

# Dog-Bite Prevention: The Calgary Model



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<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/research/human-animal-studies>

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# Acknowledgements & Disclosures

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  - Canadian Institutes of Health Research
  - Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada
  - University of Calgary.
- Members of the *Human-Animal Studies and Health Promotion Team* contributed information + insights
- I do not have any conflicting interests to declare.
- I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

# Take-Home Messages

- 1) **Dog-bite injuries** deserve more attention
  - Dog bites + fear of dogs can reduce mental, physical & social well-being
  - Children – at highest risk
  - Disadvantaged families + communities may suffer most
- 2) **Policies** can reduce dog-bite frequency + severity
- 3) **Calgary** = ‘**model city**’ for dog-bite prevention
- 4) **Calgary’s Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw** will soon change
- 5) **More cooperation** could help reduce dog-bite problem
- 6) **Housing** access, affordability *might* help the dog-bite problem



# Dog-Bite Injuries → Overview

- **Global estimates** of dog bite incidence **don't exist**
- **Children** more likely than adults to be bitten by dogs
- Children face higher risks of dog-bite injuries to the **face**, **head** and **neck** than in adults



<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/animal-bites>



# Dog-bite Injuries → in Canada

## **CHIRPP INJURY BRIEF**

*Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program*



### ***Injuries associated with ... Non-Fatal Dog Bites***

1990-2003, All ages

- 2/3rds of infants + toddlers (up to 4 years old) needed treatment because dogs had bitten their *faces, heads &/or necks*.
- More children between the ages of 5 & 9 received emergency treatment for dog-bite injuries than for *ice-hockey injuries*.
- In youth aged 10 through 14, dog-bite injuries accounted for more emergency department visits than *trampolining*.



