

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Dog Park Pilot Project Update

**Prepared By:** Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services

**Department:** Recreation

**Date:** August 12, 2025

**Report Number:** REC2025-16                      **File Number:** C11REC, R04DO

**Attachments:**

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**Recommendation:**

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number REC2025-16 - Dog Park Pilot Project Update, prepared by Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services for information purposes.

**Report:**

**Background:**

At the April 23, 2024, Council meeting, approval was granted to construct a one-year Pilot Dog Park located at Lobies Park. The Pilot Dog Park opened in May 2024. Staff continued its operation through the summer of 2025, with intentions to propose a permanent Dog Park solution in the 2026 budget considerations.

The Pilot Off-Leash Dog Park was established using temporary chain-link fencing repurposed from the Walkerton Ball Diamonds. The park includes separate designated zones for small and large dogs. Essential amenities include double entrance gates, signage, a dog waterspout located at the campground shower building, a dog waste bag dispenser, and landscaping enhancements with tree planting for future shade, that was completed in summer 2024.

For several years various sites were evaluated by staff and the Parks and Recreation Committee, narrowed down to Lobies Park, Bend Park, and an area at trail entrance near the Rod and Gun Club. While each location had its benefits and challenges, Bend Park was particularly discouraged by the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority due to the risk of severe flooding, which was notably observed firsthand in 2025 when the area was submerged under several meters of fast flowing water. Lobies Park was ultimately selected due to its suitability for addressing the pilot's requirements and long-term solution.

Upon Council approval a media release was communicated, and notification letter was dispatched to nearby residents in May 2024 to inform them about the construction and features of the Pilot Dog Park.

Throughout the pilot year, staff implemented a visitor tracking system and conducted a survey that garnered 53 responses. This survey was available until the community engagement website, BuildYourBrockton.ca, was discontinued in February 2025.

### **Analysis:**

To provide a comprehensive overview of survey respondents perspectives regarding the pilot off-leash dog park located at Lobies Park, Staff have recorded visitor tracking and analyzed survey findings to convey the general sentiment of park users and assist in guiding future decisions regarding the park's operation.

### **Summary of Findings Relevant to the Current Location of Dog Park:**

#### **Frequency of Park Visits:**

Respondents provided insights on how often they visit the dog park:

- Daily: 5 respondents
- Multiple times per week: 15 respondents
- Once per week: 14 respondents
- Monthly: 3 respondents
- When in the area (e.g., camping): 4 respondents
- Never: 4 respondents

The data suggests that a significant portion of the community regularly utilizes the park, with 34 respondents visiting at least once a week or more frequently.

#### **Satisfaction with the Current Location: Lobies Park**

Respondents ranked their satisfaction with the dog park's current location at Lobies Park as follows:

- Unhappy: 5 respondents
- Neutral: 19 respondents
- Happy: 29 respondents

These results indicate a generally positive reception of the park's location among community members, with 29 individuals reporting happiness regarding the setting.

#### **Summary of Positive Comments:**

*Community Value:* Multiple respondents expressed enthusiasm about the addition of the dog park, appreciating its contribution to community life. Positive remarks include:

- "This is a fantastic extra to our town!"
- Comment on community completeness: "Well overdo to have this feature in town... vital for a complete community."

*User Experience:* Users have highlighted satisfaction with the current arrangement, comparing it to successful models in other locations with comments such as:

- "Kincardine's is great... super happy to have a dog park close and available."
- "This park is wonderful! My small dog loves to run around and play, free from his leash for a change!"

## Summary of Negative/Constructive Comments:

*Location Concerns:* Several respondents suggested alternative locations, noting potential issues with the current proposal:

- “There is not enough parking... no fence should be allowed.”
- Suggestions for alternative locations include:
  - Jackson Street for its open space.
  - South of Riverbend Park due to parking and existing infrastructure.

*Design and Infrastructure:*

- Some feedback pointed out the need for better design inspired by successful models: “Advise council to visit Kincardine dog park as a reference.”

In an effort to provide a detailed account of the current utilization patterns at our Pilot Dog Park, Staff has been actively monitoring visitor activity. We have systematically tracked the presence of dogs and the corresponding usage of parking facilities throughout the day.

The data collected indicates that, on average, the Pilot Dog Park accommodates approximately 15 to 20 dogs daily. At any given time, the park hosts no more than 3 to 4 dogs simultaneously. This observation suggests a limited impact on parking availability, with an average of only 2 to 3 vehicles occupying parking spots concurrently at peak times.

The frequency of visits and positive satisfaction levels demonstrate a favorable community attitude toward the current operational setup of the dog park. Given the input from respondents, these findings may inform discussions regarding the potential for permanent establishment and enhancement of facilities at Lobies Park. The community feedback provides valuable insights on location choice and design considerations.

## Path Forward:

As part of the 2026 budget considerations, plans for establishing a permanent dog park are under review. The proposed design will relocate the fencing closer to the road, allowing expanded space for local resident to have an unobstructed evacuation route in the event of flooding. Additionally, the newly planted trees will enhance the area by providing shade and foliage, creating a trail-like experience for users walking their dogs within the permanently fenced park. Staff will continue to integrate community feedback to ensure that the most popular features are included in design plans.

## Strategic Action Plan Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

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|---|-----|
| • Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision                       | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community              | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life                               | Yes |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development                          | N/A |
| • Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance                          | Yes |

## Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective?  
N/A

## Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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## Respectfully Submitted by:



Colleen Gillis, Director of Community Services

## Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer