

TO : CITY MANAGER DATE: 1997 MAY 06

FROM : ACTING DIRECTOR RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT : **OFF-LEASH AREAS FOR DOGS IN PUBLIC PARKS**

PURPOSE : To request Council to amend Bylaw No. 9609 and Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 7331 to establish designated off-leash areas for a one-year trial period, to approve in principle entering into a legal agreement with the Burnaby Canine Society to manage the proposed off-leash enclosure at Confederation Park, and to forward a copy of the attached report to the Environment and Waste Management Committee for information purposes.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT staff be directed to amend Bylaw No. 9609 (A Bylaw to Regulate the Keeping of Dogs and Other Animals), and Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 7331 to reflect the establishment of designated off-leash areas commencing with a one-year trial period in 1997.
2. THAT approval be given in principle entering into a legal agreement with the Burnaby Canine Society pertaining to the management of the proposed off-leash enclosure at Confederation Park.
3. THAT a copy of the attached be forwarded to the Environment and Waste Management Committee for information purposes.

**REPORT**

At its meeting of 1997 March 19, the Parks and Recreation Commission received a staff report on the above subject and adopted the six recommendations contained therein.



KATE FRIARS  
ACTING DIRECTOR RECREATION  
AND CULTURAL SERVICES

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Attachment

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cc: Director Planning & Building  
Director Finance  
City Solicitor  
Clerk's Office

SUBJECT: OFF-LEASH AREAS FOR DOGS IN PUBLIC PARKS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the proposal to establish off-leash trails for dogs in Confederation Park and Robert Burnaby Park, as outlined in this report, be approved for a trial period of one year commencing in 1997.
2. THAT \$10,000 be allocated from the 1997 Minor Development Fund to implement the two off-leash trails.
3. THAT Council be requested to direct staff to amend Bylaw No. 9609 (A Bylaw to Regulate the Keeping of Dogs and Other Animals), and Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 7331 to reflect the establishment of designated off-leash areas commencing with a one-year trial period in 1997.
4. THAT Council be requested to approve in principle entering into a legal agreement with the Burnaby Canine Society pertaining to the management of the proposed off-leash enclosure at Confederation Park.
5. THAT Council be requested to forward a copy of this report to the Environment and Waste Management Committee for information purposes.
6. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the correspondents listed in this report.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

A delegation appeared before Council in 1995, August, requesting the establishment of a fenced area in Burnaby Heights Park for the purpose of allowing dogs to run off-leash. Council referred the matter to the Parks and Recreation Commission who instructed staff to work with the delegation to help meet their request, if possible.

A committee was formed with the delegation, the S.P.C.A. and staff from the Planning, License and Parks and Recreation Departments for the purpose of conducting research into the advent of off-leash areas in other municipalities, and to derive criteria by which to locate, design and manage off-leash areas in Burnaby. The above criteria led to a preliminary concept for a managed off-leash enclosure and three off-leash areas in public parks in Burnaby which was approved in principle at the 1996 June 19 Commission meeting, subject to public consultation. The approved proposal is represented in this report with modifications that resulted from public input.

There are over 4000 licenced dogs in Burnaby and an unknown number of unlicensed dogs. Current

bylaws state that all dogs in Burnaby are to be licenced. The establishment of designated off-leash areas for a trial period of one year is felt to be warranted, pending public and Commission approval. It is anticipated that concentrated enforcement of off-leash infractions in environmentally sensitive areas such as Deer Lake Park will occur once off-leash areas are designated. It would be necessary to take a phased approach to this project and to monitor the off-leash areas during the trial period prior to designating permanent off-leash areas.

The proposed concept for off-leash areas was introduced to the public in a series of open house meetings which were advertised in local newspapers and held in north, central and south Burnaby in the Autumn of 1996. Citizens were encouraged to express their opinions in a detailed written questionnaire distributed at the meetings and in discussions with staff present. Further public opinion was tabulated on this topic via the recent Parks and Recreation Community Needs and Preferences Survey. In addition, a petition related to this proposal containing in excess of 500 names was received by Council and the Commission during the public consultation process. The questionnaire and survey results are presented in this report, and an off-leash areas concept is proposed for the consideration of the Commission.

