NEW WESTMINSTER

People Parks & Pups

A 10 year strategy for sharing parks and open spaces in New Westminster



Report prepared by space2place design inc.
for the City of New Westminster, 2022.
Adopted by New Westminster City Council, February 14, 2022.

space2place

NEW WESTMINSTER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'People, Parks + Pups' outlines 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 planning, design and management of off-leash activity in our city over the coming decade.

The city's existing off-leash areas (OLAs) have been evaluated relative to neighbouring municipalities, and at the neighbourhood scale. This analysis provides context and an improved understanding of the current off-leash amenities, and helps identify areas that are currently underserved.

A robust community engagement process informs this Strategy. Input from local residents and municipal staff was gathered through virtual open houses, public surveys, workshops, presentations and an Advisory Group developed specially to guide these recommendations.

Recommendations are organized into four categories: Designating Space, Attracting Use, Managing Operations and Working Together. Recommendations are provided in each category, in order to provide comprehensive guidance on off-leash activity in our city's parks and open spaces.

Underpinning these recommendations is is the goal to provide a parks and open space system for the residents of New Westminster, that feels inviting and safe for all.

The following table provides an overview of key recommendations in these categories:

- Designating space
- Attracting use
- Managing operations
- Working together

DESIGNATING SPACE

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
DISTRIBUTION	• Prioritize under-served areas when establishing new OLA space, based on an evaluation of current and projected population densities and dog license data. • Engage local residents in the process of modifying OLA boundaries. • When off-leash areas are relocated or their boundaries are modified, aim for no net loss of designated off leash space within its service area. • Update metrics to confirm New Westminster provides an off-leash area within 1km (15minute walk) of most New Westminster residents.
TYPOLOGY	• Develop design standards and guidelines for Dog Parklets (refer to Strategic Report for additional details). • Evaluate existing OLAs that are less than 0.4 ha in size for opportunities to expand the off-leash area, keeping in mind that oddly-shaped sites and longer corridors for running can be an asset. Engage local residents in the process of modifying OLA boundaries. • Work with third party landowners (i.e. BC Hydro, Fraser Health, Metro Vancouver, Translink, etc.) to identify underutilized open areas outside New Westminster's municipal jurisdiction that might be suitable for temporary off-leash use.
ACCESS & CIRCULATION	• Conduct an accessibility audit and develop accessibility guidelines to ensure that all existing OLAs in New Westminster are universally accessible (refer to Strategic Report for additional details). • Ensure new OLA spaces are designed to meet accessibility guidelines. • For OLAs that are 0.4 ha or larger, integrate accessible paved looped paths. • When establishing new OLA space, review site access at the neighborhood scale to mitigate conflict and support access via walking, cycling and transit. • Where possible, provide direct access to the OLA from the associated parking areas to avoid unsanctioned off-leash activity between the parking area and the OLA.
ADJACENCIES	• When establishing new OLA space, review adjacent land and park uses in order to ensure more compatible adjacencies. • Separate off-leash areas from adjacent land and park uses with secure fencing, plus additional mitigation measures based on guidelines in the Strategic Report. • Engage a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) to evaluate impacts of OLAs that are located in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, and provide recommendations for mitigation as required.

ATTRACTING USE

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
TYPOLOGY DESIGN GUIDELINES	• Introduce the city's first dog parklet along the Agnes Street Greenway. Monitor use and evaluate its success for a 6 - 12 month period before implementing additional dog parklets. • Work with Engineering Services to develop standards for dog parklets (i.e. traffic management). • Engage local residents in the process of identifying suitable locations for Dog Parklets, and evaluating their success. • Engage an interdepartmental city staff team to plan, design and develop maintenance standards for each dog parklet to ensure staff capacity and expectations are aligned. • Provide a range of character between OLAs by integrating the specific attributes of each site and providing diverse layout, topography, and amenities. • Support more intensively used OLAs with sufficient resources to ensure surfacing and amenities are attractive and durable.

AMENITIES	• Identify gaps in the provision of 'Standard' Amenities, and a plan for implementation. Note that trees planted in the short term may require several years for the canopy to grow to a sufficient size to provide shade.
	• Following an audit of existing OLAs for provision of 'Special Amenities', create an implementation plan that prioritizes:
	  • OLAs with intensive use in high-density areas; and
	  • Amenity requests communicated during the engagement process to develop this Strategy.
	• Evaluate existing OLAs to identify opportunities to extend the space with a "separable" area connected to the larger OLA space. Include signage with etiquette guidelines for the use of "separable" areas.

SURFACING	• Integrate vegetation and protective edging (as required) to enhance the OLA. Planting design should:
	  • Consider sight lines and clearances for dogs and people;
	  • Provide shade where needed; and
	  • Enhance seasonal variation and scent.
	• Audit existing signage locations at park entry points and at OLA entrances to alert park visitors to off leash activity within the park (refer to Strategic Report for additional details).
	• Evaluate the best surface for OLAs based on: intensity of use; site drainage; maintenance requirements; comfort for majority of dogs; costs; and suggestions communicated during the engagement process to develop this Strategy.

ATTRACTING USE

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	

VEGETATION	• Integrate vegetation and protective edging (as required) to enhance the OLA. Planting design should:
	  • Consider sight lines and clearances for dogs and people;
	  • Provide shade where needed;
	  • Enhance seasonal variation and scent.
	• Assess existing vegetation in OLAs to determine plant and tree health and potential impacts from dog activity. Implement vegetation protection measures as required.
	• Vegetated areas proposed in OLAs (where suitable) to include native, drought tolerant species and be designed to minimize maintenance requirements.

BOUNDARIES	• Develop and implement a standard double-gate design for OLAs based on the accessible gate at Queen's Park OLA. Engage experts (as required) to refine the gate design to promote universal access. • Provide 2.4m wide lockable gates for maintenance vehicle access, at all fenced OLAs in parks. Engage operations staff to confirm design criteria.
SIGNAGE	• Develop standard signage with rules and guidelines for responsible use of dog parklets and OLAs, in consideration of feedback received through the engagement process to develop this Strategy. • Audit existing signage locations at park entry points and at OLA entrances to alert all park visitors to off-leash activity within the park (refer to Strategic Report for additional details). • Consider providing community notice boards at park OLAs for local residents and the municipality to share information related to the site and more broadly to dog activity in the city (refer to Strategic Report for additional details).

MANAGING OPERATIONS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
DOG WASTE MANAGEMENT	• Encourage stratas to provide biodegradable bag dispensers at key access entry and exit points. • Provide bins in convenient locations for dog owners to deposit dog waste that are identifiable and easy to use (i.e. no lifting a lid, conveniently located etc.) and establish a regular collection schedule. • Generate an outreach campaign for responsible dog waste disposal, and work with community groups and schools to deliver educational programs about dog waste management. • Develop a dog waste signage strategy that is playful in tone, and coordinated with other OLA signage to create consistent, clear messaging. Consider including information about the impacts of dog waste on streetscapes, natural areas and water quality. • Engage a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) to assess off-leash areas that are located within riparian setbacks and provide recommendations to mitigate the impacts of dogs and their waste.

LICENSING	• To encourage dog licensing and renewal, consider:
	  • Opportunities to promote dog license renewal and make payment easy and convenient (i.e. offering renewal services at community events);
	  • Partnering with veterinarians to offer dog license in combination with annual check-ups; and
	  • Partnering with local pet shops to develop a "rewards" program that offers discounts for owners of licensed dogs at participating pet stores, or offers them access to training resources.

ENFORCEMENT	• Collaborate with Animal Services to identify priority locations with unsanctioned off-leash activity, and implement a plan for increased enforcement supported by educational outreach. • Monitor bylaw infractions related to dog activity in parks and open space through Animal Services (i.e. the offence, location, date, and action taken). Use this information to establish measurable goals to increase enforcement.

MANAGING OPERATIONS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
MAINTENANCE	• Identify high, medium and low priority improvements for each OLA with an implementation plan that includes target timelines and resource planning. • Develop a standard maintenance plan for OLAs and dog parklets (monitor the dog parklet pilot project to help identify maintenance requirements for this typology). • Track staff time and resources invested in each OLA to help inform resource planning. • Promote the 'SeeClickFix' app for reporting OLA maintenance issues to municipal staff. • Identify an annual budget for OLA maintenance and upgrades with increases commensurate with population growth.
EVALUATION	• Continue to monitor and implement accessibility guidelines at OLAs. . • Develop a standardized procedure for annual evaluation of OLAs including a condition assessment of standard amenities.

WORKING TOGETHER

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
STEWARDSHIP	• Initiate a stewardship program for community members, local businesses and other organizations to adopt an OLA or dog parklet. • Formalize stewardship responsibilities for adopting an OLA, and establish how work by stewards will be coordinated with operations staff.
FUNDING	• Pursue private and public funding opportunities for upgrading specific OLAs with special amenities. • Consider opportunities for a design competition for new dog parklets. • Track annual maintenance and operations cost for OLAs and dog parklets, and establish an annual budget with increases proportional to population increases.
EDUCATION	• Engage an animal behaviour expert to generate educational resources on dog behaviour and OLA etiquette to promote the comfort and safety of all park users, including dogs. Consider integrating this material on signage posted in OLAs, and/or as online video resources. • Collaborate with environmental organizations to deliver educational programs related to the impacts of dog activity in environmentally sensitive areas and how uncollected dog waste can impact water quality. • Identify opportunities to integrate educational initiatives on dog activity with other community events in order to engage a broader audience.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Increasing Demand
1.2 Process
1.3 Benefits of OLAs
1.4 Challenges of OLAs
1.5 Inventory
1.6 Analysis

1.1 BENEFITS

OLAs help reduce conflicts between park visitors with and without dogs.

According to 60% of Phase 1 Engagement Survey Respondents

- Off-leash areas provide opportunities to exercise and socialize dogs, and may offer mental stimulation. These activities have the potential to improve a dog's behaviour outside of off-leash areas[1].
- Off-leash areas can be popular gathering places in neighbourhoods, where people can meet, socialize, and build support networks. This can increase people's sense of belonging and boost social resilience[2].
- Visitors to off-leash areas provide "eyes on the park" which may help deter crime and make parks feel safer.
- Providing designated off-leash areas may help reduce conflicts and help promote safety for people and dogs.
- Providing designated off-leash areas may lead to better compliance with leash bylaws in on-leash areas.
- Providing designated off-leash areas may reduce unsanctioned off-leash activity in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Off-leash areas can be venues to promote responsible dog ownership and animal welfare.
- Off-leash areas can help animate public space, as some people find dog activity interesting to watch. Providing agility features may further encourage this.

REFERENCES

1. Nicole Ellis, American Kennel Club (https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/mentally-stimulated-happy-dog/)
2. Wood, Lisa & Giles-Corti, Billie & Bulsara, Max. (2005). The Pet Connection: Pets as a Conduit for Social Capital? Social science & medicine (1982). 61. 1159-73. 10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.01.017.

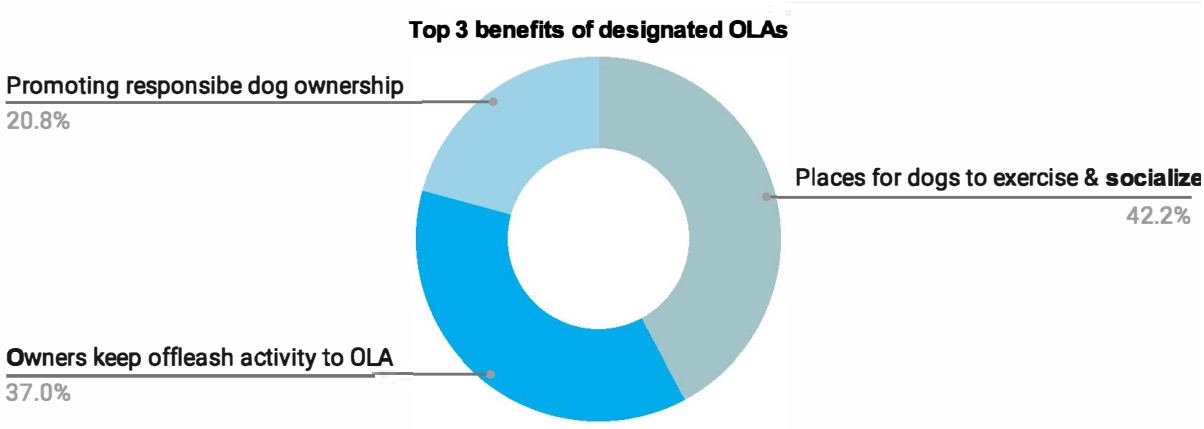


Fig 1.1 Benefits of OLAs | Phase 1 Engagement

1.2 CHALLENGES

"A dog who is nervous or uncomfortable is more likely to be easily overwhelmed in a park setting, which can lead to dog fights or a long-term fear of encountering other dogs."

Nick Hof, Association of Professional Dog Trainers [1]

- The presence of uncollected dog waste is often cited as the top drawback of dog off-leash areas. If the dog is not on a leash the dog owner may be less likely to monitor the dog's activity, and therefore there may be more instances of uncollected dog waste in OLAs.
- There is a risk of disease transmission from dog waste to humans. Children are most at risk due to their potential to ingest soil while playing in parks and handling objects that have been on the ground.
- Dogs may learn bad behaviour if they are not kept under the control and supervision of their owners at off-leash areas[2].
- Off-leash areas are generally considered to be unsuitable places to socialize puppies[1].
- Dogs in general, and dogs off-leash in particular, have the potential to disturb wildlife and cause other environmental impacts including soil erosion, damage to vegetation/trees, spreading invasive plant species, and negatively impacting water bodies and habitat areas.

REFERENCES

1. Nick Hof, Association of Professional Dog Trainers (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/06/smarter-living/the-dog-park-is-bad-actually.html)
2. VAC Animal Hospitals (https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/puppy-behavior-and-training---dealing-with-undesirable-behavior)

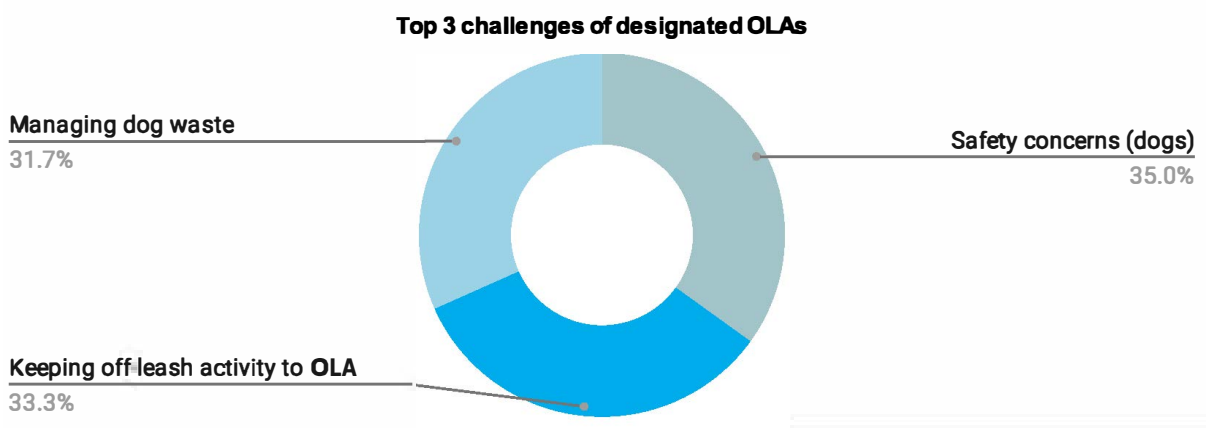
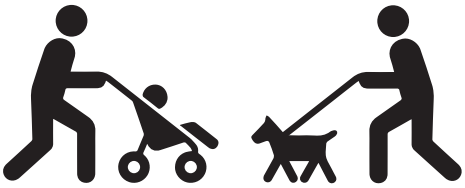


Fig 1.2 Challenges of OLAs | Phase 1 Engagement

1.3 INCREASING DEMAND

~42% of households with children*

~41% of households with dogs**



Estimates suggest the number of Canadian households with dogs is roughly equal to the number of households with children.

Sources: *Statistics Canada 2016
**Canadian Animal Health Institute Survey 2018

With population growth and people living in smaller spaces, it is now more important than ever to balance different uses of parks and public spaces.

Park space in New Westminster is highly valued; the amount of land available for public open space is limited, and public parks support a diverse range of activities. It is important for people to know when to expect dogs off-leash, in order to support the comfort and safety of all park visitors. Providing designated off-leash areas, or OLAs, can make park spaces more comfortable and safe for those with and without dogs. In order to be successful, these off-leash areas need to be well planned, designed and managed in a process that engages the local community.

Designated areas for off-leash dog activity are increasingly recognized as legitimate use of public space1, similar to the provision of sports courts or playgrounds within public park space. Off-leash areas are among "the fastest growing park amenities" with a 74% increase in the number of dog parks in the decade preceding the 2019 survey of the park systems of the 100 largest US cities[2].

There are a range of benefits and challenges of dog off-leash areas that are common amongst many municipalities; key considerations for New Westminster were identified through the engagement process (see Section 1.2 and Appendix D).

REFERENCES

1. Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Best Management Practices for Dogs, 2011.
2. The Trust for Public Land (https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/City%20Park%20Facts%20Dog%20Parks%202019_R5_0.pdf)

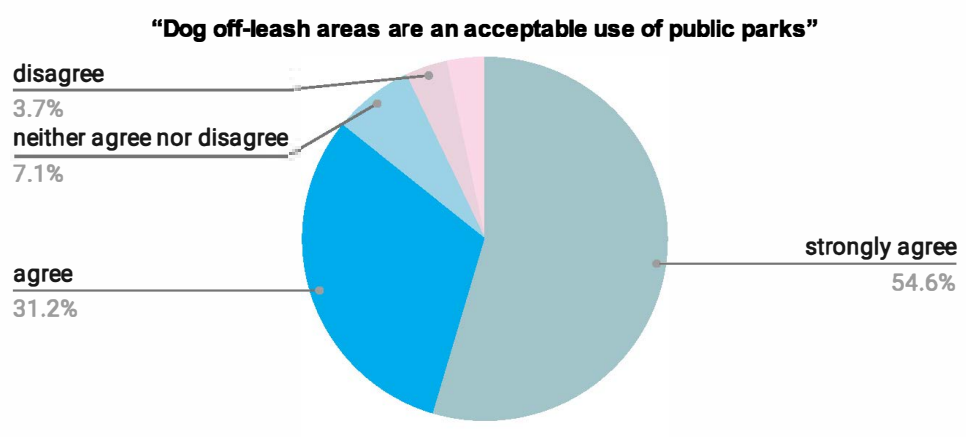


Fig 1.3 Acceptable use of public parks | Phase 1 Engagement

1.4 PROCESS

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

257 Surveys completed, Phase 1 Engagement

162 Map-based feedback, Phase 1 Engagement

138 Surveys completed, Phase 2 Engagement

27 Virtual Open House participants, Phase 1 Engagement

18 Virtual Open House participants, Phase 2 Engagement

15 Advisory Group participants, Phase 1 Engagement

6 Advisory Group participants, Phase 2 Engagement

Fig 1.4 Engagement Participation

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. Municipal staff also received input from the Facilities, Infrastructure and Public Realm Advisory Committee and Task Force.

Input from New Westminster residents was heard primarily through two virtual open house events.

Each open house launched with an online presentation, which was recorded and made available on the "Be Heard New West' engagement platform, followed by small group discussions.

Through this engagement process, participants were invited to use a digital mapping tool to identify locations in New Westminster and identify what is and isn't working well when considering off-leash activity in our city, and to suggest improvements. This mapping tool, together with comments from the online forum and over 400 survey responses helped identify what is top of mind for New Westminster residents when considering dog off-leash activity in parks and open space.

Each round of engagement was informed by input received to date, in order to develop the following recommendations to plan, design, and manage off-leash activity in New Westminster. Engagement Summary Reports are included in the Appendices.

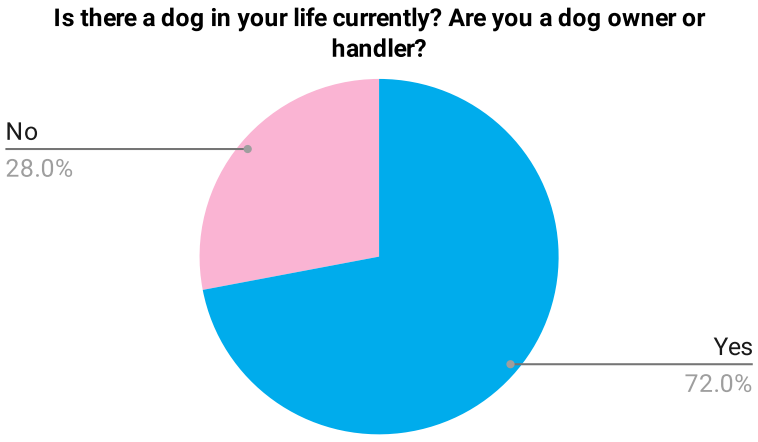


Fig 1.5 Phase 1 Survey Respondents

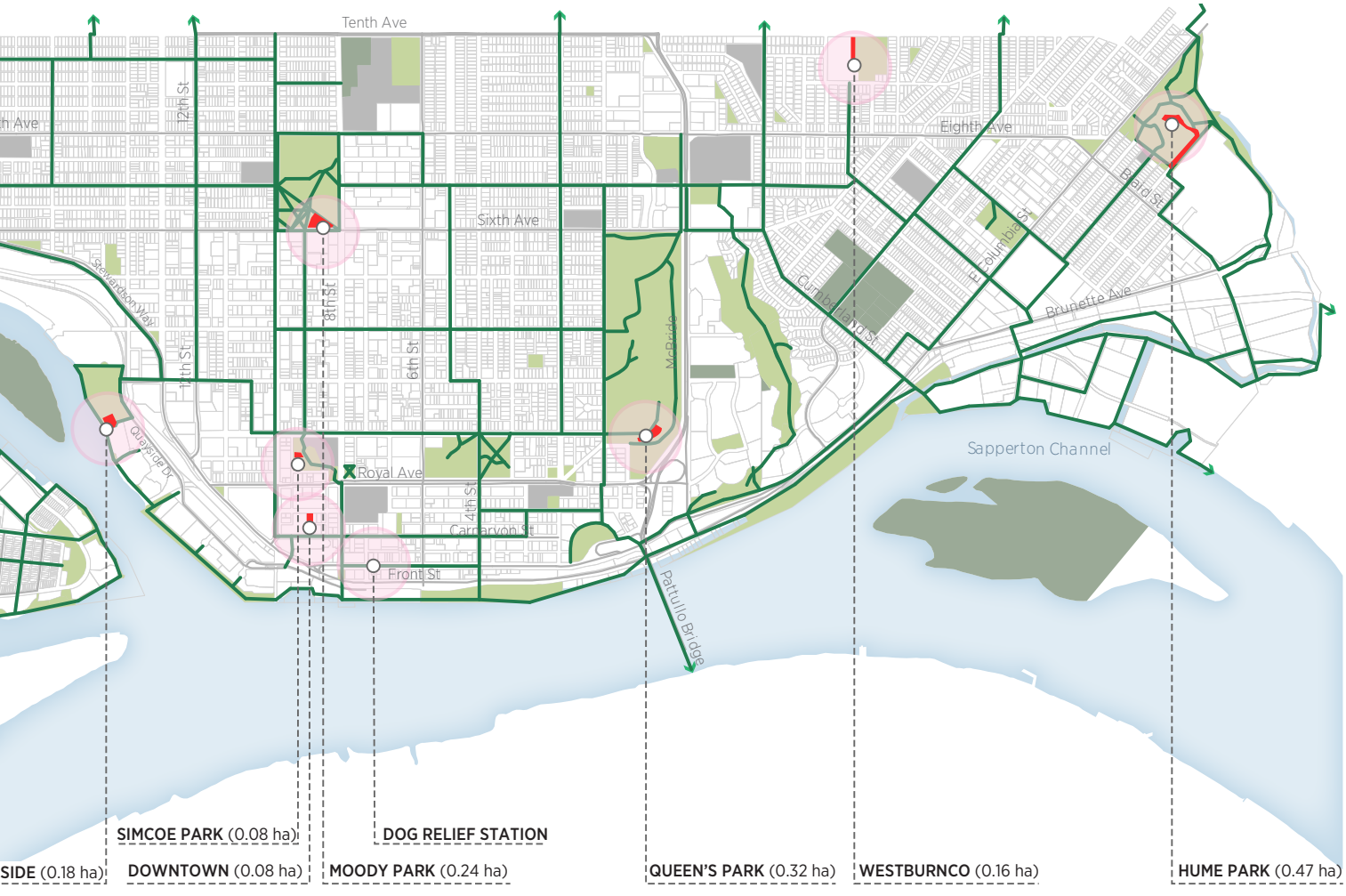
1.5 INVENTORY

There are currently eight designated off-leash areas of varying sizes that are distributed across the city of New Westminster. Two of these sites have "temporary" designation: the Downtown OLA and Quayside OLA. (see figure 1.6).

Since 2018, New Westminster has required inclusion of a 100 sq. ft. minimum dog relief area for medium and high rise residential, and mixed use development permit areas. Located on private property, these areas are maintained by the strata and are intended for use by residents only.



Fig 1.6 Map of New Westminster Parks & Dog OLAs


Tenth Ave
Eighth Ave
Sixth Ave
12th St
11th St
8th St
6th St
4th St
Columbia St
Royal St
Brunette Ave
McBride
Cumberland St
Sapperton Channel
Royal Ave
Carnarvon St
Front St
Pattullo Bridge
Queensborough Bridge
SIMCOE PARK (0.08 ha)
DOG RELIEF STATION
SIDE (0.18 ha)
DOWNTOWN (0.08 ha)
MOODY PARK (0.24 ha)
QUEEN'S PARK (0.32 ha)
WESTBURNCO (0.16 ha)
HUME PARK (0.47 ha)
LEGEND
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE
OTHER OPEN SPACE
SCHOOLS
GREENWAYS AND TRAILS
DOG OFF-LEASH AREA
N

1.6 ANALYSIS

Existing designated off-leash areas in New Westminster were evaluated according to various metrics in order to evaluate current OLA space relative to neighbouring municipalities, and to assess distribution across the city.

New Westminster allocates 1.6% of its total park area to designated off-leash areas. This is low compared to the 5.9% allocated in Vancouver, and high compared to the 0.3% allocated in Burnaby (see Figure 1.7).

These metrics were further assessed at the neighbourhood scale: 0.4% of New Westminster's total park area is designated for off-leash use in Queensborough, and 3.7% of the city's total park area is designated for off-leash use in the West End (see Figure 1.8).

PERCENTAGE PARKLAND DESIGNATED FOR OLA USE

Hectares

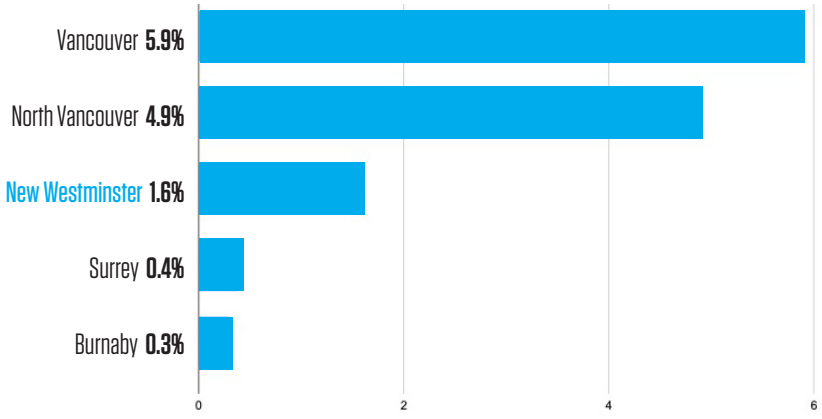


Fig 1.7 Percentage of Park Area Designated for dog off-leash use: Neighbouring Municipalities

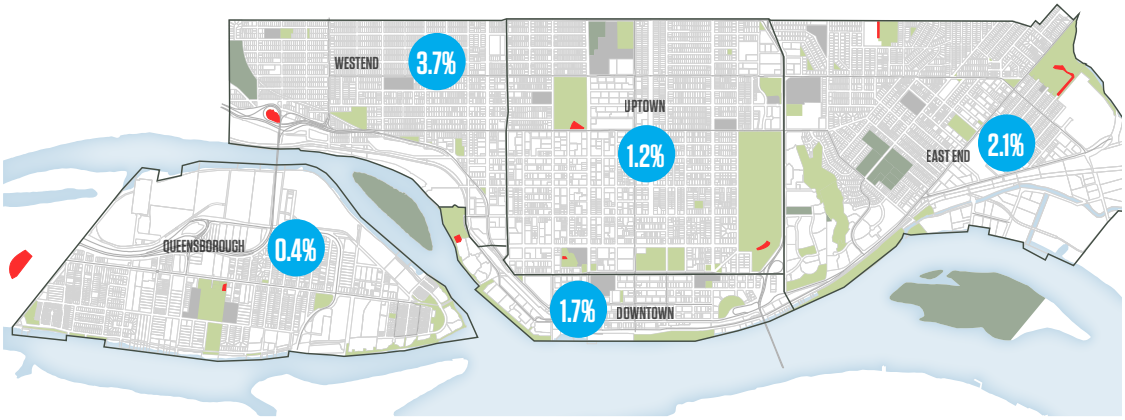


Fig 1.8 Percentage of Park Area Designated for dog off-leash use: New Westminster Neighborhoods

PARKLAND DESIGNATED FOR OLA USE

New Westminster allocates 0.31 hectares of designated off-leash space per 10,000 people. This metric is calculated based on 2016 census data. This is low compared to the 1.12 hectares allocated in Vancouver, and high compared to the 0.23 hectares allocated in Surrey. North Vancouver far exceeds neighbouring municipalities (see Figure 1.9).

When assessed at the neighbourhood scale, Queensborough has 0.11 hectares of designated off-leash space per 10,000 people and the West End has 0.73 (see Figure 1.10)

OFF-LEASH USE AREA PER 10,000 PEOPLE

Hectares

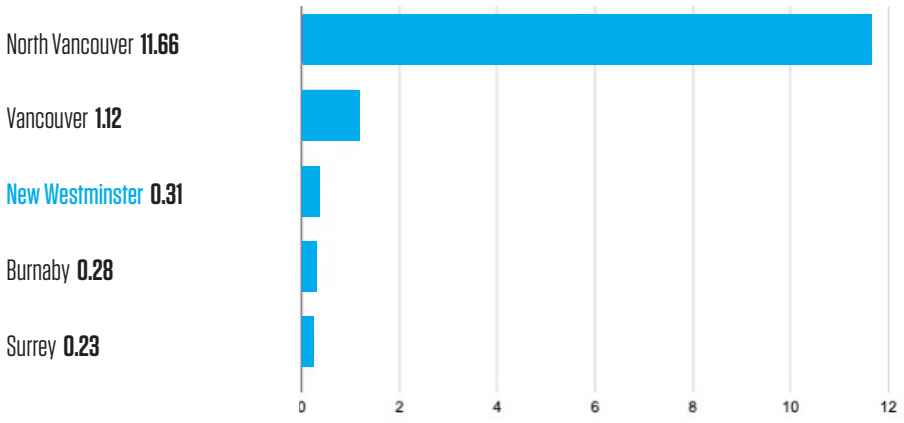


Fig 1.9 Off-leash area (hectares) per 10,000 people
Neighboring Municipalities Based on 2016 census

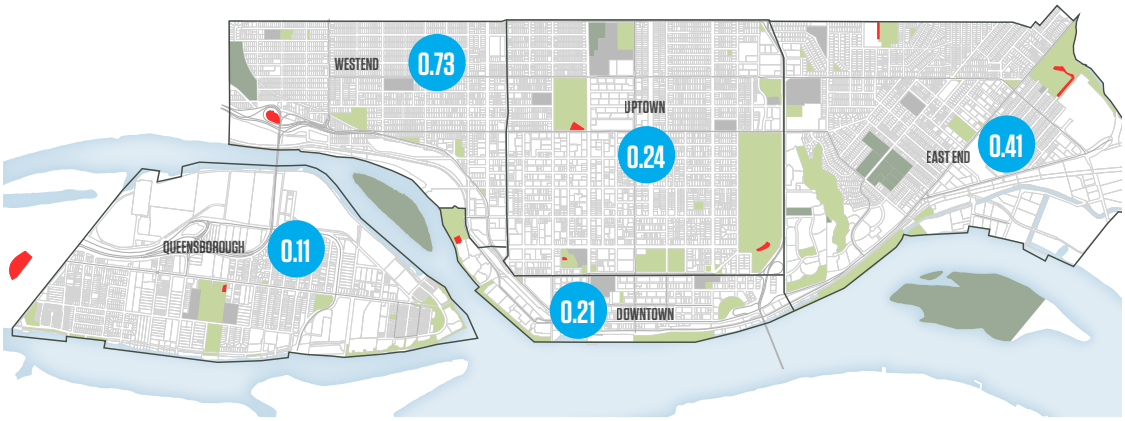


Fig 1.10 Map of off-leash area (hectares) per 10,000 people
Neighboring Municipalities Based on 2016 census

1.6 ANALYSIS (continued)

Figure 1.11 locates New Westminster's existing off-leash areas relative to population density data. This information was used to help inform recommendations on 'Designating Space' (see Section 2.0)

2016 POPULATION DENSITY

POPULATION DENSITY BY TRAFFIC ZONE

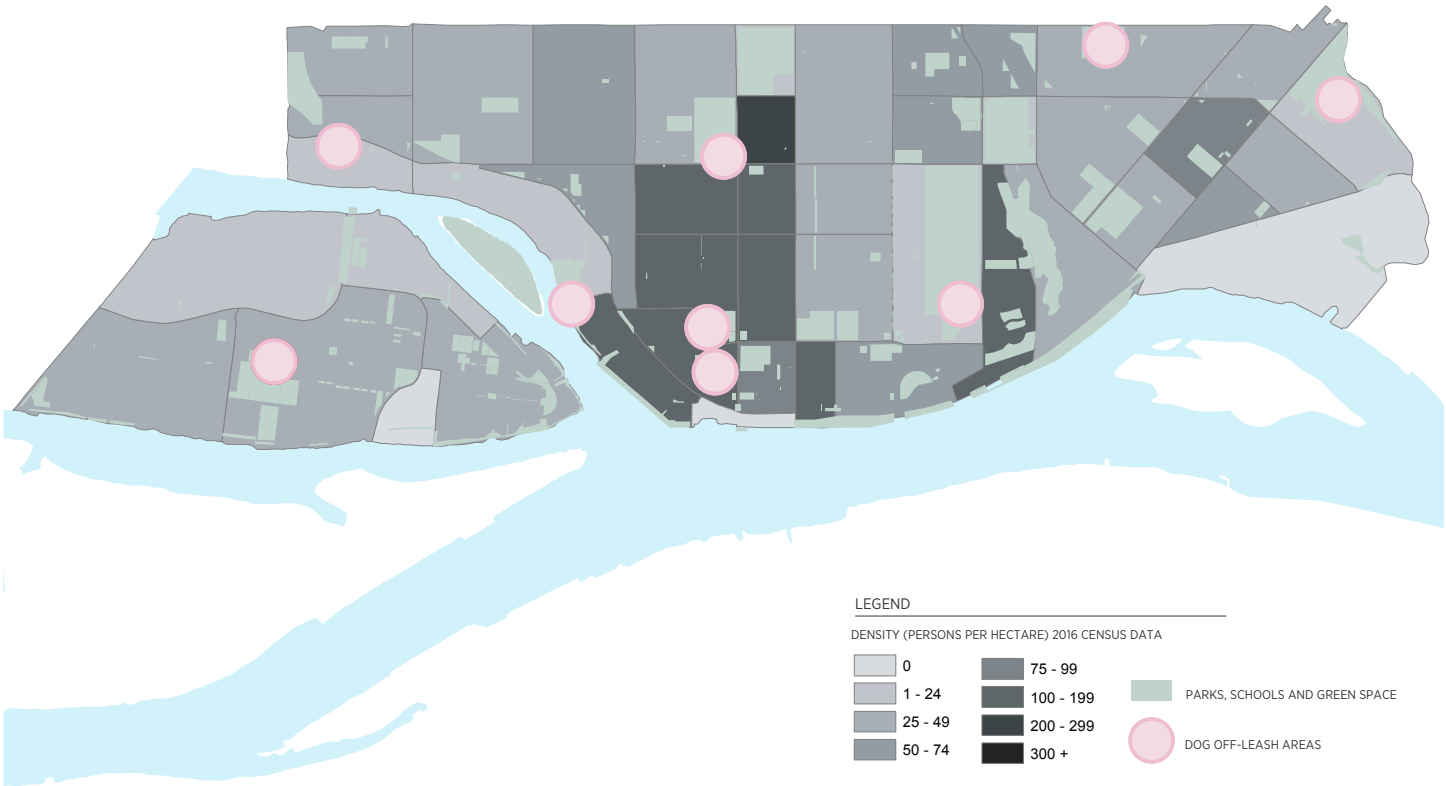


Fig 1.11 Off-leash areas relative to population density (2016 census data)

QUANTIFYING DOG POPULATIONS

There are a number of challenges in quantifying dog ownership. One recent survey of pet-owning households in Canada estimates a 8% increase in dog ownership from 2016 to 2018, from 7.6 million to 8.2 million[1]. The same survey estimates that 41% of Canadian households own a dog.

In 2020, New Westminster issued 3409 dog licenses. There are likely significantly more dogs within New Westminster than indicated by licensure numbers. High licensing compliance helps generate a more accurate estimate of dog populations. This helps municipalities effectively allocate resources for the planning, design and management of dog activity.

REFERENCE

1. Canadian Animal Health Institute (source: https://www.cahi-icsa.ca/press-releases/latest-canadian-pet-population-figures-released)

CNW LICENSED DOGS

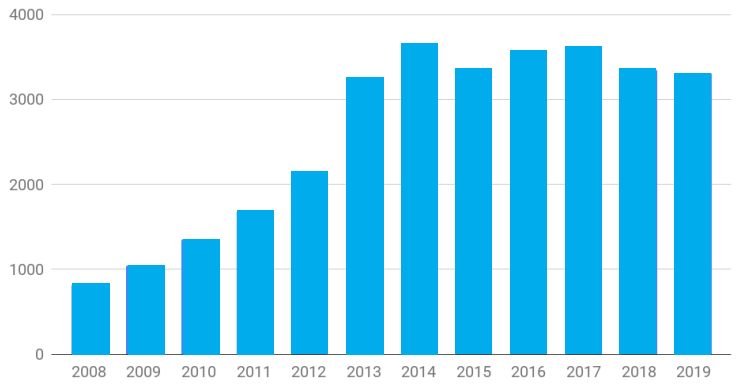


Fig 1.12 Number of Dog Licenses issued in New Westminster (2009 to 2019)

1.6 ANALYSIS (continued)

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

New Westminster's 2017 Official Community Plan identifies that nearly 104,000 residents are anticipated by 2041, with growth concentrated Downtown, Queensborough, and the Frequent Transit Development Areas.

Apartments are the primary type of dwelling in New Westminster's housing stock, making up 68%of the city's housing stock in 2011[1]. Neighbourhoods with the greatest number of apartment units are Brow of the Hill, Downtown and Uptown. 40% of households are individuals who live alone, while 23% are couples without children.

REFERENCE

1. New Westminster Official Community Plan (2017), p.15

CNW PROJECTED 2035 POPULATION DENSITY

CNW Official Community Plan (2017)

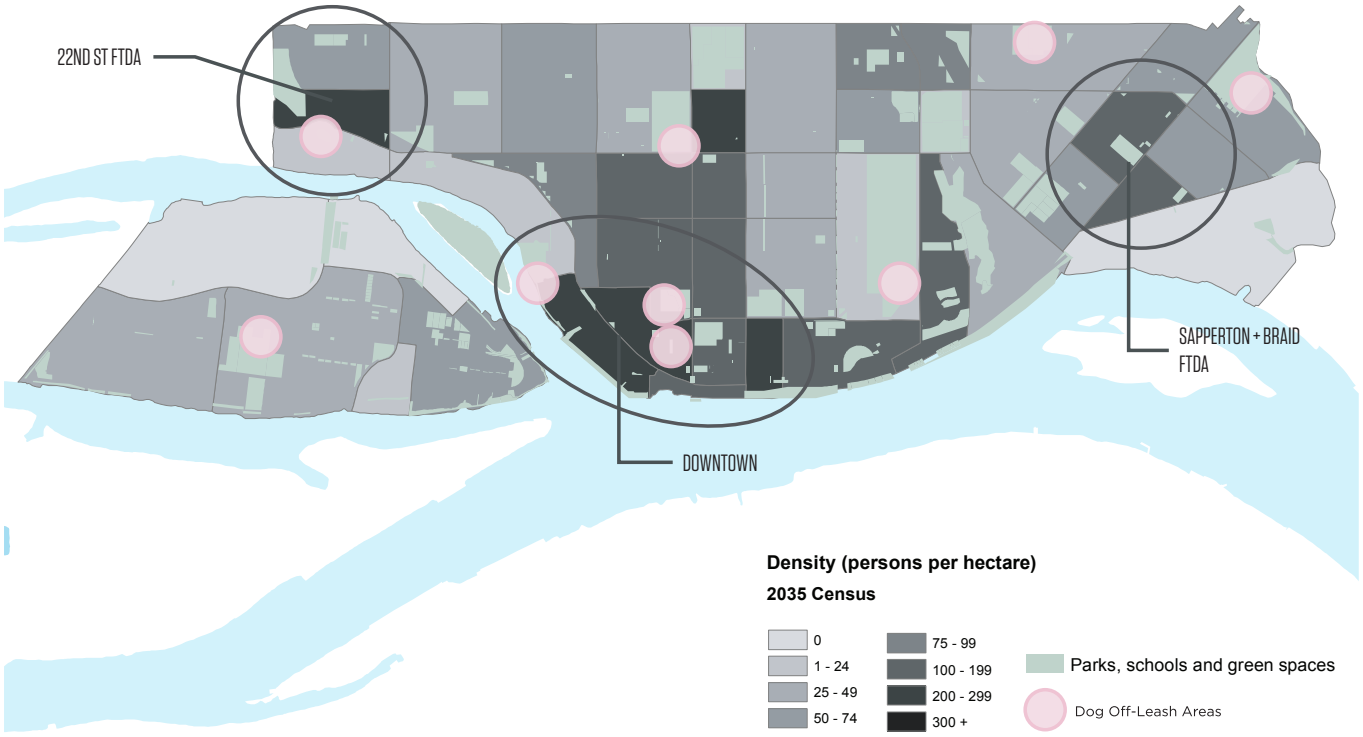


Fig 1.13 Future Growth Areas based on 2035 Projected Population Density (2017 OCP)

Residential backyards are not as common in this apartment-focused housing profile, which may intensify use of the city's parks and open spaces.

The city forecasts that approximately 36,000 new residents and approximately 16,500 new homes will be added between 2013 and 2041[1].

Planning for new OLA space should be informed by areas of projected growth, as identified in New Westminster's O.C.P.

REFERENCE

1. New Westminster Official Community Plan (2017), p.23

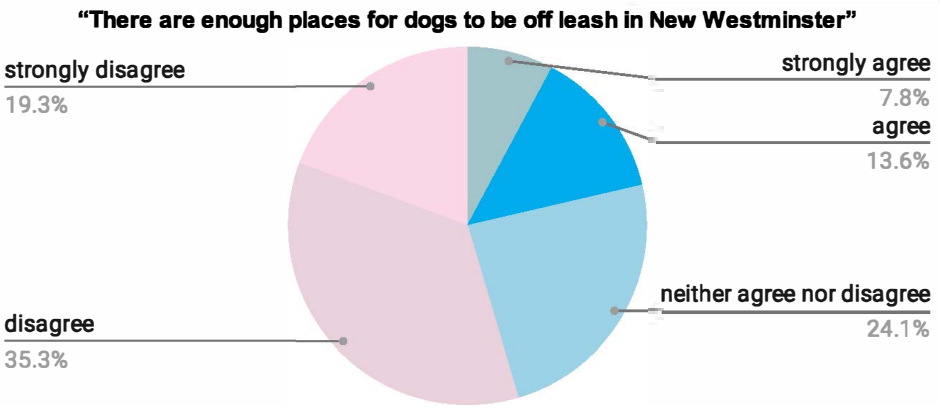


Fig 1.14 Number of OLAs: Survey results

2.0 DESIGNATING SPACE

2.1 Distribution
2.2 Typologies
2.3 Shared Use
2.4 Access & Circulation
2.5 Adjacencies

2.1 DISTRIBUTION

"The existing policy requiring new developments to provide dog relief stations is great, but existing residential buildings remain underserved."

Participant Input, Phase 1 Engagement

It is important to assess distribution of existing off-leash areas across the city of New Westminster, when considering additional space for off-leash activity. There is divergent opinion among survey respondents about how well OLAs are currently distributed across the city (see Figure 2.1), with a significant proportion (36%) who feel neutral about it.

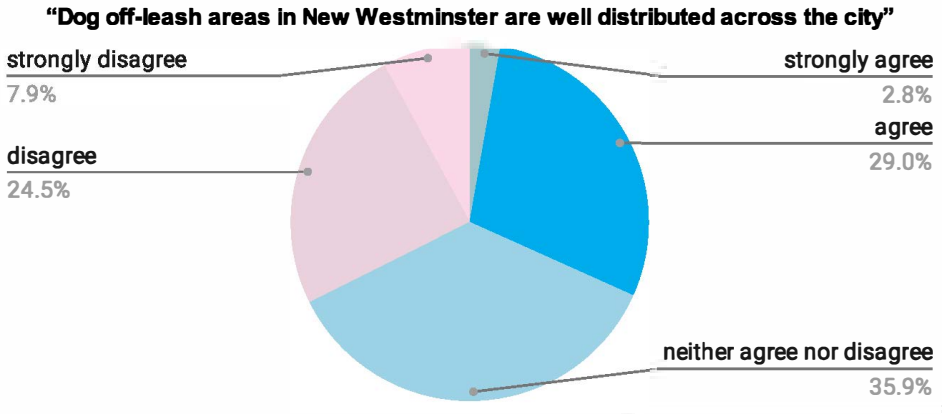


Fig 2.1 Distribution of OLAs: Survey results

Figure 2.2 identifies a 1km service radius for each OLA in New Westminster. This represents an approximate 10-15 minute walk, depending on topography, mobility considerations and other factors. Over 50% of survey respondents typically walk to an off-leash area, and over 60% are willing to walk more than 10 minutes to get to one. Providing off-leash areas within walking distance helps support the city's aim to foster a "Car Light Community" which is a part of New Westminster's Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action.

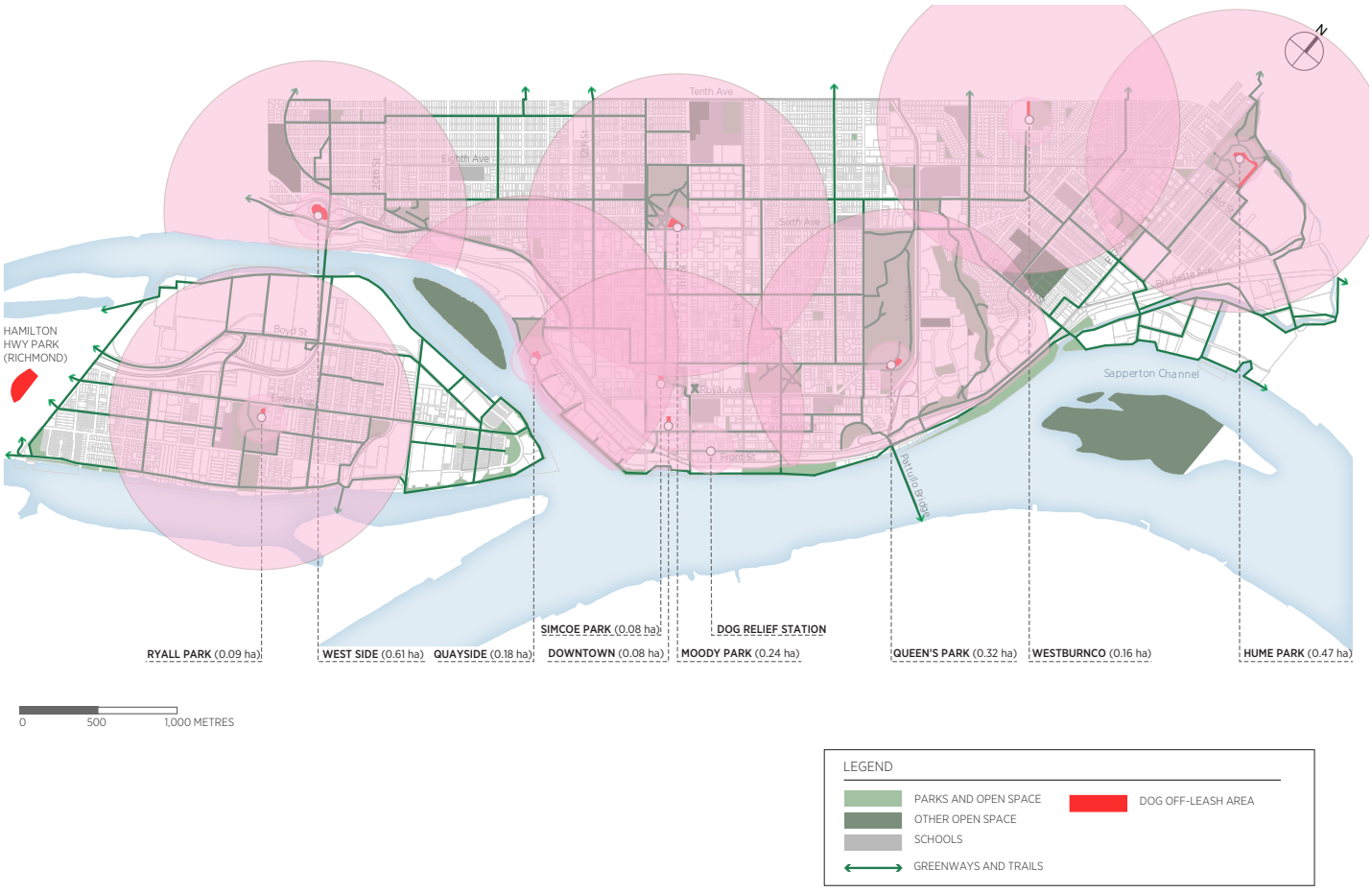


Fig 2.2 1KM Service radius of each OLA

2.1 DISTRIBUTION

Figure 2.3 identifies the population of people and licensed dogs within a 1km service radius for each OLA in New Westminster. This helps identify areas that are currently underserved, in consideration of the catchment area for each OLA.

Some New Westminster residents are also able to access the large OLAs in adjacent municipalities, such as Robert Burnaby Park in Burnaby and Hamilton Highway Park in Richmond. These large scale off-leash areas represent a "destination park" typology that is challenging to provide in land-constrained municipalities like New Westminster, and they help provide a diversity of off-leash experiences for those that are able to access them.

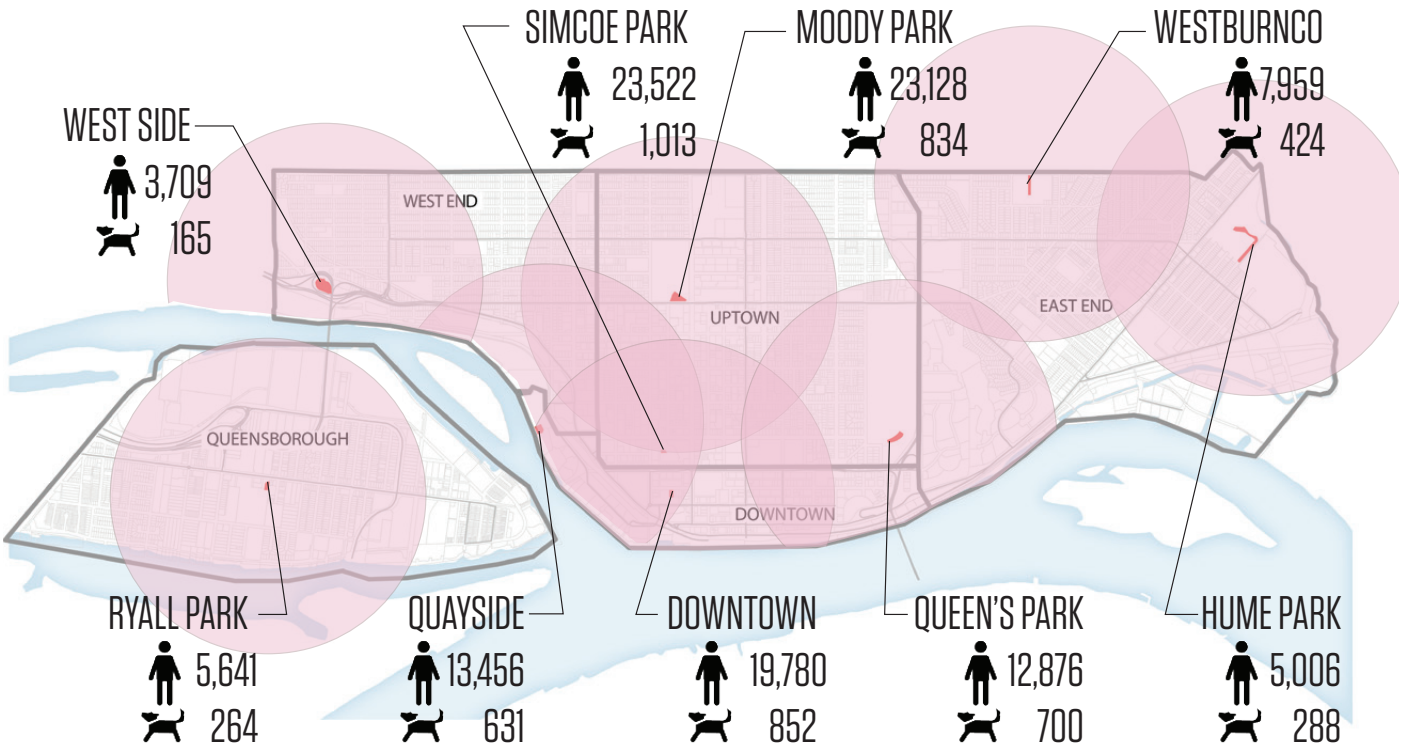


Fig 2.3 Population Density within 1km service radius of each OLA

2.1.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- When designating off-leash space, consider both current population densities and projected growth areas: CNW's 2017 Official Community Plan forecasts the largest growth areas will be Downtown, in the Sapperton & Braid FTDA and 22nd St FTDA
- Providing OLAs within walking distance helps support a "Car Light Community" which is a part of New Westminster's Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action.

2.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide an off-leash area within 1km of most New Westminster residents.
- Prioritize underserved areas when establishing new OLA space, based on an evaluation of current and projected population densities and dog license data.
- Ensure that the future planning of frequent transit development areas (FTDAs) include sufficient designated off leash areas.
- When off-leash areas are relocated or their boundaries are modified, aim for no net loss of designated off leash space within its service area.

2.2 TYPOLOGIES

Establishing typologies for off-leash areas can facilitate the planning, design and management of OLAs across the City. Each typology includes recommendations for minimum size, surfacing, amenities, and other considerations.

30% of Survey respondents believe that New Westminster's existing off-leash areas are not of adequate size (see Figure 2.4). However, New Westminster has limited opportunities to provide off-leash areas that meet the recommended minimum 0.4 hectare size identified by the Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT), which is roughly the size of a softball field. Hume Park OLA and West Side OLA exceed 0.4 ha in size (see Figure 2.5). The Association of Professional Dog Trainers (APDT) also recommends that off-leash areas be oddly shaped in order to be more engaging. Considering irregularly shaped areas may expand opportunities to expand OLA boundaries.

Two typologies are proposed for New Westminster: the Park OLA and the Dog Parklet. Each typology is described in greater detail in Section 3 of this Strategy.

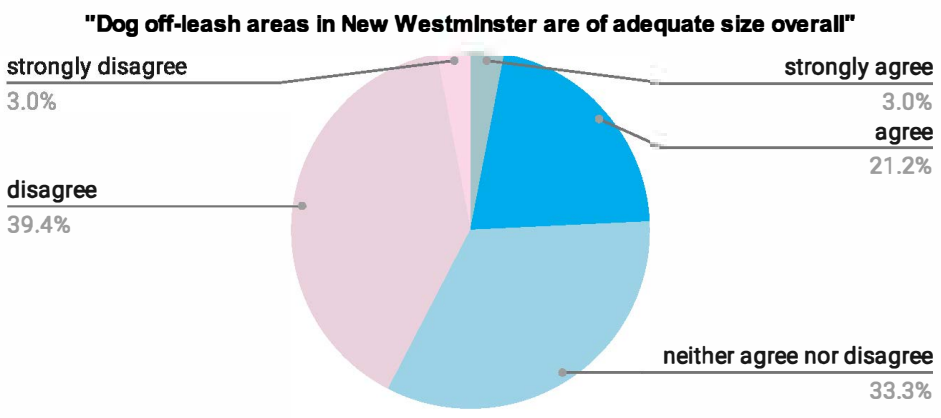


Fig 2.4 Size of OLAs: Survey results

Park OLAs would ideally be larger than 0.4ha, and at least 0.08ha, or approximately the size of two basketball courts. These would be supplemented with Dog Parklets, which extend the Parklet concept being adopted across municipalities today, converting parking stalls into small off-leash areas. The Dog Parklet typology provides a tool for the municipality to provide off-leash space in areas of higher residential density, where park space may be unavailable or where park or adjacent land uses may be less compatible with dog off-leash activity.

Dog Parklets provide a designated area for dogs to rest, socialize, play, and relieve themselves, which can help manage dog waste in highly paved areas such as downtown. These areas can help activate the streetscape by providing space for people to meet and engage with the dogs in their community, and the people who care for them.

SIZE & TYPOLOGIES

EXISTING OLAs IN NEW WESTMINSTER

Simcoe Park	**0.08 ha**
Downtown	**0.08 ha**
Ryall Park	**0.09 ha**
Westburnco	**0.16 ha**
Quayside	**0.18 ha**
Moody Park	**0.24 ha**
Queen's Park	**0.32 ha**
Hume Park	**0.47 ha**
West Side	**0.61 ha**

CASE STUDIES: MINIMUM RECOMMENDED OLA SIZE

0.09 ha	San Francisco CA (0.28 ha preferred)
0.19 ha	Oakland CA
0.20 ha	Alexandria VA
0.40 ha	Denver CO (0.8- 1.2 ha preferred)
0.40 ha	American Kennel Club

Fig 2.5 Size of existing OLAs in New Westminster

2.2 TYPOLOGIES

2.2.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- The Dog Parklet typology can help expand resources for off-leash activity in areas of high residential density where park space is limited.
- The Park OLA typology is significantly larger than the Dog Parklet, and should provide open areas for dogs to run and engage in ball play. While 0.08ha is the suggested minimum size, ideally Park OLAs would be at least 0.4 ha.
- The planning of Dog Parklets should include Engineering Services to help ensure safe circulation for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, while maintaining access to utilities and other considerations.
- The Dog Parklet typology supports the City of New Westminster's Seven Bold Steps on Climate Action towards a 'Quality People-Centered Public Realm' whereby street space for private vehicles is reallocated for sustainable transportation or public gathering by 2030.

2.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Evaluate existing OLAs that are less than 0.4 ha in size for opportunities to expand the off-leash area, keeping in mind that oddly-shaped sites and longer corridors for running can be an asset.
- Engage local residents in the process of modifying OLA boundaries, wether reducing, expanding or relocating OLA spaces.
- Engage in a process to review each existing OLA that is less than 0.4ha in size, and identify opportunities to expand the off-leash area, keeping in mind that oddly-shaped sites can be an asset.
    - Develop design standards and guidelines for Dog Darklets, including:
    - Parklet proposal requirements
    - Design development (site selection, materials, etc.)
    - Standard Amenities requirements
    - Permitting requirements
    - Fabrication and installation guidelines
    - Maintenance requirements
- Work with third party landowners (i.e. BC Hydro, Fraser Health, Metro Vancouver, Translink, etc.) to identify underutilized open areas outside New Westminster's municipal jurisdiction that might be suitable for temporary off-leash use.

2.3 SHARED USE

'Shared Use' in this Strategy refers to designating specific hours and/ or seasons for sanctioned off-leash activity. Outside of these sanctioned times, dogs would need to be leashed.

Introducing hours for sanctioned off-leash activity can be a tool to help regulate park use, particularly in locations where there is a lot of unsanctioned off-leash activity.

Designated hours for off-leash activity are often restricted to hours in the early or evening, requiring dogs to be leashed during midday hours. The intent for this approach is to share the use of the park, allocating time for off-leash activity while also maintaining leashing bylaws to support park uses that are less compatible with off-leash activity.

The extent of the sanctioned off-leash area should always be clearly marked, for example by bollards and vegetation, together with a map indicating the off-leash area. Rules identifying sanctioned hours for off-leash activity and applicable bylaws need to be clearly identified.

However, there are key safety concerns with the "Shared Use" of parks and open spaces. Feedback gathered through the engagement process for this Strategy indicated there is significant opposition to this approach, from people not feeling safe around dogs that are off leash, to confusion about rules, dog waste management, digging activity, lawn degradation, and damage to environmentally sensitive areas.

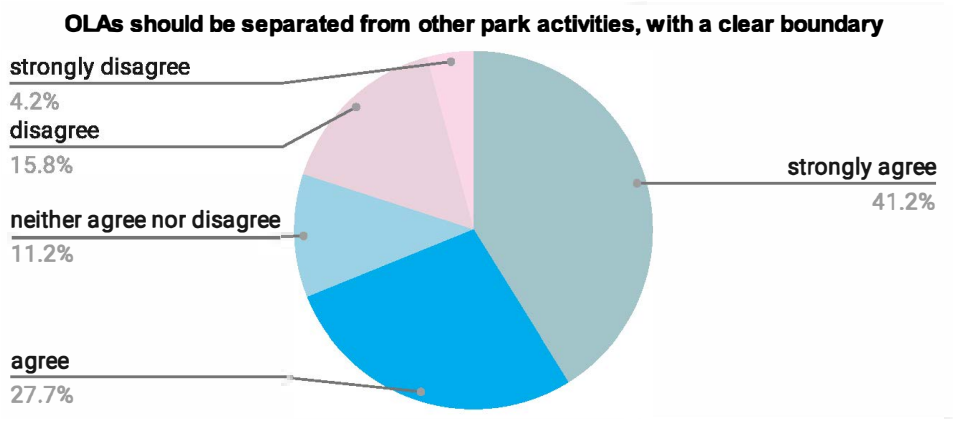


Fig 2.6 Boundaries of OLAs: Survey results

The challenges of the "Shared Use" approach includes confusion about rules, dog waste management, and digging activity. There are also key safety concerns with this approach, given that "Shared Use" parks and open spaces are typically not fenced.

A 2016 survey of Vancouver residents identified that the majority of respondents were opposed to daytime usage restrictions, with 22.4% in support and 53% opposed. Those who were opposed to daytime usage restrictions noted that many users do not respect the existing time restrictions at such off-leash areas, resulting in these sites being used as off-leash areas all day. Those in support of daytime usage restrictions (limited off-leash hours) argue that this would allow for more parks to be used for off-leash activity, while still accommodating other park uses during the day.

"Shared Use" requires maintenance and enforcement resources to support the expanded use of parks and open spaces and the increased regulation of leashing bylaws. Informal sports fields that are used during the winter season for off-leash activity will likely require annual field closures for lawn rehabilitation. Additional enforcement is recommended to help ensure compliance with leashing bylaws, outside of designated times for off-leash activity.

Vancouver and Seattle are two examples among a growing trend towards eliminating hours-of-use in favor of providing fully fenced areas solely for off-leash use. This approach makes it clear where off-leash activity is to be expected, which supports the safety and comfort of park visitors and dogs, helps protect environmentally sensitive areas, and focuses maintenance and enforcement resources on designated "single use" off-leash areas.

'Shared Use' areas may be more compatible with larger park spaces. Mundy Park in Coquitlam is a 175 hectare park with dedicated off-leash trails, plus a looped perimeter trail that allows off-leash activity from dawn until 10am.

Example of shared use OLA in Coquitlam

2.3 SHARED USE

"For a trial period and specified times I am supportive, but worry about irresponsible owners with out of control or aggressive dogs off leash."

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

"Spaces that are underutilized in the morning hours could be enjoyed by dogs and dog owners."

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

2.3.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Introducing designated hours for sanctioned off-leash activity can lead to confusion about when off-leash activity is and isn't allowed.
- "Shared Use" is most suited for parks and open spaces with low intensity of use.
- Off-leash activity is more compatible with some adjacent park uses than others. See section 2.5 'Adjacencies'.
- Boundaries for sanctioned off-leash activity should be clear. Open grass areas that are fenced, or partially fenced, may be more suitable for off leash hours-of-use.
- Some municipalities establish hours of off-leash activity based on the season, with longer periods of sanctioned off-leash activity during winter months when there are fewer competing park uses. Seasonal use of fields in municipalities with regular snowfall may be more suitable for seasonal off-leash activity.
- Seasonal use of sport fields may be suitable for off-leash activity, provided that conflicts with other park uses are minimal, impacts of dog activity are mitigated and local residents have been engaged and generally support the shared use.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING

HALIFAX
Off-leash activity in specified municipal sports fields from November 1 to May 1, provided that dogs are not unleashed if an adult or child is playing on the field.

REGINA
Outdoor boarded rinks are available for sanctioned off-leash activity between the months of May to September.

