

The right to bark: spatial barriers and possibilities for human-dog coexistence in the city. A case study of the Nyvky district, Kyiv

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Abstract. Modern urban planning is mainly anthropocentric, frequently overlooking the requirements of other species that live in urban environments. Among these, dogs hold a unique significance—they provide emotional support to their owners, positively impact health, and contribute to the development of social capital. Despite being an integral part of public spaces, dogs are frequently excluded from urban policies, infrastructure, and design considerations.

This research examines how dogs, and their owners navigate and use urban spaces, focusing on the spatial, social, and regulatory barriers they encounter in their daily lives. Based on the concepts from trans-species urbanism, the "right to the city," and the political theory of animal rights, the paper investigates how the presence of dogs is recognised or disregarded in urban practices. The case study focuses on the Nyvky neighbourhood in Kyiv. The methodology includes an analysis of local policies, mapping existing infrastructure and space usage, and conducting semi-structured interviews with local residents who own dogs. The aim of this research is to promote the concept of an inclusive city—one that acknowledges the needs, presence, and agency of dogs within urban life.

Key words: dog-friendly cities, right to the city, transspecies urban theory, social infrastructure, human-dog coexistence, spatial barriers, Anima Urbis, Zoopolis, interspecies citizenship, inclusive cities, urban policies, spatial infrastructure.

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INTRODUCTION

During the post-war reconstruction, which has actually begun from the very first months of the full scale invasion, Ukraine faces an urgent need not only for physical rebuilding of entire cities or parts of them but also for rethinking what a rebuilt city should be like, what an inclusive, sustainable and equitable urban environment is. Achieving this goal requires a rethinking of modern urban theory, which is characterized by an anthropocentric approach that prioritizes humans as the main consumers and creators of urban space. This perspective often overlooks the importance of other components within the city, whose impacts are frequently perceived as non-priority and receive insufficient attention.

In reality, the cities in which we live are very complex, multi-layered ecosystems formed through constant coexistence, encounters, and conflicts. Cities are shaped by their natural components and their changes, such as soils, water networks, terrains, while also being influenced by the interactions among different inhabitants, including animals and plants. Everything that constitutes a city matters, as these elements influence its atmosphere, functionality, and identity.

While the city may never become a perfect space for mutual understanding and coexistence, striving for inclusiveness remains an important task for urban planners, as the needs of all participants of urban life should be considered during designing cities.

This paper highlights the role of dogs as integral participants in urban life, focusing on their presence, impact and significance within the cities. In the context of war and post-war reconstruction, the impact of dogs on people's lives is especially crucial and relevant. This influence operates on several levels: physiological (by encouraging daily physical activity), psycho-emotional (by reducing anxiety), social (by fostering social connections and trust), and cultural (by contributing to identity formation). This impact is especially significant for reintegrating veterans, people who have PTSD (post-traumatic syndrome), and other vulnerable groups, for whom a dog can become an emotional stabilizer, sensory guide, and social bridge to everyday urban life.

Despite the important role of dogs, the situation regarding animal welfare in Ukraine requires special attention, as the number of animals in shelters has increased dramatically since the beginning of the full-scale invasion - by 60% on average across Ukraine.¹ At the same time, there is a positive trend: more people are adopting dogs from shelters than they did before 2022. The war has encouraged many to act on their

¹ Interfax-Ukraine, "Через Війну Кількість Тварин У Притулках І На Утриманні Зооволонтерів В Україні Зросла В Середньому На 60% - Дослідження," Інтерфакс-Україна, February 1, 2023, <https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/888376.html>.

dream for a pet instead of postponing it for “better times”. However, various challenges related to living in the city with a dog still deter many potential adopters. These challenges include difficulties in renting housing and the lack of infrastructure that supports a daily coexistence with animals.

This study highlights several important and interrelated issues that require attention as well as a comprehensive approach to solutions. These include the lack of discussion regarding this topic within the academic environment and policies in Ukraine, social perception of dogs in the city that foster alienation of dogs and their owners rather than promotion of their integration into urban life, and (dis)consideration of dogs and their needs in urban planning processes.

This paper examines the everyday experiences of human-dog coexistence in the Nyvky district in Kyiv and how these experiences are shaped by urban policies, spatial infrastructure, and social perceptions of dogs in the city.

This study uses an exploratory research design aimed at examining everyday practices to identify real-life behavioral patterns, spatial barriers, and forms of coexistence between people and dogs in a specific district in Kyiv, Nyvky. This district serves as a representative example of an urban area with multi-story buildings, multi-level parks and squares, diverse infrastructure, active traffic flow, and a variety of residents.

The paper is structured into three sections. The first section outlines the theoretical framework, which includes a review of studies highlighting the impact of dogs on people's lives and critical theoretical approaches that challenge classical anthropocentrism. These approaches include Transspecies Urban Theory, the concept of *Anima Urbis*, and the political theory of interspecies citizenship discussed in *Zoopolis*. This section outlines the methodology, including a description of the research design, the case study, and the justification for the methods used, such as policy analysis, mapping, and interviews.

The second section analyzes the coexistence of humans and dogs in the urban environment of the Nyvky district in Kyiv. The chapter integrates an analysis of the legal framework, the spatial characteristics of the district, and data collected from in-depth interviews and observations. The analysis is organized around key sub-themes including the impact of dogs on daily life and social perception, urban spaces available for dog walking, housing, infrastructure, transportation, social capital, and the environment. It examines current policies, the spatial environment and everyday practices, barriers and conflicts faced by dog owners.

The last section summarizes the conclusions and formulates recommendations for a more inclusive interspecies approach to urban planning.

STATE OF THE ART AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DOGS IN URBAN AREAS

Dogs in cities are more important than we may initially realize. They play a significant role in shaping urban life, influencing forming of new social practices and needs, impacting how public spaces are used. According to Worldostats, there are currently approximately 500 million dogs in the world, an increase from 400 million in the 2000s. In particular, there are 4.5 million dogs in Ukraine.²

Throughout much of history, dogs have been viewed mainly as utilitarian animals, serving functional roles such as guarding, hunting, or providing protection within households. Their significance has often been judged by their ability to meet human needs-guarding territory, assisting in hunting, providing security, or helping to maintain control over private spaces. In this perspective, dogs were not seen as full participants in social or urban life but rather as tools or extensions of human capabilities.³

In recent decades, the social role of dogs has been notably transformed as emotional needs become an additional aspect of human-dog relationships, new dog breeds extinct that became companions for people. Consequently, the 20th and 21st centuries mirrored a shift toward emotionally driven interactions between species. Dog owners often view their dogs not just as pets but as close friends or even members of the family. This deep bond highlights a dog's integral role in urban life, a connection that researcher Meg Daley Olmert explains through the activation of neural pathways: “When we call our dog, ‘our baby’ it is because we recognise it on a neural level as such. And this recognition triggers the same maternal bonding brain networks that allow a mother to look at her newborn and say, mine!”⁴

Moreover, numerous studies suggest that animals act as social connectors and catalysts for family interactions. They help strengthen family bonds, stimulate communication, and create shared experiences and memories that contribute to a common family identity. Many people believe that dogs are essential for “completing the family.”⁵

Changes in perception regarding pets are evident at various levels. The term “pet parent”, defined by the Collins Dictionary as a person who looks after a pet animal, has only recently become common. This shift reflects a broader change in how dogs and

² “Dog Population by Country 2025 (Updated List),” WORLDOSTATS, May 2, 2025, https://worldostats.com/country-stats/dog-population-by-country/#google_vignette.

³ John Caius, *Of Englishe Dogges: The Diuersities, the Names, the Natures, and the Properties* (Leopold Classic Library, 2015), 23.

⁴ Paws In Work, “Puppy Cuddles Impact on Mental Health,” Paws in Work, August 9, 2023, <https://www.pawsinwork.com/blog/puppy-cuddles-impact-on-mental-health>.

⁵ Maryann McCabe, “Configuring Family, Kinship, & Natural Cosmology: Branding Pet Food,” *Handbook of Anthropology in Business*, June 30, 2014, 362–78, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315427850.ch19>.

pets are viewed in human life and culture in general over the past decades. Statistics from Google Ngram Viewer show that the use of the term “pet parent” in English books has increased from 1950 to 2019, which indicates the dynamics of the popularity of the concept of pet parent in cultural and academic discussions. This term began to grow in usage after the 1990s and especially after the 2000s.⁶ In the 2000s, such well-known brands as Mars Petcare, Petco, and Purina began to actively use the term “pet parents” in their advertising and communications, forming a new emotional identity for pet owners.

Nevertheless, dog owners and non-dog owners often debate their different views on dogs: some see them as companions that should be part of public life, while others view them as private pets that belong at home. These differences create conflict zones in the city - both in the physical dimension - like yards, parks, sidewalks - and in the cultural dimension- such as behavioral norms, ideas about publicity and silence.

The media often intensifies this conflict by spreading the narrative that dogs are a source of disturbances and threats to order and security. Research conducted by Instone and Sweeney shows that dog attack stories were the most common topic reported in the media: “There was a clear and observable meta-narrative suggesting that dangerous dogs were present in the community and that control measures were lacking”.⁷

There are also discussions about the environmental impact of the significant presence of dogs in cities. This debate includes topics such as the pollution of green spaces and the effects on wildlife in city parks. In fact, there is a great lack of research on the impact of dogs on urban biodiversity to confirm or deny the impact, but it is not clear that dogs cause unacceptable damage. There are studies that show that moderate dog walking on urban dry grasslands is acceptable⁸ and studies that indicated that the environmental characteristics of parks are more strongly linked to the abundance and diversity of bird species than the presence of dog walking in those areas⁹

At the same time, despite contradictory public perceptions and conflicts, many studies confirm that dogs have a multidimensional positive impact and are deeply integrated into people's daily lives. One of the most obvious and well-documented impacts of dog ownership is on physical health. Having a dog increases daily physical

⁶“Google Books Ngram Viewer,” n.d.,

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=pet+parent&year_start=1950&year_end=2019&corpus=en&smoothing=0&case_insensitive=false.

⁷ Lesley Instone and Jennifer Sweeney, *Placing Companion Animals in the City: Towards the Constructive Co-Habitation of Humans and Dogs in Urban Areas*. Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, The University of Newcastle, 2014.

⁸ S. Buchholz et al., “Impacts of Dogs on Urban Grassland Ecosystems,” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 215 (July 30, 2021): 104201, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2021.104201>.

⁹ Alison Farrar, Dave Kendal, and Alex Kutt, “The Impact of Domestic Dogs on Biodiversity: An Ecological and Social Project Exploring the Impacts Of...,” ResearchGate, January 1, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310832611_The_impact_of_domestic_dogs_on_biodiversity_An_ecological_and_social_project_exploring_the_impacts_of_domestic_dogs_on_Boroondara's_parklands.

activity, enhances physical fitness, and reduces the risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Dog ownership promotes regular outdoor activity, as owners are responsible for walking their dogs frequently to satisfy their pets' essential needs. This impact is particularly notable among elderly. A study conducted by Anne Poestge and colleagues reveals that dog owners typically take significantly longer walks compared to non-dog owners, averaging over 120 minutes of walking each day. The findings indicate that 94% of dog owners engage in daily physical activity, whereas only 14% of non-dog owners do so. Additionally, dog owners visit the doctor an average of 5.3 times per year, while non-dog owners visit 7.8 times.¹⁰ In this way, coexistence with a dog not only brings structure to daily life but can also positively influence public health, fostering a deeper bond between species as an added benefit.

The presence of dogs has a significant impact on a person's emotional state. They provide support, comfort, and stability in daily life, especially in times of stress, anxiety, or loneliness. A study that examined the impact of a therapy dog during outpatient psychiatric appointments found that the dog's presence was pleasant for all participants, reduced anxiety, increased relaxation and improved mood, and was desired during subsequent appointments. Furthermore, 88% of participants requested for a therapy dog to be present during future appointments¹¹

According to HABRI and Mars Petcare survey, 80% of their respondents turn to their pets for comfort when they feel lonely.¹² The emotional bond between humans and dogs, formed through daily care and mutual affection, is deeply meaningful and can impact married couples as well. After children grow up and leave home, parents often have no one to take care of them, as their lives are often centered around their children. In this case, dogs become a true lifeline, a phenomenon often referred to in the media as “Empty Nest Dogs.” Dogs become a compensatory figure, providing connection, love, routine and meaning. People expect them to provide emotional support and perceive them as their “furry babies”.

Dogs play a significant role in fostering social interactions among people. Their presence in public spaces encourages casual conversations, builds trust, fosters a sense of belonging, and helps reduce feelings of social isolation and anonymity in the city. Study conducted by Robins et al. noted, "Dogs have become an antidote for the human anonymity of the public places of our contemporary society. Dogs facilitate contact,

¹⁰ Anne Poestges, Ursula Gresser, and Barbara Maria Richartz, “The Impact of a Pet, in This Case a Dog, on Physical Activity, Independence, Social Contacts, Health and Quality of Life of Elderly People,” *Advances in Aging Research* 05, no. 04 (January 1, 2016): 83–95, <https://doi.org/10.4236/aar.2016.54009>.

¹¹ R. Crease, G. Hunton, and A. Joiner, “Evaluation of a Therapy Dog in General Adult Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic,” *Morecambe Bay Medical Journal* 7, no. 11 (2017): 227–279

¹² Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI), *Addressing the Social Isolation and Loneliness Epidemic with the Power of Companion Animals* (2023), <https://habri.org/assets/uploads/Addressing-the-Social-Isolation-and-Loneliness-Epidemic-with-the-Power-of-Companion-Animals-Report.pdf>.

confidence, conversation, and confederation among previously unacquainted persons who might otherwise remain that way." ¹³

Regarding social capital, a study examining the relationship between pet ownership and social capital in four cities in the United States and Australia found that pet owners scored higher social capital compared to non-pet owners.¹⁴ Specifically, dogs serve as a kind of “icebreaker” - they make it easier to meet neighbors, other dog owners, and even random passersby. Another study found that pet owners were significantly more likely to get to know people in their neighborhood than non-pet owners.¹⁵

Pets are not only a direct source of support for owners, but can also be a catalyst for creating social support networks among people: "Overall, 42.3% of pet owners received one or more types of social support... from people they reported getting to know through their pet." ¹⁶

Another important aspect of human-dog interaction is its potential for therapy and rehabilitation, particularly in the field of mental health. In recent years, the field of animal-assisted intervention (AAI) has been actively developing around the world. AAI refers to interventions involving animals aimed at improving the physical, psychological or social well-being of humans. A significant milestone in this area was the creation of the Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals (AAAIP), a professional community that supports the development of ethical, effective, and scalable practices within the field. They define several areas of focus: Animal-assisted therapy (AAT), Animal-assisted education (AAE), Animal-assisted activities (AAA). This approach is especially important when working with people who have experienced severe psychotraumatic events, including war veterans and patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In the context of ongoing full-scale war in Ukraine, this topic is particularly relevant. According to the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, in 2023, the number of patients with PTSD increased almost fourfold compared to 2021, and in the first two months of 2024, almost as many patients were diagnosed as in the entire year of 2021.¹⁷

¹³ Douglas M. Robins, Clinton R. Sanders, and Spencer E. Cahill, “Dogs and their people: Pet-facilitated interaction in a public setting,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 20, no. 1 (April 1, 1991): 3–25, <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124191020001001>.

¹⁴ Lisa Wood et al., “Social Capital and Pet Ownership – a Tale of Four Cities,” *SSM - Population Health* 3 (May 5, 2017): 442–47, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2017.05.002>.

¹⁵ Lisa Wood et al., “The Pet Factor - Companion Animals as a Conduit for Getting to Know People, Friendship Formation and Social Support,” *PLoS ONE* 10, no. 4 (April 29, 2015): e0122085, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0122085>.

¹⁶ Lisa Wood et al., “The Pet Factor - Companion Animals as a Conduit for Getting to Know People, Friendship Formation and Social Support”.

¹⁷ Міністерство охорони здоров’я України, “Кількість пацієнтів зі встановленим діагнозом ПТСР в Україні зростає: що треба знати про посттравматичний стресовий розлад,” МОЗ України, 7 травня 2024 року, <https://moz.gov.ua/article/news/kilkist-pacientiv-zi-vstanovlenim-diagnozom-ptsr-v-ukraini-zrostaе-scho-treba-znati-pro-posttravmatichnij-stresovij-rozlad>

The study by O'Haire and Rodriguez examines the effectiveness of service dogs as a complementary treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in military members and veterans. Dogs can perform many essential tasks including distracting from panic, providing a sense of security in public places, waking up from nightmares, creating a safe distance in a crowd, reminding of medication, or serving as a support. This study showed that participants with dogs had fewer PTSD symptoms, lower levels of depression, and higher social activity compared to those who received only traditional treatment, confirming the significant therapeutic potential of animals in trauma work.¹⁸

A separate category is service dogs, a specially trained dog that helps a person with a disability perform everyday tasks. These dogs can assist the hearing-impaired, blind, people with mobility issues or mental disability, autistic people, and detect potential allergens. Currently, there is no state program for training service dogs in Ukraine, so activists and NGOs take the initiative. In 2015, the Canadian-Ukrainian project “Hero's Companion” was launched to support Ukrainian veterans through canis therapy. This approach has proven effective in the United States and Canada for reducing the number of suicides among veterans. Given that 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers have lost their eyesight in the war over the past two years, it is crucial to regulate the status of service dogs and to establish programs and infrastructure related to their training and use.¹⁹

The role of dogs in rescue services in Ukraine has emerged as a vital component of daily operations amid the ongoing full-scale war. They perform crucial tasks as demining areas, searching for people under rubble, guarding facilities, and accompanying the military. These dogs become heroes on social media, objects of respect, pride, and even national marketing.

