

Sturgeon Athletic Field Off Leash Area

Public Engagement Summary

April 2023

Background

In the 2020 Capital Budget, Council approved \$1.4 million for parks and recreation amenities. The City asked residents in the Lakewood, Crestview, Heritage Park, Buchanan, and Sturgeon Creek neighbourhoods for input on desired parks and recreation improvements. Five projects were selected as a result of the public engagement process, including the Sturgeon Athletic Field Off-Leash Area – development of which must follow the Council-approved Off-Leash Area Master Plan (OLAMP) process.

Engagement

A new off-leash dog area was designed and proposed for the Sturgeon Road Athletic Field, located north-west of the intersection of Sturgeon Road and Silver Avenue.

Feedback was collected on the proposed design to help confirm community wants and needs, determine community support for the proposed design, and move the project forward to final design and construction.

The goal is to have a field that supports athletics, athletes, and spectators while also serving dog owners and dogs and keeping all users safe.

Promotion

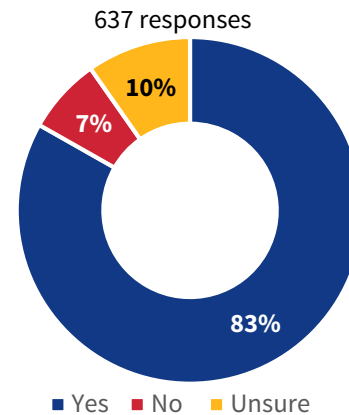
Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- City of Winnipeg website – launched May 4, 2022 and received 1,136 unique visitors
- Postcards hand-delivered to residents within 150-metre radius of the proposed design area– May 4, 2022
- Signs posted at the athletic fields and existing temporary off-leash area – May 4 through June 1, 2022
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with more than 3,700 recipients – May 3 and May 15, 2022

Key Findings

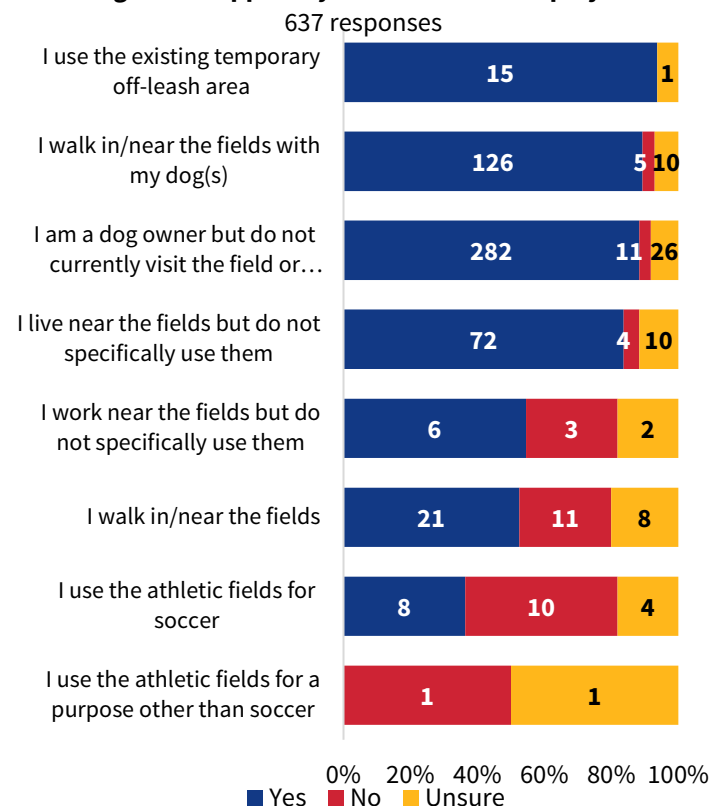
The online survey received 637 responses. Some 83 percent of total respondents support the proposed design (530 of 637 responses), 10 percent are unsure (62 of 637) and seven percent do not support the proposed design (45 of 637) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Do you support the proposed design?



Respondents who identified as users of the temporary off-leash area on Sturgeon Road and those who walk in/near the fields with their dog(s) are most likely to support the proposed design. Respondents who use the athletic fields for soccer or another purpose are least likely to support the proposed design (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Support by connection to the project



To learn more about the Sturgeon Athletic Field Off-Leash Dog Area Project, please visit winnipeg.ca/sturgeonoffleash

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Views of respondents who do not have dogs or use dog parks

Survey respondents who said they do not have dogs or use dog parks were asked what impact the proposed off-leash area would have on how they use the park (94 respondents):

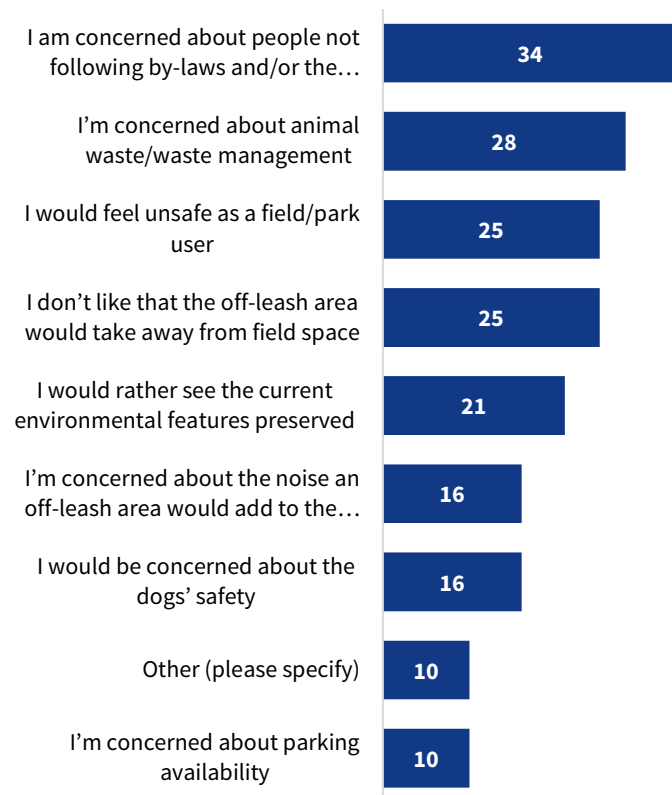
Figure 3: What impact would the proposed off-leash area have on how you use the park?

	# of responses	Percentage
No impact	39	41%
Positive impact	12	13%
Negative impact	43	46%

Respondents who indicated the proposed off-leash park would have a negative impact (43 respondents) are most concerned about people not following bylaws, animal waste, safety, and losing field space (Figure 4).

Figure 4: What aspects of the dog park would negatively impact your experience? Select all that apply.

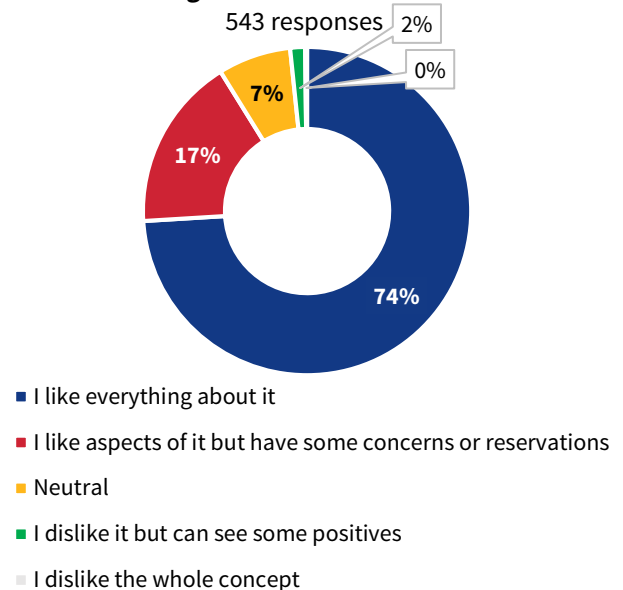
43 responses



Views of respondents who have dogs and dog park users

74 percent of respondents who have dogs or use dog parks (543 respondents) like everything about the proposed design (Figure 5).

Figure 5: How do you feel about the proposed design of the off-leash area?



Respondents were asked if there was anything missing from the proposed design. 183 comments were collected. These comments were grouped into common themes and the top themes are outlined in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Top themes from what's missing from the design

#1	Water (67 comments)		A water source for dogs to drink and cool off in hot weather.
#2	Secure fencing (18 comments)		Secure fencing and double gates without any gaps where dogs can escape.
#3	Lighting (9 comments)		Lighting for safety, particularly in winter when the days are shorter.
#3	Obstacles/agility equipment (9 comments)		Equipment for dogs to play on.

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What We Heard	How It Was Considered
While the community generally supports the proposed off leash area, the top concern by those who are opposed is users not following bylaws and bylaws not being enforced.	The City will install bylaw signage at all entrances to the off-leash area. The signage will also include a prompt to contact 311 with any concerns. Complaints will be investigated and followed up on as required by Animal Services. Animal Services officers will also monitor the area as part of their standard duties within off-leash areas.
Safety for all users of the field is important. Tall fencing around the entire perimeter and double-gates are needed to keep users of the athletic fields and dogs in the proposed off-leash area safe.	The off-leash area will be separated from all other areas by a minimum five-foot chain link fence. Entrances will be secured by double-gates.
Users of the athletic fields are concerned the proposed off-leash area will take away from field space.	The proposed location for the off-leash dog area is not taking away from space currently being used for athletic programming. It was formerly a residential lot with trees in the center and around the perimeter and is not suitable nor is it currently available for official soccer use. The existing soccer pitch on the east side of the field will be relocated to a same-sized parcel on the western side of the park to accommodate a new parking lot, small dog area, and pathway.
Keeping the area clean of pet waste is important. Pet waste bag dispensers would help owners who forget to bring their own.	The City will provide a large self-closing waste receptacle at the entrance by the parking lot. Smaller above-ground waste receptacles will be provided at the west entrance. While the City does not provide pet waste bags, we are investigating a partnership with a stewardship group or donor who could provide both pet waste bags and dispensers and, subsequently, maintain the dispensers.
A clean water source (e.g., a tap, water fountain, splash pad, wading pool) is highly desired for the proposed off-leash area so dogs can cool off in the hot summer months.	This off-leash area is designed to provide a basic level of service. Adding a water fountain or other water source could be done at a later date if and when an additional funding source is identified.
Lighting would improve safety and allow the off-leash area to be used during winter evenings.	This off-leash area is designed to provide a basic level of service. Additional lights could be considered at a later date if and when an additional funding source is identified.
Respondents would like to see obstacle course/agility equipment for dogs to play on.	This off-leash area is designed to provide a basic level of service. Additional features could be considered at a later date if and when an additional funding source is identified.
A concern was raised about potential historic burial grounds on-site.	The City is working on an investigation of site conditions. The results will tell us what the next steps will be.

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Next Steps

What we heard from this survey will help us confirm community wants and needs, determine community support for the proposed design, and refine the design.

An investigation of the site conditions is scheduled for late spring/early summer 2023. The results will tell us what the next steps will be.

Appendices

Appendix A – Postcard notification

Appendix B – On-site signage

Appendix C – Survey results