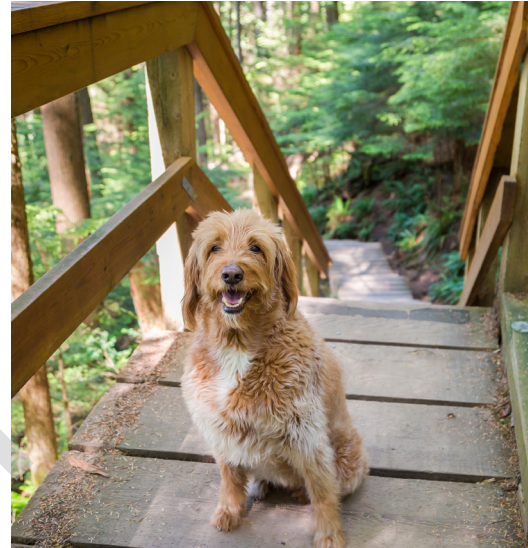
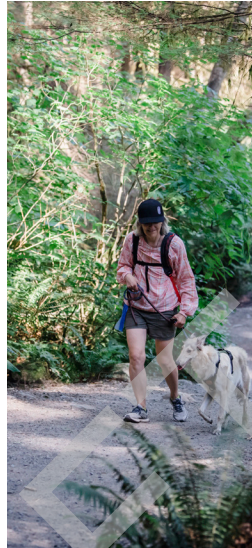


PEOPLE DOGS & PARKS

STRATEGIC PLAN



DRAFT



Executive Summary

The People, Dogs and Parks Strategic Plan sets out a comprehensive framework to guide the shared use of District parks and trails by people and dogs, helping ensure these spaces remain safe, inclusive and enjoyable for all.

This Strategic Plan considers the needs of dog owners, other park users, and the natural environment to guide thoughtful decision-making. It outlines a coordinated approach to supporting positive dog-related activity in parks through strategies focused on wellness, environment, and community.

The Plan includes a vision statement, guiding principles, strategic directions, and a set of recommended actions to be implemented over the next 10 years.

Guiding Principles



Wellness



Environment



Community

Actions

The following are the high-priority actions identified for implementation over the next three years:

- Implement new fenced off-leash areas in suitable locations within District parks, prioritizing sites near key growth centres.
- Assess and identify necessary upgrades to existing fenced off-leash areas.
- Include funding for additional fenced off-leash areas, improvements and maintenance in upcoming Capital and Operations Budgets.
- Identify adjustments needed to address dog management issues in priority parks and trails.
- Investigate alternative dog waste collection systems, including those used by other local governments.
- Identify key areas and parks to focus enforcement and education efforts to improve efficiency.
- Launch targeted campaigns using temporary signage to share dog regulations and promote responsible dog ownership and etiquette.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the District's Commercial Dog Walking Program.



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Introduction

Purpose

The District of North Vancouver is home to over 3,000 hectares of parkland and more than 120 kilometers of trails. These natural spaces are highly valued by residents and visitors for their diverse recreation opportunities, including the chance for people to enjoy the outdoors with their dogs in a beautiful setting.

Dogs play an important role in the lives of many District residents. With an estimated one dog for every five people, and a growing population, the number of dogs in parks and trails is increasing.

This growing park use presents both opportunities and challenges, and the District recognizes the need to update its policies and practices to reflect increased demand and address emerging concerns.

Community engagement has highlighted a range of perspectives, including from dog owners and non-dog owners. In response, the People, Dogs and Parks Strategic Plan sets clear direction to improve park experiences for everyone, including our four-legged friends.



Process & Engagement

Insights gathered through the community engagement process provided valuable input, helping to align strategic priorities with the community's values and aspirations.



Engagement – Round 1

The purpose of the first round of engagement for the Strategic Plan was to learn more about key community values, ideas, and opportunities from a broad range of audiences to inform the development of the Plan, including its guiding framework.

Over 2,900 respondents participated in at least one of the engagement opportunities. Input was shared through an online survey, three in-person pop-up engagement events, and an intercept survey with park users.

The following key themes were identified by the community during this phase of engagement:

- Connecting with nature in parks and environmental protection is highly valued.
- Everyone plays a role in making parks welcoming and inclusive.
- Parks serve as vital spaces for physical activity and wellness for dogs and people.
- Dog waste management is important for maintaining clean and enjoyable parks.
- Transparent guidelines and regulations ensure parks are safe and harmonious.

For details, visit [DNV.org](https://dnv.org) for the People, Dogs and Parks Strategic Plan: Engagement 1 Summary Report, 2024.

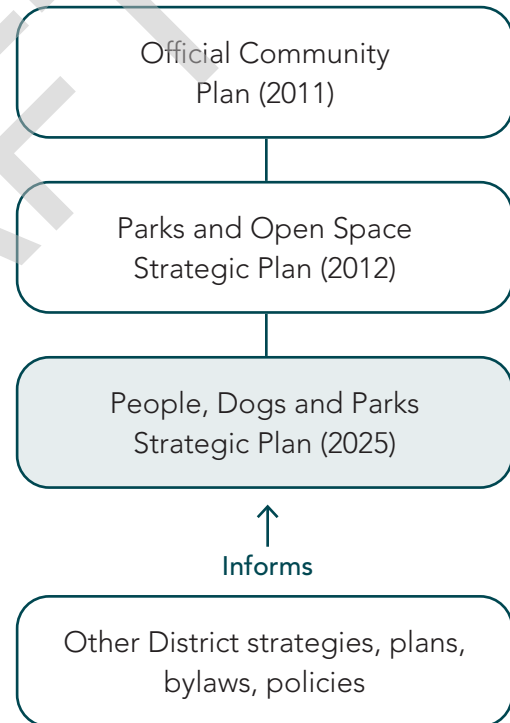
Engagement – Round 2

The purpose of the second round of engagement was to collect feedback from the community on the draft Strategic Plan including the vision, guiding principles, strategic directions, and recommended actions.

To be completed.

Policy Context

The People, Dogs and Parks Strategic Plan aligns with various District plans, policies, and bylaws:



- Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw, 5981
- Park Regulation Bylaw, 8310
- Fees and Charges Bylaw, 6481

Vision & Guiding Principles

Vision Statement

District parks offer opportunities to connect with nature and promote well-being for everyone, non-dog owners and dog owners alike, by balancing recreation with ecological integrity, and encouraging shared responsibility to keep parks safe, inclusive, and enjoyable for all.

This vision is informed by values expressed through community input during the community engagement process, aligns with the vision in the Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan (2012), and supports the wider community vision in the Official Community Plan (2011).

A vision statement describes the desired future condition. It is aspirational and indicates the direction in which the District seeks to progress. The vision is an ambitious, overarching, and future-looking statement that illustrates what we will work towards. The guiding principles, strategic directions, and actions in this Strategic Plan support progress towards this vision.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are beliefs and values that help shape decision-making and how actions are implemented in the journey towards achieving the vision statement. These guiding principles are informed by values expressed through community input during the engagement process. The guiding principles are not listed in any particular order.



Wellness

District parks promote health and wellness through active living and provide people and dogs access to a variety of safe, and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities.



Environment

Recreational opportunities for dogs are supported in ways that protect the integrity and sustainability of natural landscapes and their ecological functions for future generations to come.



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are specific goals and objectives that outline the path towards achieving the vision and guiding principles. These strategic directions are informed by community input during the engagement process which included public, interest group, and staff input. The strategic directions are not listed in any particular order.

