



June 19, 2023

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Tiina Mack - Director, Planning and Park Development

SUBJECT : **People, Parks and Dogs Strategy (2017) – Overview and Implementation Update**

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Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the award-winning [People, Parks & Dogs \(PPD\) Strategy, approved by the Board in October 2017](#) including a summary of projects completed, in-progress or ongoing since the adoption of the strategy.

### **Vision**

The vision of the Park Board's People, Parks & Dogs Strategy is to promote the comfort and safety of all park users by fostering responsible dog ownership and clarifying rules, boundaries and etiquette for dog off-leash activity in parks. Additionally, the Strategy seeks to integrate a variety of appealing and safe dog off-leash spaces in our parks that are easily accessed by local residents who directly support their success.

### **Background**

The evidence based Strategy provides a 10-year framework to deliver well planned and designed parks for people with and without dogs. Recommendations fall within four themes:

1. **Access** – Improve access to dog off-leash areas (OLA) throughout the city;
2. **Design** – Provide a variety of OLAs with clear and effective boundaries;
3. **Stewardship** – Support the success of OLAs through effective management, communication and education; and
4. **Enforcement** – Improve compliance and enforcement for dog-related by-laws.

Strategy implementation includes: quick starts; renewing existing OLAs; locating and developing new OLAs; pilot projects; partnership opportunities; and monitoring and evaluation.

### **Engagement**

The process to develop the Strategy included a robust consultation program and at the time of the strategy's development, staff also worked with a 22-member Advisory Committee made up of individuals from a diverse range of interests including sports, the environment, animal health and behaviour, persons with disabilities, tourism, and others.

OLAs continue to be a topic of interest across the City with Park Board receiving high volumes of requests and complaints through several different avenues. Based on 3-1-1 data, dog related issues are the number one Park Board related topic, number four in service requests, and number seven in enquiries. Demand far exceeds the available resources to respond to all requests.



Many vocal groups and citizens, both with and without dogs, express their concerns through these various channels. While resourcing responses to residents is a significant challenge due to volume, the [People Parks and Dogs project page](#) provides a variety of resources to assist in providing valuable information to concerned citizens and enquirers are directed to this resource for more information.

### Access and Design

Among the recommendations in the Strategy are the introduction of new features. Staff reviewed the Park Board’s current OLAs to identify locations where changes and new features are needed to implement the recommendations, specifically around surfacing and boundary conditions. The [People, Parks & Dogs Implementation Guide: Considerations for Delivery](#) guides the thoughtful approach to executing the strategy.

### Projects Completed, In-progress and Ongoing

Since the approval of the Strategy in 2017, Park Board staff have been working on a range of projects, with six new or renewed OLAs completed, five renewed or new in-progress OLA projects and a variety of ongoing initiatives such as sign upgrades and minor maintenance improvements being delivered within the available financial resources.

The OLAs at New Brighton Park, Sunset Park, Sunset Beach, Coopers’ Park, John Hendry Park, and Emery Barnes Parks were identified in the Strategy as priorities for renewal. New OLAs at Renfrew and Pandora Parks were implemented in alignment with the Strategy’s access recommendations and included in full park renewal processes. The historic pilot OLA at Burrard View Park was formalized through a public engagement process and helps to serve a priority neighbourhood as identified in the strategy. See *Appendix A: Summary of completed projects*.

### In-progress New & Renewed Off-Leash Areas for the 2023-2026 Capital Plan:

Project	Engagement	Concept Design	ITT/Contract Award	Construction Completion*
<a href="#">Emery Barnes – Renewal and Expansion</a>	Complete	Q2-2023*	Q4 2023*	Q4-2024*
<a href="#">Heather Park – New OLA</a>	Complete	Q2-2023*	Q4 2023*	Q2-2024*
<a href="#">Granville Park – New OLA</a>	Complete	Q2-2023*	Q4 2023*	Q2-2024*
<a href="#">Coopers’ Park – Renewal</a>	Complete	Complete (July 2021)	TBC (Staff vacancy)	TBC (Staff vacancy)
<a href="#">John Hendry – Renewal</a>	Complete	Complete (May 2022)	TBC (Staff vacancy)	TBC (Staff vacancy)
<a href="#">Oakridge Park – New OLA</a>	Completed	Complete (Q1 2022)	Developer timeline	Q4 2024

\*Target Dates



### **Signage**

Staff are removing old dog park signs and replacing them with improved signs that follow the new guidelines. Signage is upgraded at the time of a renewal project, or as needed on a park-by-park basis. See *Appendix B: Map of Dog Off-Leash Areas: Completed and In-Progress*.

### **Stewardship**

While there are plans to implement stewardship programs in OLAs as per the People, Parks and Dogs Strategy, no stewardship initiatives have been started at this time due to resourcing issues. An update will be provided when the stewardship program begins.

### **Enforcement**

City of Vancouver Animal Services is responsible for enforcement and resources are provided on-line to support [responsible dog ownership](#). Animal Control [By-Law 9150](#) establishes a pound, licenses dogs, and regulates dogs and other animals in the City of Vancouver. Animal services has recently hired a Public Engagement Coordinator to focus on a number of Animal Services related initiatives which include increasing Licensing compliance and endorsing responsible pet ownership.

