

NO: **R003**

COUNCIL DATE: **January 9, 2012**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **January 3, 2012**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture**

FILE: **6140-20/D**

SUBJECT: **Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy (2012-2021)**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Adopt the *Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy (2012-2021)* as generally outlined in this report and for which the Executive Summary is attached to this report as Appendix I.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the final draft of the *Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy (2012-2021)* and to seek Council approval of the Strategy to allow implementation of its guidelines and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The City currently has seven dog off-leash areas, one located in each of the following parks:

- Blackie Spit Park,
- Clayton Park,
- Dogwood Park,
- Freedom Park,
- Kennedy Park,
- Serpentine Park, and
- Tannery Road Park.

The planning, design and operation of dog off-leash areas are currently guided by the 2001 *Dog Off-Leash Master Plan*. Many of the challenges related to the provision of dog off-leash areas as documented in the 2001 Master Plan remain relevant today, including:

- integrating dog off-leash sites within existing parks,
- minimizing environmental impact of dog off-leash areas,
- identifying opportunities to use under-used park space,
- providing effective maintenance and management of dog off leash sites, and

- balancing the roles and responsibilities of dog owners and the City.

Space2Place design Inc. was engaged to develop a new ten-year strategy to guide in a strategic and sustainable manner the planning and development of dog off-leash parks in the City.

DISCUSSION

The Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy (“the Strategy”) is intended to be a strategic decision-making tool to guide the planning, design, and operation of off-leash dog parks in Surrey. A public consultation process was undertaken along with extensive research of best practices including a review of local, regional, national and international practices.

The draft Strategy includes the following:

- Documents public input on issues related to the planning, design and operation of off-leash dog areas;
- Documents precedents for successful off leash dog areas;
- Documents public input on potential future locations for off leash dog areas;
- Identifies operational challenges and recommends best management practices for off-leash dog areas;
- Provides recommendations to minimize the environmental impact of off-leash dog areas;
- Identifies opportunities for park stewardship by dog owners;
- Identifies means by which to design and build parks that are fun for both dogs and people;
- Provides guidelines in relation to the number and location of off-leash dog areas in Surrey;
- Recommends design guidelines for new off-leash dog areas; and
- Recommends seven sites for new off-leash dog areas in Surrey.

Consultation Process

The consultant team along with City staff facilitated a number of events and other means by which to provide members of the community with opportunities to share their insights and opinions in relation to development of the Strategy. The following lists some of the more significant public engagement opportunities that were provided:

- **May 2011:** Six Open House events were held with an open house meeting conducted in each of the City’s Town Centres. The Open Houses were attended by approximately 100 people. Participants at the Open Houses were provided with a comment sheet to fill out. The City received 104 completed comment sheets.
- **May – June 2011:** A telephone survey was undertaken involving 1200 separate respondents.
- **May – June 2011:** An online survey on the City’s website was available by which any member of the public could provide input. This online survey yielded 147 responses.
- **July 2011:** A stakeholder workshop was held involving representatives of 11 communities.
- **July 2011:** A report was provided to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee with a view to receiving input from the Committee.
- **September 2011:** Three Open House events were held across the City. Eighty-three (83) individuals attended these meetings and an equal number of survey responses were returned subsequent to the meetings.

Public Input Summary

Phone Survey:

The phone survey results, which are statistically significant (+/- 2.8% at the 95% level of confidence), indicate that 27% of Surrey residents own dogs. The survey also showed that many individuals in Surrey that don't own dogs support dog off-leash parks. A summary of the Off Leash Dog Park Survey 2011 is attached as Appendix 2.

The majority of respondents who completed questionnaires online or at the open houses were dog owners and they strongly support additional dog off-leash areas. In this regard, 86% of online survey respondents and 92% of open house survey respondents indicated a desire for additional off-leash areas. Thirty percent (30%) of owners of dogs in Surrey use Surrey's off-leash dog parks on a weekly basis.

Public input indicates that residents are generally satisfied with the current level of enforcement of off-leash dogs in Surrey and few people experience conflicts with off-leash dog activity in Surrey parks. Only a few people hold the view that off-leash dog parks have negative impacts on the environment. Of the off-leash dog complaints that have been reported to the City, the most common complaints relate to dog waste management and to safety concerns (i.e. afraid of dogs that are not on a leash in public parks).

Planning

From a planning perspective, dog off-leash areas need to be properly located, sized and serviced to reduce potential impacts on adjacent land uses. These areas need to be situated and designed so as to include proper buffers with residential neighbourhoods, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, and environmentally sensitive areas. In general, dog off-leash areas should be at least 0.5 hectares (1.2 acres) in area and be located away from sensitive areas while being accessible conveniently for users. Locating dog off-leash areas in under-utilized park areas can help activate these areas and discourage nuisance activities at these locations. Such areas should also be geographically distributed across the City, be designed to protect natural areas and water resources and promote social connections in neighbourhoods. Environmental concerns associated with dog off-leash areas can be addressed through proper waste management, signage and public education.

Research was undertaken on the potential for privately operated, membership-accessed off-leash dog areas in Surrey. Such facilities exist in various cities in the U.S.A. These facilities tend to be larger and therefore require significant amounts of land. Although the draft Strategy does not identify a specific area or site for such a facility, it recommends that if a private partner shows interest in developing such a facility that the City consider such a proposal. Any such proposal if it was determined to be supportable would be forwarded to Council for consideration of approval on a case-by-case basis.

Design

The design of each dog off-leash area should be informed by adjacent land uses, expected demand, site conditions, and the provision of reasonable amenities for the dogs and their owners. Basic on-site amenities should include fencing (or other effective edge features), gated entries, durable surfacing, all-weather shelter and waste management facilities. Other amenities could

include drinking water, dog rinse stations, seating, the provision of shaded areas, night lighting, washrooms, agility features and/or water-based play features.

The design concept plan for each dog off leash area should demonstrate reasonable spatial organization in the layout of site elements, including fencing, circulation networks, social spaces and small-dog areas. Surfacing material will be based on affordability, expected level of usage, drainage, aesthetics, universal accessibility and cost-effectiveness of maintenance.

A variety of surfacing materials is typically incorporated in the design of an off-leash dog park. In high traffic areas crusher dust provides the best service. Grass turf is acceptable in lower activity areas and is preferred by dog owners. The use of artificial turf will be explored as part of a pilot project in one of the new off-leash dog sites. A mix of surface materials promotes cost-effective maintenance, reasonable utility and aesthetic appeal.

The Strategy includes an updated set of dog off-leash area design guidelines that were formulated by the consultant based on a best practices review and that were vetted with the public through the public consultation process.

Operations

The operation of dog off leash areas includes park/grounds maintenance, waste management procedures, community feedback, enforcement, user education, and ongoing monitoring. Ensuring an adequate number of waste bins and signage assists to encourage dog owners to properly collect and dispose of waste. Some municipalities (e.g. Fairbanks, Toronto, and Montreal) have successfully deployed on-site or off-site dog waste composting equipment.

Community involvement in the design and operation of dog parks can greatly assist with dog park management and operations. Community groups composed of both dog owners as well as residents in the area of the dog parks (e.g. in Markham, Long Beach, Seattle, New York) can help with fundraising, site clean-up, communication among dog park users, and encouraging compliance with site rules. They can also be instrumental in helping municipalities respond promptly to park maintenance issues or to park rule violations and can also facilitate the provision of dog training services to encourage better behaved dogs. For example, in Surrey the Crescent Beach Dog Owner's Association provides assistance in the operation of the off leash dog area at Blackie Spit. Similarly, the Friends of Dogwood Park provide advocacy and assistance in the operation of the off leash dog area at Dogwood Park.

Recommended Sites

Every city-owned park site was reviewed from the perspective of its potential for use as off leash dog area. A prioritized list of preferred sites was developed based on input from:

- mapping exercises (i.e., location in relation to existing off-leash dog areas and communities within Surrey that currently do not have an off-leash dog area);
- feedback from public surveys;
- feedback from workshops and open house events held during spring and summer 2011; and
- site characteristics and analysis.

