

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: DAREN ANDERSON DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: JANUARY 26, 2016

SUBJECT: AD HOC COMMITTEE UPDATE ON DOG PARKS

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) discuss this issue of dog parks, and provide guidance to the Ad Hoc Committee on how to proceed in meeting the community's dog park needs.

BACKGROUND

The Commission has been interested in expanding the number of City dog parks for many years. Palo Alto has three dog parks: Greer Park (.12 acres), Hoover Park (.14 acres), and Mitchell Park (.56 acres). The Commission's 2010 policy directive to consider dog recreation opportunities as part of any park renovation project has not resulted in any new dog parks. As a result, the Commission concluded that rather than piecemeal decision-making as park renovations arise, a comprehensive analysis should be made of where dog parks should be placed in Palo Alto's park system.

The Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan will identify and evaluate where future dedicated dog parks should be located in new areas of the City. In the meantime, however, the Commission Ad Hoc Committee working on this topic researched whether a six-month, shared-use dog park pilot (to serve interim needs, test usage and behavior, and evaluate impacts on neighbors and other field users) would be appropriate. After analyzing the parks with the size and amenities to support a temporary, shared-use pilot, three sites stood out as viable options: Baylands Athletic Center, Greer Park, and Hoover Park.

On September 23, 2014, the Commission discussed the issues and options identified by the Ad Hoc Committee and considered necessary next steps to move forward with a proposal, including outreach to neighbors and user groups, and a strategy for evaluating metrics of success. The Ad Hoc Committee identified key considerations to be addressed in a shared-use pilot proposal, the pros, cons, and the range of costs for implementation at potential sites.

The Ad Hoc Committee met with a small group of stakeholders from the Palo Alto Dog Owners Group, which represents 300 dog owners. The Committee also met separately with athletic field users to learn more about their interests and concerns.

- a. The representatives of the Palo Alto Dog Owners Group explained that current off-leash dog exercise areas in Palo Alto are inadequate, and that there is an interest in finding spaces, especially in North Palo Alto, dedicated for small dogs, and larger spaces that allow large dogs to run, especially in North Palo Alto.
- b. The athletic user group explained that they are concerned that off-leash activity could make baseball and soccer unsafe for play. They explained small holes from dogs digging could have safety impacts to the kids. Baseballs would be more prone to taking bad hops, and soccer players turning ankles from stepping in holes. They said this would be an issue for all three proposed locations. They also had concerns about the possibility of turf being worn out and dog feces not being picked up.

Staff hosted a community meeting on July 30, 2015 to collect feedback on the concept of shared-use dog parks, and the specific locations (Greer, Baylands Athletic Center, and Hoover) and the hours which were proposed (Monday through Friday from 8am to 10am). Approximately 75 people attended.

The vast majority of participants seemed to be dog owners advocating for dog parks. A small number of participants were park neighbors who didn't want a dog park next to their house due to parking issues, dog waste, and unwanted confrontations with children and dogs off leash. Some participants voiced concern about the potential for negative impacts on the athletic field conditions, and conflicts of having dogs off-leash in areas where sports teams practice and compete.

The dog owners generally expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed hours and locations. Several people said that if the pilot is limited to just the morning hours we would exclude a lot of people who aren't available at that time. Several people indicated that a shared-use dog park would need morning and evening hours to be successful. Others commented that we need dog parks all over the City, and that just one pilot location wouldn't be successful. Some comments mentioned that Baylands was too far to drive. One meeting participant mentioned that City of Mountain View had recently added several dog off leash areas.

After the community meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee did some additional research.

1. Staff verified the amount of scheduled recreational use of the Greer Park, Hoover Park, and Baylands Athletic Center fields throughout the day and night, to see if there are conflicts with the shared use concept being both morning and evening hours. There would be conflict with athletic use at Greer and Baylands. Part of the field at Hoover (the area outside of the baseball field) seemed to have the least conflicts with field users.
2. Staff interviewed the City of Mountain View staff to learn about their experience with shared-use dog parks.

City of Mountain View's Experience

The City of Mountain View started a pilot program for shared-use dog parks in June 2014, and it was made permanent on May 26, 2015. Mountain View started their dog off leash area pilot program because of a lack of open space to fence and dedicate solely for dog use. Only one of their nine dog parks is a fenced, dedicated dog park (Shoreline Dog Park). The other eight dog parks are shared-use off leash areas that are not fenced. Only one of the shared-use off leash areas is on an athletic field. Mountain View staff advised that there appear to be some negative impacts to the field, but it is too soon to determine all the impacts.

Responses regarding the success of their shared-use program vary greatly. Most dog owners seem to love it. Some residents are unhappy with the program. The lack of fencing has caused some issues when dog owners stray outside the off-leash area or treat the entire park like an off-leash area. There were a number of complaints during the pilot program. The majority of the complaints were about non-observance of off-leash hours and days by dog owners. There were also concerns from parents who had off-leash dogs approach their children.

Mountain View has a contract security firm to enforce rules at Cuesta and Bubb Parks. The security firm works Monday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. from April through October. Mountain View also partners with the animal control officers from Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority for additional enforcement. The success of the program depends on having an enforcement component.

The City of Mountain View Parks and Recreation Commission recommended not doing any off-leash shared-use pilots. They suggested that Mountain View should pursue permanent, dedicated dog parks. But the Mountain View City Council directed staff to try a one-year pilot program. Public feedback on the pilot was a mix of positive and negative. The Mountain View Commission recommended continuing the pilot for another year, but with more enforcement. However, Mountain View Council decided to make the shared-use off-leash areas permanent.

Potential Near-term Dedicated Dog Parks

At the October 27, 2015 Commission meeting (Attachment A), staff discussed potential near-term dedicated dog parks. Because of the challenges with the shared-use concept, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to explore opportunities for new or expanded dog parks that could be implemented quickly and simply, with existing funds, while waiting for the Parks Master Plan to be completed.

Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee investigated a few options for locations for additional or expanded dog parks that could be implemented in the near term.

1. Southern undeveloped area at El Camino Park. It would be approximately .77 acres. It would require about 600' of fencing, which would cost approximately \$15,000.

Planning staff advises that the area is included in future transit improvement plans, which may prohibit using the area for a dog park. CSD staff will continue to pursue the possibility of using this site as a dog park.

2. Expanding the Mitchell Park Dog Run. It would increase the size from .56 acres to 1.21 acres. It would require approximately 383' of new fence to expand the area. New fencing would cost approximately \$9,570.
3. Colorado Ave Utilities Substation landscaped area. It would be approximately .96 acres. It would require about 600' of new fencing, which would cost approximately \$15,000.

Utilities staff raised security concerns that no longer make this site viable as a dog park.

DISCUSSION

The Ad Hoc Committee working on dog parks recommends expanding the Mitchell Park Dog Park, and continuing investigating the possibility of creating a new dog park at El Camino Park.

The unfenced, shared-use model, currently being used by the City of Mountain View, and proposed by MIG as a possible recommendation in the Parks Master Plan, is outside the scope of the Ad Hoc's work. The Ad Hoc recommends further investigation and policy discussion around that option. The February Commission retreat may represent an opportunity for the Commission to figure out the appropriate process for considering the unfenced, shared-use dog park concept, including the role, if any, of an ad hoc committee.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: October 27, 2015 Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report and Approved Minutes of discussion on item 3

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: DAREN ANDERSON DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2015

SUBJECT: SHARED USE DOG PARK PILOT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) discuss this issue of dog parks, and provide guidance to the Ad Hoc Committee on how to proceed in meeting the community's dog park needs.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2009, staff hosted a community meeting about recreational opportunities for dog owners. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting. The dog owners expressed a strong desire for off-leash dog recreation in all areas of Palo Alto to improve walkability and connections among neighbors; for more grass surfacing in off-leash areas; and for consideration of designated, non-peak hours for fenced athletic fields use by dog owners for off-leash recreation.

The Commission's 2010 policy directive to consider dog recreation opportunities as part of any park renovation project has not resulted in any new dog parks. As a result, the Commission concluded that rather than piecemeal decision-making as park renovations arise, a comprehensive analysis should be made of where dog parks should be placed in Palo Alto's park system.

The Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan will identify and evaluate where future dedicated dog parks should be located in new areas of the City. In the meantime, however, the Commission Ad Hoc Committee working on this topic researched whether a six-month, shared-use dog park pilot (to serve interim needs, test usage and behavior, and evaluate impacts on neighbors and other field users) would be appropriate. After analyzing the parks with the size and amenities to support a temporary, shared-use pilot, three sites stood out as viable options: Baylands Athletic Center, Greer Park, and Hoover Park (Attachment A).

On September 23, 2014, the Commission discussed the issues and options identified by the Ad Hoc Committee and considered necessary next steps to move forward with a proposal, including outreach to neighbors and user groups, and a strategy for evaluating metrics of success. The Ad Hoc Committee identified key considerations to be addressed in a shared-use pilot proposal, the pros, cons, and the range of costs for implementation at potential sites.

The Ad Hoc Committee met with a small group of stakeholders from the Palo Alto Dog Owners Group, which represents 300 dog owners. The Committee also met separately with athletic field users to learn more about their interests and concerns.

- a. The representatives of the Palo Alto Dog Owners Group explained that there are not enough off-leash dog exercise areas in Palo Alto, and that there is an interest in finding spaces dedicated to small dogs, and larger spaces that allow large dogs to run.
- b. The athletic user group explained that they are concerned that off-leash activity could make a baseball and soccer unsafe for play. They explained small holes from dogs digging could have safety impact to the kids. Baseballs would be more prone to taking bad hops, and soccer players turning ankles from stepping in holes. They said this would be an issue for all three proposed locations. They also had concerns about the possibility of turf being worn out and dog feces not being picked up.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR A SHARED-USE DOG PARK

The Ad Hoc Committee researched what other communities have learned regarding shared-use dog parks. The Committee reviewed a summary of the 2009 Palo Alto community meeting, and the dog policies and rules for San Francisco and for dog parks throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The Committee consulted with the Palo Alto and Menlo Park dog owners groups and city staff operating shared-use, off-leash dog parks in Menlo Park, San Carlos, and Cambridge, MA. The following are some important considerations for any shared-use dog park pilot learned from other communities:

1. Safety

Safety of both people and dogs is an important consideration for all dog parks. While other communities have successfully allowed shared-use facilities without fencing, the Ad Hoc Committee believes a self-contained field will provide better control of the dogs and increase the comfort of nearby park users. Use rules must require appropriate supervision of dogs and children during shared-use hours and prohibit aggressive dog behavior. In addition, a waste cleanup plan should be in place before opening the pilot in order to protect other field users from abandoned dog waste. Rules should be prominently posted, and cleanup bags and trash cans should be provided. In addition, a double door entry will provide security as dogs enter and exit the facility.

2. Size

The primary benefit of a shared-use facility for dog recreation is the potential for a grass-surfaced space of significant size. A shared field would provide dog owners legal access, during limited, underused hours, to a recreation space large enough to play fetch or just let their dogs run, while also distributing the impacts of dog wear over sufficient acreage to preserve the quality of the surfacing.

Palo Alto's existing dedicated dog parks are all small: Greer - .12 acres, Hoover - .14 acres and Mitchell - .5 acres. Both San Francisco and Menlo Park Recreation and Park Departments cited 10,000 square feet (approximately .25 acres) as the minimum acceptable size for a dedicated dog park, with San Francisco preferring a minimum of 30,000 sf (approximately .75 acres) and Menlo Park rating 1.5 acres or more as best.

At Mitchell, the City's largest dog park, a little less than half the surface is grass and the remainder is decomposed granite. Staff perennially reports problems maintaining the grass, due to overuse for its small coverage area. Users regularly complain of disruptions due to grass maintenance issues, but also strongly oppose eliminating this lone grass-surfaced area for off leash dogs.

