

To whom it may concern,

We, the 11th and Bark 501 3(c) Board members, submit the following letter on behalf of our dog park community regarding finalizing and procuring a lease for land located at 11th St. and Park Rd. NW. Beginning July 26th, the board used this survey to solicit input about the land lease's impact on the surrounding community. In total, the survey received 64 responses.

The survey covers the following topics: Noise from the dog park; foot, bicycle, and car traffic around the dog park; light at the dog park; size of proposed leased land; and architectural features requested for the completed dog park. Below are the results from our survey:

In regard to foot traffic around the dog park:

- No concerns
- One community member mentioned they would like to keep two entrances to the park.

In regard to vehicle and bicycle flow of traffic around the dog park:

- One community member commented asking if WMATA access will be limited and controlled for the safety of the dogs

In regard to the size of the dog park:

- 56 community members expressed concerns with the size of the dog park based on the proposed rendering.
- 8 community members expressed no concerns with the size of the land. One explained, "If the space where the trees are is enhanced, it could make up for the lost space."
- When asked to provide additional comment, 19 community members said they were concerned that the proposed design significantly reduces the size of the dog park.
 - Some comments included:
 - "Yes. It seems like there is room to extend the dog park to the property line on the Park Street side without impacting WMATA access or the ability to provide a designated parking spot. Increasing the size of the leased area would allow the park to serve more dogs at once."
 - Several people noted that WMATA should be able to access what they need with less space and that since WMATA rarely uses the space for parking, the area for their parking should be added to the dog park. Adding, "Right now, WMATA does not require access most of the time. This space would be unused a significant amount."
 - A few people noted that the District should keep the path/cement area that currently leads to the exit on Park Rd. as part of the dog park.
 - One person noted that the dogs love the grate and the dogs should keep that access. Similarly, someone else noted many dogs use the grate to keep cool/warm year-round.

In regard to noise from the dog park:

- Not one person thought it would increase noise. Many noted it would be the same. One person said it would be less noisy (they didn't explain why).

In regard to lighting from the dog park:

- 40 people noted no concerns about lighting
- 19 people commented that the park needs lighting, particularly for winter

Finally, below is a list of the desired features community members would most like to see included at the final dog park:

- Permanent seating - 28 community members mentioned wanting permanent seating.
- Shade - 31 community members mentioned wanting shade.
 - People noted that shade was important for people and dogs. People pointed out that the earth is getting hotter, making shade even more critical.
 - Some mentioned the District could plant new or keep the trees as shade, and others mentioned using sails or tarps.
- Trash cans inside that are maintained by the city
- Permanent water source(s) for drinking and cooling off dogs
- Permanent poop bag dispensers (maintained by 11th & Bark or the District)
- Separate small and large dog areas
- Many people noted they just don't want dirt and mud and puddles. They want to eliminate the standing water that forms after rain.
- Improved ground material
 - In regard to the type of ground material, community members had the following responses:
 - 12 people said they want turf
 - 4 people said gravel
 - 6 people said grass
 - 1 for wood chips
 - Many people who oppose gravel mention it is dirty, bad for paws, and dusty.
- Bulletin boards (one person noted it could display dog behavior lessons)
- A place at the entrance to hang leashes
- Agility equipment
- The current trees and the addition of natural plants and grasses
- A visual obstruction around the perimeter of the fence to prevent/discourage the dogs from barking at or chasing any passing bikes

Board Recommendations:

As many community members expressed, we also have some questions about the possibility of increasing the size of the proposed dog park. If it does not result in a significant delay, we request that the negotiating parties further discuss a solution for the park in which WMATA and the dog park community can continue to have access to a larger portion than proposed in the rendering. Among other issues, maintaining a larger part of the dog park would allow for

designated small and large dog areas to be created. Below are some comments from community members that reflect this sentiment:

- “It will be very difficult to have safe small dog and large dog areas, so it might be best to limit the use to one size dog or the other to avoid safety issues. Understanding that WMATA ‘needs’ a parking spot and access to the metro hatch, it still seems like a very inefficient use of space that could be much better optimized for both parties with some more thought.”
- “I wish there was a separate play area for small dogs vs. big dogs.”
- “I’d love to see a separate area for small dogs! I think it would make things safer for everyone.”

Regarding the length of the lease, the 11th and Bark Board would like to recommend that the lease be extended from 10 years to 15 years. However, should this request cause a delay in the signing of the lease, we find the 10-year lease length sufficient.

In regards to the features that we would like to see included in the dog park renovation that may have an impact on lease terms:

- If it does not significantly delay construction or obstruct the dog park design, the dog park board would like the existing trees maintained and included in the final dog park. These trees not only provide shade for visitors, but they are important for the biodiversity and health of the neighborhood. Note: There is one tree that may be dead and require removal.
- Additionally, we would like a permanent source of shade (e.g.: sail or tarp) to be installed to protect visitors from the sun and weather conditions.
- Finally, we recommend that significant work be completed to level the land and create a sustainable rainwater runoff system to prevent flooding. As it is today, there is a considerable flooding issue on the property. Leveling the ground and mediation will be necessary in the construction process to prevent further erosion.

The 11th and Bark Board thanks WMATA and the DC government for the progress in finalizing this land’s lease, getting us one step closer to the construction stage for the Columbia Heights Dog Park. This letter serves as both a record of community comments regarding this issue and our recommendations for the final leased land.

If there are any additional questions, please contact Board President Maggie Garrett at margaret.f.garrett@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
11th and Bark Board Members

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