

A photograph of two women walking their dogs on a dirt path through a lush green forest. The woman on the left is wearing a purple t-shirt and dark shorts, carrying a backpack. The woman on the right is wearing a pink t-shirt and denim shorts. They are both smiling and holding leashes for their dogs. The background is filled with tall trees and dense foliage.

District of Saanich

People, Pets and Parks Strategy

**DRAFT STRATEGY
PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION**

MAY 29, 2023

Agenda

- Project Overview
- What We've Heard So Far
- Vision, Goals and Principles
- Key Recommendations
- Implementation
- Next Steps
- Q+A

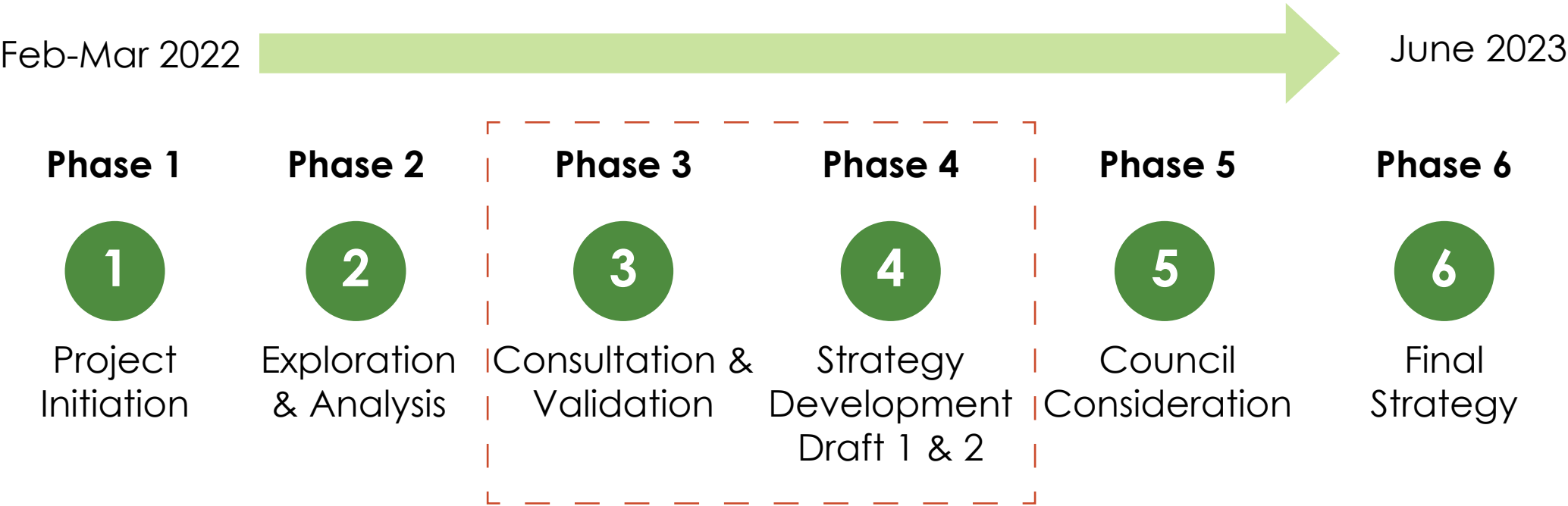
Strategy Purpose



The purpose of the Strategy is to provide positive relationships between people, pets and the environment given:

- Increasing population in Saanich and across the Capital Regional District
- Increasing number of pets in parks (primarily dogs)
- Increasing pressure on a limited amount of open space
- Changing needs and demands
- Conflicting park use and environmental impacts

