

**STAFF REPORT: Recreation**



**REPORT TO: Council**  
**MEETING DATE: Aug 14, 2008**  
**REPORT NO.: DOR 08 36**  
**SUBJECT: Off Leash Parks**  
**PREPARED BY: Shawn Everitt, Director of Recreation**

#### **A. Recommendations**

THAT Council receive Staff Report DOR 08 36 "Off Leash Parks" and approve the future use of Town Lands on Peel Street in the Thornbury Area in 2009 and Hamlet Road in the Swiss Meadows area in 2010 for off leash parks; and

THAT Council give staff direction to include park development cost as well as operational cost and revenue generation options in 2009 and 2010 capital and operational budgets proposals

#### **B. Background**

On June 26, 2008 Staff presented a report to Council highlighting two locations, as potential locations for off leash areas within the Town. Staff has continued to have ongoing discussions with Mr. Norman Patterson, who represents a delegation that was before the Recreation Committee requesting the development of a Dog Park or Off-leash area. In 2007, the Recreation Committee approved the use on a trial basis of one of the existing baseball diamonds as a leash free zone. This project would allow staff to determine the use as well as maintenance requirements of such a permanent facility. This project will begin after appropriate gates have been installed to ensure dogs are not exiting the area without the owners while other dogs are entering.

At the June 26, 2008 Council meeting, staff had identified that proper signage and fencing would be required at locations and would be proposed in the 2009 capital budget process. Other enhancements on properties noted could include benches, garbage containers, shelters as well as potential trailhead parking and linkages in the future.

As part of the final design and development of these areas, noxious weeds and poison ivy control will be considered and potentially be signed or removed to eliminate any harmful conditions that may be present for both animal and humans alike. The success and sustainability of these off leash parks will be realized by having the users maintain the facility and respect poop and scoop practices.

Staff also noted that Off Leash Parks will require rules and policies to protect the Town as well as dog owners. Signs must be visible and approved by the Town's Insurance supplier and detailed in the Parks Use By-law. Proposed rules are contained in attachment 1 Off Leash Park Policy. These rules have been developed and used by other Towns, Cities that offer similar facilities and have noted successful operations of these facilities.

### **C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan**

Preserving and enhancing natural and environmental features, and cultural heritage of the community.

### **D. Budget Impact**

2009 Capital Budget would reflect fencing and signage costs.

#### **2009 Peel Street Location**

Signage costs	\$ 1,500.00
Fencing cost	\$30,000.00 at 1320 ft of fence
Parking Lot cost	\$10,000.00
Costs of Benches, Tables,	\$ 2,500.00
Waste receptacles	\$ 2,000.00
Dog poop & scoop dispensers	\$ 500.00
Costs of Shelter/s	\$12,000.00
Staff Time to prepare locations for usage	<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>

**Peel Street Location Total** **\$61,500.00**

#### **2010 Swiss Meadows Location**

Signage costs	\$ 1,500.00
Fencing cost	\$25,000.00 at 1125 ft of fence
Parking Lot cost	\$10,000.00
Costs of Benches, Tables	\$ 2,500.00
Waste receptacles	\$ 2,000.00
Dog poop & scoop dispensers	\$ 500.00
Costs of Shelter/s	\$ 6,000.00
Staff Time to prepare locations for usage	<u>\$ 3,000.00</u>

**Swiss Meadows Location Total** **\$50,500.00**

## **E. Environmental Impacts**

To ensure sustainable use of Town Parkland

## **F. Attached**

1. Proposed Off Leash Area Policies and Procedures
2. Photo of Peel Street Property
3. Photo of Swiss Meadows Parkland

Respectfully submitted,

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Shawn Everitt, Director of Recreation

**POLICY: Off Leash Areas Policies & Procedures**



**APPROVAL DATE:**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

**REVISION DATE:**

### **Policy Statement**

This policy allows for the creation Off Leash parks and will provide additional opportunities for all citizens to participate fully and safely in our community. Off Leash Parks will serve to improve the health and well-being of citizens and will promote the Town of The Blue Mountains as an active lifestyle community.

This policy shall work in conjunction with the approved by-laws respecting control and/or licensing of animals on public lands, as well as Park Use.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide users of the Off Leash Parks rules and regulations to adhere by and respect to ensure the safe use and self sustainability of Off Leash Parks.

The Main principles of the policy are:

- Self sustainability of the facilities
- Maintaining public and animal safety
- Minimization of environmental impacts
- Community partnerships to support the creation of the parks
- A more equitable distribution of facilities across the City to improve accessibility

### **Application**

This policy applies to all users of Town Owned Off Leash Parks with respect to acceptable use and general expectations of use of the Off Leash Parks

## **RULES for Off Leash Park**

- Dog owners are subject to Ontario's Dog Owner's Liability Act. Section 2 "Civil Liability" of the Dog Owner's Liability Act states,

### **Liability of owners**

2. (1) *The owner of a dog is liable for damages resulting from a bite or attack by the dog on another person or domestic animal R.S.O. 1990, c. D.16,s. 2(1).*

- Hours of operation are ½ hour after sunrise and ½ hour before sunset 12 months per year.
- Dogs must be kept leashed until the off-leash park has been entered.
- Dogs must be under voice control and are not allowed to disturb or chase people, or to destroy, dig up, or disturb flower beds, lawns, bushes or trees.
- Poop n' scoop is mandatory, and all individuals must clean up after their dogs and waste be disposed of in the appropriate containers.
- Dogs must be wearing up to date rabies and dog licence tags as well as all required vaccinations be up to date.
- Female dogs in heat and sick dogs are to be kept out of this area.
- Aggressive dogs are to be kept out of this area. If a dog starts acting aggressively towards others (people and dogs respectively) it must immediately be leashed and removed from the site.
- No dog can be in the park without an adult human attending to it at all times.
- No more than two dogs may be brought into the park by an individual at the same time.
- Off Leash Parks are smoke free areas
- Glass containers, rawhide chews, dog toys and food (animal or human) are not permitted within the park.
- Pinch (prong) and spike collars are not allowed in the Off Leash Park
- No Persons under the age of 18 are allowed in the Off Leash Park
- Professional dog trainers must not use this facility for the conduct of their business.
- Use the Off Leash Park at your own risk.

