



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

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Off-Leash Dog Parks

The Hawaiian Humane Society supports community efforts to increase the number of off-leash parks on Oahu as one means to integrate our pets into our daily lives. The purpose of this packet is to provide you information to advocate for an off-leash park in your neighborhood.

Currently, there are nine off-leash dog parks on Oahu at Aala, Ala Wai, Diamond Head, Ewa Beach, Hawaii Kai, Kakaako, Mililani Mauka, Moanalua Valley and Moiliili. These parks represent different models of ownership and maintenance. Six of the nine parks are maintained by non-profit groups who work with the property owner (the City and County of Honolulu or the state). The volunteers create rules and oversee compliance.

We spoke with some of the community leaders in the promotion of off-leash dog parks on Oahu so we could share their insights with you about the parks:

- Patience and effort are required.
- Red tape can be discouraging.
- Volunteers must be willing to make a long-term commitment to maintain the park.
- Funding will be needed to cover expenses that can include fencing, landscaping and shade, water supply lines for drinking and irrigation, and more. Insurance coverage may be required for groups managing parks on state land.
- Other expenses can include garbage pickup and poop bags.
- Daily duties can include trash pickup, watering and security.
- Volunteer work days provide opportunities for heavy maintenance and park improvement projects.

Below are some facts about dog parks in Hawaii and around the country:

- Dog parks are the fastest growing segment of city parks in the United States, according to the Trust for Public Land. There were 681 dog parks in the 100 largest U.S. cities in 2015, an increase of 89 percent since 2007.
- Oahu's dog park inventory equates to 0.6 of a dog park for every 100,000 residents. In comparison, Portland, Ore., had 5.4 dog parks per 100,000 residents in 2015.

Helber Hastert & Fee Planners Inc. Study

In 2013 the Hawaiian Humane Society commissioned Helber Hastert & Fee Planners Inc. to conduct a study of off-leash parks on Oahu and the mainland. Below are some highlights from their study.

Design Considerations

Development concerns about dog parks are typically related to compatibility and health and safety issues. Surrounding property owners may express concerns about potential noise, odor or traffic impacts of a proposed park. Conflicts between dogs and other park users are also a possible concern.

Acreage

The general consensus of the research material, as well as the experiences of other cities, seems to suggest that dog parks should generally be at least one acre in size. This helps to reduce crowdedness at peak hours, and allows enough space to separate large dogs from small dogs. Hawaii Kai is the largest off-leash park on Oahu, but just by a small margin. At roughly 1.65 acres, it is just slightly larger than the Diamond Head Park, which is 1.45 acres.



The Diamond Head Bark Park boasts seating options and shade.



The shrub-lined fence in Hawaii Kai provides a buffer from the busy street. Parking is next to the dog park.

Surrounding Uses

Due mostly to noise concerns, the design guidelines suggest that dog parks should be located at least 200 feet from noise-sensitive uses (e.g., surrounding residences). The guidance also suggests dog parks should avoid being located near playgrounds, schools and areas where there may be a large number of children because unsupervised children in and around dog parks pose a safety risk. Some dog owners also prefer sites that are physically separated from other uses and located away from high-traffic areas because the minimal external distractions and reduced roadway noise contributes to a more pleasant, peaceful experience for park users.

Parking and Access

The design guidelines stress the importance of providing parking near the dog park entrance. This allows for less conflict between dogs and other park users.

Fencing

A double-gated entry is standard practice to prevent escapes. Fence height should be at least four feet and shrubs or hedges around the outside of the fence are recommended to separate dogs from outside distractions.

Amenities

A dog park can be equipped with separate sections for small dogs and large dogs. Shade trees and benches for people to sit on provide for a relaxing, park like setting. Other amenities that enhance the overall park experience include:

- water features or dog baths
- dog exercise equipment such as tunnels, ramps and agility courses
- walking paths
- drinking fountains (for dogs and people)
- shaded areas



Agility equipment enhances the dog park experience.



