

A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks

Round 1 - Public and Stakeholder Consultation Discussion Guide and Survey

September 8 – October 14, 2016





SURVEY INSIDE For more information about the strategy visit: vancouver.ca/people-parks-dogs *Please submit your feedback by October 14, 2016*



WE WANT TO KNOW: HOW CAN PEOPLE AND DOGS BEST SHARE OUR PARKS?

The Vancouver Park Board is developing a comprehensive strategy to guide the planning and design of beautiful, safe and engaging parks for people with and without dogs.

111

...

This discussion guide gives you information on park use by people and dogs. It includes an overview of the city's existing off-leash areas, information on how to get involved, as well as a survey so you can share your opinions and ideas.

People, Parks & Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks Round 1 – Public and Stakeholder Consultation September 8 – October 14, 2016

The consultation includes:

- Discussion guide
- Survey attached and online at vancouver.ca/people-parks-dogs
- Open houses and small group meetings throughout the city (see schedule on pages 5 and 6)

How feedback will be considered

The planning team will consider feedback from this round of consultation, along with technical information, to develop recommendations for the planning, design and management of Vancouver's parks, beaches and dog off-leash areas for Park Board review and approval.

. . .



ABOUT PEOPLE, PARKS & DOGS: A STRATEGY FOR SHARING VANCOUVER'S PARKS

As in many other major North American cities, Vancouver's urban dog population is growing. With population growth and people living in smaller spaces, it's now more important than ever to balance different uses of parks and public spaces.

People, Parks & Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks will provide an evidence-based plan for sharing Vancouver parks and beaches by people and dogs. The strategy includes evaluating 36 existing dog off-leash areas. The planning team will use the data to develop recommendations and strategies for making all parks, including off-leash areas, successful for a broad range of park users. In 2017, the planning team will submit the recommended strategy to the Park Board for review and approval.

The comprehensive *People, Parks & Dogs strategy* will:

- Provide evidence-based policy recommendations for the development and management of Vancouver's dog facilities;
- Draw on the expertise and experience of Park Board and City of Vancouver staff, park user groups, experts in animal health and human-animal interaction, stakeholders and the general public;
- Lay the foundation for well-designed off-leash areas that are successfully integrated within our park system and the neighbourhoods they serve; and
- Assist the Park Board in helping parks throughout the city meet the needs of a broad range of park users.

The strategy will include guidelines and recommendations on topics, including:

- Amenities for people and dogs
- Etiquette for park use by all users
- Safety and enforcement
- Waste management
- Environmental protection
- Location of off-leash areas
- Adjacent land uses and park uses
- Boundary definition and fencing
- Surface materials
- Partnership opportunities

While *People, Parks & Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks* is limited to Vancouver's parks and beaches, we are also interested in feedback about dog activity on other lands, such as school grounds and boulevards.

Consulting with You

The Park Board is committed to consulting with a diverse range of stakeholders, park users and the public about People, Parks & Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks.

Further consultation opportunities are planned for early 2017. During the second round of consultation, we will ask for feedback on preliminary recommendations about the planning, design and management of Vancouver's parks, beaches and dog off-leash areas. Please visit vancouver.ca/people-parks-dogs to sign-up for updates.

People, Parks & Dogs Advisory Committee

In June 2016, the Park Board created an Advisory Committee for *People, Parks & Dogs* to provide focused feedback into the consultation process from a range of stakeholder perspectives. Advisory Committee members represent a broad range of interests, including sport, the environment, animal health and behaviour, persons with disabilities, seniors, multicultural, tourism and others.

The Advisory Committee is a valuable resource for information sharing between the Park Board and stakeholder groups. Members provided feedback on consultation topics and methods during pre-consultation. The Advisory Committee will continue to meet regularly throughout the planning process.

Work to Date

The planning team is working to gain a better understanding of how Vancouver's parks are used by people and their dogs, including opportunities and challenges related to off-leash areas. Work to date includes:

- Studying Vancouver's existing off-leash areas to identify opportunities and challenges in individual parks and within the larger parks system.
- Doing field surveys at eight off-leash parks to better understand how these parks are used. This includes observations of parks during weekdays and weekends, and surveys of park users.
- Studying dog parks in other cities, including interviews with parks department staff.
- Conducting a workshop with City of Vancouver and Park Board staff to identify opportunities and challenges in existing offleash areas.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Park Board recently began a planning process to develop a bold, accessible and innovative master plan. This plan will guide the planning and provision of Vancouver parks and recreation facilities and services for the next 10 years and beyond. The Park Board and its planning team will consider People, Parks & Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks in this master planning process.



