



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: General Purposes Committee **DATE:** October 10, 2001
FROM: Mike Redpath **FILE:** 7200-20-DPAR1-02
 Manager Parks Administration & Programs
RE: Designated Dog off Leash Areas in Richmond Update 2001

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the McCallan Road Right of Way Area be removed from the Designated Dogs off Leash Program.

Mike Redpath
Manager Parks Administration & Programs

Att. 4

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Community Bylaws	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	

STAFF REPORTORIGIN

On March 1, 1999, the report "Dogs off Leash Pilot Program" (File No.: 1011-20-DADVI) was approved. As a result of the Ad hoc citizen/staff/SPCA Dog Advisory Committee formed by the Parks Department the "Designated Dog Off Leash Area" program was initiated. Six community parks were designated "pilot" areas for the off leash program and a signage and education program was initiated and monitored by City Staff working together with the Richmond SPCA. At the March 13, 2000 Regular Council Meeting the following resolution was adopted:

1. *That the report "Designated Dog Off Leash Areas in Richmond" be received for information.*
2. *That Bylaw No. 7099 (Attachment 2) which initiates changes to the Pound and Dog Bylaw No. 4323 with respect to "Designated Dog Off Leash Areas" be introduced and given first, second and third readings.*
3. *That staff be directed to continue the off leash program on a permanent basis monitoring the existing six off leash areas following the amendment of the Pound and Dog Bylaw No. 4323, and report to Council on an as needed basis to expand or reduce the number of Designated Dog Off Leash areas in Richmond.*

The purpose of this report is first to recommend the removal of the area known as the McCallan Road Right of Way as an off leash area, and second to provide Council an update on the designated dogs off leash program (Appendix 1).

ANALYSIS

Prior to the pilot "dogs off leash" program, the issue of citizens letting their dogs off leash in Richmond Parks had not been examined for over sixteen years. The existing Pound and Dog Licensing Bylaw No. 4323 identified only the areas on and outside the dyke trail system east of No. 3 road as areas where dogs off leash were permitted.

Authority

The Animal, Bird and Beekeeping Bylaw No. 7137 includes the interpretation of a **designated dog off leash area**: means an area posted by sign, which defines the geographic area and/or time period that dogs can be off-leash. The following passage from Bylaw 7137 outlines owner obligations with respect to leashing requirements:

2.2.2 Owner Obligations - Leashing

2.2.2.1 Every **owner** of a **dog** must keep such **dog** that is on any street or in a public place, on a leash at all times, except in areas posted as **designated dog off-leash areas**, and when such dog is unleashed, the **owner** must at all times:

- (a) carry a leash;
- (b) keep the **dog** in view; and

- (c) maintain effective control of the **dog** so that the **dog** immediately returns when signalled.

2.2.2.2 Every **owner** of a **dog** must immediately leash such **dog** when the **dog** exhibits **aggressive behaviour**."

1. McCallan Road Right of Way

In April of 2000, and again in August 2001, staff received correspondence from the Thompson Community Association regarding the off leash area at the McCallan Road Right of Way Park. The primary concern from the Thompson Association was that there have been increasing numbers of dog owners who have been letting their dogs run off leash in the Burnett School Park and in to the Thompson Community Centre Grounds (Attachment 2).

This is a multi-zone park where sports fields and playgrounds are located adjacent to the ROW. In 1999 staff addressed the concern of a neighboring resident that on occasion, dog owners let their dogs roam off leash around a playground located at the north end of this site. Corrective action was taken by increasing the amount of SPCA patrols to this site and the installation of signage notifying dog owners to keep their dogs on leash and under control in the playground area.

Since April 2000, staff installed additional signage in the McCallan ROW area to remind dog owners that the Burnett School Park is an area where dogs must be leashed. In addition to the signage, the SPCA was asked to increase enforcement in this area.

