City of Dublin

Office of the City Manager
5555 Perimeter Drive • Dublin, OH 43017
Phone: 614.410.4400

Memo

To: Members of the Community Services Advisory Committee

From: Megan D. O'Callaghan, P.E., City Manager

Date: February 4, 2025

Initiated By: Emily Goliver, Operations Administrator – Sustainability
Nick Tabernik, Deputy Chief of Police
Barbara Ray, Nature Education Coordinator
Madison Kregel, Public Information Officer

Re: Deer Management Follow Up

Background

The Community Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) has been discussing the topic of deer management, beginning at the February 8, 2022, meeting when a general presentation was provided about the City's wildlife management program. Since then, the CSAC has discussed deer management specifically at the February 14, 2023; June 13, 2023; September 12, 2023; and October 10, 2023 meetings. At the October 10, 2023 meeting, the Committee recommended that City Council amend the City's Code of Ordinances to include a prohibition on outdoor feeding of wild animals or animals running at large. Ordinance 47-23 was adopted at the November 27, 2023 City Council meeting and amended via Ordinance 05-24 at the April 22, 2024 meeting to remove a reference to feral cats.

The topic of deer management was referred back to CSAC at the October 21, 2024 Council meeting for further discussion and to enable CSAC to continue engaging with the topic as the regional landscape evolves. Representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) attended the November 25, 2024 CSAC meeting to present deer management tactics that have been implemented across the state.

Summary

Survey

Staff partnered with the Ohio State University's (OSU) School of Environment and Natural Resources to conduct research during the weeks of May 9 through May 26, 2023. The purpose of this work was to establish a population estimate of the deer herd within the City of Dublin. The survey team conducted a field study during the week of May 15, which included road sightings and camera trap surveys, assessing the vegetation for signs of deer and creating a citizen survey to gather data on the community's attitude towards deer. Based on the data collected by the survey team, there are approximately 50–85 deer per square mile within Dublin. A healthy population of deer is around 20-25 per square mile. The week-long community-wide survey received 297 responses. The public's sentiment was split on whether the population of white-tailed deer in Dublin is increasing and needs to be managed. The results of the survey are below.

How would you describe your experience with white-tailed deer in the City of Dublin?	
Negative	74
Neutral	73
Positive	150

Do you think the white-tailed deer population in Dublin is increasing and needs to be managed?	
The white-tailed deer population is increasing and should be managed	150
There is no need to manage the white-tailed deer herd in Dublin	147

Have you seen a white-tailed deer on your property?	
No	17
Yes	219

Do you think there are too many white-tailed deer an acceptable number, or too little number in Dublin, Ohio?	
Acceptable amount of white-tailed deer	163
Too little white-tailed deer	8
Too many white-tailed deer	126

What negative experiences have you or a member of your household had with white-tailed deer in Dublin?	
Deer/vehicle collision or almost collission	29
Lyme's Disease from Deer Tick	2
Other	47
Plant/Property Damage	219

Regional Landscape
Since the last CSAC meeting, the Worthington City Council voted unanimously at its January 21, 2025 meeting to direct Worthington staff to implement a deer management program consistent with the recommendations of their Deer Task Force, including targeted removal and an archery hunting program. The City of Worthington will spend the next several months amending the City's Code of Ordinances to allow for hunting within the City, establishing an advisory committee and refining the criteria for the archery program. The full report from the Task Force can be found at Worthington.org/2025/Deer.

Other cities around Central Ohio have implemented lethal programs to varying degrees of success. The City of Gahanna, which had a 20-year archery program before it was disbanded in 2018, released a community survey in late 2024 to evaluate the public sentiment surrounding deer. The original program was halted when a new police chief was hired, and he determined it was not necessary to ensure public safety. Dublin staff members will continue to monitor discussions in Gahanna as they progress.

Since 1984, the Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks has managed the deer population through the parks system through culling programs such as controlled deer archery hunts. Metro Parks has thinned the herd at Glacier Ridge Metro Parks where a deer exclosure study took place to determine the impact of deer browsing on the ground cover.