April 2016 – March 2017

Ongoing technical work, including data collection and analysis, precedent research and mapping

This first round of consultation will inform the development of *People*, *Parks & Dogs: A strategy for sharing Vancouver's parks*. There will be further consultation opportunities in early 2017, when we'll be asking you for feedback on preliminary recommendations about the planning, design and management of Vancouver's parks, beaches and off-leash areas.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Discussion Guide and Survey

Take the survey any time from your mobile phone!

Online at vancouver.ca/people-parks-dogs

In person at an open house or small group meeting

2 Open Houses

Date	Time	Location*
Tues, Sept 13	6 pm - 9 pm	Trout Lake Community Centre
Sat, Sept 17	10 am - 1 pm	David Lam Park
Wed, Sept 21	6 pm - 9 pm	St. James Community Square
Sat, Oct 1	10 am - 1 pm	Langara Golf Course Clubhouse

Drop in to chat with the planning team and learn more about *People, Parks & Dogs.* You don't have to pre-register.

*Visit vancouver.ca/people-parks-dogs for details

3 Small Group Meetings

Date	Time	Location*
Thurs, Sept 15	7 pm – 9 pm	Trout Lake Community Centre
Thurs, Sept 29	7 pm - 9 pm	Roundhouse Community Centre
Tues, Oct 4	7 pm - 9 pm	Sunset Community Centre
Thurs, Oct 6	7 pm - 9 pm	Kitsilano Community Centre

Join the planning team for an in-depth discussion about *People, Parks & Dogs.* To register, email people-parks-dogs@vancouver.ca or phone 604.257.8476 with your name and the date, time and location of the meeting you would like to attend.

*Visit vancouver.ca/people-parks-dogs for details



By email people-parks-dogs@vancouver.ca

By mail Attn: People, Parks & Dogs Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation 2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6G 1Z4

Please submit your feedback by October 14, 2016



WHY DO WE NEED A *PEOPLE, PARKS & DOGS* STRATEGY?

With Vancouver's growing population, our parks and other public spaces are shared by many different users. Vancouver residents and visitors regularly use parks and beaches for picnicking and sports, and with more people living in apartment buildings and condos, local parks and beaches have become neighbourhood "backyards" where people meet to socialize, exercise and play.

Many people in Vancouver have dogs and use parks for exercise and fun. Animal Services estimates that there are approximately 145,000 dogs in Vancouver with only 22,000 (or 15 per cent) licensed, making it hard to plan and provide services for dog owners. With about 265,000 households in Vancouver, the number of households that have a dog could be over 50 per cent. This means that our parks need to be well-planned, designed and managed to meet the needs of a broad range of park users, including both dog owners and non-dog owners. Considering and integrating the needs of different user groups into park planning makes sharing limited park spaces easier and reduces conflict.

> About **15%** of dogs in Vancouver are licensed

WHERE ARE VANCOUVER'S OFF-LEASH AREAS?

In Vancouver, there are 36 off-leash areas. Six sites are fenced and are typically only used by dog owners and their dogs. The remaining 30 sites are unfenced and the park space is shared with other users. Off-leash area sizes range from just over one acre at Stanley Park to almost 30 acres at Everett Crowley Park. Over half of Vancouver's off-leash areas have time or seasonal restrictions. Time restrictions typically keep off-leash activity to mornings and evenings, while seasonal restrictions allow off-leash activity at certain parks during the winter months, when there are fewer people using them.

Map of Vancouver's dog off-leash areas



History of Dog Parks in Vancouver



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF OFF-LEASH AREAS?

Benefits of off-leash areas include:



Building community: Off-leash areas are popular gathering places in neighbourhoods, both for people walking their dogs and for those who like to watch dogs. They bring people together, allowing neighbours to meet, socialize and build support networks. Off-leash areas can be particularly good for older adults who live alone because this type of park use encourages people to be active and social.



Providing places for dogs to exercise and socialize: Off-leash areas allow dog owners – especially those who live in apartments or condos – to exercise and socialize their dogs. Beyond the obvious benefits to dog health and happiness, this may also help dogs behave better on- and off-leash.



Encouraging owners to keep off-leash activity to off-leash areas: Offering off-leash areas can encourage owners to keep their dogs on-leash in areas where off-leash activity isn't allowed.

