

# **Attachment 3:**

## **Jurisdictional Review - Off-Leash Areas**

## Attachment 3: Jurisdictional Review – Off-Leash Areas

### Introduction

In response to City Council direction to develop a Citywide Approach to Dogs Off-Leash Areas ([2023.IE6.8](#)), Parks and Recreation (P&R) reviewed how 16 jurisdictions across North America approach OLAs. The jurisdictional review builds on the findings of the 2021 *City-Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas* and incorporates the five municipalities identified in Council's direction. The items researched as part of this review include how municipalities:

- Plan for new OLAs;
- Engage with communities;
- Design and build OLAs;
- Maintain OLAs;
- Promote responsible use of OLAs;
- Improve their existing facilities; and
- Review and monitor success of their approach.

The municipalities reviewed all had a policy or other strategy documents to guide their OLA decisions. A notable exception among large North American cities P&R contacted was Boston, where staff noted that the municipality does not have an OLA policy. Policies and strategies reviewed ranged in their scope and size. Windsor's policy, for example, focuses on the creation of new OLAs, and establishes governing rules and regulations for the development of these spaces. Most municipalities reviewed, however, had much broader strategy or plan documents that comprehensively address the creation of new OLAs (where they should go and what they should look like), how existing OLAs should be maintained and could be improved, and ways to strengthen the user experience, including by-law compliance.

Jurisdictional reviews are a useful part of policy development, but some caution is needed in interpreting the findings. Differences in a city's size, population density, legislative framework, fiscal approach, and numerous other factors must be considered when evaluating the results of a jurisdictional review. Nonetheless, the jurisdictional review for dogs OLAs revealed many shared challenges and some unique solutions to address them. The review also found areas of strong commonality, such as around certain design elements and provision criteria, but even within these areas, the details usually varied in accordance with the individual circumstances of each municipality.

This document outlines the methodology and details the findings for each of the elements researched first discussing how municipalities: (i) plan new OLA development; (ii) design and build new OLAs; (iii) maintain existing OLAs; (iv) engage communities; (v) facilitate responsible use of OLAs; (vi) improve their existing OLAs; and (vii) review and monitor success of their approach to OLAs. The jurisdictional review highlights many of the ways other cities have met similar challenges and offers insight into potential solutions Toronto could adapt to meet the municipality's unique circumstances. The best practices identified in the review informed *Toronto's Dogs Off-Leash Strategy*.

## Methodology

In total, P&R's review of best practices is based on analysis of 16 jurisdictions, 13 of which P&R conducted interviews with. This included an updated review of 13 cities examined in the development of the 2021 *City-Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas*. A full listing of jurisdictions reviewed can be found as an appendix to this attachment.

To conduct the jurisdictional review, P&R examined publicly available information, such as municipalities' website and policy, strategy, and/or procedure documents. P&R also sought interviews with municipal staff at all 16 municipalities, of which 13 agreed to the interview. These interviews allowed for additional and more nuanced information exchange. For the municipalities where P&R was unable to conduct an interview, some caution was used when evaluating their policy and/or strategy documents, as practice can deviate from policy, especially when the policy is not recent. Furthermore, P&R found that some of the municipalities reviewed were in the process of updating their policies, meaning the current or best practices discussed may be amended during their report drafting and council approval process.

## Findings

### Plan

#### Provision gap analysis and prioritization

Eleven of the 16 municipalities reviewed had a provision approach that included geographic catchment or service areas for their OLAs. These catchments sometimes varied with the size of OLA. The catchment area radii ranged from 800 m to 4 km, with seven municipalities having an additional driving or "by wheel" catchment area for prioritization, with radii ranging from 3 to 7.5 km.

Beyond a geographic catchment area, many municipalities also used other layers for prioritization during their provision gap analysis. These additional layers or considerations included current and anticipated population density, licensed dog density, and usage. Furthermore, certain municipalities sought to ensure a geographically even distribution of OLAs, or particular types of OLAs, by distributing them equally among wards, quadrants, or regions. The table below outlines the catchment radii and additional layers used for municipalities that included a provision analysis in their policy or strategy.

|                  | <b>Lowest<br/>"walking"<br/>catchment<br/>measure</b> | <b>Highest<br/>"walking"<br/>catchment<br/>measure</b> | <b>Driving<br/>catchment<br/>measure, if<br/>applicable</b> | <b>Other layers or<br/>approaches<br/>used, if<br/>applicable</b>                                      |
|------------------|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Vancouver</b> | 1.2 km  | 3 km   | 3 km  | Current and anticipated population density, licensed dog density, and size of OLA, with prioritization |

|                 |                 |  |                |   |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|----------------|---|
|                 |                 |  |                | given to areas without “reasonable” access to service   |
| <b>Surrey</b>   | 18 minutes      | Same   | 12 minutes     | Population density, licensed dog density, and community interest  |
| <b>Edmonton</b> | 15 minutes      | Same   | 15 minutes     | Proximity to existing OLA and 1 “District” OLA per quadrant   |
| <b>Calgary</b>  | 0.8 km          | Only Calgary’s smallest category has a walking catchment, the other two are driving catchments | 20 minutes     | Licensed dog density, geography, growth, user patterns, and alignment with the off-leash establishment checklist  |
| <b>Winnipeg</b> | 1.2 km          | 3.75 km  | 7.5 km         | The 1.2 km catchment is applied to all sites when mapping provision. Additional layers are: population density, licensed dog density, and sustainability. |
| <b>Portland</b> | 3.2 km          | Same   | Not applicable | No additional layers used   |
| <b>Seattle</b>  | 4 km            | Same   | Not applicable | Underserved areas ranked by acres per person in each council district   |
| <b>Denver</b>   | 0.8 km          | 1.2 km   | 4 km           | Current and anticipated population density  |
| <b>Halifax</b>  | No set distance | No set distance  | Not applicable | Service gaps as identified by distance and usage, current   |

|                    |                 |                 |                |  |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--|
|                    |                 |                 |                | and anticipated population, licensed dog data  |
| <b>Vaughan</b>     | No set distance | No set distance | Not applicable | Primary lens is geographic proximity to existing OLAs, secondary is population density                         |
| <b>Brampton</b>    | 2 km            | Same            | 5 km           | Capacity of nearby OLAs; 311 calls; potential for external funding; current and anticipated population density |
| <b>Mississauga</b> | 2.5 km          | Same            | Not applicable | No additional layers used  |
| <b>Windsor</b>     | 2-3 km          | Same            | Not applicable | Aim to distribute across city wards  |

Table: Catchment radii and additional layers used in provision analysis

#### Categorization of OLAs

Six of the municipalities reviewed categorize their OLAs into different groupings, such as “local,” “community,” “neighbourhood,” “regional,” and “destination.” The categorization corresponded to one or more of the following: different geographic catchment areas, service levels, and/or design features of the OLA. In these municipalities, the number of categories used varied from two (Vaughan and Vancouver) to four (Denver). These categorizations were mostly based on the size of the OLA, although they sometimes corresponded to special features such as being within a river valley or ravine area.

#### Procedure for evaluating requests for OLAs

Municipalities reviewed employ a wide variety of approaches to respond to requests for new OLAs. These range from desktop reviews by staff against service areas and resource constraints to formal processes that may include staff evaluation against set criteria, petitions, letters of support, committed funds (external to the city), and reviews by boards or committees. Ten of the municipalities reviewed had a procedure for responding to requests for new OLAs, with seven of those including as an early step an initial high-level review by staff of the feasibility of the request. In those cities, applications that did not pass the initial review were denied, allowing staff to focus resources on applications in service gap areas with potentially developable sites. In some cases, the procedures included timeframes for the initial application review; for example, Denver’s staff conduct quarterly reviews of applications for new OLAs while

Vancouver files and tracks incoming requests for analysis during the next capital planning process.

## **Design, Locate, and Build**

### Location Criteria – setbacks from other park and community uses

Every municipality reviewed had concerns with OLA directly abutting other park and land uses. The other space uses of concern generally included:

- Playgrounds, splash pads, wading pools, and children's play areas;
- Schools;
- Ecologically sensitive areas;
- Sports fields;
- Multi-use trails;
- Arterial or busy roads; and
- Community gardens.

About half of the municipalities reviewed, such as Mississauga, Vancouver, and Philadelphia prescribed setback distances, although in some cases, such as Vancouver and Brampton, the prescribed distance for certain setbacks could be reduced if the site was fenced. The other half of municipalities reviewed, such as Windsor, Vaughan, Halifax, and Portland, called for a separation and left the distance to be determined on a site-by-site basis as one of many factors to consider when siting an OLA. In interviews, municipalities generally expressed flexibility with setbacks and reported using a variety of tools, such as fencing and vegetative barriers, to mitigate the impact of OLAs on surrounding land uses.

### Size of OLAs

Comparing the size of OLAs among municipalities presents a significant challenge from Toronto's perspective. Many of the municipalities examined have a population density or distribution that is significantly different from Toronto's. Nonetheless, most municipalities faced similar challenges to Toronto in balancing OLAs with other park and neighbourhood land uses and fitting OLAs into spaces that are convenient for users, large enough for dogs to play in, and minimize disruption to other park and neighbouring uses.

The minimum size of OLAs varies significantly, ranging from 200 m<sup>2</sup> (New York City) to 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> or more (such as Windsor, ON and Surrey, BC). Many municipalities' minimum size was around 400 to 465 m<sup>2</sup>, including cities with similar population density to Toronto such as Vancouver, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Regardless of the minimum size specified, most municipalities expressed flexibility in practice, as their goal was to make a potential OLA site work if other criteria justified developing a new OLA in that community and park.

Generally, municipalities did not have an upper limit on the size of OLAs, and there was wide variance in the size of the largest OLA of each municipality. Some municipalities, however, were concerned with the overall size of an OLA relative to the rest of the park to ensure a balance of park space uses. Chicago, for example, notes that the size of the OLA should not exceed 3.5 per cent of the total park size, while Halifax states that the park should be at least 2.5 acres to accommodate an OLA.

### Fencing at OLAs

A slight majority of municipalities reviewed (9 of 16) required fencing or had most of their OLAs fenced. Some, such as Portland, were prioritizing fencing their unfenced OLAs. Fencing was generally 1.2 to 1.8 metres high. A few of the municipalities, such as Winnipeg, Halifax, and Calgary, mostly had unfenced OLAs, with fencing being primarily used to separate an OLA from an abutting sensitive land use, such as a playground or busy road. However, these municipalities have a much lower population density than Toronto's. Amongst the four municipalities reviewed with similar population densities to Toronto's, Chicago and Philadelphia require fencing while Vancouver and New York City have both fenced and unfenced OLAs. In Vancouver, however, as parks are renewed, they are reviewed against the municipality's criteria for fencing and often are fenced in that process. In New York City's case, larger OLAs are fenced while the unfenced OLAs often have time-of-use restrictions. New York City, however, also has a high number of enforcement officers per park or acre of park compared to many other jurisdictions, including Toronto, which may help make this a more feasible approach.

No policy or strategy reviewed had a procedure to review the need for fencing at an unfenced OLA. Most municipalities tended to have guidelines around fencing included in their policy or strategy documents which guided decisions during the development of the OLA. Both Portland and Vancouver, however, do review their fencing at sites and upgrade as appropriate and able. Portland is in the process of fencing more of their unfenced OLAs but did not have a specific procedure related to considering the introduction of fencing, rather, the municipality had made the decision to fence OLA where site conditions and resources allowed. Vancouver, which had numerous unfenced OLAs, reviews the fencing at sites against the criteria in their strategy during park renewals and adds fencing if appropriate.

