

Hudson Community Dog Park

Hudson, Massachusetts



Section 7(E) of the Town of Hudson
General Bylaws prohibits owners from
leaving their dogs unattended on public streets or highways.
Dogs in the City of Hudson must be
restrained by a leash.

There are over 2,400 licensed dogs in
Hudson.

\$47 on toys, \$63 on grooming or
grooming products.
Approximately 54,400,000
households have dogs as
pets.

A Proposal to Develop an Off-Leash Dog Park in Hudson Massachusetts April 4, 2016

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1.0 Community Dog Park Mission Statement

Huddog is a citizens group formed in 2015 to start and support a dog park in Hudson Massachusetts – the Hudson Community Dog Park. The mission for the Hudson Community Dog Park is to create an area that would:

Provide a fenced off-leash dog park in Hudson where people and their well-behaved dogs could socialize and exercise in a clean, safe, and friendly environment without endangering or disturbing people, property, or wildlife.

Increase foot traffic to a neglected area of town (end of Cherry Street).

Draw people to Hudson's burgeoning downtown and commercial districts.

2.0 What is an Off-Leash Dog Park?

An off-leash dog park is a fenced, designated area where licensed and permitted dogs may legally run, play, and socialize with each other in a more natural “off-leash” condition under the supervision and voice control of their owners.

A basic dog park should include the following components:

- A minimum of one to one acre of land surrounded by a six-foot chain-link fence.
- At least one double-gated entry for each area to keep dogs from escaping and to facilitate wheel-chair access.
- Cleaning supplies including covered garbage cans, waste bags, and pooper-scooper stations.
- A safe, accessible location with adequate drainage and a surface that is both comfortable for the dogs and reasonable to maintain.
- Sufficient parking close to the park.



3.0 Why Establish an Off-Leash Park?

Historically, dogs have played a vital role in our lives. Dogs have served as our family protectors, hunting companions, and law enforcers. Dogs have served as the eyes and ears of the blind and deaf, and as the arms and legs of the disabled. They have been our best friends. More and more, society has recognized the many important roles that dogs play in our lives.

As dogs become a more integral part of our lives, we have seen a change in the way people think about dogs. There has been an increase in the pet product market, popularity of dog sports (flyball, agility, tracing, lure coursing, etc.), and a substantial jump in the amount of money people are willing to spend to keep their family pets healthy.

Dogs and dog owners should not be overlooked. As a specific group with unique interests and concerns, dog owners merit the same consideration as other community groups when allocating funding and resources. To its credit, Hudson has set aside recreation space for numerous groups including baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, skateboarders, and tennis players; wildlife and nature enthusiasts; cyclists and runners, gardeners, and swimmers. However, there is no place in town where dog owners are allowed to have their dogs run free and interact naturally with other dogs. This has resulted in a lack of designated off-leash space for the over 2,400 licensed dogs and their owners in Hudson.

Establishing the Hudson Community Dog Park would have many benefits to dog owners, dogs, and to the town of Hudson as a whole.

3.1 Community Benefits

- Communities with off-leash dog parks often see a decrease in the number of dogs off-leash in other areas of the community, thereby decreasing the number of unwanted encounters in areas set aside for other recreational users.
- Dogs that are properly socialized and have plenty of exercise are better neighbors and are less prone to nuisance barking and roaming.
- Off-leash parks promote responsible dog ownership through the general expectations of park uses (picking up after one's dog, maintaining voice control, etc.).

- Off-leash dog parks provide a measure of security, both perceived and real to potentially vulnerable users (the handicapped, single women, elderly). The presence of a dog and other park uses may deter crime.
- A well-developed dog park brings attention and amenities to our area that are deemed positive. There are now over 2,000 dog parks across the U.S., and locally parks have been established in Maynard, Chelmsford, Lowell, Medway, and Billerica to name just a few. A dog park in Framingham is currently in the planning stages.
- A dog park can become a significant community asset that attracts visitors, businesses, and improves real estate values:
“In addition to our great schools, downtown area, restaurants, shopping, and bike trail we also offer a dog park...”

3.2 Dog Owner Benefits

The establishment of a designated dog park provides numerous benefits to area dog owners:

- Provides an opportunity for dog owners to meet and socialize with other dog owners.
- Provides dog owners with a place to recreate with their dogs, providing the owners – as well as the dogs – with much needed exercise.
- Provides a place for handicapped and elderly persons to exercise their dogs in a barrier-free environment.
- Increases dog owner’s voice control over their dogs.
- Provides dog owners with the simple joy of watching their dogs be dogs (playing, running, and enjoying their fellow canine pals’ off-leash).
- Promotes responsible pet ownership

3.3 Dog Benefits

The establishment of a designated dog park provides numerous benefits to our companion animals:

- Provides a safe enclosed place for dogs to play.
- Provides dogs with an opportunity to socialize with other dogs
- Provides dogs with mental exercise by exposing them to new and varied stimuli.
- Provides dogs with the opportunity to run off-leash.
- Reduces dog obesity and other health related issues.
- Decreases boredom and its associated destructive behaviors.

