City-Wide Study of Existing Dog Off-Leash Areas

Design, Operations, Maintenance & Best Practices

Stakeholder Workshop #3
October 16, 2019

Stakeholder Consultation

1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review

2. Study Goals

3. What We've Heard and Key Messages

4. DOA Interview Summary

5. Survey Summary

6. Case Study Sites- Inventory & Analysis

7. Preliminary Recommendations

8. Discussion

9. Next Steps

Study Goals

- improve existing OLAs through design, maintenance and operations

  - evaluate OLAs to provide healthy, safe, accessible and sustainable environments

  - adapt designs to meet operational pressures

  - develop design recommendations that can be replicated

  - improve community involvement and ongoing partnerships

Scope of Study

✓ explore common issues

✓ review global best practices

✓ select case study sites

    ▸ variety of challenges and opportunities

    ▸ OLAs of different size, context and character

➡ conduct stakeholder and public consultation to gain user feedback

➡ develop recommendations to improve existing OLAs

Study + Consultation Process

1. **Phase One** *Spring/Summer*- Building Understanding

   ✓present and seek feedback on common issues (both City and users)

2. **Phase Two** *Summer/Fall*- Testing Ideas

   ✓OLA Case Studies

   ➡ preliminary design recommendations

3. **Phase Three** *Fall/Winter*- Finalizing Recommendations

   – present and seek feedback on preferred design recommendations

Study + Consultation Progress

- Stakeholder Consultation increased from 3 to 4 meetings

- Number of study sites increased from 8 to 10

- Spoken to various Parks Operations Staff and Supervisors within all districts

- Interviewed DOA reps for each of the 10 sites

- Public facing survey

- Scheduled 10 Pup-Ups

Key Messages from Meeting #1

- Desire for more communication and a better relationship between dog owners and the City

- General support for the Study

- Desire to be consulted regularly in the process

- Suggestions around improving seating, shade, shelter, water, maintenance, and more

Key Messages from Meeting #2

- Additional selection criteria suggested to select case study sites (e.g. neighbourhood density; destination vs. local use); no objectives to existing criteria.

- Make sure to connect with DOA reps in advance of the Pup Ups

- Suggested additional elements to review as part of case study sites (e.g. opening & closing times, traffic through park)

DOA Interviews

- City and Swerhun spoke with representatives in mid-September from the 10 OLA Case Study Sites

