

Off Leash Dog Areas Feasibility Study

Parks and Recreation Department

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I. INTRODUCTION

This study initiates the discussion of identifying new locations for off leash dog areas within existing City of Santa Barbara parks and other city-owned property. Developed in response to public demand for additional off leash areas, this study evaluates off leash trends and attributes of successful off leash locations, explores the feasibility of providing off leash areas in established City parks and other public property, and makes recommendations regarding the approach and potential locations for further evaluation. Although Santa Barbara is rich in its diverse park system, the available land is limited. City parks are used extensively for active and passive recreation, community events, and family gatherings. Many parks also include native habitats and support wildlife. The development of new off leash areas will require changes in existing park uses. As a result, this study looks for opportunities to provide off leash opportunities that are compatible with and minimize impacts to other uses.

II. METHODS

As part of this evaluation, Parks and Recreation staff contacted several jurisdictions, performed online research, reviewed documents, and conducted site visits to off leash dog areas in the Santa Barbara south coast region. Recreation Management Magazine's *Latest Dog Park Trends* article provided up-to-date information on national trends (online Feb 2013). Local agencies through the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS) list serve (online community) provided dog park design information from across the state. Staff also reviewed the off leash dog programs of Seattle and Olympia, Washington, Encinitas, California, and Burnsville, Minnesota. These cities have experience with several types of off leash dog areas and completed a similar feasibility assessment. The City of Encinitas is a coastal town with similar park resources to Santa Barbara. Burnsville, Minnesota, provides a good model for fee-based off leash areas. Staff also reviewed the off leash programs of the County of Santa Barbara, Girsh Park, and Elings Park, and efforts of the Cities of Carpinteria and Goleta to address off leash dog recreation.

Department staff reviewed the existing amenities and uses of all City parks and facilities and applied key parameters associated with the development of a successful off leash dog area to each location. These parameters include location, size, type, and intensity of use in the park, fencing, surface, infrastructure (signage and other amenities), environmental resources, parking, and neighborhood and park compatibility. Park compatibility considers whether an off leash dog area would be compatible with existing park uses and not "spillover" into other park uses. Spillover is the encroachment of off leash dogs into other recreational use areas, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and sport fields. A full description of the parameters is included in Section VI. Considerations For Off Leash Dog Areas.

III. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL TRENDS IN OFF LEASH DOGS AREAS

There are three main configurations for off leash dog areas: 1) dedicated facilities, 2) shared parks, and 3) off leash trails. In some cases, off leash areas are fee-based or private organizations may adopt public off leash parks. Dogs can be segregated, with large and small dogs in separate enclosures. Off leash areas may have multiple uses, including some that generate revenue from dog training classes, agility tournaments, and dog washing facilities. Not all communities have established off leash areas, while others are currently in the process of reviewing requests for off leash parks. Some communities do not allow dogs in parks at all, whether on or off leash.

Dedicated Off Leash Dog Facilities

Dedicated park facilities intended for off leash use are not intended for other recreational uses. In Seattle, dedicated off leash facilities are fenced and can be as small as 1/5 acre and up to nine acres. A general consensus across jurisdictions is that an ideal dedicated off leash area has at least one acre of fenced area.

However, available sites and cost are often limiting factors when considering size. And size may not always be the most important factor in planning off leash locations. The City of Olympia is approximately half the size and the population of Santa Barbara. In Olympia, residents were polled to determine where off leash areas should be located in the park system. The majority of Olympia residents preferred smaller dedicated off leash locations scattered throughout the city, versus one large community location. Also, many of the larger Olympia park locations were open space areas that were excluded from off leash consideration due to the sensitive nature of the habitat.

Shared Use Parks

Shared use parks include off leash use and other recreational uses. The off leash and other uses may overlap in the same area or may occur in separate areas of the park, but the uses are usually separated by a physical barrier, such as a fence, or by time. Separation by time is achieved by allowing dogs off leash during a specific period of the day or week. In Olympia, most polled residences thought it was not appropriate to allow dogs off leash, unfenced, near playgrounds or where children gather. In another example, the City of Encinitas, CA, has three neighborhood parks that allow dogs off leash that also have children's playgrounds or other uses within the park. These uses are not separated by a fence, as the City Council did not want the children fenced in and did not want the dog area fenced off. Instead, Encinitas park uses are separated by time. Dogs are allowed off leash during certain hours and days of the week when children are less likely to be present. For example, every other weekday and one weekend day is available for off leash use and, on those days, the off leash time is restricted to early morning and late afternoon to evening hours. Scheduling off leash hours for early and late in the day allows people to exercise their dogs before and after work. The mid-day hours are reserved for other recreation uses.

Fee for Use, Fees for Dog Services and Community Sponsors

Alimagnet Dog Park provides an example of a fee for use off leash location. The seven-acre park is owned and operated by the City of Burnsville, Minnesota, and is supported by members of People of Alimagnet Caring for K9s (PACK). The City charges an optional annual fee of \$20 per household. The fee helps defray the cost of park maintenance, supplies, education, and upgrades. The park membership fee comes with PACK benefits, such as a quarterly newsletter and discounts on merchandise. PACK, a citizen group, also helps provide upkeep of the park with their time and financial support. PACK holds an annual fundraiser for park upgrades.

Some cities combine off leash areas with other dog services, such as dog washing, dog training classes or dog agility programs. These services often come with a fee which can help offset maintenance costs of the off leash park or program.

In another example, the City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) is responsible for the managing off leash sites and Citizens for Off Leash Areas (COLA) are responsible for the stewardship (coordination and support) of the off leash sites. After six years of organizing, planning, and public process, the Seattle City Council approved an agreement between the PRD and COLA that details the responsibilities of all involved, including Animal Control. The activity at each location occurs within a delineated, properly signed, and fenced area where dogs are allowed off-leash to run, play, exercise, train, and socialize with their owners/handlers and with other dogs. PRD is responsible for maintenance, within their budget, with voluntary assistance from COLA. PRD and COLA meet quarterly to determine the success and challenges of the agreement and off leash locations. With prior approval from PRD, COLA provides education and training for dog owners. COLA does not provide enforcement, but they may inform park patrons of rules when they observe an infraction or may notify Animal Control. The 1997 City Council Resolution that established the terms of the off leash locations, called for an agreement for each new location which includes the requirement that a "stewardship" committee is formed under the

auspices of Citizens for Off Leash Area (COLA), or another appropriate group. The performance of new (pilot) locations is monitored by Parks staff to ensure it is consistent with Parks' practices for other pilot off leash areas.

Challenges Experienced with Dog Off Leash Areas

As discussed above, the City of Encinitas has specific schedules for when dogs can be off leash in shared parks. Although the hours and regulations for dog owners are stated, there are still conflicts between uses in these parks. For example, the children's tot lot has signs stating dogs are not allowed in that area (at any time), but owners don't keep their dogs out of the playground. The park is relatively clean of dog waste, but occasionally, dogs may leave a mess in the children's play area or urinate on play structures. Also, there are complaints regarding people not adhering to the limits on dog hours. Because of these problems, community members expressed the need for dedicated off leash dog areas with no shared usage. A new 44-acre Encinitas Community Park that opened in January 2015 includes a fenced two-acre dog park, along with ball fields, playground, passive recreation areas, landscape buffer, walking paths, dry creek bed, skate plaza, and restrooms.

In another example, off leash areas can create conflict with the surrounding neighborhood. The City of Olympia, WA, closed the off leash dog area in Sunrise Park after three years of operation. Complaints from neighbors included noisy dogs and owners, urine and dog waste, and visitors taking up neighborhood parking. As a result of these conflicts, Olympia now has an off leash advocacy group and a dedicated staff person for off leash enforcement. A dedicated five-acre off leash location opened in December 2013.

The popularity of off leash locations can also create management challenges as well as increase safety concerns. The seven-acre Alimagnet Dog Park in Burnsville, Minnesota, opened in 2001 and not only attracted City residents, but also visitors from surrounding communities. The number of people with dogs was much more than expected. As an example, 500 voluntary permits were issued for the park in 2003, and a fundraiser for upgrades attracted 700 people. By 2005, an increase in the number of dogs and problem dog behaviors led to the installation of fencing and gates to segregate dogs by size, temperament, and infirmity. Small, timid or fragile dogs were separated from more robust, playful or aggressive dogs.

IV. SOUTH COAST PARK LOCATIONS FOR ON AND OFF LEASH DOGS

To provide a local context for study, staff reviewed leash requirements and off leash dog areas within the City of Carpinteria, unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, and the City of Goleta.

City of Carpinteria

Carpinteria requires all dogs to be leashed within the City limits and in all parks. Dogs are prohibited, leashed or unleashed, from the beaches located from Linden Avenue to Ash Avenue all year, at the Seal Rookery from December 1 through May 31, and at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park.

In December 2010, Carpinteria Parks staff presented options to the City Council for off leash dog areas. At that time, no off leash locations were approved. Instead, the City Council directed staff to conduct a survey of Carpinteria residents. The survey revealed that while there was a general interest in off leash areas, residents adjacent to potential locations had concerns regarding the change of use of an existing park, including increased use, and additional traffic that an off leash dog park would generate. Currently, the leash laws are still in effect, although the adopted 2014-2015 budget includes developing conceptual designs for an off leash dog area in Memorial Park.

Southern Santa Barbara County (unincorporated)

In general, dogs are required to be leashed within Santa Barbara County parks and open spaces unless an off leash privilege has been established for a designated area. The South County region includes five designated shared use off leash dog areas including four with limited hours, as shown in the table below.

SOUTH SANTA BARBARA CO PARKS ALLOWING DOGS OFF LEASH

Location			Design
	Days	Hours	
Patterson Neighborhood Open Space	Monday - Friday	8:00 to 10:00 a.m.	Unenclosed
Sea Lookout Park (Isla Vista)	Monday - Friday	8:00 to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to sunset	Unenclosed
Toro Canyon County Park	Daily	8:00 to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to sunset	Fenced
Tobano Hollow Neighborhood Open Space	Daily	8:00 to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to sunset	Fenced
Tucker's Grove Park, Kiwanis Meadow	Daily	8:00 a.m. to sunset (the park open hours)	Fenced

South County parks with off leash areas enclosed by a fence include Toro Canyon, Tobano Hollow, and Tucker’s Grove Kiwanis Meadow. In the unfenced areas at Patterson Neighborhood Open Space and Sea Lookout Park, dogs are allowed off leash only on weekdays. Similar to Encinitas, CA, the off leash hours allow people to exercise their dogs before and after work and allow children to play in the middle of the day or on their way to or from school. Positive comments received from Tobano Hollow patrons included the camaraderie the park provides for humans and dogs, and the appreciation of a place where persons with mobility limitations are able to let a dog to exercise.

At Tobano Hollow, not all dogs are managed with the same effort by their owners. Some owners are diligent about cleaning up after their dog, while others let their dog wander and are not aware of areas needing clean up. One of the challenges of a shared use park is that any adult or child using the park at the alternate recreation time may have to contend with dog waste. The same applies to holes. People are generally required to fill any hole a dog digs to minimize safety hazards.

Other challenges with shared use includes some neighbor opposition to the use of a portion of Tobano Hollow for an off leash area. The change to allow dogs off leash has also increased Parks maintenance costs. And finally, similar to other communities, enforcement of scheduled off leash hours is challenging. Parks staff and Animal Control officers receive complaints about off leash patrons not observing hours. Parks staff have also received requests to lengthen the off leash hours during the winter when there are fewer daylight hours.

Northern Santa Barbara County Off Leash Dog Areas

Orcutt Community Park is a new 26-acre facility with a 2.5-acre dedicated off leash area. The park, constructed as part of the Rice Ranch development, serves the Orcutt and Santa Maria communities. The portion of the park dedicated for off leash is fenced and includes segregated large and small dog areas, dog water fountains, and benches. Waller Park in Santa Maria is over 150 acres in size and includes a three-acre fenced off leash area. The canine area includes a fenced lawn with separate areas for small and large dogs, double entry gates, canine drinking fountains and benches. Restrooms are located nearby, as is the Wripples self service pet spa. Waller Park is closed on Thursdays for maintenance.

City of Goleta Off Leash Dog Areas

The City of Goleta requires dogs to be on leash in City public places, including parks. The City is currently completing a Recreation Needs Assessment to identify community characteristics, issues and trends, and the role of recreation and park facilities in Goleta. During public outreach for the needs assessment, the City received requests for off leash areas, in addition to other types of park and recreation opportunities. The Recreation Needs Assessment will be complete in 2015. Currently the City has no immediate plans to develop off leash areas.

Within the City of Goleta, the privately operated Girsh Park began an Off leash Dog Pilot Program in 2011. The program has limited operating hours and requires a membership fee of \$65 per dog/year. The program takes place inside the fences of the Girsh Park Multi-Use Meadow. Program hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00 to 10:00 a.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Although the Program is limited to a total of 30 participants, only 20 dogs are permitted in the Meadow at one time. The program is generally self-patrolled, unless there is a problem with an aggressive dog.

The Girsh Multi-Use Meadow was specifically designed for youth sports, including soccer. Off leash use was added later. At alternate times, the Goleta Valley Dog Club also uses the area for organized dog training, trials, and classes. The Dog Club limits training hours outside when American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO) soccer is in session. Use of the Multi-Use Meadow for dogs is closed during turf maintenance activities and inclement weather.

The off leash area is a grass surface inside of a chain link fence. On a field visit, the lawn looked no different than the play fields, as far as wear is concerned. This is primarily due to the limit on dog numbers. The set up is simple and there is no double gate, no segregated area for dog type and no water available. Parking is provided in a lot directly adjacent to the off leash area. The Dog Club parks a portable trailer that holds their training gear in the adjacent parking lot. The site visit was conducted during open dog off leash hours and while a dog training class was underway. The off leash area was spotless and the dog trainer stated that their group helps keep the area patrolled and cleaned of waste, along with the park patrons.

Although the Goleta Valley Dog Club considers the program a success since it provides a secure area for dog training, there are challenges with compliance. These include people using the off leash area who are not in the pilot program and conflicts between dog owners and other park users. Spillover conflicts include people not adhering to the pilot project times of use when others may want to use the field, and allowing dogs in the shared fenced area when soccer is in play. This may cause injury of a player, conflict with a game or practice, or a player may step or slip in dog feces. Some dog owners allow their dogs to be off leash in the park outside of the fenced area which conflicts with other recreational uses and can result in an unsafe interaction between a dog and a human. There are also instances of ball players entering the off leash area when the pilot program is in session which can also create an unsafe interaction.

V. CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PARK SYSTEM

The Parks Division manages a diverse parks system, with almost 1,600 acres of parks and recreation facilities, including 360 acres of developed parkland and 1,183 acres of open space parkland. There are eight open space parks, eight passive parks, 12 neighborhood parks, eight community parks, five beaches, and 12 sports facilities, in addition to 14 City recreation centers. Figure 1 shows the location of all parks with the City.

Park Designations

Open space parks are protected and managed as a natural environment. Open space parks are generally destination locations and people drive to those parks to enjoy the natural environment. They have limited development, and activities center around passive outdoor recreation such as bird watching, picnicking, and miles of trails for walking. The Douglas Family Preserve and Hale Park provide locations to walk a dog off leash. Parma Park provides open space to ride a horse and Equestrian Circle has a drop-in horse riding ring. Rattlesnake Canyon, Parma Park, and Honda Valley Park have ample opportunities for bird and wildlife watching. Hidden Valley is partially developed with a child's play area and barbecue facility but also provides 15-acres of riparian habitat.

Passive parks are developed parks of natural, cultural, or ornamental quality suited for outdoor recreation. Due to their special features, they often draw residents and visitors as a destination location. Passive recreation includes strolling on the grounds to observe botanical collections found at Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden or Franceschi Park, roses at the A.C. Postel Rose Garden or the 120-year old Moreton Bay Fig Tree. Other passive recreation activities include enjoying the scenic views from the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, Ambassador or Orpet Park. These parks are located throughout the City from the beach to the foothills. In any of these parks, but particularly Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge, bird and wildlife watching are a popular past time. Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden and the A.C. Postel Rose Garden in Mission Historical Park draw thousands of visitors. Parking is on the street for most, although the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and Franceschi Park have small parking lots.

Neighborhood parks are generally small, compared to other City parks, and typically serve a limited geographic area and nearby population. People who live in the vicinity often walk or bike to the park. Therefore, a parking lot is not included, and curbside parking suffices for those who prefer to drive. Stevens Park is the exception regarding size and includes a parking lot. A neighborhood park may have a playground, play field or picnic tables, but generally doesn't have restrooms. There are 13 neighborhood parks spread around the city ranging in size from the new 0.03-acre Bath Street Pocket Park to the 25-acre Stevens Park. Gardens, such as the Yanonali Community Garden, at the Eastside Neighborhood Park, and the Children's Orchard, at Parqué de los Niños, are also included in the neighborhood park designation.

Beach parks provide access to the ocean and sand areas for passive and active recreation. Beaches are found along the southern border of the city and provide a destination for residents and visitors. West Beach, Leadbetter Beach, and East Beach provide areas for sunbathing and water activities such as swimming, surfing, and boating. Parking lots are provided near beach locations. There is also a stretch of beach west of Leadbetter, below Shoreline Park, the Mesa, and the Douglas Family Preserve. This beach can be accessed from Leadbetter Beach Park, the Shoreline Park steps, Mesa Lane Steps or Thousand Steps.

Community parks are generally larger than neighborhood parks and include multi-use areas for programs, special events, and other pre-arranged functions. These facilities serve a concentrated population or specific group from a wide geographic area of the city. They have high visitor use and group activities.

Parking is provided at some, but not all, of the parks. The parks have children's recreation opportunities, such as the Kid's World playground at Alameda Park, the Shipwreck Playground and carousel at Chase Palm Park, and the wading pool at Oak Park. Large events are held at these parks, such as Earth Day at Alameda Park, cultural festivals at Oak Park, and the Summer Concert Series at Chase Palm Park, and Old Spanish Days Fiesta at Plaza de la Guerra. Community parks also provide facilities for celebrations, such as weddings, birthdays, and quinceaneras. The festivals and personal celebrations often include barbecues or food. Parks with children's play equipment can be used any time of the day for tots, during school hours for special or home school activities, and more intensely after school or during the summer or school holidays. Festivals are planned primarily for weekends and personal celebrations are primarily on the weekend, but also during the week.

Sports facilities include outdoor facilities with recreational activities and organized sports, and tournaments occur and may include related buildings and parking areas. They include softball fields, multi-use sport fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, a circuit training course, lawn bowling greens, golf, a skateboard park, and Los Baños del Mar pool. The facilities may also include other amenities such as bleachers, showers, lockers, equipment rentals or lighting. They generally have restrooms, parking, and some include picnic areas, barbecues, and playgrounds. These locations attract drop-in users, small groups for practices and large groups for tournaments, special sports events or camps. Adults and children use these facilities. Sports facilities are used most after school and work and on the weekends.

Recreation centers or community buildings are indoor facilities with recreational activities and organized sports and tournaments, meetings and gatherings and other community oriented activities. Community buildings may also include related parking and grounds. They include recreation opportunities for children, teens, adults and seniors and also include adaptive programs. Some hold Department offices or are available as rental facilities. Many provide parking lots or the use of City lots, especially downtown.

Existing City of Santa Barbara Parks - Dog On and Off Leash Locations

There are 305 acres of dog off leash park property in the City including the Douglas Family Preserve (DFP), Hale Park, the beach between the Shoreline Park beach access steps and the westerly City limit, and Elings Park. Dogs are allowed on leash in all City parks with the exception of Plaza de la Guerra and the beach from the Shoreline Park beach access steps to the easterly City limit. That area of the beach is reserved for human recreational uses associated with the water, the sandy shore and scenic vistas. Additionally, that portion of the beach has been designated as Critical Habitat for the western snowy plover by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Although the federally threatened western snowy plover rarely nests on City beaches, the bird uses City beaches for foraging and roosting. Dogs on or off leash can harass western snowy plovers (as well as other birds) and cause them to flush or abandon an area of foraging or roosting.

In 2004, after years of technical studies, public meetings, surveys and environmental review, the Santa Barbara City Council adopted the Douglas Family Preserve Management Plan and other Off leash Dog Park Locations Study Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Along with the adoption of the EIR, three off leash dog locations were approved in the City, including the DFP, Hale Park, and the designated beach area. DFP, Hale Park, and the beach off leash area have no restrictions on time or days of use, other than to adhering to regular park hours.

DFP is a 70-acre open space park that includes passive recreation uses. As an open space park, it does not include restrooms or developed picnic areas. There are over three miles of designated trails through the park and views of the Pacific Ocean. There are three gated entries to restrict vehicle access to the park although dogs are not confined to the park by fencing. Visitor parking is on adjacent residential streets.

Approximately 50 acres of the park are available for off leash use. Areas excluded include the sensitive oak woodland habitat along the northern border and the residential buffer along the eastern border.

The 14-acre Hale Park is available, in its entirety, for off leash use. Hale is an open space park with trails through oak and Eucalyptus woodland habitat. It is located in the eastern portion of the City near Montecito and is partially fenced. Similar to DFP, this park provides passive recreation opportunities and is not developed with restrooms, drinking fountains, picnic areas, or a parking lot.

