



CITY OF SAINT ANTHONY VILLAGE

**PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA**

Monday, September 8, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Members of the public who wish to attend the meeting may do so in person.

I. Call To Order

II. Roll Call

III. Approval Of Agenda

IV. Approval Of Minutes

A. Approval Of PK Meeting Minutes

Documents:

[PK 06-02-2025 REG.PDF](#)

V. Presentations

A. Silverwood Park Updates

Alyssa Baguss, Silverwood Program Supervisor, presenting.

Documents:

[SILVERWOOD SEPTEMBER 2025 SAV PRESENTATION.PDF](#)

B. Citizens For Sustainability Updates

Dan Kunitz presenting.

Documents:

[CFS 2025 SEPTEMBER PEC.PDF](#)

VI. General Business

A. Parks CIP Presentation

Deborah Maloney, Finance Director, presenting.

Documents:

[PARKS CIP.PDF](#)

B. Active Transportation Plan Updates

Minette Saulog, Sustainability Coordinator, presenting.

Documents:

[ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATES.PDF](#)

C. Dog Park Exploration

Ashley Morello, Assistant City Manager, presenting.

Documents:

[COVER MEMO - DOG PARK.PDF](#)
[DOG PARK EXPLORATION.PDF](#)
[DOG PARK EXPLORATION.PDF](#)
[DOG PARK ESTIMATE.PDF](#)
[ANN ARBOR MI - RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR DOG PARK](#)
[SITE SELECTION UPDATED 4-10-.....PDF](#)
[TRUST - DOG-PARKS-BEST-PRACTICES-2019_R3.PDF](#)

VII. Commission & Staff Reports

VIII. Community Forum

Individuals may address the Parks Commission about any City business item not included on the regular agenda. Speakers are requested to come to the podium, sign their name and address on the form at the podium, state their name and address for the Clerk's record, and limit their remarks to three minutes. Generally, the Park Commission will not take official action on items discussed at this time, but may typically refer the matter to staff for a future report or direct the matter to be scheduled on an upcoming agenda. Those unable to attend the meeting in person may submit comments via the City's [PUBLIC COMMENTS FORM](#).

IX. Adjournment

X. Next Meeting

If you would like to request special accommodations or alternative formats, please contact the City Clerk at 612-782-3334 or email city@savmn.com. People who are deaf or hard of hearing can contact us by using 711 Relay.

Our mission is to promote a high quality of life to those we serve through outstanding city services.

1 CITY OF ST. ANTHONY
2 PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING
3 June 2, 2025
4 7:00 p.m.
5

6 **I. CALL TO ORDER.**
7

8 Chairperson Fee called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
9

10 **II. ROLL CALL.**
11

12 Commissioners Present: Chair Lily Fee, Commissioners Yaacoub Hark, Kristen Peterson, and
13 Natalie Synhavsky.
14

15 Absent: Commissioner Jessica Swiontek
16

17 Also Present: Assistant City Manager Ashley Morello, Silverwood Program
18 Supervisor Alyssa Baguss, Citizens for Sustainability Representative
19 Dan Kunitz, Sustainability Coordinator Minette Saulog, and Student
20 Liaison CeCe Cram.
21
22

23 **III. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 2, 2025, PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL**
24 **COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA.**
25

26 Motion by Commissioner Hark, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the June 2,
27 2025, Parks and Environmental Commission agenda.
28

29 **Motion carried unanimously.**
30

31 **IV. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 10, 2025, REGULAR PARKS AND**
32 **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES AND MAY 21, 2025,**
33 **WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES.**
34

35 Motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Hark, to approve the March
36 10, 2025, Regular Parks and Environmental Commission Meeting Minutes as presented.
37

38 **Motion carried unanimously.**
39

40 Chair Fee noted on page 5, lines 25-26, correct to read “she helped organize workers at the
41 Silver Lane berm”.
42

43 Commissioner Peterson noted on page 6, line 37, correct to “our Minnesota climate” and on
44 page 6, line 12, correct to read “scale group of projects”.
45

46 Motion by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Hark, to approve the May 21,
47 2025, Parks and Environmental Commission Work Session Meeting Minutes as corrected.
48

49 **Motion carried unanimously.**

V. PRESENTATIONS.

A. Citizens for Sustainability Update.

Citizens for Sustainability Co-chair Dan Kunitz reviewed a PowerPoint including Earth Week Update, Environmental Stewardship Scholarship, and VillageFest. Mr. Kunitz thanked all the Earth Week Volunteers and Sponsors:

Salo Park – 21 volunteers – SAV Condo Association and PEC

Central Park – 11 volunteers – CFS & PEC

Silver Point Park – 5 volunteers – CFS & PEC

Water Tower Park – 5 volunteers – CFS & PEC

Emerald Park – 2 volunteers – CFS & PEC

Trillium Park – 16 volunteers – Village Gardeners & PEC

Silver Lake Road & County Road E – 12 volunteers – Pack and Troop 153 and local families.

Highway 88 Cleanup – 18 volunteers – SAV Kiwanis & Key Club.

Silver Lake Cleanup – Families around the lake.

Wilshire Park – Girl Scouts

SAMS – Students

The SAVHS Local Scholarship Program enables businesses, organizations, and groups like CFS to directly offset part of graduating seniors' college education. Two students are recognized for their dedication to environmental stewardship and passion to make a difference with \$500 scholarships. Mr. Kunitz thanked families and individual donors.

Citizens for Sustainability can be found at VillageFest. Residents are encouraged to share their environmental stories, view student environmental projects, sign up to win an energy savings giveaway, enjoy kids' face painting, and join CFS for a chat.

Chair Fee asked Mr. Kunitz who the other Co-chair of the committee is. Mr. Kunitz stated Lona Doolan helps with the planning and her connections.

B. Silverwood Park Update.

Silverwood Program Supervisor Alyssa Baguss reviewed a PowerPoint. Two exhibits were announced:

Sylvan Essence – Shoshana Fink – June 12 through July 31, 2025 – Opening Reception: Thursday, June 12 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

On Tree Time – Meghan Duda – June 12 through July 31, 2025 – Opening Reception: Thursday, June 12 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

There is Free Family Fun Every Month. Every second Sunday:

Parks and Environmental Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2025

Page 3

1 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Puppet Art Adventures

2 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Walk with a Naturalist

3
4 All ages and drop-ins are welcome.

5
6 Summer Teen Workshops will be held Tuesdays, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. for ages 13-19. Cost is
7 \$40 per session.

8
9 June 17 – Burn Bowls & Hammock Hang

10 July 29 – Plants & Natural Dye

11 August 19 – Lake Ecology & Glass Art

12
13 The 2025 Float-in Movie will be held Saturday, July 19 from 9:00 – 11:00 p.m. Screening:
14 Space Jam. This event is free for all ages.

15
16 Happy Trails! Country Dancing and Leather Tooling in the Park will be held Saturday, July
17 26th, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Friendly group dance lesson with Howdy Partner Dance. 6:00 – 8:00
18 p.m. Open dancing and leather tooling art activity. This event is free for all ages.

19
20 2025 Silverwood OnStage Summer Concerts in the Park are held on Wednesdays, 6:30 – 8:00
21 p.m. For more information, visit www.SilverwoodOnStage.org.

22
23 A Book Swap will be held on Wednesday, July 23, 2025, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Remaining
24 books will be donated to The Story Orchard.

25
26 The Big Picnic & Community Night with St. Anthony Village will be held on Wednesday,
27 July 31, 2025, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. during the 26 Bats concert.

28
29 The Pickup Truck Opera presenting Mozart's The Return of King Idomeneo will be held on
30 Wednesday, August 27. For more info or tickets, visit www.MixedPrecipitation.org.

31
32 A roller skating event will be held in the park on Sunday, August 24th from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.
33 This event is free. Bring your own skates, blades, or borrow a free pair from Twin Cities
34 Skaters. Show off your dance moves to music in the amphitheater. Skate along the paved
35 lakeshore trail. Make retro-inspired art with Silverwood staff.

36
37 The Silverwood Park Café hours are 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. through Labor Day. Minnesota
38 Dairy Lab Ice Cream is now available for sale.

39
40 The Island Picnic Shelter is available for rentals. Rental Open Houses are held the first
41 Monday of the month from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

42
43 Silverwood's 16th annual art and nature festival will be held Saturday, September 13, 2025,
44 12:00 – 4:00 p.m., featuring Live music from local bands Paper Chain and Splash. Local artist
45 market in partnership with the Minneapolis Craft Market. Food Trucks. Games, artmaking,
46 and nature activities for the whole family.

Ms. Saulog stated she and Ms. Morello took a tour of Silverwood, and it was a lot of fun.

VI. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Climate Plan Items

Sustainability Coordinator Minette Saulog presented a PowerPoint of Climate Plan Items for the City Council Work session. The goal for tonight's meeting is:

- Recap what PEC has discussed – sustainable building policy.
- Share new information regarding solar permitting and public EV charging.
- Review comments have been captured.
- Send any additional feedback directly to the Sustainability Coordinator after tonight's meeting.
- Consider adopting a sustainable building policy for all new and remodeled construction projects (Energy focus area).
- Address financial barriers for low-to-moderate-income residents by reducing or waiving permit submission fees for solar panels (Energy focus area).
- Consider adopting a policy on publicly facing charging infrastructure. Determine the most effective locations for EV charging stations at public facilities in SAV (Transportation focus area).
- Review multi-family EV charging ordinance (Transportation focus area).

Ms. Saulog provided a summary of the April 2 Work Session. The summary included: What type of approach would work best for St. Anthony? – Mandatory approach, scoring approach, or suggestion approach. What priority impacts do we want to target in a City overlay? What types of projects do we want this policy to apply to? – Such as zoning and/or size of building.

Staff Recommendation to Council:

- Establish sustainable building ordinance for future multi-unit developments, and commercial/industrial developments, in PUD Zones and/or over a minimum square footage size (TBD).
- Discuss whether separate ordinances are needed for multi-unit and commercial/industrial, or if the same ordinance can apply.
- Regarding all single-family projects, a suggested approach for sustainable building is recommended. Determine the applicability threshold for the definition of single-family (more than 3 units? 4?).

Ms. Saulog reviewed staff notes pertaining to addressing financial barriers for low-to-moderate-income residents by reducing or waiving permit submission fees for solar panels.

Staff Recommendation to Council:

- There is no precedent for fee waivers based on income for any other permits issued by the City.
- Administrative costs must be covered by the collection of fees.

- The cost of a solar array system and installation outweighs the cost of a permit, and there may be alternative ways to better address financial barriers and equitable access to solar.
- Recommend keeping the building (solar) permitting fees as-is.

Ms. Saulog reviewed staff notes to consider adopting a policy on publicly-facing charging infrastructure. Determine the most effective locations for EV charging stations at public facilities in St. Anthony Village.

Staff's recommendation to Council:

- Support inclusion of EV charging infrastructure in future infrastructure plans for City Hall and potentially other locations within the City.

Ms. Saulog reviewed the next steps, which include:

- Staff will incorporate PEC's input from these last several meetings to prepare materials for City Council discussion.
- July 22, 2025 – City Council work session. PEC members are not required to attend.

Commissioner Peterson suggested looking into the Solar App Plus tool that is found online.

Chair Fee asked if the excess power returned to the grid could pay the cost of the permitting. Ms. Saulog stated that it is called net metering and is between the utility and the homeowner.

Chair Fee wants to make sure the multi-family/commercial piece doesn't get dropped off. Ms. Morello stated it includes multi-family and commercial.

Commissioner Hark referred to the building policy and noted there is no mention of going with a third-party rating system. Ms. Saulog stated that it is part of the further conversation with the City Council.

Ms. Morello stated that when this information is presented, the Council will provide the final wave of approval for the policy. This is a moving piece of the puzzle. Ms. Saulog noted that a draft of the policy has not yet been prepared.

B. Well House Pickleball Concept Review and Discussion

Sustainability Coordinator Minette Saulog reviewed a memorandum prepared by Katie Koscielak of WSB. Recently, the City hosted a Parks Summit (March 2025) to review current and future priorities for the City's park facilities and amenities. During the Summit, the need for a dedicated pickleball facility was discussed, and ultimately determined that the existing tennis/pickleball court located adjacent to Well House No. 5 would be the most practical location for a dedicated facility.

A proposed layout for the dedicated pickleball courts utilizing the existing City owned property while preserving as many of the mature trees to the west as feasible was provided for

Commission review. The proposed layout includes the following amenities that do not currently exist:

- Dedicated parking outside of the existing Well House No. 5 driveway (still allowing access to Public Works).
- Concrete sidewalks to connect the existing sidewalk along Silver Lane to the pickleball court entrance.
- Permanent pickleball net system (existing system is a portable/temporary system).
- Benches and bike racks to enhance the experience of the pickleball users.
- An alternate bid item to upgrade the proposed fencing to a “heavy-duty” fence has also been provided to provide noise-canceling benefits to the site (this option would need to be included with the construction of the courts, as the layout of the fencing would be impacted).
- Alternate bid items for consideration that could be added after the pickleball courts are constructed: landscaping to provide screening and enhance the natural features within the property, lighting, and a portable restroom with enclosure.

To meet ADA requirements for the installation of the new courts, the concrete sidewalk connecting from Silver Lane to the entrance to the courts is required. All pickleball courts must be designed so that users do not cross over another court in order to reach their court.

Ms. Saulog provided the estimate of probable construction cost to construct the space. The estimate is a high-level master plan estimate (incorporating 2025 construction costs) and does not account for actual site conditions, final design (including aesthetic finish decisions), and plan preparation/bidding. The total base bid schedule is \$305,857.50, and the total alternate bid schedule is \$98,900.

Ms. Morello stated this would update the number of courts from 2 to 4 different pickleball courts.

Commissioner Peterson asked about the preservation of the mature trees and asked which ones may need to be removed. Ms. Saulog indicated on the map the trees that would need to be removed from the access walk to the courts. Commissioner Peterson suggested two fences to reduce sidewalk construction costs, with the sidewalk going to the middle of the courts. Ms. Morello stated that there would be a conversation with WSB.

Student Liaison Cram asked how many parking spaces are on the site currently. Ms. Saulog stated there are currently none. Sometimes people park on Silver Lane. WSB’s recommendation was for 16 parking spots, which was not possible to do.

Chair Fee referred to the layout and spacing between the courts. She would like to see the minimum space required between courts. She asked about benches and bike racks in the drawing and asked where they would be. Ms. Saulog stated they are not currently on the drawing, but they would like to have them included. Chair Fee asked if WSB gave a prediction of the life expectancy of the courts. Ms. Morello stated this would be a robust effort to resurface and could be provided in the future.

Commissioner Hark asked if the access to the courts without crossing other courts is an ADA requirement, and Ms. Morello stated that it is correct.

Commissioner Synhavsky asked if lighting is included in the budget. Ms. Morello stated that it is in the alternate bid. She suggested running the infrastructure for an EV Charger.

Commissioner Hark requested a corridor that goes down the middle of the courts to access the courts without the addition of a curb. Ms. Morello stated that this ties in with the grading conversation and will be reviewed again with WSB. Commissioner Hark stated that an eight-foot fence is too high, and a four-foot fence for the perimeter should be enough. Chair Fee asked what the standard is for fencing. The heavy-duty fencing would act as a sound barrier.

Chair Fee asked if this would go into the CIP review for 2026, and Ms. Morello stated that it is correct.

Ms. Morello asked for comments on the alternate bid and which items should be included. Commissioner Hark stated that for the tennis courts, there are hours for use. He asked if the lighting would be necessary. Ms. Morello stated that there are no hours of operation for the existing courts with no lighting provided. Chair Fee suggested that a restroom enclosure be provided along with landscaping, which would be her lowest priority. She asked what it would cost to add the EV infrastructure.

Commissioner Synhavsky suggested this be a multi-purpose space.