Project Overview

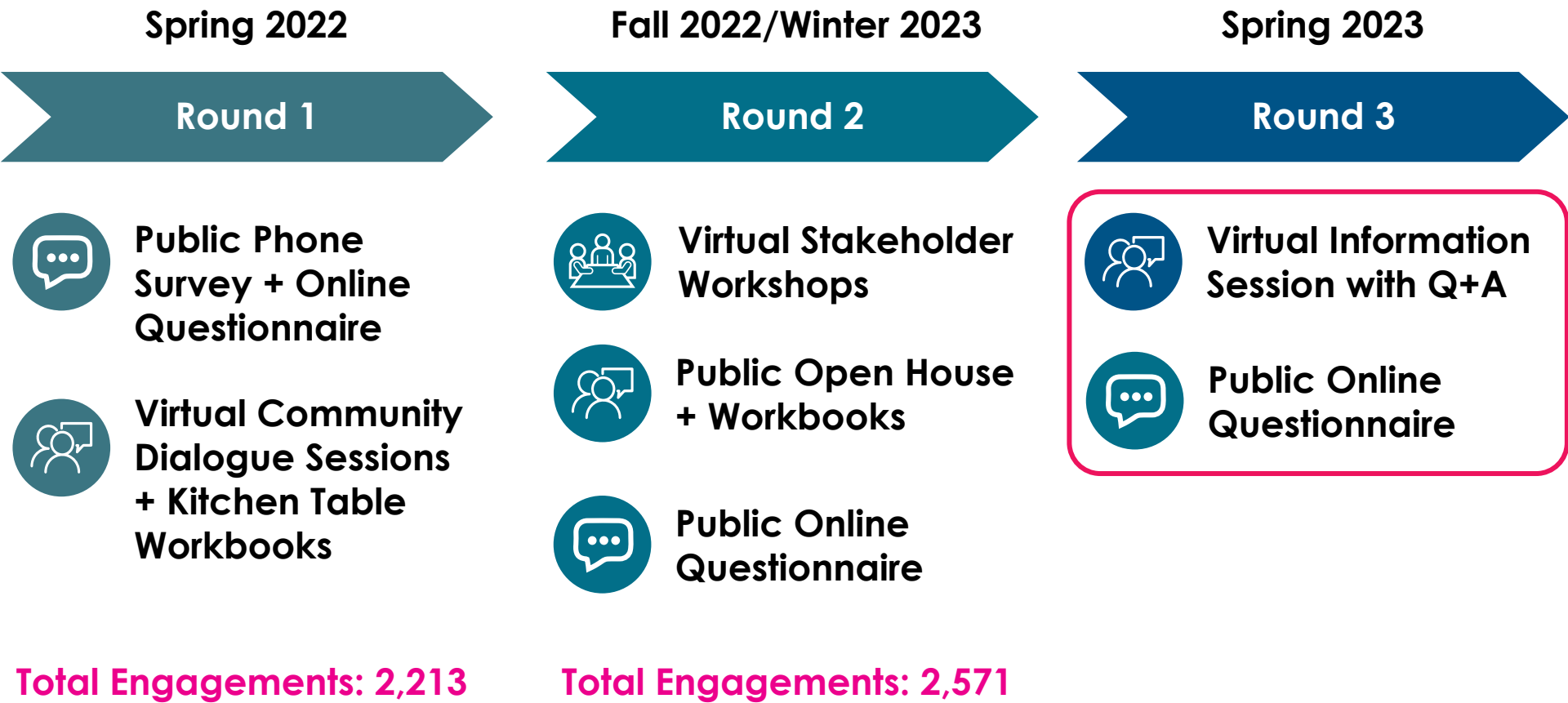


Methods and Activities

- Review of existing District of Saanich strategies related to parks and trails
- Reviews of existing pet related policies and bylaws
- Precedent research including pet policies and management strategies from other jurisdictions
- Research on managing pets and environment
- An in-depth analysis of Saanich's parks system
- Multiple rounds of engagement through a variety of methods



Engagement



What We've Learned

COMMUNITY VALUES



Open Space

- All park visitors recognize the value of having open space for dogs to play and get exercise off-leash in parks.
- Some indicated that the value of play cannot be replicated while on-leash, and the positive effects on physical and mental health for both dogs and their owners was the number one benefit.



Variety of Parks

- The community values having access to a variety of different types of parks that are distributed throughout the District.
- There are also community members who would like to enjoy different types of parks without dogs being present.



Safety

- All park visitors agree that safety is an important consideration when it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks.



Environmental Considerations

- The community values environmental and wildlife protection, as well as having opportunities to connect with and recreate in nature.



Park Cleanliness and Waste Management

- The community values park cleanliness, and waste management is an important consideration for people and pets sharing Saanich's parks.



Sense of Community

- The community values the personal connections that can be formed by bringing pets to parks, and by interacting with other community members.



Park Equity

- There was agreement that parks should be spaces for all to enjoy, and consideration should be given to the enjoyment and safety of all park users.

What We've Learned



Dog Behavior and Lack of Training/Control

- The top challenge related to pets in parks was owners not having control over their off-leash dogs.



Environmental Considerations

- All park users highlighted the importance of environmental and wildlife protection.
- Park users expressed concerns with off-leash dogs disturbing and chasing wildlife, and impacting natural and re-naturalized areas in Saanich parks.



Communication and Education

- The community indicated that bylaws and restrictions are confusing and not well understood. There is also a lack of awareness of etiquette related to people and pets in parks.



Increasing Demand

- More people and pets are putting pressure on the parks system and there are unmet needs for places to safely exercise and socialize pets, particularly in high density areas.



Visitor Comfort

- Some community members avoid parks in Saanich due to off-leash dogs being present.

Vision, Principles, and Goals

Vision Statement

Saanich parks are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all park users and provide a variety of experiences that balance the different needs of people and pets while protecting environmental integrity and promoting stewardship.

Guiding Principles

1. Parks are welcoming, inclusive, and accessible for everyone, including pet owners and non-pet owners.
2. The importance of parks is essential to pets and their owners' health and well-being.
3. Planning for pet amenities encourages stewardship and protects environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife, and biodiversity.
4. We all contribute to and have a shared responsibility for creating welcoming and inclusive parks.

Goals

1. Ensure park rules, regulations and bylaws are clear and easily understood.
2. Improve compliance with pet rules and licensing.
3. Improve protection of important and sensitive environmental areas.
4. Create a diversity of opportunities in parks for people with pets.
5. Ensure there are adequate places in parks for people who don't want to encounter dogs or other pets off-leash.

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Planning, Enforcement, & Education

- Bylaws & Regulations
- Education & Enforcement
- Stewardship
- Monitoring & Evaluation

Leash-Optional Areas

- Leash-Optional Area Typologies
- Standard Amenities
- Special Amenities
- Boundaries
- Signage
- Maintenance



Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Bylaw and Regulations

Update the Animals Bylaw, 2004, No. 8556

- Update the bylaw to specify that dogs are welcome in parks and are to be on-leash unless otherwise specified, and under control at all times on- or off-leash. (Also see Recommendation 1.3)
- Update the definition of “under control” in the Animal Bylaw to match the CRD definition: According to the CRD, *“under control” means a person in possession of a dog in a park has a clear line of sight to the dog at all times and the dog immediately returns to the owner when called or signaled.*
- Be consistent with the Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations in terms of requiring pets on leash and not running at-large or harrassing/harming wildlife.
- Ensure the bylaw includes all pets in parks, not just dogs.

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Bylaw and Regulations (cont.)

Designate specific parks, areas within parks, and trails as leash-optional areas for dogs.

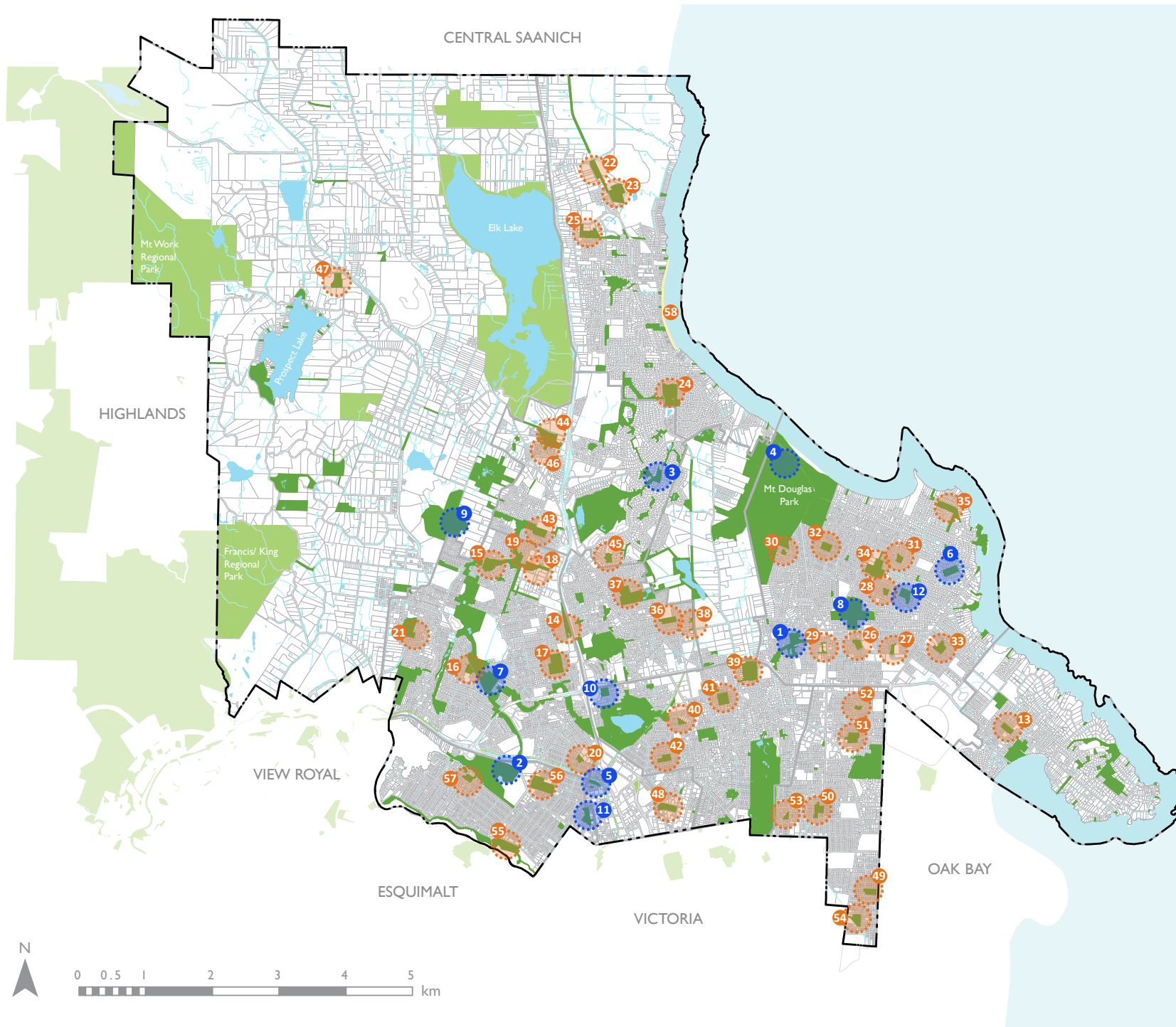
Three types of leash-optional areas are proposed:

- Leash-optional areas with no/limited fencing (includes beach access)
- Leash-optional areas with full fencing
- Leash-optional trails

57 locations for leash-optional areas.
12 locations for permanent, fenced leash-optional areas, including:

- Brodick Park
- Cuthbert Holmes Park
- Emily Carr Park
- PKOLS (Mt. Douglas Park)
- Regina Park
- Houlihan Park
- Hyacinth Park
- Lambrick Park
- Layritz Park
- Rainbow Park
- Rudd Park





MAP LEGEND

Fenced Parks/Trails

- 1 BRODICK PARK
- 2 CUTHBERT HOLMES PARK
- 3 EMILY CARR PARK
- 4 PKOLS (MT DOUGLAS PARK)
- 5 REGINA PARK
- 6 HOULIHAN PARK
- 7 HYACINTH PARK
- 8 LAMBRICK PARK
- 9 LAYRITZ PARK
- 10 RAINBOW PARK
- 11 RUDD PARK
- 12 SIERRA PARK