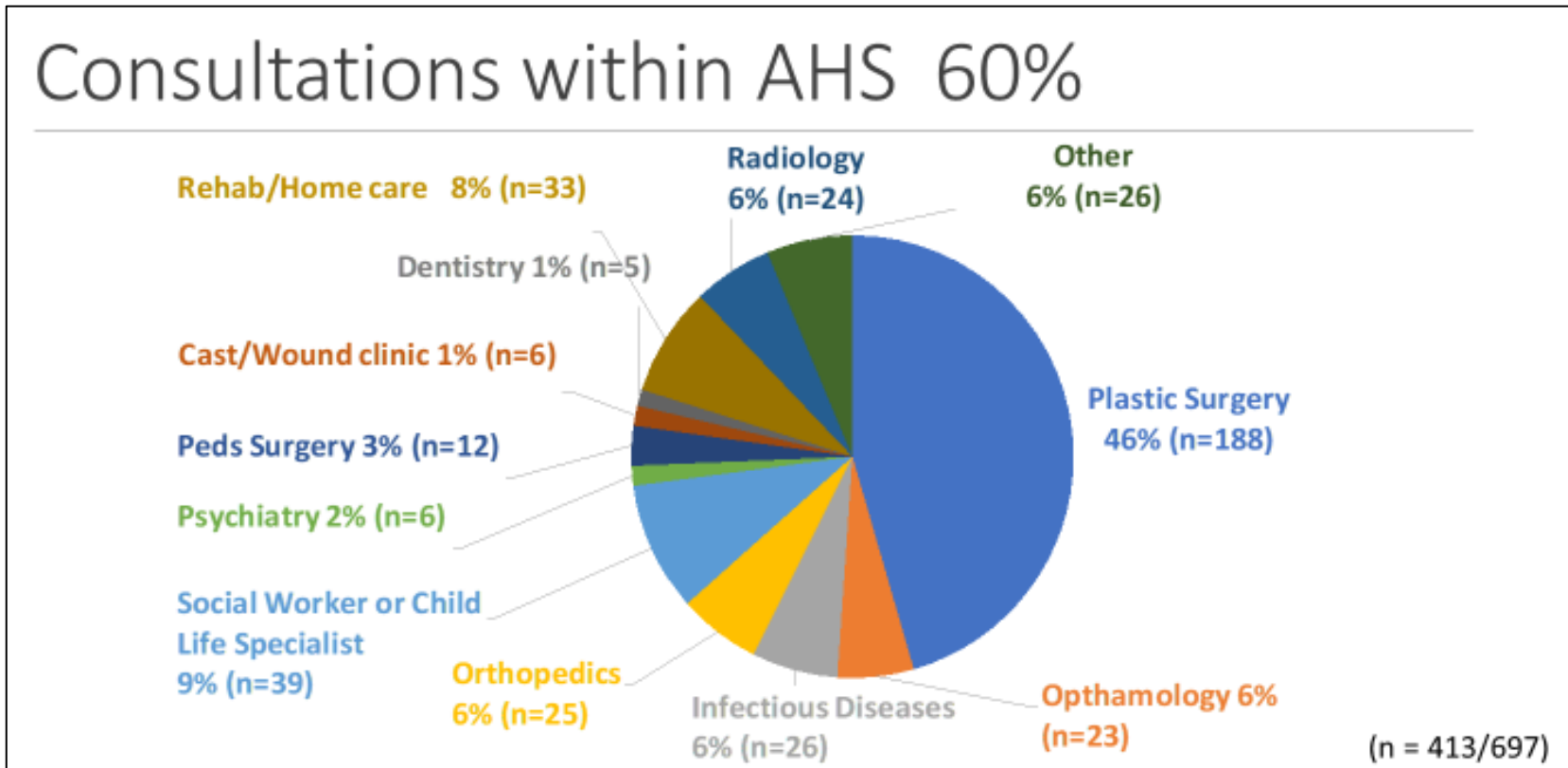
# Dog-Related Injuries → across Alberta



- Emergency “visits” vary geographically
- North-to-South gradient
- 90/100,000 in Edmonton zone
- 64/100,000 in Calgary zone

# Dog-bite Injuries → Children in Alberta

Stollery Children's Hospital (Emergency Department), Edmonton



Curtis SJ, Checkley S, Rajagopal M, Stewart C, St. Louis M, Rock MJ. 2017. Dog related injury in a Pediatric Emergency Department. Trauma Association of Canada Annual Scientific Meeting, Vancouver, Feb 23-24, 2017.

*Abstract published as:*

Curtis S, Rock M, Checkley S, St. Louis M, Stewart C, Rajagopal M. 2017. Dog-related injury in a pediatric emergency department. Canadian Journal of Surgery. 60(3):S13–S14, <https://doi.org/10.1503/cjs.005617>

# Dog-Bite Injuries and Chases → in Calgary

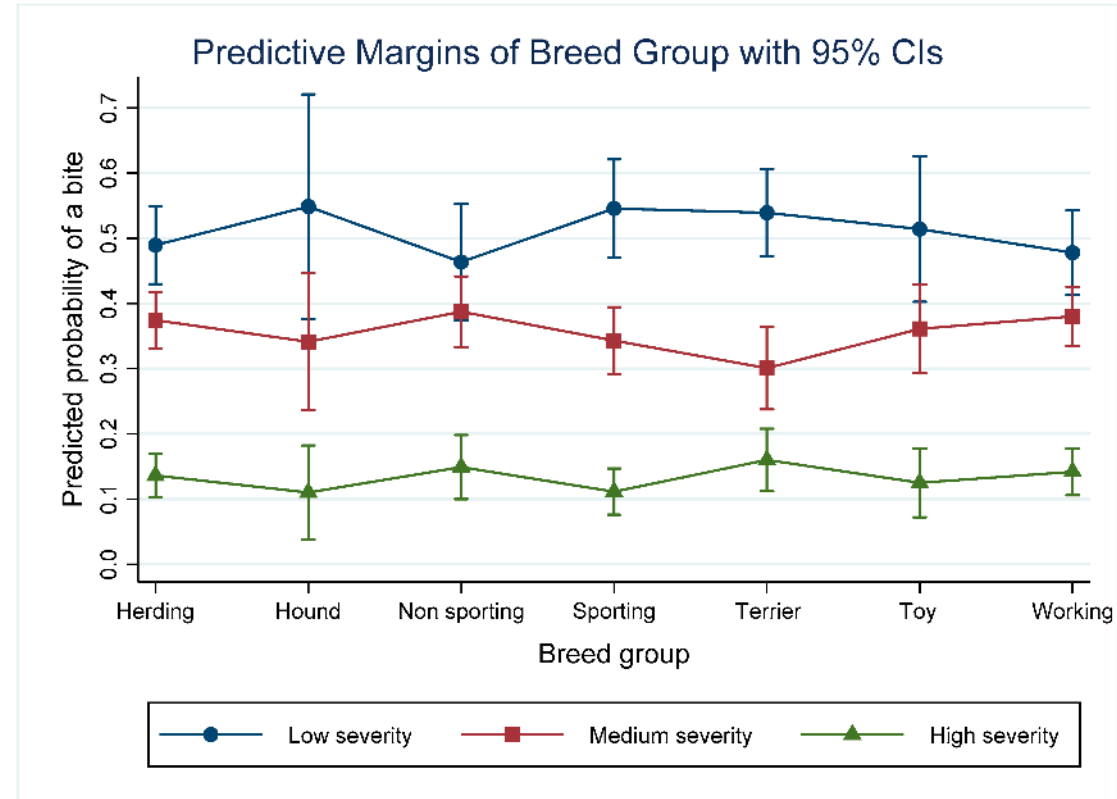
- 2723 bites + chases confirmed by City of Calgary, 2012-2017
  - 14% coded as severe (~1 in 6)
  - 54 dogs in all (3%) euthanized after investigation
  - Keep in mind: Reports mainly arise from citizens
    - Many (most?) chases go unreported
    - Many (most?) dog-bite injuries go unreported (even when treated?)





