

Wire Mill Park Off-leash Area Trial

Community Consultation Report

February 2022

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Background

In February 2021, Council received a petition from residents in Chiswick requesting that Wire Mill Park be investigated as a potential off-leash dog park. In response to this petition, Council undertook community consultation from 12 April to 5 May 2021 to understand the sentiment of the wider community.

Findings from this initial consultation were taken to Council in June 2021 where it was decided a trial off-leash area would take place to better understand community views and concerns. The trial ran from 8 December 2021 – 23 February 2022 and community feedback was collected throughout this period. Findings outlined in this report will assist Council to reach a decision regarding the future use of the space.

Consultation methods

- Collaborate survey (see appendix A)
- Feedback via paper forms at drop-in session
- Feedback via phone and email

Notification methods

The following methods were implemented to notify the community of this consultation:

- Notification letter delivered to 2,641 residents
- 3 x site posters
- Collaborate project page:
<https://collaborate.canadabay.nsw.gov.au/wiremillpark>
- Social media
- Direct email to building management and strata for the Riviera Apartments
- Direct email to participants from the first round of consultation
- 2 x drop-in sessions in Wire Mill Park



See appendix B for more detail.

Consultation summary

Collaborate reach

- 1,788 page views
- 1,111 unique site visitors
- 169 people following the project for updates

Social media reach

This consultation was promoted via the following Council social media channels:

- 4 x Facebook posts
- 4 x Instagram post

Collectively, these social posts reached 5,800 people and achieved 549 engagements (post likes, comments, and shares). See appendix C for more details.

Results

Community survey

The community survey received 304 responses and aimed to answer the following questions:

- *Should a permanent off-leash area be established in Wire Mill Park? (why/why not)*
- *What issues arose during the trial?*
- *If the area were to be established as a permanent off-leash area, what improvements would need to be made to the park for it to be successful?*

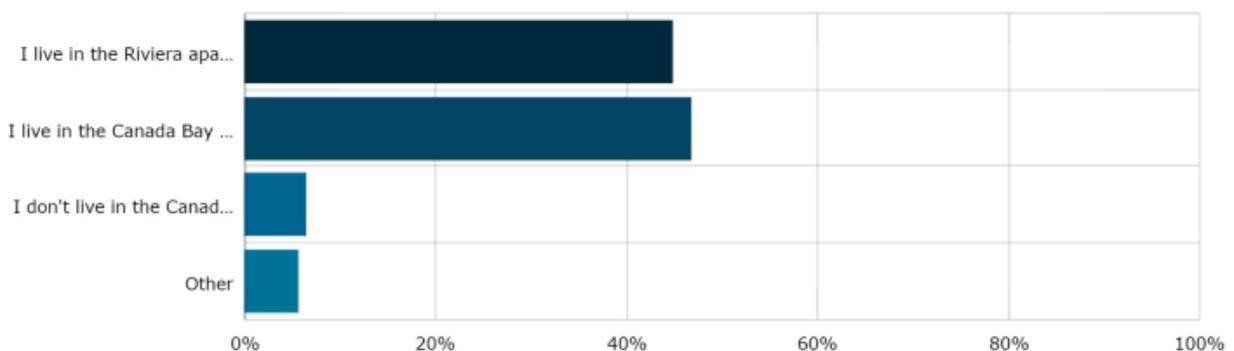
Results are summarised below. For more detail, refer to appendix D.

Respondent demographics

- 47% live in the Canada Bay area
- 45% live in apartments overlooking the park (perimeter residents)
- 6% live out of area
- 83% visit the park daily or a few times a week

12. What is your relationship to the area? Required

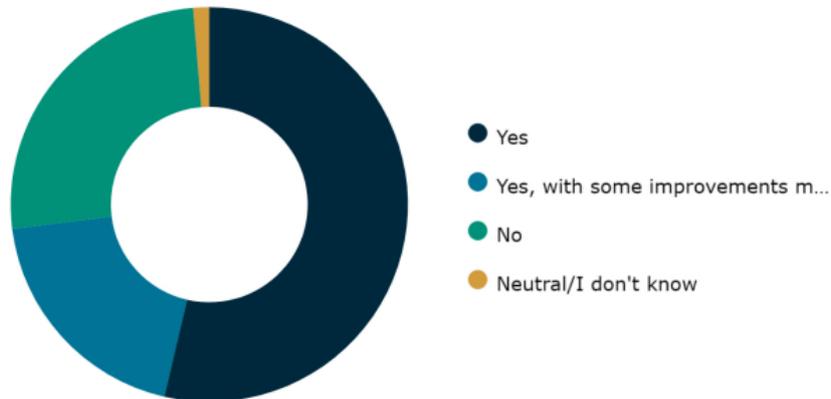
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 304 (100%)



Support for establishing a permanent off-leash area in Wire Mill Park

1. Do you support a permanent off-leash area being established in Wire Mill Park? Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 304 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	53.62%	163
Yes, with some improvements made to the park	19.41%	59
No	25.66%	78
Neutral/I don't know	1.32%	4

It's important to note:

- 5% of respondents were in support of a permanent off-leash area being established despite having not visited the park during the trial

