

Mayor

Responding Candidates:

[Jamie Atkinson](#)

[Darrell Brown](#)

[Kevin Clarke](#)

[Mohamad Kaaki](#)

[Georgios Kalkounis](#)

[Michael Lamoureux](#)

[Lyll Sanders](#)

[Josh Thompson](#)

[Joshua William Thompson](#)

Jamie Atkinson	
Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Mildly agree I support meaningful implementation of the strategy, but I think success should be measured by safer parks and better compliance, not simply by how many tickets are issued. Toronto estimates that there may be more than 600,000 dogs in the city. At that scale, this cannot be solved through enforcement alone. We need good off-leash spaces, responsible ownership, education, licensing, environmental protection and credible enforcement working together. Dogs need exercise, stimulation and opportunities to socialize. People using our parks also have a reasonable expectation that dogs outside designated off-leash areas will be under control. Good policy should respect both.
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree Environmentally Significant Areas and sensitive natural spaces need protection. Where repeated off-leash activity is harming habitat, disturbing wildlife or creating persistent conflicts, appropriate fencing and targeted enforcement can be justified. But fencing should be thoughtful rather than automatic. We should understand where people and dogs are actually moving, protect important wildlife corridors and park functions, and provide reasonable alternatives for dog owners. If we tell people where their dogs cannot run, we also have a responsibility to provide well-designed places where they can.

3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Neither agree nor disagree Education is essential, but education alone is not enough. I also think our education needs to become much more practical. A person may have walked the same dog safely hundreds of times and develop understandable trust in that animal. But the public environment is unpredictable: another dog, wildlife, a child, traffic, noise or fear can produce behaviour the owner has never seen before. We should teach more than simply "use a leash." Owners should understand loose-leash training, recall, properly fitted collars and harnesses, and how to select equipment appropriate to the size, strength and behaviour of their dog. For dogs that may bolt or escape from equipment, a backup connection or two points of attachment can provide additional security. Hands-free or waist systems may help some handlers, although they are not appropriate for every dog or every person. Dogs with a known bite risk may require properly fitted muzzles and additional precautions. Paw protection can also be useful in extreme heat, ice or road salt, although that is primarily an animal-welfare issue rather than a containment measure. The objective should be to give people the knowledge and tools to prevent something going wrong before enforcement becomes necessary. At the same time, the physical difficulty of controlling a dog cannot transfer responsibility to everyone else. Other people should not have to accept the risk of an uncontrolled animal because an owner believes their dog will behave.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly disagree Enforcement needs to be credible, but I do not believe that dramatically increasing patrols across Toronto is, by itself, a financially sustainable solution. Toronto estimates there may be more than 600,000 dogs and has more than 1,500 parks. Even a substantial increase in officers could observe only a very small share of daily dog activity.

	I would concentrate enforcement where it can make the greatest difference: repeated problem locations, environmentally sensitive areas, dangerous or uncontrolled behaviour, serious complaints and persistent non-compliance. Visible enforcement at the right place and time can reinforce the rules. But prevention, education, licensing, good infrastructure and responsible dog handling can affect behaviour every day, including when an officer is nowhere nearby. There should be consequences for serious or repeated disregard of the rules. The public should not bear the consequences of an uncontrolled animal. But the objective should be compliance and safety, not attempting to police every dog walk in Toronto.
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Mildly agree By-law officers need practical tools to do their jobs. If an officer witnesses an offence but cannot effectively proceed because someone simply refuses to identify themselves, that is a legitimate enforcement problem. But I would separate that specific problem from the much larger question of granting broader Special Constable powers. Additional authority may make an individual enforcement encounter more effective. It does not solve the underlying scale problem of more than 1,500 parks and an estimated 600,000-plus dogs. Before expanding those powers, I would want the City to clearly establish what additional authority is actually necessary, what safeguards would apply, what it would cost and whether a narrower solution could accomplish the same purpose. The principle should be proportionate authority for a clearly demonstrated need—not broader powers simply because they are available.