Twelve parks were short-listed as reasonable for dog off-leash areas with these sites being distributed across Surrey's six Town Centres. The sites are categorized as **Neighbourhood scale**, **Community scale**, or **Destination scale**. Neighbourhood-scale off-leash dog areas are intended to serve the local neighbourhood, and are thus designed to be accessed by walking since off-street parking is not provided. Community-scale off-leash dog areas are intended to serve a larger community area and therefore are served with a parking lot. Destination-scale off-leash dog areas are intended to be attractive to dog owners from across the City and therefore are larger and are also accommodated with significant off-street parking.

A conceptual design for the dog off-leash area in each of the twelve short-listed parks was presented to the public for review and feedback at three Open House events held in September 2011. Invitations to these open houses were mailed to residents within a 2 block radius of each of the 12 potential sites and advertisements regarding the open houses were placed in *The Now* and *The Leader* newspapers. The conceptual plans were also available for public review on the City's website.

Based on feedback from the public and more detailed site analysis, 7 of the 12 candidate sites are being recommended for development with a dog off-leash area in addition to Joe Brown Park, Latimer Lake Park and Bolivar Park for which Master Plans already include dog off-leash areas. These seven sites received good public support (more than 68% supported or strongly supported). These sites are:

- **Bear Creek Park** (Whalley),
- **Port Mann Park** (Guildford),
- **Colebrook Park** (Newton),
- **Bonnie Schrenk Park** (Fleetwood),
- **Cloverdale hydro right-of-way** (Cloverdale), and
- **Pioneer Greenway** (South Surrey).

Since Port Mann Park is not scheduled to be implemented for the next few years, **Fraser View Park** is being recommended as well to meet the needs of the Fraser Heights community. This park site received a reasonable level of support (58%) with no strong concerns having been received from the public relative to this location.

Both the existing dog off-leash areas and the proposed dog off-leash areas are illustrated on the maps in the Executive Summary.

Another 4 park sites are being recommended conditionally for dog off-leash areas but will be subject to additional public consultation prior to a final recommendation being made to Council. These parks include:

- **Panorama Park** (Panorama Ridge),
- **Bakerview Park** (Semiahmoo Town Centre),
- **Queen Elizabeth Meadows** (Whalley), and
- **Forsyth Park** (City Centre).

Consideration by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee

The draft Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy as presented in this report was considered by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee at its meeting on November 30, 2011. After considering the matter, the Committee adopted the following resolution:

“The Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommends to Council that the Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy (2012-2021) be approved.”

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The development of additional off leash dog areas in Surrey will support the goals and values of the City’s Sustainability Charter; more particularly the following action items:

SC6: Accessible and Appropriately Located Services within the City – The Strategy will ensure that dog off-leash areas are easily accessible to dog owners across the entire City.

EC9: Quality of Design in New Development and Redevelopment - An updated set of design guidelines for dog off leash areas has been developed based on best practices from across North America.

EN9: Sustainable Land Use Planning and Development Practices - The updated design guidelines include criteria to ensure dog off leash areas interface effectively with surrounding areas.

THE FULL STRATEGY AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Due to the length of the draft Strategy document, being 208 pages, only the Executive Summary of the Strategy has been included with this report and is attached as Appendix 1. The full Strategy document is available in the Councillor’s Library for review by the Mayor and Councillors and will be posted on the City’s website subject to approval by Council.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council adopt *Dog Off-Leash Area Strategy (2012-2021)* as generally outlined in this report and for which the Executive Summary is attached to this report as Appendix I.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation and Culture

Appendix 1 – Executive Summary, Dog Off-Leash Strategy (2012-2021)
Appendix 2 – Summary of Survey Results

Executive Summary, Dog Off-Leash Strategy (2012-2021)

Appendix 1

Off Leash Dog Park survey 2011



June 2011

**City of Surrey
Off Leash Dog Park Survey 2011**



MUSTEL GROUP
MARKET RESEARCH



➤ Introduction & Overview

As part of the City of Surrey Off-Leash Dog Park Master Plan, market research was commissioned to survey a random, representative sample of the population of Surrey, to provide a legitimate consensus of the opinions of dogs off-leash. Following are highlights of the survey results with illustrated detailed findings in the next section.

- Almost two-thirds of Surrey residents visit a Surrey park at least once a month or more, with more than four-in-ten who do so once a week or more week.
- Almost all residents are aware that off leash dog areas exist in Surrey, with about one-quarter who visit them once a month or more often. About half of all dog owners visit a Surrey designated off leash area at least once a month or more, with one-third who do so weekly and one-in-ten who do so every day.
- The main benefit of creating designated off leash dog areas, as identified by more than four-in-ten Surrey residents, is that it provides dogs with a place to exercise, play and run freely. Safety was the next most commonly noted benefit, with the aim of keeping dogs away from children and other people.
- Less than half of all residents could think of any drawbacks to providing designated off leash dog areas; but for those who did, the main concerns were about owners not cleaning up dog waste properly, owners not controlling their dogs in these areas.



➤ Overview

- In all, more than eight-in-ten Surrey residents have encountered a dog off leash in places not designated as such, with one-quarter that says it occurs frequently.
- And, in the past two years more than one-in-five Surrey residents that has encountered a dog off leash outside of a designated area, has had a negative experience or conflict with them, mostly resulting in concern for their safety or that of others.
- In spite of this the majority of Surrey residents feel satisfied with the current level of enforcement of dog leash bylaws by the City of Surrey (65%).
- Opinion is divided among residents with regards the need for additional off-leash dog areas in Surrey, with about four-in-ten in each case that either recognizes the need or do not, and 18% that is undecided. Two-thirds of dog owners feels there is a need for additional off-leash space.
- Of those who believe there is a need for additional off-leash dog space, most do not have any specific location in mind (66%); the most common recommendation, named by almost one-in-ten, is in Bear Creek Park at the junction of 88th and King George Highway.
- Just over half of all residents agree that park forested areas would be suitable for designation as off-leash (56%), with one-in-five that agrees strongly; and a similar proportion agrees that hydro right-of-ways would be suitable (57%), with one-third that agrees strongly.



➤ Overview

- More than one-quarter of all Surrey residents currently owns a dog (27%), and about three-quarters of them regularly visit Surrey parks, with almost one-third who do so every day (30%).
- The majority of dog owners who visit off-leash dog areas in Surrey currently drive there, while more than one-quarter currently walk. On average, they drive approximately 11 minutes to reach the off-leash area.
- Asked what they thought was a reasonable driving time to reach an off-leash dog park, the average estimate was 12 minutes; and, asked what they thought was a reasonable walking time, the average estimate was 18 minutes.
- When asked to rate various surfaces for use in an off-leash dog space, only one surface really stands out as being considered by dog owners as user-friendly, that of natural turf or grass.
- While most criteria thought necessary for a successful off-leash space is deemed important by dog owners, those of primary importance appear to be sustainable management of dog waste, regular maintenance of the area and a design that minimizes the environmental impact.
- Overall, Surrey residents appear supportive of off-leash dog areas, seeing them as benefiting the dogs as well as adding an increased sense of safety for other park users. However, it is important such areas are safe, user-friendly, well maintained and manage dog waste effectively and sustainably.