3. Location

Ideally, a dog park should be located within a neighborhood to allow users to walk to the facility and build community around their shared interests, but sufficiently distant from residences so that noise and activity levels are no more disruptive to neighbors than typical park uses. It should not cause significant displacement of established recreational activities, including passive recreation, and it should not cause a detriment to the facility or surrounding environment such as digging and trampling. In addition, it naturally would be preferred to open a new dog park in an area of town that is currently underserved.

If the goal is to test a large, temporary, shared-use area, options are limited to City-owned parks with adequate space to minimize the impacts of wear and with minimal new fencing requirements as fencing represents the primary start-up cost. Unfortunately, the only sites that currently fit that bill are the three proposed sites (Greer Park, Baylands Athletic Center, and Hoover Park), all of which fall in the midtown, east-west corridor, already served by two small dog parks.

The proposed pilot locations would accommodate fenced, shared-use areas sized as follows:

Baylands Athletic Center: Large field: --- 3.27 acres
Small field: ---1.30 acres

Greer Park: --- 2.09 acres

Hoover Park: Inside baseball field: --- .96 acres
Turf area outside baseball field: ---1.17 acres.

4. Costs

The primary expense of a new off-leash dog area is the purchase and installation of fencing to fully enclose the area. All three sites proposed have significant existing fencing that will help keep the cost of a temporary pilot to a minimum. All three would require a new double-gated entry. Hoover and the Baylands Athletic Center would need a negligible amount of new fence length. Greer would need more, but less than half the linear footage required to enclose the entire field area. Staff estimates new fencing costs, including double gated entries, as below. Staff is investigating temporary fencing as an alternative, but do not anticipate significant savings from that option.

Baylands Athletic Center:	\$ 1,000.
Greer Park:	\$ 21,350.
Hoover Park (inside baseball field):	\$ 4,000.
Hoover Park (turf outside baseball field):	\$ 18,775

Additional start-up costs include the installation of waste stations, signage and optional benches that will be the same regardless of location:

Signs:	approx. \$ 250.00 each
Waste stations:	approx. \$ 800.00 for two
Benches:	approx. \$ 1,500.00 each

There would be additional costs for water spigots for drinking water or additional cleanup alternatives, and those costs will vary by location.

Beyond start-up costs, there would be marginal increases in ongoing maintenance costs in the form of increased staff time.

5. **Enforceability**

Successful enforcement of rules and hours of use will be vital to justifying the compromises made by neighbors and other users. In other cities, dog owner groups have successfully minimized violations through spot monitoring and peer pressure. San Carlos, however, reported that its dog owners group dissolved quickly, leaving the City to fund all expenses. Where engaged and organized, dog groups have managed waste cleanup and ensured that owners addressed aggressive and loud dogs immediately through community oversight during use hours and volunteer sector-by-sector cleanup in advance of non-dog uses. In recent years, the Menlo Park dog owners' group has switched over to a professional cleanup service hired and funded by the dog group through user donations at an approximate cost of \$6,000 per year. In addition to behavior and clean-up, it will be important to communicate and enforce rain closures for this new user group.

Current enforcement of leash laws in Palo Alto operates on a complaint-only basis. Enforcement officers are stretched thin, and according to Animal Services, cannot guarantee stepped up enforcement for a pilot. The Ad Hoc Committee have looked at targeted oversight using contracted staff for a pilot program, but in the long term, an expanded leash law enforcement, City-wide, will be vital to securing and maintaining

community buy-in for a permanent shared-use site and additional dedicated dog parks. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends that the City develop and budget for a plan of increased enforcement of the leash law City-wide.

As for waste clean-up, the City could request that the Palo Alto Dog Owners Group coordinate, manage, and fund a professional clean-up service similar to Menlo Park's practice. It has been suggested, however, that the City maintains recreation facilities at no cost to other users (un-reserved picnic sites, Skate Park, playgrounds, etc.) and that dog owners should similarly be entitled to services within our city. Others contend that organized field users contribute to maintenance through field rental fees that give them exclusive use at reserved times. Given public sanitation concerns regarding shared use, a professional clean-up strategy may be advantageous.

It would cost approximately \$21,000 to hire a contract security firm to enforce the rules and clean up the dog waste at one shared-use Dog Park for a 6-month pilot program. This is based on 12 hours per week for a period of 26 weeks.

6. Long-term Use

The Parks Master Plan consultants, MIG, and other cities reported that in many cases, once a pilot is opened, it is very difficult to discontinue that use. Furthermore, once regular use is established, there is often an increase in off-hour use of the site when not otherwise occupied. In Menlo Park, the dog owners' group was helpful in spot checking for off-hour use and talking with violators about the risk of permanent closure.

The concern about the ability to curtail off-leash use at the end of the pilot, and the close proximity of the affordable sites suitable for the pilot, are reasons for caution about opening multiple pilot sites. Nonetheless, dual pilots at both the Baylands Athletic Center and a neighborhood park, could provide useful data about usage and the desirability of quite different models – one very large, mostly single use, facility with high fencing at the outskirts of town versus a smaller, walkable site within a popular neighborhood park that currently serves many diverse uses.

7. Metrics and Rules

Before initiating a six-month pilot program it is important to develop criteria that will allow the City to collect and monitor incoming data associated with the pilot program. Based on our discussions with other cities and review of their pilot programs, the Ad Hoc Committee drafted a list of criteria to help measure the success and/or failure of a six-month off leash dog pilot (Attachment B) and proposed rules for use of the facility (Attachment C).

8. Pros and Cons of Potential Sites

Location	Pros	Cons
<p>Baylands Athletic Center</p> <p>Proposed Size: Large Field: 3.27 acres</p> <p>Estimated New Fencing Cost: \$ 1,000.</p>	<p>Surfacing: Grass and packed dirt.</p> <p>Fencing/Cost: Minimal required</p> <p>Size:</p> <p>Significantly larger than other options – better capacity and reduced maintenance impacts.</p> <p>Location:</p> <p>High fencing – so even “jumpers” can safely use.</p> <p>Little noise impact – no adjacent residences.</p> <p>No nearby playground.</p> <p>Less risk of inviting unauthorized use due to remote location.</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Not in neighborhood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users will more likely drive than walk, possibly exacerbating morning congestion at Embarcadero/101 intersection; • Harder for dog owners group to spot check compliance; • Less community building among neighbors; • May invite more non-resident users. <p>Adjacent to delicate Baylands ecosystem – errant dogs could pose threat.</p> <p>If pilot extends beyond 6 months, potential construction of the Flood Control project and the Golf Course renovation could impede access to the site.</p>

Location	Pros	Cons
<p>Hoover Park</p> <p><u>Inside the baseball field</u> Proposed Size: .96 Acres</p> <p>Estimated New Fencing Cost: \$4,000.</p> <p><u>Turf Area outside the baseball field</u> Proposed size: 1.17 acres. Fencing costs: \$18,775</p>	<p>Surfacing: Grass and packed dirt</p> <p>Fencing/Cost: Minimal required for inside the baseball field area</p> <p>High costs for outside the baseball field area.</p> <p>Location:</p> <p>Walkable to neighborhood.</p> <p>Lots of current dog use in and outside of existing dog park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared use pilot would allow current users to become “legal” during open hours; • Increased attention to enforcement, maintenance and cleanup could improve conditions for other users. 	<p>Location:</p> <p>Frequent use of field by Key School.</p> <p>Nearby playground.</p> <p>Highest potential impact on others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavily used community park; • Close proximity to multi-unit housing. <p>Fencing:</p> <p>Existing fencing is less than 4 feet high in outfield - may have high risk of “escapees.”</p> <p>Size:</p> <p>Smallest option, yet high current unauthorized dog use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be difficult to get dog owners to stay in fenced area; • Heavy dog usage would have a greater impact on this small field.

Location	Pros	Cons
<p>Greer Park</p> <p>Proposed Size: 2.09 Acres</p> <p>Estimated New Fencing Cost: \$21,350.</p>	<p>Surfacing: Grass and packed dirt</p> <p>Location:</p> <p>Little noise impact.</p> <p>Walkable to neighborhood.</p> <p>Few adjacent residences.</p> <p>Existing dedicated dog park is smallest in the city – currently attracts mostly one-off users (and professional dog walkers) rather than gathering of dog folks. Larger space could allow better community building opportunities.</p> <p>Size: Midsized option</p>	<p>Fencing/Cost:</p> <p>Biggest fencing need of all the options.</p> <p>Permanent fencing could change the character of the adjacent picnic area.</p> <p>Location:</p> <p>Current off-leash use is low – pilot may attract more usage during unauthorized times.</p> <p>Nearby playground.</p>

DISCUSSION

Staff hosted a community meeting on July 30, 2015 to collect feedback on the concept of shared-use dog parks, and the specific locations (Greer, Baylands Athletic Center, and Hoover) and the hours which were proposed (Monday through Friday from 8am to 10am). Approximately 75 people attended. See Attachment D for notes from the community meeting.

The vast majority of participants seemed to be dog owners advocating for dog parks. A small number of participants were park neighbors who didn't want a dog park next to their house due to parking issues, dog waste, and unwanted confrontations with children and dogs off leash. Some participants voiced concern about the potential for negative impacts on the athletic field conditions, and conflicts of having dogs off-leash in areas where sports teams practice and compete.

The dog owners generally expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed hours and locations. Several people said that if the pilot is limited to just the morning hours we would exclude a lot of people who aren't available at that time. Several people indicated that a shared-use dog park would need morning and evening hours to be successful. Others commented that we

need dog parks all over the City, and that just one pilot location wouldn't be successful. Some comments mentioned that Baylands was too far to drive. One meeting participant mentioned that City of Mountain View had recently added several dog off leash areas.

After the community meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee did some additional research.

1. Staff verified the amount of scheduled recreational use of the Greer Park, Hoover Park, and Baylands Athletic Center fields throughout the day and night, to see if there are conflicts with the shared use concept being both morning and evening hours. There would be conflict with athletic use at Greer and Baylands. Part of the field at Hoover (the area outside of the baseball field) seemed to have the least conflicts with field users.
2. Staff interviewed the City of Mountain View staff to learn about their experience with shared-use dog parks.

City of Mountain View's Experience

The City of Mountain View started a pilot program for shared-use dog parks in June 2014, and it was made permanent on May 26, 2015. Mountain View started their dog off leash area pilot program because of a lack of open space to fence and dedicate solely for dog use. Only one of their nine dog parks is a fenced, dedicated dog park (Shoreline Dog Park). The other eight dog parks are shared-use off leash areas that are not fenced. Only one of the shared-use off leash areas is on an athletic field. Mountain View staff advised that there appear to be some negative impacts to the field, but it is too soon to determine all the impacts.

Responses regarding the success of their shared-use program vary greatly. Most dog owners seem to love it. Some residents are unhappy with the program. The lack of fencing has caused some issues when dog owners stray outside the off-leash area or treat the entire park like an off-leash area. There were a number of complaints during the pilot program. The majority of the complaints were about non-observance of off-leash hours and days by dog owners. There were also concerns from parents who had off-leash dogs approach their children.

Mountain View has a contract security firm to enforce rules at Cuesta and Bubb Parks. The security firm works Monday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. from April through October. Mountain View also partners with the animal control officers from Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority for additional enforcement. The success of the program depends on having an enforcement component.

The City of Mountain View Parks and Recreation Commission recommended not doing any off-leash shared-use pilots. They suggested that Mountain View should pursue permanent, dedicated dog parks. But the Mountain View City Council directed staff to try a one-year pilot program. Public feedback on the pilot was a mix of positive and negative. The Mountain View Commission recommended continuing the pilot for another year, but with more enforcement. However, Mountain View Council decided to make the shared-use off-leash areas permanent.

Palo Alto Consider Permanent Dog Parks

Because of the challenges with the shared-use concept, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to explore opportunities for permanent dog parks that could be implemented quickly without investing too much money, nor waiting for the Parks Master Plan to be completed.

Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee are investigating few options for locations for permanent or expanded dog parks (See Attachment E).

1. Southern undeveloped area at El Camino Park. It would be approximately .77 acres. It would require about 600' of fencing, which would cost approximately \$15,000.

Planning staff advises that the area is included in future transit improvement plans, which may prohibit using the area for a dog park. CSD staff will continue to pursue the possibility of using this site as a dog park.

2. Expanding the Mitchell Park Dog Run. It would increase the size from .56 acres to 1.21 acres. It would require approximately 383' of new fence to expand the area. New fencing would cost approximately \$9,575.
3. Colorado Ave Utilities Substation landscaped area. It would be approximately .96 acres. It would require about 600' of new fencing, which would cost approximately \$15,000.

Utilities staff advises that they may need to use this landscaped area for future expansion and that they have some security concerns because this is the site where the City gets its power. Another complication is that Utilities pays a significant amount of money to the City's general fund for the lease of this site. CSD staff will continue to pursue the possibility of using this site as a dog park.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Proposed shared-use pilot locations
- Attachment B: Metrics for evaluation of a pilot dog park
- Attachment C: Proposed rules for pilot dog park facility
- Attachment D: Notes from July 30, 2015 community meeting on dog parks
- Attachment E: Proposed permanent or expanded dog parks

Greer Park

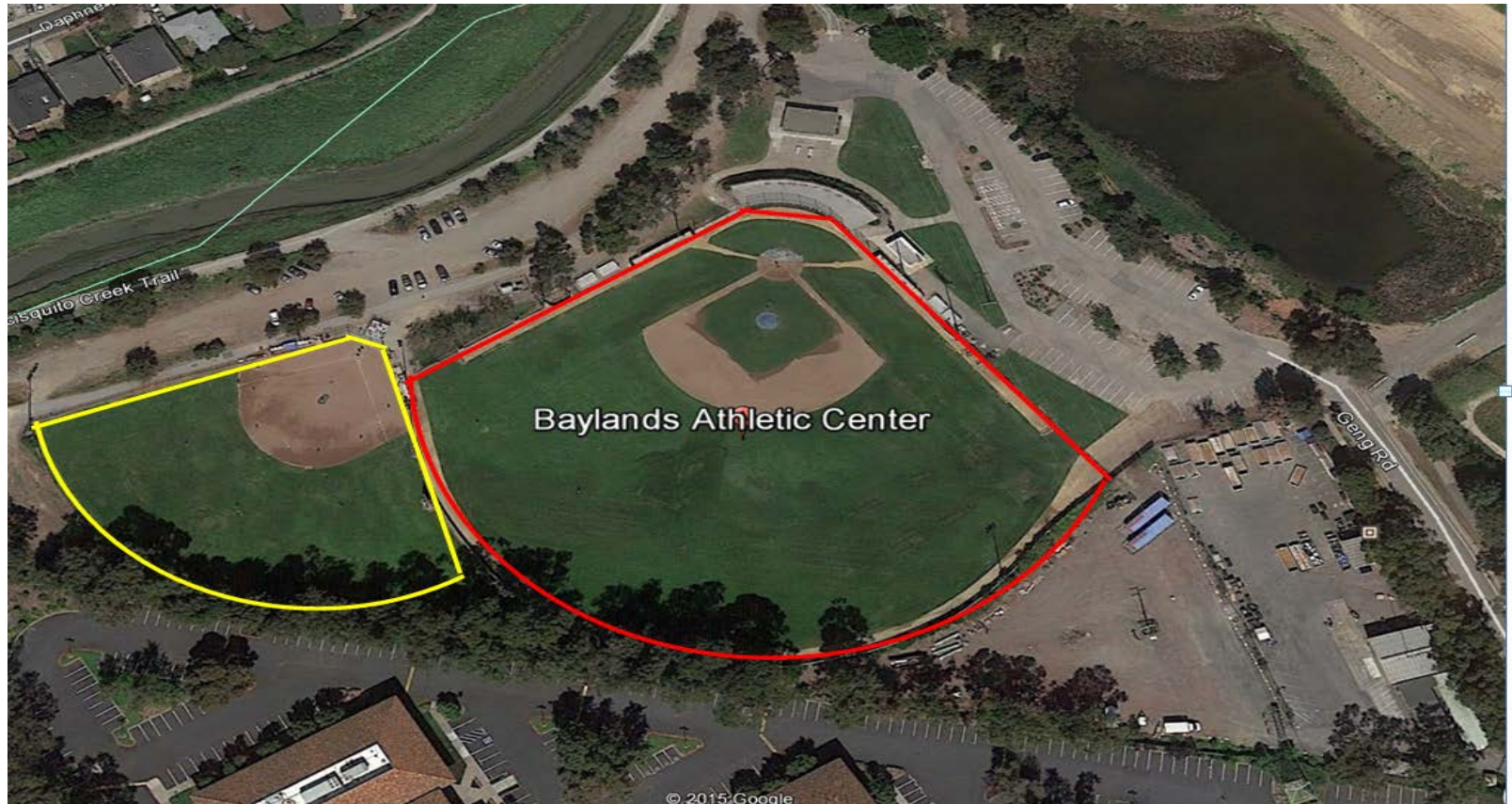
Proposed size: 2.09 acres. Estimate fencing costs: \$21,350



Baylands Athletic Center

Red Area: proposed size: 3.27 acres. Fencing costs: \$1,000

Yellow Area: Proposed size: 1.3 acres. Fencing costs: \$1,000



Hoover Park

Red area: .96 acres; Fencing costs: \$4,000
Yellow area: 1.17 acres. Fencing costs: \$18,775



ATTACHMENT B

METRICS FOR EVALUATION

Listed below is how we will be monitoring activity and ways with which we will gather the pertinent information:

1. Place comment box on site with pen and cards for information gathering and/or post an email address to send in comments.
2. Spot monitor on site during designated off leash hours to track compliance.
3. Poll participating dog owners on site about off leash opportunity:
 - a. How did participants get to off leash location? Walk, drive, other?
 - b. How often are participants using the off leash opportunity (daily, once a week, etc.).
 - c. Is the location desirable? How far from their residence?
4. How compliant are dog owners on dog waste clean up?
5. What is the condition of the field/grass after the off leash pilot (take “before” photos to establish baseline and track with additional photos monthly.)
6. What type and amount of additional maintenance and costs are required to keep field/grass in proper condition? Weekly, monthly?
7. How many off leash dog owners are participating weekly. (How will this data be obtained? Staff can do a monthly count when they take photos. Perhaps Dog Owners Group could keep sign-ins or provide spot counts. Maybe Commissioners?)
8. What is the nature of the complaints, if any? How many complaints per week, per month, during the six- month pilot? (Daren will track via an excel spreadsheet). How will the Commission decide how many complaints is too many?
9. What additional city staff and outside vendors (waste clean up service) are required with regard to hours, costs associated with keeping off leash dog hours?
10. How cooperative is the Palo Alto Dog Owners Group in self -policing violators of off leash dog rules?
11. How do we handle enforcement of non-compliance?
12. How do we provide notice of field closures? Add field closure hotline to signage?

ATTACHMENT C

RULES OF USE

1. Dogs are permitted off leash ONLY Monday thru Friday, 8:00am-10:00am in this designated location ONLY.
2. Dogs must be licensed, vaccinated, and wearing a collar with ID.
3. Dogs must be leashed when entering and leaving the off leash area.
4. Dogs in heat or under 4 months of age are not permitted in off-leash area.
5. Dog owner must be in control of dog(s) at all times. Aggressive dogs must leave the off leash area immediately.
6. Dog waste must be picked up. Please dispose of dog waste in the containers provided.
7. Do not leave dogs unattended at any time.
8. All dog bites must be reported to the City of Palo Alto Animal Services.
9. Supervise small children during off leash hours.
10. No more than three dogs per owner allowed during off leash hours.
11. No food or alcohol is allowed during designated off leash dog hours.
12. If there is a field closure there will be no off lease dog usage until City of Palo Alto notifies the field is re-opened.

The City of Palo Alto assumes no liability for the users of this area. Use these facilities at your own risk.

Attachment D

Notes from Public Meeting

Topic: Pilot Shared Use Dog Park

Date: July 30, 2015 6:30pm to 7:30pm

Location: Lucy Stern Ballroom

- 75 people in attendance – 4 commissioners & 4 staff
- Why 8-10 Monday-Friday? Teacher is excluded from use. Include early evening after recreation activities.
- Big need for after work crowd.
- What about using the former landfill for an off-leash dog park? Very large area that could be used for a dog park.
- Anything around the Baylands will disturb the wildlife. Dogs off-leash around the former landfill (currently Byxbee Park) will disturb the natural wildlife.
- Real opportunity at Byxbee Park. People and animals can enjoy. Another small fenced yard in a park will get too much use and it will smell bad. 60% of households have dogs. The time is now to plan the use of Byxbee Park to be fenced and have multi-use.
- Another resident concerned about birds.

- There is very little life on Byxbee right now, so the time is now to establish a dog area to not disturb the flyway.
- Resident likes the ideas. South Palo Alto has the only dog recreation. He would like something in North Palo Alto.
- Another resident would like the after work hours, which could be after recreation times.
- Another resident likes the idea of after hours. A dog friendly neighborhood park area or areas. Reduce people driving to locations. Every park should have a designated area.
- Greer Park is a great choice for shared use. Lots of dogs in the neighborhood. No real place to go. The existing dog park is a joke. The current dog park is being used by people out of town. Phase 4 area could be used that wouldn't conflict with athletic field use.
- We need large area as well as small neighborhood off-leash areas so that dogs can socialize.
- The least offensive would be the Baylands Athletic Center. The birds aren't near the athletic fields. Byxbee Park could be used where people walk the trails. Doesn't see the need to have big and small. They should be able to socialize together in one area.
- Just having morning hours won't satisfy the need. Fields are used by sports teams until sunset. Children are environmentally sensitive and important, too. Shared use has a lot of problems in respect to effective use. Other parks in the region with shared use dog parks do not have good success. Seen lots of evidence of their shared use dog parks having harmful effects on the condition of the fields.

- No situation is perfect. Nealon Park (shared use site) can do the professional clean up service for \$6K. At the end of the day, holes and cleanup is minimal.
- After the shared use plan is over, maybe we can try to choose a site that best for everyone and get a stable, dedicated dog park open all hours..
- Resident doesn't agree to use baseball fields at Baylands. Recipe for disaster for the kids.

North Palo alto needs a dog park. Mitchell and Hoover exist for south Palo Alto. North Palo Alto needs a walking distance park. Why not Johnson park?

Hoover Park baseball field is already separated. The yellow portion on the map (the area outside of the baseball field) could be only for dog parks.
- There are lots of kids in Palo Alto. People are able to walk in a park safely because there are so many dogs. Hoover Park is always being used for everything. After work, people that live nearby want to be able to interact with their kids and play sports. Unfortunately, kids and big dogs don't always interact well.
- Segregating large and small dogs. There are tragic examples of not doing this. Shoreline Park has good results with separated areas for large and small dogs.
- Lots of dog owners let their dogs run up to people on bikes, don't clean up after their dogs.

This will be an attraction for people to come out and let their dogs run out. Parents have to be concerned with off leash dogs when visiting a park. Small dog parks smell bad.

