City of Burbank
Park, Recreation and Community Services Department

Memorandum

Date: March 13, 2014

To: Park, Recreation and Community Services Board Members

From: Judie Wilke, Park, Recreation and Community Services Director

Subject: **FEASABILITY OF DEVELOPING AN OFF-LEASH DOG PARK UPDATE**

RECOMMENDATION:

Per the Park, Recreation, and Community Services (PRCS) Board's (Board) direction at the February 13, 2014 meeting, staff recommends the Board note and file the item. However, the Board may take any action it deems necessary and appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

The development of a dog park has been a discussion since 1997. Since then, staff has been working with the City Council (Council) and the Board in assessing the feasibility of developing an off-leash dog park.

During the Fiscal Year (FY) 1998-1999 annual Budget process, staff submitted a request to receive funding to develop a dog park. Although this request was not funded, the Council directed staff to continue their efforts in exploring the feasibility of developing such a facility.

Subsequently, on October 8, 1998, the Council held a Joint Meeting with the Board to further discuss the viability of adding a dog park to the City's park inventory. Ultimately, both the Council and the Board decided that the project should be removed from the PRCS Department's FY 1998-1999 Work Program (WP), given that a funding source could not be identified.

On September 7, 1999, at the request of then Council Member Bob Kramer, Council viewed a videotape featuring a dog park facility in the City of Huntington Beach. The Council again discussed the feasibility of developing such a facility and directed staff to identify a funding source to fund this project. The Council also directed staff to reincorporate this item onto the PRCS Department's FY 1999-2000 WP.

Per the direction of the Council, staff again began working with the Board to review, discuss, and develop a list of potential sites both within and outside of the City limits to develop a dog park. Over the course of the three presentations which were made to the Board (January 13, 2000, February 10, 2000, and March 10, 2000) staff identified twelve potential locations (Exhibit A) that could accommodate such a facility. Staff also provided the Board with a detailed analysis of each of the sites proposed and discussed other elements (environmental and operational impacts) associated with this project.

On September 14, 2000, the Council held another Joint Meeting with the Board to discuss the feasibility of developing a dog park. Staff provided the Council and the Board with a detailed chronology on the project and reviewed several potential dog park sites as previously discussed with the Board.

During the FY 2000-2001 annual Budget process, staff submitted a request to receive funding to develop a dog park facility; however, this request was not funded. Consequently, due to lack of funding staff stopped efforts in exploring the feasibility of adding a dog park to the City's park inventory. This project was removed from the PRCS Department's FY 2000-2001 WP.

On January 12, 2010 at the request of the Council, staff was directed to provide them with detailed information (white paper) regarding the possible addition of a dog park facility. The Council also directed staff to include feedback from the Board. This project was once again added to the Department's goals for the FY 2010-2011 WP.

Per the direction of the Council, on March 11, 2010, staff provided the Board with an informational update on the potential development of a dog park. The Board unanimously supported staff efforts and agreed that the development of a dog park would fit within the mission of the PRCS Department.

Overall, the Board was in favor of developing a dog park at the Wood Lot Area near the Starlight Bowl. However, due to the current economic climate the Board felt that it may not be an appropriate time to expand or enhance the City's park amenities. The Board expressed a concern that the City may not have the resources to fund and support the project at that time. Before moving forward, the Board suggested that staff work to identify alternative funding sources such as grant opportunities and/or corporate partnerships/sponsorships.

On April 6, 2010, staff provided the Council with a memo summarizing efforts made to explore the viability of developing such a facility. Staff recommended that this project be brought back as a first step in the two-step agenda process. Given that no action was taken, this item was incorporated on the PRCS Department's FY 2011-2012 WP.

At the August 28, 2012 City Council meeting, Council Member Talamantes requested that staff look into the viability of developing a dog park within the City. As a result, the Council directed staff to incorporate this in the PRCS Department's FY 2012-2013 WP and bring back a discussion regarding the viability of developing a dog park as the first step in the two-step agenda process.