Making parks and neighbourhoods safer: Dog owners use parks every day, including in the early morning and late evening. Having these "eyes on the park" can help discourage crime and make parks feel safer for other users. Similarly, off-leash areas can also help increase usage of parks that are under-used. Increased foot traffic close to dog parks also lowers crime rates in these areas.



Discouraging conflict in shared park spaces: Creating separate dog off-leash areas may reduce conflicts from off-leash dogs in shared park spaces, by separating off-leash dogs from areas used for activities such as picnicking, playgrounds and sports.



Promoting responsible dog ownership: Cities can encourage responsible dog ownership and good animal welfare by using off-leash areas to share educational resources and provide locations for dogs to be trained and socialized. Informal education also happens at off-leash areas, since dog owners can share resources and learn from responsible dog owners.

Challenges of off-leash areas include:



Managing dog waste: Dog waste is smelly, unpleasant to look at, and has health risks if not cleaned up and disposed of properly. Owners may not always see their dog defecate in an off-leash area, possibly leaving more uncollected dog waste in these areas.



Safety concerns (people and dogs): Dogs may display bad behaviour if they are not kept under supervision of their owners. Aggressive or poorly trained dogs in off-leash areas may scare or injure people or other dogs. Without play features and places to hide, small fenced dog off-leash areas can also be intimidating for shy and small dogs, and may lead to conflicts between dogs.



Sharing limited park space: With a limited amount of park space available, people who do not use off-leash areas may worry that off-leash areas leave less space for other park uses.



Managing noise: The noise from dog off-leash areas, where many dogs and people meet, may disturb other park users or neighbourhood residents.



Increased maintenance and enforcement costs: Concentrated areas of dogs off leash can wear away turf and lead to more conflicts with other park users, leading to higher maintenance and enforcement costs.



Keeping off-leash activity to designated off-leash areas: At some off-leash sites the boundaries between on-leash and off-leash areas aren't clear, leading to more off-leash activity in surrounding park areas.



Potential environmental impacts: Dogs in general, and dogs off leash in particular, have the potential to disturb wildlife, damage sensitive habitat areas, and negatively impact water quality.

What do you think about off-leash areas in Vancouver's parks? Please see attached survey to provide your feedback.



WHAT'S IMPORTANT WHEN IT COMES TO PEOPLE AND DOGS SHARING OUR PARKS?

Vancouver parks must meet the needs of a broad range of park users, including both people who use parks with their dogs and those who don't.

Based on work to date, the planning team has identified these topics about people and dogs sharing parks. These will inform preliminary recommendations for the planning, design and management of Vancouver's parks, beaches and dog off-leash areas.



Safety for people:

People who use parks with and without dogs should be safe and comfortable. Some people may be uncomfortable or scared around off-leash dogs, even if the dogs are friendly. Off-leash dogs can also be a safety risk, for example if they run across the path of a cyclist or jogger.



Safety for dogs:

Dogs, including those who use off-leash areas, should also be safe and comfortable. This means reducing the potential for conflicts between dogs in off-leash areas. It also means designing and maintaining off-leash areas so that they are safe for dogs of all sizes.



Waste management:

Each dog produces on average about 120 kg of waste each year. Good management of waste is necessary for the health and comfort of people and dogs who use parks. Waste management includes strategies for encouraging dog owners and walkers to pick up after their dogs, as well as facilitating proper waste disposal.

What the City of Hamilton is doing:

The City of Hamilton doesn't put dog off-leash areas along multi-use trails (e.g. trails used by walkers and runners, cyclists and others).

What other municipalities are doing:

Several municipalities have separate off-leash areas for small, shy or senior dogs to provide a place for these dogs away from larger or higher energy dogs.

What the City of Denver is doing:

In Denver, the city posts a green sign at off-leash areas if users are doing a good job of picking up dog waste and a yellow sign if there are problems with dog waste piling up. A red sign shows that the site is closed to off-leash use because there has been an ongoing problem with dog waste.

The city of Vancouver is piloting a dog waste collection program in three city parks starting this summer. Find out more! vancouver.ca/home-property-development/dog-waste-collection.aspx







Bylaw education and enforcement:

Educating people about bylaws governing offleash use and other dog activity, and making sure these bylaws are followed, reduces conflict and makes parks safer and more comfortable for all users.



Educating dog owners and dogs:

Education is important for promoting good etiquette for dogs and dog owners, including those who use off-leash areas. It is also important to help dogs who use off-leash areas become well-socialized and have good recall (i.e. they return to their owners when called).