**INITIAL PROPOSAL**

The proposal to establish off-leash areas and the criteria by which they were established was described in detail in a report that appeared on the 1996 June 14 Commission agenda, and was approved in principal. The following summary is provided for information purposes:

**Managed Off-leash Enclosure (Confederation Park)**

The criteria for the selection of locations precluded the use of small neighbourhood parks for off-leash activity primarily due to their limited size, greater potential concentration of dog activity and greater potential conflict with other users. This effectively excluded the delegation's preferred location for a fenced area for dogs in Burnaby Heights Park. Alternatively, a site within Confederation Park immediately north of the model railway facility was found to be a viable substitute within the neighbourhood (**Attachment #1**).

The primary features of the proposed off-leash enclosure include:

- management by the Burnaby Canine Society who would perform as a registered non-profit society and be responsible for the maintenance of the facility and scheduled activities through a legal agreement with the City
- perimeter fencing and gated entries to confine the dog activity to a space less than 3000 square metres in area
- trail links to Willingdon Avenue and the existing trail system in Confederation Park north of Penzance Drive
- appropriate signage
- future amenities may include a water connection, hydro service, potentially a sanitary sewer link, park benches, a light standard and a drinking fountain on the adjacent trail.

### Off-leash Trails

The proposal includes designated off-leash areas on existing forested trails in Confederation Park north of Penzance Drive, Robert Burnaby Park on the Hydro right-of-way and the area west of the right-of-way, and Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Park on the Patterson Trail between the pedestrian overpass on Marine Way and the Fraser Foreshore Trail (Attachments #1, 2 & 3).

The primary features of the proposed off-leash trails include:

- use of existing trails in areas offering both forest cover and internal open spaces
- use of signage and bollards to clearly demarcate the boundaries of off-leash areas
- minimal trail development and low key amenities
- access to parking and connections to alternate trail routes
- existing and planned adjacent alternate trail opportunities for individuals not wishing to enter an area demarcated as off-leash

### PUBLIC CONSULTATION

#### Community Needs and Preferences Survey

In 1996 a survey was conducted of citizens to determine the parks and recreation needs and preferences of the community. There were 1,426 respondents to the survey who were asked to gauge their preference, amongst a range of topics that the Department should focus on, for the provision of off-leash areas for dogs in Burnaby in one of five categories, from "very unimportant" to "very important", including a "neutral" category.

Thirty-five percent of respondents ranked the issue as important or very important, and 37 percent ranked the issue as unimportant or very unimportant. Twenty-eight percent ranked the issue as neutral. Out of a list of 20 priorities, respondents ranked the provision of off-leash areas as seventeenth. The interdepartmental committee established to address the issue of providing off-leash areas for dogs felt that the high rate of non-committal responses may be partially attributed to the fact that dog owners may comprise a fairly insignificant percentage of the population. In that regard, the off-leash proposal was felt to be appropriately limited in scope.

#### Questionnaire

Of the 120 citizens who attended three advertised open house meetings in the Autumn of 1996, 106 completed the questionnaire that was distributed at the meetings. Seventy four percent of the respondents were women and 90 percent were dog owners. Fifty percent of respondents were from north Burnaby and 44 percent were from south Burnaby. Five percent were non-residents (Attachment #4).

There was 94 percent support for the establishment of unenclosed off-leash areas on trails in Confederation Park, Robert Burnaby Park and the Patterson Trail. Ninety-one percent of respondents

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supported the establishment of the off-leash enclosure in Confederation Park, with 83 percent supporting the establishment of an additional enclosure in central or south Burnaby if managed by a private non-profit society. Those who expressed opposition to the project were in a very small minority at the meetings.

The central issues identified by respondents as to the establishment of off-leash areas are the provision of a dog waste disposal system, safety through surveillance, visibility and distance from traffic, ability of dog owners to keep their dogs under control at all times, and the provision of several amenities such as lights, drinking fountains for people and dogs, and park benches.

