



**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
**Operations and Waste Management Division**

<b>TO:</b> Chair and Members Public Works Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> WARD 3
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> March 5, 2012	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Petition from East End Residents Requesting a Leash Free Area in Gage Park (PW12014) - (Ward 3) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Gerry Davis, CMA General Manager Public Works Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b>  Kara Bunn (905) 546-2424, Extension 2738
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the request to make a portion of Gage Park leash free be denied based on the historic significance and adopted Master Plan of the park;
- (b) That any future petitions for leash free parks be received and referred to Parks staff for consideration in keeping with the City Hamilton’s leash free policies and by-laws;
- (c) That the Outstanding Business List Item referring to the Petition from east end residents requesting a leash free area in Gage Park be identified as completed and removed from the Public Works Committee Outstanding Business List.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council at its November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting recommended that a petition from residents in the east end of Hamilton requesting a leash free dog area in Gage Park be referred to the General Manger of Public Works for a report to the Public Works Committee. Of the 1,050 signatures on the petition, 49% are from Ward 3 and the remainder are from elsewhere in the City and Province. A copy of the cover letter to the petition is attached to Report PW12014 as Appendix A.

At present, there are six (6) leash free facilities in operation in the City of Hamilton. The leash free parks are governed by the Leash Free Parks Program Policy, which was

**SUBJECT: Petition from East End Residents requesting a leash free area in Gage Park (PW12014) - (Ward 3) - Page 2 of 5**

---

approved by Council on June 3, 2003 per Report PW03067. The policy provides a framework for the planning, design, construction, operation, regulation, funding, management, and community involvement for public leash free parks. The City of Hamilton created detailed criteria in the interest of limiting risk, avoiding potential conflicts among park users, and limiting the impact on the environment. Staff is supportive of the Leash Free Parks Program Policy and are committed to pursuing a variety of leash free locations throughout the city so that all residents have access to leash free facilities.

Staff does not recommend a leash free zone in this location as it would be detrimental to the historical vision and aesthetics of Gage Park and does not support the Gage Park Master Plan, which encompasses the need for a revitalization of the Park's urban canopy, and encourages un-programmed open spaces for active recreation.

**Alternatives for Consideration - See Page 4**

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:** There are no financial implications from the recommendations in this report.

**Staffing:** There are no staffing impacts.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Gage Park Master Plan process, undertaken by the City of Hamilton, Landscape Architectural Services Section, Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure Division, began in 2005. The Master Plan considered the vision and the historical importance of the park along with the need for recreational opportunities and the ability to host city wide events and festivals.

Public Information Centres were held on June 20/21, 2006, March 3, 2008, February 17, 2010, and February 23, 2010. On March 4, 2006 a workshop was held and on May 10, 2008 a Friends of Gage Park update meeting occurred. During the public workshops/Public Information Centres a few individuals came forward to request that a leash free area be considered for Gage Park. The request was measured against the Leash Free Parks Program Policy and other requests for the park. It was determined at that time that there was a greater need for un-programmed active space, which could be used for a variety of activities and by a variety of community members.

On March 31, 2010, Council approved the preferred option of the Gage Park Master Plan as per Report PW10033.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

If Council approves the recommendations within this report, there will be no policy implications.

The Public Works Business Plan, “Innovate Now” identifies our vision “to be recognized as the centre of environmental and innovative excellence in Canada”. Innovate Now identified seventeen top priorities to move us forward within four vision drivers. This project is consistent with the “Processes” vision driver by ensuring we commit to smart processes that match our needs; new leash free zones need to be sustainable environments.

### **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The Ward 3 Councillor was consulted in the drafting of this report and is in support of the recommendations contained herein.

The following groups were consulted and there was no support for a leash free zone in Gage Park.

#### *Internal Consultation*

Staff from:

- Landscape Architectural Services (Environment and Sustainable Infrastructure Division)
- Special Events (Culture Division)
- City-Wide Services (Recreation Division).

#### *External Consultation*

- The Hamilton Burlington Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HBSPCA) was consulted to get input on the agencies experiences with the Dartnall HBSPCA leash free zone.

### **ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the petition for a dog leash free zone in Gage Park not be supported at this time. Establishing such an area is not in keeping with the aesthetics and designated use of Park as set out in the approved Gage Park Master Plan, which maintains the historical look and vision of the Dunnington-Grubb designed parkland.

Gage Park was designed in the 1920’s as part of the City Beautiful movement; the park became an iconic presence in the City and a premier regional park showcasing historical elegance, horticultural excellence, and a space for active recreation, concerts, large events, children’s play areas, and family picnics. The Master Plan continues to encourage this vision.

