



Vision 2030

Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan

Dog Park

Focus Group Notes

May 24, 2010, 7-8:30 pm

The participants were provided an overview of the Vision 2030 project and asked a series of questions. Following are the notes from the focus group discussion attended by two stakeholders. In addition, general written comments regarding dog areas from five additional stakeholders submitted via the Vision 2030 website have been incorporated into the notes when applicable. Two M-NCPPC staff with dog park responsibilities also attended the meeting and shared information, when applicable, to help inform the discussion.

1. Which dog parks in the system are working well? What do you particularly like about them?
 - Cabin John dog park
 - Note: many of the stakeholders were from Down County and indicated that they do not frequently use the dog parks because they are not close to where they live
2. What are some common problems or challenges you encounter at dog parks, either in Montgomery County or elsewhere?
 - Consistently stakeholders brought up the need for more designated dog areas, including off-leash areas
 - There was an effort to get a designated off-leash dog area at Lake Frank; currently this is a destination area for unofficial off-leash use
 - One participant expressed concern that the enforcement of the leash law by park police at local and neighborhood parks can be intimidating to new residents and immigrants
3. What are the two or three most important design features or characteristics of a dog park? How might an urban dog park be designed differently than a dog park in the suburbs or in rural areas (e.g. size, etc.)
 - Access to body of water for dogs to swim in would be nice
 - Separate areas for small and large dogs
 - Large area so dogs have enough room to run
4. What do you consider the two or three most important need areas for dog parks in Montgomery County?
 - More designated dog areas
 - Increase number of dog areas serving dense areas in Down County, in particular the Silver Spring area (nearest one is in Wheaton – around five miles away)
 - Several stakeholders were interested in allowing for designated off-leash areas and times (one stakeholder suggested Nolte Park or Bullis Park and another suggested Fenton Gateway)

- “I believe the leash laws are good ones, and I think the community would benefit from more designated dog areas. I’d like to see more official areas for dogs and better enforcement in the non-official areas.”
5. What potential partnerships should be explored to help fund, operate, and maintain dog parks in Montgomery County?
- Police – training on how best to communicate with different cultures related to dog leash laws; another stakeholder suggested more consistent enforcement of leash laws is important
 - DogCentric, Inc., a dog walking business is interested in sponsoring dog waste disposal bags/dispensers