### Revisions to the Proposal Resulting from Public Input

It is proposed to designate limited portions of Confederation Park and Robert Burnaby Park as off-leash areas in 1997 for evaluation purposes prior to the permanent designation of all proposed sites. A report regarding the permanent designation of off-leash areas, including the Confederation Park enclosure and a segment of Fraser Foreshore Park, will be forwarded to the Commission for consideration in 1998. It is intended to post signs at the Fraser Foreshore site and the proposed enclosure location that inform current users of the future off-leash designation and that invite further public comment.

The concern for safety expressed by many women respondents at the open house meetings and in the questionnaire, specifically for the Patterson Trail location, resulted in a proposed expansion of this site to include a portion of the Fraser Foreshore Trail between Boundary Road and Patterson Trail. The inclusion of this 860m segment of the Fraser Foreshore Trail also responds to the desire expressed in the petition signed by 511 people and features improved surveillance and less isolation. It was determined that the off-leash area should not extend east of Sussex Creek to the picnic area and playground located at Byrne Road due to potential conflicts with users in this heavily programmed area.

Though the Foreshore Trail immediately east of Boundary Road is narrow, it is expected that conflicts with existing users will be limited due to the fact that this trail segment is less heavily used than other portions, and that the majority of dog owners are responsible for their dogs. There are nearby alternate trail routes for those who prefer not to enter the demarcated off-leash area from the east; by far the majority of the 3 kilometre long Foreshore trail has a leash requirement for dogs. Moreover, conflicts with the adjacent business activities are expected to be minimal in the proposed off-leash area as most owners walk their dogs outside of regular business hours. The advent of dogs entering the intertidal zone will be constrained by the control that owners are expected to have on their dogs, and the limited time the intertidal zone is exposed during low tide in daylight hours. It is intended to post signs at the site stating that dogs must be under the control of their owners at all times.

Current bylaw requirements puts the responsibility on dog owners to remove their dog's waste from public parks and dispose of it in a safe and sanitary fashion. Bylaw requirements also prevent City staff from knowingly picking up household or park garbage receptacles containing animal waste. Upon consideration of this issue, it is proposed to further encourage the commitment by the users of the off-leash areas to clean up after their pets and remove the waste from public parks. This may be

## OFF-LEASH AREAS FOR DOGS IN PUBLIC PARKS

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accomplished through signage that describes the terms of the bylaw requirements and informs users that the off-leash areas will be evaluated. It is felt that the success of the designated off-leash areas should appropriately rely upon the dog-owning public.

The S.P.C.A. participated in the planning of this project and reviewed this report. Three of their concerns are articulated below. It should be noted that the comments apply to all parks, not just the proposed off-leash areas:

- all dogs must be under the [verbal] control of their owners [this requirement must be defined in any amendment to existing bylaws and posted at all off-leash sites]
- all breeds coming under the Burnaby Animal Control Bylaw definition of a vicious dog should be muzzled before entering off-leash areas or trails
- the dog owning public and organized groups of dog owners must be informed that, until such time that off-leash areas are legal, tickets will be issued and the current bylaw enforced by animal control staff

As the result of public process, several individuals have corresponded to the City. It is intended to send a copy of this report to the Burnaby Canine Society, Nancy Bain, Judy Cooke, Debbie Martin, Denis Saron and Daphne Sinclair.

### BYLAW AMENDMENTS

The creation of off-leash areas for dogs in public parks, as proposed in this report, would require the amendment of two bylaws pertaining to off-leash activity. Bylaw No. 9609 (a Bylaw to Regulate the Keeping of Dogs and Other Animals) and the Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 7331 contain provisions that prohibit off-leash dog activity in the City. Appropriate amendments to the above bylaws would allow designation of off-leash areas in limited, well-defined portions of Confederation Park and Robert Burnaby Park during a one-year trial period. Further amendments pertaining to the permanent designation of off-leash areas in the above referenced parks and in Fraser Foreshore Park may be proposed in 1998, pending positive evaluation results during the trial period..

### FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION

It is recommended that the Commission approve the allocation of \$10,000 from the 1997 Minor Development Fund for the implementation of the off-leash trails in Confederation Park and Robert Burnaby Park during the one-year trial period. Sufficient funds exist in this account for the intended purpose (**Attachment #5**). Pending successful completion of the trial period, a recommendation may be forwarded to Commission in 1998 regarding the permanent designation of off-leash areas in Burnaby and to provide additional funding toward the completion of the project in accordance to a Capital Project construction schedule.

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The implementation of the off-leash areas during the trial period would entail the installation of signs and bollards and minor trail improvements in Confederation Park and Robert Burnaby Park. Signs will be posted in 1997 at the proposed Fraser Foreshore off-leash trail and the Confederation Park enclosure giving notice to the public of the intended future off-leash use and inviting further public input.

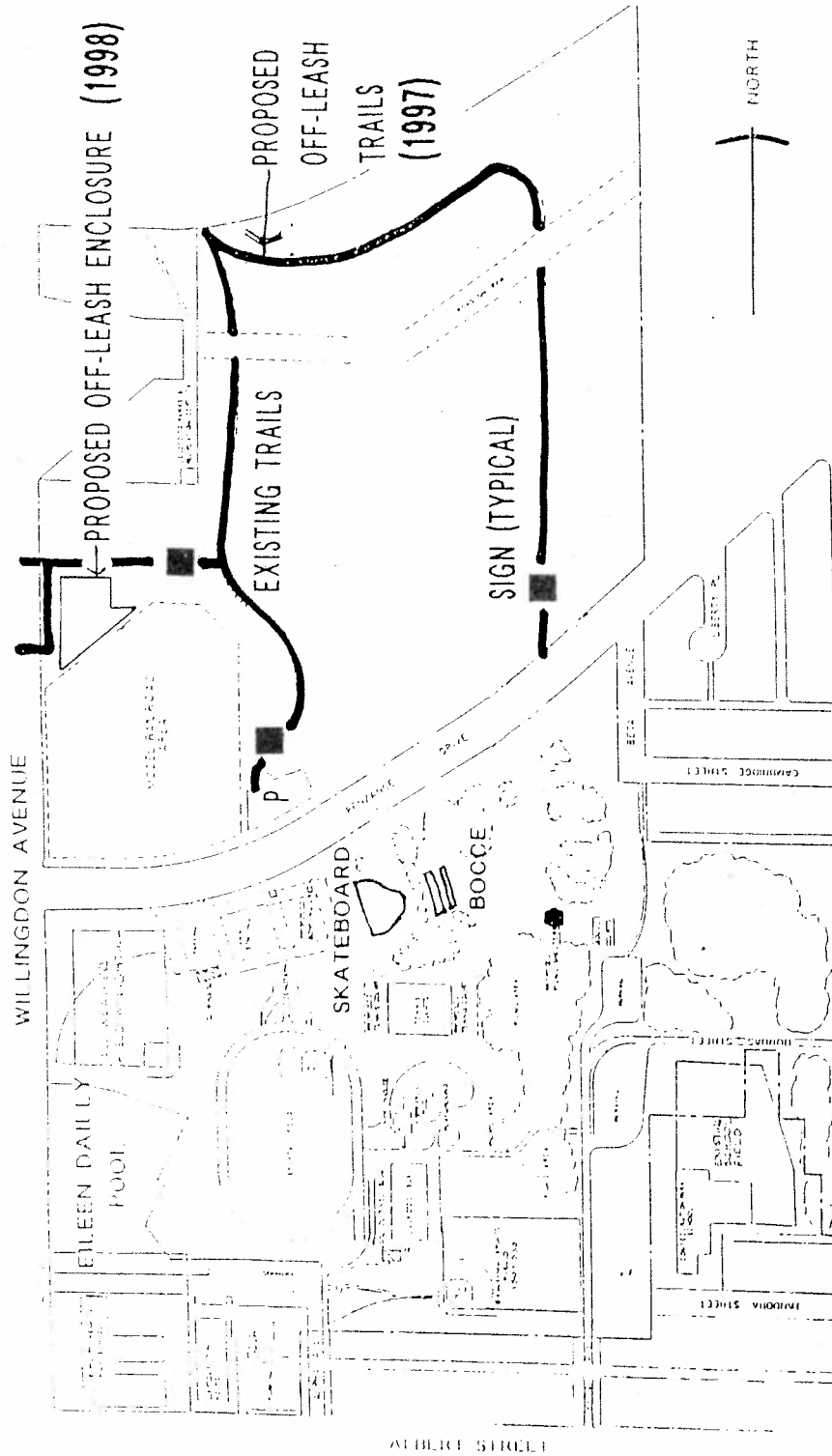
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Attachments (5)

