



COUNCIL AGENDA

Date: October 20, 2025 Item: 5.



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

## COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	October 6, 2025
From:	Jenn Moller, Director, Engineering and Transportation Services
Subject:	Cost recovery model for servicing historical grinder pumps on private property
File:	1700.09

### RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from the Director, Engineering and Transportation Services, dated October 6, 2025, titled “Cost recovery model for servicing historical grinder pumps on private property” be received for information.

THAT

1. staff be directed to proceed with developing a fee-for-service model that provides for reinstatement of District servicing of historical municipal maintained grinder pumps benefiting private property owners on a cost-recovery basis;
2. staff be directed to prepare a proposed policy and supporting procedures that provide for District servicing on a fee-for-service cost-recovery basis;
3. staff prepare applicable amendments to the District of West Vancouver’s Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023, that allows for reinstatement of servicing of historical municipal maintained grinder pumps benefitting private property owners on a cost recovery basis; and
4. staff report back in Q1 2026 with an update on the Council direction, including proposed policy and supporting procedure, and proposed bylaw amendments for Council's consideration.

### 1.0 Purpose

This report responds to Council direction in a Closed Meeting on March 31, 2025. In that meeting, Council directed staff to prepare a cost recovery approach based on a Local Area Service model that would support the reinstatement of maintenance, repair, and servicing of the grinder pumps by the District for private property owners that have benefited historically from District-installed pumps.

The proposed cost-recovery model would allow for property owners who meet eligibility requirements to opt in and continue receiving District servicing for historical grinder pumps on their private property, on the basis that benefiting property owners would pay the full costs of this service.

Council also directed staff to prepare bylaw amendments for Council's consideration in order to support the proposed cost recovery model based on a Local Area Service approach.

This report provides Council with an update on development of a cost recovery model for reinstating maintenance service for historic District-installed pumps, and requests additional Council direction.

Additional legal and internal review suggests a "fee for service" approach as a more appropriate cost recovery model than the previously recommended Local Area Service approach.

## 2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

*Community Charter* – A provincial statute that provides municipalities and their councils with a legal framework for the powers, duties and functions that are necessary to fulfill their purposes, the authority and discretion to address existing and future community needs, and the flexibility to determine the public interest of their communities and to respond to the different needs and changing circumstances of their communities.

Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District Sewer Use Bylaw No. 299, 2007 and amendments - A bylaw to establish a regulatory system for liquid waste. Metro Vancouver Regional District Integrated Liquid Waste and Resource

District of West Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023 - A bylaw to impose rates and connection fees for the use of the municipal sewerage and drainage system.

District of West Vancouver Local Area Service Policy No. 0139 and Local Area Service Procedure No. 0205 - The policy outlines the District's approach to receiving, processing, evaluating, and operationalizing Local Area Service (LAS) requests and is intended to complement the approach laid in the *Community Charter*. The procedure describes the process by which a Local Area Service (LAS) can be provided, initiated by a property owner(s) through application and petition.

### **3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan**

#### Official Community Plan

Section 2.5 of the 2018 Official Community Plan (OCP), Municipal Operations and Infrastructure, outlines several key policies related to sewage and drainage systems. However, these do not pertain to the subject matter of this report.

#### Council Strategic Objectives

This report pertains to Council Strategic Objective:

5.0: Deliver municipal services efficiently.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

The policy change outlined in Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023, and described in the staff report associated with the bylaw adoption was made primarily to improve equity. The provisions of the bylaw were intended to ultimately benefit both the District and rate payers / property owners by improving safety, reducing exposure to risk and liability, and improving equity among property owners. A consistent ownership model where all property owners are fully responsible for sewer systems on their private property is more equitable for all rate payers.

The October 2023 policy change was expected to result in operating cost saving for the District. Reducing expenditures currently allocated to private grinder pump maintenance would free up resources that can be redirected towards infrastructure and operational needs.

