

**DATE: AUGUST 23, 2016**

**TO: CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**SUBJECT: DOG PARKS**

Additional off leash dog parks for the City of Palo Alto have been the subject of much community, PRC and City Council discussion for at least a decade. The Master Plan process has confirmed that this is an urgent unmet need, highly ranked as a priority for residents.

Following extensive study and working closely with community stakeholders and staff, the PRC Dog Park Ad Hoc Committee developed a two prong recommendation presented in the March 22, 2016 Staff Report to the PRC (Attachment A). The recommendation includes:

1. A specific Dog Park Policy and Program to be included in the Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan); and
2. Near term implementation of at least one new dog park in the interim period prior to approval and execution of the Master Plan.

The March 22, 2016 Staff Report recommended two locations for near-term implementation: Eleanor Pardee Park and Bowden Park, both located north of Oregon Expressway where demand is high and no dog parks currently exist.

We ask that City Council agree to our recommendation to pursue at least one dedicated dog park in advance of final approval of the Master Plan and provide direction to staff to proceed with installing a much needed dog park north of Oregon Expressway consistent with the Master Plan and Ad Hoc Committee findings.

The implementation process will require public outreach in the surrounding neighborhood, a Park Improvement Ordinance (PIO), bids from contractors and installation of fencing and simple amenities. Remaining recommended dog parks would be evaluated and prioritized with other park projects identified in the Master Plan.

**Attachments:**

[Attachment A: March 22, 2016 Staff Report to the Parks and Recreation Commission presenting draft Dog Park Recommendation](#)



**TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**FROM: DAREN ANDERSON DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES**  
**DATE: MARCH 22, 2016**  
**SUBJECT: DOG PARK POLICY - Draft**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee recommend that the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) recommend the following policy and program regarding dog parks be included in the Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan:

Policy: The City will actively pursue adding dedicated, fenced dog parks in multiple neighborhoods, equitably distributed between north and south Palo Alto. The size of the dog parks will vary, but should strive to be at least .25 acres. Dog parks should not be placed in Open Space Preserves.

The following program will support the dog park policy.

Program: The City will evaluate and select at least six dedicated, fenced dog parks, equitably distributed across north and south Palo Alto, from the following list of potential locations:

- |     |                                 |                              |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1.  | Eleanor Pardee Park             | (North, .41 Acres)-Near Term |
| 2.  | Bowden                          | (North, .37 Acres)-Near Term |
| 3.  | Greer Park (Improve existing)   | (South, .87 Acres)           |
| 4.  | Peers Park                      | (North, .73 Acres)           |
| 5.  | Hoover (Improve existing)       | (South, 1 Acre)              |
| 6.  | Robles                          | (South, .47 Acres)           |
| 7.  | Mitchell Park (Expand existing) | (South, 1.2 Acres)           |
| 8.  | Kingsley Island                 | (North, .27 Acres)           |
| 9.  | Werry Park                      | (North, .31 Acres)           |
| 10. | Juana Briones Park              | (South, .47 Acres)           |
| 11. | Heritage                        | (North, .27 Acres)           |
| 12. | *El Camino Park                 | (North, .5 Acres)            |

\*Additional research is needed regarding El Camino Park as a suitable location due to future transit improvements in the proposed area.

\*We acknowledge that Hoover and Greer’s current dog parks are inadequate in terms of size, and they should not be counted in their current configuration towards the minimum of six dog parks recommended in this program.

**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 staff report from the January 2016 Commission meeting provides additional background information (Attachment A).

### Advantages of Dedicated Dog Parks

Dedicated dog parks have certain advantages over other dog off-leash models, such as shared-use. The shared-use model involves using an area, like a baseball field, as a dog park during certain limited hours of the day. Shared-use areas can be fenced or unfenced. Feedback from other cities that have used these models indicate shared-use dog parks (fenced or unfenced) typically require enforcement and professional clean-up services. The approximate annual cost to hire a contractor for enforcement and clean-up is \$21,000 per site. Dedicated dog parks don't require these services. Shared-use models often result in conflicts between user groups. The City of Menlo Park decided to end their shared-use dog park, and change to a dedicated dog park because their Parks and Rec Commission identified concerns related to the joint use of the softball field as a dog park and noted ongoing field condition issues. The Menlo Park City Council agreed that the shared-use field was not optimal for athletic field users or dog owners, and they approved a project to create a dedicated dog park.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee performed a comprehensive analysis of the Palo Alto park system in an effort to find suitable locations for dedicated dog parks. Locations with at least .25 acres that are not currently used for active or programmed recreation were prioritized. Twelve sites have been identified as potential locations for dedicated dog parks. Seven of the locations are located in north Palo Alto, and five are in South Palo Alto. Three of these sites have existing dog parks, although there are recommended changes to improve those areas. The dog park at Mitchell Park would be expanded. The dog parks at Hoover Park and Greer Park would be relocated to larger areas within those parks. The existing small dog parks at Greer and Hoover could be repurposed for some other recreational need identified in the Parks Master Plan. Attachment B includes aerial photographs of the 12 potential locations, and a map of Palo Alto with the potential sites circled in red, and neighboring Menlo Park and Mountain View dog parks circled in blue.

