



People, Dogs & Parks Strategic Plan: Background Report

November 2023

DOGS IN THE DNV



DNV PARKS



TOP 2 BYLAW TICKETS

- OFF LEASH DOGS (WHERE NOT ALLOWED)
- DOGS IN PROHIBITED AREAS

BENEFITS OF HAVING A DOG

- PROVIDE COMPANIONSHIP
 - KEEP US PHYSICALLY ACTIVE
 - EASE STRESS AND ANXIETY
 - HELP US GET TO KNOW OUR NEIGHBOURS
-

DOG WASTE



Summary Infographic

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1. Introduction

This background report describes what we know about dogs in the District of North Vancouver and its parks. The purpose of the report is to set a baseline of information and answer common questions, such as

- How many dogs are in the District?
- How many dogs will there be in the District in the future?
- What are the most common bylaw enforcement tickets issued for dogs?
- How many Commercial Dog Walking permits are issued and where are they allowed?
...and more.

The report will inform the development the People, Dogs & Parks Strategic Plan through all phases in the process.

2. Dog population in the District

2.1 Estimated dog population

The exact number of dogs that live within the District is unknown. Using the number of licenced dogs likely undercounts the dog population as some dog owners may not follow the bylaw (see Section 2.3 for more on dog licencing).

There are a few methods to estimate the dog population in the District (Table 1). Using these methods, **there are an estimated 17,634 to 18,515 dogs in the District.** This translates to **approximately 1 dog for every 5 people in the District.** It is likely that many owners of these dogs visit parks in the District for recreation and exercise.

Table 1: Estimated dog population

Source	Estimate method	Applied to the District
Agricultural Canada (2020) ¹	Approximately 0.20 dogs per person. The District's population was 88,168 in 2021. ²	Approximately 17,634 dogs
Canadian Animal Health Institute (2022) ³	Approximately 0.21 dogs per person.	Approximately 18,515 dogs

¹ Agriculture Canada. Sector Trend Analysis. Accessed August 3, 2023 <<https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/international-trade/market-intelligence/reports/sector-trend-analysis-pet-food-trends-canada>>

² Statistics Canada. Census 2021.

³ Canadian Animal Health Institute. 2022 Latest Canadian Pet Population Figures Released. Accessed August 3, 2023 <<https://www.cahi-icsa.ca/fr/press-releases/2022-latest-canadian-pet-population-figures-released>>

2.2 Projected dog population

The District’s population is projected to grow over time. If the rate of dog ownership remains the same and the population grows, the number dogs in anticipated to increase.

The number of dogs in the District is projected to increase by approximately 3% per year.⁴ By 2030, this means there could be approximately 21,556 to 22,634 dogs in the District (Figure 1) from 2023, which is an increase of 3,922 to 4,119 total dogs. As a result, it is likely that there will be an increasing number of dogs visiting parks in the District.

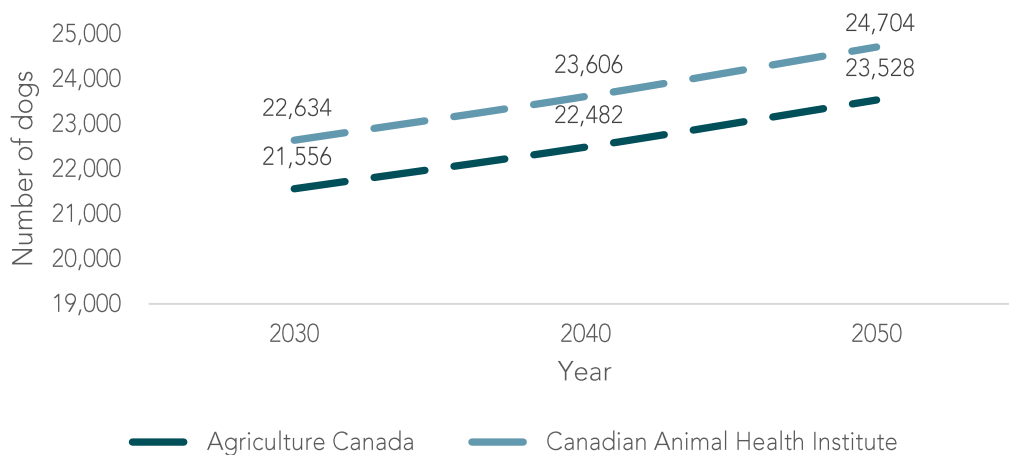


Figure 1: Projected dog population growth in the District of North Vancouver

While pet ownership tends to rise along with population in Canada, events and demographics can further increase pet ownership rates:

