



Introduction

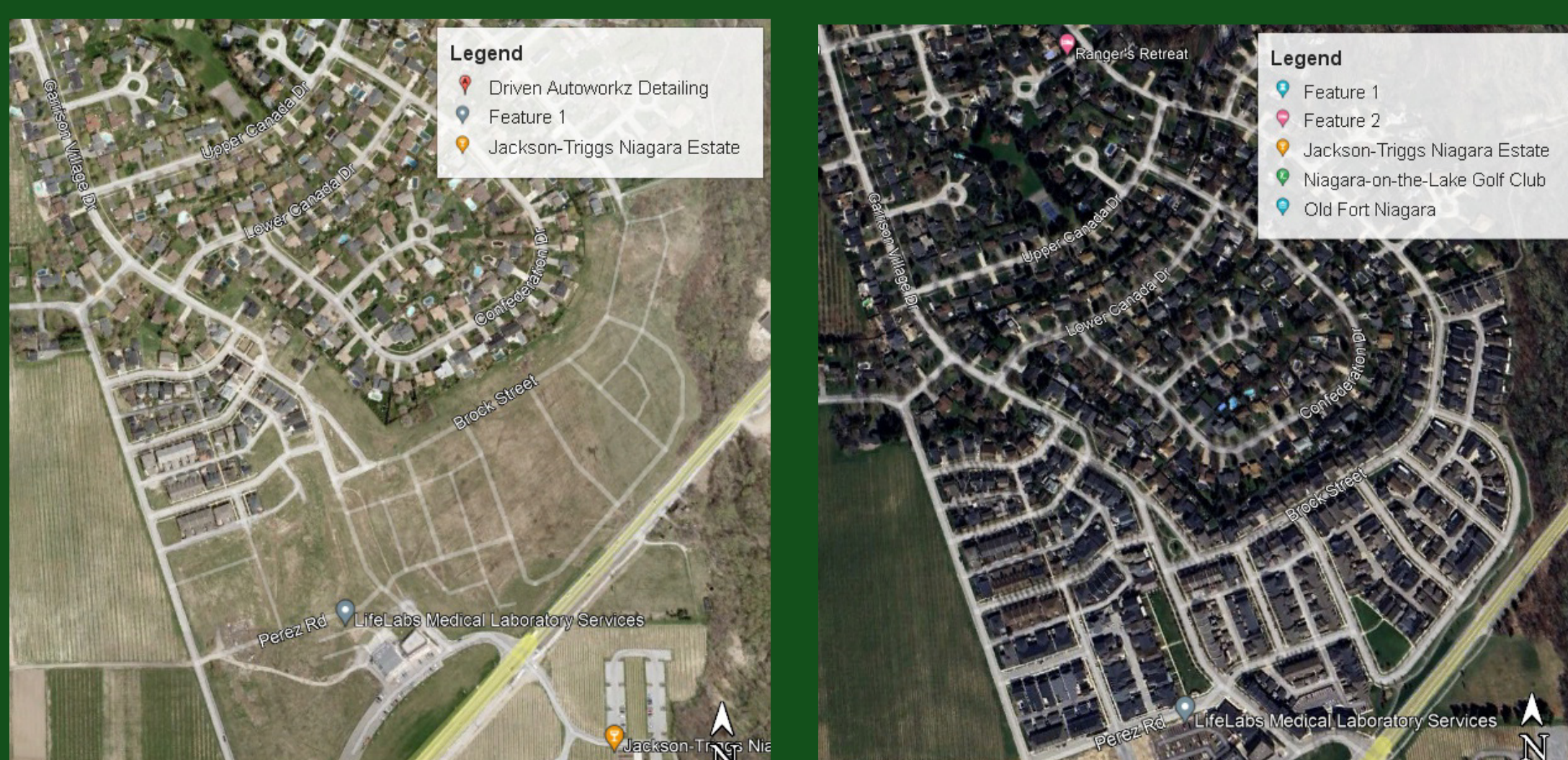
Urban development has been changing the landscape of Niagara-on-the-Lake, as well as affecting ongoing conversations about human-wildlife interaction, specifically human-coyote encounters reported on in various local news outlets. These attitudes and understandings are further observed in the urban development choices made, and the resulting effects on Niagara-on-the-Lake greenspace. It is common to read in local papers about human encounters with coyotes, and the coyotes “bold, brazen movements” (Saunders, 2021). These interactions and the conversations surrounding the “Coyote problem” (Gilchrist, 2024) is what prompted my interest and research into this topic.

Research Questions

- 1) To what extent does greenspace loss or urban expansion affect human-coyote interactions?
- 2) How do Town residents' opinions and level of knowledge on the subject inform human-coyote interactions?