ACCESSIBLE PLACE DIVERSITY QUALITY
RECREATION HEALTH VIABILITY
WATER JOURNEY WALK PLAY PARK
DOGS PUBLIC SOCIAL JOG LAYER
NEIGHBOURHOOD MOVEMENT
PLACE URBAN PROGRAM FUN
MAINTENANCE RUN PERMEABILITY
LINK SOCIAL ECOLOGY LIVE LAYER
RUN NATURE SENSORY SURREY
INPUT AGILITY DOGS ACCESS
EXPERIENTIAL CURIOSITY SAFETY
FETCH PUPPY EXERCISE PLAY
PARK UNLEASHED FAMILY ACTIVITY
CONNECTIVITY PLAY RUN CHAS

City of Surrey 2012 - 2021
Dog Off Leash Area Strategy



**ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF ALL SURREY
DOG OWNERS VISIT A DESIGNATED OFF
LEASH AREA IN SURREY EACH WEEK.
10% VISIT THESE AREAS EVERY DAY.**

SOURCE: MUSTEL GROUP PHONE SURVEY, 2011



1.0 INTRODUCTION



Photo source: flickr CC user Trey Guinn

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.2 SURREY SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The City of Surrey currently has seven dog off leash areas at the following parks: Blackie Spit Park, Clayton Park, Dogwood Park, Freedom Park, Kennedy Park, Serpentine Park and Tannery Road Park (see map on page 17). Several of these parks were developed based on the recommendations of the 2001 Dog Off Leash Master Plan, which was developed under the direction of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

Many of the challenges addressed in the 2001 Master Plan remain relevant today: integrating off leash sites with existing parks, minimizing environmental impact, designing parks to be durable and usable year-round, identifying opportunities to make use of under-used park space, providing effective maintenance and management, and balancing the roles and responsibilities of dog owners with municipal resources.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department engaged space2place design inc. to develop a new Off Leash Dog Area Strategy to guide the development of new parks over 2011 to 2021. This will ensure the city off leash areas are planned, designed and operated in a strategic and sustainable manner.

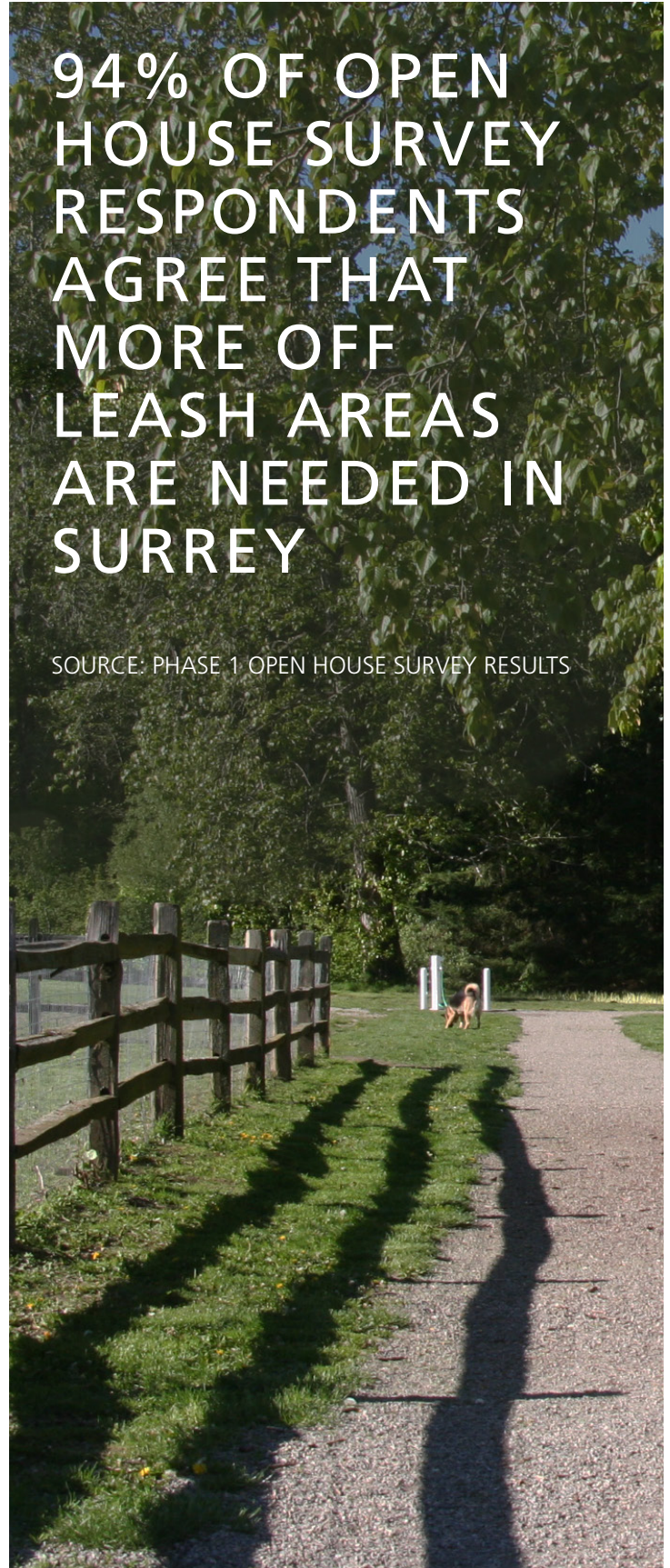
PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

The 2011 Dog Off Leash Area Strategy will serve as a decision-making tool to guide the planning, design, and operations of off leash areas in the City of Surrey. The Strategy is intended to accomplish the following:

- Documents precedents for successful dog off leash areas
- Documents public input on potential future locations for dog off leash areas
- Documents public input on issues related to the planning, design and operations of dog off leash areas
- Identifies opportunities to reflect the aims of Surrey's Sustainability Charter (Section 1.2)
- Identifies strategies to minimize the environmental impact of dog off leash areas (Section 2.4)
- Recommends provision and location guidelines to inform selection of new off leash areas (Section 2.7)
- Recommends off leash area amenities, including opportunities to create parks that are fun for dogs and people (Section 3.1)
- Recommends design guidelines for new dog off leash areas (Section 3.5)
- Recommends seven sites for new dog off leash areas in Surrey (Section 3.6)
- Identifies opportunities for park stewardship by dog owners (Section 4.3)
- Identifies operational challenges and subsequent best management practices (Section 4.7)

94% OF OPEN HOUSE SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT MORE OFF LEASH AREAS ARE NEEDED IN SURREY

SOURCE: PHASE 1 OPEN HOUSE SURVEY RESULTS



PROCESS

During the production of this strategy the consultant team undertook a detailed literature review, international precedent research, and numerous public consultation events. This combination of research methods has resulted in valuable information about the planning, design and operations of dog off leash areas.

OPEN HOUSES + WORKSHOPS

Public input was key to the development of this Dog Off Leash Area Strategy. The consultant team, together with City staff, facilitated the following events and surveys to provide members of the community with opportunities to share their insights and opinions:

- April 2011: Staff Workshop with parks planning and operations staff. 7 Staff members attended.
- May 2011: Six Open House events, conducted in each Town Centre. 101 community members attended and 104 survey responses were returned.
- May – June 2011: Phone Survey.* 1200 respondents.
- May – June 2011: Online Survey available to the public. 147 respondents.
- July 2011: Stakeholder Workshop. 11 community members attended.
- September 2011: Three Open House events. 83 community members attended and an equal number of survey responses were returned.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PUBLIC INPUT

Phone survey* results revealed that 27% of Surrey residents own dogs, and city staff estimate there to be approximately 110,000 dogs in Surrey. Forty-one percent of respondents believe there is a need for additional dog off leash areas; a good proportion of these respondents were non dog owners, indicating there is general support for off leash areas among the general population. At the same time an equal number (41% of respondents) feel there is no need for additional off leash areas.

