



MEDIA PACKAGE · SEPTEMBER 2026

Hill Street Dog Park

How a 1.06-acre neighbourhood park was divided — and the questions that remain

A source package for reporters: the community's park-use data, the City's own records, the documents obtained and requested, and the questions the Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition has put to the City of Hamilton without answer.

Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition

Co-led by Romy Buchner and Robert DeRosa · approximately 70 members — park users, small-dog and large-dog owners alike

Hamilton, Ontario · hillstreetdogpark@gmail.com · hillstreetdogpark.ca

Data figures current to September 9, 2026. The observation dashboard updates continuously at hillstreetdogpark.ca/dashboard.

What's in this package

Sections 1–6 are prepared by the coalition. Appendices A–F are primary documents, reproduced in full and unaltered.

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Available on request: the full observation dataset as a downloadable file; higher-resolution photographs of the park, the installed fence and the City closure notice; interviews with coalition members, including small-dog owners; and a walk-through of the park where the current configuration and the City-provided drawing can be compared on site.

1 · The story in brief

What happened

Hill Street Dog Park is an established neighbourhood off-leash park in Hamilton with a confirmed total off-leash area of **1.06 acres**. In June 2026 it was permanently divided by a fence, creating a separate small-dog area, following a resident petition that sought dedicated space for small dogs. Hamilton's Public Works Committee approved the project on February 23, 2026, authorizing up to \$25,000 from the Ward 1 Capital Re-Investment Reserve. The motion carried 13–0.

What the coalition is not asking for

The coalition is not asking for the small-dog area to be removed. It supports retaining a separated option for dogs and owners who need one, and recognizes that the original petition — 457 signatures recorded in City documentation by January 7, 2026 — demonstrated genuine community support for providing such a space.

The coalition's roughly 70 members are users of the park: small-dog owners as well as large-dog owners.

What the coalition is asking

Dividing an existing, heavily used public park is not the same decision as creating a new amenity. It permanently redistributes space within a facility people already rely on. Support for *providing* small-dog space does not, by itself, determine the **size, location or configuration** that makes the best use of the whole park.

The coalition has not identified a broader public consultation process in which regular Hill Street Dog Park users were asked about the final configuration before construction, and has not been provided with documentation showing what park-use data, dog counts or needs assessment informed the allocation.

The core question: what evidence informed the decision to allocate the space the way it was allocated — and does the resulting division reflect how the park is actually used?

What the coalition has done since

- **Observed.** Regular park users began systematically recording snapshots of how many dogs were using each section. 508 observations have been analysed to date.
- **Asked why.** A user survey launched August 22, 2026 asks why owners choose each area — something counts alone cannot explain.
- **Requested records.** A formal MFIPPA request was filed July 12, 2026 and acknowledged by the City on July 28 as **FOI #26-256**. It remains outstanding.
- **Invited alternatives.** "Share Your Solution" invites residents to propose actual configurations. Submissions close Friday, September 11, 2026.

2 · The evidence: how the park is actually being used

Community-submitted observations, **July 3 – September 9, 2026**. 508 observations analysed from 540 submitted, covering 68 of 69 days. Median submission delay: 2 minutes.

4,040

Dogs counted across both areas

89% / 11%

Share of dogs observed in the main area vs the small-dog area

2.6–4.0×

More crowded in the main area per acre, depending on which City area figure is used

68%

Of observations in which the small-dog area sat empty while the main area had dogs

666 vs 444

Small dogs seen using the main area, vs dogs of any size counted inside the small-dog area

98% / 31%

Share of observations in which each area was in use at all

What the counts show

- The main area held **10 or more dogs at once** in 140 of 508 observations (27.6%), on 49 of 68 days. The small-dog area reached that level in 5 observations (1%), on 4 days.
- Small dogs were observed in the main area in **60% of all observations**, and in **11 of the last 11 weeks** with a reliable sample — ranging from 51% to 75% of that week's observations.
- **8%** of dogs counted inside the small-dog area were large-sized (34 of 444).
- The small-dog area does get used: its record is **14 dogs**, on September 1. The busiest snapshot overall was **29 dogs** (26 main / 3 small) on August 3. Its use has also risen over time — the most recent four weeks run **82% / 18%**, against 89% / 11% cumulative.

Dog interactions

Tension or conflict between dogs was reported in **6% of answered observations** (33 of 508). Where a location was noted, it occurred in the main area 94% of the time. Observations reporting conflict averaged **12.2 dogs** across both areas, against **7.7** where none was reported.

An important limit. That is an association, not a demonstration of cause. The coalition does not claim crowding causes conflict. What the arithmetic does show is that the fence did not change how much land the park has — only how much of it a given number of dogs can spread out over.

How the data was collected — and its limits

Each observation is a snapshot at one moment, not continuous monitoring, and the dataset is not a census of every dog or park user. Observations are submitted through a public form; a uniform 30-minute rule is applied to every submission; retrospective entries are excluded from headline statistics but remain published. The full methodology is at hillstreetdogpark.ca/dashboard#methodology and every observation is downloadable. The coalition has also asked the City for any park-use data it holds — that request forms part of FOI #26-256.

3 · The acreage question

The **1.06-acre** total off-leash area is confirmed. How that total was divided is not. Three different descriptions have come from City and Ward 1 sources:

SOURCE	WHAT IT SAYS	IMPLIED SMALL-DOG SHARE
Ward 1 newsletters Feb 27 & Jun 5, 2026	"Approximately one-third" of the park's west end designated for small dogs. The June 5 update reiterated this five days before construction began.	≈ 33% (≈ 0.35 acres)
Ward 1 newsletter Jun 19, 2026	The completed small-dog section described as using 20% of the original park.	20%
City-provided reference drawing	Labelled "Small Dog Area — 0.26 acres" and "Main Area — 0.80 acres", totalling 1.06 acres. PDF metadata indicates the file was created September 30, 2025.	24.5% (0.26 acres)

The drawing does not match the ground

The dividing fence depicted on the City-provided reference drawing **does not correspond to the dividing fence's actual location**. Because moving the fence changes the area on each side, the coalition does not treat the drawing's 0.26 / 0.80-acre labels as confirmed measurements of the configuration that was built. The as-built fence appears to align more closely with the one-third description than with the drawing — a visual observation by the coalition, not a survey measurement.

The drawing is reproduced in full at **Appendix B**.

Where this stands. No confirmed as-built dimensions have been provided. Depending on which official figure is used, the small-dog area occupies roughly **0.26 to 0.35 acres** of the 1.06-acre total. The coalition publishes its per-acre figures across that full range rather than selecting one basis. Confirmed dimensions are being sought through **FOI #26-256** (Appendices D and E).

Why it matters to the story

Every crowding comparison in Section 2 depends on the denominator. On the one-third basis the main area is about 4.0 times as crowded per acre as the small-dog area; on the drawing's basis, about 2.6 times. Both are substantial, and both are published. But a public decision about how to divide public space should not rest on three incompatible descriptions of what was divided.

4 · Questions that remain unanswered

These questions have been put to the City of Hamilton by the coalition and have not been answered. They form the substance of MFIPPA request #26-256.

On process

- What consultation was conducted with regular Hill Street Dog Park users regarding the final size and configuration, before construction?
- What alternative configurations were considered?
- Was the completed installation verified against the intended design?

On evidence

- What park-use evidence or needs assessment informed the allocation of space?
- Were existing dog numbers or patterns of use studied before the design was finalized?
- What criteria were used to determine the amount of space allocated to each area?
- How were peak use and congestion considered?

On design

- How were entrances, exits, circulation and movement through the park evaluated?
- How was access to existing amenities considered?

On the record

- Which approved drawing or specification determined the final fence location?
- Why does the fence depicted on the drawing supplied to residents differ from the fence currently on the ground?
- How do the "approximately one-third", "20%", and "0.26 / 0.80-acre" descriptions relate to one another?

A question the coalition is asking itself

Observation counts show *where* dogs are using the park. They cannot show *why*. They cannot explain why some small-dog owners choose the dedicated area and others continue to use the main one; whether people want separation because of size, or because of temperament, confidence, age, health or play style; whether a smaller separated area would meet the same needs; or whether a different kind of separated or flexible space would work better.

That is what the user survey, launched August 22, 2026, was created to answer — and it is an open community survey, not a random sample or a scientific opinion poll. The coalition presents it on those terms.

The objective is not to predetermine the answer. Observation data, user experiences and community-designed alternatives should together determine whether the best solution is a smaller dedicated area, a different location, a different kind of separated space, another configuration, or improvements to the current design.

5 · Chronology

DATE	EVENT
Sept 24, 2025	Original petition launched, seeking a dedicated small-dog area at Hill Street Dog Park
Sept 30, 2025	Creation date recorded in the metadata of the City-provided reference drawing
Jan 7, 2026	457 petition signatures recorded in City documentation
Feb 23, 2026	Public Works Committee approves the Hill Street Dog Park Enhancement Project and authorizes up to \$25,000 from the Ward 1 Capital Re-Investment Reserve. Carried 13–0.
Feb 27, 2026	Ward 1 newsletter describes approximately one-third of the park's west end as designated for small dogs
June 5, 2026	Pre-construction update reiterates approximately one-third, five days before construction
June 10, 2026	Scheduled construction start
June 2026	Park permanently divided
June 19, 2026	Post-construction update describes the completed small-dog section as 20% of the original park
July 3, 2026	First observation in the analysed dataset
July 12, 2026	MFIPPA records request submitted to the City of Hamilton
July 28, 2026	City Access and Privacy Office acknowledges receipt — FOI #26-256
July–Aug 2026	Systematic community observations continue; drawing and dimension questions raised with the City
Aug 13, 2026	Community meeting (summary at Appendix F)
Aug 22, 2026	Hill Street Dog Park User Survey launched
Aug 26, 2026	Coalition news release issued (Appendix A)
Sept 9, 2026	Most recent observation in the dataset reproduced in this package
Sept 11, 2026	"Share Your Solution" submission deadline

A fuller sourced timeline, with links to the record behind each entry, is published at hillstreetdogpark.ca/timeline.

6 · Source library

Every item below is publicly accessible. Items marked **[Appendix]** are also reproduced in full in this package.

City of Hamilton

Public Works Committee motion, February 23, 2026 **[Appendix C]**

The motion approving the project, including the 457-signature petition count and the \$25,000 funding cap. Carried 13–0.
hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-public-works-motion-2026-02-23.pdf

The same motion on the City's official meeting portal

pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=483797

City-provided reference drawing **[Appendix B]**

Labels the park Small Dog Area (0.26 acres) and Main Area (0.80 acres). Not confirmed as-built; the fence line shown does not match current conditions.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-city-acreage-drawing.pdf

Ward 1 communications

February 27, 2026 newsletter

Described the planned small-dog area as approximately one-third of the park's west end.

maureenwilson.ca/nl_2026-02-27

June 5, 2026 pre-construction update

Reiterated approximately one-third, five days before construction began.

maureenwilson.ca/nl_2026-06-05

June 19, 2026 post-construction update

Described the completed small-dog section as 20% of the original park.

maureenwilson.ca/nl_2026-06-19

MFIPPA records request

Request cover letter, July 12, 2026 **[Appendix D]**

hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-mfippa-cover-letter.pdf

Full list of records requested **[Appendix D]**

The design, decision-making and consultation records sought from the City.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-mfippa-records-requested.pdf

City acknowledgment letter, July 28, 2026 **[Appendix E]**

The City's Access and Privacy Office confirming receipt of the request (FOI #26-256). A home address on the original has been redacted.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-mfippa-acknowledgment-letter.pdf

Community evidence

Live observation dashboard

Community-submitted counts of park use, updated continuously, with the full dataset available for download.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/dashboard

Observation methodology

How observations are collected, validated and calculated, including the treatment of retrospective entries.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/dashboard#methodology

Hill Street Dog Park User Survey, and its methodology note

An anonymous survey asking why users choose each area and what a good configuration would look like.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/survey · hillstreetdogpark.ca/survey#methodology

Community meeting summary, August 13, 2026 [Appendix F]

hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-community-meeting-summary-2026-08-13.pdf

Share Your Solution

The community's open, structured process for proposing alternative configurations. Submissions close Friday, September 11, 2026.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/ideas

Full sourced timeline

hillstreetdogpark.ca/timeline

Photo gallery

Includes the City closure notice posted at the park, the installed dividing fence, the small-dog area interior, and park use beside the new fence. Higher-resolution source files available on request.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/gallery

Petitions

Original small-dog petition, September 24, 2025

The earlier, separate petition that first requested a dedicated small-dog area.

change.org/p/create-a-small-breed-section-at-hill-street-dog-park

Current coalition petition

Asking the City to reconsider and reconfigure the small-dog area.

change.org/p/hill-street-dog-park-reconsider-reconfigure-the-small-dog-area

News release

Hill Street Dog Park users seek answers — and a better solution — after City reconfiguration [Appendix A]

August 26, 2026.

hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-news-release-2026-08-26

Media contact

Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition

Co-led by Romy Buchner and Robert DeRosa · Hamilton, Ontario

Email: hillstreetdogpark@gmail.com · Web: hillstreetdogpark.ca/media

Interviews can be arranged at Hill Street Dog Park, where the current configuration and the City-provided reference drawing can be compared in person. Coalition members, including small-dog owners, are available to speak about their own use of the park.

APPENDIX A

News release

"Hill Street Dog Park users seek answers — and a better solution — after City reconfiguration"

Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition, August 26, 2026

Reproduced in full · 7 pages · Also published at hillstreetdogpark.ca/hill-street-dog-park-news-release-2026-08-26

Hill Street Dog Park users seek answers — and a better solution — after City reconfiguration

Two petitions, hundreds of park-use observations and a community design process are raising questions about how Hamilton decided on the park's new layout — and whether it reflects how the space is actually used

HAMILTON, ON — August 26, 2026 — What began with a successful petition for a dedicated small-dog area at Hamilton's Hill Street Dog Park has developed into a second community campaign after the permanent fence was installed and many regular park users became dissatisfied with the resulting configuration.

That dissatisfaction led to a second petition calling on the City to **reconsider and reconfigure — not remove** — the small-dog area, and ultimately to the formation of the Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition.

Since then, community members have collected hundreds of observations involving thousands of dogs, held community meetings, sought answers from the City about how the current layout was determined, and launched a public process inviting residents to design alternative configurations.

The coalition supports maintaining dedicated space for small dogs. Its position is that the current configuration should be reconsidered using broader community input, actual park-use data and practical alternatives.

One petition led to the small-dog area. A second asked the City to reconsider the result.

The story began in September 2025, when a resident launched a petition seeking dedicated space at Hill Street Dog Park where small and shy dogs could socialize more safely.

The proposal attracted substantial support. By the time the matter reached Hamilton's Public Works Committee in February 2026, the City recorded 457 petition signatures.

On February 23, the committee unanimously approved a motion authorizing up to \$25,000 from the Ward 1 Capital Re-Investment Reserve for fencing and signage to establish a small-dog area within the existing park.

The committee motion established the project, but did not itself specify how much of the existing off-leash area should be allocated to small dogs or the precise location of the dividing fence.

On February 27, the Ward 1 office reported that Parks staff had evaluated the site and that approximately one-third of the west end of the park would be designated for small dogs.

That description was repeated on June 5, when residents were told construction would begin June 10 and was expected to take less than a week.

The installation of the permanent fence in mid-June was the turning point.

Once regular users could see and experience the new configuration on the ground, concerns emerged about the amount and shape of the remaining general-use space, movement through the park, access to entrances and water, and how the particular layout had been determined.

By June 19, the Ward 1 office reported that the park had reopened with the new small-dog area.

Those concerns led to a second petition, this time asking the City to **reconsider and reconfigure** the small-dog area — **not remove it**. As dissatisfied regular users began organizing around the issue, the Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition emerged.

The reconfiguration also created tension within the park community. Some supporters of the original small-dog initiative initially understood the second petition as an effort to undo what they had advocated for and eliminate the new area.

That was not the coalition's objective.

There was legitimate community demand for dedicated small-dog space. The question is whether the particular configuration that was built was the best way to provide it — and whether broader consultation before construction might have produced a layout that worked better for everyone.

What exactly was built?

Questions about how the configuration was determined have been compounded by conflicting information about the physical reconfiguration itself.

Before construction, Ward 1 communications twice described the planned small-dog area as approximately one-third of the park.

After construction, the June 19 Ward 1 update described the completed small-dog section as occupying 20% of the original park.

The City subsequently provided the coalition with a reference drawing labelling the small-dog area as 0.26 acres and the main area as 0.80 acres — approximately 24.5% and 75.5% of the 1.06-acre off-leash area.

But the dividing fence depicted on that drawing does not correspond with the location of the fence as it exists on the ground.

The coalition has sought clarification and accurate information from the City about the current configuration. Until that information is available, the coalition is not presenting the labelled 0.26- and 0.80-acre figures as confirmed measurements of the park's actual as-built division.

The unanswered questions are straightforward:

How was this particular configuration selected? Who was consulted about the layout? Why was the small-dog area described as approximately one-third before construction and 20% afterward? And why does the drawing subsequently provided by the City not correspond with the installed fence?

Park users started collecting their own evidence

Following the reconfiguration, community members began systematically documenting how the two sections of Hill Street Dog Park are actually being used.

The observation project has now produced hundreds of observations involving thousands of dogs.

The results show a substantial difference in use between the two areas. The main/general-use area accommodates the large majority of observed dogs, while the small-dog area is frequently lightly used or empty.

The coalition has published its data and methodology so residents can examine the evidence themselves.

The data is not intended to suggest that small dogs do not need or deserve dedicated space. It raises a different question:

Can Hill Street Dog Park be configured in a way that preserves a safe, useful small-dog area while making better use of the limited space available to everyone?

From disagreement to solutions

The coalition is now asking the community to help answer that question.

Its **Share Your Solution** initiative invites residents to propose alternative configurations for Hill Street Dog Park rather than simply choosing between keeping the existing fence and removing it.

Participants can propose a different dividing fence and consider gates, entrances, seating, trees and other park features, accompanied by a written explanation of what their proposal would improve and who would benefit.

No design experience is required, and residents can submit more than one proposal. **Submissions close Friday, September 11.**

After submissions close, proposals will be prepared in a consistent format so the community can compare them. The coalition plans to identify the most supported alternatives and bring them to the City for consideration.

A bigger question than one fence

For the coalition, the experience at Hill Street Dog Park now raises a broader question about how Hamilton makes permanent changes to neighbourhood public spaces.

The first petition demonstrated genuine demand for dedicated small-dog space. The second demonstrated significant dissatisfaction with the configuration that resulted. Those positions do not have to be irreconcilable.

Rather than asking the City to choose one group of park users over another, residents are trying to determine whether better consultation, real-world evidence and community-designed alternatives can produce a configuration that works better for both.

The experience also raises a question that extends beyond Hill Street Dog Park:

When a public space is permanently reconfigured, how should the people who regularly use that space be involved in deciding what gets built?

WEBSITE, PUBLIC DATA AND SHARE YOUR SOLUTION

hillstreetdogpark.ca

MEDIA PHOTOS AND RESOURCES

hillstreetdogpark.ca/media

MEDIA CONTACT

Robert DeRosa

Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition

Hill Street Dog Park — media photos

Selected visuals for media use | Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition | August 23, 2026



Community petition graphic

Campaign graphic summarizing the coalition's request: keep dedicated small-dog space, reconsider the size/layout/configuration, and work with the community on a better solution.



Installed dividing fence

View of the permanent dividing fence from the main/general-use area, showing its alignment through the park.



Park use beside the new fence

Dogs and park users in the main/general-use area with the permanent dividing fence behind them. This is one illustrative moment; broader use findings come from the observation dataset.



Dogs in the main area

Dogs using the main/general-use area with the newly fenced small-dog area visible beyond.

Park context & City-provided reference material



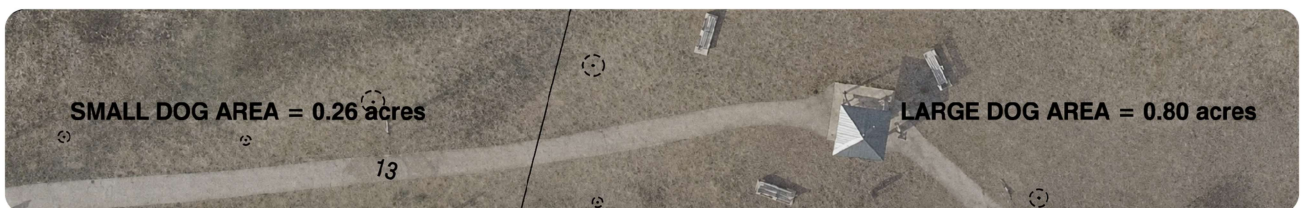
Wider exterior view

Contextual exterior view of Hill Street Dog Park showing the park's trees, paths and internal fencing.



City-provided reference drawing

City-provided drawing labelling 0.26 acres for the small-dog area and 0.80 acres for the large/main area. The coalition says the depicted dividing-fence line does not correspond with the fence's current location on the ground.



City drawing — detail

Detail showing the 0.26-acre / 0.80-acre labels. The coalition is not presenting these labels as confirmed measurements of the current as-built split.

APPENDIX B

City-provided reference drawing

Supplied to the coalition by the City of Hamilton. Labels the park **Small Dog Area — 0.26 acres** and **Main Area — 0.80 acres**, totalling 1.06 acres. PDF metadata indicates the file was created September 30, 2025.

Not confirmed as-built. The dividing fence depicted here does not correspond to the fence's current location on the ground. See Section 3. · 1 page, reduced from a large-format original — a full-size copy is available at the link above, or on request



APPENDIX C

Public Works Committee motion

City of Hamilton, February 23, 2026. Approves the Hill Street Dog Park Enhancement Project and authorizes up to \$25,000 from the Ward 1 Capital Re-Investment Reserve. Records the petition at 457 signatures as of January 7, 2026. Carried 13–0.

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CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Public Works Committee: February 23, 2026

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. WILSON.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....

Hill Street Dog Park Enhancement Project, 13 Hill Street, Hamilton (Ward 1)

WHEREAS, there are two leash free dog parks in Ward 1 (Cathedral Dog Park and Hill Street Dog Park) that provide opportunities for residents to exercise their dogs off leash within a fenced area, however neither provide small dog areas;

WHEREAS, residents submitted a petition with 457 signatures (as of January 7, 2026) to request the addition of a small dog area at the existing Hill Street Dog Park located in Hill Street Park, located at 13 Hill Street, Hamilton;

WHEREAS, the Hill Street Dog Park can be modified to include a small dog area within the existing dog park boundary;

WHEREAS, the petition demonstrates a strong community support for the addition of a small dog area at Hill Street Dog Park;

WHEREAS, there is no available funding to add new dog parks or enhance existing dog parks; and

WHEREAS, Ward 1 has available funding to enhance the existing Dog Park amenity to accommodate a new small dog area at Hill Street Dog Park to provide a safe space for small and shy dogs to socialize and play.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the supply and installation of chain link fence to establish a small dog area at Hill Street Dog Park including ancillary signage, be funded from the Ward 1 Capital Re-Investment Reserve #108051 at an upset limit, including contingency and HST, not to exceed \$25,000, be approved; and
- (b) That the General Manager, Public Works, or designate be authorized to approve and execute any and all required agreements and ancillary documents, with such

terms and conditions in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, for the implementation of a small dog area at Hill Street Dog Park.

APPENDIX D

MFIPPA records request

The coalition's formal request to the City of Hamilton under Ontario's *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, submitted July 12, 2026 — cover letter followed by the full list of design, decision-making and consultation records requested.

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hillstreetdogpark@gmail.com | hillstreetdogpark.ca

July 12, 2026

Manager, Records and Freedom of Information
City Clerk's Division, City Hall
71 Main Street West, 1st Floor
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

To the Manager, Records and Freedom of Information:

My name is Robert DeRosa, and I'm writing on behalf of the Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition, a volunteer group of regular users of Hill Street Dog Park (13 Hill Street, Hamilton).

Enclosed is a formal request for records under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), along with the \$5.00 application fee.

Our group has been documenting how Hill Street Dog Park is actually being used since a small-dog area was installed within the existing park property. We're requesting these records to better understand the design, decision-making process, and history behind that installation, so that any feedback we provide to the City is accurate and well-informed.

If any part of this request needs clarification to be processed, please don't hesitate to reach out at the email address below.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Robert DeRosa
Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition
hillstreetdogpark@gmail.com

Section C. Description of Records of Correction Requested

Request for records related to Hill Street Dog Park (13 Hill Street, Hamilton), specifically the small-dog area installed within the existing park property.

1. The original design plan, site plan, or as-built drawing for the entire Hill Street Park property — including the small-dog area, the main/general-use dog area, the playground, and the community garden — with dimensions and boundaries for each section.

Design & construction

2. The original design plan, site plan, or as-built drawing for the small-dog area, including dimensions and boundaries relative to the rest of the park property.
3. The date(s) the small-dog area was approved, constructed, and opened to the public.
4. The total cost/budget for the small-dog area installation, including materials, labour, and total project cost.

Decision-making

5. Any staff report, council report, or committee meeting minutes that recommended or approved the small-dog area installation.
6. The name and/or title (role/department, not personal contact information) of the staff member(s) or department responsible for the final decision on the small-dog area's size and configuration.
7. Any documented rationale, criteria, or usage standards used to determine the proportion of park space allocated to the small-dog area versus the main/general-use area.

Consultation & origin

8. Records of any public consultation, community engagement, or survey conducted prior to the small-dog area's installation.
9. Records showing the origin of the small-dog area proposal — e.g., a resident request, a Ward 1 office initiative, or a broader city-wide policy or program.

Since installation

10. Any 311/service request records referencing Hill Street Dog Park since the small-dog area was installed.
11. Correspondence between the Ward 1 Councillor's office and Parks Operations specifically regarding the small-dog area.

Looking ahead

12. 11. Any planned future changes, capital plans, or scheduled reviews for Hill Street Dog Park.

APPENDIX E

City acknowledgment letter

Office of the City Clerk, Access and Privacy, July 28, 2026. Confirms receipt of the request and assigns it **FOI #26-256**. The request was referred to Planning and Economic Development and the Ward 1 Office for record searches.

Reproduced in full · 1 page · A home address on the original has been redacted. The request remains outstanding as of this package's date.



Amna Durrani
Office of the City Clerk - Freedom of Information section
Corporate Services
Amna.durrani@hamilton.ca
Phone #(905) 546-2424 X4632 Fax # (905) 546-2095

July 28th, 2026

Robert DeRosa
Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition

[address redacted]

VIA EMAIL robertdanielderosa@gmail.com

Re: FOI Request #26-256 (Hill Street Dog Park, Hamilton)

I write in response to your request to access records pursuant to the provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the *Act*) that was received on July 27th, 2026.

The details of the request have been sent to the **Planning and Economic Development department + Ward 1 Office** for record searches and a response to our office.

Upon receipt of the department's search results, an Access Decision will be issued; the decision will include any applicable exemptions and any applicable processing fees.

Under section 45 (1) of the *Act*, the person who makes a request for access to a record is required to pay fees in the amounts prescribed by the *Act's Regulations*.

The fees that *may* attach to the processing of your request and that will be outlined in the City's Access Decision, include record searching (\$7.50 per 15 minutes); preparation costs, e.g. removing the personal information of identifiable individuals, including complainants (\$7.50 per 15 minutes); and, photocopy costs of 20 cents per page.

Contact me via email if you have any questions concerning the foregoing. Please quote your request number **[26-256]** in any verbal or written correspondence.

Regards,

Amna Durrani

Amna Durrani
Access & Privacy Officer

APPENDIX F

Community meeting summary

Summary of the coalition's public meeting of August 13, 2026.

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Community Meeting Summary

Thursday, August 13, 2026

Hill Street Dog Park Community Coalition

6:15 p.m.

Hill Street Dog Park

13 Hill Street, Hamilton, Ontario

The meeting reviewed how the small-dog area came about, concerns with the current built configuration, park-use evidence, and ways for the community to develop practical alternatives for the City.

Background: How the Small-Dog Area Came About

Participants discussed the history leading to the new fenced area. It was recalled that the City had previously been reluctant to divide Hill Street Dog Park because the existing off-leash area was already considered relatively small. Participants said the proposal moved forward after a petition supporting a small-dog area was circulated and brought to the City.

The earlier petition was described as having approximately **470 signatures**. Participants questioned how representative those signatures were of regular Hill Street Dog Park users or members of the surrounding community, particularly because the number appeared high compared with observed use and activity in the small-dog area. The meeting did not establish where individual signatories lived or how frequently they used the park.

Participants also emphasized that there was **no broader public community consultation on the location, size or configuration** of the new small-dog area before construction.

Drawings, Dimensions and the Built Fence

A major part of the discussion concerned the apparent mismatch between City reference drawings and what was actually constructed. Participants said the dividing fence shown on the drawings sits farther west than the fence currently on the ground.

The City reference material identifies the total off-leash area as approximately **1.06 acres**, divided into approximately **0.26 acres for the small-dog area and 0.80 acres for the main area**. Those figures correspond to an intended split of approximately **24.5% small-dog / 75.5% main area**. Based on community measurements of the fence as actually built, participants estimated that the current configuration appears closer to approximately **33% small-dog / 67% main area**.

Community measurements estimate the difference between the reference drawing and the built configuration at approximately 975 square feet, or close to 1,000 square feet. These measurements and the estimated 33% / 67% split have not been independently surveyed or confirmed by the City.

This raised questions about whether the contractor followed the supplied plans, whether the location was changed during construction, and what inspection or follow-up the City conducted after installation. It has **not yet been established whether the discrepancy resulted from the contractor, City direction or oversight, or a difference between the reference drawings and the intended final design**.

Requests for corrected drawings and confirmed dimensions were sent to **Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson's office on August 5, August 10 and August 12**. Participants said the material subsequently provided continued to show the same drawing and dimensions that did not appear to match conditions on the ground, without a substantive explanation of the discrepancy.

Small-Dog Space, Safety and Use of the Park

Participants repeatedly clarified that the campaign is **not seeking to eliminate a small-dog area**. There was support for retaining a dedicated option for smaller dogs while reconsidering whether the current size and layout are proportionate to actual use. Safety was discussed in detail, including firsthand experiences of dog conflicts and injuries. It was also stressed that a leash-free park provides room for dogs to **run, exercise and play**, not only socialize.

Observation Data and Continued Tracking

The Coalition provided an update on the community observation project. At the time of the meeting, approximately **380 observations had been submitted, representing more than 2,700 dogs counted** at Hill Street Dog Park.

During higher-use periods, the main area was described as commonly having **around 14 dogs at a time**, while the small-dog area was frequently lightly used or empty. One example discussed was **August 3, when 26 dogs were observed in the main area compared with 3 in the small-dog area**.

The discussion also highlighted that **many owners of small dogs continue to use the main area rather than the designated small-dog area**, and participants noted that the observation data appears to show this becoming increasingly common. Possible explanations included access to the larger space, established social groups and routines, dogs being comfortable around different sizes, and owner preference. As a next step, the Coalition discussed **documenting why small-dog owners choose one area over the other**.

Continued observation tracking and data collection were emphasized. The Coalition also explained that the observation project is intended to be **transparent and publicly reviewable**: submitted observation records and counts have not been altered, and the observation data is available through hillstreetdogpark.ca. Participants were encouraged to continue contributing observations from both areas.

Possible Solutions Discussed

No single design was selected. Participants explored practical ways to preserve a dedicated small-dog space while addressing concerns about space, circulation and access.

- Reduce or reconfigure the small-dog area so more usable space is returned to the main park.
- Reuse as much of the existing fencing as possible to limit cost and unnecessary construction.
- Move or reorient the dividing fence, including considering the location indicated on the City reference drawing.
- Restore convenient movement and entrances/exits, including discussion of a double-gated entrance arrangement.
- Consider gates, existing paths, park features and practical access as part of any redesign.
- Develop multiple realistic community proposals rather than having the Coalition advance one predetermined design.

Share Your Solution

The meeting reviewed the Coalition's **Share Your Solution** process. Community members can draw directly on the park map, print the submission form and sketch on paper, write out a proposal, upload a plan they have already created, or submit an idea verbally.

People are encouraged to explain what problem their idea solves, where the small-dog area would go and approximately how large it would be, how people and dogs would enter, exit and move through the park safely and accessibly, what would need to change or be added, and the benefits or possible downsides. **Answer what you can; nobody is expected to address every question, and more than one distinct solution may be submitted.**

Petition and Community Participation

The Coalition petition was reported as having **just over 200 signatures** at the time of the meeting, with online and paper signing options available. Community members who have not yet signed are encouraged to do so. Participants also discussed the importance of hearing from people who support or regularly use the current small-dog area, while making clear that the campaign is about **reconfiguration, not removal**.

City Engagement and Contacting Ward 1

Participants discussed broader questions about community consultation, park-use evidence, accurate plans, contractor oversight and post-construction verification. Hamilton's broader review of leash-free park policy and the possibility of a working group or committee were also discussed.

Community members were specifically encouraged to contact Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson directly to share their experiences, concerns and ideas about Hill Street Dog Park. The Coalition also discussed inviting Councillor Wilson to a future community meeting and continuing to follow up with her office.

Contact Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson

Phone: **905-546-2416**

Email: maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca

Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor, 71 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Next Steps

- Continue observation tracking and encourage regular community participation in data collection.
- Document why owners of small dogs choose the main area or the designated small-dog area, including through observation comments and direct feedback.
- Continue accepting community-designed solutions through the Share Your Solution process.
- Compare proposals and identify the strongest community-supported alternatives to present to the City.
- Encourage community members who have not yet signed the Coalition petition to do so.
- Encourage community members to contact Councillor Maureen Wilson directly with their experiences, concerns and ideas.
- Continue outreach to people with differing views, including supporters and users of the current small-dog area.
- Continue following up on the **August 5, August 10 and August 12 requests to Councillor Maureen Wilson's Ward 1 office** for accurate drawings, confirmed dimensions and clarification of the apparent discrepancy.
- Invite Councillor Wilson to a future community meeting and seek community representation in the City's broader leash-free park policy review.

Thank you to everyone who participated, shared an experience, asked a question or offered an idea.

The goal remains the same: keep a safe space for small dogs while finding a configuration that works better for everyone who uses Hill Street Dog Park.

This summary records information, concerns and proposals discussed by meeting participants. Community measurements, recollections about earlier City decisions, questions about petition representation, and responsibility for the apparent fence discrepancy should not be read as independently verified City findings.