The beach off leash area is variable, depending on tide, but is approximately 11 acres. It is directly below DFP and along the beach from the eastern edge of the Arroyo Burro Estuary to below Shoreline Park. The beach area can be accessed from the Arroyo Burro County Park and three sets of beach access steps: Shoreline Steps, Thousand Steps, and Mesa Lane Steps. The area is confined by the ocean and the cliff and is not fenced on either end. The beach area provides shared recreation uses.

Managed by the Elings Park Foundation, the park officially became an off-leash dog park in 1997. The Elings Park Dog Owners Group (EPDOG) was created in 2001. The EPDOG program permits, for a fee, off leash dog walking in any area of the park not otherwise rented. The \$125 per dog fee per year includes a dog tag authorizing off leash use in the park. There is a discount for subsequent years (\$100) and a third dog (free). Instead of an annual fee, there is also a day use drop-in fee of \$5.

Experience with Existing City Dog Off Leash Locations

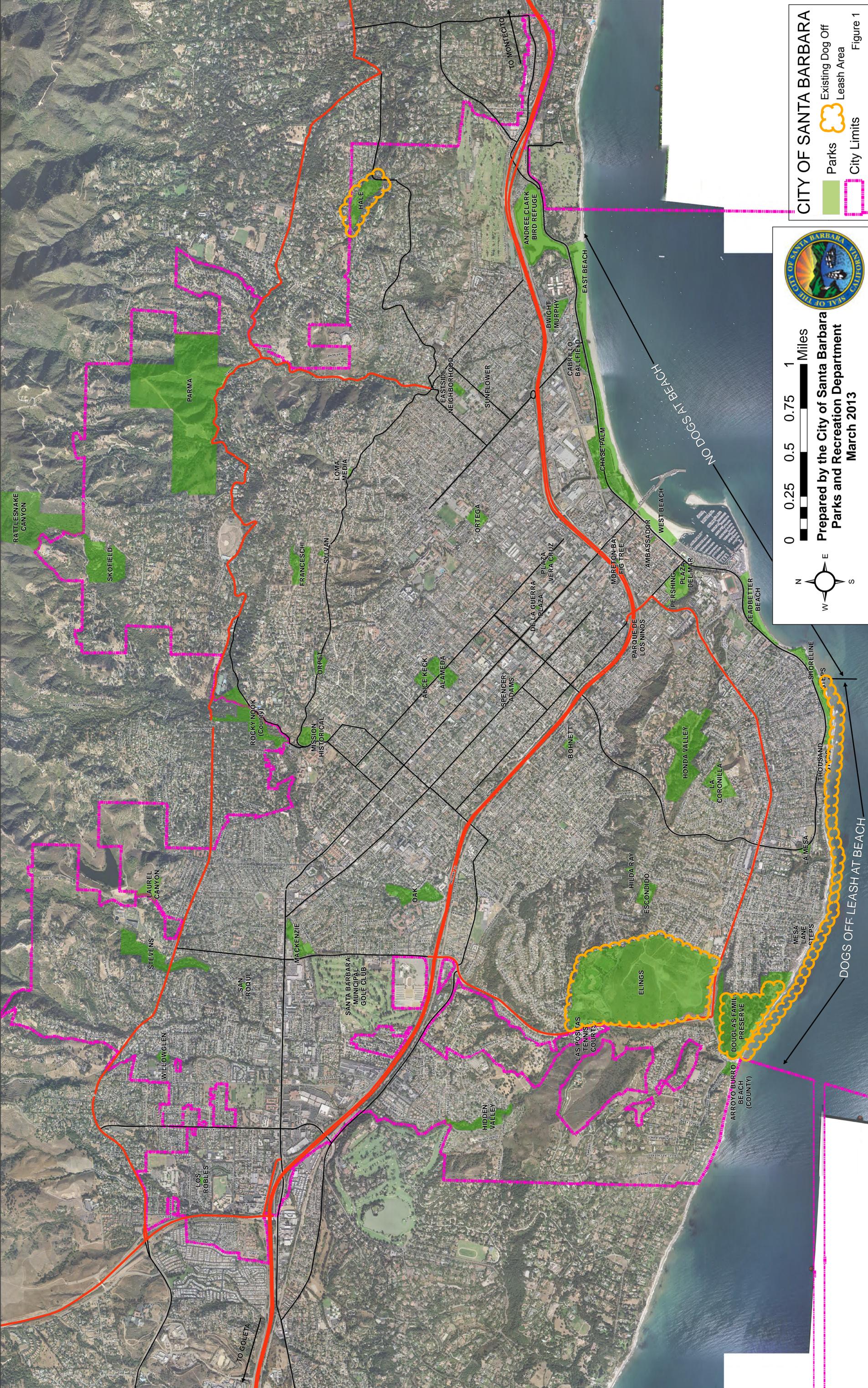
Dog off leash locations can generate a positive environment for City residents and visitors who enjoy off leash recreation for themselves and their dogs. Having off leash areas in parks provides diversity in City recreation. Also, an exercised dog is a more obedient and healthy dog.

The DFP is well-used and enjoyed by neighbors, residents, visitors, and their dogs. Park entrance signs provide park rules, including where dogs can be off leash. Dogs are only allowed off leash after reaching the designated and signed areas. Key management issues at the DFP include parking impacts, noise, spill over, dog waste and associated odors and pollution, lack of fencing for large and small dogs, dog fights, and injuries, and conflicts between recreational uses. Park users also do not generally observe the rules for the on leash areas. Since dogs are allowed off leash, the DFP is a destination location for a wide range of people that drive to the park. Without a dedicated parking lot, surrounding residential streets are heavily used. The extra cars add to more traffic, car exhaust, and noise. Noise is also an issue for neighbors when park visitors yell in an attempt to control their dog while it's off leash. Residents surrounding the DFP experience dog spill over problems, which include unleashed dogs outside of the park that wander into surrounding private yards, harass residents and other animals, and relieve themselves on private property.

The DFP is also a popular destination for professional dog walkers with between four and six dogs at one time. This poses management challenges since the dog walker may not or cannot keep track of where the dogs defecate. While the DFP is very popular with dog owners, it limits use and enjoyment of the park by other residents, including the elderly and families with young children.

Similar to the DFP, the beach dog off leash area is well-used and a destination location. The main management considerations are spill over and conflicts between recreational uses. Spill over from the beach off leash area occurs primarily on Leadbetter Beach. Some people who like to walk the Santa Barbara coastline do not like to walk in an area where dogs are allowed off leash, while others are pleased to enjoy the beach with their dog. Hale Park is regularly used for dogs off leash, but not to the extent of the DFP or the beach. Management issues are generally not related to off leash dogs in this park.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA - PARKS

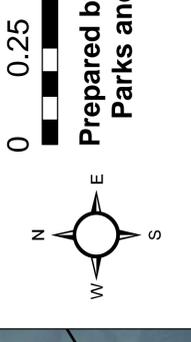


CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

- Parks
- Existing Dog Off Leash Area
- City Limits



Prepared by the City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department
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DOGS OFF LEASH AT BEACH

VI. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFF LEASH AREAS

There are a number of considerations for developing off leash dog areas. Physical characteristics include size, fencing, surface, hardware (signage and other amenities), vegetation and environmental resources, access, and compatibility with other park uses. Other considerations include noise, advocacy groups and management.