The City of Marysville passed Ordinance 53-05 in 2005, which prohibited certain acts of hunting while also outlining steps to obtain approval to hunt wildlife (deer) within the city limits. As stated

in the ordinance, the Chief of Police, with approval from the mayor, approves "designated discharge zones." According to Chief of Police Tony Brooks, they currently have four discharge zones in minimally populated areas. A prospective hunter must be properly licensed pursuant to the current rules and regulations of the Ohio Division of Wildlife and must obey all state and federal hunting laws. The hunter must apply for a permit through the police department and get approval from the Chief of Police (permits last for 1 year and cost $20 for a processing fee). The hunter must then obtain permission from the landowner, complete a "waiver of liability" and contact the police department immediately prior to engaging in hunting.

According to Chief Brooks, he has approved approximately 3-4 permits per year, all for bow hunting. Marysville PD does not require the hunter to notify them upon killing a deer and therefore does not have the number of deer eliminated. As for the efficacy of the program, Chief Brooks advised that it is hard to quantify, as they have extensive rural/farm properties and undeveloped areas immediately adjacent to their jurisdiction. He stated they have not had any issues or negative impacts from the program.

The New Albany Urban Deer Management Program, which began in 2004, has successfully decreased the number of deer-vehicle crashes in the community. It has also simultaneously decreased complaints from local landowners who experienced landscape damage caused by overgrazing. Hunting in New Albany is prohibited except on land designated to be part of the Urban Deer Management Program. Further, this land can only be hunted by hunters who are annually chosen and officially recognized by the New Albany Police Department as a part of the program. For land to be eligible for the Urban Deer Management Program, the landowner must sign a Hold Harmless Agreement. The area to be hunted must also be approved by the police department and be given a hunting zone number. (https://newalbanyohio.org/police/urban-deer-management/)

Dublin Data
Inquiries tend to be seasonal in nature, with the majority being received from late May through the end of the summer. They include complaints about landscape damage, reports of negative deer interactions and questions regarding fawn bedding in a resident's yard. Since the adoption of the Outdoor Feed Ordinance, there have also been clarifying questions about the ordinance. There were 37 documented inquiries regarding deer in 2023 and 25 in 2024. Since 2019, 53 wildlife complaints regarding deer have been submitted through the GoDublin app. Service requests peak in April, May and June.

The attached map provided identifies all locations of deer-vehicle collisions in 2024. The City also tracks all dead deer pickups to pinpoint any potential trends. The map of all dead deer pickups can be found here:
https://dublinohio.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/2e82379307bc4a97966082ba335496a8. In 2024, there were 11 deer-vehicle collisions. The Dublin Police Department dispatched 19 deer due to catastrophic injuries reported by residents.

Social Media Sentiment
Along with monitoring service request data, the City constantly monitors social media to evaluate public engagement. The attached deer management public engagement report provides a

