

Communication Update

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

Committee Date: July 27, 2026

Subject/Report No.: Mountain Drive Park Update (ES2402(b))

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 6 & 7

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Signature:



The purpose of this Communication Update is to advise Council.

Summary

This Communication Update provides Council with an update on the impacted soils identified at Mountain Drive Park in April 2024, additional testing that has been completed, and next steps for project implementation.

Background

In April 2024, staff advised Council through Communication Update ES2402 that routine soil testing associated with the Mountain Drive Park redevelopment project identified areas where soil concentrations exceeded Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) standards for parkland use. As a precautionary measure, the western portion of the park was fenced to restrict public access.

Additional soil testing completed in August 2024 determined that the impacted areas extended beyond the limits previously identified. Staff communicated these findings through Communication Update No. 2 (ES2402(a)). As a result, and out of an abundance of caution, the remainder of the park was fenced to prevent public contact with the affected soils.

Soil sampling activities continued through the summer of 2025. A total of 156 boreholes and 16 test pits were completed, resulting in the collection and analysis of approximately 450 soil samples. The results indicated that soils in multiple areas of the park exceeded Ontario MECP standards for parkland use for one or more parameters, including zinc, petroleum

hydrocarbons, and cadmium. The investigation successfully defined the full extent of the impacted areas within the park.

Details

With the affected areas now clearly defined, staff have developed a phased strategy to safely reopen a significant portion of the eastern area of the park where soil conditions meet MECP standards. The reopening and remediation program will be completed in three phases, with Phase 1 anticipated to begin by August 1, 2026.

Phase 1:

A significant portion of the eastern side of the park will reopen to the public following the removal of temporary fencing from areas where soils meet applicable standards. Fence modifications will also be undertaken in the western portion of the park to restore public access to the washroom building. Signage clearly identifying those areas that are to remain closed will be maintained throughout the period of closure.

Three isolated areas within the eastern portion of the park will remain fenced, as soil remediation is still required in these locations. Because these areas are separate from one another and isolated from the western section of the park, staff will undertake a separate Request for Quotation (RFQ) in late summer or fall 2026 to complete remediation work. This work will include the removal of impacted soils and replacement with clean fill, topsoil, and sod. Following remediation, these areas will be returned to public use and the associated fencing removed. The remediation work will require the removal of four trees.

Refer to Figure 1 for the proposed fencing modifications, interim remediation areas, and tree removal locations.

Phase 2:

Once remediation of the three isolated areas is complete, all remaining fencing within the eastern portion of the park will be removed. The eastern side of the park, including the washroom facility, will remain open for public use until construction of the park redevelopment project begins in 2027. The washroom will be open through the winter, as part of the winter washroom program.

Refer to Figure 2 for the area that will remain accessible until construction commences.

Phase 3:

Park redevelopment is anticipated to begin in spring 2027. At that time, construction fencing will be installed to facilitate the redevelopment work. This will include closure of the northern pathway, the western portion of the park, the washroom facility, and portions of the eastern area required for construction of new pathway connections.

Refer to Figure 3 for the anticipated construction limits and public access restrictions during redevelopment.

Due to shallow bedrock conditions at the site, remediation during the park redevelopment will require full-depth excavation and removal of impacted soils, followed by replacement with clean fill. As a result, approximately 45 trees will need to be removed to accommodate remediation and construction activities. The design team has worked closely with a consulting arborist to preserve approximately 61 trees located outside the affected areas.

While tree loss is unavoidable given the extent of the soil impacts, staff and consulting arborists have explored innovative approaches to preserve select trees within affected areas. Through these measures, four significant trees are expected to be retained and managed using alternative preservation techniques over a three-year period. Staff will also work with Forestry Services to develop a tree compensation strategy for Wards 6 and 7 to address the canopy loss associated with the project. Given the scale of tree removals, compensation requirements will exceed what can reasonably be accommodated within Mountain Drive Park alone.

Due to the extent and distribution of the impacted soils, remediation and park redevelopment will be completed as a single construction project. This approach will coordinate soil remediation with excavation required for the installation of new park amenities, including a spray pad, sun shelter, walkways, and replacement playground facilities. Design development is ongoing and is expected to be completed in fall 2026, with tendering to follow.

Staff recognize that the extended park closure has been inconvenient for some residents and appreciate the community's patience and understanding. While portions of Mountain Drive Park remain inaccessible, residents are encouraged to visit nearby parks, including Peace Memorial Park, Eastmount Park, and Highview Park.

