

# Appendix A

Leash-Optional Typology Examples

## Typology #1

### Unfenced Leash-Optional Area

Example: Colwood Creek Park, Colwood

- Size: 9 hectares
  - Boundary: Unfenced
  - Park Type: Open space
- 
- Colwood is a park that allows off-leash dogs. It is not fenced except the playground and splash pad has split-rail around it.



Colwood Creek Park, GoogleEarth



## Typology #1

### Unfenced Leash-Optional Area

Example: Tecumseh Park, Vancouver

- Size: 2 hectares
- Boundary: Unfenced
- Park Type: Open space
- Almost the entire park allows dogs to be off-leash, except for the playground area. There is no fenced area.



Tecumseh Park, GoogleEarth



## Typology #2

### Fenced Leash-Optional Area

#### Example: Victoria West Park, Victoria

Size: 0.16 hectares

- Boundary: Fenced
- Park Type: Open space

Fenced-in off-leash area within larger on-leash park.



Victoria West Park, GoogleEarth



## Typology #2

### Fenced Leash-Optional Area

#### Example: Sunset Park, Vancouver

- Size: 0.3 hectares
- Boundary: Fenced
- Park Type: Open space

The park does not allow dogs to be off-leash, except in the fenced-in leash-optional area. The leash-optional area includes a walking path and natural elements.



Sunset Park, GoogleEarth



## Typology #3

### Parks with Leash-Optional Trails

#### Example: Everett Crowley Park, Vancouver

- Leash-optional area size: 11 hectares
- Boundary: Unfenced
- Park Type: Wooded parks with trails (note: low environmental sensitivity as it is a former landfill)
- The park has both on-leash and off-leash trails that are identified by signage.



Everett Crowley Park, GoogleEarth



## Typology #4

### Parks with Beach Access

#### Example: Cy Hampson Park, District of North Saanich

- Leash-optional area Size: 3.5 and 2.5 hectares
- Boundary: Unfenced
- Park Type: Water access
- Fully fenced park that welcomes dogs. The park is separated into two sections by a road. One section has beach access.



Cy Hampson Park, GoogleEarth



## Typology #4

### Parks with Beach Access

#### Example: Spanish Banks Park, Vancouver

- Leash-optional area Size: 5 hectares
- Boundary: Unfenced
- Park Type: Water access
- The park allows dogs to be off-leash on the grass field and sandy beach. There is no fenced area. There is signage indicating where the dog-off leash area begins.



Spanish Banks Park, GoogleEarth





# Appendix B

Park System Analysis

## Park Suitability Analysis

Suitability for leash-optional use is not black and white, Each park has a unique set of parameters that provide an indication of how off-leash dogs will affect the park and other park users. However, there are unknowns, such as the number of off-leash dogs that use the park now and how many will use the park in the future. This initial park analysis provides a baseline using measurable criteria. Monitoring and evaluation of leash-optional areas will be essential to decision-making on any future changes (additions or subtractions) to the criteria below or to proposed leash-optional areas.

1. Park Zoning - Prioritizing environmental protection, P-5 Conservation Parks were identified as not-suitable for leash-optional areas because of the environmental impacts. P-4N Natural Parks were considered on a site by site basis.

2. Beaches - Beaches within the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary were identified as not compatible with off-leash dogs due to impacts to wildlife to be consistent with Federal regulations. A suitable beach would have multiple access points, public parking, and at least some support amenities such as washrooms and water. Most beaches in Saanich were eliminated because of the Migratory Bird Sanctuary and limited access (i.e. single point of access via a right-of-way with no parking or very limited parking). Cordova Bay Beach has multiple access points, multiple options for parking, and washrooms.

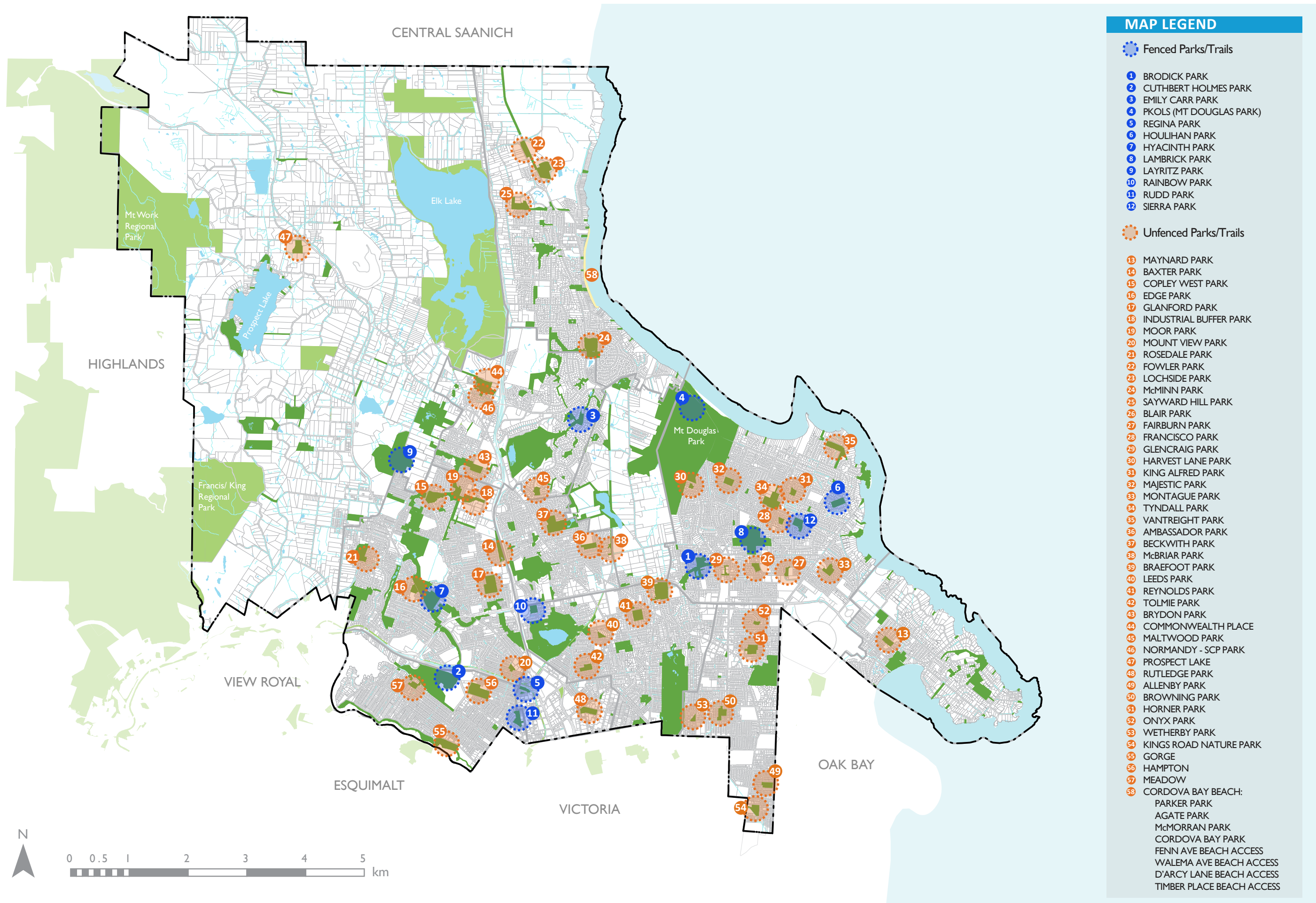
3. Size of Park / Amount of Open Space - Feedback from engagement on the pop-up parks and research indicated that a minimum size for leash-optional areas is ~0.14 hectares. Therefore, the criteria for minimum park size was set at 0.3 hectares so that there could be room for leash-optional area as well as other park uses without off-leash dogs. Some parks smaller than 0.3 ha were eventually identified as suitable for leash-optional areas based on site specific knowledge of staff.

4. Park Amenities - The following park amenities were identified as incompatible with off-leash dogs, which affected the analysis of park size and whether an off-leash area could be accommodated, either fenced or not fenced.

- playgrounds
- formal gardens / horticultural gardens
- historic sites

5. Sports Fields - Initial analysis assumed that grass sports fields are not compatible with off-leash dogs based on research from other communities (5 out of 7 do not allow dogs on sports fields) and because of input from sports fields users about the negative impacts to field maintenance (i.e. holes and dog waste). However, very few options within the Saanich parks system were found that fit the previous criteria and also did not have sports fields. Staff highlighted that not all sports fields in Saanich provide the same quality level and identified some parks where sports fields could also serve off-leash dog use if maintenance levels were increased to ensure safety and cleanliness for sports groups.

6. Fencing - Fenced leash-optional areas essentially become single-use areas, so identifying appropriate locations is important to ensuring equitable use of park space. Identification of potential locations for fully fenced leash-optional areas was based on the successful pop-up leash-optional parks Saanich had implemented in the last three years, as well as parks that were large enough to accommodate a fenced area without excluding other uses in the park.



**MAP LEGEND**

- ⊙ Fenced Parks/Trails
- 1 BRODICK PARK
- 2 CUTHBERT HOLMES PARK
- 3 EMILY CARR PARK
- 4 PKOLS (MT DOUGLAS PARK)
- 5 REGINA PARK
- 6 HOULIHAN PARK
- 7 HYACINTH PARK
- 8 LAMBRICK PARK
- 9 LAYRITZ PARK
- 10 RAINBOW PARK
- 11 RUDD PARK
- 12 SIERRA PARK

- ⊙ Unfenced Parks/Trails
- 13 MAYNARD PARK
- 14 BAXTER PARK
- 15 COPLEY WEST PARK
- 16 EDGE PARK
- 17 GLANFORD PARK
- 18 INDUSTRIAL BUFFER PARK
- 19 MOOR PARK
- 20 MOUNT VIEW PARK
- 21 ROSEDALE PARK
- 22 FOWLER PARK
- 23 LOCHSIDE PARK
- 24 McMINN PARK
- 25 SAYWARD HILL PARK
- 26 BLAIR PARK
- 27 FAIRBURN PARK
- 28 FRANCISCO PARK
- 29 GLEN CRAIG PARK
- 30 HARVEST LANE PARK
- 31 KING ALFRED PARK
- 32 MAJESTIC PARK
- 33 MONTAGUE PARK
- 34 TYNDALL PARK
- 35 VANTREIGHT PARK
- 36 AMBASSADOR PARK
- 37 BECKWITH PARK
- 38 McBRIAR PARK
- 39 BRAEFOOT PARK
- 40 LEEDS PARK
- 41 REYNOLDS PARK
- 42 TOLMIE PARK
- 43 BRYDON PARK
- 44 COMMONWEALTH PLACE
- 45 MALTWOOD PARK
- 46 NORMANDY - SCP PARK
- 47 PROSPECT LAKE
- 48 RUTLEDGE PARK
- 49 ALLENBY PARK
- 50 BROWNING PARK
- 51 HORNER PARK
- 52 ONYX PARK
- 53 WETHERBY PARK
- 54 KINGS ROAD NATURE PARK
- 55 GORGE
- 56 HAMPTON
- 57 MEADOW
- 58 CORDOVA BAY BEACH:
  - PARKER PARK
  - AGATE PARK
  - McMORRAN PARK
  - CORDOVA BAY PARK
  - FENN AVE BEACH ACCESS
  - WALEMA AVE BEACH ACCESS
  - D'ARCY LANE BEACH ACCESS
  - TIMBER PLACE BEACH ACCESS

# Appendix C

Detailed Findings

## APPENDIX     **Demographics**

### **Demographics of the District of Saanich**

In 2016, the District of Saanich had a population of 114,148 people, in 2021 the population increased to 117,735, an increase of 3.1% or 3,587 people.<sup>1</sup>

Between 2019 and 2038, the population in Saanich is projected to grow at an annual growth rate of 0.5-0.6%, an increase of approximately 700-800 new residents each year to 2038.<sup>2</sup>

### **Demographics of the Capital Regional District**

The Capital Regional District (CRD) encompasses the southern tip of Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands.

The CRD includes the cities of Victoria and Langford, the towns of Esquimalt, Sidney, and View Royal, district municipalities of Saanich, Oak Bay, Colwood, Central Saanich, Sooke, North Saanich, Metchosin, and Highlands, and the electoral areas of Salt Spring Island, Juan de Fuca and Southern Gulf Islands.

In 2016, the CRD had a population of 383,360 people. In 2021, the population increased to 415,451 (an additional 32,091 people). This is a population percentage change of 8.4%, and is above both the total national and provincial increases for the same years.

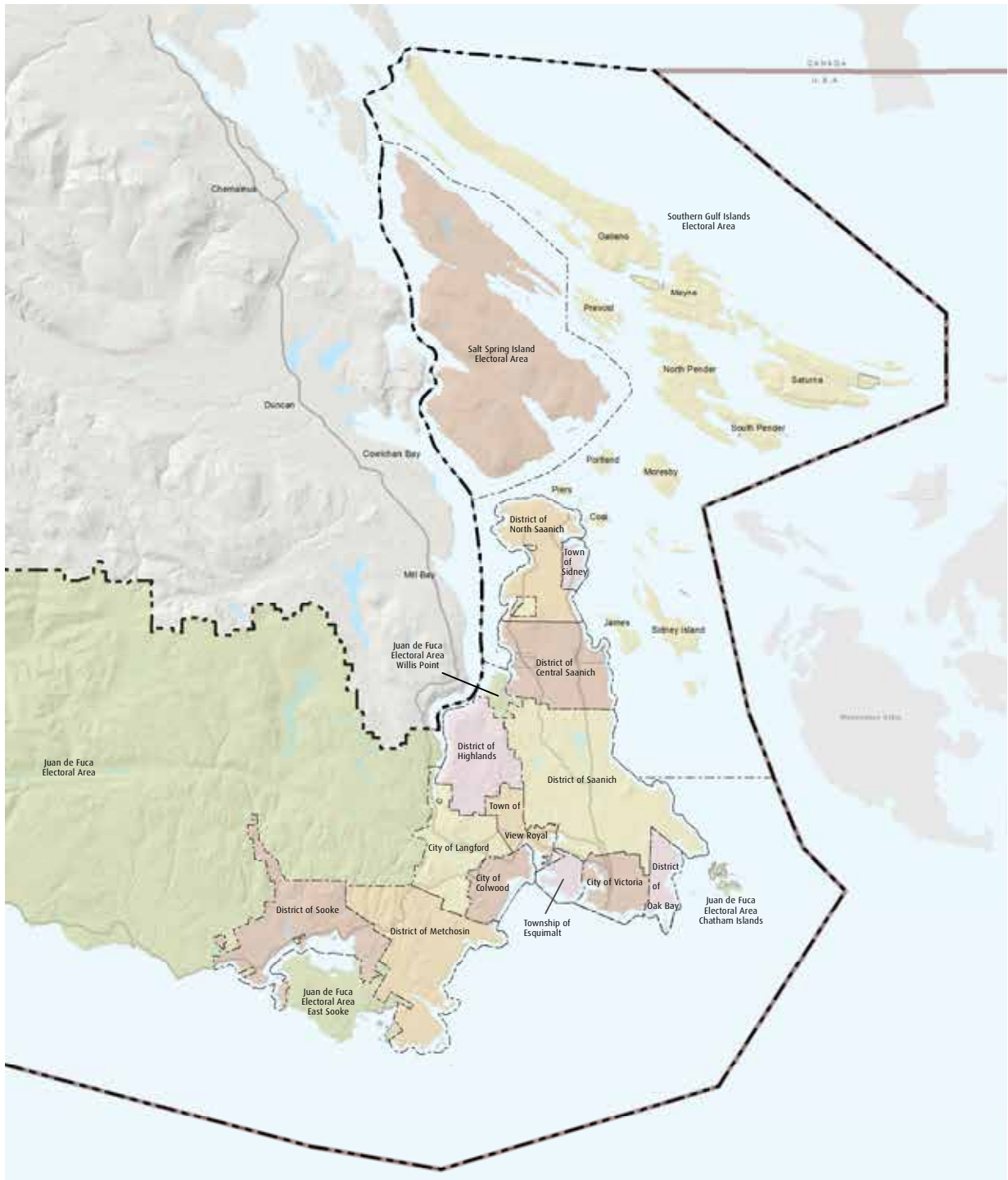
For comparison, the population of Canada increased by 5.2% from 2016 to 2021, and the population of British Columbia increased by 7.6% from 2016 to 2021.

It should be noted that neighbouring Langford and Southern Gulf Islands had the highest percentage of population growth in British Columbia from 2016 to 2021 (of census subdivisions with 5,000-plus populations) with 31.8% and 28.9% increases, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

This projected increase in population highlights the importance of having a unified strategy for the shared use of Saanich's parks. Additional growth in Saanich and across the Capital Regional District will only increase visitation and usage of Saanich's existing park space.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2022. *Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 30, 2022.*

<sup>2</sup> *Saanich Housing / Demographics Conditions, 2019*

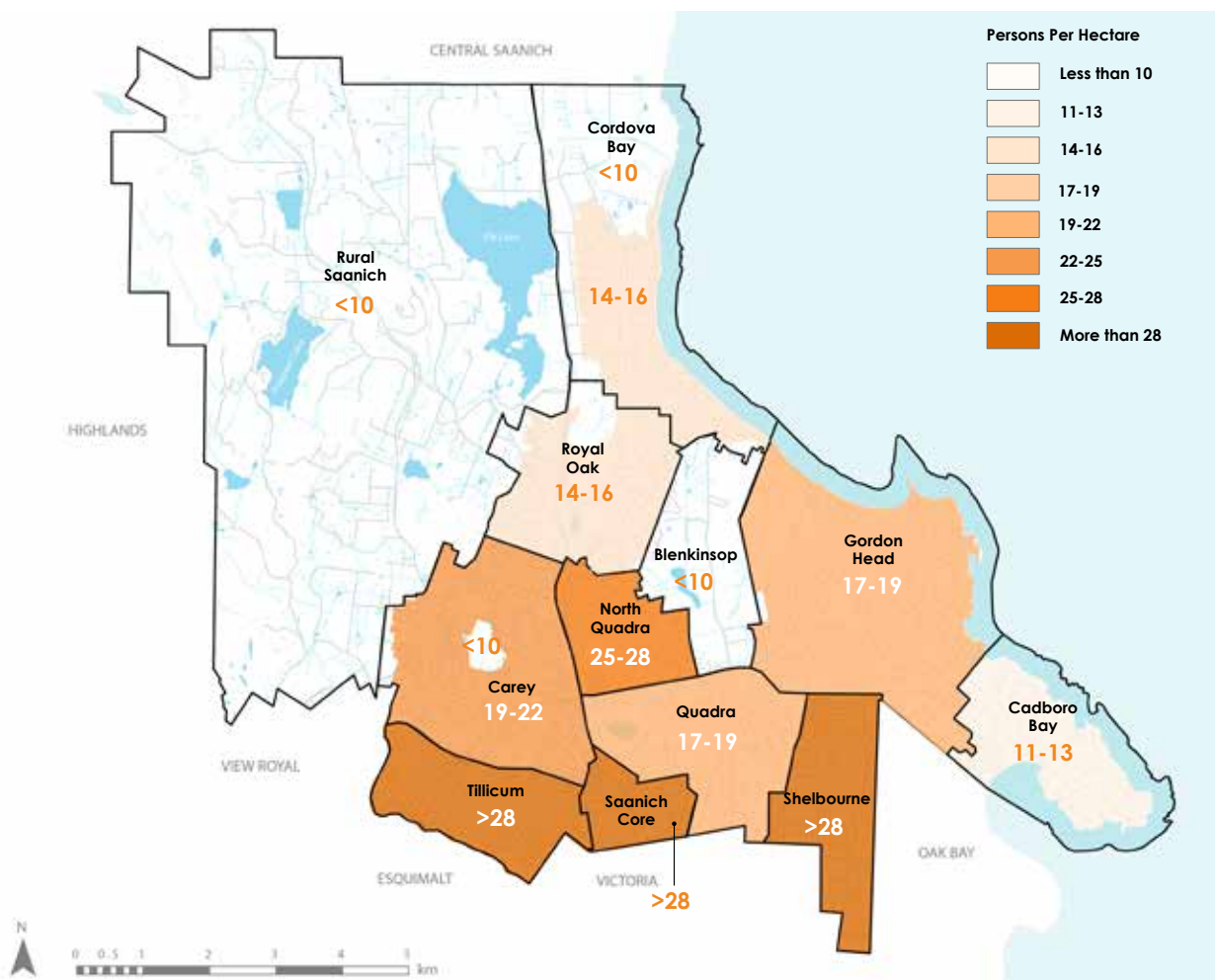


**Capital Regional District Map**

(Source: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/crd-document-library/maps/administrative-boundaries/crd-admin-boundaries.pdf> )

## District of Saanich Population Density

The land area of Saanich is 103.59 square kilometres and the population density was 1,136.6 people per square kilometre in 2021. Tillicum, Saanich Core, and Shelbourne had the highest population densities in 2016. Rural Saanich, and Blenkinsop had the lowest population densities in 2016.<sup>1</sup>



Local Area Population Densities (2016)

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2022. Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 30, 2022.

## APPENDIX      **Background Research**

### **Requirements for Pets in Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks and Trails (a department of the CRD)**

Dogs are welcome at all CRD regional parks and trails, although some areas require dogs to be on a leash, and some parks have seasonal restrictions in certain areas.

Currently, there are five CRD parks, one Forest Reserve, and two regional trails in Saanich, including Bear Hill Regional Park, Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park, Francis/King Regional Park and portions of Mount Work and Thetis Lake Regional Parks.

Dogs are required to be on a leash in these areas:

- Francis/King Regional Park: Elsie King Trail
- Galloping Goose Regional Trail
- Lochside Regional Trail

There are seasonal restrictions in some areas and dogs are not allowed to be on a designated beach or picnic area between June 1 and September 15, except to pass through on a leash. These are the dog restriction zones:

- Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park: Beaver Lake beach, Hamsterly beach, Eagle beach and Water Ski beach.
- Mount Work Regional Park: Durrance Lake main beach; Thetis Lake Regional Park - Main Beach (beach portion is not in Saanich); and Killarney Lake foreshore.<sup>1</sup>

### **Requirements for Pets in Provincial Parks**

Most frontcountry provincial parks allow dogs/pets as long as they always remain on a leash. Some provincial parks offer special designated off-leash or swimming areas for dogs. Taking pets into the backcountry, especially dogs, is not recommended, and in some parks is not permitted.

Currently, there are no provincial parks located in the District of Saanich. However, there are two located in other jurisdictions in close proximity, these include:

- Gowlland Tod Provincial Park
- Goldstream Provincial Park.

In both of these provincial parks, pets must be on a leash and under control at all times, and are not allowed in beach areas.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Capital Regional District. <https://www.crd.bc.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trails/crd-regional-parks/park-usage-rules/pets-in-parks>

<sup>2</sup> Capital Regional District. *CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032*

<sup>3</sup> BC Parks. <https://bcparks.ca/visiting/parks-and-pets/>

<sup>4</sup> BC Parks. [https://bcparks.ca/eco\\_reserve/](https://bcparks.ca/eco_reserve/)



## **Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations**

Dogs must be on a leash when within Cadboro-Gyro Park and the public beach at Cadboro Bay.<sup>1</sup> Cadboro Bay Beach is within the boundary of the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary (VHMBS), which was established for the protection and conservation of migratory birds. Activities that could harm migratory birds, their nests or their eggs are prohibited.<sup>2</sup>

There are five parks in Saanich with shorelines that are adjacent to the VHMBS. These parks include, Cadboro-Gyro Park, Gorge Park, Gorge Waterway, Craigflower-Kosapsom Park and Cuthbert Holmes Park.

The Federal Government's Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations specifies the following:

- 5(1) - No person who owns a dog or cat shall permit the dog or cat to run at large in a Migratory Bird Sanctuary.
- 5(2) - A game officer may destroy any dog or cat found chasing or molesting migratory birds in a Migratory Bird Sanctuary.<sup>3</sup>

The Acting-Regional Director of the Canadian Wildlife Service - Pacific Region, stated that subsection 5(1) requires an owner to have "continuous and effective control of their animal by restraining it to ensure that the animal doesn't disturb, harass, harm or kill a migratory bird, their eggs or their nest."

On November 1, 2021 Saanich Council voted to establish Cadboro Bay-Gyro Park and the public beach at Cadboro Bay as a year-round dog on-leash area. This came from a recommendation from Saanich Police who at the time were responsible for Animal Control in Saanich (that service has now been contracted to CRD Animal Care Services). Staff worked to ensure that signage in Cadboro-Gyro Park was updated and that Migratory Bird Sanctuary signage was installed along the beach.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *District of Saanich, Animals Bylaw, 2004, No.8556*

<sup>2</sup> *Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-bird-sanctuaries/locations/victoria-harbour.html>*

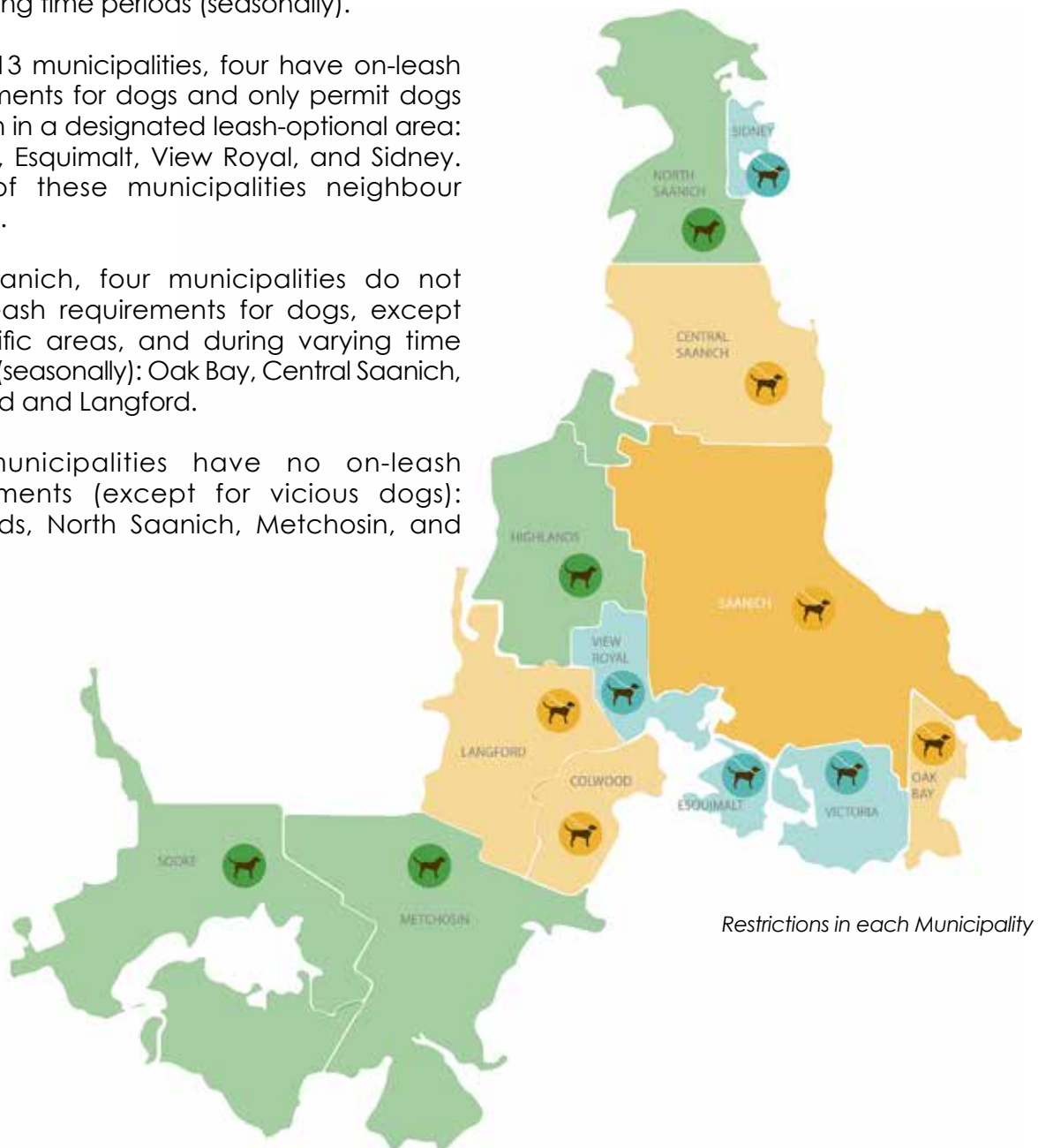
<sup>3</sup> *Government of Canada, Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations*

<sup>4</sup> *Saanich Police Department Briefing Note, June 25, 2021*

## Animal/Pet Regulations in Greater Victoria








Greater Victoria is comprised of 13 municipalities including the District of Saanich. Each municipality has individual bylaws and regulations related to pets in parks. Saanich currently does not have on-leash requirements, except in specific areas, and during varying time periods (seasonally).

- Of the 13 municipalities, four have on-leash requirements for dogs and only permit dogs off-leash in a designated leash-optional area: Victoria, Esquimalt, View Royal, and Sidney. Three of these municipalities neighbour Saanich.
- Like Saanich, four municipalities do not have leash requirements for dogs, except in specific areas, and during varying time periods (seasonally): Oak Bay, Central Saanich, Colwood and Langford.
- Four municipalities have no on-leash requirements (except for vicious dogs): Highlands, North Saanich, Metchosin, and Sooke.



*Restrictions in each Municipality*

The following table outlines the on-leash requirements for parks in each of the jurisdictions that specifically neighbour Saanich.

Neighbouring Jurisdiction	Restrictions		Animal Control Agency
City of Victoria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-leash requirements for dogs.</li> <li>• Dogs only permitted off-leash in designated leash-optional areas.</li> <li>• No off-leash areas with a beach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria Animal Control</li> </ul>
Esquimalt		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-leash requirements for dogs.</li> <li>• Dogs only permitted off-leash in designated leash-optional areas.</li> <li>• One park with a beach leash-optional year round.</li> <li>• One park with a beach leash-optional Nov 1-May 1. Sensitive ecosystem area is fenced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria Animal Control</li> </ul>
View Royal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-leash requirements for dogs.</li> <li>• Dogs only permitted off-leash in designated leash-optional areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRD Animal Care</li> </ul>
<b>Saanich</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No on-leash requirements for dogs, except in specific areas, and during varying time periods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRD Animal Care</li> </ul>
Oak Bay		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No on-leash requirements for dogs, except in specific areas, and during varying time periods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria Animal Control</li> </ul>
Central Saanich		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No on-leash requirements for dogs, except in specific areas, and during varying time periods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRD Animal Care</li> </ul>
Highlands		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No on-leash requirements (except for vicious dogs), or any areas where dogs are not permitted to be off-leash.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRD Animal Care</li> </ul>

## Existing Saanich Regulations

Currently, the District of Saanich has various restrictions for dogs in parks, including areas where no dogs are allowed, seasonal restrictions, and areas with on-leash requirements. There are 171 parks in Saanich, and 60 of these parks have some kind of restriction on dogs (about 35% of parks).

Existing restrictions for dogs in Saanich parks can be categorized in the following way:

### Seasonal Restrictions

- **1 park** has seasonal restrictions for the entire park:
  - » Whitehead Park
- **8 parks** in Saanich have fenced baseball / softball fields (about 5% of parks). Saanich's Animals Bylaw prohibits dogs from being in a fenced baseball field during the months of March to October.
- **2 beaches** have seasonal restrictions:
  - » Mount Douglas Beach
  - » Cordova Bay Beach

### On-leash Requirements

- **1 park** has on-leash requirements for the whole park:
  - » Cadboro-Gyro Park
- **1 park** has on-leash requirements for certain areas of the park:
  - » Blenkinsop Lake Park
- **55 parks** in Saanich have playgrounds or spray pads (about 32% of parks). Saanich's Animals Bylaw requires all dogs to be on a leash within a 10 metre (32.8 feet) radius of any playground equipment in a park.

- In addition, Saanich's Animals Bylaw prohibits dogs from being off-leash on a highway, school ground, college ground, or at the Royal Oak Burial Park.<sup>1</sup>








### Restrictions



- **2 parks** prohibit dogs from certain areas of the park in addition to having on-leash requirements:
  - » Rithet's Bog Park
  - » Cedar Hill Park
- **5 parks** in Saanich have an artificial soccer field (about 3% of parks). Saanich's Animals Bylaw prohibits dogs from being on an artificial turf field in any park.

### No Dogs Allowed

- **2 parks** prohibit dogs from the entire park:
  - » Quicks Bottom Park
  - » Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

<sup>1</sup> District of Saanich, Animals Bylaw, 2004, No.8556

Park Name	Local Area	Restriction	Rational	Details
<b>Quicks Bottom Park</b>	Rural Saanich	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Dogs Allowed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are not permitted in the park.</li> </ul>
<b>Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary</b>	Quadra	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Dogs Allowed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoned P-5 (Conservation Park)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are not permitted in the park.</li> <li>The park is managed by the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary Society (not managed by Saanich Parks).</li> </ul>
<b>Rithet's Bog Park</b>	Royal Oak	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoned P-5 (Conservation Park)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are only permitted on the perimeter trail and must be confined by a leash.</li> <li>Dogs are not permitted anywhere else in the park or conservation area.</li> </ul>
<b>Cedar Hill Park</b>	Quadra	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive Environment</li> <li>Safety Issues (Golf Course)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are permitted in the park, but only on the perimeter trail and must be confined by a leash.</li> <li>Dogs are not permitted within a 50m radius of Kings Pond (with the exception of being on the perimeter trail).</li> <li><i>This bylaw requires clarification.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Blenkinsop Lake Park</b>	Blenkinsop	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-leash Requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitive Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are permitted in the park, but only on the Lochside Regional Trail and must be confined by a leash.</li> </ul>
<b>Cadboro-Gyro Park</b>	Cadboro Bay	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-leash Requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per council decision November 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are required to be on leash in the park as well as the adjacent beach. Dogs and cats must not be allowed to run at large inside the designated Migratory Bird Sanctuary (According to the Government of Canada).</li> </ul>
<b>Whitehead Park</b>	Rural Saanich	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal Restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health (Beach and Picnic Area)</li> <li>Sensitive Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are not permitted in the park during the months of May to August.</li> </ul>

Beach	Local Area	Restriction	Rational	Details
<b>Cordova Bay Beach</b>	Cordova Bay	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal Restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health (Beach Area)</li> <li>Sensitive Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are not permitted on the beach between Cordova Bay Park and the northern boundary of Walema Avenue after 9:00am during the months of May to August.</li> </ul>
<b>Mount Douglas Park Beach</b>	Gordon Head	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal Restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Health</li> <li>Sensitive Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dogs are not permitted at Mount Douglas Park Beach at PKOLS-Mount Douglas Park during the months of May to August.</li> </ul>

## Local Area Assessment

An assessment was undertaken to compare the number of licensed dogs in each of Saanich's 12 local areas to the size of the local area, the population of people, and amount of park space available (not including Capital Regional District Parks, or institutional lands).

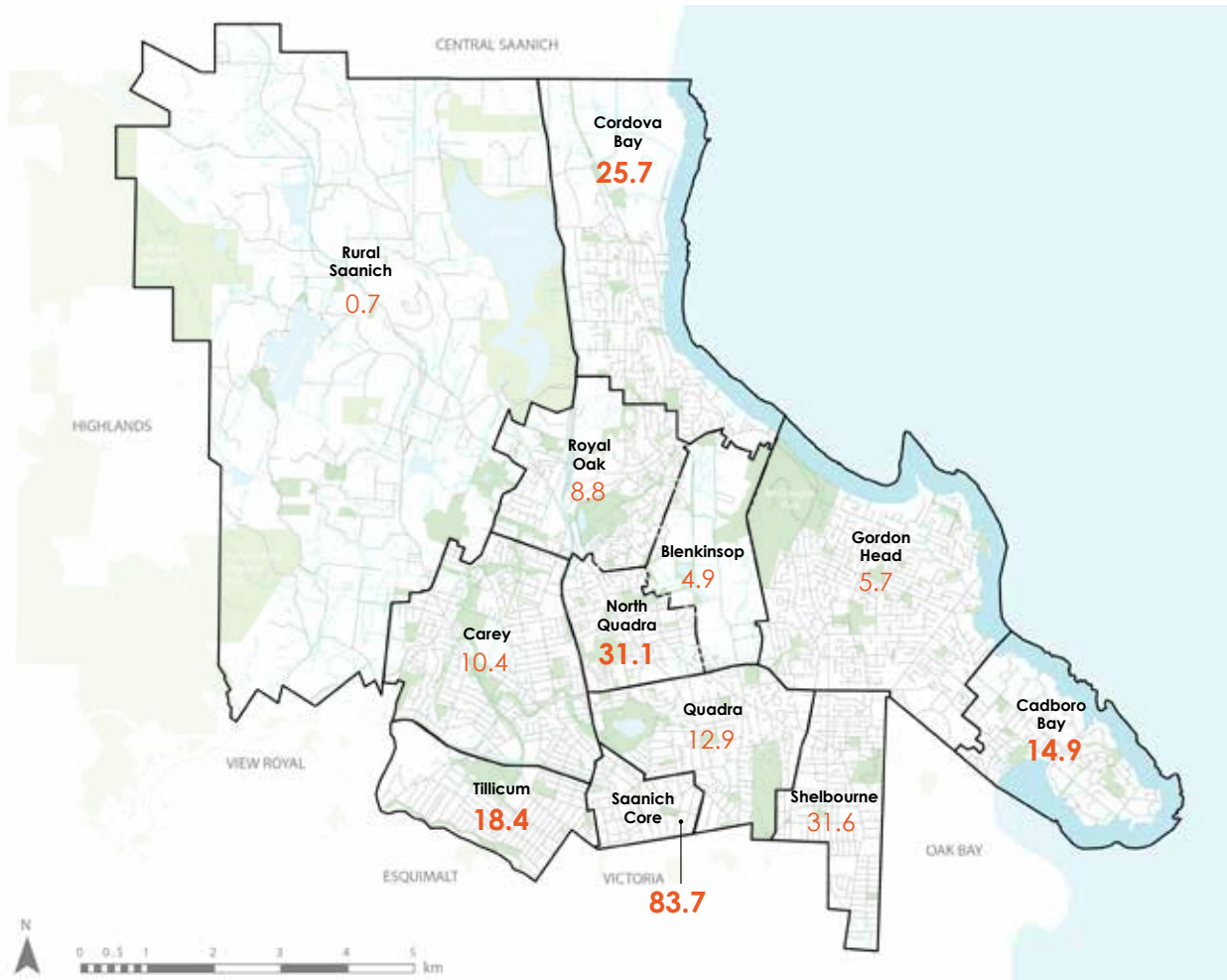
Local Area	Area (ha)*	Population (2016)	Licensed Dogs	Number of Dogs per Hectare of Local Area	Parks (ha)**	Number of Dogs per Hectare of Park Space
<b>Saanich Core</b>	177.1 ha	5,470	226	1.27 dogs	2.7 ha	83.7 dogs
<b>Shelbourne</b>	415.3 ha	12,525	767	1.84 dogs	24.2 ha	31.6 dogs
<b>North Quadra</b>	295.5 ha	7,880	521	1.76 dogs	16.7 ha	31.1 dogs
<b>Cordova Bay</b>	891.2 ha	8,125	782	0.87 dogs	30.4 ha	25.7 dogs
<b>Tillicum</b>	412.6 ha	10,080	796	1.92 dogs	43.1 ha	18.4 dogs
<b>Cadboro Bay</b>	382.7 ha	4,000	437	1.14 dogs	29.2 ha	14.9 dogs
<b>Quadra***</b>	547.7 ha	11,175	941	1.71 dogs	72.8 ha	12.9 dogs
<b>Carey</b>	826.4 ha	18,405	1,363	1.65 dogs	130.1 ha	10.4 dogs
<b>Royal Oak</b>	590.5 ha	8,855	627	1.06 dogs	71.1 ha	8.8 dogs
<b>Gordon Head</b>	1,079 ha	21,270	1,318	1.22 dogs	228.4 ha	5.7 dogs
<b>Blenkinsop</b>	431.3 ha	1,320	108	0.25 dogs	21.9 ha	4.9 dogs
<b>Rural Saanich****</b>	4,666.1 ha	5,025	624	0.13 dogs	886 ha	0.7 dogs

\* Sourced from District of Saanich Local Areas map by Corporate GIS, 2022

\*\* Sourced from Saanich Park Inventory, 2010.

\*\*\* Dogs are not permitted in the Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary or Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary in Quadra and therefore 61.8 ha of park space has been subtracted from the total amount.

\*\*\*\* Dogs are not permitted in Quick's Bottom Park in Rural Saanich and therefore 19.5 ha of park space has been subtracted from the total amount.



Dogs Per Hectare of Park Space

## **Interviews with other Jurisdictions**

Interviews were held with staff from the City of Vancouver, City of Seattle, and City of Edmonton. The following comments cover topics that all these jurisdictions mentioned:

- Signage should have clear language, not be subjective, and should show physical boundaries for any leash-optional areas.
- Tap into existing stewardship groups/independent from the region / municipality.
- Consider if commercial dog-walkers impact leash-optional areas (if so, consider that only the largest leash-optional areas are used by them).
- Budgetary restrictions have prevented retaining additional enforcement/peace officers.
- Issues with off-leash dogs on trails are a recurring challenge in parks (environmental reasons, dog and cyclist conflicts).
- There are few opportunities to access the water for dogs and these areas are kept separate from swimming beaches because of contamination (e.coli) and environmental concerns.
- It is important to implement a criteria for locating off-leash dog areas (considering access, adjacencies, etc).

## **Comparison of Research Findings**

Background research included the comparison of the policies and regulations related to pets in parks that are enforced in other jurisdictions. Some of the most widely implemented policies and regulations are enforced in Saanich. However, there are other policies and regulations enforced by the majority of the jurisdictions included in the research that are not currently enforced in Saanich. These include:

- Dogs are not to harass (chase, bark at attack) wildlife/other animals (6 of 7)
- Dogs are not allowed on sports fields (5 of 7)
- Dogs must not excessively/persistently bark (5 of 7)
- Dogs must be vaccinated ((4 of 7)
- Handlers must be in the possession of a leash at all times (4 of 7)
- Leashes must be a certain length (4 of 7)

A summary of the research is included in the table on the following page. Only the policies and regulations that were implemented by the majority of other jurisdictions included in the study are in the table.



The following table provides a high-level comparison of other jurisdiction's policies and regulations related to pets in parks.

Dog Policies and Regulations	Saanich	Frequency	Jurisdiction						
			San Francisco	Seattle	Edmonton	Vancouver	Victoria	Nanaimo	CRD
Dog must be licensed		7							
Dog waste must be picked up and disposed of properly		7							
Restrictions on aggressive dogs/aggressive behaviour		7							
No dogs in sensitive ecological areas	Only Some	7							
Dog must be under control at all times (must immediately respond to voice commands/hand signals)		7							
No dogs in children's play areas		6							
Dogs are not to harass (chase, bark at, attack) wildlife/other animals		6							
No dogs in heat		5							
Handler must be present with dog		5							
No dogs on sports fields		5							
No excessive/persistent barking		5							
No dogs on beaches except if designated off-leash area (OLA) or at certain time of the year	Only Some	5							
Must be vaccinated		4							
Dogs must be leashed when entering and exiting OLA		4							
Handler must be in possession of a leash for each dog at all times		4							
Bylaw exemption for waste removal for handler who is physically disabled or visually impaired		4							
Length restrictions on leashes		4							
Dogs must be at least 4 months old to be in OLA		3							

## APPENDIX      Key Findings

The following section provides a more detailed overview of the key findings:

### **Open Space and Exercise**

The Saanich community recognizes the benefits of having open space for running and playing with their dogs. Of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents, 49% indicated that the main benefit of allowing dogs off-leash in parks is the freedom for dogs to play/run (i.e. chase balls, exercise). Of respondents, 22% indicated that there are benefits for dog owners as well.

Public Online Questionnaire respondents indicated that the positive effects on physical and mental health for both dogs and their owners was the number one benefit to having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks. This was mentioned 1,214 times out of 1,921 comments received for this question. Many respondents commented that the quality of exercise a dog receives off-leash cannot be replicated while on leash.

### **Environmental Considerations**

Of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents, 32% indicated that the most important factor when considering Saanich parks in general is environmental protection and wildlife habitat connections. In the Public Online Questionnaire, respondents indicated that opportunities to connect with nature, and environmental protection and wildlife habitat are the top two most important consideration for parks in general.

Some volunteer groups have expressed frustration with off-leash dogs being in areas they have worked to naturalize, and community members have anecdotally expressed concern with off-leash dogs being in environmentally sensitive areas including the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary at Cadboro Bay Park.

### **Safety**

All park users agree that safety for people is an important consideration when it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks. Of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents, 50% indicated that safety for people was the most important consideration. Safety issues for children/people was a main challenge with having dogs off-leash in parks for 30% of dog owners and 45% of non-dog owners.

In the Public Online Questionnaire, safety concerns was identified as one of the top challenges with having dogs off-leash in parks for both people and dogs. Of respondents, 40% identified safety for pets as an important consideration for sharing parks, and 36% selected safety for people. It was mentioned that a lack of separation between people and off-leash dogs is a barrier to enjoyment and safety in parks.

## **Dog Behavior and Lack of Training/Control**

Dog behavior and a lack of training was consistently mentioned as the top challenge related to dogs in parks. Of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents, 49% indicated that irresponsible owners or those not able to control their dog is the main challenge with having dogs off-leash in parks. Poorly trained dogs (jumping on people, barking) was considered to be the main challenge for 26% of dog owners, and 37% of non-dog owners.

In the Public Online Questionnaire, behavior issues and improper training was identified as the main challenge with having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks, and 31% of Pop-up Dog Park Pilot Project Online Questionnaire respondents indicated that owners not controlling their dog(s) was the number one concern for having enclosed dog parks in their neighborhood.

While the majority reported positive experiences overall with dogs in parks, 51% of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents have had a conflict with an off-leash dog (57% of dog owners and, 48% of non-dog owners). Among dog owners, having their dog attacked or approached aggressively by another dog is the most frequently reported. Among non-dog owners, various issues with aggressive dogs, or owners not controlling their dogs are the most common reports.

## **Communication and Education**

Public Online Questionnaire respondents indicated that a lack of information and education is a main challenge with having dogs off-leash in parks. It was suggested that having educational opportunities and information on training and dog etiquette available to park users would result in fewer conflicts.

When additional comments were solicited in the Public Online Questionnaire, 171 comments (of 1,492) called for better and more signage to distinguish areas where dogs are permitted off-leash and not, citing that the confusion can cause tension and confrontation between park users.

Approximately 85% of Pop-up Dog Park Pilot Project Questionnaire respondents were satisfied with the Rules and Etiquette signage located at the pop-ups dog parks. Participants suggested additional messaging for picking up dog waste, and behavioral and education tips.

## **Variety of Parks**

For nearly half (45%) of the Online Public Questionnaire respondents, fenced off-leash open areas for running and play was considered a very important dog park feature, and was ranked as the most important amenity. Respondents suggested that different types of leash-options are needed in Saanich (in addition to enclosed or fenced areas), and areas of different sizes should be distributed throughout the District.

Of Online Public Questionnaire respondents, 35% indicated that the location and distribution of fenced leash-optional areas for dogs within a park as an important consideration.

When asked about the benefits of having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks, some Public Online Questionnaire respondents indicated there is no benefit to having dogs off-leash and that dogs should only be permitted off-leash in an leash-optional area to mitigate conflicts. This was mentioned 546 times out of the 1,921 comments received for this question.

When asked about reasons for not visiting parks, Online Public Questionnaire respondents indicated that there are not enough restrictions on off-leash dogs and they would prefer not to have dogs around. Many respondents shared their desire for more designated leash-optional areas. This was mentioned 264 times out of the 1,396 comments received for this question. 200 respondents indicated that they don't visit certain parks because dogs aren't allowed or must be on-leash.

### **Park Cleanliness and Waste Management**

Waste management and cleanliness is an important consideration for people and dogs sharing Saanich's parks. 29% of Pop-up Dog Park Pilot Project Online Questionnaire respondents indicated that cleanliness / owners not picking up after their dog(s) was a concern for having enclosed dog parks in their neighborhood. Similarly, 15% of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents indicated that cleanliness of parks was the most important factor to consider in parks, making it the second most mentioned consideration. Respondents to the Public Online Questionnaire identified waste management to be a main challenge of having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the typical dog generates three quarters of a pound of waste per day – or 274 pounds per year. With possibly 15,000-20,000 dogs in Saanich, that amounts to a total of 4.1-5.4 million pounds of dog waste per year. It is unknown how much of the total waste is disposed of properly.

### **Park Equity**

Of Public Online Questionnaire respondents, 40% indicated that they avoid Saanich parks due to off-leash dogs being present (24% of dog owners and 72% of non-dog owners avoid parks because of off-leash dogs). Additionally, 51% of respondents support having a park where no dogs are allowed (34% of dog owners and 83% of non-dog owners agree), and 76% of Statistically Valid Phone Survey respondents agree that specific areas where dogs are not allowed off-leash would help reduce conflicts in parks.

## **Community Building**

Public Online Questionnaire respondents indicated that bringing their dog(s) to parks allows them to connect with other members of the community, and community building was mentioned as a benefit to having dogs-off-leash in Saanich parks. However, throughout the engagement process, community members have anecdotally expressed concerns about the frequency and intensity of conflicts between park users related to off-leash dogs in Saanich.

## **Enforcement**

Respondents to the Statistically Valid Phone Survey were divided as to whether or not there is suitable enforcement of dog activity in Saanich. Of respondents, 36% agree and 30% disagree that there is suitable enforcement of dog activity in parks. In the Public Online Questionnaire, respondents indicated that there was a lack of clarity around some of the restrictions, including what it means to have dogs "under control". When additional comments were solicited in the Public Online Questionnaire, 125 comments (of 1,492) called for increased bylaw enforcement and more patrol officers.

The Saanich Police Department reported in June 2021 that during patrols of Cadboro-Gyro Park, many park users demonstrated frustration in trying to understand the Animals Bylaw and existing signage (*Saanich Police Department Briefing Note, June 25, 2021*). In June 2022, the District of Saanich contracted Animal Control services to the Capital Regional District. CRD Animal Care Services are currently responsible for enforcing the Saanich Animals Bylaw throughout the municipality, including all parks.

## **Park Use**

The Statistically Valid Phone Survey determined that dog owners are frequent users of parks, with 52% using them at least daily and 65% visiting parks several times a week or more. Of Public Online Questionnaire respondents, 69% indicated that the main reason they visit parks is to bring pets. Of Statistically Valid Phone Survey, 4% visit parks with other pets, mainly cats. Of Public Online Questionnaire respondents, 2% said they visited parks with a pet other than a dog. These pets included, cats, horses, ferrets, and parrots. Many indicated that they do not bring other pets to parks because of concerns with off-leash dogs.

## **Dog Licensing**

Data from the District of Saanich identifies 8,510 licensed dogs in 2022. The estimated dog population in Saanich is between 15,740 - 23,547 based on the Statistically Valid Phone Survey of Saanich residents and nation-wide dog population estimates from Agriculture Canada. This translates to a licensing compliance rate between approximately 35% and 45%.

## **Population Demographics**

Review of statistical information has determined that the population of Saanich is increasing and projected to grow by 700-800 new residents each year to 2038. This growth in population will undoubtedly result in an increase in Saanich's dog population as well. (*Saanich Housing / Demographics Conditions, 2019*)

## **Number of Dogs per Hectare of Park Space**

An analysis of the number of registered dogs and the amount of park space per local area in Saanich determined that there are several local areas with a high density of dogs per hectare of parks space, and some local areas with a low density. Areas with higher densities may experience more challenges relating to pets in parks.

The local areas with the highest density of dogs per hectare of parks space (more than 30 dogs per hectare) include Saanich Core, Shelbourne and North Quadra. The local areas with the lowest density of dogs per hectare of park space (less than six dogs per hectare) include Rural Saanich, Blenkinsop and Gordon Head.

It should be noted that Gordon Head has a high ratio of parkland to dogs because of PKOLS (Mt. Douglas Park).

This analysis does not account for visitors coming into Saanich with their pets.

## APPENDIX Summer Pop-ups

### Summer Pop-Up Dog Park Pilot Project

The Summer Pop-Up Dog Park Pilot Project provided fenced-in, leash-optional areas in five different parks during the summer of 2021. The pop-up dog parks were regularly monitored, and the community shared their thoughts via an online questionnaire. The project was considered a success and was expanded for summer 2022, with five additional pop-up dog parks added. The 2023 program offered three parks for five months (May 1 to Sept 30) in Hyacinth, Rudd, and Lambrick Parks.

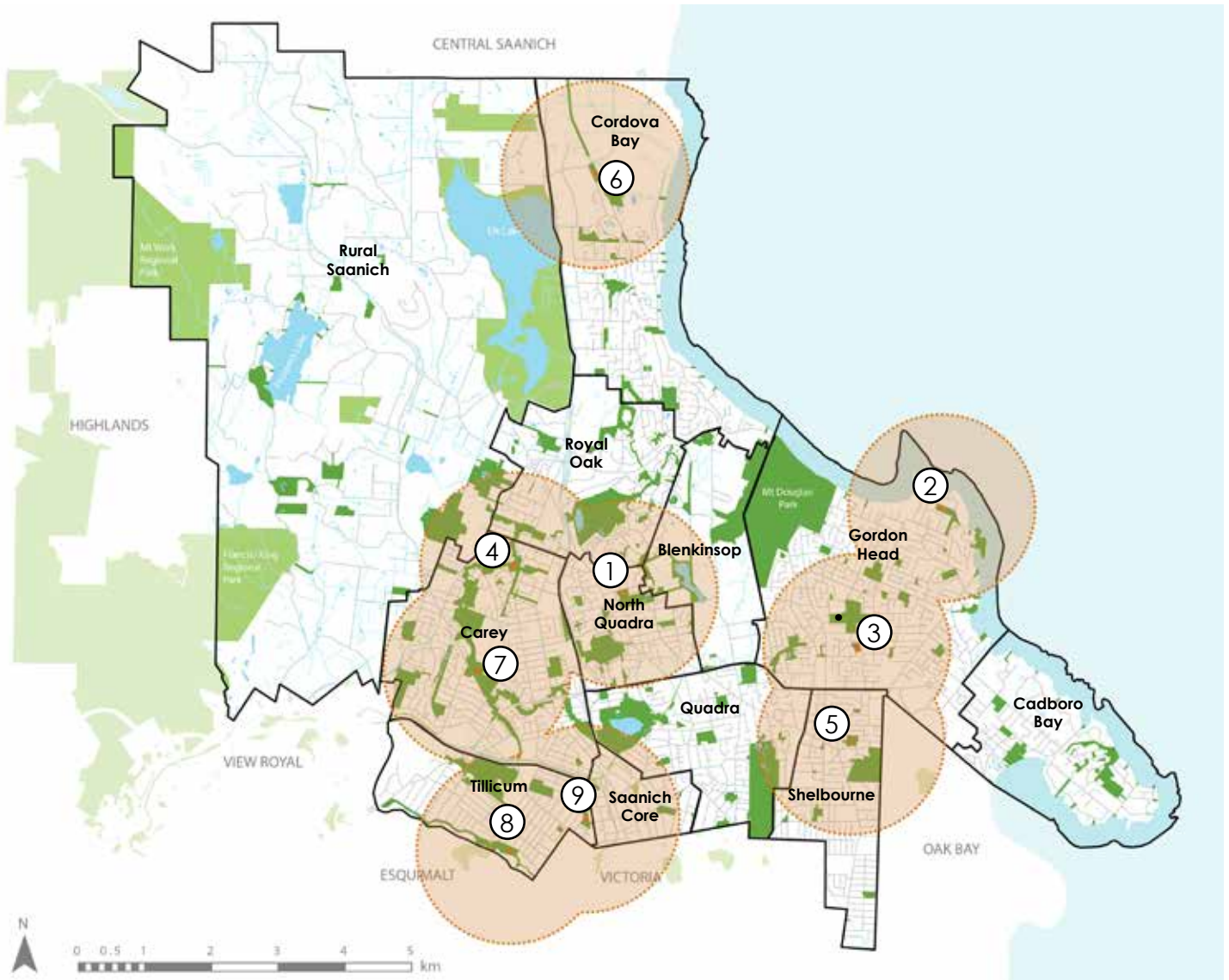
- The 2021 pop-up dog parks were well received by the community, with the majority of users being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the pop-up dog parks.
- One pop-up dog park, Cadboro-Gyro park Park, received unfavorable reviews, with the majority of online questionnaire respondents being “very dissatisfied” with the pop-up dog park. This pop-up was not reinstated for summer 2022.

Mapping the pop-ups determined that not all areas in Saanich were well served by a pop-up dog park (not within a 15 minute [1,500 meters] walking distance).

- Quadra did not have a pop-up dog park, even though it has the fourth highest population density in Saanich. Site selection was determined by the criteria listed below.
- Royal Oak, Rural Saanich, Blenkinsop and Cadboro Bay were not well served by a pop-up dog park. However, these neighbourhood areas have lower population densities.

A park would be considered for a pop-up dog park if it met the following site selection criteria determined by the District:

- The park is not zoned P-4N (Natural Park) or P-5 (Conservation).
- The site is an open field, not presently utilized for organized sport or in a natural park, and at least 0.14ha. This minimum size was determined by public feedback during the 2021 pilot project.
- On-site or street parking is available and is unlikely to impact residents.
- The park is not part of Saanich's Summer Neighbourhood Playground program.
- The physical terrain is suitable for a dog park, is flat, and not sloping.
- The park is not likely to disrupt neighbours within the vicinity.



2022 Pop-Up Dog Park Locations with a 15 Minute Walking Radius



# Appendix D

Pets & the Environment

## APPENDIX    Pets & the Environment

Round 1 Engagement determined that the environment should be a key consideration in the development of a strategy for the shared use of Saanich's parks.

This section of the report highlights some case studies and findings related to the impact that pets can have on the environment and wildlife.

### Dogs & Wildlife Disturbance

In a study on wildlife and dog disturbance in Boundary Bay Regional Park (near Tsawwassen), where 38% of observed dogs were on-leash, and 62% were off-leash, the following was observed:

Dogs disturbed wildlife **15%** of the time overall.

Of off-leash dogs, **25%** disturbed wildlife.



Of on-leash dogs, **2%** disturbed wildlife.



The study determined that waterfowl were disturbed the most frequently (38% of observations), followed by gulls and terns (32%), passerines (27%) and shorebirds (25%).

Of wildlife that was disturbed, 51% did not return to the scene of the disturbance (Gerst, 2002 as cited in Andrusiak, 2003).

Disturbance to foraging and nesting birds results in lost time spent foraging and time spent away from the nest, and may lead to declines in population (Environment & Climate Change Canada, 2022).

Disturbance increases alertness and stress response in wildlife, which can mean wildlife spend less time feeding, breeding, sleeping, and caring for young (Hennings, 2016).

## Dog Waste & the Environment

Dog waste impacts people's enjoyment of parks:

A common complaint among park users in Saanich is the prevalence of dog waste in parks (Saanich, 2021; Saanich News, 2017, 2018, 2021). Because off-leash dogs are often out of sight of their owners, their waste is less likely to be removed from natural areas.

The nutrients in dog waste impact native ecosystems:

Dog waste is high in nitrogen and phosphorus, two nutrients that can enrich soil conditions in naturally nutrient poor ecosystems, and encourage the colonization of invasive plants (Frenne, 2022). Threatened ecosystems like Garry Oak Meadows are particularly susceptible to changes in nutrient levels and the influx of invasive plants (Goert, 2022).

Dog waste is a source of E. coli bacteria in the environment:

Two to three days worth of dog waste from approximately 100 dogs can contribute enough bacteria to a waterway to close a bay to swimming and shellfishing (Metro Vancouver, 2022).

Humans and wildlife can catch parasites and diseases from dog waste:

Humans and animals can contract Giardia, hookworms, tapeworms, roundworms, whipworms, E. coli and salmonella from dog waste (Associated Veterinary Medical Centre, 2020; Hennings, 2016).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the typical dog generates three quarters of a pound of waste per day – or 274 pounds per year. With possibly 15,000-20,000 dogs in Saanich, that amounts to a total of 4.1-5.4 million pounds of dog waste per year. It is unknown how much of the total waste is disposed of properly.

**Each year in Metro Vancouver Parks, dogs deposit the equivalent of:**

 **425** bathtubs of **urine**

 **961** truckloads of **feces**

## Case Study: Cadboro Bay & The Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary

Saanich, Cadboro Bay, Gorge Waterway and Portage Inlet are located within the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary and provide important stopping ground, and foraging and breeding habitat during migration and wintering periods.

Suitable habitats for many migratory birds in South-Coastal BC are limited and are declining due to development, climate change and human disturbance. According to the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (2019), the population of shorebirds in Canada has declined by 40% since 1970.

In a study conducted by Environment and Climate Change Canada, 73 different bird species were recorded at Cadboro Bay. Total bird abundance was high from late fall to spring, with the highest numbers in January (~850 birds) and November (~825 birds).

According to Ebird, a citizen bird watching site, 125 bird species have been seen in Cadboro Bay over the last 10 years. The following species of Special Concern have been seen multiple times at Cadboro Bay within the last year:

- Great Blue Heron
- Horned Grebe
- Double Crested Cormorant
- Brandt's Cormorant
- Common Murre
- Long-Tailed Duck
- Surf Scoter
- Western Grebe

### Dogs at Cadboro Bay

Cadboro Bay provides suitable habitat for migratory and year round bird use, but may be currently limited by the level of human and dog activity (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2022).

While dogs were permitted off-leash at Cadboro Bay beach in the fall of 2020, 45% of 125 respondents to a public survey indicated that dogs were chasing or harrassing birds. Most harassment was noted towards Great Blue Heron (30 responses), gulls (22 responses), and shorebirds (19 responses), and waterfowl (17 responses) (Environment & Climate Change Canada, 2022).

### Pacific Great Blue Heron

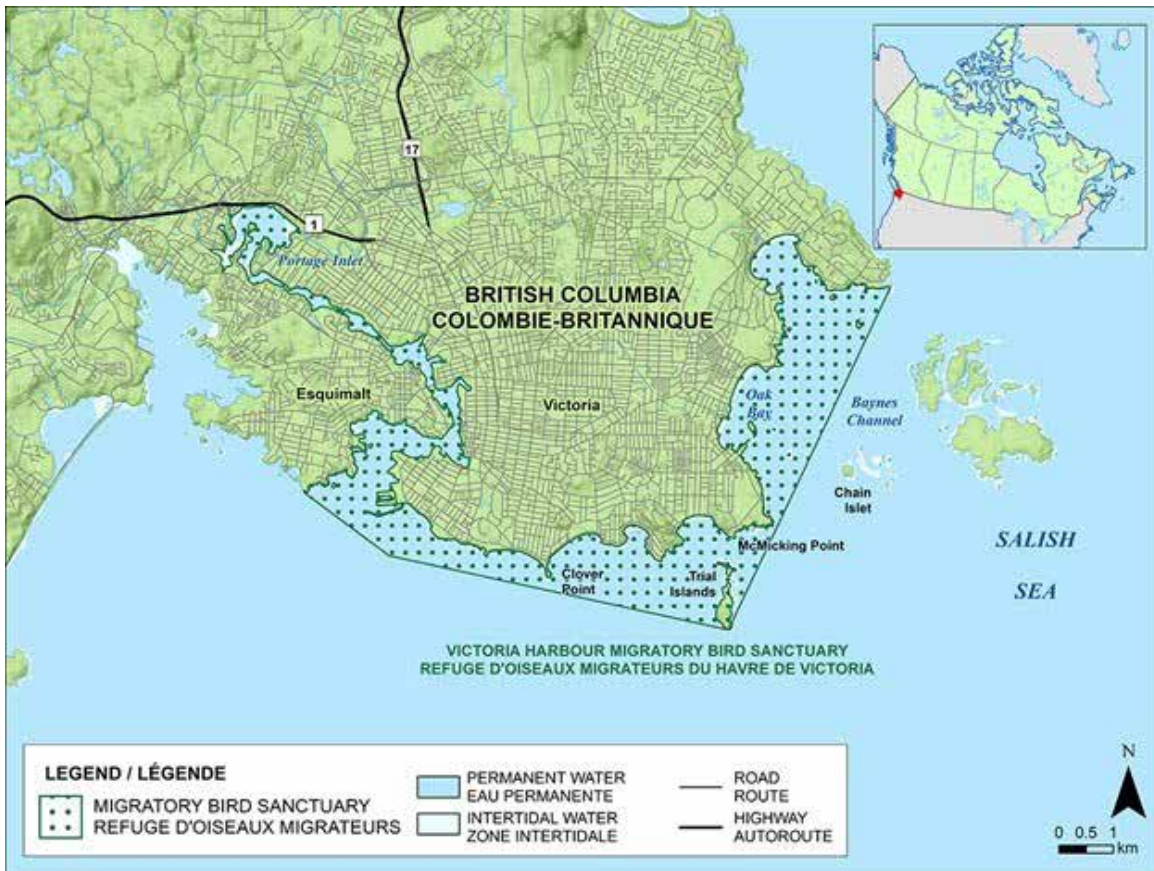
Pacific Great Blue Heron (subspecies *fanninii*) is listed by the Species At Risk Act (SARA) as a species of Special Concern. The BC population is in decline due to the loss of foraging locations and nesting habitat in South-Coastal BC.

Disturbance to nesting Great Blue Herons results in more opportunities for predation of eggs and young by Bald Eagles.

Great Blue Herons use Cadboro Bay year round for foraging and nests nearby at Mystic Pond. The highest numbers of Great Blue Heron are present at Cadboro Bay in July and August post-breeding (Environment & Climate Change Canada, 2022).



Pacific Great Blue Heron



Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary, Government of Canada

## **Saanich Wildlife Habitat**

### Riparian Areas:

- A riparian area is a transition zone between aquatic and upland ecosystems characterized by moisture loving vegetation such as Salmonberry, Elderberry and Skunk Cabbage.
- Riparian areas provide important habitat for many animals.
- Riparian areas reduce erosion, filter runoff, provide shade and food for aquatic creatures, mitigate floods, allow for groundwater infiltration, and function as wildlife corridors.
- Dogs can impact riparian areas by trampling plants, compacting soil, cause erosion along riverbanks and deposit fecal waste into waterways.

### Wetlands:

- Wetlands provide critical habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife, including many species at risk.
- Wetlands absorb and filter pollutants and excess nutrients, recharge groundwater, control runoff, mitigate floods, store carbon, and stabilize shorelines.
- Dogs can disturb species at risk found in wetlands and further endanger their survival.

### Estuaries & Mudflats:

- Estuaries and mudflats are often characterized by brackish salt marshes adapted to flooding and salty soils. Cuthbert Holmes Park in Saanich contains these habitats.
- Estuaries and mudflats provide crucial habitat for many mammals, fish species including juvenile salmon, waterfowl, shorebirds, shellfish and plant species.
- Estuaries and mudflats provide osmotic transition zone for salmon to adapt from freshwater to seawater and back.
- Estuaries and mudflats contain eelgrass beds that are important habitat for shellfish, fish, and waterfowl. Eelgrass beds reduce erosion of coastlines, produce significant amounts of oxygen, sequester carbon, and purify water. Because eelgrass is rooted in mud, it is extremely sensitive to disturbance (Coastal Shore Stewardship, 2012; Oceana.ca, 2022).
- Dogs can impact estuaries and mudflats by trampling plants, disturbing eelgrass beds, and disturbing wildlife, especially resting and feeding shorebirds and ground nesting birds.

## Coastal Douglas Fir Ecosystems:

- The Coastal Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone is a collection of rare and unique ecosystems, including Douglas fir forests, wetlands, coastal shorelines, riparian areas, and Garry Oak ecosystems. The distribution is limited to a small area of southeastern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and the Sunshine Coast.
- Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems are one of the rarest forest types in BC and the smallest in distribution. Less than 1% of old growth Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems still exist. Douglas fir forests have the highest average bird counts of any forest type in North America (CRD, 2021).
- Old growth stands support many species at risk including Northern Goshawk and Marbled Murrelet (South Coast Conservation Program, 2022).
- *Dogs can trample wildflowers, cause soil compaction and erosion on slopes, spread invasive plant seeds on fur, and disturb species at risk and ground nesting birds.*

## Garry Oak Ecosystems:

- Garry Oak ecosystem in Canada is restricted to the southeast coast of Vancouver Island, adjacent Gulf Islands and two locations on the mainland of southwestern BC.
- Garry Oak ecosystems are characterized by Garry Oaks in the canopy, and Camas Lily and many native wildflowers in the understory.
- Garry Oak ecosystem are home to more plant species than any other terrestrial ecosystem in coastal BC, many of these species occur nowhere else in Canada.
- Less than 5% of these ecosystems remain in near-natural conditions, and are among the most endangered ecosystems in Canada.
- More than 100 species of plants, mammals, reptiles, birds, butterflies and other insects in Garry Oak ecosystems are listed as species at risk and many are protected under the Species At Risk Act (GOERT, 2022).



Some examples of important ecosystems in Saanich (from left): Colquitz River mudflats and riparian restoration; Garry Oak Meadow; Western Screech Owl.

Photo credit from left: Cheryl Redhead and Angela Wyatt; DoS; Ann Nightingale.

- Dogs can impact Garry Oak ecosystems by trampling wildflowers, compacting soil, eroding slopes, and spreading of invasive plant seeds on fur. Nitrogen enrichment from dog feces increases soil nutrients that allow for colonization by plants such as blackberry and scotch broom.

### Great Blue Heron Nesting:

- Heron habitat includes riparian areas, estuaries, lakes, and lowland rivers. Herons prefer to forage on eelgrass beds, mudflats, beaches, and streams. They primarily eat fish, but will also eat amphibians, voles, mice and shrews. Heronries are typically located within 10km of foraging ground.
- From January to March adult herons return to the heronry to start constructing nests. Eggs are laid and chicks hatch from April to September (South Coast Conservation Program, 2022)
- *Dogs may disturb herons from foraging and may cause nesting herons to leave, and sometimes abandon their nests which increases the possibility of predation on young.*

### Rare Species:

Saanich is home to 184 species at risk including:

- Sharp-Tailed Snake
- Western Screech Owl
- Common Nighthawk
- Northern Pacific Tree Toad
- Purple Martin



Some examples of important ecosystems in Saanich (from left): Douglas Fir forest; Garry Oak Meadow; Rithe's Bog.

Photo credit from left: Habitat Acquisition Trust; Lees+Assoc; Rithe's Bog Conservation Society.



## Management Strategies

Toronto, Seattle, San Francisco, Edmonton, Vancouver, City of Victoria, Nanaimo, Metro Vancouver, and the Capital Region District have adopted a combination of these management strategies.



Creative waste management signage in the City of North Vancouver



Herefordshire signage explaining seasonal restrictions to protect ground nesting birds.

### Keep Plants and Wildlife Healthy: Best Management Practices

- Keep dogs licensed and vaccinated.
- Stay on the trail.
- Keep dogs on leash unless in designated leash-optional area.
- Pick up dog waste and deposit in appropriate bin.
- Do not let dogs chase wildlife.
- Keep dogs out of ecologically sensitive areas such as estuaries, riparian areas, wetlands and Garry Oak meadows.

### Community Based Social Marketing

A study on proper dog waste disposal in Chicago, Illinois, found that signage alone was not effective in encouraging people to pick up dog waste, raising the compliance rates from the baseline 5% to 6% after signage was installed. However, personal education raised compliance to 63% (Jason et al, 1979). Similarly, leash compliance on Long Beach in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve on Vancouver Island increased from 39% to 60-70% after educational signage, beach patrols and personal interactions were implemented (Zharikov, 2019).

### Beach Restrictions

Seattle does not allow dogs on beaches due to the environmental impact. Vancouver and the City of Victoria allow dogs on beaches only in designated Leash-optional areas and at certain times of the year.

### Seasonal Restrictions

Saanich, among other municipalities, has seasonal restrictions to protect nesting and wildlife habitat, as well as for public health.

### Buffer Zones

Buffer zones created by fencing and/or signage around environmentally sensitive areas, or wildlife habitat, can be an effective management technique (Gomez-Serrano, 2020).

## Stewardship Programs

The U.S. National Park Service has adopted the B.A.R.K. Ranger Program where dog owners volunteer to model good park behaviour and teach other dog owners about the environment. B.A.R.K. stands for:

- Bag your pet's waste
- Always leash your pet
- Respect wildlife
- Know where you can go

The City of Seattle successfully partners with two volunteer stewardship groups to help monitor and maintain the city's Leash-optional areas. The stewardship groups do day-to-day maintenance, which includes providing dog waste bags, volunteer management, fundraising, sponsorship, light trail maintenance, and amenity maintenance - anything that does not require heavy machinery (Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, 2022).

The City of Vancouver has started a "Dogs for the Environment" Stewardship Program where participants will help to protect wildlife and the environment, contribute to change in Vancouver parks, build community through teamwork and nurture happy and healthy dogs (City of Vancouver, 2022).

## Vaccinations & Timely Removal of Pet Waste

Ensuring timely vaccination and removal of outdoor pet feces will reduce the chance of disease transmission to wild animals. Many parasites require a few days to reach the infective stage, so disposing of waste immediately can effectively limit disease transmission (Associated Veterinary Medical Center, 2020).



An enthusiastic participant in the US National Park Service B.A.R.K program



Specialized dog waste bins in the City of North Vancouver



A cat sporting a fashionable Birdbesafe collar.

## Cat Management

Keeping your cat inside is the most effective way of eliminating its predation on birds and mammals. However, other strategies can be effective. A 2021 study in England (Cecchetti et al.) surveyed 355 cats over a 12 week trial. The authors found the following:

- Bright collars (e.g. brand Birdbesafe) reduced bird kills by 42%. Cat bells had no effect.
- Playing with cats 5-10 minutes per day reduced cat predation on small mammals by 25%.
- Feeding cats a grain-free meat based diet reduced hunting by 36%.
- Most mammal hunting takes place at night, so keeping cats inside at night can reduce its impact on mammal wildlife.

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# Appendix E

## Round 1 Engagement Summary

# District of Saanich People, Pets and Parks Strategy

## ROUND 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Spring/Summer 2022





# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Saanich People, Pets and Parks Strategy will encompass the entire municipality and address the growing calls from residents for Saanich to review policies and/or regulations relating to pet management in parks.

In Saanich, pet owners bring a variety of pets (animals) with them when visiting parks such as horses, cats, and birds, but the vast majority and reported incidents in parks involve dogs. This is why existing park rules and policies focus mainly on dogs.

Many communities across the country have established designated off leash areas or “dog parks” as a way to manage conflicts between owners, their pets and other park users that would prefer a pet free experience. Currently Saanich is unique in that, with a few notable exceptions, most of Saanich’s parks are considered “off leash” so long as the dogs are kept under the effective control of their owners. The Animal Bylaw has been the tool to enforce this requirement.

Given the large size of Saanich and limited enforcement resources, there is little ability to consistently enforce the bylaw.\*

The Strategy will outline recommendations for a District-wide framework that considers all users and the complex factors of the parks system, protects the environment, and meets the needs of the regional community.

The project team has completed Round 1 of engagement that will inform the key directions and vision for the Strategy. In the coming months, we will continue Round 2 to receive input toward the draft Strategy and its recommendations.



\* Effective June 1, 2022 CRD Animal Care was contracted to enforce the Saanich Animals Bylaw.

# WHAT WE DID

The first round of engagement for the People, Pets, Parks Strategy was between May and June 2022. The project team conducted both a public survey and statistically valid telephone survey, facilitated virtual community conversation workshops and distributed kitchen table workbooks to those who preferred to self-facilitate their own discussions. Feedback in this round will inform the key directions for the Strategy and draft recommendations.



**Public Survey:** The public survey was available from May 20th to June 19th on the project website and in paper copies. Topics covered in the questionnaire included high level questions around vision and values and ideas for creating a cohesive and inclusive Strategy, including the benefits and challenges of establishing off leash dog areas.



**Representative (Statistically Valid) Phone Survey:** Mustel Group completed 300 random telephone interviews (landline and cell numbers) to achieve a representative sampling of the District population.



**Community Conversations:** We hosted 2 virtual public workshops with Saanich community members that allowed attendees to better understand and meaningfully engage with key issues and opportunities identified in our background review and pre-consultation enquiry. This also gave participants the opportunity to learn about the range of perspectives and priorities uncovered to date and share specific needs and expectations for the Strategy.



**Kitchen Table Workbooks:** Workbooks were intended for those who were unable or uncomfortable to participate in a community conversation or who preferred to facilitate their own small group conversation. Participants provided feedback on the various users of Saanich parks and opportunities to accommodate various interests, including pets in parks.

# WHAT WE DID

Engagement Activity	Date	Participation
Public Online Survey	May 20 <sup>th</sup> - June 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	1,834
Representative (Statistically Valid) Phone Survey	May 26 <sup>th</sup> - June 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2022	300
Virtual Community Conversations (2)	June 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2022 June 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	55
Kitchen Table Workbooks	June 10 <sup>th</sup> – July 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	6 workbooks 24 participants

Total Engaged:  
**2,213**

## What is the purpose of a statistically valid survey and public survey?

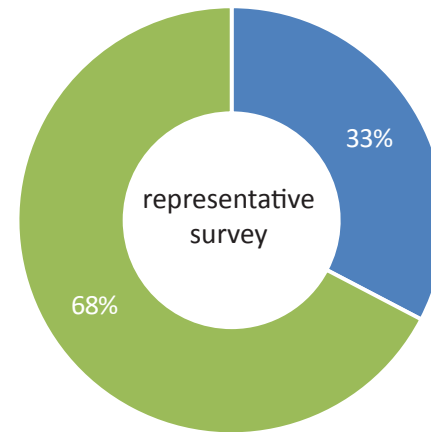
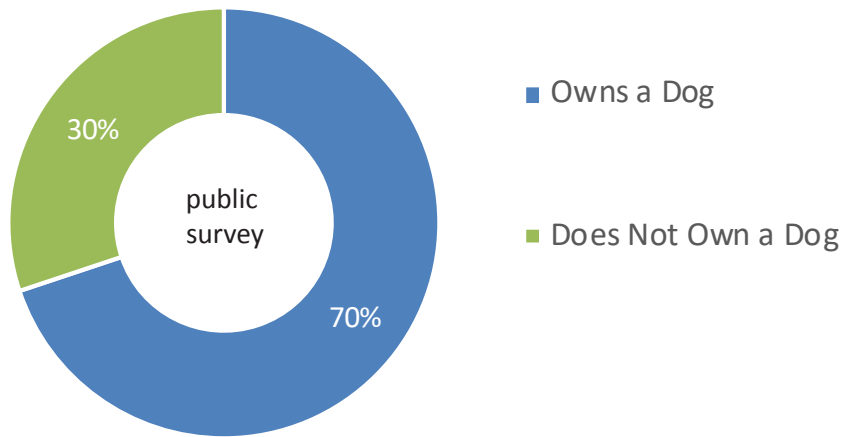


The statistically valid survey aims to represent the community at large. Respondents were drawn at random from a database of published residential and cell phone listings. The online survey was open to the general public and gave people who are interested in the Strategy an opportunity to share their input in the early stages of the process.

The following sections provide an overview of who we heard from and what we heard through all of the engagement activities in this phase. For more detailed results from each activity, please see the appendices.

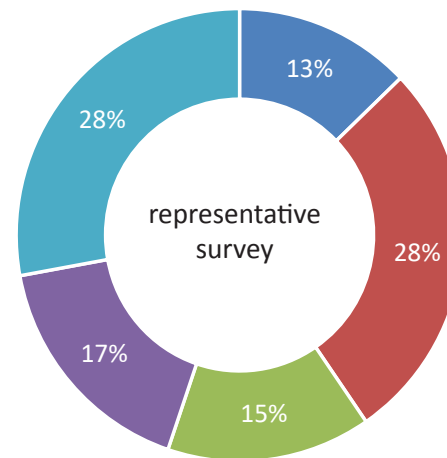
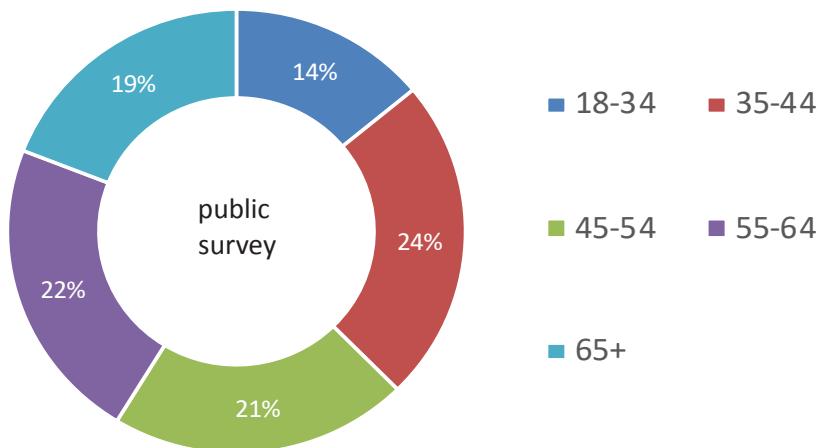
# WHO WE HEARD FROM

## Dog Ownership



Most public survey respondents identified as dog owners, while most respondents to the representative survey did not own a dog.

## Age

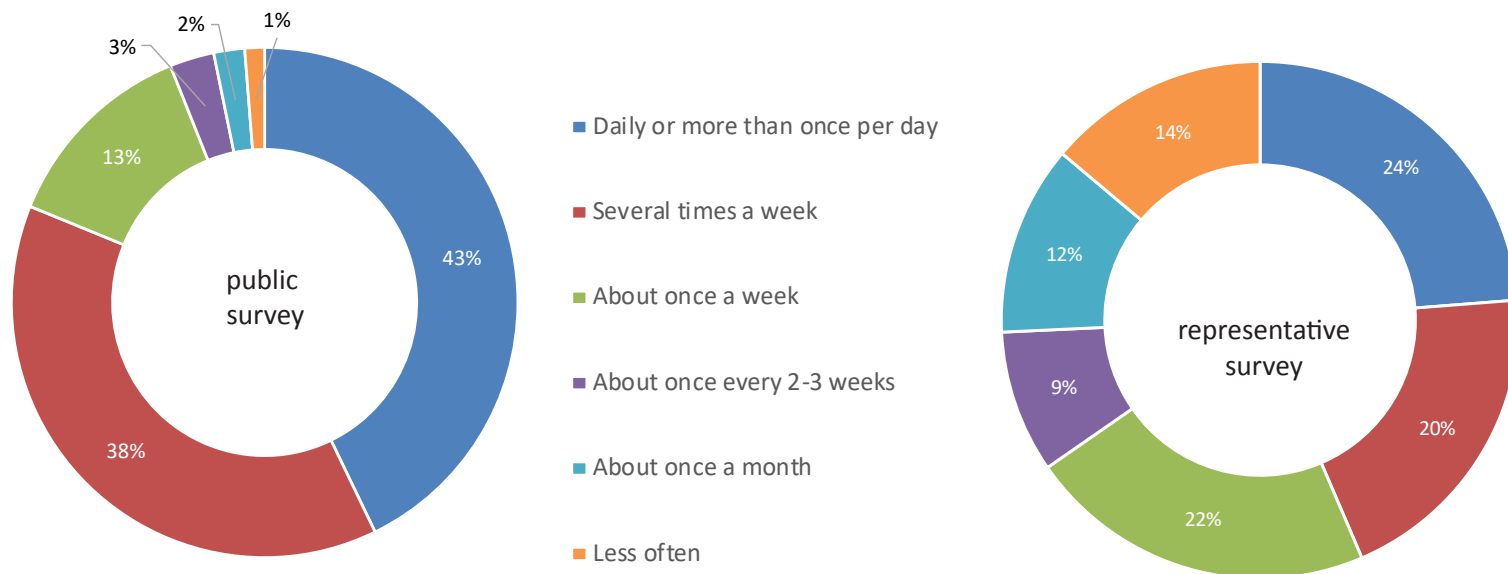


In both surveys, the smallest percentage of participants was between 18 and 34 years old.

The representative survey included a slightly greater proportion of residents 65 and older, while the largest age group in the public survey was between 35 and 44 years old.

# WHO WE HEARD FROM

## Frequency of Park Visitation



Most public survey participants visit Saanich public parks and beaches daily (or more than once per day) or several times a week.

Compared to the public survey, there was a greater proportion of representative survey respondents who visit less often or once a month.

# WHAT WE HEARD



## What do we value about Saanich parks?

When thinking about Saanich parks, participants in both the public survey and statistically valid telephone survey prioritized opportunities to connect with nature and environmental protection/wildlife habitat. This is followed by cleanliness of parks/facilities, variety of users and spaces, and safety.

**Opportunities  
to connect with  
nature**

62% selected this  
in the public survey  
and 35% in the  
representative survey

**Environmental  
protection and  
wildlife habitat**

41% selected this  
in the public survey  
and 52% in the  
representative survey

**Cleanliness of  
parks and facilities**

36% selected this  
in the public survey  
and 43% in the  
representative survey

# WHAT WE HEARD



## Who uses Saanich parks?

We know that the Strategy should serve a diversity of needs. From the community conversations and kitchen table workbooks, participants discussed the many user groups that are important to consider throughout this process. Some of the key groups mentioned include (in no particular order):

- First Nation communities
- Dog owners (particularly dogs with special needs, small dogs, service dogs)
- Cat owners
- Dog trainers and dog walkers
- People and dogs who use parks for mental and physical health benefit (including those who do not feel safe alone in public spaces or who need calm/quiet spaces)
- Equestrian users
- Community events and programming attendees
- Recreational park users (e.g., sports groups, trail walkers/runners, mountain bikers, cyclists, bird watchers)
- Sensitive species and animal habitat (e.g., migratory birds, native trees, fish)
- Volunteers and park stewards
- Scientists, researchers and citizen scientists
- Commuters and people without cars
- People in densified areas
- New immigrant families and cultural groups
- Parents, toddlers and young children (including nature-based preschools)
- Seniors and those with disabilities (i.e., who use mobility assistance devices)
- Vulnerable populations (e.g, unhoused people, drug-users)
- People who do not currently use the parks (may face barriers due to health issues, fear of other uses/users, etc.)

# WHAT WE HEARD



## How can we best share our parks?

When it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks, protection of natural areas and sensitive ecosystems, and safety for people were the most important considerations.

Protection of  
natural areas  
and sensitive  
ecosystems

41% selected  
this in the public  
survey and 43% in  
the representative  
survey

Safety for  
people

36% selected  
this in the public  
survey and 77% in  
the representative  
survey

Safety for  
dogs/pets

40% selected  
this in the public  
survey and 38% in  
the representative  
survey

Location and  
distribution  
of off-leash  
areas for  
dogs

35% selected  
this in the public  
survey and 40% in  
the representative  
survey

**From Community  
Conversations &  
Kitchen Table  
Workbooks**

Sharing our parks can enhance cooperation and foster a culture of responsibility. Participants suggested ways to support these shared spaces including waste management, planning for a variety of spaces and diverse programming, use of physical boundaries (e.g., fencing), improved signage, and training/education for pet owners.



# WHAT WE HEARD



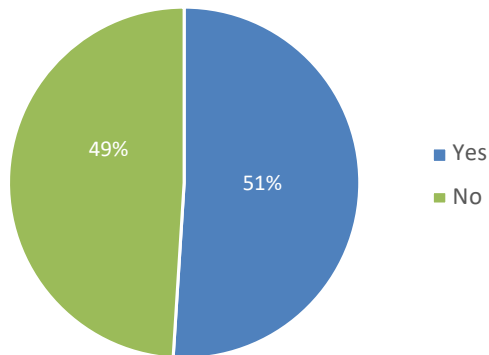
## How can we best share our parks?

From the representative survey, there were high levels of agreement for statements related to the coexistence, comfort and safety of people and dogs, indicating that overall experiences with dogs in Saanich are positive for most.

However, half of residents (51%) have had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog in the past (57% of dog owners, 48% of non-owners).

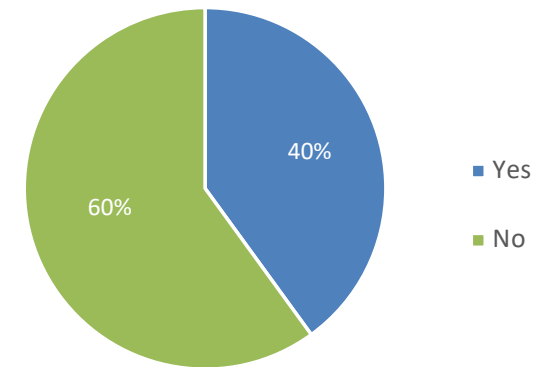
Having their dog attacked or approached aggressively by another dog is the most frequent report by dog owners.

*Have you ever had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog? (representative survey)*



Over half of public survey respondents responded that they do not avoid parks because of off-leash dogs. 40% stated that they avoid Saanich parks for this reason.

*Are there parks you avoid because of the high number of off-leash dogs? (public survey)*



“

*Our dog is reactive. He walks on leash at all times. Unfortunately, sometimes dogs are off leash and will approach him. I don't mind dogs off leash if they have good recall and their owners don't let them approach others, but maybe designated areas for dogs to be off leash would help. It can be challenging to take our dogs for walks because of this and we tend to avoid parks where this is common.*

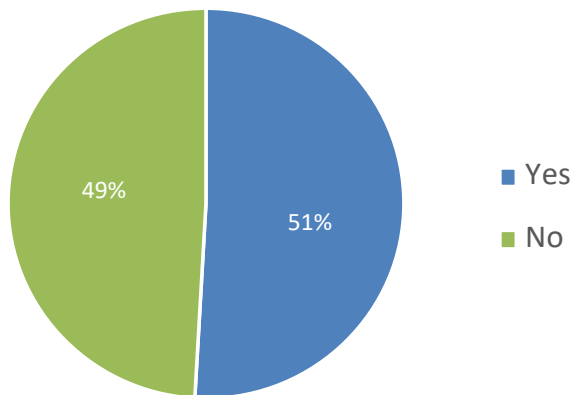
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# WHAT WE HEARD

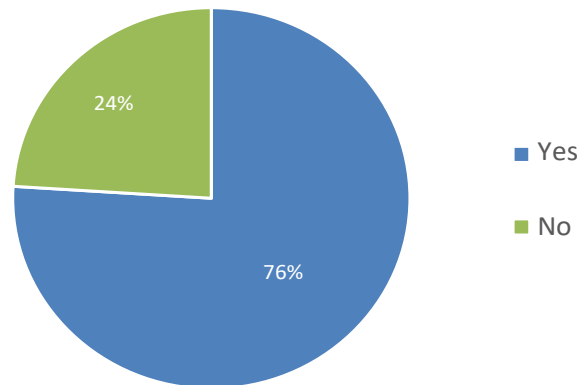


## How can we best share our parks?

Public survey participants were almost equally divided on whether they would support having a park where no dogs were allowed.



The majority (76%) of representative survey respondents agree that specific areas where dogs are not allowed off-leash will help reduce conflicts.



85% of representative survey respondents agree or strongly agree that **“dogs are a welcome part of the community”**

# WHAT WE HEARD



## What are the benefits and challenges to having dogs off-leash in Saanich?

### Opportunities

#### **Positive effects on physical and mental health (for both dogs and their owners)**

Many participants commented that the opportunity to exercise off-leash is incomparable and they feel the quality and quantity of exercise a dog receives off leash cannot be replicated while on leash. The freedom and space for dogs to play and run is appreciated by both dog owners and non-owners.

#### **Designated or enclosed off-leash areas**

Some respondents expressed that off-leash dogs should only be permitted within an enclosed area. They feel that this compromise from the current system allows dogs the freedom of being off-leash while leaving other areas for people who do not wish to be near dogs can enjoy. A variety of dog areas that are different in size and distributed throughout the District are needed. This also relates to appropriate location of designated areas (i.e., not near Environmentally Sensitive Areas [ESAs], busy roads, etc.).

#### **Sense of community**

Parks have become top of mind for residents through the COVID-19 pandemic and increase in dog ownership, resulting in a strong demand for open spaces in which to connect. Some respondents have shared that taking their dog off leash allows them to connect with other members of the community and enhances interactions as people stand and interact while their dogs are getting exercise and socializing.

### Challenges

#### **Dog behaviour and irresponsibility (of owners)**

Irresponsible dog owners and those who are unable to control their dogs are major challenges according to respondents. This is a sentiment shared by both dog owners and non-dog owners alike. Many respondents point to a lack of training and unruly behaviour as a significant issue with off-leash dogs.

#### **Waste management**

Many people commented on a correlation between off-leash dogs and improper waste disposal, as owners are not always keeping a close eye on their dog leaving excrement. Others feel that there should be dog bags at parks to facilitate cleaning up.

#### **Safety concerns**

The lack of separation between dogs and people is a big barrier to enjoyment and safety in parks, particularly with regards to children and the elderly (stated more by non-dog owners). Safety issues between dogs is another concern.

#### **Impact on natural areas**

A key challenge in Saanich has been the impact that park users and off leash dogs have on surrounding sensitive ecosystems, wildlife, and natural areas.

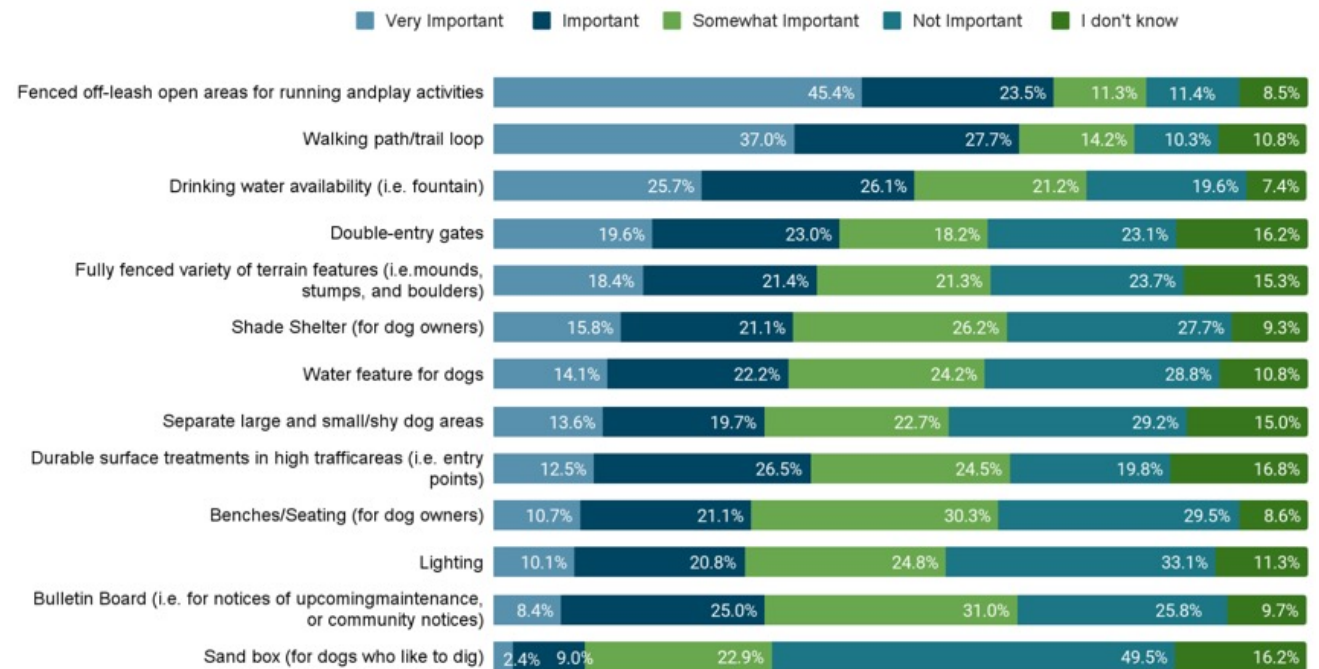
# WHAT WE HEARD



## What else needs to be considered as part of the Strategy ?

- Variety of Off-Leash Areas:** Different types of off-leash areas are needed. Some dogs are not well suited for enclosed or fenced areas as they are reactive or do not want to socialize and may need more exercise.
- Inclusivity:** Recognition and respect for all users of the parks system. The Strategy should consider all needs and perspectives to support a dynamic and connected community.
- Communication:** Additional and better signage to distinguish areas where dogs are permitted off-leash or not. This is also related to the availability and dispersal of information around where pets are welcome, how to train dogs, how to protect natural areas, etc.
- Compliance:** Bylaw enforcement should be considered in the Strategy to ensure regulation has impact. Some would like to see more patrol officers, as well as potentially heftier fines.

- Park Features for Dogs:** For nearly half (45.4%) of the public survey respondents, fenced off-leash open areas for running and play was classified as very important dog park features. Respondents also prioritized walking path/trail loops (37%).



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Engagement in this first round of the process will inform the directions of the Strategy and outline what needs to be considered in the next phase. Based on what we have heard, we know that the Strategy needs to centre the following key principles:

## **Variety of Needs & Spaces for Dogs**

It is important that the Strategy recommendations recognize the needs of different park users while protecting natural areas and habitat. Parks should accommodate different types of pets/dogs depending on size, behaviour, level of training, age and mental state. The Strategy should consider a variety of spaces for pets, including open off-leash and fenced off-leash areas as well as on-leash parks.

## **Accessible Amenities**

Acknowledging that Saanich parks cannot be “everything to everyone”, the District needs to consider how amenities are equitably distributed throughout parks in the region to accommodate the growing population. Decisions will need to be made about balancing values to ensure equitable access to parks.

## **Safety and Comfort**

We know the safety and comfort of park users should be addressed, particularly for children, people who may not have familiarity with dogs, and people afraid of dogs or with allergies.

## **Education and Awareness**

It is important that new (and existing) regulation is communicated to all park users. This includes adequate signage in parks and materials on off-leash and on-leash dog areas across the region. There is a high level of interest in more training and education opportunities for dog owners. This may also include awareness around how regulations will be enforced.

# NEXT STEPS

In the coming months, we will continue Round 2 of engagement to receive input on the draft Strategy and its recommendations.

Engagement opportunities will be shared on the [project webpage](#).



# Appendix F

Round 1 Engagement Appendices

# Saanich People, Pets and Parks Strategy

## PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

The public survey was available on the People, Pets and Parks Strategy [project website](#) from May 20th-June 19th, 2022.

The number of times a particular theme was referenced in the online survey is included in parenthesis. *Example:* Dog presence and owner behavior (225).

Results are grouped by the following topics areas:

- Park Access and Potential Barriers
- General Park Uses
- Pets in Parks
- Pet Owner Trends
- Additional Considerations

### I. PARK ACCESS & POTENTIAL BARRIERS

#### *How often do you visit Saanich public parks or beaches?*

Most participants visit Saanich public parks and beaches daily or more than once per day (43%) or several times a week (38%).

1,831 responses

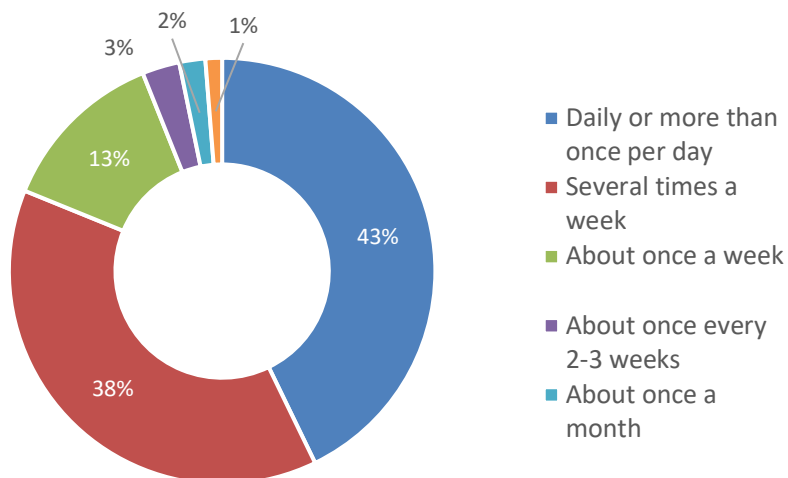


Figure 1 Frequency of Park/Beach Visit



### What are your main reasons for visiting the parks?

Most participants indicated that their main reason to visit the park is to bring pets to walk or play with (69%).

1,834 responses

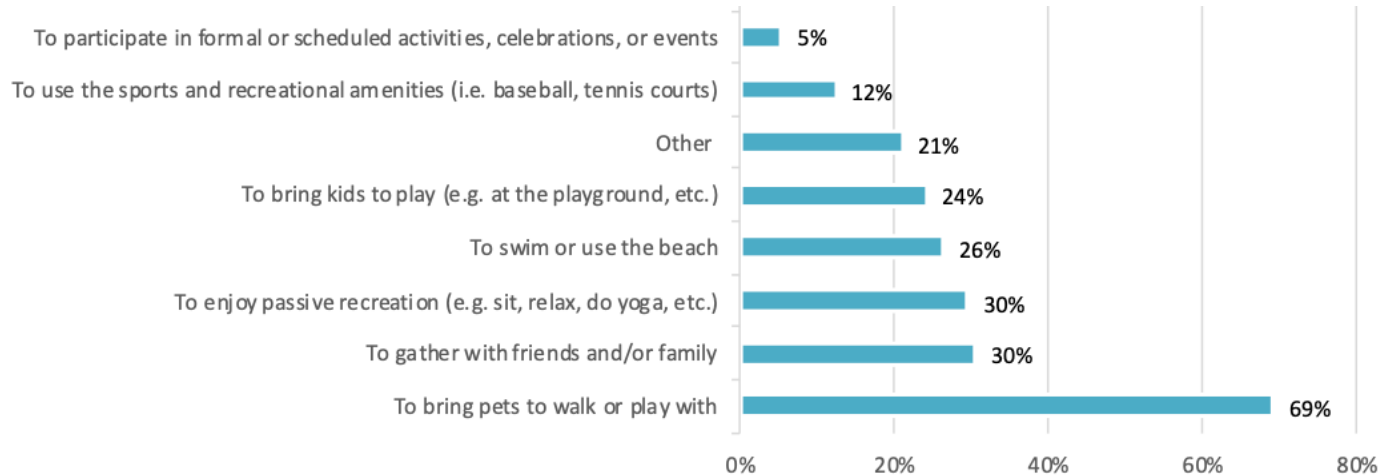


Figure 2 Main Reason to Visit Par

### How do you typically get to the park?

Most participants access the park by car (51%) or by foot (44%).

1,832 responses

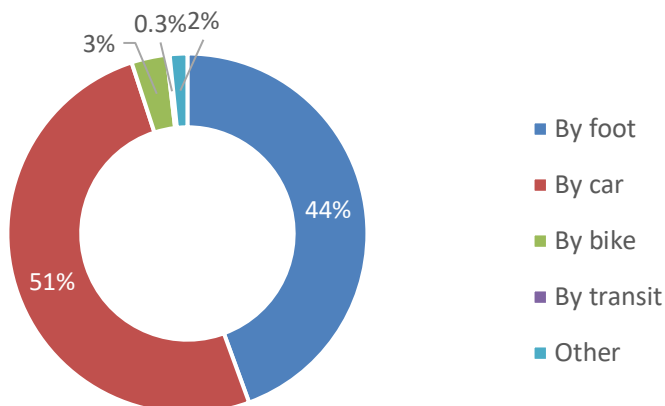


Figure 3 Access to Parks

## *What prevents people from visiting parks?*

*In the public survey, we asked participants what prevents them from visiting Saanich parks. The top barriers mentioned in survey responses include:*

- *Pet Management and Level of Restriction*
- *Vehicle Parking & Accessibility*
- *No barriers (content with current level of access)*
- *Overcrowding of parks*

### **Pet management and level of restriction (464)**

Comments generally include concern with level of restrictions, issues with dog behavior and dogs chasing wildlife, irresponsible owners, and inadequate management of dog waste. The majority of comments simply state “off-leash dogs” as a reason people do not visit parks.

#### **Too many dog restrictions (200)**

Respondents shared that they do not go to a park if they are unable to bring their dog(s). There were comments expressing frustration with the restrictive beach bylaws towards dogs.

#### **Not enough restrictions (134)**

Many other respondents shared that, due in large part to safety concerns, they would not like to have any dogs around. Some respondents point to owners not properly training their dogs or not complying with bylaws as a reason for not attending certain parks.

#### **Designated off-leash areas (130)**

Many respondents shared their desire for more dog friendly areas both leashed and unleashed. They supported options and a variety of safe off-leash areas (agility, socialization/ exercise open areas vs. shy, small, senior dog areas, agility, trails, etc.) Suggestions also included large, fenced spaces for dogs who do not wish to socialize, adding that this would lead to less dog conflict.

### **Vehicle parking & accessibility (235)**

Respondents shared that access to parks is a challenge. In particular, parking limitations for those that need to drive to the park can be a strong barrier. There were also comments from participants around accessibility for those with mobility issues.

### **Content with state of parks (212)**

Responses coded here indicated that participants did not have any barriers to access that prevent them from visiting parks.

### **Busy or overcrowded parks (163)**

Many respondents commented that overcrowding is a deterrent from visiting parks and limits their enjoyment. Mount Douglas Park was mentioned as a particularly busy park.

### **Safety (142)**

Respondents largely commented on their feelings of discomfort and insecurity around off-leash dogs. Other safety concerns respondents shared included presence of needles, lack of lighting, and proximity to busy streets.

### Amenities and infrastructure (102)

Limited amenities in some Saanich parks were stated as barriers, including additional bathrooms (or unlocked bathrooms) and better playground equipment for children.

### Other (88)

Responses expressed time constraints or weather conditions preventing attendance at parks.

## II. PARK USES

*When thinking about Saanich parks generally, what are the most important considerations? (Choose up to 3).*

The most important considerations for Saanich parks generally indicated by survey participants include opportunities to connect with nature (61.9%), environmental protection and wildlife habitat (41.3%), and cleanliness of parks and facilities (36.3%).

1,834 responses

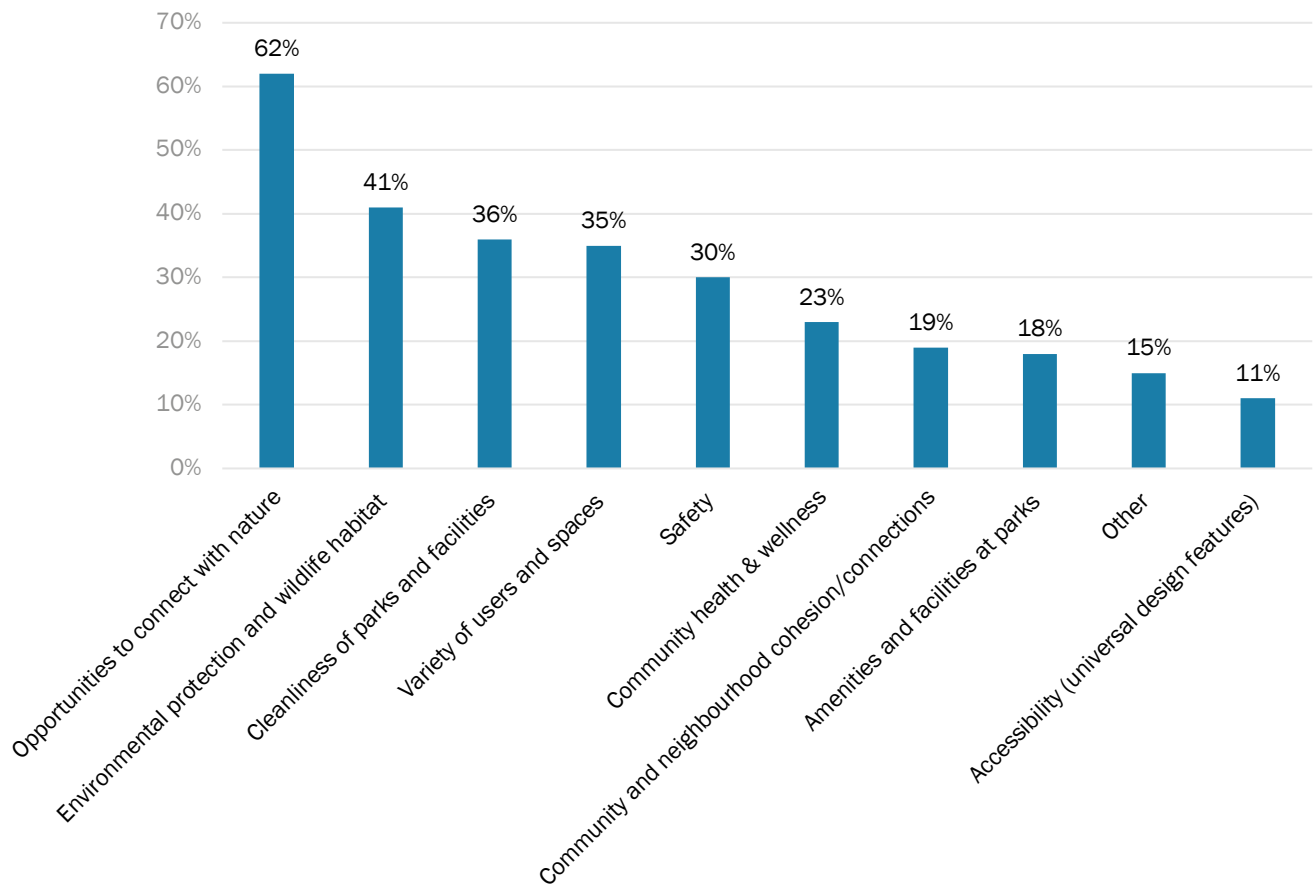


Figure 4 General Considerations for Saanich Parks

### III. PETS IN PARKS

#### *How can we share our parks with pets and people?*

The most important considerations for people and pets sharing Saanich parks indicated by survey participants include protection of natural areas and sensitive ecosystems (41.2%), safety for dogs/pets (40.0%), and safety for people (35.7%).

1,834 responses

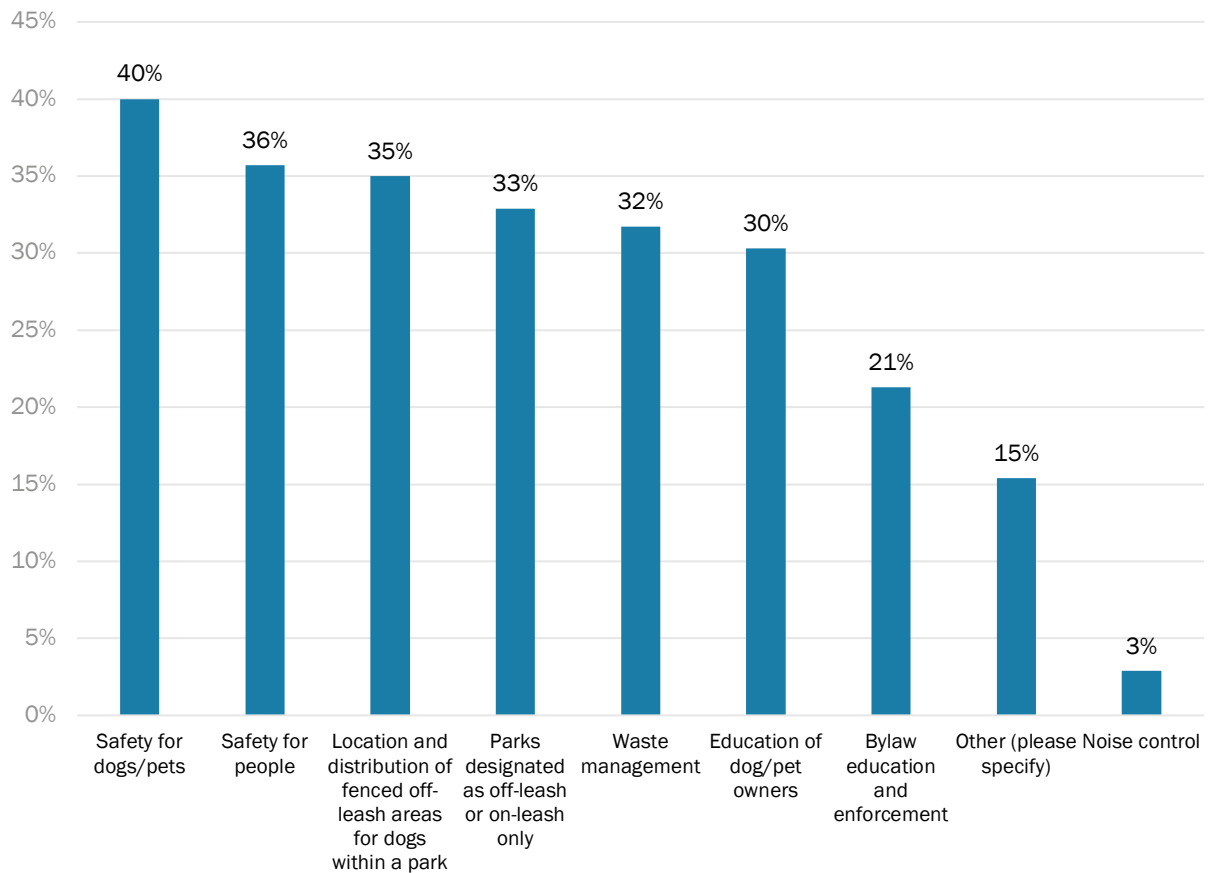


Figure 5 Considerations for Pets in Parks

“

*Cuthbert Holmes Park is a great place for people and pets, but the needs of wildlife need to be paramount. Ground nesting birds and birds in the river are particularly vulnerable to disturbance by off-leash dogs. There needs to be places for dogs to be off-leash, but natural areas with sensitive species need to be protected.*

”

### Would you support having a park where no dogs are allowed?

When asked whether they would support having a park where no dogs were allowed, respondents were equally divided.

1,768 responses

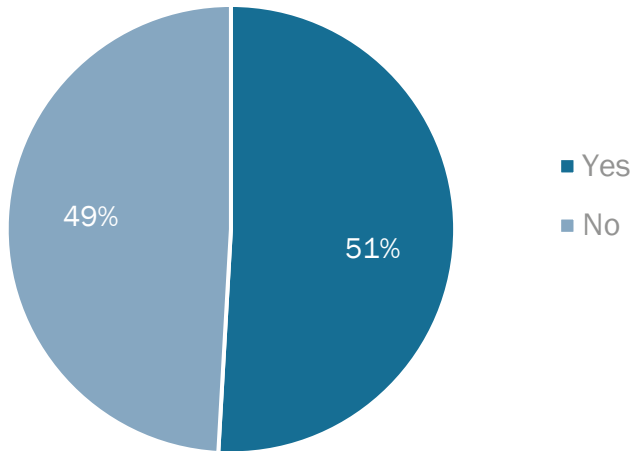
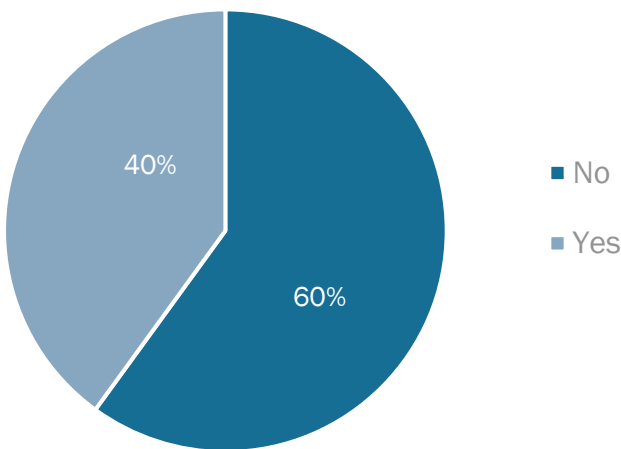


Figure 6 Support for Dog Restricted Parks

### Are there parks you avoid because of the high number of off-leash dogs?

Over half of respondents responded that they do not avoid parks because of off-leash dogs. However, 40% stated that they do avoid some Saanich parks for this reason.

1,772 responses



“

*Our dog is reactive. He walks really well on leash and is on leash at all times. Unfortunately, sometimes dogs are off leash and will approach him. I don't mind dogs off leash if they have good recall and their owners don't let them approach others. Maybe designated areas for dogs to be off leash would help. It can be challenging to take our dogs for walks because of this... We tend to avoid parks where this is common.*

”

Figure 7 Park Avoidance from Dogs

## OPPORTUNITIES *(What are the benefits to having dogs off-leash in Saanich?)*

*In the public survey, we asked participants what are the benefits to having dogs off-leash in Saanich. The top benefits mentioned in survey responses include:*

- *Positive effects on physical and mental health (for both dogs and their owners)*
- *No benefit to having dogs off-leash*
- *Designated or enclosed off-leash areas*
- *Sense of community*

### **Positive effects on physical and mental health (1,214)**

The majority of respondents recognise the benefits of off-leash areas for the physical and mental well-being of both owners and dogs. This includes those who don't own a pet but enjoy interacting and watching them. The caveat in most cases being that the dogs are well behaved and that they are not disturbing wildlife or sensitive ecosystems. Many respondents commented that the opportunity to exercise off-leash is incomparable and they feel the quality and quantity of exercise a dog receives off-leash cannot be replicated while on leash.

### **No benefit (285)**

Respondents felt that there are no benefits to having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks.

### **Designated and or enclosed off-leash areas (171)**

Some respondents feel that off-leash dogs should only be permitted within an enclosed area. They feel that this compromise from the current system allows dogs the freedom of being off-leash while leaving other areas dedicated for people who do not wish to be near dogs. There is also an issue of safety for dogs and wildlife that is resolved when there are clear boundaries.

### **Sense of community (151)**

Respondents noted the community value of having off-leash dog parks. It is added that particularly in the COVID-19 pandemic, with an influx in number of dogs and increased demand for open spaces to connect-parks have been essential. Some respondents have shared that taking their dog off-leash allows them to connect with other members of the community and enhances interactions as you can stand and interact while your dogs are getting exercise and socializing.

“

*I walk my dog every day to Playfair Park and meet other dog owners. It is the most important part of my dog's and my day. The dogs like to play together and us owners socialize. It was one of the things that kept us all same during the covid lockdowns.*

”

### **Easier and safer for those with mobility challenges (37)**

Comments here noted elderly people or people with mobility challenges would like their dogs to receive the exercise they need but this cannot be done consistently when on leash. Others mentioned safety around traversing difficult terrain with a leashed dog (i.e., steep slopes on trails).

**Off-leash areas should not be enclosed (34)**

Some respondents feel that off-leash areas should not be enclosed as this can lead to overcrowding and can be stressful for dogs who do not want to socialize. Participants also add that owners are unable to get exercise while at an enclosed dog park as it does not offer as much space as trails.

**Other (29)**

Responses that were not relevant to the question.

**CHALLENGES** (*What are the challenges of having dogs off-leash in Saanich?*)

When asked what are the main challenges to having dogs off-leash in Saanich, respondents mentioned the following key themes:

- *Dog behavior & waste management*
- *Safety concerns*
- *Natural areas & ecosystem impacts*
- *Appropriate designated areas (size, quantity, location)*

**Dog behavior and waste management (1,110)**

The majority of respondents pointed to dog behavior and waste management as a main challenge of having dogs off leash. The main reason was proper pet etiquette and training as the responsibility of the owner and not the dog.

**Behavioral issues and improper training (674)**

Many respondents point to a lack of training and proper recall as a key issue with off-leash dogs. Respondents share concerns around what “under control” means to different people and that there are not enough owners aware of the impact their dog can have on the comfort and safety of other park users.

**Responsible dog waste management and disposal (285)**

Respondents shared frustration around the current waste management system. They would like to see more resources allocated to keeping parks clean. Many respondents feel that there is a correlation between off-leash dogs and improper waste disposal, as owners are not always keeping a close eye on their dog leaving excrement. Others feel that there should be dog bags at parks to facilitate cleaning up after them. There were also a few comments about insufficient collection of garbage cans in popular parks.

**Safety concerns (323)**

Many survey respondents commented that the lack of separation between dogs and people is a large barrier to enjoyment and safety in parks, particularly with regards to children and the elderly. This also includes the safety between dogs. For example, reactive dogs with behavior issues who are leashed may become aggressive if approached by an off-leash dog. A few participants added they would like to see off-leash areas that separate small and large dogs. Some also considered the safety in the environment of potential dog parks (i.e., proximity to busy streets, etc.).

**Impacts on natural areas and sensitive ecosystems (230)**

Respondents call for greater consideration of the impacts that park users have on surrounding ecosystems, wildlife, and natural areas. Some respondents point out that off-leash dogs are not

responsible for understanding boundaries of sensitive ecosystem areas and that it is the responsibility of dog owners to be informed, respectful, and in control of their pets.

### **Appropriate designated areas (size, quantity, location) (190)**

Comments expressed the importance of ensuring appropriate locations of designated dog areas (i.e., avoiding ESAs and busy roads and considering regional distribution). There were some comments surrounding the need for clear signage that demarcates permitted uses in any given park or trail.

### **Education (155)**

Respondents share that greater education would lead to less tension between park users. There were calls for more training and accessible information, from both those who have and do not have dogs. There were also comments about the need for clear signage on where dogs are or are not allowed to be and designation of shared trails for cyclists and joggers who move at higher speeds.

### **No challenges (129)**

Many respondents feel that there are no challenges to having dogs off-leash in parks. Respondents commented on the years of visiting/using Saanich parks and not seeing any altercations or conflict.

### **Understanding of non-pet owners (103)**

Some respondents share that there is tension between those who own pets and those who don't. There can be a lack of understanding from those who don't own pets on how to behave towards dogs. There were some concerns raised around unsafe or aggressive treatment of dogs. Other respondents share that there is a lack of knowledge of where dogs are permitted, leading non-pet owners to be disagreeable in their attitude towards dogs.

### **Bylaw compliance and enforcement (87)**

Comments stated that non-compliance is most common with owners who take dogs where they don't belong or are not allowed. Respondents expressed that some bylaws are currently written in a way that leaves room for interpretation (e.g., "dog must be under control"). Others comment that there is not enough available information on rules for parks which lead to confusion and tension between users. There were some questions on how the bylaws will be enforced.

### **Overcrowding of parks (24)**

A few respondents share that overcrowding in dog parks, particularly smaller fenced areas, can lead to overstimulation or aggression in dogs. They add that some dogs who do not wish to interact with others are forced to be in a small area with others approaching them, which can lead to uncomfortable dogs lashing out. Others add that when designated off-leash parks get busy, dogs are not given enough space to run without running into other park users disinterested in interacting with dog.

“

*I used to really enjoy going for early morning walks along some of Saanich's beautiful sandy beaches, including Island View, Cordova Bay and Cadboro Bay. However, as I have gotten older and my balance is not as good as it once was, I find that I can no longer visit these places as I am constantly getting knocked off balance by off-leash dogs. I realize many of the dogs are simply excited and well-meaning, but it is a shame that I can no longer visit these beautiful beaches due to the constant presence of off-leash dogs.*

”



## How important are the following common features of off-leash dog areas in parks?

For over half (69%) of the 1,755 respondents who answered this question, fenced off-leash open areas for running and play activities was classified as very important or important. Respondents also prioritized walking path/trail loops (65%). Both themes echoed throughout the survey by those who are and are not pet owners. Most respondents felt that the availability of a sand box for dogs who like to dig is an unimportant park feature.

1,755 responses

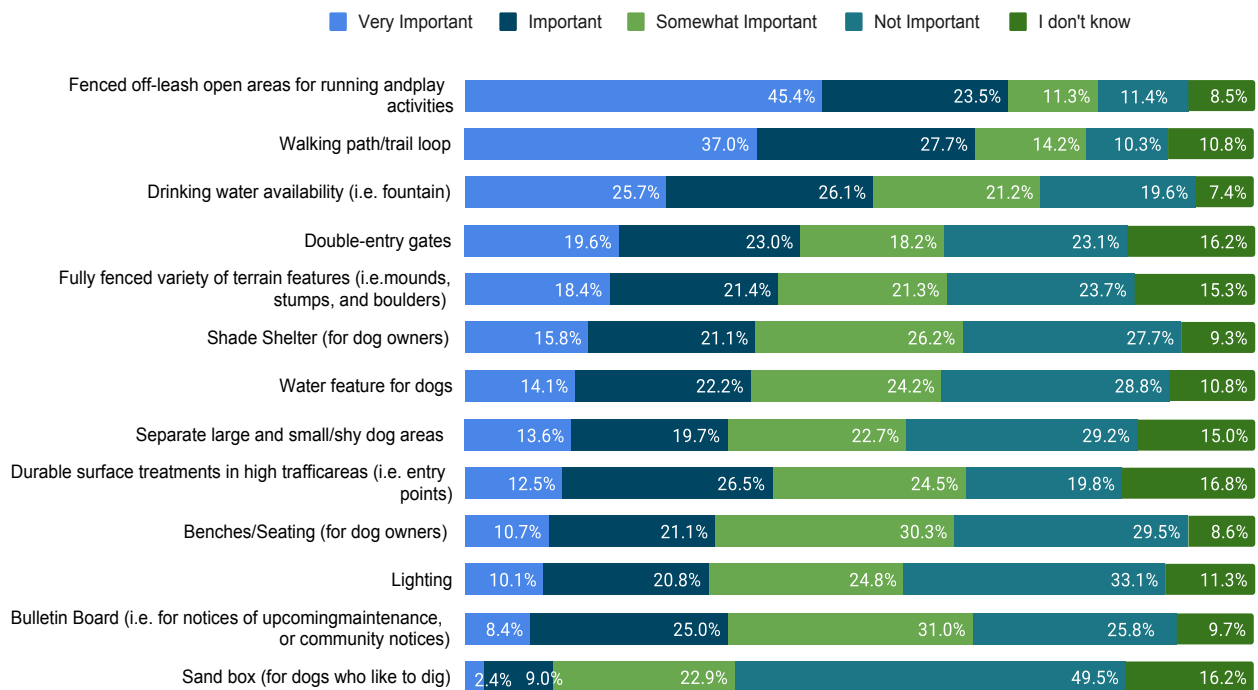


Figure 8 Importance of Dog Park Features

“

We have a dog and love going to the parks for walks in the forest. But would prefer an enclosed area for the dogs to play.

”

#### IV. PET OWNERS

*Do you currently have a dog in your household?*

The majority (70%) of survey respondents own a dog.

1,826 responses

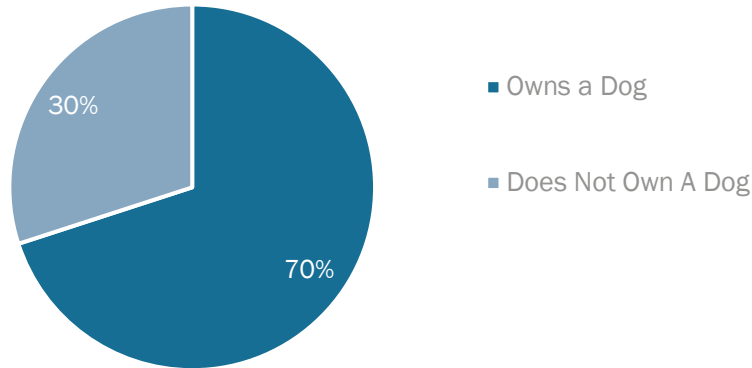


Figure 9 Dog Ownership

Out of those who have a dog in their household (1,259 responses):

Number of Dogs in Household*	
1 Dog	76%
2 Dogs	20%
3 or more	4%

Size of Dogs	
Medium (50-75 pounds)	41%
Small (25-49 pounds)	26%
Large (over 75 pounds)	17%
Tiny (under 25 pounds)	16%

\*The Animals Bylaw allows Saanich residents to have up to five dogs per property.

## Which specific parks do you enjoy taking your dog to? Why?

The most common parks survey participants mentioned included:

- Mount Douglas Park
- Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park
- Cadboro Bay Beach
- Island View Beach Regional Park
- Cuthbert Holmes
- Beckwith
- Francis/King Regional Park
- Parker Park (Cordova Bay Beach)
- Thetis Lake
- Panama Flat
- Cy Hampson (North Saanich)
- Lambrick Park

“ I visit the Cuthbert Holmes park everyday for the last 3 years and only have positive interactions. We've gotten to know other people and their pets, it's a nice community, everyone is friendly and respectful. It's a nice quiet oasis where I can enjoy nature in an urban setting with my dog. ”

Respondents expressed that they enjoy these parks because of the ability to take their dog off-leash or the presence of the pop-up dog parks, the amount of open space available, access to trails, the proximity (located in walking distance), ability to exercise, scenic views and natural elements (i.e., beach, trees, etc.).

## Do you visit local park(s) with your dog(s)?

1,238 responses

Everyday	55%
Varies (some weekdays and some weekends)	32%
Mostly weekdays	8%
Mostly weekends	5%

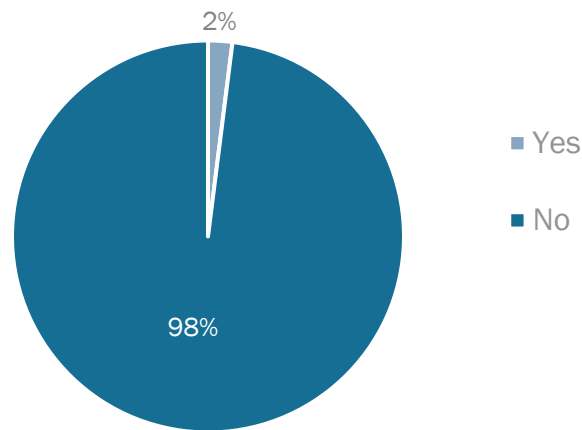
## What time of day do you usually visit Saanich parks with your dog(s)?

1,245 responses

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	48%
It Varies	40%
4:00PM - later	36%
6:00 - 9:00 AM	28%

## Do you visit a Saanich park with any pet other than a dog?

1,777 responses



## *If you visit a Saanich park with a pet other than a dog, are there special considerations we should be aware of related to how your pet uses parks?*

Some respondents visit parks with horses, cats, and birds. Cat and bird owners shared that they typically use a pet carrier when they visit and would enjoy areas where there isn't much noise to bring cats on leash. Considerations for horses\* include:

- Type of surfaces (horses require good footing)
- Waste management (for horses)
- Horse-friendly trails
- Education and signage on safe conduct for dogs around horses

\*The majority of equestrian trails in Saanich are located in Regional Parks, managed by the CRD.

## V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### *Is there anything else that should be considered in developing Saanich's People, Pets, and Parks Strategy?*

#### **Designated off-leash areas (233)**

Respondents requested that the Strategy consider the difference between fenced and open off-leash areas. There were many comments that outlined how some dogs are not well suited for

enclosed/fenced areas as they are reactive or do not want to socialise but may need more exercise. Respondents commented that the District could explore permitting dogs in parks during specific times of the day. Suggested included in the mornings before families and picnickers.

### **Education and signage (171)**

Respondents called for better and more signage to distinguish areas where dogs are permitted off-leash and not, citing that the confusion can cause tension and confrontation. Generally, comments centered around availability and dispersal of information around where pets are welcome, how to train dogs, how to protect natural areas, etc.

### **Sense of community and inclusivity (166)**

Participants expressed recognition and respect for all users of the parks system. The Strategy should consider all needs and perspectives to support a dynamic and connected community. Respondents point to the dog community as a valuable part of their Saanich experience. They add that options for off-leash areas are important to the social connections formed.

### **Bylaw enforcement (125)**

A large number of respondents felt that enforcement should be increased, adding that bylaws with no repercussions for non-compliance can negate the impact they have. Some would like to see more patrol officers and potentially heftier fines. Comments also included licensing and fees associated with enforcement. There were several suggestions for strategies or implementable systems for recuperating costs or distinguishing levels of licensing.

### **Less Restrictions (102)**

Suggestions were primarily around restrictions for dogs off leash, and particularly on trails. Owners frequently reference the benefit of exercising in tandem with their dog as a reason to keep trails accessible to dogs. Some respondents have commented that dogs are better behaved when following on a trail rather than loose in a dog park as there is a clear direction and pace.

#### **Off-leash for trained dogs (20)**

A few respondents expressed that when time is invested into training, dogs should be allowed off-leash everywhere. They share concerns around limited access should there be restrictions in all parks and trails.

#### **No restrictions (7)**

Some stated that there should be no restrictions on users in the park and that the community could self-regulate.

### **More balanced restrictions (94)**

Participants expressed an understanding for the many perspectives that exist in Saanich and would like to see parks meet the needs of all users.

“

*Saanich parks provide a great place for dogs and owners to socialize in a safe environment. The majority of pet owners are respectful and always keep their pets under control.*

”

### **Ecosystem and natural area protection (92)**

Participants offered considerations related to the availability and dispersal of information around where pets are welcome, how to train dogs, how to protect natural areas, etc. Respondents called for

better/more signage to distinguish areas where dogs are permitted off-leash or not, citing that the confusion can cause tension and confrontation.

### **Safety (66)**

Specific safety concerns included those of children, families, and seniors with off-leash dogs and dog parks with little or no separation from vehicle roads.

#### **Children and families (27)**

Respondents would like to see areas for children and families to play without off-leash dogs nearby.

### **More restrictions (56)**

#### **On leash (63)**

Some respondents expressed that the nature of the bylaw should be fundamentally shifted so that the standard for the parks system is to have all dogs on-leash. A possible exception is fenced dog areas.

#### **Dog free areas (49)**

There were respondents who would like to see parks be completely free of dogs. Generally, respondents felt that there should be options for all within the parks system and that included parks with no dogs, to satisfy those with safety concerns.

### **Content with the current state (50)**

Respondents who were content with the state of the parks shared that they derive much satisfaction from the parks system currently and it does not need any change.

### **Beach access (44)**

Respondents were divided on beach access for dogs. Some expressed that with warmer summers, access to water for dogs is important. Others conveyed that dogs present a challenge when trying to enjoy the beach. There were comments surrounding waste management on beaches as well as the impact on shoreline wildlife. Some suggestions made were to permit dogs during off season (colder months when there are less people and not during wildlife mating season) and off-peak times (early morning and late evenings).

### **Amenities and waste management (36)**

Common requests were garbage cans, waste collection, shade from trees, water sources for dogs and washrooms in parks.

#### **Waste disposal (44)**

The issue of waste management was raised throughout the survey. Respondents shared frustrations with dog waste (bags) not disposed of properly, limited number of garbage bins, and infrequent garbage collection.

### **Accessibility (19)**

Respondents would like accessibility needs for those with mobility issues, strollers, wheelchairs, etc. to be considered in park design and the implementation of this Strategy.

### **Feral cats (11)**

Some respondents expressed that cats should be held to the same standard as dogs and reflected in future bylaws. They mention bird hunting as a cause for concern.

**Cyclists (10)**

A few comments related to the high speeds of cyclists on shared trails and how this causes stress and safety concerns for those with off-leash dogs, children, and mobility issues.

**Parking and traffic (7)**

Respondents noted that parking lots in popular areas (e.g., Mount Douglas Park) are frequently full and require more spaces. Others expressed safety concerns related to traffic speeds in certain areas.

May 2022

# Saanich People, Pets and Parks - Community Survey



MUSTEL GROUP  
MARKET RESEARCH



## ➤ Foreword

### Introduction

The following report summarizes the findings from a survey of District of Saanich residents regarding people, pets and parks to provide direction for development of a strategy for sharing Saanich's parks.

### Methodology

- A total of 300 interviews were conducted by telephone with a random selection of residents, 18 years of age or over.
- The margin of error on the sample is +/-5.7% at the 95% confidence level.
- Specific steps were taken to ensure the sample is representative of the community at large including:
  - sample drawn at random from an up-to-date database of published residential listings and cell phone listings;
  - next birthday method employed to randomize respondent selection within the household;
  - up to 6 calls made to each household/individual to reduce potential bias due to non-response;
  - final sample weighted by gender within age to match Statistics Canada Census data.

### Methodology, cont.

- Interviewing was conducted by Mustel Group interviewers weekday evenings and during the day on weekends from May 26<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.
- The questionnaire used is appended.
- Detailed computer tabulations are provided under separate cover.



## ➤ Executive Overview

- One-in-four Saanich residents (24%) visit a public park or beach at least daily; almost half (44%) visit one several times a week or more often.
- Dog owners are more frequent users of parks and beaches, with over half (52%) using them at least daily (65% several times a week or more often).
- When thinking about Saanich parks, the most important factor considered is environmental protection/wildlife habitat connections. This is followed by cleanliness of parks/facilities, community and neighbourhood cohesion/connections, safety, and opportunities to connect with nature.
- When it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks, the safety for people is the most important consideration among both dog owners and non-owners.
- Considerable proportions also choose as one of their three top considerations:
  - Location and distribution of off-leash areas (more important to dog-owners);
  - Protection of natural areas and sensitive ecosystems;
  - Waste management; and
  - Safety for dogs/pets (naturally of more concern to dog owners).
- Residents were asked what they see as the main benefits of most Saanich parks being off leash for dogs. The freedom and space for dogs to play and run is appreciated by both dog owners and non-owners. Other benefits include 'good for dog-owners' (play/exercise with dogs) and that dogs can socialize and become less aggressive.
- Irresponsible owners or those not able to control their dog is viewed as the key challenge. There is also concern for the safety of children/people and poorly trained dogs (stated more so by non-dog owners). Waste management and safety issues for dogs are tertiary issues.
- While the majority report positive experiences overall with dogs in parks, half of residents (51%) have had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog in the past (57% of dog owners, 48% of non-owners).
- Having their dog attacked or approached aggressively by another dog is the most frequent report by dog owners. Among non-owners, various issues with aggressive dogs or owners not controlling their dogs are the most common reports.
- The majority (76%) agree that specific areas where dogs are not allowed off-leash will help reduce conflicts.
- With respect to enforcement, opinions are divided as to whether or not there is currently suitable enforcement of dog activity.



## ➤ Executive Overview (cont.)

- All residents were asked if there are any specific locations in the community where they are concerned about dogs being off-leash. A variety of parks, wildlife areas and beaches were cited but not by more than 3-4% each, with Gyro Park and Mount Douglas most frequently listed.
- One-in-three (33%) reside in a household with a dog, with most of this group (80%) having one dog. The dogs tend to be in the mid-range weight size (50-75 lbs.) or tiny (under 25 lbs.).
- Parks are the most common place to exercise dogs (76%) but with considerable proportions also using natural areas/trails (62%) and sidewalks (52%).
- Those using parks with dogs tend to use them daily, with evening hours (4pm or later) the most common time of day to visit.
- A small group, 4%, visit parks with other pets, mainly cats.

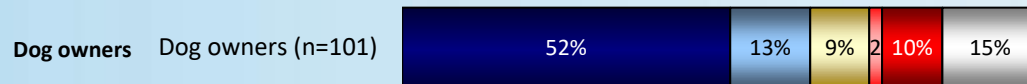
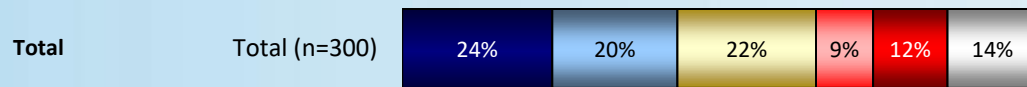


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# Detailed Findings



## ➤ Frequency of Visiting Saanich Parks and Beaches



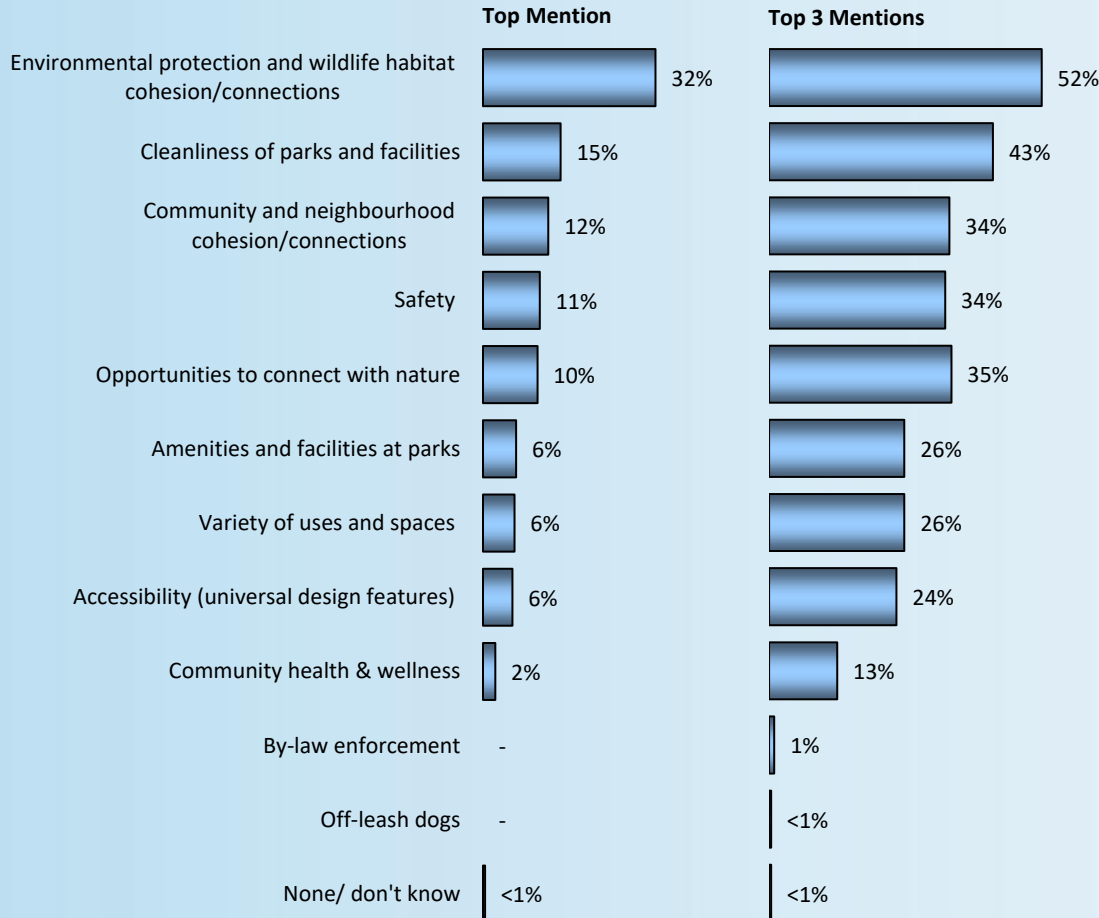
- One-in-four Saanich residents (24%) visit a public park or beach at least daily; almost half (44%) visit one several times a week or more often.
- Dog owners are more frequent users with over half (52%) using local parks or beaches at least daily (65% several times a week or more often).
- The findings do not vary significantly by area, gender or age but families and couples are slightly more frequent users than single people.

Base: Total (n=300), Dog owners (n=101)

Q.1) First of all, how often do you visit Saanich public parks or beaches? Would you say:



## ➤ Top 3 Important Factors to Consider - Saanich Parks



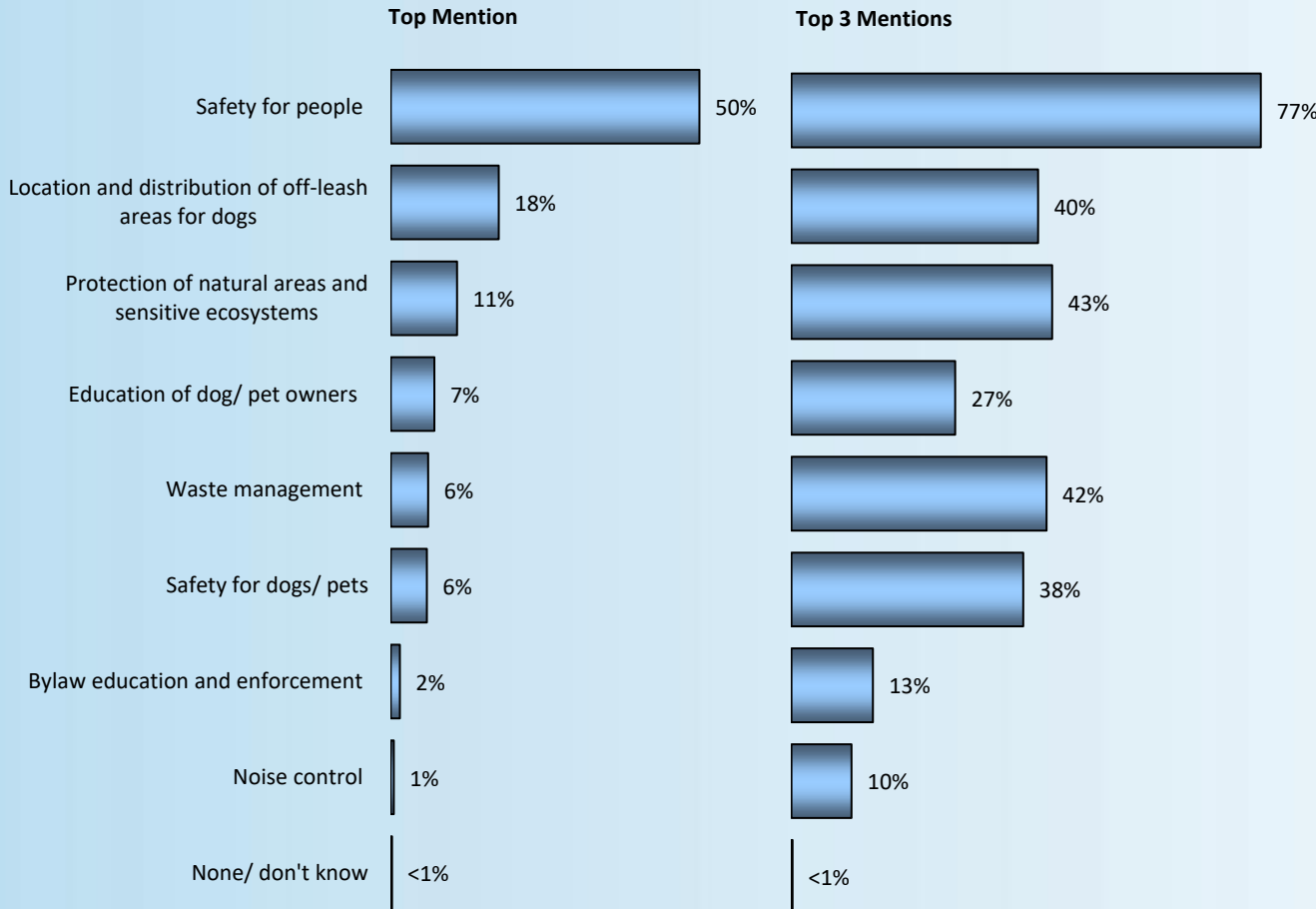
- When thinking about Saanich parks, the most important factor considered is environmental protection/wildlife habitat connections.
- This is followed by cleanliness of parks/facilities, community and neighbourhood cohesion/connections, safety, and opportunities to connect with nature.
- For dog owners, cleanliness is the top priority, whereas environment protection/wildlife is the key consideration among non-dog owners.

Base: Total (n=300)

Q.2) When thinking about Saanich parks, what do you believe are the top three most important factors to consider?



## ➤ Top 3 Important Factors to Consider - **People and Pets** Sharing Parks



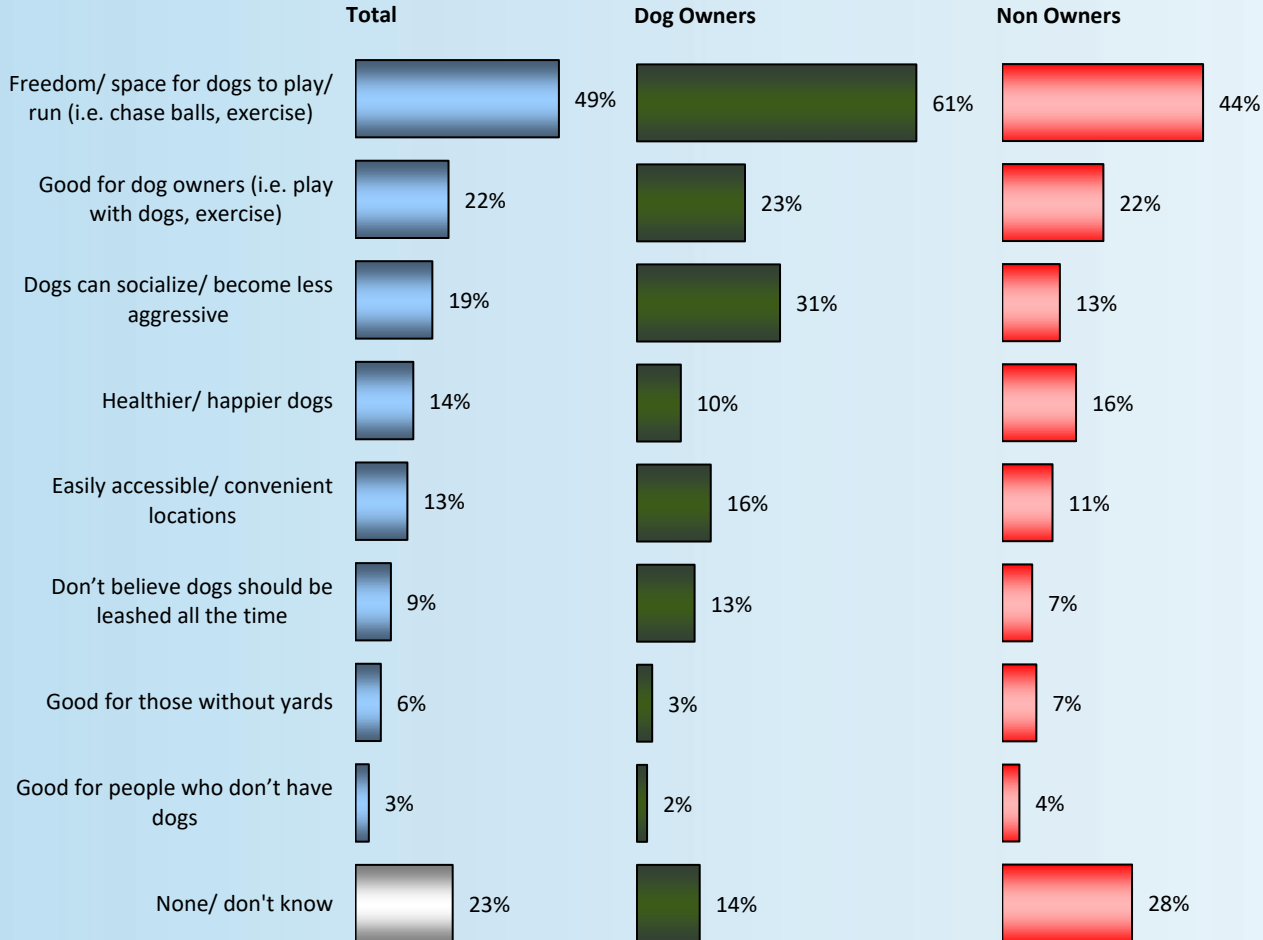
- When it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks, the safety for people is the most important consideration among both dog owners and non-owners.
- Considerable proportions also choose as one of their three top considerations:
  - Location and distribution of off-leash areas (more important to dog-owners);
  - Protection of natural areas and sensitive ecosystems;
  - Waste management; and
  - Safety for dogs/pets (naturally of more concern to dog owners).
- Education of dog/pet owners is also important to one-in-four (among both dog owners and non-owners).

Base: Total (n=300)

Q.3) When it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks, what do you feel are the top three most important considerations?



## ➤ Main Benefits of Most Saanich Parks Off-Leash (Unprompted)



- Residents were asked what they see as the main benefits of most Saanich parks being off-leash for dogs.
- The freedom and space for dogs to play and run is appreciated most by both dog owners and non-owners.
- Other benefits include “good for dog-owners” (play/exercise with dogs) and that dogs can socialize and become less aggressive.

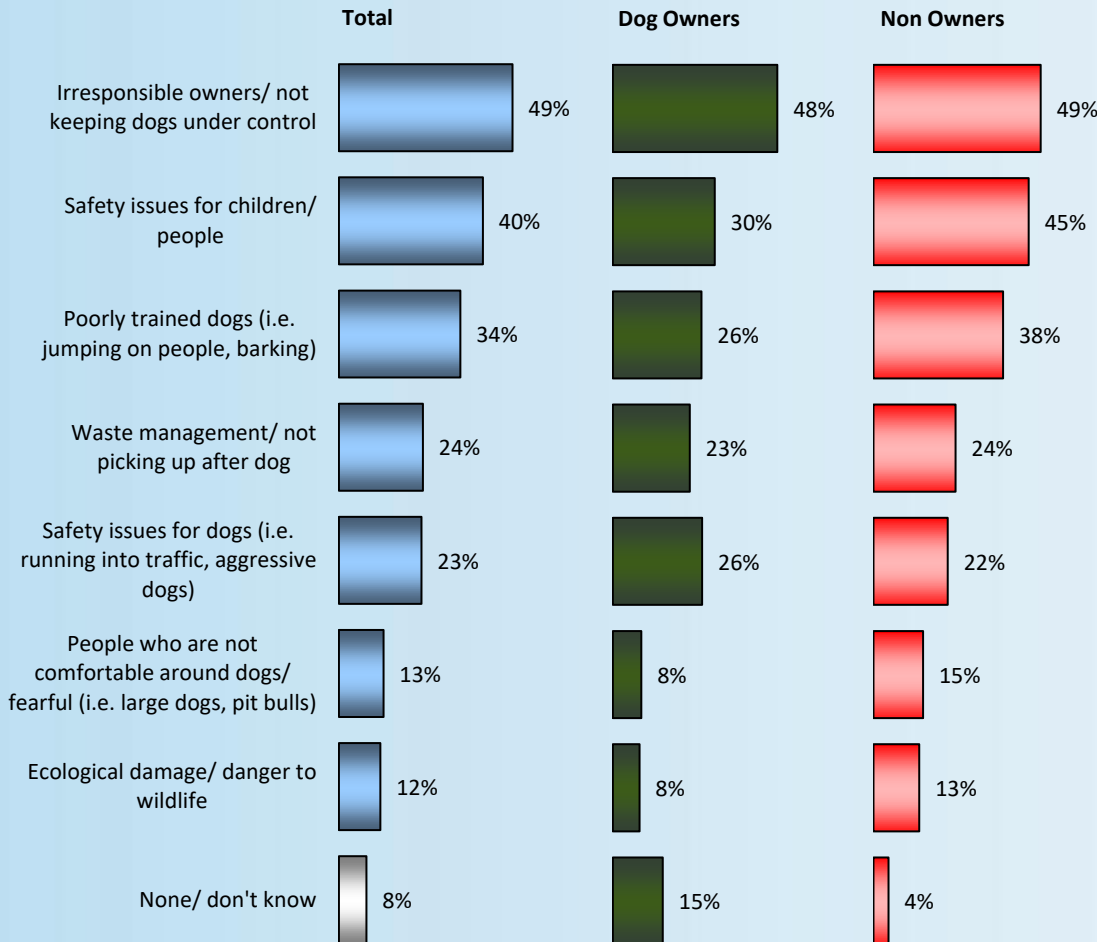
Base: Total (n=300), Dog owners (n=101), Non-owners (n=199)

Q.4) What do you see as the main benefits of most Saanich parks being off-leash for dogs?





## ➤ Main Challenges of Dogs Off-Leash in Saanich Parks (Unprompted)

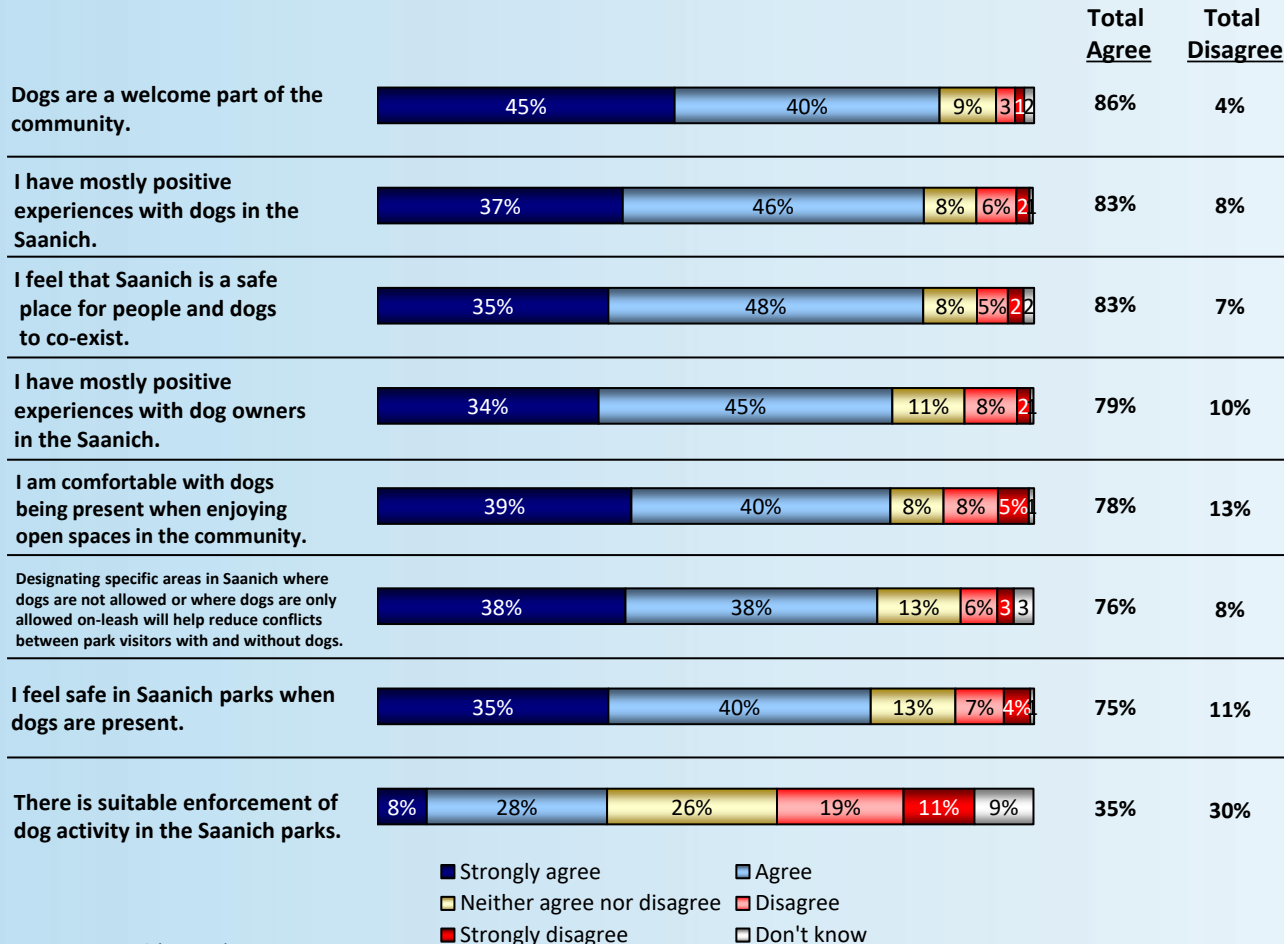


- Both those who own dogs and those who do not see irresponsible owners or those not able to control their dog as the key challenge.
- There is also concern for the safety of children/people, and poorly trained dogs (stated more so by non-dog owners).
- Waste management and safety issues for dogs are tertiary issues listed by both groups.

Base: Total (n=300), Dog owners (n=101), Non-owners (n=199)

Q.5) And what do you see as the main challenges of having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks?

## ➤ Agreement with Statements about Pets and Parks



Base: Total (n=300)

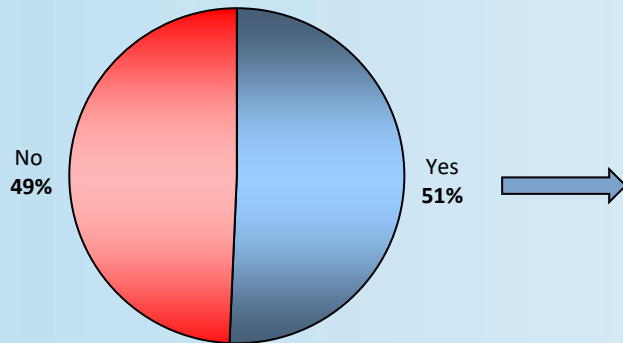
Q.6a-h) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Agreement levels are high with statements about various aspects of Saanich parks and pets indicating that overall experiences are positive for most.
- Even among non-owners, the majority agree with most statements with the disagree level 18% or less.
- However, the majority (76%) still agree that specific areas where dogs are not allowed off-leash will help reduce conflicts.
- And with respect to enforcement, opinions are divided as to whether or not there is suitable enforcement of dog activity.



## ➤ Negative Past Experience/Conflict With Off-Leash Dog

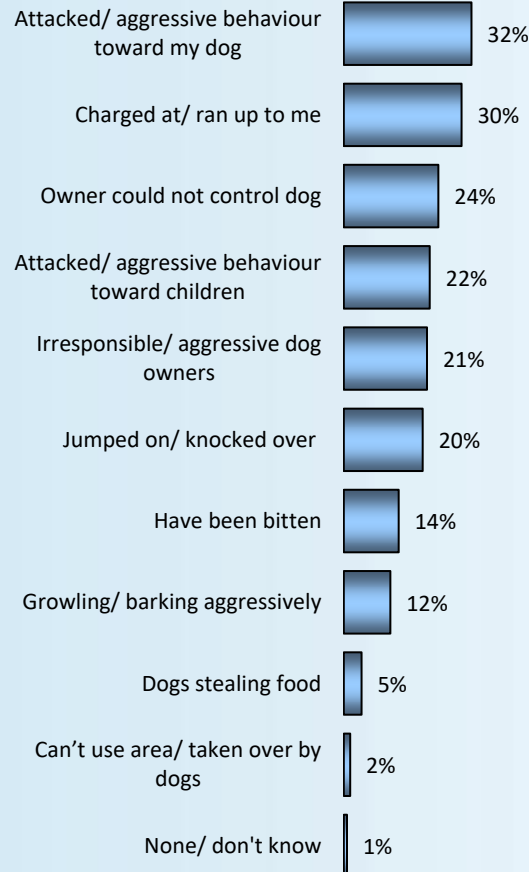
Ever Had Conflict With  
An Off-Leash Dog



Base: Total (n=300)

Q.7) Have you ever had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog?

Type Of Negative Experience



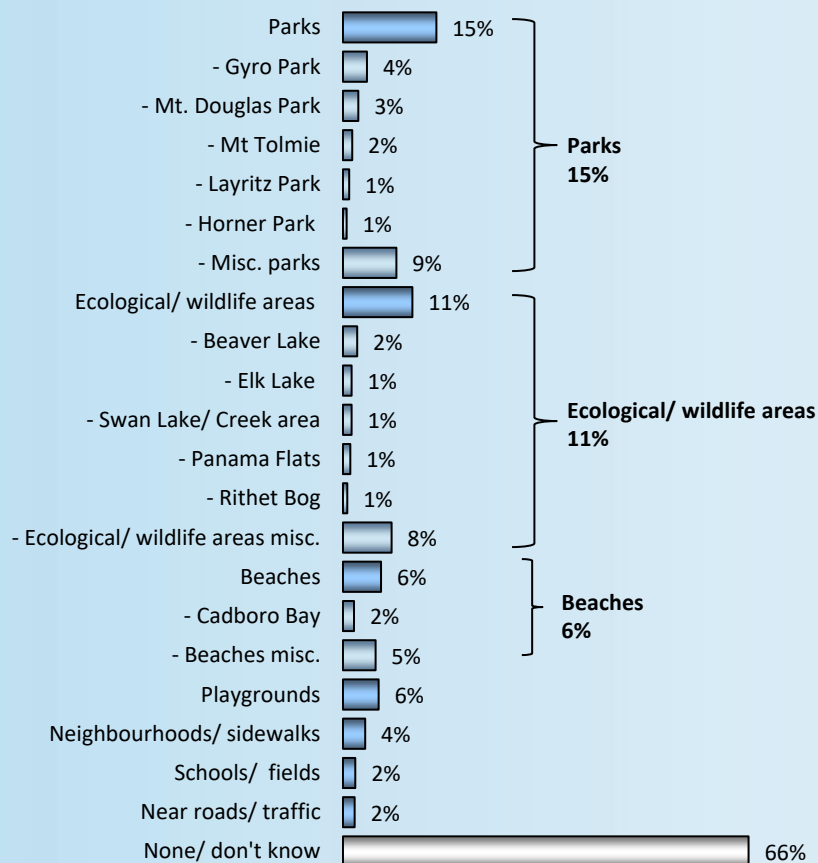
Base: Total ever have had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog (n=153)

- Half of residents (51%) have had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog in the past (57% of dog owners, 48% of non-owners).
- Having their dog attacked or approached aggressively by another dog is the most frequent report by dog owners.
- Among non-owners various issues with aggressive dogs, or owners not controlling their dogs are the most common reports.

Q.8) Can you briefly describe your experience?



## ➤ Specific Locations Of Concern



- All residents were asked if there are any specific locations in the community where they are concerned about dogs being off-leash.
- A variety of parks, wildlife areas and beaches were cited but not by more than 3-4% each, with Gyro Park and Mount Douglas most frequently listed.

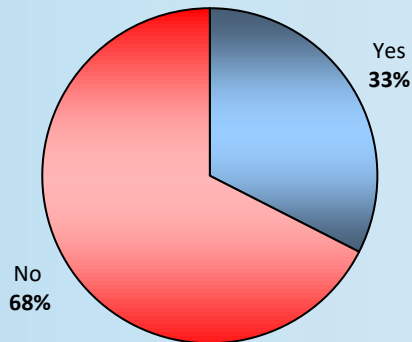
Base: Total (n=300)

Q.9) Are there any specific locations in your community where you are concerned about dogs being off-leash?

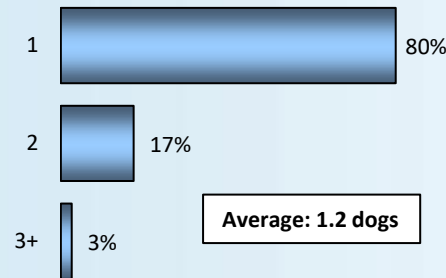


## ➤ Dog Ownership

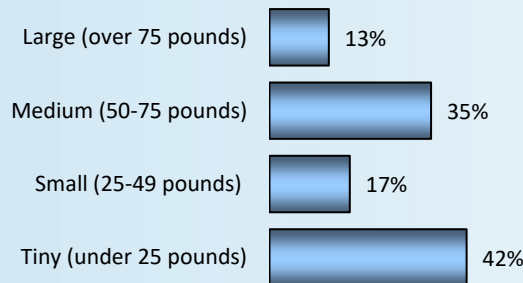
Currently Own/  
Household Has A Dog



Number Of Dogs



Size Of Dogs



- One-in-three (33%) reside in a household with a dog, with most of this group (80%) having one dog.
- The results are relatively consistent by area.
- The dogs tend to be in the mid-range weight size (50-75 lbs.) or tiny (under 25 lbs.).

Base: Total (n=300)

Q.10) Do you currently own a dog or does your household have a dog?

Base: Total dog owners (n=101)

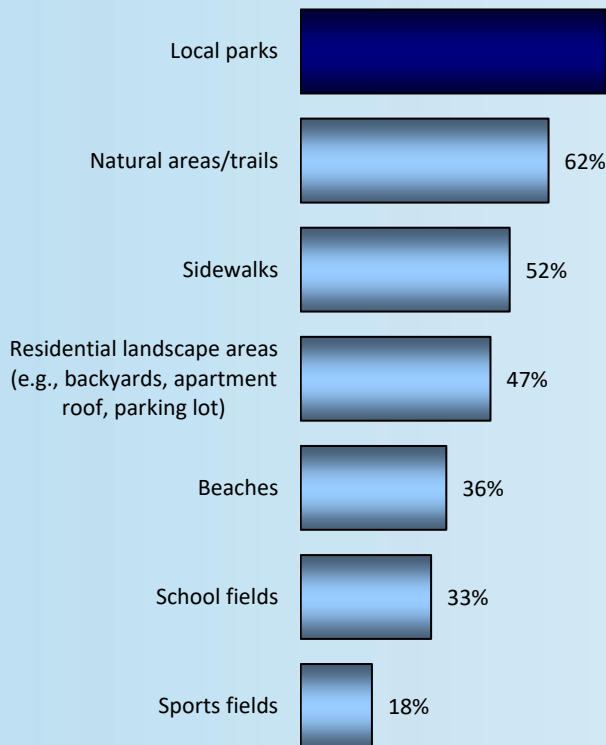
Q.11) How many dogs does your household have?

Q.12) What size is your dog(s)?

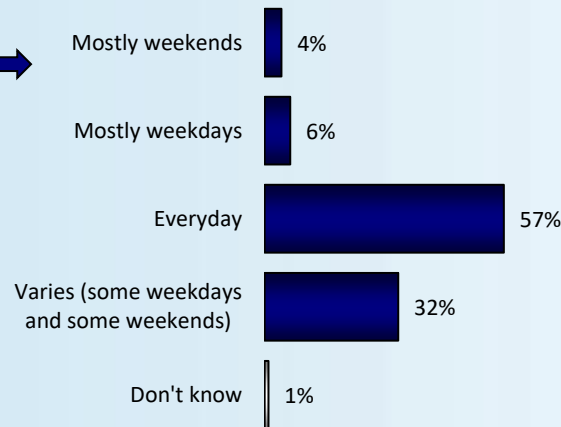


## ➤ Dog Exercise Location

Location

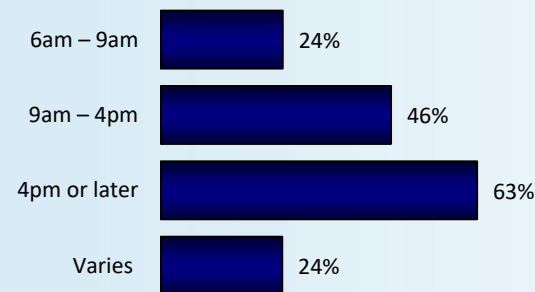


Days Of Park Visits



- Parks are the most common place to exercise dogs (76%) but with considerable proportions also using natural areas/trails (62%) and sidewalks (52%).
- Parks tend to be used daily with evening hours (4pm or later) the most common time of day to visit.

Time Of Park Visits



Base: Total dog owners who exercise their dogs at local parks (n=77)

Base: Total dog owners (n=101)

Q.13) Where do you generally exercise your dog(s)?

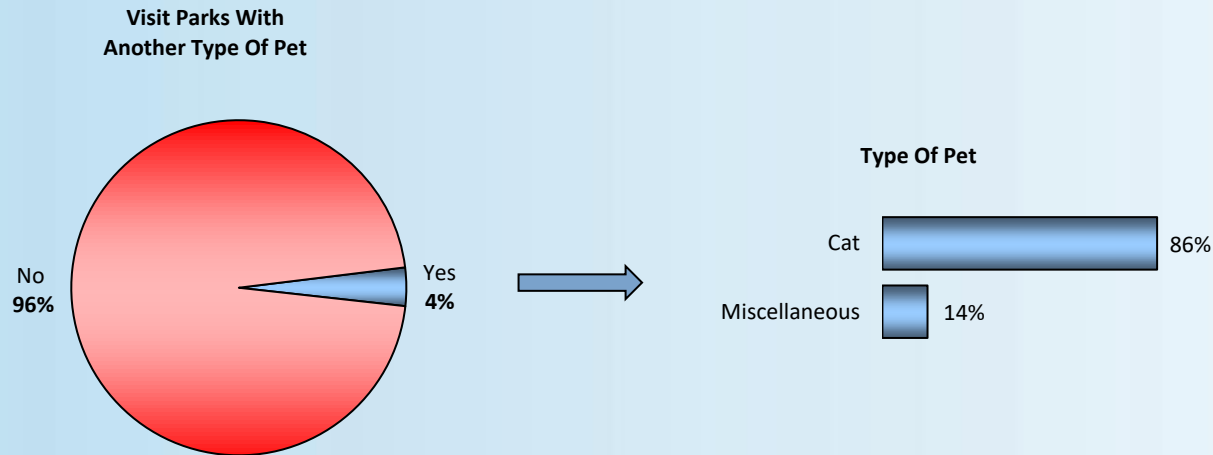
Q.14) Do you visit local parks with your dog(s):

Q.15) Which of the following times of day do you usually visit Saanich parks with your dog(s)



## ➤ Visit Saanich Parks with Other Pets

- A small group, 4%, visit parks with other pets, mainly cats.



Base: Total (n=300)

Q.16) Do you visit a Saanich Park with any pet other than a dog?

Base: Total visit with another pet (n=8\*)

Q.17) What type of pet do you visit with?  
\*Caution small base size



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# Demographics





## Demographic Profile

	<u>Total</u> (300) %
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	48
Female	52
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 34	13
35 to 44	28
45 to 54	15
55 to 64	17
65 to 74 years	15
75 years and over	13
Prefer not to say	<1
<b>Household Composition</b>	
Single with no children at home	18
Couple with no children at home	33
A family/ single parent household with children under 18 at home	31
A family/ single parent household with adult children only at home	18
Prefer not to say	1
<b>Years Residency In Saanich</b>	
<10 years	16
10 – 19	25
20 – 29	22
30 – 39	15
40 – 49	13
50+ years	9
Prefer not to say	1

	<u>Total</u> (300) %
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$60,000	15
\$60,000 - \$99,999	20
\$100,00 - \$139,999	22
Above \$140,000	24
Prefer not to say	19
<b>Ethnic Background</b>	
Canadian	40
European	35
British Isles	20
South Asian	5
Chinese	4
Other Asian	3
Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis or Inuit)	2
French Canadian	1
African	1
Latin/ South American	<1
Oceania	<1
Miscellaneous	1
Prefer not to say	6



## Demographic Profile

	<u>Total</u> (300) %
<b>FSA</b>	
<b>South</b>	<b>35</b>
V6X (South Saanich)	24
V9A (Vic West/ Esquimalt)	5
V8V (Cook St Village/ West Fairfield/ Harris Green/ Humboldt Valley/ James Bay)	2
V8T (SE Burnside/ North Park Hillside-Quadra/ Rock Bay/ West Oaklands)	2
V9B (West Highlands/ North Langford/ View Royal)	2
<b>Middle</b>	<b>25</b>
V8Z (Middle Saanich)	25
<b>East</b>	<b>25</b>
V8N (East Saanich)	16
<b>Southeast</b>	<b>25</b>
V8P (Southeast Saanich)	16
V8R (North Oak Bay/ North Fernwood/ North Jubilee/ South Jubilee/ East Oakwoods)	14
<b>North</b>	<b>9</b>
V8Y (Northeast Saanich)	7
V9E (Northwest Saanich)	2



**MUSTEL GROUP**  
MARKET RESEARCH

# Questionnaire

## INTRO/SCREENER

Hello, I'm \_\_\_ of Mustel Group, a professional opinion polling firm. Today we are conducting a short survey on behalf of the District of Saanich regarding local community topics (less than 10 min. on average). We are not selling or soliciting anything and all responses are confidential.

- A. Just to make sure we are calling the right area may I have your postal code? \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- B. To randomize our survey, may I please speak with the [male/female] in your household who is the [youngest/oldest] adult 18 years of age or over? ARRANGE CALLBACK IF NECESSARY.

RECORD GENDER (OBSERVE):  MALE  FEMALE  OTHER  PREFER NOT TO SAY

*We are calling today to conduct a brief survey among residents of Saanich on the topic of pets in parks. Data collected from this survey will be presented in aggregate only and will be used to support recommendations to Council regarding people/pet policies for parks in the future.*

*This collection of personal information is authorized under Charter and section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The information will be used for parks planning.*

*Questions about the collection of this information may be directed to:  
Josh O'Neill, General Manager Mustel Group  
3058 West 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
604-742-2245*

*Questions about privacy can be directed to the District's Privacy Officer at: 770 Vernon Avenue, Victoria BC, V8W 2W7, 250-475-1775, [foi@saanich.ca](mailto:foi@saanich.ca).*

## QUESTIONS

In Saanich, pet owners bring a variety of pets/animals with them when visiting parks such as horses, cats, birds, etc. but the vast majority of pets observed are dogs. This is why existing rules and policies focus mainly on dogs in parks. Currently Saanich is unique in that most of Saanich's parks allow dogs to be off-leash, so long as the dogs are kept under the effective control of their owners. Recently there has been growing calls from residents for Saanich to review policies and regulations relating to pets in parks.

1. First of all, how often do you visit Saanich public parks or beaches? Would you say:
  - Daily or more than once per day
  - Several times a week
  - About once a week
  - About once every 2-3 weeks
  - About once a month
  - Less often

2. When thinking about Saanich parks, what do you believe are the top three most important factors to consider? (rank order top 3)

- Environmental protection and wildlife habitat
- Community and neighbourhood cohesion/connections
- Amenities and facilities at parks
- Variety of uses and spaces
- Accessibility (universal design features)
- Safety
- Community health & wellness
- Opportunities to connect with nature
- Cleanliness of parks and facilities
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. When it comes to people and pets sharing Saanich parks, what do you feel are the top three most important considerations? (rank order top 3)

- Safety for people
- Safety for dogs/pets
- Waste management
- Noise control
- Bylaw education and enforcement
- Education of dog/pet owners
- Protection of natural areas and sensitive ecosystems
- Location and distribution of off-leash areas for dogs?
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you see as the main benefits of most Saanich parks being off-leash for dogs?

---

---

5. And what do you see as the main challenges of having dogs off-leash in Saanich parks?

---

---

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: RANDOMIZE ORDER OF STATEMENTS

SCALE: Strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree

- a. I am comfortable with dogs being present when enjoying open spaces in the community.
- b. I feel safe in Saanich parks when dogs are present.
- c. I have mostly positive experiences with dogs in the Saanich.
- d. I have mostly positive experiences with dog owners in the Saanich.
- e. I feel that Saanich is a safe place for people and dogs to co-exist.
- f. There is suitable enforcement of dog activity in the Saanich parks.
- g. Dogs are a welcome part of the community.
- h. Designating specific areas in Saanich where dogs are not allowed or where dogs are only allowed on-leash will help reduce conflicts between park visitors with and without dogs.

7. Have you ever had a negative experience or conflict with an off-leash dog?

- YES
- NO (SKIP TO Q8)

8. IF YES: Can you briefly describe your experience?

9. Are there any specific locations in your community where you are concerned about dogs being off-leash? SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you currently own a dog or does your household have a dog?

- YES
- NO SKIP TO Q16

11. How many dogs does your household have?

12. What size is your dog(s)?

- Large (over 75 pounds)
- Medium (50-75 pounds)
- Small (25-49 pounds)
- Tiny (under 25 pounds)

13. Where do you generally exercise your dog(s)?

- Local parks
- Sidewalks
- School fields
- Sports fields
- Natural areas/trails
- Residential landscape areas (e.g., backyards, apartment roof, parking lot)
- Beaches
- Other: please specify \_\_\_\_\_

IF USE LOCAL PARKS in Q12 ASK Q.13/14:

14. Do you visit local parks with your dog(s):

- Mostly weekends
- Mostly weekdays, or
- Everyday
- Varies (some weekdays and some weekends)

15. Which of the following times of day do you usually visit Saanich parks with your dog(s) (check all that apply):

- 6am – 9am
- 9am – 4pm
- 4pm or later
- Varies

16. Do you visit a Saanich Park with any pet other than a dog?

- Yes
- No

If “YES” TO Q16, ASK Q17.

17. What type of pet do you visit with?

## BASIC DATA

Just a few final questions to help us make sure our sample represents different groups in the community.

18. Into which of the following age categories may I place you?

- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 years or better

19. Which of the following best describes your current household? READ

- Single with no children at home
- A couple with no children at home
- A family/single parent household with children under 18 at home
- A family/single parent household with adult children only at home Other (SPECIFY)  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. How many years have you lived in the District of Saanich?

21. Which of these ranges best describes your current total annual household income before taxes?

- Less than \$60,000
- \$60,000- \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$140,000
- Above \$140,000
- Prefer not to answer

22. Which category or categories best describes the ethnic or cultural origins of your ancestors?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

- Canadian
- British Isles
- French Canadian
- European
- Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)
- Chinese
- South Asian
- Other Asian
- Caribbean
- Latin/South American
- African
- Arab
- Oceania
- Other – Specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

#### CLOSING

Finally, in case my supervisor needs to verify this survey, may I please have your first name or initials \_\_\_

***Thank you very much for your input; have a good day/evening!***



## FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS & KITCHEN TABLE WORKBOOKS

The following summary is based on feedback heard during the two virtual Community Conversations and Kitchen Table Workbook submissions.

### *What user groups and interests should be considered as part of this Strategy?*

From the community conversations and kitchen table workbooks, participants discussed the many park user groups that are important to acknowledge throughout this process. Some of the key groups mentioned include:

- First Nation communities
- Dog owners, particularly dogs with special needs, small dogs or service dogs and a diversity of demographics
- Cat owners
- Dog trainers and dog walkers
- People and dogs who use parks for mental and physical health (including those who do not feel safe alone in public spaces or who need calm/quiet spaces)
- Equestrian users
- Community events and programming attendees
- Recreational park users (e.g., sports groups, runners, mountain bikers, cyclists, bird watchers)
- Sensitive species and animal habitat (e.g., migratory birds, native trees, fish)
- Non-dog owners and those who do not currently use the park
- Volunteers and park stewards
- Scientists, researchers, and citizen scientists
- Commuters and people without cars
- People in densified areas
- New immigrant families and cultural group gatherings
- Parents, toddlers, and young children (including nature-based preschools)
- Women park and trail users
- Seniors and those with disabilities (i.e., who use mobility assistance devices)
- Vulnerable populations (e.g., unhoused people, drug-users)

### *Where do you see opportunities to accommodate various or multiple users? Are there any parks that you know that do a good job of this?*

We heard there are opportunities to enhance community cooperation and foster a culture of responsibility. Participants suggested opportunities to enhance natural areas, including preserving and limiting use around ecologically sensitive areas and species at risk, and improving waste management.

We heard opportunities to provide spaces and programming for different park users and to offer variety within the park. Participants provided suggestions for clear physical boundaries, either with fencing or natural elements, as well as improved signage and public education (e.g., on eco-sensitive areas, playgrounds/fields, off-leash areas, and volunteer educators). At the same time, we also heard not every park may accommodate every use and to consider multiple parks for diverse needs. Some participants would like to see stronger limitations, including leash lengths and permits, as well as seasonal restrictions and bylaw enforcement, while others caution against a heavy-handed approach.

In addition, we heard the People, Pets, and Parks Strategy is an opportunity for cross-regional collaboration with other CRD municipalities and institutions such as University of Victoria. It can also act as an avenue to plan for climate action, community health, and regional population growth.

Examples of parks that accommodate multiple users well include:

- Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park
- Rutledge Park
- Thetis Lake Park
- Beckwith Park
- Rath Trevor Provincial Park
- Colquitz River Park
- Mount Douglas
- Uplands Park (Oak Bay)
- Playfair Park
- Swan Lake (note: no dogs are allowed in Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary)
- Rithet's Bog
- East Sooke Regional Park
- Montague Park
- Windsor Park (Oak Bay)
- Cadboro Gyro Park (Cadboro Bay Beach)
- Baxter Park
- Benson Park
- Cordova Bay Beach
- Qualicum Beach
- Panama Flats Park (Colquitz River Trail)
- Lambrick Park
- Vancouver's Hadden Park (Kits Point)
- The Annex (Toronto)

### *What are some important considerations for pets in Saanich parks?*

Some participants discussed opportunities to increase sharing of park space and maximizing user group access. Participants shared ideas for different use areas, including socializing, exercising, trails, and natural areas, and restricting areas with natural or artificial barriers. We heard support for restrictions of dog owners and commercial dog walkers, including leash lengths, licensing commercial services, and enforcing bylaws. Participants also expressed a need for more diversity of spaces throughout Saanich to meet a diversity of needs, to promote walkability to parks, and to provide equitable spatial distribution of amenities. We heard education about the different types of spaces should be considered.

Participants shared concerns for environmental health, including protecting ecological sensitive areas, limiting interactions with wildlife, removal of invasive species, and planting of non-toxic species. We also heard suggestions related to park amenities, including improved waste management, signage and education, agility equipment, shelters and shade for heat refuge, water features and access to natural water.

Through the Community Conversations and Kitchen Table Workbooks, there were many comments related to the planning process. Participants suggested understanding the timeframes of when different users are in the park, looking at seasonal differences and changes over time. We also heard a need for evidence-based research to guide policy making, along with community input and procedural fairness. Participants expressed that the diversity of dogs and dog owners should be accommodated (e.g., fenced spaces don't work for all dogs), as well as the cumulative impacts of changes across the Capital Regional District. Additional considerations include the lack of park space for cats, the health importance of off-leash dog areas, and planning for the safety and comfort of all park users.

# Appendix G

## Round 2 Engagement Summary



District of Saanich  
People, Pets and Parks Strategy

**Round 2 Engagement Summary**

Fall 2022 - Winter 2023



# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The District of Saanich is developing the People, Pets and Parks Strategy to provide a framework to help manage the District's parks and open spaces and achieve positive relationships between people, pets and the environment.

The Strategy is needed because:

- Saanich has more pets and people than ever before.
- Saanich has more people and pets per hectare of parkland than ever before, especially where compact development is happening.
- The population of people and pets is projected to continue increasing.
- There is concern about the cumulative impacts of people and pets on the environment.
- There is an increasing diversity of park users in Saanich parks and some people avoid using parks because of off-leash dogs.
- There are current best practices for managing pets in parks that can help reduce conflict and make the parks more welcoming to everyone.

The project team has completed Round 1 and Round 2 of public and stakeholder engagement. A summary of Round 1 engagement is available on the [project website](#).

**This report provides an overview of what we heard through engagement activities in Round 2. Although those engaged were not a representative sample of Saanich, feedback will help decision makers understand the range of aspirations, concerns and values to consider in the Strategy and better meet the needs of our diverse community.**

This feedback will inform the Draft Strategy, which will be shared later this Spring.



# WHAT WE DID

The second round of engagement for the People, Pets, Parks Strategy took place between November 2022 and February 2023. The project team conducted stakeholder workshops, a public questionnaire, and a public open house where participants contributed feedback in individual workbooks. For detailed summaries of each activity, see Appendices A - C.



**Stakeholder Workshops:** The project team hosted a series of three stakeholder workshops which were small-scale ‘virtual’ conversations with invited representatives from various groups and organizations. Stakeholders were grouped separately to provide participants an opportunity to help the team understand considerations pertaining to their specific interests and expertise before finalizing information for the upcoming public open house. The three meetings included:

- dog owner interest and advocacy groups, trainers, and professional dog walkers (Saanich-based)
- intergovernmental agencies
- environmental and stewardship groups



**Public Questionnaire:** The questionnaire was available from February 1st to the 22nd on the project website and in paper copies. This questionnaire asked for input on the draft vision, principles, and goals as well as elements of various regulatory approaches that may inform the draft Strategy. Information collected is not statistically valid nor a representative sample of Saanich, but is a collection of thoughts and ideas from community members who are interested and actively engaged in the project.

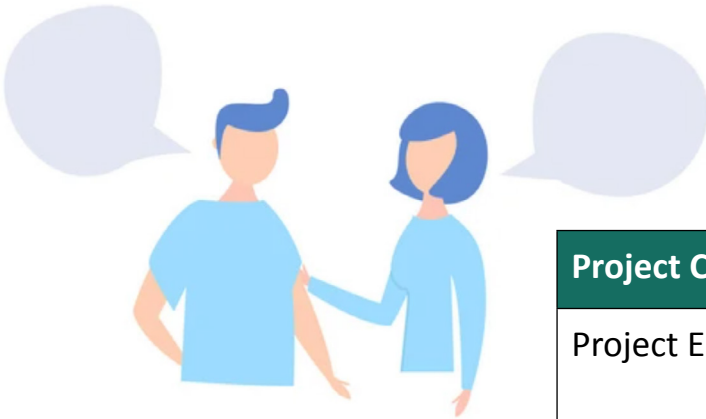


**Public Open House:** The February 1st Open House gave participants an opportunity to learn about the work completed to date and provide feedback on Strategy directions. Participants recorded their comments and ideas on each topic in individual workbooks. The Open House panels can be accessed through the [project website](#).

# WHAT WE DID

Engagement Activities	Date	Participation
Stakeholder Workshops (3)	November 24th & 29th, 2022 December 1st, 2022	37
Public Questionnaire	February 1st - 22nd, 2023	2,241
Public Open House	February 1st	293

Total Engaged:  
**2,571**



## Project Correspondence

Project Emails (59 total)

For a high level summary of project correspondence, see Appendix D.

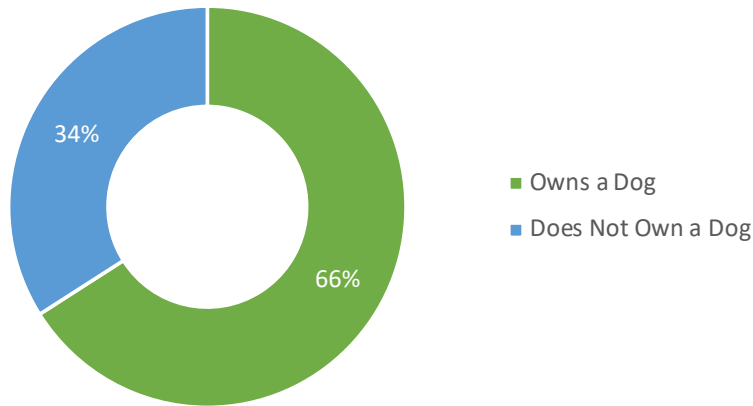
The project team received a number of emails throughout Round 2 which included:

- feedback on the Strategy process
- information sharing of relevant resources and documentation of conflicts in parks and environmentally sensitive areas
- comments, suggestions and concerns to inform Draft Strategy

# WHO WE HEARD FROM

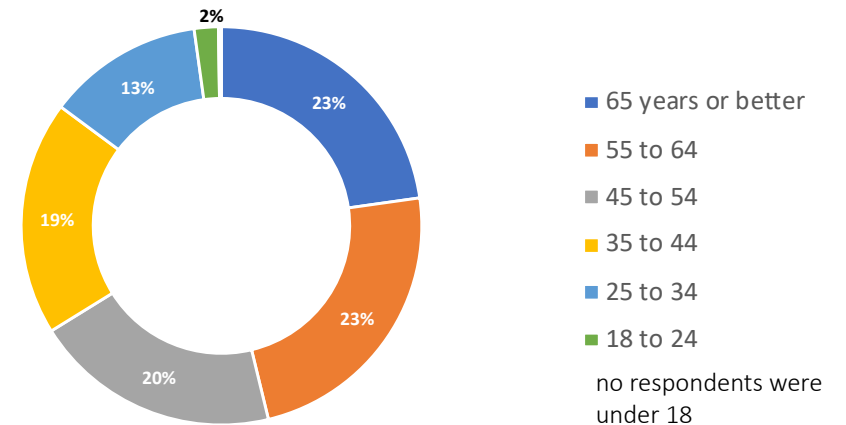
Information in this section was collected from the public questionnaire and was optional for participants to fill out.

## Dog Ownership (in Household)



Most (66%) questionnaire respondents live with at least one dog in their household.

## Age Distribution



The largest demographic we heard from (46%) were 55 years or older.

## District-Wide Comparison

**32-45% of Saanich residents are estimated to live with a dog.**

This range was calculated with the following data sources: Statistically Valid Phone Questionnaire, conducted in Round 1 (2022), estimates there to be 15,740- 22,315 dogs in Saanich; the total population in Saanich is estimated to be 117,735 people and the average number of people per household is 2.4 (Statistics Canada, 2021).

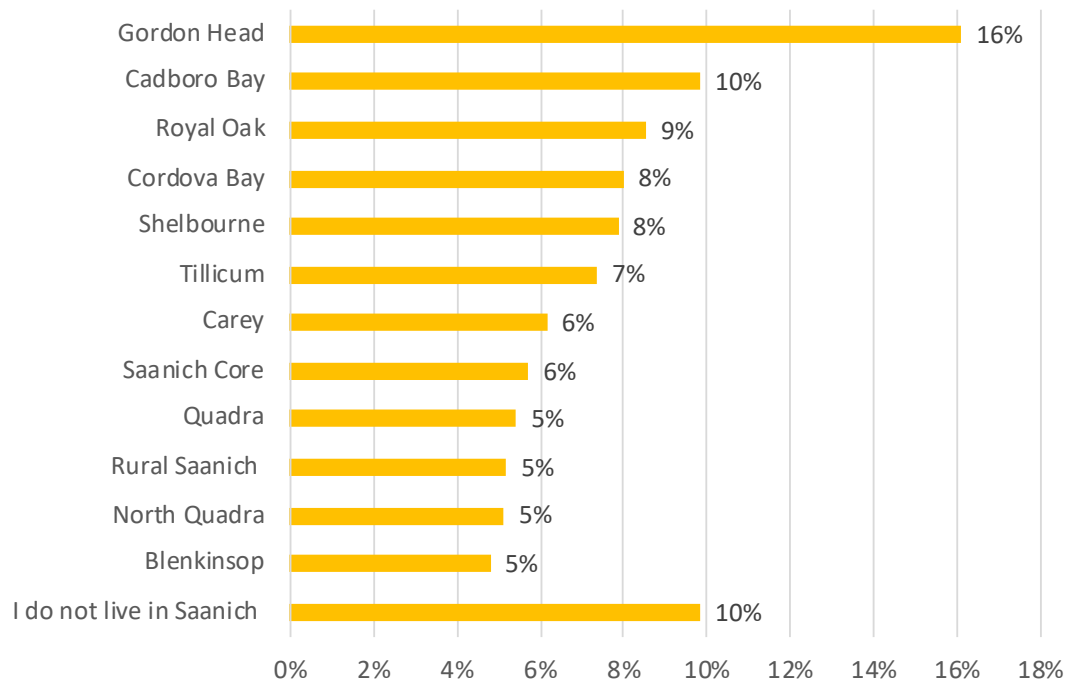
## District-Wide Comparison

**Saanich residents 55 years or older account for an estimated 34% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2021).**



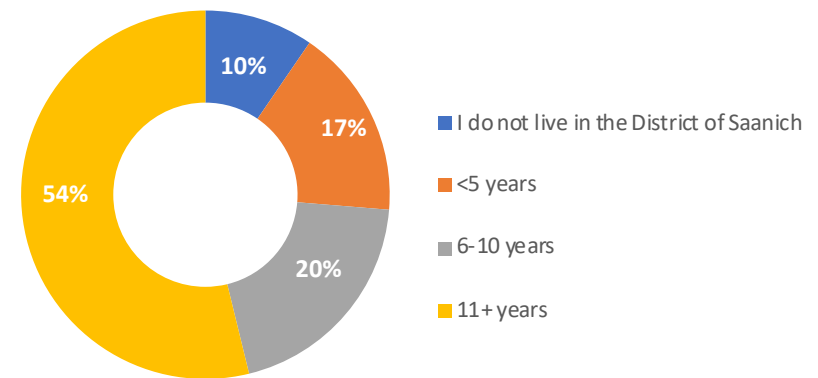
# WHO WE HEARD FROM

## Neighbourhood Distribution

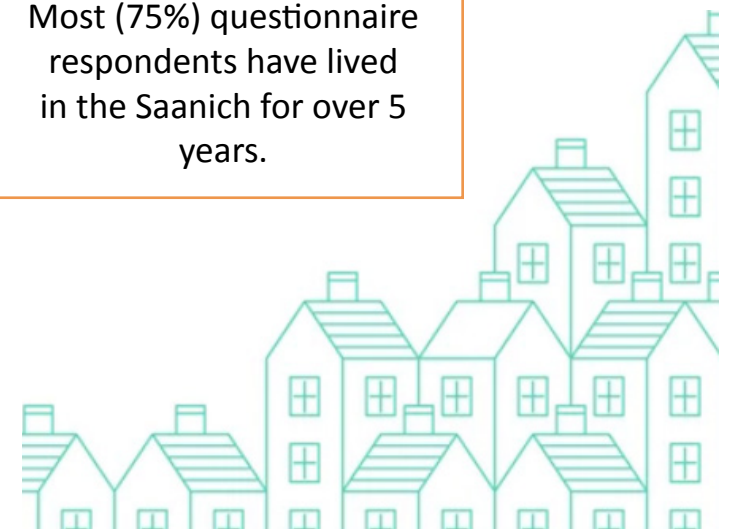


We heard mostly (90%) from Saanich residents in the public questionnaire.

## Length of Residence



Most (75%) questionnaire respondents have lived in the Saanich for over 5 years.



# WHAT WE HEARD

## Draft Vision

61%

of questionnaire respondents are somewhat or very supportive of the draft vision statement below:

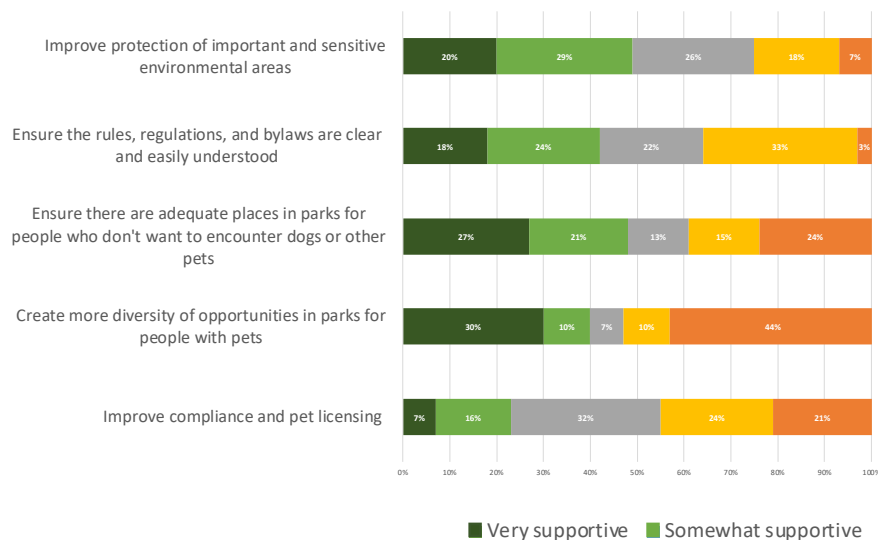
*Saanich parks are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all park users and provide a variety of experiences that balance the different needs of people and pets while protecting environmental integrity.*

## What's Missing?

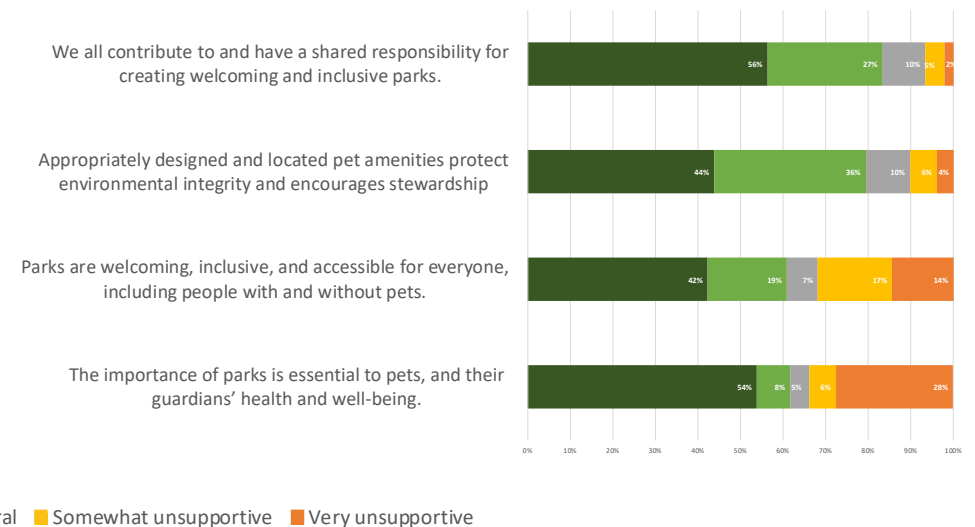
- Better balance of diverse park user needs (i.e., over-representation of pet needs or human needs)
- More emphasis on environmental protection
- Clarity and language
- Implementation

## Level of Support for Draft Goals & Principles

### Draft Goals



### Draft Principles



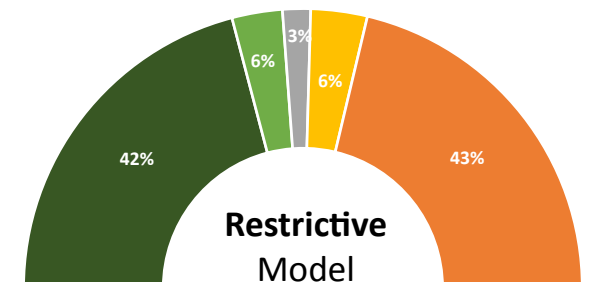
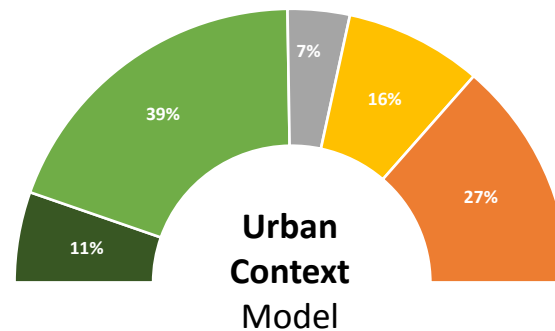
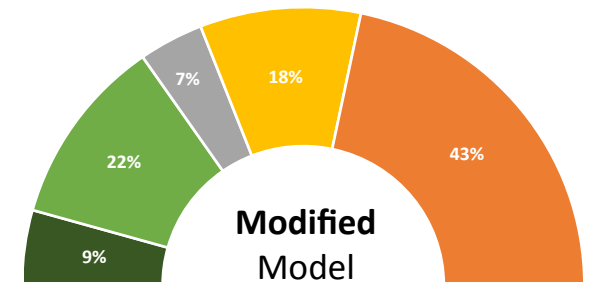
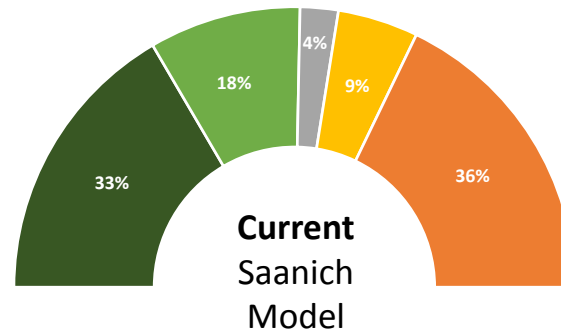
# WHAT WE HEARD

## Options for Consideration : Level of Support

To help determine key elements that should be prioritized in the draft Strategy, we presented four different options of pet regulation models. For details on each option, see [the Open House panels.](#)

The level of support for each option model is shown below. Feedback is from the public questionnaire.

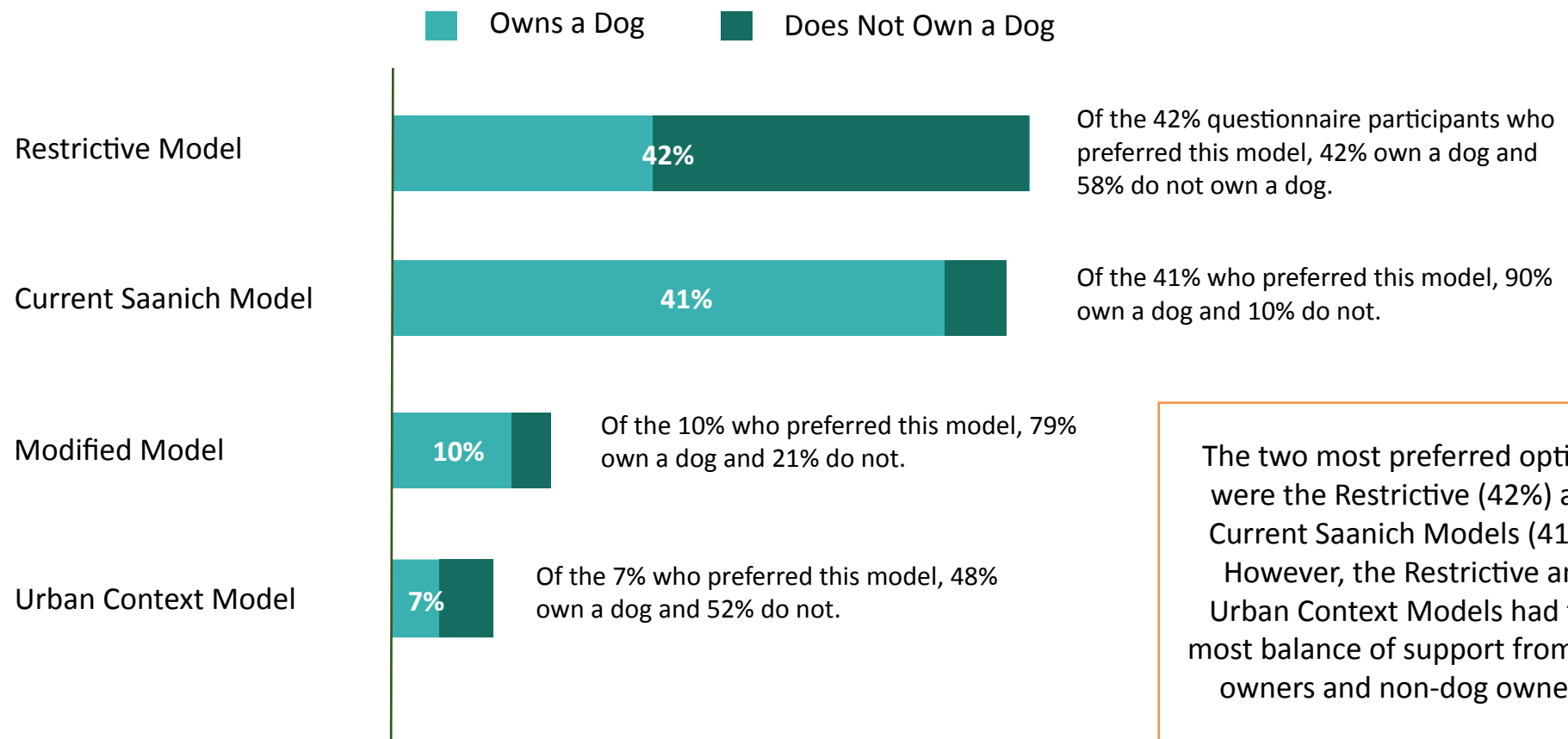
- Very supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Neutral
- Somewhat unsupportive
- Very unsupportive



# WHAT WE HEARD

## Options for Consideration : Preferred Model

We asked questionnaire participants to select the model that best reflects their vision for Saanich parks. Options are listed in order from most to least preferred.



# WHAT WE HEARD

## Options for Consideration : Preferred Model

The following key themes were summarized from comments received at the Open House.

### Restrictive Model

- General opposition to level of restriction
- Best option for environmental protection
- Support for regulation enforcement

### Current Saanich Model

- General support
- Importance of dogs off-leash
- Emphasis on responsible dog ownership, signage & education

### Modified Model

- Support for designated off-leash areas
- Does not adequately protect sensitive ecosystems or balance park user needs equitably

### Urban Context Model

- Does not fit Saanich context
- Need for park specific strategies
- Support for default leash requirement

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Dogs in Saanich Parks

Questionnaire participants value the following features most when exercising or walking their dogs off-leash:

Large/open  
space for dogs  
to exercise

21% selected  
this in the public  
questionnaire

Trails

20% selected  
this in the public  
questionnaire

Fenced areas

19% selected  
this in the public  
questionnaire

When asked which park or beach dog owners like to bring an off-leash dog most often, questionnaire respondents answered:

- PKOLS (26%)
- Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (21%)\*
- Respondents don't allow their dog off-leash in parks (16%)

\*Park is not managed by District of Saanich



# WHAT WE HEARD

## Sharing Our Parks

### With Active Recreation

Questionnaire participants shared what is important to consider when sharing parks with active recreation uses (such as bicycle trails, sports fields, sports courts, playgrounds). Key themes included:

#### restricting pet access

comments that pets should be in designated areas of the parks and/or away from programmed recreational spaces (*472 comments*).

Sport user groups expressed issues with compliance of existing regulation (i.e., sports as priority use) and suggested additional fenced infields and signage.

#### enhanced safety

safety particularly on shared pathways with cyclists and from dogs who are not controlled (*173 comments*)

#### respectful shared use

general comments that park spaces should be shared respectfully by all users (*418 comments*).

Participants at stakeholder workshops emphasized education-first approaches such as programs, trainings, and regional partnerships to promote respectful shared use of parks.

#### signage and communication

increased signage to clearly specify the “dos and dont’s” in park spaces (*107 comments*)

## Sharing Our Parks

### With Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Important considerations for how we might share parks with environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) such as Garry Oak ecosystems, wetlands, areas with known species at risks include:

restricting pet access

for pets (*358 comments*) and/or for all park users (*94 comments*) to prevent destruction of ESAs.

education and responsibility

more education about ESAs, wildlife, etc. and communication on responsible dog ownership (*211 comments*)

Stakeholder groups suggested utilizing existing stewardship groups and co-management in the way we protect sensitive areas and green spaces.

leashing regulation

suggestions for on-leash requirements generally in parks (*302 comments*) and some preferred only in designated areas such as ESAs (*50 comments*)

environmental protection

additional fencing or physical barriers are needed around ESAs to protect natural areas (*282 comments*)



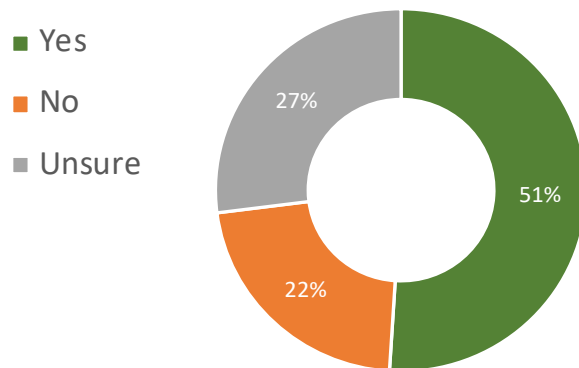


# WHAT WE HEARD

## Pilot Pop-Up Dog Parks

The Summer Pop-Up Dog Park Pilot Project provided fenced-in, off-leash areas in 9 different parks during the summer of 2022. Locations included Beckwith Park, Vantreight Park, Blair Park, Copley East Park, Horner Park, Fowler Park, Hyacinth Park, Gorge Park and Rudd Park.

In both the questionnaire and Open House, participants were asked what worked well and didn't work well about the pilot project. When asked whether they considered the pilot pop-up parks to be beneficial, about half (51%) of questionnaire respondents answered 'Yes'.



### What Worked Well

- General support for designated space for dogs and opportunity to socialize
- Safety for dogs and other park users
- Locations were well located and central

### What Did Not Work Well

- General opposition (no need for off-leash dog parks; inadequate space for exercise)
- Size was too small (can lead to conflict)
- Lack of permanence made it difficult to fully adopt as routine
- Unaware of locations or timing

Feedback from stakeholder workshops suggested that off-leash dog parks should be prioritized in higher density areas. Other suggested criteria included consideration for adjacent land uses, noise levels, and community support / engagement.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

Engagement in this round will inform the Draft Strategy. Based on what we have heard, the following takeaways are being considered.

## Draft Vision, Principles, Goals

- Participants were generally supportive of the draft vision, principles and goals.
- Defining key terms could help with clarity and public understanding (e.g., “park users” and “environmental integrity”).
- Implementation could be more explicit within the goals.

## Options for Consideration

- Participants were divided on their preferred model, with 42% in support of the Restrictive Model and 41% in support of the Current Saanich Model.
- There is more middle ground within the Modified and Urban Context Model, both with higher percentages of participants who are ‘somewhat supportive’ or ‘somewhat unsupportive’, which suggests which suggests more room for consensus and compromise among participants.
- Across all options, environmental protection, enforcement, education on responsible dog ownership and signage were all important elements to emphasize.
- Further information for specific parks of interest, PKOLS in particular, may help to better understand regulatory needs and programming opportunities for individual parks.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Dogs in Saanich

- It is important that dogs have access to a diversity of green spaces, including large and open spaces for exercise, trails, and fenced areas.
- PKOLS and Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park are the most loved parks to take dogs off-leash.
- There was a significant portion of respondents (16%) who currently don't allow their dogs off-leash in any Saanich park.

## Sharing Our Parks

Key themes that came up around sharing parks with both active recreation uses and environmentally sensitive areas include:

- need for designated spaces for pets
- enhanced safety (accessible pathways, cycling speed limits, from other dogs, etc.)
- additional fencing or barriers around ESAs
- improved signage
- education and communication for pet owners
- waste management

## Pilot Pop-Up Dog Parks

- There was general support for designated off-leash areas in parks as it created a sense of safety for dog owners knowing their dogs could not run away.
- Locations of pilot pop-up dog parks were supported.
- Concerns included the small size of the pop-up parks and not enough communication on the pop-up locations.
- It will be important to provide a variety of spaces for dogs ranging from off-leash dog parks to trails and open space for dogs (and their owners) who desire more exercise.

# APPENDICES

The following appendices are included in this report in the order that the activities were conducted.

**Appendix A:** Stakeholder Workshops Summary

**Appendix B:** Round 2 Public Questionnaire Results

**Appendix C:** Open House Workbook Results

**Appendix D:** Project Correspondence Overview (by email)

Stay tuned for project updates and future engagement opportunities on the [project webpage](#).



# Appendix H

Round 2 Engagement Appendices

# SAANICH PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS STRATEGY

## ROUND 2 - STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP SUMMARY

### OVERVIEW

Between round 1 and round 2 of our public engagement touch points, three workshops were conducted to present and discuss key directions before gaining further input from the broader public. We brought together specific groups to get feedback on the draft vision and goals, and to better understand what needs to be included in each topic area of the Strategy. Invites to the virtual stakeholder workshops were sent to representatives from a [variety of groups](#).

The overall objectives were to collaborate with key community and governmental organizations, build buy-in, and inform draft recommendations. The consulting team will use the initial feedback from the workshops with community organizations to help further refine the key directions for the Strategy.

TARGETED GROUP	DATE	ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Dog Owner Interest and Advocacy Groups, Trainers & Professional Dog Walkers	Thursday, November 24th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialized Individualized Training</li> <li>• Animal Instinct Pet Care</li> <li>• Westshore Pet Service</li> <li>• Mission Paws Dog School</li> <li>• Happy Dogs of Saanich Parks</li> <li>• Pawsentials Pet Services</li> <li>• Commercial Dog Walkers</li> <li>• Citizen Canine</li> </ul>	11

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROAM BC</li> </ul>	
Intergovernmental Groups	Tuesday, November 29th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District of Saanich</li> <li>• District of Central Saanich</li> <li>• CRD Bylaw and Animal Services</li> <li>• City of Victoria</li> <li>• Swan Lake &amp; Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary</li> <li>• Town of Oak Bay</li> <li>• Town of View Royal</li> </ul>	10
Environmental & Stewardship Groups	Thursday, December 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society</li> <li>• Friends of Victoria Migratory Bird Sanctuary</li> <li>• Animal Alliance Canada</li> <li>• Canadian Wildlife Service</li> <li>• Saanich Parks – Pulling Together Program</li> </ul>	16
<b>Total</b>			<b>37</b>

## VISION & PRINCIPLES

*Looking at the People, Pets & Parks draft vision and principles, what aspects are most important to you? Is there anything missing or that could be improved?*

- **Clarity on Key Terms**
  - "Pet amenity" – need to define
  - "Pet control" – need more clarity
    - In Victoria the bylaw defines "under control" as within view and the dog returns within 3 calls from the guardian
    - CRD states that "under control" is when a person in possession of a dog or domestic animal in a regional park has a clear line of sight to the dog or domestic animal at all times and the dog or domestic animal immediately returns to the owner when called or signalled
  - Consider change of language from pet "ownership" to pet "guardianship"
  - More definition to key words is needed
- **What's Missing...**
  - **Safety**
    - Should add language around increasing safety as many people don't feel safe with off-leash dogs
  - **Healthy Environment**
    - Should centre and prioritize minimizing impacts on wildlife and the environment
    - Parks are natural spaces / habitats before they are areas for human and pet activity (vision and principles are too focused on human use)
  - **Stewardship**
    - Consider responsibility of everyone at parks
    - Stewardship first
  - **Diversity of Use**
    - The diversity of park uses needs to be highlighted
    - Individual parks do not have to be everything to everyone
- **Implementation**
  - Owner education is very important (for pet etiquette and environmental stewardship)
  - Unclear on how this will be enforced
  - Need to consider implications of principles- we should not "over accommodate" (i.e., every park cannot meet the needs of every park user)



## ACCESS

### *What type of areas do you want to take your dog to?*

- **Large, Open Spaces**
  - Small, enclosed areas are for dogs who don't have recall or can't handle open spaces (unsafe for dogs who aren't socialized for these type of areas) – most dogs need open spaces
  - Space and distance to provide dogs and people with good, long distance and stimulating exercise
  - Consideration for senior dogs who need wide open spaces to move and not be with young dogs
- **Non – Natural Areas**
  - To protect sensitive plants and habitats
  - School or sports fields (more non-natural, "lawn" spaces) – more appropriate because they are not environmentally sensitive
    - Repurposing golf courses?
    - Sports fields could have co-benefits given the user groups
  - Significant need for off leash dog parks, including areas of significant size. Saanich may have to give up areas in parks that are being used for other purposes, to protect its natural parks from damage by pets
  - People like going to & bringing pets to the nicest beaches/forests, etc. but they may be environmentally sensitive and not resilient enough to have dogs. Places that are not vulnerable to dog activity should allow dogs so owners can enjoy them too
  - Control over dogs in sensitive areas should be priority
- **Trails**
  - Quiet and wide trails- more space between other dogs and other uses (i.e., trail runners/hikers/horses, etc.)
  - Increasing trail sizes and fencing trails may help with environmental sensitivity
  - Trails that are near perimeters and create a buffer for natural areas, rather than those that run through the middle, is a better approach
- **Feedback on Pop-Ups**
  - Pop-up dog parks were too small, and many people couldn't bring their dogs there
  - Engagement with individuals who used the popup dog parks only captures the feedback from owners whose dogs are appropriate for those types of parks
  - Beckwith Park was too small for larger dogs
- **Education & Signage**

- Better signage is key for communicating where dogs can and can't go
- Need to reinforce education for dogs who are out of control. It's difficult for dog owners who have good control of their dogs

*Are there specific parks where you think off-leash dogs should be (or types of parks)?*

- **Parker Park**
  - One of the last beaches in the region where dogs can be off leash in the summer. Given that there are probably no large forest areas left in Saanich to turn into off leash parks and no additional beaches, areas like this are requested for off leash
- **PKOLS (Mount Douglas Park)**
  - For its size and open space
  - Similar to Parker Park, access to forested areas and beach/waterfront is desirable
- **Centennial Park in Brentwood Bay**
  - Has some trails that people can pass each other with dogs, and fencing around many of the sensitive areas
- **Hyacinth Park**
  - Successful pilot dog park
- **Houlihan Park**
- **University of Victoria (now closed)**
  - Gave the ability for dogs to remove themselves from other dogs via trail access
- **Ambassador Park**
  - Many people use the baseball diamond there
- **(Parks similar to) Cy Hampson Park**
  - Although in North Saanich, this park is notable for its fencing, large green and open space, benches for owners
- **Horner Park**
  - Off-leash dog area was successful here
- **Rutledge Park**
  - Surrounded by apartments, playground nearby

## *Are there any criteria missing?*

- **Neighbourhood Context**
  - Higher Density Areas - Dog parks should be in higher densities neighbourhoods (there was more positive feedback on dog park pop-ups in higher density areas – most likely because there is less access to green space)
  - Noise levels should be considered in/around residential neighbourhoods
  - Nearby and adjacent land uses should be considered
  - Community Support - Ensuring neighbourhood support and involvement in process (through engagement/consultation)
- **Environmentally Intact Areas (Natural Areas)**
  - Should have controls over dogs in all natural areas, especially where restoration efforts are underway
- **Park Amenities**
  - Washrooms
  - Waste Receptacles
  - Water Features (especially on hot days) + access to water body (e.g., Elk Lake)

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION + STEWARDHIP**

### *What type of areas do you think are especially sensitive to dog activity and need more protection?*

- **Natural Areas**
  - “Not all grass is equal” (lawns vs. sensitive grassy ecosystems)
  - Anything other than open grass area should be protected – vegetated areas shouldn’t have off-leash dogs in them
  - Need to consider the space that plants need, although people will want to be around natural areas (trees, meadows, etc.)
  - All natural ecosystems in local parks should be considered ESAs
- **Sensitive Species and Ecosystems**
  - All are mapped in Saanich GIS system
  - All ecosystems in Saanich should be considered ecosystems at-risk
  - Garry oak meadows are at-risk
  - Dune grass
  - Yellow sand-verbena
  - Wildlife – wherever we allow dogs off-leash, wildlife will be pushed back from those areas and will create “ecological dead zones”

- Even in some of the smaller, neighbourhood parks this should be considered
  - Birds - protection for both migratory and local, resident birds as well as ground nesting species
- **Seasonal Restrictions**
  - Considering time of year and growing seasons
  - For specific parks – however, natural parks should be on-leash all times of the year
- **Trails**
  - Encouraging people to stay on main trails to prevent dogs from creating new pathways
  - Delineation of trails – “main” vs “rogue” trails (clearer separation so you know when you’re going off trail)
- **Rithet's Bog** – impacted by feral cats

### *Are there specific locations in Saanich that need protection?*

- **Cadboro Bay** – (dune grass, yellow sand-verbena, migratory bird sanctuary with heron habitat) With Bylaws and fewer dogs, they’ve seen some positive changes, but still some challenges exist with compliance
  - Sensitive areas should be fenced off and protected
  - Dogs are supposed to be on-leash, but many do not comply
  - Dog owners will throw balls & sticks at herons and other migratory birds for dogs to chase
- **Cadboro-Gyro Park** – rare plants should be fenced off with educational signage
- **PKOLS (Mount Douglas)** – existing P4N zone, severely damaged by pets
- **Glencoe Cove Park** – 3 different species at-risk where dogs harm critical habitat at this park

### *How can we work with community organizations and other stewardship groups?*

- **Existing Stewardship Groups**
  - Sanctuary Volunteer Ambassador program (Christmas Hill) – receives funding from federal government
  - PKOLS volunteer park ambassador program – could grow to include others (i.e., Cuthbert Holmes Park)
    - Not focused on dogs, but could expand mandate

- Pulling Together – environmental volunteer group has had many negative encounters in parks with dogs/dog owners

### *Are there any other considerations?*

- **Co-Management** – encouraging more responsibility in the way we co-manage our green spaces and protect sensitive or endangered ecosystems
- **Waste Management** – making waste disposal widely available (waste bags can cause more harm than good if not properly disposed)
  - Specifically, at PKOLS
- **Capacity Demands** – Saanich parks are struggling to manage the increased recreational usage in the park system
- **Communication & Education** – humans have just as much of an impact on sensitive areas as dogs (maybe more). We should be communicating the value of protecting these ecosystems from both humans and pets, not just pets
  - Need the educational piece and signage so people understand why ecosystems should be protected (e.g., a guidebook for people who register for a pet license)
  - Signage and outreach (articles in newspaper, communications, etc.) to notify park users is important – e.g., Central Meadows & Uplands Park seasonal closures
- **Type of Regulation**
  - “On-leash” vs. “under control” – significant difference that may vary park to park
- **Clear Barriers** – when decisions are made about what needs to be protected, it should be clear so there is no confusion on where dogs should not go
  - Seal Bay and Nymph Falls in Comox area are examples of good boundaries
- **Enforcement** – need stronger bylaw presence in ESAs
  - Could have community volunteers from environmental groups help with educating people about the rules and regulations

## COMMUNICATION + ENFORCEMENT

*What type of information would you like to see? Do you have any other suggestions on how to best reach and inform Saanich residents?*

- **Training** – for volunteer ambassadors (there have been instances of negative encounters with members of the public)
  - Bylaw officers should deal with any confrontation
- **Signage** – clear, simple signage so expectations are clear, educational
  - Could partner with other orgs like Canadian Wildlife Service to provide signage in parks on sensitive plants and habitats
  - Especially for rogue trails, trails that are closed for restoration, and meadows
  - Ensure signage is permanent and effective – e.g., fence signs in PKOLS were taken down
- **Education & Awareness** – access to basic training for Saanich dog owners (i.e., basic recall) and information sharing (re. regulation)
  - Should start with education and awareness
  - Free training could be an incentive/benefit of license registration
  - “Pop-up/intercept” events - educational presence in popular parks with bylaw officers, volunteers, training help, etc.
  - Education initiatives at Cadboro-Gyro seems to be working
  - Include people who live adjacent to parks
- **Information Sharing** – Pamphlets or guides to give dog owners
  - Adopting a Code of Conduct – for dog owners
  - Reaching dog owners directly through shops, rental apartment buildings, etc. (with handouts on best parks to take dogs, etc.)
  - Brochures to explain “pet-iquette” and expectations for “control”
- **CRD Bylaw Presence** – need flexibility to employ Bylaw officers and increase presence to different times of the day/evening
  - Reports from CRD are provided to municipalities and they are open to hearing about additional parks that may require more enforcement presence
  - CRD Parks have implemented regulation that all dog walkers must be permitted and carry their permit when in a park (with max 8 dogs) – have seen fewer complaints since implementing
  - CRD Park Rangers can offer additional support for CRD Bylaw – they inform CRD park users on ESAs and regulations already
- **Coordination** – partnership across groups and organizations to share resources and communications across region

## *What enforcement approaches would work better than others? How can enforcement be improved?*

- **Education First** – focus on education/awareness before enforcement
  - Proactive not reactive
- **“Carrot vs. Stick” approach** – incentives vs. fines
- **Compliance** – isn’t the only way to make this change, let’s not “punish” but invest in better education culture
  - rate is quite high in most cases; tickets are often given to people for not having a dog license
- **Programs** – e.g., Canadian Kennel Club- Canine Good Neighbour Program
  - Promoted with incentives and perks to be a part of the program
- **Communication** – need to be clear about how rules are changing, including clear rationale for decisions
- **Ambassadors** – ambassador programs and development of community expectations of behaviour will create more balanced, shared, and positive park use
- **Alignment of Regulation** – need to consider the enforcement and alignment of District Bylaw with federal regulation on migratory birds
  - Some parks and areas (e.g., Victoria Harbour Sanctuary) are shared by multiple jurisdictions so will have to work together on enforcement

**APPENDIX B**  
Round 2  
Questionnaire Results



# SAANICH PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS STRATEGY

## ROUND 2 - PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### OVERVIEW

The public questionnaire was available on the People, Pets and Parks Strategy [project website](#) from February 1<sup>st</sup> to February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. The questionnaire received 2,241 total responses.

### HOW TO READ THIS SECTION

The following section is a summary of what we heard from respondents through the online questionnaire. It is organized by the questions we asked for each topic, then by the themes that emerged from our analysis of responses.

We conducted analysis on two types of questions. Quantitative questions that asked respondents to select one or more items from a list or on a scale, are summarized by a graph and a brief description. For open-ended questions, comments were sorted and counted by a parent theme and by sub-themes where relevant. For each theme, we have included the total number of times it was referenced and a description that summarizes what we heard.

#### Analysis Example:

2. Is anything missing from the Draft Vision? ----- Question

<b>Needs of Park Users (150)</b>
<i>Balancing Needs (52)</i> Concerns with the plans' ability to balance needs of people and pets. This included suggestions to differentiate parks and their intended uses, to remove the word "needs", specify the "needs of pet owners", or to focus on the coexistence of park users.
<i>More Emphasis on Pet Needs (51)</i> Some specified specific pet and owner needs, including space to run, swim, and socialize.
<i>Less Emphasis on Pet Needs (47)</i> Others noted the vision places too much emphasis on pets and requested restrictions to dogs in parks.

----- Parent theme, number of comments related to theme

----- Sub-theme, number of comments related to sub-theme, and description of sub-theme

# DRAFT VISION, PRINCIPLES, GOALS

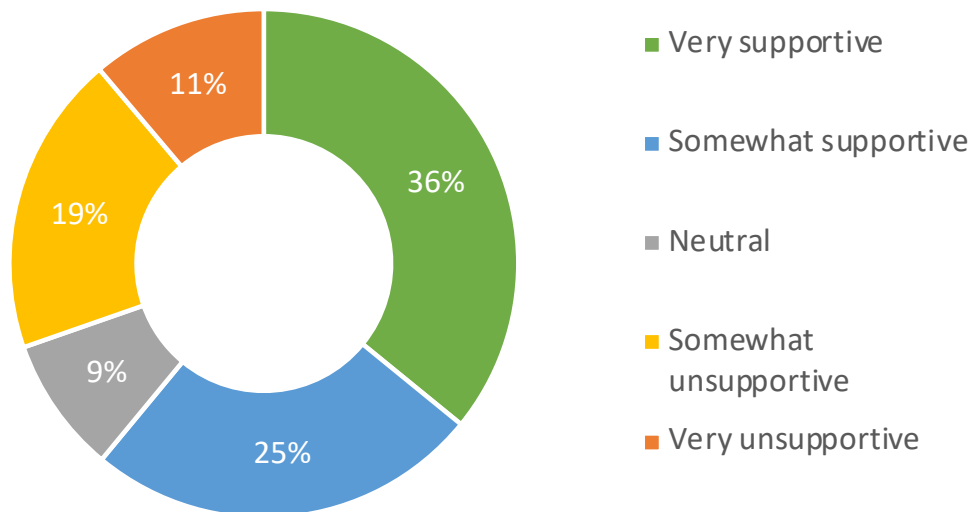
## VISION

### 1. What is your level of support for the Draft Vision, as written below, for pets in Saanich parks?

*Saanich parks are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all park users and provide a variety of experiences that balance the different needs of people and pets while protecting environmental integrity.*

Most questionnaire respondents (61%) are very or somewhat supportive of the Draft Vision. A few (11%) are very unsupportive.

Figure 1. Level of support for the draft vision



2182 responses

## 2. Is anything missing from the Draft Vision?

<b>Needs of Park Users (150)</b>
<i>Balancing Needs (52)</i> Concerns with the plans' ability to balance needs of people and pets. This included suggestions to differentiate parks and their intended uses, to remove the word "needs", specify the "needs of pet owners", or to focus on the coexistence of park users.
<i>More Emphasis on Pet Needs (51)</i> Some specified specific pet and owner needs, including space to run, swim, and socialize.
<i>Less Emphasis on Pet Needs (47)</i> Others noted the vision places too much emphasis on pets and requested restrictions to dogs in parks.

<b>Clarity and Language (129)</b>
Comments that the draft vision is unclear and open-ended. Comments that call for further defining phrases within the vision, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "effective control"</li><li>• "environmental integrity"</li><li>• "enjoyable for all"</li><li>• "balancing needs"</li><li>• "variety of experiences"</li></ul> Suggestions for language edits, including alternatives to the words "pets" and "park users".

### **Environmental Integrity (119)**

Suggestions to focus on environmental integrity through the vision and to develop pet restrictions to support environmental protection. There were comments to expand on environmental integrity, including adding the protection of sensitive areas, wildlife, and biodiversity, and promoting stewardship. Some shared concerns that a focus on environmental integrity will restrict park use.

### **Safe and Accessibility (90)**

Comments on the importance of clean and enjoyable parks. Suggestions to emphasize safety and accessibility for all community members, particularly vulnerable populations. There were also concerns about the safety of off-leash dogs and other users such as cyclists.

### **Implementation and Enforcement (71)**

Concerns that the vision is not achievable or how the vision will be implemented, potentially restricting park use. There were also comments on the need for enforcement of any proposed regulation.

### **General Support (59)**

General comments that expressed nothing is missing from the draft vision.

**Strategy Process (29)**

Support for the status quo and concerns that a Strategy is unnecessary. Concerns about public engagement materials and project background information.

**First Nations Recognition (6)**

Comments emphasizing that respect for and recognition of traditional unceded lands is missing from the draft vision.

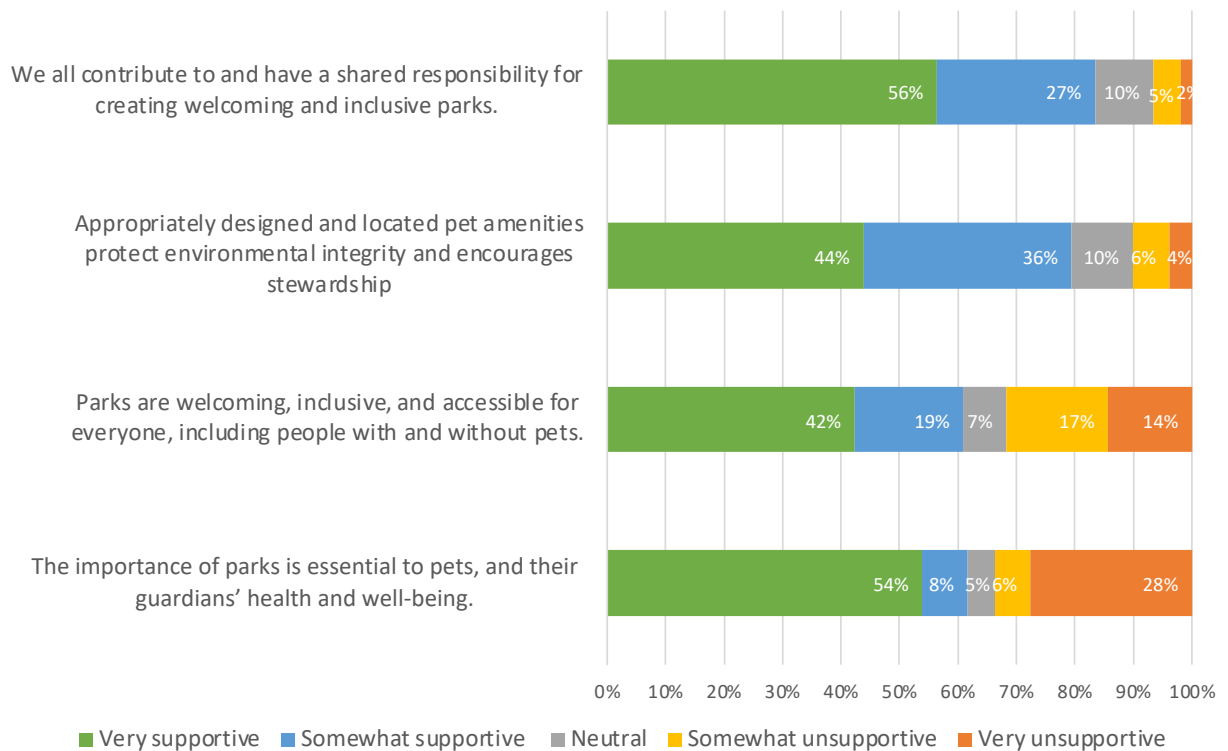
## PRINCIPLES

### 3. What is your level of support for each of the Draft Guiding Principles for pets in parks in Saanich?

The graph below shows the range in level of support for each draft principle. Principles are ordered based on the average level of support.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2. Level of support for draft guiding principles

#### Draft Goals



8749 responses

<sup>1</sup> An average level of support takes into account the full range of results that were supportive and unsupportive.

#### 4. Is anything missing from the Draft Guiding Principles?

##### **Welcoming, Inclusive and Accessible (101)**

Comments that emphasize the importance of building community and shared responsibility for parks. There was some concern that not all parks can be inclusive and accessible to everyone.

##### **Environmental Integrity (100)**

Importance of considering both human and pet impacts on the environment.

Suggestions to further emphasize environmental integrity through the draft principles and to include protection of sensitive areas, natural habitat, and wildlife.

There were some concerns that a focus on environmental integrity will restrict park use.

##### **Clean and Enjoyable (100)**

###### *General (75)*

Importance of parks for health and wellbeing of all park users, including space to socialize and exercise. Concerns about park cleanliness and need for proper waste disposal.

###### *Pet Impact on Park Experience (25)*

Comments on the over-emphasis of pets and need for leash restrictions to support peoples' enjoyment of Saanich parks.

### **Appropriately Designed Pet Amenities (82)**

Comments on the lack of clarity for 'appropriately designed' amenities and concerns that this refers to dog parks. There were suggestions to incorporate an equity-lens in park design. Expressed need for park amenities for both pets and people (e.g., waste, playground, water fountains, fences) and a variety of park environments, including natural and fenced areas off-leash areas that are appropriately sized.

### **Planning Process (60)**

#### *General Concerns (41)*

Comments that the Strategy is unnecessary and concerns with the public engagement, project background information, and lack of clarity in process.

#### *Clarity and Language (19)*

Comments that the Draft Guiding Principles are vague, and suggestions for improved sentence structure and grammar.

### **Implementation and Enforcement (69)**

#### *General (60)*

Concern about how the guiding principles will be implemented.  
Need for accountability and enforcement of park rules, including pet restrictions and substance use.

#### *Public Education & Communication (9)*

Suggestions for improved public education and communication.



**Safety (64)**

Comments that a recognition of safety (both physical and mental) is missing from the draft principles.

Concerns that off-leash areas are not safe for humans, and that enclosed areas are not safe for dogs.

Suggestions to improve programming (rather than restrictions) that encourages communal safety and stewardship.

**General Support (48)**

Comments that nothing is missing from the draft principles.

**Other (7)**

Other comments expressed that Reconciliation and decolonization are missing from the guiding principles.

Concerns that pet restrictions will be difficult and will separate families while at Saanich parks.

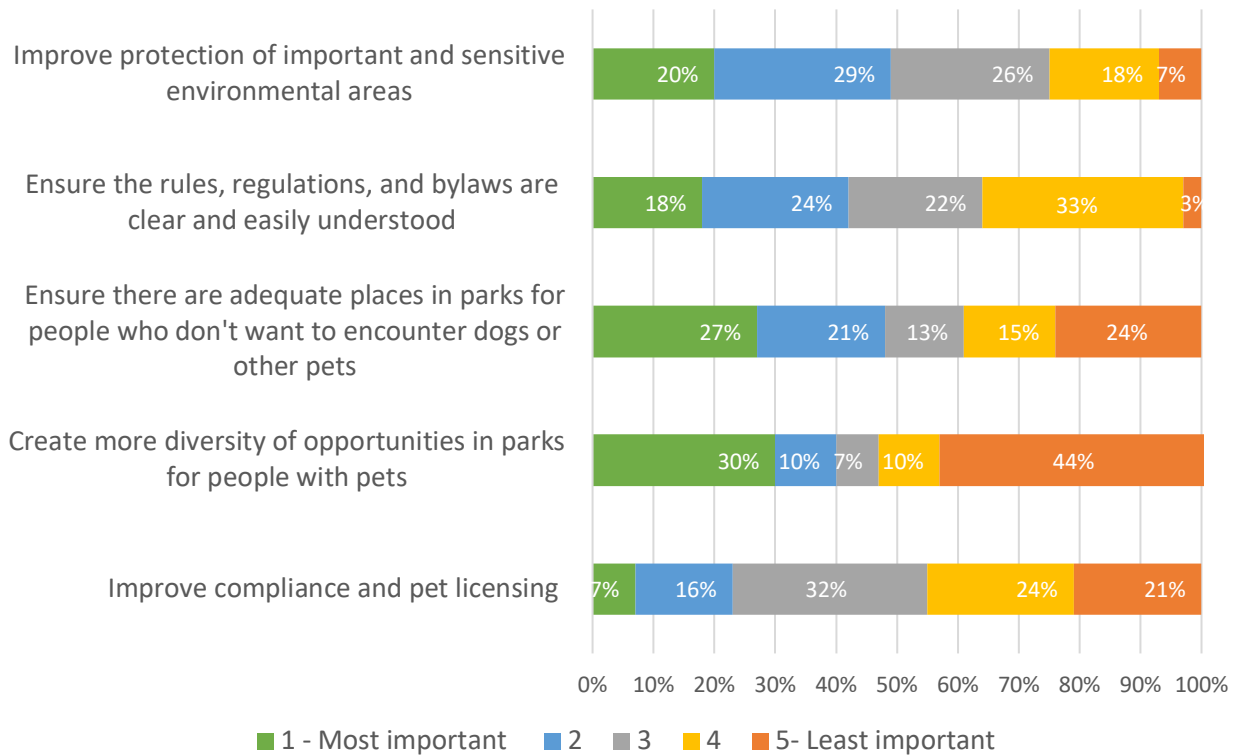
Comment on the need for a new Parks Strategy.

## GOALS

5. The following five Draft Goals have been identified. Please rank the following goals from most important (1) to least important (5) based on what you feel the Strategy needs to address.

The following graph shows the range of importance for each draft goal. Goals are ordered based on the average level of importance. "Improve protection of important and sensitive environmental areas" was seen on average as the most important goal for the Strategy to address.

Figure 3. Order of importance of draft goals



10,624 responses

## 6. Is anything missing from the Draft Goals?

<b>Balancing Park Uses (54)</b>
<p><i>Diverse user needs (21)</i></p> <p>Need for a better balance between parks for dogs and parks for people. Comments that parks should meet the needs of multiple types of users and some parks are more suitable than others for pets. Some respondents felt that the goals overemphasized the needs of pet owners, while others felt that they overemphasized the needs of those without pets.</p>
<p><i>Environmental Protection (14)</i></p> <p>Importance of recognizing sensitive area protection. Comments that dogs should not be allowed in environmentally sensitive areas (particularly migrating bird habitat) and that dogs should be banned from beaches. Some respondents felt that dogs have less of an environmental impact than other human activities (e.g., housing development).</p>
<p><i>Spaces and Opportunities for Pets (9)</i></p> <p>Diversity of opportunities for people with pets should include open spaces and walking trails where people can exercise with their dogs off-leash, not just enclosed dog parks. Some respondents felt that there should be designated fenced areas for dogs off-leash. The term "pets" should be expanded in the Strategy to include more than dogs or be more explicit about what it encompasses.</p>
<p><i>Safety (7)</i></p> <p>Importance of making it safe for people to visit our parks and beaches who do not want to encounter pets. Some respondents felt that it was important to regulate the length of dog leashes while others felt that leashed dogs were safe.</p>
<p><i>Accessibility (2)</i></p> <p>Ensure that there is access to pet friendly areas for people without access to a vehicle.</p>

*Indigenous Perspective (1)*

Goals are missing First Nations and Métis perspectives.

**Regulations (27)**

*Enforcement (12)*

Importance of adequate enforcement and the need for more bylaw enforcement and accountability.

*Compliance (11)*

Need to improve compliance of on-leash regulation. Enforcement and compliance are focused on a minority of dog-owners who are not complying, but also affects many dog-owners who are complying. Enforcement and compliance should be expanded to include smoking, cycling (on shared paths and speed limits), and other infractions by people.

*Pet Licensing (4)*

Some participants felt that there was a need to improve pet licensing and differentiate pet licensing from compliance in the goals. There were suggestions for discounted pet licensing fees for pets who have been through a pet socialization training course.

**Strategy Process and Engagement Process (12)**

Need to have an ongoing understanding of evolving community needs by collecting usage data and community feedback. Increased engagement with all park users will be important through ongoing refinement and implementation of goals.

The goals are vague about how they will be accomplished. Changes to existing regulations should be evidence based.

Need for more alignment between draft vision principles and goals.

**Education and Communication (8)**

Suggestions to develop dog etiquette rules and provide education for pet-owners, specifically on environmentally sensitive areas and responsibilities of pet owners.

Need for more communication between different types of users, improve signage on environmentally sensitive areas and communications strategy for bylaw awareness

**General Disapproval (5)**

Comments that generally did not approve of the draft goals.

**General Support (2)**

Comments that generally supported the draft goals.

**Other (6)**

Comments on the lack of clarity specifically of Goal #5 (Ensure there are adequate places in parks for people who don't want to encounter dogs or other pets.) There is a need to ensure that there is adequate distribution of parks across neighborhoods that meet the needs of pet owners and people.

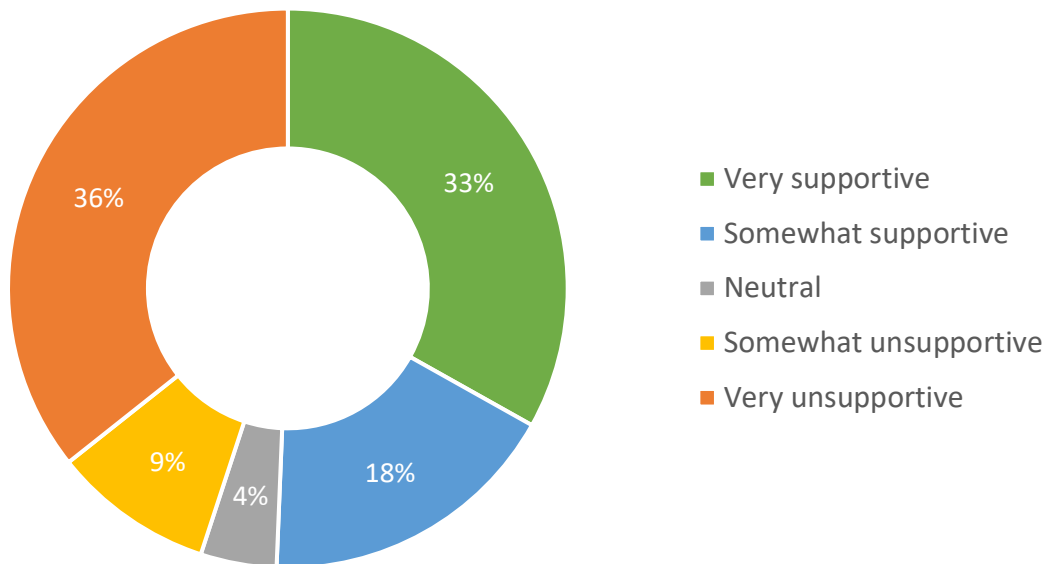
# OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

## CURRENT MODEL

### 7. What is your level of support for the Current Model?

Levels of support for the Current Model are divided. About half of questionnaire respondents (51%) are supportive of the Current Model, while just less than half (45%) are unsupportive.

Figure 4. Level of support for the current model



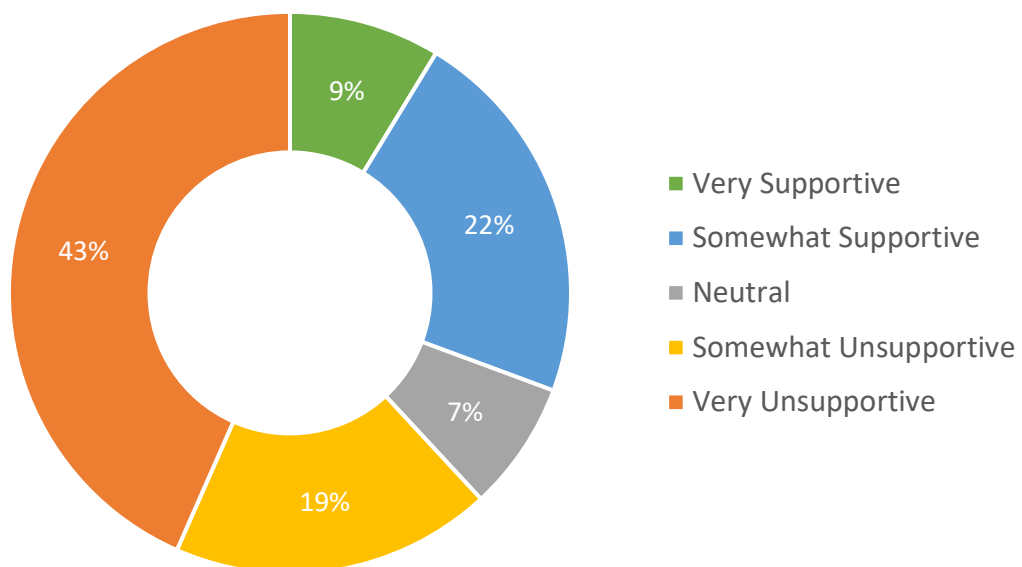
2164 responses

## MODIFIED MODEL

### 8. What is your level of support for the Modified Model?

Most questionnaire respondents (61%) are unsupportive of the Modified Model, while 31% are supportive.

Figure 5. Level of support for the modified model



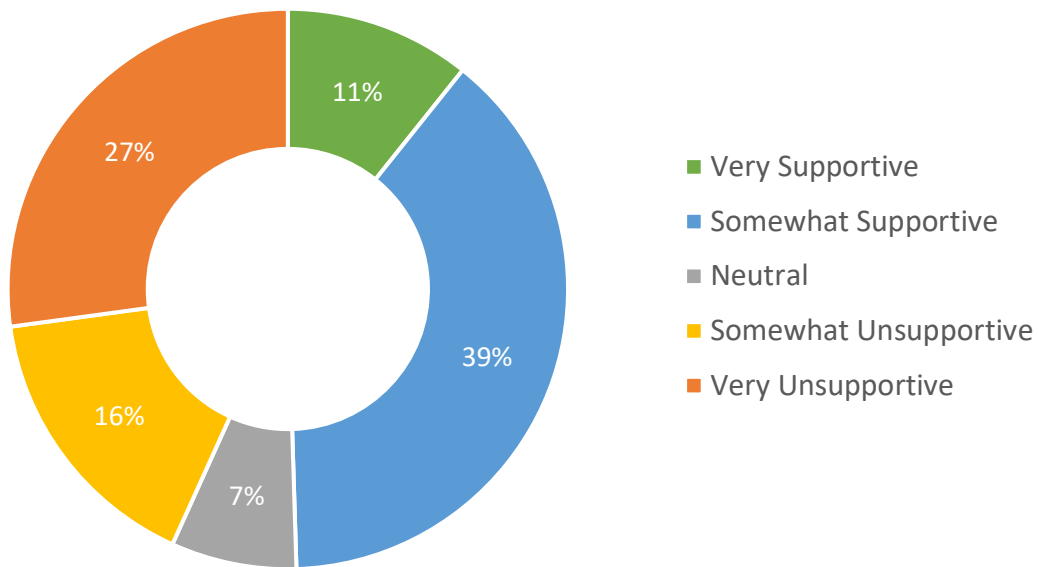
2147 responses

## URBAN CONTEXT MODEL

### 9. What is your level of support for the Urban Context Model?

Although mixed support for the Urban Context Model, it is one of the more supported models. 50% of questionnaire respondents are supportive, while 43% are unsupportive.

Figure 6. Level of support for urban context model



2129 responses

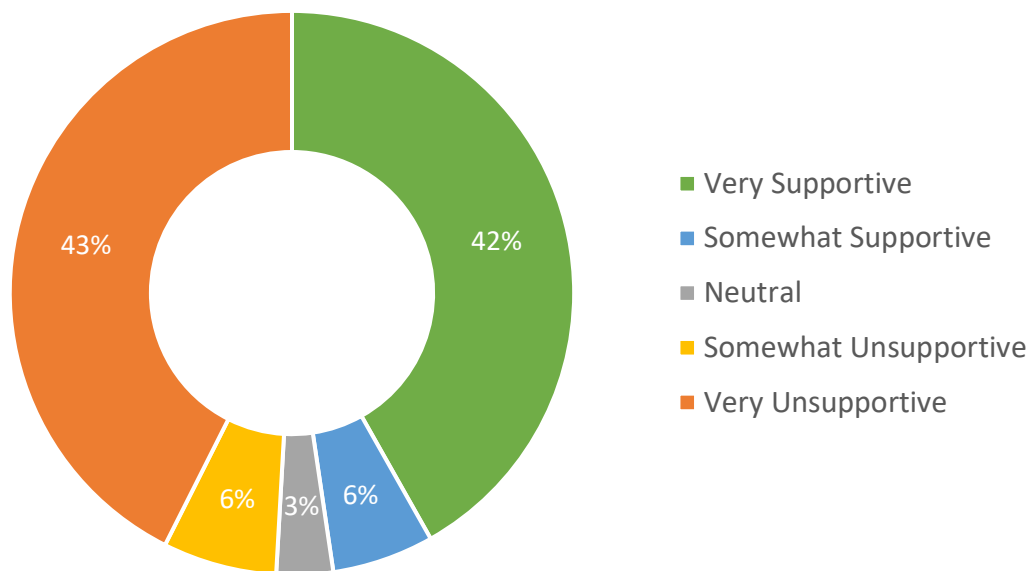


## RESTRICTIVE MODEL

### 10. What is your level of support for the Restrictive Model?

Levels of support for the Restrictive Model are divided. 48% of the respondents were supportive, while 50% are unsupportive.

Figure 7. Level of support for the restrictive model

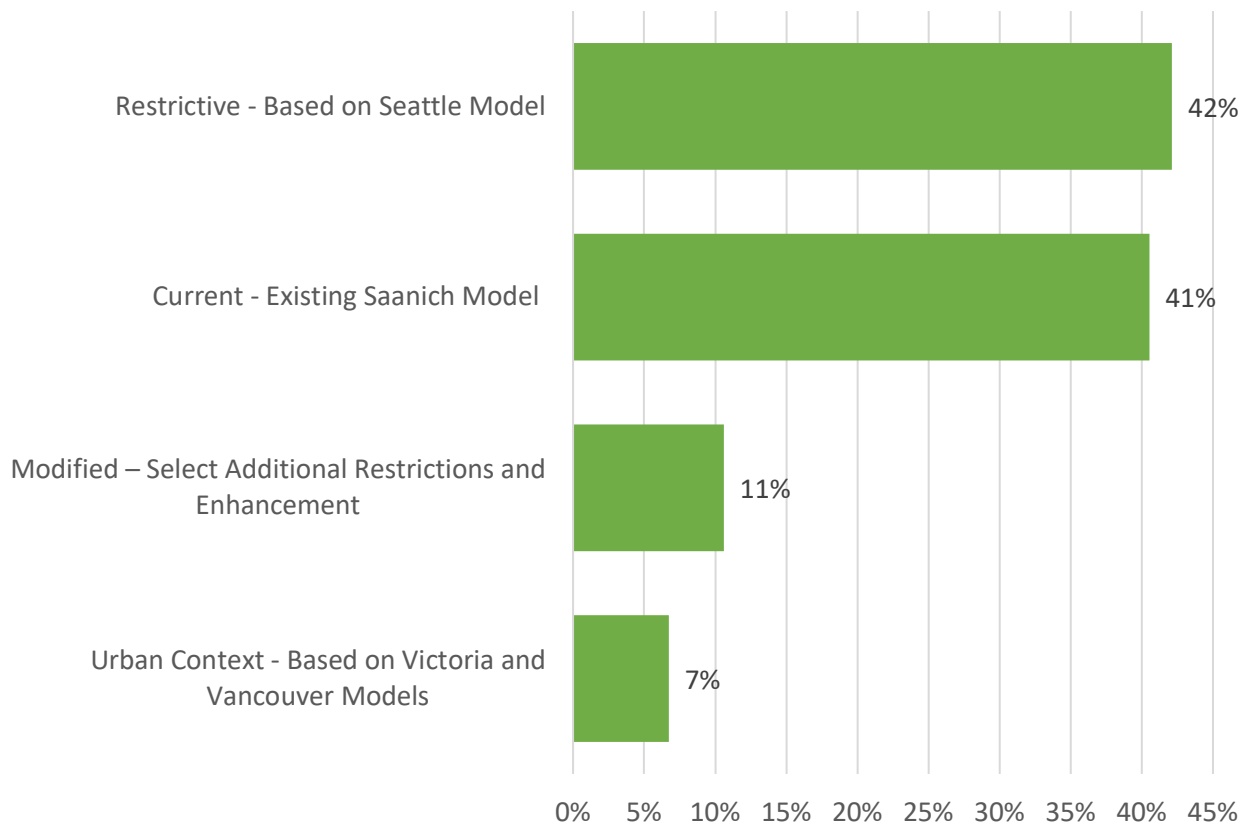


2126 responses

11. Please select which option best reflects your vision for Saanich parks (select only one).

Overall, most respondents selected either the Restrictive Model (42%) or the Current model (41%) as the option which best reflects their vision for Saanich parks. The least chosen option was the Urban Context model (7%).

Figure 8. Preferred Model for Saanich



2069 responses

## 12. Are there specific elements of any Option that you think should be prioritized?

### **Pet Regulations (37)**

#### *Leashed Pets (15)*

Some participants felt that dogs should be on-leash everywhere unless it is a designated dog park. Others felt that the default should be on-leash for dogs, even at designated dog parks. Regulating leash length was an important topic for some.

#### *Pet Restricted Areas (12)*

Some participants wanted to see no dogs on any beaches frequently used by wildlife or children. Others felt that dogs should not be allowed on narrow trails, even on-leash. Some felt that no pets should be in a multi-use public park or beach unless it's in a separate fenced area, apart from service dogs.

#### *Spaces and Opportunities for Pets (10)*

Some respondents felt that dogs should have their own parks away from other people and children. This could include leash-optional opportunities, dog exercise areas, trails, and amenities throughout the city. Fenced off-leash areas are not seen as a replacement for the current options in Saanich. Some participants wanted dogs to be allowed off-leash when under effective control in most parks. Others wanted diverse pet friendly areas in different environments, specifically in large open spaces such as PKOLS and Cadboro Beach.

### **Balancing Needs (18)**

#### *Environment (8)*

Comments that dogs should not be allowed in environmentally sensitive areas and suggestions to restrict dogs from beaches like Cadboro Bay Migratory Bird Sanctuary and parks zoned for conservation use. Pet owners are more likely to practice good recall if their dogs are off-leash in sensitive areas, and they will be more likely to steward those areas.

*Safety (6)*

Comments noted that some park users, including children, fear dogs and are affected by dog owners who don't follow the rules. Respondents felt that dogs should not be allowed where children play, like sandy beaches and playgrounds.

*Prioritizing Needs (4)*

Some respondents felt that parks should be about people first and foremost, not pets. Others felt that the current model works well, as there are very few negative incidents with dogs and most owners are responsible. There is a need for healthier coexistence between dog owners and those who use the park without pets.

**Enforcement and Compliance (8)**

Comments that enforcement and pet owner accountability will be a challenge and should be prioritized. If enforcement is increased for pets, it should be increased for other infractions as well. Enforcement through both park rangers and volunteer park stewards.

**Education and Communication (5)**

Increased communication, signage (specifically for off-leash areas), Suggestions for more education and communication through social media, TV, print and emails.

**Other (4)**

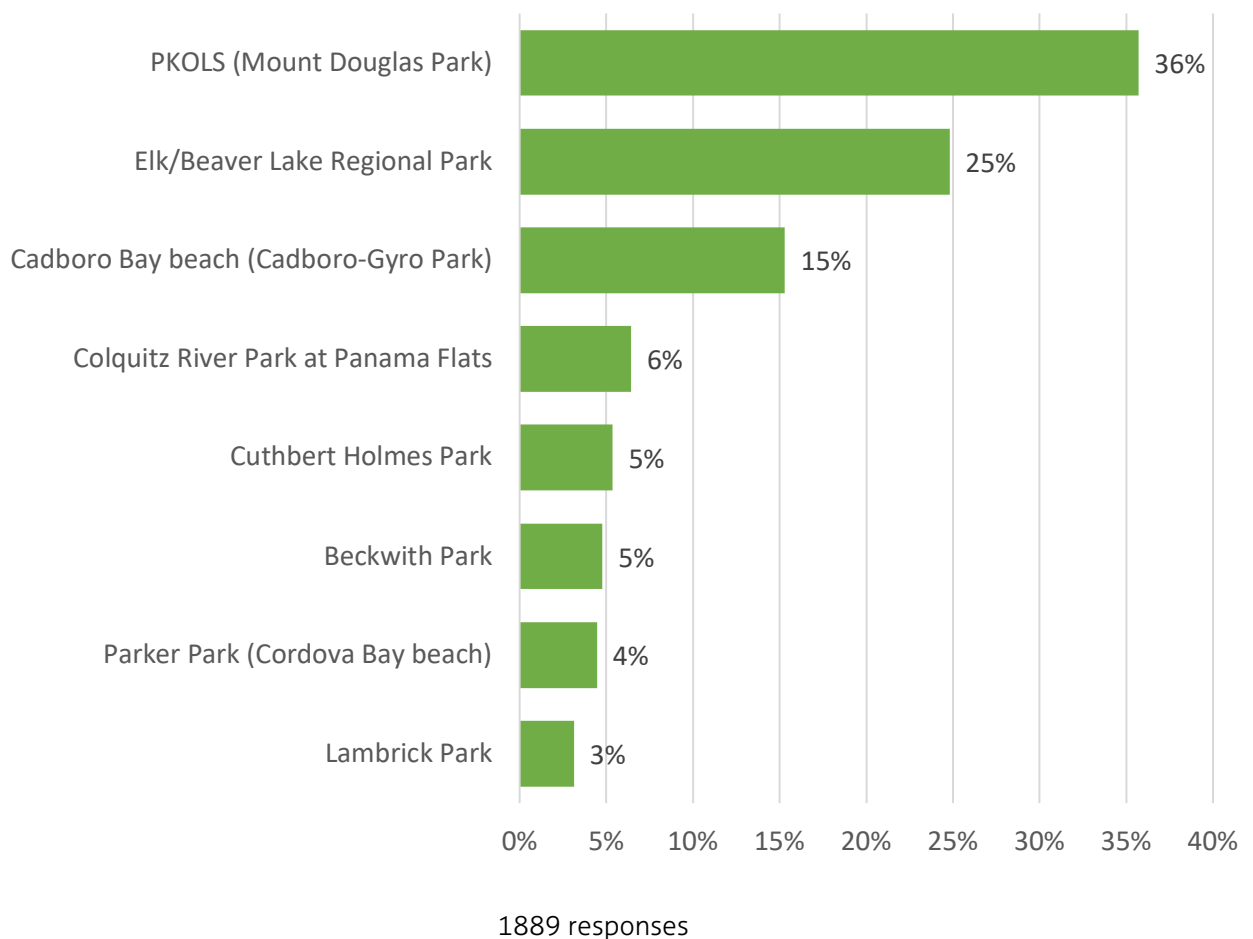
Comments that current park use is unbalanced — half of the parks should be dog-free, half requiring leashes with fenced off-leash sections in a minority of dog parks. There is a need for more waste bins and unique strategies for individual parks depending on size. "Under effective control" (referenced in model descriptions) needs more clarity.

## DOGS IN SAANICH PARKS

### 13. Which park or beach located in Saanich do you visit most often?

Most questionnaire respondents most often visit PKOLS (36%), followed by Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (25%). Lambrick Park (3%) and Parker Park (4%) are less visited by respondents.

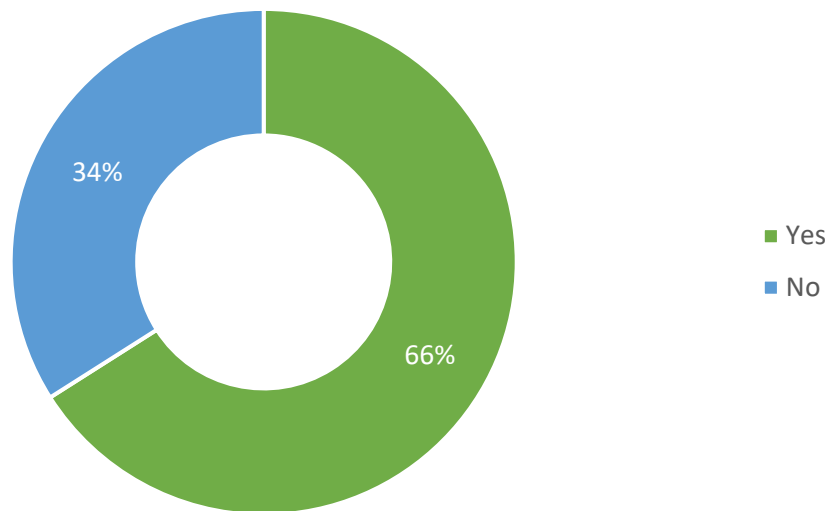
Figure 9. Most visited parks and beaches



14. Do you currently own a dog or does your household have a dog?

Most respondents (66%) own a dog. 34% of respondents do not.

Figure 10. Dog Ownership (in Household)

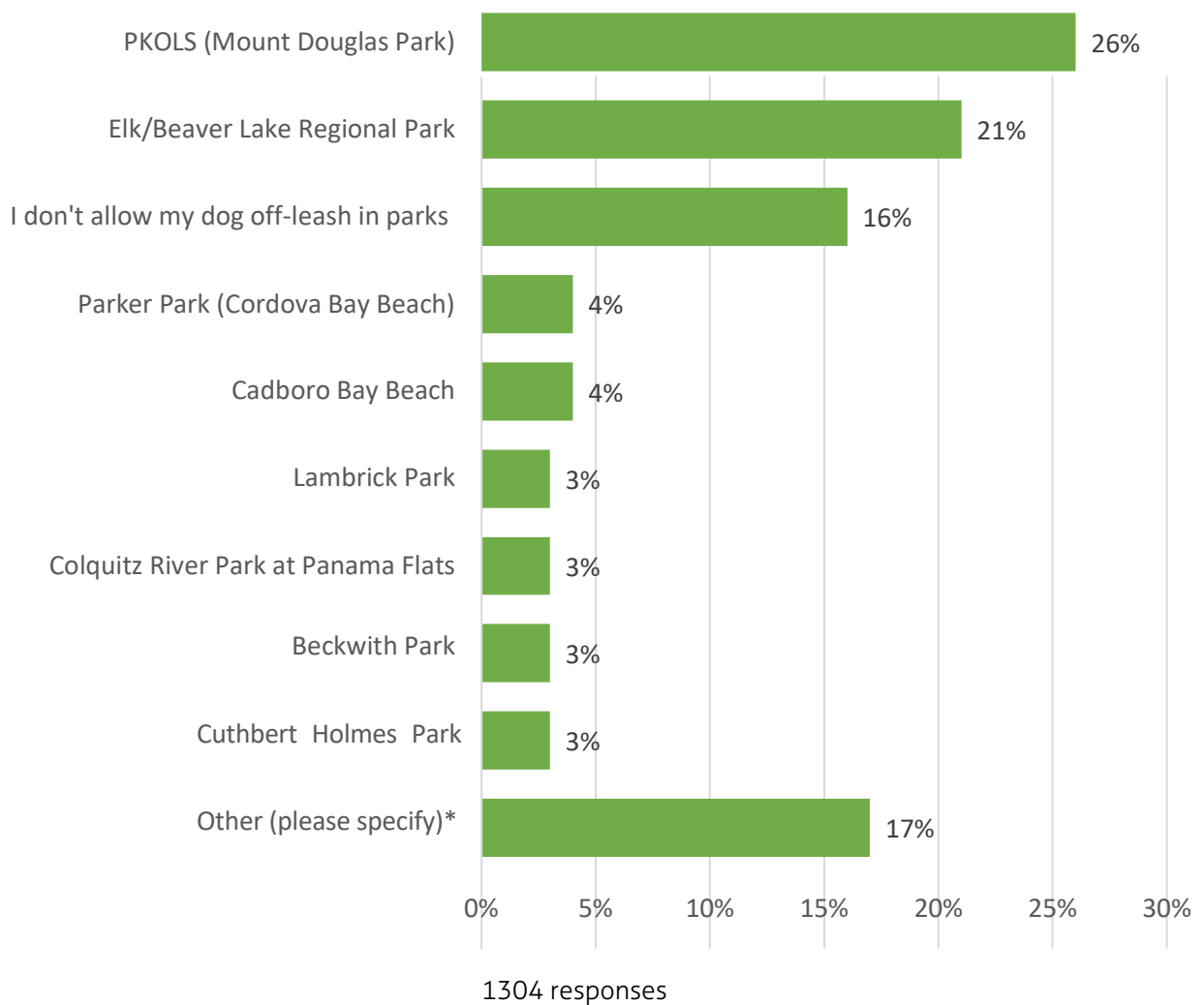


2101 responses

### 15. Which park or beach in Saanich do you bring an off-leash dog to most often?

Of the respondents who have a dog in their household, questionnaire respondents most often bring an off-leash dog to PKOLS (26%) and Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (21%).

Figure 11. Most frequented areas for off-leash dogs

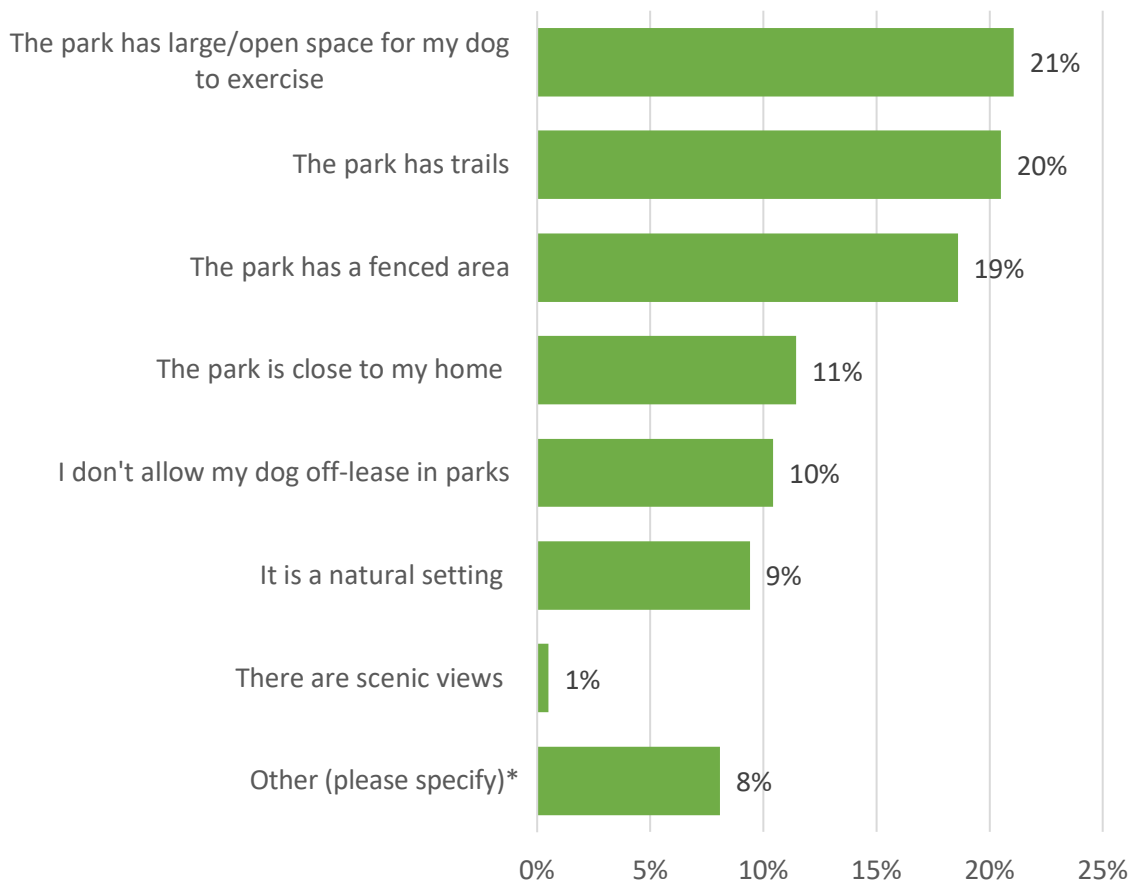


\*Other frequented parks/beaches in Saanich included: Maynard Park, Swan Creek Park, Fowler Park, Lochside Park, Houlihan Park, McMinn Park, Playfair Park, Mount Tolmie, Horner Park, Rudd Park, and Horner Park

## 16. What do you value most when walking your dog off leash?

Of the respondents who have a dog in their household, we heard that questionnaire respondents most value large open spaces (21%), trails (20%), and a fenced area (19%) when walking their dog off leash.

Figure 12. Most valued off-leash features



1372 responses

\*Other most valued off-leash features included: variety or combination of trails and natural areas, fields, access to washrooms, seating, safety from vehicle traffic, options to swim

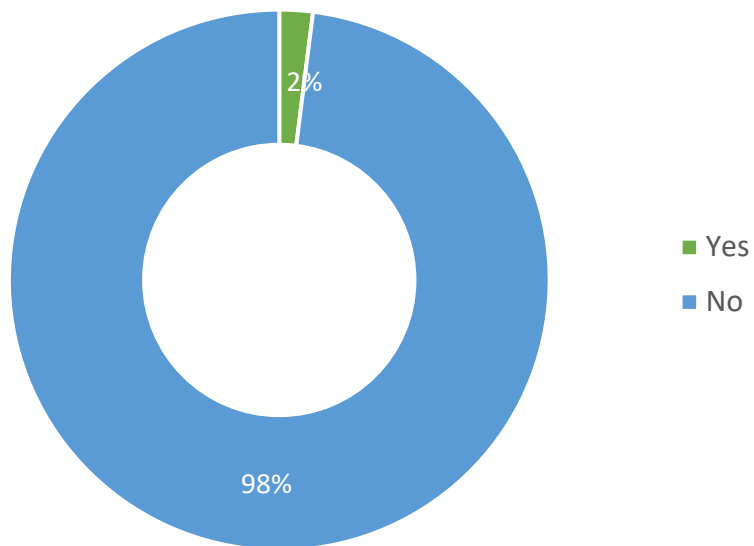


## COMMERCIAL DOG WALKING

### 17. Are you a commercial dog trainer or dog walker?

Only 2% of respondents are a commercial dog trainer or dog walker.

*Figure 13. Percentage of questionnaire respondents who are commercial dog trainer/walkers*

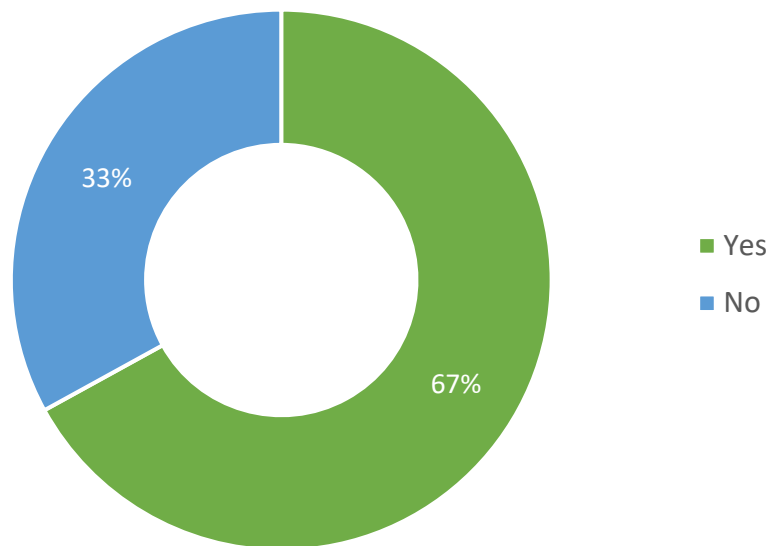


2097 responses

**18. The Capital Regional District (CRD) has a Commercial Dog Walker Permit. Do you think it would be beneficial for Saanich to have a similar program?**

Of respondents who are commercial dog walkers or trainers (2% of respondents), most (67%) think it would be beneficial for Saanich to have a Permit program similar to the CRD.

*Figure 14. Interest in a commercial dog walker permit program*



46 responses

**19. Please tell us why or why not?** (This question was only asked to those who identified as a commercial dog trainer or dog walker (2% of survey respondents).

**Value of Program (17)**

Respondents find that the program will be beneficial to control park usage, as well as enforce park regulations.

**Cost Considerations (7)**

Respondents express that it is not reasonable to incur additional costs to those who may not walk dogs a significant amount of time. There are also other permits that are of similar essence.

**Alternative Options (3)**

Respondents do not find that this program would provide a long-term solution; there is suggestion to add infrastructure such as fences, more strongly enforce rules, or increase education and communications.

**Engagement Process (3)**

Respondents found that this question should have been offered to non-commercial dog owners and to have a more science-based approach to proposed strategies.

## SHARING OUR PARKS

20. Some of Saanich's parks contain environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) like Garry Oak Ecosystems, wetlands, and areas with known species at risk. What do you think are the most important considerations for sharing these parks with pets in Saanich?

<b>Restricted Access (452)</b>
<i>For Pets (358)</i> Respondents find that pets, notably dogs, cause destruction in environmentally sensitive areas through wandering off marked paths, digging, and defecating; and as such, should have restricted access to ESAs.
<i>For All Users (94)</i> Respondents find that it is not necessarily pets that pose the largest threat or are most destructive in ESAs, but humans and other wildlife. Suggestions to prohibit access to ESAs for all users and to only stay on clearly marked paths/areas.
<b>Leashing Regulation (360)</b>
<i>On-Leash Everywhere (302)</i> Respondents would be most comfortable with having pets on-leash everywhere, including ESAs.
<i>On-Leash in Designated Areas (50)</i> Respondents would be comfortable with having pets on-leash in designated areas, such as trails.
<i>Off-Leash Everywhere (4)</i> Respondents do not find that having pets around ESAs are an issue and should be able to be off-leash.
<i>Off-Leash in Designated Areas (4)</i> Respondents would be comfortable with having pets off-leash in designated areas, such as trails.

### **Environmental Protection (282)**

#### *Additional Fencing/Barriers (180)*

Respondents express that having barriers or fencing in ESAs to prevent access from pets and/or humans. Examples include natural fencing or split rails.

#### *General Importance (102)*

General support for protecting the environment and sensitive areas. Some suggestions include beaches as part of ESAs.

### **Increased Education and Responsibility (211)**

Respondents expressed that it would be beneficial to have more education about the environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife, and flora/fauna through boards/signage. This includes increased responsibility of park users to keep and respect spaces as they are found (e.g., leave no trash behind, picking up after pets, staying on marked paths). There are some suggestions to enforce park regulations more strictly.

### **Increased Signage and Communications (200)**

Respondents express that it will be beneficial to have an increased amount of signage throughout parks to clearly specify environmentally sensitive areas and which spaces are not welcome to the public. Other signage suggestions include pet owner and park user etiquette on marked paths.

### **Balanced Approach - Addressing All Impacts (99)**

There are suggestions to look for more balanced approaches that allow humans and pets to enjoy park spaces safely while protecting sensitive areas. This includes methods such as land use planning, development considerations, climate change interventions and limiting human access.

### **No Changes Necessary (46)**

Respondents do not currently have an issue with the current approach and park regulations.

21. Some of Saanich's parks support active recreation and have bicycle trails, sports fields, sports courts, and playgrounds. What do you think are the most important considerations for sharing these parks with pets in Saanich?

<b>Pet Presence (786)</b>
<i>In Designated Areas/Away from Programmed Spaces (472)</i> Respondents express that pets should only be in designated areas of parks and/or away from programmed spaces such as playgrounds and sports fields. Some think that they should be leashed in designated areas or programmed spaces if they cannot be controlled (110) and some think that they should be able to have a designated and fenced off-leash area (79).
<i>In All Park Areas (209)</i> Respondents express that they are okay with having pets in all park areas, either leashed (193) or unleashed (8). Those who express that pets should be leashed have safety concerns and see it as general courtesy; those who express that pets should be unleashed think pets should have spaces to run freely.
<i>In No Park Areas (105)</i> Respondents express that they do not think that pets should be allowed in park areas.

<b>Respectful Shared Use (418)</b>
Respondents generally think that park areas should be respectfully shared. This includes pet owners picking up after their pets, pets having good recall, cyclists abiding to speed limits, and general mindfulness about using park spaces. There are suggestions to share sports fields with pets during off-season times or non-peak hours of the day Another suggestion is to have the Park Board supply more waste bins and waste disposal bags.

### **Enhanced Safety (173)**

#### *From Cyclists (59)*

Respondents find that cyclists pose a threat to safety in park areas, particularly around the speed they ride and along shared paths. There are suggestions to enforce speed limits, increase signage along paths, and to have designated bike paths.

#### *General Safety (59)*

There is general concern about safety in parks, and need to ensure that parks are safe to use for all.

#### *From Pets (55)*

Respondents are concerned that some pets, notably dogs, can be aggressive and/or not controlled well by owners. There are also health concerns around not having animal excrement properly disposed of and being left in areas where small children play and sport activities take place.

### **Increased Signage and Communications (107)**

Respondents suggest having increased signage in park areas to clearly specify the "dos and don'ts" in sharing park space (e.g., speed limits for cyclists, picking up after dogs/pets, protected environmental areas).

### **Maintained Recreational Spaces (66)**

Comments that the existing recreational spaces should be prioritized and maintained over spaces for pets, including sports fields, playgrounds, and paths.

### **No Changes Necessary (32)**

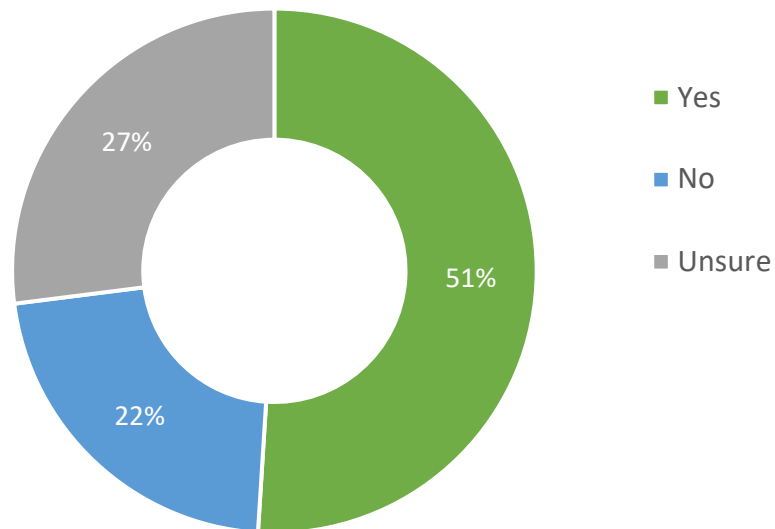
The current use of parks is fine as is, having not witnessed or encountered any problems.

## POP-UP DOG PARK PILOT PROJECT

22. In 2022, the Summer Pop-Up Dog Park Pilot Project provided fenced-in, off-leash areas in nine different Saanich parks. Did you consider the summer pilot pop-up dog parks in Saanich to be beneficial?

Most (51%) found the summer pilot project to be beneficial, while over a quarter of respondents (27%) were unsure.

*Figure 15. Benefit of the summer pop-up dog park pilot project*



2060 responses



### 23. Please tell us why or why not?

<b>What Didn't Work Well/Improvements (757)</b>
<p><i>Generally Not Beneficial (275)</i></p> <p>Respondents found that the pop-up dog parks were generally not beneficial for their needs or passersby did not see them being used or being used by uncontrolled dogs. Many preferred walking their dog(s) along trails, the beach, or an open field (both leashed and unleashed). Some also expressed that they enjoy being able to exercise (e.g., walking) while their dog exercises, which the dog park does not provide. Additionally, there is concern about park budget being put towards an initiative that does not benefit all dog owners/non-dog owners.</p>
<p><i>Size of Pop-Up Dog Parks (232)</i></p> <p>Respondents shared that the size of the pop-up dog parks were too small, particularly for larger dogs, in turn not providing the necessary space for exercise and play. Some found that an enclosed space bodes conflict between dogs more easily.</p>
<p><i>Location/Permanency of Pop-Up Dog Parks (122)</i></p> <p>Respondents found it confusing to have an inconsistent space to bring their dog(s) and hope that there will be permanent dog parks in some parks, especially those more centrally located. Suggested permanent locations include James Houlihan, PKOLS, and Fowler Parks in Saanich, and in the CRD to have them at Elk and Beaver Lakes.</p>
<p><i>Communications (67)</i></p> <p>Respondents noted that the communications and outreach of the program was lacking as they did not hear about it or found difficulty in knowing where the pop-up locations were.</p>
<p><i>Amenities and Maintenance (61)</i></p> <p>Respondents found that there could be additional amenities to enhance the space, such as shade, waste bags, water stations, and stimulating play structures. There was also a lack of maintenance in the dog parks to keep the spaces clean.</p>

## What Worked Well (514)

### *Generally Beneficial (391)*

Overall, respondents found the program to be a good initiative that could be permanent, so users know the places to go. Users and passersby enjoyed dogs in an enclosed off-leash area to have their own space to run, play, and socialize without disturbing other park users and the natural environment. There is acknowledgement that dog parks are part of the solution but not the only one, noting that designated trails and paths are important spaces for dogs and owners as well.

### *Safety (85)*

Respondents felt that having an enclosed space provided peace of mind for the safety of dogs and other park users.

### *Location of Pop-Up Dog Parks (47)*

Respondents found the pop-up dog parks to be well located and easy to access. Some that were particularly well-liked were at Fowler, Cadboro-Gyro, and Rudd Parks. Some commented on enjoying the fenced area at the University of Victoria to walk their dogs. (which was closed in 2020).

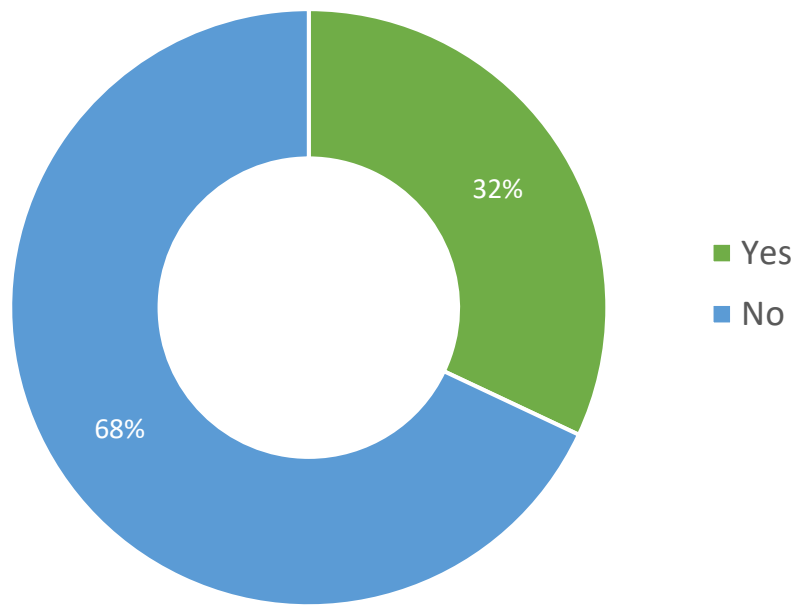
## Not Applicable (117)

Respondents did not use the pop-up dog park as they do not own a dog or did not hear about the program.

## 24. Did you use a summer pilot pop-up dog park?

About one third of respondents (32%) used a summer pilot pop-up dog park, while most (68%) did not.

Figure 16. Questionnaire respondents who used a pilot pop-up park

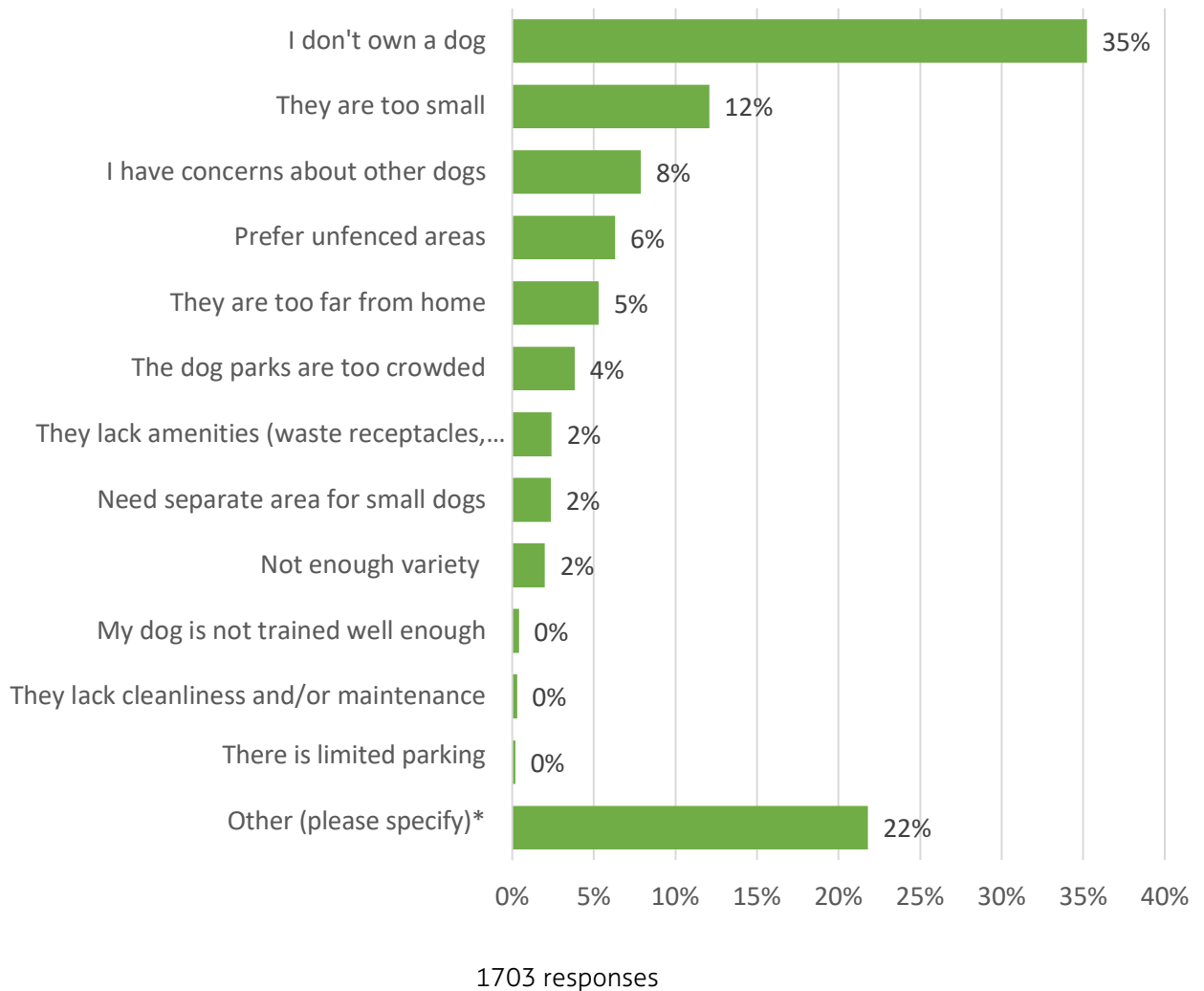


2059 responses

## 25. Was there anything preventing you from using the summer pilot pop-up dog park?

Many respondents did not use the summer pilot pop-up dog parks because they don't own a dog (35%). Other reasons included the small size of the pilot dog parks (12%) and concerns about other dogs (8%).

Figure 17. Barriers to using a pilot pop-up park



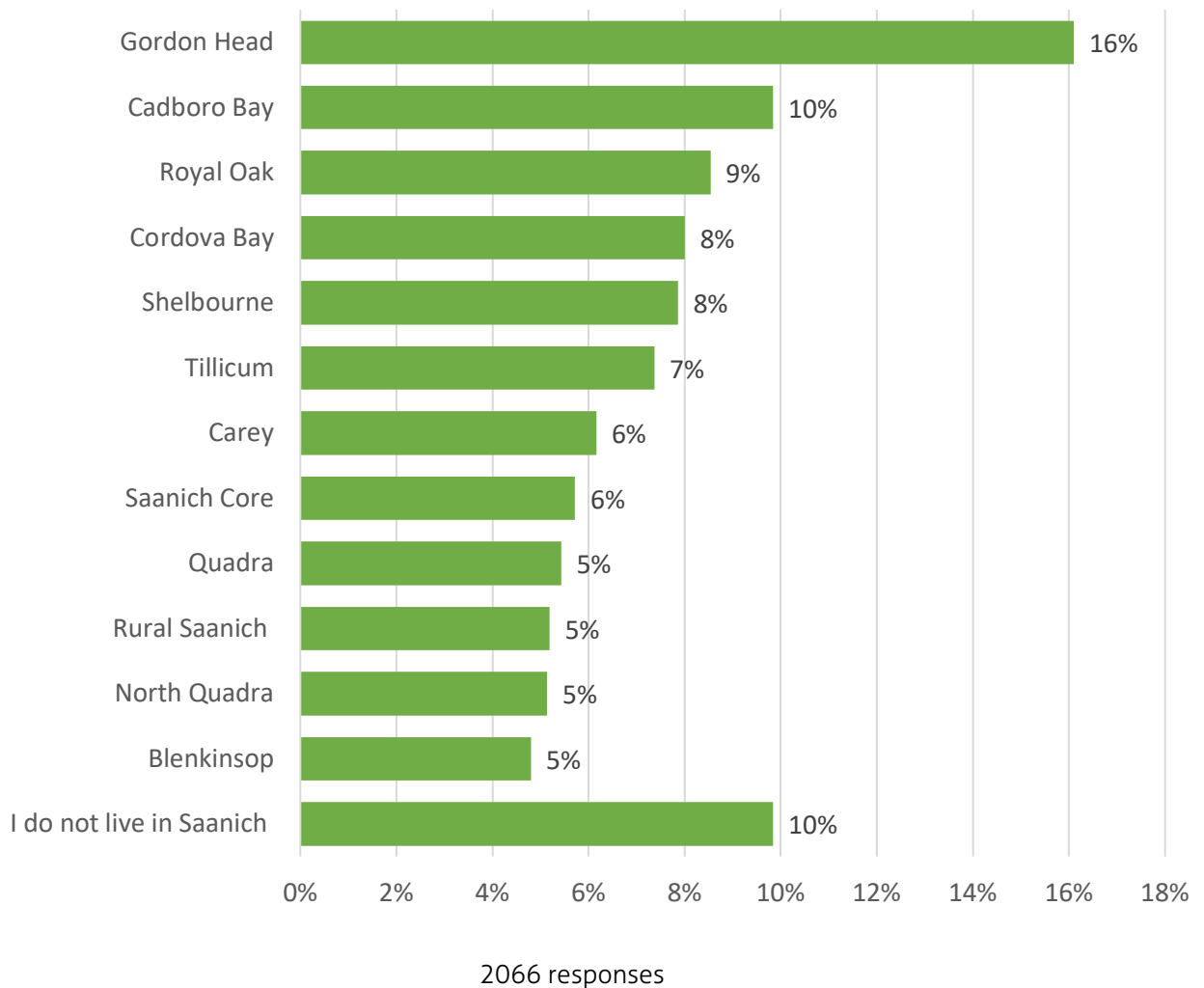
\* Those who selected 'other' were most often not aware of the initiative or pop-up dog park locations.

## WHO WE HEARD FROM

### 26. What Saanich neighbourhood do you live in?

We heard most often from residents in Gordon Head (16%), followed by Cadboro Bay (10%) and those who do not live in the District (10%).

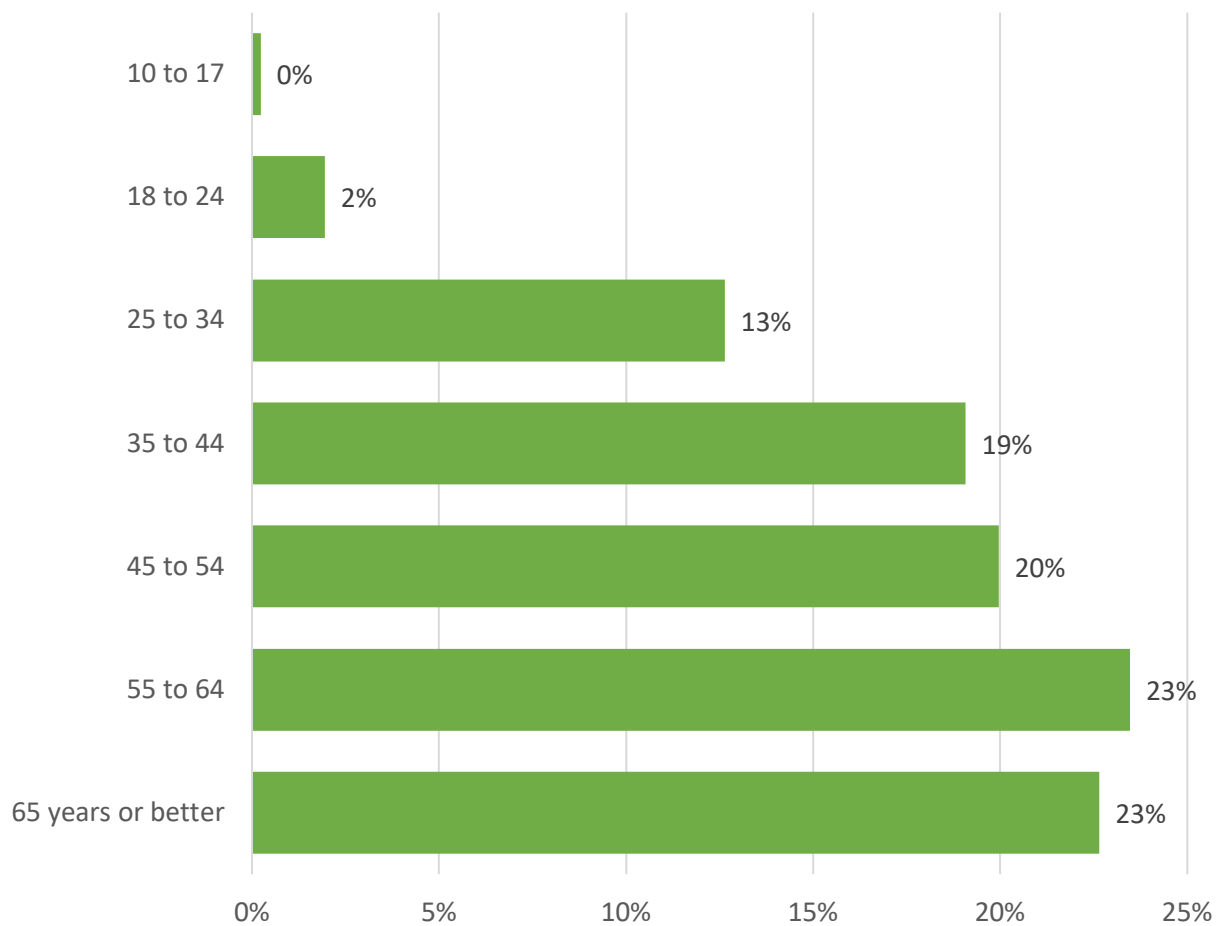
Figure 18. Respondents' neighbourhood



## 27. Into which of the following age categories may I place you?

66% of respondents are over the age of 44, with most (46%) above 55 years. We heard from some community members under the age of 24 (2%).

Figure 19. Respondents' age

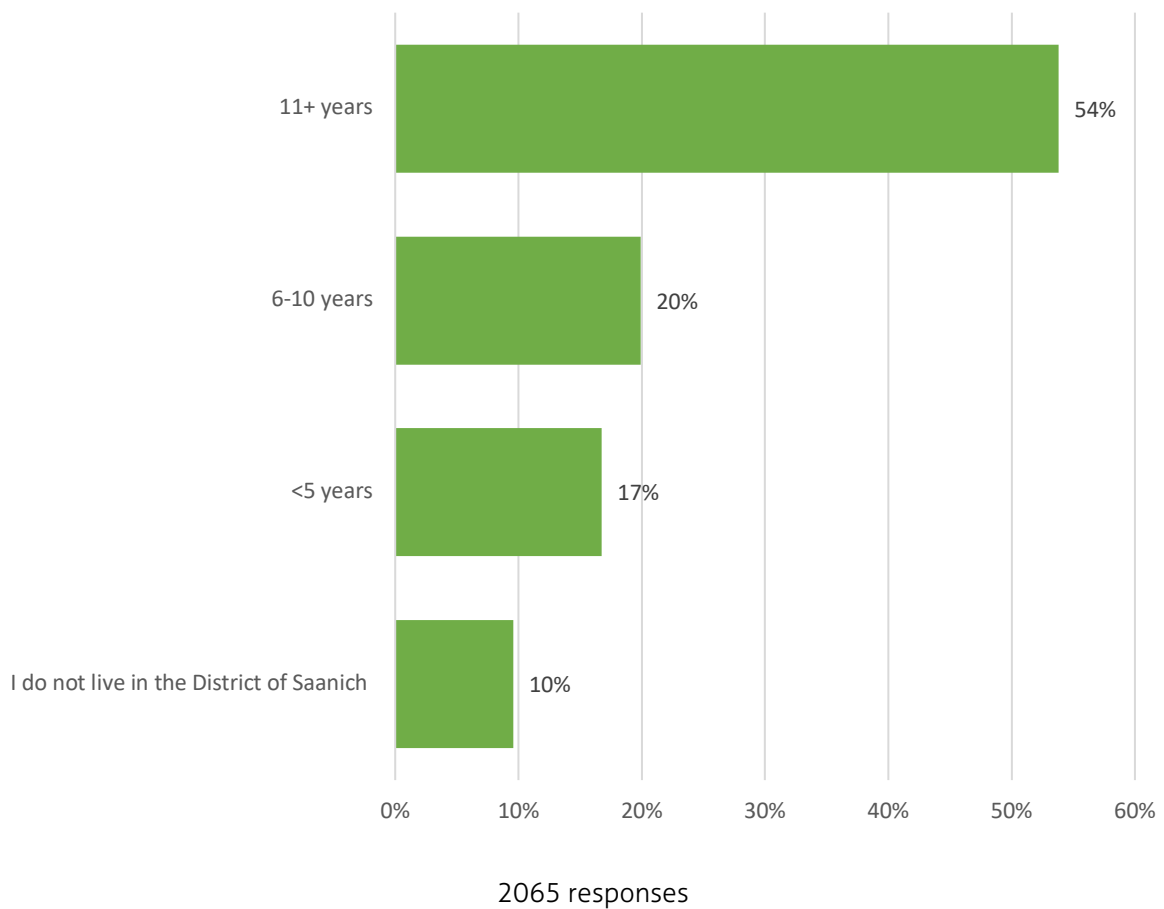


2053 responses

## 28. How long have you lived in the District of Saanich?

We heard most often from long-term residents, those who have lived in Saanich for over 11 years (54%) and 6-10 years (20%).

Figure 20. Respondents' length of residency



**APPENDIX C**  
Open House Workbook  
Key Themes



# SAANICH PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS STRATEGY

## ROUND 2 - OPEN HOUSE WORKBOOK RESULTS

The People, Pets, and Parks Strategy Open House took place on February 1st, 2023. There were **293 people who attended** the event and **116 who completed a workbook**. Below is a summary of all comments received from the workbooks.

### STATION 1

#### WELCOME TABLE

There was no feedback collected at this Station.

### STATION 2

#### LEARNING AND BACKGROUND

##### *Spaces and Opportunities for Pets (35)*

Many participants in the open house expressed that it is important to have large areas and ample opportunities for the pets to enjoy nature freely. Community members also noted PKOLS as a key park of interest, as it provides the dogs with open space to play and run around.

##### *Responsible Dog Ownership (27)*

Many participants expressed a need for accountable dog ownership and attention to dog activity. Participants commented that dog owners should be responsible for picking up dog waste, obtaining a dog license, and ensuring their dogs behave in a decent manner when in public.

##### *Pet Licensing (27)*

Respondents felt that there needs to be a significant increase in the number of licensed dogs. Currently, the number of dog licenses does not give an accurate representation of the number of dogs in Saanich.

##### *Perceived Bias (23)*

Many participants thought that issues around pets in parks have been raised by a vocal minority. Participants expressed that the process has been biased against dog owners and aims at restricting dog access in all parks. There were also comments that the statistics

provided are misleading or inaccurate and that the public and representative questionnaire did not ask all the same questions, making it difficult to trust the process and results.

### *Environment (19)*

Participants expressed their concern for environmental degradation and the need to create regulation that protects environmentally sensitive areas and is climate conscious. Participants also felt that dog waste that is not picked up harms the environment.

### *Balancing Needs (13)*

Comments reflected that parks are a place for all, and everyone deserves to have an equal authority and rights when it comes to its use.

### *Clarity and Language (8)*

Participants voiced a need for more clear language in the engagement materials. There were comments that the draft-vision is unclear and open-ended. The participants emphasized on simplifying the language further.

## STATION 3

### VISION PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

#### *Unleashed Pets (29)*

Many community members expressed that it is important for dogs to be unleashed and enjoy nature as much as it is important for residents. Many participants suggested that even if there is not a strong possibility to leave all or most of the open spaces unleashed, there should be designated areas for dogs to roam freely unleashed as it is key to pets' health and well-being.

#### *Environment (28)*

Participants expressed their concern that dogs are causing harm to environmentally sensitive areas. Participants suggested more information on the harms caused by dogs to sport fields and how damage can be mitigated. People concerned about the environmental impact from pets made suggestions to add some access restrictions to the sensitive areas for the dogs.

### *Health and Well-Being (24)*

Participants felt that dogs are like families and being able to walk with their dogs on trails, exercise and experience nature helps them clear their minds.

### *Signage and Waste Management (24)*

Comments reflected that existing signage in parks is too small and needs to be more prominent. Participants also stated a need for additional garbage bins, especially for dog waste, to maintain park cleanliness.

### *Enforcement (23)*

Participants commented on the need for restrictions and support for their implementation. Enforcement is needed to minimize safety concerns and prevent further conflict.

### *Balancing Needs (21)*

Participants expressed that Saanich parks should continue to accommodate diverse users. Parks are seen as a place for people to enjoy and feel relaxed. The District should take a balanced approach when planning public and natural spaces. Parks should accommodate both the needs of dogs and their owners as well as park users who do not feel comfortable around pets.

### *Education (19)*

Participants emphasized the importance of education for the community as well as their dogs. Some suggested increased education for both dog owners and non-dog owners through partnerships with professional dog trainers and community organizations.

### *Safety (18)*

Community members expressed that they do not feel safe when the dogs are unleashed as they have experienced several incidents or negative dog encounters. This is particularly a concern for people with mobility impairments who may worry about being knocked down by an unleashed dog.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

### OPTION 1: CURRENT MODEL

#### *General Support (39)*

Many participants were very satisfied with the status quo and preferred no changes to existing park regulation.

#### *Unleashed Pets (16)*

Many participants believed that it is important for the dogs to be unleashed and enjoy the open spaces. There were comments on the current restrictions at Cadboro Bay Beach and how they limit dogs' opportunity to play in the water and swim. There were suggestions to allow dogs off-leash for a particular season or in a designated area, so they have more opportunities to play and run around freely.

#### *Responsible Dog Ownership (12)*

Participants emphasized the responsibility of dog owners to ensure their dogs are well behaved in parks. More focus on dog owner expectations would reduce the need for leash restrictions.

#### *Signage (12)*

Participants felt that there was a need to improve the existing signage and to add additional and clear signage for the designated off-leash areas.

#### *Education and Training (10)*

Participants suggested increasing the amount of education on pet licensing for pet owners. Suggestions included increasing the importance of dog training certifications and potentially requiring certification before being granted a license.

## OPTION 2: MODIFIED MODEL

### *Designated Off-Leash Areas (49)*

Participants expressed a need for designated off-leash areas. It is important to balance the needs of park users to allow everyone the opportunity to enjoy parks safely and comfortably. Many people also expressed concern with the pilot pop-up dog parks and mentioned that the dog parks had a very confined space for dogs and created several conflicts. Community members emphasized the need for a larger designation of off-leash areas with both supervision and ample space.

### *General Opposition (26)*

Participants like to walk their dogs in their neighborhood and want to access off-leash areas within a walkable radius without needing to drive. Participants did not feel that this option would provide enough access to off-leash areas in parks and would restrict their right to walk with their pets unleashed.

### *General Support (12)*

Some participants preferred this model with slight changes.

### *Environment (12)*

Participants opposed this model because it is not favorable for the environment. Participants expressed that his model as unsuitable because driving their dogs to access off-leash areas will result in causing more harm to the environment and creation of greenhouse gas emissions.

### *Balancing Needs (11)*

Participants expressed that this model would divide the community. This option does not encompass or balance the needs of all residents and is unfavorable.

## OPTION 3: URBAN CONTEXT MODEL

### *General Opposition (46)*

Many participants expressed concern with this option because Saanich is not as urban as Vancouver or Victoria. Respondents mentioned that they moved to Saanich for its rural context and enjoy spending their time in a laid back, countryside setting.

### *Too Restrictive (18)*

Many participants believed this option is too restrictive. With the rising population of dog owners and dogs, this option may create more conflict and potential divide in the community if most parks have restrictions.

### *Park Specific Strategies (18)*

Participants commented that Saanich parks will need individual strategies based on the context of each park and the Strategy cannot be created from urban precedents.

### *Leash Restrictions (17)*

Some participants preferred this model because it creates a default leash option for residents to feel safe and comfortable in parks.

## OPTION 4 : RESTRICTIVE MODEL

### *General Opposition (81)*

Many participants expressed concern with this model. Respondents believed that this option is unrealistic for Saanich and should not be used.

### *Too Restrictive (31)*

Several participants considered this option as too restrictive for both dogs and dog owners. They believed that this option, if implemented, will force owners to choose between walking their dogs and exercising on their own. Many dog owners commented that the only reason that they go to parks is because of their dogs and this option would discourage that.

### *Enforcement & Compliance (24)*

Some participants preferred this model as it created restrictions and enforces compliance. Community members were in favor of creating policies for dog walkers.

### *Environment (7)*

Participants expressed that the environment should be prioritized and preferred this model because it includes the most protection of wildlife and natural areas.

## STATION 4

### PILOT DOG PARKS

#### *Enclosures and Fencing (44)*

Providing an enclosed space where owners can safely train their dog is seen as the primary benefit provided by fenced pop up parks. However, on multiple occasions, participants commented that the existing fencing in some parks is inadequate. A particular example (referenced by 4 participants) is Beckwith Park where dogs can get through the fence or gate.

While a few participants noted enjoying the social interaction between owners at the pilot pop-up dog parks, several participants felt that dog parks can lead to more conflict between dogs. This was attributed to forced proximity and interaction between dogs of all ages and behaviors which can cause reactivity.

### *Inadequate Size (41)*

Participants were not satisfied with the pilot pop up dog parks because they were too small.

### *Mental and Physical Health (24)*

Participants remarked on how important exercise is for their overall wellbeing and their dog's. Many felt that the quality of exercise was inadequate at the pop-up parks, with regards to stimulus, natural features, and size.

### *Designated Off-leash Areas (18)*

Participants would like to see the more popular pop-up dog parks made permanent. Others would like to see Houlihan Park better utilized as a designated off leash area.

### *Infrastructure and Amenities (15)*

Participants felt that the pop-up dog parks had inadequate amenities such as access to water, shade, trees, and places to sit. Additionally, there was mention of the need for more garbage cans and more regular cleaning/waste disposal.

### *Pop-up Park Awareness (12)*

A few participants were unaware of when or where the pop up parks were occurring and wished there had been more notice.



## STATION 5

### REFLECTION WALL

#### *Designated off leash areas (68)*

Pet owners added that in small, fenced spaces, they are unable to exercise alongside their dog and that their dogs do not receive the same quality or amount of exercise. Many participants noted that, while they understood the need for pop-up dog parks, they should not be considered an equivalent replacement for off-leash trails and beaches. A few seniors, along with others who have mobility issues, added that walking with their dogs off-leash is easier because they can walk without being pulled.

#### *Equitable and Balanced Approach (54)*

Numerous community members felt that the best way forward is with an equitable and balanced approach. They shared that the Strategy should create spaces for all by understanding and providing for the diversity of Saanich community member's needs. This includes holding space for those who want to enjoy nature without the presence of dogs, while providing sufficient space for pet owners to exercise alongside their pets.

#### *Mental and Physical Health (45)*

Many participants noted the importance of outdoor exercise for their own physical and mental health pets being a strong component of that.

#### *Perceived Bias (30)*

Participants shared that they feel the process and general discourse is biased against dogs and dog-owners. They felt that the questionnaire had an anti-dog tone and others noted a lack of trust as they sensed decisions had already been made before the public was engaged.

#### *Responsible Dog Ownership (22)*

Respondents commented that there should be an explicit level of dog obedience expected and monitored by the District. There were suggestions that licensing fees should be used to fund dog training classes that encourage responsible dog ownership and fines for those who do not license their pet. Many felt that most dog owners are responsible and that irresponsible owners should be better educated rather than the District imposing greater restrictions city-wide.

### *Bylaw Enforcement and Licensing (17)*

Some participants felt that bylaws should be better enforced and that the presence of bylaw officers in parks should be greater. It was also suggested that licensing should be better regulated and that the cost should be higher.

### *Sense of Community (17)*

Some residents feel discouraged by this process as they feel it has led to tension and a divide in the community.

### *Signage (8)*

A few participants would like to see better signage where dogs are permitted, around off leash areas, and with environmental considerations and pet etiquette.

## COMMENTS RELATING TO THE OPEN HOUSE

Generally, participants were satisfied with the event. Some recurring comments were:

- It was hosted at a good time for people to attend
- Given that the event format required participants to fill out a lengthy exercise/feedback form, some wished they had been told ahead of time that it would take longer than the average Open House
- Staff were friendly
- The information presented was very comprehensive
- It would have been easier to read if there had been less information per board and bigger font used
- For the most part, people felt there was good awareness/advertising of the event
- Many felt that the process was biased towards no dogs/on-leash restrictions
- Posting the raw data would be helpful for further discussion - particularly to support the environmental concerns that were raised (i.e., how many people felt a certain way)
- There was a bottleneck in the flow of people at the open house

**APPENDIX D**  
Correspondence Overview  
(by email)

# SAANICH PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS STRATEGY

## ROUND 2 – CORRESPONDENCE BY EMAIL

The following provides a high-level overview of the **59 correspondences** received by email throughout Round 2 (December 2022 - March 2023).

Correspondence is organized into four categories:

- Comments on the Process
- Information Sharing
  - Environmental Concerns & Damage to ESAs
  - Precent Research
  - Information to Inform Strategy Elements
- Pet Interactions in Parks
- News and Media

The number of comments within each category are stated in parenthesis. Note some correspondence may be included in more than one category.

### *Comments on Process (16)*

- Perceived bias against dogs and off leash regulations
- Concerns around reliability of sources used in arguments against dogs
- Feelings of discomfort and lack of safety attending in-person engagement events
- Dissatisfaction with questionnaire format and questionnaire logic (i.e., those who are not commercial dog walkers should still be allowed to respond to questions on the subject)
- Concerns around statistical reliability of questionnaire data
- Appreciation shared for staff at the Open House
- Appreciation for process to date and format of the open house
- Concern that the naming of Option 4 as “Restrictive” gives the wrong impression, alternate suggestions included “Environmental Context”
- Concerns raised on aspects of the project not being shown or engaged on

## Information Sharing (33)

### Environmental Concerns & Damage to ESAs (22)

- Report by Environment and Climate Change Canada (highlighting dog impact on bird sanctuaries)
- A Brief History of Mount Douglas Park Report
- Friends of Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary shared images, signage, and maps
- Photos of dog damage to Mount Douglas Park ecosystems at risk (which had previously been fully restored)
- Photos of holes and other damage done by off-leash dogs in Garry Oak Meadows
- Article by Tyee on BC's loss of Garry Oak woodland
- PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy Park Plan
- Information on bird migration & dog conflicts
- Resources concerning the impacts of dog waste on the environment
- PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy - A Priceless Saanich Asset Report
- Mapping of Human and Canine Damage in the Southern End of PKOLS – Mount Douglas Park
- Study assessing the impact of domestic dogs on the natural environment
- Perspective on the impact of humans and dogs in natural areas
- Pulling Together Volunteers Issues and Recommendations Report

### Precedent Research (8)

- CRD animal control activity reports (as an example for the need for extensive official presence and enforcement)
- CRD programs around dog obedience
- Suggestion to model this Strategy on Lethbridge example
- Precedents shared on key elements of the Strategy
- Commercial dog walker permit application from CRD as precedent
- Information left at open house with a range of photos and precedents from the Lower Mainland of dog parks, signage, and restrictions
- Delta and Vancouver commercial dog walking regulations
- 2020 petition to ban dogs from tennis courts

## Information to Inform Strategy Elements (11)

- Consider adding a Furever Clean Dog Wash in one of the parks as an amenity for dogs who get muddy
- Dog trainers cap classes at 6-8 people, therefore video lessons should be considered for the broad public
- Long-time Saanich resident shared they have never had a negative interaction with an off-leash dog and do not support pop up parks as replacement/alternative to off-leash trails
- Information regarding effective areas available vs. number of parks
- Information on recurring topics of conversation/complaint (i.e., dog waste, enclosed (fenced) parks, holes dug, responsible ownership etc.).
- Feedback on importance of safety and environmental elements of parks system
- Suggestion to consider phasing and flexibility within Strategy implementation
- Recommendations on Strategy elements including the environment and safety
- Concerns with the potential to impose too many restrictions on pets in parks
- Comments to consider a balanced approach so there are appropriate spaces for all interests and needs (e.g., safety, accessibility, pet/owner exercise, nature conservation, fear of dogs, etc.)
- Suggestion to create and share a map of Saanich waste receptacles

## *Pet Interactions in Parks (10)*

- Video shared of unruly and unobserved dogs causing damage to the ecosystem in PKOLS – Mount Douglas Park
- Photos of dogs in Cadboro Beach
- Two dog attack incident reports
- Comments that dog owners are and should not be considered the scapegoat for conflicts in Saanich parks
- Personal account (as a senior and someone with mobility challenges) of past injuries and feeling unsafe at Curtis Point from off-leash dogs
- Photos and information on positive interactions with dogs
- Leash compliance spreadsheet for the eastern side of Cadboro Bay Beach
- Perspective that irresponsible owners make up a minor percentage of all Saanich dog owners.

## *News and Media (10)*

- Videos of a dog walker allowing their dogs to dig
- Video and presentation of dogs off trail in Environmentally Significant Areas
- News article shared on off-leash dogs being a key for Saanich
- CTV news article on Saanich PPP questionnaire

# Appendix I

## Round 3 Engagement Results



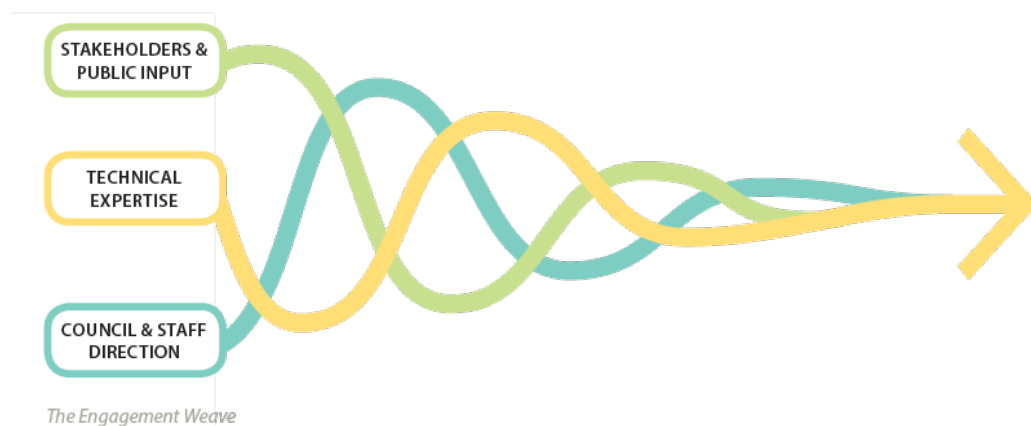


# SAANICH PEOPLE, PETS, AND PARKS STRATEGY ROUND 3 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## OVERVIEW

In February 2022, the District of Saanich and consultant team embarked on the development of "People, Pets, and Parks: A District Wide Strategy for Sharing Saanich's Parks." This process endeavoured to bring together the community's vision and needs, while effectively managing various parks and amenities in the District. Rather than being a set of guidelines, this Strategy represents a comprehensive, strategic-level document, outlining goals and objectives for future implementation.

The development of this Strategy aimed to showcase the District's commitment to transparent communication and community involvement in decision-making processes. To achieve a well-rounded approach, public engagement played a crucial role in each phase of the Strategy process. This involved gathering input from a diverse range of community members and stakeholders. What we heard from the public and stakeholders were considered as an important "stream" of input, alongside technical studies, research, and analysis. Together, these different streams of information wove a holistic understanding that led to the creation of the final Strategy.



*The Engagement Weave*

In round 1 of engagement (Spring 2022), we heard the many ways community members use and value Saanich parks. Through a statically valid phone survey, virtual community dialogues sessions, and public questionnaire, the project team gained a better understanding of key issues, opportunities, and specific needs that the Strategy should address. This input informed our draft vision, goals and principles that framed the Strategy.

In the second round (Fall 2022 - Winter 2023), the project team conducted stakeholder workshops, a public questionnaire, and an in-person open house to help determine the regulatory approaches that would work best in Saanich and actions that should be prioritized. Feedback in this phase helped to develop draft recommendations.



**Goal of Engagement**

*(IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation)*

*Involve the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered*

*Inform out on the draft recommendations and seek feedback from the public*

The third round of engagement sought to inform the public on proposed changes and how draft recommendations will address community needs. This round took place between May and June 2023. The project team held a virtual webinar to present key elements of the Draft Strategy and answer questions from participants. We also provided a feedback form for people to give their input on recommendations. The Strategy includes regulation that will inevitably change the way our community interacts in parks. This input establishes a foundational understanding of public opinion and will assist how we implement and monitor the Strategy, specifically in determining priority actions and identifying areas that may need additional planning efforts in the future.

Activity	Date	Participation
Information Webinar	May 29 <sup>th</sup>	98
Public Feedback Form	May 29 <sup>th</sup> - June 11 <sup>th</sup>	2,672
Email Correspondence	April – June 2023	86



## INFORMATION WEBINAR

The virtual webinar was held on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 from 6:00-8:00pm with 98 people in attendance. This event was intended to present highlights and key recommendations of the Draft Strategy and to provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions during the Q & A period. For a summary of all the questions asked during the webinar and answers provided, see the [full report](#) on the project webpage.



## FEEDBACK FORM

The feedback form was available on the People, Pets and Parks Strategy [project website](#) from May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Over 2,600 people submitted their feedback on the Draft Strategy. The results are intended to inform how we might implement and monitor the Strategy recommendations, understanding the pieces that should be prioritized or that will require further planning. It is important to note that feedback collected through this opportunity is not representative of Saanich but reflects the views and opinions of those interested and engaged in the project.



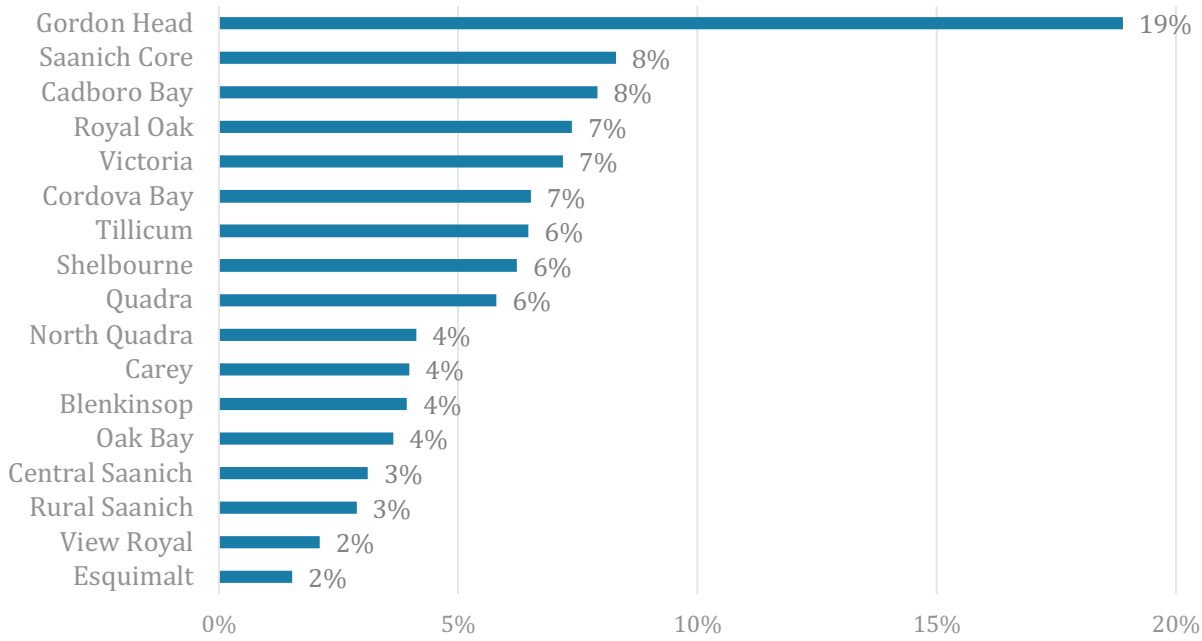
## EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

The project team received numerous emails throughout this round which included feedback on the Strategy process, information sharing of relevant resources, documentation of conflicts in parks and environmentally sensitive areas, comments, suggestions and concerns to inform the Strategy.

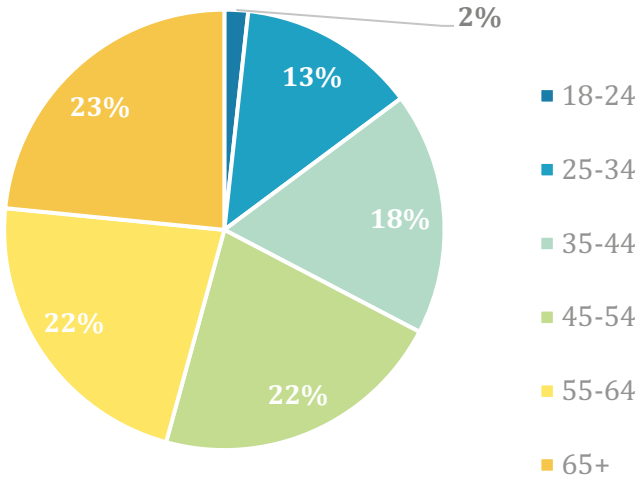
The following is an overview of who we heard from and what we heard based on the 2,672 people who submitted responses to the online feedback forms.

# WHO WE HEARD FROM

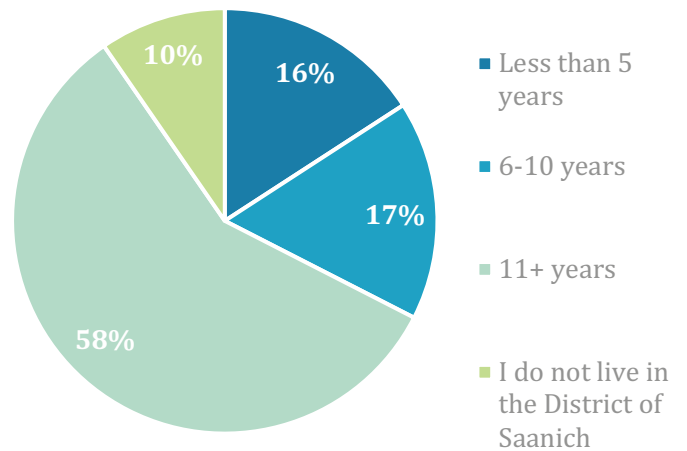
## Neighbourhood Distribution



## Age



## Length of Residency



## Pet Ownership



- Has a dog in their household
- Does not have a dog in their household

## FEEDBACK ON STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The key themes below give an overview of the comments, questions and concerns that were raised in this round of engagement. This feedback will help the District with implementation of the Strategy, understanding which recommendations should be prioritized and which may require closer monitoring. Themes are listed in order of prevalence.

### **Too Restrictive**

There was concern about that the number of leash-optional areas that will be available to dogs would be insufficient once the Strategy is implemented. Proposed leash-optional areas in parks were perceived as too small, which may lead to overcrowding and excessive use. Additionally, fenced-in areas were seen as challenging, potentially causing more dog-related issues and increased aggression. Respondents expressed a desire for increased leash-optional beach access and more leash-optional trails. It was noted that the 2.0 km PKOLS fenced trail was not enough to meet the community's needs. Rather than implementing blanket restrictions, some respondents suggested implementing time restrictions in specific areas.

### **Bylaw Enforcement & Implementation**

Respondents suggested stricter enforcement of current bylaws through ticketing offenders or imposing larger fines, rather than implementing restrictions on all dog owners. This includes ensuring that bylaw officers possess the necessary expertise and understanding of dogs to effectively enforce regulations. There were suggestions to monitor activity in parks and gather more data before implementing changes to ensure informed decision-making. Ongoing community engagement was also considered essential to ensure the success of the Strategy.

### **Park Maintenance and Management**

The importance of proper pet waste management, including the provision of pet waste bags and enhanced park maintenance were highlighted as the most effective recommendations in the Strategy. Respondents also emphasized the need for better signage to enhance clarity and compliance.

### **Strategy Development Process**

We heard concerns from respondents who perceived the process to be predetermined with already established outcomes. This includes questions about the amount of evidence and data and raising doubts about the effectiveness of proposed recommendations. Additionally, there were suggestions that the Strategy should have a broader scope and consider the entire region.

### **Cost Concerns**

There were comments related to the cost of the Strategy and a concern that recommendations will be too expensive to implement. Some respondents did not feel the Strategy development was an effective use of District budget and did not see the need for additional staff to support with implementation (e.g., pets coordinator).

## **Health & Wellbeing**

We heard that the importance of exercising with leash-optional dogs extends to both owners and their pets, offering numerous mental health benefits. The lack of restrictions on leash-optional activities has been a contributing factor to what makes Saanich an attractive place for dog owners and enthusiasts. Many Saanich residents have made engaging in an active lifestyle with their pets a regular habit and they are hesitant to see that change.

## **Not Restrictive Enough**

Respondents expressed a need for greater protection of environmental integrity through the Strategy's recommendations, suggesting enforced leash regulations for dogs at all times. There were also comments on restricting the length of leashes and presence of any leash-optional dogs that lack proper control. The importance of preserving sensitive habitats in parks like Cadboro Bay and PKOLS was discussed. There were considerations about prohibiting dogs in these areas to ensure their long-term protection. Some were concerned with the inclusion of sports fields as leash-optional areas in the Strategy, which increases the risk of damage to the fields. Some questioned the ability of parks such as Houlihan Park to be fully inclusive to all users under the new strategy.

## **Education and Awareness**

We heard that the Strategy implementation should focus on teaching good dog behaviours in parks through more dog owner education and pet etiquette resources. Some respondents also felt there is a need for increased awareness around environmentally sensitive habitat and the importance of protecting these areas.

## **Safety**

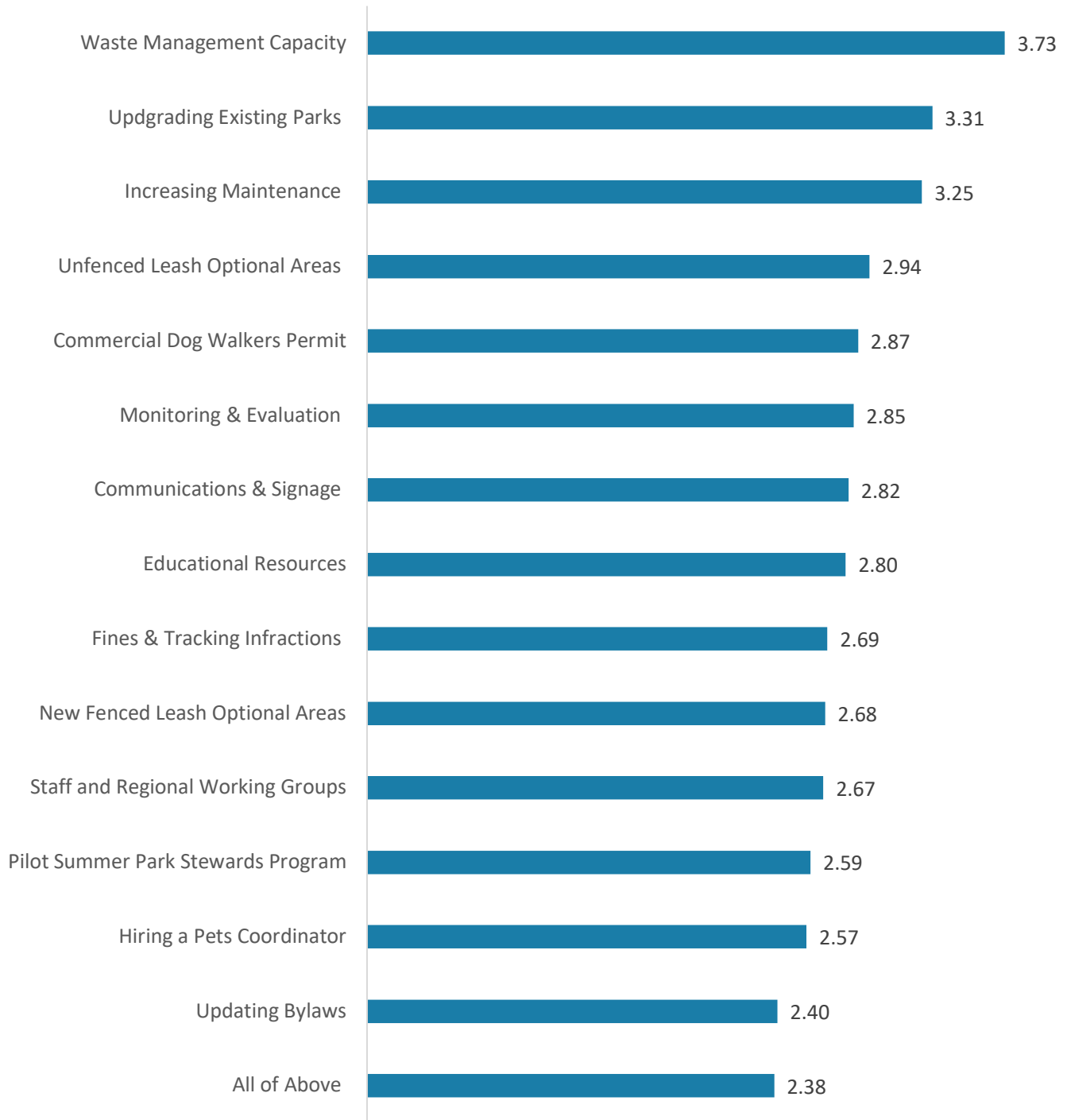
Respondents expressed concerns and fear regarding leash-optional dogs in Saanich, specifically around playgrounds and potential danger to children. There were shared observations that some dog owners tend to overestimate their capability to keep their dogs under control.

## COMPARISON ACROSS ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

We asked participants how effective they think the following recommendations will be at addressing the Strategy goals and objectives:

Topic	Recommendation
Bylaw and Regulation	Develop a Commercial Dog Walkers Permit
	Update Bylaws (to specify designated leash-optional areas/trails)
Education and Enforcement	Provide additional CRD Educational Resources
	Establishing Fines & Tracking Infractions
Stewardship	Implementing Pilot Summer Park Stewards Program
Signage	Develop a Communications & Signage Plan
Maintenance	Increase Waste Management Capacity
	Increasing Park Maintenance
	Upgrade Existing Parks (with signage, amenities, fencing, etc.)
Leash Optional Areas	Establish New Fenced Leash Optional Areas
	Designate Unfenced Leash Optional Areas
	Establish Staff and Regional Working Group
Monitoring & Evaluation	Enhance Monitoring & Evaluation Practices
	Hire a Pets Coordinator

The chart below reflects public perception of the effectiveness of recommendations proposed in the Strategy. Recommendations are ordered based the average level of effectiveness. This method considers the full range of results to calculate a score between 1 and 5 (1 being not effective at all and 5 being very effective).



Not Effective at All (1)	Not Very Effective (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat Effective (4)	Very Effective (5)
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