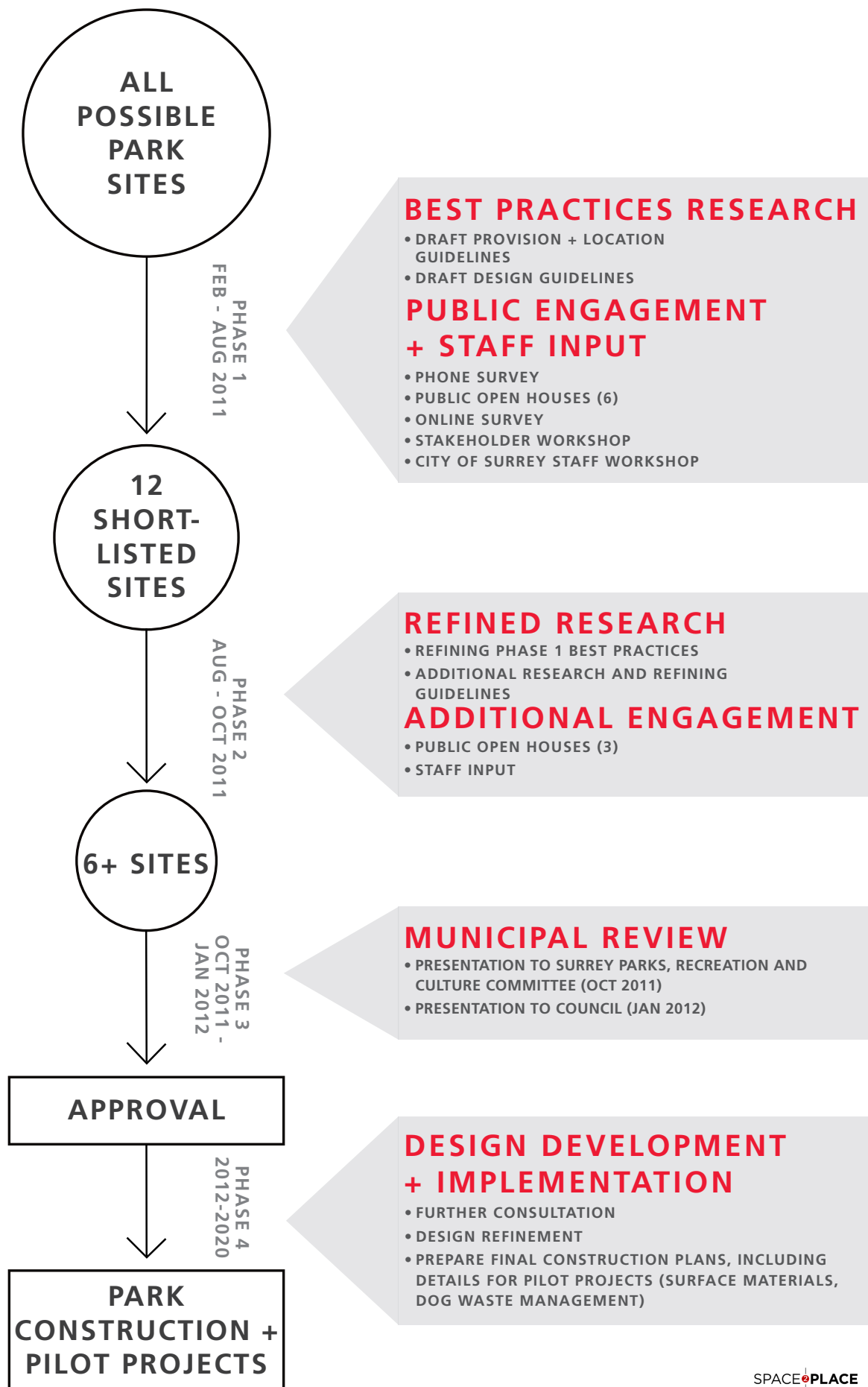
Nearly all participants who completed surveys online or at the open houses were dog owners, and thus these surveys are useful for understanding the preferences of dog owners in Surrey. Results from these surveys indicate clear support for additional dog off leash areas: 86% of online survey respondents and 92% of open house survey respondents desire additional dog off leash areas. Thirty percent of dog owners currently use Surrey's off leash areas on a weekly basis.

People are generally satisfied with the current level of enforcement of off leash dogs in Surrey, and few people experience conflicts with unofficial off-leash activity in Surrey parks. Few people believe that off leash areas have negative impacts on the environment or otherwise. Of the off leash dog conflicts reported, the most common complaints relate to dog waste management and safety concerns (i.e. afraid of dogs off leash in public parks).

Appendices 1.0 through 4.0 provide detailed summaries of the Open House events, Workshops, and Surveys.

*Results from the public phone survey are considered to be a statistically significant representation of Surrey residents as a whole (statistically significant +/-2.8% at the 95% level of confidence), and thus provide a legitimate representation of public opinion.

FUTURE OFF LEASH AREAS: SITE SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: PLANNING

From a planning perspective, dog off leash areas need to be thoughtfully located, sized, and serviced to reduce potential impacts on existing or adjacent land uses. In particular, careful siting and design should be used to reduce potential conflicts with residential neighbourhoods, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, and environmentally-sensitive areas.

Off leash areas should ideally be 0.5 hectares or larger in area (1 or more acres) and should be located away from sensitive adjacencies, while still meeting good access and safety needs. Siting off leash areas in under-utilized areas can help activate those sites and discourage potential criminal activity.

Locating dog off leash areas should reflect the aims of Surrey's Sustainability Charter, ensuring good park distribution, accessible design, protection of natural areas and water resources, and promotion of social connections in neighbourhoods. Most of the public and environmental health concerns associated with off leash areas can be addressed by ensuring proper waste management and adherence to off leash area rules. The City of Surrey's Ecosystem Management Study (2011) should be used to help inform site selection so as to minimize ecological impacts.

The City may consider working with private groups to facilitate privately-run dog parks, provided that such areas do not undermine the delivery of publicly-accessible dog parks as proposed in this strategy.

PROVISION + LOCATION GUIDELINES

DISTRIBUTION

- The intent for dog off leash areas is to distribute facilities across Surrey's six town centres.
- The long-term goal is that dog off leash areas will be accessible to the majority of the population via safe walking routes.

LOCATION

- The site selection process for new dog off leash areas will be informed by public consultation.
- Demonstration of local community involvement and/or support will help inform the site selection process for new dog off leash areas.
- Demographics (including population density and dog licensing statistics) will help inform the site selection process for new dog off leash areas.
- Dog off leash areas will be located so as to minimize potential environmental impact. Environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, riparian areas and old field habitat will be avoided. Surrey's Ecosystem Management Study (2011) will help inform the valuation of environmentally sensitive lands.
- Dog off leash areas will be sited to minimize potential impacts to aquatic ecosystems. Best management practices will be implemented to minimize the risk of surface water and groundwater contamination.
- Existing soil conditions will help inform the site selection process for new dog off leash areas. Soils that are poorly-drained or potentially toxic will be avoided.
- The anticipated expense of park development will help inform the site selection process for new off leash areas. Sites where dog off leash areas can be developed at a lower cost are preferable.
- Dog off leash areas will connect with existing pedestrian routes where feasible.

- Dog off leash areas will be accessible by vehicles, and will provide access for regular maintenance.
- Existing land uses will help inform the site selection process for new off leash areas. The design intent is to provide off leash facilities that are compatible with existing adjacent park uses
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals will be implemented in the design of new off leash areas, to promote safety and positive site activity.
- The following adjacent site uses may be compatible with off leash areas provided adequate measures are implemented to minimize potential conflict:
 - » Dog off leash areas located adjacent to sites commonly occupied by children will be fully enclosed with min. 1.2 m (4') high fencing and double-entry gates to minimize conflict among park users. Entry and exit locations and pathways will be positioned away from children's areas. Solid fencing / screening may also be recommended.
 - » Dog off leash areas located adjacent to sites commonly occupied by people engaged in sports and active recreational uses will be fully enclosed with min. 1.2 m (4') high fencing and double-entry gates to minimize conflict among park users. Fence height may vary according to adjacent sport activity.
 - » Dog off leash areas located adjacent to busy vehicle traffic areas will be fully enclosed with min. 1.2 m (4') high fencing and double-entry gates to promote safety for dogs and people.
 - » Dog off leash areas located adjacent to residential areas will incorporate a minimum setback distance and a buffer to mitigate noise where feasible. Visual screening may also be recommended.