- The COVID-19 pandemic, which increased time at home for work and leisure
- Growing senior-aged population
- Single professionals and young couples
- Higher household incomes, which have more disposable income⁵

⁴ This is calculated using Metro Vancouver’s growth projections for the District and range of dog ownership rates in Table 1: Estimated dog population.
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/Metro_Vancouver_Growth_Projections_Tables.pdf> Accessed August 3, 2023

⁵ IBISWorld. Industry Report: Pet Stores in Canada, August 2022.
IBISWorld. Industry Report: Pet Grooming & Boarding in Canada, January 2023.

2.3 Licenced dogs

All dogs are required to be licenced by the Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw. **There are approximately 6,322 licenced dogs in the District** (five-year average, 2018-2022). Using the dog population estimates in Section 2.1, **approximately 34-36% of the dog population in the District have licences.**

A survey of municipalities in Table 2 shows an average of 57 licenced dogs per 1,000 people. In comparison, the District has a higher rate of licenced dogs at 72 licenced dogs per 1,000 people. These comparisons depend on the licencing rates in each municipality.

Table 2: Comparison of municipal licenced dog to population

Jurisdiction	Population (2021) ⁶	Number of Licensed Dogs	Number of Licensed Dogs per 1,000 People
City of Mission	41,519	4,100 (2021) ⁷	99
City of Victoria	91,867	6,814 (2022) ⁷	74
District of North Vancouver	88,168	6,322 (2018-2022 average)	72
District of Saanich	117,735	8,510 (2021) ⁷	72
City of Chilliwack	93,203	6,500 (2021) ⁷	70
City of Calgary	1,306,784	88,606 (2022) ⁷	68
City of Langley	28,963	1,700 (2022) ⁷	59
District of West Vancouver	44,122	2,600 (2022) ⁸	59
City of New Westminster	78,916	3,480 (2022) ⁹	44
City of Abbotsford	153,524	6,600 (2021) ⁷	42
City of North Vancouver	58,120	2,125 (2021) ¹⁰	36
City of Richmond	209,937	7,590 (2022) ¹¹	36
City of Vancouver	662,248	22,683 (2022) ¹²	34
City of Surrey	568,322	15,671 (2022) ¹³	28

⁶ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population

⁷ District of Saanich, People, Pets and Parks Strategy, 2023

⁸ District of West Vancouver, Email from Bylaw and Licensing, 2023

⁹ City of New Westminster, Email from Animal Services, 2023

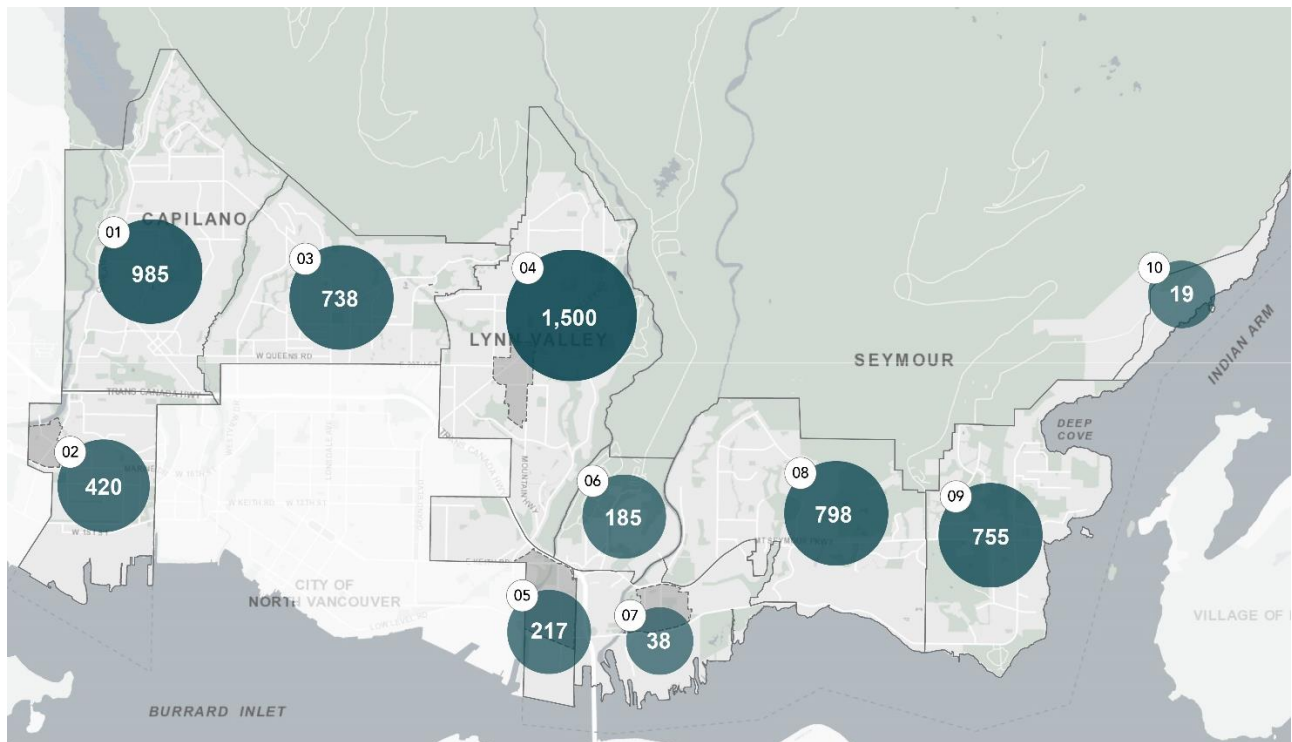
¹⁰ City of North Vancouver, Dog Licenses Issued 2021