Commissioner Peterson suggested the building could provide some screening for the restroom. She likes the picnic table suggestion. She would like to see more landscaping.

Ms. Saulog noted that the existing net system is temporary, and the new system would be permanent. The fencing will need further discussion.

Commissioner Synhavsky asked if there has been any discussion with the neighbors to the north, and Ms. Morello stated there has not, since this is an early stage of the planning. Commissioner Hark noted it would be important to speak with the neighbors.

Commissioner Hark asked if the fencing can be looked through.

VII. COMMISSION REPORTS.

Commissioner Hark had no report.

Commissioner Peterson followed up on the Minnesota Climate at the State Level. [Climate.mn.state.us](https://climate.mn.state.us) for more information.

Commissioner Synhavsky stated she has not heard from MnDOT yet. She is part of a group of parents who are interested in starting a bike bus to Wilshire Park.

Chair Fee stated in the next issue of Village Notes, there will be information on Silver Lake water quality. There will be a booth at VillageFest. She asked about doing a park walk. Ms. Morello stated that this typically would happen during a work session or a regular commission meeting. As some of the projects get further in the planning process, this may be appropriate.

Student Liaison Cram stated that the biggest event for the Green Team was “Save the Bees” activity.

Ms. Saulog stated that there have been a couple of kick-offs in the last few weeks – Partners in Energy and Active Transportation. They are connected with the consultant. She has joined the Youth Council Meetings. Solar has been wrapped up at the water treatment plant. She highly recommends the tour of Silverwood. Sustainability will be represented at VillageFest.

VIII. COMMUNITY FORUM.

Mr. Paul White, 3201 32nd Avenue, stated he would like an update on the dog park idea. Commissioner Hark stated that the subject came up during the Summit. Ms. Morello stated there is no meaningful update today. Staff is continuing to evaluate. Chair Fee shared that Commissioner Swiontek had mentioned that she has received feedback of interest in a dog park during her door-knocking within the City. Mr. White stated that a lot of the people he hears from is that people view it as a community amenity.

IX. ADJOURNMENT.

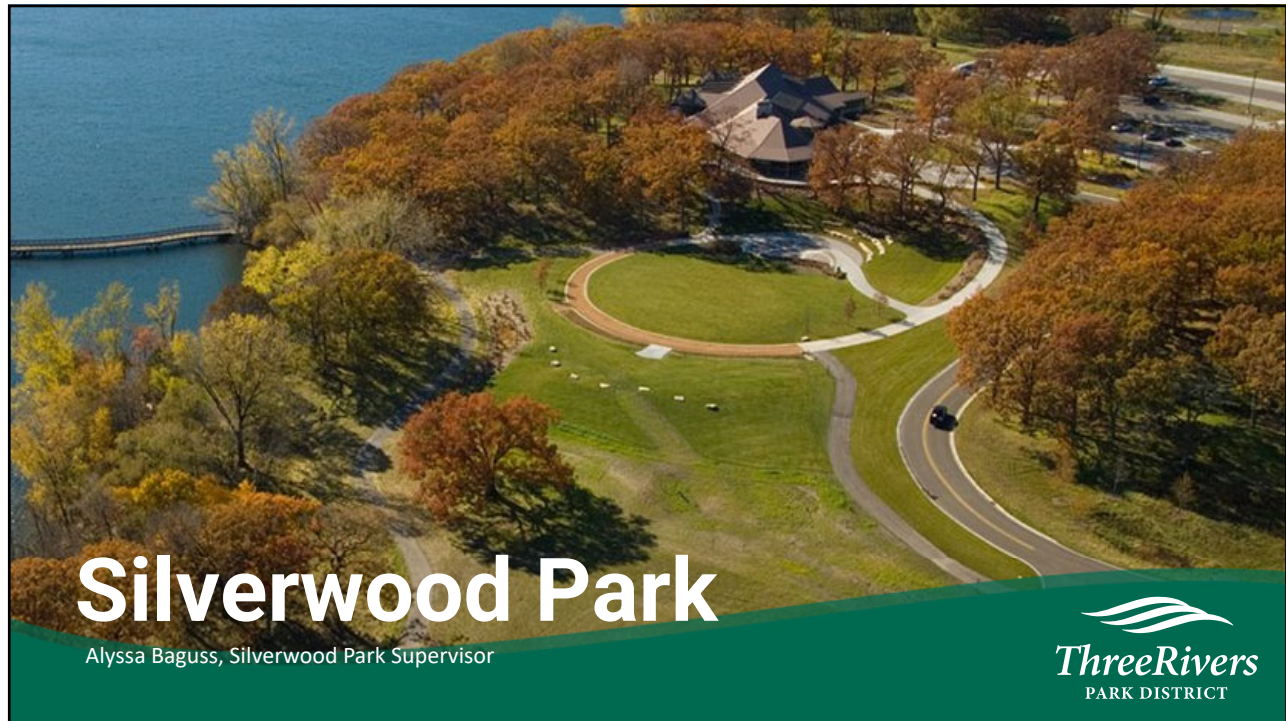
Motion by Commissioner Hark, seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to adjourn the June 2, 2025, meeting of the Parks and Environmental Commission at 8:30 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wolfe

TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.



1



Silverwood's 16th annual art and nature festival, featuring:

- Live music from local bands **Paper Chain** and ***Splash!***
- Local artist market in partnership with **Minneapolis Craft Market**
- Food trucks
- Games, artmaking and nature activities for the whole family!

Saturday, September 13th, 2025
12-4PM



2

Sarah Nguyen

No Mud, No Lotus

September 1 through 30, 2025

Opening Reception: Thursday,
September 11 from 6 – 8 pm



3

Small Universes Everywhere

Kristin Maija Peterson

August 14 through September 30, 2025

Opening Reception: Thursday, September
11 from 6 – 8 pm



4



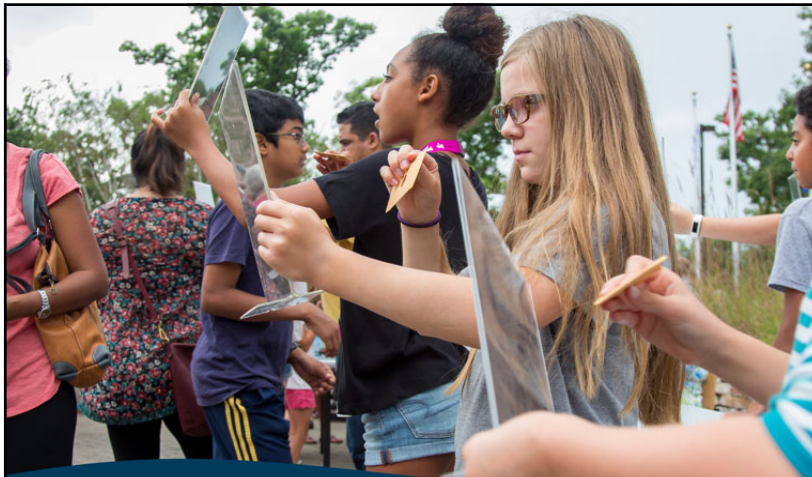
THE BIG PICNIC

July 30th

In partnership with SAV Community Services

Over 600
people in
attendance!

5



Wilshire Park Elementary Afterschool Series

Art and Ecology Club

Tuesdays, 3:50-5 PM

September 16 to December 16

- **12-week afterschool series each trimester**
- **Grades 2-5**
- **Hands-on art and nature exploration**
- **Led by an artist and a naturalist from Silverwood**

6



Introducing:
**The Great Sculpture
 Costume Crawl!**

Saturday,
 November 1st
 1-3PM

Visit costumed sculptures
 in your costume and
 collect fun prizes!

Free, all ages

7

- **In partnership with Crafty Queers Club**
- **Classic supplies provided:** yarn, popsicle sticks, glue, plus one surprise material to be revealed at the event!
- **Work alone or with a team!**
- **Free, Ages 14+**

OCT 2
6-8 PM
SILVERWOOD PARK

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN CRAFT

**A CRAFTING
"COMPETITION"**

SPECIAL GUEST: THE
OTHER JEANNIE
RETELLE

NOT YOUR
GRANDMA'S
SEWING CIRCLE.

8

Ongoing Wellness Programs at Silverwood Park:

Weekly Sunset Yoga

Every Tuesday, 6-7:15PM

Monthly Gentle Yoga Flow

Mondays, 6:30-7:30PM
9/15, 10/20, and 11/17

Ages 14+

\$12 per session, drop-ins
and all abilities welcome

SPARK! For Individuals Living with Memory Loss and Their Care Partners

Every second Thursday
10-11:30AM

All ages

Free, registration
recommended

Mindful Creations with NAMI Minnesota

Every second Wednesday
1-3PM

Ages 18+

Free, registration
recommended (sign up
through www.namimn.org)



9

Fall Sound Meditation *with Waking Nomad*

Sunday, October 19th
9:30-11:30AM

- Cultivate awareness using sound as a tool for going inward.
- Guided breathwork to release tension and reset the nervous system.
- Ages 14+, \$30 per participant.



10



Silverwood Park returns as a host site for the Bell Museum's **Statewide Star Party 2025!**

Join us here in the park:

Thursday,
September 18th
6:30-8:30PM

Free, all ages

11

SILVERWOOD PARK CAFÉ 9 am – 5 pm
 Winter Hours Building Hours 9 am – 5 pm




12

Silverwood Rental Facilities

*Book your special event in 2026.
Fridays and Sundays Available
Summer-Fall!*

*Every first Monday of the month:
5-7 PM, **Rental Open House***

For up-to-date calendars and
rental information, contact
silverwoodevents@threeriversparks.org



13

Silverwood Park

Alyssa Baguss, Silverwood Park Supervisor

ThreeRivers
PARK DISTRICT

14



Citizens for Sustainability

Parks & Environmental Commission Update

September 8, 2025



Citizens working to create a resilient and sustainable community

1

Agenda

1. VillageFest
2. Tax Credits Ending This Year
3. Fall Lawn & Garden Tips for Winter Wildlife



2

2

VillageFest

We had a great time connecting with folks through hands-on activities and conversations AND awarded four free Home Energy Squad visits



3

3

Tax Credits Ending Soon

1. Plug-in hybrid and electric vehicle credits expire on September 30, 2025
2. Renewable energy installation & home efficiency upgrade credits expire on December 31, 2025

Visit homes.rewiringamerica.org/save for more information



4

4

Fall Lawn & Garden Tips for Winter Wildlife

Many insects hibernate inside hollow plant stems or under leaf litter. Birds rely on leftover seeds from coneflowers, sunflowers, and grasses when other food is scarce.

How you can help:

1. Leave plant stalks.
2. Pile leaves in your garden to insulate soil and offer cover.
3. Wait to clean up until spring temperatures are consistently above 50°F.



5

5

Join CFS at our next meeting

October 4

10:00am

Room CS9 in City Hall/Community Services



6

6



1

PLANNING & BUDGETING FOR PARKS & ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

SOURCES FOR INPUT

Annual Goal Setting and Strategic Planning

Venue for City Council (CC), Parks and Environmental Commission (PEC)
Representative and city staff (CS) to discuss parks priorities, amenities changes, etc.

PEC Workplan Reviewed at Goal Setting

Joint Meetings between City Council and Commission

WSB Parks Assessment & Oertel Architect's Facilities Assessment

Staff and Resident Observations, PEC Comments



2

2026 BUDGET CALENDAR

2025 DATE	STEPS
January 15-17	Goal Setting, Financial Management and Planning
February 11	Public Hearing on budget calendar to provide residents with opportunity for input
April – May	Staff Meetings with Department Heads – Discussion on 2026 Operating Budget and Capital Budgets
June 24	Council work session to review infrastructure improvement schedule and resulting 2026 Debt levy requirements
August 12	Council work session to review updated proposals for 2026 overall Property Tax Levy and General Fund Budget
August 26	Presentation of Proposed 2026 Budget & Property Tax Levy to the City Council
September 9	Public Hearing to pass resolution setting Preliminary 2026 Budget and Property Tax Levy
October 14	Council work session to review Capital Improvement Plan
November 10	Approval of 2026 Capital Improvement Plan
December 9	Public Hearing and Presentation of 2026 Budget and Levy. Adoption of 2026 Budget and Property Tax Levy



3

PARK IMPROVEMENT FUND

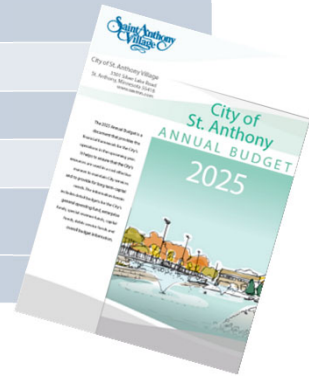


4

PEC ITEMS ARE INCLUDED IN VARIOUS BUDGETS

GENERAL FUND: Primary Source for Park & Environmental Operating Costs

Parks Personnel Costs	\$406,150
Support for ISD Recreational Programs	\$52,200
Energy Costs	\$42,800
Supplies and Other Operating Costs	\$59,100
Sustainability Programs: Recycling Events, Fix-It Clinics, Rain Barrels	\$14,000
Total 2025 General Fund Budgeted Costs	\$574,250



5

PEC ITEMS ARE INCLUDED IN VARIOUS BUDGETS

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND: Replacement of Parks Maintenance Equipment

Costs	2025	Five Year Estimate
Fleet	\$0	\$140,125
Heavy Equipment / Mowers	\$27,725	\$112,640
Other Equipment	\$4,100	\$70,000

DEBT FUND: Street Projects

Costs	2025	Five Year Estimate
Central Park Improvements	\$200,220	

BUILDING IMPROVEMENT FUND

Costs	2025	Five Year Estimate
Parks Shelters / Parking Lots / Trails	\$43,950	\$162,500

STORMWATER FUND: Stormwater Operating and Capital Costs

Costs	2025	Five Year Estimate
Stormwater / Flood Mitigation	\$5,200	\$192,700
Water Quality	\$50,280	\$452,200
Central Park Improvements	\$61,930	

CAPITAL FUNDS TOTAL	2025	Five Year Estimate
Costs	\$393,405	\$1,130,165

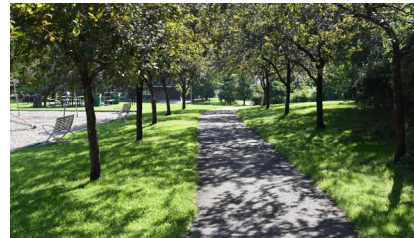


6

PARK IMPROVEMENT FUND

2025 Improvements		Future Requests and Costs Estimates	
Project	Cost	Project	Cost Estimate
Central / Emerald /Silver Point Park Signage, Benches, Tables, Splash pad repairs	42,300	Pickleball Courts To Replace Old Tennis Courts	\$350,000
Central Park Ballfield Netting	101,652	Dog Park at Location To Be Determined	\$200,000
Central Park trails resurfacing (Part of 2025 Street project)	200,220	Upgrade of Field Lighting to LED at Central Park	\$500,000

PARK AMENITIES	Established	Amphitheater	Ballfields - Multi-Use	Ball Fields - Soccer	Basketball Courts	Batting Cages	Off-Street Park	Picnic Area	Play Equipments	Shelter	Skateboard Park	Skating Rink - General	Skating Rink - Hockey	Tennis Courts	Walking Paths	Splash Pads
Central Park	2003		X	X	1/2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Emerald Park	2009		X	X	1/2		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
Salo Park	2007	X													X	
Silver Point Park	1988															
Trillium Park	1980						X									
Water Tower Park	2004						X	X	X					X	X	



7

OVERALL PARK AND ENVIRONMENTAL SPENDING

Overall Spending	2025 Levy	2025 Parks & Environmental Expenditures	Parks Five Years (approximate)
General Fund	\$6,336,888	\$574,250	\$2,871,250
Capital / Building / Stormwater Improvements	\$543,700	\$393,405	\$1,130,165
Park Improvement Fund	\$30,000	\$35,900	\$1,020,391
Total		\$1,003,555	



8



QUESTIONS? |



Active Transportation Plan Updates

Presented
September 8, 2025

1

Updates

- Local Planning Team kickoff – July
- VillageFest and Night to Unite outreach
- Bike & Walk Audit – September
- Listening Sessions – September and October
- Local Planning Team workshop – October
- Plan drafting and review – late fall and winter



UNDERSTANDING
ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION

SIMPLE STEPS. SUSTAINABLE IMPACT.

driving is six times more expensive than biking

What is active transportation?