Should Council proceed with reinstating District servicing of historical grinder pumps benefiting private property owners on a cost-recovery basis, then all costs for that service should be borne by the beneficiaries of the service and there should be no significant financial implications.

However, there may be in-direct implications in that reinstating maintenance for grinder pumps on private property will require operations staff resources. Even if done on a cost-recovery basis, the grinder pump maintenance and servicing would require staff time be diverted from other sanitary system maintenance programming.

Finally, there are administrative and legal costs associated with developing the cost recovery program for reinstating this grinder pump servicing, which are difficult to estimate at this time.

## 5.0 Background

### 5.1 Previous Decisions

Council, at its **March 31, 2025, Closed Meeting**, directed staff to prepare and send a letter to the owners of those properties which have benefited from historical municipally-maintained grinder pump systems. The letter, **Appendix A**, was to provide property owners with an overview of a legal framework for cost recovery based on a Local Area Service model, including some terms and conditions for a District servicing plan. The letter allowed for an opportunity to opt in to participate in the cost recovery model once established.

Council, at its **January 27, 2025, Closed Meeting**, passed the following resolutions:

THAT

- 1 staff be directed to prepare an amendment to Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023, such that the District maintains, repairs, replaces municipal grinder pumps as required;
- 2 staff be directed to report back to Council with a proposed cost-recovery model for maintaining these systems for consideration at a future closed Council meeting;
- 3 the cost recovery model include a simplified form of release and indemnification in favour of the District; and
- 4 the decision to prepare an amendment to Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023 and development of a cost-recovery model be released for public information.

Council, at its **October 30, 2023, Regular Meeting**, passed the following resolutions:

THAT proposed "Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023" be adopted.

THAT proposed "Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw No. 4368, 2004, Amendment Bylaw No. 5275, 2023" be adopted.

Council, at its **October 23, 2023, Regular Meeting**, received a report from the Senior Manager, Engineering Utilities Planning, Design, and Project Delivery titled "Sewer and Drainage Utility Fee Bylaw No. 4538, 2007 Repeal and Replace" and passed the following resolutions:

THAT

1. proposed "Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023" be read a first, second, and third time; and
2. proposed "Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw No. 4368, 2004, Amendment Bylaw No. 5275, 2023" be read a first, second, and third time.

## 5.2 History

This section of the report provides a short overview of the policy change and bylaw that Council adopted in October 2023 and a subsequent notification process, as well as an overview of additional Council direction to date.

### Historical provision of private system pump servicing

Due to natural topography and grades within the District, there are both gravity and pumped sewer systems; this is the case for both District and private sewerage systems. Of those private pumped systems, there are a limited number of properties for which the District has historically assumed operational responsibility for pump maintenance in spite of no legal obligation to do so.

In the early 1970's, the District's plumbing and building codes were amended to require that all properties must connect to the municipal sewer system. Shortly after, the District council in that era determined that it was preferable to expedite the process of connecting all properties to the municipal sanitary system rather than continuing to support and regulate the operation of private septic systems. At the time, to mitigate the upfront costs to affected private property owners, the District opted to subsidize the installation of the grinder pumps that some properties in low pressures areas would require to connect to municipal sewer. However, it was not the District's intention to maintain this infrastructure in perpetuity. Informally and in the absence of formal agreements or policy, District operations staff continued to maintain some of these systems in spite of the District having no legal obligation to do so.

### Formalizing a consistent ownership model for private systems

In October 2023, Council adopted Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023, and with it a new policy that the District will no longer install or provide maintenance for private sanitary systems as part of municipal sanitary utility operations.

In adopting this bylaw, Council formalized a consistent ownership model where all private property owners are fully responsible for sewer systems on their property whether it is gravity fed or requires a grinder pump. This change affected fewer than 150 property owners who continued to benefit from historical special grinder pump servicing, which is less than 1% of service connections in the District.

