

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPS2011-08
ATTACHMENT 3

Off-leash Area Management Plan 2010





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Report Author

The City of Calgary Parks

Appreciation and thanks are extended to:

Citizens of Calgary

The City of Calgary would like to thank all stakeholders who provided input between 2008 and 2010 as part of the development of the Off-leash Area Management Plan.

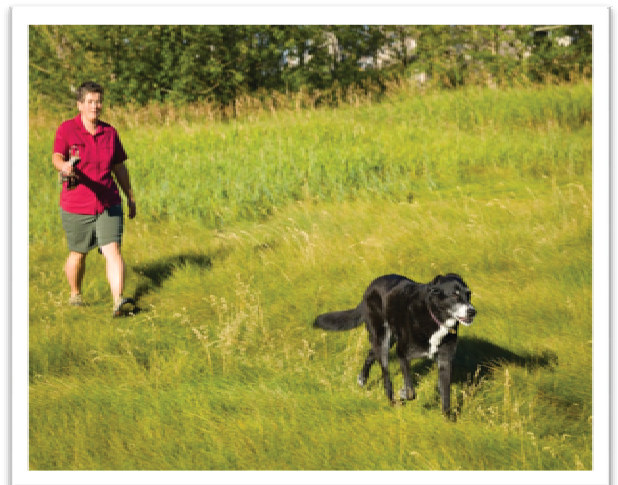
The City of Calgary

Contributing Business Units:

- Parks
- Animal & Bylaw Services (ABS)
- Infrastructure & Information Services (IIS)
- Customer Service & Communications (CSC)
- Community & Neighbourhood Services (CNS)

Calgary City Council

This document is being presented to Council as a pilot framework through the Standing Policy Committee (SPC) on Community & Protective Services (CPS) in February 2011.



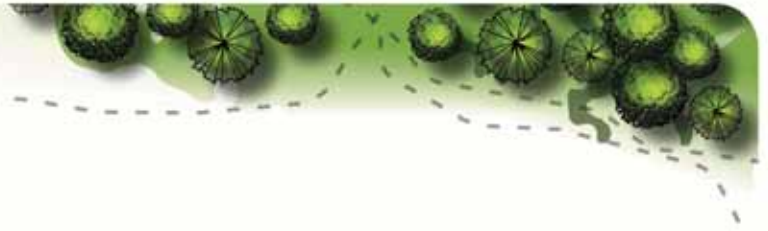
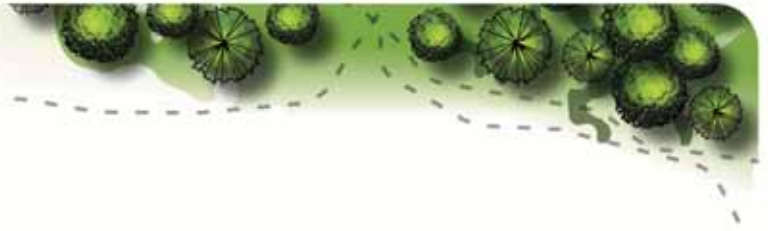


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Calgary City Council directed Administration to improve the management of off-leash areas. In response, The City of Calgary Parks (**Parks**) worked with Animal & Bylaw Services and other City departments and divisions to conduct stakeholder input, analyse the current situation, and review best practices in other cities. The results include the Off-leash Area Management Plan (**OLAMP**) and the following recommendations.

RECOMENDATIONS

A. Strategic Management

1. Council to receive the current off-leash area inventory for information.
2. Council to receive the Off-leash Area Management Plan for information and to direct Administration to utilize the guidelines, procedures, and the stakeholder engagement and service-level frameworks herein.
3. Build the management of off-leash areas into the Parks Asset Reporting and Information System.

B. Facility Enhancement

1. Increase off-leash opportunities by proposing the addition of up to 15 new sites in existing communities to key stakeholders.
2. Propose opportunities to simultaneously fully fence and gate up to 10 existing off-leash areas to key stakeholders.
3. Implement minor operational improvements to existing sites within division budgets.
4. Include off-leash areas as an option in the hierarchy of new and existing community planning.

C. Community Participation

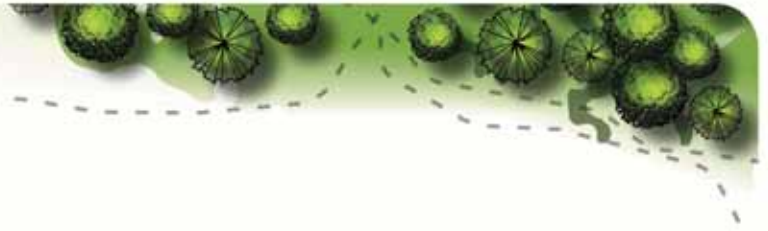
1. Offer citizens and key stakeholders the opportunity to enhance levels of service for specific off-leash areas through existing Parks programs such as:
 - Adopt-a-Park
 - Optional Amenities Agreements
 - Letters of Understanding
 - Sponsorship Programs
 - Lease/operating agreements for registered not-for-profit organizations when/if surplus City-owned land can be identified and secured.

D. Education and Enforcement

1. Parks to conduct an annual special event and media campaign in partnership with Animal & Bylaw Services promoting responsible and environmentally sustainable behaviours.
2. Animal & Bylaw Services to conduct a review of the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw and to include Parks as a key stakeholder for input.
3. Animal & Bylaw Services to lead the investigation and implementation of a dog waste enforcement and education strategy in partnership with Parks.

E. Communication

1. Enhance the Parks off-leash website and work with 3-1-1 to allow off-leash area requests from citizens.
2. Include detailed location and amenities information with customer friendly location maps on The City of Calgary website.



DEFINITIONS

Off-leash Area (OLA) – A multi-use park, or portion of a multi-use park, designated by the Director of Parks as an area where dogs are allowed off-leash under full control of the owner. These sites may be unfenced, partially fenced or fully fenced. This is the base level off-leash opportunity provided by The City of Calgary. On a case-by-case basis, Parks may enter into agreements with community volunteers or corporate sponsors to enhance the level of service for a particular OLA.

Dog Park – A fully fenced and gated open space, designed specifically for owners to allow their dogs off-leash. Registered not-for-profit organizations may apply for a Licence of Occupation (LOC) to construct and operate a dog park where surplus City-owned land can be identified and secured.

No Dog Area – For public health and safety reasons, dogs are prohibited from the following areas: school grounds, playgrounds, sports fields, golf courses, cemeteries, wading or swimming areas, or any area where dogs are prohibited by posted signs. Dogs are allowed on pathways only if the owner keeps the dog: under control at all times, on a short leash and on the right hand side of the pathway. *To see details of the Responsible Pet Owner bylaw, view Appendix 1 (pages 23-24).*

Owner – Any person or body corporate who: is the licensed owner of the dog; has legal title to the dog; or has possession or custody of the dog, either temporarily or permanently.