SIZE

- The intent for off leash dogs parks is to provide spaces of adequate size to avoid site degradation caused by overuse.
- The recommended minimum size for dog off leash areas is about 1 hectare (2.5 acres), though sites between 0.5 ha and 1 ha may be considered.
- Dog off leash areas will be classified into three different types based on site size, amenities, and service radius:
 - » Neighbourhood: to serve the neighbourhood
 - » Community: to serve town centre community
 - » Destination: to serve the City of Surrey
- Off-street parking will be provided for dog off leash areas where feasible. Neighbourhood parks may not require off-street parking if they are well connected to walking paths.

VISIBILITY

- Clear sightlines into the park from adjacent sites will be provided where feasible, except where visual screening is desired.
- Site lighting at dawn and dusk could be explored as part of the public consultation process for each park. Lighting would extend park use and promote security.

DESIGN

Dog off leash area design should be informed by adjacent land uses, expected demand, site conditions, and desired amenities for dogs and owners. Basic amenities should include fencing (or other effective edges), gated entries, durable surfacing, all-weather shelter, and waste management facilities. Additional amenities can include drinking water, dog rinse stations, seating, shade, lighting, washrooms, agility features, and/or water play features.

The design concept plans for recommended new parks (Section 3.6) show the overall spatial organization of each site and the proposed layout of site elements, including fencing, circulation networks, social spaces and small-dog areas.

Surfacing material choice should be informed by affordability, ease of maintenance, dog owner satisfaction, drainage, aesthetics, universal accessibility, and cleanliness. Based on these criteria the ideal surfacing option for high traffic areas is crusher dust. Natural turf, while not a durable surface, is highly desired by dog park users. Repurposed artificial turf should be explored as part of a pilot project on one of the new off leash area sites. A mix of surface materials promotes aesthetic and experiential interest.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

PARK ENTRIES

- Park entry pathways should be universally accessible.
- Consider multiple entry points to reduce congestion and potential conflict around entries.
- Park entries should not be located in corners of the off leash area, so as to reduce the chance of dogs and owners becoming “cornered” upon entry.
- Provide durable surface materials with suitable drainage at park entries, as these are areas of concentrated use.

PARK AMENITIES

- The number and type of amenities offered at off leash areas should be weighed against the following considerations:
 - » Classification of off leash area and corresponding service radius, size and provision of amenities. Off leash areas are classified as either ‘neighbourhood,’ ‘community’ or ‘destination.’
 - » Capital and maintenance costs of amenities.
 - » Availability of existing utilities connections at park sites.

HIGHER PRIORITY AMENITIES

- Provide a variety of amenities to provide visual interest and engage dogs and their owners in social and recreational opportunities.
- Provide drinking water for dogs from spring to fall. Drinking water stations may consist of simple hose bibs and a bowl, or specially-designed two-level water fountains to accommodate humans and dogs.
- Provide seating, potentially as movable chairs or fixed benches. Sightlines and size of clustered seating should balance promoting social conversation among dog owners with encouraging owners to supervise their dogs without social distractions.

- Provide waste bins of a sufficient size and number to accommodate the expected demand and available resources for waste collection. Distribute bins across the site, where feasible. Volunteer associations may take on the role of stocking bag dispensers, possibly making use of sponsorship opportunities through local businesses.
- Provide a shelter for shade and protection during inclement weather. Also make use of existing and new trees for shading the site.
- Provide looped walking trails for site circulation. Consider connecting to existing pedestrian routes where possible, while maintaining a separation between routes used by cyclist and joggers and those used by dogs to promote site safety.
- Provide open areas for running and play activities.
- Provide signage (see below), as well as areas for park users to post community notices.

LOWER PRIORITY AMENITIES

- Consider providing water features with opportunities for swimming and water play. Consider maintenance and the resources required to maintain water features to ensure animal and human health and safety.
- Consider providing site lighting to extend hours of park use, particularly during the winter months. Park lighting should be compatible with adjacent site uses, such as residential areas.
- Consider providing washroom facilities, and consider locating washrooms centrally to service the park as a whole.
- Consider providing cleaning stations, particularly in sites with water features and/or muddy conditions. Cleaning stations typically include a hose bib and a paved surface such as concrete, and are located close to the site entry.
- Consider providing agility training features such as bridges, tunnels, bars, and other elements to enhance the enjoyment and experience of the off leash area.

Agility equipment may be particularly useful at parks where formal dog training services are offered.

- Consider providing dual-bin waste receptacles that separately accommodate garbage and dog waste.
- Consider providing separated areas, contained by fencing or low walls. These areas may be used to provide separate areas for small dogs, or to help socialize dogs and regulate dog behaviour.
- Consider proximity of high-density apartment buildings when designing amenities for small dogs.

SURFACE MATERIALS

- Provide a combination of surface materials relative to intensity of use, site drainage, aesthetics and sensory interest.
- Provide well-draining, durable materials in high-traffic areas. Crusher dust is well-suited for high-traffic areas and walking paths. Concrete can be used for surfacing at entry areas.
- Consider providing grass turf in areas of lower intensity of use. Natural grass turf is the preferred surface material identified by dog owners surveyed for this report. Turf is best suited to areas of lower intensity of use, and requires proper drainage and regular maintenance to be successful.
- Crusher dust (9 mm minus) and sand have been identified through public input as good surfacing options relative to cost, ease of upkeep, effective drainage, and dog owner satisfaction.
- Repurposed artificial turf could be explored for a pilot project.

GATES + FENCING

- Double-gated entries of generous size should be provided to allow for safer leashing and unleashing of dogs. Gates should be self-closing, lockable (e.g. for maintenance needs), and wheelchair accessible.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

DESIGN GUIDELINES CONTINUED

- Provide perimeter fencing with a minimum height of 1.2 m (4'), but not more than 1.8 m (6'). Consider providing visual screening to help buffer the off leash area from adjacent land uses, or to help reduce aggression between dogs by blocking low sightlines.
- Economical fencing options include:
 - » Chain link with black vinyl coating and black posts for reducing its visual prominence
 - » Rail fence with wire mesh across openings
 - » Wooden post and top rails with page wire mesh
 - » Consider providing low walls to define the boundaries of separate use areas within the off leash area.
- Consider providing moveable fencing to close certain areas for maintenance and/or for turf regeneration.
- Consider fencing alternatives where appropriate to adjacent land uses and supported by the community and the municipality. "Ha-ha" walls could be investigated as fencing alternatives.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