- understand site-specific issues and seek feedback

- help form recommendations and improvements for a City-wide application

- meeting summaries are posted on the project website
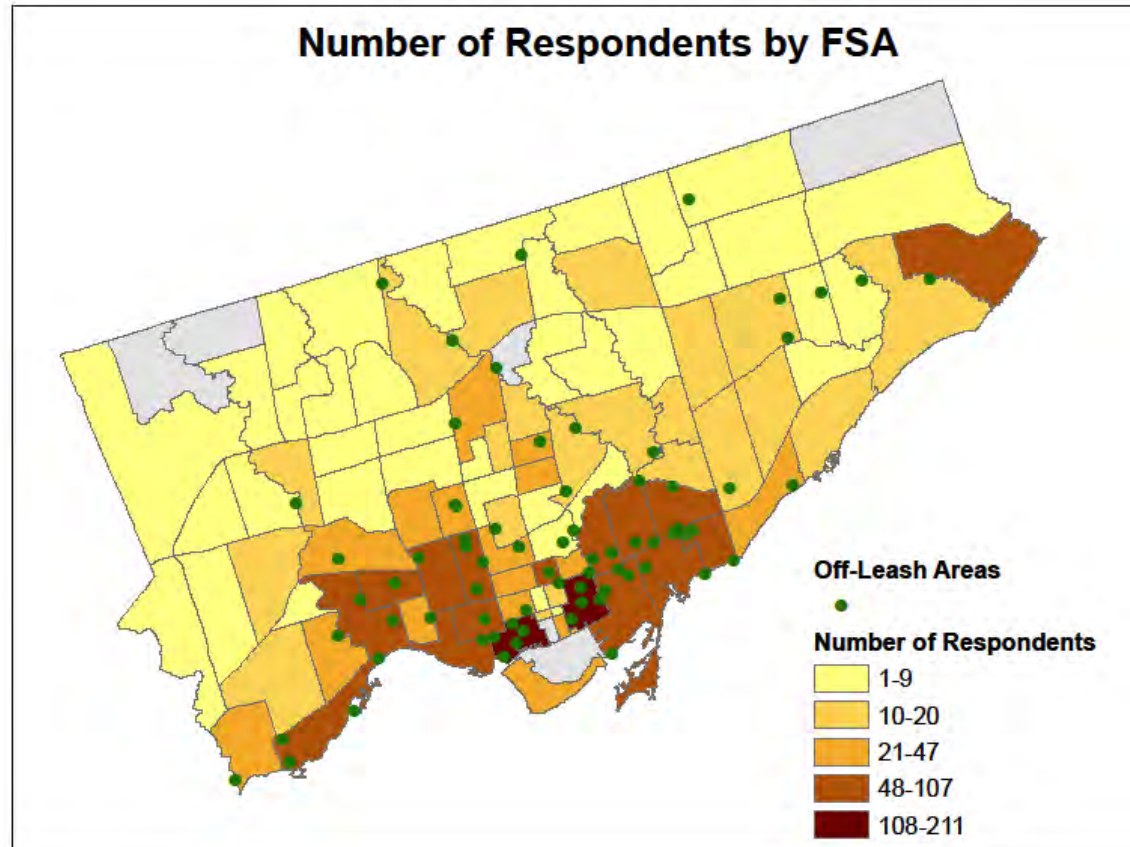
DOA Interviews
Summary

- Examples of common issues:

  ‣ Communication between OLA reps, OLA users, and City

  ‣ Maintenance, materials, and height of gates & fencing

  ‣ Safety and accessibility in winter (e.g. icy surfaces)

- Examples of common suggested solutions

  ‣ Create mechanism for OLA users to get regular updates on maintenance

  ‣ Investigate adding double gates to all entrances and exits

  ‣ Ensure clear communication about maintenance expectations and build OLA user capacity to help maintain in winter

Survey

– survey closed September 29th

– high level themes from the survey have been used to help form preliminary recommendations