The policy change outlined in Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023, and described in the staff report associated with the bylaw adoption was made primarily to improve equity. The previous system, in which most property owners owned and maintained the sewer system on their property (including grinder pumps) while others received special assistance from the District to do so, created an equity imbalance.

The provisions of the bylaw were intended to ultimately benefit both the District and rate payers / property owners by improving safety, reducing the District's exposure to risk and liability, and improving equity among property owners. A consistent ownership model where all property owners are fully responsible for sewer systems on their private property is more equitable for all rate payers.

Additionally, the policy change was expected to result in operating cost savings for the District. Reducing expenditures currently allocated to private grinder pump maintenance would free up resources that can be redirected towards infrastructure and operational needs that benefit the whole community, rather than a small number of individual property owners.

In accordance with the new bylaw and policy, the District retired its maintenance and renewal program for grinder pumps located on private property in 2024. Property owners of whom the District had record of having previously benefitted from special municipal grinder pump service received notification of this change by registered letter dated July 15, 2024, see **Appendix B**.

To implement the new policy with minimal disruption to residents who have benefitted from special service in the past, the District offered a transfer of ownership of the grinder pump installed on private property at no cost to the current and future owner(s) of that property so the private property owners could continue to benefit from that infrastructure for the duration of its remaining useful life. Alternatively, property owners could opt to have the District collect system and appurtenances it had been maintaining as part of the historical service.

Upon receiving notice, some affected property owners expressed concern with the policy change and regarding some issues inherent with the low-pressure sanitary systems located on their properties that existed prior to the change.

Proposed private pump system servicing under a cost recovery model

In response to this feedback, in January 2025, Council directed staff to consider and report back on options to reinstate District maintenance service under a cost recovery model. The objective in doing so was to address these concerns in the near term, but with the intent that eventually servicing will be phased out as properties redevelop and/or private sanitary systems are updated or replaced.

In a Closed meeting on March 2025, Council directed staff to prepare and send a letter to the owners of those properties which have benefitted from the historical Municipal maintained grinder pump systems. The letter was to provide owners of each of those properties with an opportunity to either:

- a) opt into a cost recovery model under the legal framework of a Local Area Service to provide for maintenance and repair of the grinder pumps by the District OR
- b) assume responsibility to maintain and repair the grinder pumps with no District involvement.

That letter, **Appendix A**, was mailed May 15, 2025.

To date, approximately 70 property owners (nearly half of affected property owners), have expressed interest in receiving more information about opting in to a servicing plan under a cost recovery model.

## **6.0 Analysis**

### **6.1 Discussion**

Since receiving Council direction in March and responding to that direction by sending notification letter on July 15, 2025, staff have continued to work internally and with legal counsel to explore mechanisms for reinstating service for historical pumps under a Local Area Service model of cost recovery.

On closer inspection, staff have identified several legal, administrative and practical challenges that require Council's additional direction. This discussion section of this report provides Council with a summary of those findings to inform next steps.

#### Appropriate model for cost recovery

Council, at its March 31, 2025, Closed Meeting, directed that the cost recovery approach to grinder pump servicing be based on a Local Area Service (LAS) model. Council also provided direction that staff should prepare a bylaw amendment to Sewerage and Drainage Bylaw No. 5263 2023 and a bylaw to support the LAS approach.

The authority to create local area services is provided by the *Community Charter* (Part 7: Division 5 Local Service Taxes). A local area service can be initiated by local residents via petition, (CC s. 211), by council initiative, (CC s. 212), or by the alternative approval process, (CC s. 213). Once established by bylaw it creates a tax on the benefiting properties.

In our discussions with legal counsel, they have raised a number of considerations which mitigate against the creation of a local area service bylaw for the purpose of servicing the grinder pipes.

From a practice perspective, at the onset of the process it will be necessary to set the boundaries of the local service area. Since all properties within the service area must pay the tax, it is not appropriate to encapsulate within the boundaries of the service areas properties that do not require the delineated services. In other words, if the properties receiving the benefit of the local area service are not contiguous, each property must be specifically identified in the petition and related bylaw.