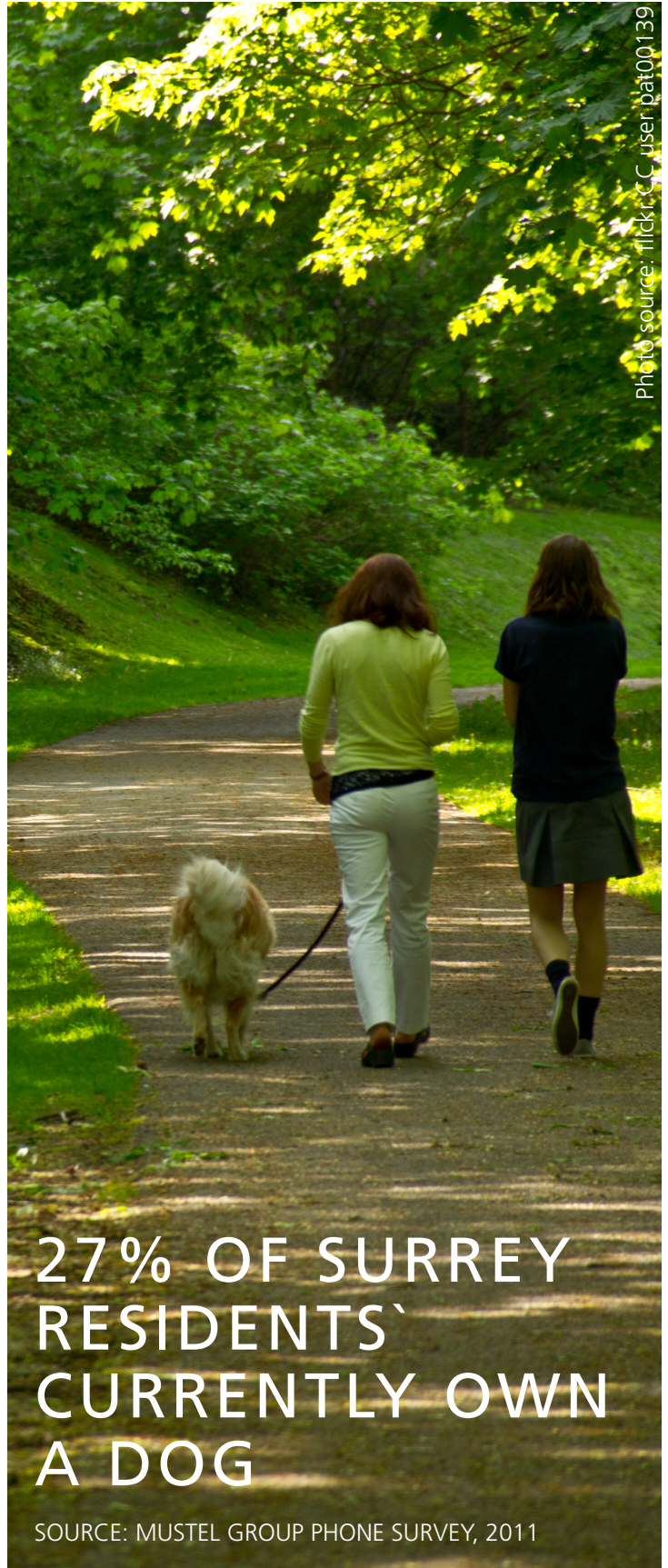
- Consider surface and subsurface drainage patterns and implement design features to minimize the risk of surface water and groundwater contamination. In particular, the location and design of dog waste collection areas requires the application of best management practices.
- Provide varied terrain and topography. Consider integrating mounds, stumps and boulders to provide visual interest, varied play opportunities, and to potentially mitigate aggression between dogs by blocking low sightlines.

- Retain and protect existing trees where appropriate, as establishing new trees in off leash areas can be challenging.
- Consider providing vegetated areas for shade, screening and seasonal interest.
- Maintain clear sightlines to promote site safety.
- Consider providing buffers to mitigate noise from barking dogs in consideration of adjacent land use, such as residential areas.

SIGNAGE + PARK ETIQUETTE

- Provide site signage in areas of high visibility, to identify designated off-leash areas and park etiquette.
- Consider providing notice boards for public use.
- Consider using signage to promote communication and education among dog owners, and the broader community. For example, key health and safety issues may be addressed such as vaccinations, and managing aggressive dogs.
- Ideally, an off leash area etiquette statement would be developed by the City of Surrey, and publicly posted in all off leash area sites.

Photo source: flickr CC user pat00139



27% OF SURREY RESIDENTS` CURRENTLY OWN A DOG

SOURCE: MUSTEL GROUP PHONE SURVEY, 2011

OPERATIONS

Operating a dog off leash area requires consideration of maintenance resources, waste management procedures, community engagement, enforcement, self-policing, and ongoing evaluation of the park's success. Ensuring an adequate number of waste bins and signage may encourage dog owners to properly collect and dispose of waste.

Engaging community groups to help design and operate off leash areas can greatly assist with off leash area management and operations. Such groups (e.g. in Markham, Long Beach, Seattle, New York) often help with fundraising, site clean-ups, facilitating communication amongst dog park users, and encouraging compliance with site rules. They can also be instrumental for helping municipalities respond to maintenance issues or rule violations occurring in off leash areas. These groups can also facilitate the provision of dog training services to encourage better-behaved dogs.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

MAINTENANCE

- Provision of dog park amenities should be informed by the classification of the off leash area (neighbourhood, community, destination) and corresponding maintenance resources available for the site.
- Durable and low-maintenance materials and site furnishings should be selected to reduce maintenance demands.
- The maintenance plan for each site should address the collection and disposal of dog waste; pruning plants; and maintaining surfacing, fencing, site furnishings, and water supplies.
- Opportunities should be identified to engage dog park associations and/or local volunteers with site maintenance.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Dog waste collection may be facilitated by providing an adequate number of well-distributed waste receptacles.
- Visible signage in multiple locations should be used to encourage park users to pick up after their dogs.
- Sustainable dog waste management strategies should be explored. Off-site composting and anaerobic digesters are recommended for exploring through pilot projects in City of Surrey off leash areas (see Section 4.9)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The City of Surrey can encourage dog park stewardship by facilitating the set-up of dog park associations for each site, formed by local volunteers.
- The City of Surrey may consider providing dog park associations with group facilitation training, meeting space, communications assistance, and/or other resources to help increase the success of the group.
- Dog park associations may play a variety of roles in the

operation of an off leash dog area. Roles may include liaising with city staff, fundraising for off leash area upgrades, encouraging compliance with off leash area rules, and facilitating dog training.

DOG PARK CODE OF CONDUCT

- A consistent set of off leash area rules should be developed for all sites in Surrey; additional rules may be developed as necessary for individual off leash area sites depending on unique site conditions or amenities.
- Promotion of off leash area code of conduct can be facilitated by distributing the park rules through private businesses and dog licensing mail-outs.
- Off leash area code of conduct should be highly visible in at least one location at each site.

ENFORCEMENT + SELF-POLICING

- Dog park associations can be trained to take an active role in self policing off leash areas.
- City bylaw officers should be available to enforce off leash area rules when warranted. Dog park association volunteers can help to notify city bylaw officers when additional enforcement appears to be needed.
- The use of technology (e.g. texting, smartphone apps) can be used by volunteers and park visitors to help the City track and respond to infractions.

MONITORING + EVALUATION

- Regular monitoring is important to address emerging issues and to ensure long-term success of each off leash area.
- Physical site conditions should be monitored for condition of surface materials; functioning of site lighting, gate closures, and water systems; presence of uncollected dog waste; and capacity of waste bins.
- Technology (e.g. texting, smartphone apps) can help dog park volunteers and users report concerns with physical site conditions (e.g. maintenance needs) and/or social site conditions (e.g. rule infractions).

OFF LEASH AREA SELECTION PROCESS

At the beginning of the park selection process, all city-owned park sites were considered for potential new off leash areas. A prioritized list of sites was developed based on input from the mapping exercises, public surveys, workshops, and open house events held during spring and summer 2011 (Appendices 1.0 to 4.0). These sites were evaluated using the Provision and Location Guidelines (Section 2.7), site analysis, and city staff input, resulting in a list of twelve short-listed sites distributed across Surrey's six Town Centres. A similar process will be used to plan for new dog off leash areas in Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) areas, such as Grandview Heights. NCP areas currently in the process of planning and design are not included in this strategy as parkland has not been secured in these neighbourhoods. Dog off leash areas will be planned concurrently with the NCP planning process.

Potential off leash area sites were categorized as Neighbourhood Parks, Community Parks, or Destination Parks, depending on the desired service radius; increasing levels of parking and amenity features were allotted to community and destination parks.

Conceptual designs for the twelve short-listed sites were presented to the public for review and feedback at three open house events held in September 2011, and were available for public review through the City of Surrey website (Section 3.6). Public feedback on the concepts was received from 83 respondents.

Based on a combination of public feedback, further input from the City of Surrey staff, more detailed site analysis, and additional review of the Provision and Location Guidelines, **7 of the 12 candidate sites were recommended without conditions for further development.** Six of the seven were those that received the greatest public support and low opposition, and included Bear Creek Park (Whalley), Port Mann Park (Guildford), Colebrook Park (Newton), Bonnie Schrenk Park (Fleetwood), Cloverdale hydro right-of-way (Cloverdale), and Pioneer Greenway (South Surrey). Fraser View Park was also recommended as a seventh site to meet the demand in Guildford Town Centre, and specifically in Fraser Heights.

