



Best Practices for a Dog Friendly Park & Recreational Facility

The following are best practices and guidelines for individuals or community leaders interested in building dog friendly parks and/or recreational facilities in their communities.

A. Before Considering:

- Gain awareness of any dog parks near you by visiting our "Locations" Page and searching your town, there may already be a dog park nearby.
- Contact your civic leader for further information. A civic leader can be a city or county official, such as the mayor of your county.
- Most importantly is there land/space available to build a dog park and/or recreational facility
- Consider applying for a dog park grant, which could help facilitate the cost and planning of a dog park. Check out the two resources below available in the state of Tennessee.
- An alternative to a grant is a sponsor. A sponsor can help with the costs of the park development and landscaping. Also consider local sponsorships or service project partnerships with community organizations.

B. Have a Plan:

- Separate small and large dog fenced-in areas.
- Waste Plan. Install waste bag and trashcan stations around the park and/or recreational facility to keep pet owners accountable during their stay. Approximately 4 per acre depending on the layout of your park.
 - o Ensure you have a pick-up service in place to empty the waste stations.
- Shade & Seating. Add shade structures and seating areas for humans
- Design a space that will encourage movement. Promote agility through obstacle courses and jumping rings
- Water features. Splash pads, fountains (for humans and dogs) or water holes
- Signage & Communication. Communicate hours of operation and dog park rules through signage and community publicity.
 - o Implement a bulletin board in the dog park and/or recreational facility to promote pet owners to share about community-based groups, events, and activities.
 - o Consider the changing of the seasons. Implementing splash pads and/or water holes will be affected by climate change, communicating the on and off seasons for these water stations will be an important item to state through signage.

C. Suggested Dog Park Rules/Guidelines:

- Dogs must display on collars a current license tag along with current rabies vaccination (or owner must have information available). *Visible collars and identifiable tags should be worn at all times
- Only dogs are allowed inside park or recreational areas with the accompaniment of their owner
- Children under the age of 12 must also be accompanied by an adult
- Dogs should be leashed when entering and leaving parks and/or recreational facilities
- Food should not be allowed on premises as this can be a distraction for other dogs
- Puppies under 4 months of age, female dogs in heat or dogs known with history of aggressive behavior should be prohibited

Resources:

- Each year, the national [PetSafe® Bark for Your Park](#) dog park program awards select communities in the US. Grants to help build new dog parks or enhance existing dog parks.
- [The Tennessee Dog Park Dash](#), funded by the Boyd Foundation, is another resource to help financially support and sponsor a dog park for Tennessee communities.
- [PlayCore](#), located in Chattanooga, offers a comprehensive set of tools to help build advocacy, plan the space, and choose the right dog park products to keep dogs, owners, and the neighborhood happy.
- [PooPrints®](#), a Knoxville DNA Waste Management company, provides pet wastes stations and refill waste bags, as well as a DNA Waste Management program that keeps the park clean and safe.

Sources:

1. [National Recreation and Park Association: Making Space in Parks for Dogs](#)
2. [National Recreation and Park Association: Designing and Managing Innovative Dog Parks](#)
3. [City Parks Blog: Dog Parks 101: Best Practices](#)
4. [PetSafe: How to Design a Dog Park](#)
5. [Parks and Rec Business: A Plan with Legs](#)