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REPORT SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION MEETING OF THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

SUBJECT **Rainbow Recreation Centre Off-Leash Dog Park**

ISSUE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to review costs and staffing implications to determine a new location and design for the Rainbow Recreation Centre off leash dog park.

BACKGROUND

Dogs are welcome on Capital Regional District (CRD) trails and community parks within the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Parks and Recreation system, excluding those community parks with playgrounds. Dogs need to be “under control” meaning within an owner’s direct eyesight and returns immediately when called. Owners are asked to always carry a leash and leash their dog if their dog is young or has a mind of its own or when you are at a trail head or intersection or when approaching other dogs or wildlife.

The dog park located at the Rainbow Recreation Centre opened in April 2011, made possible through several monetary and in-kind donations. The small park was envisioned as a place for recreation and social interaction among both dogs and owners. The park features separate fenced areas for small and large dogs, two trees providing shade, a picnic table and a covered shelter. Currently, the Rainbow Recreation Centre dog park is the only fenced public dog park on SSI. This dog park is well used by some in the community but has experienced conflict with other visitors and regular users. The current location of the dog park is not ideal due to seasonal flooding and limited shade. The Rainbow Recreation Centre Site Master Plan recommends relocating the dog park to a more suitable location.

In response to recent concerns, the following motion was passed at the July 10, 2025 meeting of the SSI Local Community Commission (LCC)

“That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission request that staff report back on cost implications associated with exploring alternative locations for the dog park located at 262 Rainbow Road.”

To explore a more suitable location for a community dog park, staff are recommending a structured, transparent and inclusive process to ensure the site is safe, accessible, and supported by the community. To support this process, the following stages should be followed:

1. Establish objectives and criteria
2. Conduct a preliminary site inventory
3. Evaluate sites against criteria
4. Community and stakeholder engagement
5. Detailed site analysis of preferred locations
6. Select and approve final site
7. Conceptual design and budgeting
8. Implementation, monitoring and regular maintenance

At the October 9, 2025, meeting of the SSI LCC the following motion was passed.

“That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission requests that staff defer consideration of the Community Dog Park Designs project to the 2027 Budget Planning meeting.”

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

Relocating the Rainbow Recreation Centre off leash dog park would require funding to support determining the site, community consultation, site assessments, demolition and construction.

The project could be done in two phases, with the first phase identifying a site, developing detailed designs and cost estimates. The following cost estimate will allow the project to progress to the end of stage 6 (select and approve final site). Additional considerations will be needed to execute phase 2 (stages 7 and 8).

Phase 1 – Site Determination and Design Cost Estimates		
Assessments	Environmental, geotechnical, archaeological	\$5,000
Conceptual Designs	Determine scope, separate large and small dogs, fencing, benches	\$2,500
CRD Project management and admin	Develop project plan, site criteria and assessment tools	\$1,400
Community Engagement	Stakeholder workshop / open house	\$600
Cost Estimates	Class D cost estimate - contingency	\$1,500
	Total	\$11,000

Social Implications

Dog parks provide many benefits including improving dog socialization, boosting dog’s physical health, promoting active lifestyles, providing a safe space for exercise and socialization. Dog parks also provide social interaction among both dogs and owners. Typical community guidelines have around one dog park per every 15-20k residents. With only 1 dog park currently established on SSI, care will need to be taken to ensure timelines allow the community to have continuous access to a dog park during the transition.

CONCLUSION

Relocating the Rainbow Recreation Centre off-leash dog park would address site limitations while aligning with community concerns and the Rainbow Recreation Centre Site Master Plan. A phased approach, beginning with site determination and cost estimates, would allow staff to identify a suitable location through assessment and engagement before relocation is considered. Further design and implementation would be subject to future budget deliberations, consistent with the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission’s direction to defer consideration to 2027.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Kent Bittorf, BPhEd, Manager, SSI Parks and Recreation
Concurrence:	Dan Ovington, BBA, Senior Manager, SSI Administration
Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, MBA, BSc, General Manager, Electoral Area Services

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A – Rainbow Recreation Site Master Plan – Revised September 10, 2024