



**Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 21, 2022**

To: Committee of the Whole
From: Mayor Helps
Subject: Dogs in Parks Motions

Date: April 18, 2022

BACKGROUND

The mayor and councillors have been approached by members of the public in at least three neighbourhoods seeking more off leash spaces in their neighbourhoods. Our job is to be responsive to the public and to bring things forward for Council's consideration. The mechanism that we have to do this is to refer items to the next triennial update and ask staff to report back on the implications of a given motion.

There have recently been three motions generated from mayor and council with respect to dogs in parks, including the potential for an off leash area at Chambers and Pandora as part of the 2023 budget, and two motions to report back at the next triennial update on off leash areas in Fairfield at Brooke Street Park and in North Park at Royal Athletic Park. Planning for these three items is not included in the 2022 work plan, budget, or strategic plan.

There may be more motions coming forward now for other neighbourhoods, given the precedent that Council has set in responding to the desire for residents for off-leash areas, which are also important community gathering spaces.

It is my recommendation – even as an instigator of one of these motions – that we direct staff to include all of these motions in the high-level strategic discussion that is set to take place with respect to dogs in parks in 2023. Doing so will allow consideration of these three and other potential off-leash areas as a whole and as part of a strategic discussion.

Importantly, doing so will also allow parks staff to focus on the work plan and priorities that Council has given them in the 2022 budget including Songhees Park, the new skate park and the artificial turf fields in Topaz Park, the accessible playground at Stadacona Park, the Banfield Park dock, shoreline planning in Victoria West and Burnside Gorge, the off-leash area on Dallas between Cook and Clover Point and many other projects that our residents expect us to complete as part of the 2022 budget and before the end of this term.

I understand and also feel the pressure from the public to take action on the dogs in parks issue. However, from a good governance and strategic point of view, the best way for us to be responsive to the public is to have an in depth and comprehensive conversation about this in 2023 rather than as one offs in 2022, which is also detracting from staff's ability to address the priorities that Council has set for the last year of this term.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council direct staff to include all the dogs in parks motions, including the motion for Brooke Street Park, Royal Athletic Park, and the eastern part of Harris Green at Chambers and Pandora in the Dogs in Parks strategic discussion scheduled for 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Helps". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized "M".

Mayor Helps