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November 27, 2012

City of Oakland City Council
c/o Ann Cievenger, Case Planner
City of Oakland

RE: Rebuttal of Appeal of Oakland Planning Commission Denial of Case No.
CU-11-208

City Councilmembers,

On May 2, 2012, after consideration of substantiated evidence and extensive public comment, the Oakland Planning Commission voted to deny the application for a conditional use permit to allow dogs off-leash within a fenced enclosure at Lakeview Park. No Planning Commissioners voted in favor of the project. On May 14, 2012, Ms. Rena Rickles appealed, on behalf of ODOG, Oakland Planning Commission Denial of Case No. CU-11-208, pursuant to Oakland Municipal Code Section 17.124.070.

Section 17.134.070 of the Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) lays out the framework for appealing certain Planning Commission decisions before City Council. According to the OMC, the appeal must show that "there was an error or abuse of discretion by the Commission or wherein its decision is not supported by the evidence in the record." Regardless of whether the City Council uses the abuse of discretion threshold pursuant to the OMC, or whether it will review the project de novo, below is a rebuttal to Ms. Rickles' and ODOG's May 2012 appeal.

In her appeal letter to the Oakland City Council, Ms. Rickles makes a number of mischaracterizations. She states that the evidence supporting the findings for denial is based on erroneous facts, speculation not based on facts, and unsubstantiated opinion. Contrary to Ms. Rickles statements, the Planning Commission did indeed base its Findings for Denial on substantiated evidence and sound facts. In turn, the Planning Commission's findings supported its clear and definitive decision for denial of the proposed dog run.

Unfortunately, your planning staff failed to include the Planning Commission's Findings for Denial in your staff report. To assist you, I have included some of the findings in the body of the text on the following pages.

A. Affect on Livability, Lack of Harmony in Scale and Coverage, and Harmful Effect upon Desirable Neighborhood Character

1. Park Size

"The addition of a 20,788 s.f. enclosed dog play area would take a substantial portion of the available open field area away from these general users and dedicate it to a special group (dog owners and their dogs). The desirable neighborhood character would be affected by physically fencing off part of the open field area with a dog play area of the proposed scale and coverage in a high profile location in downtown Oakland near Lake Merritt and the Grand Lake neighborhood."

Planning Commission Finding for Denial

Ms. Rickles stated that Lakeview Park is 6.7 acres in size and that the dog play area would take up 23% of the park. As clarified in the November 7, 2012 staff report, the portion of Lakeview Park where the fence dog enclosure is proposed is only 3.66 acres. This small area of the park currently has a great deal of programming, including a drive aisle, a parking lot, a library, a restroom building, a large tot lot, a playfield and landscaping. This extensive park program was commented on by one of the Planning Commissioners who stated, "this park is already programmed just the right amount." Further, the open playfield is currently less than 1.5 acres, including the margins at the park perimeter (which are unusable for active recreation). A 20,788 square-foot fenced dog enclosure would have far too much coverage within the existing open lawn and would be out of scale with this small neighborhood park. This in turn, would adversely affect the thriving livability of the neighborhood, as described below.

2. Amount of Playfield Lost and Interference with Established Uses

"Potential safety and health issues could result if dogs were to get loose in the area, or if the area were not diligently maintained."

Planning Commission Finding for Denial

Ms. Rickles suggests that the amount of playfield that would be lost "is not a substantial portion of the open field, nor is it a substantial impact on Lakeview Park as a whole...." The truth is that the fenced dog run, including the contiguous setback areas surrounding the dog run would take nearly one-half (approximately 44%) of the useable playfield area. Not only would this be a significant portion of the field to be set aside for one user group,

but it would also create a significant adverse impact on the recreational capacity of the remaining playfield, where myriad recreational users would be forced to compete for leftover space.



The fenced dog enclosure would take away approximately half of the usable playfield.

Proposing dog parks where other established uses already exist is known to be problematic. This fact was submitted as evidence to the Oakland Planning Commission when they received *Creating Dog Parks Without Rancor* (2005), a report authored by the Trust for Public Land (Center for City Park Excellence). The report describes guidelines developed by the City of Seattle's Planning Department in conjunction with COLA (Citizens for Off-Leash Areas), a local organization. The development of the guidelines resulted in site selection criteria that led to successful dog park locations. As shown in the criteria below, avoiding interference with other established uses is of utmost importance. On May 2, 2012, Oakland's Planning Commission cited this exact concern prior to denying the application for the Lakeview Dog Park.

- Avoid interference with other established uses;
- Avoid locations directly abutting residences;
- Assure availability of close-by parking;
- Avoid locations near children's play areas;
- Choose spots where there are minimal impacts on the visual character of a park;
- Avoid sites where there will be spill-over into non-dog areas; and
- Avoid sensitive environmental habitats.

3. Too Close to the Tot Lot

"...the proximity to Astro Park (25 feet away), a children's playground, where families gather with small children creates a potential for safety impacts if dogs were to get loose while arriving or leaving the dog play area, or jump over the fence, and there could be health-related impacts if dog waste is not diligently cleaned up...."

Planning Commission Finding for Denial

On the topic of safety impacts due to the close proximity of the tot lot to the proposed dog area, Ms. Rickles uses one example, Hardy Park, as evidence that dogs playing in a fenced-off area do not create a safety issue between small children and canines. That specific example, however, has little similarity to the proposal before you. The tot lot at Hardy Park is far smaller in size and has far less use than the tot lot at Lakeview Park. As a result, the popular Lakeview Park tot lot leads to far greater spillover of children into areas beyond the tot lot. The proposed dog enclosure at Lakeview Park would also be very popular and would have far greater spillover of dogs into areas beyond the dog run. Since the two facilities are 25 feet away from each other, dogs and children within the spillover areas, and while coming and going from the park, would be at a higher risk of conflicts.

As observed by researchers contributing to a U.C. Davis study¹ produced by the *Program in Veterinary Behavioral Medicine, Center for Animals in Society*, it was "not uncommon for users to allow their dogs off-leash when coming to or leaving a dog park, even though there were rules against allowing dogs off-leash away from the park." In addition, as described to the Oakland Planning Commission by William Rogers, the former Director of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront for the City of Berkeley and current Assistant City Manager, the "proximity [of the dog park] to children's play areas may constitute an incompatible use by placing dogs and children in such close proximity to one another. It's a safety issue for park users and a liability issue for the City." Given the above guidance from the professionals and an expert witness, it is reasonable to assume that the presence of many dogs and many children sharing the same space at the same time (evenings and weekends), would inevitably lead to conflicts between the canines and people.

*"In a place that is as highly trafficked as Lake Merritt, I worry.
And in a place that is as close to a tot playground? I worry even more."
-Oakland Planning Commissioner prior to voting to deny the dog park*

¹ Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Successful Off-Leash Exercise Areas

4. Fencing is Detrimental

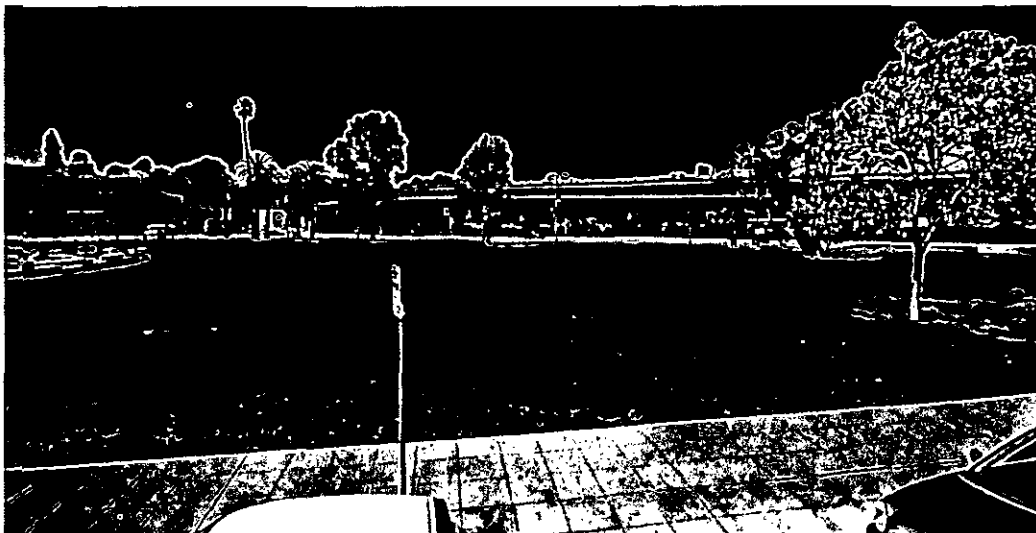
"A fenced off area at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue would be detrimental to the visual and aesthetic quality of the existing open field and children's play area."

Planning Commission Finding for Denial

Ms. Rickies states in her appeal letter that "substantial evidence based on photographs in the record of the proposed fencing shows that the vine covered fencing will blend in with the green field area." The Planning Commission, comprise of experienced professionals, disagreed.



ODOG's representation of how the vine-covered fence would "blend in with the green field area".



The existing visual and aesthetic quality of the open playfield that is used regularly for recreation.

B. Location, Design and Site Planning Problems (Wood Chips and Maintenance)

"The proposed fencing off of over 20,000 s.f. of grass field area and replacement of the grass with wood chips for the dog play area would adversely affect the visual attractiveness of this high-profile location (Lakeview Park) and setting (Lake Merritt and Grand Lake neighborhoods)."

"Also, if it is not diligently maintained due to reliance on self-policing of the dog owners or if funding issues arose, the Dog Play Area could potentially become a visual blight with the park and community."

Planning Commission Findings for Denial

Ms. Rickles' statement that "the wood chips would be camouflaged by vine covered fencing" raises two questions: Why is "camouflage" needed? What are they hiding? The photo of Ohlone Dog Area below sheds light on the problem. The Planning Commission stated concerns specifically regarding aesthetics prior to denying the application for the dog park.

In addition, the OSCAR Element states that, "projected maintenance costs should be fully accounted for...." According to U.C. Davis researchers², "it is suggested that an active dog park club help advise the municipality as to the needed resources to maintain the park and to help monitor their condition. However, do not rely on the club to handle the maintenance."



Ohlone Dog Park during Winter 2011



Lakeview Park during Winter 2011

² Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Successful Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas.

C. Would Not Enhance the Successful Operation of the Surrounding Area

"In this dense downtown area, the existing field that is available to a variety of users for a variety of purposes would be compromised by the dedication of a large portion of its usable area to a specific group (dog owners and their dogs).

"The Dog Play Area as proposed would take away...open lawn within that park that is currently valued for active recreation by multiple users including: picnicking, informal sports games, private school gym classes, jogging, etc."

Planning Commission Findings for Denial

On weekends and evenings, the following groups use Lakeview Park for active recreation:

Bayhill High School P.E.	Girls on the Run
Special Olympics	Squash-Drive.org
Rehabilitation Center (anon)	Tot Lot spillover
Soccer Shots	Hula Hooping
Circle Rules Football	Dancing
Kundalini Yoga Flash Mob	Adult Pick-up Soccer Games
Sunday Soccer League	Drumming Circle
Volleyball	Strong Man Bootcamp
Baseball	Picnickers and more...
Frisbee	

If nearly half of the 1.5 acres of playfield were taken away for a fenced dog enclosure, the above-mentioned groups would be in competition with each other for the leftover space, while one user group (dog owners) would have sole use of the other half. In addition, hundreds of dogs would be on the remaining field, coming and going to the dog enclosure. That is why the Planning Commission determined that the existing field would be compromised if the project were to go forward. Prior denying the dog park application, one of the Planning Commissioners stated that adding another programmed use to this small park would take away the margin of safety that currently exists due to the large open lawn area.

D. Non Conformance to Design Review Criteria

"The Planning Commission finds that the location, size and scale of the proposed Dog Play Area are not appropriate for this site. It is located in a relatively small Neighborhood Park...that is considered to be a gateway to Lake Merritt. In addition, OSCAR states that the park 'is generally a better site for active recreation than nearby Lakeside Park due to the large open lawn area.'"

Planning Commission Finding for Denial

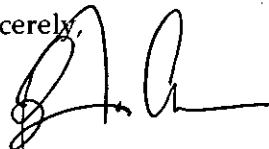
The words of the OSCAR policy described above are vitally important. The success of the small park and gateway at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue is due to the large open lawn area. The City's policymakers recognized this when they crafted that language more 16 years ago. The words remain true today.

Summary

In Oakland, we pride ourselves on diversity. This is the spirit that a small group of neighbors embraced when it chose to speak up to protect and conserve Lakeview Park for a broad array of recreational uses. But this kind of thinking isn't just happening in a small group. Thousands of like-minded neighbors have come to agree that a dog park in the Lake Merritt neighborhood may be the right idea, but that Lakeview Park is the wrong place. Our small neighborhood park is cherished for its balanced mix of programmed uses and for its unfenced green space that is in the heart of our thriving neighborhood. It provides active recreation, it provides healthy living for young and old, and it does all of that right at our gateway to the Lake Merritt District.

This is why I and the other 2,200 members of Save Astro Park ask you to uphold the Planning Commission's decision, DENY the Appellants' appeal in its entirety, and DENY the application for a conditional use permit for a fenced dog enclosure in our small neighborhood park.

Sincerely,



Brad McCrea
Oakland, CA

Brad McCrea
901 McKinley Avenue
Oakland, California 94610

November 28, 2012

Oakland City Council
c/o Ann Clevenger, Case Planner
City of Oakland

RE: Policy Basis for Denial of Appeal of Oakland Planning Commission Denial of Case No. CU-11-208

Councilmembers,

This letter outlines the policy basis for why you should uphold the Planning Commission's denial of the conditional use permit application for a proposed off-leash dog enclosure at Lakeview Park, and deny the application for the change of use in this park location.

For the purposes of brevity, I will keep to the matters of Oakland policies, codes, objectives and strategies. I will not attempt to reinforce the local community's opinion on the matter, but rather will let the heartfelt letters from hundreds of other opponents speak for themselves.

Introduction. Let me be clear. It is clearly understood that the Lake Merritt Master Plan (LMMP) acknowledges a fenced dog area as a "potential" use at Eastshore Park (also called Astro Park and Lakeview Park). Further, the LMMP states that low fencing would be required to "corral dogs in an off-leash condition." However, the Master Plan also acknowledges that off-leash status should be pursuant to City of Oakland regulation. And that is why this project cannot be approved at this time.

The Lake Merritt Master Plan was approved by the Oakland City Council in 2002. However, the Open Space Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) Element of the City's General Plan was adopted by the Oakland City Council in June 1996 and, as currently written, does not include allowances for a fenced dog enclosure within Eastshore Park. Therefore, to approve this proposal now would be to make an arbitrary public policy decision in the absence of amending the General Plan policies. It appears that the only legal way to approve this proposal is for the applicant to follow the appropriate procedural steps and amend the OSCAR Element of the General Plan, which contains policies addressing the management of open land, natural resources and parks in the City.

“Try to find property with no history...it’s a lot easier than persuading people to change a field’s use into something different.”

- City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department

Alternative Site Location Process. Before I further describe why a half-acre, fenced dog run cannot be built at Eastshore Park, it needs to be understood that there are options for identifying alternative dog park sites.

In its report, *Creating Dog Parks Without Rancor (2005)*, the Trust for Public Land (Center for City Park Excellence) references guidelines developed by the City of Seattle’s Planning Department in conjunction with COLA (Citizens for Off-Leash Areas), a local organization. In the Seattle example, COLA helped the Seattle of Parks and Recreation identify approximately 70 potential off-leash sites and the City mandated a 15-month program at eight of them in 1996. The process resulted in site selection criteria that would lead to successful locations. Those criteria are:

- Avoid interference with other established uses;
- Avoid locations directly abutting residences;
- Assure availability of close-by parking;
- Avoid locations near children’s play areas;
- Choose spots where there are minimal impacts on the visual character of a park;
- Avoid sites where there will be spill-over into non-dog areas; and
- Avoid sensitive environmental habitats.

As reported, the City of Seattle also learned something else. “Try to find property with no history,” said a spokeswoman for the park department. “It’s a lot easier than persuading people to change a field’s use into something different.”

The City of Oakland should employ this practical and pragmatic public process.

Non-Conformance with the General Plan

General Plan Strategies, Objectives and Policies. As stated in the introduction above, the dog park proposal does not conform to the City of Oakland’s General Plan because, as currently written, the Open Space Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR Element) does not allow this use in this location.

As background, the half-acre fenced dog enclosure is proposed within Eastshore Park, a public open space categorized in the OSCAR Element as a Neighborhood Park. Eastshore Park is located in a planning area with strategies to protect, maintain and enhance open space. Finally,

the OSCAR Element clearly states that Eastshore Park has great value as an active recreation space due to its existing large, open lawn.

Specifically, the proposal is inconsistent with OSCAR Element objectives and policies, because the project would result in:

- the loss of active recreation space;
- the failure to preserve and enhance the neighborhood open space;
- incompatibility with the recreational and aesthetic character of Eastshore Park; and
- the degradation of an identified Lake Merritt gateway and its view corridors.

"[Eastshore Park] is very heavily used...It is generally a better site for active recreation than nearby Lakeside Park due to the large open lawn area."

- OSCAR Element, Chapter 5

Park Planning Area Strategies. Eastshore Park is located within the City's Central Planning Area (OSCAR, Chapter 5). According to the OSCAR Element, the Central Planning Area's parks are unique among those in Oakland, reflecting the area's historic character, its longstanding position as the region's civic and business core, and its proximity to Lake Merritt. Lakeside Park is described as "Oakland's recreational melting pot," drawing visitors from all across the East Bay. This description can be seen in full color any evening or weekend when people of all races, nationalities and physical abilities convene at Eastshore Park for a variety of activities. The park serves as Grand Lake's "neighborhood commons."

Eastshore Park Strategy. The OSCAR Element has the following specific recommendations for Eastshore Park:

"This neighborhood park is very heavily used....The park is also a logical 'gateway' to the lake area and would benefit from signage improvements or even a monument or fountain of some sort....It is generally a better site for active recreation than nearby Lakeside Park due to the large open lawn area."

The General Plan clearly states that Eastshore Park is a better site for active recreation due to the existing large, open lawn. When the OSCAR Element was adopted by the City Council in June 1996, it did not include, nor anticipate, that approximately half of this "large open lawn area" would be fenced off for a single user group. The fenced dog run proposal is inconsistent with this Eastshore Park Planning Strategy because it would limit and preclude active recreation within a "very heavily used" neighborhood park. Dog runs are a passive use, not an active use. Although canines are generally active in an enclosed dog area, humans usually stand or sit

while their dogs play. Eastshore Park is the only publicly-available open space in the Lake Merritt area with large, level ground suitable for multiple uses to occur simultaneously. The proposal is inconsistent with this General Plan strategy because it would exclude current active recreation uses at the unprogrammed lawn area, which is a scarce amenity in the relatively dense Lake Merritt District.

Given the great variety of activities that occur within Eastshore Park, the remaining 50% of the usable playfield at Eastshore Park would be insufficient to accommodate all of the current active recreation needs of the community.

The following is a current list of active uses at Lakeview Park:

Informal Uses at Eastshore Park:

- Baseball
- Hoola hooping
- Volleyball
- Circle rules football
- Aerial acrobatics
- Flag football
- Dancing
- Soccer
- Capoeira (Brazilian martial arts)
- Kundalini Yoga Flash Mob
- Slacklining
- Badminton
- Running/Chasing
- Drumming Circle
- Frisbee

Organized Uses at Eastshore Park:

- Special Olympics Soccer Team
- Squash Drive
(an after-school enrichment program serving Oakland youth)
- Bayhill High School
(focused on educating students with learning differences)
- Girls On The Run
(a running program for girls ages 8 to 13 that teaches specific and well-defined social and personal skills).
- Rehabilitation Center (anonymous)
- Boot Camps
- Soccer Shots
(soccer training for toddlers and young children)

"Despite the large number and variety of parks, existing park acreage has been found to be inadequate to meet community needs." –

- OSCAR Element

OSCAR OBJECTIVE OS-2: Urban Parks, Schoolyards, and Gardens

This open space objective is "to maintain an urban park...which provides open space for outdoor recreation, psychological and physical well-being, and relief from the urban environment. This OSCAR policy clarifies that "urban parks are among the most valuable open spaces in the City....They are probably the most familiar form of open space in Oakland, particularly in flatland neighborhoods where they may be the only form of open space."

The proposed dog enclosure does not conform to the above OSCAR Objective OS-2 because demolishing half of the existing open play field at Eastshore Park, which is designated as a Neighborhood Park, does not "maintain an urban park," while providing "psychological and physical well-being, and relief from the urban environment." The creation of a fenced dog area would result in a net reduction of approximately 21,000 square feet (one-half acre) of active outdoor recreation space for Oakland residents. If a fenced dog area were to be constructed at Eastshore Park, there would not be enough remaining space to accommodate the various human activities that currently exist on the playfield during evenings and weekends.

OSCAR POLICY OS-2.1

This policy states, "[m]anage Oakland's urban parks to protect and enhance their open space character while accommodating a wide range of outdoor recreational activities."

This OSCAR policy clarifies that parks such as Eastshore Park will be managed to preserve and enhance their value as neighborhood open space. The policy states that fields and landscaped areas should be well maintained and cared for, that a variety of outdoor recreational activities should continue to be provided, and that activities should be compatible with the character of the park. Further, the policy states that, "despite the large number and variety of parks, existing park acreage has been found to be inadequate to meet community needs."

The proposed dog enclosure does not conform to the above OSCAR Policy OS-2.1 because the project includes removing approximately one-half of the existing playfield at Eastshore Park, thereby failing to "preserve and enhance" its value as a neighborhood open space where a "variety of outdoor recreational activities should continue to be provided." Hundreds of feet of fencing would be installed within the open space, which would preclude the extraordinary array of outdoor recreational activities that take place concurrently. In addition, the dog enclosure would be highly incompatible with the recreational character of the park, which is used for multiple established activities that define the character of Eastshore Park. As proposed, these activities would be required to "stay back" from the dog run so that errant balls, frisbees

and running children did not conflict with the dog area. Further, the aesthetic character of Eastshore Park is defined by the large, open grass area. As proposed, approximately 21,000 square feet of lawn would be removed and replaced with brown dirt and woodchips to accommodate dog feces and dog urine. Although a volunteer maintenance workforce has promised to prune a "ribbon of flowers" on the proposed metal fence, there is no guarantee that adequate landscape maintenance of the dog run would be sustainable.

OSCAR POLICY OS-9.3

This policy states, "[e]nhance neighborhood and city identity by maintaining or creating gateways. Maintain view corridors and enhance the sense of arrival at the major entrances to the city... Use public art, landscaping, and signage to create stronger City and neighborhood gateways."

As described in the Planning Area Strategies section above, the OSCAR Element defines Eastshore Park as a "logical gateway" to the Lake Merritt area. The I-580 ramps at MacArthur Boulevard, Grand Avenue and Lakeshore Avenue are major entrances to the Lake Merritt neighborhoods. As proposed, the four-foot-tall fences, dirt and woodchips that would be installed at this gateway would be inconsistent with goals of Policy OS-9.3 stated above, which include maintaining view corridors and enhancing the sense of arrival at this major entrance to the city.

OSCAR Policy Summary. For the reasons described above, including the loss of active recreation space, the failure to preserve and enhance the neighborhood open space, the incompatibility with the recreational and aesthetic character of Eastshore Park, and the degradation of an important Lake Merritt gateway and its view corridors, the Planning Commission should DENY the application for a conditional use permit.

The Proposal is Beyond the Scope of the Lake Merritt Master Plan

The proposed dog enclosure is identified in the 2002 Lake Merritt Master Plan as a "potential" use. However, the Master Plan also acknowledges many other goals that must be read in conjunction with other provisions of the Master Plan so as to understand the entire intent of the document. In this context, it is clear that the proposal for a fenced dog area goes beyond what was originally envisioned in the Master Plan.

Original Master Plan Intent. Clearly, Figure III.2 of the Lake Merritt Master Plan (Plan) depicts a "Potential off Leash Dog Area" at Eastshore Park. However, the original intent of the Master Plan was for a smaller dog area that would not impact recreational uses at Eastshore Park, which is cited as a "significant open space area." The Master Plan describes the detailed guidelines for Eastshore Park: "[t]his perimeter park area represents a significant open space area with heavy use by neighbors, local shoppers, and school children. The tot lot, restrooms, and open lawn areas are recommended for enhancement.... A special area for dogs (per city parks rules) is identified along MacArthur Boulevard." Further, the Lake Merritt Master Plan states, "[t]he plan identifies a dog use area as a potential use in the park. Off-leash status should be pursuant to City of Oakland regulation. Low fencing should be required to corral dogs in an off-leash conditions." Figure IV.38 of the Master Plan depicts the original intent of the active recreational space. The open playfield is shown to be much larger than that shown in the current proposal before the City Council.

Guiding Principles of the Lake Merritt Master Plan. The allowance for an off-leash dog area, described above, must be considered in conjunction with other goals, not the least of which is the Guiding Principles of the Master Plan. Within the Lake Merritt Master Plan, four guiding principles shape the park's planning: Ecology, Education, Recreation, and Culture. Regarding Recreation, the principle guides the City, "to improve the park as a place of informal, outdoor recreation. Oakland's youth should especially benefit from the lake's resources." Currently, Eastshore Park allows Oakland's youth to participate in a diverse range of healthy, informal activities on the large, open lawn. The proposed location and size of the off-leash dog area would adversely affect park visitors and preclude some of the benefits to the youth that this lake resource provides.

Further, the Master Plan has specific language about the park programming that was adopted by the City Council in 2002. These program intentions support an open lawn at Eastshore Park. The plan states, "*in most cases, existing patterns of use are maintained and facilities that support the uses are enhanced.*" The Master Plan's land use recommendations

state that, “[s]elect open lawn areas should be enhanced for larger scaled, active, informal sports.” To be consistent with the Master Plan, the proposed dog area must be smaller and the open lawn area at Eastshore Park enhanced for the larger-scaled activities that it affords.

Gateways. Eastshore Park is identified as a gateway in the General Plan’s OSCAR Element. The Lake Merritt Master Plan also places value on gateways, stating they they “highlight the sense of identity of our built environments...serve as points of reference, and often highlight the unique qualities of our environment.” The LMMP recognizes the Lake’s presence as a natural gateway, “giving identity to nearby streets and neighborhoods.” The proposal for a fenced dog run in this location would impact the sense of arrival at Lake Merritt. The current identity of this area is historic open parkland and scenes of Oaklanders recreating. If a fenced dog area were to be built in the location and of the size proposed, visitors would be greeted with metal wire fences and a half acre of brown wood chips that, during the winter, would become a fenced muddy lot at this gateway to Lake Merritt. Currently, during the wet months of the year, the lawn is home to the birds of Lake Merritt that forage on the grass. To be consistent with the Master Plan, a smaller, more remote dog area would be needed at Eastshore Park.

Maintenance. As proposed, the fenced dog area proposal would be maintained by a volunteer group of citizens. The sustainability of such an effort is questionable. Additionally, the City is unable to identify funds to deal with the high maintenance requirements that come with a fenced dog area at this gateway to Lake Merritt. This project should not proceed until adequate funds are properly identified.

This position is amplified by the Lake Merritt Master Plan (Chapters 5 and 6), which states:

“Simply recommending the programs and identifying costs will not go far enough to ensure the long-term successful maintenance of the park. The problem, historically, has been one of consistent allocation of funds, or lack thereof, for maintenance and operations. Somehow, the funds needed for the park’s proper maintenance need to be provided in a more consistent, more guaranteed manner.”

“The basic care of landscape elements and park furnishings is considered by many to be the single most pressing deficiency at Lake Merritt. Repair and replacement of many park elements are chronically deferred, resulting in a lack of amenities.”

“Throughout the Master Plan Process, a clear desire was repeatedly expressed by the community; the desire for a properly maintained and operated park. Although much of the Master Plan recommendations address capital improvements, maintenance and

operations programs and costs are also clearly identified in order to address this strong desire of the community."

"Management and supervision of volunteers is important for meaningful participation and effects of their work." "Volunteers should work under the supervision of park staff. This may require [staff] flexibility to be available on weekends when most volunteers are available."

Suggested Findings for Denial

The location, size and operating characteristics of the proposed Lakeview Dog Play Area will not be compatible with and will adversely affect the livability of the surrounding neighborhood.

1. **Lack of Harmony in Scale and Coverage.** The proposed project would result in the loss of approximately 50% of the existing playfield at Eastshore Park, a neighborhood park defined by the General Plan's OSCAR Element as a site that is valued for its active recreation uses. Such a reduction in active recreation at Eastshore Park would adversely affect the livability of the surrounding neighborhood. The scale and coverage of the proposed dog enclosure is greater than that which was envisioned by the Lake Merritt Master Plan. (See discussion above in the Lake Merritt Master Plan section.) Figure IV.38 of the Master Plan depicts a much larger "Active Recreation" area than is proposed by the applicant. To be consistent with the Master Plan, the project area would have to be reduced.



Figure IV.38 of the Master Plan

2. **Harmful Effect upon Desirable Neighborhood Character.** The proposal would have a harmful effect on the character of the Grand Lake neighborhood because the proposal includes removing the existing lawn, erecting fences and placing wood chips in order to accommodate dog urine and dog feces at a location described by the OSCAR element as a gateway to Lake Merritt. The intersection of Lakeshore

Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard is a primary crossroads in the Lake Merritt District. The proposed four-foot-tall fencing around the enclosure would impede views across the open lawn towards the Lakeview Library and Astro Park tot lot and the fencing would preclude some uses within the currently unprogrammed open lawn area.

- 3. Problems with Traffic Generation and Street Capacity.** The applicants have suggested that most people will walk instead of drive to the proposed dog area. However, according to a study done on 17 dog parks by the Program in Veterinary Behavioral Medicine (U.C. Davis), dog park users drive to dog parks 95% of the time.

According to the 2007 Environmental Impact Record for Measure DD Implementation Project, approximately 3,700 cars per hour pass through the intersection of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in the peak evening hours. As part of the Measure DD Implementation Project, some roadways around Lake Merritt were reduced, causing slower traffic and some delays at times. The proposed dog enclosure would likely increase vehicular traffic, especially during peak dog use hours which coincide with peak traffic during weekday evenings, and on Saturdays when retail, commercial and the Farmer's Market traffic dominates the area.

Most dog park planning documents, including the Trust for Public Land's *Creating Dog Parks without Rancor*, state that parking should be included in dog park plans. Because parking supply in the Grand Lake shopping district is already insufficient and additional parking is not included with the proposed dog park, it is likely that the proposed dog area would adversely affect the livability of the neighborhood. The proposed plan calls for removing several parking spaces on Lakeshore Avenue to accommodate the service driveway of the dog area.

- 4. Child Safety / Incompatible Uses.** The existing 8,000-square-foot children's play area at Eastshore Park is used daily by many families. On busy weekend days, it is not uncommon to see 50 to 75 people, including dozens of children, enjoying the playground. The proposed fence of the dog area would be only 25 feet from the existing playground. Given the close proximity of the dog play area to the children's play area, children and parents would be subjected to dust and odors from the proposed dog area. This would adversely affect the ability for families to spill over and use the lawn in the same manner that they do today.

Although dogs and children can be good together, many children and adults are fearful of dogs. Therefore, putting the two uses in the same part of the neighborhood park raises issues of child safety, municipal liability and risk. With dozens of dogs and dozens of children in the same area at the same time, the risk of an incident would be greatly increased. Although a chain link fence would separate the two uses, spillover would likely happen and the probability of dog bites occurring in the City-owned park increases. For these reasons, the proposed Lakeview Dog Play Area would not be compatible with and would adversely affect the livability of the surrounding neighborhood.

5. **Maintenance.** The OSCAR Element states that, *"projected maintenance costs should be fully accounted for in all new facilities, with an assurance that these costs will not jeopardize existing facilities."* Therefore, adequate resources for maintenance must be part of any off-leash dog enclosure proposal. The proposal fails to ensure that a sustainable maintenance regime can be achieved at Eastshore Park. The proposal calls for a volunteer maintenance force, with the Oakland Dog Owners Group (ODOG) responsible for seeking sustainable financial resources for operation, maintenance and a volunteer program. Although volunteer work has a role in every City, the highly visible location lawn at the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur already requires a high level of maintenance. A fenced dog enclosure would have extremely high maintenance requirements.

Although the Lake Merritt Master Plan acknowledges the role of volunteers, volunteer maintenance in City parks can be sporadic and is not advisable for dog parks, says a study by U.C. Davis researchers, entitled, *Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Successful Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas*. The researchers state, "it is suggested that an active dog park club help advise the municipality as to the needed resources to maintain the park, and to help monitor their condition. However, do not rely on the club to handle the maintenance."

Additionally, the Lake Merritt Master Plan advises that "management and supervision of volunteers is important for meaningful participation and effects of their work" and "volunteers should work under the supervision of park staff. This may require flexibility [for staff] to be available on weekends when most volunteers are available."

6. **Problems with Location, Design and Site Planning.** A proposed dog run would not be as attractive as its location and setting warrant.

Eastshore Park sits atop two major watershed creeks and is saturated with rainwater during winter and spring months. Poor drainage may leave the dog enclosure unusable for days at a time and could lead to sanitation issues, as feces and stagnant water are a breeding ground for giardia. Despite some grading work the situation has not been remedied. The current plans for the dog park do not address these ongoing drainage issues.

The fenced dog area would be located in a highly visible location in the middle of the Grand Lake neighborhood. During winter months, the dirt and wood-chipped dog area would be brown and muddy. In the summer months, the dog area would be brown and dusty. The applicants have proposed planting vines on the wire metal fence to hide the dog facility. However, vine maintenance is likely to require a high level of oversight.

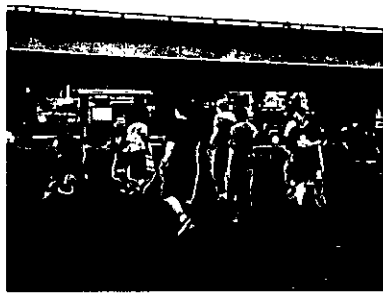
7. **Not an Essential Service to the Community or Region.**
 - a. **Public Benefit versus Public Detriment.** The proposal will not enhance the surrounding area's basic community functions. Developing a fenced dog area at Eastshore Park requires taking away the essential community services that the existing park provides. The proposal would result in the loss of active recreation space. The public detriment from the loss of active recreational open space at Eastshore Park would clearly exceed any public benefits derived from a fenced dog enclosure in that same location.

The OSCAR policies state that, "*[c]ertain neighborhoods...stand out as being particularly dense, including Adams Point, the Oak Center area, and Cleveland Heights. While the densest areas tend to be relatively close to Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park, they are not adequately served with facilities for active recreation such as ballfields, playgrounds, and recreational centers.*" (OSCAR Chapter 4, pg. 16). The OSCAR Element continues, "*[a]ctive recreational areas [are] identified as an unmet need in the Lake Merritt neighborhood.*" (OSCAR Chapter 4, pg. 43)

For these reasons, the proposal to eliminate approximately 50% of the playfield at Eastshore Park will not enhance the surrounding areas basic functions.

- b. **A Changed Neighborhood Since 1999.** The proposed dog enclosure was first considered over a decade ago. Since that time, the Grand Lake neighborhood has changed. Today, there is more activity on the streets due to greater retail and commercial opportunities, resulting in a thriving neighborhood district. Additionally, more active recreational use is occurring on the open lawn at Eastshore Park. More than ever, Eastshore Park is a much needed, vital community benefit that would be adversely affected by the construction of an off-leash dog area of the scale and location that is currently proposed.

Save Astro Park. I am a member of Save Astro Park, an ad-hoc group of neighbors who coalesced last year for one reason – Eastshore Park is the wrong place for a dog run. Many of us have dogs. Our membership is comprised of approximately 2,200 Lake Merritt neighbors who oppose taking away well-used, flexible neighborhood recreation space for the sake of one user group who live outside the neighborhood and the City. (For example, the applicant does not live near Lake Merritt.) We care deeply about this planning decision because we are the people who would be impacted by the proposed change of use within our neighborhood park. We believe that the public detriment from the loss of active recreational open space at Eastshore Park would clearly exceed any public benefits derived from a fenced dog run in the park. The dog owners from beyond our Lake Merritt neighborhood want a dog park at Eastshore Park because, quite simply, they have nothing to lose. However, we do.

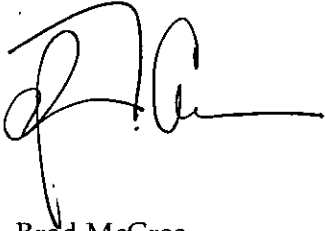


Left to right: Special Olympics practice at Eastshore Park; youth playing at Eastshore Park; Ohlone Dog Park during the winter, cited as a “good” example of a dog park with wood chips. All photos 2011.

Oakland City Council
November 28, 2012

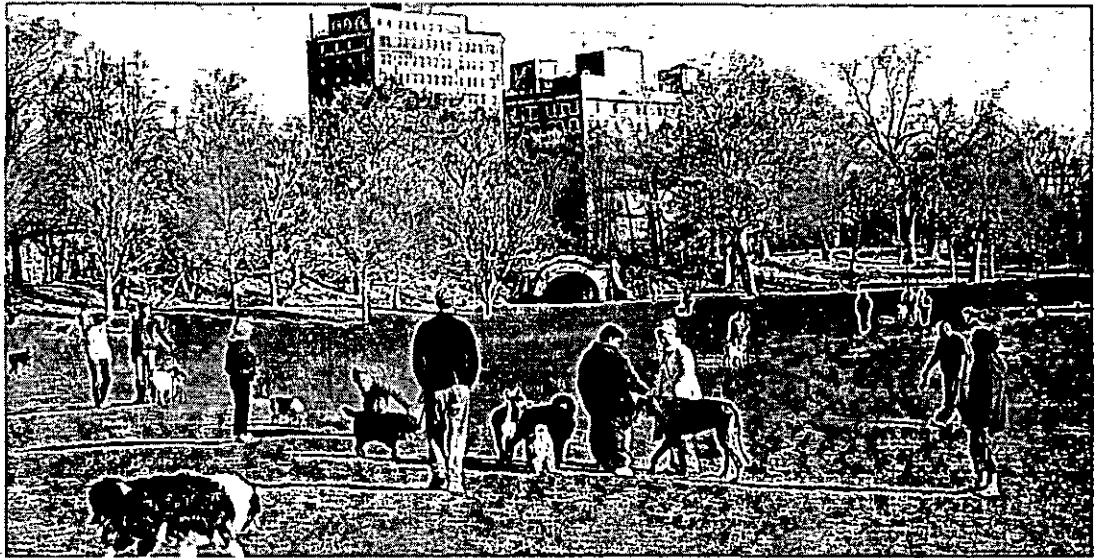
Thank you for your thoughtful consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad McCrea', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Brad McCrea
Oakland Resident

Creating Dog Parks - Without Rancor



Prospect Park, New York City

By Peter Harnik and Cerise Bridges

DOG PARKS UNLEASHED! That's how a tabloid might cover it. Or, just as plausibly FIDO FINALLY GETS TO PLAY! Either way the hottest new city park issue to hit America -- the skyrocketing support for creating places to let dogs run free -- has been challenging park directors, roiling communities and making headlines.

Dogs have always played a big role in city parks, but their traditional position at the end of a lead has been upended by changing mores and a rising enthusiasm among dog owners for much more active play. By one estimate there are now at least 2,000 off-leash dog areas, ranging from small parks entirely devoted to canines to substantial corners of larger green spaces—and the number is growing exponentially. From Berkeley, Calif. (site of reputedly the nation's first, in 1983) to San Antonio and Atlanta (which each opened their first only in 2003), the issue has provoked excitement and furor, with raucous public hearings sometimes running well past midnight. Interestingly, in some cases the dog park issue has badly fragmented a city while in others it has been resolved harmoniously, even adding potency to the park constituency. Why the difference?

In a crowded city where almost every square foot is precious, it's not easy for a park department to announce that some of its land will be devoted to free-running dogs. To some folks that sounds like "your dogs over my children." But from the other side of the fence, the reaction is equally strong: "My kid happens to be a dog. We all pay taxes here, don't we?"

Of all the clashes, nowhere has it gotten as bad as in San Francisco, a city with multiple park agencies and as many dogs as children.

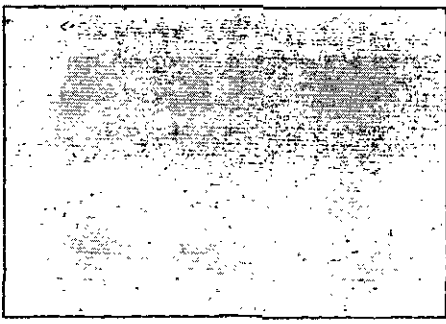
In the 1970s, an off-leash culture began on some of the chilly, foggy and remote San Francisco beaches operated by the National Park Service. Initially removing leashes

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Dog Owner Associations

Who says dog owners (and their opponents) don't have a sense of humor?

SCOOP: Sacramento Owners for Off-leash Parks, Sacramento

KC SCOOP: Kansas City Society of Canine Owners for an Off-leash Park, Kansas City

POOP: People Organized for Off-Leash dog Parks, Nashville

PUP - People Using Parks, Oregon

PiP - Partners in Parks, Milwaukee

FIDO - Fellowship in the Interest of Dogs and their Owners, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York

ROMP: Responsible Owners of Mannerly Pets, Minneapolis

Fort Woof Dog Park: Fort Worth, Tex.

LAPP: Leash-free Alliance of Piedmont Park, Atlanta, Georgia

COLA: Citizens for Off-Leash Areas, Seattle (and other locations)

UnCOLA: Off-leash opposition group, Seattle

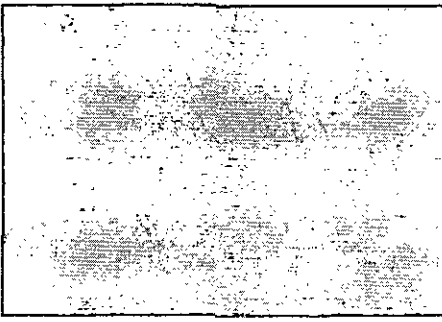
was illegal because of a blanket prohibition on all Park Service land, but a special advisory group recommended an exception for portions of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Not everyone in the city approved, but it did provide an escape valve to keep off-leash dogs from running in more heavily used places like Golden Gate Park or Union Square. Then, in 2001 park naturalists realized that the populations of two threatened beach birds, the snowy plover and the bank swallow, were dropping rapidly and that it was probably due to the unleashed dogs. Suddenly park police began enforcing the leash law and handing out expensive tickets. Just as suddenly owners began to take their pets to much smaller and more centrally located neighborhood parks run by the city park department.

In San Francisco, the second most densely populated city in the nation (after New York), even quarter-acre patches of green are dearly loved and heavily used. If one of them is suddenly peppered with dog droppings, or if someone is bitten while sunbathing, or if mothers start screaming at the owner of an off-leash dog, the whole city quickly hears about it. Perceiving a lack of leadership (the city has two park agencies which rarely communicate, plus the mayor and the city council are usually at odds), every park became a battleground. Both sides dug in, roiled by both the media and a number of grandstanding politicians. Ultimately, the Park Service brought in two organizations, the Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution and the Center for Collaborative Policy to conduct a "negotiated rule making process," a formal consensus approach to problem solving. There are early indications that San Francisco's off-leash dog battle might eventually be amenable to a negotiation, but this particular process is federally mandated and, as such, is so bureaucratic that it can easily take years. When asked if he was surprised that a dog park issue has gone so far, Mike Eng, a senior program manager with the conflict resolution institute was appropriately diplomatic. "On the grand scale of environmental conflicts we deal with, this is low," he said, "but with the emotional attachments people have for their dogs, it is understandable."

Perhaps the real wonder should be reserved for Seattle, 1000 miles to the north, which made the civic transition to dog parks with relative ease and polish. Seattle, too, was hit by the off-leash trend in the early 1990s and, after complaints escalated, the city initially took a hard-line approach, adding more animal control officers and increasing the number of citations. Concerned about where the policy would lead, dog owners formed Citizens for Off-Leash Areas (COLA) and caught the attention of a city council member. The Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation was not the least bit enthusiastic, but COLA helped identify about 70 possible off-leash sites and the City Council mandated a 15-month pilot program at eight of them in 1996.

The pilot program made all the difference. First, it showed residents that the city was in charge and acting reasonably. Second, it taught Seattle how to identify site selection criteria that would lead to successful locations, which turned out to be: (1) avoid interference with other established uses or department-sponsored activities; (2) avoid locations directly abutting residences; (3) assure availability of close-by parking; (4) avoid locations near children's play areas; (4) choose spots where there are minimal impacts on the visual character of a park; (5) site so as to avoid spillover into non-dog areas; and (6) avoid sensitive environmental habitats.

Seattle also learned something else. "Try to find property with no history" says



A Temperament Test

Every dog park has guidelines and rules of etiquette. Commonly, owners are required to clean up after their pets and are prohibited from bringing aggressive dogs, dogs in heat, and dogs that have not been vaccinated. They are also required to be within calling distance of their pets. Some facilities are divided into "large dog" and "small dog" areas. However, Paw Run Recreation Area, a privately run dog park in Ann Arbor, Mich., takes things a step further. Paw Run requires dogs to pass a temperament test to enter.

The temperament test evaluates two forms of aggression: dog-to-people and dog-to-dog. In each test the dog's reaction to a greeting, handling, and object possession is graded from A ("leans forward, averts eyes, relaxes posture and wags tail"), to F ("growls or tries to bite the handler").

Though grades are not a judgment about dog's worth, says Carolyn Kinsler, operator of Paw Run Recreation Area, "members appreciate the test, assured that aggressive dogs will not be a threat to their own or their dog's enjoyment."

Dewey Potter, spokeswoman for the park department. "It's a lot easier than persuading people to change a field's use into something different."

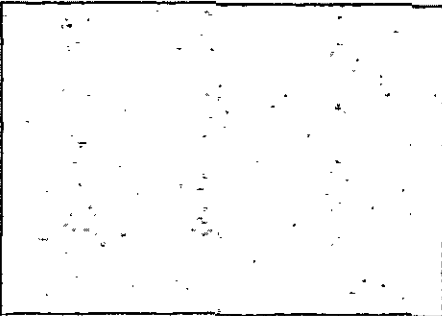
Thanks to a phased-in program by a no-nonsense agency that backed up its promises with both real facilities in some places and tickets in others, Seattle's program today is "wildly successful," according to Potter. In fact, dogs in Seattle have even helped reclaim some parks from illegal users: in 1995, when police reported a high volume of unlawful alcohol, drug and sexual activity in three particular parks, the park department converted them to pilot off-leash areas and criminal activity soon evaporated.

There's no doubt that off-leash areas are good for dogs and their owners. The dogs can run and cavort; the humans can stand or sit, talk or read, watch and provide comfort, if necessary. It's pretty similar to a children's playground and just about as much fun, even for non-dog owning passers-by who often stand at the fence and enjoy all the activity. The more enterprising sites even have playground-like props and accoutrements - sprinklers, fake fire hydrants, wading pools, bridges, tunnels and more - often in bright, primary colors (even though dogs are largely color-blind). When dogs run off excess energy they become less aggressive. When people socialize they often strengthen their community. In Seattle, off-leash areas were so successful that one pundit dubbed them "the singles' bars of the 90s."

There's also no doubt that nearby neighbors are often less enthusiastic. As with playgrounds, noise is a factor, and most people have less tolerance for barking than for children's delighted shrieks. Dog parks also take a physical beating. Even beyond issues of droppings and urine, there is no way to keep grass green, growing and healthy on any dog park smaller than about 15 acres, according to Don Colvin at Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation. Thus, most dog parks are surfaced with shredded bark, pebbles, synthetic materials - or, de facto, with mud and dust.

Robert E. Lee Park, in Baltimore, exemplifies the range of problems - environmental and otherwise—which can arise on an inadequately planned and managed space. Lee is not officially a dog park, but because of its relative remoteness and a lack of enforcement, it has become a popular one. "Overrun," is how one user put it. "Families used to come to picnic, but that's out of the question now with all the dogs running around," he said. When the city announced that it would close the park for a year to reconstruct a bridge and to remediate soil that it said was contaminated by the dogs, owners engaged in what park superintendent Connie Brown called "civil disobedience," cutting fences and circumventing welded steel bars. When a local citizen group pleaded for the creation of a fenced off-leash area within Robert E. Lee Park, the park department deferred the issue until a policy on off-leash areas can be established. Baltimore is a classic case of a city without an off-leash policy without a plan of action, without criteria and without enforcement—there are only two animal control officers for 650,000 residents.

The story from Atlanta's Piedmont Park had a happier ending. There, too, an out-of-the-way portion of the 185-acre park had evolved into an illegal but popular off-leash gathering spot. When it came time to renovate that section of the park, the Piedmont Park Conservancy realized it would have to confront the issue head-on or risk a Baltimore-like uprising. Fortunately a solution was at hand. Piedmont Park has a number of undeveloped, unusable sections which have never evolved a culmre or a user con-



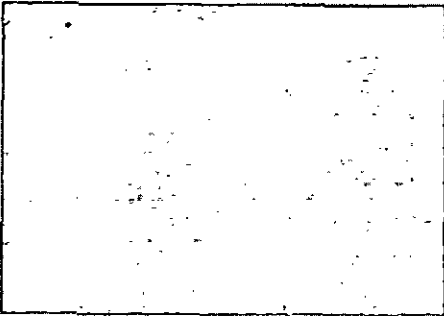
stituency. One, down in a valley shielded by trees and tracks from carshot of most homes, had recently been renovated. It was there that conservancy staff, relying entirely on donations from dog lovers, erected a fence and posted rules. It has become one of the most frequented areas of the park and operates virtually around the clock. "Atlanta has no other dog park," said conservancy Development Director Kendra Cotton. "It was so desperately needed that people treat it as a gift, and take care of it." (The facility is basically self-policed by users, although after a pit bull killed a miniature pincher, the two-acre park was divided into sections based on canine size and weight, and a security patrol was added. The conservancy is also considering instituting a temperament test for dogs.)

The cutting edge in off-leash management is to do a dog park without a fence. This is relatively common in some of the sprawling cities of the west and southwest, such as Colorado Springs and Portland, Ore. Surprisingly, it's also the rule in New York City's Prospect Park.

Prospect Park is a 526-acre oasis in the heart of Brooklyn, one of the most densely populated places in America. Today it is a manicured delight of forest and field, but in the 1970s it was in shambles, a dangerous no-man's land where dogs were both a problem and a source of protection, and many of them were off-leash. With the creation of the Prospect Park Alliance and the successful effort to turn the park around, Tupper Thomas, park administrator, decided to add some structure to the chaotic situation. But she used the clock and the sign, not the fence. She allowed leash-free only in the morning and evening - and dog owners who didn't comply began receiving costly citations. She also stressed that raking off the leash was a privilege, not a right, and it could be taken away if there were problems. To defuse a potentially explosive situation, advocates formed Fellowship in the Interest of Dogs and Owners (FIDO) to maintain good communication with the park staff and to support self-enforcement of the rules. FIDO is now part of a community committee on park policy.

Specifically here are the rules: from April 1 to October 31, off-leash dogs are permitted from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. in three specific places -- Long Meadow, Peninsula Meadow and the Nethermead - which total an amazing 116 acres; in Nethermead they are also permitted from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., but only Monday through Friday. From November 1 to March 31, the off-leash hours for all three areas are 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. seven days a week. Josephine Pittari, vice president of the Alliance, reports that off-leash problems are minimal; she attributes the program's success to good communication between the park and dog owners. In addition to some signs, the Alliance aggressively gives out cards which state clearly the rules, hours and locations.

Perhaps a more typical response was in Milwaukee. When Citizens for Public Dog Parks brought up the issue in the early 1990s, the group was greeted with deep skepticism. The county board expressed concern about maintenance costs and about slotting county land for dogs. Eventually creativity and persistence paid off - the group located a 26-acre backwater between a highway and a river that the county owned but had no plans for. But even then, the county put most of the weight of the experiment on the backs of the dog owners by leasing the land (for \$1) instead of operating it as an official county park. When Granville Off-Leash Dog Park officially opened in the spring of 1999, Citizens for Public Dog Parks changed its name to Partners in Parks (PiP). The



county agreed to pay half the \$4,000 cost of fencing the area but it left all other expenses and management decisions to PIP, which subsists on voluntary contributions and memberships.

Fred Mennecke, board president of PIP, isn't bitter. "Milwaukee County is not a very dog friendly area, but it also has budget problems. If it were known that the county put money into a dog park, all hell would break loose." Despite its step-child status, Granville is a big success - possibly because of its dramatic landscape (stemming from the dumping of old construction fill that resulted in hills and wetlands with woods and trails), or possibly because it is still the only dog park in Milwaukee County

In the long run, Milwaukee's experience may be more telling than Prospect Park's. Cities - Brooklyn included - need more parkland. Instead of cramming more users into existing parks, the search should be on for alternative places to take the leash off - preferably using the not insignificant political and economic clout of urban dog lovers. Dog parks can be established on vacant lots, on drainage detention sites or on former landfills. For instance, villagers in Weston, Wis., plan shortly to officially open their dog park on top of a former landfill that has been covered with topsoil and planted. They raised \$7000 for fencing, benches, and a waste disposal center for the 10-acre facility Berkeley's Caesar Chavez Park, a closed landfill, designates 17 of its 90 acres as off-leash. (It's now the largest dog park in the San Francisco Bay area.) Genessee Park in southeast Seattle, another newly sealed landfill, includes a 3-acre off-leash area and a ball field. (Staying true to the goal of choosing land with no previous park history Seattle is also utilizing a fenced stormwater detention site for another off-leash spot called Blue Dog Pond.)

Though dog parks are in high demand, no park department has thus far taken the step of purchasing land for one. "I don't think we're there yet," says Christine Weber of FIDO Carolina. "Normally dog parks are added to an existing park or are part of the master plan for a new multi-purpose park." Even parks on landfills, because they are usually quite large, are designed to meet a variety of recreational purposes.

The demand for dog parks is strong and growing. This trend has the capacity to add significant power to the general park movement - or it can create divisions that debilitate it. More so than any other new segment of the park user universe (infinitely more so than skateboarders, for instance), dog owners are a constituency with clout. (The U.S. "dog economy" is estimated at around \$75 billion a year.) By communicating sensitively and by planning carefully together, park advocates of all stripes - including both dog lovers and haters - should be able to strengthen urban park systems across the board through better design, better space utilization and the acquisition of more land.

New Ideas on New Spaces for Dogs and Dog Owners

The City of Oakland's OSCAR (Open Space Conservation and Recreation) guidelines say it is better to add new parkland for new programs rather than sacrificing existing parks in use. OSCAR suggests looking to school yards, abandoned gas stations and other surplus City property to add to our parkland. Surplus Caltrans parcels and OUSD land can also be candidates for new parks. By adding to our parkland and preserving park spaces that already benefit Oakland's population, we can increase use without creating conflict. There are also many other ways to improve access for dogs and their owners to Oakland spaces, which we describe below.

There are many alternate options for creating a dog play area in the the Lake Merritt area, outside of Astro Park. These have not yet received a thorough and recent evaluation or any planning efforts:

1. The old Oakland Police Horse Stables, closed in 2006, located in Lakeside Park is one possibility. The stables has a history of animal use, both horses and dogs, and is currently unused and available. It is located in a secluded spot, on a hilltop, away from the sidewalk circling the lake and at a safe distance from vehicle traffic. There is already a substantial fence surrounding the stables which could easily be expanded to provide additional space to create a larger dog run. Conflicts regarding noise and access could be mitigated by predetermined days and hours of use as well as dedicated access routes. There is an existing public bathroom nearby, which is currently closed but could be reopened. Progress on developing a plan for this site was halted while awaiting the final decision on the Eastshore site.
2. Another option is the grounds of the recently closed Lakeview Elementary School. The fenced playground area behind the school could be used for a dog run. Hours of operation would be determined to accommodate other potential uses of the buildings by OUSD administration. Superintendent Tony Smith has said that he does not object to this possibility.
3. Caltrans is mandated by the State of California to offload or lease any parcels not necessary to support transport. Caltrans has stated they are open to discussing the potential sale or lease of surplus properties. Caltrans has already partnered with the City of San Francisco and a private dog park group to develop Rincon Dog Park in San Francisco. The partnership included a six figure grant and a once vacant lot near the Bay Bridge is now utilized as a neighborhood dog park. There are parcels in the Lake Merritt area, owned by Caltrans that would be feasible for potential dog run sites. One specific location rests between Hwy 580 and Macarthur Blvd. where Alma Ave and Capell Street meet Macarthur.

4. The Kaiser Auditorium at the end of Lake Merritt has remained vacant and unused for some time now. The parking lot has recently been utilized as a staging area for construction equipment while implementing the Lake Merritt Measure DD improvements. Soon the construction will be completed and this space would be suitable for a pilot dog run program until the City of Oakland determines the long term fate of the property.
5. Buying or leasing private land, or receiving donations or access rights. Oakland dog owners have shown their willingness and ability to raise funds for dog parks, and spaces may be available from private owners (churches, companies, other organizations or individuals) on a partial-hours, temporary or long-term basis to support off-leash dog play areas, particularly when property is being held for long-term gains not current active use. Sponsorship from pet products and services providers may help here. This is a model in use in some other American cities (e.g. Big Pine, Florida Keys; Decorah, Iowa), with some dog parks being “private” and using a membership model, and others being “pop-up” at certain times of the week.

Beyond the shores of Lake Merritt, other exciting possibilities become available for much larger park spaces for off-leash dog access. The most frequented and best-loved dog parks in the Bay Area are large ones. Existing large off-leash areas are available to dogs and their owners in Redwood Regional Park and many of the surrounding EBRP parks. Point Isabel in Richmond, Cesar Chavez in Berkeley and Fort Funston in San Francisco are three local areas open to off-leash dogs that are so big that minimal fencing is required. Alameda dog park is slightly smaller at five acres and fully fenced. All of these parks are regional draws and their wide open spaces are enjoyed by dogs and their owners. Rather than scatter many tiny dog parks throughout neighborhoods in Oakland, the City could create another large one for use by all Oaklanders as well as those arriving from nearby areas. Suggested locations where this could be accomplished within Oakland include portions of Middle Harbor Park, by the Port of Oakland, and an area of the Martin Luther King Jr Regional Shoreline near the Oakland Airport. Both of these parks have plenty of parking and there are no residences or business districts directly abutting them.

Other alternatives that improve access to dogs with their owners, that do not involve fencing off a specific area, could also benefit from City support:

- I. On-leash walking paths. With better signage and marketing, and the positioning of dog poop bags and “Magic Cans” beside sidewalks encouraged for dog walking, community can be established amongst dog walkers “on the move”. We have 1120 miles of sidewalks in Oakland today on which on-leash dog-walking is allowed. Some focus on improving provisions on some few key miles of this network may go a long way to help.

2. **On-leash permission in specific (or all) Oakland parks.** The City Council should consider revisiting Oakland's blanket ban on all dogs in all Oakland parks at all times. Some relaxation of this rule, even with time-of-day restrictions if thought necessary, could provide opportunities for owners to picnic outdoors with their pets as part of their families, sitting on the grass, as well as to take favorable shortcuts across parks.
3. **Require new developments to include an area for dogs.** The City can make any development beyond a certain size have a requirement of a fenced area for dogs. For example the new Lake Merritt Station Area Plan in Oakland's Chinatown includes a suggested play area for dogs. See page 13 of 42 here: www2.oaklandnet.com/w/oak028423
4. **Dog-friendly bus shuttles at weekends to big parks allowing off-leash dogs.** With coordination with AC Transit and Paratransit authorities and support from the City of Oakland, special services could be offered to take Oakland dog owners and dogs of all sizes from centers of dog population to and from the large bayside and hills parklands for off-leash adventures, relaxing the usual AC Transit "dogs in carriers only" restrictions. This would enable people without cars to access the bay area's most exciting and beautiful dog-friendly spaces, and provide a new community amongst the dog-owning bus riders.
5. **City support for apartment owners providing off-leash dog access.** Many dog owners who have concerns about off-leash access live in apartments. The City could provide support (easy permitting process, other benefits) to apartment owners who choose to fence their yards to allow for off-leash use by their tenants' dogs.
6. **A subsidy from the City of Oakland for its citizens to get an off-leash dog permit for Piedmont parks.** For some Oaklanders, wherever we put our neighborhood dog parks, the ones in Piedmont will always be closer. Where the \$34 per year cost of a permit is a hardship, the City could help its dog-license-owning citizens pay this fee.



SAVE ASTRO PARK – WHO WE ARE

SAVE ASTRO PARK is a 2,000 plus-member grassroots neighborhood coalition that formed in February 2011 to preserve the open green space at Eastshore Park – also known as Astro Park. We oppose the construction of the Lakeview Dog Play Area proposed by Oakland Dog Owner's Group (ODOG) on the southeast side of our neighborhood park.

SAVE ASTRO PARK strongly believes that Astro Park is a highly unsuitable location for a dog run because this open space is well-utilized for recreation, is adjacent to a children's play area, and is very visually prominent.

Over the past year, SAVE ASTRO PARK has spent time at the park notifying the neighborhood about the dog park proposal. Approximately nine out of every 10 people that we've spoken to do not want a dog park in Astro Park. We have, therefore, created this document outlining the community's concerns.

SIX PRIMARY CONCERNS ABOUT THE DOG PARK PROPOSAL

The following six concerns that have been expressed by neighbors who are in favor of retaining the existing open space rather than constructing a fenced, off-leash dog run. The concerns are:

- 1 Gateway to Lake Merritt -- Adverse Impact on Visual Character of Park
- 2 Recreational Space -- Adverse Impact on Established Uses
- 3 Proximity to Children's Play Area -- Animal Spillover into Non-Dog areas
- 4 Park Maintenance
- 5 Parking Impacts
- 6 Planning Process Considerations

These concerns are in alignment with typical issues related to dog park development across the country. Planning guidelines for off-leash dog areas created in other large cities strive to address the concerns that have been raised in Oakland. Each of these concerns is articulated in greater detail in this report following a brief review of Oakland's current planning tools.

PLANNING GUIDELINES

Oakland's Park and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) is in the process of creating guidelines for best practices for off leash and on leash dog play areas in Oakland. This report will be available in February of 2013. Since these are not yet available, we have reviewed several sets of guidelines for development within parks. These documents support our position that Astro Park is an inappropriate location for a dog run. These documents include:

- 1996 Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element of the General Plan (OSCAR) for the City of Oakland; and
- Creating Dog Parks Without Rancor, report by the Trust for Public Land (Center for City Park Excellence, 2005)

The Trust for Public Land's Creating Dog Parks Without Rancor, references guidelines developed by the City of Seattle Planning Department in conjunction with COLA (Citizens for Off-Leash Areas), a local organization. Those criteria are:

- Avoid interference with other established uses (or "history");
- Avoid locations directly abutting residences;
- Assure availability of close-by parking;
- Avoid locations near children's play areas;
- Choose spots where there are minimal impacts on the visual character of a park;
- Avoid sites where there will be spill-over into non-dog areas; and
- Avoid sensitive environmental habitats.

The OSCAR Element was approved by the Oakland City Council in June 1996 as the "blueprint for change over the next two decades." The document makes recommendations for the future growth of open space and included an Oakland Parks Master Plan and specific plans for individual parks. A specific plan was not developed for Eastshore Park.

The following are the OSCAR policies that apply to the proposed dog park at Astro Park. The policies are grouped according to the primary concerns of SAVE ASTRO PARK, and are similar to the City of Seattle's guiding principles.

GATEWAY / VISUAL CHARACTER

- *Eastshore [Park]. This neighborhood park is very heavily used...the park is also a logical "gateway" to the lake area and would benefit from signage improvements or even a monument or fountain of some sort. (OSCAR Chapter 5, pg. 12)*
- *Policy OS-9.3 Gateway improvements. Enhance neighborhood and city identity by maintaining or creating gateways. Maintain view corridors and enhance the sense of arrival at the major entrances to the city...Use public art, landscaping, and signage to create stronger City and neighborhood gateways (OSCAR, Chapter 2, pg 63)*
- *Specific recommendation for Lakeside Park: One goal of the plan is to increase the perception of the park as a single unity rather than a series of disjointed spaces. (OSCAR Chapter 5, pg. 11)*

RECREATIONAL SPACE NEEDS

- *Active recreational areas identified as an unmet need in the Lake Merritt neighborhood. (OSCAR Chapter 4, pg. 43)*
- *Certain neighborhoods ... stand out as being particularly dense, including Adams Point, the Oak Center area, and Cleveland Heights. While the densest areas tend to be relatively close to Lake*

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Merritt and Lakeside Park, they are not adequately served with facilities for active recreation such as ballfields, playgrounds, and recreational centers. (OSCAR Chapter 4, pg. 16)

- *Conflicts between park uses. This policy directs the Office of Parks and Recreation to site new park facilities in a manner which maximizes the usefulness of the facility while minimizing its impact on existing use. Basic principle: Large enough areas should be provided for each activity. (OSCAR Chapter 4, pg. 34)*

MAINTENANCE

- *Projected maintenance costs should be fully accounted for in all new facilities, with an assurance that these costs will not jeopardize existing facilities. (OSCAR Chapter 4, pg. 24)*

1) GATEWAY TO LAKE MERRITT / VISUAL CHARACTER OF PARK

As noted above, Astro Park is designated by OSCAR as a “gateway” to Lake Merritt, which defines Oakland’s beauty. It is a beautiful, green field, well suited to recreational use, and enjoyed by the many who circulate around it. It provides a sense of spaciousness in a very dense, urban environment.

The park is the central focal point of the neighborhood. It is bordered on the south side by the freeway and by hillsides on the east and west. It is located at the bottom of a large bowl that is visible from the surrounding residences. At this location, Interstate 580 empties onto MacArthur Boulevard providing daily access to the Lake Merritt neighborhood for as many as 30,000 households and an untold number of visitors. It is a key transportation link in our community, well utilized by buses, pedestrians, and cyclists. It also connects the Grand Lake retail district to the lake.

Improvements to this space should be in the form of additional landscaping, paths, seating, public art, or daylighting of covered creeks. Any of these would contribute to the beauty of this prime location.



Corner of Grand Ave and MacArthur Blvd. Photos taken in Spring 2011.

Conversely, the construction of a fenced dog park in this location would be extremely detrimental to the visual character of the park. The dog park design approved by PRAC in December 2010 consists of 700 feet of metal fence surrounding 21,000 square feet of space. The existing grass would be removed and the ground surface would be covered with wood chips, turning the cherished green space into a brown lot. The proposal includes growing vines on the chain link fence in an effort to obscure this unattractive feature.

Regardless of attempts to mitigate this eyesore through landscaping screening, the space would surely be brown, fenced and unsightly. Astro Park sits atop two major watershed creeks and is saturated with rainwater during winter and spring months. During this time, the dog park will be unusable due to poor drainage and the smell of urine-soaked wood chips would be pervasive.



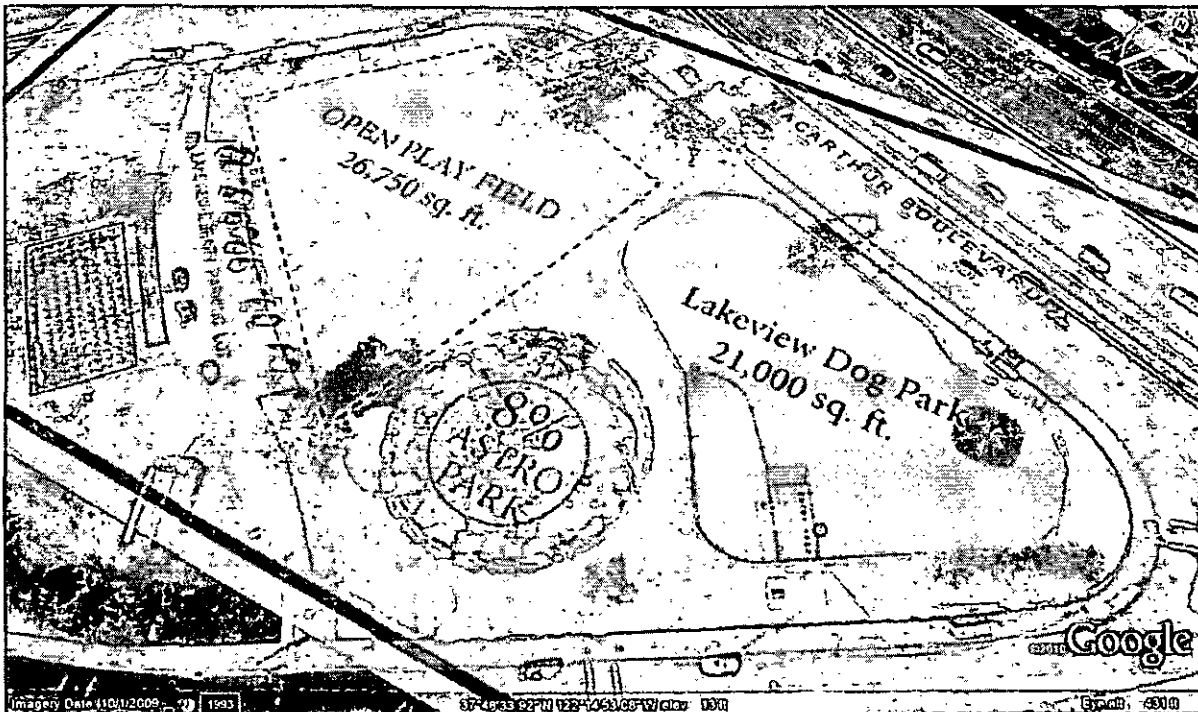
Ohlone Dog Park, Berkeley, CA.

The above picture was taken March 2011. The Ohlone Dog Park was referenced by ODOG as an example of a dog park that utilizes wood chips.

A development of this sort will surely reverse the positive trends that the Lake Merritt neighborhoods have experienced over the past several years. The improvements to Lake Merritt's perimeter made through Measure DD, the wildly successful farmer's market and the addition of Trader Joe's and other successful retail has made the Grand Lake area a destination. The increasing vibrancy of the neighborhood would likely be impacted by a fenced dog run at this gateway.

2. RECREATIONAL SPACE/IMPACT ON EXISTING USE

Active recreation is identified by OSCAR as being inadequately served in the Lake Merritt area. Astro Park is the only flat, open field for active recreational play in the Lake Merritt area. The proposed dog park plan would reduce the available play field area by approximately half.



The fenced dog run would be located adjacent to a tot lot, and result in the loss of half of the usable play field.

As acknowledged by OSCAR, the play field is regularly used for many recreational activities. These include soccer, volleyball, flag football, baseball, circle rules football, Frisbee, slack line, picnicking, drumming performances, yoga, and lacrosse. Many of the groups that use this space have been using it for more than a decade and, in some cases, more than twenty years. Because the space is wide open and unprogrammed, groups do not compete with one another for use. This is essential to the success of Astro Park, and follows the OSCAR guideline creating space of adequate size to reduce conflicts between uses.

The addition of a 21,000–square–foot fenced dog run would subdivide the open field such that existing uses will no longer have adequate space. There are frequently multiple activities taking place simultaneously. All activities will be more crowded, which may create an unsafe situation for children using the playground. Additionally, Bayhill High School has expressed strong concerns as Bayhill uses the field for daily PE classes and touch football games. The Special Olympics rely on Astro Park for practice because the unstructured space and its proximity to bus lines is unique to the area.

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All current users of the play field would be subjected to a constrained space with a fence further limiting range of play. Additionally sports and recreation users of the park will experience noise, odor and dust blowing out from the proposed dog area. The Oakland Youth Tennis program, among others, has complained about similar conditions at the Mosswood Tennis Court. The tennis courts at Mosswood Park are adjacent to the Mosswood Dog Play Area.

SAVE ASTRO PARK has consulted with many of the users of Astro Park. They are unanimously opposed to the Lakeview Dog Park proposal and in favor of retaining the unprogrammed play field at Astro Park.



Active recreational areas are identified by the OSCAR Element as an unmet need in the Lake Merritt neighborhood.



Children's Soccer League practice, October 22, 2011



Special Olympics practice, November 5, 2011

3. PROXIMITY TO CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA / SPILLOVER INTO NON-DOG AREAS

Given the close proximity of the proposed dog park to the children's play area, children and parents would be subject to noise, smell and dust from the potential dog area, making their experience unpleasant. Also, the flexibility of the space where families use both the tot lot and the green space concurrently becomes constrained with the addition of a nearby fence.

Although dogs and children can be good together, the City of Seattle determined that it is important to avoid siting a dog run in a location near a children's play area. Many children as well as adults have a fear of dogs and they should not be required to interact while using the children's play area. From the perspective of liability, the two park uses are incompatible.

The proposed dog run at Astro Park would be only 25 feet from the existing children's tot lot. With dozens of dogs and dozens of children in the same area at the same time, the risk of an incident would be greatly increased. Although a metal fence would separate the two uses, spillover would likely happen and the probability of dog bites to occur in the City-owned dog park increases. **SAVE ASTRO PARK** strongly urges the City of Oakland to not allow these incompatible uses in the same location.

4. INSUFFICIENT MAINTENANCE FOR A HIGHLY VISIBLE PARK LOCATION

Maintenance of a dog run requires a considerable amount of work. The current maintenance proposal calls for the City to pick up the trash at the dog park, routinely replenish a half-acre of wood chips, and remove graffiti. Due to budget cuts, Oakland Public Works staff would be hard-pressed to spend the time needed to keep this dog run well maintained.

The proposal calls for a volunteer maintenance force and ODOG would be responsible for seeking sustainable financial resources for operation, maintenance and a volunteer program. This is not advisable, says a study by U.C. Davis researchers, entitled, *Guidelines for Establishment and Maintenance of Successful Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas*. The researchers state, "it is suggested that an active dog park club help advise the municipality as to the needed resources to maintain the park,

and to help monitor their condition. However, do not rely on the club to handle the maintenance." [Emphasis added.]

The Stewardship Agreement between the City of Oakland, Office of Parks and Recreation, Public Works Agency and Lakeview Park Dog Owner Croup (LPDOC) is likely insufficient. Does it describe any penalties levied to any party to the agreement for failure to perform the responsibilities described within? Does any party take responsibility for the fence itself, if it should become damaged by vine growth, undermined by enthusiastic digging activities or simply depreciates from age? Is there a description of ground treatment for odor control and acid management? What equipment and supplies are required? Who is responsible to provide them? Where would the equipment and supplies be stored? Finally, how will new officers be elected or appointed by its members in the case that an existing officer might move away or retire?

Maintenance is the key to the success of all the Measure DD improvements and any new enhancements. OSCAR and dog park publications also stress the importance of properly funded maintenance plans for any new projects. Due to vine and planting maintenance, this dog park would require more volunteer resources than any of the other dog parks in Oakland. In fact, vines are seldom

used for municipal plantings due to the increase of care and attention that they naturally require. Given that the Department of Public Works laid off 17 gardeners in July of 2011 due to budget problems it would not be wise to add enhancements that require extra maintenance. Furthermore, it would be irresponsible for the City to rely on a volunteer group for ongoing maintenance, given the visibility of this space and its proximity to retail businesses. The stakes are too high.

5. PARKING IMPACTS

The dog park proponents have stated that no one will drive to the dog park. This claim, however, is unsubstantiated and an unreasonable assumption. Dog park users drive to dog parks 95% of the time, according to a study done on 17 dog parks by the Program in Veterinary Behavioral Medicine, U.C. Davis. Every dog park guidance document, including those referenced by the Trust for Public Land, state that parking should be included in dog park plans. Currently, Cleveland Heights and Adams Point constituents drive to the area for their retail and entertainment needs. Parking supply in the shopping district is insufficient and additional parking is not included with the proposed dog park. In fact, the proposed plan calls for removing several parking spots on Lakeshore Avenue to accommodate the service driveway of the dog area.

The proximity of the dog park to the Grand Avenue and Lakeshore Avenue retail areas is a significant issue. Eastshore Park is currently zoned C-30, which indicates it is in a major retail district thoroughfare. In recent years, new commercial development (Trader Joe's, Walgreen's, new restaurants, the Farmer's Market), as well as the City's stated goal to increase population density in the area, has put further demands on traffic and parking capacity. The area is entirely too congested for a dog park and would adversely impact traffic and parking. As proposed, service trucks removing dog waste from the park would stop on busy Lakeshore and then back in, crossing the heavily used sidewalk. This activity would take place in between a bus stop and the popular children's play area, creating an unsafe situation for all those nearby.

According to the 2007 Environmental Impact Record for Measure DD Implementation Project, approximately 3,700 cars per hour pass through the intersection of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in the peak evening hours. The proposed dog park would increase vehicular and pedestrian traffic, especially during peak dog park hours in the early evening and on Saturdays when restaurant, theater and the Farmer's Market traffic dominate the area. Additional dog park traffic would negatively impact surrounding streets supporting the Grand Lake retail and commercial areas. Furthermore, Measure DD projects reduced roadways around Lake Merritt from four to two lanes. The impact on traffic at El Embarcadero and MacArthur Boulevard was already identified by the Cleveland Heights Yahoo group in October 2010 as an issue for the area. And meetings with the City's traffic & engineering departments in January 2011 yielded no progress on the issue.

It's Not Even A Good Dog Park
The site is not suitable for many reasons. Shade is critical for dogs, as they are unable to cool themselves as efficiently as humans. The American Kennel Club, Animal Planet and The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, all list shade as a requirement for a dog park. Astro Park offers no trees and hence no shade for dogs. Although trees could be planted, it would take many years before dogs could find this location to be tolerable on warmer days.

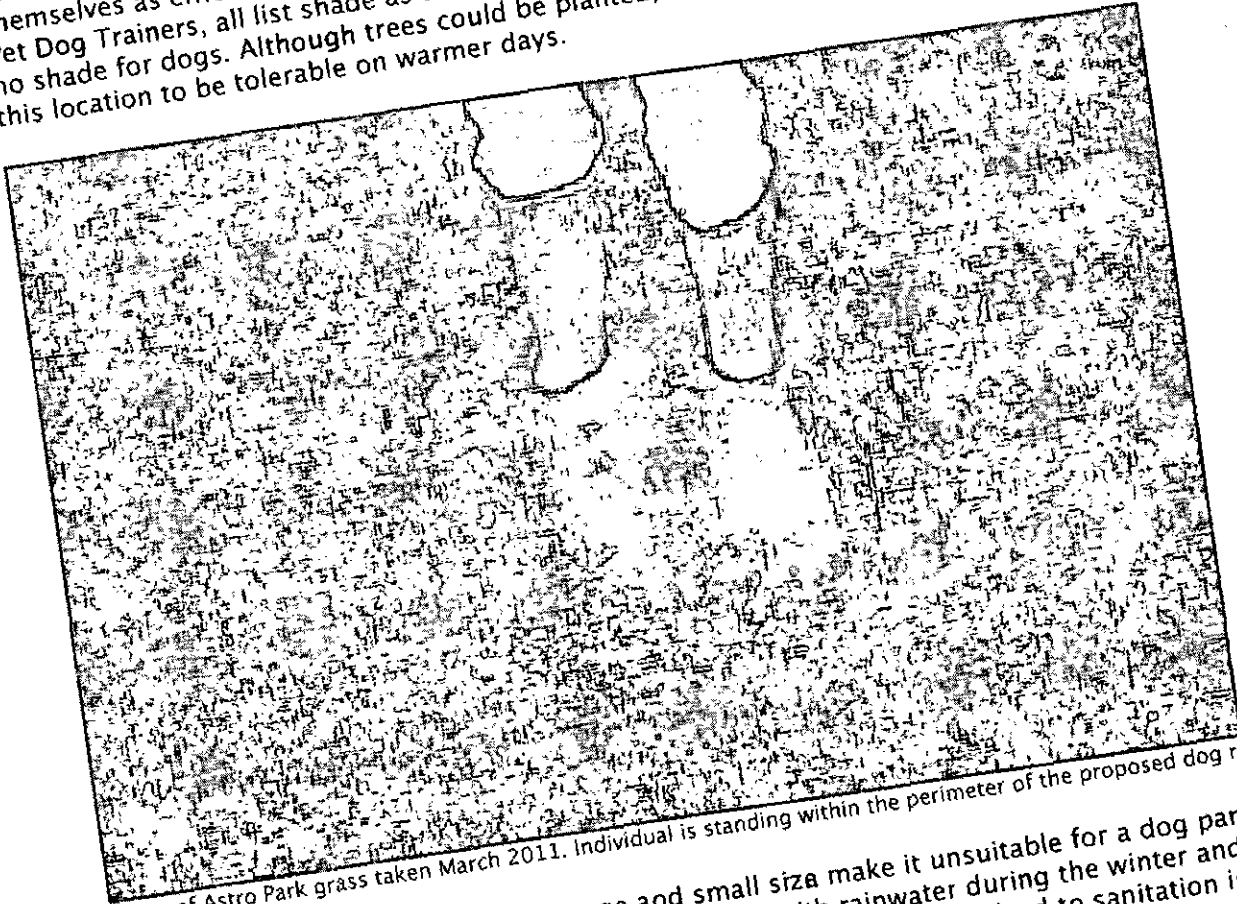


Photo of Astro Park grass taken March 2011. Individual is standing within the perimeter of the proposed dog run.

Additionally, Astro Park's poor drainage and small size make it unsuitable for a dog park. The park sits atop two major watershed creeks, and is saturated with rainwater during the winter and spring months. Poor drainage often leaves the park unusable for months and could lead to sanitation issues, as feces and stagnant water are a breeding ground for giardia and other dangerous pathogens. Despite some grading work the situation has not been remedied and the current plans for the dog park do not address these ongoing drainage issues. As a result, a dog park at Astro Park would be unusable for parts of winter and spring, yet consistently remain visually brown, fenced and uninviting. Runoff from the proposed dog park compounds these issues as it would eventually drain into the underground creeks as well as Lake Merritt. The runoff issue should require a creek permit and possible evaluation of other environmental impacts.

The proposed size of the Lakeview Dog Park is approximately one-half acre. A 21,000 square foot dog park is not a recommended size for a successful dog park. According to the American Kennel Club and California Parks and Recreation Society (see addendum), the minimum recommended size for a dog park is 1 acre. Applying Oakland's own zoning requirements, parks no less than 7 acres in size should

be sought to add appropriately sized dog parks. Of course there are exceptions, but they should only be considered in areas where there is blight, crime or underutilization. The intersection of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard, a primary gateway to Lake Merritt, is not blighted or underutilized. If our City staff, elected officials and community members are committed to spending so much time on a proposed dog park at Lake Merritt, let's be sure to create one that can be safely and maximally used.

6. PLANNING PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS

No Community Input on Current Plan

In 2002, a dog park was added to Lake Merritt Master Plan as a “potential dog park” at Eastshore Park with minimal details. Town Hall meetings to get community input were conducted in January 2004, and the community reviewed a preliminary design at a June 2006 meeting.

The scope of the project was a dog park and butterfly garden, which included a very intricate landscape design plan with irrigation, garden pergolas at both ends of the dog park, wrought iron gates and a butterfly garden. The total budget for the original project was over \$400,000.

In late 2009, the plan resurfaced as a dramatically scaled back version of the original plan with a new budget of \$45,000. The new budget includes the fence, wood chips, concrete perimeter, irrigation and some landscaping and not much else. There were no community meetings to get preliminary input on the new proposal.

Community Notice Requirement

OSCAR requires that pre-development meetings occur and that the public be very much involved in open space management. The current proposal is a completely different plan from the 2004 version and therefore requires a pre-development neighborhood meeting per the planning code. Nancy Nadel's PRAC design recommendation mentions that the new plan was reviewed by PWA, OPR and ADA, as well as the Adam's Point Action Council. However, there were no community meetings to get preliminary input on the revised 2009 plans.

In fact, Councilmember Nadel's office did not notice the community email groups of any progress on the original dog park in 2007, 2008 or 2009. In August 2010 a neighbor in the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Croup sent an email about dog parks and was met with an abrupt response from Councilmember Nadel. In September 2010, the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Croup moderator tried to take a poll of the community's interest in the Astro location. Councilmember Nadel made it clear to the list that she was not open to discussing the project, which is one reason the project has created such uproar. Members of the community who had an opposing position were never given a voice. Furthermore, her office failed to share with the community the new plans that removed 90% of the budget, a significant material change.

Even after all this email activity, Councilmember Nadel's office did not inform the neighborhood groups of the December 8, 2010 PRAC Design Review meeting. ODOG only emailed information about the plans and the PRAC meeting to their supporter list. It was on December 5th (three days before the meeting) that the community was informed that a new plan existed by a dog park supporter on the ODOG list who did not support the Astro Park plan. Many of the community members who oppose the Eastshore location did not have enough notice to attend the meeting.

It was only after the PRAC Design approval for the dog park that a community meeting was held. The meeting, held on March 23, 2011, was attended by approximately 150 residents and clearly demonstrated that, by that time, the community was divided on this issue. Despite over 10 years of planning, a significant number of community members do not support a dog park at Astro Park and a significant majority (almost 70%) of people who attended the meeting expressed concerns about the

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location. Proposing a dog park in a well-loved, small neighborhood park that is widely used for recreational purposes has created a contentious community situation.

A PRAC meeting was then held in July of 2011. The question for the PRAC was whether or not to recommend a CUP for this dog run. No recommendation was made as there was a tie vote (3-3). The meeting ended with Audrey Jones Taylor, head of Oakland Park and Recreation stating that this matter had, "died in PRAC." Without a recommendation from PRAC, this item should not have moved to the Planning Commission. According to Oakland's OSCAR (Open Space Conservation and Recreation) policy, if newly proposed recreational uses could significantly change the character of the park, as is the case with this proposed dog run, both PRAC and Planning Commission approval is required. Neither approval was granted.

On May 2, 2012 the Oakland Planning Commission unanimously denied issuing a conditional use permit for the dog park at Eastshore Park. After reviewing over 1400 pages of reports and public input and hearing over three hours of testimony the Commissioners voted as follows: Truong voted no, Huntsman voted no, Zayas-Martinez voted no, and Wales abstained. Patillo recused herself due to a conflict of interest. Colbruno was absent. .

ASTRO PARK IS A PLACE FOR EVERYONE

While this document serves to outline the reasons why our community does not want and should not have a fenced dog run at the Astro Park location, what is difficult to communicate is the essence of the space and the emotion it evokes in our neighborhood. This space is loved—by many and for many different reasons. This is not just a patch of green. This space represents the best of Oakland:

"...we use Astro Park every Sunday at 3pm to play soccer. A group of around 20 show up and play soccer from 3pm till around 6 or until it gets dark. This is not just a group of your average American guys playing soccer. This is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-religious group. Here is a group of Muslims from Afghanistan playing soccer with Hindus from Sri Lanka, Buddhist from Bhutan, and Orthodox Christians from Eritrea – laughing and playing soccer. They are the future of Oakland. They are the future of our nation. Allowing green spaces like Astro Park to exist allows for connections and bridges to be built across cultural, language, religious, and social barriers. It is one of the few green spaces in Oakland big enough to host a group like ours."

(Excerpt from a letter sent to Commissioners on 3/4/2012)

It is for every reason in this document and every reason you see and feel when you read the letters from our community that we urgently ask you to deny the appeal of the Planning Commission decision and to deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.



Date: November 2012

To: Oakland City Council

From: Save Astro Park - A coalition of neighbors opposed to the Lakeview Dog Park (AKA Astro Park)

On May 2, 2012, Oakland's Planning Commission unanimously denied the conditional use permit application for a dog play area at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue. Four Commissioners were present. One of those Commissioners abstained from voting. The other three Commissioners voted unanimously to deny the application for the proposed project.

The Planning Commission reviewed over 1,400 pages of information and public comment and heard over three hours of public testimony. The Commissioners determined that the park was too small to add another program element of this type, that the tot lot would be too close to the proposed dog area, and that spillover from the fenced dog run would likely occur. For these reasons and others, such as aesthetics, and heavy traffic, the Commission determined that this site is inappropriate for a dog run.

This unanimous decision by the Planning Commission to deny the project was appealed to the City Council.

Section 17.134.070 of the Oakland municipal code lays out the framework for appealing certain Planning Commission decisions before City Council. According to the municipal code, the appeal must show that, "there was an error or abuse of discretion by the Commission or wherein its decision is not supported by the evidence in the record."^[1]

The Planning Commission, during the months preceding the May 2nd meeting, reviewed over 1400 pages of application materials and public comments that was part of the public record. The Planning Commission also carefully, thoughtfully and patiently listened to over three hours of presentations and testimony from both sides. Planning Commission Chairperson Vien Truong ensured that every person who wanted to speak had the opportunity to do so. Interruptions were not allowed and members of the public were given the opportunity to cede their time to others. In the end, the Commissioners unanimously decided against the Lakeview Dog Play Area at this location. There was no error or abuse of discretion, and the Commission's decision was well supported by the evidence in the extensive record.

We strongly encourage the City Councilmembers and their staff to review the video of the May 2, 2012 Planning Commission meeting on the KTOP DVD, enclosed. We especially encourage the Councilmembers to listen to the Commissioners final statements in justifying their unanimous decision. Upon review, we believe it will be clear that the City of Oakland Planning Commission acted fairly and used sound judgment while using its discretion.

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Save Astro Park concurs with the Planning Commission's decision and believes that the proposed site for the Lakeview Dog Play Area is highly unsuitable. The fenced dog area would adversely impact the current use of the open space, which includes park visitors, children, and business owners. The proposed dog run would also be visually destructive to an attractive park setting that brings much needed visual relief to this dense urban neighborhood.

Save Astro Park currently has more than 2,000 members. We formed in February 2011 when people in the Lake Merritt neighborhoods began learning about the proposal to fence off a large portion of the lawn at Astro Park for a dog run. A group of volunteers stood at the edge of the Park on Saturday mornings to inform neighbors of the size and location of the proposed dog area. On some mornings, the space was taped off in accordance with the December 2010 PRAC-approved design. On other mornings, a map demonstrating the approved design was given out. As we described the new dog run to our neighbors, they expressed surprise and concern about the plan. Each time we were at the park, 100 to 200 neighbors signed up to become members of Save Astro Park, giving us their email addresses and offering their support to save the open space. Within just a few months, the database surpassed 2,000 neighbors and concerned citizens who walk by the space regularly.

Thousands of community members do not want a dog park sited at this location. In light of the community concerns and overwhelming opposition, we request that the application for a minor conditional use permit for the Lakeview Dog Play Area be denied.

Briefly, we will present the primary reasons the community does not want a dog run in this location.

- 1 Astro Park is technically and visually a gateway to Lake Merritt as well as the Grand Lake District. Thousands of pedestrians and occupants in vehicles view this space on a daily basis. Siting a dog park in such a highly visible space is inappropriate.
- 2 The proposed dog run is located next to a tot-lot. While no one is interested in fear mongering, the reality is, not all dogs are safe. And not all children are well behaved around dogs. While the majority of the time there may be no issues, it is the City's duty to protect its citizens by making sure that dog runs are not near children's play areas. If these incompatible uses are located adjacent to each other, conflicts between children and dogs, at some point, are inevitable.
- 3 This park is heavily used by a diverse group of people in different ways. From soccer players to picnickers to toddlers running around, an open, green commons in a sunny spot is rare and cherished. Further, students of Bayhill High School, located one block away, rely on the park for recreational activities Monday through Friday, from 8:30 to 11:30 AM. See Attachment 1 for a list of observed uses to date. Additionally, this video taken on a sunny Saturday last

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February shows how heavily used the park truly is:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TESI-FZCApc>

- 4 A 22,000 square foot dog run consumes almost half of the available play space. (See Attachment 2 for plan.)
- 5 There are six other dog parks located 1.1 miles to 2.7 miles away. Many of these existing alternatives are currently underutilized. Additionally, with Redwood Park and Joaquin Miller Park within a ten minute drive from Astro Park, Oakland hosts 2,300 open space acres in hills where dogs can run off-leash. See Attachment 3.
- 6 Relying solely on volunteer maintenance to service dog parks is never recommended. We are very concerned that the dog run will quickly become an eyesore, especially during winter rains, and will be detrimental to the vibrancy of our neighborhood. Trash, graffiti on fences and smells are likely at this Gateway to the Lake Merritt district. See Attachment 4 for information on dog park maintenance, written by the Assistant City Manager, City of Berkeley.
- 7 The park sits atop two major watershed creeks and can be saturated with rainwater during winter and spring months. This flooding cannot be mitigated by wood chips. Please take the time to watch this video, taken exactly where the proposed dog run would be sited:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6W1wnan2rOg&feature=channel>
- 8 Traffic and increased neighborhood parking demand would be problematic. Although the dog park proposal is being touted as a neighborhood 'walk-to' amenity, common sense dictates that people will drive there both from the neighborhood and the greater East Bay. Once a dog park is announced on Yelp or other online postings, people will drive to this site with their dogs. This area is already highly stressed in terms of parking and congestion.
- 9 The proposed dog park was not "approved" in the Lake Merritt Master Plan. In 2002, the dog area was described as "potential dog park" at Eastshore Park with minimal detail. Although this proposed park received a PRAC design approval in December 2010, it failed to receive PRAC's recommendation for a conditional use permit in July 2011. According to Oakland's OSCAR (Open Space Conservation and Recreation) policy, if newly proposed recreational uses could significantly change the character of the park, as is the case with this proposed dog run, both PRAC and Planning Commission approval is required. This project received neither.
- 10 Community Opposition. The community, which is currently represented by, but not limited to, 2,000 Save Astro Park members, does not want a dog run located at Lakeshore and MacArthur. To date, over 500 letters have been sent to the Planning Department and the City Council, all passionately pleading to keep the space as it is.

Lack of Community Process. Given all of the reasons stated above, and given the widespread and vehement community opposition for a dog run at this location,

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please ask yourself: how did this proposal get as far as it has? The answer to this is simple: the community was not properly notified.

The fact that the community was not properly notified was confirmed by Councilmember Nancy Nadel in a December 7, 2010 email that she sent to the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Group:

"The dog park at the MacArthur location has been in the planning process for many years, perhaps longer than some have even lived in the area. Unfortunately, it seems that many of you were not notified of the numerous outreach activities that took place over the last 5 years.... Please be respectful of years of other people's work that hasn't always been on everyone's radar screen because of limited funds but is now finally coming close to fruition."

We have researched the history of this proposal and are aware of an initial plan for a dog park at Astro Park developed in 2006 with a \$400,000 budget, and a subsequent plan with a \$35,000 budget presented to PRAC in late 2009. No meetings were held to get community input on the 2009 plans. Councilmember Nadel, whose office sponsored the plan, did not notice the community email groups of any progress on the original dog park in 2007, 2008 or 2009.

Further Councilmember Nadel's office did not inform the community email groups of the December 8, 2010 PRAC Design Review meeting. Save Astro Park was formed shortly after this meeting when several neighbors learned about the proposal because one member of ODOG's mailing list was opposed to the idea of the dog park and discussed it on the Cleveland Heights Neighborhood Group, setting off a firestorm of opposition.

At the insistence of Councilmember Pat Kernighan, a community meeting was finally held on March 23, 2011. It was attended by approximately 150 residents and clearly demonstrated that the community was divided on this issue. Approximately 70% of people who attended the meeting expressed concerns about the location. Proposing a dog park in a well-loved, small neighborhood park that is widely used for recreational purposes had created a contentious community situation. A PRAC meeting was then held in July of 2011. The question for the PRAC was whether or not to recommend a CUP for this dog run. No recommendation was made as there was a tie vote (3-3). The meeting ended with Audrey Jones Taylor, head of Oakland Park and Recreation stating that this matter had, "died in PRAC." However, the Planning Staff determined that denying the application administratively was out of the question and elevated the matter to the Planning Commission, which, on May 2, 2012, denied the application.

Since July 2012, the opposition to the dog park has continued to grow. The community preference is clearly to retain the existing, much-needed open space rather than create a dog park. The Trust for Public Land's document, [Creating Dog](#)

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Parks Without Rancor, recommends creating dog parks in locations that are "shielded", "undeveloped", "unusable" and that do not have "a user constituency". Astro Park is none of these and should not be converted to a dog run.

Again, we respectfully urge you to uphold the Planning Commission's decision and deny the application for a Conditional Use Permit for the Lakeview Dog Play Area.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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Attachment 1: Groups and Uses of the Astro Park Playfield

Groups and uses include but are not limited to:

Bayhill High School – Bayhill is a charter school one block away. Bayhill needs the play field for P.E. classes and holds their touch football games at Astro Park.

Baseball – Simple games of catch are often played on the field. Most frequently, this is between a parent and child.

Baseball Backstop – The backstop is used frequently, again, with parents often times pitching the ball to their child or children.

Rehab Center – This center has been using the field for nearly two decades. They remain anonymous but use the field weekly for soccer.

Soccer Shots – Soccer Shots is a leader in youth soccer development for children ages 3–8. Soccer Shots uses the field frequently and year-round.

Soccer – Informal, weekday pick-up games that generally happen in the late afternoon and evening.

Special Olympics – uses field for soccer practice on Saturday mornings for several months before the games.

Squash-Drive.org – an afterschool enrichment program serving Oakland youth. They use the playfield for general fitness development and games.

Sunday soccer league – This is an informal pick-up group that has been using the play field for over 15 years.

Volleyball – Informal volleyball games have been going on for an estimated fifteen years or longer.

Tot Lot – More often than not small children and their parents utilize the space beyond the tot-lot for playing with a ball or simply just running around. This spill-over space is in the exact foot print of the dog run.

Other uses observed at Astro:

Badminton

Brazilian Martial Arts.

Dancing

Frisbee Play.

Hula Hooping

Pedestrians

Picnickers

Tightrope Walking (Slack Liners)

Boot Camp

Circles Rule Federation

Drumming Circle.

Girls On The Run

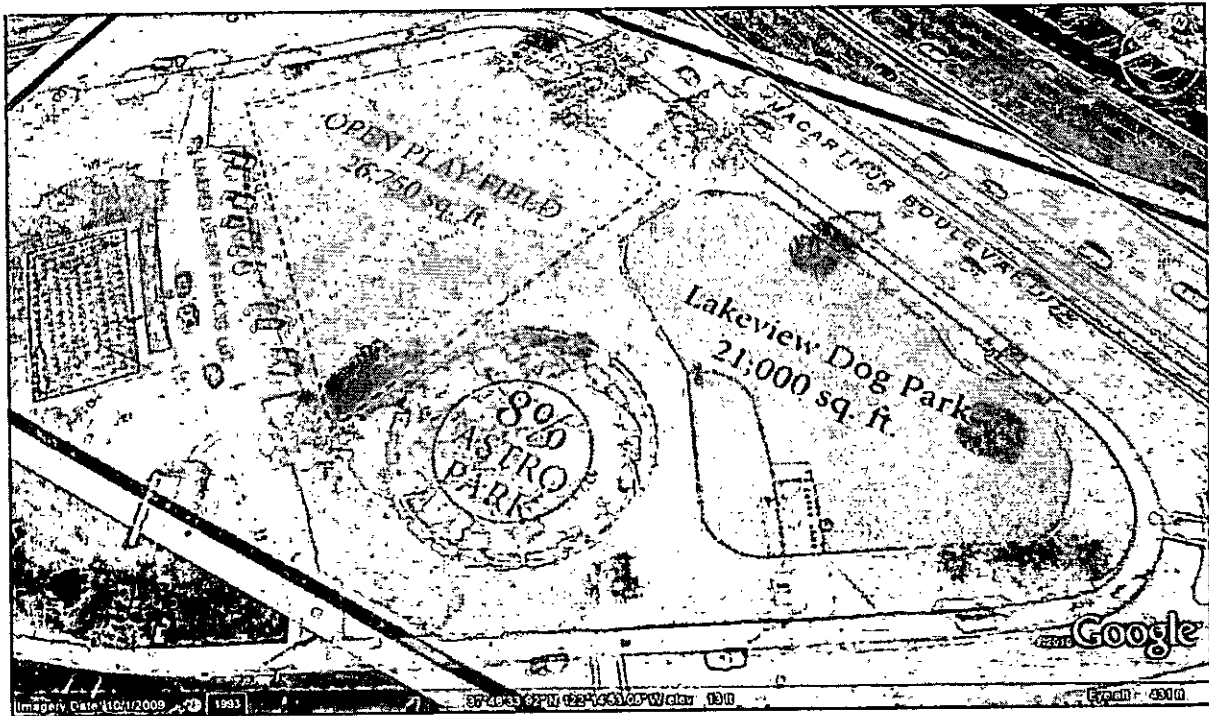
Kundalini Yoga Flash Mob

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Attachment 2: Dog Park Proposal Eliminates Half The Usable Playfield



This map was created by the Oakland Dog Owner's Group to illustrate the size of the proposed dog park. The dog park will occupy 21,000 square feet of the open play field, leaving 26,750 square feet for the multitude of other activities that occur here. The new dog park will take 44% of the open play field.

