

**Strathcona County  
Dog Control Bylaw Review**

Phase 1 Survey Summary Report



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Strathcona County

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## 1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Like many Canadian municipalities, Strathcona County has a Dog Control Bylaw which was adopted by County Council in 2006. It clarified the rules for both rural and urban dog owners regarding licensing, types of offenses and associated fines, household limits, and vicious dog guidelines. The rapid population growth in the County over the past decade has put pressure on space, services, and resources as the number of dog owners has increased. With a focus on maintaining the quality of life for all residents, a review of the bylaw will to determine what parts of the bylaw are working well and which need updating.

The goal of this project is to engage County stakeholders to get their input how the bylaw has performed since its inception, and to hear how it could be made better. Areas of interest that will help shape the new bylaw include, but are not limited to:

- Licensing
- Enforcement and offences
- Vicious dogs
- Over limit permits (currently the County permits only two dogs per household, unless the resident has an over-limit permit)

Receiving feedback from the residents will need to achieve a balance of input – between the rural and urban residents, between dog owners and those without dogs, and between those with other vested interests in the bylaw (veterinarians, breeders etc.) and those who are not directly affected. There also must be a balance between protection of both people and other pets, without making dog ownership so restrictive that it impacts the quality of life of those who choose to have them.

### 1.1 PROJECT SCOPE

The goal of this public engagement process is to use an informative, interactive, and inclusive public engagement approach that will give a voice to all County residents - dog and non-dog owners, urban and rural citizens, and people who provide services to dogs across Strathcona County. This input will provide the direction for an updated dog control bylaw that focuses on responsible pet ownership. The public engagement process has been divided into two complementary phases:

- Phase 1 – Fall 2016
  - Project awareness campaign
  - One-on-one interviews
  - Direct engagement with residents in public areas
  - Online survey to determine preferences and priorities

- Phase 2 – Winter 2017
  - Survey summary highlight report
  - “What We Heard” comprehensive survey summary report
  - Four workshops, open to all interested parties. Two events will be held in Sherwood Park and two will be held in rural locations to better gather a balance of input
  - Final project report summarizing the engagement process including key themes, evaluation of project, and summary of what we heard
  - Presentation of project summary report to County Council

## 2.0 PHASE 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – COMMUNITY PREFERENCES

### 2.1 NOTIFICATIONS

The public engagement process for this phase of the project involved two main areas of focus – project awareness and direct engagement on the priorities and preferences of Strathcona County residents regarding the current bylaw specifically and dog ownership in general. The project stakeholders were contacted via a variety of methods, including:

- Newspaper advertisements in the *Sherwood Park News* on November 25 and December 10, 2016
- *Sherwood Park News* article on November 25, 2016 (<http://www.sherwoodparknews.com/2016/11/25/input-sought-on-potential-changes-to-dog-bylaw>)
- Social media, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Paid Facebook ads also ran from November 29 – December 11, 2016
- Notification on the Strathcona County website on November 22, 2016
- Notification at all members of the County public engagement e-newsletter on November 23 and December 9, 2016
- A news release sent out to local media on November 22, 2016
- Direct mail postcards to all registered dog owners mailed December 1, 2016 (9,783 records)
- Project awareness signs and posters placed around the County, including in County offices, pet stores, along popular trails, the Deermound off-leash area, etc.

## 3.0 PRIORITIES AND PREFERENCES ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey was open from November 21 to December 11, 2016. The final survey numbers were:

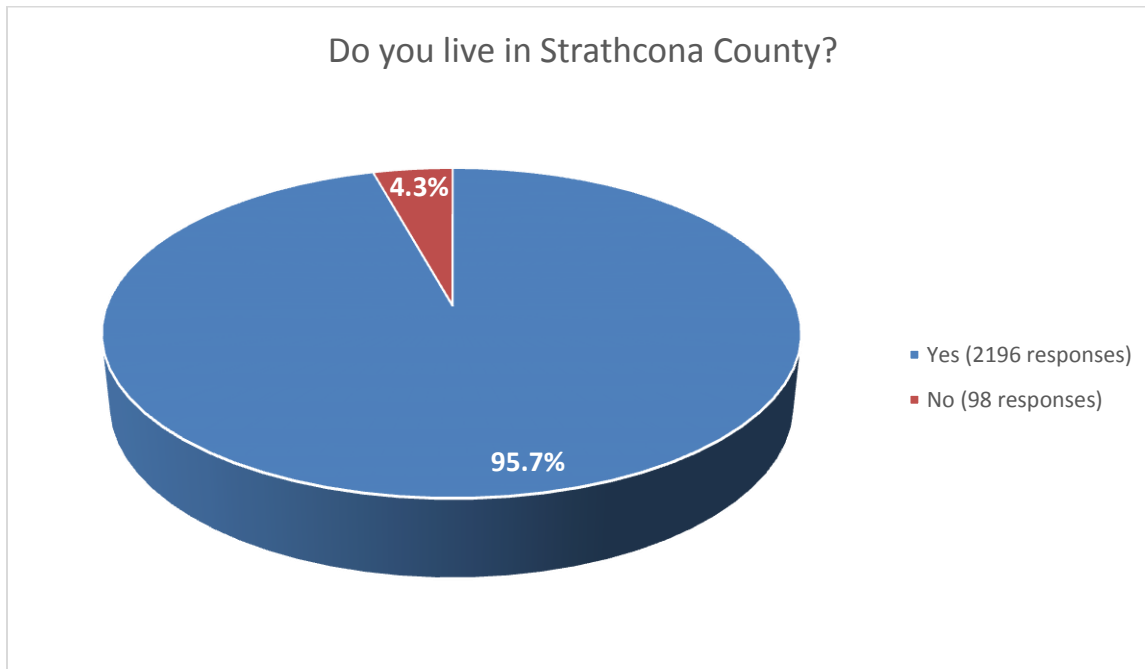
- 2306 total responses
- 1877 completed
- 331 partially completed
- 98 rejected (due to participant not being a resident of the County)

A full version of the survey questions has been included in Appendix A.

### 3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Respondents were asked to provide some background information on their interests in this project; namely, their reason for being a project stakeholder, and which areas of the County they reside in. The results are shown below in Table X and Figure Y.

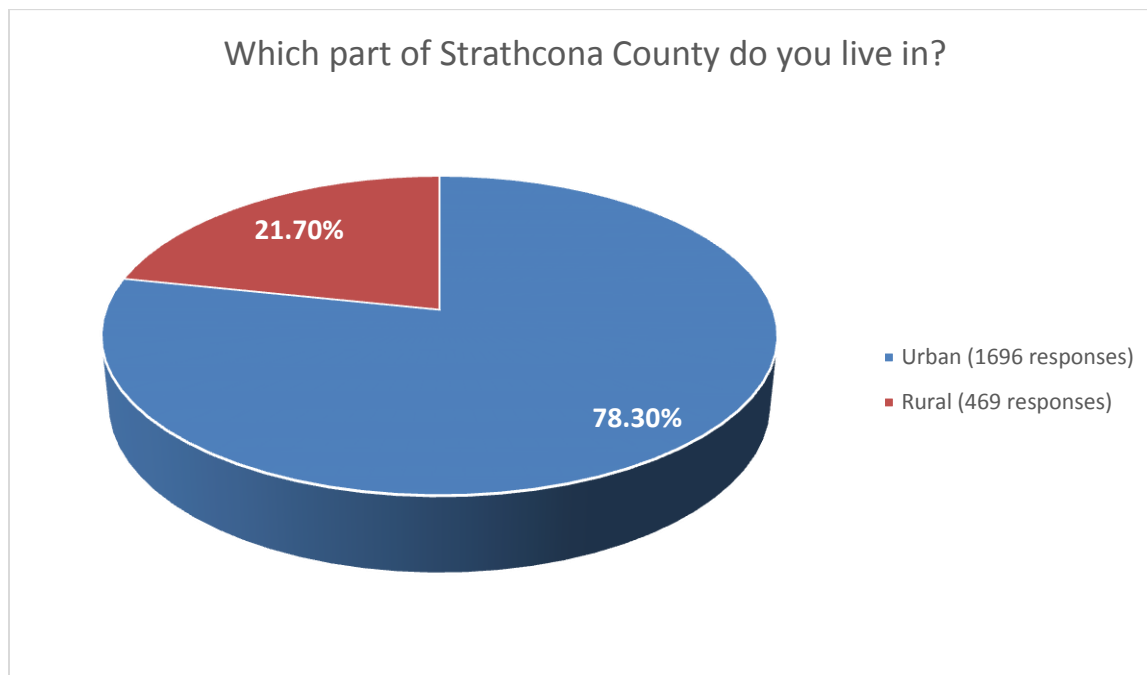
#### 3.1.1 Question 1 - Residency



The vast majority of survey respondents were residents of Strathcona County. However, nearly 100 respondents were not County residents, and were not allowed to proceed any further into

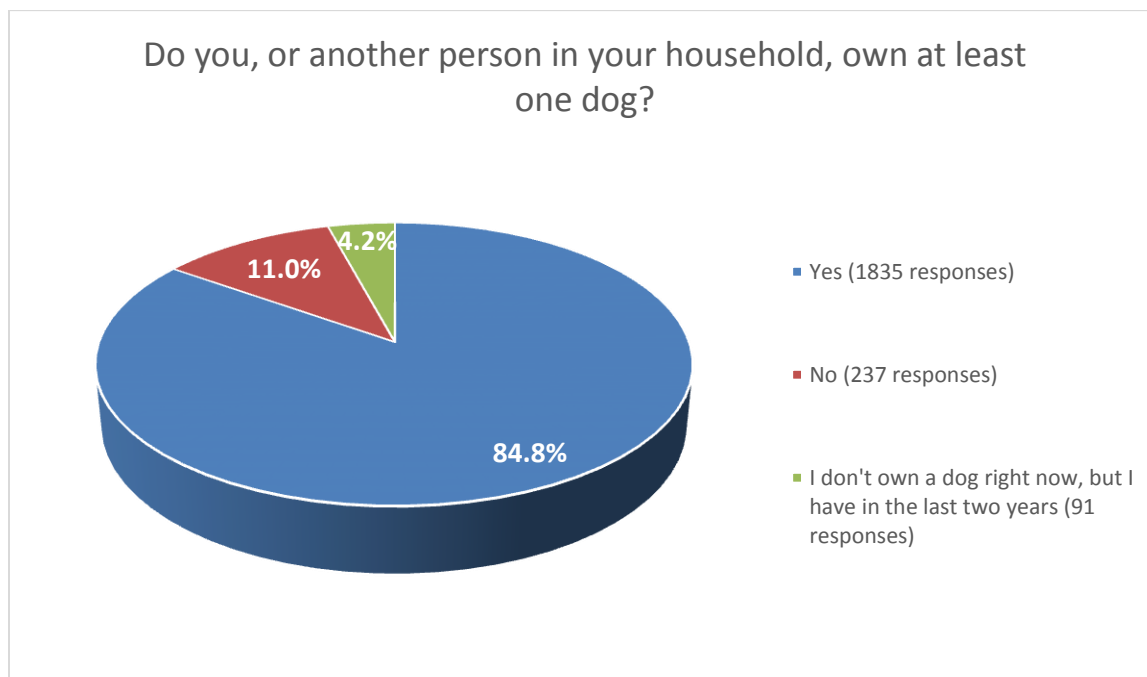
the survey. By stopping the survey at this point for non-residents, there is a clear distinction that any decisions made based on this input should reflect the desires of County residents alone.

### 3.1.2 Question 2 – Location of Residence



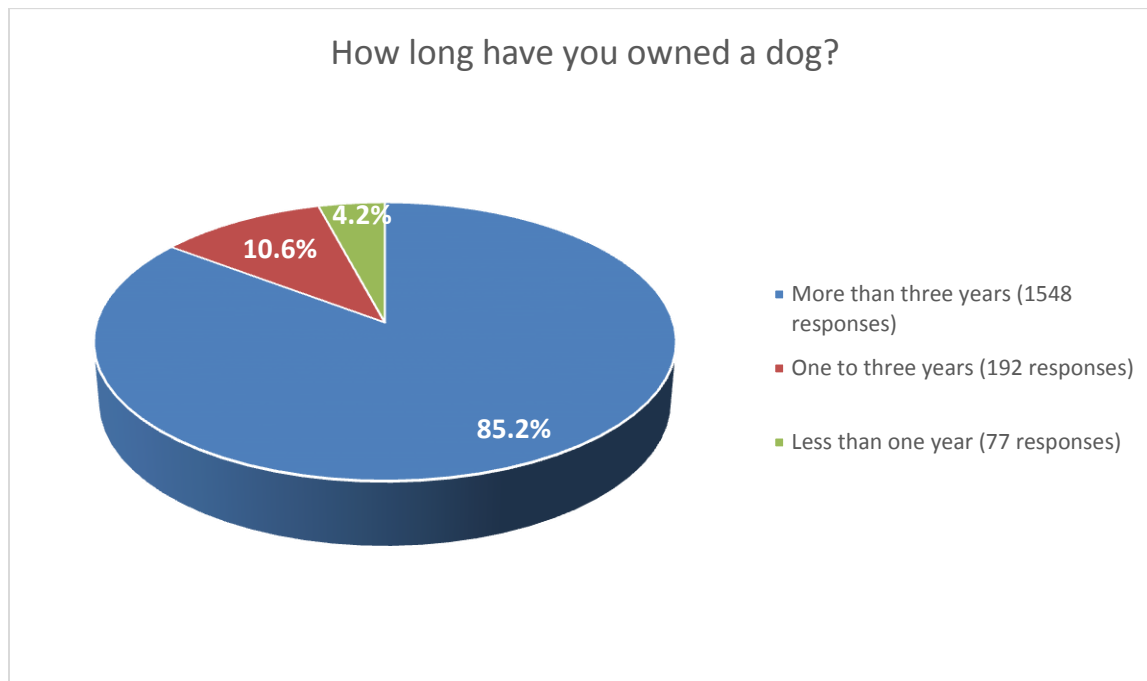
The split between urban and rural responses for this question is very similar to the actual urban/rural split of population in Strathcona County, which was 71.9% urban to 28.1% rural based on the 2015 census data. Urban residency was defined as living within Sherwood Park. Rural residences included Antler Lake, Ardrossan, Collingwood Cove, Half Moon Lake, Hastings Lake, Josephburg, North Cooking Lake, South Cooking Lake, country residential (acreages) and farms.

### 3.1.3 Question 3 – Dog Ownership



The divide between present and past dog owners (89% combined) and residents without dogs (11%) was somewhat surprising, as the focus of the survey and the associated advertising was participation by all County residents with an opinion on responsible dog ownership. However, the timing of the survey may have had at least a partial effect on the results. The signage posted around the County, especially along the walking trails and open spaces in Sherwood Park, may have been viewed more by dog walkers since it was posted to raise awareness for a survey in late November. The cold weather during this period may have also been a factor, as walkers and runners without dogs may have opted for other activities indoors. Residents without dogs may not have understood how the bylaw and any potential changes to it may affect them. Participants who answered “No” to this question were jumped to Question 21 to complete the latter part of the survey, as Questions 4 through 20 only applied to current dog owners.

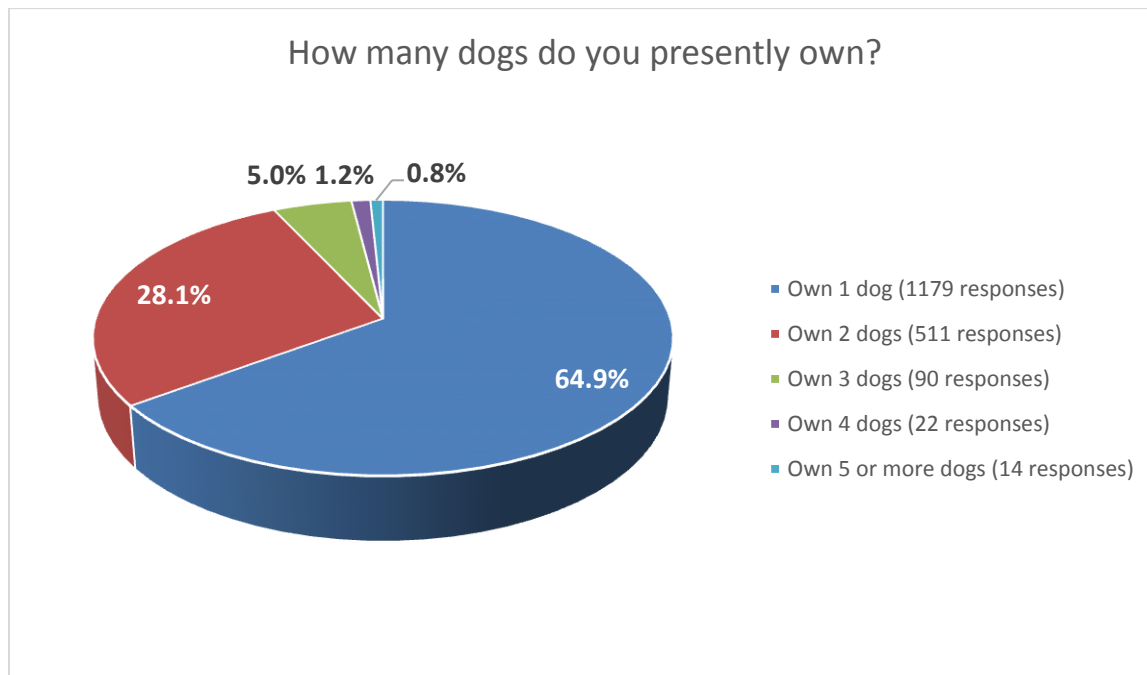
### 3.1.4 Question 5 – Time of Dog Ownership



Given the length of a dog's life, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of the respondents to the survey have been dog owners for more than three years. This aligns well with responses to later questions that support the idea that owning a pet is a long term commitment.



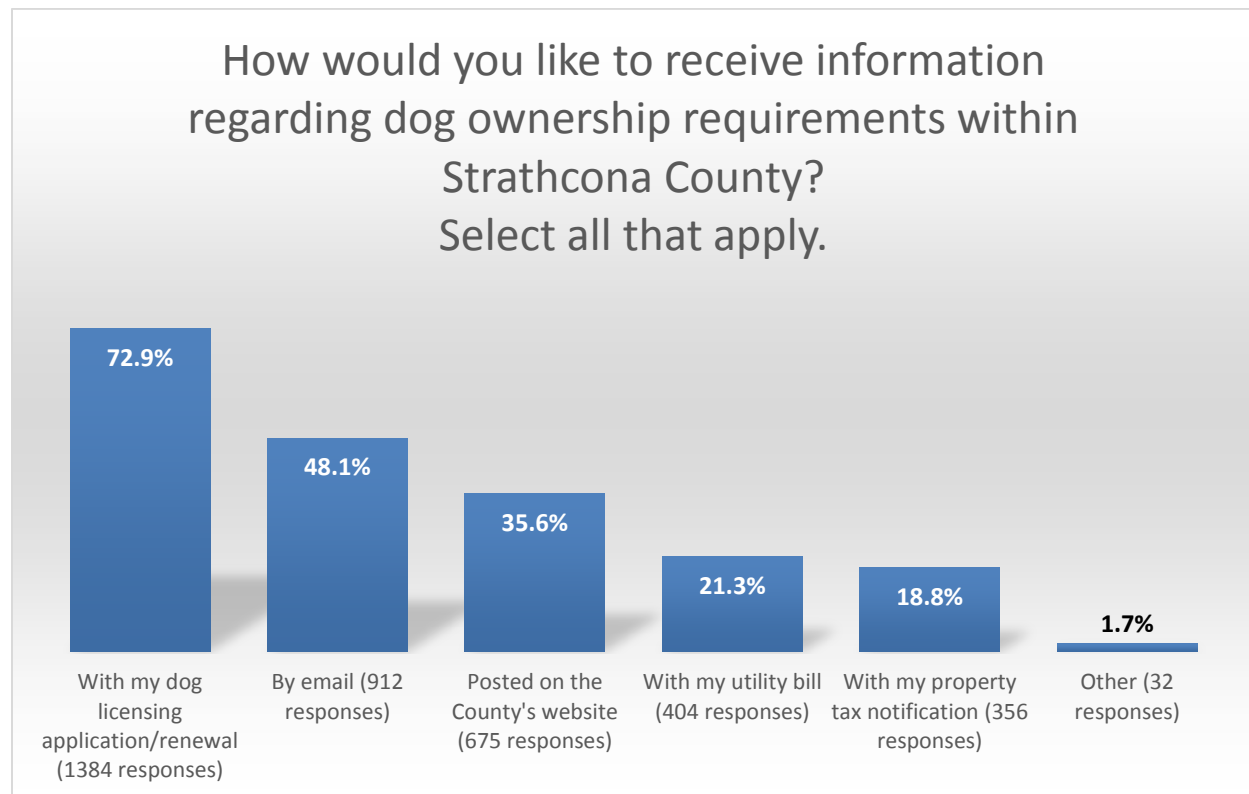
### 3.1.5 Question 6 – Number of Dogs in Household



The responses to this question are interesting on two fronts. First, the number of respondents who own one or two dogs (93% combined) aligns very well with the statistics from the dog licenses issued within the County. The number of respondents who own more than two dogs – which is the current number allowed without an over-limit permit – is less than half of the number of active over-limit permits (126 responses vs. 360 permits in 2016), but the numbers in each category are very similar.

