

City Wide Study of **Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)**

Background

The City of Toronto’s Parks Standards & Innovations Unit is leading an interdivisional study to examine how the City’s existing Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLAs) can be reimagined to better harmonize with existing park uses, provide a satisfying user experience, and operate with optimum efficiency. This study is a result of the recommendation in the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017) to “develop criteria for improving existing dog off-leash areas.”

This study will explore common issues, global best practices, and potential solutions in an effort to develop design solutions to help improve the City’s existing OLAs. The City will select eight case study sites and examine the variety of challenges and opportunities in OLAs of different size, context, and character. Ultimately, the Study will strive to address common issues, reflect consideration of a range of perspectives and needs, and propose site-specific recommendations that could apply to OLAs City-wide

Why Now

The City has heard that OLAs could be better

Improving existing OLAs will help the City maintain a successful park amenity.

Toronto’s population (human and dog) is increasing

With more pets and dogs living in the City there is an increased demand to accommodate them in public space like parks.

Existing OLAs need to work as well as possible

In 2010, the City’s People Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy led to a capital investment of over \$5 million dollars to create and improve OLAs. With that capital investment completed in 2016, the City is focusing on improving what it already has.

Goals + Objectives

1. Improve existing OLAs through effective design, maintenance, and operations
2. Foster healthy relationships between dog owners and non-dog owners
3. Elevate OLAs as spaces that provide a healthy, safe, accessible, and sustainable environment
4. Adapt OLA designs to meet operational pressures, such as use and sustainability
5. Develop guidelines to ensure consistent maintenance and operation across Toronto
6. Develop design recommendations that can be applied to all existing OLAs
7. Identify required operating and/or capital budget to maintain & improve existing site
8. Improve community involvement and develop future ongoing partnerships

Case Study Sites

The selected 10 case study site are to be used as exemplars for the 73 existing OLAs within Toronto. The site-specific recommendations will help inform the other 63 OLAs that have similar characteristics and criteria.

These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

Phase One Building Understanding

- Work Plan
March 2019
- Review and Synthesis of Background Materials
April 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #1
June 2019
- Internal Stakeholder Consultation
July 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #2
August 21st 2019
- Public Survey #1
Early September 2019

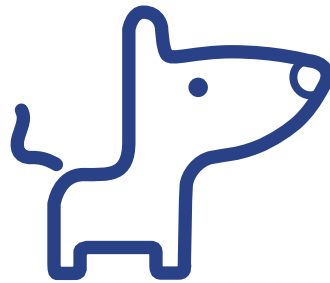
Phase Two Testing Ideas

- Site Tour of 10 Case Studies
Early September 2019
- Interviews with Local Stakeholders
Mid September 2019
- High Level Concepts
Late September 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #3
October 16th 2019
- ‘Pup’ Ups
Mid to late October 2019
- Public Survey #2
Early November 2019