- Supports the idea of people being able to walk their dogs to their local park. Space for dogs in several parks would be a good idea. One park is not appropriate. Dogs need an open space to run. Comparable to humans on 101 during rush hour. Times of usage are important in order to have a shared use space with wider flexibility. Supports morning and evening times. In order to establish the concept of sharing, not every single park has to have a sport held in it. We have enough parks to designate a non-sports field for dog users. Equal number of dog owner and non-dog owners. Statistics show that there is a greater risk of being hit by a ball than bit by a dog.
- Morning hours will be very tough for parents to make it. It's not dog owners vs. kids or parents.
- A lot of the tension happens when there are shorter hours in the day and when its dark.
- Dogs, children and dog owners should share. Parks should have an area for just kids, and an area just for kids and dogs.
- We have to find a balance where kids can recreate safely.
- A lot of people can't get there from 8am-10am, but it doesn't mean that every place should be open all day long. Not every park should serve every need. Some in the morning, some in the evening.
- Dog group founder appreciates the meeting. Advocate for a decent size fence for dogs of different sizes. He thinks in the long term it will be better, and he would like an experiment.

It's important to have morning and evening hours so everyone isn't trying to get in at once.

Hoover works well to use existing dog park as small dog and the new for bigger dogs.

- There should be a place for dogs in each park on the power point presentation (Greer, Hoover, and Baylands Athletic Center). There should be a fence that comes up and down so that people can share.
- Experience at Nealon with shared use dog park. Her son has been on a baseball team for years. At least once per week he steps in poop. Nealon is a failure. In Palo Alto, the off leash law isn't enforced now, so will they start enforcing them now? Having dogs on sports fields has huge implications. Field damage, potholes, dog waste. There are also other associated costs-- will the city pick up the cost of repairing the fields that are damaged by dogs?
- CPA has poor enforcement. Animal services said they cannot routinely patrol the parks to enforce the leash law. Repair costs have not been factored into the numbers shared tonight. It is challenging to re-grow grass in dead areas of the turf.
- Seattle has large dog parks two/five acre dog parks. Parks with small and larger dog areas are more successful. Dedicate space and have flexible hours. Have you reached out to others that have had success with dedicated dog parks?
- To hear there will not be enforcement from Animal Services in concerning. Also concern that such large portions of the parks are being proposed for shared use. Concerned of additional

traffic and how dogs are let out of vehicles off leash. His own children have been affected by dog use and owners are not very apologetic.

- Have we considered Seale Park? Used for soccer and grass is clumpy. It would be better since it has three sides. Is noise a real issue? Can the hours be pushed to 6am? Or extend the hours in the evening so that afternoon users could use park lights.
- COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS- Hetterley- There aren't many parks with a lot of acreage. In order to dedicate a park year round, it would most likely be a smaller park. Would it be better to have a smaller dedicated dog park or limited hours in a larger site?
- Alma and El Camino slated for being a park? Why was the area taken off the table? We were not allowed to develop it due to creek setback.
- Bags at the sites?
- Byxbee has an endangered species there, the burrowing owl and ridgeway rail.
- Sometimes dog walkers park in front of residents' driveways at Hoover Park.
- Byxbee would be a good site if it were fenced off.
- An apartment resident adjacent to Hoover Park noted that the apartments accept dogs so its beneficial for many of the people who live in the apartments. If there were lights at Hoover it would allow longer use of the site.
- Neither choice of a small dedicated dog park, or limited shared use site is a good idea and a vote isn't right.

- Small spaces and too many dogs in small spaces is not good.
- Are we talking about the pilot program or the whole solution? Opportunities for big areas are limited.
- Likes the idea of large spaces. Also likes the idea of large areas to build communities.
- Agrees that small areas can be good dog parks, but if its as small as .1 acres it is not worth it.
- People come up to dog owners, elderly, families and ask if they can play and pet the dogs. A form of socialization and community.
- The City of Mountain view has made ALL of their parks shared use parks at some time during the day.
- Mountain views off leash 6am to 10am and its not the entire park and its away from the playground area.
- Expand the thinking outside the box of other available locations . EX. Lucie Stern can be turned into a dog park with some fencing. Partner with companies in PA with lawn areas to use their properties as off leash dog use.
- Loma Verde area behind Sterling Canal near utilities property where they keep their stuff. Dogs are compatible with native plants. Some teams are not from Palo Alto and excluding Palo Alto residents to use the parks in their city. Greer Park especially being used by out of towners. Real unfriendly place.

Additional Comments made after the public meeting

-Comment re: Greer Park. It's right around the corner from PAAS (Palo Alto Animal Services) and once they get new management in charge perhaps that person would allow the dog socializer volunteers to bring adoptable dogs to the dog park to mingle with neighbors. That kind of visibility is an incredible tool for getting the word out about shelter dogs.

I also like the idea of enclosing the field part of Seale Park for shared use. This park already has 3 sides enclosed and many people take their dogs there to play and socialize.

During the open comment section I mentioned there is a part of Greer Park that is essentially unused that could be idea for a dog park. It's the section at the corner of the W Bayshore and Colorado. It's sort of rolling hillocks with a few trees and several picnic benches. The only activity I have ever seen on the grassy area is people playing with their dogs. I think you mentioned it is a new area (I don't know as I have only lived here 4 years). It is called Scott Meadow after Charles Scott. (BTW he lives down the street from me and I have even met him.)

This area could be enclosed perhaps including one of the picnic table sections and excluding the other. It's far away from any homes, and is a friendly looking spot as opposed to the strip on the other side of Colorado. It could even be designated as the large dog park and the small one that already exists in Greer Park could become the small dog park. While that existing dog park gets very little use, I believe it would become more attractive if this part of the park brought more dogs with their people.

-Your staff were doing a good job of taking notes, so we are not going to comment on everything brought up, but we would like to summarize our main thoughts subsequent to the meeting.

1. While there are pros and cons to any program, we still feel that it is important to have at least one Shared Use Dog Park in Palo Alto until more permanent and dedicated, larger dog parks can be developed. Two or three would be better than one, but we would settle for one at this time. The one with the fewest cons appears to be Hoover Park outside the baseball field. This will detract the least from existing recreation for children and others. The fencing cost is small compared to the cost of acquiring any land in Palo Alto. Without both morning and evening hours, any shared use dog park will concentrate too many dogs into too little time and space.

2. The need for dog recreation in Palo Alto north of Oregon Expressway will not be met by any of these proposals, so the highest priority for any future dog parks in Palo Alto should be in the north. As we have discussed before, a relatively easy and low cost facility could be an artificial turf park within Rinconada Park. It could avoid all of the negative factors mentioned by the concerned citizens who showed up at the meeting, both those for more/better dog parks, and those not so sure.

3. In spite of the concerns about birds and endangered species, we feel that a portion of Bixby Park should be fenced and set aside for a new dog park. A fenced area would still mean a net positive gain for wildlife in the Palo Alto bayfront at Bixby Park. This should be done in a manner to minimize adverse impact of the park on wildlife.

4. Palo Alto Dog Owners stands ready to work with you and your staff in the development of strong rules and strategies to minimize the impact of a shared use park on other park uses and to make our facilities a model for best practices. We are willing to hold meetings and publicize the rules to maximize compliance.

On behalf of Palo Alto Dog Owners, thank you again for putting on such a well-run meeting last evening. There were lots of excellent comments.

-1. Tables and benches in current dog parks: I appreciate the idea of having those, but what this means in reality is that dog parks attract people who sit at the tables or on the benches and play cards or chat and not supervise their dogs. I see people in Hover park dog park every day reading on the benches while their dogs are left unsupervised. It's even worse in Mitchell Park where people play cards at the tables rather than pay attention to their dogs. We've had many encounters with aggressive dogs left to their own devices. Because of this, we don't go to any of the dog parks any more and instead use the shared fields off leash. The irony is that people that have their dogs off leash "illegally" have well trained dogs that hardly ever cause problems.

2. I think we all need to be tolerant to each group of stakeholders. What nobody brought up tonight is that baseball at Hover park is incredibly loud, much louder than the dogs. There is also litter left behind every time and parking is a nightmare during baseball hours. Every interest group comes with their challenges and we need to be acknowledge all of it.

3. Shared hours: I'm really torn with this one. I like the idea per se, but I'm worried that this will mean people start calling animal control 5 min after the off-leash window runs out because they can. People are very opinionated and I'm worried that this would create an opportunity that would backfire on the dog community.

4. Small dog areas all over the city are a bad idea. We need large areas where big dogs can run and be exercised plus the small areas we have right now are already overrun with little dogs and owners that don't supervise them. Separating small from big dogs is a good idea, we have met lots of aggressive little dogs in Palo Alto.

5. It really comes down to this: there are very responsible dog owners in Palo Alto, who need space to run with their dogs and exercise them (people at Hoover park even pick up other dogs' poop if they see it). But there also totally irresponsible owners who ruin it for everyone. Perhaps a "good citizen dog pass" could help weeding out irresponsible dog owners and they would not be allowed in shared spaces? Also, nobody needs to worry about their children if the dog owner is responsible and the dog well trained (mind you, children should also be trained how to and always supervised when approaching a dog!). Howard Hoffman has set up a good group of people already if this could be used as a starting point.

6. A city in Italy has created a DNA library from all dogs in the city and whenever there is poop left without cleaning up, they take a sample and test which dog it was. The owner then has to pay for the DNA test and a clean up fee. This is extreme and probably unnecessary in Palo Alto, but could perhaps ease everyone's fear about people not cleaning up after their dog. I'd sign up for this voluntarily as a gesture of good will.

-I owned a Vizsla for 14.5 years. He passed away last year due to cancer. Vizslas, German ShortHairs, Weimeraners are all hunting dogs. They are most happy being off-leash and looking for birds. Vizslas were bred to hunt, point and flush quail and pheasant. They are extremely high energy and remain that way their entire lives. Joey was my first and only dog that I raised and trained from a puppy. I learned a lot about dogs and dog behavior by reading, training with various trainers and being consistent with my dog.

My biggest problem was finding a big off-leash area to run my dog. The dog pens in Palo Alto are way too small. My dog was most happy investigating his environment. When he was a puppy I would bring him over to the Mitchell Park dog park and it was a nice place for him to socialize with other dogs. However as soon as he turned into an adult dog he was no longer interested in going, preferring to be off-leash.

So, I looked for areas to run him, finding the Woodside Horse Park (which I paid \$500.00/year just to walk him around the perimeter of the park) and a dog walker that would drive him over to the beach for a 3 hour run. That was \$35.00/time. Overnights with the dog walker was \$60.00 per night. I invested a lot of time getting him to be a socialized dog. However, he still turned out to be an anxious, reactive dog and I soon found I could not trust him in certain circumstances. One such instance was at Gunn High School when Joey decided to chase a person in an electric wheelchair who was on the walking path by the school. I knew then I could not take him there off-leash unless there were barriers. Joey became very protective of me which I could do nothing to stop.

I think the exercising of dogs in Palo Alto need to be comprehensive. I think that the more places you have to exercise dogs then less dogs in each location. So, there should be morning/evening

times at most neighborhood parks, and there should be a dedicated dog park that is so big you can walk for an hour in it. There is no place for people to walk their dogs off-leash in a secured area without bikes and horses interfering. When you get a group of people in a park or a dog park they have a tendency to ignore their dogs behavior because they are too busy talking to each other. When you are in a secured dog area, you can be walking and training your dog at the same time. I used this approach to train Joey in recall. I used a whistle and he was very good at coming to me.

The old dump at the Baylands is a perfect place for an off-leash site. It is rustic (dogs don't care that there no lawn), it is fenced and close to bathrooms. It is also relatively close to people in Palo Alto. I don't think there are any birds nesting in it as well. You don't have to worry about dogs digging it up or the smell or the noise. A sign at the entrance telling people that it is a dog exclusive park and that young children probably shouldn't be in there.

Athletic fields and very small and busy parks probably should not have any off-leash activity as it seems to be too stressful for the neighbors and dogs have a tendency to dig and leave poop on the field. People are not particularly consistent in cleaning up after their dog.

