



October 21, 2019

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Malcolm Bromley
General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **People, Parks & Dogs Strategy Implementation Update**

Dear Commissioners,

This memo provides an update on the [People, Parks & Dogs \(PPD\) Strategy](#), including an overview of projects completed or underway, and plans for upcoming projects proposed within the current Capital Plan (2019-2022).

1. Background

The evidence based and award winning People, Parks & Dogs Strategy, approved by the Board in October 2017, 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 throughout the city;
2. **Design** – Provide a variety of dog off-leash areas with clear and effective boundaries, and support the needs of people with and without dogs in parks with dog off-leash areas;
3. **Stewardship** – Support the success of dog off-leash areas 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 dog off-leash areas; locating and developing new off-leash areas; pilot projects; partnership opportunities; and monitoring and evaluation.

2. Projects Completed or Underway

Park Board staff have completed a broad range of projects, with some ongoing or underway.

[New Brighton Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal](#) (completed 2017) – with completion of the salt marsh on the east side of the park, the (non-beach) off-leash area was relocated to the west side of the park; it includes fencing, gates, and a perimeter walking path.

[Sunset Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal](#) (completed 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 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Upgraded Sunset Park off-leash area.

[Sunset Beach Park Dog Off-Leash Area Improvements](#) (completed 2018) – new secure double gate installed adjacent to the Seawall to reduce conflict between users.

[Renfrew Park New Dog Off-Leash Area](#) (completed October 2018) – created a new fully enclosed 0.14 hectare off-leash area 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 (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Renfrew Park dog off-leash area

[Pandora Park New Dog Off-Leash Area](#) (completion expected spring 2020) – a fully enclosed off-leash area is part of the approved park redevelopment; the off-leash area will include double gates, gravel walking paths, benches, and grass.

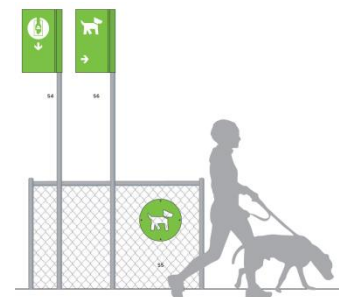
[John Hendry Park Master Planning Process](#) (ongoing) – the process to update the park master plan has resumed (process paused in 2015 until PPD Strategy was completed) and Park Board staff are engaging with the community and key stakeholders; this is the first opportunity for the strategy to be applied to a master plan so staff are working closely with the public to develop a space that aligns with the values of both dog owners and non-dog owners and balances the needs of all park users.

Signage Upgrades – Staff are removing old dog park signs and replacing them with improved signs that follow the new guidelines.

- **Completed** - installed basic signs, indicating spaces that are 'on-leash', 'off-leash' and 'no dogs allowed' in parks with high dog activity, including Andy Livingstone (see Figure 3), Coopers', Devonian Harbour, Emery Barnes, Hinge, Nelson, New Brighton, Sunset Beach, Sunset and Renfrew Ravine.
- **Underway** – installing 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; completion estimated for late 2020.
- **Ongoing** – installing signs in areas that do not allow dogs off-leash to address dog related complaints (e.g., dogs running off-leash; owners not cleaning-up after their pets; dogs digging holes in sports fields/grass areas; etc.).



Figure 3: Andy Livingstone off-leash sign





Dog Waste Collection/Red Bin Program (ongoing, launched summer 2016) – Engineering Services pilot project to reduce the amount of dog waste reaching the landfill (aligns with Zero Waste 2040 plan); red bins currently in 8 parks (7 off-leash areas), with plans for expansion.

Stewardship (launched summer 2018) – encouraging new and expanded networks of responsible dog owners, Park Board Stewardship Ambassadors:

- visited 17 sites, including off-leash areas and special events to connect with park users and promote responsible dog ownership;
- held a 3-part speaker series on dog behavior and diet; and
- currently are planning next steps to further support stewardship opportunities to support off-leash areas.

