



# Off-Leash Parks – Coventry Hills

Report Back: What We Heard

September 2021

## Project overview

The City of Calgary, in partnership with the Northern Hills Community Association and Creating Coventry, is seeking feedback on the proposal to use a strip of provincial land between the northern edge of Coventry Hills and Stoney Trail as a dog-friendly, multi-use area for the local community to enjoy. The area proposed is a provincial utility corridor and we would be requesting permission to use this provincial land for as long as possible. The City of Calgary would enter into an agreement to maintain the space and make it accessible for residents to use. Currently, this space is not accessible.

The vision is that this space would be a dog-friendly area (i.e., off leash is available). However, it is not an exclusive area for dog users. We wish to encourage this area to be seen as a local space for residents of Coventry Hills to visit without using a motor vehicle since parking is limited. Formal parking would not be provided for this area.

There would be minimal new infrastructure in place but would include garbage cans where they can be serviced easily and potentially benches. There is an existing “ranch style” wildlife fence to separate Stoney Trail from this space but it is not the typical chain-link fence. Some gates would be installed to limit the encroachment onto provincial land that there is no permission to access. Additional fencing around the area would not be a part of this project and the existing wildlife fence would be the boundary.

## Engagement overview

The engagement process is not designed as a voting process but rather to gather collective and balanced input to gauge response to a project. The feedback received is used to shape and provide direction to the project.

A portal page (<https://engage.calgary.ca/offleash-coventryhills>) was open for input from June 8 – September 7, 2021. The page was designed to communicate the goals and objectives of the project and to gather feedback. Maps were included to give additional context for participants to understand the proposed plan. With respect to participation in this project, there were 769 visitors and 553 contributions to the project portal page. Input from the online survey is being used to help identify patterns of preference for the proposed off-leash park.

## What we asked

A demographic question was asked to see if we were speaking to community members who would be using the proposed off-leash area. We also asked the following questions related to the proposed off-leash space.

1. Are you a resident of Coventry Hills?
2. Do you believe you will be impacted by the proposed dog-friendly, multi-use area?
3. Do you support the proposal of a dog-friendly, multi-use area?



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4. If the off-leash concept was not supported, would you as a resident of Coventry Hills still want to benefit from accessing this space? Should we proceed with the proposed changes to make it formally accessible for use?
5. There is an onus on users, residents, visitors to use respect and adhere to bylaws. City can help with regards to enforcement. In working with the Community Association we are seeking suggestions as to how can the community be a part of this solution?
6. Is there anything else you want to comment on about this project?

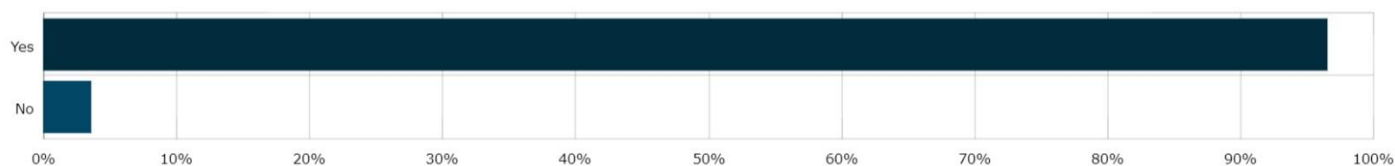
### What we heard

This section provides a short summary of what we heard from the participants who had completed the online survey for this project. Responses for the open-ended/short text questions have been categorized into overarching themes to provide a summary of what we heard. Themes presented are those with frequent or recurring mentions. Comments can represent in more than one theme area. Verbatim comments are presented as received and they are not altered for spelling or grammar. A verbatim listing of all the comments is provided at the end of this report.

*Shows the question type and response rate.*

1. Are you a resident of Coventry Hills?

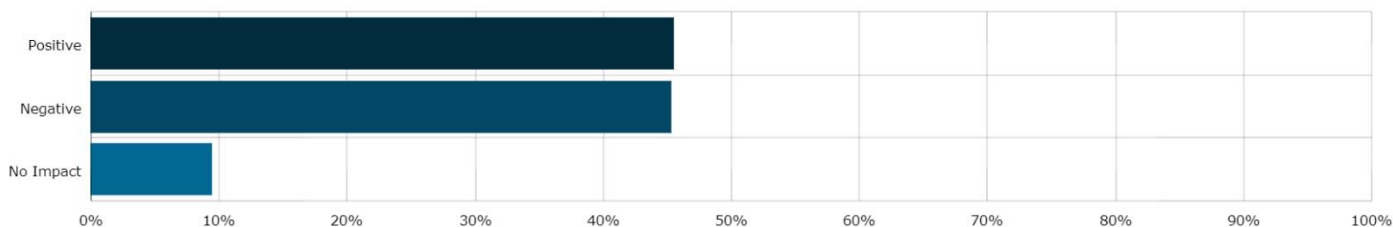
*Multi Choice | Skipped: 73 | Answered: 480 (86.8%)*



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	96.46%	463
No	3.54%	17
Total	100.00%	480

## 2. Do you believe you will be impacted by the proposed dog-friendly, multi-use area?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 73 | Answered: 480 (86.8%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Positive	45.42%	218
Negative	45.21%	217
No Impact	9.38%	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>480</b>

## 3. Do you support the proposal of a dog-friendly, multi-use area?

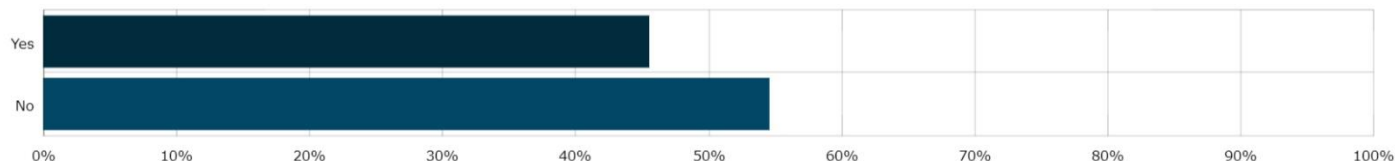
Multi Choice | Skipped: 74 | Answered: 479 (86.6%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	53.24%	255
No	46.76%	224
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>479</b>

4. If the off-leash concept was not supported, would you as a resident of Coventry Hills still want to benefit from accessing this space? Should we proceed with the proposed changes to make it formally accessible for use?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 76 | Answered: 477 (86.3%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	45.49%	217
No	54.51%	260
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>477</b>

5. There is an onus on users, residents, visitors to use respect and adhere to bylaws. City can help with regards to enforcement. In working with the Community Association we are seeking suggestions as to how can the community be a part of this solution?

Short Text | Skipped: 402 | Answered: 151 (27.3%)

A few themes were identified under this question supported by participant comments. The following is a summary of the top themes identified:

Themes That We Heard	Examples of Participant Verbatim Comments
<b>Community Approaches</b> About one third of the participants who answered this question suggested using various community approaches such as involving volunteers, providing education and information sharing, and promoting responsible dog ownership, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Ensure there are enough waste bins for disposal of feces. While people should pick up after their pets, this doesn't always happen. The community could have park clean up days at high dog-use times to promote involvement and education.”</li> <li>“Dog bags at the garbage cans at each entrance. Volunteer ambassadors. Prizes for responsible dog parents.”</li> <li>“The volunteer off leash ambassador could work well here! We have very active community members to support.”</li> <li>“The Community Association can support the project if it goes through by providing education, and City/Volunteer ambassadors to help with concerns (Dog waste, conflicts, parking, etc.)”</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“As always, with any dog ownership, comes the responsibility for ALL owners to pick up after their pets and to have the knowledge to know if their pet will behave in an off-leash setting. That will be the responsibility of the community.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide Garbage Bins, Bin Bag Dispensers, and Clear Signages</b></p> <p>The second most common response to this question spoke to the importance of providing garbage bins and bin bag dispensers at the proposed off-leash area. There were also suggestions to provide clear signages to indicate locations of the garbage bins, parking signages, and post bylaws to remind people about respectful use of the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“multiple garbage bins and poop bag dispensers are a must not only at the entrance but in other places inside the area”</li> <li>“COMPOSTABLE poop bag stations!!!! Seriously so valuable to have them compostable to just go into the green bins!!!!” I wouldn't mind seeing rules posted and a reasonable number of garbage cans for waste disposal. It would also be nice to see a bag dispenser for people to use.”</li> <li>“If possible, clear and proper signage for everything should be put in place as well. E.g. Indicators of where the garbage bins/extra poop bags etc. are located.”</li> <li>“Parking signage would be helpful”</li> <li>“Clearly posted bylaws at the entry could remind us how to use this facility best.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bylaw Enforcement</b></p> <p>Bylaw enforcement and reporting bylaw offences were also noted by some participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Enforce leashing of dogs outside the designated off-leash area, even if the dog is "friendly." Enforce picking up pet waste and discarding it in the appropriate garbage cans.”</li> <li>“I hope people will make sure to report any issues and follow the rules with respect to controlling their dogs and cleaning up after them.”</li> <li>“Report bylaw offences to 311 - but the city would need to follow-up.”</li> </ul>

<p><b>General Comments of Opposition and Other Concerns</b></p> <p>Although this question inquired about suggestions as to how the community can be a part of the solution to ensure having a respectful off-leash park where users would adhere to bylaws, a number of participants who answered this question also expressed concerns or opposition to the project.</p> <p>- <b>Adjacent homes concerns, parking, traffic, and other concerns</b></p> <p>Some participants who answered this question and expressed that they do not support this off-leash project also stated concerns that would impact residents living in houses adjacent to the proposed off-leash site.</p> <p>Parking and traffic concerns are also voiced by several participants who answered this question. Other concerns cited include noise, smell, wastes, and disturbance of wildlife habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “House backs onto that space. Don’t want the smell, noise, I want the privacy...reason why I bought this house. My vote is a HARD NO”</li> <li>• “This area is directly behind our back fence and we certainly don’t want our privacy invaded by a bunch of dog walkers. The other problem is parking, there is no parking whatsoever around this area. There are other areas that could be used.”</li> <li>• “The proposed area of this park will have a drastic effect on the surrounding community and its infrastructure, it was not designed to support the amount of traffic that will come to the adjacent laneways”</li> <li>• “Parking – it is wishful thinking that ALL people will walk to this park. Having more people drive to use this space puts more cars on this very calm street, making it unsafe for kids playing outside due to speeding cars and visibility issues.”</li> <li>• “The noise will increase. Stoney does not offset the current noise from people who access the area already. The smell is already horrible from the small numbers who use this. It will destroy property value.”</li> <li>• “I strongly suggest that more thought be placed into the off-leash area proposed. There are several factors that bring me concerns, parking, placement of garbage cans, destruction of wildlife habitat. More consideration needs to be put forth.”</li> </ul>
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6. Is there anything else you want to comment on about this project?

*Short Text | Skipped: 330 | Answered: 223 (40.3%)*

The following is a summary of the top themes identified under this question. The themes captured below are supported by participant comments.

Themes That We Heard	Examples of Participant Verbatim Comments
<p><b>General Comments of Support</b></p> <p>Over one third of the participants who answered this question were in support of the proposed off-leash park. Some participants who were supportive of the proposed off-leash park also pointed out the importance of adding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This would be much appreciated as there are a lot of dogs in Coventry but there is no formal off-leash space. This will put some formality and rules for the community.”</li> <li>• “Long overdue! Very happy to see this proposal.”</li> </ul>

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<p>fencing in the area. Having a formalized off-leash park might help to reduce complaints about residents letting their dogs off-leash in other parks and school fields.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Thank you for heading this up! It is so so so needed to have somewhere off leash for our pups! Please please please put in a fence though so dogs don’t get hit &amp; killed on Stoney Trail. Please I’m begging you, a fence is 100% needed to keep everyone safe!”</li> <li>• “Having a designated off leash park will serve all community park users by minimizing the number of off leash dogs in every other park in Coventry hills, and the mess they (their owners) leave behind”</li> <li>• “I am not a dog owner but I walk the community a lot (10+km a day) and this is one of the missing components in the community.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>General Comments of Opposition and Other Concerns</b></p> <p>Slightly over ten percent of the participants who answered this question voiced opposition to this proposed-off-leash park. Other participants also noted concerns and suggestions such as design, adjacent homes concerns, safety, enforcement, and parking &amp; traffic concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Please don’t disrupt the land and build something that will effect the quiet, traffic and be more maintenance to keep up to when it’s not necessary. Let the land be the way it is.”</li> <li>• “We do NOT support this plan!!”</li> <li>• “This area is full of Fox Tails, (a non invasive weed in AB) thus type of weed has tiny shards that get stuck in a dogs tissues usually through their throat and lungs somethings leading to death. Absolutely terrible choice for a dog park”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Concerns - Design: fence/gates needed and other design suggestions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I think for the safety of dogs using this area a chain link fence should be created. This will keep pets safe and limit the chance of pets running onto Stoney Trail.”</li> <li>• “Please use entry gates and fences, since there's a lot of wildlife in the area (especially those jackrabbits) I fear that there will be a lot of loose dogs if the area isn't ENTIRELY fenced in. Not to mention it will hopefully keep the coyotes out.”</li> <li>• “We really need a dog park That has a small dog fenced area just for dogs under 25 pounds.”</li> <li>• “Dog-friendly is great, but ideally there is a designated area for off leash only. Not the whole length of the proposed area to be all off leash. I walked this area today and there is plenty of space to have gated off-leash area as well as on leash”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Concerns - Adjacent homes concerns</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My home backs onto the proposed the proposed dog park, and I seriously object to this proposal... to the point where I'd have to sell the house and</li> </ul>



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	<p>relocate my family if approved. Please find another spot for a dog park!!”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I do not agree with this park! Our area is very quiet, that is the reason we purchased our house in this area!! I do not want people down my street taking up parking, the noise. My own dogs will be scared to go outside as this will be behind our house!!!!”</li> <li>• “Too close to residential and housing. Negative impacts to parking. Increased risk of children getting harmed with increased parking around playgrounds. Smell. Noise. Privacy. Safety/vandalism with increased activity and little to no access for repairs”</li> </ul>
<b>Other Concerns - Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “As a resident of coventry hills I believe this will make our community less safe!!”</li> <li>• “concern about rise in crime”</li> <li>• “This will invite vandalism to the properties that back onto this space!”</li> </ul>
<b>Other Concerns - Bylaw enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Enforcement on current paths and green spaces is subpar. In order for all to enjoy more enforcement must be done. With hefty fines to deter offenders.”</li> <li>• “It is not the right space. The long skinny park is too close to housing and will be near impossible to enforce bylaws. Where would officers park? There is no parking lot. I want a real plan for enforcement before this proceeds. Plans need plans.”</li> <li>• “Many of our community members are irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs. Without increasing enforcement there is little hope the dog owners will suddenly become responsible because there’s an open space to let their dog run”</li> </ul>
<b>Other Concerns - Parking &amp; traffic concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Concern is traffic and parking in the area. I have been to many off leash parks with my dog and the parking lots are always overflowing. This is a residential area and cannot support this amount of traffic if it is designated an offleash park.”</li> <li>• “There is no proposed parking area for this park. Street parking is at a premium for the residents. We don't need additional taking what little space remains.”</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Concerned about increase in traffic in the area. I would prefer a public pathway, not offleash area. If an offleash area is to go through a parking lot is essential. Only region that seems to work would be the East end with one entrance and exit.”</li> <li>• “I don’t agree with the middle access point (Coville Circle/Close). People will naturally park as close as people resulting in parking issues. Also if the access isn’t gated it will result in unwanted wildlife accessing the community”</li> </ul>
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## Next steps

- Meet with Community Association to discuss what we heard report.
  - Discuss comments and ways to mitigate main concerns. Current engagement result does not allow us to pursue the current proposal with confidence due to the polarity of the comments.
  - Parks and Community to revise any plans or proposals.
  - Discuss opportunities for added involvement by Community – Volunteers, etc.
  - More engagement will be needed to gain feedback from the community. Explore possibility for further engagement to address some of the concerns identified.
  - Discuss if community association wishes to proceed – Support with board motion.
- Communicate revised plans on The City of Calgary, Engage portal page. Communicate changes and reasons behind those decisions. For information on ongoing process and updated plans, please check the Engage portal page for this project (<https://engage.calgary.ca/offleash-coventryhills>).

## Verbatim Comments

Verbatim comments presented here include all feedback, suggestions, comments and messages that were collected online through the engagement described in this report. All input has been reviewed and provided to Project Teams to be considered in decision making for the project.

The comments are divided into questions asked. No other edits to the feedback have been made, and the verbatim comments are as received. Any personal identifying information has been removed from the verbatim comments presented here. Comments or portions of comments that contain profanity, or that are not in compliance with the [City's Respectful Workplace Policy](#) or [Online Tool Moderation Practice](#), have also been removed from participant submissions.



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For full verbatim on question #5 please click here: [https://hdp-ca-prod-app-cgy-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/1516/3476/7985/Coventry\\_Off-Leash\\_Park\\_Verbatim5.pdf](https://hdp-ca-prod-app-cgy-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/1516/3476/7985/Coventry_Off-Leash_Park_Verbatim5.pdf)

For full verbatim on question #6 please click here: [https://hdp-ca-prod-app-cgy-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/4016/3476/8144/Coventry\\_Off-Leash\\_Park\\_Verbatim6.pdf](https://hdp-ca-prod-app-cgy-engage-files.s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/4016/3476/8144/Coventry_Off-Leash_Park_Verbatim6.pdf)