

Off-leash Dog Beaches & Parks Community Engagement Report

September 2016

Executive Summary

Provision for dogs in any community generates strong, frequently polarized, opinions on the subject. While this can make locating new dog facilities more difficult, dog owners are one of the largest single user groups of our park system, and as a progressive, mid-sized city their needs should be addressed.

In order to more accurately understand public feeling on the subject, the City undertook a statistically valid survey in January/February 2016. The findings of this survey identified the majority of residents (55%), both dog owners and non-owners, felt more dog beaches were necessary across the City. Based on community feedback, five potential locations were identified, four beaches and one park. Further public consultation on these specific locations was then conducted with public opinion sought on the schematic designs for these specific sites. Following the intent of accuracy from the original survey, this engagement report seeks to accurately and objectively record the feedback received, and balance it against the physical factors considered in selecting a dog park or beach.

Approximately 38 per cent of households in the city of Kelowna own at least one dog; this is higher than the national average of 35 per cent (Ipsos Reid). Kelowna currently has eight off-leash dog parks and one off-leash dog beach located at Cedar Creek. In addition, there are a further 76 parks that permit dogs on leash.

Following the statistically-valid survey conducted in early 2016, it was determined that the majority of Kelowna residents, especially dog owners, would like to see more designated off-leash dog beaches. The sole off-leash beach at Cedar Creek is frequently used, but the location has been identified as impractical for those who reside in north, east or downtown Kelowna.

Our public waterfront property is a valuable asset to all City residents, with many competing needs and uses. The beach locations were selected in consideration of a number of factors:

- public safety,
- good distribution of locations across the City waterfront;
- impact on the surrounding neighbourhood;
- water-quality less suitable for human swimming;
- impact on the environment and wildlife;
- proximity to suitable car parking;
- proximity to other park facilities and recreational uses.

A new dog park or beach would most directly impact the surrounding neighbourhood. Therefore, consulting with those most affected by the implementation of a new off-leash park or beach is essential to ensure Kelowna's off-leash areas are located, designed, and operated in a sustainable manner. This report records the engagement process, both from local residents at each of the selected sites as well as broad feedback from the wider population. It is worth noting, an over-arching theme that was heard at almost every discovery session was to introduce multiple sites or none - don't trial just one as it will be inundated with too many users.

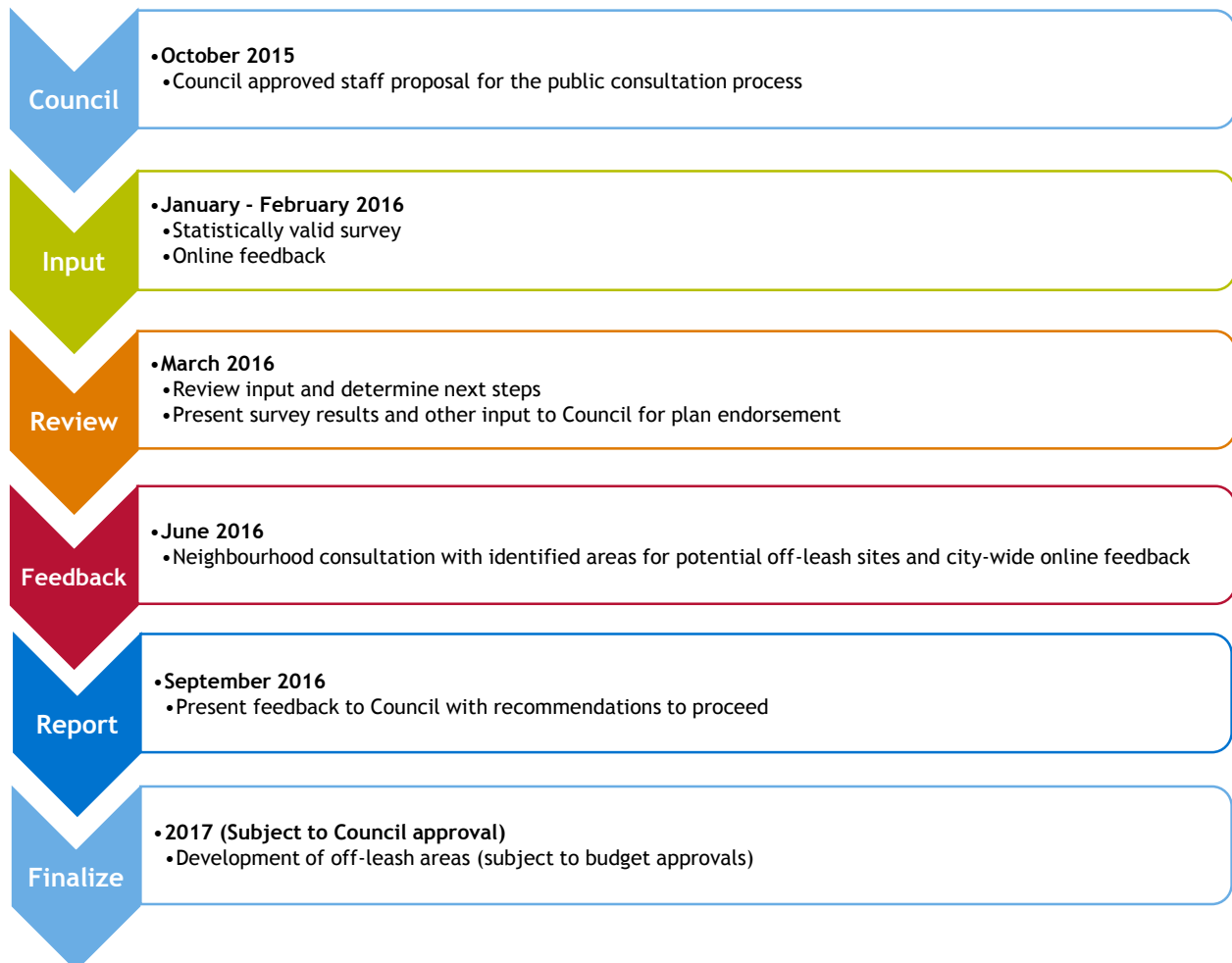
At the conclusion of this engagement report, recommendations will be submitted to Council based both on the engagement conducted, as well as an objective consideration of the physical attributes of each site selected, in order to allow Council to decide on how best to proceed.



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1. Engagement Timeline

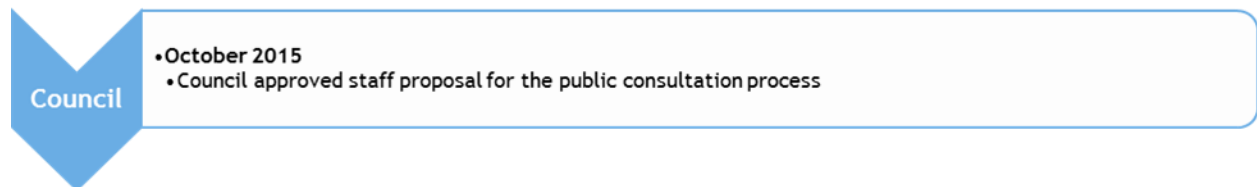


2. Background

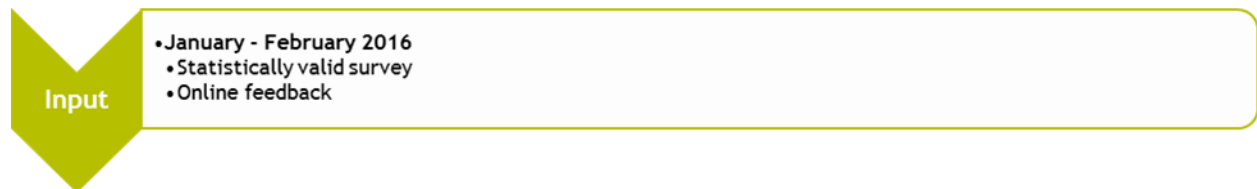
Every year the City receives feedback from residents and visitors regarding dogs in parks. Some request more spaces for dogs, while others express concern about dogs in public parks. The need for more dog beaches has consistently been a popular request from local residents. A petition was started in July 2015 requesting the creation an off-leash dog area in Sutherland Park. More than 1,200 signatures were collected and submitted to the City.

Dog ownership benefits communities simply by encouraging active lifestyles and building local community relationships between dog owners. Dog parks offer a controlled environment for owners to exercise their dogs off-leash. However, irresponsible dog ownership is a frequent cause for irritation and results in a number of complaints to the City each year.

While staff have found that there tends to be overall community support for dogs in parks, those who reside in close proximity to proposed off-leash locations often raise concerns.



On October 19, 2015, Council endorsed staff's proposal to undertake a public engagement process that includes a statistically valid survey conducted by an independent research group.



Telephone interviews with 385 households were conducted in early February. The selected telephone interviews of Kelowna residents aged 18 years or older were conducted in order to:

- Determine residents' level of support for off-leash dog parks and/or dog beaches,
- Identify residents' attitude and tolerance level for off-leash dog parks and/or dog beaches in their neighbourhood,
- Identify priority neighbourhoods for off-leash dog parks and/or dog beaches.

The 385 interviews were completed with quotas set for specific postal codes and loose quotas set for gender and age to ensure the sample was inclusive and representative of the City population.

Concurrent with the statistically valid survey, an online feedback form was available between January 26 and February 15 for interested residents to provide input on Kelowna dog parks and beaches.

Review

- March 2016
- Review input and determine next steps
- Present survey results and other input to Council for plan endorsement

The statistically-valid survey results received on February 26, 2016 outlined the following:

- ▶ **Approximately 38% of households in Kelowna have one or more dog.**
- ▶ **The demand for more off-leash dog parks is fairly equally split, but the City of Kelowna is lacking off-leash dog beaches.**
Half (52%) of residents believe there are enough off-leash dog parks, but only 36% believe that there are enough off-leash dog beaches. The perception among dog owners is more negative: 47% agree there are enough dog parks, but only 22% agree that there are enough off-leash dog beaches.
- ▶ **There is strong support for creating a fenced off-leash dog area at an existing beach.**
Three-quarters (76%) of residents support this option, with 43% strongly supporting it. As might be expected, dog owners are more supportive of this concept with 85% supporting it (57% strongly). Perhaps more surprisingly, 69% of non-dog owners supported it.
- ▶ **Inconvenience or distance is the primary reason for not using off-leash dog beaches more regularly.**
30% of those that say their dog rarely or never goes to an off-leash dog beach, state it is for this reason. The same reason is given for 11% of those who say that their dog rarely or never goes to an off-leash dog park. But other reasons, such as not having a need, are more common.

Currently, the City has one off-leash beach for dogs at Cedar Creek near the southern boundary of the City. The location of the dog beach has been identified as inconvenient for many dog owners, especially for those who reside in the north or east quadrants of the City.

- ▶ The preferred locations for additional off-leash dog parks included the Mission (13%), Glenmore (10%), Rutland (9%) and Downtown (8%).
- ▶ The preferred locations for an additional off-leash dog beach included Downtown (17%), Mission (8%) and North End /North Kelowna (6%)

Common themes that emerged from the open-ended feedback included:

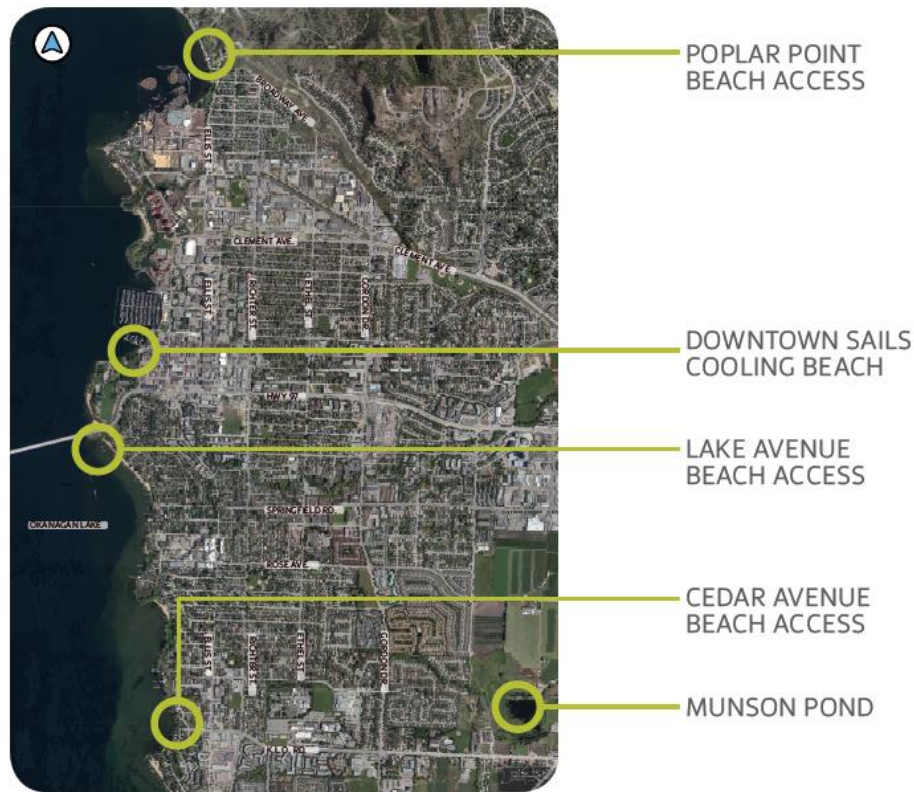
- ▶ Location suggestions or requests (including water access, trails and mixed use)
- ▶ Park design and amenity suggestions or requests
- ▶ Concerns about dog parks
(e.g. cleanliness/dog waste, enforcement, fines, uncontrolled dogs)

3. Proposed Locations

Neighbourhoods were selected based on the feedback received from the statistically valid survey as well as the online feedback forms. Staff then assessed the neighbourhoods and selected locations based on several criteria, including availability of space, current gaps in service, popularity, other waterfront usage, water quality, environmental sustainability, accessibility, proximity to residential areas and availability of parking.

Five potential locations were selected from existing city-owned properties:

PROPOSED BEACHES / PARKS



Proposed locations for off-leash dog beaches:

- ▶ Poplar Point Drive Beach Access (North Kelowna)
- ▶ Sails Plaza “mini” Beach (Downtown)
- ▶ Lake Avenue Beach Access (Downtown)
- ▶ Cedar Avenue Beach Access (Mission)

Proposed location for an off-leash dog park:

- ▶ Munson Pond Park, northeast section of the field

4. Engagement Process

Feedback

- June 2016
- Neighbourhood consultation with identified areas for potential off-leash sites and city-wide online feedback

Engagement Objectives:

The goal of this phase of engagement was to consult with citizens on each of the five proposed locations. The consultations allowed the City to listen to and understand the needs and concerns of the neighbours closest in proximity to each location, as well as to gauge city-wide interest and preferences for each location.

It is important to distinguish the *in-person neighbourhood feedback* from the *online feedback*. While the City is constantly seeking inclusive input, at this stage in the decision-making process, it is essential to garner feedback from those directly affected by the location of the off-leash dog beaches/parks, especially those who live in close proximity to these locations. This is why the survey results are separated into two sections - Discovery Sessions, feedback and survey and Online City-wide Engagement, feedback and survey. The same **information boards and conceptual designs (Appendix A)** were presented to both audiences. Feedback received from the two distinct groups often showed a difference in opinion as outlined in the discovery session feedback results below.

Information Sharing, Communication & Promotion:

To ensure the City heard feedback from those residents most affected by the implementation of dog beaches and parks, the first four sessions were promoted only to the local neighbourhoods. Targeted promotions were utilized to ensure nearby residents knew about the proposal and the feedback options including:

- ▶ **Signage on site (Appendix B):** sandwich boards were set up in each location encouraging park users to share their feedback at each respective discovery session or online.
- ▶ **Letters (Appendix C)** were sent to households and businesses within a 200m radius from the area inviting them to share their thoughts and feedback at the discovery session.
- ▶ Letters were also delivered to local stakeholders including neighbourhood associations.

The final city-wide discovery session held at Sails on June 15 was an inclusive session looking for feedback from the general public and broader promotional tactics were used:

- ▶ A news release was sent out on June 1 with information pertaining to the city-wide session and online feedback channels.
- ▶ The city-wide session was highlighted in the City in Action section of Capital News.
- ▶ A Parks e-newsletter was delivered on June 1 inviting the public to attend the city-wide session or submit feedback online.
- ▶ Social media channels were utilized to help promote the city-wide discovery sessions and online feedback forum throughout the months of May and June.
- ▶ A public service announcement was sent out one week prior to the closing of the online feedback forum.

5. Discovery Sessions Surveys and Feedback

All **surveys (Appendix D)** collected as part of the engagement process gave participants the option to provide general feedback on the direction of the plan and the process. Highlights of the feedback received in-person and via the surveys are included below.

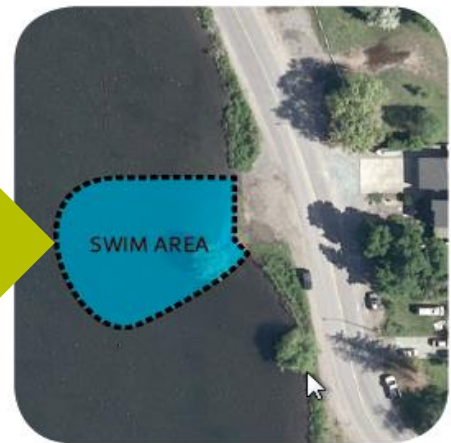
Poplar Point Beach Access, near Knox Mountain Park	Sutherland Park	June 7
Lake Avenue Beach Access Sails Plaza 'Mini' beach, Kerry Park	Lake Avenue Beach Access	June 8
Cedar Avenue Beach Access	Cedar Avenue Beach Access	June 9
Munson Pond Park	Munson Pond Park	June 14
City-Wide Discovery Session	Sails/Kerry Park	June 15



