

# **REPORT**

## ***Parks & Recreation***

**To:** Mayor Cote and Members of Council      **Date:** February 14, 2022

**From:** Dean Gibson      **File:** 2026155  
Director of Parks and Recreation

**Item #:** 2022-110

**Subject: People, Parks & Pups: A 10-Year Strategy for Sharing Public Space**

---

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** Council adopt the “People, Parks & Pups Strategy”, as included as Attachment B of this report, to guide the planning and design for people and dogs in parks and open spaces across New Westminster; *and*

**THAT** staff proceed with next steps as outlined in this report.

---

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek adoption of the People, Parks & Pups Strategy (the “Strategy”) as developed to support a proactive approach to sharing New Westminster’s limited park space among those with and without dogs. As a ten-year framework, this Strategy provides recommendations to guide the ongoing planning, design and management of dog off-leash activity across the city.

### **SUMMARY**

New Westminster parks and open spaces are shared by residents with and without dogs. As the population of our City grows, so do the number of dogs. Statistics Canada 2016 estimates suggest the number of Canadian households with dogs is roughly equal to the number of households with children. As a result of growth in New Westminster, a new community-driven approach is needed to help improve the access, design, stewardship, and enforcement of dog activity in parks in order to address the needs of all residents.

The “People, Parks and Pups Strategy” was informed by two phases of community consultation, staff workshops and an Advisory Group formed specifically for this project. Input was also received from Mayor and Council (December 13, 2021), the Facilities,

Infrastructure and Public Realm Advisory Task Force and parallel community Advisory Committee.

## **BACKGROUND**

On December 13<sup>th</sup> 2021, Space2Place consultants presented the draft Strategy to Council for feedback and indicated that a final version of the Strategy would be brought back to Council for adoption in early 2022 with subsequent implementation later that year. For reference, [the report to Council](#) is included as **Attachment A** and provides a summary of themes and recommendations from the Strategy. Following the presentation on December 13<sup>th</sup>, staff received positive feedback on the draft Strategy and a specific question related to the Moody Park Off-Leash Area (OLA) which is addressed in the 'Next Steps' section of this report.

## **EXISTING POLICY AND PRACTICE**

The Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan (2008) and the Dog Off-Leash Management Plan (2014) currently guide the planning and design for new or improved dog off-leash areas.

The City's public engagement practices are guided by the Public Engagement Strategy (2016) and Public Engagement Policy (2021).

## **ANALYSIS**

Refer to Attachment A of this report.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Pending adoption by Council, the high priority actions will be implemented over the next 12 to 18 months to improve conditions and service levels of off-leash areas:

- 1) Create a 'separable' area at the Moody Park OLA (Refer to Council resolution adopted by consent on [December 10, 2018](#)):

*THAT a permanent small dog off-leash area be incorporated into the existing Moody Park Dog enclosure as outlined in the December 10, 2018 staff report.*

- 2) Pilot a 'separable' area at the Queen's Park OLA;
- 3) Construct the city's first Dog Parklet as part of the Agnes Greenway Project;
- 4) Monitor and engage the local community to evaluate the success of the Dog Parklet after 12 months;
- 5) Initiate the stewardship program and invite residents to engage with staff on how to structure and operate this program;
- 6) Conduct an accessibility and standard amenity audit for all existing OLA's;
- 7) Review locations for additional waste receptacles and sign regarding responsible disposal of dog waste in key locations, as identified through the Engagement Process; and

- 8) Review opportunities for integrating agility features at the off-leash areas located in Ryall Park and Moody Park.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

With population growth and people living in smaller spaces, it is important that the Strategy (specific to the context of New Westminster) consider all points of view in planning, designing and maintaining space for dogs that respects a diversity of park and open space uses that meets the needs of all users.

The Strategy also aims to contribute to the city's climate action goals with provision of dog off-leash areas located within 1km (15 min. walk) of most residents. Recommendations related to the City's Biodiversity Strategy include setbacks for OLA's from environmentally sensitive areas, responsible disposal of dog waste and protective edging surrounding trees and vegetation vulnerable to dog activity.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding is available in the 2022 Approved Capital Expenditure Budget of approximately \$75,000 to support the high priority action items listed in this report, exclusive of the Agnes Greenway dog parklet. The dog parklet, along with other public realm improvements, will utilize the \$50,000 capital funds dedicated to Agnes Street Greenway Public Realm Improvements from the Parks & Recreation Department.

Ongoing operating costs related to the high priority capital investments, including dog parklets, are under review. Over the next few years, staff will monitor changes in operational needs related to all dog off-leash areas and report back to Council with any changes in operating costs and proposed funding strategies.

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Staff from the following Departments participated in the staff workshop including: Office of the CAO, Climate Action, Planning and Development, Finance, Engineering Services (Operations and Animal Services) and Parks and Recreation.

### **OPTIONS**

The following are options for Council's consideration:

- 1) To adopt the "People, Parks & Pups Strategy", included as Attachment B, to guide the planning and design for people and dogs in parks and open spaces across New Westminster; *and*
- 2) To proceed with next steps as outlined in this report; or
- 3) Provide alternate direction to staff.

Staff recommend Option #1 and #2.

---

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Report to Council dated December 13, 2021

Attachment B: Draft- People, Parks and Pups Strategy

Attachment C: Summary of Engagement Phase 1 and 2

This report was prepared by:

Erika Mashig, Manager-Parks & Open Space Planning, Design and Construction

This report was approved by:

Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer