

AGENDA
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 28, 2021, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Due to COVID-19 measures, Saanich is unable to accommodate the public for any Council, Committee of the Whole, Advisory, Board or Foundation meetings while maintaining the limits on large gatherings due to the Public Health Order.

As per the Order of the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Emergency Program Act, Ministerial Order No. M192, public attendance at the meeting is not required if it cannot be accommodated in accordance with the applicable requirements or recommendations under the Public Health Act.

To listen to this meeting by telephone call 250-900-5640 and use code 195 188 828# during the time noted above.

***** Territorial Acknowledgement & Inclusivity Statement *****

1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- March 24, 2021 (attachment)

2. CHAIR'S COMMENTS

3. REFERRAL FROM COUNCIL – DOGS

- Discussion of recommendations 1 - 5 only (attachment)

4. CORDOVA BAY LOCAL AREA PLAN

- Staff presentation
 - See Section 7 of [link to the Cordova Bay LAP](#) for information

5. TRIPP BIKE PARK CONCEPT DESIGNS

- Staff presentation
 - see [Tripp Station Youth Park | District of Saanich](#) for information

6. NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Staff presentation

*** Adjournment ***

Next Meeting: May 26, 2021

In order to ensure a quorum, please call Tania Douglas at 475-5494 ext. 3505 or tania.douglas@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

MINUTES
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
March 24, 2021 at 4:00 pm

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff (Chair), Ted Austin, Kathleen Burton, Leigh Campbell, Pamela Carroll, Pat Danforth, Lyndsay Edgar, Amy-Jade Louie, Dexter Owen, Kyle Danielewicz

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Cris Caravaca, Senior Manager of Community Services; Regan Pemberton Community Recreation Programmer (Child and Youth Services); Alison Chamberlain, Community Services Programmer (Older Adult Services); Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Annie Djijtsa

Minutes

MOVED by D. Owen and Seconded by P. Carroll: “That the Minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held February 24, 2021, be adopted as circulated.”

CARRIED

CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair stated:

- The Saanich Cycle Festival has transitioned into a Geoquest. This information was launched on the website and Facebook and the event will be held between April 22nd – May 1st. Two new locations will be posted daily for participants to find. Staff are wanting to provide 20 locations featuring native or natural features, and/or public art that are easy to walk or cycle to. The goal is for participants to find the location/item, take photo and submit this, and at the end there will be prize baskets and a grand prize. Suggestions from the committee included Kings Pond, Camosun, the statue on Lochside trail of Farmer Roy, and the public art piece on the trail near Saanich hall.
- An Urban alliance article which promotes mental health and wellness through urban forests referenced a 3/30/300 rule, in which every citizen should be able to see at least three trees of a decent size from their home, the 30 is about the tree canopy, and the 300 suggests it should be about 300 metres from a person’s home door to a park. The Chair suggested maybe a photo challenge could go out to the community about Saanich residential trees and to promote the urban forest within residential areas. It was noted that Saanich’s target is 500 metres so it is very close to the suggestion in the article. Saanich is promoting trees, forests and ecosystem restoration, and it was suggested that a photo montage of submitted pictures could be done as part of this promotion.
- Saanich has been given \$1.2M to invest in ecosystem restoration including trees in various specific sites in Saanich over 10 years. This ties into the decade of ecosystem restoration.

A comment was made regarding the photo challenge that a tie-in with the Boulevard Partnership Tree program would be of benefit.