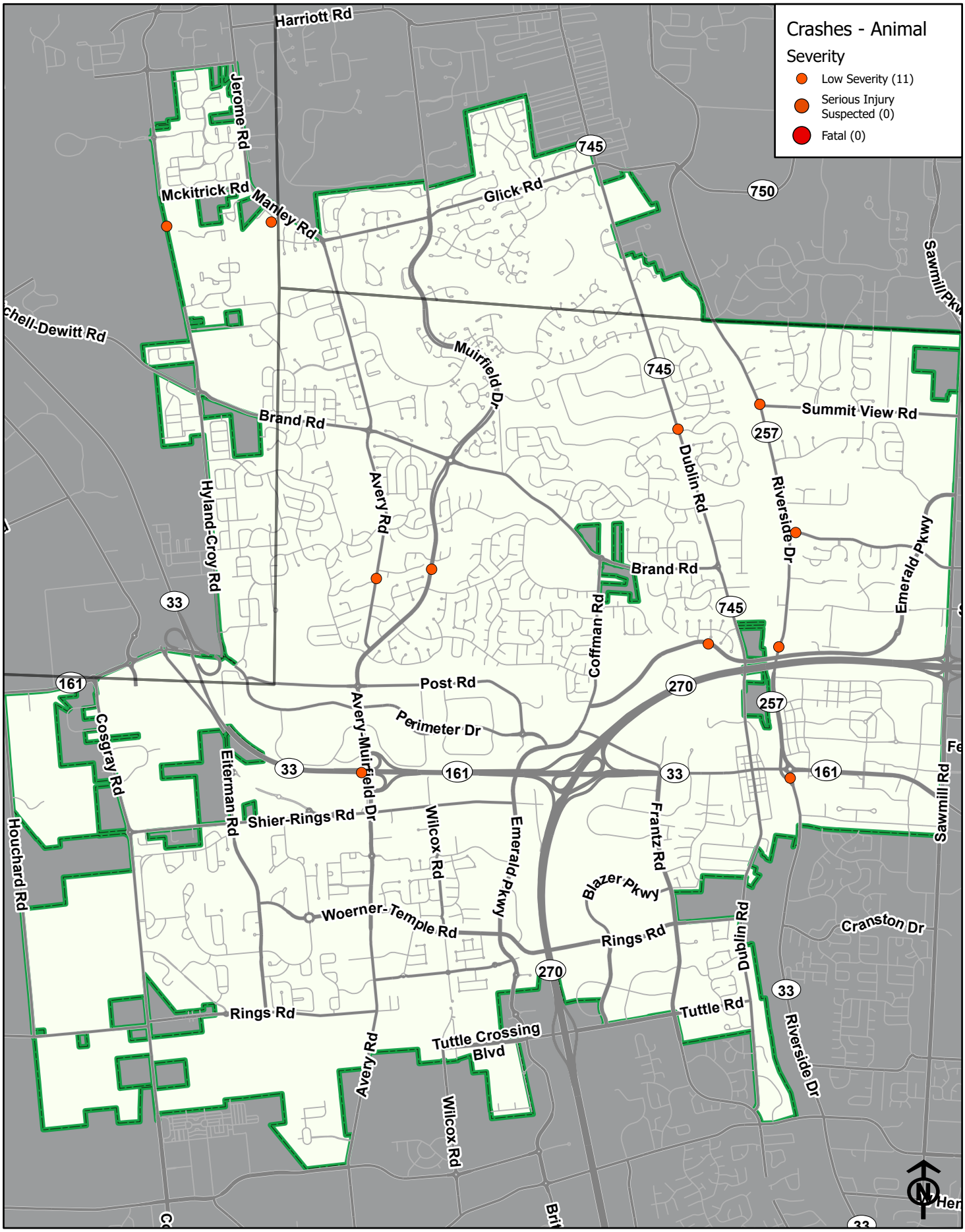
summary of sentiment the City is tracking on social media to give CSAC context of the public opinion regarding the subject.

Code Enforcement
As part of enforcing the ordinance, the City's Nature Education Coordinator makes the first contact with a resident to inform them of the issues caused by outdoor feeding. Further violation of the ordinance can result in the involvement of Code Enforcement. In most cases, residents who have received an educational outreach from the City cease the behavior once they understand the harm it causes.

To date, the City has initiated contact with 12 residents after receiving reports that they might be feeding wildlife. Upon following up on these cases, a warning letter has been issued to six of the residents for continued feeding. In most instances, the feeding has ceased after the second letter. There are two occasions where the behavior has not changed and the City is working to involve Code Enforcement for further action.

Recommendation
Staff is looking for feedback from CSAC on the following questions:

- What additional information is CSAC interested in Staff providing?
- Does CSAC have any questions?



Animal Crashes
Jan 1, 2024 through Dec 31, 2024

4,000 Feet

City of Dublin
OHIO, USA

Deer Management Public Engagement

Overview

Throughout the year, platforms like Nextdoor featured reports of injured deer and discussions on wildlife management, including calls for culling to address the growing deer population (over 180 interactions).

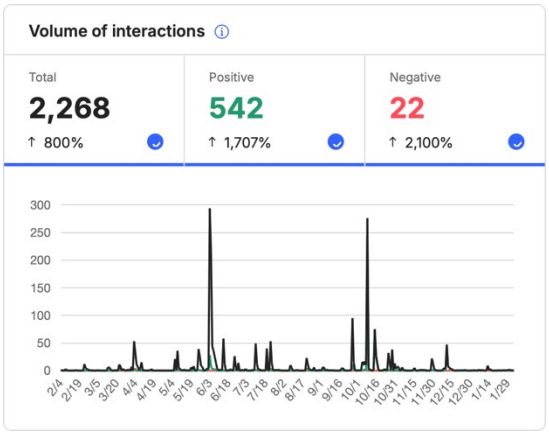
In June, the City reminded residents on Facebook, Nextdoor and Instagram to report aggressive deer during fawning season and provided safety guidance (over 570 interactions).

In August, the City promoted the Outdoor Feed Ordinance on Instagram, which prohibits feeding wildlife on public property to reduce human-deer interactions (over 20 interactions). Additional posts on Instagram, Facebook and Nextdoor highlighted deer sightings, wildlife appreciation and advice on feeding practices (over 290 interactions).

Conversation Snapshot

The sentiment data compiled is from 2024. Positive sentiment was 24x higher than negative sentiment (24% positive vs. 1% negative).

- Positive- words like "Thank you," "Great" and "Love."
- Negative- words like "Dangerous," "Illegal" and "Selfish."

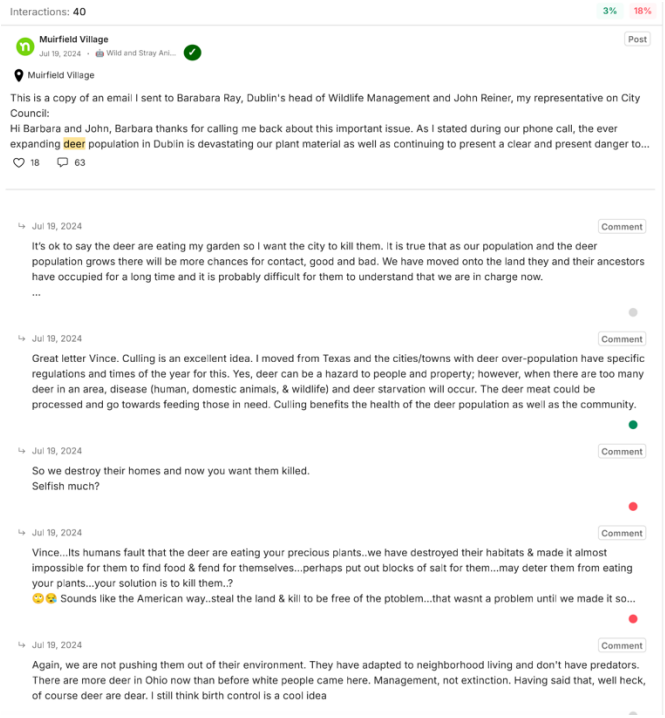


Message Highlights

Nextdoor

ZenCity records Nextdoor community posts based on keywords. Residents post about wildlife and receive varying sentiments.

This thread was posted by a concerned resident and has multiple comments with positive and negative sentiments. The resident posted an email they had sent to Nature Education Coordinator Barbara Ray and Council Member John Reiner regarding the Dublin deer population and the City's response to the Outdoor Feed Ordinance.



Interactions: 40 3% 18%

Muirfield Village
Jul 19, 2024 · Wild and Stray Ani...
Post

Muirfield Village

This is a copy of an email I sent to Barabara Ray, Dublin's head of Wildlife Management and John Reiner, my representative on City Council:
Hi Barbara and John, Barbara thanks for calling me back about this important issue. As I stated during our phone call, the ever expanding deer population in Dublin is devastating our plant material as well as continuing to present a clear and present danger to...