- human-powered travel like walking and cycling
- public transportation
- reduced reliance on cars
- affordability - eliminates fuel, insurance and maintenance costs

Benefits

- increased physical activity
- reduced traffic congestion
- improved air quality

What you can do

- walk to school
- stroll in our parks
- ride the bus

Active Transportation Plan

- safe routes to school
- complete streets
- improved transportation network

Take our survey: savmn.com/at-survey



2

Community Listening Sessions

- Monday, September 22
 - City Hall Council Chambers, 5 PM – 7 PM
 - Open to all
- Monday, September 29
 - SAMS Family Night, 5-5:30 PM
 - Open to middle school students and families
- Thursday, October 2
 - Hayden Grove Senior Living, starting at 2 PM
 - Open to all



3

Online Map and Survey

- Everyone is invited to fill out our survey to share comments:
 - Available at savmn.com/at-survey or bit.ly/sav-at
- You are also invited to add comments to our interactive online map:
 - Bit.ly/sav-atmap



Participate in Saint Anthony Village's Active Transportation Plan!

The City of Saint Anthony Village is developing an Active Transportation Action Plan. We need your help identifying how to make walking, biking, and rolling a safer, more accessible and enjoyable option in Saint Anthony Village. We look forward to your input!

Check out the *Let's Talk* website to learn more about the project and stay up to date!

bit.ly/sav-at

Scan this code with your phone to share ideas on an interactive comment map!

or go to **bit.ly/sav-atmap**

4



THANK YOU |



MEMORANDUM

To: Saint Anthony Village Parks and Environmental Commission
From: Ashley Morello, Assistant City Manager
Date: September 8, 2025
Request: Dog Park Exploration

BACKGROUND

The topic of exploring the feasibility of a dog park in Saint Anthony Village was an agenda item at Parks & Environmental Commission meetings in Fall 2022 and Winter 2024, and historically as far back as 2014. It was also discussed at the Parks Summit in March of this year, which included attendees from both Commissions, City Council, school district, sports boosters and staff. While a dog park has been subject of public interest, the geographic restraints, development of the City, as well as anticipated staff demand are challenges that impact the feasibility of establishing a dog park within the City. This meeting will build upon previous discussions in response to community desire for a dog park. As part of the Parks and Environmental Commission 2025 Work Plan, the Commission is being asked to identify the best location for a dog park with the least adverse impacts.

STAFF RESEARCH

To provide guidance on a recommendation that provides the best possible amenity to serve the greatest number of community members as possible, included in the meeting attachments are a report from Ann Arbor, MI that outlines recommendations for dog park site planning, as well as a guide from The Trust for Public Land. Some key components for best practices from the documents are summarized below:

Size: The recommended minimum size for dog parks varies considerably among cities, but is generally between ½ acre and one acre. This allows adequate space for a higher volume of dogs as well as larger dog breeds that require more space for activity.

Buffer from Residential: A few cities provide definitive distances from residences, varying from 50 feet to 200 feet. All strive to minimize conflicts and include guidelines such as: making sure that noise and activity levels are no more than other park uses, importance of screening or visual buffers, and having a minimal impact on residences.

Parking: Recommendations include that parking should be readily accessible, close to the site, sufficient/adequate size, and convenient. There were no standards for size; rather it is important to consider parking when locating a dog park.

Use Conflict Avoidance: Guidelines include avoiding play areas and other recreational amenities, high use areas, natural areas and water sources, wildlife, trails, community gardens, and historic sites.

The Parks Summit confirmed that establishing a dog park that can serve as a community-wide amenity would require displacing current activities or amenities. After the Parks Summit, staff assessed potential dog park locations that present the least impact to current uses and/or addresses other known issues or amenity changes being considered (see the Table below).

Location	Size	Residential Buffer	Parking	Conflict Avoidance
Central Park	Largest park in city. Would need to displace another service in order to consider.	Doesn't meet residential buffer.	Existing on-site parking. Parking competes with existing uses of park.	High use area. Low conflict avoidance.
Emerald Park	Smallest park in city. Area is not configured to accommodate a city-wide use.	Doesn't meet residential buffer.	On-street parking only. Would not meet demand.	Medium conflict avoidance.
Silver Point Park	Medium sized park. Would need to displace another service in order to consider. Possible dog park size: approximately 0.5 – 1.15 acres	Doesn't meet residential buffer.	Existing on-site parking. Parking over-utilized based on current uses.	Medium conflict avoidance.

Staff do not recommend considering Central Park as a dog park location due to its existing usage and high potential conflicts with other users. Staff further do not recommend considering Emerald Park as a dog park location due to its size and inadequate parking. It is also worth noting that because of Emerald Park's location and size, its current usage is more consistent with a neighborhood park and playground and is not suited to be a city-wide dog park. As a result, other small parcels owned or not owned by the City are not considered viable dog park locations, as they do not meet size, parking or buffer needs and would further not be suited as a city-wide dog park.

While no location in the City has ideal conditions to reflect dog park best practices, staff has determined that a dog park at Silver Point Park could have the least adverse impacts. That said, a dog park within the City would require staff time and labor to establish as well as maintain beyond existing staff capacity. Staff compiled and attached a summary of considerations and tasks that are to be expected with managing and maintaining a city dog park. Due to the anticipated staff demand for a dog park at an existing park, staff do not recommend considering a non-city owned park, as that would result in even greater demand from staff to maintain.

SILVER POINT PARK

In order to consider the feasibility of a dog park at Silver Point Park, the existing amenities need to be considered.

Accessible Playground

In 2024, the playground at Silver Point Park was modified to a fully accessible playground, including accessible play equipment, accessible rubber surface, and a swing set. This is the only fully accessible

playground within the city and is a key amenity for kids of all abilities. Any consideration of a dog park should not have adverse impacts on the accessible playground.

2024 Street Improvements

As part of the 2024 Street Improvement Project, the basketball court and parking lot were repaved as well as repairs were made to the sidewalk and trails. Any consideration of a dog park should not have adverse impacts on the basketball court, parking lot, sidewalk and trails.

Ball Fields

There are two existing ball fields at Silver Point Park. This existing usage, in conjunction with the accessible playground, basketball court and ice rinks result in high parking and traffic conditions that the park and surrounding neighborhood is not designed to meet. The ball field #2, the southerly ball field closest to Highway 88 has been reported as often unusable due to flooding conditions, meaning that most T-ball activities take place on the inner field closest to the playground. It is worth noting that this area was originally designed as a stormwater retention area and therefore was designed with intention to retain water.

If the ball field were removed, the space could be considered for a dog park. If this location were considered, additional infrastructure such as trails would likely be needed for vehicles to access the dog park for maintenance purposes as existing paths are not suited for such vehicle traffic and maneuvering vehicles around the accessible playground is not feasible. This cost is not reflected in the preliminary quote.

If this option is *not* recommended, staff will continue to explore reducing the number of ball fields due to site challenges and site usage overwhelming the park's capacity.

Ice Rinks

The City currently has a hockey rink and a pleasure rink at each of its three primary parks. While not every season will be as mild as the last several winters, the management of all 6 rinks across 3 parks requires time, cost and labor for the Public Works crews to maintain for a relatively short period of usability.

These ice rinks have traditionally been an important amenity for the community and the rinks at the three parks each serve surrounding neighborhood. Removing the ice rinks at Silver Point Park could allot space for a dog park. Central Park is a short distance away and its rinks are an alternative for those who currently use the rinks at Silver Point.

Pros and Cons

Either of the above options will result in programming changes for those who currently participate in sports or use the ice rinks at Silver Point Park. There is a parking shortage in this park for the activities that currently take place, and adding a dog park would further contribute to parking congestion unless most users walk to the facility.

	Ball Field #2 Location	Ice Rink Location
Pros	Reduces parking and traffic congestion associated with T-ball activities	Reduces the quantity of ice rinks maintained by the city
Cons	Area will experience wash outs from heavy rain events	Proximity to residential back yards

	Proximity to accessible playground	Ice rink is popular amenity for the neighborhood
	Additional trail/path infrastructure need to access	

Construction Estimate

A preliminary estimate for anticipated construction costs of a dog park is included in the meeting materials. This is for preliminary purposes only and does not account for any specific location.

DISCUSSION ITEMS FOR COMMISSION FEEDBACK

If a dog park is pursued, staff recommend considering the two locations at Silver Point Park. Utilizing one of the existing parks as a space for a dog park would require modifying or eliminating existing amenities at the park, which could reduce existing parking and traffic stress on the local neighborhood streets. Staff do not recommend pursuing a new location as that would result in additional demand and labor for Public Works.

Staff request PEC's recommendation on which site would be best suited for a dog park.

NEXT STEPS

City Council will receive PEC's recommendation on a dog park location. The dog park and other park amenities are currently not in the 2026 CIP and would be subject to Council consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

- Presentation
- Dog Park Exploration
- Dog Park Estimate
- City of Ann Arbor, MI – Recommendations and Guidelines for Dog Park Site Selection, Design, Operations and Maintenance
- Trust for Public Land – How to build a dog park



DOG PARK EXPLORATION

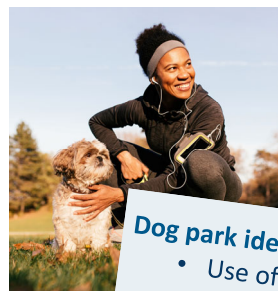
Presented
September 8, 2025

DOG PARK CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

PEC Topic in Previous Years
Including 2014, 2022 and 2024

Identified as an amenity of interest at Parks Summit,
March 2025



- Dog park ideas include:**
- Use of existing park space
 - Use of non-city owned parcels
 - "Pocket" Dog Parks



WHY HASN'T THE DOG PARK BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN THE PAST?

BACKGROUND

Space Availability	Saint Anthony Village is fully-developed (built out)
Geographic Boundaries	Small City – 2.5 Sq. Miles
Cost	Projects of this scope impact budget
Staffing	Maintenance and Labor Costs



BEST PRACTICES SUMMARY

Size	Recommended minimum size for dog parks varies considerably among cities but is generally between ½ acre and one acre.
Buffer from Residential	A few cities provide definitive distances from residences, varying from 50 feet to 200 feet. All strive to minimize conflicts and include guidelines: making sure noise and activity levels are no more than other park uses, importance of screening or visual buffers, and having minimal impact on residences.
Parking	Recommendations include: parking should be readily accessible and near site, sufficient/adequate size and convenient. There were no standards for size but stress importance of parking when locating a dog park.
Conflict Avoidance	Guidelines include avoiding play areas and other recreational amenities, high-use areas, natural areas and water sources, wildlife, trails, community gardens and historic sites.



STAFFING

Daily / Every Other Day Tasks*

5-6 hours/ week

- Pet waste pickup and bag refill
- Trash and waste disposal monitoring/emptying
- Visual inspection of fence, gates, latches, park cleanliness
- Walking the park for spot-cleaning and other issues

Monthly Tasks

8-12 hours/month

- Fence and latch repairs
- Minor grading, filling of worn paths and holes
- Park condition reporting and documentation

Seasonal / Quarterly Tasks

20-30+ hours/quarter

- Hauling in and spreading mulch
- Repairs to trail or damage from hauling equipment
- Odor management/additional waste clean-up in warmer months
- Snow removal from access paths and gates (if open year-round)

**Possibly 10-15 hours a week during peak season or after weather events*



POTENTIAL OPTIONS

Location	Size	Residential Buffer	Parking	Conflict Avoidance
Central Park	• Largest park in city. • Would need to displace another service in order to consider.	Doesn't meet residential buffer.	• Existing on-site parking. • Parking competes with existing uses of park.	• High use area. • Low conflict avoidance.
Emerald Park	• Smallest park in city. • Area is not configured to accommodate a city-wide use.	Doesn't meet residential buffer.	• On-street parking only. • Would not meet demand.	Medium conflict avoidance.
Silver Point Park	• Medium sized park. • Would need to displace another service to consider. • Possible dog park size: approximately 0.5 – 1.15 acres	Doesn't meet residential buffer.	• Existing on-site parking. • Parking over-utilized based on current uses.	Medium conflict avoidance.



LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS: Overall

OTHER LOCATIONS

Several alternative locations for green space outside of the City's three main parks have been suggested in the past.

Why this alternative is not feasible

- Site incompatibility (site not owned by city, site does not provide level ground for a dog park)
- Noise considerations due to close proximity with neighbors
- City wide vs neighborhood park
- Staff maintenance demand would be even greater with an additional site



LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS: Best Practices

NO IDEAL LOCATION

No location in the City has ideal conditions to reflect dog park best practices

Silver Point Park could have the least adverse impacts with strategic modifications

- Staff do not recommend adding a dog park to Silver Point as is
- Would need to modify existing services in order to accommodate



SILVER POINT PARK: Existing Amenities

EXISTING AMENITIES

Full accessible playground added in 2024

Half basketball court repaved in 2024

Sidewalk and trail repairs made in 2024

Ice rinks (hockey and pleasure rinks)

Two Ballfields

SILVER POINT PARK



All Accessible Play Equipment



SILVER POINT PARK: Dog Park Challenges

CURRENT SITUATION

Two Ball Fields	- Result in high volumes of parking and traffic - Parking lot and neighborhood is not designed to accommodate
Ball Field #2 Flooding	- Silver Point Park was designed as a retention pond - Often not able to be used
Ice Rinks	Discussion of sustainability with warmer winters
Modification Options	Could replace either the ball field #2 or the ice rinks with a dog park



SILVER POINT PARK: Dog Park Opportunities

	Ball Field #2	Ice Rink
Pros	• Reduces ball field activities and associated parking and traffic congestion • Reduces ball field maintenance	• Reduces the quantity of ice rinks maintained by the city
Cons	• Area will experience wash outs from heavy rain events • Proximity to accessible playground • Trail/path infrastructure needed to access	• Proximity to residential back yards • Ice rink is popular amenity for neighborhood



CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE

PRELIMINARY

A preliminary estimate for anticipated construction costs of a dog park is just over \$192k.*

Not currently in CIP for Parks

Competing priorities for city budget

**For preliminary purposes only and does not account for any specific location.*



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

1. Should we move forward with pursuing a Dog Park?
2. Recommendation to City Council: If we consider a dog park, which location?



Saint Anthony
Village

THANK YOU



DOG PARK STAFF DEMAND

This document was prepared for the September 8, 2025 Parks & Environmental Commission meeting with input from the City's Public Works Department.

Below are additional considerations to keep in mind for ongoing discussions regarding a City Dog Park.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

Location access

Foot traffic interactions with surrounding activities such as playgrounds and ballfields may present safety and sanitation concerns, particularly regarding the control of off-leash dogs, potential dog-owner conflicts, and potential odor impacts to other park users.

Access paths should ideally support vehicle traffic to facilitate delivery of maintenance materials (e.g. wood chips) and removal of pet waste. Modifications to existing trails will be necessary to accommodate maintenance vehicles and equipment. If vehicle access is not possible, materials may need to be brought/removed manually.

Trail infrastructure longevity

In the presence of a park trail, accessing the dog park will require the use of the adjacent asphalt trail to transport mulch, fencing materials, and service the waste dumpster using trucks, heavy equipment or light utility vehicles. This additional repeated use will accelerate surface wear, cause cracking, or degrade trail edges and require repairs sooner than anticipated.

MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Ground cover (mulching)

Mulching is required to maintain clean, mud-free conditions and minimize odor and wear on the soil. Replenishment frequency may be weekly or monthly depending on weather and usage levels. Wood chips would need to be purchased frequently. Due to access limitations, 2 crew members would be required for delivery and distribution and may require manual labor.

Waste management

A dedicated dumpster for pet waste will be necessary, ideally placed in a discreet yet accessible location. This dumpster should be emptied at least once a week, with increased frequency in summer months or during periods of high usage. Waste bag dispensers and signage must be installed and refilled according to demand.

Fencing and infrastructure

Routine inspection and repair of the perimeter fencing, gates, and latches are essential to ensure security and user safety. Fencing, gates, and latches should be visually inspected at least weekly and repairs made immediately for identified issues. Repairs may include but are not limited to: patching holes, reinforcing posts, adjusting gate hardware to prevent escape or injury.

General inspection and cleanliness

Daily checks and monitoring for the park would include removal of trash and debris, ensuring no dangerous objects or dog waste have been left behind, vandalism, safety hazards or rule violations. More thorough inspection would need to occur monthly to address deeper cleaning, drainage, surface wear, and signage integrity.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Odor management

Accumulated pet waste will need to be managed regularly to avoid odor-related problems that may affect other activities at the location (i.e. proximity to playgrounds, sports fields).

User behavior and compliance

Park success relies on user compliance with leash laws outside the park, proper waste disposal, and supervision of pets. Public education and visible signage will be required.

Impact on adjacent park usage

Increased foot and canine traffic will interact with nearby recreational areas. Additional fencing, pathways, and buffer zones may be needed to minimize disruption.

ESTIMATED OVERALL IMPACTS

Parks Crew workload impact

Public Works currently has three members on the parks crew. This crew also manages mowing, field preparation, playground inspections, irrigation, and other standard parks maintenance. A dog park would increase daily and weekly responsibilities especially during peak season (spring-fall). The following tasks would require an estimated **6-8 additional staff hours per week at minimum**, up to **10-15 hours** during peak season or after weather events.

Daily/Every Other Day tasks (5-6 hours/week)

- Pet waste pickup and bag refill
- Trash and waste disposal monitoring/emptying
- Visual inspection of fence, gates, latches, park cleanliness
- Walking the park for spot-cleaning and other issues

Monthly tasks (8-12 hours/month)

- Fence and latch repairs
- Minor grading, filling of worn paths and holes
- Park condition reporting and documentation

Seasonal/Quarterly tasks (20-30+ hours/quarter)

- Hauling in and spreading mulch
- Repairs to trail or damage from hauling equipment
- Odor management/additional waste clean-up in warmer months
- Snow removal from access paths and gates (if open year-round)

Dog Park Estimate

ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE COSTS FOR CONSTRUCTION

No.	Spec	Item	Units	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price
BASE BID						
1	2021.501	SITE MOBILIZATION (5%)	LS	1	\$9,332.50	\$5,357.50
2	2104.503	REMOVE FENCE	LF	125	\$20.00	\$2,500.00
3	2106.501	EXCAVATION - COMMON	LS	1	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
4	2504.602	CONNECT TO WATERMAIN	EA	1	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00
5	2504.603	WATER LINE	LF	60	\$75.00	\$4,500.00
6	2521.518	6-INCH CONCRETE	SF	500	\$15.00	\$7,500.00
7	2540.602	PICNIC TABLE	EA	3	\$2,000.00	\$6,000.00
8	2540.602	BENCH	EA	1	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
9	2540.602	DOG WASTE RECEPTACLE	EA	2	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00
10	2540.602	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	EA	1	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
11	2564.602	ENTRANCE SIGN (BUDGET)	EA	1	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
12	2573.501	STABILIZED CONSTRUCTION EXIT	LS	1	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
13	2573.503	SILT FENCE TYPE MS / BIOLOG	LF	400	\$3.50	\$1,400.00
14	2557.502	DOG FENCE CORNER	EA	8	\$800.00	\$6,400.00
15	2557.502	CHAIN LINK GATE	EA	2	\$1,800.00	\$3,600.00
16	2557.503	4' HIGH POST & WIRE FENCE	LF	750	\$35.00	\$26,250.00
17	2557.503	4' HIGH CHAIN LINK FENCE	LF	80	\$55.00	\$4,400.00
18	2571.504	2.5" CAL TREE	EA	4	\$750.00	\$3,000.00
19	2575.505	SEEDING TYPE I - SUNNY TURF MIXTURE	ACRE	0.3	\$3,000.00	\$900.00
20	2575.505	HYDRAULIC STABILIZER MULCH (BFM)	ACRE	0.3	\$4,000.00	\$1,200.00
21	2575.507	MULCH	CY	530	\$150.00	\$79,500.00
TOTAL BASE BID SCHEDULE						\$192,007.50

Recommendations and Guidelines for Dog Park Site Selection, Design, Operations and Maintenance



2013/2014

Park Advisory Commission Dog Park Subcommittee

MISSION STATEMENT

To create formal guidelines regarding the placement and management of new dog parks and the improvement of existing dog parks in Ann Arbor.

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INTRODUCTION

Dog parks have grown in popularity throughout the country as more people have pets and are asking that communities provide recreational opportunities for them. The City of Ann Arbor is no exception. This planning document has been developed in response to resident advocacy for additional dog parks and to assure that, moving forward, the existing and proposed dog park areas are successful and well received.

The City of Ann Arbor currently has 158 parks covering 2,118 acres. Two of these parks contain fenced off-leash dog run areas, known as dog parks. These include 10-acre Swift Run Park and .7-acre Olson Park. These parks are located at the extreme south and north of the City, and residents have requested that new dog park areas be more accessible to their residence. This document provides historical information on the background leading up to the development of the existing dog parks, information about the existing dog parks in the City, data about dog parks in other cities, guidelines for the location and design of any new off-leash dog parks, and guidelines for how to improve existing dog parks. In addition, details are provided about the process that the City's dog park subcommittee went through to establish these guidelines.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

A Brief History

Public advocacy to establish dog parks dates to the mid 1990's. To address these requests, in 1997, a Dog Off-Leash Taskforce was formed as recommended by staff and the Park Advisory Commission with the goal of gathering and reviewing information, reporting findings, and making recommendations for the design, placement, and management of dog parks. The task force met for seven months. Their work included holding interviews with dog behavioral specialists, and researching materials on dog behaviors and management from around the country.

The resulting [report](#), (attached as a hyperlink) released in 1998, addressed design criteria, including size, fencing, gates and entrances, sanitation facilities, water, surfacing, shade, seating, emergency phone, agility equipment, paths, parking, park maintenance, supervision and monitoring, signs, and hours of operation. It also provided information about obtaining a permit, dog park rules, costs and funding, enforcement, changing the City ordinance, and a pilot project. The report was presented to the Park Advisory Commission in November of 1998.

The effort to establish the first dog park did not move forward until 2005 as there were concerns about potential management issues, funding, and resistance from residents. However, the concept of an off-leash dog park continued to gain momentum in the intervening years and advocates continued to lobby to establish one or more dog parks. In response, the City researched potential locations using the criteria developed in the 1998 report. In 2005, the City started discussions with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, who were also hearing from constituents that a dog park was a desired amenity, to explore the joint development of a dog park at Swift Run Park.

Establishment of Dog Parks in Ann Arbor

In June 2007, City Code was amended to provide for dogs to run off-leash in designated dog play areas (i.e., dog parks). In December 2007, a partnership agreement was signed between the City of Ann Arbor and the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission for the development, maintenance, and operation of

a dog park at Swift Run Park. Swift Run was suggested as a location because of its proximity to the County maintenance facility, was not near residences, was adequately sized, and was not being used for any other park purpose.

A second dog park area was established at Olson Park in 2008. This location was adopted after a series of public meetings, in which alternative locations were discussed, including Ward Park, Leslie Park, and South Maple Park, but were not supported by adjacent residents or were not compatible with other city functions for the site at the time. Olson, like Swift Run, is located away from housing. It is part of a larger multi-use park, and does not conflict with or preclude any other existing park use; however it is much smaller, and primarily serves residents in the northern part of the City.

Assessing the Desire for Additional Dog Parks

In the past few years, public advocacy for additional dog parks has again risen to the forefront of desired park amenities. Input from the 2011-2015 Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan also supported the desire for additional Dog Park areas. This input has been focused on creating additional parks closer to residences, especially one that is centrally located and walkable from the downtown for residents who do not drive.

In 2012, staff suggested West Park would be worth considering since a master plan had just been completed and property purchased along Chapin was not being utilized for any specific purpose. A public meeting was held and there was general support for the concept. However, enough opposition arose that the project was eventually rejected. A new initiative to explore dog park locations was needed.

In response, a subcommittee of the Park Advisory Commission was formed in 2013. Over the course of 2013-14, the committee met more than 13 times. These meetings were posted and open to the public, and public commentary was first and last on every agenda. The committee was tasked with developing a public input plan and a process for determining appropriate criteria to locate dog parks. The committee looked to establish criteria and to test these criteria at several park locations to see if the elements were relevant and a good determinant for a successful location. The committee looked at the parks in the vicinity of the downtown as a first step. Several potential locations were identified to test the criteria before holding public meetings. Two public meetings were held to discuss the criteria and other issues surrounding establishment of dog parks.

After considering strong public feedback regarding the process, the committee decided to take a step back to revisit the existing criteria and develop revised recommendations for locating, designing, and operating a dog park, before proposing any locations and holding public meetings on specific park areas. A key piece of these recommendations relates to process, more specifically, ensuring that the public has a chance to be actively engaged in discussing, reviewing, and commenting on these criteria for locating new dog parks. This document is the culmination of these discussions and provides the framework for how the City can move forward with creating and maintaining successful dog parks. However, it is also understood that this is a living document and will be revisited in the future to consider new initiatives and trends.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To guide the subcommittee's mission, a series of goals were established. These goals cover the process and outcomes for creating new dog parks and improving existing ones. The four goals established by the subcommittee include:

Goal 1 – Evaluate Community Preferences around Existing and Potential Future Dog Parks

To meet this goal, the dog park subcommittee utilized a series of tools including: a community-wide survey, a series of public meetings, targeted outreach to engaged citizens, and discussion during dog park subcommittee meetings.

Goal 2 – Research Best Management Practices to Inform Guidelines for Ann Arbor Dog Parks

To meet this goal, the subcommittee contacted communities from around the country, referenced master plans, and conducted interviews with staff and other community members. From this research, summaries and charts were developed to compare best practices regarding dog parks. Results can be found in [Appendix 4](#) and [Appendix 5](#).

Goal 3 - Provide Guidelines for the Development and Maintenance of New Dog Parks

To meet this goal, the subcommittee set three objectives: 1) To develop criteria for site location; 2) To develop criteria for site design; 3) To establish a public process for decision making regarding siting new dog parks.

To inform the guidelines, the committee reached out to communities around the country to gather best management practices, as well as to learn what might be improved with existing dog parks ([Goal 2](#)). The research included email, telephone interviews, website research, and review of master plans from other communities. The data was then collated into charts to compare criteria that guide development and maintenance of dog parks ([Appendix 4](#)).

The committee also created a community-wide survey to assess citizen needs, interests, desires, and concerns regarding future and existing dog parks in Ann Arbor. In addition, two public meetings were held with citizens to review the results of the survey and further discuss issues and opportunities related to new and existing dog parks in Ann Arbor. The subcommittee reviewed the survey and public meeting input in the creation of this document. The results from the survey and meetings can be found in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 3](#), respectively.

Goal 4 – Provide Guidelines for the Ongoing Operation and Improvement of Existing Dog Parks

To meet this goal, the subcommittee inventoried the existing Ann Arbor dog parks, including layout, amenities, operation, and maintenance practices. Enforcement issues outside of the existing dog parks were also studied. Input gathered from the survey and public meetings about what is and is not working well at Swift Run and Olson Parks, and research from other communities, helped the subcommittee to learn about best management practices. The committee also looked at volunteer and educational opportunities to aid in the management of future and existing dog parks.

From this information, the subcommittee made recommendations to improve ongoing operation, infrastructure, and amenities at existing dog parks and to improve enforcement issues surrounding off-leash dogs in parks.

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Evaluate Community Preferences around Existing and Potential Future Dog Parks (Goal 1)

Research was conducted by asking residents of Ann Arbor to provide input through a number of mechanisms explored below. Additionally, other cities and regions were interviewed to determine best management practices for establishing new dog parks and operating existing ones.

Public Input Methods

Several methods were used to obtain public input including a citizen survey, two public meetings, input at task force meetings, emails, and phone interviews. Each input method provided important information that helped to inform the criteria for site selection and design, as well as recommendations for improvements to existing dog parks.

A questionnaire was designed by the Park Advisory Commission subcommittee with public input and advertised via email, press releases, the City website, and postcards placed at recreation facilities, the City Hall customer service desk, and other public locations. The questions were designed to gain a better understanding of the existing dog population, the desire for or concerns against dog parks, whether and how people use dog parks, and what they like or dislike about them. Questions also addressed dog behaviors, geographic distribution, and locations where dog parks would or would not be acceptable.

A dog park web page was maintained during the public input period detailing the ways in which residents could be involved and provide input. The page listed the survey link, public meeting dates, email address, and Park Advisory Commission subcommittee meeting times and locations. The page is attached in [Appendix 2](#).

Two public meetings were held to obtain input. The meetings included discussion about potential location and design criteria, maintenance issues with existing dog parks, concerns about creating new parks, potential locations, and questions about what other communities are doing about dog parks.

Minutes of both meetings and detailed survey results are included in [Appendix 3](#).

Summary of Survey Responses

- The survey was completed by over 1,500 people, ranging in age from teens to seniors, and representing all areas of the City, with the majority being from zip code 48103.
- The majority of respondents own dogs and many own more than one dog.
- The majority of respondents do not currently use dog parks, but of those who do, more use Swift Run. Frequency of use ranged from daily use to a few times annually.
- The current dog parks were appreciated for their existence, size, fencing, and distance from homes. The dislikes included ill behaved dogs, fees, lack of shade, and issues with cleanliness.
- Respondents indicated that dog park usage would increase as the distance to the home decreased, with the most popular time for use being late afternoon.

- The most important items mentioned for a successful dog park were cleanliness, maintenance, location, and shade.
- The greatest concerns were cleanliness, dog conflicts, and maintenance.
- Many residents were willing to volunteer at a dog park to help clean, landscape, organize events and activities, and fundraise.

Summary of Input from Public Meetings

- Three public meetings were held with 29 people attending the first meeting, 9 people attending the second meeting, and 17 attending the third meeting.
- Important considerations should include buffers between the dog park and other uses, protection of natural areas and water quality, provision of shade, appropriate surfacing, adequate drainage, and parking so as not to put additional burden on existing neighborhoods.
- Take care of what we have and correct existing issues, including cleanliness, inadequate shade, condition/maintenance of existing dog parks, and issues with dogs running off-leash.
- Location is important, but it is also important to recognize that the City will never be able to provide dog parks walkable from every residence and land other than parks should be considered.
- Research and provide data from other communities to establish best practices when designing and locating new dog parks and managing existing parks.
- Establish an ample and well thought out process for public input.

Summary of Placement, Design and Management Practices from Other Cities (Goal 2)

Staff and Park Advisory Commission subcommittee members researched development and management practices from numerous cities, and obtained information via phone conversations, email, websites, master plans, and policy documents. Cities contacted include: Baltimore, MD; Boulder, CO; Chicago, IL; Kalamazoo, MI; Madison, WI; Norfolk, VA; Alexandria, VA; Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA; and Meridian Township, MI. Existing master plans referenced include Denver, CO; Salt Lake County, UT; and Oakland, CA.

Below is a summary of the responses. The data from the research on each city is detailed in [Appendix 5](#).