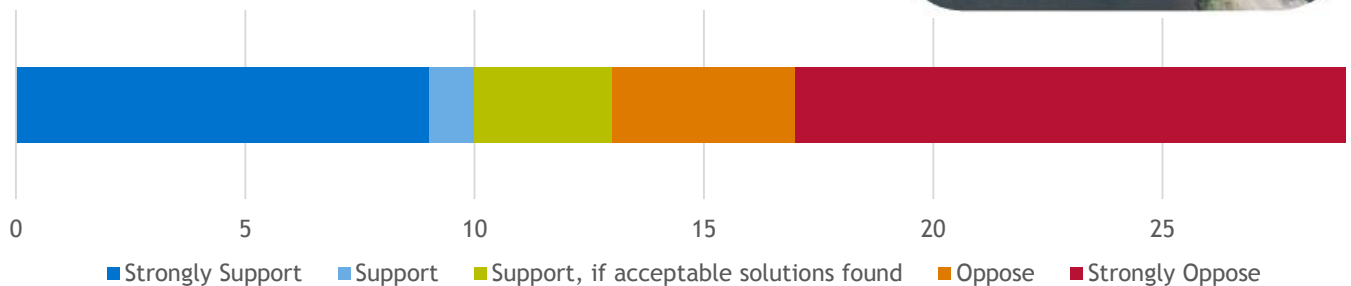
POPLAR POINT BEACH ACCESS SUTHERLAND PARK - JUNE 7, 2016

- ▶ Number of attendees: 38
- ▶ Attendees to note: N/A
- ▶ Exit surveys: 29

For further details on conceptual designs, see Appendix A



DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG BEACH AT POPLAR POINT BEACH ACCESS?



29

THEMES HEARD IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION	CONCERNS HEARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Space is frequently used for dogs, some residents unaware that it wasn't already an official off-leash area ▶ Proposed location far enough away from the boat launch to ease any safety issues ▶ Good location in North Kelowna with Knox Mountain close by ▶ Would provide a nice cooling off for dogs following a hike ▶ Would like to see it happen as long as the recently installed riparian work would not be impacted ▶ Would use the area every day if it became an off-leash dog beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Traffic and bike safety - concern about dogs running onto the road ▶ Limited parking in the area ▶ Location is too small ▶ Will have too much uptake and cause congestion ▶ Potential conflict with kayakers and canoes ▶ Dog fouling not being picked up ▶ Advertising it as a dog park would only encourage additional traffic to the neighbourhood ▶ Noise concerns in reference to extra vehicle traffic and dogs barking ▶ Families without dogs might be deterred from using the area ▶ Worried about disc golf in Sutherland Park being removed for parking

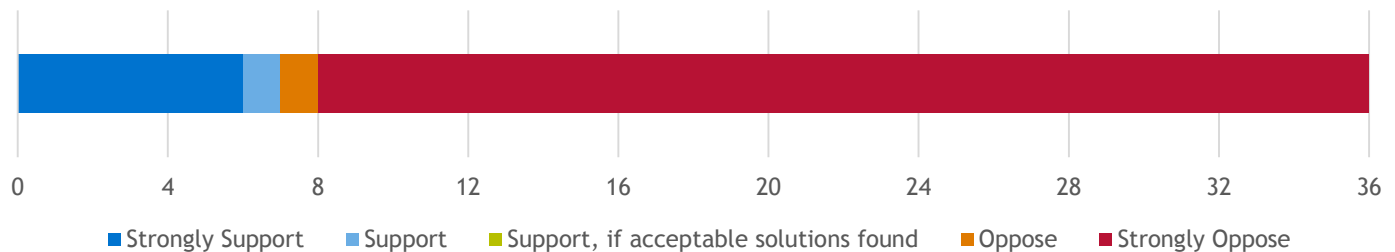
Summary: This location had a mixed response with a slight majority of those in attendance opposed to this location. It was noted during this session that both Sutherland Park and the proposed location are being frequently used by dog owners both on-leash and off, and there is currently some confusion as to proper on-leash dog protocol in the area (dogs are allowed on-leash as long as they remain on the pathway). If this location were selected as an off-leash dog area, clear signage would need to be posted to inform residents of proper dog behavior and to inform them where the off-leash area ends to avoid the boat launch area.

LAKE AVENUE BEACH ACCESS LAKE AVENUE - JUNE 8, 2016

- ▶ **Number of Attendees:** 48
 - ▶ **Attendees to Note:** media outlets, organized residents group
 - ▶ **Exit Surveys:** 36
- Note: Inclement weather including rain and heavy winds may have kept some people away.*



DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG BEACH AT LAKE AVENUE BEACH ACCESS?



THEMES HEARD IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION	CONCERNS HEARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ideal location near downtown ▶ Well used already by dogs to cool off ▶ Would drive away people who use the beach for illicit activities ▶ Would welcome dog beaches in the other locations but really think this location, Lake Ave, is ideal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would decrease neighbourhood property values ▶ Not enough parking ▶ Cleanliness and concern about dog fouling ▶ Safety concerns with high volumes of pedestrian and cycling traffic going through the area at high speeds ▶ Would deter families from using the beach access ▶ Would or could encourage transient population ▶ Dogs coming into nearby resident's yards ▶ Noise concerns with barking dogs in residential area ▶ Dog beaches should not be in residential areas ▶ Could destroy the recent riparian work ▶ Already working to better the reputation of the beach, off-leash area would not help ▶ Dog fouling would contaminate the water and sand ▶ Legal action if the proposal goes forward ▶ Causing stress for many neighbours in the location