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Attachment 3: Existing Dog Parks in Oakland

Park	Dog Park Size/Details	Current Issues with Dog Park
Grove Shafter 5.55 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened Nov 2010 • Dog Park: 2.16 acres, fenced area w/ separate areas for small and large dogs. • The dog play area includes benches, picnic tables, boulders for dogs to scamper up, and in-ground waste receptacles. 	History of underutilization and PRAC Commissioner Ricards expressed concern for drug use in area.
Jefferson Square 1.42 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened Nov 2010 • Dog Park Size = unknown, fenced area, separate areas for small & large dogs 	After freeway construction in the 1970s, this historic attraction grew steadily neglected and became one of the community's most underutilized parks.
Mosswood 11 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened Nov 2007 • Dog Park: 6,300 sq. ft., dirt & wood chips fenced area, separate areas for small & large dogs 	Area is near freeway and history of blight and crime. Drug dealing and needles present in park. Homeless encampment.
Joaquin Miller 500 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened Oct 2006 • Dog Park: 1 acre • Dirt & wood chips fenced area of overflow parking area of the park. 	<p>One of the only Oakland city parks that allow dogs on-leash.</p> <p>Underutilized part of parking lot. Dog Park is closed 30 days a year for theater season.</p>
Hardy Dog Park 2.16 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened 1995, pre-OSCAR • Dog Park: size unknown, concrete fenced area 	Concrete area under freeway. Underutilized space.

Additionally, Oakland hosts 2,300 acres of open space in the hills where dogs can run off lead.

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Attachment 4: Dog Park Maintenance

Below is a letter written in spring of 2011 by William Rogers, Assistant City Manager for the City of Berkeley, to Pat Kernighan and Jennie Gerard. William's opinion was sought out by Pat Kernighan and below is his written response:

Dear Pat and Jenny,

Per your request, I'm writing to provide you with information about the City of Berkeley's operational and maintenance experience with its dog parks and our experience using volunteers for maintenance. I will outline some of the maintenance activities that we provide to Ohlone Dog Park (which is similar in scale to the dog park proposed in the Lake Merritt area), talk about some of the challenges of a dog park and then discuss some of our experiences with volunteers in our parks system for ongoing maintenance activities. Finally, I'll provide some feedback on the location of the proposed Oakland dog park.

As you are aware, I run the Parks Department for the City of Berkeley. I want to be clear that I am in no way representing or speaking on behalf of the City of Berkeley in my correspondence with you, but am speaking as a constituent with professional experience in this area. I also want to say that I am a supporter, both personally and professionally, of dog parks in urban communities as I believe they are important amenities for dog owners and their dogs to congregate and socialize.

CITY MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

There are a number of City staff members who provide services to the Ohlone Dog Park. In Berkeley, there are three work units that provide the primary support and maintenance to the dog park. I've listed the work activities that each City work unit provides to the dog park:

Landscape Maintenance Work Activities include:

- Litter Pick up
- Trash Can Service
- Graffiti Abatement
- Weed Abatement
- Mulching
- Pruning
- Irrigation
- Site Inspections
- Volunteer Work Efforts
- Storm Watch (Storm runoff, drains...)
- Annual Wood Chip & Straw Bale Replacement
- Response to Public Concerns & Complaints
- Animal Control Related Issues

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Building Maintenance Work Activities include:

- Irrigation maintenance
- Graffiti abatement
- Gate maintenance
- Self locking gate mechanism inspection, repair and maintenance
- Site drainage maintenance: root clearing
- General maintenance : signs, benches, tables
- Fence and surface material containment; structure (boards) maintenance

Forestry Work Activities include:

- Tree maintenance
- Tree replacement

BENEFITS OF A DOG PARK

The benefits of dog parks to both human users and dogs are numerous and have been well stated in the community meetings and correspondence with your office. Berkeley users enjoy similar benefits and value from their City's dog parks.

CHALLENGES OF A DOG PARK:

Dog parks also present a number of challenges. Some of the challenges we have faced include:

- Neighbor and park users complain of noise (barking throughout the day and into the evening; and on weekends and holidays)
- Neighbor and park users complain of odor from feces and urine.
- There are requests to provide areas to separate large and small dogs.
- Users have a low threshold of tolerance for environmental factors such as the site surface and materials, the quality of woodchips, and the presence of mud (natural turf cannot be sustained with the heavy use by dogs).
- The fence becomes a blight as users leave bags on the fence to store or share with other users .
- Users and neighbors complain of dust from dirt and wood chip decomposition.
- Trees in the dog park are negatively impacted.
- Users request a higher standard of maintenance and/or amenities than available resources allow.
- Volunteers often make frequent requests that require a higher level of oversight and support from staff and city resources. We deliver and pick up tools and materials, are in frequent discussions about improvements, and are responsible for administration of liability waivers for volunteers, MOU's and adopt-a- park programs
- Storm water and ground water quality may be negatively impacted from feces, urine and mud washing off.
- Proper site drainage is very important due to the transport of feces, urine, surface material (wood chips) and soil

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- Locking gates– staff have to ensure gates are opened when the dog park opens and closed when it closes. To reduce staff time, we installed self-locking gates. Some complain if the gates open too soon and others complain if they lock too soon. There is no perfect system as there are both mechanical and human errors.
- Increased maintenance time to find buried irrigation boxes
- Employee safety – Employees are exposed to aggressive dogs and unsanitary conditions at a higher concentration and rate than in other parks.
- Parking– dog parks are typically a citywide or regional resource and people drive to them from outside the immediate neighborhood, the City and even the region. The lack of parking (particularly in an area that is already densely populated with cars) can have a negative impact on surrounding businesses.
- Natural Resources– The presence of dogs is incompatible with wildlife such as birds. Wildlife stays away or their nesting, foraging and other essential activities are interrupted. Birds are flushed by dogs. Some dogs even chase and kill wildlife. This would be a significant issue by the Lake.
- Public and dog health alerts: E Coli inquiries, dog disease inquiries, respiratory illness inquiries, water borne pathogens inquiries, and mushroom inquiries. Signage as needed.

VOLUNTEERISM FOR ONGOING MAINTENANCE

The other question you raised was about volunteerism for ongoing maintenance. In Berkeley, the city does the primary maintenance for the dog parks and volunteers do some of the fine tuning like spreading and adjusting chips, etc.. Staff oversee volunteer efforts which requires time and resources. Dog park users can be very motivated to become volunteers because it is a place where they want to take their dogs and socialize with others. In our experience, volunteers have really good intentions about maintaining an area or Park over the long term. Yet, as people's lives or priorities change, so does their commitment. If a primary volunteer organizer cannot or does not want to volunteer any longer, it can have a huge impact on the volunteer effort. In our experience (with some exceptions), volunteer efforts for ongoing maintenance wane over time. It is often difficult and tiresome for people to continuously pick up after others. When volunteer efforts wane, it is ultimately the City's responsibility to ensure that the park is well maintained and safe for the public's use. At the end of the day, the City has sole legal and financial liability for the maintenance and safety of the community asset.

DOC PARK LOCATION

Finally, the chosen location of any dog park is important. In my opinion, the location of the proposed dog park is problematic for several reasons, including:

- Its proximity to children's play areas may constitute an incompatible use by placing dogs and children in such close proximity to one another. It's a safety issue for park users and a liability issue for the City.
- The elimination of well-used, unprogrammed open space in an area that has very little of it seems unwise and runs counter to other important human, environmental and public health goals for Oakland and its residents.

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The prominence of the location for the proposed dog park appears incompatible with the current projects around the lake. This is an area where the City has spent millions of stimulus dollars to beautify the Lake Merritt area and to provide more open space. This location is a gateway to the lake (from the North) and the new projects and amenities that are currently under development. Dog parks are mostly dirt because running, urine, feces and digging affect the ability of anything green to grow. It appears to be a choice that runs counter to the intention and spirit of the projects currently underway at the lake.

I hope this helpful. In both my personal and professional opinion, I believe that dog parks are important in urban areas. I also believe that this particular location is less than desirable for such a use and that another more suitable location would better meet the needs of the residential and business community as well as the tourists who visit the Lake Merritt area.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or need clarification.

Sincerely,
William Rogers

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Ten Reasons Why You Should Deny The Appeal For A Dog Run On The Corner Of MacArthur Boulevard And Lakeshore Avenue:

1. The Planning Commission Unanimously Denied the CUP Application. Oakland's Planning Commissioners reviewed 1436 pages of information and public comment on the proposal. They listened to over three hours of public testimony. In the end, the proposal was unanimously denied by a vote of 3 - 0, with one abstention. The Planning Commissioners said that the open space is too small to add another program element and, in an area as congested and busy as this site, the margin of safety would be too slim if fences were constructed within the lawn area. There were also concerns about aesthetics and the level of intense neighborhood opposition.

2. People Use And Love Astro Park. This park provides the active recreation that keeps Oaklanders healthy and strong. Throughout the year people play soccer, volleyball, baseball, football, badminton, Frisbee, tag and tug-o-war. People run, juggle, dance and do Yoga. Organized groups including the Special Olympics, Bayhill High School, Squash Drive, Girls On The Run and Soccer Shots use the space regularly. If you support flexible open space for youth activities and adult recreation, then do not remove this play space in favor of installing a fenced area for dogs.

3. Over 2000 neighbors and concerned citizens oppose a dog park in this location. The more people learn about this proposal, the more people don't want it. These are people who walk by the park regularly, people that use and love the space. An estimated 500 letters, not one of them a form letter, have been written asking (in most cases, pleading) that this dog park not be sited in this location. As we like to say, "Right Idea. Wrong Place."

4. The Location is too Busy and too Close to Kids. The proposed location sits in the middle of three busy streets with two freeway ramps handling regional traffic in and out of the district. With three

bus stops encircling the park, this location is a major transit node. Adding another use to a space that already hosts a tot-lot, the library and unstructured active recreation is unwise and potentially dangerous.

"In a place that is highly trafficked as Lake Merritt, I worry. And in a place that's as highly trafficked as close to a tot lot, I worry a lot." - Planning Commission Chair Vien Truong

5. The **Proposal** would be **Unsightly** at this **Gateway**. This highly visible location is classified in the OSCAR element as a gateway to Lake Merritt. It is also a gateway to the Grand Lake district. It is inappropriate to remove half of the remaining green grass in this location and replace it with brown wood chips and a metal fence. Dog parks are a muddy mess during winter rains. **Not** only would the green of the grass be gone, but sight lines would be interrupted and the sense of openness would be lost. Additionally, fencing begets graffiti, blight and space restrictions.

6. There's **No Maintenance Budget**. Even when dog parks are located in places that are not nearly as visible as Astro Park, relying strictly on volunteer maintenance is never recommended. Volunteers come and go.

7. **Not Large Enough** to be a **Great Dog Park** -- **Small Enough** to Cause **Problems**. Dog parks ideally should be large. The American Kennel Club recommends at least one acre. This proposed dog run is a half acre and is further sub-divided into areas for large and small dogs. A large concentration of dogs in a small area increases the likelihood of dog-on-dog aggression. In the end, we have a sub-standard dog park at the expense of human user experience and aesthetics.

"This park is small already. I think if you put some other use in it, you're just going to kill that. I think this park is already programmed

just the right amount." - Planning Commissioner Madeline Zayas-Mart

8. **It Floods In The Winter.** There are two urban creeks flowing underneath the proposed space and the lawn is currently swampy during the rainy season. Dog feces, urine, mud and rain near a tot lot and a recreational space are a recipe for problems.

9. **No Process, No Real Guidelines.** Dog park proponents say that they deserve a dog park in this location because they've been following process for fourteen years. However, Oakland has never had any site selection process for dog parks. So while this location may have been chosen in the 1990's, the Lake Merritt area was a significantly different place at that time. As the City of Seattle and other great municipalities have discovered, dog park guidelines are needed to ensure that any location would truly work for everyone. In February 2013, Oakland's Park and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) will finally have siting and design guidelines for dog parks. **We** ask that Council explore the compatibility of this proposed location with the newly adopted City of Oakland guidelines that will be released in a month or two.

10. **There Are Alternatives.** Over the past two years various interesting alternative off leash dog play area locations have been investigated. These include the abandoned Police Horse Stables, an area near Grand and Perkins, other City-owned parcels, several private parcels, and surplus School District and CalTrans properties. Additionally, on-leash policy recommendations are expected from PRAC in February 2013. However, in order for a rational dialogue about alternative sites to occur, the Lakeview Dog Play Area proposal must be denied.

In terms of additional financial resources and City staff time to create a wonderful recreational resource for Oakland, we ask for... nothing. We simply ask that this stretch of green be left alone, be left for play, be left so that future generations of Oaklanders can enjoy what we have all enjoyed for so many years.

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Citywise: Dog park proposal goes before Oakland City Council on Dec. 4

By Chris De Benedetti and Matthew Artz
Bay Area News Group
Posted: 11/16/2012 05:30:59 PM PST
Updated: 11/16/2012 07:43:49 PM PST

The long-standing fight over a proposed dog park at the southeastern edge of Lake Merritt will finally go to the City Council on Dec. 4.

The council's Rules Committee agreed Thursday to schedule a hearing on the dog park proposal over the objection of opponents, who wanted the hearing and likely vote pushed back until after the new year, when the city's Parks and Recreation Commission releases a new report.

Dog park supporters feared that political motivations were behind the postponement request. The proposed park at the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Drive, near the I-580 interchange, is at the edge of Councilwoman Nancy Nadel's district. Nadel, a park supporter, will leave the council at the beginning of January.

Her successor, Lynette Gibson McElhaney, said earlier this year that she felt a better site could be found for the park.

Nadel's aide, Carietta Starks, pushed for the December hearing. "We cannot delay this park out of existence," she told members of the Rules Committee, "it is at the point that this needs to be decided ... on its own merits."

The council postponed the item earlier this year at the request of park supporters.

Opponents have argued that the park would significantly reduce the largest grass expanse in the Grand Lake neighborhood. The Planning Commission rejected the park proposal earlier this year, but supporters appealed that decision to the council.

Previous negotiations

have failed to produce a compromise. However, there have been discussions about holding a mediation session led by Councilwoman Jane Brunner, who last week brokered an agreement between Safeway and opponents of the expansion of the chain's Rockridge store.

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Fremont to form Environmental Sustainability Commission

The Fremont City Council voted Tuesday to form a new government panel to guide decision-makers on environmental issues.

The Environmental Sustainability Commission is expected to be formed by March and will meet quarterly, officials said. It will serve an advisory role to the City Council and be tasked with receiving any required progress reports from staff on meeting climate action goals. It also will advise the City Council on policy issues related to environmental sustainability and any updates to the Climate Action Plan.

The Commission will have up to seven members, including a student and a representative from the Fremont business community, an environmental organization and the development/construction industry. Remaining seats will be open to community members at-large.

Natarajan to remain as Fremont's vice mayor

Councilwoman Anu Natarajan, who finished third in the Fremont mayoral election last week, is expected to continue to serve as vice mayor through next year.

Natarajan captured 26.1 percent of the vote while finishing behind Councilman Bill Harrison and Steve Cho. Hanison was scheduled to serve as vice mayor in 2013, but his election as mayor will leave the position open for Natarajan.

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THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2012

Oakland Planning Commission Rejects Lake Merritt Dog Park Proposal

BREAKING NEWS [Nate Seltner](#) - Thu, May 3, 2012 at 8:00 AM

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After fourteen years of planning, the Lake Merritt Dog Park may be dead for good. Nearly 100 people attended last night's Planning Commission meeting to weigh in on the proposal, and by 11:10 p.m. the four commissioners finally issued their pained decision: denial. Speakers, who each had a minute at the mic, were split nearly down the middle. For every pro there was a con, and for every argument a rebuttal. But in the end the commissioners decided by a vote of three nays and one abstention that the open lawn near the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue, at the northeastern corner of Lakeside Park, was wrong for a fenced-in dog run.

Speaking first, Commission Vice-Chair C. Blake Hunstman emphasized how hard it was for him to come to a decision. Then he rattled off a series of concerns. "I just truly don't believe this is the best place for it," he said. "Aesthetically, I have problems. I have problems with the safety. ... I can't in good conscience support this."

Commissioner Madeleine Zayas-Mart also stressed the difficulty of her decision, saying, "I think both sides are right in a way." Then she shared her own problem with the proposal: "This park is small already," she said. "I think if you put some other use in it, you're just going to kill that. I think this park is already programmed just the right amount."

"I don't think we should do it and take away something that's already working well for the community," she concluded. "I encourage everyone involved to think outside of the box and look at other sites." **One such alternate location on city land near Children's Fairyland** has already been discarded because the organization's board of directors came out against the idea.

Issuing the deciding vote, Commission Chair Vien Truong began by identifying herself as a dog lover and the owner of two dogs. Still, she said, she did not support the proposal, primarily on the basis of safety concerns. "In a place that is highly trafficked as Lake Merritt, I worry, and in a place that's as highly trafficked as close to a tot lot, I worry a lot," she said.

Commissioner Jonelyn Whales abstained, saying she wasn't sure which way to vote. The commission's decision is appealable to City Council within ten days.

Tags: [Oakland Planning Commission](#), [Oakland Dog Owners Group](#), [Save Astro Park](#), [Lake Merritt Dog Park](#)

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Posted by Editor on 05/07/2012 at 5:14 PM

 The failure of this initiative proves that we have gone about it the wrong way. There are several other sites that have been proposed and discarded. I monitored this issue very closely. We have to learn give something to get something. In my opinion, we should have a dog park. People with dogs also pay taxes. The lake should be for all not just for those without dogs. There are several underutilized areas of the lake that can easily host this use. These areas would be brought back to life and we would get a dog park.


If the people behind this initiative would like me to give it a try - I am very happy to work with the powers at be and get this done.



Your Neighbor,

Alex Miller-Cole
510-859-8842
alex@millercole.com

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Posted by [Alex Miller-Cole](#) on 05/03/2012 at 7:33 PM

 I don't understand why folks talk about the amount of time spent on this dog park proposal. No matter the length of time, it will not turn this bad proposal good. It was bad when it was thought up, and it is bad now. Thank you Oakland Planning Commission for seeing this and voting the right way... now can we please move on to other potential dog park proposals that do not take away open space already in use?

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Posted by [Darryl Larry](#) on 05/03/2012 at 3:21 PM

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Oakland Planning Commission votes against Lakeview Dog Park proposal

Published on Friday, May 04, 2012

Last updated on 06:57AM, Friday, May 4, 2012



Those present in favor of the dog park raise their hands.

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The Lakeview Dog Park Proposal was denied Wednesday night by the Oakland City Planning Commission members in a vote of 3 against, 1 abstaining.

The meeting, which began at 6 p.m. and was adjourned around 11:10 p.m., drew more than 200 people and saw almost 100 speakers. All four Commissioners agreed there was a need for more accessible dog parks in Oakland, but that a different location would be more suitable.

After moving through the first two agenda items – an amendment moving to make the Oakland Local Hazard Mitigation Plan a part of the "Safety Element" of the Oakland General Plan and approval for creating more affordable senior housing at the Coliseum Gardens in East Oakland – the dog park proposal took the stage.

Following an explanation of the proposal by case planner Ann Clevinger, proponent Emily Rosenberg and opponents Sue Levin and Brad McCray both gave 10-minute presentations. Through the presentations and throughout the night, those present waved signs, some of which read: "Don't Let It Go to The Dogs!" or "Share The Park!" Most of those in attendance sported either a yellow sticker emblazoned with a dog paw print (the proponents) or a long green sticker, which read "I'm a S.A.P. Save Astro Park Now!" to show their affiliation with the main opposition. For the most part, speakers alternated between proponent and opponent.

When there were finally no more speakers, Commission members did not ask for further questions, some of them chuckling at the idea of having more information.

Commission Chair Vien Truong held up a giant stack of paper to demonstrate how comprehensively she had been informed. Most commission members mentioned feeling torn about the issue and Commissioner Jonelyn Whales eventually opted to abstain.

Development, Community
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Meredith Brown and her daughter explain why they think a dog park at Eastshore Park is a good idea.

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"I've never been so indecisive," Whale said. "I just wish there was another location I could support."

Truong, who identified herself as a dog owner and a frequenter of Ohlone and Joaquin Miller dog parks, also felt another location would be ideal.

"I wasn't convinced that we should make some change," she said. "I am convinced there are other locations."

About Lauren Soldano

Lauren Soldano is a Journalist by day and a queer experimental filmmaker by night. Their journalistic interests are varied, but much of their writing centers on issues within activist communities. When they are not interviewing or writing frantically to meet a deadline, they can probably be found whipping up a fancy dinner, reading Bitch magazine, or waiting for the bus. If you think there is something they should be writing about, contact them at lauren.soldano@gmail.com.

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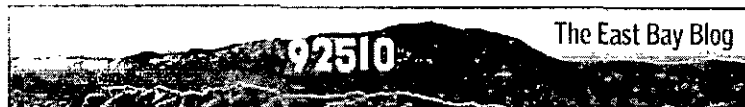
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MONDAY, APRIL 30, 2012

Lake Merritt Dog Park Showdown at Wednesday's Planning Commission Meeting

POLITICS / PEOPLE / ENVIRONMENT [Nate Settenrich](#) - Mon, Apr 30, 2012 at 1:16 PM

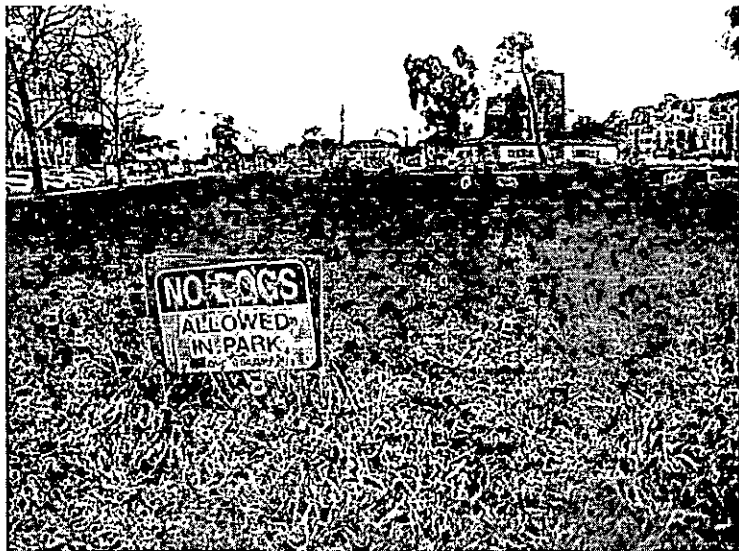
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Controversy over a proposed Lake Merritt dog park in the works since 1998 should come to a head at Oakland City Hall on Wednesday, when the Planning Commission decides whether or not to grant the project a Conditional Use Permit.

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Despite support from councilwoman Nancy Nadel, in whose district the 20,000-square-foot park would be located, it's not clear which way the vote will go due to potential conflicts with Oakland's Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation zoning guidelines, which prioritize active recreation and open space preservation in the Lake Merritt area and encourage development of underutilized resources. The dog run under consideration at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard would replace a portion of the popular lawn area at the northeastern corner of Lakeside Park.



One thing is certain: Both sides will be out in force at the Wednesday meeting. Our story on the conflict last March drew eighty mostly heated comments within a week, and a strictly informational public meeting the following week drew more than 200 people.

In the year since then, the two sides have only dug in. Proponents with the Oakland Dog Owners Group submitted a final Conditional Use Permit application in November, and in recent weeks have encouraged backers to voice their support at the Planning Commission meeting. A post on the ODOG website promises "dog owners by the hundreds" at the meeting,

92510

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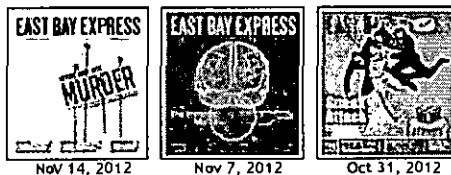
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saying, "We need to make it very clear to city officials that Oakland will benefit from having new community space at the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur."

Opponents with Save Astro Park have been doing their share of outreach, too. According to member Steve Saffold, the group collected the names and emails of more than 1,700 local residents concerned about the dog park proposal via an informational table over the course of eight Saturday mornings.

The Planning Commission meeting takes place at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 2, in the council chambers at Oakland City Hall, One Frank Ogawa Plaza. No matter the outcome, an appeal is likely.

Tags: [Oakland Dog Owners Group](#), [Save Astro Park](#), [Lake Merritt Dog Park](#)


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Posted by Editor on 05/01/2012 at 6:06 PM

 I live right across the street from that part of the park- literally a stones throw away. I can tell you that no one uses that part of the park except some futbolistas on the weekend, and one crazy dude who practices his kung fu swords there at night. Bring on the dogs I say!

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Lakeview Dog Park Proposal Planning Commission Hearing is May 2

Published on Monday, April 30, 2012

Last updated on 08:48PM, Monday, April 30, 2012



Emily Rosenberg, ODOG co-founder, holds a poster of flowers that would be planted at the Lakeview Dog Park.

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The year is 1981.

Oakland resident Emily Rosenberg is taking her newly adopted dog for a walk through her Rockridge neighborhood. When she arrives at the small, empty park down the street, she looks up and sees a sign with big, glaring letters which read: "NO DOCS."

That sign filled her with resolve. She said to herself, "When I retire, I'm going to work on changing these rules."

Rosenberg, now retired and an Oakland resident for 40 years, has kept with the promise she made to herself and her dog that day - a choice, which has put her squarely in the middle of a heated controversy over whether a 21,000-square-foot dog park and play area should be built in Lake Merritt's Eastshore (also called "Astro") Park.

This week, the Lakeview Dog Park proposal - which was first hatched way back in 1998 - will be presented to the Oakland Planning Commission on Wednesday evening, May 2. The meeting will likely see some fur fly as the idea has come under increasing opposition in the past year, largely from a group called Save Astro Park, or SAP.

Most of the anti-park sentiment from SAP's end has revolved around the proposed location, for aesthetic reasons as well shared space logistics. Recently, the issue of gentrification has been raised - specifically in Oakland Local's own Community Voices section. Meanwhile, hundreds of people each day walk their dogs in the park area illegally - illegal, that is, under current Oakland City park regulations, which prohibit walking dogs through park grass.

Founded by half a dozen concerned citizens back in February 2011, SAP's main concern

Community, Development
Lake Merritt, Lakeshore, Lakeview
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is that the proposed location is just not the right place for a dog park.

"I've been to lots of dog parks, and I think maybe that's why I had a very definitive reaction," Sue Levin, an Oaklander since 1998 and one of SAP's co-founders, explained. "I know what they look like, I know what they smell like, I know what they sound like, and I know what's an appropriate location." Levin is a dog owner who lives five blocks away from the proposed location.

SAP members hold "stake-outs" on Saturday mornings where they literally stake out the proposed location, making visible the area, which would be fenced off. Levin said SAP got the idea from attending a meeting hosted by Oakland Dog Owners Group – ODOG – where the 21,000 fees were clearly staked. ODOG, co-founded by Rosenberg, is one of the lead proponents of the park. Levin and other SAP founders felt making the actual size of the dog park visible to other park-goers would arouse an oppositional reaction similar to the one she had. As a result of these Saturday demonstrations, the SAP membership has expanded to more than 1,700 Oaklanders.

As far as gentrification concerns, one of the leading anti-gentrification task forces in the Bay Area, Causa Justa: just Cause, has no official position on the Lakeview Dog Park Proposal. CJC is a grassroots organization, which works to foster leadership among low-income communities in both Oakland and San Francisco to achieve housing and economic justice.

"As an organization with a long history in Oakland, we haven't heard the greater need for dog parks in general," Patricia Zamora, CJC's Oakland Lead Organizer, said in a phone interview Friday. "There's a school that's being closed that's not that far away, Lakeview Elementary. Parents and teachers and students are fighting hard to keep that school open while we're talking about building a new dog park – it's something to put in contrast or relation."

Rosenberg agreed with the importance of keeping schools open, but said funds the city would provide to help fund the park would come from the capital fund, a part of the budget, which is specifically designated for building new structures. The city would contribute around \$31,000 to the project, while another \$40,000 or so would be donated by individual and corporate sponsors.

"What we're trying to do is provide a place for dog owners – whether they're long time residents or new in town – to come together and play with their dogs," Rosenberg said. Rosenberg added she feels having the dog park in Lakeview is "a fairness issue," and said many neighborhood residents drive out of the area every day to exercise their dogs.

Levin's position, however, is that people usually drive to dog parks – and that a dog park in Lakeview would only increase the already congested area.

Sitting near the proposed location Thursday afternoon, Rosenberg disagreed. She argued that even if dog owners did opt to drive, there were hundreds of parking spaces under the I-580 overpass.

"The park would keep more revenue in the neighborhood and decrease the number of automobile trips," Rosenberg said. "And people would get to know each other and have community. People stand around and chat – and then they help each other sell their houses, or get married to each other, or look after each other when somebody's sick."

Many of SAP's backers are Oaklanders who use the park for non-dog related activities, including the many soccer players who can often be seen on the field, and Bayhill High School students and staff who use the field for P.E. class and touch football league practice. Levin noted that an alternate location for the park, which has been discussed, is the abandoned horse stables near Children's Fairyland at the other side of the Lake. The space is currently not being used and has already seen some dog days – it once served as a training ground for police dogs.

However, the space in Eastshore Park is the only space near the lake the city has allotted for a dog park, according to Rosenberg.

"The reason we can go forward at the Lakeview location is that it was called out in the Lake Merritt Master Plan and Adams Point Plan," Rosenberg said. "Saying it could go somewhere else is a red herring. All parties have been told that there is no alternate site."

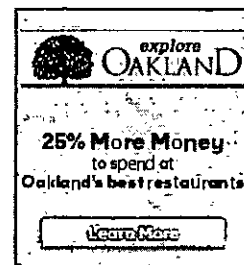
If it's approved, the only remaining hoop for proponents to jump will be getting the vote from City Council to amend the municipal code to allow dogs in Eastshore Park.

"Everybody knows that there are hundreds of people every week who walk their dogs illegally at the lake," said Rosenberg at the proposed space Thursday afternoon, as several dogs and their owners walked the grass in front of her. "We think that when this legal exercise place is here, people will choose to use that with their dogs."

The planning commission meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 2, at City Hall, in the Council Chambers upstairs.

About Lauren Soldano

Lauren Soldano is a journalist by day and a queer experimental filmmaker by night. Their journalistic interests are varied, but [Login](#) or



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much of their writing centers on issues within activist communities. When they are not interviewing or writing frantically to post to meet a deadline, they can probably be found whipping up a fancy dinner, reading Bitch magazine, or waiting for the bus. If you think there is something they should be writing about, contact them at lauren.soldano@gmail.com.

Paul commented at Mon, 30 Apr at 2:46pm

SAP claims their "membership" is 1700. But, they offer no proof of that, and in fact, Sue Levin sent a letter to the Planning Commission saying they didn't have their "members" names or addresses, and asked if they could just "confidentially" flash their notebooks to planning staff. It's clear they did not want that list on public record where it could be verified.

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Melissa Sherman commented at Mon, 30 Apr at 1:49pm

This dogpark was a \$400k project originally that, over time, has been downsized until it it only costs \$30k. Why only \$30K? That's partly due to proposing a volunteered-based maintenance plan. That's right -- no city funding for maintenance.

People opposed to this plan, dog owners and non-dog owners, are opposed to it because they value the open green space found at Astro Park today.

If this goes through everyone who passes by what is now one of the few shared, open green spaces in Oakland will see a dirty, dusty, noisy, smelly area located very close to a children's playground and one of the busiest intersections in the area.

There are better places to do this.

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NEWS

July 06, 2011

A New Lake Merritt Dog Park?

The old police horse stables site is to be explored as a possible alternative to the controversial Lakeview Park plan.

By Nate Seltenrich @nateseltenrich



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The debate over the proposed dog park at Lake Merritt just got a lot more interesting. For years, residents have been led to believe that the only possible location for the fenced dog run was a lawn near the lake's northeastern corner, where MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue meet. That's precisely what has made the project controversial, with many residents arguing that the site's high visibility makes it inappropriate for a dog park. Proponents, including Councilwoman Nancy Nadel, have insisted that there is no other option. But an alternative site has surfaced that has the support of Councilwoman Pat Kernighan and appears to be favored by both Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

Discovered by Kernighan's office in the spring but only recently revealed, the proposed alternative site is sparking a fresh round of discord on online forums. It's located further west down Grand Avenue, behind Children's Fairyland and due west of the Lake Merritt Band Stand. The wooded hilltop site is the former home of the Oakland Police Department's horse stables, a remnant of the days when police patrolled the lake on horseback.

The ex-stables are choked with grasses and weeds, with the exception of a small area used occasionally for police-dog training. The majority of the area proposed for a dog park is already enclosed within a six-foot-tall chain-link fence. Best of all, proponents say, it's quiet, shaded, and sufficiently obscured that many regular park visitors may not even know it exists — all while offering views of the lake and downtown.

"The main improvement is that it doesn't take away an open space that's currently in use, and that it's shielded by trees and shrubs from view," said Councilwoman Kernighan. "It does not pose an aesthetic problem, and it doesn't take away any open space. ... I think it's a better choice." And so do

city staff in both Parks and Recreation and Public Works, she said.

After being tipped off to the site by a member of Kernighan's staff, **Luka's Taproom & Lounge** co-owner Maria Alderete decided to run with it. An avowed dog lover who named her business after her late dog Luka — and who lives in Cleveland Heights, closer to the original location — Alderete nonetheless opposes the controversial plan proposed by the **Oakland Dog Owners Group** at the east end of the lake.

Recognizing the community's need for a dog park, however, Alderete decided to be proactive. She ended up working with **Brad McCre a**, a member of **Save Astro Park**, the group that has led the charge against the original proposal, to draw up formal plans for the alternative site and submit them to Parks and Recreation early last week for a formal design review.

"We're not against dog parks," Alderete said. "We're just against fenced dirt areas at the gateway to Lake Merritt. ... The community was told that the Lakeview site was the only location. They don't even know that there is this other site."

At its meeting on Wednesday, July 13, Oakland's **Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission** will hear a presentation from a member of Alderete's team and decide whether or not to move the design proposal along to the next step, which is applying for a conditional use permit.

At the same meeting, the eleven-member commission will review a minor conditional use permit application already prepared by Parks and Recreation for the original location. If approved, the city planning office will post signage at the park noticing a seventeen-day public comment period before making its final ruling on the **Lakeview Dog Park** proposal, which has been in the works in various guises since 1998.

The confluence of the two processes, one new and one old, makes for a curious situation. While both parks are targeted to total about 20,000 square feet, offer separate spaces for large dogs and small dogs, and could be constructed in roughly the same amount of time, the differences between them are myriad.

The Lakeview Dog Park is estimated to cost \$45,000, while Alderete guesses that her plan will cost around \$35,000. The Lakeview Dog Park would eat into a grass lawn also used as a playing field, while the horse stables park would expand into an open picnic area. And the Lakeview Dog Park's location would allow it to best serve residents of the Grand Lake and Cleveland Heights neighborhoods, while the horse stables location is more accessible to residents of Adams Point and Uptown.

More importantly, the police horse stables location appears better poised to benefit from both public opinion and Oakland's **Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation** zoning guidelines — which prioritize active recreation and open space preservation in the Lake Merritt area and encourage development of underutilized resources. Even though it's only just been revealed, the horse stables location already looks to have fewer obstacles before it.

According to Kernighan, in a May meeting she briefed Oakland Dog Owners Group co-founder **Emily Rosenberg** on the alternative location and its relative merits — and offered up the chance to change horses mid-stream, so to speak. Rosenberg declined. Her organization has been working on the location at the Lakeview site for thirteen years, and, even with the zoning

challenge ahead, is closer than it's ever been to having the project approved. "We've seen how much opposition has come up at Lakeview, and we can't afford to start over," Rosenberg said. "What we need to do right now is keep focused on moving this one through the public process."

Still, she said that the police horse stables could make for an excellent dog park — perhaps in addition to the Lakeview site. Kernighan and Alderete say they've considered pursuing the second location regardless of what happens with the first; demand in the Lake Merritt area is likely sufficient to support two dog parks, which would provide the added benefit of avoiding excessive crowding at either location.

Yet it remains too early to tell how quickly, or if at all, the police horse stables location could come to fruition. Just about everyone who's familiar with it seems to have embraced it — everyone, that is, except its closest neighbor, Children's Fairyland. After learning about the new proposal, Executive Director C.J. Hirschfield floated the idea to her board of directors. Not one of the eleven members was particularly enthused, she said. Concerns included access to the site, which relies on Fairyland's sole service road; available parking; and compatibility with the nearby bird sanctuary (Kernighan said that as long as no birds are physically harmed by dogs, this shouldn't be an issue — and that holds true at both locations).

The board was also concerned about combining small kids, strollers, and dogs in one place — which is likewise a critique of the Lakeview site, as it's located directly next to a children's play area.

Save Astro Park member Steve Saffold said his group's primary goal is protecting the open space that would be lost under the proposed Lakeview Dog Park plan. But its members also have identified and measured a dozen alternative sites around the lake, and agree that the police horse stables present the best solution. "This is the one that far and away has the best combination of attributes," he said. "This location has it all."

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NEWS 13

DOG PARK DIVIDES LAKE MERRITT

Thirteen years in the making, the proposed Lakeview Dog Park meets its fiercest resistance yet

The question comes up again and again: Why would anyone oppose a dog park? But opponents of the proposed **Lakeview Dog Park** at the north end of Lake Merritt say they have a good reason: The high-visibility location is simply inappropriate for a dog park. Now, as opposition to the park has mounted in recent weeks, heated arguments, emotional missives, and brazen name-calling have swelled on online neighborhood forums. Councilwomen **Nancy Nadel** and **Pat Kernighan** have stepped in to moderate. The only question left is whether the long-awaited dog run will ever get built. But even if it succeeds in gaining final approval from the city, it won't be without a bitter, divisive fight. — *Story inside*

The Lakeview Dog Park has been in the works since 1998. Dogs are not currently allowed off-leash anywhere around Lake Merritt, and are banned from all of its green spaces. The notion of a dog play area near the lake was first integrated into the Lake Merritt Park Master Plan in 2002. Oakland's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee approved the park in 2006, but cost concerns stalled the project. This past December, the park appeared to finally be on the verge of breaking ground after receiving approval from the committee a second time. But now, even if the park succeeds in gaining final approval from the city, it won't be without a bitter, divisive fight.

The opponents' view is clear: Dog parks are great, but the location's all wrong. Planned for the northeastern corner of Lakeside Park, where MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue meet, the 21,000-square-foot run would occupy one of the most visible and highly trafficked intersections in the city. It would also require a portion of a popular playing field to be fenced off and covered with wood chips.



Some opponents of the proposed dog run are concerned about the loss of open space. — *Nate Seltnerich*

Steve Saffold, who owns a dog and lives in the nearby Cleveland Heights neighborhood, is concerned about the loss of green space at what he considers to be the heart of Oakland, where people come from miles around to enjoy the outdoors, eat, drink, and shop. The dog park would be immediately visible from the Grand Avenue freeway off-ramp, adjacent to a popular child's playground, and across the street from the weekly **Grand Lake Farmers' Market**.

"This is about a land-use choice at maybe the key location in all of the city, whether to keep this precious resource of unprogrammed open space that we already have," he said. "We have this, in the greatest location in the city. And it looks like we're going to surrender it to a fenced, wood-chipped dog area. That just seems like a questionable land-use choice for the future of the city."

Saffold and a number of other concerned residents have banded together to spread the word about the current plans. A new Facebook group called **Save Astro Park**, referring to the name of the nearby playground, has accrued about sixty supporters since forming in late February. **Gilbert Vahanian**, who also lives nearby, is among them. He doesn't have a dog, but says he plans to get one soon for his five-year-old son. "We do love dogs," he said. "We have lots of dog owners in the group."

"No one has convinced me of the cost-benefit analysis of taking away the green space and replacing it with a dog park," he continued. "I don't question that we need to have an area for dogs, I just don't know if the work has been done, or I haven't been shown the work, that shows that's the best place for it."

Opponents are concerned that the dog run could introduce unpleasant odors into a highly public area. They fear that a large concentration of canines in one space could pose a safety threat to toddlers and small children at the playground. And they worry that the already busy neighborhood would be unable to accommodate an increased demand for parking.

Dog park supporters dispute their opponents on nearly every point. "I think people are worrying about an issue of appearance in the park that won't be an issue," said **Emily Rosenberg**, co-founder of the **Oakland Dog Owners Group**, which has worked on the cause for more than a decade, beginning with the collection of 740 petition signatures in 1999. The dog

run's proposed four-foot cyclone fence would be covered with green vines, she said. "I think there will be very little visual impact on the park. It's going to look lovely."

As far as the playing field goes, before Oakland Dog Owners Group got involved, the center of the lawn was too swampy for use, said Rosenberg, who lives in Montclair. In 2005, she said, her group worked with Oakland's Department of Public Works to fill in the middle of the field, mitigating any potential impacts of the dog run. Later, in 2008, the dog area's pro-

posed footprint was reduced. On top of that, she said, it's planned for a corner of the lawn that sees very little activity, and would not impinge on other user groups.

Still, Rosenberg concedes that the busy location may not be entirely ideal. "We did have many other choices that the dog owners might've preferred, but this is all the city gave us," she said. "This is a compromise all around."

cont'd →

Subject: Re: Today

Date: Tuesday, November 27, 2012 7:40:02 AM Pacific Standard Time

From: sue@heragency.com

To: sue@heragency.com

my own letter

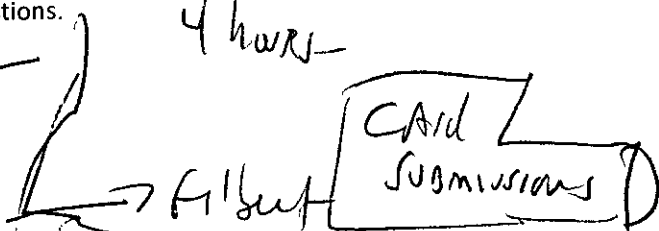
contact jane brunner's office--see if she has any questions.

add tally info to cover email to council re letters. ✓

4 hours

see if i can reverse order the letters

copy all letters into consolidated doc ✓



wrap arms around where we're at with ceding and seating

send message to scott and ann--say we are cc'ing them on several docs, that we are also submitting these to clerk on thursday for inclusion in council supplemental packet for friday

getting/heard/peid

valence-

key testimonials-pick out 3-4 letters of major stake-holders? } ✓
brad-double check

write to db: attend--give speaker points, parking, note about staying posted--city hall has changed things and we're trying to figure it out--stay tuned by liking us on fb and checking website.

list of docs to print:

Letters-Sue

Position/Shorter Letter: Debbie (done and sent)--make sure to print cover lette with our ten points in addition to the attachment.

Alternatives Pete and Grace (being developed)

Brad's policy doc

Brad's response to appeal

Press

TPL-RANDIE

Seds time-

ALL JEM - people come in, at 9am

who speaks no - needs time -

Seed post? -

11/27/2012

Councilmembers,

This document is approximately 400 pages long.

If it feels daunting, please consider that you are holding the heartbeat of a park in your hands. These are the words of a community pleading to keep a very small neighborhood park just as it is--open, green and unfenced.

Sincerely,

The 2000+ Members of Save Astro Park

From: Michael Foster [mailto:mfooster@fosterlaborlaw.com]
Sent: Monday, February 28, 2011 4:34 PM
To: 'pkernighan@oaklandnet.com'
Cc: 'jgerard@oaklandnet.com'; 'jkarchmer@oaklandnet.com'
Subject: Astro Park - Dog Run

Ms. Kernighan: I own the commercial space at 3000 Lakeshore Avenue and write in opposition to the proposed fenced dog run proposal for Astro Park . As a dog owner, I understand that additional space for animals may be a desired objective; nonetheless, the proposed project as I understand it will result in the loss of valuable open "green space" enjoyed by Oaklanders on a daily basis. I purchased this property in part due to the green space directly in front of it. I will be saddened by changes creating a concrete, fenced area for dogs.

I often drive by the dog park space under Hwy 24 at Claremont Ave and have taken my dog there to play. Simply put, I would not want a similar space in Astro Park . Indeed, the Claremont Ave space serves a potential model for future dog parks. That space was not formerly open green space with heavy park-related use. Instead, conversion to a dog run was a clever conversion of otherwise underused space for the general good of dog owners, such as myself. Converting an otherwise, often used green space for this purpose seems ill advised.

Moreover, placement of a dog park next to a structure occupied by very small children seems like a potential litigation risk that should be avoided. As you are well aware, Lakeshore is a busy road, particular at rush hour and on Saturdays (due to the heavily populated Farmers' Market). Placing together small children, significant traffic and a large contingent of dogs (many of whom will be off leash) does not strike me as sound planning policy. Instead, it is likely to result in injury to people and animals.

Finally, as a commercial property owner, I request that you consider the negative effects that a dog run is likely to have on property values. Mine is one of only three occupied buildings between Our Lady of Lourdes Church and the 580 Freeway! We have enough trouble finding potential buyers/developers for this area. Removing the beauty of Astro Park and replacing it with a fenced dog run would be a disaster to this effort.

Best,

Michael W. Foster
Foster employment law
3000 Lakeshore Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610
(510) 763-1900 ext. 101
(510) 763-5952 (fax)
mfooster@fosteremploymentlaw.com
mfooster@fosterlaborlaw.com

From: Rachel Wylde [mailto:wylde@bayhillhs.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2011 11:18 AM
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: sue@heraagency.com

Subject: Proposed Dog Park

Dear Councilmember Kernighan,

I am the principal of a private high school for learning disabled students near the proposed dog park on Lakeshore Avenue in "Astro Park". I have examined the map of the proposed park. I am very concerned that if the dog park becomes a reality our students will not be able to continue to use this area for recreation activities such as field games, their P.E. classes, as well as flag football games that they play on this field as part of a sports league. Bayhill High School serves 80 students in grades 9 through 12 who need specialized instruction to address their learning disabilities and other special needs. Our students are bright students with a lot of potential who have failed in mainstream school settings. As a small school with no gym or field adjacent to our campus, we use the green space near the lake for many outdoor activities. If the dog run goes up it will decimate our P.E., sports, and recreational programs. Although as a dog owner myself I am in favor of dog and dog owners' rights, I don't think they should be put ahead of the needs of the youth of Oakland and other surrounding communities who are currently using this space for educational purposes.

I would welcome an opportunity to speak to you about this. Please call me or consider coming and visiting our school. I'm sure a few of our student athletes would be more than happy to tell you how much preserving this green space means to our school.

Yours very truly,

Rachel Wylde
Executive Director
Bayhill High School
521 Boden Way
Oakland, CA. 94610
Phone (510)268-1500 x222
Fax (510)268-1503
wylde@bayhillhs.org

From: Shelley Lobell [<mailto:lobell@bayhillhs.org>]
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2011 1:49 PM
To: pkernlghan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: sue@heragency.com
Subject: Plan for Astro Park

Dear Councilmember Kernighan,

I am the new Executive Director of Bayhill High School, located across the street from the proposed dog park on Lakeshore Avenue (Astro Park). I have reviewed the scope of this project and am extremely disconcerted to see that the specific space being considered for this dog park is where Bayhill conducts its recreation activities.

Bayhill High School serves 80 students in grades 9 through 12 who are experiencing significant learning issues that need to be addressed in a smaller school setting. Our students are bright, motivated and eager learners. They simply need their academics

taught with adapted curriculum. We are both a school certified by the California State Department of Education for provision of services to students with special needs (School District Funded) as well as a WASC Certified High School. Being a small school, we have no gym or field. Hence we use the green space being considered for a dog park for our PE classes, recreation area and practice area for our competitive flag football team, often with games scheduled in that exact space. If the project for a dog park goes into this area designated as Astro Park, our PE and sports programs will be decimated.

We have started our flag football season, we practice every Monday and Wednesday and have games on Fridays in the space you are considering fencing off for a dog park. Our first game will be held there tomorrow. Although I understand the rights and needs of dog owners, I am troubled they would be put before the needs and rights of the children and youth of Oakland.

Additionally, I question why we, being a neighbor and a school, were not informed that such a proposal was being considered by the City of Oakland. Please keep us informed of any meetings regarding this matter. Our parents, students and faculty will want to participate in any meetings regarding this decision.

Please call me or visit our school and programs that take place in Astro Park. I am certain some of our athletes and students would like to tell you how much that green space means to them.

Sincerely,

Shelley Lobell, Ed.M.
Executive Director
Bayhill High School

521 Boden Way
Oakland, CA 94610

Phone: (510) 268-1500
Fax: (510) 268-1503

From: Maria Alderete <maria_aldo@yahoo.com>

Subject: Lake Merritt Dog Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, officeofthemayor@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com

Cc: driley@oaklandnet.com, maria_aldo@yahoo.com, eangstadt@oaklandnet.com

Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2011, 1:31 PM

Dear Respected Council Members,

I'm writing to you today to share with you my concerns about the proposed dog park at Astro Park and ask for your leadership support on this issue that is deeply dividing our community. This issue impacts Lake Merritt, the crown jewel of Oakland, a place that should be a centerpiece of pride for the entire Oakland community.

Measure DD is currently putting \$198 million into Lake Merritt. The vision for the Lake Merritt Master Plan is to extend the park from the lake, through the estuary to the bay. And goals were set to establish a Lake Merritt District, as well as perimeter on-leash access for dogs. Astro Park is located at the entry way into Lake Merritt, on the other side of the freeway from the busy retail district and farmers market. At this location, Interstate 580 empties onto MacArthur Boulevard, providing daily access to the Lake Merritt neighborhood for as many as 30,000 households and an untold number of visitors coming to the Lake Merritt area. It's a highly visible area in our community.

At the same time the Lake Merritt plans were being developed, a proposal for a much needed dog park arose. This proposal was driven mostly due to the current unfair dog ordinances and increasing density in the area. It is my understanding that ODOG proposed several other locations for a dog park, but was given only one choice.

It deeply concerns me that this dog park project might have diverted DD funds that I believe should have gone to improving the Astro Park area to serve as a gateway to the "Lake Merritt District". Additionally, given the dog park location selection process was not transparent with limited community input, alternative community proposals for the space were not even considered.

But it's important to remember it is the location, more than the dog park project, that divides the community. At the meeting last Wednesday over 200 community members came out and over 50 spoke on the issue. Of the speakers 55% spoke out for the Astro Dog Park and 45% opposed. Regardless of what side folks were on, there seemed to be overwhelming support for a dog park at Lake Merritt. I also heard that a lot of the folks that supported the dog park also had issue with the location. I don't have specific numbers, but I'm guessing of everyone 80% were pro-dog park and 70% had issue w/ location. James Vann refused to state an opinion, but did say that the wood chips were unfortunate and that it's not the best place for it. It's also important to note that most of people, on both sides of the issue, that came out for the meeting were dog owners. So, although the meeting showed slight majority in favor of the Astro Park proposal, I feel a broader survey of the population which included more non-dog owners would tip the majority to the other side.

I would like to challenge the city with this question, "Why is Astro Park the only option". Are we so tied up with special interests and the bird sanctuary that we can not even consider another location? I also ask that you step back and reassess its fit in the broader strategic vision for the Lake Merritt District.

