

Executive Summary: Submissions by Martin Peters Regional Parks Committee Meeting, March 5, 2025

My submissions are in support of maintaining and enhancing existing off-leash paths in Pacific Spirit Park. Press reports following submissions to the Committee by Dr. Annie Ciernia on February 5, 2025 indicated that Metro Vancouver was considering moving and reducing off-leash areas in the park as part of its current review of its dog management program in response to public complaints. This resulted in a significant public outcry, with one petition in opposition to the plan quickly gaining more than 4000 signatures. I understand that currently Dr. Ciernia's proposal is "not on the table", but that this matter remains under review and that a "pilot project" may be implemented this spring or summer. I want to ensure that the Committee hears the perspective of the vast majority of satisfied park users and not just the voices of the small number of people with complaints. I hope my submissions will aid in the on-going review and any revisions to the dog management policy in the park.

I will have four submissions to aid the committee in your review:

1. According to the statements made by Richard Wallis, Park Operations Supervisor in the press the park receives some 4 million visits a year, while there are approximately 100 complaints and by-law issues per year. I walk my dog daily throughout the year in the park and have done so for the past 18 years, without encountering issues. My experience is that at least 70% of park visitors have dogs. Accordingly, any changes to dog management policy in the park should seek to accommodate the needs of this very significant portion of park users rather than seeking to address a small number of complaints by relegating them to the northern fringe of the park.
2. A reduction in the off-leash areas or trails in the park, including moving off-leash areas to the northern sector of the Park, will not solve the problem of uncontrolled dogs. It will only move the problem to a potentially smaller area, adding to congestion. An expansion of on-leash trails or areas may also result in greater use by dog owners of very long leashes, which would pose a danger to runners and cyclists and everyone using the park.
3. People make dogs part of their families because dogs bring untold benefits to them, not least among them the requirement for regular exercise. Doctors regularly recommend dog ownership as a way to improve one's overall physical and mental health. In return, it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of our dogs that they have space to run off-leash and socialize with other dogs. The availability of off-leash trails in Vancouver is quite limited and many, many dog owners (including the thousands who

signed the various petitions supporting off-leash trails in the Park) rely on being able to use the off-leash trails in the Park as part of their daily routine.

4. It is in the interests of all Park users, including responsible dog owners, that dogs be properly under control while off-leash and that people generally follow the existing rules. I would agree that the situation in the Park could be improved by better signage, better posting of rules (not just for dog owners, but also regarding courteous behaviour by runners, cyclists and other Park users who also cause problems) and continued enforcement of the rules. It is also true that the current path configuration changes from on-leash to off-leash with some frequency in a way that is not always obvious or intuitive. It may make sense to review that configuration to make the off-leash areas more contiguous (but without reducing, and ideally expanding, their overall area).

In closing, the vast majority of satisfied Park users, including the estimated 55,000 dogs in Vancouver and their families, deserve to have their needs taken into account in any review of the dog management policy.

Link to Petition: <https://chng.it/TfrHKrqkNS>

To: Regional Parks Committee

From: Jeffrey Fitzpatrick, Division Manager, Design and Development, Regional Parks

Date: February 19, 2025

Meeting Date: March 5, 2025

Subject: **Derby Reach Regional Park – Campground Expansion**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Parks Committee receive for information the report dated February 19, 2025, titled “Derby Reach Regional Park – Campground Expansion.”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edgewater Bar Campground in Derby Reach Regional Park provides a unique camping experience along the Fraser River. The campground is easily accessible from Metro Vancouver communities and is fully booked throughout the summer season.

Planning is underway for a campground expansion in Derby Reach Regional Park, which currently includes 38 campsites that can accommodate RVs and tents. A preliminary concept for a 30-site campground expansion was developed in 2024. The Agricultural Land Commission recently approved a non-farm use application for the proposal considering the regional park context of the site.

