



Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

FEASIBILITY REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF A LOCATION WITHIN HERMOSA BEACH FOR A DOG PARK

(Senior Recreation Supervisor Brian Sousa)

Recommendation:

Staff requests the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission review and consider a recommendation to City Council regarding the feasibility of designating a location within Hermosa Beach for an off-leash dog park.

Executive Summary:

At its March 11, 2025 meeting, City Council directed staff to prepare a feasibility report regarding the off-leash dog park proposal submitted by the community organization, Bark for a Park. Staff have completed its review of the proposal, including evaluation of potential locations within Hermosa Beach and a review of comparable sites in neighboring cities. City Council also directed staff to provide the feasibility report to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (Commission) prior to City Council review.

Background:

A feasibility study is a pre-project assessment to better determine the viability, practicality, and potential of a proposed idea or project. Typically conducted before significant investment, the report considers technical, financial, legal, and operational factors that could be used in identifying a prospective location for a dog park in Hermosa Beach. In the City's most recent Parks Master Plan, adopted in November 2024, one of the goals outlined to advance was to explore current recreational spaces and the feasibility to provide dog-friendly amenities, while considering the associated increases in operations and maintenance costs and neighborhood impacts.

At City Council's March 11, 2025 meeting, during public comment, the community organization Bark for a Park requested that the City consider designating a dog park in Hermosa Beach. City Council then recommended a future agenda item directing staff to develop a feasibility study report regarding an off-leash dog park in Hermosa Beach in collaboration with Bark for a Park. City Council also directed staff to present the report to the Commission prior to City Council review.

At the Commission’s July 1, 2025 meeting, Bark for a Park provided a presentation (**Attachment 1**) outlining its case for an off-leash dog park in Hermosa Beach, including potential benefits, possible locations, design elements, and estimated costs and funding ideas. Vice-Chairperson Horowitz, with support from Commissioners Moroney and Worner, requested that staff return with a future agenda item to consider the formation of a subcommittee to evaluate the off-leash dog park proposal.

At the Commission’s September 2, 2025 meeting, staff recommended the Commission consider the creation of a Community Dog Park Subcommittee (subcommittee). The Commission serves in an advisory role for the City Council in matters pertaining to the Parks and Recreation Department. Subcommittees are created to assist staff in the completion of Department projects. The Commission unanimously approved the creation of the subcommittee, appointing Chair Ellman and Commissioner Worner.

Past Commission and Council and Commission Actions

Meeting Date	Description
City Council: March 11, 2025	City Council directed staff to prepare a feasibility report regarding the off-leash dog park proposal submitted by the community organization, Bark for a Park, and to provide such report to the Commission prior to City Council review.
Commission: July 1, 2025	Vice Chairperson Horowitz, with support from Commissioners Moroney and Worner, requested staff return with a future agenda item to consider the formation of a subcommittee to consider the feasibility of an off-leash dog park.
Commission: September 2, 2025	Commission approved the creation of the Community Dog Park subcommittee consisting of Chair Ellman and Commissioner Worner.

Discussion:

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to serve as the steward of parks, open spaces, natural resource lands, and waterways designated for public use and enjoyment. The Department provides recreational resources, programs, and activities throughout the City of Hermosa Beach while promoting the preservation and interpretation of historical and cultural resources, the natural environment, and community assets.

The subcommittee was tasked with working with staff and collaborating with Bark for a Park to develop a feasibility report with consideration of:

- Best-practice research, including collecting information and data from comparable cities with existing dog parks, such as hours of operation, cost estimates for

design, construction, equipment, and ongoing maintenance, funding sources, community feedback, and review of policies and procedures;

- Evaluation and site visits of potential locations (**Table 1**) within Hermosa Beach; and
- On-site visits of comparable cities’ dog park facilities (**Table 2**).

Table 1: Potential Off-Leash Dog Park Locations

Name of Park	Location
Valley Park	North-East area
Valley Park	South-East area
Bi-Centennial Park	Open Space
Edith Rodaway Friendship Park	Open Space
Beach	Herondo Street – 1 st Street
Greenbelt	Pier Avenue – 11 th Street, East

The evaluation of potential off-leash dog park locations considered various elements that would factor into decision-making, including proximity, impacts to current park use, park features, existing infrastructure, and the landscape. It was determined that one of the proposed locations, Noble Park, does not qualify as it is designated under the OS-2 zoning ordinance, which is reserved for open space and recreational uses that do not allow new structures or facilities that could disrupt the natural or passive character of the area. More information regarding the potential off-leash dog park locations in Hermosa Beach is included as **Attachment 2**. Additionally, included within Attachment 2 is research on comparable cities’ dog park facilities.

