



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Parks Department



**DATE:** September 18, 2015

**COMMISSION MEETING DATE:** October 1, 2015

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Marlene Finley, Parks Director  
**SUBJECT:** Establishing a Dog Strategy Committee

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Establish a Dog Strategy Committee to make recommendations to update and improve dog management in San Mateo County Parks.

**BACKGROUND:**

On August 7, 2014, County Parks staff provided a briefing paper on dog management and a recommendation for Park staff to develop a Dog Management Strategy to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Briefing paper is available at:

<https://parks.smcgov.org/sites/parks.smcgov.org/files/events/8A-Dog-Management-Strategy.pdf>

Based on the successful process and outcomes of the Mini-Parks Committee, I would like to propose a similar effort for a Dog Strategy for San Mateo County Parks.

**DISCUSSION:**

San Mateo County Parks currently allows dogs on leash in the following areas: Devil's Slide Trail, Pillar Point Bluffs, Quarry and Wicklow Parks (except within the picnic area), along the San Francisco Bay Trail through Coyote Point Recreation Area and Loma Mar Redwoods. The majority of these areas are newer parks or trails. They are places where there have been traditional dog walking opportunities.

The Committee would address the following:

1. **Criteria:** Establish criteria to evaluate parks best suited to allow dogs.
2. **Pilot Parks:** Design a pilot program to allow dogs on leash on a limited basis and monitor and track results such as compliance, waste, complaints, and change in park use levels. Consider the same for a dog park or other type of off-leash area. Identify locations for the pilot(s).

3. **Ordinances:** Recommend updates to County Ordinances to reflect recommended changes in dog policies and codifying acceptable dog recreation opportunities.
4. **Infrastructure:** Describe infrastructure needed to allow dogs in specific parks, such as waste stations and signage.
5. **Training:** Describe information and educational materials needed for park visitors bringing their dogs. Identify important training for Park rangers making contacts with dog owners to gain compliance.
6. **Enforcement:** Determine staffing needed to patrol. Determine best methods for warnings, citations and tracking repeat offenders.
7. **Budget:** Prepare a detailed budget for additional staff, training, equipment, and infrastructure to implement the strategy.

County Parks recommends that the Committee consist of one to two Parks and Recreation Commissioners, a representative from each unincorporated area (such as MCC, PMAC and NFOCC), a representative from an environmental organization, a representative from an equestrian organization, a dog advocacy representative from a group such as Montara Dog Group or Peninsula Humane Society, and the County Parks Director.

The Committee would be supported by County Parks staff and County Counsel as needed.

The Committee would convene for the purpose of completing the above tasks and would then be disbanded. In other words, this would not be a standing committee.