



MEMORANDUM

Community Services Department

DATE: June 8, 2016

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Bruce Hurlburt, Parks and Open Space Manager
J.P. de la Montaigne, Community Services Director

SUBJECT: Off-Leash Area Program Update

RECOMMENDATION

Review update on the Off-Leash Area Program and provide a recommendation to the City Council with the following addition:

- Increase the hours at Bubb Park Off-Leash Area to Monday through Sunday from 5:00 p.m. to sunset for a six-month trial period.

FISCAL IMPACT – No fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND

Mountain View faces the challenge of meeting the needs of many diverse user groups with a limited amount of park open space. Finding locations for dedicated, fenced, off-leash dog parks proved challenging as much of Mountain View's open space is on school district property or abuts residential property. Posted, unfenced, off-leash areas (OLA) have been adopted as a way to allow for multiple uses of limited park open space.

On May 26, 2015, the City Council passed a motion to permanently adopt the Off-Leash Dog Area Program and directed staff to modify the existing ordinance as appropriate. The Council also included the following additions:

- a. Enhanced signage.
- b. Clear demarcation of boundaries.
- c. Increased enforcement at Bubb Park.

- d. Increase hours at Whisman Park OLA to include weekends.
- e. Include Rengstorff Park seven days a week during park hours.

Enhanced Signage

Permanent signs were designed and installed (Attachment 1) in prominent locations at each OLA. Each sign covers the rules and hours of operation and has a map showing the boundaries of the OLA.

Information on the OLA Program is also easy to locate on the City webpage. Users can type “dogs,” “off-leash,” or “dog park” into the search bar or use “How do I...” at the top of the webpage with dogs listed under “Learn about” or they can click on the “Parks, Trees, Trails” icon. All these routes take the user to the information on the OLA Program. Users can click on each OLA and a map of the area is displayed.

Clear Demarcation of Boundaries

Signs at each OLA site and information on the City webpage clearly define the boundaries of each OLA. Staff has not installed permanent boundary stakes to date as they have not found a product that fits aesthetically in the park system.

Increased Enforcement at Bubb Park

From May through October, the Ranger stationed at Cuesta Park is assigned to make periodic patrols of the Bubb Park OLA. During the pilot period in 2014-15, Bubb Park OLA received the most complaints (20) from the public. This past year (2015-16), the number of complaints has reduced significantly (3).

Increase Hours at Whisman Park OLA to Include Weekends

Weekend hours were added to the signage at Whisman Park and the information on the webpage was updated.

Include Rengstorff Park Seven Days a Week During Park Hours

The OLA at Rengstorff Park is located along the east side of the tennis courts. Permanent signs were installed and the OLA webpage information was updated.

OLA OVERVIEW

One year after being formally adopted, the program is working well. Staff continued to keep a log during the past year with 11 entries noted compared to 59 during the pilot. The 11 concerns fell into several categories:

- Dog owners failing to comply with OLA hours and days (4).
- Dog's off-leash in nondesignated areas (2).
- Dogs approaching park users and not under voice control of the owner (2).
- Dog owners being unresponsive when asked to leash their dogs and comply with the OLA rules (3).

Concerns reported per OLA

	2014-15	2015-16
• Bubb Park	(20)	(3)
• Cooper Park	(3)	(1)
• Cuesta Park	(15)	(3)
• Cuesta Annex	(3)	(1)
• Eagle Park	(2)	(1)
• McKelvey Park	(0)	(0)
• Whisman Park	(4)	(2)
• Rengstorff		(0)

Two parks, Bubb and Cuesta, registered the most concerns again, though significantly fewer than during the pilot. The OLA at Cuesta Park is available for use all day long, seven days a week. Cuesta is a heavily used park, popular with families and joggers. This, combined with daily use by dog owners, continues to create conflicts between park users and dog owners. Using the Ranger stationed at Cuesta Park to talk with dog owners at both Cuesta and Bubb has helped reduce complaints.