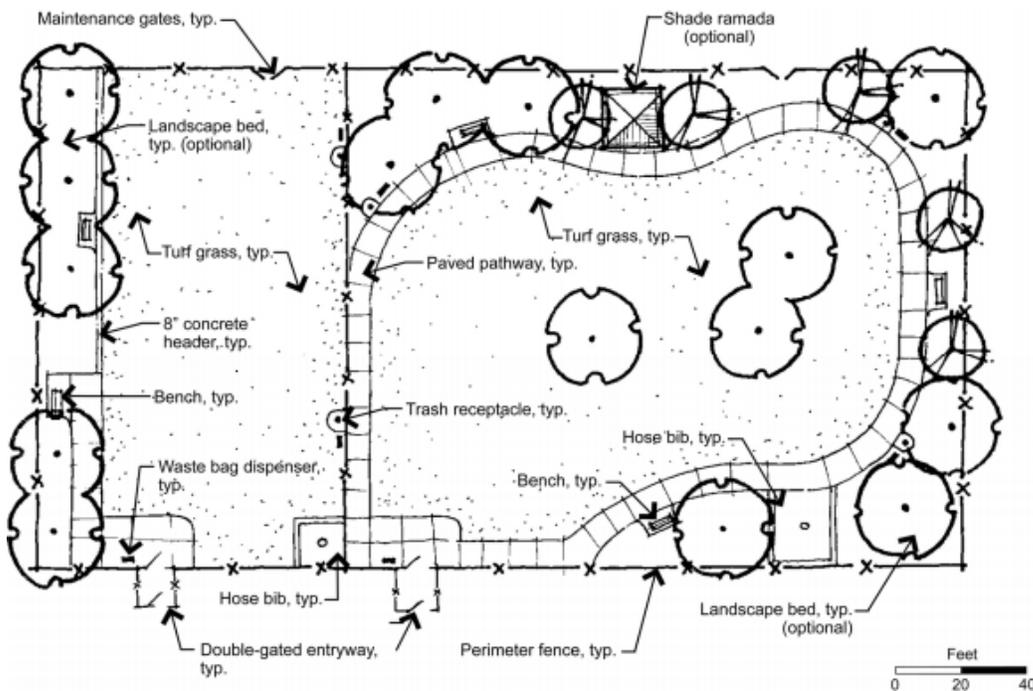
Heritage Bark Par in Las Vegas, Nevada, uses a combination of turf and decomposed granite.

Surfaces

Grass cover is typical on Oahu, but requires a certain level of maintenance to protect from overuse, bare patches and weeds. Many dog parks in other cities use other surfacing materials like bark or wood chips, decomposed granite or sand.

Master plan

The master plan shown below is for a ½- to 2-acre prototypical neighborhood dog park in Salt Lake City, Utah. It includes many of the standard design elements of off-leash parks, including a walking path; a combination of grassed areas and concrete areas; shade trees and an open ramada-style shelter; benches; a water source; a waste bag dispenser and a trash container; and a double-gated entry.



Resources

Dog owners need to create a coalition in order to be heard by decision makers. Generating enthusiasm for the idea of an off-leash park among your neighbors is the first step.

Groups can take that momentum to their neighborhood board, city council member, and state senators and representatives for feedback.

Find your:

- Neighborhood board at www.honolulu.gov/nco/boards.html
- City council member at www.honolulu.gov/council
- Senator and representative at www.capitol.hawaii.gov/

Successful organizers of off-leash parks said district managers with the City Department of Parks and Recreation will have useful information about the parks in their area:

- District 1: East Honolulu (Sandy Beach – McCully/Ala Wai): 373-8013
- District 2: West Honolulu (Makiki – Aiea): 768-9292
- District 3: Leeward/Central Oahu (Pearl City – Waianae & Ewa Beach – Whitmore): 675-6030
- District 4: Windward Oahu (Kaena Point – North Shore – Makapuu) : 233-7300

Cultivating and maintaining a solid relationship with district office personnel also is important after a park is established as they can help resolve issues that arise over time, organizers said.

The Hawaiian Humane Society also is available to assist with your off-leash dog park efforts. Please contact Public Policy Advocate, Stephanie Kendrick, at 356-2217 or advocacy@hawaiianhumane.org.

Honolulu's off-leash parks

- Aala Park Dog Park, 280 N. King St.
- Ala Wai Dog Park, Ala Wai Community Park, 500 University Ave.
- Diamond Head, 18th Ave. & Diamond Head Rd.: www.facebook.com/BarkParkHonolulu/
- Ewa Beach Dog Park, Hoalauna Community Park, Keaunui Drive
- Hawaii Kai Dog Park, 220 Keahole St.: <http://hkdphei.org/HawaiiKaiDogPark/default.html>
- Kakaako Dog Park, Mother Waldron Park, Pohukaina Street
- Moiliili Dog Park, Kalo Place Mini Park
- Mililani Mauka, 95-1069 Ukuwai St.:
www.facebook.com/pages/Mililani-Mauka-Dog-Park/145876848776197
- Moanalua Dog Park, 2900 Moanalua Rd.:
www.facebook.com/pages/Moanalua-Dog-Park/134954376552144

Off-leash parks on City property have to comply with the rules outlined in Title 19-5-7 of the City and County Administrative Rules. They include a limit of two dogs per adult handler as well as rules about behavior at the park. Find the complete rules at www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/dpr/Dog_Rules_2014.PDF