6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	I want our off-leash areas to be places that dogs and their owners actually want to use. If the legal option is tiny, muddy, poorly drained, poorly maintained, difficult to reach or does not provide enough room for a dog to genuinely exercise, we should not be surprised when some people look elsewhere. I would support secure fencing and double-gated entrances, good drainage, durable surfaces, shade, seating, waste facilities, accessible pathways and water where practical. Where space permits, smaller-dog areas and layouts that provide enough distance for dogs to run should also be considered. Location matters as much as design. Toronto should progressively build a network where reasonable access to an off-leash area is part of neighbourhood park planning rather than something available only to fortunate neighbourhoods. I would also use these spaces as places for education. The City, veterinarians, trainers and animal organizations could provide information about licensing, recall training, loose-leash walking, properly fitted harnesses, escape-resistant equipment and safe interactions between dogs. A well-designed off-leash network is not simply an amenity for dog owners. It is part of the infrastructure that makes leash rules elsewhere more reasonable and easier to follow.
7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this	If Council establishes a rule and directs enforcement, there needs to be a credible way of enforcing it. But I do not think the financially responsible answer is to assume that we can place enough officers in enough parks to observe every violation. The scale matters. Toronto estimates more than 600,000 dogs across a city with more than 1,500 parks. The City therefore needs an enforcement model designed around risk and results.

discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	I would use complaint and enforcement data to identify recurring hotspots and concentrate resources on environmentally sensitive areas, locations with repeated conflicts, dangerous or uncontrolled animals and persistent offenders. Periodic visible enforcement can also remind people that the rules are real without requiring permanent patrols. At the same time, I would examine why illegal off-leash activity persists beside a legal off-leash area. Is the legal area too small? Is the surface poor? Is it overcrowded? Are entrances badly located? Does the adjacent park offer something the designated space does not? Sometimes enforcement is the answer. Sometimes the design is telling us something. With limited City resources, I want us to address both. Enforcement should protect the public when rules are ignored, while better design, licensing, education and responsible handling reduce how often enforcement is necessary in the first place.
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Dog licensing is important because it helps reunite lost animals with their families, gives the City better information about the population it is planning services for, and helps fund Toronto Animal Services. But when compliance is this low, I think we should ask why before simply increasing penalties. Licensing should be almost effortless. I would look at stronger integration with veterinarians, microchipping, adoptions and other points where people already interact with animal services; simple online registration; QR codes in parks and off-leash areas; automatic email and text reminders; and potentially multi-year or automatic renewal options where legally and administratively practical. Off-leash areas are also an obvious place for occasional licensing and education initiatives because dogs using those facilities are already required to be licensed.

	Most importantly, people should understand what they are paying for. If owners can see that licensing supports shelters, veterinary care, lost animals and safer neighbourhoods, the licence becomes easier to understand as part of responsible ownership rather than simply another fee. I would protect the existing funding that licensing provides to Toronto Animal Services. If substantially better compliance creates additional revenue, I would examine whether some of that incremental revenue could strengthen the broader system—better owner education, improved off-leash facilities and targeted compliance work—without taking resources away from shelter and animal-care services. The long-term goal should be a system where responsible ownership is easier, safer and more understandable for everyone: the dog owner, the dog and the people sharing the city with them.
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Darrell Brown

Questions

Responses

1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy

Strongly agree
There is no point establishing rules if they will not be enforced.

2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.

Mildly agree
There has to be common sense applied. Fencing where the assessment makes sense that fencing is needed.

3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.

Strongly disagree
Education cannot be the sole component. There has to be enforcement tools in place.

4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.

Mildly agree
There is a problem with bylaw enforcement generally. This is likely a resource problem that has to be investigated further. In principle, we need adequate bylaw enforcement staffing.

5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.

Mildly agree

6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?

There has to be adequate fencing and protocols to ensure that dogs are not released unleashed outside the fenced areas.

7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	Yes
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Licensing is important. There has to be outreach, education and where there is identified inappropriate behaviour, part of the inquiry should be about licensing and there should be penalties applied in the absence of compliance.

