healthcare and social services

### **OCP**

The following are OCP policies related to childcare:

- Support the alignment of social services with community needs and anticipated population growth through greater access to health care, childcare, family resources, settlement and integration, local employment services, and other related services that are deemed appropriate. [No. 12]
- Encourage opportunities for childcare and healthcare facilities to be incorporated into development proposals, institutional sites such as schools and churches, or as standalone facilities. [No. 13]
- Implement the action items identified in the Central Saanich Child Care Inventory and Action Plan (Aug 2020), including updating home occupation regulations to support more in-home daycares [No. 22]

## **OPTIONS:**

### **Option 1 (recommended):**

1. That Bylaw No. 2155, Central Saanich Parks Management and Control Amendment Bylaw No. 3, No. 2155, 2025, be introduced and read a first and second time.
2. That Bylaw No. 2155 be read a third time.

### **Option 2:**

That Council do not amend the bylaw at this time.

**Option 3:**

Other, as directed by Council.

**CONCLUSION:**

The 2020 Childcare Inventory and Action Plan identified, as an action, the amendment of the Parks bylaw to allow use by groups of children in care.

Report written and submitted by:	Emilie Gorman, Director of Corporate Services/Corporate Officer
Concurrence by:	Jarret Matanowitsch, Director of Planning and Building Services
Concurrence by:	Dale Puskas, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix A: [Childcare Action Plan \(2020\)](#)

Appendix B: Bylaw No. 2155

Appendix C: Bylaw No. 804 (redlined)