❒ Info Package Date:

SJ	SJ	
Dept. Manager	GM/ Director	CAO

The District of North Vancouver
INFORMATION REPORT TO COUNCIL

July 25, 2025
File: 6486814

AUTHOR: Monica Woods-Marshall, Section Manager, Urban Forestry and Natural Areas
Michael Cowman, Trail and Habitat Coordinator, Natural Areas

SUBJECT: **Hastings Creek Trail Update**

REASON FOR REPORT:

This report provides an update to Council on the management strategy for Hastings Creek Trail in the Lynn Valley neighbourhood.

SUMMARY:

Hastings Creek is one of the District's most important urban watersheds. Flowing through a steep, ecologically sensitive ravine, the creek has historically supported salmon populations and remains an integral part of the Lynn Valley landscape. However, the central section of the Hastings Creek Trail has suffered extensive erosion and recurring slope failures, presenting an unacceptable safety risk and triggering costly, unsustainable maintenance efforts. After more than two decades of monitoring and mitigation, District staff have exhausted practical, safe, and environmentally responsible options to keep this portion of the trail open. Based on detailed geotechnical evaluations and multiple failed re-routing attempts, the conclusion is clear. The middle segment of trail cannot be maintained without risking public safety or inflicting substantial ecological harm.

On February 19, 2025, the Parks and Natural Environment Advisory Committee (PNEAC) reviewed the options and unanimously supported the permanent closure of the central trail section. There is no viable reroute, given the terrain and environmental sensitivities.
With this direction in place, staff will implement the following actions:

- Permanently close the central section of the Hastings Creek Trail, which is currently under temporary closure
- Extend the northern portion of the trail to maintain neighbourhood access (scheduled for completion in fall 2025)
- Remove the northern bridge, which is no longer safe or sustainable (summer/fall 2025)
- Reinstate the southern bridge to maintain a safe and enjoyable out-and-back trail experience on the southern end (planned for summer 2026)

These actions reflect the District's long-term monitoring, geotechnical findings, environmental stewardship obligations, and current Parks capital planning. While the southern portion will remain open for now, it will continue to be monitored. Should new safety risks emerge, staff are prepared to act. This course of action prioritizes public safety, protects the integrity of the watershed, and ensures responsible use of public funds.

BACKGROUND:

The Hastings Creek Trail runs parallel to the creek through a steep valley characterized by unstable slopes and high-energy streamflow. The area is home to critical fish habitat and has been subject to increasing erosion, bank failure, and infrastructure loss. The trail has been a recurring maintenance challenge for years. Several previous reroutes have failed due to ongoing bank undercutting and terrain instability.

In 2021, the District engaged Ecora Engineering and Environmental Ltd. (Ecora) to conduct a comprehensive geotechnical study. The assessment identified thirteen locations with moderate to high risk of failure along the central section of the trail. Ecora provided a conceptual stabilization plan valued at over $5 million dollars. The proposed works would have involved significant construction and resulted in considerable environmental disruption. It was determined that the project's cost, impact, and long-term effectiveness could not be justified. Since then, the situation has continued to deteriorate. Infrastructure failures have increased, slope conditions remain unstable, and the trail poses an ongoing hazard to the public. Temporary closures have become routine. With no safe or sustainable path forward, staff now recommend a full and permanent decommissioning of the central trail segment. (See Appendix I for photos).

Geotechnical issues

Geotechnical instability along the Hastings Creek Trail is now considered critical and irrecoverable in the central section. The natural meandering of the creek has undercut the slope toe over time, creating rotational and translational failures that cannot be stabilized using conventional means. Soil conditions are highly variable, with shallow root zones and saturated subsurface layers contributing to rapid erosion and bank collapse during storm events.

