

**REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION
MEETING OF THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025**

SUBJECT SSI Centennial Park Garden Upgrades

ISSUE SUMMARY

To seek direction from the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (LCC) to enhance the garden areas within Centennial Park in response to visitor complaints.

BACKGROUND

Centennial Park is a central public gathering space in Ganges Village, hosting the popular Saturday Market, seasonal community events, and serving as a daily destination for both residents and visitors. Past park upgrades have focused on infrastructure improvements, including washrooms, playground, drainage, and the plaza. However, the garden areas have not received significant investment or enhancement in several years.

Wildflower seeds were planted as part of the Centennial Park Plaza upgrade project; however, the plantings have since deteriorated, become overgrown, and no longer contribute positively to the park's visual character.

Community feedback, including comments shared on social media platforms and online visitor reviews, frequently note that the gardens lack vibrancy, flowers, shrubs, and overall visual appeal. These observations highlight a desire among residents and visitors to see the park's green spaces restored and maintained to reflect the park's importance as the heart of Ganges Village.

Enhancing the garden areas presents an opportunity to:

- Improve the visual quality and first impressions of Ganges Village's main public park.
- Respond directly to community feedback regarding the park's current appearance.
- Support biodiversity and pollinator-friendly plantings through native and seasonal species.
- Encourage year-round use and enjoyment by providing more engaging and visually dynamic spaces.

Potential improvements could include replanting with perennial and native flowering species, adding shrubs and decorative planters, and implementing a seasonal maintenance plan to sustain garden health and appearance. Collaboration with local garden clubs and volunteer groups could also be explored to support ongoing stewardship however an initial investment in the gardens would be required.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission requests that staff defer consideration of the Centennial Park Garden Upgrade Project to the 2027 Budget Planning meeting.

Alternative 2

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission requests that staff include Project (26-17) Centennial Park Garden Upgrade Project funded by \$5,000 of capital reserve funding and that an additional \$4,800 of operating funds be included in the 2026 Final Budget Parks and Recreation Five Year Financial Plan.

Alternative 3

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission refers the report back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The provisional 2026 Parks and Recreation Centennial Park plants and planters budget is \$290, up from \$280 in 2025. This funding supports materials for a “pre market” clean of the garden beds where staff weed and lay bark mulch. CRD parks staff wages to complete this work are not included in this line item.

Preliminary estimates suggest that an initial investment of \$10,000 would be required to support landscaping design, soil improvements and plantings to upgrade the current wildflower beds as well as improvements to the remaining planters and shrubs in Centennial Park. Irrigation to the wildflower beds surrounding the plaza was installed as part of the plaza upgrade. Additional funding would be required to maintain the beds throughout the year and for annual upgrades.

Funding sources for initial upgrades to the wildflower beds could include the SSI Parks and Recreation capital reserves, Community Works Funds or an increase to the requisition. Any improvements to the gardens would require additional annual maintenance costs added to the parks and recreation operating budget.

Centennial Park Garden Upgrade Project		
Initial Upgrades	Replace wildflower beds with soil improvements, shrubs and plantings	\$5,000
Annual Maintenance (staff time)	Monthly weeding and seasonal planting	\$4,800
Annual Repairs (materials)	Annual soil and bark mulch application	\$2,000
Total		\$11,800

CONCLUSION

Enhancing the gardens in Centennial Park will revitalize one of Salt Spring Island’s most visible and well-used public spaces. Community and social media feedback indicate a desire for more vibrant, well-maintained, and seasonally appealing garden areas. Investing in these improvements will strengthen the park’s role as a welcoming gathering place for residents and visitors alike.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission requests that staff defer consideration of the Centennial Park Garden Upgrade Project to the 2027 Budget Planning meeting.

Submitted by:	Dan Ovington, BBA Senior Manager, Salt Spring Island Administration
Concurrence	Stephen Henderson, BSc, MBA, Senior Manager of Real Estate, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area and Saltspring Island Local Community Commission