Dog ownership

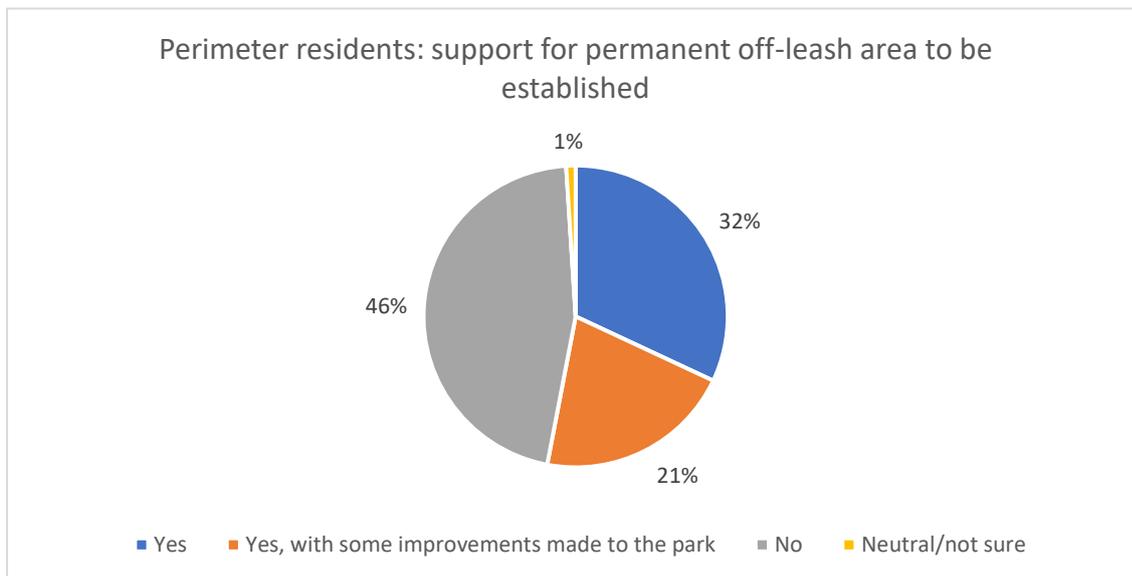
- 67% of respondents own a dog, of which the majority (64%) own adult dogs
- 11% don't currently own a dog but might in the future
- 19% don't own a dog
- 2% provide dog walking services

Peak periods

During the trial, most respondents visited the park in the evenings from 4pm onwards.

Perimeter residents

45% of survey respondents live in apartments overlooking the park (perimeter residents) and of this group, response towards the trial was mixed. 46% of perimeter residents do not believe the park should be a designated off-leash area.



Key issues observed during the trial

- Owners not picking up their dog’s droppings (61%)
- Owners not being able to control their dogs well enough (58%)
- Dogs bothering cycles and people walking through the park (48%)

Other issues mentioned:

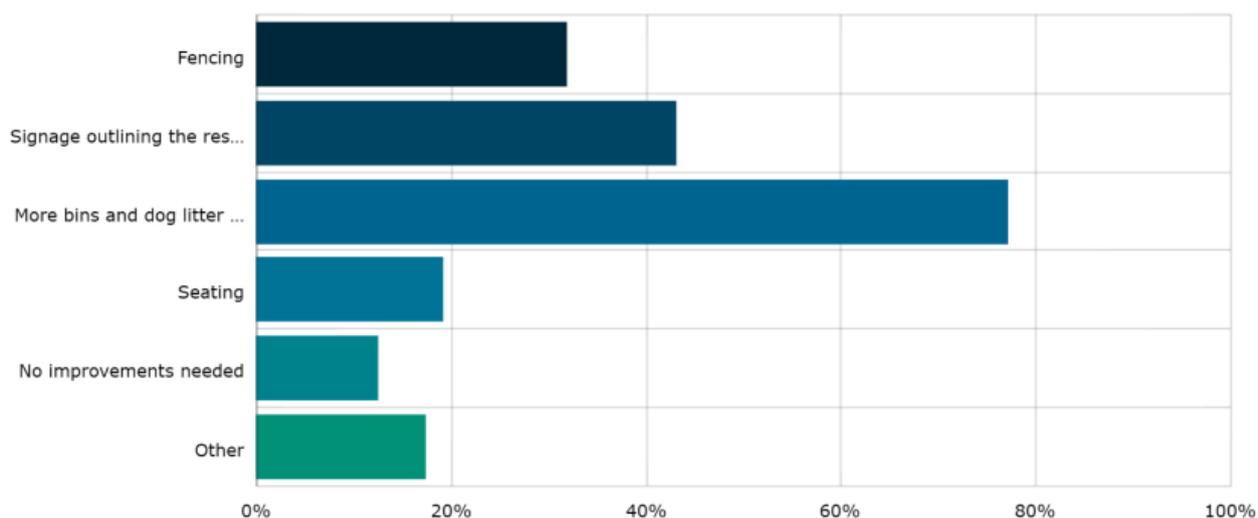
- Noise (14)
- Dogs disturbing park users (7)
- Unfriendly interactions between dog owners and other park users (7)
- Dogs off-leash outside the designated off-leash area (4)

Issues noted above were most prevalent in the evenings (4pm onwards) and on the weekend.

Park improvements needed

6. If the off-leash area were to be established permanently, what improvements would you like to see in the park?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 20 | Answered: 284 (93.4%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Fencing	31.69%	90
Signage outlining the responsibilities of dog owners	42.96%	122
More bins and dog litter bags	77.11%	219
Seating	19.01%	54
No improvements needed	12.32%	35
Other	17.25%	49

Other suggestions put forward by 2 or more respondents include:

- Drinking fountain for dogs and park users (17)
- Enforcement to ensure the off-leash boundary is respected (8)
- Time restrictions (3)
- More lighting (3)
- Shade (3)

Additional feedback

Respondents were invited to provide any extra feedback or comments on the trial. 174 respondents answered this question and results are summarised below.

