

Summerland Dog Park Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions as of October 27, 2020

1. Consultation Process

- 1.1. ***How is the public consultation process (including the Online Open House and Public Survey) being promoted?*** The Summerland monthly E-Newsletter in September and October included information on the project and a link to the project website. The website will continue for November and December. Social media and mass media have been used and will continue to be used. Two radio interviews were conducted requesting community feedback. The District of Summerland website contains a Dog Park project page with background information and links for Open House registration and the Public Survey. The website also has a list of frequently asked questions and posts of correspondence received from the community and stakeholder groups.
- 1.2. ***How can community members and stakeholder groups provide feedback?*** Everyone is welcome to submit written feedback at any time to the Aquatic and Fitness Centre, or by e-mail to: recreation@summerland.ca. Feedback received will be posted on the public website for the project: <https://www.summerland.ca/parks-recreation/dog-park-project>; Additionally, community members are encouraged to complete the Public Survey which will be open Oct. 23 to Nov. 8, 2020. Stakeholder groups also provided feedback as part of focus groups and interviews for input. These groups included recreational baseball and softball groups, user groups of the Summerland Rodeo Grounds, and the Summerland Dog Owners Association. The input of these stakeholders was used to help create the background documents and present key information in a clear and non-partisan way.
- 1.3. ***Why are community members not considered to be stakeholder groups?*** Community members are considered to be stakeholders. However, the process for getting feedback from the community is using the Online Open House and the Public Survey tools instead of focus groups.
- 1.4. ***Can non-dog-owners provide feedback?*** Yes, non-dog-owners are considered stakeholders, as is everyone in the community. The selection of an off-leash dog park needs to be suitable for the community as a whole.
- 1.5. ***Who is the consultant working on this project?*** Lesley Dyck Leadership & Consulting, a local health promotion and community development consultant has been contracted to support this project by the District of Summerland.
- 1.6. ***Who initiated the public survey?*** Summerland Council requested staff to consult the public around 5 options, three of which are included on the survey. The other two options were withdrawn as at the request of the landowners.

2. Need, Impact and Responsibility to Build

- 2.1. ***Why is there a need for another dog park given all the other options in and around Summerland?*** The Summerland Parks & Recreation Master Plan recommends an off-leash dog park for the community, based on the need for a central, safe and accessible location to exercise dogs, and the expected social benefits for the community. There has also been a strong advocacy effort by dog owners via the Summerland Dog Owners Association since 2012.

- 2.2. **Why is a second dog park needed in Trout Creek?** The proposed park is not the same as the Sun-Oka Provincial Park off-leash area and meets the need for a safe fenced and landscaped park suitable for small and large dogs and people with accessibility/mobility restrictions.
- 2.3. **What is the economic impact of a dog park?** It depends on the community, location, design and promotion. Some communities have focused on making their park a draw for tourists, and others have focused on the local populations.
- 2.4. **Is the District of Summerland responsible to provide dog park?** The Parks & Recreation Master Plan recommends an off-leash dog park for the community. The option of asking community volunteers to fund raise and buy land for a dog park is not being considered by Council.
- 2.5. **Do we know where in Summerland most dog owners live?** We do not have good statistics on dog ownership in Summerland, however we expect that areas of increased household density such as downtown likely have an increased density of pets (including dogs).

3. Proposed Site Options

- 3.1. **Why are there only 3 site options being proposed for feedback, and why these 3?** Council directed staff to consult with the community on these 3 sites. These sites were selected as they are owned by the District, are large enough for a good quality dog park, accessible, and already used for recreation purposes. Other sites were considered in the first phase of the project but rejected due to small size, potential conflict between shared users, negative feedback from the public, and partner concerns over flexible use of the land and noise.
- 3.2. **Why did the churches decline to partner with the District to build a dog park?** The churches wanted to keep flexibility around how to use their property. They are also concerned about the impact on residential neighbours re: noise.
- 3.3. **Has the Province been approached about establishing a fenced dog park within the Sun-Oka dog beach site?** No, the Province has not been approached on this matter.
- 3.4. **Are these proposed options and designs final?** The background documents provide a description of various size and location options at each site as a starting point for providing feedback. This does not mean these sizes/locations will necessarily be selected as the final site/design. Community members are welcome to provide other suggestions for sites and designs.
- 3.5. **Is the Public Survey asking for more locations?** Yes, survey respondents are invited to provide ideas about other sites they feel should be considered for a dog park. These will be shared with Council in the project report.
- 3.6. **How many sites will be selected by Council?** Council may select one or more sites, or no sites. It is an option for Council to determine that a dog park is not needed at this time given the mix of available sites for dogs in the community.
- 3.7. **What is the best location for a dog park?** There is no single best location. Council will use the planning principles that have been applied to the options presented here, along with feedback from the community, and priority setting as part of the budgeting process.
- 3.8. **Will the report to Council include a recommended site?** The report will include recommendations based on dog park best practices, assessment of available sites, and feedback from community members and stakeholder groups. The purpose of the report is to provide high quality information so that Council can make an informed decision.
- 3.9. **Is it legally possible to change the use of donated land?** Changing the type of use of property owned by the District depends on provincial requirements (e.g. Agricultural Land Reserve), local zoning (Official Community Plan), and any specific legal title/agreement that may be in place.

Living Memorial was donated for parks/youth, but it would be up to Council to authorize appropriate land use.

- 3.10. ***Why was Peach Orchard Park rejected as a site?*** Peach Orchard Park was rejected as a site by Council after reviewing recommendations from phase 1 of the project and receiving input from community members.
- 3.11. ***Why was the soccer field at Dale Meadows rejected as a site?*** Council rejected taking a soccer field and making it a dog park due to the impact on recreational soccer.
- 3.12. ***Are the Summerland Rodeo Grounds being promoted as a site?*** No, the Rodeo Grounds are only one of 3 sites being focused on for community feedback.
- 3.13. ***Why is there no site proposed for the downtown/central location?*** Due to the lack of available District-owned property that is large enough (Memorial Park was determined to be too small during Phase 1 consultations).
- 3.14. ***Can a dog park be built at Living Memorial without removing diamond 3?*** Unfortunately, there is not enough land between the diamonds and on the hill behind to create a dog park of an appropriate size.
- 3.15. ***Have other areas such as the old skatepark, District owned property near the Works Yards, and downtown near Wharton been considered?*** Yes, they were all considered in the first phase of the project, but were determined to be either too small, not central and/or in conflict with current use.

4. Impact and Mitigation Options

- 4.1. ***Why is the Powell Beach diamond renovation cost necessary if Living Memorial is the chosen site?*** Currently the Powell Beach diamond is not in good enough condition for the displaced baseball users (ages 7-11, Tadpole and Mosquito) and the softball users to practice or play games.
- 4.2. ***Are the baseball and softball fields used in the off-season (September – May)?*** These fields are not generally booked during the off-season to limit damage to the field, and due to weather. During the summer season they are booked most days of the week.
- 4.3. ***Is it possible to move baseball users from diamond 3 at Living Memorial to Dale Meadows instead of Powell Beach?*** Yes, that could be considered as a mitigation option. It would impact current users of Dale Meadows. A more detailed plan to address any impacts resulting from the selected site will need to be developed by staff at the direction of Council.
- 4.4. ***Does an upgraded Powell Beach diamond need to have fencing all the way around the perimeter?*** If the diamond is adapted to include minor baseball (ages 7-11) it will need to have an outfield fence to bring it to the standard of the current Living Memorial diamond.

5. Timelines and Planning Information

- 5.1. ***When will the site be selected?*** The summary of the community consultation will go to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee in November for input and then the report will go to Council with recommendations and/or considerations in December. A decision about the site will be made by Council at some point after that.
- 5.2. ***When will the dog park be built and operational?*** The staff will develop an implementation plan at the direction of Council, based on District project and funding priorities. Council will be discussing 2021 capital projects in January, a budget Open House will take place in February, and the 2021 budget is targeted to be adopted at the end of February.

- 5.3. ***Why has it taken so long for the site to be selected?*** The diversity of opinions, lack of available property owned by the District, budget constraints, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all slowed the planning and public engagement process.
- 5.4. ***What information has been reviewed in the development of the options provided for community consultation?*** All of the documents from phase 1, including public feedback to Council and best practices in dog park design have been reviewed. All the sites have been visited and District staff have been consulted on cost estimates. A landscape planning architect who has done dog park planning in the Okanagan has been contacted as well.
- 5.5. ***Has this project been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic?*** No, Council directed staff in March 2020 to undertake this consultation to provide information to help with priority setting for the 2021 capital budget.

6. Design and amenities

- 6.1. ***Will there be specific areas for large and small dogs?*** Yes, the plans include designated areas for small and large dogs.
- 6.2. ***Will there be a handwashing/porta-potty station?*** These have not been costed in the basic design; could be added in future.
- 6.3. ***Will there be a fence and gate?*** Yes, there will be a fully fenced enclosure and a double gate entrance.
- 6.4. ***How large will the dog park be?*** The size will be determined by Council. The proposed options for feedback range from 0.85 acres to 1.6 acres. This range of sizes aligns with best practice around dog parks internationally.
- 6.5. ***Why do the proposed sites not include off-leash areas in each neighbourhood?*** Best practices in dog park planning recommend not creating many small parks to serve only specific neighbourhoods. Instead, they should be larger and draw in a few neighbourhoods or an entire district. It depends on geography, population, usage, availability of other option (unfenced off-leash areas etc.).
- 6.6. ***Will the surface of the dog park be grass?*** The surface will depend on the selected location. Powell Beach and Living Memorial both have grassy areas in the proposed options.
- 6.7. ***Will there be set hours for the dog park?*** Yes, most dog parks have designated opening and closing times.
- 6.8. ***Will the Dog Control Officer patrol and enforce the dog park rules?*** Yes, the dog park will be included under local bylaws.

7. Funding and Costs

- 7.1. ***How much will it cost to maintain the dog park?*** Additional maintenance costs are estimated for Powell Beach Park and Living Memorial Park at \$7,725 annually. Maintenance costs for Summerland Rodeo Grounds will need to be developed based on the site selection and development plan.
- 7.2. ***Will taxes need to go up to pay for the dog park?*** Dog park construction costs would be allocated through the Capital Reserve Fund which is funded through contributions from taxation.
- 7.3. ***Why are the estimated costs not based on a detailed site design?*** Costs for the proposed sites are intended to provide a general value for comparing sites and as a first step for building a

detailed budget. It does not make sense to pay for detailed designs for sites that may not be selected.

7.4. ***What will the cost be for the selected site?*** A detailed budget will be developed for the selected site so that specific costs can be accurately estimated, and so that time and effort is focused on the site of interest.

7.5. ***What has been spent on consulting to support the dog park planning process?*** The costs associated with this work has been \$11,700 for consulting services and community engagement in 2019 (for the combine land use planning for tennis, pickleball and dog parks) and approximately \$10,000 for the work taking place this year.