



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Brad Reid, Director of Parks and Recreation

**Date:** March 24, 2020

**Reference:** Discussion related to a potential ordinance change regarding restricting dogs at city parks

**2030:** Sustainable City Government Strategy: Excellent and Well-Maintained City Infrastructure and Facilities.

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### Introduction:

The purpose of this agenda item is to determine whether or not the City Council would like for staff to bring forward a proposal to change the current ordinances, creating restrictions on animal access to city playgrounds, or other park areas.

Due to some recent complaints about dog behaviors at Kid Country Playground, the Park Board discussed this very topic at their February 3, 2020 meeting. They expressed sympathy toward those who may not like that dogs are present in the playground area, as well as regret that some people are not more responsible in how they control their pets. There was also discussion about the idea that dogs can carry and pass on diseases, although they did not at the time of the discussion have Dr. Anna Simmons' Risk/Benefit Consideration statement (see attached).

At the request of the City Council, the Board revisited the item at their March 2 meeting, after having received and reviewed Dr. Simmons' statement. This discussion expanded the consideration of other park areas in addition to Kid Country Playground.

The Park Board recognizes the need for educating the public regarding the potential risks associated with pets interacting with people, especially when in close quarters and pet owners are taking liberties with people's personal space and not controlling their animals in a responsible manner. At the end of the discussion it was suggested that the city continue taking extra steps in educating the public about the current ordinances and informing the public about the responsibilities that go along with pet ownership, the placement of extra signage at the entry of Kid Country Playground as well as other gathering places and a focus on the enforcement of the existing ordinances related to the leash laws and cleaning up after pets. The Board did not feel the need to create an ordinance restricting dogs from park areas at this time.

**Analysis:**

Pets have been a welcomed addition at all the city park areas and few complaints have been received about this practice until very recently. With the increased number of pets in the community and the demonstrated unwillingness of certain pet owners to maintain control of their pets, conflict has arisen in the past few months over undesirable interactions between pets and children visiting Kid Country Playground. However, these seem to be isolated and rare occurring incidents.

New signage has now been installed at the entry to the playground which emphasizes the existing ordinance to be a good neighbor when bringing your dog to the park, reminding about the leash law and the requirement to pick up after your pet. This ordinance, of course, does not address the idea that diseases can be transmitted from pet droppings (even after it has been properly removed) to humans with whom it comes into contact, as is described in Dr. Simmons' statement. After review of this statement and the CDC website where the concern for communicable diseases are spelled out, the Board felt that no changes to the ordinances are necessary at this time.

**Legal Review:**

Agenda item does not require legal review.

**Fiscal Impact:**

This agenda item has no fiscal impact.

**Recommendation:**

The Parks and Recreation Department agrees with the Park Board recommendation at this time