Comments were categorised into 4 sentiment types:

- Positive – statements which show support for a permanent off-leash area
- Mixed – statements which provide suggestions for improvements to the park

- Negative – statements which do not support what has been drafted
- Neutral – statements outside the scope of this consultation

Sentiment



Tags



Tag	Percent	Count
Safe for dogs	19%	33
More enforcement	15.5%	27
Sense of community	11.5%	20
More bins	8.6%	15
Needs fencing	7.5%	13
Clear signage	6.9%	12
Time restrictions	4%	7
Noise	3.4%	6

Drop-in sessions

Council officers were at Wire Mill Park on Wednesday 2 February from 4:30-6:30pm and Saturday 12 February from 8:30-10:30am to talk to residents about this consultation and gather further feedback. Approximately 50 members of the community were present at these drop-ins and the following feedback was submitted:

- 15 pieces of written feedback submitted
- 12 hard copy surveys completed

Completed surveys were input into the online survey to collate results. A summary of written feedback received is provided below.

Support for permanent off-leash area

- 8 respondents (53%) were in favour of a permanent off-leash area being established
- 7 (47%) were opposed

Reasons for and against are listed below. The number of respondents who put forward the same idea is included in parenthesis.

Reasons for:

- Good location as it's safe for dogs (3)
- Creates a sense of community (1)

Reasons against:

- There are suitable off-leash areas nearby (4)
- Aggressive dog behaviour (3)
- Excessive noise (1)
- Park will become too busy (1)

Suggestions for park improvements

- Bins and doggy bags (4)
- No fencing (1)
- Close to the gate to the boat ramp (1)
- Water fountain (1)

Feedback via phone/email

Council officers received 37 emails and phone calls providing feedback on the trial. Of these:

- 68% (25 respondents) were against the establishment of a permanent off-leash area
- 27% (10 respondents) support the establishment of a permanent off-leash area
- 5% (2 respondents) did not comment on future use of the park but requested more bins and doggy bags be provided

The main reasons noted for opposing the off-leash area include:

- Excessive noise (11)
- Aggressive dog behaviour (10)
- Community members won't be able to use the space for other recreational purposes (10)
- Safety concerns for children and older residents (9)
- Dog droppings not being collected by owners (8)
- The off-leash area at Lysaght Park is nearby (7)
- The park will become too crowded (5)
- Off-leash boundaries are not being respected and dogs are off-leash in bordering parks (4)
- The park is too small to be an off-leash area (4)
- Dogs cause damage to the lawn/park (3)

The main reasons in support of the off-leash area include:

- The off-leash area fosters a strong sense of community (6)
- There is greater demand for more dog parks due to an increase in pet owners during the pandemic (4)
- Lysaght Park is not safe for dogs (3)
- Dog owners have displayed responsible ownership during the trial (3)

Suggestions for park improvements

- More bins and doggy bags (3)
- More enforcement (2)
- Improve site signage promoting responsible dog ownership (1)

In addition to the feedback summarised above, numerous instances of inappropriate behaviour were reported during the trial, from dog owners towards residents and park users, and from residents towards dog owners.

Conclusion

The community is divided on whether a permanent off-leash area should be established in Wire Mill Park. While most survey respondents support a permanent off-leash area, a number of concerns were raised during the trial including dog droppings left in the park, aggressive dog behaviour and dogs bothering other park users. Residents overlooking the park are particularly concerned about increased noise, aggressive dog behaviour and the risk this poses for children and older people using the park.

Those in favour of establishing a permanent off-leash area believe more off-leash areas are needed as dog ownership in the area increased during the pandemic. Many park users have also commented on the sense of community that has been fostered during the trial, as the park has been a great place for dog owners and dog lovers to socialise. While the off-leash area at Lysaght Park is nearby, many respondents highlighted that it is not safe for dogs as the park is not fenced and is bordered by busy roads.

If an off-leash area were to be established permanently the community believes more bins with dog litter bags are needed, as well as clear signage outlining the boundary of the off-leash area and the responsibilities of dog owners. There was also a call for more enforcement of the off-leash boundary and some park users suggested introducing time restrictions to mitigate noise to nearby apartments. Support for fencing was not strong, with a number of respondents noting that fencing is not required as the water creates a natural barrier for dogs.

Appendices

A. Survey questions

1. Do you support a permanent off-leash area being established in Wire Mill Park?

- Yes
- Yes, with some improvements made to the park
- No
- Neutral/I don't know

2. Have you visited Wire Mill Park during the trial period?

- Yes
- No

3. What time of day have you visited Wire Mill Park during the trial period? Please select all that apply.

- Weekday morning (before 10am)
- Weekday, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)
- Weeknight (4pm onwards)
- Weekend morning (before 10am)
- Weekend, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)
- Weekend evening (4pm onwards)

4. Have you observed any of the following issues during the off-leash area trial? Please select all that apply, or none at all.

- Increased litter
- Aggressive dog behaviour towards people or other dogs
- Owners not picking up their dogs' droppings
- The park becoming too busy at certain times
- Dogs bothering cyclists and people walking through the park
- Dogs left unattended in the park
- Too many dogs being brought in by one owner
- Owners not being able to control their dogs well enough
- Other (please specify): _____

5. At what times do you notice these issues are most prevalent?

- Weekday mornings (before 10am)
- Weekdays, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)
- Weeknights (4pm onwards)
- Weekend mornings (before 10am)
- Weekends, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)
- Weekend evenings (4pm onwards)

6. If the off-leash area were to be established permanently, what improvements would you like to see in the park? Please select all that apply.

- Fencing
- Signage outlining the responsibilities of dog owners
- More bins and dog litter bins
- Seating
- No improvements needed
- Other (please specify)

7. How important are the following elements to ensuring a safe and successful off-leash dog area? Please use an 'x' to indicate your response, with 1 being not important and 5 being extremely important.

