

To: Community Services Committee

From: Ron Diskey, Commissioner,
Community Services Department

Report Number: CS-17-87

Date of Report: October 20, 2017

Date of Meeting: October 26, 2017

Subject: Request for Dog Park in South Oshawa

File: F-6100

1.0 Purpose

This report is in response to Correspondence CS-16-70 requesting the creation of a dog park in South Oshawa.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Community Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That Report CS-17-87 dated October 20, 2017 be received for information.
2. That the public be consulted to provide input into the proposed off-leash area in south Oshawa.
3. That funding be included in the proposed 2019 Capital Budget for Council consideration.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

- Corporate Communications
- Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services (M.L.E.L.S.)
- Animal Services
- Finance Services

5.0 Analysis

Off-leash areas can play an important role in fostering a sense of community and opportunity for improving fitness. In September 2016, the City received Correspondence

CS-16-70 requesting the creation of a dog park in South Oshawa. The desire for off-leash areas need to be balanced with the needs of other park users in order to ensure success and continued support.

In order to guide the siting, construction, and maintenance of off-leash areas in Oshawa, Parks Development section has developed Guidelines for Design and Placement of off-leash areas provided in Attachment 1. The Guidelines were developed based on best management practices utilized in other cities and municipalities with successful off-leash programs as well as standard park planning processes.

The Guidelines contain key considerations when planning, siting and designing an off-leash area:

- Size
- Fencing/Gates
- Accessibility
- Paths
- Parking
- Maintenance
- Enforcement
- Surfacing
- Shade
- Seating
- Monitoring
- Signage
- Buffer zones
- Park Activity/Programing
- Site Conditions/Sensitivities
- Community Support/Demand

The request for an off-leash area in south Oshawa (south of Highway 401 or immediately adjacent to the 401) was reviewed alongside the available park land and open spaces while taking into consideration the Guidelines. Based on this review 3 locations have been identified for consideration that either meet most or some of the criteria:

- Cordova Park – Preferred option as it meets size, has existing parking and suitable buffer. It is also located in a high density area.
- Stone Street Park – Not an ideal location due to size, proximity to residents and distance to parking.
- Lakewoods Park – Not an ideal location due to size and need for installation of parking.

The proposed locations are highlighted in greater context in Attachment 2.

5.1 Consultation

The development of an off-leash area will follow the same process as any other park development/re-development project including consultation. To address the request for an off-leash area in south Oshawa, staff will work with Corporate Communications on the development and implementation of a consultation plan that will:

- confirm the level of interest in an off-leash area in south Oshawa;
- obtain local feedback on the proposed locations and off-leash area; and,
- gain commitment from volunteers to participate in the Off-leash Ambassador Program as outlined in Attachment 1 under Section 4.0.

Based on the responses and feedback obtained during the consultation process and confirmation of the need for an off-leash area in south Oshawa staff will determine the most appropriate location for the off-leash area in south Oshawa.

Additional public consultation process will be developed and undertaken to gauge the level of interest/demand across the entire City in order to properly plan for future off-leash areas including in new developments and park redevelopment projects.

6.0 Financial Implications

This report has no financial implications. Capital cost for a South Oshawa Dog Park will be placed in the proposed 2019 Capital Budget for Council Consideration.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report addresses the Oshawa Strategic Plan by responding to the goal of "Accountable Leadership" through the theme of "Deliberate Community Engagement". The report also supports the goal of "Social Equity" through the theme of "An Active, Healthy and Safe Community".



Glenn Simmonds, Director,
Operations



Ron Diskey, Commissioner,
Community Services Department

Guidelines for Design and Placement of Off-Leash Areas

Date: October 2017



1.0 Introduction

The City of Oshawa's Parks Development section uses the following design standards and guidelines to aid in the location selection, construction, and maintenance of Off-Leash Areas. For proposed Off-Leash Areas, these design standards and guidelines help determine the rationale for site selection and any changes that may be required to an existing site to ensure success. The goal of the Guidelines is to provide a framework for well-planned and designed parks that accommodate all park users and minimize conflict. Off-Leash Areas will also assist with fostering responsible dog ownership and awareness of City By-laws.

A new Off-Leash Area may also be considered in conjunction with the redevelopment of an existing park or a new park development.

2.0 Guidelines

2.1 Off-Leash Area Site Selection

- **Geographic Distribution amongst other Off-Leash Areas:** To be determined by qualitative need on a case by case basis. Off-Leash Areas should be distributed in the City such that there is equitable distribution to these facilities in the City.
- **Land Suitability:** The site should be relatively flat and have clear site lines. If a desirable site has excessive slopes, it should be designed such that erosion and run-off do not become an issue.
- **Protection of Natural Areas:** Off-Leash Areas should not be located in or in close proximity to natural areas where flora and fauna, such as ground nesting birds, small mammals, and native plants, would be disturbed. Natural watercourses and their associated ecosystems are to be properly protected from any disturbance caused by users of Off-Leash Areas.

- **Buffer from Dissimilar Uses:**
 - **Residential:** A minimum setback of 20m is required from all adjacent residential land uses to the Off-Leash Area. The buffer space should allow for neighbors to have no more disturbances from a dog park than other typical park uses. Buffers may include vegetation and/or berms to aid in noise and visual attenuation.
 - **Non-Residential:** Depending on adjacent land use, a setback may or may not be required as an Off-Leash Area may be considered beneficial or undesirable. If the Off-Leash Area poses risks / undesirable traits to the adjacent land uses, the setback and buffer type used for residential land uses would apply.
 - **Park Facilities:** Consideration will be given to the need for additional buffer space between the Off-Leash Area and other recreational facilities such as playgrounds, trails, picnic shelters, etc. This buffer can be determined through proper layout of the overall park space and assessment of other park uses to minimize potential conflict.
- **Size:** The size of the Off-Leash Area will be dependent upon the particular park in which it is proposed, other park activities, facilities, proximity to residences, etc. The acceptable range for a standard Off-Leash area is 0.5 hectares to 2.5 hectares. If a smaller Off-Leash Area is all that can be accommodated in a particular park, and if there is appropriate community support, then a smaller size will be considered.
- **Community Support:** Consultation as outlined in Section 3.0 has indicated support for the project.

2.2 Enclosure Design

- **Fencing Requirements:** Future off-Leash Areas require a suitable enclosure to ensure compatibility with other park uses while also establishing a clear boundary between on and off leash areas. Fencing style to be determined based on site character and setting.
 - **Page Wire:** To be used in natural settings and layouts where large quantities of fencing are required. Fencing type to be 1200mm tall galvanized wire fencing with 50mm x 100mm openings. Top and bottom wire to be 10 gauge and filler wires to be 12.5 gauge. Page Wire to be fastened to 150mm diameter peeled cedar farm posts.
 - **Chain link:** To be used in traditional parkland setting. Fencing type to be 1200mm tall galvanized chain link fencing attached to galvanized posts.
 - **Ornamental:** To be used in smaller urban park settings and fencing style to match with the aesthetic of the surrounding built form. Fencing style to be specified at time of location approval.
- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.) Compliance:** Barrier free access to the site shall be provided, as well as an area through the

corral and at the entry. Benches and accessible parking will also be provided. Barrier free paths through the Off-Leash Area should be provided.

- **Entrance Design:** An entry corral, consisting of a 3 meter x 3 meter fenced area with two gates, should be provided to allow for pet owners to safely unleash their dog prior to letting them in the Off-Leash area.
- **Parking:** Sufficient dedicated parking, convenient to the site, should be provided such that the dog park does not create undue burden on the surrounding neighborhood. Parking to provide the appropriate A.O.D.A. required spaces. Off-Leash Areas smaller than 0.25 hectares do not require dedicated parking.
- **Surfacing:** A variety of surfaces may be used depending on size of Off-Leash Area proposed.
 - Turf: Natural turf grass is the preferred choice for standard sized Off-Leash Areas larger than 0.5 hectares in size. In smaller areas, turf grass may not have sufficient time to regenerate due to use. It is recommended that lawn areas be rested periodically to allow for the turf grass to recover. Artificial turf is not recommended.
 - Pea Gravel: Pea Gravel is recommended in smaller Off-Leash Areas where turf grass would not regenerate due to the high use.
 - Mulch: To be used as an alternative to pea gravel or for heavy wear locations within turf grass Off-Leash Areas.
- **Signage:** Rules shall be clearly posted, including codes of behavior, hours, and requirements for entry.
- **Waste Collection:** Trash containers shall be provided in the Off-Leash Area, making sure that they are located with easy access for maintenance vehicles.
- **Site Furnishings:** Benches should be provided in convenient locations to allow for gathering and resting throughout the Off-Leash Area.
- **Pathways:**
 - Limestone Screenings: Interior paths should be constructed out of granular material with a limestone screenings topcoat. These secondary paths provide an accessible route within the Off-Leash Area.
 - Asphalt Pavement: The primary connection pathway from the parking / entrance area of the park to the Off-Leash Area should be constructed out of Asphalt with a minimum width of 2400mm to aide in accessibility and ease of maintenance.
 - Concrete Pavement: Concrete pavement to be used in high wear locations and primary entry areas, including but not limited to the double corral gate.
- **Shade:** The site should provide a good mix of mature trees to promote shaded areas. Shade structures may be beneficial where trees aren't available.

