

# Report to Council



**Date:** May 5, 2025  
**To:** Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** Recreational Vehicle Sanitary Waste Disposal  
**Department:** Utility Services

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Utility Services Department, dated May 5, 2025, regarding sanitary waste disposal from recreational vehicles.

## **Purpose:**

To receive an update on the feasibility and costs associated with a City-provided recreational vehicle sanitary waste disposal facility.

## **Council Priority Alignment:**

Economic Development

## **Background:**

The City of Kelowna provides a variety of public services including the collection and treatment of wastewater from our residents and customers. A very specific type of wastewater collection from recreation vehicle (RV) wastewater storage tanks into the municipal wastewater system is referred to as a "sani-dump".

Within the boundaries of Kelowna there are no City-owned and operated RV sani-dumps. One privately operated facility is located at the Shell gas station at 1155 Hwy 33. Dumping is free with a gas purchase, otherwise the cost is \$3.

There are 8 licensed Agri-tourism RV campgrounds that can have up to 10 sites within the City. Seven of the eight locations advertise as having sanitary service on site.

#### *Previous Council Resolution*

At the June 24, 2024 meeting, council raised the issue of the limited availability of RV sani-dumps within the municipal limits of Kelowna and the impacts that may have on tourism. Staff were asked to explore the matter and report back.

Resolution	Date
THAT Council directs staff to explore the need for another sani-dump facility in Kelowna and to explore possible locations including potential partnership opportunities with the private sector, and report back to Council.	June 24, 2024

#### **Discussion:**

Staff have been unable to assess the customer demand (need) for another sani-dump within the City. Given the small number of stand alone RV sites within the City, and the fact that almost all camp sites are fully serviced, staff conclude that the demand for sani-dump facilities within the City is mainly driven by local residents wanting to empty their RVs.

An RV sani-dump facility requires several elements. Ideally, the site should be in proximity to our primary highways and be easy to locate. Physically it needs a substantial area for vehicles to safely queue, maneuver to the dump site, off-load wastewater, and have adequate space to maneuver and exit. The site needs a connection to the sanitary sewer network (ideally with significant usage and flow) or a holding tank to be vacuumed up and transported to the wastewater treatment plant. If a user pay program is desired, a payment system is required. Finally, the site may need to be secured to restrict off-hour dumping and monitored to guard against disposal of untreatable contaminants (e.g., paint, pesticides). The site will require access to potable water and some staff resources to maintain. Staff did see the availability of potable water as a significant co-marketing element.

Table 1 summarizes some of the known sani-dump facilities in the Central Okanagan, the approximate land area, and how much they charge to use the service.

Location	Public or Private?	Site land area (approx. acres)	Fee
Vernon (Tronson Rd)	Public	0.8	\$4
Fintry Provincial Park (Westside Rd)	Public	0.5	\$5
Bear Creek Provincial Park	Public	Unknown	\$5
Kelowna (Shell Gas - Hwy 97)	Private	0.76 (Gas Station)	Free with fill or \$3
West Kelowna (Shell Gas – Dobbin Rd)	Private	0.94 (Gas Station)	Free
West Kelowna (Chevron Gas – Dobbin Rd)	Private	0.50 (Gas Station)	Free
Summerland (off Hwy 97)	Public	0.3	\$15
Penticton	None found (2 recently closed)		

Table 1 – Sani-Dump Location Summary

Staff studied the location question from two perspectives. Firstly, are there private businesses that are interested in adding a sani-dump to their own operation and can the City of Kelowna assist? Secondly, does the City have a suitable location that could accommodate this type of operation?

Council's discussion was reported by the local news agencies. Following that news coverage, no local businesses came forward inquiring about adding an RV sani-dump to their business. Staff made additional inquiries with several local businesses; however, none expressed an interest in adding or returning a RV sani-dump to their site, even with City assistance. Two private locations in Penticton recently closed due to excess operating challenges and costs.

At a very conceptual level, staff reviewed a dozen potential locations on which the City could create a sani-dump site that could accommodate at least one connection on a City road or on city property and meet the operational requirements. Site development costs vary significantly but for a more permanent site that allows for at least some queueing, site development would likely range from \$100,000 to \$250,000, assuming a flat and readily accessible property. Operating costs are estimated at \$15,000 per year plus lifecycle maintenance, which is also site and service specific. Operating costs will escalate if inappropriate dumping occurs.

The 10-year capital plan and 2025 capital budget do not include a program that is aligned with developing a sani-dump site. Therefore, funding would need to be added to the capital plan or shifted from another program. Staff are confident that if fees are collected, revenues may recover operating costs. Revenues are unlikely to recover the capital cost of construction.

**Conclusion:**

There are concerns that without a sani-dump facility in the region, RV owners will simply find other municipalities to empty their systems. This can become a lost opportunity for the municipality and may need to be addressed independently or in partnership with private companies.

The Central Okanagan area currently has seven publicly accessible locations that staff could identify. There does not seem to be any local private sector interest in partnering with the City of Kelowna in developing a new RV sani-dump.

Staff feel that if a fee were charged, the annual operating cost might be recovered. The capital cost for development will not be recovered from a City owned facility. The application of a fee will undermine the attractiveness of a municipal site for visitors which will erode the alignment to Council's priorities.

The City has viable sites that could be developed into an RV sani-dump. A business case, including design and cost estimate, can be prepared should Council recognize this as a funding and business priority in a future business plan and budget.

**Internal Circulation:**

Partnerships Office

**Considerations applicable to this report:**

***Financial/Budgetary Considerations:*** Requires additional capital and operating budget approvals to construct and operate.

Cost recovery is estimated to be negligible for the capital cost to construct a site and some potential to recover the annual operating cost if a fee between \$5 and \$15 were applied.

If the strategic priority was to encourage visitors to stop in Kelowna, a fee is more likely to encourage them to use the free facilities in West Kelowna.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

***Legal/Statutory Authority:***

***Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:***

***Existing Policy:***

***Consultation and Engagement:***

***Communications Comments:***

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cc:

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