

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: DAREN ANDERSON DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: JULY 23, 2019

SUBJECT: DOG PARKS AND PARK RESTROOMS

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) discuss dog parks and park restrooms and provide guidance to the Commission Ad Hoc Committee working on identifying dog off-leash opportunities and appropriate locations for park restrooms.

BACKGROUND

Dog Parks

Palo Alto has four dog parks located within: Greer Park (.12 acres), Hoover Park (.14 acres), Mitchell Park (.56 acres), and Peers Park (.7 acres). The Peers Dog Park was opened in June 2018. The City’s five-year Capital Improvement Program includes a Capital Improvement Project (PG-18001), which provides funding (\$150,000) for dog parks in Fiscal Years 2020, 2022, and 2024.

The Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space and Recreation Master Plan (Parks Master Plan), adopted by Council in 2017, provided guidance on dog parks. The Plan noted that all Palo Alto’s dog parks, except Peers Dog Park, are all located south of Oregon Expressway. Since dog owners prefer to use dog parks near their residences, adding dog parks in north Palo Alto parks will improve residents’ dog exercise opportunities.

Parks Master Plan—Dog Park Policy and Program

Policy 2.D 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.

Program 2.D.1 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:

- Eleanor Pardee Park (North, .41 Acres)
- Bowden Park (North, .37 Acres)
- Greer Park (Improve existing) (South, .87 Acres)
- Peers Park (North, .73 Acres)
- Hoover Park (Improve existing) (South, 1 Acre)
- Robles Park (South, .47 Acres)
- Mitchell Park (Expand existing) (South, 1.2 Acres)

- Kingsley Island Park (North, .27 Acres)
- Werry Park (North, .31 Acres)
- Juana Briones Park (South, .47 Acres)
- Heritage Park (North, .27 Acres)

Locations with at least .25 acres that are not currently used for active or programmed recreation were prioritized. Eleven sites have been identified as potential locations for dedicated dog parks. Six of the locations are 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 could be expanded or relocated to larger areas within those parks.

Park Restrooms

The Parks Master Plan illustrated that residents strongly support improved and additional restrooms in parks that have amenities that draw people, especially children and seniors, and encourage them stay at the park for a span of time. The community highlighted the need to include security measures such as automatic locking mechanisms and lighting, which have helped address some of the concerns related to restrooms in parks.

Parks Master Plan--Park Restroom Policy and Program

Policy 2.E The City will actively pursue adding park restrooms in parks that are approximately 2 acres or larger, have amenities that encourage visitors to stay in the park, have a high level of use and have no nearby restrooms.

Program 2.E.1 Develop a restroom standard, in collaboration with the Architectural Review Board, for neighborhood parks.

2.E.2 The City will actively pursue adding park restrooms at the following potential locations:

- Bol Park
- Bowden Park
- Eleanor Pardee Park
- Johnson Park
- Ramos Park
- Robles Park
- Terman Park

Fifteen of Palo Alto's thirty-seven parks and open space preserves have restrooms. Attachment A includes photos of three park restrooms. The Master Plan recommends adding park restrooms in seven other parks, although community outreach for each site needs to be completed before taking any action (Attachment B). The City's five-year Capital Improvement Program includes a Capital Improvement Project (PG-19000), which provides funding (\$350,000) for park restrooms in Fiscal Years 2020, 2021, and 2023.

DISCUSSION

Dog Parks

The Commission Ad Hoc Committee and staff are working to identify the best use for the Dog Park CIP funding available in FY 2020 and FY 2022. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends using the FY 2020 CIP funds to expand the existing dog parks at Greer Park and Mitchell Park. The Ad Hoc Committee will continue analyzing potential dog park locations, particularly in north Palo Alto. Staff would conduct community outreach prior to making a formal recommendation to the Commission regarding dog park locations.

In addition to adding dedicated, fenced dog parks, dog owners have expressed an interest in having the City consider other dog off-leash opportunities, such as the unfenced dog off-leash area model used by the City of Mountain View. In this model a non-fenced section of a park is used as a dog park for a limited number of hours of a day. The Ad Hoc Committee and staff would like feedback from the Commission regarding pursuing this option as a pilot program.

Park Restrooms

The Commission Ad Hoc Committee and staff are working to identify locations for adding park restrooms with the Park Restroom CIP funding available in FY 2020 and FY 2021. The Ad Hoc Committee recommends Ramos Park be considered as the site for the FY 2020 park restroom project. Ramos Park, which is identified in the Parks Master Plan as a potential site for a park restroom, is scheduled for a capital improvement project in FY 2020. The Ramos Park CIP will replace the existing park playground, benches, and drinking fountain, as well as resurface the basketball court playing surface. Community outreach for the Ramos Park CIP is tentatively scheduled for August 2019. The construction would likely start in February 2020 and be completed in approximately three months.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Photos of Park Restrooms at Briones, El Camino, and Peers Parks

Attachment B: Park Restroom Analysis