Table 2: Comparable Cities’ Dog Park Facilities

City	Park	Approximate Proximity to Hermosa Beach (City Hall)	Approximate Size
Manhattan Beach	Polliwog Park Dog Run	2.5 miles	5,900 sq ft
Redondo Beach	Redondo Beach Dog Park	1.7 miles	130,680 sq ft
El Segundo	El Segundo Dog Park	5.5 miles	66,400 sq ft

The evaluation included the same elements as the Hermosa Beach review, including proximity, impacts to current park use, park features, existing infrastructure, and the landscape. Key takeaways from the comparable sites include:

- El Segundo and Redondo Beach were in close proximity to residential areas.
- Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach are incorporated into multi-use parks with sports fields and other amenities.
- El Segundo and Redondo Beach have dirt surfaces (previously grass) with no additional lighting at the facility, large holes exposed in the ground, and leftover personal play equipment on-site.
- Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach had limited shade and noticeable odors from dog waste.
- All three sites lacked nearby restrooms or ADA-accessible paths into the facility, but ample parking was available.

Additional information on comparable cities' dog park facilities is included as **Attachment 3**.

Bark for a Park provided additional examples of comparable dog park locations in cities that the subcommittee was unable to visit due to time constraints and distance. **Attachment 4** details four Los Angeles sites: Olive Hills, West Hollywood Dog Park, Glen Alla Park, and Bluff Creek, including details on each site's surface materials, layout designs, aesthetic features and amenities, and signage.

Following the completion of best-practice research, evaluation and site visits of potential locations within Hermosa Beach, and on-site visits to comparable cities' dog park facilities, the subcommittee developed a recommended order of priority, as listed in order below, for City Council to consider of potential sites where an off-leash dog park could be incorporated based on feasibility, layout, and amenities criteria.

Option 1 - Greenbelt:

Benefits include:

- Central location in Hermosa Beach
- Minimal to no impact on homes/residences
- Flat surface, natural environment, and shading
- Nearby public restrooms and public parking lot
- More easily supports ADA requirements (further evaluation would be required)
- Potential to incorporate two sections, for small and big dog separation
- High foot traffic for residents with dogs, which could potentially support local businesses.

Notable challenges include:

- No lighting (hours would be dusk to dawn)
- No direct route
- New piping installation for potable water
- OS-1 Zone*, which is designated for open space and passive recreational uses, typically limiting construction of new structures or facilities that could disrupt the natural or passive character of the area

*On June 7, 1988, City voters approved local ballot measure Proposition D, authorizing the City to set aside funds to purchase the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way for conversion to open space and recreational use. On November 7, 1989, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 89-1001, which renamed the purchased property as the Greenbelt, preserved it for parkland and open space purposes, and mandated that all dogs be on a leash within the Greenbelt. Section 6 of the Ordinance states that no provision may be amended without a vote of the people. As a result, any amendment to allow an off-leash dog park in the Greenbelt would require a public electoral vote (ballot measure) and a majority Yes vote for approval. Any ordinance revision would only apply to a specific section of the Greenbelt, designated specifically for a dog park, and it would not be recommended to amend the ordinance in its entirety.

Option 2 – Edith Rodaway Friendship Park:

Benefits include:

- Flat surface with natural shading
- Open green space with no conflicting park amenities
- Nearby, though limited, street parking spaces
- Existing potable water, irrigation, drainage, and fencing infrastructure
- Popular location for local residents with dogs

Notable challenges include:

- Compacted residential area and potential noise complaints
- Located in a compact residential area
- No direct route, restrooms, or lighting (hours would be dusk to dawn)
- Would occupy a large section of the open green space
- Potential impact on the annual Pumpkins in the Park special event and other city programming

Option 3 – Bi-Centennial Park:

Benefits include:

- Flat surface with natural shading
- Direct routes, options for accessibility improvements, and open green space with no conflicting park amenities
- Existing potable water, irrigation, lighting, drainage, waste stations, and fencing infrastructure
- Popular location for local residents with dogs

Notable challenges include:

- Dense residential area and potential noise complaints
- No restrooms
- Not ADA
- Located in a compact residential area
- Very limited street parking available
- No restrooms

- Would occupy a large section of the open green space

Option 4 – The Beach:

Benefits include:

- Relatively flat, less utilized open space in the area
- Option for limited use hours and open access zones (no fencing required)
- Nearby restrooms
- Minimal impactful to nearby residences

Notable challenges include:

- Approval required from the California Coastal Commission
- Limited parking available
- Accessibility challenges: not ADA-compliant, and no potable water, irrigation, lighting, drainage, or fencing infrastructure onsite
- Environmental study required to assess potential impacts
- Sanitation, health, and maintenance concerns due to the sand surface

Option 5 – Valley Park East:

Benefits include:

- Natural shading
- Accessible, nearby pathways, open green space,
- Nearby restrooms, parking lot, and street parking spaces
- Nearby pathways and open green space
- Existing irrigation, lighting, and drainage infrastructure

Notable challenges include:

- Uneven surface, steep grade slopes, ADA concerns
- Environmental impacts (larger surfaced tree roots, garden)
- Uneven surface with steep grade slopes
- Located near a residential area
- Potential environmental impacts (tree roots, garden areas)
- Conflicts with city programming areas and close proximity to the playground
- Would occupy a large section of the open green space

Attachment 5 includes the Bark for a Park recommendation and justification for its preferred locations in Hermosa Beach, which includes the Greenbelt as its primary choice and recommends that City Council consider Bi-Centennial Park as a secondary option if a ballot measure for the Greenbelt does not receive public approval.

Bark for a Park has verbally agreed to assume financial responsibility for all pre-development costs, including (but not limited to) architectural design, construction, supplies and equipment, required permits, and inspections, to be further determined if a specific location is selected. Bark for a Park has requested that, upon completion of construction, the City assume full responsibility for the dog park and ongoing

maintenance. Estimated elements of ongoing maintenance could include but is not limited to:

- Opening and closing the facility daily
- Daily and weekly cleaning
- Removing personal belongings
- Emptying waste stations and resupplying waste bag stations
- Replacing or cleaning signage displaying rules and regulations
- Filling surfacing issues and repairing fencing, seating, or other amenities
- Irrigation and maintenance of surfaces, vegetation, and substrates

Next Steps:

Staff would present the feasibility study and the Commission's recommendation to City Council at its April 14, 2026 meeting. If City Council approves a location to be further considered, staff would bring back a comprehensive report at a future City Council meeting as a Public Hearing item for public participation and formal approval. The comprehensive report would include estimated capital costs, such as site preparation and grading, fencing and gates, surfacing, lighting, shade structures, water access, waste stations, and signage. It would also include ongoing maintenance costs, including waste removal, irrigation and turf care, equipment repairs, cleaning, staffing/oversight, and general upkeep.

Ongoing maintenance requirements for the dog park are anticipated to be notable, based on observations from comparable facilities. Maintaining a consistently high standard of cleanliness and service can require regular attention, particularly given the level of use such parks typically experience. Common maintenance considerations at similar facilities include waste management, surface upkeep, odor control, noise concerns, and ensuring compliance with posted rules.

To preserve the condition of the facility at the level established upon opening, consistent and proactive maintenance efforts would be important. This would require dedicated staff resources, with a desire for organized community volunteer efforts as well, and ongoing operational funding to support a safe, clean, and functional environment for public use.

Fiscal Impact:

Implementing an off-leash dog park in Hermosa Beach would have both initial capital costs and ongoing operational and maintenance costs. Costs would vary depending on the selected location, size, and amenities included.

Attachments:

1. Bark for a Park Presentation
2. Potential Off-Leash Dog Park Locations in Hermosa Beach and Information on Comparable Cities' Dog Parks
3. Comparable Cities' Dog Park Facilities Visited

4. Other Comparable Cities' Dog Park Facilities Not Visited
5. Bark for a Park Preferred Locations

Respectfully Submitted by: Brian J. Sousa, Senior Recreation Supervisor

Approved by: Lisa Nichols, Parks and Recreation Director