



# CITY OF PITTSBURGH

## *Department of Parks & Recreation*

### **Regulations for the design, location and operation of Off Leash Exercise Areas**

Pursuant to Section 633.22(d)(1) of the Pittsburgh City Code, Off-Leash Exercise Areas benefit the community by allowing a place for dogs to exercise and socialize safely. These areas also help prevent off-leash animals from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users. When properly applied, these rules should facilitate enforcement of leash laws and help promote responsible dog ownership. The Current list of authorized OLEA is as follows:

1. Allegheny Commons Park (West Commons), Central Northside
2. Bernard Dog Run, Lawrenceville
3. Frick Park, Squirrel Hill
4. Olympia Park, Mount Washington
5. South Side Riverfront Park, South Side
6. Riverview Park, Perry North

The following Site Selection Standards and Recommended Design Standards are to be used when establishing a new off leash exercise area or relocating existing OLEA to a new location. These standards will help to avoid issues such as noise complaints, physical impact on the site, and conflicts between dogs, dog owners and park guests and neighbors.

#### **Site Selection:**

When selecting an OLEA site, the site must meet the following criteria:

- The land must be 1.5 - 2 acres in size, well-drained, with a maximum slope of 5%.
- It should avoid interference with other established uses or sponsored activities.
- The location must have high visibility; ideal locations would be adjacent to roadways, visible from other uses such as roads, parks, public buildings, or trail corridors.
- An ideal distance between the OLEA and adjacent residences and businesses is two hundred (200) feet. However, changes in topography or landscape can reduce the need for spatial separation.
- Sites should have near-by parking to accommodate both residential use and dog park visitors and minimal impact on the visual character of a park while avoiding spillover into non-dog areas.
- These areas should also avoid sensitive environmental habitats; including hillsides, riparian areas, high-valued habitats, or protected watersheds.
- Normal public process, including public meetings, design review, and planning meeting processes should be adhered to in developing and finalizing design

#### **Recommended Design Standards:**

The standard OLEA should consist of a safe surface for play, a water source, runoff mitigation, and visual screening. Amenities should include signage. The surface of any OLEA should include all necessary drainage systems, installed prior to installation of surfacing.

- The preferred surface should be produced from decomposed granite, no greater than .25 inches in size, laid to a depth of at least six inches. If decomposed granite is not able to be used then alternate materials can include: shredded bark, pebbles, or synthetic materials. OLEA designs should also include a paved pathway spanning 8-10' wide that loops around the park. The use of grass or turf for the surface of OLEA is discouraged.
  - Fencing, if applicable, should be five to six (5-6) feet tall and made of commercial grade vinyl-coated chain link, with footings buried to a depth of one (1) foot and panels buried to a depth of six (6) inches. Fencing should also include two access points. Any gates or entrances should be lockable and be the same height as the fencing. One of the two access points should be a double gate to provide public access to a twelve (12) square-foot minimum paved area; this area serves as a buffer between the OLEA and the rest of the park. The second access point should be a single sliding gate to provide maintenance access and should be a minimum of ten (10) feet wide, controlled by the Department of Public Works (DPW).
  - OLEAs that do not require a fence should be more than 200 feet away from nearest street. Unfenced areas typically exist within large community or regional parks.
  - All specimen trees within the OLEA will be protected by fencing designed to keep dogs from marking on the tree trunk.
  - The water source should be equipped with a standard hose-bib or quick coupler on 150' radius in each fenced area. One accessible drinking fountain for people and one dog drinking feature should be provided in each fenced area.
  - Plant beds should be placed along the outside of the fence to help reduce runoff and screen the OLEA from other park users.
- Special care will be taken to work within design standards for OLEA designs located in historical parks.
- All OLEAs will have permanent signs, stating the hours of operation, rules and regulations, and contact information for DPW.
  - Design for OLEA should include sufficient waste disposal plans. This includes waste bag dispensers near trash receptacles, at the OLEA entryway, and a minimum of one per acre. One waste receptacle should be placed at the OLEA entry and a minimum of one per acre. Waste receptacles should be an appropriate distance from seating. The Department of Public Works will ensure an adequate supply of bags and will empty the waste receptacles at least once daily.
  - Sponsoring groups may provide additional amenities by submitting a funded proposal for review by the DPW. Amenities may include seating (3-4 accessible benches per acre), shade structure, agility play features, dog wash-off station, lighting, etc. Amenities may need approval from the City's Art Commission.
  - Designs may consider a separate area for small dogs because they can sometimes be injured or frightened by larger dogs. Many dog parks designate separate areas for smaller or younger dogs so that they can play safely. Simple metrics for delineating small from large dogs such as height or weight can be utilized to distinguish size.
  - OLEA should not be installed on a dead end street, as to avoid congestion or traffic problems. It is also advisable to consult a traffic engineer or city planner for instruction about parking and traffic.
  - Long-term and sustained maintenance should be considered in the planning phase of the project, to ensure enough funds are allocated to this aspect.
  - Public-Private Partnerships should be considered as a means to improve maintenance, monitoring and community support for OLEA. Sponsorship/advertising is limited in parks and must comply with applicable City laws/MBRO standards.

### **Rules for Conduct/Behavior at OLEAs**

The following are rules are to be established for OLEAs. These rules and regulations should be posted on permanent signs that should also state the hours of operation and contact information for DPW.

- Dog owners are required to remove all waste.
- Dogs must be on a leash to and from the park access points.
- Dog owners are required to have voice control over their dog(s).
- Dog owners are required to always keep their dog(s) in sight.
- Dog owners are required to be present at all times.
- Children under 8 years are not permitted inside fenced areas. Children age 9-15 must be accompanied and supervised by an adult. Dog handlers must be 16 years of age or older.
- A maximum number of three (3) dogs per owner/handler.
- No smoking, alcohol, or food is allowed in the dog park.
- No pet grooming is allowed outside of established dog wash areas.
- Dogs must be healthy and at least four months old.
- Full immunizations of dogs are required.
- Dogs must be spayed or neutered; dogs in heat are not allowed.
- Dogs must display a current license.
- Dogs showing signs of aggression or defined as “dangerous” by City Code are not allowed.
- Additional rules are not precluded

**Rules Specific to Unfenced OLEA**

The following rules should be applied for unfenced exercised areas in addition to the aforementioned rules.

Dogs must be kept on leashes expect for times designated for off-leash hours.

- Examples of this would be:
  - Dogs must be kept on a leash between the hours 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
  - Between the hours of sunrise – 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. until closing, dogs may be allowed off leash
  - Parks will close at dusk for non-lighted parks and 11pm for lighted parks.
- During prohibited hours or in non-off-leash locations, there is a \$100 fine for violators
- Owners must not allow dogs to dig holes, as they create safety hazards for people.
- Dogs should be kept away from ponds, pond banks, shrubs, wooded areas, and other areas that contain sensitive vegetation, for environmental protection.
- Dogs are not permitted off-leash outside of the OLEA, including on children’s playgrounds or athletic fields.
- Additional rules are not precluded

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***December 26, 2014***