¹¹ City of Richmond, Email from Dog Licensing Clerk, 2023

¹² City of Vancouver, Email from Animal Services, 2023

¹³ City of Surrey, Email from Dog Licensing Clerk, 2023

Dog licence data shows the distribution where licenced dogs live in the District. Figure 2 shows the number of dogs by neighbourhood. The neighbourhoods with the most dogs include Lynn Valley, and Upper Capilano. The neighbourhoods with the least dogs include Indian Arm Communities (inclusive of the entire neighbourhood along Indian Arm not shown on the map below), and Maplewood.



- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 01 UPPER CAPILANO | 06 LYNNMOUR - INTER-RIVER |
| 02 LIONS GATE | 07 MAPLEWOOD |
| 03 UPPER LONSDALE - DELBROOK | 08 SEYMOUR (WEST) |
| 04 LYNN VALLEY | 09 SEYMOUR (EAST) |
| 05 LYNN CREEK - KEITH LYNN | 10 INDIAN ARM COMMUNITIES (INCLUSIVE OF ENTIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD) |

■ KEY TOWN AND VILLAGE CENTRE

Figure 2: Licenced dogs by neighbourhood

3. Regulations & enforcement

3.1 Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw & Fees and Charges Bylaw

Dogs are regulated by the Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw in the District. The bylaw includes:

- Dog licencing
- Disposal of dog excrement
- Aggressive dogs, animal cruelty, diseased dogs
- Seizure and impounding, surrender/sales fees
- Enforcement and penalties
- List of parks and amenity areas within parks where dogs are prohibited, on-leash only, and on-leash or under the control of a competent person (see Appendix 1 for list of District parks). "Under control" is defined in the bylaw as any dog, leashed or unleashed, immediately returns when called by the person who owns or has care and control of the dog, and is not annoying, harassing or attacking any person, wildlife or other animal
- Commercial dog walker permit, fees, regulations, conduct, and where commercial dog walking is permitted

Dog licencing fees

Annual dog licencing fees in 2023 are as follows (Fees and Charges Bylaw):

- Spayed or neutered dog: \$35
- Not spayed or neutered dog: \$82; 3 to 6 months of age: \$35
- Spayed or neutered aggressive dog: \$100

Commercial dog walking

Commercial dog walking is permitted on sections of the Baden Powell Trail, Powerlines Trail/BC Hydro right of way, Inter River Park Dyke Road, and sections of Lower Lynn Canyon Park (Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw). There are also signs on Mount Fromme that indicate trails where licenced commercial dog walkers are permitted, however these trails are not listed in the bylaw.