The 2021 analysis by Ecora identified 13 discrete zones with moderate to high risk of structural failure. These include both active slumps and zones with tension cracks, perched infrastructure, and signs of progressive downslope movement. Several areas exhibit ongoing creep and retrogression, suggesting that future failures are not only likely but imminent under current conditions. Importantly, even short-term repairs or localized reinforcements are unlikely to succeed due to the depth of failure planes and hydrologic unpredictability of the creek. Proposed interventions such as retaining walls, bank armoring, or slope reconstruction would involve extensive excavation, disrupt salmon habitat, and create significant sedimentation risk downstream. These measures carry an estimated cost exceeding $5 million and would require invasive construction activity within a narrow riparian corridor.

EXISTING POLICY:

The following documents support and direct the proposed trail changes:

- **Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan** – 5.4.1 Key Recommendation - Ensure trails are designed, constructed and maintained to minimize the impact to sensitive ecosystems and to enhance user safety
- **Natural Areas Trails Strategy** – Goal 1.17 - Continue to refine risk management processes to identify unintended risks on trails and reasonably manage these risks through proper trail planning, design, maintenance, management, signs, and communication
- **Official Community Plan** - Section 9.4 Natural Hazards - Policy 2 - Facilitate mitigation measures to reduce risks of landslide, flood, debris flow and forest interface wildfire

ANALYSIS:

A number of options were considered, ranging from keeping the trail open ($5M+), closing the entire trail ($150K), and closing the middle section of the trail and maintaining the southern section ($500K). The Parks and Natural Environment Advisory Committee reviewed the options presented and expressed support for closing the middle section of the trail ($500K).

Scope of Work:

The preferred management strategy balances public safety, environmental protection, existing budget allocation and recreational values, and includes the following:

- Permanent closure of the central section of the trail (Figure 1, red line), including the removal of a failing bridge (Figure 1, purple line).
- Bridge replacement in 2026 located in the southern section of the trail (Figure 1, blue line).
- The southern section of trail will become an out-and-back style trail. This length of trail was significantly impacted by the October 2024 atmospheric river event and will be repaired before reopening. Staff will monitor this area and may consider partial closure for this section of trail in future years (Figure 1, dark green).
- The northern section of trail will be extended to connect the current trail to Kilkenny Road and is planned for 2025 (Figure 1, yellow line).
- Some infrastructure decommissioning and habitat restoration work, such as invasive plant removal and replanting, will be implemented in 2025/2026.

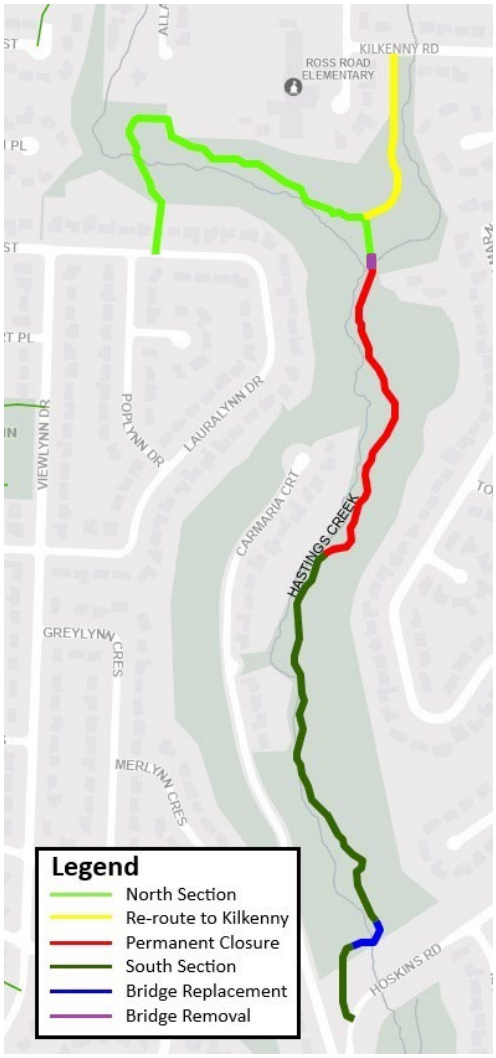


Figure 1. Hastings Creek Trail with proposed changes.