Staff noted five additional concerns registered at school sites this year. Concerns were raised at Monta Loma, Landels, and Stevenson sports field by parents when dogs were off leash while children were playing sports. Staff forwarded this information to Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority so animal control could visit these sites.

Request for Additional Hours and Days

At the November 18, 2015 Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) meeting, a group of residents presented a proposal to request additional days and hours for the OLA at Bubb Park (Attachment 2). The PRC voted to place the topic on a future agenda.

The current hours for the Bubb Park OLA are Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The residents noted that many of them work and are not able to utilize the morning hours. Their request is to add evening hours from 5:00 p.m. to sunset similar to the Whisman Park OLA. Additionally the residents would like to add weekend hours from 5:00 p.m. to sunset. Their proposal calls for a six-month trial period.

Many residents wanted to see the program expanded to have more parks, days, and hours when surveyed during the pilot period. When the Council adopted the program, they attempted to address this desire by adding weekend hours at Whisman and opening a new OLA at Rengstorff Park.

Expansion of afternoon hours and weekends could be challenging for some sites as the “shared” areas are used by the public and youth and adult sports leagues. This is especially true at the Eagle and McKelvey Park OLAs. Eagle has limited space and is used evening and weekends for soccer practice as well as pickup games of soccer and Frisbee for adults. McKelvey sees evening and weekend use for both spring and fall seasons of baseball.

Soccer games and practice are scheduled for the field at Bubb School but the turf area at Bubb Park is not scheduled for these activities. Evening and weekend hours could potentially be accommodated at the Bubb Park OLA.

SUMMARY

Mountain View’s OLA Program “shares” park space that is utilized by both the public and dog owners. The program is working as noted by the reduced number of concerns registered during the first year of operation. The program relies on dog owners being responsible and abiding by the rules. The majority of dog owners seem to be able to do this. Unfortunately, a small minority of dog owners continue to flaunt the rules making use of some OLAs difficult for the public which reflects poorly on all dog owners.

Staff is continuing to work with our Rangers and Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority to work on OLA rule compliance by dog owners.

ALTERNATIVES

- Do not recommend additional hours and days for Bubb Park.
- Extend the proposed hours and days for Bubb Park for one year to gather sufficient information.

BH-JPdIM/CV/7/CSD
231-06-08-16M-E

Attachments: 1. Off-Leash Area Sign
2. 11-18-2015 Proposal for Bubb Park OLA

cc: File copy



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

Off-Leash Areas (OLA) for Dogs: Whisman Park

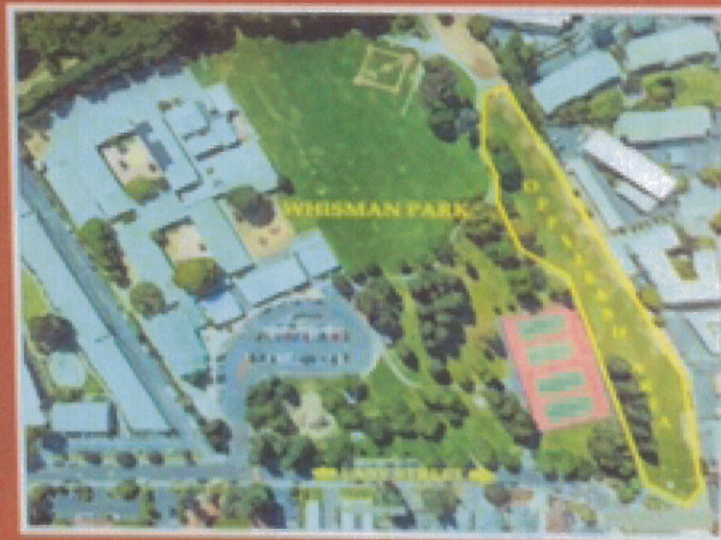
(6 AM - 10 AM) (5PM - SUNSET)
Monday - Sunday

OLA Information: www.mountainview.gov/parks

OFF-LEASH AREA (OLA) RULES

Please abide by the following rules so everyone can enjoy this facility:

- Leash all dogs unless in the designated off-leash area.
- Owner is responsible for the dog's behavior and any damage caused by the dog.
- No person shall have more than two(2) dogs in a posted off-leash area at one time.
- "Field Closed" areas include people and dogs.