As private businesses operating on public land, commercial dog walking companies are required to have permits. Regulations for commercial dog walking include walking up to six dogs at a time, wearing an official, identifiable vest, and displaying their permit. **A maximum of 40 permits may be issued at any given time. In the last five years (2018-2022), the number of issued permits at any given time is typically near or at the maximum number of permits.** This shows there is sustained demand for commercial dog walking permits.

Commercial dog walking permits in 2023 are \$73.40 plus an annual park use permit ranging from \$685.60 to \$1,445.90 (Fees and Charges Bylaw). The range depends on the number of dog walkers in the business and whether the business is located in the District of North Vancouver.

3.2 Education and enforcement in parks

The District’s Bylaw Officers and Park Rangers educate dog owners and walkers about the dog regulations in the District and enforce infractions by ticketing. A Dog Licence Canvasser goes door to door throughout the District in the summer to promote and education residents about dog licencing.

A high-level estimate of the staff time cost spent on dog education and enforcement is approximately \$200,000 per year (2021 rates).

Overall, the top five categories of issued bylaw enforcement tickets matches the top five reported issues.

Ticketed offences are shown in Figure 3. The most common is “dog at large”.¹⁴ The top five offences account for 90% of tickets. On average, 19 tickets were issued in parks per year from 2018-2022.

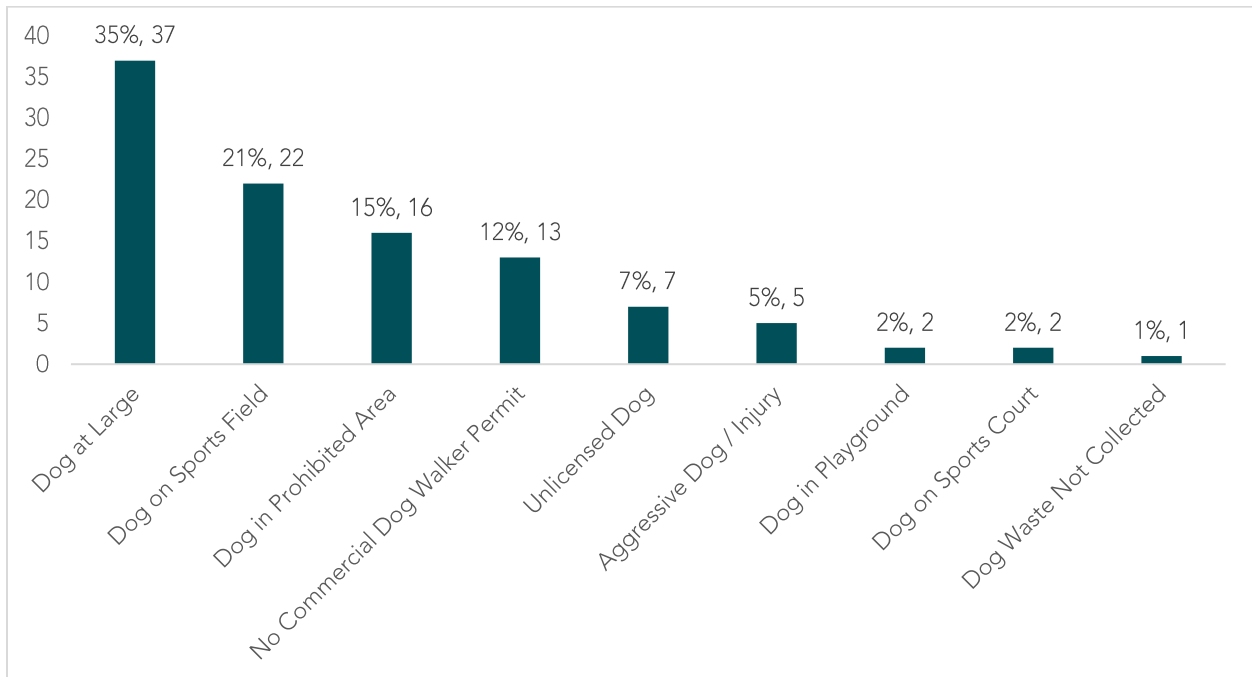


Figure 3: Dog enforcement tickets issued in District parks, 2018-2023 2nd Quarter

The top six parks where dog enforcement tickets have been issued is shown in Figure 4. There is a mix of on-leash parks, off-leash areas, and some of these parks include areas where dogs are prohibited, such as sports courts and playgrounds.

