

**Strathcona County
Dog Control Bylaw Review**

Phase 2 Workshop Summary Report



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Strathcona County

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March 13, 2017

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STRATHCONA COUNTY DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Executive Summary
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strathcona County (the County) has undertaken a municipality-wide public engagement program to complement a regional bylaw comparison in preparation for an update to the Dog Control Bylaw (85-2006). The engagement program, consisting of an awareness campaign, an online survey and a series of workshops hosted across the County, has provided a large volume of feedback from County residents that will provide direction for the new bylaw, which is anticipated to take effect in 2018.

The online survey ran from November 21 to December 11, 2016 and had nearly 1900 completed responses from a variety of stakeholders. 78% of respondents lived in the Sherwood Park urban service area, with 22% living in other areas of the County. This is very close to the actual distribution of population in the County (72% urban vs. 28% rural).

- Areas of strong support:
 - Greater use of online portals and communication on dog-related matters (emails, online registrations and renewals, social media updates, etc.)
 - Maintaining different licensing fees for spayed/neutered dogs vs. intact dogs
 - Keeping current fee structure (\$35 for spayed/neutered dogs, \$70 for intact dogs)
 - Limiting the number of licence renewal notices to one, and keeping the renewal deadline as March 31
 - Extending the "grace period" for registering new dogs from 15 days to 30 days
 - Better signage/enforcement of off-leash dogs
- Areas in need of further exploration
 - Creation of different household dog limits for urban vs. rural residences
 - Requirement for secondary identification for dogs (i.e. microchips/tattoos)
 - Expiry date for dog licences
 - Dog owner training
 - Escalation of penalties for repeat infractions
 - Threshold for over-limit permits
- Areas with little or no support
 - Addition of any form of a breed ban in the new bylaw
- Areas requiring stronger communication
 - What license fees are used for
 - How to report abuse/neglect
 - How to report dog-related issues
 - Expectations for responsible dog ownership

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Four workshop sessions were hosted around the County in February 2016 to report back to the community on the survey results and to receive clarifying feedback on the six areas of further exploration listed above.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	COMMUNITY	ATTENDANCE
Saturday, February 4	10 A.M. – 12 P.M.	Broadmoor Golf and Curling Club	Sherwood Park	41
Tuesday, February 7	6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.	Moyer Recreation Centre	Josephburg	3
Thursday, February 9	6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.	Bethel Lutheran Church	Sherwood Park	42
Wednesday, February 15	6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.	Community Hall	South Cooking Lake	26
TOTAL				112

The feedback from the survey and the workshops has resulted in seven recommendations for the new bylaw:

1. Exclusion of any type of a breed ban
2. Creation/adoption of a standardized owner training certificate program
3. Preserving the current dog licence term (April 1 to March 31 annually) while moving to a single reminder notice for renewal and adoption of an online renewal system
4. Fines for consecutive offences should continue to escalate to provide a deterrent effect
5. Increase of the household dog limit to three animals, and creation of clear criteria for the granting of over-limit permits
6. Further examination of a separate rural household limit, restricted to parcels of land larger than five acres
7. Support for microchips as a secondary form of identification
 - Mandatory for dogs that have been designated as vicious
 - Voluntary for all dog owners as part of an incentive program

STRATHCONA COUNTY DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Project Background
March 13, 2017

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2016, Strathcona County began a two-pronged review of its current Dog Control Bylaw (85-2006), adopted by County Council in 2006. The review included an examination of similar bylaws in neighbouring communities, as well as public engagement to invite comments about which areas of responsible dog ownership are working and where improvements can be made. The public engagement component of the project included three main phases – an initial project awareness/launch campaign, an online survey to determine areas of priority and preference in County residents, and a series of workshops to confirm the survey results and clarify areas of direction for the bylaw update.

3.0 PHASE 1 SURVEY SUMMARY

The first two phases of the engagement program, conducted in the winter of 2016, consisted of a comprehensive community outreach program, coupled with an online survey. The outreach program was focused on generating broad-based awareness of the bylaw review project, as the bylaw affects both dog owners and residents without dogs. The online survey was tailored to ask questions 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.
- Interaction with project team members on local walking trails and at the Deermound off-leash area prior to and during the survey period, and at the Silver Bells Winter Market on November 26, 2016

The survey ran from November 21 to December 11, 2016, and resulted in:

- 2306 total responses



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Phase 1 Survey Summary
March 13, 2017

- 1877 completed surveys
- 331 partially completed surveys
- 98 rejected surveys (survey was open to Strathcona County residents only)

The 24 survey questions were designed to establish preferences and priorities among a diverse group of interested stakeholders within the County, including rural and urban residents, 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. Special care was taken in designing the survey questions and the survey logic to only present relevant questions to participants. The survey was also restricted to County residents so that any feedback received was reflective of those who will be affected by the changes to the bylaw.

- About 85% of respondents own at least one dog, with an additional 4% having owned a dog in the previous two years. Nearly 240 surveys were completed by residents who did not own a dog
- 93% of survey participants who owned dogs had one or two dogs in their household, which is well aligned with the actual number of households with this number of dogs (96%). Survey participants who did not own a dog were jumped to Question 21 at this point as the next 16 questions only applied to dog owners
- 95% of respondents have owned a dog for more than a year, with 85% owning a dog for three years or more
- 93% of respondents own one or two dogs, which is very similar to the actual level within the County of 96%. There are currently around 9900 households that combined have nearly 13,200 licensed dogs
- Large numbers of dog owners would like to receive information on responsible dog ownership when they register/renew their dog (73%), via email (42%), or on the County's website (36%), with smaller levels of support for other methods (with utility bills, property tax notices, etc.)
- Approximately 66% of respondents knew the renewal deadline of March 31, and a large majority (over 82%) would prefer to renew their licences online
- The license term had nearly equally split support between the status quo (April 1 to March 31 annually), the anniversary of the registration date annually, or a new option in the form of a lifetime fee
- 87% of respondents felt that the current system of different fees for spayed/neutered dogs and intact dogs should be maintained



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Phase 2 – Direct Engagement
March 13, 2017

- Over three quarters (77%) of participants felt that the current licence fees were appropriate. Follow-up questions on the “ideal” amount for each individual fee supported this input
- Nearly 78% of survey respondents felt that the County should only issue a single renewal reminder notice to dog owners
- Over 60% felt a grace period of 30 days for the registration of new dogs would be appropriate, with an additional 20% expressing that the status quo (two weeks) would also be acceptable. There was very little support for any timeframe either shorter or longer than these two options
- About 56% of respondents felt that a secondary form of identification for dogs should be a requirement, with many others noting that they would be more supportive of a voluntary/incentive based approach to encouraging microchipping
- Respondents were asked to provide what they felt were three traits that defined aggressive dogs and nuisance dogs. Many aggressive dog traits listed are similar to those for fearful dogs, and the vast majority of respondents listed excessive barking as the top nuisance trait for dogs
- Over 56% of respondents felt that over-limit permits should be required to have more than two dogs, with another 32% feeling that this could be increased to three dogs. There was very little support for any option other than these two numbers
- Nearly 55% of respondents felt that there should be different household thresholds for dogs depending on whether the residence was urban or rural. Many noted that the additional space available in rural areas made it feasible

4.0 PHASE 2 – DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

The final phase of the engagement program, conducted in early 2017, consisted of a series of workshops hosted in several locations across the County to increase the number of opportunities for stakeholders to participate in an event relatively close to their homes. The direct engagement component of the project was promoted through a variety of means, including:

- Direct emails to approximately 200 individuals who provided email addresses as part of the Phase 1 survey
- Notification through the Strathcona County Public Engagement e-newsletter
- Notification on the Strathcona County website



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- Information release (resulting in article in Sherwood Park News: January 31, 2017 <http://www.sherwoodparknews.com/2017/01/31/discussion-open-for-dog-bylaw>)
- Digital sign advertising at Strathcona County facilities
- Social media updates

Interested parties were asked to RSVP via the Strathcona County Trumba event planning portal to aid in hosting events at venues that were appropriately sized for the anticipated crowd and arranging for adequate staff numbers to run the events effectively. The four events were divided into two rural opportunities and two urban opportunities to provide balanced access to all types of stakeholders to participate. Additionally, the events were strategically located around Strathcona County so that stakeholders did not have to travel far to attend an event. Lastly, the timing of the events was also spread out as much as possible to accommodate a broad spectrum of different work and life schedules. These events were as follows:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	COMMUNITY	ATTENDANCE
Saturday, February 4	10 A.M. – 12 P.M.	Broadmoor Golf and Curling Club	Sherwood Park	41
Tuesday, February 7	6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.	Moyer Recreation Centre	Josephburg	3
Thursday, February 9	6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.	Bethel Lutheran Church	Sherwood Park	42
Wednesday, February 15	6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.	Community Hall	South Cooking Lake	26

Each event followed the same format to provide a similar experience for all participants. Doors opened approximately one half hour prior to the start of each event for attendees to register and participate in an initial feedback exercise. Each participant was asked to provide their input on three areas of interest that were raised in the additional comments in the Phase 1 survey:

- Methods/channels that Strathcona County could use to better communicate with residents regarding dog-related topics
- Reasons why some people do not register their dogs
- Information/education that would be valuable or important for dog owners

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Phase 2 – Direct Engagement
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These three areas of interest were posted onto a comment area at each event and attendees were encouraged to provide their comments on any or all of the topics. The summary of these results will be provided below in Section 5.8.

Each event began with a short presentation outlining the purpose of the bylaw review project, a summary of the survey results, the areas still requiring clarification through further engagement at the event, and the next steps in the project. A copy of the presentation has been included in Appendix A.

Following the presentation, attendees were asked to participate in an idea rating exercise using six different themes that did not have a clear direction from the public's responses to the survey (i.e. the results did not show that a majority of respondents either supported or disapproved of the proposed direction, or the theme emerged from the volume of additional comments provided by respondents). These six areas, listed below, and the results from their corresponding rating exercises, are summarized in the following sections. A sample idea rating sheet is included in Appendix B.

1. Household dog limits – urban vs. rural
2. Secondary Identification (i.e. microchips/tattoos)
3. Expiry date for dog licences
4. Dog owner training
5. Penalties for repeat infractions
6. Over-limit permits

Attendees were also encouraged to create additional ideas for rating by other participants at each event. Several of these ideas were added, and a collective summary is included in Section 5.7 later in this document. Participants were given approximately 30 minutes to circulate around the room and provide their feedback and level of support for each of the idea being rated. At the end of this time, a recap of all of the idea rating sheets was provided to the attendees, and any ideas that still did not have clear direction were then discussed in more depth in smaller group discussions. This focused feedback helped to tweak the proposed idea enough that a clear direction was provided by the group.