- Dogs must be watched at all times.
- Dogs must be under voice control at all times.
- Poop happens...when it does, pick it up.
- All dog bites must be reported immediately to Silicon Valley Animal Control Authority. (SVACA) at (408) 764-0344

Attachment 2

Proposal for a Trial Extension of Off Leash Hours at Bubb Park

To the Mt. View Parks and Recreation Commission:

We, the undersigned, are a group of Cuesta Park residents and neighbors who have historically taken our dogs to Bubb Park for exercise and socialization. **We would like to propose that for a 6-month trial period off leash hours at Bubb Park be extended to weekdays and weekends from 5:00pm to sunset, also adding the morning hours on weekends.**

Besides socializing our dogs, we humans have also socialized and become friends. Since many of us work during the day, we would meet during the evening hours before dark during the week and on weekends; usually between 5:00pm – 7:00pm.

Since the OLA One Year Trial Period ended and was made permanent, and the off-leash hours remained restricted to 6am – 10am weekdays, we believe the complaints about Bubb Park during the 1-year trial program have been greatly reduced or eliminated. During this period to the present, most of us stopped going to Bubb, using Cuesta Park or other dog-friendly areas.

Currently there is very little activity at Bubb Park in the late afternoon and evening hours. Some days it is deserted except for a few parents and children in the two play areas. Organized soccer or baseball/softball activities are all in the Bubb School fields; none take place in the Bubb Park area. Occasionally there is a Dad or Mom playing soccer with their son or daughter. Usually they are at the Barbara St. end of the park away from the off-leash area. The park is a shared resource. We monitor new dogs and their owners, encouraging them to control their dogs and not let them go into the play areas.

During the OLA Trial at Bubb and for many previous years, we are unaware of any incidents where humans or children have been attacked, bitten, knocked down, or otherwise bothered by the dogs. In fact, many parents bring their children over to meet one or more of the dogs. Children are curious, delighted and intrigued by our dogs. We enjoy helping parents teach timid children how to best approach dogs and that they are not scary. We do our best to make these meetings safe and fun for the kids and parents and to promote neighborly relationships and friendships. Some parents bring their children and the family dog with them to the park.

In summary, given the current light use of Bubb Park, and the excellent track record at Bubb regarding dog incidents with people or other dogs, **we propose that for a 6-month trial period off leash hours at Bubb be extended to weekdays and weekends from 5pm to sunset, also adding the morning hours on weekends.**

Sincerely,

Vera Kark Norabelle Michelle Woodbridge Olivia Chapman Thompson
Richard Woolley Janet Brewer Chelsea Denise Shine Bill Shine Bailey
Chris Higgins Bentley Cari Aves Joel Aves Buddha Scott Savino Nya
Dana Glusovich Sheila Hutchinson Daisy Mae Wendy Yee Sable
Craig Ferrara Stephanie Ferrara Obi Karen Yoshioka Steven Ted Sanford Mogul

Wendy Yee Richard M. Woolley
Janet Brewer Chelsea ❄️
Vera Kark Norabelle

~~Jefferson~~ Obi ❄️

Bill Shine Bailey
Denise Shine
M Woodbridge + Olivia ❄️

DANA "COOL ROCK" GLUSOVICH
Craig Ferrara

Missy D'Allo, Eddie Gussardi + Cass
~~Case~~ + BUDDHA

Sheila Hutchinson + Daisy Mae

Chris Higgins (+ Bentley)
Chrysan Thompson (+ OLLIE)

Adam Kye (Butters)

Scott Savino (NYA)

Jenna Hagnere