In 2023, the Dogs-Heroes of Ukraine project was founded to tell the story of dogs' “heroic deeds”. Each December, awards are presented to dogs and their owners are publicly acknowledged. The society actively consumes stories about “heroes with a tail,” shares photos, creates souvenirs with the dog Patron, who has become a mascot of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, a national hero, and a symbol of war. At the same time, dogs are excluded from urban planning. There is a lack of affordable housing for dog owners, and barriers exist that hinder everyday coexistence with them. While a dog may serve in a patrol or sapper team, it may not be allowed in the subway, restaurants, or even in a rented apartment with its owner. We often hear stories from the front line about dogs saving soldiers and becoming their loyal companions. These

¹⁸Marguerite E O'Haire and Kerri E Rodriguez, “Preliminary Efficacy of Service Dogs as a Complementary Treatment for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Military Members and Veterans,” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 86, no. 2 (January 25, 2018): 179–88, <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000267>.

¹⁹Siobhán O'Grady and Kostiantyn Khudov, “Blinded in Battle, These Ukrainian Soldiers Will Never See Their New Babies,” *The Washington Post*, May 12, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/05/02/ukraine-blind-soldiers-babies-war>.

dogs also play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of veterans, helping them reintegrate into civilian life. The inadequate infrastructure for dogs, even service dogs, highlights a deeper issue: who truly has the “right to the city”?

This concept, first formulated by Henri Lefebvre, suggests considering the city as a “work” (œuvre) - a product of the collective activity of its inhabitants and a material manifestation of social relations and cultural ideas. In this framework, the right to the city is not just access to space; it encompasses the right to participate in its formation, habitation and transformation.²⁰

However, traditionally, this theory presents the city exclusively as an arena of human experience and control, where only people are recognized as subjects of creation and use. This perspective reinforces the anthropocentric norm suggesting that the city is something created by people and for people. In this context, dogs, like other non-human beings, remain invisible - they are present in the city, but have no spatial, legal, or political recognition. The right to a dog-friendly city is not a metaphor, but a practical issue of access to parks, sidewalks, transportation, housing, decent walking, and even the right to bark.

This approach prompts us to rethink urban spaces not only as a product of human activity, but as an environment of interspecies coexistence, where every resident including dogs has the right to be present, acknowledged and heard. This leads to a broader question: if dogs are to be recognized as full-fledged city residents, what legal and ethical status do they occupy in society at large? It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that animal protection approaches began to develop actively, starting with calls to improve the treatment of animals by prohibiting abuse and providing decent conditions. For a long time, animals were regarded as objects of compassion rather than as active subjects with the right to be present in society.

This paradigm is redefined by Donaldson & Kymlicka in “Zoopolis A Political Theory of Animal Rights” who propose to recognize animals as political actors with a form of “citizenship” that includes three key elements: residency, inclusion, and agency. Residency means that this is their home, they belong here, among us. Inclusion refers to their interests as sovereign individuals capable of contributing to the public good.. Finally, agency signifies their ability to influence the rules of interaction within society. This citizenship does not grant rights in our classical sense, such as the right to vote, but it obliges the city to provide them with proper care, space, and inclusion. Pets should not be viewed merely as private property or utilitarian companions. Their presence in human communities has political significance, as their bodies, labor, and interactions with humans have actually helped to build the societies

²⁰Henri Lefebvre, “The Right to the City,” in *Writings on Cities*, ed. and trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA; Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996)

in which we live. Therefore, animals have the same right to be here as any other participant in urban space.²¹

In the context of this study, this framework encourages us to view dogs not merely as private possessions of their owners or potential sources of discomfort, but as political subjects within the city. They possess a moral and practical right to access space, infrastructure, protection, and participation. This vision provokes discussion that means more than tolerance for dogs, it highlights the need for their inclusion in the city's future vision, considering care, dependence, shared history, and everyday interactions. Expanding on this idea, there are new discussions emerging around the topic. Sociologist Leslie Irvine argues that the concept of moral equality could lead to the end of pet ownership. She states, "If animals have the right not to be treated as objects, then we cannot justify breeding them simply to serve as our companions. If we recognize the intrinsic value of animals' lives, it becomes immoral to keep them for our enjoyment, regardless of whether we refer to them as companions or pets".²²

At the same time, despite the growing humanization of animals in daily life and the emotional connection between people and dogs, their recognition at the institutional level remains extremely limited. In 2020, the Summit on Social Isolation and Companion Animals emphasized the importance of connecting people and pets to address the issue of isolation through elimination barriers to pet ownership and facilitating companion animal interactions, enabling more individuals to access the potential health benefits of the human-animal bond.²³

While most studies emphasize the benefits of dogs for humans such as improving physical health, psycho-emotional stability, and social interaction-this focus often maintains an anthropocentric perspective, in which the value of an animal is determined by its function and utility to humans. This approach is important for legitimizing the topic in public discourse, but it overlooks the independent right of dogs to be present in the city as sensitive beings that also shape its rhythms, sense of security, atmosphere, and overall identity.

Without this important understanding and perception of dogs as emotional beings, there is also a marginalization of those categories of dogs and their owners who bark in public places, pull the leash, and are visible in our space. It is believed that such dogs violate the urban order: "Barking, pooing, chewing, roaming and biting – dogs are trouble! And they trouble the notion of the human-centred city in significant ways".²⁴

²¹Stanley Shostak, "Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights," *The European Legacy* 19, no. 2 (February 23, 2014): 283–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10848770.2014.876242>.

²² Leslie Irvine, "Pampered or Enslaved? The Moral Dilemmas of Pets," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 24, no. 9 (September 1, 2004): 5–17, <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330410790740>.

²³ HABRI, Addressing the Social Isolation and Loneliness Epidemic

²⁴ Lesley Instone and Jill Sweeney, "The Trouble With Dogs: 'Animaling' Public Space in the Australian City," *Continuum* 28, no. 6 (October 21, 2014): 774–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2014.966404>.

Many people have limited knowledge about animals, which influences what behaviors are considered acceptable. When a dog goes beyond them, a conflict occurs, because a dog should not bark, make noise. In other words, dogs generally facilitate communication, but if you have a “problem dog,” it puts a strain on people. Owners of such dogs often have to adapt their behavior and may feel anxious, uncomfortable, or guilty about their dog's actions. Research indicated that people reported ‘visceral crushing feeling’ after even relatively minor negative interactions, eroding her confidence, and leaving her fearing, for example, that her dog’s barking could be reported for causing a public disturbance.²⁵

A barking dog does not necessarily indicate that the dog is angry, aggressive, or poorly behaved. Barking is a form of communication. It can signify various feelings, such as fear, discomfort, a desire to defend itself or its owner, an invitation to play, or simply joy. It is especially important to understand this in today's context, where more and more people adopt dogs from shelters. Many of these dogs have endured trauma, such as living through occupations, experiencing bombings, or surviving the explosion at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant. Their behavior may be perceived as disruptive to the urban order, but in fact it only indicates the need for care and adaptation.

As Paul O'Hare's research shows, the following situations can negatively impact the dog walking experience: «It can have a debilitating effect on dog-walking experiences with walks leaving human companions feeling frustrated with their dogs, isolated from fellow walkers and alienated from their localities». ²⁶

This demonstrates the need to create a more sensitive, adaptive urban environment for both dogs and those who live with them. In this context, urban space turns into an arena of interspecies clashes, which some seek to avoid or displace. Instead of understanding and inclusion, these public disputes lead to restrictions, shape perceptions of “acceptable” behavior, and increase stigma.

This forces us to rethink cities as shared spaces where non-human lives matter. This perspective aligns with Transspecies Urban Theory, which serves as a key theoretical framework for this study. The authors introduce a conceptual framework for the development of a trans-species urban theory that links urbanization processes, human-animal interactions, urban wildlife ecology, and trans-species urban practices. They criticize the anthropocentric logic of urbanization that has historically ignored the lives of non-human beings - except for those used as commodities: “Historically,

²⁵ Paul O'Hare, “A Walk With ‘That Wild Dog of Yours’: Tales of Circumscribed, Co-negotiated and Adaptive Walking Practices,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 25, no. 8 (February 2, 2024): 1311–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2024.2308912>.

²⁶ O'Hare, “A Walk With ‘That Wild Dog of Yours’: Tales of Circumscribed, Co-Negotiated and Adaptive Walking Practices.”

the logic of urbanization has proceeded without regard to nonhuman animal life except as commodities headed for slaughter at the 'disassembly' line."²⁷

This thinking is reflected even in the vocabulary of urban planning, which presents nature as an "empty" territory that should be "developed": "Urbanization transforms 'empty' land through a process called 'development', to product 'improved land' which developers are exhorted to dedicate to the 'highest and best use'. Wildlands are not 'empty' but are teeming with nonhuman life. 'Development' involves a thorough denaturalization of the environment; 'improved land' is invariably impoverished in terms of soil quality, drainage, and vegetation. And judgments of 'highest and best use' reflect utilitarian market values and interests of humans alone".²⁸

This approach is reflected not only in the structure of urban spaces, but also in the everyday perception of animals as those whose presence in the city should be either "useful" or controlled. Often people view nearby wildlife either as "pests" that create costs such as property damage, risk of disease/injury, or as "pets" or "amenities" that provide benefits like increased property values, ecological and aesthetic values, and recreational opportunities.

This functional perception of non-human inhabitants reinforces the hierarchical model of the city as a space where the right to be present is determined solely by human interests and benefits. In contrast, the trans-species perspective offers a radically different vision: the city should not be designed around only human interests and needs. Cities are multi-species ecosystems in which cohabitation should be based not on hierarchy, but on interdependence and ecological sensitivity. Trans-species theory argues that in order to create more equitable and sustainable urban environments, it is necessary to abandon the exclusively human viewpoint and acknowledge the importance and needs of non-human inhabitants of cities.

This theoretical expansion of urban sensitivity to non-human life forms was further developed in the concept of "Anima Urbis" proposed by the same author, Jennifer Wolch in 2002. She introduces into urban theory the concept of the "soul of the city" as a phenomenon formed not only by people but also by animals that give space rhythm, presence, influence, and meaning: "Anima urbis - the breath, life, soul and spirit of the city - is embodied in its animal as well as human life forms".²⁹

In this perspective, urban identity appears as a common fabric of interspecies relations, rather than as an anthropocentric projection of power onto space. It is important that animals shape the urban experience and landscape primarily through the formation of the identity and subjectivity of its inhabitants. For example, Wolch

²⁷ Jennifer R. Wolch, Kathleen West, and Thomas E. Gaines, "Transspecies Urban Theory," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13 (1995): 735–760.

²⁸ Wolch, West, and Gaines, "Transspecies Urban Theory".

²⁹ Jennifer Wolch, "Anima Urbis," *Progress in Human Geography* 26, no. 6 (December 1, 2002): 721–42, <https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132502ph400oa>.

and Lassiter demonstrate that for Latin American immigrants, keeping chickens in their backyard is one of the ways to maintain a connection with the rural landscape they left behind.³⁰

The issue of identity formation through animals can also be seen in the study of Kay Anderson, who analyzes the role of the zoo in Adelaide. Anderson reveals how the zoo's exhibits and presentation of animals helped to reinforce and legitimize Australian colonial identity. The way in which nature and animals were "framed" served to naturalize colonial rule and oppress the indigenous population. The zoo created a certain hierarchy in which the colonizers occupied a dominant position, reflecting the power relations of the time.³¹

In addition, Wolch also raises the question of the role of activism in the creation of "animal-friendly" spaces. The movement for urban dog parks in the United States, documented by Wolch and Rowe, exemplifies how citizen activism can lead to the creation of new urban spaces focused on animals and the human-animal bond. Initially controversial, these parks have become standard elements of urban park systems, demonstrating the normalization of dogs as legitimate members of the urban community.³²

Thus, this study utilizes an interdisciplinary analytical framework that integrates the right to cities theory, trans-species theory, animal rights theory, and empirical research. A key aspect of this framework is a shift from a purely anthropocentric view of the city as a space created exclusively for humans. Instead, the city is viewed as a multi-species ecosystem in which dogs, like other animals, are not only present but also play an active role in shaping urban experiences, rhythms, and practices.

The concept of the right to the city, as formulated by Lefebvre, is central for this discussion - the right to space, participation, and representation. In the case of dogs, this means recognizing their everyday practices as claiming to be included in the urban environment at the level of institutional and spatial planning. This approach develops the Transspecies Urban Theory, which critiques urbanization as a process of denaturalization of space and the displacement of non-human life and strips space of its natural essence. In this view, the city is presented as a space that has been "cleansed" for maximum human benefit, with the "best use" assessed based on purely market values.

The idea of "anima urbis", the soul of the city, expands this framework by emphasizing that animals are not only users of space, but also co-creators of urban identity, memory, and belonging. Owning pets becomes not only a personal choice, but

³⁰ Jennifer Wolch and Ursula Lassiter, "From Barnyard to Backyard to Bed: Attitudes toward Animals among Latinas in Los Angeles," in *Land of Sunshine: The Environmental History of Greater Los Angeles*, ed. William Deverell and Greg Hise (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, forthcoming).

³¹ Kay Anderson, "Culture and Nature at the Adelaide Zoo: At the Frontiers of 'Human' Geography," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 3 (1995): 275–294

³² Jennifer Wolch and Susan Rowe, "Companions in the Park," *Landscape* 31 (1992): 16–33

also a form of reconnecting with one's own culture, history, or even nationality. The examples cited by Wolch, Lassiter, and Anderson demonstrate how animals, particularly dogs, participate in the formation of colonial, immigrant, or urban identities-while remaining invisible at the policy level.

Despite the increasing interest in the role of animals in urban life in Western academic discussion, the topic of dogs in the city still remains marginalized in the Ukrainian context. Most of the studies referenced in this paper were conducted in other countries and primarily reflect the American or Western European context. In Ukraine, the topic of animals in the city is almost absent from academic discourse and policy-making. As of 2025, there is no high-quality national animal registry and no systematic data on the number of dogs. The academic discussion surrounding interspecies coexistence is underdeveloped, and animals, including dogs, are often not viewed as active participants in urban life. There is a strong tendency towards a utilitarian approach: even where the presence of dogs in the city is recognized, it is often justified only because of their benefits to people such as emotional support, activity, therapy. This approach does not acknowledge the subjectivity of dogs, their right to space or participation in shaping the urban environment, so dogs remain invisible at the level of institutions, policies, and planning.

At the same time, we see that the presence of dogs has a positive impact on human life on physiological, psycho-emotional, and social levels, affects the use of spaces, and has become an essential part of our daily existence. The need for research that takes into account both human and non-human perspectives is extremely high, especially in the context of the recovery and reconstruction of Ukrainian cities. This confirms the importance of integrating the results of such research into urban planning to create just, inclusive, and comfortable cities for all their inhabitants.

This study focuses on three main issues: the lack of focus on this topic within the academic community and among policymakers in Ukraine; the social perception of dogs in the city that leads to the alienation of dogs and their owners rather than their integration; and the consideration of dogs' needs in urban planning. The purpose of this research is to examine the everyday experiences of human-dog coexistence in the Nyvky district in Kyiv, and how these experiences are shaped by urban policies, spatial infrastructure, and social perceptions of dogs in the city.

Methodology

The research is qualitative and exploratory, focusing on the everyday experiences of coexistence between humans and dogs in an urban district of Kyiv. A quantitative approach would not capture the complexity and depth of these experiences. Therefore, this study employs a qualitative design that combines inductive thematic analysis with ethnographically sensitive observation.

The research focuses on a part of the Nyvky microdistrict located in the Shevchenkivskyi district in the western part of Kyiv. This neighborhood is a historically formed urban area consisting of more than 10 settlements and was actively built up after the Second World War. The main urban fabric of Nyvky, as we see it now, was formed before the 1970s.

A historically significant part of the selected area is the Galagan area, which emerged from the industrial zone around the Kyiv machine-tool plant Vercon. Today, the area is home to warehouses, office space, and technical enterprises.

Nyvky is an important transportation hub of the city. A railway line with the Beresteyska platform, a subway line with the Nyvky station, as well as numerous buses, trolleybuses and minibuses lines pass through the area. Two major transport hubs - the Nyvky metro station at the intersection with city and suburban transport stops - generate constantly active mobile flows. The area borders the inactive Svyatoshyn military airfield.

This neighborhood is an example of a complex urban area that combines low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise buildings, multi-level green infrastructure (parks and squares), heterogeneous diverse infrastructure, and heavy traffic flow.

The boundaries of the research area were chosen taking into account the fact that residents of the selected area have the opportunity to cross paths while walking their dogs in one of the parks, as this area has a minimum of physical barriers that could restrict the movement of people and their animals between parts of the district.

The selected research area covers an area of 4.55 km² and includes various types of buildings: detached (single-family) housing and multi-family apartment buildings, the oldest of which was built in 1938, while the newest residential complexes date back to 2020 and are currently under construction.

The area includes Nyvky Park (established in 1972, part of it is classified as a conservation zone), Veselka Park (opened in 1960, reconstructed in 2019), and Verstatostroitelny Square (reconstructed in 2019).

The selected part of the neighborhood demonstrates a wide range of urban challenges faced by dog owners: lack of walking infrastructure, difficulties with transportation, access to green areas, and housing policy. This makes Nyvky a relevant case study for interspecies coexistence in urban settings.