If a council initiated petition to establish a local service area fails because of counter petition, the process must be abandoned. The District would have to wait a year before restarting the local service area establishment process.

In addition, the establishment of a local area service for the proposed service is contrary to the District's Local Area Service Policy No. 0139. The grinder pumps are located on private property. The Policy requires local area services to be provided on District owned property. Pursuant to the Policy, local area services work is not permitted on property owned by others even if there is a District owned easement or right of way that permits District access to land owned by others.

In addition to further legal review, staff have also considered the scope and operational requirements of a reinstated grinder pump servicing plan. It has become clear that there are some legal, administrative and practical challenges to the Local Area Service approach.

The LAS model is typically best suited for isolated capital projects with up-front, and one-time costs (e.g. laneway paving). Under the LAS model, the District would establish a fee to recover the costs of providing the grinder pump servicing and apply that fee to all eligible properties that could benefit from the service. In other words, all properties that have grinder pumps would be included in the service area and would be required to contribute to the costs incurred in provided the service to other properties, even if a specific property does not need the service. All properties within the local area service area must pay the fees, there is no option for properties that are within the service area but do not require the service, to opt out.

Servicing grinder pumps on private property will give rise to risk and exposure to claims if the pumps fail and cause damage. If the District provides grinder pump servicing as a fee for service, it is recommended that each property requesting the service grant the District an easement or statutory right of way to access and maintain the grinder pumps. These agreements would include:

- Indemnification of the District;
- release and waivers of any claims against the District for:
  - the value of the grinder pumps,
  - the interest in land required for the easement or SRW, damages arising from any malfunction of the grinder pumps; and,
  - the ongoing presence of the pump on private properties the land,
  - limitations on the use of the easement or SRW area by the owner so as to protect and provide access to the grinder pump.

These protections and transfer of risk and liability are not part of an local area service, the District does not have the authority to create the service and then impose these conditions on the provision of the service.

In light of the above concerns the legal and internal review suggests a “fee for service” approach as a more appropriate cost recovery tool.

As with LAS, any “fees for service” must be established and set by bylaw. Unlike LAS, the fee for service option provides much more flexible on what service municipality provides, as well as the terms, conditions, and fee structure for that service.

The District already employs the “fees for service” model in a number of areas, including:

- new development utility service connections (also called third party works);
- after hours emergency call out work on private properties; and
- special water meter reads.

Once the service and fees are established, the District can imply invoice benefiting property owner for services. Any unpaid invoices can be collected as part of tax billing.

#### Policy and procedure development for service delivery

To supplement bylaw amendments, the District should clearly:

- define scope of services and fee structure,
- establish eligibility criteria for accessing the service in exchange for the fee, and,
- establish a process by which eligible beneficiaries provide their consent to obtain in the service as defined.

The requirements of service would include a requirement that owners wishing the service register a statutory right of way on their property permitting District access to the pump grinders.

Developing and approving policy and procedures could help to improve clarity for District staff and benefiting property owners in the following ways:

- a policy statement would confirm & clarify Council objectives for reinstating service for eligible beneficiaries
- policy can better establish clear definitions and scope of service the District will provide under proposed cost recovery model

- defines eligibility criteria for property owners to receive this service (e.g. benefits from historical municipal grinder pump, has a statutory right of way on title)
- clearly outlines a fee structure for the cost recovery model (which will inform relevant bylaw amendments)
- establishes procedure by which eligible property owners will access this service, and by which staff will confirm eligibility for receipt of this service. Some elements that could be developed and included within the procedures include:
  - application process for eligible property owners
  - instructions for establishing statutory right of way
  - requirements regarding limits of liability, safe access/egress for staff providing servicing

An approved Council policy and supporting procedure would provide a clearer and more explicit framework for service delivery than bylaw alone.