1 Distribution & Supply

Ensure adequate supply, quality, diversity and distribution of outdoor recreation experiences and amenities including off-leash opportunities.

3 Ecological Integrity

Increase awareness of environmental impacts caused by dogs in parks and implement measures to maintain ecological quality and integrity.

5 Collaboration

Collaborate with interest groups, community partners, and local governments on dog-related initiatives, while engaging the community in decision-making.

2 Balance

Practice thoughtful planning to balance the needs of various user and stewardship groups to mitigate dog conflicts and risks in parks.

4 Cleanliness

Improve dog waste management and demonstrate that improper disposal affects everyone's enjoyment of parks and is seen as unacceptable by both dog owners and non-owners alike.

6 Education & Enforcement

Enhance awareness of various recreational opportunities and effectively communicate appropriate usage, rules, and regulations related to dogs in parks through education and enforcement.



Action Plan

The following recommended actions outline practical steps to achieve the vision, guiding principles, and strategic directions set out in this Plan.



Action Plan

This section lists strategic actions over the short, medium, and long term and actions that are ongoing.

Short term actions should be implemented immediately to over the next three years. Medium term actions could be implemented over the next 4-6 years. These actions usually take longer to plan and implement. Long term actions are expected to take 7-10 years for long term success. Ongoing actions are sustained efforts continuously carried out over time.

Approximate costs for each recommended action are categorized as being high (\$150,000-500,000+), medium (\$25,000-150,000) or low (less than \$25,000).

Priority levels for the implementation of each recommended action are also included as high, medium or low priority, and are based on input from the community and staff.

The District will need to monitor and assess the recommended actions to determine if any course changes are needed.



Wellness

Foster enjoyable and informed recreational experiences through ongoing and adaptive planning, development, and maintenance.

1 Distribution & Supply

Ensure adequate supply, quality, diversity and distribution of outdoor recreation experiences and amenities including off-leash opportunities.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
1.1	Evaluate off-leash area distribution in the District, identify gaps, and opportunities to improve access.	Low	Ongoing	Low
1.2	Implement new fenced off-leash areas in suitable locations within District parks, prioritizing sites near key growth centres.	High	Short term	High
1.3	Advocate for the inclusion of off-leash areas and other dog-related amenities outside of District parks including in new development projects.	High	Ongoing	Low
1.4	Identify and evaluate potential locations to pilot 'fetching lanes' in existing parks and prepare design standards.	Low	Medium term	Low
1.5	Assess and identify necessary upgrades to existing fenced off-leash areas to ensure they meet Design Guidelines, and accessibility requirements.	High	Short term	Low
1.6	Include funding for additional fenced off-leash areas, improvements and maintenance in upcoming Capital and Operations Budgets.	High	Short term, with Action 1.2	High

Action Plan



Wellness

Foster enjoyable and informed recreational experiences through ongoing and adaptive planning, development, and maintenance.

2 Balance

Practice thoughtful planning to balance the needs of various user and stewardship groups to mitigate dog and park visitor conflicts and risks.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
2.1	Develop a prioritized list of parks and trails with significant dog-related challenges and evaluate the dog access category using the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations.	High	Medium term, with Action 2.3	Low
2.2	Evaluate the suitability of existing commercial dog walking trails, as well as other trails that may be appropriate for this use, using the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations.	Medium	Medium term	Low
2.3	Identify adjustments needed to address dog management issues in priority parks and trails.	High	Short term, with Action 2.1	High
2.4	During the initial planning phase of new park or trail initiatives, apply the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations to help determine the appropriate dog access category.	High	Ongoing	Low



Environment

Recreational opportunities for dogs are supported in ways that protect the integrity and sustainability of natural landscapes and their ecological functions for future generations to come.

3 Ecological Integrity

Increase awareness of environmental impacts caused by dogs in parks and implement measures to maintain ecological quality and integrity.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
3.1	Identify suitable locations to provide dogs access to the water (oceanfront, creeks etc.) in parks.	Medium	Short term, with Action 3.3	Low
3.2	Identify key environmentally sensitive areas in District parks near popular dog off-leash areas and trails to inform planning and decision making.	Medium	Long term	Low
3.3	Implement adaptive mitigation measures to limit negative impacts from dogs on key environmentally sensitive areas (including waterways) where appropriate and as resources permit.	High	Ongoing, with Action 3.1	Medium

Action Plan



Environment

Recreational opportunities for dogs are supported in ways that protect the integrity and sustainability of natural landscapes and their ecological functions for future generations to come.

4 Cleanliness

Improve dog waste management and demonstrate that improper disposal affects everyone's enjoyment of parks and is seen as unacceptable by both dog owners and non-owners alike.

Action	Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
4.1 Secure permanent operating funding to maintain the separated dog waste program.	High	Medium term	Low
4.2 Use site selection criteria and data collection to evaluate and optimize the placement of dog waste bins and bag dispensers in high-use park and trail areas, ensuring effective waste management with minimal operational impact.	High	Ongoing	Low
4.3 Explore vehicle adaptations or other equipment for dog waste bin collection to reduce staff workload.	Medium	Medium term	Low
4.4 Investigate alternative dog waste collection systems, including those used by other local governments, to identify more efficient options. Consider implementing or piloting these systems in the District.	High	Short term	Low
4.5 Ensure all dog waste bags provided in District parks and trails comply with provincial regulations and are free of oxo-degradable plastics.	Medium	Ongoing	Low
4.6 Explore alternative ways to competitively procure dog waste bag supply and dog waste bin collection services in District parks and trails.	Medium	Medium term	Low



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair, and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

5 Collaboration

Collaborate with interest groups, community partners, and local governments on dog-related initiatives, while engaging the community in decision-making.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
5.1	Organize a bi-annual roundtable meeting, led by the District's Parks department, with key staff involved in dog management to discuss current issues and ongoing projects related to dogs in parks and trails.	Low	Short term	Low
5.2	Hold annual or biennial meetings with the District of West Vancouver to collaborate on commercial dog walking regulations, policies, and permit fees.	Low	Short term	Low
5.3	Collaborate with the NSMBA and other trail user groups to find innovative solutions to address challenges related to dogs on trails.	Medium	Short term	Low

Action Plan



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair, and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

6 Education & Enforcement: Signage

Enhance awareness of various recreational opportunities and effectively communicate appropriate usage, rules, and regulations related to dogs in parks through education and enforcement.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
6.1	Develop standard dog regulatory and educational signs with a consistent look and messaging, using the District's unique and identifiable communication standards.	Medium	Medium term	Low
6.2	Collaborate with other neighbouring land managers to establish a common color code and symbols for dog-related signs.	Low	Medium term	Low
6.3	Incorporate humorous and engaging messages on dog-related signs.	Low	Short term	Low
6.4	Create an inventory of existing dog-related signs in parks and trails, assess if these signs are appropriately located, and identify suitable locations for new signs.	Medium	Short term	Low
6.5	Replace all dog-related signs in parks and trails with standardized signs with a coherent look and messaging as resources allow.	Medium	Long term	High
6.6	Launch targeted campaigns using temporary signage to share dog regulations and promote responsible dog ownership and etiquette.	High	Short term	Medium



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair, and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

6 Education & Enforcement: Staffing

Enhance awareness of various recreational opportunities and effectively communicate appropriate usage, rules, and regulations related to dogs in parks through education and enforcement.

Action	Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
6.7 Offer dog behavior training to staff who regularly work in parks and may interact with dogs.	High	Ongoing	Low
6.8 Review staffing levels and the roles of animal control officers and park rangers in managing dogs in District parks.	Medium	Medium term	Low
6.9 Identify key areas and parks to focus enforcement and education efforts to improve enforcement efficiency.	High	Short term	Low

Action Plan



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair, and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

6 Education & Enforcement: Community Outreach

Enhance awareness of various recreational opportunities and effectively communicate appropriate usage, rules, and regulations related to dogs in parks through education and enforcement.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
6.10	Consider supporting volunteer programs related to dogs in parks in collaboration with North Vancouver Recreation Commission (NVRC).	Medium	Medium term	Low
6.11	Allocate a budget for low-cost outreach initiatives to promote and reward responsible dog ownership.	Medium	Medium term	Medium
6.12	Consider developing a District-led "Bark Ranger" campaign supported by volunteers to encourage responsible dog ownership.	Low	Long term	Low
6.13	Develop an information package or reference guide for staff, in collaboration with the Animal Services and Park Ranger teams, that clearly summarizes dog-related park regulations and enforcement best-practices.	Medium	Medium term	Medium
6.14	Update the District's website with additional resources and guidelines to encourage responsible dog ownership in parks.	Medium	Medium term	Low
6.15	Consider implementing the Yellow Bandana Program to help identify reactive dogs and support owners.	Low	Medium term	Medium
6.16	Develop and implement targeted communications programs on a range of dog-related topics to support education, and enforcement where necessary.	High	Short term	Medium



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair, and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

6 Education & Enforcement: Bylaw Amendments

Enhance awareness of various recreational opportunities and effectively communicate appropriate usage, rules, and regulations related to dogs in parks through education and enforcement.

Action	Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
6.17 Conduct a comprehensive review of Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981.	High	Short term, with Action 6.29	Low
6.18 Revise Bylaw 5981 to enable staff to more easily modify dog use designations (on-leash, off-leash, dogs prohibited) in parks.	Medium	Medium term	Low
6.19 Explore and define options for including the term "competent person" in Bylaw 5981.	Medium	Short term	Low
6.20 Add a definition for "water access" to Bylaw 5981.	Medium	Short term	Low
6.21 Amend Bylaw 5981 to include a requirement that all park users must have their dogs on leash for the first 50 meters from any park or trail entrance or exit.	High	Medium Term	Low
6.22 Amend Bylaw 5981 to include a requirement that all park users with a dog must have a dog waste bag with them at all times when in a District park.	High	Medium Term	Low
6.23 Amend Bylaw 5981 to clarify that dogs are expected to remain on designated trails within parks where off-leash use is permitted, unless otherwise posted.	High	Medium Term	Low

Action Plan



Community

Inclusive planning and clearly communicated, fair, and enforceable regulations, promote a culture of respect, responsible dog ownership and collective stewardship in District parks.

6 Education & Enforcement: Commercial Dog Walking Program Review

Enhance awareness of various recreational opportunities and effectively communicate appropriate usage, rules, and regulations related to dogs in parks through education and enforcement.

Action		Priority	Timeframe	Relative Cost
6.24	Conduct a comprehensive review of the District's Commercial Dog Walking Program, including the relevant provisions in Bylaw 5981.	High	Short term	Low
6.25	Consider amending Bylaw 5981 to address areas that are currently signed to allow commercial dog walking but not recognized in the bylaw.	High	Medium term	Low
6.26	Clarify the number of commercial dog walkers permitted under each Annual Park Use Permit in Bylaw 5981.	Medium	Medium term	Low
6.27	Amend Bylaw 5981 to include a new regulation limiting the number of Annual Park Use Permits issued to any one commercial dog walking business to 4 per year.	High	Medium term	Low
6.28	Determine if the current number of commercial dog walkers permitted on District trails is appropriate.	High	Medium term	Low
6.29	Clarify the titles of permits for different fee categories issued to commercial dog walking businesses and amend the District Fees and Charges Bylaw 6481 and Dog Tax and Regulations Bylaw 5981 accordingly.	Medium	Short term	Low
6.30	Develop a bylaw amendment report for Bylaw 5981 for Council consideration.	High	Medium term	Low



Detailed Action Plan



1 Distribution & Supply

Action 1.1

Evaluate off-leash area distribution in the District, identify gaps, and opportunities to improve access.

Based on benchmarks from other municipalities, it is recommended that the District aim to provide access to an off-leash area within 1.2 km, or approximately a 15-minute walk, of most residents¹. However, this distance may not always be feasible and may need to be adjusted based on the level of demand in an area, and the availability of suitable District parkland.

¹ Trust for Public Land, Parks on the Clock: Why We Believe in the 10-Minute Walk, 2016

Action 1.2

Implement new fenced off-leash areas in suitable locations within District parks, prioritizing sites near key growth centres.

In densely populated neighbourhoods, off-leash areas are essential for both residents and their dogs. As the District's key growth centres continue to develop into vertical communities, more people are living without access to private green space. Conveniently located off-leash areas are crucial for dogs' daily exercise and relief, and ultimately contribute to a higher quality of life in these higher-density residential areas.

Each of the District's town and village centres should be prioritized for the inclusion of at least one nearby fenced off-leash area, ensuring convenient access for the greatest number of residents and their dogs. Additional suitable locations for fenced off-leash areas in underserved areas should be considered as indicated by demand. Fenced off-leash areas should be piloted first to evaluate their suitability before investing in long-term infrastructure.

See Appendix 3 for more information.

Action 1.3

Advocate for the inclusion of off-leash areas and other dog-related amenities outside of District parks including in new development projects.

The District should continue to encourage the private sector to provide fenced off-leash areas and other amenities for dogs, such as rooftop relief areas, through development applications. To support this, the District could develop design guidelines and best practices for new multi-unit buildings, update Development Permit Area Guidelines, or consider eligibility of dog-related amenities as Community Amenity Contributions (CACs). Additionally, the District should explore opportunities to create off-leash areas outside of District parks, including through partnerships with other landowners, as suitable sites become available.

Action 1.4

Identify and evaluate potential locations to pilot 'fetching lanes' in existing parks and prepare design standards.

A fenced 'fetching lane', could provide a safe, and designated space for dogs to run and fetch, reducing the likelihood of conflicts with other park users. 'Fetching lanes' should be piloted to test location suitability and design effectiveness. Scheduled single-dog access would provide an enclosed space for dogs that are reactive or still learning recall. Signage that outlines the unique etiquette and rules of these spaces would need to be designed and installed.

Action 1.5

Assess and identify necessary upgrades to existing fenced off-leash areas to ensure they meet Design Guidelines, and accessibility requirements.

The fenced off-leash area in Myrtle Park would benefit from upgrades to enhance accessibility, functionality, and the overall user experience. An assessment should be conducted to identify improvements that align with the Design Guidelines (see Appendix) and meet accessibility standards. Potential enhancements may include updated surfacing, adding double gates, additional seating, shaded areas, clear and consistent signage, and accessible pathways. Improvements should be prioritized based on immediate safety and accessibility needs, while considering which upgrades can be deferred to future comprehensive park planning.

Action 1.6

Include funding for additional fenced off-leash areas, improvements and maintenance in upcoming Capital and Operations Budgets.