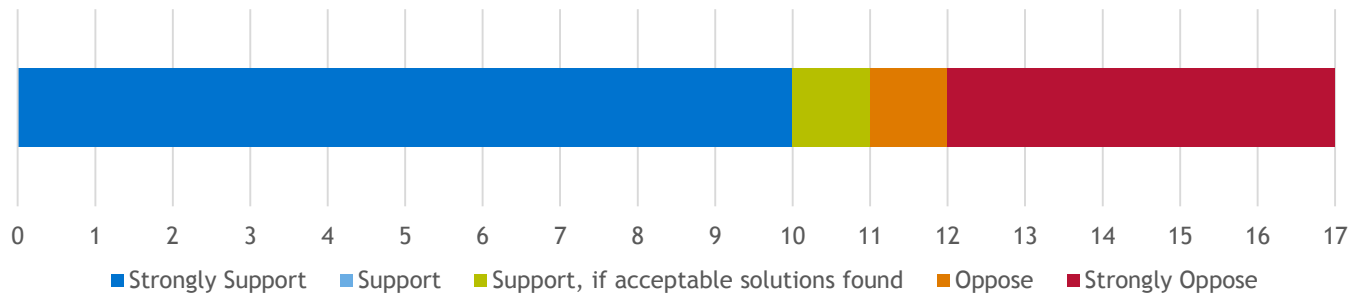
Summary: Approximately four-fifths of attendees were opposed to a dog beach at the Lake Avenue location, most strongly opposed. Prior to the session, neighbourhood residents had put up posters in opposition of using this site as a dog beach. Those in attendance were passionate and strong in their opinions on this matter, with several key concerns reiterated by multiple attendees: decreasing property values, cleanliness, lack of parking, proximity to a high traffic active transportation pathway and concerns that an off-leash dog beach would not appeal to young families. While there were many local resident dog owners in attendance who welcomed the idea of more off-leash dog parks, most did not feel that Lake Avenue was an appropriate location. Alternative locations were suggested by attendees including the southern end of Hot Sands Beach in City Park, adjacent to the bridge.

CEDAR AVENUE BEACH ACCESS CEDAR AVENUE - JUNE 9

- ▶ Number of attendees: 36
- ▶ Attendees to note: N/A
- ▶ Exit surveys: 17



DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG BEACH AT CEDAR AVENUE BEACH ACCESS?



THEMES HEARD IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION	CONCERNS HEARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An excellent place for dogs to be off-leash and in the water ▶ Would promote the area as a family friendly place to be ▶ Beach is large enough to divide for both people and dogs ▶ Dog swim areas currently lacking in that location ▶ Make gate and dog area easily wheelchair accessible ▶ Could use it June through September when it is too hot to walk the dog without a swim ▶ Would want small dog and large dog areas segregated by fence for small dog's safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Not enough parking ▶ Potential conflict with Paddle Club ▶ Too much traffic congestion ▶ Would negatively affect nearby businesses ▶ Water not recommended for human swimming ▶ Wildlife conflict ▶ Dog health: park is notorious for swimmer's itch from ducks and geese ▶ Concerns about sewage outfall nearby ▶ Current location for dropping the milfoil during the summer

Summary: Two-thirds of respondents were in support of a dog beach at this location.

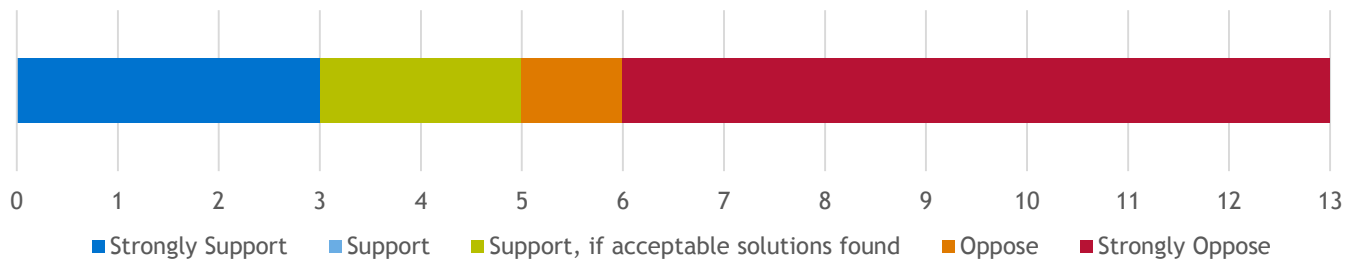
While there were some opposed due to potential conflicts with wildlife and swimmers, many brought suggestions as to how to make this site work. A number of questions were raised about parking in the area and how it would affect future plans for the Pandosy Waterfront Project. As well, several attendees suggested an alternate location at a small beach access one block south on Meikle Avenue.

MUNSON POND MUNSON POND PARK - JUNE 14, 2016

- ▶ **Number of attendees:** 34
- ▶ **Attendees to note:** Central Okanagan Naturalist Club, Central Okanagan Land Trust Building manager
- ▶ **Exit surveys:** 14



DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG PARK AT MUNSON POND?



THEMES HEARD IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION	CONCERNS HEARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Would like the square plan larger if possible ▶ Favor the larger NW area for dog park ▶ We need more dog-accessible areas and off-leash in particular ▶ This area is central and convenient ▶ Would be a great spot for off-leash ▶ Would like the off-leash area to have access to water for dogs ▶ In favor of a larger fenced off leash dog park in this area for dogs and their owners to socialize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Concerns about environmental preservation ▶ This pond is on migration route for waterfowl and dogs off-leash would chase birds ▶ Cleanliness: dog owners being negligent with dog fouling in the area ▶ Currently enjoy the quiet and wildlife in the area - dogs could affect that lifestyle ▶ Noise from barking dogs would be a nuisance ▶ Safety for seniors who must keep their dogs on leashes due to inability to walk ▶ Wildlife concerns (coyotes often in the area) ▶ Dogs off-leash are out of control

Summary: Munson Pond is popular with seniors and bird-watchers in the area and as such an off-leash dog park in the area was poorly received. Just under two-thirds of respondents were opposed. Many had concerns about conflicting park uses especially with dogs potentially driving off birds in the area. Several members from the Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT) attended and voiced their opposition to an off-leash area in Munson Pond Park as they considered it would conflict with the goals set out in the Munson Pond Naturalization Project to protect existing natural habitat features of Munson Pond, improve habitat diversity for birds and to provide opportunities for public enjoyment that are compatible with conservation in a safe manner. COLT and the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club are partners in the Munson Pond Naturalization Project - both object to the off-leash proposal in the area.