Placement

- **Size:** The recommended minimum size for dog parks varies considerably among cities, but is generally between 1/2 acre and one acre.
- **Buffer from Residential:** A few cities provide definitive distances from residences, varying from 50 feet to 200 feet. All strive to minimize conflicts and include guidelines such as: making sure that noise and activity levels are no more than other park uses, importance of screening or visual buffers, and having a minimal impact on residences.
- **Water Source:** Most recommend having a source of drinking water for humans and dogs if possible.

- **Parking:** Recommendations include that parking should be readily accessible, close to the site, sufficient/adequate size, and convenient. There were no standards for size; rather it is important to consider parking when locating a dog park.
- **Drainage:** Important aspects included that the site be relatively flat and have permeable soils.
- **Shade:** All recommend some shade as desirable, but not heavily shaded to allow for grass growth and for the ground to dry.
- **Use Conflict Avoidance:** Guidelines include avoiding play areas and other recreational amenities, high use areas, natural areas and water sources, wildlife, trails, community gardens, and historic sites.
- **Protect Wildlife and Natural Areas:** Several cities discuss avoidance of conflicts with wildlife and sensitive habitats.
- **Geographic Distribution:** A few cities have general guidelines, such as a one or two mile service area, but most do not state explicitly how the parks should be distributed through their community.

Design

- **Fence Height and Material:** All cities contacted have galvanized or vinyl coated chain link fences, with a minimum height of 4 feet. Double gated entries to allow for dog owners to unleash the dogs in a corral prior to letting the dog run free are the norm.
- **Surfacing:** There is no consensus as to the best type of surface. Several cities have multiple surfacing types including crusher fines or decomposed granite around the entrance area, concrete, grass, and mulch. For the larger areas, grass is used most often.
- **Separate Small and Large Dog Areas:** Most cities provide small dog areas if space allows.
- **Site Furniture and Other Amenities:** Most provide benches. Some have community bulletin boards to post announcements and some have shade structures. Very few have dog play amenities.
- **Trash Cans and Bag Holders:** All provide trash containers and some provide bag holders. A minority of cities also provide bags.
- **Signage:** All cities contacted post rule signs.
- **ADA Access:** All cities contacted said that they comply with the ADA for access to the site.

Management

- **Staffing:** Cities that have rangers or other park staff monitor dog parks, as well as illegal off-leash activity outside of dog parks, find this helpful for controlling dogs and building community support.
- **Fines:** Cities that issue warning tickets and/or fines find this effective at reducing the number of repeat offenders of illegal off-leash dog activity.
- **Entry Fees:** Fees to use dog parks range from free to \$35 or \$40 per year.
- **Entry Key Fob:** Cities that restrict use of the dog parks to patrons who pay for the permit by installing a key fob entry find that it encourages more people to follow rules, increases revenue, and provides a more equitable system for all users.

- **Hours of Operation:** Dawn to dusk is common.
- **Use Permit:** Obtaining a dog park permit as part of purchasing a dog license is common practice.
- **Volunteers and Enforcement:** A few cities have volunteers involved with the park maintenance and activity programming. Involvement of community members was noted to increase acceptance of the dog park and helps to minimize problems.

DOG PARK GUIDELINES FOR ANN ARBOR

Guidelines for Development and Maintenance of New Dog Parks (Goal 3)

Many of the below criteria are consistent with the off-leash Task Force Report of June 1998. However, several criteria have been updated based on current research and public input. This section outlines guidelines for placement, design, management, and enforcement of both existing and proposed dog parks, and the public process to be followed to establish new dog parks. The guidelines are derived from public input and what the subcommittee learned from research of other city's practices.

Guidelines for Placement of New Dog Parks

- **Size:** The size of dog parks will be dependent upon the particular park in which it is proposed, other park activities, facilities, proximity to residences, etc. Larger is better (at least ½ acre), but if a smaller dog park area is all that can be accommodated in a particular park, and if there is community support, then a smaller size will be considered.
- **Buffer from Residential:** It is crucial to provide a buffer between nearby residences and the dog park. The buffer should allow for neighbors to have no more disturbances from a dog park than other typical park uses. Buffers may include vegetation and/or berms to aid in noise/visual attenuation.
- **Non-residential Adjacent Land Use:** Depending on the type of business or institution, a dog park may be considered either a beneficial amenity or an undesirable facility.
- **Drinking Fountain:** A source of drinking water is highly desirable within or adjacent to the dog park area.
- **Parking:** Sufficient parking, convenient to the site, should be provided such that the dog park does not create undue burden on surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Land Suitability:** The site should be relatively flat and have permeable soils. If a desirable site has excessive slopes, it should be designed such that erosion does not become an issue, water bodies are protected, and visibility to all dogs is possible within the fenced in area.
- **Shade:** Shade is highly desirable. The site should provide a good mix of mature trees and open space/turf grass.
- **Use Conflict Avoidance:** It is important to provide a sufficient buffer between the dog park area and other recreational facilities such as playgrounds, trails, ball fields, picnic shelters, game courts, or any existing heavily used or programmed area.

- **Protect Natural Areas:** Dog park areas should not be located in or in close proximity to natural areas where flora and fauna, such as ground nesting birds, small mammals, and native plants, would be disturbed.
- **Geographic Distribution:** Dog park areas should be distributed in the City such that there is equitable distribution to dog parks in the City.

Guidelines for Design of New Dog Parks

- **Fencing Height and Type:** A minimum of a 4 foot high chain link fence, either galvanized or vinyl coated, be installed around the perimeter of the site.
- **Perimeter Plantings/Buffers:** If the budget and site permit, and if it is necessary to buffer the dog run area, vegetation should be planted on the outside of the fence to aid in the aesthetic quality of the site and to assist in mitigating noise associated with the dog park.
- **Entrance Design:** An entry corral, consisting of at least an 8 foot x 8 foot fenced area with two gates, should be provided to allow for pet owners to safely unleash their dog prior to letting them in the dog run area.
- **Visual Character and Aesthetics:** Dog parks should be located so as not to detract from the aesthetic quality of a park or open space. Ideally, the dog park should be designed to integrate well into the existing site.
- **Surfacing:** A variety of surfaces may be used within a site. Crushed fines at the entry are recommended as this area has a concentration of use. In smaller dog run areas, a larger crushed fines area is recommended as the concentration of dogs may not allow grass to grow. All surfaces should be easy to maintain. If possible, lawn areas should be rested periodically to allow the turf to recover.
- **Separate Areas for Large and Small Dogs:** When space permits, separate small dog areas should be provided for dogs up to 25 pounds.
- **Signage:** Rules shall be clearly posted, including codes of behavior, hours, and requirements for entry.
- **ADA Accessibility:** Barrier free access to the site shall be provided, as well as an area through the corral and at the entry. Barrier free paths through the dog run area should be provided if space and funding permit.
- **Trash Containers:** Trash containers and waste removal bag holders shall be provided in the dog run area, making sure that they are located with easy access for maintenance vehicles.
- **Site Furniture:** Ideally, several benches should be provided in convenient locations to allow for gathering and resting throughout the dog park area.
- **Pathways:** Walking trails around the perimeter would encourage owners to interact with and monitor their dogs more closely, as well as to provide additional ease of access to the entire site, and should be provided if there is sufficient space and funding.
- **Shade:** Trees and/or small shade structures should be provided if the site has insufficient shade to allow humans and dogs to retreat from the sun.

- **Water:** Drinking fountains should be provided if water is readily available and should include a dog drinker/bowl.
- **Lighting:** As the park areas are open from dawn to dusk, lighting need not be provided as an additional amenity.
- **Agility Equipment:** Amenities such as agility equipment may be included if a user group desires them.
- **Ease of Maintenance:** Service gates and trash barrels should be located such that maintenance vehicles may easily enter from an existing park road, parking lot, or street frontage.
- **Bulletin Board:** A community kiosk and bulletin board should be provided to provide a place to post notifications for meetings, work days, and events.

Guidelines for Management and Enforcement of Dog Parks

- **Staffing:** Staff monitoring of dog parks during heavy use periods is recommended.
- **Fines:** Warning tickets, followed up by fines, are recommended for repeat offenders to help reduce the amount of illegal off-leash dog activity outside of dog parks and enforce use by those who have not paid the fee to use dog parks.
- **Entry Fees:** Fees to use dog parks ranged from free to \$35 or \$40 per year. The City's fees are in line with those around the country. Continue to evaluate fees in relationship to other dog parks.
- **Entry Key Fob:** Restricting use of the dog parks to patrons who pay for the permit is recommended to encourage more people to follow city rules, increase revenue, and provide a more equitable system for all users. A key fob would assist in monitoring who has purchased dog park passes and have obtained the required vaccinations.
- **Hours of Operation:** Maintain current hours to be consistent with all parks: dawn to dusk.
- **Dog Park License:** Obtaining a dog park permit as part of obtaining a dog license is efficient and should be continued. Explore implementation of an online application process to be more user-friendly and increase compliance.
- **Rules:** City rules are consistent with other cities. They should remain as is and continue to be posted. Existing dog park rules are listed in *Appendix 6*.
- **Turf Maintenance:** Design of dog parks should permit resting grass to allow turf to reestablish.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteer involvement should be encouraged to promote stewardship of dog parks. Work with park volunteer staff to help develop programs and events, and recruit stewards.
- **Education:** Develop program to educate park users on dog etiquette, and to educate the community about dogs and dog parks in general.

Process to Establish New Dog Park Sites

Any proposed location should have strong support from surrounding neighbors and, in general, be supported by the community. Buy-in from immediate neighbors is crucial to the success of any proposed location. Given this basic criteria, the following process shall be followed when considering establishment of a new dog park.

1. Establish an ad-hoc committee comprised of members from the Park Advisory Commission, staff, and citizens to identify potential sites using established guidelines.
2. Have committee evaluate sites using the placement criteria (*Appendix 7*) to ensure the greatest opportunity for success while considering geographic distribution.
3. Using the scoring sheets, narrow the sites to those that score the highest.
4. Develop a concept plan for the site being considered that shows the proposed location in the particular park or public land, the access points, parking, amenities, and landscaping.
5. Plan for public input using the Community Engagement Tool, including conducting an online questionnaire available to all citizens, and notifying all residents within ¼ mile of the proposed site by mail with the link for the questionnaire, and the date and place for the public meeting.
6. Hold public meeting to discuss the site being considered and include the input received from the email questionnaire.
7. If there is general support for the project, concerns and suggestions are shared at the public meeting and staff will explore modifications to the concept plan.
8. If, after the concept plan is modified, opposition to the plan is still such that the project lacks the necessary support to succeed, then the second site on the list of potential parks will be considered, and the public process will be repeated.
9. When a proposed location is generally supported, being sensitive to residents in close proximity to the proposed dog park, the ad hoc committee will vote on the proposed site.
10. If the committee approves the proposed site, it would then be brought to the Park Advisory Commission for discussion and recommendation.
11. If the Park Advisory Commission approves the proposal, the site will be brought to City Council and include a public hearing so that City Ordinance can be modified to accommodate the proposed site.

Guidelines for Improvements to Existing Dog Parks (Goal 4)

In order to improve existing dog park areas, it is important to inventory what we have and explore what is working and what needs improvement. Lessons learned will also inform maintenance practices for new dog parks. The City currently has two dog park areas, Swift Run and Olson Parks. The inventory of these parks follows, as well as recommendations for improvements.



Inventory of Existing Dog Parks

OVERVIEW OF SWIFT RUN DOG PARK

- Location: 2998 E. Ellsworth Road at corner of Platt Road
- Size – 10 acre grassy field area with 5 foot high perimeter fencing
- Large and small dog run areas
- Gravel parking lot with approximately 30 spaces
- Double entry/exit control gates (wheel chair accessible)
- Mowed trail, landscaping, and benches
- On-site portable toilet and nearby, off-site, flush-restrooms (Southeast Area Park at Northwest corner of Platt and Ellsworth)
- Trash receptacles and dog waste disposal stations
- Posted rules, signage, and information kiosk

ISSUES AND POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO SWIFT RUN DOG PARK

1. The location of the park on a former landfill limits the types of amenities that can be installed as footings are not permitted that might puncture landfill cover.
2. The condition of the parking lot has been a source of complaint because of muddy conditions and rutting. Paving the parking lot should be considered.
3. Requests have also included water and permanent restrooms. However, no water is available at the site due to the fact that there is no water main in the vicinity.
4. Continue to explore improvements to surfacing.

OVERVIEW OF OLSON DOG PARK

- Location – Dhu Varren Road at corner of Pontiac Trail
- Size – .7 acre grassy field area
- 5 foot high perimeter fencing
- One area – no separate large and small dog run areas due to space limitations
- Paved parking lot for all park uses
- Two double entry/exit control gates (wheel chair accessible)
- Benches
- Flush restrooms on-site
- Drinking fountain with dog bowl located near restrooms
- Trash receptacles and dog waste disposal stations at entries to dog park
- Posted rules, signage, and information kiosk

- Separate maintenance/entry gate for mowing/maintenance equipment
- Surfacing consists of gravel and grass
- Wind and shade shelter
- One bench in fenced in area and other under shade structure
- Shade trees within fence, but not many mature trees

ISSUES AND POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS AT OLSON DOG PARK

1. Maintenance of the surfacing has been challenging because of the small size and clay soils. Staff has experimented with different surfacing types, including woodchips and gravel.
2. Trees have been planted, but they are still small.
3. Location serves north area of town, but is too far from other parts of town.
4. In response to public input, improvements made to the dog park after initial construction include a wind/shade structure, a second entry corral, and installation of a variety of surfacing types.

Suggestions for Improvements to Existing Dog Parks

1. Continue to evaluate surfacing. Make changes to improve drainage, wearing surface, and turf quality.
2. Work with Park Volunteer staff to find ways to engage volunteers for clean up days and other dog park events.
3. Establish a plan for future amenities and improvements so that if funding for park amenities is donated, there is a plan for inclusion in the existing dog parks.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Community Questionnaires

The subcommittee decided that questionnaires of the general public would allow a greater number of residents to participate in the public process. The questionnaires were posted on the City's website, emails were sent out via govDelivery, two press releases were posted, and post cards were placed at City Hall as well as several recreation facilities. The first questionnaire was available to the public for several weeks in August 2013, and the second in February and March, 2015. The results are as follows:

Questionnaire #1

Over 1,500 individuals completed the first questionnaire

2/3 were female (67.1%); 1/3 male (32.9%)

Age Breakdown for Respondents:

0.2% - under 18
2.1% - 18-24
42.4% - 25-44
45% - 45-64
10.3% - 65+

Zip Codes for Respondents:

58.8% from zip-code 48103

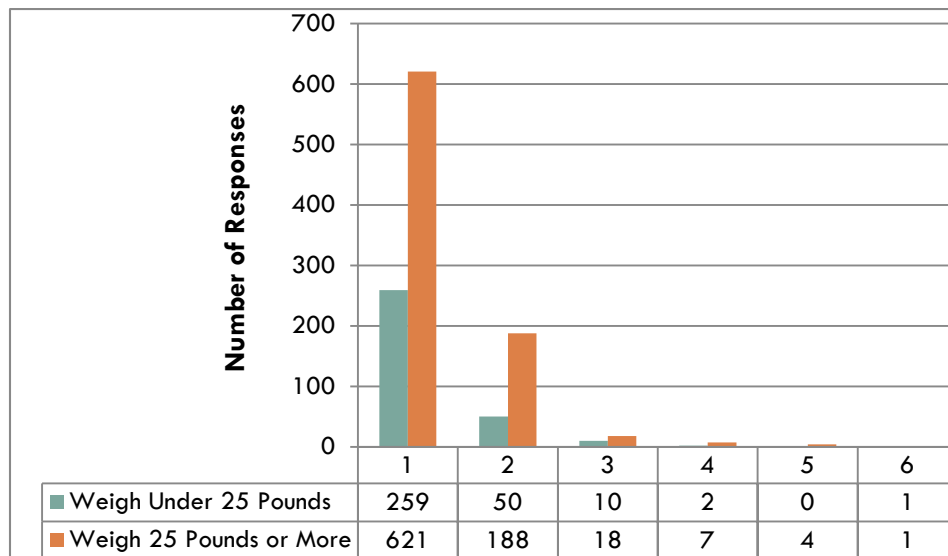
18.9% from zip-code 48104
 15.2% from zip-code 48105
 7.1% from zip-code 48108

Q1: Do you currently have a dog?

