



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: Dave Semple
Director of Parks and Public Works Operations
Re: Dogs in Parks Task Force

To Parks, Rec & culture -
Date: April 17, 2008 Apr 29, 2008
File: 11-7200-20-DPAR1-01/2008-Vol 01

Staff Recommendation

1. That the Vision and strategic directions identified in the report, Dogs in Parks Task Force, dated April 17 2008 from the Director of Parks and Public Works Operations be endorsed.
2. That a public consultation process regarding the recommendations of 2008 Dogs in Parks Task Force be undertaken throughout the fall of 2008 and report back to Committee in early 2009.

Dave Semple
Director of Parks and Public Works Operations
(604-233-3350)

Att. 2

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Community Bylaws	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>file alive</i>	
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>DWS</i>		<i>AT</i>

Staff Report

Origin

At the September 10 2007 meeting of Council the following referrals were received:

- 1. That the City continue to consult and collaborate with RRDOG as outlined in the report (dated July 18 2007 from the Director of Parks and Public Works Operations)*
- 2. That the concept of a dog management strategy be received for information and report back to Committee in early 2008.*
- 3. That RRDOG's three pillar approach to Dog Management Strategy for Richmond be referred to staff for review, including the financial implications;*
- 4. That staff investigate the feasibility of designating a portion of Railway Ave as a potential off-leash area; and*
- 5. That staff investigate the feasibility of banning dogs on the West Dyke during nesting season.*

This report responds to these Committee referrals and makes recommendations for a dog management strategy in Richmond.

Analysis

To address the diversity of interests with regard to the broader issues of dogs in parks, staff convened a six person task force with participation from areas that were selected based on best practices and other models used in the Lower Mainland. The terms of reference for the Task Force (Attachment 1) included the following purpose for the group:

“The Task Force will provide input and information regarding dogs and parks, specifically pertaining to:

- the identification of stakeholders and potential partnerships
- the proposed enhancements to Richmond's existing off-leash program
- the design of infrastructure required for accommodating dogs, including the identification of locations for dog owners
- the education of dog owners
- the enforcement of dog-related rules and regulations

Membership on the Task Force included two RRDOG (Richmond Responsible Dog Owners Group) directors, a professional dog walker, a professional dog trainer, and a citizen at large. The task force met nine times over a period of six months including a Saturday morning tour of existing and potential off-leash sites. The outcome of the work of the Task Force is the attached Dogs in Parks Task Force Report – April 29th 2008. (Attachment 2)

Key to the work of the task force is the following vision:

“That Richmond is a dog-inclusive community which meets the needs of its residents through safe, clean and accessible open spaces, fair and effective enforcement, and comprehensive and collaborative education promoting responsible dog ownership.”

The Task Force also developed a number of strategic directions which closely relate to the three-pillar approach (education, enforcement and environment) identified by RRDOG and considered throughout the work of the Task Force. The strategic directions are as follows:

1. *Opportunities for accessible, off-leash use of open spaces for Richmond dog owners.*
2. *Effective communications regarding dogs in Richmond.*
3. *Effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of services and support for issues which affect dogs in the community.*
4. *Enforcement of dog-related bylaws is coordinated, consistent, fair and adequately funded.*

Finally, each strategic direction is supported by a number of recommendations including the continued exploration of a designated off-leash area on the Railway Avenue Right of Way, the need for more effective and coordinated enforcement to allow proposals such as banning dogs on the West Dyke during nesting season to be feasible and the proposed commitment of funding to engage an organization to conduct public education about dogs and dog ownership in Richmond.

One specific recommendation, “Consider the establishment of a comprehensive public dog education program with roles for the City and for Community partners,” relates to RRDOG’s request for funding from the City through the community grants program. RRDOG’s application was denied with the rationale that the work of the Task Force was not yet complete. Given that the work is now complete and the Task Force has made this recommendation, staff suggest that, as implementation of the task force recommendations proceeds, the addition of a public education role to that of the animal shelter contract be considered. RRDOG could apply for this contract or work in partnership with another organization.

The Task Force recognized through its process and reporting that issues related to dogs in parks and, more broadly, dogs in Richmond, are city-wide concerns and that a wider consultation is required prior to implementation of the recommendations.

It is recommended that staff, with the support of the Task Force membership, undertake a public consultation process throughout the fall of 2008. The consultation will consider all of the Task Force recommendations including the following three issues which remain major points of discussion for the task force members:

1. Dogs at Garry Point Park.
2. Dedicated (primary use) off-leash areas.
3. Issues related to persons with disabilities and dogs.

Ongoing assessment of the Task Force recommendations will occur throughout the consultation process.

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There may be a financial impact of implementing the Task Force recommendations. Staff will bring back to Council the financial (capital and operating) implications with the identification of an implementation plan upon the conclusion of the consultation process.

Financial Impact

The costs of the public consultation will be funded through existing resources in the 2008 Parks operating budget.

Conclusion

The members of the dogs in parks task force are to be commended for their work over the past six months. Dogs are an important part of our City and our lives and issues related to them can be difficult and emotional. Successfully addressing these issues will help Richmond to achieve its vision of being the most liveable, well-managed community in Canada.



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