SAILS PLAZA “MINI” BEACH LAKE AVENUE - JUNE 8, 2016

- ▶ **Number of Attendees:** 48
- ▶ **Attendees to Note:** Marina Operator
- ▶ **Exit Surveys:** 9

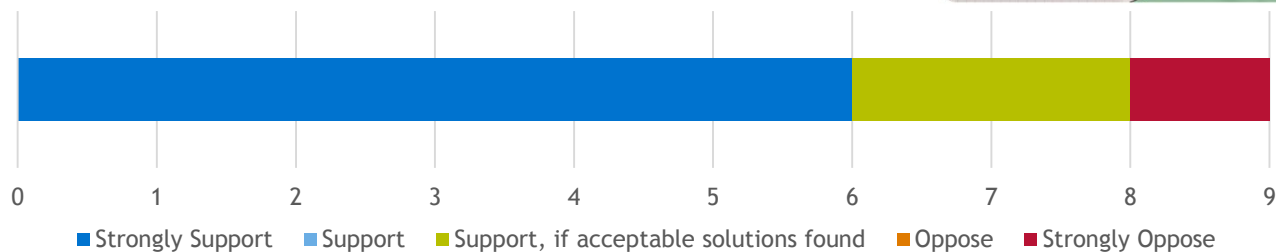
Note: In order to avoid conflicts with other users in this busy location, it is proposed to only be off-leash before 9 am. and after 6 pm.

Dogs must remain on-leash while on the beach between 9 am. - 6 pm.

Additional comments regarding this proposed location were received at the city-wide session on June 15, 2016.



DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG BEACH AT SAILS PLAZA?



THEMES HEARD IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED LOCATION	CONCERNS HEARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Great central location ▶ Would like to see it be off-leash all day rather than just in the morning as proposed ▶ Dogs need water access ▶ The space is not really being used for anything else and would work great for dogs to cool off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Too small ▶ Conflicting uses in the area with high traffic along the City Park walkway ▶ Not enough room for dogs - set a dog limit and take turns ▶ Dangerous with boat traffic ▶ Would prefer to see the area used for on-leash dogs to “cool off” rather than letting them swim free

Summary: About 90 per cent the surveys received for the “mini” beach at Sails Plaza supported the idea of allowing for an off-leash dog beach at this location. The central location was noted as especially ideal. The proposed time for off-leash vs on-leash dog access was met with mixed response. Those opposed to the location felt they would not be able to use the area for swimming if it was used as an off-leash area, and noted high traffic of pedestrians and cyclists.

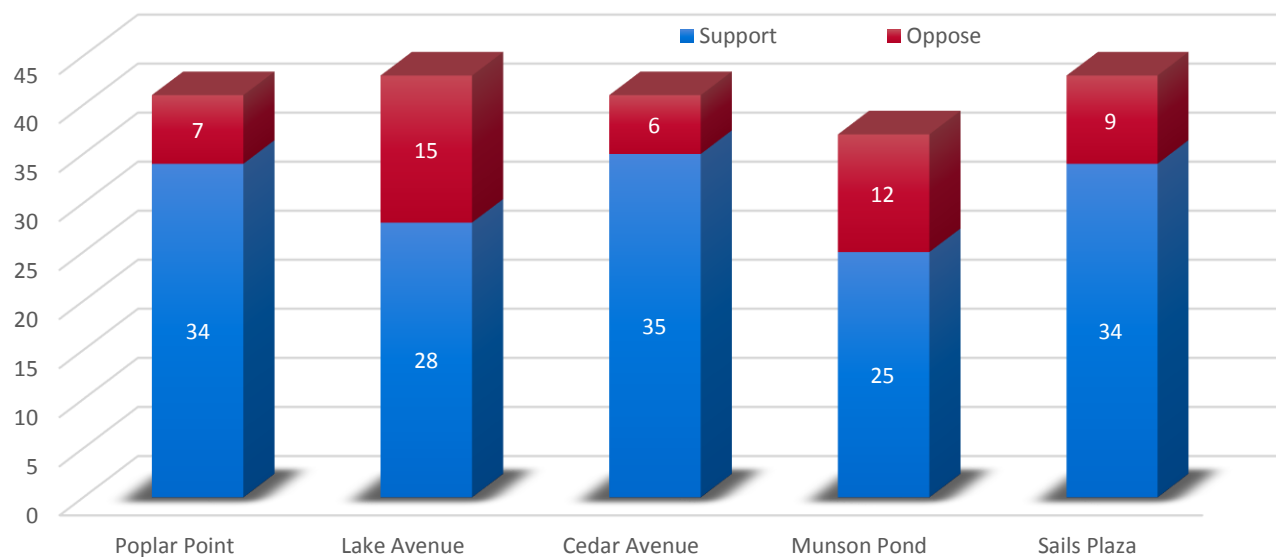
The Downtown Kelowna Association chose not to take a position in regard to the potential dog beach near Sails. Tourism Kelowna did not voice concern or support for this location despite invitation for feedback. The marina operators, Westcorp, objected to the dog beach as they thought it would conflict with the marina boat users.

CITY-WIDE NEIGHBOURHOOD SESSION KERRY PARK - JUNE 15, 2016

- ▶ **Number of attendees:** 60
- ▶ **Attendees to note:** Several media outlets
- ▶ **Exit surveys:** 45

Note: This discovery session was designed and promoted to hear feedback regarding all five proposed off-leash locations. As such the survey was laid out in the online format to gauge support or opposition for each proposed location:

DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG AREA AT:



THEMES HEARD SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED OFF-LEASH LOCATIONS	CONCERNS OR ALTERNATE SUGGESTIONS HEARD REGARDING OFF-LEASH LOCATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ City needs more dog beaches ▶ Cedar Creek is just not viable for many residents, would appreciate a location close-by ▶ Time for this project to move ahead ▶ Because of the amount of dogs in Okanagan, any off-leash efforts will be greatly appreciated ▶ Would like to rely on vehicles less and the current dog beach is a long drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Concern over children and family safety with off-leash dogs in the proposed areas ▶ Not informed of the potential for a dog area prior to buying home ▶ Not enough beaches in downtown area for humans, never mind dogs ▶ Worst location is Lake Ave beach due proximity to residential area ▶ Dogs already have enough space both off and on-leash ▶ Better choice is just north of the tunnel in City Park as the beach is underused

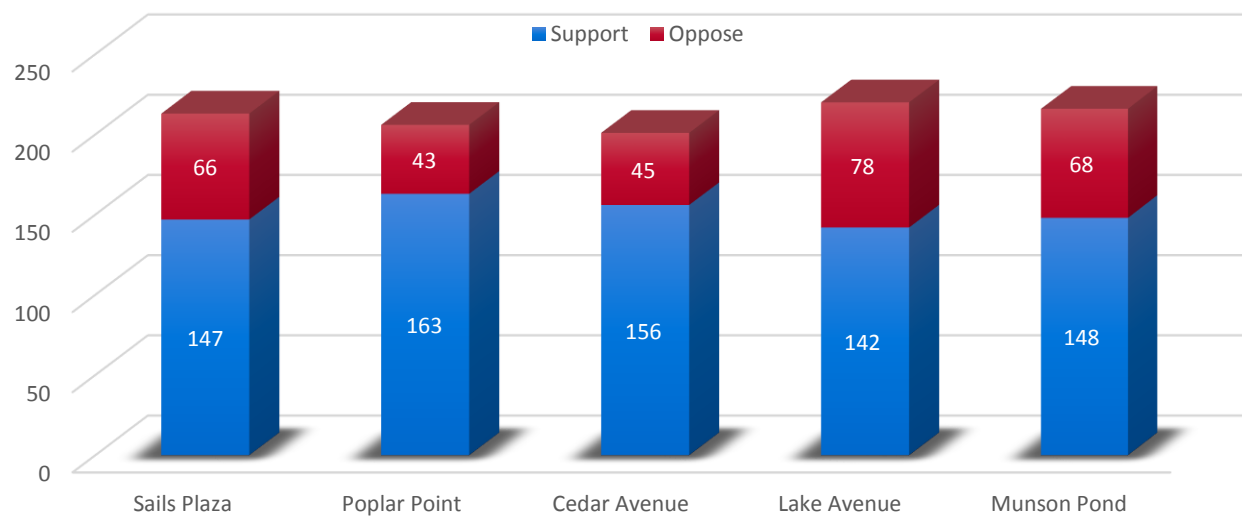
6. Online City-wide Engagement Results

Residents were invited to provide feedback online at getinvolved.kelowna.ca from June 7 to 28, 2016.

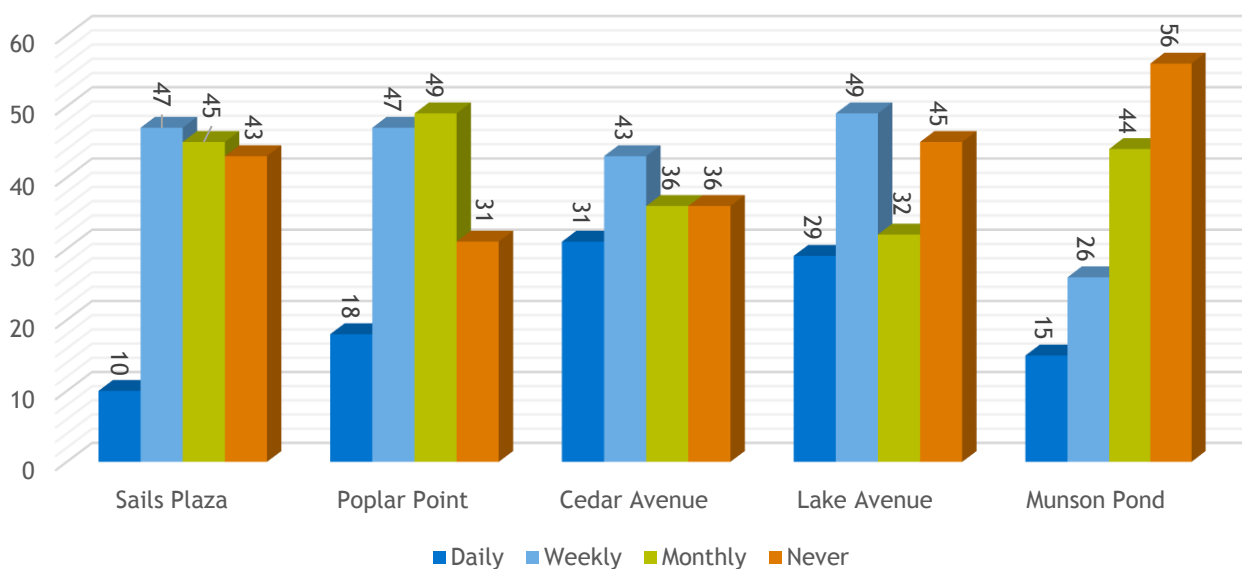
Total Online Surveys Received: 247

For the full breakdown of *online surveys and responses*, refer to Appendix E.

DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING AN OFF-LEASH DOG AREA AT:



IF YOU ARE A DOG OWNER, PLEASE SPECIFY HOW OFTEN YOU WOULD USE THE OFF-LEASH AREA AT:



ONLINE FEEDBACK THEMES	THEMES HEARD IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED LOCATIONS	CONCERNS HEARD REGARDING THE PROPOSED LOCATIONS
General Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Encouragement for the City to implement all proposed locations ► Rather than off-leash, turn some existing beaches into on-leash with separate water access for dogs ► Having an off-leash beach in multiple locations is needed in Kelowna 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Safety concerns regarding dogs in parks and City liability ► Cedar Avenue, the Sails and Lake Avenue are too busy for dogs to be running around off-leash
Sails Plaza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Great cooling off spot - while exploring downtown the dogs have a spot to take a swim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Too busy with pedestrians and tourists
Poplar Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Great for cooling off after Knox Mountain climbs ► Already being used as off-leash area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► No parking ► Busy park across the road ► Too small
Cedar Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Padosy area is well populated with dog owners ► Perfect location for a dog beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Not conducive for dogs, as it is very well used by both people and water birds
Lake Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Would be perfect to promote urban family life ► It's already noisy and often has a very disruptive population that may be discouraged with the advent of a dog park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Traffic congestion ► Noise from barking dogs ► Impact on environmentally sensitive riparian area ► Worries regarding dog waste cleanup ► Declining property values
Munson Pond		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Many seniors use the area and are not looking to share space with dogs ► Do not want barking dogs in the area

Correspondence with Mayor and Council

A number of letters, e-mails, service requests and phone calls were sent in to administration as well as to Mayor and Council. *A summary of correspondence sent in to Mayor and Council are submitted as Appendix F.*

Lake Avenue: 3 - Opposed
All three local area residents

Cedar Avenue: 2 - Support
President KLO Neighbourhood Association (if parking concerns are addressed)
Area resident (Supports Cedar Avenue and Lake Avenue, opposed to the rest)

Munson Pond: 2 - Opposed
President of the Central Okanagan Land Trust
Central Okanagan Naturalists - Birding Club

Sails: 1 - Opposed
Marina Operator (opposed to Sails, supports Lake Avenue)

7. Recommendations and Considerations

Report

- September 2016
- Present feedback to Council with recommendations to proceed

The feedback received from the public, stakeholders and community members has provided valuable insight in determining the best course of action to ensure the City understands the differing needs of the community. The statistically valid survey was an important tool to understand public stance regarding the need for more dog spaces in the City, while the Discovery Sessions allowed local residents to voice their opinions closer to home. The phased engagement process was necessary to properly gauge City-wide interest and usability for each location.

While public opinion and perception is a key element in the decision making process, there are a number of other factors that contribute to the practicality of an off-leash dog area including location and distribution across the City waterfront, popularity of the beach and conflicts with other user groups, water quality, environmental concerns, access and parking, health and safety.

Location	Recommendation	Considerations
Poplar Point Beach Access	Yes	<p>This is one of the smaller locations proposed, however the proximity to Knox Mountain, one of the City's most popular parks for walking, makes it an ideal spot for an off-leash dog beach. The beach area is currently frequented by dog owners and it would not be a difficult transition to make it an official off-leash beach. A slight majority of attendees to the discovery session were opposed to the location, but voiced concerns that could and would be addressed to make it a successful option.</p> <p>To ensure that the beach is not confused with the Sutherland Park area, clear signage and wayfinding would be utilized as well as fencing to protect recently-installed riparian work.</p>
Lake Avenue Beach Access	Trial basis only	<p>This location received strongly felt comments from local residents opposed to a dog beach in this location. However, it also received broad support from the wider community both online and at the city-wide open house. Should a dog beach in this location proceed, there would likely be significant push back from local neighbourhood residents.</p> <p>From other design aspects, the location is the best suited for this use. The space is larger than the other options considered, and well located next to City Park with ample parking, and the downtown core. Many of the concerns raised, had already been addressed by the schematic design, namely a fence to protect the riparian area and the cycle path over the creek. The outflow of Mill Creek into the lake will ensure good water circulation. It is also hoped the increased 'eyes on the beach' from dog-owners' year round will deter many of the undesirable or illegal activities often associated with this beach.</p>

Cedar Avenue Beach Access	Yes	This location proved to be the most supported by the general public and those who attended the in-person discovery sessions. The water quality is not recommended for human swimming, and would serve as an effective spot for dog owners to allow their pets to cool off. The central location is also ideal to serve both the Pandosy area and the southern half of the Downtown area, the most popular locations in the statistically valid survey.
Munson Pond Park	No	This location is not endorsed by staff for several reasons. While the design located the dog park away from the environmentally sensitive wetland, it would occupy the valuable buffer zone adjacent. The ground modification required to make the area suitable year round would be both costly and environmentally intrusive and a potential risk to the delicate environmental balance. The area has only recently been opened up to the public for exploration, and has proved to be very popular with both seniors and naturalists. While there was only a slight majority opposed from the small number of exit surveys, there were several valid concerns raised that could not easily be addressed in the design.
Sails Plaza 'Mini' Beach	Yes	This location received broad support, and the concept of it as just a small cooling off area embraced. The central location was popular. The time restriction that dogs must remain on a leash during the busiest part of the day was proposed in order to avoid fencing on the downtown waterfront.

8. Evaluation

On both the online and discovery session surveys, a series of questions were asked to gauge the accessibility, format and understanding of the engagement process. The feedback received demonstrates:

- ▶ **Online:** 83.4% of online respondents reported that the information was presented in a format that was understandable. Thirty-one respondents (12.6 per cent) reported that they did not review the information panels while 4% reported that they did not understand the presentation materials.
- ▶ **Online:** 80% of online respondents reported that the materials provided an informed opinion on the nature of the project while 12.6% did not review the panels.
- ▶ **City-wide in-person discovery session:** 94.7% of respondents reported that the information was presented in a format that was understandable.
- ▶ **City-wide in-person discovery session:** 91.9% of respondents reported that the materials present at the discovery sessions provided enough information to make an informed opinion on the nature of the project.
- ▶ **City-wide in-person discovery session:** 92.3% of respondents reported that the information helped to understand the scope of the project.

9. Appendix

Appendix A: Discovery Session Panels and Conceptual Designs

Appendix B: Promotional signage on site

Appendix C: Discovery Session neighbourhood and stakeholder letter samples

Appendix D: Surveys

Appendix E: Online Survey Response Summary

Appendix F: Correspondence sent to Mayor and Council