Ad-hoc Multi Stakeholder Advisory Group – A temporary multi-stakeholder advisory group facilitated by The City, where required for specific off-leash sites. Membership is specific to the service area of the type of OLA under consideration with a maximum of 10 members. Members accepted by The City include representatives approved in writing by key stakeholder groups such as community associations, dog walking groups, nature groups, seniors groups, cycling groups, and others. The City will also consider two individual residents from within the intended service area.

Types of OLAs: All off-leash areas are accessible by all members of the public regardless of where they live. The types of OLAs listed are for definition purposes only.

- 1. Neighbourhood OLA** – Is less than 4.3 hectares, and is intended to serve an 800-meter walking distance.
- 2. Community Cluster OLA** – Is between 4.3 and 19.9 hectares and is intended to serve an 8-minute driving distance. Driving distance is determined by The City of Calgary's Network Analysis System.
- 3. Regional OLA** – Is over 19.9 hectares and is intended to serve a 20-minute driving distance. Driving distance is determined by The City of Calgary's Network Analysis System.

See page 17 for details on levels of service provision for types of Off-leash Areas.



INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Off-leash Area Management Plan (**OLAMP**) is a City of Calgary Administrative document. It outlines a mission, vision, values, principles, and procedures for the establishment, management and operation of off-leash areas (**OLAs**). It enables a city-wide strategic approach to effectively manage OLAs in Calgary while taking into consideration the interests of a variety of park users. The guidelines and procedures are intended to be specific enough to provide consistency in processes, and broad enough to allow site specific flexibility for City staff managing off-leash areas.



Background

In June 2007 City Administration was directed by Council to report on rules and standards that could apply to a few strategically placed dog parks in Calgary.

As a result, In January 2008, Council then directed Administration to continue working collaboratively with communities and dog interest groups to provide off-leash access to Calgarians; and include off-leash areas in the hierarchy of open space options available to communities; and then in June 2008 added the request to review the management of off-leash dog areas as well.

The Off-Leash Areas Implementation Plan was approved in March 2010 and Administration was directed to report back with a progress update to the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services.

In February 2011, Administration presents the Off-leash Areas Management Plan to Committee including opportunities to:

- create fully fenced off-leash dog areas;
- identify options and review budget feasibility; and,
- lease surplus City lands to non-profit groups to manage and provide programs and services for dogs and their owners.



Current Reality and Challenges

Calgary City Council in 1989 had the forethought to work towards creating a dog friendly city by approving an off-leash area in almost every community (at that time).

Calgary as a result, may have the largest number of off-leash areas (149) and combined amount of off-leash space (1,280 hectares) in North America.

These off-leash designations make up for approximately 17% of the total City of Calgary Parks (Parks) land inventory and equates to almost 1,600 Canadian Football League fields.

Even so, The City of Calgary acknowledges the criticisms of some off-leash users regarding the quality of some of these sites and is working towards improving off-leash opportunities.

Along with criticisms on quality, several key challenges must be recognized, including the need to:

- Balance limited availability of open space in our urban environment and the increased demand for many types of recreational opportunities including off-leash activity.
- Deal with competing interest for taxpayer dollars with other municipal priorities such as protective services, roads, transportation, water resources, waste services, recreation centres, etc.
- Establish base level and enhanced levels of service for off-leash areas and the associated cost of provision.

- Balance the protection of vegetation and habitat with off-leash activity. Overuse, improper designations, poor design and/or poor signage in the past has caused the degradation of natural area habitat, and negatively impacted wildlife and ornamental parks.
- Reduce or eliminate safety/health hazards and user conflict associated with OLAs located adjacent to incompatible areas (pathways, major roadways, public drinking water sources, public swimming and wading areas, tot lots, playgrounds, school grounds and sports fields). As well as address the failure to remove and properly dispose of fecal matter.





Scope and Authority

The OLAMP consolidates current practices, existing corporate plans and policies, and new standards and guidelines to assist in the efficient and effective management of off-leash areas.

The plan applies to all open space and pathways where The City of Calgary is the steward. The guidelines, procedures and standards outlined in this management plan must be adhered to by City staff and/or contractors.

Authority for this plan lies with the Director of The City of Calgary Parks (Parks). Parks and Animal & Bylaw Services work in partnership to provide off-leash opportunities in Calgary.

The City of Calgary Parks

Parks is the steward of Calgary's open space and pathways, and is ultimately accountable for responsible and sustainable management of those lands and assets. Parks' role is to develop and implement management principles, practices and processes for the establishment, operation and maintenance of OLAs, and how stakeholders may become involved regarding the designation, design, operation and/or maintenance of these sites.

The City of Calgary Animal and Bylaw Services

Animal & Bylaw Services is responsible for managing the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw and The Calgary Parks and Pathway Bylaw as they relate to activities and behaviours within off-leash areas. Animal & Bylaw Services does this through enforcement, education, and citizen participation.

The Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw requires individuals to remove feces immediately and have in their possession a suitable means of removing excrement. The bylaw also requires dogs to be on leash everywhere in Calgary except in signed off-leash areas. Individuals must be in control of their dog at all times while in an OLA. Dogs must always be on leash on a

paved pathway (even if the pathway is in an off-leash area), and must not enter "No Dog Areas" whether a sign is posted, not posted or vandalized.

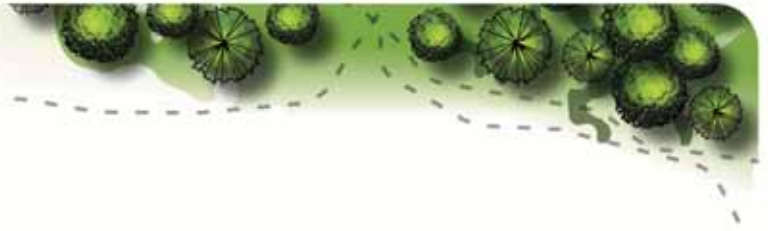
"No Dog Areas" include: school grounds, playgrounds, sports fields, golf courses, cemeteries, wading or swimming areas or any area where dogs are prohibited by posted signs.

The OLAMP is subject to the:

- Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw #23M2006
- Parks and Pathways Bylaw #20M2003
- Natural Areas Management Plan 1994
- Calgary Pathway and Bikeway Plan 2000
- Parks and Pathways Sign Manual 2007
- Development Guidelines and Standards Specifications Landscape Construction 2010
- *engage!* Policy 3rd Edition 2007
- Calgary Open Space Plan 2003
- Community Services & Protective Services Business Plan CSPA 2009– 2011
- Other relevant Municipal, Provincial, Federal policy

Appendix 1 highlights specific excerpts from relevant City of Calgary Bylaws.





Drivers

There were 95,563 dogs identified in Calgary during the 2001 census and over 122,000 were confirmed during the 2010 census. The steady increase in dog population creates a greater demand for OLAs within existing open space and open space planned for new communities.

Along with traditionally recognized and high-demand recreation activities, there is recognition that walking/exercising with your dog off-leash is a valid form of recreational activity.

Community, economic and environmental challenges and issues can emerge with intensified OLA use and the growing demand to provide off-leash opportunities in public open space. For example, human and dog health and safety issues; environmental degradation; conflict between off-leash dogs, neighbours and other park and pathway users; adequate parking and amenities; and fiscal realities contribute to the need to better manage off-leash areas.

Establishing, changing or eliminating OLAs prompt strong reactions from the community. Citizens interested in the establishment and management of off-leash areas in Calgary are organized and involved in processes along with other park users and community members who may or may not support the notion of OLAs. The increased expectation from citizens for public input are not only evident in Calgary but have also been identified as a trend by many municipalities across North America.

Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder engagement conducted in 2008-2009 was considered in the development of this OLAMP.

Overall, public engagement results indicate that dog owners and non-dog owners share similar concerns about OLAs: safety, lack of responsibility or respect by users, and a lack of area amenities or features.

Appendix 2 (on page 25) provides a summary of the public engagement results.

The "Procedures for OLA Requests" on page 14 outlines how stakeholders may become involved in the designation and operation of OLAs, while "Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines" is covered on page 21, Table 1.

Project Implementation

Following the public input gathered in 2008-2009, a diverse administrative project team contributed to development of this plan and to other components of the Council approved 2010 Off-leash Area Implementation Plan.

Representation included staff from: Several City of Calgary divisions including Parks; Animal and Bylaw Services (ABS); Infrastructure & Information Services (IIS); Customer Services & Communications (CSC) and Community and Neighbourhood Services (CNS). A project work plan was established including:

- External stakeholder input review
- Best practices review
- City policy and bylaw review
- OLAMP development strategy
- On-line stakeholder input and piloting of the Off-leash Area Management Plan
- OLA inventory and mapping exercise of existing sites
- New site identification service gap analysis using GIS mapping and dog licensing information
- Internal and external communication strategies
- Education and enforcement practices review.



Best Practices Research

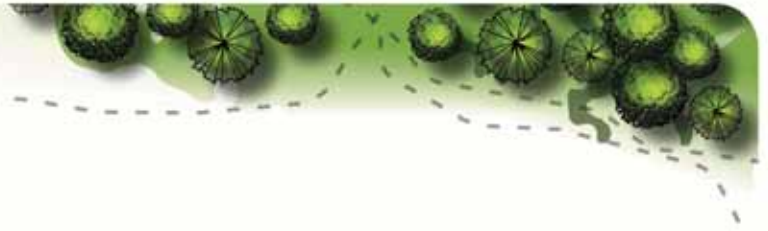
Although many cities are experiencing similar trends with respect to off-leash activity, a 2006 Parks review of 15 municipalities across Canada and the United States and, a subsequent review done by Animal & Bylaw Services (ABS) in 2008, reveal a wide variation of dog off-leash management practices.

No consistent best practices were identified because many cities indicated that they were in the infant stages of responding to this relatively new demand for off-leash space.

Despite this common response, a few themes did emerge:

- Those municipalities that do have an off-leash management plan in place include some sort of vision, goal or strategic statement.
- Many also have principles in place that influence the content of their plans and any future decision-making.
- A number of cities require new requests for off-leash areas to be supported by a community group.
- Partnerships with community, business and other government agencies are being considered for land acquisition, revenue generation and management of OLAs.
- In some cases, municipalities are asking community-based organizations to sign partnership agreements outlining clear roles and responsibilities including financial obligations.





PLAN OVERVIEW

The following City of Calgary Parks off-leash mission, vision, values, and core principles set direction and provide a guide for decision making.

Mission

The City of Calgary provides safe, sustainable off-leash opportunities to citizens.

Triple Bottom Line Vision

- **Social**
Off-leash area use enhances the well-being of people and dogs.
- **Environmental**
Management of multi-use off-leash areas maximizes enjoyment and safety for all users while minimizing negative impacts on the environment.
- **Economic**
A successful off-leash dog strategy contributes to Calgary's reputation as a desirable place to live and augments The City of Calgary's reputation as a leader in open space and responsible pet owner management.

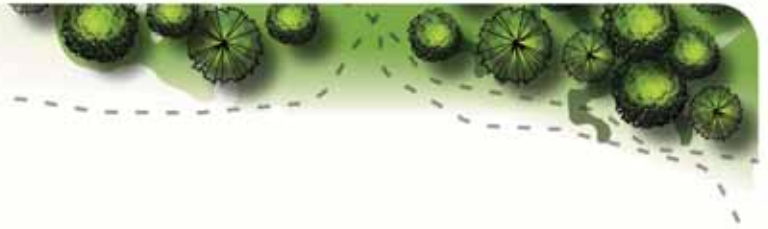
Values

The City of Calgary values:

- Accessibility and outdoor pursuits for all Calgarians.
- Off-leash dog walking as a legitimate form of recreation.
- Health and safety of people and dogs.
- Stakeholder involvement and volunteer participation.
- Mutual respect demonstrated by Members of Council, Administration and citizens.

Core Principles

- The privilege to allow dogs off leash in public space comes with responsibility and owners must adhere to all relevant bylaws including, but not limited to, picking up after dogs and controlling dogs at all times.
- The interests of a variety of stakeholders must be considered with the provision of OLAs.
- The management of OLAs is sustainable in all respects.
- The safety of all park and pathway users and dogs takes precedence over off-leash opportunities.
- The protection of park assets, particularly natural habitats and wildlife, takes precedence over off-leash opportunities.
- Minimize user conflict and safety concerns through quality design.
- Stakeholder engagement is subject to current Council-approved policy.
- Dog owners/walkers (and/or commercial dog walkers) are legally responsible for their own dog(s) and any injuries or damage caused by their dog(s).
- Individuals who choose to use off-leash areas do so at their own risk.
- All relevant Provincial and Federal regulations and Municipal bylaws supersede this plan.

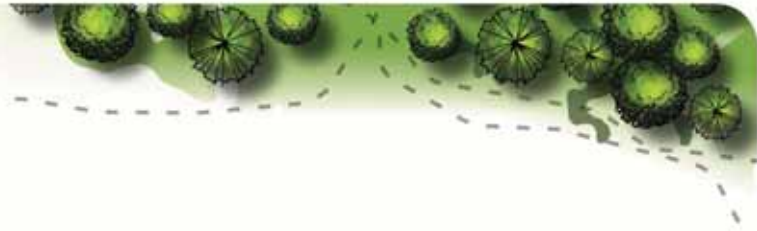


OFF-LEASH AREA ESTABLISHMENT CHECKLIST

Answers should be yes: exceptions to be explained and/or strategies implemented.