### Surface material used at OLAs

Almost all municipalities use a variety of surface materials generally dependant on the size and anticipated usage of the OLA. Grass was the preferred surface material for most municipalities, with a range of secondary options such as woodchips/engineered wood fibre, artificial turf, and infield mix.

|                  | Grass | Woodchips, mulch, engineered wood fibre | Artificial or K-9 turf | Crusher dust, sand, or infield mix | Crushed gravel | Asphalt or concrete | Pea gravel |
|------------------|-------|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|
| <b>Vancouver</b> | ✓     | ✓                                       | (piloting)             | ✓                                  | ✓              |                     |            |
| <b>Surrey</b>    | ✓     |   |                        | ✓                                  |                |                     |            |
| <b>Edmonton</b>  | ✓     |   | ✓                      |                                    |                |                     |            |
| <b>Calgary</b>   | ✓     |   |                        |                                    | ✓              |                     |            |
| <b>Winnipeg</b>  | ✓     | ✓                                       | ✓                      |                                    |                |                     |            |
| <b>Portland</b>  | ✓     |   |                        | ✓                                  |                |                     |            |
| <b>Seattle</b>   |       | ✓                                       |                        |                                    |                |                     |            |
| <b>Denver</b>    |       |   |                        | ✓                                  |                |                     |            |
| <b>Chicago</b>   |       |   | ✓                      |                                    |                | ✓                   | ✓          |

|                      |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Philadelphia</b>  |   |   | ✓ |   |  | ✓ |  |
| <b>New York City</b> | ✓ | ✓ |   | ✓ |  | ✓ |  |
| <b>Halifax</b>       | ✓ |   |   |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Vaughan</b>       | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Brampton</b>      | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Mississauga</b>   | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |  |   |  |
| <b>Windsor</b>       | ✓ |   |   |   |  |   |  |

Table: Types of surface materials used by municipalities

### Lighting in OLA

Thirteen of the 16 jurisdictions examined did not have lighting requirements for OLAs, with a few of these cities noting that the OLAs were often lit by surrounding park lights or that lighting was installed when possible, but not required. Only Denver, Philadelphia, and Vaughan had lighting requirements, although Vaughan's requirement is only for their "primary" (larger) OLAs.

### Amenities in OLAs

Most municipalities offered a combination of amenities at OLAs, such as benches, shade structures, play structures, agility equipment, water features, waste receptacles, pathways, and washrooms. Half of the municipalities examined installed a base set of amenities, with additional amenities provided based on a combination of factors, including the size of the OLA, site characteristics, and budget or community fundraising. The other half of the cities examined offered a base set of amenities consistent across all sites. Regardless of which approach a municipality took, the most commonly included base-level amenities were:

- Benches;
- Trash receptacles;
- Water access (where servicing allowed); and
- Shade structures or trees.

### **Maintain**

Maintenance practices varied significantly between municipalities as some had a greater level of participation from volunteer groups in the upkeep of their OLAs than others. Municipalities such as Seattle, Chicago, and Philadelphia had agreements with volunteer organizations that generally manage and maintain the OLA on a day-to-day basis, with the municipality often assisting for more major capital improvements. In municipalities such as Denver and Winnipeg, volunteer groups helped with certain aspect of maintenance.

In municipalities where city staff performed maintenance, duties included: minor repairs of damaged infrastructure, surface and vegetation maintenance, and emptying waste receptacles. Almost all municipalities identified improperly disposed of dog waste as an issue. In the case of Denver, city staff do not pick up dog waste bags not properly disposed of, and instead, dog parks have a cleanliness monitoring system. OLA signs have a green, yellow, or red slider denoting the level of cleanliness at the OLA; if dog waste is not properly disposed of, the area risks closure by city staff.



## Engaging Communities

### Volunteer and ambassador programs

Ten of the municipalities reviewed had or recently had a volunteer or ambassador program for OLAs. Volunteer programs were generally responsible for stewarding the OLAs while ambassador programs tended to educate community members at OLAs on bylaws and responsible dog ownership or promote OLAs to the general public. These programs took many forms, performed a variety of roles, and had both formal and more informal relationships with the municipalities.

In some municipalities, such as Chicago and Philadelphia, the volunteer associations were responsible for: securing funds for the development of the OLA, maintaining the space, and funding minor repairs. As some areas of cities may be able to better organize or raise funds, this approach risks resulting in inequitable distribution of OLAs across the municipality. On the other end of the spectrum, cities like Winnipeg and Edmonton (in the current form) have a less formal relationship with volunteer groups that have organically formed at OLAs and support and consult with those groups, where possible.

The roles volunteer and ambassador groups played also varied across municipalities. Denver described a very successful program (where sites were “adopted” by a group) that focuses on keeping OLA clean, performing basic maintenance such as landscaping, and educating OLA users. It should be noted that not every site has been “adopted.” Calgary, on the other hand, noted that their Off-Leash Ambassador program has been successful in focusing on by-law and responsible dog ownership by visiting sites and interacting directly with park users. Recently, however, the program has experienced low participation levels and the municipality is in the process of trying to increase participation in the program to previous levels.

Volunteer and ambassador programs, however, are not without their challenges. Even municipalities that identified their programs as successful noted challenges. Additionally, some municipalities, such as Edmonton, Vancouver, and Vaughan, had to end their volunteer programs for various reasons. Some of the challenges municipalities raised included:

- Insufficient municipal resourcing;
- High level of staff time required with minimal perceived benefits;
- Physical altercations between volunteers and park users;
- Online bullying and ostracization by volunteer members of other OLA users;
- Lack of interest from the public to volunteer;
- Continuity of the program over time due to dwindling interest; and
- Overlap of responsibilities with collective bargaining agreements resulting in objections from unions.

On the other hand, successful programs with formalized relationships with the municipalities had a few features in common. These generally included:

- Dedicated staff resources to manage the program or support volunteers/ambassadors;
- Training for the volunteers/ambassadors; and

- Provision of supplies by the city (such as rakes, refuse bags, brochures, and/or promotional/educational material, depending on the roles involved).

## Responsible Use of OLAs

### Hours of operation

Hours of operation varies among the municipalities reviewed, however, almost all OLAs that were open all day opened between 5 and 7 am or at dawn and closed at 10 or 11 pm or at dusk. There were rare exceptions to this. Seattle, for example, has some OLAs that are open from 4 am to 11:30 pm, and certain New York City OLAs are open until 1 am.

In most cities reviewed, the hours of operation were uniform across the municipality, usually matching park hours of operation. Six of the municipalities, on the other hand, had site-specific hours of operation. In addition, some cities used time-of-use restrictions or had seasonal OLAs. In off-seasons, Halifax uses underutilized sports fields to augment their OLA supply. While this has the benefit of creating additional off-leash space, staff noted challenges regarding maintenance of these spaces when transitioning back to a sports field.

Time-of-use restrictions allow parkland to be designated as an off-leash space at certain times and a leash-required space at others. New York City and Vancouver, for example, use time-of-use restrictions where certain spaces are designated off-leash in the morning and evening but during the daytime, leashing is required, and the space becomes a multi-use space. In their 2017 *People, Parks, and Dogs Strategy*, however, Vancouver noted challenges with compliance and enforcement at OLAs with time-of-use restrictions as park users continued to let their dog off-leash during the leash-required hours creating conflict between park users. Vancouver's strategy recommended reducing the number of parks using this technique to address the frustrations around compliance and increase access to dog parks for residents, something the municipality has generally done during park renewals successfully reducing the number of parks with time-of-use restrictions for OLAs in place.

### Commercial Dog Walker Policies and Regulations

After the initial jurisdictional review, P&R contacted fifteen municipalities regarding professional dog walker policies and/or regulations. Thirteen responded to P&R's inquiry and P&R was able to review a fourteenth city's policy online. Of these fourteen cities, only four identified having policies or regulations specific to professional dog walkers: Calgary, Vaughan, Mississauga, and District of North Vancouver. For the other municipalities, in the absence of policies or regulations, CDWs would be similar to other members of the public in terms of the number of dogs they could walk and when and how they are able to access OLAs.

|                | <b>Number of dogs a CDW can walk</b>                            | <b>Limitations to CDW access to OLAs</b> |
|----------------|---|--|
| <b>Calgary</b> | Number may be limited as a condition of their Dogwalker Permit. | None                                     |

|                                    |                                |   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Vaughan</b>                     | 6 on a walk                    | CDWs can only bring 3 dogs into an OLA  |
| <b>Mississauga</b>                 | 8                              | CDWs can only access OLAs Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4 pm.   |
| <b>District of North Vancouver</b> | 6 on a weekday; 3 on a weekend | CDWs access is limited to certain OLAs. Although there is no clear criteria for which ones, these tend to be more removed from developed areas. |