Detailed planning of the campground expansion including concept development, costing, phasing, public and First Nation engagement will extend through 2025.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Regional Parks Committee on the proposed campground expansion at Derby Reach Regional Park in the Township of Langley.

BACKGROUND

Derby Reach Regional Park is located along the Fraser River in the Township of Langley. The park includes 315 hectares (778 acres) of mature forest, open space, old field and bog habitat. Recreational amenities include trails, a campground, picnic areas, and other features.

The existing Edgewater Bar Campground is a popular destination. Registration for the campground opens in February. Approximately 75 per cent of availability is booked within several days and the remaining spots are fully booked throughout the season.

The campground includes 38 sites that can accommodate RVs and tents. Each site includes a picnic table and fire pit. Campground facilities include drinking water access, washrooms, a picnic structure, and parking area.

Demand for camping in Metro Vancouver is strong. In 2024, Regional Parks completed an Outdoor Recreation Needs and Trends survey. Annually, campsite reservations for the year in the Metro Vancouver system fill up within hours of going live online. BC Parks and Parks Canada are experiencing similar demand.

CAMPGROUND EXPANSION

Planning for a campground expansion at Derby Reach Regional Park is underway (Attachment 1). The proposed site is a grassed open space between Allard Crescent and the riverfront multi-use trail, east of the existing Edgewater Bar Campground. This 3.8 ha site can accommodate up to 30 campsites, an access road, picnic shelter, and amenities.

A preliminary concept was developed in spring 2024 for planning purposes and to support a non-farm use application to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) (Attachment 2). In November 2024, Regional Parks Staff provided a site tour to the ALC South Coast Panel in support of the application. In January 2025, the ALC approved the non-farm use application.

Through 2025, Regional Parks staff will complete technical studies, concept development, costing and phasing plans for the proposed campground expansion. The planning process will include public and First Nation engagement. Regional Parks Staff will work closely with Township of Langley staff and provide regular updates to the Regional Parks Committee as the project moves forward.

The Derby Reach campground expansion project will be included in the 2026-2031 Regional Parks Capital Plan for the MVRD Board's consideration as part of the regular 2026 budget process, to be funded from existing budget.

ALTERNATIVES

This is an information report. No alternatives are presented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications to consider.

A refined concept plan, detailed costing and phasing plan will be developed through 2025. The project will be included in the 2026-2031 Regional Parks Capital Plan for the MVRD Board's consideration through the regular budgeting process.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The proposed campground expansion site is owned by Metro Vancouver. The planning process will include public and First Nation engagement.

The site is in the Agricultural Land Reserve. The ALC approved Metro Vancouver's non-farm use application in January 2025.

The site has a Township of Langley municipal zoning of Civic Institutional P-1 A which permits recreational use. Metro Vancouver is working with Township of Langley staff to determine rezoning and other permitting requirements associated with the campground expansion.

CONCLUSION

Edgewater Bar Campground in Derby Reach Regional Park is a popular destination for Fraser Riverfront camping.

A preliminary concept for a 30-site campground expansion was developed in 2024. The Agricultural Land Commission approved a non-farm use application for the proposal in January 2025.

Detailed planning including concept development, permitting, costing, phasing, public and First Nation engagement will extend through 2025. Regional Park staff will work with Township of Langley staff, and provide regular updates to the Regional Park Committee, as the planning process moves forward.

The project will be included in the 2026-2031 Regional Parks Capital Plan for the consideration of the MVRD Board through the regular budgeting process.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Derby Reach Regional Park - Campground Context Map.
2. Preliminary Concept – Campground Expansion.

Fraser River

Fraser River

ALLARD CRESCENT

EXISTING EDGEWATER
BAR CAMPGROUND

Derby Reach Regional Park Campground Expansion

LEGEND

Trail System

Proposed Campground
Expansion Site

Regional Park

0 125 250 500
Meters



Context Map

Preliminary Concept - Campground Expansion

