



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

Date: February 10, 2017

From: Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks

File: 11-7000-01/2017-Vol
01

Re: Programming at McDonald Beach Park

Staff Recommendation

That no changes be undertaken to the existing dog off-leash area at McDonald Beach Park as detailed in the staff report titled "Programming at McDonald Beach Park," dated February 10, 2017, from the Senior Manager, Parks.

Mike Redpath
Senior Manager, Parks
(604-247-4942)

Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO 	

Staff Report

Origin

At the July 21, 2016, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting, staff received the following referral:

That staff investigate removing the dog off-leash area in McDonald Beach Park and developing McDonald Beach Park as a regular park site with potential for a Girl Guide campsite and report back.

Analysis

Girl Guide Campsite – Woodward's Landing

The Girl Guides of Canada have operated a 2.5 acre campsite on City-owned property at Woodward's Landing for approximately 20 years (Attachment 1).

Over 1,800 Girl Guides, Boy Scouts and members of other community groups camp at the site annually. Campers learn outdoor and camping skills, leadership skills, and participate in a variety of programs and activities including cycling, walking, music and story-telling, and environmental stewardship activities.

The location and existing on-site infrastructure make Woodward's Landing a desirable location for a campsite. Benefits to this site include:

- Its proximity to a grocery store and drug store for shopping for supplies;
- Its adjacency to the Horseshoe Slough Trail and South Dyke Trail for cycling and walking;
- Perimeter fencing and the presence of a caretaker for site security;
- Landscaping suitable for camping (i.e., flat and well-drained surface area);
- dedicated washrooms for campers;
- Access to drinking water;
- A covered picnic shelter and picnic tables;
- A cooking shelter; and
- A group campfire circle.

The Girl Guides contributed to funding the caretaker's suite and other infrastructure and landscaping on the site including the picnic shelter and campfire circle. Under the terms of the current agreement, the Girl Guides are responsible for maintaining the campsite in good repair and have been able to fulfill these responsibilities.

Should Council determine that this property would be better used for an alternative purpose in the future, under the current terms the City is able to terminate the agreement upon giving Girl Guides 90 days written notice.

McDonald Beach Park - Dog Off-Leash Area

McDonald Beach Park (Attachment 2) is located at the north end of Sea Island and is home to the only public boat launch on the North Arm of the Fraser River. This is a popular boat launch as it offers easy access to Howe Sound, Vancouver harbour and popular fishing areas. McDonald Beach Park is also home to picnic tables, a public washroom, a network of trails and an unfenced dog off-leash area.

With the presence of over 7,000 licensed dogs in the City and given Richmond's growing population, there is significant demand for areas where residents can safely and responsibly exercise their dogs off-leash. Off-leash areas create opportunities for social connections between residents, increased compliance with bylaws outside of off-leash areas, reduced conflict between park users and help to create better socialized dogs.

In order to effectively achieve these positive outcomes, the City initiated its dog off-leash program in 1999 with four locations. Since that time, the program has grown to include 12 sites throughout the City (Attachment 3), including McDonald Beach Park. McDonald Beach Park is one of three unfenced off-leash areas in the City. These larger, unfenced areas are very popular as they offer greater opportunities to exercise dogs and provide an open atmosphere enjoyed by dog owners.

During the recent off-leash program expansion in 2014 / 2015, the Parks Department installed four pilot locations throughout the City. Throughout the year-long public consultation period, staff heard from numerous residents, the vast majority of whom offered their support for the expansion of the off-leash program.

Based on staff observations and feedback from residents, McDonald Beach Park is the City's most popular off-leash area. Not only does the open space offer the ideal location for residents to responsibly exercise their dogs, it is the only designated off-leash area in the City that provides access to water. McDonald Beach Park also provides an ideal location for this well-used dog park as it is not adjacent to residential areas.

Proposed Girl Guide Campsite – McDonald Beach Park

McDonald Beach Park offers several significant challenges to the development of a campsite including:

- Sound pollution due to its proximity to the airport;
- The presence of fire ants;
- Potential conflict with other park uses, including the boat launch; and
- Lack of infrastructure including dedicated washrooms, fencing, picnic and cooking shelters and appropriate landscaping for camping.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

No further action will be taken at this time to either remove the dog off-leash area at McDonald Beach Park or to relocate the Girl Guide campsite.

Any potential changes to programming at McDonald Beach Park will be the subject of future reports to Council.

At present, staff are working with the Girl Guides of Canada to enter into a new Licence to Occupy Agreement at Woodward's Landing, which will be the subject of a future report to Council. Any changes to the current agreement terms can be considered at that time.



Marie Fenwick
Manager, Parks Programs
(604-244-1275)

- Att. 1: Map - Woodward's Landing
- 2: Map - McDonald Beach Park
- 3: Map - Dog Off-Leash Areas



Woodwards Landing



McDonald Beach Park



Dog Off-Leash Areas