### Near-Term Dog Parks

Two of the recommended locations for dog parks, Eleanor Pardee Park and Bowden Park, are recommended to be implemented in the near-term. There is funding in an existing capital improvement project that could be used to add fencing, water for dogs, and benches to create simple dog parks in these areas. Both parks are in the northern portion of Palo Alto (north of Oregon Expressway), which doesn't currently have any dog parks.

Eleanor Pardee Park's centralized location in north Palo Alto would allow walkable access from several neighborhoods. It is a large park (9.6 acres) with sizable unprogrammed passive-use areas with space to dedicate a large dog park with minimal impact on other uses, and with significant buffer space for adjacent residences.

Bowden Park, while not large (2 acres), has an unprogrammed passive-use area that is currently underused due to adjacency with busy Alma Street. The proposed dog park site will have minimum impact on other park users and nearby residences as well as accessibility for multiple neighborhoods given the proximity to California Avenue underpass. There is a capital improvement project at Bowden Park that is scheduled to start in the next few months, and it may be possible to time the dog park installation to coincide with the rest of the park renovation.

#### Process and Timeline for Adding Near-Term Dog Parks

The process for adding the dog parks would involve hosting a public meeting for the neighborhood around each park to collect feedback on the proposed dog park; seeking a recommendation from the Commission to approve a Park Improvement Ordinance (PIO) for the dog park; seek approval from Council for the PIO; get bids from fencing contractors, and install fencing. The other recommended dog parks would be projects that would be evaluated and prioritized with other park projects identified in the Parks Master Plan.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: January 26, 2016 Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report

Attachment B: Maps of the Potential Locations for Dedicated Dog Parks

**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><b>Baylands Athletic Center</b></p> <p>Proposed Size: Large Field: 3.27 acres</p> <p>Estimated New Fencing Cost: \$ 1,000.</p>	<p><b>Surfacing:</b> Grass and packed dirt.</p> <p><b>Fencing/Cost:</b> Minimal required</p> <p><b>Size:</b></p> <p>Significantly larger than other options – better capacity and reduced maintenance impacts.</p> <p><b>Location:</b></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><b>Location:</b></p> <p>Not in neighborhood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users will more likely drive than walk, possibly exacerbating morning congestion at Embarcadero/101 intersection;</li> <li>• Harder for dog owners group to spot check compliance;</li> <li>• Less community building among neighbors;</li> <li>• May invite more non-resident users.</li> </ul> <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><b>Hoover Park</b></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><b>Surfacing:</b> Grass and packed dirt</p> <p><b>Fencing/Cost:</b> Minimal required for inside the baseball field area</p> <p>High costs for outside the baseball field area.</p> <p><b>Location:</b></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"> <li>• Shared use pilot would allow current users to become “legal” during open hours;</li> <li>• Increased attention to enforcement, maintenance and cleanup could improve conditions for other users.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b></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"> <li>• Heavily used community park;</li> <li>• Close proximity to multi-unit housing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fencing:</b></p> <p>Existing fencing is less than 4 feet high in outfield - may have high risk of “escapees.”</p> <p><b>Size:</b></p> <p>Smallest option, yet high current unauthorized dog use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult to get dog owners to stay in fenced area;</li> <li>• Heavy dog usage would have a greater impact on this small field.</li> </ul>



Location	Pros	Cons
<p><b>Greer Park</b></p> <p>Proposed Size: 2.09 Acres</p> <p>Estimated New Fencing Cost: \$21,350.</p>	<p><b>Surfacing:</b> Grass and packed dirt</p> <p><b>Location:</b></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><b>Size:</b> Midsized option</p>	<p><b>Fencing/Cost:</b></p> <p>Biggest fencing need of all the options.</p> <p>Permanent fencing could change the character of the adjacent picnic area.</p> <p><b>Location:</b></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