¹⁴ “At large”, when used with reference to a dog, means being elsewhere than on the premises of its owner and not secured on a leash by a competent person.

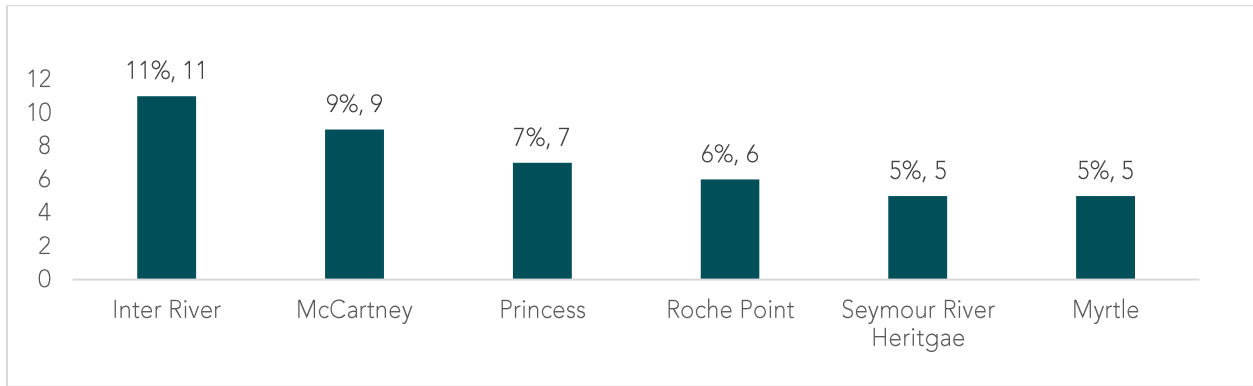


Figure 4: Dog enforcement tickets issued by park (5 or more), 2018-2023 2nd Quarter

Reported dog issues in parks are shown in Figure 5. The top five reported issues account for almost 80% of cases.

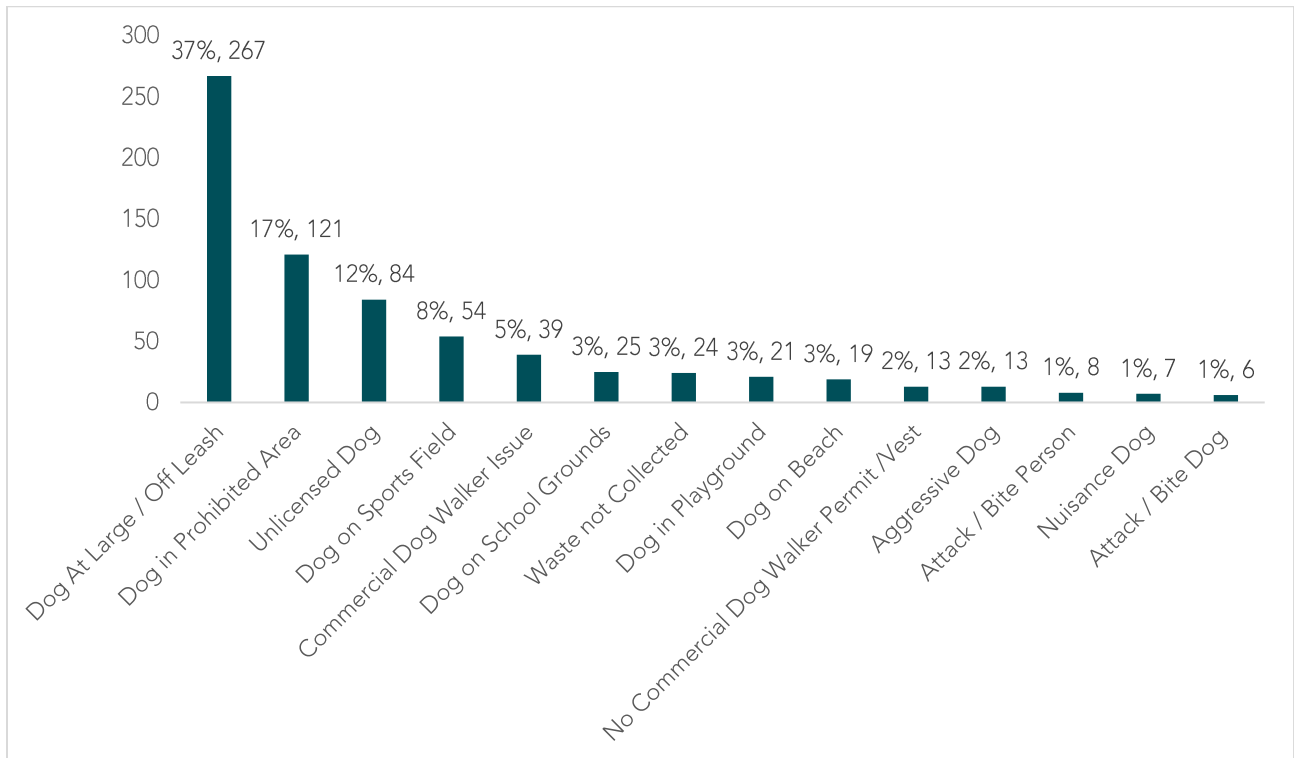


Figure 5: Reported dog issues by public and staff in District parks (5 or more), 2018-2023 2nd Quarter

4. People and dogs in parks

4.1 Park visitors with dogs

The number of visitors to District who bring a dog is unknown. However, **an estimated 19-24% of park visitors bring one or more dogs with them.** In an intercept survey of trail visitors at select natural area trailheads in the District in May 2022, 19% had at least one dog with them.¹⁵ Metro Vancouver Regional Parks estimates 24% park visitors bring a dog.¹⁶

4.2 Facilities for dogs

Facilities for dogs in District parks include:

- Fenced off-leash area at Myrtle Park
- Fenced off-leash area at Belle Isle Park
- Dog waste bins
- Dog waste bags and dispensers (partnership program: bags donated for advertising)
- General waste bins
- Riparian area fences to prevent dogs from entering sensitive ecosystems
- Signs about wildlife and regulations

4.3 Dog waste

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks estimates a medium sized dog (e.g. cocker spaniel) discharges 0.34 kg of feces and about 720 ml of urine each day.

In the District, an estimated 17,634 dogs (see dog population estimates in Table 1), would produce **241 garbage trucks of feces and 22,259 oil drums of urine in one year.**

4.4.1 Dog waste bins

The District Parks dog waste bin program began in 2014 with the aim of reducing the amount of dog waste entering the landfill for health and safety reasons.

As of 2023, **over 60 dog waste bins** placed at high collection locations to serve park visitors. In summer, **over 4,000 kg of dog waste in one month** was collected from dog waste bins in District parks. Annually, **over 6,000 dog waste bin bags are collected** and costs approximately **\$30,000 in staff time** for collection (2021 rates), and approximately **\$40,000 for contractor disposal costs.** Disposal involves separating the bags from the excrement. Other costs for this

¹⁵ District of North Vancouver. Natural Areas Trails Strategy Initial Engagement Summary Report, September 2022. Available on DNV.org

¹⁶ Metro Vancouver. Dogs in Regional Parks. Accessed August 3, 2023
<<https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-parks/dogs-in-regional-parks>>

program include the dog waste bins, bags, and equipment.

4.4.2 Dog waste impacts

Dog waste can contain pathogens such as bacteria, salmonella and giardia, and nitrogen and salt contaminates. It can make people sick and contaminate soil and water.

People could inadvertently contact dog waste in parks while playing sports on sport fields, children playing in parks and playgrounds, or disabled persons using hand-activated mobility devices. Plants and aquatic life can be affected through waste in waterways.

Dogs typically defecate along the first 100 to 150 metres of a trail. Two to three days' worth of poop from about 100 dogs can contribute enough bacteria to temporarily close a bay to swimming and shellfishing.¹⁷

This is why it is important to properly collect and dispose dog waste. It is a bylaw offence to leave dog waste – this include pushing it off the trail or leaving it in plastic bags on the ground (including bags labeled biodegradable or compostable).

5. Dogs & environment

The District has extensive parkland areas and a range of ecosystems and terrain. Visitors to parks, especially natural parkland, are entering wildlife areas.