Table: How municipalities regulate CDWs and CDW access to OLAs

### Education Approaches

For most municipalities, by-law and responsible pet ownership education was done primarily through communication channels. Cities used a mix of media, including the city website, corporate communications such as social media, direct mail, and signs in parks and at OLAs. Calgary and Vancouver noted that in addition to some of the tactics mentioned above, they use extra portable signage as a temporary measure to further promote by-law compliance when hotspot parks are identified.

These efforts were sometimes augmented by staff and enforcement officers promoting by-law compliance and responsible pet ownership on-site at OLAs. In Calgary, this is further supported through their Off-Leash Ambassador program, where volunteers hand out educational material and poop bags and promote responsible dog ownership. In other municipalities that have volunteer groups at specific OLAs, such as Denver and Winnipeg, staff noted there is likely a degree of “self-policing” and education done by the volunteer groups, but this is not done through a formal municipal program.

### Bylaw Enforcement Approaches

All municipalities interviewed identified by-law compliance as a challenge, with varying degrees of success addressing the issue. The most-cited issues included dogs off-leash outside of designated areas, owners failing to pick up and dispose of dog waste properly, and off-leash dogs not under the owner’s control. Cities generally noted that a lack of resources for enforcement officers and the overall low-priority of dog-related issues made compliance especially challenging.

Of the 13 municipalities interviewed, 8 indicated by-law enforcement was almost exclusively reactive, only attending OLAs in response to calls. Vancouver, Portland, Denver, Vaughan, and Brampton, on the other hand, noted that in addition to responding to calls about issues at OLAs, enforcement officers also do proactive patrols at dog parks.

One enforcement approach of note is found in Portland. Portland’s enforcement generally begins with a warning to non-compliant pet owners, which the city keeps a record of. This is followed by a \$50 USD (about \$72 CAD) ticket for the second violation and a \$150 USD (about \$215 CAD) ticket for the third and subsequent violations. Additionally, Portland’s Park Rangers conduct proactive blitzes in hotspot areas. These areas are identified through a combination of 311 data and frontline staff input. Once an area is identified, the public and relevant stakeholders are informed of the forthcoming

blitz one month in advance. Park Rangers then patrol the park and issue tickets without the usual warning for first-time violations. Portland identified success in promoting compliance through their combination of proactive and reactive visits to parks.

Seattle's enforcement approach is also note-worthy. The city's *People, Dogs & Parks Plan* (2017) notes that "it was the hope of city officials that violations of the leash, license and scoop laws would drop with the advent of off-leash areas, but that was not the case" (p. 16). Seattle hired two dedicated staff persons to combat the ongoing compliance issues related to dogs, a Parks Maintenance Worker and a Humane Animal Control Officer, to proactively patrol parks, focusing on hotspot areas. At that time, Seattle had approximately 6,200 acres of parks and 150,000 dogs. Seattle reported that in the first two months on the job in spring 2016, the two officers had exceeded the total number of citations issued in 2014.<sup>1</sup>

### Closure of an OLA

Six of the jurisdictions examined had closure criteria or procedures applicable to Toronto's context. Key elements from each of those six municipalities are listed in the two tables below.

|                 | <b>Criteria</b>   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>Windsor</b>  | An OLA designation may be cancelled if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OLA is not regularly used</li> <li>• There is extensive damage to the park and/or natural environment</li> <li>• The park is not longer suitable for this use</li> <li>• There are conflicts between park users that cannot be resolved</li> <li>• There is repeated and ongoing non-compliance with the Code of Conduct</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Calgary</b>  | An OLA designation may be reviewed based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and nature of by-law or 311 complaints</li> <li>• Concerns around risk management and/or safety issues</li> <li>• Damage to the surfacing and vegetation or amenities</li> <li>• Negative impact to the surrounding ecosystems and wildlife and/or water quality</li> <li>• OLA user patterns</li> <li>• Amount of dog waste not properly disposed of</li> <li>• Impact on other park users</li> </ul> |
| <b>Edmonton</b> | An OLA may be closed or modified in size if the OLA is in an over-serviced area (i.e. the usage does not justify having the number and/or size of the OLA in that area).  |
| <b>Denver</b>   | OLA signs have a green, yellow, or red slider denoting the level of cleanliness at the OLA; if dog waste is not properly disposed of, the area risks closure by city staff.   |

