

What We Heard Report

Keheewin/Bearspaw Off-Leash Area

June 2022

www.edmonton.ca/keheewin-and-bearspaw-leash-area

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Public Engagement Summary and Results

Project Overview

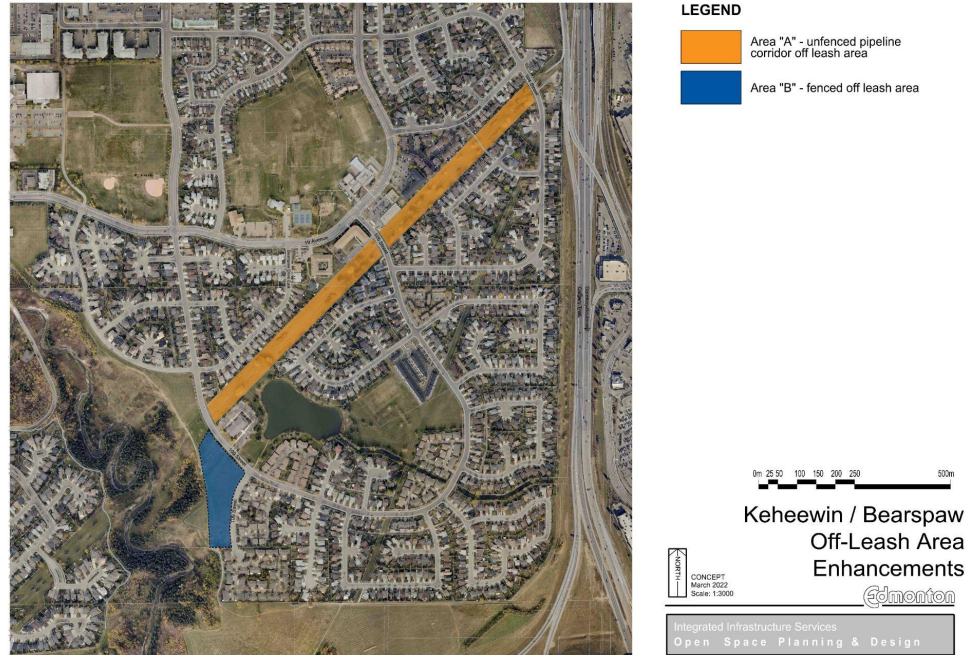


Figure 1: Map of the current off-leash area in Keheewin/Bears paw with proposed enhancements: Area "A" (unfenced pipeline corridor) and Area "B" (proposed fenced area)

Project Rationale

The City of Edmonton is preparing a concept plan to update the existing Keheewin and Bears paw Off-Leash Dog Area (located in the area of 11-23 Ave NW and 104-109 St.), to ensure that it meets the [current standards recommended within the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy](#). Public engagement, consultation with City of Edmonton staff and other stakeholders played a prominent role in shaping the direction of the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy, which was approved by Council in 2016.

The results and recommendations included in the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy were used to inform and prioritize the recommended actions in the [Dogs In Open Spaces 10 Year Implementation Plan](#).

According to the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy, recommended standard City off-leash area amenities include:

- Physical barriers, either fencing or landscaped, in areas with high potential for conflict with other park users or safety issues for both dogs and humans.

- Changes to off-leash area boundaries to better integrate off-leash areas with other park uses such as shared use paths.
- Clear boundary and etiquette signage including the responsibilities of dog owners.
- Dog waste bag dispensers and waste receptacles.

Project Background

The project area is within the parcel of parkland currently designated as off-leash within Keheewin/ Bearspaw, as shown in the image above.

There were two distinct proposed areas of this project:

- Keheewin Off-Leash Area would not be enhanced with additional fencing, access points, or other amenities. This off-leash area is located along a pipeline corridor which limits the amenities available to be provided. Landscaping could be added in the storm water pond area as a barrier to reduce movement into this area and improve safety for dogs and people.
- Bearspaw Off-Leash Area was proposed to be enhanced with fences and access points to help manage pathways and safety for off-leash dogs and other park users. Within the Bearspaw off-leash area, five access locations would include a double gate system, garbage cans, dog waste dispensers and signage with park information. One access point would be a 4m (meter) swing gate for operational use.

As previously mentioned, these proposed enhancements would have upgraded the Keheewin/Bearspaw off-leash area to the current standards recommended in the [Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy](#).

What We Heard

A survey consisting of 15 questions was made available on the City's Engaged Edmonton platform. The results are shown in the order of the questions listed in the survey. Optional questions are indicated.

The first four questions were demographic related, to determine how participants use the area, the communities where they reside and how they travel to it.

Survey Results

Of the 748 responses, 74% (555) indicated they own a dog, with the remaining 26% (193) stating they do not.

A large majority of respondents (80%) are regular users of the off-leash area, with nearly 44% indicating they use the area on a daily basis and an additional 36% on a weekly basis.

Just over 61% of survey respondents indicated they are from the areas immediately surrounding the Keheewin/Bearspaw off-leash areas, with 42% from Bearspaw, 12% from Keheewin and nearly 7% from Twin Brooks. A significant number of respondents (39%) reported residing in other areas such as Skyrattler, Rutherford, Summerside, Rideau Park, Erminskin, Sweetgrass, MacEwan, Blackmud Creek, Duggan, Callaghan, Greenfield and Southbrook, Blue Quill and Steinhauer.

Over 50% of respondents travel to the park on foot, and nearly 43% by car. Others indicated they don't travel to the park (3%), travel by bicycle (1.6%) or take transit (0.3%). The "Other" responses included area users who utilize a combination of methods (ie. car in winter, by foot in summer, etc)

Question 5. Please refer to the image, showing the Keheewin Off-Leash Area.

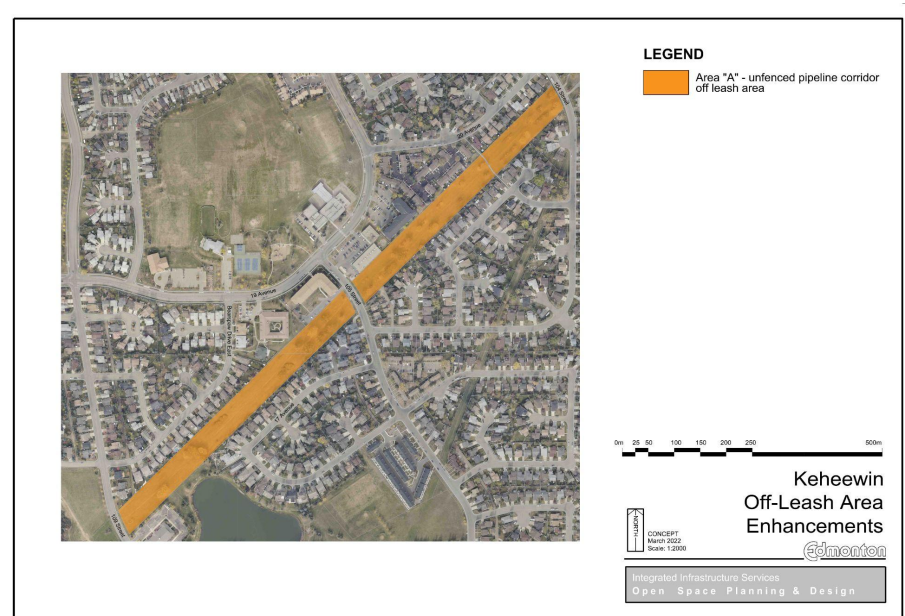
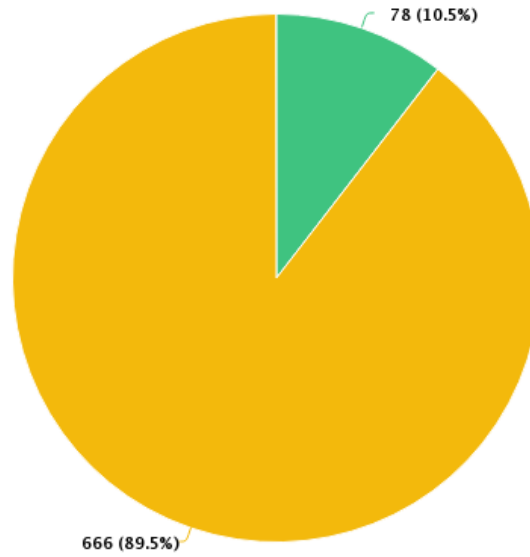


Figure 2: Map of the current off-leash area in Keheewin, Area "A" (unfenced pipeline corridor)