The biggest problem with dogs are their owners. People just don't understand dogs and their behavior. They will ignore them when they are annoying people or other dogs or when they are wanting to fight other dogs. These problems can crop up anywhere because people don't have a good understanding of dogs. I have seen kids chased by dogs because they started running and they were small (dogs have a strong prey drive) and I have seen fights between owners because of bad dog behavior. I have seen people ignore the responsibility of cleaning up after their dog (a lot!). So at all the parks you should have bags available and a place to dispose of the dog poop. It would be nice to offer classes in owning a dog. In fact that would be a good thing to teach children in school (how to approach dogs or dog etiquette).

The one last thing that there should be in Palo Alto is consistent availability of police officers in case you need someone. I have heard of fights at the dog park where a man picked up a black and tan coonhound and threw it to the ground. Police were called but they got there too late. The man had fled. So, having a protocol on when to call someone would be good.

Well, I hope that this information helps. Not every dog is a ball dog that just runs after balls. Dogs don't need a nice lawn to run on. They don't care where they are. Dogs that are untrained need an enclosed area to keep them from getting into trouble. They also need an area just dedicated to dogs — only.

Attachment E

Potential Near-term Dedicated Dog Parks

Colorado Utilities Substation -landscaped area

This grass area is approximately 1 acre and is fenced on one side. It is located across the street from Greer Park.

Size: Approximately 1 acre

Cost: Approximately \$15,000.



Mitchell Park Expanded Dog Park

The area outlined in red is the existing dog park
The area outlined in green is the proposed expanded dog park area.

Size: Increase the size from .56 acres to 1.21 acres.

Cost: Approximately \$9,575.

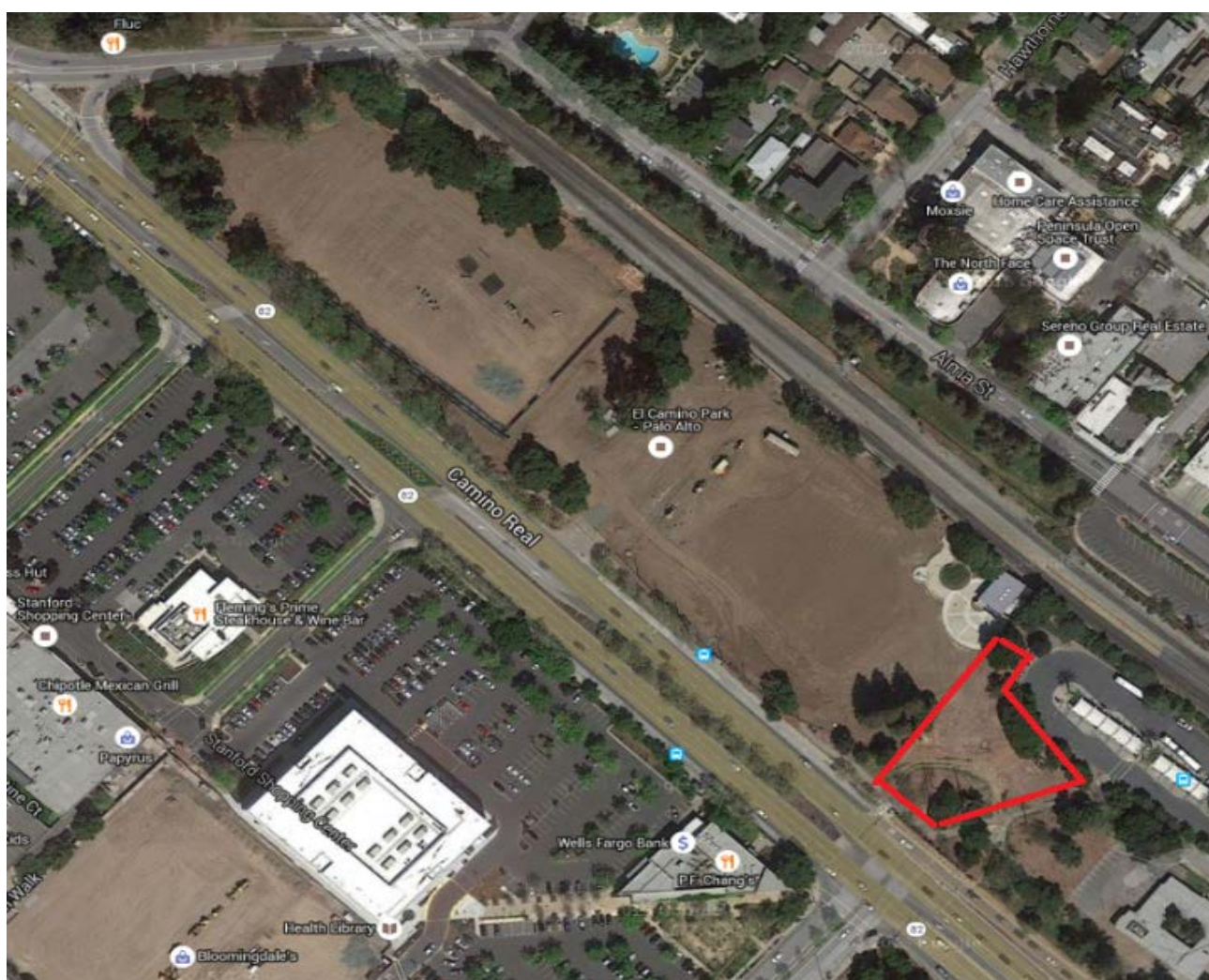


El Camino Park- Southern Undeveloped Area

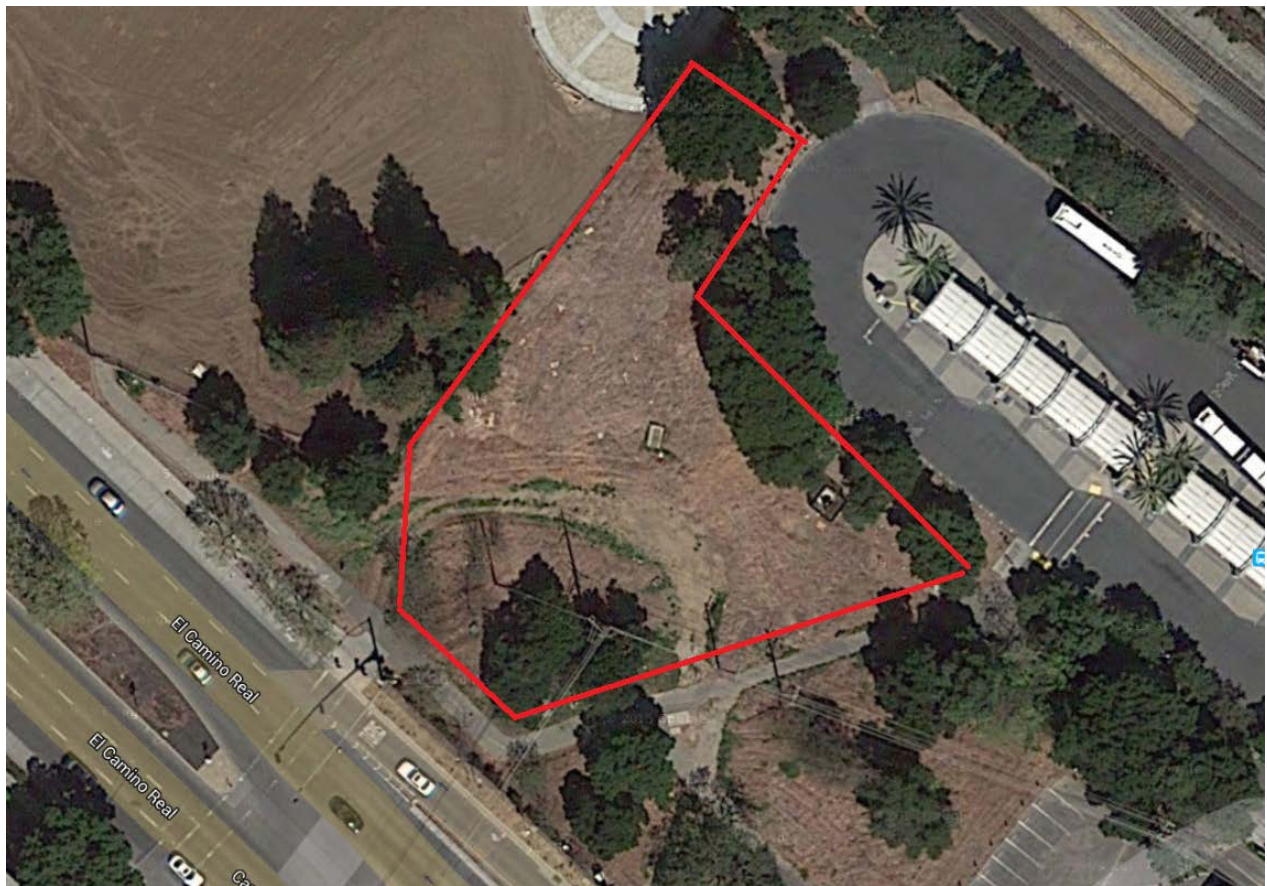
The area outlined in red is the potential dog park location.

Size: Approximately .77 acres

Cost: Approximately \$15,000



Another photo of the potential El Camino Park Dog Park



Taken from the Approved Minutes of October 27, 2015

3. Discussion on the Shared Use Dog Park Pilot Program.

Daren Anderson: Just one second. Let me pull the materials.

Chair Reckdahl: Okay. We have some speaker cards. If anyone has not filled out a speaker card for this, please do so now.

Mr. Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson with Open Space, Parks and Golf. I'm here tonight to seek your guidance regarding the shared-use dog parks, basically your feedback on how we're going to meet the community's dog park needs. At the last Commission meeting, I had provided an update on this topic where we covered the vast majority of the background in this staff report. I'll gloss over that and move on to the discussion section. As I mentioned in my previous update, Staff had hosted a community meeting July 30, 2015 to collect feedback specifically on the shared-use concept. The vast majority of the participants were dog owners advocating for dog parks and generally expressed dissatisfaction with the limited hours. Our proposal had Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at these sites, Greer Park, Baylands Athletic Center and Hoover Park. The feedback was that morning hours just aren't enough. That's not going to be adequate. To be successful, (a), you've got to make them morning and evening at least, and it's got to be more than one site. One site's inadequate to be successful. There were a small number of participants who attended, who were park neighbors, who said "We don't want a dog park near our house. There's parking issues. There's dog waste issues. There's unwanted confrontations with children and dogs off-leash." There were also some participants who voiced concerns about potential impacts to the fields themselves. These are athletic users saying, "There's incompatibility between having dogs off-leash and a contained athletic facility." One of the meeting participants mentioned that City of Mountain View had recently made a number of their parks off-leash areas. After this public meeting, the ad hoc committee did some additional research. One was to verify what our current recreational use is brokered at those three sites, Greer, Hoover and the Baylands Athletic Center, and determine if we'd have conflict between evening use dog off-leash and athletic use. Unsurprisingly, there was conflicts at all three sites with the exception or at least the least amount of impact for the yellow area in Hoover Park. That outfield area was the least impacted if we had evening and morning off-leash hours, if we did a pilot there. The other kind of follow-up research that staff had done was to reach out to Mountain View, talk to their staff, and see what lessons they learned from their entire experience with these off-leash areas that they recently instituted. My interview of staff brought out some interesting facts. One was that they started this pilot program in June

