

Off-Leash Dog Park Report Morinville Community Services



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GENERAL DEFINITION & DESIGN ELEMENTS OF DOG PARKS/OFF-LEASH AREAS

Fenced Dog Run is a special fenced area for dogs to exercise and socialize. Design elements may include a four (4) feet perimeter fence, special surface for adequate drainage and ease of cleaning, shade, benches, double gates for entry, dog water fountain and water source for cleaning the run, covered trash receptacles and dog waste bag dispenser.

Off-leash Dog Area is a definable space within a park that is identified by signage as available for off-leash dog activity. The space may be enclosed in four (4) feet perimeter fencing, defined by park elements such as topography, landscaping or pathways or a combination of elements to separate the off-leash area from nearby roadways. Design elements may include shade trees, a dog water fountain, benches, dog waste dispenser and covered trash receptacles.

QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL DOG PARKS

Dog parks can have a very positive effect on the lives of dogs and their owners. They provide opportunities for dogs to exercise, socialize with other dogs, and allow owners to let their dogs run in a safe environment. Estimates of dog ownership among the population in general range between 25 and 30 percent of the population as a whole. This means there are many dogs and owners who could benefit from such a development. The main qualities that define a successful dog park are described below:

Strengthen Community Connections:

There is already a strong community culture around dog ownership. Dog owners need functional and aesthetically pleasing spaces that allow them to meet and strengthen connections within this community in a comfortable environment that is inclusive to both their needs and the needs of their dogs.

Well Managed And Have Longevity:

A well-loved and well-used dog park requires it to be well maintained. Management considerations are paramount in the design of off-leash areas and must consider long-term maintenance and be flexible to allow changes over time. Off-leash areas are exposed to a huge amount of traffic in the form of running dogs that can tear up the ground. Durability of materials coupled with a management plan for the disposal of dog waste and repair of degraded areas must be in place for the long term success and sustainability of any park space.

Safe For All Users:

Off-leash areas must have guidelines, or etiquette that keeps all users safe from aggressive dogs (or owners). When rules are in place and acceptable behaviors are communicated and understood by all users, the dog community will take ownership of a park and the park will often become self-policed by the community.

Accessible:

While every effort should be made to ensure that parks are within walking distance from residential neighborhoods, off-leash areas should have available parking close by as these areas will also be

destination parks where people may drive a considerable distance to get to. The off-leash areas should also have consideration for connectivity to walking trails in close proximity.

Have Clear And Defined Edges:

Where dogs and people occupy a given park space harmoniously, a dog off-leash area will be clearly defined with strong and understandable edges. Site selection should avoid close proximity to children's play areas or passive areas where people relax, picnic, or sunbathe.

Fun For Dogs And People:

A sophisticated yet playful dog park design can look a little like a children's playground. In addition to large open spaces for running, dog parks can introduce other play elements such as boulders, logs, tunnels, bridges, and water elements such as wading pools or drinking stations. Dog owners, like parents, will delight in seeing all the fun that their dogs are having while burning off some energy. For dog owners, seating and social areas are desirable, where owners can interact and share stories, or throw a ball or stick for their pet.

Have Minimal Visual Impact:

If off-leash areas are located within larger community parks, they should be sited so as not to impact the overall visual character of the park.

Respectful Of Neighbours:

Off-leash areas should not be located directly adjacent to residential developments. While it is desirable to have community parks close to housing, there is generally less community tolerance for the noise originating from a large numbers of barking dogs. Vegetated and bermed buffers should be used to mitigate noise where appropriate.

Do Not Impact Sensitive Environmental Habitats:

There is the potential for significant impacts to any site that is chosen as an off-leash park. Impacts may include erosion, soil compaction, water quality impacts, and effects on wildlife. An environmental assessment may be required during design development to assess the potential impacts of a proposed off-leash area, and to mitigate these effects.

BEST PRACTICES, STANDARD OPERATING RULES FOR FENCED DOG RUN OR DESIGNATED OFF-LEASH AREA

- 1. All fenced dog runs and off-leash-areas are for dogs, their owners/handlers and those accompanying them. No animals other than dogs are allowed in the area.
- 2. Children under eight (8) years are not permitted inside fenced dog runs or off-leash-areas. Children age 9-15 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. Dog handlers must be 16 years of age or older.
- Off-Leash
 Area
 Please ensure you have read and understand the rules before entering

3. Owners and dog handlers are limited to a maximum of three (3) dogs. Professional dog walkers, trainers and groomers shall not use the fenced dog runs or off-leash areas to conduct their business.

- 4. Dogs under the age of four (4) months and female dogs in heat will not be allowed to use fence dog runs or the off-leash-areas. Dogs that are ill or known to carry untreated parasites will not be permitted within the fenced dog runs or the off-leash-areas.
- 5. Dogs must wear a proper fitting collar or harness displaying their identification tag, municipal registration tag, and rabies tag while in the fenced dog run or off-leash-area. Pinch collars, spike collars or slip collars that could cause injury to another dog are not permitted. Owners/Handlers must have possession of a dog leash at all times.
- 6. Dogs must be under the control of their owners/handlers and in view of their owners/handlers at all times. Leaving dogs unattended is prohibited.
- 7. Owners/Handlers must clean up after their dogs with plastic bags and dispose of dog waste in covered trash cans.
- 8. Food and drinks in glass containers are not permitted in the fenced dog run or off-leash area. Treats for dog training are permitted.
- 9. All dogs must be on a leash, eight (8) feet or less when entering or leaving the fenced dog run or off-leash-area. Any dog found "off-leash" outside of an established fenced dog run or off-leash-area will be subject to the municipalities associated fines.
- 10. Dogs must be leashed and removed from any fenced dog-run or off-leash-area at the first sign of aggression. Dogs with a record of aggressive behavior on file with the municipality will not be allowed to register for use of fenced dog runs or off-leash-areas.



- 11. Owners/Handlers are legally responsible for their dogs and any injuries caused by their dogs. Owners/Handlers use the fenced dog runs or off-leash-areas at their own risk.
- 12. Any bites to humans must be reported to the Department of Health and Animal Control within 24 hours in accordance with communicable disease laws.
- 13. Owners/Handlers may be prevented from using off-leash areas if their dogs are repeatedly involved in conflicts.
- 14. In case of a special event or emergency, the municipality shall post a notice of a planned closing at each entrance, stating the reasons for the closure.

Incorporating the best practices and standard operating rules from above, the following Off-Leash Dog Park Rules will be implemented for Morinville. The following sign will be posted on site.



DOG PARK RULES

Morinville Off-Leash Dog Park Rules: Respect your Park

- All dogs must be on a leash when entering or leaving the dog park.
- No animals other than dogs are permitted in the off-leash dog park.
- Dogs must be under the control and in view of their owner(s)/handler(s) at all times. Leaving dogs unattended is prohibited.
- Dogs are not allowed to damage or destroy the dog park.
- Poop n' scoop is mandatory. All individuals must clean up after their dog(s).
- Dogs must be wearing up-to-date rabies and dog license tags.
- Female dogs in heat, and/or sick dogs are not permitted.
- Aggressive dogs are not permitted. At the first sign of aggression, dogs
 must be leashed and removed immediately from the dog park.
- Owners and dog handlers are limited to a maximum of three (3) dogs within the dog park at one time.
- Food and drinks in glass containers are not permitted.
- Alcohol is not permitted
- Spike collars, or collars that may cause harm to another dog are not permitted.
- \bullet $\,$ Children under 14 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult.
- Owners and handlers are legally responsible for their dog(s) and any injuries caused by their dog(s).
- In case of an emergency contact Morinville Bylaw at 780-939-7831 or 911.

