

CHEMAINUS

Off-leash dog park



WHAT WE HEARD

Engagement Summary Report

Project: **Chemainus off-leash dog area**

Date: July 7, 2025

Background

The dual use of Field 3 at Chemainus Ball Park as both an off-leash dog area and a baseball field is leading to conflicts among user groups. In addition, the off-leash dog park is seasonally limited to September 1 to March 15.

Options to minimize these conflicts, including identifying a new year-round location, are being considered.

Council received a petition related to this issue from a group of off-leash dog park users who wish to retain the current area in Field 3 (March 19, 2025). At that council meeting a large number of proponents and opponents were in the gallery and many participated in public input.

During the ball season (March 16 to August 31, per the bylaw), some dog owners have been using the sports field at St. Joe's, an unused school site that is currently for sale, making it an unsanctioned off-leash dog area.

Staff identified three options to address the conflicts:

- Keep the off-leash dog area at Field 3 but change the off-leash dog season to accommodate a longer ball season (and shorten the off-leash dog season)
- Move the off-leash dog area to Elm Street, a section of property adjacent to Field 3
- Move the off-leash area to Elliott Steet, adjacent to the skate park.

The Elliott Street location is also being considered by council for use as a community garden and food forest, as well as for a future affordable housing project.

The community, including sports field users, dog-park users, and neighbours to the existing and potential park locations were invited to share their feedback on options.

A project page on ConnectNorthCowichan.ca was developed, and where background information, details about the three options was made available. A question and answer widget was open where people could ask questions and receive a public reply from staff. A survey was open from June 9 to July 4.

What we did

Work began earlier in 2025 as staff investigated various site options using municipally owned land or property. In early June the engagement launched with the ConnectNorthCowichan.ca web page and question and answer function.

- connectnorthcowichan.ca/chemainus-dog-park

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Chemainus off-leash dog park project. The header includes the logo for ConnectNorthCowichan.ca and navigation links for Home, Projects, North Cowichan Website, English, My profile, and Search. The main content area features a large image of a dog running in a field, with the title "Chemainus off-leash dog park" and a sub-headline "Finding solutions to conflicts at the current seasonal off-leash dog park in Chemainus." Below this is a "Follow" button. The page is divided into several sections: "Who's listening" featuring Neil Pukesh (Director, Parks, Recreation, and Forestry) and Shaun Mason (Manager, Parks); "Document Library" listing various documents such as "Off-leash dog areas in Chemainus" and "Off-leash park location options"; and "Proposed solutions" detailing three options: "Existing location, Field 3", "Elliott Street", and "Elliott Street" (adjacent to the skate park).

[The connectnorthcowichan.ca project page](https://connectnorthcowichan.ca/chemainus-dog-park)

The survey was launched on June 9 and included questions about the respondent's connection to the off-leash dog area, preferred location, as well as questions on what they felt were to top issues and what were the desired amenities that could be included in the development of an off-leash dog area.

On June 25, the Director of Parks and Recreation and the Manager of Parks attended the Chemainus Wednesday market and met with attendees to discuss the off-leash dog area and encourage participation in the survey.



Photo: Staff attended the Chemainus Wednesday market on June 25.



Staff created an assortment of buttons featuring dogs (and a couple of cats) to provide as handouts for market visitors

How we connected

Several opportunities to reach out to people to inform them of the engagement were undertaken:

- Emails were sent from the Manager of Parks to interested and affected parties including the Chemainus Baseball Association and off-leash dog area petition proponents.
- A news release was issued on June 9, 2025 resulting in the following media coverage:
 - Chemainus Valley Courier, June 20, 2025, "[Unleash your opinion: dog park feedback wanted](#)"
 - Cowichan Valley Citizen, July 2, 2025, Editorial: "[Location, location, location: important for dogs, too](#)"
 - CHEK News, June 10, 2025, "[North Cowichan seeks public input on off-leash dogs in Chemainus amid field conflicts](#)"
- Social media:
 - Facebook and Bluesky: June 10, June 23, July 2



Municipality of North Cowichan

June 10 at 9:55 AM

🐾 Woof woof, Chemainus! We want to hear from you!

Are you a user of the ball field or off-leash dog area at the Chemainus Ball Park? We've heard concerns about conflicts in the seasonal off-leash area and are exploring options, that include a new location or changing the seasonal use dates, to make it safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

Share your feedback and help shape the future of this space.

👉 Visit connectnorthcowichan.ca/Chemainus-dog-park



Municipality of North Cowichan

June 23 at 6:30 PM

🐾 Woof woof, Chemainus! Got thoughts on the off-leash area at Chemainus Ball Park's Field 3? We're looking at ways to improve the space, and we want your input!

Come chat with us this Wednesday at the Chemainus market (at Waterwheel Park!) or share your ideas online at connectnorthcowichan.ca/Chemainus-dog-park



Municipality of North Cowichan

July 2 at 10:35 AM

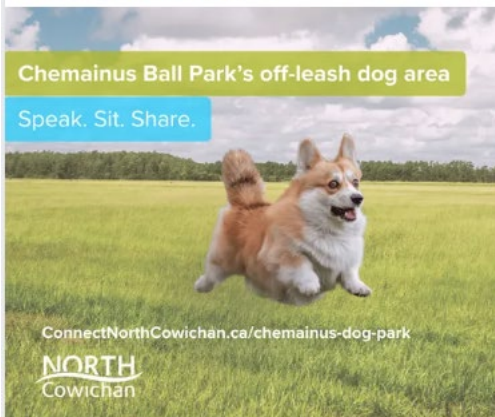
Do you think Field 3 at Chemainus Ball Park should remain dual use as a seasonal off-leash dog area? Or would you prefer a new year-round off-leash area? 🐾 🗳️

Your feedback will help guide decision-making around a solution to reduce conflicts between user groups.