Environmental protection:

Dogs can unintentionally affect the environment by disturbing wildlife or sensitive habitats. Reducing environmental impacts from dogs includes proper waste management, as well as strategies to keep dog activity away from sensitive natural areas (e.g. estuaries and mudflats; places where birds nest).

(0)	
\mathbf{V}	,

Location of dog activities within parks:

Good placement of off-leash areas in parks allows many different park users to enjoy parks at the same time. This includes locating off-leash areas away from high conflict areas (e.g. sports fields, multi-use paths and playgrounds) and environmentally-sensitive areas.

What the District of North Vancouver is doing:

The District of North Vancouver is well-known for using funny and creative park signage to educate users about off-leash bylaws and etiquette. Humorous messaging is valued by dog owners and can help encourage people to follow the rules.

What the City of Calgary is doing:

The City of Calgary offers free training classes for dog owners, and runs educational programs to teach people about the importance of picking up dog waste. In Calgary, 90 per cent of dogs are licensed and the city funds most dog-related programs with dog license revenues.

What the City of Burnaby is doing:

Off-leash areas in the City of Burnaby are required to be set back 30 metres from any bank of fresh water bodies, like ponds, streams and lakes.

What the City of Surrey is doing:

To reduce potential conflicts between dogs and people, the City of Surrey requires off-leash areas to be located away from sports fields, school grounds, playgrounds, residential areas and environmentally-sensitive areas.





Location and distribution of off-leash areas within neighbourhoods:

Strategic location of off-leash areas throughout the city puts dog owners and dog walkers within easy reach of places to exercise and socialize their dogs.



Noise:

Off-leash areas can be noisy. Good placement of off-leash areas within parks and neighbourhoods helps to minimize noise problems for neighbours.



Design of off-leash areas, including boundaries:

Well-designed off-leash areas meet the needs of people and dogs, and also reduce maintenance requirements and costs. This includes attractive and durable surface materials and amenities for people and dogs (e.g. shade, water and seating). Off-leash area design also includes fencing and other strategies for clearly marking the boundaries of off-leash areas.



Partnership opportunities:

Exploring innovative opportunities to partner with volunteer community members, non-profit organizations and/or potential sponsors can help make dog facilities, including off-leash areas, better and more sustainable in the long-term.

What Salt Lake County is doing:

Salt Lake County aims for neighbourhood dog off-leash areas to serve residents within 3 km; community dog off-leash areas to serve residents within 8 km; and for regional dog off-leash areas to serve the entire county.

What the City of Denver is doing:

In Denver, dog off-leash areas are separated from residential areas with dense vegetation or solid fencing to help reduce noise.

What the City of Malmö is doing:

In Malmö, Sweden, a recent urban development includes a half-acre dog off-leash area that has varied landscape, shade trees, a mix of turf and durable gravel surfacing in high-use areas, seating, drinking water, waste bins and dog agility features. The site is also fenced, which helps keep the dogs from running into the nearby play area.

What the City of Seattle is doing:

Citizens for Off-Leash Areas is a Seattle-based group that partnered with the city to help manage off-leash areas. Volunteers help with site planning, education initiatives, monitoring, fundraising and site clean-up.

What do you think of this list? We want to hear from you about shared park use by people and dogs. Please see attached survey to provide your feedback on what is important to you.





FILL IN OUR SURVEY!

As part of the first round of public consultation, we want to know what you think about dogs in parks! Fill out this survey to tell us what's important to you about dogs in Vancouver's parks, including opportunities and challenges for the City's off-leash areas, and outside of the off-leash areas. Please submit your feedback by October 14, 2016.

Your feedback will help inform the recommendations for planning, designing and managing Vancouver's parks, beaches and dog off-leash areas.

As in many other major North American cities, Vancouver's urban dog population is growing. With population growth and people living in smaller spaces, it's now more important than ever to balance different uses of parks and public spaces. The Vancouver Park Board wants to develop a comprehensive strategy for dogs and people to guide well-planned parks that are designed to accommodate all park users.

What is most important to you about people and dogs sharing Vancouver's parks and beaches?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All
Safety for people	0	0	0	0
Safety for dogs	0	0	0	0
Waste management	0	0	0	0
Bylaw education and enforcement	0	0	0	0
Education of dog owners and dogs	0	Ο	0	Ο
Environmental protection	0	0	0	0
Location of off-leash areas within parks	0	0	0	0
Location and distribution of off-leash areas within neighbourhoods	0	0	0	0
Noise	0	0	0	0
Off-leash area boundaries (e.g. signage, vegetation, wood posts, fencing or other methods where appropriate)	0	0	0	0
Amenities for people and dogs (e.g. seating)	0	0	0	Ο
Partnership opportunities (e.g. volunteers and sponsors)	0	0	0	0
Other:				



Please check up to three.