Next Steps

Environmental Services staff will coordinate the relocation of the fencing to allow access to the washroom and open the eastern portion of the park as outlined in Figure No. 1.

Landscape Architectural Services Staff will issue an RFQ for interim soil remediation and tree removal to allow the eastern portion of the site to be fully open as outlined in Figure No. 3.

Landscape Architectural Services Staff will continue to advance the overall park development documents for a targeted tender in fall / winter in 2026, with construction anticipated to start in Spring 2027.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

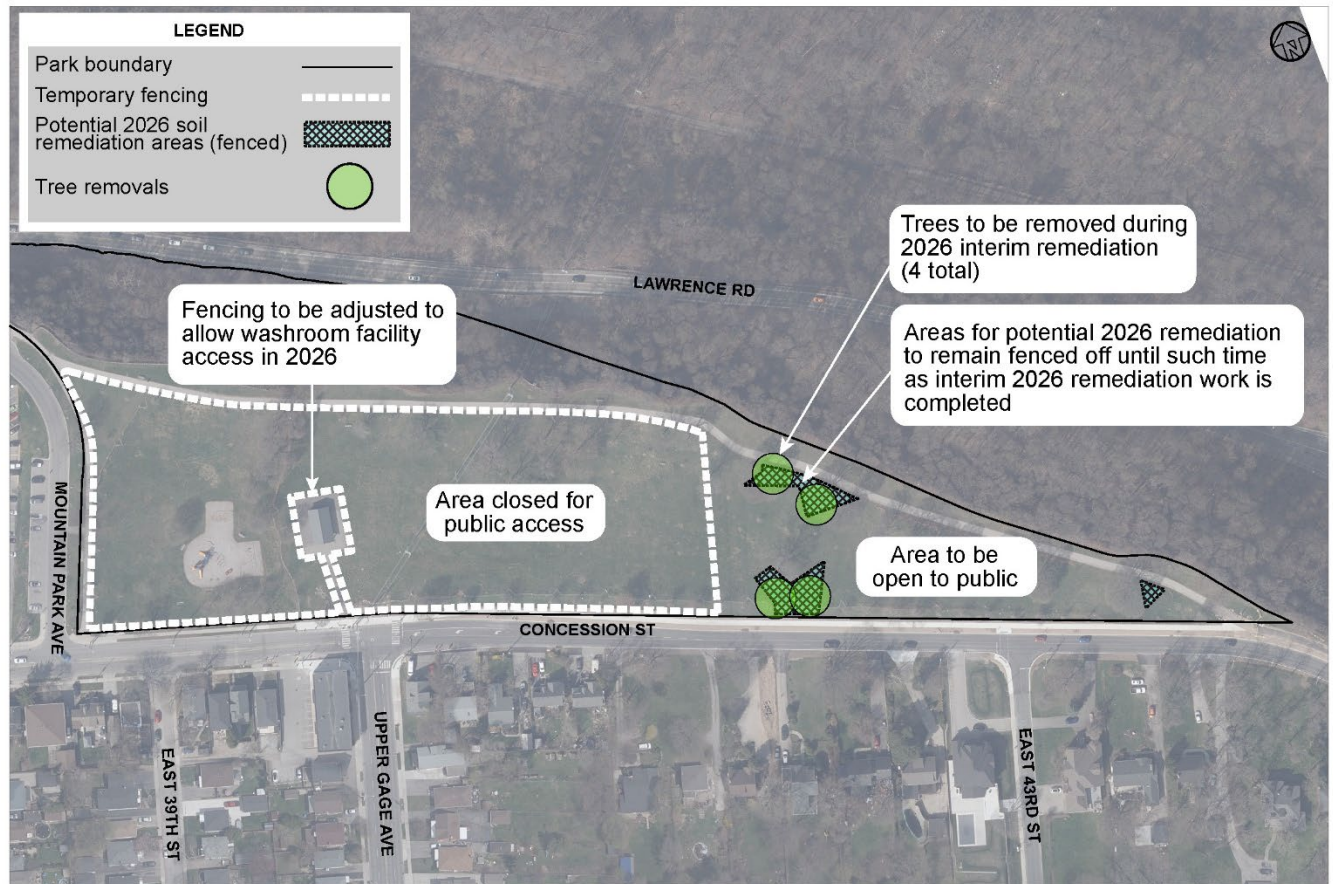


Figure No. 1 – Proposed Fencing Modifications and Interim Soil Remediation Limits.



Figure No. 2 - Eastern Area to be Fully Open Post Remediation Works.



Figure No. 3 - Anticipated Limit of Construction in 2027. No Public Access to Areas.