On December 4, 2012, staff presented a report to the Council which discussed the viability of developing a dog park as the first step in the two-step agenda process. While staff advised the Council that the development of a dog park is viable and aligns with the PRCS Department's overall mission, staff expressed a concern over the PRCS Department's existing aging facilities and its ability to support an additional park. In summary, staff recommended that improvements be made to the PRCS Department's existing infrastructure before adding any additional park amenities to the City's inventory because many of the facilities are well over 60 years old. The Council supported staff's recommendation and directed staff to focus on addressing the PRCS's Department's existing infrastructure needs. However, the Council also directed staff to work with the Board to discuss the following: the viability of establishing a task force; identifying three suitable locations, estimating development costs, identifying funding sources, exploring operational models, and identifying potential partnerships. The Council further recommended that a white-paper be prepared to be considered as part of the FY 2013-2014 Budget process.

On February 14, 2013 staff provided the Board with an update on the project and requested that the Board provide input on the direction given by the Council at their December 4, 2012 meeting. The Board unanimously supported the development of a dog park; however, the Board did not agree with staff's recommendation which was to not develop a task force but rather utilize the Board as the advisory body to develop recommendations for the Council to consider. The Board felt that a task force should be formed to develop policy recommendations for the potential development of a dog park. The Board recommended that the Council consider a task force composed of seven members.

More recently, at the April 23, 2013 Council meeting, staff recommended that Council not create a task force to oversee the dog park project, but rather the Board fulfill this role. The Council supported this recommendation but encouraged staff to facilitate a community meeting in the near future to receive input regarding a location and type of amenities to include in the prosed project.

DISCUSSION:

In alignment with the Council's direction, staff would like to continue to engage the Board, the overseeing body of the dog park project, with discussion regarding the status of the dog park. While staff advised the Council that the development of a dog park aligns with the PRCS Department's overall mission, staff has identified challenges with all twelve sites (Exhibit B) that were previously reviewed and discussed by the Council and Board.

In reviewing the potential sites, staff assessed the following: proximity to other dog parks, adjacent land use compatibility, environmental considerations, vehicular and pedestrian access, visibility, and neighborhood concerns. Subsequently, staff identified the following:

- There are a total of seven dog parks located within a 14-mile radius of the City, of which two of the seven are less than one mile away from the City's border;

- Perceived issues and concerns regarding dog parks will arise when adjacent land use is residential (noise level of barking dogs, smell of dog waste, parking issues, etc.);
- Onsite parking is not provided in close proximity to any of the potential sites;
- There is not available open space to accommodate a dog park;
- All identified sites will take open space from existing parks; and
- Funding is not available for the development or ongoing maintenance of the project.

While it is important to consider development costs associated with the project, these costs are unknown because a location and specific design element for the project have not been solidified. However, staff anticipates that the development costs for a dog park could range from $100,000 to $300,000 depending on the size of the facility and the amenities selected. To that end, staff believes that a portion of the development costs could be offset through grant opportunities, private and non-profit sponsorships/ partnerships. However, it is important to note that funding has not been allocated to the development or ongoing maintenance needs of the project.

CONCLUSION:

Provided the aforementioned information, there is no viable site for the dog park project. Therefore, staff is not comfortable with conducting community outreach until a site is identified that meets the established criteria and minimally impacts the community. At the same time, staff is working with the City Manager on how to best move forward with the proposed dog park project. Staff will keep the Board abreast of any updates regarding the dog park.

