

KYMENLAAKSON AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
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DOG PARK RENOVATION PLAN

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ABSTRACT

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Green areas play an important role in modern society. As cities expand rapidly, green areas become more important, desirable, and attractive for society. In order to offer an adequate environment, all sectors have to be considered in the planning; children, the handicapped, the elderly, and even pets. Dogs have natural instincts and necessities, and should be considered in an urban development as pets are part of society.

Pikku-Palomäaki Dog Park, situated in Kouvola city, is lacking in general maintenance. Seen as an opportunity rather than an issue, there was a clear first step: to gather user's opinions. When planning an improvement to a public space, users are the main objective and the reason of the improvements. Having their opinions, the plan has then good foundations and support.

An important data acquisition tool for the project was the survey. The questionnaire containing 24 carefully formulated questions enabled the correct acquisition of user behaviour, opinions, and experiences in this particular dog park. The survey was available online, reaching a larger audience and facilitating the data collection and analysis.

The results of the survey led to a proposal. In order to increase the popularity of the park, it has to be appealing for pets and humans alike. It suggests the transformation from a circuit-like park into a more dynamic area. A new central area interconnected to the circuit would simple turn the park into a more consistent space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The order of the contents is presented to the readers as the development process followed throughout the entire project.

During the development of the plan, the author of the thesis received help and guidance from Sakari Värri, head of green-areas in Kouvola City. The topographic maps needed for the study, analysis and development of the park were kindly provided by Kouvola City.

In order to reach the correct audience, the online survey was forwarded with the help of Kouvolan Seudun Seurakoirakerho ry, who invited all members to respond to the survey.

The aim of the thesis is to gather the correct information, design a renovation plan and suggest the result to the City of Kouvola for further consideration. Rather than a technical approach, the project takes an aim towards research and development; the optimal usage of the space allocated to the dog park, user behaviour, user activities, and dog/human safety; all of these aspects were the objectives of the project.

The results are a suggestion and would need further technical planning/drawings concerning lightning, drainage, etc.

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LIST OF TERMS

<i>agile</i>	Able to move quick and easy.
<i>bark</i>	The sharp explosive cry of certain animals.
<i>behaviour</i>	The way in which one acts or conducts oneself.
<i>benefit</i>	An advantage or profit gained from something.
<i>bulletin</i>	A short official statement or broadcast summary news.
<i>conifer</i>	A tree that bears cones and evergreen needle or scale-like leaves.
<i>deciduous</i>	Shedding its leaves annually.
<i>disease</i>	A disorder of structure or function in a human, animal, or plant, especially one that produces specific signs or symptoms or that affects a specific location and is not simply a direct result of physical injury.
<i>dog</i>	A domesticated carnivorous animal that typically has a long snout, an acute sense of smell, and a barking, howling, or whining voice. It is widely kept as a pet or for work or field sports.
<i>dominant</i>	More important, powerful or noticeable than other things.
<i>dynamic</i>	Characterized by constant change, activity, or progress.
<i>evolution</i>	The gradual development of plants, animals, etc. over many years, from simple to more complicated forms.
<i>exercise</i>	Activity requiring physical effort, carried out especially to sustain or improve health and fitness.
<i>hierarchy</i>	A system, especially in a society or an organization, in which people are organized into different levels of importance from highest to lowest.

<i>homeostasis</i>	The ability or tendency of an organism or cell to maintain internal equilibrium by adjusting its physiological processes.
<i>inoculate</i>	To protect a person or an animal from catching a particular disease by injecting them with a mild form of disease.
<i>instinct</i>	A natural tendency for people and animals to behave in a particular way using the knowledge and abilities that they were born with rather than thought or training.
<i>interaction</i>	Reciprocal action or influence.
<i>lack</i>	The state of being without or not having enough of something.
<i>longevity</i>	Long life; the fact of living a long life.
<i>obedience</i>	Compliance with someone's wishes or orders or acknowledgment of their authority.
<i>obstacle</i>	A thing that blocks one's way or prevents or hinders progress.
<i>physiology</i>	The way in which a living organism or bodily part functions.
<i>shovel</i>	A tool with a long handle and a broad blade with curved edges, used for moving earth, snow, sand, etc.
<i>survey</i>	Investigate by questioning a group of people.
<i>vandalism</i>	Action involving deliberate destruction of or damage to public or private property.
<i>welfare</i>	The health, happiness, and fortunes of a person or group.
<i>wellbeing</i>	The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

(New Oxford American Dictionary)

1 INTRODUCTION

Green areas within a city are of great importance for the common wellbeing of its population. A park is as important as a school, church or the public transport. In order to maintain an optimum city, all its inhabitants have to be considered, including children, the elderly, the handicapped, and even pets such as dogs.

Dogs without sufficient daily exercise become stressed, which affects humans as well; if the dog does not burn its energy with exercise, it will burn it by barking, chewing furniture, walls and floors, and even become aggressive. Stress affects dogs' health; diseases may appear as a consequence of lack of exercise and stress.

In some cases, the designer's job is to compare, analyse and improve a product or service in order to get a greater satisfaction for the users. Being a dog owner myself and a regular user of Pikku-Palomäki dog park, I realized that the park could easily be improved, and therefore offer a better place for dogs and their owners. The park was also lacking maintenance; the furniture was rotten, the agility devices were not safe anymore, and the fence in bad condition.

During my visits to the park, I realized that only a small percentage of the area was being utilized. By redistributing and rearranging the elements of the park, the *usable space* would increase and the *unused space* would decrease. As a result, the users would have more area for themselves and their dogs. For a correct documentation of the condition, distribution, location, and materials of the elements in the park, video footage and photographs were taken before the winter season, showing the landscape without snow.

In order to start planning the improvements, first I contacted Kouvola City and shared the pictures I had taken to show the current conditions of the park, and discuss the idea of redistributing and rearrange the elements of the park in order to maximize the *usable space*. The answer was positive; a scheduled woodland maintenance of the area was planned for the near future, giving me the possibility of presenting the improvements for further consideration.

As the project has the goal of improving the park, current users had to be taken into consideration. User's opinions, behavioural patterns and attitudes were an important

first step when planning improvements. By getting this data, the project had the certainty that the improvements were not only for me, but also for most of the users. The data was collected using a carefully formulated survey as a tool, and with the help of KSSK (Kouvolan Seudun Seurakoira Kerho) I could reach an important amount of users.

2 DOGS: WELFARE AND NEEDS

Wolves and dogs are part of the larger order Carnivora (animals that are meat eaters and mostly live by hunting). Even though each dog has a secondary classification specifying its distinctions, all are categorized by biologists as canines and members of the same biological family, Canidae – as are wolves, foxes, jackals, and coyotes. (Dogs All-in-One For Dummies 2010, Book I: 21)

The contract between man and dog would seem to be a straightforward one: we provide food, shelter and security, expecting only companionship in return (Jensen 2007: 225). The emotions dogs experience throughout their life are probably simpler than those of a human. Dogs are possibly limited to a few emotions such as fear, anger, and pleasure. These emotions are an evolutionary consequence necessary for surviving in the wild. The strength of these emotions may be measured using physiological and behavioural parameters that appear to be common to many mammals including humans. The biological functioning of an animal, both short and long term may also reflect its welfare. In the short term, the effort made to maintain homeostasis and the presence of stress or distress might reflect an animal's welfare. In the longer term, an animal's health, reproductive success, and longevity may be influenced by its physical and mental wellbeing. (Stafford 2007: xi)



Picture 1. A distressed healthy dog.

The main characteristic patterns of social behaviour in dogs are the following: *social play*, where the dog learns the basic rules of social life such as how roughly they can interact, how hard they can bite, and how to resolve conflicts; *sense of fairness*, the dog learns codes of social conduct, helping the animal to survive in their particular social environment; *communicative skills*, the barking of a dog contains transitions and gradations having different meanings; *family groups or packs*, a social system where the members are members of a hierarchy; *long-term monogamy*, the most common mating system; *bonding behaviour*, a behaviour much stronger and longer than, for example, in chimpanzees; *parental care*, provisioning of cubs by both parents and all other pack members act as helpers; *social learning from conspecifics*, where the pup stays long enough with its parents in order to learn social behaviour, hunting skills, and feeding behaviour; *communicating social rights, dominance hierarchy*, implying the acceptance of restrictions by the subdominant animal. (Jensen 2007: 108-109)



Picture 2. Social play between dogs.

Dogs are animals that work for a living. They have worked alongside us for thousands of years, and most are bred for a particular purpose, such as hunting, herding livestock, or providing protection. They lead busy, complex lives, interacting socially and solving simple problems necessary to their survival. (www.asPCA.org)

All pedigree breeds are divided into seven breed groups, which are hound, working, gundog, terrier, utility, pastoral, and toy (www.theKenneLclub.org.uk). The smallest dog alive, according to the *Guinness World Records* is a female Chihuahua, who measures 10.16 cm tall; the tallest dog alive is a Great Dane, measuring 1.092 meters; the highest jump cleared by a dog is 172.7 cm, achieved by a Holly Grey. The heavi-

est dog in history was an English Mastiff, with a weight of 343 lbs (155 kg).
(www.guinnessworldrecords.com)



Picture 3. Comparison of dog sizes. Chihuahua (left) and Great Dane (right).

Some dog breeds are used as sentinel and guard animals, many used for protecting property and individuals from humans or other animals. The most common breeds used as guard dogs are German shepherd, Doberman, Rottweiler, and the American Bulldog. Each particular breed has its own advantage over others, some breeds might be more agile than others but be less strong, while other breeds are stronger but less agile. Guard dogs need to have a strong loud bark that will inform of the presence of intruders and potentially intimidate them. (Stafford 2007:13)



Picture 4. Guard dog training

Detection dogs are used to locate particular items such as drugs, currency, explosives, firearms, cadavers, termites, etc. Detection dogs are widely used at airports, where drugs intend to cross the board into other countries. These kinds of dogs need to be physically fit, love praise, and have a strong hunting instinct. Drug and bomb detection dogs sniff up to 300 times per minute when working. (Stafford 2007:17)



Picture 5. Detection dog on duty.

Despite dogs' natural instincts, most dogs do not earn their living in modern days; instead they adjust to our lifestyle, a sedentary lifestyle. Food is served to them in a bowl for free, without the necessity of hunting their own food. The energy is then kept inside the dog that is now inactive for most of the day. This lack of purpose leaves dogs no space for practicing their naturally active tendencies, their instincts—physical and mental—and it contributes to the development of behaviour problems. (www.aspca.org)

Dog exercise is highly recommended and has plenty of health benefits. The dog will feel good, have a healthy weight, and display exemplary behaviour. Regular walking and sufficient exercise are the cornerstones of a dog's health and welfare. Dogs must be taken for daily walks sufficiently often, and particular attention must be paid to meeting the dog's need for exercise. A dog's individual need for exercise and activity varies according to the breed, age and health of the dog. Generally speaking, however, all dogs should be taken outside at least three times a day. A dog should be taken for a long walk at least once a day to give it the proper exercise it needs and to enable the dog to follow its instincts. (www.hel.fi)



Picture 6. Healthy pet.

If the dog's energy is not drained by exercise or play, the energy will result in unwanted behavioural actions such as: destructive chewing, digging or scratching, ruining furniture, walls, floors, etc.; investigative behaviours like garbage raiding, exposing the dog to possible poisoning or diseases; hyperactivity, excitability and night-time activity; unruliness, knocking over furniture and jumping up on people; excessive predatory and social play, leading to aggression and fights; attention-seeking behaviour like barking and whining. (www.asPCA.org)

If the energy is drained by exercise, social activities and play, the dog as well as the owner will enjoy the benefits. Some of the benefits are: reduction or elimination of the common behaviour problems mentioned above; dogs are healthy, agile, and limber, this includes a reduction in the risk of heart disease, urinary infections, depression, stress, and enhances longevity; reduction of digestive problems and constipation; helps timid or fearful dogs build confidence and trust; helps dogs feel sleepy, rather than restless, at bedtime or when you're relaxing; helps to keep dogs' weight under control. (www.asPCA.org)

Exercise is important for dogs all around the year. As the dog whisperer Cesar Millan says: *'Yes, it's cold outside, and the number of daylight hours is short, but your dog does not hibernate, and it's important that your dog get daily exercise. Vital for a dog's physical and mental wellness, exercise is also a crucial part of the relationship between pack leader—you—and your dog'*. Most bigger dogs love snow, and they can get a great workout by ploughing through it. Spend 30 to 40 minutes in the snow, and

your dog will get a workout that leaves it exhausted—and their muscles toned.
(www.cesarsway.com)

A dog park is a great way to improve your dog's social skills and allow it to have some fun interacting with others of its own kind, draining in this way the energy accumulated and bringing benefits to the dog itself and the owner, consolidating the relationship. Off-leash walking, running, hiking, or bicycling in a large, safe fenced park or in a forest are ideal activities. Your dog can set its own pace, sniff and investigate to her heart's content, stop when he's tired and burst into running whenever he likes.
(www.asPCA.org)

Dog agility is a great method to bond humans and dogs as much as it is a great exercise. Agility demands intelligence, speed, and teamwork; as the dog and handler progress through agility levels, courses become more complex. The sport is all about competing on an obstacle course for the best times. Dogs that are normally bored in obedience often are very good in agility. (Bonham 2009: 3-6)

For the agility competition, dogs are divided into three categories; contestants below 35cm of height are considered *Small*, higher than 35cm but less than 43cm are considered *Medium*, and dogs higher than 43cm are in the *Large* category. (Agility Regulations of the Federation Cynologique Internationale 2007:3)

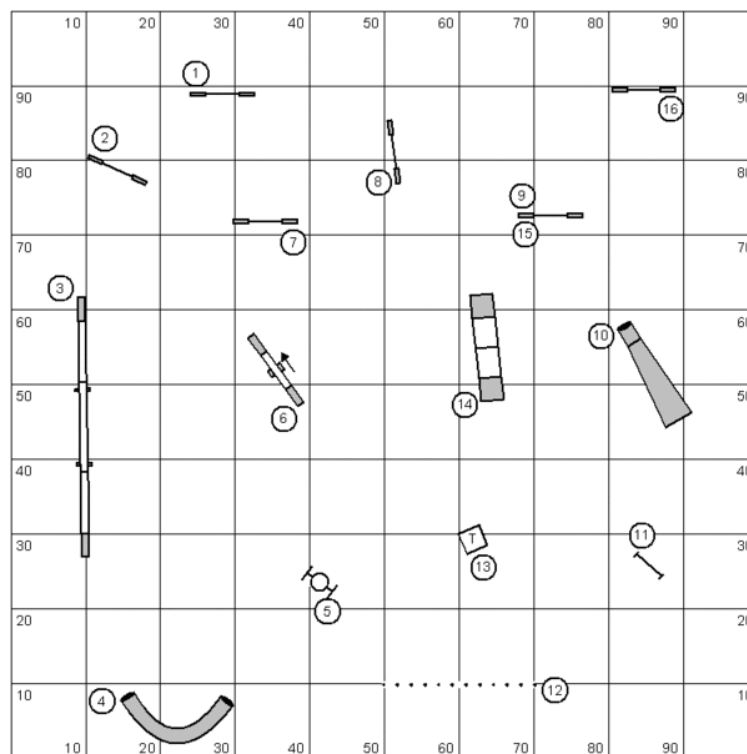


Picture 7. Agility obstacle execution (Hurdle obstacle)

In an agility course, several obstacles are laid down in a predetermined space forming a course difficult enough for the dog not to be able to complete the course without the handler's help. (www.thekennelclub.org.uk)

The area required to build an agility course must measure at least 30m x 40m. The actual length of the course will be between 100m and 200m and, depending on the class, will require a dog to traverse at least 15 obstacles but no more than 20, no less than 7 of them must be jumps (hurdles, wall, and tyre). A standard competition set must contain at least 10 hurdles. Spread jumps will have a maximum width: S: 30cm; M: 40cm; L: 55cm. Combination jumps (maximum of three hurdles counting as one obstacle) have a distance of 2m for small, 3m for medium and 4m for large dogs. These combination jumps can only consist of hurdles with poles. The distance between two consecutive obstacles ranges from 5m to 7m (Agility Regulations of the Federation Cynologique Internationale 2007:3)

The obstacles approved by the Federation Cynologique Internationale are hurdles, see-saw, flat tunnel, viaduct or wall, A-frame, tyre, table, weaving poles, long jump, dog walk, and tube tunnel. (Agility Regulations of the Federation Cynologique Internationale 2007:4)



Picture 8. Agility course map example (imperial units)

In the diagram above, an agility course map is shown. The human (master) follows the numbers in order while the dog executes the task. In this course, a total of 16 steps have to be executed in the correct numeric order. The contestant, who executes all steps with fewer mistakes and in less time, wins the competition. Numbers 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15 and 16 represent the so called *hurdle* agility obstacle. A *dog walk* is represented in the map by the number 3. The number 4 is a *tube tunnel*, number 5 a *tyre* obstacle, number 6 a *see saw*, number 10 a *flat tunnel*, number 12 represents a *weave* obstacle, 13 representing a *table*, and number 14 represents an *A-frame*. More information about agility obstacles is available in the appendix 8 and 9.

3 OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

Dogs have specific places for being off-leash. These areas are usually fenced, offering a proper environment for dogs to follow their natural instincts and behaviour, i.e. running, chasing, smelling, socializing, etc.



Picture 9. Dog park, USA.

Even though all off-leash areas are different, common elements exist in all of them. The main elements present in off-leash dog areas are: a fenced area, sitting places, sufficient lighting, one or more trash bins, and a board with the rules users have to follow in the area.

In some cases, these areas includes two fenced areas, one for smaller dogs and another for larger dogs, it being possible for smaller dogs to be in the larger dogs area but not vice versa. All gates have a locking mechanism simple for humans to open and close but impossible for dogs to open.



Picture 10. Gate locking mechanism. Merisatamanranta, Helsinki.

Some other elements might or might not be present in all off-leash dog areas; these elements are mainly: shovels, utilized by the users to collect their dog's faeces and dispose of them in the trash bin or compost system, avoiding in this way the use of plastic bags; a shelter, protecting the users from bad weather, usually relatively small; a bulletin board, with advertisements related to dogs such as services, dog accessories, etc.; a wider secondary access gate, for maintenance purposes.



Picture 11. Shovels for common use and trash bins. Merisatamanranta, Helsinki.

Commonly, male dogs urinate on vertical elements such as trees, posts, and the sides of benches, so therefore the materials used in dog parks have to withstand corrosion. In the dog park located in Vattuniemi, Helsinki, wooden posts were placed in strategic

locations all over the park in order to attract dogs to pee on the wooden posts instead of metallic elements in the park, such as the fence or the furniture. The wooden posts can be replaced more easily and economically than the fence or the furniture.



Picture 12. Wooden posts. Vattuniemi, Helsinki.

Richness in the relief of the surface is an equally important element. Small hills, rocks, and trees make the surface relief more suitable and enjoyable for the dogs, adding excitement to the area.



Picture 13. Common behaviour in dog parks.

For safety reasons as well as common wellbeing, all off-leash dog areas establishes rules for the users:

- Allow your dog to run free – Make sure your dog gets along with other dogs.
- Ensure that your dog is properly inoculated.
- Do not throw sticks, stones or snowballs and do not bring your own toys either – The consequences may be unforeseeable.
- You are always responsible for your dog – You are always responsible for material damage or bodily damage caused by your dog – YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE.
- Ensure that your dog's barking does not disturb people at night (between 22:00 and 07:00).
- Do not damage flora or fixtures.
- Keep the dog park clean – Clean up after your dog and discard the waste in the bin.
- Always close the gate.

(www.kouvola.fi)



Picture 14. Dogs chasing each other, a common activity in dog parks.

Each dog park has its own character, some located next to a lake/sea, others located between buildings, but all dog parks offer a suitable area for dogs. In the next picture, a basic dog park in Kuusankoski, Kouvola is shown consisting only of a relatively large fenced area, a bench, a trash bin and a bulletin board. The park is not located near any buildings or houses.



Picture 15. Basic dog park.

Unlike the previous example, the next picture shows a dog park situated in between urban developments next to the sea in Helsinki. The picture shows the shore, the buildings are located behind the camera. The park is a large open space, divided into two sections: one for smaller dogs and another for larger dogs. Because of the size of the park there are two different entrances, one from each side. The fence height might not be enough in winter season, when the snow piles up and raises the ground level, making it possible for dogs to jump over the fence, becoming a potential risk due to the busy urban surroundings. The open space gives the user great visibility upon dogs without the necessity of following the dog throughout the park. Several benches are located in the centre of the park, becoming the heart of the area.



Picture 16. Dog park Eiranranta, Helsinki.

In the next examples, the park is located right next to a body of water. The dogs can have a swim during summer and enjoy the company of other dogs. Three big wooden dogs indicate the allowance of dogs in the area. Unlike toys, sticks, or snowballs, water is a safe entertainment where a large amount of dogs can coexisting in the same space.



Picture 17. Dog park in Tervasaari, Helsinki.



Picture 18. Dog park in Rajasaari, Helsinki.



Picture 19. Dog park Vattuniemi, Helsinki.

Dog parks facing the sea give a sensation of great space; with only three fenced sides, the shore offers space, freedom, and adds a dynamic element to the park: water. Over-

all, dog parks are usually an open space, where dogs can play freely in a controlled environment.



Picture 20. WC for dogs, France.

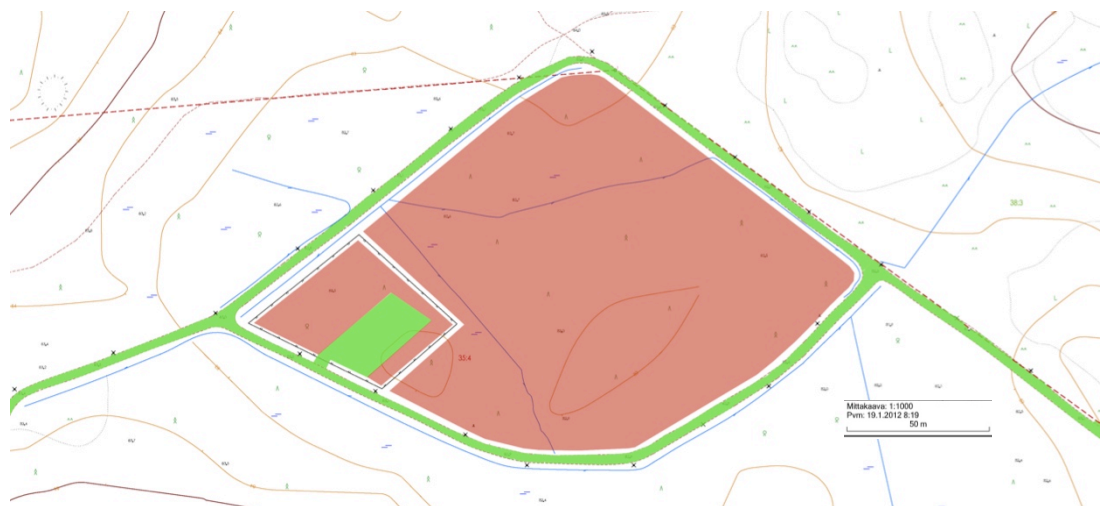


Picture 21. Open and clear dog park, USA.

4 PIKKU-PALOMÄKI DOG PARK

Even though Pikku-Palomäki dog park offers a reasonably good and suitable area for dogs, it lacks general maintenance. The furniture is currently in bad condition, some of which are rotten already. Even though the fence is still serving its purpose in a good manner, it has to be replaced due to deformation in certain areas throughout the area. Some of the boards containing dog park rules have graffiti on them, diminishing readability. A public video of the dog park is available online in [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) under the name *Koirapolku Pikku-Palomäki, Kouvola*.

The park has mainly a circuit and, on one side, a fenced area of about 2000m² that covers just a small zone of the whole area designated to the dog park. The percentage of the usable space offered to the users is very low in comparison to the whole area of the dog park. In the next picture, the space in the park currently being used is shown in green, meaning the circuit and about half of the fenced area. The unused space is shown in red. Clearly, the red area is much bigger than the green. Even though the red area is part of the park, it has no use nowadays. The entrances to the park are located in the picture in both lower extremes, marked as used space.



Picture 22. Green represents *used space*, red represents *unused space*.

In other words, the *used space* is about 15%, and the other 85% *unused space*.



Used vs. Unused

4.1 Location and Accessibility

The off-leash dog area is located in Pikku-Palomäki, Kouvola. The park has two access points; one is from Sammonkatu, and another is on Lehtomäenkatu, both accessible by car, bicycle, or on foot. An additional access point is from Sammonraitti, only available to bicycles and pedestrians. Parking places are available on both sides of the park. The park is illuminated daily until 22:00 hrs. When entering the dog park from the entrance located in Sammonkatu, the user has to first cross the skiing circuit, which has a length of 4 meters approximately. The parking lot is shared between users of the skiing circuit and the users of the dog park. The park is suitable for trolleys and wheel chairs in all seasons except winter, where snow becomes an issue in this case.

4.2 Elements in the park

The park offers its users some basics elements. A trash bin, important for the correct disposal of dog faeces; lighting, placed all around the park including the fenced area and access points; signage, for making clear the off-leash area for dogs; a bulletin board, where various announcements are posted; park rules board, where the eight rules are clearly displayed to users; a fenced area, where users can take a closer look at their dogs and have greater control over them.

A man-made element present in the park is the ditches, almost entirely covered by vegetation in summer, where water is collected keeping the walkways relatively dry.



Picture 23. Furniture condition in the fenced area.



Picture 24. Ditch on one side of the walkway.

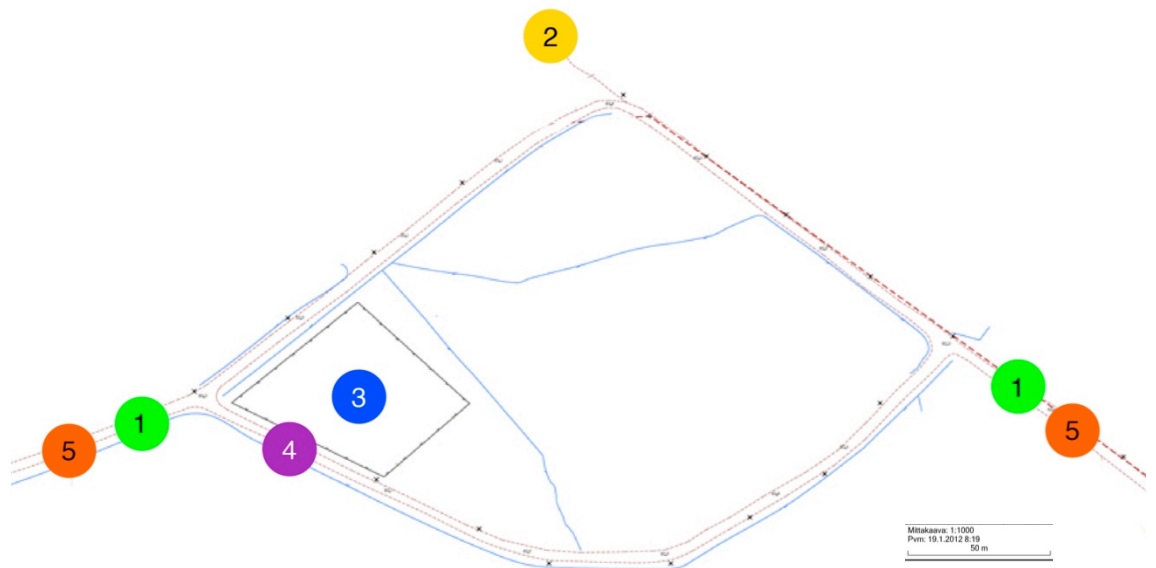
The park has coniferous trees such as spruce and pine, and deciduous trees such as birch and alder, all about the same age. The light posts are wooden, blending with the

trees surrounding them. The only trash bin is located next to the fenced area, placed on a light post and shared with the bulletin board.

4.3 Layout and Distribution

The park has two main entrances (marked with the number 1). Some of the users access the park from a secondary entrance (number 2). The fenced area is marked with the number 3; in this area, furniture and agility devices are placed. The number 4 indicates the entrance to the fenced area, the only light post illuminating the fenced area, the bulletin board, and the only trash bin. Light posts are located all around the circuit. Number 5 indicates the boards containing dog park rules.

The layout of the park encourages the users to either walk the circuit around the park or/and take their dog(s) to the fenced area.



Picture 25. Elements distribution

5 DATA ACQUISITION

In order to adequately conduct the process and achieve the established goals, the correct data is the base for the project. The facts are gathered to frame the problem and envision possible solutions.

5.1 Information Retrieval Method

When planning improvements to a public space, the users are the key source of information and the key for making improvements instead of allowing the status of the space to decline. Listening to the users is a priority when planning improvements to the service. A suitable method for user information retrieval is a questionnaire survey, enabling the gathering of information from a series of different users and broadening the success rate of the project. The survey needs to be carefully formulated, having a purpose for each question and being formulated as well as possible to discard misunderstandings and therefore possible misleadings to the result. As Ian Brace claims, *‘if the questions are poorly phrased or in the wrong order, the answers obtained may be worse than meaningless: they may be misleading. Good questionnaire writing is a no-or low-cost option in any survey, which has major rewards in delivering the best, or must accurate, answers.’* (Brace 2008:1)

For this purpose, the questionnaire refers to an interview schedule, with the term questionnaire reserved for the self-completion survey instrument. A structured interview is one in which each subject or respondent is asked a series of questions according to a prepared and fixed interviewing schedule – the questionnaire. (Brace 2008: 2)

In all cases, the role of the questionnaire is to provide a standardized interview across all subjects. Asking the questions in the same way to different people is the key to most survey research. Questionnaires are the medium of conversation between two people, albeit that they are remote from each other and never communicate directly, or in other circumstances it can be applied personally in the form of an interview. (Brace 2008: 4)

The aim of the questionnaire is to obtain better and more accurate answers, not to obtain particular answers to support our position or our client’s position. The research objective of the questionnaire is to gain an awareness of certain problems or discomfort users and/or their dog(s) might have concerning dog parks, as well as possible improvement ideas.

5.2 Results and Analysis

The survey was launched on the 7th of March and it was available in the forum of KSSK web pages. The linked was viewed 250 times and a total of 47 persons answered the survey, of which 89% were women and 11% men.

The age group that answered the most was 26-35 years at 43%, followed closely by 16-25 providing 34% of the answers. These results might suggest that users of an age between 16 and 35 are the most active. There were no entries from the age group below 15 nor above 66 years of age. The results of the survey show that 85% do not deal with dogs as part of their daily job, meaning the answers are reliable by suggesting the interest of personal use and not one of productive or commercial use.

Most of the people visit the dog park with only one dog per person; 57% bring one dog, 28% bring 2 dogs, 13% bring 3 dogs at one time and only 2% bring more than 3 dogs at once. With the given results, we can conclude that only a small percentage of the users might have to control two or more dogs in a dangerous or aggressive situation; the more dogs a user has at once, the more possible difficulties they might face. Even though this percentage is small, it is considerable. Safety for the dogs and their owners is a priority, and correct decisions have to be taken.

Based on the results, 60% of the dogs weigh over 15kg, and 40% weigh 15kg or less. In dog parks, a dog is considered small if it weighs up to 15kg and it has a height under 40cm, while a large dog is one which weighs more than 15kg. More than half of the dogs visiting the park are large dogs; 60% of the respondents agree that the park should have a designated fenced area for smaller dogs, instead of having just one for any size breeds. In some off-leash dog areas in Finland, it is common to see a fenced area for smaller dogs and a fenced area for larger dogs, offering the possibility of introducing smaller dogs to the large dogs area under the owner/walkers responsibility, but never vice versa. According to the survey, the heaviest dog that visits the park weighs 48 kg, and the lightest dog weighs 5 kg. The difference in weight is considerable, and commonly the owners of smaller dogs feel intimidated by larger breeds that could severely injure the toy dogs in a fight. As a consequence, a special fenced area needs to be destined for smaller dogs, where a more controlled and safe zone is established.

The dog park has visitors all round the year, but according to the survey, spring (26%) is the season with the most visitors. These results differ in only a small quantity from each other, meaning that the park has practically the same amount of visitors all around the year.

Almost 30% of the users visit the park less than once per month, and 26% visit the park between 1 to 3 times per month. According to the results, 17% take their dogs to the park from 1 to 2 times per week, 11% 3-4 per week and 6% 5-6 per week.

The time spent in the park by a user is usually more than 30 minutes (62%). These results might suggest a need for benches for the users. The average amount of time spent in the park might be increased if the park was more appealing. In this way, dogs would encounter more dogs, socialize, play, and exercise more.

Most of the people use cars to get to the park, but almost the same percentage reach the park on foot. People coming by car reported that they were always able to find a parking space.

The main reason for visiting the dog park has been to let the dogs be off-leash and socialize with other dogs. Another important reason is to allow puppies to socialize and find themselves in a hierarchical place within a pack.

An important amount of the users (47%) walk around the circuit during their visit to the park. The vast majority visit the fenced area (48%) and either wait for the dog to play around and mark certain places, practice agility with the only device, or play with the dog(s) themselves. Users mention in several cases that the number of times they visit the park as well as the amount of time spent in the park would increase if there were better agility devices.

An important 47% of the users reported that they feel safe in the park at all times, concerning both dogs and users. Unfortunately, another 19.1% feel safe only sometimes, while the remaining 34% does not consider the park to be a safe environment. Many users report the presence of aggressive dogs and their irresponsible owners/walkers being the main reason for feeling unsafe amongst mainly larger breeds of dogs.

On the other hand, 62% agree the park has enough lighting in the circuit as well as in the fenced area, with only 19% disagreeing with that statement. The amount of trash bins, which today is only one bin in the entire park, appears to be poor, with 64% complaining about that issue. It is worth mentioning that only 17% agree with the amount of trash bins in the area, while the other 19% does not agree nor disagree. Considering that only one trash bin serves the whole park, it is expected to get emptied regularly; 66% neither agree nor disagree with that the trash bin is emptied regularly; the statement can be considered to be positive, if the trash bin was not emptied regularly then as a consequence users would realize it and reply differently.

Another important issue is the ditches, which are commonly muddy. The ditches are not the place you want your dog to play in, but because the ditches are exposed and very often dogs like to play with water, dogs end up getting dirty and give their owners/walkers the task of washing them. To ascertain the previous statement, the survey reports that 68% of the dogs play in the ditches, of which 90% of the walkers/owners of those dogs do not like because of the dirty and muddy water.

One of the main reasons of taking dogs out is because their physiological necessities. Fortunately, based on the survey, the majority of the owners/walkers would pick up their dog(s) faeces either with a plastic bag or a shovel, the only exception presented is when the dog poops in an area not transited by people, this is away from the walkway, fenced area or parking place.

When analysing some other off-leash dog areas in Finland, in especially newer parks, a rather small roof was available in the park if bad weather conditions present during the visit. According to the survey, 68% claim not to need a roofed area in the park, and only 21% would like to have one.

The vast majority agrees that the surface material within the park is suitable for their dogs' paws.

Overall, the respondents grade the park with a high score; 36% give an 8 and 26% grades it at 7.

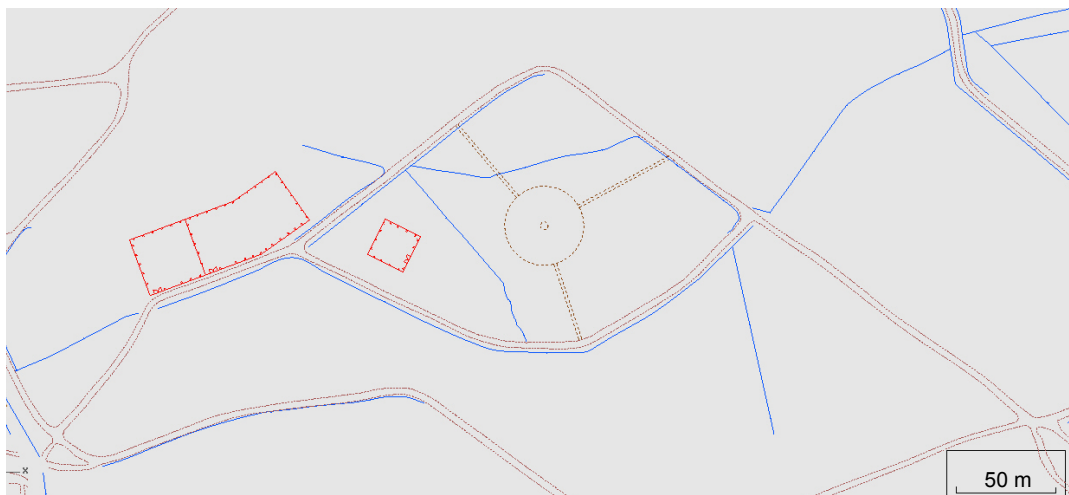
6 RENEWAL PLAN

6.1 Layout and Distribution

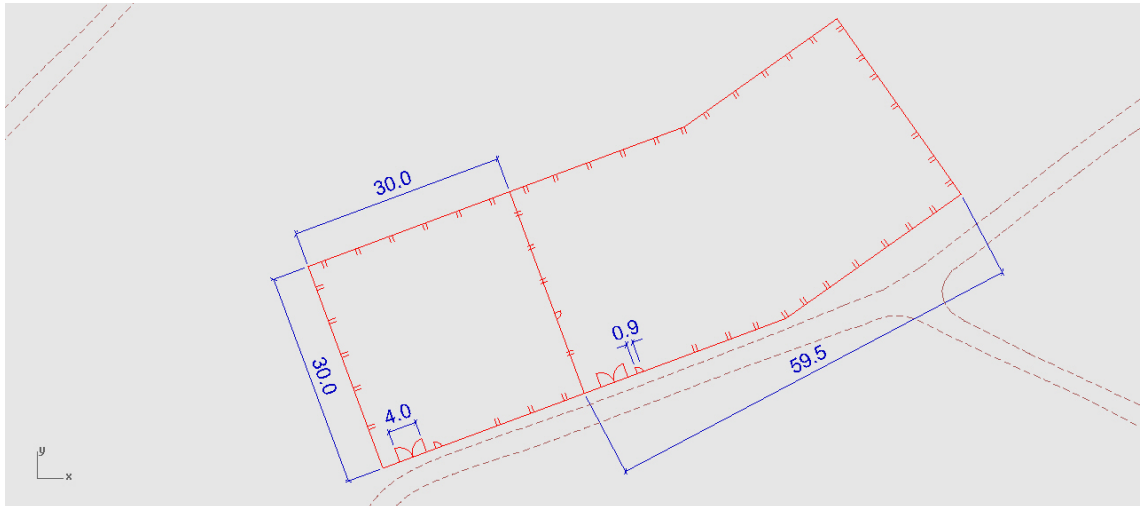
The park has certain elements which help to shape the environment for public use. Many off-leash dog areas share the same elements, nevertheless certain parks have special requirements due to their terrain or location, amount of visitors, type of vegetation, etc.

