

OFF-LEASH PARK EXPANSION

Issue

A review of considerations to include the south access road for off-leash activities is provided to Council for information.

Motion Proposed by Administration

That the Off-Leash Park Expansion report be received as information.

Report, Analysis and Financial Implications

At the June 10, 2024 Council meeting an inquiry was made regarding whether the south access road to the off-leash park could be included for off-leash activities to improve access to shade. Administration has reviewed the request including desktop and field observations to adequately respond to this inquiry.

Due to the orientation of the access road and existing trees, there is no shade cast onto the access road, except at the very bottom near the parking lot. Adjacent to the road area is a small creek and riparian area. A species at risk has been observed in the area. It is a recommended practice to not identify the species specifically as it may draw additional undesired attention. Based on this, moving the fencing of the south access road would only be supported provided the small creek and riparian area was fully fenced off to keep pets on the road access.

Fully fencing the road would require 900 metres of fencing, which would come at a significant cost. Fencing would interfere with some of the single-track trails in the area frequented by walkers and cyclists.

Based on these findings, Administration does not recommend including the south access road for off-leash use at this time. Instead, Administration will explore opportunities to add shade structures and plant additional trees within the existing off-leash park, considering the restrictive covenant (RC) registered to the lands. Since the Okotoks Gas Plant previously occupied the area, any site improvements must align with the RC.

The Town has engaged a consultant to prepare a request for closure of the site from a reclamation perspective and the application is expected to be completed by year-end, and submitted to the Province with the final steps occurring in the first or second quarter of 2025. However, even after completion, there will likely still be limitations regarding land use and ground disturbance.

Strategic Plan Goals

<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsibly Managed Growth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrated Environmental Leadership
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strong Local Economy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Culture & Community Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organizational Excellence		

Equity/Diversity/Inclusivity Impacts and Strategy

n/a

Environmental Impacts

The report considers the impacts to habitat for a species at risk in proximity to the site.

Governing Policies/Bylaws/Legislation or Agreements

Wildlife Act

Community Engagement Strategy

n/a

Alternatives for Consideration

CAO Comments

I support the recommendation of Administration.

Attachment(s)

n/a

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