2014, made it permanent in May 2015. Only one of their nine off-leash areas is a dedicated dog park; that's Shoreline Park. The other eight are off-leash areas that is unfenced. Only one of those eight is on an athletic field. The rest are kind of passive sections of a park. The majority of the complaints that they received were about non-observance with their hours and days, that people were bringing their dogs when they weren't really allowed to or outside of the areas that they were allowed to. There were also concerns from parents who had off-leash dogs approach their children. Mountain View's got a contract with a security firm that performs enforcement on two of their sites. Their staff explained that the success of the program really depended on that enforcement component. They also explained a little bit of the process they went through, that their parks and recreation commission had not advocated for doing a pilot program, but rather said, "You should research and look for dedicated sites." Their Council directed staff to move ahead with the one-year pilot. After the pilot which had some mixed results, some very positive, some against the program, the commission said, "We should extend this pilot for a year with additional enforcement." Their Council disagreed and said please proceed in making it permanent. Staff recently learned some additional news about Menlo Park's experience with shared-use dog parks. Since 2005, the softball field at Nealon Park has been a shared-use site. That is from Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Recently the Menlo Park Recreation Commission identified some concerns about the field conditions at the site. Their City Council concurred and basically said that the joint use was not optimal for either user group and approved a CIP to find a dedicated spot. This November, they're having a public meeting to see if they can relocate what they had as that shared-use site for a dedicated spot somewhere either in that park or another. Some of these challenges that we've encountered, both in our public meeting and some of our outreach to other agencies, led the ad hoc committee to explore opportunities for new or expanded dog parks that could be implemented quickly without investing too much money nor waiting necessarily for the Master Plan to be completed. Give me just one second to pull up the ... This was in your staff report. This first site is across from Greer Park; it's called Colorado Avenue Utility Substation. This is the landscaped area just outside it. It's about an acre, .96 acres to be precise. It would require about 600 feet of fencing which would cost about \$15,000. There's parking available on the street side, and it's close proximity to neighborhoods. There are a few challenges with this site. The Utilities Department has informed us that they may need this site for future expansion, that is, they're constrained on the land they have and there's a possibility they might need to use this and they're reluctant to give it up. They also had some concerns about security. This is an area where the City gets a tremendous amount of its power. Having people very close to the fence line was potentially an issue for them. Lastly, the Utilities Department pays a significant amount of money to lease that land. There'd be an impact to the General Fund; if we were to take it over for a dog park. They'd no longer be contributing that

money. However, we are going to remain diligent in looking to see if this is still an option. CSD will continue to pursue it. This next site is Mitchell Park. The idea is can we expand Mitchell Park. The red polygon is our existing dog park. It is about .56 acres. We, with very minimal costs, could extend the fence line to that green polygon, which takes you from .56 to 1.21 acres. This would only cost about \$9,500. The last site we're looking at—these three sites are not exhaustive. These are three that the ad hoc committee and staff could find that seemed to fit the paradigm of not very expensive, could be implemented potentially quickly if we clear some hurdles. This last site is El Camino Park. This is undeveloped area of parkland just outside. Of course, the photo here is not that helpful. Just to the left of that red polygon that you see is the softball field. There's a fence line that separates it. That's kind of the park proper to the left. This undeveloped area is just largely mulch, and there's utilities on site. If we fenced off this little area, you would gain about .77 acres of a dog park at about \$15,000 cost. We did reach out to Utilities and found out they didn't have a conflict. We could work around their access needs. However, Planning advised staff that there are plans for a future transit improvement that may incorporate changes to this area. CSD staff is in communication with Planning to see if we can work around that. That concludes my presentation. I defer to the ad hoc committee to see if they have anything they'd like to add.

Commissioner Hetterly: Sure. I would just add, what we're really looking for today is feedback from you all on what should be our next step. Should we be continuing to think about a shared-use option, in which case Hoover seems the only place that's really workable in terms of the hours and for trying to set it up for success. As you can see looking at the picture, that does take up a big chunk of the park for some hours of the days. We'd like your thoughts on that. Also, these three sites, as Daren said, we're not looking to preempt the Master Plan process in any way, but we're really trying to find something that we can do in the near term to expand our off-leash dog opportunities. These seem some places where, short of a CIP since they're a much smaller investment, we may be able to open something at least for the interim until we're able to find something more permanent or maybe one of these possibilities could become a permanent option in the future. On this one at El Camino Park in particular, like I said, all of them we're not proposing any improvements aside from fencing and a gate and a poop bag station, maybe a bench. Who knows. They could be interim projects that could be easily removed later for future use. This one, this Planning project, they're talking about extending Quarry Road through to the transit center, which of course will have all sorts of its own issues since that's parkland. It doesn't seem like something that they're going to break ground on in the next six months, so why wouldn't we go ahead and use that space? I'd like any reaction from you all (crosstalk).

Chair Reckdahl: Who owns the transit center itself?

Commissioner Crommie: Do we need community input?

Chair Reckdahl: Yeah, we will. I wanted to get one clarification. The transit center there, just to the right of the red line, who controls that?

Mr. Anderson: I'll have to look into that and get back to you.

Chair Reckdahl: Is that City land do you know?

Mr. Anderson: I don't.

Chair Reckdahl: We have some speakers here. First, we have Howard Hoffman. Howard, you have two minutes.

Howard Hoffman: Pardon me?

Chair Reckdahl: You have two minutes.

Mr. Hoffman: Thank you very much to the staff and to the Commission for at least recognizing that if we're not going to go ahead with a shared-use facility, that we really need at least some sort of interim dog park improvements until the Master Plan. We're optimistic that that's going to identify multiple locations. Palo Alto dog owners would be happy to see all of these. The people that have dogs running off-leash right now all over Palo Alto are not an asset to the community. It would be an asset to have one or more of these sites enclosed whether it's the shared-use facility at Hoover Park or any of these. We do appreciate that you're working on this and recognize that it's long overdue. We just hope that—we're not going to endorse any one particular option. The one other option that I would like to hold out there, which I didn't see in here, there's the part of Rinconada Park. Of course, the dog use facilities are especially in north Palo Alto. Rinconada Park back by the power substation there, there's an area I think in the Master Plan for that park that was identified for bocce ball perhaps. I think we've got bocce ball somewhere else. It's a small area, but it could be with artificial turf. We don't have any artificial turf parks being discussed here. That does give you another option over dirt or decomposed granite or over grass. Grass needs to be fairly large. I think that some of you are familiar with the Mountain View artificial turf park for dogs, and that's worked out really well. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you, Howard. Next we have Amarad Acharia.

Amarad Acharia: Hi. I'm Amarad Acharia. I'd like to appreciate and thank the staff for taking the effort to put this together. The two things I would like to point. Centralized parks, wonderful to have them when there's nothing else available, but they take up the opportunity of intercommunity socialization. I mean, largely I meet my neighbors when I have kids and I take them to the park or if I have a dog and I go with the dog for walking. Those are largely the only times I get to meet my neighbors. Otherwise, I'm just living isolated and have relationships elsewhere. Having parks that are within communities provide that opportunities. It comes with all the other constraints; I understand that. We do have parks, Rinconada for example, for people living on the northern side of town. That does have some room that could be taken advantage of to provide such an opportunity. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Shani Kleinhaus, you are next.

Shani Kleinhaus: Thank you. I'm going to speak as a resident who owns three dogs right now. One of them is probably not going to last much longer, and then I'll say something about environmental issues wearing my environmental hat. First, I find that dog parks provide a huge service to the community, especially when there is no fence around them. I have to say that it brings the community to the park. It brings people together, and it creates an opportunity for people whose children are already not at home. They don't socialize with their kids; they socialize with their dogs. That is very evident in our neighborhood. There is a need for more dog parks, for sure. I do want to say a few things about the one park at the Baylands that was proposed here. I have concerns about that. I've had other people from the environmental group have concerns about bringing dogs there. One reason is that you'd have to drive there, and it's not really a wonderful idea to drive anywhere these days if we don't have to. If you can provide the service in the City, it's better. The other thing is that unless there is somebody to actually monitor what happens and how people behave and whether they take the dogs then for a walk along the creek, then that could be a huge impact to that creek, especially as now the San Francisquito Creek is supposed to go through a flood control and habitat restoration project. Hopefully it will go through sooner or later. When it does, I don't want to have to look at an existing condition of dogs already there because this project moved forward before the creek was in place. When it goes to any kind of additional analysis, the dogs will already be there. I know it's already been through CEQA, but still I think that that's not a very good selection for a dog park unless there is huge monitoring of how people behave and that they don't go on the levee with dogs off-leash, which they already do anyway, but that just brings more people to do that. I think that the less risk of inviting unauthorized use to a remote location may not be a good analysis unless you have data to support that. That is of concern.

Chair Reckdahl: Your time's up.

Ms. Kleinhaus: Also artificial turf, I don't know. You may like that park over there. I find it kind of yech.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Mot Huri, you're up next.

Mot Huri: Hi, good evening. We've only moved to Palo Alto about 2 1/2 years ago with a dog. Since he can't come to the meeting, this leash is him representing himself and his friends here. One of the lovely things about Palo Alto is almost everybody has a dog. I would like to thank you all for these wonderful proposals. There's only one potential problem here. I live in Crescent Park. Most of these are concentrated south of Oregon, Hoover, Greer, Mitchell. The one exception is Baylands, and she very articulately mentioned why it wouldn't be the best option. These proposals leave seven communities which would be Crescent Park, Community Center, Saint Francis, Professorville, University South, Leland Manor and Old Palo Alto, with no options to walk to a dog park. The reason we would like to walk is many. One is you get to meet people. I know more people from all over Crescent Park just by running into them and their dogs and our dogs interacting than I would normally had I moved to any other community. The second things is—this also reference to her concern—when you're around people you know, you behave better. I don't know why, but we do that. When we are in a park and there are neighbors and we're all there with our dogs, we are going to pick up and they are going to pick up, because we are being watched. The third thing is the Baylands, besides everything else, all of these communities would have to negotiate Embarcadero during commute hours to get there. We all know Embarcadero is a traffic nightmare with unenforceable speed limits and many other problems, very congested. I would like for you all to think about the possibility, given how many dogs exist here and given the benefits of allowing for areas where dogs and people can meet, I would like you all to think about putting in off-leash, fenced dog areas in all the major parks in the north side. Certainly Rinconada has the space for it, as does Pardee. If you can go ahead and find some space for it in either Johnson and Heritage as well, that would be great. More are better for many reasons. I don't know how close I am to running out on time, but Mitchell is the one good off-leash in Palo Alto, which means it gets lots of people and lots of dogs. There have been dog confrontations. All of that can be eased up if there are multiple alternatives. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Herb Borock is next. Irene Keene follows him.

Herb Borock: The first answer, Chair Reckdahl, is a question about El Camino Park. The land is owned by Stanford University and leased to Palo Alto. I believe the current lease runs to June 30, 2033. We have off-leash dog areas already,

except they're not legal. Because they're not legal, they don't get the intensive use you would have with an official, sanctioned dog park. I've been familiar with the area in Hoover Park, the turf area outside of the ball field that's used off-leash illegally. That park also has an official dog park, and there people with dogs use both of those and some use one or use the other. When the most people congregate is the hours when animal control is not working. It limits the number of people, the number of dogs that come there. If you're going to be having more dog parks, they should be in the north area of town, north of Oregon Expressway. They should be on neighborhood parks. El Camino Park and Rinconada Park are district parks. When you tried to have a dog park or a bathroom even in Eleanor Pardee Park, you saw the resistance. The woman from Crescent Park who thinks everyone's got a dog and her neighbors want to go to a neighborhood park and do that, she'll find very quickly that in north Palo Alto there'll be a lot of resistance to having more dog parks. If you want to do something for the community as a whole, then you're going to have to make that kind of decision. You should expect that it'll be more than just people who are in walking distance. People will drive to any of these parks. If you did, for example, try Hoover Park with that area delineated in yellow, you should put a very firm time limit because you'll very quickly find not only the intensive use but also all the damage and concerns that people have mentioned will then happen that are not happening now. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Our last speaker is Irene Keene.

