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**Community Services Briefing to
SPC on Community and Protective Services
2019 November 13**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
CPS2019-1434**

Response to Motion Arising – Off-Leash Dog Parks

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

At the 2019 February 4 Combined Council Meeting, a Motion Arising related to CPC2018-1359 directed Administration to “review and revise policy to enable off-leash dog parks as a component of design programming within Municipal Reserves and other park spaces within communities.”

Calgary Parks reviewed existing off-leash areas, processes around the establishment of new off-leash areas, and also had discussions with Councillor Colley-Urquhart who brought the Motion forward. This work led to the following conclusions:

- Calgary is generally well-served in terms of available off-leash areas with 157 locations covering approximately 1,200 hectares city-wide.
- In areas where this is not the case, the Off-Leash Area Management Plan, received by Council for information in 2011, provides a robust and well-defined process for proponents of new off-leash areas to investigate feasibility and adjacent community interest.
- One area that could provide greater clarity for establishment of off-leash areas in new and redeveloping communities is an off-leash area design specification. Parks will engage with the development industry to gauge their interest and input on this as part of our annual review of the Parks Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications for Landscape Construction.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Calgary is fortunate to have approximately 14% of the total Calgary Parks land inventory as public off-leash areas, one of the highest per capita concentrations in North America. Even so, with the popularity of dog ownership, The City of Calgary is continually working on enhancing existing areas and adding more off-leash locations.

In 2011, Council received the Calgary Parks’ Off-Leash Area Management Plan (OLAMP) for information and directed Administration to utilize the guidelines, procedures, stakeholder engagement and service-level frameworks herein. OLAMP was developed following substantial public and stakeholder engagement, and acts as a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and challenges associated with off-leash areas, and The City’s mission, values and core principles associated with the provision of such areas. It also provides a robust, yet straightforward, guide to investigating the potential for a new off-leash area, including determining the need for and feasibility of a site, requirements for stakeholder engagement, and guidelines for implementation. The OLAMP has served as a valuable tool for citizens and The City by ensuring that new off-leash areas are considered in a consistent, transparent and thoughtful manner.

The OLAMP has successfully guided the establishment of several new off-leash areas, including recent examples in the communities of Mount Pleasant, Killarney, Forest Lawn and

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Downtown West. The success of these new off-leash opportunities owes to the thorough considerations included in the plan. Similarly, there have been some situations where proposed off-leash opportunities were not implemented. In these cases, execution of the process outlined in the OLAMP revealed that the area was not appropriate for off-leash from a technical sense such as inadequate access or parking, or the majority of the surrounding community did not support it.

The OLAMP also assists with evaluating the potential for new off-leash areas in developing communities, given that the criteria and process are similar. Requests for off-leash areas by developers of new communities is uncommon. In instances where interest has arisen, solutions have been opportunistically pursued in road and utility right-of-ways, on non-credit Municipal Reserve sites or in other non-park areas as the developer dedicated 10% community open space is most often needed for schools and parks that provide more flexible space for a variety of park users, amenities and activities. Recent examples where off-leash opportunities have either been planned or established on non-credit reserve areas include sites in the communities of Wolf Willow, Taradale and Auburn Bay.

To give further guidance and certainty to developers who wish to establish off-leash areas, Calgary Parks will engage BILD Calgary regarding the potential for an associated standard specification or design. This will be undertaken as part of our annual joint review of the City of Calgary Parks Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications for Landscape Construction.

In summary, Administration's investigation of Councillor Colley-Urquhart's Motion Arising revealed that a robust guidance on the opportunities for and methods to establish new off-leash opportunities already exists in the Off-Leash Area Management Plan, a Council-approved document which involved significant public and stakeholder engagement. Although Administration does not feel further policy revisions are required, the investigation of standard specification, which could be used for off-leash area development, may be helpful to guide future inquiries. As such, Administration will pursue this further directly with the development industry in 2020.