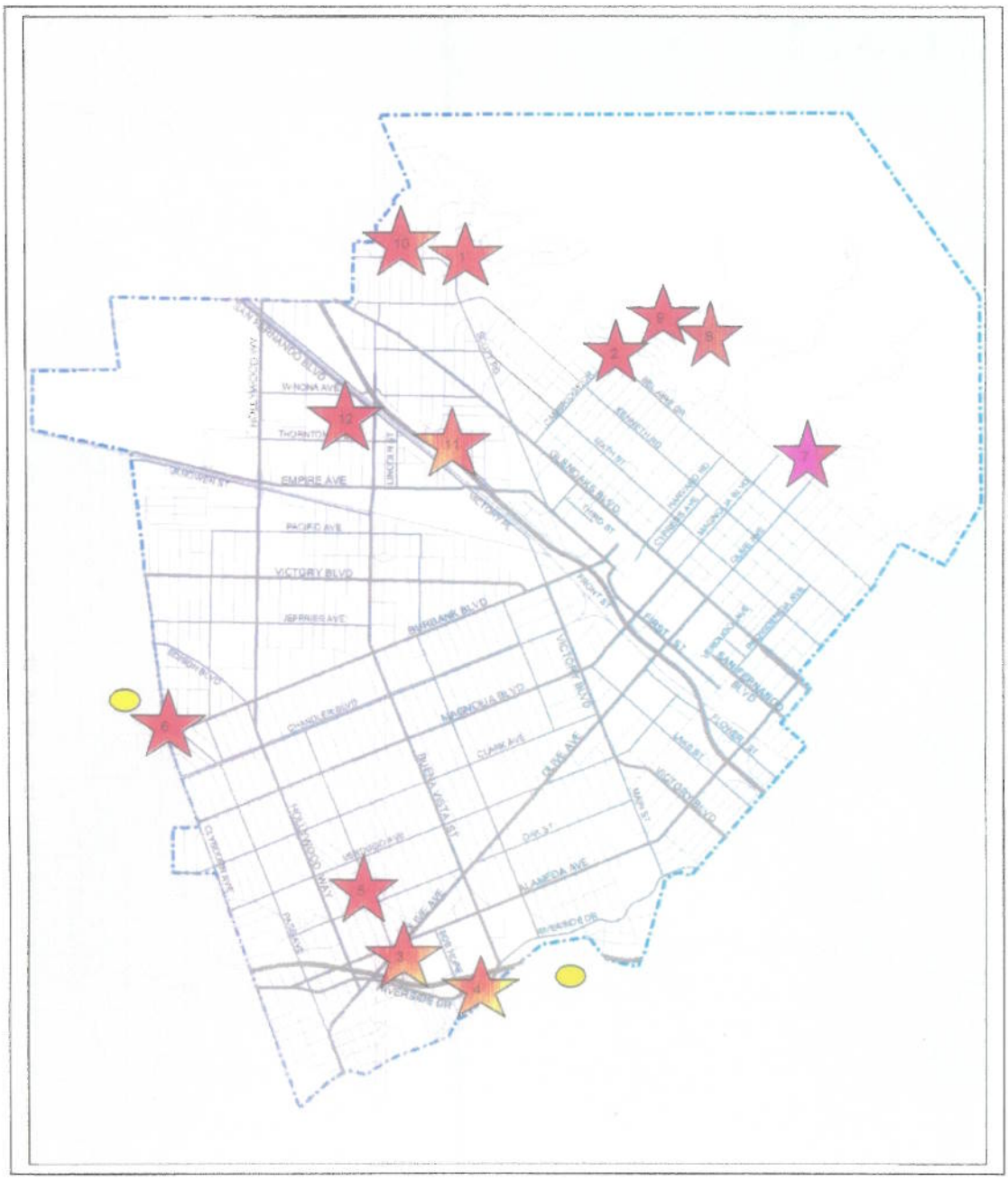
In alignment with how the Board has previously prioritized the development of an off-leash dog park project, the PRCS Department will continue its efforts to focus on rehabilitating and maintaining the City's existing infrastructure before adding any additional park amenities to the City's park inventory.

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit A - Potential Dog Park Sites
Exhibit B - Dog Park Site Challenges

EXHIBIT A

POTENTIAL DOG PARK SITES



1. Brace Canyon Park (City-Owned Property)
2. Bel Aire Park (City-Owned Property)
3. Johnny Carson Park North (City-Owned Property)
4. Johnny Carson Park South (LA Owned Property-leased to City)
5. Whitnall Highway Easement South (City-Owned Property)
6. Whitnall Highway Easement North (Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Owned Property)
7. Palm Park (City-Owned Property)
8. Starlight Bowl Parking Lot at Stough Park (City-Owned Property)
9. Wood Lot Area (City-Owned Property)
10. Cabrini Basin (City-Owned Property)
11. Interstate 5- HOV Right of Way (City-Owned Property)
12. Lundigan Park (City-Owned Property)

Directly Adjacent Dog Parks.

