

Agenda

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Accessibility Committee Meeting

to be held via Zoom and in person in Room A Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

1. Call Regular Committee Meeting to Order

We acknowledge that Penticton, where we live and work, is on the traditional lands of the Syilx People in the Okanagan Nation.

2. Adoption of Agenda

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the October 9, 2024 Accessibility Committee Meeting

Recommendation:

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the October 9, 2024 meeting as presented.

3.2 Minutes of the October 28, 2024 Special Accessibility Committee Meeting Recommendation:

3-4

1-2

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the October 28, 2024 special meeting as presented.

4. **New Business**

4.1 Roundtable Check-in

Power 4.2 EV Charging Update

5-13

Staff Recommendation:

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report dated January 8th, 2025 titled "EV Charging Update".

Rendall/ Moncreiff

4.3 Eckhardt Avenue Corridor Reconstruction

14-17

Staff Recommendation:

THAT after reviewing for accessibility and inclusion barriers, the Accessibility Committee support the design concepts as described as outlined in the report dated January 8, 2025 titled "Eckhart Avenue Corridor Reconstruction".

Boyko 4.4 Update on Dog Park Upgrades and Dog "Leash-Optional" Pilot Project & Recommendations 18-27 Staff Recommendation:

THAT the Committee receive into the record the report dated January 8, 2025 titled "Update on Dog Park Upgrades and Dog "Leash-Optional" Pilot Project and Recommendations";

AND THAT Committee recommend to Council that the City continue with "leash-optional" areas at the following locations:

- Riverside Park 187 Riverside Drive
- Skaha Lake Park Main 3661 Parkview Street
- Skaha Lake Park East 3895 Lakeside Road
- Water Treatment Plant Entrance 1900 Penticton Ave

5. **Next Meeting**

The next special Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2025 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

The next regular Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2025 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

6. **Adjournment**



Minutes

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Accessibility Committee Meeting

held via Zoom and in-person in Room A
City Hall, 171 Main Street
Wednesday, October 9, 2024
at 9:30 am

Present: Trisha Kaplan, Chair (via Zoom)

Leanne Williams, Vice-Chair Kristi Bauman (via Zoom)

Randy Boras James Ludvigson Grant Pattingale Heather Miller

Council Liaison: Julius Bloomfield

Regrets: Krista Russo

Staff: Blake Laven, Director of Development Services

Sarah Desrosiers, Social Development Coordinator

Hayley Anderson, Legislative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Vice-Chair called the Accessibility Committee to order at 9:32 am.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the agenda of October 9, 2024 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the July 10, 2024 Accessibility Committee Meeting

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the minutes of the July 10, 2024 meeting as presented.

4. New Business

4.1 Roundtable Check-in

The Vice-Chair led the Committee in a round table check-in to discuss accessibility thoughts or challenges not specifically on the agenda. Staff noted the items discussed.

4.2 <u>Annual Progress Report</u>

The Social Development Coordinator provided the Committee with an update on the progress of the Accessibility Plan one year after implementation.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report titled "Annual Progress Report".

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. **Next Meeting**

The next special Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2024 at 9:30am via Zoom and in-person at the Penticton Community Centre.

The next regular Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2025 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

6. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adjourn the meeting held on October 9, 2024 at 10:58 am.

Certified Correct:			
Hayley Anderson Legislative Assistant	 		



Minutes

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Special Accessibility Committee Meeting

held via Zoom and in-person in Room 3, Penticton Community Centre

City Hall, 171 Main Street Monday, October 28, 2024 at 9:30 am

Present: Trisha Kaplan, Chair (via Zoom)

Leanne Williams, Vice-Chair Kristi Bauman (via Zoom)

Randy Boras Heather Miller Krista Russo

Council Liaison: Julius Bloomfield

Regrets: James Ludvigson

Grant Pattingale

Staff: Blake Laven, Director of Development Services

Sarah Desrosiers, Social Development Coordinator

Ysabel Contreras, Parks Planning & Capital Projects Coordinator

Hayley Anderson, Legislative Assistant

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Accessibility Committee to order at 9:37 am.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adopt the agenda of October 28, 2024 as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. New Business

3.1 Lakawanna Park Upgrade – Design Priorities & Engagement Plan

The Parks Planning & Capital Projects Coordinator introduced consultants Keith and Ann from BENCH Site Design Inc. who provided the Committee with an overview of the 2 concept plans for the park. The Committee provided feedback noting different elements that could be included for both physical and neurological accessibility.

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report dated October 28, 2024 titled "Lakawanna Park Upgrade – Design Priorities and Engagement Plan."

4. Next Meeting

The next regular Accessibility Committee meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2025 at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person.