- **Water:** Source of potable drinking water for dogs may be considered available. Ideally, water source is brought to within Off-Leash Area enclosure and dispensary is installed for consumption if funding allows.
- **Lighting:** Lighting is not required.
- **Separate Areas for Large and Small/Shy Dogs:** Where space permits, two enclosed areas may be provided to allow for the separation of large and small/shy dogs. The Larger enclosure should be at least 0.5 hectares in size before a separate small dog enclosure is provided.
- **Visual Character and Aesthetics:** Off-Leash Areas should be located so as not to detract from the aesthetic quality of a park or open space. Ideally, the Off-Leash Area should be designed to integrate well into the existing site.
- **Buffer Plantings:** If it is necessary to buffer the Off-Leash Area, vegetation should be planted on the outside of the fence to aid in the aesthetic quality of the site and to assist in mitigating noise associated with the Off-Leash Area.
- **Maintenance Access:** Service gates and trash barrels should be located such that maintenance vehicles may easily enter from an existing park road, parking lot, or street frontage.

3.0 Consultation



The development of Off-Leash Areas will follow the same process as any other park development/re-development project including consultation. Staff will engage the public to:

- confirm the level of interest in an Off-Leash Area in south Oshawa;
- obtain local feedback on the siting and proposed off-leash area; and,
- gain commitment from volunteers to participate in the Off-leash Ambassador Program as per Section 4.0.

Based on this consultation staff will use the feedback to confirm the need for an off-leash area in south Oshawa and finalizing the proposed public input will help to determine the most appropriate locations for the off-leash area in south Oshawa.

Additional public consultation will also be undertaken to gauge level of interest/demand across the City in order to properly plan for future off-leash areas including future planning in new construction and park redevelopment.

4.0 Off-leash Ambassador Program

The establishment of a formal volunteer led group to work collaboratively with Parks Operations, Animal Services, and M.L.E.L.S. is essential in ensuring the success of an off-leash area.

The volunteer group would assist in:

- coordinating volunteer activities and fundraising;
- raising awareness among dog owners and park users of the by-laws and off-leash rules;
- monitoring and reporting on conditions at off-leash area (e.g. damage, maintenance) and activity in off-leash area (e.g. non-compliance issues);
- light maintenance work including poop and litter pick up within and around enclosed area and filling of holes; and,
- reporting of incidents to the City.

Volunteers must be familiar with the City's by-laws and act as a positive role model to promote responsible pet ownership and safety.

The City will provide ongoing maintenance including garbage removal, grass cutting, and site maintenance in accordance to current standards and operations.

5.0 Off-Leash Area Code of Conduct

Dog owners are subject to the Oshawa's Responsible Pet Owners By-law and the province of Ontario's Dog Owner's Liability Act.

All dogs must be on-leash in all public spaces unless otherwise signed that it is an off-leash area. In accordance with City By-laws dogs must be under their owner's control at all times which means in Off-Leash Areas dogs should be in view of their owners at all times and under voice control/command.

Dogs must be leashed when entering and leaving a leash-free area. All dogs must be licensed, vaccinated and wearing up to date tags. All litter, including dog waste, must be picked up and disposed of properly. Un-scooped poop is a health concern for dogs and humans and poses an environmental concern.

Dog owners should know their own dogs and leash them if necessary (even in a leash free area). Dogs are not to disturb or chase people. Users should take care and respect the wildlife and vegetation in the park.

Aggressive dogs, female dogs in heat, unneutered and sick dogs are not to use the park. If a dog becomes aggressive towards other dogs or humans, it must be leashed immediately and removed from the park. Please report dog attacks to Municipal Law Enforcement Services.

