

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) MAY 27, 2003

LEASH FREE AREA

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Buildings, Facilities and Parks, and the Director of Parks recommends:

That the following information report be received;

That staff be directed to further research the logistics of implementing a leash free dog area within the City of Vaughan as a pilot project in 2004; and

That a by-law be enacted to amend all necessary by-laws, to allow dogs to be leash free in designated areas; and

That any funding be included in the 2004 Capital and Operating Budget request.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information regarding the implementation of a leash free dog area as a pilot project within the City of Vaughan and review the attached list of potential sites for the purpose of suggesting a pilot location.

Background - Analysis and Options

In the Spring of 2001, a community resident wrote to Council regarding the need for leash free dog areas in Vaughan. Staff met with this resident and toured possible locations for leash free areas, looking at both open spaces and existing parks. Two community residents then came to Committee of the Whole on deputation to outline the need for such areas and the benefits to the community. Staff were directed to review the logistics of providing a leash free area in Vaughan and report back to Council.

Staff held a meeting with representatives from across the City on October 15, 2001 to determine the potential interest for a leash free area and to discuss issues relating to the implementation of such a facility.

Most other municipalities including Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham have leash free areas. Staff have obtained information from these municipalities, from internet sources on the subject, and on successful "dog parks" in the United States. The provision of leash free areas can reduce the number of dogs off leash in parks, while providing a safe area for owners to exercise their dogs. The leash free areas have rules and regulations which are enforced, mainly by the users themselves, such as cleaning up dog excrement, prohibiting aggressive dogs, prohibiting dogs in heat, and not allowing young children into the leash free area.

Based on the experiences in other municipalities and the comments from the October 15, 2001 meeting, staff have prepared a list of potential sites (attached) that may successfully accommodate a leash free area as the site of a pilot project.

Conclusion

The implementation of a leash free area on a pilot basis will allow for the study and evaluation of this new level of service for the community.

Attachments

1. Potential Sites – Leash Free Dog Parks, City Wide

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner of Community Services

POTENTIAL SITES – LEASH FREE DOG PARKS (CITY WIDE)

March 10, 2003

Attached you will find a list of potential sites for a leash free dog park. The sites have been selected for discussion purposes before being vetted through Parks Operations, other relevant City Departments and the public. In addition a number of sites are not in City ownership and will be subject to the requirements of a lease agreement if amenable to the landowners. Further evaluation of sites noted on TRCA land will be subject to a TRCA policy on leash free dog parks anticipated to be brought forward to their Executive in June of this year.

The sites noted are categorized with respect to the community and projected availability for use, that is:

Immediate	current year
Intermediate	1 to 3 years
Long term	3 to 5 years

Included on the list is a brief description of the property and the requirements for capital investment from fencing within an existing park to full development. Full development would entail grading, sod, fencing, parking, lighting and servicing. All of the sites would require capital funds for development.

MAPLE:

1. **Civic Centre** (long term)
 - existing parking & storage area south east by Go line
 - currently little use of this area
 - utilize part or all for park purposes including a leash free zone
 - all granular surface now
 - raw land full development
 - easily monitored – bylaw
 - highly visible
 - centrally located
2. **Maple Valley Park** (long term)
 - consider as part of overall park development program
3. **Purcell Parkette MP6** (immediate)
 - as yet undeveloped & small area
 - if clean green & drained
 - fence & use as a trial area
 - park on local streets
4. **Nevada Park MN8** (intermediate)

2 potential locations – both not central to Community as a whole

a) on tableland where gas easement was / is?

Area available ± 4400m² / 1 acre

Parking on Nevada Crescent

Easily monitored / visible

b) in valley abutting park

subject to TRCA policy

5. **Le Parc TN33** (Langstaff & Keele / Dufferin) (immediate)

- centrally located
- parking available
- fence off landscaped area on west side
- washrooms
- industrial area not central to a community
- existing black chain fence along one side

6. **NE Wonderland Lands** (intermediate)

- raw land therefore full development
- need access and parking / fencing
- agreement with Paramount

WOODBRIIDGE AND KLEINBURG

1. **Vaughan Grove Sports Park WR1** (long term)

- north of ball diamonds
- east side of ring road
- need ring road & parking
- raw land full development
- winter use would require plowing and lighting
- not highly visible possible users will do "off leash" elsewhere in park
- not centrally located
- police advise need more presence in park / this could assist
- washrooms available

2. **Hydro Corridor Highway 7 & east of Highway 27** (long term)

- either side of road
- raw land requires full development
- requires agreement with Hydro & likely ORC
- yearly lease cost
- good access but not connected to residential area
- vehicular access off Highway 7 likely right in right out for either side

3. **Rainbow Creek Park WN1** (immediate)

- central to Woodbridge Community
- good access
- smaller area available
- include in park feasibility for MLP for long term

4. **WEA District Park WEA D1** (intermediate)

- mini soccer area SE corner
- size good 1.2 ha ±
- turf will be present
- parking
- centrally located
- need fencing only

5. Boyd Park (immediate)

- centrally located for Woodbridge & Kleinburg
- additional parking may be required
- TRCA land subject to their policy
- Boyd Park manager needs to buy into this and winter maintenance will be required
- use of valley not acceptable to TRCA

6. Millview Open Space KOS1 (intermediate)

- subject to final design of area
- raw land / full development
- Kleinburg residents have substantial open space along the Humber Trail they are using to walk dogs leash free, since the TRCA & City would like to discourage this a location in Kleinburg is recommended

THORNHILL

1. Yorkhill Park TD1 (immediate)

- area is not large but lots of dog walkers
- south open area
- concern for storm water management need to verify why no facilities are there now
- lit paths surround
- turf good
- centrally located for Thornhill
- parking at CC and school

2. Vaughan Crest Park TN (immediate)

- lands west of park
- ownership needs to be identified
- lease required
- fencing all around required
- large area
- no trees
- parking – off closed section of Jacob Fisher or on Pinewood Drive
- nearby residents vocal about parking on streets

3. Concord Thornhill Regional Park TR2 (intermediate)*

- eastern section of park
 - unfinished at this time
 - fencing etc. needed
 - parking available
 - winter maintenance required therefore park open in winter
4. **Concord Community Park TN 35** (long term)
- lands south of park
 - ownership needs to be identified
 - lease would be required
 - raw land / full development
 - access off Dufferin or park
 - area west of this site requested by residents and refused by Council*
5. **Marita Payne Park TN26** (immediate)*
- area #4 from residents request to Council
 - this site begins at the north end of the Marita Payne Park, which is just south of a bridge on Glen Shields Ave. and extends to the north end of the pond. Access would be either through the park itself from many locations or, off Glen Shields Avenue. Parking would be limited to Glen Shields Avenue and fencing would be required. Lighting is limited.*
 - staff review indicates this is a very small area less than ½ hectare. No parking nearby, but centrally located. Appears to have been evaluated by staff in an earlier review and not endorsed as a site.
6. **Glen Shields Hydro Right of Way** (intermediate)*
- area #1 from residents request to Council
 - Hydro Corridor/MTO/Region Lands south of Centre Street
 - multiple landowners
 - raw land therefore full development needed
 - close to BSG could encourage off leash use on paths – not desirable

***areas requested by residents 2001**