

Priorities Committee Meeting_Jun08_2021

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Neighbourhood Dog Off-leash Update

Report Purpose

To provide Priorities Committee with an update on neighbourhood dog off-leash areas in Strathcona County.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

Report

Recreation and culture services are recognized as essential to the overall well-being of individuals and the community. The County recognizes these benefits and strives to be a leader in the delivery of recreation and culture opportunities. The Dog Off-Leash Strategy, the Recreation and Culture Strategy and the Recreation and Culture Strategy Implementation Plan support dog off-leash areas in Strathcona County. These strategies outline how Strathcona County will identify, prioritize and best meet community needs through service delivery that works to more clearly define our community-driven approach to delivering recreation and culture opportunities in parks and open spaces.

In March 2021, following Council's direction to investigate potential sites for neighbourhood off-leash dog areas, Strathcona County conducted an online survey to obtain feedback from residents on the use of existing permanent and seasonal off-leash dog parks operated by Strathcona County, as well as examining the features associated with dog parks. According to RCMP and Enforcement Services, there are currently 14,480 licensed dogs residing in Strathcona County (as of May, 2021).

The dog off-leash survey results were informed by more than 1,300 community responses from people who reside in Strathcona County. The distribution of urban/rural respondents is similar to the population distribution (2018 census). Both dog owners and non-dog owners provided feedback on the importance of dog off-leash areas in the community. The survey and site assessment all contributed to the potential sites for new neighbourhood dog off-leash areas.

Year round dog off-leash sites with temporary fencing cost \$12,000. This cost includes fencing, supportive amenities and additional maintenance costs. Dog off-leash sites that have permanent fencing cost \$45,000 per site. Administration are considering adding an additional five, year round dog off-leash sites with temporary fencing in Strathcona County. This could be done in summer 2021 pending communication to residents adjacent to park spaces and re-prioritizing projects or be put forward through the 2022 budget process.

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Council and Committee History

February 23, 2021 Council approved: THAT Administration prepare a report for Council's consideration by the end of May 2021 on potential sites for neighbourhood off-leash dog parks in Strathcona County.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: RCMP and Enforcement Services, Communications

Master Plan/Framework: Dog Off-Leash Strategy, Recreation and Culture Strategy, Recreation and Culture Strategy Implementation Plan.

Communication Plan

A detailed communication plan has been developed for this initiative.

Enclosure

1 Dogs in Our Community presentation