



**STAFF REPORT  
ACTION REQUIRED**

**People, Dogs and Parks Strategy – Off-Leash Policy  
Review**

<b>Date:</b>	December 16, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Parks and Environment Committee
<b>From:</b>	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

**SUMMARY**

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The “People, Dogs and Parks Strategy – Off-Leash Policy,” enacted by Council in 2007 after several years of research, assessment and extensive public debate, provides a framework to address the provision of dogs off-leash areas in City parks, greenspaces, and waterfront areas. Since enactment, staff have completed reviews on 65 of 85 applications (grandparented and new sites).

On the basis of this experience with application of the policy, this report advances a number of refinements to provide greater clarity to the assessment criteria; streamline the decision-making process; and better link consideration of dogs off-leash requests to community need, overall park planning and development, and financial sustainability. The proposed revised policy is contained as Attachment 1 to this report, with supporting amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 608 – Parks, set out in Attachment 2.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that City Council:**

1. approve the revised Off-Leash Policy with amendments outlined in bold print, in Attachment 1, subject to any necessary minor substantive, or stylistic refinements as may be identified by the General Manager; and
2. direct the City Solicitor to make the corresponding amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 608 - Parks to implement the revisions to the Off-Leash Policy, as

outlined in Attachment 2, subject to any necessary minor substantive or stylistic refinements as may be identified by the General Manager and the City Solicitor.

## **Financial Impact**

City Council, under the 2009 Capital Program, for the first time, approved funding for the installation and improvement of dogs off-leash areas in the amount of \$1.5 million. An amount of \$1 million has been approved in the 2010 Capital Budget. Adoption of the recommendations in this report will establish a closer relationship between implementation and ongoing operation of dogs off-leash areas and the Division's capital program of parks redevelopment and development of new parks, with no direct incremental funding beyond current levels.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

City Council, at its meeting of July 16, 17, 18, and 19, 2007 adopted the "People, Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy" and, among other things, directed the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to the Parks and Environment Committee on the effectiveness of the Off-Leash Policy after implementation (Item PE7.3).

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/cc/decisions/2007-07-16-cc11-dd.pdf>

Subsequently, City Council at its meeting of July 15, 16 and 17, 2008 referred a motion, "Minimum Park Size for the Creation of New Off-leash Areas in City Park", to the Parks and Environment Committee for its consideration (Item MM23.10).

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/decisions/2008-07-15-cc23-dd.pdf>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Fair and equitable allocation and programming of the City's parklands for a vast range of users with diverse and constantly evolving needs requires a continual balancing of competing interests. Among other things, access and accommodation for dogs and their owners has long been a consideration in the management of the parks, both at the system-wide and local levels. The issues are often highly emotional, on both ends of the spectrum. The "People, Dogs and Parks Strategy," enacted by Council in 2007 provides a comprehensive framework to address the provision of dogs off-leash areas in City parks, greenspaces and waterfront areas. When considering the policy, Council incorporated specific amendments to recognize the social benefits of dogs in parks.

## **COMMENTS**

City Council, in July 2007, adopted the "People, Dogs and Parks Strategy – Off-Leash Policy" as well as associated amendments enacted at the same time to Municipal Code Chapter 608 – Parks. This policy was the culmination of extensive work over a number

of years. The efforts involved the collaboration of community groups, associations, political representatives, City staff, subject experts and residents – including both those who own dogs and those who do not. Methods included research on the practices of a wide range of national and international municipalities, assessment of earlier pilots and the extensive public engagement and input process that informed the development of the policy.

## **Pre-existing Off-Leash Areas**

Prior to Council enacting the current policy in 2007, 32 dogs off-leash sites were in operation (pre-existing). The policy specifically addressed these pre-existing sites, providing that:

“Existing off-leash areas that are working well will be grandparented. Staff will work to apply the new criteria and rules of engagement, including establishment of dog-owners’ associations, agreements, and dog licensing requirements to these areas. In addition, staff would work with groups to make adjustments to these areas to improve overall functionality, including fencing, seasonal adjustments, and alternate locations.

Pilot projects and “hot-spots” – those off-leash areas that have had a series of complaints from community members, local councillors or where by-law enforcement officers have been called on to attend on a complaint basis – will be assessed immediately on a priority basis to determine their continuation.”

Council also addressed the impact of the pre-existing off-leash areas on Natural Environment Areas through the following amendment it enacted to the policy:

“These areas that fall within existing off-leash sites will be reviewed on a site by site basis by appropriate representatives of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to determine suitability and possible amendments.”

On the basis of this framework for grandparented locations, staff reviewed the 32 pre-existing sites, with the following outcomes:

- review completed, no changes to site required, continues to operate as-is (12 locations);
- review completed, significant upgrades constructed and operational, or under construction, as part of larger park improvement initiatives (3 locations);
- review completed, adjustments (fencing, surface, etc.) constructed and operational, or under construction (4 locations);
- review completed, adjustments (fencing, surface, etc.) planned, site continues to operate as-is in interim (7 locations);

- review completed, pre-existing off-leash area closed or relocated (2 locations); and
- pre-existing off-leash area continues to operate as-is, but under review as part of larger park planning initiatives (4 locations).

Attachment 3 provides a more detailed summary of each site. It is noted that significant staff resources have been needed to review the 32 pre-existing sites and carry out public consultation where necessary. Staff have spent many hours consulting and meeting with Ward Councillors, interest groups and communities, including multiple meetings for some highly contentious locations, to seek consensus on the off-leash area location adjustments required to meet the Council-approved policy criteria, determine conditions of use, identify dog owner association contacts and obtain their sign-offs on the Conditions of Use, as stipulated in the policy. The locations that are still being processed also involve parks planning or design issues beyond dogs off-leash areas.

With respect to implementing the range of improvements noted to pre-existing locations as well as new applications, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division received dedicated funding under its capital program for the first time in 2009. Implementation of many of the improvements anticipated this year was delayed as a result of the labour disruption affecting the heart of the construction season. A number of the projects are now under construction or will proceed in spring 2010.

### **Assessment of New Applications Under the Policy**

In addition to the 32 pre-existing off-leash sites, 11 applications had been received at the time the policy was adopted by Council but not implemented (denoted as “pending”) and 42 further applications have been received since. The status of these applications is summarized as follows:

- review completed, not suitable for off-leash site, no further action (24 locations);
- review, design and public consultation completed, off-leash area constructed, or under construction (5 locations);
- review, design and public consultation completed, construction scheduled (8 locations);
- review and design completed, public information meeting scheduled or pending (10 locations); and
- review and design in progress or pending (6 locations).

Attachment 4 provides a more detailed summary of each application.

With respect to processing applications for dogs off-leash areas, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has implemented a more systematic methodology to assess applications and communicate information. A project lead approach has been instituted, whereby one staff in Parks, Forestry and Recreation has overall carriage and internally brings in the expertise of all affected Divisional groups (Parks supervisors, landscape architect, forestry, capital construction, communications, etc.). This person is the key point of contact for any questions or concerns about the particular project. Once the Divisional review is completed, the results, including plans, will be compiled more formally than has been done in the past, in a technical staff summary report, for discussion with the affected Ward Councillor. Preparations will then be formulated jointly for a public consultation process, including the public information meeting.

At the present time, the Division's Parks Branch plays an over-arching co-ordination role for all dogs off-leash reviews carried out under the policy. As the process evolves and aligns more closely with a parks capital, planning and budgeting perspective, staff are developing refinements to the internal processes to reflect this planning-centred approach. This will further evolve as the Parks Service Plan advances in the months ahead.

### **Off-leash Area Construction Considerations**

Concurrent with developing and refining its internal assessment procedures, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has also dedicated considerable effort toward off-leash area amenity and construction standards. These measures are intended to bring a level of consistency and certainty to these installations, but at the same time provide a menu of options to reflect local conditions. For example, some of the park locations are highly urban, while others comprise more natural settings. The features being developed are intended to reflect these circumstances.

The main elements being considered are surface treatment, fencing and gates, tree protection, drainage, hygiene and irrigation, and furnishings. The development of various options (for example, four styles of fencing have been developed) takes into account safety and maintenance considerations, but also seeks to blend aesthetic elements.

Not including the grand-parented sites where no changes were required, some level of construction or installation has taken place, or is underway (by the end of January 2010) at 15 off-leash sites, ranging from comprehensive construction projects to more modest installations.

### **Recommended Policy Refinements**

Application of the policy has resulted in 65 completed reviews since its enactment in 2007. Ample experience with the policy parameters has pointed to a number of refinements that could:

- i) provide greater clarity to the assessment criteria guiding the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's analysis of off-leash requests;
- ii) streamline the decision-making process; and
- iii) better link consideration of dogs off-leash requests to community need, overall park planning and development, and financial sustainability in the context of budget considerations.

Attachment 1 provides the recommended revisions to the "People, Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy". Attachment 2 outlines proposed amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 608 – Parks to support the recommended policy adjustments.

### **Linking Dogs Off-Leash Requests to Capital and Parks Planning**

Currently, applications for dogs off-leash areas are not formally addressed in a broader context of overall parks planning and development. Under the current policy, the reviews centre solely on a specific park space or location requested, and do not account for such factors as availability of other existing sites, neighbourhood demographics, potential for an off-leash area to be established at a nearby site, etc.

The Division also has concern about the financial sustainability of implementing and maintaining the off-leash areas. On average, the cost of constructing a three-quarter acre off-leash site is \$150,000, for proper fencing, gates, drainage, irrigation, surface, paths, tree protection and furnishings. Currently off-leash areas are maintained as part of the regular park maintenance program within the existing operating budget. As the number of off-leash areas and their intensity of use increases, enhanced maintenance programs are required to address deteriorating surfaces, tree health, drainage issues and provide surface irrigation for sanitary purposes.

It must be acknowledged that this program is one component of many in the roster of Parks, Forestry and Recreation responsibilities and services and, therefore, must be viewed in this context. Playground equipment, sports fields and facilities, recreation centres, washrooms and general park maintenance all vie for limited capital and operating funding, and the Division currently faces a large funding shortfall in state of good repair in many of these.

The proposed policy revisions would steer the dogs off-leash process from the current discrete, ad hoc approach to carrying out reviews of new requests under the Division's capital process for park redevelopment and new park development as a matter of routine. This is similar to other large cities in Canada.

The criteria for such consideration outlined in the attached policy includes such factors as: neighbourhood characteristics (population density, housing types, licensed dog population, existing and other potential off-leash areas within a reasonable walking distance of 15 minutes / 1 kilometre); the park's design, established uses and features;

potential impacts on the park's functionality, condition and natural environment; the proportion of park to be taken up by an off-leash area; and its proximity to residences, in order to determine the most suitable location within the neighbourhood.

### **Managing Off-Leash Areas in Small Parks and Parkettes 2 Acres and Less**

In reviewing the motion to set a minimum size for establishing off-leash areas in parks (which suggested a minimum 2 acre threshold), staff recognize that there are challenges with setting out off-leash areas in smaller parks, as there are with the provision of various amenities and facilities for other user groups. However, there are demographic and geographic constraints to this approach. There are 679 City parks that are less than 2 acres in size and 791 City parks that are more than 2 acres. Most parks less than 2 acres in size are situated in the inner areas of the City, where the demand for off-leash areas is highest, due to high-density residential development with limited or no greenspace available.

If a strict size limit criteria such as 2 acres, was to be included in the Off-Leash Policy, many parks in inner city neighbourhoods and the downtown would be automatically deemed unsuitable and the needs of Toronto's residents and their pets would not be met in the area of the City where the highest demand occurs.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff are recommending an improved approach that would both meet the needs of the City's dog owners and protect the sensitive areas within parks where dogs should not be allowed to run freely. Staff are recommending that new off-leash areas should only be established within neighbourhood parks and parkettes that are 2 acres or less, where there are suitable spaces that can be completely enclosed with fencing and gates. This would allow for an off-leash area to be established in a smaller park, yet provide an appropriate physical barrier between other established uses that are incompatible with the off-leash area. Due to the limited space, Commercial Dog Walkers would be prohibited from using these off-leash areas and the area would be posted accordingly.

There are currently five successful off-leash areas in parks that are either 2-acres in size or smaller. Off-leash areas can transform the activities and uses of a park. Some of these parks previously had issues with loitering and illegal activities and are now active spaces where dog owners go to play, socialize and exercise their dogs.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation is assessing types of surfaces other than turf that are more sustainable for off-leash activities such as wood mulch, stone mulch and high performance bedding with the appropriate site irrigation and drainage, especially for neighbourhood parks and parkettes that are 2 acres or less.

## **Specific Policy Refinements**

- **Dog Owner Association (Attachment 1, Page 12)**

In the revised Off-Leash Policy, staff are recommending removal of the requirement that a local Dog Owner Association be established in order to apply for an off-leash area. This requirement has prevented the establishment of new off-leash areas that have been assessed and which would otherwise meet the policy criteria.

Notwithstanding this recommendation, active Dog Owner Associations can significantly contribute to the smooth implementation and ongoing operation of dogs off-leash areas. The Division encourages and would continue to work with such groups.

- **Procedure for New Off-Leash Areas**

Following the objectives set out above to better integrate the review of dogs off-leash requests with parks planning, development and budget processes, on a go-forward basis, new off-leash areas would be considered as part of the capital budget process for the redevelopment of existing parkland and development of new parkland using the dogs off-leash policy criteria. The Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff review process for requests for dogs off-leash areas will take into consideration the local neighbourhood and park characteristics to determine if a proposal for a new off-leash area in a particular park meets the criteria, or if there is a more suitable location within the neighbourhood. Suitable sites will be included in the capital budget cycle. The applicants would be advised of site's suitability for their request. Once the applications on file have been processed, staff are recommending the discontinuation of the formal application process.

- **Location Criteria - Neighbourhood Characteristics (Attachment 1, Page 14)**

As noted previously, it is recommended that the review of dogs off-leash area requests be linked much more closely with the overall parks planning, development and budgeting processes. New location-type criteria are proposed in the revised policy to ensure this perspective is considered in the various assessments. Consideration will be given to the local neighbourhood characteristics, population density, housing types, licensed dog population, proximity of existing and other potential off-leash areas within a reasonable walking distance of 15 minutes / 1 km, potential impacts on the park's functionality, condition and natural environment, proportion of park to be taken up by the proposed off-leash area, proximity to residences and off-leash area exclusions and ability to meet the policy criteria to determine the most suitable location for an off-leash area in the neighbourhood.



- **Off-Leash Area Exclusions (Attachment 1, Page 14)**

In addition to the excluded areas identified in the existing policy (e.g., playgrounds, sportsfields, waterplay areas, ornamental gardens) that are not considered suitable for off-leash use at any time, it is recommended that additional exclusions for designated Memorial, Heritage, Commemorative and Ceremonial areas in parks be added to the policy.

Criteria for the Natural Environment excluded areas for off-leash use have been revised in Attachment 1 to better define and clarify where an off-leash area will not be approved.

“Alternative Sites” has been removed from the policy. It is recommended that only properties owned or managed by the City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division be considered for designated off-leash areas to ensure that the Division does not incur future unfunded expenditures, such as property tax reimbursement payments to Hydro One for the use of hydro corridor lands.

- **Off-Leash Area Fencing Requirements (Attachment 1, Page 15)**

Fencing around off-leash areas that meet the policy criteria is required if these areas are located within the vicinity of an area that is excluded, such as, a playground, sportsfield, ornamental garden, etc. This requirement would apply particularly to smaller parks and be mandatory for those that are 2 acres or less in size. Existing fenced-in, off-leash areas are listed in Attachment 3.

For all other off-leash areas, fencing or other physical delineation compatible with the site is required around off-leash areas that meet the policy criteria.

- **Pre-existing Off-Leash Areas - Delete**

This section is no longer required. Review of all original 32 sites that were in existence prior to the Council approved policy are either completed or well in progress under current policy provisions. As a result of the completed reviews, staff have confirmed that two of these sites did not meet the policy criteria. Accordingly, the off-leash designations at Jean Sibelius Square and Nordheimer Ravine were removed.