**Is your property line directly adjacent to the Keheewin Off-Leash Area?
(optional)**

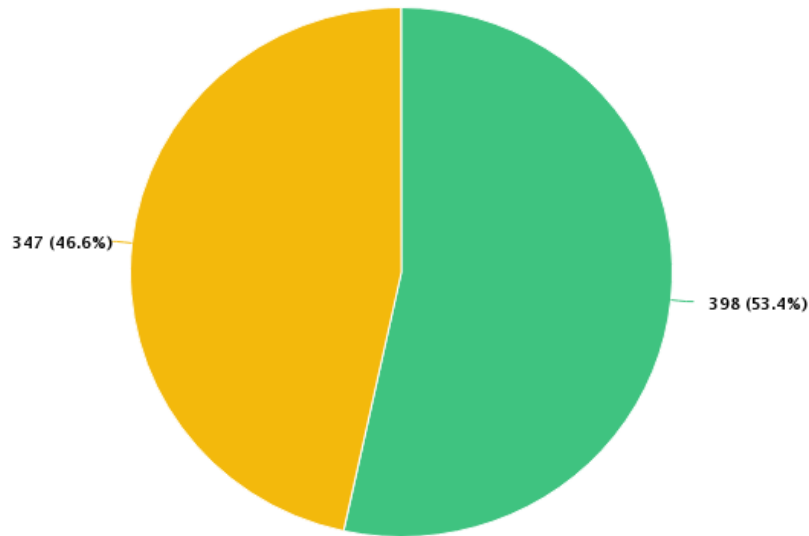


Question options
(Click items to hide)

- Yes
- No

Just over 10% of respondents indicated their property is adjacent to the existing Keheewin Off-Leash Area.

Question 6. Please refer to the image in Question 5, showing the Keheewin Off-Leash Area. Do you use this area as off-leash? (optional)

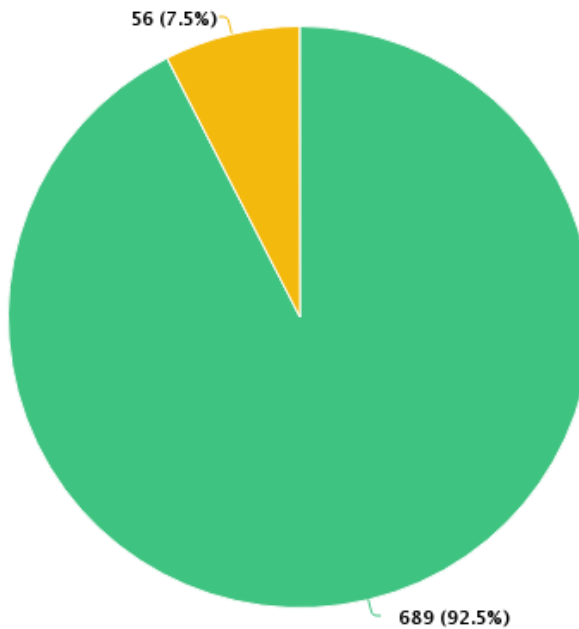


Question options
(Click items to hide)

- Yes
- No

A narrow majority of respondents (53%) indicated they use the Keheewin area as an off-leash area.

Question 7. Please refer to the image in Question 5, showing the Keheewin Off-Leash Area. Do you want to keep Keheewin as an off-leash area? (optional)



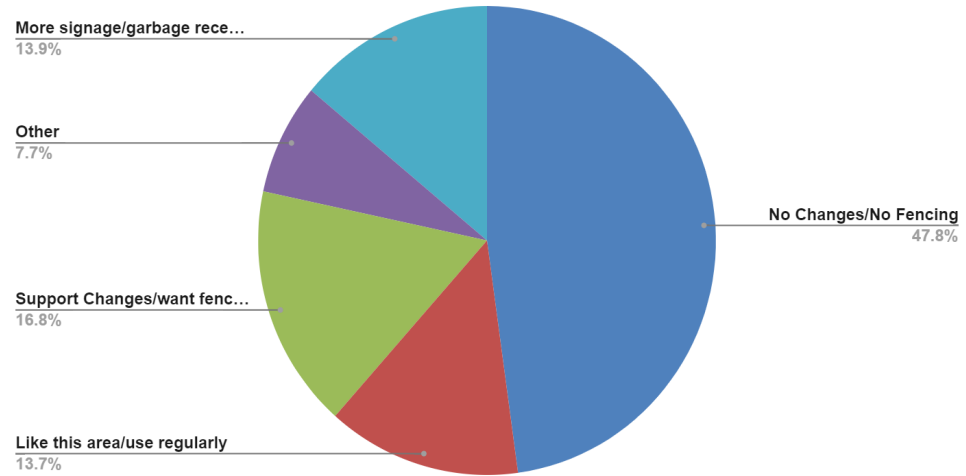
Question options

(Click items to hide)

● Yes ● No

A very large majority of respondents (92.5%) indicated they want the Keheewin pipeline corridor area to remain as an off-leash area.

