

We have just sent the attached letter to the recipients, and we want to share it with you, too. We are hoping you will take the time to send your own, similar letter and encourage your groups to send letters, too. If you wish, you can simply write a letter stating that you agree with Seattle Nature Alliance's position. We are not yet ready to officially release it as an "open letter", but feel free to use any of our words and information in your letter.

Important dates to keep in mind: Focus Groups are coming to a close on Tuesday, Oct. 27. After that, Parks will be in the "Plan Development" phase, where they will release a first draft on Dec 1. We believe it would be a good idea if they continue to receive feedback from non-COLA individuals and organizations as they are working on their first draft.

We are hoping to stall this process, get more time to prepare, and ideally, be invited to participate in a more meaningful way. At the very least, we want to show the Parks Department that we see the writing on the wall: *they want to extend (unfenced or minimally fenced) off-leash areas into regional parks, nature trails, and beaches*. They are presenting other "options", but without the funding to buy new land, or to build traditional dog parks, the obvious intent is to simply relax the leash laws. In Off-Leash advocacy, this is known as the "Hours" method, the "Leash Optional" and other methods to have free-running dogs in open fields in regional parks, on nature trails or beaches. Please check out this link to photos of Handouts that were given out in Parks' Focus Group held at Camp Long on Thursday, 10/15/2015:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwvdsYUdB_64V1Z0QUpNb1JXdE0/view

A major problem with this is that they are being very opaque about this intent. If they were to simply say they want to *relax the current leash laws*, they would obviously get some serious push-back. So, instead, they are presenting things in an obscure, misleading and fast-track way. Note that the plan will be presented to the Park Board on January 14, with the Superintendent's recommendation in early-mid February, and the Mayor's sign-off immediately after. Also, note that unless "new" OLAs are created, they would not need the Mayor's approval.

Here's a very good article from the Trust for Public Land, *Creating Dog Parks - Without Rancor*: https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe_Dog_Park_Report.pdf Seattle is singled out for its successful and level-headed approach, on pages 2, 3, and 5. It appears that approach is about to change.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. Denise was at the 10/15 Focus Group, and left the meeting feeling quite alarmed.

Seattle Nature Alliance

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