

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

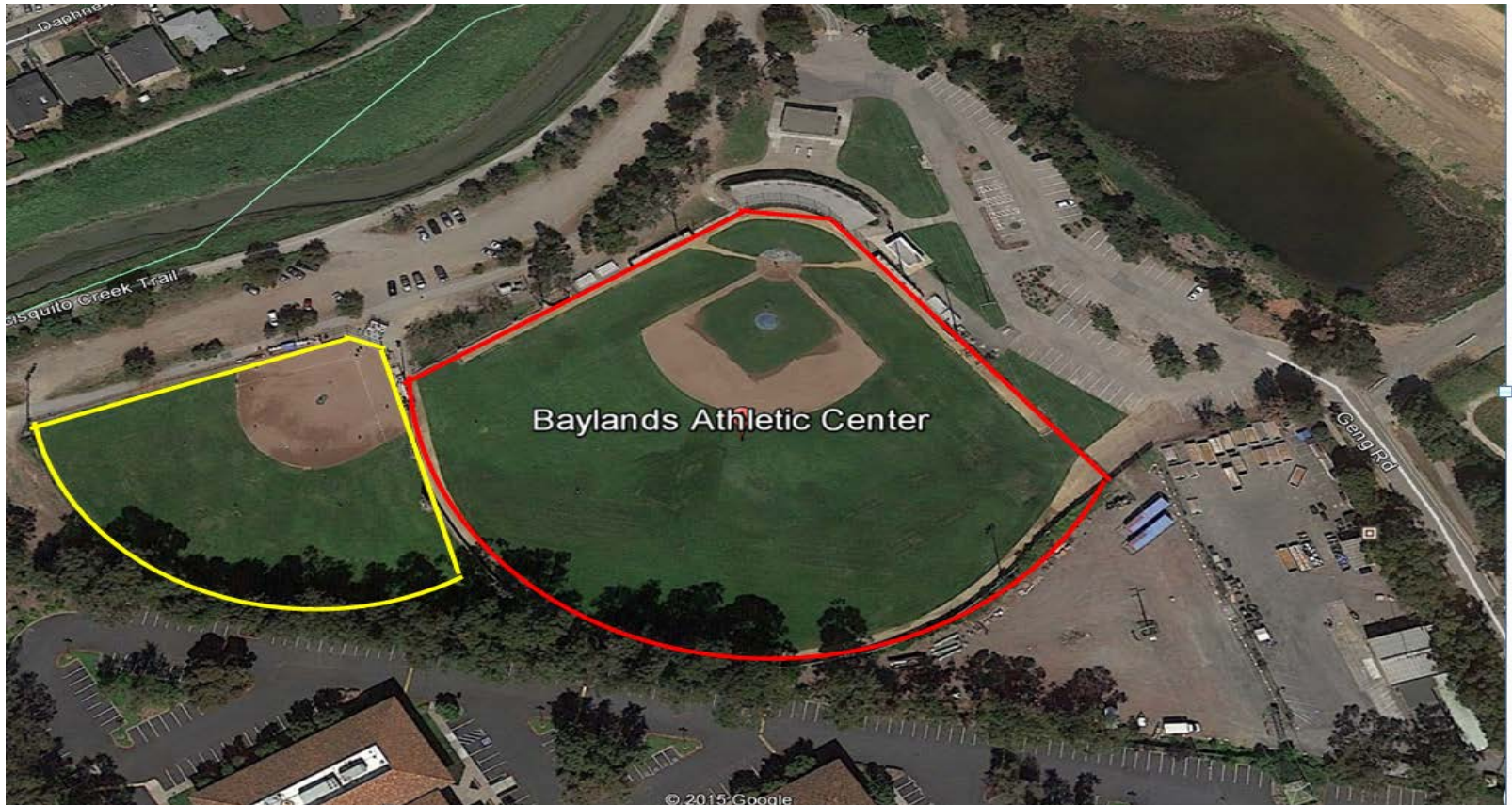
Proposed size: 2.09 acres. Estimate fencing costs: \$21,350



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.