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Engagement Topics
March 13, 2017

5.0 ENGAGEMENT TOPICS

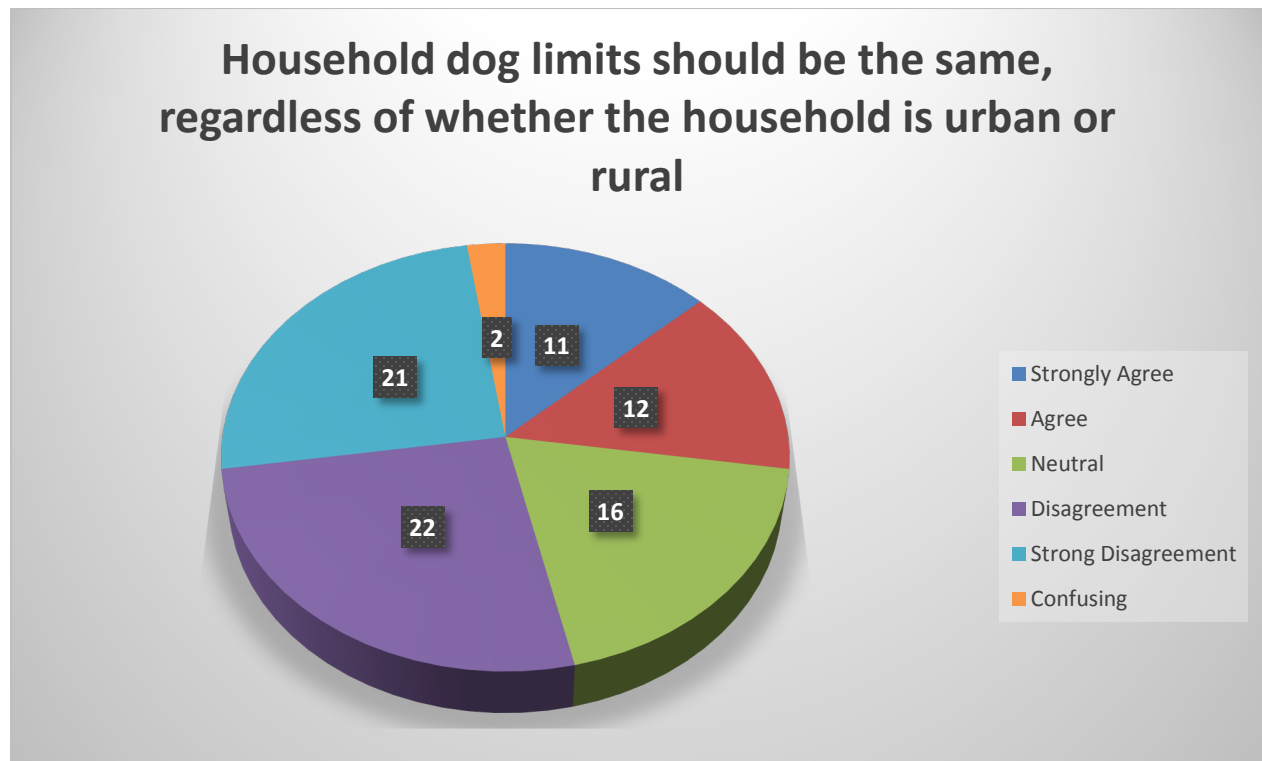
Each topic listed below contains a summary of the comments received, an overview of the levels of support based on direct ratings on the idea rating sheets, and an adjusted support score. The adjusted score was calculated by assigning the following values to each category:

- Strongly Agree = +1
- Agree = +0.5
- Neutral = 0
- Disagreement = -0.5
- Strong Disagreement = -1
- Confusing – not included in calculation

By multiplying the raw responses by the adjustment value and then averaging the totals before converting to a percentage, a relative level of support for each theme can be developed. These calculations are included in each section for transparency.

5.1 HOUSEHOLD DOG LIMITS – URBAN VS. RURAL

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for the following statement:



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Engagement Topics
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Strengths and Opportunities

- Not sure how this affects licensed breeders
- Dogs are time intensive, not space intensive!
- There is a means for over-limit if required
- I would like to see the limits increased to 4 dogs urban 5 dogs rural before over the limit licence needed but if repeat offenses or neglect/abuse then limit reduced or permit taken away in case by case
- Some dogs are used for work both inside and out
- Rural should be higher. In Sherwood Park 2-3 dogs before over-limit permit; rural 4-5 dogs before over-limit permit
- Permit for 3 or more
- Consideration for training competency of owner + training level of dog
- Hard to care + train packs of dogs
- As long as the dogs and their owners are well-trained, it shouldn't matter where they live
- Dog ownership requires common sense
- The larger parcels of land should be able to have more dogs
- Rural/urban split should be based on zoning, not necessarily property size (e.g. agriculture vs. residential)

Concerns and Weaknesses

- As long as the rules change accordingly
- Over limit within urban area limits a lot of neighborhood issues
- Not limits - responsible dog ownership
- Have special category for Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) breeders (non-spayed/neutered dogs)
- There are working dogs needed on some rural establishments
- No extra fees for breeders for non-spayed/neutered dogs
- Have breeders register separately
- 5 in rural
- 2 in urban
- 2 urban
- Facilities available are a cause for variation
- Larger areas can accommodate more dogs
- It depends on how well you can provide for more dogs
- More space allows for more animals. That is why many people move to the country
- Limits increase, with consideration of competency
- More dogs = possible compounded problems / issues
- Hamlets should be urban!
- Farm working dogs need to be looked at differently than pets! (agreed!)
- Responsible dog owners are the ones punished
- Rural residences offer greater space and privacy not present in urban or subdivision - equal to urban, should not be treated equally
- Easier to have dogs be a nuisance
- We can have more horses on our rural land...
- Lots of space in rural areas; we have a huge house and lots of property, we can house/help more than just 2 or 3



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Engagement Topics
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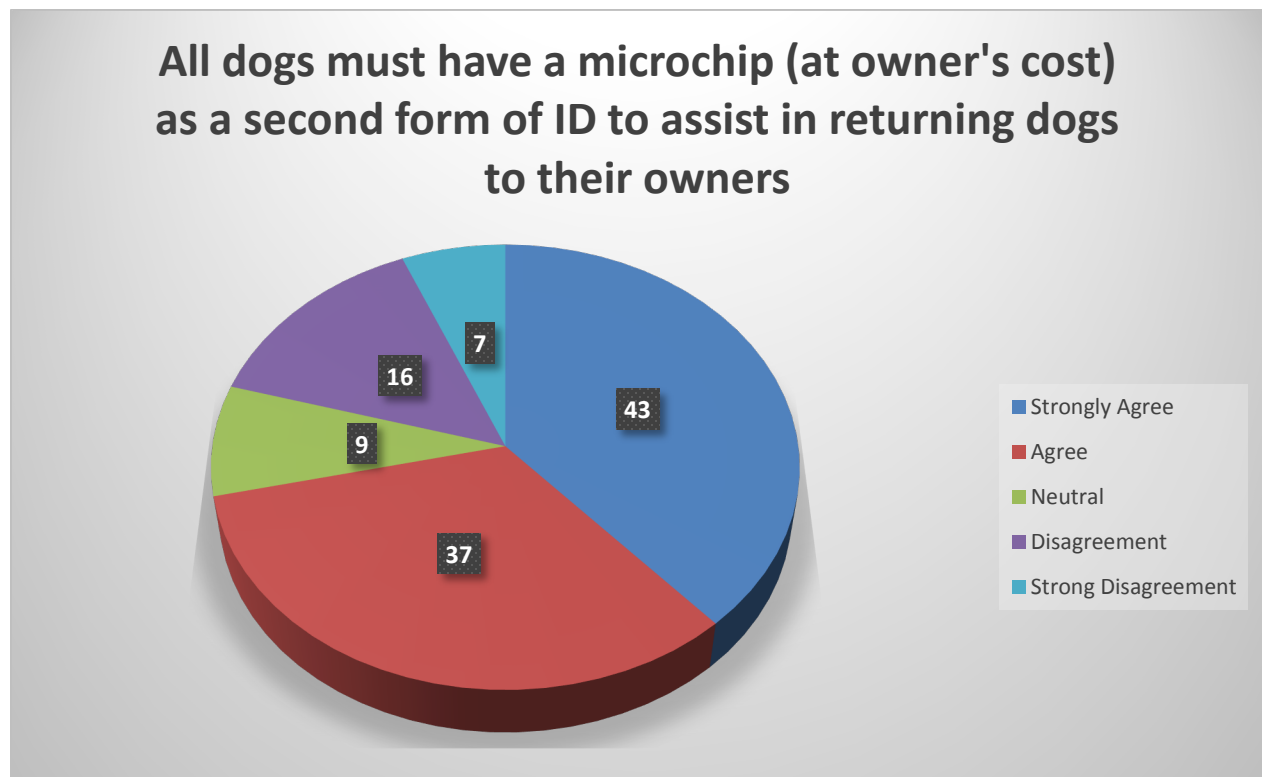
Adjusted Score = $-15/82 \text{ responses} \times 100 = -18\%$

The topic of different household limits for urban and rural residences was essentially the only one that did not receive concrete direction through the idea rating exercise. Overall, many respondents in both the survey and through the workshop events felt that there should be a higher threshold in rural areas before an over-limit permit was required, with various suggestions put forth. One clear piece of direction on this front is that most felt that any difference in limits between urban and rural should include the following:

- Recognition that “urban” needs to include all urban areas of Strathcona County (i.e. hamlets as well as Sherwood Park) as their lot sizes are similar and will face similar pressures
- The divide between “urban” and “rural” needs to include country residential (acreage) properties as well on the urban side. Several noted that rural should apply to any parcel of land larger than 5 acres, which is the largest acreage size currently in use in Strathcona County

5.2 SECONDARY IDENTIFICATION (I.E. MICROCHIPS/TATTOOS)

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for the following statement:



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Strengths and Opportunities

- Tattoo ensures lost dogs are returned home
- Good dog ownership - if you are willing to pay big bucks for a dog cost is negligible
- Vet tattoos at time of neuter/spay are free
- Dogs don't always have their collars on. Tattoos/chips are not very expensive and can easily be done when fixed. It would cost tax payers less to have an owner called to pick-up rather than transfer to Edmonton Humane Society (EHS)
- Very cost effective
- Minimal cost for tattoo or chips
- Proven to be most effective method of ID
- An excellent way to properly identify
- Typically, one of the first things checked when pet found
- Dog finders want the dog - no # of chip will get it back
- Education
- Leduc's idea \$15 microchip day
- Anything that helps a lost dog find its home safely / promptly
- Other methods
- If a person owns a dog, they should care that it can be returned to them even if they did not pay a lot for the dog
- Could use a tattoo or any other 2nd method
- One dog w/ (microchip) vs. dog w/o (microchip) will change time involved with return for officers
- Cost is part of the dog ownership
- Safer return of lost / stolen dogs
- Maybe microchipped dogs get lower registration fee
- Opportunity for microchip blitz for affordability
- Gives county a chance to connect with dog owner to educate at the blitz. i.e. Canada Day
- Facilitates owner return
- Microchips are great
- Tags can come off
- Tags get lost, tattoos are hard to track down (yes)

Concerns and Weaknesses

- Cost will discourage registration
- Access to info on how and have "free microchip" days so people can come get it done
- Cost to owner will discourage licensing
- Encouraged, but not required
- A lot of tattoos are poorly identifiable
- Hard to enforce
- Tattoos smudge with time
- Intrusive (agree)
- Health concerns
- Tags sufficient
- Should be personal choice not mandatory



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Engagement Topics
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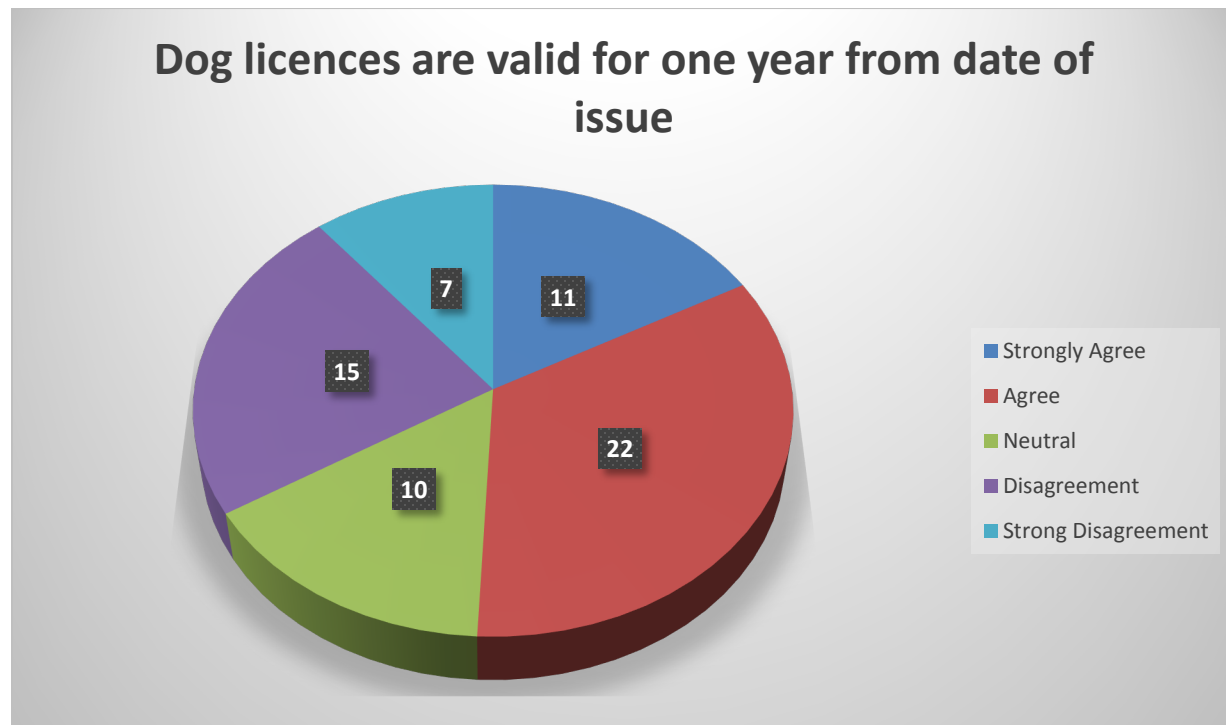
- Difficulty with cost
- Can agree if included in tag reg cost
- Cost
- Tattoos are not as efficient; vets are moving away from tattoos b/c they don't work well between provinces; if you move the tattoo can't be traced to the clinic
- Optional - very expensive
- Need to make sure it is universal

Adjusted Score = $46.5/112 \text{ responses} \times 100 = +42\%$

This theme had one of the strongest levels of support of all of the ideas tested with stakeholders, and clearly many felt that the addition of a second form of identification for dogs was an important piece of responsible dog ownership. However, there were some concerns raised that making this requirement mandatory for all current dogs might be challenging, and the creation of an incentive to increase the number of compliant owners may be more effective. This could take the form of a discount on the annual registration fee for dogs that are microchipped.

5.3 EXPIRY DATE FOR DOG LICENCES

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for the following statement:



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Strengths and Opportunities

- If it is still just a year, keep it at the same date. Easier to remember to do (x3)
- Would rather have a longer term instead of every year. - me too!
- Can do a combo of the options in PowerPoint, offering pro-rated options for fosters, etc. - agree
- Reduced price for multiple years - keep one date (x5)
- Auto renewal/multiple year plan - there still needs to be a resource for county to pay for up keep of trails, off leash areas, bylaw enforcement
- No forgetting to renew
- Need to be able to synchronize multiple licences

Concerns and Weaknesses

- Feels like a tax grab (agree)
- Can see real benefit to some to have options for longer
- Makes policing more difficult if everyone has a different expiration / renewal date
- Too confusing as to when issue is
- Cost to administer
- Don't like licence - not a problem in rural
- Where does the \$ go towards?
- Remind me by automated email; save resources - no more paper!
- Confusing if you have more than one dog to keep track of
- The idea of a lifetime licence is intriguing!
- Lifetime would be great
- There should be no such thing - my taxes should cover it!!
- Lifetime licence would be good
- Would it be more work/cost vs. having all licences renew April 1?
- Lifetime licence would be useful
- Lifetime
- What would be the fee? What if your dog dies in one year?

Adjusted Score = 7.5/65 responses X 100 = +12%

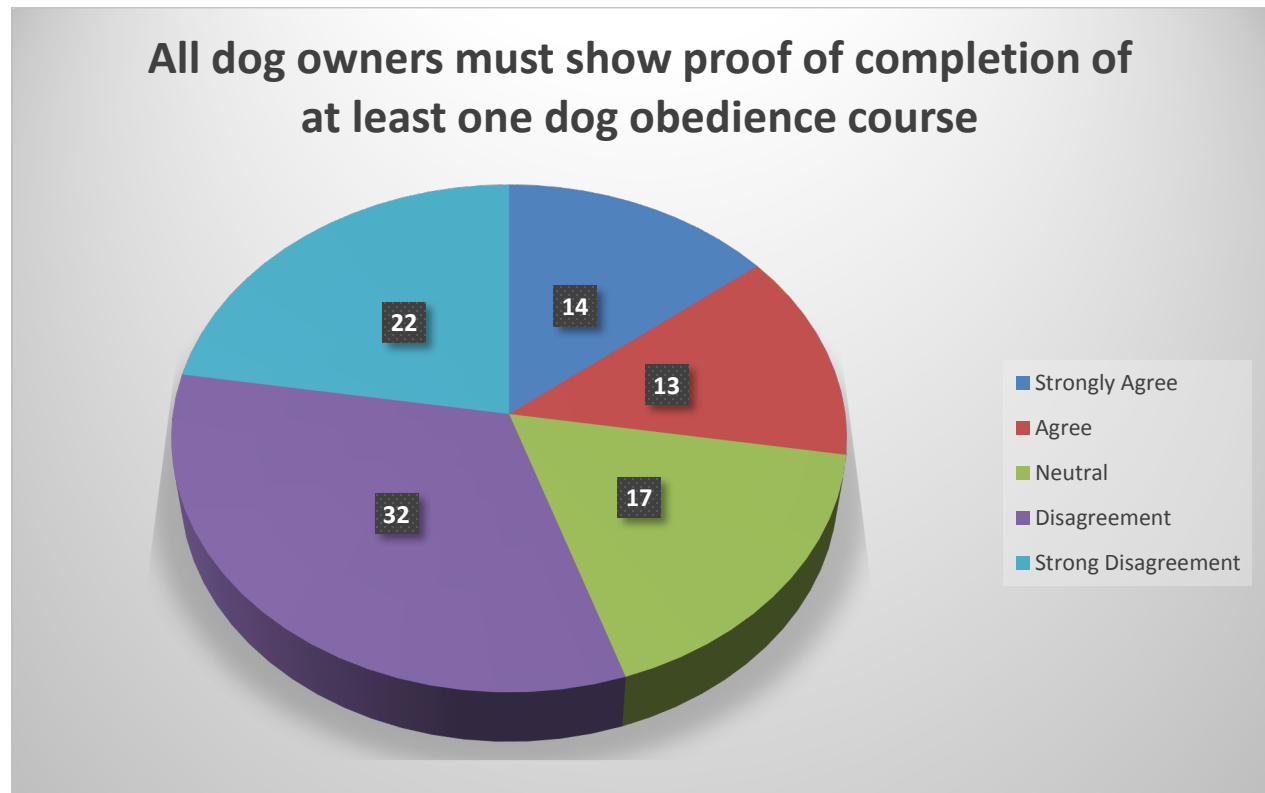
This theme resulted from testing three separate concepts in the survey that each had nearly equal levels of support – keeping the renewal date as is (end of March), moving it to end of the calendar year (December 31) or moving to a lifetime licence for each dog with a one-time fee. While there was still some support for adding in a lifetime fee option, many noted the logistical challenges of such a fee, as well as any shift from the current practice. The continued meagre support for change likely shows that keeping the system the same will likely be the best course of action.

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DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW**

Engagement Topics
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5.4 DOG OWNER TRAINING

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for the following statement:



Strengths and Opportunities

- Courses are more/as much for owners as dogs.
- More value from course on what responsible ownership means in Strathcona County
- Have someone attend course if they have been fined OR - some variation on CGN (Canine Good Neighbour) testing
- Chance for possible reduction to license?
- Educate!
- Dog obedience for rescue dogs who have been abused
- Some trainers are worse than owners!
- Maybe make it into an incentive to get a higher household limit without an over-limit permit
- County should be the ones supplying the training - even 4x /yr would be enough
- Perhaps owners who do training of some kind could see a reduction in fees
- Should be optional
- Should be able to train your own dogs if you have the skills. If dogs are repeat offenders, then be required to take training course
- After second offense / ticket must complete a course
- Reword this - Owner course needed

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Engagement Topics
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- Independent evaluation of ability to manage dog safely - particularly off leash
- If they cause problems, at this time it seems needed in this County (I agree with above message) (agree with above comments)
- Provide reduced fees for proof of completion (like this)
- Most people know their dogs behaviour
- A good way to educate owners

Concerns and Weaknesses

- Encouraged but not required
- Might be too narrow of course for it to result in more responsibility, such as a trick class
- What classes count?
- Hard to police or define for each dog? Too vague.
- None of your business
- 'Certification' ≠ responsible
- Cost excessive for owners
- There is a trainer standard with an exam and code of ethics that should be considered as a base standard. "Certified Professional Dog Trainer"
- Challenges with enforcement
- Need standard course and approved trainers
- Might not be worth the extra administration
- Some dog owners are able to train their own dogs (Agree with this)
- Good idea but what standard do you use for acceptable training?
- Cost, time factor
- Voluntary, reduced license fee (2x)
- Dog training is not regulated (2x)
- County would need to offer many programs to ensure easy access and/or standard
- The owners tend to be the issue, not the dog!!! Courses TEACH people how to properly train and socialize their pets
- Not one obedience course/dog, but one course/person
- Could be waived for owners who are trainers, prof. dog handlers, etc. upon proof of such
- Courses not standardized or equal
- Not a guarantee of responsible ownership
- 1 course does nothing
- Depends on how experienced the owners are; maybe they have had dogs forever and already know how to work with them - proof of course from 10 years ago?

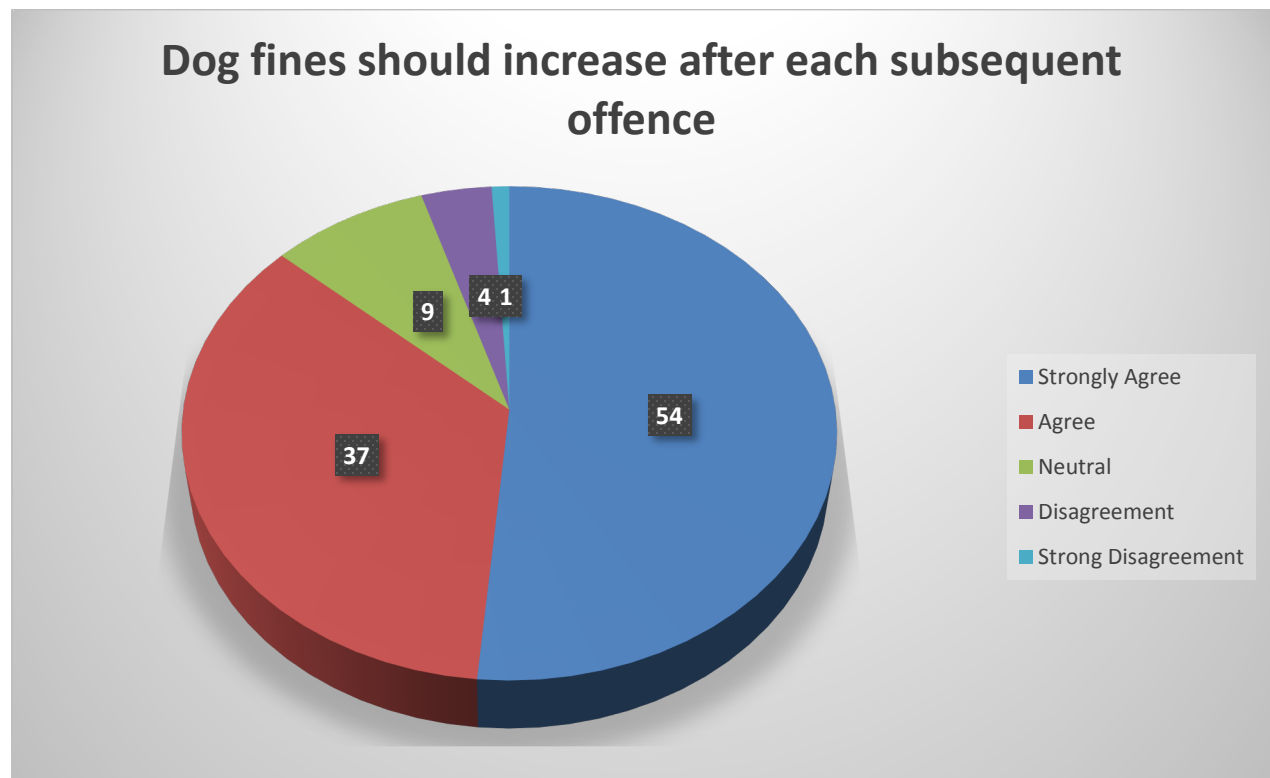
Adjusted Score = -17.5/98 responses X 100 = -18%

This theme created the greatest level of debate at all of the events. Overall, there seemed to be limited support for this concept as it was presented, but this could potentially be improved if the following changes were made:

- Training was standardized, such as the CKC Canine Good Neighbour course, and provided by Strathcona County approved trainers
- Training should not be mandatory – should be voluntary to receive an incentive (i.e. lower registration fee) or associated with repeat offenses under the bylaw

5.5 PENALTIES FOR REPEAT INFRACTIONS

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for the following statement:



Strengths and Opportunities

- Alternative: corrective course on better owner responsibility (agree: positive approach that is longer lasting)
- Opportunity for mediation and rehab
- Do we need to "rate" the offensive?
- If a fine is issued, do they check for licensing?
- Perhaps part of the fine should be mandatory additional dog training
- Puts onus on the "responsible" owner
- Responsible dog ownership (x4)
- Mandatory training classes for owner & dog
- Consequences result in compliance
- Incremental deterrent - hits where it counts - \$\$
- Should be more of a deterrent
- Depends on the offence; in the city if people complain about barking - is it just a grumpy neighbour who hates dogs? Or is it really the dog/owner's fault? After all, dogs bark - that's kind of what they're for!

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Concerns and Weaknesses

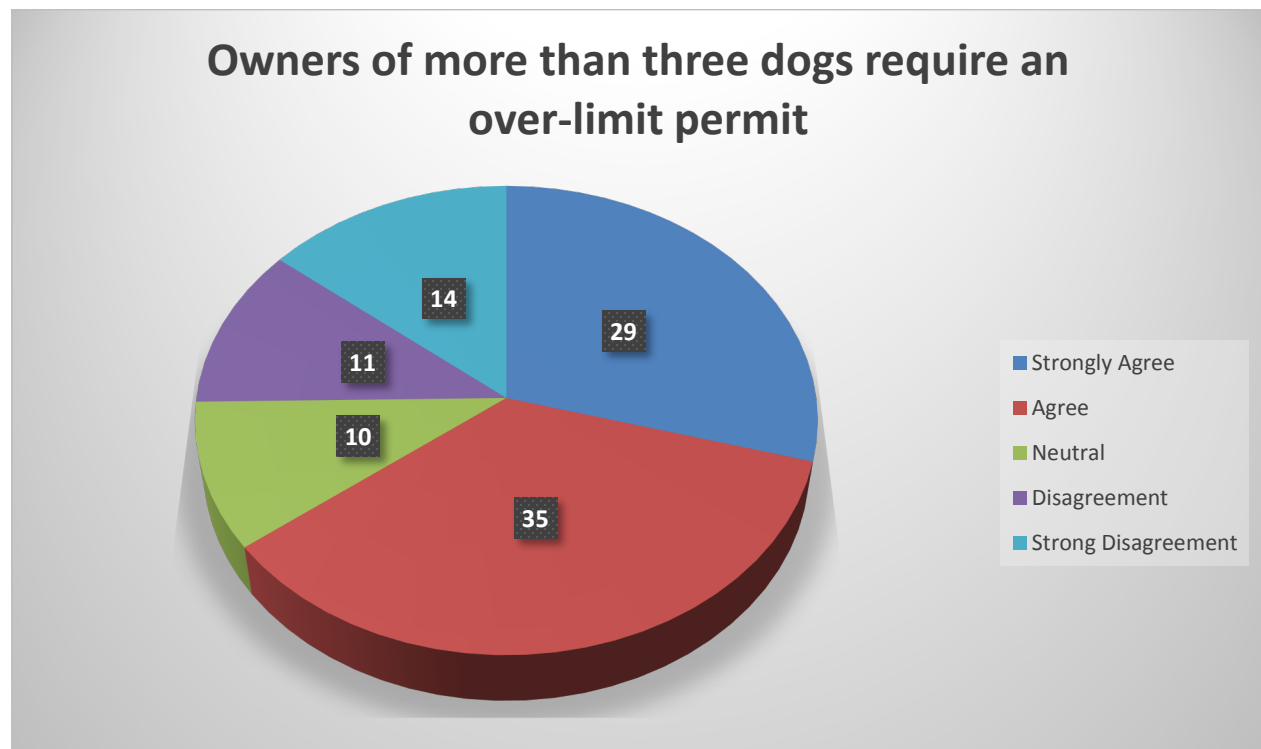
- Define "offense"
- Vindictive neighbour
- How long till puppy is too 'expensive' + then punted by owner?
- Need to put fines into categories as shouldn't increase all things (agree)
- Depends on offense (x2)
- Clear definitions of offenses
- There should not be a free first time - owners that do not require to have their dog returned should get a discount on their fee
- How does officer know repeat at scene?
- What do you do to collect delinquent fines? (Agreed)
- How do you track down delinquents?
- When will owners be fined for not scooping?!? Any given day at local dog off leash areas and within city limits - it's a frequent occurrence. Fine = deterrent

Adjusted Score = 69.5/105 responses X 100 = +66%

The theme on repeat offenders had the highest support of the six themes tested with stakeholders, with many feeling that the current fine structure did not serve as a large enough deterrent for irresponsible dog owners. Because of the high levels of support, this theme also had the smallest amount of debate and the most questions on how to make offenses easier to report and ticket. Numerous stakeholders noted that Strathcona County already has fines already listed in the existing bylaw that cover the most common offenses, but that there needed to be more stringent enforcement of these existing offenses as well. However, it was also noted that two of the most commonly seen offenses – failure to pick up dog feces and allowing a dog to roam unleashed in an on-leash area – were very difficult to enforce as it would require a much larger team of bylaw enforcement officers that also were on hand in the area where the offenses occurred.

5.6 OVER-LIMIT PERMITS

Participants were asked to rate their level of support for the following statement:



Strengths and Opportunities

- It allows for multiple dog ownership while ensuring accountability
- I would be very happy to see the limit increased to three dogs.
- Home evaluation for 3 or more dogs
- 2 small = 1 large also maybe provide space and care also ability of owner
- 3 is ok - more could be an issue (hoarding, etc.)
- Not really pets, time needed to care and train not there for most families or single owners
- Discourages unregulated breeders - "puppy mills" (agree with above)
- The commitment shouldn't be an issue
- Agree - more people would license

Concerns and Weaknesses

- Feel it penalizes financially that person
- Limits different or rural vs Urban
- As long as you can be responsible pet owner you should be allowed more / as many dogs (look at Calgary Bylaw)
- Think about size of dog!
- Over the limit permit encourages dog hiding

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Engagement Topics
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- Two dogs, no permit; more dogs = permit for each
- Punitive? hiding of pets? needs to be explained. i.e. breeders, rescues?
- Dependent on whether rural or urban limits should be different
- Notice given to neighbours of applied permits
- I believe if you have 1 or more just regular dog fee
- It's the responsibility of an owner just like # of children
- ? Breeder - kennel license
- Follow the City of Calgary no limit!
- Breeder / kennel license - flat fee, no limit
- It depends how well behaved the dogs are not the number
- Mental health issues in terms such as OCD - major cause of dog hoarder, how to deal with this
- Breeders will be impacted due to litters
- Rescue people have dogs coming and going
- Impacts foster and rescue homes
- As above, foster and rescue homes are affected; need to support rescues, not limit them by making it too expensive for the rescue or volunteer
- Are rescues regulated? Licensed? Or can anyone claim to be a rescue home?
- Exceptions for rescue
- Already licensed

Adjusted Score = 27/99 responses X 100 = +27%

A large number of workshop participants were pleasantly surprised to hear that Strathcona County is considering increasing the number of dogs allowed per household from two to three before an over-limit permit is required. Several noted that they had not known about the different threshold compared to the City of Edmonton prior to their move into Strathcona County and were scared that they were not going to be able to get "approved" for an over-limit permit for their additional dog(s). Many felt that combining this move to three dogs per household, with the concept of having an even higher threshold for rural residences before requiring an over-limit permit, would likely increase the number of dog owners who will license all of their dogs in rural areas.

5.7 ADDITIONAL THEMES

Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Active showdogs should have a waiver from the fee schedule due to requirement for them to be intact	- these are not likely dogs running at large and/or contributing to unwanted litters		3						3.00	3	100%	
Strathcona County should provide an area for off leash activities such as luring and agility courses	- on a rental basis - contribute to County revenue - opportunity for education for county residents - bring visitors to county - \$ hotel etc.		3						3.00	3	100%	
Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) members should have reduced licensing fees (their dogs are often for purposes of showing / events)	- CKC members are held to high standards of responsibility, they face discipline if they do not comply, they bring business into the community through holding events, they teach and train, they rescue their breeds, and much more! - These people are very responsible - one licensing fee but reduction for people who spay or neuter - Q: what about pets who will not be neutered due to vet recommend due to health reasons?	- same rules should apply to all owners - adopt don't shop - dog is a dog	5	2	3	3	18		-13.50	31	-44%	

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Engagement Topics
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Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Increase off leash options small dogs / more seasonal areas /	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- does St. Albert have an open park off leash program? If so, what are the results?- I would love a pathway to walk on versus a fenced area- committee to review safety etc., off leash- continue pilot project of arenas in summer months (Centennial Park walkway)- dedicated fenced area at off-leash for 15-20 lbs. or small dogs- skating rinks are a great summer off leash option- better utilization of urban green spaces- dog safety reduces fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">difficult to walk both dogs if different sizes- need more off leash spaces :)	20	3	5	1			21.00	29	72%	
Any obvious injury as a result of a dog attack can be treated in the same manner as a dog with a puncture wound (empower bylaw) e.g. lameness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- small dogs can easily be traumatized by uncontrolled large dogs- all owners responsible to inquire if there is an incident - no matter what size- empower officers to make informed calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- how to prove?- situational & perception- possibly require vet assessment- need witness- dogs running to greet other dogs can collide with them	11	8	4	2	2		12.00	27	44%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- should use the yellow ribbon/leash system for problem/aggressive dogs

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Engagement Topics
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Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Yearly fee added to property taxes (only dog owners, lifetime tag)	- possibility will help with compliance - better control - all dog owners should relicense same time each year - rather than 13,000 applications at 1-time period why not like vehicle license and use letter of last name (agree)	- prefer one-time fee (like Leduc) - other communities have a 1-time fee and have many owners register their dogs - difficult to keep track of in the system - one-time fee or use same as vehicle registration - strongly prefer one-time fee - too much administration (x2) - too hard for individuals to remember when to renew - pro-rate - hard when everyone has a different renewal date - reminders will get complicated	9	14	2	7	5		7.50	37	20%	- household dog limits the same regardless of urban or rural - what is the purpose of the over-limit permit - breeders are exempt from over-limit - need to mention service dogs in bylaw and link to fed/prov regs, as well as penalties for refusing access to service dogs - kennels are a home based business - neighbours should be notified when over limit permits are requested - can the over limit permit be revoked? why is it needed? - should keep service dog licenses free for life of dog - people check the dog limits when they are thinking about moving to the county - is Sally Stewart Park for small dogs only? - lifetime license will result in poor records - management of off leash - What to do when your dog runs away? - duplicate tags - dog owners can get another tag with same tag # (not official tag, just a tag from a pet store engraved with the actual tag number) - Humane Society pays \$5 for the tags that come with your adopted dog, they are official tags - Contact info for informing County that your dog has died - put it on website - what costs are involved in enforcing the dog bylaw? - online renewal - can add County as payee for dog license through most online bank portals
Clear Definition / Scale for what constitutes abuse: - neglect - lack of training - pain reinforcement / abuse	good - need clear definitions		1					1	1.00	1	100%	

STRATHCONA COUNTY
DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Engagement Topics
March 13, 2017

Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Foster Dogs should have a lower license fee (ex. \$0-5)	- promotes adoption - what about a floating license? (x4) - registering of foster home \$0 fee (x4) - cost of adoption \$300 a break would be appreciated - temporary tags would be appropriate in this case - opportunity for foster - permit / licensing with provisions specific to "fostering" e.g. "over limit permit for foster" without current over limit fee & rules	- may have false licenses - another way to avoid getting a license - no fee for fostering \$0 (x3) - proof of fostering necessary	10	4	3	8	2		6.00	27	22%	
Strict enforcement for feces pick up on private property (back yards, front yards)	- disease prevention, clean parks + playgrounds - who checks? - feces may contaminate neighbours yards	- who determines the standard, what is the standard? - is it a health concern to people or the pets? - not so much private property, more so public property + neighbours - "strict" is not balanced regulation - vague, but if neighbour complaints regarding should be fined - rural - intrusive (for less reason than urban) - isn't there already bylaws that deal with nuisance properties?	14	10	3	2		5	18.00	29	62%	

STRATHCONA COUNTY
DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Engagement Topics
March 13, 2017

Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Breed specific ban should NOT be part of bylaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- it should be an individual dog!- really focus on the owners' part to play in dog behavior- it is TOTALLY owner behavior. No BLS!!!!- opens a huge can of worms for those who need to identify what breeds fall into their category- absolutely should NOT be part of bylaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- there are genetic predispositions for breeds to behave in particular ways - regardless of the person / training. However, these breeds should be "proven", "assessed", "tested" for removing restriction IF they are in place- need only look at the research....	25	8	1			2	29.00	34	85%	
Incentives or lower registration fees for owners who adopt and rescue dogs. (rescue specific), (people who foster dogs), (must have come from a "certified" rescue origin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- all dogs that come from rescues are fixed. So if there continues to be a different fee for fixed dogs they are already getting a reduced rate :)- help with overpopulation of unwanted dogs- absolutely ridiculous- not the county's choice to say you get lower rates based on where you get your dog- more cost to rescue dog as they usually have been abused. Therefore, cost goes to obedience classes. for both dog and dog owner- agree with the incentive to adopt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- would seem like a lot for county to oversee- many "rescue" dogs are just nice dogs whose owners no longer can care for them. They were not ill abused or in danger- not a good definition	5	6	3	7	14		-9.50	35	-27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- "rescue dogs" is not breed specific, topic addressed in breed ban sheet- should fostered dogs have a special tag?- when dogs are your pets, then 1) foster 2) permanent adoption- encourage compassionate response to these animals- don't make it too onerous to license a dog- don't discriminate against pure bred dog owners- Holland - no wild dogs

STRATHCONA COUNTY
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Engagement Topics
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Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Should the county support responsible dog breeding, both urban and rural?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- my breeder sold all dogs before the breeding, did temperament testing AND had bloodline research- eliminate backyard breeding + sales- can't legally breed a dog in urban areas right now- can have a category for breeders + not have increased fees for non-spay/neutered dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- in what way?- many questions to this. Broad topic. Far reaching results- how will the county educate?- do dog breeders? Register with the county?- define "responsible breeding"	5				1	9	4.00	6	67%	
Should there be a scale that related to dog aggression? The Vet behaviour community has a scale they use. (a bite level scale) (95% level one - muzzle punch; level two - bruising/scraping; level three - less than 1/2 canine tooth deep; level four, more than 1/2 canine tooth deep; level five, tearing (head shake); level six, death, removes tissue)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- hopefully each individual situation is reviewed. (i.e. dog is communicating, did you ignore all warning signs?)- as long as the situations are looked at from every angle- all our definitions are wanting- this provides more clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- suggest vet/expert input, not just bylaw- that depends on definition of aggression. As per the survey, sounds like most people do not have a sound idea of what aggression is	4	8	1			5	8.00	13	62%	

STRATHCONA COUNTY
DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Engagement Topics
March 13, 2017

Statement	Strengths and Opportunities	Concerns and Weaknesses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagreement	Strong Disagreement	Confusing	Score	Total Weighted Dots	Score vs. Total Response	Other Comments
Would like to see tall-fenced outdoor arenas as micro-off leashes (or other area)	<div>- better area to TEACH recall safety</div> <div>- infrastructure is already in place (hockey rinks) (+ baseball diamonds in winter for year round spaces)</div> <div>- easy to designate one as small dog</div> <div>- great spaces to teach proper human dog interaction - long term benefits</div> <div>- love the rink + diamond spaces, don't know if all need tall spaces</div>	<div>- this is a good idea, but would require enforcement to be present to ensure some don't take it too far as in non off leash areas.</div> <div>- good areas for agility equipment</div> <div>- don't like dog parks</div>	2	13	3				8.50	18	47%	

Attendees at the four events supplied an additional 14 topics for rating by the participants. None of the additional topics gathered significant levels of support, or if they did, were areas that did not relate directly to the dog control bylaw.

5.8 INITIAL FEEDBACK EXERCISE RESULTS

As noted above, attendees at each event were asked to provide some input on three questions/challenges that were raised in the Phase 1 survey. A summary of each of the three topics is provided below.

5.8.1 Methods/channels that Strathcona County could use to better communicate with residents regarding dog-related topics

The most popular method that the County could use to communicate with dog owners is via emails. Many noted that it would be simple to collect this information as part of the registration process, and this address could then be used to send regular updates on events in the community, any potential canine health related alerts, and especially the renewal reminders. Other popular channels included:

- Billboards/County signage
- The Strathcona County website and social media feeds
- Outreach through service providers (vet clinics, dog supply stores, etc.)

5.8.2 Reasons why some people do not register their dogs

Many reasons were given as to why there are unlicensed dogs in Strathcona County, but two factors were mentioned numerous times – the cost of the licence, and the dog's life situation. Several participants noted that dogs that never leave the house (usually small dogs) or dogs that are elderly tend to not be licensed as their owners feel that there is no need. Other reasons given included:

- Laziness/apathy/inconvenience/irresponsibility
- "Hiding" of dogs due to having more than the household limit or having a breed that is perceived as being "dangerous"

5.8.3 Information/education that would be valuable or important for dog owners

Many felt that the best information that could be provided to dog owners would be a listing of approved training resources, with both online and in person components. Attendees felt most dog owners want to be responsible, but lack the resources or an understanding of the expectations. If this information were provided upon registration and then updated regularly, there is a feeling the overall level of irresponsibility and ignorance would decrease.

STRATHCONA COUNTY DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Recommendations
March 13, 2017

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback provided at the workshops and through the Phase 1 survey, there are several areas of clear direction provided for consideration when reviewing the dog control bylaw.

1. Exclusion of any type of a breed ban – participants were very clear there was very little support for any type of regulation that would limit the types of dogs allowed within Strathcona County based solely on breed.
2. Owner training – the creation of an acceptable, standardized responsible dog ownership course, such as the CKC Canine Good Neighbour certificate, should be included with two methods of usage. An incentive should be created to complete the certificate course in order to receive a discount on the registration fee for a maximum of five years. The course should also be used as an enforcement tool with a mandatory enrolment for an owner who receives more than two tickets for any offence in the same calendar year, or more than two tickets for the same offence within three calendar years.
3. Term of dog licences – renewal period should remain as it currently stands (expiry on March 31 annually) as there was no real support for a move away from this date, and an increased administration cost if it were switched to a renewal date based on the registration date of the dog. Current practice of not having to licence a dog until March 31 in any given year, regardless of the date the dog enters Strathcona County, should be maintained. There was a modest level of interest in an optional lifetime licence fee, but the logistics of administering this fee would need to be examined. Lastly, the move to a full online registration system should be implemented as soon as possible, as there was overwhelming support for this option for renewals. There was also clear direction given that Strathcona County should only be providing one reminder notice to dog owners to renew their dog licences.
4. Escalation of fines – the deterrent effect of the current fines in the bylaw should be increased. Based on the feedback through the engagement process, the fines should continue increasing for each subsequent offence of the same infraction, and the increases should also expand (i.e. fine should double for a second offence, but a third offence should then be five times the original fine amount, and a fourth offence should be ten times the original fine, for example)
5. Over-limit permits and household limits – the household limit should be increased to three dogs. This would bring Strathcona County into alignment with most of the other municipalities in the Capital Region, and would likely reduce the number of over-limit permits in force. Over-limit permits would still be required for households wanting to have

STRATHCONA COUNTY DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW

Recommendations
March 13, 2017

more than three dogs, and clear criteria for the approval of this permit will need to be created, such as the number of additional dogs over the approved threshold, the size of the property in question, and the enforcement status of the applicant. Applications for more than seven dogs in a household should be subject to deeper investigation and additional requirements for notification of neighbours, etc.

6. Urban vs. rural household limits - Further examination of a separate rural threshold should be undertaken as well, which would only apply to parcels of land larger than five acres.
7. Secondary form of identification (i.e. microchip) – any additional form of identification of dogs should be limited to microchips, as tattoos are falling out of favour due to their tendency to stretch/smear/fade over time. Microchipping should not be made mandatory except in the case of dogs that have been designated as vicious. Any owner that voluntarily microchips their dog and registers the microchip with Strathcona County should be eligible for a discounted registration fee for the lifetime of the dog.

REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A – Workshop Presentation

Appendix B – Sample Idea Rating Sheet

**STRATHCONA COUNTY
DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW**

Appendix A – Workshop presentation
March 13, 2017

Appendix A – WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

Dog Control Bylaw Review

Responsible Dog Ownership Workshops

Dawn Green

Senior Advisor, Public Engagement
Strathcona County

Jonathan Mackay

Community Engagement Consultant
Stantec Consulting Ltd.

February 2017

Event Agenda

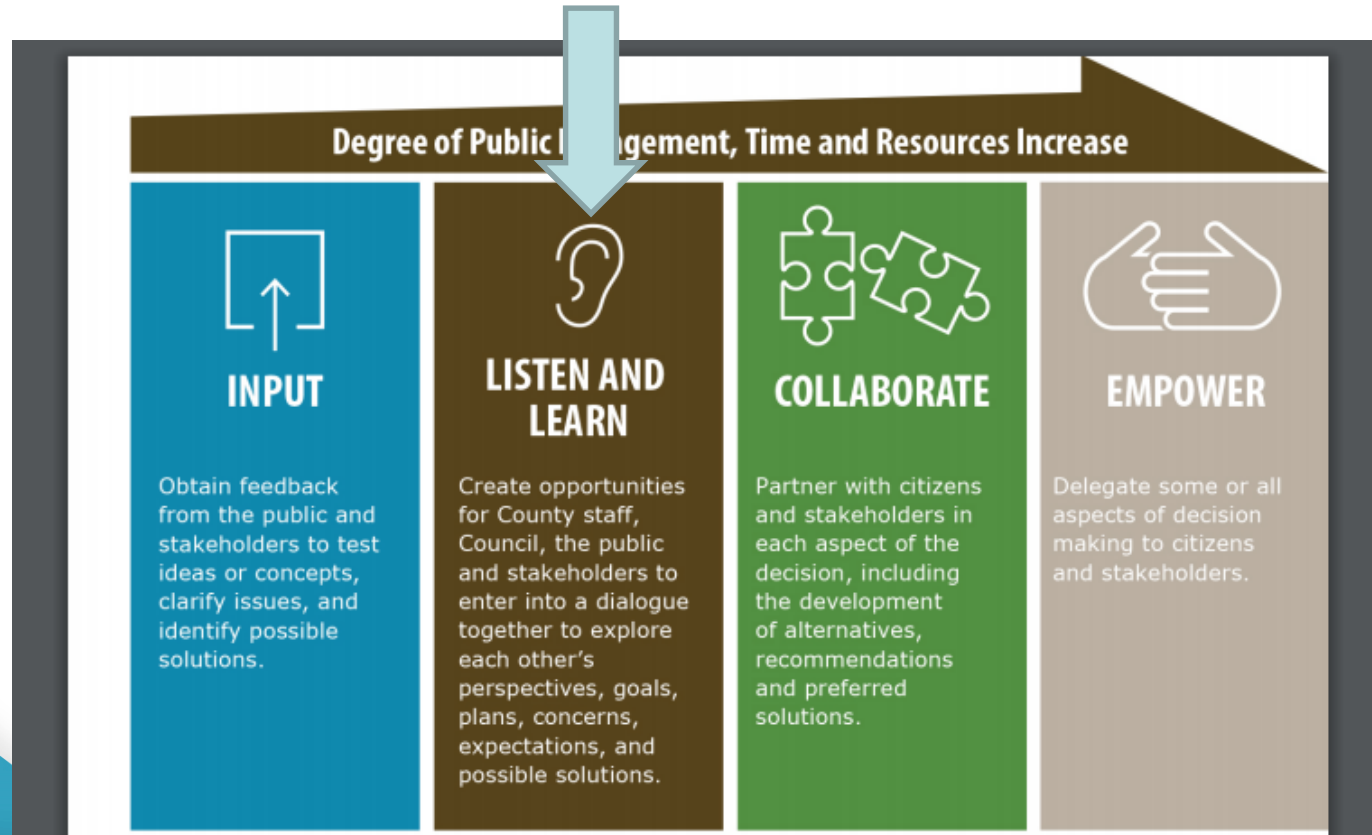
- Orientation and Safety
- Project Presentation
- Idea Rating Exercise
- Idea Rating Summary
- Discussion Groups
- Recap and Timeline

Orientation and Safety

- Washrooms
- Muster Point
- Safety Moment
 - Walking Safely



Continuum of Engagement





Rules of Engagement

- We minimize distractions
- We balance air time fairly
- We speak one at a time
- We listen to understand before we speak
- We can disagree respectfully
- We can change our minds

Today's Discussions

- Goals
 - Recap of survey results
 - Direction on remaining areas
 - Hear different opinions
 - Next steps
- **Not on the table**
 - **Cat Bylaw**



Project Background

- Existing bylaw (2006)
 - Due for review
 - Alignment with neighbouring municipalities
 - Shift in focus
 - More dogs than in 2006!

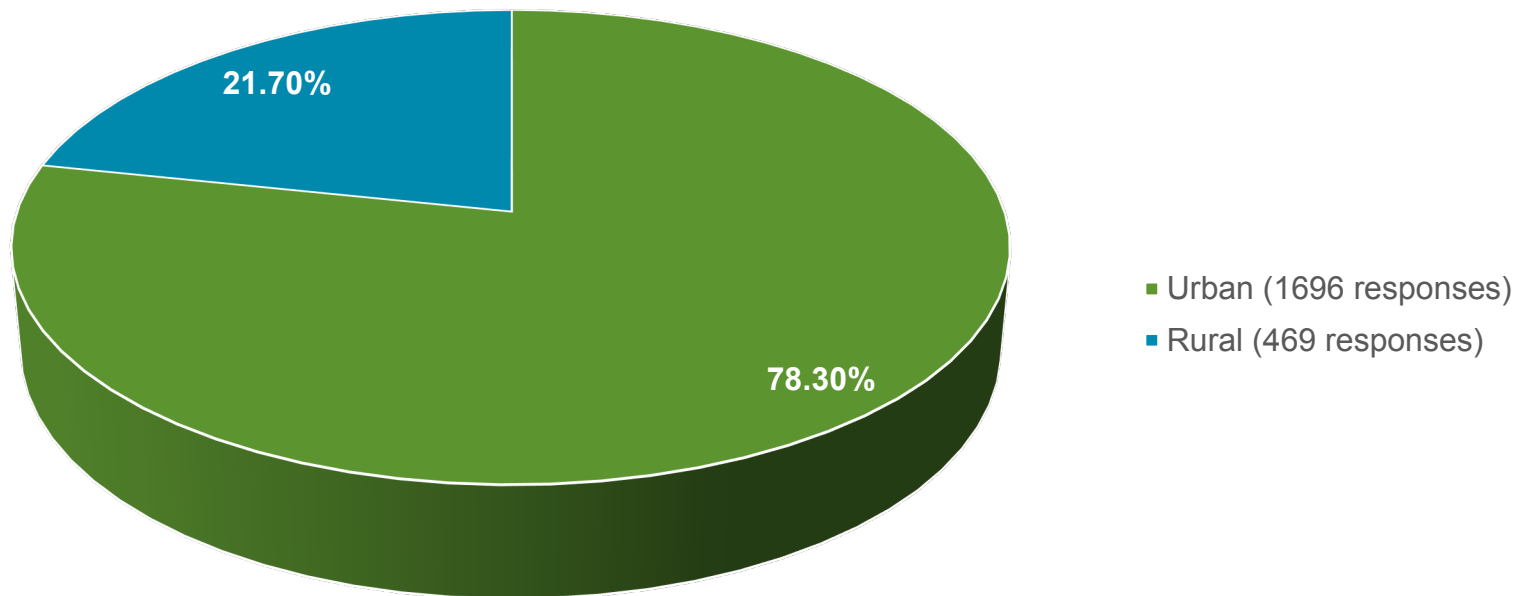


Project Survey

- Online survey ran Nov. 21 – Dec. 11, 2016
 - 2306 total responses
 - 1877 completed, 331 partially completed
 - 98 rejected (due to participant not being a resident of the County)
- Two main sections
 - “Who are you?”
 - “What do you think about.....?”

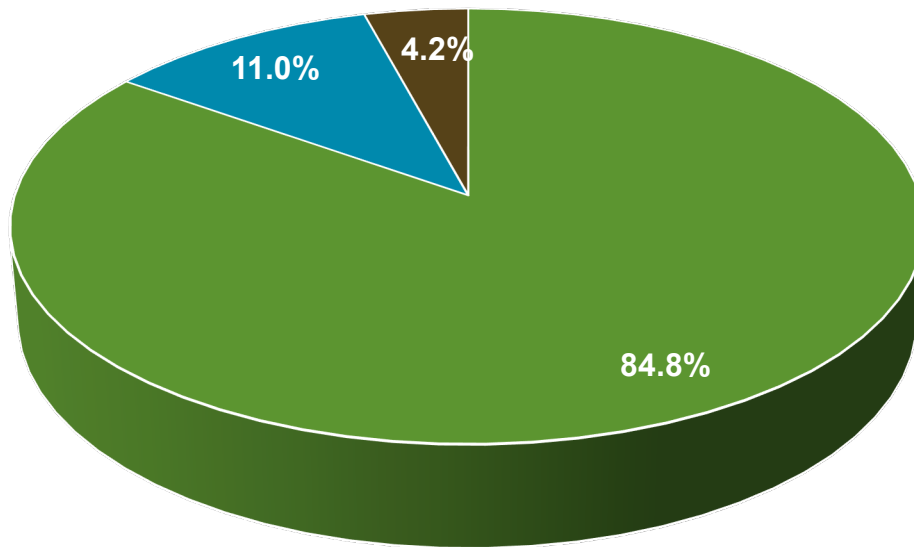
Survey Results

Which part of Strathcona County do you live in?



Survey Results

Do you, or another person in your household, own at least one dog?



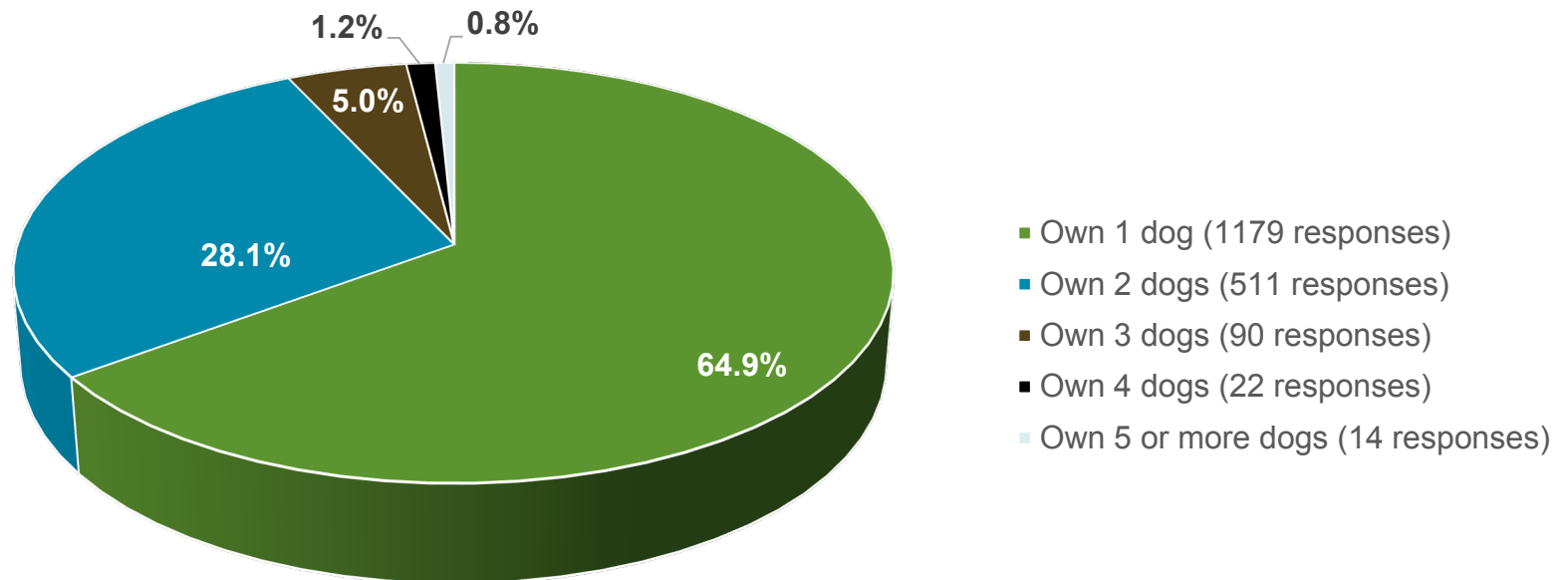
■ Yes (1835 responses)

■ No (237 responses)

■ I don't own a dog right now, but I have in the last two years (91 responses)

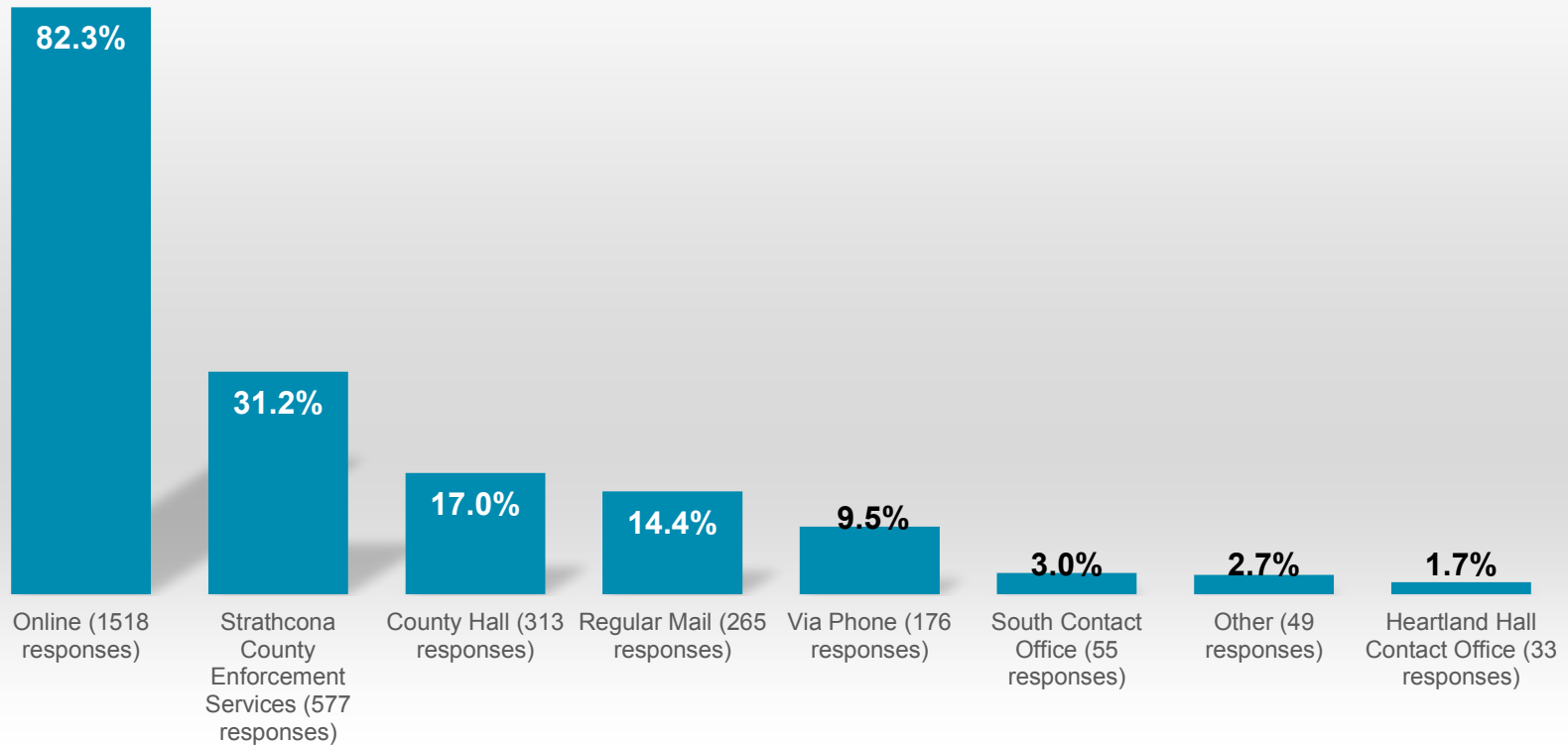
Survey Results

How many dogs do you presently own?



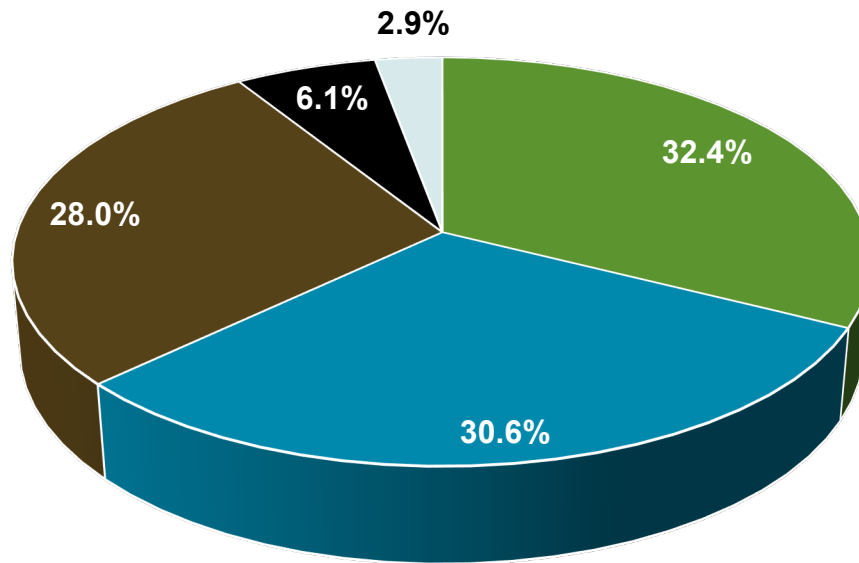
Survey Results

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



Survey Results

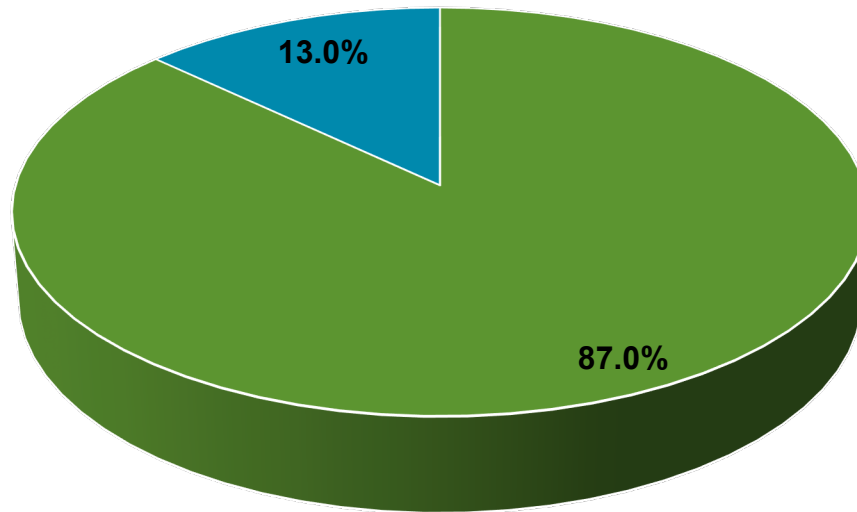
Currently annual dog licences are valid from April 1 until March 31. Which of the following options would you prefer:



- A licence should last for the lifetime of the dog with a one time fee (596 responses)
- All licences should expire on the same date (March 31), regardless of the date it was purchased (564 responses)
- A licence should last one year from the date you registered your dog (515 responses)
- All licenses should expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31), regardless of the date it was purchased (113 responses)
- I don't know (54 responses)

Survey Results

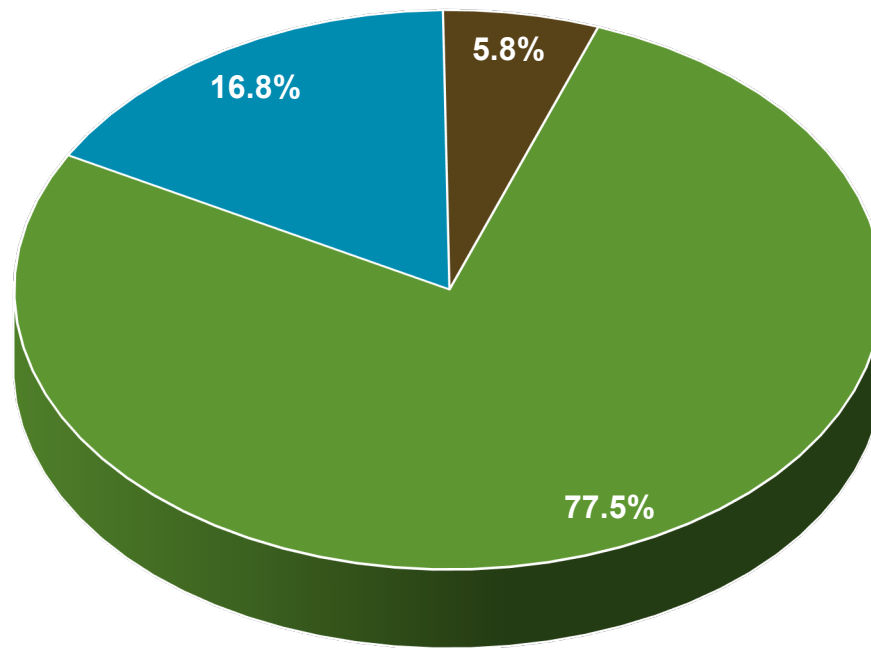
**Presently, the County charges a yearly fee of \$35.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$70.00 for unspayed/unneutered dogs.
Should there be a different fee for each of these dogs?**



- Yes, continue to charge two separate fees depending on whether the dog is spayed/neutered (1602 responses)
- No, charge the same fee, regardless of whether they are spayed/neutered (240 responses)

Survey Results

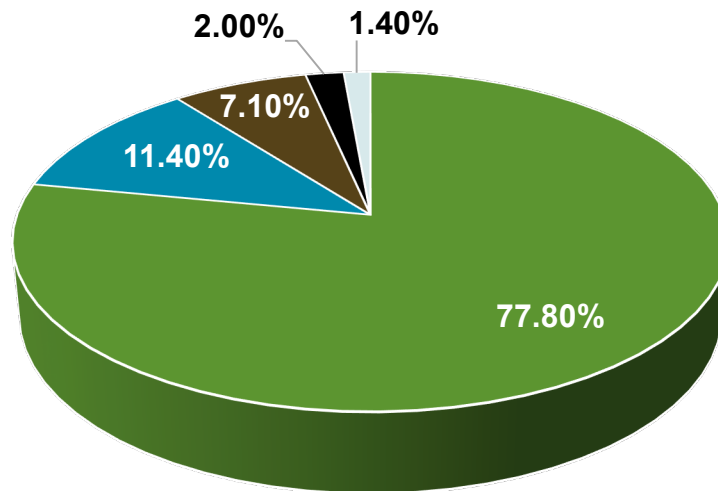
What do you think would be a reasonable fee for dog licensing?



- Current fees are ideal – don't change them (1428 responses)
- Current fees seem too high – should be lower (309 responses)
- Current fees seem too low – I would be ok with paying more (106 responses)

Survey Results

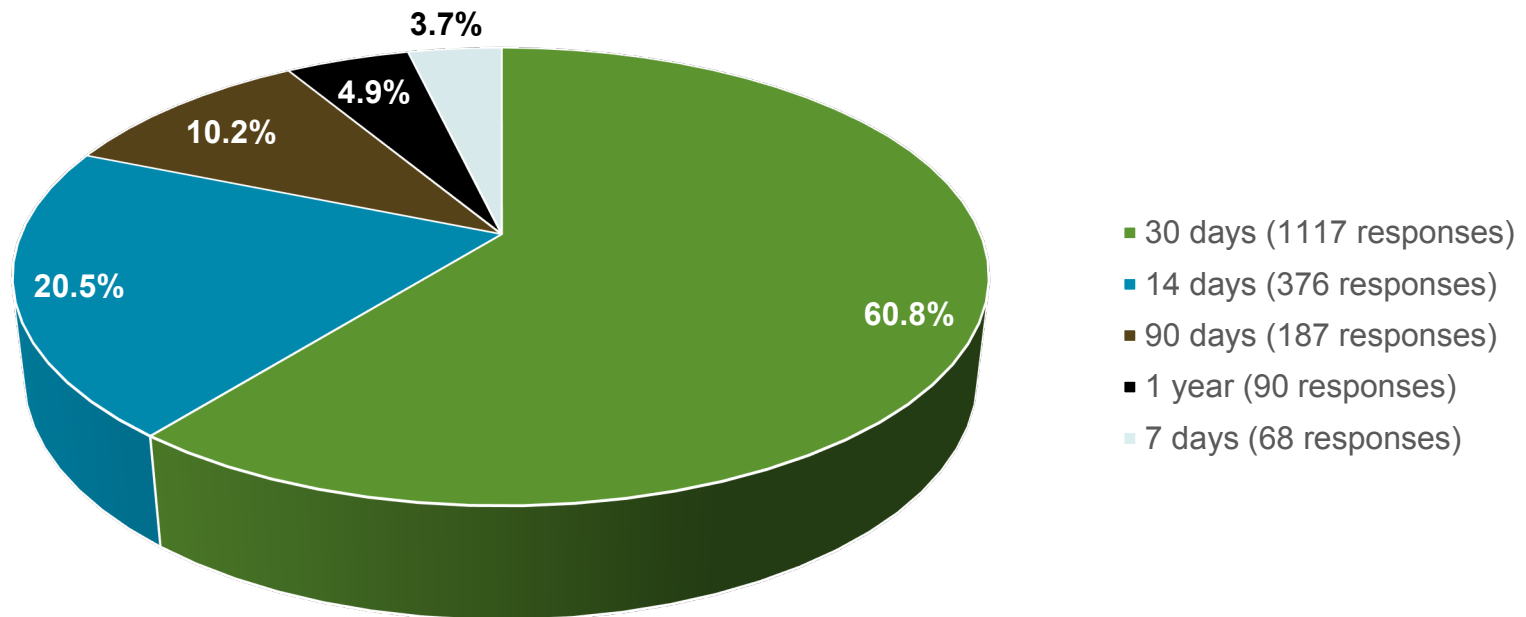
Does the County need to remind people to license their dog(s)? Please choose one answer.



- The County needs to send one reminder notice (1432 responses)
- The County needs to send two reminder notices (216 responses)
- No, owners should remember to license their dog annually (131 responses)
- Other (37 responses)

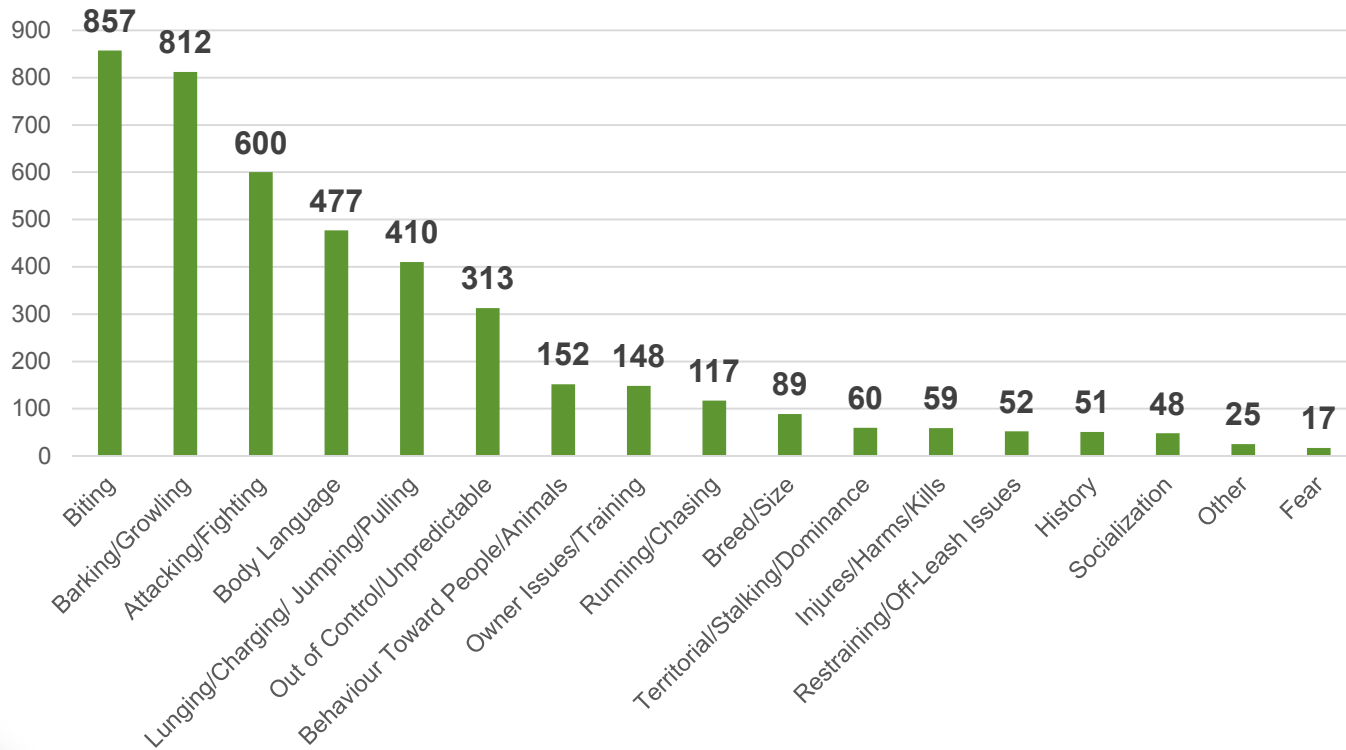
Survey Results

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



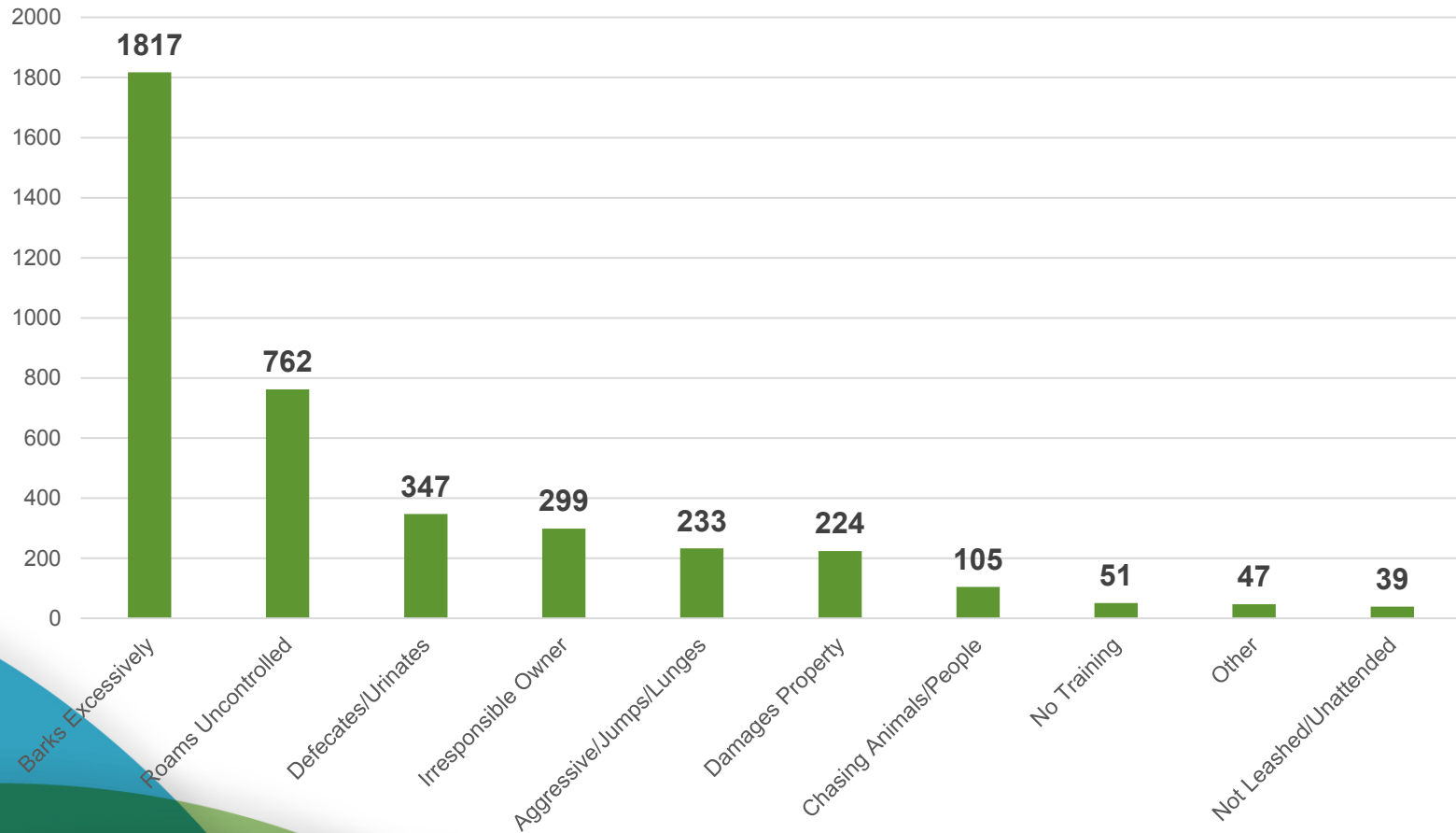
Survey Results

Traits of Aggressive Dogs



Survey Results

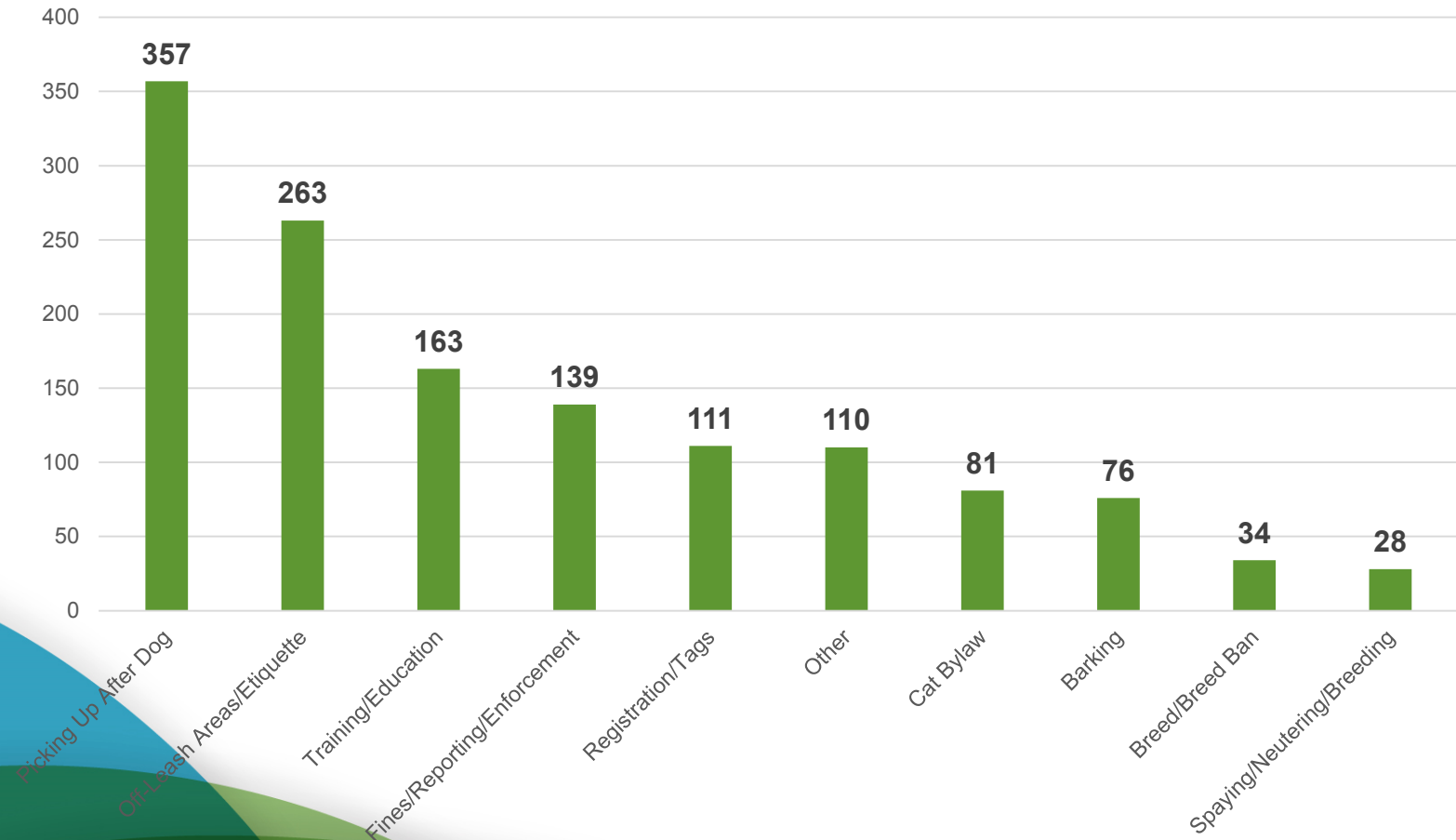
Traits of Nuisance Dogs





Survey Results

Additional Comments



Clear Direction in Survey

- No breed ban
- Better communication from the County on:
 - What license fees are used for
 - How to report abuse/neglect
 - How to report dog-related issues
- Better signage/enforcement of off-leash dogs



License Fees

- Used for:
 - Returning lost dogs to their owners
 - **“Return to owner”** program
 - Providing food, shelter and care for lost dogs
 - Supporting the adoption of unclaimed dogs
 - Transport of dogs to the Edmonton Humane Society



Areas Requiring Further Input

- Household dog limits – urban vs. rural
- Secondary Identification (i.e. microchips/tattoos)
- Expiry date for dog licenses
- Dog owner training
- Penalties for repeat infractions
- Over-limit permits

Next Steps

- Remaining sessions
- Workshop summary report
- Council Report
 - Multiple steps March-May
- Draft bylaw – fall 2017
- Rollout 2018

Questions or comments?

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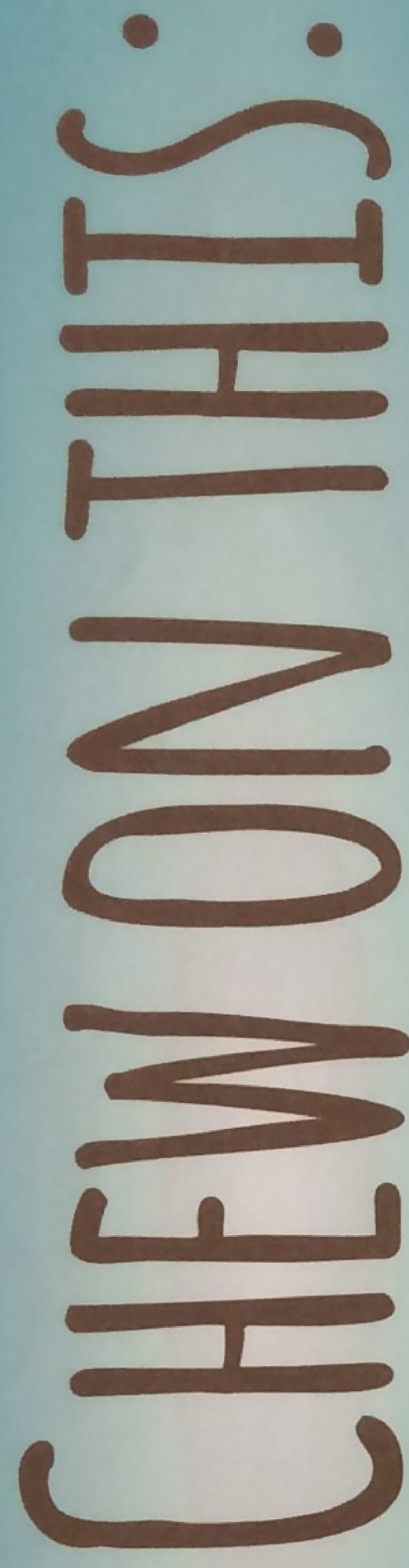
jonathan.mackay@stantec.com



**STRATHCONA COUNTY
DOG CONTROL BYLAW REVIEW**

Appendix B - Sample Idea Rating Sheet
March 13, 2017

Appendix B - SAMPLE IDEA RATING SHEET



All dogs must have a microchip (at owner's cost) as a second form of ID to assist in returning dogs to their owners

(FILL YOUR ONE DOT BELOW)

OPTIONALLY ADD BRIEF COMMENTS

CONCERNS & WEAKNESSES

Good dog ownership - if you are willing to pay big bucks for a dog cost is negligible

vet tattoos at time of neuter/spay are free

dogs don't always have their collars on. tattoos/chips are not very expensive and can easily be done when fixed. It would cost tax payers less to have an owner obliged to pick-up rather than transfer to EMS.

Proven to be most effective method of I.C.I.

an excellent way to properly identify. the cat's first thing's checked when pet found.

Implication one of this first things crucial when performing.

Dog Finders want the dog - no # of chips will get it back. **INTRUSIVE** ✓

access to info on how + have "free microchip" days ^{so people can} come get it done

Cost to owner will discourage licensing encouraged, but not required

most of tattoos are barely identifiable.

hard to enforce

Tattoos smudge w/ time
found.

