

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: March 29, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Sean LeBrun Manager Parks & Solid Waste Services

SUBJECT: Update: Off Leash Strategy

ATTACHMENT(S): Off Leash Strategy

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated March 29, 2021, from the Acting Director of Civic Operations, titled "Update: Off Leash Strategy."

PURPOSE:

This report is intended to provide Council with Administration's review of the Off Leash Strategy.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Prince George first introduced off leash/under control pilot areas through the People, Pets and Parks program in 2002. This program was developed to support the new pet regulations introduced in the revised Parks & Open Spaces Bylaw No. 7330. The bylaw recognizes pets as legitimate users of parks and open spaces. The Off Leash Committee of Council developed policy direction in 2011 for an off leash program. The strategies provided recommendations for additional public consultation, development, maintenance and future expansion of the program.

In April of 2011, Council passed the Duchess Park Plan paving the way for the development of a new community park that included the City's first official off leash dog park. In July of 2013, after extensive community consultation with surrounding property owners and user groups, the "Pilot" designation was removed and both Ginter's Meadow and Moore's Meadow became official off leash/under control areas.

DISCUSSION:

The development of the Park Strategy began in the fall of 2015 with assessment and community engagement phases that comprised the critical first steps in the creation of the final version of the document that Council approved in January of 2017. The Park Strategy provided staff with clear direction and goals for prioritizing park infrastructure investment while managing financial resources and balancing public demand. A focus on potential scenarios and creative solutions to meet park services highlighted repurposing underutilized or redundant park facilities to an alternative, higher priority uses as a goal.

In the spring of 2017, Park staff transformed the underutilized Glenview baseball field into the City's second dog park at Corporal Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Park. Other potential sites identified through the Park Strategy action plan for future off leash/dog park areas through this cost effective repurposing process include Malaspina, Ingledew and Heather Road parks. The Parks Division continues to move forward with the identified

dog park and off leash strategy and is committed to continuing to build this program following the recommendations from strategies adopted and continued community consultation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Off leash areas build community and support social health and wellbeing through the creation of a connected and inclusive community. Engaging the community and activating park spaces for everyone in our community continues to support and promote healthy and active living supporting myPG goals, council focus areas and the Park Strategy action plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The existing dog park and off leash areas are maintained by Parks and Solid Waste Services within existing operating budgets and receive weekly maintenance attention as identified in the Parks Service Level Activity Schedule. Operational costs consist mainly of waste removal and the supply of dog waste bags at a cost of approximately \$15,000 annually. Proposed capital works in 2021 for expanded off leash areas in College Heights and the Millar Addition neighbourhoods have received Capital Expenditure funding of \$25,000. No significant increase to operational expenses anticipated from the additional off leash areas repurposed from existing park space.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The Parks Division is committed to supporting and promoting initiatives in our community that promote healthy and active living and that activate our park and open spaces. Since the introduction of the People, Pets and Parks program, we have kept our community engaged through the use of surveys, open houses and on site consultation and have heard from close to 2,000 residents.

Administration has determined that the off leash strategies and proposed off leash areas established in the 2011 off leash strategies report along with the prioritization and recommendations for parkland development and community engagement set out in the adopted 2016 park strategy provide the required direction now and for the future.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Blake McIntosh, Acting Director, Civic Operations

PREPARED BY: [Sean Lebrun, Manager Parks and Solid Waste]

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, Acting City Manager

Meeting Date: 2021-04-12