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## STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
**FROM:** BRIGID REYNOLDS, CONSULTING TOWN PLANNER  
**SUBJECT:** STORAGE CONTAINERS  
**MEETING DATE:** MAY 26, 2026

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### PURPOSE

To seek Council's direction to develop a policy to permit storage containers on a temporary basis during renovations and moving.

### BACKGROUND

At its regular meeting on December 16, 2025, Council directed staff to undertake a roadside inventory of the extent of the use of storage containers in Town. This work is expected to be completed by a summer student. Council also directed staff to work with a property owner to remove a storage container on their property. The property owner has confirmed that the storage container will be moved so they can continue building their accessory building (shop).

At the regular Committee of the Whole (COW) on May 12 the following Notice of Motion was passed

*That staff investigate a policy, fee system, and timeline, for temporary use of storage units for those moving from, or to Lake Cowichan, as well as for homes under renovation, to remove the possibility of bylaw complaints regarding their use.*

At that meeting, the Committee directed this item to be referred to the APC for its comments.

The Zoning Bylaw does not permit storage containers, unless permitted by a site-specific zoning amendment.

- Section 4.3.17 Restricted Uses – d) storage containers

- Section 4.3.6 e. - A storage container, where expressly permitted, shall be entirely enclosed, or wholly screened.

The only zone that permits a storage container is on a site-specific basis on a Public Use (P-1) zoned property - Lot B, Section 6, Renfrew District (situated in Cowichan Lake Land District), Plan VIP61171. This is the Palsson School located at 30 Grosskleg Way. The bylaw also states that it must be properly screened. Despite the Zoning Bylaw prohibiting containers, there are many located around Town on private and public property including the wastewater treatment plant and fire hall.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Zoning Bylaw does not permit the use of storage containers. A policy permitting storage containers, even on a temporary basis, would require an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw.

Temporary use permits (TUP) are another possible avenue to permit a storage container for a limited period. However, the Zoning Bylaw does not permit TUPs on residentially zoned land.

Possible considerations to create a policy could include:

- Establish a maximum time frame.
- Submission of a bond to be held until the storage container is removed.
- Providing proof that of the applicants moving and/or renovation plans
- Providing a site plan to show where on the property the storage container is proposed to be located.

This matter was discussed by APC and member's comments ranged from - the existing bylaws should be enforced and storage containers should not be permitted ... to table this issue of storage container use until after the election. A suggestion was made that an implementation period of six months should be established to advise the community of the proposed initiative and to consider developing a survey to gather community input.

The APC recommendation related to the use of storage containers for temporary purposes:

- A security bond of \$2500 should be collected.
- Proof of that the storage container is being used for moving or renovating must be submitted.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **a. Financial:**

An adopted policy could identify a fee to cover the administrative costs.

### **b. Policy/Legislation:**

The Zoning Bylaw does not permit the use of storage containers in any zone district and would require a zoning amendment. Temporary use permits are another tool but their use would require an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw.

**c. Strategic Priority:**

This is not a strategic priority for the Planning Department. The Department's priorities are to complete CMHC HAF deliverables and Bill 44 Provincially mandated amendments.

**d. Sustainability:**

Reusing storage containers minimizes waste and can be a cost-effective alternative for storage.

**e. Communication:**

Given the number of unpermitted storage containers distributed around Town, wider community consultation is appropriate.

**Options**

- 1) Direct staff to prepare a zoning bylaw amendment and draft policy for Council's consideration to allow storage containers on a temporary basis when moving or renovating.
- 2) Direct staff to prepare a zoning bylaw amendment to allow temporary use permits to be applied for on residentially zoned lands for the purpose of temporary use of storage containers.
- 3) Direct staff to prepare a public engagement strategy on the matter for Council's consideration.
- 4) To put the matter on hold.

**Recommendation**

The contract planner does not have a recommendation for Council on this matter.

Signed:

***Brigid Reynolds***

Brigid Reynolds RPP MCIP  
Contract Planner

Concurrence

***John T***

John Thomas  
Chief Administrative Officer