City of Saskatoon
Communications & Public Engagement

ENGAGE

Append 4- Dog Parks for Small Dogs Engagement Summary.docx

Engagement Summary
June 6, 2022

Engagement Summary

The City of Saskatoon Administration is proposing two dog parks for small dogs – one in Charlottetown Park on the west side of the river and one attached to the existing dog park in Hyde Park on the east side of the river. This engagement was to collect public opinion on these.

The purpose of this engagement was to listen to public concerns and suggestions regarding these two proposed locations, as well as to gather general comments on dog parks for small dogs. If the dog parks are approved, this input will be considered in the design of the proposed dog parks and their ongoing management.

An online comment form was posted on the City website and received 698 responses. Additionally, an in-person public information session for residents near Charlottetown Park had six attendees.

Overall, feedback received was extremely supportive of dog parks for small dogs. The proposed locations are largely supported, especially if both locations are approved to better accommodate residents on both the east and west sides of Saskatoon.

The most common themes from the comments provided include:

- Many owners of small dogs do not feel comfortable using dog parks that include dogs of all sizes due to safety concerns and would appreciate designated areas for small dogs;
- Questions related to monitoring, reporting, and enforcement processes;
- Questions and suggestions related to size limits;
- Suggestions related to desired features (e.g., trees, bushes, paths, benches, water fountains, etc.) to enhance the experience at the proposed dog parks; and
- Desire for more dog parks for small dogs, including suggestions for additional locations.

Detailed engagement results are provided below.

Contents

1 Background

In October 2018, the City of Saskatoon (City) contracted Insightrix Research Inc. to conduct an Animal Services Customer Satisfaction Survey to better understand dog owner use and satisfaction with current dog parks throughout the City.

In total, 606 Saskatoon dog owners completed the survey (332 who use dog parks and 274 who do not). One of the recommendations from the 2018 survey was that the City consider designating off-leash areas specifically for small dogs and their owners to better manage animal behaviour and improve both animal and owner safety while using our off leash parks.

When asked how participants would rate the importance of specific amenities within City run dog parks, 64% of respondents stated the availability of a small dog dedicated off-leash area was needed.

When asked about park usage if a dedicated area for small dogs was available, a majority of small to medium sized dog owners stated they would be more likely to use a designated area dedicated to small dogs. Nearly six in ten non-park users stated they would likely use a space for small dogs if it were available.

Over the past several years, Administration has received numerous requests for dedicated space specifically for small dogs with concerns surrounding pet and owner safety being the predominant indicator for this need.

In response to this interest, and to address safety concerns for small dog owners and handlers, two dog parks for small dogs are being proposed – one in Charlottetown Park on the west side of the river and one attached to the existing dog park in Hyde Park on the east side of the river.

The purpose of this engagement was to gauge public opinion regarding these two proposed locations, and to gather general comments on dog parks for small dogs. These comments have been considered in the design of the proposed dog parks and, if approved, their ongoing management.

2 Engagement Activities

2.1 Marketing

An Engage webpage for the project was created on the City website.

Due to the proximity of Charlottetown Park to residential dwellings, residents in the neighbourhood received a mailout that included a high-level description of the project, instructions on how to access the project webpage and online comment form and an invitation to attend an in-person information session.

Social media ads (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) directed people to the project's Engage page.

Posters were placed at dog park locations with a QR code directing people to the project's Engage page.

Invitations to participate in the engagement were also forwarded to dog park ambassadors and other known stakeholder groups.

2.2 Comment Form

An online comment form was posted on the Engage page and was open for responses from March 23 through April 25, 2022. In total, there were 698 responses.

2.2.1 Results

Respondents were provided the rationale for dog parks for small dogs, as well as a description and visual for each of the two proposed locations. Respondents were asked to provide their comments for the following three questions:

- Do you have any comments on the proposed dog park for small dogs in Charlottetown Park?
- Do you have any comments on the proposed dog park for small dogs in Hyde Park?
- Do you have any general comments related to dog parks for small dogs?

The content of comments received was coded and analyzed to determine any common themes. A table is provided below for each question to summarize the comments received, in descending order of how often the theme was expressed.

Do you have any comments on the proposed dog park for small dogs in Charlottetown Park?

Comments Provided for Charlottetown Park	Count
• General support and enthusiasm / safety concerns related to dog interactions at regular dog parks	169
• Supportive of proposed location	49
• Concerned with safety at the proposed location / opposed to proposed location	25
• Not from this area / would not travel to get there	22
• Suggest adding features (trees, paths, benches, dog play structures, etc.)	19
• Questions on enforcement / management	14
• Suggest more central location would be better	13
• Not supportive of overall project / Not needed	12
• Questions on the definition of a small dog / suggested sizes	12
• Suggest other areas for future dog parks for small dogs	7
• Feel the proposed dog park is too small / small dogs also need space to run	6
• Uninteresting/unappealing space to spend time	6
• Fencing will need to be to the ground to prevent escapes	6
• Small dogs can be aggressive	5
• Dog owners are more the issue than the size of the dog	4
• Suggest water fountain / potable water source	3
• Feel the proposed dog park is too large	3
• How will children who use this space (nearby daycare) be impacted by the loss of open green space	3
• Suggest security cameras	2
• Other types of dogs could use designated space (e.g., anxious dogs, elderly dogs)	2
• Appreciate the nearby parking lot	2
• Parking may be limited during events at Cosmo Civic Centre	2

Comments Provided for Charlottetown Park continued	Count
• Clear signage indicating rules and size limits needed	2
• Critical of the engagement	2
• Suggest double-gate entrances (Moose Jaw for an example)	2
• Instead of a new dog park suggest cordoning off part of an existing dog park or adding on	2
• More concerned with dogs off-leash in non-designated areas	1
• Suggest ball 'library' (like stick library)	1
• Suggest planting clover for ground cover	1
• What if I have a medium and small dog? Cannot bring both?	1
• Concerned with potential of tree removal	1

Do you have any comments on the proposed dog park for small dogs in Hyde Park?

