



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Committee

**Date:** October 2, 2015

**From:** Mike Redpath  
Senior Manager, Parks

**File:** 11-7000-01/2015-Vol  
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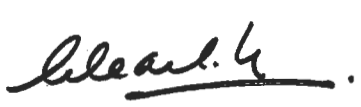

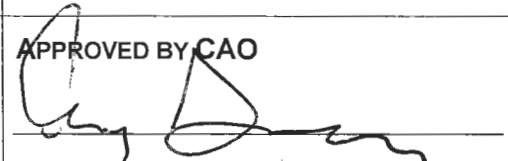
**Re:** Dog Off-Leash Program Update 2015

### Staff Recommendation

1. That the areas at McCallan Road Right of Way/Railway Corridor, Garden City Community Park, and South Arm Community Park as detailed in the staff report titled "Dog Off-Leash Program Update 2015," from the Senior Manager, Parks, dated October 2, 2015, be designated as dog off-leash areas.
2. That the designated dog off leash area pilot project at 7300 Elmbridge Way continue on an annual basis subject to future potential redevelopment of that site.

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

Att. 5

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b> Recreation Services Community Bylaws	<b>CONCURRENCE</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>  
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT /            AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the June 9, 2014, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting staff received the following referral:

*(1) That the existing temporary fenced dog off-leash area at Dover Park be relocated to the McCallan Road Right of Way/Railway Corridor and be designated as a fenced dog off-leash area to be reviewed on an annual basis as detailed in the staff report "Dog Off-Leash Program Update 2014" from the Senior Manager, Parks dated May 5, 2014;*

*(2) That the vacant City-owned lot located at 7300 Elmbridge Way be designated as a fenced dog off-leash area as detailed in the staff report "Dog Off-Leash Program Update 2014" from the Senior Manager, Parks dated May 5, 2014 and be reviewed on an annual basis;*

*(3) That a designated fenced dog off-leash area be located on a portion of Garden City Community Park as detailed in the staff report "Dog Off-Leash Program Update 2014" from the Senior Manager, Parks dated May 5, 2014 and be reviewed on an annual basis and;*

*(4) That a designated fenced dog off-leash area be located on a portion of South Arm Community Park as detailed in the staff report "Dog Off-Leash Program Update 2014" from the Senior Manager, Parks dated May 5, 2014 and be reviewed on an annual basis.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

*Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.*

*2.3. Outstanding places, programs and services that support active living, wellness and a sense of belonging.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #6 Quality Infrastructure Networks:

*Continue diligence towards the development of infrastructure networks that are safe, sustainable, and address the challenges associated with aging systems, population growth, and environmental impact.*

*6.2. Infrastructure is reflective of and keeping pace with community need.*

## **Analysis**

### Background

With increased growth in Richmond's population and over 7,000 licensed dogs in the City, there is a demand for areas where residents can exercise their dogs off-leash. Dog off-leash areas create opportunities for better socialized and exercised dogs, increased compliance with bylaws outside of off-leash areas, reduced conflict between park users, and social connections between residents.

In order to effectively achieve these positive outcomes without negatively impacting adjacent land uses, dog off-leash areas need to be thoughtfully located, sized, designed and maintained.

With these considerations in mind, the City initiated the Dog Off-Leash Program in 1999. The program has grown to include seven designated dog off-leash areas and four pilot sites installed in 2014 (Attachment 1).

The four pilot sites were installed in the fall of 2014 along with signage inviting public input. To ensure all residents had the opportunity to comment on the program, additional signage was installed in July 2015, providing residents one month notice for public input. Staff visited the sites throughout the year to speak with residents, observe usage and note issues with the areas.

### Proposed Program Updates 2015

#### **McCallan Road Right of Way/Railway Corridor**

Based on staff observations and public input, while this is the most lightly used of the four pilot locations, feedback has been positive and there is a demand for a dog off-leash area in Terra Nova.

Recommended changes to the McCallan Road Right of Way/Railway Corridor dog off-leash area include installing permanent fencing, gates and seating (Attachment 2).

#### **7300 Elmbridge Way**

Public feedback in this location has been very positive and has demonstrated that this is a well-used amenity in what was previously an underutilized open space.

Comments since the start of the pilot program include:

*This dog park is getting a lot of use! My partner and I were thrilled to see this dog park and we don't even own a dog.*

*I want to say thank you for putting in this pilot project as I feel it is bringing people out of their homes and making the area feel like more of a community. I have also noticed that the grass area around our building is already less covered in dog feces which I feel is thanks to the garbage can in that park.*

*This project really makes our little corner of Richmond feel more like a neighbourhood!*

Recommended changes to the 7300 Elmbridge Way dog off-leash area include shifting the fencing south to include trees for shade, installing permanent fencing, gates, seating and improving surfacing to better manage wet conditions in low lying areas (Attachment 3). As this site has future development potential it is recommended that the designated dog off leash area be extended on an annual basis until future redevelopment of the site occurs.

### **Garden City Community Park**

Public feedback in this location has been very positive and has also demonstrated that this is a well-used amenity in what was previously an underutilized open space. Concerns include that the area is too small and lacks adequate seating given the high usage.

Comments since the start of the pilot project include:

*There are many dog owners in townhouses and condos in this area. We do not have green space that dogs can run freely in. This solves the problem. Good use of space – No one used this area of the park before.*

*It is being regularly used by a large number of people and dogs and has already added a vibrancy and community spirit to this neighbourhood. Many would like to see the park bigger.*

Recommended changes to the Garden City Community Park dog off-leash area include increasing the size of the area, installing permanent fencing, gates, seating and improving surfacing to better manage wet conditions in low lying areas (Attachment 4).

### **South Arm Community Park**

Public feedback has been generally positive with many residents expressing appreciation for having a place to exercise and socialize their dogs and to meet other dog owners. The primary concerns raised by park users at South Arm Community Park are that it is muddy and slippery in the winter months, grass in low lying areas is damaged, and that the area is too small to properly exercise their dogs.

Comments since the start of the pilot project include:

*I would like to thank the community so much for putting an off-leash park in my area. I was able to meet so many helpful dog owners who shared their tips and tricks when it comes to caring for my dog.*

*Leading up to the installation of the fenced off-leash area in South Arm Park, we were concerned that it would be ugly and obtrusive. However, now that it's in, we are relieved that the height is low and it's a muted black colour.*

In July 2014, prior to the installation of the dog off-leash area, a petition was submitted to the City raising concerns related to the appearance, noise, parking and loss of open areas. The public feedback that has been received since the installation of the pilot dog off-leash area does not indicate these are significant issues. Concerns related to the appearance of the park will be addressed through the installation of permanent fencing, gates, seating, landscaping and

improved surfacing. Enlarging the area will not only allow more space for dogs to exercise but will also reduce overall wear and improve the look of the park.

Recommended changes to the South Arm Community Park dog off-leash area include increasing the size, installing permanent fencing, gates, seating, additional landscaping elements and improved surfacing to better manage wet conditions in low lying areas (Attachment 5).

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact as a result of this report. Installation of permanent fencing and other amenities will be funded through the capital process.

### **Conclusion**

Since the inception of the Dog Off-Leash Program in 1999, the City has been proactive in continuing to expand and refine the program while respecting adjacent land uses. The program will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis and consideration will be given to additional areas in future park planning.



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

- Att. 1: Map – Dog Off-Leash Areas in Richmond
- 2: Map – McCallan Road Right of Way/Railway Corridor – Pilot Dog Off-Leash Area
- 3: Map – 7300 Elmbridge Way – Pilot Dog Off-Leash Area
- 4: Map – Garden City Community Park – Pilot Dog Off-Leash Area
- 5: Map – South Arm Community Park – Pilot Dog Off-Leash Area

# Dog Off-Leash Areas in Richmond