# Dog-Bite Injuries → in Calgary

“Dogs in all breed groups are capable of inflicting a bite, and the **probability of a high severity bite was not significantly higher in any particular breed group.**”



Caffrey N, Rock MJ, Schmitz O, Anderson D, Parkinson M, Checkley S. 2019. Using a dog aggression scale and administrative data to explore the epidemiology of dog bites in the City of Calgary. *Animals*. 9(6), <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685306-12341556>

# PAUSE

## (or PAWS?)



# Calgary → Model City for Dog-Bite Prevention

## TORONTO SUN

Edmonton / Alberta / News

### Edmonton city council does away with breed-specific bylaw

Dave Lazzarino

Oct 17, 2012 • October 18, 2012 • 2 minute read

### How Calgary reduced dog attacks without banning pit bulls

*"We have to get to the root of the problem, and that is that people must maintain control of their animals"*

René Bruemmer • Montreal Gazette

Aug 23, 2016 • September 1, 2016 • 6 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)

### City of Edmonton updates pet registration process, hopes for higher numbers

Chandra Lye  
CTV Edmonton



Published Saturday, April 5, 2014 2:28PM MDT

### Less than one third of dogs in Toronto are licensed



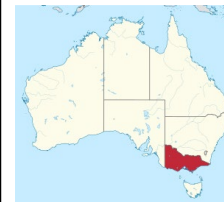
By Alan Carter • Global News

Posted October 3, 2014 4:21 pm



### PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

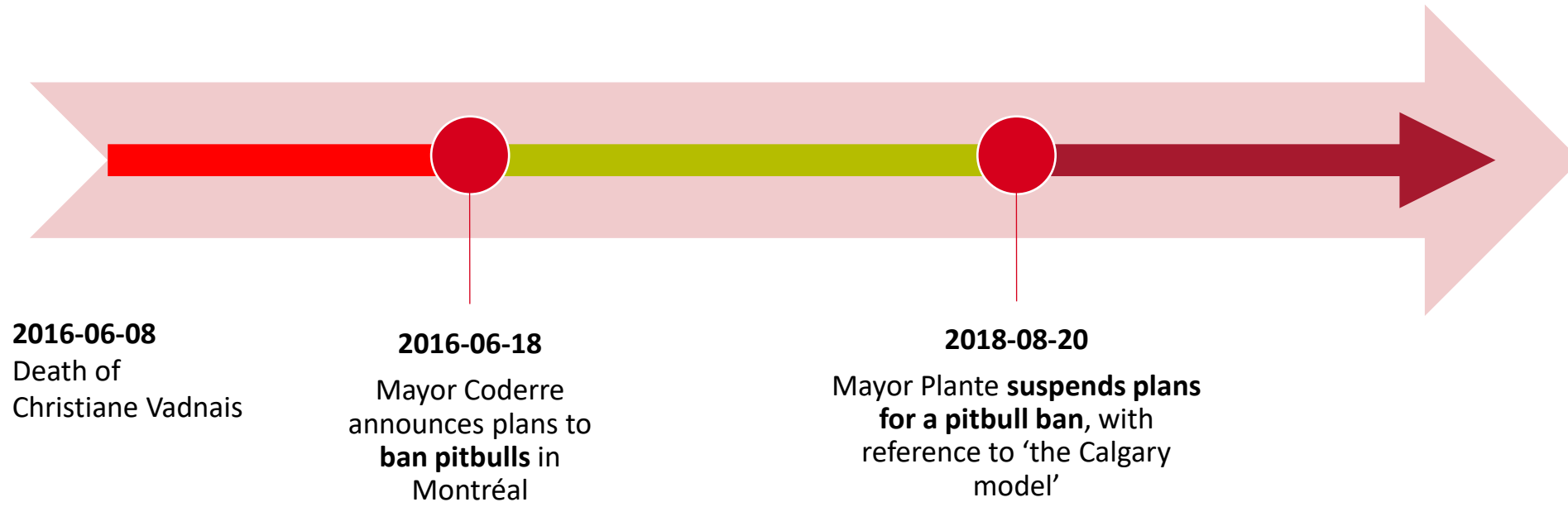
Legislative Council  
Economy and Infrastructure Committee



