



FAIRFIELD GONZALES
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
the place to connect

March 18, 2022

Victoria Mayor and Council
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Sent via email to mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca

Dear Mayor Lisa Helps and Council members,

RE: Paws in Parks

This letter is to formally request that the City of Victoria accelerate the comprehensive review of the Paws in Parks plan ahead of the City's 2023 budget.

The Fairfield Gonzales Community Association (FGCA), and its Board of Directors, appreciate the City's undoubtedly good intent in allowing for more pet-friendly communal spaces. However, there are mixed views among Victoria residents on whether off-leash dog parks are needed or practical.

Recently, the FGCA received correspondence from two concerned citizens regarding their opposition to off-leash park expansions. Specifically, these citizens expressed concern over safety and inclusion. As an advocate for the safety, accessibility and wellbeing of the Fairfield and Gonzales neighbourhoods, we share these concerns. As noted in our correspondence of December 15, 2021, we also recognize the community-building benefits of off-leash dog areas.

While off-leash dog parks promote valuable exercise and socialization for dogs and dog owners, these parks may be dangerous for other animals, including local wild habitats, and small children, due to animal aggression, improper clean-up and transmission of disease. On-leash dog parks still afford these benefits, while ensuring the health and safety of all park users.

Due to the divisive nature of this issue, the City needs a comprehensive review ahead of implementation, including robust public engagement. Until this occurs, conflict between off-leash proponents and opponents will continue. The FGCA expects that Mayor and Council will do their due diligence in making a full assessment of the Paws in Parks plan being considered as part of the City's 2023 budget. As the City enters a new fiscal year, we urge the City to expedite its review process, while still ensuring it is exhaustive and inclusive. The City can and should make decisions that reflect the diverse needs and values of its citizens.

Sincerely,

Anna Phelan, President

On behalf of the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association Board of Directors
president@fairfieldcommunity.ca



1330 FAIRFIELD RD. VICTORIA, BC V8S 5J1

Tel. 250.382.4604 Fax 250.382.4613

www.fairfieldcommunity.ca

place@fairfieldcommunity.ca