Learn more and take the survey at

www.connectnorthcowichan.ca/chemainus-dog-park

📅 The survey closes this Friday, July 4.



Social media post examples

- Site signs with a QR code were installed at all three locations



Site sign at Field 3

What we heard

The following is a summary of feedback heard through the connectnorthcowichan.ca project page and from people who attended the Chemainus Wednesday Market.

It should be noted that registration was not required to complete the survey, minimizing any barriers to participation. While this could provide an opportunity for people to “game” the survey by completing it more than once, no overt patterns of misuse were identified. It should also be noted that participation in surveys is voluntary and self-identified, meaning that respondents chose to participate and identified their own affiliations (e.g., dog owner, ball field user, nearby resident). As such, the results are not statistically representative of the entire population and should not be interpreted as a scientific poll. Instead, the results provide insight into the perspectives and preferences of those who chose to engage.

Full reports are available in the appendix.

Digital project page:

- 686 page views and 575 visits from 402 unique visitors.
- 200 total contributions from 161 contributors.
- 182 survey responses and 18 Q&A contributions.
- Peak engagement occurred on*June 16, 2025.

Key themes from survey feedback

1. User demographics (self-identified)

- 54% of respondents identified as dog owners or guardians.
- 34% were off-leash park users.
- 32% were ball or sports field users.
- 66% were nearby residents.
- 76% of respondents live in Chemainus.

Note: Respondents could choose more than one option, so totals are more than 100%

2. Conflict resolution preferences

- 80% of all respondents and 90% of ball field users supported finding a new year-round location for off-leash dogs.
- Only 11% of all respondents and 5% of ball field users preferred maintaining the status quo or adjusting seasonal dates.

3. Preferred new locations

Among those who supported relocation:

- 41% preferred Elliott Street (adjacent to the skate park).
- 39% preferred Elm Street (adjacent to Field 3).

Only 9% wanted to retain Field 3 with adjusted seasonal dates.

4. Desired features for off-leash area

Top features identified:

- Secure fencing/gates (79%)
- Year-round access (67%)
- Space to run (56%)
- Access to water for dogs (42%)
- Clear signage (33%)

5. Concerns about shared use

Key concerns included:

- Uncontrolled dogs (67%)
- Feces or urine (63%)
- Aggressive dogs (58%)
- Park user conflicts (55%)
- Lack of fencing (41%)

Ball field users expressed even stronger concerns about uncontrolled dogs (78%) and feces (78%).

In-person engagement insights

A total of 48 people visited the North Cowichan tent at the Chemainus Wednesday Market on June 25, 2025. While quantitative data from the market event is not separately reported, staff noted that in-person conversations echoed the survey findings. Many participants expressed frustration with current conflicts at Field 3 and emphasized the need for a dedicated, secure, and year-round off-leash space.

Who we heard from

The connectnorthcowichan.ca project page received 402 unique visits.

Survey participants identified their affiliation voluntarily:

- 54% of respondents identified as dog owners or guardians.
- 34% were off-leash park users.
- 32% were ball or sports field users.
- 66% were nearby residents.
- 76% of respondents live in Chemainus.

Note: Respondents could choose more than one option, so totals are more than 100%

Forty-eight people attended the Chemainus Wednesday Market.

Next steps

The next steps will be for Council to provide direction on an option for either moving the off-leash dog area or to adjust the seasonal use by the ball association and for off-leash dog users at Field 3. Once direction has been provided staff will work to either ready a new location and move the off-leash area, or adjust the seasonal use dates. All options will require an amendment to the [Animal Responsibility Bylaw](#) to amend the off-leash dog area description.