Instead of dividing the community by letting the ODOG move forward I would like to request that it be put on hold for a temporary period so that 1) we revisit the location selection process, 2) develop an alternative proposal for the Astro Park space that will serve as a centerpiece of pride

and help realize the vision for a new Lake Merritt District 3) involve a broader group of leaders and Lake Merritt community to evaluate all proposals and 4) evaluate all the Lake Merritt parks for permitted on-leash dog access.

I am not just words. I am committed very passionately to the Lake Merritt vision, as well as a more dog friendly community. From opening Luka's Taproom & Lounge, I have learned how to take visions, create and complete plans, which led to real changes in the Uptown area. So, let's get to work. I have a list of all parks in the area that I can share and have offered my services to Pat Kernighan to research the location issues. I would much rather work on this than fighting the zoning process.

Please let all voices be heard. Let's unite, not fight.

Regards,

Maria Alderete
Resident – 438 Wayne Ave., Oakland, CA 94606
Business Owner- Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: peter grube <pgru@sbcglobal.net>
To: nnadel@oaklandnet.com; PKernighan@oaklandnet.com; atlarge@oaklandnet.com; libbyschaaf@earthlink.net; chjohnson@sfnchronicle.com; Imccullen@oaklandnet.com; driley@oaklandnet.com
Sent: Fri, March 25, 2011 6:15:19 PM
Subject: Astro Park

Council members, Planning commission members, Chip Johnson,

I attended the neighborhood meeting at Lakeshore Baptist Church on March 23rd. After hearing the emotional presentations and seeing the photoshopped images of the proposed park, I decided to do my own evaluation of the site for the dog enclosure. I'd like to share my experience with you.

I drove down to the area with my dog and parked my car on Lakeshore. Having visited dog parks throughout the bay area, I know that most people arrive by car. There is absolutely no evidence that this park will be any different. After parking near the yogurt shop, I walked up Lakeshore and crossed Lakepark when the light signaled to cross. While walking across this very busy intersection (4 lanes) I took note of the cars bearing down on me and my dog as they impatiently waited to turn right onto Lakepark. We navigated the intersection, went under the bridge and came upon the next extremely busy intersection (5 lanes) that we had to cross. Once at the park, I started to walk onto the grass section that would become fenced off and used for a dog park. I walked no more than 10 feet onto the grass when I realized the entire area was a swampy bog. Since I had waterproof boots on, and the water was only up to my ankles, I went further into the proposed dog enclosure. Large swaths of grass were under water, other areas merely saturated, but drainage here is a major issue. If you put wood chips, as proposed, on top of water, they float. In the areas where wood chips are not floating, they will make a broth of decomposing wood, mud, water, and dog urine. This would be difficult to keep clean regardless of the endless number of volunteers who have made a lifetime commitment to maintain the proposed park. At every dog park I have visited, dogs like to dig holes. Then more dogs go to the same spot and dig deeper. It is a great activity for the dogs and fun for people to watch too. But when it rains, the holes fill with water. There are problems with standing water in parks designated for dogs. As any experienced dog owner could tell you, dogs love to drink from

puddles (toilets too). But if you've been to a dog park, you know that owners hate for their dogs to drink from the puddles. Why? Because there is a highly contagious bacteria that lives in the stagnant water areas at dog parks. Giardia is one common disease that dogs regularly contract from high use enclosed dog parks that have puddles. Easy to contract, but very difficult to combat. And once your dog has it, when he returns to the park it is extremely likely he will spread it to others. The symptoms are extreme diarrhea, weight loss and dehydration. And yes, humans are susceptible too. But enough about swampy land, I'll move on.

I looked to my left and noticed just how close the bus stop is to this area. And when I looked out toward Lakeshore there is another bus stop of equally close proximity. I pictured those stops filled with people waiting for their ride. At present they have a busy street on one side and an unencumbered field on their other side. As proposed, the future holds a dog park on their backsides.

Then I recalled the beautifully created photos of the proposed dog enclosure and what it would look like, how it would function. In between the bus stop and the tot lot, there will be a driveway. Here, city trucks will stop on heavily trafficked Lakeshore and back up and into the driveway. Once in the driveway, they will empty two, estimated 40 gallon cans of dog feces. I'm not quite convinced that 25 feet will be much respite for the parents and children at the tot lot and the people waiting for their bus. The smell is unbearable. Go to a dog park, pick up some poop, carry it over to the cans and try not to hold your breath.

There is more that disturbs me about the location of this park, but I will end my observations with the following thoughts. I love dog parks. I use dog parks. Dog parks need to be situated in locations that take into consideration parking, size, maintenance, existing use, drainage, pedestrian and vehicle traffic and overall impact to their surroundings. I ask you, does this park take into account any of these? Please don't agree to put a dog park here.

Thank you,
Peter Grube

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Barb St. Amant <bstamant@sbcglobal.net >

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com

Sent: Wed, March 16, 2011 6:36:03 PM

Subject: dog park

Ms Kernighan;

i am firmly not in favor having a dog park by the Astro Park playground. I'm a veterinary technician and I live on Beacon. While I love dogs and wish there were more large dog parks available, I believe that this location is absolutely the wrong place for it. It won't be large enough to comfortably and safely accommodate all the dogs and owners that are sure to frequent it. In my work as an emergency veterinary nurse I frequently see the results of the combination of ill-mannered owners, poorly trained dogs, and owners who can't control their dogs. I've seen it range from minor to disastrous - eyes popped out that are not salvageable, simple lacerations, chest injuries that are life-threatening. Not to mention the increased chance of dogs jumping the very short 4 ft tall fence and getting HBC (hit by car).

While all of these may occur in ANY dog park, the chance of injuries/conflict happening are MUCH greater in a smaller area. This area may look big to the untrained eye but dogs need plenty of room and this does not provide it.

And then there are the esthetics. I've lived on Beacon for 8+ years - i drive down it all the time and view this beautiful expanse of green that sometimes is being used/occupied by people and sometimes not. But the tally/tracking of use is only part of determining the value of this empty space. Cliche perhaps, but it is the gateway to our wonderful neighborhood. What will be the continuity between the jewel of Oakland, Lake Merritt, and all the businesses on Grand and Lakeshore? What will people pass by while on their way between the two? A beautiful expanse of green. SO rare these days, or a fence inside of which is a smelly dog park?

And finally, people are sure to park in the library parking lot. This library is a little gem itself and will be negatively affected by a dog park.

Sincerely,

Barb St. Amant

From: Karen Patterson [mailto:patterson-k@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2011 1:47 PM
To: sue@heragency.com
Cc: Fr. Seamus Genovese
Subject: Dog Run

Hello - I am contacting you regarding the matter of the proposed dog run that would be placed near the Lakeview Library. This item was put on the agenda at a recent meeting of our Pastoral Council, as the decision regarding the proposed dog run is important to our parish community and to the community at large.

I am the Chair of the Pastoral Council and this item was discussed openly and at length by our members. There was agreement that the proposal for the dog run, given location, use, upkeep and community impact, seems ill conceived and inappropriate. We share your concerns, and support your position on this proposal. You requested that Fr. Seamus or another representative of our parish attend meetings where this issue would be further addressed. While our Council supports the logic and position that you identified in your email messages dated March 11th-March 16th, none of our members could attend the meetings that you suggested based on schedules and prior commitments. We do however, want you to know that our parish opposes a dog run for this particular locality, and we hope that the support of our parish, as well as other groups and individuals, will result in the elimination of the proposed dog run.

Thank you for expressing your concerns about this issue, for your realistic approaches and consideration of the proposal, and for contacting us regarding this matter. Again, we share your concerns, and apologize for having been unable to attend recent meetings. We hope this matter will be resolved quickly and to the benefit of our community.

Please keep us updated regarding the results of this proposal.

Karen Patterson, Chair
Pastoral Council
Our Lady of Lourdes Church

From: HARDYIC@aol.com [mailto:HARDYIC@aol.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 17, 2011 3:20 PM
To: sue@heragency.com
Subject: Volunteerism

Hello all

I have lived in the Rose Garden/Grand Lake area since 1984. i have slowly come to love my hood and have done a lot of volunteering in the Rose Garden, along Grand Avenue , Lake Park and Lakeshore, all around Lake Merritt , having once been on the Board of the Lake Merritt Institute, in Splash Pad Park , and at the traffic circle at Elwood, Jean and Santa Clara .

I was the NCPC Chair, am the Crime Block Captain of my area, and have attended countless meetings regarding the neighborhood and the City at Barnett Hall and City Hall. I have interfaced with Adams Point community leaders, those from Hadden Hill, Cleveland Cascade and all over the City. I have attended countless NCPC meeting throughout the City to get a flavor for what works, particularly regarding hte topic of recruiting volunteers.

I "adopted" the traffic circle at Santa Clara , Elwood and Jean and have organized my neighbors over the years to maintain the planting in the bulb out and circle. The city installed it at our urging to stop sideshows, under the condition that the neighbors maintain it. The feedback from the residents was very positive initially but that soon faded away and died.

Over the months, the group of volunteers has dwindled to a paltry few. In one concerted effort in early 2010, I e mailed my crime watch group (50+ homes and apts), hand delivered 300+ flyers to all the houses and apartments on Santa Clara, Elwood, Valle Vista, Mira Vista, Alta Vista and Jean. Ten people showed up. That was a record turn out. The usual suspects total 4 people, on a good day.

The last time the circle needed weeding, pruning, etc, (February 20, 2011 after a good rain) I did it myself somewhat gun shy of being rejected over and over and over again by hundreds of people.

You can count on one hand the people that help Ken Katz with Splash Pad Park , the people that help Maggie Kostoff with the Rose Garden and the planting of daffodils on Grand, the people that have helped Jim Radliff with Cleveland Cascades. It is always the usual suspects and dedicated residents and volunteers that end up doing all the work.

I have been asked to respond to the Emily Rosenberg e mail of 4-8-11 regarding volunteers and promising to maintain the proposed dog park. She has made commitments and promises regarding all the tasks the ODOG volunteers shall perform on a regular/weekly/daily basis. They are to plant and maintain vines along a chain link fence the length of two football fields, maintain wood chips for a 22,000 square foot field, fill in holes that are greater than six inches in diameter, and somehow deal with the flood of this marsh area in the rainy season. This of course does not even mention the excrement factor, urine smell and all other things that come with dogs.

I wish her great luck with this endeavor if it ever comes to fruition. The volunteers shall die away in short order. She will find herself doing all the work, which shall breed resentment, back aches and cynicism for poor Ms. Rosenberg. Just an FYI Ms. Rosenberg, it will come down to you, your adoption of the dog park, your sweat for the dogs, and no one else and you get to maintain a 22,000- square foot sized field on your own. Good luck with that.

I continue to work on my traffic circle which is far smaller than the proposed dog park as I take great pride when I circle it that I and a few others are responsible for it's maintenance. The city does nothing at the traffic circle. The city will do nothing for the dog park.

And for you other residents, what happens when Ms. Rosenberg moves away? Will you get out there and pull weeds, pick up dog poop, fill in holes, maintain wood chips, and fill in the marsh when it is needed?

Jana Hardy
Chme Block Captain
Retired NCPC Chair
Proud, hard working Oakland Resident
-- On Tue, 3/8/11, Maria Alderete <maria_afdo@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Maria Alderete <maria_aldo@yahoo.com>
Subject: Lake Merritt Dog Park
To: xwang@oaklandneLcom
Cc: maria_aldo@yahoo.com
Date: Tuesday, March 8, 2011, 7:41 AM

Hi Xiaojing,

Carietta L. Starks provided your contact information to my community email group asking that we send you our comments on the proposed dog park at Lakeview park.

Whereas I strongly agree we need more space for dogs, which may include a dog park. I also strongly disagree w/ the current proposed location at Lakeview park.

What I like about the other dog parks in Oakland is that they convert unsightly space, like the area under the freeway overpass (Rockridge Dog Park). Or use an existing park known for it's crime and drug trafficking (Mosswood). Or use a space (sloping hillside) that is otherwise unusable for development (Linda dog Park).

My biggest issue with this proposal is it would occupy a large, green, open space that is currently used by runners, volleyball & soccer players, picnickers & families using the playground. I also disagree that as a community we have a right to a dog park within walking distance. In fiscal hard times, it does not seem like we are focused on the right priorities.

I have a couple of recommendations. First, most of Oakland parks do not permit dogs. Even if we don't have a dog park, we should consider allowing dogs at some of our parks. No design costs, no construction costs. Second, if a majority of the community members oppose the park, it seems like the city should be more open to discussing other locations. Our yahoo group did a poll on if folks felt we needed a dog park and it barely got a majority. I voted "yes", but would have voted "no" if I had known the proposed location. I feel the most effective way to communicate this project would be to post a drawing of the project in the park and solicit community feedback. Posting requirements are very common with construction projects and since you are converting the use of the space I feel it's important. Finally, 10 years is way too long for a project like this. I recommend a city auditor look at the process and make recommendations on how to streamline the process.

I would like to acknowledge all the hard work that folks have put into this project. However, given the community concerns, I like the city needs to be more open about getting feedback.

Thanks.
Maria Alderete
Wayne Ave/Oakland

From: Steve Saffold [mailto:stevesaffold@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2011 12:37 PM
To: Kernighan, Pat; Karchmer, Joanne

Subject: lakeshore/macarthur dog park

hi pat and joanne,

my name is steve saffold; i live on brooklyn and wesley. i wasn't able to attend the recent meeting at the church on lakeshore and mandana, but was given a synopsis by another opponent of the dog park.

i attended the parks and rec meeting about a month or two ago in that building near the lawn bowling. in that meeting, i addressed the parks and rec committee and expressed my strong concerns with the notion of putting a dog park in this location. since that meeting, my concerns have not abated or been mitigated by anything the pro-dog park people have put forth. quickly, here are my concerns, and for the record, i have a dog:

- it is an important inaccuracy (and one that has been actively and knowingly misrepresented by the dog park people) to say that ten years ago (or whenever it was), 800 (or however many) people signed a petition to have a dog park in this location. people merely signed in favor of exploring the idea of having a dog park somewhere near the lake.
- this is a critical piece of open space in a "main and main" location, whether the space is "utilized" by sports enthusiasts often enough or not. yes, it's important for people to be able to play soccer or volleyball there, as well as to be able to sunbathe or picnic. but it's equally if not more critical to preserve the openness of the space for aesthetic and visual purposes. to have a six-foot hurricane fence wrapped in opaque plastic or netting, at the corner of lakeshore and macarthur, in perpetuity, is NOT a wise land-use choice for the city of oakland .
- it is a fallacy that people are not going to drive to bring their dogs to this park. are you kidding me?
- traffic: it's awful there now, and will get worse. parking: ditto. i take my nephew to that toddler park all the time, and it's really tough to park.
- toddler park: it is irresponsible and cavalier for the dog people to claim that having dogs next to the kids will benefit the kids. really? based on what? these are animals, and no one can predict what any interaction between a dog and a child will be.
- dog parks belong in unclaimed places without a lot of eyeballs.
- the smell will be be horrendous and will be noticeable on lakeshore and grand retail strips, but that is not even one of my top concerns.
- fact: in Central Park in NY, there are no dog parks. in a few areas of the park, dogs are permitted off-leash, but only at specific hours (early in the morning and after dark).

if you sense a bit of surliness in my tone, it's because frankly i feel that the supporters of the dog park have organized in a generally self-serving enterprise and have gotten to the point where they feel entitled to have this park here. that includes at least one email missive from councilmember nadel. much has been made of the long history of this project, the time and energy spent moving it forward....i submit that that is no justification for a poor land use choice at a key intersection of oakland that would be PERMANENT. i work in real estate development, and one popular refrain is, "thank god that didn't end up getting built there."

thank you both for listening. feel free to contact me anytime, for any reason.

Hi Pat,

A concerned group of Oaklanders recently became aware of the proposal to place a dog run at the corner of MacArthur Blvd and Lakeshore (Astro park). The proponents claim this is a part of

the Lake Merritt Master Plan (plan) and that, aside from the initial city outlay of approximately \$35,000, there will be no further cost to the city for maintenance and up-keep. A review of the plan reveals that while every other aspect included is part of the plan, it refers to the dog run as "proposed". Additionally, the plan calls for funded managed maintenance and that those maintenance costs for the lake area are expected to increase as time passes.

Beyond the obvious loss of valuable green space (currently enjoyed by all Oaklanders), according to the American Kennel Club's (AKC) recommendation for dog specific areas, it asserts a one acre space as a minimum requirement. The Astro park proposed dog run is far inferior to that requirement.

Additionally, the *Volunteer Maintenance Model* proposed for the dog area is not in keeping with the master plan's specifications. Contrary to proposed dog run proponents, feedback gathered as part of this group's need to better understand this proposal revealed that the VMM has not been a successful approach in other dog run areas. Complaints such as, 'This place should be renamed to Hardly Dog Park. It's a sorry excuse for a park where I will only bring my dog in desperation. The neighborhood dog people need to get together and seriously rehab this place!' are not uncommon. Given the monumental effort(s) of community and city time (not to mention the millions of dollars spent thus far) invested in the Lake Merritt revitalization, this proposed dog run is completely contradictory to the overall spirit and direction of the master plan.

It appears that beyond a decades old dialogue about a dog run at Astro park, very little outreach has occurred recently. Given that with time, needs, opinions, business and personal make-up, traffic patterns and appropriateness of an idea often changes.

This proposed dog run is ill-conceived, its maintenance is completely unsupported and based on the recommendations from the AKC, its size is inferior to the minimum acreage recommended by them. Valuable open green and un-programmed space is a valued commodity within an urban area. Lake Merritt, also known as the "jewel" of Oakland, has precious little unprogrammed open green space where soccer, volleyball, kite flying, exercising and whatever other outside activity people gather out of doors can enjoy.

As we reaching out to you to gain your support in maintaining our valued Astro park open space, so too are we identifying concerned Oakland group(s) and their members to gather their support for preserving this valued gateway to Lake Merritt.

Joseph Villatoro

Hi Pat,

I am writing to express my continued concern regarding the proposed Lakeview dog park inside of Astro Park. I first want to preface my concerns by saying that I'm a dog person. And I'm a dog person who uses our dog parks on a near daily basis.

However, I am also a citizen and homeowner here on Elwood in the Grand Lake district

I have a good many concerns but first and foremost I know from experience that dog parks/runs are not pretty places. You can make pretty drawings of how it will look but in the end, for the most part, they're fenced areas with chips on the ground. Generally, the way it goes is that dog parks are created in out-of-the-way places where people don't have to look right at them. Or in blighted areas where a dog park actually makes things possibly look better, safer, more populated.

Dog parks should **never** take over a beautiful green space like the one proposed in Astro Park. Astro Park is the gateway to our fantastic neighborhood. Do you think the people in Montclair would agree to a dog park in the middle of their bustling shopping district? Never. So why should we?

Additionally, this dog park will serve only a small sub section of the community. Not only can non-dog owners not use the space or even enjoy it visually anymore, a good many dog owners won't use it either. It's way too small. The American Kennel Club says a dog park needs to be a minimum of an acre to be useful. Alameda Dog Park is eight acres. At half an acre, this proposed park is **sixteen** times smaller than Alameda's. I am pointing this out not to advocate for this proposed park to increase in size but to demonstrate that we are sacrificing currently un-programmed open space for everyone to give it to a very small sub-section of the population.

There is also the issue of parking. People will drive there. Every dog park I go to—every single one—people drive to. People will drive and they will want to park in the library lot which is already impossible to park in. It's just a really poorly conceived location for a dog park. Again, I'm pro dog-park but **not** there.

I am attaching a letter of concern from Oaklanders For Open Space (OFOS), a group that was formed and that I have joined because of this situation. This group is rapidly moving forward to get the word out that this is happening. We understand that this dog park was in the works a long time ago but it appears to be only very recently resurrected and has caught a lot of people off guard.

I love our 'hood. I've lived here and owned a home for twelve years. I've voted for you—twice. I've walked the neighborhood on safety walks with you. Your husband came to my door to canvas and I said don't waste your time—I'm in—I am a PatK supporter. I voted for you because, quite frankly, I think you have good common sense. I know it sounds funny but common sense is not all that common and I appreciate it. This proposed park, to me, really flies in the face of common sense.

In closing, please know, I am not a political person. I am a **dog** person. But I'm first and foremost a person concerned about having a really nice neighborhood. I've seen this place take off—I'm so proud to live here—but this proposed effort has me really, really down.

Sue

Sue Levin
President
HerAgency & Babyforcemedia
Brand, Buzz, and Build: We Reach Moms Online

510-663-4693 (V)
510-827-6419 (M)
509-461-2116 (F)
sue@heragency.com

From: HARDYIC@aol.com
To: PKernighan@oaklandnet.com, JKarchmer@oaklandnet.com,
JGerard@oaklandnet.com
Sent: 2/23/2011 7:04:21 P.M. Pacific Standard Time
Subj: Proposed Lakeview Dog Park

Hello Pat, Joanne and Jennie,

I have been uncharacteristically silent over the dog park brouhaha over the last few months. I am a cat person, not a dog person, and felt I had nothing to add to the mix. However, with the escalating tensions

and emotions being exhibited, and countless e mails, I felt I needed to throw in my two cents.

I am against this dog park, not because I am not a dog person or that I don't like dogs. I like dogs. I just don't have one of them given my cats are opposed to that idea. I am not opposed to all dog parks. In fact, I have taken walks with friends and their dogs at the dog park at Point Isabella. Terrific dog park, perfect for many dogs. Great location. I am against the Lakeview dog park for the following reasons:

1. it is too small, only 1/2 acre. Most dog parks are 8 acres (Alameda) to 40+ acres (Pt Isabella), or bigger.
2. location, not remote and off the beaten track, like many dog parks (I reference Pt Isabella)
3. location, not happy for the dogs...just below a busy freeway (noise and pollution) and adjacent to very busy streets with buses and cars zooming by (MacArthur, Grand, Lakeshore). Also, too small of a space for bigger dogs and many dogs. I see discrimination going on against big dogs with this park. Only small dogs allowed? And only a few small dogs for that matter.
4. Lack of parking for participants. We all went to school on parking re the Farmers Mkt. They use the school parking lot and as it is, people park in front of my house on Elwood and up the hill and walk to the market on Saturday mornings.
5. Increase of traffic on MacArthur, Grand and Lakeshore. Kwik Way conversion to a potential MacDonalds taught us all on traffic flow and how AC Transit will probably be very opposed to this idea of a dog park. MacArthur/Lakepark are major hubs for AC Transit. They don't need packed in dogs adjacent to their routes. If I was a dog, it would freak me out totally. Has anyone checked with AC Transit re their position on this dog space?
6. maintenance of dog park by volunteers. We all know how that goes, everyone is on board for a few months and then they fade away. I cannot get more than 3 or 4 people out to help me weed the traffic circle and bulb out on Elwood and Santa Clara (only once or twice a year) after blanketing the area with no less than 300 flyers, e mails, etc each time I need help. If not maintained, what does a dog park smell like? And do you want that as the gateway to your council district Pat and the neighborhood?
7. the loss of green space currently being used by a variety of people for baseball, soccer, appreciating the green space. We cannot afford to lose hard fought green space. We would be giving this away to a poorly thought out plan that just won't work well for humans and dogs alike.
8. The lake is a protected wild life preserve. Will dogs packed into a relatively small space right next to the lake be in keeping with the protected preserve of the lake and adjacent areas?
9. Does this dog area mesh well with Measure DD Pat? Is this what you envisioned when you spearheaded the passage of Measure DD? A poopy dog park, all the grass demolished with the green space destroyed?

As an addendum, I believe that Ken Katz was also very suspect of this dog park working and not 100% on board. If anyone knows what will work for the Grand Lake area, it is Ken. He and Ann have lived here longer than me and I have only been in my Elwood home for 27 years. I trust his reluctance to endorse this plan. It is telling to me if Ken does not believe it is a good idea. I know I am in good company with him.

So, Pat, I request you take a firm position in opposition to the dog park. I cannot see where it would be good for my neighborhood. I would rather see energy be used to clean up the on and off ramps from 580 into the Grand Lake area. I know Ken has worked diligently on these on and off ramps as they are also the entrances and gateways to our hood. They could use some help. Also reconfiguring the area of Lake Shore and Lake View so Ann Katz and others are not hit by cars again. And need I mention the ever present

pot holes???!!!!

Okay, I'll shut up now.

I would appreciate a response to the above. Pat, are you opposed to the dog park? I know it is not officially in your district, but I think your opinion should carry great weight nevertheless.

Jana Hardy
441 Elwood Avenue
Oakland, Ca 94610
1-510-444-2913
Crime Block Captain
Retired NCPC Chair

From: Steven Belcher <swbelcher007@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 25, 2011 at 6:01 PM
Subject: proposed dog park at McArthur and Lakeshore
To: pkemighan@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

As a life long dog owner, I think the proposal to build a dog park at the corner of Lakeshore and McArthur is really a bad idea. Most dog parks become a unattractive wasteland of dusty wood chips and dilapidated plastic chairs. The current location is currently heavily used by people of all ages, throwing Frisbees, footballs, and just hanging out. The fact that the city cannot currently maintain its existing parks probably insures that this park if built and used will blight that corner of the recently renovated and world class Lake Merritt park. Most people will drive to the park; taking up very limited parking spaces needed by adjacent merchants and library users. As an alternative, consider building a dog park on Port of Oakland vacant land. There are many opportunities for dog owners to walk their dogs off leash in the eastbay...please save this precious and visible piece of green space.

Steve Belcher
630 Longridge Road

From: Frank Arthur [mailto:farthur@tricommercial.com]
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 6:27 PM
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com; nnadel@oaklandnet.com; ,
Subject: Lake Merritt Dog Park

Councilmembers Kernighan, Nadel and Kaplan:

I would like to express the concern of TRI Commercial Real Estate Services, which represents Lakeshore commercial property owners, regarding the proposed Dog Park at Lakeshore and McArthur.

The Grand/ Lakeshore District is an evolving one which has a great deal of additional potential to provide needed food and retail establishments for the neighborhood. We believe that a Dog Park in this location will detract from the potential of the area and we are particularly concerned about the "self policing" of the area by users. We believe that without strictly enforced controls and professional maintenance this facility can easily become an eyesore and detriment to the neighborhood. It would seem that a reasonable relaxation of current lease laws in the area would be a more beneficial solution to the problem

On behalf of TRI Commercial and our client, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Oakland, we encourage you to insure that the City take into account all aspects of this proposed project and protect all interests in the area.

Thank you,

Franklin Arthur

Franklin K Arthur III | Senior Investment Advisor
DRE Lic #: 00472853
TRI Commercial Real Estate Services
1777 Oakland Blvd. Suite 100
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Ofc 925.296.3322 | EFax 510.336.8292
Fax 925.296.3399 | Cell 510.816.5914
farthur@tricommercial.com
www.tricommercial.com

NOTE: This is Steve's second letter--to Nadel. If we only can send one from him, I think this one is better than his first that he sent to Kernighan:

Steven W. Belcher
630 Longridge Road
Oakland, California

Nancy Nadel
City Councilmember
Oakland City Council

August 30, 2011

Dear Nancy,

I think this is the first letter I have written you; I am very concerned about the future of Astro Park which now I live near (adjacent to 580, between Lakeshore and Grand, near Lake Merritt). You know well; it is the only multi-use playfield in the area and during the weekends. It is a hive of activity, pick up soccer, baseball, football, and other activities that need a grassy field and room to play. The people who use it reflect and look like Oakland, the most multi-ethnic/racial society in the country. It is also one of the few windows to people passing through Oakland that presents the beauty of the lake and its architecture. There is a proposal to convert a significant portion of this space into a dog park.

I love dogs. I have had dogs all my life. I even served time as acting head of animal control for Berkeley. When I lived in Rockridge, I sometimes took my dog to the dog park there. I know there are limited venues for dog owners to let their dogs recreate and thus the proposal for the Astro Dog Park. This is, however, such a bad idea. If you visit the Rockridge Dog Park you will see what I mean...often it is a dirty, smelly place that at times even repels dog owners to the extent that some recreate their dogs in the park lawns adjacent to the dog park.

As head of Berkeley's animal control, I became convinced that small dog parks (as opposed to large areas along the bay) need a high level of maintenance and I am guessing the City is not prepared to finance dog park maintenance. I know there may be many volunteers now...but as you know volunteers are fickle and subject to the winds of expediency and crisis. I am guessing that if the dog park is approved, within a year it will look like any other dog park (assuming high maintenance), that is, a wasteland of dirty wood chips and third hand plastic chairs.

Also disturbing is the loss of a multi-use green space. For the life of me I can't think of an alternative space. Soccer fields are way over subscribed and distant. The closest, near the estuary, is heavily used already during non-working hours. I doubt Laney College with its ample sports facilities would open its gates to the community, nor Oakland High, or Piedmont High. I can't think of any sport venues in Lake Merritt Park. Maybe I am missing something?

I know this is an issue most public officials really, really dislike. Any decision will not be popular and will not fade. For politicians, it is tough; on one hand you have passionate caretaking dog owners and on the other, neighbors who love their park as it is. Neither group is moving away. You also have a large group of park users (e.g., soccer players) who maybe unaware of and disengaged from the political process, in many ways disenfranchised from this decision making opportunity. It is, however, an issue that will continue to echo through successive political campaigns.

I apologize for the length of the letter....but this issue, I believe, is transformative for the neighborhood. The dog park if built will be iconic; it will be a landmark characterizing several neighborhoods. It will be the first thing prospective homeowners and business investors will see when exiting the freeway. It will be "...you know...you get off the freeway where that dog park is..." instead of "you get off the freeway where you see a gorgeous park and lake".

Thanks for your consideration,

Steve Belcher

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Taylor Brady <taylor@taylorbrady.org>

Date: Thu, Oct 13, 2011 at 1:54 PM

Subject: No fenced dog run at Astro Park

To: pkemighan@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Pat Kernighan,

I am writing today to share my strong opposition to any plan that would seek to turn Astro Park into an enclosed, off-leash dog park. As an Oakland resident, and member of a family with both a dog and a small child, I have several reasons for this opposition:

- 1) I disapprove of enclosing a public space that is used for a variety of purposes by a diverse range of Oakland residents and converting it to a single-use space. The implication that dog owners have some sort of privileged claim on public space that trumps the claims of pick-up soccer teams, parents with small children, runners and exercisers, and community members simply enjoying a bit of accessible green space, is profoundly imbalanced and undemocratic.
- 2) The location of Astro Park at a "crossroads" in terms of Oakland neighborhoods has ensured that the broad range of mixed uses noted above has served a purpose of civic integration and sharing of space across lines of race and class, at a time when society at large and Oakland in particular seem to be rapidly re-segregating.
- 3) The collateral effect of the park's location adjacent to the Saturday farmer's market is that a number of families who might not otherwise consume significant portions of fresh, locally grown food are now doing so because of the time they spend in proximity to the market with their children. The impact of this on both regional economies and neighborhood health is hard to quantify, but at a time when childhood obesity and diabetes are at epidemic levels, and several major Oakland neighborhoods have earned the unwelcome designation of "food deserts," even a potential correlation between the park's location and healthy food purchase habits is worth preserving.
- 4) Oakland and surrounding parts of Alameda County boast a number of spectacular dog-friendly trails that are a healthier, safer means to ensure adequate off-leash time. Having seen the proliferation of enclosed off-leash dog parks during my time as a resident of San

Francisco, I can say that these civic amenities tend to encourage the worst habits of dog owners, promoting unsupervised and unstructured time spent by large concentrations of dogs in a limited space. This tends to lead to large numbers of fights, bite wounds and other injuries, and paradoxically to under-exercised dogs, since owners tend to be less engaged in promoting active exercise once they have the illusion that the off-leash space is doing the work for them. Reliance on these "dog-only" spaces also tends to exacerbate problems of dogs that are under-socialized with humans and especially with children.

5) Simply from an aesthetic standpoint, the idea of turning an unfenced green space into a fenced, wood-chipped lot makes no sense.

Astro Park works as it is currently designed and used. How many institutions and spaces in Oakland can we say that about right now? I strongly encourage you to support its retention as a community green space accessible to a broad range of uses, rather than its enclosure for the benefit of a narrow segment of the community.

Best regards,
Taylor Brady
2907 Georgia Street
Oakland, CA 94602

From: Mirabai Deranja <morticia.atoms@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Oct 14, 2011 at 10:33 AM
Subject: Please keep Astro Park open and green!
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com

To Pat Kernighan:

Hello. Please keep Astro Park green and open. We love it. We play volleyball there. We drive by there all the time, appreciating the green.

Thank you, thank you.
Mirabai Deranja -Resident of Oakland

From: Amy Jo Karn <amyjokarn@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 13, 2011 at 1:16 PM
Subject: No dog park at Astro Park please
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Pat Kernighan,

I'm writing to tell you that I strongly disapprove of any plan to turn astro park into a dog park.

I am a dog owner, a mother, and a frequent visitor to Lake Merritt and the farmer's market. It would be a terrible idea to change the beautiful, highly used grassy park into a brown, fenced dog park.

(1) Oakland boasts a number of gorgeous hiking trails that are dog-friendly. This insistence that dog owners have some sort of right to a dog park in each and every neighborhood is ridiculous. Dogs do best on trails, in motion, not romping around in a fenced wood chip area.

(2) Astro Park is always being used by people with kids, by sports teams and camps, pick-up soccer leagues, and folks who exercise at the lake. Why fix what isn't broken?

(3) The geese who live at Lake Merritt also use this grass at Astro Park, and they will have to overpopulate the grassy area near the lake, causing more congestion in an already busy area.

(4) It is not logical to turn a green space into a brown space, when there are plenty of ugly, unused spots that could be turned into dog parks.

Thank you for your time,

Amy Karn
2907 Georgia St.
Oakland, CA 94602

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jeff Chorney <jeffchorney@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed, Oct 12, 2011 at 8:52 PM

Subject: No dog park

To: "rkaplan@oaklandnet.com" <rkaplan@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Rebecca Kaplan,

My name is Jeff, and I live on Perkins Street, near the intersection with Grand Avenue, with my wife and daughter. I learned recently there is a plan afoot to put in a dog run at Astro Park.

I am writing to tell you that I am 100% opposed to this plan. I urge you to do everything in your power to make sure that no dog run is installed at that location.

Nearly every Saturday, my daughter and I walk down Grand to the Farmer's Market. We stay there for awhile and then we go to Astro Park. We enjoy the grass and the playground. We like to watch people playing soccer and we like to play on the grass ourselves. Putting a dog run at that location would create an eyesore and would take away my enjoyment and the enjoyment of others.

Astro Park's green space is the perfect contrast to the busy freeway next door. It is the antidote to traffic. It helps make the rest of our neighborhood palatable.

I understand some dogs need a place to run but the center of our neighborhood is not the right place. Dogs should not take priority over people, especially children. Please do not diminish a very necessary patch of green.

Sincerely,
Jeff Chorney

From: Sally Lewis <sallyelewis@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 12, 2011 at 11:48 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com,
aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Pat, Rebecca, and Ann,

I have been living in Oakland for about three years, and I have lived right up the street from Astro Park for almost two years now. In fact, I can see Astro Park from my bedroom window. I thoroughly enjoy and take pride in my residence in the Lake Merritt area. I frequent local shops, the Saturday Farmer's Market, and walk around the lake at least twice a week (weather permitting). Moreover, I worked at Bayhill High School, on Boden Way, which utilized Astro Park for its' sports and other school activities. I now work at another local high school, and our school played flag football against Bayhill High School in Astro Park -- right where people are trying to install a dog park. I think it would be a travesty to take this space away from the multitude of people and programs that utilize it. It makes me happy to see people of all sorts of creeds use this park for play and recreational activities. I am a dog owner, and have been for 5 years, and yet I am completely opposed to this space being used as a dog park. I know that my students would be devastated not to be able to use this area to scrimmage against other local high school. I cannot think of another place for our games to be held. Please consider the people who use this park for positive reasons every day and deny this area as a dog park. Thank you

--

Sally Lewis

[Redacted signature]

From: chad marshall <chadmarshall@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 8, 2011 at 12:55 PM
Subject: Please don't let Astro Park go to the dogs!
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello Pat,

I normally don't write letters to City Council members, but for this cause I felt obligated. My Wife and I are Oakland residents and have been homeowners here for about 7 years. We walk

Lake Merrit and hit the Farmers Market every weekend, almost without fail. I've heard that there are plans to turn Astro Park into a fenced dog run. For us that would be a terrible idea. I love walking thru that park and watching all the people enjoying whatever activities they are in to. Did I mention we are expecting our first child? It's one of the few places I can imagine letting my kid run around with no worries. A dog park would completely ruin that idea. Please keep Astro Park for People.

Thanks for your time.
Chad Marshall & Clara Llosa
415.205.8056

From: jere martin <jpmartin59@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 9, 2011 at 10:25 PM
Subject: Lake Merritt Dog Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

May I ask those (non-dogowners) who may be neutral toward or in favor of using a portion of Lake Merrit parkland commonly referred to as Astro Park as a dog run to go to the proposed site and just stand there for ten minutes observing the activities on or around it. Consider what a pack of barking dogs will do to the peace and quiet of the residents of the apartments nearby, the users of the library a few yards away, the children and their minders in the playground area, the bus users for the many lines who use the shelters in the park or directly across the street, trapped there for up to 30 minutes awaiting their rides, the fitness tribe using the free exercise equipment, the users of the makeshift soccer and baseball fields, although they may just be displaced--although to where they would go as there are no facilities for either of those sports nearby is unknown, the people who use the area while heading to the trails around the lake for the serenity it offers.

To the little gifts left by the geese who frequent the area will be added doggie waste, both in the dog area and the streets coming and going.

It is really hard to imagine a more inconvenient place for a dog run than this park. I'm not suggesting an alternative, but I think that any dog run belongs in an industrial area, isolated, with zero contact with people who don't use it.

Jere Martin
1720 Macarthur Blvd.
510 530-3779

From: Rachel Dulaney <rachel.dulaney@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 9, 2011 at 10:33 PM
Subject: Opposed to dog run plan for Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To Whom it may Concern,

I wish to voice my opposition to the proposed dog run at Astro Park near Mac Arthur Boulevard and Lakeshore.

As a resident in the area (Palm Ave @ Bellevue) since 2006, I was surprised to hear of the project only recently from the group Save Astro Park. I have serious concerns about the changes proposed. The Save Astro Park group (www.saveastropark.org) enumerates several that I see as valid:

- poor drainage in that area of the park exposing dogs and people to increased health hazards
- high vehicle traffic in very close proximity
- cutting the usable recreation space of the already small park in half
- detracting from the beauty of the current open green field
- proximity to children's play area
- already overburdened city maintenance department would be unable to devote adequate resources to upkeep and slipshod and impermanent volunteer groups are no substitute.

Furthermore, I would encourage investigating the option of a dog run site at the old horse stables as described on at <http://www.saveastropark.org/alternative-location>. This location is nearby, walkable yet off the main artery roads, disused, and has firmer drier ground.

When the idea for a dog run in the area was first put forth in 1998, it may have had more support because there was a dearth of available off leash runs in Oakland. However, the implementation of the plan took many years to move forward, as with many bureaucratic processes, and in the interim other locations for off leash dog use have become available (find a list [here](#)).

While I appreciate that the plan for the Mac Arthur/ Lakeshore site has been in the works for years, I still do not find that that expense and effort put into it thus far is just cause for implementing a flawed plan for the park. It would be a costly mistake, and would no doubt meet with overwhelming community opposition if more people were aware of the plan.

I look forward to hearing discussion on this topic at the Planning Commission meeting.

Thank you for your devoted civil service and your attention in this matter.

Ms. Rachel Dulaney
Adams Point
Oakland, CA

From: Elizabeth James <elizabeth.james82@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Dec 1, 2011 at 8:16 PM

Subject: Astro Park Proposal

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Kernighan, Ms. Kaplan, Ms. Nadel, Ms. Clevenger, and Ms. Brunner,

I write to request that you please reconsider the proposal to add a dog run in Astro Park. This is a beautiful patch of green space in an otherwise busy, urban setting. My sixteen-month-old daughter loves to play on the playground adjacent to there and then run through the large grassy patch unimpeded by sidewalks, bicyclists, and other hazards. We live in Upper Rockridge (near College and Broadway), an area surprisingly lacking in toddler-friendly playgrounds and green space, and her favorite activity in the world is to visit Astro Park and run wild. My husband and I have picnicked there with friends and played football, and when we used to live in Adams Point, the grass along Astro Park was a lovely counterpoint to the 580 as I walked daily to the stores on Lakeshore.

Please do not allow this park to be spoiled. Oakland is such a beautiful city. It would be a shame to allow over-development to wreak havoc through a beautiful part of town.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth James

From: david getzschman <davidgetzschman@hotmail.com>

Date: Mon, Dec 5, 2011 at 12:30 PM

Subject: Plans for Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hi folks,

I'm a three-year resident of Oakland who loves the community and loves Lake Merritt. I intend to make the neighborhood my home for the foreseeable future.

I'd like to convey my hope that you'll dismiss plans for a dog run at Astro Park, adjacent to Lake Merritt. I'm not against dogs or dog-owners, and I would support a dog park in a more secluded area, but consider that:

- For many visitors to Lake Merritt, whether they're coming for our wonderful Saturday Farmers Market, the Grand Lake theater or any of the local businesses, Astro Park is their first visual impression of the neighborhood as they take the Grand/Lake exit from 580. Its wide open green acres suggest Oakland's commitment to beautiful public areas, and a dog park would diminish that impression.
- A dog run at Astro Park seems short-sighted given the inevitable noise and odors it would introduce right next to the Farmers Market, which is an attractive draw to thousands in the vicinity of the lake.

- Significant acreage devoted strictly to dogs would limit space and discourage visitation from the thousands of native and wintering birds that help make Lake Merritt such a unique place to visit.

I've no doubt local dog-owners would love a park. I simply think there's a more suitable alternative elsewhere, and I'd encourage you to explore other possibilities.

Thanks for taking my opinion into consideration!

Dave Getzschman
1 Lakeside Drive Apt. 1209
Oakland, CA 94612

From: John Thompson <jthompson@pyatok.com>

Date: Mon, Dec 5, 2011 at 1:37 PM

Subject: Please no dog run at Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello All,

As a neighbor (I live at Lee & Van Buren) and a local worker, I wanted to e-mail my objection to a fenced-off dog run area at Astro Park. My girlfriend and I LOVE the Lake and the wonderful (and improving) ring of green space that surrounds it. Every day on my walk to work I am passed by joggers with their dogs running alongside, and I frequently see people pausing to let their dogs socialize with other dogs. All of this happens naturally, and it's all part of what makes the neighborhood so inviting for people like us that were done with living in San Francisco.

We are dog lovers and wish we could own a few under our lease. For now we make do with stalking our neighbor's dogs (and getting awkward smiles from their owners.) But on the issue of a fenced-off dog run at Astro Park, we both feel that the park is already happily maximized by groups playing sports, morning exercise groups, strolling people as well socializing dogs and their owners. There is no need to sequester a part of it and turn it into a dirt patch fouled with dog poop. The geese already do enough unmitigated fouling of the park.

I understand the joy of seeing dogs running off-leash but obviously with the adjacent freeway traffic that's not a great idea at this corner. But it's also part of the reason that this is just not the best place for this activity at all- either off-leash or with a fence, especially given the frequency of other uses. Adding a fence will fracture the park too much for the other uses, inviting more geese into the vacuum.

Please leave this wonderful park unfenced and open for all users, as it is today. People love it as it is.

Sincerely,

John

--

John Thompson, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

Project Architect
Pyatok Architects
1611 Telegraph Ave., Suite 200
Oakland, CA 94612
510-465-7010 x114
jthompson@pyatok.com
www.pyatok.com

From: Victoria Wong <vwoakland@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 5, 2011 at 2:11 PM
Subject: Against Astro Park Dog Park
To: "rkaplan@oaklandnet.com" <rkaplan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>, Pat Kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Councilmembers Kaplan and Nadel and Ms. Clevenger:

I write to strongly oppose the placement of a dog park at Astro Park/Eastshore Park. This area is highly visible and heavily used and enjoyed by many neighborhood residents, including me and my family, who live within half a mile of the park. A dog park at this location would eliminate the open space that serves as a transition between SplashPad Park and the Lake, significantly harming the aesthetics of the park. I do not want a chain-link-fenced dirt area in that highly visible location. If the appearance of other dog parks, such as the one by FROG park, is any indication, this would be an unsightly and unwelcome area.

In addition, the neighbors of the park, like myself, should not be expected to rely on volunteers' promises to maintain the dog park. If it becomes dirty and smelly, the community will have no recourse for correcting the problem. Furthermore, I believe this dog park, if it is to be located anywhere, should, like most dog parks, be placed in an underutilized area, as the Linda Park dog park and the dog park near FROG Park are placed (on a steep hillside and under a freeway, respectively), rather than in a highly used, attractive and visible area.

Furthermore, despite ODOG's promises that its volunteers will maintain the park, there is no guarantee it will happen, and the City will not have the resources to maintain the park. As it is, Oakland does not have the resources to maintain existing parks, even with volunteer assistance. For example, the Oakland Rose Garden's condition has deteriorated severely since gardening staff was reduced, despite regular volunteer efforts. I do not want to see a new dog park, in a highly visible and highly trafficked area, deteriorate into a blight on the neighborhood. In fact, I am opposed to even the capital expenditures proposed for the park, given Oakland's dire budget situation. That money would be far better spent maintaining existing parks than creating another park for which the City cannot afford maintenance.

Arguments that this location has been in the works for a long time and that the City should not spend additional money on planning a new park are not persuasive. As evidenced by the strong community opposition to the park, many, many local residents had no idea about the plans, and there are many valid objections to it, including children's safety, aesthetics, and the elimination of a significant open space, where Oakland has a shortage of open park space already. The fact that this not a suitable location for a dog park remains true regardless of how much it would cost to plan an alternative location.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria Wong

From: Jeff Steuben <jsteuben@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Feb 12, 2012 at 3:17 PM
Subject: Proposed dog park in Astro Park
To: rkaplan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Kaplan,

As you may know, there is a proposed dog park in Astro park, at Grand/Lake. I'm writing to you to voice my opposition to this project for a variety of reasons. I do not want to prevent dog owners from enjoying Oakland's parks, but feel that Astro park is not a good choice for its location. I suggest the planning committee take another look at available spaces for it instead.

At times it feels silly to be discussing this project when Oakland faces many larger problems with budget cuts, cost overruns and ongoing protests. However, I feel strongly that a focused, dedicated group of citizens like the Save Astro Park group can actually have an impact where we can feel powerless in facing the larger issues. Please heed this message as a reflection of the desires of the residents of Oakland.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Steuben

From: <bill@joostlaw.com>
Date: Sun, Feb 12, 2012 at 8:57 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oakland.net, nnadel@oakland.net
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, deborah bowen <deborahgbowen@gmail.com>

Count my wife and I, longtime Piedmont residents, among those opposed to the proposed dog park, which clearly can be located elsewhere than in the little oasis that is Astro Park.

Indeed, we urge you to see to it that time and money which might be spent on this proposal and construction, supervision and maintenance of the dog park on **first**

class maintenance for the existing park. And by the way, make **first class** maintenance of the fine Lake Merritt remodel a priority as well. These are PUBLIC spaces, enjoyed by folks from all walks of life, that provide opportunities for genuine community. The dog park, with its fences and questionable self-maintenance, will provide none of that and is likely to become a smelly, dirty eyesore in a busy, central place. Similarly, allowing the lake remodel to fall into disrepair, **as is already happening if you look close enough**, is unforgivable.

Bill & Deborah Joost

From: Art Springs <art51springs@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2012 at 10:33 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Peggy <pegasus16.b@gmail.com>

While walking around Lake Merritt this past weekend, my companion and I approached Astro Park to find a large area cordoned off to represent, as we discovered from a group of concerned citizens of the neighborhood, a proposed fence designating an area to possibly be used for a dog park. I think dog parks, in general, are a good idea, particularly in dense urban areas as this, but I also feel they need to be weighed against what could be an even greater loss. Although I am but a three month long resident in the Lake Merritt district, I think it would not be wise to convert a park so widely used by the public as a popular gathering place for socializing and recreation when there are other places such as the park at the corner of Hanover and Lakeshore, for example, which is virtually barren when I pass it daily. Parks like this one do not serve the public for any recreational purposes like soccer, football, or family gatherings because of the uneven ground, but they would easily suffice as an area for dogs to run freely with their owners. I hope that the planning commission and city council take full consideration of the long standing importance of Astro Park to the people in our city before possibly making it a dog park when there are other options available around Lake Merritt. I truly feel it would be a grave mistake to deny us this center of activity and maintain its aesthetic value by not putting up a fence in a place so visible and appreciated for its openness.

With great concern,

Art Springs

From: Peter Torsiello <Torsiello43@msn.com>

Date: Tue, Jan 10, 2012 at 9:37 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

I am writing to protest any dog park use at Astro Park or anywhere in or around Lake Merritt. I especially dislike the idea of using Astro Park for that purpose as it is part of the Lake Merritt Waterfowl Reserve, the first park set aside for waterfowl in the nation back in the 1890s. It is also located on a heavily used plot of park that attracts toddlers, ducks by the dozens and children playing including the people at Clausen House where they use the open space for exercise and games on occasion. This is a really bad idea and I don't see why the planning commission and the City would even consider it. Not to mention all the people who walk around the lake and pause there to eat and socialize (10,000 people a week walk around that lake.) Not to mention that parking is totally lacking in the area already. This will bring even more cars into a totally congested road system that I don't think was helped by the new configuration since the roads were reworked two years ago. BAD, BAD, BAD. Don't do it!

The second suggested place is also not appropriate since it also is within the WaterFowl Reserve Area. We have a unique place here in Oakland for our dwindling Duck population and dogs are a natural enemy of Birds. And while you are at it, you should clearly mark the walking paths with correct signage for excluding Dogs anywhere near birds there and enforcing the leash laws which are so often ignored by dog owners. Fining dog owners who allow their dogs off leash around the park would generate a large income for the City (As a walker daily around the Park, I see unleashed dogs every day.) Wrong, Wrong, Wrong!!

Why doesn't the city use some open areas near the edge of the Estuary like they do in Richmond. There is a lot of unused space , Much more accessible for dogs romping unhindered by other users.

Peter Torsiello
1200 Lakeshore Ave. Apt 10c
Oakland, Ca. 94606

Terry Carr, US Geological Survey
Science Information Services
Office of Communications
345 Middlefield Rd.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 329-4360

----- Forwarded by Wilfred T Carr/DO/USGS/DOI on 02/27/2012 04:19 PM -----

From:	Wilfred T Carr/DO/USGS/DOI
To:	pkernighan@oaklandnet.com
Date:	02/27/2012 04:17 PM
Subject:	

Terry Carr, US Geological Survey
Science Information Services
Office of Communications
345 Middlefield Rd.
Menlo Park, CA 94025.
(650) 329-4360

I can't believe anyone who can see would in any way entertain the idea of putting a Dog Park or Dog Run in Astro Park, Lake Merritt. Many different kinds of outdoor activities take place in that park each day, seven days a week, all ages. I don't know why people with dogs think everyone enjoys being around pets, especially in our public parks and playgrounds. This idea of a dog run in this beautiful front view of Lake Merritt and the residents living area is the wackiest plan the city will have to review.