Concurrence:

The management strategy for the Hastings Creek Trail was reviewed and supported by staff from the following sections: Parks, Legal, Risk, Fire and Rescue Services, Environment, Climate Action, Engineering and Communications.

At the February 19th meeting, PNEAC members discussed the various options and strongly supported the proposed management strategy (see Appendix II for presentation slides). Two members of the committee were residents directly adjacent to Hastings Creek Park, offering good local knowledge and perspective.

A communication plan has been developed to inform residents of the trail changes and the rationale for these changes.

Financial Impacts:

The estimated cost to complete this project is approximately **$500,000.** This work is funded in the 2025 capital budget and no additional funding is required.

Liability/Risk:

Currently the trail is closed south of Hoskins Creek and staff continue to monitor the closure. In the interest of public safety, it is not feasible to open the middle section of the trail due to unstable banks, erosion, and failing infrastructure. The selected management strategy will reduce public safety risks, improve protection of an environmentally sensitive area and reduce ongoing maintenance costs for the trail.

Environmental Impact:

The closure of the central area of the trail will include streamside restoration through the removal of invasive plant species and replanting native trees and shrubs. This work will increase biodiversity, reduce erosion and improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

Conclusion:

Hastings Creek Trail faces significant risks due to severe erosion and unstable banks. High-energy stream flows have led to frequent slope failures, causing infrastructure damage and unsafe conditions. The middle portion of the trail, with the steepest slopes, is the most affected.

A permanent closure of the central section of trail is necessary to ensure the safety of trail users, reduce environmental impacts and allow the remaining sections of the trail to be maintained with a reasonable budget. The southern section will become an out-and-back trail and the northern trail section will be extended, connecting to Kilkenny Road. The southern section of trail will be monitored and more closures in this area may be required in the future. These changes will improve public safety, enhance environmental protection, responsibly manage budgets and maintain opportunities for public access to nature.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Woods-Marshall
Section Manager, Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

REVIEWED WITH:

❑ Sustainable Community		❑ Clerk's Office		External Agencies:			
❑ Development Services		☒ Communications	CG	❑ Library Board			
❑ Utilities		■ Finance	SJ	❑ NS Health			
■ Engineering Operations	FD	☒ Fire Services	MD	❑ RCMP			
■ Parks	SC	❑ ITS		❑ NVRC			
☒ Environment	CN	■ Solicitor	CS	❑ Museum & Arch.			
❑ Facilities		❑ GIS		❑ Other:			
❑ Human Resources		❑ Real Estate					

APPENDIX I - Examples of Erosion, Slope Failures and Failing Infrastructure

Photo 1. Northen bridge with floating footing.

Photo 2. Damaged southern bridge.

Photo 3. Trail fully washed away.

Photo 4. Bank erosion under cutting boardwalk footings.

Photo 5. Large landslide area directly above trail. Large rocks regularly roll down onto the trail.

Photo 6. Large landslide area where the trail runs directly along the top of the slide.

APPENDIX II - PNEAC Presentation Slides

Hastings Creek Trail Management

Parks and Natural Environment Advisory Committee

February 19, 2025

Monica Woods-Marshall, RPBio, BSc.
Section Manager, Urban Forestry and Natural Areas

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

1

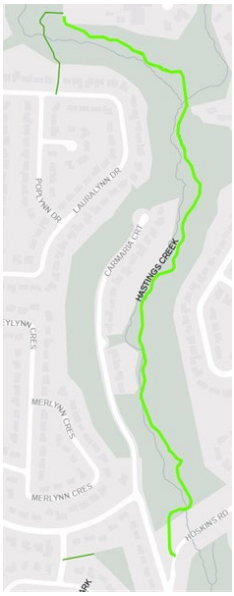
Agenda

1. Hastings Creek Trail Description
2. Trail Benefits
3. Trail Challenges
4. Video
5. Trail Management Options
6. Discussion Questions

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

2

Hastings Creek Trail Description



- 1.5km long
- Rustic and natural with extensive built infrastructure
- Runs along creek and steep ravine corridor
- Neighborhood trail
- Coho salmon habitat

