



# **Leash-Free Zones in Mississauga**



# OVERVIEW

- History
- What is Leash-Free Mississauga
- Accomplishments
- The Zones
- Current Guidelines
- Signage
- Locations – Amenities

# OVERVIEW

- City's Relationship
- Liability and Issues
- Conclusion
- Questions and Answers

# History of Leash-Free Zones

- First pilot zone was set up in 1994
- 1995 saw four other zones set up varying in size, and design
- set up with the understanding that the zones would be “self policed” by dog owners

# Initial Guidelines

- topography taken into account, natural barriers  
size of park
- ensured user conflicts are taken into account,  
presence of children's facilities, sports fields
- environmental concerns, wildlife, fisheries,  
rare vegetation and woodlots

# Trial Period

- 5 zones were set up for a 6 month trial period in 1996
- feedback was gathered from public, staff and users
- results showed high community support
- common issues were high levels of noise, traffic congestion, dogs straying out of zone, lack of cleanliness, parking

# Establishment of Permanent Zones

- 4 permanent zones were set up in Feb. 1997, with 5th zone to be relocated
- conditions were set as follows: no cost to taxpayers, self sufficient, fencing and signage required
- formalized groups, community groups at local level and one umbrella group.

# What is Leash-Free Mississauga?

- a non-profit, volunteer organization, which promotes, through education and example, the responsibility of every dog owner for the behaviour and well-being of his/her dog(s)
- work in conjunction and affiliation with the City of Mississauga to find, establish, maintain and organize specific areas where dog owners can safely exercise and socialize their pets without infringing on the rights or sensibilities of people without dogs.



# How is Leash-Free Mississauga funded?

- LFM is a strictly volunteer organization. They rely entirely on memberships, donations, corporate sponsorship and fundraising efforts to establish and support Leash-Free zones.
- Membership costs \$10 per year for one dog or \$15 per year for two or more dogs, with 70% of the funds going to LFM and 30% going to the local zone to cover maintenance expenses.

# Accomplishments

- Initial Costs of \$24,000 paid back in 3 years
- two new zones added in 2000, \$17,000 in costs paid back within 2 ½ years
- New zone added in 2004, paid back \$3,900 in 6 months
- additional lighting added at Garnetwood
- additional area at Totoredaca
- Plantings done at Lakeside and Parkway Belt

# The Zones

- There are seven zones set up throughout Mississauga differing in size. 6 out of 7 zones are fully fenced.
- standard fencing is 4' high page (farm) fencing
- the six fenced in areas all have “coral” gates which allow the dogs and owners to enter/exit in a safe manner

# Current Guidelines

- Demand for area
- Demonstrated volunteers to manage the area
- Start-up Costs
- need to coordinate estimates of fence costs + any other costs( i.e., trees/grass, parking area, etc., with LFM sponsors and individual parks' fundraising activities

# Current Guidelines

- Acreage (size) suggested minimum size be at least 2 acres (note bigger areas attract more dog walkers and help to minimize congestion; however, fence cost is a factor)
- Proximity to other park users
- the amount of seasonal activity in any park and the amount of direct interaction with leash-free area impacts the success of the park (parking issues)

# Current Guidelines

- consider where “cross over” of traffic will occur, how close to picnic areas/bbqs, sports areas, natural or woodlot areas
- ideally, area should be apart from other park users to minimize possibility of conflicts and also so that other park users have a level of comfort to use the park

# Current Guidelines

- Proximity to residents
- the bigger the buffer zone between the leash-free area and local residents, the better
- probably better to have area close to major roads (limit local traffic)
- Recommended that area not back on to backyard fences
- Time restrictions in order to alleviate noise complaints



# Current Guidelines

- Environmental
- Wear and tear on grasslands.
  - where there is a lot of users, paths are made and grass wears away; thereafter there can be a mud problem (bark chips), etc.
- Both good and bad plants, i.e., poison ivy vs. prairie grass, trees for shade



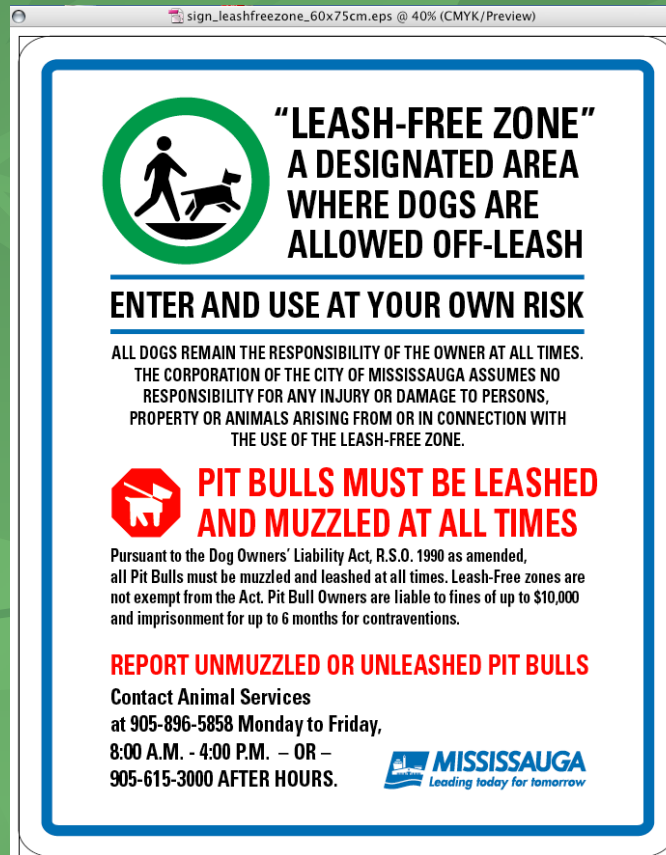
# Current Guidelines

- Zones are delineated with 4' page wire (farm fencing (except Toto and Garnetwood))
- double gate entries, (coral)
- maintenance gates
- garbage cans, bag dispensers (group supplies bags
- signage
- Bulletin Boards

# Gates



# Signage



# Signage



# Locations and sizes

- Etobicoke Valley is 3 acres, The area is not fenced, nor is the grass cut
- Garnetwood, 1.5 acres, the community group is Pause for Paws, fully fenced park, located within a larger, public park. Due to the size of the park, it is recommended that unneutered dogs NOT use this area.

# Locations and sizes

- Jack Darling, 20 acres - Responsible Dog Owners Group (RDOG), There are restricted hours in the summer (not available 11 am to 7 pm, Sat. Sun & Holiday Mondays from Victoria Day to Labour Day weekends) as well as closed off areas during the winter for tobogganers.

# Locations and sizes

- Lakeside, 1.6 acres, This is a temporary park (until future decisions are made regarding the area). It is fully fenced, and faces the lake.
- Quennippenon Meadows, 1.34 acres, This is a fully fenced park on a water pumping station with two parking lots.



# Locations and sizes

- Totoredaca, 3 acres, This park is the relocated home from Battleford Park. It is fully fenced (chain link), and lit. There is a separate area for small dogs as well as a separate area for agility training.
- Parkway Belt, 3.2 acres, Park, is fully fenced. It is located about 100 yards from the parking lot. First Leash-Free to make it into a master plan



# Amenities



# City's relationship

- City liaison assigned to work with Leash-Free Mississauga
- assistance with formalizing the group
- assistance with events, concerns, major park issues (relocation, set up of new zones)
- third party liability insurance coverage
- picnic tables for events

# City's relationship

- parking lot grading (maintenance)
- provision of woodchips
- garbage pick up (note cans are outside of zone therefore group is responsible for anything inside of zone)
- minor emergency repairs to fencing
- eradication of noxious weeds (i.e. Poison Ivy)
- expert advice on turf regeneration, and naturalized areas

# City's relationship

- improved relationship and image of Animal Services, via promotion of services that are provided, attendance at events to sell licenses, and vice versa. Leash-Free membership sent out with Dog renewal licences. Any issues are dealt with efficiently. Communication is great.
- Corporate Security mobile unit will monitor issues in parks.

# Liability/Issues

- Dog Owners Liability Act is followed
- Aggressive dogs , if becomes a pattern
- working towards a Management and Operations agreement

# Liability/Issues

- any improvements are approved via Parks Manager/Supervisor
- Children and dogs in park
- dogs off leash in Parking lots and other areas of park
- small dogs getting out of the fence



# Small Dog area



# Children's Area





# Children's Area



# Conclusion

- **areas are clean**
- **no costs to the City, we front the money for initial set up and utilize City contractors**
- **leash-free zone has made it into a Master Planned Park**
- **improved communication and educational opportunities**
- **great working relationships.**

# Conclusion

- **reducing incidence of non-leashed-dogs in city parks**
- **reinforcing the city's efforts in the Litter-Not and Litterbug**
- **active presence in city parks helping to reduce crime (early morning, later at night)**
- **High profile to Mississauga as we are contacted by other Municipalities.**