18 63

Jul 19, 2024 Comment
It's ok to say the deer are eating my garden so I want the city to kill them. It is true that as our population and the deer population grows there will be more chances for contact, good and bad. We have moved onto the land they and their ancestors have occupied for a long time and it is probably difficult for them to understand that we are in charge now.
...

Jul 19, 2024 Comment
Great letter Vince. Culling is an excellent idea. I moved from Texas and the cities/towns with deer over-population have specific regulations and times of the year for this. Yes, deer can be a hazard to people and property; however, when there are too many deer in an area, disease (human, domestic animals, & wildlife) and deer starvation will occur. The deer meat could be processed and go towards feeding those in need. Culling benefits the health of the deer population as well as the community.

Jul 19, 2024 Comment
So we destroy their homes and now you want them killed.
Selfish much?

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Vince...Its humans fault that the deer are eating your precious plants..we have destroyed their habitats & made it almost impossible for them to find food & fend for themselves...perhaps put out blocks of salt for them...may deter them from eating your plants...your solution is to kill them..?
😂😭 Sounds like the American way..steal the land & kill to be free of the ptoblem...that wasnt a problem until we made it so...

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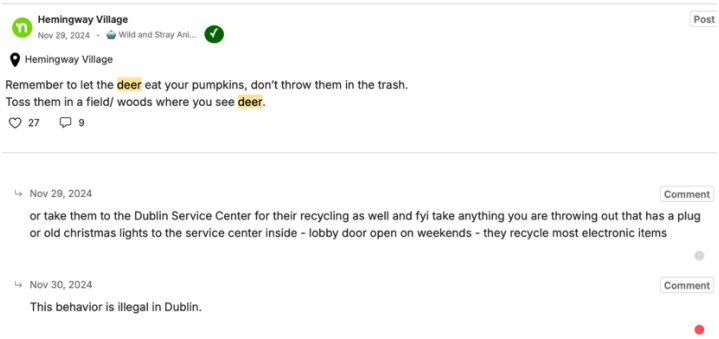
Again, we are not pushing them out of their environment. They have adapted to neighborhood living and don't have predators. There are more deer in Ohio now than before white people came here. Management, not extinction. Having said that, well heck, of course deer are dear. I still think birth control is a cool idea

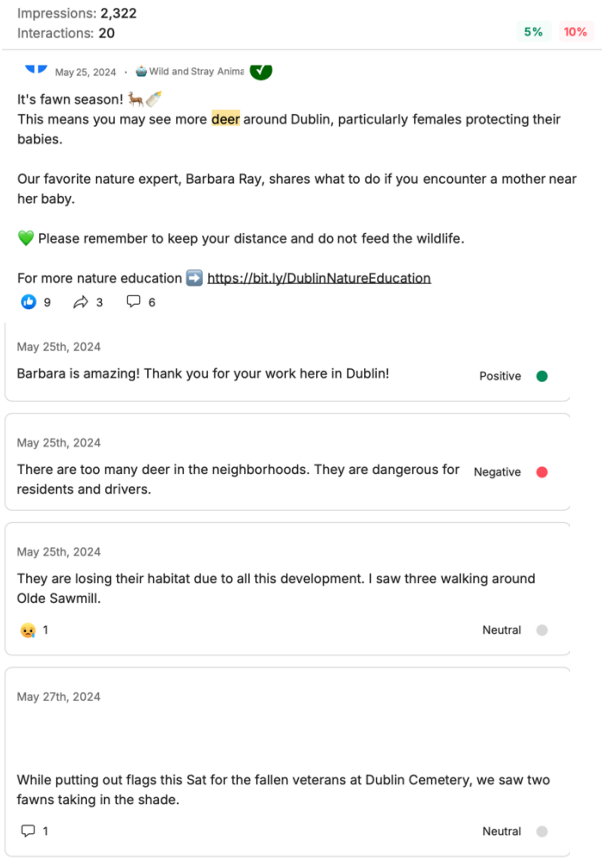
Many other comments on this thread contributed to the conversation in a neutral manner. Most agreed there is overpopulation but noted that the City will need to seek other options for prevention and management.