Staff were asked to provide information to the committee on the 3/30 300 photo challenge.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & OLDER ADULT STRATEGIC AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Senior Manager of Community Services referred to their March 24, 2021 report, and provided a background and summary of the Youth Development and Older Adult strategic and implementation plans. The following was noted:

- Both strategies have been in play for a few years. The report provided highlights, outcomes, expectations and goals.
- Regarding youth development; it has been a difficult year but staff moved forward as the services Saanich provides are very much needed.
- 2020 marked the 5th and final year of the Youth Development plan, but this is not a stopping point; everything created over the last five years are community driven, requested by youth in the community.
- All programs running are needed/desirable, and shape the lives Saanich youth. Saanich will continue to shape and support these programs, and although the strategy will end, staff will step into a maintenance mode.
- Good feedback/input has been received from schools, local organizations and youth.
- Staff do plan to go forward with a departmental strategy plan in the next couple of years, which will loop-in youth services work and make sure it is still hitting the mark.
- Staff are just getting started with the Older Adult Strategy and continue to retool/reshape the program considering the pandemic. With vaccinations coming, staff are looking for ways to launch programs in community centres/park sites, etc. in a safe manner. Funding for the Older Adult Strategy will be considered Council.
- Both of these initiatives support the Council directive of community well-being.
- Appreciation was expressed for the support of these initiatives that support vulnerable populations.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY – YEAR FIVE REPORT

The Community Recreation Programmer (Child and Youth Services) provided information on the Youth Development Strategy. The following was noted:

- At end of 5 years staff are 96% successful on the strategy's goals and priorities.
- Despite COVID, there was full participation in the youth adventures breakout camps and an increase in the reserved program for LGBTQ2 community groups at the teen centres.
- Collaborations increased, and in 2020 we partnered with Saanich Neighbourhood Place who provided mental health support for youth in the Tillicum area.
- The youth element at Horner Park was completed and an art mural may be done at the Tripp Station outdoor bike park.
- Low-cost workshops have helped youth take classes in first aid, food safe, and youth employment readiness programs. A self-expressive art program was done at Cedar Hill for low cost as well.
- Communication with youth is the most challenging strategic priority. Youth are elusive to communicate with and there is limited access to virtual technology. Staff created a community and school resource manual that went out to service groups and school district partners. The manual includes information on Youth LIFE access and provides information on grants available to youth.
- Youth spaces saw adapted and expanded programs to meet youth needs. The Pearkes teen centre was lost but staff still managed to provide some programs.
- Work continued with non-profit partners to enhance service delivery.
- In 2021 the department would like to strengthen school partnerships and continue with leadership academy and life skills workshops.
- Staff wish to provide opportunities to experience Indigenous culture and also see the completion of the Tripp station youth park.

Responses to committee comments/questions were noted:

- Youth participation has increased significantly; it helped when school partners came on board to get the word out about services being offered. It is very hard to get word out to youth.
- When the space was lost at Pearkes, they found space in the fieldhouse at Pearkes as well as the Lam room in the recreation centre.
- There was a Wheel Riders skate park program and a sports program before and staff hope to bring these programs back soon.

It was noted that program participation seems to increase when food and drink are offered, and that community partners can also be very helpful.

The Senior Manager of Community Services noted that their team has good working relationships with non-profit agencies and schools to help obtain spaces. Youth in the Tillicum neighbourhood are vulnerable and volatile and programs are needed. The programs are not doing as well as before because of the lost dedicated space. A lot of mental health services has been lost because of the pandemic, with reduced access to functional adults that can help with a variety of topics. Newcomer teen groups still need a safe space to meet. The team is looking for alternative methods to bring spaces back to provide these services.

OLDER ADULT STRATEGY – YEAR THREE REPORT

Alison Chamberlain, Older Adult Community Programmer, provided information on the work done in 2020 and the following was noted:

- The Heart images showing throughout the presentation are from the Hearts Together collaborative program which was discussed at the last meeting. About 250 older adults participated in that program.
- With funding approved in May 2020, staff have continued working from the strategic priorities that were adopted in 2017, which are to have age friendly spaces, collaboration, enhanced communications and access to information accessibility services.
- Council funded a part-time programmer one position who has supported the work required to implement the strategy (eg. Coordinate Cedar Hill club, organize dementia programs, health care access and facilitate outreach etc.)
- When the strategy is complete there will be four part-time programmers.
- Jan-March 2020 staff could support a wide range of social opportunities, and support caregivers with respite opportunities. Groups of elders self-organized themselves and partnerships expanded with Native Friendship Centre. Information on the LIFE program was circulated and the Connections guide was distributed.
- March – Dec 2020 – there was uncertainty in program planning and a challenge with changing health orders. Staff adapted to evolving health orders by allowing membership programs to reserve spots for fitness and arts, and limiting sizes of groups to be safe. The website was adapted to provide more information on partners and resources. Outside activities commenced. Park programs occurred at three parks.
- Enhanced communications and age friendly spaces were provided and the Older Adults Connections guide was published. A second welcome desk was purchased which provides helps people navigate new safety protocols and general program information.
- When we opened pools for length swimming, we received much positive feedback as there are large benefits for physical and mental health.
- Gaining safe access to programs has been the biggest challenge.

- Going forward there are challenges for older adults to connect. This past year highlights how strategic priorities relate. Staff will continue to focus on building and enhancing communication and partnerships, having welcoming spaces, and continue with programs that are relevant.

Comments from committee members and responses noted:

- With reference to using the internet, some people only have telephones, and many seniors either do not have access to technology or have a limited understanding. Any links from printed materials and the website must be done thoughtfully. Lots of people are fearful of hacking. Teaching seniors to use ipads is a good idea, some organizations do this. Staff replied that there has been lots of adaptation. Some partners have call check-ins, Cedar Hill Club switched to calling members via telephone. There are a variety of ways to reach out to people in place.
- Question was asked what the Cedar Hill Club membership numbers are as the Cordova Bay 55+ has high membership. Staff responded that they did have good membership but have moved away from membership model and hope to pick it up again in the fall.
- It was noted that men are often less connected and didn't really participate at Cordova Bay 55+ until they started a mens' exercise program. Staff replied that they are looking at how to bring forth spaces to bring all to connect. It is hoped that next year will have less restrictions regarding gathering and sharing of things like tools.
- Intergenerational programming is very good to connect youth with mature people.
- A background was provided on the origins of the Cordova Bay 55+ Centre.

CUTHBERT HOLMES RESTORATION

The Senior Manager of Parks provided information on Cuthbert Holmes and Tillicum Park and the various areas within, which include berms, ponds and wetlands, mud flats, trails, meadows, and more.

- There have been significant changes in the area and an overview was given of restoration work done since 2017.
- Part of a provincial grant will go towards Cuthbert Holmes. When the interchange was being planned this committee was good in getting money into Saanich accounts for this project.
- Park areas of restoration were explained: Area A is a berm of rock/dirt along the highway and staff planted up with over 600 trees and created a pathway. Area B are newly created wetlands, Area C is restoration work at Admirals, Area D includes trail relocation and aspen restoration, and Area E is general park restoration opportunities.
- The berm area has nice view and lots of wildlife. The rough treatment along edge is on purpose, and is typically used for mine reclamation sites. It is fortunate that the Ministry agreed to it. At this time there is lots of woody debris and rock. This slows down water flow from top of berm to reduce flow. This area is planted up with seedlings as well. Eventually we will have benches and amenities.
- Regarding Area B, the ministry biologist said we need to deal with water, so a wetland was proposed and two were constructed. They take water that's close to the interchange over to the pond and then to Colquitz river. There is also a wood duck box in the pond.
- A wetland was constructed in the centre of the roundabout to deal with highway water.
- Area C has more constructed wetland at the Admirals estuary area.
- Area D is new with a trembling aspen area and trail relocation. There is an invasive Hawthorne field to be removed and money from the ministry will help with this. This summer in-stream creek work, will result in a more diverse habitat.
- Area E has some large dead Grand fir trees and some were shortened to make wildlife trees. Some areas are very compacted where people walk to the river. These areas

have been fenced over and we will use an air spade to de-compact the soil. Volunteers built owl nests for great horned owls. One is already being used.