Trail Benefits

- Rugged, natural style trail in the heart of Lynn Valley
- Improves community connection
- Part of the Lynn Valley Link Network
- Light-moderate use dog walking and running route
- Used and loved by locals and families of Ross Road Elementary

Trail Challenges

- Steep ravine
- High energy stream
- Geotechnical risk assessment: 13 sites with failure risk
- Unstable eroding banks and slope failures
- Ongoing trail washouts, infrastructure loss and environmental impacts
- Infrastructure is damaged or nearing end of life
- Topography and adjacent private property make trail realignment impractical

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

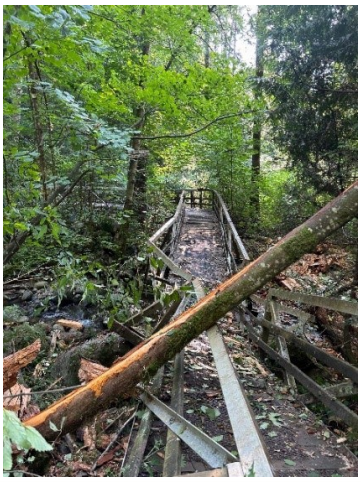
5

Erosion Impacts

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

6

Aging and Failing Infrastructure



DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER 7

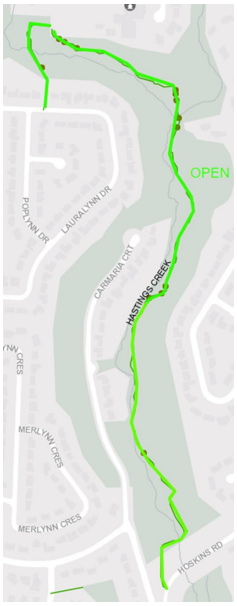
Hastings Creek Video Footage

- Video

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER 8

Trail Management: Option 1

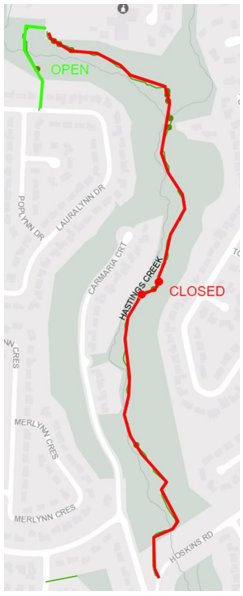
- Keep entire trail open
  - $5M+
  - Highest risk tolerance required
  - Results in ecological degradation and loss of fish habitat
  - Unlikely to receive required environmental permits for the work



DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER 9

Trail Management: Option 2

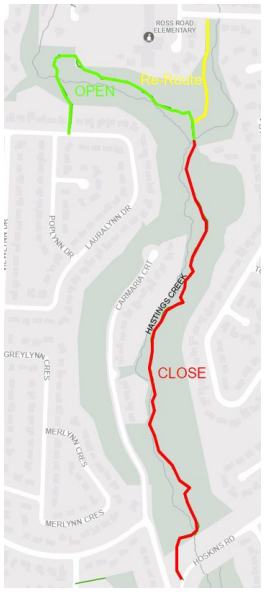
- Close entire trail except portion between 27th St and Ross Road Elementary
  - $50,000 - $400,000
  - Safest option for trail users
  - Lowest negative impact on environment
  - High potential for public opposition
  - Significant loss of recreation and access to nature



DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER 10

Trail Management: Option 3

- Close trail south of Hoskins Creek and create a loop trail that connects to Kilkenny Rd
  - $200,000 - $500,000
  - Eliminates major risks while still maintaining recreation options
  - Balances recreational use with habitat
  - Public opposition still likely, but some compensation



DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

11

Trail Management: Option 4

- Remove failing infrastructure over time, phased approach closure
  - $400,000 - $700,000
  - Moderate risk tolerance
  - Eventually results in almost full closure of the trail (similar to Option 3)

DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

12

Discussion

1. What option do you prefer and why?
2. Are there other options we have not considered?
3. Are there other recreation/community impacts we have not considered?