An additional 4 sites are conditionally recommended pending the acquisition of more information and the undertaking of more public consultation. These parks include Panorama Park, Bakerview Park, Queen Elizabeth Meadows, and Forsyth Park.

Three separate off leash areas have been approved for development through separate master planning processes.

RECOMMENDED OFF LEASH AREAS

The following is an overview of the public and staff feedback for the off leash areas; additional information on proposed locations is provided in Section 2.8, and design concepts are provided in section 3.6.

BEAR CREEK PARK, WHALLEY (COMMUNITY PARK)

Bear Creek Park received a high level of public support (49 responses: 76% in support, 10% opposed, remainder of neutral opinion). A wildlife / Environmentally Sensitive Areas study will be required to protect the site's ecological values.

PORT MANN PARK, GUILDFORD (DESTINATION PARK)

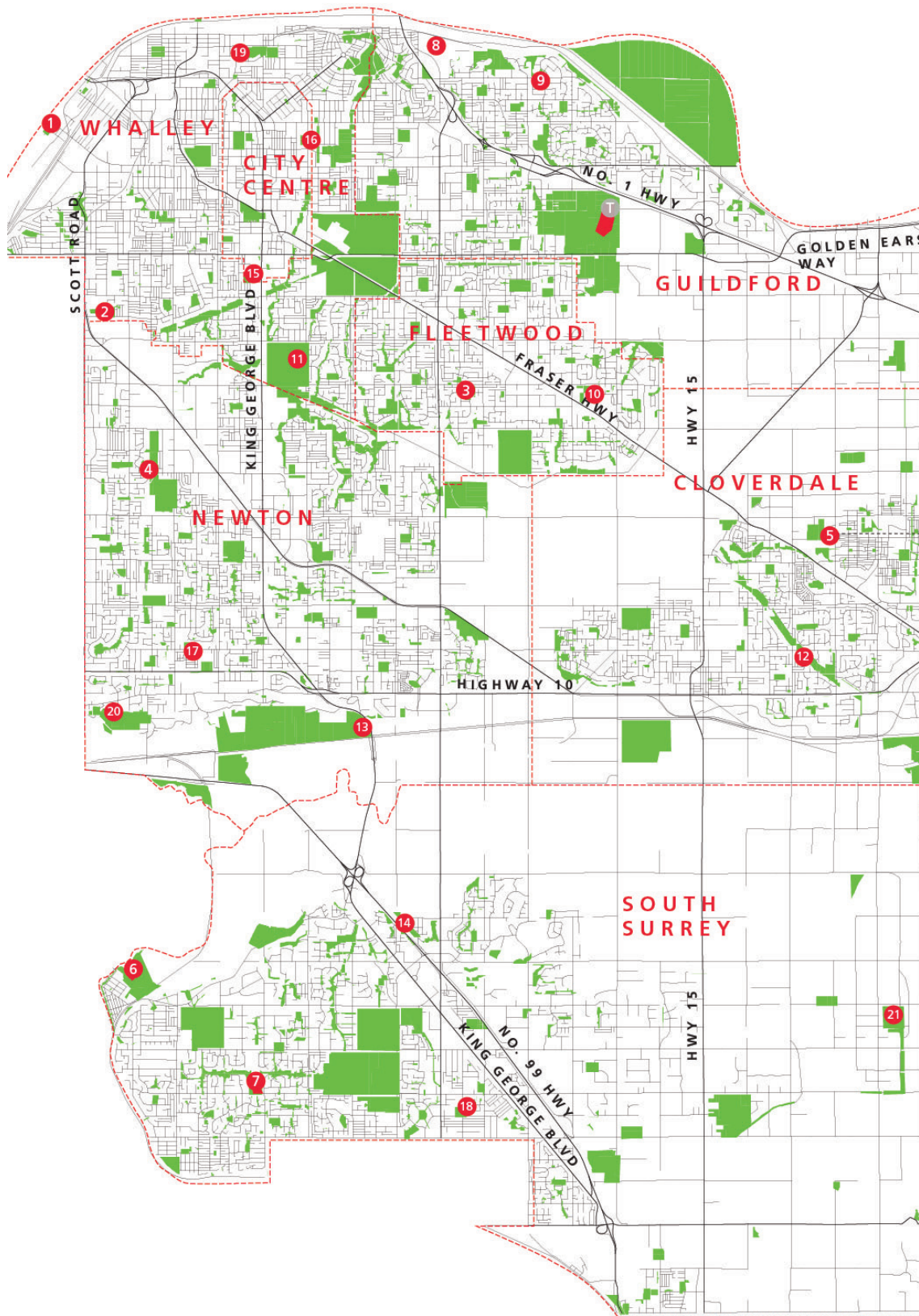
Port Mann Park received a high level of public support (50 responses: 78% in favour, 2% opposed). Detailed design will require an update to the Port Mann Park Master Plan, and will require access improvements for cars and pedestrians. The park will also need to be integrated with the overall park circulation system.

FRASER VIEW PARK, GUILDFORD (NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK)

Fraser View Park received a good level of public support (45 responses: 58% in favour, 4% opposed) and there were many strong positive written comments in support for an off leash area in this location. As a neighbourhood park this site would serve the local residents differently than Port Mann park.

COLEBROOK PARK, NEWTON (DESTINATION PARK)

Colebrook Park received a high level of public support (50 responses: 76% in favour, 4% opposed). Detailed design of



- EXISTING OFF LEASH AREAS**
- 1 TANNERY ROAD PARK
- 2 KENNEDY PARK
- 3 FREEDOM PARK
- 4 SERPENTINE PARK
- 5 CLAYTON PARK
- 6 BLACKIE SPIT
- 7 DOGWOOD PARK
- 1 TTYNEHEAD PARK OWNED AND MANAGED BY METRO VANCOUVER

- RECOMMENDED NEW PARKS**
- 8 PORT MANN PARK
- 9 FRASER VIEW PARK
- 10 BONNIE SCHRENK PARK
- 11 BEAR CREEK PARK
- 12 CLOVERDALE HYDRO R.O.W.
- 13 COLEBROOK PARK
- 14 PIONEER GREENWAY

- CONDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION**
- 15 QUEEN ELIZABETH MEADOWS
- 16 FORSYTH PARK
- 17 PANORAMA PARK
- 18 BAKERVIEW PARK

- APPROVED IN SEPARATE PROCESS**
- 19 BOLIVAR PARK
- 20 JOE BROWN PARK
- 21 LATIMER LAKE PARK

CITY OF SURREY



PROPOSED SITES FOR FUTURE OFF LEASH DOG PARKS
 SPACE+PLACE | CITY OF SURREY

this site will need to ensure any runoff is fully treated, due to the proximity of red-coded watercourses.

BONNIE SCHRENK PARK, FLEETWOOD (COMMUNITY PARK)

Bonnie Schrenk Park received a good level of support (45 responses: 69% in support, no opposition). Consultation will need to be undertaken with the Schrenk family and with the Fleetwood Community Association prior to detailed design of this site.

CLOVERDALE HYDRO R.O.W., CLOVERDALE (NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK)

The proposed site in the Cloverdale hydro right-of-way received a good level of support (47 responses: 68% in favour, 2% opposed). There were some concerns about potential vandalism of site amenities here, and parking may be desirable.

PIONEER GREENWAY, SOUTH SURREY (COMMUNITY PARK)

Pioneer Greenway received a high level of public support (50 responses, 76% in support, 4% opposed). Off-site park space in the Pioneer Greenway area should also be developed for the use of non dog owners.

OFF LEASH AREAS APPROVED IN A SEPARATE PARK MASTER PLANS

Three additional off leash areas have been selected by the City of Surrey through separate park master planning processes. The master plans have been approved by Council and implementation of these off leash areas will occur as funding becomes available. Approved parks include Bolivar Park (Whalley / City Centre), Joe Brown Park (Newton), and Latimer Lake Park (South Surrey).