Park Hours Daylight to Dusk

TYPICAL SITE FEATURES



FENCING

Off leash dog parks will be enclosed by perimeter fencing with a minimum height of 4 feet / 1.2 meters. Fencing options that will be considered include chain link and wire mesh with wood posts and rails.





ENTRY

Double-gated entries, with self-closing, lockable gates. Universally-accessible.







SOCIAL / AMENITY SPACE

Focalareasofthesitewhereamenitiesare concentrated, including seating and signage. Where feasible, more playful amenities such as water features and overhead structures for shade and rain protection may be provided. Surface materials in these areas of concentrated activity would be designed to support year-round use.





VEGETATED BUFFER

Areas where the growth of plants and trees will be encouraged, in order to provide seasonal interest and a visual buffer to adjacent areas. These areas will be protected by fencing until plants are established and protection is no longer required.





SMALL DOG AREA

Enclosed areas for priority use by small dogs. When unoccupied by small dogs, these areas might be used to help socialize dogs of any size and regulate dog behaviour.







OPEN FIELD

Broad open spaces for running and chasing. These areas would take advantage of existing clearings and relatively level ground.







BERM

Areas where the ground plane is shaped into small hills and mounds, to create varied topography for enhanced play opportunities. Berms may also provide a visual and sound buffer between the park and adjacent areas.





AGILITY TRAINING AREA

Areas designed to provide a range of physical activities that challenge a dog's coordination, strength, accuracy and speed. These informal training areas might include obstacles such as bridges, tunnels, and bars.







VEHICLE ACCESS



PEDESTRIAN PATHS

Walking trails will be looped to create continuous circuits. Gravel surfacing is recommended for these paths, in order to provide a durable, well-draining surface material that supports year-round use.

SITE SELECTION CRITERIA & SPECIFICATIONS FOR OFF-LEASH DOG PARK

Selection of a suitable location for an off-leash dog park needs to consider several criteria. Using best practices from other municipalities the following list of criteria was compiled.

- 1. Distance between a proposed off-leash area and adjacent park features, homes and businesses should be evaluated for conflicts associated with noise. An ideal separation between off-leash areas and businesses or residences is 200 feet; however changes in topography or landscaping can reduce the need for spatial separation.
- 2. Off-leash areas should be located on well-drained land with a maximum slope of 15%.
- 3. Surface of off-leash areas must be durable and easily maintained and can include natural turf or a hard surface.
- 4. If located in a park, an off-leash area shall not be placed in any area where it will negatively impact primary uses of the park, unless the impact can be mitigated by regulating the hours of the dog park. Sites will be evaluated for noise conflicts with adjacent park uses, residential areas and businesses. Potential use conflicts include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Playgrounds and children's play areas
 - Athletic fields and courts
 - Sensitive habitats or wildlife areas
 - Areas directly upslope from community gardens
 - Jogging or bicycle paths
 - Historic sites
- 5. Ideally, an off-leash area shall be a minimum of one (1) acre.
- 6. Design of an off-leash area may include a potable water source for dogs.
- 7. An off-leash-area shall have permanent signage, displaying hours of operation, rules and regulations and contact information for the municipality, Bylaw and Animal Control.
- 8. Amenities required on site include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Parking
 - Access
 - Minimum 4 feet high fencing, preference for black vinyl chain link, however post and wire may be suitable where neighbor impacts are minimal
 - Double gates preferred; entry should be located away from neighbors or sensitive areas
 - Refuse containers
 - Benches and tables
 - Shade (either from trees or structures)
 - Separate areas for small, timid or old dogs should be considered where possible
 - Signage

MORINVILLE SITES FOR CONSIDERATION

Several green spaces within Morinville were considered for the best location of an off-leash dog park. The primary factor for consideration was that the land was Town owned. This was a limiting factor for identifying locations south of the railway tracks in Morinville. Much of this land is currently owned by developers and under development. Future sites in this area could be considered once development is further advanced. Heritage Lake, west of Morinville, was also considered but accessibility was limited by Hwy 2 and it did not meet many of the other standard criteria.

Potential sites were narrowed to two locations and evaluated based on standard criteria (described above) which include:

- Separation (+200 feet)
- Well-drained land
- Potential use conflicts (i.e. playgrounds, athletic fields, etc.)
- Area available (+1 acre)
- Amenities (i.e. parking, access, etc.)

The 2 locations evaluated in detail were 1) Bob Foster Park and 2) Montreau.

1. Bob Foster Park (recommended location):



Bob Foster Park is an ideal location as it meets all criteria and can accommodate all of the required amenities.

Separation requirements from residential and businesses can be met. Currently there is limited development in this area which would minimize potential conflict.

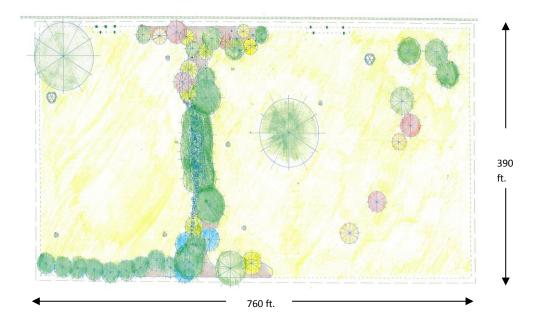
Due to its location this area has more than adequate access. Existing parking to the west, and adjacent to a trail system creates the required connectivity and makes this a convenient spot for users of the off-leash area.

Topography and drainage on this site meets the requirements.

This location is 3 times larger than the standard criteria thus allowing the off-leash area to accommodate 2 separate parks. One side of the park would allow for small dogs up to 30lbs and a second side for dogs over 30lbs.

Most importantly, this area poses the least potential conflicts with playgrounds, athletic fields, sensitive habitats, gardens, paths and historic sites. Proximity to the trail/path can be managed through fencing. The adjacent skateboard park is separated by topography. Additional fencing will eliminate any concerns.

Potential concept design for the recommended Bob Foster Park location is presented below:



2. Montreau:



This area was identified as a potential future off-leash park location through the Recreation, Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

This location partially addresses accessibility to the public as it is slightly more central (although east) compared to Bob Foster Park; however there is currently no connectivity via trails or readily accessible parking.

Proximity to residents does not meet the required distance outlined in the standards. The off-leash dog park would be located in the centre of an existing residential neighborhood that could pose conflict or create a negative interaction between residents and users of the dog park.

In addition, close proximity to both a school and sports field conflicts with recommended criteria. Fencing is not as practical at this location making it difficult to address conflicts in use.

SUMMARY OF 2 SITE LOCATIONS

1. BOB FOSTER PARK					
PROS	CONS				
Accessible from all areas of Town	Although accessible, site is not central				
Connectivity to trails	Potential for minimal residential concern				
Available parking	Costs to fence				
Meets separation distance from residents					
Exceeds size recommendation					
Accommodates dual design (small/large dog)					
No drainage issues					
Potential use conflict minimal and easily					
managed by fencing and topography.					
 Existing residential development is limited, 					
minimizing a conflict in use. Future					
residential development will be aware of the					
amenity					
Fits with existing amenities in the area to					
create a destination					

2. MONTREAU PARK				
PROS	CONS			
Site location could be considered more central	 Proximity to existing residents; does not meet separation distance criteria 			
Potential for future parking	 Potential use conflict as a result of proximity to school zone and sports field. 			
No drainage issues	No current parking			
Minimal to no fencing costs	No current trail connectivity			
Meets size recommendation	No future expansion to accommodate dual parks for segregation of dog sizes			
	Difficult to fence			

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The community and, more particularly, dog owners should be engaged in the process of establishing and maintaining a dog park. By providing the opportunity to be engaged, the public will remain involved and take pride in ownership of the amenity.