### **Time-of-use Restrictions to be Discontinued**

There are daytime off-leash use restrictions for all or part of the year at 18 of Vancouver's off-leash areas, which existed prior to the adoption of the Strategy. These restrictions confine dog activity to mornings and evenings (e.g. 5 to 10 am, 5 to 10 pm), to allow for other park uses during the day.

Due to lack of compliance with time-of-use restrictions, incompatible adjacencies (i.e. playgrounds, sports fields, busy roads etc.) and subsequent increased incidents and enforcement requirements, the Strategy recommends discontinuing time-of-use restrictions as a practice for managing off-leash dog use in parks. Focusing on permanent dog-off leash areas will provide a higher and more reliable level of dog off-leash service across the city, reduce confusion among users, and make the City's enforcement resources available for other dog-related activity.

A morning hours only pilot was proposed in the Strategy as a pilot project for George Wainborn Park as Downtown is one of six high priority neighbourhoods currently underserved for dog off-leash area access. However, considering other changes proposed for the park (e.g. Board approved location for the [Irish Monument](#)), and aforementioned adjacency issues, continuing this pilot is not possible and staff are now focusing efforts on improvements to the Emery Barnes OLA and the Coopers OLA to serve Downtown.

### **Next Priority Project**

[Strathcona Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal](#) – Work is ongoing to review park needs and design modifications to improve the remaining off-leash area and address user concerns. This project will be pursued as the next priority OLA project after the In-progress projects are completed.



### Funding Implications

The available funds will be utilized for the delivery of the In-progress – New and Renewed OLAs as described in this Memo and in Table 1. Operating budget implications will also be included in the concept plan or contract award Board reports and subsequent operating budget discussions. The total available funding from the 2015 – 2018, 2019 – 2022, and 2023 - 2026 capital plans has been fully allocated to the projects below.

**Table 1: Funding Summary for In-Progress New and Renewed Off-Leash Areas**

Name	Estimated Capital Budget	Estimated Operating Impacts to Capital
Emery Barnes OLA Renewal and Expansion	\$1,130,000	\$44,000
Heather Park Proposed New OLA	\$560,000	\$23,000
Granville Park Proposed New OLA	\$720,000	\$31,000
Coopers Park OLA Renewal	\$1,120,000	\$62,000
John Hendry OLA Renewal	\$750,000	\$33,000
Oakridge Park New OLA	CAC Contribution	Maintenance by others
<b>ESTIMATED TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,280,000</b>	<b>\$193,000</b>

Regards,

Tiina Mack  
Director - Planning and Park Development  
TM/NF/DS/JL/VT

Copy to: PB Leadership Team  
Nicole Taddune, Project Manager II, Park Development  
PB Communications

## Appendix A: Summary of Completed Projects

Completed New and Renewed Off-Leash Areas		
Project Name	Completion Date	Notes
<a href="#">New Brighton Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal</a>	2017	With completion of the salt marsh on the east side of the park, the (non-beach) OLA was relocated to the west side of the park; it includes fencing, gates and a perimeter walking path.
<a href="#">Sunset Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal</a>	2018	First project to incorporate the strategy's design guidelines; includes various surface materials, looping path, formal & informal seating, shade, and drinking water for people & dogs.
<a href="#">Renfrew Park New Dog Off-Leash Area</a>	2018	Created a new fully enclosed 0.14 hectare OLA in a portion of an underused parking lot; includes two double gates and various amenities, including a walking path, benches, picnic tables, dog play features, and various surface materials.
<a href="#">Burrard View Park New Dog Off-Leash Area</a>	2019	A pilot OLA was in place at Burrard View Park since 2005. In 2019, public engagement took place to discuss giving the off-leash area permanent status. Informed by public engagement, the off-leash area was reduced in size, metal bollards were added to define boundaries, and additional seating, a water fountain, and signage were added.
<a href="#">Pandora Park New Dog Off-Leash Area</a>	2020	A fully enclosed OLA is part of the Board approved park redevelopment; the off-leash area includes double gates, gravel walking paths, benches, and grass.
Completed Improvements		
Project Name	Completion Date	Notes
<a href="#">Sunset Beach Park Dog Off-Leash Area Improvements</a>	2018	New secure double gate installed adjacent to the Seawall to reduce conflict between users.
Basic Signage at Parks with High Dog Activity	various	Installed basic signs, indicating spaces that are 'on-leash', 'off-leash' and 'no dogs allowed' in parks with high dog activity, including Andy Livingstone, Coopers', Devonian Harbour, Emery Barnes, Hinge, Nelson, New Brighton, Sunset Beach, Sunset and Renfrew Ravine.
Large Kiosk Style Signs at Parks with High Dog Activity	various	Installed large kiosk style signs with maps in off-leash areas to increase visibility and further clarify dog owner responsibilities at: Andy Livingstone, Coopers', Devonian Harbour, Emery Barnes, Nelson, New Brighton, Sunset, and Renfrew Ravine.

## Appendix B Map of Dog Off-Leash Areas: Completed and In-Progress

### Dog Off-Leash Areas: Completed & In-Progress

