

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

For the Agenda of:
September 15, 2005
9:30 a.m.

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Department of Regional Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Subject: Report Back On Accelerating The Implementation Of An Off-Leash Dog Park

Contact: Ron Suter, Director, 875-6132

BACKGROUND:

At the Final Budget Hearings on September 7th, your Board directed the Department of Parks, Recreation and Open Space to report back on September 15th and provide information regarding the possibility of accelerating the planning, design, and construction of an off-leash dog park within the Unincorporated Area of Sacramento County.

DISCUSSION:

In 2001, Parks staff secured \$175,000 in Proposition 12 funds for the design and construction of a five-acre off-leash dog park at the site of an unmaintained, fenced park within Mather Airport. The site possessed healthy shade trees, an irrigation system, a perimeter fence, and several shade structures. The funds were to have been spent on renovating the existing irrigation system, turf and shade structures, repairing the existing fencing, and installing drinking fountains and other amenities. Unfortunately, due to the requirements of the Sacramento County Airport System and Federal regulations, Parks was unable to implement the project at that site. The funds remain available.

Upon study of the matter, Parks staff has concluded that to successfully accelerate the implementation of an off-leash dog park, the following factors must be addressed:

1. While \$175,000 may have been sufficient to renovate an existing, but neglected park, it is insufficient to plan and construct a new park. Experience has proven that approximately \$1,250,000 will be required to design and construct a fenced five acre off-leash dog park on undeveloped land. The breakdown of these costs include: \$950,000 for construction; \$65,000 for permits, utilities and inspection; \$10,000 for CEQA review; and \$100,000 for planning, design, and administration.
2. Securing a suitable site may prove extremely difficult unless Parks collaborates with another jurisdiction. Most parts of Mather Regional Park possess either sensitive wetlands or are too remote from existing utilities. A similar situation exists at the Gene W. Andal Park and Habitat Preserve; and any active use of Andal Park will require the approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Master Plan and intended uses at

Gibson Ranch Regional Park are incompatible with an off-leash dog park. The appropriateness of locating an off-leash dog area in the American River Parkway is an issue currently under review by the American River Parkway Plan Update Committee. If recommended, it would be at least two years before final adoption of the Parkway Plan. Parks has had preliminary discussions with the County Department of Waste Management and Recycling to consider a possible site at the Kiefer Landfill Bufferlands, once their Bufferland Management project is completed and a determination of what land is available has been completed.

3. At this time, Parks Planning staff is performing at maximum capacity to keep up with their current workload. Due to the reduction in Department revenue the past few fiscal years, approximately 30% of Planning staff time is dedicated to providing landscape architectural services to outside agencies such as Mission Oaks, Arden Manor, Fair Oaks, and Arcade Creek Park Districts and providing landscape architectural services to various Architectural Services Division (ASD) projects, reviewing and commenting on private development projects located within the Combining Zone, as well as serving on the Subdivision Review Committee, in an effort to fund the Division. Because these projects generate revenue, they are often given a higher priority than a County Parks project.

Combined, the factors of insufficient funds, lack of a suitable site, low staffing levels, and reduced General Fund allocations make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Parks to accelerate the implementation of an off-leash dog park without additional action by the Board.

The accelerated planning, design, and construction of an off-leash dog park would require the implementation of one or more of the following measures:

1. Re-prioritize the existing 2005-2006 project list.
2. Addition of an Associate Landscape Architect position to oversee the management of this project.
3. Additional General Fund appropriations to offset current outside revenue generation activity.
4. Use of General Fund money to fund the acquisition of a suitable site.
5. Use of General Fund money or other funding sources to fund construction costs.

Respectfully submitted,

APPROVED:

Terry Schutten
County Executive

Ron Suter, Director
Department of Regional Parks

By: _____
Cheryl Creson, Administrator
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