

# **REPORT**

## ***Engineering Services***

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** May 5, 2025

**From:** Lisa Leblanc  
Director of Engineering Services  
**File:** 05.1035.10  
(Doc# 2683378)

**Item #:** 2025-124

**Subject:** **Amendment to the Water Shortage Response Bylaw No, 6948, 2004 – Minor Revision to Stage 3 Lawn Sprinkling Regulations**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004, Amendment Bylaw No. 8521, 2025 be introduced and given first, second and third readings.*

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### **PURPOSE**

To introduce an amendment to the Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004 for Council's consideration (Attachment 1).

### **SUMMARY**

The proposed amendment to the Water Shortage Response Bylaw is a minor revision that brings the City into alignment with Metro Vancouver's Drinking Water Conservation Plan (DWCP). Specifically, the proposed amendment will require that all issued permits for new lawns and/or lawns being treated for European Chafer Beetle be invalidated when the Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD) commissioner activates Stage 3 of the DWCP.

### **BACKGROUND**

Metro Vancouver's Drinking Water Conservation Plan (DWCP) is a regional policy developed with local governments in the GVWD and other stakeholders to manage the use of drinking water during periods of high demand, mostly during late spring to early fall, and during periods of water shortages and emergencies. The DWCP helps ensure

our collective needs for drinking water are met affordably and sustainably now, and in the future. The DWCP is enacted by each member municipality by implementation of a municipal bylaw, which enables municipal staff to enforce the water restrictions.

The Water Shortage Response Bylaw was previously amended in March 2022 in response to the record-breaking heatwave observed during the summer of 2021, which resulted in unprecedented sustained high water use. The revisions included reduction of lawn watering from two days per week to one day per week for residential and non-residential addresses during Stage 1, with a complete ban on lawn watering in Stage 2. Furthermore, the revisions included changes to the allowable time window to water trees, shrubs, and flowers during Stage 1 and 2.

### **EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE**

The existing City's policy/practice is based on the Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004 (last amended in 2022) that sets Stage 1 through Stage 4 restrictions for watering residential, non-residential and government/schools/parks lawns, trees, shrubs, and flowers. The City's bylaw follows the recommendations of the DWCP and Stage 1 is effective annually between May 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>.

The GVWD Commissioner provides management and oversight of the activities of the GVWD as authorized by the GVWD Board and has the authority to make a decision to activate, extend, or deactivate stages within the DWCP at any time. Recommendations to activate, extend, or deactivate a different stage of the DWCP are made by Metro Vancouver (MV) staff to the GVWD Commissioner and if required the GVWD Commissioner may consult with the GVWD Board Chair and standing committee Chair, on the recommendations.

Each stage of the DWCP is designed to reduce demand for drinking water:

- Stage 1 reduces demand in the summer months by promoting water conservation and efficient watering practices;
- Stages 2 and 3 describe further restrictions to limit water use and are likely to be activated during unusually hot and dry conditions to maximize conservation through to early fall with the return of seasonal rainfall or until the risk of water shortage is over;
- Stage 4 is an emergency stage that limits both indoor and outdoor water uses to ensure an adequate supply of drinking water for human consumption and essential uses such as firefighting.

A number of factors guide the GVWD Commissioner's decision to activate the more restrictive stages of the DWCP. Activation of Stages 2, 3, and 4 of the DWCP is based on measured facts, reasoned predictions, historical patterns and modelling, with a goal of ensuring the sufficient supply of drinking water until the events that caused the more restrictive stages are over. As climate change is resulting in warmer and drier summers,

the DWCP supports climate adaptation by reducing the region's demand on and conserve the water supply during the critical summer months.

## **DISCUSSION**

The proposed bylaw amendment updates the City's Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004 to include minor revisions to Stage 3 requirements and ensure alignment with the Metro Vancouver DWCP. Specifically, the amendment bylaw requires that all issued permits for new lawns and/or lawns being treated for European Chafer Beetle be invalidated when Stage 3 is activated.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

Lawn sprinkling regulations reduce peak water demand in the hot summer months by promoting water conservation and efficient watering practices during the time when water supply is constrained.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Potential reduction in water consumption as a result of the lawn sprinkling regulations may reduce city costs for water purchases from the GVWD.

## **INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Staff from the following departments have been involved in the development of the Bylaw:

- Legislative Services (Office of the CAO)

## **OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council's Consideration:

1. That Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004, Amendment Bylaw No. 8521, 2025 be introduced and given first, second and third readings.
2. Defer the proposed Water Shortage Response Amendment Bylaw No. 8521, 2025, and request Metro Vancouver to provide further information.

Staff recommend Option 1.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Drinking Water Conservation Plan (DWCP) is intended to conserve water by managing discretionary uses in a manner which minimizes the impact on residents and does not impose unnecessary economic hardships on businesses. The proposed bylaw amendment updates the City's Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004 to

include minor revisions to Stage 3 requirements and ensure alignment with the Metro Vancouver DWCP.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Water Shortage Response Bylaw No. 6948, 2004, Amendment Bylaw No. 8521, 2025

## **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
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This report was approved by:  
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