Size. Some jurisdictions, such as Boulder, Colorado, have established one acre as the minimum size for dedicated off leash dog parks, although this is not always feasible given available park land or funding. Portland's Citizen Task Force for Off leash Dogs recommends 0.11 acres as a minimum size and San Francisco has set 0.23 acres as a minimum, although 0.75 acres is preferable.

Fencing. Fencing is common especially when adjacent uses include street traffic, playgrounds, sport fields, picnic areas, or other recreation uses. Fencing separates recreational uses and helps prevent spillover in a shared park, and protects dogs from traffic, and neighbors from dogs in a dedicated park. Fencing is also used to segregate large from small dogs. The City of Bishop fenced 0.5 acres of their two-acre dog park to segregate small dogs. Small dogs can sometimes incite a predator response from larger dogs, especially if the small dog cries out while playing or if they like to be chased.

Chain link is preferred fencing material and heights can range from 2.5 to 6 feet, depending on the location. The City of Bishop and other jurisdictions recommend a six-foot fence, although some dogs are capable of jumping even that height. A double gated area at the entrance provides a small foyer and allows a patron to close the outer gate and leash or unleash their dog inside. There should also be a service gate in the fence for maintenance vehicle access.

Turf Management Considerations. Several surface types, such as grass, wood chips, decomposed granite or crushed rocks, are used in off leash locations. Grass is the surface in most Santa Barbara area parks. Dog agility trials are held on grass so it is also the preferred surface for dog trainers.

Hardware. Signage containing rules and regulations are posted onsite along with emergency and maintenance contact numbers. Mutt mitts and trash cans are provided. Seating is optional and may be provided in or outside of the off leash area. Drinking water is not offered at all off leash parks. Goleta's Girsh Park does not provide water. The City of Davis has water onsite, but turns it off during the winter months and informs park patrons to bring water during that time. If desired, a fountain out or inside the fenced area may include a high/low faucet to serve both people and dogs.

Vegetation and Environmental Resources. Not all off leash park areas provide shade. Trees inside the off leash area or at the edge of the park can be impacted by off leash dogs due to soil compaction and urea from dog urine. Sensitive resources, such as wetlands, wildlife areas, and other native habitat within a park should be protected. A dog off leash area may need a water quality buffer at the edge of fencing to mitigate the potential for urea or silt to move offsite, especially if near a storm drain outlet or creek.

Parking. Parking needs to be provided either by a lot or available street parking. In addition to providing access, people need to be able to remove a leashed dog from their vehicle safely.

Compatibility and Spillover. If there are other park uses, most jurisdictions prefer to have a separation of uses by area (fence; distance) or time (alternate hours or days). One of the more common problems, especially in shared use parks, is the use of areas not designated for off leash. This includes allowing an unleashed dog to run through an on leash area of a park, or allowing an unleashed dog to run from a car through a neighborhood to an off leash area.

Noise. Olympia, WA, performed a feasibility study and reported that most jurisdictions recommended that an off leash park area be situated at least 150 feet away from the nearest residence or other noise sensitive land use. Noise can be generated by dogs barking, people yelling at dogs, or vehicle noise associated with the destination location. If a site is suitable, except for the noise buffer, a sound barrier such as vegetation, a hill, or sound proof fencing could be installed.

Advocacy Group. Many jurisdictions have advocacy groups associated with their off leash areas. These groups provide support by assisting with maintenance and stewardship, adoption of an area, and funding to support maintenance. They are often instrumental in reminding users of the rules and regulations and help educate patrons of park etiquette.

Dog Classes and Trials. Dog obedience and agility trials (competitions) are increasingly popular. There are several benefits of a trained dog. Trained dogs have learned obedience commands and are under voice or visual control of their owner. Dogs cannot advance to agility classes and trials until they pass obedience training and understand basic commands, such as sit, stay and come. This is an asset at home or in a park with other dogs and park patrons. Training and classes provide exercise and an exercised dog is a healthy dog.

VII. CONSIDERATIONS FOR SANTA BARBARA OFF LEASH AREAS

In its review of existing parks and recreational facilities, the Department identified a range of considerations for new off leash dog areas, including location, size, design/style, park and neighborhood compatibility, and management and enforcement. Many of these considerations overlap and present challenges to identify opportunities for a successful off leash area within existing parkland.

Location: New off leash locations in different areas of the city would best meet the needs of a cross section of Santa Barbara residents. Additional considerations include accessibility both to the site and access within the park as well as available parking, either dedicated or on-street. Parks within the developed areas of the city are more likely to meet the dog owners due to their close proximity to residential areas.

Size/Area: While diverse, Santa Barbara's park system is characterized by small parks scattered throughout neighborhoods, larger community parks, open space, and recreational sport fields. Smaller parks are less feasible for off leash areas due to limited space and potential competition for other park resources and recreation uses. Even in larger park facilities, where off leash areas could be compatible with other park uses, the most feasible areas available for dogs would range from 1/3 to 1-acre.

Park compatibility: Park compatibility considerations include both existing recreational uses and park habitats and vegetation. Given the popularity of all city parks for a variety of recreational activities, the development of fenced off leash areas are most likely to have the greatest park compatibility. The type of recreation is also a consideration. A perimeter fence around an off leash area allows different recreational uses in the park at the same time, discourages spillover, and increases safety. Santa Barbara also has a number of parks with riparian and other native habitats, creeks, and areas that host wildlife populations. Parks with environmentally sensitive areas are not ideal due to the potential impacts to wildlife, native habitat, and water quality.

Design/Style: While the Department evaluated the feasibility of scheduled time within parks for off leash, due to its experience with off leash use at the Douglas Family Preserve and on the beach, concern for conflict with other park uses, park management and safety concerns, and challenges with enforcement, greater focus was placed on evaluating feasible locations for new fenced off leash areas. The City's

Animal Control Officers also did not support unfenced off leash areas due to public safety considerations. Although fencing to separate large and small dogs would be preferable, due to site size limitations, scheduled use of fenced areas could achieve separation. Signage, mutt mitts and trash receptacles would be included. Water fountains, shade and seating would also be considered.

Neighborhood Compatibility: Noise and parking are key considerations for neighborhood compatibility, as well as the style of the off leash area and other park uses. Neighborhood parks are generally bordered by residences and have limited or no off street parking. The parks are smaller and may already include children's playgrounds or provide other drop-in recreation uses. The ideal scenario would be to have adequate frontage or off-street parking as well as an off leash area 100-150 feet away from residences or have noise screening in place.

Management and Enforcement: There are certain expectations for human and dog behavior in an off leash dog area. The City currently has Municipal code regulations for Hale Park, the Douglas Family Preserve and the off leash beach area. Those parks are relatively large open space areas. A review of existing and potentially new regulation and management options would be considered for any new off leash location. Additional regulations may be more specific regarding what type of dog would be allowed to use the off leash area (vaccinated, socialized), expectations for humans (clean up dog waste, bury holes dug by dogs, have a six foot leash available at all times), and enforcement tools.

A third party group could help with education, maintenance or fund raising to support a dog off leash location. Also, although volunteers would not act as enforcement, they would be able to remind park patrons of the dog off leash rules. Currently there are no active dog advocacy groups that could fulfill this role. Although at one time Dog PAC of Santa Barbara was an active nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of dog owners' rights and to responsible dog ownership, they are not active today at DFP, or any other off leash area in the City. The Friends of the Douglas Family Preserve were also active at one time with fund raising, volunteering and support of restoration efforts in the Preserve.