- There is so much wildlife in this urban park and many educational opportunities. Staff are considering putting this presentation on the Saanich website for information.

Committee comments and responses to questions:

- Suggestion made that an owl cam would be very interesting.
- Question about extra water flow will banks be damaged? Staff noted there will probably be more water from the highway with there being more pavement. There are a lot of steps for water to go before getting to the Colquitz. Staff feel there are enough barriers to slow water down.
- Comment made regarding whether there will be an asphalt pathway as hard-pressed trails can be easy to get stuck in. People with mobility issues and strollers prefer asphalt and it is also easier to walk on for older people. Staff noted they want to ensure water can flow underneath the trail and they are still sorting this out.

*** L. Edgar left the meeting at 5:28 ***

- This area is so much better then what was there before. Member would support publishing information on the website.
- Some people were unaware that the rough materials were left there on purpose and it was suggested that signage be installed. Staff replied that they will install educational signage.
- This area could be turned into a good educational program. Signage is needed and posting something on web is a great idea.
- Suggestion made that maybe short videos on different restoration projects could be put on the website. The work that was done in this area that was previously so devastated is great.

DIVISION UPDATES

There was no discussion. Updates were attached to the agenda for information.

In reply to a question about the Parks budget, it was noted that this year resources requests are challenging. The department did get funding for the Urban Forest Strategy review and for the washroom plan. Cedar Hill is in the capital budget request for each year and if anyone is interested this can be seen online. Lastly, it was noted that there are two playground options are online for the Normandy park concept if members want to vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm. The next meeting is on Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

Councillor Brownoff, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary

March 22, 2021

Dear Mayor and Council

As you deliberate the [Draft 2021-2025 Financial Plan](#), we recommend funding opportunities and immediate actions that support the significant increase in park usage by families with and without dogs.

In 2020, the Cadboro Bay Residents' Association (CBRA) undertook an extensive study and public survey on dog restrictions at Cadboro-Gyro Park.¹ Since then, the region has experienced a dramatic acceleration in the usage of dog-friendly beaches, parks, and trails. The closure of the "UVic Dog Park" has also had a detrimental impact on the community and starting May 1st, seasonal dog restrictions banning dogs from Willows Beach and large sections of Cadboro-Gyro Park will take effect. These trends are intensifying demand for fenced dog parks and intensifying pressures at Cadboro-Gyro Park.

We urge you to fund improvements for the many families with and without dogs who collectively treasure Cadboro-Gyro Park for its beachside recreation, community vibrancy, and wildlife.

This letter outlines immediate actions for consideration in your financial planning process.



Urgent Recommendations for 2021:

- 1. Empower Saanich Staff to draft bylaw amendments that permit leashed dogs to be walked on Cadboro-Gyro Park grounds (pathways, grassy areas) during the spring and summer to address accessibility challenges and reduce congestion.**

Currently, dogs are banned from all accessible paved/gravel pathways, all grassy areas and the parking lot from May 1 to Aug. 31 after 9 a.m. This causes significant problems:

- a) Discrimination against people with limited mobility who have dogs,**



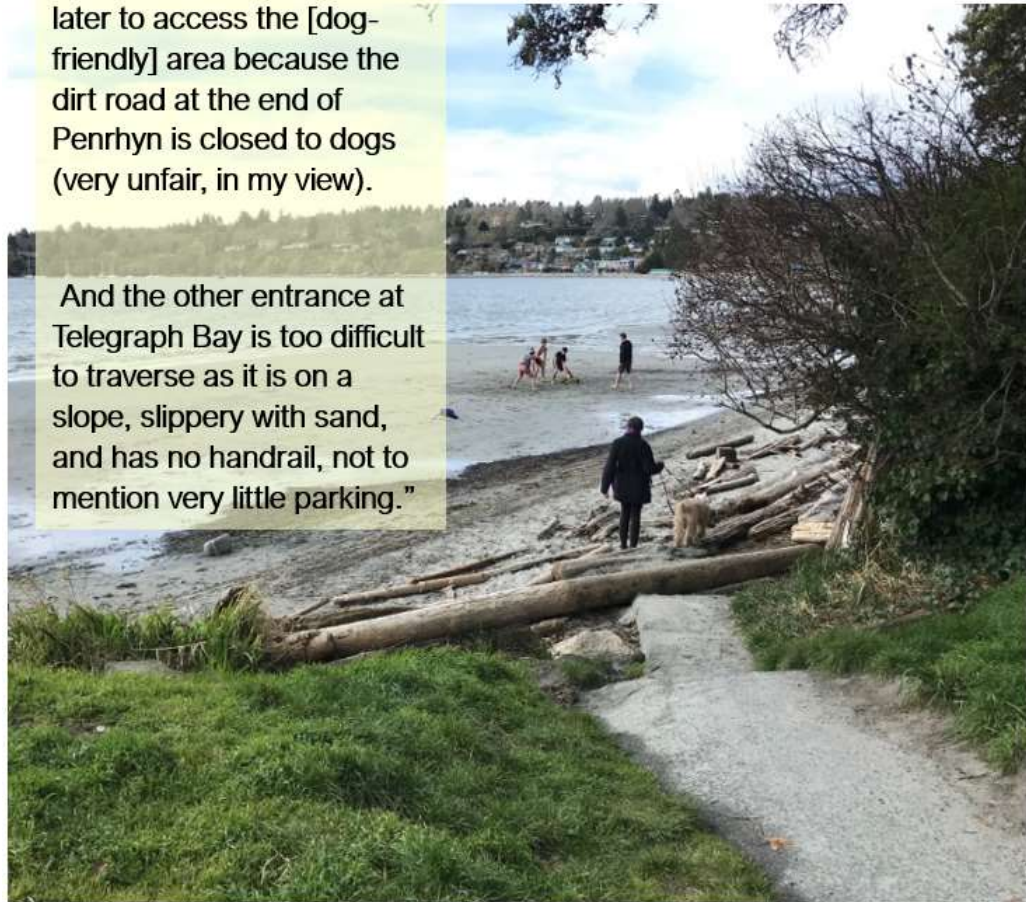
¹ CBRA's Aug/Sep 2020 report and presentation to Saanich Council available at www.cadboro.ca

including people with disabilities, seniors and many others, by excluding them from the only accessible areas of the park. This also excludes them from enjoying any sightlines of the park and beach where vibrant activities take place daily.

- b) Congestion** at the only dog-friendly access point (photo below) is common. This path is a narrow, rugged path at the foot of Tudor Ave off busy Cadboro Bay Road. Through the Pandemic, lineups often form at the top and bottom. It is not accessible by people with limited mobility. Immediate opening of the park to leashed dogs will enable improved dispersion and flow of people—added importance under COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions.

“...At my age...I am unable later to access the [dog-friendly] area because the dirt road at the end of Penrhyn is closed to dogs (very unfair, in my view).

And the other entrance at Telegraph Bay is too difficult to traverse as it is on a slope, slippery with sand, and has no handrail, not to mention very little parking.”



- c) Enforcement against healthy activities:** Enforcement of families walking peacefully with leashed dogs in the park effectively punishes them for seeking out healthy lifestyle activities or requiring accessible pathways.

No reasons or risks have been identified as to why Cadboro-Gyro Park bans dogs in all park areas above the beach in the spring and summer. No other similar parks ban dogs on pathways and grassy areas, including Willows Park (Oak Bay), Beacon Hill Park (Victoria), and Kitsilano Beach Park (Vancouver).

- d) **Inability to make essential interconnections by walking through the park to Cadboro Bay Village and other areas of the community, if walking with dogs.** Instead, current rules concentrate families with dogs in the eastern section of beach with a single rugged dog-friendly pathway far from the park.