### Inquiry into the legislative and regulatory framework relating to restricted-breed dogs



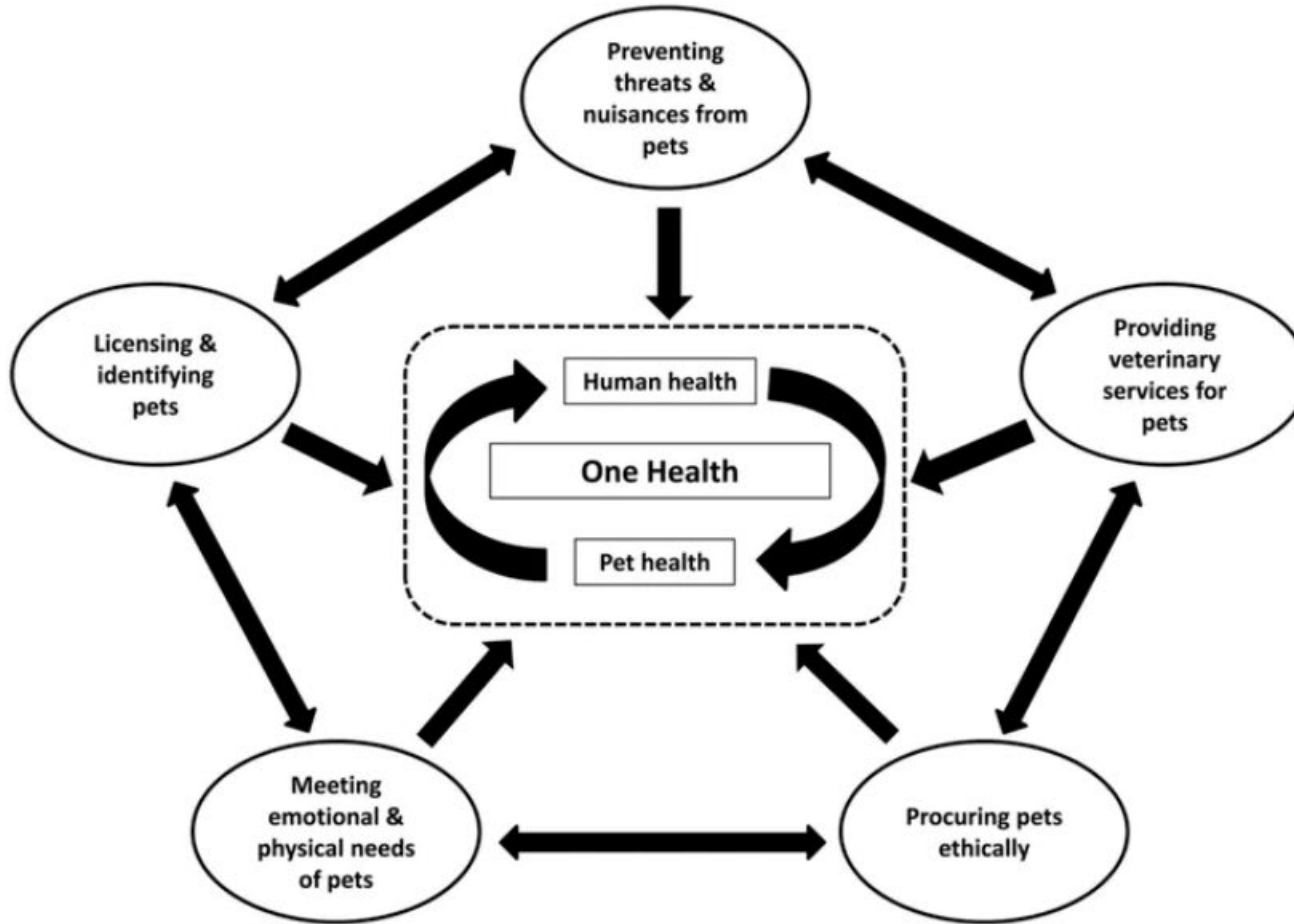
# Calgary to Montréal → Prevention *WITHOUT* Breed Bans