The District will require 6 additional fenced off-leash areas to service each of the District's town and village centres that do not currently have one. The fenced off-leash area in Belle Isle Park, built in 2025, cost approximately \$100,000 (not including taxes). This off-leash area was designed to a high specification and includes quality materials like artificial turf surfacing and metal fencing for durability and long-term use. Anticipated capital expenditures required (not including land) are estimated at between \$600,000 and \$900,000 to deliver this action. This action is aspirational and could be phased in over several years.

See Appendix 3 for more information.

Detailed Action Plan



2 Balance

Action 2.1

Develop a prioritized list of parks and trails with significant dog-related challenges and evaluate the dog access category using the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations.

Using the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations, evaluate District parks and trails to determine the most suitable dog access category, such as on-leash, leash-optional, dogs-prohibited, or commercial dog walking. Given the resource demands of this work, prioritization should be guided by staff observations, documented infractions and conflicts, and feedback from park users and residents. This approach will focus efforts on locations experiencing the most pressing dog management challenges. Community input will play a key role in guiding any future changes to a trail's access category.

See Appendix 4 for more information.

Action 2.2

Evaluate the suitability of existing commercial dog walking trails, as well as other trails that may be appropriate for this use, using the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations

Evaluate the suitability of existing District trails for commercial dog walking and explore the potential for designating additional trails for this use by applying the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations.

See Appendix 4 for more information.

Action 2.3

Identify adjustments needed to address dog management issues in priority parks and trails.

Challenges related to dogs in parks could be managed through a variety of mitigation strategies, as outlined in the Trail Modification Measures section of this report (Appendix 5).

It is important to evaluate the feasibility of each mitigation strategy and identify the necessary resources. A comprehensive work plan, communication strategy, enforcement program, and implementation timeline should also be developed to guide the process. Monitoring is recommended to evaluate the impact.

See Appendix 5 for more information.

Action 2.4

During the initial planning phase of new park or trail initiatives, apply the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations to help determine the appropriate dog access category.

See Appendix 4 for more information.

3 Ecological Integrity

Action 3.1

Identify suitable locations to provide dogs access to the water (oceanfront, creeks etc.) in parks.

Collaborate with the District's Environment Department, the North Vancouver Streamkeepers Society, and other land managers to identify appropriate waterfront access points for dogs and determine suitable seasons for use. Clear signage and fencing (where needed) should support this initiative to help protect sensitive fish-bearing waterways.

Action 3.2

Identify key environmentally sensitive areas in District parks near popular dog off-leash areas and trails to inform planning and decision making.

Use available environmental information, including the District's Biodiversity Strategy, to help identify environmentally sensitive areas that are most vulnerable to impacts from dog activity. This exercise will help guide future planning and decision-making.

Action 3.3

Implement adaptive mitigation measures to limit negative impacts from dogs on key environmentally sensitive areas (including waterways) where appropriate and as resources permit.

Collaborate with the District's Environment Department and key interest groups to develop solutions that support both dog recreation and ecological conservation goals. Assess appropriate and feasible mitigation measures (including fencing, trail improvements or rerouting, leash-required zones, access restrictions, and signage) to help protect highly sensitive ecological areas. Ensure measures are implemented in consultation with the community.

Detailed Action Plan



4 Cleanliness

Action 4.1

Secure permanent operating funding to maintain the separated dog waste program.

Securing ongoing operational funding for the dog waste collection program (which features separate dog waste bins in parks and trails, and has been positively received by the community), will allow the District to continue to offer the current service, help reduce the environmental impact of dog waste, and explore possibilities to expand the program in areas of high demand. The feasibility of accessing the District Solid Waste Fund to continue to finance the program should be explored.

Public engagement identified dog waste as a top concern for both dog owners and non-owners, with 80% of respondents supporting improved waste management practices. This initiative also aligns with Metro Vancouver's regional goal to divert waste from landfills by separating waste streams.

Action 4.2

Use site selection criteria and data collection to evaluate and optimize the placement of dog waste bins and bag dispensers in high-use park and trail areas, ensuring effective waste management with minimal operational impact.

Use site selection criteria and bin volume data collected by the District's Operations staff to strategically place dog waste bins and dog waste bag dispensers in areas with high demand in parks. Continue monitoring waste volumes to refine placement over time and assess additional popular dog-walking areas to identify new suitable locations, ensuring efficient waste management with minimal operational impact.

Action 4.3

Explore vehicle adaptations or other equipment for dog waste bin collection to reduce staff workload.

Collaborate with the District's Fleet Services department to explore vehicle modifications that reduce the physical demands of dog waste collection on staff. The current system is labor-intensive, and initiatives, such as vehicles equipped with mechanical loading arms, could help minimize staff contact with waste and lower the risk of injury.

Action 4.4

Investigate alternative dog waste collection systems, including those used by other local governments, to identify more efficient options. Consider implementing or piloting these systems in the District.

Research alternative dog waste collection systems used by other local governments to identify more efficient and effective methods for managing dog waste. Evaluating these systems may reveal opportunities to reduce operational costs, improve staff workload and safety, and streamline collection processes. Findings should inform whether any of these approaches are suitable for future implementation in the District.

Action 4.5

Ensure all dog waste bags provided in District parks and trails comply with provincial regulations and are free of oxo-degradable plastics.

As of 2024, British Columbia regulations prohibit the sale or distribution of single-use products containing oxo-degradable plastics, including dog waste bags². These plastics break down into microfragments that pollute the environment and are often misleadingly marketed as biodegradable. The bags currently provided meet the required standards, and any future bags should continue to do so.

² Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation - Province of British Columbia

Action 4.6

Explore alternative ways to competitively procure dog waste bag supply and dog waste bin collection services in District parks and trails.

Currently, the District relies on a specialized contractor to remove dog waste from a centralized storage container and a separate supplier that provides dog waste bags in exchange for advertising. A formal RFP process could allow the District to competitively procure these services and make improvements to service consistency. Other municipalities, including the City of Burnaby and the Township of Langley, issued similar RFPs in 2024, demonstrating a growing regional interest in more sustainable dog waste management practices.

Detailed Action Plan



Temporary dog etiquette sign, Whistler

5 Collaboration

Action 5.1

Organize a bi-annual roundtable meeting, led by the District's Parks department, with key staff involved in dog management to discuss current issues and ongoing projects related to dogs in parks and trails.

Improved collaboration among District departments, such as Parks, Bylaw and Animal Services, Development Planning, Fleet and Solid Waste, Environmental Protection, Community Services, Communications, and Finance, will help align efforts and foster a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities each department faces.

Action 5.2

Hold annual or biennial meetings with the District of West Vancouver to collaborate on commercial dog walking regulations, policies, and permit fees.

Coordinating commercial dog walking regulations, policies, and fees, and providing a consistent framework for commercial dog walkers to follow will help reduce confusion and improve compliance.

Action 5.3

Collaborate with the NSMBA and other trail user groups to find innovative solutions to address challenges related to dogs on trails.

The North Shore Mountain Bike Association (NSMBA) and other trail user groups have strong working relationships with the District and bring valuable experience to trail management. Their insights can support the development of user-informed strategies to address challenges related to dogs on trails, particularly on shared-use routes, and in situations where off-leash dogs accompany mountain bikers on rides. Collaborating with various groups can help to enhance safety and enjoyment for all trail users.

6 Education & Enforcement: Signage

Action 6.1

Develop standard dog regulatory and educational signs with a consistent look and messaging, using DNV's unique and identifiable communication standards.

Inconsistent and outdated dog regulation signs across District parks can lead to confusion, causing visitors to miss or overlook important rules and information related to dogs in parks. Standardizing signage would improve clarity of information, support better compliance, and contribute to more cohesive and visually appealing parks.