BURNABY
Barnet Marine Park: Trail with time restrictions:
May 1-September 30:

- Weekdays dawn to 10am & 6pm to dusk
- Weekends & Stat Holidays dawn to 10am

October 1-April 30: no time restrictions, dawn to dusk

- Burnaby Heights Park (Byrne Creek Dyke): Trail and Picnic Meadow (lawn north of picnic shelters) with time restrictions:

May 1-September 30: Dawn to 9am & 6pm to dusk

October 1-April 30: no time restrictions, dawn to dusk

COQUITLAM
Mundy Park is a 175 hectare park that includes off-leash trails that may be used from dawn until dusk, plus an extensive looped perimeter trail where off-leash activity is sanctioned from dawn until 10am.

PORTLAND
Off leash hours and seasons are to be defined by each park use patterns and daylight hours. For examples, sites adjacent to schools follow these recommendations:

- During the school year, weekday off-leash use is recommended to end earlier in the morning so leashes are required during the period when children are walking to school. These times are adjusted to reflect specific school start times.
- At some school sites, where school use makes it possible, it is recommended that additional mid-morning hours be added to compensate for the shorter early morning hours. These hours, as well as morning hours, must be approved by the school Principal.
- Unique schedules or use patterns at some sites next to schools required an equally unique off-leash schedule.

ANN ARBOR
The municipality of Ann Arbor manages OLAs use by charging an entry fee of $60/year ($45 spayed/neutered with documentation) and using an entry key fob. The key fob helps monitor who has obtained the required vaccinations and this encourages patrons to follow city rules and generate revenue.

NEW YORK CITY
In parks without an official dog park (which include the vast majority of parks in New York city) and with permission from the Parks Department, dog owners may allow their dogs off-leash from 9pm-9am but only while the park is open.

2.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Shared Use of parks and trails is not supported by the community at this time; survey respondents indicated a variety of safety concerns, and FIPR AC members anticipate significant conflict.

"I do not feel safe around dogs that are off leash."

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

"It's good to trial to see if we can collaborate on shared spaces as not everyone is near a dog park."

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

2.4 ACCESS & CIRCULATION

Off-leash areas should be accessible to the residents of New Westminster. Where possible, these should be located along pleasant and safe walking routes to encourage nearby residents to walk to the OLA instead of driving. 53.7% of survey respondents walk to an OLA, while 33% drive and 23% use other ways to access these sites (Phase1 Engagement results). OLAs should be located along or near transit routes for small dog owners who may travel with their dogs on transit (New Westminster regulations currently require dogs to be in carriers). Likewise, owners who cycle with their dogs, such as in dog trailers, would benefit from proximity to cycling routes.

Circulation within OLA sites should be accessible and designed to avoid conflicting use. It is recommended that off-leash areas are directly accessible from associated parking areas, to avoid non-compliance with leashing requirements when traveling between the parking area and the off-leash area.

Including looped paths within larger OLA spaces can encourage people to walk with their dogs through the space, thereby reducing the potential for dogs to congregate at entries, where conflict is more likely to occur. Paths should be wheelchair accessible and designed in consideration of those with limited mobility.

See section 3 for design recommendations related to access and circulation at the site scale.

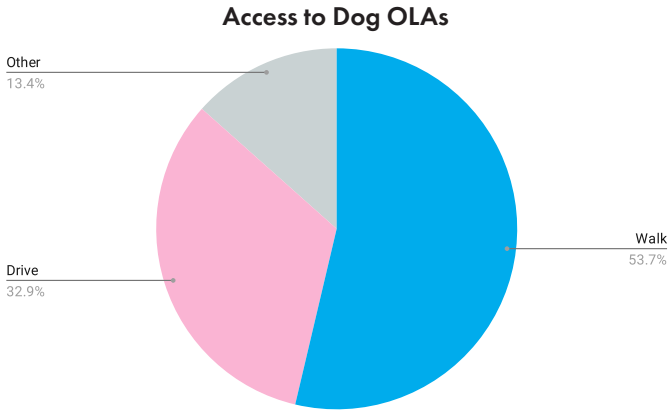


Fig 2.7 Access to OLAs: Survey results

2.4.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Site circulation at the neighbourhood and park scale should be assessed when evaluating proposed or existing dog off leash areas, to help minimize conflict.
- Off-leash activity in proximity to roads, bike paths and walking paths can be a safety concern for both people and dogs.
- The provision of OLAs within biking, walking distances and along transit routes supports the City of New Westminster's Seven Bold Steps on Climate Action towards a 'Car Light Community' whereby sustainable modes of transportation make up 60% of all trips within the City by 2030.

2.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct an accessibility audit and develop accessibility guidelines to ensure that all OLAs in New Westminster are universally accessible. See Section 3 for design recommendations that support Universal Access.
- When establishing new OLA space, review site access at the neighborhood scale to mitigate conflict and support access via walking, cycling and transit.
- When modifying OLA boundaries or establishing new OLA space, provide direct access to the off-leash space from the associated parking areas.
- Provide accessible, looped paths in OLAs that are 0.4ha and larger.

2.5 ADJACENCIES

When considering new areas for off-leash use, the adjacent land use needs to be assessed at both the neighbourhood and the park level in order to identify compatible uses and suitable mitigation measures. Where adjacencies to less compatible land uses cannot be avoided, mitigation measures should be used to reduce chances of conflict.

Off-leash areas are often separated from other park activities and adjacent land uses by either a generous setback distance, or fencing. New Westminster has limited park space, which often cannot accommodate minimum recommended setback distances. All of the city's existing off-leash areas are fully fenced.

NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE

Areas of commercial, municipal, institutional and light industrial land use are typically considered compatible with adjacent off-leash activity.

Residential adjacencies are less compatible with designated off-leash areas, as noise can be disruptive. Some municipalities recommend a minimum setback distance between the dog off-leash area and residential areas (see figure 2.8).

LAND USE/ ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDED MINIMUM SETBACK OR MITIGATION MEASURES
Residential	Secure fencing, plus noise mitigation measures
Ecological sensitive areas	Secure fencing. OLAs not recommended in proximity of highly or moderately sensitive areas
Busy Road	Secure fencing
Multi-use trails	Secure fencing
Playground/ Wading Pool/ Splash pad	Secure fencing plus a 5m dog-exclusion zone
Community gardens	Secure fencing
Designated picnic areas	Secure fencing

Fig 2.8 Mitigation measures for various land uses or activities

ROADS AND PATHS

Separate off-leash areas from vehicular routes with significant traffic, such as arterial roads, with a minimum 75 meter setback, or secure fencing.

Separate off-leash areas from multi-use trails, cycle paths, and busy pedestrian paths with a minimum 25 meter setback, or fencing.

PARK USE

When considering adjacencies within parks and open spaces, off-leash spaces should be separated from areas where conflict is more likely such as playgrounds, swimming pools or splash pads, community gardens, and sports fields.

Secure fencing plus a 5m setback from the perimeter of playgrounds, wading pools and splashpads is recommended.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Designated off-leash areas should be separated from areas that are sensitive to disturbance, including existing trees, ecologically sensitive areas, and ornamental plant displays. Environmental assessments should be used to identify setback distances and mitigation measures. Open lawn space that is not actively programmed, and other vegetated areas with low ecological sensitivity are typically considered compatible with adjacent off-leash activity.

Off-leash areas located in proximity to environmentally sensitive areas should be regularly monitored by a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) in order to evaluate impacts to vegetation, fauna, soils, and water, and make recommendations for mitigation.

2.5 ADJACENCIES

2.5.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Avoid locating off-leash areas in proximity to school grounds, cemeteries, historic sites and other cultural resources, unless suitable mitigation measures are applied.
- Dog activity can significantly impact environmentally sensitive areas. Professional biologists can conduct environmental assessments to help evaluate and monitor impacts, and recommend mitigation measures.
- When assessing potential new locations for dog off-leash areas, a thorough review of the adjacent land and park uses is recommended to avoid or mitigate conflicts.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING

MICHIGAN

Buffer from Residential: A few cities provide definitive distances from residences, varying from 50 feet to 200 feet. All strive to minimize conflicts and include guidelines such as: making sure that noise and activity levels are no more than other park uses, importance of screening or visual buffers, and having a minimal impact on residences.

LOS ANGELES

The existing standards state that designated off-leash dog exercise areas should (City of Los Angeles 2010 Bylaw):
Be far enough away from a residential or commercial land use that the single event sound of a dog bark would generally be perceived as a background sound or would be screened by traffic noise. To achieve this objective, the off-leash area should be:

a. At least 150 feet (45m) from residences and separated by a street or nonresidential structure, and,
b. At least 80 feet (24m) from commercial uses; if the wall of the commercial building that faces the off-leash area is windowless, a distance setback may not be required.

2.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- When establishing new OLA space, review adjacent land and park uses in order to ensure more compatible adjacencies.
- Engage a Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) to evaluate impacts of OLAs that are located in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, and provide recommendations for mitigation as required.
- Separate off-leash areas from adjacent land and park uses with secure fencing, plus additional mitigation measures based on guidelines in the Strategic Report.
- Develop standard procedures for evaluating a potential new OLA site

3.0 ATTRACTING USE

3.1 Typology Design Guidelines
3.2 Amenities
3.3 Surfacing
3.4 Vegetation
3.5 Boundaries
3.6 Signage

3.1 TYPOLOGY DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design of off-leash areas is critical to attracting and retaining use so that off-leash activity is maintained in these designated spaces. There is divergent opinion among survey respondents about the overall quality of current off-leash areas in New Westminster (see Figure 3.1), with a significant proportion (34%) who feel neutral about it. Establishing design guidelines can help create inviting park spaces that feel safe and comfortable for all visitors.

Two typologies for off-leash areas are proposed for New Westminster: the Park OLA and the Dog Parklet. Each typology has specific recommendations relating to size, access, surfacing, fencing and amenities (see Guidelines: Park OLAs and Dog Parklets). Each of these design elements are reviewed in further detail in Section 3.2 to 3.6 of this report.

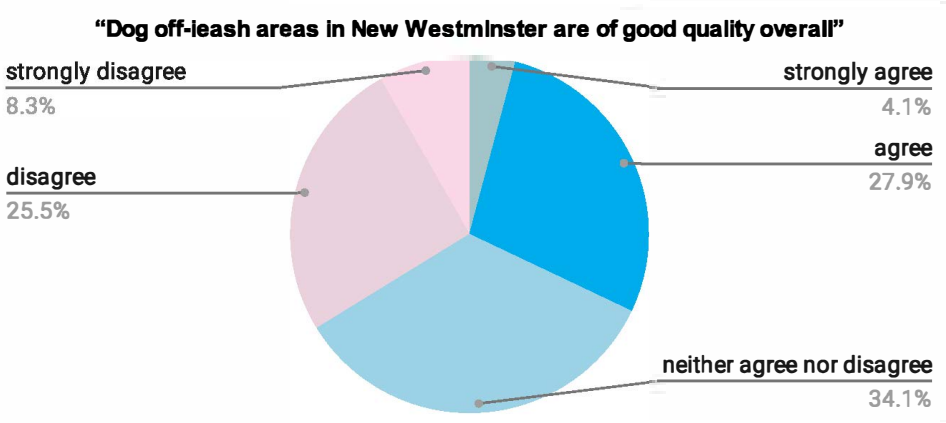


Fig 3.1 Quality of OLAs in New Westminster: Survey results

GUIDELINES: PARK OLAS

ACCESS

- Design for Universal Access
- Conduct an Accessibility Audit
- Consider access routes into the OLA area, and where unsanctioned off-leash activity may occur (e.g. between the parking lot and the designated OLA area).
- Provide a Park OLA or Dog Parklet within a 15 minute walk of most residents

SIZE

- Minimum 0.08 ha. Ideally 0.4 ha.

STANDARD AMENITIES

- Areas to sit or lean
- Dog waste bins
- Drinking water for dogs
- Open space
- Shade
- Boulders and logs

SPECIAL AMENITIES

- Lighting* (priority item; see Section 3.2)
- Separable areas
- Water for dog play
- Agility features
- Paved, looped paths for OLAs >0.4ha

SURFACING

The selection of surface materials should be informed by the usage intensity of the site; site drainage; maintenance demands; capital costs, and topography:

- Mix of surfaces, including fine gravel, wood chips, and grass.
- Pathways are to be accessible, and paved with fine-crushed gravel, asphalt or concrete.
- Asphalt or concrete paving is recommended at dog wash stations and drinking fountains.

BOUNDARIES

- Full fence enclosure, min 1.2m ht.
- Entrances to be ADA compliant, and double-gated. Coordinate with Operations staff to provide access for maintenance vehicles.

SIGNAGE

Signage to have a welcoming tone, with graphics to facilitate communication. Signage to include:

- Etiquette Guidelines
- Map of OLA boundaries
- Applicable Bylaws + Fines
- Municipality Contact Info
- Notice board for important info such as disease cases

GUIDELINES: DOG PARKLETS

ACCESS

- Design for Universal Access
- Coordinate with Engineering Services to help ensure safe circulation
- Consider access routes into the OLA area, and where unsanctioned off-leash activity may occur (e.g. between the parking lot and the designated OLA area).
- Provide a Park OLA or Dog Parklet within a 15 minute walk of most residents

SIZE

- Minimum 2 parking stalls in length, 3 preferred.

STANDARD AMENITIES

- Areas to sit or lean
- Water access with a hose for washing down the Parklet.
- Drainage to accommodate regular washing
- Dog waste bins
- Agility feature / element to engage dogs

SPECIAL AMENITIES

- Water for dog play
- Drinking water for dogs
- Additional agility features
- Seating
- Shade
- Covering for rain protection
- Lighting

SURFACING

- Durable surfacing, suitable for regular washing (e.g. synthetic turf, pour-in-place rubber surfacing). No loose fill materials.

BOUNDARIES

- Full fence enclosure, min 1.2m ht.
- Fencing to provide sightlines into the enclosure.
- Gates to be ADA compliant and self-closing.

SIGNAGE

Signage to have a welcoming tone, with graphics to facilitate communication. Signage to include:

- Applicable Bylaws + Fines
- Map identifying nearest OLAs
- Municipality Contact Info
- Traffic Safety Signage

3.1 TYPOLOGY DESIGN GUIDELINES

3.1.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Providing a variety of sizes, amenities and overall character to off-leash areas can help expand the range of off-leash experiences available.
- Off-leash areas with a higher concentration of use require more durable amenities and surfacing.
- Off-leash areas less than the size of a basketball court should have washable surfacing and access to water for regular cleaning. Ensure sufficient municipal resources are provided to support regular cleaning and waste collection.
- Dog Parklets are recommended in high density areas where park space is limited. These small spaces are intended to supplement Park OLAs, not replace them.
- Dog Parklets can help animate the public realm, provide opportunities for socializing, and increase "eyes on the street", while providing relief areas and helping to manage dog waste in highly paved areas.

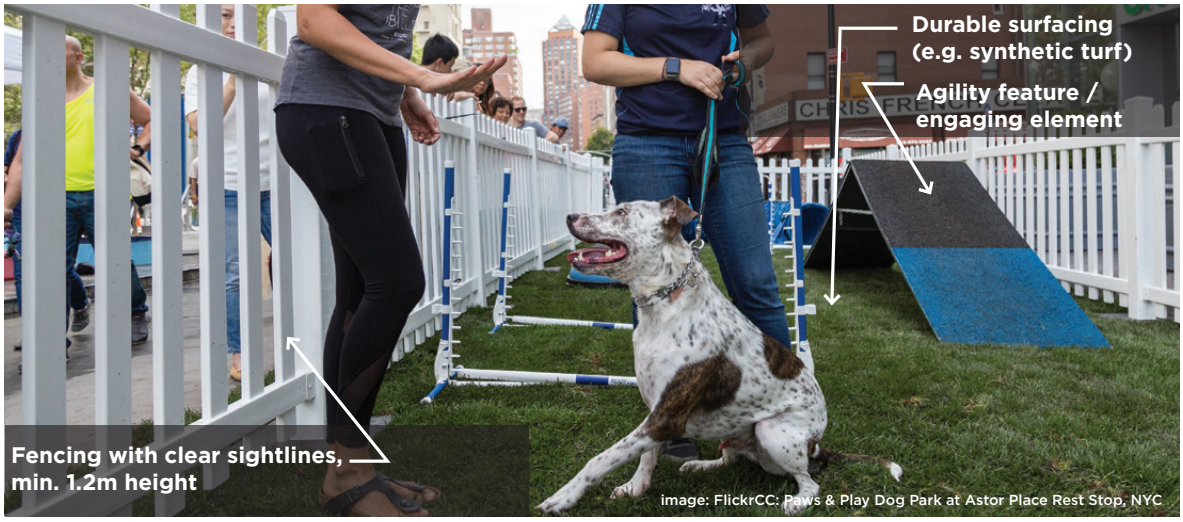


Fig 3.2 Dog Parklet Typology

3.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide accessible gates and paths to accessible seating areas and fountains in all designated off-leash areas. Conduct an accessibility audit of existing OLAs including an assessment of parking, circulation and amenities, with a target timeline to implement upgrades. Ensure new OLA spaces are designed to facilitate universal access.
- Adopt Park OLAs and Dog Parklet typologies in order to elevate the overall quality of off-leash areas in New Westminster.
- Support off-leash areas with more concentrated use, such as Dog Parklets and Park OLAs in more densely populated areas, with a greater investment in durable surfacing and engaging amenities.
- Introduce the Dog Parklet typology as a Pilot Project on the Agnes Street Greenway.
- Collaborate with the municipal Engineering Department to develop detailed design standards and guidelines for Dog Parklets, including traffic management. Engage local residents in the process of identifying suitable locations, and evaluating their success.
- Engage multi-departmental city staff in the design, development and resource planning to support the maintenance of Dog Parklets before they are constructed.
- Apply the design guidelines in consideration of the character of each site, and look for opportunities to provide a range of OLA Park sizes, surfacing and amenities across the city.

