

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: April 11, 2011
	Agenda Item No. 49 Roll Call No. <u>11-637</u> Communication No. <u>11-220</u> Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Director of Park and Recreation

AGENDA HEADING:

Approving development of a dog park at Ewing Park.

SYNOPSIS:

Approval of staff recommendation to develop a dog park at Ewing Park.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$96,000 estimated project cost

Funding Source: \$42,000 in future dog park permit fees (revenue based on proposed future Council action). \$54,000 - 2010-2011 CIP, G.O. Bonds from Neighborhood Park Improvements, PKS 137, page Parks-13.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Park and Recreation Department is in the process of developing off-leash dog areas, or dog parks in the City of Des Moines. These specialized areas provide a community setting for people to gather, socialize, and observe the interaction of groups of dogs.

Based on direction from Mayor Cownie and City Council, park staff conducted public input meetings to determine the best locations for the establishment of dog parks. Staff is recommending Ewing Park as the City’s first dog park site, with development to proceed upon approval. Funding for this facility is available in the FY 2011 budget as indicated, with funding for additional dog parks included in the FY 2012 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget under Neighborhood Park Improvements. Staff plans to recommend a facility on West Riverside Drive for development this fall. In addition, the Des Moines Water Works is planning the development of a dog park in Water Works Park, pending ordinance changes allowing dogs to be off-leash in the city.

On May 24, 2005, by Roll Call No. 05-068, the Park and Recreation Board adopted the Ewing Park master plan, which calls for a dog park in the northwest portion of the park. The planned site in the 347-acre regional park provides 9.5 acres of well-established grass and mature trees, vehicle access with existing parking, a proximate future trail connection to Easter Lake, and existing water utilities.

Public input meetings regarding the development of a city-wide plan for regional dog parks were held on December 14, 2010, and March 3, 2011. Des Moines residents and dog owners, particularly those in the

vicinity of the proposed sites, were encouraged to attend to hear options and share their opinions and any concerns about possible sites, amenities, and conceptual plans. Ewing Park was chosen as the first location for the following reasons: the 9.5-acre site is the largest of those proposed; it provides easy access; it has an existing parking lot; the improvement has been approved as part of the park's master plan; and established turf and mature trees exist on the site.

The second phase of the widening of Indianola Avenue will be completed in several stages over the next two years. Infrastructure work will be completed in 2011, during which time Indianola Avenue will remain open to through-traffic and access will be maintained to Ewing Park. However from April through November 2012, Indianola Avenue will be closed due to the installation of the pedestrian underpass and grading/paving of the roadway. This phase of construction will also impact accessibility to portions of Ewing Park, including the area where the proposed dog park would be located. To ensure access to the park during this stage of road construction, Park and Recreation staff is working with Engineering to determine if a bridge that once was erected over Yeader Creek can be rebuilt and allow citizens to continue access to all of Ewing Park. This bridge would provide a long-term pedestrian connection over the creek to not only the dog park but also the future trail connection along Indianola Avenue and trails at Easter Lake Park. The bridge cost is estimated to be \$10,000-14,000; funding is available in the FY 2012 CIP budget under Neighborhood Park Improvements.

Dog park funding is proposed through several avenues, including:

- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) - Parks and Recreation has included \$54,000 in FY 2011 and \$200,000 in FY 2012 Capital Improvement under Neighborhood Park Improvements for four dog parks with basic amenities.
- Dog park permits - Customarily, the public accesses dog park facilities through the use of a purchased annual dog park permit. Staff conducted a survey of other cities and found a \$20 annual permit is at or below the market rate in Iowa. That same survey found that an average of 35% of pet owners who purchased a pet license also purchased an annual dog park permit. Des Moines issued 16,191 dog licenses in 2010. Presuming like numbers in 2011, Parks staff projects that 14%, or about 2,200 of the owners who license their dog in the city of Des Moines will purchase an annual permit each year. If a \$20 dog park permit fee is adopted after approval at the Des Moines Park and Recreation Board in April and review by City Council in May, it could result in projected annual revenue of \$44,000.
- Fundraising - Park and Recreation Board member Vince Scavo has agreed to lead efforts to provide additional funding for dog park development in Des Moines. Possibilities include selling sponsor recognition on the annual dog park permit and sponsorship of park amenities.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: April 1, 2011

Resolution Number: 11-035

Action: Approving development of a dog park at Ewing Park.

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: March 22, 2011

Resolution Number: 11-024

Action: Receive and file Ewing Park dog park location recommendation.

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: May 24, 2005

Resolution Number: 05-068

Action: Approving Ewing Park master plan.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:

Approve dog off-leash ordinance change.

Approve dog park permit fees.

Accept bids for construction of components of dog park.

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