Bernard Dog Run
Proposal for a Neighborhood Dog Park in Lawrenceville
This proposal for an enclosed, off-leash dog run along the Allegheny Riverfront Trail in Lawrenceville aims to create a much-needed new type of public space that addresses two current neighbourhood weaknesses: A lack of safe and legal recreational space for dogs and their owners, and limited riverfront access. The proposal builds upon existing community and city-wide initiatives, including the Allegheny Riverfront Vision, to increase livability in our neighborhood by promoting access to the outdoors, to the river and to public amenities.

On behalf of the Bernard Dog Run Committee, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who participated in helping us complete the many iterations of this proposal.

The Bernard Dog Run effort is dedicated to the memory of Jay Bernard, a Lawrenceville resident, business owner, artist and abandoned dog advocate whose big heart and countless contributions to his community continue to inspire.

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Introduction

Mission

Our mission is to establish a community-based, enclosed off-leash dog park that is sustainable, well-maintained, safe and enjoyable for well-mannered dogs and people.

The dog park will be accessible, centrally-located within Lawrenceville and will include a separate section for small dogs and large dogs.

The dog park is a community recreational amenity and will strive to be in harmony with the natural environment, property and the community.

A stewardship committee made up of local residents will monitor and fundraise to maintain the dog park in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh Department of Parks & Recreation and Department of Public Works.

The dog park will be named the Bernard Dog Run in honor of Jay Bernard, Lawrenceville activist, artist, businessman and abandoned dog advocate.
Introduction

Bernard Dog Run Committee

The Bernard Dog Run initiative is a volunteer-driven effort on behalf of an eclectic group of people who are long-time residents, new residents, homeowners, renters and business-owners. We have been brought together over the desire to have a safe neighborhood destination in which to exercise and socialize our dogs. In addition to our enthusiasm for making Lawrenceville a better place to live, we bring a variety of skills and experiences to the project, including marketing and social networking, graphic design, urban planning and design, construction, accounting and in-depth knowledge of the culture and history of Lawrenceville.

The idea for a dedicated, enclosed dog exercise area in Lawrenceville originated with the circulation of a neighborhood petition in the summer of 2007. The previously-named Lawrenceville Dog Park Committee officially began meeting in September 2008. Since then, we have accomplished the following:

Website: www.lawrencevilledogpark.org
The Bernard Dog Run website communicates our progress to the community while also providing links to important community resources, such as the municipal dog licensing law, local shelters and dog-related services. Web hosting and original design work has been donated by a local firm, Cytech Hosting.

Survey
A 10-question online web survey has so far collected 200 responses. It is accessible via our website.
Introduction

Community Outreach
In the past year, we have sought feedback from the following public agencies and groups:
• City of Pittsburgh Public Works Department
• PA Senator’s Office, 38th Senatorial District
• City Councilor’s Office, District 7
• Lawrenceville United
• Lawrenceville Corporation
• Lawrenceville Greening Committee
• Lawrenceville Planning Team
• URA’s Open Space Planning Committee
• Friends of the Riverfront
• Friends of the Pittsburgh Urban Forest
• Regional Composting & Recycling Initiatives, Pennsylvania Resource Council (PRC)

Fundraising Events
The Committee has held four public fundraising events: An art auction at a local gallery, a variety night, a games night and a dance-a-thon. Many Lawrenceville-based businesses and artists—and a few from outside the neighborhood—donated merchandise or talent. These events raised over $2,300 and we have been told by potential donors that they are waiting for an official site to be selected before donating larger sums.
Introduction

Current Status and Need

Lawrenceville’s urban condition, namely its narrow streets lined with tightly-packed properties, is typical of American cities developed during the period of industrialization in the late 19th century, before the widespread use of the automobile. While this density of buildings is part of its charm and lends the critical population mass needed to support a local business district, the small yards mean that dog owners must look to communal green spaces in order to exercise their dogs.

Currently, Lawrenceville dog-owners face a conundrum: City of Pittsburgh ordinance §633.08 *Dogs At Large Prohibited* bans dogs from running off leash in public space with the exception of “a specific area designated by the Director of Parks & Recreation to be an Off Leash Exercise Area (OLEA)”.

Under §633.22 *Off-Leash Exercise Areas*, the city established a pilot program for OLEAs in the following areas: Upper Frick Park, Lower Frick Park, West Park and Highland Park. The pilot program was meant to be in effect for a period of three years after which the program would be reviewed and either cancelled or integrated into the City Code. To date, the Upper Frick Park OLEA is the only fenced-in park built, and while it is hugely popular with Pittsburgh residents, the fence is incomplete and too low for many dogs to be considered safe.

Lawrenceville currently does not have any designated off-leash dog areas. The main recreational spaces are the 9-acre Arsenal Park, Leslie Park, the Allegheny Riverfront Trail and a handful of small parklets and playgrounds. Dogs are not permitted in the cemeteries. As a result of a lack of off-leash options, residents are breaking City Code by letting their dogs run in parks and on private open land.
Our online survey of 202 respondents found that the Arsenal Park tennis courts have become the off-leash enclosed area of choice, with 38% of users reporting their use. Additional non-enclosed green spaces are the open baseball fields in Arsenal Park (16%), the Allegheny River Trail (20%), the northwest corner of the Allegheny Cemetery property adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club (14%), and the Buncher Corporation lawns between 43rd and 48th Street near the river (11%). Forty-six percent said they used other sites, including the large, fenced-in parcel of land beside St. Mary’s Cemetery (owned by the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh), the Leslie Park baseball diamonds, the Foster Community Center lawn on Main Street, and various other pieces of vacant public and private property.

Many respondents to our survey expressed frustration at not having any safe options in Lawrenceville, and several non-resident respondents stated that they had considered moving to Lawrenceville but chose not to because of the lack of facilities, opting instead for neighborhoods closer to Frick Park.

There are several large fenced-in dog parks outside of the city, including Hartwood Acres and South Park. However these can only be accessed by car and as such are not convenient for daily use and do not contribute to the local community. It is important to note that one-third of Americans do not drive and as such are de facto pedestrians. These include children and youth, many seniors, people with disabilities and low-income Americans, in addition to those who choose not to drive for other reasons.3
Introduction

According to the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), there are approximately 74.8 million owned dogs in the United States. Thirty-nine percent of US homes own at least one dog, and on average, a dog-owning household will have 1.7 dogs.4

Lawrenceville’s population in 2000 was nearly 11,000 residents or 4,641 households. Based on these figures, there are an estimated 3,077 dogs in Lawrenceville. In our online survey, 24% of respondents said they would use a neighborhood dog park daily while 25% said they would use it four to five times a week.

There are an estimated 3,077 dogs in Lawrenceville.

The fenced-in Arsenal Park tennis courts are very popular among dog owners.

The Buncher Corporation lawns behind Hatfield between 43rd and 48th Street are also used.

Frequency of Use
How often would you use an enclosed dog park in Lawrenceville?

- 24% Daily
- 25% 4-5x week
- 31% 2-3x week
- 10% 1x week
- 6% < 1x week
- 5% Never
LOVE the idea!
I think this would be a great idea and I know I would use this often!!!
Hope to see it come to fruition!
I am looking to move to closer to Pittsburgh in about a year. A dog park would definitely be a plus.
I can’t wait for the Lawrenceville dog park—it’s just one more reason to buy a home in the neighborhood.
Thank you, great idea!
A dog park in our neighborhood would be a godsend for us.
I think this is a great idea. I can’t wait to see it happen.
This is very exciting. Thank you for taking this on!!
Please get one soon!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Comments from our online survey (N=202).

Time of Use
Which times would you be more likely to visit the park? (Check all that apply)

Weekdays
- 5-9PM: 84%
- 6-9AM: 20%
- 9-5PM: 25%

Weekends
- 5-9PM: 40%
- 6-9AM: 55%
- 9-5PM: 67%

Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh property, at the end of Davison Street near 46th Street.
American society’s concept of public parks and outdoor recreation has evolved since the industrial era, when Frederick Law Olmstead launched the public parks movement in 1858 with the first great American urban park, New York City’s Central Park.

Today, urban parks are multi-functional public spaces, venues that often integrate recreational opportunities with ecological functions, cultural and artistic expression, economic ventures and even agriculture. The forms of urban outdoor recreation have multiplied as new group and solo activities have emerged. Sports and activities that were not seen in urban parks fifty years ago, such as Ultimate Frisbee, Tai Chi, mountain biking, skateboarding and even working on laptops, are becoming commonplace in cities across the country.

Likewise, the role of the dog in our society has changed, from largely working animal—guarding, pulling and herding—to companion animal and even therapeutic assistant. Dogs are the most popular species of pet in the United States, with 45.6 million households owning at least one dog. In 2008, Americans spent $43.2 billion on pet products, services, vet care and animal purchases. Culturally, it is not uncommon for people to declare that they consider their dog as their “child” and to feel strong affection for their pet. Indeed, the psychological benefits of caring for a dog have been measured in many studies and some of the benefits have been found to be similar to those acquired from human relationships.

A dog park is defined as an enclosed area where dogs are legally allowed to roam off-leash. A dog run is a type of dog park that is typically linear in shape, smaller and located in an very urban environment.
Benefits to the Community

1. Pet Safety
The foremost benefit of a dog park is the safety provided by a dedicated, enclosed space where dogs can run free. Dog parks are a safe and legal place for dogs to exercise off-leash while not being exposed to undue dangers and risks, such as being hit by a car or running away.

2. Safer Parks
Enclosed dog parks are a necessary and realistic infrastructure for the enforcement of dog control laws. They segregate dogs from other open public spaces, reducing potential conflicts between loose running dogs and other people, particularly children. In this case, fences do indeed make good neighbors!

3. Public Health
Walking or exercising a dog is not just a basic responsibility of pet ownership; it’s a pleasurable daily recreational and social activity for many dog owners. However research shows that public support and infrastructure influence how often one walks their dog. A recent study found that people who perceived greater social support and who had access to a dog-supportive park within their neighborhood were more likely to regularly walk with their dogs, and that 80% of those who regularly walk their dogs meet the minimum 150 minutes of exercise per week. At a time when two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese, these findings should not be ignored.
4. Safer Neighborhoods
Dog parks can contribute to both individual and public health, as well as neighborhood vitality. In her seminal 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, celebrated urban theorist Jane Jacobs argued that a high degree of interactivity between neighbors leads to safer streets and public spaces.

Dog park users are regular members of the community who share an interest in having a safe neighbourhood. Since people tend to use dog parks throughout the day, seven days a week, year-round—even in the rain and snow, they provide additional “eyes on the street” from the early morning to late evening and act as an unofficial block watch as they walk to and from the dog park.

5. Inclusive Communities
A public dog park is a community meeting space providing dog owners and guardians with an opportunity to socialize with each other and to share information. Dogs are notorious “social lubricants”, affording a pretext for meeting new people in a non-formalized manner. It is not uncommon for people to share information about local events in their neighbourhood or to find that they have more in common than they realized while chatting at the dog park. Since dog ownership crosses class, race, gender and cultural boundaries, public non-fee dog parks are one of the few places in contemporary cities where a diverse group of people can interact and socialize over a common interest.

The social function of the dog park is especially important for community members, such as seniors or those who work...
from home, who have more time on their hands or who otherwise have limited social contact and are seeking social interaction. Dog parks are often used by seniors and people with reduced mobility who cannot leash walk their dogs long distances or afford a dog walker.

6. Improved Outcomes of Dog Ownership
Dog parks help nurture the human-dog bond by providing an opportunity for play and an outlet for both dogs and people to experience the outdoors on a regular basis. Dogs that are accustomed to playing with other dogs and who are exposed to different people are better socialized and are more reliable around strangers. A well-exercised dog is also calmer and typically less of a nuisance to both owners and neighbors.

Research has shown that behavioral issues, including barking, chewing, hyperactivity and housetraining accidents, are the major reasons for which millions of dogs are surrendered to shelters every year. What this indicates is that many dog owners invariably do not understand the importance of regular and vigorous exercise, are unable to provide such opportunities due to a lack of infrastructure, or are not equipped with the knowledge or resources to properly train and care for their dogs. The results are frustrated pets and owners, and an overburdened animal shelter system in which two million dogs are euthanized each year.

7. Resource Linkages
In addition to providing the critical infrastructure to exercise dogs, dog parks are also a venue for public outreach and education on issues of pet care and advocacy. Through a community billboard and word of mouth, dog park users can find out about dog stewardship, local animal shelters, municipal pet licensing, social events and local services, such as dog walkers and pet supplies.

We envision the dog park and website as a resource for improving knowledge about responsible animal care. In the course of working on this proposal, the Committee has discovered that Lawrenceville is home to a local dog supply company (Merlin Bark Products), and that there are several dog walkers eager to market their services in the neighborhood. We have also discovered that certain services, such as a veterinarian clinic and dog day care, are lacking and in demand in Lawrenceville. A neighborhood dog park would become the local hub for a growing cultural and economic phenomenon.

8. Environmental and Economic Benefits
Green spaces and parks, including dog parks, not only meet a need for recreational and community gathering space, but with thoughtful landscaping and design, they can provide actual cost savings to municipalities by reducing air pollution, mitigating the urban heat island effects, improving the health of the population and diverting stormwater and waste. They can also support biodiversity by incorporating wildlife habitat and numerous studies show that parks can increase nearby property values by up to 20%.
9. Community Development

Neighborhoods thrive when there is a diversity of people, activities, buildings and places. The recent changes in Lawrenceville aptly demonstrate this rule. As one of Pittsburgh’s largest and most populous neighborhoods, Lawrenceville is rapidly becoming a destination for new residents and consumers due to an expanding inventory of shops and restaurants, as well as cultural opportunities, such as Art All Night and the Little Flea, a modest but successful community flea market.

Lawrenceville is fortunate to have a large number of active residents, businesses and organizations committed to creating a better quality of life in the neighborhood. Much of what has been accomplished in the last decade has occurred through collaborative community development initiatives and countless volunteer hours.

Efforts by groups such as the Lawrenceville Corporation, Lawrenceville United, Lawrenceville Stakeholders and the Lawrenceville Historical Society have focused on public safety, business district development, preservation and reuse of historic buildings and the promotion of owner-occupied housing. Hundreds of buildings have been renovated and facades restored. Butler Street’s 16:62 Design Zone boasts over 100 design-related businesses in addition to clothing and shoe stores, cafés, bars, restaurants and other neighborhood businesses.

The Lawrenceville United, one of neighborhood’s community development organizations, has worked to improve public safety and offer recreational opportunities for children since 2001.

Thoughtful restoration of facades and new businesses in the 16:62 Design Zone near the 5300 block of Butler Street.
Dog Parks 101

Sidewalk seating is more and more common along Butler Street, bringing life to our streets.


“Butler Street is a place the chain stores forgot...”
—New York Times, October 14, 2007

Butler Street at 38th, in Lower Lawrenceville (LOLA).

Central and Lower Lawrenceville’s property values have risen a steady 8% a year since 1997 (compared to 2 to 4% for the region). The neighborhood was recently featured in the New York Times Travel Section as one of Pittsburgh’s top neighborhood destinations.

With the real estate market and business districts stabilizing, Lawrenceville’s community groups and organizations have more recently begun focusing on the central role of the “public realm”, including sidewalks, public squares and green spaces, in accommodating the neighborhood’s cultural and social life in all of its diversity. Among the recent or current initiatives treating public space:

• A pan-organizational community planning initiative in 2005 produced the Lawrenceville Community Plan, which recommended creating new public parks on vacant land and greater access to the Allegheny River.
• The non-profit group Friends of the Riverfront has worked with local stewards to create and maintain a half-mile riverfront trail along the Allegheny River, from 38th Street to 43rd Street.

• The Lawrenceville Tree Tenders and Lawrenceville Greening Committee are focused on improving Lawrenceville’s ecological footprint through various greening measures. Several proposals have been made for the addition of modest new parklets and pocket parks on vacant lots along our major arteries, including a tree park on the corner of Stanton Avenue and Keystone Street, a public space on Butler Street near 35th Street and a small parklet on Penn Avenue at 37th Street. Two of these are in the final design stage.

• The citizen-led, pan-organizational Lawrenceville Planning Team meets regularly to monitor and weigh in on land-based development in the area, including an upcoming development at one of Lawrenceville’s main gateways, Doughboy Square.

• The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) hired Perkins Eastman Architects to produce the Allegheny Riverfront Vision, which will guide land use along the river.

Our proposal for an urban dog run recognizes the tremendous work achieved by neighbourhood and civic groups, and builds on these efforts to increase the variety and quality of public spaces available to an ever-diversifying population in Lawrenceville. As a “light” intervention, it is an ideal interim use that can be embedded into the long-term vision for the riverfront and relocated at a later date.
Overview

This proposal is for a one-acre, community-based, enclosed off-leash dog park along the Allegheny Riverfront Trail in Lawrenceville.

In searching for a site, we considered fringe open spaces that are currently vacant and underused in the neighborhood. It is important to note that our goal with this project is to add an amenity to Lawrenceville’s portfolio of public spaces, not to replace or crowd an existing park. Based on our research of dog parks, we came up with a list of basic criteria and additional considerations:

**Basic Criteria**
- minimum 0.5 acre
- centrally-located within Lawrenceville
- buffered from residences
- land currently underused
- slope under 25%

**Additional Considerations**
- property ownership and likelihood of acquisition
- substrate type and drainage
- proximity to incompatible uses and potential synergy with nearby compatible uses
- accessibility by foot and vehicle
- impacts on local ecology
- ease of access for Department of Public Works maintenance crews
- serviceable by electricity and water

**Proposed Dog Run Location**

A 15-minute walk to 2/3 of Lawrenceville’s housing stock.
Proposal

- Green Space (0.13 acres)
- Gravel Parking Lot (0.36 acres)
- NREC
- Buncher Corp
- CSX Rail line
- Trail (0.5-mile)
- Kayak/Canoe Rack
- Kayak/Canoe Launch

Existing Conditions
Proposal

Existing Conditions

The final choice of the linear space between the Allegheny Riverfront Trail and the rail line to the west of the 40th Street Bridge meets all of the basic criteria and rates favorably to additional considerations.

1. Central Location
The proposed site is located in the heart of the neighborhood, near the 40th Street Bridge. It is within a half-mile radius, or a 15-minute walk, to two-thirds of Lawrenceville’s housing stock.

2. Current Use
The proposed site is situated near an existing but underused 0.13-acre public green space along the Allegheny River at the base of 40th Street. It is one of the few points of access to the Allegheny River in all of Lawrenceville. The main attractions are the half-mile Allegheny Riverfront Trail and a kayak/canoe storage rack and boat launch. There is also a 0.36-acre gravel parking lot.

The land is currently zoned GI-General Industrial District. Nearby, there are several warehouses with large, asphalt parking lots, as well as Carnegie Mellon University's National Robotics Engineering Center (NREC) testing facility. A rail line runs close to the river, between the trail and a warehouse complex.

3. Land Ownership
The land parcel on which the dog run would be located is owned by the City of Pittsburgh. The railroad is owned by the CSX Corporation, while adjacent parcels are owned by the Buncher Corporation and NREC (see Appendix A).

4. Access
The centrally-located site is accessible from 40th Street by foot and bike. Pedestrians and cyclists can additionally arrive from 43rd Street or 38th Street along the Allegheny Riverfront Trail. The surrounding streets are a mix of warehouses and residences.

5. Landscape Features
The topography is slightly flat until reaching the edge of the river, upon which it drops steeply about 15 feet. The area on which the dog run would sit is flat, and either grassy or partially wooded.

6. Synergies with Existing Uses
As a daily-use, year-round amenity, a dog run in this location would likely amplify the value of the riverfront trail and contribute to a change in the perception held by some that the riverfront, which is isolated from residential streets by warehouses and a rail line, is not a safe destination for all residents. It would also likely reduce the instances of illegal trash dumping and other undesirable activity along the riverfront.
Existing Conditions: 40th Street entrance to the Allegheny Riverfront Trail; NREC at right.

Existing Conditions: Open public space at foot of 40th Street and under the 40th Street Bridge; NREC at left.
Proposal

Existing Conditions: Gravel lot, warehouse complex and CSX rail line, looking west.

Existing Conditions: Proposed location of linear dog run between CSX rail line and riverfront trail.
Existing Conditions: Trail, west of bridge, looking west.
Existing Conditions: Trail looking west from near 43rd St.
Existing Conditions: Illegal dumping of phone books.
Existing Conditions: Foot of canoe/kayak launch with view of Downtown Pittsburgh in the distance.
Bernard Dog Run

The Bernard Dog Run proposal fits comfortably within the existing program of uses, namely the open public green space, kayak/canoe rack and launch, riverfront trail and light industrial operations.

In accordance with our mission, the dog run design is inspired by safety, user friendliness, accessibility and harmony with its surroundings.

The dog park itself would cover roughly one acre between the existing trail and the CSX rail line. The linear run would span about 750 feet. The small and large dog runs would be accessed via a shared vestibule, located along the trail.
Proposal

Existing Conditions

Proposed Bernard Dog Run
Proposal

Dog Run Features
The basic requirements for a safe dog run are a 5-foot fence for the larger dog section, a double-gated vestibule, trash bins and soft but drainable surface material. Additional amenities as included in the following list are representative of those commonly found in higher quality urban dog runs and can be added in time and as funds permit.

- Section for small (under 25 lbs), old and infirm dogs, measuring roughly 0.075 acre (3,000 square feet)
- Section for large dogs, measuring roughly 680 feet by 70 feet, roughly one acre (50,000 square feet)
- Around the small dog section, a 4-ft tall perimeter chain-link fence
- Around the large dog section, a 5-ft tall perimeter chain-link fence
- Double-gated vestibule (shared between sections)
- Drainable surface material, such as wood chips
- Durable seating
- Covered bins for dog waste disposal and shovels
- Trash and recycling bins for non-dog waste
- Play features for climbing and playing, such as locally-sourced logs and boulders
- Shade from existing and newly planted trees
- Lighting, preferably solar-powered, which is typically low-maintenance and runs automatically on detectors
- Drinking water and possibly a water play feature
- Signage (rules & regulations and liability information) and Community Bulletin Board

While our mission is to create an enclosed dog park, the addition of a new public amenity in this area may be an opportunity to leverage additional resources to upgrade what is currently Lawrenceville’s only riverfront green space. As such, our concept plan depicts an expanded public green space.

Access & Parking
The existing gravel parking lot (roughly 0.35 acre) is located on the only open riverfront land available to Lawrenceville’s 11,000 residents. We suggest reducing this lot and expanding the green space (currently about 0.15 acre). The remaining parking lot could accommodate two dedicated, oversized spaces for the canoe/kayak launch, and an additional three spaces for disabled parking.

The politics of parking are very contentious and cannot not be fully explored in this proposal. However it can be argued that offering a free parking lot of the magnitude that is on the site today sets an expectation on the part of the public that parking in highly urban environments is a right, no matter how rare and valuable the land, rather than a privilege. This small move—turning a parking lot into a community green space—would make a statement that Lawrenceville and Pittsburgh are embracing sustainable urban design standards and promoting active living.

A dog run near the 40th Street Bridge will surely attract many more users than currently use the trail and boat launch. It may be useful as a matter of perspective to note that the proposed dog run location is within a half-mile radius or 12- to 15-minute walk of two-thirds of Lawrenceville’s housing
Amenities and materials can both link the park to the rest of Lawrenceville and Pittsburgh while also creating uniqueness through original art and design:

Rust-coated solar-powered lights by Zava are elegant and sustainable; Lawrenceville-specific trash bins and benches use the “doughboy” motif; and simple iron fencing was traditionally used in the neighborhood, for example around homes, the cemetery and the library.

Play features made from organic materials, such as logs and boulders, and a wood chip ground cover would fit in with the overall natural riverfront aesthetic of the site.

Alternative parking management strategies should be employed to optimize existing parking infrastructure in the area. Two specific strategies to consider are using the eastern portion of the Buncher Corporation’s parking lot, which is rarely occupied, and implementing metered parking. The latter would raise revenues, reduce demand and increase the turnover of the spaces. On-street permit parking in Lawrenceville is likely inevitable and would further help ration and optimize parking.

Parking racks for a minimum of ten bicycles should be included for all users of the riverfront park, with a preference for the existing iconic “Three Rivers” bike rack.

stock. This is the same distance as exists between the popular Frick Park Off-Leash Area (OLEA) and the nearest entrance off of a street on which parking is available (Beechwood Boulevard). It is reasonable to believe, therefore, that residents will not be dissuaded from using the area should the parking lot be moved further away or removed entirely.
Waste Management

There are two considerable environmental problems with the way conventional dog parks are designed and maintained:

- Dog waste is bagged into plastic bags and sent to a landfill, where it cannot biodegrade.
- When it rains, stormwater is often carried off-site and into the local stormwater sewer system, taking harmful bacteria, parasites and nutrients along with it.

Dog waste is considered the third or fourth largest source of bacterial pollution in urban watersheds. Dog feces can contain bacteria like *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Giardia*, as well as parasites, such as hookworm, tapeworm and roundworm, all of which can be transmitted to humans. Dog waste has higher concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorous than most livestock waste, and if it is allowed to reach waterways, can disrupt the natural balance of nutrients. Animal waste, left on sidewalks, yards and parks is an issue. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has estimated that two to three days worth of droppings from 100 dogs in a watershed of up to 20 square miles can cause enough contamination to close a bay to swimming.

Dog urine is also considered an environmental problem in urban areas. The acid, nitrogen and salt in dog urine can create "brown spots" on vegetation. The issue is not only aesthetic: A study found that 50,000 trees were killed in a single year in New York City due to dog urine.

While this information is alarming, the suggested consequences are readily managed. In fact, dog parks can be part of the solution. A dog park composting system is a great opportunity to capture dog waste that would otherwise be left outside or bagged and thrown into a landfill, and to turn...
it into a resource. And a landscape design that captures and filters stormwater runoff before it reaches storm sewers can remove harmful contaminants from traditional pathways to our urban waterways.

The most common method for collecting dog waste in a dog park is to “poop and scoop” using provided shovels and garbage bins, or to bag the feces and throw it in a bin, transporting the problem off-site to a landfill. However several cities have installed on-site or off-site feces composting systems as part of an overall municipal sustainability programme:

• In Australia, “doggy loos” have been installed in the ground. Feces is collected and placed in the disposal units where it then decomposes, avoiding the need for refuse collection.²⁰
• An aerobic composting method using compost bins with passive aeration is being used in a dog park in Parc Notre Dame de Grace, in Montreal, Canada. A study found that park users participated actively and the bins were found to be nearly odorless. The dog park diverts almost a ton of dog waste and 7,000 plastic bags from the local landfill, and produces about 1,700 lbs of compost annually.²¹
• San Francisco, a national leader in municipal waste reduction, recently applied the anaerobic method (methane digestion) that is more commonly used with cow manure. This method not only creates compost but also generates methane, a renewable energy source.²²
• The Treman Marina Dog Park in Ithaca, NY hands out free biodegradable bags for users to collect dog waste while at the park. The collection bins are regularly emptied and taken to a commercial composting facility to be turned into usable compost.²³

Composting can reduce the volume of dog waste by over 50% and results in a usable end product.²⁴ Our online survey of 202 people has found that 60% of respondents said they would use a “no bag” composting bin system for dog waste. With greater explanation of the process and the benefits, we believe that composting would be a viable option for the Bernard Dog Run. The Director of Regional Composting & Recycling Initiatives for the Pennsylvania Resources Council has agreed to consult with us on a potential composting program.

Regardless of the type of collection system chosen, trash bins will be regularly emptied by the Department of Public Works.
The Bernard Dog Run is envisioned as a public asset. As such, it would be owned by the City of Pittsburgh and folded into the City’s existing portfolio of public parks and recreational amenities. Refuse and recycling pick-up, fence repairs and wood chip replenishment would be provided by the Department of Public Works.

Research has found that the participation of a community group is an important factor in the ongoing success of a dog park. The Bernard Dog Run Committee would continue to act as a partner with the City of Pittsburgh in ongoing stewardship of the park. The Committee would both maintain the website and organize annual events to raise awareness in the community about the park, its proper use and to raise funds towards its maintenance and improvements. Dog park users would be invited to notify the committee regarding maintenance issues through the website.

The costs to build a dog park can range greatly, from $5,000 to $85,000 or more, depending on the design, materials and amenities. The annual upkeep for a dog park is similar to that of a soccer field (mowing grass or adding substrate, possible irrigation, landscape maintenance, repairs), about $3,000.

Lighting will be important, particularly during the shorter fall and winter days. We propose independent solar-powered lighting which is typically low-maintenance and runs automatically on detectors.

Decomposed granite is recommended as a surface material for dog parks because it is soft on foot pads, is impervious to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Construction Costs</th>
<th>Donated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site preparation (grading for drainage)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site design</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 1,600 feet of 4’ and 5’ fencing, and double-gated vestibule with hardware</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four inches of mulch</td>
<td>likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation labour</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water fountain</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play features</td>
<td>likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feces removal station</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping materials</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td>likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
water and therefore does not absorb odors, and is easy to keep clean. However decomposed granite may not be readily available in the Pittsburgh region. A more viable option for this location is likely a mixture of wood chips, bark and mulch, which the City of Pittsburgh may be able to provide free of charge.

Play equipment can be in the form of logs and boulders, which can be sourced cheaply locally, are weather-resistant and can be easily replaced. The possibility of adding a water fountain should also be investigated.

The Committee is dedicated to finding alternative sources of materials and labor, and to fundraising in order to build a quality neighborhood dog park. There have been many offers from local residents and businesses to provide free labor and construction/trades expertise in the construction of a dog run in Lawrenceville.
Liability

It is important to note that users of an off-leash dog park are held to the same standards as elsewhere in the public space. People who suffer bodily injuries or injuries to their dogs have the same rights in an official dog park as they do outside the park.

On the issue of negligence liability, dog bite specialist attorney Kenneth Phillips writes that even in an off-leash dog park, a dog owner must still “do what is reasonable if the dog is unruly, easily scared, not socialized, unneutered, has provoked fights with other dogs, or has any known dangerous propensity, such as the habit of jumping on people”. If such an owner allows their dog to injure another person or dog, that person can be seen as negligent under the law.

Concerning biting and dog fighting, Phillips notes that “most states have laws imposing strict liability on dog owners whose dogs actually bite someone. If a dog owner knows that his or her dog has the dangerous tendency to attack and fight with other dogs, he should not bring that dog into a dog park. Doing so would be not only negligent but would constitute a reckless disregard for the safety of other dogs, the rights of other dog owners, and the safety of other dog owners. A dog owner should be held fully responsible for all resulting injuries to other people and their dogs. The doctrine of assumption of the risk should not apply because the victim cannot be regarded as accepting the risk of such negligent, reckless and possibly illegal conduct”.

