

# Policies and Procedures for the Establishment of Fenced Dog Training and Exercise Areas (Dog Parks) and for the Establishment of Voice and Sight Control within Urban Park Areas

The purpose of this document is to establish planning and evaluation criteria, policies, and procedures for the establishment of two separate types of off-leash areas within urban park areas within the incorporated limits of the City of Boulder. The citizens of Boulder approved in November, 1996, a process to grant exceptions to the leash laws in city owned park and Open Space lands within the incorporated areas of Boulder. In response to citizen interest, the City of Boulder has recognized the need to set aside parcels of park land for the primary use of allowing residents to exercise their dogs off leash. As such, this document will identify procedures and the process involved in establishing these sites and evaluating their use.

## Types of Off Leash Areas

1. *Fenced Dog Training and Exercise Areas (Dog Parks)*: These areas will be established to allow dogs who are not yet trained in voice and sight commands to be able to practice these skills in a fenced environment off leash. It is anticipated that two or three pilot sites will be chosen in 1997 within City limits in various geographic areas of the City to test these sites. The fenced dog training and exercise areas will be no less than one (1) acre in size. A minimum number of park amenities will be established for these sites.
2. *Voice and Sight Control Areas*: These areas will be established in a variety of City park and Open Space lands within City limits. The voice and sight areas will be established to allow dogs who are fully trained in voice and sight command to utilize non-fenced, designated areas without leashes. These sites will be adequately marked and may have well have some types of amenities found in park sites. These sites will not be established under a pilot program.

## **Planning Criteria for the Development of Fenced Dog Training and Exercise Areas**

In order to determine the effectiveness of both fenced dog exercise and training areas, two pilot sites will be established during the initial year in two distinct geographic areas of the City. The following are the criteria that will be used to determine the establishment of these sites:

1. **Size** - Minimum size proposed for fenced dog parks will be one acre up to five acres in size.
2. **Geographical Distribution** - The pilot sites will be located in two areas of the City. One site will be located north of Arapahoe and the other site will be located south of Arapahoe.

3. **Parking** - Since it is anticipated that these sites will be regional in nature, adequate parking will be important to provide based on the expected usage of the park.
4. **Fencing** - Chain link or similar type of fencing with a minimum of two or more self-closing gates, 4-5 feet high will be needed to protect other users of the park from dogs which are being trained in voice and sight control.
5. **Environmental Factors** - Dog Parks should not be located in environmentally sensitive areas that include unique wildlife habitat or where impacts of the fenced area will change the environmental balance negatively. Additionally, dog parks should not be located on unstable soils and easily eroded slopes.
6. **Noise** - Fenced dog areas should not be located closer than 150 feet from the nearest resident to create a buffer effect. Additionally, if practical, every effort should be made to locate fenced areas adjacent to tree lines or hillsides to buffer noise.
7. **Signage** - Safety warning signs should be placed along strategic points on the fence to identify the area inside the fence as an off-leash dog exercise and training area. Rules and regulations should also be posted at the site.
8. **Park Amenities** - Efforts should be made to find locations which are not planned for other recreational development. Park amenities in these areas should include open turf and irrigation, picnic tables, benches, trash cans, dog litter disposal stations, drinking fountains and hose bibs for providing drinking water for dogs.

Due to the regional nature of this type of off-leash area, it is recommended that community park sites should be initially considered. Potential sites include the natural area of East Boulder Community Park, and the Community Park site in North Boulder.

## **Planning Criteria for the Development of Voice and Sight Control Areas**

The criteria for the establishment of voice and sight control areas will be driven by neighborhood initiatives and demonstrated neighborhood support. It is projected that 2-4 pilot sites will be developed City-wide during the first two years. These sites will also be established in two separate geographic areas of the City. The following are recommended criteria which will be used to evaluate potential sites:

1. **Size** - The size of voice and sight control areas will be defined by the area under consideration.
2. **Neighborhood Density** - The initial pilot sites should be given priorities in locations with high density population within ½ mile of the proposed voice and sight control park.