Dog obedience and agility trainers in the Santa Barbara vicinity may be interested in using an off leash location for classes or trials. Professional dog obedience and training classes would be at a separate time versus general dog use in the off leash area. Local groups and trainers include, but are not limited to, the Goleta Valley Dog Club, Santa Barbara Flyers Dog Sports Club, Santa Barbara Supersonic Flyball Racing Team, and Paws @ Play (dog classes).

VIII. POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR NEW OFF LEASH AREAS

Department staff developed a matrix of 50 City park and recreation facilities and one public works facility (Sheffield Open Space) to initiate the review of potential locations for new off leash areas. After a preliminary review as well as selected site visits, 41 locations were eliminated from further review due to the potential for conflicts with other recreational uses, existing intensity of use of the park, limited area, specialized recreational use or presence of sensitive resources. Six locations were evaluated further but are not recommended for similar reasons. The following discussion provides summary considerations for each location. Four locations are recommended for further evaluation. These include Dwight Murphy Field, Ortega Park, MacKenzie Park and the Sheffield Reservoir Open Space.

1. Parks Eliminated After Preliminary Review

Open Space Parks

The City's open space parks provide limited opportunity for fenced off leash areas due to topography, location, and existing park development. Unfenced off leash use would result in impacts to water quality, native habitats, fish and wildlife and potentially conflict with other park uses. Many open space areas are located in the City's foothills with limited parking, and have fire hazard and other public safety considerations.

Equestrian Circle – Equestrian Circle is a 5.5-acre drop in riding rink for horses and riders. Potential conflicts include horses bolting or throwing a rider if not accustomed to dogs. A danger to dogs may include trample from horses, especially if not accustomed to horse behavior. Sensitive biological resources that may be impacted by dogs off leash include Mission Creek and associated riparian (creek side) woodland and wetland habitat.

Hidden Valley – Hidden Valley is a narrow 18-acre park with the majority of the park situated along a trail adjacent to Arroyo Burro Creek. Street parking is along Calle de los Amigos or Torino Road. Although it is dedicated an open space park, an area near the entrance includes picnic and barbeque facilities, and a small lawn and playground for 2-5 year-old children. The developed area is small which precludes the development of a fenced off leash location. Dogs allowed off leash without fencing would impact native riparian habitat, associated wildlife and creek water quality.

Honda Valley – A mostly undeveloped 48-acre open space park accessed primarily by trail, the park includes Honda Valley Creek, riparian habitat and associated wildlife species. Parking is limited to residential streets. Provision of permitted off leash dog use would impact native habitat and wildlife. Since access to and within the park is by trail, this location would also present management and enforcement challenges.

Parma – Parma Park is one of a few places in the City where horseback riding is allowed. The 200-acre park includes the most diverse native habitats in the City with no less than six native habitats ranging from chaparral on dry slopes to grassland and finally riparian and oak woodlands in canyons. There is no off-street parking. Dogs roaming freely in this park would disrupt native habitat, the wildlife species in the park and have the potential to impact water quality in the creeks onsite and downstream.

Harold Parma deeded Parma Park to the City in November 1973. The Parma Park Trust (Trust), established in 2000, provides funds to support the preservation and maintenance of the park. Provisions of the Trust state that “Parma Park will be maintained in its natural state, with only such improvements as are appropriate to preserve its natural beauty and to protect it from fire as appropriate for its use and enjoyment by hikers and equestrians...” The Trust goes on to state that if the “Trustee determines that

Parma Park is proposed to be improved or used for purposes inconsistent with these wishes, he shall be authorized to withhold or restrict further payments...”. The Department would need to confer with the co-Trustees to determine if impacts that may result from off leash dogs would be consistent with the Trust conditions.

Rattlesnake Canyon – Although it is 451 acres, Rattlesnake Canyon has mostly steep undeveloped terrain. Its primary feature is the 2.6-mile hiking trail that extends from Las Canoas Road to Gibraltar Road. Limited street parking is available on Las Canoas. Part of the front country trail system, off leash dogs would impact riparian and wetland habitat and present management and safety challenges.

Passive Parks

Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden – A popular 4.5-acre park downtown with developed landscaped areas, walking paths, a pond, and lawn, this park is also used for weddings and other special events. It is a popular destination for walking tours and families with small children. The lawn is regularly used for picnics. All parking is on street. The use of the park for off leash dogs would be incompatible with existing park functions.

Ambassador – The ½ acre that comprises Ambassador Park is located on Cabrillo Boulevard between two hotels and across from West Beach. Access includes street parking along Cabrillo, West Mason Street or other side streets. Use of this park for off leash dogs is not feasible due to its size, location, and archeological resources.

Andrée Clark Bird Refuge – The 42-acre Andrée Clark Bird Refuge provides habitat for over 200 species of birds, wetland and other native habitat, and walking paths. The use of the park for off leash dogs would be incompatible with existing park functions.

Franceschi– This 15-acre park includes the Franceschi house and rare botanical collections planted. It is not a good site for off leash use due to historic and horticultural resources. Its steep terrain and location also present potential safety and fire hazard concerns.

Mission Historical Park & AC Postel Rose Garden – Similar to Franceschi Park, dogs off leash would conflict with the horticultural and historic resources of the 10-acre park. The park is also a popular drop-in area for families with children, scheduled special events and private weddings. All parking is on street.

Moreton Bay Fig Tree – Located next to the train station, the ½ acre park is comprised primarily of the sensitive horticultural and historic resource of the fig tree. The use of the park for off leash dogs would be incompatible with existing park functions.

Orpet – This four-acre park on the north and south side of APS includes rare plants and trees, picnic tables and walking paths. Although there are lawn areas, there is limited space for a fenced area due to other park resources. Unfenced use would impact park resources and potentially pose safety hazards due to the proximity to the street and residential areas. There is limited street parking.

Neighborhood Parks

Bohnett – The 2.25-acre park includes a playground, picnic areas, and a grassy area used for drop-in soccer. Old Mission Creek flows through the park. There are no feasible locations for a fenced off leash area and unfenced use for off leash dogs would be incompatible with existing park uses and creek resources.

Eastside Neighborhood – The two-acre park includes the Yanonali Community Garden, a playground, and picnic and barbeque areas. The existing lawn is divided by all of these uses and would be a challenge to fence for off leash use.

Hilda Ray – This 1.5-acre park includes a playground and large picnic and barbeque area. Similar to the Eastside Neighborhood Park, the lawn is divided by the playground so there is no space suitable for off leash dogs and off leash dogs would conflict with the existing uses.

Los Robles – This is a one-acre park in a residential area that includes a lawn, trees and benches. An unnamed creek in the Atascadero Creek watershed runs along the western border. Off leash dogs would not be compatible with the surrounding residential condominiums and creek resources. The limited park area also makes it an undesirable location.

Plaza Vera Cruz – This two-acre park includes a lawn and playground. Limited street parking is available on Cota Street. It would not be feasible to fence off sections of the lawn to provide an off leash area.

Sylvan – The $\frac{3}{4}$ acre park is dotted with trees and includes a few benches. There is no lawn or open area suitable for dogs off leash. Parking is very limited along Dover Road and APS.