#### Next steps and additional direction

For the reasons described above staff are seeking Council's direction to proceed with a "fee for service" approach to cost recovery rather a Local Service Area approach, should Council wish to proceed with reinstating District servicing for historical grinder pumps located on private property.

With this report, staff also request Council's direction to prepare and bring forward a proposed policy and supporting procedures that establish scope, terms and conditions for the servicing approach. These would help to improve clarity for both the District and beneficiaries of the proposed private grinder pump servicing plan.

#### 6.2 **Climate Change & Sustainability**

Does not apply.

#### 6.3 **Public Engagement and Outreach**

Information regarding the October 2023 policy change has been posted to the District website. It can be found by visiting [westvancouver.ca/sewer](http://westvancouver.ca/sewer).

Two notification letters have been distributed to affected property owners (see appendices). The first letter, dated July 15, 2024, notified affected property owners of the policy change Council adopted with the Sewerage and Drainage Bylaw No. 5263, 2023 in October 2023.

The second letter, dated May 15, 2025, informed affected property owners of Council's March 31, 2025, direction and provided an opportunity to opt in to a cost recovery model based on a Local Area Service framework.

Staff have also supported Council in managing correspondence and a number of resident enquiries resulting from the above notification processes.

#### 6.4 **Other Communication, Consultation, and Research**

Municipal solicitors as well as staff from Financial Services, Legislative Services and Land Development have been consulted with respect to the preparation of this report.

### 7.0 **Options**

#### 7.1 **Recommended Option**

THAT the report from the Director, Engineering and Transportation Services, dated October 6, 2025, titled “Cost recovery model for servicing historical grinder pumps on private property” be received for information.

THAT

1. staff be directed to proceed with developing a fee-for-service model that provides for reinstatement of District servicing of historical municipal maintained grinder pumps benefitting private property owners on a cost-recovery basis;
2. staff be directed to prepare a proposed policy and supporting procedures that provide for District servicing on a fee-for-service cost-recovery basis;
3. staff prepare applicable amendments to the District of West Vancouver’s Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023, that allows for reinstatement of servicing of historical municipal maintained grinder pumps benefitting private property owners on a cost recovery basis; and
4. staff report back in Q1 2026 with an update on the Council direction, including proposed policy and supporting procedure and proposed bylaw amendments for Council's consideration.

#### 7.2 **Considered Options**

Council could receive the report for information and request that staff provide additional information or provide other alternate directions (to be specified).

### 8.0 **Conclusion**


This report responds to Council direction in a Closed Meeting on March 31, 2025.

In that meeting, Council directed staff to prepare a cost recovery approach based on a Local Area Service model that would support the reinstatement of maintenance, repair, and servicing of the grinder pumps

by the District for private property owners that have benefited historically from District-installed pumps.

With this report, staff are seeking Council's direction to proceed with a "fee for service" approach to cost recovery rather than a Local Service Area approach for the reasons enclosed in the report.

Staff also request Council's direction to prepare and bring forward a proposed policy and supporting procedures that establish scope, terms and conditions for the servicing approach. These would help to improve clarity for both the District and beneficiaries of the proposed private grinder pump servicing plan.

Author:   
Jenn Moller, Director, Engineering and Transportation Services

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Notification 2: Letter regarding opportunity to opt into a cost recovery model dated May 15, 2025

Appendix B – Notification 1: Registered Letter regarding bylaw and policy change dated July 15, 2024

ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION  
750 17th Street West Vancouver BC V7V 3T3  
t: 604-925-7020 | e: engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca



This is an important notice. Please have someone translate.

这是一份重要的市政通知，请找人帮您翻译。 | 이것은 시청에서 보내는 중요한 통지입니다. 다른 사람에게 번역을 부탁하여 읽으십시오.  
این یک اطلاعیه مهم شهری است. لطفاً از کسی بخواهید که آنرا ترجمه کند.

15 May 2025

File: 1700.1

Dear Owner / Account Holder:

**RE: District maintenance support for private sewer grinder pumps**

In October 2023, Council adopted the new Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023. The bylaw formalized a framework in which all property owners are fully responsible for maintenance or replacement of private sewer systems including grinder pumps. The District notified property owners who previously benefitted from municipal maintenance support for private grinder pumps of this policy change by registered letter in July 2024.

In January 2025, in response to feedback from some affected property owners, Council directed staff to investigate and report back on an alternate approach where the District might reinstate maintenance for municipally installed private grinder pumps with service costs charged back to the benefiting property owner.

Council considered the alternate approach at a March 31, 2025 Closed Council meeting, and decided to provide owners of those properties that have benefited from the historical municipal-maintained grinder pump systems an opportunity to commit to either:

- (1) opt in to a cost recovery model in which the District provides for maintenance and repair of the grinder pumps;
- OR
- (2) assume responsibility to maintain and repair the grinder pumps with no District involvement.

For those residents who opt in to the cost recovery model, service will be established by a local area service through means of an Alternative Approval Process (AAP). District charges will apply and a statutory right of way will be required to be registered against each property title. The statutory right of way will establish terms including access to the pump and property around the pump; indemnification of the District; discretion of the District to repair, maintain and replace the pump.

**Should you wish to opt in to the cost recovery model, please contact the District via email at [engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca](mailto:engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca) before June 30, 2025;** in the event of an interruption to mail delivery as a result of strike action an extension to this date may be considered.

If you choose not to opt in, no action is required. This would mean you assume responsibility to maintain the system with no District involvement, and that you are fully responsible for maintenance or replacement of the private sewer system on your property including the grinder pump. If your private system requires service, you will need to contact a qualified plumber or tradesperson as needed.

For any questions or concerns, please contact the Engineering Department at 604-925-7020 or [engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca](mailto:engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca).

## **Engineering and Transportation Department**

ENGINEERING & TRANSPORTATION  
750 17th Street West Vancouver BC V7V 3T3  
t: 604-925-7020 | e: engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca



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این یک اطلاعیه مهم شهری است. لطفاً از کسی بخواهید که آنرا ترجمه کند.

July 15, 2024

Dear Owner / Account Holder,

### **RE: Change to your private sewer grinder pump maintenance**

You are receiving this notice because, according to District records, your property relies on a sewer grinder pump to discharge sewage waste to the nearest District sewer main.

Moving forward, the sewer grinder pump located on your property is considered part of your private sewer grinder pump system. Please be aware that the District will also no longer maintain grinder pumps on private property.

#### **What is happening?**

In October 2023, Council adopted the new Sewerage and Drainage Regulation Bylaw No. 5263, 2023. The bylaw formalizes a framework for ownership and maintenance obligations of private sewer pump systems.

Under the new framework, ownership of any District-maintained grinder pump located on private property is transferred to the owner of that property. Property owners are responsible for maintenance or replacement of private sewer systems including grinder pumps. For service, please contact a qualified plumber or tradesperson as needed.

#### **Why is it happening?**

Typically, grinder pumps on private property are the sole property and responsibility of the property owner. There have been some exceptions historically where the District has provided on-going maintenance for private grinder pumps with no legal obligation to do so. This created an equity imbalance, with some property owners owning and maintaining their sewer grinder pumps while others receive assistance from the District.

A consistent ownership model where property owners are fully responsible for sewer systems on their private property is more equitable. The change also reduces the District's operating costs associated with maintaining private systems and allows staff to focus on other critical sewer maintenance tasks that benefit the broader community.

#### **Get more information.**

For more information about water and sewer utilities, visit [westvancouver.ca/sewer](https://westvancouver.ca/sewer)

For any questions or concerns regarding this change please contact the Engineering Department at 604-925-7020 or [engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca](mailto:engineeringdept@westvancouver.ca).

### **Engineering and Transportation Department**



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