Kevin Clarke	
Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Strongly agree I am Running for MAYOR not City Councillor
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree I am Running For Mayor Not City Councillor
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Mildly agree I am Running For Mayor Not City Councillor,I mildly agree due to the beliefs that enforcement and penalties should be considered
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly agree
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Strongly agree I am running for Mayor Not city councillor
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	whatever is needed for the safety of the public and wellbeing of the animals

7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	In a manner that would benefit the public's needs in this matter, yet I am running for Mayor Not City Councillor
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	I am Running for Mayor Not city Councillor yet I believe it is very important to try for 90+ % of pets licenced

Mohamad Kaaki

Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Strongly agree Council-approved strategies must be followed by meaningful implementation, clear accountability, and measurable results.
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree Protecting environmentally significant areas and community green spaces is essential. Enforcement should be fair, while providing safe and appropriate designated off-leash areas for dogs.
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Mildly disagree Education is important, but it cannot solve off-leash challenges alone. We also need well-designed dog areas, responsible ownership, and fair enforcement of City rules.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Mildly agree Enforcement is important, but education, clear signage and sufficient designated off-leash areas should come first. Ticketing should focus on repeated or unsafe violations.
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Mildly agree I support effective by-law enforcement, including off-leash rules, while ensuring that any expanded authority is accompanied by proper training, accountability, and respect for residents' rights.
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	I would improve off-leash areas through better design, secure fencing, proper lighting, waste stations, clear signage, regular maintenance, and separate areas where appropriate. Good design, education and responsible enforcement can make these spaces safer and more enjoyable for dog owners, other park users and nearby residents.

7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	If taxpayers are investing significantly in off-leash areas, the City must also ensure that the rules are respected. I would support dedicated and adequately funded enforcement, particularly in parks with recurring problems, combined with education and clear signage. Enforcement should be fair, consistent and focused on public safety rather than simply issuing fines.
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Dog licensing is important for responsible pet ownership and for supporting animal services. I would make licensing simpler, more affordable and easier to access, while increasing public awareness of where licensing fees go. The goal should be cooperation and education first, with fair enforcement when necessary. Revenue should help improve animal shelters, clean and safe off-leash areas, and responsible pet ownership across Toronto.

Georgios Kalkounis

Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Mildly agree My agreement is conditional. I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill Council's 2020 Off-Leash Strategy provided that implementation is supported by a simplified, efficient process, and that both structural and operational costs are clearly defined, justified, and manageable. Any advocacy will be subject to the City's financial condition, long-term fiscal projections, and the ability to deliver the Strategy without creating new administrative burdens, cost overruns, or unfunded operational pressures.
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Mildly agree My agreement is conditional. I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill Council's 2020 Off-Leash Strategy provided that implementation is supported by a simplified, efficient process, and that both structural and operational costs are clearly defined, justified, and manageable.
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Strongly disagree I do not believe that education alone can resolve the City's off-leash dog challenges. While education is an important component, it is insufficient without clear rules, consistent enforcement, operational capacity, and properly designed off-leash infrastructure. Sustainable solutions require a balanced approach combining education, enforcement, environmental protection, standardized OLA design, and long-term operational planning.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly agree I strongly agree, based on the principle of minimal effective control. Increased by-law patrols and ticketing are necessary to deter off-leash activity, but they must be applied in a targeted, efficient, and proportional manner.

	The goal is not maximum enforcement — it is minimal enforcement that is effective, predictable, and fiscally sustainable.
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Mildly agree I conditionally agree, based on the principle of minimal effective control. Increased by-law patrols and ticketing are necessary to deter off-leash activity, but they must be applied in a targeted, efficient, and proportional manner. The objective is not maximum enforcement; it is minimal enforcement that is effective, predictable, and fiscally sustainable.
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	As future MAYOR, I will support a simplified yet effective approach to improving off-leash areas. This includes: Clear rules and signage so expectations are easy to understand Targeted by-law patrols based on minimal effective control Consistent maintenance and design standards so OLAs function safely Practical education focused on responsible use Efficient processes that avoid unnecessary costs or administrative burden My goal is to ensure off-leash areas are safe, predictable, and responsibly used, without adding complexity or unsustainable costs to the City.
7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	To eliminate the current confusion, I support a simple, direct, cost-effective, long-term plan that is clear to understand, easy to comply with, and straightforward to enforce. Responsible use improves when rules are simple and users can demonstrate effective practices by example. Introducing competitive procurement to reduce capital and service-delivery costs — potentially cutting related expenses by at least half, depending on market competition Setting clear, simplified rules that reduce ambiguity and improve compliance Applying minimal effective control — targeted, efficient by-law patrols focused on problem areas Aligning enforcement funding with Council direction, ensuring enforcement is not left unfunded Integrating enforcement into existing MLS/PFR operations to avoid new administrative structures Using data-driven deployment so patrols occur where they have the greatest impact