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970310 (draft 5)

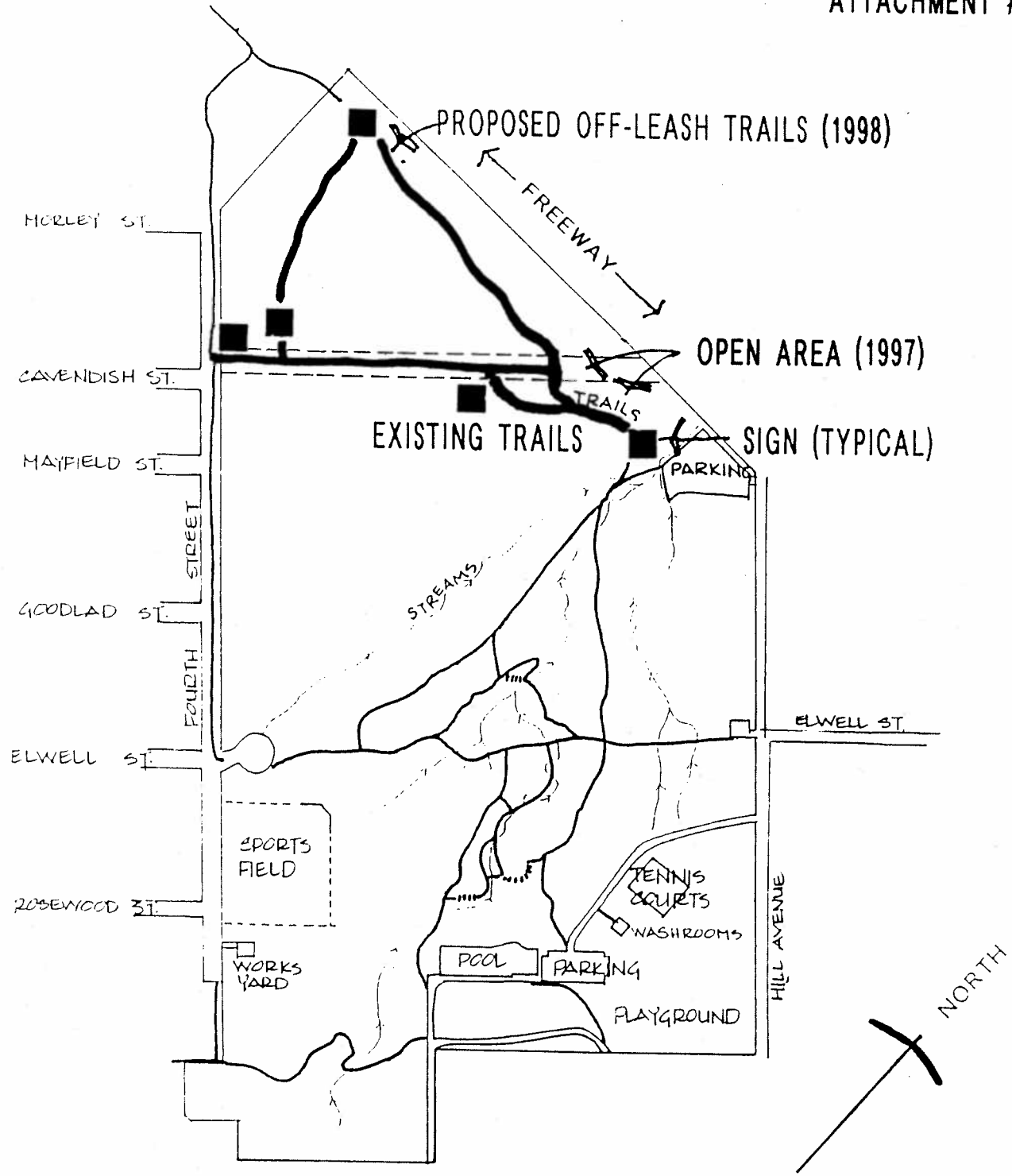
cc: Director of Planning  
Director of Finance  
City Solicitor  
Clerk's Office

ATTACHMENT #1





ATTACHMENT #2



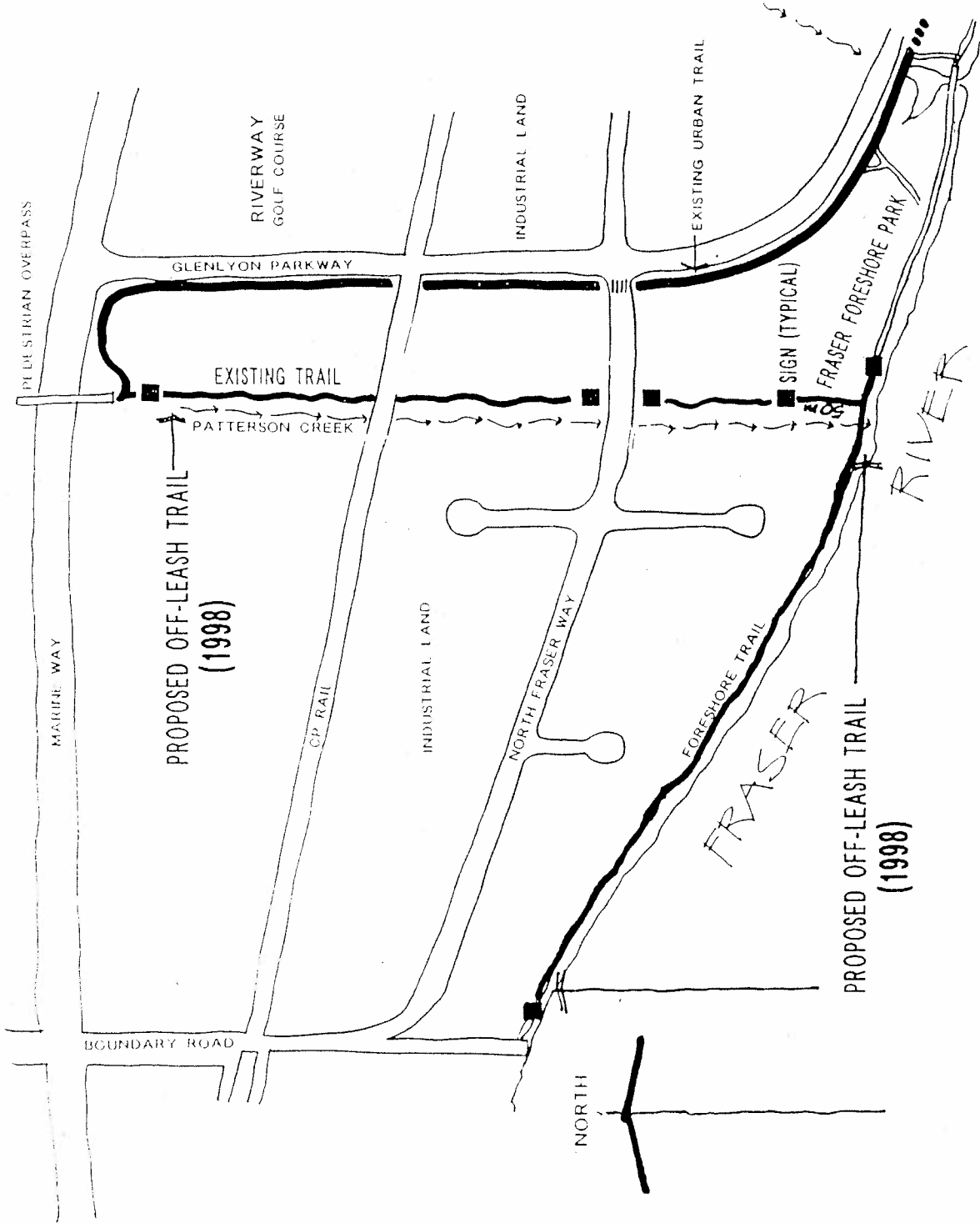
Robert Burnaby Park  
Proposed Off-Leash Area