- **Off-Leash Area User Exclusions (Attachment 1, Page 15)**

Non-neutered male dogs are currently prohibited from entering off-leash areas under Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608 - Parks. In the revised policy, staff are proposing that these dogs not be excluded from off-leash areas, as this restriction is difficult to enforce and excluding them is too general. All dogs have the potential to behave aggressively, regardless of sex or sterilization status. The fact that a dog is not neutered does not automatically predispose the dog to being a menace to people

and other dogs. Since the inception of this policy, staff have not encountered any related complaints or problems with non-neutered dogs in existing off-leash areas, and, to date, no charges have been issued under the Municipal Code Chapter 608 - Parks. If approved, Chapter 608 shall be amended accordingly.

The Off-Leash Area User Exclusions section of the policy is being revised to exclude any dogs that must be muzzled or leashed in accordance with an order issued under Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349 - Animals or the *Dog Owners' Liability Act* ("DOLA"). These dogs may either have had a history of aggression, or have been identified as a Pit Bull under DOLA and Pit Bulls must be muzzled and leashed. It would be unsafe to expose a dog that is muzzled and leashed to unmuzzled and unleashed dogs. If approved, Municipal Code Chapter 608 – Parks, shall be amended accordingly.

In the revised policy, staff are recommending the addition of a new requirement that Commercial Dog Walkers be prohibited from using certain off-leash areas that are deemed unsuitable, due to their limited size and/or proximity to residences. For example, although a small off-leash area may be suitable to meet the needs of local residents, it may not be suitable for use by commercial dog walkers who may bring four to six dogs at one time into the area. Also, several dogs together in a small space can lead to overcrowding, barking, etc. which could disturb nearby residents. If this revision to the policy is approved, Municipal Code Chapter 608 - Parks will be amended to include a provision stipulating that Commercial Dog Walkers are not permitted in off-leash areas where signs are posted prohibiting them. Existing off-leash areas where commercial dog walkers are permitted are listed in Attachment 3.

The by-law to amend Municipal Code Chapter 608 - Parks, shall come into effect on the day after the set fine order is issued by the Regional Senior Judge of the Ontario Court of Justice.

- **Cancellation of Designated Off-Leash Area (Attachment 1, Page 16)**

Proposed amendments provide greater detail to this provision. A designated off-leash area may be cancelled by the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, under certain conditions, i.e., where the off-leash area is no longer being used on a regular basis, where extensive damage to the park or natural environment is occurring, where the park is no longer suitable for an off-leash area, conflicts between park users cannot be resolved or repeated, and/or ongoing non-compliance with the Code of Conduct and Toronto Municipal Code Chapters is occurring.

- **Appeal Process (Removed from the Policy)**

The process to appeal a decision to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to cancel an Off-Leash Area has been removed from the policy. This provision is redundant. In conjunction with the proposed policy framework refinements set out in this report, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division has

implemented changes to its procedures that will ensure that all affected branches of the Division are involved in the assessments, and the ultimate conclusion reflects a unanimous Divisional decision.

- **Enforcement and Fines (Attachment 1, Page 16)**

In addition to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349 - Animals and Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608 - Parks, dog owners and commercial dog walkers must comply with Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591 - Noise, the *Dog Owners' Liability Act*, R.S.O. 1990 and all other relevant laws, by-laws, policies, rules and regulations.

## **Public Education and Communication**

The People, Dogs and Parks Off-Leash Policy requires ongoing communication and public education to inform target audiences of the changes to the policy, locations of off-leash areas, benefits of responsible pet ownership and pet licensing requirements. Appropriate messaging will be disseminated to residents and park users through a variety of communication vehicles, including the Parks, Forestry and Recreation website.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Brenda Patterson,  
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Amendments to the People, Dogs and Parks Off-Leash Policy  
Attachment 2 – Proposed Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks  
Attachment 3 – Status Report: Grand-parented / Pre-existing Sites  
Attachment 4 – Status Report: New and Pending Applications

<b>People, Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy</b>	Approved By: Approval Date: July 4, 2007 Revision Date: October 27, 2009	
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<b>Policy Statement</b>	<p>The City of Toronto (the “City”) recognizes the social benefits of <b>dogs and their owners having access to and being accommodated within the parks system.</b></p> <p><b>This policy pertains to the provision of off-leash areas for dogs in City-owned or operated parks, greenspaces and waterfront areas (“City Parks”).</b></p> <p><b>Provision of these off-leash areas will be based on each neighbourhood’s characteristics and needs.</b></p> <p><b>Consideration must be given to balancing the needs and interests of the community, impact on the natural environment and sustainability of the off-leash area, when identifying appropriate locations for off-leash areas.</b></p> <p>The City further recognizes the requirement for responsible pet ownership within <b>City Parks.</b></p> <p>Dogs must be kept on leash at all times in all <b>City Parks</b> unless otherwise posted.</p>
<b>Procedure for New Off-Leash Area</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1) New off-leash areas will be considered in conjunction with capital redevelopment of existing parks or new park development against the policy criteria.</b></li> <li><b>2) A request for an off-leash area will be reviewed by staff from Parks, Forestry and Recreation and relevant staff in other City divisions against the criteria set out in the policy.</b></li> <li><b>3) Requests shall not be accepted in relation to property that is not owned or managed by City of Toronto Parks, Forestry &amp; Recreation Division.</b></li> <li><b>4) The Ward Councillor shall be notified by Parks, Forestry</b></li> </ol>

