

Ward 5 - York South-Weston

Responding Candidates:

[Matthew Boateng](#)

[Sileen Phillips](#)

[Frances Nunziata](#)

Matthew Boateng	
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
3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Mildly disagree Education is important but concrete action and tough decisions are also required to ensure that the community is safe, dogs are able to have free space to exercise and the community can feel confident that their needs are being addressed.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly agree Take it like when the parking enforcement comes around during prohibited parking times. Everyone will rush to move their cars to prevent picking up a fine. I believe a similar model can be observed here.
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.	Neither agree nor disagree If this is a measure that is required for by-law enforcement to fulfil their duties then I support it. I would also like to explore other avenues to ensure residents don't feel harassed or targeted.
6. As future Councillor, what are you prepared to do to improve off-leash areas so that they are	As Councillor, I would work with local residents and dog owners to ensure that off-leash areas are safe, clean, and better maintained, with proper fencing, lighting, waste bins, and clear signage. I would advocate for these measures

more likely to be used in a responsible manner by dog owners?	consistently through social media and monthly/quarterly newsletters.
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)	As Councilor I would support a motion to prioritize funding for enforcement officers necessary resources to fulfil their duties. Taxpayers are on the hook for building and maintenance of these spaces, so we need to make sure they are being used responsibly.
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 dog licensing is important because it helps the City keep track of dogs, support responsible pet ownership, and connect owners with important services. I would want to better understand the current licensing system and work with City staff and local pet owners to make it easier and more convenient to register. I would also support better public education through community forums and workshops so that more dog owners understand why licensing matters and how it benefits the community.

Sileen Phillips

Questions

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

Responses

Strongly disagree
This policy aligns with my broader goals around shared public space stewardship, community safety, and environmental protection. I will advocate for strong, consistent enforcement of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy because clear rules and predictable behaviour in our parks protect everyone who shares these spaces — children, seniors, other pets, and the environment. When the City's standards are followed, off-leash areas function as they were intended: safe, well-maintained, and respectful of surrounding neighbourhoods. Enforcing the Strategy is ultimately about fairness and accountability, ensuring that public spaces remain welcoming, accessible, and enjoyable for all residents.

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 disagree

3. I believe that education alone can be the solution to the City's off-leash dog challenges.	Strongly disagree As with many things, education is essential — but on its own, it cannot solve all the issues. Education is a core pillar of the 2025 Off-Leash Strategy, but the Strategy is explicit that education must work alongside enforcement and clear rules — not instead of them, and it makes this clear in this statement: “promote responsible dog ownership through community engagement, positive education, and bylaw enforcement.” Education works for people who want to comply. The City's challenge is the subset of owners who ignore rules even when they are well-publicized. A balanced approach is what the Strategy calls for. Compliance depends on education + enforcement + proper infrastructure is what it takes. Together, these approaches are the tools that create safe, predictable parks. Relying solely on education leaves wildlife, children, and other park users vulnerable.
4. I believe that increased by-law patrols and ticketing are needed to deter off-leash activity.	Strongly disagree
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 disagree
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 Councillor, I am prepared to strengthen the City's off-leash system so that dog owners (and their dogs) have safe, well-designed spaces that support responsible use and deters negligent/irresponsible behaviour. This includes: 1. Improving the design and condition of existing off-leash areas I will work with Parks, Forestry & Recreation to ensure OLAs meet the updated 2025 design standards — adequate fencing, durable surfacing, proper drainage, and clear separation from sensitive natural areas. Well-designed spaces reduce conflict, improve safety, and make responsible use easier. Cruickshank Park sees heavy daily use — cyclists, seniors, families, and dog walkers all share the same narrow trail, resulting in conflicts. This is a textbook example of where education alone is not enough and where the Strategy's

	“responsible use + enforcement” approach applies. 2. Expanding off-leash areas where demand is high York South–Weston has limited OLA coverage. I will advocate for new, appropriately located OLAs in underserved neighbourhoods so residents have accessible, legal spaces to exercise their dogs. When legal options are available, illegal off-leash activity decreases. 3. Ensuring clear signage and communication I will support consistent, visible signage that explains rules, hours, and boundaries. Clear communication reduces unintentional violations and helps residents understand where off-leash activity is permitted. 4. Supporting targeted enforcement in high-risk areas Education alone cannot address persistent violations. I will work with Municipal Licensing & Standards to ensure predictable patrols and enforcement in ravines, ESAs, and parks with repeated complaints. Enforcement is essential to protecting wildlife, preventing erosion, and maintaining safe shared spaces. The Humber River corridor is one of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the ward. Illegal off-leash activity is a recurring issue along the multi-use trail, riverbank restoration zones, and forested ESA sections near Weston and Raymore. These areas contain ground-nesting birds, sensitive vegetation, and active restoration sites. They are not designed for off-leash use, and the Strategy explicitly prioritizes enforcement in ravines and ESAs. The average follow-up response time for a standard 311 service request regarding an off-leash dog is up to days. Clearly, this is not acceptable. To improve this, I will support a more responsive, data-driven enforcement model that aligns with the City’s 2025 Off-Leash Strategy. First, we need targeted deployment. Enforcement should be prioritized in locations with repeated complaints — such as the Humber River ravine, Cruickshank Park, and Eglinton Flats — rather than relying on citywide averages. Concentrating patrols where violations are most frequent will reduce
--	---

	response times and increase deterrence. Second, I will support real-time coordination between 311 and Municipal Licensing & Standards, including clearer triaging of high-risk calls. Calls involving Environmentally Significant Areas, multi-use trails, or conflicts with other park users should be escalated for faster response. Third, the City should expand the use of proactive patrols in known hotspots. When officers are already present in the area, response time effectively drops to zero, and compliance improves through visibility alone. Finally, I will advocate for better public reporting tools so residents can provide precise locations, patterns, and times of recurring violations. This allows enforcement staff to schedule patrols strategically rather than reactively. 5. Protecting Environmentally Significant Areas and community green spaces I will support fencing, boundary markers, and enforcement where needed to prevent illegal off-leash activity in sensitive natural areas. These spaces require active stewardship to remain healthy and accessible. E.g. Eglington Flats: Illegal off-leash activity has been reported in the wetland edges and garden areas. This is a location where fencing, signage, and enforcement would directly protect sensitive habitat. 6. Strengthening community engagement I will support the Strategy's commitment to structured community engagement, including local feedback on OLA design, maintenance, and behaviour expectations. When residents feel ownership over these spaces, compliance improves.
--	---

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)	As Councillor, I would address this discrepancy by advocating for a fully integrated funding model that aligns infrastructure investment with enforcement capacity. This includes: 1) Establishing a dedicated enforcement budget tied directly to off-leash management, ensuring that new and existing OLAs are supported by predictable compliance measures. 2) Prioritizing enforcement resources in high-risk areas such as ravines, ESAs, and multi-use parks where illegal off-leash activity causes safety concerns and environmental harm. 3) Improving coordination between 31and Municipal Licensing & Standards so that off-leash complaints are triaged more effectively and response times are reduced. 4) Using data from complaint hotspots to guide proactive patrols, ensuring that enforcement is targeted, efficient, and responsive to community needs. 5) Ensuring that future capital reports include enforcement impacts, so Council receives a complete picture of the operational requirements associated with new OLAs. Residents are already paying for high-quality off-leash infrastructure. It is reasonable — and responsible — to ensure that enforcement capacity keeps pace with these investments.
--	---

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 a foundational component of responsible pet ownership in Toronto. When licensing rates are low, the City cannot reliably assess demand, forecast service needs, or ensure that costs are shared fairly among dog owners. From a public safety perspective, licensing helps reunite lost pets with their families and ensures that dogs have up-to-date vaccinations. It also reinforces accountability: licensed owners are more likely to follow leash rules, use off-leash areas appropriately, and comply with by-laws. In short, dog licensing is important because it supports animal welfare, strengthens enforcement capacity, improves planning for off-leash infrastructure, and ensures that the City's investments in parks and shelters are matched by the revenue needed to maintain them. As Councillor, I would prioritize increasing licensing compliance through a combination of education, accessibility, and enforcement. First, licensing must be easier and more visible. Many residents are unaware of the requirement or do not understand its purpose. Clear communication at veterinary clinics, pet stores, off-leash areas, and through digital channels would help residents understand how licensing directly supports shelters, enforcement, and improvements to off-leash areas. Second, I would support streamlined licensing options, including automatic renewal reminders, simplified online registration, and integration with other City services. Making licensing convenient reduces barriers and increases compliance. Third, I would explore incentive-based approaches, such as reduced fees for early registration, multi-year licenses, or partnerships with local veterinarians to offer bundled licensing at the time of vaccination. These approaches have been effective in other municipalities. Finally, enforcement must be predictable and fair. When only a small fraction of dogs are licensed, responsible owners bear the cost while others benefit without contributing. Targeted enforcement — particularly in off-leash areas and
--	--

	parks with repeated issues — would help ensure that licensing requirements are applied consistently across the city.
--	---

	A modernized, accessible, and well-communicated licensing system is essential to achieving these goals. I believe a massive overhaul is actively underway.
--	---

Frances Nunziata	
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.	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.	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?	Yes I have advocated for more OLA in YSW. I succeeded in adding a new OLA coming in Pelmo Park

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)	I will definitely look into including enforcement.
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?	Very Important to have all dog licensed for two reason one it raises capital for enforcement and/or raises additional capital for the creation of more OLA's in the City.