Dwg.# O.P. 36-2-45s  
 Date: Feb. 11, 1997  
 Scale: nts  
 Prepared By: MB  
 ATTACHMENT #2

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ATTACHMENT #3

Dwg# O.P. 23-4-54s  
 Date: 96/04/24  
 Scale:  
 Drawn by: MIB  
 ATTACHMENT # 3



Fraser Foreshore Park  
 Proposed Off - Leash Trail



# DOGS OFF-LEASH OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY

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Attachment #4

## ATTENDANCE AT DOGS OFF-LEASH OPEN HOUSES

Open House	General Public	Canine Society Members	SPCA Representative	Staff	Total
Confederation Centre	71	3	1	3	78
Eastburn Recreation Centre	26	3	-	3	32
Bonsor Recreation Complex	23	4	-	3	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (106 Questionnaires returned)

### BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Residence in Burnaby	N. West	N. East	S. West	S. East	Non-Res.	Total
	45	9	31	16	5	106
%	42%	8%	29%	15%	5%	100%

<b>Male</b>	12	5	5	6	-	28
%	43%	18%	18%	21%	0%	26%
<b>Female</b>	33	4	26	10	5	78
%	42%	5%	33%	13%	6%	74%

### Dog Ownership

No	2	-	-	-	-	2 (2%)
Previously	-	-	1	1	-	2 (2%)
Intend to	4	-	1	1	-	6 (6%)
<b>Dog Owner</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>96 (90%)</b>

### SUPPORT OF OFF-LEASH AREAS

	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE
Support unenclosed off-leash areas in public parks in Burnaby?	100 (94%)	6 (6%)	0

If yes, which proposed off-leash areas do you support?

Penzance Trail	94 (89%)	3 (3%)	9 (18%)
Robert Burnaby Park	92 (87%)	3 (3%)	11 (10%)
Patterson Trail (Fraser Foreshore Park)	88 (83%)	7 (7%)	11 (10%)

Support enclosed off-leash areas in public parks in Burnaby?	97 (91%)	4 (4%)	5 (5%)
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If yes, support enclosure in Confederation Park, managed by Burnaby Canine Society?	91 (86%)	1 (1%)	14 (13%)
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If yes, support additional enclosure in central and south Burnaby, managed by private non-profit societies?	88 (83%)	3 (3%)	15 (14%)
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**DOGS OFF-LEASH  
OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY- CONTINUED**

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**MAIN CONCERNS ABOUT ACTIVITY OF OTHER DOGS AND OWNERS IN:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>UNENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability of owners to control their dogs and be responsible for their dog's behaviour and actions (39)</li><li>• That people pick up after their dogs and provisions be made for clean up and disposal of dog waste (37).</li><li>• Aggressive dog behaviour (29)</li></ul> | <p><b>ENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That people pick up after their dogs and provisions be made for clean up and disposal of dog waste (34).</li><li>• Ability of owners to control their dogs and be responsible for their dog's behaviour and actions (31)</li><li>• Aggressive dog behaviour (14)</li></ul> |
|---|---|

**MOST IMPORTANT FACILITIES/AMENITIES TO INCLUDE AT AN OFF-LEASH AREA**

**RANKED BY THE NUMBER OF RESPONSES THAT LISTED THESE AS A FIRST PRIORITY:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>UNENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garbage cans / bag dispensers (23)</li><li>• Fountains (for people &amp; dogs) (21)</li><li>• Signage (12)</li><li>• Benches (10)</li><li>• Limited additional trails (3)</li></ul> | <p><b>ENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garbage cans / bag dispensers (19)</li><li>• Lights (15)</li><li>• Signage (11)</li><li>• Fountains (for people &amp; dogs) (10)</li><li>• Benches (9)</li></ul> |
|--|---|

