



# Staff Report

## City of Manhattan Beach

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Fahey and Members of the City Council

**THROUGH:** Geoff Dolan, City Manager

**FROM:** Richard Gill, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Idris J. Al-Oboudi, Recreation Services Manager

**DATE:** August 16, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Making Permanent the Live Oak Park Dog Run and Established Dog Pass Through Areas at Culiacan, Live Oak, and Sand Dune Parks with Minor Changes to Hours of Operations

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council make permanent the dog run at Live Oak Park and the established dog pass through areas at Culiacan, Live Oak and Sand Dune Parks and approve recommended changes to the hours of operation from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday to 8:00 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATION:**

There is no fiscal implication with this recommendation. All expenses below for the dog run and pass through paths, except for ongoing maintenance, were expended in the last fiscal year.

1. Landscaping and fencing of off leash dog area - \$7,000. This includes preparation of area, fencing, gates, people and dog water fountain, mutt mitt dispensers, wood chips and trash cans
2. Signage, windscreens, drop box, display case - \$5,000
3. It will cost approximately \$50/month for all on-going maintenance

### **BACKGROUND:**

During the November 16, 2004 City Council meeting, the Council approved the installation of an off-leash dog play area just beyond the center field fence at Dorsey Field for a six month trial basis. The City Council directed staff to monitor the area for the concerns that were raised at the November 16 meeting and provide Council with a progress report at the end of six months. The concerns that were raised at the Council meeting were:

1. Noise/excessive barking

2. Dog feces/urine smell
3. Overcrowding/becoming a destination point/traffic
4. Safety issues, i.e. dog bites and aggressive dogs

The Council also established dog walk through areas at Culiacan, Live Oak and Sand Dune Parks. These dog walk through areas allow persons walking dogs on leash to pass through designated city parks on designated pathways and areas.

**DISCUSSION:**

The dog run was completed in mid-February. A three month status report provided to the City Council in May by staff stated that the feedback received up to that point was very positive.

Staff used two methods to collect data on the operation of the dog run: 1) Parks and Recreation tennis monitors completing an hourly narrative and checklist form and survey forms that are provided on site.

During the past six months, staff collected 285 dog run participant surveys and 1,639 hourly statistics from staff monitoring logs. The staff logs and user surveys both addressed the concerns raised at the November 16 Council meeting.

1. Noise concern/excessive barking

Short burst of barking	8%
Continuous barking for more than 1 minute	2%
Little or no barking	90%

Comments: The general user comments regarding this issue was that more noise was coming from the ball fields, street and playground

2. Dog feces/urine smell

Waste observed picked up	95%
Users picking up for another dog	17%
Mutt Mitts available	99%
Smell	0%

Comments: What little waste and urine that is left behind is dissipated by a sprinkler system that soaks and washes the area.

3. Overcrowding/traffic/destination spot

Average number of dogs present at most times	3-4
Most dogs seen in run (maximum allowed 10)	10
Dog owners walking to site	70%
Dog owners driving to site	30% *

\*Of the 30% driving, 88% drove less than 2 miles

Comments: No problems have been witnessed by staff or participants regarding parking/traffic/or over use.

4. Safety issues/liability/dog bites/aggressive dogs

Dog bites	0
Instances of aggressive dog behavior	less than 5%

Comments: One request that has been raised is the request to separate larger (60 lb.+) and smaller dogs (up to 60 lb.). The committee and staff are continuing to monitor and try to find solutions for this issue. The dog run is too small to separate into two areas and it is inefficient to assign certain days for each group. Currently the owners are working together to mitigate any aggressive behavior.

### **Neighbor Concerns**

Members of the Dog Committee surveyed the surrounding neighborhoods for non-dog owner concerns for this six month update. 16 neighbors living near the dog run voluntarily filled out surveys; with most stating they had no concerns with the dog run operation so far.

### **User Suggestions**

Comments and feedback received from the users on the surveys:

1. Install a bench – completed
2. Separate large and small dogs – being looked into by committee
3. Light area for evenings
4. More hours for the dog run – many of the surveys and comments heard by staff and the committee were from users wanting to expand the hours of operation. Currently the Dog Run is open from 7:30 am – 10:00 pm, Mon-Fri. The request is to change the opening from 7:30 am to 7:00 am.  
On Saturday and Sunday, the current hours are 9:00 am to 6:00pm. The request is for 8:00 am to 7:45 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Staff supports both requests.

### **Other User Comments**

Of the 285 user surveys returned, 97% contained very positive feedback for the dog run. The other 3% were only negative in that they wanted more areas and more hours of operation.

### **Dog Pass Through Paths**

Staff has received very little feedback from residents and users of the dog pass through paths at Live Oak, Sand Dune and Culiacan parks. What feedback we have received has all been very positive. Staff believes that this is because the dog pass through areas have existed for many years; the only difference is that we have signage identifying each pass through path and the City Ordinance was changed to officially permit the use.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The six month progress report for the dog run operation and the dog walk through areas is very positive.

The concerns expressed by neighbors during the November 16 City Council meeting have not materialized. Over 95% of the users are picking up their dog's waste. Over 90% of the time, staff and the users heard no barking. Only 2% of time was it reported that dogs barked continuously for more than a minute.

The issue of overcrowding of the area becoming a destination point has not materialized, as over 70% of the users stated they walked to the site and of the 30% who drove, 88% drove less than two miles.

Agenda Item #: \_\_\_\_\_

Because of the positive feedback received on the off leash dog run at Live Oak and on leash dog pass through at Sand Dune, Live Oak and Culiacan, staff recommends that the City Council make them permanent.

As a final note, the Committee would like to continue exploring new areas of the City for other dog runs. They would like to approach the City Council during Tuesday night's meeting and ask for clarification as to what the Committee needs to do to get approval for other dog run areas.