

DOG Parks: Fact & Fiction



FACT:

- A well-exercised dog is much quieter thus a better neighbor
- Provides elderly and disabled owners with an accessible place to exercise their companions
- Residents feel welcome as common interests and playful dogs break the ice.
- Interaction between diverse groups of people.
- Pet owners will no longer illegally allow their dogs to be off-leash in the neighborhood.
- Discourages the current dog waste
- Discourages crime and loitering in open parks
- Socializes and exercises dogs in a safe environment
- Promotes responsible pet ownership
- Enables dogs to legally run off-leash
- Promotes public health and safety
- Provides a valuable tool for realistic enforcement of dog control laws

Myth #1 Hordes of loose dogs will over-run the city.

Untrue.

- The off-leash area has fencing and a double gated entry system.
- Once dogs are inside they are too busy playing with each other to try to jump the fence or escape.
- The sign at the entryway alerts the public that this area is for off-leash enjoyment and leash laws will be in effect everywhere else in the city.

Myth #2 My child or dog will be viciously attacked.

Untrue.

- There has never been a single serious injury reported in any off-leash area to our knowledge - it simply hasn't happened. As a attorney commented, "There is less liability in an off-leash area than in most other park activities."
- Off-leash areas are neutral territories for visiting dogs, so it is highly unlikely that they will try to protect their turf. Dogs prefer to work things out in their groups peacefully, much as humans do.
- Plus, animal behaviorists have known for years that dogs are less likely to be aggressive with each other when off-leash than when they are on leash!
- Children under adult supervision will be allowed in the off-leash areas, but parents are advised to use common sense, especially with very small children. Dogs while playing can inadvertently bump into children, which may frighten them.
- Dogs known to be aggressive are not permitted to use these areas.

Myth #3 The noise and stench will be overwhelming.

Untrue.

- Well-exercised and well-socialized dogs are much quieter in public areas and at home. So the more running and playing a dog does, the less likely that s/he will play-bark or engage in nuisance barking.
- When dogs are playing together there is less barking when left alone in a back yard
- The cities we consulted reported that nuisance barking was not a problem in their off-leash areas.
- Dog owners are more inclined to pick up after their own dog plus after other peoples dogs and garbage in a park that they are proud of.
- Moloks have been installed to use as waste containers. These units are clean, odourless & environmentally friendly and used through-out the City of London. A new concept in garbage disposal

Myth #4 The vegetation and grass will be destroyed and the fencing will be unsightly.

Untrue.

- The size of the off-leash area will help ensure that there is plenty of room to spread out to decrease pressure on vegetation.
- Areas of high use (entryways, common paths) may need wood chips or other material, as is already done in the other parks.
- Part of the design and calculated maintenance is for beautification projects, such as vines or shrubs around fencing to camouflage it.
- There are many types of fencing available that can be quite unobtrusive or even very attractive. The type of fencing used will depend on how much money is allocated from the city and raised from private donors (such as you).

Myth #5 It's too expensive.

Untrue.

- Aside from initial start-up costs to pay for fencing, signage, and amenities such as trashcans, it costs very little to maintain the areas. Unlike softball fields or hockey rinks, off-leash areas require very little maintenance beyond trash removal, occasional mowing or snow removal.
- It has been proposed that a modest increase in dog licensing fees would pay for any maintenance costs. In fact, making off-leash areas a benefit of dog registration would lead to more dog registrations and increased revenue for the city.