RECOMMENDED SITES WITH CONDITIONS

The following sites are recommended with the caveat that significantly more public consultation and information gathering would be required prior to any park development; see section 2.8 for more detail.

PANORAMA PARK, NEWTON (NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK)

Panorama Park received a good level of support (44 responses: 64% in support, no opposition). This park would provide a more accessible park for local residents compared to the Colebrook Park site. Neighbourhood impacts of this site would potentially be significant, however, and thus a park-specific open house would be required to ensure support.

BAKERVIEW PARK, SOUTH SURREY (NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK)

Bakerview Park received the highest number of responses (64 responses) and the highest amount of opposition (64% in support, 20% opposed), indicating that it was the most controversial of the candidate sites. Opponents of this site were concerned that the small size of the park and its high level of use would not support the addition of an off leash area. Accommodating a dog off leash area would require a separate master planning process to be undertaken, which would involve additional public engagement.

QUEEN ELIZABETH MEADOWS, WHALLEY / CITY CENTRE (NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK)

Queen Elizabeth Park received a good level of public support (44 responses: 57% in support, 2% opposed). During the public consultation process questions were raised about there being a covenant on this property, which would preclude its use as an off leash area. No record of this covenant has been found to date, and further investigation will be required to ensure no terms would be violated by developing a dog off leash area.

FORSYTH PARK, WHALLEY / CITY CENTRE (COMMUNITY PARK)

Forsyth Park received a good level of public support (42 responses: 59% in support, 9% opposed). A master planning process will be required to ensure that a dog off leash area would be well situated and that it would avoid conflicts between adjacent uses as the park is developed.

NEXT STEPS

The recommended sites will be put forward to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee and to Surrey City Council for approval in late 2011 - early 2012. Subsequent development of the parks will take place over three phases, between 2012 and 2021.

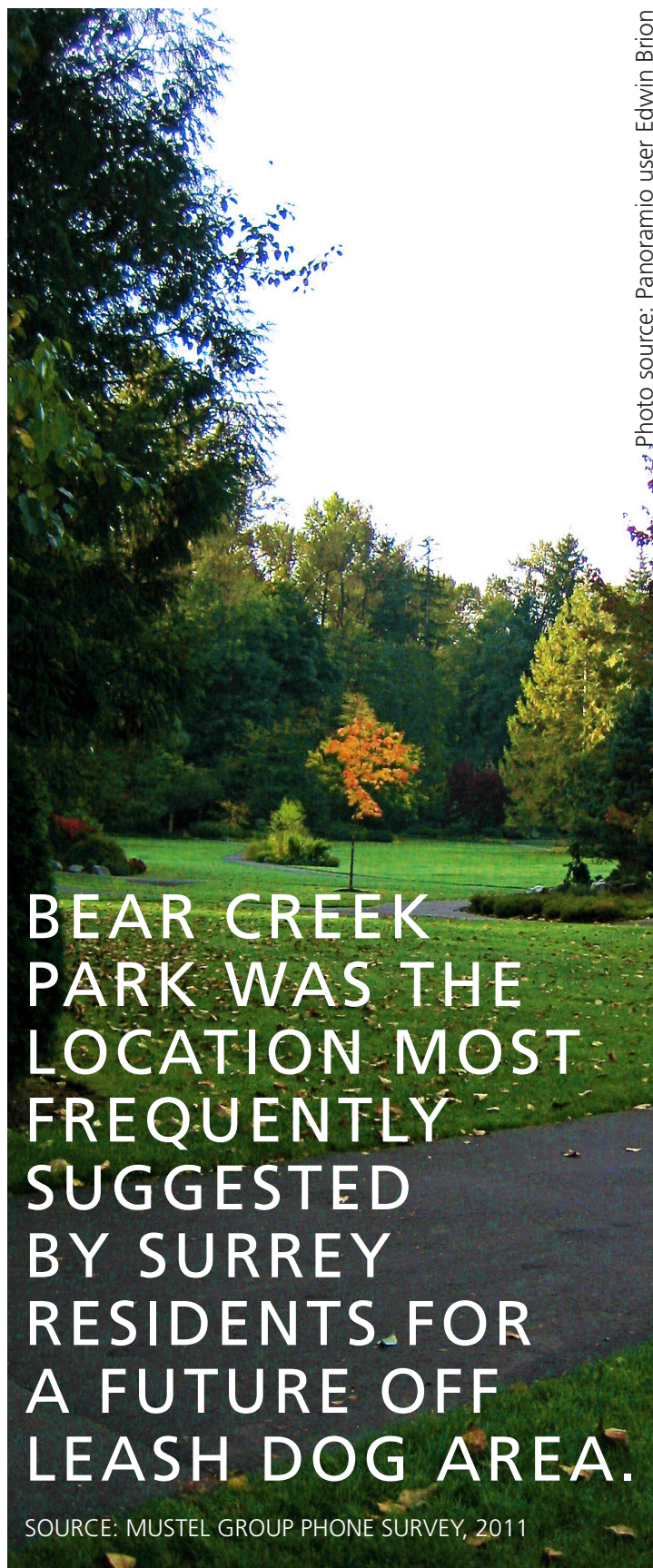


Photo source: Panoramio user Edwin Brion

BEAR CREEK
PARK WAS THE
LOCATION MOST
FREQUENTLY
SUGGESTED
BY SURREY
RESIDENTS FOR
A FUTURE OFF
LEASH DOG AREA.

SOURCE: MUSTEL GROUP PHONE SURVEY, 2011

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW OFF LEASH AREAS (2011 - 2021)

	RECOMMENDED OFF LEASH AREAS	RECOMMENDED OFF LEASH AREAS WITH CONDITIONS (SEE TEXT FOR MORE INFORMATION)	OFF LEASH AREAS APPROVED IN SEPARATE PARK MASTER PLANS
SHORT TERM (2012 - 2015)	Bear Creek Park, Newton (Community Park) Pioneer Greenway, South Surrey (Community Park) Fraser View Park, Guildford (Neighbourhood Park)	Panorama Park, Newton (Neighbourhood Park)	Bolivar Park, Whalley / City Centre
MEDIUM-TERM (2015 - 2018)	Colebrook Park, Newton (Destination Park) Bonnie Schrenk Park, Fleetwood (Community Park) Cloverdale Hydro Right-of-Way (Neighbourhood Park)	Bakerview Park, South Surrey (Neighbourhood Park) Queen Elizabeth Meadows, Whalley / City Centre (Neighbourhood Park)	Joe Brown Park, Newton
LONG TERM (2018 - 2021)	Port Mann Park, Guildford (Destination Park)	Forsyth Park, Whalley / City Centre (Community Park)	Latimer Lake Park, South Surrey

1.2 SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER

The development of dog off leash areas in Surrey should reflect the goals and values of the Sustainability Charter to ensure that such developments help the City achieve its vision and goals for sustainability. Key goals of the Sustainability Charter and how the off leash areas help to support them are as follows:

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

SC6: ACCESSIBLE AND APPROPRIATELY LOCATED SERVICES WITHIN THE CITY

The Dog Off Leash Strategy updates guidelines for the location of such facilities to ensure new facilities are more readily available, easily accessible and within walking distance of densely populated town centres. The strategy continues to ensure dog off leash areas are equitably distributed across the City.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

EC9: QUALITY OF DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

An updated set of design guidelines for dog off leash areas ensures the City is following best practices for the design and construction of new dog off leash areas and renovating where appropriate. The provision of shelters, water fountains, wash stations and small dog areas are initiatives that set a high standard for new dog areas in the City of Surrey.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

EN9: SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

Dog off leash areas are an important component in mixed land use planning providing recreation opportunities for residents at all times of the day in close proximity to where they work and live. The Strategy's location guidelines ensure dog off leash areas avoid critical habitat and are delivered centrally for best results.