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**Item No. 10.2.1**  
**Halifax and West Community Council**  
**November 25, 2014**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Halifax and West Community Council

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Duncan Morum, Chair Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee

**DATE:** September 30, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Point Pleasant Park – 2012 Park Survey Solutions to Identified Concerns

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**ORIGIN**

The September 4, 2014 meeting of the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee Terms of Reference: 7 – The PPPAC shall make recommendations to Halifax and West Community Council solely in an advisory capacity.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee recommends Halifax and West Community Council request a staff report to identify possible solutions to the major concerns as identified in the 2012 Point Pleasant Park Survey including:

1. Improve compliance and increase awareness of existing park rules particularly with respect to dogs and bikes through the park through enhanced enforcement (e.g. increased officer patrols and signage to encourage compliance).

## **BACKGROUND**

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee (PPPAC) was established to advise and assist Council in planning and management of Point Pleasant Park.

A Point Pleasant Park user survey was conducted in August 2012 which provided the PPPAC valuable information on how people use the park and also drew attention to a growing number of concerns from Park users.

On May 13, 2013 members of the Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee provided a presentation to Halifax and West Community Council entitled "What Point Pleasant Park Users Had to Say." This presentation provided the Community Council with information on how the park is used and outlined the concerns provided from park users.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee have met and discussed the Park survey and have identified concerns and are now seeking Council assistance in finding solutions for the betterment of the park and enjoyment of its users.

The Committee continues to be concerned that the rules around off leash activities are not clearly understood or enforced in the park. In the survey of park users the majority of respondents indicated that the current rules respecting off leash areas are appropriate, but respondents raised significant concern that the current rules need to be better understood and regularly enforced.

Similarly, the respondents also noted concern regarding cyclists in the park not obeying the posted rules. The Committee feels that an enforcement of existing rules needs to be improved and are requesting that Halifax and West Community Council request a staff report to provide possible solutions.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Should Halifax and West Community Council approve the recommendation of PPPAC the resulting staff report will provide the financial implications.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee is comprised of eight community members, the Mayor and the Councillor from District 7. The meetings of the Point Pleasant Advisory Committee are open to the public.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications to this report.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Point Pleasant Park Advisory Committee did not provide an alternative.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2012 Park Survey Summary – What Point Pleasant Park Users Had to Say

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by:      Quentin Hill, Legislative Assistant 902.490.6732

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# What Point Pleasant Park Users Had to Say . . .

Point Pleasant Park  
Advisory Committee  
Revised: February 13, 2013

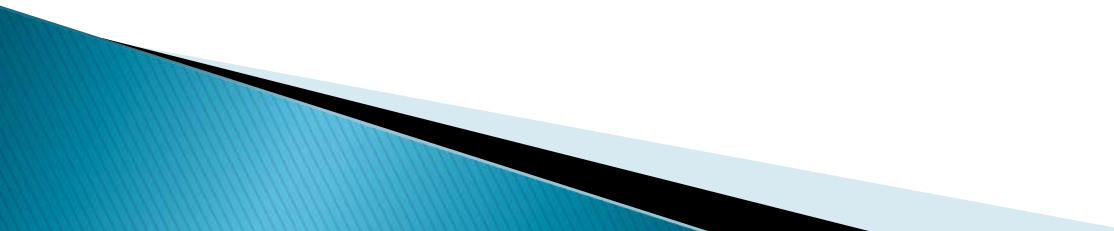
# The Need for a New User Survey

- ▶ The last survey of PPP users was undertaken in 1999.
- ▶ Since that time,
  - The population of HRM has increased by over 15%
  - The volume of visitors to the Park is increasing
  - The type of uses continues to expand – arts & theatre, bikes, dogs, runners, sports training are increasing
- ▶ The PPPAC wanted to have a current understanding of how users feel about their Park.

