Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – July 11, 2018

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – July 3, 2018

Item No. 5 Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan
File PR-7

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 3, 2018, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, as amended, and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan as outlined in attachment Schedule A, be approved.

2. That the Off-leash Area (OLA) Policies and Standards identified within the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan align with OurWinnipeg, the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, and the Regional Parks Investment Strategy.

3. That funding for an annual capital program of $300,000.00 per year over the next six years to implement the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan be referred to the 2019 budget process for consideration.

4. That the Brenda Leipsic Dog Park be a Regional Off-leash dog area.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – July 11, 2018

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – July 3, 2018

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 3, 2018, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendments:

- Add the following as Recommendation 4:

  "4. That the Brenda Leipsic Dog Park be a Regional Off-leash dog area."

- Renumber the remaining recommendation.

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Further on July 3, 2018, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks requested that the Winnipeg Public Service report back in 120 days with a process for site selection for off-leash areas.

Further on July 3, 2018, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks received submissions from the following;

- Brian Gudmundson submitted a communication dated February 15, 2018, a communication titled "wildwood Dog Owners Group – response to the Off-Leash Maser Plan", a communication dated March 8, 2018 and a communication titled "Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas, with respect to the matter, and a communication dated March 8, 2018.
- Donna Henry, President, WINDOG, submitted a presentation dated July 3, 2018, and a petition purporting to have 627 signatures with respect to the matter.
- Joanne Gibson, on behalf of WDOG, submitted a presentation dated July 3, 2018, with respect the matter.
- Dan McInnis, Chair, Brenda Leipsic Dog Parkers Inc., submitted a presentation dated July 3, 2018, with respect to the matter.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks - Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
D. Domke	J. Berezowsky	N/A	D. McNeil

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Winnipeg currently operates eleven off-leash dog areas (OLAs) within the City's park system, with two additional OLAs that are currently in-development or being modified. In recent years, dog ownership has increased in Winnipeg, and so has public interest and inquiries about OLAs. The City however does not have an overall plan that provides clear direction as to where new OLAs should be directed or how they should be established.

With approved funding from the 2016 Capital Budget, a consultant was hired and the "Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan" was completed in May 2018. This Master Plan built on previously prepared '2012 Guidelines for Off-Leash Dog Parks in the City of Winnipeg,' and utilized extensive community and stakeholder engagement to develop the City's vision, goals, guiding values, and objectives for the future establishment of OLAs in Winnipeg, as well as policies and standards for the development and design of safe, accessible, and sustainable OLAs.

Off-leash usage in Winnipeg has increased to the extent that some of the current off-leash facilities are under regular and possible constant over-use. Off-leash use of specific public lands is a major leisure activity in Winnipeg. In response to the increased demand for these OLAs in parks, the Off-leash Dog Areas Master Plan (OLAMP) specifically proposes the following:

- A framework for the distribution of off-leash areas within the City of Winnipeg;
- Guidelines for the evaluation of potential sites;
- Guidelines for the establishment and designation of new off-leash areas;
- Guidelines for the development of new off-leash areas; and
- Guidelines for the review of existing off-leash areas.

There is no Financial Impact associated with this report, as no funding has been approved to implement the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan. The funding required to implement the program will be referred to the 2019 Budget process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council approve the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan as outlined in attachment Schedule A.

2. That the Off-leash Area (OLA) Policies and Standards identified within the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan align with OurWinnipeg, the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, and the Regional Parks Investment Strategy.

3. That funding for an annual capital program of $300,000 per year over the next six years to implement the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan be referred to the 2019 budget process for consideration.

4. That the proper officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On July 16, 2014, the Executive Policy Committee directed the Winnipeg Public Service to hire a consultant to create an Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan for the City of Winnipeg and that up to $100,000 be committed to the project in the upcoming 2015 – 2019 Capital Budget.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the collection of feedback from the public, and from the recommendations within the OLAMP, it is clear that, in general, the public desires more OLAs with upgraded amenities and design features to be distributed throughout Winnipeg. To provide and manage these amenities, the City will need to establish a $300,000 capital budget line item in each of the next 5 years to support capital investment in the establishment and enhancement of OLAs, based on the most current siting and design standards, as outlined in the OLAMP. The City will also need to establish additional operating budget resources in the amount of $14,950 for the management of OLAs, as per the most current management (service level) standards described in the OLAMP. New OLAs will require an additional operating budget of $9,905 per hectare to target proposed service level maintenance standards.

To help guide the City and community groups, the City will also need to revise/develop policy and action plans that address the development, management, and maintenance of OLAs.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The City of Winnipeg currently operates eleven OLAs within the City's park system, with two additional OLAs that are currently in-development or being modified. In recent years, dog ownership has increased in Winnipeg, and so has public interest and inquiries about OLAs.