Environmental and park features	Potential impacts from dogs
Sensitive ecosystems including riparian areas, wetlands, estuaries, beaches, and mudflats that are important for wildlife and birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion near waterways, which causes sedimentation and loss of vegetation (which speeds up further erosion) • Sedimentation of waterways • Chasing wildlife, including the presence of dogs, can decrease the abundance of wildlife • Disturbing migratory birds during important rest and eating periods • Spread of invasive plant species
Creek and rivers that are home to aquatic life, including some fish-bearing waterways where fish lay eggs and young ones grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sedimentation in water affects the ability of fish to find food and fish egg development • Damage to fish, fish eggs, and other aquatic animals

¹⁷ Metro Vancouver. Dogs in Regional Parks. Accessed August 3, 2023
<<https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-parks/dogs-in-regional-parks>>

Key times for fish are during spawning (fall) and hatching (spring) seasons	
Extensive undeveloped, forested mountainside areas that is territory for wildlife including larger animals including black bear, coyotes, cougar, bobcats and more remotely, potentially wolves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasing wildlife, including the presence of dogs, can decrease the abundance of wildlife • Potential to provoke bears, particularly if dogs are off leash, for a negative encounter with people and dogs
Plant communities and understory vegetation near the forest floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trampling vegetation off trails • Digging holes
Sports fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digging holes that can cause injury to sport players • Leaving sticks on sports fields damages lawn mowing equipment
All park areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog feces not picked up can make people sick on contact and has contaminants that affect the natural environment (see Section 4.3 for more on dog waste)

6. Housing trend impacts on dogs & parks

Housing relates to planning for dogs in nearby parks in the following ways.

6.1 Key centres for housing development

The District's Official Community Plan (OCP) plans for key town and village centres to be where most new housing is built. The town and village centres are envisioned to have low-carbon, compact, and diverse housing, transportation choices, and supportive public amenities and employment space.

As population grows in the centres, it may translate to higher densities of dog ownership. The location of new housing is directed by The OCP focuses most development to the **four key town and village centres**:

- Maplewood
- Lynn Creek
- Lynn Valley
- Lions Gate

Currently, Lions Gate is the only centre with a dog off-leash area (in Belle Isle Park).

6.2 Changes in housing form

Housing form relates to the amount of private space available to dogs for washroom and some exercise needs. The proportion of residential housing form is shifting in the District **towards attached dwellings**, such as apartments, townhouses, and basement suites. From 2011 to 2021, the proportion of detached housing decreased from 56% to 49%.

Attached dwellings typically have smaller private outdoor areas for dog washroom and exercise needs. At the time of writing, the District does not have requirements for dog amenities in multi-family development projects. As a result, dog owners may be spending more time in public places to exercise their dogs and for washroom needs. This may be an emerging trend of parks use.

7. Benefits of pet ownership

Interacting with pets provide social, physical, and mental health and well-being benefits. Pets can provide comfort, companionship, and motivate people to get outdoors regularly. Studies show several health and therapeutic benefits of dog and pet ownership:

- Decreased blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels, risk of heart disease, and less likely to be obese
- Less prone to loneliness, anxiety, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- More likely to get regular physical activity, which is related to improved physical and mental health outcomes^{18, 19, 20}

Guide and service dogs help people with disabilities avoid hazards or perform tasks. Guide dogs help people with visual impairments. Service dogs help people with other kinds of disabilities such as hearing impairments and epilepsy. They can help a person navigate through public areas, alert them to sounds, open doors and do other tasks. Guide and service dogs are certified by the Province.²¹

¹⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. How to Stay Healthy Around Pets and Other Animals. Accessed July 10, 2023 <<https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/keeping-pets-and-people-healthy/how.html>>

¹⁹ Harvard Medical School. There's a reason dogs are human's best friend. Accessed July 10, 2023 <<https://www.health.harvard.edu/promotions/harvard-health-publications/get-healthy-get-a-dog-the-health-benefits-of-canine-companionship>>

²⁰ Mayo Health Clinic. No bones about it. Accessed July 10, 2023 <<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/dogs-are-good-for-your-health>>

²¹ Province of BC. Guide Dog and Service Dog Certification. Accessed July 10, 2023 <<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog>>

Appendix 1: Dog regulations by District park

The following table summarizes the dog regulations for parkland areas per the Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw 5981 as of July 2023. Should there be a discrepancy between this list and the bylaw, the bylaw prevails.