6.1.1 Fenced areas

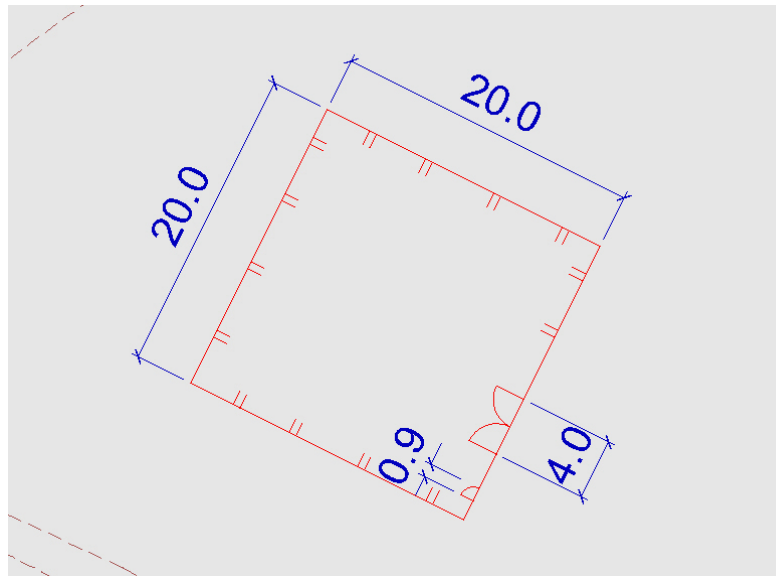
Two separate fenced areas are proposed. One fenced area is divided in two; one-third is destined for smaller dogs, and the other two-thirds for larger dogs. Both divisions have a maintenance access gate for trucks. Some users feel safer and with greater control in the fenced area rather than outside in the park, based on this statement, the fenced area is placed closer to the main entrance. The smaller dog fenced area is closer to the entrance; according to the survey, a large amount of users walking smaller dogs feel unsafe in the park at times, 40% of the dogs visiting the park are smaller breeds. When the smaller dog fenced area is placed closer to the entrance, users with small dogs can quickly access the fenced area, and therefore face fewer potential dangers, offering a greater feeling of security to users unwilling to let their small dogs socialize with larger dogs. The larger dog fenced area is placed next to it, offering the possibility of going from smaller to larger but not vice versa. In winter season, snow piles up, raising the ground level; the fence height should be suitable for winter conditions as well.



Picture 26. Fenced areas represented in red.



Picture 27. First fenced area dimensions in meters.



Picture 28. Second fenced area dimensions in meters.

The agility area is also fenced, and located in a more tranquil area. The fence is surrounded by vegetation blocking most of the visual distractions. In this way, the dog as well as the master can concentrate and practice basic agility. It is recommended to only enter the agility area if there are no other users inside the area, only one dog at the time. The obstacles have to withstand outdoor conditions as well as vandalism. The agility area in the park is only for basic agility practices, for a more professional approach the users would have to visit a proper established agility track with the help of a trained guide. The *tube tunnel* can be made of a drainage pipe, which will withstand weather and temperature changes throughout the year. The *tyre* obstacle can be made

from a recycled tyre, chains, and metal tubes. Any metal tube placed in the agility areas has to have its concrete foundation, as lampposts, in order to withstand the rough usage as well as vandalism, assuring its adequate positioning during the years.



Picture 29. A pipe used as a *tube tunnel* agility obstacle.

See Appendix 8 and 9/2 for more information.



Picture 30. Recycled tyre and chains used as a *tyre* agility obstacle.

See Appendix 8 and 9/3 for more information.

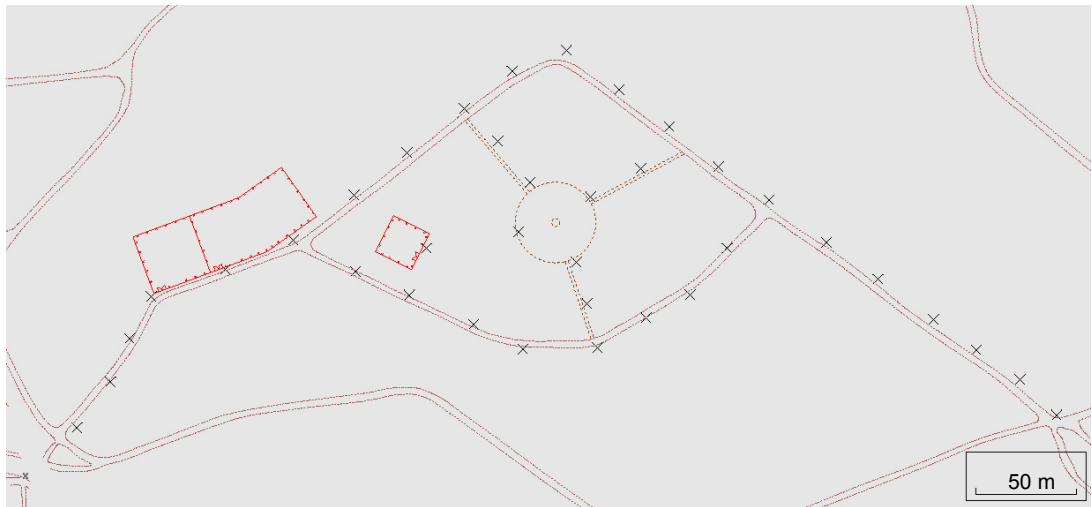


Picture 31. A pipe used as a *tube tunnel* agility obstacle.

6.1.2 Lightning

As the majority of users agree that the park has sufficient lighting in the circuit, no major changes would be made. If necessary, the posts could be replaced, but the locations of the posts would remain approximately the same. As the park has changes in

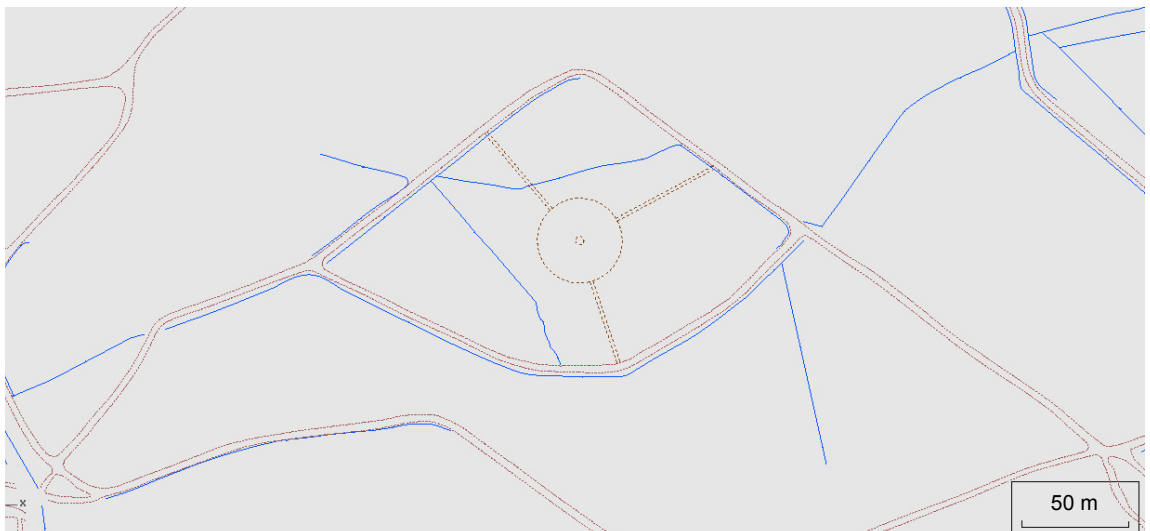
the layout, new light posts have to be placed in order to fulfil the lighting requirements, as the following diagram explains.



Picture 32. Light posts represented with an X.

6.1.3 Ditches

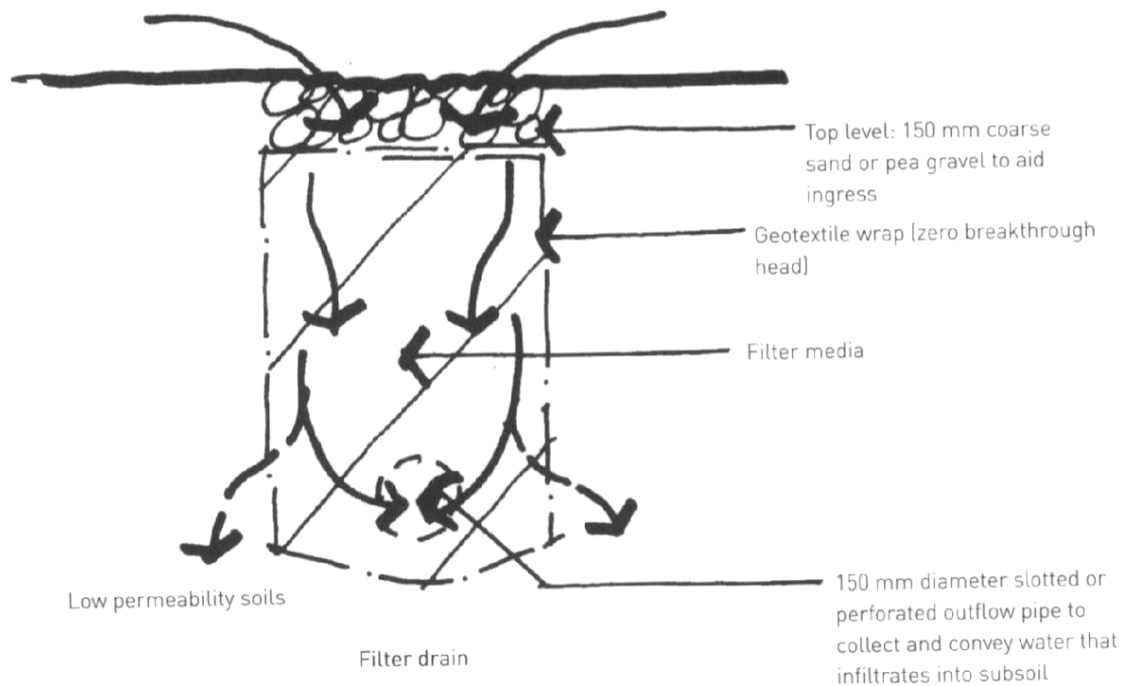
About 90% of users dislike the idea of their dog(s) playing in the ditches. Muddy and dirty, the ditches are not a place for dogs. The ditches have to be re-made, over the years the soil has shifted, misdirecting the water in some areas. In summer, the exposed water in the ditches contributes to an increase in the mosquito population.



Picture 33. Ditches represented in blue.

A solution to this problem is French drains, also known as filter drains, which consist of a trench filled with gravel with a permeable-pipe drain at the base, permitting sur-

face water to enter the soil until it is saturated. (Holden & Liversedge 2011: 108-109). Permeable geotextiles are commonly used in filter drainage systems, placed around the pipes in order to prevent fine soil from entering and blocking them. Geotextiles are made from yarns or fibres fashioned into sheets, made either from natural materials such as hemp, cotton, jute, bamboo, etc, or synthetic material such as polypropylene, polyester, polyethylene, polyamide or PVC, then known as geosynthetics. Geosynthetics are resistant to biological and chemical change, whereas natural fiber geotextiles are used for temporary applications. (Holden & Liversedge 2011: 129-130)



Picture 34. Filter drainage diagram.

By applying French drains to the park, exposed water is avoided, dogs will not play in the mud of the ditches and users will have a more pleasant experience.

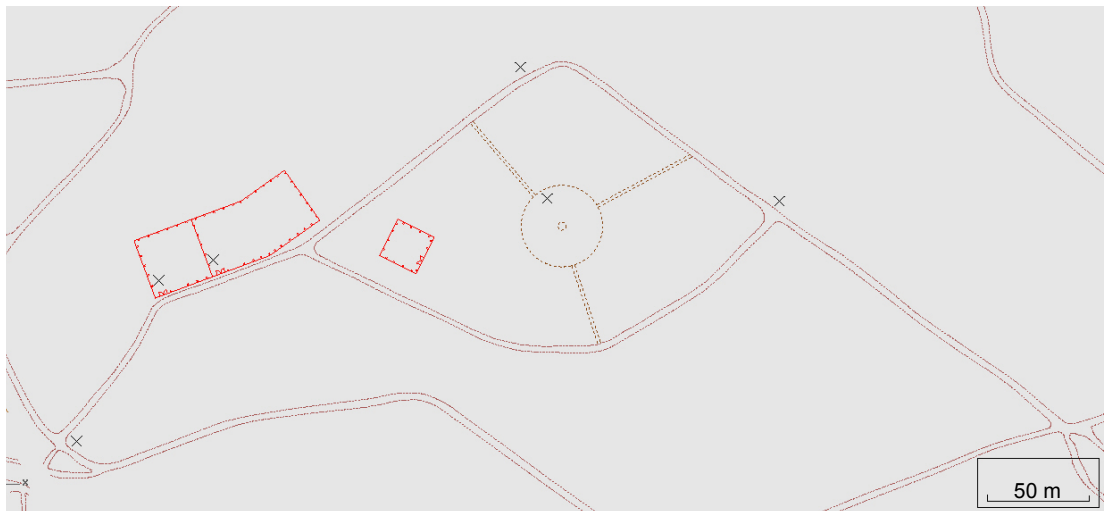
6.1.4 Trash Bins

According to the survey, not enough waste bins have been placed in the park. As some users smoke while in the park, bins for cigarette filters have to be considered. Cigarette filters are not to be consumed by dogs, and are a health risk if eaten. Considering all users to be responsible, smokers would have to dispose of their filters in the appropriate bin. These bins, including an ashtray, would be placed in areas where people are more likely to smoke, i.e. the central unfenced area where the benches are located.

Users dispose of their dogs' faeces either with the help of a shovel or with a plastic bag.



Picture 35. Trash bin + cigarette disposal unit. L&T CITY® Combi



Picture 36. Trash bins represented with an X.

6.1.5 Boards and signage

Signage indicating *off-leash dog area* has to be placed strategically in places clearly visible from the main entrances to the park. Park rules have to be clearly visible to the users in order to achieve the adequate safe environment for the users. New signage for the *small dog area* as well as *large dog area* will be placed respectively, as well as in

the *agility area*. A bulletin board is placed next to the large dog area, where users may advertise, offer, or warn other users about certain issues.



Picture 37. Off-leash dog area sign.



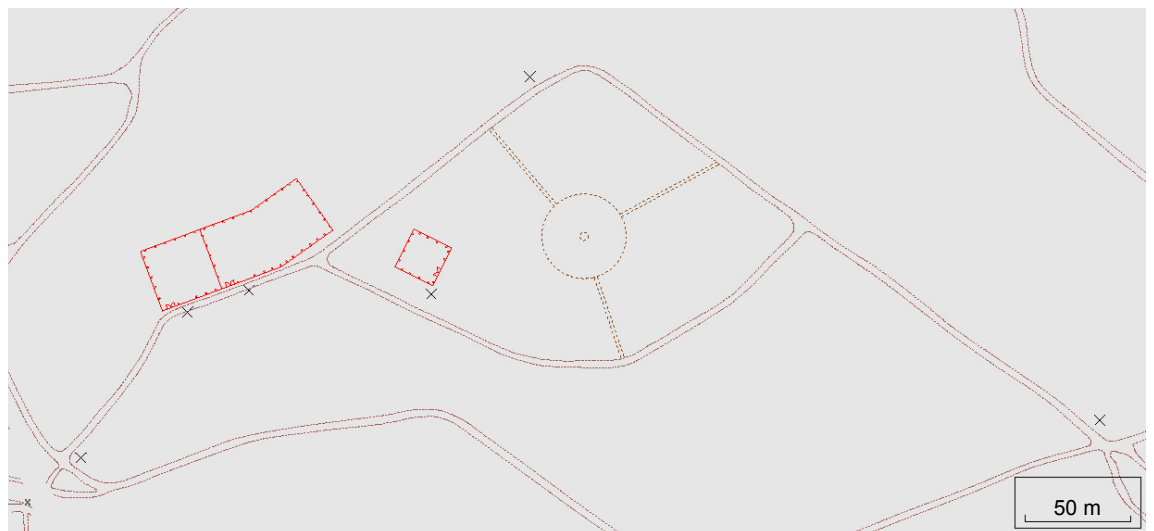
Picture 38. Agility area sign.



Picture 39. Area for larger dogs sign.



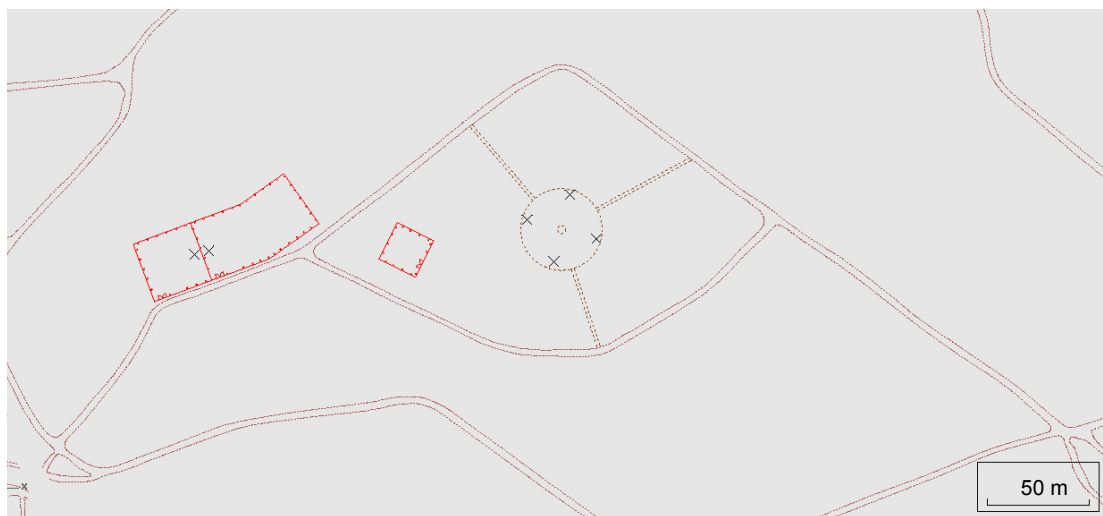
Picture 40. Area for smaller dogs sign.



Picture 41. Signage placement represented with an X.

6.1.6 Benches

About 65% of the users currently spend more than 30 minutes in the park. The aim of the park is to attract people and to offer a leisure environment as well as an attractive park not only for dogs but for humans as well. The park offers opportunities for taking mild exercise by walking around the circuit. Benches should be considered for those users who prefer to sit, contemplate the surroundings, have a chat with other users, and enjoy the warm weather in summer while their dogs play and socialize with others in the same environment. This area is located in the centre, with three different access points.



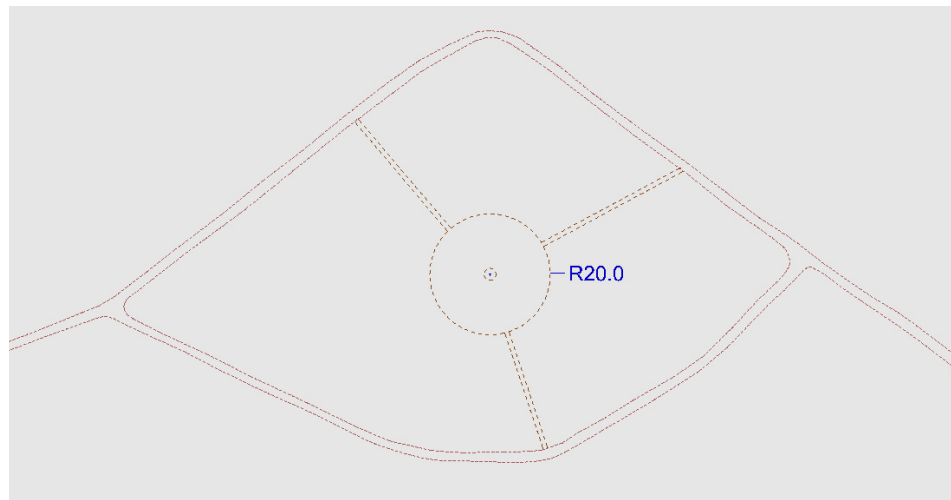
Picture 42. Benches represented with an X.

6.2 Usage

Nowadays, the users of the park have two activities to choose from; either walking around the circuit, in one direction or another, or visiting the fenced area.

With the new proposal, the user would have further possibilities, adding richness to the park, making it a more dynamic place. Two fenced areas, including one for practicing basic agility, the circuit that encloses the park and a new possibility: usage of the central space. The central space suggests a place for users to gather and let dogs practice natural pack instincts.

The agility practice area is now an independent zone, focusing only on that activity. The area offers agility obstacles suitable to practice basic agility rather than professional agility.



Picture 43. The central open area (meters).

6.3 Maintenance

The central opened area is a branch free surface, and in order to achieve that, regular maintenance has to be done in the area. All six trash bins have to be regularly emptied, including the ashtray in the central open area. The agility obstacles have to be inspected regularly and fixed if needed to warranty safety. In winter season, at least the main circuit has to be kept free of snow.



Picture 44. Regular maintenance has to be scheduled in order to conserve the optimum condition of the park.

CONCLUSIONS

Green areas within a city are becoming more important as cities expand. Society needs greater leisure options. Based on the results of the survey and the research, the proposal suggests a better dog park, where dog owners can gather and chat, but more importantly, let their dogs off-leash and socialize with other dogs in a safe, healthy, friendly and fun environment. The result is rather modest; a woodland area with few walkways giving humans and dogs a natural environment to interact.

The survey was a suitable tool for gathering information, and with 47 users answering the questionnaire in few weeks the result was pleasing, showing that most of the users are willing to contribute for a change, and are expecting a change as well.

The park has many visitors every day, including irresponsible users. Potential danger always exists, and in a place where users do not know if an aggressive dog is approaching, users have to always keep a close eye and follow the movement of the dogs. For this particular reason, the solution is as simple as possible: a place for walking your dog off-leash. Dog park rules are clearly shown in the area but are not read or followed by many users. The agility area is the only place in the park where you can actually play with your dog. Outside the agility area, if users start playing with dogs, other dogs might become overexcited and therefore aggressive.

The agility area is suitable for introducing basic agility to the users. For a complete agility experience, the user would have to visit an agility centre where proper obstacles are laid in a controlled environment, and where professional guidance is available.

Overall, the change with the biggest impact would be the addition of the centre space. The centre space adds life to the place, suddenly becoming a dynamic space, being not anymore a circuit, but a park for humans and dogs alike.

As a user of the park and as a dog owner, the changes proposed would contribute to uplift the park and its reputation, attracting more users, contributing to the wellbeing of dogs and reducing their potential behavioural problems.

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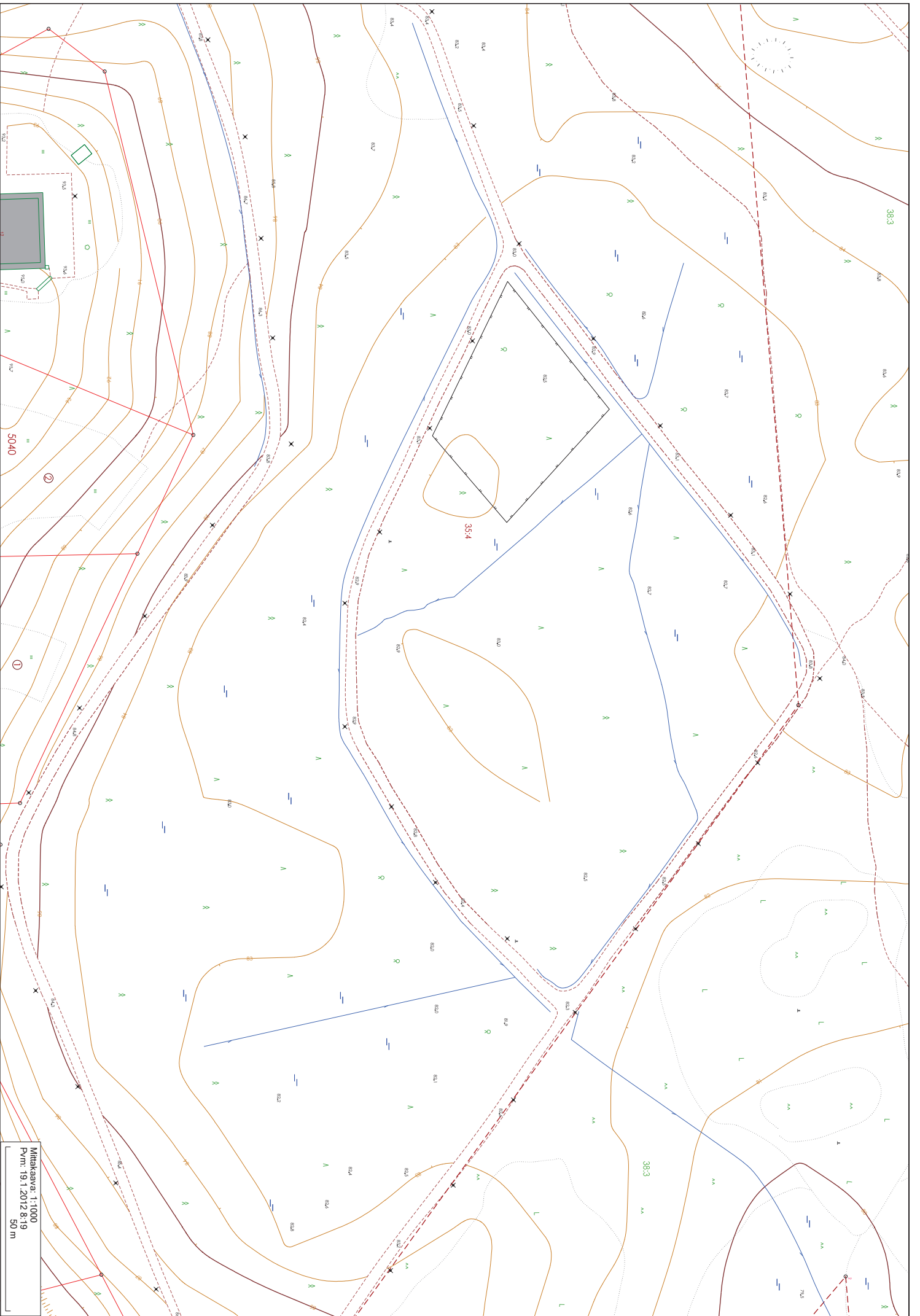
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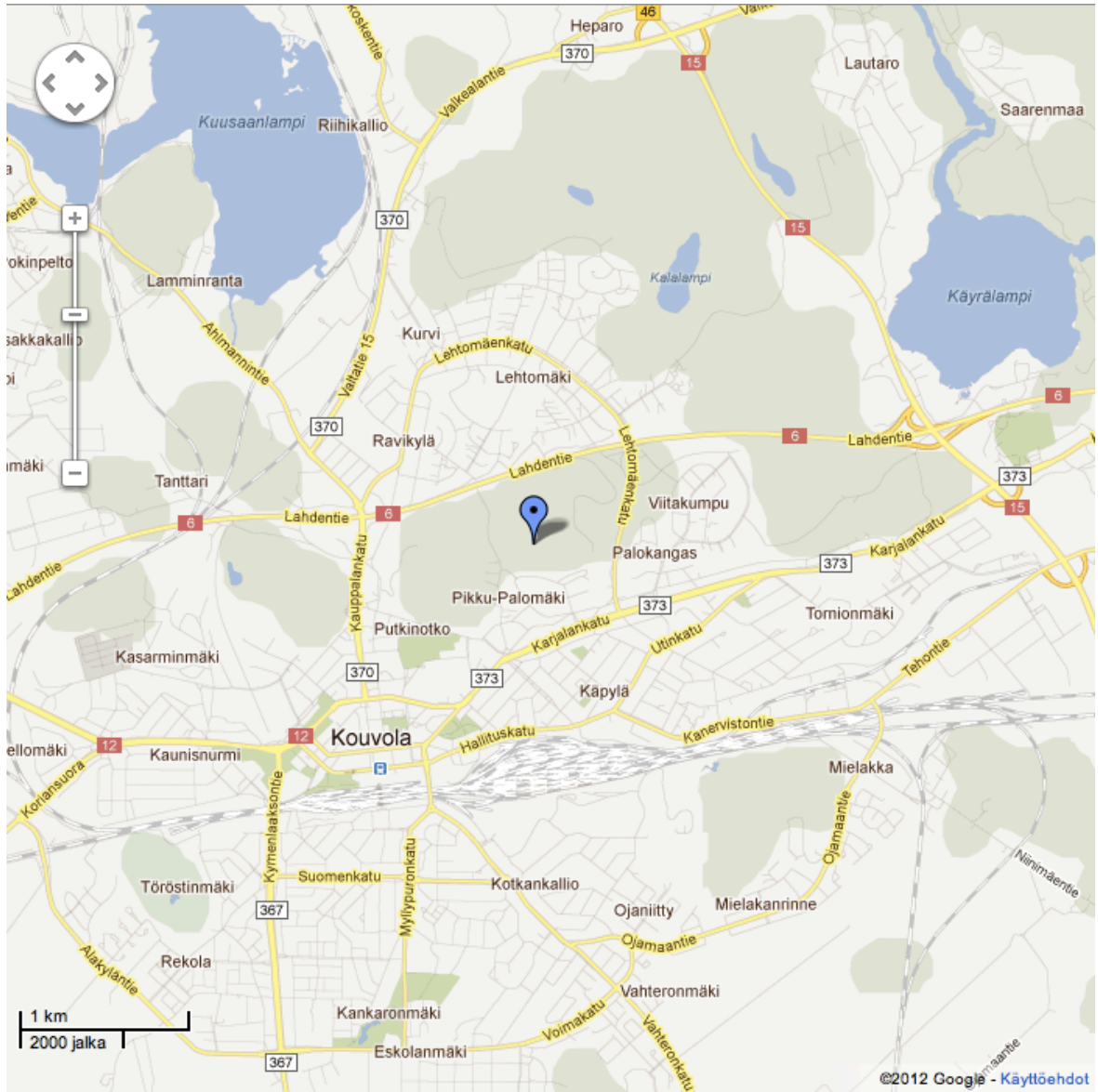
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New Oxford American Dictionary







Dog walk obstacle in Pikku-Palomäki dog park.



Bulletin board and trash bin.



Full trash bin.



Ditches.



Shovel for dog faeces



Light post



Survey announcement.



Dog park entrance



Light post



Gate to fenced area



Fence



Dog park rules board



Bench



Walkway



Ditch

Kysely Pikku-Palomäen koirapolusta

Olen Dario Vidal, opiskelija Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulusta. Tämä kysely on osa opinnäytetyötäni, jossa suunnittelen uudistuksia koirapolulle. Vastauksiin nojautuen koirapolkua tullaan parantelemaan käyttäjiensä hyväksi.



Tämän kyselyn tavoitteena on kartoittaa käyttäjien mielipiteitä ja henkilökohtaisia kokemuksia koirapolulta. Sekä kartoittaa käyttäytymiskaavoja, asenteita ja tyytyväisyyttä koirapolusta sen nykyisessä muodossa.

Kyselyn kesto on n. 5 minuuttia.

Kyselyllä on Kymenlaakson ammattikorkeakoulun, Kouvolan Seudun Seurakoirakerhon ja Kouvolan kaupungin tuki.

Video koirapuistosta [täällä](#).

Kartta käytössä [täällä](#).

*1 Koiran ulkoiluttajan sukupuoli:

- Mies
- Nainen

*2 Koiran ulkoiluttajan ikä:

- <15
- 16-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66>

*3 Työskenteletkö koirien kanssa nykyisessä ammatissasi?

- Kyllä
- Ei
- Joskus

*4 Kuinka monta koira sinulla on yleensä mukana koirapolulla?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 8>

5 Koiran rotu

*Koira 1	
Koira 2	
Koira 3	
Koira 4	
Koira 5	
Koira 6	
Koira 7	
Koira 8	

6 Koiran paino:

*Koira 1	
Koira 2	
Koira 3	
Koira 4	
Koira 5	
Koira 6	
Koira 7	
Koira 8	

*7 Vuodenajat jolloin käyt koirapolulla:

- Kevät
 Kesä
 Syksy
 Talvi

*8 Kuinka usein käyt koirien kanssa koirapolulla?

- joka päivä
 5-6 kertaa viikossa
 3-4 kertaa viikossa
 1-2 kertaa viikossa
 1-3 kertaa kuukaudessa
 vähemmän kuin kerran kuukaudessa
 Muu:

*9 Kuinka kauan olet kerralla koirapolulla?

- <10 minuuttia
 10-20
 20-30
 30-40
 40>

*10 Miten yleensä tulet koirapolulle?

- Autolla
 Busilla
 Pyörällä
 Kävelen
 Muu

Matkustus aika:

11 Kun tulet koirapolulle autolla, löydät aina parkkipaikan.

- Täysin erimieltä
 Erimieltä
 En osaa sanoa
 Samaa mieltä
 Täysin samaa mieltä

*12 Miksi tulet koiran kanssa koirapolulle?

- Koira saa olla vapaana
 Koira saa leikkiä muiden koirien kanssa
 Leikit koirasi kanssa
 Lenkkeilet ja kuntoilet koirasi kanssa
 Saat jutella muiden lenkkeilijöiden kanssa

Muu

*13 Mitä yleensä teet koirapolulla?

- Kävelet koirapolkua ympäri
 Menet koira-aitaukseen ja seisot
 Menet koira-aitaukseen ja istut
 Menet koira-aitaukseen ja harjoittelet agilityä koiran kanssa
 Menet koira-aitaukseen ja leikit koirasi kanssa

Muu

*14 Tunnetko koirasi olevan turvassa koirapolulla?

- Kyllä
 Joskus
 Ei, miksi?

*15 Onko koirapolun valaistus riittävä?

- Kyllä
 En osaa sanoa
 Ei

*16 Onko koirapolulla tarpeeksi roskiksia?

- Kyllä
 En osaa sanoa
 Ei

*17 Leikkiikö koirasi koirapolun ojituksissa?

- Ei
 Kyllä. Pidätkö siitä?

*18 Mitä teet kun koirasi ulostaa koirapolulla?

	Keräät kakkapussiin ja heität roskikseen	Keräät lapiolla ja heität roskikseen	Jätät siihen ja peität sen	Jätät vaan siihen	Muu:
Polulle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Koira-aitaukseen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Metsään	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>
Parkkipaikalle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/>

*19 Tarvitset koirapolulla katoksen sateella.

- Täysin erimieltä
- Erimieltä
- En osaa sanoa
- Samaa mieltä
- Täysin samaa mieltä

*20 Koirapolun roskikset tyhjennetään säännöllisesti.

- Täysin erimieltä
- Erimieltä
- En osaa sanoa
- Samaa mieltä
- Täysin samaa mieltä

*21 Koirapolun ja -aitauksen pohjamateriaali on sopivaa koiran tassuille.

- Täysin erimieltä
- Erimieltä
- En osaa sanoa
- Samaa mieltä
- Täysin samaa mieltä

*22 Olisi tarpeellista olla kaksi aidattua aluetta, toinen isoille ja toinen pienille koirille.

- Täysin erimieltä
- Erimieltä
- En osaa sanoa
- Samaa mieltä
- Täysin samaa mieltä

*23 Arvioi nykyinen koirapolku kokonaisuudessaan.

24 Muita kommentteja:

Survey

Pikku-Palomäki Dog Park

I am Dario Vidal, student at Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences. This questionnaire is part of my final thesis, in which I plan a renovation of the park. With the help of the survey, I will make sure that the improvements consider all users.

The objective of the survey is to acquire user's opinions and personal experiences in the dog park, as well as behavioural patterns, attitudes, and satisfaction level with the service provided nowadays. The answers will be used as a background to improve the park, benefiting all users.

The survey will take you an average of 5 minutes to answer.

The survey has the support of Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences, Kouvola City and Kouvola Seurakoirakerho.

A video of the dog park is available [here](#).

Map available [here](#).

1. Dog walker's gender.
2. Dog walker's age.
3. Do you deal with dogs as part of your daily job?
4. How many dogs do you take at once to Pikku-Palomäki dog park?
5. Your dog(s) breed.

6. Your dog(s) weight.
7. Season(s) when you visit the park.
8. How often do you visit the dog park?
9. How long do you spend in the park?
10. How do you usually get to the park?
11. When you arrive by car, you can always find a parking space.
12. Reason(s) you visit the dog park.
13. What do you usually do in the park?
14. Do you consider your dog(s) is safe in the park?
15. Is the lighting in the park enough?
16. Does the park have enough trash bins?
17. Does your dog(s) play in the ditches?
18. What would you do if your dog(s) poops in:
 - Walkway
 - Fenced-area
 - Forest
 - Parking lot
19. I need a shelter in the park for rainy conditions.
20. Trash bins in the park are emptied regularly.

21. The surface material of the park is adequate for dog's paws.
22. Two fenced areas are necessary, one for smaller dogs and other for larger dogs.
23. Grade the dog park.
24. Other comments.

47 answers

1. Dog walker's gender:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| a. Men: | 10.6% |
| b. Women: | 89.4% |

2. Dog walker's age:

- | | |
|----------|--------------|
| a. <15 | 0% |
| b. 16-25 | 34% |
| c. 26-35 | 42.6% |
| d. 36-45 | 10.6% |
| e. 46-55 | 8.5% |
| f. 56-65 | 4.3% |
| g. 66> | 0% |

3. Do you deal with dogs as part of your daily job?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a. Yes | 10.6% |
| b. No | 85.1% |
| c. Sometimes | 4.3% |

4. How many dogs do you take at once to Pikku-Palomäki dog park?

- | | |
|------|--------------|
| a. 1 | 57.4% |
| b. 2 | 27.7% |
| c. 3 | 12.8% |
| d. 4 | 0% |
| e. 5 | 2.1% |
| f. 6 | 0% |

5. Your dog(s) breed & 6. dog(s) weight:

1. Samoyed - 28
2. Great Dane - 40
3. Australian Terrier (3) – 7,7,7
4. Finnish Lapphund (3) – 20,20,20
5. Cocker Spaniel (2), Gordon Setter – 14,12,23

6. Belgian Shepherd - 22
7. Siberian Husky - 20
8. Welsh Springer Spaniel (2) – 20,20
9. Boxer, Pug – 32,12
10. Finnish Lapphund (3), Mudi (2) – 15,16,17,9,4
11. Cavalier King Charles Spaniel - 10
12. Jack Russell Terrier (2) – 5.4,5.7
13. Samoyed (2) – 24,21
14. Pembroke Welsh Corgi - 11
15. Labrador Retriever (2) - 25
16. Mixed (2) – 31,26
17. Mixed (2), Eurasier, Siberian Husky – 30,20,25,30
18. Spanish Water Dog - 14
19. Finnish Lapphund - 15
20. Miniature Pinscher, Shetland Sheepdog, Brazilian Terrier –
7,8,9
21. Jack Russell Terrier - 5
22. Jack Russell Terrier - 8
23. Fox Terrier - 8
24. Welsh Terrier - 7
25. Berger Blanc Suisse, Border Terrier – 34,8
26. Golden Retriever, Border Terrier – 35,8
27. Beauceron, Doberman – 38,39
28. Mixed - 30
29. Mixed - 13
30. Mixed - 20
31. Mixed - 16
32. Samoyed - 20
33. Nova Scotia Retriever - 16
34. German Shepherd - 37
35. Bearded Collie (2) – 24,27
36. Rhodesian Ridgeback - 48
37. Mixed - 30

- 38. Border Collie – 20
- 39. Dachshund - 7
- 40. Jack Russell Terrier (2) – 6,6
- 41. Mixed - 28
- 42. Mixed (2) – 6,6
- 43. Pug, Afghan Hound (2) – 6,37,27
- 44. German Shepherd (2) – 24
- 45. Belgian Shepherd – 20
- 46. Cocker Spaniel – 10
- 47. Doberman - 25

7. Season(s) when you visit the park:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| a. Spring | 26.1% |
| b. Summer | 24.2% |
| c. Autumn | 24.8% |
| d. Winter | 24.8% |

8. How often do you visit the dog park?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| a. Everyday | 6.4% |
| b. 5-6 times per week | 6.4% |
| c. 3-4 times per week | 10.6% |
| d. 1-2 times per week | 17.0% |
| e. 1-3 times per month | 25.5% |
| f. Less than once per month | 27.7% |
| g. Other | 6.4% |
- i. Everytime I am in Kouvola.
 - ii. Nowadays almost never, in the past I went several times per week.
 - iii. Generally I go only with puppies so they can learn to socialize with other dogs.

9. How long do you spend in the park?

- | | |
|----------------|-------|
| a. <10 minutes | 2.1% |
| b. 10-20 | 19.1% |

c. 20-30	17.0%
d. 30-40	29.8%
e. 40>	31.9%

10. How do you usually get to the park?

a. Car	40.8%
b. Bus	1.4%
c. Bicycle	0%
d. Walking	36.6%
e. Other	0%

11. When you arrive by car, you can always find a parking space.

a. Strongly disagree	0%
b. Disagree	2.7%
c. Neither agree nor disagree	8.1%
d. Agree	54.1%
e. Strongly agree	35.1%

12. Reason(s) you visit the dog park:

a. The dog can be off-leash	33.1%
b. The dog can play with other dogs	25.6%
c. To play with the dog myself	9.0%
d. To exercise myself and the dog	13.5%
e. To chat with other users	12.8%
f. Other	6.0%
i. My puppy has to learn pack rules.	
ii. My dogs can sniff/smell as a reward.	
iii. My dogs can socialize.	
iv. The presence of an agility device.	
v. I want my dog to socialize.	
vi. To socialize	
vii. The only forest-like dog park in the area.	
viii. I can exercise as well, rather than just standing around like in a regular dog park.	

13. What do you usually do in the park?

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| a. Walk around the circuit | 47.3% |
| b. Go to the fenced area and stand up | 17.2% |
| c. Go to the fenced area and sit down | 1.1% |
| d. Go to the fenced area and practice agility | 7.5% |
| e. Go to the fenced area and play with my dog | 23.7% |
| f. Other | 3.2% |

14. Do you consider your dog(s) is safe in the park?

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a. Yes | 46.8% |
| b. Sometimes | 19.1% |
| c. No, why? | 34.0% |
- i. Many aggressive dogs in the park, whose owners do not care about common safety.
 - ii. I am afraid of dogfights.
 - iii. Sometimes, there are aggressive dogs in the park as well as uncontrollable dogs running free.
 - iv. Nowadays there are aggressive dogs and irresponsible owners.
 - v. Usually I consider it a safe place, but sometimes we have confronted large aggressive dogs that are not under control of the masters. With these experiences, my dog is now afraid of larger dogs.
 - vi. The circuit is sometimes used as a shortcut. The rules are broken and there are many aggressive dogs around.
 - vii. From time to time, big dogs run freely and the owners are not nearby, forcing me to try to control other people's dogs.
 - viii. In the park, aggressive dogs are off-leash and approach my dog in an unsafe manner.
 - ix. Other dogs' behaviour is always a mystery.
 - x. Sometimes 'special' users go to the park with unbalanced dogs, forcing me to leave and find a peaceful area.
 - xi. You got to be careful with other dogs and users. I do not let any dog approach us straight away.
 - xii. People don't do anything when dogs are start to fight.

- xiii. Large dogs run far away from their owners in search of others. Even though they might not be aggressive, smaller dogs are scared.
- xiv. A large percentage of owners are not under control of their dog in stressful situations.
- xv. 90 % yes, but between male dogs there is a dispute for hierarchy levels, and that might not end up well.
- xvi. Many users leave male dogs off-leash, dogs which will molest other dogs. One day, a German shepherd bit my dog in the neck so badly that I could see blood, even then the owner did not leash his dog. My dog was at all times on the leash.

15. Is the lighting in the park adequate?

- a. Yes **61.7%**
- b. Don't know 19.1%
- c. No 19.1%

16. Does the park have enough trash bins?

- a. Yes 17.0%
- b. Don't know 19.1%
- c. No **63.8%**

17. Does your dog(s) play in the ditches?

- a. No 31.9%
- b. Yes, is it an issue for you? **68.1%**
 - i. No
 - ii. No
 - iii. No, because the water is dirty and I have to wash my dog afterwards because of that.
 - iv. No, because the water is polluted.
 - v. Horrible, smelly, and polluted water.
 - vi. On a hot summer's day it's ok, so that the dog can splash itself and drink a little water. In autumn, it isn't that nice.
 - vii. Do not like it!

- viii. No, Ditches are dirty, muddy and dogs end up looking like the same way. I prefer to go somewhere else.
- ix. No
- x. I have to wash my dog afterwards, but on sunny hot days it will refresh the dog.
- xi. Quite ok.
- xii. No, because the dog gets very dirty.
- xiii. Dog life...
- xiv. In winter it is not a problem, but in other seasons it's not a good idea.
- xv. Don't like it, but my dog loves it.
- xvi. No
- xvii. My dog doesn't care about the ditches in summer, and I don't care myself if my dog runs through them. Usually, it will jump over the ditches.
- xviii. No
- xix. No, ditches are full of dirty and smelly water.
- xx. No
- xxi. Definitely not.
- xxii. It is fine, it will get dirty anyway.
- xxiii. It is fine when ditches are full of water, then they are not so muddy.
- xxiv. I don't like it, but my dog does, so it can do it.
- xxv. Do not like it.
- xxvi. NO!!! Really dirty and muddy, bad smell :(

18. What would you do if your dog(s) poops in:

	Pick it up with a plastic bag	Pick it up with a shovel	Leave it there and cover it with leaves/sand/snow	Leave it there
Walkway	76.6 %	6.38%	4.26%	12.77%
Fenced-area	53.19%	40.43%	2.13%	4.26%
Forest	4.26%	0%	21.28%	74.47%
Parking lot	93.33%	0%	0%	6.67%

19. I need a shelter in the park for rainy conditions.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| a. Strongly disagree | 23.4% |
| b. Disagree | 44.7% |
| c. Neither agree nor disagree | 10.6% |
| d. Agree | 14.9% |
| e. Strongly agree | 6.4% |

20. Trash bins in the park are emptied regularly.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| a. Strongly disagree | 10.6% |
| b. Disagree | 23.4% |
| c. Neither agree nor disagree | 66% |
| d. Agree | 0% |
| e. Strongly agree | 0% |

21. The surface material of the park is adequate for dogs' paws.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| a. Strongly disagree | 0% |
| b. Disagree | 2.1% |
| c. Neither agree nor disagree | 27.7% |
| d. Agree | 63.8% |
| e. Strongly agree | 6.4% |

22. Two fenced areas are necessary, one for smaller dogs and another for larger dogs.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| a. Strongly disagree | 0% |
| b. Disagree | 12.8% |
| c. Neither agree nor disagree | 19.1% |
| d. Agree | 42.6% |
| e. Strongly agree | 25.5% |

23. Grade the dog park.

- | | |
|-------|--------------|
| a. 10 | 0% |
| b. 9 | 10.6% |
| c. 8 | 36.2% |
| d. 7 | 25.5% |

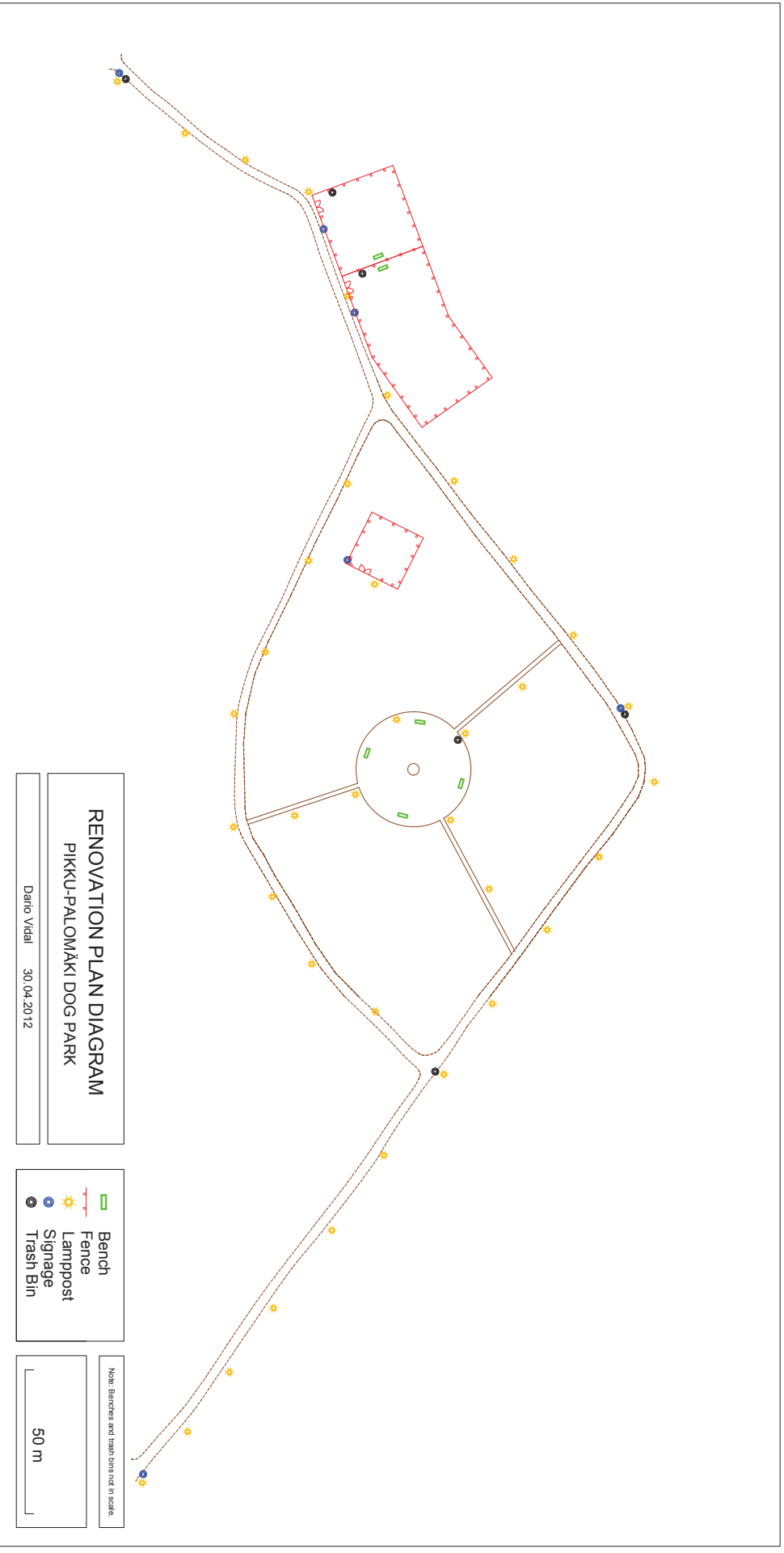
e.	6	12.8%
f.	5	6.4%
g.	4	6.4%
h.	3	2.1%
i.	2	0%
j.	1	0%
k.	0	0%

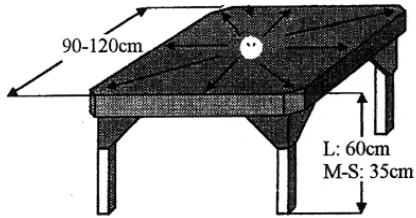
24. Other comments:

- i. It is nice that somebody is interested in improving the park!
- ii. The circuit is too small.
- iii. The ditches are the only negative thing about the park. If the water wouldn't stay there for a long time, it would be fine.
- iv. I would like to see a dog circuit/park in Valkeala!
- v. The ditches could be changed to French drains, so that no water was exposed. A fenced area for smaller dogs, newer agility devices.
- vi. First of all, the fenced area can be improved: new fence, new agility devices or other fun activities. A bench would be nice if people are planning to stay there longer. Two fenced areas would be very good, one for smaller dogs and another for bigger ones. The lighting in the fenced area could be improved. The lighting in the circuit is adequate.
- vii. I enjoy going to the park, but it would be more enjoyable if there were more people and dogs, in this way there would be more playmates for my dog.
- viii. The circuit is quite ok, but it could be longer. The big problem is the aggressive dogs, they have nothing to do there. Some users forget that they are responsible for their dog's actions. The ditches are an issue as well.
- ix. Poor maintenance.
- x. The fence is in bad condition, you can't rely on it anymore, and the agility devices are pose a risk to the dogs.

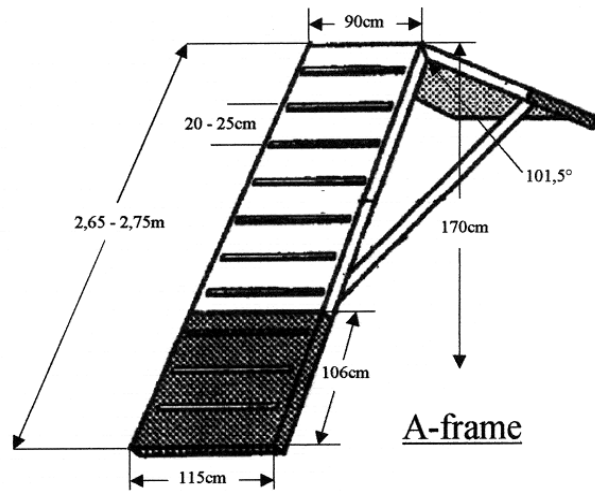
- xi. The track could be longer, and perhaps include a special circuit for smaller dogs.
- xii. Agility devices would be nice, and more responsible users as well.
- xiii. The forest is too dense! It has to be maintained.
- xiv. Pikku-Palomäkki park is a very nice place and very well located in the city. People come from far away to that specific park. It is apparently the best dog park in Kouvola. At peak time, loads of people and dogs walk around the circuit. I would like to see more agility devices, even really simple ones.
- xv. Before, there were agility devices but they were destroyed by teenagers. The devices should be replaced.
- xvi. The agility device is in very bad condition, and it could collapse anytime. It is not a safe device anymore.
- xvii. Two fenced areas is a good idea, especially for those small dog owners who are afraid of mixing with larger dogs. I personally let my dog play with dogs of any size. Would be nice to increase the circuit's length. More importantly, the pathways coming from the forest should be covered by woodchip. In the fenced area, a bench is necessary, as well new agility devices.
- xviii. I haven't really been in the park because I have a puppy. I expect people to not bring their dogs if they are aggressive. I'm not sure if I can bring my kids to the park either because of the aggressive dogs.
- xix. Bigger and more trash bins (one could be in the entrance from Sammonkatu)
 - Usable agility devices.
 - A shovel to the fenced area.
 - Could there be French drains?
 - Apart from that, very nice place.
- xx. The fenced area could have its own trash bin, and several bins throughout the circuit. Agility devices could be renewed.
- xxi. The worst issue are the smelly, dirty ditches. It limits the usability of the park.

- xxii. The circuit could be bigger, but I doubt it can be done.
- xxiii. A couple of walkways could be made towards the centre of the park, in this way packs could avoid each other, and it will make the park more interesting.
- xxiv. More agility devices inside the fenced area. Now there is only one which is in very bad conditions.
- xxv. We, the users, could even make the changes ourselves if we get the tools from the city.
- xxvi. The park could be more spacious, without so many trees. In Helsinki area there are spacious dog parks, enabling the dogs to run without any danger. Branches and trees are dangerous!
- xxvii. A big problem is when users let their dog free in the parking lot, where dogs can run into neighbour's yards or towards cars.
- xxviii. More trash bins! A big trash bin in the fenced area! Smaller ones at each entrance. The agility devices should be renewed. The table in the fenced area should be renewed as well.
- xxix. The park should have a board saying: dogs that have attacked other dogs can't be off-leash in the park anymore, only in the fenced area. Apart from that, it would be useful to have a sign you can tilt to indicate there is a male dog in the park.

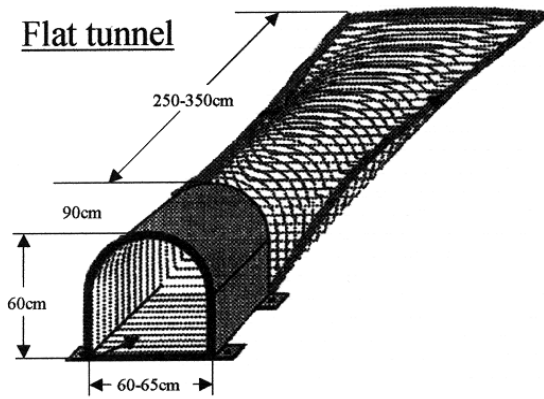




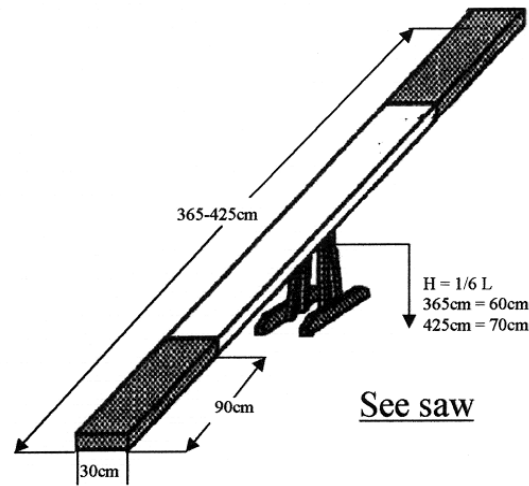
Table



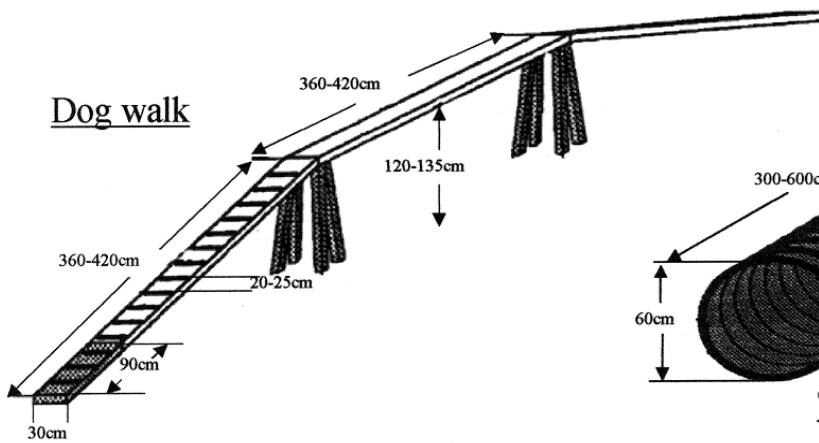
A-frame



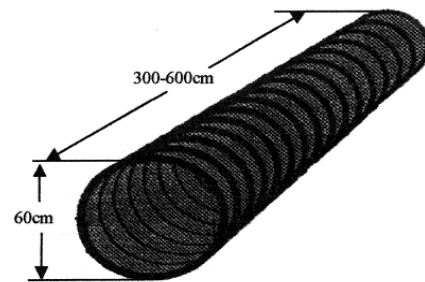
Flat tunnel



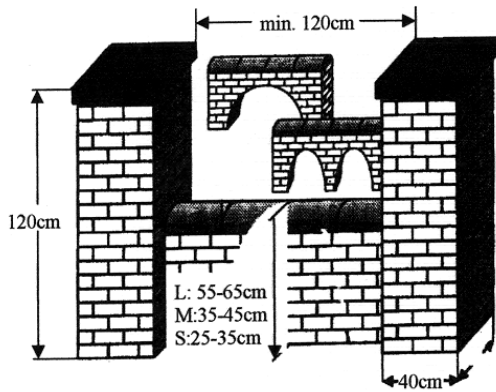
See saw



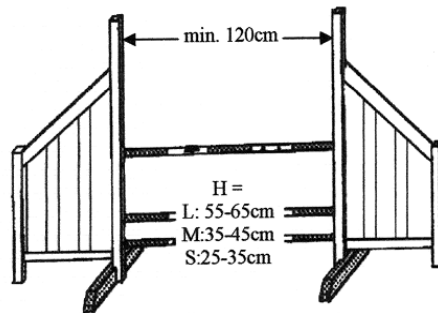
Dog walk



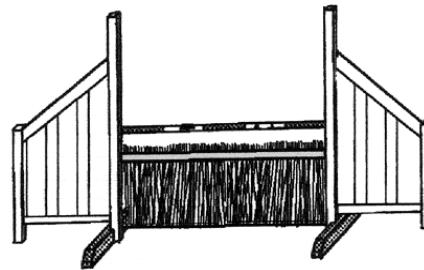
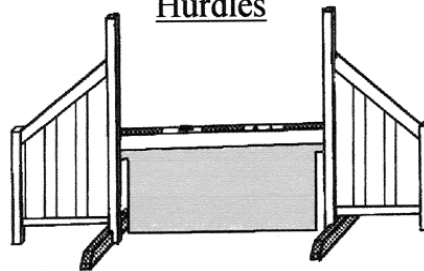
Tube tunnel



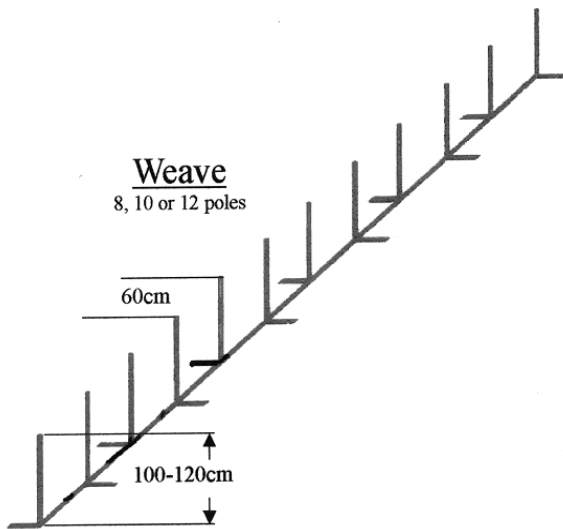
Wall / Viaduct



Hurdles

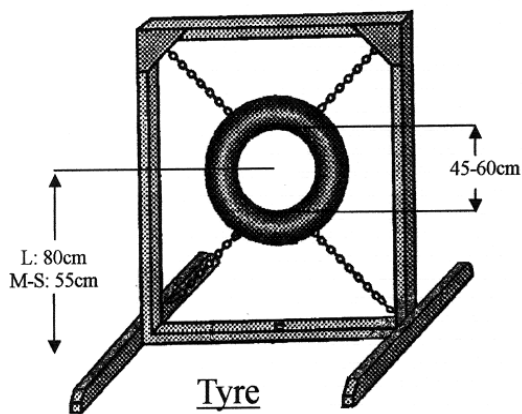


Brushfence



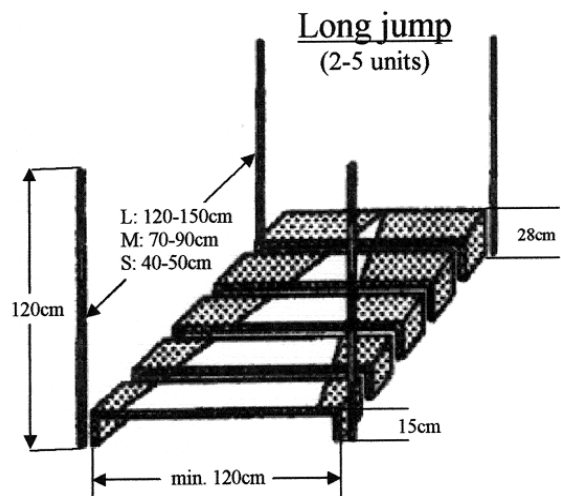
Weave

8, 10 or 12 poles



Tyre

FCI Agility rules



Long jump

(2-5 units)



Table



Flat tunnel



A-frame



See saw



See saw



Dog walk



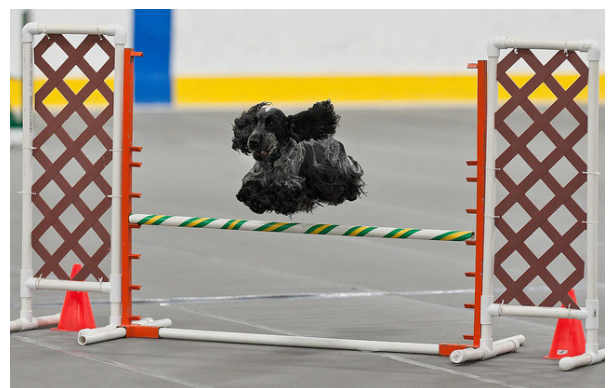
Tube tunnel



Tube tunnel



Wall



Hurdle



Weave



Weave



Tyre



Long jump