Morinville community engagement opportunities included:

- Photo contest best photos to be used in the Morinville Off-Leash Dog Park Brochure.
 - o 96 entries were received
- Survey of dog owners requesting input on the required amenities for an off-leash dog park.
 - o 335 surveys were submitted

Results of the survey to date were considered in drafting this report and will be used to guide the construction and design of the actual site. A copy of the survey questions is attached in Appendix A.

In addition, Morinville has already received coverage from the media and positive feedback from the community on the off-leash dog park that is scheduled for construction in 2014. Examples of the media coverage and feedback are attached in Appendix B.

IMPACTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Connection to Morinville's Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP):

As a Council approved 2014 project, the construction of the off-leash dog park is scheduled to begin in the fall pending Council's decision on location. This project aligns with three of the six sustainability pillars in Morinville's MSP, these are Cultural, Social and Environmental.

Requires Changes to Bylaw:

It will be necessary to complete a review and update of the Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw 26-2010 as a result of this project.

Staffing Resources:

The impact on staff resources needs to be considered. Compared to other parks, the off-leash dog park has the potential to be higher in terms of maintenance demands. Town staff will be required to provide periodic maintenance related to grass cutting, vegetation maintenance, waste collection, and other maintenance activities to ensure the park is available for year-round use.

In addition, the collection of waste and monitoring and enforcement will be a high priority. Cooperation of the users will be necessary for the ongoing success of the park.

Managing Waste:

In addition to improving the user experience at off-leash areas, proper dog waste management can reduce the chance of disease and parasite transmission between dogs, from dogs to humans, and/or from dogs to wildlife.

Partnership/Sponsorship Opportunities:

There are several options for dog waste collection, several of which are quite innovative and have the potential to create partnership opportunities. These options will be explored further; however a few pilot projects have been highlighted below.

Lees + Associates Landscape Architects explored dog waste composting options for a pilot project at Everett Crowley Park in Vancouver (Lees + Associates, 2005). The authors recommended that the park provide compostable plastic bags for waste collection, which would then be placed in an on-site composting container. Such a container would likely require a mechanized mixing and aeration system, or otherwise be maintained by volunteers. The biggest concern they identified was the potential for contamination of the system with non-biodegradable materials.

Cambridge dog park, piloted a creative and practical solution to dog waste management where dog waste is used to power on-site lighting. Artist Matthew Mazzotta developed the concept for collecting dog waste in an anaerobic digester, which produces methane through microbial processes. The methane is currently burned onsite in an old-fashioned lamp post. Dog park users collect dog waste in biodegradable bags and simply deposit them into the digester, which can be periodically mixed with a hand-crank.





Additional amenities to increase the quality of the off-leash dog park could create partnerships and/or sponsorship opportunities. By partnering or acquiring sponsorship, additional amenities that could increase the quality and appearance of the site could be installed. Examples that will be explored include additional, benches, tables, gazebos, waste collection bins, etc.









APPENDICES

Appendix A – Off-Leash Dog Park Survey Questions



OFF-LEASH DOG PARK SURVEY

To help us provide you and your dog with a great experience, please take the time to fill out the following survey so we have an understanding of the needs of the community.

1)	Are you a current resident of the Town of Morinville?	Υ	Ν
2)	Do you currently own a dog?	Υ	Ν
3)	How many licensed dogs do you own?		
4)	Do you exercise your dog(s) regularly?	Υ	Ν
5)	How often would you use an off-leash dog park?		
6)	What type of activities would you use it for (e.g. retrieving, so	ocializing, recall, exercis	e, etc.)