Question 8. Please refer to the image in Question 5, showing the Keheewin Off-Leash Area. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the Keheewin Off-Leash Area? (optional)



Nearly 48% of respondents indicated they are opposed to any changes to the Keheewin Off-Leash Area, including no added fencing or changes to the area's size.

Almost 17% of respondents supported the proposed changes for the Keheewin area, with some indicating they would like to see fencing added, the area should be on leash and concerns cited regarding irresponsible dog owners.

Just under 14% indicated they would like to see more signage, additional waste bins and dog waste bags/dispensers and higher levels of maintenance to the area.

A number of respondents (13.7%) stated they like the Keheewin area and use it regularly, particularly as a walk-through corridor down to the Bearspaw Off-Leash Area and nearby ravine.

Other responses (7.7%) included: no comment, don't use the area often or at all and that the Keheewin Off-Leash Area should be extended or expanded.

Question 9. Please refer to the image, the Bearspaw Off-Leash Area.

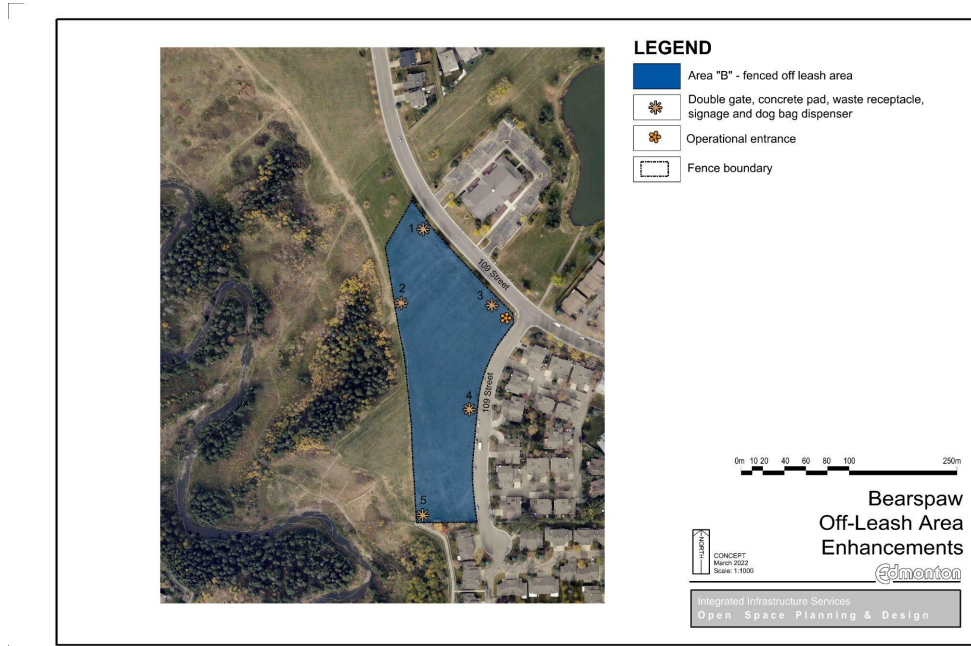
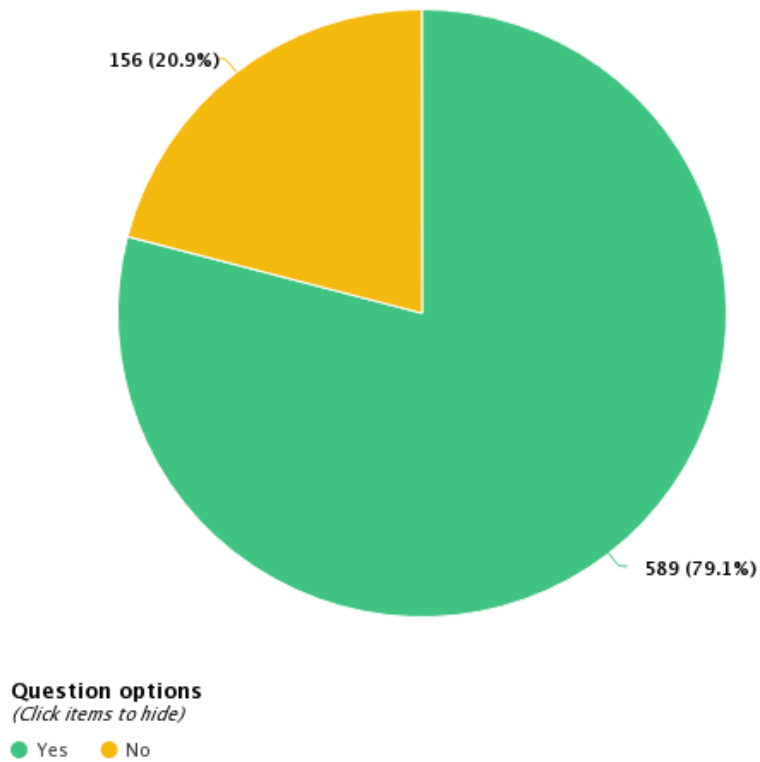


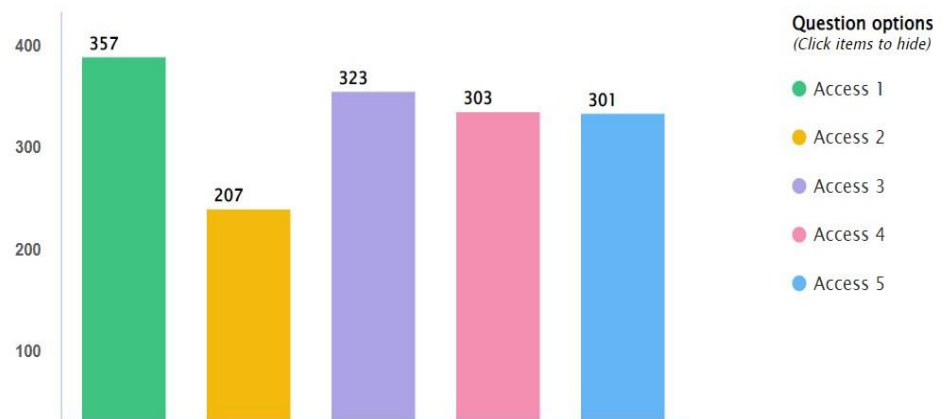
Figure 3: Map of the current off-leash area in Bears paw, Area "B" (fenced off leash area)

Do you use the Bears paw area as off-leash? (optional)



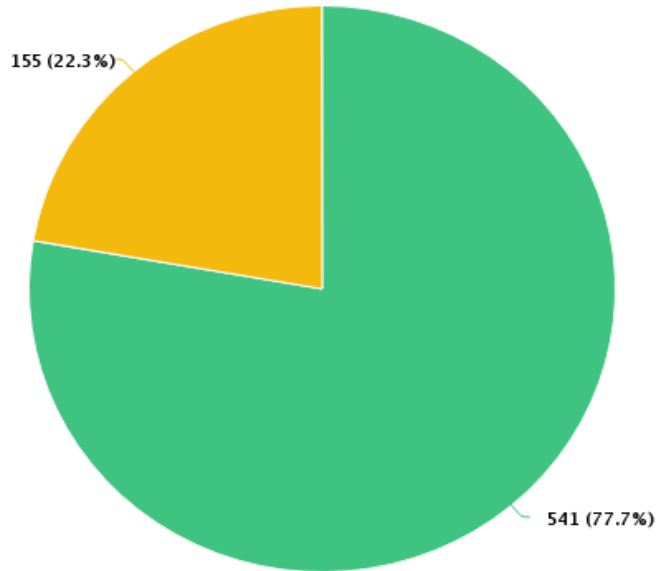
Over 79% of respondents stated they do use the Bears paw area as an off-leash area.

Question 10. Please refer to the image in Question 9, the Bearspaw Off-Leash Area. Within the Bearspaw off-leash area, five access locations will include a double-gate system, garbage cans, dog waste dispensers and signage with park information. One access point will be a 4m (meter) swing gate for operational use. Fencing is proposed as shown, and the five proposed public accesses into the off-leash area are indicated with numbers and light orange stars. The access point for operational use is shown in dark orange without a number. Please indicate which access points you are most likely to use. Choose up to three. (optional)



Access 1 was reported as the most likely area to be used, with Accesses 3-5 almost equally selected by respondents. Access 2 was the least selected area.

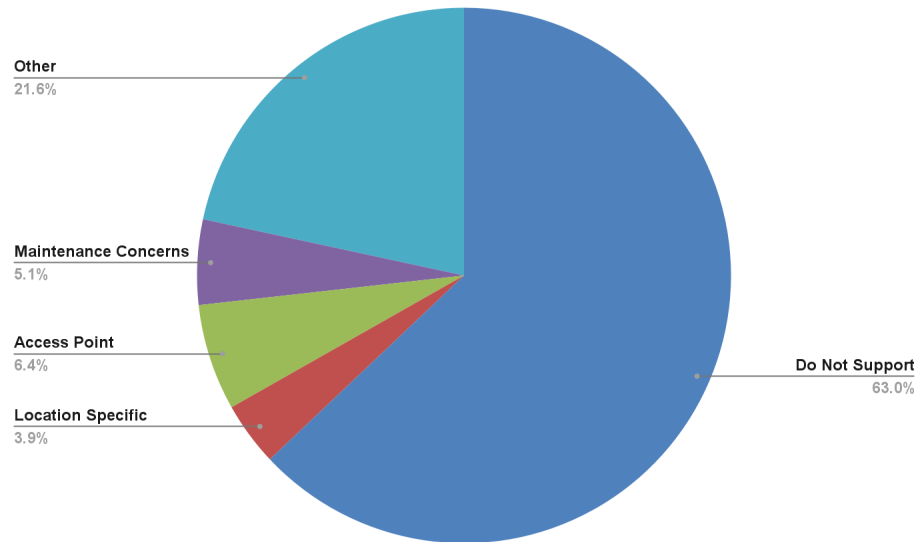
Question 11. Please refer to the image in Question 9, the Bearspaw Off-Leash Area. Are there any locations of access points that we have missed? (optional)

**Question options***(Click items to hide)*

- No
- Yes (if yes, please specify where)

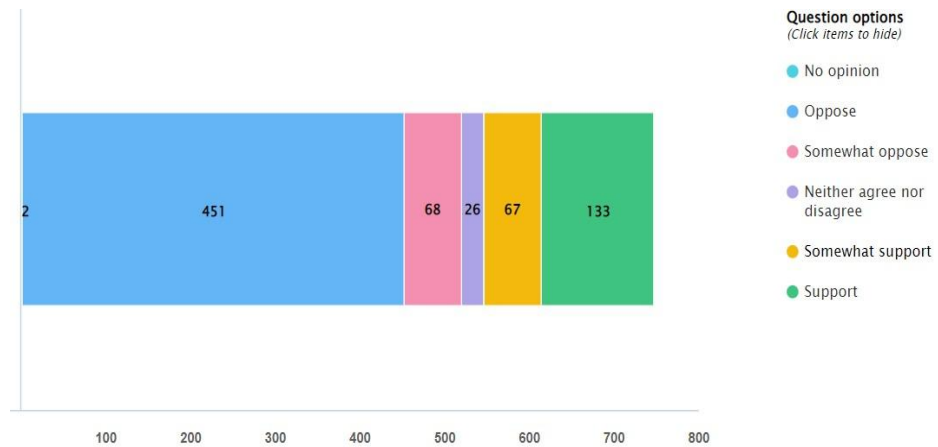
Just under 78% of respondents indicated there were no access points missed. Of those who responded yes, many stated they do not want a fence at all, some want additional access between Access Points 1 and 2, others requested more access along the 109 Street side, an additional access between points 2 and 5 (where there is a current pathway) and an adjacent access next to point 4.

Question 12. Please refer to the image in Question 9, the Bearspaw Off-Leash Area. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about the access points? (optional)



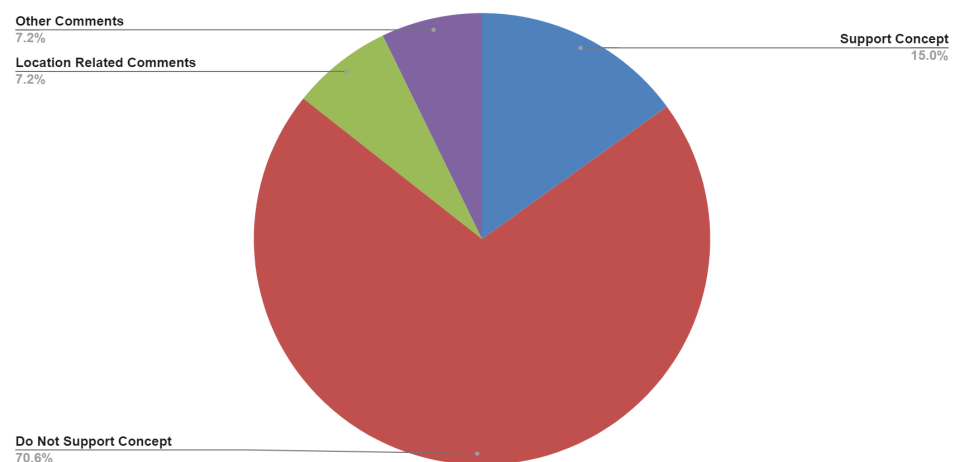
A large majority of respondents did not provide a direct response to this question, instead referring to the fencing or off-leash area in general. Sixty three percent (63%) indicated they do not support the concept for Bearspaw off-leash area. The most common answers were: opposition to any fencing in the area, concerns about the off-leash area size being limited and general comments in support of keeping the area unchanged. Nearly 22% provided various “other” responses, including no comment, expressed concerns related to project decision making, supported the concept of fencing in the area, had traffic and parking-related concerns, or mentioned incidents of non-compliance with dog owners in on-leash areas. A small number of responses provided specific access point ideas and concerns (6.4%), maintenance related concerns (5.1%), or provided location-specific issues (3.9%).

Question 13. [Referring to both Keheewin and Bearspaw Off-Leash Areas] Please indicate your level of support for the design. (optional)



Just over 60% of respondents oppose the design, while an additional 9% somewhat oppose it. On the other side, 18% support the design, with an additional 9% somewhat in support of the design. The remaining 4% were neutral and two respondents had no opinion.

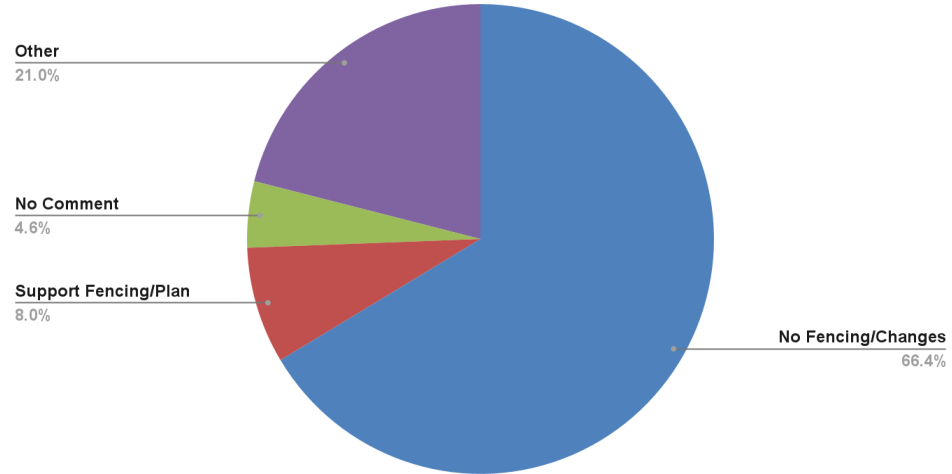
Question 14. Please explain your level of support for the design. (optional)



A large majority of survey respondents (70%) oppose the design, with opposition to the fencing and the overall project as the primary concerns. Fifteen percent (15%) provided supportive comments, either approving of the fencing specifically or indicating general support for the project. The remaining responses focused equally (7.2%) on location-related comments (such as adding more access points, more garbage receptacles, dog waste bag dispensers and signage, supported perimeter fencing, or had maintenance-related suggestions) and other comments (including incidents of non-compliance with dog owners in on-leash areas, opposition to any

off-leash areas, or that they like the park's openness and the opportunities to socialize with other community members).

Question 15. Is there anything else that you would like us to know about the draft design for the Keheewin and Bearspaw Off-Leash Area? (optional)



Survey Analysis

Over 66% of respondents stated they are opposed to fencing and/or do not support the draft design plan. Twenty one percent (21%) provided other responses, such as requests for more signage, garbage receptacles and waste bags/dispensers and trees; had safety or maintenance requests; questioned the community consultation process; or expressed their opposition to specific access points/gates in the proposed design. Eight percent (8%) expressed support for the design and were happy to see fencing and more controlled measures for off-leash areas, and nearly 5% had no comment.

In addition to the survey responses, a number of email messages were received by the City from community members sharing similar concerns provided in the survey data above. Many respondents questioned the need for the project as a whole, suggesting it was a waste of financial resources better spent on other city ventures such as snow and ice, or homelessness-related projects. Others expressed opposition to fencing in the off-leash area and would prefer to keep the area open.

According to the survey data, survey respondents were predominantly regular, local area users of the park with dogs and do not want to see any changes to the current off-leash area.

What We Did

Based on the feedback from this public engagement, the project team will be re-evaluating the scope and design of the concept for Keheewin and Bearspaw off-leash area. It is anticipated an updated design will be made available for viewing on the project website in Summer 2022. The project will move into the Design stage of the project (see project timeline in the “how we engaged” section).

Public Engagement Approach

How We Engaged



Figure 4: The City of Edmonton public engagement spectrum- ADVISE level was selected for this project.

An online engagement, consisting of an Engaged Edmonton survey to collect feedback, was administered for the public to ADVISE the design for the Keheewin and Bearspaw Off-Leash Areas. At this level, the public is consulted by the City to share feedback and perspectives that are considered for policies, programs, projects or services.

Signage around the park area and roadways, a webpage on the City's site and social media posts were used as the primary methods of communicating the engagement with the public. These tactics were intended to specifically target the park users and communities surrounding the park.

The survey was open to the public from April 4-18, 2022. Due to significant public interest, the survey was reopened and extended until May 11 to collect further feedback. In total, over 1,600 page views to the Engaged Edmonton page were recorded and a total of 748 survey responses were received.

In addition to the public engagement, project team members attended a town hall meeting organized by Ward Councillor Rice on May 4 to hear feedback and answer questions about the project.

Currently, the City is implementing a digital-first public engagement approach, with additional in-person opportunities as needed, to ensure it reaches as many Edmontonians as possible. In following this approach, a survey was selected for this project as the primary engagement tool to be

used, due to extensive public engagement recently conducted to develop the [Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy](#).

The project is currently in the “Concept” stage. With the conclusion of the public engagement, as well as consultation with City departments and other stakeholders, the proposed design will be altered and finalized for the “Design” phase.



Figure 5: Stages of the project, currently in the ‘concept’ phase

Who Was Engaged

While the engagement was open to all members of the public, the specific communities surrounding the Keheewin and Bearspaw Off-Leash Area were the focus of engagement as these are the park users and most likely to be affected by this project. The first four questions of the Engaged Edmonton survey were demographics questions, asked to determine if participants:

- Owned a dog or not.
- Used the park on an occasional or regular basis.
- Resided in an adjacent or nearby neighborhood.
- Used a particular mode of transportation to get to the park.

The full results of these questions are shown in the above section (“what we heard- survey results”). The majority of respondents own dogs, live within the south-central area of Edmonton directly surrounding the off-leash area, use the park on a somewhat regular basis and access the park primarily by foot or car.

What Happens Next?

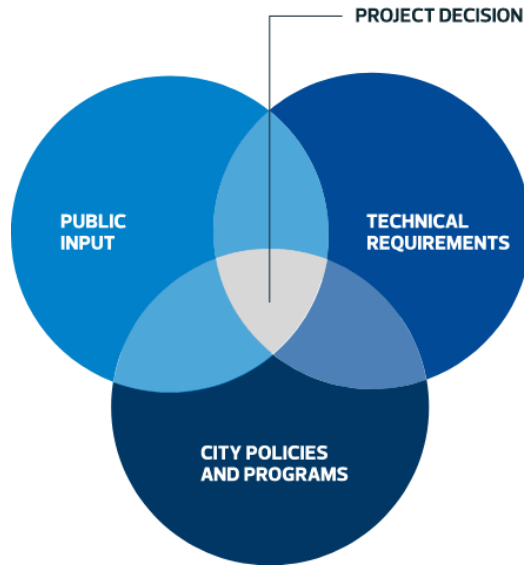


Figure 6: Venn diagram of the City's decision making process

The City makes decisions using a combination of policy and program information, public engagement input, technical requirements and available funding. This process helps to ensure that the decisions we make are fiscally responsible, align with best practices, consider the existing public and private infrastructure, land uses and activities in the neighbourhood and result in the best outcomes for our city.

City policies and programs, such as the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy, provide the overall direction for designs. As each neighbourhood is unique, the Project Team asks for input from residents who live, work and play in the neighbourhood and considers technical aspects as well.

Based on the high volume of feedback received from this public engagement, the project team is re-evaluating the concept design and will be developing a revised design, to be made available in Summer 2022.

It is important to emphasize that this project was initiated in the strategy phase as a result of historical concerns received from residents regarding safety concerns for users (dogs and people) due to the lack of fencing or barrier controls around the adjacent street and ravine; some respondents continue to request/support fencing of a portion of the off-leash area; and,

the proposed enhancements are in alignment with the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy. However, a strong preference was expressed by the community for no fencing of the existing off-leash area and that the revised concept plan should not include fencing.

Thank you to everyone who participated and provided feedback on the concept plan for the Keheewin and Bearspaw Off-Leash Area. Please visit the webpage for all further updates on this project:

<https://www.edmonton.ca/keheewin-and-bearspaw-leash-area>.