Mouton, M., and Rock, MJ. 2021. Débats autour des races canines et de la santé publique à Montréal et au Québec (2016-2019).  
Revue canadienne de santé publique / Canadian Journal of Public Health.  
<https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-021-00550-3>



# Calgary → Model City for Dog-Bite Prevention



Melanie J. Rock et al. Health Promot. Int. 2014;heapro.dau017



# Calgary → Stella the Rottweiler



- Dog fight in a park
  - 1 dog bit the other dog's companion
- Bystander called 311
  - Biting dog called "Stella"
  - Looked like a Rottweiler
- Officer on patrol nearby swiftly identified 17 Rottweilers named Stella
- Officer 'educated' & fined Stella's owner that day

# Calgary → “White Pit Bull is loose...”



Calgary Police ✓  
@CalgaryPolice

## DANGEROUS DOG WARNING:

A white pit bull is loose near 17 Ave and 37 St SW. It has bitten two people and should be considered dangerous. We are in the area with [@cityofcalgary](#) Animal Services trying to locate it. Please keep your distance and call 403-266-1234 if you see it.

[#yyc](#)

6:42 PM · Jun 6, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Rock MJ, Mouton M. 2021. Dog bites happen every day, often to children, but urban pet policies can help prevent them. The Conversation (Canadian edition), 26 October.

<https://theconversation.com/dog-bites-happen-every-day-often-to-children-but-urban-pet-policies-can-help-prevent-them-168715>

# Calgary → “White Pit Bull was loose...”

CALGARY | News

## 'Dangerous' pit bull on the loose in southwest Calgary: CPS



CTV News Calgary  
Staff

[Follow](#) | [Contact](#)

Published June 6, 2021 9:39  
p.m. MDT

Share



CALGARY - Animal services is searching for a white pit bull loose in southwest Calgary that police are calling “dangerous.”

At 6:42 p.m., CPS sent out a warning on Twitter, saying a white pit bull was loose near 17 Avenue and 37 Street SW.

The dog has bitten two people, according to police.



**Calgary Police**  @CalgaryPolice · Jun 6

Replying to [@CalgaryPolice](#)

UPDATE - DOG WARNING:

The dog that bit a child and adult while running loose near 17 Ave and 37 St SW has still not been captured. However, no further incidents or sightings have been reported.