Methods

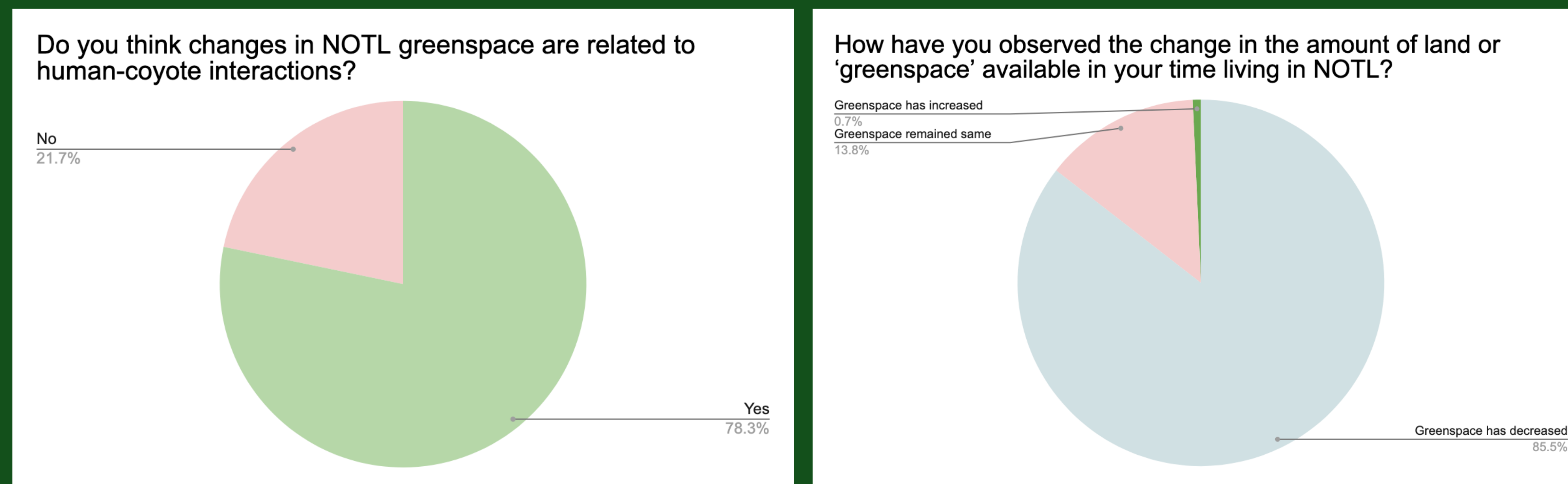
- Survey (n=138)
- Chi-square test
- Semi-structured interviews (n=3)
- Mapping analysis



2006 vs. 2023 land use comparison showing housing development and loss of greenspace

Bethany Helaine Pörtl, researcher
Professor Brent Doberstein, Dr. Michelle Anagnostou, co-advisors

Results



“Niagara-on-the-Lake is really a good example of a community that's expanded so quickly. There's loss of green space, and also maybe not being prepared with education about who are the wild neighbors, builders that come in there and clear cut, that are not looking at the landscape as habitat for already established wildlife.”
-Interviewee #3 Coyote expert, Senior staff member of NGO

“The land behind us was farmland but now has been torn away and will eventually be houses. We see coyotes quite often and one time came right up to my husband. He backed away and his sandal fell off. The coyote grabbed the sandal and ran away.”
- Survey participant comment

“We get a lot of people really concerned about dogs; they sometimes think they're [coyotes] just domestic dogs running loose.”
- Interviewee #1 Staff member of regional animal welfare agency

Acknowledgements

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Discussion

- The majority (79%) of survey participants agreed that development of Niagara-on-the-Lake greenspace is negatively impacting wildlife space.
- The challenge is meeting the tourism and urban growth desires of the community while balancing residents' feedback on environmental concerns and the needs of wildlife.
- 51.4% percent of participants disagree that coyotes are aggressive in Niagara-on-the-Lake, however 47.8% did agree there is human-coyote conflict in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Recommendations

Greenspace Development: As of summer 2024, Niagara-on-the-Lake has approved several development projects (hotels, high rises, subdivisions) that would cause significant greenspace change. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake needs to integrate consideration of greenspace, existing wildlife habitats and how human-wildlife interactions will be affected by development, into development planning.

Human Perception: Human perception of coyotes, human-wildlife interactions and greenspace development impacts the ability to adopt a coexistence mindset, through public education and adaptation of greenspace conservation strategies human-wildlife relationships can be shifted towards a coexistence.

Public Education: Coyote Watch Canada has been instrumental in providing the Town residents with public education on coyotes, continuing these initiatives will ensure that residents continue to learn and an encourage a shift towards coexistence.



Photo credit: Bethany H. Pörtl