Mitigate concerns before moving forward in the process.

Question	Yes/No/NA (not applicable)	Explanation/Mitigation Strategy
• Is the land in the Parks inventory or is there an opportunity to lease the land?		
• Does it fill a gap in service area?		
• Is it at least .5 hectares in size?		
• Does it occupy less than 30% of a regional/multi-use site?		
• Is it safe for people and dogs?		
• Can effective strategies be implemented to mitigate potential safety concerns and/or conflict between users if the site is adjacent to: No Dog Areas; pathways; residents; major roadways?		
• Are stakeholders likely to support the site? (Proximity to adjacent residents, natural areas, already used informally as off-leash?)		
• Is there adequate parking and/or space available to provide parking?		
• Is the site easily accessible by the public and by service vehicles?		
• Can boundaries be clearly delineated?		
• Is the terrain/topography suitable for off leash and not susceptible to erosion?		
• Is the site currently used for passive unstructured activity?		
• Where a section of a park is considered, can a peripheral area be designated rather than a central area?		
• Is it a permanent site or site not expected for development in the next 10 - 20 years?		
• Is the cost to implement reasonable in relation to the length of term of a temporary site?		
• Can it be demonstrated that the site is in accordance with natural habitat goals when adjacent to or within a: Special Protection Natural Environment Park; Major Natural Environment Park; Environmentally		
• Can it be demonstrated that the site is in accordance with natural habitat goals when adjacent to or within a: Special Protection Natural Environment Park; Major Natural Environment Park; Environmentally Significant Area?		



OFF-LEASH AREA EVALUATION

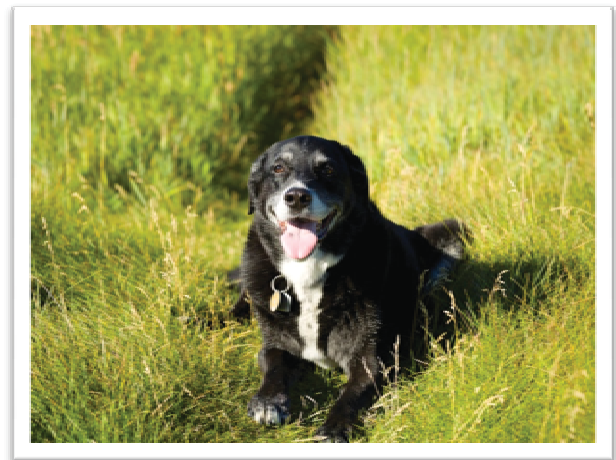
General Guidelines

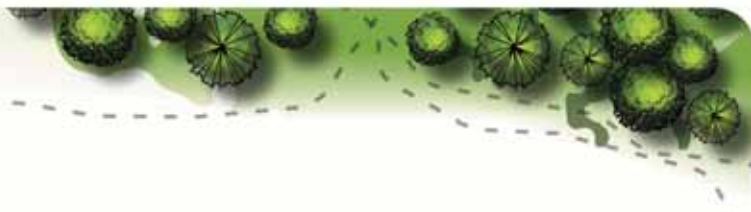
- All OLAs are subject to monitoring and evaluation for quality control and public safety by Parks staff using processes and criteria outlined herein.
- Parks may initiate mitigation strategies up to and including elimination where public safety or asset management challenges exist.
- Final approval for designation changes including elimination of an OLA rests with the Director of The City of Calgary Parks.

Evaluation Criteria

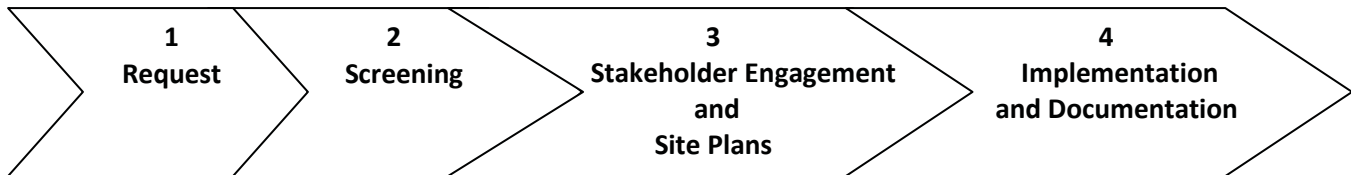
- Number and nature of bylaw or 3-1-1 complaints relative to park size and number of users.
- Number and severity of risk management/safety issues.
- Number and severity of damage to turf, shrubs, and trees.
- Number and severity of damage to amenities.
- Negative impact on wildlife or natural area habitat identified using appropriate quantitative methodologies.
- User patterns.
- Number and type of pathway users.
- Amount of dog feces not picked up.
- Negative impacts on nearby water quality.

Where one or more of these has been identified as a concern the Park Community Liaison (PCL) will initiate the process for reviewing the OLA.

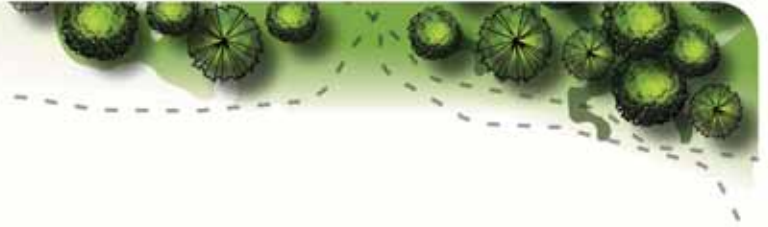




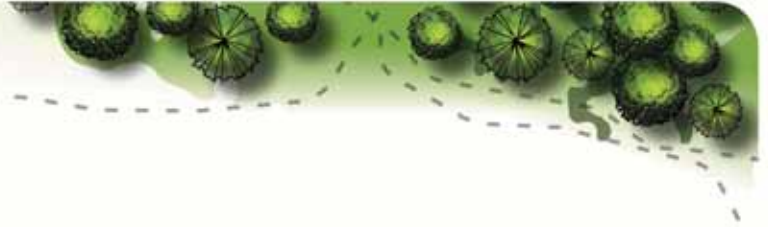
PROCEDURES FOR OFF-LEASH AREA REQUESTS



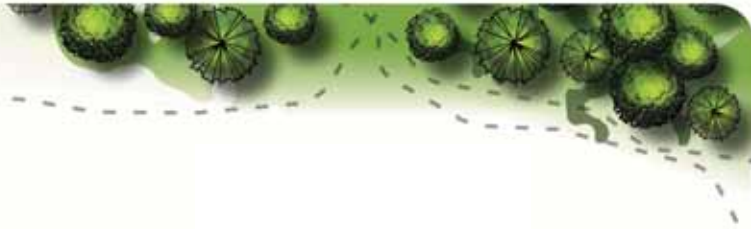
Step One: Request	
<i>*Note: PCLs and/or Parks Planning Project Managers should retain and submit any and all relevant documentation to PARIS</i>	
Action	Who
a) Requests can come from citizens, organizations or be initiated by The City of Calgary.	Requestor
b) Requests from citizens and organizations are submitted on a 3-1-1 application form. They must be accompanied by an address or legal lot description, reason(s) for the request, and demonstrate significant stakeholder support relative to the type of Off-leash Area (OLA) . Stakeholders must be from within the service area and may include other community residents, parks users, community associations and/or other social recreation organizations.	Requestor
c) Requests for the establishment, modification or elimination of an OLA are referred to the respective City of Calgary Parks (Parks) division's Park Community Liaison (PCL) .	Park Community Liaison (PCL)
d) The Division PCL and Parks Manager determine whether the request will get initial support in principle based on the stakeholder support provided and a high-level review of the Establishment Criteria Checklist on page 12.	PCL
e) The PCL advises the requestor of the decision, and also the respective Aldermanic Office of the request and decision where appropriate.	PCL
Step 2: Screening	
Action	Who
a) The PCL facilitates a detailed screen of the site using the Establishment Criteria Checklist. The PCL may consult with: Parks Operations, Parks Planning and Development, Parks Natural Areas; Roads; Animal & Bylaw Services; Community & Neighbourhood Services; and any other business unit affected by the request.	PCL
b) The Parks Division Manager has final approval of the site screening.	Parks Manager
c) Requests that do not pass the initial screening are denied. The PCL communicates the decision to the requestor and Aldermanic Office as necessary.	PCL
d) The PCL works with Parks Planning to negotiate any land agreements with appropriate bodies where necessary. Larger capital projects are lead by a Parks Planning Project Manager.	PCL and Parks Planning



Step 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Site Plans		
Action	Who	Other
a) The Parks Manager may approve minor changes for immediate implementation.	Parks Manager	PCL Parks Operations
b) Key external stakeholders are identified, their level of involvement is established, and the engagement process designed by Parks (as per the Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines in Table 1 on page 21) and current City of Calgary engagement practices. This is communicated clearly at the outset of the process to stakeholders.	PCL - small projects Project Manager - large capital projects	Customer Service & Communications (CSC)
c) The PCL and/or Parks Project Manager facilitate a meeting of key internal stakeholders to develop a draft plan for the establishment of a new OLA, and/or modification or elimination of an existing OLA. <u>Request to establish a new OLA</u> - The plan at minimum will include the type of OLA, boundaries, signage, proposed amenities, maintenance plan, rules and regulations, education and bylaw enforcement strategies, evaluation and monitoring plan, notification/signage protocols prior to designation of OLA, budget implications both capital and operating and, clear roles and responsibilities of parties involved. See Off-leash Dog Area Framework on page 17. <u>Request to modify/eliminate an existing OLA</u> - The meeting includes discussion and documentation of: compliance with existing guidelines; current issues/problems; proposed changes to existing boundaries, signage, amenities, maintenance plan, rules and regulations, education; and bylaw enforcement strategies, evaluation and/or monitoring plans, and roles and responsibilities of parties involved.	PCL - small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Other City of Calgary business units
d) The proposed plan, modifications, or potential elimination of the OLA, and the upcoming engagement are communicated to stakeholders and the Ward Aldermen.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Stakeholders Ward Aldermen
e) Engagement and discussion around draft plans for new sites, and modifications or request to eliminate existing sites, continue ideally until the stakeholders come to consensus.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Stakeholders



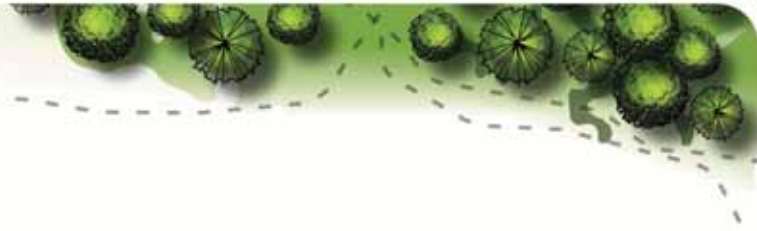
Step 4: Implementation and Documentation		
Action	Who	Other
a) Final decision for new site plans or the modification or elimination of a site rests with Parks.	Parks Manager	Parks Director
b) The final decision and plan is communicated to the respective Parks Division Operation and to all stakeholders including the Ward Alderman.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Stakeholders Ward Aldermen Parks Operations
c) The proposed site and/or plans are submitted to the Parks Business and Asset Strategies group for inclusion in the Parks Asset, Reporting and Information System (PARIS) so it is identified and approved in this database.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Parks Business and Asset Strategies portfolio.
d) A signed agreement outlining responsibilities of all parties including financial responsibilities is required for sites where community, public or private third parties are involved. These agreements are submitted to PARIS.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Third Parties
e) Stakeholder notification protocols and signage plans are established and implemented prior to development, modification or elimination of an OLA as necessary.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Parks Operations
f) Ensure final plans, boundaries, and documentation of agreements with other land owners or third parties are submitted to Parks once the project is complete.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	
g) Ensure final turn over to the respect Parks Division Operations.	PCL – small projects and/or Project Manager - large capital projects	Parks Operations



OFF-LEASH AREA LEVEL OF SERVICE FRAMEWORK

Currently the majority of Calgary's 149 dog off-leash areas are located primarily on Parks land, but some areas are on other City-owned land, provincially leased lands or lands with other owners. The chart below illustrates levels of service for present and future off-leash areas. It is organized by site size, intended service area and proposed corresponding amenities. Please note that areas designated for dog off-leash use maybe situated within a larger open space or park site.

Level of off-leash service	Type of off-leash dog use area		
	Neighbourhood	Community Cluster	Regional
Approximate size range	under 4.3 ha	4.3 – 19.9 ha	19.9+ ha
Proposed service area	800 metre walking distance	8 minute driving distance	20 minute driving distance
Base Service			
• standard waste removal service	✓	✓	✓
• standard maintenance schedule	✓	✓	✓
• clear signage	✓	✓	✓
• online maps	✓	✓	✓
• responsible pet ownership and other educational information	✓	✓	✓
• bylaw enforcement (where required)	✓	✓	✓
• parking	---	✓ off site - on site only when necessary and feasible	✓ off/on site
• partial or fully enclosed fencing or natural barriers to separate use	✓ where necessary and feasible	✓ where necessary and feasible	✓ where necessary and feasible
• increased waste removal service in enclosed areas	✓	✓	✓
• benches	---	✓ where feasible	✓
• enhanced maintenance schedule	---	---	✓
• washrooms - where feasible - in Regional OLAs only	---	---	✓ where feasible
Enhanced Service - potential volunteer or sponsorship-based service			
• dog waste bags and dispensers	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible
• drinking water for dogs	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible
• responsible pet ownership information and seminars	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible
• other enhancements proposed or funded by stewards	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible	✓ where feasible



OLA GUIDELINES

General

- Design OLAs to accommodate multi-use functions in public parks, not for exclusive off-leash activity.
- Design OLAs to maximize safety, minimize the potential for user conflict, and to ensure clarity as to the boundaries of the OLA.
- Make decisions related to OLAs that are sustainable in all aspects balancing: cost, environment and asset protection, manpower availability, safety and/or others.
- Assign the responsibility to house and update the OLAMP to one Division Park Community Liaison (PCL). Rotate the responsibility through the PCL pool on a two-to-four-year basis.

Amenities

- Provide amenities in off-leash areas which reflect use patterns and enhance maintenance functions and lifespan of park assets.

Bylaw Enforcement and Education Strategies

- Responsibility and accountability for bylaw enforcement and public education with respect to behaviours in OLAs lies with The City of Calgary Animal & Bylaw Services.
- Ensure collaboration between Parks, Animal & Bylaw Services, and other stakeholders regarding bylaw enforcement/education strategies where appropriate.
- Develop communication plans in line with current education/bylaw enforcement strategies.
- Focus bylaw enforcement/education strategies on dog waste pick up, control of animals and dogs running at large.

Commercial Activity

- Manage and enforce commercial opportunities as per Land Use Bylaw.

Development Guidelines/Amenities

- Refer to the over-riding guidelines outlined in the current Development Guidelines and Standards Specifications when developing OLAs.
- *See Off-leash Area Level of Service Framework on page 17.*

E-maps

- Provide OLA information on the City of Calgary website and maps which accurately reflect onsite signage.

Evaluation

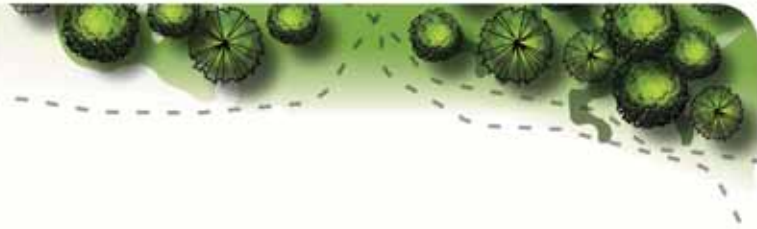
- Evaluate all new and existing OLAs subject to the principles and guidelines of this plan.
- *See page 13 for specific guidelines and criteria for site evaluations.*

Funding

- Identify funding requirements and potential sources of funds in concert with engagement and approval processes for the development/re-development of OLAs. Include capital, operating and lifecycle maintenance. Funding sources could include Parks, developers, community, private funding, grants, or combination thereof.

Land Allocation and Planning

- Distribute OLAs throughout the city factoring in number of dogs, geography, growth, use patterns, and the off-leash establishment checklist found on page 12.
- Include off-leash activity as a key consideration in the park planning process for established communities and in the community planning process for new communities.



Maintenance

- Parks is responsible for ensuring maintenance of OLAs within the Parks inventory.
- Maintain OLAs based on current Parks inventory maintenance practices.

Management

- Parks has ultimate responsibility and accountability for the management of OLA land and assets as the stewards of public parklands and pathways.
- Negotiate operating agreements between Parks and other stakeholders where appropriate.

Natural Areas

- Consider new OLAs in or adjacent to Special Protection Natural Environment Parks, Major Natural Environment Parks and Environmentally Significant Areas only where it can be demonstrated they are in accordance with natural habitat goals.
- Conduct a biophysical impact assessment and monitoring plan outlining specific criteria defining its success where an OLA currently exists in/adjacent to a Natural Environment Park or Environmentally Significant Area. Where a biophysical evaluation shows that the natural area habitats or its wildlife are being negatively impacted, implement strategies to protect the natural area, or the off-leash area will be eliminated. These decisions are made at the discretion of the Director of The City of Calgary Parks.
- Eliminate impact of dog off-leash use on native plants and wildlife, and the fragmentation of natural habitats.
- Determine appropriate access to water bodies in accordance with overriding Municipal, Provincial and, Federal regulations.
- Natural Areas develop education strategies on environmental protection and carrying capacity related to OLAs.

No Dog Areas

- Consider new OLAs in or adjacent to no dog areas, pathways or major roadways only when effective strategies can be implemented to mitigate potential safety concerns and/or conflict between users.
- Install “No Dog” signs in playgrounds which are located adjacent to/within an off-leash site.
- Implement effective mitigation strategies where an OLA currently exists adjacent to an existing “no dog” area where safety concerns or conflict between users has been identified up to and including elimination.

Operating Agreements

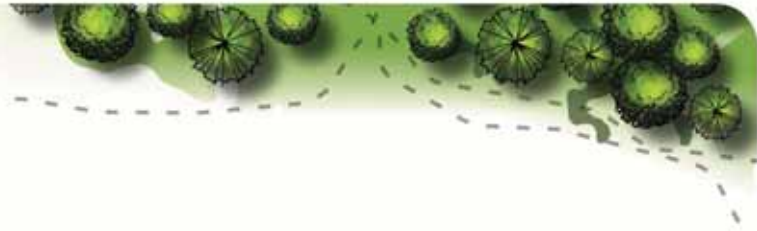
- Prepare and sign the required operating agreement for OLAs where community, public or private partners are involved which clearly outlines roles and responsibilities of all parties.

Parking

- Suitable parking must be available or provided for Community Cluster or Regional OLAs.
- Dogs must be on-leash in parking areas.

Pathways

- Consider new OLAs in or adjacent to no dog areas, pathways or major roadways only when effective strategies can mitigate potential safety concerns and/or conflict between users.
- Implement effective mitigation strategies where an OLA currently exists adjacent to an existing or “planned for” regional pathway where safety concerns or conflict between users has been identified up to and including elimination.
- Plan for, or add, new pathways within or adjacent to existing or planned-for OLAs only when effective strategies can mitigate potential safety concerns and/or conflict between users.
- Post the pathway information sign “Dog Owners Remember – Paved Pathways are Always On-leash”, in high conflict areas next to the pathway where Regional Pathways are adjacent to/intersect an off-leash area.



Roadways

- Consider new OLAs in or adjacent to No Dog Areas, pathways or major roadways only when effective strategies can be implemented to mitigate potential safety concerns and/or conflict between users.
- Implement effective mitigation strategies where an OLA currently exists adjacent to roadway where safety concerns or conflict between users has been identified up to and including elimination.

Rules and Regulations

- Ensure OLA rules and regulations comply with all relevant City bylaws.
- Post consistent city-wide off-leash rules which apply to all sites on both the Animal & Bylaw Services, and Parks websites.

Signage

- Create a signage plan prior to development of new or improvement of existing OLAs as per current Parks and Pathways signage guideline and this plan.
- Post “Entering/Leaving Off-leash Area” signs in OLAs at appropriate locations to clearly mark boundaries for citizens. Post back to back signs where necessary.
- Install “No Dog” signs in playgrounds that are located adjacent to/within an off leash site.
- Post the pathway information sign, “Dog Owners Remember – Paved Pathways are Always On-leash”, in high conflict areas next to the pathway where Regional Pathways are adjacent to/intersect an off-leash area.
- Use other approved signage within OLAs where required.
- Remove or replace signage that is inappropriate or not consistent with approved Parks guidelines.

- Give consideration to the ramification/risks associated with changing signage in off-leash areas and put appropriate communication strategies in place to address the changes where necessary (i.e., 3-1-1 marquees).
- Consult with Animal & Bylaw Services regarding the type and placement of signage for sites where Parks or park users have identified ability to enforce is questionable.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement related to OLA requests is subject to the current Council approved policy (see Tables 1 and 2 on pages 21 and 22).



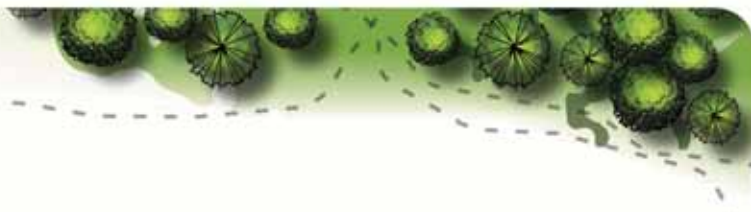


Table 1 Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines Off-Leash Area Requests			
Stakeholders	OLA Type and Stakeholder Level of Involvement		
	Neighbourhood	Community Cluster	Regional
Community Association where OLA is Located	Consult	Consult	Consult
Residents Directly Adjacent to OLA	Consult	Consult	Consult
Community Residents where OLA is Located	Consult	Consult	Consult
Dog Walking Groups within OLA Service Area	Consult	Consult	Consult
Park and Pathway User Groups within OLA Service Area	Consult	Consult	Consult
Ad-hoc Multi Stakeholder Advisory Groups within OLA Service Area	Consult	Consult	Consult
Adjacent Community Associations	Listen and Learn	Consult	Consult
Residents in Adjacent Communities	Listen and Learn	Consult	Consult
Citywide Dog Walking Groups	Listen and Learn	Listen and Learn	Consult
Citywide Park and Pathway User Groups	Listen and Learn	Listen and Learn	Consult
General Public	Listen and Learn	Listen and Learn	Listen and Learn
Other			

The level of stakeholder involvement recommended is relative to the intended service area of the OLA and whether the stakeholder is part of that service area. Stakeholders within the service area have equal influence. No one activity or interest takes precedence over another. Final decisions regarding the designation, design, and operation of an OLA lies with Parks as the stewards of public open space.

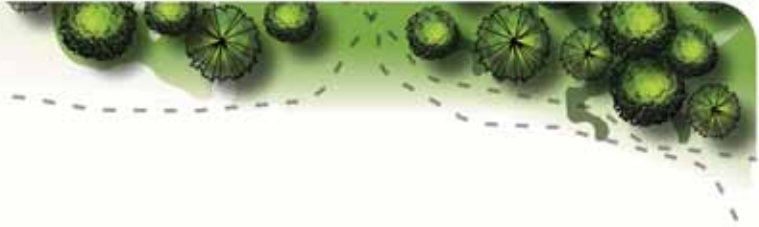
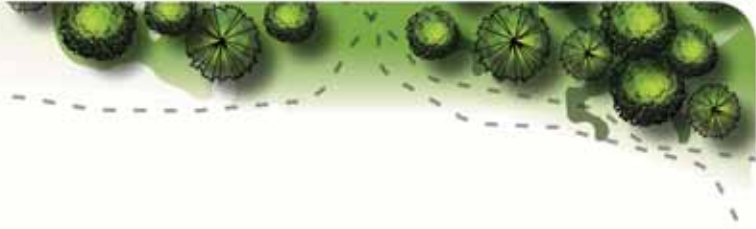


Table 2 Engage Spectrum of Strategies and Promises

	Inform	Listen and Learn	Consult	Collaborate	Empower
The Strategy	To provide information that will assist stakeholders in understanding issues, problems, alternatives and/or solutions	Both stakeholders and The City listen to and learn about each other's views, plans, concerns and expectations.	Stakeholder feedback is obtained through consultation to analyze issues and build alternatives, and thereby make contributions to the decision-making process. Consulting with stakeholders ensures issues and concerns are understood and considered.	Stakeholders that are considered partners in the decision-making process, including collaboration on analyzing issues, building alternatives, identifying a preferred solution and making recommendations. (e.g. funding partners, land owners)	Aspects of the decision-making process are delegated to stakeholders. (e.g. City commissions, boards, committees, authorities)
The Promise	We will provide information that is timely, accurate, balanced, objective, easily understood, and highly accessible. We will respond to questions for clarification.	We will listen to stakeholders and learn about their plans, view, issues, concerns and expectations.	We will consult with stakeholders to obtain feedback and ensure their input is incorporated to the maximum extent possible. We undertake to advise how consultation affected the decisions and outcomes	We will partner with stakeholders in a process that result in joint recommendations. We undertake to advise how collaboration affected decision-making.	Where legislation permits, we will abide with the decisions made under delegated authority. Where legislation precludes making such a commitment in advance, we undertake to be guided by the outcome



APPENDIX 1

Excerpts from the City of Calgary Bylaws Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw #23M2006

•••

INTERPRETATION

2. (1) (u) "Running at large" means:

- (i) an Animal or Animals which are not under control of a person responsible by means of a Leash and is or are actually upon property other than the property in respects of which the owner of the Animal or Animals has the right of occupation, or upon any highway, thoroughfare, street, road, causeway, trestle way, sidewalk (including boulevard portion of the sidewalk), Park or other public place which has not been designated as an off-leash area by the Director, Parks, or
- (ii) an Animal or Animals which are under the control of a person responsible by means of a Leash and which cause damage to persons, property or other Animals;

•••

DOGS IN OFF LEASH AREAS

13.(1) Notwithstanding Section 12, an owner of a dog is not required to have the dog on a leash in a park or portion of a Park which has been designated as an "off-leash area" by the Director, Parks.

(2) The owner of a dog in an "off-leash area" shall ensure that such dog is under control at all times.

(2.1) A Bylaw Enforcement Officer may:

- (a) order that a dog be put on Leash; and
- (b) order that a dog be removed from an off Leash area.

(3) Whether a dog is under control is a question of fact to be determined by a Court hearing a prosecution pursuant to this section of the Bylaw, having taken into consideration any or all of the following:

- (i) Whether the dog is at such a distance from its Owner so as to be incapable of responding to voice, sound or sight commands;
 - (ii) Whether the dog has responded to voice, sound or sight commands from the owner;
 - (iii) Whether the dog has bitten, attacked, or done any act that injures a person or another animal;
 - (iv) Whether the dog chased or otherwise threatened a person;
 - (v) Whether the dog caused damage to property.
- (4) An Owner who fails to immediately restrain and remove the dog upon it engaging in any of the activities listed in Section 25, by restraining the dog on a Leash not exceeding two (2) meters in length and removing the dog from the off-leash area, is guilty of an offence.
- (5) Nothing in this section relieves a person from complying with any other provision of this Bylaw.

ANIMALS PROHIBITED IN OFF-LEASH AREAS

14. (1) No Owner of a Vicious Animal shall permit the animal to be in an off-leash area any time.

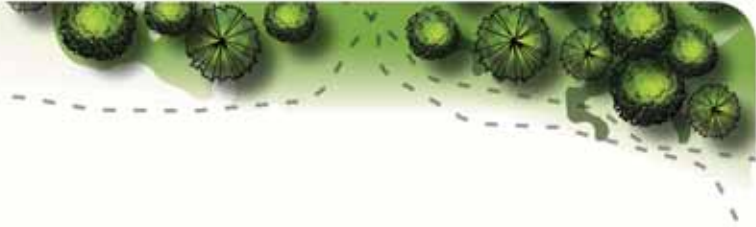
(2) No person shall allow an animal other than a dog enter into or remain in an area that has been designated by the Director, Parks, as an off-leash area.

DOGS IN PROHIBITED AREAS

15.(1) The Owner of a dog shall ensure that such dog does not enter or remain in or on:

- (a) a School Ground, Playground, Sports Field, Golf Course, Cemetery, Wading or Swimming Area or a Pathway; or
- (b) any other area where dogs are prohibited by posted signs.

(2) The Owner of a dog shall ensure that such dog does not enter or remain in a Park, or any part thereof, where the dog is within five (5) meters of



a Play Structure, a Wading Pool or Swimming Area, a Sports Field, a Golf Course or Cemetery.

(3) The Owner of a dog shall ensure that such dog does not enter or remain in a Park or any part of a Park or on a Pathway which has been designated by the Director, Parks as an area where dogs are prohibited.

DOGS PERMITTED ON PATHWAYS

(4) Notwithstanding subsection 15(1) or 15(2), the Owner of a dog may allow such dog to pass along or across a Pathway, including a Pathway that runs through an area designated as an off-Leash area, only if such a dog:

(a) is secured by a Leash of no greater length than two (2) meters;

(b) remains on the right hand side of the Pathway at all times unless moving around another Pathway users; and

(c) remains under the Owner's control at all times ensuring that the dog does not interfere with or obstruct any other Pathway user.

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REMOVING EXCREMENT

22.(1) If an Animal defecates on any public or private property other than the property of its Owner, the Owner shall remove such feces immediately.

(2) If an Animal is on any public or private property other than the property of its Owner, the Owner shall have in his possession a suitable means of facilitating the removal of the Animal's feces.

•••

Parks and Pathways Bylaw #20M2003

SIGNS

25.(1) No Person shall disobey a sign placed in a Park.

(2) No Person shall, other than where authorized pursuant to this Bylaw, place a sign of any kind, commercial or otherwise, in a Park.

WASTE

27. (1) In a Park, no person shall leave or dispose of Waste except in receptacles specifically provided for Waste disposal.

•••

GENERAL MANAGER POWERS

48.(1) The Director may as the Director deems necessary for the administration of Calgary's Parks, preservation and protection of Parks and Amenities, and to ensure public safety:

(a) close or restrict the use, or type of use of a Park, Pathway, Trail, Playground, Cemetery or Sports Field;

•••

(c) vary the time that a Park, Pathway, Trail, Playground, Cemetery or Sports Field, or a portion of a Park, Pathway, Trail, Playground, Cemetery or Sports Field, is open to the public;

•••

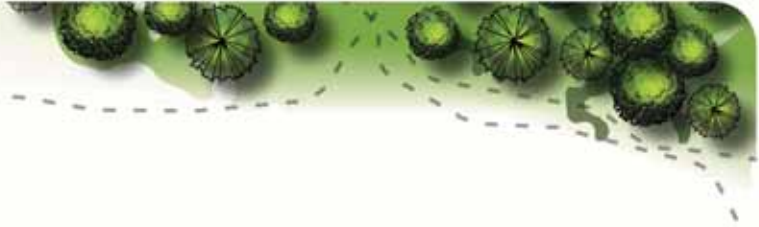
(i)(i) subject to subsection 48(1)(i)(ii), designate areas within Parks where dogs are permitted to run when off-leash, where organized and controlled canine events may be held and where dogs are prohibited;

(ii) Not designate or allow to be designated any off leash areas within Glenmore Park;

(iii) notwithstanding subsection 15(4) of Bylaw 23M2006, the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw, designate specific off-leash areas or areas within off-leash areas in which the Owner of a dog is not required to secure such dog on a Leash while the dog is on a Pathway;

(r) Designate areas in Parks where dogs are allowed to swim or are not allowed to swim, where such activity is otherwise prohibited or allowed;

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APPENDIX 2

Off-leash Area Public Engagement Results

Supporting Engagement:

2008 November	Off-leash area use scoping survey	607 respondents
2009 March	Open houses	150 attendees
2009 April	Online survey	4,400+ respondents
2009 July	Telephone survey	500 respondents
2009 August	Onsite intercept surveys	51 respondents

**Highlights from the two key 2009 surveys are contained below.*

	Online survey (March-April 2009)	Telephone Survey (July 2009)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ over 4,400 respondents ○ primarily dog owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 500 respondents ○ demographically balanced
<i>Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflicts due to lack of separation between off-leash dogs and other users ● Number and location of garbage bins ● Poop bag availability ● Close proximity of off-leash areas to roadways and pathways ● Dog owners or walkers who are unable to supervise or control their dog(s) ● Dog owners not picking up dog waste ● Lack of respect and courtesy between dog owners and other users (primarily cyclists) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dogs not kept under control ● Dog poop not picked up ● Concern with other park users
<i>Solutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear signage indicating transitions between off-leash and on-leash boundaries and regional pathways ● Fencing or a physical separation to decrease user conflict and improve safety ● More garbage bins and waste bags ● Increase the number of off-leash areas (79% of respondents) ● Develop specific areas for dogs ● Drinking water for dogs ● More communication and education, and enforcement for off-leash use ● Washrooms in larger parks ● Limit number of dogs for dog walkers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More enforcement presence ● Designate more off-leash areas (suggested by 89% of dog owners, 75% of non-dog owners) ● More public education ● Require dog owners to walk/exercise dogs in designated areas only ● Provide more garbage cans and have poop bags available ● Create fenced dog areas ● More visible signs