Below, a comment about the Outdoor Feed Ordinance is labeled as negative; seeing residents spread the word about the rule is helpful.



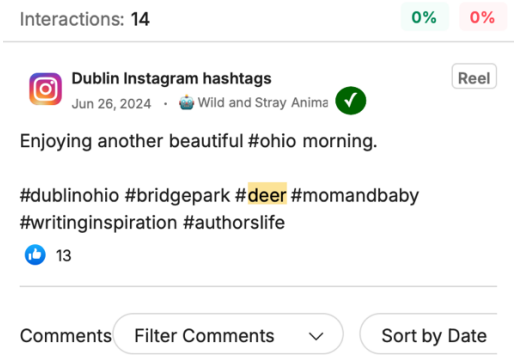
Facebook

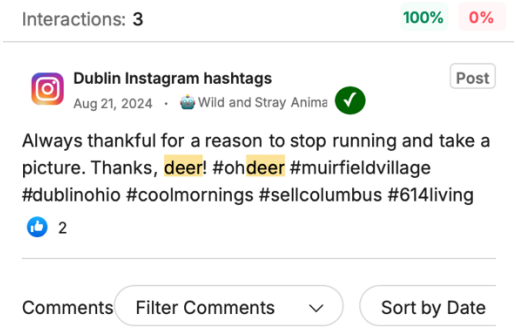
The City shared a video, "Dublin's Backyard with Barbara," reminding residents about fawn season. Residents responded with mixed sentiment.

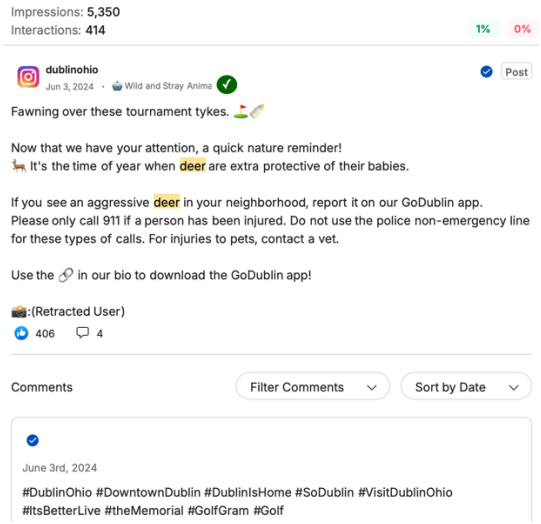


Instagram

Sentiment on this platform is mainly positive. ZenCity picks up hashtags associated with Dublin, including #dublin and #deer.







DEER MANAGEMENT FOLLOW UP

February 11, 2025

Sustainable | Connected | Resilient

City of Dublin OHIO, USA

Background

- Ongoing conversation since Feb. 2022
- Ordinance 47-23 was adopted by City Council at the Nov. 27, 2023 meeting
- ODNR presented to CSAC at the Nov. 25, 2024 CSAC meeting

Survey Results

How would you describe your experience with white-tailed deer in the City of Dublin?	
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Regional Landscape

City of Worthington

- City Council voted unanimously on Jan. 21 to direct Worthington staff to implement a deer management program
- Will include targeted removal and an archery hunting program

City of Gahanna

- Had a 20-year archery program, which ended in 2018
- Surveyed the community to determine the public's sentiment towards deer

Metro Parks

- Lethal removal in Metro Parks since 1984
- Exclosure study to determine the impact of deer browsing of the ground cover

City of Marysville

- Allows hunting in designated discharge zones pursuant to the current rules and regulations of the Ohio Division of Wildlife
- Issues approx. 3 – 4 permits per year for bow hunting