Parqué de los Niños – This small neighborhood park (0.5 acres) consists primarily of a playground and walkway. There is no available space for an off leash area and off leash dogs would be incompatible with existing park uses.

Stevens – The 25-acre park has the feel of an open space park with its shady riparian and oak woodlands along San Roque Creek, a tributary to Arroyo Burro Creek. Popular with families with younger children, it includes a playground and picnic and barbeque sites. The narrow configuration of the park around the sensitive habitat of the creek and the existing recreation facilities limit the feasible for a fenced area. Unfenced off leash use would be incompatible with other park uses and environmental resources.

Sunflower – This small neighborhood park (0.5 acres) consists primarily of a playground and walkway. There is no available space for an off leash area and off leash dogs would be incompatible with existing park uses.

Beaches

Leadbetter and West Beach – Recreational uses of the beach exclude dogs, whether on or off leash.

East Beach – In addition to the recreational uses of the beach, dogs conflict with sensitive resources including the federally threatened western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus* ssp. *nivosus*) and it's associated federally protected Critical Habitat.

Community Parks

Many of the Community Parks are intensely used by the public seven days a week and/or for large community gatherings. Off leash areas would not be compatible with these recreational uses.

Alameda – The nine-acre park downtown includes the Kids World playground, a bandstand and picnic facilities. With many mature trees, this park is the location of family picnics and parties, and large community special events, such as Earth Day and Solstice.

Chase Palm – This narrow park includes 25 acres of land along both side of Cabrillo Boulevard and includes the Shipwreck playground, soccer field, multimode pathway and rental areas for weddings and parties. The site is also the home of the Arts & Crafts show and Summer Concert series. Similar to Alameda, this location is not appropriate for an off leash area.

De La Guerra Plaza - Dogs are not allowed in this location, on or off leash, per the Santa Barbara Municipal Code.

Plaza del Mar – This 4.5-acre park one of oldest in the City, includes a band shell and is adjacent to the beach and ball fields. Due to its historical nature, mature trees and lack of space for a fenced area, it would likely not be an option for off leash dogs.

Skofield – A 35-acre park in the foothills, Skofield Park includes picnic and barbecue sites for small groups and larger groups of 60 to 200 people. This is the only park with camping areas for non-profit youth groups for up to 200 people and the location is also used by City sponsored Nature Camp. In addition to type of park uses, off leash dogs would impact to sensitive biological resources in the park, including Rattlesnake Canyon, Mission Creek, and associated habitat and wildlife species.

Shoreline – The narrow 15-acre park on the Mesa has open and a group picnic area, walking paths, a stairway to the beach and a children’s playground. It is popular for people of all ages and abilities. Off leash dog use would conflict with existing recreational uses.

Sports Facilities

The following facilities were eliminated as each has a limited area for a specific recreational use: *Carrillo St. Gym, Cabrillo Pavilion and Bathhouse, Los Baños del Mar Pool/West Beach Wading Pool and Municipal Tennis Center, Municipal Golf Course, Skater’s Point, Spencer Adams.*

Pershing – The six acre park includes two softball and one baseball field and tennis courts. The only area open is a narrow ¼ acre strip between outside of the ball fence and the side walk at Castillo Street.

2. Parks that received further consideration

There are ten locations within parks or other property that received further consideration for off leash dog areas. Although none of these locations meet all of the parameters, they present some feasibility due to size of open land, the potential to fence a limited area, the presence of a grassy or other potentially suitable surface, and location in the City. This section discusses six of the ten locations that, although further considered, are not recommended. The following section discusses in greater detail, four locations that are recommended for further consideration.

Open Space Parks

Laurel Canyon Park – The six-acre park includes paths through coastal sage scrub hills and open grassland with a drop-in softball field. This location combines several desirable features for an off leash area, including the large grassy level field and shade trees. This park would also serve the foothill neighborhoods, where no existing off leash area occurs. However, the narrow Laurel Canyon Road leading to the location presents a constraint, as does the very limited parking. Fencing, at least along the adjacent private property, would likely be needed. Concerns include the close proximity of neighbors and the potential for complaints regarding spill over from the park. In addition, there could be disturbance of wildlife known to exist in the park, including bobcats and a coyote family. Even if fenced, the noise and

presence of dogs and humans may cause the wildlife to vacate the area. The use of this location could also increase the chance of domestic dog and wildlife interactions.

Neighborhood Parks

Escondido – The two-acre park in the Mesa Hills includes picnic areas, a playground and basketball court. Conversion of the basketball court area to a fenced off leash location might be feasible; however, it would eliminate the court use and potentially pose enforcement challenges since the area is set inside the park. Parking is limited to the residential street. Unfenced off leash dog use is not feasible due to the children’s playground.

La Mesa – La Mesa Park is almost nine acres and includes a playground, group picnic area, Lighthouse Creek, and extensive groves of trees. The most feasible location to be fenced as an off leash location is an open lawn (0.4 acres) near the parking lot. Fencing this area would impact scheduled recreation uses including Tai Chi and children’s fitness programs. Scheduled unfenced off leash use would be limited and presents safety considerations. Another drawback to this location is its proximity to DFP and potential to concentrate more off leash use in a neighborhood already served by the off leash areas.

Willowglen – Willowglen is a three-acre park with a playground, ball field and open grassy area. Potential locations for a fenced off leash area would be the 3/4 acre ball field or the grassy area that is approximately 1/3 acre. Parking is on Willowglen Road. An off leash area would need to be fenced due to the existing playground as well as the use of the park for access to the elementary school. Fencing a section of the park would eliminate other recreation uses.

Community Parks

Oak – Oak Park includes playgrounds, tennis courts, an outdoor dance floor, a wading pool, horseshoe pits, small and large picnic and barbeque areas, parking, and sites for large gatherings. It is popular for cultural festivals and private events. Oak Park also receives a significant amount of drop in use, from area residents, including the Samarkand retirement community and groups of young children. Although 17 acres, there is limited area for a fenced off leash dog area due to existing park development, extensive mature oak trees, and the Mission Creek corridor. Unfenced off leash use is not feasible due to range planned special events, private site rentals, children’s recreation, and creek habitat.

Sports Facilities

Cabrillo Ball Park – Cabrillo Ball Park includes a softball field, restrooms and an open field area. Street parking is available along Calle Puerto Vallarta, East Cabrillo Boulevard or South Milpas Street. Popular for both scheduled recreation as well as drop-in use, the Department is currently developing a renovation plan for the park to enhance recreation opportunities. A preliminary phase of the planning process included a conceptual plan for a 0.75-acre fenced off leash location. This option was eliminated from further consideration after review by the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission determined that this location was not feasible for an off leash area given other opportunities for expanded recreation.

3. Parks/City facility most feasible for off leash locations

The four locations that appear to have the best potential for an off leash area include Dwight Murphy Field, MacKenzie Park, Ortega Park and the Sheffield Reservoir Open Space. These locations could accommodate a fenced area that could also be compatible with other park uses and the surrounding neighborhood.