Despite the additional signage and enforcement, many dog owners chose to ignore the leashing requirement in Burnett Park. As such, and as part of the annual review of the off leash program it is recommended that the area known as the McCallan ROW be removed from the designated dog off leash program.

In order to facilitate a smooth transition of the McCallan ROW back to a leash only area for dogs, staff will install notices in the area notifying Dog owners that as of November 1, 2001 all dogs must be leashed in the area, and work with the SPCA to ensure enforcement when necessary.

2. Update

With the increased growth in Richmond's population, there has been an accompanying increased demand on areas closer to the City Centre and residential areas west of No. 3 road where residents can exercise their pets off leash responsibly in City parks or trail systems other than the dyke trail east of No. 3 road.

The result has seen a polarisation of attitudes between pro-dog and anti-dog viewpoints and many dog owners allowed their pets to be off leash on the dyke trail system and in community and neighborhood parks in direct non-compliance with existing leash bylaws.

Since the inception of the Dogs Off Leash Program in Richmond, the popularity of the designated off leash areas has grown. The following areas are currently designated as off leash areas for dogs in Richmond (see Map attachment 1): Vacant lot East of Highway #91, Old Cambie School Field, Shell Road Trail, McDonald Beach, South foot of No. 3 Road, and the McCallan Road Right of Way. Additional information regarding the designated dogs off leash program is included for information in Appendix 1.

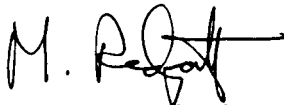
FINANCIAL IMPACT

There will be a minor cost for removing the existing dogs off leash signage at the McCallan Road site, and installing new dogs must be on leash signage.

CONCLUSION

Richmond dog owners must ultimately accept the responsibility for the actions of their pets. The issues of conflict that on occasion do arise in Richmond parks and trails with respect to dogs being on or off leash are ultimately due to issues of Dog Control. A continued effort at combined education and enforcement programs is necessary to sustain the dogs off leash program.

The Community Bylaws department will be reviewing the SPCA contract in the Fall of 2001, issues relating to enforcement of leashing bylaws will be addressed during the contract review process. Staff will continue to monitor the dogs off leash program in Richmond and report to Council on an as needed basis with regular updates.



Michael Redpath,
Manager Parks Administration & Programs

Appendix 1:

Designated Dog off Leash Areas in Richmond Update 2001

Benefits of Off Leash Areas:

"Walking with a dog supports physical fitness, social interaction, personal security and greater use of parks by residents., Owners and handlers have a responsibility to have their dog under control at all times to ensure all park patrons have a safe and enjoyable visit. (GVRD Dog Management Review Update November 2000.)"

By identifying areas throughout Richmond that residents can allow their dogs to be off leash, the SPCA can strategically target their enforcement to areas where dogs must be on leash. The SPCA under contract to enforce leash bylaws, have the discretion to issue Municipal Tickets when they deem necessary.

The most popular sites today are the #3 Road Dog Park, and McDonald Beach. Staff have noticed limited usage of the site located at the vacant lot east of Highway 91 in the Hamilton area, and the Shell Road trail.

Current Challenges/Issues

The following is a summary of some of the current challenges surrounding dogs 'running at large' in Richmond's Parks and trail system:

- Many residents who live adjacent to Richmond's park sites create their own "de facto" dog off leash parks, socializing with their pets and neighbors. The SPCA responds to complaints in these areas, however due to limited staffing cannot enforce leash rules city-wide all of the time. Response is limited and primarily complaint driven.
- The west dyke trail system continues to be a challenge where residents are exercising their dogs off leash. Continued increased enforcement in this area is necessary to ameliorate the many resident complaints of trail use conflicts on the west dyke trail system.
- Residents frequently complain that the level of "off leash" enforcement is inadequate especially on the dyke trail system, and at Garry Pont Park
- Owners who are negligent in the responsible handling of their dogs in and out of off leash areas affect the integrity of the dogs off leash program

Request for Park Sites Where No Dogs Are Allowed:

Staff have received a request (Attachment 3) to investigate the feasibility of having Richmond's newest park: North McLennan Community Park – Phase 1 Botanical Garden and Arboretum designated as an area where dogs are not allowed at all.