Action 6.2

Collaborate with other neighbouring municipalities to establish a common color code and symbols for dog-related signs.

Consistent color coding and graphics on dog-related regulation signage would reduce confusion, especially in areas where parks and trails cross municipal boundaries. Shared visual standards would improve rule recognition and contribute to a clearer, more cohesive experience for visitors across the region.

Action 6.3

Incorporate humorous and engaging messages on dog-related signs.

The District has a history of using humorous messaging on regulatory signage, including dog etiquette signs. When messaging resonates with the community, it makes important rules more engaging, memorable, and more likely to be followed.

Action 6.4

Create an inventory of existing dog-related signs in parks and trails, assess if these signs are appropriately located, and identify suitable locations for new signs.

Identifying strategic locations for dog-related signage helps ensure information is shared where it will be most effective. Some areas may lack signage entirely, while others may suffer from signage clutter. Consideration should be given to placing signage in high-use areas, transition zones where rules change, and locations prone to conflict to ensure information is being shared efficiently.

Action 6.5

Replace all dog-related signs in parks and trails with standardized signs with a coherent look and messaging as resources allow.

Replacing all outdated dog-related signs with standardized versions will help create a more consistent, recognizable signage system across parks and trails.

Action 6.6

Launch targeted campaigns using temporary signage to share dog regulations and promote responsible ownership and etiquette.

Temporary signage, such as sandwich boards, can be an effective way to share information on responsible dog ownership, environmental efforts, and ongoing educational campaigns. These signs can be easily updated and relocated to address immediate dog-related challenges or initiatives. Some examples of messaging could include "children play here, please pick up dog waste", or "salmon spawning, please keep out of waterways."

Detailed Action Plan



6 Education & Enforcement: Staffing

Action 6.7

Offer dog behavior training to staff who regularly work in parks and may interact with dogs.

Dog behavior training helps staff safely and confidently manage interactions with dogs and their owners. It reduces the risk of incidents and improves conflict resolution. Well-trained staff also help build public trust. Advanced dog behavior training could be offered to staff responsible for enforcing regulations.

Action 6.8

Review staffing levels and the roles of animal control officers and park rangers in managing dogs in parks.

Effective enforcement is essential for ensuring the safety and enjoyment of parks for people and dogs. A visible bylaw presence reinforces that dog regulations are taken seriously and encourages greater compliance. To keep pace with demand, the District should assess current staffing levels and evaluate whether additional staff may be needed, especially as new off-leash areas or trails are introduced.

Action 6.9

Identify key areas to focus enforcement and education efforts to improve enforcement efficiency.

Targeting enforcement and education in parks with frequent dog-related bylaw issues or on-going community concerns allows the District to use resources more effectively to improve compliance. Also, providing park rangers and animal services staff access to a shared reporting system should be considered as this would enable real-time tracking of offences, enhance interdepartmental coordination, and promote a data-driven approach to decision-making.

6 Education & Enforcement: Community Outreach

Action 6.10

Consider supporting volunteer programs related to dogs in parks in collaboration with North Vancouver Recreation Commission (NVRC).

Activities such as park clean-ups, dog training sessions, dog sporting club activities (e.g. flyball, agility etc.), or “Paws in the Park” style gatherings can foster community connection while promoting responsible dog ownership. These initiatives can also serve as a bridge between the community and local government. With support from NVRC, the District could help establish and sustain these groups by offering resources and coordination.

Action 6.11

Allocate a budget for low-cost outreach initiatives to promote and reward responsible dog ownership.

Public outreach initiatives, like park rangers occasionally providing treats, free leashes and dog waste bags while patrolling District parks, provide opportunities for education in a non-confrontational way. This approach is easy to implement and can be supported through partnerships or small-scale funding within existing operational budgets.

Action 6.12

Consider developing a District-led “Bark Ranger” campaign supported by volunteers to encourage responsible dog ownership.

This type of campaign could promote responsible dog ownership through peer-to-peer engagement. Volunteers, equipped with basic training and recognizable gear, could share dog-etiquette tips, answer questions, and model positive behaviour in parks and trails. This light-touch approach encourages education over enforcement and helps build a more respectful and informed community.

Action 6.13

Develop an information package or reference guide for staff, in collaboration with the Animal Services and Park Ranger teams, that clearly summarizes dog-related park regulations and enforcement best-practices.

The reference guide could include a summary of dog-related District bylaws and the rationale behind them, tips for engaging with dog owners, suggested responses to common questions or concerns, and guidance on recognizing and reinforcing positive dog ownership. It could also outline consistent procedures for documenting and tracking infractions to support data collection and enforcement efforts.

Action 6.14

Update the District’s website with additional resources and guidelines to encourage responsible dog ownership in parks.

To improve access to information, create a centralized online resource that includes a summary of dog-related District bylaws, a map of leash optional trails in the District, and clear dog etiquette guidelines. This hub could also link to information on dog licensing, commercial dog walking, community events, dog training resources, related park projects and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section. Including educational videos produced with the District’s Communications team would also help share information with the community.

Detailed Action Plan



Action 6.15

Consider implementing the Yellow Bandana Program to help identify reactive dogs and support owners.

The Yellow Bandana program signals that certain dogs need extra space, helping to prevent unwanted interactions. It supports owners in managing their pets more confidently in public spaces, and encourages responsible pet ownership.

If implemented, a strong signage and communication strategy will be key to supporting the program. Temporary signage and social media campaigns can explain the program's purpose and promote participation. Collaborating with other neighbouring land managers would expand the reach of the Program and promote a unified regional approach.

This recommendation is supported by positive feedback from the City of Vancouver, which has successfully adopted the program

Action 6.16

Develop and implement targeted communications programs to educate the community on a range of dog-related topics to support education, and enforcement where necessary.

A variety of tools can be used to communicate dog-related regulations and etiquette in parks including permanent and temporary signage (placed at key locations such as off-leash areas, environmentally sensitive areas, and sites with recurring dog-related challenges), digital outreach (including online resources, educational videos, and social media campaigns), printed handouts (featuring key information and maps of permitted off-leash areas) distributed by enforcement staff to support in-person education. All communication materials should consistently follow the District's brand guidelines.

6 Education & Enforcement: Bylaw Amendments

Action 6.17

Conduct a comprehensive review of Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981.

Conduct a full review of Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981 to identify opportunities for modernization, clarity, and improved operational flexibility. The review may include updates to definitions, alignment with current operational practices, and revisions to maps. This review will inform a bylaw amendment report for Council consideration and will include exploration of the specific bylaw amendments outlined in the section below and any additional recommended updates.

Action 6.18

Revise in Bylaw 5981 to enable staff to more easily modify dog use designations (on-leash, off-leash, dogs prohibited) in parks.

Currently, Bylaw 5981 lists dog use designations (on-leash, off-leash, or dogs prohibited) for each individual District park, meaning changes to designations would require a formal bylaw amendment. Removing park-specific listings and allowing staff to manage these designations through policy or operational guidelines would streamline decision-making and support more responsive and adaptive park management.

Action 6.19

Explore and define options for including the term “competent person” in Bylaw 5981.

A clearer definition would address ongoing confusion about what it means to have a dog “under control” in parks and on trails, making expectations more understandable for both staff and dog owners.

Action 6.20

Add a definition for “water access” to Bylaw 5981.

Include a clear definition of “water access” in Bylaw 5981 to improve the District’s ability to enforce restrictions on dogs entering creeks, rivers, and other water bodies where access is unsuitable. The Province has confirmed that the District may enforce such provisions, including leash requirements, within provincial waterways.

Action 6.21

Amend Bylaw 5981 to include a requirement that all park users must have their dogs on leash for the first 50 meters from any park or trail entrance or exit.

Park and trail entrances and exits, especially parking lots and trailheads, are busy places with cars and people coming and going. Having dogs on-leash in these areas will help make the arrival and departure experience more safe and enjoyable. This initiative also encourages dog waste pick up, as dogs are more likely to relieve themselves within close proximity to a trail entrance.

This recommendation is an extension of the Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981 8.12(f)(iii) that applies to commercial dog walkers.

Detailed Action Plan



Action 6.22

Amend Bylaw 5981 to include a requirement that all park users with a dog must have a dog waste bag with them at all times when in a District park.

To promote consistent dog waste pickup in parks and reduce the negative impacts of uncollected dog waste on natural areas and other park users, it is recommended that Bylaw 5981 be amended to require all park users with a dog to carry an empty dog waste bag at all times. This measure would help ensure dog owners are prepared to clean up after their pets, supporting cleaner, safer, and more enjoyable parks for everyone.

Action 6.23

Amend Bylaw 5981 to clarify that dogs are expected to remain on designated trails within parks where off-leash use is permitted, unless otherwise posted.

While Bylaw 5981 currently implies that dogs should stay on trail within parks where off-leash use is permitted, this expectation isn't clearly stated. Clarifying that dogs are expected to remain on designated trails, unless signage indicates otherwise, would help protect sensitive natural areas and support responsible park use. A reasonable offset, such as within 1 to 2 metres, would allow dogs some freedom while minimizing disturbances. In less sensitive areas, greater flexibility could be considered.

6 Education & Enforcement: Commercial Dog Walking Program Review

Action 6.24

Conduct a comprehensive review of the District's Commercial Dog Walking Program, including the relevant provisions in Bylaw 5981.

Review the District's Commercial Dog Walking Program, including relevant sections of Bylaw 5981, to ensure the program is clearly defined, enforceable, and aligned with current operational practices. The review will assess the program's effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement. The review should also include coordination with the District of West Vancouver to promote alignment between the two commercial dog walking programs, supporting a unified approach that improves clarity and consistency of rules and regulations across municipal boundaries.

Action 6.25

Consider amending Bylaw 5981 to address areas that are currently signed to allow commercial dog walking but are not recognized in the bylaw.

Consider housekeeping amendments to Bylaw 5981 to align it with current signage and online information regarding commercial dog walking trails. As a first step, identify all locations where signage permits commercial dog walking but are not currently recognized in the Bylaw 5981. Addressing these inconsistencies will reduce confusion for commercial dog walkers, other trail users, and enforcement staff, and ensure the bylaw accurately reflects on-the-ground conditions.

Action 6.26

Clarify the number of commercial dog walkers permitted under each Annual Park Use Permit in Bylaw 5981.

It can be understood that each District Park Use Permit allows a business up to four commercial dog walkers. This could result in 160 individual walkers on District trails at a time despite a cap of 40 permits. In contrast, West Vancouver limits one walker per Park Use Permit. Clearer language could reduce confusion.

Action 6.27

Amend Bylaw 5981 to include a new regulation limiting the number of Annual Park Use Permits issued to a commercial dog walking business to 4 per year.

It is recommended that the District amend Bylaw 5981 to limit the number of Annual Park Use Permits issued to any one business to a maximum of 4 per year. Currently, there is no cap, which can lead to inequities and administrative challenges.

Action 6.28

Determine if the current number of commercial dog walkers permitted on District trails is appropriate.

High volumes of commercial dog walking could lead to overcrowding, trail degradation, and conflicts with other users. Assessing whether the current number of commercial dog walkers permitted on District trails is appropriate would help determine if current limits are sustainable or need adjustment. This evaluation could involve collaboration with Parks staff, commercial dog walking businesses, and the District of West Vancouver to ensure any changes reflect both operational realities and community expectations.

Detailed Action Plan



Action 6.29

Clarify the titles of permits for different fee categories issued to commercial dog walking businesses and amend the District Fees and Charges Bylaw 6481 and the Dog Tax and Regulations Bylaw 5981 accordingly.

Work with Legal, Bylaw Services, and Finance to revise the Fees and Charges Bylaw 6481 and Dog Tax and Regulations Bylaw 5981 to clearly distinguish between permit types and associated fees for commercial dog walking businesses. Currently, similar permit names cause confusion. For example, businesses must obtain an Annual Park Use Permit and pay an Annual Fee per dog walker, but the naming does not reflect these differences.

Action 6.30

Develop a bylaw amendment report for Bylaw 5981 for Council consideration that incorporates findings from the comprehensive bylaw review and commercial dog walking program review.

A bylaw amendment report should be prepared for Council consideration, consolidating findings from the comprehensive review of Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981 and the Commercial Dog Walking Program. The report will outline recommended updates and proposed amendments.



Metrics for Success

Indicators and targets are key to evaluating the Strategic Plan's success and impact over time. They help monitor progress, inform adjustments, and ensure resources are directed where they're most needed.



To evaluate the effectiveness of the People, Dogs and Parks Strategic Plan, a set of indicators and targets has been established to monitor progress.

These may be refined or expanded during implementation to reflect evolving needs or new data. The indicators are informed by community feedback collected during the initial engagement phase, as summarized in the Engagement 1 Report (February 2024).

Each indicator's baseline level of concern is classified into one of three tiers: high (targeting a 10% reduction), moderate (targeting a 5% reduction), or low (maintain or reduce current low levels). This tiered approach ensures that resources are allocated in proportion to the community's level of concern.

Indicator	Baseline (2024)	Desired Direction	Target Reduction
Percentage of park users who express concern about dog waste not being picked up or properly disposed.	90% of non-dog owners and 76% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.	Decrease in concern over time, indicating improved conditions and perceptions.	10% reduction for non-dog owners (to 81%), and 10% reduction for dog owners (to 68%) within 3 years.
Percentage of park users who express concern about impacts to the environment (other than dog waste).	66% of non-dog owners and 52% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.		10% reduction for non-dog owners (to 59%), and 5% reduction for dog owners (to 49%) within 3 years.
Percentage of park users who express concern about dog owners not following regulations.	82% of non-dog owners and 51% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.		10% reduction for non-dog owners (to 74%), and 5% reduction for dog owners (to 48%) within 3 years.
Percentage of park users who express concern about conflicts with other dogs or dog owners.	76% of non-dog owners and 45% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.		10% reduction for non-dog owners (to 68%), and 5% reduction for dog owners (to 43%) within 3 years.
Percentage of park users who express concern about not having enough enforcement or regulations.	75% of non-dog owners and 41% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.		10% reduction for non-dog owners (to 68%), and 5% reduction for dog owners (to 39%) within 3 years.
Percentage of park users who express concern about not enough signs or information about regulations or etiquette.	62% of non-dog owners and 38% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.		5% reduction for non-dog owners (to 59%), and maintain current low levels for dog owners within 3 years.
Percentage of park users who express concern about commercial dog walking.	52% of non-dog owners and 23% of dog owners are somewhat/very concerned.		5% reduction for non-dog owners (to 49%), and maintain current low levels for dog owners within 3 years.