Table: Criteria for considering closing an OLA

<sup>1</sup> P&R was not able to confirm if this approach is still used. Nonetheless, as outlined in their 2017 *Plan*, the program had strong initial results, although the long-term impact on compliance is unclear.

|                  | Procedure   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Vancouver</b> | <p>Staff should first try to resolve the issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem sites are assigned probationary status and the issues and timeline for review are communicated to OLA users</li> <li>• If the site is closed, the reason needs to be clearly communicated to all users</li> <li>• Staff provide notice in-park, online, and via distribution to households in the service area</li> </ul> |
| <b>Winnipeg</b>  | <p>Winnipeg has had to modify OLAs (for nearby infrastructure projects) and staff noted the best practices included clear communication and, where appropriate and able, replacement of the service elsewhere or improvements at the modified OLA to offset the loss of space.</p>  |
| <b>Halifax</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Director, Parks may close an OLA. Regional Council can request a report on the closure and modify the order or re-open the OLA.</li> <li>• Regional Council can also decide to close an OLA.</li> <li>• Both the Director's and Regional Council's decisions to close an OLA can be made without the advice of staff and without public consultation.</li> </ul>                 |

Table: Procedure to close an OLA

## Review and Monitor

Most municipalities' policies or strategies did not include key performance indicators or ways to measure the success of their approach, and this was generally done on a more informal basis.

In interviews, jurisdictions identified numerous criteria including:

- An increase in dog licensing compliance;
- A reduction in 311 calls or councillor inquiries regarding dogs;
- Feedback from frontline staff;
- Semi-annual surveys that include satisfaction questions about OLAs;
- OLA user data (e.g., low-resolution trail cameras or manual counts showing number of OLA users during a given time period or cell phone data showing number of users and distances traveled); and
- Successful delivery of OLAs as planned in the municipality's long-term plan.

## Conclusion

The jurisdictional review revealed some shared approaches to OLAs across North American cities helping to identify some "best practices" that could be applied to Toronto's context. Nevertheless, there remained other areas with many disparate solutions to a similar issue and no clear best practice emerged.

## **List of Jurisdictions Examined**

*Jurisdictions examined as part of the development of Toronto's Dog Off-Leash Strategy*

### Canada:

- Brampton, ON
- Mississauga, ON
- Vaughan, ON
- Windsor, ON
- Calgary, AB
- Edmonton, AB
- Halifax, NS
- Surrey, BC
- Vancouver, BC
- Winnipeg, MB

### United States:

- Chicago, IL
- Denver, CO
- New York, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- Portland, OR
- Seattle, WA

*Jurisdictions examined specific to developing criteria for Commercial Dog Walker Use of off-leash areas:*

### Canada:

- Brampton, ON
- Mississauga, ON
- Vaughan, ON
- Windsor, ON
- Calgary, AB
- Edmonton, AB
- Halifax, NS
- Surrey, BC
- Vancouver, BC
- District of North Vancouver, BC
- Winnipeg, MB

### United States:

- Chicago, IL
- Denver, CO
- Portland, OR

*Additional jurisdictions reviewed as part of the City-Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas, 2021:*

Ontario:

- Hamilton, ON
- Guelph, ON
- London, ON
- Ottawa, ON
- Sudbury, ON
- Thunder Bay, ON

Canada:

- Regina, SK

International:

- Austin, TX, USA
- Christchurch, NZ
- London, UK
- Madrid, ES
- Munich, DE
- Paris, FR
- San Francisco, CA, USA
- Switzerland
- South Australia
- Sydney, NSW, AUS
- Tampa, FL, USA