Irene Keene: Hello. I also live in Crescent Park, but I'm on the edge of Community Center, so I'm in north Palo Alto. There are no dog parks anywhere near me. I have to get in my car and drive. We only have three dog parks in Palo Alto. It's crazy, only three. There's only one that's halfway decent which is the one at the big park, Mitchell. The one at Hoover is small; it's dirty; your dog gets filthy there in the summertime; in the wintertime the dog gets muddy because it turns into a mud puddle when there's rain. The other one is at Greer; that's a run. It's really narrow; it's kind of long, but it's also a mud pit. I love the dog park in Mountain View, the one that's got the fake grass. I mean, it's a little over the top, but I'll tell you what. It keeps your dog really clean. When it's wet out, grass gets wet. Your dog is going to be filthy because it gets a little wet on the feet, then he walks in dirt and it's a mess. I will get in my car and drive to Mountain View to keep my dog clean. Then I'm going to shop over there, because there's the nice Safeway there. Sometimes I go to Menlo Park, then I go to the Safeway in Menlo Park. You want people to stay in Palo Alto and spend their money in Palo Alto, get some dog parks in north Palo Alto please. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. That was the last comment, so now we'll move on to Commissioners.

Commissioner Lauing: Chair Reckdahl?

Chair Reckdahl: Yes.

Commissioner Lauing: Just a process question. Would it make sense to just go quickly around for questions before we came to conclusions just to make sure everything was answered?

Chair Reckdahl: Okay. Do you have any questions?

Commissioner Lauing: I do.

Chair Reckdahl: Fire away.

Commissioner Lauing: I'd actually like to ask questions about the permanent ones first, the permanent options that have been identified. For example, Mitchell Park, there's no cons listed here. By the way, I thought this whole ad hoc report was terrific, very detailed, very thorough. Good job by the ad hoc and staff. It's just really, really helpful. Mitchell, there's no cons listed, and the cost is \$9,500. I always think of cost as a con.

Commissioner Crommie: Con is location.

Mr. Anderson: I should clarify. The pros and cons list were conducted for our shared-use ones. When we put together our list of potential dedicated parks, we hadn't done the pro and con analysis. It was just preliminary. We haven't quite resolved a lot of the other potential challenges like the substation (crosstalk) we didn't get to the pros and cons for this one.

Commissioner Lauing: This one seems to get to wow, we can get a real-size park here in a way that your analysis, the ad hoc's analysis, it'd be nice to have an acre and to be able to add that much—if there really are any cons and there's \$9,500 as the cost, that seems like a way to get some—like we created in the Baylands. What did Council say? We created land out there by doing that. You might be able to create a big dog park here.

Rob de Geus: Can I just comment on that?

Commissioner Lauing: Sure.

Mr. de Geus: There's always going to be tradeoffs and some pros and cons. I haven't been out there recently. That area, people do sit on that grassy area. It's

sort of a hilly area. It's a nice place to just lie down on the grass and relax. I see people do that all the time, so that's one tradeoff that we have to consider.

Commissioner Lauing: Your point is an important point for all of this discussion. The public, some of whom spoke tonight, always need to know that there's a tradeoff. If you've got a dog there, you're not kicking a ball, you're not lying in the grass, and so on. That's part of our challenge with this whole issue Citywide. With respect to both Colorado Avenue and El Camino, the issue of there may be a future need, in and of itself doesn't seem too compelling to me as a con, because we can use it now. I guess my question back is how long do you think it would take to resolve that situation for either one of those? Yes, you might need it later, but as we know it takes time and it could be a couple of years before they need it, Let's be active with it, would be one approach.

Mr. Anderson: That's certainly the position that staff is taking. The conversations for both of those sites are ongoing right now.

Commissioner Lauing: I mean, I know this is a little bit unfair. Do you think this is going to be resolved in a month or 12 months or ...

Mr. de Geus: I don't think we have an answer. We're trying to get the answer to that. We have the same question, Commissioner Lauing. One of the things we've heard for this location here from Utilities staff is the concern that once you provide that service, say this is a dog park even if it's temporary, it's very hard to take it away once you've provided it. They've expressed that concern.

Commissioner Lauing: The other side of it is if we don't do it all for two years ...

Mr. de Geus: I know. That's what we ...

Commissioner Lauing: We have some blank space there that looks compelling. Just to be sure about the security concern issue there. Was it just getting too close to the electrical facilities? Is that what you mean?

Mr. Anderson: That's what they voiced, yes. That was the Utilities staff. Security in terms of protecting the asset of the City's power.

Mr. de Geus: That's a particularly important power plant, not that I know much about it. What I've heard from the Utilities staff is—I asked them about this. How serious are these constraints that they're suggesting? This site is where all the electricity for Palo Alto comes through, into that particular location. They're especially sensitive to ...

Commissioner Lauing: Is it a two-way security concern? They're concerned that somehow the public is going to get in there and disrupt that or is it a concern that we don't want the public to be hurt? I just didn't (crosstalk).

Mr. de Geus: I think it's both. I do think it's both. It wasn't a complete shutdown; it can't happen. The Utilities staff were willing to in fact even meet with the ad hoc committee if they'd be interested in doing so. I think we'll pursue that.

Commissioner Lauing: I didn't quite get the concern about the amount of money. Again, it's just sitting there vacant, and there wouldn't be any change for that if they needed it back in five years. I didn't understand why that was a potential constraint.

Mr. de Geus: I don't know if this is it. Daren, I don't want to jump in. Utilities is an Enterprise Fund, so they pay rent for the land that they use. They're paying rent to the City's General Fund for the use of that land including that. Once it's used for a different purpose, not a utility purpose, then they no longer pay rent back to the City. There's a financial (crosstalk).

Commissioner Lauing: Legally or conveniently?

Mr. de Geus: It's just there. They ...

Commissioner Lauing: I don't want to take too much time. Another question I had is that in the summary many, many dog owners at that last large meeting, which I attended, said that the hours just don't work. Again, it's a debate with if that's all you could get, would you take a shared-use dog park with a couple of hours. I share that concern, because what we're trying to do with any pilot is basically do a test market of will this work in a lot of different ways. If you only test two hours or three hours on five days a week, we're just not testing anything that's very comprehensive relative to, as you would say with a product, to be able to roll it out. I wasn't on the ad hoc, so I don't have the level of detail. I was surprised that at Baylands, for example, there weren't Sunday nights between 4:00 and 8:00 in the summers that might be open. I don't think, from my recollection of Babe Ruth which I was involved with, that they play at that time. My question is, if we really strive, could we find some other segments of time to test different time segments besides 10:00 to 12:00 in the morning. Has the ad hoc already exhausted that?

Mr. Anderson: I'll defer to the Commissioners on that one.

Commissioner Hetterly: I would just answer on when the Baylands Athletic Center is used, they're telling us from 3:00 until 10:00 p.m., Monday through

Friday, it's booked. Weekends from 8:00 a.m. 'til 10:00 p.m. it's booked. That seemed to us to preclude joint use during those evening hours.

Commissioner Lauing: I'm surprised at the evening hours. I haven't worked on those schedules in a few years. Also in terms of the Babe Ruth, which is a big user of that, it's not 12 months out of the year.

Chair Reckdahl: They close down the field for how many months? Three months during the winter?

Mr. Anderson: Mm-hmm.

Chair Reckdahl: So no one can access the field just because of damage to the field. The field gets wet.

Commissioner Lauing: That makes sense.

Chair Reckdahl: During the non-closed, it's between Babe Ruth and other people that rent the field, it's brokered down there. It's pretty busy.

Commissioner Lauing: That was just one example. The question is do you feel like you've exhausted any options for evening walks. Basically, anybody who has a job, has an 8-5 job, is not going to be able to use this shared-use dog park.

Commissioner Hetterly: I think it's pretty clear to the ad hoc. Anyway, we concluded that Hoover was the only viable option of the three for a shared-use pilot that could handle those evening hours ...

Commissioner Knopper: The yellow.

Commissioner Hetterly: ... at the yellow part, outside that fence.

Commissioner Knopper: The stakeholders that use that said they would not use that part of the field. Now, part of the field they use sort of for practice, but if it was shared use with dogs, they wouldn't even put children on it at that point, because they'd be scared dogs would dig a hole and the kids ...

Commissioner Lauing: This is Hoover?

Commissioner Knopper: Yeah, outside the yellow portion. The baseball stakeholders said they just wouldn't use the yellow if we did ...

Commissioner Hetterly: They occasionally use it now, but it's not booked through our—I don't know (crosstalk).

Commissioner Knopper: For official practices.

Mr. Anderson: That's right.

Commissioner Hetterly: It's just informal use.

Commissioner Knopper: It's not official, but you use it to take kids out there to teach them technique or whatever. If we were to implement a pilot of shared-use, they wouldn't put kids out there.

Commissioner Lauing: Okay. Was the small field at Baylands the same way in terms of its usage?

Mr. Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Knopper: Mm-hmm.

Commissioner Lauing: No further questions.

Chair Reckdahl: Deirdre.

Commissioner Crommie: How come Sterling Canal didn't end up on your list of extra opportunities?

Mr. Anderson: It just wasn't a comprehensive list. As I mentioned, these three jumped out at us. Both because there was partial fencing there on all three of those that limited the cost to something that we could afford without waiting for a CIP. As soon as you need a new CIP, you're looking at a much longer timeframe. Once you're within the 20,000 and less category, it's something we could probably fund with our existing funds.

Commissioner Crommie: I have a problem with that actually, for generating a list that way. First of all, if you end up at Mitchell, there's already a dog park there. It seems like you're not even in line with the mandate to look for areas that are not served currently. If that's what you've come up with, it means you didn't look enough, as far as I'm concerned. I don't know if this is our comment section. I would just say that you're not being expansive enough right now.

Commissioner Hetterly: Should I respond? Would you like a response to that? As far as what we were limited—our mandate was really to look at shared-use

sites. The whole purpose behind that was to find large sites. Shared-use was appealing because it offered the opportunity to have a big chunk of land that dogs could really run in. We had agreed as a Commission to defer the bigger question of how we can distribute dog parks Citywide within our parks better through the Master Plan, because we know there's a big public outreach process for every single park, as you know. Who wants a park, who doesn't want a park, dogs, bathroom, whatever. We thought that was more appropriate through the Master Plan process. We were really just looking at what can we do in the short term to test something out for shared use, which limited our options to begin with to the three we talked about because of the cost and the size, where we had athletic fields that were available. Then when we looked at non-shared-use options, again we were looking for big sites with few improvements that could happen quickly. That's how we ended up with those three that we ended up with. I think Sterling Canal has a number of issues, as you probably know because you were on the Sterling Canal ad hoc committee. There was limited options there. It's completely fenced off at this point, and there's no public access at all.

Commissioner Crommie: We never got to the bottom of that. Let me just ask this question then, based on what you just said. Is the current Mitchell Park dog park bigger than a baseball field diamond shared-use would achieve or smaller? The current size.

Commissioner Hetterly: Small, small.

Commissioner Knopper: Smaller.

Commissioner Crommie: Can you just give me the two square footages?

Commissioner Hetterly: They're on your handout.

Mr. Anderson: Mitchell's .56 acres. For example, Hoover which is up on the display, you can see the yellow area is 1.17 acres. Inside the red area is .96 acre. They're all a little different. As I toggle back to the Baylands, you can see it's much larger, for example. That large red area has 3.27.

Commissioner Crommie: Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Stacey, do you have any questions?

Commissioner Ashlund: Yeah. In the Hoover Park option, it's listed as a con that there's frequent use of the field by the Keys School. Why is that a con? Because the field is occupied?

Commissioner Knopper: There's a lot of children using it during the day, so that leads to the issue of use, because they use it for their PE activities during the course of the school day. A lot of the comment with regard to public comment is that you have dog waste that isn't necessarily cleaned up and the occasional dog digging the hole and tearing up the grass. That is an opportunity for kids to ...

Commissioner Ashlund: That applies at any park, right?

Commissioner Knopper: For shared-use, yeah.

Commissioner Ashlund: For shared use. Do you only want questions at this point or we're making other comments as well? Is this the first pass through?