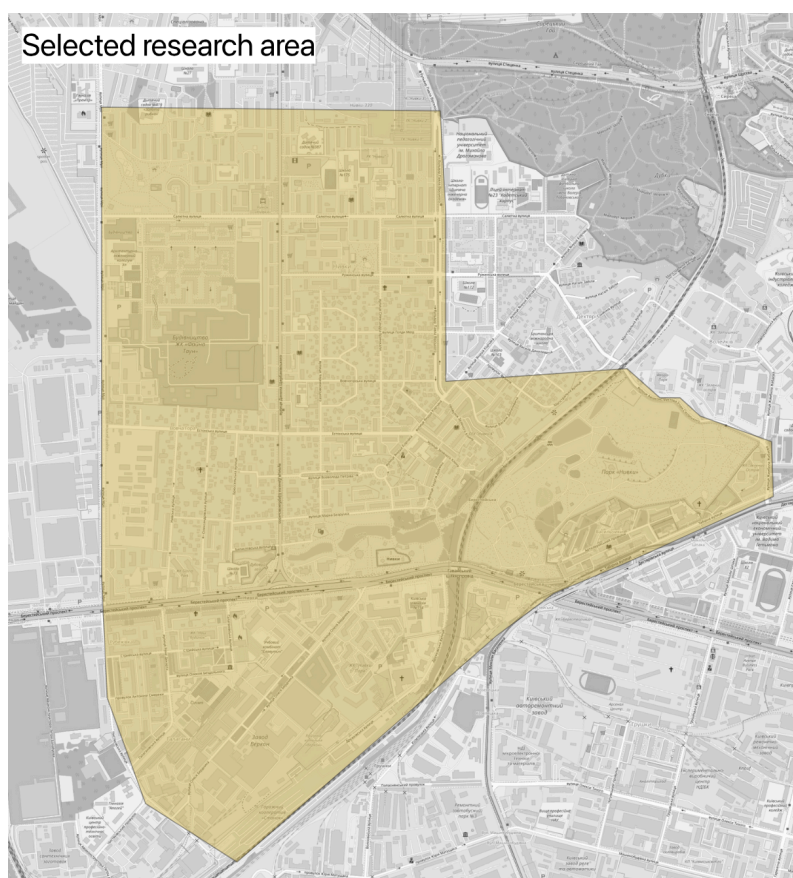


Figure 1. The map of the selected research area

Data collection methods

Analysis of existing legislation

A comprehensive review was conducted of Ukrainian regulatory and legal acts that directly or indirectly regulate the presence of animals in urban environments. These include Law of Ukraine No. 3447-IV “On the Protection of Animals from Cruel Treatment”, Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses No. 8073-X of December 7, 1984 (as amended up to 16.04.2017), Decision of the Kyiv City Council No 1079/3912 “On the Regulation of the Maintenance and Treatment of Dogs and Cats in the City of Kyiv”, “Places or areas for walking animals SBS B.2.2-5:2011. Landscaping”, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1402 “On the Approval of the Rules for the Transportation of Animals”, Order of the Ministry of Construction, Architecture, and Public Housing and Utilities 09.10. 2006 N 329 “Approval of Rules for the Use of Trams and Trolleybuses in Cities of Ukraine”, Decision of the Kyiv City Council No № 1079/3912 “Approval of Rules for the Transportation of Animals”, The European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals.

A critical assessment of the content of these documents was conducted in terms of their adequacy, clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of implementation. It was

found that most of the standards are fragmented and often too general, making their practical application in urban planning challenging. There is a gap between formal regulations and the everyday practices of residents, particularly in the area of dog walking. A significant problem is the lack of a comprehensive policy or vision for the integration of animals into the urban environment.

Legislation and approaches to regulating human-animal interactions in urban environments in the US, Germany, Australia, Sweden, and Spain were also analyzed.

Mapping

As part of this study, the Nyvky district was mapped to analyze the infrastructure, routes, and patterns of dog walking, as well as the barriers faced by dog owners.

First, scenarios for the use of two key parks - Veselka and Nyvky - were mapped. Here, mapping was conducted using systematic observation. I visited Nyvky Park more than 20 times at different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening), in different weather conditions (sunny, rainy, snowy), and throughout several seasons. This repeated presence allowed me to record consistent spatial practices, variability in behavior depending on external conditions, and to identify informal areas of activity that are only revealed through constant observation.

Veselka Park was visited 15 times following a consistent methodology that includes observations on weekdays and weekends, during peak and low activity hours, and in different weather conditions. This approach let track patterns of space use, the level of occupancy of specific areas, and the effectiveness or, conversely, marginalization of formal infrastructure, particularly, the dog park, which often remained empty.

Both officially designated walking areas and informal off-leash spaces that are actively used despite the absence of appropriate signs were noted. In addition, we identified areas of socialization for dogs and pet parents-benches and popular gathering places-as well as areas that dog owners tend to avoid due to noise, poor surface conditions, or competing functions, such as playgrounds and bike paths. Study results show that formally designated areas are rarely utilized, with owners preferring more intuitive and convenient locations characterized by dense vegetation and less human activity.

The second type of mapping focuses on infrastructure: specialized, dog-friendly, and non-dog-friendly. Mapping of specialized infrastructure, such as veterinary clinics, pet shops, grooming salons, was made by using open databases and field observations. The results show an uneven distribution of these services and highlighting the existing inequality in access to basic services for dog owners. The assessment of the “pet-friendly” status of establishments was conducted through direct mentions in respondents' answers during interviews and autoethnographic experience.

This analysis highlighted informal spaces where the presence of dogs is socially acceptable, as well as places where it is unacceptable. Consequently, the mapping revealed symbolic segregation within the district: areas characterized by openness and dog-friendly policies tend to be concentrated around and within new residential developments.

The third type of mapping identified areas which serve as barriers or comfortable zones for walking. Three types of routes were identified: favorable for walking (characterized by quiet, sufficiently green areas with sidewalks), dangerous or inconvenient (including crowded or noisy roads, highways, paths without sidewalks), as well as places that are perceived as polluted, dangerous, or unpredictable. They also identified informal activity sites that are frequently used, which are spontaneously formed spaces for playing or training with dogs, such as safe, secluded areas in parks or quiet, safe areas near factories. It was discovered that owners adapt their walking routes based on their dogs' behavior, safety concerns, social dynamics, and specific environmental conditions. In addition, official locations designated by the Kyiv City Council Administration for walking dogs and dog parks were mapped, which primarily showed their uneven distribution across the district and highlighted critical gaps between official policy and the actual use of spaces by dog owners.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews

As part of the study, 11 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with dog owners living in different parts of the Nyvky microdistrict. The purpose of this method was to gain insight about daily experience of interacting with urban space, explore the barriers faced by petparents, and to identify typical patterns of walking, mobility, and socialization. It was also aimed to discover the limitations and challenges faced by dog owners in this area.

Respondents were recruited through personal contacts (2 respondents), Instagram (2 respondents) and the Dogs Navigator app (social network where you can post photos of your pets and find friends to walk using a map) (7 respondents, which proved to be the most effective way to find respondents).

The selection of respondents covers different breeds and sizes of dogs, behavioral characteristics, and geographical location within the research area. The interview format consisted of nine interviews conducted online via Zoom, and two interviews conducted in person. All interviews lasted between 90 and 120 minutes and were divided into seven subtopics: changes in daily life, walks and outdoor routines, infrastructure and access, community social ties, transportation and housing. A list of all questions is provided in Appendix 1.

Ethical considerations were taken into account appropriately: not all respondents agreed to have their names used in the text of the paper, so their names are not mentioned. However, all of them gave permission to use the names and photos

of their dogs. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed fully. The interview texts were then analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The main approach was to identify recurring themes, images, patterns of action, and spatial scenarios that respondents described during their conversations. Coding was done manually, using predefined categories.

Dog's Name	Age	Breed
Beck	5.5 years	Other
Latte & Leon	1.6 years	Dachshunds
Ricky	2.6 years	Maltipoo
Arnold	3 years	Chihuahua
Trixie	3 years	Pomeranian Spitz
Atari	2 years	Other
Kharon	3 years	Labrador
Tommy	10 years	Other
Kliff	3 years	Labrador
Krish	1.5 years	Welsh Corgi
Duna	3 years	British Bull Terrier

Figure 2. Characteristics of respondent`s dogs



Figure 3. Spatial distribution of respondents and their dogs

Unstructured interview

One unstructured interview was conducted with a professional urban planner. It highlighted the need for research and interdisciplinary approach to urban planning, and demonstrated the importance of a social contract regarding the norms of coexistence between humans and animals in the city.

Methodological limitations

Despite the depth and diversity of the data collected, the study has a number of methodological limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

1. The sample size is limited in terms of age and social features

All respondents are young people under the age of 35, some of whom actively maintain Instagram pages for their dogs, use the DogsNavigator app. They consider themselves part of a community of “responsible” owners. This shapes a conscious, ethical, and reflective attitude toward walking, safety and owning in general. For example, many of them refuse to let their dogs off the leash without visual control or the presence of familiar dogs. This approach is commendable, but it does not reflect the full spectrum of behavioral patterns in urban spaces, including less ethical or unconscious practices.

2. Young dogs

Most of the dogs mentioned in the interview were born during the full-scale invasion, after 2022, and are quite young.

3. Socially homogeneous environment

All respondents belong to a more or less similar environment - they are educated, digitally active, with relatively flexible schedules. Most of them work from home, so they have the opportunity to be with their dogs constantly. This impacts the daily routine of walking, decreases the risk of separation anxiety in dogs, and does not take into account the experiences of individuals who must leave their pets alone for extended periods or have limited access to flexible schedules.

All the respondents in this sample are responsible and caring, so there are no critical voices or reports of conflict or irresponsible attitudes toward animals in the study. However, many respondents mentioned observing the opposite behavior in other pet owners. Several interviews recounted situations where animals were allowed off-leash near roadways, leading to tragic consequences. For example, one respondent witnessed a couple walking their dog without a leash, not controlling its movements; the animal ran out onto the road, where it was hit by a car. The owners did not notice the incident themselves - only after passersby approached them. Such stories are important because they reveal not only different levels of responsibility among owners, but also a broader context.

OVERVIEW OF THE DAILY INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND DOGS IN THE NYVKY DISTRICT

The context of Ukrainian policies: regulatory silence regarding dogs management in the urban areas

Legislative norms will be analyzed according to the studied subtopics, assessing their relevance and compliance.

Firstly, Ukrainian legislation establishes norms that regulate the requirements for the keeping and protection of animals, based on the principles of protection from cruel treatment. The primary law governing this issue is the Law of Ukraine No. 3447-IV “On the Protection of Animals from Cruel Treatment.” Overall, this law demonstrates a commendable commitment to animal welfare by establishing requirements to protect them and prevent abuse. However, it is based on the protection of animals rather than the granting of rights, which is insufficient for participation in urban life. There is also a lack of subordinate legislation to implement its provisions.

Currently, Ukraine faces a problem with the registration and microchipping of dogs. Registration of animals has been mandatory since 2007, and Article 154 of the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses even provides a fine for keeping unregistered dogs, ranging from 170 to 340 UAH as of 2025.³³ This amount is insufficient to encourage compliance. In practice, there are no known cases of fines being imposed for keeping unregistered dogs resulting in a lack of data on the quantity of dogs in Ukraine and real needs for specialized infrastructure. Since May 12, 2025, it has been possible to register a dog through the Administrative Services Center in Kyiv, which makes it more accessible and convenient than at municipal veterinary hospitals, of which there are only three in the entire city.³⁴ However, the regulation of “mandatory” registration remains unchanged, and the hope for changes largely depends on raising awareness through media promotion.

In Australia, for example, dog registration and microchipping (different states have different requirements for ages) are mandatory by law and regulated by the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and Dog and Cat Management Regulations 2017. The fine for not microchipping is \$180.³⁵ Registration is crucial because it establishes the legal responsibility of the owner, provides a realistic picture of animal ownership,

³³ Кодекс України про адміністративні правопорушення, чинна редакція від 17 квітня 2025 року, № 8073-X, із змінами за законом № 4316-IX, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/80731-10#Text>.

³⁴ Київська міська рада, “Реєстрація домашніх тварин стане доступною у ЦНАПах Києва,” Офіційний портал Києва, 15 травня 2024 року, https://kyivcity.gov.ua/news/reestratsiya_domashnikh_tvarin_stane_dostupnoyu_u_tsnapakh_kiyeva/.

³⁵ Office of Local Government NSW, “Microchipping,” NSW Pet Registry, accessed June 4, 2025, <https://www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au/owners/microchipping>.

controls vaccinations, and helps effective planning for the number of pets and urban infrastructure development.

In some countries, mandatory courses or certifications for dog owners are good practice and important for the development of responsible dog ownership. For example, Switzerland is introducing mandatory courses for all dog owners, regardless of breed or size, which include theoretical and practical training.³⁶ In Germany, certain federal states require owners to get a dog license for breeds classified as dangerous. In Hamburg, having this license provides benefits, as the law permits dogs to be walked off-leash.³⁷

This is a very important practice because it promotes responsible pet ownership, and contributes to improving animal welfare and safety in society. In Ukraine, there are no requirements for dog owners, even in the case of dangerous breeds. This lack of oversight extends to dog breeding, leading to uncontrolled breeding practices, commercial exploitation, and an increase in the number of stray animals. In contrast, EU countries regulate this area through licensing, veterinary registration, and restrictions on breeding without permission. For example, in Austria, “Any person who has a litter, including those who have accidental litters, must report themselves as a breeder to the authorities.”³⁸ In Lithuania, it is also prohibited to breed animals with any genetic diseases or pathologies.³⁹

In the context of animal protection, it is important to note that tail docking and ear cropping of dogs are prohibited by the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals (Article 10), which Ukraine ratified in 2013.⁴⁰ Owners who violate these restrictions can be fined ranging 3400 - 5100 UAH, but there is no specific provision prohibiting ear and tail cropping in Ukrainian law, so it still happens. Due to the absence of subordinate legislation, this restriction is not effectively enforced.

Another critical issue in Ukrainian legislation is absence of regulation regarding the status of service dogs: how to obtain that status, the rights it confers, and who is responsible for training these dogs. Currently, dog owners can train their dogs themselves or hire private trainers, but this does not guarantee legal recognition or corresponding rights. For example, the private organization AIR DOG, offers online courses for training assistance dogs. In other countries, such as the United States,

³⁶ Kanton Zürich, Hundegesetz vom 14. April 2008 (HuG), in Kraft seit 1. Januar 2010, https://www.zh.ch/de/politik-staat/gesetze-beschluesse/gesetzessammlung/zhlex-ls/erlass-554_5-2008_04_14-2010_01_01-119.html.

³⁷ Animal Lawyer, “Hundeführerschein – The Dog Owner License in Germany,” Animal-Lawyer.de, accessed June 4, 2025, <https://animal-lawyer.de/hundefuehrerschein-the-dog-owner-license-in-germany/>.

³⁸ Vlaamse overheid, “Honden en katten kweken,” Vlaanderen.be, accessed June 4, 2025, <https://www.vlaanderen.be/honden-en-katten-kweken#q-45f4084b-4c06-433e-ac86-0ddcfbfc895>.

³⁹ EU Dog & Cat Alliance, “Lithuania: Overview of Dog and Cat Welfare,” https://dogandcatwelfare.eu/media/filer_public/53/ed/53ed4c6d-374f-455f-8b46-48f96c50bc2f/lithuania.pdf.

⁴⁰ Європейська конвенція про захист домашніх тварин, чинна редакція, ратифікована Законом України № 578-VII від 18 вересня 2013 року, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_a15#Text

there is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which clearly defines who qualifies as a service dog, where these dogs are allowed, and what rights they possess. An example of the current issues in Ukraine occurred in Kyiv when a dog with verified service dog status was denied entry into the metropolitan. According to the current metro rules, a dog must complete a special course by the metro. However, such courses are not currently available, and even the staff are unaware of their existence.

Guide dogs are a specific type of dog which is recognized in Ukrainian legislation as assisting blind. However, there are currently no regulations regarding their certification. The only right that is provided is access to public transportation. It's important to note that guide dogs can assist not only blind people but also individuals with other disabilities. To better support these dogs and their handlers, basic infrastructure needs to be developed for their integration into society.

Therefore, the basic law is necessary but insufficient for its enforcement and implementation, as well as for the full participation of animals in urban life.

Human features in dog shapes: perceptions, ideas, and biases

Through observations of narratives from around the world and results from interviews conducted, a clear trend emerges regarding the perception of dogs as a full-fledged part of the family, which indicates the deep bond between humans and dogs.

Most respondents noted that they perceive their dog as their child. This perception is more common among respondents who are in a relationship. In any case, the importance of dogs in the lives of respondents was very significant and important, which indicates the strong emotional ties between the owner and their dogs. During their stories, these respondents often compared their dogs to children: “our fluffy son”, “our boy”, “she is our daughter and he is son, we are dog mom and dad”, “She is like a child: she gets sick, she wants attention, she wants love”, “We got her when we couldn't afford a child yet, but we wanted someone to take care of.” In this case, the dog plays the role not just of a companion, but of an object of care that fulfills the basic human need for care and attachment. While respondents acknowledged that living with a dog can be challenging, this did not lead to the negative narrative; many interviews emphasize the psycho-emotional support that dogs provide. Their presence helps to combat stress, overcome depression or loneliness, especially after difficult periods in life:

“She is like an emotional support. When I was having a hard time, she was there and just lay next to me. When I cry, she comes and comforts me, she feels everything.”

Most respondents frequently use diminutive forms of their dogs' names and describe their dogs with human-like character traits such as “loving,” “quarrelsome,”

“very independent,” “social and sociable.” This lexicon used by respondents indicates a deep emotional attachment, as well as a tendency to humanize pets.