Comments Provided for Hyde Park	Count
• General support and enthusiasm / safety concerns related to dog interactions at regular dog parks	172
• Supportive of proposed location	100
• Suggest adding features (trees, paths, benches, dog play structures, etc.)	31
• Feel the proposed dog park is too small / small dogs also need space to run	25
• Concerns that it is connected to existing dog park / interactions through fence	22
• Like that it is an extension of current park	15
• Not from this area / would not travel to get there	12
• Uninteresting/unappealing space to spend time	11
• Suggest more central location would be better	10
• Not supportive of project	9
• Suggest future small dog parks in high density areas / other areas	8
• Would prefer not next to busy road	6
• Clear signage indicating rules and size limits needed	6
• Not supportive of location	6
• Questions on enforcement / management	6
• Fencing will need to be to the ground to prevent escapes	6
• Suggest (plant-based) sound barrier between park and Boychuk	4
• Dog owners are more the issue than the size of the dog	4
• Questions on the definition of a small dog / suggested sizes	4
• Suggest water fountain / potable water source	4
• Suggest entrance to small dog park near parking / closer parking	3
• Separate entrances / exits for each park	3
• Rocks in Hyde Park dog park a hazard for dogs and humans	2
• Small dogs can also be dangerous	2
• Proposed size of park too big	2
• Suggest waste bins, etc. are available and emptied regularly	2
• Parking is sometimes busy concerned parking may become more congested	2
• Appreciate ample parking	1
• No wind protection	1

Comments Provided for Hyde Park continued	Count
• Suggest dog park next to SPCA	1
• Suggest security cameras	1
• Suggest large rocks / boulders	1
• More concerned with dogs off-leash in non-designated areas	1
• What if I have a medium and small dog? Cannot bring both?	1
• Could outdoor rinks be designated for small dogs in summer months?	1
• Suggest planting clover	1
• Takes away from naturalized park	1
• Wheelchair accessibility needs to be considered	1
• City should spray for ticks	1
• Other types of dogs could use designated space (e.g., anxious dogs, elderly dogs)	1
• Suggest reseeding the existing dog park	1
• Concerned with foxtail weed that grows in Hyde Park / can harm dogs	1
• Not easy for local residents to walk to – most need to drive to get there	1
• Suggest double-gate entrances (Moose Jaw for an example)	1

Do you have any general comments related to dog parks for small dogs?

Other General Comments	Count
• General support and enthusiasm / safety concerns related to dog interactions at regular dog parks	325
• Clear process for monitoring / reporting / enforcement is needed	51
• Need clarity on size definition (some feel proposed max is too small; others want to ensure it stays small; breed; age)	47
• Would like to see other locations as well (suggestions provided)	43
• Small dogs can be aggressive / less often trained	19
• Not needed	17
• Also include small dog designated space in the existing and future dog parks	16
• clear signage needed (size guidelines, enforcement, cleanliness, etc.)	14
• Should have same amenities as other parks (trees, paths, benches) / make it interesting for users	13
• Locations need to be easy to get to; should be central	12
• Dog owners are more the issue than size of dog	12
• Parks should be larger	10
• Adequate fencing (to the ground)	10
• Suggest parks exclusively for big dogs	7
• Small dog owners may continue to use most convenient/preferred dog park; limited use?	5
• Like that there are proposals for each side of the river	5
• Add obstacles / dog play structures	4
• Dog parks need supervision / ambassadors	4
• What of owners of both medium and small dogs?	3
• Need potable water access	3

Other General Comments Continued	Count
• Do not like locations / too far away	3
• Critical of engagement / survey	2
• Security concerns (lighting)	1
• Money better spent on SPCA	1
• What data was used as basis for this project?	1
• Dog parks should be user financed	1
• Suggest shorter fences to deter large dog owners from using space	1
• More concerned with dogs off-leash in non-designated areas	1
• Opposed to replacing existing park space with dog parks	1

2.3 In-Person Public Information Session

An in-person public information session was held at Cosmo Civic Centre on the evening of April 12, 2022. The purpose of this session was to give residents near Charlottetown Park an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments to City staff regarding the proposed park for small dogs. In total, there were six attendees.

Topics of discussion at this public information session included:

- Suitable gates and entrances are needed to ensure dogs do not slip under the fence;
- Available poop bags and receptacles are needed;
- Must be well lit;
- Signage must be clear;
- Planned height (16 inches) and weight (20 pounds) limits seemed to be acceptable;
- Concerns with how users will self-manage; and
- Wheelchair accessibility, including ways to make the park accessible in the winter and lower garbage cans.