

“Pup Ups” Summary

City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas
November 2019



Overview

Between Thursday, October 17 and Monday, October 28, 2019, the City of Toronto’s Parks, Forestry, and Recreation Division (PFR) hosted ten pop up events in dog off-leash areas across the city. The pop up events (dubbed “Pup Ups”) were part of the public engagement process informing PFR’s City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas (OLAs), a Study exploring how to improve existing OLAs through changes to their design, operations & maintenance, and administration. The City retained thinc design, a landscape architecture firm, to prepare the Study with support from Swerhun Inc., public engagement specialists.

The purpose of the Pup Ups was to raise awareness of the Study and to share and seek feedback on thinc design’s Preliminary Recommendations. The feedback from the Pup Ups is one of several consultation inputs into the Study; other inputs include feedback from online public surveys, stakeholder meetings, and City staff. The Pup Ups took place in ten Case Study sites informing the Study’s recommendations and approximately 500 people attended.

The ten Case Study / Pup Up sites

Bayview Arena Park
Cherry Beach Park
High Park
Merrill Bridge Road Park

Beresford Park
Allan Gardens
Sunnybrook Park
Sandy Bruce Park

Wychwood Car Barns Park
L’Amoreaux Park

This summary, prepared by Swerhun Inc., documents feedback shared across all ten Pup Ups, organized under the categories of Design, Operations & Maintenance, and Administrative.

Role of the Case Study / Pup Up sites

The role of the Case Study / Pup Up sites is to inform the Study's recommendations by:

- ensuring they reflect consideration of the range of characteristics and conditions found across Toronto's 70+ OLAs, including (but not limited to): OLAs with and without fencing; OLAs with different types of surfacing; OLAs with and without lighting; OLAs in high-density, high-growth parts of the city and in lower-density, stable parts of the city; and,
- providing the Study Team with a diverse range of real-world OLAs to explore and conceptually demonstrate local applications of the Study's city-wide recommendations.

Pup Up promotion, format, and approach

Prior to the Pup Ups, the Study Team interviewed Dog Owners' Association (DOA) representatives for each Case Study site to better understand local issues and opportunities and to seek advice on a good time to host the Pup Ups. In addition to the feedback from the DOA representatives, other factors that informed the schedule and timing of the Pup Ups were: ensuring a range of morning, midday, afternoon, and weekend dates; enabling both those who work 9-5 jobs and those who do not to attend; availability of day-light hours, and; availability of resources. The full Pup Up schedule and summaries of discussions with DOA representatives are included (see **Attachment A** and **Attachment B**).

To support promotion of the Pup Ups, the team designed and shared posters with each DOA representative. The team also sent notice of the Pup Ups via an email to its stakeholder group, posts on social media, and an email to local Councillors.

The Pup Ups were designed as drop-in sessions so park users could arrive at any point during the event. Stationed beneath a blue City of Toronto tent near entrances to OLAs, City staff and Swerhun Inc. facilitators, asked participants to share what they liked about the Preliminary Recommendations and what they thought was missing. They also shared information via:

- **Five display boards**, including one providing a Study overview, three detailing the city-wide Preliminary Recommendations (one for Design, one for Operations & Maintenance, and one for Administrative), and one showing how the Preliminary Recommendations could apply to the specific Case Study site where the Pup Up was hosted (**Attachment C**).
- **A discussion guide** that explained the Study's objectives, the types of considerations that would be explored through the Study, the engagement process, the Case Study site selection criteria, and more (**Attachment D**).
- **A post card** with the Pup Up schedule and information on how to stay up to date on the process, including the project website (with QR code) and email address (**Attachment E**).

The team explained to participants that the purpose of the consultation was to seek feedback on **city-wide** Preliminary Recommendations, not site-specific changes to the OLA. The distinction was important because one of the display boards included an annotated illustration of potential design recommendations to the Case Study site. The purpose of site-specific illustrations was to inform participants' understanding of how the city-wide recommendations could be applied to the Case Study site (and other OLAs with similar characteristics). Significant changes to an OLA would require a funding source be secured and a dedicated community consultation process involving area stakeholders, the local Councillor, and others.

Key messages

These key messages highlight major topics shared at the ten Pup Up events; they should be read in concert with the more detailed summary of feedback below.

General support for the Preliminary Recommendations. Many participants shared support for the Preliminary Recommendations, saying several address key issues they currently experience in the City's OLAs.

Enhanced and ongoing communication is essential. Several participants said they were keen to see the Administrative recommendations implemented, especially those focused on improving communication between OLA users, City staff, and DOA reps.

Maintenance is crucial to the success of OLAs. Participants consistently said maintenance is a key issue needing improvement. They shared significant support for the Operations & Maintenance recommendations, especially the recommendations to perform weekly inspections and monitor and maintain state of good repair. Some participants indicated an interest / willingness to assist with light maintenance if materials could be provided by the City.

Surfacing materials should be dog-friendly and promote good drainage. Participants shared concerns about existing types of surfacing, primarily pea gravel. They said that, above all else, surfacing materials should not harm dogs' paws and should promote good drainage.

Support for the study and consultation. Several said they were happy the City is exploring ways to improve OLAs and is making an effort to speak with OLA and other park users.

Detailed feedback about the Preliminary Recommendations

Participants shared feedback about the three categories of city-wide Preliminary Recommendations. Their feedback included support for several of the Preliminary Recommendations as well as suggested refinements and additional recommendations to consider.

Feedback about the Preliminary Design Recommendations

Participants shared feedback about six categories of Design recommendations: shade, surfacing & drainage, fencing & entrances, amenities, lighting, and water.

Shade

Many participants said they liked the recommendations to provide shade, saying OLAs without shade become very hot in the summer and are less likely to be used. Some said they specifically liked the recommendation to ensure 20% shade coverage, saying it would still allow for plenty of space for people and dogs to be in the sun when it's cooler. Others weren't as sure, saying it's difficult to imagine what 20% coverage actually looks like. Suggested additions / refinements to the Preliminary Recommendations about shade included:

- Ensure shade structures / trees are spread out so that people and dogs don't have to gather in one area of the OLA, which can cause conflicts.
- Ensure shade structures are durable so that they last a long time, keeping in mind that Toronto can have severe winters with snow, ice, and wind.
- Consider shade structures that can also provide shelter from other elements, e.g. rain, wind, snow, etc. Porous shade structures do not provide much shade.

Surfacing & drainage

Many participants across all the Case Study sites supported the recommendations to improve drainage in the OLAs, with several saying that poor drainage leads to muddy conditions and standing water (which is undesirable and unsafe for both dogs and people). Participants said good drainage is especially important at the entrances/exits to prevent muddy/icy conditions in and around gates.

Independent of the Preliminary Recommendations, participants shared a range of opinions on different types of surfacing. Generally, participants said surfacing materials should be chosen that are good for dogs (i.e. aren't harmful to their paws) and promote good drainage.

Many shared specific concerns about pea gravel, including that: it can be harmful to dogs' paws; it creates a lot of dust in the air; it can be difficult for dogs and people to walk in; and it becomes very hot in the summer. A few said pea gravel offers good drainage and is clean when it rains.

There were mixed opinions about woodchips, with some saying they are a preferred surface because they promote good drainage and reduce muddy and wet conditions, while others said they don't like them because they can hurt dogs' paws.

Some said they liked having grass as the surfacing material, though others said grass needs to be maintained and should only be planted where it's proven that it can grow and be sustained.

Fencing & entrances

There was significant support for the recommendation to replace existing latches with upgraded latches that can accommodate the use and climate. Participants also supported the recommendations to: install fencing that fits within the surrounding environment (e.g. steel in urban areas and post and paddle in natural environments); replace single gate systems with double gates, and; ensure there is more than one entrance/exit.

Several said they like the recommendation to raise fence heights to five feet to help prevent dogs from jumping in and out of OLAs and, in some cases, prevent coyotes from getting in. Suggested refinements to the fencing recommendations included:

- consider a maximum six-foot fence;
- make sure fencing is made out of materials dogs cannot climb, and;
- make sure to measure the height of fences from the top of the surface material since some materials (especially woodchips) build up around fences and effectively reduce their height.

A few said they haven't seen dogs jumping over fences and suggested the City conduct a site-by-site investigation before deciding whether to increase the height of fences.

Several participants supported the recommendation to investigate opportunities to create barriers (including vegetative barriers) between an OLA and high traffic areas and/or adjacent park uses. Participants said barriers should be functional, i.e. create both a visual and physical barrier that prevent dogs from getting out of the OLA.

Participants, particularly those at sites without fences, discussed and shared a range of opinions about adding fences / barriers to OLAs that don't currently have them. Several OLA users and other park users insisted that fences or other barriers should be added to increase safety for both dogs and people. A few shared experiences where dogs have run out of an unfenced OLA and were aggressive or attacked children. Others raised concerns about adding fences, saying it could lead to increased aggressive behaviour among dogs and potentially

more Commercial Dog Walkers using smaller OLAs (even where they are not permitted to do so). A few said that, in some instances, the absence of fencing was a decision made with the local community when the OLA was established. There was general agreement that the local community would need to be consulted about any changes to fencing. *In responses to feedback about adding or removing fencing, the City explained that this OLA Study will not be recommending adding or removing fencing; any decisions about adding or removing fencing to any OLA would require a dedicated community consultation process.*

Amenities

Participants generally liked recommendations that would increase the accessibility of OLAs, including installing and providing accessible seating and pathways. While there were no objections to ensuring seating is accessible, some cautioned against adding too much seating, saying it can encourage people to sit and not actively watch / interact with their dog(s). Participants also supported the recommendations to: install recycling, garbage, and green bins outside main entries/exits; install City signage within the OLA and prior to the entry; install community boards at main entries/exits, and; install educational and interpretive panels at main entries/exits.

Participants had mixed opinions about the recommendation to install agility equipment. Some liked the idea, saying it presents an opportunity for an engaging structured activity for dogs and people. Others shared concerns, including safety, maintenance, and cost, with some saying there are other more immediate needs in OLAs (and parks in general) that require funding.

There were also mixed opinions about recommendation to add Small Dog Areas (SDAs). Several participants said that existing SDAs are an important and well used part of the OLAs where they exist, saying they create a safer and more comfortable environment for small dogs and their owners. These participants supported the addition of SDAs in more OLAs across the city. Others raised concerns about segmenting OLAs, especially smaller OLAs. Specific suggestions related to SDAs included:

- ensure fences around SDAs are high enough to keep large dogs (and in some cases coyotes) out, and;
- add an external entrance/exit to the existing SDAs so that small dogs and their owners don't have to go through the main OLA.

Lighting

Participants generally liked the lighting recommendations, with many saying lighting is very important because it increases safety. Participants also said lighting makes it easier for dog owners to pick-up after their dogs at night, in turn keeping the OLA cleaner. Participants suggested a few refinements and additional things to consider related to lighting including: ensure solar and LED lights are bright enough to be useful; ensure lighting doesn't negatively impact neighbouring residents (i.e. shining into their backyard or homes); consider using timers for lighting so that they come on and turn off as needed; provide lighting in Small Dog Areas where there is already lighting in the main OLA.

Water

Participants were generally enthusiastic about the recommendations to add water features and/or amenities. Some said the water access doesn't necessarily have to be right in the OLA as long as it is close by.

Participants shared mixed opinions about the type of water access they would prefer. Some really liked the idea of providing a multi-tiered fountain that could be used by both dogs and people. Others felt dogs should be the primary focus and suggested investigating simpler and less expensive options that could be used by multiple dogs at once (e.g. some kind of trough). Some raised concerns about providing water with a bowl, saying it may contribute to the spread of kennel cough or infections. Several participants said the water source, regardless of type/style, should have good drainage to prevent muddy and icy conditions and/or standing water.

Feedback about the Preliminary Operations & Maintenance Recommendations

Several participants said that proactive and ongoing maintenance is crucial to the success of OLAs. Many that shared concerns about a lack of existing maintenance were very supportive of the Preliminary Operations & Maintenance Recommendations, especially the recommendations to perform weekly inspections and monitor and maintain state of good repair. Several supported the recommendations to install surfacing bins and doing regular surfacing top ups. Suggested additions / refinements to the Operations & Maintenance recommendations included:

- ensure pathways from outside the park to entrance/exits are maintained;
- explore ways to address the smell in OLAs as they tend to smell bad, and;
- investigate opportunities to perform winter maintenance (e.g. snow / ice removal), especially around entrances and exits to the OLAs.
- schedule maintenance during low use periods and provide notice before and during.

Feedback about the Preliminary Administrative Recommendations

Participants discussed and shared feedback about several of the Preliminary Administrative Recommendations. The recommendations that received the majority of attention were those focused on improvements to the City Website, signage and educational resources, improvements to the Dog Owner Association (DOA) program, and by-law enforcement.

Improvements to the City website

Participants generally liked the recommendation to improve the City website to increase access to information about OLAs and strengthen communication between OLA users, DOA reps, and the City. Participants suggested additional information that could be incorporated in an improved website, including:

- maps of parks where OLAs are located that show the specific area where the OLA is;
- consistent information about all OLAs (i.e. type of surfacing, size, entrances/exits, amenities, etc.);
- contact information for park supervisor and DOA rep(s), and;
- information about closures for maintenance (and other reasons).

Signage and education resources

Several participants supported the recommendations to post the code of conduct in every OLA. They suggested having the code of conduct posted at all entrances/exits and within the OLAs to increase awareness (and ideally compliance). Participants also liked the recommendation to create educational resources, suggesting these resources could be used to help identify both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for dogs and people. Other suggestions related to signage and educational resources included:

- install signs at entrances/exits that explain how to use double gates (and the importance of using them properly);
- signs with information about how to monitor and manage different types of dog behaviors;
- notifications about scheduled maintenance and closures;
- contact information for DOA rep(s) and parks staff, and;
- investigate creating a TV commercial to inform people about the rules around having dogs off-leash.

Improvements to the DOA program

Many participants liked the idea of enhancing and raising awareness about the DOA program. Some said they didn't know there was a DOA program or that there is meant to be a DOA rep for each OLA. Participants particularly liked the idea of creating standardized contact information for the DOA reps and making this information readily available to OLA users (e.g. on the City website and posted at the OLAs).

By-law enforcement

Participants shared mixed opinions about increasing by-law enforcement. Some said increased enforcement is desperately needed to promote compliance and correct inappropriate behaviours in OLAs and surrounding areas. Others raised concerns that dog owners may be unfairly targeted and ticketed more frequently, suggesting instead to investigate ways to empower DOA reps and other dog owners to monitor their own communities. It was also suggested that all enforcement should be done in a respectful manner.

Some participants said they have had issues with the times by-law officers are available. For example, at one OLA, participants said someone has regularly left raw meat across the street early in the morning—a safety issue for both dogs and people—but by-law officers do not come early in the day. At another, participants said dogs barking in an OLA after midnight was a concern, but by-law officers do not investigate noise complaints at that hour.

Other feedback about the Preliminary Administrative Recommendations

Those that shared feedback about the other Administrative recommendations generally liked them, including recommendations to: promote volunteer and stewardship, introduce a process to consult on open and closed hours for OLAs, schedule lighting based on the seasons, and re-allocate Commercial Dog Walkers fees to improve Commercial Dog Walker parks.

Other suggested recommendations to consider included:

- Create a Commercial Dog Walker-specific OLA to reduce conflicts and/or create specific hours for CDWs in more OLAs (i.e. during the day when they are less used by other OLA users).
- Create a mechanism for residents / dog owners to set-up their own “donation box” (potentially a digital one) so residents can help fund improvements.
- Encourage the use of biodegradable dog bags as opposed to plastic ones.

Other Feedback

Participants shared additional feedback about off-leash areas generally, including:

- Consider developing a methodology and/or criterion that would look at expanding OLAs if there is sufficient demand.
- Consider developing a process to review and (where necessary) revise the code of conduct.

NEXT STEPS

At each Pup Up, the Study Team let participants know that a public survey with the Preliminary Recommendations would be available on the project website in the coming months (www.toronto.ca/olastudy). They encouraged participants to visit the project website to stay up to date on the process and complete the survey.

Attachment A: Pup Up Schedule

Off-Leash Area	Date	Time	Approximate number of people that stopped to talk
Bayview Arena Park	Thursday, October 17	4:30 – 7 pm	20
Cherry Beach Park	Saturday, October 19	9 – 11 am	60
High Park	Saturday, October 19	noon – 2 pm	100
Merrill Bridge Road Park	Tuesday, October 22	7:30 – 10 am	35
Beresford Park	Wednesday, October 23	8:30 – 11 am	50
Allan Gardens	Wednesday, October 23	4:30 – 7 pm	60
Sunnybrook Park	Thursday, October 24	10 am – noon	35
Sandy Bruce Park	Thursday, October 24	4:30 – 7 pm	30
Wychwood Car Barns Park	Saturday, October 26	9 – 11 am	50
L'Amoreaux Park	Monday, October 28	4:30 – 7pm	40

Attachment B: Off-Leash Area Case Study Site Interview Summaries

City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas

OFF-LEASH AREA CASE STUDY SITE INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

As part of the City-Wide Study of Off-Leash Areas the City held conversations with representative from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The purpose of the conversations was to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on opportunities for improvements to help inform the City-wide recommendations.

Summaries from the then conversations with the OLA representatives are included on the following pages of this report.

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City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas

ALLAN GARDENS OLA INTERVIEW

Friday, September 20, 2019

Conference Call

Participants:

Allan Gardens Off-Leash Area Representative
City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit
Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Allan Gardens OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc and was shared with participants in draft prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative began their position in the spring/summer of 2019, after the previous representative stepped down. The main communication mechanism for OLA users is a Facebook page. There is desire for a bulletin board in or around the off-leash area to share information and updates.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Fencing

Issue: Both large and small dogs are able to get out of the OLA. Large dogs can jump over the fence and small dogs can squeeze through gaps in the fence. OLA users have put in some wiring, which has helped to prevent small dogs from getting out but the wiring is not maintained.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate ways to improve and maintain fencing to prevent dogs from getting out of the OLA. Taller fences may not be a desirable solution as they are unlikely to be visually appealing.

2. Gates & winter maintenance

Issue: Gates often break, especially in the winter and repairs can take a long time to be completed. It can also be difficult to get to the OLA because of snow and ice buildup or salt used to clear paths, which can be harmful to dogs' paws.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate gate and latch materials that are stronger and less likely to break regularly. Use dog-friendly salt/ice melting options to remove snow and ice.

3. Accessibility

Issue: Several OLA users at Allan Gardens use wheelchairs and those without 'off-road wheels' have trouble accessing and using the OLA. Both the latches and the existing surface present problems for people in wheelchairs.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate the installation of accessible (e.g. paved) pathways within the OLA and gates/latches that are also accessible.

4. Surfacing

Issue: Most of the OLA is just dirt. There are mixed opinions about this surface; some are fine with it, whereas others want crushed granite. There is also understanding among OLA users that the original plan for the OLA was to provide crushed granite. OLA users have raised concerns that the dirt can cause infections in dogs and increase visits to the vet.

Proposed solution to investigate: Clarify if crushed granite was/is the planned surface and if so, consider crushed gravel as a possible surfacing option for the OLA.

5. Shade

Issue: There is minimal shade, especially in the large dog area. There was large tree, which died and was cut down without any known plans to replace it. This is especially a problem when the park is hot and busy.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate planning more trees to provide shade. Also clarify the process for adding trees to OLAs; there are other OLAs within the same ward that have received trees.

6. Lighting

Issue: The current lighting used are outdated gas lamps, which provide poor lighting.

Proposed solution to investigate: Replace current lights with modern LED lights that are brighter.

7. Access to running water

Issue: The only fountain is in the large dog area. This makes it difficult for small dog owners to get water for their dogs as they have either bring their dogs with them or leave them unattended while they get water for them. Additionally, there isn't a water fountain for people.

Proposed solution to investigate: Install a water fountain in the small dog area and potentially dual source fountains for both people and dogs.

8. Seating

Issue: Seating is limited, which is a highly desired asset in the OLA.

Proposed solution to investigate: install more benches / places to sit in the OLA.

9. Cigarette waste

Issue: OLA users appreciate the new facilities for recycling and bio-waste. However, cigarette butts are left throughout the OLA, which can be harmful to dogs.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate installing ashtrays to collect cigarette butts.

10. By-law and code of conduct signage

Issue: Signs are difficult to read and quickly understand because they are outside of the gates/fences and include technical/legal language.

Proposed solution to investigate: Install signs inside the OLA so people can see and reference them when they're using the dog park. Investigate using more common language to make it more accessible.

Pup-Up Event

Holding the Pup-Up at a few times would be ideal to get a broader range of OLA users. Busier times include Monday thru Thursday from 5:00 – 7:00pm. Suggest finalizing the date and time and sharing it with Councillor Wong-Tam before October 8th as she is holding a meeting for related to OLAs in her ward and could help promote the Pup-Up at this meeting.

BAYVIEW ARENA PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

3337 Bayview Ave – Donut Counter

Participants:

Bayview Arena Park Off-Leash Area Representative
City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit
Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative for the Bayview Arena Park Off-Leash Area to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc and was shared with participants for review prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The Bayview Arena Parks OLA representative has been so since the OLA opened. They have developed connections with other local dog owners and OLA users through word of mouth and communicates with them at the park and sometimes through text messages.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Unneutered male dogs

Issue: Previously, the Code of Conduct prohibited unneutered male dogs in OLAs; they are now allowed. Unneutered male dogs, especially if untrained, can be aggressive and have resulted in injuries, including one person who had a piece of their finger bitten off in the OLA.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate why the Code of Conduct was revised to allow unneutered male dogs in OLAs and consider amending the policy.

2. Shade

Issue: This OLA does not have any shade/shelter and becomes very hot, which results in minimal use, especially during the summer months. The existing surface, pea gravel, also gets very hot.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate ways to provide shade to keep the OLA cooler and more usable during hot weather. Investigate other surface options (e.g. smaller versions of pea gravel) that may not get as hot. Don't change the surface without first determining if there is a better option. *The City noted that this OLA is in a hydro corridor*

and the lack of shade may be a result of rules and regulations set by Hydro One, which the team will need to investigate further.

3. Size

Issue: This OLA is small and prevents dog owners from walking their dogs. Instead people and dogs stand around in groups and dogs often become territorial.

Proposed solution to investigate: Directed exercise (i.e. walking on a path / trail) is beneficial for both dogs and humans. Having OLAs that are large enough to accommodate people taking their dogs for a walk should be investigated. Agility equipment is not a desirable replacement for space to walk.

4. Gates

Issue: The gates often break during the winter and require a large crew of park staff to fix.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate why gates are breaking and potential alternative materials that are less likely to break.

5. Salt

Issue: The paths around the OLA and the area between the double gates are heavily salted during the winter. The salt can be harmful to dog's paws and act as a barrier to use.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate alternative ways to keep ice off the paths, e.g. shoveling and/or a dog-friendly salt. At the very least, do not salt the area between the double gates that provide access to the OLA.

6. Water

Issue: Water is not provided at the OLA, which requires people to bring their own from home.

Proposed solution to investigate: Park staff have explained that water cannot be run to the OLA because it is in a hydro corridor. As an alternative, explore opportunities to provide access to water at the arena (e.g. a fountain or tap outside).

Pup-Up Event

Early evening/after work may be the best time to host the Pup-Up. However, it is difficult to identify a specific time when the OLA is used more frequently because local dog owners don't often use the OLA because of the issues identified above. The team should find ways to connect with local dog owners that don't use the OLA (e.g. people walking their dogs in the hydro corridor) and ask arena/park staff when the OLA is more heavily used.

BERESFORD PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Friday, September 27, 2019

720 Bathurst Street – CSI Annex

Participants:

Beresford Park Off-Leash Area representative

City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit

Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Beresford Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc. and was shared with participants for review prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative began their position as the OLA representative about 3 years ago along with another member of the community. Communication between the OLA reps and other OLA users is generally informal (e.g. discussions at the OLA). The representative suspects that many people aren't aware that they are the reps for the OLA and suggested a more formalized system with publicly available contact information would help with communication (*see point 4 below for additional information*).

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Fencing

Issue: Beresford Park does not have a fence and is next to a road that has relatively high traffic, especially during the morning and afternoon rush hour periods. The lack of barrier between the road and the OLA can be dangerous for dogs if they run out on to the street or across the street to the playground area.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate possible barriers between the OLA and the road and/or options to reduce the speed of cars (e.g. speed bumps, reduced speed limits, etc.). Many OLA and park users like not having a fence/barrier between the OLA and rest of the park because it promotes a mix of uses and interaction between different park users.

2. Human Litter (meat scraps)

Issue: An individual dumps meat scraps in the park across the street from the OLA. This attracts dogs across the street, which increases their risk of getting hit by the car and can

also make dogs sick if they eat the meat. It can also be harmful to children and other park users because the meat attracts wasps.

Proposed solution to investigate: The City and park users have had difficulty stopping the individual from dumping the meat but have recently become aware of who it is, and the frequency has decreased. Investigate additional opportunities to enforce consequences as dumping meat scraps is not allowed in parks.

3. Enforcement and reporting

Issue: There have been conflicts between dogs in the off-leash area, with certain dogs attacking other dogs. These instances are further problematic if/when dog owners either don't have recall over their dog or take the attitude that other dogs should simply get used to their dog's behaviour. Some dog owners are hesitant to call 311 to report issues because they don't know what action will be taken; they are nervous the other dog may be put down and/or they may be identified as the person issuing a complaint.

Proposed solution to investigate: Explore opportunities to increase education about the reporting system, i.e. how someone can report an issue in the OLA and what happens when someone reports an issue to the City. Examine problematic areas across the City and deploy enforcement staff and resources to those problematic areas.

4. Roles and responsibilities of OLA

Issue: The specific roles and responsibilities of the OLA reps are somewhat unclear. This can make it difficult for the OLA reps to fulfill their responsibilities and reduce their ability to be a useful resource for other OLA users and the City.

Proposed solution to investigate: If not already in place, investigate a process for formalizing the roles and responsibilities of the OLA representatives. Look for opportunities to communicate/publicize the set roles and responsibilities as well as the OLA reps' information. This could include having the roles and responsibilities and a list of all the OLA reps on the City's website with designated contact information so that OLA users know who to contact for their specific OLA. Investigate options to allow for a team of advocates for each OLA that could be led by one or two OLA reps. The additional advocates could help with education and communications.

The OLA representative also identified a number of features that are working well at the Beresford Park OLA, including: most OLA users follow the rules, including picking up after their dogs; the lack of fencing between the OLA and the rest of the park promotes a mix of uses and positive interactions between many park users; and the grass is a good surface.

Pup-Up Event

Weekday mornings or evenings are consistently busy (i.e. starting at 9:00 am or 5:00pm). The weekend is less consistently busy. Suggest talking with families using the playground across the street to get their perspective on the off-leash area.

CHERRY BEACH OLA INTERVIEW

Tuesday, September 24, 2019

Conference Call

Participants:

Cherry Beach Off-Leash Area Representative

City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit

Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Cherry Beach OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc. and was shared with participants in draft before being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The Cherry Beach representative has been going to the beach for over 30 years with her dogs and has seen the area evolve from an unofficial off-leash area to an official off-leash area. They became the official OLA representative more recently by default as the position was not filled by anyone else. The OLA has a very active Facebook group; while there are some ongoing technical issues with the administration it is used by the OLA rep and others as an effective means of communication. There are also a number of active professional dog walkers that use the OLA regularly and are very helpful with communicating information and updates to the many people who use the OLA. The OLA representative also noted that they have good communication with the Parks Supervisor.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Communicating with all OLA users

Issue: While the Facebook group is a very effective communication tool there is an awareness that it is not reaching all OLA users, especially younger and older users who don't typically use Facebook.

Proposed solution to investigate: The OLA rep and other active users have discussed using other forms of social media (e.g. twitter) to reach out to younger OLA users. Additional signs where information and updates can be posted may also help to reach more people.

2. Erosion and waste from the lake

Issue: As the OLA is on a landfill large pieces of rebar and rusted metal protrude from the ground. These pieces of rebar and metal are dangerous for both dogs and people.

Proposed solution to investigate: There is recognition that the City has made a concerted effort to mitigate erosion and the large pieces of metal and rebar, including: putting up orange fencing to act as a barrier for dogs and people; and putting down rocks/stones to prevent further erosion and cover the pieces of metal. While it may not be feasible, an ideal solution would be to remove the pieces of metal.

3. Flooding

Issue: Parts of the OLA area often flood, which creates a 'toxic swamp'. The flooding prevents dogs and people from getting to the west side of the OLA. There are also concerns that the water in the flooded areas may be harmful to dogs.

Proposed solutions to investigate: Investigate improved drainage options to help reduce flooding and standing water.

4. Dog waste left in the park

Issue: People not picking up after their dogs or picking up and leaving it in the OLA is an ongoing issue.

Proposed solutions to investigate: There is recognition that dog owners are responsible for picking up after their dogs and this requires a behaviour change by OLA users. Additional waste/compost bins at all entrances; additional signage; and stations where OLA users can pick up bags for dog waste may also help to correct this behaviour. *The City explained that compost bins have been added to all OLAs along with an education campaign that dog waste should be put in either garbage or compost bins but not recycling bins. It may not be possible to put bins at every entrance due to an inability to access and collect waste at entrances closer to the water. The City also explained that while they do not have resources to supply dog bags, the community can fundraise and connect with parks staff about options for distributing bags at the OLA.*

5. Loss of trees

Issue: A number of trees have been lost in the OLA, which may be contributing to erosion.

Proposed solutions to investigate: The OLA representative and other users are aware there is an opportunity to fundraise to bring in native tree species. The OLA rep and other users are continuing to follow-up with parks staff to see what can be done through fundraising.

6. Holes being dug by dogs

Issue: Dogs often dig holes; some of which are quite large (up to 3 feet deep), which can be dangerous for both people and dogs. This is especially problematic further away from the water where the soil is compacted and refilling holes can be difficult.

Proposed solutions to investigate: Many of the OLA users understand it is the dog owner's responsibility to refill any holes dug by their dog and will often remind and encourage individuals to do so when they see holes being dug. Tools (e.g. shovels) that can be left at the OLA and a bin with soil may help OLA users refill larger holes. Investigate additional options for filling holes in areas where soil is compacted.

7. Gates

Issue: The Cherry Beach OLA does not have safety/double gates. This can result in dogs escaping when other users and their dogs are entering the park.

Proposed solutions to investigate: Investigate adding double gates to entrances/exits to the OLA.

Pup-Up Event

Regular OLA users typically go to the park weekday mornings around 9:30 am and again at 3:30 pm. There is also a number of people that use the OLA after work around 6:30/7:00pm. However, they may start going sooner as the days get shorter. The OLA is also heavily used on the weekends as many non-regular users come to the park at this time. If feasible, a small incentive for participants (e.g. a doggy loot bag) may help to increase participation.

City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas

HIGH PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Wednesday, September 25, 2019

720 Bathurst Street – CSI Annex

Participants:

High Park Off-Leash Area Representatives

City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit

Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the two representatives from the High Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc. and was shared with participants for review prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

Both of the OLA representatives have a long-standing history of participation with High Park. One participant has been a user of the park for over 20 years. The second representative has over 30 years' participation in High park related to dogs. Both have volunteered for 15 years on an advisory committee related to dogs in High Park. They predominantly use a Facebook page, High Park K9, and an email to connect with other OLA users. They also use the bulletin board situated in the park.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Communication

Issue: At times there can be a lack of information or clarity on plans for long-term maintenance being completed by the City. If the OLA representatives don't know/understand the long-term plans they in turn cannot keep other OLA users up to date. Additionally, OLA users have a great deal of useful information about the OLA they could share related to ongoing and site specific issues if they were more regularly included in the conversations with park staff about long-term operations.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate developing a process that would allow park staff to provide regular updates on ongoing maintenance / operations and gather information from OLA reps and users (e.g. an advisory committee or something similar).

2. Erosion issues at the Spring Road entry

Issue: The Spring Road OLA entry has significant issues with erosion and safety, and many users will go to another gate to avoid icy conditions and exposed tarp staples where the sand covering has eroded. The exposed tarp staples are located on the off leash trail that is west of Spring Road, opposite the metal staircase. Dogs have to be on-leash at the other gate, but people don't always follow this rule.

Proposed solution to investigate: Long-term solutions for the erosion by the staircase where the OLA entry at Spring Road is located. Look into the feasibility of connecting the two-sides of the OLA where users are currently not abiding by proper leash requirements so that it is legally allowed.

3. Fencing

Issue: Some of the current fencing is old and flimsy, and in certain areas heavy rainfall has eroded the surrounding sand creating muddy conditions. Dogs have escaped and/or have got stuck and hurt in the damaged fencing. In some cases, temporary fencing has been put up in the past to fill the gaps, however the barricades don't always work, and dogs manage to crawl underneath and/or get stuck. This is especially problematic in the area that leads down to the creek, which dogs and their owners regularly accessed prior to temporary fencing being put up.

Proposed solution to investigate: Look into installing post and paddle fencing and in some cases extending the height of the existing fencing. This could help create a more permanent and safer solution. Strive to strike a balance with fencing height and materials that prevent dogs from getting out of OLA while maintaining a natural look and feel.

4. Gate damage

Issue: Many gates to the OLA are damaged or no longer attached to a fence because of rotting wood. While there is some history of human-involved damage, this does not appear to be the primary cause of the issue. If dogs hop the fence or become stuck and the gate is not accessible, it creates an issue for the dog owner.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate a higher standard of maintenance and/or improved materials for the gates and fencing, ensuring that they are accessible for all users.

5. Waste management

Issue: There used to be non-organic and organic bins near the main OLA entry to Dog Hill east of Colborne Lodge Dr, which were well-received by OLA and park users. These bins were removed and resulted in issues with people leaving dog waste on the ground in the area for a period of time. This issue has subsided recently as people have become aware of and are using bins at nearby locations.

Proposed solution to investigate: Facilitate accurate expectations within the community about waste management; communicating when and why bins are moved as well as alternative locations. Note added after the meeting: See Attachment 1 for a map provided by the City identifying the organic and non-organic waste bins in High park.

6. Education about ESA

Issue: High Park is an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) in the City of Toronto; the OLA representatives suggested that more OLA and general park users would respect and follow by-laws in the park if they knew more about ESAs and the importance of protecting the natural environment. They also noted that they are keen to connect with other groups at High Park to help promote the importance of the natural environment and the ESA specifically.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate opportunities educate park users and help facilitate connections between OLA users and other High Park groups (e.g. ProtectNatureTO). Investigate education opportunities such as having experts come to the park to host sessions on Black Oak Savannah, hosting a Jane's Walk in High Park through the OLA to learn about the natural environment, and promoting community clean-up days.

Pup-Up Event

The representatives highlighted two sets of times that would be useful for the pup-up event. As a destination OLA, weekends are best and very busy as it draws people from all over the City. On weekdays there are more dog walkers during the day (10:00am – 4:00pm) and neighbourhood people in the morning. It was recommended that Thanksgiving week be avoided due to people taking travelling and taking extended holidays.

L'AMOREAUX PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Friday, September 20, 2019

Conference Call

Participants:

L'Amoreaux Park Off-Leash Area Representative

City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit

Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the L'Amoreaux Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc and with the OLA representative in draft before being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative started their position a few months ago when this study began and they became aware that L'Amoreaux Park did not have a rep. At this point they communicate primarily through word of mouth in the park and have put their email up on the OLA bulletin board.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Fencing

Issue: There are some gaps and holes in the fence, which allows dogs, primarily small dogs, to get out.

Proposed solution to investigate: Find holes/gaps and fix them to prevent dogs from getting out. Stay in contact with the OLA representative to help identify problem spots and fix them before they become large enough for dogs to get out.

2. Gates

Issue: The latches often stick, making it difficult to both open and close the gates.

Proposed solution to investigate: Examine the latches on the gates and make necessary repairs. Investigate alternative latches that are less likely to stick.

3. Access to running water

Issue: There is no direct access to water in the OLA. There is a small washroom near the parking lot, which some OLA users get water from. However, the washroom is not always open.

Proposed solution to investigate: There is a desire to have a water fountain in the OLA and if possible, a tri-level fountain that can be used by dogs, children, and adults.

4. Small-dog area

Issue: The OLA at L'Amoureux Park does not have a small dog area and small dogs and their owners can become uncomfortable in the OLA, especially if/when large dogs are rambunctious. This is particularly problematic if large dogs are left unattended.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate opportunities to include a small dog area at the L'Amoureux Park OLA and other OLA's in the city that currently don't have one. At the L'Amoureux Park OLA, specifically examine if it would be possible to add a portion of fence across the triangular corner of the OLA for a small dog section.

5. Promoting the code of conduct and by-laws

Issue: The OLA is often used by people from Markham who do not have their dogs licensed in Toronto and are therefore are technically not allowed to use the OLA.

Proposed solution to investigate: Increase signage in the OLA that outlines the code of conduct and by-laws, e.g. put the signs at each entrance/exit and put them inside the OLA so that OLA users can see and reference them while using the dog park.

6. Food waste around the OLA

Issue: There is a shelter area in the park near the OLA that many people use to have picnics and consume food. However, because there aren't any garbage cans near the shelter food, including chicken bones, are often left on the ground. Food waste can attract dogs and can be dangerous for them to consume.

Proposed solution to investigate: Consider adding garbage cans near the shelter area. City staff also suggested calling 311 as calls get recorded and tracked, which helps to identify persistent issues and enforcement.

7. Drainage

Issue: The entrance to the OLA becomes wet and swampy when it rains. OLA users often avoid using this entrance when it's wet.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate surfacing and improved drainage to prevent water buildup and swampy conditions.

8. Shade and trees

Issue: There are three trees in the OLA, which are either dead or in bad shape. These trees had provided shade, which helped to keep the park cool and accessible during hot weather.

Proposed solution to investigate: Additional deciduous trees are preferred as a means of providing shade. However, it's understood that because this OLA is in a hydro corridor new trees may not be permitted. Investigate alternative options for providing shade.

Pup-Up Event

The OLA is busy on weekday evenings (6:00 pm onward) and Saturday mornings; either of these times would be good times to host the Pup-Up. The OLA can also be quite busy on Sunday evenings.

MERRILL BRIDGE ROAD PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

720 Bathurst Street – CSI Annex

Participants:

Merrill Bridge Road Park Off-Leash Area Representative
City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit
Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Merrill Bridge Road Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc and shared with the participants for review prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative has been a co-chair for the Merrill Bridge Road Park OLA since October 2018, and became the sole representative in June 2019. They have developed connections with other local dog owners and OLA users through the dog park email list which has approximately 150 subscribers, an active Facebook page which they help manage, as well as by communicating with people directly in the park. There is also a message board that has the dog park Facebook page information.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Communication with the City / governing bodies

Issue: Difficulty getting in contact with Parks and Metrolinx staff regarding a fallen tree in the rail corridor that is impacting the fence at the south edge of the park. This fallen tree has damaged the fence and the fence is the only barrier for the OLA. On a broader scale, there is a general concern about a lack of responsiveness from the City regarding ongoing issues.

Proposed solution to investigate: Education about the various actors involved with OLA maintenance, and streamlining reporting so issues are tracked and dealt with in a timely manner. *City staff also said they will continue to follow up with Metrolinx about having the fallen tree removed.*

2. Maintenance

Issue: As part of the OLA is grass, dogs dig holes that need to be repaired to avoid safety concerns for dogs and people. The park has a City bin where dog owners can retrieve soil to patch holes, however the supply has run out. Part of the issue is signage and communication; the code of conduct states that dog owners are responsible for repairing damage caused by their dogs, however very few do.

Proposed solution to investigate: Ensure that the Code of Conduct is visible to prompt dog owners to repair OLA surfaces if their dog causes damage. Research how maintenance tools are distributed amongst OLAs and whether there would be the opportunity for Merrill Bridge to receive more soil.

3. Communication and action regarding allowable/regulated OLA uses

Issue: Commercial dog walkers aren't legally allowed to walk their dogs in Merrill Bridge Road Park; however, many use the OLA due to a lack of proper signage. Additionally, there has been a range of opinions about OLA representatives policing park space.

Proposed solution to investigate: The City explained that non-emergency municipal service is data driven and calling 311 to report illegal uses of the OLA will not only track the comment, but reoccurring issues could prompt more response. It may also be helpful to inform the Canadian Dog Walkers Association so they can remind their members to not use areas they are prohibited in. Installing larger, clearer signage near the OLA entrance that states the Code of Conduct and by-laws may help mitigate this issue.

4. Proper waste disposal

Issue: OLA users are pleased that there is garbage, recycling and compost bins on-site. However, dog waste is often put in the recycling bin, which contaminates the recycling.

Proposed solution to investigate: Better signage and moving the recycling bin away from other bins to discourage people from putting in dog waste in the recycling bin.

5. No small-dog area

Issue: Big dogs and large puppies often dominate the OLA, and can contribute to an unsafe or uncomfortable environment for small dogs and their owners. Large dogs can trample small dogs.

Proposed solution to investigate: Review options to see if an area for small dogs is feasible at this location to help create a safer, more inclusive environment.

Pup-Up Event

There is a large group and broad range of dog-sizes in the OLA between 8:00-10:00am on weekday mornings, as well as 4:30-6:00pm, after standard working hours. Saturday mornings are also quite busy.

SANDY BRUCE PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Friday, September 20, 2019

Conference Call

Participants:

Sandy Bruce Park Off-Leash Area Representative
City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit
Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Sandy Bruce Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc and shared with the participants for review prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative has been involved for two years. An email address has been created and posted that the OLA. There is also have a Facebook page, which is used to share information and has approximately 120 members.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Communication

Issue: The response rate from the City used to be quite reasonable. However, more recently it has started to take much longer (i.e. months and on one occasion a year) to get a response from the City on issues raised. There is also a perception that the standard answer to nearly all requests is “no” without explanation as to why. If responses from City staff are limited or delayed it can be difficult for the OLA representative to act as an effective liaison between the City and OLA users. If OLA users are not receiving information from the OLA rep, they often reach out to the City directly, resulting in the City receiving many additional inquiries that could be streamlined through the OLA rep.

Proposed solution to investigate: Develop a system that records and tracks inquiries from the OLA representative so they and the City can more effectively follow-up. Provide clarity on if/how OLA users can fundraise for certain features for their OLA (e.g. a water fountain).

2. Slope and drainage

Issue: The Sandy Bruce Park OLA has a large slope, which becomes quite slippery and dangerous in the winter and is not accessible for some OLA users. As snow and ice melt the water pools at the bottom of the hill. Ice then builds up at the bottom of the hill and again can become a dangerous environment for OLA users.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate installing a railing to make it easier and safer for everyone to move up and down the slope. Investigate the existing drainage system and make any necessary repairs/improvements.

3. Gates with concrete pads

Issue: The concrete pads at the gates/entrances to the OLA are flush with the ground. This results in significant snow and ice buildup, which can prevent the gates from closing and allows dogs to get out.

Proposed solution to investigate: Consider raising the concrete pads and/or using animal-safe de-icing materials to prevent snow and ice buildup and gates from staying open.

4. Surface maintenance

Issue: The OLA surface is woodchips and often requires maintenance and additional woodchips. Otherwise the OLA becomes very muddy. There is a perception that other OLAs with woodchips are restocked more regularly.

Proposed solution to investigate: Clearly communicate the replenishment cycle the City follows for woodchips (i.e. which park gets restocked and when). Share information about if/how OLA users can fundraise to help replenish woodchips as needed; there is strong potential for the local community to raise funds for this and other needs at the OLA.

5. Design implementation

Issue: Some aspects of the construction of the OLA do not appear to match the original design (e.g. location of rock walls). There is a perception that the design may not have been followed without an explanation as to why.

Proposed solution to investigate: Ensure park designs are properly implemented and explanations for any changes can be explained.

Pup-Up Event

The OLA is generally busiest on weekday evenings (5:00 – 7:00 pm) and weekend mornings (10:00 am – 12:00 pm); either of these times would be good times to host the Pup-Up.

City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas

SUNNYBROOK PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

720 Bathurst Street – CSI Annex

Participants:

Sunnybrook Park Off-Leash Area Representative

City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit

Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Sunnybrook Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc. and was shared with participants in draft prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative has held their position for the last two to three years and is also a registered professional dog-walker in the neighbourhood. The OLA has a Facebook page for communication, but the discourse can, at times, be a source of tension. The representative prefers face-to-face communication and finds that it's the best way to facilitate sensitive issues. As a very frequent user of the OLA, they reach out to other users if there is a known problem that someone is experiencing.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. Water supply

Issue: The water source in the park is on dirt or clay, and experiences drainage issues. It puddles at the base, which can be a hazard to dogs if they roll around or drink the water. There has been a lack of response from the City in the past when OLA users notify the city for maintenance.

Proposed solution to investigate: Install a pebble or concrete slab base under the water source to prevent pooling of water. A dual-level water fountain for both dogs and people would also be great to have.

2. Fencing

Issue: The fence near the forested conservation area is too low, and because it is made of horizontal timber with chicken wire, small dogs can escape when it gets damaged. It can be unsafe if dogs escape, particularly with a neighboring parking lot.

Proposed solution to investigate: Review the height and materials of the fence to see if other feasible materials could be used instead.

3. Small dog park location

Issue: In order to access the small dog area, people and their dogs have to pass through the large dog area which can create tension. Some people don't feel safe with their small dogs interacting with the larger dog population.

Proposed solution to investigate: Review the possibility of extending the fence line to a nearby service door in the OLA, in order to allow for a separate entrance.

4. Equipment, maintenance and winterization

Issue: The latches on the entry gates are often broken, and the platforms are not maintained in the winter. Ice builds up, which contributes to the damage of the entry gates and is a hazard to users of the park. While OLA users will often help maintain the park, the conditions can become very poor. Traditional salt is harmful to the pads on dog's paws.

Proposed solution to investigate: Clearer communication about maintenance expectations and determining resources for OLA users to help effectively maintain the park in the winter. Implementing other means of snow and ice removal, such as dog-safe salt or sand.

5. Communication about the OLA uses

Issue: Due to Sunnybrook's size and location, there are many different users who enjoy the park amenities. Some people picnic, bring in strollers, and bike through the OLA. These uses, at times, can conflict with dogs in the OLA.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate ways to promote the code of conduct and responsible behaviour in the OLA so that all users can enjoy the park. *The City explained that prohibiting specific users/uses would go against the mandate of City Parks, which is an inclusive use for all residents to enjoy.*

6. Size of OLA and nearby uses

Issue: A dead-end pathway behind the dog park is intended as an on-leash area, however many people take their dogs off-leash because it is quiet, has water, and allows their dogs to be walked. The OLA lacks flat open areas where dogs can be walked and have more interaction, instead of just running in circles.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate if it would be possible to extend the OLA to include the pathway area behind the existing area.

7. Lack of interactive elements

Issue: There is a lack of tactile amenities in the OLA for dogs to interact with. While it is important to have human-focused amenities such as benches, it is very important to improve the OLA with dogs in mind.

Proposed solution to investigate: It is understood that due to finances and physical layout of the OLA, it may not be feasible for high-cost solutions. Instead, investigate low-cost best practices being implemented in other cities.

8. Parking

Issue: The parking lot next to the OLA is often full of visitors coming to the nearby hospital.

Proposed solution to investigate: Increased enforcement of allowable parking in the lot and clearer signage to direct people trying to access the OLA to the other parking lots near the other side of the OLA, when the main lot is full.

Pup-Up Event

The busiest time during the week is 10:00am until noon, with high turn over, including dog owners and dog professionals, and other users. It is also busy at the same time on the weekends.

WYCHWOOD CAR BARNS PARK OLA INTERVIEW

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

720 Bathurst Street – CSI Annex

Participants:

Wychwood Car Barns Park Off-Leash Area Representative
City of Toronto – Parks Standards & Innovations Unit
Swerhun Inc.

OVERVIEW

As part of the City-Wide Study of Existing Off-Leash Areas the City is hosting conversations with representatives from the 10 Off-Leash Area (OLA) Case Study Sites. The City and Swerhun Inc. had a conversation with the representative from the Wychwood Car Barns Park OLA to better understand ongoing issues and seek feedback on potential opportunities for improvements that can help inform the City-wide recommendations being developed through the study.

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc and shared with the participants for review prior to being finalized. It provides a review of key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Communications with dog owners and OLA users

The representative began their position in the summer of 2019. There is a Facebook page for OLA updates, but it isn't very active. Word of mouth is currently the most useful way to communicate with users, and although it needs cleaning and updates, there is access to a bulletin board.

Common issues and proposed solutions

1. **Drainage and surfaces**

Issue: The park has a crushed granite surface which shifts with use to the edges of the OLA and causes drainage issues. There is a low-lying area in the south-west corner that has a drainage system, but it doesn't appear to be working well and hasn't for quite some time. Whenever it rains or ice melts, it becomes a pool and there are reports of dogs becoming sick from drinking or bathing in the mud.

Proposed solution to investigate: The surface material itself is not the issue for owners and dogs, however there is a need for additional crushed granite. One suggestion is to have a volunteer clean-up day. There is also need for clarity about what's allowed and encouraged in terms of self-regulated maintenance, i.e. what are OLA users allowed to do in terms of clean-up and fundraising for materials to help with maintenance.

2. Off-leash area hours and access to running water

Issue: The OLA is closed from 12:00 – 3:00pm daily, this rule was established when the OLA was created. There is a desire to have the OLA opened during these hours; many people use the OLA at this time, including people who take their dogs out on their lunch hour. Access to water is within the OLA, therefore people walking their dogs in the area during 12:00-3:00pm are unable to access water for their dogs.

Proposed solution to investigate: Investigate if it would be beneficial and possible to have the OLA open from 12:00 – 3:00pm daily.

3. Seating and shade

Issue: There are two picnic tables and a trellis in the OLA, but the type of seating isn't preferred, and the trellis doesn't provide adequate shade.

Proposed solution to investigate: Install benches in the OLA, as well as more shade covering whether it be a physical structure or trees in order to keep the area cooler, particularly in the summer months.

4. Communication about dog licensing

Issue: There's a perception from some OLA users that licensing dogs is a cash-grab from the City and that the capital doesn't go back into the parks, rather the City at-large.

Proposed solution to investigate: Better communication is needed to address this perception, and more education on how the funds from licensing dogs is used as well as the revenue sources for OLAs.

In addition, the representative inquired about community fundraising to maintain and improve the OLA. The City explained that there is a branch that manages partnerships and fundraising and said they would share information about how to contact this branch.

Pup-Up Event

Saturdays are the busiest day, but this may change when the Wychwood Market moves indoors. 10:00am and after working hours (between 5:00-6:00pm) are the busiest times during the week.

Attachment C: Pup Up Display Boards

City Wide Study of **Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)**

Background

The City of Toronto’s Parks Standards & Innovations Unit is leading an interdivisional study to examine how the City’s existing Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLAs) can be reimagined to better harmonize with existing park uses, provide a satisfying user experience, and operate with optimum efficiency. This study is a result of the recommendation in the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017) to “develop criteria for improving existing dog off-leash areas.”

This study will explore common issues, global best practices, and potential solutions in an effort to develop design solutions to help improve the City’s existing OLAs. The City will select eight case study sites and examine the variety of challenges and opportunities in OLAs of different size, context, and character. Ultimately, the Study will strive to address common issues, reflect consideration of a range of perspectives and needs, and propose site-specific recommendations that could apply to OLAs City-wide

Why Now

The City has heard that OLAs could be better

Improving existing OLAs will help the City maintain a successful park amenity.

Toronto’s population (human and dog) is increasing

With more pets and dogs living in the City there is an increased demand to accommodate them in public space like parks.

Existing OLAs need to work as well as possible

In 2010, the City’s People Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy led to a capital investment of over \$5 million dollars to create and improve OLAs. With that capital investment completed in 2016, the City is focusing on improving what it already has.

Goals + Objectives

1. Improve existing OLAs through effective design, maintenance, and operations
2. Foster healthy relationships between dog owners and non-dog owners
3. Elevate OLAs as spaces that provide a healthy, safe, accessible, and sustainable environment
4. Adapt OLA designs to meet operational pressures, such as use and sustainability
5. Develop guidelines to ensure consistent maintenance and operation across Toronto
6. Develop design recommendations that can be applied to all existing OLAs
7. Identify required operating and/or capital budget to maintain & improve existing site
8. Improve community involvement and develop future ongoing partnerships

Case Study Sites

The selected 10 case study site are to be used as exemplars for the 73 existing OLAs within Toronto. The site-specific recommendations will help inform the other 63 OLAs that have similar characteristics and criteria.

These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

Phase One Building Understanding

- Work Plan
March 2019
- Review and Synthesis of Background Materials
April 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #1
June 2019
- Internal Stakeholder Consultation
July 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #2
August 21st 2019
- Public Survey #1
Early September 2019

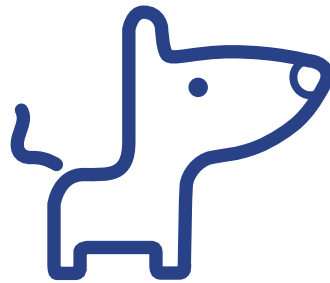
Phase Two Testing Ideas

- Site Tour of 10 Case Studies
Early September 2019
- Interviews with Local Stakeholders
Mid September 2019
- High Level Concepts
Late September 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #3
October 16th 2019
- ‘Pup’ Ups
Mid to late October 2019
- Public Survey #2
Early November 2019

Concepts and Recommendations Finalized
Late November 2019

Phase Three Finalizing Recommendations

- Draft Report
Late November 2019
- External Stakeholder Consultation #4
Early December 2019
- Final Report
End of December 2019










City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

Preliminary Design Recommendations

Design recommendations are first filtered based on Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA) because ESAs are subject to different processes, such as Environmental Assessments, with varying governing bodies (eg. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority). Design recommendations are then applied to each Off-Leash-Area (OLA) based on usage and size.

Usage for an OLA is categorized as high, medium, or low, and the size is determined to be small (under 2,000 square meters), medium (2,000 to 7,500 sq m) or large (over 7,500 sq m). Resulting recommendations are separated into the below six topics. The specific condition of an OLA under each topic area determines which recommendations are chosen for that site.

D1	Shade	D2	Surfacing & Drainage	D3	Fencing & Entrances	D4	Amenities	D5	Lighting	D6	Water
1.1	Ensure 20% shade coverage within OLA	2.1	All surfaces to be regraded to encourage positive drainage (min. 2%)	3.1	Replace all existing latches with upgraded latch <ul style="list-style-type: none">Redesigned latch to accommodate use and climate	4.1	Install agility equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Undergo professional inspection processGain approval by all governing bodies involvedInstall within small OLAs - encourage exerciseInstall within high use (all sizes)Options for manufactured and natural play	5.1	Install lighting at main entrance <ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium and high useWhere electrical line exists	6.1	Install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where water line existsInstall gravel/concrete radius
1.2	Plant unprotected trees within OLA <ul style="list-style-type: none">Install within low use OLAsInstall gator bags for minimum 2 years	2.2	Install dual surfacing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Various combinationsDetermined by slopes within OLA, size and usage	3.2	Replace all single gate systems with double gate system <ul style="list-style-type: none">Install concrete entranceEnsure turning radius meets AODA requirements	4.2	Agility <ul style="list-style-type: none">Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate SDA	5.2	Install user activated lights at entrance(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium and high useWhere no electrical line exists	6.2	Install dog fountain/bowl within SDA <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where water line existsInstall gravel/concrete radius
1.3	Plant protected trees within OLA <ul style="list-style-type: none">Install within medium use OLAsPlant additional vegetation at base of tree	2.3	Install 200mm min. wood chips <ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium UseUsed in medium sloped areas (2-5%)Ensure installed in areas that receive some sunlightEnsure proper drainageNo filter fabric	3.3	Install steel fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Urban and suburban environmentsMin. 1.5m	4.3	Small Dog Area <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide accessible pathway within OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Less than 4.9% slope - if greater than, hand rail requiredProvide connection between entries/exitsMedium and large sizes: looping pathwaySmall size: linear pathway	5.3	Install solar lights at entrance(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium and high useWhere no electrical line exists	6.3	Install water play <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where water line existsTo be installed within multi-tier drinking fountainInstall gravel/concrete radiusHigh use
1.4	Plant fenced trees within OLA <ul style="list-style-type: none">Install within high use OLAsInstall fencing surrounding tree	2.4	Install 200mm min. EWF <ul style="list-style-type: none">Medium UseUsed in medium sloped areas (2-5%)Ensure installed in areas that receive some sunlightEnsure proper drainageNo filter fabric	3.4	Install post and paddle fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Natural environments and hydro corridorsMin 1.5m	4.4	Pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide accessible pathway within OLA<ul style="list-style-type: none">Less than 4.9% slope - if greater than, hand rail requiredProvide connection between entries/exitsMedium and large sizes: looping pathwaySmall size: linear pathway	5.4	Install lighting along paved pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none">High use all sizesMedium Use and Large	6.4	Install irrigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">To be installed with crushed granite (see surfacing)Where water line exists
1.5	Install shade structure (various sizes) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Located along a pathwaySeating beneath shade structure	2.5	Install 150mm min of crushed granite <ul style="list-style-type: none">High use areasUsed in low sloped areas (2%)Ensure proper drainageNo filter fabricInstall irrigationIrrigation to be run April-October, overnight and for 10 minutes at 12pm and 2pmInstall wind barriers	3.5	Install vegetative boundary/buffer <ul style="list-style-type: none">Visual boundary for adjacent park uses (playground, sports field, etc.)	4.5	Furnishings <ul style="list-style-type: none">Install recycling, garbage and green bins outside main entry/exit<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where necessary, install ashtraysInstall accessible seating<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide accessible pathway to seatingInstall City signage within OLA and prior to entry<ul style="list-style-type: none">Code of ConductHours and BoundaryInstall community boards at main entry/exitInstall educational and interpretive panels at main entry/exit<ul style="list-style-type: none">To be installed in OLAs within 'Environmentally Significant Areas'	5.5	Replace existing lights with LED <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where lighting previously exists		
											
											

For Example...

Shade:
Wychwood Barns

Existing
Wychwood Barns Off Leash Area doesn't achieve 20% shaded area.

Proposed
Install shade structure to achieve 20% shaded area.

Surfacing and Drainage:
Bayview Arena Park

Existing
Bayview Arena Off Leash Area currently has pea-gravel surfacing with low and medium slopes.

Proposed
Install dual surfacing in All Dog Area: Where slope is low, install grass-seed mix (fescue mix) and where slope is medium, install 200mm min. wood chips/EWF. Install grass-seed mix (fescue mix) in Small Dog Area (SDA).

Fencing and Entrances:
L'Amoreux Park

Existing
L'Amoreaux Park is fenced with post and paddle fencing (with wire mesh) to a height of around 1m, but the park is adjacent to a busy road in a suburban area.

Proposed
Increase fencing to height of 1.5m to increase safety of dogs and people.

Amenities:
Merrill Bridge Road Park

Existing
Merrill Bridge Road Off Leash Area is medium-sized, with no Small Dog Area, no accessible pathways, and some seating (not barrier-free). Signage is inconsistent and not at all main entries.

Proposed
Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate SDA. Provide accessible pathway within OLA: looping pathway. Install accessible seating. Install City signage within OLA and prior to main entry.

Lighting:
Cherry Beach

Existing
Cherry Beach Dog Off-Leash Area is popular and large-sized. It has no lighting within the Off Leash Area, but the adjacent parking lot is lit.

Proposed
Install up-to-date lighting at main entrance area to extend winter usage hours.

Water:
High Park

Existing
High Park Dog Off-Leash Area is large-sized and popular. The current water provided is a tap (30cm height) on top of concrete pad with affixed hose, and loose metal bowls brought by the community.

Proposed
Recommending install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain (i.e. for dogs and humans) with properly drained concrete/gravel radius.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

Preliminary Operations and Maintenance Recommendations

The general operations and maintenance recommendations are meant to be applied throughout the City’s 73 Off-Leash Areas. The surfacing recommendations are site-specific based on the type of surfacing being used at each park.

General

- OM1

Ensure consistency for all OLAs

Signage, community boards, garbage and seating
- OM2

Perform weekly inspections

Raking, litter pick up, top up surfacing bins, monitor repairs, etc.
- OM3

Monitor and maintain state of good repair

Shoreline management, waste pick up, lighting, drinking fountains, fencing, etc.
- OM4

Protect and monitor vegetation health

Tree inspection, health, shade coverage, etc.
- OM5

Temporary closures to support vegetative growth

Erosion control, grass regrowth, etc.
- OM6

Ensure pathway to OLA is free of ice and snow

- Where winter maintenance exists - if not maintained, clear hazard signage

- Safety concern

- Solid Waste pick up
- OM7

Work with Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division on surrounding park development

Urban Forestry, Parks, Community Recreation, Management Services, Parks Development and Capital Projects, and Policy and Strategic Planning



Surfacing

- OM8

Install ‘surfacing bins’

- Wood chips, fescue seed mix, EWF

- Promote top ups

- Refill bins as needed
- OM9

Top up surfacing once a year

- Crushed granite, gravel
- OM10

Top up surfacing twice a year

- Wood chips, EWF



City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

Preliminary Administrative Recommendations

The administrative recommendations are to be applied to the current system and hope to address communications between OLA Reps, OLA users and the City.

- A1

Improvements to City Website

- Ways to report concern/issues

- Roles and responsibilities of other governing bodies with contact information

- Ways to license your pet

- List OLA locations

- Commercial Dog Walkers information-licensing fees, responsibilities, etc.
- A2

Create classification of OLAs that reflects City’s Park classifications

- Parkette, Neighbourhood, Community, District and City
- A3

Post Code of Conduct and by-laws in every OLA
- A4

Introduce open/closed hours consult process

- Ensure time restrictions are posted at main entry/exit
- A5

Create educational resources

- Importance of on-leash (i.e. Max)

- Environmentally Significant Areas
- A6

Scheduled lighting

- Varied times- Winter vs Summer

- Scheduled with time restrictions

- A7

Volunteer and stewardship promotion

- Posted within community boards

- Community vs City Wide
- A8

Gather accurate usage data for all OLAs

- Public Life study

- Counter surveys
- A9

Improvements to DOA Program

- Provide a package with role description

- DOA (toronto.ca) email address

- OLA Code of Conduct/by-laws

- Access to community boards at OLAs
- A10

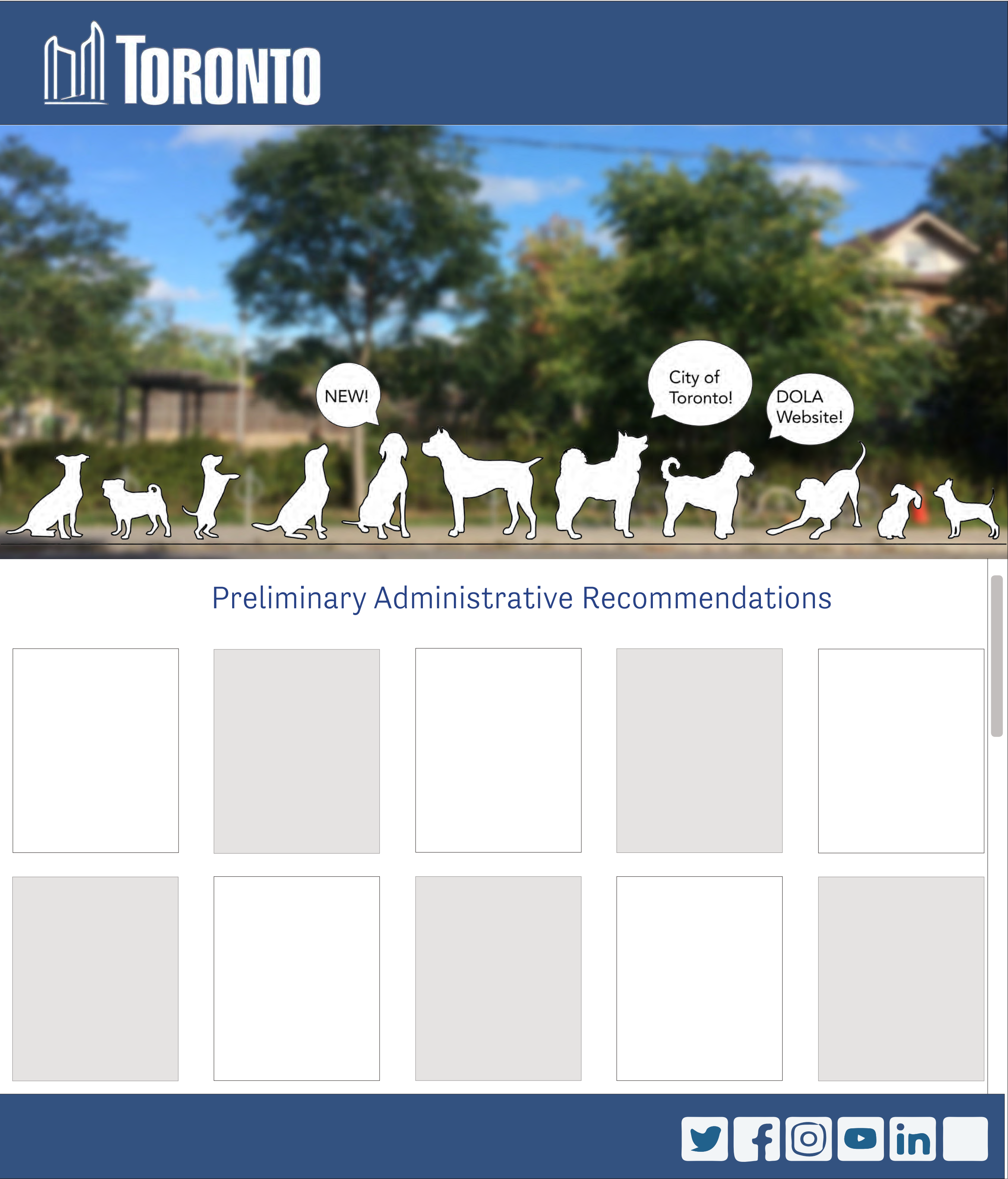
Increase by-law

- 30 by-law officers for 1,600 parks insufficient
- A11

Re-allocation of Commercial Dog Walkers Licensing Fee

- Clearly define CDW

- CDW fee collected separately and put towards CDW Parks

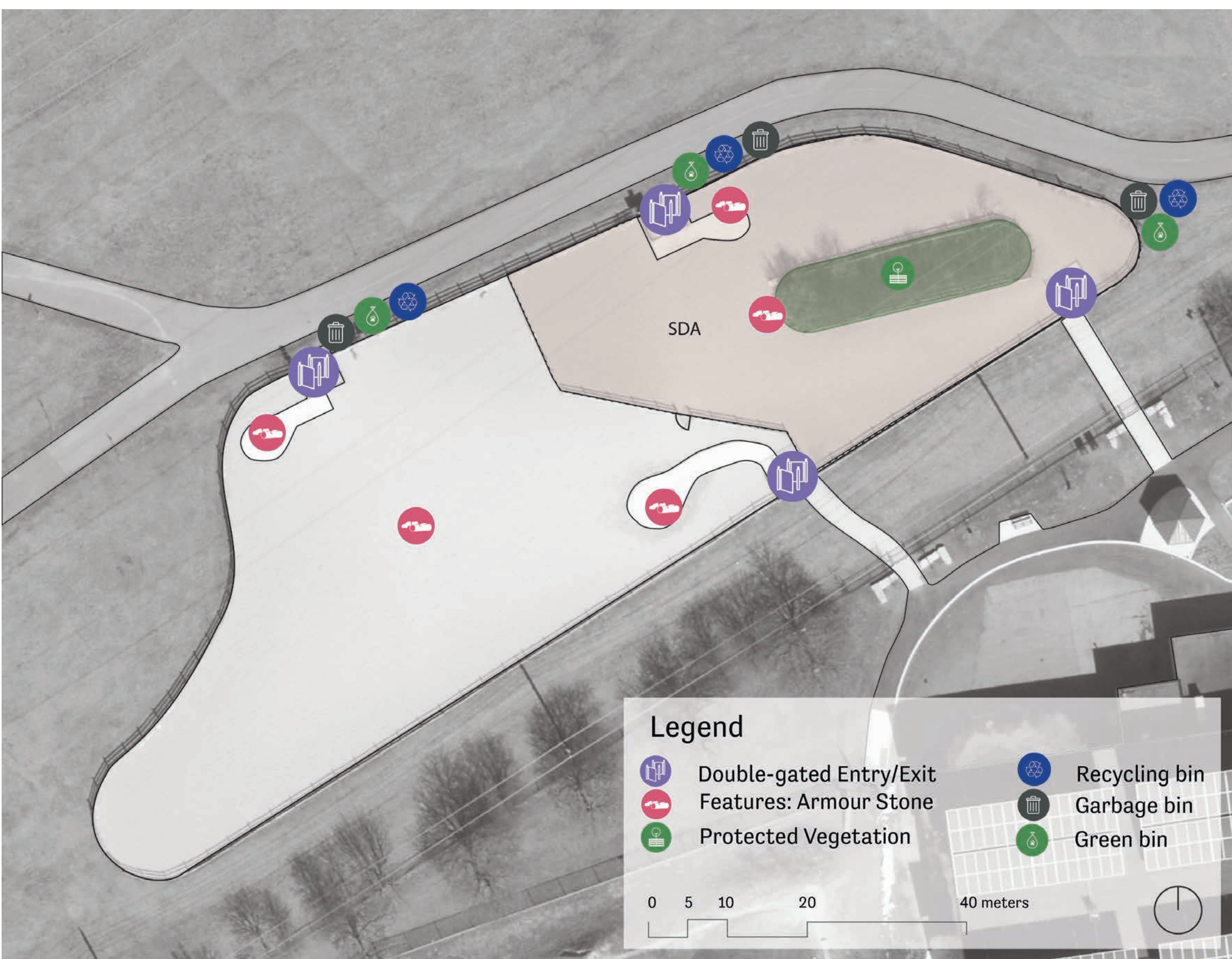
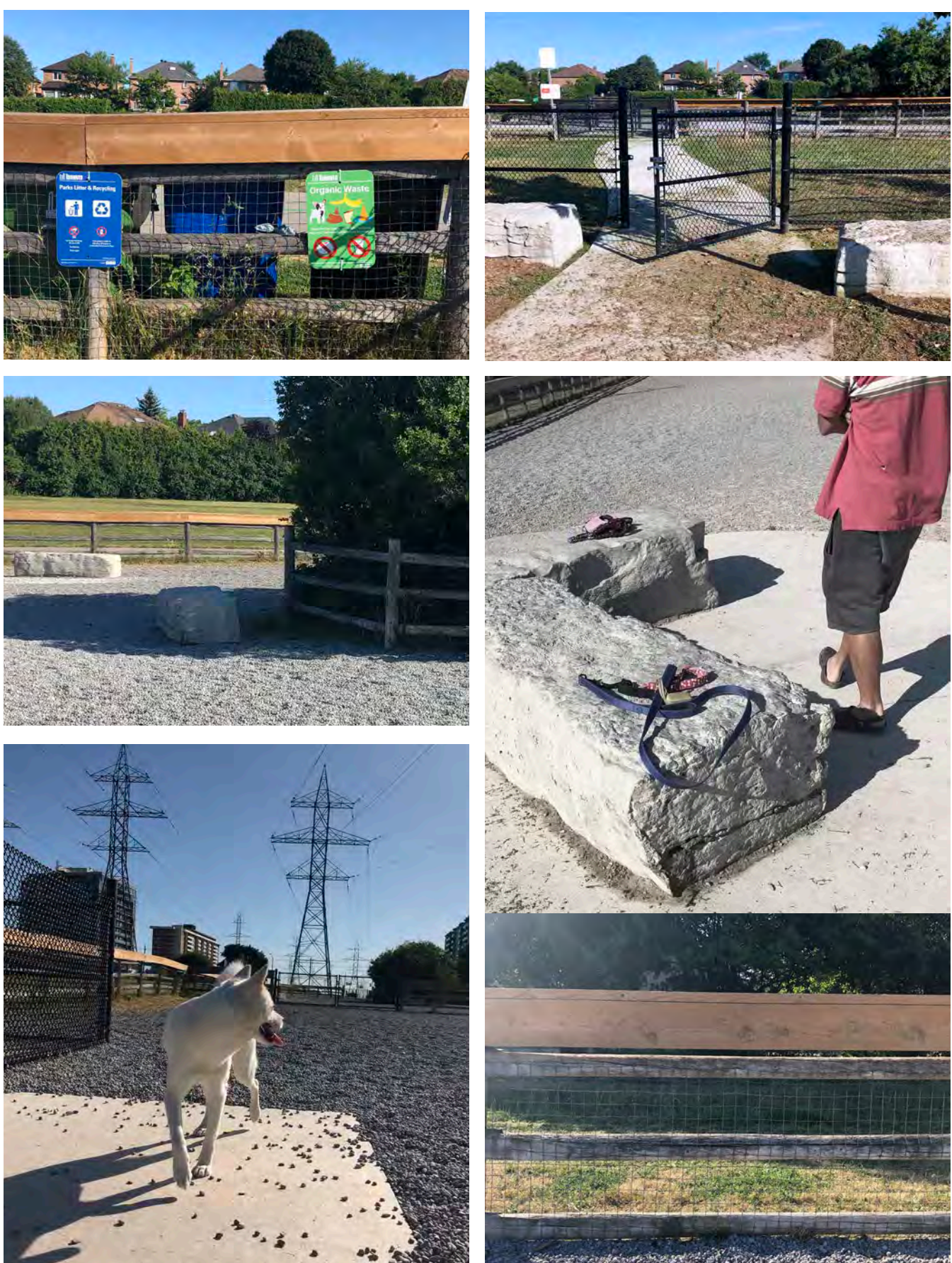


City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

BAYVIEW ARENA PARK

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	1-2% slope
Small Dog Area (SDA)	yes
Access Area	Interrupted paved pathway
OLA Area	Pea Gravel surface with paved pathway islands. Limited accessibility
Surfacing	pea gravel surface; material migration to concrete pathway island surfaces.
Fencing style	Post-and-paddle with wire mesh; height extension wood.
Fencing height	1.26m
Fence condition	In good condition.
Gates	Double gated except the gate between SDA and General Area. Broken latches.
Exits/Entrances	SDA 2; General Area 2 access from path and from parking.
Vegetation	SDA has shrub vegetation to a limited height providing minimal shade. All vegetation fenced-off.

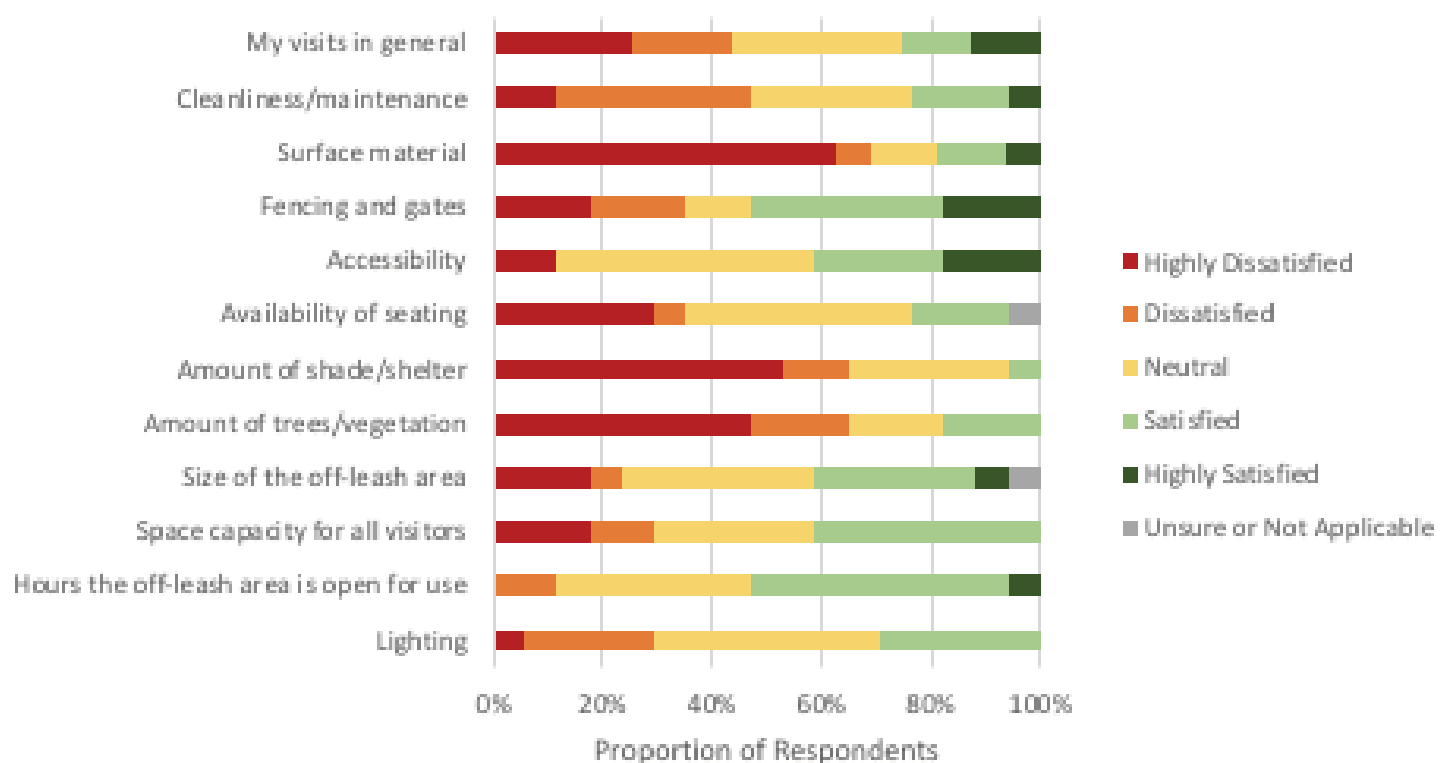


What We've Heard

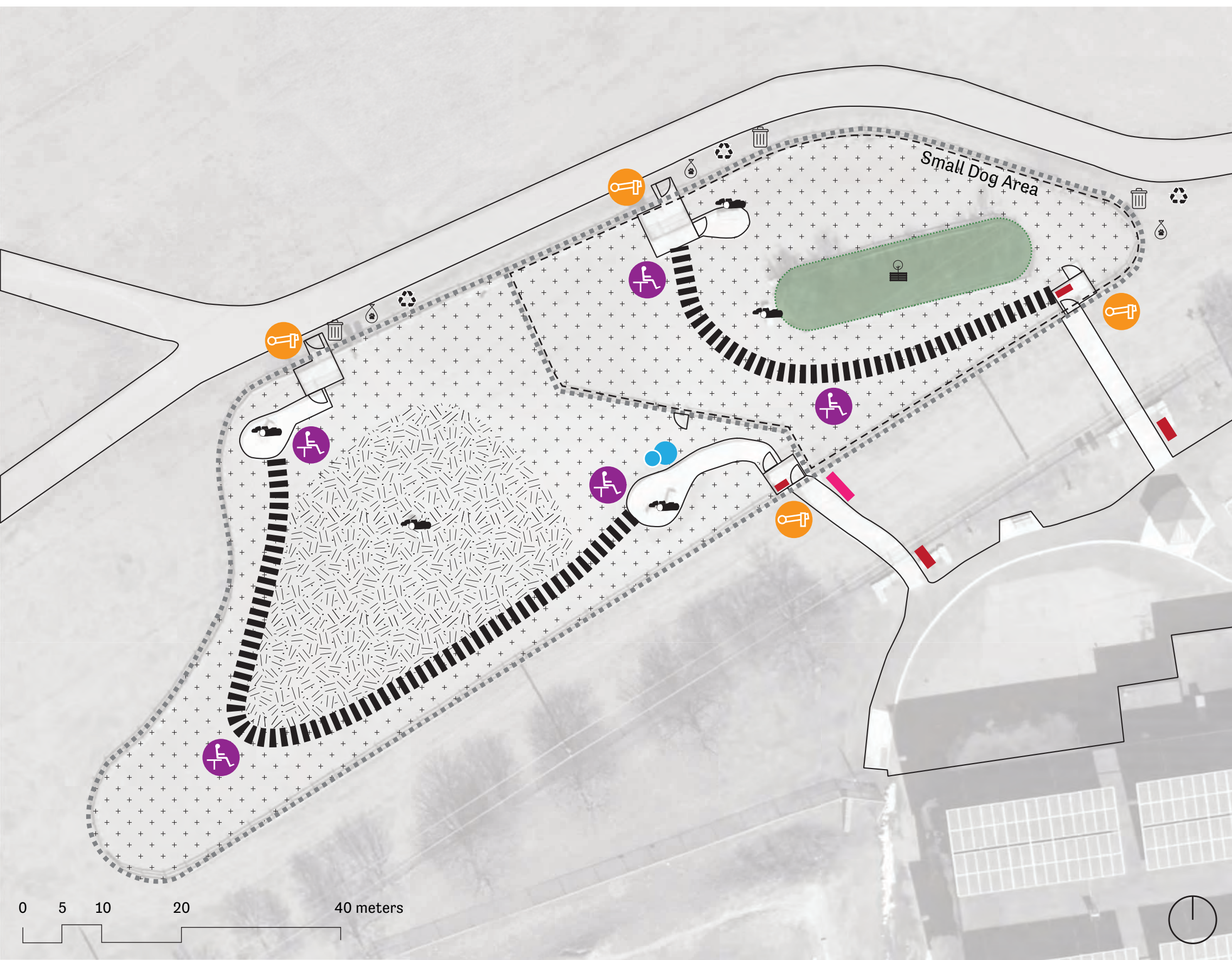
The Bayview Arena Park Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

Size Small, can prevent dog owners from walking their dogs while inside.	Fencing and Entrances Gates often break during the winter, requiring crew of park staff to fix
Shade OLA becomes very hot because not enough shade/shelter, resulting in minimal use	Water Water is not provided/permitted at the OLA
Surfacing & Drainage Pea gravel gets very hot in summer	Admin The heavily salted paths and gated areas can be harmful to dogs' paws

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Bayview Arena satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



Legend

Existing Features

- Double-gated Entry/Exit
- Recycling bin
- Garbage bin
- Green bin
- Features: Armour Stone
- Protected Vegetation

Recommended Features

- Seed Mix
- Wood Chip, 200mm
- New Latch
- Steel Fencing
- Accessible Pathway
- Accessible Seating
- Community Board
- City Signage
- Signage for Drinking Fountain

The Bayview Arena OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

D2.2 Install dual surfacing in General Area

Install grass seed mix (fescue mix) on west side of proposed path and west side of fence to SDA. Install 200mm depth of wood chips within loop created by the proposed All Dogs Area path. Install grass seed mix (fescue mix) in SDA. Both kinds of surfaces absorb less heat than gravel.

D4.3 Provide accessible pathway within OLA

Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages some directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. We recommend a looping pathway in the General Area and a linear one in the SDA based on size.

D4.7 Install community boards at main access point

Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and news. They are a best practice for public parks.

D3.1 Replace existing latch with upgraded latch

Replace the faulty latching mechanisms on all gates with new mechanism that is designed to work well, and without maintenance issues, during all seasons.

D4.5 Install accessible seating

Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Those with mobility constraints will be able to make use of the OLA.

D6.1 Install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain

The OLA is located within a hydro corridor, and the City is unable to provide a water line within the corridor. A multi-tier drinking fountain is being proposed at the arena, with clear signage within the OLA.

D3.3 Install post and paddle fencing (min. 1.5m height).

There is already post and paddle fencing around this OLA. We are proposing that the height of the fence be increased to 1.5m in order to adhere to best practices in dog park design. This height ensures that large dogs cannot jump the fence as easily.

D4.6 Install City signage within OLA and prior to entry

Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or code of conduct.

OM Update maintenance procedures

Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, protect and monitor vegetation health, install surface bins in OLA, and top up wood-chip surfacing twice a year.



City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

CHERRY BEACH

Inventory and Analysis

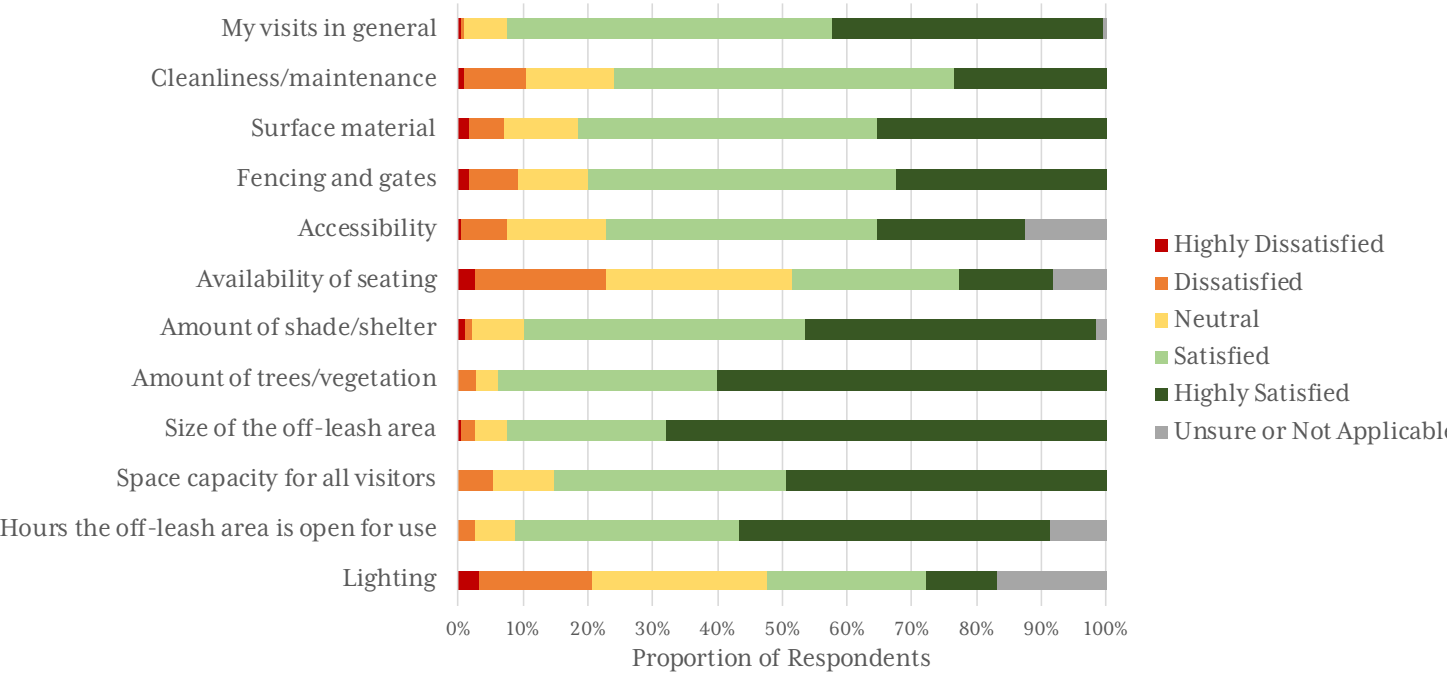
Topography	0-5% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	paved pathway
Surfacing	sand/grass/natural surface holes and digging damage pooling & mud/flooding
Fencing style	post and paddle with wire mesh chain link
Fencing height	1.2m
Fence condition	good condition, but post and paddle lower than required
Gates	3 single gates and 1 maintenance gate
Exits/Entrances	3 all from eastern portion of park.
Trees	5+ with roots exposed, soil compaction, urine rings (at entrance) Many areas with healthy trees.
Other vegetation	Environmentally Sensitive Area – shrub and groundcover varies



What We've Heard

The Cherry Beach Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues	
Communication Lack in effective communication between park users.	Tree Loss Due to erosion and other factors, trees are being lost within the OLA.
Erosion/Flooding Landfill pieces protrude from the ground. Flooding causes swamp and limits access.	Holes Dogs digging causes tripping hazards
Dog Waste People not picking up after their dogs.	Gates Single gate system causes conflict at entry/exit

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Cherry Beach satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



Legend	
Existing Features	
	Gate
	Recycling bin
	Garbage bin
	Green bin
	Features: Agility Features
	Bench
	Boundary
	Existing Tree
	Water Access
	Scrub Vegetation
	Riprap
Recommended Features	
	LED Lighting
	New Latch
	Accessible Pathway
	Accessible Seating
	Community Board
	City Signage
	Vegetation Protection
	Proposed Double Gate
	Interpretive Signage

D3.1	Replace existing latch with upgraded latch Replace the existing latching mechanisms on all gates with new mechanism that is designed to work efficiently, and without maintenance issues during all four seasons.
D3.2	Replace single gate with double gate system Both existing entry/exit gates are single gate systems. Proposed solution is to modified existing single gates to double gate with concrete pad.
D4.3	Provide accessible pathway within OLA Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. We recommend a looping pathway amongst the existing trees.
D4.5	Install accessible seating Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Seating to be located along accessible pathway.
D4.6	Install City signage within OLA and prior to entry Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or code of conduct, and provide reference when needed.
D4.7	Relocate community boards at main access point Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and news. They are consider a best practice for public parks.
D4.8	Install educational/interpretive panels at main entry/exit High Park is located within an ESA and certain measures and precautions need to take place within these areas. Signage will assist in supporting the messaging and awareness of ESA sites.
D5.1	Install lighting at main entrance Lighting exists in the parking lot adjacent to the OLA. Recommendation to provide lighting at the main entry/exit for gates, garbage and community boards.
OM	Update maintenance procedures Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, monitor and maintain shoreline for erosion and hazards, protect and monitor vegetation health and state of good repair and install surface bins in OLA to users to repair holes created by digging.

Cherry Beach is located within an Environmentally Significant Area, and certain measures and precautions need to take place prior to any design recommendations.

The Cherry Beach OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

OM4 Protect and monitor vegetation health

There are many large existing trees within the OLA. Based on recommendations by a certified arborist, these trees need to be properly protected with protective fencing around tree trunks with river rock or mulch at the base to prevent compaction and digging.

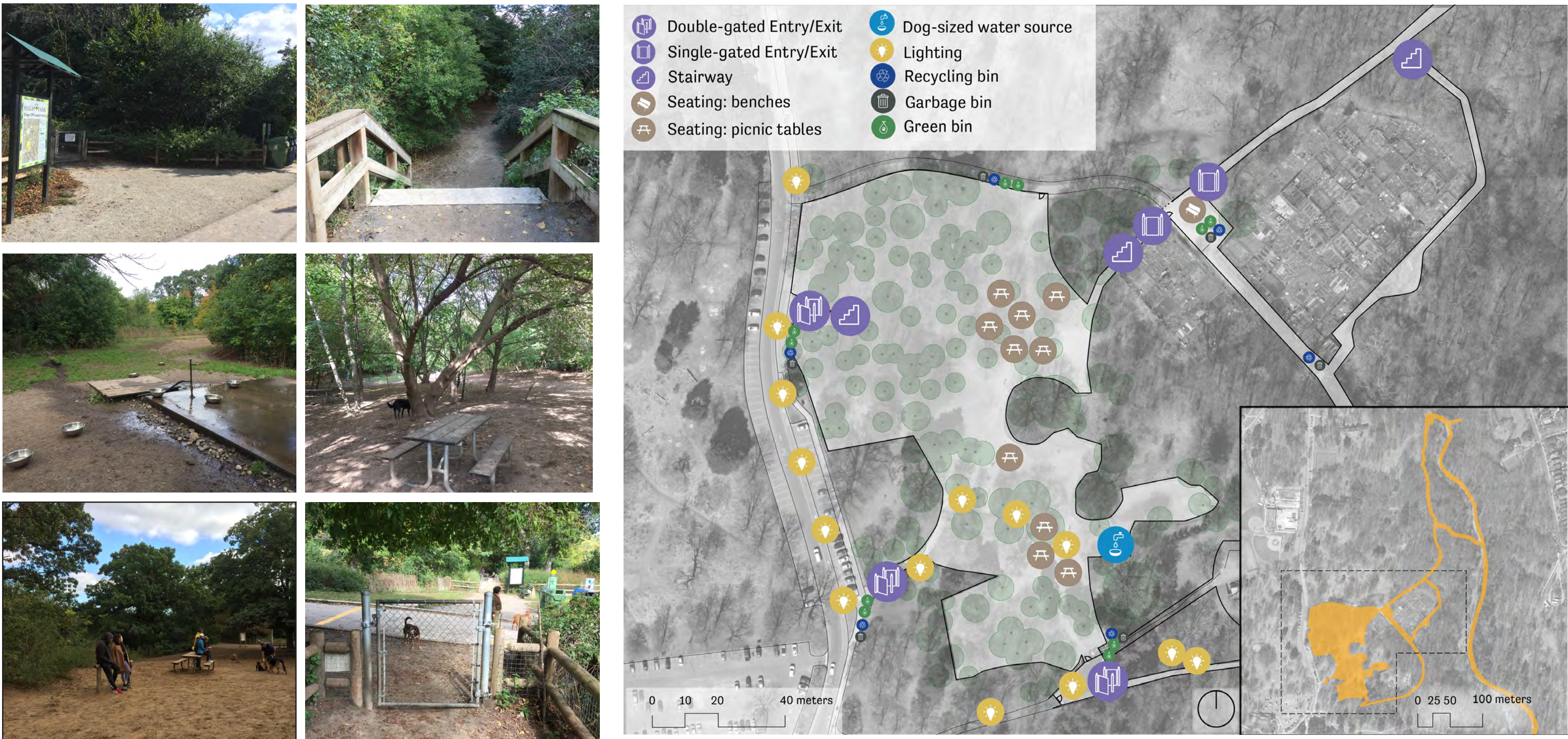


City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

HIGH PARK

Inventory and Analysis

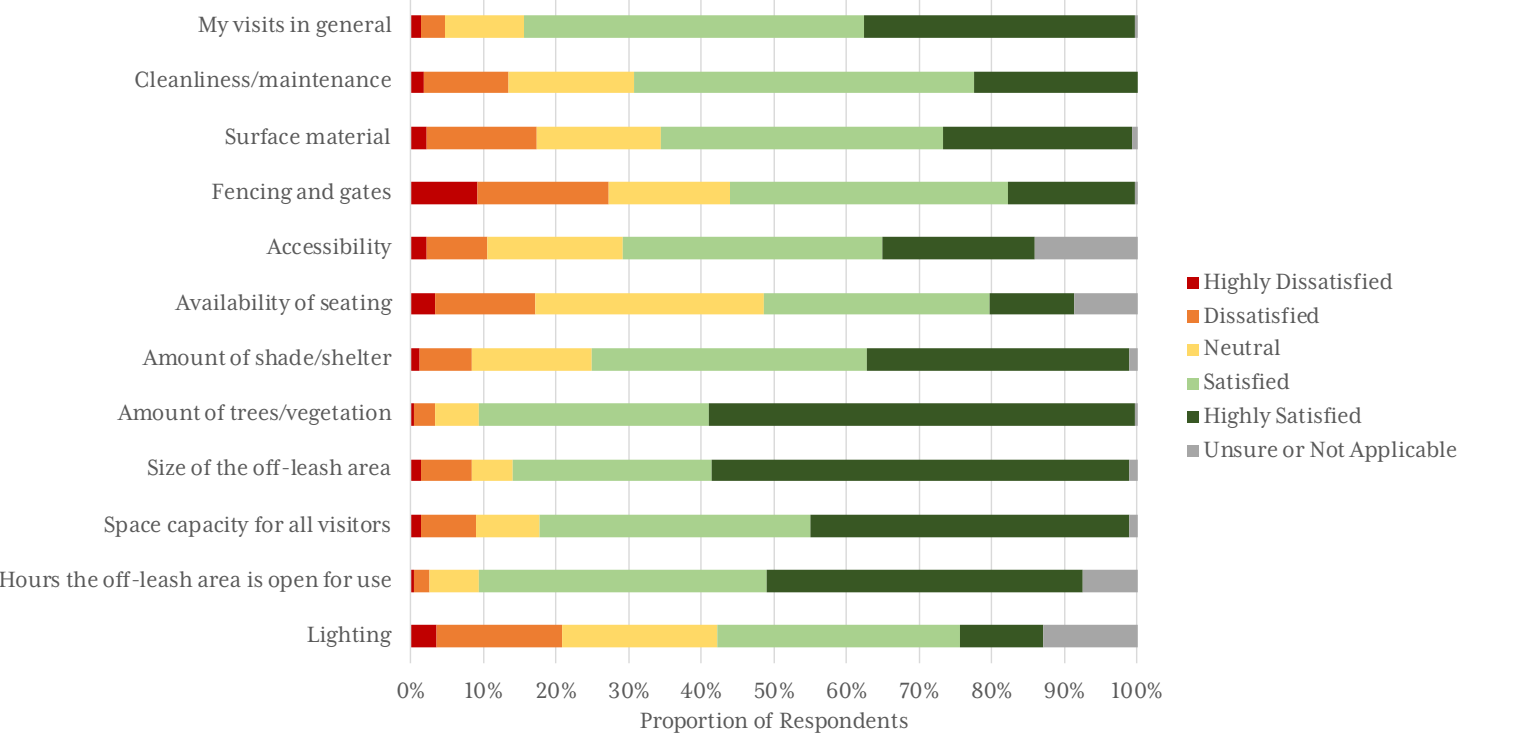
Topography	varies; 2-9% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	paved pathway
Surfacing	sand/grass/natural surface holes and digging damage erosion
Fencing style	post and paddle with wire mesh
Fencing height	1.2 m
Fence condition	Rusted, poor condition, breaks and gaps, warping/sagging, some unsafe conditions.
Gates	3 double-gated, 2 single-gated
Exits/Entrances	5 (Off-Leash Park area)
Trees	5+ with roots exposed, damaged 3 urine ring damage, root flare damage; 1 dead tree; many areas with healthy trees.
Other vegetation	Environmentally Sensitive Area – shrub and groundcover varies.



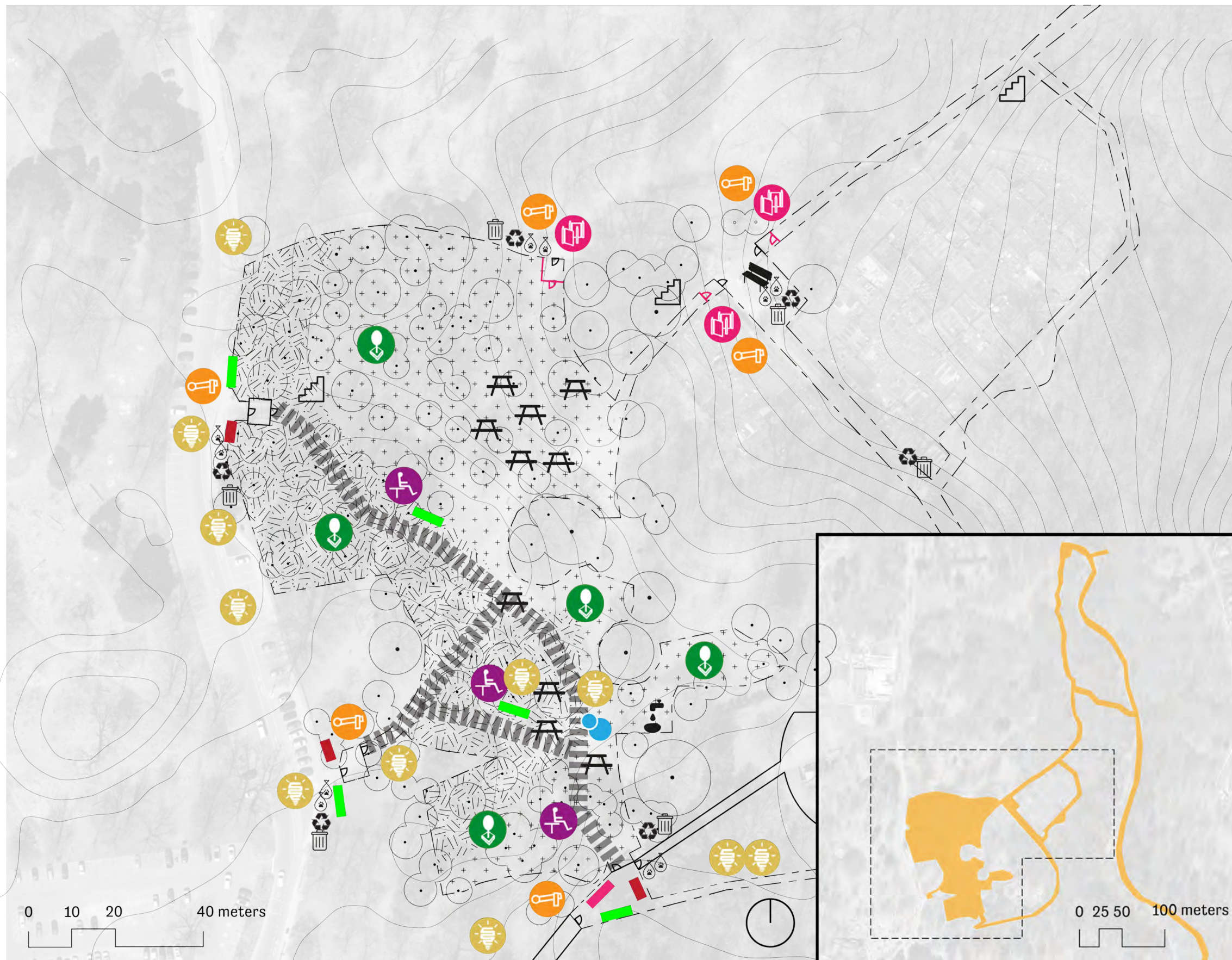
What We've Heard

The High Park Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues	
Communication Lack in communication between park staff and the park users.	Gate Damage Gates are damaged and no longer function effectively.
Erosion Spring Road entry has significant erosion. Safety is a concern.	Waste Management No green bins located at main entry/exit. Dog waste being left on the ground.
Fencing Inconsistent fencing, various holes and damage. Dogs escaping and getting injured.	ESA Education Lack of understanding and education about the importance of an ESA.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for High Park satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



High Park is located within an Environmentally Significant Area, and certain measures and precautions need to take place prior to any design recommendations.

The High Park OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

- Legend**
- Existing Features**
- Double-gated Entry/Exit
 - Recycling bin
 - Garbage bin
 - Green bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic Table
 - Existing Tree
 - Water
 - Stairs
- Recommended Features**
- Grass
 - Wood chip
 - LED Lighting
 - New Latch
 - Accessible Seating
 - Accessible Pathway
 - Interpretive Signage
 - Community Board
 - City Signage
 - Accessible Drinking Fountain
 - Vegetation Protection
 - Proposed Double Gate

D2.2 Install dual surfacing

Install grass seed mix (fescue mix) on east side of proposed path to help stabilize the slope and prevent further erosion. Install 200mm depth of wood chips on the west side of the proposed path within the flatter areas.

D3.4 Install ESA compatible fencing

There is already fencing around this OLA. There are many holes that have required repairs. Fencing is inconsistent. The recommendations to increase the height of the fence to 1.5m in order to adhere to best practices in dog park design. Work needs to be further investigated as it relates to the ESA.

D4.6 Install City signage within OLA and prior to entry

Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or code of conduct, and provide reference when needed.

D6.1 Install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain

The is an existing drinking hose within the OLA, however a multi-tier drinking fountain would provide drinking water for all users and would eliminate the need to bring water bowls.

D3.1 Replace existing latch with upgraded latch

Replace the existing latching mechanisms on all gates with new mechanism that is designed to work efficiently, and without maintenance issues during all four seasons.

D4.3 Provide accessible pathway within OLA

Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. We recommend a looping pathway as well as a linear pathway that connected the entrances.

D4.7 Relocate community boards at main access point

Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and news. They are consider a best practice for public parks.

OM Update maintenance procedures

Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, protect and monitor vegetation health and state of good repair, install surface bins in OLA to users to repair holes created by digging, and top up wood-chip surfacing twice a year.

D3.2 Replace all single gate with double gate system

Most of the existing gates at High Park are double gate, however the connection at Spring Road are single gates. Proposed solution is to modified existing single gates to double gate with concrete pad.

D4.5 Install accessible seating

Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA.

D4.8 Install educational/interpretive panels at main entry/exit

High Park is located within an ESA and certain measures and precautions need to take place within these areas. Signage will assist in supporting the messaging and awareness of ESA sites.

OM4 Protect and monitor vegetation health

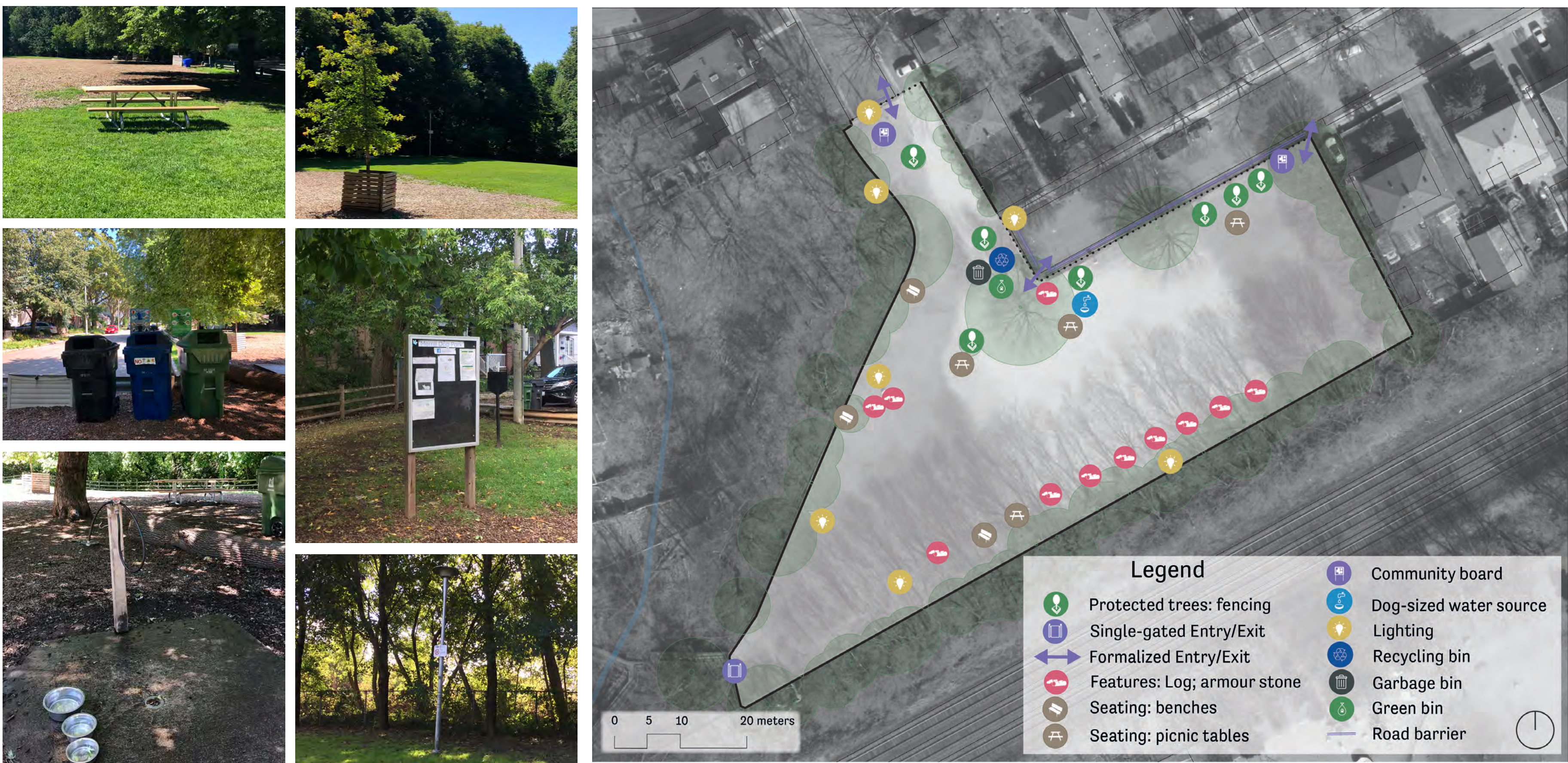
There are many large existing trees within the OLA. Based on recommendations by a certified arborist, these trees need to be properly protected with protective fencing around tree trunks with river rock at the base.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

MERRILL BRIDGE ROAD PARK

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	2-11% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	paved sidewalks for main entry; wooden boardwalk steps for back entry
Surfacing	grass/natural surface & wood chips/ EWF; some holes and digging damage; some erosion and compaction; material migration.
Fencing style	wire mesh and post and paddle; chainlink; unfenced on several sides
Fencing height	1.2m post and paddle; 1.8m chainlink
Fence condition	good condition
Gates	1 single gate at ravine entrance
Exits/Entrances	5: 1 gated; 3 semi-formal; 1 informal
Trees	7 young trees fenced/protected; 1-2 mature trees with urine ring damage, some root exposure; perimeter has healthy trees
Other vegetation	none beyond groundcover

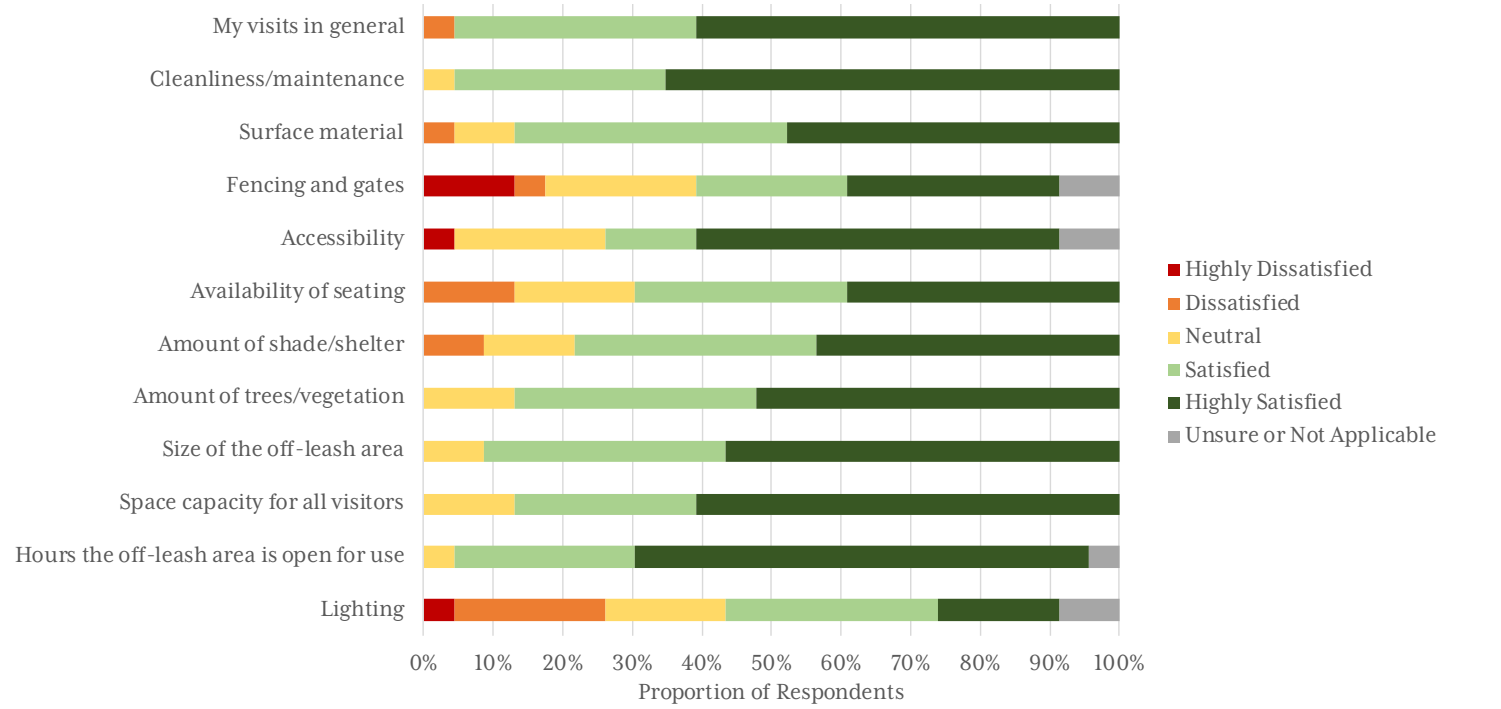


What We've Heard

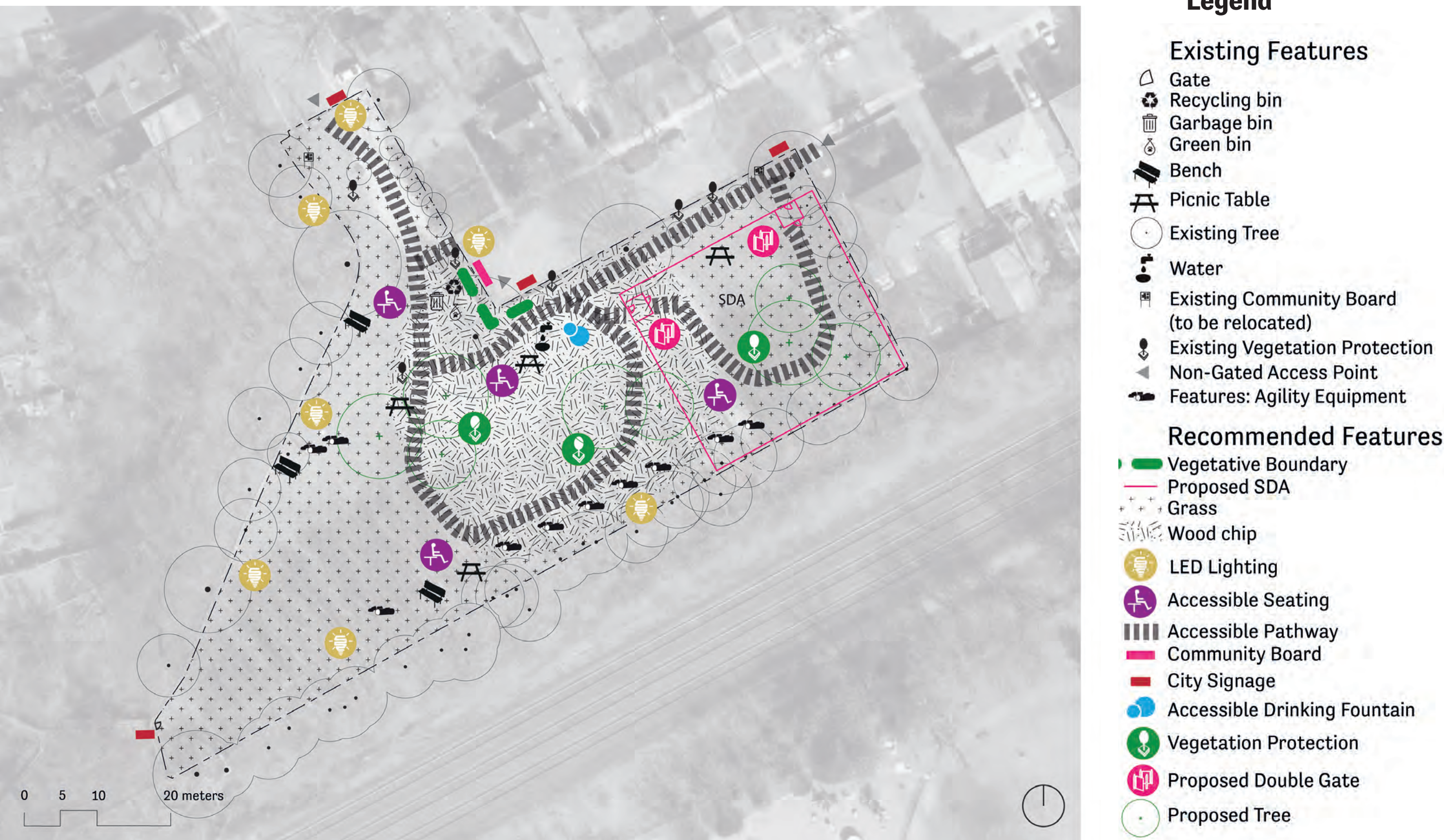
The Merrill Bridge Road Park Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

Small Dog Area No SDA within Merrill Bridge contributes to an unsafe/uncomfortable environment. Desire for separate area for small dogs .	Communication Difficulty getting response to requests from City and from Metrolinx regarding issues with rail corridor.
Waste Disposal OLA users often discarding dog waste in recycling bin.	Bylaw Enforcement Some commercial dog walkers are using the park despite the park's designation as non-CDW. Enforcement of by-laws and better signage of the code of conduct is required.
Operations and Maintenance Existing surface bin needs to be topped up more frequently to allow users to fill the holes their dogs have dug.	

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Merrill Bridge satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



- D1.3** Plant protected trees within OLA
Merrill Bridge contains several protected trees, however the fencing used for protection needs to be updated to a City standard to ensure proper protection and maintenance.
- D2.2** Install dual surfacing in general area
Retain the current grass areas of the OLA, but install to a more durable seed mix. Similarly, top up 200mm depth of wood chips within area that already contains them, but the path (D4.3) will allow for more containment and separation of the surfaces.
- D3.7** Formalize main access point
This OLA has several access points. The road barriers assist in designating areas to enter, however to ensure that all entries are supplied with appropriate signage and garbage bins, vegetation will be added to emphasize appropriate entries.
- D4.2** Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate SDA
There is demand for a SDA within Merrill Bridge, and the size of the park is sufficient that supplying a separate area for small dogs would not be an issue. Providing a SDA is a best practice in dog parks to allow for the comfort of both small and large dogs during play.
- D4.3** Provide accessible pathway within OLA
Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. We recommend a looping pathway as well as a linear pathway that connects the entrances and includes the SDA.
- D4.5** Install accessible seating
Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Those with mobility constraints will be able to make use of the OLA.
- D4.7** Relocate community boards at main access point
Community boards already exist at two of the access points, but this requires duplicate information to be posted on the boards. For consistency and ease of access, consolidation to a larger board placed at more central location is recommended.
- D5.5** Replace existing lights with LED
Where lighting currently exists, replace lights with LEDs. LEDs provide brighter lights and better durability while providing a reduced impact on the environment.
- D6.1** Install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain
There is an existing drinking tap and hose within the OLA, however a multi-tier drinking fountain would provide drinking water for all users and would eliminate the need to bring water bowls.

The Merrill Bridge Road OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.



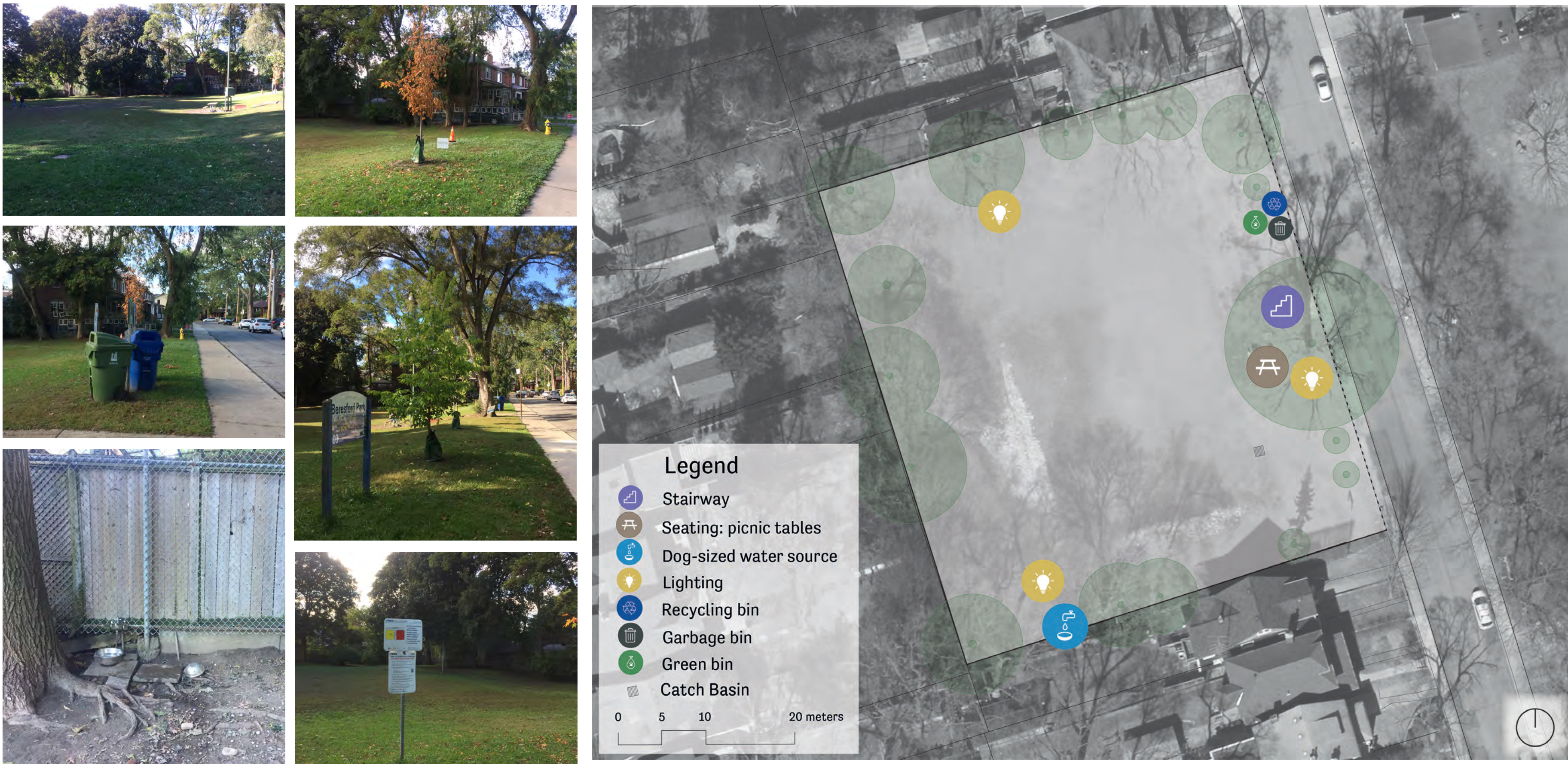
- OM** Update maintenance procedures
Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, monitor and maintain surface bin contents so users of OLA can repair holes created by digging, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees. Additional fencing or other protection will be considered for mature trees as part of these duties.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

BERESFORD PARK

Inventory and Analysis

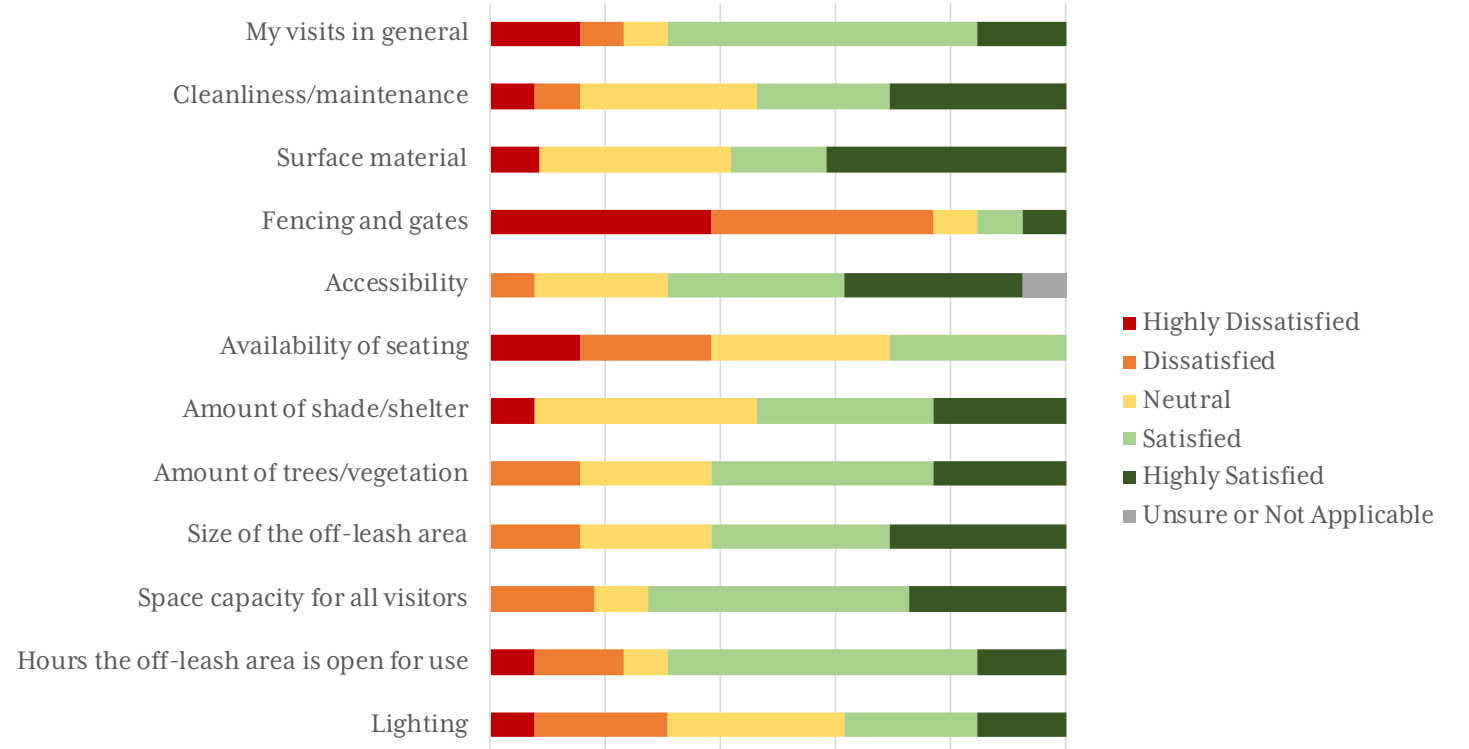
Topography	2-8% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	paved sidewalk adjacent to road
Surfacing	Grass/Natural Some holes and digging damage;
Fencing style	chainlink; unfenced on street edge
Fencing height	2-3m chainlink
Fence condition	vegetation taking over and some rust
Gates	1 single gate from private yard
Exits/Entrances	N/A
Trees	1 dead young tree in gator bag; 2 newly planted trees in gator bags; mature trees with urine ring damage, root exposure and root wounding; some healthy trees along perimeter
Other vegetation	some shrubbery on perimeter



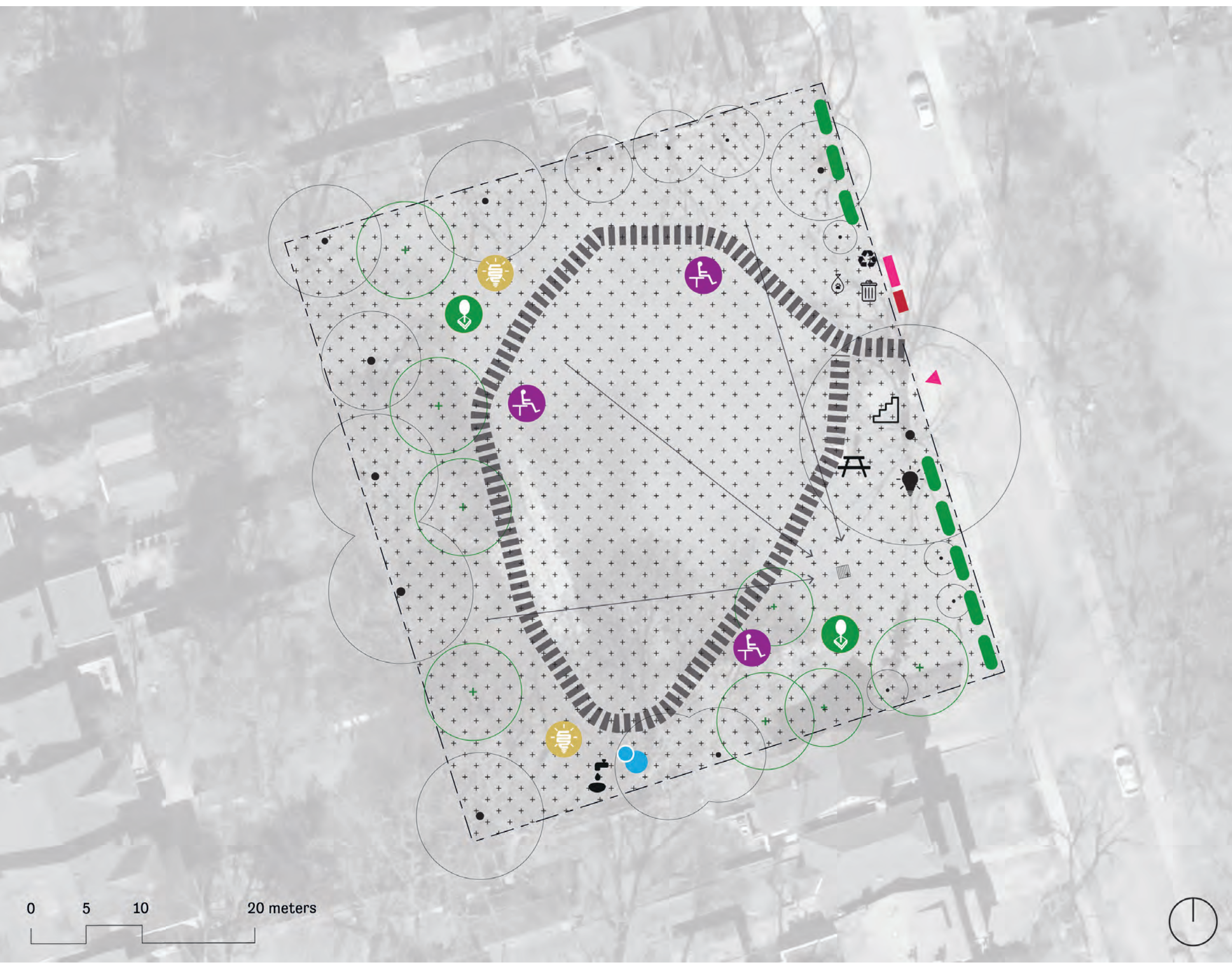
What We've Heard

- The Beresford Park Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues
- Fencing**
Lack of barrier between road and OLA can be dangerous for dogs if they run out onto the street
 - Human Litter**
Incidents of meat scraps being found within the OLA have caused problems for dogs and users.
 - Enforcement and Reporting**
Lack of information and education about dogs conflicts. Unsure on actions resulting from 311 calls.
 - Roles and Responsibilities of OLA**
Unclear role and responsibility of DOA Rep and therefore are unable to effectively communicate resources and information to the community.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Beresford Park satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



Legend

- Existing Features**
- Recycling bin
 - Garbage bin
 - Green bin
 - Bench
 - Picnic Table
 - Existing Tree
 - Water
 - Existing Community Board
 - Existing Lighting
 - Non-Gated Access Point
 - Steps
 - Catch Basin
- Recommended Features**
- Grass Seed Mix (Fescue Mix)
 - Accessible Seating
 - Accessible Pathway
 - Community Board
 - City Signage
 - Drainage
 - Accessible Drinking Fountain
 - Vegetation Protection
 - Vegetative Boundary
 - Proposed Main Access Point
 - Proposed Tree
 - LED Lighting

D1.3

Plant protected trees within OLA
Beresford OLA contains young deciduous trees with gator bags along the perimeter of the area. Recommendation to plant additional protected trees, while ensuring the centre area remains clear to allow for the winter skating rink.

D3.5

Install vegetative boundary
There is a secure boundary along 3 sides to the OLA, however there are concerns with dogs running out into the road or adjacent playground. Installing a vegetative boarder will help to reduce dogs escaping the OLA, while keeping it free of gates and fencing.

D4.6

Install City signage within OLA and prior to main access point
Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or Codes of Conduct.

D2.1

Surfacing to be regraded to encourage positive drainage (min 2%)
This OLA is bowl shaped with a catch basin in the south east corner. Positive drainage to this catch basin will reduce pooling and puddling and ensure that the winter skating rink drains properly.

D4.3

Provide accessible pathway within OLA
Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. Recommendation for a looping path.

D4.7

Install community boards at main access point
Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and local news.

D6.1

Install multi-tier drinking fountain
There is an existing informal drinking tap within the OLA, however a multi-tier drinking fountain would provide drinking water for all users and would eliminate the need to bring water bowls.

D2.8

Install grass seed mix (fescue mix)
Grass surfacing is favoured within this OLA. Recommendation is to retain the current surface material, but install a more durable seed mix with native grasses.

D4.5

Install accessible seating
Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Those with mobility constraints will be able to make use of the OLA.

D5.5

Replace lighting with LED
Where lighting currently exists, replace lights with LEDs. LEDs provide brighter lights and better durability while providing a reduced impact on the environment.

OM

Update maintenance procedures
Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, install surface bins for users to repair holes created by digging, monitor and maintain surface bin contents, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees and grassed areas. Temporary closed portions may result to encourage regrowth.



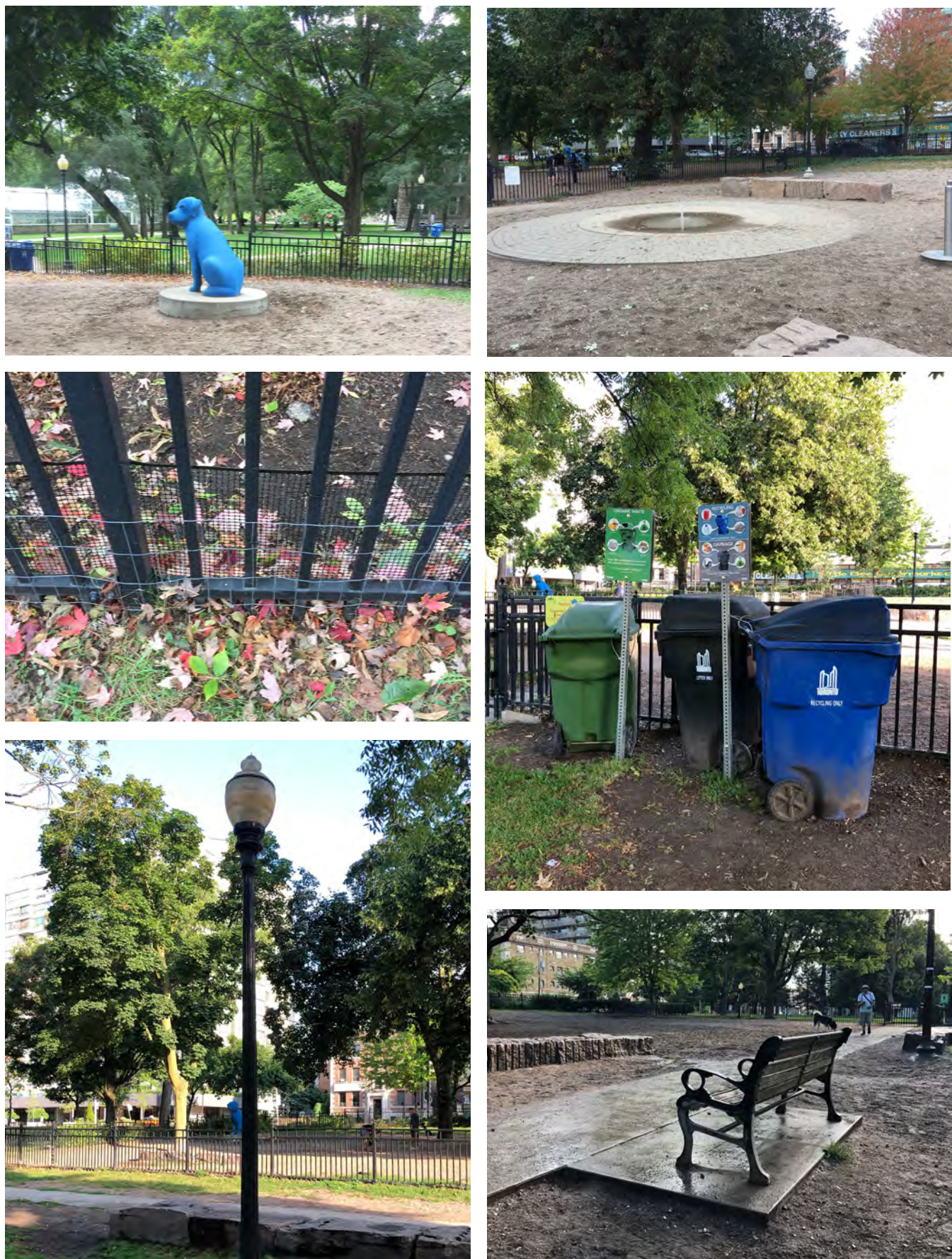
The Beresford Park OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

ALLAN GARDENS

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	0-4% slope
Small Dog Area	yes
Access Area	paved sidewalks for all entries
Surfacing	grass/natural surface a lot of compaction
Fencing style	Wrought iron fencing with wire mesh reinforcement at base
Fencing height	1.29 m
Fence condition	Some rust, otherwise good
Gates	5 gates, all double gated
Exits/Entrances	1 entrance/exit from outside to Small Dog Area (SDA); 1 from General Area to SDA; 3 from outside to General Area
Trees	5 trees within the OLA in varying states of health – 1 with basal damage; 1 with severe defoliation; 3 trees within SDA appear in better health but still have root exposure and subject to compaction
Other vegetation	none

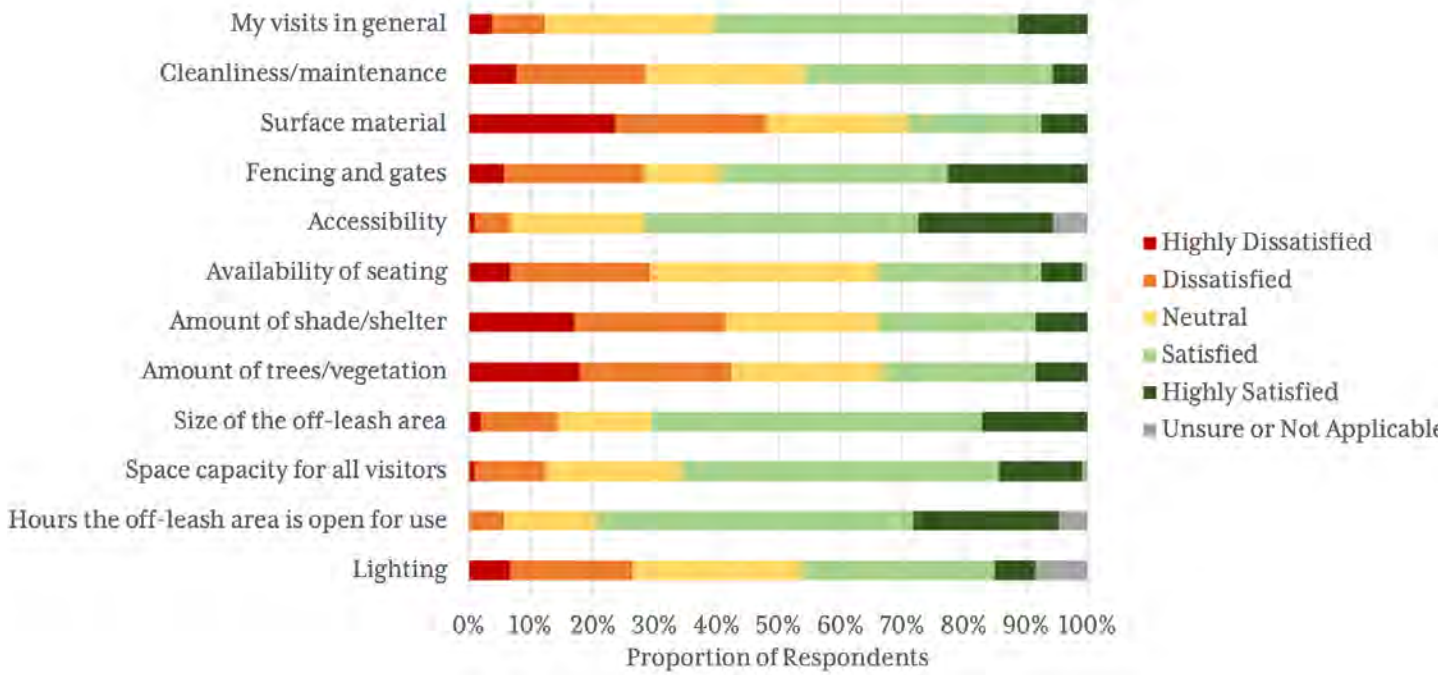


What We've Heard

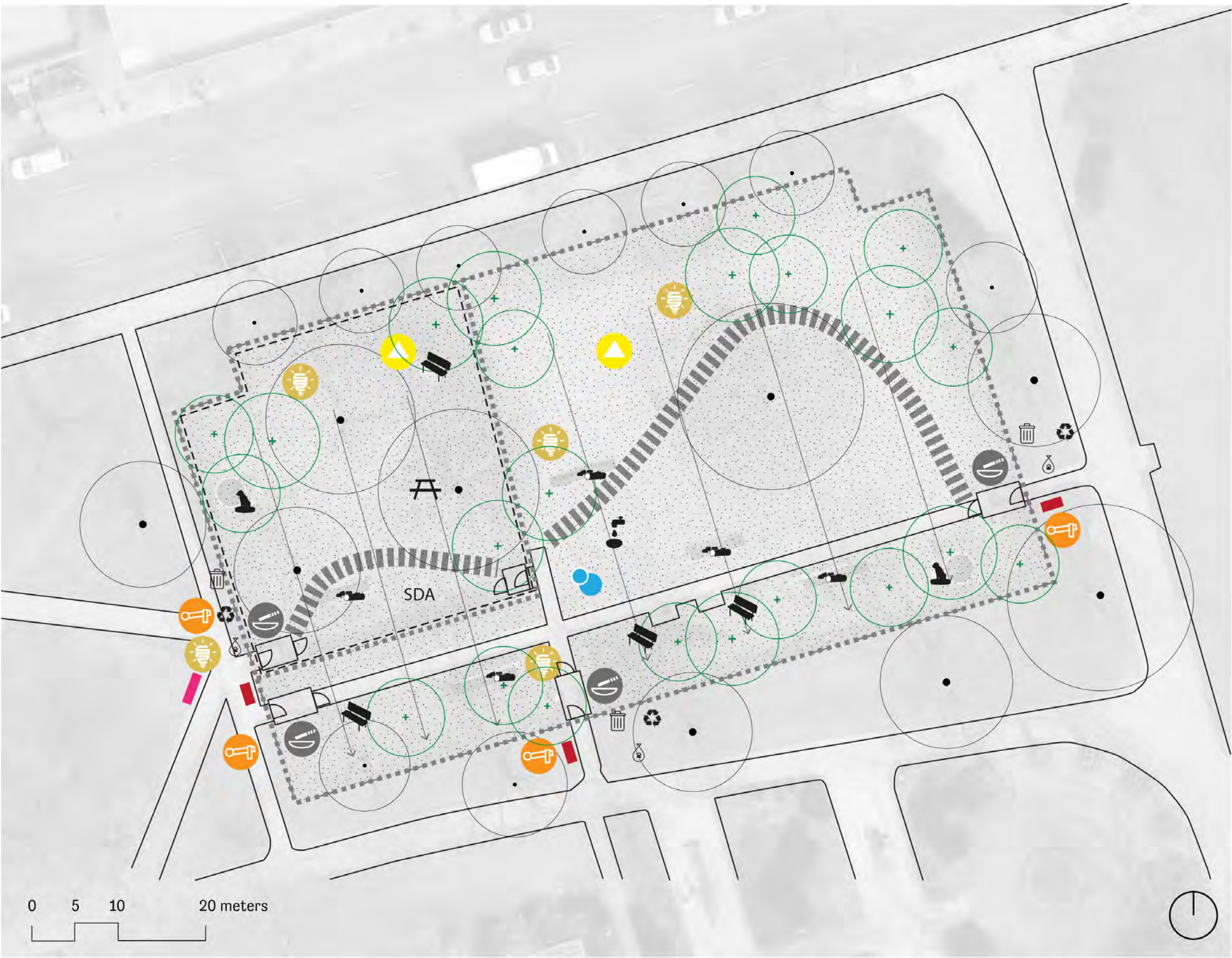
The Allan Gardens Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

Shade Very limited shade within the general dog area. A large tree was recently lost.	Fencing Larger dogs are able to jump over the fences. Wire mesh along bottom of fence has helped with small dogs but no maintenance of mesh.
Surfacing Mixed feelings about what the best surface material would be: sandy dirt or crushed granite.	Lighting The current lighting is not bright enough and insufficient.
Cigarette Waste Cigarette butts are littering the OLA.	Water No easy access to water within SDA. No human water fountain.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Allan Gardens satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



The Allan Gardens OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

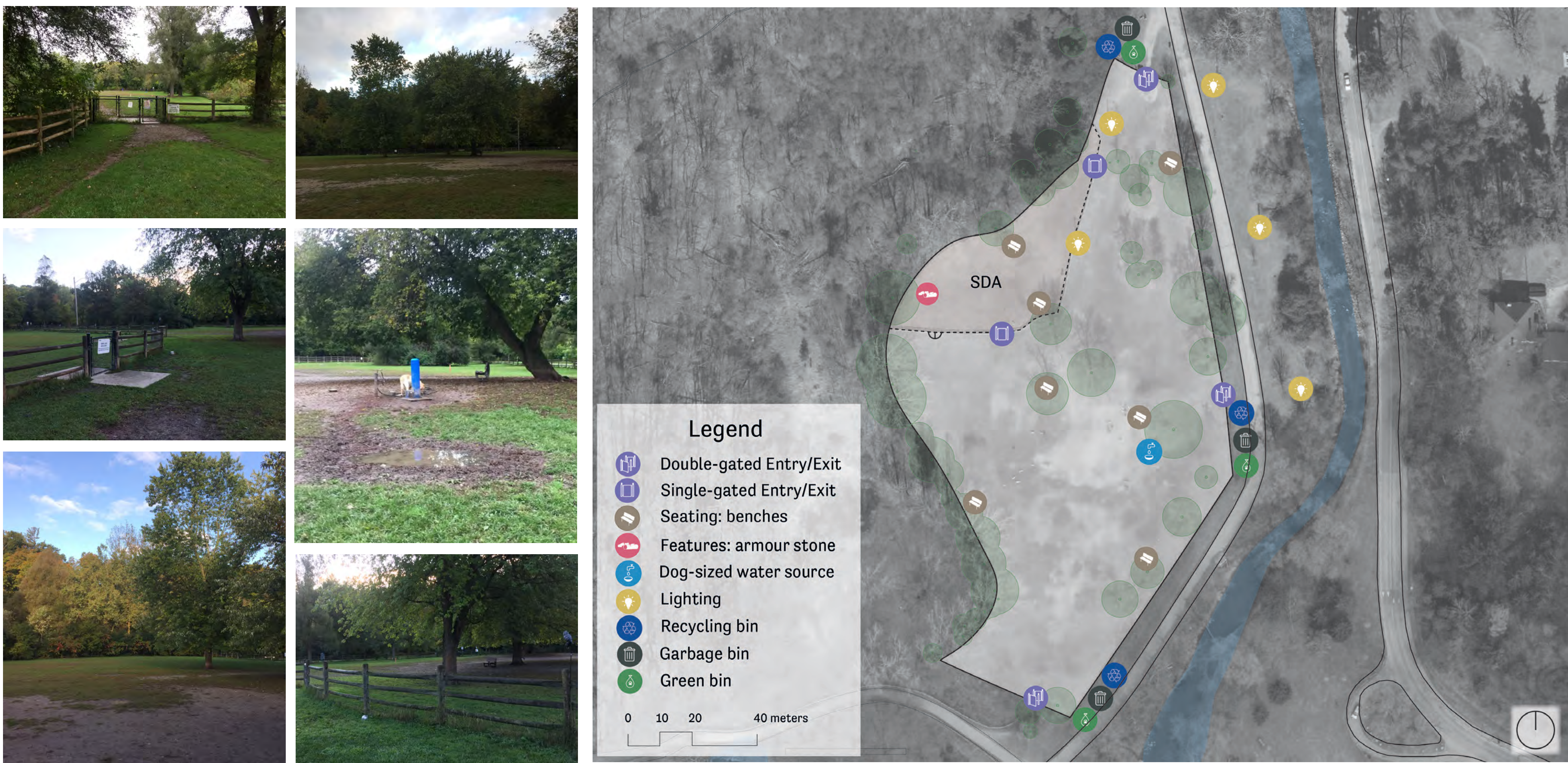
D1.4 Plant fenced trees within OLA Allan Gardens OLA contains mature deciduous trees in varying states of health. Recommendation to plant additional trees within General Area and SDA to provide more shade and ensure a spread of tree ages. Both existing trees and proposed trees will be fenced.	D2.1 Surfacing to be regraded to encourage positive drainage (min 2%) This OLA is flat and suffers from soil compaction, leading to poor drainage. Positive drainage will reduce pooling and puddling, particularly around the splash pad.	D2.8 Install 150mm crushed granite This OLA is heavily used and requires a surfacing that can accommodate and support it's usage. Recommendation to install crushed granite to 150mm depth to encourage proper drainage and reduce muddiness.
D3.1 Replace existing latches with upgraded latch Redesigned latches will make gates more accessible. New latches will be more resilient during winter use.	D3.3 Install steel fencing (min. 1.5m high) Taller fences will prevent large dogs from jumping out of the OLA. Steel fencing also employs a mesh-like structure and will prevent small dogs from squeezing under or through the fence.	D4.1 Install Agility Equipment* This OLA is high use but small in size. Agility equipment could provide more opportunity for rigorous play within the OLA and promote exercise. *Please note that any and all agility equipment will need to go through a professional inspection process prior to installation and yearly during use.
D4.3 Provide additional accessible pathway within OLA Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. Recommendation for path that enters and goes through SDA.	D4.4 Install ashtrays at access points In an effort to prevent cigarette butts from littering the OLA, recommendation is to install outdoor ashtrays near all main access points.	D4.6 Install City signage within OLA and prior to main access point Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or Codes of Conduct.
D4.7 Install community boards at main access point Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and local news.	D5.5 Replace lighting with LED Where lighting currently exists, replace lights with LEDs. LEDs provide brighter lights and better durability while providing a reduced impact on the environment.	D6.1 Install multi-tier drinking fountain There is an existing informal drinking splash pad within the OLA, however a multi-tier drinking fountain would provide drinking water for all users and would eliminate the need to bring water bowls.
		OM Update maintenance procedures Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, monitor and maintain splash pad and irrigation, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees. Trees will be fenced off for protection.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

SUNNYBROOK PARK

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	-2% slope
Small Dog Area	yes
Access Area	paved road entry but unpaved/natural path connection into OLA
Surfacing	grass/natural surface holes/digging damage evident areas of poor drainage
Fencing style	post and paddle with wire mesh chain-link entrances
Fencing height	1 m
Fence condition	poor condition- holes, rust, sagging
Gates	3 double gates from outside OLA; 2 single gates between general area and small dog area
Exits/Entrances	2
Trees	~20 trees; often with exposed roots with root damage; basal damage/urine rings; compaction around roots; perimeter trees outside of OLA are healthy
Other vegetation	shrubs and groundcover protecting some trees along perimeter



What We've Heard

The Sunnybrook Park Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

Water Supply

Base of water source drains poorly and puddle forms. Dogs are drinking from the puddles.

Maintenance and Winterization

Issues with the latches and concrete pads due to snow and ice build up. Using salt is a concern.

Fencing

Fencing near forested area is too low and of poor quality. Dogs are able to escape.

Communication

Some park users unfamiliar that OLA is for dogs. Users are biking and picnicking which can be unsafe for all.

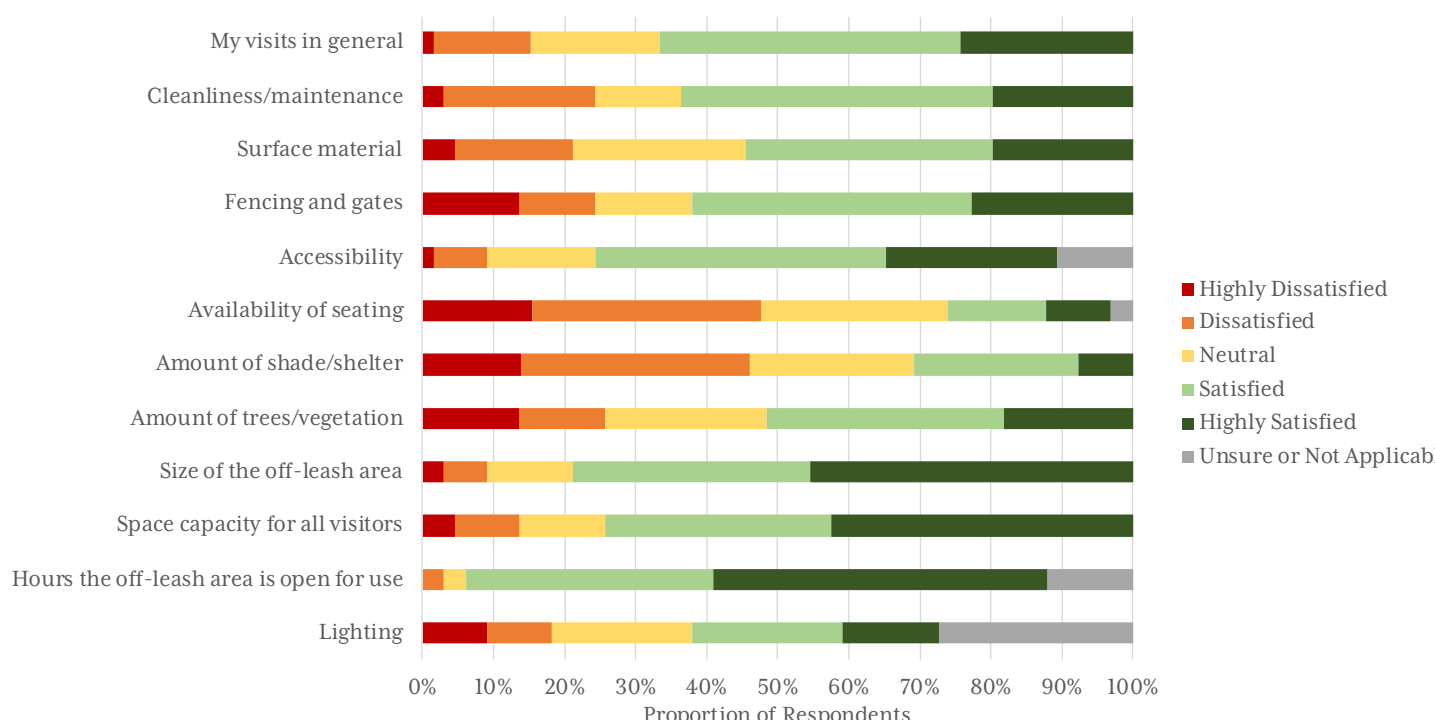
Small Dog Area

Dogs must enter general area prior to the SDA. Need direct access to SDA from main entry/exit

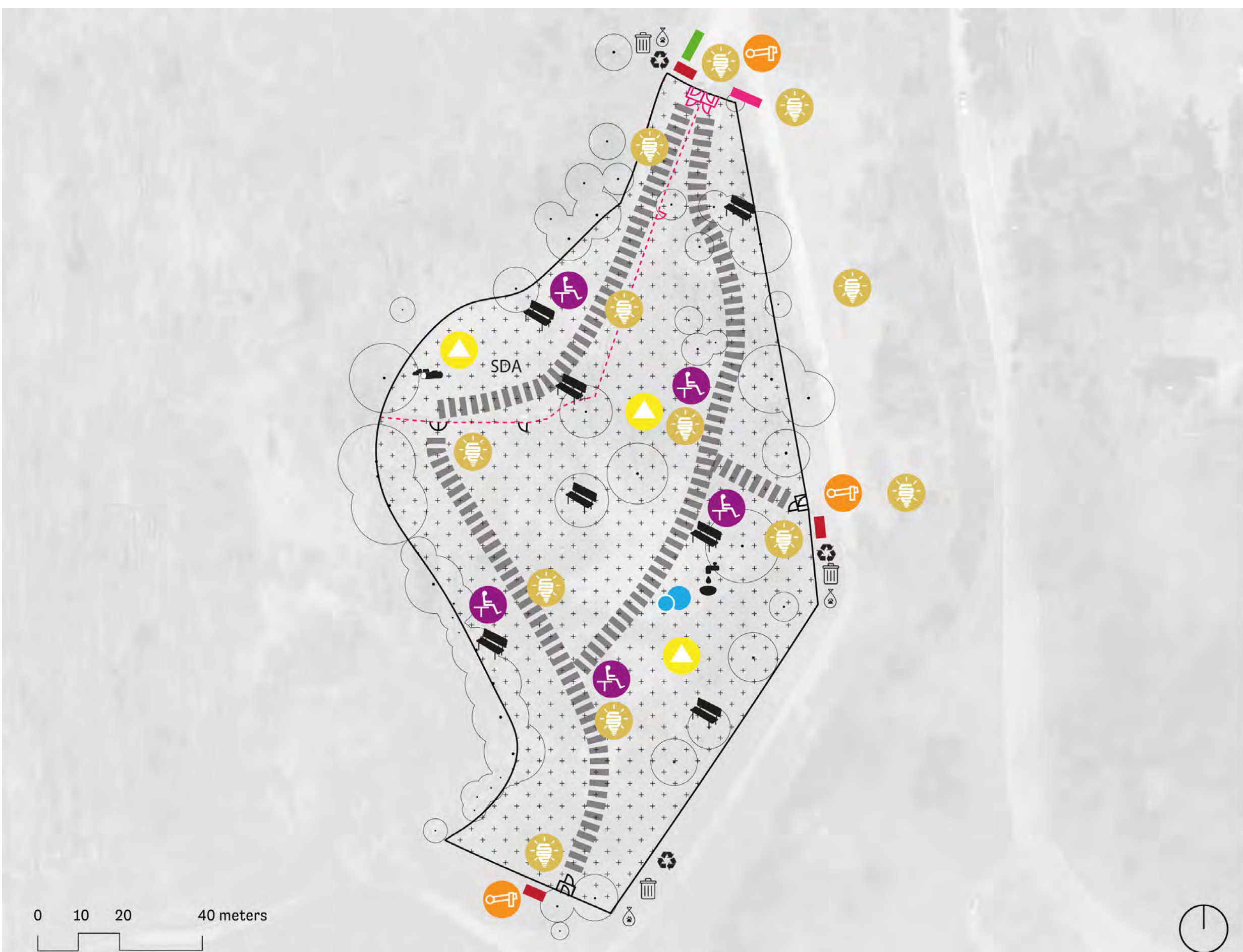
Interactive Elements

Lack of tactile amenities within OLA. Users would like to see elements for the dogs to play/exercise.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Sunnybrook Park satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



Legend

Existing Features

- Double-gated Entry/Exit
- Recycling bin
- Garbage bin
- Green bin
- Bench
- Existing Tree
- Water
- Features: Agility Features

Recommended Features

- Grass Seed Mix (fescue mix)
- LED Lighting
- New Latch
- Accessible Seating
- Accessible Drinking Fountain
- Community Board
- City Signage
- Interpretive Signage
- New Agility Equipment

D2.8

Install grass seed mid (fescue mix)

Grass surfacing is favoured within this OLA. Recommendation is to retain the current surface material, but install a more durable seed mix with native grasses.

D4.1

Install Agility Equipment*

This OLA is high use and there is demand for interactive elements. Agility equipment could provide more opportunity for rigorous play within the OLA and promote exercise. *Please note that any and all agility equipment will need to go through a professional inspection process prior to installation and yearly during use.

D4.5

Install accessible seating

Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA.

D5.1

Install lighting at main entrance and along paved pathway

D5.4

Sunnybrook is a large OLA, and numerous users travel through the park. Existing lighting within OLA to be upgraded to LEDs, and additional lighting should be installed along looping pathway and main entry/exit.

D3.1

Replace existing latches with upgraded latch

Redesigned latches will make gates more accessible. New latches will be more resilient during winter use.

D4.2

Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate SDA

There is an existing SDA within the OLA, however users have to walk through the general area to access it. Boundary to be extended to the north to allow users direct access to the SDA.

D4.6

Install City signage within OLA and prior to main access point

Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or Codes of Conduct.

D6.1

Install multi-tier drinking fountain

There is an existing multi-tier drinking fountain within the OLA, however the surrounding surfacing does not drain properly. Installing appropriate surfacing at the base of the drinking fountain will ensure proper drainage and reduce pooling and puddles

D3.4

Install ESA compatible fencing

There is already fencing around this OLA, however there are holes that have required temporary repairs. The recommendations to increase the height of the fence to 1.5m in order to adhere to best practices in dog park design. Work needs to be further investigated as it relates to the ESA.

D4.3

Provide additional accessible pathway within OLA

Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. Recommendation is to also include a path that goes through SDA.

D4.7

Install community boards at main entry/exit

Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and local news.

OM

Update maintenance procedures

Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, install surface bins for users to repair holes created by digging, monitor and maintain surface bin contents, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees and grassed areas. Temporary closed portions may result to encourage regrowth. Tree fencing to be installed with proper root and base protection.

The Sunnybrook Park OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

D4.8

Install educational/interpretive panels at main entry/exit

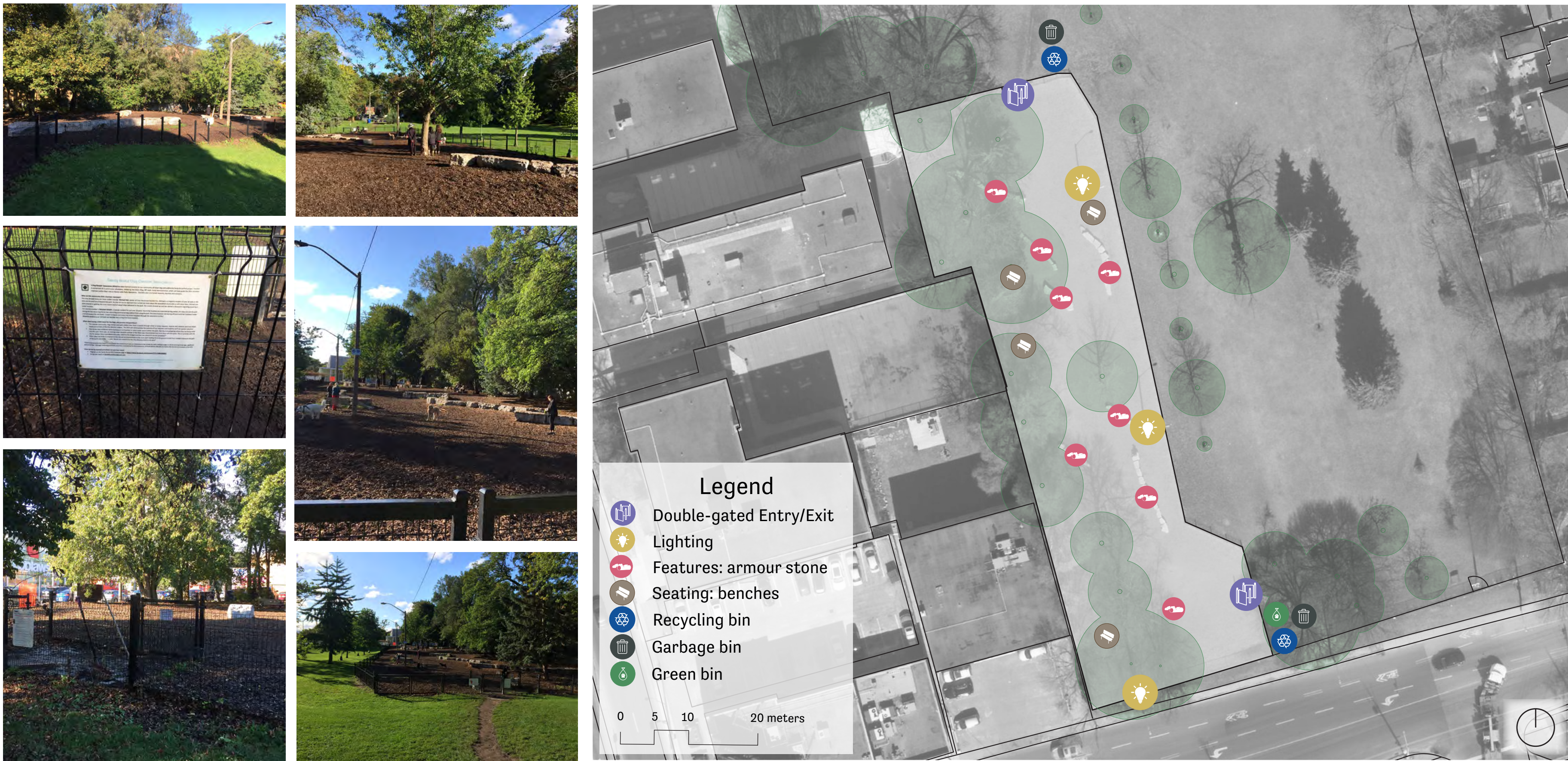
Sunnybrook Park is located within an ESA and certain measures and precautions need to take place within these areas. Signage will assist in supporting the messaging and awareness of ESA sites.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

SANDY BRUCE PARK

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	-2-3% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	grass and dirt pathways
Surfacing	woodchips/EWF; material migration
Fencing style	omega/steel fencing on border with rest of parkland; old chain-link on border with private property; chain-link gates
Fencing height	1 m
Fence condition	old fencing is overgrown in some areas
Gates	2 double gates from outside OLA
Exits/Entrances	2; one to the north, one to the east
Trees	~11 mature trees; urine rings and basal damage with stripped bark; little root damage; perimeter trees outside OLA are healthy
Other vegetation	shrubs and groundcover along western edge



What We've Heard

The Sandy Bruce Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

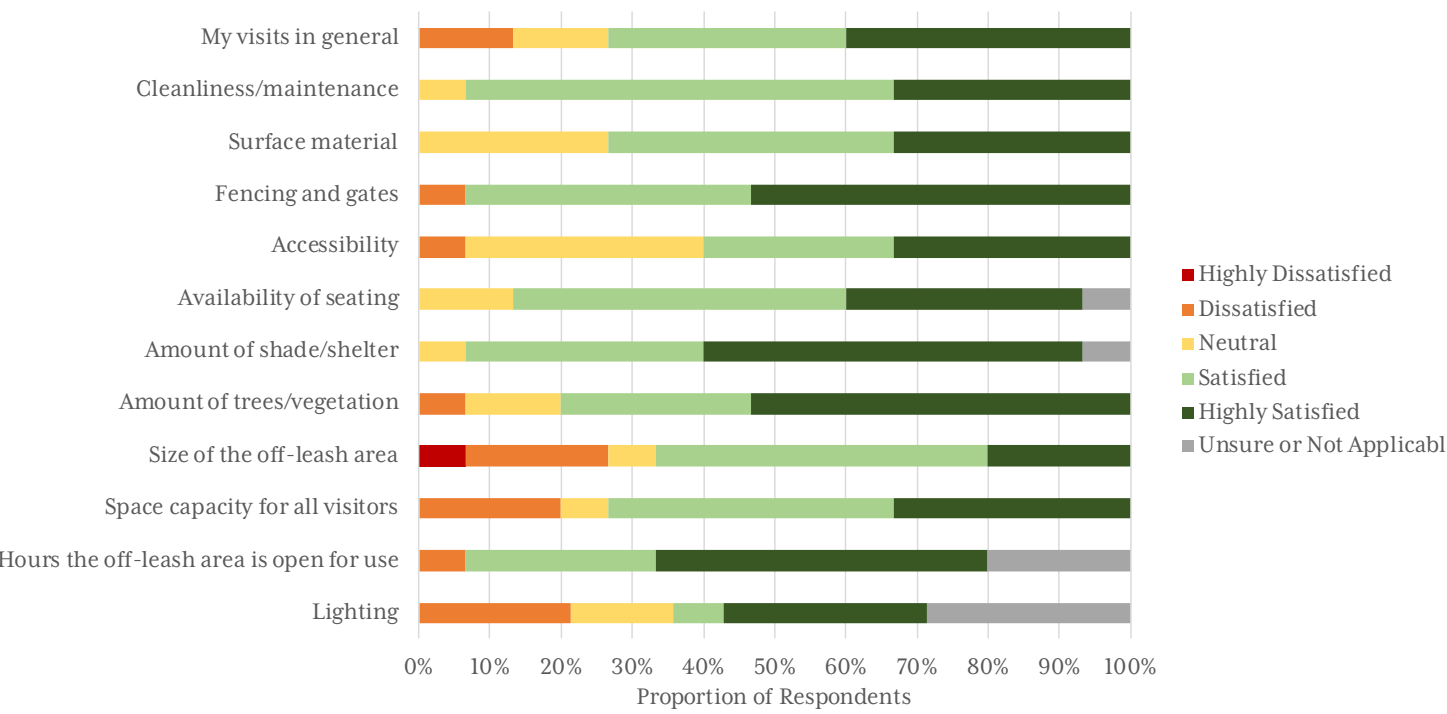
Communication
Disappointed with the response rate from the City. Concerned that issues are not being tracked and/or recorded. Lack of information to DOA Rep to share with OLA users.

Gates and Concrete Pads
Significant snow and ice buildup as the concrete is flush with the ground. Poor drainage causes pooling and ice build up.

Slope and Drainage
Sandy Bruce is on a large slope and it's difficult to maneuver in the winter months with ice and snow. Pooling at base of slope.

Surface Maintenance
Surfacing needs to be topped up more consistently. Concern that other parks get more attention. Replenishment should be done on a schedule.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Sandy Bruce satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



The Sandy Bruce OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

- D2.2** Install dual surfacing

Sandy Bruce OLA currently has wood chips/EWF. As this is a medium to high use park, woodchips are recommended. However, since this park is sloped there is lots of material migration. A mix of grass seed (fescue mix) will be implemented to help stabilize and reduce erosion/migration.
- D3.1** Replace existing latches with upgraded latch

Redesigned latches will make gates more accessible. New latches will be more resilient during winter use.
- D3.6** Install concrete pad at all access points

This OLA has existing concrete pad entries, however they are flush with the ground and have poor drainage that causes pooling. Concrete pad to be regraded to ensure positive drainage to eliminate pooling.
- D4.3** Provide additional accessible pathway within OLA

Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA.
- D4.5** Install accessible seating

Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Those with mobility constraints will be able to make use of the OLA.
- D4.6** Install City signage within OLA and prior to main access point

Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or Codes of Conduct.
- D4.7** Install community boards at main access point

Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and local news.
- D5.5** Replace lighting with LED

Where lighting currently exists, replace lights with LEDs. LEDs provide brighter lights and better durability while providing a reduced impact on the environment.
- D6.1** Install multi-tier drinking fountain*

There is no existing water fountain within Sandy Bruce. Installing a multi-tier drinking fountain for all OLA users. Surrounding surfacing would include gravel or concrete to ensure proper drainage and limit pooling and puddles.

*If existing waterline exists



- OM** Update maintenance procedures

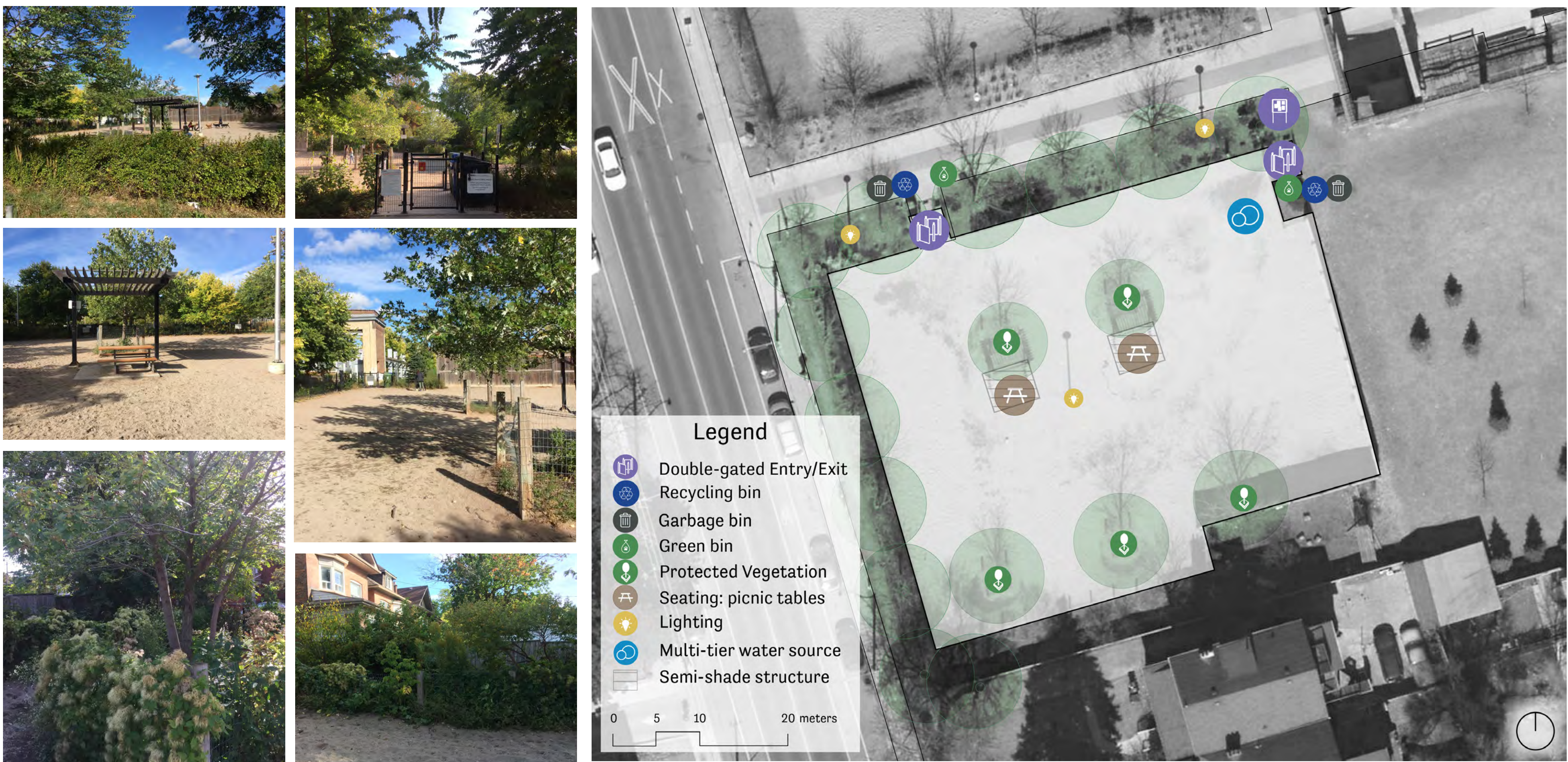
Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, install surface bins for users to repair holes created by digging, monitor and maintain surface bin contents, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees and grassed areas.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

WYCHWOOD CAR BARN

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	0-2% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	paved sidewalks for all entries
Surfacing	crushed granite/sand; exposed filter fabric; compaction causing negative drainage; material migration
Fencing style	steel/Omega fencing; wire mesh fencing to protect existing trees
Fencing height	1.2 m
Fence condition	good condition
Gates	2 gates; all double gated
Exits/Entrances	2
Trees	5 young trees fenced/protected; trees within OLA are enclosed with fencing surrounded by high vegetation, causing moist tree trunk; perimeter outside OLA trees are healthy
Other vegetation	vines, ragweed, groundcover in corners and climbing on fencing



What We've Heard

The Wychwood Car Barns Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

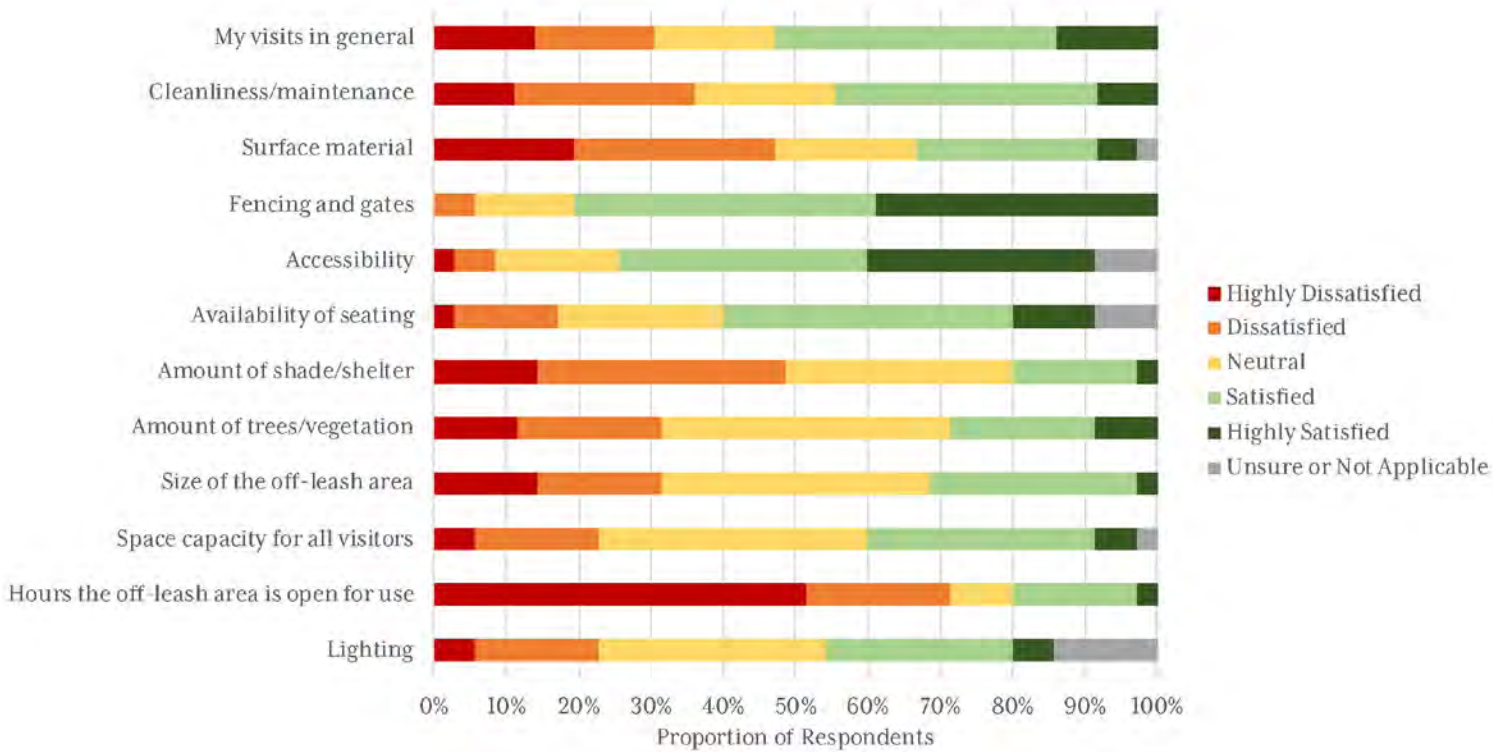
Drainage and Surfaces
Existing drainage does not work. Pooling and puddles form in the south-west corner.

Seating and Shade
Picnic tables is not the preferred seating, trellis does not provide adequate shade.

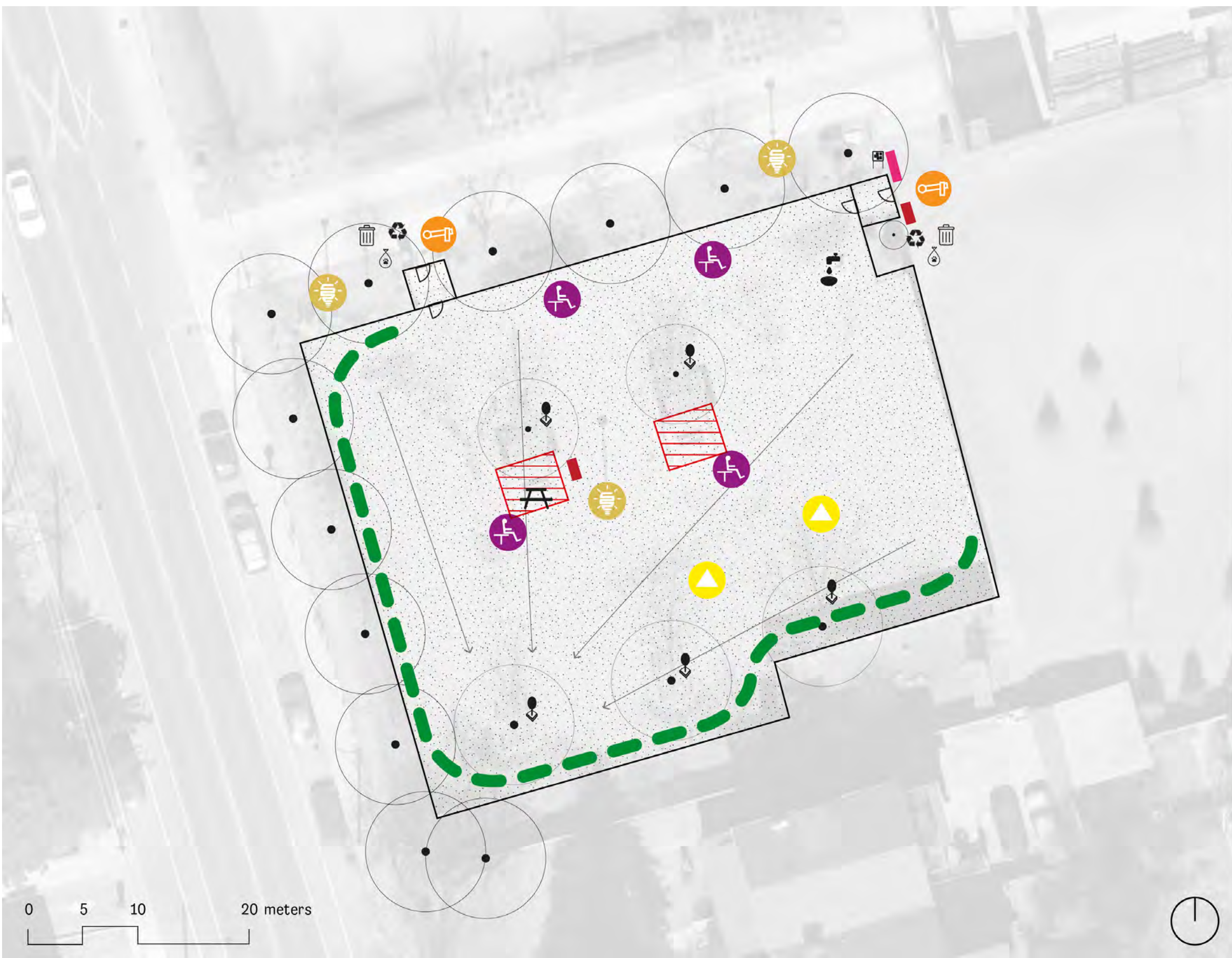
Hours and Water
OLA is currently closed from 12pm to 3pm daily, and there is desire to remove this restriction. Water is available within the OLA but can't be accessed when it's closed/locked.

Licensing and Communication
Feel that licensing dogs is a cash-grab from the City, and the money does not go back into the OLAs.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for Wychwood Car Barns satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



The Wychwood Car Barns OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

Legend

- Existing Features**
- Double-gated Entry/Exit
 - Recycling bin
 - Garbage bin
 - Green bin
 - Picnic Table
 - Existing Tree
 - Water
 - Existing Vegetation Protection
- Recommended Features**
- Crusehd Granite
 - LED Lighting
 - New Latch
 - Accessible Seating
 - Community Board
 - Regrading
 - Vegetative Buffer
 - New Agility Equipment
 - Updated Shade Structure
 - City Signage

D1.5

Install shade structure

Wychwood current has trees planted within the OLA, as well as a shade trellis. The trellis and trees do not provide enough shade. Recommendation to replace the slotted trellis with a solid roof too ensure adequate shade coverage.

D3.1

Replace existing latches with upgraded latch

Redesigned latches will make gates more accessible. New latches will be more resilient during winter use.

D4.5

Install accessible seating

Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Those with mobility constraints will be able to make use of the OLA.

D2.1

Surfacing to be regraded to encourage positive drainage (min 2%)

This OLA is flat and suffers from soil compaction, leading to poor drainage. Positive drainage will reduce pooling and puddling.

D3.5

Install vegetative boundary/buffer

OLA has numerous neighbours within close proximity and dogs barking has been an issue. Recommendation to install dense vegetation along residential side to reduce noise and dust migration.

D4.6

Install City signage within OLA and prior to main access point

Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or Codes of Conduct.

D5.5

Replace lighting with LED

Where lighting currently exists, replace lights with LEDs. LEDs provide brighter lights and better durability while providing a reduced impact on the environment.

D2.5

Install 150mm crushed granite

Majority of users have issues with the lack of top ups and drainage within the OLA. This OLA is heavily used and requires a surfacing that can accommodate and support it's usage. Recommendation to install crushed granite to 150mm depth and ensure proper drainage and top ups.

D4.1

Install Agility Equipment*

This OLA is high use but small in size. Agility equipment could provide more opportunity for rigorous play within the OLA and promote exercise. *Please note that any and all agility equipment will need to go through a professional inspection process prior to installation and yearly during use.

D4.7

Install community boards at main entry/exit

Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and local news.

OM

Update maintenance procedures

Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, monitor and maintain irrigation, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees. Trees are fenced off for protection and vegetation to be maintain to ensure tree is not moist.

City Wide Study of Existing City of Toronto Dogs Off-Leash Areas (OLA)

L'AMOREAUX PARK

Inventory and Analysis

Topography	-2% slope
Small Dog Area	no
Access Area	paved pathway entry from walking path and from parking lot
Surfacing	grass/natural; compaction
Fencing style	post and paddle fencing with wire mesh
Fencing height	1 m
Fence condition	good condition
Gates	2 double gates from outside OLA
Exits/Entrances	2- one to parking, one to pathway
Trees	3 mature coniferous trees within OLA; urine ring and basal damage; in poor health; 3 trees outside OLA providing shade are healthy
Other vegetation	none



What We've Heard

The L'Amoreaux Park Dog Owner's Association has shared these issues

Fencing and Gates

Holes within the fencing, dogs are able to escape. Latches stick, making access difficult.

Code of Conduct and By-Laws

Unlicensed dogs using the off leash area. Users unaware of OLA rules and regulations.

Access to Water

Users get water from nearby washrooms, however washrooms not always open.

Drainage

Entrance to the OLA is very wet and water pools in the rain.

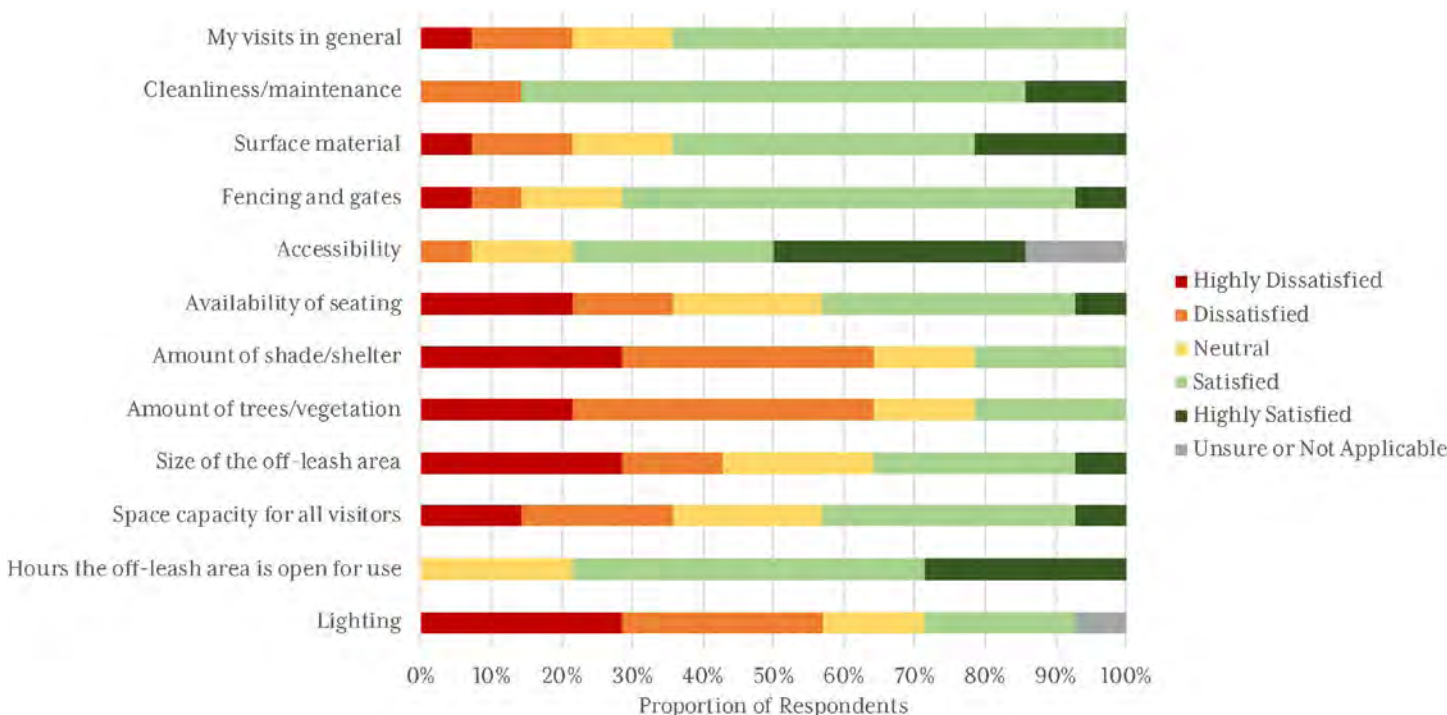
Small Dog Area

Desire to have a separate area designated for small dogs.

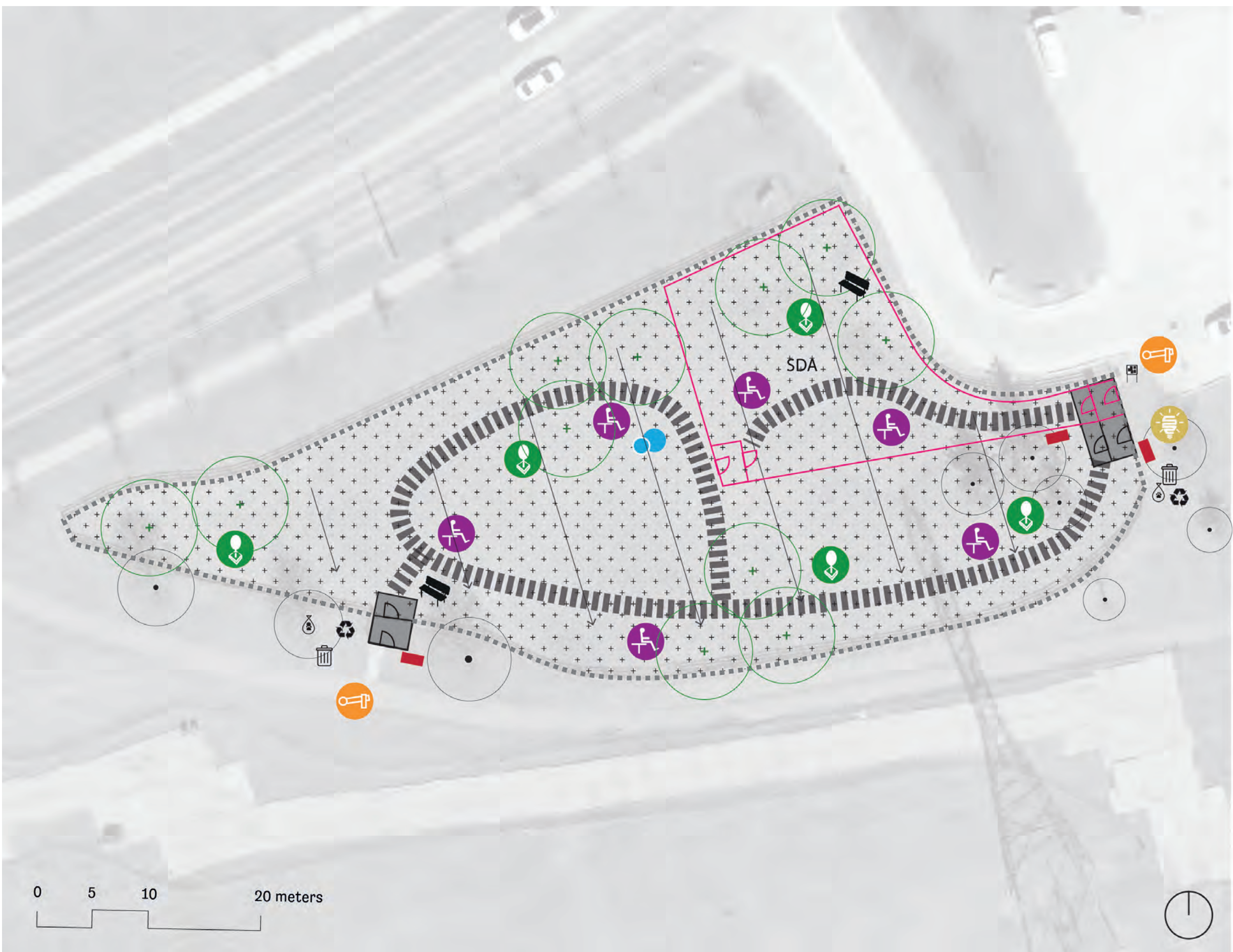
Shade and Trees

Little to no shade within the OLA, however it is believed that the OLA is located within a hydro corridor.

A public survey on all City of Toronto Off-Leash Areas (OLA) has been completed, and individual case study site data for L'Amoreaux Park satisfaction rating is included in the chart below.



Preliminary Recommendations



Legend

Existing Features

- Double-gated Entry/Exit
- Recycling bin
- Garbage bin
- Green bin
- Bench
- Existing Community Board
- Existing Tree

Recommended Features

- Proposed SDA
- Grass Seed Mix (fescue mix)
- Accessible Seating
- Accessible Pathway
- City Signage
- Accessible Drinking Fountain
- Vegetation Protection
- Proposed Tree
- New Latch
- Steel Fencing
- Concrete Pad
- LED Lighting

D1.3

Plant protected trees within OLA

This OLA has a very limited amount of shade, and does not meet a minimum of 20%. Additional deciduous trees are recommended to increase shade and canopy cover. Vegetation at the base of the tree will protect it from urine rings/basal damage.

D2.8

Install grass seed mix (fescue mix)/t

Grass surfacing is favoured within this OLA. Recommendation is to retain the current surface material, but install a more durable seed mix with native grasses.

D3.1

Replace existing latches with upgraded latch

Redesigned latches will make gates more accessible. New latches will be more resilient during winter use.

D3.4

Install steel fencing (min. 1.5m high)

L'Amoreaux is located within the suburbs and steel fencing is recommended to reduce holes and damage. The height of the fence should be a minimum of 1.5m (5ft) high, as taller fences will prevent large dogs from jumping out of the OLA.

D3.6

Install concrete pad at all access points

This OLA has existing concrete pad entries, however they are flush with the ground and have poor drainage that causes pooling. Concrete pad to be regraded to ensure positive drainage to eliminate pooling.

D4.2

Redefine existing OLA boundary to accommodate Small Dog Area

There is demand for a SDA within L'Amoreaux OLA, and the size of the park is sufficient that supplying a separate area for small dogs would not be an issue. Providing a SDA is a best practice in dog parks to allow for the comfort of both small and large dogs during play.

D4.3

Provide additional accessible pathway within OLA

Providing accessible, paved pathways (meeting AODA standards) encourages directive exercise within the OLA, and allows a larger proportion of dog owners to make use of the OLA. Recommendation for path that enters and goes through SDA.

D4.5

Install accessible seating

Providing accessible seating (meeting AODA standards) will allow for more comfort while spending time in the OLA. Those with mobility constraints will be able to make use of the OLA.

D4.6

Install City signage within OLA and prior to main access point

Signage prior to entry will allow non OLA users to determine whether they are eligible to use OLA. Signage within OLA allows current users to become familiar with any changes to by-laws or Codes of Conduct.

D5.1

Install lighting at main entry/exit*

Based on feed back received, there is strong demand for lighting with the OLA. Recommendation is to provide lighting at main entry/exit (closest to the parking lot) to encourage multi-season use.

*If existing electrical services exist

D6.1

Install multi-tier drinking fountain*

There is no existing water fountain within Sandy Bruce. Installing a multi-tier drinking fountain for all OLA users. Surrounding surfacing would include gravel or concrete to ensure proper drainage and limit pooling and puddles.

*If existing waterline exists

OM

Update maintenance procedures

Maintenance will perform weekly inspections, install surface bins for users to repair holes created by digging, monitor and maintain surface bin contents, and protect and monitor vegetation health for all trees and grassed areas. Trees will be protected to limit urine ring and basal damage.

The L'Amoreaux Park OLA serves as an exemplar and contains attributes/criteria similar to the City's other existing OLAs. These recommendations are for demonstration purposes and are not intended to imply the OLA will be redesigned as illustrated in the immediate future.

D4.7

Install community boards at main access point

Community boards provide a place where OLA users are able to post notices about community events, lost and found, and local news.

Attachment D: Discussion Guide

City-Wide Study of Existing

Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLAs)

Design, Operations, Maintenance and Best Practices

The City of Toronto's Parks Standards & Innovations Unit is leading an interdivisional study to examine how the City's existing Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLAs) can be reimagined to better harmonize with existing park uses, provide a satisfying user experience, and operate with optimum efficiency. This study is a result of the recommendation in the Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017) to "develop criteria for improving existing dog off-leash areas."

This study will explore common issues, global best practices, and potential solutions in an effort to develop design solutions to help improve the City's existing OLAs. The City will select ten case study sites and examine the variety of challenges and opportunities in OLAs of different size, context, and character. Ultimately, the study will strive to address common issues, reflect consideration of a range of perspectives and needs, and propose site-specific recommendations that could apply to OLAs City-wide.

Consultation is an important part of the process - this Discussion Guide is intended to support public and stakeholder conversations about improving OLAs.



Did you Know?

The City now has over 70+ OLA sites that are owned and/or managed by Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation.

Why Now?

The City has heard that OLAs could be better.

Improving existing OLAs will help the City maintain a successful park amenity.

Toronto's population (human and dog) is increasing.

With more pets and dogs living in the City there is an increased demand to accommodate them in public space like parks.

Existing OLAs need to work as well as possible.

In 2010, the City's People Dogs and Parks – Off-Leash Policy led to a capital investment of over \$5 million dollars to create and improve OLAs. With that capital investment completed in 2016, the City is focusing on improving what it already has.

Study Goals

- ▶ Improve existing OLAs through effective design, maintenance, and operation
- ▶ Foster healthy relationships between dog owners and non-dog owners
- ▶ Elevate OLAs as spaces that provide a healthy, safe, accessible, and sustainable environment
- ▶ Adapt OLA designs to meet operational pressures, such as use and sustainability
- ▶ Develop guidelines to ensure consistent maintenance and operation across Toronto
- ▶ Develop design recommendations that can be applied to all existing OLAs
- ▶ Improve community involvement and develop future ongoing partnerships



What does the City think about when it thinks about accommodating dogs?

Dog and human safety, health and enjoyment

Harmonizing uses in parks and meeting a diversity of needs

Cost, including design, construction, and maintenance

Environmental impacts: foliage protection and surface erosion

Accessibility and feasibility

Feedback from park users



Where do OLAs fit into the City's approach to accommodating dogs?

OLAs are single-use spaces that are one of several options for dog owners and dogs. Other options are on-leash in public parks or sidewalks and off-leash in backyards and dog-friendly condo/apartment amenity spaces. Just like how the City provides a range of playgrounds for different children's age and ability levels, it also provides a range of OLAs so that dog owners can go to the one that is most appropriate for their dog.



Examples of different kinds of OLA amenities

Fenced Parks

- ▶ Woburn Park
- ▶ Regent Park
- ▶ Woolner Park
- ▶ L'Amoreaux
- ▶ And others

Small-Dog Areas

- ▶ Sunnybrook Park
- ▶ Allan Gardens
- ▶ Raymore Park
- ▶ Thomson Memorial Park
- ▶ And others

Commercial Dog Walkers

- ▶ Sherwood Park
- ▶ Cherry Beach
- ▶ Humber Bay Park West
- ▶ Botany Hill Park
- ▶ And others



Connected initiatives: the dog library

People, Dogs and Parks – Off-leash Policy (2010)

This policy outlines procedures and location criteria of OLAs in order to balance diverse community needs, and consider environmental impact.

Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign (2015)

Key findings on dog bite incidents and best practices on public education, legislation and enforcement in order to work towards increasing dog and human safety in the City.

Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017)

Strategic directions to improve the availability of and access to facilities for parks & recreation at-large, with attention to balancing user needs, provision of OLAs as part of private development sites, and giving greater focus to improving existing OLAs.

Green Bin Pilot (2018)

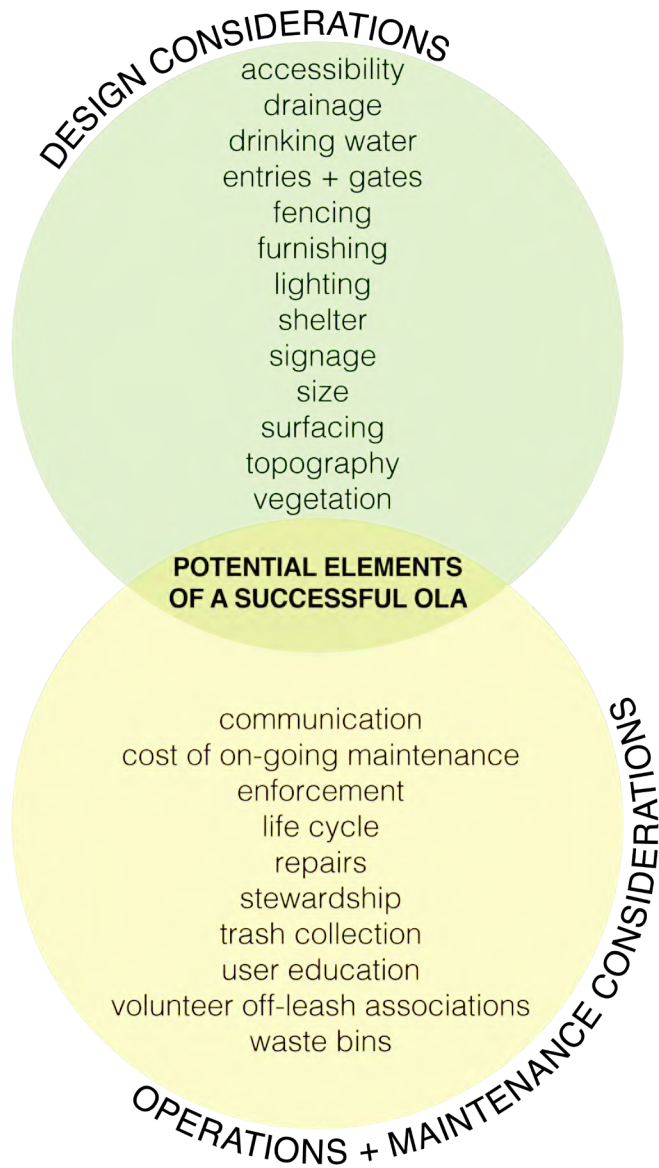
A successful pilot that aimed to divert organic waste from the landfill and reduce contamination in the recycling. Green bins are being installed now in all OLAs.

Pet-Friendly Design Guidelines for High Density Communities (2019/2020)

A future report of guidelines to inform the design and planning of pet amenities in multi-unit, high density communities with the goal of fostering more pet-friendly environments.



Design, Operations and Maintenance Considerations



This Study is looking at ways to improve the design, operations, and maintenance of existing off-leash areas. In order to provide a successful off-leash area, the overall goal for the design, operation and maintenance needs to be determined for each site individually.

All 70+ OLAs pose their own opportunities and challenges. However, a variety of design elements have proven successful and these can be included in Toronto's OLAs and tailored for each site. Some design elements to consider may include fencing, varying topography, variety of surfacing, shade, seating and water features.

With each design element comes different maintenance and operation requirements. Surfacing may require annual top ups (engineered wood fibre) or repairs (sod, artificial turf) and each site will require a different operation plan, as well as different installation and maintenance costs.

The consideration of design, operations and maintenance are interconnected. Throughout this process, the project team will work to understand the needs of the City, dogs, dog owners and the general public to ensure the design of OLAs satisfies the needs of the users while establishing a sustainable operation and maintenance program.

Did you Know?

Dogs must be licensed in order to use an off-leash area.

2019 OLA Surfaces

41% is grass

22% is pea gravel

21% is EWF/wood chips

11% is sand

4% is crushed granite

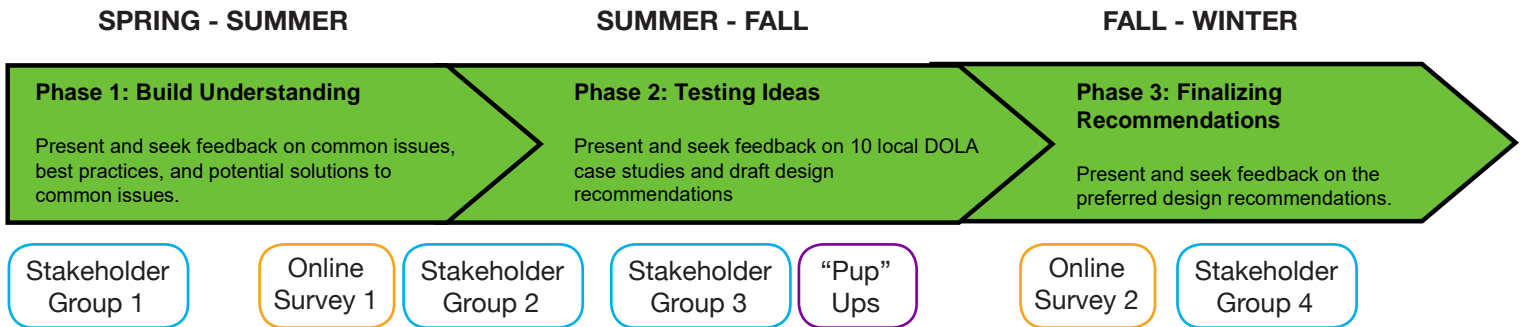
1% is boardwalk/natural trail



Get Involved!

Good decision-making needs good information. Your ideas, opinions, and local knowledge will help us improve the City's existing Dog Off-Leash Areas.

The Dogs Off-Leash Area (OLA) consultation process will happen in three phases and will involve City staff, park users, dog owners, and the general public city-wide.



There will be opportunities in-person and online to participate in the study, including:

Stakeholder Group Meetings

Purpose: Meet with organizations that have an interest in OLAs to present and discuss common issues, potential strategies to address issues, and draft recommendations.

"Pup" Ups – In 10 Sites

Purpose: Connect with dog-owners and park users through "in park events" in each of the ten case study sites to share and seek feedback on potential recommendations.

Public Surveys

Purpose: Present and seek feedback from the broader public on common issues, potential strategies to address issues, and draft recommendations.



For more information:
www.toronto.ca/olastudy
dola@toronto.ca

Attachment E: Pup Up Post Card



Toronto Study of Existing Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLAs)

The City of Toronto is leading a study to examine how it's existing Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLAs) can be reimagined to better harmonize with existing park uses, provide a satisfying user experience, and operate with optimum efficiency. The study will strive to address common issues, reflect consideration of a range of perspectives and needs, and propose site-specific recommendations that could apply to OLAs City-wide.



Join us for “Pup Ups”!

See Reverse for
schedule!>>>

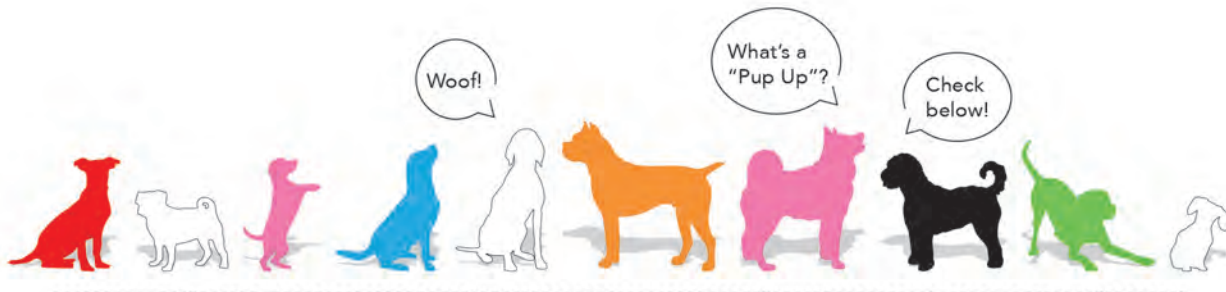


What's up dog? Learn more and get involved here:



www.toronto.ca/olastudy
dola@toronto.ca





"PUP UPS" SCHEDULE

The "Pup Ups" are designed to be drop-in sessions in 10 case study sites where park users can learn about and share feedback about the Study and its preliminary recommendations.

Location (Off-Leash Area)	Date	Time
Bayview Arena Park	Thursday, October 17th	4:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Cherry Beach Park	Saturday, October 19th	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
High Park	Saturday, October 19th	12:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Merrill Bridge Park	Tuesday, October 22nd	7:30 AM - 10:00 AM
Beresford Park	Wednesday, October 23rd	8:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Allan Gardens	Wednesday, October 23rd	4:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Sunnybrook Park	Thursday, October 24th	10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Sandy Bruce Park	Thursday, October 24th	4:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Wychwood Car Barns Park	Saturday, October 26th	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
L'Amoreaux Park	Monday, October 28th	4:30 PM - 7:00 PM