# About the Survey

- ▶ An on-line survey was conducted during August & September 2012
  - The Survey was promoted on the HRM and PPP websites, in the media, and through signage in the Park.
  - The Survey took approximately 12 minutes to complete
- ▶ Over 1585 survey responses were received

# People really enjoy their Park!

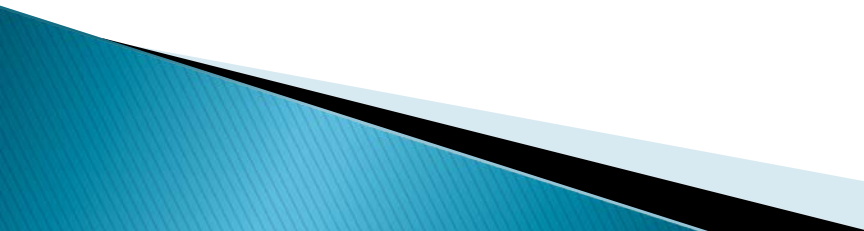
- ▶ 94% said that they enjoyed their most recent visit to the Park
  - ▶ Many, many comments were made about how much the Park means to the respondents.
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# PPP is largely used for walking.

## ▶ The major activities\*

- Walking 82%
- Dog Walking 50% (increase from 20–35% in 1999)
- Outdoor Environment 36%
- Running/Jogging 32% (increase from 15–35% in 1999)
- Sightseeing 29%
- Family Outing 23%
- Theatre 21%
- Biking 19% (increase from 1–4% in 1999)
- Beach 10%
- Arts Event 9%

\*Respondents could select all that apply





# Most respondents are regular users of PPP throughout the year.

- ▶ During the past year,
  - Users who visited weekly 31%
  - Users who visited 11 to 50 times 35%
- ▶ Among users who said they visit at a typical time of day, the timing was spread throughout the day, particularly between 9 am to dusk
- ▶ The busiest seasons are Spring, Summer and Fall, but 60% of respondents also indicated that they visit during the Winter

# Users don't have many complaints. . . but those who do have a complaint are not satisfied

- ▶ The majority of users don't have serious complaints
  - 80% have not had a problem in the park that caused them to file a complaint or reconsider visiting the Park
  - 8% have experienced a problem
    - Typically about interactions with a dog, or a bike
- ▶ Of the 8% of users who experienced a significant problem, 80% of them did not feel satisfied with how the problem was resolved
  - Often advised that no follow up action can be taken

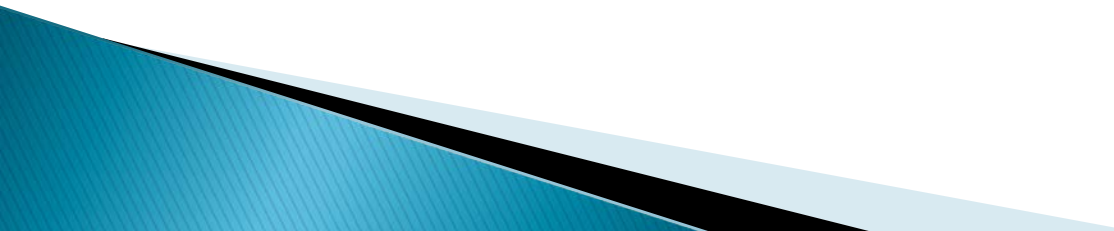
# Most visitors travel to the Park by car.

- ▶ 72% said they usually travel by car
  - 18% come by foot
  - 6% come by bike
  - 2% come by bus
- ▶ Of the 72% who travel by car
  - 87% feel the parking facilities are excellent or good
- ▶ Of the 6% who came by bike
  - 55% feel there are sufficient bike racks

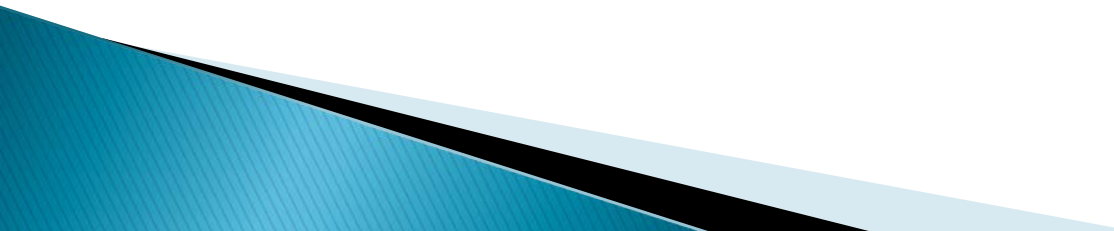
# Respondents think the park is well maintained

- ▶ 89% think the condition of roads, sidewalks & lighting within the Park is Excellent or Good.
  - 1% feel condition is poor
- ▶ 51% think the Park maintenance in the Winter is only Fair or Poor, and suggested improvements
- ▶ Most common suggestions for improvement
  - More washrooms
  - Better winter maintenance
  - Tree management
  - Better signage
  - Improve condition of the forts

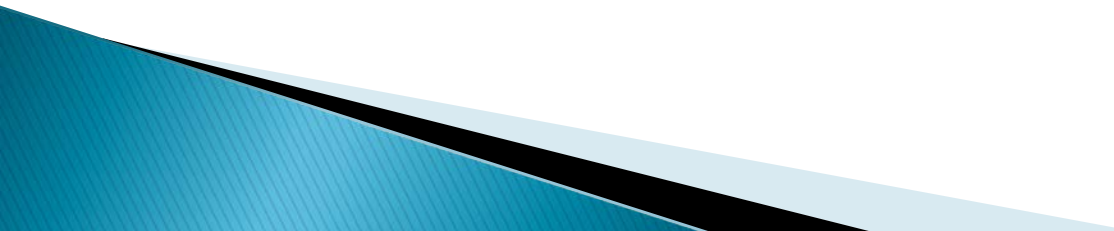
# There is high awareness of arts programs.

- ▶ 93% are aware of arts programs such as Artist in Residence and Shakespeare by the Sea
  - ▶ 53% have attended an arts event in the Park
  - ▶ 66% plan to attend an arts event in the future.
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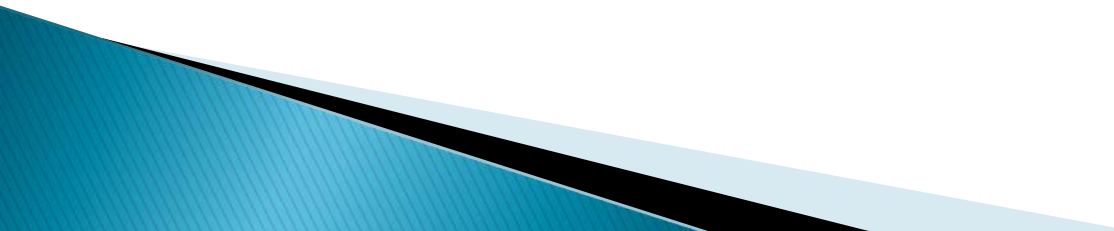
# Many people run or jog in the Park.

- ▶ 41% of respondents run or jog in the Park.
  - ▶ 91% of those respondents feel the paths and amenities meet their needs
  - ▶ There are several comments from runners who indicate concerns with interactions with dogs in the park
  - ▶ The most common concern relates to joggers running several abreast and taking over the trail
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# Awareness of Park Bylaws

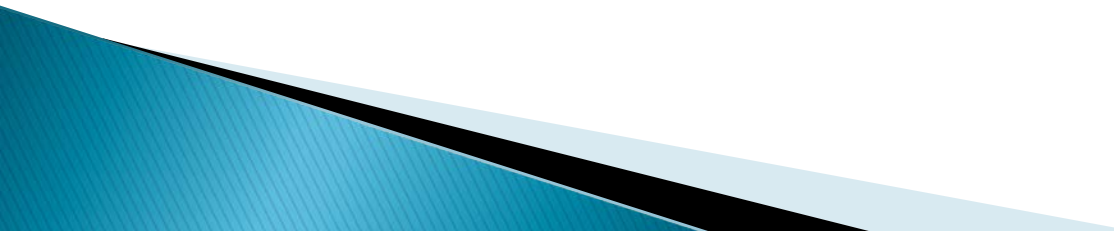
- ▶ 90% of respondents feel they are aware of park rules respecting animals and responsible pet ownership
  - ▶ 75% of respondents feel they are aware of park rules respecting use of bicycles
  - ▶ 89% of respondents say they have read park rules signage
  - ▶ Several suggestions were made to improve signage and undertake projects to improve awareness
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# Many people walk dogs in the Park.

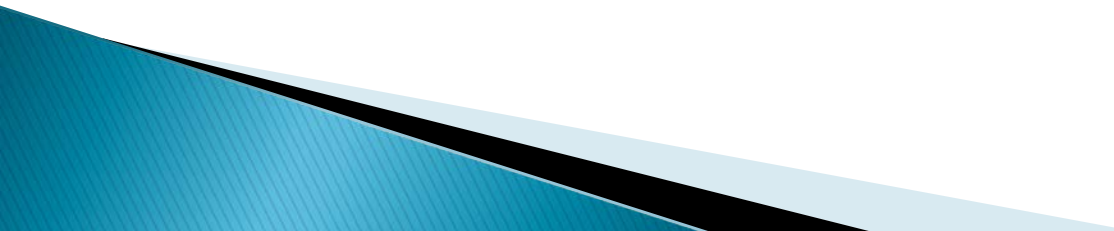
- ▶ 53% of respondents walk a dog in the Park
  - ▶ Strong feelings were expressed both for and against dogs in the park
    - Some want dogs only on leash
    - Some want off-leash areas expanded
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# Off-Leash Areas

- ▶ 76% the respondents think the current rules respecting off-leash areas are appropriate.
    - However, several comments were made about the need for more enforcement of rules
  - ▶ 62% of respondents think the current rules prohibiting all dogs (on-leash or off-leash) after 10 am are appropriate
  - ▶ Of those respondents who think the rules are not appropriate
    - Some suggested the off-leash areas be reduced.
    - Some suggested that people should be allowed to walk dogs after 10 am along Shore Road.
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# Off-leash Areas (continued)

- ▶ 51% of respondents think dogs should be on leash in all areas where there are picnic tables
  - ▶ 44% of respondents think dogs should be on leash in heritage and culture sites such as Prince Wales Tower
  - ▶ 45% think dogs should be on leash in vicinity of all beach areas after 10 am every day
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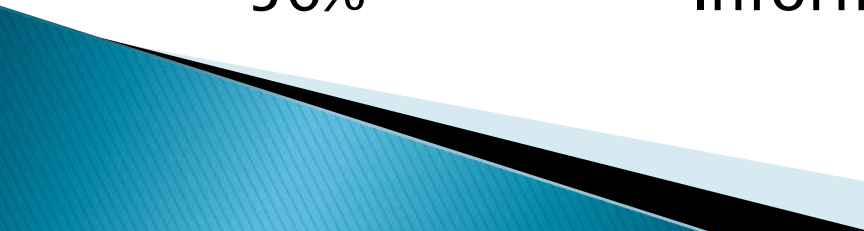
# Bicycles

- ▶ 60% of respondents think the current rules limiting bikes to weekdays & restricting bikes to main/gravel roads are appropriate
- ▶ 34% of respondents think bikes should be permitted in the park every day
  - 40% of these respondents think there should be restrictions associated with this access
- ▶ 35% of respondents think bikes travel too fast in the Park

# Safety

- ▶ 97% of respondents said that they always or usually feel safe in the Park
- ▶ Suggestions were made to improve lighting and security after dusk

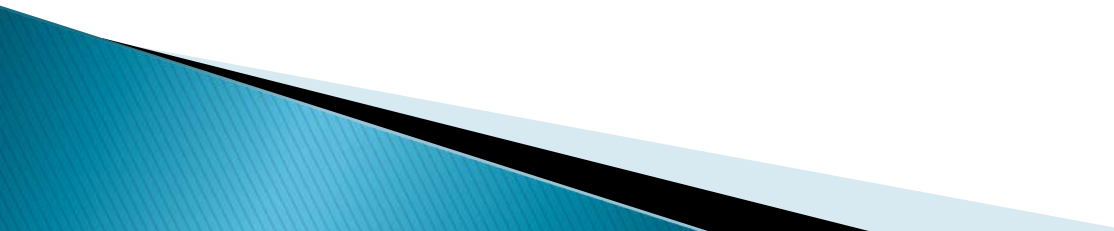
# Communications about the Park

- ▶ The best way to receive information about the Park is through signs at the Park and the PPP website
    - A blog and Press Releases were also mentioned
    - Many respondents indicated that multiple approaches should be used
  - ▶ The type of information they want
    - 77% Park Events
    - 70% Major Projects in the Park
    - 59% Park policy/rules
    - 56% Information for dog owners
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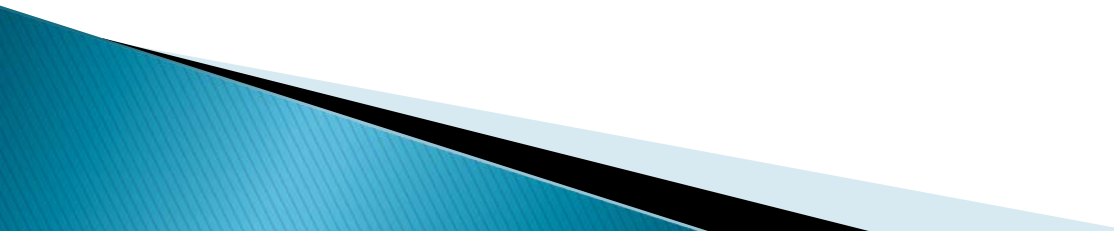
# What's most important to ensure a positive experience at PPP?

- ▶ Natural Beauty 47%
- ▶ General Park maintenance 28%
- ▶ Safety 21%

# What do respondents like best?

- ▶ Nature, the views, the trees, well maintained
  - ▶ The walking trails
  - ▶ The way the Park is used for multiple activities, and generally they all co-exist very well
  - ▶ Dog walking
  - ▶ Many respondents said they like the Park the just way it is!
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# What do respondents think could be improved about the Park?

- ▶ Enforce the rules (more park patrol – on foot or bike)
  - ▶ All park users should be considerate of the needs of others
  - ▶ Better maintenance of washrooms (and more)
  - ▶ Water fountains – for people and dogs
  - ▶ No motorized vehicles (or Segways)
  - ▶ Tree management
  - ▶ Winter maintenance
  - ▶ Better Signage – not clear
  - ▶ More Services & Events – playground; cafe; exercise equipment
  - ▶ Don't have so many rules – more bike and dog access
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# About the Respondents

- ▶ 62% female      38% male
- ▶ Represent a broad age profile
  - 19–25                      8%
  - 26–34                      23%
  - 35–44                      20%
  - 45–54                      22%
  - 55–64                      17%
  - 65 +                        9%
- ▶ 97% of the respondents are from HRM
  - 2% from Nova Scotia, outside HRM
  - 0.6% from other Canadian provinces
  - 58% from the Halifax Peninsula
  - 39% from HRM, off the Peninsula

# Recommendations

- ▶ Enforcement of existing rules must be improved.
  - Many of the complaints are about dog owners and bikers not complying with the rules
  - What is the budget for bylaw enforcement now compared to 10 or 15 years ago?
- ▶ Signage should be reviewed for consistency and to improve awareness.

# Recommendations (continued)

- ▶ Park staff should review suggestions for improvements such as
  - Timing of gate closing
  - Cleanliness of washrooms
  - Requests for Water Fountains
  - Speed of maintenance & patrol cars in park
  - Remind sports team to respect park users when training in the park
- ▶ The PPPAC and HRM should use the detailed comments for input in planning park activities and potential changes

# Surveys need to be done regularly to inform and guide park planning.

- ▶ There is no current data on park user numbers.
- ▶ It is recommended that a “clicker” count be taken of park users in 2013
  - Quarterly, at representative times, to allow comparison with results in 1999
- ▶ It is recommended that a survey of users’ views about the Park be undertaken on a regular basis
  - A similar survey is suggested every 3 years.

# Special Thanks to HRM Staff!

- ▶ HRM staff were very helpful in the design and delivery of the survey.
  - ▶ Particular thanks go to Brian Phelan and Stephen Rice for their input, and their assistance in getting the survey on-line and advertised.
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