3. Implementation Plans for 2019

[Burrard View Park New Dog Off-Leash Area](#) - A pilot off-leash area has been in place at Burrard View Park since 2005. Park Board staff hosted an open house in January 2019 to discuss giving the off-leash area permanent status. In response to feedback, staff updated the off-leash area design reducing the size of the off-leash area, adding metal bollards, updating signage, and adding additional seating and a water fountain for people and dogs. Improvements will be phased, and are scheduled to begin this month (October 2019).

[George Wainborn Park New Dog Off-Leash Area](#) – Downtown is one of six high priority areas currently underserved for off-leash area access. A pilot project at George Wainborn Park was recommended in the PPD Strategy to test an early morning-only off-leash area. However, considering other changes proposed for the park (e.g. approved location for the [Irish Monument](#)), staff are completing a needs assessment and proposed design modifications to identify opportunities to locate a permanent off-leash area in the park. Community engagement is anticipated for early 2020.

[Strathcona Park Dog Off-Leash Area Renewal](#) – Historically there were two off-leash areas in the park, one on the west side and one on the east side. The west off-leash area was located on two sports fields; as identified in the PPD Strategy, sports fields and off-leash areas are incompatible uses due to field impacts and safety concerns. The west off-leash area was also within 50 metres of the playground, which is incongruent with Park Board standards for unfenced off-leash areas. As such, the west off-leash area signs were removed last spring with the off-leash area webpage updated to reflect this change. The east off-leash area remains in place. Following concerns raised by park users, staff met with residents in September to discuss this change. Work is now underway to review park needs and design modifications to improve the remaining off-leash area and address user concerns. Further public consultation and upgrades for this off-leash area are anticipated in early 2020.

Commercial Dog Walking Permit – Park Planning and Commercial Operations staff are working with key stakeholders to create a Commercial Dog Walking permit to bring this service into compliance with Park Board policy and bylaws.

Consistent Signage – Communication between the Park Board, Vancouver School Board and City of Vancouver Engineering's Green Infrastructure Implementation group is ongoing



to improve clarity regarding dog activity on public lands. The Vancouver School Board has adopted the Park Board's sign formats and will pilot these this year, starting at Mount Pleasant Elementary School (adjacent to Guelph Park).

4. Implementation Plans 2020-2022

Existing Dog Off-leash Area Renewals - the [PPD implementation plan](#), as outlined in Appendix C of the October 2017 board report, identified the following off-leash areas for renewal within the current Capital Plan: Coopers' Park, Crab Park at Portside, Musqueam Park, and Charleson Park. Staff will provide updates on these projects as work progresses.

[Hadden Park Study Area](#) – this site is a special study area due to the conditions placed on the land when it was gifted to the Park Board in 1928; any changes at this location require legal and policy review, further public consultation and evaluation.

[Jonathan Rogers Park New Dog Off-leash Area](#) - a master plan for Jonathan Rogers Park will begin in 2020 and staff will bring forward opportunities for an off-leash area; Mount Pleasant has been identified as one of six high-priority neighbourhoods.

[Spanish Banks Study Area](#) - the Spanish Banks West Park off-leash area is in a unique legal and jurisdictional situation; as the park lies outside the boundaries of the City of Vancouver within the University Endowment Lands, any changes to this site requires further research and consultation with other government agencies.

5. Capital Plan Support for Dog Off-leash Areas

The 2019-2022 Capital Plan includes \$2M to build new off-leash areas and to maintain and renew existing off-leash areas. Additionally, the PPD Strategy encourages all Park Development projects (renewals and new sites) to consider off-leash areas as part of their public engagement process. These potential new amenities would then be funded through other park capital programs.

This is a new era of urban park development for Vancouver as its parks have increasingly become outdoor living rooms and backyards for residents of all ages. Providing high quality spaces for people to recreate with their dogs on and off leash is a priority.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Malcolm Bromley'.

Malcolm Bromley
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/sw/ds/ee/clc

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
PPD Project Team
PB Communications