Currently have a dog – 67.5%
 Do not have a dog – 26.2%
 Planning to get a dog – 6.2%

Q2: If yes, how many dogs?

Participants were asked to list the number of dogs they owned under 25 pounds and/or over 25 pounds.



Q3: Do you currently use any existing dog parks? If so, which dog parks do you use?
 Respondents could select all that applied.

Swift Run – 332
 Olson Park – 158
 Do not use dog parks – 956

Participants were also able to list other area dog parks. Other sites mentioned included:

- Animal Kingdom
- Arise Dog Park
- Mill Pond
- Paw Run
- Neighborhood

Q4: How often do you use dog parks?

I don't use dog parks – 61%
A few times annually – 16.6%
Once a month – 7.6%
Multiple times per week – 6.8%
Daily – 1.9%

Q5: What do you currently like about the existing dog park(s)?

This was an open ended question. The most common responses are listed below:

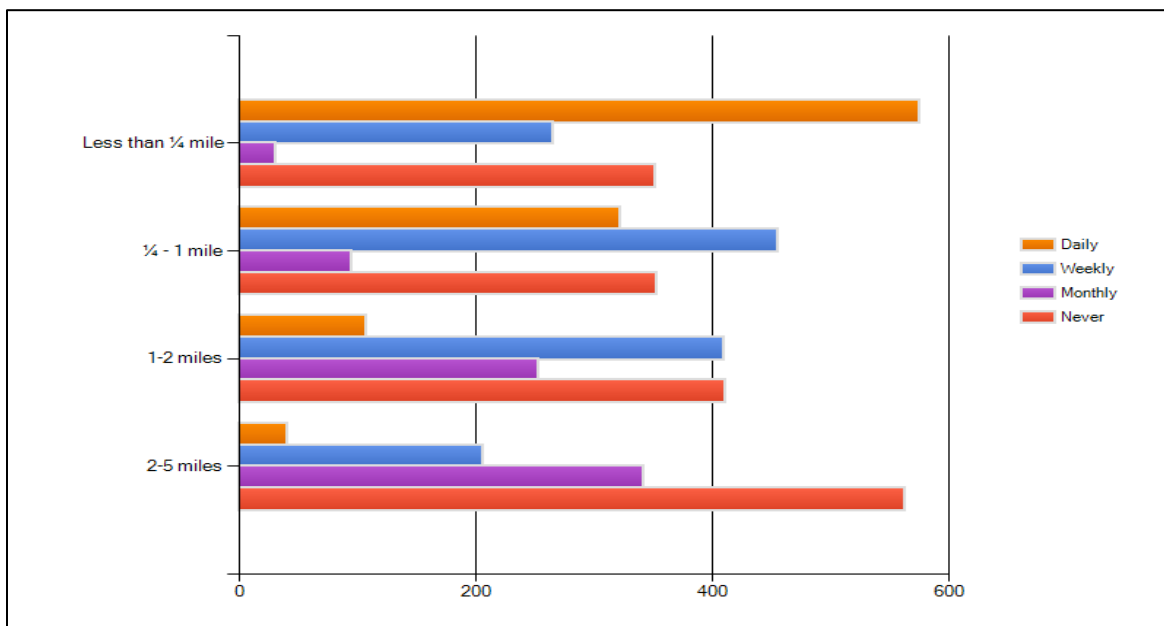
- That they exist
- The space – size
- Secure fencing
- That they are close to my home
- That they are far from my home
- No competition for other uses – outside existing parks
- Seating
- Nothing
- That there is a legal place for dogs to play off-leash

Q6: What do you dislike about the existing dog park(s)?

This was an open ended question. The most common responses are listed below:

- Ill-behaved dogs
- Fee charged
- Location – too far away
- No water
- Not enough shade
- Cleanliness
- No enforcement

Q7: If a dog park were located at a given distance from your residence, how often would you use it? (Check all that apply):



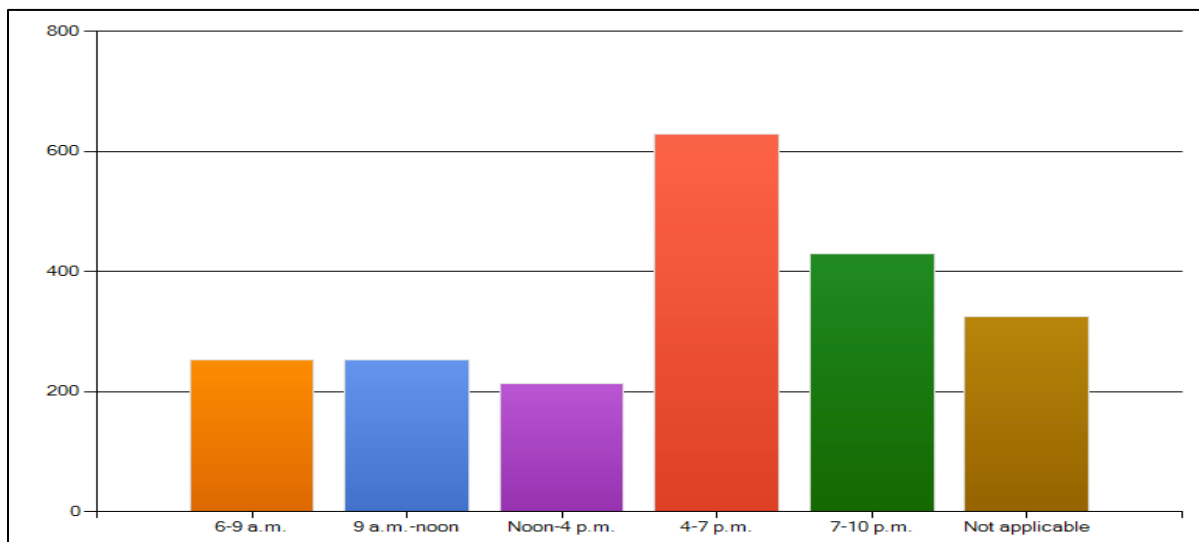
68.8% Would use a dog park daily if it was less than 1/4 mile from their residence

63.5% Would use daily or weekly if it was 1/4 to 1 mile from their residence

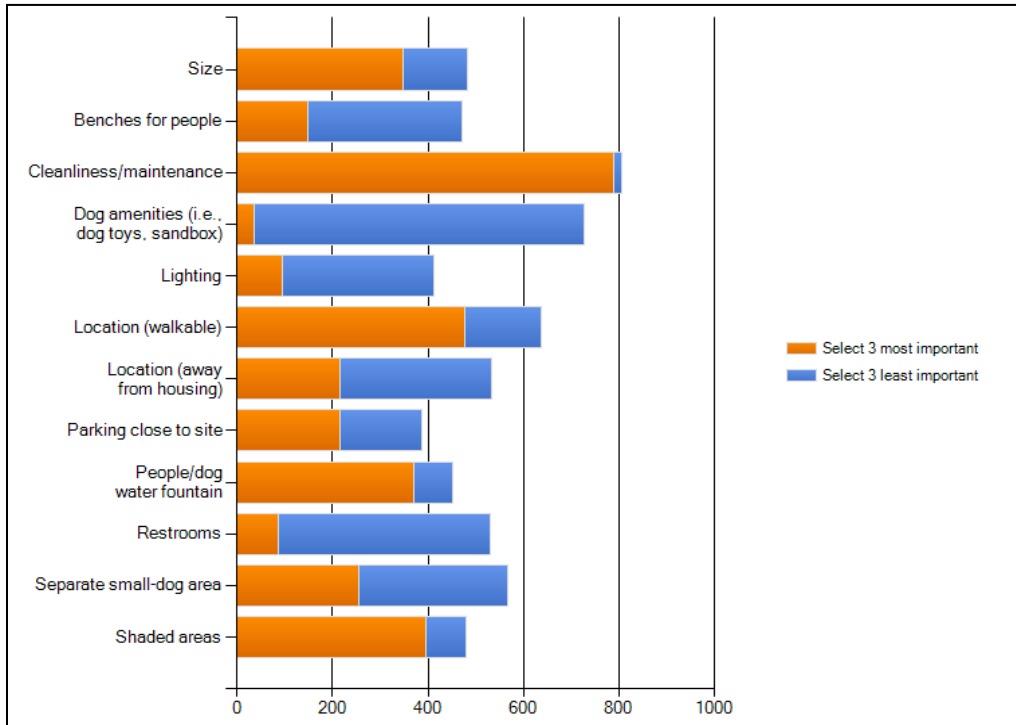
56.1% Would use weekly or monthly if it was 1-2 miles from their residence

78.7% Would use monthly or not at all if it was 2-5 miles from residence

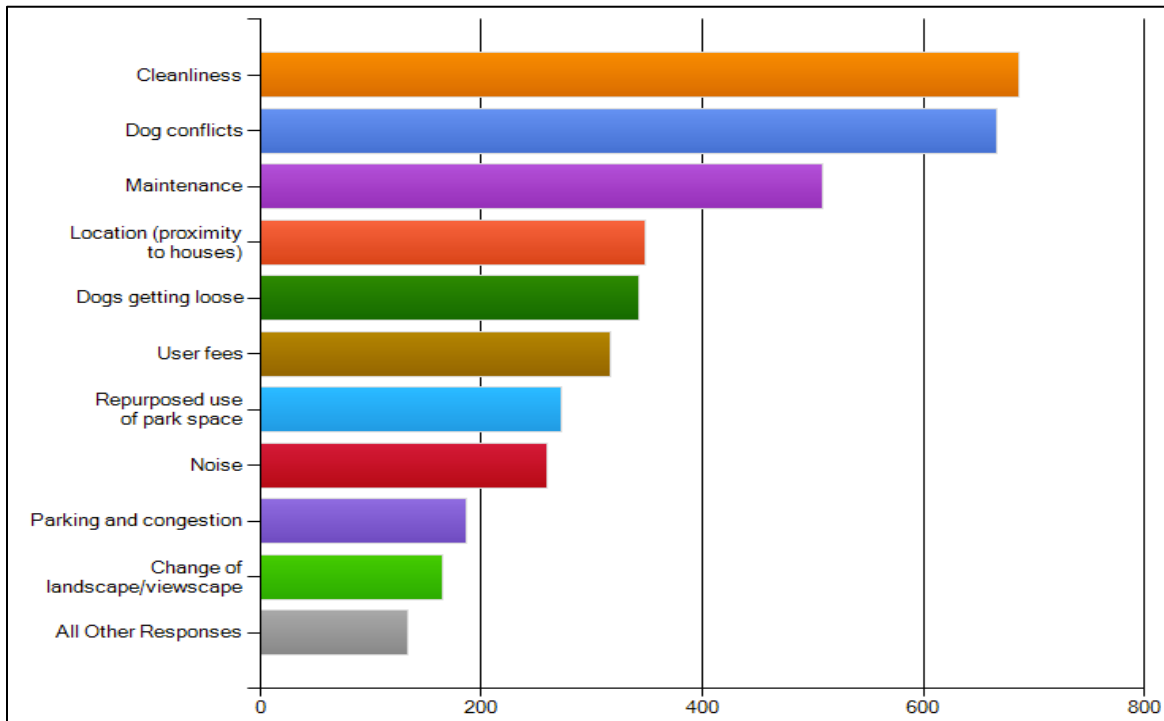
Q8: What times of day do you or would you most likely use a dog park? (Select all that apply.)



Q9: How important are the following items to a successful dog park? Please select the 3 items that are MOST important to you and the 3 items that are LEAST important to you. Selecting more than 3 for each column will nullify the response.



Q10: Are there issues related to dog parks that concern you? (Select all that apply.)



Q11: Would you support a dog park being located in...? (Answer all that apply)

Participants were asked to list parks for each sub-question. Word clouds are used to indicate the variety of responses. The larger the word(s) appear, the more times it was mentioned.

My neighborhood park (please provide the name of the park).

581 out of 943 selected this option.



Larger community-wide park (please provide the name of the park).

478 out of 943 selected this option.



Other community park (please provide the name of the park).

251 out of 943 selected this option.



As many places as the city will provide (please provide locations).

267 out of 943 selected this option.



I do not want a dog park anywhere.

130 out of 943 selected this option.

Q12: Would you be willing to volunteer at a dog park?

Clean – 199

Landscape – 180

Help organize events and activities – 156

Fundraise – 115

Q13: Would you support off-leash dog hours in parks without fencing?

Yes – 40.1%

No – 46.1%

Don't know – 13.8%

The full results of the community questionnaire, including all open ended responses may be found at this link: [PAC Dog Park Survey Results](#) (PDF).

Questionnaire #2

The subcommittee decided that a second questionnaire of the general public was needed after there were requests to revisit the criteria. The questionnaire was posted on the City's website, emails were sent out via govDelivery, a press releases was posted, and emails were sent to everyone who had attended a previous meeting or provided their email. The questionnaire was available to the public for several weeks in February and March, 2015. The results are as follows:

168 individuals viewed the questionnaire, and 40 completed the questionnaire.

Three questions were asked about the process, research and scoring sheet:

Q1: Given the research presented from other cities, and that there are not universally accepted dog park best management practices, does the proposed criteria for Ann Arbor provide sufficient guidance to determine potential sites for a new dog park?

Yes – 55%

No - 42.5%

No opinion – 2.5%

Q2: Do you feel that the proposed scoring sheet provides an objective means to help determine whether or not a particular site should be proposed for a dog park?

Yes – 60%

No – 32.5%

No opinion – 7.5%

Q3: Do you feel that the proposed process to establish new dog park locations provides for an open and fair decision making process for locating dog parks?

Yes – 67.5%

No – 25%

No opinion – 7.5%

The full results of the survey included open ended responses are located on the dog park website page.

Appendix 2: Website Page

A webpage was developed containing information concerning meetings, the survey, and resource materials.

Information on the website included the following:

SURVEY ON POTENTIAL NEW DOG PARKS

Your input and feedback are important to us! The desire for additional dog parks is identified in the current City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (an element of the City Master Plan). In an effort to ensure the Park Advisory Commission is responding to this need in an appropriate manner, the public is being asked for input on where one or more dog parks could be located and what types of amenities should be considered for inclusion in new and existing dog parks.

SURVEYS:

We invite everyone to take the dog park survey, whether or not you have a dog. In total, the survey should take between 5-10 minutes to complete. We greatly appreciate your time, and thank you in advance for sharing your thoughts. The survey link is www.surveymonkey.com/s/7YXPKXG or please call 734.794.6230 ext. 42590 to receive a paper copy. The survey will remain open through Monday, Aug. 12, 2013.

PUBLIC MEETINGS:

- Wednesday, Sept. 11, 7 to 9:00 p.m. at Cobblestone Farm Barn (2781 Packard Road)
- Tuesday, Sept. 24, 7 to 9:00 p.m. at Traverwood Library (3333 Traverwood Drive)
- Tuesday, March 5, 7-8:30 at City Hall (301 East Huron Street)

EMAIL YOUR INPUT:

a2parks@a2gov.org and visit our website at <http://www.a2gov.org/parks>.

