

Date: May 13, 2024

To: Mayor and Council

From: Councilor Elaine Cheung

Subject: Dog Walking on White Rock Promenade April to October between 5:30AM to 9AM

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council:

Direct staff to bring forward a bylaw amendment to facilitate a trial period for allowing *dogs* on the promenade from April to October, during the specific hours of 5:30 AM to 9 AM.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents information for consideration of implementing a bylaw permitting leashed dog walking on White Rock Promenade from April to October, specifically between 5:30 AM and 9 AM.

At the October 19th, 2020, Regular Council Meeting, Council endorsed allowing dogs on the promenade for a six-month period from October 1 to March 31 on a yearly basis after considering the results from the Dogs on the Promenade Pilot Project survey, which showed 67% of White Rock residents and visitors expressing support for dogs on the promenade during the off-season.

A recent 2024 survey conducted by Councilor Cheung asked the community if they support having dogs on the promenade from April to October and only between 5:30 AM and 9 AM. The survey results suggest considerable community interest, with 79% of respondents indicating support for the proposed motion.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Residents approached Councilor Cheung requesting that dogs be allowed on the promenade during the high season of April to October. Subsequently, Councilor Cheung presented the motion to Council for consideration.

At the regular council meeting on June 29, 2020, a trial program allowing dogs on the promenade from October 1, 2019, to April 31, 2020, was reviewed. The Dogs on the Promenade Task Force (DOTPTF) presented the following findings:

Feedback received included:

- Written correspondence: 70 positive (60%), 46 negative (40%).
- Emails: 113 positive (53%), 35 negative (35%), 24 neutral.
- Online Survey: 1,001 respondents: 555 White Rock (V4B), 196 South Surrey (V4A), 172 other Surrey, 76 Metro Vancouver.
 - Among White Rock respondents: 336 (61%) support dogs on Promenade in off-season, 201 (36%) do not support, 13 (2%) unsure, and 5 (1%) conditionally support.
 - Overall survey results: 67% supportive, 30% non-supportive, 2% unsure.

Other notable findings:

- Bylaws Patrols averaged 2 hours/day, 2-4 times/day.
- Impact on migratory birds: Fewer geese led to decreased geese droppings during the trial.
- They received 47 images of “dog feces,” but it turns out only 2 were actual dog feces; the rest were goose droppings
- Environmental impact: Low E.coli levels, no significant effect from dogs.
- Recommendations from the Dogs on the Promenade committee: 4 out of 5 recommend continuing the pilot.
- In summary, 61% of White Rock respondents support dogs on the promenade in the off-season.

At the October 19th, 2020 Regular Council Meeting, Council endorsed allowing dogs to be permitted on the promenade for a six month period October 1 to March 31 on a yearly basis

CURRENT 2024 SURVEY RESULTS

Councilor Cheung personally created an online survey to gauge the community on the idea, and it was posted on different Facebook community groups:

The White Rock/South Surrey Community Group
South Surrey/White Rock Community Group
South Rock Dog Owners
South Rock Locals
South Rock Moms
South Surrey Secrets

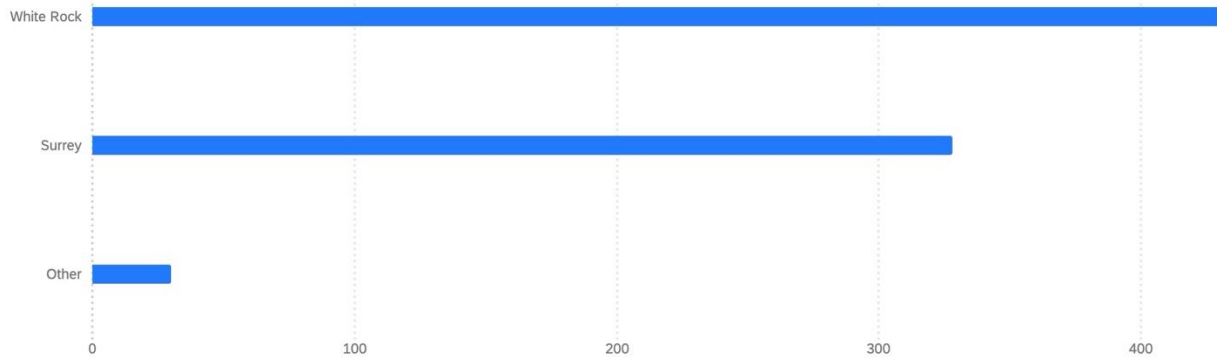
Councilor Cheung also posted the survey on her own personal Facebook account. The survey had three questions: where do you live, do you have dog(s), and would you like to have dogs on the promenade between April – October between 5:30AM -9AM. The survey was posted on Facebook on April 18.