**Calgary Police**  @CalgaryPolice · Jun 6

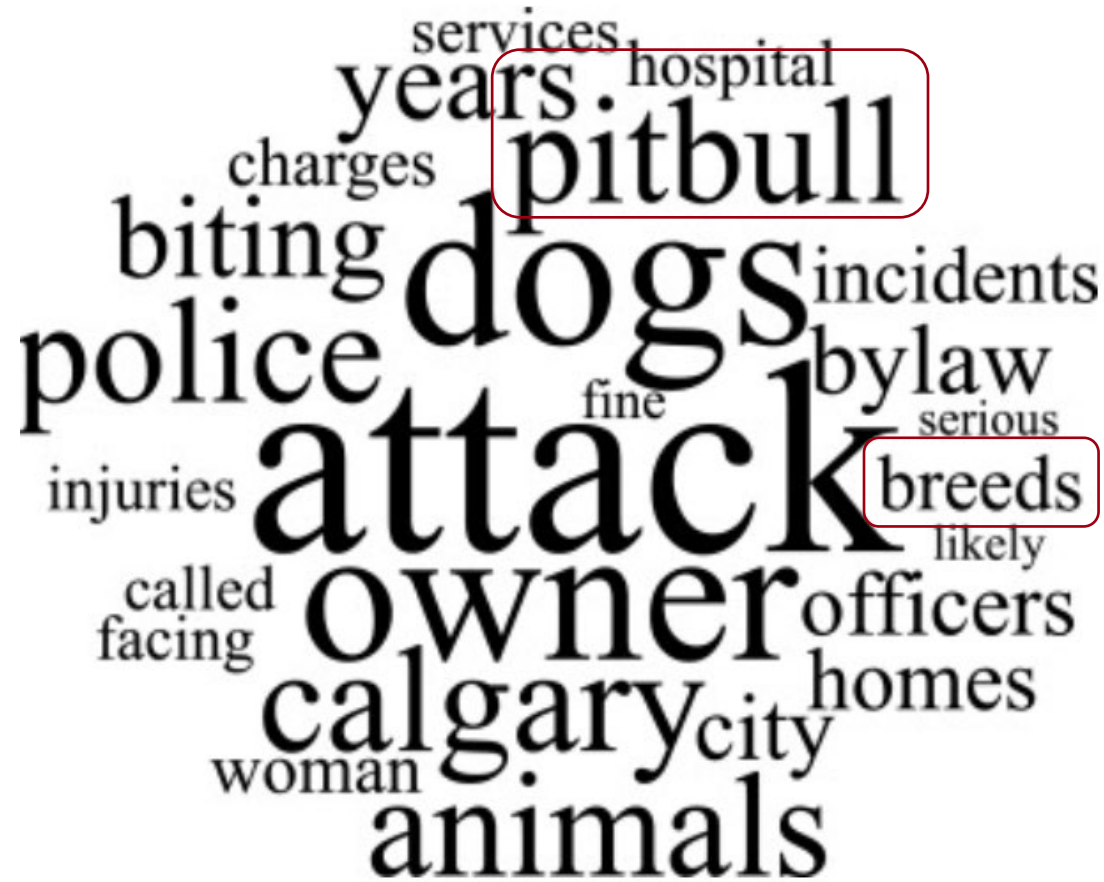
[@cityofcalgary](#) Animal Services will continue their investigation into the incident and will keep searching for the animal.

The child was transported to hospital to be treated for non-life threatening injuries.





# Calgary → 25 most-frequent words in dog-bite news



Mouton M, Boulton A, Solomon O, Rock MJ. 2019. 'When the dog bites': What can we learn about health geography from newspaper coverage in a 'model city' for dog-bite prevention? *Health & Place*. 57: 70-73  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2019.03.001>



**PAUSE**

**(or PAWS?)**





# Calgary → Changes to the *Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw*

CALGARY | News

Hens and bees allowed under new Calgary pet bylaw, **number of cats and dogs limited** per household



Jordan Kanygin



Jordan Kanygin

CTV News Calgary Video Journalist

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**Updated** June 2, 2021 7:18 p.m. MDT

Published **June 2, 2021** 11:01 a.m. MDT

# OTHER Changes to Calgary's Dog-Ownership Rulebook



## Summary of Major Proposed Changes



- Grant authority to the **Chief Bylaw Officer to designate animals vicious** rather than the Provincial Court
- **Expand the nuisance designation** to allow conditions to be placed on an animal that are meant to mitigate concerns and rehabilitate the animal



# Calgary → More Change Needed as a Model City



Responsible Pet Ownership  
Bylaw 47M2021

## 1) **Coordination** needed across sectors

- ❑ Dog-bite data from Alberta Health Services + Public Health Agency of Canada didn't factor into Calgary's pet policy review (1 example)

## 2) **Social Justice** needs consideration

- ❑ Reinstate subsidies for spay/neuter !
- ❑ Introduce subsidies for pet licensing ?
- ❑ Address affordability, accessibility for veterinary care + dog training
- ❑ Map dog complaints, injuries, licensing
  - City did map access for off-leash policy review

Rock MJ, Mouton M. 2021. Dog bites happen every day, often to children, but urban pet policies can help prevent them. *The Conversation (Canadian edition)*, 26 October. <https://theconversation.com/dog-bites-happen-every-day-often-to-children-but-urban-pet-policies-can-help-prevent-them-168715>

Rock MJ, Rault D, Degeling C. 2017. Dog-bites, rabies and One Health: Towards a coordinated agenda for research, policy and practice. *Social Science & Medicine* 187: 126-133, DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.06.036