3.2 AMENITIES

Standard and Special amenities are Amenities are important to attract the use of OLAs. "**Standard Amenities**" are recommended for all OLAs, according to their Typology (see Section 3.1). "**Special Amenities**" are recommended on a case-by-case basis, in consideration of the location of the OLA and the population density of its service area, capital and maintenance costs, etc. OLAs with the highest density service areas will be prioritized.

Lighting is identified as a "Special Amenity" but is highlighted by an asterix (*) as a high-priority item. Lighting can help park visitors feel safe and comfortable, and can extend the use of off-leash areas, particularly in the winter season. Lighting at OLAs will be considered on a case-by-case basis and evaluated in consideration of feelings of safety, surrounding land use, ecology, existing utility infrastructure, costs, etc.

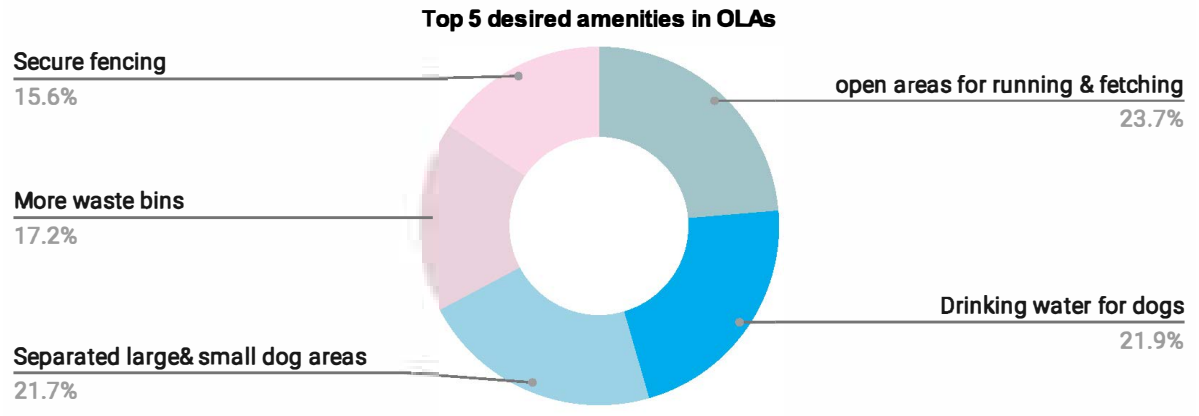


Fig 3.3 Top 5 desired amenities in OLAs: Survey results

Waste bins are provided as standard elements by most municipalities, and many provide dog bag dispensers that are typically stocked by local residents given the expense of providing biodegradable bags, and the challenges of equitable distribution. The City of Surrey hires a private contractor to supply dog waste bags in exchange for advertising space on park kiosks. Recommendations for providing readily-identifiable waste bins are outlined in Section 4.1.

The value of including a separable area within a Park OLA space was identified in the engagement process that informed this Strategy. These separated spaces can help provide a safe and inviting dog park environment. New Westminster currently has one separated Small Dog Area, located at the Queen's Park OLA. Approximately 60% of survey respondents would like the Separated Small Dog areas expanded to include shy or senior dogs, as well as dogs in training.

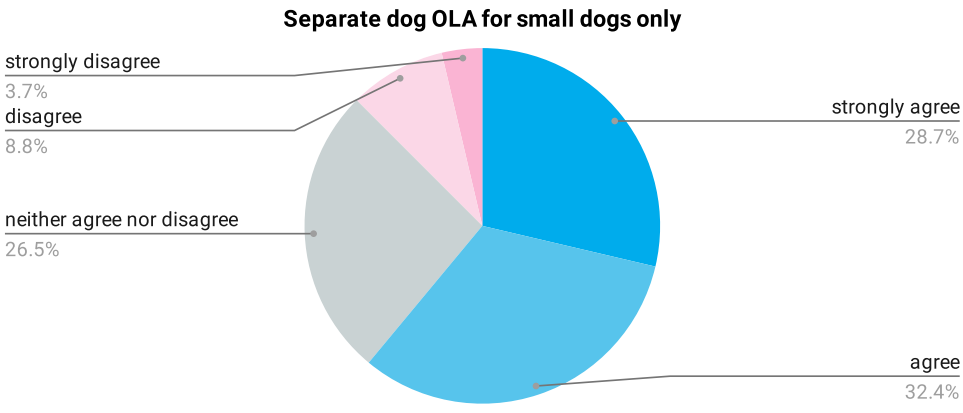


Fig 3.4 Small dog areas at park OLAs: Survey results

3.2 AMENITIES

3.2.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Amenities are a key aspect of successful off-leash spaces, as they are key to attracting and sustaining use.
- Off-leash areas located in more densely populated areas are likely to have more concentrated use, and therefore a greater investment in durable and engaging features is recommended in these areas.
- Consider exploring private and public funding opportunities to fund 'Special Amenities'(see Section 5)

3.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt 'Standard' amenities to be provided at all off-leash areas in New Westminster, according to their typology. Ensure all new OLA spaces include standard amenities, identify amenity gaps at existing OLAs, and develop an implementation plan to provide them within a target timeframe.
- Generate a funding and implementation strategy for adding 'Special' amenities, aiming to focus investment in OLAs with the highest-density service area, and prioritizing amenity requests that have been clearly communicated in the public engagement process for this strategy. Refer to Appendix 4.0 Engagement Summary Report.
- Engage local residents, city staff, and a Registered Professional Biologist in the process of reviewing opportunities to add lighting to off-leash areas.
- Evaluate existing OLAs to identify opportunities to extend the space with a "separable" area connected to the larger OLA space, with a gate that can be closed at the user's discretion. Include signage with etiquette guidelines for the use of "separable" areas.
- Introduce a one-year long Pilot Project to revise the separated small dog area at Queen's Park to become a "separable" area (as described above). Engage OLA users in the process of evaluating its success.

3.3 SURFACING

Identifying successful surfacing options for off-leash areas is a challenge for many municipalities. Most dog off-leash area visitors prefer grass, but this is not a durable surfacing option and often turns to mud in wet winter conditions. The selection of surface materials for off-leash areas should be informed by intensity of use, site drainage, maintenance demands, capital costs, and topography. A variety of materials can be used to support different intensities of use and to provide a range of surfacing experiences.

Municipalities that share a wet winter climate, including Portland, Oregon and Surrey, BC have found that fine crushed gravel (also referred to as 'crusher dust' or 'granite screenings') is the most successful material for high use areas, as long as smell and dust is managed. It is recommended that gravel particles be no larger than 7mm (0.25 inch) in size. Feedback received in the engagement process informing this Strategy included complaints about gravel surfacing, noting some small dogs avoid walking on it, and the gravel particles can damage paws.

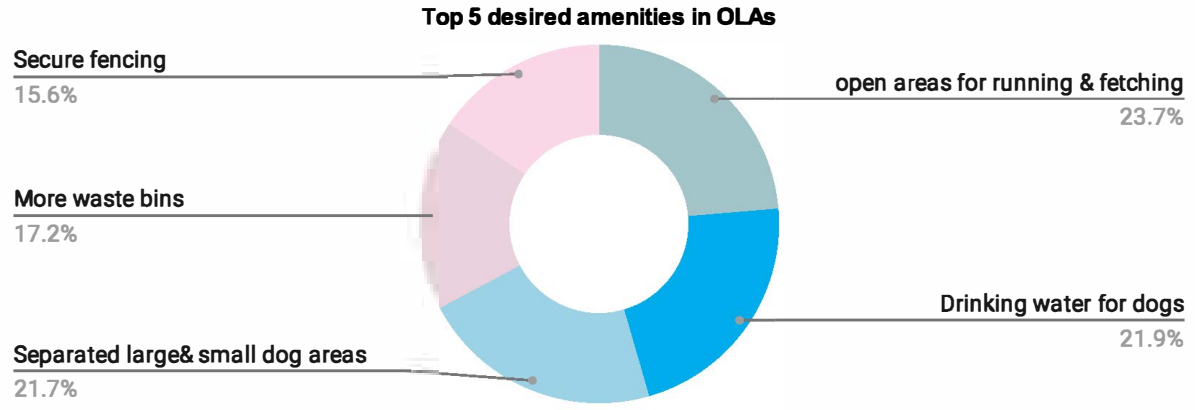


Fig 3.5 Top 5 desired amenities in OLAs: Survey results

New Westminster has had success surfacing OLAs with wood chips, using material recycled from tree pruning activities. While this material is generally considered to be soft on paws, is does require frequent "topping up" and is not recommended for areas with poor drainage.. The City of Surrey, however, is finding success with the use of cypress wood shavings or sawdust often used in equestrian facilities.

Other durable surfacing options include pet-friendly artificial turf or pour in place rubber. These options are more expensive, and are recommended for areas with a high concentration of use.

When selecting surface materials it is important to manage drainage effectively. It is recommended that areas of poor drainage include an engineered sub-surface, designed to prevent ponding and maintain the quality of the surfacing. Avoid diverting stormwater runoff from OLAs into the municipal stormwater infrastructure, as runoff may be contaminated from dog waste. Infiltrate runoff in suitable locations, and engage a professional Biologist to assess risk when runoff may be negatively impacting adjacent ecological areas.

3.3 SURFACING

3.3.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- OLAs with higher concentration of use should have greater investment in durable, engaging amenities and surfacing in order to better support the intensity of use.
- The selection of surface materials should be informed by the usage intensity of the site, comfort and safety for dogs, durability, drainage, and cost.
- There is divergent opinion regarding the use of gravel surfacing in off-leash areas. Gravel surfacing can facilitate drainage can be designed for wheelchair accessibility, however it may hurt paws. Maximum recommended gravel particle size is 7mm.
- Water runoff from dog off-leash areas or parks with high numbers of dogs should be directed to infiltrate in an appropriate location where it will not introduce excess nutrients and pathogens to surface water.

3.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Select surfacing for OLAs based on an evaluation of anticipated level of use, drainage considerations, maintenance requirements, comfort and safety for dogs, and cost. Refer to 'Surfacing Materials' Table.
- Focus investment in surfacing for OLAs with the highest-density service area, and prioritizing amenity requests that have been clearly communicated in the public engagement process for this strategy. Refer to Appendix 4.0 Engagement Summary Report.
- Identify existing OLAs with gravel surfacing where OLA park visitors have highlighted challenges with the surfacing. Evaluate whether the gravel particle size exceeds the recommended 7mm diameter, and engage local OLA visitors in a process to evaluate surfacing options.

SURFACING MATERIALS

GRASS

Grass or other groundcover plants (e.g. native meadow species) are recommended for large, open, well-draining areas. However, these areas can be easily damaged in areas of high use, however, resulting in bare soil or muddy conditions.

CRUSHER DUST

Crusher dust (also known as decomposed granite, crushed stone surfacing, or fine gravel), is well-suited for pathways and areas of high use, such as entry locations. If it is well prepared and maintained it can accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility aids. A 7mm minus aggregate is recommended for good compaction.

CONCRETE ASPHALT

Concrete or asphalt are recommended for paths that are highly used in winter, and for areas around dog wash stations or drinking fountains. Surfaces should be designed to direct runoff to infiltration areas. Concrete or asphalt may also be considered for areas of concentrated use, such as entries to fenced dog parks.

SAND AND PEA GRAVEL

Sand and pea gravel can be useful surfaces in poor-draining areas, but both typically require some containment to prevent these materials from scattering into adjacent surfaces.

SYNTHETIC TURF

Synthetic turf is recommended in areas of high concentrated use where washable surfacing is needed. Consider options to use reclaimed materials, such a repurposed artificial turf sourced from athletic field replacement.

WOOD CHIPS

Wood chips are an economical surfacing option that supports the re-use of local materials, by using wood from tree pruning activities. Wood chips require regular 'topping up', and use is cautioned in areas with poor drainage.

3.4 VEGETATION

Providing trees and planting within off-leash areas can enhance seasonal interest and scent, and improve the micro-climate to create a more enjoyable park space. Low plantings or areas of taller grasses at dog off-leash areas can be used strategically to break up sightlines at the dogs' eye level, thereby helping to reduce conflict between dogs.

Plants for dog off-leash areas should be durable and kept low for increased visibility for other park users, where appropriate. Ensure dog off-leash areas are kept free of wild grasses with barbed seeds, such as "spear grass" which can harm dogs. Check the ASPCA database of poisonous plants to ensure vegetation in off-leash areas is not toxic to dogs. Negative impacts on existing vegetation by dogs may include digging, urinating, or trampling due to high intensity dog activity.

Trees and plantings in off-leash areas are prone to damage from trampling, digging, root compaction, and the negative effects of dog urine on vegetation. Strategies to protect vegetation include:

- Restrict dog access to planted areas by integrating raised planters and/or protective edging such as boulders or low fencing.
- Install low fencing or barrier edging around the perimeter of newly planted or immature trees (at minimum protect the area within the drip line; larger areas are likely more beneficial).
- Engage an Arborist to identify tree protection measures specific to each OLA site
- Locate higher intensity use areas, such as seating areas and entries, away from existing vegetation
- Maintain a thick layer (~100mm) of wood mulch over any areas of exposed or sensitive root systems
- Use signage to remind owners to discourage dogs from digging in planted areas

3.4.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Uric acid can damage trees and vegetation, and rapidly degrade metal tree grates.
- Dog activity can damage vegetation and compact soils.
- Trees and plants can be toxic to dogs and humans, and some grasses have needle-like seed heads that can damage paws and embed in fur. Consult resources including the ASPCA database of poisonous plants to ensure vegetation is suitable for use in off-leash areas
- Providing trees and vegetation in OLAs can help shade exposed areas and create a more comfortable microclimate.
- Vegetation, together with topography, can be used to help reduce conflict between dogs by breaking up sightlines at the animal's eye level.

3.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate vegetation in consideration of sightlines for dogs and people, in order to provide shade in exposed areas, and enhance seasonal variation and scent.
- Install protective edging around trees and other planted areas to prevent dogs from compacting the root zone and damaging vegetation.
- Design vegetated areas in consideration of maintenance requirements, and incorporate native planting where suitable.
- Assess existing vegetation in OLAs to determine plant health and potential impacts from dog activity, and implement vegetation protection measures as needed.

3.5 BOUNDARIES

Whether fenced or unfenced, it is necessary to clearly define off-leash area boundaries. All of the existing off-leash areas in New Westminster are fenced, therefore the boundaries of these off-leash areas are clearly defined. OLAs that are fully enclosed with secure fencing are more suitable in more compact urban environments, where it is less feasible to provide generous setbacks between the OLA and other park activities or land uses. Providing fully fenced areas also enhances the safety and comfort of park visitors with and without dogs.

The height of fencing used for off-leash areas varies. While dogs may be capable of jumping over fencing less than 1.8m in height, tall fencing can obstruct sightlines and make park space feel uncomfortable. A fence height of 1.2m is used by many municipalities, as this provides a clear sightlines for park visitors while clearly marking the extent of the designated off-leash area. Gates for fenced OLAs should be designed to facilitate universal access, limit opportunities for dogs to escape, and be located to minimize congestion.

Natural boundaries such as un-mown areas or forest edges are used to define the edges of off-leash areas in Calgary, Alberta, and a combination of wood posts and signage are used as boundary markers in some unfenced off-leash areas in Portland, Oregon. However, many municipalities are moving towards fencing all off-leash areas in order to promote safety and mitigate less compatible adjacencies.