The results as of May 4th:

Total Respondents: 795.

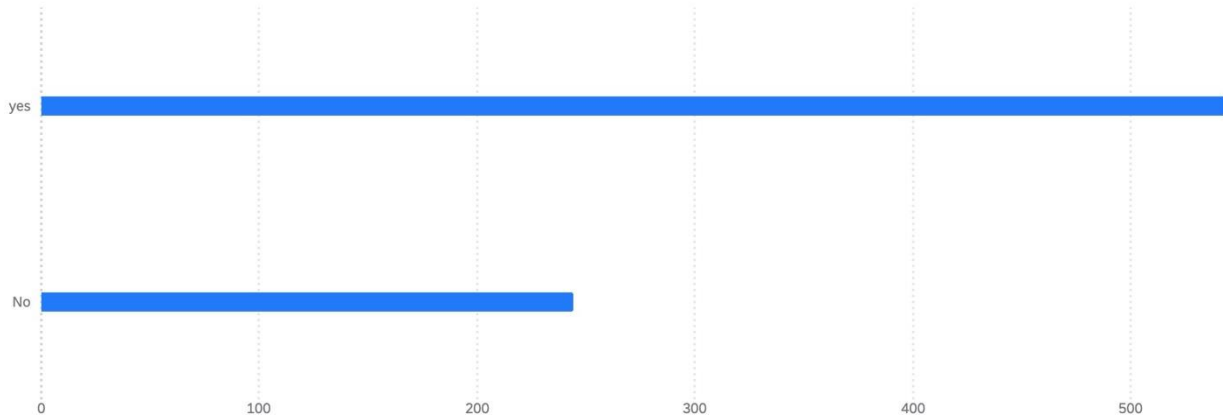
Question 1: Where do you live?

White Rock Residents 430 (55%), Surrey Residents 328 (42%), other 30 (4%)



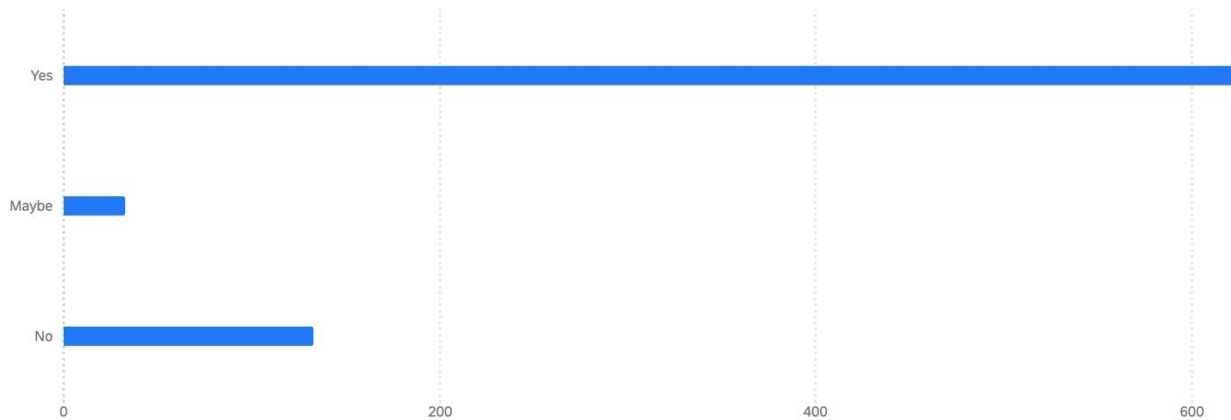
Question 2: Do you have dog(s)?
544 (69%), without dogs 244 (31%)

Do you have dog(s)? 788 ⓘ



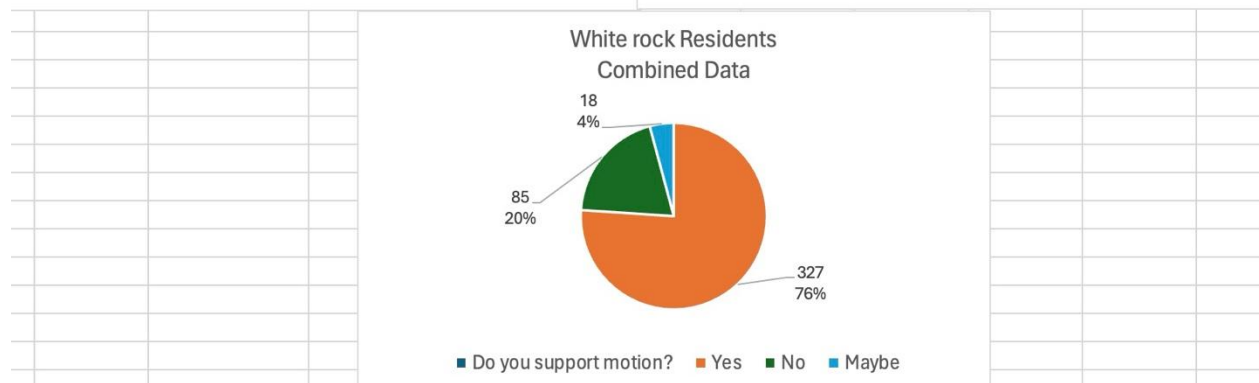
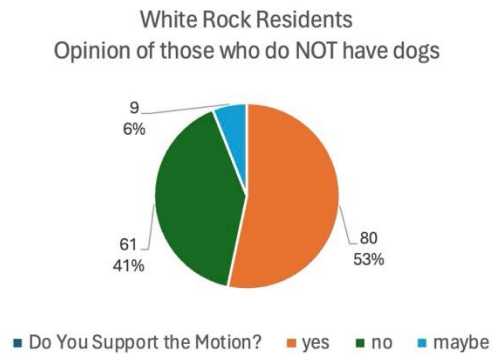
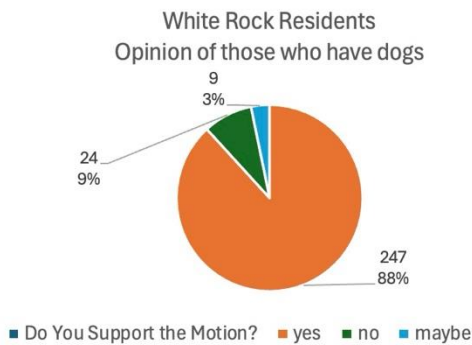
Question 3: Do you support allowing dogs to walk on White Rock Promenade on leash during the months of April to October and only between the hours of 5:30AM - 9AM?
622 (79%), Maybe 33 (4%), No 133 (17%)

Do you support allowing dogs to walk on White Rock Promenade on leash during the months of April to October and only between... 788 ⓘ



Just White Rock Residents Results:

Total White Rock Residents: 430
 Yes: 327 (76%), No 85 (20%), Maybe 18 (4%)



ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **Livable Environment:**
 - Promotes community engagement and social interaction among residents.

- Provides designated hours for dog walking to enhance livability and inclusivity.
- **Vibrant Waterfront:**
 - Increases foot traffic and activity along White Rock Promenade during specified hours.
 - Supports local businesses and contributes to the economic prosperity of the waterfront area.
- **Healthy Lifestyles:**
 - Encourages regular physical activity through dog walking, promoting better health outcomes for residents.
 - Provides an accessible and enjoyable way for residents to incorporate exercise into their daily routines.
- **Community Connectivity:**
 - Strengthens community bonds by creating shared spaces for residents to interact and connect.
 - Fosters a sense of belonging and enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

CONCLUSION

The creation of a bylaw permitting leashed dog walking on White Rock Promenade from April to October, restricted to the hours between 5:30 AM and 9 AM, aligns with the city's priorities of fostering a livable environment and supporting a prosperous waterfront. This initiative enhances community connectivity, promotes economic prosperity, and encourages healthy lifestyles among residents. By implementing this bylaw, the city demonstrates its commitment to creating an inclusive and vibrant community for all.

APPENDIX

Written Comments from Survey *Comments captured in Facebook posts under the link to the survey*

- Will fill this out. That would be great and it's not too busy at that time anyhow!
- No. Kids play on grass. Some people fear dogs. Dogs sniff & jump. Older people with walkers/cane's can trip or get tangled in leashes. I love dogs - lots of other places to walk & exercise them. Keeping them on a tight leash is cruel.
- I don't have a dog but I think dogs should be allowed on the promenade on a leash as long as the owners have the respect of picking up after their furry ones and controlling them.
- Filled out the survey. Interesting, reading all these comments. I think some people are forgetting that the time that you're asking for is between 5:30 AM and 9 AM. I think it's great to put this restriction for time and not annoying the general public with the ask as most people are not out at this hour. Great idea and a great way to balance, pet owners and non-pet owners with time constraint option.
- I don't have a dog but I wish that this city was more dog inclusive. Look at Whistler where dogs are included everywhere. I think it's brutal that a few people who don't pick up after their animals have ruined it for everyone else.
- We don't kick the people with bad behaviour off the promenade. I think dogs should be free to walk at the beach year round while on a leash. There should be dog bags readily available near the garbage cans at the beach. I wish the hours could extend beyond that, but it's a start.
- I'm happy to live in a community where one of the biggest problems is whether or not dogs can walk on the beach. 12 years ago we ran an event 'Pooch Parade on the Peninsula' that showcased how many dog owners could walk the promenade safely and respectfully. It went without incident, we had a clean up crew that found two poops that may have been there beforehand . It was shortly after that that winter walks with dogs were allowed on the promenade.
- I support the morning time as so many seniors benefit from exercising their dogs and I believe the vast majority are respectful of others.
- Why not all day?
- If dogs are leashed I can't understand why they shouldn't be allowed. Unfortunately too many dog owners disregard signs stating dogs must be leashed. Time for all municipalities to step up patrols and increase fines.
- Thankyou for considering this!
- A great compromise!
- Done. And I'd even say open it up completely. If there were dog walkers all year round WR wouldn't have to worry so much about lone assailants on the abandoned promenade. Safety!
- Done. Hope it goes through!
- Great idea Elaine but way too early for me.
- I'd like it until 10.
- I'd prefer to petition that we can walk our dogs there on a leash, all the time. Not just from 5am to 930am.

- I said no to the 5-9am. Otherwise I'm a yes
- Done! Thank you for doing this
- they should be allowed all the time not just certain hours, imo. Good luck!
- My 2 cents as a dog owner...before 10am is fine year-round. The number of people in the summer makes it just too much of a headache to walk them down there past that. Would love to continue running with my dog in the morning though.
- Why are dog owners discriminated against in this area. Why can't we walk them anytime?
- I am not sure that your survey will get at the information you are trying to get at. If it had asked "would you support dogs having some hours of access to the boardwalk during the summer months?", I would have replied 'yes'. However, I am not keen on 5:30 am to 9 am as that is waaaaay too early for me and my pup, so I replied 'no'. Which makes it seem I am not supportive of dogs on the boardwalk, when in fact I am. I think they should have access all the time.
- I love this. It's a baby step to dogs being allowed! We're closer to Crescent and this a great idea for that as well!
- Yes please I miss my morning dog walks there
- I've done the survey but this still wouldn't help me as I am not up and out that early for a dog walk. This doesn't help me so while I voted for it I don't feel it strikes a balance for all those who aren't early risers.
- I wished there was a question for whether we would use it or not and for timing so the survey could return a fuller snapshot of whether there is a bigger solution that might work for more.
- why not all year! Co-exist with animals!
- I'd love that!!!
- Thank you for trying to modernize the town
- What I don't understand is why all dog owners suffer. The only ones that should be eliminated from these areas is irresponsible dog owners who don't pick up after their pets, aggressive dogs and people who do not keep their dog on a leash.
- irresponsible people in our society always spoil it for the rest of us. Too many dog owners seem to think that rules don't apply to them. Problem is the lack of enforcement and most people know that bylaw is rarely patrolling the promenade and almost zero fines were levied against offenders, even during the dogs on promenade trial period. It is a very contentious issue in our community but dog owners have to realize that not everyone likes dogs for many differing reasons- fears, allergies, nasty confrontations, etc. These residents and taxpayers deserve a place where they know that they will not encounter dogs, just as dog owners feel they should be allowed anywhere they want to be with their pets. Personally, I thought the recommendation by a now former staff member at the end of the trial period was a great compromise. He suggested that the West Beach area should allow dogs year round and that East Beach should be dog free. I thought that as an adjunct to the staff recommendation, a water doggie park at Bayview Park would be worth pursuing. Unfortunately, the members of the task force, who were dog owners didn't want to give up their "turf" since some lived in East Beach and others in West. They didn't/couldn't agree and the suggestion got axed before it even had any chance for success.

- I don't think there should ever be a limit of dogs on promenade. I think you should only be a limit from people that don't pick up after the dogs and for aggressive dogs as well as people that don't have the dogs on a leash but that's just my opinion.
- I have responded to the survey, but I honestly think the times are challenging for anyone who works. Rather than a morning, why not after 7PM? I'm not really in the loop with why people out here are so opposed to dogs at any time as long as they are leashed. If dog owners are responsible, they aren't going to take their pups into a super crowded area, I'm sure they would only go during a quieter time anyways. How about restricting the length of the leash to force owners to be closer to their dogs to control them? I can't stand those long retractable leashes myself. LOL I hope this pans out for whoever can make that time slot, but hope the slot gets reconsidered.
- No. Plenty of places to walk and not get tangled in leashes on the promenade thank you
- I've completed survey. And I fail to understand why this has always been an issue. Just let people take their dogs along for the walk. Anytime!! I don't have a dog but don't have a problem with it whatsoever.