Oakland is trying to rebuild it's image that outside cities view us a drugs, killing, shootings and others crimes. Just last week a lady I work with for several years asked me if I was afraid to go places in Oakland, because she hears and read about the label of bad happenings in our city. Now in one of the most beautiful and physically active parks, some dogs lovers think the park is the place for free running dogs.

I think the Planning Commission have better areas to accommodate the people who want their tax dollars spent on their pets!

Please do what you can to save the park!

[Redacted]

From: Joy Hillriegel <joy.hillriegei@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 1, 2012 at 12:42 PM
Subject: please no dog run near Astro Park
To: acleVenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saVeastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I love dogs and want them to have a great place to play... but I feel strorigly that this is not the right place.

I'm concerned about the smell. Over time dog parks definitely get a strong urine/ammonia smell... and this

location is so close to the little playground, that I worry there could be a significant impact on the ability of children and parents to enjoy the area.

Additionally, the fenced off area would have a significant impact on the open, welcoming feeling that the end of the park currently has.

Perhaps there is another part of the park that would work instead? Maybe in the green space between Fairyland and Bellevue Avenue?

Thank you for taking these concerns into account when making your decision, and I hope we can find a better location for the dog park.

-Joy Hillriegel
484 Merritt Ave
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Steve B <sbreg82@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 1, 2012 at 5:34 PM
Subject: SAVE ASTRO PARK
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

I love Astro Park and think a dog park would be a blight on the park and surrounding area. I request that you all DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in my neighborhood park. I live on Hanover Ave. located off of Lakeshore Ave. less than a half mile form Astro Park and walk by, use, and enjoy almost daily.

Respectfully Your,

Steven Bregante

322 Hanover Ave.
Oakland, CA 94606
925-785-1487

From: Joshua Drake <jdjd123@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 2, 2012 at 9:26 AM
Subject: Please save Astro Park --- no dog park!
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Ms. Ann Clevenger,

Please vote to deny the effort to convert Astro Park into a dog park. This is the only green place in my neighborhood to play sports! Astro Park is beautiful now as open space with no fences. Please don't let the dogs turn it into an eyesore.

Sincerely,
Joshua Drake
637 Beacon St, Oakland

From: Matthew Tanner <aacdebo@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 2, 2012 at 9:30 PM
Subject: Astro Park Off-leash Area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park, as it is already a long-established family and recreational park in a very central area of town. I love having dog parks, and I know there are a lot of dogs around Lake Merritt that need a place to go; I just don't think Astro Park is the right choice for reasons like safety and sanitation. Maybe trying to decentralize it is the answer. There are parks and locations around that would be better suited for this use.

Thank you,

Matthew Tanner

From: Shigeo Watanabe <shigwatanabe@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Mar 3, 2012 at 11:36 AM
Subject: please don't ruin Astro park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I am begging you to not allow the proposed dog park to ruin Oakland's wonderful Astro park. It is so inspiring for me to see so many people and children running around playing soccer, baseball, volleyball and just exercising in the space that the well wishing, but misguided dog park people want to claim. Even most dog owners that I know think that it is a bad area for a dog park and would much prefer the old stable area behind Children's Fairyland. Please keep Astro Park the way it is.
sincerely, Shigeo Watanabe

From: Benjamin Adkins <benjamin_adkins@hotmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 4, 2012 at 2:51 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Ben Adkins and I live in the Adam's Point neighborhood next to Astro Park and Lake Merritt. Astro Park and the Lake is the best thing about this area of Oakland. It is truly the gem of Oakland! Please do not allow this beautiful green space to be turned into a dog run. Please deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in my neighborhood park! I have many reasons for pleading with you to not allow this to happen. My wife and I moved to Oakland within the last year because we are volunteers with the International Rescue Committee, an organization committed to helping displaced refugees from around the world to successfully resettle here in Oakland. My friends, our new incoming refugees, are arriving from all over the world: Bhutan, Nepal, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and so many more! We use Astro Park - one of the few large green areas that is within walking distance near my neighborhood - to host weekly and daily

events. For example, every Friday we teach a free English class for new refugees and afterwards we play soccer with our students. We walk to Astro Park and use this beautiful green space to play soccer and build relationships with our students. Our students describe this as their favorite time during the week. It is therapeutic for them! For many, they come from rural areas that are usually lush and green, so coming to a modern city like Oakland is hard for them. Yet, this little space called Astro Park allows them to remember what green space looks like. I distinctly remember one of my Bhutanese friends on his first time to Astro Park reaching down to the grass and dirt at Astro Park and smiling. I asked him what was going on because here was this 30 year old man standing in the middle of Astro Park bent over in half touching the earth. I will never forget what he told me - he looked up at me and said in his broken English - "Ben, I feel the earth again." I asked him, "what do you mean?" He told me that this was the first time since he moved to Oakland (about four months prior) that he was able to touch the grass, the soil, and the earth. He was so excited and happy to be able to have a green place to come to. He came up to me and gave me a big hug and said: "thank you!" This is why Astro Park is important. Living in a modern city, we have to protect our green spaces. If Astro Park had been a dog run, my new friend would have never had this experience.

In addition to this experience, we use Astro Park every Sunday at 3pm to play soccer. A group of around 20 show up and play soccer from 3pm till around 6 or until it gets dark. This is not just a group of your average American guys playing soccer. This is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-religious group. Here is a group of Muslims from Afghanistan playing soccer with Hindus from Sri Lanka, Buddhist from Bhutan, and Orthodox Christians from Eritrea - laughing and playing soccer. They are the future of Oakland. They are the future of our nation. Allowing green spaces like Astro Park to exist allows for connections and bridges to be built across cultural, language, religious, and social barriers. It is one of the few green spaces in Oakland big enough to host a group like ours.

Besides using this beautiful green space for sporting events, we host family events here as well. For example, last Spring we hosted an Easter picnic and egg hunt for refugee families. We had over 30 families show up for the event. We had food from all over the world. We had games for the children. And we had a good 'ole American Easter Egg Hunt for the young children. Well, ... we thought it was only for young children until our adults, who had never experienced an Easter Egg hunt ran out to find eggs for themselves. Many of the families had never experienced an Easter Egg hunt and were so happy and excited to be able to experience an American

"tradition." For weeks afterwards, many of our friends kept asking us when we could go back to Astro Park and look for eggs! If Astro Park was a off-leash dog run, where else could we go? Please, don't allow this space to be turned into a dog-run. Not only do we use this space for large group gatherings, we also use it for small group gatherings as well. We have taught English in the park. We have small picnics in the park. It is such a wonderful place. And we love it!

Commissioners, I beg of you, please deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in my, no, "our" neighborhood area park.

Sincerely,
and in most respect,

Benjamin S. Adkins

From: t monnin <tev.monnin@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 4, 2012 at 3:55 PM
Subject: please DENY permit application for fenced dog area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Ann Clevenger:

I am writing to urge the commissioners to please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This area is used by individuals, families and communities for many different outdoor activities. The space promotes exercise, health, and community. Please keep it this way by denying the permit application for fenced off leash dog area.

thank you,
Tev Monnin

From: Jay <jamesetjackson@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 5, 2012 at 2:50 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed dog run project at Astor Park.

I am a 47 year resident of Oakland, and my earliest memories include activities at Astro park. I have now had the pleasure of bringing my own children to Astro to play, and that would be severely compromised by the plan that has been put forward.

There is a shortage of grass play areas in the City, and it would be a disservice to the community to take more away and make this a dog run. I am confident that there are underutilized areas elsewhere that would better lend to the proposed use.

I respectfully request that you deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park, our neighborhood park.

Sincerely,

James Jackson
2069 Braemar Rd.
Oakland, CA 94602

From: M.Kourjanski <mkourjanski@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 5, 2012 at 7:00 PM
Subject: Please, no "dog park" dirt pit by Lake Merritt
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com,
NNadel@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express our entire family's strong opposition to the plans of some apparently small but very vocal activist group to place a dog park in the middle of the open green by Lake Merritt.

We reside in the neighborhood since 2003, and had many, many wonderful moments of going to the playground or kicking the ball on the green.

This open green is the face of the city, it shows charm and beauty.

When we talked within our family about the strange plans to spoil this open green space, my now 10-year old son asked – who could possibly come with this weird idea? My now 18-year old daughter asked – how come this idea found its way into the city government? My wife just shook her head because she is aware how dysfunctional the governance of this city is. And from my own point of view I would add that we've seen many cities and governments through our life – from former USSR, through Europe and to quite a few places in the US – and Oakland unfortunately shows the most staggering incompetence in terms of architectural planning and strategy of all places we've ever seen.

Me being a Block Captain for the Neighborhood watch, I discussed the publicized plans around the dog park with our neighbours. The reaction was overall between strongly negative and somewhat neutral (with the unanswered question – who is going to pay for and do maintenance). Mind you, many of them own dogs.

I would like to ask you to DENY the permit application for the dog park proposal; if it moves forward it would be an enormous disservice to our community.

Finally, I simply cannot resist to mention:

- It is amazing how difficult it is to even obtain simple facts about the proposed upcoming changes;
- It is nearly impossible to determine what is the decisioning workflow and public commenting process at the City commission, with very low transparency and visibility to local residents (who by the way pay your salary with their property taxes).
- It is amazing to note that city officials were making order-of-magnitude mistakes in quoting estimated budgets for the new feature development and continued maintenance.
- It is amazing to see an utter and complete disregard by some of the Representatives of the voice of the community expressed in thousands of negative opinions, along with a pretty rude communication style.
- And last but not least – it is amazing to see the lack of elementary logic in the arguments from the small group of pushers of this poor idea.

Thank you for your attention.

From: Patricia Littlefield <norcal532001@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 8:56 AM

Subject: Proposed Dog Park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

I am against the development of the **Astro Park** as a dog exercise area, even though I am a small dog. The area is inappropriate for a variety of reasons.

First, there is a nearby dog park on the Oakland/Piedmont area near the Rose Garden.

Secondly, vestiges of a number of old creeks draining into the lake result in water pooling in that field, and it will be a muddy mess. It also portends for remnants of dog waste draining into the lake.

Thirdly, the neighborhood, in general, is becoming too busy on Saturdays in particular, with the crowds that come in to frequent the **Farmes' Market**, the sidewalk vendors on the margins of the **Farmers' Markets**, the restaurant clientele on **Lakeshore**, and the number of people trying to exercise in the lake area. We don't need more activity in the area. Many of the people who will bring their dogs will drive over to the area, and then park, contributing to congestion and decreasing the overall effort in the area to get people out of their cars.

Fourthly, the mentally handicapped have been long term users of that space on the weekends to play soccer, not to mention others who work out on the edges.

Fifthly, I don't think the city needs to be paying for this given the budget.

If you are still insistent in doing something in the area, why not look into using the school yard of **Lakeview Elementary School** which will be closing after this year? You have

parking, you have space that you can easily modify for a dog run.

The neighborhood is getting to be too busy on Saturdays and a bit of a drag for anyone living in that area. A good thing can become too much, just like what happened with the Festival of the Lake. It started out smaller and manageable, and over the years, it became larger with too much activity for the area. The mix we have now is tolerable, but on the verge of becoming too much.

From: Jerry Wolfe <wingate63@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 1, 2012 at 2:22 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park: Please NO DOG PARK
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I have been a proud Oakland resident for the past 40 years and truly love the diversity and beauty of our city. For thirty of those years I worked in the Oakland Public Schools, and now serve on various community boards, including the Downtown Oakland YMCA, and La Clinica.

I mention these experiences to give you a sense of my perspective of what is of great value to all the citizens of Oakland, especially our youth and families.

The green open space area known as Astro Park, is a rare and much used city gem. Most urban areas around the country are working diligently to preserve the few and limited green open spaces in their cities, knowing the value to the whole community which these spaces provide.

The space at Astro Park is a city wide gem. I have spent countless days viewing the vast array of families, youth, high schools, community groups and sports teams who use that space and cherish its availability. Even to just drive by the spot and see the green beauty gives Oaklanders moments of peace and calmness.

The outpouring of opposition to the outdated and limited view of those proposing an ill conceived dog park and thus elimination of a major part of this space, shows the overall community desire to keep the gem as it is. I am certainly not a dog hater(as often portrayed by the group pushing this dog park), nor unaware of the needs of dog owners in our city. Yet this is

the wrong place and time for such a project. As I am sure you are aware, our city faces major financial shortages, and despite supposed assurances from "volunteer" dog owner groups, the city is not in a position to spend any public funds on a badly placed project.

I strongly urge you to oppose this dog park, not just for the hundreds if not thousands of Oaklanders who have voiced their opposition but for all those who use, view and value this rare open space in our city for years to come.

Sincerely,
Jerry Wolfe

From: Miss Rootes <missrootes@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 5, 2012 at 10:09 AM
Subject: Astro Park Planning
To:
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Official,

It has been pointed out to me by a group of concerned citizens that Astro Park may be too small for a dog park. I have been a Lake Merritt resident for over 7 years and I would vote no for a dog park in this area. There are many different groups of people that share that space for sports and recreation, from toddlers to young children to adults. It moves to co-ed adult groups who need a physical release from stress on weekends. I hope you will consider the wisdom and humanity of prioritizing human use of the playing field over animal recreation. People who use the park should be conscious of the fact that they will have to take their animals to more remote areas to run off leash. I am also concerned that the space will not be cared for and will become a dog park spoiled by animal waste. Please do not turn Astro Park into a dog park.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Rootes

From: stephen cunningham <stephent_94606@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 10:32 AM
Subject: Please save our open space at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

I am a 40 year resident on Haddon Hill and I am opposed to transforming the wonderful open sapce at Astro Park into a doggie park. This open space is currentlywell utilized by many groups and should not be made available to a select few.

Thanks
Stephen
Haddon Hill

From: Lea Therianos <leatherianos@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to support the efforts to save Astro Park. I'm a dog owner, and have lived in the Bay Area for almost 28 years of my life. There are many wonderful dog parks, and out door areas for dog owners to take their pets in the Bay Area.

I'm almost always supportive of creating new spaces for outdoor off-leash dog parks, but I feel that it's unnecessary to turn Astro Park into one because the area is not suitable for a dog park. There are too many cars, and man-made dog runs are hard to maintain and keep clean. Parks such as the one they're proposing to make in Astro Park is usually the last place I enjoy taking my dog for exercise. I enjoy taking my dog to parks such as Fort Funston in San Francisco, and Point Isabelle in Richmond. I'm a Berkeley resident, and the drive to both of these places is completely worth it for me

because the land is a suitable place for families to spend time with their beloved pets.

Astro Park is a place where many people and families, mine included, enjoy playing outdoor sports, join fitness groups, have picnics, and participate in many other outdoor activities. It'd be a shame to do away with the green grassy area that gets so much great usage now, and to fence this area off to make a dog park when there are so many other wonderful places to take our pets.

Thanks for taking time to read this letter.

Best,
Lea Therianos

From: Heather Ehmke <hehmke@walkuplawoffice.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 1:54 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners:

I understand that the application for a DOG PARK at Lakeside Park near MacArthur Blvd. (also called Astro Park) has been completed. Please **DENY** the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This area is used by many people for soccer, frisbee, volleyball, and children who enjoy the grassy area. It also is a great open space that would be stunted by fences. Children would be playing side by side with dog poop. It's just not an ideal place for a dog run. I love dogs and believe there should be more designated areas for off-leash play, but this is just not the right place! Go check it out and see for yourself. It's simply illogical to fence off this expanse of grass for dogs.

Thanks for your consideration.

Heather Ehmke

Secretary to Douglas S. Saeltzer, Esq. and Kevin L. Domecus, Esq.

(415) 981-7210

(415) 391-6965 (fax)

www.walkuplawoffice.com

www.wrongfuldeath-law.com

www.neuroinjurylaw.com

From: Sam Markewich <shmullyop@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 4:39 PM

Subject: Astro Park dog park proposal

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park (Astro Park). Both me and my partner, Tess Ouellette, believe this is simply and absolutely not only the wrong location for a dog park but also a complete affront to the many people who now FREQUENTLY use the park for neighborhood-invigorating activities such as team sports and group fitness activities.

Additionally, this is a chunk of beautiful OPEN green space in the middle of an otherwise busy and high car traffic area. Closing that space off for dog owners would have a substantially deleterious effect on the look and feel of the area.

Also, placing a dog park so close to an area set out for a young children's playground is a recipe for constriction on the kids' freedom to play and could also result in young children having scary interactions with dogs.

I do not think that a dog park so close to a small library makes any sense at all. Noises and smells associated with the dog park will easily make their way into the library. As well, it is likely that many of the dog owners will go to the library with their dogs, it being so close to the dog park, and tie their dogs outside the library creating a chaos of dogs in a very small place.

Finally, those of us who do not enjoy interacting with dogs but do enjoy the library, the farmer's market, and the freedom to walk in the area will also of a sudden be forced to interact with many dogs as the owners walk them to and from the park. In that area, the sidewalks will become

likely WAY overcrowded with dogs and dog owners blocking pedestrians as the dog owners and dogs schmooze as they often like to do. This is already too much of an issue for those of us who cycle and jog around the Lake. Don't make it worse.

This is simply not the right space. Nor, for that matter, should the city in these hard times spend a dime on anything less than urgent.

Sincerely,
Sam Markewich and Tess Ouellette
378 Jayne Ave
Oakland 94610

From: Michael Nasif <mnasif1@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 5:25 PM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners, Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Michael Nasif
1181 Holman Road
Oakland

From: stan lee <islandboystan@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 7, 2012 at 9:53 AM
Subject:
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I am voicing my concern that you NOT put a dog park at Astro Park. I believe that location is not the best use since there are many others who use volleyball or other games. I also think that its too close to the children's city consider a area behind Fairyland? I believe it would be less intrusive for Park from going to the dogs!! Thank you, Stan Lee

From: Patti Byram <pattl@trademarkevents.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 1, 2012 at 12:17 PM
Subject: SAVE ASTRO PARK! No dog park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners: Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This green park is beautiful as it is and used in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife. This is not the place for a dog park. Thank you.

Patti Byram
Resident of Grand Lake area ☐

From: Jennifer Chin <jentchin@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 7, 2012 at 10:30 AM
Subject: Please deny permit for fenced off off-leash dog area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger:

Thank you for forwarding my email below to the Planning Commission.

Dear Commissioners:

I've been an Oakland Lake Merritt resident for nearly 15 years. I love dogs--I've owned a dog, and I've cared for others' dogs. I'm also a parent with a 4-year old who loves the green area of Astro park because my son can run around the field and play soccer on Saturday mornings before we walk over to the Farmers' Market. We can fly kites and play baseball there on Sunday afternoons. We play in the sandbox, but sometimes my son just wants to run on the green, green grass. All of these things will be changed or not even a possibility if there is a fenced, off-leash dog run built. I respectfully, but strongly request that you deny permit to allow for a fenced-off dog park area in the park, on the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur.

With all the wonderful park upgrades and road and walkway improvements done under Measure DD, I'm finding it very hard to imagine how a off-leash dog run with a wrap around fence, RIGHT on the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur is even a consideration. So many people use this space--adults

have their own soccer games along side the kids. Little toddlers run and chase the geese, kites are flown, There isn't enough room to push the soccer and field games to the area near the library parking lot. There are many dog parks in walking distance. Why do we need to have a chain fenced obstruction right in the heart of the busiest part of Lake Merritt? Why are we going to put in something that will take away the green grass, block park access, increase traffic, and put off-leash dogs closer to tots?

I'm a single mother who is finding urban Oakland harder and harder to raise a child in. I own my property and I pay Oakland taxes. I support Oakland businesses because I believe in this city. I will be extremely disappointed if this permit is allowed to push out more recreational space for residents and children where it is needed most. Why are we pushing out the people and children and making room for dogs? Dogs can have space--it's just not appropriate here.

To avoid sending large files, I'm including a link to photos of my son and his buddies making good use of this space. Please don't take that away.
https://picasaweb.google.com/107385679758804445215/AstroPark?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCP_J27T-u5f6cA&feat=directlink

Respectfully,
Jennifer Chin (Oakland Lake Merritt resident since 1997)
Alex Chin (Oakland Lake Merritt resident since 2007)

From: Kamala Leslie <repdiva@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 11:31 AM
Subject: Please DENY permit application~Astro-Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I have lived in the Lake Merritt neighborhood for several years now and really appreciate the open grass area. It adds to the beauty of the area. Turning it into a fenced off-leash dog area makes it available for use by limited number of people, that is dog-owners. The rest of the people~ the soccer players, the parents with children, the Lake Merritt enjoying resident, the out of area visitors looking to enjoy the lovely grassy park by the Lake... the rest of us.... will be cut out from further

use of this park. This to me feels very unfair. It changes not only the appearance of the area but the accessibility and use. We need open areas in urban settings for the simple enjoyment of life and nature. Please consider this and DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood. There are plenty of other places for those who consciously choose to take on the responsibility of pet-ownership to take their dogs, including the dog park at Redwood Regional, just a ways up the road.

Thank you,

Kamala Leslie Davis
Lake Merritt resident

From: Mclaughlan, Kristina <Kristina_Mclaughlan@intuit.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 7, 2012 at 11:57 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park!! - Please DENY conditional use permit application
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood Astro Park!!!

My family, friends and I enjoy this park on a weekly basis for large games of soccer, Frisbee, boot camp and many other sports. My small children enjoy playing on the outdoor play structures, and we would be devastated to lose field space and have an off-leash dog area. We are all completely opposed to this conditional use permit application.

Please do **NOT** allow the conditional use permit application to go through.

Thank you,
Kristina McLaughlan
71 La Salle Ave, Piedmont CA 94611

From: Steven Boranian <stevenboranian@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 7, 2012 at 7:56 PM
Subject: **NO** to the dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: Pat Kernighan <PKernighan@oaklandnet.com>, Rebecca Kaplan <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

Please DENY the misguided application to convert our beautiful neighborhood park into an off-leash dog park.

What a sad day it would be if you were to take this wonderful resource that is enjoyed by so many and turn it over to dogs and their owners, who care about no one other than themselves. The most sad part is that a dog park is completely unnecessary. Every dog owner in Oakland is free to have his or her dog in her or her own home, and there is no need, and certainly no entitlement, to have premium public space fenced off for their exclusive use.

I have lived in the neighborhood for 16 years and have raised my three children here, walking often to the park and to the nearby library. I also drive by the park on a daily basis, like thousands of others, and it is a wonderful gateway to the neighborhood. Imagine if the open green space is replaced by a fenced-off brown patch filled with dogs and their droppings. If you approve this application, you will literally be dumping on our neighborhood. In fact, the weather this weekend is supposed to be nice and clear. Why don't you drive by and see for yourself how well this space is used and what a tragedy it would be if you put an end to the open use of this public space.

Please do not give in to the selfish dog owners. There are bullies and will insist that the entire city needs to embrace and accommodate their precious pets. They must not be allowed to appropriate for themselves one of the nicest spots in our neighborhood.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Steven Boranian
780 Trestle Glen Rd.
510-893-1402

From: Tom Elke <tom.elke@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 12:07 PM
Subject: Astro Park Proposed Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger:

I am an Oakland resident writing you in fervent opposition to the proposed dog park in Astro Park, approximately 5 blocks from my family's home. I come from a long-line of dog-lovers. Indeed, over the holidays there were no less than five dogs in my home. From childhood, dogs have played a very important role in my life. Nevertheless, my family and I adamantly oppose any proposed dog park in Astro Park. I have never in my life attended a city council meeting nor contacted an elected official, but this so potentially damaging to my community I felt compelled to express my opposition.

I love dogs. But this dog park is a bad idea that will hurt my community. My family and I oppose this proposal completely.

Sincerely,
Tom Elke
704 Calmar Ave.

From: StephandTrav Bethune <stephntrav.bethune@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 1:02 PM
Subject: Please Deny the Conditional Use Permit for the Dog Park Application for Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please do deny this application for permit use of Astro Park to set up a dog park. As an Oakland resident and frequenter of the Lake Merritt area, there are few central places in this area that are available for people, especially children, to make full use of that green space for recreation. Having been a dog owner, I can say there are a variety of dog park options in Oakland, and Alameda County, for folks to walk their dogs off-leash. Please do not compress the Astro Park space for "people".

Best,

Travis Bethune
760-258-6986 - cell.

From: Francis Upton <francisu@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 1:57 PM
Subject: dog park proposal for Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Martha Lyman
<martha.lyman@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Cleavenger:

I'm writing to oppose the proposal for the dog park at Astro Park. Our daughter regularly uses the park to play soccer, and we are there nearly every Saturday in conjunction with the Farmer's market where most of the time the park is fully used.

This tract of green space is very important both visually and functionally given its central location. To have an enclosed dog park would change it in a negative way.

My understanding is there are some alternative locations for the dog park that are possible and have not been fully investigated. I urge you to consider another location.

Kind regards,

Francis Upton IV
567 Walavista Ave
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Susan Stanley <sstanley727@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Thu, Mar 8, 2012 at 9:37 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, jon.stanley@sbcglobal.net

Dear Commissioners,

Please preserve Astro Park for multi use by Oaklanders.

We do not want to see a designated dog part take over one of the few lovely green areas we can all enjoy.

Please DENY the conditional use permit for the fenced off-leash dog area in the park and keep it clean, green and open for use by children, families and anyone wanting to enjoy a nice urban outdoor space.

Susan Stanley

From: David L. Hurty <dave@hurty.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 10:36 AM
Subject: Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I live near this park and pass it often. Many small children and parents use the area for soccer and other field games. It is one of few areas where it can be used for such play activities in this neighborhood.

Cordially,

David L. Hurty

Rev. David L. Hurty
565 Bellevue Avenue, Apt. 707
Oakland, CA 94610-5016
Home: 510.465.3301
Fax: 510.465.3301
Mobile: 510.435.1568
dave@hurty.com

From: peter grube <pgru@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 10:59 AM
Subject: Fw: Dog Park At Astro
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: PKernighan@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I am writing today to urge the Planning Commisioners to deny the conditional use permit for a fenced dog area in Eastshore Park (Astro Park). This small neighborhood park is well used and has been enjoyed by generations of Oaklanders. Many groups use the space for organized sports activities. Soccer, volleyball, flag football, frisbee, baseball (at the backstop), boot camps, Brazilian Martial Arts, circle rules football, hoolahoop, yoga and slack lining are just some of the groups recently using this marvelous open space. There are also aduhs and kids overflowing from the tot lot, people playing with their kids, and some folks who just like to walk across the grass. These activities are so varied that they require a large open space. The beauty is we already have this level open space at Astro Park.

Please don't allow a fence to be put up and subtract almost half of the open field. The proposed fence would not only compress all these activities into half the available space, but it would also ruin the impressive sight lines for those who are simply passing by. Where else in Oakland do we have an uninterrupted view of a large lawn in this type of urban area? Old google maps show that the open space, at one time extended all the way to Lake Park where the Kwikway and Grand Lake Theater are located. When the highway came through, that open space was cut back to what is now Astro Park. Astro Park is all that is left of our gateway to Lake Merritt. Let's not further divide this unique and valued space.

A fenced dog run at Astro Park would dominate the space and invite hazards and nuisances. Service trucks would be required to back in from busy Lakeshore Avenue and cross a congested sidewalk in very close proximity to toddlers. The fence line would run directly along the foul line of the baseball backstop and extend along the perimeter of the tot lot forcing users to adjust their play to avoid interference from the new structure. Freedom to participate in a variety of activities would be restricted due to new space constraints. All sports field users, pedestrians passing by,

people waiting for buses and tot lot users would be subject to smell, noise and dust from the proposed dog park. Visually it would be a downgrade for everyone, even the thousands who pass by in cars and on bikes every day.

This neighborhood park and in fact the entire area is heavily used but at the same time enjoyed for its accessibility. Please don't place a limit on this enjoyment by overburdening the location with a dog run development. We don't need to cover every available space with fixtures. In this case the beauty is in the availability and openness provided to everyone.

Lastly, Oakland has been my home since 1981 and I have always had dogs. Oakland is a fabulous place for dog owners with no less than five fenced off leash dog runs and thousands of off leash acres available in the Oakland hills to take our pets along with many more options nearby. The notion that, as dog owners, we are somehow being discounted or denied access is ludicrous.

Please deny the conditional use permit for an enclosed off leash dog area in Eastshore (Astro) Park. Keep Astro Park open and available for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Peter Grube
Casterline Road
Oakland

From: Christopher Wike <chrisjwike@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 2:18 PM
Subject: Dog Park near Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Ms. Clevenger

Good afternoon

I and my family are local to Astro Park and use the park on almost a daily basis.

I am writing this email in regards to the proposed off leash dog run near the Astro Park playground. Please DENY the approval of the conditional use permit, for the following reasons: as the enclosed area becomes over used the grass has no chance to recover, becomes hard and turns to none vegetative soil. The maintenance of the area increases because the wind and water erosion needs to be controlled so that the area sediment does not run into the drains and increase the turbidity of the surrounding water. The side affect of closing off the that much area is the proposed open space will also see a more concentrated use and may not have a chance to recover either. In turn this will produce the same result as the hard soiled dog park or the open space closes for a period of time to allow for the ground to recover and the dog park stays open. Which I believe is not an equitable solution seeming that the status-quo does not produce the negative results as adding a dog park. The park houses a multitude of uses, i.e. soccer, volleyball, baseball to name a few. These activities would not be able if the open space was decreased, because many of them occur at the same time. Lasty and probably most important is safety! Increased concentration of dogs means increased chances of dog tights, dogs biting children, increased dog defecation on public areas. This in-turn can lead to more lawsuits that the city has to deal with or is involved in.

I love dogs I have grown up with dogs most of my life. I think a local dog park could be a good idea, but the benetit of the few should not burden the many.

Regards,

Christopher Wike

From: Liz Sand <lizsand@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 10:19 PM

Subject: Save Astro park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Hello Ann and Dear Commissioners, Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I suggest an alternative place for the dog park. Across Lakeshore is an empty lot that was a gas station. This space is almost as large and is not an infringement to anyone using the existing park. My problem with the proposed space is aesthetic and safety. Please do not take away the existing park.

Thank you.

Liz Sand

From: Lisa Robesch <l.m.robesch@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, Mar 10, 2012 at 9:48 AM

Subject: Regarding the conditional use permit application for fenced off-leash dog area Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. Astro Park has this great big space of green. We play frisbee there and hang out in the sun. It's one of the only big free spaces of green for miles. I like it the way it is. I use it. Please don't take it away from the community. I love dogs and am all for an off leash area, just not there! The fence will not help the feeling of community. There are plenty of other places much better suited for a fenced in off-leash area. Please consider my voice in your decision.

Thank you,

Lisa Robesch

671 Vernon Street

Oakland CA 94610

510-520-9649

From: Felicia <mai.felicia@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, Mar 10, 2012 at 2:06 PM

Subject: No dog park in Astro park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atiarage@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saVeastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing you today, to ask you to please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood Astro park. I am a working professional and mother of a 2 year old. My family frequents the playground, the nearby library, and the open field on a daily basis. We believe that by allowing the proposed dog park to go through, you would be negatively impacting the community in many ways. There are not any other open fields in the vicinity, however there are at least 6 other dog parks in the area. Many children and adults use the open fields for picnicking, chasing geese, sunbathing, games of three-flies-up, soccer, volleyball, capture the flag, and more. By taking away this space and redesignating it for running dogs, you'd be doing many humans a disservice. Please save our Lakeview/Astro Park!

Sincerely,

Felicia Hashimoto

- Locating a dog park in the middle of a highly visible, high density retail environment is inappropriate and unwise fiscally and aesthetically
- The dog park would remove 50% of an open playfield currently depended upon by residents and schools.
- Active recreation use is identified by OSCAR as being inadequately served in the Lake Merritt area.
- Maintaining a dog park in this location is not sustainable. The high visibility requires maintenance standards that could not nor should be left up to a volunteer group.
- Parking is already stressed in the area. The dog park proposal would only add to the parking demand.
- The area sits atop two major watershed creeks and is saturated with rain water during winter and spring months.
- The proposed location is next to a tot lot, raising concerns regarding incompatibility and safety.

- Open Space (OSCAR) guidelines mandate that at the most, only 15% of this space be evaluated for change of use. The current proposal would change 24% of this neighborhood park.
- OSCAR guidelines described above mandate that new dog parks be located in underutilized spaces, not high value, existing playfields.
- The original dog park proposal followed appropriate process by being reviewed in 2004 and 2006 community meetings, but the design proposal at that time was for a highly improved \$400,000 dog park.
- The cost estimate for the current proposal is \$45,000 —only 11% of the original budget. No pre-development community meetings were held to gather input, even though concerns began surfacing in community email groups in mid-2009.
- A dog park with a small capital budget and a dubious maintenance strategy should be located in a less visible location.
- The location is too noisy and too busy for dogs and too dangerous if a dog were to get loose off-leash.
- There is a much better alternative location for a dog park at Lake Merritt that avoids virtually every concern brought up with the Astro/Eastshore Park location.
- <http://www.saveastropark.org/>

--

Felicia Moi Hashimoto
510.517.0051
mai.felicia@gmail.com

From: Evelyn Williamson <may.williamson@gmail.com>
 Date: Sat, Mar 10, 2012 at 3:47 PM
 Subject:
 To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
 Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask that you please deny the conditional use permit that would transform Astro Park into a dog park. I grew up in Oakland I think it would be a huge mistake to turn that area into a dog park for many reasons.

It is a space constantly used by the public in a variety of ways; pick up soccer games, volleyball, and kids playing ball with their parents are just a few. People do not talk about it much, but it is evident through observation that the area functions as a center of the community. Also, from a aesthetic

stand point, it would be an eye sore. Dog parks inevitably become dirt patches that are always a little smelly. That location is basically the gateway to Lake Merritt from the Lakeshore business strip, a big fenced in lot wouldn't provide the warmest welcome.

It seems to me that there are other areas around the lake that could serve the needs of local dog owners without taking away such a loved feature of the neighborhood.

Thank You for Your Consideration
Evelyn Williamson

From: Michael Recknor <michael@recknor.net>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 7:18 AM
Subject: Please DENY the permit for the off-leash dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners:

The plans for the proposed off-lease dog park near Astro Park will turn a bright open space into a chain-linked prison yard. Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Michael Recknor
6153 Castie Drive
Oakland, CA 94611

From: Leigh McDougall <leighnan@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 9:50 AM
Subject: Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ann Clevenger,
I wanted to express to you my opposition to the proposed placement of a dog park currently under consideration. I feel it would be a detriment to the open green space we all enjoy- while I am sympathetic to the need for a dog park, I feel a better location would be at the old stable area near the children's fairyland. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leigh McDougall
377 Santa Clara Ave #103
Oakland, Ca. 94610

From: Diane Wallace <moongoddess13@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Sat, Mar 10, 2012 at 11:25 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park from going to the dogs
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ann,

Please stop the proposal that would turn Astro Park into a dog park. This is a beautiful grassy area where people play sports, dance, exercise and enjoy themselves in a scenic location. Dog parks are messy and ugly with bare earth and ugly fences. Please don't allow a noisy, messy eyesore to be installed where there are now beautiful green open spaces. There is no reason why dog owners can't walk their dogs on leashes near the lake. There are other dog parks within driving distance that don't impact as many people.

Please keep Oakland's Lake Merritt beautiful and deny this dog park proposal.

Sincerely,
Diane Wallace
Oakland resident

From: Alan L Lin <alan@zot.net>
Date: Fri, Mar 9, 2012 at 10:46 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Astro Park is a public area, and the use of this area should be subject to a vote by Oakland residents. Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in the park until it can be voted on as a ballot measure.

Thank you,
Alan Lin
Oakland resident

From: Peter Torsiello <Torsiello43@msn.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 5:54 PM
Subject: Astro Park permit
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

I am writing this email to protest the placing of a dog park in Astro Park. Please deny the use permit when this item comes before you in April.

I have written to the City Council members in the past to protest this misguided idea. There are many reasons why this location is inappropriate.

1) This is a totally congested area in the first place. With the movement of people in the area for use of the playground by toddlers, use of the parkland as a recreational area for the Clausen House clients, Soccer and baseball, volleyball, exercisers, runners, and as a staging area for meetings and gatherings, The Christmas Tree lot in Nov. and Dec., and the Saturday market, more congestion cannot be a healthy thing for this area.

2) After walking the lake every day for the past 30 years (that's right every day) and observing the traffic patterns that result from the movement of cars coming off the highway, traversing the Lake from one side to the other, parking to reach the shopping areas on Grand and Lakeshore, and the numerous buses that take people through that area, to add more cars bringing dogs to the site is an obvious burden to the neighborhood.

3) I know that the streets around the Arbor and in front of the library (another place that brings cars to the area) were reconfigured to help in traffic flow, but It is my opinion that they impede car movement even during non commute hours; it has not been an improvement and creates even more congestion.

4) Putting dogs next to little children using the playground is asking for trouble, fenced or not.

5) Noise at this location is terrible as it is. To add barking to this cacophony of sounds is ludicrous.

6) AND MOST IMPORTANT - This area is part of the Lake Merritt Waterfowl Reserve, The first such Reserve ever set aside for birds in America.

Dogs are a natural enemy of Waterfowl and other birds. They have no business being in the same area designated for waterfowl.

7) Everyday, I see owners and their dogs around the park-off leach. Every day - Off Leach. This is a misdemeanor going completely unticketed. If owners are ignoring this law, how can we rely on their obeying any dogpark rules. Who would enforce these new rules? Nobody!

Why don't you use the parkland out by the estuary where the port and the bay come together. It is far enough away from the waterfowl and almost unused since it was put out there some years ago.

This is a BAD BAD BAD idea and I am surprised that our Planning Commission would even consider such a thing. Why don't you walk around the Astrto Park area and do a survey of the numbers of cars and people using that area right now. We do not need more congestion at this location. Find another spot!!!!!!!.

Peter Torsiello
1200 Lakeshore 10C
Oakland, Ca 94606

From: sunnywindow@juno.com <sunnywindow@juno.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 7:01 PM
Subject: Please keep rare, wondrous grassy Astro Park as it is.
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland Planning Commissioners ~~

This is to ask that you keep Astro Park as it is: invifingly Vast and Green. It is Our Urban Meadow, gladdening and soothing all people. We smile at the sight of it and at the feel of it under us. Its healing civic benefit would be lost if a dogpark were put in it.

Thank you ~~

Gayle Mohrbacker, sunnywindow@juno.com

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From: Marcia Lovelace <marcialovelace@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 9:28 PM
Subject: Proposed dog run in Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. The area in question is in constant use for games, drum circles and the kinds of eclectic gatherings that give Oakland its unique flavor. The proximity to the children's playground, library and bird sanctuary at Lake Merritt makes it the wrong site for an off-leash dog run. I own and like dogs--and sympathize with those looking for such a facility. But this is not the right place for it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcia Lovelace
307 Jayne Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610

From: <karenengel09@comcast.net>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 10:03 PM
Subject: Astro Park Dog Area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.net, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger:

I am a Grand Lake area resident and a volunteer at the Lakeview Branch of the Oakland Public Library. The library branch adjoins Astro Park, part

of which is being considered by the Planning Commission to become a dog park.

After years of observing how the park is used by adults and children in our neighborhood, I feel that there isn't enough space available for a dog park there without cutting into current uses.

I hope the Planning Commission will look into other spaces for a dog park.

Sincerely,

Karen Engel
811 York St #114
Oakland CA 94610

From: Jesse NACHEM <jlnachem@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 1, 2012 at 10:58 AM
Subject: NO dog park in Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I have written before about this issue, but I just heard that an application was just completed for a conditional use permit for a fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park.

Please DENY this permit.

Astro Park is a neighborhood park that is constantly used by our community at Lake Merritt. A dog park would impede on the space used regularly by children and families, developmentally disabled groups, and exercise groups, among others. It is a vital and beautiful community space.

In addition, using this space as a dog park seems unsafe for dogs - being close to two busy intersections, I would not bring my dog un-leashed to this space for fear of car accidents or dogs jumping fences into traffic. There are numerous other dog parks in the area that I frequent and enjoy without fear for safety.

Thank you for hearing my concerns. Again, I implore you to deny this permit.

Sincerely,

Jessica Nachem

420 Merritt Ave
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Martin Rosson <mrosson@pacbell.net>
Date: Sun, Mar 11, 2012 at 7:03 PM
Subject: dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

"Dear Commissioners,
Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park near the Grand Lake theater. Among other things, it is too massive and restricts land use for people that play sports and create a health hazard with the dog feces dust that will be created next to a children play area.
Martin M. Rosson, P.E.

From: Greg Macchi <gmac619@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 10:16 AM
Subject: Please Deny application for dog area at Astro Park (Lakeshore)
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,
Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park on Lakeshore. My family use the large green area for recreational activities and feel the large dog area would detract from the usable space as well as create an eyesore in the community. Again, please vote to not allow for the dog park at our park.

Best regards,

Greg Macchi
452 Newton Ave.

From: Sarilee Janger <sarileejanger@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 11:05 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners, Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This neighborhood does not need another off-leash dog park...there are enough nearby to satisfy those needing to let their dogs run free. What we do need to maintain is the free space, a multi-use big splash of green in the middle of our neighborhood. What a shame it would be to lose it!

Thank you,
Sarilee Janger

From: <MNocon@fbm.com>

Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 11:43 AM

Subject: Please DENY the permit application for Astro Park!!

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This open space is a beautiful anchor to the surrounding neighborhoods and shouldn't be cut up and fenced off to only be used by dog owners. I am a dog lover, but know for a fact that the City of Oakland already has plenty of off-leash areas for dog owners to take their pets. This will be an complete eye-sore and will seltishly take away vital space that is now used by many, and will then only be available to a few. Please, please don't let this happen!!

Monica J. Nocon
Time & Billing Supervisor

Farella Braun + Martel LLP
RUSS BUILDING
235 MONTGOMERY STREET
SAN FRANCISCO / CA 94104

Main Line 415.954.4400
Direct Line 415.954.4715

Acct. Dept. Fax 415.291.8212
or
Main Fax 415.954.4480

www.fbm.com

From: Rose Works <workspaz@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 1:21 PM

Subject: Planning Commission-Save Astro Park

To: "vienv.truong@gmail.com" <vienv.truong@gmail.com>, "blake.huntsman@seiu1021.org" <blake.huntsman@seiu1021.org>, "michael.colbruno@gmail.com" <michael.colbruno@gmail.com>, "mzmdesignworks@gmail.com" <mzmdesignworks@gmail.com>, "jaw1123@aol.com" <jaw1123@aol.com>, "pattillo@PGAdesign.com" <pattllo@pgadesign.com>

Cc: "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "pkernihan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernihan@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>, "eangstadt@oaklandnet.com" <eangstadt@oaklandnet.com>, "smiller@oaklandnet.com" <smiller@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Please find my letter in opposition to the Board granting a conditional use permit at Astro Park in the Lake Merritt area. Please take a moment of your time and read the rationale for not granting this permit as it adversely impact our neighborhood in a number of ways and in inconsistent with the General Plan.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 510-325-9974 or workspaz@yahoo.com.

Thank you,

Rose Works

cc: Oakland City Councilmembers Nadel, Kernighan, and Kaplan

Ann Cleavenger

From: Christopher Floras [mailto:chrisf@sbcglobal.net] **Sent:** Monday, March 12, 2012 3:50 PM **To:** 'aclevenger@oaklandnet.com' **Cc:** 'saveastropark@gmail.com'. **Subject:** Astro Park Usage

Dear Commissioners,

I am a resident of Lakeshore Ave and make regular use of Lake Merritt and the adjoining spaces to walk, read, relax, and enjoy the beautiful vistas. All the improvements ongoing under Measure DD are only making the area more beautiful and attractive.

Hence, I am somewhat dismayed about the proposal to have a dog run build at AstroPark. It seems totally inappropriate since the area is used for picnics, pickup games, children and relaxing. Plus it seems an awfully small area for a reasonable dog run. I do believe there are other areas for dog runs in the city more suited to those activities - longer distances, more varied landscaping (e.g., off Oakland Ave). Dogs need space not vistas.

I request you deny any application to build a dog run in Astro Park.

Regards.

Christopher Flores

Christopher Flores
4114 Lakeshore Ave
Oakland, CA 94610
Tel: +1 (510) 834 4046
Cell: +1 (510) 599 7353
Email: chrisf@sbcglobal.net

From: M. Rose <mrose@prodigy.net>
Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 6:14 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This dog area takes up too much of the space, which is actively used by kids and adults. I am a dog owner myself, but do not believe this is a good use of space.

Marsha Rose
Haile Girma & Co.
phone 510.420.1626
fax 510.653.6450

From: chad marshall <chadmarshall@hotmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 6:38 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please do not allow our beloved park go to the dogs. Let's face it, dogs are already everywhere. I see them in Starbucks. In the bread isle at Safeway. On the counter of La Farine bakery. In restaurants with their obviously fake "Service Animal" vests on. Heck, I already see some dog owners using Astro Park without a care. Scofflaws! Can we please have a place, just one place that is for people only? Where kids can run and play without listening to incessant barking and owners screaming "NO!", "WHAT A GOOOO BOY!" et cetera et cetera. Now is your chance to take a Stand! Sit! Stay! Please keep the park for the people.

Thanks for your time.

Chad Marshall
415.205.8056

From: Elijah Pfister <elijah.pfister@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 9:08 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

Every week, without exception, I take my family to Astro Park to play in the playground and run in the grass. We play soccer, baseball and football for hours. Please, please deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off dog park. I love dogs but this area is used by people every day of the week. If anything find a way to eradicate the geese so we can enjoy the park further - find the money to improve the play area.

Thank you,
Elijah Pfister
Atlas Ave, Oakland, CA

From: Chris Willging <cwillging@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 11:54 AM
Subject: Proposed dog park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>, "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park near the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur.

I have been using this park with my children for about 6 years, and have found that the space to run and play next to the playground adds to the sense of freedom that the kids have there, especially as they grow older and find the playground less interesting. I also appreciate having some open green space in this very public and central location. In addition, I have a lot of concerns about the maintenance of the dog park, since there is no budget for that. Even if the park is well-maintained, the odor from dog urine soaking into the wood chips and the ground may become unbearable over time.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Christine Willging

From: Mr Steve A <srabeyta@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 12:50 PM
Subject: Astro Park - concern over dog park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commisioners,

I would like to encourage you to deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park.

I am writing on behalf of myself and my family. My wife and I lived near Lake Merritt for 5 years and grew familiar with this neighborhood. We have spent many weekends at Astro park either playing pickup soccer, or just enjoying the large expanse of grass. Now that we have kids we use the park for Saturday soccer camp and the nearby playground.

What I love about this open space is its proximity to the neighborhood just East of the freeway. We lived in this neighborhood and Astro Park was the closest and best open grass field. It serves as an open and inviting space to the hundreds of households that live on or around Grand Ave East of 580. Additionally, it serves as a convenient area for farmer's market patrons on the weekend.

By fencing off a dog park area, we would lose a rarity in this area: A close, convenient space to the East Grand Ave neighborhood, and a beautiful, very large, open and unobstructed green area seen from the freeway, farmers market, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Steve Abeyta

From: Swetta Abeyta <swettabeyta@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 12:55 PM
Subject: Dog park concern
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

I have lived in the Grand ave area for 5 years. I encourage you to NOT approve the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Please consider that although there are many dog lovers in the world, there are also many people that don't share this enthusiasm. There are always a few owners that don't have control of their dogs and also don't pick up after their dogs. Astro park is not a good location for dogs due to the fact that the patrons using the kids park and remaining open grass will be forced into close proximity with these owners/dogs. In my opinion a dog park should be placed in an area that doesn't force a large amount of unintentional interaction between dogs and others.

It seems as if there are better alternatives to the dog park location. Some, within the lake Merritt area. However, Astro Park has a steady user base of kids, athletes, and farmer's market patrons. It would be a shame to alter this beautiful green, family friendly space.

Thank you,
Swetta Abeyta

From: Omar shah <omarshah@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park!!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,
Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced

off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This park is frequently used for many fun activities for kids and adults including soccer, volleyball, etc. Given that there is a kids park next to it, it is a fun and safe place for kids to run around in the green grass. Allowing dogs in the park would make it unsafe for little kids and also ruin the green grass due to dog feces. Please consider keeping this park for residents to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Thanks
Omar

From: Tiko Shah <tikoshah@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 13, 2012 at 1:39 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hi, I wanted to write to tell you that I would love to keep Astro Park as it is, as a wide open, beautiful space, available for people to play in, and not have it become a dog park. I would like to request that the commission DENY the application to convert it to a dog park. Thank you!

Tiko

From: Michael Sasso <michaelwsasso@hotmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 10:26 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Commissioners,

Please do not turn Astro Park into a dog run. Very few large open grassy places in our area of Oakland exist which are suitable for soccer and other field games. Converting a large area of the park into a dog run will severely impact these activities in a negative way. There are many other suitable dog run areas which would not displace play areas for our neighbors and children.

Thank you ,

Michael Sasso

492 Staten Ave., #501
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Victoria A. Barbero <vabarbero@comcast.net>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 11:01 AM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park for Children
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Commissioners:

Please deny the conditional use permit for the fenced- off leash dog area in our neighborhood park. We have lived in the area for the past 30 years and take special delight in seeing the children and adults enjoying the playground and the greenery. Many of them live in apartments and have nowhere else to play. Please do not take away that joy. The dogs would bring dirt, noise and danger to a place of peace, beauty and relative quiet.

My husband and I strongly urge you to deny this permit and allow the majority to enjoy the greens.

Victoria and Reinaldo Barbero

1010 Trestie Glen Rd.
Oakland, CA 94610

From: <HARDYIC@aol.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 1:20 PM
Subject: Astro Park Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners

Please deny the conditional use permit application for the fences off-lease dog area at Astro Park.

I have lived in the Grand Lake District for 28 years as a home owner and have come to enjoy the one and only open green space proximal to my home. It is a multi use space used by many on a daily basis. The space if used as a dog park would be far too small. Other dog park encompass acres of land, wherein, this space is far less than one acre.

The location is adjacent to a freeway. It is also sandwiched between one of the busiest Muni stops in all of Oakland and a toddler park. The safety of children is at risk as well as the safety of Muni riders.

I am opposed to a dog park in that location.

Jana Hardy
441 Elwood Avenue
Oakland, Ca

From: Ronna Benjamin <ronnabenjamin@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 2:42 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Please deny the permit for the fenced-off dog park within Astro Park. It is a wonderful green space in a busy, high-traffic area, and a highly-used extension of the public space--with library, playground, walkways and benches--connecting to Lake Merritt. Lake Merritt has recently been renovated into a beautiful area. This complex is an urban space that any city would be proud to have. Other cities have renovated river and lake-front spaces that attract residents and visitors alike. Oakland should treasure this, not destroy it.

