

TO: CITY MANAGER
DATE: 1999 JUNE 17

FROM: DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: BYRNE CREEK AND BARNET MARINE PARK OFF-LEASH AREA FOR DOGS

PURPOSE: To request Council to amend Burnaby Animal Control Bylaw No. 9609 and Park Regulation Bylaw 7331 to accommodate the one year trial off-leash area on the Byrne Creek dykes.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Burnaby Animal Control Bylaw No. 9609 and Park Regulation Bylaw 7331 be amended to accommodate the one year trial off-leash area on the Byrne Creek dykes.

REPORT

At its meeting of 1999 June 16, the Parks and Recreation Commission received the attached staff report on the above subject and adopted the three recommendations contained therein.



KATE FRIARS
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION
AND CULTURAL SERVICES

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Attachment
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cc: Director Engineering
Director Planning
Director Finance
City Solicitor

SUBJECT: BYRNE CREEK AND BARNET MARINE PARK OFF-LEASH AREA FOR DOGS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the Byrne Creek dykes be approved as an area for off-leash dogs for a trial period of one year as proposed in this report, commencing August 1st, 1999.
2. THAT Council be requested to amend Burnaby Animal Control Bylaw No. 9609 and Park Regulation Bylaw 7331 to accommodate the one year trial off-leash area on the Byrne Creek dykes.
3. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the SPCA.

REPORT

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting of 1999 April 21, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the establishment of a permanent seasonal off-leash area in Fraser Foreshore Park. The designated area exists in an open lawn in the park between Byrne Creek and Byrne Road and permits off-leash activity during winter months from October 1st to March 31st each year. In recognition of the demand to provide more year round facilities, the Commission requested staff to further explore possible additional locations for this use in South Burnaby.

In addition, Commission approved an extension of the six month trial period for the seasonal off-leash area in Barnet Marine Park from 1999 October 1 to 2000 March 31. Commission also requested staff to report further on providing greater accessibility for the disabled to the off-leash area located at the western end of the park.

FRASER FORESHORE PARK & BYRNE CREEK DYKES:

On 1972 March 27, the Big Bend Development Plan was adopted. The Plan included a linear park and trail to connect Fraser Foreshore Park to the south slopes. The Plan recognized the park lands, once acquired, as Parks Department property under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Commission. In 1977, the City studied the adequacy of Byrne Road to carry anticipated Big Bend industrial traffic and storm water volumes. The notion of piping Byrne Creek under the road was in conflict with Council's policy of maintaining streams in an open condition. On 1983 April 06, the Commission approved a plan for the relocation of Byrne Creek into the linear park corridor with construction taking place in 1986. Joint management and maintenance of the park corridor section south of Marine Way has been practiced by the Parks and Engineering Departments for park amenity and storm water issues respectively.

Both the east and west Byrne Creek dyke service roads join with the Fraser Foreshore Park seasonal off-leash area, as indicated in Attachment #1. The site is recommended as a year-round off-leash area, commencing with a one year trial period, for the following reasons:

- It joins with the existing seasonal off-leash area and is not in conflict with the more heavily traveled foreshore trail or scheduled park activities such as group picnics.
- The route is approximately one kilometer long, north to south, and offers a 2 km long route if both the east and west dyke service roads are used at least part of the way to the CPR right-of-way. The area is currently underutilized for recreational activity and is felt to be large enough to absorb a significant amount of off-leash activity. The south end of the route provides public parking, washrooms and other park amenities.
- The west dyke service road is 4 metres wide with well-maintained, wide mown edges that offer excellent surveillance. The east dyke possesses a level top with a trail where it is intended to provide a 3 m wide mown corridor. Concerns expressed for previously proposed South Burnaby locations regarding isolation, fragmentation, narrow path corridors with poor visibility, lack of alternate trail routes, and conflicts with other users are largely mitigated on this site.
- The site was assessed for the potential impact of an official off-leash dog area on Byrne Creek corridor wildlife habitat, and to determine how that impact could be mitigated. It should be noted that field observations on this and previously proposed sites regarding this issue concluded that there is little evidence that dogs habitually leave a defined trail corridor and enter or disturb wildlife habitat areas to a significant degree. The SPCA will be requested to patrol the Byrne Creek off-leash area during the one year trial period. The Byrne Creek corridor does possess valuable riparian habitat that is largely protected by impenetrable bank vegetation consisting mostly of Himalayan blackberry, hardhack and reed canary grass. To further protect the habitat and mitigate potential off-leash activity impacts, it is felt the most reasonable steps should consist of:
 - spot planting native shrub species to supplement the existing dense vegetative barrier on the banks of the channel
 - reduce the mowing strip width on the channel banks adjacent to the service roads to allow an increase in the riparian cover/barrier to occur naturally
 - provide a method by which dog owners can dispose of dog waste
 - remove existing park benches placed on the banks of the channel and close these access points to the water with riparian vegetation

The presence of the 4 m wide west dyke service road and the east dyke path make it possible to take into account any future routing option of the proposed urban trail development in the Byrne Creek corridor. The urban trail planning is incomplete in the Big Bend area at this time. However, the most direct and likely route along the Byrne Creek corridor would occur on the east dyke between North Fraser Way and Marine Way, which implies that the off-leash area should occur on the opposite (west) dyke in that segment. An urban trail would preclude off-leash dogs, but likely not leashed dogs and pedestrians. The Engineering Traffic Division is willing to provide a mid-block crosswalk where the west dyke service road crosses North Fraser Way. The proposed west dyke off-leash area will terminate at the CPR right-of-way, and a chain link fence will be erected with signs demarcating the area.

There are no other known sites appropriate for this use on public land in South Burnaby. Park sites and trails previously evaluated and ultimately rejected for this use include Willard Park (isolated, lack of support amenities, close to residential), the Patterson Trail (isolated, fragmented, poor surveillance), the one kilometer segment of Fraser Foreshore Trail east of Boundary Road (narrow, conflicts with other users), Central Park (conflicts with other users, adjacent to heavily traveled roads, requires fences) and Byrne Creek Ravine (conflicts with other users, lack of alternate park path routes). The above sites were noted in greater detail in previous reports to Commission.

In light of the above information and the previously documented public support for this use, it is recommended to initiate off-leash usage of the Byrne Creek Dykes for a trial period of one year, commencing 1999 August 01. The off-leash area will be evaluated during the trial and a report will be submitted to Commission regarding its permanent designation in the summer of 2000. Signs will be erected at all entry points to the site similarly as with previous sites that inform the public of the intended use and that invite comments. Waste barrels and plastic bag dispensers will be placed in key locations for the duration of the trial period. The locations of the above amenities will be coordinated with the Engineering Department so as to not impede service vehicles to Byrne Creek. It is intended to provide a 3 m wide mowing strip along the east dyke trail. It should be noted that should the Byrne Creek dykes receive permanent designation for this use, then the east dyke trail may require resurfacing with crushed limestone, and all map signs at the entry points to all other City off-leash areas will require revision and replacement in future.

BARNET MARINE PARK:

With respect to improving accessibility for the disabled to the Barnet Marine Park seasonal off-leash area, the current limitations to accessibility are due to the fact that only one signalized public crossing of the CPR tracks is allowed to Barnet Marine Park. The crossing is located at the opposite end of the park from the off-leash area. It is felt that limited improvements to accessibility can be achieved with the addition of two more directional signs in the upper parking lots instructing all patrons of the off-leash area to utilize the pedestrian bridge over the CPR right-of-way, and by shifting some of the existing on-site directional signs to more efficient locations. Handicap parking is currently available in the drop-off area near the concession (Attachment #2).