Rock MJ, Degeling C, Graham TM, Toohey AM, Rault D, McCormack GR. 2016. Public engagement and community participation in governing urban parks: A case study in changing and implementing a policy addressing off-leash dogs. *Critical Public Health*. 26(5): 588-601, doi: 10.1080/09581596.2016.1177635

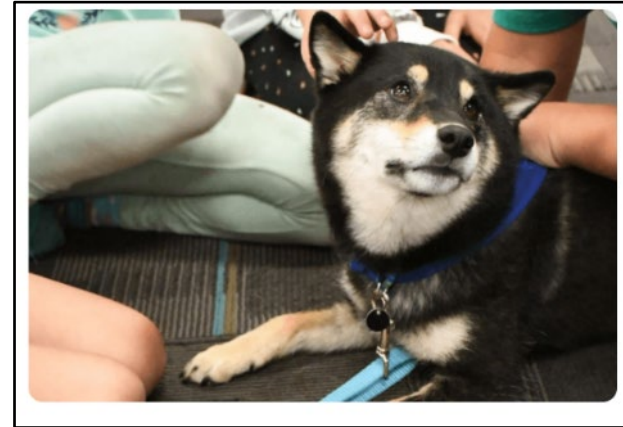
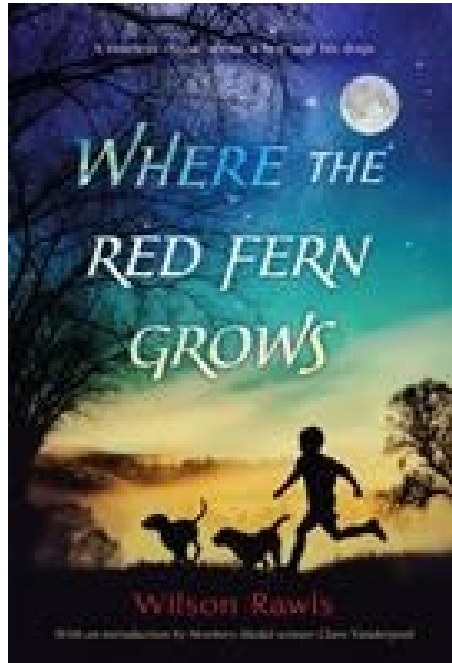
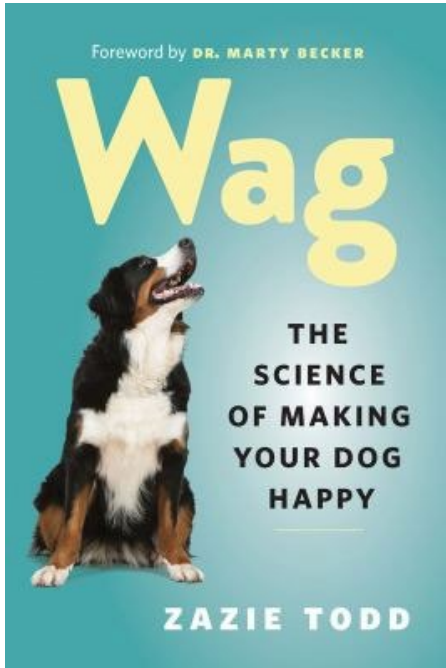




**PAUSE**

**(or PAWS?)**

## → Resources *about* & *with* dogs



### Story Pals Online

Pet Access League Society (PALS) volunteers and their highly socialized dogs provide a calm, accepting presence for children to practise reading aloud. During the program, young...