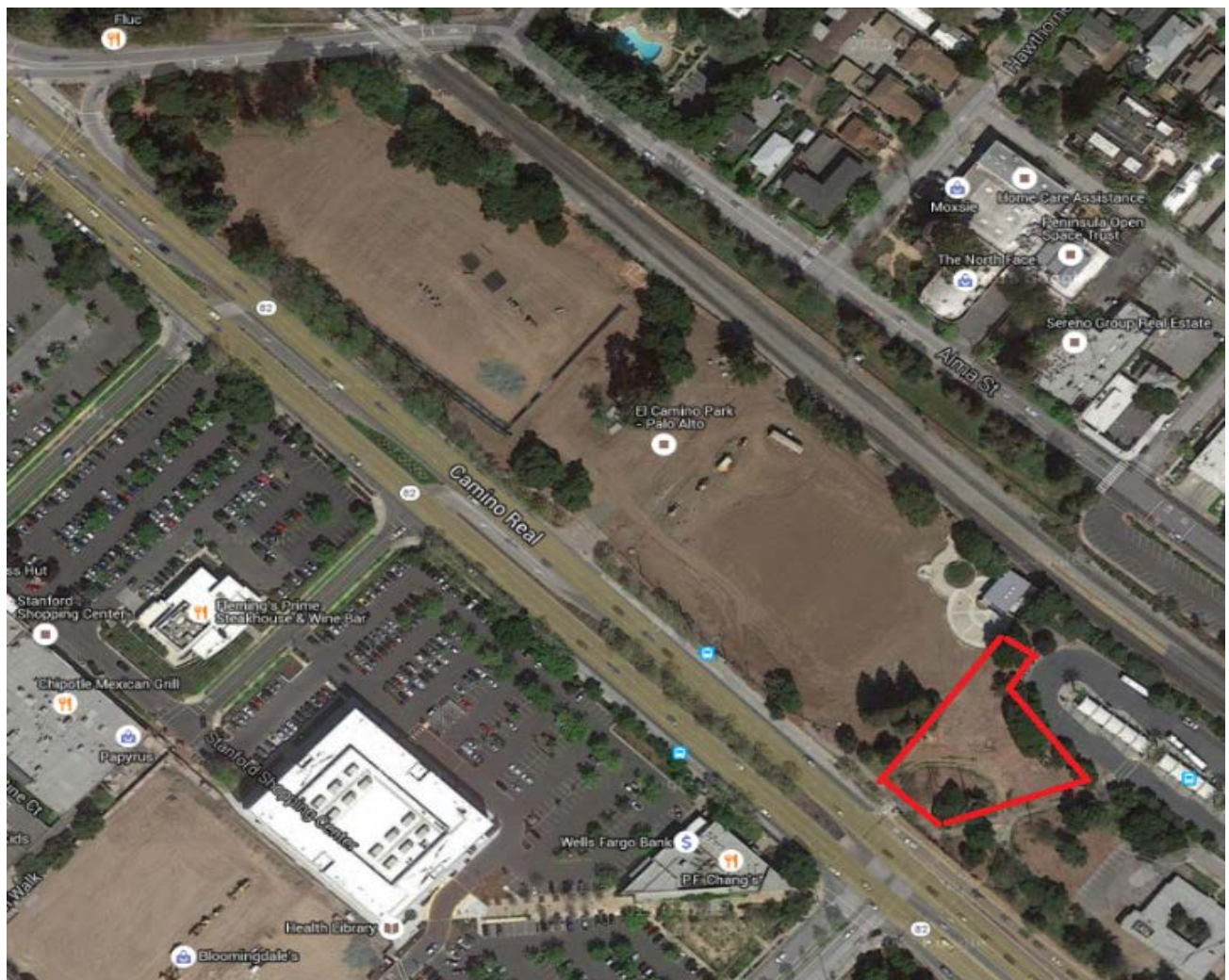


El Camino Park- Southern Undeveloped Area

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