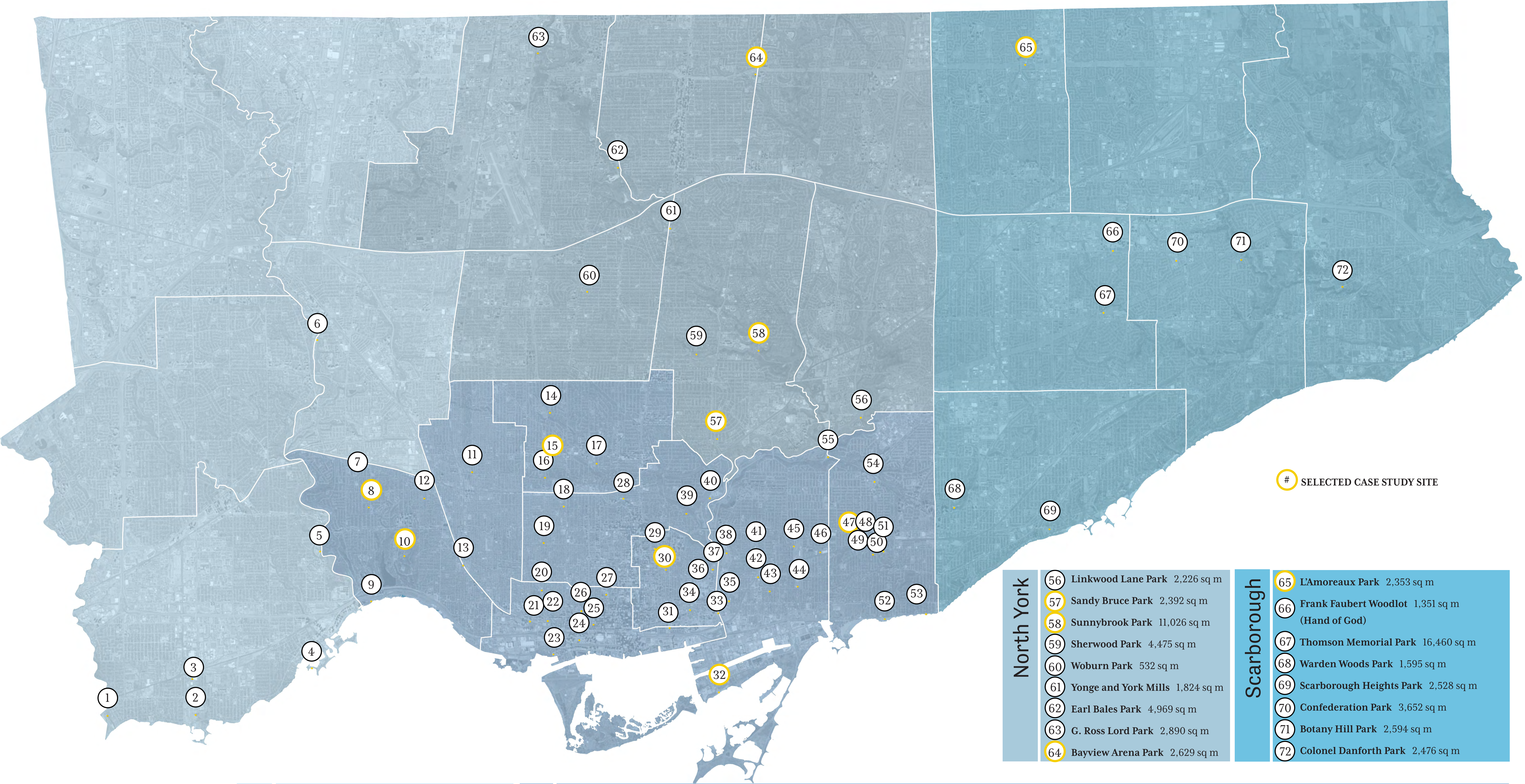
Concepts and Recommendations Finalized
Late November 2019

Phase Three Finalizing Recommendations

- Draft Report
Late November 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #4
Early December 2019
- Final Report
End of December 2019



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Etobicoke	
1	Marie Curtis Park 4,764 sq m
2	Colonel Sam Smith Park 4,118 sq m
3	Don Russell Memorial Park 16,510 sq m
4	Humber Bay Park West 6,227 sq m
5	King's Mill Park 12,738 sq m
6	Raymore Park 3,781 sq m
7	Woolner Park 2,450 sq m
8	Beresford Park 2,805 sq m
9	Sir Casimir Gzowski Park 1,678 sq m
10	High Park 32,346 sq m
11	Earlscourt Park 1,785 sq m

Toronto + East York	
12	Baird Park 902 sq m
13	Sorauren Avenue Park 1,623 sq m
14	Cedarvale Park (Seasonal) 4,390 sq m Cedarvale Park (Year Round) 4,838 sq m
15	Wychwood Car Barns Park 1,231 sq m
16	Hillcrest Park 1,888 sq m
17	Sir Winston Churchill Park 4,730 sq m
18	Vermont Square 1,240 sq m
19	Bickford Park 2,258 sq m
20	Trinity Bellwoods Park 15,734 sq m
21	Bill Johnston Park 774 sq m

22	Stanley Park South 2,165 sq m
23	Coronation Park 6,020 sq m
24	Canoe Landing (Temporary) 532 sq m
25	Clarence Square 1,971 sq m
26	St. Andrew's Playground 545 sq m
27	Grange Park 624 sq m
28	Ramsden Park 2,372 sq m
29	Barbara Hall Park 968 sq m
30	Allan Gardens 2,650 sq m
31	David Crombie Park 1,496 sq m
32	Cherry Beach 38,806 sq m

33	Corktown Common 422 sq m
34	Orphan's Green 1,695 sq m
35	Thompson Street Parkette 917 sq m
36	Regent Park 836 sq m
37	Riverdale Park West 45,247 sq m
38	Riverdale Park East 4,417 sq m
39	Craigleigh Gardens 6,015 sq m
40	Don Valley Brickworks 4,187 sq m
41	Withrow Park 4,415 sq m
42	Gerrard Carlaw Parkette 1,881 sq m
43	Hideaway Park 480 sq m

44	Greenwood Park 2,650 sq m
45	The Pocket 10,357 sq m
46	Monarch Park 12,335 sq m
47	Merrill Bridge Road Park 5,005 sq m
48	Oakcrest Park 1,330 sq m
49	Wildwood Crescent Playground 1,486 sq m
50	Cassels Avenue Playground 6,129 sq m
51	Norwood Park 1,654 sq m
52	Kew Gardens (Beaches Park) 22,774 sq m
53	Silverbirch Park 13,844 sq m
54	Stan Wadlow Park 2,178 sq m
55	Coxwell Ravine (Taylor Creek Park) 1,038 sq m

North York	
56	Linkwood Lane Park 2,226 sq m
57	Sandy Bruce Park 2,392 sq m
58	Sunnybrook Park 11,026 sq m
59	Sherwood Park 4,475 sq m
60	Woburn Park 532 sq m
61	Yonge and York Mills 1,824 sq m
62	Earl Bales Park 4,969 sq m
63	G. Ross Lord Park 2,890 sq m
64	Bayview Arena Park 2,629 sq m









Scarborough	
65	L'Amoreaux Park 2,353 sq m
66	Frank Faubert Woodlot 1,351 sq m (Hand of God)
67	Thomson Memorial Park 16,460 sq m
68	Warden Woods Park 1,595 sq m
69	Scarborough Heights Park 2,528 sq m
70	Confederation Park 3,652 sq m
71	Botany Hill Park 2,594 sq m
72	Colonel Danforth Park 2,476 sq m

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Preliminary Design Recommendations

Design recommendations are first filtered based on Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) because ESAs are subject to different processes, such as Environmental Assessments, with varying governing bodies (eg. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority). Design recommendations are then applied to each Off-Leash-Area (OLA) based on usage and size.

Usage for an OLA is categorized as high, medium, or low, and the size is determined to be small (under 2,000 square meters), medium (2,000 to 7,500 sq m) or large (over 7,500 sq m). Resulting recommendations are separated into the below six topics. The specific condition of an OLA under each topic area determines which recommendations are chosen for that site.

