



Sunnyside Campground Seasonal Fee Increase Stakeholder Response Synopsis

Overview

Cultus Lake Park received 38 emails and 5 phone calls in response to the Sunnyside Campground fee increase announcement.

The majority of the emails offered some form of concern regarding the increase.

One email acknowledged that a large infrastructure project requires funding and said that the increase is understandable.

Many of the emails explained that the writer had been a part of the Sunnyside Campground community for many years, even decades.

Concerns

- Increase per site (not affordable for some)
- Sites not being charged an equal rate (waterfront, view sites have higher increase than regular sites)
- Campers being charged the same amount as residential leaseholders when in their perception, campers use less resources and won't put as much of a strain on the sewer system.
- Campers not having any input in these decisions (not seen as members of the community, unable to vote etc.)
- Short notice for increase to come into effect
- That families with children and seniors (the groups seen as the heart of the community) will be forced out as a result of the increase.
- That because CLP has a waiting list for the sites, there is little or no consideration regarding what this increase will mean to current site holders.
- That CLP shows the season as 180 days and some campers can't be there for all that time because of work and other responsibilities. It's not a 180-day season for them so the daily rate as outlined by CLP is actually much higher when viewed as days that they are at the Campsite vs. days they have access to the campsite.

Perceptions

- A few comments appeared to come from the perception that there have been substantial increases each year.
- A few comments appeared to come from the perception that Sunnyside campers feel that the residential leaseholders don't contribute as much to the community overall as the campers.

- Two emails mentioned that they felt that the cost comparison to other recreational campsites doesn't work because Sunnyside doesn't provide Wi-Fi (it does), children's programs (it does), appreciation events (it does) or have a convenience store where they can purchase basics onsite.

Questions/comments - FAQs

Q: Why are different sites (waterfront, view etc.) being charged a higher rate than regular sites?

The Board has decided to remain with a graduated distribution of the fee increase versus an even distribution. When the Board looked at making increases to the rates they also looked at other market rates and what increases the market can tolerate. At Sunnyside there is a very high demand for the waterfront and view lots. This is due to their short supply and of course the added benefit of being on or close to the water. Conversely, there is a lower demand and a higher supply of our regular sites. When looking at competitors in the seasonal camping market and comparing these to the prices of our regular sites the Board believes our regular sites cannot tolerate the same increases in rates as our waterfront and view lots. Therefore, we have proposed a graduated rate increase to consider the demand on the waterfront and view lots due to the high desire for campers to be in close vicinity to the water.

Q: Why isn't government finding this?

A: Cultus Lake Park is a self-sustaining community. We do not receive funding from any level of our government. Our revenue from residential and commercial leaseholders, Sunnyside campground and parking provides financial support for the community – from operational such as park security and bylaw enforcement to infrastructure to protecting the vast natural spaces that makes Cultus Lake Park so special.

Q: We gave you \$300 last year where did it go?

A: Washroom upgrades including Toilets and Taps changed to low flow.

Sewer pumping and hauling

Children's Programs

New Playground equipment

New electronic Gate

New fencing

Upgrades to WIFI

Water system upgrade

Q: Are you going to let us in two weeks early to make up for this?

No, the seasonal move in date will start on April 7, 2019, just short of 6 months.

Q: Why did you decide this was the year to do this – in light of the increase last year

A: The old sewer system was failing. As an interim measure, we were pumping and hauling waste out of Sunnyside Campground, which was unsustainable over the long-term. In addition, we heard that the noise and smell of pumping and hauling was a concern for the Sunnyside Campground community. The installation of the new Class A+ Sewer System had to be done as quickly as possible because the old system had become an environmental risk.

Q: You say the season at Sunnyside is approximately 180 days of camping - do you realize most of us can't be there for the full time?

A: We understand that personal and professional obligations mean that some Sunnyside Campers cannot be at the campground for every day of the season. Sunnyside Campground is open and accessible to seasonal campers for 176 days in 2019; that is what we mean when we say that the Sunnyside Campground season is approximately 180 days.

Q: Why are campers being charged the same as houses when a) we don't have laundry, etc. and aren't there all year round?

A: Capital costs and reserve funding per connection is the same whether you own a house or an RV. Operating costs are not the same, the cost is prorated based on the number of months seasonal campers occupy the campground (5/12). In addition, the higher water flow in residential houses actually assists with the breakdown of the sewer compared to the low storage capacity in an RV which causes a higher concentration of effluent.

Q: It seems as though you feel like because you have a waiting list and we have no rights, you can do whatever you want – because someone will step in and take the spot at the higher rate

A: We understand that there are frustrations and concerns about the increase for Sunnyside Seasonal campers. We see the seasonal campers as an important part of the Cultus Lake Park and Sunnyside community. That there is a waiting list has no influence or weight in the decision-making process. We know that many Sunnyside Seasonal Campers have been coming to us for many years, decades even – and that you are a big part of what makes Sunnyside special. The Park Board is committed to improving the communication with the Sunnyside Seasonal Campers and have formed a Sunnyside Seasonal Communication and Relationship Management Committee which will be chaired by Commissioner Joe Lamb. This Committee will meet a few times per year.

Q: There are no programs for kids, no appreciation functions, no tv and of course no Wi-Fi – why not?

A: In fact, there are activities such as Seasonal Welcome BBQ, Movie Nights, Easter activities, children's activities and Mother's & Father's Day Pancake Breakfast and Wi-Fi was upgraded last season and plans are to continue to add further upgrades in 2019.

Q: Will there be a payment plan or extension of some sort provided to us?

A: To assist with the increase in 2019, the Park Board has authorized staff to extend the final payment to May 1st, 2019. A pre-authorized credit card payment or post-dated cheque will be accepted. Payment details will be outlined on the front page of the website.

Q: What you call waterfront or view often aren't – when will you review this?

A: All waterfront and view sites have a view of the lake, however, depending on what is placed on the site can block the lake view. This cannot be managed unless we start to stipulate the size of a RV allowed onto the site, no canopies, no decks, etc.

Q: When will installation of the sewer system be completed?

A: Fraser Valley Regional District has indicated the sewer system is projected to be completed in early Spring.

Q: Can you advise what the increase will be for the following season?

A: Sewer capital costs will be included in the seasonal rates over the next 20 years. Also, each year will be inflation increase plus any other operational costs that may be required for the upcoming years' campground operation. We cannot predict this far in advance for next season.