5. **Adjournment**

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Accessibility Committee adjourn the meeting held on October 28, 2024 at 10:38 am.

Certified Correct:		
Hayley Anderson	 	
Legislative Assistant		



Memo to Committee

File No: N/A

penticton.ca

Date: January 8th, 2025

Accessibility Committee

From: Draydan Power, Manager of Energy & Environment

Subject: EV Charging Update

Staff Recommendation

THAT the Accessibility Committee receive into the record the report dated January 8th, 2025 titled "EV Charging Update".

Background

To:

Electric Vehicle Charging

Reducing community-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can be achieved by encouraging the use of electric vehicles (EVs) by residents and visitors. EVs contribute significantly less emissions than fossil fuel powered vehicles, and it is estimated that transportation-based emissions account for 58% of Penticton's overall community emissions (2021 CEEI data).

Reducing transportation-based emissions is supported by the Official Community Plan and the 2021 Community Climate Action Plan. Providing EV charging infrastructure at a cost-effective rate is one method to encourage EV uptake and to reduce community generated GHG emissions.

There are two primary types of EV chargers: level 2 and level 3. Level 2 EV charging stations provide moderate charging speeds with power outputs up to 19 kW, typically taking 4 to 8 hours to fully charge an electric vehicle. Level 2 stations are commonly found in homes, workplaces, and public places. In contrast, Level 3 EV charging stations, also known as DC Fast Chargers (DCFC), deliver high-speed charging with power outputs of 25 kW and above, enabling an 80% charge in just 30 to 60 minutes. These stations are usually installed in commercial areas and along highways for quick top-ups during long journeys.

City EV Charger Network

The City of Penticton currently owns and operates six level 2 electric vehicle charging stations for public use and is in the process of installing four level 3 electric vehicle charging stations by the end of 2024.

The City's first four level 2 charging stations became operational at the 307 Ellis parking lot in summer of 2019. From August 2019 to November 2020, there was no fee for use at the stations. As this is a monthly pay parking lot, parking at the EV charging sites is free and does not require a monthly parking pass. The stations were also free to encourage electric vehicle adoption and to introduce this service to the community. In November 2020, the fee was changed to \$2.00 per hour, and implementation of a fee led to a reduction in

usage of 60% compared to the previous year when charging was free. In August of 2022, two additional level 2 charging stations were installed at City Hall for public use, bringing the total number of City-owned public level 2 charging stations up to 6.

In 2022 the Community Sustainability Advisory Committee recommended that Council change the rate from \$2.00 per hour to a graduated billing fee structure: the first two hours are free, followed by a charge of \$2.00 per hour for each subsequent hour. The committee noted that a graduated rate would be reasonable, encourage the uptake of electric vehicles, help cover operating costs, and promote parking spot turnover. This recommendation was adopted by Council, and the graduated billing rate is the current fee structure for the level 2 charging stations.

Staff routinely monitor the charging stations, including costs, revenues, and overall usage and uptake at the site. Each year through the regular Fees and Charges process staff will bring forward recommendations to change or maintain the fee based on the current revenue and expenses at each site. As an example, in comparing level 2 EV charging station usage in 2023 to 2024, the number of charging hours has increased by 46%, and energy distributed has increased by 49%. This increase in usage highlights the trend of growing EV adoption in the region. The steady increase in usage indicates that the graduated billing model may no longer be necessary and that a flat hourly rate can now be implemented.

In December 2024, four level 3 electric vehicle charging stations for public use are being installed at four strategic locations: City Hall, Community Recreation Centre, Riverside Parking Lot, and Skaha Lake Park. The stations are anticipated to be activated by December 31*, 2024. These stations, partially funded through the investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – CleanBC Communities Fund will be owned and operated by the City and will be co-located with additional level 2 charging stations in 2025. There currently is no fee in place for level 3 EV charging, and this report seeks to set an appropriate fee structure, as well as review the fee structure for level 2 charging.

Analysis

EV chargers intended for public use must consider all aspects of accessibility to ensure any member of the public can recharge their vehicle. EV chargers are typically located in existing parking lots, making each site unique in applying accessibility standards.

The Energy & Environment department is seeking feedback on the recent installations of level 3 chargers, and recommendations for improvements as more level 2 chargers are deployed in 2025 at each of these sites.

Alternate recommendations

N/A

Attachments

Attachment A - City Hall Level 3 EV Charger

Attachment B - Community Centre Level 3 EV Charger

Attachment C – Riverside Level 3 EV Charger

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Respectfully submitted,

Draydan Power

Manager of Energy & Environment

Concurrence

General Manager/ Director

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Memo to Committee

penticton.ca

Date: January 8, 2025 File No: 5220-20/2025 Eckhardt

To: Accessibility Committee

From: Chandra Moncrieff, Design Supervisor

Subject: Eckhardt Avenue Corridor Reconstruction

Staff Recommendation

THAT after reviewing for accessibility and inclusion barriers, the Accessibility Committee support the design concepts as described as outlined in the report dated January 8, 2025 titled "Eckhart Avenue Corridor Reconstruction".

Background

The Eckhardt Avenue corridor construction between Main Street and Government Street is due for underground asset renewal in 2025. This project includes:

- Approximately 600m of water main replacement
- Water service upgrades
- Hydrant spacing improvements
- Relining of existing sanitary sewer
- Sanitary service renewals
- Storm water system upgrades to address localized drainage issues
- Moving overhead electrical and communication lines underground
- Lighting improvements
- Crosswalk safety upgrades at Ellis Street, Gahan Avenue and the KVR Walkway

The utility upgrades will involve removing and replacing curbs, which will enable the relocation of the curb to allow widening of the active transportation corridor. This will include adding grade-separated bike lanes and continuous sidewalks, enhancing connections to the existing Government Street lanes and the KVR walkway to the Lake-to-Lake route.

Following a recent Road Safety Audit by ICBC, the latest design also includes removal of on-street parking on Eckhardt, between Main Street and Government Street. There is already limited parking on the corridor and low utilization of the limited spots available, with many alternative options in the area. Removal of the parking allows for the previously allocated space to be redistributed to pedestrians, cyclists and allows for more than the minimal separations as recommended by the design guide. Further it will allow for some

additional trees to be planted along the corridor, which was not possible in the earlier design. Other minor modifications recommended by ICBC have also been incorporated in the latest design drawings.

Accessibility and Safety Improvements

The new design will improve safety for all users of the corridor. The intention of this report is to highlight some of the key features that are still fairly new to Penticton, and to seek feedback from the accessibility committee on their proposed usage on this corridor.

Continuous Sidewalks

The City intends to maintain as much of the existing sidewalk as practical but a significant portion will be replaced. When doing so, the City has opted to maintain a consistent level for the sidewalks as it continues through intersections. This means that no ramps will be installed to lower the pedestrian to street level as they traverse a street. Continuous sidewalks force drivers to slow down and be more aware of pedestrians. These sidewalks are particularly beneficial for people with mobility impairments, those using wheelchairs, strollers, and or other wheeled devices. There will be a minor elevation change at the road crossings but it will be less significant than a typical crossing. Tactile pads will mark both sides of the crossing. Tactile differentiation will also be incorporated between the sidewalk corridor and the cycling corridor. The absence of curbs and ramps at the intersections makes navigation smoother and easier.

The continuous sidewalk can increase comfort by eliminating the need to step down onto the road. By providing a safer and more comfortable pedestrian friendly environment, they encourage more people to walk, promoting a sense of community and accessibility. It also supports Council's initiative to prioritize the pedestrian as noted in the City's Official Community Plan. Continuous sidewalks are starting to become more frequent in Canada, recently being utilized in Nanaimo and in various communities in the lower mainland.



Figure 1: Continuous Sidewalk

Photo credit: https://rmcyclist.info/the-dutch-solution-for-safer-sidewalks-continuous-sidewalks/

Grade separated Bike lanes

Grade-separated bike lanes enhance safety by physically separating cyclists from motor vehicle traffic (putting them behind a curb at sidewalk level). These lanes reduce the risk of collisions and accidents while making cyclists feel safer and more secure when they are not sharing the road with motor vehicles. They also minimize conflicts between cyclists and motorists, especially at intersections and driveways. This can lead to smoother traffic flow and fewer instances of vehicles encroaching into bike lanes.

The safety improvements can encourage more people to cycle as a mode of transportation, which can reduce traffic congestion, lower pollution levels, and promote healthier lifestyles. It supports the OCP hierarchy giving more priority to cyclists as well as creating more connectivity in the cycling network. Staff have used the BC Active Transportation Design Guidelines to inform the cycling facility selection and design on the Eckhardt Avenue corridor.

Floating Bus Stops

Floating bus stops, also known as bus islands, offer enhanced safety by separating bus stops from bike lanes, reducing conflicts between buses and cyclists by placing the bus stop adjacent to the bike lane. This design helps prevent accidents and ensures a safer environment for both cyclists and bus passengers. Bus efficiency is improved when buses can stop without having to merge into and out of bike lanes or vehicular travel lanes as traffic will be required to stop and wait for the bus.

Floating bus stops provide a dedicated space between the cycle corridor and the vehicular travel lane for passengers to wait and will incorporate tactile walking surface indicators and visual signage. By maintaining a continuous bike lane, floating bus stops also support a more bike friendly environment. Figure 2 below shows a visual of one of the floating bus stops that was recently installed on South Main Street as part of the lake-to-lake bike route, that follows the design guidance recommended in the recently issued supplementary guidelines for floating bus stops that form part of the BC Active Transportation Design Guide. These are similar to what are being proposed for the stops on Eckhardt Avenue.



Figure 2: Floating Bus Stop

Lake to Lake Route Floating Bus Stop

Improved lighting and crossings

Improved lighting along the corridor increases visibility for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, improving safety particularly at intersections and crosswalks. Well-lit streets make people feel safer and can be correlated with a reduction in crime.

Pedestrian and Cyclist crossings are enhanced with reduced crossing distances and increased lighting. They will have improved ramps with tactile pads. The City does not currently have an accessibility standard (nor is there a Provincial or National standard as of yet) and will be working towards setting one for the community in consultation with the Accessibility Committee in the future. The crossings at Ellis Street and at the KVR trail will include the rapid rectangular flashers activated by push buttons.

Accessibility During Construction

Pedestrian and cyclist accessibility will be maintained during this project. Temporary pedestrian pathways in line with the City's Pedestrian Safety Guide may be established complete with compact level surfaces, temporary ramps and clear signage. Additionally, public communications about the construction schedule and changes to pedestrian routes will be utilized.

Respectfully submitted,

Chandra Moncrieff
Design Supervisor

Concurrence

General Manager/ Director

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Memo to Committee

penticton.ca

Date: January 8, 2025 File No: 6240-01

To: Accessibility Committee

From: Scott Boyko, Public Works Manager

Subject: Update on Dog Park Upgrades and Dog "Leash-Optional" Pilot Project & Recommendations

Staff Recommendation

THAT the Committee receive into the record the report dated January 8, 2025 titled "Update on Dog Park Upgrades and Dog "Leash-Optional" Pilot Project and Recommendations";

AND THAT Committee recommend to Council that the City continue with "leash-optional" areas at the following locations:

- Riverside Park 187 Riverside Drive
- Skaha Lake Park Main 3661 Parkview Street
- Skaha Lake Park East 3895 Lakeside Road
- Water Treatment Plant Entrance 1900 Penticton Ave

Strategic Priority Objective

Livable & Accessible: The City of Penticton will proactively plan for deliberate growth; focused on an inclusive, healthy, safe and desirable place to live.

Vision: Penticton is a connected, resilient and healthy waterfront city focused on safety, livability and vibrancy.

Executive Summary

The City of Penticton, in collaboration with the "People for Penticton Pets" (PPP), has undertaken significant efforts to enhance dog-friendly amenities in the community, including physical upgrades to many of the City's designated off-leash parks, as well piloting shared "leash optional" spaces throughout the community. The pilot project included a comprehensive public engagement strategy, and this report brings forward both the findings of the engagement as well as recommendations to continue with all but one of the leash optional areas, and a revised recommendation for Okanagan Lake Park. The report also recommends minor modifications to the leash optional areas to respond to the feedback received during the pilot program.

Background

On August 15, 2023 the "People for Penticton Pets" (PPP) attended the regular Council meeting as a delegation and presented to Council their ideas for: establishing additional off-leash dog parks, an area for small and senior dogs, relaxed seasonal dog regulations, enhanced conditions for existing dog parks and expanded tourism opportunities. Following the delegation, Council passed the following resolution:

309/2023

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to report back in October with information on the status of the City dog parks and improvement options.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

In accordance with the above noted resolution, staff conducted an audit of the City's existing off-leash areas, that can be divided into two categories as outlined in the table below.

Water Front Off-Leash Areas / Parks	General Off-Leash Areas /Parks
Okanagan Lake Park – Okanagan Lake	Dartmouth Drive Off-Leash Area
3 Mile Beach – Okanagan Lake	Ellis Creek Off-Leash Area
Lakeside Rd. Dog Beach- Skaha Lake	Water Treatment Plant Off-Leash Area

On Sept 7, and Sept 19, 2023 staff met with the representatives of PPP to review the existing off-leash areas, identify deficiencies, and to discuss opportunities for improvements. Working in collaboration, staff and PPP developed a list of proposed improvements for each location, as well as a "leash optional" pilot project, both of which were brought to the regular Council meeting on October 17, 2023. At the meeting, Council passed the following resolutions:

377/2023

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council receive into the record the report dated October 17, 2023 titled "Update on Dog Park Status and Recommended improvements";

AND THAT Council approve \$200,000 for the capital upgrades to the existing off-leash dog parks to be funded from the Gaming Reserve.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

378/2023

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council direct staff to conduct a "leash-optional" pilot project at the following locations;

- Riverside Park 187 Riverside Drive
- Okanagan Park- 45 Lakeshore Drive East
- Skaha Lake Park Main 3661 Parkview Street
- Skaha Lake Park East 3895 Lakeside Road
- Water Treatment Plant Entrance 1900 Penticton Ave

at an estimated capital cost of \$15,000, funded by the Gaming Reserve;

CARRIED

Councillors Miller and Watt, Opposed

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379/2023

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the 2023-2027 Financial Plan be amended to include the above noted funding; AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed in 2024 to develop a longer term strategy to evaluate the need, and identify possible locations, for additional dog facilities within the City.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

On December 3rd, 2024 Council received a report with updates on both programs, including recommendations relating to the leash optional pilot project, and referred the staff recommendations to both the Parks and Recreation Committee, as well as the Advisory Committee, prior to making a decision.

359/2024

It was MOVED and SECONDED

THAT Council receive into the record the report dated December 3, 2024 titled "Update on Dog Park Upgrades and Dog "Leash-Optional" Pilot Project and Recommendations";

AND THAT Council refer the recommendation to continue with "leash optional" areas at the following locations, to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Accessibility Committee:

- · Riverside Park 187 Riverside Drive 5
- · Skaha Lake Park Main 3661 Parkview Street
- · Skaha Lake Park East 3895 Lakeside Road
- · Water Treatment Plant Entrance 1900 Penticton Ave

AND THAT Council refer the recommendation to expand the current fenced Dog Park at Okanagan Park, to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Accessibility Committee.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

This report seeks the Accessibility Committee's recommendation on the path forward with regards to the leash optional areas.

Dog Park Improvements Update:

The status on the upgrades to the existing off-leash areas are as follows:

Ellis Creek Off-Leash Area	Completed
Dartmouth Off-Leash Area	On Hold dependent on City Yard Upgrades
Water Treatment Plant Off-Leash Area	Installation of Water Fountain location under review
Okanagan Lake Beach Off-Leash Area	Ramp and Fencing upgrades on hold for Pilot Project
Lakeside Road - Beach Off-Leash Area	Completed
Three Mile Beach Off-Leash Area	Completed
	Water Treatment Plant Off-Leash Area Okanagan Lake Beach Off-Leash Area

Some small outstanding items are currently being completed with self-closing gates being installed at applicable locations and standardized signage for all locations. No further changes are recommended at this time at the Dartmouth Park given the ongoing space constraints at the City Yards, and a revised recommendation for Okanagan Lake is discussed further below. A list of the original deficiencies and opportunities for upgrades at each location can be found in Appendix A.

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Working with the PPP, a number of opportunities on accessibility were realized and included in the upgrades. Accessible access to the area and within the fenced area were identified and improvements were suggested and improvements were designed for 5 of the areas with some of the work still outstanding.

As part of the improvements, weekly inspections, frequent vegetation control, and increased litter pickup and removal were recommended, and staff had estimated that the increased cost of this enhanced service level would be approximately \$17,000, to be monitored through 2024. Staff has confirmed this estimate is accurate and has included a continuation of this higher service level through the recently adopted 2025 operating budget.

The estimated capital cost for the recommended upgrades to the City's existing facilities was approximately \$210,000 and \$104,000 has been spent on the work completed to date. Roughly \$50k was originally allocated for Dartmouth Park, however, staff are not recommending investing in this location at this time given the space constraints at the City Yards and the ongoing changes being planned there. As a result, staff anticipate the remaining deficiencies will be completed below budget, with any excess funding remaining in the Gaming Reserve.

Leash Optional Pilot Program:

The leash optional pilot project, and the associated public engagement, ran from March 1st to August 31st, 2024, with the goal of testing designated shared-use spaces for dogs and their owners. Five pilot locations were selected based on accessibility, existing usage patterns, and community input. Following the completion of the engagement program, staff compiled a report and reviewed survey results to determine the next steps. During this time, the leash-optional locations remain in place while City staff reviewed all available data.

Public engagement was a central component of the pilot, with a detailed survey conducted during the program. Over 1,200 respondents participated, providing insights into user experiences, concerns, and suggestions for improvements and revealed diverse feedback based on user experiences. A full copy of the engagement report can be found in Appendix C. Feedback was collected from all users of the shared spaces, and the results can be filtered accordingly:

- Dog Walkers (Off-Leash): 47.9% of respondents attended the trial spaces as dog walkers with their dogs off-leash.
- Dog Walkers (On-Leash): 21% of respondents attended as dog walkers with their dogs on-leash.
- Park Users Without Dogs: 31% of respondents attended the spaces as park users without dogs.

Summary of feedback by Group

- Dog Walkers (Off-Leash)
 - o This group appreciated the opportunity to use leash-optional areas and generally reported feeling safe in the spaces.
 - o They highlighted issues such as insufficient signage to define boundaries, the need for more waste bins and dog bag dispensers, and concerns about rule enforcement to ensure all users comply.
 - Some participants requested fencing to create a safer environment and prevent dogs from wandering into restricted areas or onto roads.
 - While many supported making the leash-optional zones permanent, they also emphasized the importance of ongoing maintenance and Animal Control monitoring.
- Dog Walkers (On-Leash)
 - On-leash dog walkers raised concerns about safety, particularly in interactions with off-leash dogs

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- that lacked adequate recall.
- o Many noted that they felt less safe when off-leash dogs approached their leashed pets or children accompanying them.
- o This group emphasized the need for better enforcement of leash-optional rules and suggested fencing to separate leashed and off-leash areas to reduce conflicts.
- o Requests for clearer signage, defined boundaries, and seasonal restrictions (non-peak times such as summer) were also prominent.

• Park Users Without Dogs

- o Park users without dogs expressed mixed feelings about leash-optional zones.
- Many appreciated the shared use of the spaces but raised concerns about personal safety when encountering off-leash dogs, particularly those with poor recall.
- Wildlife safety was a recurring concern for this group, as some noted instances of dogs chasing wildlife in shared spaces.
- They also called for better signage, strict rule enforcement, and seasonal restrictions to minimize disruptions during peak park usage times.

Key Insights Across Groups

- Overall, 65% of all respondents supported the concept of off leash optional areas
- Common Suggestions: Improved signage, waste management facilities, and stricter enforcement of leashoptional rules were universally emphasized.
- Fencing and Safety: Across all groups, there were frequent requests for fencing to separate leash-optional areas from other park uses. Safety for children, seniors, and wildlife emerged as a shared priority.
- Maintenance and Monitoring: Participants consistently called for ongoing maintenance and increased Animal Control monitoring to address non-compliance and ensure safe interactions between different users.

These insights highlight the diverse needs and perspectives of park users, reflecting both enthusiasm for leash-optional spaces and the challenges of balancing shared use among different groups. In addition to reviewing detailed public engagement results, staff consulted with other City departments, including Parks, Events, Bylaw, and Animal Control, to gather their insights on the pilot project. This internal feedback is summarized below:

- Concerns about turf health in high-traffic areas, particularly at Okanagan Lake Park
- Increased levels of dog waste at all locations, with Okanagan Lake Park and its surrounding garden beds seeing the highest levels
- The need for enhanced signage to help clarify designated areas and user responsibilities
- Of the 400 proactive patrols by Animal Control completed in the five off-leash pilot project parks, they
 received two complaints (both for the same incident). These complaints involved two non-aggressive dogs
 not respecting the designated areas in Okanagan Lake Park.
- Animal Control did receive calls from residents who were for and against the decision to allow dogs to run in these parks and advised them to submit their opinion on the online survey.
- General internal feedback was that the five pilot areas were well respected, indicating responsible pet ownership among users.
- No substantial change in calls for service related to dogs, off-leash complaints etc. from before and during the pilot program

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Staff also received additional comments through email and observed some commentary on various social media channels. We were also made aware of an independent online survey conducted by a group of citizens. These results, while viewed and considered, have not been included in the City's engagement report results as generally any situations warranting action are reported to the City and it is difficult to know if the information would be duplicate to what is submitted through the City's formal engagement opportunities.

Based on both the public engagement and internal feedback, staff have prepared site-specific recommendations for each of the locations as follows:

1. Okanagan Lake Park – 45 Lakeshore Drive East

This site was selected as it is currently used informally as an off-leash area and is adjacent to an off-leash beach. It is also a high-tourist zone.

Survey Response

The public engagement for this location had the highest participation with 625 respondents

- Dog Walkers (Off-Leash): ~307 (49.1% of 625)
- Dog Walkers (On-Leash): ~115 (18.4% of 625)
- Park Users Without Dogs: ~203 (32.5% of 625)

While many felt safe and appreciated the pilot, concerns were raised about signage, waste management, and beach rules. Suggestions included more waste bins, fencing, and better signage to indicate off-leash boundaries. During the pilot program, there were two incidents, both related to one event involving non-aggressive dogs that Animal Control responded to. Some concerns about the connection to the fenced dog park and beach via a pathway were expressed. Concerns about long-term turf health were also noted. Additional signage was added at this location at the mid-pilot engagement point based on feedback.

Recommendation

Staff note that this area is heavily utilized by park users and hosts numerous events throughout the year, resulting in significant strain on the turf. The increase in dog activity and year-round traffic would likely exacerbate the stress on this grass area, particularly during the winter months, making it challenging to restore the turf to its previous health levels given the high tourist influx and frequent large events.

Based on the risk to this highly utilized turf area, staff do not recommend continuing to use this space as an off-leash area. Instead, staff propose extending the existing fenced dog park, which currently spans 40 meters along the lakefront, to a length of 75 meters. Feedback from users of the fenced dog park report that the area is too small and not maintained adequately and this expansion would provide a larger area for dogs to play and would enable City staff to access the area with the beach cleaner, maintaining a higher standard of upkeep. The estimated cost for this extension is \$7,000, which can be covered by the remaining capital budget for Dog Park Improvements. This work would be done in conjunction with the previously identified work including accessibility improvements and gates.

2. Skaha Park Main - 3661 Parkview Street

This location is a low-use section of the main part of Skaha park and one of the few potential off-leash areas on the city's south side in closer proximity to residential and tourist areas.

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Survey Response:

Public engagement for this location had 284 respondents.

- Dog Walkers (Off-Leash): ~132 (46.5% of 284)
- Dog Walkers (On-Leash): ~67 (23.6% of 284)
- Park Users Without Dogs: ~85 (29.9% of 284)

While the pilot was appreciated, safety concerns, rule enforcement, and the need for clear signage were frequently mentioned. Several participants suggested seasonal (non-summer) leash-optional usage and fencing. Additional signage was enhanced at this location at the mid-pilot engagement point based on feedback.

Recommendation

Staff recommend this location continue to be a leash optional space. Its central position within Skaha Park and lower overall use make it ideal for a shared space. Enhanced signage around the perimeter area will more clearly define boundaries, while the natural elevation buffer between the park and road adds safety. Turf management is expected to be manageable due to lower user numbers and fewer events. Parks staff can also adjust the boundaries as needed to address potential wear.

3. Riverside Park – 187 Riverside Drive

This is a low-use park area with a busier parking lot and channel access during summer months. It features well-defined access points and a grassy area, and it has defined natural and hardscape boundaries and lower usage compared to the other Okanagan Lake pilot area.

Survey Response

The public engagement for this area saw 135 respondents

- Dog Walkers (Off-Leash): ~72 (53.3% of 135)
- Dog Walkers (On-Leash): ~28 (20.7% of 135)
- Park Users Without Dogs: ~35 (25.9% of 135)

Responses highlighted the need for more signage and waste collection bins, alongside concerns about interactions between dogs and leashed walkers. Some requested fencing and seasonal restrictions to manage safety and boundaries.

Recommendation

Staff recommend this location continue to be a leash optional space. It has fewer users compared to the Okanagan Lake area and offers a large grassy space for dogs on the north end of town and within close proximity to both residential and tourist areas. Defined pathways and hardscape boundaries, along with enhanced signage around the perimeter, will help clarify usage for park visitors. Given moderate use during the pilot, turf maintenance is expected to be sustainable long-term, and this area provides a grassy alternative given that the other pilot area in Okanagan Lake Park is not recommended to continue.

4. Skaha Park East - 3895 Lakeside Road

This low-use park section is the second of the leash optional spaces on the south side of the city in close proximity to residential and tourist areas. It has defined natural and hardscape boundaries and lower usage compared to the other Skaha Lake pilot area.

Survey Response

Public engagement in this area had 139 respondents

Dog Walkers (Off-Leash): ~54 (38.8% of 139)

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- Dog Walkers (On-Leash): ~41 (29.5% of 139)
- Park Users Without Dogs: ~44 (31.7% of 139)

Some responses had concerns regarding boundary definition, and enforcement. Suggestions included adding fencing, clear signage, and enhanced monitoring by Animal Control officers. Additional signage was enhanced at this location at the mid-pilot engagement point based on feedback.

Recommendation

Staff recommend this location continue to be a leash optional space. To improve safety given there is no natural boundary between the roadway and the park area, staff propose adding a small fence along the east side, costing approximately \$4,000. This expense can also be covered by the remaining Dog Park Improvements budget.

5. 1900 Penticton Ave – Entrance to the Water Treatment Plant

This area has a low-volume road that is closed to traffic daily from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM, providing access to the Water Treatment Plant Off-Leash area. This was the largest area in terms of size for all the areas piloted and is in close proximity to residential areas.

Survey Response

The public engagement had the least participation with 54 respondents.

- Dog Walkers (Off-Leash): ~28 (51.9% of 54)
- Dog Walkers (On-Leash): ~19 (16.7% of 54)
- Park Users Without Dogs: ~17 (31.4% of 54)

While many supported the initiative, there were repeated calls for fencing, road safety measures, and designated birding areas to minimize ecological impact.

Recommendation

Staff recommend this location continue to be a leash optional space. It sees fewer users than other pilot areas and connects well to an existing fenced dog park. The pathway is at the upper end of a designated trail area currently frequented by on-leash dogs, and maintenance impacts are expected to be minimal. This area offers the largest area among the 5 piloted areas.

The recommendation to continue the leash-optional areas is based on overall public support, and the value these spaces provide to dog owners in a city with limited options for dedicated single-use facilities. These areas are not high-traffic or prime park locations, making them easier to avoid for those uncomfortable mixing with dogs. To address concerns raised by non-dog park users, particularly around safety and interactions with off-leash dogs, staff recommend enhanced signage to clearly define boundaries and rules, with clear information on how to contact Animal Control for support if required. Staff will continue to work closely with Animal Control to maintain a visible presence, ensuring users adhere to rules and remain in control of their dogs. However, Animal Control staff noted that with the compliance that was observed through their proactive patrols, more monitoring was not required at this time.

Should Committee, and subsequently Council, support the recommendation to continue as outlined above, staff will continue to monitor the areas and make adjustments or bring forward improvements as needed to balance the needs of all park users.

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Long Term Dog Park Strategy Update:

Staff continue to explore future opportunities for designated fully fenced traditional off leash dog park areas. However, creation of new single use amenities in the community, such as the traditional fenced dog parks, are difficult to come by due to the size of land required. They can also be difficult to locate in existing infill residential neighborhoods where they are most desired. With the recommendations to continue the 'leash optional' areas, the City would be adding just over 38,000m² of dog friendly space that would support higher utilization of existing park spaces and could eliminate the need for costly, single-use facilities. A further 600m² of fenced in dog park would be added with the recommendation of the expansion of the Okanagan Dog Park.

The comparisons for British Columbia communities with a similar population to Penticton indicates that Penticton is at the higher end in terms of the number of dog off-leash areas it provides. However, the size of these parks in Penticton is relatively small, with the current average size being approximately 1,460 m², compared to other similar communities that more closely align with the recommended size of 4000m² (1acre) - 20,000m² (5 acres). However, Penticton is unique in that we offer beach access, while many comparable municipalities do not. Some of Penticton's dedicated facilities are also quite far geographically (such as the Three Mile Beach of Lakeside Road parks), making them less desirable for casual and frequent usage. Offering more leash optional spaces spread throughout the community will both reduce crowding in Penticton's smaller existing dedicated parks and may reduce the desire for new single-use facilities.

Of note, the PPP also identified the area of the Esplanade as a potential dog park site in the future, and this will be considered as part of the 2025 Esplanade Plan planning process.

Financial implication

Staff have included an additional \$17,000 for the operating service level improvements in fenced dog parks as part of the recently adopted 2025-2029 Financial Plan.

The modifications to the leash optional areas as described in the report will be roughly \$5,000, which can be covered by the remaining capital funding for the dog park improvements. Similarly, the expansion of the fenced beach area on Okanagan Lake is estimated to be a further \$7,000 and can also be covered by the remaining approved capital funding.

Analysis

The upgrades completed at the City's existing off-leash parks have addressed numerous deficiencies, ensuring safer, cleaner, and more functional spaces for pets and their owners. The Leash Optional Pilot Program has successfully tested shared-use spaces, and staff recommend this shared use continue at all the pilot locations aside from Okanagan Park, where modifications are recommended to increase the fenced beach area instead.

These recommendations reflect a thoughtful and strategic approach to enhancing dog-friendly amenities in Penticton, without the need for a large, costly, single-use facility. Should Committee, and subsequently Council, support the recommended approach, staff will continue to monitor the ongoing impacts, including turf management and conflict mitigation, and recommend or make changes as required.

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Should Committee not wish to continue with the leash optional areas as recommended, or with the expansion to the fenced Okanagan Lake dog park, alternative recommendations are provided below.

Alternate recommendations

Committee may wish to proceed with some, but not all of the recommended leash optional areas. Or;

Committee may not wish to continue with any of the leash optional areas. And/or;

Committee may also not wish to expand the Okanagan Lake fenced dog park as outlined in the report.

Attachments

Appendix A – Dog Park Improvements

Appendix B - Pilot Project Leash Optional Areas

Appendix C – Leash Optional Pilot Program Engagement Report

Respectfully submitted,

SBoyko

Scott Boyko

Public Works Manager

Concurrence

General Manager of Infrastructure

KD

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