

Ward 14 - Toronto-Danforth

Responding Candidates:

[George Fawcett](#)

[Devyn Stackhouse](#)

[Jason Stevens](#)

[Denise Walcott](#)

George Fawcett

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.	Mildly agree I would support enforcement in these areas and would consider fencing in certain high-priority areas. However, I would be concerned with overly fencing some of our green spaces.
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Mildly disagree I believe that expansion of the OLA network would be the main driver of a solution. Unfortunately in many cases, I believe that dog owners are aware of the rules but choose to disregard them due to not having a convenient OLA within walking distance. I am a dog-lover and former dog owner so do not mean to sound overly harsh in saying that. Perhaps there is an opportunity for education in terms of encouraging people to look at things from other perspectives. For example, you may not consider your dog running loose to be scary in any way, but that viewpoint may not be shared by a child or someone with past trauma, who have a right to enjoy our green spaces.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Mildly agree I would support this, but my hope and belief would be that a signal from the city that it will do so and/or an initial enforcement blitz, combined longer-term with the expansion of the OLA network, would greatly decrease the need. Ultimately, ticketing/fines makes life less affordable for people no matter how much we may disagree with their actions, and so it should be a last resort whenever possible.

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 believe that due in part to the size of our wards in Toronto, many residents feel increasingly disengaged from their city councillors and our local politics. The first step would be directly engaging with dog owners and users of OLAs to understand their concerns and how the areas could be improved. A couple of potential areas for improvement include better drainage and vegetation to reduce the muddiness of the areas as well as better lighting, but I would first spend some time listening to constituents and putting together a list of their priorities.
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)	This is understandable in a sense as I know that some dog owners fear for their dog's safety when encountering bigger, more aggressive dogs. I think we should look at the possibility of having separate fenced areas in more OLAs for smaller or more timid dogs, as well as more education about how all dog owners could help create a welcoming and safe environment for all dogs and owners.
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	I believe it is very important part of responsible pet ownership. This issue won't be solved right away given the current numbers, but over time we can start to increase them. I would start with a public education campaign explaining the benefits of licensing for dogs, their owners, and the general public, as well as how those funds are spent, including recent accomplishments. If people can start to see more clearly that their fees go to projects such as OLA improvements, they may be more motivated to license their pets. As well, when additional enforcement of illegal off-leash activity may be required, we must ensure that bylaw officers are also checking the registration status of the pet.

enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	
--	--

Devyn Stackhouse

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 A literal pet peeve
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 This isn't worded clearly. I support the spirit of it, but I might have issues with the details around requiring ID
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'm running as an animal advocate, I want to have a large conversation about the animal residents and their treatment in the city. One of my core platform points is to extend the right to freedom from harm to Toronto's animal residents, and establish a \$15,000 penalty for violating it. The city has an enforcement problem in general, but the blind spot around animal welfare is something I will not ignore in office.

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)	This would be part of a greater enforcement strategy. I don't think our fines are high enough in general in the city, and I also am not against using fines as revenue. Given the enforcement blitz I'm spiritually aligned with, education and policing across by-law categories are necessary.
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?	If you want a high licensing rate, make it free. And if you want revenue, make it expensive. You can't have both. I would not divert any money from animal shelters to off-leash area improvement. I will not raise licensing fees. The improvement of off-leash dog areas is one of the few areas where I see corporations playing a benevolent role. Naming rights and ad spaces are more ethical sources of funds than scraping from elsewhere. In a perfect world, corporate sponsors are amply available and we can reduce licensing fees.

Jason Stevens

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.	Mildly agree
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?	the bylaw enforcement and education combined should be a good path

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)	council has been budget tight and im working on ways to increase torontos budget by stopping the Premiers wasteful SPA and other billions of a fiasco
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 believe it's worth considering

Denise Walcott

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 support ensuring that Council-approved directions are actually implemented and that residents can see 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 We need to protect environmentally sensitive areas while ensuring residents and responsible dog owners continue to have access to safe, appropriate spaces.
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Strongly disagree Education should always be part of the approach, but it needs to be supported by consistent enforcement when rules continue to be ignored.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Mildly disagree I support targeted and consistent enforcement in areas where repeated illegal off-leash activity is creating safety concerns, harming environmentally sensitive areas or preventing others from enjoying shared public spaces. However, enforcement should be proportionate and focused on achieving compliance, not simply issuing more tickets. The City must also improve education, implement its approved strategy and provide enough safe, properly maintained off-leash spaces for responsible dog owners.
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 disagree I support ensuring that Council-approved directions are implemented and that residents can see measurable results. City staff should report publicly on patrols, warnings, tickets, repeat problem areas and compliance so Council can determine what is working and where additional action is needed.
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are	I would begin by reviewing the condition, accessibility and geographic distribution of existing off-leash areas in consultation with dog owners, nearby

more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	residents, accessibility advocates and environmental experts. Improvements should include appropriate fencing, secure gates, durable surfaces, drainage, shade, seating, waste containers, clear signage and regular maintenance. Where space permits, the City should consider separate areas for smaller or more vulnerable dogs. The City should also establish transparent service standards for maintenance and publish timelines for approved improvements. Well-designed, properly maintained and conveniently located off-leash areas make responsible use easier and can improve compliance in surrounding parkland.
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)	Council-approved directions should not be adopted and then left without the resources required for implementation. I would request a clear report on why the enforcement directions remain outstanding, what staffing and funding are required, and which locations experience the greatest number of repeated complaints. During the budget process, I would advocate for targeted enforcement resources based on evidence, including patrols during the days and times when violations are most common. I would also require public reporting on patrols, warnings, tickets, compliance and outcomes. Enforcement and appropriate off-leash infrastructure must be planned together. Taxpayers should see measurable results from both the money invested in off-leash areas and the money allocated to enforcing the rules outside them.
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	Dog licensing is important because it helps reunite lost pets with their owners and provides revenue for Toronto Animal Services, including shelters, veterinary care, spay and neuter programs, and assistance for distressed animals and wildlife. To improve licensing rates, I would support clearer multilingual communication, simple online and telephone registration, automatic renewal reminders, and partnerships with veterinarians, shelters, rescues, pet stores and community organizations. Mobile or pop-up licensing opportunities at parks and community

enforcement. As City Councillor, how important do you think dog licensing is and what are your ideas to improve licensing rates?	events could make registration more convenient. The City should also promote existing reduced fees for eligible seniors and low-income residents, clearly explain how licensing revenue is used, and report publicly on licensing rates. Education and convenient registration should come first, followed by consistent enforcement when owners repeatedly refuse to comply.
--	--