All Off Leash Parks will have regulatory and advisory signage posted directly outside the entry gate to the fenced pen area.

Signage will be posted indicating that any incidence of dog bites or scratching of humans must be immediately reported to the Public Health and Community Services Division for Rabies Control and Staff follow up.

## **Definitions**

**Off Leash Parks** are fenced facilities where residents have the opportunity to exercise their dog in an off-leash within a controlled environment without being in contravention of municipal by-laws.

## **Exclusions**

This policy is applicable only to areas with the Town that have been identified as an Off Leash Park.

## **Policy Authority**

Council

## **References and Related Policies**

1. Town of The Blue Mountains By-law No. 2006-32 respecting dogs
2. Town of The Blue Mountains Parks Use by-law
3. Ontario Dog Owner's Liability Act

## **Consequences of Non-Compliance**

If a dog owner is non-compliant of these rules a letter will be written to the owner of the dog/s noting their privileges of Off Leash Areas use being revoked. If they do not comply, charges will be brought forward against them.

In the case of a dog not having up to date dog tags, a letter will be sent by registered mail to the dog/s owner with a licence application attached. If they do not comply by the compliance date charges will be brought forward against the dog/s owner.

## **Review Cycle**

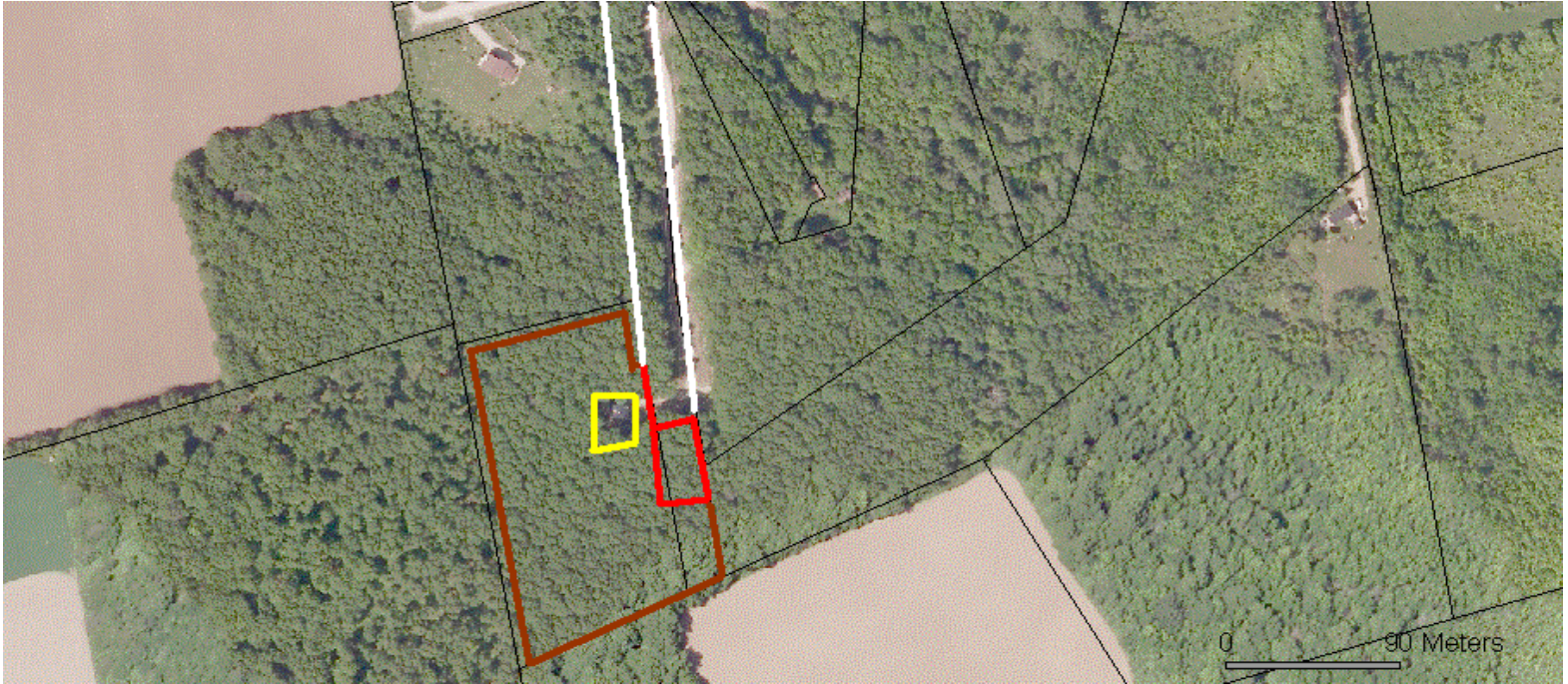
This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team.

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
Proposed Peel Street off Leash Area



White is existing entrance area  
Red is potential parking area  
Brown is proposed off leash Area to be fenced  
Green is Georgian Trail and potential trail linkages

**ATTACHMENT 3**  
Proposed Swiss Meadows off Leash Area



White is existing entrance area  
Red is potential parking area  
Brown is proposed off leash Area to be fenced  
Yellow is existing water Reservoir