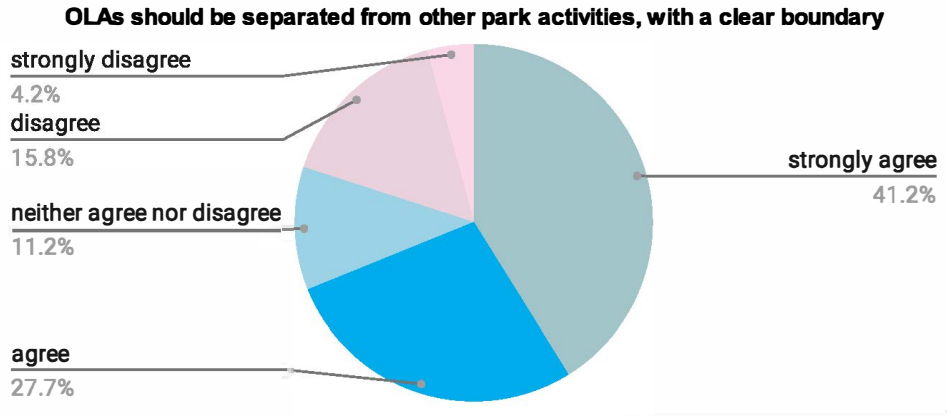


Fig 3.6 Boundaries in OLAs: Survey results

The City of Toronto requires that off-leash areas within parks 2 acres and under must be fenced.

3.5.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Conflict can result from lack of clarity about the extents of the designated off-leash area. All OLA boundaries should be clearly identified by physical makers.
- Signage with maps of the OLA boundaries can help clarify the extent of the OLA area, and can identify the location of other OLA areas within proximity.
- The selection of appropriate boundary tools should be based on an assessment of the potential for conflict with adjacent park and neighborhood uses, existing site features, site circulation, and input from local park users.
- Consider the use of bollards, topography and vegetation where a more permeable boundary is suitable.
- Double-entry gates reduce the chance of off-leash dogs escaping when new people or dogs arrive at the site.
- Entry gates should promote universal access, and be designed in consideration of those with mobility devices and seniors. Include a kick plate, and limit the weight of the gate so it is operable by a range of park visitors.

3.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clearly define dog off-leash area boundaries using a combination of secure and permeable tools depending on the adjacent park uses, land uses and existing site features.
- Provide accessible, double-gated entrances at all fenced Park OLAs. Locate gates away from corners to reduce “pinch points” at entries
- Provide 2.4m wide lockable gates for maintenance vehicle access, at all fenced Park OLAs.
- Develop a standardized gate design for OLAs, based on the accessible gate at Queen’s Park OLA. Engage experts as required to refine the gate design to promote universal access.

3.6 SIGNAGE

"Signage educating owners on dog behaviour and contact number for a licensed dog trainer would be helpful."

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

The boundaries of all dog off-leash areas should be delineated with signage. Signage content and placement should minimize visual clutter, while providing information for people with and without dogs to help manage expectations about park use. Key considerations include:

- Clear and concise messaging
- Simple, accessible language
- Graphic symbols in addition to text
- Consistent visual language at all sites so that dog off-leash areas are readily recognized

Messaging for in-park signage will vary depending on the type of sign and its purpose, such as identifying boundaries of dog off-leash areas, etiquette, by-laws or educational signage.

Signage can play a key role in promoting safety in off-leash areas. Survey respondents identified that the number one reason they let their dogs off-leash in unsanctioned areas is "I have had safety concerns or anticipate safety concerns in designated off-leash areas". Posting rules or etiquette guidelines at the OLA sets expectations for the use of the space, and the responsibilities of dog owners.

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES		
ENTRY SIGNS	**BOUNDARY SIGNS**	**EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE**
Entry signage should include: • Etiquette for using dog off-leash areas • Map of dog off-leash area boundaries • Cite relevant by-laws • Contact information (i.e. for by-law enforcement, reporting damage or maintenance requirements, emergency contact information) • Notice area to share information about dog off leash area events, training opportunities, services etc. • Notices when dog disease cases, including zoonotic diseases, have been identified in the area (e.g. parasites, bacterial infections kennel cough, etc.)	Boundary signs should be located regularly in unfenced dog off-leash areas, clearly identifying the extent of the designated off-leash area, and clarifying which side of the boundary marker is on leash and which side is for dogs off leash.	Signage can be a valuable tool to educate the public about health and safety concerns related to dogs in public spaces, including waste management signage. There should be highly visible signage in multiple locations within the Off Leash Area to encourage owners to pick-up and properly dispose of dog waste. Signage should reference the Off Leash Area rules and accompanying penalties, but can still be written in a humorous tone to encourage compliance.



Fig 3.7 Sample of current OLA rules signage

3.6.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Effective signage is critical in shared-use parks with a combination of on-leash and off-leash areas.
- Off-leash areas that are not completely fenced should include signage with a map identifying the extent of the designated off-leash zone, together with on-the-ground markers such as bollards or vegetation.
- New Westminster updated their dog signage in 2018. When the municipality updates these signs again, consider adopting a more playful tone and incorporating graphics and symbols to communicate to a broader audience.

3.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop signage guidelines for each off-leash area Typology.
- Signage and boundary maps should be posted at all park entry points and at off-leash area entrances to alert all park visitors to the presence of off leash activity.
- Signage should indicate the extent of the designated off-leash area, cite relevant bylaws, and provide contact information for Animal Services and Park Operations, as well as etiquette guidelines for OLA use.
- Consider providing community notice boards at Park OLAs, for local residents and the municipality to share information relating to the off-leash area and dog-related activity in the city. Notice boards should include an area for municipal staff to highlight key health and safety information, such as reporting outbreaks of kennel cough, and other infections and diseases.
- Review existing OLA rules and guidelines in a process in a process that engages local residents, and integrate this information into the standard signage for OLAs.

4.0 MANAGING OPERATIONS

4.1 Dog waste management

4.2 Licensing

4.3 Enforcement

4.4 Maintenance

4.5 Monitoring & Evaluation

4.1 DOG WASTE MANAGEMENT

Dog waste management is one of the major challenges associated with off-leash areas and dogs in urban areas in general. Key concerns related to dog waste include risk of pathogen transmission, water pollution caused by excess nutrients, use of plastic bags, and greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the US Department of Agriculture, "Dog waste contains nitrogen and phosphorus, which can deplete oxygen that fish and other water-based life need to survive, as well as encourage the growth of harmful algae. It is also considered a significant source of pathogens like fecal coliform, a disease-causing bacteria."[1]

Proper dog waste management is important to reduce the transmission of pathogens to wildlife and to surface water, as well as to other dogs and people. Stormwater runoff from areas with high numbers of dogs should be infiltrated in an appropriate location to avoid contaminating surface water with excess nutrients and pathogens.

REFERENCE

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture (https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2011/03/08/pet-waste-disposal-systems-help-protect-water-quality)



Fig 4.1 Dog waste management strategies: Survey results

In order to help protect water quality, it is important to collect dog waste so that bacteria and nutrients do not contaminate stormwater runoff and negatively impact water bodies downstream. However, the plastic bags that are often used to collect dog waste can also be a source of pollution and many municipalities including New Westminster are encouraging a shift away from plastic bags. Some municipalities report that the use of bags labeled "Biodegradable" leads to more instances of bagged dog waste being tossed in the bushes or left curbside, based on a misunderstanding that the material will break down naturally in a short period of time. In addition, many municipalities find the cost of supplying biodegradable bags challenging, particularly when there is little ability to ensure bags are equitably distributed when they are offered free of charge.

Educational initiatives that identify the environmental and health risks associated with poor dog waste management may be effective. The city of Kirkland, Washington recently published a report on Pet Waste: Bacteria Monitoring, Outreach and Education. This included information on impacts to water quality, and an awareness campaign that included flagging uncollected dog waste.[1]

While New Westminster currently incinerates most of its waste, many municipalities in the Vancouver area have invested in a separated dog waste program in order to divert dog waste from the landfill where it is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases. A private company is engaged to separate the dog waste from each bag containing it, so that the waste alone can be sent to the wastewater treatment plant.

The most effective strategy to reduce the amount of uncollected dog waste, according to survey respondents, is to provide easily-identifiable dog waste bins that are designed for ease-of-use and regular collection (see figure 4.1).

REFERENCE

1. City of Kirkland (https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/public-works/2020-kcd-pet-waste-final-report.pdf)

4.1 DOG WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.1.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS



Fig 4.2 Sample of current dog waste signage

- Bins specific for dog waste can be collected more frequently to help manage foul odor, particularly during summer months.
- Bins specific for dog waste can reduce the chances of inadvertent contact and contamination, particularly when dog waste is kept separate from recyclables.
- Providing bags for dog waste may encourage collection. The cost of supplying and managing dog waste bags can potentially be offset through private partnership agreements.
- Educational campaigns can be an effective tool to promote dog waste collection.
- Involving children in educational campaigns can be an effective way to create generational change and this can also result in behavioural change of the parents, as children pass on the information.
- Dog Parklets can help manage dog waste in highly paved areas such as the Downtown core, provided these spaces are regularly cleaned.
- Asses stormwater runoff in parks with a lot of dog activity, to reduce environmental pollution from uncollected dog waste.
- Riparian buffers help filter pathogens and keep animals from defecating near water bodies.
- Bioretention strategies such as rain gardens can help infiltrate stormwater and protect water quality.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA
A person who keeps a dog must immediately remove any excrement deposited by the dog, and deposit it in a suitable refuse container. (This does not apply to the dog owner's property)

CALGARY, ALBERTA
Animal waste must be packaged into securely tied double plastic garbage bags and placed inside your waste containers for collection.

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
Dog waste can be collected in a plastic bag and thrown in the garbage.

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
Put small amounts of pet waste in tightly sealed bags together with household garbage.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO
Flush it down the toilet or wrap it in absorbent paper and place it in a sealed, leak-proof bag with regular garbage, in quantities of less than 11% by volume of the total garbage bag or can.

GUELPH, ONTARIO
Property owners are responsible for the removal and sanitary disposal of any excrement. (Maximum fine $5000)

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
Flush it down your toilet or double bag and dispose with your regular garbage collection.

Source: https://www.cpha.ca/scoop-poop

4.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Locate waste bins in convenient locations for dog owners to deposit dog waste. Considerations for waste management include:
    - a bin that is identifiable and easy to use (i.e. no lifting a lid);
    - a complimentary outreach campaign for responsible disposal of dog waste; and
    - a regular collection schedule.
- Develop a dog waste signage strategy that is playful in tone, and coordinated with other OLA signage to create consistent, clear messaging. Consider including information about the impacts of dog waste on water quality.
- Work with community groups and schools to deliver educational programs about dog waste management.
- Engage a RPBio to assess off-leash areas such as Quayside that are located within the riparian setback and make recommendations to help mitigate pollution from dog waste.
- Encourage stratas to provide biodegradable bad dispensers at key access entry and exit points.

4.2 LICENSING

Municipal bylaws require all dogs in New Westminster to be licensed. In 2020, New Westminster issued over 3400 dog licenses, but it is likely that the dog population is significantly greater (see section 1.6 for additional information).

New Westminster's fees for dog licensing are relatively low compared to neighbouring municipalities, and there are no additional fees charged for dogs deemed aggressive, vicious or dangerous, as defined by municipal bylaws (see Appendices- Licensing Fees).

Increased licensing compliance would generate a more accurate estimate of New Westminster's dog population, which would help effectively manage resources related to dog activity. For example, dog licensing statistics help inform park planning including the provision of designated off-leash areas and investment in the amenities and maintenance of these areas.

Benefits of dog licensing also include emergency protection; licensed dogs are listed on the emergency pet registry so emergency responders know to look for them in an emergency and licensure helps reunite dogs with their owners if they go missing.

4.2.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Linking resources generated from dog licensing directly with investments in dog-related amenities may increase licensing compliance.
- In Burnaby, Surrey, and the District of North Vancouver, B.C. licensing fees are higher for dogs deemed aggressive, vicious or dangerous (as defined by their bylaws).
- Richmond, B.C. stipulates a maximum of three (3) dogs per one or two family dwelling units and two (2) dogs per multiple family dwelling unit.
- Many municipalities, including New Westminster, offer a discounted licensing fee for spayed or neutered pets.

4.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage veterinarians to offer dog licensing in combination with annual vet checkups.
- Identify opportunities to promote dog license renewal and make payment more convenient, such as at offering renewal services at community events.
- Develop a "rewards" program so that owners of licensed dogs can access discounts at participating pet stores, or access training resources.
- Consider introducing a license requirement for commercial dog walkers, coordinated with a bylaw that identifies the maximum number of dogs per handler, training criteria for handlers, and approved areas for use by commercial dog walkers.

4.3 ENFORCEMENT

"There needs to be more active enforcement of current bylaws."

Public Engagement 2

Effective bylaw enforcement is key to supporting the safety of people and dogs. It is important that bylaws are clearly written, specific, and enforceable; the offence, fine, and the dispute resolution process should be clearly identified.

In order to promote the comfort of all park visitors, including those with and without dogs, it is important for people to know when and where to expect dog off-leash activity. However, one of the top challenges of off-leash areas according to survey respondents is "Keeping off-leash activity to designated off-leash areas." In order to restrict off-leash activity to designated areas, it is important for those areas to be engaging, so they attract and sustain use (see Section 3).

The provision of designated areas for off-leash activity needs to be supported by bylaw enforcement of unsanctioned off-leash activity. New Westminster residents have identified that they want to see more enforcement of unsanctioned off-leash activity, particularly in key areas (see figure 4.3 & Appendix for Engagement Summary Reports). There is a perception among survey respondents that unsanctioned off-leash activity is not enforced, and that active enforcement may lead to greater bylaw compliance.

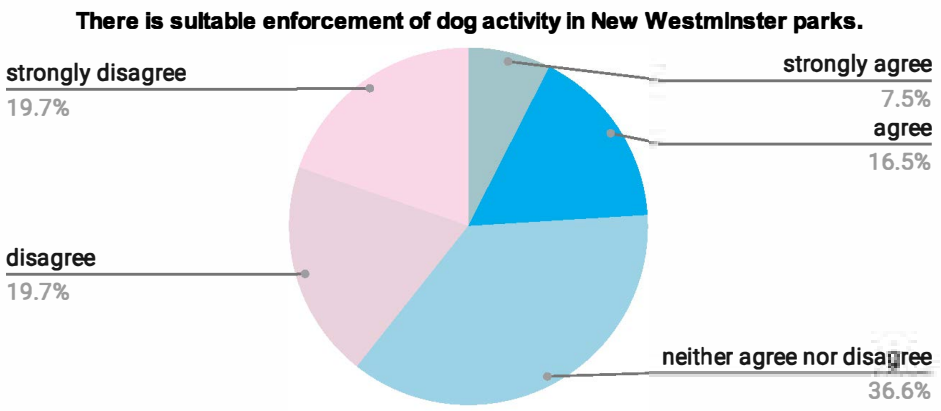


Fig 4.3 Enforcement of Dog Activities in New Westminster: Survey results

Regulating leash length can also help people feel safe and comfortable around dogs when they are on leash, and was requested in the engagement process informing this Strategy. The city of Burnaby identifies a 2 meter maximum leash length, and in Vancouver the maximum length is 2.5 meters. Current bylaws stipulate a 1 meter maximum leash length for aggressive and vicious dogs, but there is no criteria for leash length generally.

New Westminster residents also want to see more enforcement related to uncollected dog waste (see Section 4.1, figure 4.1). Many municipalities have struggled to enforce bylaws relating to dog waste, as it can be very challenging to link the infraction directly to the dog owner, and educational campaigns may be more effective.

Increased enforcement, together with educational campaigns, are also recommended to help protect environmentally sensitive areas that are impacted by unsanctioned off-leash activity.

Striking a balance between enforcement and education is important to maintain positive relationships between the municipality and its residents. Educational campaigns implemented in combination with a visible increase in enforcement can be an effective way to focus limited resources.

4.3 ENFORCEMENT

4.3.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Bylaws relating to dog activity should be consistent, enforceable, and relevant.
- Enforcing leashing bylaws in parks and open spaces can help people with and without dogs feel more comfortable and safe.
- Active enforcement can help encourage compliance with bylaws.
- Limiting leash length can help regulate dog activity in areas of high pedestrian activity and areas of multi-modal transportation.