Appendix 1

Fenced Off-leash Area Design Guidelines

These design guidelines support the creation of safe, inclusive, and enjoyable fenced off-leash areas. Informed by best practices and community input, they offer a flexible framework with recommended materials and amenities to guide implementation and future improvements.

Summary of Design Elements

- 01 Fencing:**
 - Steel
 - Chain link
 - Post and rail (with wire mesh infill)
- 02 Gates:**
 - 2a Double-gated entrance
 - 2b Service gate
- 03 Surfacing:**
 - Artificial turf
 - Crushed gravel
 - Engineered wood fiber / mulch
- 04 Circulation / Pathways:**
 - Concrete / asphalt (accessible)
 - Crushed gravel (accessible)
- 05 Signage:**
 - 5a Notice board
 - 5b Entry signs (bylaws, contact info.)
 - 5c Educational signs (etiquette, dog behaviour)

Summary of Amenities

- 06 Standard Amenities:**
 - 6a Dog waste bin
 - 6b Standard waste bin
 - 6c Dog waste bag dispenser
 - 6d Seating
 - 6e Shade / shelter
 - 6f Natural features (logs, boulders)
- 07 Optional Amenities:**
 - 7a Water / hose
 - 7b Lighting
 - 7c Vegetated buffers
 - 7d Separate area for small dogs
 - 7e Small hills and mounds

Summary of Design Elements for Dog Runs

(Temporary / Pilot Project)

- 08 Fencing:**
 - 8a Temporary metal panels
- 09 Gates:**
 - 9a Temporary gated metal fence panel

DOG OFF-LEASH AREA ETIQUETTE

-  PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG
-  KEEP DOGS FROM BEING AGGRESSIVE WITH PEOPLE AND OTHER ANIMALS
-  KEEP DOGS WITHIN SIGHT AND UNDER VOICE CONTROL
-  DISCOURAGE EXCESSIVE BARKING
-  NO DIGGING. OWNERS MUST FILL ANY HOLES DUG BY THEIR DOG

IS IT PLAY?

Diagram illustrating a wolf's body posture and associated signals:

- Winking, lips yawning or smiling
- Binding or avoiding eye contact
- Head tilted forward stance
- Front paw raised

PLAYFUL

Stiff body, mouth up, tongue visible

Ears up

Spreading, snarling

Stiff body, mouth up, tongue visible

Eyes snarling

NOT SURE...
Dogs may be uncertain or anxious, looking for more information as if to say "I'm not a threat, are you?"
When a dog looks anxious or is not engaging in play, call your dog and take a break from it.

TENSE...
When a dog's body is stiff, they could be in "Right or Right" mode. If either dog looks fearful or aggressive, call your dog and take a break from play. Leash and separate dogs until they calm down. If the other dog follows you, ask its owner to keep their dog away.

cover are not responsible for injuries to dogs or off-leash area is at your own risk.

OF VANCOUVER BYLAW NO. 9



Belle Isle Park, District of North Vancouver

Appendix 2

Site Selection

Site selection criteria were developed to help identify and select suitable sites for new fenced off-leash areas, ensuring decisions were made in a transparent and objective way and sufficient regard was given to alternative options.



Site Selection Criteria

Consideration was given to a wide range of criteria to assess which sites within District parks are 'suitable' for the development of new off-leash areas.

The goal was to identify sites with the highest potential to provide a positive and safe experience for both dogs and their owners and minimize impacts on existing park users and residents where feasible.

A sieving exercise using Selective, Evaluative, and Informative Criteria considered every District owned park and ranked potential sites through the application of a rating process.

- Selective Criteria were used to identify and filter out unsuitable choices early on, ensuring that only viable options were evaluated further.
- Evaluative Criteria were used to assess and compare the suitability of different sites, helping to rank each site based on its merits and drawbacks to ensure the most suitable options were shortlisted.
- Informative Criteria were used to provide additional insights to help inform decisions but were not used to disqualify or rank sites.

The site selection criteria were determined based on research, interviews with other municipalities, and best practices.

See Appendix 3 for Priority Locations for Fenced Off-leash Areas in District Parks.

Selective Criteria

1. **Park Size:** To be considered, sites need to be capable of accommodating an off-leash area at least 0.04 hectares.
2. **Available Open Space:** To be considered, sites need to be “open space” currently used for passive, unstructured activities.
3. **Topography:** To be considered, most of the site must be relatively flat and not exceed 8% slope.
4. **Sensitive Ecosystems:** To be considered, the site must not include riparian areas, wetlands, or ponds.
5. **Environmental Restoration Areas:** To be considered, the site must not include areas that have undergone environmental restoration.

Evaluative Criteria:

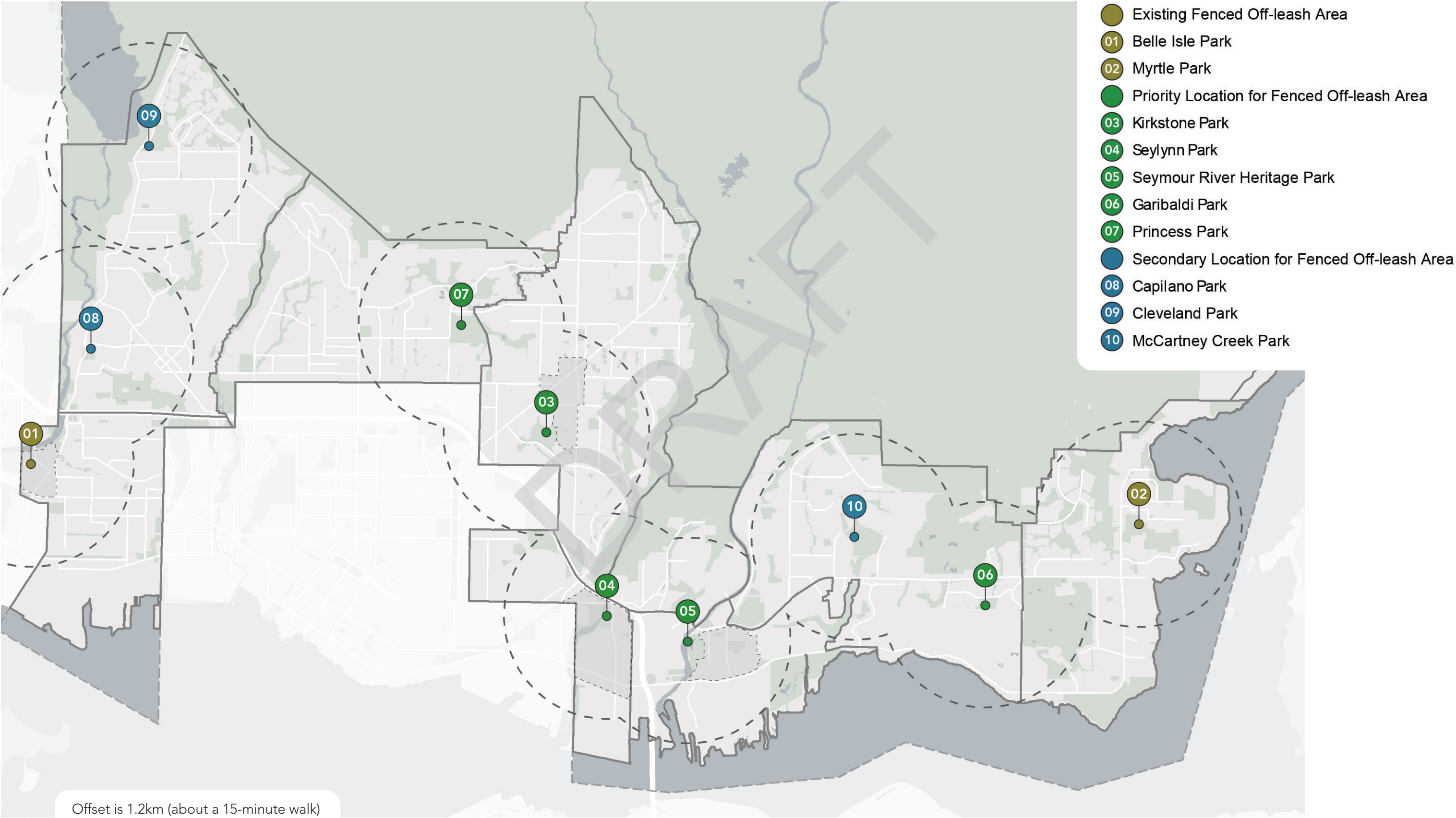
6. **Open Space Size:** Prioritize sites with more available open space over ones with less.
7. **Type of Open Space Available:** Prioritize open space characterized by maintained lawn, grass and/or with minimal trees and vegetation.
8. **Access:** Prioritize sites that are easily accessible by the public, service vehicles etc. (connected to existing pathways).
9. **Visibility:** Prioritize sites that are highly visible to passersby and have clear sightlines for user safety.
10. **Distance from Existing Fenced Off-leash Areas:** Prioritize sites that are further away from an existing fenced off-leash area (in either District of North Vancouver or City of North Vancouver parks).
11. **Areas with High Potential Demand:** Prioritize sites in areas with high population density, high number of apartment buildings, and near the District's town and village centres.