Persons with disabilities are encouraged to participate in public meetings. Accommodations, including sign language interpreters, may be arranged by contacting the city clerk's office at 734.794.6140; via email at cityclerk@a2gov.org; or by written request addressed/mailed or delivered to the Ann Arbor City Clerk's Office, 301 E. Huron Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Requests need to be received at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

PAC SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Tuesday, April 23, 2013, Monday, May 5, 2013, 8 to 9:30 a.m., Friday, May 31, 2013, 4 to 5:30 p.m., Friday, June 21, 2013, 4 to 5:30 p.m., Monday, July 8, 2013, 4 to 5:30 p.m., Thursday, July 25, 2013, 8 to 9 a.m., Friday, Aug. 23, 2013, 2:30 to 4 p.m., Friday, Sept. 20, 2013, 8:00 a.m., Friday, Nov. 8, 2013, 9 to 10 a.m., Monday, Nov. 25, 2013, 8 to 9 a.m., Monday, Dec. 2, 2013, 8 to 9 a.m.

CITY WIDE PUBLIC MEETINGS:

Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013, 7 to 9 p.m., Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard Road, Ann Arbor

Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2013, 7 to 9 p.m., Traverwood Library, 3333 Traverwood Drive (at Huron Parkway)

The Dog Park Subcommittee of the Park Advisory Commission is exploring options for additional dog parks within the City of Ann Arbor. Meetings are open to the public and a space for public commentary is included on the agenda.

You can e-mail Parks Planner [Amy Kuras](#) or call 734.794.6230 ext. 42590 to receive additional information.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Ingrid Ault

Karen Levin

Missy Stults

Staff support include Amy Kuras, Colin Smith, David Rohr

DOCUMENTS THAT THE SUBCOMMITTEE IS REVIEWING INCLUDE:

[Dog Park Questionnaire](#)

[Dog Park Survey](#)

[Dog Park Letter](#)

[Dog Park Article](#)

[PAC Dog Park Survey Results](#) (PDF)

[PAC Dog Park Survey Results](#) (Excel)

The survey results are now available in an Excel spreadsheet format (above) for those interested in delving deeper into the material. The Excel file can be downloaded and saved to your computer.

Additional cross tabulated survey reports are available upon request. Please email request to David Rohr at drohr@a2gov.org.

Appendix 3: Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held to obtain general feedback about locations, criteria, and existing parks.

Notes from public meeting held on September 11, 2013

29 members of the public and 5 Park Advisory Commission members attended. The background and an overview of the input process was presented as well as a summary of the survey. Meeting participants then were asked to provide feedback.

Discussion about criteria:

- Parks are used by many types of people, children, etc.
- Adequate space is important.
- Big spaces – wide and long for dogs to run.
- Pay attention to potential use conflicts; children's play area at Wurster Park.

- Permeable soils are important.
- Not bordering households.
- Distance from neighbors.
- Avoid established neighborhood uses.
- Drainage – not on slopes, so that feces does not drain into areas where children are playing.
- Adequate parking – Old West Side is already full of cars from people who work downtown. There is traffic congestion. People who would drive to a proposed park would make the situation worse.
- What did we look at – want more specifics – how did these come about.
- Every site needs to be evaluated on its own merits. The neighborhood is going to need to like it.
- Drainage – not only slope away, but how soil perks – permeability.
- Can you please reveal which parks informed your criteria?
- Baltimore, Provincetown, Madison, and New Haven – lessons learned.

Maintenance:

- Why are we considering another dog park when we can't maintain what we have?
- Would help to know mitigation strategies for taking care of what we have.
- We need to know how to fix things – do it right before building more dog parks

Budget:

- What is the budget?
- How much is the partnership with the County?
- What is the budget for capital and operating?
- Why can't we cooperate with the County?

Existing Dog Parks:

- Users had a lot of complaints about existing dog parks.
- Lessons learned – needed to modify parks, volunteers didn't work out.
- Why not reconfigure Swift Run to make it more fun?
- Add to Swift Run – sand, pea gravel, cement – surfaces that can be cleaned.
- Swift Run – water, filling in of low areas, parking lot, partitioning.

Issues:

- Every park is a dog park – everyone lets their dogs run off-leash.

- Do not want a dog park in West Park.
- Focus on one park vs. many parks.
- Illegal gatherings.
- Dog park licenses – online instead of having to come down to City Hall.
- Remedy current dog park issues and learn from it.

Location:

- Is there something that can be a walkable amenity from downtown?
- It will never be walkable for everyone.
- Look at the process in other communities – What is the best distance from houses? What is the minimum size? People are interested in what makes a good location.
- What parameters should we consider for a downtown park?
- Identify dead spaces, other spaces that are not parks.
- What about newly acquiring areas for dog parks?
- Consider spaces that are not currently used as parks. Are there empty lots downtown or parking lots that could be used as part time dog runs?
- Will the city acquire new property for a dog park to avoid existing use conflicts in existing parks?
- Be clear about centrally located dog park.
- The question of dog park locations needing to be no more than 2 miles away makes me ask “away from whom?? The people who would like Wurster Park would not be willing to walk to the North Main City property, but folks closer to that spot would. How will you resolve that?
- Why not remodel or use space not currently a park?
- What properties have you looked at and eliminated – non-City owned.

Other:

- Excited to have a dog park.
- How do we hear what cities like Baltimore are doing?
- Timeline – when do we expect to arrive at a conclusion?
- Park fee with dog licensing fee

Notes from public meeting held on September 24, 2013

9 members of the public and 3 Park Advisory Commission members attended. The same presentation was made as at the first meeting, but then participants were divided into two groups to discuss the criteria and make suggestions as to specific potential locations.

Input on Proposed Criteria:

- Size - people tend to take little dogs to little parks.
- Enforcement is crucial – needs to be staffed.
- Cleaning up after dogs.
- Bar code entry, swipe card.
- Swift Run is really huge – it doesn't need to be that big. People lose track of their dogs.
- Drainage – muddy dog park not good, need to rethink surfacing, provide alternatives, make sure any new areas have proper drainage.
- Parking spaces – need to be adequate for anticipated use.
- Noise – elevation difference between park and surrounding area – in a valley or on a hill can help.
- Keep an eye on historical nature of park; make sure that change in use does not change intention or character.
- Natural feature preservation – no development of sensitive natural features/areas.
- Shade – need to make sure there are adequate trees.
- Operation – can you control number of dogs using a particular dog park at any one time?
- Use conflicts – buffers needed between different types of uses (play areas, etc.).
- Connection to river or a moving body of water is a desirable feature.

Ideas for new dog parks:

- Fuller Park South – has adequate parking, need to stay away from wetlands.
- Kuebler Langford Park – thruway hikers, away from neighbors, noisy highway would cover noise of barking.
- Broadway Park – close to downtown, not much pedestrian traffic, not connected to B2B trail, noise from trains, away from neighbors.
- Veterans Memorial Park – noise offset by traffic, parking adequate, may be too popular, need an acre minimum for this site.
- DTE Property – not owned by City, away from neighbors.

Notes from public meeting held on March 5, 2015

Fifteen members of the public and two Park Advisory Commission members attended the meeting. Research done by the subcommittee was presented, along with proposed revised scoring criteria based on what was learned.

Comments from attendees about why they came to the meeting:

- Would like equal access to city services
- Saline dog park – really like it, interested in parks in general
- Special place where dogs should be, not around churches and things of that nature
- Where could a dog park be placed? Concerned about cleaning up after dogs
- Walks in regular parks, don't think that Ann Arbor is going to make a dog park because we have too many spaces where people keep their dogs off leash
- Dog clean up is an issue and would like to have input on where dog parks could be and where they shouldn't be
- Concerned about proximity of parks and who is going to maintain the park
- Concerned about dog residue, and don't want dogs around little people and elders because they could bite, concerned about location around church. Wants to know about methods for choosing dog parks.

Overview of meeting purpose

- There is a long history of advocacy to establish dog parks, and people have very strongly held views about dog parks
- Worked to come up with a consistent and coherent process for locating dog parks, and want to make sure that the process is as objective as possible
- Want to make sure City is on the right track before considering specific sites

Attendees at meeting scored a location, and provided the following feedback about the scoring sheet:

- There should be extra points for water bodies for swimming
- Change residential buffer to institutional buffer as well, including churches, hospitals, etc.
- Buffer from residents isn't always better as maybe being closer for walkability is desired
- Shade criteria is confusing
- Use conflict avoidance should be about not just what is in the park, but what is around it
- Geography – simplify so that it is about more equitable distribution
- Clarify water quality and drainage criteria

- Water source was confusing – is it about places to drink or swim or both?
- Not sure that separating kids from dog parks is a desirable thing, having the kids at the park and then a place for dogs in the same vicinity can be desirable as well.
- Could the scoring be weighted?
- Is there wiggle room in the selection criteria in the times of use, etc. It's not like there is a formula, it is site by site.

Appendix 4: Research from Other Communities

Staff and Park Advisory Commission subcommittee members performed research to explore best practices from communities around the country, as well as professional organizations that specialize in pets. The research included internet searches to find out what type of criteria were being used to site dog parks, as well as what kind of design criteria were used to establish the areas. In addition to the web searches, staff and Park Advisory Commission members telephoned and emailed individuals from more than 10 cities to discuss the successes and struggles associated with their public process, design, and maintenance of dog parks in their communities. A range of cities were contacted, including several whose population and makeup were similar to Ann Arbor (university towns), several major cities who have numerous dog parks, and regional facilities in Michigan and other states in the Midwest with similar climate.

The questions that were asked included the following. Responses are summarized in the charts:

- Do you have criteria to site a dog park?
- Do you have criteria for design of a dog park?
- Do you have a minimum buffer and/or distance between dog parks and existing resident? If so, how did you arrive at the criteria?
- What kind of oversight do you have to enforce rules, monitor behavior of dogs, restrict entry, etc.? Do you have staff on site?
- Do you engage volunteers? If so, how?
- Do you have any educational programs for the public, such as dog behavior issues they might encounter, complaint procedures, etc.?
- What type of decision making process was involved to establish the dog park?
- Are you satisfied with how your public process panned out? Were there contentious issues? If so, how did they get resolved?
- Do your dog parks include a separate area for small dogs? If so, how large is the area?
- What has, in your opinion, worked well in establishment and maintenance of your dog parks?
- What would you do differently next time around?

In order to compare the responses that were gathered, the following charts outline the responses received in categories to allow for comparison.

Several cities, including Denver, CO; Salt Lake County, UT; and Oakland, CA have master plan documents that were used to provide data. Others were telephoned and emailed, and others had useful information on their websites. These were all utilized to compare criteria. Not all cities had criteria for every category included in the charts, but there was sufficient information to provide comparative information.

Appendix 5: Charts Summarizing Data from Other Cities

Appendix 5: Data Summary											
Location	Size Guidelines	Parking	Buffer from Residential	Conflict Avoidance	Surfacing	Drainage	Fees	Small & Large Dog Areas	Geographic Distribution	Perimeter Fencing	Other Information
Alexandria, VA	≥ 21,780 ft² (0.5 acre)	Easy access for police/animal control	50 ft			At least 60 ft from stream bed or water source				Double gated entry	
Baltimore, MD	≥ 5,000 ft²		200 ft; Changes in topography or landscaping can reduce amount	Avoid playgrounds, athletic fields, sensitive habitats, areas directly upstream from community gardens, paths, and historic sites	Natural turf or hard surface to allow for cleaning with a hose	Well drained, max 5% slope, and avoid floodplains				5 ft perimeter fence and double gated entry	
Boulder, CO	No specific design requirements		No set criteria	Locate as far away from adjacent residences as possible	Decomposed granite or crusher fines material that isn't too sharp; All weather surface		Free and open to public during normal park hours	Unspecified size		Vinyl coated chain link fence	Volunteers occasionally work as ambassadors. Important to work closely with community advocacy group to assist with maintenance
Chicago, IL	≥ 3,500 ft² (not to exceed 3.5% of total park acres)		Ensure noise and activity levels are no more disruptive than typical park uses	Strong buffer between uses	Hard surface	Proximity to drainage to a sanitary sewer system	Annual: \$5				
Denver, CO	≥ 43,560 ft² (1 acre) (2-3 acres preferred)	Existing off street parking should be available	200 ft from street	100 ft from playground or other children's facility. No arterial streets within 200 ft unless fully fenced.	Crusher fines at entry. Min 1 acre alt. surface (sand based soil mix, synthetic turf or infield mix)	Must have positive drainage	Annual: \$25 residents, \$40 non-residents	Recommended	One mile service area radius for most populous areas. Two mile service area for lower density areas	4 ft fence and double gated entry	Discounted fee provided in exchange for volunteer maintenance support and participation in educational programs
Kalamazoo, MI		Nearby	No set criteria. Existing park 100-150 ft from street	Full time staff for park maintenance			Fee and key fob required	Separate areas; Same entrance			
Madison, WI	≥ 43,560 ft² (1 acre)	Nearby	Maximize distance; Include vegetative buffer	Avoid use conflicts	Grass		Daily: \$5; Annual: \$30; Senior/Disabled: \$15	100x300 ft for small dogs		Chain link	Park Ranger visits daily, leads monthly dog park user meetings and cleanup days.
Meridian Township, MI	10 acres		Screening from other park uses required		Decomposed granite	Screening should help mitigate runoff		Small dog area 1/4 size of large dog area		4-6 ft galvanized and double gated entry	
Montgomery County, MD	10,000 ft²	Adequate parking	Appropriate distance from residents		Various					5 ft min height and double gated entry	
Norfolk, VA	≥ 32,670 ft² (0.75 acre), approx 175' x 200'	Appropriate parking; Minimize disruption to resident parking	Avoid highly populated or high use areas	Avoid high use areas such as schools, jogging tracks, trails, playgrounds or recreational amenities							Neighborhood acceptance requires majority approval at public meetings. Adjacent property owners must provide written approval.
Oakland, CA	≥ 20,000 ft²	Nearby (within reasonable walking distance)	Avoid locating adjacent to residences	Avoid wildlife conflicts or conversion of parkland	Easy to maintain; Turf not desired in smaller fenced areas; Preferred surfacing TBD	Relatively flat, well drained, berms, catchments to avoid runoff	Annual: \$25-\$35 recommended	Small dog area: Minimum 1/4 acre	Ideally dog area within two miles of every Oakland resident	4 ft black vinyl fence and 8 ft x 8ft double gated entry with two 4 ft gates; Separate gate for maintenance	Opportunities for community bulletin board/kiosk. Park stewardship days.
Portland, OR	≥ 5,000 ft²	Nearby	Minimize impact to adjacent residences	Avoid conflicts with fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, playgrounds		Dry and irrigated rather than wet, avoid slopes, relatively level	Free		Focus on multi-family neighborhoods where people don't have backyards		No permanent volunteer group. Some programs. Fines of up to \$150 for violation of off-leash law.
Salt Lake County, UT		Sufficient and convenient	Minimize conflicts with existing/planned land uses		Surfacing type must be carefully considered	No standards, but very important		Sometimes; Unspecified size			
San Francisco, CA	≥ 10,000 ft² (30,000 ft² preferred)		Natural or man made buffer to avoid conflicts	Avoid use conflicts and overcrowding	Turf in larger parks, alternative surfaces in smaller parks						
American Kennel Club	≥ 43,560 ft² (1 acre)	Parking				Adequate drainage					
Association of Pet Dog Trainers	Enough to avoid crowding		Visual buffer within fenced park								

Appendix 6: Existing Dog Park Rules

DOG PARK USERS

PLEASE OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES

1. A permit is required to use this facility. For registrations call 994-2725 City, 222-6600 County.
2. Dogs must display current registration, license, and vaccination tags.
3. Users of this facility do so at their own risk. Dog behavior can be unpredictable around other dogs and strangers.
4. Dog owners and handlers are strictly liable for any damage or injury caused by their dogs.
5. Dog handlers must be 16 years of age or older.
6. Children under age 15 are not allowed in the park unless accompanied by an adult.
7. All dogs must remain on leash until inside the designated fenced area.
8. Dogs must not be left unattended. Dogs must be in view and under the voice command of their handler at all times.
9. Dog handlers are required to clean up and dispose of their dogs' waste.
10. Dogs in heat and puppies under 4 months of age are not permitted in the park.
11. Dogs that fight or exhibit aggressive behavior must be immediately removed from the park.
12. No more than two dogs per handler are allowed at one time.
13. No smoking, food, or alcohol is allowed within the park.
14. Professional dog trainers shall not use the park to conduct their business.
15. Failure to comply with posted rules is subject to citation, expulsion, or arrest, as well as dog impound.