3. **Voice and Sight Control Boundaries** - The boundaries of the projected voice and sight control areas should be easily delineated with obvious barriers. The development of voice and sight control areas in linear parks with natural or man-made boundaries is preferable to square or rectangular type parks with no natural boundaries
4. **Parking** - Adequate parking should be available on site or within residential areas.
5. **Hours for Voice and Sight Control** - Sites without easily distinguished natural or man-made boundaries may be considered if neighborhood support for specific times for voice and sight control are requested which minimize conflicts with other park users.

Potential park sites to be considered include linear type parks such as Martin and Tantra Parks, Harlow Platts Community Park, and Howard Heuston Park.

### General Policies relating to the establishment of both types of off-leash areas

1. The City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department and/or Open Space Department are responsible for providing and clearly marking all established voice and sight control off-leash areas and for providing for maintenance of these sites. The Parks and Recreation Department will be responsible for developing fenced dog training and exercise areas.
2. The appropriate City agencies and/or the Humane Society shall be responsible for the enforcement of all codes pertaining to the conduct of the animals and the owners utilizing these areas and for providing dog owners using areas illegally with information regarding the location of the nearest legal exercise area.
3. Dog owners utilizing the established off-leash areas are responsible for keeping the areas clean of animal feces and litter by using proper disposal methods, and for keeping their dog(s) under control and within the boundaries of the off-leash area when off leash, and to prevent injurious interaction with other dogs or people.

### Procedures for the establishment of fenced dog exercise and training areas

1. Requests for dog exercise areas or suggestions for locations for potential fenced dog exercise and training areas shall be initiated, in writing, by citizens or Parks and Recreation staff. These request sites should include a map or a sketch which clearly identifies the site. All requests for establishment of fenced dog exercise and training areas should be sent to the Park Superintendent, City of Boulder.
2. There must be demonstrated neighborhood support for utilizing the requested location for a fenced dog exercise area. The support may take the form of petitions, letters of support or an endorsement from the local civic association or homeowners' association.

3. Upon receipt of the request for a new fenced dog exercise area, the Parks and Recreation Department will conduct an analysis of potential development and maintenance costs. This analysis will also address recommended amenities and fencing costs.
4. The Parks and Recreation Department will advertise and conduct at least one neighborhood meeting to discuss and take comments on the proposed fenced off-leash area. The Department will use information from the public meeting to provide analysis to decide whether to take the proposed dog exercise area to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
5. The Parks and Recreation Department staff will provide information, analysis, and recommendations for all requests made and will advise and solicit direction and recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
6. An assessment of each fenced dog exercise area will be done after the first anniversary annually to determine if the site should continue to be utilized for that purpose. The decision to eliminate a fenced dog exercise area will lie with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

#### Procedures for the establishment of voice and sight control areas within incorporated areas of the City of Boulder

1. Requests for off-leash voice and sight control areas or suggestions for locations for potential areas shall be initiated, in writing, by citizens, Parks and Recreation or Open Space staffs. These request sites should include a map or a sketch which clearly identifies the site. All requests for establishment of voice and sight control areas should be sent to the Park Superintendent, City of Boulder. The Park Superintendent will forward to Open Space any requests for voice and sight control on Open Space land.
2. There must be demonstrated significant neighborhood support for utilizing the requested location for a voice and sight control area. The support may take the form of petitions, letters of support, or an endorsement from the local civic association or homeowners' association.
3. Upon receipt of the request for a potential voice and sight control area, the appropriate City Department will conduct an analysis of potential development and maintenance costs. This analysis will also address environmental impacts to these areas.
4. The City department will advertise and conduct at least one neighborhood meeting to discuss and take comments on the proposal for voice and sight control areas. The department will use input from the public meeting to provide information on the proposed voice and sight control area for their respective Board.

5. The department staff will provide information, analysis, and recommendations for all requests made and will solicit direction and recommendations from their respective Board.
6. The appropriate board will recommend approval or disapproval.
7. If a positive recommendation for a voice and sight control area is made by the appropriate board, an ordinance describing the specific area will be taken to City Council for final consideration.
8. An assessment will be done on each voice and sight control area on City property after the first anniversary to determine if the site should continue to be utilized for that purpose. Thereafter, demonstrated change in community support will trigger a use review. The decision to eliminate a voice and sight control area will lie with City Council, with appropriate board recommendations.