	1	2	3	4	5
Seating for dog owners					
A drinking fountain with pet bowl					
A varied terrain/landscape					
Natural shade					
Dog litter bags and bins provided					
Regular maintenance of the park					
Providing separate areas for large and small dogs					
Making the area entirely fenced in					
No fencing, to allow the park to be used for other purposes					
Signage outlining the responsibilities of dog owners					
Ensuring the area is accessible for people of all abilities					

8. Please share any other feedback you have about the trial.

About you

9. a) How often do you visit the park?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Never
- Other (please specify): _____

b) What is the primary reason you visit the park?

- Exercise
- To get some fresh air
- To take my dog for a walk
- To socialise with friends and/or family
- Other (please specify): _____

c) If an off-leash area were to be established permanently, when would you most often visit?

- Weekday mornings (before 10am)
- Weekdays, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)
- Weeknights (4pm onwards)
- Weekend mornings (before 10am)
- Weekends, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)
- Weekend evenings (4pm onwards)

d) What is your relationship to the area? Please select the response which best applies.

- I live in the Riviera apartments or another apartment overlooking the park
- I live in the Canada Bay area
- I don't live in the Canada Bay area but visit the park often
- Other (please specify): _____

e) Are you a dog owner?

- Yes
- No
- No, but I provide dog walking services or similar
- No, but I might be in the future

f) What life stage is your dog?

- Puppy
- Adult

Senior

g) Did you provide feedback in April/May 2021 when we consulted the community about establishing an off-leash area in Wire Mill Park?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

B. Notification methods



12 April 2021

The Resident

Off-leash dog area consultation — Wire Mill Park, Chiswick

The City of Canada Bay is seeking feedback on a proposal to establish a new dog off-leash exercise area in a portion of Wire Mill Park (as shown on overleaf).

Our process for considering proposals for new dog off-leash exercise areas is listed in our Dogs in Public Places Strategy (available at canadabay.nsw.gov.au). Such proposals will be assessed against a number of criteria including feedback from residents, proximity to existing dog parks, and environmental considerations.

We are now inviting you to have your say so that all views can be considered prior to any decisions being made.

You are invited to provide feedback via either of the methods below:

- Online survey on collaborate.canadabay.nsw.gov.au/wiremillpark
- Email feedback to openspace@canadabay.nsw.gov.au

The consultation period runs from 12 April until 5 May 2021.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Council's Parks Planner, Robert Marshall, on 9911 6326.

Kind regards,

Russell Wolfe
Manager Parks and Recreation



Proposed off-leash area

Canada Bay Civic Centre Drummoyne
1a Marlborough Street Drummoyne NSW 2047
Locked Bag 1470 Drummoyne NSW 1470
ABN 79 130 029 350

Tel 9911 6555
council@canadabay.nsw.gov.au
www.canadabay.nsw.gov.au

Wire Mill Park

Off-leash dog area consultation

The City of Canada Bay has received resident requests to establish an off-leash dog area here at Wire Mill Park, adjacent to Fig Tree Bay Reserve.

Tell us what you think about the proposal.

All feedback will be considered before a decision is made about the future of this space.