Connect North Cowichan

Report Type: Project

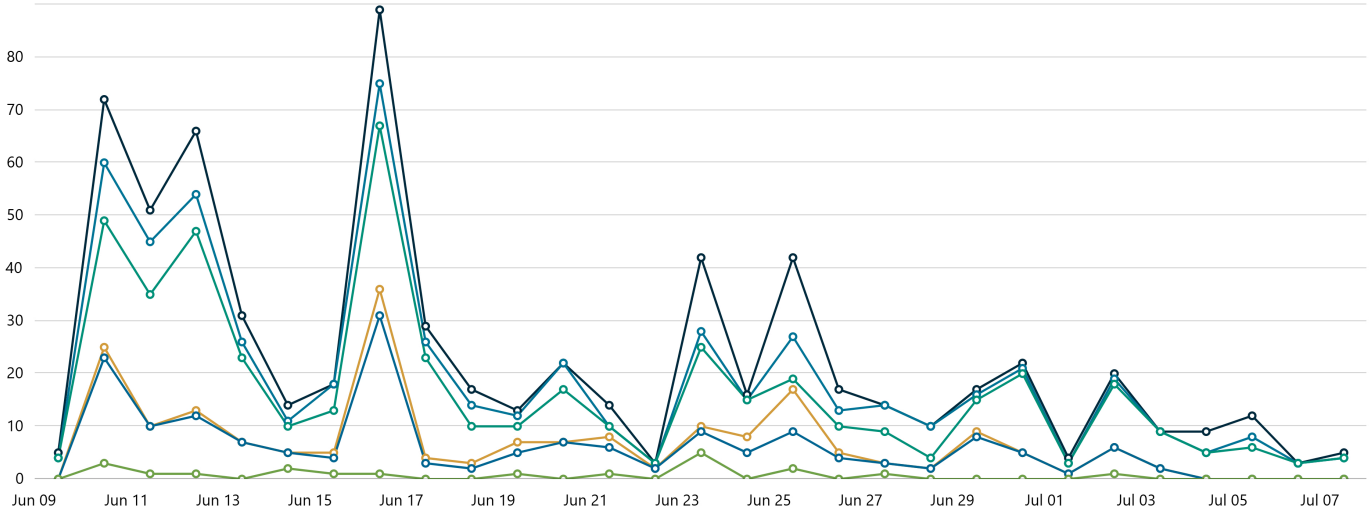
Project Name: Chemainus off-leash dog park

Date Range: 09-06-2025 - 07-07-2025

Exported: 07-07-2025 15:39:58

Performance Summary

Information regarding key visitation and utilisation metrics for your Site or projects.



686
Views

575
Visits

402
Visitors

200
Contributions

161
Contributors

20
Followers

Views - The number of times a Visitor views any page on a Site.

Visits - The number of end-user sessions associated with a single Visitor.

Visitors - The number of unique public or end-users to a Site. A Visitor is only counted once, even if they visit a Site several times in one day.

Contributions - The total number of responses or feedback collected through the participation tools.

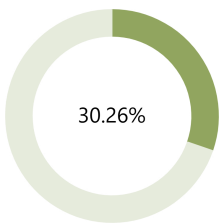
Contributors - The unique number of Visitors who have left feedback or Contributions on a Site through the participation tools.

Followers - The number of Visitors who have 'subscribed' to a project using the 'Follow' button.

Conversions

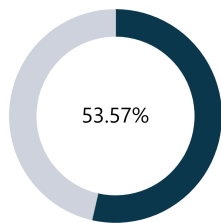
Information regarding how well your engagement websites converted Visitors to perform defined key actions.

Feedback



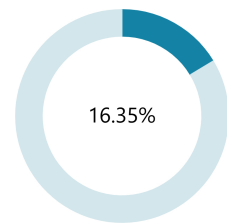
Percentage of visits where at least **1 contribution** was made.

Attention



Percentage of visits that lasted at least **1 active minute**.



Actions





Percentage of visits where at least **2 actions** were performed.

Participation

Information regarding how people have participated in your projects and activities.

Contributions by Activity			
Contributions by Activity is a breakdown of contributions across each tool			
Activity	Contributions		%
 Form	182	<div style="width: 91%;"><div style="width: 91%;"></div></div>	91%
 Q&A	18	<div style="width: 9%;"><div style="width: 9%;"></div></div>	9%

Top Activities			
Top Activities is the top 5 tools that received the highest contributions			
Activity	Page Name	Contributions	Contributors
 Form	Chemainus off-leash dog park	182	157
 Question and Answer	Chemainus off-leash dog park	18	13

Projects

The current number of published projects on your site

Engagement Time	
1 Days	7 Hours
18 Minutes	
Jun 16th 2025 Peak Visitation Date	Monday Peak Visitation Day

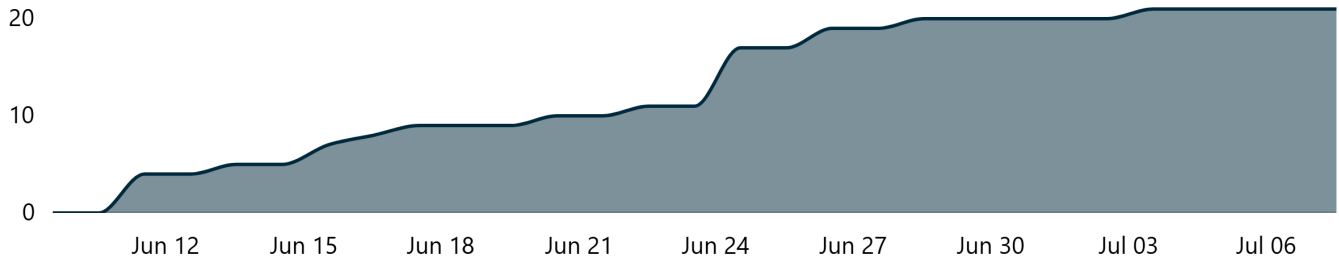
Top Visited Pages			
Summary information for the top five most visited Pages.			
Page Name	Visitation %	Visits	Visitors
Chemainus off-leash dog park	100%	571	400

People

Information regarding who has participated in your projects and activities.

Follower Activity

Information regarding the activity of registered Members who have 'followed' or subscribed to one or more projects.



20
Total Followers

20
New Followers

21
Total Follows

21
New Follows

Total Followers - The number of unique Members who have 'followed' at least one project.