A significant bond between a dog and a person is also formed as a result of significant changes at the individual level. Most respondents noted that the appearance of a dog radically changed their lives, which literally divided into “before” and “after”. Respondents reported becoming more organized, structured, and responsible. Regular walks several times a day, a feeding schedule, considering dogs' needs when traveling or planning a weekend - all form a new discipline. Many emphasized that they can no longer afford to “spontaneously stay late at work” or “leave the house for the whole day”. Their presence in public spaces creates new standards: their favorite places now consist solely of those that welcome dogs, while venues with a negative attitude toward pets are quickly excluded and added to a “blacklist”.

When planning trips to the city center or outside the city, they need to consider even the smallest details and plan the route and means of transportation in advance. Walking routines impact on a person's daily routes. Some individuals begin to avoid noisy areas, while others seek out green spaces. Many have established new habits, such as making an evening walk a priority. Additionally, people often talk about “avoiding problem areas”, which can relate to safety concerns.

Respondents noticed an increase in their attentiveness as dogs require practice observation daily: is the animal comfortable, is it afraid of crowds, is it too noisy. These questions are often answered by interpreting the dog's body language. One significant transformation was sensitivity to space. Respondents emphasized carefully choosing their walking route, analyzing the quality of sidewalks, the presence of green areas, the absence of aggressive dogs, or potentially conflictual areas.

On an emotional level, respondents emphasized that the presence of a dog significantly enhances feelings of joy, warmth, and psychological stability in everyday life. They noted that “there is always someone waiting at home”, which creates a sense of need, unconditional support, and mutual attachment. Communicating with a dog is an opportunity to share experiences, relieve tension, or feel physical comfort through hugs. However, this comes with emotional responsibility: constant care for their dog's health, experiencing anxiety when the dog is absent, and managing its behavior during walks or public outings. Many noticed increased attentiveness - not only to the environment, but also to changes in the dog's mood, signals, and needs.

Interestingly, most respondents got a dog during the full-scale invasion and noted that they had always dreamed of having a dog but had always put it off until “when I have my own house”, “when I work from home”. However, at the beginning of the full-scale war, they decided not to put off their lives and dreams and got a dog despite the challenges that might arise. None of the respondents got a dog to

emotionally handle events; they feel more responsibility additionally for dogs, which are often very stressed during explosions.

An important influence is increased physical activity. According to the interview results, on average, respondents walk their dogs twice a day for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Walking dogs is a daily routine that creates regularity and structure in the daily rhythm. Most respondents note an increase in physical activity, or at least its regularity in the morning or in bad weather. For some respondents, walking the dog remains the main physical activity during the day:

“I started walking for at least an hour and a half every day. Before, I didn't even go out for a walk - there was no reason to.”

“She gets me out of bed even when I'm in a bad mood or don't feel like doing anything.”

At the same time, all respondents noted the problem of insufficient awareness among dog owners and other city residents about the rules for interacting with dogs in public spaces, about the behavioral characteristics and needs of dogs. There is a generally low level of understanding regarding dogs' body language, emotional responses, and their basic needs for well-being, which complicates safe interactions. Particular concern was expressed about dogs with docked tails and ears.

In a broader context, there is a stereotypical view of dogs as a source of dirt, noise, and danger. A prevalent prejudice is towards barking and the idealized image of an obedient dog that owners of both small and large dogs often face. Barking is perceived not as a form of communication, but as a disturbance of order and peace in the city. Sometimes barking is stigmatized, even when it is a normal reaction:

“When my dog howled, all attention was on her. Some people look disapprovingly, even though it is a normal reaction to the sound of a siren; the dog is scared and feels uncomfortable. Some people understand and smile, try to calm her down, and say, ‘What a protector!’”

It is also important to highlight the disregard for boundaries and disrespect towards dogs. There are instances where strangers approach dogs without permission and attempt to pet them. However, this is a basic manifestation of politeness and respect, as we wouldn't imagine approaching a stranger in the city and starting to pet them-such an action would generally be considered rude. However, this kind of interaction with dogs is often seen as acceptable. It reflects a failure to recognize dogs as beings with their own rights to comfort, space, and choice:

“There was a case when a woman touched a dog, and the dog started barking - immediately, an elderly woman began to get indignant... But the dog simply did not accept the person.”

Interestingly, respondents identified a gender pattern in interaction of strangers with dogs: it is usually men who approach smaller dogs, asking questions like, “Does it bite? Let me pet it!”

In the case of small dogs, barking is often interpreted as emotionally unstable:

“You often hear: ‘Oh, those little ones are barking again - they're unstable. But they can communicate they are scared, don't come near, especially when there are big dogs around.’”

Respondents who own large or fighting dogs often notice fear in people's eyes, even when the dog is far away:

“Many people judge him at first glance as dangerous and aggressive, and I often hear people whispering when I walk by.”

Female respondents noted that they are more often the target of complaints about dog walking, as they are perceived as less threatening and more “accessible” for social control - unlike men with large dogs, whom, according to them, people are simply afraid of.

In a broader context, there is a stereotypical view of dogs as a source of dirt, which, according to respondents, often becomes the main argument for banning animals from shops, restaurants, or other public spaces:

"It's a common stereotype that dogs are dirty creatures that carry viruses... This is often the main argument for why they are not allowed in stores, but a person who coughs or sneezes on products causes more harm than a dog that quickly walks past me and does not touch the products.

Sometimes respondents are asked questions about domestic cleanliness: "Does your dog shed a lot of hair or create dirt in the house?"

This perception replaces the idea of dogs as sensitive creatures with their own boundaries, fears, preferences, and needs, which require not only discipline but also adaptation, respect, and understanding. Instead, the desire for “control” often dominates without considering deepening social tension in interactions between species.

Despite stereotypes, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion of citizens react positively to dogs in the city: they stop to look, smile, pay compliments, and ask if they can pet or play with them. We see that attitudes toward dogs in the city are ambiguous, ranging from enthusiasm to condemnation, from friendliness to disgust. Positive reactions create an important space and a starting point for fundamental changes, but we still lack comprehensive vision and transformations to achieve a city open to human and non-human inhabitants.

It is worth recognizing that responsible dog ownership is gaining momentum, and local initiatives and activists play an important role here. For example, dog trainers and zoopsychologists are actively disseminating information about rules for interacting with dogs and their body language. A noteworthy example is social enterprise LavGav, which actively promotes cleaning up after dogs. According to their data, Their efforts have led to a 20% increase in the number of people who clean up after their pets. They create and install dog toilets in cities and offer biodegradable

bags. These activities are critically important because the responsibility of pet owners forms the basis for the acceptable, comfortable, and safe coexistence of all residents.

Urban spaces for walking: accessibility, restrictions, and daily routes

In Ukraine, the regulation of walking animals is decentralized, so the rules can vary slightly from city to city. Violations are punishable by fines in accordance with the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses, but the specific amounts of penalties depend on local regulations and practices.

According to Law of Ukraine No. 3447-IV “On the Protection of Animals from Cruel Treatment,” individuals over the age of 14 are permitted to walk an animal, exclusively on a leash. For dangerous breeds of dogs the leash should be no longer than 1.2 meters and muzzle is compulsory. Dogs may be off-leash in designated walking areas, except for dangerous breeds. Further regulations may vary at the city level.⁴¹

According to Decision No. 1079/3912 “On the Regulation of the Maintenance and Treatment of Dogs and Cats in the City of Kyiv”, designated areas for walking animals allow owners to walk dogs freely. If the nearest designated area is more than 400 meters away, walking is permitted in the areas adjacent to the building from the rear or technical side of the building, which must be indicated by an appropriate warning sign. In other cases, walking is strictly prohibited only on the territory of educational institutions and healthcare facilities, which is understandable and important.⁴²

A controversial aspect is the definition of suitable areas for walking dogs. According to Decision No. 1079/3912, designated areas for walking dogs include alienated territories along roads and under power lines, sanitary zones around gas stations, wastelands, forests, forest plantations, territories that are rarely visited and river banks.⁴³ This approach contributes to the perception of dogs as undesirable in urban environments, reinforcing the idea that they should be excluded from public spaces and exacerbating social inequalities. In addition, such places are often neglected and dangerous. For many people, walking their dog may be the only form of physical activity they get each day and a vital way to socialize. However, using these neglected areas for dog walking can have negative consequences for both dogs and their owners. In 2018 this decision was supplemented by the Kyiv City Council Administration, so a list of such areas was published. Maintenance of these areas is the responsibility of district housing and communal services departments or other legal

⁴¹ Закон України “Про захист тварин від жорстокого поводження”, чинна редакція від 15 листопада 2024 року, № 3447-IV, із змінами за законом № 4017-IX, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3447-15>.

⁴² Київська міська рада, Про затвердження Правил утримання домашніх тварин у місті Києві, рішення № 1081/3053 від 5 жовтня 2017 року, [https://kmr.ligazakon.net/document/mr072242\\$2017_10_05](https://kmr.ligazakon.net/document/mr072242$2017_10_05).

⁴³ Київська міська рада, Правила утримання домашніх тварин у місті Києві.

entities responsible for these territories. It is important to note that the technical requirements specify that walking areas must be designated in every park and square, and the area of these zones must be at least 30% of the routes located in parks and squares.

According to the "Places or areas for walking animals SBS B.2.2-5:2011", the surfaces in these areas should consist of sand and earth, gravel and sand, or grass (low solid vegetation). All places and areas for walking animals must be equipped with special warning signs, as well as signs indicating the names and telephone numbers of the institutions responsible for their technical and sanitary condition. Additionally, these areas must include containers for collecting garbage and animal waste.⁴⁴

The existence of such areas allows dogs to be let off their leashes, which is essential for their health. This type of exercise enhances their natural gait, social interaction skills, and exploratory behavior.⁴⁵ According to KCCA, this research area include such designated areas for walking dogs: Artilleriyivsky Lane 5B, Igor Sikorsky Street 6A, Janusha Korchaka Street 20A, and Mriia Street 18E. The map below illustrates the walking distance of 400 meters to these locations, defined by the KCCA, and to official dog parks, which are unevenly distributed.

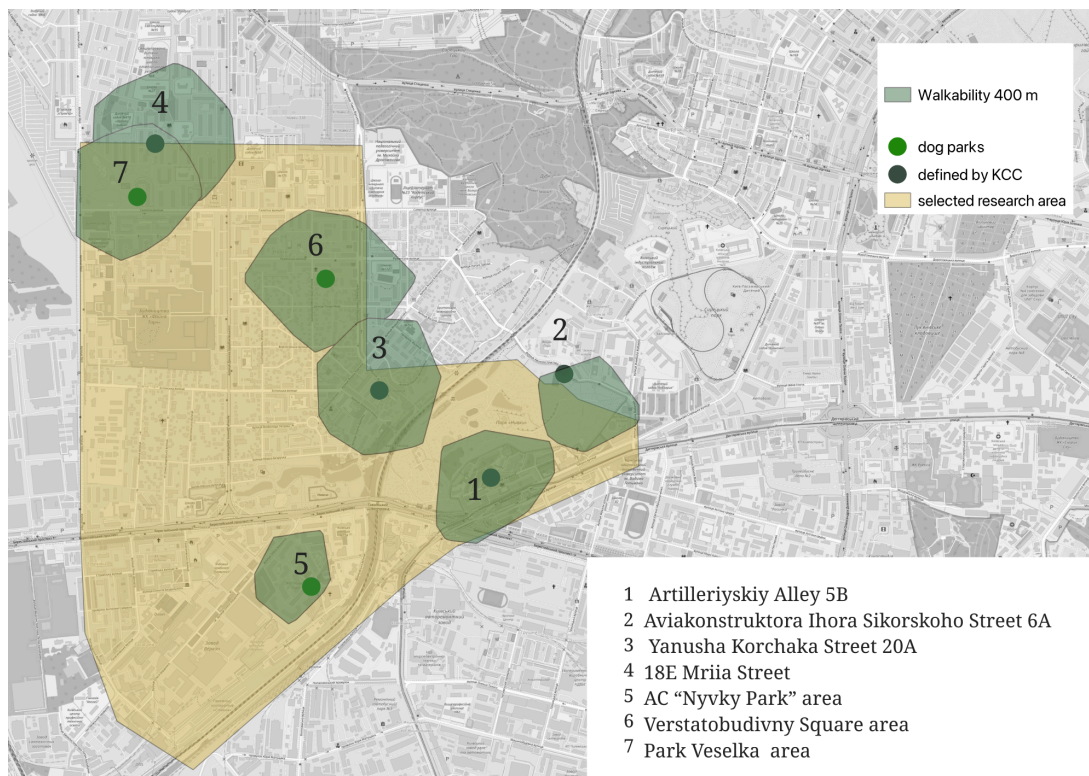


Figure 4. Map of dog walking locations and recommended sites from the Kyiv City State Administration and dog parks within a 400-meter walking distance

⁴⁴ ДБН Б.2.2-5:2011. Благоустрій територій, розділ 5, п. 8.

⁴⁵ Sandra Foltin and Udo Ganslosser, "Let' M Loose – the Importance of Off-Leash Walks For Pet Dogs," *Animal and Veterinary Sciences* 9, no. 6 (January 1, 2021): 181, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.av.s.20210906.14>.

Analyzing each of these areas in terms of compliance with requirements and practical convenience of use, it should be noted that in practice, the norms of the KCCA are declarative. None of the points meet all the requirements, and most are completely unsuitable for walking animals.

- Artillery Lane 5B features a narrow area behind the park, at the back of the building, where there are no indications of the space's intended purpose. It lacks benches, trash cans, or signage indicating maintenance responsibilities. Instead, there is just a large trash can and parked cars. Dog owners tend to avoid this area, choosing to walk their pets deeper into the park.
- At Aviakonstruktora Ihora Sikorskoho Street 6A, the surroundings comprise garages and lack any infrastructure for walking dogs. There are no signs indicating who is responsible for maintenance, and the proximity of a busy road makes this area very dangerous.
- Janusha Korchaka Street 20A is marked by a sign leading to a completely fenced-off garage cooperative, where cars drive. There are no maintenance signs, and the surface is entirely asphalt. Outside this fenced area, there is a road and a zone filled with trees and tall grass, making it impossible to walk a dog there.
- Mriya Street 18E is the only location among those listed where it is practically possible to walk a dog. Although it does not meet formal requirements-lacking signs indicating maintenance responsibility-it is a beautiful and well-kept green yard



Photos from: Artilleriyskiy Alley 5B, Aviakonstruktora Ihora Sikorskoho Street 6A, Yanusha Korchaka Street 20A



Photos from: Mriia Street 18E

Figure 5. Examples of dog walking zones in Nyvky microdistrict

Another type of area is dog parks for training, which must have a sign with the name, full name of the responsible person, phone number, work schedule. The surface of the training grounds should consist of a lawn with dense, low vegetation based on

sandy soil. Maintenance of these areas is supervised by the Main Department for Control over the Landscaping of Kyiv.

“Park design guide” developed by Urbanyna provides recommendations for designing dog walking areas. It suggests having two separate spaces for large and small dogs, each enclosed by a 1.5-2 meter fence and featuring 1-2 meters of greenery for safety and comfort. Each area should include a trash can, a drinking fountain, and covered seating. Additionally, the entrance should open inward to prevent dogs from escaping, ensuring their safety. Additional recommendations are provided for dog parks for training , which have the same general layout requirements but include special bypass paths and facilities.

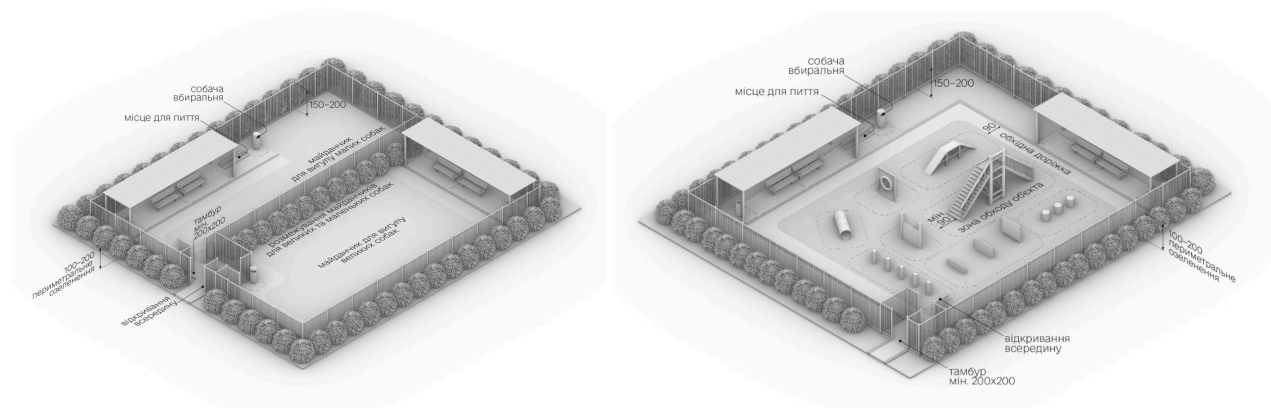


Figure 6. Visualized recommendations for designing dog parks and dog training parks from Urbanyna. Source: Urbanyna, “Папки,” <https://www.urbanyna.com/parky>.

There are also three dog training areas in the research area:

- Located in Park Veselka - park is often closed and rarely used. The equipment is too large for small dogs, and it is mainly utilized for training with dog handlers.
- Located in RC Nyvky Park- park is popular, especially for walking dogs of the same breed. It is well-fenced, but there are complaints about the uncomfortable surface.
- Located in Verstatobudivny Square - area has designated zones for large and small dogs; however, the playground itself is very small. There have been reports of poison being scattered in the area, which discourages frequent use.