The Off-Leash Park will be fenced with gate access, please rate each of the following items indicating the importance to you (1 being least and 5 being very important):

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	
How important are the following to you:						
Garbage cans						
Benches						
Tables						
Shelters (Gazebo)						
Shade (Tree plantings)						
Signage						
Park size - 3 acre						
Park size - 5 acre						
Park size - 10 acre or more						
Accessibility through local walking trails						
Parking						
Park separation for large dogs 30 lbs and over						
Park separation for small dogs 30 lbs and under						

Appendix B: Local Media & Facebook

8/12/2014

Printart | St. Albert Gazette



Published August 6, 2014 YOUR VIEWS

Turn your canine into a star

by Alex MacPherson

St Albert Morinville Community Services is on the hunt for the perfect canine photograph this month and are asking for your help. Residents are encouraged to submit a picture of their favourite pooch to tburke@morinville.ca and be entered to win the cover spot of a new dog park brochure. "Why pick out some meaningless photo online when we can get the community involved in the process," asked Chris Fish, businesses and operations manager for Morinville community services. "The hardest part will be picking a winner. We've already had some great entries and more keep coming in every day." The dog picture contest is the first of its kind for community services. Fish has been impressed with the response and is hopeful they will set up similar contests in the future. "We are always looking for new ways to interact with the community and so far this has gone really smoothly." The brochure will advertise Morinville's new off-leash dog park when it opens. The new park received \$50,000 in funding from the city and an additional \$20,000 from Champion Petfoods. It will be a welcome addition to the community for pet lovers because there are no other off-leash parks in Morinville at this time. If you think your mutt has the perfect puppy eyes then send in your photo before the 4:30 p.m. deadline on August 15. There is a limit of one entry per family.

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Story URL: http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/20140806/SAG0904/308069988/-1/sag/turn-your-canine-into-a-star

Local Media & Facebook





Furry friends to fetch fame in photo contest

LOCAL NEWS, MORINVILLE

By Ashley Janes 1 450 10:00 am August 7, 2014



by Ashley Janes

The Town of

Morinville is having a dog photo contest, running now until August 15, the winner of which will be showcased on the cover of a brochure advertising the future Morinville Off-leash Dog Park. This is good news for the enthusiastic dog owner looking to show Spot off.

The contest is simple. Residents can submit their favorite photo to tburke@morinville.ca, including their name and phone number in the body of the email. They will then be notified if their submission wins.

There will also be an opportunity for a second and third placing, as pictures will be used throughout the brochure and on other advertisings.

8/15/2017

Furry friends to fetch fame in photo contest | The Morinville News

Chris Fish, Community Services Department's Business Manager, said that staff hope the contest will give residents a sense of pride and ownership over the park. "We felt it was a nice touch to have the community get involved instead of using the generic photos we find on the web."

Fish also explained that the winner will be chosen by the Community Services Department, therefore Town staff are exempt from the competition in order to avoid any bias.

"There have been quite a few photos already submitted and we are looking forward to seeing many more. This is their park and we want the public to be just as excited as we are about this addition to our town."

But that is not the only good news. Morinville's pooches will wag with delight when they hear that the tentative timeline for completing the off-leash dog park is set for this fall. Town Chief Administration Officer Debbie Oyarzun said construction on the site could begin as soon as September.

"Residents have requested an off-leash dog park for a few years now. Council approved a \$50,000 budget for 2014. Champion Petfoods has also expressed interest in providing some financial support to this project."

Finally, a social spot for Spot!

If residents are interested in learning more about the dog park, Town administrative staff will be presenting a detailed package to Council on August 26 with all the available information on the project to date.

Oyarzun explained that a location for the dog park has not yet been selected; however, administrative staff have reviewed several locations in Morinville and a recommendation for the site will be made to Council based on standard criteria and best practices.

The Town will also be conducting a local survey which is available to residents next week. Oyarzun said that the survey will ask questions regarding things like preferred amenities and park usage in order to assist project leaders in providing the best experience for both dog owners and their pets.

A part of that positive experience is the photo contest, so if you would like to enter, do so before the submission deadline at 4:30 p.m. on Aug. 26.

Update: The survey is now online at http://morinville.fluidsurveys.com/s/dogparksurvey/



BY ASHLEY JANES

http://morinvillenews.com/2014/08/07/fury-friends-to-fetch-fame-in-photo-contest/

3/8

Local Media & Facebook