Fig 4.4 Sample of current dog leashing signage

4.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate with Animal Services to identify priority locations to regulate unsanctioned off-leash activity, and implement a plan for increased enforcement supported by educational outreach.
- As staff capacity allows, coordinate with Animal Services to track details of bylaw infractions related to dog activity in parks and open space, including the offence, the location and date, and the fines imposed or other disciplinary or educational action taken. Establish goals to measurably increase enforcement.

4.4 MAINTENANCE

Maintenance of off-leash areas is very important in order to attract use and help support a pleasant experience for park visitors.

Off-leash areas should be designed for the efficient use of limited maintenance resources. Waste bins should be designed and located to facilitate collection, surfacing should be durable and well-draining, circulation should be accessible and designed to avoid pinch points and paved in areas of concentrated activity, and amenities should be durable.

Local residents can support maintenance of off-leash areas directly through various stewardship initiatives (see Section 5), or by alerting municipal staff to maintenance needs. For example, New Westminster's '*SeeClickFix*' app could be promoted and developed as a communication tool between staff and residents about maintenance requirements at off-leash areas.

Maintenance requirements should be taken into consideration during the planning and design of new off-leash areas, to support the effective management of these spaces. For example, the planning and delivery of Dog Parklets needs to be supported by a robust maintenance plan in order to be successful; these small spaces are designed for areas of high residential density, and will need to be frequently washed and dog waste bins emptied regularly.

Vegetation can play an important role in off-leash areas, helping with stormwater management, improving the microclimate, adding scent and texture, and breaking up sightlines between dogs (see Section 3.4). Maintenance of planted areas can be facilitated by providing low fencing or barrier edging at the perimeter of vegetated areas, selecting native and low-maintenance species, and engaging local residents (see Section 5).

4.4.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Areas with high concentration of use need to be supported with greater investment in maintenance resources.
- Tracking maintenance resources over time can help municipalities effectively plan and manage resources.
- Dog Parklets will need to be supported by a robust maintenance plan in order to be successful.

4.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify high, medium and low priority improvements for each off-leash area with an implementation plan that includes target timelines and resource planning.
- Develop a regular maintenance plan for OLA's and dog parklets. Monitor the Dog Parklet pilot project to help identify maintenance requirements for this typology.
- Track staff time and resources invested in each off-leash area to help inform resource planning.
- Promote the '*SeeClickFix*' app for reporting off-leash area maintenance issues to municipal staff.
- Identify an annual budget for OLA maintenance and upgrades with increases commensurate with population growth.

4.5 EVALUATION

Engage local residents in the process of evaluating existing off-leash areas, and to help identify what is and isn't working well when considering dog activity in New Westminster's parks and open spaces. Input can be formally solicited, such as through statistically valid phone surveys, or informally, such as engaging municipal staff to conduct intercept surveys with visitors in parks.

Evaluate existing off-leash areas to identify gaps where further investment is needed in order to meet the recommendations of this Strategy, including designing for Universal Access. Assessment should include identifying adjacent park or land uses and whether setbacks or fencing meets the recommendations, identifying whether standard amenities are provided, conducting accessibility audits, and evaluating the condition of surfacing, fencing, site furnishings, signage and vegetation.

Tracking safety incidents and complaints related to each off-leash area is another valuable indicator of areas that need improvement in order to promote the safety and comfort of all park visitors.

4.5.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Local residents can play a key role in identifying what is and isn't working well in off-leash areas.
- Municipalities such as Vancouver (BC). Calgary (AB), and Edmonton (AB) and Strathcona (AB) have established lists of evaluation criteria that are used to assess off-leash areas.

4.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct an audit of each off-leash area to evaluate universal accessibility, including circulation routes to the OLA, gates, paths within the OLA, seating, fountains, amenities and signage. Identify target timelines and a phasing plan to address gaps.
- Develop a standardized form to evaluate dog off-leash areas. Confirm whether Standard Amenities are provided, and evaluate the condition of fencing, surfacing, amenities and signage in order to facilitate resource planning. Include an assessment of adjacent land and park uses.
- Develop a tracking system to consolidate safety and maintenance information for each off-leash area. Consolidate input from Animal Services incident reports, phone calls and emails to municipal staff, data from '*SeeClickFix*' and other relevant sources. Evaluate this data regularly in order to identify priority areas for improvements.

5.0 WORKING TOGETHER

5.1 Stewardship

5.2 Funding

5.3 Education initiatives

5.4 Community supported initiatives

5.1 STEWARDSHIP

There is often significant interest among local residents in helping care for, or steward their local off-leash area. Local businesses might also be interested in adopting one of these spaces, such as a Dog Parklet located in the downtown area. Volunteer efforts can play a valuable role in the success of these spaces, from helping to educate and model responsible dog ownership, to light maintenance tasks.

Numerous municipalities including Portland, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Calgary encourage the formation of volunteer-based committees to be involved with the stewardship of individual off-leash areas. The city of Edmonton has a formal partnership with Dog Off Leash Ambassador groups across the city who visit off-leash areas on a regular basis to answer questions, note maintenance concerns, and redirect any user questions to appropriate municipal contacts.

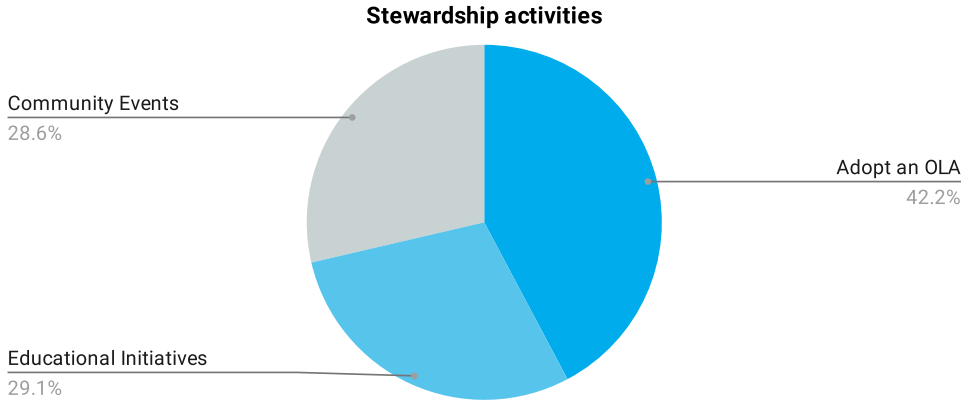


Fig 5.1 Successful stewardship activities: Survey results

In Seattle, the volunteer group Citizens for Off Leash Areas (COLA) helps steward OLAs. Their activities include general cleanup and maintenance, alerting municipal staff to areas in need of repair, and working with Parks staff on site improvements such as fence maintenance and rehabilitating surfacing and planting. COLA volunteers are responsible for maintaining the kiosks where off-leash area rules and community notices are posted, and help remind users of OLA etiquette. They also sponsor educational workshops, and fundraise for amenities.

Standalone stewardship events can also be successful, and help connect local residents with off-leash areas. For example, a hands-on community service program in Berkley, CA, provided an opportunity for university students to fill holes and spread wood chips in off-leash areas.

New Westminster residents believe that adopting an OLA will be the most successful stewardship activity (see Figure 5.1). This strategy can strengthen connections between each off-leash area and its local community.

"It would be great to have a couple of 'Shared Space Ambassadors' who would explain the rules and expectations..."

Public Engagement 2

5.1 STEWARDSHIP

5.1.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Numerous municipalities encourage volunteer-based committees to help care for individual off-leash areas. Duties often include light maintenance work, such as picking up dog waste and filling in holes dug by dogs.
- Regular visitors to an off-leash area can help alert municipal staff to maintenance needs and animal care concerns. Review opportunities to facilitate easy communication between local residents and municipal staff.
- Music and snacks can help provide a lively and engaging atmosphere at OLA 'Clean Up' events and work parties.

5.1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Initiate a stewardship program for local residents, community groups, residents associations, businesses, and other organizations to adopt an off-leash area.
- Formalize stewardship responsibilities for adopting an OLA, and establish how stewards will coordinate with municipal staff.
- Provide stewards with resources such as safety training, materials, tools and personal protective equipment (as required) for light maintenance work.

"Create a face book page for New West dog owners and coordinate clean up and maintenance days"

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

5.2 FUNDING

Off-leash areas need sufficient investment in order to attract use and keep off-leash activity limited to designated areas, which helps promote the comfort and safety of all park visitors. These areas, and the surfacing in particular, need to support more concentrated use than most other park amenities, and require sufficient resources to support their maintenance and operation.

The majority of municipalities surveyed (see 'Precedent Research' in Appendix) obtain the largest percentage of off-leash area funding from their general parks budget; this is generally available for new construction as well as maintenance.

Other potential sources of funding or in-kind support include:

- **Private sponsorship**: Surrey, B.C. and Calgary A.B. both use private sponsorship to fund extra amenities at off-leash areas. Surrey engages a private contractor to provide dog waste bags in parks in exchange for advertising space on in-park kiosks. Other municipalities have pursued sponsorship agreements through advertising, dedications and naming rights.
- **Community fundraising:** Volunteer fundraising is used to fund non-standard amenities at off-leash sites, such as in Calgary, A.B.
- **Private Partnerships**: Toronto (ON). recommends that new multi-unit residential developments include pet relief areas, pet wash stations and outdoor off-leash areas. Edmonton (AB) recommends partnering with community groups and organisations to develop privately-run off-leash areas.

- **Alternative Spaces:** Some municipalities recommend utilizing alternative spaces such as rooftops on city-owned parkades (Vancouver, BC), underutilized road or utility right-of-ways (Winnipeg, MB) and reaching out to local universities, schools or other large campuses for use as temporary off-leash sites.
- **Licensing Fees:** Revenues from dog licensing fees may be used to directly support the maintenance and operation of off-leash areas. Review options to increase dog license fees and to add permitting fees for commercial dog walkers. Municipalities such as Vancouver, B.C. note that there may be greater licensing compliance if dog owners can see a direct link between revenues from licensing fees and investment in off-leash areas.
- **Volunteer support:** In Seattle, the volunteer group Citizens for Off Leash Areas (COLA) helps support these spaces. In 2014, 8,124 hours were invested by 739 volunteers, and in 2015, 5,825 hours were invested by 611 volunteers[1].

REFERENCE

1. Seattle Parks and Recreation: People, Dogs and Parks Strategic Plan, 2017

5.2 FUNDING

5.2.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Fundraising and sponsorship initiatives may be more successful when supported by an engaging, creative outreach campaign with a clear project purpose and outcome.
- There are likely grants available that could be used by local residents and community groups to support off-leash areas, such as constructing custom agility features. Review opportunities to integrate community-built features in off-leash areas, and consider developing guidelines outlining best practices for their construction. Post grant opportunities in OLAs and online.
- Review opportunities to engage private construction companies or developers to construct Dog Parklets and custom agility features for Park OLAs.
- Consider opportunities to engage private sponsors for Dog Parklets, providing advertising space and / or naming rights in exchange for funding construction and maintenance costs for a specified period of time.

5.2.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pursue private sponsorships and community fundraising for special amenities in off-leash areas.
- Review opportunities to establish a sponsored design/ build event to provide new Dog Parklets, and how such events could be a platform for educational initiatives related to dog activity in the city.
- Track annual maintenance and operations cost for off-leash areas, and establish an annual budget with increases proportional to population increases.
- Review options to increase dog license fees and to add permitting fees for commercial dog walkers.
- Evaluate opportunities to transfer revenues from dog licensing fees directly to support off-leash area maintenance, and make this connection transparent to the community.

5.3 EDUCATION

"When an owner gets a licence or renews it whether online or in person they must read and sign a document. That document should outline the dog waste protocol as well as the fines for not following the rules. The document should also contain other important information for dog owners."

Participant Input, Phase 2 Engagement

Educational initiatives can play a valuable role for dog owners and non-owners alike, and can help make our parks and open spaces more inviting. Through education, we can better understand dog behaviour and how to identify risk, learn how dogs can impact wildlife, ecology and water quality, and be informed about local bylaws and best practices.

Educational initiatives can be sponsored, organized by volunteer groups, or offered by the municipality. Tools include in-park signage, online resources including videos, public outreach campaigns, and school programs. These initiatives can also foster stewardship, by encouraging community members to help care for off-leash spaces.

One of the most valuable outcomes of educational initiatives is increased safety, and understanding dog behavior can play a key role in this. Educational resources can help people learn to recognize when a dog is at ease or when it is stressed and may need to be separated from other dogs or people. The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants offer free posters online, to help identify dog behaviour that communicates fear or aggression, and what the owner can do in response. [1]

Another valuable topic is responsible pet ownership. Calgary offers an online training program for its Off-Leash Ambassadors, so that participants better understand the bylaws relating to dogs and the responsibilities of dog owners. Through its Off-Leash Ambassador Program, Calgary also offers free in-park training on dog recall and Toronto offers city-run dog obedience courses. Vancouver provides educational documents online such as '*A dog's guide to living in the City of Vancouver*' and '*Training Rex in the City: Basic Obedience for Dogs*' for educational purposes.

Some municipalities have partnered with organizations such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) for educational events.

REFERENCE

1. International Association of Animal Behaviour Consultants (https://m.iaabc.org/resources/dog-posters/)

5.3.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Review opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities and organizations and share the cost of generating educational resources that can be shared online, free of charge.
- Educational workshops can help promote safety for dogs and people in our city's parks and open spaces. These could be held in OLAs, parks, or other community spaces, and could include topics like OLA etiquette, understanding dog behaviour, dog waste management and licensing.
- Suggested topics for educational initiatives include:
    - Understanding dog behaviour, such as recognizing signs of playfulness and signs of stress.
    - Managing aggressive behaviour in dogs
    - Dog training resources, such as formal courses and in-park educational sessions with professional trainers.
    - Ecological protection, such as how dog activity can impact environmentally sensitive areas and how uncollected dog waste can impact water quality.

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage an animal behaviour expert to help generate educational resources on dog behaviour and OLA etiquette in order to promote the comfort and safety of all park visitors and dogs. Consider integrating this material on signage posted in off-leash areas, and as video resources online.
- Collaborate with environmental organizations to deliver educational programs that raise awareness of how dog activity can impact environmentally sensitive areas and how uncollected dog waste can impact water quality.
- Identify opportunities to integrate educational initiatives relating to dog activity in the city with other community events, in order to engage a broader audience.

5.4 COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Fig 5.2 Yellow Dog Project signage

There are numerous opportunities for New Westminster to create a more dog-friendly environment, in a way that is mindful that not everyone feels comfortable around dogs.

Providing safe opportunities for people to socialize with dogs can help educate people about dog behaviour, and can promote feelings of social connection and support mental health.[1]

In Vancouver, the Vancouver Public Library and St. John's Ambulance recently introduced an innovative program inviting people to read outdoors with a therapy dog. Dogs could be "checked out" for 15 minute sessions in a local park. These highly-trained dogs provide an opportunity for people to have a safe and comfortable interaction with these animals.

The concept of dog "cuddle" benches, or designated seating areas, has also been promoted based on the idea that this could help connect people with dogs that enjoy being pet and are comfortable around strangers. However, such informal arrangements would likely not be restricted to highly-trained therapy dogs, and considerations to help ensure safe interactions, such as establishing etiquette guidelines, would be necessary.

At the other end of the spectrum are dogs that need more space from other dogs or people. The *'Yellow Dog Project'* is an initiative that helps promote the comfort and safety for everyone, by using a yellow ribbon on the dog's leash to indicate it needs more space. Municipalities can support this project by installing informative signage in parks (see Figure 5.2)

REFERENCE

1. Ontario SPCA (https://ontariospca.ca/blog/benefits-of-pets-for-our-mental-health/)

Businesses can be dog-friendly by offering fresh drinking water or dog treats. Where feasible, they may also allow pets indoors, or provide an area to tie-up your pet on the patio beside you. Apps such as *PawSwap* highlights dog-friendly businesses and events, and offers a rewards program (see Figure 5.3)

Similarly, Toronto has a *BluePaw Partner* program that encourages pet licensing by offering discounts at participating businesses from dog walking services to veterinarians.

Cities are making efforts to include dogs in a wider range of urban activities, though often on privately owned land. For example, Washington Park in Cincinnati was developed as a private-public partnership and hosts a wide range of programming, including dog-themed events where your pet can make paw print art and join in outdoor movies. In Atlanta, a full-service dog park has been developed, complete with a bar, outdoor TVs, dog bath stations and play features. Those without a dog can attend with no entrance fee.

Public parks can also be a venue to support dogs in the community. Events like New Westminster's *Woofstock* and Pawfest can help animate the city's park spaces, bringing people together in a fun atmosphere. These events can be a platform for educational initiatives relating to dog activity in the city, and an opportunity to promote responsible pet ownership.



Fig 5.3 Signage identifying dog-friendly business