**RANKED BY THE TOTAL FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>UNENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garbage cans / bag dispensers (54)</li><li>• Fountains (for people &amp; dogs) (43)</li><li>• Benches (38)</li><li>• Signage (27)</li><li>• Lighting (17)</li></ul> | <p><b>ENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garbage cans / bag dispensers (45)</li><li>• Fountains (for people &amp; dogs) (37)</li><li>• Benches (36)</li><li>• Lights (28)</li><li>• Signage (21)</li></ul> |
|--|--|

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES TO DETERMINE LOCATION FOR OFF-LEASH AREAS**

**RANKED BY THE NUMBER OF RESPONSES THAT LISTED THESE AS A FIRST PRIORITY:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>UNENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Away from traffic (17)</li><li>• Accessible (13)</li><li>• Away from playgrounds / high-use areas (8)</li><li>• Large enough for good runs / training (7)</li><li>• Provide in a variety of neighbourhoods (5)</li></ul> | <p><b>ENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessible (7)</li><li>• Away from traffic (6)</li><li>• Proximity to users (5)</li><li>• Large enough for good runs / training (5)</li><li>• Open area with good drainage (3)</li></ul> |
|---|---|

**RANKED BY THE TOTAL FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>UNENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Away from traffic (23)</li><li>• Accessible (18)</li><li>• Away from playgrounds / high-use areas (13)</li><li>• Large enough for good runs / training (13)</li><li>• Safety (9)</li></ul> | <p><b>ENCLOSED OFF-LEASH AREAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Away from traffic (9)</li><li>• Accessible (8)</li><li>• Proximity to users (8)</li><li>• Large enough for good runs / training (7)</li><li>• Open area with good drainage (4)</li></ul> |
|---|---|

**DOGS OFF-LEASH  
OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY- CONTINUED**

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**SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS FOR OFF-LEASH AREAS**

RANKED BY THE TOTAL FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES:

- Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Park (13)
- Deer Lake Park (12)
- Barnet Marine Park (8 responses specified west of Texaco Drive) (9)
- Burnaby Heights Park (7 responses specified lower field) (9)
- Burnaby Lake Park (8)

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

- Attendance at the open houses was primarily representative of the dog-owning public. Those present were very supportive of the three off-leash trails and the enclosure area proposal. However, it is evident from studying the questionnaire results that this support is based on certain expectations regarding the provision of site amenities such as waste disposal facilities (bag dispensers and garbage cans), drinking fountains, signage, benches and lighting. Without these amenities the success of the proposed off-leash areas is in question.
- It should be noted that the Patterson Trail was not as widely supported as the other two off-leash trail locations. Additional comments expressed describe the Patterson Trail location as too isolated, not safe enough for women, too narrow, too enclosed, too restricted, too limited in areas and length, too dangerous to people and dogs, too close to busy roads and subject to flooding. Also noted was the necessity to cross a busy road and a lack of parking. Preference was expressed for the foreshore trail location with Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Park over the Patterson Trail location. A 500 signature petition received by the Commission and Council supports the foreshore trail as the preferred location.
- Many respondents expressed concern about the ability of dog owners to control the behaviour of their dog(s), especially aggressive behaviour. A lack of responsibility of dog owners for their dog's behaviour and actions is also a primary concern.
- Many respondents expressed a desire that their dogs be provided access to a body of water suitable for swimming. If the foreshore trail location at Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Park is proposed as a replacement for the Patterson trail the question of dogs being permitted to swim the river will have to be addressed.

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ATTACHMENT #5

STATUS OF THE MINOR DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT

AS AT 1997 FEBRUARY 23

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

1997 PROVISIONAL CAPITAL BUDGET \$20,000

COMMITTED:

\$ 0

SUB TOTAL UNALLOCATED BUDGET \$20,000

LESS - PROPOSED PROJECT:

Dogs off leash areas  
- Signage 10,000

TOTAL UNALLOCATED BUDGET \$10,000  
=====

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1997 March 10