



December 6, 2018

TO: Park Board Chair and Commissioners
FROM: General Manager – Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Pandora Park New Dog Off Leash Area

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the addition of a new dog off-leash area in Pandora Park as described in this report.

BOARD AUTHORITY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

As per the [Vancouver Charter](#), the Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over park land use in the City of Vancouver, including any structures, programs and activities, fees, and improvements that occur in parks.

In October 2017, the Park Board approved the [People, Parks & Dogs Strategy](#) and directed staff to report back on implementation of the strategy.

Board approval is sought for all new dog off-leash areas (OLA's).

BACKGROUND

The People Parks and Dogs Strategy provides a framework for the design and delivery of OLA's that consider all park users with and without dogs and minimizes conflict.

The Strategy mapped the distribution of existing OLA's, licensed dogs and population density across Vancouver to understand the demand for off-leash areas now and in the future. The analysis of existing OLA's in Vancouver identified Grandview-Woodland as one of six neighbourhoods that are underserved by the network of existing OLA's.

Located in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood, Pandora Park is a 1.7 hectare neighbourhood park serving a socially diverse and vibrant community. The park is bounded by Templeton Drive (west), Nanaimo Street (east), Pandora Street (north) and Franklin Street (south). Pandora Park is the largest and most diverse park in the mixed-income sub-neighbourhood of Cedar Cove, a primarily residential area with a mix of low-rise rental apartments, townhouses and duplexes, as well as some single-family homes. The popular East Village shopping area is just one block south of Pandora Park and many residents walk through the park to access restaurants, shops, services and transit along Hastings Street.

The Grandview Woodland Community Plan policy notes that Cedar Cove sub-area provides an important stock of affordable rental housing that will continue to be protected as this housing stock is renewed. The Plan also notes that Grandview Woodland's population is anticipated to increase by 28% by 2041.

Existing features found in Pandora Park include, a children's water spray park, play areas, a community garden, passive lawn areas, four tennis courts, picnic benches, and a fieldhouse containing public washrooms and an artist studio. Old stone walls and stately shade trees surround the park and the lawn area west of the tennis courts is popular with dog walkers and residents looking for a quiet location to enjoy sunsets and views to downtown and the north shore mountains.

The incremental renewal of Pandora Park began twelve years ago and was undertaken as funds became available. Park Board staff has engaged the community to set priorities in the phased delivery of needed improvements to Pandora Park over the years. The proposed addition of an OLA was triggered by the identification of Grandview-Woodlands as an underserved neighbourhood in the People, Parks and Dogs Strategy, as well as by demonstrated support from surrounding neighbourhood residents.

This report describes the engagement process and proposed concept plan for the renewal of Pandora Park, and the rationale for a new OLA here.

Pandora Park – Existing Features (Figure 1)



The following is a timeline of the Pandora Park renewal process to date:

- 2006: A central pedestrian path was created within a former section of the Garden Drive right of way providing residents with a pleasant and convenient mid-block connection to Hastings Street. The children's playground was renewed and picnic tables and a junior basketball hoop were also added at this time.
- 2009: The community garden was established in the south west portion of the park.

- 2015: Under the fieldhouse activation program a portion the caretaker's suite was converted to an artist studio. Dance Troupe Practice was awarded a 3 year studio residency.
- 2016: The second phase of park improvements included the replacement of the wading pool with a children's water spray park. Built adjacent to the playground the popular water spray park displaced the basketball court. During engagement events we heard additional park improvements were desired including, east-west pedestrian connections through the park, tennis court resurfacing, basketball court replacement, social spaces, and a designated OLA.
- 2017: The People Parks and Dogs Strategy identified Grandview-Woodland as one of six neighbourhoods in need of service level improvements to provide more equitable access to OLA's across the city.
- 2017-2018: Staff hosted community engagement events to gauge the level of support for a variety of park features related to court renewals, as well as an OLA.
- 2018: Funding was allocated in the 2019-2022 Capital Plan for new dog off-leash areas and sports court renewals.

DISCUSSION

Based on feedback from the community and Operations staff, the Pandora Park project team developed a concept plan for renovation of the west side of the park. The plan includes a fenced OLA, two renewed tennis courts, a new basketball court, passive green space, seating, and picnic areas.

The planning process identified a preferred location for an OLA and improved spatial relationships to make best use of the available park space. A wide range of potential options was explored to ensure all park users benefit from the park renewal and addition of the OLA.

Consultation Overview

This past year staff led a comprehensive public engagement process resulting in a well-received concept plan. The process included a design workshop, open house, and two online surveys. A summary of the events is listed below:

1. Open House at Pandora Park Fall Fair, September 24, 2017;
2. Online questionnaire #1, Sept 24 – October 9, 2017;
3. Design workshop with youth at Raycam Community Centre, January 18, 2018;
4. Online questionnaire #2, July 24 – August 14, 2018;
5. Review with Park Planning and Operations staff, July 2017 and Jan, Mar, April, 2018.

Questionnaires sought to gauge the level of community support for designating a dog-off leash area in Pandora Park. Residents were notified of the questionnaires in the following ways: hard copies available at the open house event, email invitation to Talk Vancouver members, signs in the park, Canada Post door-to-door flyer drop, Facebook ads, and updates on the [project webpage](#).

Nearly 200 residents completed the 2017 questionnaire and 249 residents completed the second questionnaire in 2018. Below is a brief summary of what we heard:

Questionnaire #1 - 3 concept plan options

Three concept plan options with a variety of park features and layouts were presented; two of the three options included an OLA.

When asked if they supported a new OLA in the park, 61% of respondents liked the idea, while 23% did not. When asked what they thought of the proposed locations for the OLA, 59% preferred the southwest area of the park while 50% preferred the northwest area of the park. Between 22% and 32% did not support the proposed locations. However, it is not clear if this reflected an opinion regarding the specific locations proposed or a general disapproval of the creation of a new OLA in the park.

Questionnaire #2 – proposed concept plan

A proposed concept plan was developed based on feedback received at previous engagement events and compatible adjacencies, making the best use of the available park space. The plan includes a .25 hectare fenced OLA located in the northwest area of the park, 2 resurfaced tennis courts, a new basketball court, pathways and seating areas.

Residents were notified of the proposed concept plan and invited to complete an online questionnaire. Responses received indicated a high level of support for a fenced OLA in the northwest portion of the park. 67% of respondents replied that they were in support, while 20% were not.

The [concept plan](#) for Pandora Park is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Dog off-leash area Implementation Process

With the recent adoption of the People, Parks & Dogs Strategy, the Park Board has been working towards creating new OLA's in underserved neighbourhoods, as well as updating and improving existing OLA's. The Strategy outlines the need for a variety of attractive and easy-to-access OLA's that reduce unsanctioned off-leash activity outside of designated OLA's. The Strategy also clarifies the rules and etiquette for using dog off-leash areas and outlines methods for managing dog waste, protecting the environment, promoting responsible dog ownership, and fostering the health and well-being of all park users.

The recommendations outlined in the Strategy were employed in developing the proposed Pandora Park OLA in the following ways:

- **Access:** The Strategy recommends adding new dog off-leash areas and prioritizing underserved and densely populated neighbourhoods, including Grandview-Woodlands, with the goal of having a neighbourhood service level OLA within a 15 minute walk (approximately 1km) of most residents.
- **Design:** The size and amenities of the proposed Pandora Park OLA are in keeping with those recommended in the Strategy and identified as desirable by the community during the engagement events. The approximately .25 hectare OLA will include a universally accessible loop path, access to drinking water (for people and dogs), shade trees, seating areas and clear boundaries. The detailed design drawings will specify durable materials and suitable surfacing.

- **Location:** The OLA was sited adjacent to compatible park uses to the greatest possible extent and less compatible adjacencies have been mitigated through fencing. The OLA is located on the west side of the park away from the children's water spray park and playground. The chance for conflict with users of the adjacent courts, community garden and seating areas has been mitigated with secure fencing around the OLA.
- **Signage:** Concise, clear and consistent signage will be installed in keeping with the recommendations outlined in the Strategy. An example of etiquette signage is shown in Appendix B.
- **Waste:** Pandora Park may be considered as a future site to be included in the separated dog waste "red bin" program.
- **Stewardship:** As part of the city-wide stewardship initiative launched this summer to recognize and encourage stewardship in off-leash areas, efforts will be made to encourage the establishment of a stewardship group to support the Pandora Park OLA. It is anticipated that stewardship participants will support and monitor the success of the OLA and promote ongoing community building, as currently fostered through the Pandora Park community garden and artist residency studio.
- **Enforcement:** Park Board staff will liaise with Animal Services, who are responsible for enforcement of unsanctioned off-leash activity outside of the designated OLA.

