

PARKS, FORESTRY & RECREATION DOGS OFF LEASH PUBLIC MEETING



DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2015
TIME: 6:30 TO 8:00 PM
LOCATION: S. WALTER STEWART
LIBRARY
170 MEMORIAL PARK

WELCOME EVERYONE



- Councillor Mary Fragedakis
- Parks Branch Staff :
 - Edward Fearon
 - Tara Coley
 - Mark Hawkins
 - Ruthanne Henry, Capital Projects
 - Samantha Fraser, Mgr. Design & Construction Services

AGENDA



- Welcome & Introduction
- Presentation by Parks Staff
- Comments, questions, concerns
- Next Steps
- Adjournment

BY 8:00 pm TONIGHT ...



- Knowledge of:
 - Policy for Dogs Off-Leash (DOL) Area
 - Coxwell Ravine – Dogs Off Leash Proposal
- Opportunity for meeting participants to:
 - Provide Feedback
 - Ask Questions
 - Identify Concerns and Support

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE FOR PEOPLE, DOGS & PARKS STRATEGY (PDPS)



- **Purpose of Strategy:**
 - promotion of responsible dog ownership in parks
 - to accommodate the urban canine population
 - recognition of benefits that people with their dogs experience in parks

BACKGROUND – PEOPLE, DOGS AND PARKS STRATEGY (PDPS)



- Council approved policy after extensive public consultation in 2007
- Policy was refined in 2010 to take more neighbourhood characteristics into consideration
- Policy was established to manage:
 - Increase in dog ownership
 - Increase of park usage by dog owners & dogs
 - To balance the needs of all park users
 - To create additional off-leash areas in a consistent manner that relieves the pressure on existing sites
 - To promote responsible dog ownership across the City

PROCESSING OF OFF-LEASH REQUESTS



1. Internal Review of the Request

- Requests Received by Parks Standards and Innovation
- Property Ownership Confirmed
- Consultation with:
Capital Projects and Planning & Design Staff; Community Recreation Branch including a review of permit and program uses in the Park
- Other Divisions are consulted where necessary
- Off-leash requests that cannot comply with the policy criteria are rejected
- Viable applications are forwarded to Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff for assessment

PROCESSING OF OFF-LEASH REQUESTS



2. Internal Assessment of the Request

- Technical assessment conducted by Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff
- Councillor and Applicants advised that site is suitable and can move forward as is or with adjustments or it has been deemed unsuitable and cannot comply with the Policy

CRITERIA FOR OFF-LEASH AREAS IN PARKS



The following criteria will be used in staff's review of the suitability:

- Neighbourhood characteristics (ie. adjacent land uses, population density, housing types, proximity of existing and other potential off leash areas located within 1 kilometre)
- Compatibility with the park's design, established uses, features and components
- Potential impacts on the park's functionality, condition and natural environment
- Proportion of park to be taken up by the proposed off-leash area
- Proximity to residences and off-leash area exclusions

Off-leash areas shall not be established within the following areas:

- playgrounds
- splash pads and wading pools
- horticultural display areas or ornamental gardens
- skateboard bowls, tennis courts and other sports pads
- sportsfields and stadiums
- artificial or natural ice rinks, toboggan hills
- animal display areas
- campgrounds
- designated heritage, memorial, commemorative and ceremonial areas
- burial grounds
- areas posted prohibiting dogs

PROCESSING OF OFF-LEASH REQUESTS



3. Public Information Process

- Public meeting is held by Parks, Forestry and Recreation with the support of the Ward Councillor to advise the community that the site meets the off-leash policy criteria
- Discussion and feedback from the community includes:
 - Location
 - Hours of operation
 - Fencing, gates and or natural barriers to identify area
 - Signage
 - Tree protection
 - Other amenities
- Feedback from public information meeting is considered and all possible options are reviewed
- A follow-up meeting is scheduled with the community if necessary

SITE MONITORING



- Sites are monitored by Municipal Licensing and Standards, By-law Enforcement.
- Monitoring conducted through site visits to ensure compliance in collaboration between Parks staff, By-law Enforcement, dog owner association contacts & other community representatives.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT OF FINDINGS

Coxwell Ravine



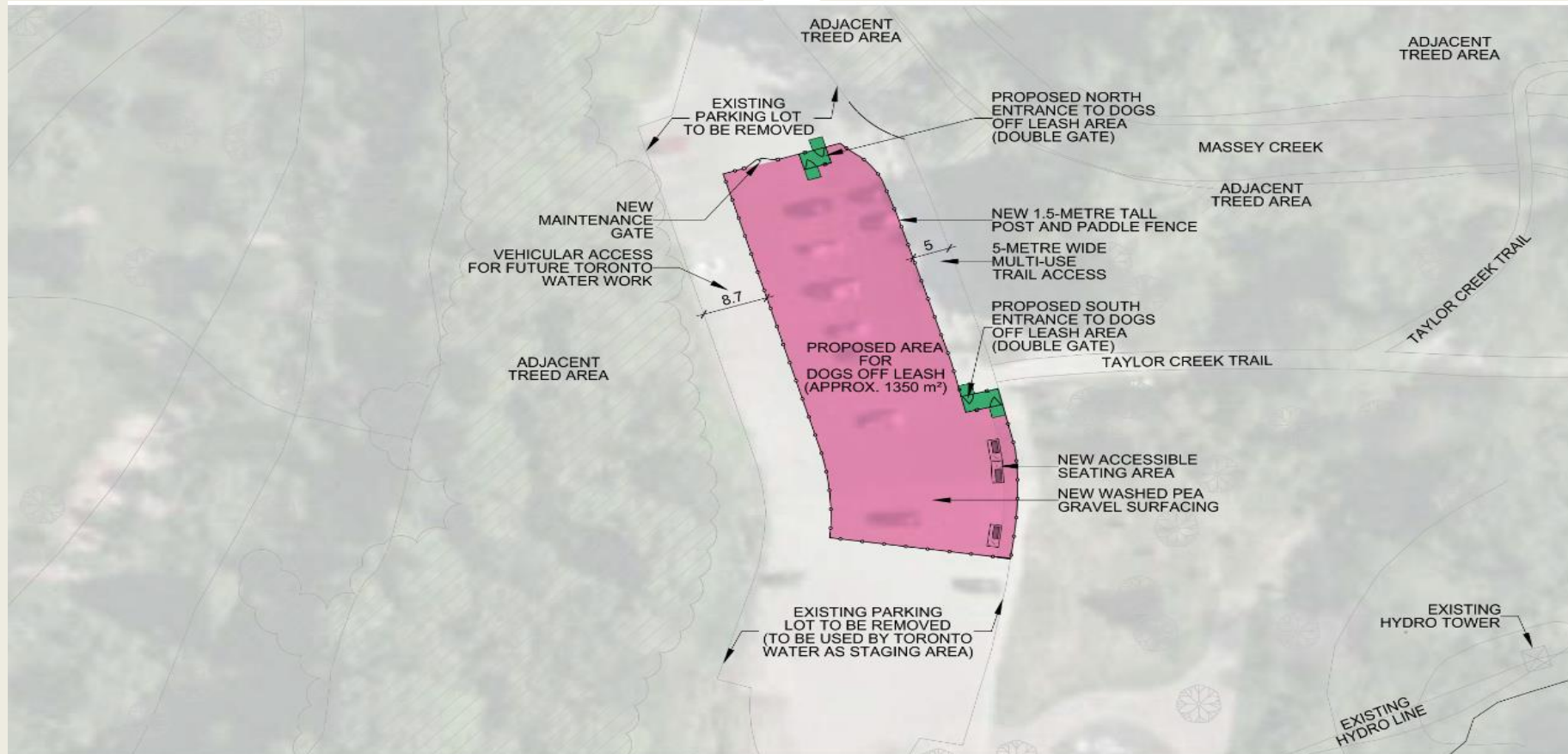
- Adequate parkland available for off-leash activities.
- Area used as a destination for passive recreational activities. 4 major trails converge.
- Parking lot will be removed due to staging area for an expanded sanitary trunk sewer system.
- Parking located a short walk north @ Charles Sauriol just past white bridge.
- Fencing is required to contain off-leash activities and prevent damage to naturalized areas.
- The hours of operation will be set to prevent disturbances.
- In 2014, there were 1,244 licensed dogs in Ward 29.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS (CONT'D)



- A designated off-leash area will assist with addressing the need for an area dedicated to dogs in Ward 29 while removing the pressure off the remaining areas of the park and assisting in safety of patrons.
- Commercial Dog Walkers will be allowed.

SITE MAP – COXWELL RAVINE (approx. 1,350 sq.m.)



SITE DETAILS



- Hours of Operation: 7am to 9 pm
- Fencing: Post and Paddle
- Signage: Code of conduct, Conditions of Use, Flood Hazard
- Benches and litter receptacles



SAMPLE SIGNAGE CONDITIONS OF USE



 **Toronto** Municipal Code #608

G. Ross Lord Park



**Hours for unleashed
dogs**

**Monday to Sunday
6 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.**

**Dogs must be on a
leash at all other times.**



Refer to Code of Conduct.
Please pick up after your pet.
Violation of By-laws are punishable by fines.

Code of Conduct for Off Leash Area



Municipal Code
Chapters #608, #349

Code of Conduct for Off-Leash Area

1. Comply with all signs and boundaries.
2. Dog(s) must be on leash at all times except when in the designated off-leash area.
3. All dog(s) must have a visible municipal license affixed to the dog(s).
4. Dog(s) must remain in off-leash area so as not to trample or endanger plant material and other park resources.
5. Dog(s) excluded from off-leash areas include:
 - a. Pit Bulls or other dangerous animal
 - b. Female dogs in heat
 - c. Any dog(s) that has been issued a muzzle order by the Medical Officer of Health.
6. Dogs shall not chase wildlife.
7. Pick up after your dog(s) and place waste in receptacle or take home for disposal.
8. Keep dogs in sight and under control at all times.
9. Do not leave dog(s) unattended while in off-leash area.
10. Repair holes dug by the dog(s) under your control.

Violations of By-laws are punishable by fines.

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP



Responsible pet ownership is a key component to a successful off-leash area

- Licence your dog
- Pick up after your dog
- Educate yourself and train your dog
- Follow the City's by-laws and park policies
- Respecting other people, property and animals
- Keep your dog on a leash when not in a designated off-leash area

MEETING PARTICIPANTS



- Ground Rules
- 3 to 5 minutes
- Comments
- Questions
- Ideas
- Concerns

NEXT STEPS



- Website Contact Info: www.toronto.ca/parks
- Thank you everyone!
- Adjournment