Location of these parks does not provide essential pedestrian accessibility, limiting their usage. According to interview results, most respondents do not visit such dog parks regularly. The primary reasons for this include inconvenient locations, poor maintenance, the potential for conflicts between dogs, small park areas, lack of zoning for different dog sizes, inadequate facilities for various breeds, and safety concerns-particularly due to the possibility of dog hunters scattering poison in these areas. Many people visit dog parks only occasionally, primarily to let their dogs off-leash in a confined space. Their decision to enter the park often hinges on the

presence of familiar or aggressive dogs. Additionally, some equipment is viewed as outdated or inappropriate for regular dogs, resembling Soviet-era training grounds for service animals rather than spaces for play and socialization.

Spatial practices of pet parents and dogs in parks

Officially designated walking areas often fail to meet the actual needs of dog owners, so they rethink urban spaces on their own. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze which parks and green spaces are practically used as walking areas, regardless of existing policies.

Park Nyvky

The park is clearly divided into two parts, eastern and western, formally and informally. The western part is more lively and active, serving as a transit point for people traveling from the electric train (Brestevska stop), moving towards Brestevskyi Avenue and Shcherbakivskoho Street, where there are important stops connecting other parts of the city. This part of the park is often used for recreation: fishing, bird feeding, walking with children, running, riding bicycles and scooters. The benches are almost always occupied, with people often eating and drinking alcoholic drinks there. In winter, children and adults skate on the frozen lake. However, due to the high level of use, this part is overloaded and polluted - there are not enough trash cans, and the area needs maintenance.

Up to 20% visitors to this park are dog owners, mostly walking their dogs on leashes. There are only a few places where dogs can be let off the leash, but these are more places for movement and socialization than for full-fledged play. These areas can be referred to as “informal legalization spaces” for walking without a leash. The first area for off leash activities is the old playground at the park entrance. It is quite spacious and is often used as a place for dog training, running with pullers and balls. This area is less active, hidden, safe, and spacious. The second one is an area of a former sports ground, which is spacious and green. This area often serves as a gathering place and walking area for dogs of the same breed. One of the respondents noted that she often sees Jack Russells playing there in the evening. The third one is between the lakes, at the intersection of roads, where everyone meets and can socialize and stop for a few minutes: there are interactions between dogs, between dog owners, or between children and dogs. Interestingly, the existing active playground does not deter dog walkers; instead, dogs and children coexist well. Dogs and children play literally on the same “field” because there are no clear divisions or fences.

However, this part of the park is less used for leash off activities due to high pollution and fear of picking up trash or food. Dog walking in this section of the park primarily occurs in the evening hours, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, and all day on weekends. It is less used in the morning hours, as the location of the park requires time to get there. The park is also rarely used during inclement weather due to the

absence of shelters and asphalt pavement, which results in muddy conditions when it rains.

The eastern part is more “wild” and spacious, cleaner, and more rugged. There is no strict division of functions here: areas for walking and picnics are intertwined, which promotes coexistence between species. This area is perceived as safe and “dog-friendly,” where many animals roam off-leash, people mostly sit on benches and chat, and you can often see elderly people with their dogs. There are few specially equipped areas deep inside the park, so this part of the park is used more for walking. The eastern part of the park is better equipped, with nice benches located near the lakes where elderly people often relax, despite the challenges posed by steep slopes and numerous stairs for accessing the park. There are many young people and children on the playgrounds near the residential complex.

On weekends, the eastern part of the park is actively used for dog walking throughout the day, especially in the mornings from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. and in the evenings from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. During weekdays, the easternmost area tends to be used primarily during morning and evening hours, mainly by residents of the nearest residential complex due to its convenient location. For walking large dogs, trampled paths are more often used, where there are fewer people, but they are not limited to them.

Both parts of the park have problems with trash cans, as there are only a few of them and they are located only near the benches by the lakes. This does not meet the needs of visitors, as the park is quite active, and they are almost always full, with trash often lying around.

Spatial practices of pet parents and dogs in the park Nyvky

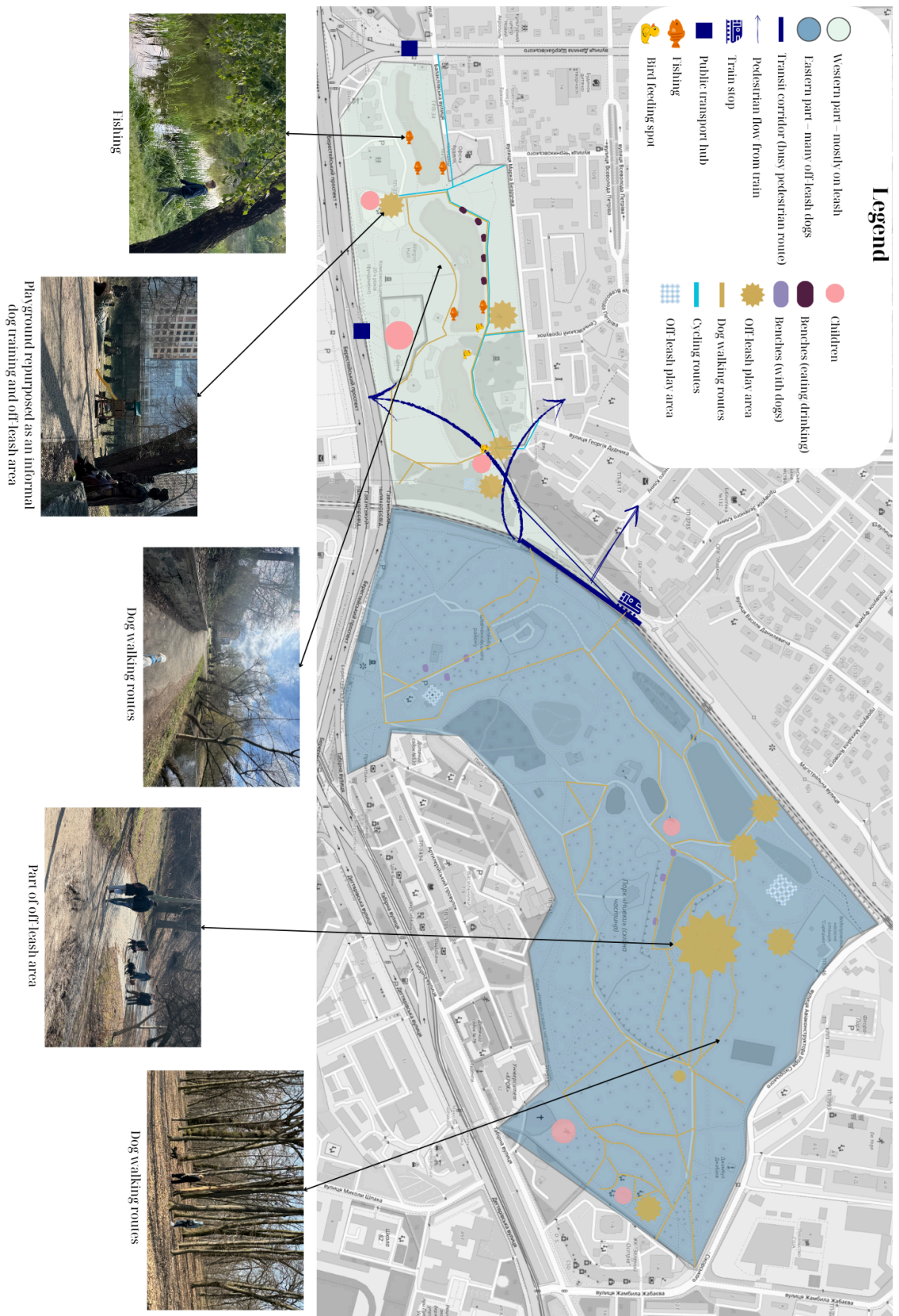


Figure 7. Spatial practices of pet parents and dogs in the park Nyvky

Park Veselka

Park Veselka is a good example of how different types of visitors can coexist within shared space. The main users are elderly people, young people, families with children, dog owners, and runners. The park is extremely well-maintained and attractive, with a sufficient number of trash cans throughout the area. The abundant greenery and trees create a cozy atmosphere, reducing noise from the nearby road and providing some relief from the heat during hot weather. In addition, during summer, water sprayers are installed in the summer season, and the lawns are regularly watered, making them ideal for children and dogs to play and cool off.

The park has clear zoning, formal and informal, which ensures a comfortable experience for all park users and reduces the causes of possible conflicts. Importantly, the park is not a destination that attracts visitors from distant parts of the city; instead, it primarily serves the residents of the nearby residential complexes. Therefore people know each other, it creates an additional sense of security and belonging among visitors.

There is a specialized dog training park, which is rarely used. Firstly, it does not meet the “30% of the route area” principle defined by KCCA. Secondly, there are frequent complaints that it is simply closed in the evening when people need to walk their dogs after work. It is mainly used for training by cynologists on weekends. The equipment has become noticeably worn over the years, and the area contains only five facilities, all of which are designed for large dogs. In addition, it was designed as a space for residents of the Fyina Town to walk their dogs, but most of the buildings in this complex are beyond walking distance (400 m), so it is inconvenient for daily use. Interestingly, this training park is located in the northeastern part of the park, while most dogs are in the opposite, southwestern part. This is where people walk their dogs, sit on benches with them, and this area of the park is the most active. The western part has less dense vegetation, so dogs are more often walked on a leash here due to the risk of them running out onto the road. In contrast, the southern part is separated by dense bushes that form a natural barrier, creating a safe space for leash-off walking.

It is worth noting the presence of a drinking fountain, which plays an important role in the summer - for collecting water for dogs. The playground in the park is well equipped, fenced off, and the areas around it are not used for walking dogs. This is a manifestation of mutual respect and understanding of the needs of both groups - parents with children and dog owners. This part of the park is very active and noisy, which also forces dog owners to avoid this area.

Spatial practices of pet parents and dogs in park Veselka

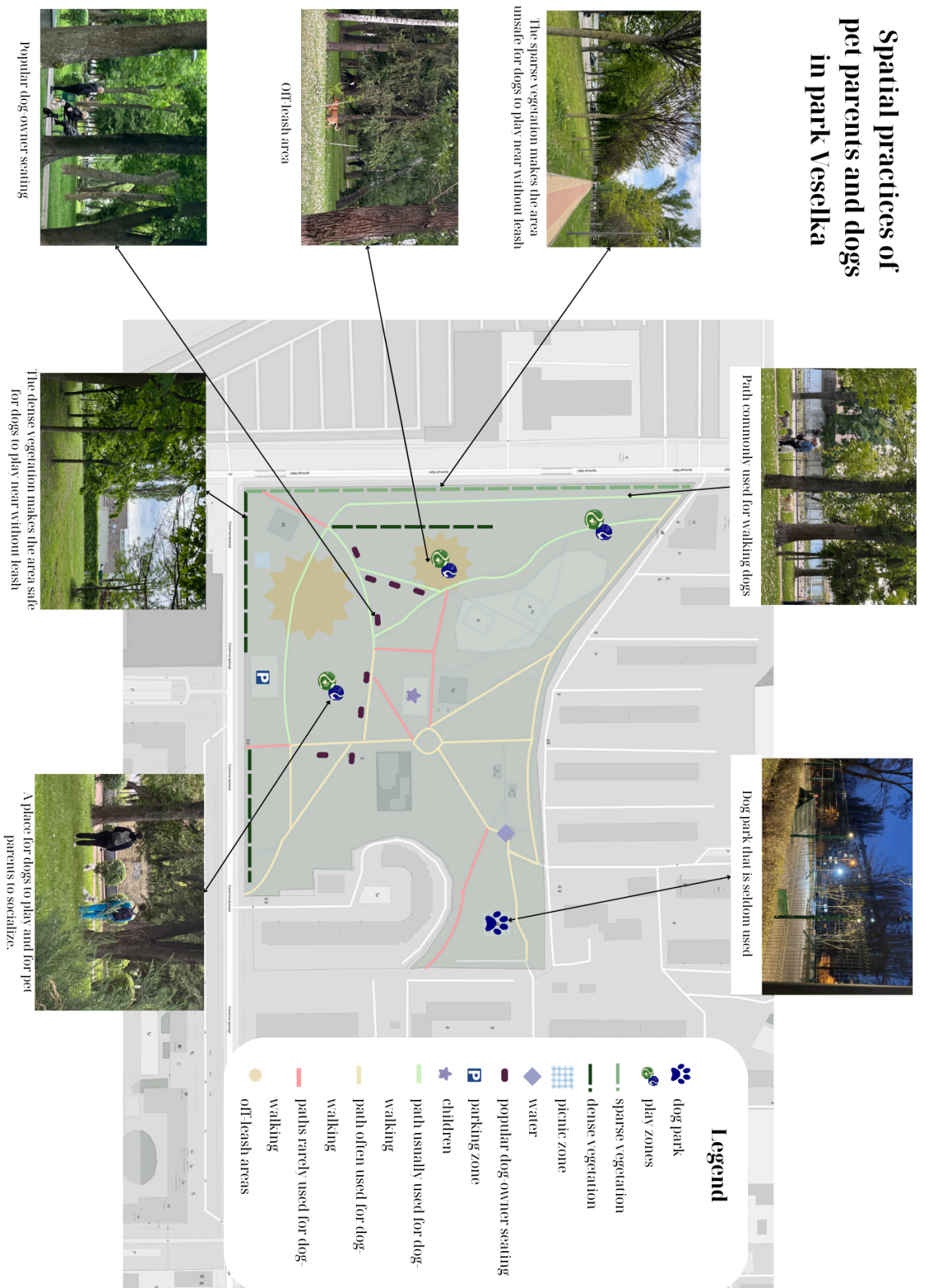


Figure 8. Spatial practices of pet parents and dogs in the park Veselka

Barriers and walking routes

Respondents identified key criteria that influence the choice of walking location, including sufficient greenery, clean areas, quiet streets, and distance from traffic. They generally avoid places where dogs feel uncomfortable such as noisy avenues, undergrounds, crowded streets, areas with large numbers of dogs, and areas with garbage dumps. The main types of pollution encountered during walks are food scraps and bones, broken glass, bottles, and traces of poison. Although cases of poisoning were mentioned rarely, respondents clearly know where these areas are located, avoid them, and warn others through personal chats or during walks.

There are often cases when respondents meet dogs without leashes in places not designated for this. Small dogs are often let off the leash, especially those that do not respond to their owner's voice commands. In cases where a dog that has a negative interaction with another dog is spotted, or when an off-leash dog is running nearby, owners tend to deliberately avoid these areas, change their routes, or cross the road to ensure safety

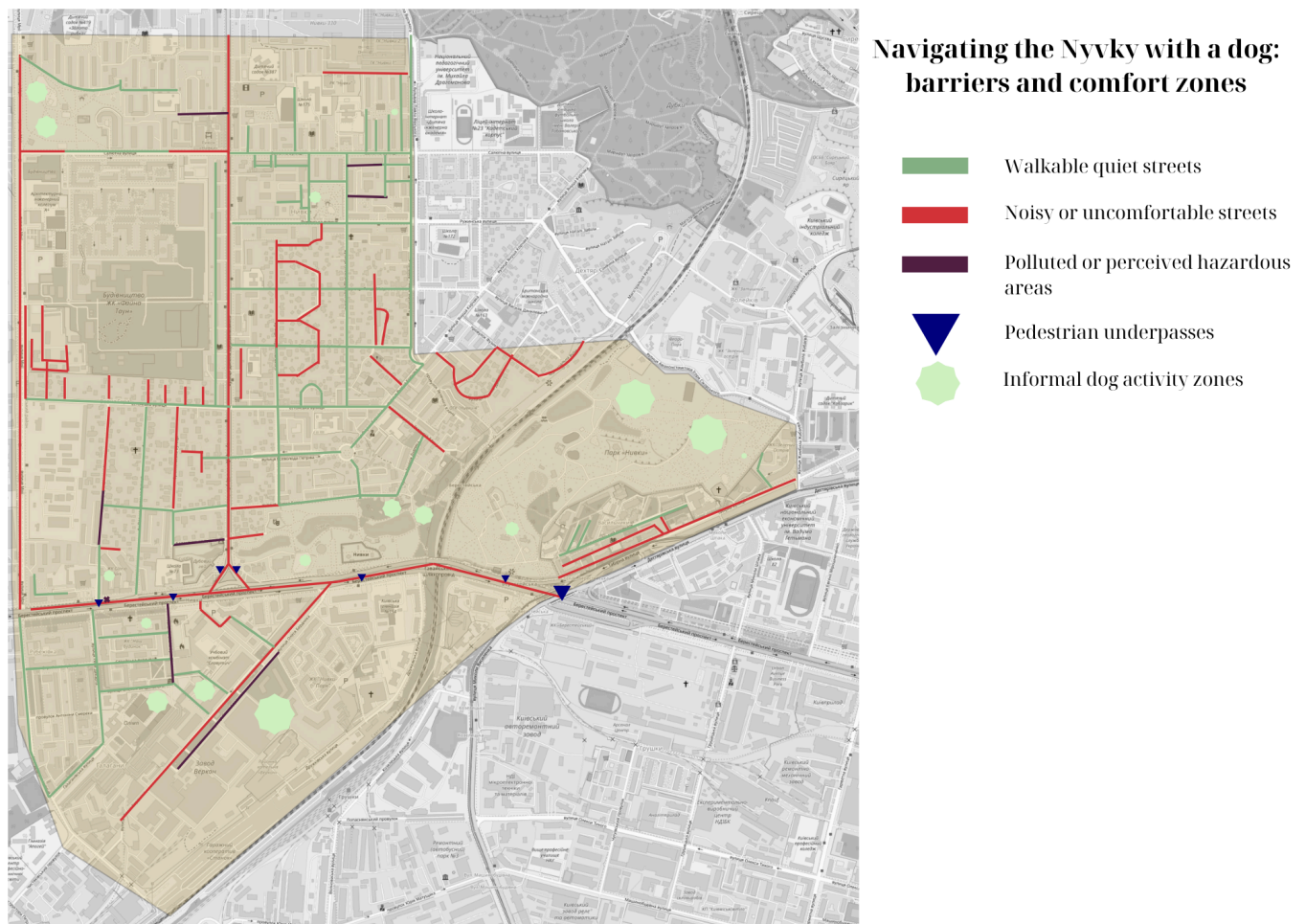


Figure 8. Barriers and comfort zones for petparents and dogs in selected research area

The map illustrates the subjective perception of urban space by dog owners in the research area. It provides an informal definition of convenient and enjoyable routes for walking dogs, as well as those that are considered dangerous or unpleasant. The identified routes are influenced not only by the presence of sidewalks and green spaces but also by a combination of spatial, social, and sensory factors.

Green lines indicate quiet streets suitable for walking dogs. These paths are perceived as safe, pleasant, characterized by moderate or minimal traffic, sufficient green areas, shade from trees, and minimal noise pollution. Here, dog owners experience less stress, less chance of conflict with other residents, and dogs can “be a dog” stop and sniff. Although these streets are not officially designated for walking, they perform this function due to their spatial qualities. These paths are mainly located near low-rise buildings, away from noisy highways and crowded places.

Streets that are avoided due to noise, dirt, lack of pedestrian areas, or crowds are marked in red. These streets are uncomfortable not only for dogs but also for their owners due to heavy traffic, narrow sidewalks, and lack of greenery. People tend to cross such streets quickly, keeping their dogs close without stopping. This is a space where walking turns into maneuvering. These are mainly areas near garbage dumps, abandoned territories, garages, crowded places, and markets.

Brown lines indicate polluted streets and dangerous places. These are areas that have a reputation for being threatening - due to scattered poison, garbage, and aggressive stray animals. They are marked as real barriers to everyday use and can have serious consequences for animal health and safety.

Blue triangles mark underground passages referred to as “stress zones.” These areas can be uncomfortable for most dogs due to factors such as slippery stairs, grates that may trap their paws, confusing routes, darkness, and loud noises from traffic above. Many respondents reported that they avoid these passages.

Light green spots are informal activity zones where dogs often can run off-leash. These spaces were informally formed by residents. However, such places don’t have official designations as “dog parks,” they serve an important role in the community. Most of them are far from busy traffic and have natural boundaries (dense trees, fences, slopes), which adds to the feeling of safety. Such areas often serve as socialization points for both dogs and people, reinforcing the role of dogs as mediators in community building.

By mapping these routes, we can see that even small spatial elements such as trees, fences, trash cans, and underground passages significantly affect the quality and manner of interaction with space, as well as the sense of safety and comfort. In real life, we can also see that the red areas are not used not only by dog owners, but by any group of people. Dogs can be sensory guides around the city because they are more sensitive to noise, surfaces, threats, and they help identify problem areas in the urban environment.

We see that people choose functional and safe areas, even if they do not have official status, while the “walking” points designated by the authorities are completely ignored.

Unlike in Ukraine, where dog walking areas are mostly isolated and marginalized territories, in most European countries dog walking areas are located in parks and squares, and are usually fenced off and safe. In most cases, dogs must be kept on a leash in all public places, except for designated areas, and there are fines for walking dogs without a leash, for example, up to \$615 in the US. Barcelona, a city eight times smaller than Kyiv, has 120 designated dog walking areas, including small off-leash enclosures, larger dog parks, and shared use areas (specific times for dogs). The areas contain benches and trash cans for dog waste, as well as drinking fountains. These areas are cleaned daily and periodically watered to avoid unpleasant odors. Every month, they are disinfected at night with a harmless agent that has bactericidal properties. These spaces are inspected weekly and, if necessary, decorated with plants and street furniture. In Catalonia this year of the 69 municipalities on the shore, 45 will allow animals on the sand. Some other municipalities belong to natural parks, so they prohibit the presence of dogs from an environmental point of view, as they can affect bird nesting.

In summary, formally designated walking areas largely fail to fulfill their functions, both in terms of compliance with requirements and in terms of use. Everyday practices show that people independently choose their routes and areas for walking their dogs that actually meet safety and convenience requirements. This highlights the need to rethink existing regulations and take real-life experience into account when developing them.

Mobility injustice in daily routes

Mobility for pet owners is fragmentally regulated and often restricted. Existing rules do not guarantee equal access, are not always followed, and leave space for interpretation.

The rules for transporting pets on public transport are regulated by several regulatory acts and individual rules of transport companies.

According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1402, dogs may be transported in bags with a solid bottom, wearing a muzzle and on a leash. They must not soil other people's belongings, and in taxis when they are on a mat.

In Kyiv, the rules are further specified by Decision No. 1079/3912 of the Kyiv City Council, which allows transportation in the absence of a prohibition sign, in the back seat, on a short leash, with a muzzle and registration number. For certain types of transport, such as trams and trolleybuses, passengers can transport dogs in muzzles free of charge if they have leashes and appropriate documents. In the metro, according to the rules of the Kyiv Metroliten, only small dogs and cats are allowed to be

transported in special bags which means a loss of mobility for owners of medium and large dogs.

Guide dogs that assist visually impaired people are also allowed in the metro, provided they have a special certificate. However, in practice, it is impossible to obtain this document, as the metro does not provide the necessary training and does not issue certificates.

A positive change is the permission to stay with a dog in the metro during an air raid alarm. In January 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an order officially allowing animals to be kept in shelters. However, this happened after a scandal broke out when the children of a deceased soldier were not allowed to enter a school shelter with their dog. This is not only an important practical decision in wartime, but also an important social shift in perception. Now we often see media images of families, including children and pets, particularly larger dogs, taking shelter in the metro. There is some controversy surrounding the restrictions on movement in the metro for safety reasons, aimed at preventing dogs from running away due to loud noises or getting injured on escalators. However, in the year and a half since dogs have been officially allowed in the metro during alarms, there have been no reports of conflicts or injuries resulting from the use of the prohibited escalators. This situation serves as a good example of how a crisis can lead to more inclusive practices. Meanwhile, petitions are demanding that dogs be allowed on the metro, with adherence to safety and sanitary standards.

Real-life experience of traveling with a dog highlights the hierarchy of convenience and accessibility of transportation. Most respondents reported that the most comfortable way to travel is by private car. However, not everyone can afford this, so the city once again appears as an unequal space of mobility, where “accessibility” directly depends on private transportation. Interestingly, people who own a car often choose to travel to more attractive park or recreation areas instead of walking to nearby but less attractive places.

Taxis rank second in terms of convenience for traveling with pets, but they often lack reliability and can lead to an unpleasant experience. Despite the existence of a “Pets” category in the app, which allows dogs to travel, and additional fees for this option, order confirmation depends on the driver's subjective beliefs and is often accompanied by additional questions about the breed and size of the animal. Respondents who have large dogs often get refused because of the size of their dog. One respondent said that when she got there, the taxi driver refused and said: “That's not a dog, it's some kind of calf.”

Even when trips do occur, passengers often sense that drivers are dissatisfied or concerned about keeping their cars clean. Travelling with dogs by taxi is always more expensive and often increases the waiting time for a car. You can never be sure that you will be picked up, especially if you have a large dog. Since the most common

answer to the question “Where do you need to go with your dog by transport?” was the veterinary clinic, this problem is quite acute, as it can be a matter of life and death.

Public transport, especially the metro, remains one of the least dog-friendly options. The rules require dogs to be transported exclusively in carriers, which is, first of all, simply inconvenient if you are going for a walk, and secondly, this option is only available for small dogs. Most respondents expressed a desire for the metro to be more open to traveling with dogs of different sizes and without carriers. Everyone agreed that a dog on the metro is the owner's responsibility, and the owner must be attentive and careful.

Trolleybuses and trams are more flexible, as dogs can travel without muzzles and in different parts of the vehicle, which does not cause conflicts or protests. Many owners of small dogs often bypass the formal rules by carrying their pets in their arms or under their jackets to avoid the carrier requirement. This type of public transport in this area is often used for traveling to the park or the vet. Respondents noted that their dogs tend to handle the journey well and behave appropriately: “Sometimes people on the bus ask about the breed, smile, and admire how obedient he sits.” When a dog behaves well, it inspires admiration - and creates space for cultural change, breaking down stereotypes about dogs as a source of threat or inconvenience.

In many European countries, dogs are allowed on public transport, but there are clear rules to ensure the comfort of all passengers. For example, a dog can travel next to its owner on a leash. At the same time, during rush hour (as in Sweden), there are restrictions on traveling with animals, and special areas or carriages are provided for passengers with dogs. Such decisions not only increase the mobility of pet owners but also foster a culture of coexistence in urban spaces.

The mobility of dog owners remains fragmented due to ineffective regulations, challenges with transporting large dogs, so there is a great need to rethink mobility and update the rules and transportation policies to ensure that both owners of large dogs and owners of small dogs can travel.

Housing for more than humans

Access to housing often becomes an additional obstacle and manifestation of discrimination against dog owners, which hinders the realization of the right to the city.

Neither Ukraine as a whole nor Kyiv specifically has any regulation at the level of national legislation or city policies on living with animals. This situation leaves housing decisions to the discretion of the market, which leads to discrimination both in the form of a direct ban on living with a dog and additional mechanisms such as increased rent or additional pre-payments. Numerous stories highlighting these issues can be found on social media and in the news.

Dogs are often viewed as a risk, an additional problem for property, cleanliness or order. According to the survey, only one respondent reported property damage caused by a dog, which he compensated for during eviction and did not have a conflict. Several respondents reported that during eviction they heard from landlords that it was hardly noticeable that a dog lived there. It suggests us to think that it is more about the stereotype of dogs as a threat and dirt than reality.

In recent years, UA Animals has been launching information campaigns aimed at raising awareness of the issue of accessibility of housing for petparents. For example, in 2023, citylights in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, and Odesa shared photos of search dogs involved in rescue operations, rubble removal, and searching for soldiers' bodies at the front. These photos included the provocative caption “Will her/his owner not be given an apartment too?” - which raises important questions about the consumerist approach to animals. After all, they are real heroes here, performing vital missions where their chances of success often depend on their involvement. But will they have a place to live in the city? Will they be allowed into a shelter?

In 2023, UAnimals and Bloom Büro will also prepare a new campaign, posters calling for renting to people with pets. Spreading this narrative along with articles highlighting the benefits of renting to pet owners is impactful and helpful. This initiative aims to create a more welcoming environment for renters with pets.



Figure 8. Examples of informational campaigns. Source: UA Animals.

Bird Product Manager Oleg Solomakha also noted that the “pet-friendly” filter is used 60% more often in the Bird app than other filters. This shows the relevance and high demand for such apartments.⁴⁶

Analytics from housing portals Bird and Dom.Ria show that pet owners have little choice in housing, as less than a third of landlords are willing to rent their apartment to petparents. According to the data from OLX real estate, only 10% of landlords would allow more people to live in their apartments, including children or pets, while 49% of renters are willing to give up 20-40% of the rent.

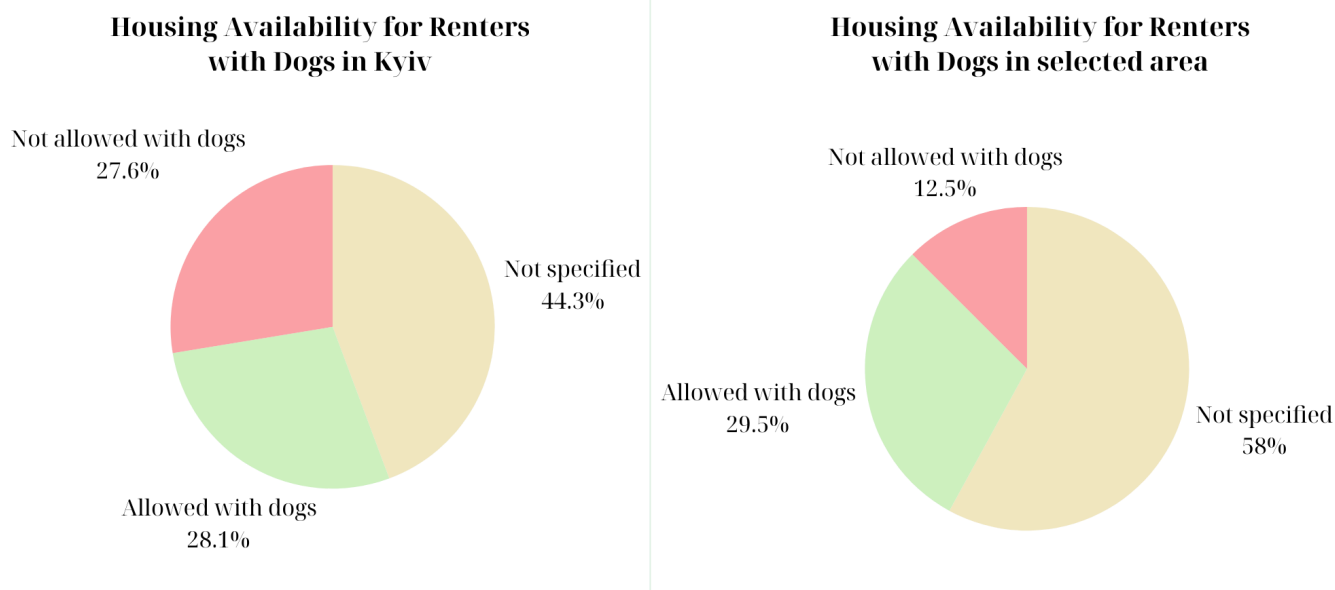


Figure 8. Diagrams of availability of housing in Kyiv and selected research area. Data collected via the Bird platform.

These diagrams show the distribution of affordable housing for tenants with dogs, according to data from the Bird platform. The study categorizes all advertisements into three distinct criteria:

- No Dogs Allowed - ads that explicitly state that pets are not allowed.
- Not specified - formally neutral ads, but in practice, most owners refuse to allow dogs or agree only to small dogs, often after a personal request.
- Allowed with dogs - ads that explicitly state that animals are allowed. This type of housing is often divided into two categories: housing in poor conditions or very expensive options that require a higher deposit for pets.

⁴⁶ The Village Україна, “Винаймати житло з твариною в Україні важко. Чому так — не повинно бути,” The Village Україна, 25 жовтня 2023 року, <https://www.village.com.ua/village/city/animals/344995-vinaymati-zhitlo-z-tvarinoyu-v-ukrayini-vazhko-chomu-tak-ne-pov-inno-buti>.

In the research area, renters with dogs have a slightly better chance of finding housing than the average in Kyiv, a much smaller proportion of landlords are categorically against it, and 58% of apartments give the possibility of negotiation for renters with small dogs.

According to the respondents, there is a tendency that owners who previously had or currently have animals are more loyal and tolerant of tenants with animals and are willing to rent apartments to them. Overall, one-third of apartments are actually accessible to petparents, which greatly limits housing options. Often, this housing is in poor condition or very expensive, with an additional double deposit for the animal. It creates a barrier for middle-income tenants.

The minimum rental price for an apartment that is ready to be rented to an owner with a dog in this neighborhood is UAH 8,500, and the maximum is UAH 107,500. Most offers are concentrated between UAH 15,000 and 50,000.

Requesting a double deposit when moving into a rental property with a dog has become a common practice, as shown by the responses from many interviewees and stories shared on social media. In this district, the modal price of a pet-friendly apartment is 20 000 UAH, meaning that a renter moving into an apartment with a dog will most likely have to pay 60 000 UAH at once. This is more than twice the average salary in Kyiv, which is discriminatory.

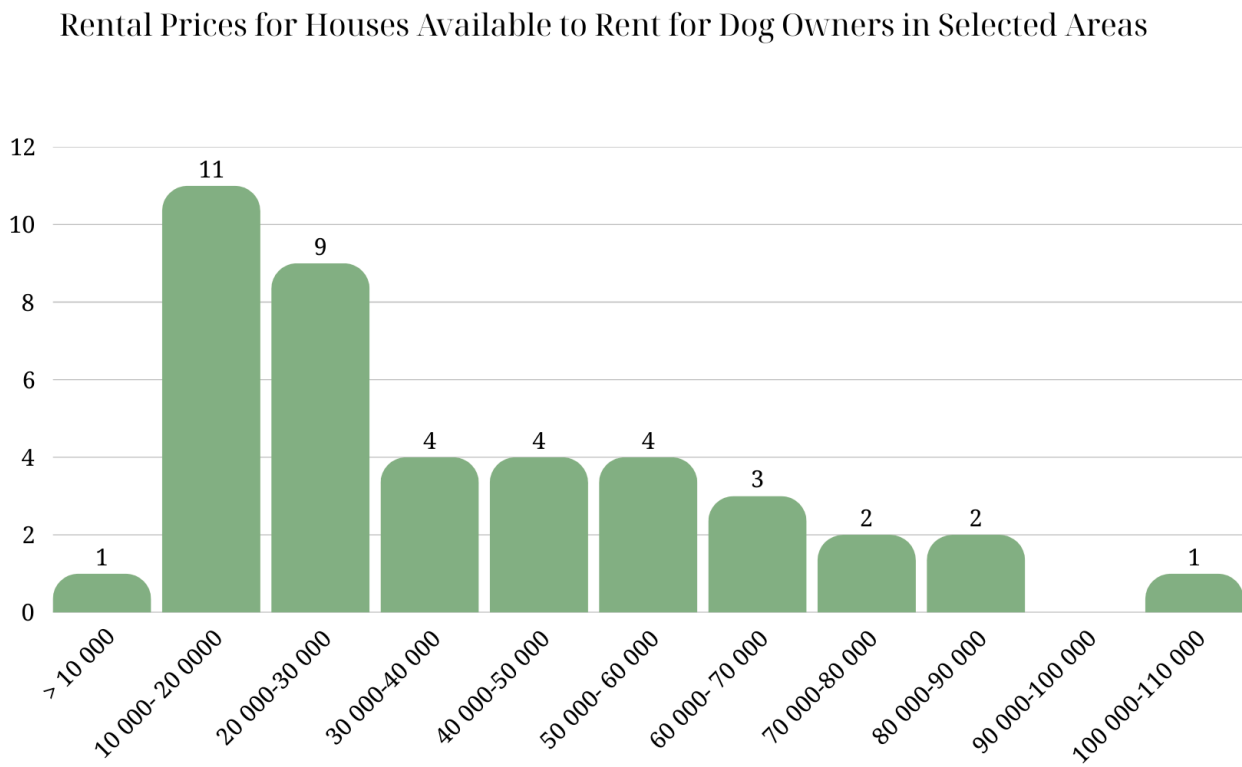


Figure 9. Distribution of the rental prices for houses available to rent for pet owners in selected research area. Data collected via the Bird platform.

