



CITY OF ST. ALBERT
ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: DOG FRIENDLY PARK

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present a motion for which Councillor Hansen gave notice on January 25, 2021.

PROPOSED MOTION(S)

Direct administration to change current service levels of the Dog friendly Park and implement a dedicated area at Lacombe Park Lake for small dogs (please provide costs). That this service level change be funded through the stabilization reserve.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Dog Designated Areas (Dog Friendly Parks) - An area provided for dogs to recreate off leash.

- Dedicated use off leash space for dogs, owners, and park users.
- Design and Construction: Park classification and design are outlined through the Area Structure Plan Technical Report.
- Standards and Expectations for the development and operation of City Dog Friendly Parks are in alignment with Administrative Directive A-CS-07 – Standards for City Dog Friendly Parks.
- Hours: Hours are in alignment with Parks Bylaw 19/65.
- Access: Free access spontaneous spaces.
- Responsibilities of owners of animals within and location of sites are in alignment with Animal Bylaw 11/2013.
- Park and trail sign standards are in alignment with Administrative Directive – A-CS-08 – Parks and Trails Sign Standards.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND

In 2021, Administration is completing a strategic overview regarding dog park operations and will include an assessment of a dedicated small dog area within Lacombe Lake Dog Friendly Park as a component of this project. While it is considered feasible to develop a fenced small dog area within Lacombe Lake Dog Park, there is some pre-work required in planning and confirmation for this potential asset, including the following:

- Regional best practice research – Size requirements and specifications, necessary amenities, and site access for small dog areas.
- Potential site location, design and costing options.
- Risk identification and potential public engagement expectations.
- Service standard revisions.

This work identified above is planned to inform a capital charter for a fenced small dog area within Lacombe Lake Dog Friendly Park that Administration will submit for Council consideration with the 2022 growth capital budget. If it is determined through the identified scope of work that a small dog area is not feasible then Administration would return a report to Council to outline reasoning, challenges and alternatives.

If Council wishes Administration to follow the above noted course of action, the following motion can be made;

That Administration prepare a capital charter for a fenced small dog area to be developed within Lacombe Lake Dog Friendly Park for consideration in the 2022 budget process.

PARK USAGE

Dog Friendly Parks and Off-Leash Areas are well utilized and valued in St. Albert. Administration receives frequent feedback on the operation of these sites and general management of dog related issues each year. To date, Administration has received a small number of requests for a fenced small dog area at Lacombe Lake Dog Friendly Park.

Small dog areas within dog parks have become more common in regional dog parks over the last few years and as such has become more of an expectation for current dog park operations.

Data collection has occurred regarding the number of park users during the winter of 2020/21. This data indicates that Lacombe Lake Park is one of the busiest park sites in the City. Administration has also noted that the number of licensed dogs in St. Albert has doubled in the last five years, from 4,073 in 2016 to 8,979 in 2021. Using this data, it can be interpreted that St. Albert has increased park user density within Dog Friendly Parks and Off-Leash Areas since the implementation of the Animal Bylaw.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2013, the implementation of Bylaw 11/23: Animal Bylaw resulted in the creation of Lacombe Lake and Dodger Dog Friendly Parks, eighteen off-leash areas and nine seasonal off leash areas in outdoor boarded rinks in St. Albert.

Dog Friendly Parks are dedicated off-leash space for dogs, owners, and park users, while Off-Leash Areas are spaces for dogs, owners and park users that are shared use spaces with other park amenities. Dog Friendly Parks have established design standards that include components such as minimum park size, listing of possible site amenities, and design/infrastructure guidelines, including dog park perimeter fencing.

In 2016, City Council approved funding for dog park perimeter fencing at Lacombe Lake Dog Friendly Park which was installed on site in November of that year. There was significant public interest and noted public concerns focusing on the perceived negative aesthetic of the fencing installation and a report was returned to Council in 2019 with options to improve the site aesthetics.

As a part of the aesthetic review of the site, Council approved Administration in 2019 to install improved dog park signage, trees, and park benches to the site which is now complete.

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