Informative Criteria:

12. **Land Ownership:** Consider the sites' ownership.
13. **Existing Park Amenities:** Consider if the site is within a park that has existing amenities (off-street parking, fencing, washrooms etc.)
14. **Existing Bylaw Designation:** Consider the park's designation within the Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981.
15. **Site Drainage:** Consider the site's level of soil permeability and drainage patterns.
16. **Streamside Protection:** Consider the level of impact the off-leash area could have on adjacent hydrographic features (creeks, ponds, wetlands etc.).
17. **Natural Areas:** Consider the level of impact the off-leash area could have on sensitive natural areas, species of concern and important habitats and ecosystems.
18. **Amount of Park Space Occupied:** Consider the amount of park space that the off-leash area would occupy and how much space would remain available for other park users.
19. **Existing Utilities:** Consider if the site has existing utilities (storm, sanitary, water, electricity etc.) that could be impacted (if an off-leash area is developed on top or adjacent them) or utilized for future amenities.

Appendix 3

Priority Locations for Fenced Off-leash Areas in District Parks



Appendix 4

Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations

The appropriate dog access category for each District trail should be determined based on safety, trail conditions, user experience, and environmental conditions. This section outlines various criteria to support informed decision-making.



In the District, dogs must be leashed in public places unless they are in a designated off-leash area, park, or trail.

To help determine a District trail's most appropriate dog access category/designation, such as on-leash, leash-optional, dogs-prohibited, or commercial dog walking, it's important to consider a wide range of trail conditions and contextual factors.

This section outlines a set of criteria, to help determine the most appropriate dog access category/designation for a trail, with the goal of promoting safe and enjoyable experiences for all users, while also minimizing environmental impacts.

The site selection criteria were determined based on research, staff input, and best practices.

The following criteria are provided to inform the process and are listed in no particular order.

Informative Criteria

1. **Trail Activities:** Consider the types of permitted trail use, such as hiking, mountain biking, or equestrian activities, the most common uses and whether trails are optimized for specific activities.
2. **Trail Usage Levels:** Consider overall trail usage levels, including peak times and seasonal variations.
3. **Trail Conditions:** Consider existing trail conditions, such as trail width, slope, surface material, level of trail degradation, erosion etc.
4. **Trail Length and Connectivity:** Consider the length of the trail and its connectivity to the broader trail network.
5. **Trail Distribution:** Consider the location and geographic distribution of trails with different designations and assess equitable access across the District.
6. **Trail Visibility:** Consider sightlines and potential blind spots along the trail and assess the risk of unexpected encounters or conflicts between trail users.
7. **Trail Conflicts:** Consider documented incidents or patterns of conflict involving dogs and other trail users.
8. **Trail Regulations / Historic Use:** Consider past patterns of trail use and existing regulations or designations.
9. **Trail Designation of Adjacent Routes:** Consider the category/designation of nearby or connecting trails and assess whether a consistent designation is suitable.
10. **Proximity to Environmentally Sensitive Areas:** Consider the trail's proximity to ecologically sensitive areas and assess the potential impact on wildlife, vegetation, and environmental stewardship efforts.
11. **Proximity to Areas with Wildlife Critical Periods:** Consider the trail's proximity to areas where wildlife undergoes critical life cycle events, such as ground bird nesting or fish spawning.
12. **Proximity to Areas with Conflicting Park Use:** Consider the trail's proximity to areas that could have conflicting uses or areas where dogs are not permitted (busy roads, playgrounds, sports fields etc.).
13. **Parking:** Consider the availability, proximity, and capacity of parking near trailheads.

Appendix 5

Trail Modification Measures

When deciding the dog access category for a District trail, it's useful to consider whether modifications, such as signage, fencing, or design changes, could inform the chosen designation.



When determining the appropriate dog access category for trails in District parks, it's important to consider the range of trail conditions and contextual factors (as outlined in Appendix 4: Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations), various potential trail modification measures, and the unique characteristics of each site.

The following modification measures may help reduce trail user conflicts, improve safety, reduce the impact of dogs, or enhance the suitability of a trail for dog use, including off-leash access where appropriate.

Ultimately, the feasibility of implementing trail modification measures may significantly influence a trail's dog access category.

Decision and Implementation

- Completing an initial assessment of a District trail using the Decision Making Criteria for Trail Designations (Appendix 4) and evaluating potential trail modification measures, helps staff to decide the most appropriate dog access category.
- Implementing a new dog access category or modification measures for a trail would involve developing a communication plan or community engagement program to collect input and build awareness.
- Once in place, enforcement efforts and ongoing monitoring should be carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of the modifications, assess the suitability of the chosen dog access category, and identify whether further adjustments or adaptations are needed.

Modification Measures

1. Signage & Communication:

- Permanent signage (e.g., trail rules, dog etiquette)
- Seasonal or temporary signage (e.g., education on wildlife, stewardship initiatives)
- Wayfinding signage

2. Education & Enforcement:

- On-site education campaigns (e.g., volunteer ambassadors)
- Enforcement patrols or presence during peak times

3. Physical Infrastructure:

- Permanent fencing (e.g., to protect sensitive environmental areas)
- Temporary or seasonal fencing (e.g., during wildlife critical periods, stewardship initiatives)
- Trail rerouting (e.g., to avoid conflict zones, sensitive habitats)

4. Trail Design Enhancements:

- Trail edging improvements to define boundaries and reduce off-trail wandering
- Trail surfacing improvements (e.g., to accommodate high trail usage levels)
- Trail widening (e.g., to reduce user conflicts)
- Clear separation of multi-use zones (e.g., off-leash dogs vs. mountain bikes)

5. Access Management:

- Leash-required zones or trail sections (permanent or seasonal)
- Time-based access (e.g., feasibility of off-leash access allowed during early morning hours)

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