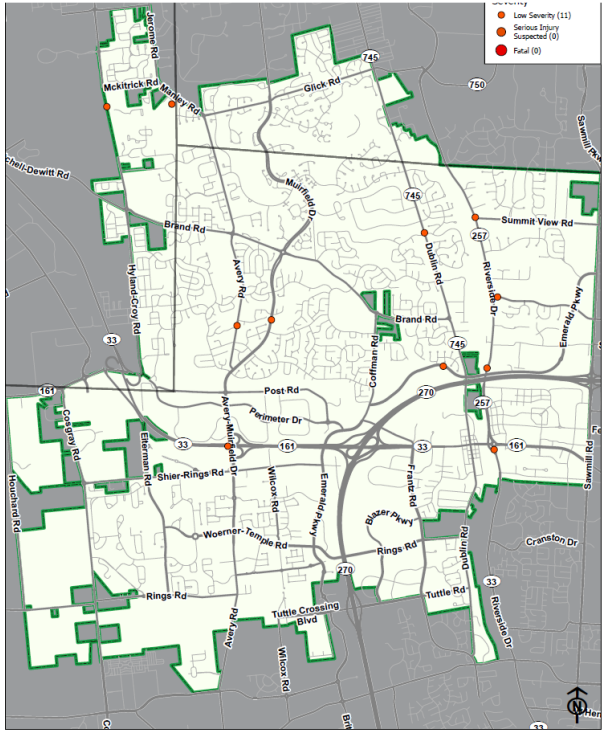
City of New Albany

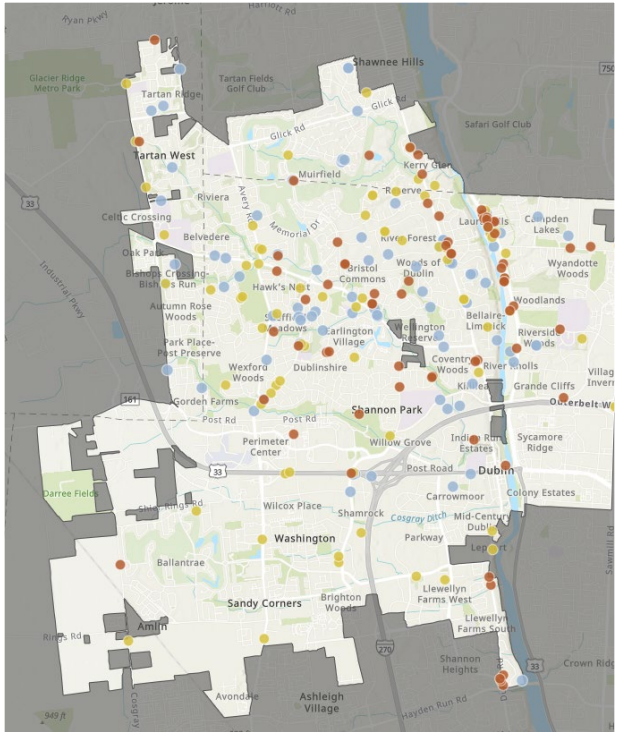
- Designates land as part of the program. Hunters are chosen and recognized by the New Albany Police Department
- Has successfully decreased the number of deer-vehicle collisions

Dublin Data

- 37 documented inquiries in 2023 ; 25 in 2024
- Common inquiries
  - Landscape damage
  - Negative deer interactions
  - Fawns in yards
- GoDublin wildlife complaints regarding deer since 2019: 53
- Code Enforcement:
  - Educational Outreach: 12
  - Warning Letters: 6
  - Code Referrals: 2 pending

Dublin Data





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- Generally mixed sentiment across platforms
- Some comments call for management through lethal means ; other comments agree there's an overpopulation concern but encourage the City to find other means of management

Recommendation

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- What additional information is CSAC interested in Staff providing?
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