

SAMPLE LETTER

Honorable Mayor Annise Parker
City of Houston
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, TX 77251

I am writing to express my support for the Houston Dog Park Association (HDPa) and Bay Area Running K9s (BARK9) with their efforts to create a network of off-leash dog parks in the Houston area. BARK9 is a group that is concentrating their efforts in southeast portion of Houston in the Clear Lake Area. I strongly encourage you to place a high priority on moving a proposal forward in creating a dog park on the south side of Houston in the Bay Area.

As a dog owner, taxpayer, and voter, creating a network of dog parks in Houston is an important amenity that the City of Houston is much behind the times in addressing. Dog parks have been operating for almost 20 years in New Jersey, Oregon, Florida, and California with great success. An increasing number of dog owners consider their dog as a member of their family. Dog owners are a distinct and growing segment of park users, and the Parks Department should consider them when planning amenities at new and existing parks. Dog parks in other cities have demonstrated that there are numerous benefits for dog owners if they have a convenient, safe, secure place for their dogs to exercise and socialize off leash. Just like humans, dogs that get regular aerobic exercise are healthier and have fewer medical problems than sedentary or confined dogs. They are better-behaved, less destructive, bark less, and make better all-around companions for their owners. Dogs that are regularly socialized with other dogs are less aggressive, friendlier, and less nervous in public situations, making them better all-around canine citizens. When in neutral territory and off-leash, aggressiveness between dogs is very rare. Dog parks provide all tax paying citizens (including elderly and physically challenged citizens) with an opportunity to exercise their dogs off leash that they might not have otherwise. Fenced areas are more secure and easier to maintain than non-fenced areas. Dog parks give dog owners a place to socialize and to share information on dog health, upcoming events, and items of interest for dog owners. A network of well-planned dog parks in the Houston area would clearly be an asset to our community. I look forward to Houston starting its network of dog parks in the near future. Please let me know your plans for the proposed dog park site.

This is also in keeping with the City of Houston's Animal Protection Task Force report dated 11/22/05 Page 26 section 3 quotes "The Task Force recommends the designation of a 'dog park and pet-friendly venue' position with the City Parks Department, whose responsibilities will be the expansion and multiplication of dog parks and other pet-friendly venues in all areas of the City".

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Address & Phone Number]

CC: BARK9, P.O. Box 591297; Houston, Texas 77259-1297
Joe Turner, Director HPARD; 2999 S. Wayside; Houston, TX 77023