



Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
**Emery Barnes OLA Renewal &
Proposed Expansion**

**Engagement 1: Summary Report
September 23–October 15, 2021**



Engagement Overview

By the Numbers

395

surveys completed



249

who are dog owners



225

who use the park at
least a couple times
per year

Notification



Postcards – postcards were sent to 49,320 households within a 15-minute walk of the park



Signage – three signs were placed in Emery Barnes Park to notify visitors of the opportunity to engage with the survey



Email Newsletter – an email newsletter was sent to 505 people on our dog off-leash area mailing list

Social media posts – posts were



made on the Vancouver Park Board Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to inform people of the engagement

What's next?

The results from this survey will be used to inform the conceptual design of the OLA renewal. In the next round of engagement, respondents will be asked to provide their feedback on the proposed conceptual design to further develop a plan that benefits all park users.

Background

The Vancouver Park Board (VPB) approved the **People, Parks and Dogs (PPD) Strategy** in 2017, to help deliver carefully designed parks that accommodate park users with and without dogs. The strategy identified Downtown as being in need of additional and renewed off-leash areas (OLAs) to support the high number of licensed dogs in the neighbourhood.

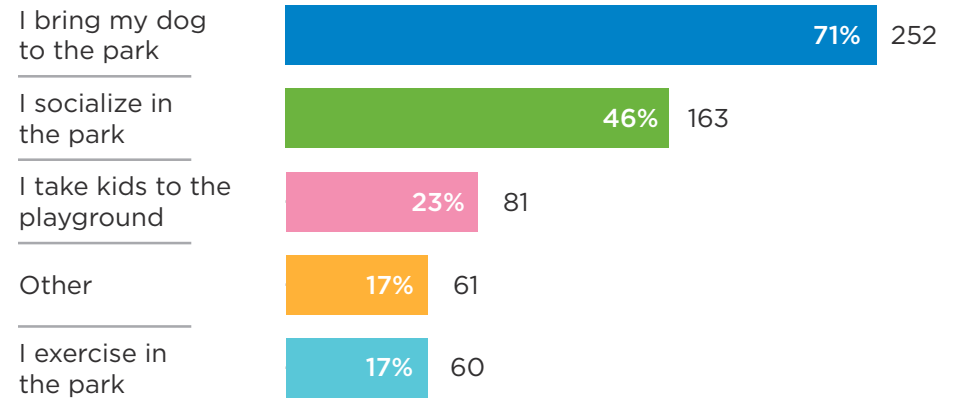
Emery Barnes Park is located in the heart of Yaletown at the intersection of Seymour and Davie streets. The off-leash area (OLA) here serves one of the most densely populated parts of Vancouver, with the second highest number of licensed dogs within 1km.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is proposing a renewal of the OLA, including an expansion which would add to its overall size. Currently, the potential expansion area is a small lawn with a bench and two trees. A survey, hosted on ShapeYourCity.ca, was open for feedback regarding this potential project from September 23 to October 15, 2021.

The survey asked users of Emery Barnes Park for their feedback on topics including the amenities and surfacing to be considered for the redesigned OLA.

Note: not all respondents answered all questions. Some questions allowed a respondent to select multiple answers, so percentages may not add up to 100.

How do you use Emery Barnes park?



Other responses:

I walk to and from work five days a week and I cut through the park each time, which is the highlight of my walk.

I often like to sit and relax watching the water and the kids play.

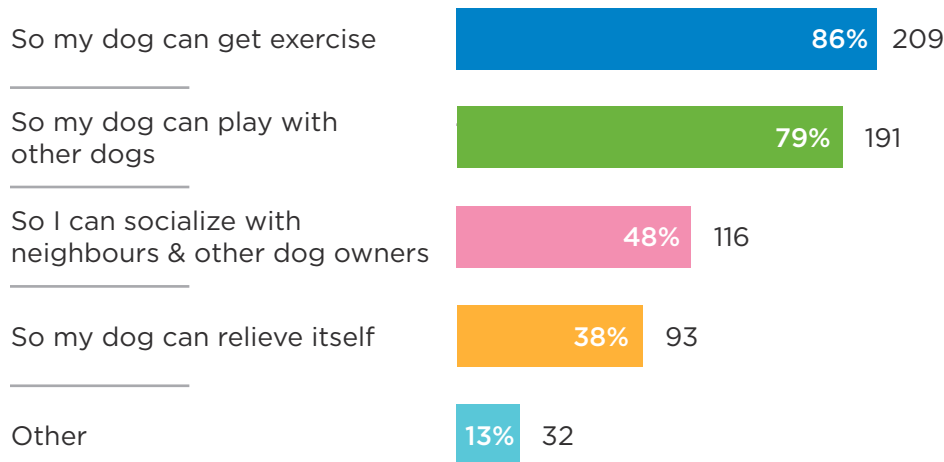
I love watching the dogs run free and meet other dogs.