Off-leash usage in Winnipeg has increased to the extent that some of the current off-leash facilities are under regular and possible constant over-use. Off-leash use of specific public lands is a major leisure activity in Winnipeg. These assertions were put forward in a 2012 report commissioned by the Parks and Open Space Division - *Guidelines for Off-Leash Dog Parks in the City of Winnipeg* - in response to the increased demand for these OLAs in parks. Specifically, the report proposed the following:

- A framework for the distribution of off-leash areas within the City of Winnipeg;
- Guidelines for the evaluation of potential sites;
- Guidelines for the establishment and designation of new off-leash areas;
- Guidelines for the development of new off-leash areas; and
- Guidelines for the review of existing off-leash areas.

At the May 21, 2014 meeting of the Executive Policy Committee (EPC), the Winnipeg Network of Dog Owner Groups (WINDOG) made a presentation with concerns regarding the proposed Guidelines, focusing on inadequate consultation and lack of future planning and development. As a result, the report was not endorsed and the Winnipeg Public Service was directed to conduct further research on the matter. In response, the Parks and Open Space Division recommended that a consultant be hired to create an Off-Lease Dog Area Master Plan that would build from the existing 'Guidelines' document.

Funding from the 2016 Capital Budget for development of this Master Plan was approved by Council on March 22, 2016.

In January 2017, WSP Planning, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design was hired utilizing funds from the Capital Budget. In May 2018, the draft Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan was completed.

The OLAMP, through research and a robust community and stakeholder engagement process, outlines the City's vision, goals, guiding values, and objectives for the future establishment of OLAs in Winnipeg, as well as policies and standards for the development and design of safe, accessible, and sustainable OLAs. The OLAMP builds upon *Guidelines for Off-leash Dog Parks in the City of Winnipeg,* while responding to the growing interest and demand for OLAs throughout the city.

The OLAMP aligns with the City of Winnipeg's *OurWinnipeg Development Plan*, *Our Winnipeg's Complete Communities Direction Strategy*, *Recreation and Parks Masterplan* and the *Regional Parks Investment Strategy* by emphasizing the establishment of OLAs that are accessible, walkable, safe, sustainable, and satisfy the needs of OLA users, while also balancing the needs and interests of the broader community.

The OLAMP is a helpful planning tool for the City's elected officials and administration, as well as the public. The plan will act as a reference guide for the City and the public, providing the foundation for clear policies and standards for the siting, design, management, and establishment of new OLAs and the enhancement of existing OLAs.

The following items identify and summarize the intent, direction, and content of the OLAMP.

The Vision for OLAs in Winnipeg as outlined in the OLAMP

In recognition of the need for off-leash areas in Winnipeg that enhance the health and wellness of its residents, while strengthening neighbourhoods and building communities, the City of Winnipeg will strive to create and maintain accessible, safe and sustainable off-leash areas that complement the communities in which they are located.

Goals of the OLAMP

GOAL 1: To describe the local demand for OLAs, identify opportunities and constraints to serve that demand, and define a strategic direction for achieving appropriate access to OLAs across the city.

GOAL 2: To provide clear standards and processes for identifying/selecting/designating OLAs in City owned parks and open spaces to meet the needs of all park users.

Guiding Values of the OLAMP

- To provide transparency in the OLA site selection process.
- To streamline the process for establishing an OLA for the public and City administration.
- To provide standards and guidelines for designing safe, accessible, and sustainable OLAs.
- To consider the interests of the various park and open space users including adjacent land uses, ecologically sensitive areas, and the surrounding community when siting and designing an OLA.
- To mitigate safety issues and concerns in and around OLAs through siting, design, formalizing boundaries and management considerations.
- To provide OLA opportunities that will improve the health and well-being of citizens.
- To review the development of OLAs in accordance to a classification system based on typology, amenities, service levels, and distribution.

Objectives of the OLAMP

- To develop policies and standards for the establishment and management of OLAs in Winnipeg, based on public and stakeholder feedback, research, and review of best practices implemented in other jurisdictions, and a review of the *Guidelines for Off-leash Parks in Winnipeg* (2012).
- To identify a method which considers appropriate OLA distribution for the City based on demand and existing policies.

OLAMP Policy Considerations and Standards

The OLAMP includes policies and standards that will be used by the public service to site, design, and manage future OLAs and to enhance existing OLAs in Winnipeg. These policies and standards also provide direction for how to meet the local demand for OLAs in a logical and sustainable manner, in alignment with *OurWinnipeg*, *Complete Communities*, the *Regional Parks Investment Strategy,* and the *Recreation and Parks Master Plan*.

The recommendations for policy and standards included in the OLAMP reflect recommendations from, stakeholder and community feedback, observations gathered from local OLA site visits and user-counts, the previous *Guidelines for Off-leash Parks in Winnipeg* and OLA best practices implemented by a variety of municipalities from across North America.

The OLAMP's policy recommendations for considerations are as follows:

1. The Off-leash Area Policies and Standards must align with *OurWinnipeg*, the *Recreation and Parks Master Plan*, and the *Regional Parks Investment Strategy*.
2. The City will establish a budget line item to support capital investment in the establishment and enhancement of OLAs based on the most current siting and design standards, as outlined in the OLAMP, and will establish additional operating budget resources for the management of OLAs, as per the most current management (service level) standards described in the OLAMP.
3. The City shall consider opportunities for OLAs through the land development process.
4. The City shall establish permanent OLAs in accordance with the most current siting standards, as outlined in the OLAMP.
5. The City shall establish temporary OLAs in accordance with the most current siting standards, as outlined in the OLAMP.
6. Design of OLAs shall comply with the most current design standards, as outlined in the OLAMP.
7. Management of OLAs shall comply with the most current management (or service level) standards, as outlined in the OLAMP.

The OLAMP includes a series of standards, which will be used by the City for the future planning and enhancement of OLAs. These standards are divided into four (4) sections:

- General;
- Siting;
- Design; and
- Management.

The standards within each of these sections will assist the public service in achieving the intent of the policy considerations. The OLA design standards define four (4) OLA classifications as follows:

- Regional OLA;
- Community OLA;
- Neighbourhood OLA; and
- Seasonal Adaptive OLA.

Each of these classifications was developed to fit the varying needs and desires of OLA users in Winnipeg. The OLA classifications vary in their size, distribution, amenities, and service levels. To establish these OLAs, the OLAMP includes two (2) processes that guide how future OLAs are to be established.

The benefits of off-leash areas are numerous, not only for the dogs, but also for the dog care providers and the community overall as they can provide the following:

- A community place for people and their dogs to gather and socialize;
- Allow for safe places for dogs and their owners to exercise;
- Promote responsible pet ownership;
- Provide places for dogs to meet in a neutral territory, which can reduce fear, territoriality and aggression in dogs;
- Many communities have found a significant reduction in crime around such parks as dogs encourage pedestrian traffic on pathways surrounding the park;
- When dogs receive adequate exercise, they maintain their health and are less likely to have destructive and annoying behaviors such as barking.

In November 2017, Winnipeg's most recent "Neighbourhood" OLA at Bonnycastle Park was completed and opened to the public.

The Planning, Property and Development Department as well as Public Works Department have reviewed and approved the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan and now seek Council approval of it.

2019 Budget Process

The City is facing significant financial challenges in the 2019 budget process. At the time of drafting this report, the tax-supported Operating Budget shortfalls for 2019 and 2020 from last year's budget process are $85.9 million and $101.3 million respectively. Cash to capital in 2018 was adopted at $23.3 million and the 2019 capital forecast is set at $65.9 million. The 2019 capital forecast will need to be comprehensively reviewed and reprioritized due to its direct impact on the operating budget through cash to capital and debt financing. In addition, the provincial funding uncertainty will need to be addressed through the capital budget process. Funding for the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan is not currently in the base capital and operating budgets, and will be referred to the 2019 budget process as a risk item. All budgets must be approved by Council.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** June 1, 2018

Project Name: Off Leash Dog Areas Master Plan

COMMENTS:

There is no Financial Impact associated with this report as no funding has been approved to implement the Off Leash Dog Areas Master Plan. The funding required to implement the program will be referred to the 2019 Budget process and is subject to Council approval.

If approved as part of the 2019 Budget process, an annual capital program of $300,000 per year would be required, beginning in 2019 and continuing through the 5 year capital forecast period (2020 to 2024). Associated annual operating costs would be an annual management cost of $14,940 plus $9,905 per hectare (total hectares to be determined).

The annual capital program estimate of $300,000 per year is a Class 5 estimate. The new capital program being proposed has not completed the City's Asset Management assessment.

"Original signed by J. Ruby, CPA, CA"
J. Ruby, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The establishment, enhancement and management of off-leash dog areas are in accordance with the following OurWinnipeg Directions:

- **Section 03-1: Opportunity**, Direction 1: Strive to use mandated municipal services areas, such as libraries and recreation, as opportunities to foster strong cross-cultural relations that contribute to healthy communities. Direction 2: Provide equitable access to municipal programs, services and facilities.
- **Section 03-2: Vitality**, Direction 2: Deliver a coordinated, integrated, and seamless service response to address community needs and priorities that contribute to build healthy communities. Direction 4: Maintain the health and safety of neighbourhoods by enforcing animal control by-laws and promoting responsible pet ownership.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Planning, Property and Development
Division: Urban Planning and Design
Prepared by: Rob Zanewich, Project Manager
Date: June 6, 2018

Attachments: Schedule A - Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan