

COMMISSION REPORT

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
COMMISSION

DATE: 2019 July 18

FROM: DIRECTOR PARKS RECREATION AND
CULTURAL SERVICES

FILE: 61000-02

SUBJECT: PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR DOG OFF-LEASH FACILITIES

PURPOSE: To provide information regarding the feasibility of fencing Malvern off-leash facility.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the Commission meeting of 2019 April 09, Commissioner Preston made a Notice of Motion that staff undertake a community consultation on whether or not Malvern Park off-leash dog area should be fully enclosed or if the current gate and fencing off Imperial Street should be removed to ensure people are aware that it is not enclosed. On 2019 May 14 Commissioner Dhaliwal recommended the motion brought forward by Commissioner Preston at the April 09 meeting be referred to staff for a review of the scope, cost and feasibility of undertaking the work. This report outlines the scope, cost and feasibility of undertaking a public consultation. This report also discusses the implications of fencing the dog off-leash facility at Malvern Park.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

The provision of facilities for walking dogs off-leash is aligned with the City of Burnaby Corporate Strategic Plan by supporting the following goals and sub-goals of the plan.

- A Safe Community
 - Transportation safety
 - Community amenity safety

- A Connected Community
 - Social connection
 - Geographic connection
- An Inclusive Community
 - Serve a diverse community
 - Create a sense of community

3.0 BACKGROUND

The Malvern Park off-leash dog facility was created in 2007 following extensive public consultation through mail in surveys, site patron surveys and public open houses. Through the consultation process it was established that a variety of dog off-leash facilities should be provided to give different experiences without negatively impacting the environment. The Malvern Park site provided an opportunity to use the hydro corridor for dogs to run openly and the opportunity for an off-leash trail through the forest. The facility has an entry gate at the park entrance off Imperial Street to allow dog owners to leash and unleash dogs in a controlled area that is safe from vehicle traffic. The attached drawing illustrates the size and location of the facility.

Public Consultation:

Changes to the design of an off-leash facility are typically made by staff after observation of issues and or complaints brought forward by the user groups. Staff also review and consult the public where and when new facilities are being considered. A full review of current facilities and associated improvements to them will be part of a 2019 - 2020 work plan.

The Scope of Consultation:

Public consultation related to dog parks has been done through public surveys and open houses. To address the question of public opinion about fencing at Malvern Park, staff would propose creating a survey questionnaire to administer on site to park visitors and patrons of the off-leash facility to gather their opinion. This would be over a two-week period at various times of the day.

The Cost of Consultation and Construction:

The cost of the consultation would include staff time for; the preparation of the survey, to collect data on site, the compilation of the findings and reporting out of the results. This component is estimated to cost \$4,000 in staff time.

The cost of constructing a fenced dog facility at Malvern Park is estimated to be \$165,000 for the fence and additional gate installation. This does not include the cost of tree removals which would be required for fence installation and servicing.

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The Feasibility of Fencing Malvern Off-leash Facility:

The impact of installing fencing around an entire dog off-leash facility of this size presents several challenges that would negatively impact the environment and other wildlife in the park.

To install a chain link fence would require a six-foot wide cleared zone on one side of the fence to allow for construction and maintenance vehicle access in addition to the installation of a controlled entry point for Hydro vehicles. Permission from Hydro to enclose part of the transmission corridor would be required.

Tree removal for fence installation through parts of the forest would open the site to environmental degradation due to a loss of tree canopy. Where the sun comes in, there will be opportunity for invasive plants to colonize. A new fence line through the forest would create a new edge condition for the forest trees. The root structure of the trees has developed in a colonized state with a shallow root system and little anchor support. This makes the new edge trees susceptible to blow down in strong wind events.

Fencing through the forest will segment habitat into smaller, isolated areas or habitat "islands". The movement of wildlife for foraging, hunting, lifecycle changes and connections to and from water sources would be impacted. The fence may also entrap the wildlife. A more in-depth analysis of the habitat value of the forest in Malvern Park would identify the specific species and the impact to their lifecycle patterns.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

The Malvern Park dog off-leash facility was designed to function as both an open area and forested trail for dog walkers and their dogs. The design and style of the off leash facility was vetted through public consultation and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission. The public have enjoyed the use of the facility over the past decade. There have been few public complaints or concerns about the open area or the gate. Under the direction of the Commission, staff will continue to undertake a wider review of all dog off-leash facilities and report back at a later date on proposed changes to existing facilities including Malvern Park. Staff will also post signage at the Imperial entrance gate to inform the public that the off-leash area is not enclosed.



Dave Ellenwood
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

HE:ATS:tc
Attachment