I often ate there when I had to get take-out because restaurants were closed for dine-in.

What We Heard

We asked dog owners about how they currently use the Emery Barnes OLA.

Why do you visit the Emery Barnes OLA?



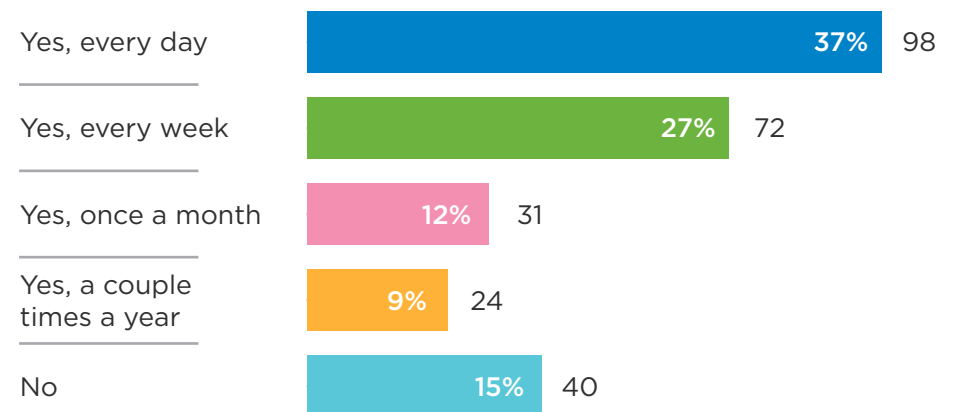
Other responses:

I stopped visiting because my dog can't tolerate that pea gravel surface and he just wants to sit in my lap rather than be on the ground.

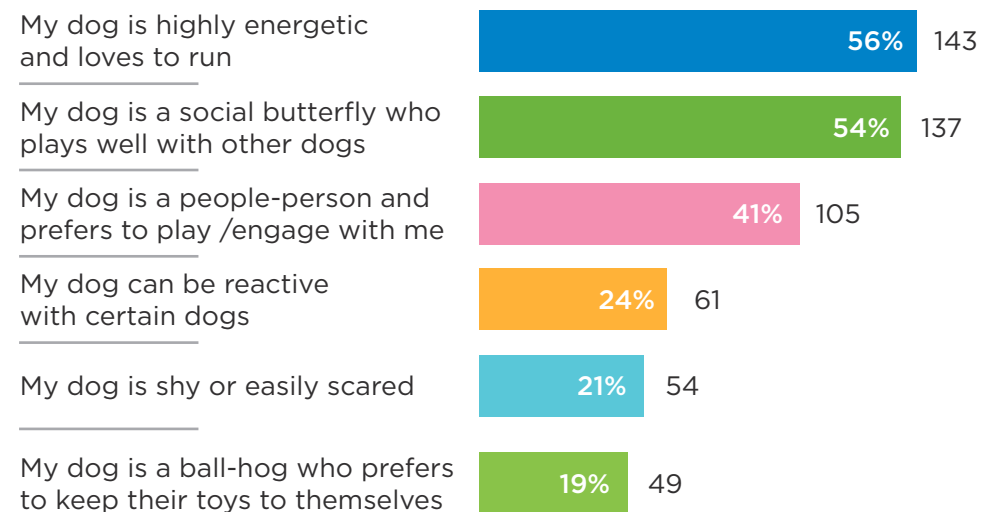
We don't use the off leash area because it always has large dogs in it and our dog is very shy and timid.

It's close to home and for my dog to socialize get energy out.

Do you currently use the Emery Barnes off-leash area with dog(s)?



Please help us understand how your dog typically uses an off-leash area (check all that apply)

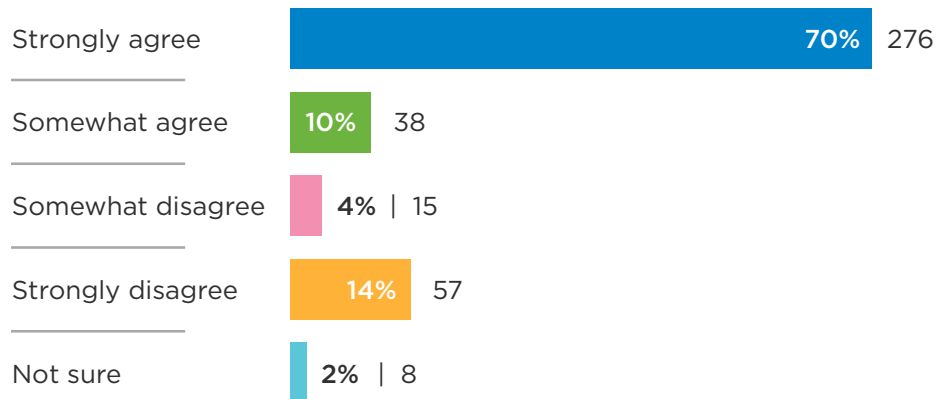


What We Heard

Emery Barnes is a well loved park that balances a variety of spaces including the off-leash area. Within the city of Vancouver, the park has the second highest number of licensed dogs within 1 km.

We see an opportunity to expand the OLA into an additional area to help accommodate the high number of dogs while maintaining the existing activity spaces in the park. Currently, the potential expansion area is a smaller lawn with a bench and two trees.

Do you agree or disagree with expanding the existing OLA?



80% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree with expanding the OLA.



What We Heard – Small/Shy Dog Area

Ensuring dogs of various sizes and temperaments have places to feel safe while also providing them with amenities and opportunity for play is important to the success of the revitalized Emery Barnes off-leash area.

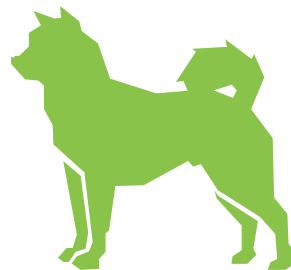
Participants were asked if they would value the creation of a self-managed, separated area for small or shy dogs, to allow these dogs to benefit from off-leash activity with others of similar size and/or temperament.

What size is your dog? (Check all that apply)



136

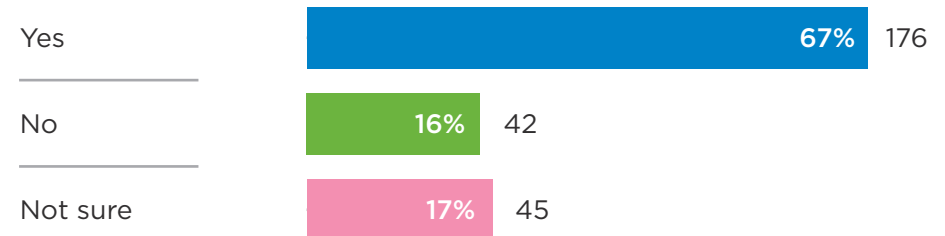
My dog is small
(under 25 lbs)



135

My dog is
medium to large
(25 lbs or more)

Would you value creating a separate space within the OLA for a self-managed small/shy dog area?



67% of respondents value creating a separate space for small/shy dogs.

Survey results indicate that there is a fairly equal number of small and medium–large dogs in the area.

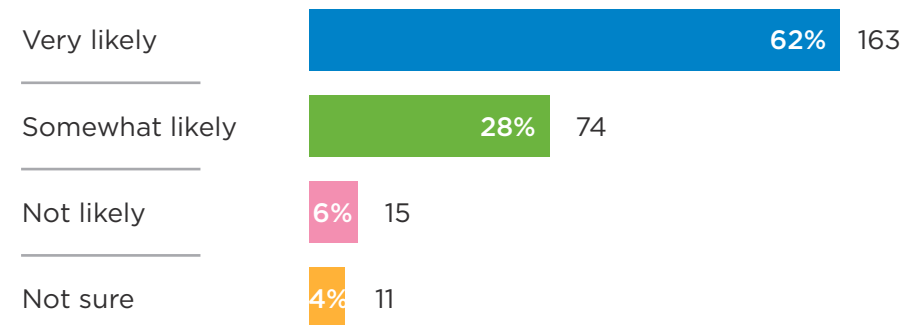
What We Heard – Amenities

Participants were asked about what amenities they would like to see in the revitalized OLA, including enrichment features (activities designed to mentally stimulate a dog’s brain).

What amenities would you and your dog value most when visiting the Emery Barnes off-leash area? (Rank in order of preference)

- 1 **Open areas for running, fetch, and playing with other dogs**
- 2 **Shade trees**
- 3 **Enrichment and agility features, including signage for how to use**
- 4 **Places to sit and socialize with other dog owners**
- 5 **Dog hose-off area**
- 6 **Training features, including signage with instructions for how to use**

How likely would you be to engage with your dog using equipment or features intended for enrichment?



Are there any amenities we missed?

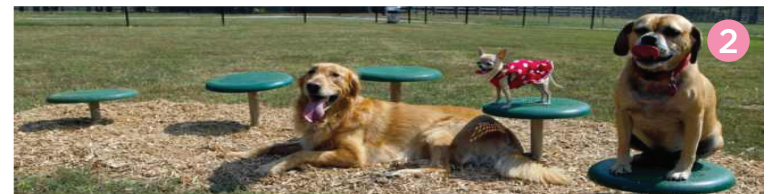
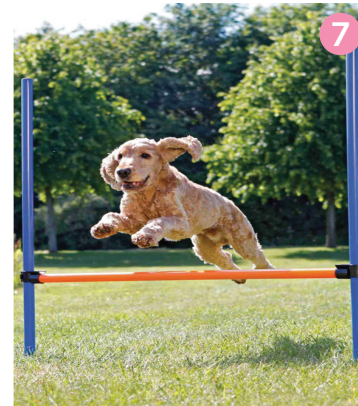
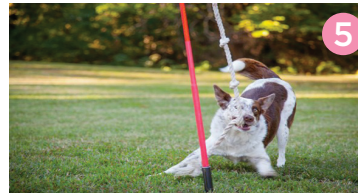


What We Heard – Amenities

What elements for enrichment and agility would you (and your dog) value most when visiting the Emery Barnes off-leash area?

- 1 Ramp
- 2 Stepping 'stones'
- 3 Platform
- 4 Hoops
- 5 Tug-post
- 6 Weave posts
- 7 Hurdles

Respondents ranked a ramp, stepping 'stones', and a platform as the top three amenities they would value most.



Are there any enrichment/agility features that we missed?

It was very hard to rank those features. They all sound great and my dog would benefit greatly!

What We Heard – Surfacing

The survey asked participants about what surfacing they would like to see within the off-leash area, as the existing surface of pea gravel is causing maintenance and safety challenges, and needs to be replaced.

Pet-specific synthetic turf will be piloted at this location, as it is a high quality and durable surface, suitable for a relatively small area with a large number of dogs.

In addition to dog specific synthetic turf, what additional surfacing would you and your dog like to see in the OLA? (Rank in order of preference)



Respondents ranked rubber as the most preferred surface, followed by wood chips, sand and fine-crushed gravel.

Additional Comments

I love the idea to add equipment to engage dogs. My dog loves jumping on rocks around the park and using the step stones by the water.

When I use the park in the mornings, I see many dog owners using the green-grass areas of the park for their dogs, not the gated OLA.

Changing the surface of the actual OLA is the best idea as it needs to be cleaner/safer.

Pet amenities are important in urban spaces.

Currently, this park often has a strong smell of urine. Especially during the summer between rain falls.

OLA needs to be designed to be inviting to both dogs and their owners. It's a place for us to socialize too. Shade, seating, water and lighting are important features.

The OLA at Emery Park is a very welcome spot to exercise and socialize both canines and humans but I can't use it with my dog which is small and feels intimidated by big dogs however friendly.

The grassy area is used by kids who also need space to run and grow when living in a densely populated and small space downtown. Let the kids keep the space. Is it really fair to put a dog's needs over a child's?

Please increase the size of the OLA

Better enforcement of dog owners is required in all parks as many do not leash up again when out of the off-leash area.

Get in Touch

You can email the project team at offleash@vancouver.ca