2. Construct fenced dog parks in Saanich and engage with University of Victoria on potential re-opening of the fenced field at Cedar Hill Cross Road.

Fenced dog parks provide an important outlet for more intensive dog exercise and group dog play, especially for the most active dogs. They also support improved dispersion of people with dogs regionally.

The UVic property on Cedar Hill Cross Road generally referred to as the “UVic Dog Park” (closed March 2020), held particular appeal due to its large size, mix of trees and open spaces, and walking circuit in support of healthy lifestyles and socialization.



Appendix A provides an impactful letter from a community member illustrating benefits experienced over 25 years, efforts by UVic over time to enable use of this space by the public, and the detrimental impacts of the closure for community members (including displacement and crowding in nearby areas including sensitive Mystic Vale).

3. Increase enforcement – After implementing urgent bylaw change to allow leashed dogs in the park in spring and summer (and any other bylaw improvements), increase enforcement to promote control of dogs and compliance to bylaws.

Saanich bylaws currently require that dog owners keep dogs under control at all times, remove feces immediately, and limit excessive noise.



- 4. Improve signage.** Signage about dog restrictions at Cadboro-Gyro Park is limited and unclear. Signage plays an essential role in directing attention to the importance of not allowing dogs to chase birds and keeping dogs under control at all times. It is also necessary for creating awareness of dog restrictions.



- 5. Increase the number of garbage bins, frequency of garbage bin cleanings and offer recycling receptacles.**

Garbage bin overflows were a common occurrence following busy days in the spring and summer of 2020. Cans and bottles that can be recycled also take up significant space or are frequently left outside of garbage bins. Similar themes have also been observed



at other Saanich trailheads. Photo is from Cadboro's East Beach (dog-friendly section) in summer, 2020.

6. **Construct a covered picnic shelter** to accommodate the increased usage of the park and to make possible increased usage on rainy days.

Additional Recommendation for 2021-25 Financial Plan

7. **Empower Saanich staff to draft bylaw amendment options for improved dog restrictions at Cadboro Beach that:**

- a) Considers the option outlined in Figure 1 below, developed based on extensive research that balances input from over 1,200 members of the public and from various subject matter experts. [Read](#) the full report and [watch](#) our presentation to Saanich Council for greater detail and insights relevant to Cadboro-Gyro Park's distinct characteristics and patterns of use.
- b) Considers the future forthcoming findings of the Federal Government in relation to the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary.
- c) Ensures long-term inclusivity for families with and without dogs, balancing diverse interests, preferences and uses consistent with Saanich's values.

Figure 1: Proposed for further review by Saanich Council, staff and the public:



This option requires dogs to be leashed in the park and across the main sections of beach from **May through Labour Day**. Leash optional beach areas are provided at the extreme east and west ends of the beach to enable dog off-leash dog swimming and cooling off in hot weather.

- **Leash required areas (yellow):** Extends across the majority of the beach, from the storm drain at Tudor Ave on the East Beach, to west of the Mystic Pond outflow on the West Beach. Leashed dogs would also be permitted in the Park (except playground).
- **Leash optional areas (green):** The two extreme ends of the beach would be leash-optional: east of the Tudor Ave outflow and west of the Mystic Vale outflow. These areas have distinctive physical features that make them simple to demarcate with prominent signage, benefitting both dog owners and people wishing to avoid off-leash dogs.

Benefits:

- Peak season (spring/summer) leashing in the park and across the most popular section of beach ensures dogs are under control, mitigating concerns about safety, nuisance, missed dog feces and chasing of birds.
- Maximally disperses people with dogs while under the control of a leash. This reduces the problem of families with dogs becoming concentrated in one area and enables walkability from all directions.
- Restrictions are simple and easy to demarcate.
- Maintains opportunity for dogs to swim, play and cool off in the water with their families off-leash in sections of beach that offer a better balance of shared use.
- Maintains inclusivity to all beachgoers (families with and without dogs).
- Encourages respectful shared use, control of dogs and tolerance of diversity.

Conclusion

Year-round access to Cadboro-Gyro Park and Beach by people with dogs is extremely important to a significant portion of the community, but **harmony requires a widely shared feeling of safety, inclusivity, and a culture of personal responsibility**. Saanich can make meaningful improvements possible through its Financial Plan and further work on this topic.

Thank you for considering our recommendations,

Cadboro Bay Residents' Association

Appendix A: UVic Dog Park Closure – Impact Statement Letter

Having worked at UVic for over 25 years, and being a long-time dog owner, I'm aware of many of the issues around the area that has historically been referred to as the UVic "Dog Field."

Starting in the mid 90's, after we got our first dog, I soon discovered the UVic Dog Field, which is the are located on Cedar Hill Corner X Rd across from Henderson Rec Centre. A friend and I began meeting each day, with our dogs, at 8am, prior to going into work. A group soon formed and we all became good friends, as did our dogs. WE would walk, "rain or shine" and year-round, at the "Dog Field" as it was affectionately known then. The entrance back then was where the trucks and service vans now enter. At that time, there was no fencing along the Mystic Value side, no gate, and no stairs. There were no Garbage cans either but, we dutifully picked up our Dog's poop and took it with us. After some time, UVic Buildings and Grounds personnel brought a garbage can and left it at the gate for us to use. We were very grateful and appreciative that UVic allowed us to use their field and even brought us a place to deposit our pet's poop.

Over the next 20 years and two more dogs, I continued to meet friends while my dogs met theirs, as we all exercised and socialized. Suring this time, UVic even expanded their services to the area, providing fencing along the Mystic Vale side and building stairs down to it. They also provided other gates and even more garbage cans. Dog owners greatly appreciated UVic's contribution to the region's community. It became the optimal place to bring their dogs. The "Dog Field" became a safe, fenced, serviced area for their exercise and socialization. There was no better place in the Greater Victoria region to take one's dog.

Unfortunately, since March 2020, as COVID locked us down, the field was closed to the public. Since then, disappointingly, UVic has permanently banned dogs and their owners from using it. It ahs had a dire effect on the community and has significantly overloaded the few other areas available in the region.

Mystic Vale, an environmental jewel, is now crowded, as people are looking for a safe, accessible place to walk their dogs. Willows Beach allows dogs but only until May and it is now crowded. As well, Uplands Park has restricted months when dogs are allowed. Dallas Road, with no fencing, can be dangerous for off leash pets. Cadboro Bay Beach (East end) allows dogs year-round for now, but there are continued attempts to restrict their use. UVic's area was ideal. It suited everyone, young and old, as it was flat, fenced and big.

When I worked at UVic, there was always talk of different ways the institution could be a good corporate citizen to the population of Greater Victoria. Never wanting to be seen as the "Ivory Tower" to the surrounding communities, UVic looked for different ways to be inclusive and welcoming to the non-UVic population. There was a desire to open the Campus up to try to make it more inviting to the non-UVic population. The "Dog Field" was always held up as a great example of UVic sharing and partnering wit the regions' citizenry.

To add to the challenge caused by the permanent closing of the “Dog Field”, there has been a large increase in people adopting or acquiring dogs during this past year of Covid, and are now looking for places to take them.

Before, when UVic expanded services to the “Dog Field,” many came to rely on it as the place to take their dogs. It was a wonderful, expansive and contained area where everyone could meet up. When it became apparent that the closure was going to be permanent, there was extreme disappointment.

The “locked out” area now sits empty, most of each day, except for some limited usage by Athletics. It is especially difficult to see the “Fields” permanent closure as Victoria seems to be bursting at the seams, with dogs and their owners looking for safe places to go. Its important to remember as well, that many are UVic alumni who own dogs and who used that field.

If there was a possible solution that could allow even some usage, I believe it would be celebrated and lauded by many, many pet owners.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Regards, Kathy Shields