Chair Reckdahl: The first pass through. (inaudible) two.

Commissioner Ashlund: That's it for now.

Chair Reckdahl: That's it, okay. Any other questions? Okay. Now, comments, conversations. Ed, do you have anything?

Commissioner Lauing: Yeah. Why don't you start at that end? I'm happy to go if you want.

Chair Reckdahl: Stacey, do you want to start?

Commissioner Ashlund: Okay.

Chair Reckdahl: Go for it.

Commissioner Ashlund: I really like the recommendations. I mean, it's been so consistent all along from the community and Council and everybody that the need is in the north of Palo Alto. I really like the potential triangle we'd have if we kept Mitchell the size it is, use the Colorado substation area and the El Camino Park area. I think that would be really, really good coverage. The Colorado substation, today's the first day I've heard that brought up. I don't know if we've discussed that before on the Commission, but I may have missed that one in the past. If we are looking at shared-use, I don't see that use of a public park by a private school for PE is a con. It's public land, so I don't think that applies here as a con. It's public land. I mean, there's schools adjacent to all of our parks. It's public land; it's not private PE land.

Chair Reckdahl: Do they pay rent?

Mr. de Geus: I have to look into that. I'm not sure if they get a permit; I don't believe they do. I have to check.

Commissioner Ashlund: If they were renting the field, that would be one thing.

Commissioner Knopper: I think you have to look—just pardon me for interrupting. Point taken with regard to it's a private school. I think some of the other cons are there's a nearby playground and it's a heavily used park on any given day, all hours of the day.

Commissioner Ashlund: Yeah, I understand that. I don't think location-wise that Hoover is really jumping out. I mean, it's been so consistent that the need is in the north. The other possibility—I don't know if we have already approached the neighborhood associations. Since we do frequently hear from speakers in the north saying, "We want them in the neighborhood parks in the north," have you approached the neighborhood associations at all and said, "Talk to your neighbors and let's see what your consensus is. Do you guys want it or do you not want it in your neighborhood park?" Once it comes back to the Commission, then we have to go back and do the outreach. If the neighborhoods are asking for it and can start to say there really is more demand than there is resistance in a certain neighborhood park, that could help with community feedback.

Commissioner Hetterly: We have not done that primarily because the Commission had asked us not to do that and to leave that to the Master Plan process.

Commissioner Ashlund: Leave that to the Master Plan process, right.

Commissioner Hetterly: Just to reiterate, the idea of trying to get more dedicated dog parks in neighborhood parks across the City is, as we understood it, really part of the Master Plan process. This is an additional process that we're trying to move something forward quickly. That's a big (inaudible).

Commissioner Ashlund: I would avoid expanding at Mitchell. Mitchell is really, really crowded by a number of schools, a number of tennis players, bicyclists, pedestrians. I would really avoid it. The need just isn't there. Nobody is coming to our meetings saying, "We wish we had—if Mitchell were bigger on the south end of Palo Alto." We're hearing north, north, north. That's my feedback, is really, really keep the focus there.

Chair Reckdahl: Other questions? Deirdre.

Commissioner Crommie: Are we just doing comments now?

Chair Reckdahl: Comments, questions (crosstalk).

Commissioner Crommie: I knew the shared-use was dead on arrival when it was just morning hours. I mean, I wasn't surprised one bit because everyone I know that hangs out with their dogs in public places are doing it in the evenings. It just seems obvious. Just look around our City. Look around our neighborhoods. Look around our parks. Everyone comes out after they get home from work. They like to come during that twilight hour. All across the City, that's happening, and it's not happening in the morning. I'm not surprised that we got all that feedback. I brought it up at the time that the ad hoc was formulating their idea, but I was told, "We just have to do that as a pilot." These things are all connected. I mean, it's not independent. It's like you have to satisfy the need even when you do a pilot. I think we should take the Baylands park off the table. There's not a single person who's coming here saying they want to go over there and use that as a dog park. We need to look at what the constituency is saying. No one is saying that. Plus, it can harm the wildlife as people move from that park to the levee which they absolutely will do if they're over there. I just think that should be a non-starter. I know it was sort of put on the table because it was cheap, but I just don't see any reason to keep it there. Mitchell Park is in my neighborhood, relatively close. I guess it's a 20-minute walk or 5-minute car ride. None of my neighbors with dogs go over there. They just don't want to do it. They hang out at the tiny, little Monroe Park. I wish I could get them to go to Robles which is a 7-minute walk. People just don't seem to want to go very far from their homes with their dogs. Mitchell Park, I don't even like being there with my dog. It's all dirt. I haven't heard good things about the experience at Mitchell Park for a dog park. If we don't have a good experience with a half-acre dog park over there, I'm not sure it's going to improve to go into that nice sitting area nearby. We can't keep the grass nice at Mitchell Park. Now, if you double the size, maybe there's a lower impact, somehow you can keep it nice. I've just not seen that happen. I'm a big user of the artificial turf dog park; I go there multiple times a week with my dog. It's in the shopping center at San Antonio and Fayette. I was never into artificial turf; it seems gross to me. I will say it works, it really does work. It's hugely used, a massively dense dog park, and the dogs are all different sizes. It'd be really nice to know the acreage on that dog park. It seems tiny to me. I've talked to a lot of people there. Kind of the word at that park is, it's tiny but we all can see our dogs so the dogs are not misbehaving. That's why the small dogs work with the big dogs, because they're highly monitored. Some people in dog parks say where you really get into trouble is when it gets too big, the dogs run off. People want to stay and congregate with each other, and then the dogs start misbehaving or not getting picked up after and stuff like that. I guess of all these proposals, I would say put them where the people want them which is in the north. That's where we have the deficit. We should do whatever it takes to get something over

there. Then we have to look at just neighborhood by neighborhood and make sure every neighborhood park is assessed for a dog area, because that's where people want to go. They want an easy walking distance. Some parks are a lot better suited for it. It's an absolute tragedy at Eleanor Pardee. The reason you don't have a dog park there is because people rebelled in that neighborhood. We need to have a stronger policy mandate to really counteract the NIMBY-ism. I've been on the Commission now for seven years. Ever since I sat here, we have looked at dog parks. I just hope the next wave we get more going with it. You really do need to look at where the users are, where people want it, independent of cost at this point. I think we're being misled to look for a cheap solution. Look where we ended up; we ended up in areas where we already have dog parks, looking at that. That's not what people are telling us they want. That's what I feel.

Female: Can I ask a question?

Commissioner Lauing: Not really.

Chair Reckdahl: No.

Female: Come back next month on this.

Chair Reckdahl: Ed.

Commissioner Lauing: Yes, thanks. As we address this whole issue, we need to go back over the last year and half when we got started and over the last six years. Why are we looking at shared-use dog parks? Because there aren't enough dog parks. Why aren't there enough dog parks? Because there's not enough parks and there's not enough park space. To have a comment that we should just survey the public and put them where they want them is not practical in any way, shape or form. We have to do what we can with the limitation of park space until we can get more park space, if we can, and do the best we can to identify existing spaces that can be turned into dog parks. We've been working on this for a long time. The need is there. We know that it's going to come out as a very, very high need in the Master Plan. The top three, maybe the top issue in all of parks, maybe in the top three of all City issues, but certainly as park specific. There are other options that are being uncovered, which I agree is above and beyond the scope of what the ad hoc was supposed to look at. I thank them for also looking at those. There are still a lot of cards to overturn there. We don't know if that's going to be the case. I would be very happy to see action at our next meeting in favor of going ahead with these pilots to get some data. That's what you do, as I said earlier, in a test market. You try to get some data on what works and what doesn't. For example, I think it would be a very valid test to have Hoover and Baylands because, amongst other things, it's comparing the usage that we get from someone

who's walking to the park and the usage we would get with someone who is driving to the park. If I lived in north Palo Alto, which I do, and I had a dog, which I don't, I would love to go to Baylands a couple of hours and run my dog in that big space as opposed to never go there because it takes me five minutes to drive there. I think it could get extraordinary use. We don't know that if we just restrict it to one pilot or say, "Forget about it. Let's just wait another couple of years until we can get some permanent dog parks." To be able to test Hoover versus Baylands, number one, you really do need an A-B split test to have a valid study. You're testing north and south; you're testing drive to and walk to. I think you would get some pretty interesting feedback there. I'm very aware of the challenges involved, but I don't think the cons are so overwhelming that we say we shouldn't do it. In the meantime and in parallel if those, call them ready options, can be looked at, certainly the El Camino would be a tremendous alternative. We worked really, really hard on the El Camino Park to get a dog park in there. We were shot down on that a couple of years ago by the environmental; otherwise, there'd be one right there today because I see the park is almost ready to open. I'd like to see us move to action on the ad hoc at the next meeting. I'm sorry, on the shared-use at the next meeting that the ad hoc has studied. If we ended up saying contingent on if a permanent one opens up in 60 days, we can kind of reel it back in. The footnotes that I would have is that I still would like to see if there will be a way to extend the hours. In contrast to my colleague, I don't agree that nobody's going to come between 8:00 and 10:00, because a lot of people walk their dogs in the morning. A lot of people. I've gone on morning walks, and I run into a lot of dogs and make a lot of dog friends. Let's see. The second thing is in the pilot I would like to see—this may be a detail—during the pilot I would like to see outreach and support from the dog owners in terms of the clean-up aspect of it just to make it a very successful pilot. We can sort out later what to do around that.

Chair Reckdahl: Anyone else? Pat.

Vice Chair Markevitch: It seems to me there's one park that has not been mentioned, and it's in north Palo Alto. That's Heritage Park where the old clinic used to be on Homer. They specifically planted trees there so soccer clubs couldn't play. I think it's a good shared-use option to look at.

Chair Reckdahl: We went over there after the May Fete Parade. I brought that up, that I thought there is room there to have a dog park whether it be a shared-use or a dedicated dog park. I understand the ad hoc was not addressing the whole dog park issue. They were very focused on the shared-use. Once the Master Plan comes in, I think we'll have a little more freedom. When I look at these options, I think the most promising one is El Camino. I think that is a very good location. If we can do that on the cheap, I think we should do it now and not wait for the Master Plan. I do think that, in my anecdotal experience talking to people who

have dogs, most people want something that they can walk to. I hear that over and over again. We don't have big parks in Palo Alto. We can't have big dog parks in every park, but we can have small dog parks in a lot. Down the road, if I look in my crystal ball, I think that's the solution that's going to percolate up, having some small—it'll probably have to be artificial turf since you have high use on it—in neighborhood parks. That's a decision down the road, but now I think we should just move ahead and do something, either the shared-use at Hoover or the El Camino Park. Those are the two most feasible. Hoover Park, you could have evening hours. There is not the constraint that you would have if you had it inside the diamond where you would have competition from kids. You could do Hoover and have morning and evening hours, and that would be an option. You could have a dedicated park over at El Camino. I think those are the two best options. I don't see any reason to wait for the Master Plan for either of those. A couple of points I would bring up. A lot of people complain, "I'm a neighbor to a park. I don't want to have a dog park nearby." When I go over to San Antonio, I'll sit there and listen. One thing is if you look up there, people have their windows open looking out over that dog park. If it was really that noisy, they would have their windows shut. I don't think a dog park is any more noisy than any other park use. When I sit there and try and listen and pretend if I was in my living room, would I find this objectionable, I don't. I think that neighbors' objections are not based on fact. It's based on concerns that are not real. The second thing is off-leash without fences. I think that's a really bad idea. My son was knocked down in a park once by an off-leash dog, and it was very traumatic. He had a dog phobia for years after that. I think if we want to off-leash dogs, they really should be inside some type of fence. I think that's the best option. I think we do have options here. I agree with Ed that we should move on, and we should in the near future try something. If it doesn't work, we always can back it out. Failing any other comments, we'll move on to the Master Plan.