

REQUEST FOR DECISION (RFD)

Date: May 9, 2023
To: Mayor Milligan and Members of Council
From: Director of Parks Facilities and Recreation
Subject: 2023 Railyard Dog Park Plan

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the Railyard Dog Park plan prepared by the Fernie Pets Society as required by the Service Provider Agreement with the Fernie Pets Society; and

THAT Council direct staff to engage the Fernie Pets Society to determine if the partnership can extend to another location within the City.

PURPOSE




To provide the Council with an outline of the projects and activities planned for the Railyard dog Park in 2023.

BACKGROUND

The Railyard site was the preferred location for a dog park because of its large size and proximity to residential areas. It was zoned as municipal park land and at the time (2011-2012) it was being used for industrial waste storage and disposal and a portion is designated as a snow dump.

A large section of the site is reserved as a BC Hydro right-of-way for high-voltage power lines. Following consultations with stakeholders, Fernie's Leisure Services Master Plan (2013) recommended that the Railyard site be developed as a dog park. In 2015 BC Hydro approved the Society's request for development of trails and fencing within its right of way. A formal Land Use Permit agreement between the City of Fernie and the Society was approved in July 2016, allowing the Society to proceed with development of the dog park.

Following the expiration of the agreement in 2019 a new Service Provider Agreement was endorsed by council in July of 2022 extending until July of 2027. Within that agreement improvements included language related to:

Reviewed by:			
Chief Administrative Officer 	Director of Corporate Administration Services 	Director of Finance 	Other:

- Roles, Responsibilities, and consulting with the city related to activities, projects, park management issues, signage hours, donations related to the Park, proposed projects, improvements, and maintenance for the Park.
- Establishing rules and guidelines for Park users
- Annual reporting requirements detailing activities with respect to the park including but not limited to:
 - Activities, projects, park management issues, volunteer hours and
 - donations to the park.
 - Proposed improvements, structures, or projects for the Park.
 - Maintenance of the Park.
 - Any Construction undertaken in the Park.

Included in the 2022 agreement was a joint venture related to establish a standard for City owned dog parks that includes necessary amenities to provide an area for pets and owners to enjoy safely and responsibly without extending service levels of the City or adding additional fixtures and amenities that will impose costs burdens on the City to manage, maintain and replace.

- Key features for the dogs
 - One acre or more of space for dogs to run and play.
 - Four- to six-foot fencing around the park.
 - Double gate system to keep pets safe as they go in and out of the park off-leash.
 - Separate large and small dog areas.
 - Hydration station(s) for dogs.
 - A suitable surface for running dogs.
 - Exercise equipment and obstacles for dogs to climb.
 - A water feature for dogs to play in.
 - Shade for both dogs and owners.
- Key features for dog owners
 - Clear signage about rules and expectations for use of the park.
 - Waste station for owners to pick up after dogs.
 - Shade for both dogs and owners.
 - Benches or seating for dog owners

INTERNAL CIRCULATION

The Bylaw department took interest in this partnering agreement, the statistics developed through the bylaw department have a clear indication that further investment in dog parks around the city may be required to mitigate the conflict between dog owners and the public.

Annex Park had an off-leash dog park without any of the necessary amenities to ensure safe enjoyment by dogs and their owners resulting in direct conflict between citizens and off leash dogs. During the pandemic and prior to the work being performed in the Annex park the area was closed for use and has not since been reopened, leaving the desire by the public for an additional dedicated area for dogs.

With the “All Ages Play” project planned for the north end of the park that area is no longer a suitable location for an off-leash dog park.

LEGAL/STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Service Provider Agreement sets out the legal relationship between the City and the Society.

LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

The agreement states that the City, through the Mayor and Council, shall, annually prior to the 31st day of March of each year of the term of this agreement, either approve, reject, or modify the park plan.

Staff notes for the Council that reporting requirements for this year were provided by the Pets Society on time, however given staff workload and meeting availability there were delays bringing this report before the council within the prescribed agreement timing. Moving forward, with process and templates created, we do not anticipate this being a problematic timeline for future years.

COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE STRATEGIES & POLICIES

Creating long term financial stability

Collaborating with the society supports the City's adopted objective of creating long term financial sustainability. The value provided to the community via the service provider would be difficult to manage within current funding realities and available staff capacity.

Committing to timely and compelling communication and engagement

By cocreating workplans with service providers their members as well as public engaged through council meeting and presentation can be informed of the workplans happening yearly. Furthermore, by working closely with service providers we are able to provide timely communication and updates from the Fernie Pet Society related to work taking place within the dog park that may effect the user, this information can be shared using City communications.

Dedicated to future proofing our community.

By utilizing these service agreements with community groups, services are provided without extending city staff and resources, therefore strengthening our ability to maintain service levels in other areas.

Building an inclusive community

The ongoing operations of this facility, and the many contributions made by the society also directly support building an inclusive community by maintaining an attractive, accessible amenity and reducing conflicts elsewhere between pets and people or wildlife."

Investing in core infrastructure and service delivery

By creating these workplans we define the extend the City takes part in projects as well as control the additions of adding amenities through city approval.

FINANCIAL/BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Dumpster- \$130 per month (\$1560.00 per year) Have removed 2 dumpsters from contract recently (Old Fire hall and Art Station alleyway), no increase to yearly operating budget to supply.

Boulders- For Parks, the City has budgeted for a supply of boulders for this purpose in other areas resulting in no additional funds required.

Sign- The City has an existing sign structure for dog park. Signs fabrication cost approximately \$150.00 (general parks operating budget). Concrete and materials estimated at \$300.00 (general parks operating budget).

Hydro Service- Cost are unknown until design work completed, existing funds have been set aside from the society for servicing.

In kind labor

- Sign-two days, two staff and equipment.
- Boulder installation- two staff for two hrs. and equipment.
- Debris removal- two Staff one day and equipment.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Section two of the Annual and Project Plan (Attachment 1) outlines the planned projects for 2023.

The workplan and projects effecting the City for this year are:

- City to install dumpster to replace the GFL dumpster in the parking lot.
- City staff place boulders on lawn sections in parking lot to prevent vehicles.
- City to install Railyard Dog Park sign in grass area at the parking entrance.
- City to look at feasibility of Pit Toilet in 2024, the need for a washroom of some kind at this location is necessary.
- New BC Hydro service pole location to be designed for installation of EV chargers.
- Partnership for Removal of Hazards before vegetation grows in.

Grants being applied for by the society are:

- Fernie Pets Society CBT REDI grant request for \$30k.
- A \$70k grant request from Co-op is low probability since the nearest store location is Lethbridge. Society is considering a request for additional funding through RMI since park is a tourism amenity.
- Grant awarded for \$1227 from Community Foundation for a dog pool.

Addition work with some city staff oversights is:

- Storage solution, replacing the need for c-can, 6' high chain link fence compound to secure equipment at the far end of parking lot.
- Add play structures, city to explore what recycled materials could be available: tires, culverts, logs.
- Society to post signs with contact information.

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS

N/A

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Work being completed within the park will be communicated in partnership with the Society.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the Railyard Dog park plan as presented and Direct staff to engage the Fernie Pets Society to determine if the partnership can extend to another location within the City.
2. Approve the Railyard Dog Park plan as presented.
3. Direct staff otherwise.

CONCLUSION

Service provider agreements such as this allow the City to assist in the operation of additional amenities within the city, reducing operating costs and related staff time that would normally be a responsibility of the City. Without increasing taxation levels, the assistance from partners using these agreements provides additional recreational opportunities and facilities with the care and attention needed to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Respectfully submitted,

Brett Logan, Director of Parks, Facilities and Recreation

Attachments:

1. Fernie Pet Society-Annual and Project Plan
2. Fernie Pet Society-Service Provider Agreement