Park Hours are dawn to dusk
(Subject to closures during required maintenance operations.)

Call 911 for Emergency Assistance

Appendix 7: Scoring Sheet for Placement Criteria

Appendix 7: Scoring Sheet for Placement Criteria		5 = Ideal Conditions; 4 = Exceeds Basic Criteria; 3 = Meets Criteria; 2 = Minimally Meets Criteria, Not Optimal; 1 = Does Not Meet Criteria			
Criteria Description	Score 1	Score 3	Score 5	Comments	Score
Size Variable and dependent upon proposed park location. Minimum 1/4 acre; 1/2 acre preference	Less than 1/4 acre	1/2 acre to 1 acre	> 2 acres		
Buffer from Residential Ideally limit neighborhood disturbance to be consistent with typical park uses. Desired increased distance; vegetative buffer	50' or less from adjacent residents, and little opportunity for buffer	> 100' from residents and moderate opportunities for buffer	> 200' from residents and good opportunity for buffer		
Nonresidential Adjacent Land Use Depending on the type of business or institution, may be considered either a benefit or an undesirable amenity	Surrounding institution/business does not consider dog parks compatible with its mission/constituency	A dog park would be neutral for the surrounding institution or business	An adjacent dog park would be a positive addition to the surrounding institution or business		
Drinking Fountain Highly desirable within or adjacent to dog park area	No drinking water available on site; would be expensive/difficult to provide water	Drinking fountain and/or water service available on site, but outside of dog park	Drinking fountain available within proposed dog park area		
Parking Sufficient and convenient; Provided without undue burden on neighbors.	Onsite parking not currently existing; Site too small to accommodate parking lot	On-site parking not currently existing; Site can accommodate parking lot	Existing parking lot on site can accommodate dog park		
Land Suitability Relatively flat topography, permeable soils, design to minimize erosion potential, protection for water bodies, good visibility through site	Excessive slopes, impermeable soils, and high erosion potential	Moderately flat, moderate visibility, moderately permeable soils	Primarily flat, good drainage, permeable soils, good visibility		
Shade Highly desirable; Site provides good mix of shade/mature trees and open space/turf grass	No trees on site; full sun	Some trees on site; smaller trees don't provide much shade	Mature trees; good mix of shade and open space		
Use Conflict Avoidance Avoid placing dog park in area that would conflict with or displace desired active and passive activities	Dog park would conflict with existing park uses	Existing park use would not be impacted by proposed dog park	Dog park would complement existing park uses		
Protect Natural Areas Should not be located in close proximity to high quality natural areas to limit disturbance of nesting birds, small mammals, native plants	Site within 50' of high quality natural area	Natural area > 100' from proposed dog park area	No natural areas at site		
Geographic Distribution Located such that there is equitable distribution to dog parks in the City	Within 1/4 mile of an existing dog park; Well served by dog park	Within a 1 mile of an existing dog park; Moderately well served	Equal distance from other dog parks in unserved area of City		
Highest Score Attainable - 45 points; Minimal Score for Consideration - 27 points; Eliminate as Possibility <27 points					Total Score
Summary Comments:					

Dog parks 101, 2019

The Trust for Public Land - Center for City Park Excellence.



Executive summary: How to build a dog park.

We get many questions from parks agencies, park advocates, and the press about dog parks through the year, but especially around the release of our ParkScore Index in late May. People have many questions about “the right way” to build a dog park and want to bring together the right combination of people and resources to make it possible. Based on those discussions, as well as some interviews and even some personal experience, we have put together this guide. It will continue to be revised (we welcome your thoughts) and posted on our Park Advocacy resource, Parkology.org.

1. Have a plan.

With so many dog parks in public parks, there are both best practices and lessons learned that both public agencies and park advocates could learn from. The most important point is: have a plan. You can modify it as you go, but being upfront about what you need to do helps everyone understand what is required and keeps the process public and transparent.

A plan should address all of those questions that people will ask as you move through both the approvals process as well as the funding process. It should answer some of the following questions:

- What kinds of facilities you want to build?
- Should the dog park or off-leash area be fenced, or are you planning for open areas that are open during a certain number of hours during the day?
- For open areas in a larger park, are you planning to rotate from season to season?
- Are you planning water features, including drinking fountains, splash pads, or pools?
- Are you planning climbing or other agility features?
- Are you including seating and shade?

There are many options, and you should first consult what types of dog parks already exist in your

community, as well as any standards that have been developed or approved by public agencies. (We will cover this in detail in a bit.)

Public agencies should develop a standard for dog parks with a public input process based on best practices that are generally available widely. Required elements for dog parks generally include:

- **COMPLETE FENCING** around the perimeter of the designated area, or natural barriers that prohibit dogs from leaving the area.
- **DOUBLE-GATE ENTRY** – A standard feature is a double-gate entry system with a gated waiting area for the dog and human to enter, remove the dog’s leash, and then open the gate to the main off-leash area, reversing the process for exiting. This ensures that unplanned escapes will be kept to a minimum, allows for leashing and unleashing in a separate area, and enables dog owners to manage the transition into and out of the dog park.
- **SEPARATE AREAS FOR SMALL AND LARGE DOGS.** Allow for dogs of different sizes and ages to avoid interacting (and causing possible conflicts) by creating separate areas for different-sized dogs and their humans. Puppies and shy dogs then have the opportunity to interact and get used to the high level of activity that can occur in a dog park.
- **SURFACING PLAN** (including renewal) – There are many surfacing options, and the choices depend on weather, drainage, and current conditions. That said, there are many options, ranging from artificial turf to engineered wood fiber to gravel. All have pluses and minuses, and local knowledge of what works in other park facilities (such as playgrounds or other high-traffic areas) is critical. For example, artificial turf is great, but it requires cleaning and built in irrigation and sanitizing systems are increasingly common. Natural turf is softer but requires a lot more care – including a plan for renewal, including temporary closures for regrowth. Gravel, rock dust or some sort of crusher fines work well but can get stuck in dog paws and

become dusty in drier climates or seasons. Regular mulch or engineered wood fiber is increasingly used in playgrounds, but needs to be replaced often, depending on the usage patterns.

- **AN ALTERNATIVE** to fenced and gated sites are areas that are subject to time restrictions for off-leash use. Prime examples are Long Meadow in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY, or Boston Common, which have off-leash rotating areas depending on the time of the year. These parks set out specific areas as well as specific times of day for off-leash usage.
- **DOG WASTE PLAN** (bag dispensers and trashcans) – A key requirement of any dog park is dealing with dog waste, as well as general trash and recycling. All dog owners should be strongly encouraged to bring their own bags (you never know where a dog will poop!) and be encouraged to “pack it out,” to minimize the impact on the dog park as well as the ongoing maintenance and operations for the parks department.
- **A DESIGN TO ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT.** We’ve heard from many dog trainers and public health officials that a key ingredient in developing good park areas are designs that keep dogs and their people moving in the off-leash area. Many people might think that unclipping your dog’s leash once inside the double gate and plopping oneself down on a bench is all you need to do. Nope. Dogs are pack animals and love to socialize, but also need to be managed by their owners. We all need exercise, and areas for object chasing, agility and other forms of activity, mixed with socialization, are a key contributors to a great dog park.

2. Make sure your dog park is open and inviting.

Try to make your dog park inviting to everyone, not just dogs and their owners or walkers. As many case studies have shown, having a good working relationship with neighbors is critical to the success of any dog park. While welcoming elements might be considered frills, it is important to think about what makes your favorite park inviting and welcoming, as many of the same rules apply.

- **WATER FOUNTAINS OR FEATURES** for humans and pups. Having a source of water, especially in warmer climates, is key. Dogs can get overheated

easily, and we all want everyone to stay hydrated and safe.

- **SEATING FOR HUMANS.** Generally, it is a good idea to keep people and their dogs moving, but everyone needs a break. Having seating is good; it can often double as an agility feature.
- **PARKING AND BIKE RACKS.** Not everyone can walk their dog to the park; some people need to come via other means.
- **SHADE.** In general, we need trees in our parks, and dog parks are no exception. Alternatives can include shade structures, like those increasingly found shading playgrounds in warmer climates.
- **SIGNAGE.** It is very important to post clearly at dog park entrances the park’s hours, rules, volunteer opportunities, and opportunities for joining friends-of-the-park or dog park groups.
- **VISUAL ATTRACTIVENESS, ESPECIALLY FROM OUTSIDE THE PARK.** It is important to be a good neighbor to the rest of the park, the adjacent street, and local residents and businesses. Improvements such as flower plantings, attractive street fencing, and artwork are always welcome and are ways that the local friends group can make a difference in the upkeep of the park. One of the authors passes his community dog park going to and from the subway each day, and it’s a lively place with dogs and their people socializing, playing together, and engaging with passersby. (There’s a set of athletic fields and a very busy hike-and-bike trail in the immediate vicinity.)

3. Be open and communicative.

Be sure to cast a wide net and work with likely as well as unlikely allies as you work to plan, build, and run your dog park.

GROUPS FAVORING DOG PARKS should reach out to the city’s parks department to determine if there are ordinances as well as design standards (including the elements mentioned above) that need to be followed in order to create a dog park.

Groups favoring dog parks should also reach out to current users of the park, and local community leaders, to understand the history of the community and the park, prior and current park uses, and other possible plans or efforts for the park that may be

already underway. This identifies the issues and concerns of individuals or other groups, and allows all players to engage in the process with their eyes fully opened.

Public parks agencies should seek input from groups that may, at first glance, not seem to be allies. These can include:

- **PUBLIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT AGENCIES AND SHELTERS.** These agencies can be sources of information – for example about runaways or stray dogs, dogs chained in yards, dog bites, dog adoptions, and other issues – and help by identifying potential allies of dog parks or the benefits of building one. They can provide programming, including adoptions, run-with-a-dog programs, onsite health clinics, obedience classes, licensing, and vaccinations. (All of these efforts can go a long way in addressing issues that often come up in news reports, including sick dogs, misbehaving dogs, or conflicts with dog owners.)
- **COMMUNITY-BASED DOG-ADVOCACY GROUPS.** These groups are often breed-specific or rescue-oriented. Community and other friends groups can be critical to the success of a dog park. In fact, a number of public park agencies require a friends group to help maintain and manage the dog park, or even to raise money for construction, maintenance, or improvements. More than any other partner, these groups, made-up mostly of volunteers, assume a strong ownership role in the park, helping to maintain standards of behavior and cleanliness, keeping “eyes on the park,” and managing community and park-agency issues on a regular basis.
- **NONPROFITS INVOLVED IN DOG WELLBEING.** These include adoption agencies, low-cost spay and spay-and-neuter clinics, animal shelters, area veterinarians, affinity groups, agility and obedience trainers, and more. Like the animal management agencies and shelters, these organizations are a great source of programming, both at the dog park and offsite, and can help educate dog owners and promote positive activation of dog parks.

4. Embrace the standards.

Many city parks departments have developed standards and master plans for dog parks. But even when

standards and plans are in place and other dog parks are already established, it is important for groups to reach out and communicate proposals and plans for a new dog park. Although the expenses associated with community outreach, collaboration, and coalition building can seem high, these investments are essential to establishing and maintaining a successful dog park. We’ve provided a case study below to show how.

Case Study: RUFF and the DeFillippo playground and dog park in the North End, Boston.

RUFF (Responsible Urbanites for Fido) began in response to increased complaints about dogs and dog owners in the North End neighborhood of Boston. The North End is a close-knit and tightly packed neighborhood that has been an Italian-American for several generations and, prior to that, was home to successive Irish Enclave and a Jewish communities, all these changes coming in the last 100 years. RUFF began to organize and help address issues related to dogs, including the use of leashes in parks, volunteer efforts to clean-up parks frequented by dogs and their owners, and raising funds to pay for Mutt Mitts and other supplies.

About 2015, the group began looking for public spaces to put in a pilot dog park, working closely with the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission as well as local community groups. Of all of the parks in the neighborhood, they ended up with what they thought was their last choice. The site was on multiple levels in and around the DeFlippo Playground. The park has historically been known as “Gassy,” from the days when a giant aboveground gas tank stood in the middle of the neighborhood. But, it was site for a dog park, and RUFF saw a great opportunity.

The group raised some funds and embarked on a pilot project. They purchased fencing for the site and had it installed, complete with gates that had to be manually locked and unlocked daily. To do this, they rotated through volunteers for the first few months. With a little fundraising, they installed automatic gates that unlocked in the morning and locked automatically at closing.

Through the pilot, which lasted several years, RUFF worked to address ongoing issues (like excessive barking and dog waste), held gatherings that offered education and services (licensing, dog wash, vet check-ups), and continued coordinating with both neighborhood organizations and the public parks agency. Over time, the group raised additional funds and worked out the details to build a permanent dog park, complete with artificial turf, irrigation to clean and disinfect the turf in season, additional play and safety features, and improvements to the pilot elements, including fencing.

The park opened in the spring of 2018. In the meantime, RUFF volunteers continue to do what they have been doing for the past four years: addressing neighborhood issues, daily maintenance and operations (shoveling snow, cleaning steps, and small repairs), and, most importantly, enjoying the park.

5. Unique features, cool features, ideas and suggestions for dog parks.

Off-leash dog parks are not just for playing, walking, and running. Facilities for swimming, agility and more are being added to public dog parks in cities across the United States. We have highlighted a selection and will be adding to this list on *parkology.org*. We invite your contributions as well.

- First dog park in NYC – Tompkins Square Park (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_park)
- Millie Bush Dog park – Houston, TX – <http://www.pct3.com/dog-parks/millie-bush-dog-park>
- Laurel Canyon Dog Park – Los Angeles – <https://www.laparks.org/dogpark/laurel-canyon>
- Bear Creek Dog Park, Colorado Springs, CO – <https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/parks-and-recreation/bear-creek-dog-park/>
- Montrose Beach Dog Park, Chicago – only beach where dogs are allowed (in many parts of the northern US, dogs are often excluded from beaches from memorial day through labor day) – <http://mondog.org/>
- Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY – <https://www.prospect-park.org/visit-the-park/things-to-do/dogs/>
- Bark Park at Heritage Park, Henderson, NV – <http://www.cityofhenderson.com/henderson-happenings/>

[parks-and-trails/locations-and-features/bark-park-at-heritage-park](#)

6. Sample standards and policies for dog parks

Here are some examples of policies and / or standards that have been created by public agencies for dog parks.

- Ann Arbor, MI: <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/Parks-Recreation/play/Documents/Recommendations%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20Dog%20Park%20Site%20Selection%20updated%204-10-15.pdf>
- American Kennel Club: <http://images.akc.org/pdf/GLEGo1.pdf>
- City of Norfolk, VA Dog Park Criteria: <https://www.norfolk.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1531>
- CityLab – The Anatomy of a Large Dog Park: <https://www.citylab.com/life/2017/04/how-to-design-the-best-dog-park/522870/>
- District of Columbia – Dog Park Design Guidelines: https://dpr.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dpr/publication/attachments/dpr_DogParkDesignStandards.pdf
- Raleigh, NC Dog Park Study: <https://www.raleighnc.gov/parks/content/ParksRec/Articles/Projects/DogParkStudy.html> and final report: <https://publicinput.com/dogparks>
- Separating small and large dogs in dog parks: <https://www.dog-on-it-parks.com/blog/dog-park-design-cosiderations-large-small-dog-areas/>
- Ten tips for planning and building a dog park: <http://www.doodycalls.com/blog/ten-tips-for-planning-and-building-a-dog-park-in-your-community/>
- PetSafe: <https://www.petsafe.net/learn/how-to-design-a-dog-park>