



**SUBJECT:** Leash free site application options for Ward 1 and Ward 5  
**TO:** Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.  
**FROM:** Recreation, Community and Culture

Report Number: RCC-07-22

Wards Affected: 1 and 5

File Numbers: 930-01

Date to Committee: June 9, 2022

Date to Council: June 21, 2022

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### **Recommendation:**

Direct the Director of Recreation, Community and Culture to complete public engagement to determine a preferred location for a leash free area in Ward 1 and Ward 5 as outlined in report recreation, community and culture department report RCC-07-22; and

Direct the Director of Recreation, Community and Culture to put a hold on the leash free area application process until the update to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Assets Master Plan is completed.

### **PURPOSE:**

#### **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

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### **Background and Discussion:**

In December 2019, Council approved report PR-12-19 Proposed Changes to the Leash-free Area Criteria to allow for more opportunities for leash free areas in parks. The approved criteria and process strive to deliver leash free areas in a thoughtfully planned and designed manner to accommodate all park users. The updates to the Leash Free Area Criteria identify two leash free area size classifications, destination and

neighbourhood, to better meet different needs and to suit the character of the neighbourhood and park. The updated process for the construction of leash free areas includes planned park renewal or new park construction projects, or through an online application process for resident requests.

Through the approved process, all online applications received prior to March 31 of each year will be reviewed by staff in relation to the Council approved Leash Free Area Criteria. Application(s) that meet the criteria will be reported to Council with recommendations in Q2 of that same year. Upon approval, staff will request funds through the capital budget process for the following year.

In 2021, a new leash free area was constructed at Colin Alton Parkette through the new park development project. Two (2) applications for a leash free area were received through the online application process; Aldershot Community (Ward 1) and Orchard Community (Ward 5).

## **Strategy/process**

### **Aldershot Community Leash Free Area Application - Ward 1**

An application was received in March 2022 for a new leash free area in the Aldershot Community. The application identified several options including Hidden Valley, Lamb's Hollow, LaSalle Park, Kiwanis Park and Groves Park. Of the options presented, Hidden Valley was the only park that meets the Leash Free Criteria.

Staff reviewed several other leash free area site options in Ward 1. The final recommendation is to build a leash free area in Hidden Valley Park. This location was identified in the application and meets the Council approved Leash Free Area Criteria.

The chart below identifies the benefits and challenges of the recommended location. Site location and conceptual layout of the leash free area is presented in Appendix A.

<b>Hidden Valley Park – Location 1</b>	
Proposed Leash Free Area Size – 0.30ha Park Classification: Community	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to parking</li><li>• Access to water</li><li>• Centrally located in Aldershot area</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Removal of picnic areas 1 &amp; 2</li></ul>

### Orchard Community Leash Free Area Application - Ward 5

An application was received in February 2022 for a new leash free area in the Orchard Community.

Staff have reviewed several leash free area site options in Ward 5, including the ones identified in the application, based on the Council approved Leash Free Area Criteria. The application requested four (4) site options including Orchard Park, Corpus Christi Catholic Secondary School, John William Boich Parkette and Twelve Mile Trail. Corpus Christi Catholic Secondary School, John William Boich Parkette and Twelve Mile Trail do not meet the Leash Free Area Criteria or are in close proximity to the leash free area located in Bronte Provincial Park and therefore have not been included for consideration.

The charts below identify the recommended site options and the benefits and challenges of each site. Site locations and conceptual layouts of the leash free areas for each site are presented in Appendix B.

<b>Orchard Community Park – Location 1</b>	
Proposed Leash Free Area Size – 0.15ha Park Classification: Community	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkable by local neighbourhood</li> <li>• Access to parking</li> <li>• Access to water</li> <li>• Centrally located in Orchard community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very busy complex</li> <li>• Removal of open green space that the school uses for recess and physical education classes</li> </ul>
<b>Orchard Community Park – Location 2</b>	
Proposed Leash Free Area Size – 0.15ha Park Classification: Community	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkable by local neighbourhood</li> <li>• Access to parking</li> <li>• Access to water</li> <li>• Centrally located in Orchard community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very busy complex</li> <li>• Location was approved location for community garden in 2015</li> <li>• Removal of open green space</li> <li>• Removal of open green space that the school uses for recess and physical education classes</li> </ul>

<b>Pathfinder Park</b> Proposed Leash Free Area Size – 0.10ha Park Classification: Neighbourhood	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkable by local neighbourhood</li> <li>• Access to parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of open green space</li> </ul>

### Leash Free Application Process

The leash free application process that was approved through PR-12-19 Proposed Changes to the Leash-free Area Criteria has allowed the community to identify their needs for leash free areas in their parks. This process has demonstrated community initiative and engagement. However, through the service presentations in the fall of 2021, staff identified that there is limited green and park spaces available for residents. Leash free areas are only one type of park amenity. There are many competing park amenity interests in the community, including community gardens, splashpads, sports fields, courts (e.g., pickleball), exercise equipment, increasing tree canopy and protection of open greenspace for casual use.

A park provisioning initiative is currently underway to assess future population growth and outdoor provisioning needs to accommodate this growth. A progress report for the Park Provisioning Master Plan is also on the June agenda with a final deliverable targeted for September 2022. This progress report includes a summary of existing challenges and opportunities such as parcel fragmentation and changing trends that influence parkland supply and service levels. Following this work, staff will be updating the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Assets Master Plan (PRCAMP), which will include a framework for prioritizing the future programming of park space and strategies related to future investment of park assets. As such staff are recommending that the on-line leash free area application process be put on hold until the park provisioning work and the updated PRCAMP are complete. This will help determine service levels and community preferences related to amenities in the City’s already limited park space.

### Options Considered

Based on the Leash Free Area Criteria, Staff reviewed City owned and leased lands in Wards 1 and 5 to assess the possibilities for leash free areas in various locations. Based on this review, the locations presented in this report meet the Council approved criteria.

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### **Financial Matters:**

The cost to construct a leash free area in Ward 1 and Ward 5 will be determined once a preferred location has been identified through public engagement.

The funding to support these new amenities will be considered through the 2023 capital and operating budget and forecast process.

New leash free areas will be put in priority sequence with other capital projects currently underway or previously approved.

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### **Climate Implications**

Allowing for neighborhood leash free areas will encourage residents to walk to their local leash free area therefore reducing greenhouse gasses created by longer car trips to access leash free areas.

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### **Engagement Matters:**

The proposed locations for a leash free area in Ward 5 presented through this report will be polled to the residents for the preferred location to construct. Staff will inform residents of Ward 1 on the proposed location for a new leash free area and will inform the local Councillor of any opposition to the park being used for a leash free area.

Staff will also work with internal departments on any challenges the site may present.

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### **Conclusion:**

Staff will work through the community engagement process along with the capital and operating budget planning for the new leash free areas in both Wards 1 and Ward 5.

Staff are also recommending pausing the leash free area application process as we enter the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Assets Master Plan (PRCAMP). The PRCAMP is expected to identify recreation assets, including leash free areas, service level review and delivery.

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Respectfully submitted,

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**Appendices:**

- A. Ward 1 Leash Free conceptual design
- B. Ward 5 Leash Free conceptual design and location options

**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.