- O Building community
- O Providing places for dogs to exercise and socialize
- O Encouraging owners to keep off-leash activity to off-leash areas
- O Making parks and neighbourhoods safer
- O Discouraging conflict in shared park spaces
- O Promoting responsible dog ownership
- Other: _____



What are the top three CHALLENGES of having designated dog off-leash areas? (See page 10 for full descriptions).

Please check up to three.

- Managing dog waste
- Safety concerns (people)
- Safety concerns (dogs)
- Sharing limited park space
- Managing noise
- O Increased maintenance and enforcement costs
- Keeping off-leash activity to designated off-leash areas
- O Potential environmental impacts
- Other: _____



To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Dog off-leash areas are an acceptable use of public parks	0	0	0	0	0
There are enough places for dogs to be off leash in Vancouver parks	0	0	0	0	0
Dog off-leash areas in Vancouver are of good quality overall	0	0	0	0	0
The distribution of off-leash areas meets my needs	0	0	0	0	0
Dog off-leash areas help reduce conflicts between off leash dogs and other park users	0	0	0	0	0
Dog off-leash areas should have clear boundaries	0	0	0	0	0
Dog off-leash areas should be separated from other park activities	0	0	0	0	0
Dog owners and walkers do an adequate job of picking up dog waste from Vancouver parks	0	0	0	0	0
There are enough waste bins in Vancouver parks	0	0	0	0	0
There is enough enforcement of dog activity in Vancouver parks	0	0	0	0	0

5 What amenities would you like to see in Vancouver's off-leash areas?

Please check up to three.

- O More waste bins
- O Drinking water for dogs
- O Drinking water for people
- Shade
- Separated large and small/shy dog areas
- Open areas for running and fetch

- O Secure fencing
- Seating
- Walking paths
- Dog bag dispensers
- Play features for dogs
- Other: _____

If you are a dog owner or handler, where do you currently let your dog(s) off leash?

Please select all that apply.

- O Dog off-leash areas
- O City park or beach without a designated dog off-leash area
- School grounds
- O Other: _____

If you let your dog(s) off leash outside of dog off-leash areas, why?

Please select all that apply.

- O It's more convenient
- O Non off-leash areas have a nicer atmosphere/better amenities
- O Have had problems or anticipate problems at dog off-leash areas
- Off-leash areas are too crowded
- O Other: _____

If you let your dog(s) off leash outside of dog off-leash areas, which parks or public spaces in Vancouver do you use?



How far are you willing to regularly walk and/or drive to get to a dog off-leash area?

Please select the most applicable for **walking**.

- O Under 10 minutes
- 10 20 minutes
- 20 30 minutes
- 30 minutes +

Please select the most applicable for **driving**.

- O Under 10 minutes
- 10 20 minutes
- 20 30 minutes
- 30 minutes +



Please select the most applicable.

- Neighbourhood off-leash areas (i.e. small off-leash areas within neighbourhood parks that are typically accessed by walking)
- O Destination off-leash areas (i.e. large off-leash areas in key parts of the city that are typically accessed by walking or driving, and may have more amenities, such as a dog wash station and agility features)
- O Neighbourhood and destination off-leash areas should be of equal priority
- O No preference

9 If you have a dog, is your dog licensed?

Please select the most applicable.

- O Yes
- O No

If no, why not?

Please select all that apply.

- O Didn't know it's legally required
- O Don't see the benefit
- Other: _____





DEMOGRAPHICS

It's extremely important to us that we hear from a diversity of people and perspectives. The following questions help us to determine how the feedback we receive represents the community. Please note that individual responses are treated as anonymous and demographic information is always kept separate from personal identifiers.

Do you identify as	
O Male	O None of the above.
O Female	l identify as
Transgender	 Prefer not to say
Which age group do you belong to?	
19 years and younger	○ 50-59
0 20-29	0 60-69
0 30-39	0 70+
0 40-49	
What is your home postal code?	
Do you walk dogs in Vancouver parks?	Are you a dog owner?
O Yes	O Yes
O No	O No

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES

Optional: To receive updates on the *People, Parks & Dogs* strategy, including notification of upcoming consultation, please complete the following information. You may opt out at any time.

Name:	
Organization (if applicable):	
Email:	
Phone Number:	



Thank you for participating! Please submit your feedback by October 14, 2016