  • further data being reviewed and will be reflected in refined recommendations
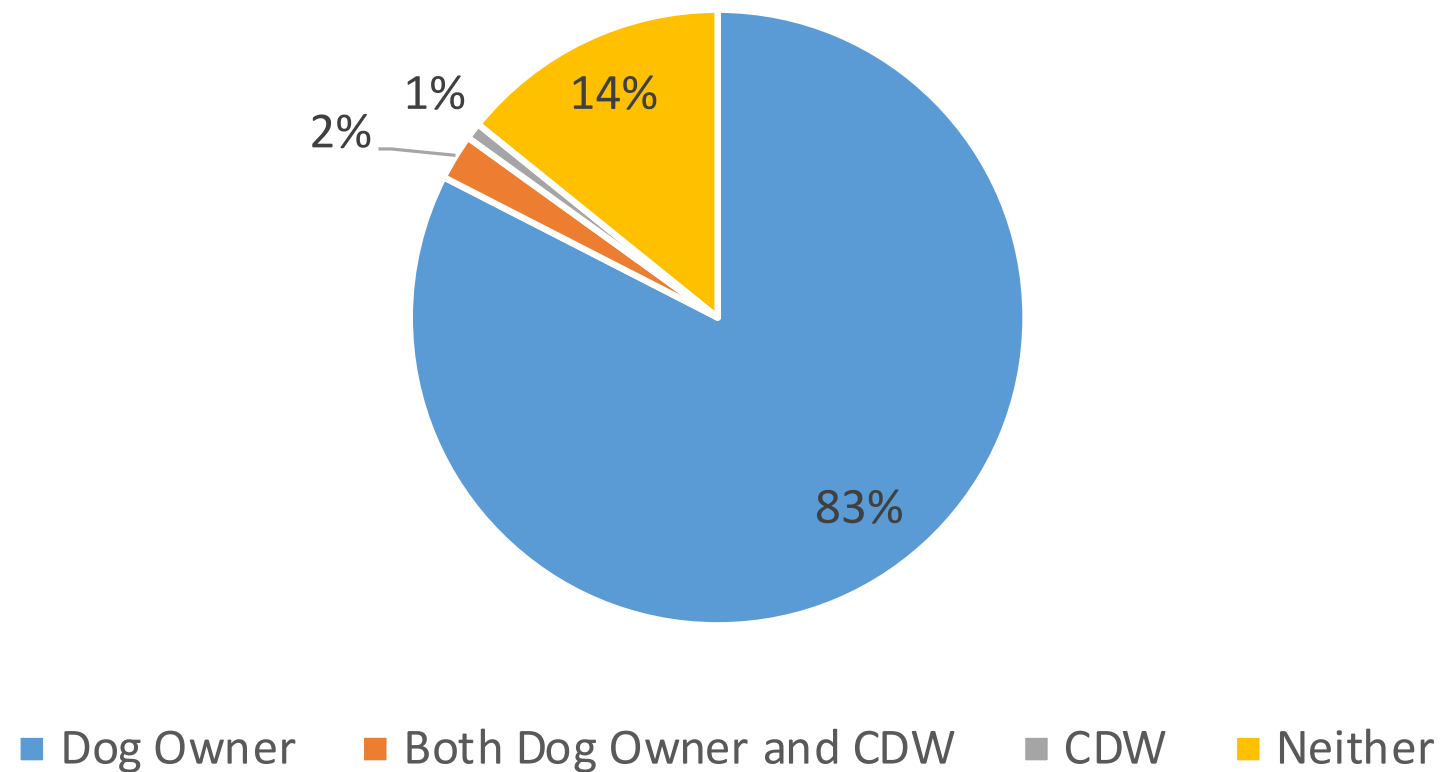
Survey Responses

– 3,911 respondents from areas across the city

Number of Respondents by FSA

Off-Leash Areas

Number of Respondents
- 1-9
- 10-20
- 21-47
- 48-107
- 108-211

Survey Responses

– both dog owners and non-dog owners

Are you a dog owner? Are you a commercial dog walker?

■ Dog Owner   ■ Both Dog Owner and CDW   ■ CDW   ■ Neither
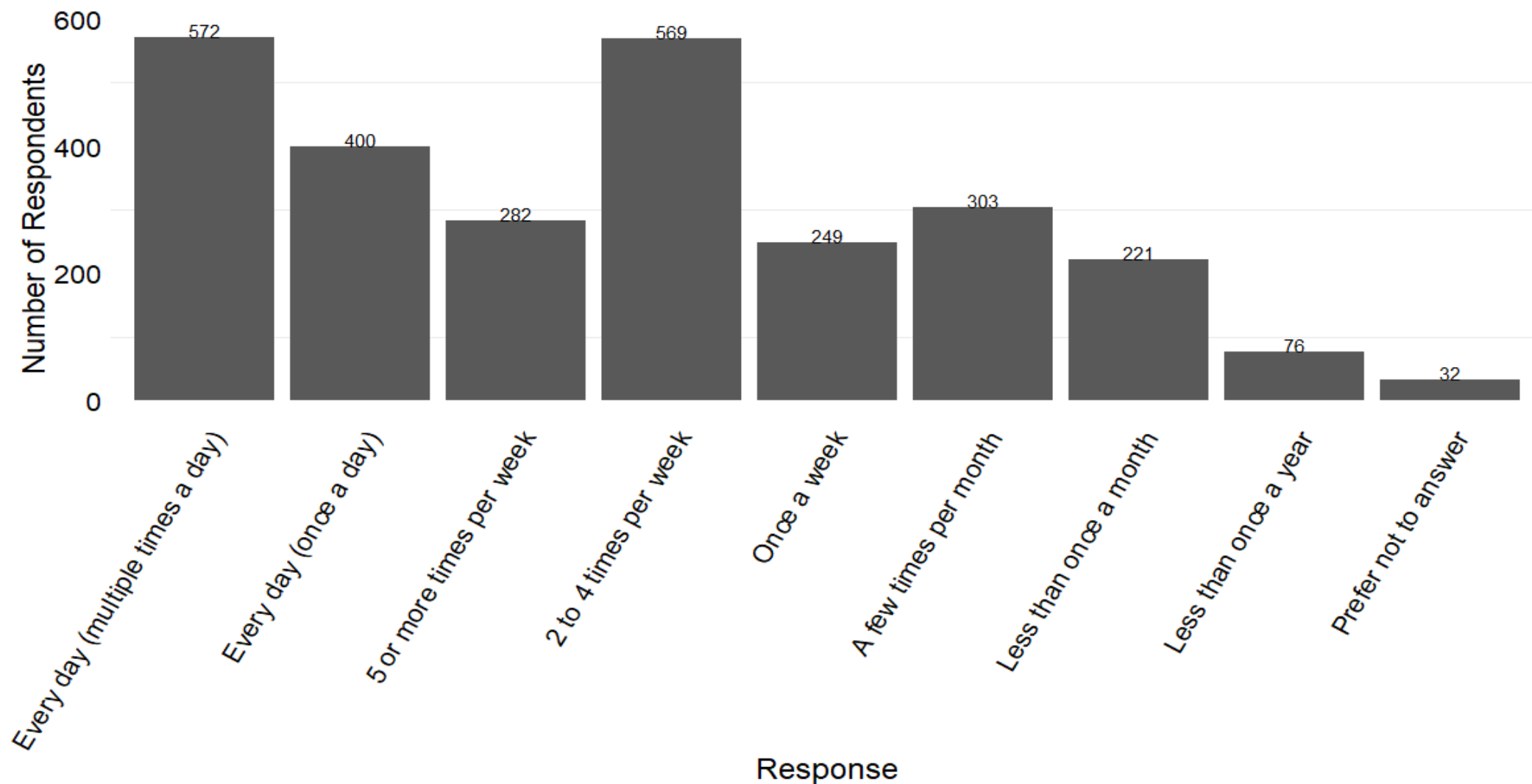
Survey Responses

- understand how people use the existing OLAs

Survey Responses

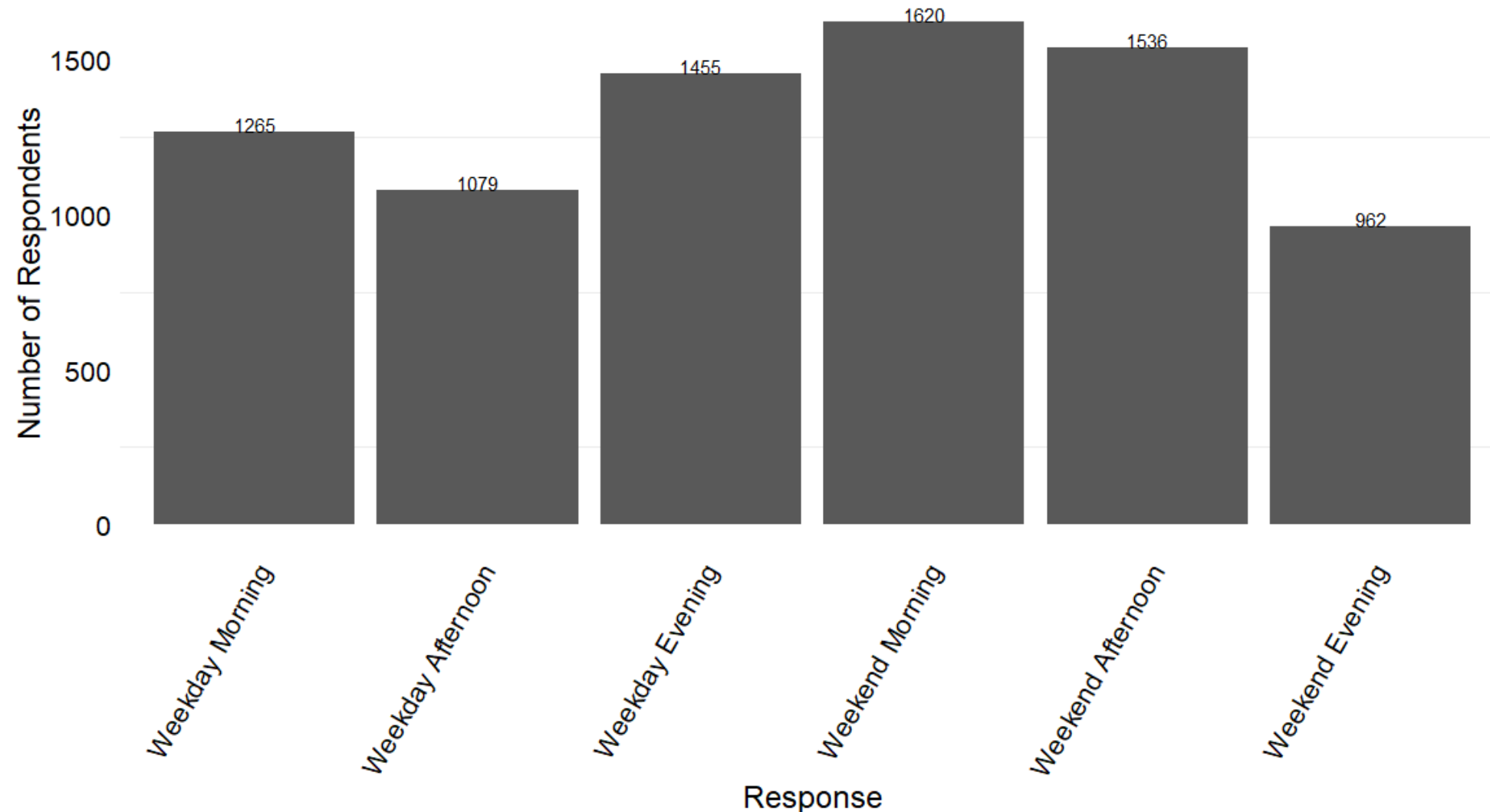– understand usage patterns of the existing OLAs

On average, how frequently do you visit off-leash areas in Toronto?

Survey Responses
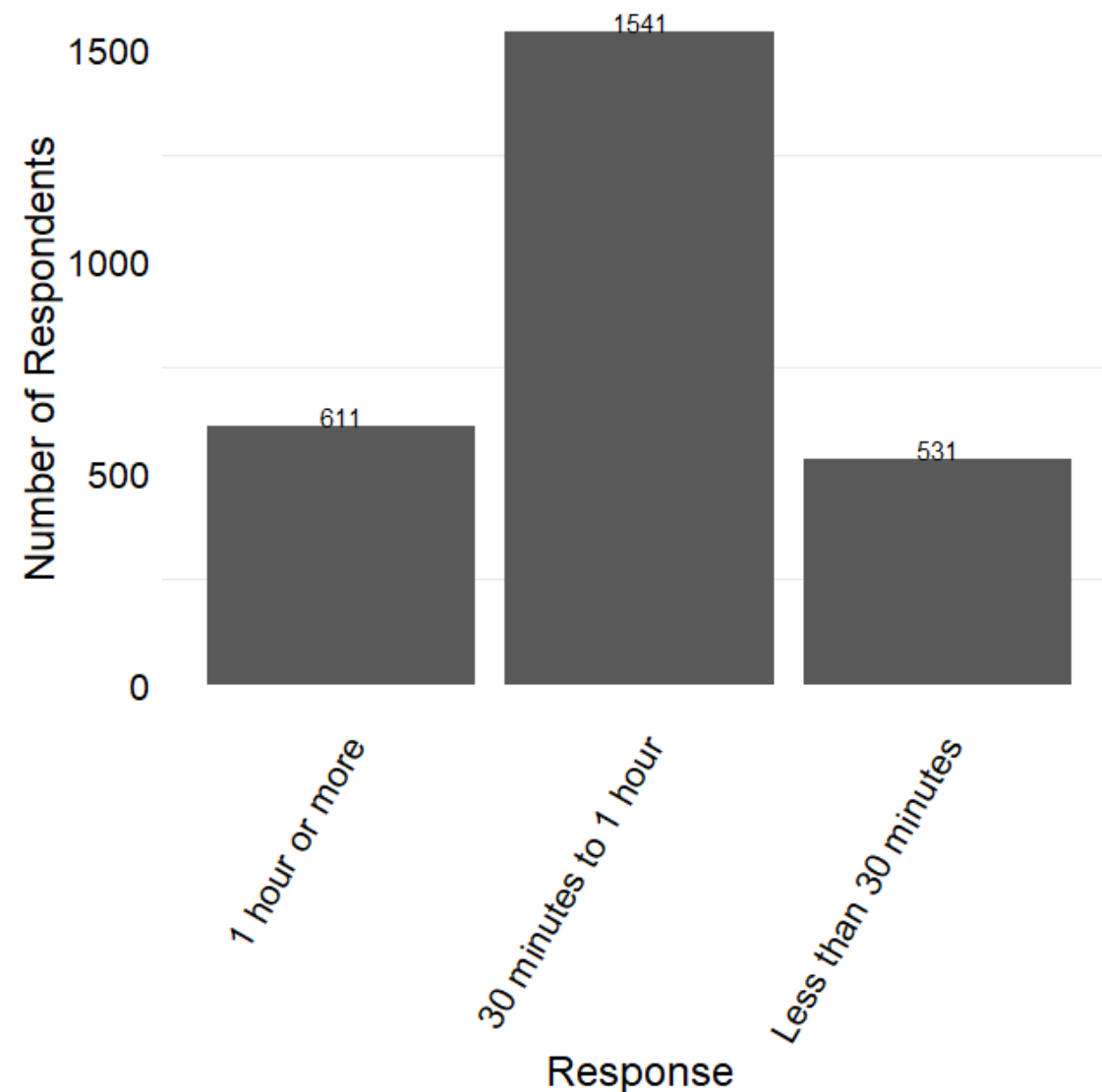
– understand usage patterns of the existing OLAs

When do you normally visit off-leash areas in Toronto? Select all that apply.

Survey Responses

– understand usage patterns of the existing OLAs

How much time do you typically spend at your most-visited OLA?

Case Study Sites

- the 10 sites serve as exemplars and have attributes/criteria that represent the 73 OLAs across the city

- information gained from the 10 sites will help inform the city-wide recommendations within the study

- additional criteria was considered from previous meeting and modifications were made to the case study sites

Case Study Sites

Allan Gardens

L'Amoreaux Park

Bayview Arena Park

Merrill Bridge Park

Beresford Park

Sandy Bruce Park

Cherry Beach

Sunnybrook Park

High Park

Wychwood Car Barns

Case Study Sites
Assessment + Inventory

City of Toronto
DOG OFF LEASH AREA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name:

District: | **Main Intersection:**

Size (ha): | **Shape:** | **Topography:**

SURFACING

Surface Type:
Engineer Wood Fiber   Mulch   Natural/Grass   Pea Gravel   Granite Chip   Sand

Surfacing Observations:
Material Migration   Poor Drainage   Erosion   Pooling/Mud   Holes/Digging   Root Exposure   Compaction

Surfacing Depth (mm):

FENCING

Fencing: Y / N | **Gates:**   Y / N | **# of Gates:**

Fencing Type:
Iron   Omega   Chain Link   Post and Paddle   Wire Mesh   Other:

Gate Location: | **Double Gate:**

Fence Observations:
Cut Holes   Large Gaps   Rust   Damage   Warped/Sagging   Unsafe   Other:

Fence Height (m):

TREES

Trees within OLA: Y / N | **Trees providing shade within OLA:**   Y / N:

If trees within OLA, are they fenced off: Y / N

Tree Damage:
Compaction   Roots Exposed   Damaged Canopy   Urine Ring   Stripped Bark   Other:

Number of Trees within OLA: | **DBH:**

WATER

Irrigation: Y / N | **Dog Drinking Fountain:**   Y / N | **Human Drinking Fountain:**   Y / N:

Beach/Water Access: Y / N

AMENITIES

Landscape Features:
Boulders   Logs   Play Amenities   None   Other:

Signage: Y / N | **Type:** | **Community Board:**   Y / N

Lighting: Y / N | **# of Lights:** | **Location:**

Seating: Y / N | **Type:** | **Amount:**

# of City Bins: | **Waste Bins:**   Green / Blue / Black

ACCESSIBLE

Within OLA: Y / N | **To OLA:**   Y / N | **Transit Connection:**   Y / N

Walkability:
Poor   Satisfactory   Good   Great | **Adjacent Amenities:**
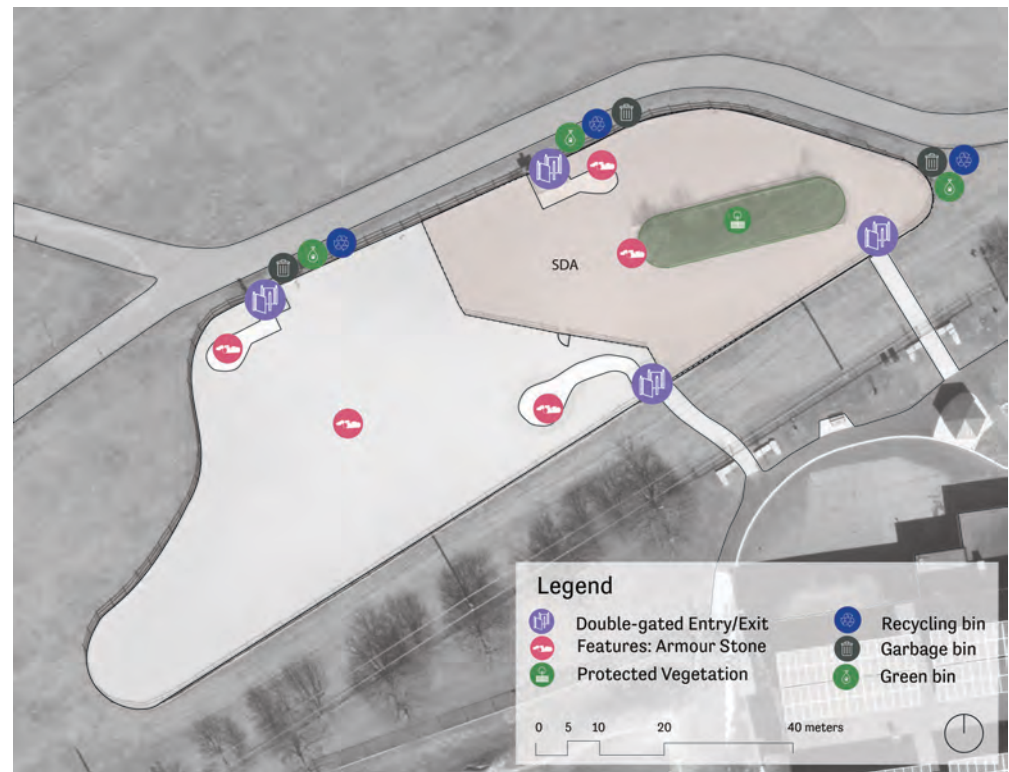Playground   Sports Field   Washroom   Splash Pad   Other:

Case Study Sites
Assessment + Inventory

Example 1

Example 2

Preliminary Recommendations

38 design

11 administrative

10 operations & maintenance

Preliminary Recommendations

38
design

11
administrative

10
operations &
maintenance

Design
Overview

- design recommendations are first filtered based on Environmentally Significant Areas

  ▸ different processes (eg. Environmental Assessments) with varying governing bodies (eg. Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority)

- design recommendations are applied to OLAs based on usage and size

  • usage= high, medium, and low

  • size= small (under 2,000 sq m), medium (2,000 to 7,500 sq m) and large (over 7,500 sq m)

Design Overview

– general recommendations organized into six topics

1. Shade

2. Surfacing

3. Fencing and Entrances

4. Amenities

5. Lighting

6. Water

Design
Shade

– Shade Example: Wychwood Car Barns

  ▸ **Existing**: Wychwood does not meet 20% shade coverage

  ▸ **Proposed**: Install shade structure to achieve 20% shaded area

Design
Surfacing

– Surfacing Example: Bayview Arena Park

▸ **Existing**: Bayview has pea-gravel surfacing with low slopes in both the All Dog Area and Small Dog Area (SDA).

▸ **Proposed**: Install dual surfacing in the All Dog Area. Along the perimeter install grass seed mix and within the centre provide wood chips/Engineered Wood Fibre. Within the SDA, install grass seed mix.

Design
Fencing + Entrances

– Example: L'Amoreaux Park

▸ **Existing**: Currently fenced with post and paddle with wire mesh, standing at 1.0m. This OLA is located with a Hydro Corridor.

▸ **Proposed**: Maintain the post and paddle fencing, however increase the height to a minimum of 1.5m to improve safety for dogs and people.

Design
Amenities

– Example: Merrill Bridge Park

▸ **Existing**: A medium sized, with no SDA, no accessible pathways and some seating *not barrier-free). Inconsistent signage and not at all main entries.

▸ **Proposed**: Redefine boundary to accomodate SDA, provide accessible pathway, install accessible seating, locate community board and clear City signage at main entry points.

Design
Lighting

– Example: Cherry Beach

▸ **Existing**: A very popular and large OLA, located within an Environmentally Significant Area. There is no lighting within the area, but adjacent parking lot is lit.

▸ **Proposed**: Install LED lighting at main entrance area to extend winter and evening usage

Design
Water

– Example: High Park

▸ **Existing**: A very popular and large OLA, located within an Environmentally Significant Area. There is currently a water tap with a hose, and loose metal bowls provided by the community.

▸ **Proposed**: Install accessible multi-tier drinking fountain with properly draining concrete/gravel radius.

Preliminary Recommendations

38 design

11 administrative

10 operations & maintenance

Operation and Maintenance
Overview

- two categories

  1. general recommendations

     - applied to all 73 existing OLAs

  2. site specific recommendations

     - surfacing

Operation and Maintenance
General

▸ **Existing**: Inconsistencies between OLAs, lack of inspection standards and surfacing concerns.

▸ **Proposed**: Ensure minimum consistencies (signage, community boards, seating, etc), and weekly inspections to monitor and maintain state of good repair

Operation and Maintenance
Surfacing

- **Existing**: OLAS have varying surfacing options. Each require different maintenance requirements.

- **Proposed**: Where applicable, install surface bins with top up material. Parks Staff to perform top ups once or twice a year.

Preliminary Recommendations

38
design

11
administrative

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maintenance

Administrative
Overview

- higher level than site specific recommendations

- recommendations to the current system

Administrative System

‣ **Existing**: Lack of communication between OLA Reps, Users and City staff. Unclear roles. Inaccurate usage data.

‣ **Proposed**: Update to the City's website with information about DOA program, DOA contacts and roles and responsibilities of other governing bodies. Gather accurate usage data to ensure recommendations are appropriate and applicable.

Preliminary Recommendations

38
design

11
administrative

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operations &
maintenance

Discussion

- Three concurrent, rotating discussions

    • 25 minutes each

- Three stations set up within the room

    1. Design Preliminary Recommendations

    2. Operations and Maintenance Preliminary Recommendations

    3. Administrative Preliminary Recommendations

Discussion

1. What, if anything, do you **like** about the Preliminary Recommendations? Are there any that you think would be particularly helpful in improving OLAs?

2. What, if anything, do you think is missing from the Preliminary Recommendations?

Next Steps

1. 'Pup'-Ups

2. Online Survey #2

3. Stakeholder Consultation #4

4. Final Report

thank you