	Ensuring long-term fiscal sustainability by tying enforcement levels to multi-year budget projections This approach keeps enforcement lean, predictable, and effective, while ensuring taxpayers' investments in off-leash areas are protected and responsibly used.
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Dog licensing is important because it directly supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could help fund improvements to off-leash areas and targeted by-law enforcement. With over 600,000 dogs in Toronto but only 8–11% licensed, the current system is not effective. As MAYOR, I would improve licensing rates through a simple, direct, cost-effective plan that is easy to understand, comply with, and enforce: - Simplify the licensing process so it is fast, clear, and accessible - Use competitive procurement to reduce off-leash areas structure, administrative and service-delivery costs — potentially cutting related expenses by at least half - Apply minimal effective control by focusing enforcement on chronic non-compliance, not blanket ticketing - Link licensing to visible benefits such as improved off-leash areas, better signage, and targeted patrols - Promote responsible ownership through practical education and community examples - Integrate licensing checks into existing MLS/PFR operations to avoid new bureaucracy - Ensure long-term fiscal sustainability by aligning licensing revenue with multi-year projections for shelters, OLAs, and enforcement This approach keeps licensing simple, predictable, and cost-efficient, while ensuring that dog-related services are properly funded and responsibly managed.

Michael Lamoureux	
Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Strongly agree
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Strongly disagree
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly agree
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Strongly agree
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	
7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this	Add a budget for enforcement. License fees should cover the entire budget for new parks and enforcement or no new parks.

discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Public notices in dog parks, social media advertising, easy on-line registration and park enforcement patrols

Lyall Sanders

Questions

Responses

1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy

Strongly agree
There must be designated areas for dogs to be off-leash and education for dog owners as to where they are.

2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.

Strongly agree

3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.

Strongly disagree

4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.

Mildly agree

5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.

Mildly agree

6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?

We need to make sure that owners know where the locations are and that they are the only places, besides private residences, where off-leash is allowed.

7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this

Residents need to be fully informed of the rules, and of the consequences for not following them. Officers should be assigned to monitor and address the issue.

discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	It helps to properly assess the needs of the community and make sure that dog owners are informed of proper care and the regulations.

Josh Thompson

Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Strongly agree Support clear rules and real enforcement of the City's off-leash strategy, with fiscal discipline on resources.
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree Illegal off-leash activity harms parks, wildlife, and neighbours; use clear rules and real enforcement.
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Strongly disagree Education matters, but illegal off-leash activity also requires clear rules and real enforcement.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly agree Real enforcement is needed where required; use resources responsibly and focus on clear rules.
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Strongly agree Clear authority and accountability can improve public safety and consistent enforcement.
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	Maintain safe, clean and accessible off-leash areas, with clear rules, responsible maintenance and real enforcement so they work for dog owners, neighbours and parks.

7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	The City should prioritize existing resources, audit spending and use fiscal discipline before requesting more money. Targeted enforcement and maintenance should be funded transparently where needed.
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Licensing is important because it supports enforcement and responsible ownership. Make compliance simple and affordable, improve outreach, and use the revenue transparently for animal services and safe parks.

Joshua William Thompson	
Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Strongly agree
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Strongly disagree
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly agree
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Strongly agree
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	I would support clear rules and real enforcement of leash laws where required, so off-leash areas are used responsibly and parks, wildlife, and neighbours are protected.
7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this	I would treat real enforcement as a public-safety responsibility and use fiscal discipline to ensure City funding and enforcement keep pace with investments in off-leash parks. The City should fund and track enforcement of its clear rules.

discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Dog licensing is important for public safety and responsible pet ownership. I would support clear licensing rules and real enforcement, with transparent use of licensing revenues to support animal shelters and by-law enforcement.

Questions	Responses
1. As Councillor, I will advocate for staff to meaningfully fulfill the directions given by Council as part of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy	Mildly agree I support meaningful implementation of the strategy, but I think success should be measured by safer parks and better compliance, not simply by how many tickets are issued. Toronto estimates that there may be more than 600,000 dogs in the city. At that scale, this cannot be solved through enforcement alone. We need good off-leash spaces, responsible ownership, education, licensing, environmental protection and credible enforcement working together. Dogs need exercise, stimulation and opportunities to socialize. People using our parks also have a reasonable expectation that dogs outside designated off-leash areas will be under control. Good policy should respect both.
2. As Councillor, I will support fencing and enforcement where needed to ensure that Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces are protected from illegal off-leash activity.	Strongly agree Environmentally Significant Areas and sensitive natural spaces need protection. Where repeated off-leash activity is harming habitat, disturbing wildlife or creating persistent conflicts, appropriate fencing and targeted enforcement can be justified. But fencing should be thoughtful rather than automatic. We should understand where people and dogs are actually moving, protect important wildlife corridors and park functions, and provide reasonable alternatives for dog owners. If we tell people where their dogs cannot run, we also have a responsibility to provide well-designed places where they can.
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Neither agree nor disagree Education is essential, but education alone is not enough.

	I also think our education needs to become much more practical. A person may have walked the same dog safely hundreds of times and develop understandable trust in that animal. But the public environment is unpredictable: another dog, wildlife, a child, traffic, noise or fear can produce behaviour the owner has never seen before. We should teach more than simply "use a leash." Owners should understand loose-leash training, recall, properly fitted collars and harnesses, and how to select equipment appropriate to the size, strength and behaviour of their dog. For dogs that may bolt or escape from equipment, a backup connection or two points of attachment can provide additional security. Hands-free or waist systems may help some handlers, although they are not appropriate for every dog or every person. Dogs with a known bite risk may require properly fitted muzzles and additional precautions. Paw protection can also be useful in extreme heat, ice or road salt, although that is primarily an animal-welfare issue rather than a containment measure. The objective should be to give people the knowledge and tools to prevent something going wrong before enforcement becomes necessary. At the same time, the physical difficulty of controlling a dog cannot transfer responsibility to everyone else. Other people should not have to accept the risk of an uncontrolled animal because an owner believes their dog will behave.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly disagree Enforcement needs to be credible, but I do not believe that dramatically increasing patrols across Toronto is, by itself, a financially sustainable solution. Toronto estimates there may be more than 600,000 dogs and has more than 1,500 parks. Even a substantial increase in officers could observe only a very small share of daily dog activity. I would concentrate enforcement where it can make the greatest difference: repeated problem locations, environmentally sensitive areas, dangerous or

	uncontrolled behaviour, serious complaints and persistent non-compliance. Visible enforcement at the right place and time can reinforce the rules. But prevention, education, licensing, good infrastructure and responsible dog handling can affect behaviour every day, including when an officer is nowhere nearby. There should be consequences for serious or repeated disregard of the rules. The public should not bear the consequences of an uncontrolled animal. But the objective should be compliance and safety, not attempting to police every dog walk in Toronto.
5. As Councillor, I will support by-law officers having Special Constable status to give officers the authority to require ID and to facilitate the enforcement of all by-laws, including off-leash by-laws.	Mildly agree By-law officers need practical tools to do their jobs. If an officer witnesses an offence but cannot effectively proceed because someone simply refuses to identify themselves, that is a legitimate enforcement problem. But I would separate that specific problem from the much larger question of granting broader Special Constable powers. Additional authority may make an individual enforcement encounter more effective. It does not solve the underlying scale problem of more than 1,500 parks and an estimated 600,000-plus dogs. Before expanding those powers, I would want the City to clearly establish what additional authority is actually necessary, what safeguards would apply, what it would cost and whether a narrower solution could accomplish the same purpose. The principle should be proportionate authority for a clearly demonstrated need—not broader powers simply because they are available.
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	I want our off-leash areas to be places that dogs and their owners actually want to use. If the legal option is tiny, muddy, poorly drained, poorly maintained, difficult to