Prices in the research area vary significantly due to the differences in quality of housing, distance to green areas, transportation, and building age.

The illustration shows examples of apartments for rent in this neighborhood, where living with pets is allowed. Interestingly, most of these offers are apartments of about 30 m², which means that only a person with a small dog, not even a medium-sized one, can really pretend for such an apartment. The blue arrows indicate apartments in a cheaper price segment, the price is based, of course, on the distance from transport interchanges and the condition of the housing. However, we see that there are also well-maintained apartments that accept pets, although they come at a higher price.

The most pet-friendly residential complexes, where ads often mention that dogs are welcome, are Fayna Town, Gloria Park, Nyvky Park, San Francisco, and Perlyna Nyvok.

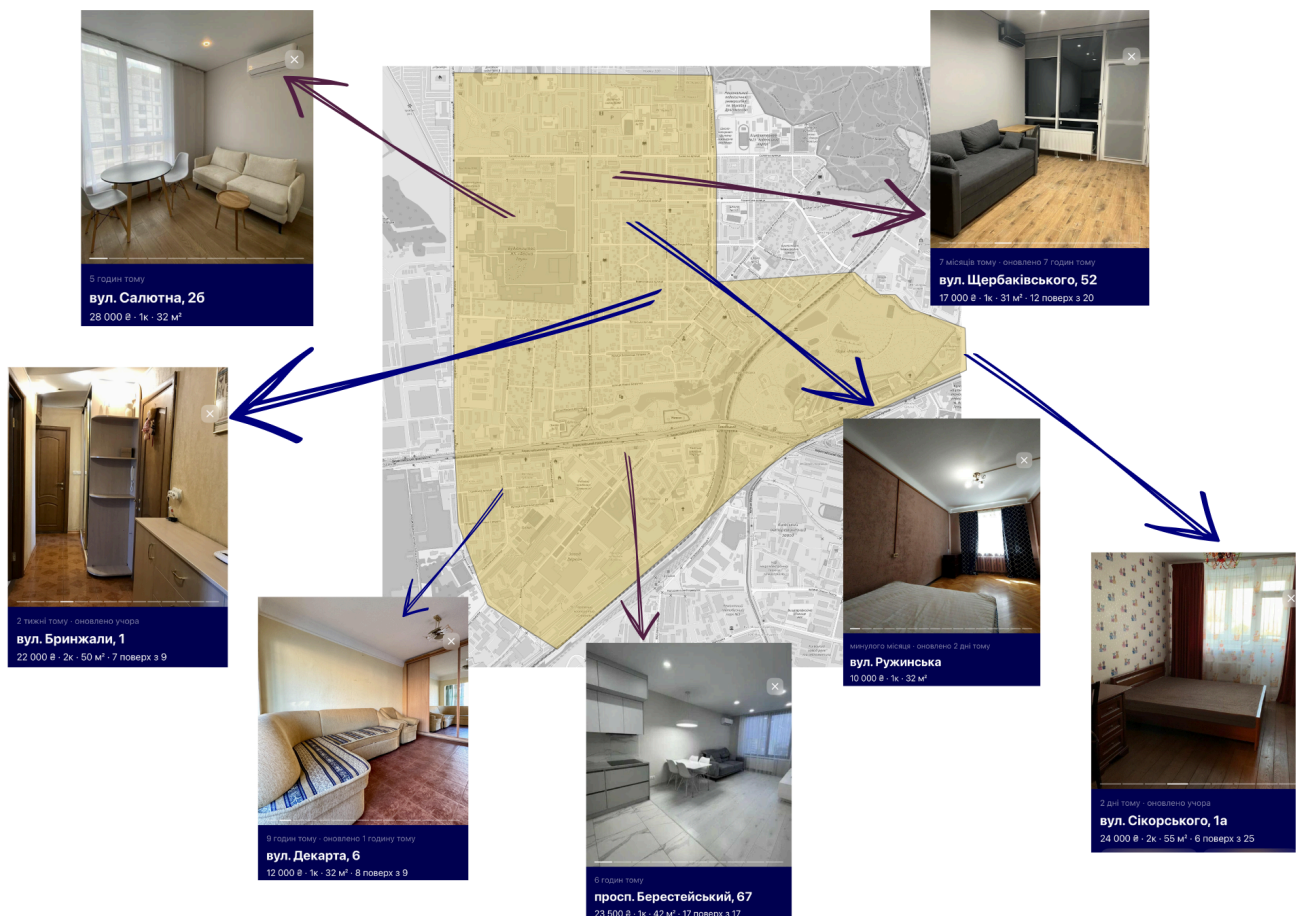


Figure 10. Examples of accessible housing for dog owners in the selected research area. Photos collected via the Bird platform

However, there is no clear correlation between the price of renting a house and the possibility of living with pets.⁴⁷

Searching an apartment for pet owners is a rather long process. All respondents who rented an apartment mentioned this. Firstly, it can be explained by the lack of pet friendly offers, and those ads that do not include this information require more time for making phone calls, discussing their situation, explaining that they have a dog, and often facing rejection:

“I was looking for an apartment for more than a month, and as soon as I mentioned the dog, the conversation was over.”

Owners of large dogs face more discrimination in housing due to the limited number of rental positions that meet the necessary square footage requirements and the stereotypes with damages from large dogs. Several respondents mentioned stories of owners trying to use the dog as a reason to collect money during eviction, even without any real damages:

“We were told that the neighbors sometimes complained that the dog barked, so they did not return us part of the deposit.”

This case illustrates the problem of normativity: barking is a form of communication for a dog, just like a child's crying or a loud adult conversation. But only in the case of animals does it become a justification for restricting rights or economic discrimination.

Respondents identified main challenges they face when renting apartments such as overpricing of apartments for pet parents with identical conditions and condition, poor and dilapidated conditions, lack of offer allowed for living with dogs, prejudices from landlords. There have been cases of realtors blocking a phone number once they know that an apartment is needed for an owner with a dog, asking for extra payment (double deposit amount), asking for an increased monthly rent by 20-30%.

Among the respondents, there was a slight preference for a private house as an idea of space, security, and freedom. Respondents believe that a dog would be better in a private house. It is also about human fatigue from regulation, the struggle for the right to exist: “In a private house, no one says that barking bothers them.” Several respondents noted that living on the same floor with another dog does not always create comfortable conditions, because the dogs bark, and they are always worried about the reaction of other neighbors and possible complaints.

The existing discrimination and challenges discourage people from adopting dogs from shelters, which is a significant issue now, as the basic need for housing may not be met.

⁴⁷The Village Україна, “Винаймати житло з твариною в Україні важко. Чому так — не повинно бути”.

Paws welcome? Dog-friendly urban infrastructure

According to the decision of the Kyiv City Council Administration, it is not allowed to bring animals (except guide dogs) into shops, cafes, or restaurants.⁴⁸ However, owners of private establishments may set their own rules. Leaving pets tied up unattended in public places or places where people gather is strongly prohibited. Therefore, designated areas or “dog parkings,” as we call them, can not be used. This is an extremely important rule, because even if dogs are tied up for just 5 minutes, they can be stolen or attacked by other dogs, which is dangerous. However, people still do this sometimes because they are not permitted inside, and may urgently need to make a purchase while short on time.

An important trend observed in the responses of all respondents is the increasing number of pet-friendly establishments. This is not just about the formal possibility of entering, but about creating a friendly environment: bowls of water, treats for animals, the opportunity to use the summer terrace, and placing loungers for pets. Establishments that not only tolerate dogs but also warmly invite them and show a willingness to engage with pet owners are particularly appreciated. Dog owners are forced to search for pet-friendly places in advance or leave their dogs at home, which is often a problem. Several participants mentioned the practice of creating “blacklists” of establishments that had previously refused them entry. Owners of large dogs often face more restrictions when entering establishments, while small dogs are generally admired or can easily be hidden under a jacket or carried in arms.

Analyzing the research area, it is worth noting that almost all establishments in the FaynaTown residential complex are open to visitors with dogs. Some dog owners may only enter these places to provide their pets with a drink of water while on a walk. It creates a safe, friendly environment that integrates dogs into everyday life without tension.

Respondents noted that spaces with summer terraces are more attractive to visit, as they are often more comfortable due to more space. At the same time, the experience of interacting with pet-friendly establishments is not always straightforward: in one establishment, a dog was offered a slice of cucumber as a treat, and later this was added to the bill as an additional item costing 40 UAH, without warning.

Respondents noted the lack of specialized infrastructure within the research area, such as bins, quality veterinary clinics within walking distance, and drinking fountains. Pet stores are often located in crowded or commercial areas, while they are either completely absent in quiet residential neighborhoods. It is often inconvenient,

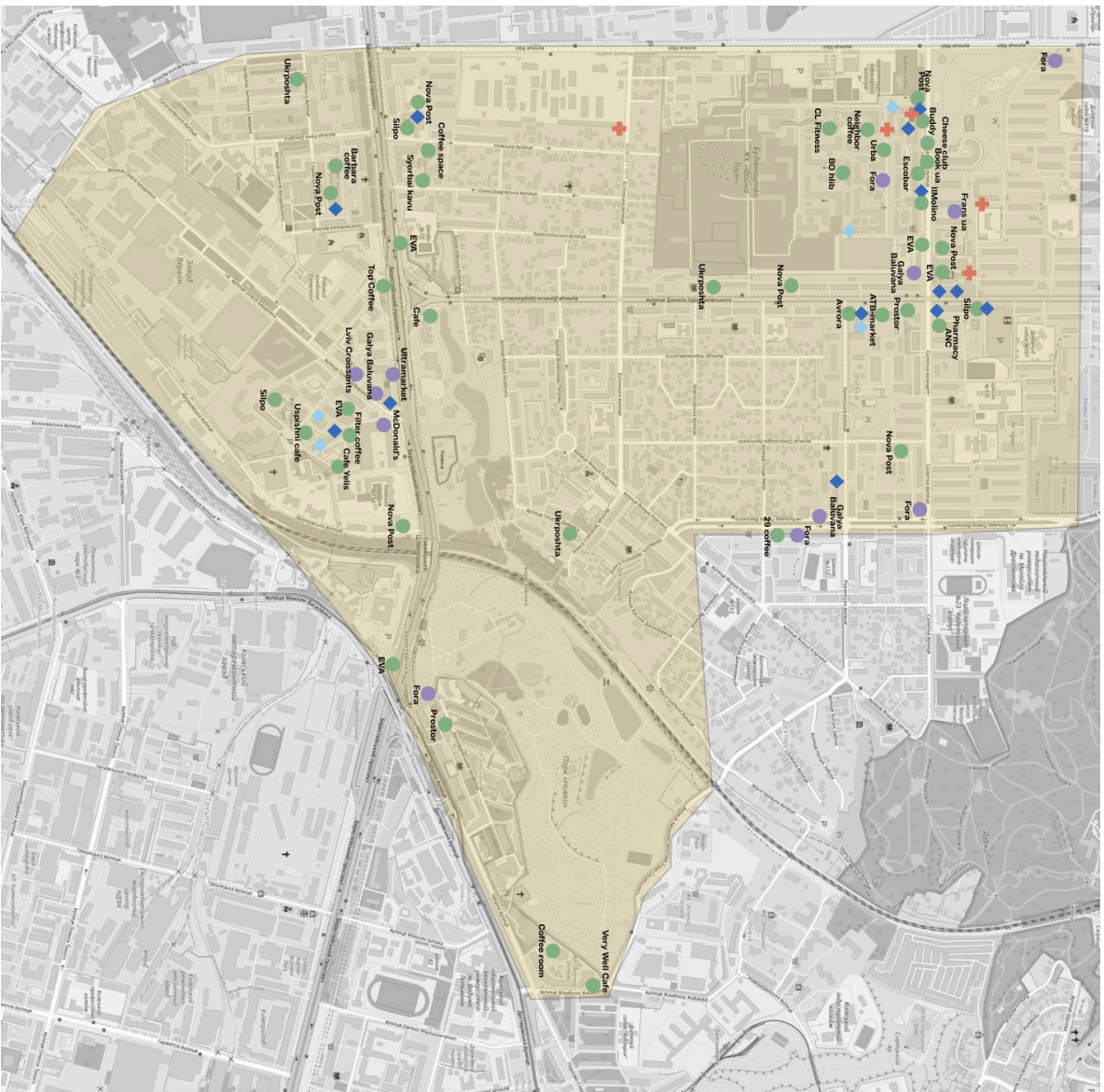
⁴⁸Київська міська рада, Про внесення змін до рішення Київської міської ради від 25.10.2007 № 1079/3912 “Про врегулювання питань утримання та поводження з собаками і котами в м. Києві”, рішення №1348., https://kmr.gov.ua/sites/default/files/1348_0.pdf.

as uncomfortable to walk in crowded spaces with dogs, and shopping centers do not always allow pets inside. Most respondents prefer to order online regular and large purchases (such as food), and visit physical stores only when they need small items.

An interesting example of a local initiative is the practice at the Nyvky Park residential complex, where signs calling on people to clean up after their dogs are placed alongside advertisements for local businesses. Attached to these signs are bags for dog waste, and below the message, you'll find logos of internet providers and other services. This approach not only ensures a consistent supply of resources through private funding but also fosters a culture of responsible dog ownership.

The map illustrates the spatial distribution of infrastructure that, according to respondents' experience, is dog-friendly or non-dog-friendly. The list of pet-friendly establishments includes large chains such as EVA, Avrora, ATB, Nova Poshta, Ukrposhta, Silpo, and Cheese Club, as well as local cafés such as 29 Coffee, Barbara, Coffee Space, Syorbai kavu, Pharmacy ANC, and many shops and cafés in Fayna Town. Among the establishments that prohibit dogs are Fora, Ultramarket, Varus, McDonalds, Baluvana Galya, and pharmacies (not all). The map also shows the location of specialized infrastructure: veterinary clinics, pet shops, and grooming salons, demonstrating their uneven distribution and concentration around new residential complexes and major transportation hubs.

New types of services are being developed, aimed not only at meeting basic needs, but also at improving well-being, socialization, and facilitating the coexistence of people and dogs. For example, grooming salons offer separate adaptation visits to allow dogs to get used to the environment without stress. New dog walking and boarding services are emerging, as well as doggy daycare centers, which solve the problem of leaving home for an extended period of time and deal with separation anxiety in dogs. In addition, pet stores are transforming into real dog spaces where you can not only buy food or toys, but also attend events, lectures, themed promotions, and meet other dogs. These transformations testify to the existing demand: dogs are becoming more and more integrated into urban life, and this process requires not only such adaptation but also systemic support through policies, regulations, and spatial solutions.



Map of dog-friendly infrastructure and services

Legend

- dogs-friendly places
- non-dogs-friendly places
- ◆ pet stores
- ◆ grooming salons
- + veterinary clinics

Figure 10. Map of specialized infrastructure for pets and dog-friendly or non-dog friendly places.

The city of connections: how dogs build communities

Dogs in the city are powerful catalysts of social capital, facilitating various forms of social interaction, and causing acquaintances that can lead to brief encounters or long-lasting friendships. Respondents indicated that their first contacts often occur with the dog rather than the owner.

All respondents noted that thanks to the dog, they were able to get to know their neighbors, especially other dog owners, even if they had no experience walking or playing with the dog together. Often, people know the dog's name but not the owner's; moreover, they may not recognize the owner when the dog is not around. Although these encounters are usually brief and occur mainly during dog walks, they contribute to a sense of belonging within the local community.

Additionally, interaction with neighbors who own dogs often builds special trust. Respondents often noted that later they have someone to ask to walk their dog or pet sit. They get to know each other, realize that they have similar values in dog training, and feel so trusted that they can rely on them. Such cases do not happen very often, but there is a tendency for so.

Most interactions in the city with dogs are still short dialogues. Between dog owners, the dialog begins with interaction with another dog or a question about the name, age, breed, which quickly turns into a pleasant exchange of advice. The majority of respondents said that they perceive other pet partners as a safe environment where they can come up to talk, ask for water or a bag. The practice of sharing experiences about good or bad experiences about vet clinics, grooming salons, pet stores, is becoming more common. Usually, such interaction is positive; in some cases, conflict arises when one of the dogs walks without a leash, as it can be dangerous, and according to respondents, this phenomenon often happens.

Breed-specific communities are being actively formed, allowing owners of the same dog breeds to interact more frequently. They tend to arrange joint walks, exchange contacts, as dogs of the same breed have more similar play and behavioral characteristics. This fosters joint walks, reduces the risk of conflicts, and creates the basis for socialization of the owners.

Interactions between dog owners and non dog owners usually begin with a compliment to the dog or a question about the dog's gender or breed. Large dog owners are more likely to face prejudice, including people's fear of safety and dirt. Small and breedy dogs are more likely to be petted by children and attract the attention of the elderly. Petparents also observe positive changes in how children interact by asking permission before petting a dog, which shows a growing awareness and respect for the animal's personal space. This conscious approach is a key step towards creating a safe and ethical environment for interspecies interaction.

In this context, the international Yellow Dog project, founded in 2012 in Sweden, aims to create a visual, clear signal through the presence of a yellow ribbon that a dog needs space and should not be petted or approached. Awareness of this project remains low in Ukraine, both among dog owners and ordinary citizens, but it is very important in other contexts. Typically, dogs displaying this marking are undergoing socialization, recovering from trauma, healing from treatment, or simply feeling uncomfortable in large crowds of people or other animals.

Interestingly, new interaction formats are created in response to existing requests. For example, many residential complexes create separate chats for dog owners or common house chats with a “dog segment”. These chats are actively used as a place to exchange information, report on lost/found animals, provide advice, discuss clinics, and announcements about the sales.

Thus, dogs are not only objects of care, but also mediators of interpersonal interaction - forming trust, communities, and daily practices of mutual support. They contribute to the creation of horizontal connections in the city, which, although often invisible, significantly affect the quality of urban life and the level of social cohesion.

The anatomy of a perfect walk

At the end of the interview, participants were asked to describe their ideal district for living with a dog. The majority highlighted the importance of shaded areas, an abundance of trees and green spaces, access to water, the presence of trash bins, and designated walking paths. The characteristics of a dog-friendly environment closely align with those of a comfortable district for all residents, including low-rise buildings, tranquility, safety, clear zonings, and minimal noise.

The concept of an ideal district extends beyond being dog-friendly; it shows a vision of a comfortable, safe, and responsive urban environment. What respondents find good for their pets often mirrors what people desire for themselves. Therefore, these perspectives should be considered in larger planning decisions, particularly during post-war urban transformations, when there is an opportunity to rethink how we want to coexist in the city.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE URBAN COEXISTENCE

In the context of full-scale war, the coexistence of different species within the city is a significant issue. Specifically, dogs are an extremely important part of residents' lives, due to promoting physical activity, enhancing emotional well-being, helping overcome anxiety after challenging times as nightly shelling and distressing daily news. Dogs often warn of danger due to sensitivity and provide emotional support for soldiers, play an important role for veterans in rehabilitation through canine therapy, assistance in everyday life by helping with mobility in case of disability or performing specialized tasks that help people with PTSD. Dogs not only help people adapt after traumatic events, but also create social connections for life afterwards. Therefore, the integration of dogs into our cities is part of a comprehensive approach to creating safe, open, comfortable, caring cities, so infrastructure, policies, and spaces that support people with dogs are an important indicator of urban well-being, where the experience of trauma is recognized and anticipated by the infrastructure.

After analyzing current regulations, the daily practices of dog owners in a specific area, and the challenges they face, it is important to identify opportunities for the development of the Ukrainian environment towards open and inclusive cities for trans species coexistence, where dogs are integrated into urban life without being viewed solely through the lens of utility or stereotypes. To achieve this, we need to focus on three interrelated directions for change: (1) improving the legislative framework and developing new policies based on research, (2) spatial physical changes in cities that meet the needs of dogs and people with dogs in the city, and (3) cultural transformation that involves breaking down stereotypes and developing responsible dog ownership.

To ensure that decisions regarding urban integration are consistent, relevant, and reflect real needs, it is important to raise the topic of trans species coexistence to the academic level and conduct research in our context of post-war reconstruction. During the interview, the urban planner emphasized that interdisciplinarity and collaboration with various experts-ecologists, biologists, zoologists, psychologists-is crucial. Additionally, it is important to study our specific context, as norms always reflect the mentality and cultural characteristics of a community. The Ukrainian context requires not copying practices, but forming our own approach that is sensitive to war, reconstruction, and social transformations.

To address the existing gap, especially in the context of war and post-war recovery, it is necessary to establish a foundation for interdisciplinary research. At this stage, it is possible to involve academic institutions, such as KSE, KNUBA, KMA, to study the impacts and transspecies interactions, develop policy briefs for the national and local levels, and conduct workshops with experts and citizens. It is important to cover various areas: the impact of dogs on the psycho-emotional state of Ukrainians

during the war, the role of dogs in accompanying people with disabilities and the recovery of our veterans with PTSD, the impact of dogs on our parks and green zones, and the study of real practices of using urban spaces and infrastructure.

Changes must occur at various levels, from national to individual. Addressing the identified issues requires a systematic approach where legislative initiatives, urban policy, local decisions, and personal responsibility complement each other. Specific proposals for each of these levels are presented below.

Legislative level

In order to establish an effective and up-to-date animal registration system in cities, which is important for understanding the actual number of dogs, assessing infrastructure needs, vaccination control, reducing the number of stray dogs, and increasing owner responsibility, it is important to have mandatory dog registration through an accessible and understandable procedure. It is important to develop clear regulations: to set the maximum age at which a dog must be registered, and the timeframe for registering adult dogs. Raising the fine for unregistered dogs and re-imposition of fines for non-registration over the subsequent months are essential to comply with this regulation. In Kyiv, registration is already possible through the Administrative Services Center, which makes it more accessible, but Ukraine, as a digital country, has the potential to make it even more convenient, for example, through DIIA.

To continue it is important to introduce mandatory microchipping at the national level with strict regulations to ensure compliance, including a control mechanism developed by veterinary and municipal services, as well as the imposition of fines for failing to microchip animals below a certain age. These standards should be developed with the involvement of veterinarians, animal welfare organizations, and sociologists based on analyzed standards and legislation of other countries, and accompanied by powerful information campaigns.

Another important area that lacks sufficient legislative regulation is guide dogs and service dogs. It is important to define the concepts of these types of dogs, to establish rights and guarantees of access to public places, to define the certification procedure and those responsible for training dogs, and to establish penalties for discrimination.

It is important to establish requirements for different types of infrastructure that need to be adapted for individuals with such dogs. It includes testing pilot spaces, for example, separately designated areas in public transport that are more spacious, automatic doors, special areas in hospitals and train stations. This decision should be based on research into the needs and challenges of people who have such dogs, and involving dog trainers, zoopsychologists, and veteran rehabilitation centers.

An important step in fostering responsibility and awareness among petparents is basic training before getting a dog. This course could be implemented in the form of an educational series on the DIIA platform, making it accessible to a wide audience. It would cover topics related to responsible dog ownership: basic dog needs, care rules, legal requirements, ethics of behavior in public spaces, what is allowed and what is not - with the aim of raising awareness among both current and future owners. This training course could be made a prerequisite for obtaining permission to get a dog. As part of the initiative to register dogs through DIIA, it can be effective. For the pet parenting of dogs belonging to potentially dangerous breeds, it is worth introducing mandatory certification, a practical course covering information on behavior, safety, and training. Each regional center should have several dog training centers educated by the Department of Specialized Training and Dog Training Support, and which are authorized to issue certification and conduct training.

It is essential to rethink and clearly define areas for walking dogs at the legislative level. Areas for walking dogs should be categorized and outlined in the State Building Standards(SBS). It should specify the necessary facilities in the city, their locations, and maintenance requirements, provide regulation for construction of residential complexes (for example,a required number of dog waste stations based on yard area, the establishment of designated pet relief zones (when space permits), and fully equipped training playgrounds.).

To establish quality standards, it is essential to conduct an audit of existing areas, to analyze their actual use, and a study of international infrastructure designs. It is equally important to introduce a mandatory participatory approach to the creation of such spaces - conducting surveys among residents, testing routes and areas for walking dogs, and involving dog trainers, veterinarians, planners, and petparents in the design of new spaces. In the context of aligning the strategic vision and specific proposals for the SBS, cooperation with organizations such as Dostupno.UA or Big City Lab, which already have experience in advocating for an inclusive environment, is promising. They can act as partners in creating integrated urban policies focused on intersectional inclusion, physical accessibility, and social justice.

Another critical change is the regulation of housing availability, which involves amending legislation to establish clear criteria for when it is permissible to refuse to allow a pet to live in a property. For example, allergies, non-registered dog, the specific type of property. This does not restrict the rights of the property owner, but encourages agreement and provides an opportunity to live with a dog. Potential additional point is the development of standard lease agreements that outline rights and obligations of tenants with animals, conditions for compensation of destroyed and damaged property, and the possible inclusion of cleaning services after eviction. It is also worth prohibiting mechanisms that lead to hidden discrimination, such as unjustified double surcharges, overpriced rental rates, or refusal to return the deposit

without confirmed damage to the property. Fundamental solutions also require research in this area. For example, the Cedos analytical center, which has experience in housing policy, could broaden its focus and develop specific recommendations that take into account the needs of pet parents, international practices, and the problems faced by tenants and landlords.

City and district level

At the city level, developing a separate city animal welfare policy or including provisions on animal integration in city strategies is an important step toward creating a comprehensive approach. This practice exists in Barcelona and can serve as an example for Ukrainian cities to create a strategic vision for integrating animals into urban life, regulate standards and infrastructure requirements, provide recommendations for developers, and launch educational initiatives. The inclusion of such provisions allows normalization of discourse about dogs as city users and ensures that their needs are taken into account in urban planning.

It is important to update and establish high-quality regulations for off-leash areas, which are an important necessity for dogs, as well as training areas, in accordance with standards. These areas should be evenly distributed throughout the city and located within a walking distance of 400 meters, which is a good standard.

Technical requirements must be carefully developed with the involvement of dog trainers, zoopsychologists, architects, urban planners, and the public to ensure that these areas are useful and practical. It is important to regulate responsibility for the maintenance of these areas, cleaning, disinfection, equipment upgrades, and the implementation of a transparent and convenient mechanism for reporting non-compliance with standards or existing problems.

A good practice could be supporting the installation of dog toilets with waste bags, for example, by supporting our Ukrainian social enterprise LavGav. Such stations promote cleanliness in public spaces and foster a culture of cleaning up after pets. An example of high-quality and effective cooperation is the collaboration with businesses, as in the case of the Nyvky Park residential complex, where the installation of such toilets was financed by businesses in exchange for advertising space on them.

It is important to promote mobility for people with dogs, for example, allowing dogs of any size to travel on the metro without carriers but on a leash, regulating the transport of dogs in taxis, and mechanisms that prevent discrimination by drivers.

At the city level, it is necessary to support national regulations on dog registration and microchipping, promoting implementation through local mechanisms. This includes developing accessible infrastructure for registration, introducing verification and surveillance systems, and launching a powerful information campaign. The city's task is to make the process convenient and understandable, fostering a culture of responsible petparenting.

The city should also take a leading role in disseminating infographics, recommendations, and practical guides on rules for treating animals in urban spaces. This promotes a sensitive attitude toward dogs as living beings with their own needs, reinforcing the principle of mutual respect in the city.

Residents level

Changes can start with small but regular steps taken by city residents and activists. A key area is educational activities, which have the potential to shape new norms of coexistence—spreading information about the basics of dog welfare, body language, signs of stress, and the need for exercise, socialization, and rest. Information campaigns on the accessibility of housing and transport, the principles of responsible pet parenting, and cleaning up after pets are also relevant. Such actions enhance the overall level of understanding, reduce tension in cities, and signal existing problems.

Advocacy

In Ukraine, we can clearly see the role of activists, social enterprises, animal welfare organizations, professional communities of dog breeders in shaping public discourse and advocating for infrastructural, regulatory, and cultural changes. An example of an effective initiative is the social enterprise LavGav, which not only develops and distributes infrastructure solutions, but also disseminates a consistent information campaign on cleaning up after animals, responsible behavior. UA Animals plays a similar role, particularly in the area of housing accessibility, as well as in supporting campaigns to protect pets in combat zones.

Advocacy potential can be enhanced through personalized narratives, and the ability to speak with the “voices” of dogs about their needs. Patron is a national figure and symbol, and a dog with real needs: a place to walk, an apartment to live in, the ability to move by the metro to the vet, a fountain to drink water in the heat. Through such examples, it is possible to formulate public requests to the authorities and raise the level of understanding of challenges.

Veterans' stories can become effective mechanisms that can illustrate why dogs are not just pets, but part of psycho-emotional support, rehabilitation, and functioning after traumatic events. This particularly raises the issue of the status and regulation of guide dogs, service dogs, therapy dogs, and infrastructure accessibility for them. Possible cooperation with rehabilitation centers, such as Lisova Poliana or Unbroken, would allow for the formation of pilot programs to support canine therapy within post-war medicine and recommendations for implementation at the city and national levels.

The visibility of stories about people with disabilities, for whom dogs are often critically important support in everyday life, is also important. Personal stories can

demonstrate animals not only improving mobility, but also promoting autonomy, emotional stability, and social integration.

At the same time, animal welfare organizations such as UA Animals and the social enterprise LavGav play an important role in shaping the right narrative and cultural change. Their activities include disseminating reliable information about dog behavior and the principles of responsible ownership. Separately, it is worth mentioning media examples that have the potential for educational work. For example, the dog Hermes, who “published” the book “Advice from Hermes the Dog: How to Live with Humans.” The book provides expert recommendations on typical situations in animal care in an accessible form, and the profit used for the reconstruction of the Sirius shelter. This format combines humor, educational function, and social support - and can be scaled up in the future.

Advocacy for change does not always start with departments. It often starts with a story - about a dog that becomes a hero, a neighbor, a helper, a veteran, a friend. These stories already exist - you just need to give them a voice, see the common request, and forward that request into formal mechanisms for change.

Ultimately, this work and the recommendations it offers are not exhaustive. An analysis of the daily challenges faced by dog owners in cities provides a basis for understanding the areas that need to be explored, recognizing that current regulations are not working and are being circumvented for some reason, and understanding that dogs and their owners are discriminated against in our city. This raises truly important issues of interspecies coexistence in the context of post-war reconstruction, because right now we are undergoing profound social changes and forming new norms for our society. By raising this to the level of the academic environment, we are providing an opportunity to rethink urban space as one that is capable of meeting the needs of different types of inhabitants, ensuring their rights accordingly, and seeing that dogs have the right to bark in our Ukrainian cities.

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Annex 1

Hello!

My name is Albina - thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this interview. I'm conducting research for my master's thesis, exploring how people and dogs co-exist in the city - in particular, what are the barriers and opportunities, and how the experience of living with a dog changes our use of urban space.

The results of the interview will be summarized and used for research purposes only. However, I would like to ask permission to record the conversation and use your dog's name. Also, for the visual component of the design, I would like to ask if I can insert a photo of your dog into the joint collage of all respondents?

1. About You and Your Dog

- Please tell about your dog: breed, age, and how long has he/she been with you?
- Is this your first dog?
- How do you perceive your dog? What place does it occupy in your life?

2. Changes in Everyday Life

- Have you noticed any changes in your daily life since getting a dog?
- How has your lifestyle, habits, or routine changed?
- Has your physical activity level changed?
- Has your emotional or psychological well-being been affected?
- Do you feel you've started interacting more with other people?
- Have your daily routes changed? Are there places you now avoid - or places you visit more often?

3. Walks & Outdoor Routines

- How often do you walk your dog? For how long?
- Where do you usually go - large parks, dog parks, quiet streets?
- What influences your choice of walking route? (safety, cleanliness, presence of other dogs, etc.)
- Are there any places where you feel uncomfortable walking your dog? Why?
- Are there enough spaces nearby to walk your dog? What's the ideal distance/time to reach a park for you?
- Have you ever had conflicts - for example, when walking your dog off-leash in public spaces? How do you usually handle such situations?

4. Infrastructure & Access

- What places are you allowed to go with your dog and what places are not? Do you have any interesting stories to share?
 - How do people usually react to you and your dog in public places?
 - Have you experienced any negative reactions or conflicts because of your dog?
 - What questions do you get asked most often in public places?
 - What restrictions do you face most often in public places?
 - Would you like more places to be accessible to dogs? If so, which ones?
- What specialized facilities for dogs do you use in your daily life? (For example: veterinary clinics, pet stores, grooming salons, cafes where you can be with your dog, etc.)
 - How often do you go to each of these places? (Once a week, once a month, only when necessary, etc.)
 - Do you have any favorite or regular places you go to? (Please mention names or locations if you like)
 - How much does it approximately cost you to visit or make a purchase in these places? (To understand the average cost, it does not have to be exact)
 - What do you think is lacking in your neighborhood for a comfortable life with a dog? (playgrounds, garbage cans, drinking fountains, veterinary clinics, etc.)

5. Community & Social Ties

- Has your dog helped you make new acquaintances or even friends?
 - How often do you meet other dog owners?
 - Do you have a pet community with whom you walk your dog? How would you describe your pet community?
 - How comfortable do you feel around other dog owners?
 - Are there any rules or traditions in your community?
 - How often do people approach you to meet and socialize because you have a dog? Is there a certain category of people who most often start talking to you (e.g. children) ?

6. Transportation

- What method of transportation do you usually use with your dog? Why do you use it? How often do you use it? Where do you usually need to get to by transportation?
 - What challenges do you face when traveling with your dog? Do you have any interesting stories to share?
 - Did you stop using any transportation when you got a dog?
 - What changes would make your life easier?

7. Housing

- Do you rent or live in your own home?
 - Have you had experience looking for an apartment with a dog? How did it go, did it take you long?
 - Have you experienced any strange requests or prohibitions? For example, did they block the room, ask for an extra fee for the dog? Were there any damages that you actually had to pay for when you moved out?
 - Do you feel that your dog would be happier in a private house? Why?

8. Other

- If you had the opportunity to create the perfect neighborhood for living with a dog, what would it be like?
 - Do you have anything else you'd like to add or share that I didn't ask you, but that you think is important?