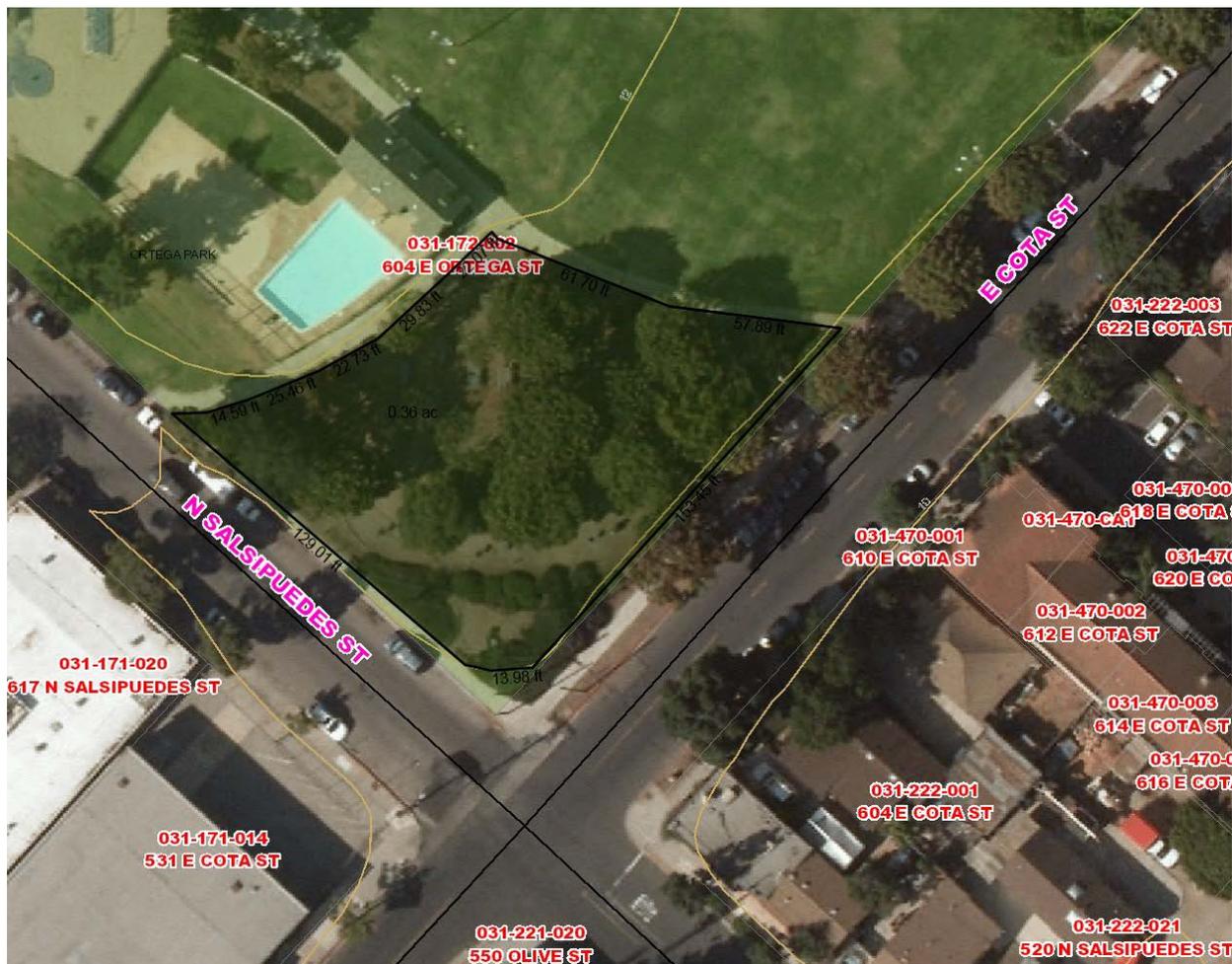
Dwight Murphy Field – The 10.5-acre park includes a softball field, soccer field, bleachers, playground and fitness circuit-training course. It is located at Niños Drive and Por La Mar adjacent to the Santa Barbara Zoo. The park includes two parking lots along Niños Drive including one adjacent to the soccer field and its entrance, and one adjacent to the playground. Road frontage parking is also available on Niños Drive and Por La Mar Drive. The site includes residential and hotel uses along Por La Mar. The potential off leash area is approximately 100 feet from residences or hotels.

The Department evaluated both fenced off leash options and unfenced scheduled use. Scheduled off leash use is not recommended due to potential impacts to the turf, management of dog feces, player safety and the potential for conflict if dogs were present off leash during active field use. In addition, the Department will be evaluating the potential for converting the turf to an artificial sports material which is incompatible with dog use. The most feasible area of the park for an off leash area is in the vicinity of the stationary fitness equipment. With a fence, the area could be $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 acre, depending on the park design. Further evaluation of this location would include relocation of the fitness equipment to another location in the park and other park improvements, including artificial sports turf. Dwight Murphy is an already developed park, so frontage improvements would not be necessary. A parking lot, restroom and water supply are already in place.



Ortega – This family oriented 9.5-acre park includes a softball field, outdoor basketball courts, playground, restrooms, summer pool, picnic and barbeque sites, and the Ortega Welcome House. As a community park, it is the location for large gatherings including the Looking Good Santa Barbara annual volunteer event. An expanse of turf in the park, adjacent to Santa Barbara Junior High School, is used for scheduled and drop in sports, such as soccer. There are no parking lots within the park. Road frontage parking is available along East Ortega, North Salsipuedes and East Cota Street.

An unfenced off leash area in the sports field is not advisable due to its current use for scheduled and drop-in field sports, location adjacent to the junior high school, streets and traffic along the borders of the park. In addition, the neighborhood has a population of stray dogs that could present additional safety concerns. The group picnic area has been identified as an area that may be appropriate for an off leash area. An area ranging in size from ¼ acre to ½ acre could be fenced. The location includes surrounding residential and business uses, although there is a street, and also in some instances vegetation, separating residences from the park. The closest residence (south or west) or business building to the proposed area is 60 feet away. Although a fenced off leash area would displace picnic and barbeque uses, the use of this location downtown would provide dog off leash recreation to an underserved area of the City.



Sheffield Reservoir Open Space - The City Public Works Department is responsible for the Sheffield water facilities, including two secured 6.5-million gallon potable water reservoirs buried underneath the natively landscaped 20-acre public Sheffield Open Space. By contract with Public Works, Water Resources Division, the Parks Division maintains the open space area. There is a small parking lot on site and there is limited parking along West Mountain Drive. Although the site includes residential uses along its borders, the potential location for a fenced off leash area is well within the property and distanced from area residences. Providing an off leash facility would likely draw people and traffic to the vicinity causing an increase in traffic. There are no associated restrooms.

The property is not suitable for an unfenced location due to the current use by elderly residents and families with young children. Scheduled unfenced dog off leash would impact the native habitat and potentially conflict with the Police Department K-9 training area. A one-acre area in the center of the facility was identified as a potential location for a fenced off leash area. Review with Public Works determined that this area is not appropriate due to the presence of the underground water tanks and depth of soil. A more feasible location for a fenced off leash area is shown in the map below. This area, about one-acre in size, would be set apart from the internal road which is a popular walking area.



IX. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends that the four potential sites for off leash dog areas be further evaluated. Further review includes developing conceptual designs for site improvements, neighborhood meetings with stakeholders and residents for each park location, technical studies, and City design review and permitting. Further evaluation is dependent on funding. As part of the FY 2016-2021 Capital Improvement Program, the Department included a funding request to develop off leash areas over a five-year period.