Regarding lawsuits against local governments, Phillips writes that “the victim of a personal injury or injury to the victim’s dog probably will not prevail on a claim against the local government entity that established the dog park... Generally, there are immunities that protect government entities from many claims; if the entity believed that it was doing something beneficial for the community, it is hard to get around the immunity. However, failure to enforce its own rules and regulations may result in governmental liability. Dog parks frequently are governed by special rules that are either posted or part of the local municipal code. If an irresponsible dog owner has a habit of breaking those rules, and the local animal control officers do nothing despite being informed, a person who sustains personal injuries or injuries to his or her dog may prevail against the municipality.”

For such reasons, park rules and regulations, as well as liability information should be posted prominently at the entrance to the dog park. Additionally, dog parks users should have a clear method for communicating safety issues to the city as it would in any other circumstance, such as the 3-1-1 Response, or in case of emergencies, the 9-1-1 Response.


Appendix A

Property Map

Source: Allegheny County GIS (2007)
Appendix B

Sample Park Rules and Responsibilities

For your safety and the safety of the dogs and the environment, park users are subject to the following rules and responsibilities. We appreciate your cooperation!
• Off-leash runs are for dogs, their handlers and those accompanying them. No other use is allowed.
• All dogs must be accompanied at all times by a handler aged 14 or older.
• Dogs must be on leash when outside of the dog run. Once inside, dogs must be unleashed immediately in the vestibule but must continue to wear a collar.
• No handlers, including professional dog walkers, shall have more than two dogs under his/her control.
• Professional dog trainers shall not use the run for the conduct of their business.
• Handlers shall maintain voice control over their dog(s) at all times.
• Handlers must have control and must carry a leash while their dog(s) are in the run.
• All dogs are required to be properly licensed and vaccinated, and must wear tags to prove so.
• All dogs must be free of diseases and parasites such as fleas and intestinal worms.
• No unneutered male dogs or unspayed female dogs are allowed in the run. This prevents fights.
• Dogs that have previously bitten a person or dog, and dogs that have been declared dangerous by a court or the animal control department are prohibited.
• Handlers shall pick up and dispose of any and all feces left by their dog(s).

• Handlers shall immediately leash and remove their dog(s) from the run if the dog exhibits aggressive behavior towards other run users or other dogs.
• No food or animal snacks are permitted in the off-leash run. This prevents fights.
• All persons entering the run shall comply with all departmental rules and regulations, city ordinances and signs posted in the park.
• All persons entering the dog run enters at his or her own risk. The City is not liable to any person or dog for any injury of harm incurred or caused by any other person or dog entering or remaining in the run. Owners are liable for damage or injury inflicted by their dogs.

Adapted from the Hawaii Kai Dog Park, Department of Parks & Recreation, City & County of Honolulu. Source: http://www.hui-ilio.org/DogParkRules.php
Appendix C

Dog Park Etiquette for First-time Park Users

- Once you enter the double-gated door, close the door behind you and let your dog offleash before opening the second door into the dog park. Leashed dogs may feel threatened by other loose dogs.
- Always clean up after your dog.
- Be aware that dogs have different play styles—don’t overreact! Mounting, growling and jumping are normal and tolerable behaviors for many dogs.
- Don’t bring dogs younger than 4 months to a dog park since they won’t have had all the necessary inoculations (i.e. against parvovirus) that allow them to play safely with other animals.
- Don’t bring a female dog in season or an unneutered male.
- Keep your dog on-leash until you get to the off-leash area. This is not just respectful to other park users, it’s much safer for your dog.
- If your dog becomes unruly or plays rough, leash him and leave immediately.
- If you bring children to the dog park, supervise them closely.
- Don’t smoke or eat while at the dog park, and do not dispense dog treats. This can create fights.
- Don’t let your dog dig big holes in the park.
- Always observe all of the rules posted.


Appendix D

Sample Liability Notice

By entering this dog run, the user agrees to hold the City of Pittsburgh Parks & Recreation (Citiparks) Department harmless and free from liability from any action of any park users or their dogs. Dog run users use the park at their own risk, including the risk of being bitten, knocked down, tripped, etc. Run users agree to fully comply with posted rules and take full legal liability from any action of their own or their dogs.

A list of Rules and Regulations are posted at the run entrance for the safety and well-being of users. If you have any concerns regarding violations, please contact City of Pittsburgh Animal Control at 412-XXX-XXXX.

Bernard Dog Run
Proposal for a Neighborhood Dog Park in Lawrenceville

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October 2010
Pittsburgh, PA