🖥️ Online    Age 6-12 years

# MY FIRST BOOKSHELF

In partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library







# Canada → Indigenous Reconciliation & Dog “Rescues”

## Fort Chip dog cull prompts howls from animal rescue groups



Northern Alberta reserve offered dogcatcher \$100 bounty for each stray dog

CBC News · Posted: Feb 13, 2014 10:19 AM MT | Last Updated: February 13, 2014

## Northern Saskatchewan First Nation to cull stray dogs



Band chief says wild dogs pose a safety risk to children

CBC News · Posted: Apr 08, 2015 6:00 AM CT | Last Updated: April 8, 2015



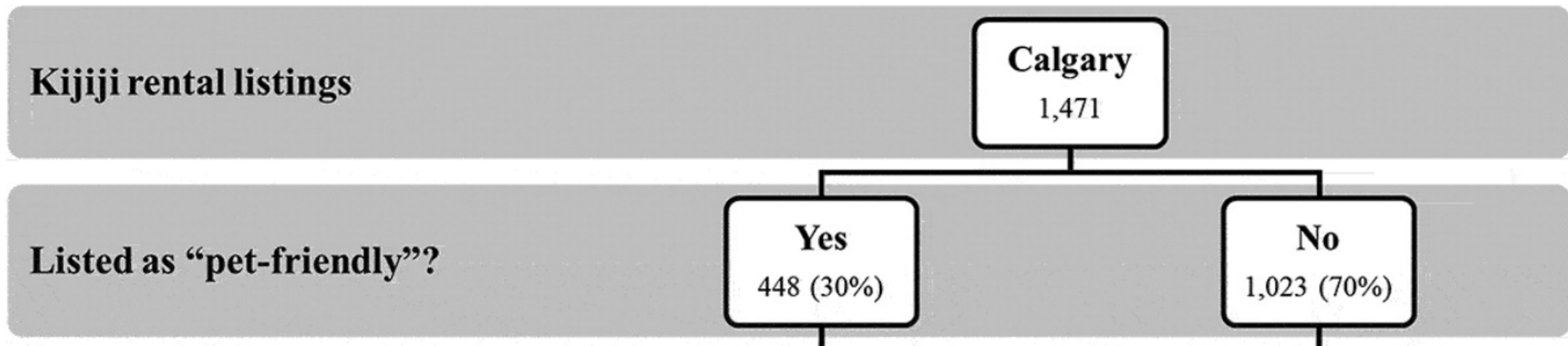
- **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**
  - balance in media coverage, starting with the CBC (Action 84)
  - health equity (Action 19 – & others)
- Indigenous communities’ socioeconomic circumstances (colonialism’s legacy) has yet to receive much attention in CBC’s coverage of ‘dog problems’
- Emphasis on removal of dogs in CBC coverage of ‘dog problems’ in Indigenous communities
  - Culling as tragic...
  - **Rehoming as heroic !**



# 'Good Homes' in Calgary → Housing (Access, Affordability)

2013 floods – rescuing pets, rehoming pets, reuniting pets with people

2014 aftermath – rental shortage, not least for Calgarians with dogs



Rock, MJ; Blue, G. 2020. Healthy publics as multi-species matters: Solidarity with people’s pets in One Health promotion. Humanities & Social Sciences Communications. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0509-1>

Graham TM, Rock MJ. 2019. The spillover effect of a flood on pets and their people: implications for rental housing. Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science, 22(3): 229-239, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888705.2018.1476863>

Graham TM, Milaney KJ, Adams CL, Rock MJ. 2019. Are millennials really picking pets over people? Taking a closer look at dog ownership in emerging adulthood. Canadian Journal of Family and Youth, <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/cjfy/index.php/cjfy/article/view/29454>

# In trade-off for a home he can afford, senior faces losing a beloved companion

*Stan Parsons' struggle to find an affordable home for him and his pet is a reflection of a broader problem for seniors in Calgary, says one expert*

Yolande Cole

Jan 16, 2019 • January 16, 2019 • 4 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



Stan Parsons, 84, pictured at his home in Calgary, has to find a new place to live by the end of February. The senior, who is on a fixed income, says he hasn't been able to find anywhere affordable that will accept pets the size of his dog Jellybean. PHOTO BY LEAH HENNEL /Postmedia





## Calgary → Housing Access, Affordability & Security



Stan Parsons with his golden retriever, Jellybean. © Bryce Meyer

**“Jellybean gets me out every day to exercise and talk to people in the park”**

<https://arch-magazine.ucalgary.ca/news/better-aging-pets>

Toohey AM, Rock MJ. 2018. Disruptive solidarity or solidarity disrupted? A dialogical narrative analysis of economically vulnerable older adults' efforts to age in place with pets. *Public Health Ethics*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/phe/phy009>

Toohey AM, Hewson J, Adams CL, Rock MJ. 2017. When 'places' include pets: Broadening the scope of relational approaches to promoting aging-in-place. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. 44(3): 7, <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol44/iss3/7>

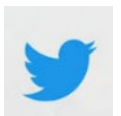
**Thanks for joining !**

**Now, over to YOU ...**

Professor Melanie **Rock**

University of Calgary

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/research/human-animal-studies>



**@rock\_m**



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