D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6
Shade	Surfacing & Drainage	Fencing & Entrances	Amenities	Lighting	Water
<div>1.1</div> <div>Ensure 20% shade coverage within OLA</div> <div></div> <div>1.2</div> <div>Plant unprotected trees within OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install within low use OLAsInstall gator bags for minimum 2 years</div> <div></div> <div>1.3</div> <div>Plant protected trees within OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install within medium use OLAsPlant additional vegetation at base of tree</div> <div></div> <div>1.4</div> <div>Plant fenced trees within OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install within high use OLAsInstall fencing surrounding tree</div> <div></div> <div>1.5</div> <div>Install shade structure (various sizes)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Located along a pathwaySeating beneath shade structure</div> <div></div>	<div>2.1</div> <div>All surfaces to be regraded to encourage positive drainage (min. 2%)</div> <div></div> <div>2.2</div> <div>Install dual surfacing<ul style="list-style-type: none">Various combinationsDetermined by slopes within OLA, size and usage</div> <div></div> <div>2.3</div> <div>Install 200mm min. wood chips<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium UseUsed in medium sloped areas (2-5%)Ensure installed in areas that receive some sunlightEnsure proper drainageNo filter fabric</div> <div></div> <div>2.4</div> <div>Install 200mm min. EWF<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium UseUsed in medium sloped areas (2-5%)Ensure installed in areas that receive some sunlightEnsure proper drainageNo filter fabric</div> <div></div> <div>2.5</div> <div>Install 150mm min of crushed granite<ul style="list-style-type: none">High use areasUsed in low sloped areas (2%)Ensure proper drainageNo filter fabricInstall irrigationIrrigation to be run April-October, overnight and for 10 minutes at 12pm and 2pmInstall wind barriers</div> <div></div> <div>2.6</div> <div>Install synthetic turf<ul style="list-style-type: none">High use areasUsed in low sloped areas (2%)Coverage less than 1,000 sq mEnsure proper drainage</div> <div></div> <div>2.7</div> <div>Install 200mm min. gravel<ul style="list-style-type: none">High use areasUsed in low sloped areas (2%)Gravel type specificCoverage less than 750 sq mEnsure proper drainageNo filter fabric</div> <div></div> <div>2.8</div> <div>Install grass seed mix (fescue mix)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Low use areasUsed in minimally sloped areas (~2%)Ensure proper drainage</div> <div></div>	<div>3.1</div> <div>Replace all existing latches with upgraded latch<ul style="list-style-type: none">Redesigned latch to accommodate use and climate</div> <div></div> <div>3.2</div> <div>Replace all single gate systems with double gate system<ul style="list-style-type: none">Install concrete entranceEnsure turning radius meets AODA requirements</div> <div></div> <div>3.3</div> <div>Install steel fencing<ul style="list-style-type: none">Urban and suburban environmentsMin. 1.5m</div> <div></div> <div>3.4</div> <div>Install post and paddle fencing<ul style="list-style-type: none">Natural environments and hydro corridorsMin 1.5m</div> <div></div> <div>3.5</div> <div>Install vegetative boundary/buffer<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visual boundary for adjacent park uses (playground, sports field, etc.)</div> <div></div> <div>3.6</div> <div>Install concrete pad at all access points<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fenced OLAsEnsure positive drainage</div> <div></div> <div>3.7</div> <div>Formalize main access point<ul style="list-style-type: none">Unfenced OLAsVegetationInstall signage and garbage</div> <div></div> <div>3.8</div> <div>Install additional entry/exit to ensure more than one access point<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fenced locationsMin. 2 entries/exits per OLA</div> <div></div>	<div>4.1</div> <div>Install agility equipment<ul style="list-style-type: none">Undergo professional inspection processGain approval by all governing bodies involvedInstall within small OLAs - encourage exerciseInstall within high use (all sizes)Options for manufactured and natural play</div> <div></div> <div>4.2</div> <div>Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate SDA</div> <div></div> <div>4.3</div> <div>Provide accessible pathway within OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Less than 4.9% slope - if greater than, hand rail requiredProvide connection between entries/exitsMedium and large sizes: looping pathwaySmall size: linear pathway</div> <div></div> <div>4.4</div> <div>Install recycling, garbage and green bins outside main entry/exit<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where necessary, install ashtrays</div> <div></div> <div>4.5</div> <div>Install accessible seating<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide accessible pathway to seating</div> <div></div> <div>4.6</div> <div>Install City signage within OLA and prior to entry<ul style="list-style-type: none">Code of ConductHours and Boundary</div> <div></div> <div>4.7</div> <div>Install community boards at main entry/exit</div> <div></div> <div>4.8</div> <div>Install educational and interpretive panels at main entry/exit<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be installed in OLAs within 'Environmentally Significant Areas'</div> <div></div>	<div>5.1</div> <div>Install lighting at main entrance<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium and high useWhere electrical line exists</div> <div></div> <div>5.2</div> <div>Install user activated lights at entrance(s)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium and high useWhere no electrical line exists</div> <div></div> <div>5.3</div> <div>Install solar lights at entrance(s)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium and high useWhere no electrical line exists</div> <div></div> <div>5.4</div> <div>Install lighting along paved pathway<ul style="list-style-type: none">High use all sizesMedium Use and Large</div> <div></div> <div>5.5</div> <div>Replace existing lights with LED<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where lighting previously exists</div> <div></div>	<div>6.1</div> <div>Install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where water line existsInstall gravel/concrete radius</div> <div></div> <div>6.2</div> <div>Install dog fountain/bowl within SDA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where water line existsTo be installed within multi-tier drinking fountainInstall gravel/concrete radius</div> <div></div> <div>6.3</div> <div>Install water play<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where water line existsTo be installed within multi-tier drinking fountainInstall gravel/concrete radiusHigh use</div> <div></div> <div>6.4</div> <div>Install irrigation<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be installed with crushed granite (see surfacing)Where water line exists</div> <div></div>
 				  	 

For Example...

Shade:	Surfacing and Drainage:	Fencing and Entrances:	Amenities:	Lighting:	Water:
<i>Wychwood Barns</i>	<i>Bayview Arena Park</i>	<i>L'Amoureux Park</i>	<i>Merrill Bridge Road Park</i>	<i>Cherry Beach</i>	<i>High Park</i>
Existing	Existing	Existing	Existing	Existing	Existing
Wychwood Barns Off Leash Area doesn't achieve 20% shaded area.	Bayview Arena Off Leash Area currently has pea-gravel surfacing with low and medium slopes.	L'Amoureux Park is fenced with post and paddle fencing (with wire mesh) to a height of around 1m, but the park is adjacent to a busy road in a suburban area.	Merrill Bridge Road Off Leash Area is medium-sized, with no Small Dog Area, no accessible pathways, and some seating (not barrier-free). Signage is inconsistent and not at all main entries.	Cherry Beach Dog Off-Leash Area is popular and large-sized. It has no lighting within the Off Leash Area, but the adjacent parking lot is lit.	High Park Dog Off-Leash Area is large-sized and popular. The current water provided is a tap (30cm height) on top of concrete pad with affixed hose, and loose metal bowls brought by the community.
Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
Install shade structure to achieve 20% shaded area.	Install dual surfacing in All Dog Area: Where slope is low, install grass-seed mix (fescue mix) and where slope is medium, install 200mm min. wood chips/EWF. Install grass-seed mix (fescue mix) in Small Dog Area (SDA).	Increase fencing to height of 1.5m to increase safety of dogs and people.	Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate SDA. Provide accessible pathway within OLA: looping pathway. Install accessible seating. Install City signage within OLA and prior to main entry.	Install up-to-date lighting at main entrance area to extend winter usage hours.	Recommending install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain (i.e. for dogs and humans) with properly drained concrete/gravel radius.

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Preliminary Operations and Maintenance Recommendations

The general operations and maintenance recommendations are meant to be applied throughout the City’s 73 Off-Leash Areas. The surfacing recommendations are site-specific based on the type of surfacing being used at each park.

General

- OM1

Ensure consistency for all OLAs

Signage, community boards, garbage and seating
- OM2

Perform weekly inspections

Raking, litter pick up, top up surfacing bins, monitor repairs, etc.
- OM3

Monitor and maintain state of good repair

Shoreline management, waste pick up, lighting, drinking fountains, fencing, etc.
- OM4

Protect and monitor vegetation health

Tree inspection, health, shade coverage, etc.
- OM5

Temporary closures to support vegetative growth

Erosion control, grass regrowth, etc.
- OM6

Ensure pathway to OLA is free of ice and snow

- Where winter maintenance exists - if not maintained, clear hazard signage

- Safety concern

- Solid Waste pick up
- OM7

Work with Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division on surrounding park development

Urban Forestry, Parks, Community Recreation, Management Services, Parks Development and Capital Projects, and Policy and Strategic Planning



Surfacing

- OM8

Install ‘surfacing bins’

- Wood chips, fescue seed mix, EWF

- Promote top ups

- Refill bins as needed
- OM9

Top up surfacing once a year

- Crushed granite, gravel
- OM10

Top up surfacing twice a year

- Wood chips, EWF



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Preliminary Administrative Recommendations

The administrative recommendations are to be applied to the current system and hope to address communications between OLA Reps, OLA users and the City.

- A1

Improvements to City Website

- Ways to report concern/issues

- Roles and responsibilities of other governing bodies with contact information

- Ways to license your pet

- List OLA locations

- Commercial Dog Walkers information-licensing fees, responsibilities, etc.
- A2

Create classification of OLAs that reflects City’s Park classifications

- Parkette, Neighbourhood, Community, District and City
- A3

Post Code of Conduct and by-laws in every OLA
- A4

Introduce open/closed hours consult process

- Ensure time restrictions are posted at main entry/exit
- A5

Create educational resources

- Importance of on-leash (i.e. Max)

- Environmentally Significant Areas
- A6

Scheduled lighting

- Varied times- Winter vs Summer

- Scheduled with time restrictions

- A7

Volunteer and stewardship promotion

- Posted within community boards

- Community vs City Wide
- A8

Gather accurate usage data for all OLAs

- Public Life study

- Counter surveys
- A9

Improvements to DOA Program

- Provide a package with role description

- DOA (toronto.ca) email address

- OLA Code of Conduct/by-laws

- Access to community boards at OLAs
- A10

Increase by-law

- 30 by-law officers for 1,600 parks insufficient
- A11

Re-allocation of Commercial Dog Walkers Licensing Fee

- Clearly define CDW

- CDW fee collected separately and put towards CDW Parks