	<p>and Recreation staff of the request for an off-leash area and shall be kept apprised of the outcome of the review process.</p> <p>5) If the request does not meet the criteria for an off-leash area, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff shall advise the Ward Councillor and the applicant(s) in writing of the reasons why the location is not appropriate.</p> <p>6) Where Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division and other relevant staff have determined that the request meets the off-leash policy criteria and a suitable location within the neighbourhood has been identified, the request will be programmed in the capital budget / parks planning process.</p> <p>7) Notice of a neighbourhood meeting shall be provided to the Ward Councillor and the local community, as part of the consultation process when the existing park redevelopment or new park development is occurring.</p> <p>8) Notice shall be posted a minimum of 20 business days prior to the date of the meeting.</p> <p>9) Members of the public are encouraged to attend the meeting and provide comments on the park project, including proposed off-leash areas. Staff will take the public's input into account in finalizing the design of the park development.</p> <p>At the meeting, park project staff shall review the proposed off-leash area with the attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ overall project</li> <li>○ request for an off-leash area</li> <li>○ neighbourhood and park characteristics</li> <li>○ size and location of area</li> <li>○ slopes and their sustainability</li> <li>○ hours of operation</li> <li>○ rules and regulations</li> <li>○ fencing requirements or use of natural barriers where deemed appropriate</li> <li>○ signage</li> <li>○ tree or forest protection required</li> <li>○ amenities (lighting, seating, access to water for people and dogs, waste and recycling programs)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Off-Leash Area Fencing Requirements</b></p> <p><b>Pedestrian Pathways, Boardwalks And Linkages</b></p> <p><b>Off-Leash Area User Exclusions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>swimming beaches, with the exception of Kew-Balmy and Woodbine beaches from November 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> below snow fence line only</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Natural Environment Areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Areas protected by Municipal Code Chapter 658, Ravine and Natural Features Protection must be approved by Urban Forestry.</b></li> <li>• <b>Areas protected by Ontario Regulation 166/06 and lands owned by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) must be approved by TRCA. Criteria reviewed include, but are not limited to assessment of site in relation to hydraulic floodways, conservation of land, protection of watercourses / fish, habitat / groundwater and recharge / discharge zones</b></li> <li>• <b>Areas that have undergone tree / shrub / wildflower planting or where plans exist for such planting to occur</b></li> <li>• <b>Natural shorelines with natural vegetation that would be disturbed by compaction and foot / paw traffic</b></li> <li>• <b>Areas containing species of concern, including local or regionally uncommon, rare, threatened or endangered species</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Off-leash areas within parks 2 acres and under must be fenced.</b></p> <p><b>Off-leash areas to be located within the vicinity of the identified exclusions must be fenced.</b></p> <p><b>For all other off-leash areas, fencing or physical delineation compatible with the site is required around off-leash areas that meet the policy criteria.</b></p> <p>Dogs using these pedestrian areas must be kept on a leash no greater than 2.4 metres in length. Dogs and their walkers must stay to the right of the pathways at all times. Dogs shall not interfere with or obstruct other pathway users.</p> <p><b>The following dogs are not permitted in off-leash areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>female dog in heat</b></li> <li>• <b>any dog that must be muzzled or leashed in accordance with a notice issued under Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349, Animals or the <i>Dog Owners' Liability Act (DOLA)</i> or an order issued under DOLA</b></li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>dogs not licensed in the City of Toronto or the municipality in which the dog resides.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Commercial dog walkers, as defined in Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks, are not permitted in off-leash areas where signs are posted prohibiting commercial dog walkers.</b></p>
<b>Monitoring and Dispute Resolution Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks, Forestry &amp; Recreation staff shall track issues as they arise and shall liaise with dog owners / walkers using <b>the off-leash area</b>, By-law Enforcement, Animal Services and other park users in an effort to resolve issues as effectively as possible.</li> <li>• <b>Parks, Forestry &amp; Recreation shall monitor the off-leash areas.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Cancellation of Off-Leash Designated Area</b>	<p>Designation of an off-leash area may be cancelled by the General Manager of Parks, Forestry &amp; Recreation where in the opinion of the General Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the off-leash area is not being used on a regular basis;</b></li> <li>• <b>extensive damage to the park and / or natural environment is occurring</b></li> <li>• <b>the park is no longer suitable for an off-leash area.</b></li> <li>• <b>conflicts between park users cannot be resolved</b></li> <li>• <b>repeated, ongoing non-compliance with the Code of Conduct for off-leash area use posted at each off-leash area and the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapters.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Enforcement and Fines</b>	<p>Dog owners / walkers and commercial dog walkers must comply with Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 349 Animals, Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 608 Parks, <b>Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 591 Noise, the Dog Owners' Liability Act, R.S.O. 1990, and all other relevant laws, by-laws, policies rules and regulations.</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_349.pdf">http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_349.pdf</a></p> <p>.</p> <p><a href="http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_608.pdf">http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_608.pdf</a></p>
<b>Liability</b>	<p>Dog owners/ walkers and or commercial dog walkers are legally responsible for their own dog(s) and any injuries or damage caused by their dog(s). Individuals who choose to use off-leash areas do so at their own risk.</p>



**Proposed Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 608, Parks**

The following shall be added to Chapter 608, Parks after Section 608-34A(4):

- A. While in a park, no person as owner or person having control of a dog shall:
  - (5) Allow a dog to enter a designated off-leash area if the dog is required to be equipped with a muzzle or secured by a leash under:
    - (a) A notice issued under Chapter 349, Animals; or
    - (b) The *Dog Owners' Liability Act* or an order issued under that Act.

Section 608-34B(6) is deleted and replaced with the following:

- B. While in a park, every person as owner or person having control of a dog shall:
  - (6) Ensure that female dogs in heat are on a leash or chain at all times and do not enter a designated off-leash area.

The following shall be added to Chapter 608, Parks after Section 608-34.1B(3):

- C. While in a park, no commercial dog walker shall enter a designated off-leash area where posted to prohibit commercial dog walkers.

## Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: Grand-parented / Pre-existing Sites

Park Name	District	Ward	OLA Size (Acr.)	CDW *	Fenced	Status Update
<b><i>1 – Review Completed, no changes required, site continues to operate as is</i></b>						
DONALD RUSSELL MEMORIAL PARK	EY	6	1.00	Yes	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is. Land transfer between City and TDSB for the construction of the Weston Lions Arena is pending, at which point the use of the site will be re-evaluated.
WOBURN AVENUE PLAYGROUND	NY	16	0.13	No	Yes	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
SHERWOOD PARK	NY	25	3.00	Yes	Yes	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
CAWTHRA SQUARE PARK	TEY	27	0.24	No	Yes	No changes required, site continues to operate as is. Off-leash area was constructed in 2007 as part of the park development project prior to policy approval.
DAVID CROMBIE PARK	TEY	28	0.48	No	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
RIVERDALE PARK WEST	TEY	28	12.35	Yes	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
MONARCH PARK	TEY	30	3.10	Yes	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
CASSELS AVENUE PLAYGROUND	TEY	32	1.40	Yes	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
KEW GARDENS	TEY	32	6.39	Yes	Yes	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
NORWOOD PARK	TEY	32	0.40	Yes	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.

**Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: Grand-parented / Pre-existing Sites**

Park Name	District	Ward	OLA Size (Acr.)	CDW *	Fenced	Status Update
OAKCREST PARKETTE	TEY	32	0.31	No	No	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
WILDWOOD CRESCENT PLAYGROUND	TEY	32	0.35	No	Yes	No changes required, site continues to operate as is.
<b>2 – Review Completed, Significant upgrades completed or under construction as part of larger park improvement initiative</b>						
ALLAN GARDENS	TEY	27	0.78	Yes	Yes	Off-leash area constructed in 2008 as part of park development project.
DON VALLEY BRICKWORKS	TEY	29	1.35	Yes	Yes	Changes made as part of the park development project in 2008. Operated by Canadian Humane Society.
HIDEAWAY PARK	TEY	30	0.36	No	Yes	Review and consultation process led to development of a park refurbishment plan, including changes to the off-leash area. Construction of permanent improvements began on November 5 <sup>th</sup> , including fencing, irrigation, drainage, surfacing, and furnishings. In addition, new off-leash area also created at nearby Gerrard-Carlaw Parkette.
<b>3 – Review Completed, adjustments (fencing, surfacing, etc.) constructed and operational or under construction</b>						
SUNNYBROOK PARK	NY	25	2.96	Yes	Yes	Additional fencing added in 2009 to protect naturalized areas adjacent to off-leash area. No other changes required.
CEDARVALE PARK	TEY	21	2.77	Yes	Yes	Off-leash site was relocated out of the ravine to new location within the park. New fencing installed in 2008.
HILLCREST PARK	TEY	21	0.52	No	No	Partial fencing was added in 2008 to protect other features in the park from the off-leash area.

### Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: Grand-parented / Pre-existing Sites

Park Name	District	Ward	OLA Size (Acr.)	CDW *	Fenced	Status Update
GREENWOOD PARK	TEY	30	0.80	Yes	Yes	Construction of permanent improvements to off-leash area began on October 22, including fencing, gates, drainage, surfacing and furnishings. Alternate off-leash site to be set-up within the park while permanent off-leash area is under construction.
<b>4 – Review Completed, minor adjustments (fencing, surfacing, etc.) planned, site continues to operate as is in the interim</b>						
RENNIE PARK	EY	13	1.25	Yes	No	Review led to the pre-existing off-leash area being relocated from ravine to a more suitable location within park. Detailed fencing plan being developed in consultation with nearby school. Installation may commence in 2010. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
BICKFORD PARK	TEY	19	1.00	Yes	No	Assessment, public meeting and design process complete. Staff to refine detailed plan for submission to Councillor with construction target of mid-2010. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
TRINITY BELLWOODS PARK	TEY	19	1.80	Yes	No	Assessment, public meeting and design process complete. Construction of site enhancements including partial fencing to protect the naturalized areas can commence in 2010. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
VERMONT SQUARE	TEY	20	0.63	Yes	No	Assessment, public meeting and design process complete. Construction of site enhancements including fencing can commence in 2010. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
RAMSDEN PARK	TEY	27	1.00	Yes	No	Assessment, public meeting and design process complete. Construction of site enhancements including partial fencing to separate the off-leash area from surrounding pathways can commence in 2010. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.

**Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: Grand-parented / Pre-existing Sites**

Park Name	District	Ward	OLA Size (Acr.)	CDW *	Fenced	Status Update
WITHROW PARK	TEY	30	0.70	Yes	No	Review identified need to make some adjustments to better delineate uses in the park, provide better amenity in the off-leash area and control erosion and impacts on natural features. Staff to complete detailed plan and summary report for submission to Councillor. Staff and Councillor will discuss plan and formulate public consultation process, with construction target of mid-2010. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
SILVERBIRCH	TEY	32	2.00	Yes	No	Assessment and public meeting complete. Fence to be installed on the west side, delineating off-leash area from the swimming beach. Construction will begin after the completion of Toronto Water's project at RC Harris Treatment Plant. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
<b>5 – Review Completed, pre-existing off-leash area closed</b>						
JEAN SIBELIUS SQUARE	TEY	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not suitable due to the proximity of off-leash area to playground, horticulture beds and recreation green space. Designation was removed.
NORDHEIMER RAVINE	TEY	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not suitable as off-leash area was located in a designated ravine and has been relocated to nearby location - Sir Winston Churchill Park. Off-leash area designation was removed.
<b>6 – Pre-existing off-leash area continues to operated as is, but under review as a part of larger park planning initiative</b>						
HIGH PARK	EY	13	7.70	Yes	Yes	Complex site; off-leash area plan being developed in context of park planning and design study encompassing other uses and protection of natural environment. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.

### Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: Grand-parented / Pre-existing Sites

Park Name	District	Ward	OLA Size (Acr.)	CDW *	Fenced	Status Update
STANLEY PARK SOUTH	TEY	19	2.40	Yes	No	Review led to development of a refurbishment plan for the entire park. Changes to the off-leash area will be made as part of the park re-development plan. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
PARK DRIVE RESERVATION LANDS (Craigleigh Gardens)	TEY	27	1.10	No	No	Review in progress; requires further assessment and review of environmental protection needs. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.
CHERRY BEACH	TEY	30	10.90	Yes	No	Competing uses, including the off-leash area, Blue Flag beach and kiteboarding necessitate changes to the existing configurations, as directed by Council in Feb. 2009. Continuing to assess alternatives in consultation with stakeholders. Staff are reviewing a recently-completed arborist report with respect to tree protection requirements and working towards options. Site continues to operate in the interim as is.

\*CDW – Commercial Dog Walkers Allowed

#### Districts:

EY – Etobicoke, York District

NY – North York District

TEY – Toronto & East York District

## Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: New and Pending Applications \*

Park Name	District	Ward	History	Status Update
<b><i>1 – Review Complete, not suitable for off-leash area. No further action</i></b>				
KING'S MILL PARK (n/o Bloor)	EY	5	New Application	Site is not suitable under City or TRCA criteria, located within floodplain and in close proximity to a significant wetland.
MICHAEL POWER PARK	EY	5	New Application	Site is not suitable, located where existing uses and programs are taking place.
GRAND AVENUE PARK	EY	6	New Application	Site is not suitable due to contamination and redevelopment of the park including construction of sportsfields.
SENTINEL PARK (Hydro Corridor)	NY	8	New Application	Not a City owned or managed site - Toronto Hydro property. Would require property tax reimbursement payment to Toronto Hydro to proceed with the off-leash.
LITHUANIA PARK	EY	13	New Application	Site is not suitable, located near existing playground, sportsfield, and where existing uses and programs are taking place.
MAGWOOD PARK	EY	13	New Application	Site is not suitable under City or TRCA criteria, located within the ravine and in close proximity to storm floodplain and Magwood Sanctuary.
RAVINA GARDENS	EY	13	New Application	Site is not suitable, located within a designated ravine and on a sportsfield.
MACGREGOR PLAYGROUND	TEY	18	New Application	Site is not suitable, located on sportsfield.
EXHIBITION PLACE - MEDIEVAL TIMES - BASEBALL FIELD	TEY	19	New Application	Not a City owned or managed site.
RITA COX PARK	TEY	19	New Application	Site is not suitable, located in close proximity to horticulture beds and where existing uses and programs are taking place.

## Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: New and Pending Applications \*

Park Name	District	Ward	History	Status Update
ST. ALBAN'S SQUARE	TEY	20	New Application	Site is not suitable, located in close proximity to newly planted trees and where other activities are taking place.
EDITHVALE PARK	NY	23	New Application	Site is not suitable due to the park redevelopment project.
DAVID A. BALFOUR PARK	TEY	27	Pending Application	Site is not suitable, located in a ravine.
MOOREVALE PARK	TEY	27	New Application	Site is not suitable, located where existing mature trees are. Unable to provide tree protection or other remedial measures.
WELLESLEY PARK	TEY	28	Pending Application	Site is not suitable, located in a ravine.
SACKVILLE PLAYGROUND	TEY	28	New Application	Site is not suitable, located near existing playground and other established uses.
CROTHERS WOODS	TEY	29	New Application	Site is not suitable, located in a designated ravine and has undergone significant habitat restoration.
OAK PARK AVENUE LOT (EVERETT OPEN SPACE)	TEY	31	New Application	Site is not suitable at this time due to soil conditions. Will be revisited in conjunction with future capital remediation plan.
STAN WADLOW PARK	TEY	31	New Application	Site is not suitable, located near existing playground, sportsfields, and other established uses and programs.
TAYLOR CREEK PARK	TEY	31	New Application	Site is not suitable, located in a ravine, within TRCA's regional storm floodplain and an environmentally sensitive area.
ASHBRIDGE'S BAY PARK	TEY	32	New Application	Site is not suitable, located near shoreline habitat, vegetated areas, cycling and pedestrian pathways and picnic areas.
ROYWOOD PARK	NY	34	New Application	Site is not suitable, located on sportsfields.
BLANTYRE PARK	SC	36	Pending Application	Site is not suitable, located near existing playground, sportsfield, horticultural beds and newly planted trees.



**Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: New and Pending Applications \***

Park Name	District	Ward	History	Status Update
CATHEDRAL BLUFFS PARK	SC	36	New Application	Site is not suitable, located in close proximity to an environmentally sensitive area and TRCA's Terrestrial Natural Heritage System.
<b>2 – Review, Design and Public Consultation Complete. Off-leash area constructed and operating, or under construction</b>				
WYCHWOOD CAR BARNES PARK	TEY	21	New Application (Operating Site)	Off-leash area constructed in 2008 as part of park development project.
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL PARK	TEY	22	Pending Application (Operating Site)	Developed in 2008 as part of removal / relocation of off-leash area from Nordheimer Ravine.
GERRARD-CARLAW PARKETTE	TEY	30	New Application (Operating Site)	Temporary fencing was installed in 2008 to establish an interim off-leash area. Construction of permanent improvements to the off-leash area began on December 2, 2009 including permanent fencing, gates, tree protection and benches.
CORONATION PARK (TORONTO)	TEY	20	New Application (Operating Site)	Off-leash area constructed in 2009.
LEDBURY PARK	NY	16	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Off-leash area construction including fencing, gates, furnishing, and tree plantings commenced on November 30, 2009.
<b>3 – Review, design and public consultation complete. Off-leash area construction scheduled</b>				
ST. ANDREW'S PLAYGROUND	TEY	20	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Off-leash area construction including fencing, gates and tree protection to commence in January 2010.
KING'S MILL PARK (s/o Bloor)	EY	5	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Construction of the site to commence in 2010.
ORPHAN GREEN SPACE - 51 POWER STREET)	TEY	28	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Construction of the site to commence in 2010.

**Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: New and Pending Applications \***

Park Name	District	Ward	History	Status Update
BAIRD PARK	TEY	14	Pending Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Construction of the site to commence in 2010.
SORAUREN AVENUE PARK	TEY	14	Pending Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Construction of the site to commence in 2010.
MERRILL BRIDGE ROAD PARK	TEY	32	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Construction of the site to commence in 2010.
COLONEL SAMUEL SMITH PARK	EY	6	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Site set-up set to commence in January 2010.
HUMBER BAY PARK WEST	EY	6	New Application	Review, design and public consultation completed. Construction of the site to commence in 2010.

***4 – Review and design complete; public consultation meeting scheduled or pending***

BERESFORD PARK	EY	13	New Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable with seasonal adjustments. Public meeting to be scheduled in 2010.
EGLINTON PARK	NY	16	Pending Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable. Requires Dog Owners' Association representatives as per off-leash policy to move forward with public information meeting.
ELLERSLIE PARK	NY	23	New Application	Review completed. Public meeting was held in Fall 2009 and met with community opposition. Other neighbourhood sites to be considered by staff and a follow-up meeting to be scheduled in 2010.
SANDY BRUCE PARK	NY	26	New Application	Review and design have been completed. Public meeting held in Fall 2009 and some concerns with respect to the proposed layout were raised. Staff will refine the layout and a follow-up meeting will be scheduled in 2010.
LITTLE NORWAY PARK	TEY	20	New Application	Review completed. Site assessed as suitable. Public meeting held in Spring 2009. Follow-up with working / community group is required to refine location and site-specific details.

**Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: New and Pending Applications \***

Park Name	District	Ward	History	Status Update
ROSEHILL RESERVOIR	TEY	27	Pending Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable. Public meeting to be scheduled in 2010.
VIEWMOUNT PARK	NY	15	New Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable. Public meeting to be scheduled in 2010.
WILLIAM HANCOX PARKETTE	TEY	32	New Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable. Public meeting to be scheduled in 2010.
BOTANY HILL PARK	SC	43	New Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable. Public meeting to be scheduled in 2010.
WOODBINE PARK	TEY	32	Pending Application	Review and design have been completed. Site assessed as suitable. Requires Dog Owners' Association representatives as per off-leash policy to move forward with public information meeting.

***5 – Review and design in progress or pending***

HURON ST PLAYGROUND	TEY	20	New Application	Review in progress; outstanding for assessment.
WILLOWDALE PARK	NY	23	New Application	Review in progress; outstanding for assessment.
PINEWAY PARK	NY	24	New Application	Review in progress; outstanding for assessment.
ST. JAMES PARK	TEY	28	New Application	Review in progress; outstanding for assessment.
RIVERDALE PARK EAST	TEY	30	Pending Application	Staff assessment concludes park is suitable for off-leash area. Detailed design options were developed, taking into account need to mitigate impact on natural environment and slope erosion. Staff and Councillor will discuss options and formulate public consultation process with construction target of mid-2010.

**Dogs Off-Leash Areas - Status Report: New and Pending Applications \***

Park Name	District	Ward	History	Status Update
WARDELL PARKETTE (BRUCE MACKEY PARK)	TEY	30	Pending Application	Review in progress; Dog Owners' Association has been re-established. Assessment of options for provision of an off-leash area in this vicinity is being incorporated into the broader Jimmie Simpson Park Master Plan study. Further community meeting(s) will be held in spring 2010.

\* **New Applications - Applications received since the policy approved by Council in 2007.**

**Pending Applications – Applications received prior to enactment of policy but not processed until policy approval by Council in 2007**

**Districts:**

**EY – Etobicoke, York District**

**NY – North York District**

**SC – Scarborough District**

**TEY – Toronto & East York District**