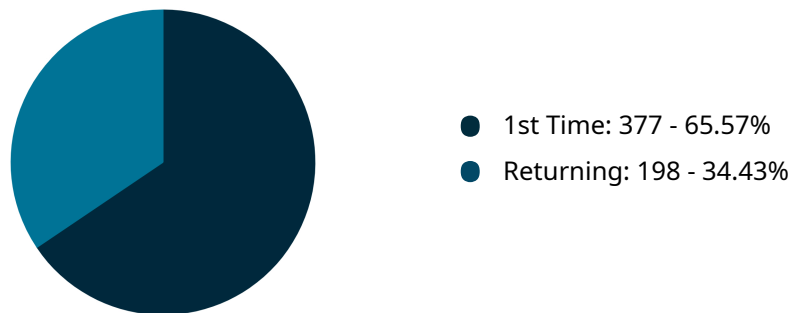
New Followers - The number of new unique Members who have 'followed' at least one project within the specified reporting date range.

Total Follows - The number of total 'follows' performed by all Followers across all projects. Each Follower may record multiple Follows.

New Follows - The number of new total 'follows' performed by all Members across all projects within the specified reporting date range.

Visit Profile

Visit Profile compares new visits and returning visits over the selected period.



First Time - The number of Visits that are visiting a Site for the first time within the reporting date range.

Returning - The number of Visits that have made more than one Visit to a Site within the reporting date range.

Acquisition

Information regarding the method by which Visitors arrived to your Site or projects.

Referral Types

Referral traffic is the segment of traffic that arrives on your website through another source, like through a link on another domain.



Direct - Visits from Visitors who enter the exact URL or click an untracked link (e.g., from emails without UTM parameters).

Search Engine - Visits from search results on engines like Google or Bing.


Websites - Visits from links on external sites, excluding search engines and social media.

Social Media - Visits from links on platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, or X.

Campaigns - Visits from tracked marketing efforts using UTM parameters, such as email campaigns or paid ads.

Downloads

Information regarding your downloads, the total set of unique documents downloaded, total downloads of all files, and your top downloads.


 **243**
Total Downloads


Top Downloads		
Top file downloads in your selection, ordered by the number of downloads.		
File Title	File Type	Downloads
Elm St option.png	PNG	80
Elliott St option.png	PNG	63
Field 3 option.png	PNG	50
existing dog parks.png	PNG	26
Off-leash dog area options.png	PNG	24

Email Campaigns

Information regarding your email campaigns, your total campaigns, the total number of recipients, and your top campaigns by click-through rate (clicks as a percentage of total recipients).

 **1**
Email Campaigns Sent

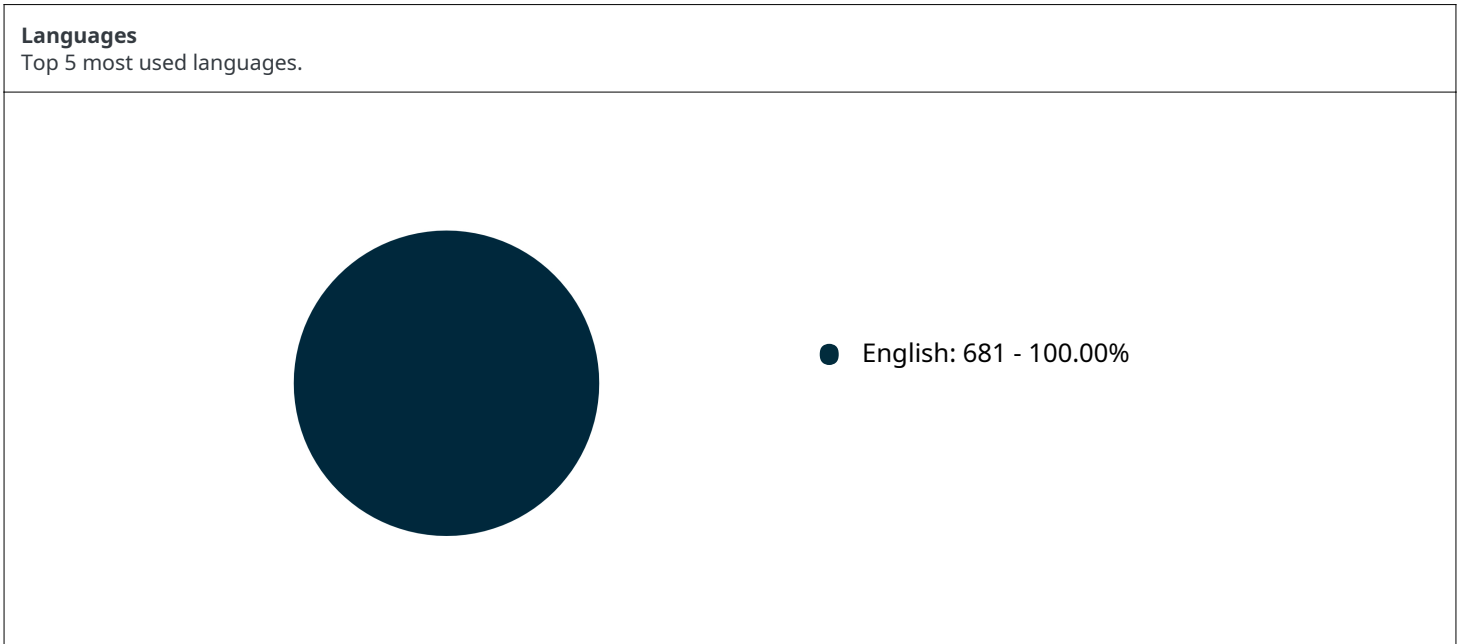
 **5**
Total Recipients

 **20%**
Click-through Rate

Top Campaigns			
Top email campaigns that have activity in your selection, ordered by click-through rate (clicks as a percentage of total recipients).			
Campaign Name	Recipients	Clicks	Click-through Rate
Chemainus off-leash dog park	5	1	20%

Translation

Information regarding the languages used by visitors to your site or projects.



Top Languages
Top 5 languages with the number of page views

Language	Page Views
English	681

Connect North Cowichan

Form Results Summary

Jun 10, 2025 - Jul 04, 2025

Project: Chemainus off-leash dog park

Form: Take the survey

Tool Type: Form

Activity ID: 46

Exported: Jul 07, 2025, 03:40 PM

Exported By: BFloden

Filter By: No filters applied.

Closed

Take the survey
Chemainus off-leash dog park

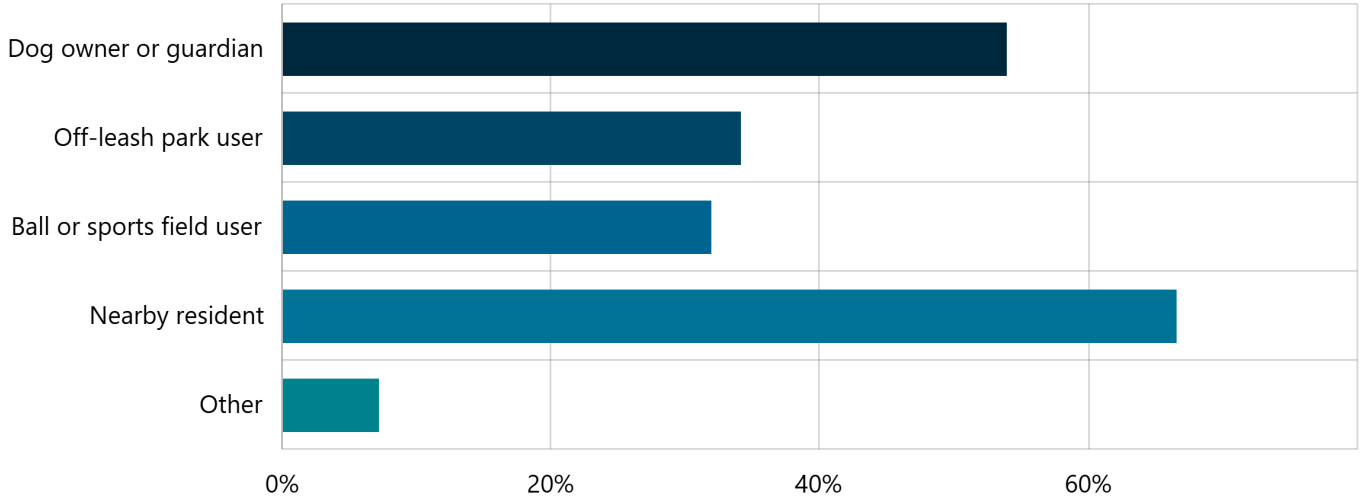
157
Contributors

182
Contributions

Contribution Summary

1. I am (check all that apply) Required

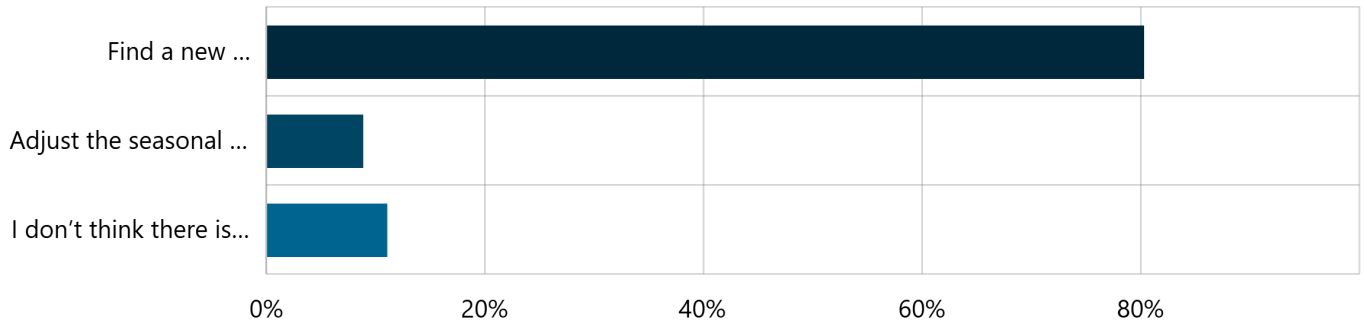
Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 182 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Dog owner or guardian	53.85%	98
Off-leash park user	34.07%	62
Ball or sports field user	31.87%	58
Nearby resident	66.48%	121
Other	7.14%	13

2. Conflicts between user groups of Field 3 have occurred, especially during the off-leash dog use season (September 1 to March 15). What, in your opinion, would be the best way to resolve this conflict? Required

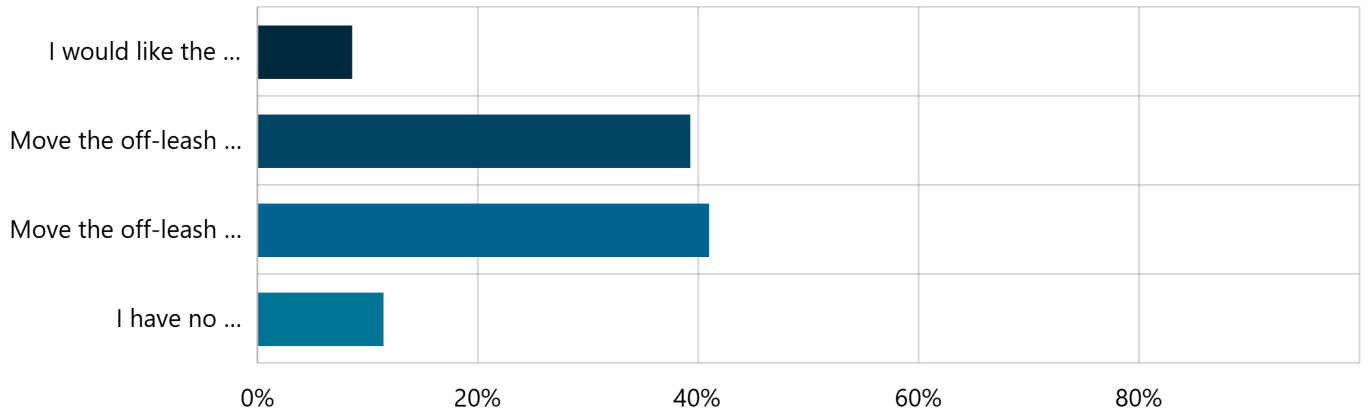
Select Box | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 182 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Find a new year-round location for off-leash dogs	80.22%	146
Adjust the seasonal use date in the bylaw to accommodate the extended fall baseball season (and shorten the off-leash dog use season)	8.79%	16
I don't think there is a conflict / keep same / status quo	10.99%	20
Total	100.00%	182

3. If a new location for the off-leash dog area was the preferred solution, which location do you think is best suited for a year-round off-leash dog park?

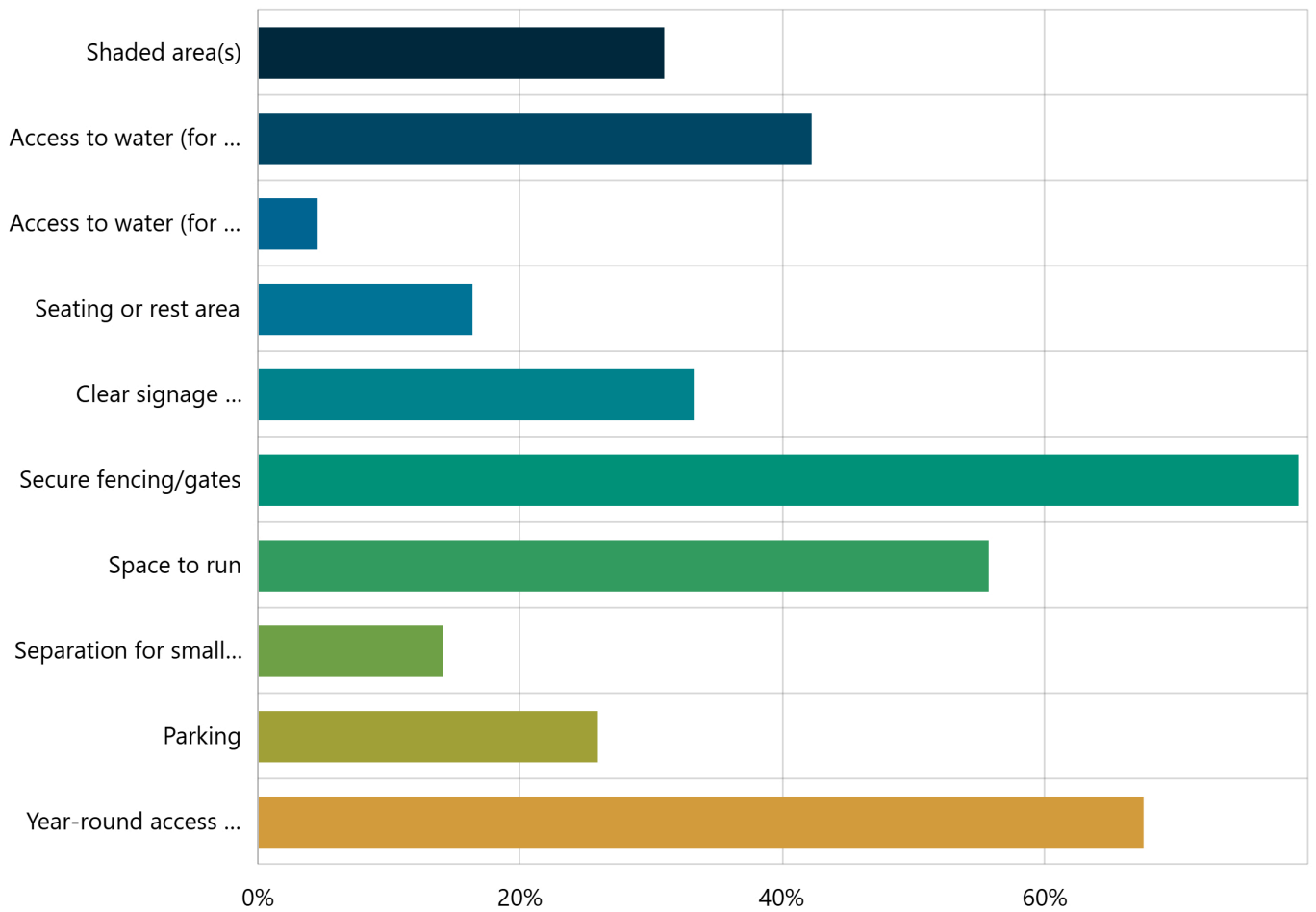
Select Box | Skipped: 6 | Answered: 176 (96.7%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
I would like the off-leash dog area to remain seasonally at Field 3 (with a change to Nov. 1 - March 15)	8.52%	15
Move the off-leash dog park to Elm Street (property adjacent to Field 3)	39.20%	69
Move the off-leash dog park to Elliott Street (adjacent the skate park)	40.91%	72
I have no preference/don't know	11.36%	20
Total	100.00%	176

4. What features or considerations help make an off-leash area work well (besides waste bags and garbage receptacle, as these are standard amenities)?

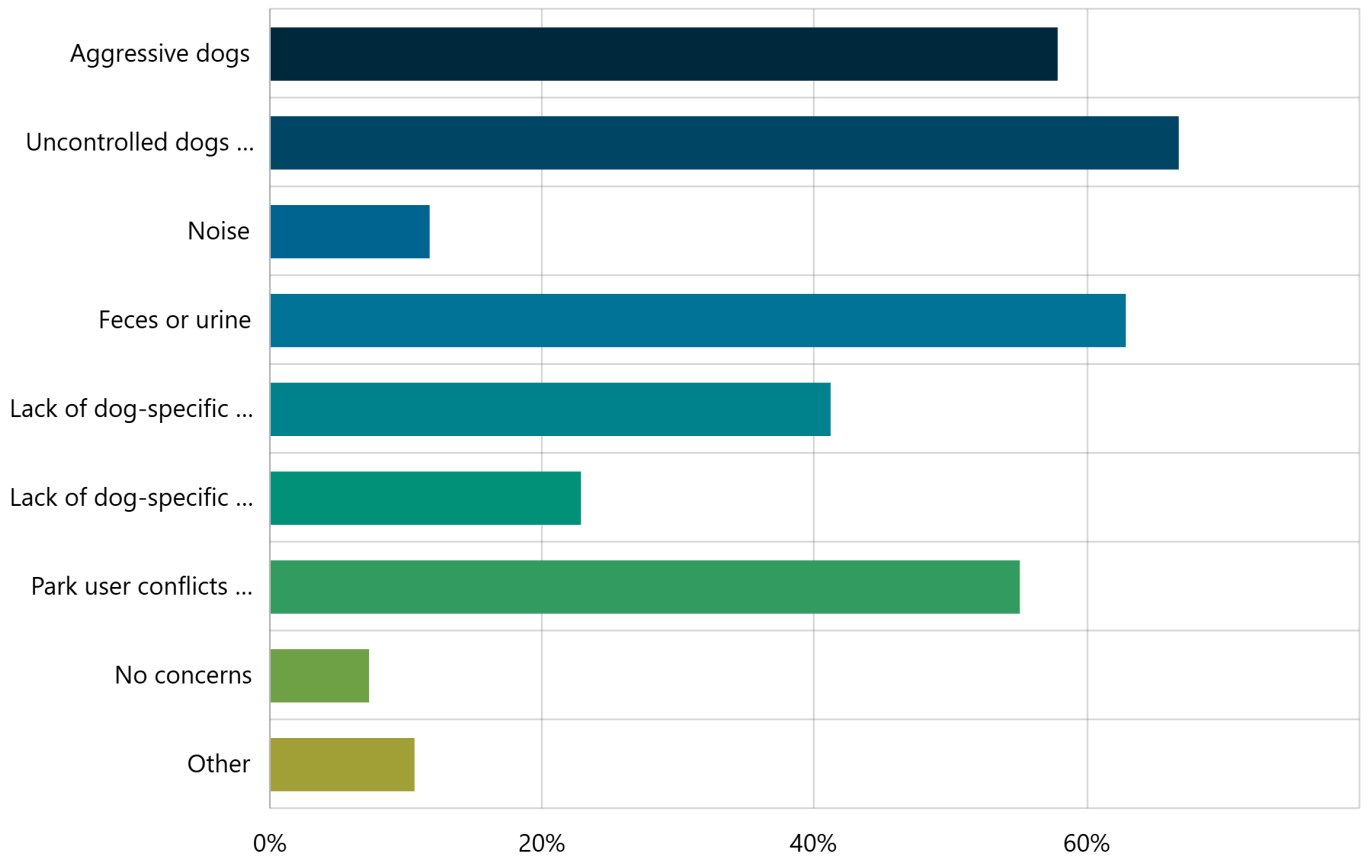
Multi Choice | Skipped: 4 | Answered: 178 (97.8%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Shaded area(s)	30.90%	55
Access to water (for dogs)	42.13%	75
Access to water (for people)	4.49%	8
Seating or rest area	16.29%	29
Clear signage outlining park use and rules	33.15%	59
Secure fencing/gates	79.21%	141
Space to run	55.62%	99
Separation for small and large dogs	14.04%	25
Parking	25.84%	46
Year-round access (not seasonal)	67.42%	120

5. Thinking about a shared user group off-leash dog area, what, if any, concerns do you have?

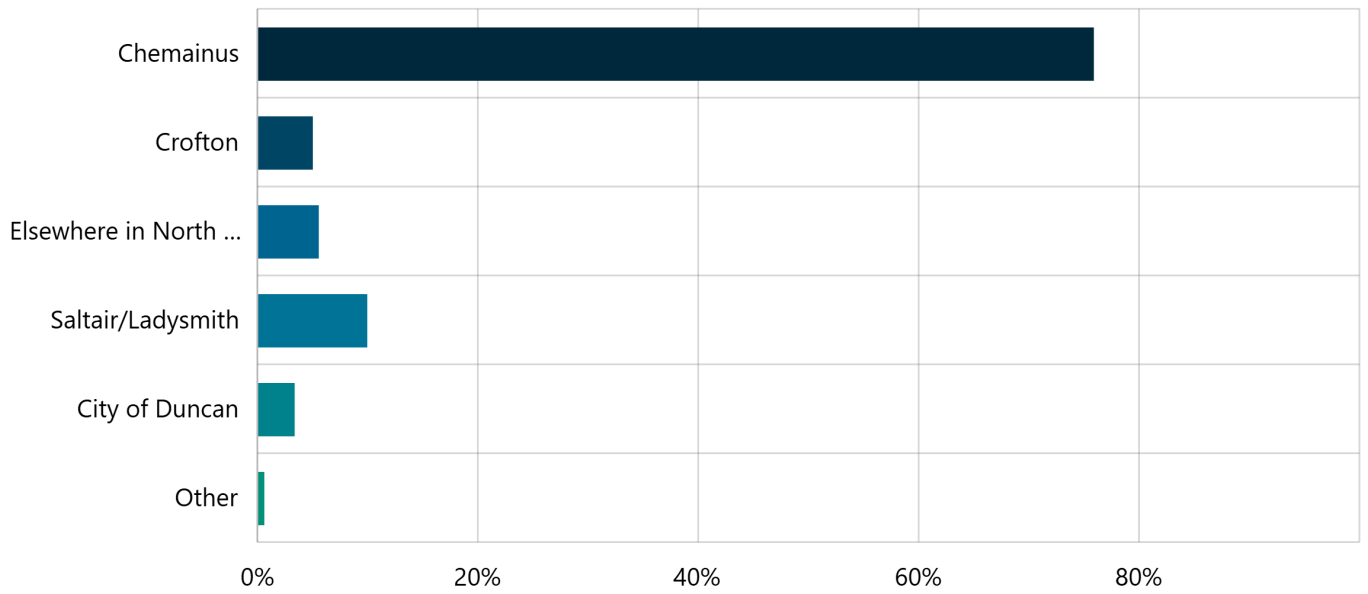
Multi Choice | Skipped: 2 | Answered: 180 (98.9%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Aggressive dogs	57.78%	104
Uncontrolled dogs (poor/no recall, poor socialization)	66.67%	120
Noise	11.67%	21
Feces or urine	62.78%	113
Lack of dog-specific fencing	41.11%	74
Lack of dog-specific amenities (benches, shade, water, etc.)	22.78%	41
Park user conflicts (sports users, non-dog users, other off-leash dogs, etc.)	55.00%	99
No concerns	7.22%	13
Other	10.56%	19

6. I live in Required

Select Box | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 182 (100%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Chemainus	75.82%	138
Crofton	4.95%	9
Elsewhere in North Cowichan	5.49%	10
Saltair/Ladysmith	9.89%	18
City of Duncan	3.30%	6
Other	0.55%	1
Total	100.00%	182

Connect North Cowichan

Report Type: Question and Answer Results Summary

Date Range: 12-06-2025 - 02-07-2025

Exported: 11-07-2025 10:52:41

Open

Have a question? Ask it here!

[Chemainus off-leash dog park](#)

13
Contributors

18
Contributions

Key Statistics

Top-level information about the activity.



18
Questions
13 duplicate questions



37
Question Votes
2.6 avg. votes / question



288
Question Views
16.0 avg. views / question



14
Answers
4 unanswered questions



21
Answer Votes
1.5 avg. votes / answer



5.2 days
Average Response Time

Contribution Summary

Summary of content contributed by participants including text-analysis, voting results and more.

Text Analysis (Questions)

Overall sentiment and key themes of participant contributions.

Sentiment



Positive
0% (0)

Mixed
5.56% (1)

Negative
38.89% (7)

Neutral
55.56% (10)

Unclassified
0% (0)

Tags

Enforcement

Location

Location idea

Rationale

Field use

Tags	Percent	Count
Enforcement	11.11%	2
Field use	11.11%	2
Location	5.56%	1

Location idea	16.67%	3
Rationale	5.56%	1