The following is a summary and timeline of the city-wide dog off-leash area delivery and People Parks and Dogs Strategy implementation process to date:

2017:

- A new destination fenced OLA was constructed and opened at New Brighton Park. A separate time-of-use restricted OLA at the park's east beach remains as a pilot project, which will be assessed in 2019.

2018:

- New fenced OLA's were constructed and opened at Sunset and Renfrew Community Parks. The OLA at Renfrew Community Park includes a variety of surface materials (grass, sand, cypress wood shavings, and wood chips) that are being assessed for suitability and potential for broader use.
- The Park Board launched a stewardship initiative in July to recognize and encourage stewardship of Vancouver's OLA's.
- Rollout of new signage developed as part of the People, Parks and Dogs Strategy began in October at existing OLA's in the downtown area as well as the new facilities Sunset Park, Renfrew Community Park and Burrard View Park. The phased rollout of new signage to the remaining existing OLA's elsewhere in the city will continue into 2019.

2019:

- The pilot OLA at Burrard View Park in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood will be converted to a permanent OLA and time-of-use restrictions will be removed. With the addition of permanent OLA's at Burrard View Park and Pandora Park, the goal of providing most residents with a neighbourhood service level OLA within a 15 minute walk will be realized in the north-west area of the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood.

- A pilot time-restricted unfenced OLA will open at George Wainborn Park.

FUNDING AND SCHEDULE

Design development and preparation of construction documents for the Pandora Park renewal are needed prior to tendering and are anticipated to be ready in the spring of 2019.

The 2019-2022 Capital Plan provides funds for the design and construction of dog-related amenities and sport court renewals. The estimated cost for construction of the Pandora Park OLA, court renewal and other associated park improvements is \$800,000.

Based on the above estimate, Staff will return to the Park Board prior to awarding a construction contract, at which time confirmation of sufficient project budgets will be provided.

SUMMARY

The Vancouver Park Board aims to promote the comfort and safety of all park users, while providing equitable access to well-designed off-leash areas (OLA's) across the city.

Grandview-Woodlands is one of six neighbourhoods identified in the People Parks and Dogs Strategy as underserved by the existing network of OLA's. Throughout the Pandora Park engagement process, area residents demonstrated strong support for a fenced OLA.

With the addition of the proposed neighbourhood-level OLA in Pandora Park, residents of Grandview-Woodlands will enjoy increased access to safe and appealing fenced off-leash space. Stewardship participation will support success, promote responsible dog ownership, and foster etiquette for off-leash activities.

Upon Board approval of the Pandora Park OLA, staff will prepare detailed designs and a tender-ready package of construction documents in order to prepare for construction of the new OLA and sports court renewal in 2019, funded from the 2019 budget.

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Appendix A: Pandora Park Concept Plan
Appendix B: Etiquette Guideline Signage for Off-Leash Areas

Pandora Park Concept Plan



Key Features:

- 1 Potential community garden extension
- 2 Path upgrade to Franklin Street
- 3 New park entrance at Franklin Street
- 4 New seating areas
- 5 New picnic area
- 6 Fenced off-leash dog area
- 7 New East West path connections
- 8 Two resurfaced tennis/pickleball courts
- 9 Basketball court
- 10 Drinking fountain

Etiquette Guideline Signage for Off-Leash Areas

**PLEASE BE COURTEOUS
AND RESPECTFUL**



PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG



KEEP DOGS FROM BEING
AGGRESSIVE WITH PEOPLE
AND OTHER ANIMALS



KEEP DOGS WITHIN SIGHT
AND UNDER VOICE CONTROL

**ETIQUETTE FOR PEOPLE WITH DOGS
USING DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS**

- All dogs must be licensed
- No persistent barking
- No digging
- Maximum 3 dogs per handler
- Dogs must be on leash when entering and exiting off-leash area

**FOR ALL PEOPLE USING DOG
OFF-LEASH AREAS**

- Be prepared to encounter dogs off-leash
- Supervise children closely
- Limit open food
- Do not approach a dog without owner permission