I walk from my home in Adams Point to the farmers market every Saturday and take my granddaughter to the playground and Lakeshore library. I see young children playing soccer, young adults playing soccer and frisbee, families with children, tight-rope walkers, people working out on the bars--all in this green space. It is a wonderful mix of people and activities. It is the kind of public space that Oakland needs in every neighborhood.

On the other hand, I have seen dog parks in FORG park and on Linda Ave. which are chain-link fence, barren dirt, smelly eyesores. We do not want this to happen in our neighborhood.

Please save our open space and strengthen our neighborhood.

Ronna Benjamin

From: Pat Hea <patheaphy47@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 4:06 PM
Subject: Regarding Application for Dog run in Park Near MacArthur and Lakeshore
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Commissioners,

I am apposed to an off lease dog park. Please stop and deny any permit for use of a dog

off lease area in the park at the corner of MacArthur and Lakeshore.

I have lived in the neighborhood for 30 years. I know how important this open space is.

I live on Haddon Hill/China Hill. We have no parks or public spaces on the hill so this

area is very important for the neighborhood and community.

Again I am very opposed to an off lease dog park at Astro Park in Oakland.

Thank you

Patrick Heaphy

614 Alma Ave

Oakland, 94610

From: Mark Popple <markpopple@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 9:36 PM
Subject: The proposed dog park at Astro Park.
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Commissioners.

Please DENY the permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area.

I am totally opposed to this for many reasons. This is currently an open space for everyone to use. Many football players use this area. It is just big

enough for two simultaneous games at present; if any part of it is fenced off that capability will be gone and there are very few places where people can play.

It is used as a playing field for the special school just up the hill from there. Last year they had a special needs games day there and they will be devastated at the loss of this facility.

Are we seriously proposing to spend money on a dog park when we cant keep libraries open? I know that this is supposed to be privately funded and not cost the city but I cannot see how that is possible. Even assuming no city funds are used to build the park, and it is maintained by volunteers (both assumptions that I would dispute) the city will still be on the hook for maintaining the dog mess bins and having them emptied. Will the proponents pay for this service?

Whilst we are on the subject of mess, is it wise to have that much dog mess right next to a children's playground? It will hardly be very pleasant for young children and their carers to be subjected to that stench. Having visited some of the many other dog parks in the area I am NOT impressed by the standard of maintenance, the smell, or the look of them. The proponents hold up the Ohlone dog park in Berkeley as a fine example of a dog run. When I visited there was un-picked up dog muck in numerous places and on the fence was a sign that said " please stop the incessant barking of your dogs" that the residents of the area had posted in obvious disgust and distress. Or will this one go the route of the Alameda dog park in which there are white plastic lawn chairs scattered around the dog urine stunted shrubbery and scraggy grass.

But perhaps the biggest reason for keeping the park as it is, is the fact that it is the entrance to the city's jewel, Lake Merritt. Nearly everyone who comes to the lake passes this corner. Why should we spoil the open space, that is enjoyed by everyone, to fence it off for a few people with dogs. I thought Oakland was supposed to be against special interests and favouring the few.

Please leave our park alone.

Mark Pople.

Oakland resident. Cleveland Heights.

From: carol shepherd <carolsheph@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 8:43 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms Clevenger,

I am writing to ask the Planning Commission to please DENY the conditional application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park.

I have lived in the area for over 30 years. An off-leash dog run will destroy the space provided by Astro Park for multiple human uses: volleyball, soccer and others. If the proposed dog-run is approved, other uses of the design will be permanently lost. A unique Oakland attraction for all its residents will be reduced to a venue for a restricted number of dog-owners.

The area, as you know, represents a combined residential/commercial lot with a lot of foot traffic (especially on Saturdays during the farmer's market near the overpass across the street). Dedicated off-leash dog runs should be located in areas where people are less likely to be pursuing various daily activities.

Dog ownership means taking responsibility for your pet. Sometimes, it results in inconvenience, like taking your dog to an already existing site for exercise. It is difficult to locate a suitable area that will not inconvenience other people or deny the use of public space in a densely-used public park in the heart of Oakland.

I urge you and your colleagues to stop any further planning for a dog run. This idea that should be abandoned now.

Thank you.

Carol Shepherd
620 Spruce St
Oakland CA 94610

From: Ashley Ziegler <Ashley@sfhoundlounge.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 12:31 PM
Subject: save the park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I have submitted letters in an effort to save Astro Park before and I am now sending another message but will keep it brief. The park is used as it is by many. It is a cherished area that should remain as is. Thank you for considering my high priority request.

From: Anne <gordon.anne@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 1:23 PM

Subject: No Dog Park at Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Planning Commission,

I am a concerned mother of two who loves to take her kids to Astro Park. The park, in fact, is one big reason that we have chosen to live in the Grand/Lake neighborhood. My partner plays frisbee on the grass, we have picnics near the library, and not a week goes by without me taking both children to the playground. It would be truly tragic to replace a beautiful stretch of green with a fenced-in, non-grass dog park. Moreover, my toddler is scared of dogs, and it would cut down on our enjoyment of the playground immensely to constantly be having to reassure her that the dogs will not come over to the playground.

Please reject the proposal for the dog park.

Thank you,

Anne Gordon
460 Valle Vista Ave.
Oakland, CA 94610

--

Anne D. Gordon
gordon.anne@gmail.com
[773.895.1609](tel:773.895.1609)

From: Mirabai Deranja <morticia.atoms@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 2:05 PM

Subject: Astro Park! Please keep it green.

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Please keep our park green!!! Don't let the Dog park ruin it. Please keep it the way it is.

Thank you
Mirabai

--
Aspire to inspire before you expire.
www.miratango.com

From: Peter Cole <peter.cole@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 12:31 PM
Subject: Dog park at Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Ms. Ann Clevenger:

Subject: Proposed dog park at Astro Park

Dear Ann:

I am resending a letter dated November 1, 2011 sent to the following persons by email.

Ms. Ann Clevenger
Ms. Pat Kernighan
Ms. Rebecca Kaplan
Ms. M. Nadele

Dear Ladies:

I urge you to drop plans to construct a dog park on the playfield at Astro Park.

I am a man in my seventies and was saddened to learn that you all propose to create a dog park in the middle of the playfield at Astro Park. I walk to the park almost every day and today was no exception. I saw no dogs or persons walking dogs in the area of Astro Park but I did notice that right where you propose to construct the dog park there were a meaningful number of young adults playing. This is often the case. So it seems to me that while persons of all ages use the proposed dog park area for recreation purposes, a dog park would substantially limit recreation space for persons. While on weekends the dog traffic is likely heavier there is ample area around the lake for persons to walk and exercise their dogs on leash. Worse still is the possibility that the dog park would not attract the number of dogs the proponents may argue but it certainly would deprive people use of the area for recreation. In effect the proposed dog park gives priority to dogs and/or dog owners, which I do not think is appropriate given that there are alternatives places for dogs.

Secondly, while it does not occur frequently there I have witness times when certain dogs became unruly and a threat particularly to small children who sometimes stray from their central play area. A dog park would presumably increase the number of dogs present and thus increase the chance of a dog attack.

For the reasons stated above I urge you to please deny the conditional use permit application for a fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park.

Sincerely,

Peter Cole

CC: saveastropark@gmail.com

From: <chrmaine@wellsfargo.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 2:39 PM
Subject: Please preserve open space at Lake Merritt
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

It has come to my attention that a conditional use permit has been submitted to create a fenced off-lease dog area in our neighborhood near Lake Merritt. I have been a resident of Oakland and Piedmont for nearly 25 years. I cherish the beauty of Lake Merritt and often walk or run around the lake, bring my kids there to play, and show it off to my out of town friends. It is a city jewel!

We need the open space and greenery that the park has today. The open space for people to play Frisbee, soccer, or simply sit down and have a discussion or lunch is cherished. There are fewer and fewer areas like this for recreation and relaxation. Please preserve it!

While I like dogs, I do not agree this is the best use of that site and do not support it. Please do not approve a dog park there – it is a beautiful site the way it is today.

Thank you,

Charmaine Clay
510 Boulevard Way
Piedmont, CA 94610

From: Michael Klissam <bandini4@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 3:09 PM
Subject: Proposed dog park at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oakland.net, pkernigham@oaklandnet.com,
nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

I have just heard that the proponents of a proposed dog park at Astro Park have completed their application. I am writing to express my *extreme*

disapproval of this proposal. I have read the flyer from the people attempting to further this plan and they like to state that they "simply want a small slice of the thousands of acres of Oakland Park space available". To say that the area they suggest be used as a dog run is just some random slice of Oakland park space is ridiculous. It only takes a casual familiarity with Lake Merritt to know that the grass by Astro Park is by far the single most heavily used area around the lake. It's the most heavily used slice of park for miles in any direction for that matter.

My daughter takes soccer classes at this location every Saturday and when we are there there are always several other groups teaching soccer there as well, including one group that specializes in organizing games for the mentally handicapped. There are groups that do tai chi there. There are groups that do various forms of cardio and resistance training there. We regularly meet friends there to kick the ball around with our children. We fly our kites there. There are almost constant soccer, volleyball and frisbee games going on there. The list goes on and on. On weekend mornings you are lucky if you can even find a place to play, there is so much activity going on there. Again, it only takes the most casual familiarity with this area to know this, so why anyone would propose taking this area away from children of Oakland is beyond me.

I want to be clear that I have nothing against dogs and would even potentially support a dog run at another location should it be deemed to be truly an important societal asset, but to take away the most popular children's play area in the Lake Merritt area and give it to dogs seems to be a horrible idea on every level. Not to mention the inherent risks involved in having a children's playground and a dog park side by side.

Oakland, while a wonderful city, has many many problems to deal with and many of these problems directly effect our youth. This park has consistantly provided a safe and fun environment for kids to play, learn and be positive in. Please do not communicate to the children of Oakland that they are literally less important than a dog. Please do not take our park away.

Thank you for your time,
Mike Kissam

From: Casey Law <caseyjlaw@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 4:00 PM
Subject: comment on Astro park dog area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Jessica Law <jessica.s.law@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to express our opposition to the conditional use permit for a fenced off-leash dog area near Astro park (a.k.a. Lakeview dog play area). As a resident of the neighborhood, we ask that you deny this permit.

The park is a valuable green space available for many uses, from soccer to fitness to enjoying the sun. The plan for a fenced area will lock up half of the green space in the park for a smaller number of users. While we are sympathetic to the needs of dog owners, we feel this is not the best use of our limited open space.

As a free, open space, the park creates a green "heart" for the Grand/Lake neighborhood. Being able to see and walk freely through that space is necessary for it to serve that function. This is especially important given that the freeway already cuts our neighborhood in two.

For these reasons, we hope that you will reject the conditional use permit. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Casey and Jessica Law
570 Boden Way
Oakland, CA

From: Alaina Eldridge <alainaseldridge@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 5:35 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please don't accept the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park. I live in the neighborhood and have enjoyed the large grassy area for many years now. Every weekend I walk by the park, on my way to the farmers market, and often take the child I babysit to the park to play on the grass. The park is almost always being used by families or people playing sports. Getting rid of all the grass and putting in a brown dog area would make the neighborhood less attractive and appealing. I also think it's a poor spot for a dog park and wont be very successful, especially since there are much better dog parks just a couple

miles away. So please deny the conditional application for the fenced off dog area and keep the park green. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Alaina Eldridge

From: Marcus Keay <marcuskeay@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 7:51 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park - Deny Dog Park Permit
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Miss Ann Cleaver

As a resident of the Lakeshore area "1177 Holman Road" and the father of a 17 month old child, my family and I frequent the children's play area adjacent to the proposed dog park regularly. As an observer of the activities that take place in the proposed area for the dog area I strongly oppose the area to be designated for dogs. The proposed area is regularly used by children and adults alike for multiple open area activities such as children's and adult soccer, running, bootcamp and volley ball to name a few. There has to be a better location for the dog park than this site.

Please help keep our limited open park areas for people and reconsider this proposal and find another location.

Yours sincerely,

Marcus Keay
1177 Holman Road,
Oakland, CA, 94610

Sent from my iPad

From: Eduardo Portal <eportal@elword.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 8:02 PM
Subject: Dog Park at Lake Merrit Site: Terrible Idea.
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please let the Planning Commission now that I add my voice to oppose the use of the grassy area between the Lakeview Library and McArthur Blvd as a dog park.

The proposed dog park will be not only a nuisance, an eyesore and a liability to the city; it will endanger the children playing in the nearby play structure and the dogs themselves due to the high traffic intersection where it will be located.

Respectfully,

Eduardo Portal.
697 Calmar Av.
Oakland CA 94610

From: Anna Fisher <afisherca@aol.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 15, 2012 at 8:14 PM
Subject: proposed dog park near Lake Merritt
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Planning Commission members:

I've lived in Oakland for several years, and have spent many hours near or by Lake Merritt. I was very disturbed to learn that a dog park has been proposed to take up (and take away) space from that lovely picturesque recreational area near the Lake.

On weekends, children use the space, often after visiting the Library. Residents play soccer, stretch before a run around the Lake, or just arrive to sit and chat with friends. People coming from or going to the Farmers' Market stop there, enjoying the setting on a Saturday morning. I've played frisbee, had picnics, played tag with my little nieces and more in the exact place this terrible proposal would transform into a 21,000 square-foot dog run.

What a horrible idea, to ruin this setting with a dog park that can hardly be called pretty, relaxing or healthful for Oakland residents. Have you noticed how much space the intended dog area will actually take up? I've seen the plans, and it is a large, ugly, intrusive area that will surely detract from the current green grass and play space we have now. I wonder, too, how that dog run will look a few months after it is built, and who will really take care of it, keep it clean, maintain it...

I love dogs, but a dog park is not the sight I want to see as my first view of Oakland when I come off Route 580 and down the hill toward Grand Avenue. There are other areas that are much more suitable for this

proposal. Besides, the dogs won't care where the Park is, so long as they have some space to run. Surely you can find another less-used space in Oakland for the dogs, and save this space for the rest of us

So please...STOP this proposal, deny the conditional use permit application for the off-leash dog area in our precious neighborhood park. It is a BAD IDEA for this neighborhood space.

Respectfully,
Anna Fisher

From: kathleen gillis <kathleengillis@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Wed, Mar 14, 2012 at 11:05 AM
Subject:
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Planning Commissioner, Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leasch dog area in our neighborhood park. It is a totally inapropritate place to have a dog park. I truely hope that you have the far-sight to see this.

Thank you,

kate gillis

From: Kevin Duncan <kevinduncan2@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Mar 17, 2012 at 9:36 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Planning Commission --

My name is Jean-Philippe and I live in the Crocker Highlands area in Oakland. Prior to purchasing a home in Oakland, I lived almost a decade in San Francisco. When it came time to have a family and settle with wife and kids and such, I carefully considered several areas around the Bay and Peninsula. To be honest, Oakland was not on top of my list (Piedmont and San Mateo were). But then a friend took me to Gold's Gym one Saturday morning (I had never been around there before). After our workout, we

made it to the green grass where a lot of young people from different backgrounds (Latin America, Brazil, Spaniards, French etc..) were playing soccer (I grew up in Europe and I am a decent soccer player) and I joined in. After the play, we headed to the Farmers Market nearby.

It is then that I realized Oakland could be a great option to start a family: I could imagine my (then-future but now quite real) kids playing in the green grass area, kicking balls with me and my friends, running to the playground towards the lake. I was sold and bought a house in Oakland.

So it with absolute horror that I heard a group of my fellow proud Oaklanders have decided to turn the green grass area that lured me to Oakland into a ...dog park? Why should we destroy what is probably one the best open spaces in Oakland and probably in the Bay Area into a dog park? Is there any other space anywhere in the city to accommodate a dog park? How can we take we consider taking a green, gorgeous space, open to all to do whatever one feels like and turn it into a potentially dirty space, reserved for the few of us who have dogs?

I strongly urge (ok, beg) you to not approve this plan, to not allow a dog park in this area close to Lake Merritt, the Farmers Market and the best of Oakland. Help dog owners find another space somewhere else but not so close to what is the heart and pride of Oakland: our gorgeous Lake Merritt area with its green open space, "do whatever your heart fancies" grass area.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to chime in.
Jean-Philippe

PS: in case you wonder, yes we do own dogs, two of them; we love them but we believe Astro Park is too useful to too many people from too many walks of life to turn it into a dog park useful only to those who are dog owners!

From: j v <ja_7_4@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 18, 2012 at 5:05 PM

Subject: Please preserve Astro Park as it is

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Planning Commission,

Please reject the application to replace a beautifully green and tranquil Lake Park (aka Astro Park) area, used by a majority of

Lake Merritt residents, with a dog area that would cater to a small number of dog owners. I have two dogs, but believe this proposal is short sighted and selfish; it denies the majority of residents of the enjoyment they have enjoyed for generations. It would deny residents of the many current uses it provides by chopping up and negatively impacting the park. It is a beautiful space that should be preserved as a destination location for Oaklander's and visitors alike.

What began slightly more than a year ago with less than a dozen concerned Oakland citizens in the Lake Merritt area, opposed to changing the current use of the park, has grown into a movement of astounding proportions. The reason is simple; it's a bad idea and the wrong location for a fenced in and ultimately ugly and smelly dog area.

I have enjoyed this park as a child, adolescent and adult. It is a rare jewel that sparkles like no other place in Oakland. Located in the heart of a thriving business and residential neighborhood, it provides a much needed respite to us all from the hustle and bustle common to an area with such heavy and diverse use.

Please vote to preserve this park in its current and pristine condition and deny this dog proposal.

Thank you,

Joseph Villatoro

From: mejonathan@netzero.net <mejonathan@netzero.net>
Date: Sun, Mar 18, 2012 at 8:24 PM
Subject: Astro dog park proposal
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello -

I live on Haddon Hill and have resided there since 2005. In that time I have seen welcomed changes - Trader Joe's being one.

I could write so much on this topic but will be brief. I am not against change. I am not against sharing common areas.

A fenced-off dog park is a taking of common property for an exclusive use - a use that, by definition, excludes other uses. It also removes open green space that has an aesthetic appeal, as well as utility.

It is taking. Not sharing.

This is change that I am against. Let me be clear: I am not against household pets. People love their cats and dogs and other domestic friends. That is fine by me. I encourage responsible human-pet relationships. I do not believe that denying an exclusive use dog park will deny people the ability to continue to have such in their lives. By contrast, allowing an exclusive use dog park will deny all residents a precious swath of rare shared green space.

Jonathan

P.S. My thanks to those who are taking an active role in monitoring this situation so that us "regular citizens" are kept apprised.

From: Ricky Alperon <ealpe2004@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, Mar 18, 2012 at 9:22 PM

Subject: Dog Park by the Lake

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioner,

Please consider denying the conditional use permit for an off leash dog Merritt. It is a wonderful spot already used by the community, I am sure taxes. There are children, soccer players, boot camp people, sun bather who just like to walk and watch all the socializing and activities in my ne

The Lake is a beautiful open space. I do not consider fences, dusty so smells to be an asset to our Jewel. This is one of the first places that vi entering the Grand Lake area. Please do not allow for destruction.

It is unfortunate that Lakeshore is getting overrun by the homeless and walk around people's dogs. A dog park will only bring more dogs. I wo shoppers!

I have been a home owner in Cleveland Heights for 13 years. I just sold downsize. I am strongly considering buying my next home in another cil you have to choose what is better for all, not just a few.

Oakland has its troubles. We need to attract people who have money a this area and are invested in making neighborhoods better. Who are the the Park. Are they homeowners? I know that homes usually come with transient renters? Hmmmm? I can take a guess.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eleanor Alperon

From: Sufen Chang <sufen@structurespace.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 19, 2012 at 9:34 PM
Subject: stop the dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. We love our little park with the green area. My family has lived in this neighborhood for 14 years and both of my kids grew up in this park. This is the gem that's part of Lake Merritt. Please save this beautiful green area and do not ruin Lake Merritt which is the most beautiful iconic scene in Oakland.

Having an area that is FENCED off is the last thing we need. One of the main reasons that the farmer's market is so successful is how porous it is in its entire perimeter. Similarly, we need a natural green space without fences to bridge and connect the lake and the businesses on the other side of the freeway, as well as providing the most versatile and open use for all residents.

Thank you,

Sufen Chang
Resident at Adams Point and Jean Street Condominiums
since 1998.

From: Maida Counts <countsmd@aoi.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 18, 2012 at 10:05 PM
Subject: Save a little bit of nature for all
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger:

Similiar to the beauty of Central Park that wonderful place in the middle of one of the world's greatest cities New York City, please reserve a bit of nature's beauty at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and East Shore Pkwy in Oakland for the human soul to be refreshed.

When I have had a stressful day, it is a pleasure to drive along Lakeshore Avenue toward my home. The trees and open green space near the tot playground and library are a balm for me. There are no buildings or fences to shut out the view toward the lake. I am thankful to have Astro Park there.

As a resident of this neighborhood for more than 15 years, I have witnessed the many uses of this valuable open space. From families with small children running on the grass to soccer teams practicing or young adults playing frisbee, it is enjoyed by many.

To dedicate a large portion of this park area to a dog run is to destroy a jewel in the City of Oakland. I have driven by other dog runs in the East

Bay. They are dismal in appearance. The ground is packed dirt at best or mud during the rainy season. It has been noted that the Astro Park area is especially wet due to underground water conditions. Will there be an odor from dog feces accumulating in this area in the warmer weather as well?

Although the dog run volunteers are enthusiastic about maintaining the area, how long will that last? Will they be here in 2 years - 5 years - 10 years? We have a mobile society. Will the City of Oakland have to step in and maintain the run at a cost to the taxpayers?

Where will these dog owners park their cars? Nearby residents will not be the only ones bringing their dogs to a run here. Parking is already difficult in this area especially on Saturdays with the Farmers' Market. The local theatre and merchants have already been impacted by lack of parking. During fair weather the majority of the parking along Lakeshore Avenue is utilized each day by joggers enjoying the path around the lake.

There is also the concern of safety not only to the small children nearby in the swings and slides of the tot playground but to people using the area near Grand Avenue. Will all the dog owners using the run have insurance in case of any incidents or will the City of Oakland be responsible?

Hopefully, another site will be found that benetit dogs and their owners. It might also be mentioned that the Oakland Hills have a number of trails in the East Bay Regional Park system that allow dogs. If people want to provide open space for their dogs, perhaps they should make an effort in this direction.

Let's keep the gateway to Lake Merritt as beautiful as possible for all visitors and residents.

Maida Counts
468 Stow Avenue, # 7
Oakland, CA

From: Victoria Wong <vwoakland@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 20, 2012 at 9:55 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park!
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners and Ms. Clevenger,

I am writing to oppose the proposed dog park at Astro Park. I am a long time resident of the Grand Lake neighborhood, and I feel strongly that the open space at Astro Park is an integral part of the community that needs to be preserved. This area is highly visible and attractive, and heavily used and enjoyed by many neighborhood residents, including me and my family, who live within half a mile of the park. Every weekend there are people using that open space for soccer games, stretching and calisthenics, and children's activities. A dog park at this location would eliminate the open space that is important to our community, in an area with relatively little park space for recreation like soccer games. There is no place for those types of activities around the lake or up either Grand or Lakeshore Avenues. It also would impact safety for children, as the dog park would be right next to the heavily used playground and library.

That open space also serves as a transition between SplashPad Park and the Lake, significantly harming the aesthetics of the park. I do not want a dog park in that highly visible location. It would be a visual blight on the neighborhood, which has worked hard for years to improve itself and attract pedestrians and shoppers.

Furthermore, despite ODOG's promises that its volunteers will maintain the park, there is no guarantee it will happen, and the City will not have the resources to maintain the park. If it becomes dirty and smelly, the community will have no recourse for correcting the problem. Furthermore, I believe this dog park, if it is to be located anywhere, should, like most dog parks, be placed in an underutilized area, as the Linda Park dog park and the dog park near FROG Park are placed (on a steep hillside and under a freeway, respectively), rather than in a highly used, attractive and visible area.

As it is, Oakland does not have the resources to maintain existing parks, even with volunteer assistance. For example, the Oakland Rose Garden's condition has deteriorated severely since gardening staff was reduced, despite regular volunteer efforts. I do not want to see a new dog park, in a highly visible and highly trafficked area, blight the neighborhood. In fact, I am opposed to even the capital expenditures proposed for the park, given Oakland's dire budget situation. That money would be far better spent maintaining existing parks than creating another park that much of the community opposes, and for which the City cannot afford maintenance.

Arguments that this location has been in the works for a long time and that the City should not spend additional money on planning a new park are irrelevant. The fact that this not a suitable location for a dog park remains true regardless of how much it would cost to plan an alternative location. As you know, based on the strong community opposition to the park, many local residents had no idea about the plans.

In sum, I oppose the proposed dog park for many reasons, including children's safety, aesthetics, and the elimination of an important and heavily used open space, where Oakland has a shortage of open, accessible park space already. Please vote against the proposed dog park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria Wong

From: christina mastrangelo <christina.mastrangelo@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 14, 2011 at 5:28 PM

Subject: NO On Fenced Dog Run Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com,
nnadel@oaklandnet.com, aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members and Staff,

I am writing to voice concern and vote against having the fenced dog run at Astro Park at Lake Merritt for the following reasons:

SAFETY!! - Too close to the Children's Playground and Street which is not good for the kids or the dogs.

Not sanitary for the location

Not the best use for the greater public

Destroys the Oakland Culture of that use in that park.

This will deter the greater public from use and enjoyment of the park. Please put the dog park else where. In addition most of the dog owners currently walk there dogs around the Lake and those that I have talked to said they would not use the dog park and that they would continue to walk there dog around the lake.

--

Very Concerned Oakland Resident

Christina Mastrangelo

MOBILE: 510-459-2653

EMAIL: christina.mastrangelo@gmail.com

From: jere martin <jpmartin59@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Mar 20, 2012 at 10:59 AM

Subject:

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

While riding BART from the Coliseum yesterday, I rode through the industrial wasteland of Oakland. I thought what a nice place this would be for a dog park--plenty of space, parking, no residents, enclosed large lots. Best of all, no prime parkland converted to a noisy, dirty activity which will affect unfavorably children, bus

riders who use the busy two stops, soccer players, library users et al.

There is no reason why this nuisance should be foisted upon people who love and use Splash Pad daily. Let's find another place. Really, the dogs won't mind at all.

Jere Martin
Dimond District

From: Tom Willging <twillgin@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 20, 2012 at 6:14 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Chris Willging <cwillging@yahoo.com>

Dear Commissioners:

Please vote to deny the application to create a dog park on the Astro Park grounds. With the layout of the park, having dog runs will interfere with the many activities that take place there now. I am especially concerned about the effect of a dog park on the children's playground that will border the dog run. My two grandsons, ages 2 and 6, have enjoyed the park throughout their young lives and would like to continue to do so.

I appreciate the need for a dog park and hope that you are able to locate a suitable area in the neighborhood. My only objection is having the park so close to where children play and to the soccer and athletic fields.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Willging
177 19th Street, Apt. 2D
Oakland, CA 94612
510-835-0159 (home)
202-491-4747 (cell)

From: <ouija@spaz.org>
Date: Thu, Mar 22, 2012 at 6:37 AM
Subject: please deny permission to make fenced off dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

please , deny the fenced off dog park . i live in front of the park at perkins , and i feel its the last thing needed . we use this park all the time to play with our children ,frisbee, and sports. the area around the lake is aprotected wildlife area , and not suitable for sports etc. its allready good . whats needed is awareness for dog owners to understand the area there in front of bellevue is a bird migration protected zone . a reserve for these birds whos habitat is indangered. the dog owners and others dont know this , because no signs or anything to tell them. thank you.

From: cody eriks <codyeriks@hotmail.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 22, 2012 at 9:50 AM
Subject: Vote No on the Lake (Astro) Park Dog Proposal
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,
Please vote to DENY the proposed dog area for Lake (Astro) Park. Without a doubt, it is the worst possible idea that could have been proposed for this wonderfully beautiful location. An off-leash, fenced-in dog area will reverse the great strides the city has made and invested millions of dollars into to improve the lake area. These improvements were designed to and have been successful in encouraging commerce and has created an area that is both inviting and a desired location for a great many wonderful uses. This dog proposal is a black-eye on an otherwise great lake area concept.

I have recently become aware of the history of how this dog area proposal came to where it is today. What a tragic process of secrecy and mis-information this project has engaged in to further a very short-sighted agenda. To be sure, transparency was NOT part of how this proposal developed.

This park provides recreation to a great many organizations and individuals alike, yet until recently, there has been no outreach to identify

exactly who the organizations are, how they utilize or benefit from the park or what multiple unprogrammed uses the park provides for everyone on a daily basis. This is a horrible omission of information that really should have been identified at the beginning of this whole ordeal. It was not and I must ask why?

Beyond the many reasons to keep the park as is and utilized as a great resource by a great and diverse population, blight is yet another strong argument against a dog area here. Blight is what will result because there are no sustainable provisions or budget for maintenance or care contained within this ill-conceived dog area proposal. Yes, it does say volunteers will be responsible for maintaining the area but, in truth, depending on volunteers to maintain this area of vines, feces and urine smells, year after year, and next to a children's play area too, is irresponsible.

Please deny the off-leash, fenced-in dog area at Lake Park; it really is a bad idea for this park.

Thank you,

Cody
Adams Point

From: Steven Belcher <swbelcher007@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Mar 25, 2012 at 10:29 AM
Subject: Proposed Dog Park at Astro Park (Lakeshore)
To: Pattillo@pgadesign.com, vienv.truong@gmail.com,
Blake.Huntsman@seiu1021.org, michael.colbruno@gmail.com,
mzmdesignworks@gmail.com, jaw1123@aol.com

Steven W. Belcher
630 Longridge Road
Oakland, California 94610
(510) 301-5321
swbelcher@msn.com

Re: Opposition to Proposed Dog Run at Astro Park

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Please "google" "off leash dog parks in Oakland" and you will see a great Yelp site rating 37 off leash dog parks in and around Oakland. Now search for programmed play fields near Lakeshore and they list places such as "Oilman" which is in Berkeley and scheduled to the hilt and Mosswood which is not fiat. Astro Park (Lakeshore) is one of the few remaining pieces of unprogrammed playing field left in Oakland. That means, that you can see groups of pick up soccer, baseball, football, play without driving to a field, paying for a permit...or waiving for a permit.

In that vein, yesterday I passed the park and there was all the above activities go on at the same time, no stress, just having fun. Where will these citizens go for their outdoor fun? It also occurred to me that most of those children and young adults do not have a clue that their play fields are about to disappear or have the means to drive to an alternative.

Please leave one of the last big open green spaces, open and green. Some have this compulsion to fill empty spaces...let this one be. By the way, with the City budget on life support, how will the proposed dog park be financed and maintained?

Sincerely,

Steve Belcher

Planning Commission: vien Truon, C.Blake Huntsman, Michael Colbruno, Madeleine Zayas-Mart, Jonelyn Whales, Chris Pattillo

From: Milton Andersen <budandersen@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Mar 26, 2012 at 8:05 PM
Subject: Astropark should not become an ugly dog-run
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Commissioners of the Planning Commission:

Please DENY the conditional use permit that would allow the beautiful and much used Astropark to become an ugly dog run. THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO DENY THE PERMIT. You have probably heard about or read about most of the reasons. So I will mention just one reason that shouldn't be neglected. It is the issue of possible health hazards of a dog run with wood chips, and the possibility of dog poop being mixed up with

the wood chips, and the difficulty of a person to quickly identify a piece of dog poop mixed up with the wood chips.

Dogs are carnivores, and carnivores have in their feces high levels of pathogens. There is a kiddie playground very close to the proposed dog run. Will dust, containing small particles of dog feces, drift over to be breathed by children in the kiddie playground? This is a possibility.

So, for the above reason, and many other reasons, PLEASE DENY THE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT.

Sincerely,
Milton(Bud) Andersen

budandersen@gmail.com
510 625-0831

From: Brian Auerbach <auerbach.brian@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 27, 2012 at 8:30 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park as a green space for all
To: rkaplan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Rebecca,

I live in the neighborhood that includes the Astro Park green space. This green space is a gem in the neighborhood that creates a beautiful and unmistakable vista for all citizens to share. There is nothing more pleasurable after a long day at work in San Francisco and a commute bus ride home than to look out of the bus window and see that wide vista with all kinds of people walking, playing soccer, kids playing, people exercising and, of course, just the open space dedicated to all.

A dog park in this location would be a tragedy for all concerned. I am not against dogs or dog parks per se, but this prime resource set in such a prominent part of our neighborhood is just wrong for dog usage and would be a city planning error. I ask you to please deny the proposal to put a dog park in this wonderful, shared location.

Sincerely,
Brian Auerbach

From: Brian Auerbach <auerbach.brian@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 27, 2012 at 9:01 PM

Subject: Opposing Dog Park at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

. Please convey this message to the Planning Commission:

Dear Commissioners:

It is imperative that Oakland conserve its level park lands for human recreational use, not for dog parks. Please deny the proposed dog park at Astro Park, and direct staff to explore alternatives such as the underutilized park at Lakeshore/Hanover/Wayne.

Oakland is chronically short of parks for soccer, volleyball, and other sports that need to be played on turf. We are not a community like Piedmont, where private donors can pay millions of dollars to excavate a canyon and provide expanded facilities. (Blair Park proposal in Piedmont.) In Oakland, we must protect and preserve our level grass areas so that children and adults can stay active and involved in our community. The area that has been proposed for a dog park is almost always in use for frisbee, volleyball, soccer and other human activities; the area must be preserved for such activities.

A few short blocks away, there is a park on Lakeshore/Hanover/Wayne that would be a great dog park. This area has benches, some trees providing shade, a slope overlooking the lake, onstreet parking, and adequate space for a dog park while preserving a buffer for adjacent areas. A dog park on this area would make the neighborhood a safer, more pleasant area for all.

Thank you for denying the proposed Astro Dog park. Best regards, Natalie West (Oakland resident for 35 years, raised 2 children here - always looking for soccer, baseball, and other playing fields for the youth of our community.)

From: Debbie Cooper <debjoy.cooper@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 28, 2012 at 7:58 AM
Subject: No to the dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, NNadel@oaklandnet.com,
pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, RKaplan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger and Councilmembers Kernighan, Kaplan, and Nadel:

I am writing to express my opposition to the Lakeview Dog Park proposal for three primary reasons.

1. It is going to be UGLY. There's no doubt in my mind about this. I am a highly skilled architect and I spend all my time evaluating design. It is incomprehensible to me how such a bad proposal is even being considered on a site adjacent to all of the very successful improvements around Lake Merritt and at Splash Pad Park, and in such a prominent focal point of the neighborhood.

And there's nothing that will convince me that urine-soaked wood chips won't smell.

2. The community doesn't want it. I've been working with SAVE ASTRO PARK for almost a year to inform my neighbors about this plan. I've told hundreds of people that this green space will be fenced and filled with wood chips, and I've watched shock and disgust come over their faces every time.

3. ODOG doesn't understand what they are asking for. SAVE ASTRO PARK has staked out the dog park area to show the neighborhood where the new dog park will be located on several occasions. We have repeatedly had members of ODOG state that the area staked out is larger than their proposed plan. But we have made every attempt to show the location accurately based on ODOG's plan. This was done by a landscape architect, a contractor, and me – an architect. We know how to read plans.

If they can't visualize the size of the space they are asking for, they certainly don't understand how truly detrimental a fenced, brown space will be.

Please keep Astro GREEN. I sincerely and strongly request that you DENY the proposal for the Lakeview Dog Park.

Thank you.

Deborah J. Cooper, AIA, LEED AP
681 Spruce Street
Oakland

From: <stephenparente@comcast.net>
Date: Sat, Mar 24, 2012 at 6:10 PM
Subject:
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

□To the Attention of the Commissioners of the Planning Commission,

Dear Commissioners, my wife and I are writing to urge you to DENY the conditional use permit for the fenced off leash dog area

in our beautiful and much used and appreciated park at Lake Merritt! It's a mystery to us that the moneys being spent to improve

access and open space at the Lake should be closed off and encumbered by a 28.000 SQ, FT dog park.!

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and please DENY the petition for a dog park at Astro Park!!

Sincerly,

Stephen and Margaret Parente

From: **Gilbert Vahanian** <gvahanian@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 28, 2012 at 3:01 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park

To: "aclevenger@oakIndnet.com" <aclevenger@oakIndnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

Please forward this message to the Planning Commission.

Thank you.

Dear Commissioners,

Please vote to DENY fencing off a portion of Astro Park for a dog run.

This beautiful, serene, green space provides utility not just to the many active users of it, but also to thousands of daily passer-by who derive peace and satisfaction from seeing a tranquil, green oasis in the midst of what otherwise would be a desolate urban diaorama of buildings and concrete.

If we must appropriate valuable, open, tiat, green, unprogrammed space for any other purpose, then let's ensure that the utility provided by that proposed use FAR outweighs the cost of relinquishing this green space. Decimating this beautiful space with woodchips, dust, and chicken-wire does not come close!

Moreover, this well-intentioned, but utlimately horritically flawed proposal, will be an eye sore, nose sore, and ear sore for all visitors to the lake, IN PERPETUITY!

When I saved a deaf dalmation puppy from sure extermination by a breeder in San Leandro, I relocated to Concord to give the sweet soul a back yard to run in. No, I did not have a car, and rode to Bart on my bicycle. I'm all for dog parks in Oakland, but to put a dog park at this vital patch of green adjacent to a tot lot and an important, highly trafficked corridor that connects many districts strikes me as sophomoric.

And I haven't even touched on the notion that this land is part of the first US national wildlife refuge and an important bird sanctuary!

Please, let's kill off this proposal, and start working on proposlas on how to preserve our valuable open space from similar future land grabs.

Let's not be the ones future generations of Oaklanders and Piedmonters look back to as having woodchipped paradise and put up a dog crapper.

Thank you for hearing my voice.

Kindest regards,

Gilbert Vahanian

Oakland Homeowner since 2005
635 Spruce St.
Oakland, CA

From: mike evans <mikeevans1@earthlink.net>
Date: Thu, Mar 29, 2012 at 6:31 PM
Subject: Please DENY permit application for fenced dog area at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms.Clevenger,

Please forward my email below to the Planning Commission.

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to urge to please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off lease dog area in Astro Park. This area is used by individuals, families, and communities for many different outdoor activities. The space promotes exercise, health and community. It is also very prominent to visitors to the City coming from the freeway. And a large chain-link, wood-chip covered area at this location will be an eyesore to both the neighborhood and visitors. One last, but very big concern, is the runoff from this area flowing into Lake Merritt during wet weather.

Please keep Astro Park in its current use as a healthy neighborhood park by denying the permit application for a fenced off lease dog area. I think an area like where the old Police horse stables were makes more sense as a dog park.

Respectfully,

Pat Evans
Oakland Homeowner since 1990

Piedmont Pines

From: William Rogers <william@ix.netcom.com>
Date: Thu, Mar 29, 2012 at 11:58 PM
Subject: Proposed Dog Park at the Astro Park Site Location
To: Clevenger Ann <AClevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

March 29, 2012

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I am a resident of the Lake Merritt area and have two boys ages 10 and 12 who use Astro Park regularly. While I am generally supportive of dog parks in urban communities, I am strongly opposed to the reconfiguration of Astro Park for this purpose.

First, a dog park in this location destroys a primary (and much needed) feature of Astro Park – un-programmed open space. Adults and children need open space areas to run, exercise, play games and engage in sports. The elimination of well-used, un-programmed open space in an area that has very little is contrary to basic community needs and is antithetical to the human, environmental and public health goals for Oakland and its residents.

Second, the proposed dog park's proximity to an area that is programmed for children's play may constitute an incompatible use by mixing dogs and children in such close proximity to one another. It's a potential safety issue for park users and a liability issue for the City.

Third, the prominence of the location for the proposed dog park is contrary to the current projects around the lake. This is an area

where the City has spent millions of stimulus dollars to beautify the Lake Merritt area and to provide more open space. Astro Park is the Northern gateway to the new and improved lake. Dog parks become large dirt patches because dogs that are running, digging, urinating, and defecating suppress the ability of anything green to grow. Despite the architectural renderings of a green and flowered dog park, the reality is a very prominent eyesore in this high profile location.

The proponents of the dog park have asserted volunteers will largely maintain the dog park. Volunteers often make frequent requests that require a higher level of oversight and support from staff and city resources. The City of Oakland would be responsible for administration of liability waivers for volunteers, MOU's and oversight of the operational components of a volunteer program.

In addition, cities across the country have engaged volunteers who have really good intentions about maintaining an area or Park over the long term. Yet as people's lives or priorities change, so does their commitment. Volunteer efforts for ongoing maintenance simply wane over time. It is often difficult and tiresome for volunteers to continuously pick up after others. When volunteer efforts dissipate, it is the City's responsibility to ensure that the park is well maintained and safe for the public's use. At the end of the day, the City has sole legal and financial responsibility for the public asset.

Given this, the City of Oakland will have financial, maintenance and operational responsibility for the park regardless of volunteer efforts. City services will include litter pick up, trash can service, graffiti abatement, weed abatement, mulching, pruning, irrigation (to minimize dust), site inspections, site drainage maintenance,

annual wood chip and straw bale replacement, gate, sign, bench maintenance, response to public concerns and complaints and animal control related issues. City staff and Police will be required to ensure compliance with dog park rules and will be responsible for enforcing dog park hours of operation. The dog park will require recurring City resources to maintain and operate.

The City will also be required to use its resources to field complaints, enforce rules, monitor activities and facilitate disagreements. Common community complaints about dog parks include noise, dust (from dirt and wood chip decomposition), blighted conditions, and odor from feces and urine. Complaints from users include environmental factors such as the presence of mud, the quality of woodchips, and the condition of the site surface. Municipalities with dog parks are also finding that a dog park can create conflicts among animals of different sizes and requests are commonly made to mitigate conflicts by creating separate areas for large and small dogs. As time goes on, users also tend to request a higher standard of maintenance and/or amenities than available resources allow.

Environmental factors are also an issue. Storm water and ground water quality may be negatively impacted from feces, urine and mud washing off. In addition, proper site drainage and maintenance will be essential to prevent the transport of feces, urine, surface material (wood chips) and soil.

Wildlife may also be impacted as the presence of dogs may be incompatible with wildlife by the lake which may cause wildlife to stay away or cause their nesting, foraging and other essential activities to be interrupted. Birds are often flushed by dogs and some dogs chase and kill wildlife. There are also public health and

dog health alerts: E Coli inquiries, dog disease inquiries, respiratory illness inquiries, water borne pathogens inquiries, etc..

Finally, parking will likely be an issue. Dog parks are typically a city-wide or regional resource and people drive to them from outside the immediate neighborhood, City and even the region. The lack of parking (particularly in an area that is already densely populated with cars) can have a negative impact on surrounding businesses and neighbors.

For all of the reasons stated above, a dog park at this location should not be approved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

William Rogers
Oakland, CA

From: R. Blair Sly <rblairsly@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 30, 2012 at 10:28 AM
Subject: Opposition to Dog Park at Astro Park/Eastshore Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

I am a lifetime resident of Oakland and currently live on Wayne Ave, between Hanover and Stowe. I strongly oppose the proposal to establish a dog park at Astro Park/Eastshore Park, and encourage the commission to vote down the proposal.

Oakland is desperately deficient in level, grassy playing fields for sports and other recreational uses. I am an active volleyball and soccer player,

and regularly use the space at Astro park to play these sports. Having a central place where anyone can freely participate in these types activities is critical to establishing a sense of community in this neighborhood. Proponents of the dog park argue that an ample grassy area would be preserved, but let's be frank -- the area they propose is just too small to accommodate soccer and other activities.

I fully support establishing a dog park in the general Lake Merritt area, but PLEASE, let's work to find an alternative location for a dog park that doesn't take away from any of the Invaluable level grassy areas that are used for other activities! There are reasonable alternatives in Lakeside park near Fairyland, or down Lakeshore at the underutilized park at Lakeshore/Hanover/Wayne.

I hope you will do the right thing and preserve flat open green space for our community by denying the proposed Astro Dog park.

Blair Sly
407 Wayne Ave
Oakland CA 94606

From: Molly Ammons <molly.ammons@ngem.com>
Date: Fri, Mar 30, 2012 at 4:40 PM
Subject: Please DENY the dog par at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I am a resident of the Lake Grand area, and I coach a girls running program, Girls on the Run Lake Merritt, at Astro Park twice a week. Astro Park is an invaluable piece of land in our community that has too few green play areas for children.

Of our team of 17 girls, ages 8-13, over half live in apartment buildings without yards or open play spaces. Their time at Astro Park twice a week are rare moments where they can lay in the grass, run as far as they like without fear of cars, and partake in the vibrant community that surrounds the park. It would be a shame and an embarrassment to Oakland to have this community area used for a dog park, instead of as a place for community children to grow and thrive.

Above left: Coach Kristin and four Girls on the Run on a sunny Day in Astro Park

Above right: The moon rises over three of our team members as they run laps in Astro Park

I am not against a dog park in the Lake Merritt area - on the contrary, I highly support it. However, Astro Park is not the appropriate place.

Respectfully,

Molly Ammons

Girls on the Run Bay Area - Lake Merritt Team Coach

491 Mandana Boulevard, #7

Oakland, California

p. 510-381-2406

From: Sarah Heath <trisas6@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Apr 1, 2012 at 12:09 PM

Subject: NO to the Lakeview Dog Park proposal

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I want to voice my opinion that Astro Park is **NOT** an appropriate location a fenced off-leash dog area - the space is too used and beloved by people (adults playing ultimate, kids playing soccer, individuals reading, etc.)

While I support dog parks throughout the city, they should be strategically located in areas where we are not *taking green-space* away from children and adults for exclusive use by dogs - we need to keep our priorities straight. The green-space in our city (as in any city) is far too precious & limited to surrender to the dogs. It would be an unnecessary eye-sore in what is now a beautiful treasure for families, neighbors and visitors.

Please consider alternative locations for the dog park and DENY the conditional use permit application for the Lakeview Dog Park.

Thank you,

~Sarah

**Sarah Heath
Stow Ave, Oakland**

From: **Richard Burge** <rwburge@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, Apr 3, 2012 at 2:48 PM
Subject: Opposition to Astro Park dog area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Commissioners:

I am strongly opposed to any use of Astro Park for an unattractive fenced dog area and permit for it. The fine grassy area is a rare, pleasant counterpoint to our otherwise congested neighborhood. I think it is unreasonable that dog owners have the expectation of allowing their animals to roam freely in that the established public use of this nice open space should be hijacked for such an in

Dog owners have many options for exercising their pets at a wealth of surrounding area: Parks and elsewhere. Owning a dog in Oakland was a choice they made in light of the environment. It should not be everyone else's responsibility to give over any part of our neighborhood to their convenience. Dog owners now want to make their lives more convenient.

Sincerely,

Richard Burge
1032 Ardmore Ave.

From: eric mullen <emullen55@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 3, 2012 at 5:24 PM
Subject: Against the dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

April 3rd, 2012

Dear Commissioners,

Please keep Astro Park open, green and clean, not fenced, brown and stinky.

i strongly prefer that this area NOT be converted to use for dogs.

Keeping this entire area open and green is FAR more important to my quality of life than a dog park.

I respectfully ask that the Planning Commission deny the conditional use permit application for a fenced dog park at this site.

Thank you,

Eric Mullen
438 Staten Ave., # 307
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Pat Hea <patheaphy47@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 3, 2012 at 5:47 PM
Subject: astro park dog take over
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Ann,

Now that the date has been set for the hearing about the Astro Park dog run I want to state my feelings again. Because I will be out of town during the hearing on Nov 2.

I am apposed to taking so much well used space in the park for a dog run.

The field is beautiful, green and well used by many people. Large expanses of green grass is such a wonderful site for us city dwellers.
we need it for our soul and spirit.

Please have the dog run people find a less in your face place for the dogs to run.
Again I am a local resident only a 10 minute walk from this site and do not want it used as a dog run.

Thanks so much helping with this
Patrick Heaphy
614 Alma Ave
Oakland, 94610

From: Eleanor Hanson Wise <eleanor@thepresentgroup.com>

Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 10:16 AM
Subject: Astro Park isn't the place for a dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing to voice my concern over the proposal to create a fenced dog park taking up over half of Astro Park. While I am a dog lover myself, and agree that there is a desperate need for some dog friendly park space in this area, I don't believe Astro Park is the place to do it. The thing about dog parks is that they don't need to be flat. There are plenty of hilly little parks in the area that would work for this purpose. The thing about playing fields is that they do need to be flat. And un-programmed, open, flat, fields are something that we need to preserve as it is incredibly hard to ever get them back once they're gone.

I am aware that it is always hard to find a space for dog parks as no one wants them in their backyard, however please consider re-focusing your efforts into finding a location that is not flat, and therefore not used by all sorts of people playing sports and games. In addition, it would make more sense to look for a location under trees, where grass already does not grow, rather than mulching or paving over a large swath of grass. Dogs love running around and peeing on trees anyway!

I would encourage you to deny this permit application for a fenced dog park in Astro Park, however would strongly encourage you to continue your efforts to finding a suitable location for a dog park in the Grand Lake area.

Thank you,
Eleanor Hanson
33 Excelsior Ct.

From: Rachel Broadwin <chezrachel@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 11:22 AM
Subject: Deny conditional use application for dog area
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. As homeowners we have enjoyed this neighborhood. The grassy, verdant space should remain just that. A dog park would be an eyesore.

Thank you for considering our opinion.

Rachel Broadwin & Lary Heath
934 MacArthur Blvd

From: Rufus L. Cole <rcole@rufuscole.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 1:00 PM
Subject: Dog Run Near Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am sending this email to request that you DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. The rights of our children and other adults should have a higher priority than our four legged friends and while I respect the needs of dog owners, Astro Park is simply too small to accommodate a dog run. If anything, the Park should be expanded for the use of individuals who would like to picnic with family and friends. Please do not make this precious space more limiting than what it already is.

Rufus L. Cole
Rufus L. Cole & Associates
720 Market Street, 10th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: 415-956-8800
Facsimile: 415-956-8811

From: Lisa Cole <lisaryancole@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 2:19 PM
Subject: Dog Run Near Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you DENY the temporary conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. The rights of our children and other adults should be a higher priority than our four legged friends and while I respect the needs of dog owners, Astro Park is simply too small to accommodate a dog run. If anything the park should be expanded for the use of individuals who like to picnic with family and friends. Our granddaughter looks forward to playing on the play structure and running in the grass. She is afraid of dogs and having a dog run so close would discourage her from playing in area that she loves. Please do not make this precious space more limiting than what it is already.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ryan Cole
Resident of Oakland

From: Jan LeGassick <janle@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 9:13 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I live in the Lakeshore area and am unhappy with the proposal to create a fenced-in dog deny the conditional use permit.