Have your say

collaborate.canadabay.nsw.gov.au/wiremillpark

openspace@canadabay.nsw.gov.au

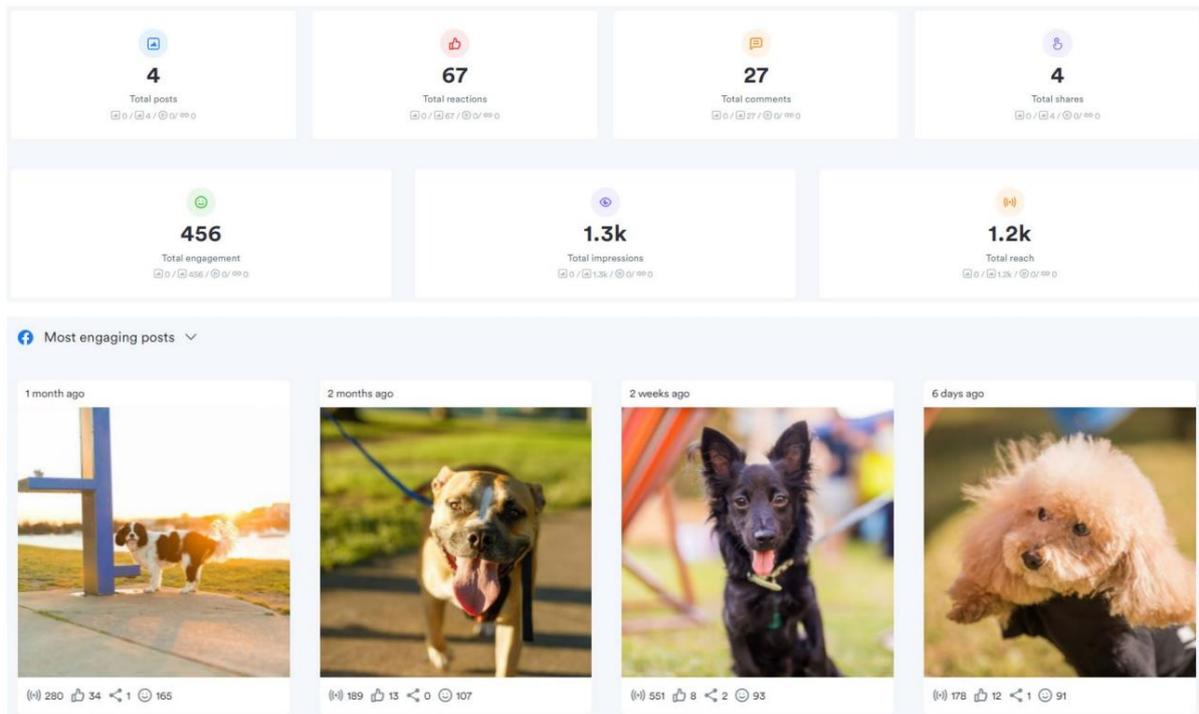
9911 6555

Drop-in session onsite: Wednesday, 21 April 5-6:30pm

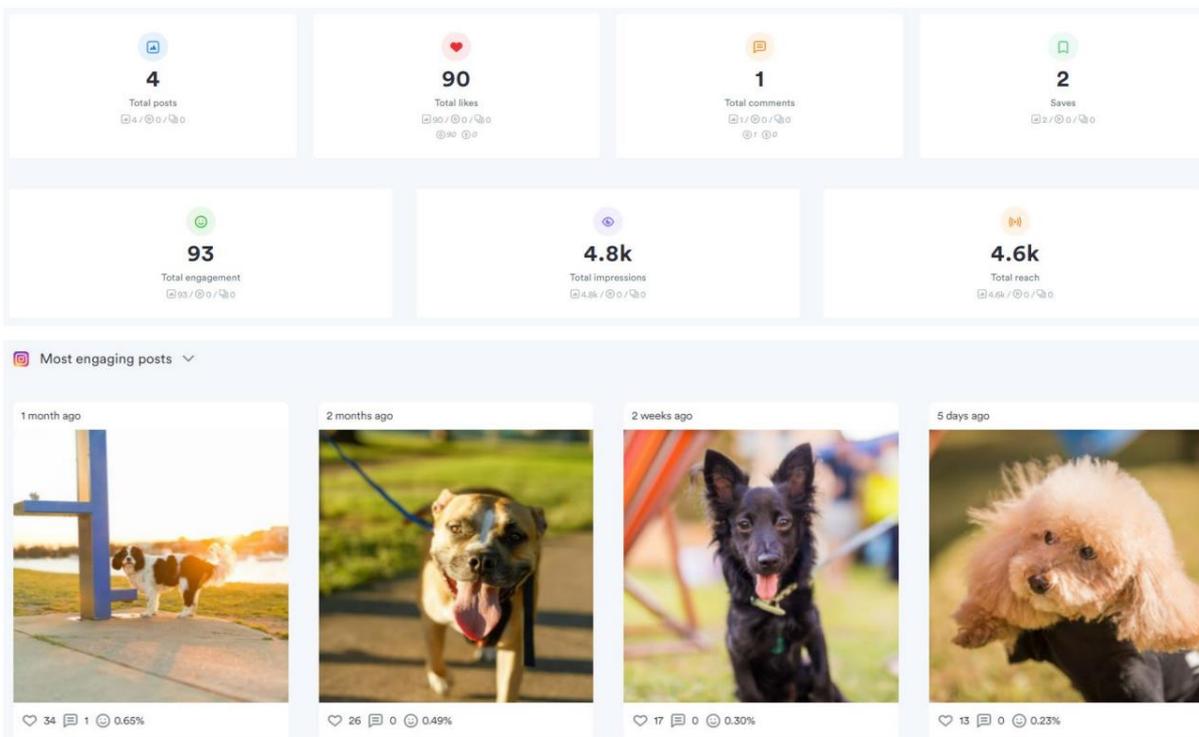


C. Social media reach

Facebook posts



Instagram posts

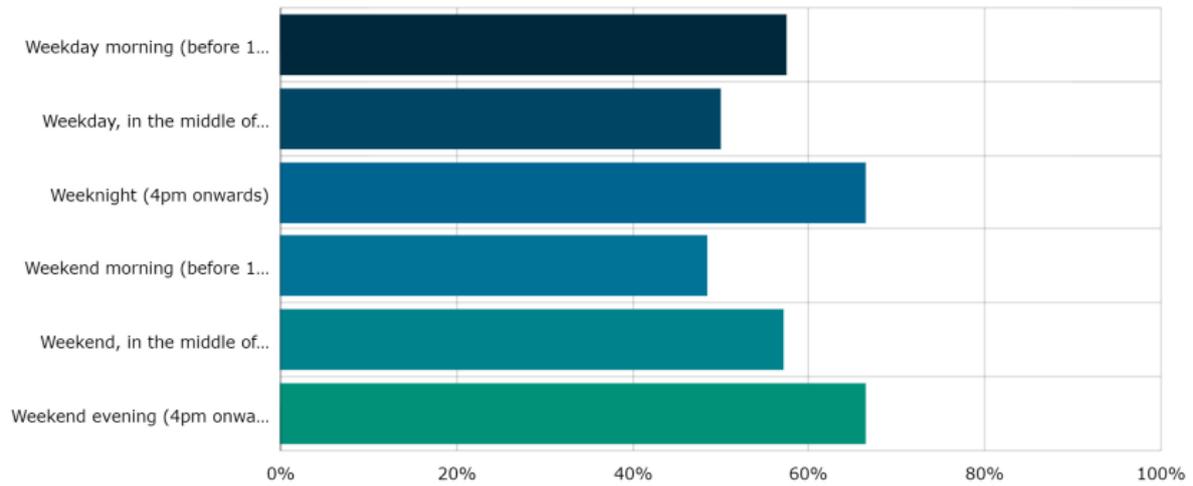


D. Detailed survey results

Peak periods

3. What time of day did you visit?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 15 | Answered: 289 (95.1%)

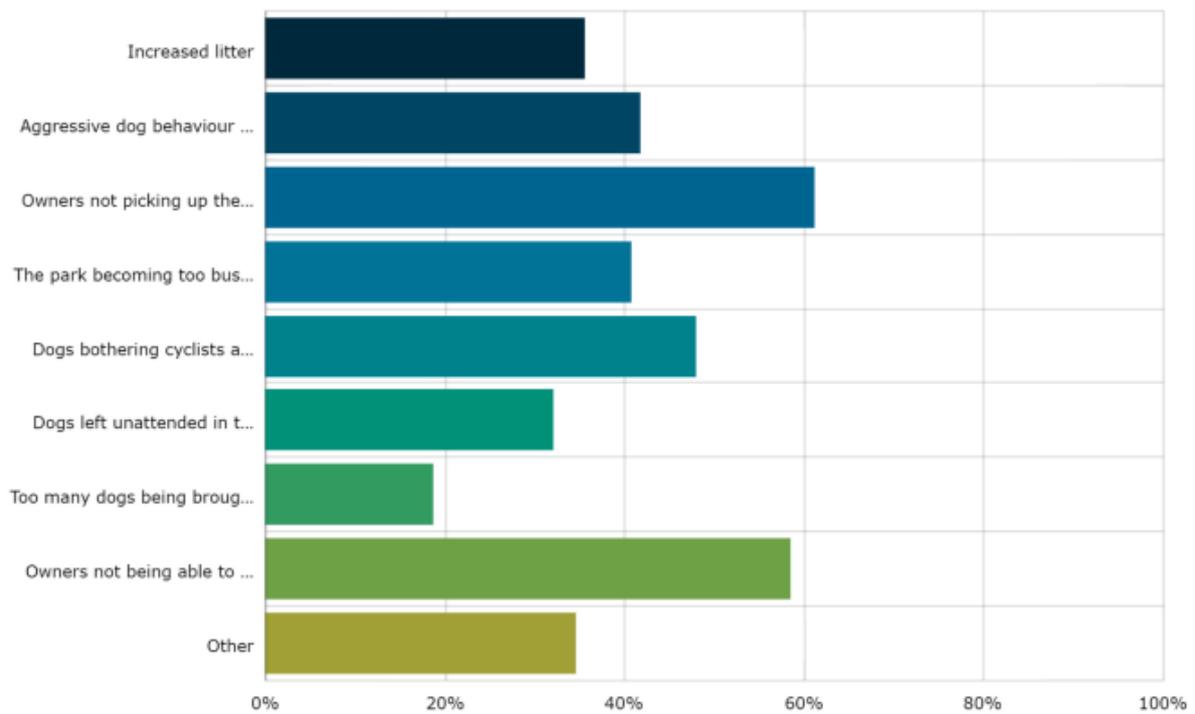


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Weekday morning (before 10am)	57.44%	166
Weekday, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)	49.83%	144
Weeknight (4pm onwards)	66.44%	192
Weekend morning (before 10am)	48.44%	140
Weekend, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)	57.09%	165
Weekend evening (4pm onwards)	66.44%	192

Key issues observed during the trial

4. Have you observed any of the following issues during the off-leash area trial?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 191 | Answered: 113 (37.2%)

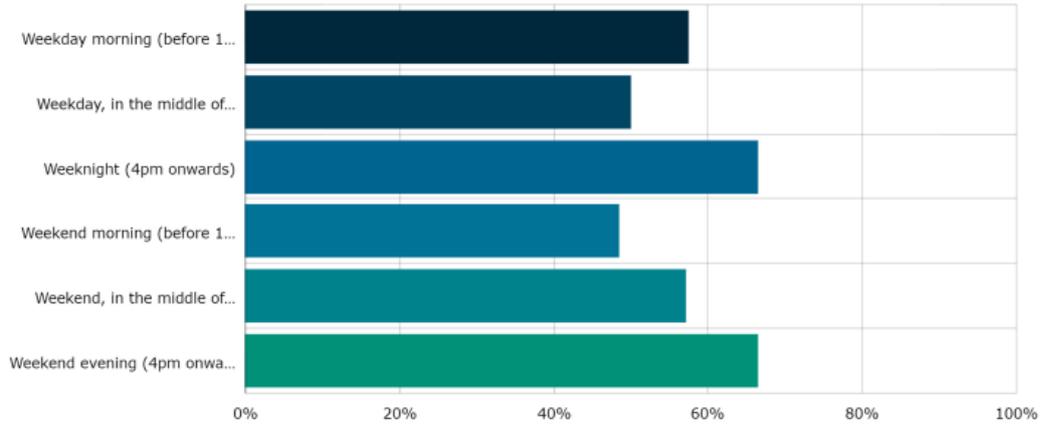


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Increased litter	35.40%	40
Aggressive dog behaviour towards people or other dogs	41.59%	47
Owners not picking up their dogs' droppings	61.06%	69
The park becoming too busy at certain times	40.71%	46
Dogs bothering cyclists and people walking through the park	47.79%	54
Dogs left unattended in the park	31.86%	36
Too many dogs being brought in by one owner	18.58%	21
Owners not being able to control their dogs well enough	58.41%	66
Other	34.51%	39

Use of Wire Mill Park

3. What time of day did you visit?

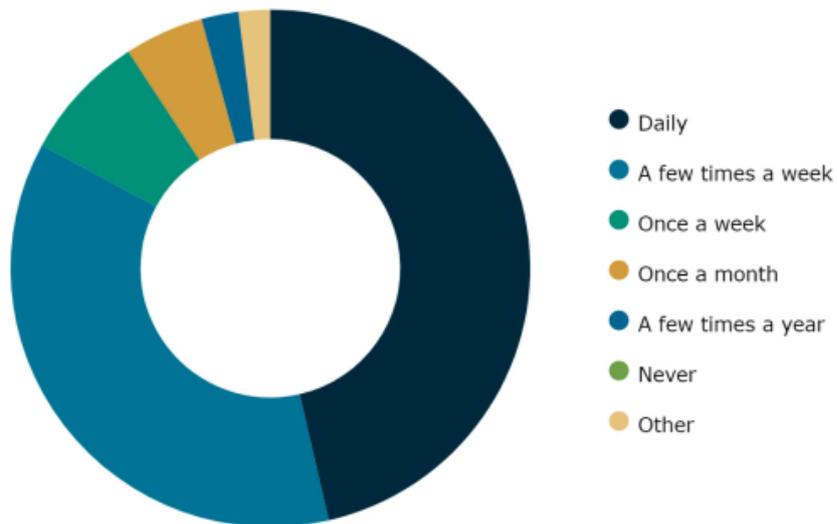
Multi Choice | Skipped: 15 | Answered: 289 (95.1%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Weekday morning (before 10am)	57.44%	166
Weekday, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)	49.83%	144
Weeknight (4pm onwards)	66.44%	192
Weekend morning (before 10am)	48.44%	140
Weekend, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)	57.09%	165
Weekend evening (4pm onwards)	66.44%	192

9. How often do you visit the park? Required

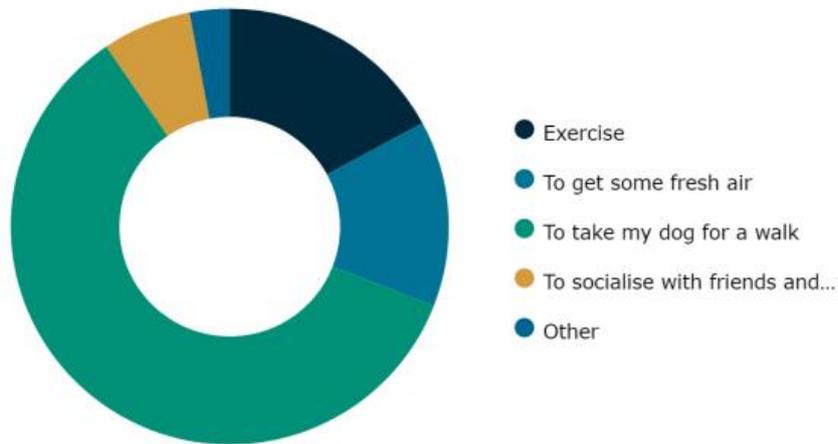
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 304 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Daily	46.38%	141
A few times a week	36.51%	111
Once a week	7.89%	24
Once a month	4.93%	15
A few times a year	2.30%	7
Never	0%	0
Other	1.97%	6
Total	100.00%	304

10. What is the primary reason you visit the park? Required

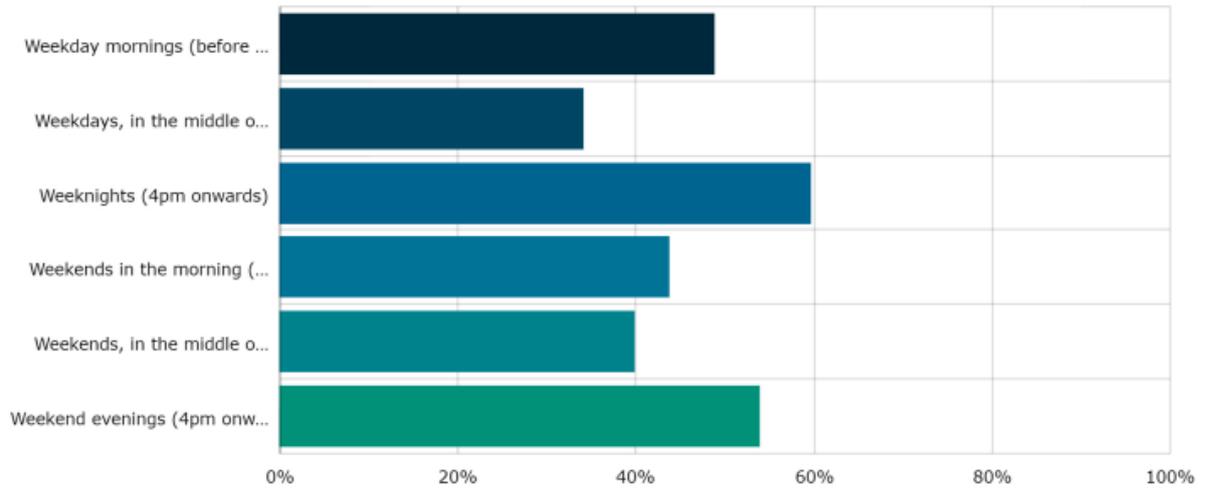
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 304 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Exercise	17.11%	52
To get some fresh air	13.82%	42
To take my dog for a walk	59.54%	181
To socialise with friends and/or family	6.58%	20
Other	2.96%	9
Total	100.00%	304

11. If an off-leash area were to be established permanently, when would you most often visit?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 27 | Answered: 277 (91.1%)

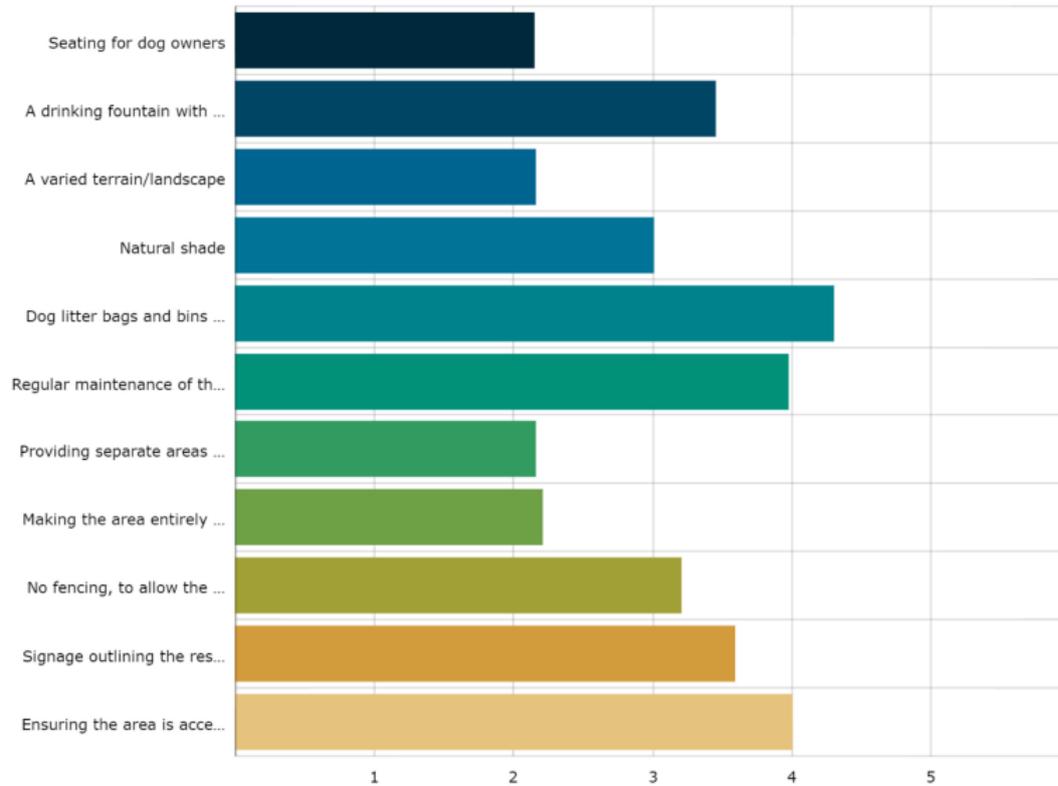


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Weekday mornings (before 10am)	48.74%	135
Weekdays, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)	33.94%	94
Weeknights (4pm onwards)	59.57%	165
Weekends in the morning (before 10am)	43.68%	121
Weekends, in the middle of the day (10am-4pm)	39.71%	110
Weekend evenings (4pm onwards)	53.79%	149

Elements to ensure a safe and successful off-leash area

7. How important are the following elements to ensuring a safe and successful off-leash dog area? (with 1 being not important and 5 being extremely important) Required

Matrix | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 304 (100%)



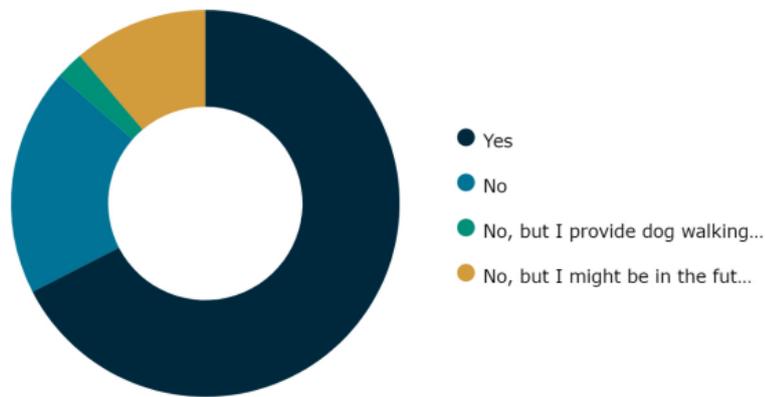
	1	2	3	4	5	Count	Score
Seating for dog owners	46.05% 140	17.11% 52	21.38% 65	7.57% 23	7.89% 24	304	2.14
A drinking fountain with pet bowl	19.41% 59	7.57% 23	18.42% 56	18.09% 55	36.51% 111	304	3.45
A varied terrain/landscape	49.01% 149	14.80% 45	18.09% 55	8.22% 25	9.87% 30	304	2.15
Natural shade	25.99% 79	10.20% 31	25.00% 76	15.13% 46	23.68% 72	304	3.00
Dog litter bags and bins provided	7.24% 22	3.62% 11	7.24% 22	15.79% 48	66.12% 201	304	4.30
Regular maintenance	6.25% 19	6.25% 19	16.78% 51	25.66% 78	45.07% 137	304	3.97

of the park							
Providing separate areas for large and small dogs	50.00% 152	14.47% 44	18.42% 56	4.28% 13	12.83% 39	304	2.15
Making the area entirely fenced in	53.62% 163	12.50% 38	10.86% 33	6.58% 20	16.45% 50	304	2.20
No fencing, to allow the park to be used for other purposes	28.62% 87	7.89% 24	13.82% 42	14.14% 43	35.53% 108	304	3.20
Signage outlining the responsibilities of dog owners	15.13% 46	8.88% 27	19.74% 60	14.80% 45	41.45% 126	304	3.59
Ensuring the area is accessible for people of all abilities	10.86% 33	4.28% 13	16.45% 50	10.86% 33	57.57% 175	304	4.00

Dog ownership

13. Are you a dog owner? Required

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 304 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	67.43%	205
No	19.08%	58
No, but I provide dog walking services or similar	2.30%	7
No, but I might be in the future	11.18%	34
Total	100.00%	304

14. What life stage is your dog?

Multi Choice | Skipped: 110 | Answered: 194 (63.8%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Puppy	25.77%	50
Adult	63.92%	124
Senior	10.31%	20
Total	100.00%	194