Dog walkers are welcome at the park, but must follow the City of Oshawa's by-law of a maximum of four dogs per walker. This has been put in place to ensure that all dogs are under control at all times.

User groups wishing to hold events may be allowed within the enclosure but must follow the City's park permitting policy.

Where issues persist with compliance an Off-Leash Area may be reviewed and reconsidered on a case by case basis.

Potential Locations for Off Leash Areas in South Oshawa

1.0 Cordova Valley Park

- Programmable Size: 0.72 hectares
- Relationship with the Guidelines for Design and Placement of Off leash Areas: Cordova Valley Park meets all of the recommended guidelines above. Currently, the location proposed with Cordova Valley park is not programmed. The area is relatively flat with clear sightlines and is set back from adjacent residential land uses. There is existing parking available within the park space, however a proper walkway to the proposed Off Leash Area is required.



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2.0 Stone Street Park

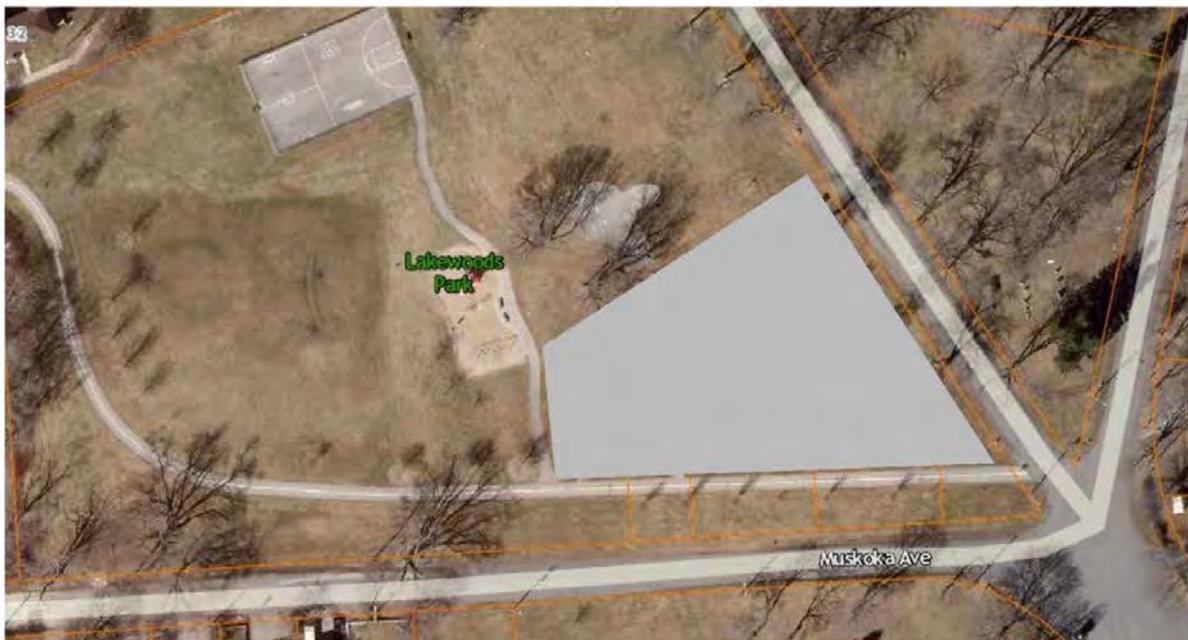
- Programmable Size: 0.37 hectares
- Relationship with the Guidelines for Design and Placement of Off leash Areas: Stone Street Park meets many of the recommended guidelines above. At 0.37 hectares, the overall size available in this park is under the standard for an Off Leash Area. The proposed location has available parking, however it would be sharing the parking with other programmed facilities and future uses. The current setbacks would be beyond the 15m minimum however there is not enough room to adequately buffer the Off Leash Area from the adjacent residential land use.



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3.0 Lakewoods Park

- Programmable Size: 0.32 hectares
- Relationship with the Guidelines for Design and Placement of Off leash Areas: Lakewoods Park meets some of the criteria set by the Guidelines above. At 0.32 hectares, the overall size available in this park is under the standard for an Off Leash Area. Lakewoods park does not have access to a nearby parking facility and would therefore require additional land from the park space to provide one. There are plenty of mature trees on site which would provide shade cover however the spacing from the adjacent residential units would require proper vegetative buffering.



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