

# Revenue Generation Strategy 2021-2024 (Options)

## Regional Parks

Capital Regional District | February 24, 2021

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# Options to the Revenue Generation Strategy 2021-2024

At its March 27, 2019 meeting, the Parks & Environment Committee directed staff to identify options during the 2020 budget process for service level adjustments to sustain the Regional Parks service delivery. At the October 23, 2019 Parks & Environment Committee meeting, staff presented the Regional Parks Sustainability Service Delivery Plan Report Card as well as an Infrastructure Status Report Card, for each regional park and trail that identified that the financial and human resources were no longer sufficient to meet the current asset renewal demands. This meeting resulted in two motions related to Sustainable Service Delivery: 1) that an additional \$925,000 be requisitioned each year for capital reserves to fund the refurbishment and replacement of existing assets, and 2) that staff report back in 2020 on strategies to ensure sufficient funding is in place in future years to sustain the Regional Parks service delivery.

At the November 25, 2020 Regional Parks Committee meeting, a Regional Parks Revenue Generation Strategy 2021-2024 was provided to support the generation of additional funding through non-tax revenue cost recovery for infrastructure and service delivery needs that are currently excluded from the Regional Parks Sustainability Service Delivery Plan Report Card as per the second motion of the Parks & Environment Committee meeting. At this time, the Regional Parks Committee referred the matter back to staff to report back to the committee with: 1) revised recommendations with lower fee increases and/or extended implementation timelines for parking and camping; 2) provide options for short-term paid parking; 3) provide options for considering acceleration of paid parking at the three parks in the report; 4) have conversations with the District of Central Saanich about paid parking at Island View Beach; 5) consider what the implication would be on revenue if year-round paid parking is considered, and 6) provide any other revised recommendations by staff.

## Gradual Parking Fee Increase

Gradually increasing the parking fees in the regional parks system would result in systemic and predictable increases over time. A fixed incremental amount is proposed for short-term, daily and yearly increases.

Gradual increase (Table 1): a new short-term parking fee of \$2.00/2 hours is proposed in 2021. The daily fee will have an initial increase of \$1.75 and incremental increases of \$1.50 per year subsequently, to a maximum of \$7.00/day from 2023 onward until a future fee review is undertaken. The seasonal pass will have an initial increase of \$10.00 with subsequent increases of \$15.00 per year, to a maximum of \$60.00/year from 2023 onward until a future fee review is undertaken. It is important to note that a seasonal pass would be valid at all regional parks with pay parking. A 2023 \$60 season's pass would be cost effective after eight visits.

**Table 1: Gradual increases of parking fees over a span of three years.**

	Short-Term (2 hours)	Daily	Season
2020	None	\$2.25	\$20.00
2021	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$30.00
2022	No change	\$5.50	\$45.00
2023	No change	\$7.00	\$60.00
2024	No change	No change	No change

## Expanded Pay Parking

Proposed, in Table 2, is an option to implement paid parking in an additional nine regional parks in 2022 based on the criteria of highest visitation levels and/or carrying capacity issues. After 2024, the regional parks without paid parking will be reassessed to evaluate if they have reached more than 50,000 visits and/or reached parking capacity for implementation of parking fees.

Before implementing the expansion of paid parking, consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders in 2021. The success of implementation will require working with the local municipalities and electoral areas and other stakeholders affected for a collaborative approach to parking issues in the area around each regional park. Implementation will be contingent on the feasibility for installation and management of paid parking by a service provider (i.e., is the service delivery contract economically viable).

**Table 2: Accelerated implementation of paid parking in regional parks in 2022.**

Regional Park	Visitation in 2019
Devonian	64,693
East Sooke	208,121
Elk/Beaver Lake	1,587,494
Francis/King	76,550
Horth Hill	96,216
Matheson Lake	65,152
Mill Hill	51,913
Mount Work	196,607
Witty's Lagoon	98,046

The following regional parks were excluded from the current proposed increase:

- Park Reserves: Ayum Creek, Mill Farm and Sooke River Road Reserves.
- Parks with less than 50,000 visits annually and/or not currently facing the highest capacity issues: Bear Hill, Brooks Point, Coles Bay, East Point, Gonzales Hill, Jordan River, Kapoor, Lone Tree Hill, Matthews Point, Mount Parke, Mount Wells, Roche Cove, Sooke Hills Wilderness, Sea to Sea and St. John Point regional parks.
- Parking not on CRD land: Albert Head Lagoon and Island View Beach regional parks parking lots are not located on CRD land. Discussion with the respective municipalities will be undertaken in 2021 to discuss the feasibility of implementing paid parking in these locations.