## 3.2 QUESTIONS REGARDING LICENSING

### 3.2.1 Question 7 – Communication Preferences



Unsurprisingly, most responses indicate that dog owners would like to know what is expected of them right from when they license their dogs. Electronic methods of receiving information (email and websites) were also very popular, especially since both would also be available on portable electronic devices like tablets and smartphones.

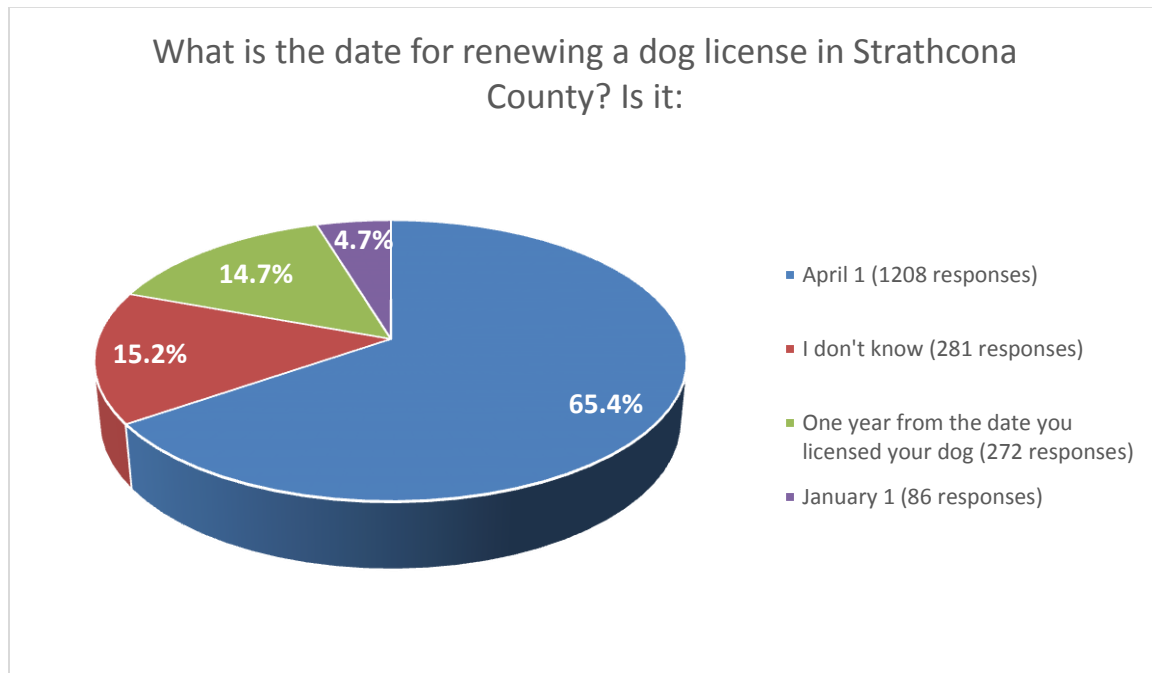
### 3.2.2 Question 8 – Other Communication Options

Other preferred methods of communication included:

- Facebook/Social Media (5 responses)
- Mail (5 responses)
- Newspaper (3 responses, one suggested Friday edition specifically)
- A flyer or notice in local paper are also good ways of notifying people (1 count)
- All of the above and an ad in the newspaper if it includes anything new (1 count)
- Website (1 count)
- It would be really nice if the person who registers the dog gets the bill. I live with my parents and I OWN the dog which means I should get the renewal fee not the owners of the house! (1 count)

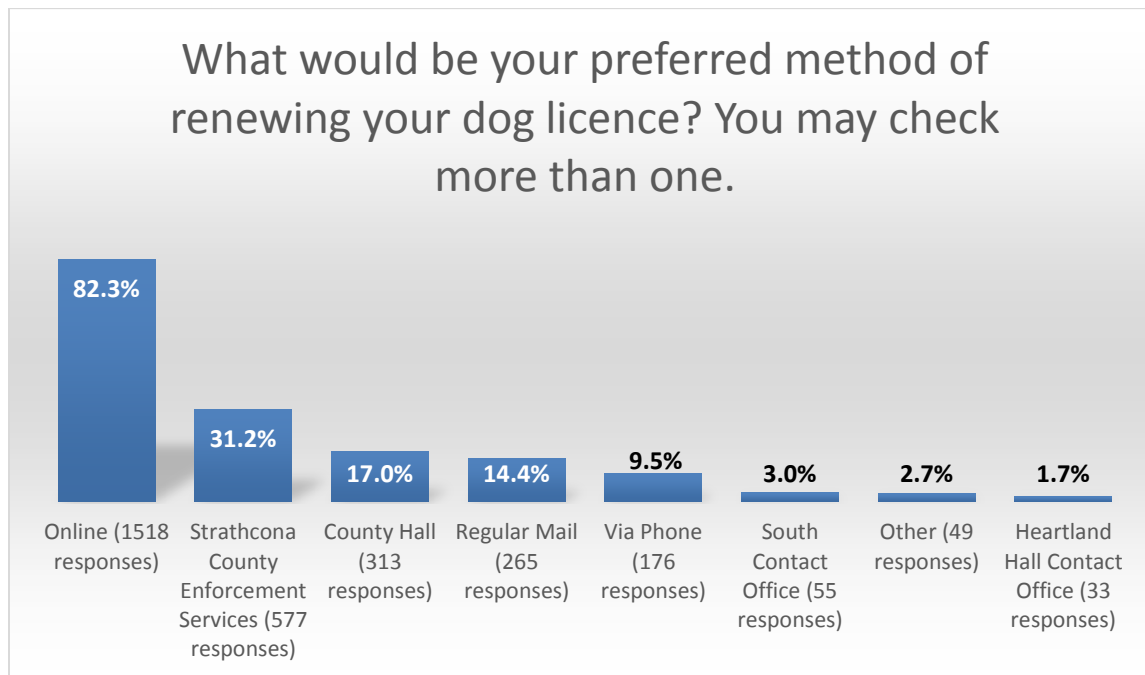
- LOVED the signs around the trail system where I walk my dog, fantastic idea, really got my attention to provide feedback (1 count)
- Separate mail out to all dog owners. Non-dog owners can go to the County website for information (1 count)

### 3.2.3 Question 9 – Licence Renewal Date



This question was posed to gauge how familiar County residents are with the current renewal process. The response to this question can be interpreted in two ways. Since only about 2/3 of respondents answered correctly, this may be an area that requires more frequent or clearer communication to dog owners. On the other hand, this also shows that nearly 2/3 of dog owners know the renewal date and likely are responsible about renewing their dog's licences annually.

### 3.2.4 Question 10 – Licence Renewal Preferences



The responses to this question are very much in line with the answers to the previous question on notification and communication, and with overall trends as well. The preference for an electronic option for renewals, which is available in many other communities, is very evident.

### 3.2.5 Question 11 – Other Renewal Options

Other preferred methods of renewing licences included:

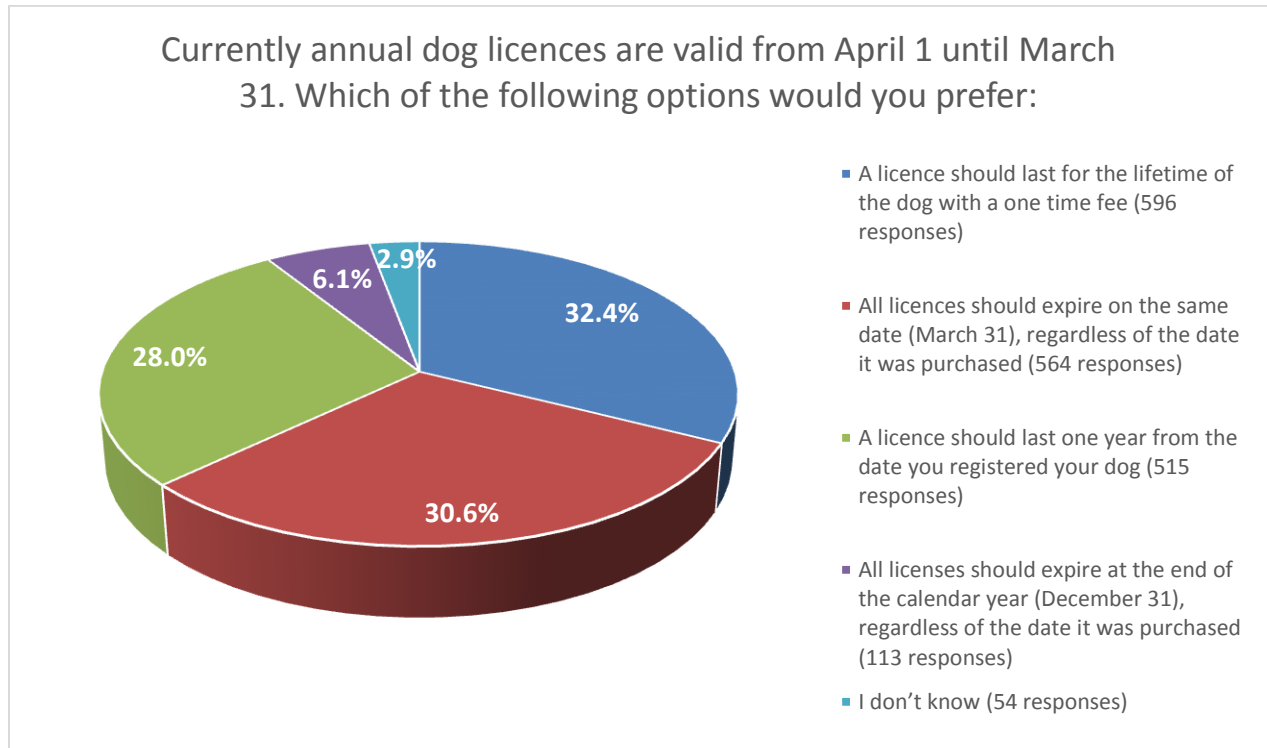
- Bank - (19 responses)
- Online - (8 responses)
- Email - (2 responses)
- Telephone banking - (2 responses)
- EFT (electronic funds transfer) - (2 responses)
- Text - (1 count)
- At a veterinarian clinic within Strathcona County - (1 count)
- With property tax assessment - (1 count)
- In person - (1 count)
- Recreation centers (Ardrossan, Millennium) - (1 count)
- When I pay my utility bill - (1 count)

Several other responses related to licensing in general were also provided:

- Don't license - (1 count)
- Not to have a licence (at all). Cats don't - why do dogs? - (1 count)
- There is no point in registering a dog, unless you use off leash areas. Off leash users should buy a membership - (1 count)

- We should not have to renew our dog licence like other countries have. Example Leduc - (1 count)
- It should be free. Why do I have to pay and cat owners do not? (1 count)

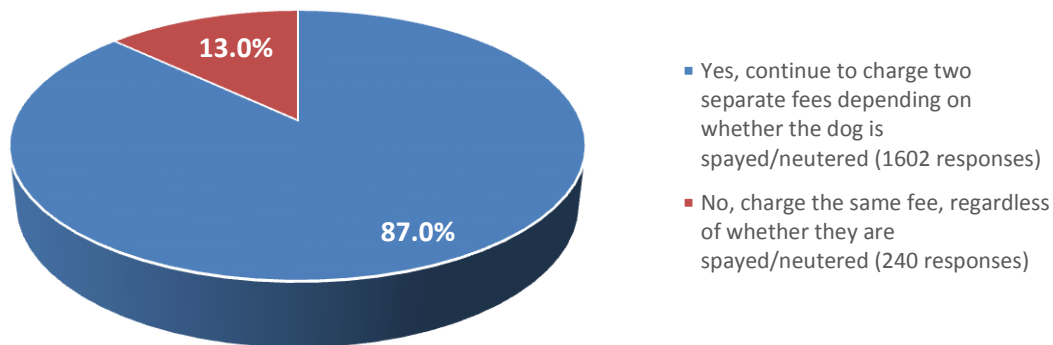
### 3.2.6 Question 12 – Annual Licence Period



There was no clear direction on the preferred option for the renewal date for dog licences, with three options – keeping the date the same, changing the renewal date to the anniversary of the day of registration, or moving to a lifetime fee – all having about equal levels of support. This question will require further engagement with dog owners to test the reasons for changing from the current renewal date.

### 3.2.7 Question 13 – Discounted Renewal Fees for Spayed/Neutered Dogs

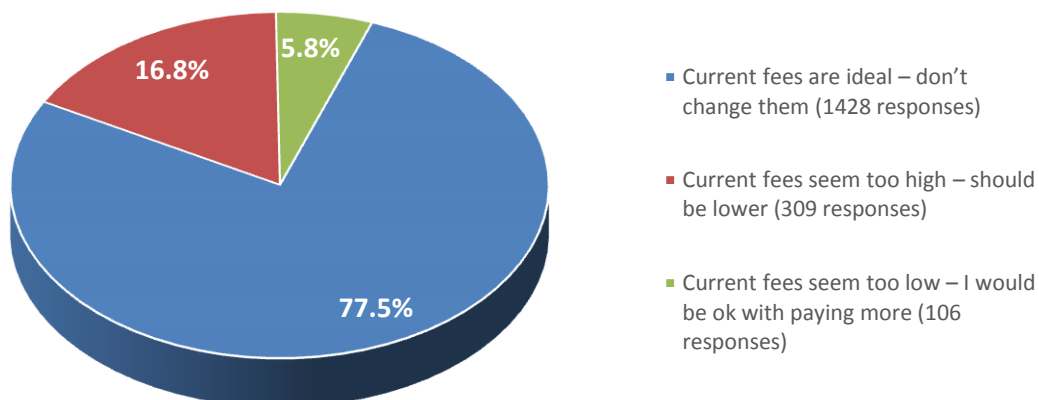
Presently, the County charges a yearly fee of \$35.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$70.00 for unsprayed/unneutered dogs. Should there be a different fee for each of these dogs?



There was a very clear preference for the County to continue to charge different fees for intact (i.e. not spayed or neutered) dogs and those that have been spayed/neutered.

### 3.2.8 Question 14 – Licence Fee Value

What do you think would be a reasonable fee for dog licensing?



Over three-quarters of the survey respondents felt that the current fee for dog licences is appropriate for the level of service provided. This was explored further in the following two questions.

### 3.2.9 Question 15 – Ideal Fees – Spayed/Neutered Dogs

Survey participants were asked to provide their ideal licence fees for spayed/neutered dogs, which are listed in the following table. Any clarifications provided by the survey respondents and the number of times that they were repeated are also included.

Proposed Fee	Number of Responses	Clarifications
\$0/Free to \$25/year	216	Only applies to rural homes (2); This fee should be per family (1)
\$30 to \$50/year	116	Lifetime fee (6); fee should be for any dog (spayed or not) (1); fee should be for spayed dogs only (unspayed is more expensive (1)
\$55 to \$75/year	7	Lifetime fee (2)
\$80 to \$100/year	15	Lifetime fee (7); for non-neutered dogs only (1)
\$125 to \$300	6	Lifetime fee (6)
Mean of responses*	\$48.45/year	
Median of responses**	\$50/year	
Mode of responses***	\$20/year	

\*The mean refers to the average yearly fee that residents would like to pay for a dog licence. 15 residents felt that annual dog licences should be free, and these entries were not included in this calculation as it would lower the average fee artificially. Calculations were based on the entries that were in the range from \$5/year to \$300 lifetime.

\*\*The median refers to the central point of the range in yearly fees charged for a dog licence. For this, 50% of residents would be okay paying this fee (or more), while the remaining residents would prefer to pay less annually.

\*\*\*The mode refers to the yearly fee most frequently mentioned by residents.

Other responses included:

- Additional charges to owners who's dog was picked up by bylaw
- Fees for cats too so dogs less \$
- Equivalent to fees paid by cat owners for returning lost cats and managing cat control issues, moving cats to the Edmonton Humane Society
- Should go down by the more you have.
- My spayed or neutered dog costs NOTHING to the County so it's practically stealing to charge for something that doesn't affect you or the County in ANY way. Disguising the fee as something for lost dogs is a complete scam. Get real this isn't what people want government for.
- That should be owner's responsibility not the community. It should be a fine if the pet has not been spayed or neutered
- There should not be a penalty for those responsible dog owners to have a 'whole dog'. This makes those owners guilty immediately. The preferred system should be a low initial cost for registering any dog. IF that animal presents a cost to the system, then the annual rate for such animal would be increased substantially. This would encourage at least positive outcomes. First, the low initial fee would encourage registration of all dogs. Second, the increased fee or 'penalty' would hopefully dissuade bad behavior.
- This depends on whether were doing a one-time licence fee or not. I'd be happy to pay approximately \$100-200 for a one-time fee.
- To pay for when my dog is lost. Household dogs that don't leave the house off-leash should not pay as much as those dogs that are off-leash for periods of time. Irresponsible pet owners should be fined. Responsible pet owners should not have to pay for the irresponsibility of others.
- My dog lives indoors and I DO NOT license it.
- A higher fee (\$100.00/dog) may encourage folks to spay/neuter their dog enabling them to pay less fees.

### 3.2.10 Question 16 – Ideal Fees - Unspayed/Unneutered Dogs

Survey participants were next asked to provide their ideal licence fees for unspayed/unneutered dogs, which are listed in the following table. Any clarifications provided by the survey respondents and the number of times that they were repeated are also included.

Proposed Fee	Number of Responses	Clarifications
\$0/Free to \$25/year	65	Only applies for rural dogs with urban dogs paying regular fees (1)
\$30 to \$50/year	101	Should be a lifetime fee (1); fee would apply to unneutered dogs with the unspayed dog fee set at \$70 (1); Fee should apply to all dogs (no different fee for spayed/neutered dogs) (2)



Proposed Fee	Number of Responses	Clarifications
\$55 to \$75/year	44	Lifetime fee (1)
\$80 to \$100/year	90	Lifetime fee (3)
\$105 to \$150/year	18	
\$155 to \$1000	35	Lifetime fee (11), fee should be \$200 or the equivalent cost of spaying or neutering the animal as an annual fee (1)
Mean of responses*	\$84.95/year	
Median of responses**	\$75/year	
Mode of responses***	\$100/year	

\*The mean refers to the average yearly fee that residents would like to pay for a dog licence. 15 residents felt that annual dog licences should be free, and these entries were not included in this calculation as it would lower the average fee artificially. Calculations were based on the entries that were in the range from \$5/year to \$300 lifetime.

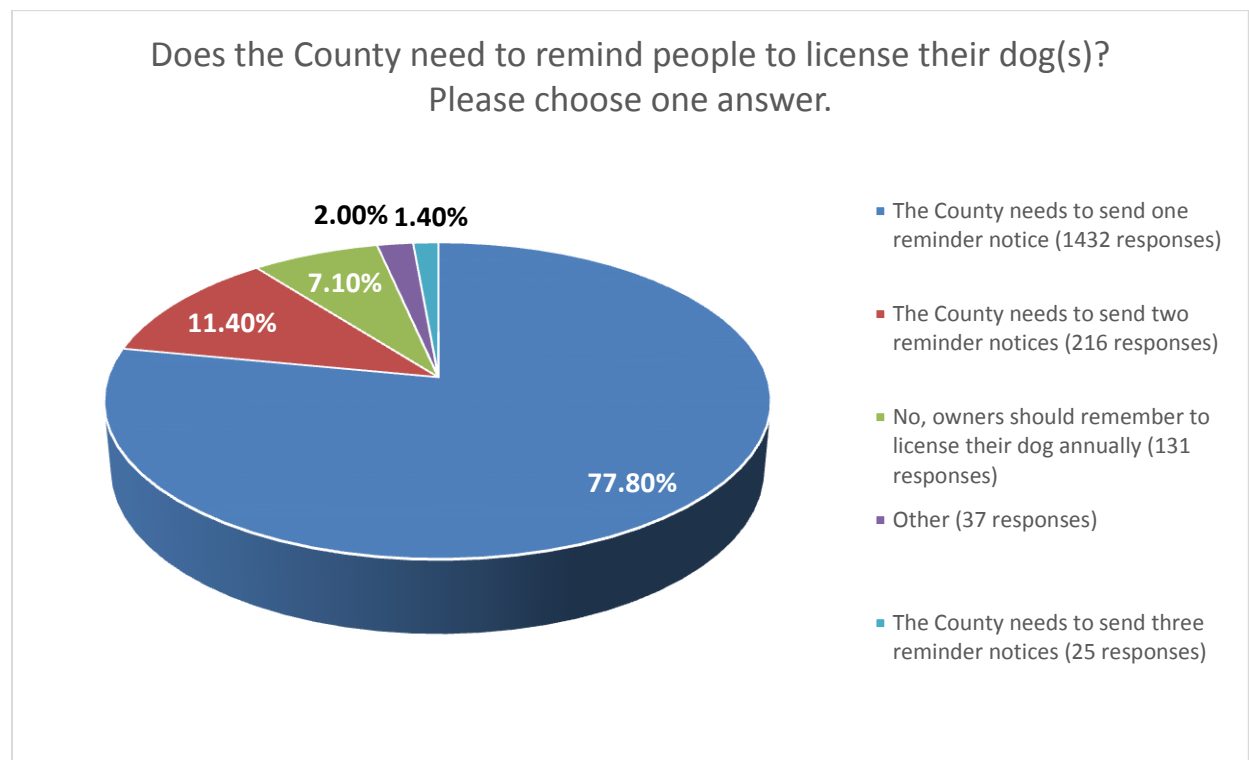
\*\*The median refers to the central point of the range in yearly fees charged for a dog licence. For this, 50% of residents would be okay paying this fee (or more), while the remaining residents would prefer to pay less annually.

\*\*\*The mode refers to the yearly fee most frequently mentioned by residents.

Other comments included:

- Same as spayed or neutered dog – 2 responses
- All should be fixed
- This is a dirty cash grab
- It should be illegal to keep an unspayed or unneutered dog.
- Double
- \$100/year to encourage spay/neuter
- Not sure
- Mine are spayed and neutered right away as young puppy so I do not have an opinion on rates for this question.
- \$100/year to deter backyard breeding. Allowances should be made for puppies/dogs under one year old as it is not in their best health interest to be altered until fully developed/grown.
- Don't know
- My dog lives indoors and I DO NOT license it
- Those who are so irresponsible as to not spay or neuter their pets probably won't pay any licensing fees

### 3.2.11 Question 17 – Renewal Reminder Notices



The response to this question is interesting, as the current practice (three reminder notices) had the lowest ranking overall. Nearly 80% of respondents felt that a single reminder notice was enough, and a move to this new standard would likely have two effects. First, it would free up significant resources within the bylaw enforcement administration to pursue other activities (such as education programs) and second, it would also provide more clarity to enforcement officers when they encounter a dog without valid tags.

### 3.2.12 Question 18 – Other Reminder Options

Several respondents noted that a one-time registration fee would allow the County to do away with reminder notices completely, since there would no longer be any need for renewals.

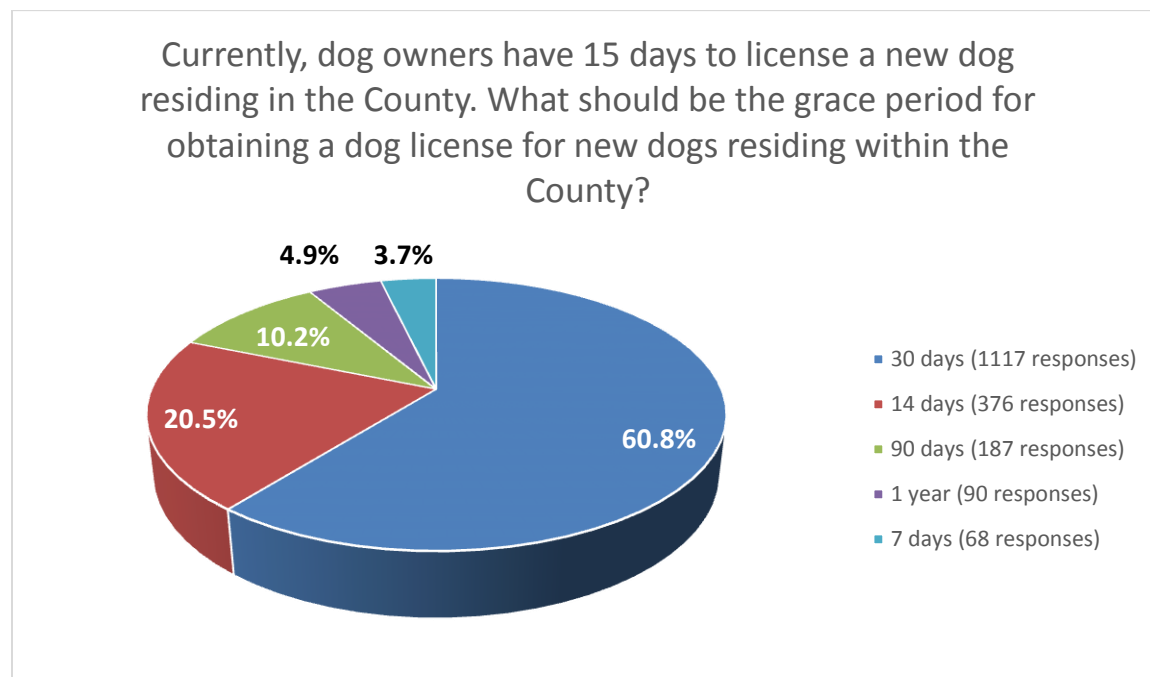
- One-time payment does not require a reminder.
- One-time only. High annual fees are a lot to manage and discourages owners from registering their pets at all. A one-time process may get more traction with owners and allow more pets to get tracked back to the owners along with charges for handling/care.
- Only license dogs once.
- Life time licence with a small one-time fee to cover this cost. Build current annual fee into County taxes.
- One-time fee for the dog no renewal it's just a cash grab
- If the licence lasts for the lifetime of the dog, there is no need for a renewal notice. Saves money and time.

- If a one-time fee was instituted, there would be no need for reminder notices. The next most efficient system, in my opinion, would be done online, with an automatic renewal process.

Other reminder options and comments noted by respondents included:

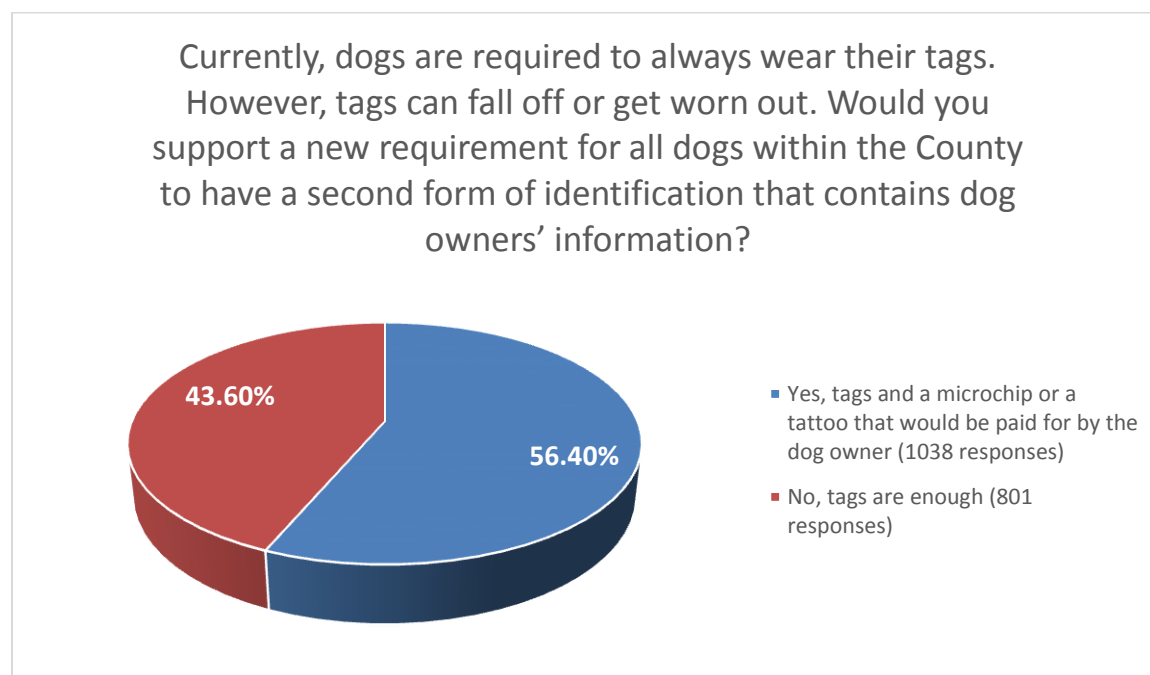
- Similar to licensing vehicles, dog owners could sign up to receive automatic email reminders to license their pet.
- Shouldn't have to license unless cats and other pets are required to have them.
- All dogs need to be licensed so if people will not renew maybe it should be added to their taxes. Being responsible for their dog is not an option but a requirement.
- Dogs do not need to be licensed. Users of off-leash should pay for space. If your dog is rescued then pay large amount for return.
- Reminder notice online and charge extra if not registered within 30 days after registration. If owner doesn't have a dog any longer, they can notify County as such.
- A reminder is good, but to save on mailing costs, the reminder could be sent via e-mail.
- Reminders should be sent out using information delivery from previous question.
- The County already notifies dog owners. Reminders in the paper, utility bills inserts and the actual renewal itself. More than enough notification.
- More than one notice and advertising in paper and online if there are ANY changes to current or future bylaws
- Email a statement... Issue ticket one month later for failure to comply
- Email, welcome to the 21st century. Or text to a mobile number. Canada Post isn't reliable and who goes to the mailbox every day
- Sending the renewal of licence should be reminder enough
- Whatever the date is, the County should remind people. If there is a savings this could be sent out with the property taxes. Or have a month long campaign about pet ownership once a year that would match the renewal.
- Maybe like how vehicles are registered (by your last name). But one reminder is fine.
- One reminder 60 days in advance.
- Option to receive notifications via email too hard to remember without some reminder
- A reminder makes sense, two reminders should be enough.
- Need to send as many reminders as it takes for someone to license dog.
- It depends if the dogs are ever in public places. If they are maintained in a private fenced rural property they should not need to be licensed.

### 3.2.13 Question 19 – Renewal Grace Period



Nearly two in three respondents felt that doubling the current grace period to 30 days would be acceptable. There is little support to extend the grace period much past this.

### 3.2.14 Question 20 – Secondary Identification



Response to this question revealed a clear divide between those who supported a second form of ID for dogs and those who do not. More information on the need for secondary identification and its role in returning lost dogs to their owners may be helpful. Several respondents also noted that a partial solution to this issue would be sending out new tags to all owners on a regular basis – for instance, with every fifth renewal.

### **3.2.15 Question 21 – Traits of Aggressive Dogs**

Survey participants were asked to list three traits that they felt defined an aggressive dog. The results from this question are listed below.

#### **Biting - 857 mentions which includes the following:**

- One that bites or attempts to bite a person without being provoked.
- A dog which, when unprovoked, bites, nips, or tears at a person or animal, including their person, shoes, clothing or possessions
- Deliberately bites dog or person and draws blood or causes serious bruise. Not all bites indicate aggression
- One that leaves its territory to bark at and bite strangers

#### **Barking/Growling – 812 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that barks excessively without provocation whether in their own yard or in a public area with or without the owner present
- Barks sharply and loudly in a hostile way with teeth barred and hackles up upon seeing someone they don't know
- Low growl, teeth bared

#### **Attacking/Fighting – 600 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that has attacked another animal or person. I strongly believe that this should not be breed specific as dogs are products of their environments
- Attacking other dogs, i.e. pinning them and biting
- High prey drive towards other animals, no matter the size of the dog
- One that refuses to obey its owners commands to stop attacking someone

#### **Body Language – 477 mentions which includes the following:**

- Low stance, tail low and ears flat to head
- Hackles/hair raised
- Direct eye contact - fixed stare without movement while standing tall leaning forward
- Snarling and drooling

#### **Lunging/Charging/Jumping/Pulling – 410 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that bares their teeth and lunges at other dogs/people/animals
- Lunges at fence or pulls excessively on tether when people walk by their property
- Jumping against the owner's fence (in back yard, etc.) when another person or dog walks by

**Out of Control/Unpredictable - 313 mentions which includes the following:**

- Doesn't get along with other dogs in a controlled situation
- Even when on a leash, the owner has little or no control over the animal
- Owner unable to control dog to bring them out of aggressive behaviour and to a controlled state
- Reacts unpredictably and in an intimidating way when encountering people or dogs

**Violent/Threatening/Aggressive Behaviour Towards People/Other Animals - 152 mentions which includes the following:**

- Unwarranted hostility
- A dog that interferes with the freedom of movement of a person or animal, whether on its own property or in a public area
- Dogs who are aggressive even when a dog and or human shows obvious signs of submission and dog still is aggressive
- Displays aggressive behaviour toward people off their own property

**Owner Issues/Training - 148 mentions which includes the following:**

- OWNER responsibility is #1. Truly 'aggressive' dogs are rare. It is generally ignorant and irresponsible ownership leading to an unfortunate situation
- If dogs are aggressive, the dog owner should muzzle their dog. It's not the dogs. It's the bad owners
- Dominant, untrained. Ultimately the hand at the end of the leash is to blame
- One that doesn't obey direct commands from its handler to back down when it is told to

**Running/Chasing - 117 mentions which includes the following:**

- Comes after you - when you walk/run/bicycle
- Escapes its confined area to chase people or other dogs with intent to fight
- In an off leash area chasing and nipping at all the other dogs
- Chasing/harassing other pets, livestock or passing vehicles

**Breed/Size - 89 mentions which includes the following:**

- I don't agree with dogs being labeled 'aggressive' by their breed...owners MAKE dogs aggressive.
- Breeds that have been bred for aggression and known to snap such pit bulls, Akitas, etc.
- Aggressive dogs should not be labelled as such because of their breed, but by their actions
- The difference between an aggressive Chihuahua and an aggressive pit bull is that the bigger breeds can cause proportionately bigger damage

**Territorial/Stalking/Dominance - 60 mentions which includes the following:**

- Over protective of neutral territory (dog parks)
- One that follows people and stalks them
- To me a dog that will not submit is aggressive

**Injures/Harms/Kills – 59 mentions which includes the following:**

- Wanders onto neighbour's property to hurt or kill other animals
- Seeks out to injure person or another animal
- Injures another dog or human (breaking the skin) under conditions that dogs usually do not find stressful (e.g., walking on leash, socializing off leash at the dog park)
- Broke skin on a human or another dog

**Leash/Restraining/Off Leash Issues – 52 mentions which includes the following:**

- Dogs that are straining their leashes as they approach other people/dogs
- One that is trying their best to get off leash to 'go after' another dog
- If I saw a dog wearing a muzzle I would think it's aggressive

**History - 51 mentions which includes the following:**

- History of biting
- Frequent intervention by enforcement services (lost/escapes often)
- Repetitive, non-situational - happens more than twice in different situations

**Socialization – 48 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that has not been socialized properly and goes after other dogs
- A dog that does not get along with other animals or people
- Any dog that cannot accept touching by a stranger
- Unapproachable, even in ordinary calm situations

**Other – 25 mentions which includes the following:**

- Constantly in an overstressed condition. Often confused by surroundings
- There should be a professional evaluation on any dog before it is deemed aggressive
- If after behavioural intervention the dog is still prone to lashing out

**Fear – 17 mentions which includes the following:**

- 95% of dog aggression comes from fear, not malice, so very fearful dogs are likely to display aggressive behaviours if they are not approached correctly
- Shows no fear or evidence of backing down
- Dogs who are cornered may have their body low, tail down, ears back but can bite out of fear
- A fearful dog that feels scared and trapped so it bites

### **3.2.16 Question 22 – Traits of Nuisance Dogs**

Survey participants were asked to list three traits that they felt defined a nuisance dog. The results from this question are listed below.

**Barks excessively - 1,817 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog barking for lengthy/extended periods of time/continuously/ incessantly /non-stop /uncontrolled /excessive /barks all the time

- A dog that barks at all hours of the day and/or night
- A dog that barks a lot when their owner is away -- or even worse when their owner is home!

**Roams uncontrolled in the neighborhood – 762 mentions which includes the following:**

- A loose dog wandering on its own in the neighbourhood / on other people's property
- A dog that can easily escape from its yard /jumps fences
- A dog allowed to roam free/run free in the neighborhood

**Not Leashed /Unattended - 39 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that isn't leashed in public outside of the off-leash area
- Dog on its property but not restrained

**No Training - 51 mentions which includes the following:**

- Not under control / disobedient
- One that is untrained
- Flies out of owner's driveway when you walk by

**Defecates/Urines uncontrolled - 347 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that defecates and/or urinates in other people's yard
- A dog whose owners don't pick up after it

**Damages other people's property (digs up, garbage, etc.) - 224 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog loose continually tearing up garbage
- A dog that causes damage to public or other resident's property
- Steals things from other people's properties /from other dogs

**Aggressive Behavior/ Jumping /Lunging - 233 mentions which includes the following:**

- A dog that attacks /acts aggressively/jumps on people
- A dog that approaches me as I am walking down the street and nips at my heels/bites
- Over protective of private property that may affect public property

**Chasing animals or people - 105 mentions which includes the following:**

- Allowed to antagonize other animals /pets /wildlife with their behavior
- dog that does not belong to me on my property, bothering livestock
- Chases after people, cars, or bikes

**Owner not assuming responsibility- 299 mentions which includes the following:**

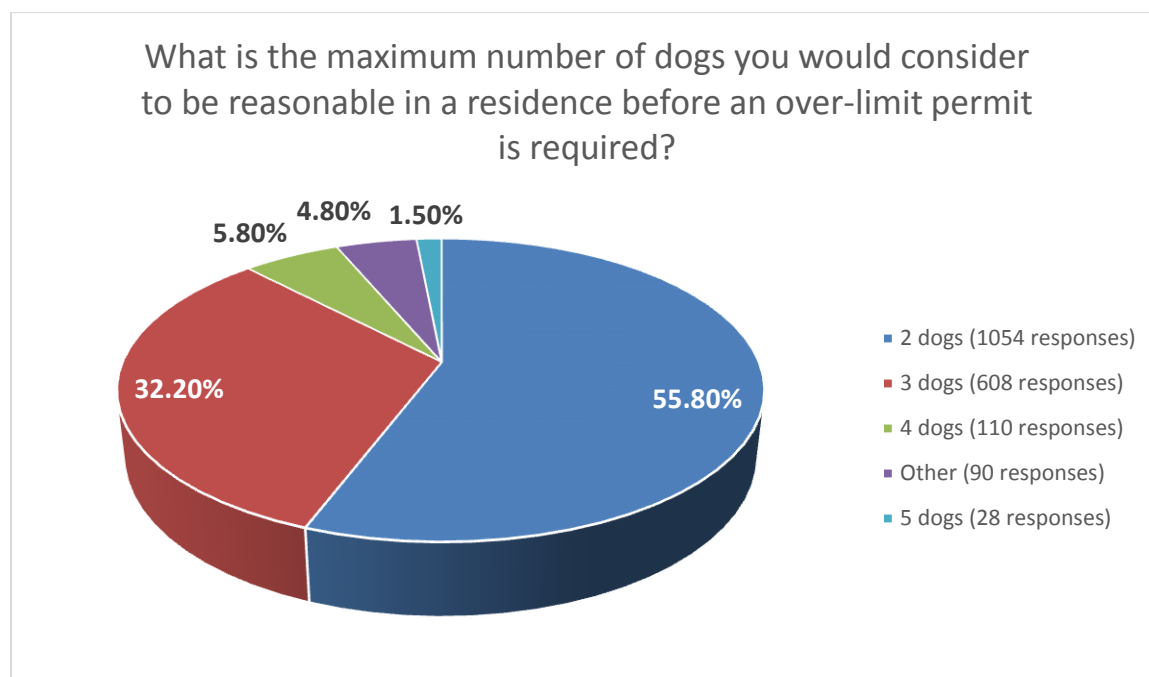
- A dog that is out of control of the owner on a regular basis
- Dog jumps up on people - not restrained by owner
- A dog owner who does not pick-up after its dog



**Other Comments - 48 mentions which includes the following:**

- Unlicensed dogs
- A bother to the neighborhood /lingers
- Marking its territory / not spayed or neutered
- Any dog that has 3 or more violations for anything, within one year
- Back yard dogs, dogs that stay outside all day
- Dirty / odors from unkempt yards
- Dogs should always be on a leash even in the rural areas

**3.2.17 Question 23 – Over-Limit Permits**



Just over half of respondents felt that the current limit of two dogs per household was an acceptable number. There was also significant support (nearly a third of respondents) who felt that having up to three dogs in a household would be acceptable, but there was very little support for numbers greater than that.

**3.2.18 Question 24 – Additional Comments on Over-Limit Permits**

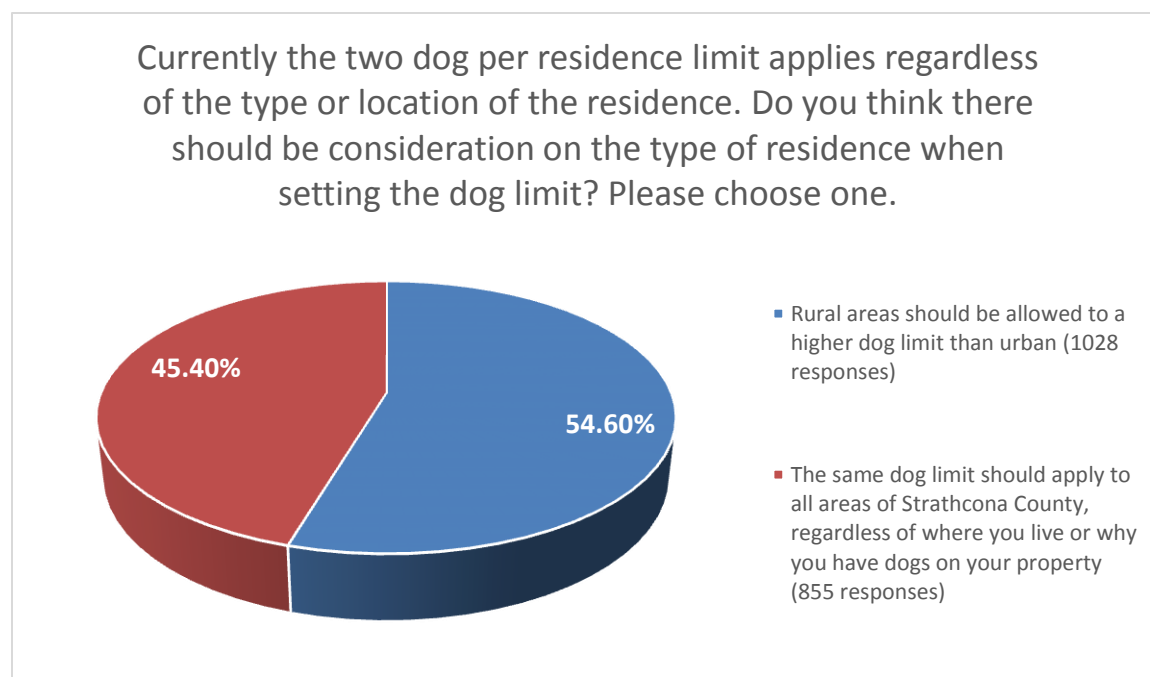
Many survey respondents noted that there are numerous factors to consider when it comes to over-limit permits, including:

- type of home (condo/apartment vs. single family home)
- size of home and yard

- size of dog (generally, the number of dogs per home should decrease as the dogs get larger)
- location of home (urban or rural)
- whether the dog is spayed/neutered or not
- training of dogs and owners and the responsibility of the owners

There were also several comments that household limits are unnecessary, and that owners should be allowed to have as many dogs as they can responsibly care for. However, this came with the condition that there would need to be stronger enforcement to ensure that the dogs are cared for properly and are not seen as a nuisance within the community.

### 3.2.19 Question 25 – Urban vs. Rural Household Dog Limits



Note: Dog-based businesses, such as kennels, are required to have a valid development permit and therefore are not required to purchase an over-limit permit.

There was slightly more support for a higher household dog limit in rural areas, but as was noted in the additional responses from the previous question, this higher limit would likely come with conditions based on the size of dog, whether “rural” means an acreage or a farm, etc.

### 3.2.20 Question 26 – Reasons For/Against Different Limits

Survey participants were asked to provide any additional reasons why they felt there should or should not be a different limit for urban versus rural properties. The vast majority of the responses focused on the additional space/room that animals would have in the rural areas, meaning that numbers of dogs per hectare would be equal or lower and thus more acceptable. However,

several noted that there would need to be a clearer distinction of “rural” between the country residential areas (i.e. acreages) and larger rural properties (i.e. farms).

- More space to accommodate and more duties for dogs to carry out in rural areas
- I think the breed of dog should be considered when deciding how many dogs. For instance, 3 or 4 tea cup sized dogs would seem reasonable. The type of residence should be taken into consideration not just the location. If you are living in an apartment/condo with 2 St. Bernards would be a quality of life situation.
- I think in the rural areas it would be ok to have max 3 dogs. The dogs have a larger space to run and play.
- More space for the animals, not as cramped. Hopefully less noise issues as your neighbors are farther away

### 3.2.21 Question 27 – Additional Comments

Participants provided additional thoughts about responsible dog ownership in Strathcona County in the following theme areas. Following each theme area is a selection of typical comments on the theme.

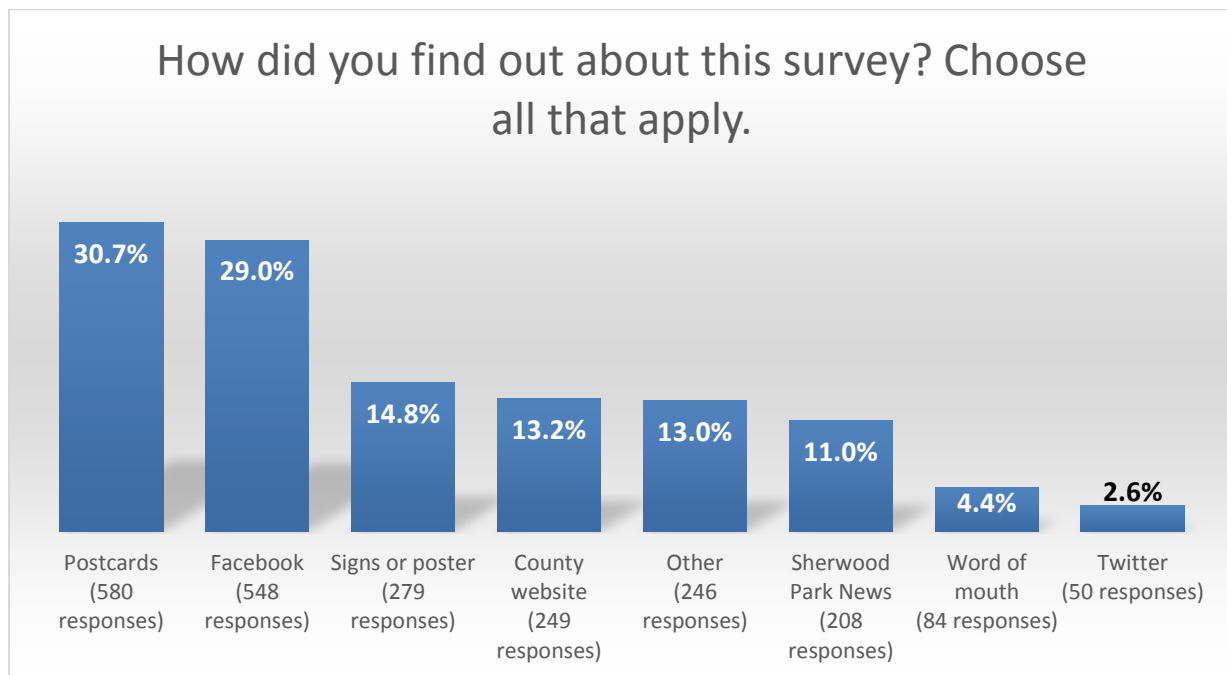
- **Picking Up After Dog – 357 responses**
  - Owners need to clean up after their dogs always
  - I wish that more people would clean up after their dogs. The walking paths are getting crazy with the amount of poop laying around.
  - There should be a more severe punishment for those owners who do not pick up after their dogs, coupled with a simple mechanism to report and document proof
- **Off-Leash Areas and Off-Leash Etiquette – 263 responses**
  - More off-leash areas in the open green spaces around Sherwood Park
  - There are too many dog owners who allow their dogs off leash in areas that are not designated as off leash - I see this regularly in Sherwood Park
  - Encourage more visits by the bylaw officer at the off-leash park, the presence would encourage more to keep their dog on leash to and from the vehicle into the park. It can be very busy and we are concerned that a dog may be hit by darting out into the parking lot
- **Training/Education – 163 responses**
  - I think there should be mandatory training for dog owners. Most of the issues are created by bad owners, not bad dogs
  - Consider having dog owners provide a minimal standard of training for licences or a discount for training
  - I truly believe that there are no real bad dogs just bad owners!! Owners must be held responsible for the bad behaviours in their pets!
- **Fines, Reporting and Enforcement – 139 responses**
  - Higher fines when bylaw is called out, double the fines when by-law is called out a second time, triple fine for a third call etc. because it is obvious the owner is not practicing responsibility
  - Lots of nuisance and aggressive dogs and irresponsible owners. Increase the fines and increase enforcement patrols

- It seems that there are bylaws but they are not being enforced. The problems would be solved if the bylaws were enforced
- **Registration and Tags – 111 responses**
  - Regarding the two dog limit - I think that is fine if you have the space. Many yards within Sherwood Park do not have the space for dogs to exercise. Setting a limit of one dog in condos, town homes and smaller duplexes isn't unreasonable
  - I believe the number of dogs allowed in a home should not only depend on if it's rural or urban but also the size of the house and how the dogs are being cared for.
  - I believe there should be more checking to make sure dogs are licensed. I see dogs without collars so I am not sure they are licensed
- **Cat Bylaw – 81 responses**
  - The County really needs to address the cat licensing issue. Cats should be restricted the same way as dogs. They annoy residents just as much if not more. They also decimate bird populations.
  - Get more serious about responsible cat ownership
  - Cat owners should be subject to the same rules. I am tired of people's pet cats wandering my neighborhood
- **Barking - 76 responses**
  - Enforcement should be stricter. Our neighbour's dog barks excessively and despite numerous complaints from numerous neighbours, enforcement continues to 'warn' them with notices as they never answer their door and apparently nothing else can be done unless they're spoken to so the dog continues to bark and we've given up complaining. Fines should be added to tax bills in cases like this
  - I would like to know how to stop owners from allowing their dogs to bark excessively. It is not like we need guard dogs in an urban area so the barking should be minimal
  - The bylaw should be clearer and more enforceable regarding nuisance behaviour such as excessive barking in an urban setting
- **Breeds/Breed Ban – 34 responses**
  - I feel that dog bans should never be a thing. There are no bad dogs, just bad owners
  - Do not ban dog breeds. Ban dog ownership from irresponsible people with a poor track record
  - Serious consideration should be given to banning dangerous breeds such as pitbulls
- **Spaying/Neutering and Dog Breeding – 28 responses**
  - All dogs should be spayed/neutered unless the owner has a breeding licence for each individual intact dog. Help prevent back yard breeding and cause owners to be responsible. If they cannot afford the surgery, they shouldn't own an animal as they won't be able to afford the proper care for the animal
  - Unless you are running a breeding operation all dogs should be either spayed or neutered

- **Other – 110 responses**

- I have taken in strays several times and have always found bylaws officers to be very helpful and caring of the dogs when I call them to collect them. Keep up the good work!
- I would like the steps for contacting authorities about aggressive dogs, irresponsible owners, lost dogs, found dogs, etc. to be easier to find. I believe that the County could provide a shelter in the County to hold animals that have been found.
- I would like to see the bylaws include points regarding comfortable living conditions for dogs. For example, I'd like to see that it is prohibited for an owner to just chain a dog up on a short chain in their yard for lengthy periods of time, etc.
- Look at the City of Calgary and their model. It is amongst the most progressive in North America and is well respected by dog owners as well as advocacy groups

### 3.2.22 Question 32 – Survey Notification



### 3.2.23 Question 33 – Other Notification Methods

Other methods that notified participants about the survey included:

- Email – 114 responses (either directly from the County or indirectly from friends, family, etc.)
- Mail – 38 responses
- Postcards handed out in the community (at dog park, Silver Bells Winter Market, on the trails, at groomers, RCMP station, etc.) – 22 responses
- Notification with utility bills – 8 responses
- Internal news release to County staff – 8 responses

- Strathcona County Public Engagement e-newsletter – 6 responses
- Notified by a County elected official – 4 responses
- Other electronic media (other websites, Instagram, etc.) – 4 responses
- Phone – 3 responses

## 4.0 NEXT STEPS

The next phase of engagement will consist of a series of facilitated workshops to be held in February 2017. These four events – two held in Sherwood Park, and two held in rural areas – will be used to host deeper discussions on several topics that did not finish with clear direction in the survey. These topics, as noted in the graphs and data above, include:

- Household dog limits should be the same, regardless of whether the household is urban or rural
- All dogs must have a microchip (at owner's cost) as a second form of ID to assist in returning dogs to their owners
- All dog owners must show proof of completion of at least one dog obedience course
- Owners of more than 3 dogs should need an over-limit permit
- Dog licenses are valid for one year from date of issue
- Dog nuisance and aggression issues should have a simpler route to enforcement
- Dog fines should increase after each subsequent offence.

## **Appendix A** **SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS**





## SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Dog bylaw review

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ID 6

**1. Do you live in Strathcona County? \***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Household characteristics

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ID 8

**2. Which part of Strathcona County do you live in? \***

- ☐ Urban (Sherwood Park)
- ☐ Rural (Antler Lake, Ardrossan, Collingwood Cove, Half Moon Lake, Hastings Lake, Josephburg, North Cooking Lake, South Cooking Lake, country residential or farm.)

ID 9

**3. Do you, or another person in your household, own at least one dog? \***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I don't own a dog right now but I have in the last two years
- ☐ No

**ID 10**

#### **4. How long have you owned a dog?**

- ☐ **Less than 1 year**
- ☐ **1 to 3 years**
- ☐ **More than 3 years**

**ID 11**

#### **5. How many dogs do you presently own?**

- ☐ **1**
- ☐ **2**
- ☐ **3**
- ☐ **4**
- ☐ **5 or more**

**12**

**6. How would you like to receive information regarding dog ownership requirements within Strathcona County? Select all that apply.**

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Posted on the County's website
- ☐ With my dog licensing application/renewal
- ☐ With my property tax notification
- ☐ With my utility bill
- ☐ Other

A large, empty white rectangular box with a thin grey border, likely for a user to enter an answer or provide feedback.

Licensing

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**ID 18**

**8. What is the date for renewing a dog licence in Strathcona County? Is it:**

- ☐ January 1
- ☐ April 1
- ☐ One year from the date you licenced your dog
- ☐ I don't know

**ID 42**

**9. What would be your preferred method of renewing your dog licence? You may check more than one.**

**In person, at:**

- ☐ **Strathcona County Enforcement Services - 911 Bison Way, Sherwood Park**
- ☐ **Heartland Hall Contact Office - 55305 Range Road 214, east of Fort Saskatchewan (South of Highway 15, on the east side of Secondary Highway 830)**
- ☐ **South Contact Office - 22142 South Cooking Lake Road, South Cooking Lake**
- ☐ **County Hall (Assessment and Tax) - 2001 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park**

**Phone**

- ☐ **Via phone**

**Mail**

- ☐ **Regular mail**

**Online**

- ☐ **Online**

**Other**

- ☐ **Other**

**ID 44**

**Please specify: \***

**10. Currently annual dog licences are valid from April 1 until March 31. Which of the following options would you prefer:**

- ☐ A licence should last one year from the date you registered your dog.
- ☐ All licences should expire on the same date (March 31), regardless of the date it was purchased.
- ☐ All licences should expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31), regardless of the date it was purchased.
- ☐ A licence should last for the lifetime of the dog with a one-time fee.

I don't know

**11. Presently, the County charges a yearly fee of \$35.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$70.00 for unspayed/unneutered dogs. Should there be a different fee for each of these dogs?**

- ☐ Yes, continue to charge two separate fees depending on whether the dog is spayed/neutered.
- ☐ No, charge the same fee, regardless of whether they are spayed/neutered.

**ID 22**

**12. Dog licensing fees are used to cover the costs of returning lost dogs to their owners and managing dog control issues, moving dogs to the Edmonton Humane Society, providing emergency care to strays and generally managing dog issues in the County. What do you think would be a reasonable fee for dog licensing?**

- ☐ **Current fees are ideal – don't change them**
- ☐ **Current fees seem too high – should be lower**
- ☐ **Current fees seem too low – I would be okay with paying more**

**ID 23**

**My ideal fee for spayed/neutered dog is**

**ID 24**

**My Ideal fee for unspayed/unneutered dogs is**

**ID 25**

**13. Does the County need to remind people to licence their dog(s)? Please choose one answer.**

- ☐ No, owners should remember to licence their dog annually.
- ☐ The County needs to send one reminder notice.
- ☐ The County needs to send two reminder notices.
- ☐ The County needs to send three reminder notices.
- ☐ Other

**ID 46**

**Please specify: \***



**ID 26**

**14. Currently, dog owners have 15 days to licence a new dog residing in the County. What should be the grace period for obtaining a dog licence for new dogs residing within the County?**

- ☐ 7 days
- ☐ 14 days
- ☐ 30 days
- ☐ 90 days
- ☐ 1 year



Enforcement

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**16. How would you define an aggressive dog? Please provide up to three traits in space below.**

a.

b.

c.

**17. How would you define a nuisance dog? Please provide up to three traits in space below.**

a.

b.

c.

**ID 31**

**18. What is the maximum number of dogs you would consider to be reasonable in a residence before an over-limit permit is required?**

- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ Other

**ID 56**

**Please specify: \***

**ID 30**

**19. Currently the two dog per residence limit applies regardless of the type or location of the residence. Do you think there should be consideration on the type of residence when setting the dog limit? Please choose one.**

***Note:* Dog-based businesses, such as kennels, are required to have a valid development permit and therefore are not required to purchase an over-limit permit.**

- ☐ The same dog limit should apply to all areas of Strathcona County, regardless of where you live or why you have dogs on your property.
- ☐ Rural areas should be allowed to a higher dog limit than urban.

 57

**Why? \***

 33

**20. Do you have any additional thoughts about responsible dog ownership in Strathcona County?**

 37

**21. How did you find out about this survey? Choose all that apply.**

- ☐ **Sherwood Park News**
- ☐ **County website**
- ☐ **Twitter**
- ☐ **Facebook**
- ☐ **Word of mouth**
- ☐ **Signs or poster**
- ☐ **Postcards**
- ☐ **Other**



**STRATHCONA COUNTY  
DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW**

0 Sample Survey Questions  
January 31, 2017

**ID 58**

**Please specify:**