Currently in Richmond, as in most of the GVRD, 'no-go zones' for dogs are primarily in natural areas, swimming beaches, and nature conservancy areas where potential negative impacts to the environment can be prevented.

For these same reasons, Richmond prohibits dogs from entering the Richmond Nature Park west and the Richmond Nature Park east. By designating select Richmond natural areas no go zones for dogs, the City is supporting the OCP policy objective of:

"Enhancing public awareness of Richmond's unique natural features, and provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as birdwatching and nature viewing; and provide related educational information as appropriate."

Given that the McLennan North Park is a Community Park, designed to provide much needed public open space in Richmond's most densely populated area, staff believe that designating North McLennan as a no go zone for dogs would be overly restrictive, and difficult to enforce.

A complicating factor is the high number of multi-family residential properties in the adjacent area who currently have a limited amount of public open space to exercise their dogs on leash. Residents in the North McLennan planning area at present have only boulevards to walk their companion animals.

Recommended Alternative Area for a Dog Free Park

In an attempt to create additional areas where residents can enjoy Richmond's public open space where no dogs are allowed at all, at this time staff recommend consideration of the Terra Nova Natural Area to be designated as an area for a dog free zone. The Terra Nova Natural Area is a specialty natural area park located on the pacific migratory bird flight-path.

This park large park site is a favorite spot for bird watching, and passive recreational use. The area is currently adopted by the Vancouver Natural History Society who undertake plant and animal species inventory counts on an annual basis. By working with the SPCA to strategically target enforcement, and with the installation of signage in the area promoting the site as a natural area, this area could be designated as a park where dogs are prohibited.

In order to gauge the level of public interest for the Terra Nova Natural Area, or any other park site in Richmond to be designated as a dog free park, it is recommended that staff facilitate a public information meeting to solicit public input for such a park designation.

Education/Enforcement

While dog advocates stress the importance of compliance with responsible dog owner etiquette, an information sign and accompanying map and pamphlet was developed for the off leash program (Attachment 1).

This pamphlet has been well received by the public, becoming one of the most popular pamphlets distributed by the Parks Department today. Used as an additional tool by the Richmond SPCA, the off leash area pamphlet can be used in place of ticketing by SPCA enforcement officers. In the summer of 2001, this pamphlet was also distributed by the RCMP bike patrol.

When the SPCA identifies an individual letting their dog off leash for example on the west dyke (a leash only area) the officer explains that dogs must be on leash in this area and offers a pamphlet identifying locations where the resident can exercise their dog off leash.

In an attempt to improve communication and education between park users who exercise their dogs in Richmond's public open space, a new pamphlet has been developed to improve communication. The new pamphlet (Attachment 4) includes the following new information:

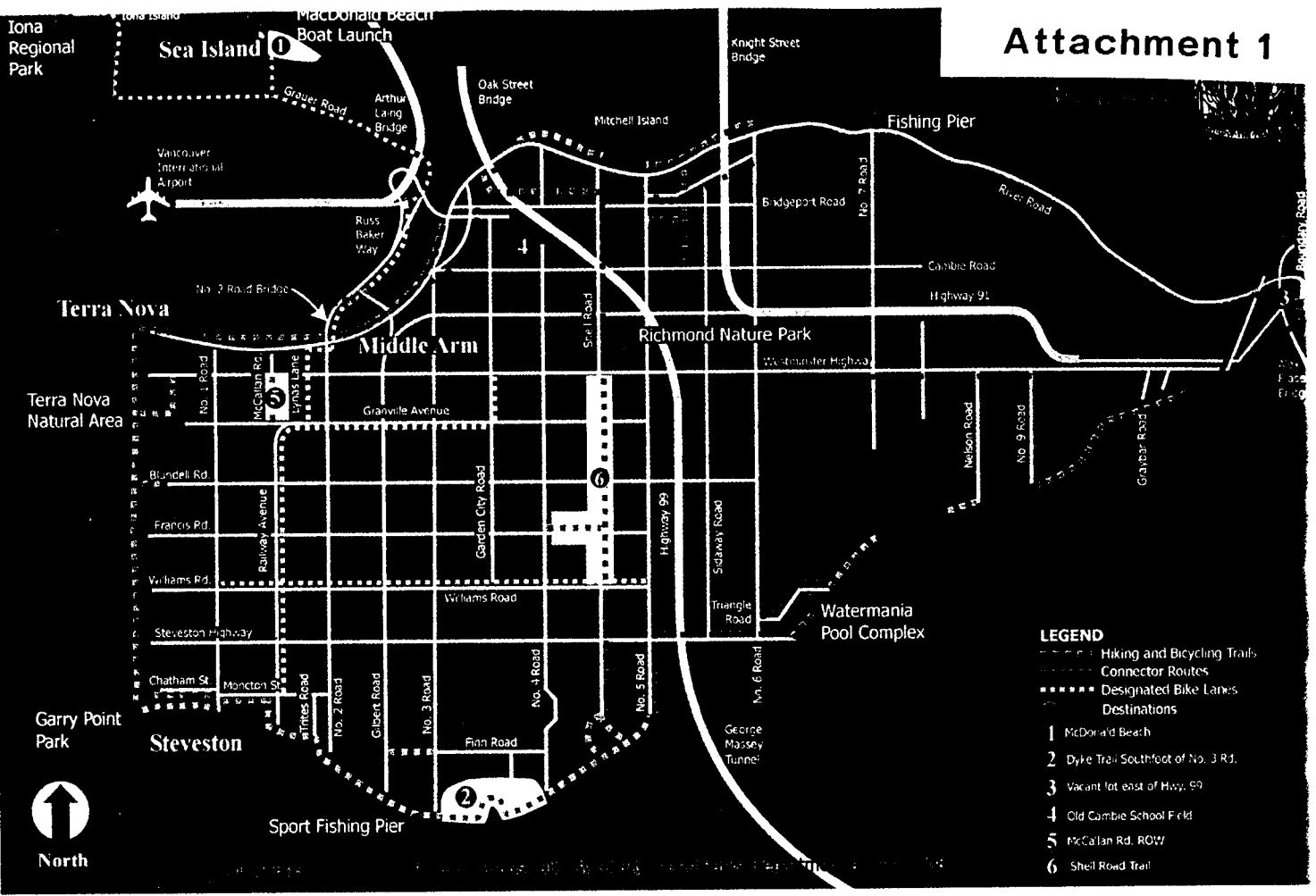
- Dangerous dog legislation adopted by the province of BC
- Opportunities for volunteer involvement
- Opportunities for further corporate sponsorship of dog bag dispensers
- Web links for the SPCA and BC Veterinary Medical Association
- Tips for responsible dog ownership

Number of Dogs in Richmond

There were 3014 licensed dogs in Richmond in 1997 and 3020 in 1998 and 3508 in 1999. The SPCA is aware that there are a substantial number of unlicensed dogs in Richmond and undertook a door to door expanded dog license program in 1999. Current figures indicate that there are approximately 5000 licensed dogs in Richmond today.

Monitoring







The monitoring of the off leash areas includes involvement from City Bylaw Enforcement officers and the SPCA. In 2001 to date there have been 35 running at large tickets issues in Richmond.



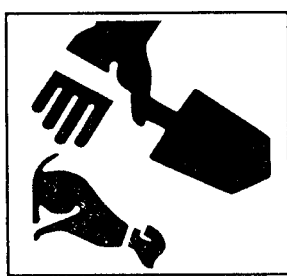
Dogs Off-Leash Area

Designated dogs off-leash areas is an initiative by the City of Richmond and the S.P.C.A., in consultation with the community to provide areas where responsible owners may exercise their dogs on or off-leash.

Responsible Owners:

-  Dogs must be kept under control by their owners at all times
-  Stoop and Scoop, clean up after your dog
-  Dog owners must carry a leash at all times
-  All dogs must be currently and visibly licensed
-  Dog owners must maintain effective verbal control of their dogs and always be able to see their dog when off the leash
-  Any dog exhibiting aggressive behavior must be leashed immediately

By-law No. 4323. Maximum fine for not complying with this by-law is \$1000.00. To report violations or for more information please call the S.P.C.A. at 277-6212



Please turn over for area map



THOMPSON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
5151 GRANVILLE AVE., RICHMOND, B.C. V7C 1E6
TEL: (604) 718-8422 FAX: (604) 718-8433

August 15, 2001

Mike Redpath,
City of Richmond Parks Department
5599 Lynas Lane
Richmond, BC

Dear Mike,

Re: Off-Leash Area at McCallan Road Right of Way Park

As you are aware from previous conversations, Thompson Community Association staff, volunteers and users have had serious concerns about unleashed dogs in the park areas contiguous to the community centre since the inception of off-leash areas. As you are also aware, the Association, under its Operating Agreement with the City, has the right to provide input to the administration of such areas.

In spite of the extra signage you have provided and occasional visits from the SPCA, the problem is as bad, if not worse, than ever. It seems the majority of dogs in the Burnett park are now unleashed. The accompanying dog excrement is an unpleasant addition to the sports action on these fields. Children playing at the McCallan park are often approached by off-leash dogs and bicyclists have been chased several times that we know of. We now experience daily incidents of unleashed dogs in the play area immediately outside the community centre. Hence, at the Board meeting held on Monday, August 13th, the following motion was passed unanimously:

That the park area between Westminster Highway and Granville Avenue along the former railway right of way be returned to dogs on-leash only and further, that enforcement and encouragement of leash rules for the entire Thompson/Burnett/Blair/McCallan area be strengthened and increased.

We know that a review of the off-leash areas is set for the fall. We hope the McCallan area can be returned to leash-only sooner. Thank-you for your understanding of our concerns and efforts to alleviate them thus far.

Sincerely,

Julie Halfnights
President

cc. Marty Tanaka, Thompson Area Coordinator
Councillor Lyn Greenhill, Thompson Council Liaison



City of Richmond

6911 No.3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Telephone (604) 276-4000

www.city.richmond.bc.ca

September 10, 2001

Bill Teague, Jean Weaver
101-8700 Jones Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 1L8

Dear Mr. Teague and Ms. Weaver:

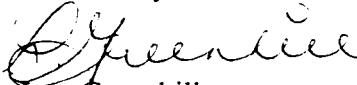
Re: Dogs Off-leash at Garry Point Park

Thank you for your letter, which was received in the Mayor's office on August 28th. I know that you have met with former Mayor Halsey-Brandt, and subsequently Acting Mayor Linda Barnes on July 4th. I understand that Mr. Redpath, who was present at that meeting, agreed to follow-up on several of your concerns, as outlined in the letter to you dated July 6th.

Your request to be kept informed of matters related to the progress of North McLennan Community Park will be referred to staff. In the meanwhile, as you still have some ongoing concerns about the dogs off-leash program, one suggestion I have for you is to make a presentation at the General Purposes Committee meeting scheduled for 4:00 pm, Monday, October 15th. Staff will be presenting a report on the dogs off-leash program at that meeting. If that is your decision, please send a letter to me as the Chair of the Committee, with a copy to the Committee's Administrative Assistant Fran Ashton, Clerks Office at City Hall, by 5:00 pm, Wednesday, October 10th, so that you will be noted on the agenda. All members of Council attend General Purposes Committee meetings.

Another option, if you wish to make your comments to the General Purposes Committee prior to October 15th meeting, is to attend our next meeting on Monday, September 17th. Although there will not be any reports about the dogs off-leash program on that agenda, you still have the option to appear as a delegation. You will need to notify me by September 12th in order to be on the agenda. I trust these options will be suitable if you choose to make a presentation, to bring your concerns to the attention of all members of Council.

Yours truly,


Lyn Greenhill
Acting Mayor

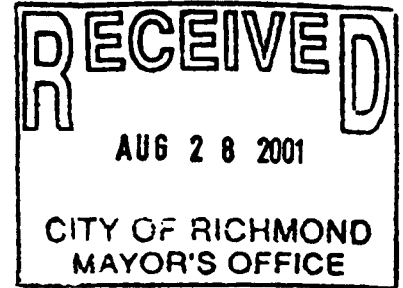
pc: Fran Ashton, Administrative Assistant, Clerks Office
Mike Redpath, Manager, Parks Administration and Programs
Sandra Tokarczyk, Manager, Community Bylaws




RICHMOND
Island City, by Nature

101-8700 Jones Road,
Richmond, B.C.
V6Y 1L8.

The Mayor,
City of Richmond.



re:- Dogs off leash at Garry Point Park:

Thank you for meeting with us recently regarding the problem of "off leash" dogs.

It has raised a number of points, which we wish to place on record.

It is very disconcerting that our original proposal and the then Mayors reply, have been either lost or misplaced. Attached are copies of both. From the date you will now appreciate our frustration that nothing has been achieved, in spite of it being nearly three years.

We feel aggrieved that if public hearings were held prior to the opening of 7 parks to allow off leash, that we were not invited or even informed as we were on the ad hoc dog committee.

The present policing of enforcement of unleashed dogs in public parks is woefully inadequate and totally ineffective, especially over weekends. In ten years we have yet to see a single official in attendance!! And this in spite of the fact that fully 80% of dogs, in our experience, continue to run off leash, and obviously with impunity & arrogance. This is a very sorry state of affairs and requires immediate remedial action on the part of the authorities.

Recently in Victoria yet another little girl had to undergo surgery to save her scalp after being attacked by a dog. This is just too much.

As a start to offsetting the huge imbalance between parks where off leash is permitted and those where no dogs are allowed, a perfect candidate is the new North McClennan Community Park on Garden City.

We wish to be kept informed of progress in these matters.

Bill Teague.

Jean Weaver.

with best regards,

Bill Teague

Jean Weaver

COPY

#101 - 8700 Jones Road
Richmond, British Columbia
V6Y 1L8 Canada

Telephone (604) 270-9970
Fax (604) 270-9970 E-mail jeanmw@bc.sympatico.ca

The Mayor,
City of Richmond.

Hon; G. Halsey-Brandt,

re: Garry Point Park.

My wife and I wish to make a proposal regarding Garry Point Park.

As parks exist for the benefit of people, and especially children who enjoy using the beach during the Summer, we believe the time has come for a ban on dogs in the park during the Summer months.

From, say, May until October no dogs should be allowed into the park and for the other half of the year dogs should be permitted "off leash". This would be a very fair and equitable compromise in the best Canadian tradition.

There are several well established precedents where this arrangement works satisfactorily.

Sad to relate, but at the present time, it has been our experience that less than 20% of dogs we encounter in both the park and on the West Dyke Trail are ever on a leash. On more than one occasion we have had unpleasant experiences as a result.

We firmly believe this suggestion to be in everyone's best interests and request it be given favourable consideration to be implemented for the Summer of 1999.

Bill Teague
Jean Weaver



COPY

City of RICHMOND

7577 ELMBRIDGE WAY, RICHMOND, B.C. V6X 2Z8

Telephone: (604) 276-4133

Fax No.: (604) 278-1612

GREG HALSEY-BRANDT
MAYOR

November 19, 1998

Mr. Bill Teague and
Ms. Jean Weaver
#101-8700 Jones Road
Richmond, B.C., V6Y 1L8

Dear Mr. Teague and Ms. Weaver

Re: Dogs "off leash" at Garry Point Park

Thank you for your letter dated November 9, 1998 regarding dogs "off leash" at Garry Point Park. At this time, I have referred your letter to Mr. Dave Semple (Director of Parks). Mr. Semple is currently working with an ad-hoc dog advisory group examining a number of issues related to dogs in Richmond. Dogs "off-leash" at Garry Point Park is one of those issues.

In discussion with Mr. Semple, I have been informed that a staff report to Council regarding dogs "off leash" will be forthcoming. At that time, Council will review options regarding the matter. Your suggestions will undoubtedly be considered in this report. Additionally, both Garry Point Park and the West Dyke trail will be included in this review.

I have asked Mr. Semple to contact you directly to invite you to work with the ad-hoc group in exploring options. Should you not hear from him in the immediate future, please feel free to contact him at 276-4109.

Yours truly,

Greg Halsey-Brandt
Mayor

pc: Dave Semple, Director of Parks

Handwritten notes:
Huddle...
...
8:00 PM
...
...
...



What are "Dogs Off-Leash Areas"?








Dogs off-leash areas are places where responsible dog owners can exercise their dogs off-leash.



Mar/Donahill Beach - Sea Island

We ask that:

Responsible Dog Owners Will:

-  Let their dog off-leash in designated areas only - please see map on reverse
-  Keep their dog under effective verbal control and always be able to see their dogs when off the leash
-  Keep their dog on leash until out of the parking lot area
-  Clean up after their dog - "stoop and scoop"
-  Carry a leash at all times
-  Visibly display their current dog license
-  Immediately leash their dog at the first sign of aggressive and/or inappropriate behaviour

Our parks and trail systems are patrolled by the Richmond SPCA, please call: 604-277-6212.

Did you know...

The province of British Columbia has instituted a "Dangerous Dog Law". On August 30, 2000, new legislation came into force in British Columbia that will allow quick action to be taken to protect people and animals from dangerous dogs.

The new law respects the rights of responsible dog owners who make sure their pets are properly cared for, well socialized, trained, and do not pose a threat. The law also deals with situations where irresponsible dog owners refuse to take the necessary measures to prevent a dog attack.

Please remember...

All dogs can bite.

A dog may show aggression when protecting its young, its owner, its owner's property, its food or its toys. A dog may bite or growl if it is injured, frightened or threatened. This does not mean that all dogs are necessarily dangerous.

These are some steps you can take if your dog shows inappropriate aggression:

- First, talk to your veterinarian to get advice and if necessary

medical intervention.

- Make sure your dog is kept in a secured environment - a fenced yard or locked enclosure.

- When you take your dog off your property, make sure the dog is leashed and, if appropriate, muzzled.

- Consult with a reputable dog trainer or behaviour specialist.

- Have your dog spayed or neutered.
- Sterilizing your dog can significantly reduce aggressive behaviour.



For further information, please check out these sources:

South Dyke Trail
part of No. 3 Road.

- New dangerous dog legislation, please refer to the following Website:
- BC SPCA and the "Bite Free" program, please refer to the following Website:
- BC Veterinary Medical Association Website:

How can you help?

Adopt-A-Dog Bag Dispenser

Dog owners and park users alike appreciate the availability of Dog Bags for their use in Richmond's park and trail system. Dog Bag Dispensers contribute to keeping our parks and trail system clean.

For more information on Dog Bag Dispenser locations, or on how to become a sponsor of the program, please call the City of Richmond Parks Department at 604-244-1208.



South Dyke Trail - part of No. 3 Road

Be a volunteer!

Do you enjoy interacting with animals? If so please consider becoming a volunteer at the Richmond SPCA. Call 604-709-6700 for information about becoming a volunteer today!