## Year-round Paid Parking

As part of the Regional Parks Revenue Generation Strategy 2021-2024, it was proposed that pay parking continue on a seasonal basis. Paid parking is not only a source of non-tax based revenue, but helps to address the increasing parking capacity issues that CRD Regional Parks are facing. If applied seasonally, pay parking would generate income from visitors to the region, especially in peak seasons. As not all parks would have seasonal pay parking, residents would still have non-pay parking options for visiting a regional park in peak season and free parking when visiting all parks outside of peak season.

Year-round paid parking would contribute to increased revenue for the regional parks system, and would create a consistent approach. It would also encourage year-round active and alternate transportation choices; however, this option would go beyond the capacity driven approach to the application of paid parking as suggested in the Revenue Generation Strategy.

Some factors to consider are that year-round paid parking may or may not be preferable to a service provider. If visitation patterns continue as they have over the last few years, there is no longer a true “off season”, and capacity issues will continue to be an issue in the winter months.

The change to year-round paid parking along with the expansion of paid parking to nine regional parks total, could ultimately be projected to generate \$2.5 million in annual revenue at the fair market value rates. This estimate is calculated using current visitation trends with assumptions that each visit equals 0.18 car visits with some adjustments for parks which would likely have less car visits per visitor.

This estimate needs to be considered cautiously because the introduction of the short-term parking option, the value of the seasonal pass, the variability of modes of travel to different parks, and the change in visitor use patterns are all variables that influence any gross projections.

## Camping

The fees proposed in relation to camping were intended to create efficiencies by streamlining camping fees for consistency across all campgrounds. As such, it is still recommended that a fee of \$25 is implemented to align all three Regional Parks campgrounds.

## Other Revised Recommendations

Some regional parks have multiple parking lots for visitor access. In order to be consistent and not drive capacity issues to smaller lots, it is recommended that paid parking be implemented in each lot in a park. However, the stakeholder engagement and subsequent proposals from a service provider would have to be considered.

It is recommended that a two-hour option be implemented rather than an hourly rate as most park visitors spend over an hour in regional parks as supported by the data collected in the 2019 visitor use surveys for Thetis Lake and Sooke Potholes regional parks where parking is implemented already. For visitors who spend close to an hour in regional parks, this would allow for a buffer to reduce generating unnecessary parking infractions should a visit go a little longer than planned.

## Alternate Options

The following alternate options were taken into consideration.

Alternate incremental increases (Table 3): a new fee of \$2.00/2 hours is proposed in 2021. The same incremental increases are proposed as Table 1, but the implementation is spread over a longer timeframe. Increases would be implemented in 2021, 2023 and 2025 to offer more time to regional parks visitors to become accustomed to parking fee changes. From 2025 onward the rates will be \$2.00/2 hours, \$7.00/day and \$60.00/season until a future fee review is undertaken.

**Table 3: Alternate incremental increases of parking fees over a span of five years.**

	Short-Term (2 Hours)	Daily	Season
2020	None	\$2.25	\$20.00
2021	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$30.00
2022	None	None	None
2023	None	\$5.50	\$45.00
2024	None	None	None
2025	None	\$7.00	\$60.00

Slower gradual increase (Table 4): a new fee of \$2.00/2 hours is proposed in 2021 until a future fee review is undertaken. The daily fee will start with an initial increase of \$1.75 and follow with incremental increases of \$1.00

per year subsequently, for a total of \$7.00/day from 2024 onward until a future fee review is undertaken. The seasonal pass will increase by \$10.00 per year, to a maximum of \$60.00/year from 2024 onward until a future fee review is undertaken.

**Table 4: Slower gradual increase of parking fees over a span of four years.**

	Short-Term (2 Hours)	Daily	Season
2020	None	\$2.25	\$20.00
2021	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$30.00
2022	None	\$5.00	\$40.00
2023	None	\$6.00	\$50.00
2024	None	\$7.00	\$60.00

Slower gradual increase of paid parking locations (Table 5): Table 5 reflects an accelerated increase in the number of regional parks with paid parking over the next three years. East Sooke, Elk/Beaver Lake and Mount Work regional parks would be implemented first as they have over 100,000 visits per year. The following year Francis/King, Horth Hill and Witty’s Lagoon regional parks would be implemented as they are the second highest group in visitation. In 2024, Devonian, Matheson Lake and Mill Hill regional parks would follow. After 2024, the regional parks without paid parking would be re-assessed to evaluate if more than 50,000 visits and/or parking capacity is reached.

**Table 5: Accelerated implementation of paid parking in regional parks over three years.**

Regional Park	Visitation in 2019	2022	2023	2024
Devonian	64,693			X
East Sooke	208,121	X		
Elk/Beaver Lake	1,587,494	X		
Francis/King	76,550		X	
Horth Hill	96,216		X	
Matheson Lake	65,152			X
Mill Hill	51,913			X
Mount Work	196,607	X		
Witty's Lagoon	98,046		X	