Unfenced Parks/Trails

- 13 MAYNARD PARK
- 14 BAXTER PARK
- 15 COPLEY WEST PARK
- 16 EDGE PARK
- 17 GLANFORD PARK
- 18 INDUSTRIAL BUFFER PARK
- 19 MOOR PARK
- 20 MOUNT VIEW PARK
- 21 ROSEDALE PARK
- 22 FOWLER PARK
- 23 LOCHSIDE PARK
- 24 McMINN PARK
- 25 SAYWARD HILL PARK
- 26 BLAIR PARK
- 27 FAIRBURN PARK
- 28 FRANCISCO PARK
- 29 GLENCRAIG PARK
- 30 HARVEST LANE PARK
- 31 KING ALFRED PARK
- 32 MAJESTIC PARK
- 33 MONTAGUE PARK
- 34 TYNDALL PARK
- 35 VANTREIGHT PARK
- 36 AMBASSADOR PARK
- 37 BECKWITH PARK
- 38 McBRIAR PARK
- 39 BRAEFOOT PARK
- 40 LEEDS PARK
- 41 REYNOLDS PARK
- 42 TOLMIE PARK
- 43 BRYDON PARK
- 44 COMMONWEALTH PLACE
- 45 MALTWOOD PARK
- 46 NORMANDY - SCP PARK
- 47 PROSPECT LAKE
- 48 RUTLEDGE PARK
- 49 ALLENBY PARK
- 50 BROWNING PARK
- 51 HORNER PARK
- 52 ONYX PARK
- 53 WETHERBY PARK
- 54 KINGS ROAD NATURE PARK
- 55 GORGE
- 56 HAMPTON
- 57 MEADOW
- 58 CORDOVA BAY BEACH:
 - PARKER PARK
 - AGATE PARK
 - McMORRAN PARK
 - CORDOVA BAY PARK
 - FENN AVE BEACH ACCESS
 - WALEMA AVE BEACH ACCESS
 - D'ARCY LANE BEACH ACCESS
 - TIMBER PLACE BEACH ACCESS

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Other recommendations under Bylaw & Regulations

- Work with adjacent jurisdictions to explore ways to improve consistency of bylaws and enforcement. (interjurisdictional working group)
- Develop a Commercial Dog Walkers Permit.



Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Education and Enforcement

- Work with the CRD to develop educational resources about licensing and bylaws.
- Increase licensing rates through annual licensing drives and communication blitz in the spring each year.
- Improve tracking of animal bylaw enforcement by documenting the location and coding the bylaw infractions with consistency.
- Explore options for enhanced enforcement and progressive fines for repeat offenses to change habitual non-compliance.

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Stewardship

- Create a pilot program for one full-time seasonal park ambassador to increase education and awareness about pets in parks.
- Support the development of stewardship groups, formed by local volunteers, to support sustainable management and maintenance of leash-optional areas.
- Develop an outline of the roles and responsibilities of stewardship groups.
- Add Take a Bag - Leave a Bag station at all parks. Create opportunities for community members to “Adopt a Bag Station”.

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Maintenance

- Increase resources for maintenance and management of leash-optional areas, especially sports fields and fenced areas.
- Increase resources and infrastructure for pet waste management.
- Regularly evaluate the allocation of maintenance resources based on monitoring, service calls in parks, and data collection on level of use and condition.



<https://pettable.com/blog/how-to-dispose-of-dog-poop-the-green-way>

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Leash-Optional Area Amenities

| | Unfenced Leash-Optional / Under Control Areas | Fenced Leash-Optional/Under Control Areas | | Parks with Leash-Optional/Under Control Trails | Leash-Optional/Under Control Beach Areas |
|---|---|---|-------------------------|--|--|
| | | Provide for all designated areas | Provide as space allows | | |
| Standard Amenities | | | | | |
| Open space | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Waste bins | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Take a Bag / Leave a Bag Station | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Seating | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Barrier-free access (wherever possible) | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Special Amenities | | | | | |
| Separated small / shy dog areas | | | ● | | |
| Water stations (where possible) | | ● | ● | | |
| Natural elements | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Pathway/trail loop | | | ● | | |
| Agility features | | | ● | | |

Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Develop a monitoring and evaluating program. For example, use infrared counters to measure use of fenced leash-optional areas.
- Develop standard evaluation criteria.
- Develop an online tool so park users can help monitor and evaluate how implementation is going.
- Prioritize issues and work toward solutions.



Key elements of the Draft Strategy

Implementation

Total Estimated Capital Costs

- \$5.3 - \$7.1 million over 5 years
- \$4.2 - \$6.0 million is allocated for new fenced leash-optional areas
- \$400,000-500,000 is allocated for park upgrades for unfenced/partially fenced leash-optional areas

Total Staff Costs

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 2024-2026 Annual Staff Costs | \$792,000 |
| 2027 onward Annual Staff Costs | \$821,000 |
- Pets in Parks Coordinator (3-year term position)
 - Maintenance Staff
 - Enforcement Staff
 - Seasonal Ambassador

Next Steps



Complete Round 3 of Engagement

- Compile and answer questions
- Gather feedback through an Open Online Questionnaire

Make Edits, Summarize Engagement, and Develop the Final Draft Strategy

Present to Council

Finalize Strategy



QUESTIONS