FINANCING:

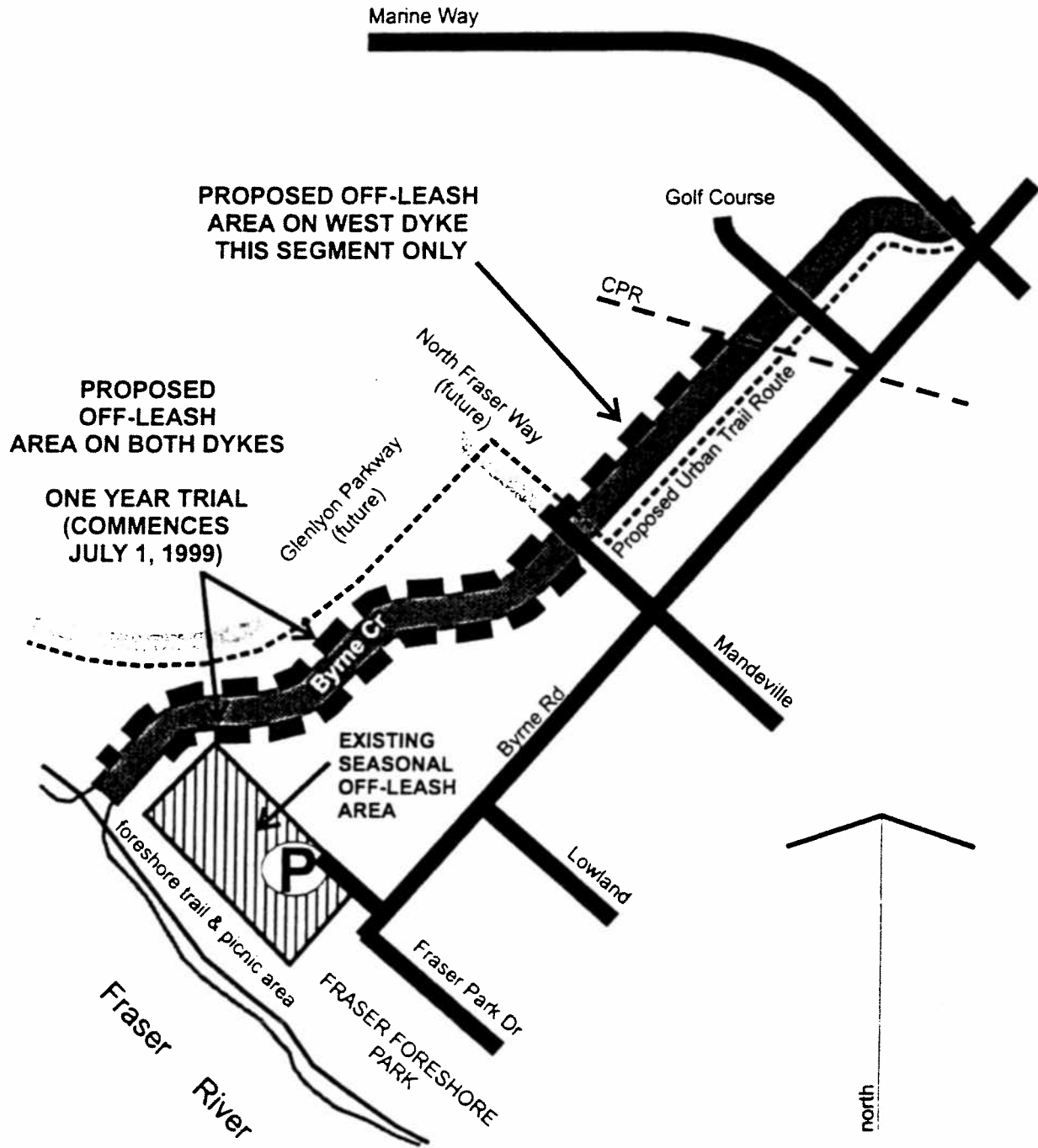
The cost of signs, fencing, supplemental planting and plastic bag dispensers at the proposed Byrne Creek off-leash area, as well as two additional signs at Barnet Marine Park, is estimated at \$6,000. Sufficient funds exist in this year's capital project for the reconstruction of the Commonwealth pier and the associated landscape works in Fraser Foreshore Park to finance the above project. No new funds are proposed for this trial project. Further funding will be necessary should both sites receive permanent off-leash designation in future.

MB:mb:hh

Attach.

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cc: Director Engineering
Director Planning
Director Finance
City Solicitor

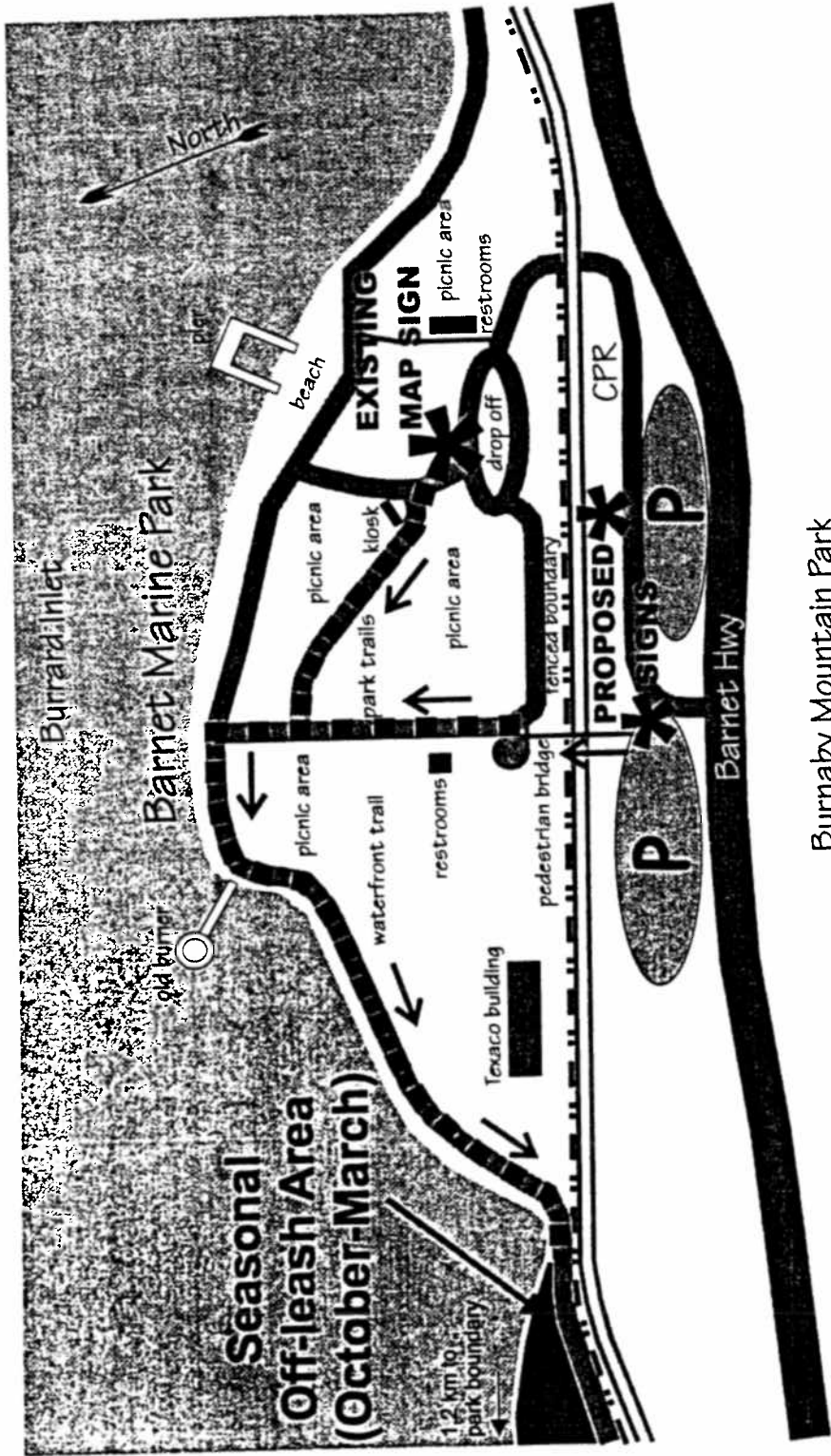


Park Planning & Design
cad: core/off-leash byrne creek



**Proposed One Year Trial
BYRNE CREEK DYKES
OFF-LEASH AREA**

DRAWING: OP 23-4-64s
 DATE: 99/05/12
 SCALE: NTS
 DRAWN: MB



Park Planning & Design
off-leash barnet attach

Dwg: OP#
Date: 99/06/10
Scale: nts
Drawn: mb

Barnet Marine Park Seasonal Off-leash Area
Existing Map Sign



Burnaby Mountain Park