

City of Cambridge Off-Leash Working Group Recommendations

November 2014

Purpose

The Off-Leash Working Group was formed to make recommendations for improving access to off leash areas for residents of Cambridge. The recommendations are aimed at making changes that will, over time, provide a broad network of open spaces that offer opportunities for dogs to be off leash so that all neighborhoods have access to off leash opportunities and no one location is more intensely impacted. The recommendations include both short and long-term approaches to off leash issues in the City including working to build new habits, use of new technology, and considering locations for new dedicated off leash spaces. The opportunity to interact with other community members at many of the designated as well as non-designated open spaces where off leash use occurs is a significant factor in making these locations attractive to dog owners. The Mid-Cambridge and Area IV neighborhoods are considered a priority in terms of providing additional, legal, off leash opportunities for dogs and their owners.

Recommendations

- Continue allowing shared use off leash hours at **Gold Star Mother's Park** and **Raymond Park** between the hours of 6am and 9am.
- Provide additional locations proposed for shared use off leash hours. All of these sites should be periodically reviewed for impacts on physical conditions, feedback from users, and the general public:
 - **Joan L. Park** (Mid Cambridge) - AM shared use, (8am to 10am)
 - **Hoyt Field** (Riverside) - AM shared use (6am to 9am)
 - **Greene Rose Heritage Park** (Area IV) - AM shared use (6am to 9am)
- Work with the historical commission to explore the possibility shared use hours at Longfellow Park with particular attention to the sensitive nature of field conditions.
- Monitor and evaluate impacts on open spaces where shared off leash use is allowed regarding field conditions and maintenance, dog waste, animal related complaints, through regular communication between the Department of Public Works, Animal Commission, Recreation Division, and Community Development Department.
- Consider new off leash space in Eastern Cambridge and Kendall Square as part of the Eastern Cambridge Kendall Square Open Space Planning Study.
- Promote and help facilitate opportunities for community building at locations and during times that off leash use is legal and encouraged. Some examples might include events, giveaways, morning coffee etc.
- Continue to explore new outreach and education strategies regarding off leash policies responsibilities and expectations, especially for new residents, students, and renters in the

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city. Consider ways to provide information and get feedback through the dog license application process.

- Improve signage regarding off leash areas, with an emphasis on visual and graphic cues. Explore branding strategies to create easily recognizable and consistent signage and information.
- Use social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter and others, to proactively get relevant real time information out to dog owners such as field conditions, maintenance schedules, and other issues facing the off leash community as they arise.
- Explore new technology related to dogs, particularly off leash policy and regulations, as it becomes available.
- Continue to work with the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) regarding off leash policy and opportunities at DCR open spaces within Cambridge.
- Consider creating dedicated off leash spaces as part of future park renovations where appropriate.