EXHIBIT B

DOG PARK SITE CHALLENGES

POTENTIAL SITE	CHALLENGES
1) Brace Canyon Park (City-Owned Property)	• Ingress/egress impacts same neighborhood affected by park programming. • Located in residential area. • Proximity to adjacent resident homes. • Existing site would require grading to become suitable for use. • Area is adjacent to reservoir which could create water quality issues.
2) Bel Aire Park (City-Owned Property)	• Ingress/egress impacts same neighborhood affected by park programming. • Located in residential area. • Proximity to adjacent resident homes. • Limited street parking. • Currently utilized as an active ballfield facility. Redeveloping site would result in programming issues and a loss of revenue for the PRCS Department. • No permanent restroom facilities.
3) Johnny Carson Park North (City-Owned Property)	• Plans to redevelop park are currently underway and scope of that project does not include such a facility. • Impact existing developed park acreage. • Adjacent to freeway invites non-resident usage. • Area relies on street parking. • Impacted by Media District traffic and surrounding uses.
4) Johnny Carson Park South (Los Angeles Owned Property-leased to the City)	• Impacts existing developed park acreage. • Adjacent to freeway (dog safety). • Area relies on street parking. • Impacted by Media District traffic and surrounding uses. • Borders residential neighborhood. • Could impact adjacent equestrian trails. • Areas will be used as staging site for LADWP upper reach project.
5) Whitnall Highway Easement South (City-Owned Property)	• Located in residential area. • Proximity to adjacent resident homes. • Ingress/egress would impact residential neighborhood. • Limited street parking. • Impact existing parkland acreage. • No restroom facilities or irrigation system. • Close proximity to other dog parks outside of city boundaries (1.3 miles).
6) Whitnall Highway Easement North (Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Owned Property)	• Ingress/egress would impact residential neighborhood. • LADWP easement land use issues. • No restroom facilities.

	• No irrigation system or water supply. • Limited street parking. • Close proximity to other dog parks outside of city boundaries (.35 miles).
7) Palm Park (City-Owned Property)	• Not viable because there is a reservoir. A dog park can't be built over a reservoir due to water quality issues. • Ingress/egress impacts same neighborhood affected by park programming. • No dedicated parking. • Located in residential area. • Proximity to adjacent resident homes. • Currently utilized as an active ballfield facility. Redeveloping site would result in programming issues and a loss of revenue for PRCS Department. • No permanent restroom facilities.
8) Starlight Bowl Parking Lot at Stough Park (City-Owned Property)	• Ingress/egress would impact same neighborhood affected by Castaway, DeBell, Starlight Bowl and Nature Center traffic. • Upper portion of lot is over landfill and cannot be developed into an active park site due to ground settlement and regulatory issues. • No existing irrigation. • Would negatively impact programming at the Starlight Bowl.

9) Wood Lot Area
(City-Owned Property)
	• Ingress/egress would impact same neighborhood affected by Castaway, DeBell, Starlight Bowl and Nature Center traffic.
	• No restroom facilities.
	• No existing irrigation.
	• Currently, existing access is restricted.
	• Impacts to other City uses:
	  ○ BWP and PW wood lot storage area might have to be relocated
	  ○ Security issues for site because it's near BWP training facility.

10) Cabrini Basin (City-Owned Property)	• Ingress/egress would impact residential neighborhoods. • One access point on private property and located immediately across from residential neighborhood. • No existing water supply, irrigation, restroom facilities, or dedicated parking.
11) Interstate 5-HOV Right of Way (City-Owned Property)	• Adjacent to freeway (dog safety). • Land better suited for a developed property with a higher use – Economic Development.
12) Lundigan Park (City-Owned Property)	• Impact existing parkland acreage (already very limited open space). • Located in residential area. • Ingress/egress would impact residential neighborhood. • Limited street parking.