	reach or does not provide enough room for a dog to genuinely exercise, we should not be surprised when some people look elsewhere. I would support secure fencing and double-gated entrances, good drainage, durable surfaces, shade, seating, waste facilities, accessible pathways and water where practical. Where space permits, smaller-dog areas and layouts that provide enough distance for dogs to run should also be considered. Location matters as much as design. Toronto should progressively build a network where reasonable access to an off-leash area is part of neighbourhood park planning rather than something available only to fortunate neighbourhoods. I would also use these spaces as places for education. The City, veterinarians, trainers and animal organizations could provide information about licensing, recall training, loose-leash walking, properly fitted harnesses, escape-resistant equipment and safe interactions between dogs. A well-designed off-leash network is not simply an amenity for dog owners. It is part of the infrastructure that makes leash rules elsewhere more reasonable and easier to follow.
7. Even where off-leash areas exist, we see illegal off-leash activity in adjacent parkland. Taxpayers fund the installation of new dog parks (at a current estimated budget of \$535,000 per park) and the maintenance of existing off-leash parks (\$9.5 million budgeted over the next 10 years) but the City has not included specific additional funds for off-leash enforcement as directed by Council. As Councillor, how would you address this discrepancy? (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation, 2025)	If Council establishes a rule and directs enforcement, there needs to be a credible way of enforcing it. But I do not think the financially responsible answer is to assume that we can place enough officers in enough parks to observe every violation. The scale matters. Toronto estimates more than 600,000 dogs across a city with more than 1,500 parks. The City therefore needs an enforcement model designed around risk and results. I would use complaint and enforcement data to identify recurring hotspots and concentrate resources on environmentally sensitive areas, locations with repeated conflicts, dangerous or uncontrolled animals and persistent offenders. Periodic visible enforcement can also remind people that the rules are real without requiring permanent patrols.

	At the same time, I would examine why illegal off-leash activity persists beside a legal off-leash area. Is the legal area too small? Is the surface poor? Is it overcrowded? Are entrances badly located? Does the adjacent park offer something the designated space does not? Sometimes enforcement is the answer. Sometimes the design is telling us something. With limited City resources, I want us to address both. Enforcement should protect the public when rules are ignored, while better design, licensing, education and responsible handling reduce how often enforcement is necessary in the first place.
8. Based on the City's estimate of over 600,000 dogs in the City of Toronto, (City of Toronto, General Manager, Parks and Recreation) and the number of licenses issued, only 8-11% of Toronto dogs are licensed (City of Toronto, Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards). The money from licensing supports Toronto's Animal Shelters and could be used to support improving off-leash areas and providing support for by-law enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	Dog licensing is important because it helps reunite lost animals with their families, gives the City better information about the population it is planning services for, and helps fund Toronto Animal Services. But when compliance is this low, I think we should ask why before simply increasing penalties. Licensing should be almost effortless. I would look at stronger integration with veterinarians, microchipping, adoptions and other points where people already interact with animal services; simple online registration; QR codes in parks and off-leash areas; automatic email and text reminders; and potentially multi-year or automatic renewal options where legally and administratively practical. Off-leash areas are also an obvious place for occasional licensing and education initiatives because dogs using those facilities are already required to be licensed. Most importantly, people should understand what they are paying for. If owners can see that licensing supports shelters, veterinary care, lost animals and safer neighbourhoods, the licence becomes easier to understand as part of responsible ownership rather than simply another fee.

	I would protect the existing funding that licensing provides to Toronto Animal Services. If substantially better compliance creates additional revenue, I would examine whether some of that incremental revenue could strengthen the broader system—better owner education, improved off-leash facilities and targeted compliance work—without taking resources away from shelter and animal-care services. The long-term goal should be a system where responsible ownership is easier, safer and more understandable for everyone: the dog owner, the dog and the people sharing the city with them.
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