The Gage Park Master Plan was developed in order to re-establish a cohesive vision and to direct future work in the refurbishment of the park. One recommendation of the Master Plan proposed a 20 year urban forest strategic plan to protect and revitalize the

rare native tree species that occur within Gage Park. This direction is reinforced by the Urban Hamilton Official Plan (Council adopted on July 9, 2009) that encourages the protection and conservation of tangible heritage landscapes. Gage Park is also designated as a Natural Heritage area and as such the green spaces and urban canopy are to be protected. The area where a potential leash free dog park could occur is in an area where young trees have been planted as part of the efforts to renew the tree canopy of Gage Park; these trees would sustain significant damage if a dog park were located here.

The only area that is of adequate size to be considered for a leash free zone is in the south-west corner of the Park and the space has been identified in the Master Plan for an informal active recreation area. The Master Plan, attached to Report PW12014 as Appendix B recommended that the area be a versatile open space and remain un-programmed. The location is at the corner of Gage and Lawrence Road, denoted with an 'H' in Report PW12014 as Appendix B. The Master Plan further recommends that open space should be protected and highly valued. Ward 3 currently has a deficiency of recreational spaces and staff encourage the protection of the open spaces in Gage Park so that many community groups can continue to take advantage of the areas available that are not programmed, including those who wish to walk their dogs through the park on-leash.

The City of Hamilton has a deficiency of leash free areas and staff is actively pursuing additional facilities throughout various wards. Ward 3 currently has a leash free area that may be used by residents and is located on Birch Avenue.

#### **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

As an alternative to the staff recommendation, Council could accept the petition to establish a leash free area at Gage Park. Should this be done, the requirements of the City's Leash Free Parks Program Policy would still need to be met prior to a leash free area being implemented.

This would require residents submitting a "Request for Dog Park" application, including proof of a volunteer committee comprised of ten members who would execute an agreement of volunteer responsibilities. A public meeting would then be convened with neighbourhood residents and stakeholders in conjunction with the Ward Councillor and other impacted City departments.

In accordance with the requirements of the Leash Free Parks Program Policy, the development of all new dog parks proceeds on a cost share basis, whereby the City pays 50% of the upstart development cost and the volunteer committee pays the remainder. The total cost to develop a leash free zone in Gage Park would be approximately \$30,000 of which \$15,000 would need to be raised by the volunteer group prior to development. Based on the Policy requirements, the only suitable space for a two acre fenced leash free area would in the informal active recreation area identified in the Gage Park Master as shown in Appendix C to Report PW12014. To determine the success of a leash free area, or to determine if further action is required

**SUBJECT: Petition from East End Residents requesting a leash free area in Gage Park (PW12014) - (Ward 3) - Page 5 of 5**

---

to improve or remove the free-running designation, the park would be evaluated once within the first year of operation, and then on an 'as required' basis thereafter to. Leash free park closures and/or removals are at the sole discretion of Council.

Council may also choose to direct staff to look for an alternative location for a Leash Free area and prepare a report back to Public Works Committee and Council, however, specific direction is not required as staff are pursuing additional leash free areas throughout the various wards. Ward 3 currently has a leash free area that may be used by residents and is located on Birch Avenue.

### **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

#### ***Financial Sustainability***

- ◆ Delivery of municipal services and management capital assets/liabilities in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

#### ***Growing Our Economy***

- ◆ A visitor and convention destination

#### ***Environmental Stewardship***

- ◆ Natural resources are protected and enhanced
- ◆ Reduced impact of City activities on the environment

#### ***Healthy Community***

- ◆ Plan and manage the built environment

### **APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

Appendix A - Petition letter from the east end residents requesting a leash free area in Gage Park

Appendix B - Gage Park Master Plan (adopted by Council July 9, 2009)

Appendix C - Option for placement of a leash free zone in the South West corner of Gage Park

*November 23,2011*

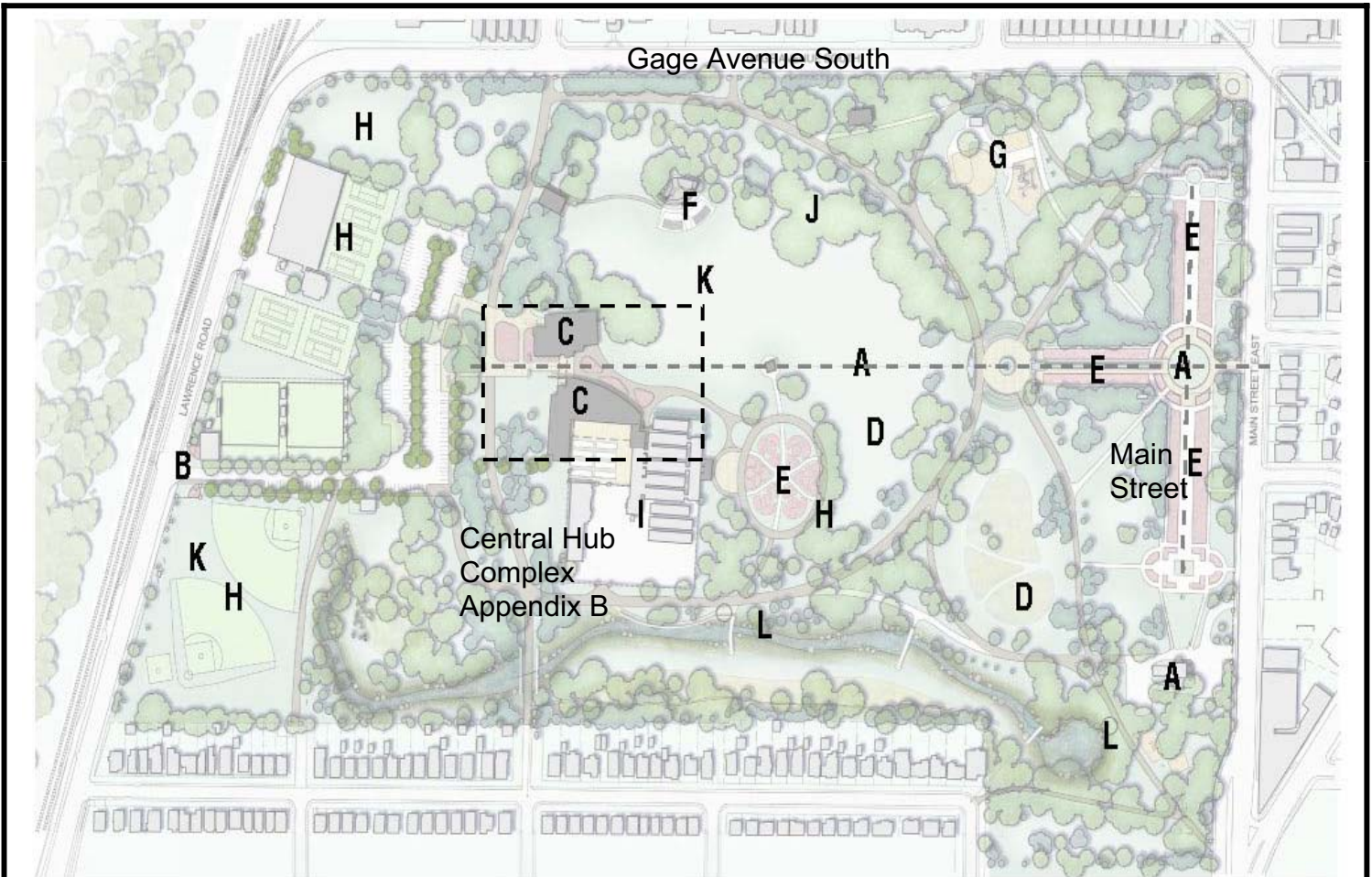
***To Whom It May Concern:***

***Our petition and concerns are to have a leash free park in the east central area for its citizens to have a place to let their dogs run and exercise in a fenced in leash free environment in this area. We the committee and citizens would like to see this happen within Gage Park. There is a great need for it. We are aware that in the past years there have been petitions started to have a leash free area within Gage Park with no success. We believe it is time to listen to the citizens in the east central area, for there is a great need for a fenced in leash free park to be accessible to them. When we say accessible we mean within walking distance, wheelchair friendly and senior friendly. The Benefits of a fenced in leash free dog park promotes responsible pet ownership, gives dogs a place to exercise safely thus reducing barking and other problem behaviors. It provides seniors and disabled owners with an accessible place to exercise their companions and provide an area for community-building socializing. Off leash dog areas, provide a community setting in which people can gather and socialize, where they can observe the interaction of groups of dogs at play. Dog parks the world over allow owners and their dogs to spend time together,***

*while the dog satisfies it's cravings for canine play and companionship. We the committee and the community are looking forward to hearing back from you in response to our petition.*

*Thank-you*

*Committee members : Cynthia Lively, Michael Beattie, Rick Cobbet, John Danby, Brian Evans, Igor Kasprzycki, Nicolo Piras, Carol Pocock, John Sharpe, Dan Taylor, Laurie Watters, Sue Bauer*



Location of Key Elements and Systems

- A - Historic Integrity
- B - Lawrence Road Entry
- C - Multi-Use Buildings and Tropical Greenhouses
- D - Lawn and Maintained Meadow Landscapes
- E - Horticulture Display Gardens
- F - Band Shell
- G - Children's Play Area
- H - Active Sports in the Park
- I - Production Greenhouses, Forestry and Public Work's Yard
- J - Reforestation Guidelines
- K - Large Event Management
- L - Interpretive Nodes and Outdoor Educational Opportunities



Hamilton

Public Works

General Manager  
Gerry Davis, CMA

*PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT*  
*Environment & Sustainable Infrastructure Division*

# PARK MASTER PLAN



PLAN SHOWING  
POTENTIAL DOG PARK  
AT GAGE PARK