4.0 Proposed Site and Administration

4.1 Site

Huddog proposes the use of town-owned land on Cherry Street as an ideal location for an off-leash dog park. This site provides a flat area with plenty of parking. Additionally, the establishment of a dog park in the area may provide the area with renewed energy and the stimulus for greater economic activity in the adjacent commercial buildings. We are committed to working with the Hudson Parks and Recreation Department to make this area work for all parties – or to determine a suitable alternate location – preferably on Town-owned land.

4.2 Administration

Huddog proposes that the town of Hudson would own, operate, and maintain the dog park with assistance from an ad-hoc dog park committee (to be established from local volunteers).

5.0 Off-Leash Recreation Area Design Specifics

The proposed design would include the following components:

- Approximately 1 to 1.5 acres of open space with a comfortable and low-maintenance surface such as grass, bark mulch, or pea stone.
- 6-Foot high chain-link fencing surrounding the park.
- A double-gated entrance.
- Benches
- And information kiosk to be used for posting the park rules and regulations, educational information, and notices
- Appropriate signage
- Trash receptacles and waste disposal stations (pooper scooper stations)

6.0 Usage Guidelines and Park Rules

The following dog park rules and guidelines are at this time suggestions only, and are open to modification. All dog park users would be required to have their animal licensed from their municipality, and have proof of vaccinations. All dog park guidelines and rules would be in accordance with the Town of Hudson bylaws unless stated otherwise.

6.1 Usage Guidelines

Regular park hours would be Monday through Sunday (not affected by holidays) from sunup until sundown. Reserved hours for smaller dogs only may be a future consideration.

6.2 Suggested Dog Park Rules

- Dog owners must carry a leash for each dog at all times

- Owners must clean up after their dogs
- Limit of 3 dogs per owner per visit
- Dogs must be under voice control and in sight of owner
- Dogs exhibiting aggressive behavior must be removed
- Dogs must be licensed and vaccinated
- Puppies using the park must be at least 4 months old
- Dogs “in season” not allowed
- Owners are responsible to cover holes or turf damage caused by pets
- Children running or chasing dogs prohibited
- Children under 10 years old are not allowed in the off-leash dog area.
- Children aged 10-17 years may enter the off-leash dog area only if accompanied by an adult.
- Park uses and dog owners assume all risk related to the dog park.
- This park may be used by well-behaved dog owners and dogs. No other animals are allowed.
- You must enter the park along with your dog(s) and keep your dog(s) in sight at all times. Dogs must not be left unattended in the park.
- Dogs must be leashed prior to entering and exiting the off-leash area. No leashed dogs are allowed inside the off-leash area.
- All dogs must wear a tag collar with their identification on it. For the safety of your dog(s) and other park visitors, prong/pinch, choke, and spiked collars are prohibited inside the fenced area.
- For the safety of all, do not touch any dog without the owner’s prior permission.
- No food for dogs or humans is allowed inside the park (training treats are permitted).
- No glass containers are permitted in any part of the dog park, including the parking lot area.

- Children's toys and sporting equipment is prohibited within the fenced area with the exception of tennis balls and Frisbees.
- *Huddog and the Town of Hudson, its officers, employees, and agents shall not be responsible for any accident, injury, and/or loss of property or damage resulting from use of the park by any individual, group, or organization.*



7.0 Estimated Development and Maintenance Cost, and Funding

Estimated Development Costs		
Landscaping	Fencing	Miscellaneous
Surfacing	6' Perimeter fence	Erosion control
Trash Receptacles	6' Double-gated entry	Site prep
benches (optional)		Plans/permits
Dog bag stands		Contingency
signage		
Kiosk (optional)		
\$20,000	\$30,000	\$5,000

*Landscaping costs will vary greatly with the actual surfacing type used

Estimated Annual Operating Costs		
Surface Management	Dog Waste Bags	Fence Repair
\$1,000	\$500	\$500

*Surface management costs will vary greatly with the actual surfacing type used

7.1 Proposed Funding Sources

- Community Preservation Funding: A dog park would be an excellent candidate for CP funding as a recreational asset to the town serving the needs of its many dog-owners.
- Private donations, fundraisers, or advertising revenue.
- Nominal increase to dog license fee.