



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD RECOMMENDATION 20220822-3

Date: August 22, 2022

Subject: Off-Leash Dog Areas

Motioned By: Dawn Lewis

Seconded By: Richard DePlama

Recommendation

the Parks and Recreation Board encourages the City of Austin and the Parks and Recreation Department to explore all available means to educate the public about this issue, and to expand fenced off-leash dog areas, prioritizing the high density areas that lack these facilities.

Rationale:

WHEREAS, Section 3-4-1 of the Austin City Code states that except in designated off leash dog areas, "an owner or handler of a dog shall keep the dog under restraint."; and

WHEREAS, with Austin's growth, there has been a steady increase in violations of this code in parks and green spaces; and since October 1, 2022, Park Rangers have had over 2,101 contacts with park visitors who had their dogs off the leash to request compliance with leash laws; and Austin's 311 call line consistently receives notifications of leash-law violations at city parks; and

WHEREAS, a working group which included PARD and AAC staff and members of the Parks and Recreation Board and the Animal Advisory Commission evaluated the growing community concerns and created recommendations to address the growing off-leash dog issue; and

WHEREAS, off-leash dogs can pose a threat both to dog-safety and the safety of other park users; and

WHEREAS, parks and green spaces should be safe and welcoming for all members of the community;

WHEREAS, currently the Austin Police Department, the Austin Animal Shelter and the Parks and Recreation Department do not have the resources to enforce the off leash dog ordinance; and

WHEREAS, in Austin, which holds a population of over a million, there are only twelve official PARD off-leash dog areas in the City of Austin, and not all areas are fenced;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Parks and Recreation Board encourages the City of Austin and the Parks and Recreation Department to explore all available means to educate the public about this issue, and to expand fenced off-leash dog areas, prioritizing the high density areas that lack these facilities.

Vote **The motion to approve the recommendation that the Parks and Recreation Board encourages the City of Austin and the Parks and Recreation Department to explore all available means to educate the public about this issue, and to expand fenced off-leash dog areas, prioritizing the high density areas that lack these facilities was approved on Board Member Lewis' motion, Board Member DePalma's second on a 9-0 vote. Board Members Hugman and Rinaldi absent.**

For: Chair Cottam Sajbel, Vice Chair Faust, Board Members Di Carlo, Moore, Flowers, Barnard, Taylor, Lewis and DePalma.

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Board Members Rinaldi and Hugman.

Attest:

Tim Dombek