Totals:

Dog Regulation	Number of parks and greenbelts
Prohibited	30 parks (15%)
Prohibited except on leash	155 parks and greenbelts (78%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 parks (33%) • 90 greenbelts (45%)
Prohibited except on leash or under control of a competent person	13 parks (7%)

Note: Assistance dogs are not subject to these regulations

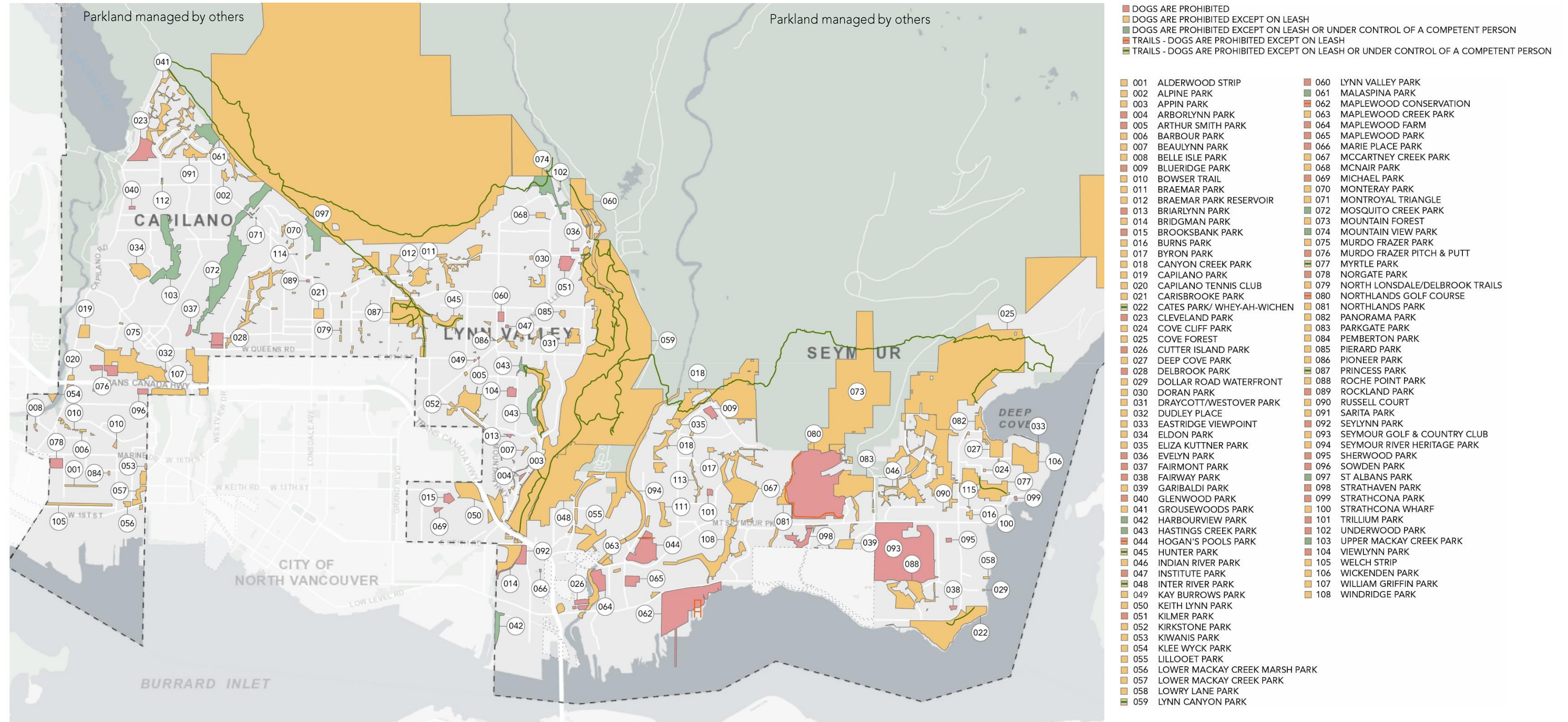


Figure 6: Dog regulations by District park from Dog Tax and Regulation Bylaw (5961)

Appendix 2: Dog regulations of adjacent park managers

Jurisdiction/park	Regulations
Metro Vancouver Regional Parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capilano River Regional Park • Lynn Headwaters Regional Park • Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog prohibited areas • Leash required trails • Leash optional and under control trails
City of North Vancouver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog prohibited areas • Leash required parks • Leash optional parks
District of West Vancouver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog prohibited areas • Leash required parks • Off leash parks including trails and fire access roads in undeveloped public lands north of the highway • Designated commercial dog walking locations
Mt. Seymour Provincial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs discouraged from backcountry areas • Leash required