Contrary to what supporters of the dog area claim, this part of the park is often used by a games and other activities. It's also an entry point to the Lakeshore area and is now an off for dog use, and relying on volunteers to maintain the site is a bad idea. There must prime real estate, that would be more suitable for a dog park.

Thank you,

Jan LeGassick

From: Richard Chaikind <richjc@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Wed, Apr 4, 2012 at 9:30 PM
Subject: Please save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask you to please deny the proposal to have a dog run in the area and I along with friends enjoy using the park to play soccer, to being there on a sunny day. If you walk through the park almost any day weekends you will see the whole park being used and enjoyed by people. There must be some other place to fence off for dogs.

Thank you,
Richard Chaikind

From: kay marie jacobson <kmariej@comcast.net>
Date: Thu, Apr 5, 2012 at 3:55 PM
Subject: No dog run at Astro Park!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello Commissioners,

I'm writing to urge you to please deny the application for the conditional use permit for a "dog run" at Astro Park. Green spaces are in short supply in the Grand Ave - Lakeshore neighborhood and the fencing of even a small portion of the park would be a huge loss. I personally walk by that park several times a week and my grandchildren often use the playground adjacent to the area proposed. The kids always want to run and play on the expanse of grass -- the nearest open space for a "kid run" is in Piedmont. That's a sad fact.

Aside from losing access to the field, a dog run will sacrifice what little green we have and no doubt turn it into a muddy mess. I love dogs and respect their needs to run, but this is simply not a great location for this use. Our priorities should be to the overall quality of the environment and more importantly to the children in the neighborhood. It is vital for us to preserve and improve what little public park space we have -- a dog run does not

serve this purpose. Lastly, having so many dogs coming and going right next to a busy children's playground is probably asking for trouble.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Kay Marie Jacobson
651 Santa Ray Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610

From: **Gerald Wheeler** <geraldwheeler@comcast.net>
Date: Thu, Apr 5, 2012 at 4:31 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

I have lived in this neighborhood for over 27 years and dividing the use of this small park between dogs and people is a proposal that has been rejected by most of the residents that I know, particularly those, and there are a lot of them, families with small children. Astro Park is a location that always has been and continues to be fully used by families, and sports enthusiasts for recreation and pleasure on a daily basis. Chopping it up for dogs is a bad idea.

I have no doubt that there are other, far less intrusive locations where dog owners can allow their animals to run free. Please do not allow it here.

Thank you,

Gerald Wheeler
651 Santa Ray Ave.
Oakland, Ca. 94610

From: Ailian Chong <chongppr@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Apr 5, 2012 at 4:50 PM
Subject: No Dog Park on Lakeshore Please
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Planning Commission:

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced dog area in our neighborhood near Astro Park. I love the open green space which is currently there. It's a joy to have such wide open space and seeing informal soccer and baseball games with kids and a few dogs running around. I used to bring my kids to this park and not have to worry too much about uncontrolled dogs in the area.

This space is too small for bounding dogs to move about freely and the fenced area will cramp the whole openness of this urban area. We've visited Point Isabel Park in El Cerrito, and can see how a dog park can be a magnet for many dogs in the greater bay area. This kind of increased usage would be inappropriate for our neighborhood. With cutbacks on the Parks & Recreation Department, there won't be funds for the more intensive maintenance needed for a new dog park. Please keep this neighborhood enjoyable AS IS since it is already a fairly dense populated area.

Sincerely,
Oy-Lene Chong
Spruce Street
Oakland

From: Sue Levin <sue@heragency.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Feb 2012 17:53:21 -0800

To: <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Subject: Please, No Dog Park At Lakeshore & MacArthur

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I am a dog owner and live on Elwood Avenue in the Grand Lake District.

In December of 2010 I went to a Park and Recreation Advisory Commission meeting to hear about a proposal to fence a dog run on the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur. The only way I knew about this was through a dog therapy group that I belong to that phoned me to ask me to come to the meeting and support the design approval for this run.

Otherwise, I would have had no idea. I did not come to the meeting to support the dog run however. I came because I was incredulous that the city of Oakland would even consider fencing a dog run next to a tot lot in a highly visible space in the middle of a busy shopping district. To this day I remain dumbfounded that this proposal has gotten as far as it has.

Astro Park (also known as Eastshore Park) is a beautiful, precious green gateway to the Grand Lake district as well as a gateway to Lake Merritt. Additionally, a large and diverse group of Oaklanders use the park in diverse ways => <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TESI-FZCApc>

I am a member of Save Astro Park and we have worked to help educate the neighborhood on the dog park proposal and what we have observed is this: the more people find out about it, the more people don't want it.

The fact that this proposal was kept virtually under wraps except for dog specific groups who knew about it is a shame. Had the community learned about it a lot earlier it would have never gotten this far or created the kind of acrimony that it has.

One thing is for sure: the city needs to take a stronger leadership role in determining the siting for these dog runs. Otherwise we have what we have now: ODOG going from neighborhood to neighborhood creating rancor amongst residents. Seattle figured out a better way so maybe someday Oakland can as well. Regarding Seattle's pilot program and eventual implementation of a dog park plan, "The pilot program made all the difference. First, it showed residents that the city was in charge and acting reasonably. Second, it taught Seattle how to identify site selection criteria that would lead to successful locations, which turned out to be: (1) avoid interference with other established uses or department-sponsored activities; (2) avoid locations directly abutting residences; (3) assure availability of close-by parking; (4) avoid locations near children's play areas; (5) choose spots where there are minimal impacts on the visual character of a park; (6) site so as to avoid spillover into non-dog areas; and (7) avoid sensitive environmental habitats." (http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe_Dog_Park_Report.pdf) Note that the Astro Park location choice flies in the face of every single one of these criteria.

I am not anti-dog and I am not anti dog park either. What I am against is taking away the little precious open, unfenced, un-programmed green space that we have so that people can have yet another place to have their dogs interact. We have plenty of resources for dogs already and, at the expense of grabbing 22,000 square feet (about half, see attached photo) of the available open green space in our neighborhood gateway, the city in no way owes residents a dog park on every corner. What the city does owe residents is care and consideration in how it treats its precious open un-programmed green space. As the old saying goes, "They ain't making any more land." I urge the Planning Department to take this into careful and consideration in looking at this proposal to fence off half of the open space at Astro Park. While this issue may seem small in comparison to many, it actually is one that will impact thousands of people and for generations to come.

Thank you for listening and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sue Levin

From: Steve Saffold <stevesaffold@vahoo.com>

To: "acleVenger@oaklandnet.com" <acleVenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: pat kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>
Sent: Friday, March 2, 2012 1:08 PM
Subject: Oakland Common

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

Please deny the application to turn the green, open space at Lakeshore & MacArthur--"Astro Park"--into a fenced, wood-chipped dog area. This space is a gift, a true Commons at the very core of our city. The fact that this proposal had made it this far is frankly stunning. Would Boston permit half of Boston Commons to be turned into a fenced, wood-chipped dog area?

This should not come down to a show of hands by citizens. This is the job of the planning department and planning commission--to demonstrate vision, and in some cases, courage, to do what is best for Oakland today and far into the future.

With that being said, there is an astonishing amount of resistance to this proposal. I have stood at the proposed location on several Saturdays, simply explaining the proposal and giving people the opportunity to write down their email addresses if they believed this was a bad idea.

We have not been there every Saturday; in fact we have only been out there between five and ten times, within the past few months. And only in the morning.

On these mornings, some 1300 people have written down their names and email addresses and asked us to keep them posted on how to defeat this proposal. 1300.

I happen to work in real estate development. All of the projects I work on are "infill" projects in urban areas. I have seen major projects defeated by groups as small as two or three people. In the case of this dog park proposal, there are 1300 people who signed their names and volunteered their email addresses AT THE SITE. These are not people who are part of a region-wide network of dog-park objectors. I ask you: how could the city approve a project--a project that requires a conditional use permit for a change of use, nonetheless--that has at least 1300 objectors who have volunteered their information, not to mention unknown numbers who have not done so??

There are myriad reasons that this is plainly a horrible location for a dog park. Take your pick: adjacency to a tot playground, already gridlock traffic,

no parking, no maintenance budget, permanent awful smell at a key Oakland location, regular use by folks of every age and stripe, or (my personal biggest reason) the beauty of the space and the tranquility it affords at this key location.

Thanks, Ms. Clevenger.

Kind regards,
Steve Saffold

Steve Saffold
510-282-9169 mobile
stevesaffold@vahoo.com

From: nancy smith <nsmith1717@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Apr 6, 2012 at 11:33 AM
Subject: astro park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

Please please keep Astro Park as is. This place is enjoyed by families with small children, as well as those of us older folks who just love the greenery in the Lake Merritt area. When money in Oakland is so tight, why would the city council decide to spend on such an unnecessary project?

Please consider the ramifications of this idea.

--

Nancy Smith
Educator

From: Elaine Ellis <mseinelis@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Apr 6, 2012 at 1:49 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DO NOT vote to the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

I am an Oakland resident and love to run around Lake Merritt and all of its surrounding green space. While I love dogs and believe they deserve a place to run around, please do not take away this limited green space in the Lake Merritt neighborhood for all of us who use it in our own ways, playing sports or just enjoying relaxing there in the sun.

Thank you for considering the wishes of your constituents.

Sincerely,
Elaine Ellis
(School social worker, Rockridge resident)

From: **Wendy Winter** <wintermade@hotmail.com>
Date: Fri, Apr 6, 2012 at 8:26 PM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park
To: acleVenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saVeastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners, I respectfully ask that you deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced, off-leash dog park at Astro Park.

Let's not kid ourselves, Oakland's reputation is tarnished: from our less than present former Mayor Dellums, to the Occupy Movement, the recent mass murder at the Oikos college and our high crime rate. Oakland simply carries a bad rep. And now a group of misguided people want to take a piece of our crown jewel and turn it into a fenced dog run. So now imaging the future when news cameras turn to show scenes of the lake, they'll get a beautiful view of what? happy dogs in a fenced in area rather than beautiful green space, with kids and adults enjoying one of the few green, easily accessible, public spaces. Sure, we've got Redwood Park, but if you're tethered to the flat lands or vehicle free, you're going to have to work hard to see some green space. Don't take away the green.

And for the record, I love dogs more than I love people. I think Oakland's leash laws are simply Draconian. Change the laws. Make life easier for dog owners, but DON'T take away this beautiful green space in my neighborhood. That would simply be foolish.

thank you
Wendy Winter
589 Kenmore Ave
Oakland, CA
94610

From: Martina I. Cucullu <mcucullu@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 7, 2012 at 12:44 PM
Subject: Astro park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

I live a few blocks from the lake and am very much opposed to a dog run even though I just got a dog. There are so many dog parks in the nearby area that I just don't see any reason to add another in astro park. The area is always in use by people playing soccer, children and others looking to enjoy the park.

I also think it's a bad idea given how much traffic there already is around the lake not to mention all the children who play on the playground nearby. The only way to adequately protect them and the dogs would be to erect a number of fences that would make the area difficult to access and ugly. We've spent so much time and money into making the park pretty it is just counter-intuitive to do something that would defeat all the work that's been done.

Martina Cucullu Lim

From: amy bell <amyk.bell@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 7, 2012 at 1:57 PM
Subject: Citizen opposing Dog Park in beautiful Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners and Council members,

I am a citizen of Oakland (Glenview/Trestle Glen) who, like so many of my neighbors and my husband, loves the Lake Merritt and Grand/Lake area. I am there nearly every day to shop, run errands, eat, exercise, take out Library books, and enjoy the land.

It would be a tragedy to introduce a dog run to Astro Park, for many reasons. I believe the most compelling argument here is the disruption a dog run would cause in the way the community uses the space.

A dog run would seriously impact the social and visual experience of the entire Embarcadero landscape. Many people travel some miles to get to the Lake Merritt area in order to enjoy its open spaces. The proposed brown dog run, surrounded by a fence, would disrupt and detract from that open space experience and seriously hinder the sense of community - whole community - that the space currently promotes in its simple, easily maintained way.

No one who does not own a dog wants to participate or take any personal responsibility for a dog park. A dog park is an off-limits area to them. It is negated space. Many people including small children are afraid of gathered dogs. Gathered dogs snarl and nip and become agitated, as is their nature. Many dislike their smell and open defecation. Many

have to live with barking dogs in their neighborhoods and seek the tranquility of public parks to be free of that.

Do we really want to build off-limits areas in such a wonderfully open and communal city space? Does fencing off a small, dusty or muddy area for dog owners and their pets truly serve the community at large? How much benefit is given to those dogs, and at what expense to the whole community?

The design of urban spaces has a subtle but profound way of influencing a community of people. Putting up fences, replacing green grass with dirt, and making space off-limits to certain community members will have a divisive and scornful effect on the way people treat Astro Park. A park shouldn't have privileged areas, and that is essentially what a dog run creates.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Best regards,
Amy K. Bell
Oakland Citizen against Astro Park Dog Run

From: Catherine Baumgartner <oakcab@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 7, 2012 at 2:25 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: saveastropark@gmail.com

PLEASE DON'T BUILD A DOG PARK AT ASTRO PARK!!!!!! I have been living in Oakland for 26 years. Before coming here I lived in SF for 15 years. SF has it's massive Golden Gate Park. All Oakland has is the beautiful Lake Merritt and it's surrounding few parcels of grass. PLEASE DON'T COVER IT WITH BROWN DIRT AND WOOD CHIPS AND SMELLY LOUD BARKING DOGS. One of the nicest and smartest things Oakland has ever done for it's people is to beautify Lake Merritt and build up the neighborhood with it's fabulous Farmer's Market! KEEP THE DOGS AWAY AND LET THE PEOPLE PLAY PLAY PLAY PLAY PLAY. Thank you. Catherine

From: Alexandra Williams <atw8@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Sun, Apr 8, 2012 at 9:57 AM
Subject: Please keep Astro Park as it is!!!!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Members of the Oakland Planning Commission:

I have been an Oakland resident since 2002. Since my daughter was born in 2006, we have gone weekly to Astro Park. Each week I run around Lake Merritt, with my daughter now accompanying me on her bike instead of being pushed in the jogger. We then go to the farmer's market and finish up the morning with an hour or two cavorting in the grass of Astro park and playing in the adjacent playground.

I am a lifelong dog owner and dog lover but Astro Park is not the right place to put a dog run! It is one of the few open, grassy spaces we have in Oakland and one of the few of

those that is safe and at which I have no worries that my daughter will stumble across garbage or worse as we play in the park and grass.

Astro Park is one of the rare swathes of green in our city; it's very expanse is part of what is treasured by our family! Please, please do not put a dog park there. Even a relatively small area of grass being converted to a fenced off dog run will turn one of our few pretty, vibrant and open spaces into an ugly scar. As it stands now, the wide open grassy space, the library, the colonnade and the lake make that corner one of the best treasures in Oakland - please don't ruin it!

I fully support the effort to create more dog-friendly and dog-specific areas within Oakland but surely there are options that won't ruin one of the beautiful well-used spaces we've already got.

Thank you,
Alex Williams

From: Alexandra Williams <atw8@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Sun, Apr 8, 2012 at 10:07 AM
Subject: Please save Astro Park!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Astro Park savers:

Hi, my name is Quinn and I am 6 years old. I want you to save Astro Park and I will make some signs that say "Save Astro Park". I want to save Astro Park because I like to play in the grass. I also like to play soccer on the grass. And I also like to play rugby on the green space. I live in Oakland. I do like dogs but I think the dog park should be somewhere else because I use the green space and other kids do too. And anyway, dogs might run into the street since it's very, very close to the cars. It's a better place for people than dogs.

I will bring the signs to the park and hang them up.

Thank you for saving the park,
Quinn Williams

PS I told my Mom what to say and she typed this email.
PPS I will try to take a picture of me playing in the green space and send it to you.

From: Jill Friedman <bearcat3@hotmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 8, 2012 at 6:10 PM
Subject: No dog park at Astro Park!!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I am writing to add my voice to the many in our community who do not want any part of Astro Park converted to a dog park. I live nearby [up Perkins] and often walk in the area around Astro Park and the Lake, sometimes even with a neighbor's dog. A dog park is

not consistent with current use, by children, families, and sports groups. Nor is a dog park what I would want visitors to the Grand Lake/Lake Merritt area to be confronted with as a first sight. Please find a different space for people with their dogs. One that is not at the gateway to our wonderful community, and one that does not take away open space that is already used by others. Thanks. Jill Friedman

From: Penny Jane T. Aporillo <dynastylov_95@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 9:05 AM
Subject:
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Hello,

PLEASE, do not turn part of Astro Park into a dog park. I have taken my son and his friends to this park many times because it is a great place for my son and his friends to play and especially all the grassy space for kid's and adults to enjoy alike. I'm sure that there are other parks in Oakland and much bigger where you can place a dog park, but not Astro. Hopefully, you will take my thoughts into consideration and SAVE ASTRO for people and not dogs.

Penny Jane T. Aporillo
dynastylov_95@yahoo.com

From: Shah Smoak <shahsmoak@hotmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 9:15 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ann Clevenger,

Astro Park contributes so much to my community. The proposed plan to restructure the park is short sighted at best. There really is no need to "push aside the many park goers who have enjoyed the park for years.

Thank you.

Shah E. Smoak RN BSN

From: Jeanne Brown <jeannemab@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 9:38 AM
Subject: no dogs in ASTRO PARK!!
To: saveastropark@gmail.com

This spot is WAY TOO SMALL!!!!

We need this space for People!!

It would be out-of-control and would be expensive to monitor and

control the VOLUME of dogs and MESS!!!

THE CONVERGENCE OF DOGS THERE COULD BECOME A LIABILITY!!!

jmbrown

From: <alankarls@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 9:47 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

I am totally against placing a dog park in Astro Park. I do not see the logic of taking a park that is well used by all the citizens of Oakland, and taking a good chunk of it and making it a place for a small minority of Oaklanders. Why should the majority have to lose a resource for a minority's needs? Dog owners do not have to own dogs.

I am also concerned about the added traffic and the loss of parking: dog owners are notoriously addicted to large vehicles: where do you plan to put the SUVs? I am also concerned about mixing small children and dogs who are not well trained. The reason a dog park is needed is because the owners ignore the dogs all week and when the dogs finally get out, they are very excited and ill controlled.

I believe that this is a terrible idea and one that should be stopped. Leave the entire park available to all residents, not just to a minority. Prevent dog bites on little children. Avoid the traffic and parking problems that will ensue. Leave the park an attractive part of Lake Merritt: don't give the park a section in which the grass is beaten into earth and covered with feces and urine. Leave the park a place to play soccer, play catch, have a picnic, and just relax. Putting a dog park in that tight but well used park will destroy it.

Please, please, please do not put a dog park in Astro Park.

Alan R Karls
365 Euclid Ave. #302
Oakland CA

From: Philip de la Rosa <filup501@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 9:54 AM
Subject: Please DENY the conditional use permit application for dog area.
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. It is a beautiful open space that I enjoy very much. It would dishearten me to see that open space diminished in any way. It gives me a wonderful sense of community and

warmth to see children children playing there and watching the volley ball games during warmer weather. I would be a shame to see Astro Park go to the dogs!

Philip de la Rosa
491 Chetwood St
94610

From: **Kris Jussila** <kris_j59@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 10:24 AM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

This park is used by many in our area for sports, games, working out, picnics, for our kids to have an area to play, etc... A fenced area in this park does not make sense. Not ot mention that it would ruin the look of the park. Please consdier other areas that are better suited for a dog park.

Respectfully,

Kris

From: **william lyons** <willwjl@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 10:46 AM
Subject: Please don't make astro park a dog run!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Parks and green spaces were created for people! There is so little open green space around the lake! Most of that is covered with Canada Goose droppings as it is! If this area is made a dog run, even a small portion, there will be even less safe open green space for people. It will also not be clean. Regardless of the rules/laws a good number dog owners do not pick up their dog's litter. The sidewalks all around lake Merritt are littered with dog droppings. I've even witnessed people allowing their dogs to run free through the Rose Garden. Which is also dog-restricted! There are also ordinances in the Farmers Market and Lakeside Park that clearty state no dogs. I still see people with their dogs leashed and unleashed in the parks in and around Lake Merritt. I once even saw the Former Mayor Jerry Brown with his bulldog in Lakeside Park. I acknowledged him and reminded him that no dogs are allowed in the park as he jogged by. Does Oakland need one more venue where lawlessness can prevail?

Don't let Astro Park become a dog run! It's not good for the area!

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: C.C. Abdullah <cc1gel@yahoo.com>

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Sent: Monday, April 9, 2012 11:07 AM

Subject: Proposal on Astro Park

To : **Commissioners**

take action to stop this proposal against use Astro Park.

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Astro Park is space needed by the people of the city not prime location for dogs.

Thank you.

From: **Karyn Moss Veneklasen** <karyn@mosspro.com>

Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 11:19 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park--Move Proposed Dog Park to Another Location

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear **Commissioners**,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park, Astro Park. Our daughter plays soccer there on Saturdays, and our toddler son loves to play in the green area. We also love having the big green patch as a great benefit to the neighborhood.

We're 100% in favor of an off-leash dog park in the neighborhood, but as a dog owner, I know that they're ugly and smelly, so we'd would all be better off hiding it behind Fairyland or another site that's less visible and in the center of our highly trafficked public park area.

Sincerely,

Karyn Veneklasen
1036 Sunnyhills Road
Oakland 94610

From: awenzell <awenzell@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 11:36 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners:

I write to **STRONGLY** oppose the conversion of Asto park to a dog run area. While I understand the need for doggy open spaces, this park and the area specifically slated for the dog park is one of the most utilized open spaces in all of Oakland. Not a day goes by, rain or shine, when you will not see people (taxpaying citizens) playing Frisbee, soccer, baseball, football, working out, turning cartwheels, chasing their children, or simply sunbathing.

I am a dog owner and I live three blocks from Astro park, so I would benefit disproportionately from a dog run area. But looking at the larger good to the community, it would be a terribly selfish disservice to the citizens of Oakland as a whole to deny such a utilized recreational area to the rest of my neighbors because a handful of us dog owners want to run our dogs off-leash.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,
Ann Wenzell
750 MacArthur Blvd.

From: MNM <yellowgreeneyes@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 12:03 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

"Dear Commissioners,
Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. Just last weekend I was at the park enjoying the community and the scenery. This is one of the few places where so many people can convene and enjoy the grass, the serenity and the diverse community. Sectioning off a dog run area will be obtuse, ugly, and morph that area into a danger zone with more feces, urine, contamination and danger of unfriendly dogs. Please direct dog owners to a space that doesn't take from the Lake Merritt park community.
Thanks,
Marisa Musso

From: Rachel Gregg <rachel@inman.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 1:49 PM
Subject:
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, rkaplan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

For more than two years I have lived on Grand Avenue across the street from Astro Park. My third story apartment allows me to observe the daily (and nightly) goings on of the park and the park has been nothing short of inspirational.

Please deny the conditional use permit that would fence off a significant portion of green space to create a dog park. Simply put, a transition of Astro Park's green space into a dog park would be a misguided, egregious waste of taxpayer dollars.

The money should be put towards maintenance of the park, AS IT IS. Additionally, those dollars could be used to maintain the heavily used but shoddily maintained nearby Splash Pad Park.

Astro Park is used day-in and day-out by countless Oaklanders. Nearby parking is at capacity. Astro Park is thriving, AS IT IS. Please, reserve taxpayer dollars for maintenance of the current park system or locate the dog park in a park that is in need of revitalization.

Astro Park is a dynamic and thriving park that attracts a broad spectrum of our population - lets keep it that way.

Rachel Gregg
626 Grand Avenue Apt 4
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Liz Fuchs <eaf11182002@yahoo.com>
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Sent: Monday, April 9, 2012 5:55 PM
Subject: Please Deny Dog Run on Lakeshore

Honorable Planning Commissioners:

Please Deny the proposed offleash dog run permit proposed for the community park at Lakeshore and MacArthur. (aka AstroPark). This is the wrong place to site an offleash dog run for the following reasons:

- This park is flat and used alot by active recreationists. Dogs do not need flat land but soccer players and active recreationists do.They should have priority for this flat park area.This is a small area and you will be trying to cram too many uses at the expense of kids soccer, volleyball, baseball and other recreationists.
- This dog run will damage the neighborhood and adjacent businesses. On weekends, the parking already is light and this will create even more parking and traffic demands. I note that recently in other cities, for example, most recently Rancho Palos Verdes in southern california, an offleash dog area was closed down after only a short time because it attracted so many dog owners it created severe parking problems that adversely affected adjacent businesses. That will likely happen here.

- The city lacks adequate park maintenance now, and this could become an unmaintained nuisance.
- A chain link fence and brown wood chips surface will create an eyesore in one of the prime neighborhood gateway locations., transforming this lovely grassy park. It will be even worse when it rains. And this could adversely affect the property values of any business or residence that is adjacent to it.
- Dogs will inevitably get loose and create unsafe conditions for the adjacent children's play area. Not every child--or adult--likes or feels safe around dogs. That should be respected. I already witnessed unleashed pit bulls loose in the area by the library on a Saturday. Siting a dog run here is asking for such conflicts, instead of avoiding or minimizing them.
- There are better alternatives--consider a dog run near less visible, less heavily used areas such as the old police stables or the area by the lawn bowling. There are other dog runs already in the city.

Just because folks say it has been in discussion for a long time is no excuse to allow such a damaging project. You have the discretion and I urge you to DENY this permit.

Liz Fuchs
Merritt Ave.

From: Clarence Binninger <cbinusa@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 6:12 PM
Subject: Save Astropark
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please do not turn astro park into this wasteland of a dog run. The geese like the grass, the kids like the grass, and I like the grass. It would be less horrible if it at least turned into a cordoned-off grass dog run, but dark chunks to add to global warming? Are you kidding? If this nightmare originated with a city employee, then this is an example of an out-of-touch government bureaucrat run-amock. Why not turn an underused parking lot into a nice grassy field where dogs can run instead? There are plenty of such lots near the Lake

by the Kaiser Convention Center and Laney College and all over downtown.

Clarence Binninger

From: Karen Zachary <karendzachary@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Apr 9, 2012 at 6:27 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ann,

Please don't build a dog park at Astro Park.

- 1) parking is already abysmal in this area and would get worse
- 2) dog walking already obstructs the sidewalks around the lake too much...and having a dog park could mean more dogs passing through my neighborhood
- 3) we don't need the noise
- 4) it's wrong for all Oakland citizens to yield precious green space to a minority (dog owners)
- 5) Astro Park gets plenty of use for more positive activities

I don't think the city should have ANY dog parks, but if it must, the space by Fairyland is a much better location.

Thank you for reading,

Karen Zachary
2316 Lakeshore Ave #9
Oakland, CA 94606

From: Roxanne Clement <roxanne5788@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 10, 2012 at 12:08 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To Whom it may concern:

I am a long-time dog owner and current Oakland resident. I often come to the lake Merritt area to work out, dine, or go to the farmer's market. Astro Park as it is, adds a huge sense of community to the neighborhood and I never see it empty of either kids, games or sports programs. It is put to good use.

There are three major problems with having a dog park in the area:

1) poor aesthetics, 2) removal of community/kid space, and 3) As a dog owner myself, I would not use it.

A dog park in this area will not only be an eyesore with a huge fence imposed upon the park, it will also remove one of a very limited number of public spaces where kids can come and play, run and be active in Oakland.

I have not had trouble finding places to take my dog. I was aware when I got one that I would need a place to take him and did not rely on what may be available in the future. As a responsible dog owner, it is far more beneficial to my dog to go to more open spaces than this park would allow.

I simply would not use a dog park that will ruin the turf, be near food venues and have such a poor aesthetic.

Finally, and most importantly, where will the kids that use the space now go? By putting in a space for dogs, kids who have nowhere else to go will be displaced. It is unreasonable and ridiculous to deprive them of free space and give it to people who have chosen to have a dog. I understand people love their dogs (certainly love mine) but the kids in our community come first.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Roxanne Clement

From: Jeff Chorney <jeffchorney@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 10, 2012 at 3:20 PM
Subject: No dog run at Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. CleVenger,

My name is Jeff Chorney, and I am writing to oppose the plan to install a dog run at Astro Park. I live on Perkins Street, near the intersection with Grand Avenue, with my wife and two daughters.

I am 100% opposed to this plan. I urge you to do everything in your power to make sure that no dog run is installed at that location.

Nearly every Saturday, my family and I walk down Grand to the Farmer's Market. We stay there for awhile and then we go to Astro Park. We enjoy the grass and the playground. We like to watch people playing soccer and we like to play on the grass ourselves. Putting a dog run at that location would create an eyesore and would take away my enjoyment and the enjoyment of others.

Astro Park's green space is the perfect contrast to the busy freeway next door. It is the antidote to the traffic and bustle. It helps make the rest of our neighborhood palatable.

I understand some dogs need a place to run but the center of our neighborhood is not the right place. Dogs should not take priority over people, especially children. Please do not diminish a very necessary patch of green.

Sincerely,
Jeff Chomey

From: Fred Baumgartner <fredbaum@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Apr 10, 2012 at 7:27 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Members of the Oakland Planning Commission,

I too, think Oakland could use another dog park but is the corner of MacArthur and Lakeshore really the right place for it? This central location is a focal point for many activities at that end of Oakland's jewel, Lake Merritt. Many people, Oaklanders and non-residents alike use the lake and it's environs. Astro Park has, for many years, been an open green space that has played host to a multitude of outdoor activities for people of all ages. It would be a shame to reduce this space by half with a dog park in this beautiful high density neighborhood, my neighborhood. One wonders if even the half that remains open to humans would get much use at all once a dog park, defined by steel fences, barking, and feces is erected. Dogs are wonderful creatures

and I've owned four in my lifetime but I don't see how a dog park in this particular place best serves the needs of the majority of Oaklanders. Surely another location can be found for man's best friend. I think even the dogs would agree. Lake Merritt is a key component of the positive face of this great city. Let us all be careful how we treat it and remember the responsibility we all share as its conservators for the generations to come.

Sincerely,

Fred Baumgartner

From: Barb St. Amant <bstamant@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Apr 10, 2012 at 9:53 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park!

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

I am a dog lover and a veterinary professional writing to ask that the commission DENY the permit for a dog park at Astro park. I have lived on Beacon street for 10 years, 2 blocks from this green jewel of land, and am very familiar with the area. This is an unsuitable site for many reasons. As an emergency Veterinary Nurse, the first concern that comes to mind is the safety of the dogs. This is an area bordered completely by busy streets; the risk to dogs (easily) jumping the proposed fences, or owners losing control of them in/outside of the area is predictable. Dogs are then faced with cars on all sides of them; it's an unfamiliar environment with cars zooming around corners. The result is HBC (Hit By Car). It's common to see anything from minor scrapes, to broken legs, to chest injuries, to massive bleeding, to being

DOA. The proposed use of this site is a perfect recipe for such disaster.

The small size of the enclosed area itself encourages dog to dog aggression. In the past 25 years I've seen again, anything from minor lacerations, to eyes being bitten out, to outright death. The acreage here is too small to support the numbers and sizes of dogs likely to use the area. Inadequate space equals increased aggression.

As if this weren't enough, taking away this amazing green expanse of land negatively affects EVERYONE. It's a gorgeous, inviting link between the lake and the adjoining shopping area. People walk and drive to the lake then venture to the Grand/Lakeshore shopping area. Visitors drive/walk to go shopping in the area then walk to the lake, BECAUSE they can experience the expanse of calming green, the wildlife, the activity inviting them to the lake. (It's a wildlife sanctuary!!) They see people using this area - sports, relaxing, picnicing, playing with their children, groups using the area for scheduled activities. Please imagine a fenced block of space that obscures your view of the lake, or your view of the shopping area from the lake. Is this an improvement? Is this what we want from here on out?

In the long term is this REALLY what's best for Astro Park? I don't think so. I look forward to the May 2nd meeting.

Sincerely,

Barb St. Amant
Beacon St.
Oakland, CA

From: Laura Bruce <laurabruce0625@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 11, 2012 at 11:06 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

As a member of the Oakland community, I greatly value the current state of Astro Park. Living in an urban environment does not lend itself to many open grass fields where children and adults alike are able to participate in a variety of sporting events. Not only do I view it as a community building area, but one of enhancing public health through sport and exercise. I'm concerned that if the off-leash dog area permit is granted, we are sending a message of skewed priorities. For the children in my neighborhood, this is one of the very few options for safe, easily accessible, open space. For these reasons, I urge you to deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Laura Bruce

From: cherryshari@netzero.com <cherryshari@netzero.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 11, 2012 at 1:33 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park from the dog park - Right Idea. Wrong Place.
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

The Planning Commissioners will meet to decide the fate of Astro Park on Wednesday May 2nd at 6pm at Oakland City Hall. The corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue is the wrong place for a dog run.

Some of the top concerns:
Turns green space brown
Fence blocks park access
No budget for maintenance
Too close to the tot lot
Too much traffic

Please put the dog park in the area near the lake by the bocci ball parks.

More info. <http://www.saveastropark.org/top-ten-reasons-this-dog-run-is-a-bad-idea/how-to-create-a-great-dog-run---how-does-this-one-score>

Thanks,
Shari Morfin
6887 Exeter Drive
Oakland, CA 94611

Subject: Lakeview Dog Park Project
From: maria@lukasoakland.com
Date: Tue, April 10, 2012 4:39 pm
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Ann:

Enclosed please find my personal comments related to the Lakeview Dog Park Proposal's CUP application being considered at the May 2, 2012 Planning Commission Meeting.

I am a dog owner, local business owner and on the Board of Directors for Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation and I regrettably, but deeply oppose this proposal. I feel this opposition is strongly supported in the OSCAR Element of the General Plan, detailed further in my attached zoning comments.

The Oakland Parks Coalition's 2011 Community Report Card states, "Dog parks and community gardens should not be an afterthought in park planning. Rather they should be incorporated into park design and strategically placed," and they acknowledged that the strong public opposition to the Lakeview Dog Park Proposal could have been avoided with a more strategic approach. Instead of pushing this contentious proposal forward, we need to take a step back and do it right.

I don't oppose dog parks, just the proposed location. Lake Merritt's revitalization is inspiring recreation, leisure, spontaneous dance and music all around the lake. I agree with PRAC Commissioner Miller when he said at the July 2011 CUP application hearing "a monument belongs here, not a dog park." A tribute to Samuel Merritt or Lake Merritt District signage is more appropriate than the fenced space proposed. Please come down to the park on a Saturday morning and evaluate for yourself.

I do feel that we need to give more thought on dog use in our parks. However given the current budget crisis, I recommend looking at on-leash use first as it does not require large capital commitments. At the same time we can start doing our homework on dog parks, which to date has only included the perspective of a small group of well intended dog park supporters. This is important and highly visible park space that deserves broader community input.

Please feel free to contact me at maria@lukasoakland.com or 510-409-8582 if you have questions on this project.

Regards,

Maria Alderete
Luka's LLC, Managing Member
Board of Directors, Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation
Park Steward, Eastshore Park

From: Quinn Vaughn <quinnvaughn@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat, Apr 14, 2012 at 2:30 PM

Subject: save astro park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

My family was visiting Astro Park last weekend and heard about the proposal to put a dog Park there.

I want to express my concern for this location.

It seemed to me that the corner of MacArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue is a rare space in this park of Oakland. To have a dog park at first glance didn't seem like a bad idea...it's already a hub for so many of the diverse neighborhoods there and it could meet a need for some in that neighborhood...but upon second glance it made me wonder these things...

1)where the kid's would play soccer?

2)Would the dogs scare the children at the play ground?

3)Would the dirt runs take away from the green space?

4)Would the park for children and families be kept up considering that it is currently in need of care right now and dog park maintenance is another additional cost?

5) Would it look like a big scar (fence)?

6)It is already a very congested area so would it cause even more traffic?

7)Aren't there other dog parks available?

Lastly, city dog owners have chosen to live in the city and thus their dogs are city dogs (i.e. they have to run and play on leashes...it's doesn't seem right but that is the life of a city dog)

Please consider a different location or other options!

Thank you.

From: Kathryn Moll <kathryn@demonchaux.com>

Date: Sun, Apr 15, 2012 at 4:25 PM

Subject: Conditional Use Permit Application for Dog Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to encourage you to deny the conditional use permit application for a fenced dog area in our neighborhood park.

My graduate work at Berkeley was focused on the environmental and urban quality of the spaces surrounding Lake Merritt. As such, I have a particular concern about the intersection of dog waste--a significant source of water pollution--and my neighborhood park at the base of the Lakeshore watershed.

Our park is sited on land that was originally tidal marshland and an extension of Lake Merritt. This natural history begins to explain why the site was left undeveloped as the city grew up around it: Drainage is poor, and when Oakland experiences heavy rains as we did this past week, the site wants to revert to the marshy swamp that it once was. (Please see the attached photograph, taken Saturday.) Dog waste leaching into Lake Merritt will harm fish and waterfowl, increase algae growth, and generally decrease the appeal of the Lake for all of its users.

Even if the City was willing to allocate resources to the enforcement of pet waste management laws and the maintenance of dog areas (including signs, clean-up stations, and park staff), the proposed site at Lakeshore and MacArthur is environmentally the wrong choice for a dog park.

Thank you for denying the application on May 2nd.

Kathryn Moll

References:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Pet Waste Management:

http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/index.cfm?action=factsheet_results&view=specific&bmp=4

The Oakland Watershed Map, showing the natural boundaries of creeks and marshland in our neighborhood:
<http://museumca.org/creeks/1180-OMSAntonio.html#>

https://mail-attachment.googleusercontent.com/attachment/u/0/?ui=2&ik=4a389cd290&view=att&th=136b853894bc8f55&attid=0.1&disp=inline&safe=1&zw&sadue=AG9B_P8bpWCYISgSWyA5XBsdiJQB&sadet=1334587021063&sads=deDIOvLfFwl6pr0Dh4Xy9h2Gx8s

From: Natasha Vinakor <fourelements24@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, Apr 16, 2012 at 5:50 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com"
<aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com"
<saveastropark@gmail.com>

To the Commissioners:

I am writing a brief note to express my sentiment about the proposed dog park at Astro Park in Oakland.

Although I have full respect for dog owners, I do not feel that this is the best use of the area. As a city, it is vital for us to have open space where children and adults can relax and play, and this location is one of the prime locations for this. While I don't play soccer currently, I am inspired every time I drive or walk by and plan to join. The dance group that I am part of will have a kick-off for the Carnival season there next weekend. I have sat and watched capoeira groups play and walked to and from the playground with children. I feel

strongly that this is a healthy, positive green space in Oakland that should retain it's current focus.

While some dogs are well behaved and gentle, it is inevitable that bringing a large number of them together will bring issues. Simply in esthetic terms, to have animals this close to the most popular Farmer's Market in the East Bay seems unsavory. I simply think this is an inappropriate place for a dog park.

I live in Oakland, on Park Blvd, and also work and vote here. I love our city and want what is best for it. I feel that a dog park would serve a limited number of constituents, while leaving a much larger number without this vital space and dissatisfied. The joy of living in Oakland is that we have room to breathe and move, and I hope that you will allow this space to remain.

Thank you so much for your time and your careful consideration in this matter.

All the best,
Natasha Vinakor

Natasha Vinakor, MSW
fourelements24@yahoo.com

"Seek first to understand, and then to be understood" -
Covey

From: Andrew Castle <castleneineineffect@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 16, 2012 at 8:49 PM
Subject: A letter about the issues at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Greetings Ann Clevenger,

Thank you for your role in working to make Oakland a unique and happy place to live.

I am writing to weigh in for my self and my constituency on the issue of the proposed 'dog park' in the Astro park boundaries.

I have been named by a group of my peers, some 40+ persons, who regularly use Astro park informally to bring this message:

We are very grateful to have a place in the city center that is clean and solely for the use of humans.

We feel that the park is an important cultural place because it is only for humans. Old and young of all races interact and play games together throughout the entire park. This kind of open space is invaluable for our city.

Please do not allow fences and a dog park to encroach and limit our towns public space.

Places where dogs are concentrated are unavoidably loud and disruptive. Dog owners certainly need a place for there animals to have exercise and relieve themselves. Such a place needs to exist. If this place is adjacent to where children and adults gather a number of conflicts arise. Hygiene is top on the list.

Dogs and dog runs are a major vector for bacteria as well as noise, unpleasant odors and human animal altercations.

Many people who use Astro Park play Ball games. A dog park with a fence will create lots of situations where human games stop so the ball can be retrieved from the 'dog run'. This is also a dangerous bacteria vector in addition to being a major inconvenience for the humans who use the park.

The childrens playground will become noisy and congested with foot traffic. People bring their children to parks to have safety and freedom for their children to play. This is a very important time for parents to interact, share supervision and develop connections to one another. A 'dog park' will make a major impact on the dynamics for children and their parents. With dogs coming and going parents will be obliged to be more on edge supervising their children. This will detract from the relaxation and social benefits that parents and children enjoy in Astro park. A 'dog park' in Astro park will make a negative impact on the play ground and the ease of culture that parents and children currently enjoy.

Informal use groups choose Astro park because there is enough room for multiple groups to play at once. It is very important culturally that there be a place to go at any time where there is enough space for your games as well as others. From pick up soccer games to joggers and the circus acrobatic groups many people can enjoy the park at once. Astro park works so well as a gathering, game, exercise place because it is large enough to accommodate many groups simultaneously. A 'dog park' would stop the park from being a destination for Oakland's citizenry to enjoy there leisure in the company of others.

In addition a 'dog park' would create a boundary and fence that will be a real headache for everyone. As mentioned balls from human games going over the fence will certainly occur regularly. This is a disease vector as well as opportunity for dog owners and regular park users to enter into conflict. Dogs will create a lot of dust and feces scents which will make the atmosphere of Astro park unpleasant for most users.

I and my peers feel very clear that there must surely be several alternative sites for a dog park where the impact will not be as negative for the rest of the city population.

Thank you for reading and receiving our message about this issue.

May collaboration and mutual benefit be the theme in Oakland.

Andrew Castle and peers.

From: martha wallner <marthaw@lmi.net>
Date: Mon, Apr 16, 2012 at 10:24 PM
Subject: Re: Astro Park Dog Area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood ASTRO park.

I love dogs and I think that folks who have dogs should take them somewhere else. It is really an awful idea to turn that patch of ASTRO park into a dog run. There is so much broken in our society – and troubles enough in Oakland. Astro Park isn't broke – so please don't "fix it" by fencing part of it off for the use of dogs and their owners only. That isn't fair.

Regards,

Martha Wailner – a regular Farmer's Market and Astro Park enjoyer
39 Randwick Ave
Oakland, CA 94611

From: Boris Deunert <wbdinc@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Thu, Apr 19, 2012 at 1:01 PM
Subject: Conversion of Astro Park to a dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,
I am writing to you regarding the possible conversion of Astro Park to a fenced dog park. While I do see a need for a dog park, I was wondering why you chose an open field that is currently used for many activities rather than a different location that would be more suitable for the dog park. We have been playing soccer in this park for a long time and could be considered regulars on Sundays and Wednesdays. We are 186 members strong and would like to preserve this park for future activities. As you may be aware, there are not too many open fields left in this area that provide enough space for these activities. I would like you to reconsider this location and explore alternative locations within the same general area.
Thank you very much,
Sincerely,
Boris Deunert

From: Karen Moran <kamoran@lbl.gov>
Date: Fri, Apr 20, 2012 at 1:12 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Ms Clevenger,
I live just up Santa Clara from Astro Park and see how much that green space is used for all kinds of activities. One day it's kids playing soccer and the next families playing with their kids. Please do not approve the plans to put a large ugly fenced off dog park there!
Sincerely,
Karen Moran
370 Santa Clara Ave. # 6
Oakland, CA 94610

--

Karen Moran RN
Health Services
Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
Mail Stop 26R0147
Fax 510-486-7192

510-486-4483

Hi...

I play soccer at Astro Park and this is my letter against the dog park, it's endorsed by 24 of the players I play with.

I realize it's pretty long and I just finished it. if you care to edit it for length or content I understand, but I'm tired of writing and want to get out in this sun =)

Good luck, and thank you for helping save Astro Park.

Sam Murchison

From: Sam <sambow5000@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Apr 20, 2012 at 2:19 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park letter - from a loquacious soccer player.

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Sue Levin <sue@heragency.com>

Hi...

I play soccer at Astro Park and this is my letter against the dog park, it's endorsed by 24 of the players I play with.

I realize it's pretty long and I just finished it. If you care to edit it for length or content I understand, but I'm tired of writing and want to get out in this sun =)

Good luck, and thank you for helping save Astro Park.

Sam Murchison

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. (Astro park by Lake Merritt)

This is the first letter I've ever written to a congressman, senator, schoolboard or commission - but this dog park would affect me and what i love to do, so dramatically, and negatively, i feel compelled to write.

I don't know much about local politics, zoning or permit applications so i shall speak to two things i know a great deal about:

1) The knee-jerk tendency in the east bay to always side on behalf of animals vs humans, without ever really hearing what's being decided, or giving it proper context.

2) The power of sport.

I've been going to the Grand Lake theatre since 1975. I was born in Berkeley at Alta Bates hospital in 1970, I lived in Berkeley or North Oakland until I graduated from Berkeley high school. And, after spending much of my adult life away I have been back in Oakland for five years- living just three blocks from the proposed dog park.

I think I know as well as anyone where we do, and don't, need a dog park in our community. {For instance: Before they build a single new dog park in Oakland they need to destroy the one on Claremont ave beneath the 24 freeway. That depressing patch of concrete is an insult to dogs, dog owners and dog lovers everywhere - and I'm one of them }

Ever since I was a little boy in Berkeley I've noticed that people in the bay not only put the needs, wants and convenience of animals before people - they're almost always ready to do so without knowing the benefit, or cost, to human beings.

The geese that ruin the lake for anything but running are in no danger of going extinct, neither are dogs for that matter, but god forbid we should try and curtail the poop they drop on every blade of grass, or give them their own designated area. "Protecting", or overly protecting, this abundant animal keeps humans from laying on the grass around the lake, and is preventing Lake Merritt from becoming the crown jewel of Oakland, and making it one of the most beautiful parks in California. So again the human beings in Oakland, that you represent are, forced to settle for just "nice".

Growing up in Oakland I came to learn that I should be satisfied with "nice". Because nice was "pretty good for Oakland". Somehow we didn't deserve, or shouldn't expect, more. After a long time living away I'm so happy, and proud, to see what Oakland has become now, because we deserve, and now have, better.

I lived in Long Beach, New York and Los Angeles after high school and was shocked, and occasionally appalled, at the general absence of thought about the welfare, or convenience, of dogs animals etc. But it made me think, and realize, that there must be a happy medium where both humans and animals flourish.

I know for a fact thousands upon thousands of animals, and several species, were displaced or killed because Oakland was founded and grew to be the great city it is now. I've never heard animal lovers in Oakland bemoaning that.

I think it was a good trade.

To put a dog park on the only flat usable playing surface anywhere near the lake that would ruin it for people that have been using it for decades seems not very well thought out, at the very least. Especially when you consider there are plenty of attractive alternatives for the dog park - like we are supporting.

That one paltry piece of grass by the freeway is all us humans have to play our silly games on near the lake. The rest is for dogs, joggers and geese.

Which leads me to.... The power of sport.

I go play soccer on this field a few days a week and every Sunday I look forward to playing with dozens of people of all ages, colors and backgrounds who have only one thing in common. A love of futbol, and a proximity to the only suitable playing field in the area. Some of the people in my game have been playing on that field for a decade. Ten years.

Any notion that a dog park, especially one this size, can "co-exist" with the kids and adults who play baseball, soccer and football on this field daily is a joke. We use the entire field, and most of the grass near Grand Ave is completely unusable because it's in such poor condition. The dog park is planned for some of the prime grass that we use daily, and it's simply too big to share the space with us - and the little kids who use this space. Anyone saying otherwise is ill informed, or has ulterior motives.

I've always loved sports since I was a little boy playing soccer and basketball in Berkeley and Oakland. I played Division One basketball in college, I was a sports broadcaster for several years while living in New York and getting my Master's Degree at NYU. My master's is in economics, but I wrote my master's thesis on sports. I currently write about soccer for a blog.

I feel very comfortable calling myself a "sports expert".

My favorite thing about team sports has always been the camaraderie, the human experience, the bonding and intimacy that doesn't occur anywhere else.

Ask anyone who played team sports at a very high level "what do you miss"? They will almost always begin talking about the locker room or things that happened traveling on the road together etc. The moments on the court are fleeting. But that sense of team, unity and us against the world lasts forever, and is sorely missed, all at the same time.

When I first made the team at Long Beach St. as a walk-on (the lowest player on the totem pole) it was a dream come true for me. The players on the team were so talented, funny and different from my teammates at Berkeley High. But I was very surprised how socially segregated the team was coming from Berkeley. Basketball has always been heavily integrated, and I thought that translated socially everywhere - I was wrong.

I was just a minor player on the team, and my team mates soon realized being from the bay area made me "different". But I'm a people person, my teammates liked me, and I became kind of an emotional leader. After our very first pre-season game, while it was just players in the locker room, I excitedly asked "what's everybody doing tonight"? This seemed normal to me, we would always do something after games in high school, regardless of our social circles away from the team.

The room got kind of quiet, and I could tell I'd said something out of order.

The captain of our team next to me, a 6'9" white guy from Florida, leaned in and said "we're going to go drink at this frat party where they're gonna have three kegs" - the "we" meaning the *white* guys on the team. One of the other captains on the team told me "we're going to a black fraternity dance on campus with 800 people and two DJ's" - his "we" was also quite clear.

I immediately said "Oh, that sounds *hella* fun. I'm going to the dance"!

Everyone assumed I was joking.

But at the next practice, after I'd gone and danced all night as the only white guy there, all the players on the team on were talking about it. I just did what I felt like doing, but by the end of the season some of the black guys were coming to do "white things" and vice versa. I'm proud to know my liberal influence had a small part in that. I can't say how much I changed anyone's life dramatically, but I know sports is always like that. Slowly making people more comfortable with things they're ignorant about, afraid of, or simply haven't been exposed to.

From Jack Johnson to Jesse Owens to Jackie Robinson to Muhammad Ali to to Bill Russell (a McClymonds graduate) Billie Jean King to Tiger Woods I can tell you that sports has been responsible for more social change in America than anything besides politics - save perhaps the arts.

Why is any of this relevant?

Because here we sit in the "liberal utopia" that is the East Bay and you're about to destroy my sunday game that represents all of that power that is inherent to sport, and reflects the values we champion in our community.

For a dog park?

Isn't Oakland all about encouraging people of different backgrounds, colors and languages to mix, mingle and learn from each other? Isn't that one of the things we are most proud of as a community?

Well i want you as a commission to tell me the last time you were flung together with dozens of people speaking multiple languages and forced to perform a complex task under competitive circumstances within moments?

Because that's what it's like trying to win, or even score a goal, every Sunday at Astro Park.

A month ago I collected names and countries of players for this submission. The day I brought my pen and paper was the Sunday following our worst week of rain in years. The wind was blowing thirty miles an hour, and the field was soggy.

These are about the worst playing conditions in recent memory and I was still able to collect 24 names representing 12 countries and almost as many languages. (That's excluding the two players who chose to designate Oakland and Berkeley as their own countries =).

But I knew most people would show up, because that's what we do on Sundays. Some people go to church to find community, we go play Futbol.

That is the power of sport.

I hope this long letter helps you understand what you'll be destroying if you allow a dog park to replace my Sunday game, and all of those people who have stories just like mine.

Respectfully,

Sam Murchison

Lifelong Dog Lover, Sports Fanatic and Oakland Resident.

endorsed by...

The Soccer Players of Astro Park!

Name	Country of Origin
Richard Pollman	Chile
Shehu Korona	Sierra Leone
John Otourfor	Ghana
Nate Opei	Ghana
Jamal Muhammad	USA
Femin Hackman	Ghana
Chakes Obeng	Ghana
Hubert Saintil	Haiti
Goston	Cameroon
Dana Leona	St. Lucia
Gerard Leona	St. Lucia

Cleve Warner	St. Kitt's W.I.
Amine Ababil	Morocco
Rob Jackson	Oakland
Armil	Congo
Doug Hewitt	USA
Didy	Congo
Ben Adkins	USA
Moibe Kiehsay	Eritrea
Taha Almusawi	Iraq
Tesalem	Eritrea
Rind Hussein	Iraq
Sam Murchison	Berkeley

From: Mary Wadsworth <mary_wadsworth@hotmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 21, 2012 at 3:52 PM
Subject: Dog Park in Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Ms. Clevenger:

As a resident of the Grand Lake neighborhood and a frequent visitor to Lake Merritt, I am writing to express my extreme opposition to the proposed fenced off-leash dog run at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland. I have serious concerns about the plan, in particular the fact that the dog run will eliminate much used green space, the impact on traffic and parking in the area, and the fact that there is no budget for maintenance. With seven other dog runs within a three mile radius I do not see the need for a new dog run in this location.

Please pass on my objections to the Planning Commission when they meet to consider the proposal on May 2.

Thanks,
Mary Wadsworth
1016 Harvard Road

Oakland, CA

From: Linda Holland <linda@ljholland.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 21, 2012 at 4:12 PM
Subject: Please, no dog park at Lakeshore Ave!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Gordon Juan
<gjwest3@hotmail.com>

Hi Ann,

My husband and I bought a lovely home in Adams Point two years ago. We love the neighborhood and all the new businesses that are thriving here.

Please tell the city council that we do not want a dog park in our neighborhood. It would destroy the beauty of the lot and limit its use as a playground. Oakland has so many needs — including road maintenance, police and fire services, and library services-- that would be a much better use of city funds. I love dogs, but feel that there are more appropriate places for them to play.

Many thanks for your support,

Linda Holland
Gordon Juan, MD
408 Euclid Ave
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Clarence Binninger <cbinusa@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 21, 2012 at 4:49 PM
Subject: No dog-chip park at Lakeshore
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, info@nancynadel.org
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>,
aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Councilmembers Nadel and Kerrigan,

It's hard to believe this example of government run-amok, but do you know that some out-of-touch city bureaucrat ("buree") seems to have dreamed up the idea of turning a lovely grass park into a wasteland of dark wood and dog chips, - right by a kid's playground to boot? I refused to believe it, till I saw the pictures and copy of application!

Obviously, that buree must not believe in global warming, or know of the the geese who graze there, or the kids and grown ups who use the grass regularly, and who like it green now. The buree did not pick up the phone to see if the 12th street restoration could have and still can accommodate a dog run before people get used to it once the project completes. This desk-bound buree obviously did not look at the numerous unused and wasting dark paved lots, all over Oakland, including near Kaiser Convention center, that can be sanely turned into brown-chip land.

The reasonable people at saveastropark.org have proposed the reasonable alternative of using the old horse stables. They make a persuasive case as to why you should not be swayed by that buree.

So, direct the city bureaucracy to stop wasting our scarce tax dollars on this arrogant proposal, and to spend the money on hiring more police, replacing burnt out street lights, and other things to keep us safe instead.

Your vote on this will matter.

Clarence Binninger
501 Wesley Ave., No. 4
Oakland, CA 94606

From: Ruby Wara-Goss <rubywaragoss@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, Apr 21, 2012 at 7:07 PM
Subject: Please keep Astro Park the way it is
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing to ask that you please deny the fenced off-leash dog run proposal at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland. Some of the reasons why I do not believe a dog run at Astro Park would be a good idea include:

- The fenced enclosure would reduce or eliminate existing recreational uses
- No budget for maintenance
- Dogs would be too near the tot lot
- Would create traffic and parking impacts near the Lakeview Library
- Turns green space brown
- There are six other dog parks nearby

Thank you for your time and I look forward to being in touch about this issue.

--

Warm Regards,
Ruby Wara-Goss

510-593-4268
rubywaragoss@gmail.com

"We're in this together - cross color, cross culture, cross gender, cross class. Let your light shine." -Cornel West

From: **Kenyatta Miles Davis** <daviskk@pacbell.net>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 9:54 AM
Subject: Important Please Read

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Ms. Clevenger,

I am totally shocked that this dog park is even being considered at this location. As a parent my main concern is its proximity to the Tot Park. Dogs are really unpredictable so just the thought of them being that close to a tot park park frightens me. I am also concerned about the fact that there is no budget for maintenance. I mean Serious???? How is that even possible. Astro Park is for the kids. Please do the right thing and vote no on this proposal.

Thank You

From: Pat Madarang <pmadaran@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 3:27 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

My name is Pat Madarang and I am a resident of the City of Oakland living in Sequoyah Hills in Oakland, Ca. I am writing to you to Save Astro Park.

Kids need to play on grass too! Not enough grass to sit on in Oakland near LakeShore! Dog waste? We are not Golden Gate Park. Why?

My suggestion is to use the blighted area across the street and create a tourist location (e.g. dog hotel) for off-lease dog lover's around the world can visit Oakland and play; like San Francisco and follow the State of Nevada and put solar panels on the "for sale" Building. Keep the dogs cool on hot days from the shade of solar panels. Ask Danny Kennedy from Sungevity to help, he is from Oakland.

I am a graduate of the USC Price in Sacramento and we have a highly regarded Urban & Regional Planning Program in the country as part of our university. USC Sol Price School of Public Policy is older than the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, so I know something about urban planning and I think somebody has influenced your planning commission unwisely!

Brainstorming Ideas for dog friendly cities!

- 1 <http://www.yeip.com/biz/mission-creek-dog-park-san-francisco>

- 2 <http://www.bringfido.com/attraction/parks/city/san francisco ca us/>
- 3 <http://www.solaripedia.com/13/315/3639/animal foundation dog park pvs.html>

Pat Madarang
FOTS Lead Solar Advocate
"Feet on the Street" Greater SF Bay Area
Real Goods Solar, Inc.
Solar Living Since 1978
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l1VMwIM9 II>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUstFht bso>
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/pmadarang>

From: Erin Jamison <jamison.erin@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 4:19 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners:

Please DO NOT approve the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park. I am a dog owner living two blocks away from the proposed site.

Before moving to Oakland from Los Angeles, I also lived within walking distance of an off-leash dog park. (Please see attached photos.) It was dirty, dusty, and reeked of urine. What had begun as a proposed site to better the community and provide for socialization of dogs and people quickly turned into a trampled, poorly-maintained dirt patch with a smell that carried for blocks. While both my dogs and I enjoy the off-leash park experience, I can't imagine how replacing Astro Park's existing grassy lawn with wood chips and chain link could be seen as an improvement. I consider Astro Park my front yard. I walk by on my way to the grocery store, the gym, and the library - and on any given day, pass by children picnicking with their parents, teens lying in the grass to study, or the local soccer club, tai chi group, or yoga aficionados engaging in what they love.

Please don't take away one of the rare green spaces in Oakland that caters to so many and replace it with what will surely become a barren dirt patch intended for the use of one very specific group. Again, I am not denying how wonderful the dog park experience can be - which is why I use one of the already developed dog parks within walking distance or make the drive to Point Isabel. Those of us who live in and love Oakland are fortunate to have the rare green space provided by Astro Park - please do not support its destruction.

Erin Jamison
636 Beacon St.
Oakland

--

"Where there is love, nothing is too much trouble, and there is always time." - Abdu'l-Baha

Dear Commissioners,

As a resident of one of the neighborhoods that surround Lake Merritt, I am writing to ask that you please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

I am so proud to call this area of Oakland my home. With each new friend or family member who visits, one of my favorite outings is a Saturday walk down Lakeshore Avenue to the Farmers' Market and Lakeshore's small businesses and restaurants. Walking by Astro Park always makes me stop in my tracks and smile. I love watching toddlers at soccer practice and friends playing volleyball and just pausing to admire the broad stretch of green grass softening an otherwise urban block.

A dog park would destroy the neighborhood appeal and enjoyment of Astro Park. Dog parks quickly become chain link fenced in stretches of dirt littered with feces, a sure blight on an otherwise beautiful stretch between the Lake and nearby businesses. Why take the chance on marring such a beautiful and popular spot?

As a dog lover, I hope a more appropriate location can be found for local dogs to play off leash and hang out with friends. However, Astro Park is not the right spot for such plans. At such a busy car, bus and foot traffic area, the corner is not a safe spot for our local pups.

Astro Park is well utilized and loved by the humans in the neighborhood. I am sure the local dogs can appreciate that. Let's find a spot that meets the needs of dogs and humans and preserves the beauty of the Lake Merritt area.

Again, I ask that you please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Adria D. Walker
Oakland Resident
Adriawalker@gmail.com

From: Patricia Piatti <ppiatti5@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 7:31 PM
Subject: SAVE ASTRO PARK- NO DOG PARK!!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park (Lakeshore and MacArthur Blvd).

The location of this park will not allow for a safe environment for either dogs, dog owners and those trying to enjoy the areas outside of the proposed dog park. Also, the proposed dog park will reduce the area available for free enjoyment of the park, for activities such as soccer pickup games, children playing safely, resting area, etc.

Residents who need to walk their dogs can do so in other nearby dog parks (six other dog parks within less than 3 miles, most within 1.5 miles).

The city's financial situation makes it almost impossible to guarantee proper maintenance. There is no clear statements in the proposal, pointing to the responsible party or parties for maintenance or for fixing broken fences, etc.

This is not a sound proposal, please do not approve permit application for the construction of this dog park!!

--

Patricia

From: a.v. keith-queen <aviessa@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 7:45 PM
Subject: SAVE astro park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please DENY the fenced off-leash dog run at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland. Too dirty, too much in cost, takes away too much from the people who currently plat there.

--

A. Viessa Keith-Queen

From: <carri97@aol.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 8:00 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park (McArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue , Oakland- Lake Merritt)
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I own a dog and love dogs but I'm emailing to ask that you please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced-off leash dog area in our neighborhood park (Astro Park at McArthur Boulevard and Lakeshore Avenue in Oakland). I live around Lake Merritt and run around the lake a lot and going down to Astro Park is a part of my route. The Astro Park area is beautiful and fencing it off, in my opinion, will take away from the open and bright/vibrant energetic "appeal" of the green park. In my opinion, the open green park will complement the entire new Lake Merritt area when the renovations are completed. Thanks for your consideration.

Best regards,

Vickie Jackson

From: Adrienne Elenteny <aelenteny@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 22, 2012 at 10:34 PM
Subject: Keep Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

I played at Astro Park, including the moon-scape play mound, with my brothers over 40 years ago. Now, my neices and my son play soccer at the park every Saturday morning. The scene at the field of Astro Park on any given Saturday or Sunday morning is bucolic, exciting, and fills me with pride to be an Oaklander, all at the same time.

After watching little kids run around learning how to scrimmage, and returning from the farmers market with a waffle, we stopped to watch an impromptu circus that had been set up on the field along with an African drumming troupe. God Lord, you couldn't get any better snapshot of the Oakland that we want and have struggled for as citizens. Cosmopolitan, Artistic and Inviting.

It was shocking to see the size of the suggested dog park, which would effectively eliminate any other use of the field.

I strongly urge you to DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park for the sake of the city and all the astonishingly varied people who use this field.

Adrienne Elenteny
Oakland, CA 94602

From: Audrey Kossak <audreykossak@me.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 23, 2012 at 12:25 PM
Subject: Grand/lakeshore dog area
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in my neighborhood park between grand ave and lakeshore ave in Oakland. The freeway over pass is enough of an eyesore as I walk around the lake to neighborhood shops. I want to continue to see a wide open grassy space and watch families picnic, children and adults playing soccer and frisbee. I own a home 4 blocks away and I don't want to see a fenced dog park, with added noise pollution from barking and the smell pollution of dog poo. Please save your money for a project that improves our fine city of Oakland. Thanks for listening to the voices of the grand/lake neighborhood.

-Audrey Kossak

From: Kasey Ellison <kaseydellison@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Apr 23, 2012 at 1:31 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I am an avid dog lover, I volunteer at the East Bay SPCA and I donate to them annually as well so no one I understand that there is a need in the area for dogs to play. I however don't understand why it must be astro parks, since it's clear that this area is already being utilized by children, families, and many non profit organizations. Through all my visit to East Bay Regional Parks (I visit one weekly for a running club), I've yet to see a dog park that close to a children's play area most aren't even sharing the same land, and I'm sure this was done on purpose for the protection of both the children and the dogs. Why would Oakland do something so different from all the surrounding cities?

I'm not one to complain without giving a suggestions. There is plenty of nice space inside the Lake Merritt area this would not only be better for the dogs as it would keep them away from street traffic, but because there is fee'd parking inside the Lake Merritt area it could help further fund the dog park. There is also one huge space that is very underutilized near Ahn's 1/4 burgers which states currently "NO DOGS" that could be blocked off for a dog park, as a current resident of the area who sees this park every day, and it's hardly has ANY human foot traffic through that area.

Please do not place a dog park in Astro Park, please reserve this area so that children can play, adults can remain active/healthy, and non profit organizations can flourish.

Thanks,

Kasey Ellison
Lake Merritt Area Resident.

From: Andrea Byers <drebyers@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 23, 2012 at 1:46 PM
Subject: AstroPark Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ann Cleavenger,

I'm concerned about the plan to add a dog run/park in Astro Park by Lake Merritt. I've lived by the lake for 10years now and have enjoyed the field and seen others enjoying it for years.

There are very few places for soccer games and areas for the kids to run and play "tag."

I am asking you to not change the park by adding a dog run, please keep the field open.

Thank you,

Andrea Byers
1949 7th Ave.
Oakland, CA 94606

From: Melissa Miyara <mnmiyara@hotmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 23, 2012 at 3:24 PM
Subject: Proposed dog run at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I recently moved to the area, and the open green spaces are among the top factors that initially attracted me to the neighborhood. I am somewhat saddened to find that one of these beautiful spaces is already threatened by a feature that will only serve one small segment of the population. Please reconsider the idea of building a fenced-in dog run in such a prominent and visible location. I enjoy dogs and even work in a dog-friendly office, however I also think it is important to be selective about where they are allowed to roam off-leash and impact the surrounding land. Astro Park is already host to a variety of recreational uses and I do not believe anything would be gained by deprioritizing those uses for a dog run.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Miyara

From: pcyeta jackson <pcyetaj@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 8:21 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This area is practically across the street from a 3.5 mile lake, where dog owners are free to to walk/run their dogs all day. Why take away a park where we sit, eat and play, when there's already an area (Lake Merritt) for people to walk their dogs. Doesn't make sense. Please stop this.

Thank you!

Lake Merritt Resident,
-Pcyeta Jackson

Stephanie Mamane <steph0099@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 2:23 PM
Subject: My opposition to Astro Park becoming a dog park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saVeastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Ms. Clevenger

I am a long time resident of Oakland with 3 small children. My children have come to enjoy the flat grassland at Astro park for many years. We picnic on sunny days, kick a soccer ball with their friends, and throw a frisbee around. I strongly oppose the potential plan to put a dog park in that area. If the city approves this, it will be depriving our kids of valuable open space in a thriving neighborhood. I can't understand how this space makes sense for a dog park - there are many businesses in the area that are benefitting from Oakland's revival and the Lakeshore area is booming. Removing open space that HUMANS use for a dog park is just wrong. Please find an alternative location. The smell, the poop, the potential danger of large and small dogs near toddlers, are all good reasons to find another space for this. It is disheartening to see the needs of animals put before children in the community...

Stephanie Dilworth

Oakland, OA

From: K/C Mead <ckmead@comcast.net>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 12:38 PM
Subject: Please deny permit for Astro Park dog area
To: acleVenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saVeastropark@gmail.com

Oakland Planning Commission

Dear Commissioners,

We urge you to deny the conditional use permit application for an off-leash dog area at Astro Park. Ever since we became aware of the movement to place a fenced, off-leash dog area at this wonderful neighborhood park, we've made a practice of observing the type of use this park gets on a daily basis. The activities at this fabulous neighborhood resource include young children at the playground; seniors exercising; school children playing organized games; adults playing ball, exercising, and playing music; and other healthy and enjoyable activities.

While we understand the need for exercise areas for off-leash dogs, Astro Park is the wrong place for a dog park. The noise, smell, proximity to children, loss of play area, and damage to the green are just a few of the negatives. Decreased parking and increased noise for library patrons are also important considerations, as are the lack of funds to maintain a dog park so that it does not instantly become a serious health hazard.

Please take into the strongest consideration the needs of the community at large and not the special interest of the proponents of this use permit, and deny this permit.

Thank you.

Karen and Chris Mead
Boulevard Way

From: Patrick Emmert <qopus1988@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 2:45 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please deny the permit to turn Astro Park into a dog park.
There's no money to actually pave MacArthur at that

corner, but there is somehow money for a dubious dog park?

And it is a terrible location - at a busy intersection, too close to a children's play area, that will take away a vibrant sports field.

I also question the process by which this change is done. Two little signs are put up three weeks before the vote. How about stakes showing just how much of the park will be taken and a GIANT sign saying exactly what the proposal is? I guarantee that the vast majority of people who use those playing fields have NO idea that this plan even exists.

Please deny this permit.

Thank you,

Patrick Emmert
320 Lee St
Oakland

From: chandrastar@juno.com <chandrastar@juno.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 3:20 PM
Subject: Please
To: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Planning commissioner,

Please, it is very important that you not fence off Astro Park for dogs and their owners, only. I am certain that this would be a violation of Civil Rights and Public Park codes which designate parks for children and all races and creeds of individuals, whether dog owners or not. I do not, nor have I ever ascribed to the dog religion, I do not even believe that dogs have anything like the same rights as humans. I like dogs, but that is as far as my feelings for them go. Humans on the other hand, children, the clear view the park now affords to humans as we pass, that for me is as close to

a religion as I get...and it is quite far. Don't cut me off! Don't cut off my view! Don't discriminate against artists, children, volleyball players, and the other humans who enjoy Astro Park. Did I mention the elderly, the disabled? you may well have a major class-action suit on your hands if you kow-tow to the dog religion.

Thank you, Sincerely,
Chandra

From: Sonia Russell <sonia@worldmeetingsbysonia.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 3:23 PM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Sonia Russell and I am an Oakland resident, and have been most of my life. I turned 40 this year and used to play in Astro Park as a child. Now that I have my own child, I look forward to playing there with her as well. I love this big OPEN green space and I don't believe that a dog park there is a good use of the space...the green is the best use of the space!

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Many thanks.
Sonia

Sonia Raye & Grace Geraldine
510-386-2294
sonia@worldmeetingsbysonia.com

"Love is by far the most important thing of all."

From: Maria Maria <onelovegurl@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 3:30 PM
Subject: AStro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

IS this really happening? I've never heard of anything so absurd(1: ridiculously unreasonable, unsound, or incongruous 2: having no rational or orderly relationship to human life). How could anyone take away such a great family park!! I think this is probably the most used park in Oakland, everyday of the week from morning until sunset! I figured it was all talk, especially since all the geese graze there every morning before most are up and most dogs like to eat birds.

My friends and I use it for soccer and badminton(we set up badminton right in the proposed dog run area(there's not to many other flat services around the lake.). It's one of the few safe parks. I also lay there for hours reading or watching the soccer games and the fathers desperately trying to teach their young children the skills of soccer! It's so wonderful and funny to watch.

I am in shock because safe outdoor family entertainment is scarce in Oakland; excercise, reading, laughing! overall health is at risk for the many whom use this great park.

Furthermore, a dog needs more excercise then this small enclosure and if a dog owner is to lazy to take there dog on a proper walk or run then they probably shouldn't have a dog in the first place and they will be the ones who leave their dog messes all over. We,personnally, don't take the dogs to small enclosed dog runs because they are too small and full of germs for the dogs and humans. Our lab was sick for 2 months, after stopping at one on vacation, we will never use one again. He couldn't walk or stand this whole time and the dog park was the only thing the vet could figure he contracted something.

I hope we do not destroy what little is available here in this city. **Please deny this application and stop this**

proposal.

Thank you

Mahia Dougherty

Who's going to tell the geese their sanctuary stops at El Embarcadero?

From: Greg deBeer <gdebeer@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 3:50 PM

Subject: Please no dog park at astro park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Commissioners

I would like to add my voice to those who are opposed to a dog park near the Lakeview library. The open space we have now is a priceless treasure in a beleaguered town- a place where a neighborhood can play, enjoy open vista, and most importantly, see GREEN. Turning a huge patch of green grass into a brown woodchip covered mess (like so many other dogparks in the area) would really detract from so much enjoyment people get out of the space. The soccer players, the tightrope walkers, the joggers, the kids. We need that space.

Furthermore, I cannot fathom how the city of Oakland can plan to maintain a new park of this nature with the ever-shrinking budgets. If we are threatening to close down libraries and lay off police offices, what sense is there in adding a new annual line item to the budget, even if it is minimal? And if there is no plan for maintaining the park, then you are just making a bad situation worse- taking away our open green space, and then letting go to waste. Either way it is unacceptable.

I ask you to please deny the permit for the dog play area at astro park.

Thank you

From: Debra Odink <daodink@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 4:13 PM

Subject: Deny Conditional Use Permit for Dog Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners:

As a resident of nearby Crocker Highlands, I am a frequent visitor to Lake Merritt and Astro Park. I believe the Lake and Astro Park combined are the most striking visual attributes in the local area. These two features of the neighborhood allow us an opportunity to get away from the urban sprawl and enjoy some outdoor time in a beautifully maintained environment (thanks to all the tax payers and city planners!). As a former dog owner, I understand the need to have space to allow these animals to run free. Dog parks are wonderful places for such a purpose. However, it is vitally important that dog parks be located in areas that can accommodate the "dog traffic" and not adversely impact the immediate environment. One common issue that is created with lots of dogs in a fenced in dog park is odor from feces and urine. Despite the best drainage and ground maintenance, all the dog parks I visited with my pet smelled horrible. The idea of walking past this smell each weekend on my walk around the Lake is disturbing and disappointing. From the wonderful smells of the Farmers Market on Lake Park to the horrible smells of an overused dog park, one would have to question why a dog park would be placed in Astro Park. One reason: Bad planning and lack of foresight.

Besides the foul odor of a dog park, there is another reason I object to this project. Everyday on my way home from work, I exit the gritty freeway on Grand Avenue and descend into the Grand/Lakeshore area. It is so beautiful to see this wide open GREEN field when I exit the freeway. Astro Park has the effect of taking us from the gritty urban commute to a beautiful open space where kids play soccer and people transform themselves from working people to people working-out. It is the green grass that evokes this sense of park and in fact a sense of community. Astro Park is a place where people want to go after work or on the weekends. A dog park characterized by the brown gravel yard and enclosed by a chain link fence evokes an entirely different feeling for me (yes, you can try to put grass in but it will not grow and the money spent on maintenance will be wasted). More crowding, more noise, more nasty smells...that isn't relaxing, pleasant or inviting. There are better places in Oakland to locate such a dog park. Please do not destroy this open green area called Astro Park by putting in a dog park.

I love dogs and I do plan to get another dog in the near future. I hope to walk my dog (on a leash) around the Lake every weekend. I also plan to take my dog to the open dog area of the East Bay Trail and to Point Richmond where dogs run free. I don't not plan on taking my dog to any dog parks because they are nasty and foul smelling environments.

Thank you for denying the conditional use permit application for Astro Park.

Sincerely,
Debra Odink

From: Mechelle Hutchens <mechelle.hutchens@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 4:16 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Ann Clevenger and the Commission,

I am a home owner in the Grand Lake area. I utilize the lake at least 2-3 times a week. I have two small dogs and no kids - I consider my dogs my kids though and care for them with as much love. I take my dogs on walks around the lake, my immediate neighborhood and to off-leash parks in the area. I often drive to Alameda small dog park which is attached to a larger dog park, the same general design that is being proposed for Astro Park, only much smaller. What I witness at the Alameda dog park is *not* what I want to see, hear or smell in my neighborhood.

There are usually a hodge-podge of dirty lawn furniture strewn about the area, weeds, buckets with algae and mold for holding dog water, dirty smelly dog waste trash cans and a bill board with papers and business cards pinned all over it. It's also problematic that Astro park for dogs is being proposed without any funds for the city to maintain the area.

Then there is the noise issue, the small dogs chase the large dogs along the fence line and bark endlessly at the larger dogs running around. Two out of three times I am at the Alameda dog park, there is a fight between large dogs – and the area is at least 3 times the size being proposed. Parking and driving in the area is usually congested which creates issues with maneuvering around cars, children, and dogs.

As it is, I can barely find parking around the lake, Lake Shore Ave. and Grand Ave. I shop locally to benefit my community, but if parking gets any more congested I will end up driving somewhere else as there are a lot of choices that are still close and easy/easier to access.

The other issue I have is that I enjoy seeing the green space and would like to have a place to play that is unplanned and not overly manicured – I can play catch, kick a ball, play badminton, etc. If there were a dog park allowed in Astro park, it will, at the very least, smell of dog urine – just like all of the other dog parks, from Point Isabel to Alameda.

□ Thank you so much for your attention to this very important matter that will have a significant impact on our community. I hope that you will save Astro park for a clean green space for all to enjoy.

Sincerely,
Mechelle Hutchens

--

Seize Life!

From: Jennifer Black <jenblackjenblack@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 4:35 PM
Subject: proposed dog park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask you to DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park (near the Lakeview Branch public library).

I live in the neighborhood (on Mandana Blvd.), and use that park quite regularly. I participate in a "boot camp" there on Saturday mornings, and often bring my daughter, who loves the swings. Sometimes we stop

in the library. Sometimes we go from there to the farmer's market, and back across the grass to the swings (again).

What I truly appreciate about the park is that it seems to be one of the last green, open spaces in the city. It also seems very well used - and quite beloved - by a wide cross-section of Oaklanders.

I feel for dog owners who don't believe they have a convenient place to run their dogs, but I strongly believe that chopping up this space with a fence, obliterating the grass and only allowing access to people with dogs is NOT the answer. Surely we can find a more suitable plot for a dog run to satisfy that minority - especially considering how critical this large grassy area is to those who use it, or merely drink in its green expanse as they drive by.

We live in a sufficiently compacted, urban area - please let us keep wide open one of the few wide open spaces we have left.

With many thanks for your consideration,

Jennifer Black

From: Alex Size <alexandersize@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 5:35 PM
Subject: Save Oakland's Flat Green Space
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Hi there,

I writing to voice my concern over a proposed dog park in Astro Park. In a 2005 report entitled "Creating Dog Parks - Without Rancor" by The Trust for Public Land, the organization (the largest in the nation dedicated to increasing urban park space) cites the following lessons from a Seattle-based dog park feasibility study;

- (1) avoid interference with other established uses or department-sponsored activities;
- (2) avoid locations directly abutting residences;
- (3) assure availability of close-by parking;

- (4) avoid locations near children's play areas;
- (5) choose spots where there are minimal impacts on the visual character of a park;
- (6) site so as to avoid spillover into non-dog areas;
- (7) avoid sensitive environmental habitats.

An additional lesson cited was to try to find a property with no history.

While the proposed Astor Park dog park meets 2 and 7 (and perhaps 3) above, it does not meet the remaining criteria. In my opinion, these are essential criteria to meet when planning a dog park. While no location will meet ALL of these criteria, failing to meet a majority of them should be sign that a new location should be sought. Astro Park simply isn't the right location for a dog park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alex Size
Adam's Point Resident
727-492-7058

From: David Schlessinger <dskc@mac.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 7:40 PM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. Astro park is a beautiful open park where everybody can gather

and play. I have two young children that play and enjoy the park everyday. Please keep Astro Park open and beautiful and available for everybody to enjoy.

Dave Schlessinger

From: Barbara Massey [mailto:barb510@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2012 8:51 PM
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Subject: Save Astor Park

Dear Commissioners:

I have to add my always quiet voice to the voices that ask you to STOP the conditional use permit of Astor Park to a dog park. The parking around the park and the Grand Ave. and Lakeshore is already a nightmare on a nice day. Many people, many cars, traffic all add up to avoidance of the area which saddens me as the merchants in that area need a chance to commerce. Residents of Oakland need good shopping areas and any disturbance of that is not good for Oakland.

Its a beautiful open space green area where I have seen many kids, family and sports enthusiasts play. Why destroy that beauty with a brown, smelly area which is dangerously close to the playground area for kids.

I ask you to please be the leaders that the public needs and make a decision that is good for that specific area of Oakland. Dog parks are great, but not in the diamond of the bejeweled area.

Sincerely,
Barbara Massey

From: Naomi Miroglio <naomi@argsf.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 9:20 PM

Subject: Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com"
<aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com"
<saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Ann,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed dog park at Astro Park.

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog park. Astro Park is the gateway to Lake Merritt, and serves a variety of needs for the neighborhood that are irreplaceable. I have lived in Adams Point since 1987. I purchased and renovated a home in the neighborhood, am raising my family here, and we all frequently use Astro Park. It is a unique open space that it serves all ages and interests. When my children were young we used the children's park. My teenagers currently play soccer and volleyball on the field. We frequent the Lakeshore Library and read on the grass. There is no other park space in the City that provides for the variety of recreational uses that occur at Astro Park.

Astro Park is not an appropriate place for a dog park. It is a prominent and visual location and the dog park would have a negative affect.

Again, I am requesting you DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog park, and SAVE Astro Park.

Sincerely,
Naomi

From: sandra bradman <bsandrini@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 24, 2012 at 11:50 PM
Subject: Please: Save Astro Park!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Ms Clevenger, and Council Members,

Do not allow a small portion of the community to take nearly half of Astro Park for their use only.

I have walked or past this park 3-7 days a week for nearly 30 years. i have seen countless soccer games, both adults and children, kids learning to catch and throw with their parents, volleyball, bicycle polo practice, batting practice and more. a dog park will curtail much of this; especially the parents and young kids who step out of the play area to throw, catch and kick their balls.

For those who own dogs, I would love to see the park and the lake open to leashed dogs, with clean up enforced.

They Should not take away half of the park from the rest of us.

Thank you for your time and attention.
Sandra Bradman, MD

Thanks 510-967-9693

From: doris_shiozaki@hotmail.com
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Subject: save astro park
Date: Wed, 25 Apr 2012 14:01:34 +0000

Commissioners,

Please deny the conditional use permit application for fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Reduction of space for recreational usage, no budget for maintenance, and traffic and parking impacts. Use the alternative location of the former Police Horse Stables.

I have lived in this neighborhood for 48 years, and raised 4 children. They all benefitted with time spent in their growing

years at their favorite spot Astro Park. It still gives me great pleasure to see the usage at Astro Park currently.

Sincerely,

Doris Shiozaki

546 Haddon Rd.

From: George W. Adams, Jr. <gadamsii@aol.com>
To: aclevenger <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Co: saveastropark <saveastropark@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 9:43 am
Subject: Please Save Astro Park for People

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park known as "Astro Park" near Lake Merritt.

I live one block from the area under consideration and have lived here for more than twenty-five years. I love dogs, but this area of our park is used extensively by people -- for reading, sunning, exercising, playing soccer and just relaxing. Please preserve this wonderful neighborhood asset as is.

Thank you,
George Adams
415 Lagunitas Ave, #405
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Veronica Torres <veronicatorres28@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 12:20 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Veronica Torres.

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

It is fully functional as is, it is a wonderful open space for children and adults to enjoy the beautiful scenery to play and run and have fun!

My son is in the Soccer Shots program, which uses the space and it would be extremely sad to the children and the whole Oakland community to have the space taken over for a dog park!!!

It would be extremely upsetting to see the space taken from the community in such a way, there are many dog parks in Oakland, and the Bay Area. To have this space taken would be unfair to the community, the people who live in the area and people who come from far to enjoy the beautiful atmosphere the area provides.

Please, please, please deny the dog park from the Astro Park!!!!!!

Thank you,

~Veronica Torres

From: Niansheng Qi <niansheng_qi@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 4:21 PM
Subject: the fenced off-leash dog area
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. There are also safety issues as a children playground is next to the proposed area. There is spaces crossed the street, which is used for Saturday farmer market. My suggestion is why not using that area area?

Sincerely,

Niansheng Qi

From: Paul Hollenbach <hollcs@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 5:40 PM
Subject: Dog Park@Lakeshore
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Dear Commissioners,

I'm very much opposed to a dog park being located at the field near the Lakeview Library. Please deny the Conditional Use permit for the dog park.

I have two dogs and I'm walking distance to the proposed site. It seems I would love a dog park. That would be wrong! There are very few flat grassy fields in this part of Oakland. I take a group of my daughters friends there to play soccer. Two of the girls parents have said their daughter can't go if a dog park is that close to the area of play.

And it's not just about soccer or sports. The dog park would be much bigger than its physical footprint. No one will use the park with 100 feet of it's fence. The constant barking will drive everyone away and change the complexion of the entire area.

While I'm sympathetic to people wanting a dog park, this location is just wrong.

Thank you,

Paul Hollenbach
695 Calmar Ave.
Oakland, CA

hollcs@sbcglobal.net

C. 510.502.8108
From: Loretta San Souci
<sansouci1@comcast.net>

Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 6:58 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I wholeheartedly support the maintaining of Astro Park as it is now, a rare and wonderful urban open space for the people of the Grand Lake neighborhood as well as all of

Oakland to enjoy. I have dogs and I feel that there is a place for dogs and a place for people. I walk my dogs daily, and find appropriate places for them to run off-leash.

It should not come at the expense of having access to the park as we have access to it now, available for children's soccer, baseball, adult volleyball, soccer,

exercising, etc. Fencing off part of the area for dogs to run would limit access to all. It would severely limit availability to larger space activities such as soccer and volleyball

games. I believe that having a dog park right next to so much traffic would not be safe because of the noise, which most dogs are very sensitive to. You also would have extra

dog excrement around a children's play area. We need to keep this neighborhood resource open and green. DENY the conditional use permit application for the

fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park!!

Sincerely,

Loretta San Souci

From: Patricia Durham <pdurham444@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 7:28 PM

Subject: DENY Conditional Use Permit for DOG Park: SAVE ASTRO Park for ALL of us.

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I wrote my Councilmember, Pat Kernighan, over a year ago, to express my opinion about the proposed Dog Park at Astro Park. I want to reaffirm my thoughts to you, as you make this very important decision on May 2. My husband has also written - his letter is being forwarded separately. My two five-year old grandchildren also wrote letters which they took to Ms. Kernighan's office a year ago. All of us OPPOSE creating a dog park at this lovely spot currently enjoyed by all of us who live or visit here and enjoy the visual and outdoor play spaces of Oakland.

Please DENY the conditional use permit for the proposed location of a dog park at Astro Park.

I fear that many residents of Oakland have no idea that this issue is even being debated in City government. The proponents of the Dog Park have been organizing for years, quietly, and there appear to be very few mechanisms to alert the general citizenry about this issue of general importance, especially where this group is well organized, likely well-funded, and has been able to pull together its plans out of the view of the majority of Oaklanders.

I have lived near Lake Merritt for nearly thirty years. I have enjoyed walking around the Lake countless times, training for races, getting in shape, just appreciating its natural beauty. It is enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. I also am a dog lover and have had a dog in the family for the past 20+ years. I drive past Astro Park perhaps three or four times each day. I am appalled and outraged that anyone would consider locating a dog park at this site.

These are a few of my reasons:

- The lovely grassy field at Astro Park is beautiful visually, and is one of few remaining public open spaces at the Lake or in the vicinity of this size and nature.
- That field is used by soccer players of all ages, volleyball players, children, and families all the time, all year round, without restriction as to by whom and how it may be enjoyed.
- I have taken my young grandchildren to Astro Park to play on many occasions, and would not want to fight even more for nearby parking, or be concerned about their safety from dogs traveling to and from the dog park, or be subjected to the eyesore and the odors that a dog park inevitably presents, no matter how well maintained.

- Only a few would be able to use the dog park area - a loss to all the rest of us who currently enjoy running around, picnicking, playing on, and admiring this great green field.
- Dog families and walkers have many other options in Oakland and in nearby areas to exercise their dogs, without impacting the entire community and its common lands: They can walk their dogs on leash in their neighborhoods; take them to off-leash dog parks in Joaquin Miller Park, Frog Park on Claremont Avenue, Redwood Park and almost all other EBRPD parklands, Piedmont, Pt. Isabel, etc.; arrange dog play dates at friends' homes with yards; take their dogs to dog gyms, etc.
- There are other areas for dog park use, rather than this centrally located and well-used public play areas: Other places in Lake Merritt, such as near the recently renovated fountain or behind Fairyland; other less popular areas that are reclaimed from less-desirable spots, such as the are under the freeway at Frog Park.
- Dog parks are not pretty nor fragrant nor free of congestion: Why create what is essentially a blight on our public space, for the benefit of just a few?
- I understand that there is no money for on-going maintenance of such a dog park, even if it were to be constructed here.
- The few who want this park are among the few who will use it. The majority of Oaklanders have no idea what is planned for their inviting parkland. There has been no fair process to adequately inform the general public and evaluate pros and cons offered by ALL affected parties.

Please DENY this conditional use permit, and leave Astro Park for the enjoyment of everyone.

Thank you,

Sincerely yours,

Patricia Durham
848 Longridge Road
Oakland CA 94610

From: Patricia Durham <pdurham444@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 7:39 PM
Subject: DENY Dog Park at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners

For 28 years, I have lived less than a mile from the proposed dog run at MacArthur and Lakeshore. For most of that time, mid-sized dogs have been part of my family. I walk my dog on a leash around my neighborhood. I frequently make the delightful walk -- without the dog -- from my home to, and around, Lake Merritt, observing lately the splendid improvements wrought by the hard-won Measure DD. The health and well-being of my dogs seem none the worse for not having had a fenced acre in which to join with other dogs in despoiling the land.

A few dog owners might think this dog run would be a convenience for them. It would be a major inconvenience for the great majority of Oaklanders who use and care about the Lake Merritt area. The primary goal of public policy should be the advancement of the greatest good for the greatest number. This dog run, at best, might be somewhat good for a few, while being decidedly bad for most.

So what's wrong with the proposed dog run?

The proposed dog run would be of no clear benefit to the dogs (even if it might help their owners feel nobler).

The area proposed to be appropriated (or more accurately, mal-appropriated) for the dog run is much used by humans, of all ages, at play. In a city (at least), human playgrounds are more important than pet playgrounds.

Dog runs are ugly and stinky.

The proposed dog run would be a blight on wonderful -- and otherwise improving -- park land.

The proposed dog run, if used, would produce even more traffic in an already-congested area, including the pollution and safety problems that traffic engenders.

Parking -- already scarce in that area -- would become even scarcer, and would further congest traffic as drivers putter around in traffic lanes looking or waiting for parking spaces. There is no need for a dog run at this location. Other dog runs are available nearby.

My twin 6-year-old grandchildren are adamantly opposed to the proposed dog run.

If you must have a dog run, the vacant corner lot on the other side of Lakeshore (where a Chevron station once stood) would be preferable, since it is already blighted and is not part of the existing park, although this location would create similar traffic problems [Note - this letter was originally written before that area was paved]. Presumably the City would need to buy or lease the land, but the cost could be reimbursed by use fees charged to human users of the dog run. Proposing use fees might smoke out purported proponents whose enthusiasm diminishes if a cost is attached.

I'm not sure why people want this dog run, since it makes so little sense:

Are the proponents too lazy to walk their dogs around the block (which current science suggests would be better for

their health than driving to the dog run and standing around)?

Is there any science suggesting that dog health is improved by frequenting a dog run (as opposed to walking around the neighborhood on a leash), or does the science tend the other direction because of the risk of spreading canine communicable diseases in dog runs?

If taking their dogs to a dog run is so meaningful, why are the proponents unwilling to drive to a dog run that already exists in Oakland (Hardy or Joaquin Miller) or nearby in Alameda or Berkeley?

If the proponents are unwilling to drive to an existing dog run, what reliable evidence exists that they would use the proposed dog run?

Has anyone attempted to poll (in a statistically accurate way) all families with dogs to ascertain how the majority addresses the needs of their dogs?

Has anyone attempted to poll families without dogs to ascertain whether they would prefer that this location continue to be a park for people instead of a dirt/mud lot for dogs?

Could the money (however much or little) proposed to be used for the dog run be better spent on, say, educating our children, funding our libraries, or protecting public safety.

These and other relevant questions should be thoughtfully and thoroughly addressed before any action is taken on the authorization of this dog run. If you really want to find out what the people think of this proposal, you should put it on the November ballot, rather than basing any judgment on ad hoc comments by a few interested parties. I'm told you've received a few hundred e-mails on this topic, which can hardly represent the views of 400,000 Oaklanders. A public referendum would engender thorough public debate for all to hear and result in a definitive answer.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas L. Hammer

848 Longridge Road
Oakland, CA 94610

510-465-9028 (home)
415-421-6500 (work)

F. 510.465.8108

From: martin melia <melia401@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 10:11 PM

Subject: Dog Run at Astro Park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com"

<aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com"

<saveastropark@gmail.com>

My name is Martin Melia and I am writing to protest the proposed dog park/run at Astro Park.

I have been a lifelong resident of Oakland. I was born in 1951 at Kaiser Hospital (Broadway), went to public schools in Oakland and spent 12 years in the Oakland Fire Department. I love Oakland and I do not believe that having a dog run at the north end of what I call the 'Jewel of Oakland' – Lake Merritt – will be in the best interests of Oakland. Dog parks become an eyesore very quickly, turning green lawn into muddy fields; dog waste and litter only add to the mess. Why would we want to put such blot on the landscape in plane view at the end of what is arguably Oakland's greatest visual and recreational asset?

This problem will be exacerbated because there is no money for maintenance. It is wishful thinking to believe that volunteers will be able to deal with the problem of waste and trash—let alone turf maintenance. Perhaps the first few months will see lots of helping hands but as time passes and excitement wanes, fewer and fewer people will pitch in or even care. That is the human condition.

Beyond the aesthetic problems there are a host of other negative drawbacks. Placing large numbers of dogs next to small children is simply asking for trouble. Sooner or later a dog is going to injure a child – no matter how careful dog owners maybe. In all my years in the fire department it never ceased to amaze that people were surprised when accidents happen, particularly when they themselves set up the conditions that triggered the accident. When you create the conditions for an accident it will happen sooner or later and nobody should be surprised about that. If a dog park is eventually built at this site a child will eventually be injured by a dog. Of course this does not even take into consideration the fact that many joggers and pedestrians use this area and could be subject to attack and injury by dogs.

Many people fear dogs or are allergic to dogs and all of these individuals will essentially be denied access to this part of the park if a dog run is created. This would be a shame, especially when there are good alternatives that either already exist for dog owners to exercise their dogs or could be built in more convenient places. The priority should go to human enjoyment given the various good alternatives (six other dog runs nearby) available to dog owners.

In summary, I strongly believe that placing a dog run in this location is extremely bad policy, aesthetically, in terms of

safety, and for the greater good of many Oakland residents and visitors to our city.

Thank you for your consideration of my letter

Martin Melia
Margot Bach

From: Kass Hartley <kasshart@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Wed, Apr 25, 2012 at 10:17 PM
Subject: Keep Astro Park Fence-Free
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners:

I'm writing to urge you to deny the conditional use permit for a fenced in dog run in our neighborhood park. With all the positive development around the lake improving visual and physical access, this would be a giant step in the wrong direction. I'm a dog owner who makes good use of the myriad off-leash venues throughout the East Bay. So it's not that I don't understand the motivation to have space for dogs to run off leash. But the open space at the intersection of Lakeshore, MacArthur and Grand is the wrong place for a fenced in dog run. Please keep Oakland moving in the right direction. Thanks.

Mike Kass

On Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 12:06 AM, Chris Norman
<chris@chrisnorman.net> wrote:
Dear Oakland Planning Commission,

I am an Oakland Resident that is writing to you to let you know that I

am against a dog park being created at Astro Park.

I am a dog lover and when I first heard of this plan many years ago it seemed like a good idea. I would love to have somewhere close where I can go and see dogs run and play. I have spent many hours of many days at a dog park. Mostly I have spent time at Pt. Isabel in Richmond (http://www.ebparks.org/parks/pt_isabel) and at the Paw Patch at Concord's Newhall Community Park (<http://www.ci.concord.ca.us/recreation/parks/pawpatch.htm>). I am an avid photographer and I have taken many photos of dogs at dog parks (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/concord-dog/>). So while I am no expert on dogs or dog parks, I feel confident enough to talk about why this park would be bad for the dogs and for the city.

Now, hopefully others will address the extremely bad traffic and parking issues that we already have in the Grand Lake/Cleveland Heights neighborhoods on Saturdays, as well as the parents who do not feel safe having their small children that go to the current play area be around lots of dogs. Some people might even bemoan the fact that we would lose one of the only flat grassy areas around the lake, and in

it's place would be a patch of dirt and some tan bark. Even a smaller

group might question why we are spending money on park improvements

when we can't even pay for enough gardeners for the parks, not to

mention enough police for the city. The smallest group (I hope it is a

small group anyway) and probably the loudest group on the "Save Astro

Park" side might be the people who just don't like dogs or dog owners.

I have witnessed these people first hand when my friends who took

their dogs to the Paw Patch in Concord, went in front of the city

council of Concord to get lights installed at their dog park

(<http://cityofconcord.org/citygov/agendas/committees/rca/2008/03-11-08/rpt03-11-08-2.pdf>),

and some of the arguments were nonsensical to say the least.

I would like you to ignore all of that. While it might seem relevant

on the surface, really many of those points could apply to almost any

project that comes before you.

Instead, I would like for you to think about what is in the best interests of the dogs. That is really what this discussion should be

about. If you can't already tell, I am PRO dog park, just not this

plan and not in this location. I agree that it would be nice to have a

dog park some where in the Lake Merritt area, but I think there are locations that are better for the dogs.

The problem with the location boils down to what surrounds it. Grand

Ave, MacArthur and Lakeshore. From dawn to dusk these three streets are full of traffic. Even the most careful owner with the most well

behaved dog can run into a situation where a dogs gets loose. At most

dog parks that I have been to if a dog gets out of the assigned off

leash area it is really no big deal, generally there is not to much

around that the dog might hurt or that might hurt the dog.

When a dog

gets loose from the dog park that is being proposed for Astro Park

there is a very high likelihood that it is going to be hit by a car or

chase after something that isn't going to know the dog in most cases

is just playing. Dogs like to chase... not really cars (at least I have seen very few that do), but they like to chase other dogs, birds,

butterflies and especially their owners. So when their owners are

chasing them, trying to get them back onto a leash, it is just a game

to them. Problem is that once they are out in an open area outside of

the dog area proposed for Astro Park, they have no where to run. Every

way they might go is just bad news. They are surrounded on 3 sides by busy streets and on the 4th by a children's play area.

The problem with the plan is that it seems like it was put together by someone who hasn't spent much time at a dog park. First off, tan bark?

That might seem like a good idea when it is on paper and in a budget

but it is horrible for the dogs. The whole point of a dog park is for

the dog to run and burn off all the energy that they have. A tired dog

is a happy dog. But you will never see a dog running like this:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/concord-dog/1426027627/in/photostream> ,

on tan bark. There is just no grip, to a dog it is almost like running

on ice. It also makes the dogs dirty, and it kicks up a nasty dust

when the dogs do try at first to run around on it. There is also the

poop factor. Most people don't feed their dogs well and based on what

I have seen at dog parks a majority have digestive problems (they have

soft to runny bowel movements). What this means is that you either

have soiled tan bark in and around the dog area (near the children's

park) or it gets thrown out with the poop. Over time this will leave

the ground bare especially if the park district has no funds to

replace the tan bark. It would be better to just let the grass that is currently there be worn down over time, and then address the issue of the bare ground as necessary. Also a big issue that I have with the plan is the fencing. A 4' fence is only tall enough to keep most of the small dogs in, any dog that knows how to jump could clear 4ft very easily. The plan with the 5' fence would be much better but still not tall enough to keep some dogs in.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdggeysQLgc> and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIM4vnCwx3I&feature=fv_wrel and on and on and on. I don't think I have been to a dog park where there is just as much if not MORE going on around outside the park as there is in the park. So the point of the fence is usually to keep the dogs in one area, not to keep them from getting out and into traffic or a children's play area. With this plan you have the potential for screaming, yelling, running children on one side (dogs are attracted to the noise and they like to chase things, especially if those things that are running and screaming are eye to eye with them), people playing with balls and frisbee's on another side (what is left of the park), traffic, walkers, joggers, AC Transit passengers on a third

side, and lots more joggers and walkers and traffic and of course other dogs entering and exiting on the 4th side (dogs like to "greet" new dogs as they come into the park). So unless you plan on putting an 8ft... 10ft... 12ft fence around this park, dogs will be coming over that fence do not doubt it for one second. The last issue that I have with the plan is that there seems to be no mention of any water source. A lot of dog owners these days bring a water bottle just for their dog (since just like the village well, a bucket in a dog park is a good place for germs to be passed from one dog to another and the fact that some dogs will pee in the buckets to mark there territory. So people bring their own water bottles but even a water bottle from home will need to be refilled once in a while and it is best to have that water source right near the entry to the park. If not you have owners searching for a water source while there dog is more than likely left alone in the park.) So a plan with no water should be a non-starter to begin with. The water doesn't need to be "near" the dog park, it needs to be AT the dog park.

I am not against those that want to have a place nearby for their dogs to play. What I am against is a plan that was put together by a person or persons who lacked any long term experience at a good dog park. The plan is bad for the neighborhood and it is bad for the park. Most importantly it is a bad plan for the dogs and could very well be deadly for the dogs.

I do support a dog park near the lake. My suggestions would be first using part of Snow Park (the fact that it is on a hill is a plus since it tires the dogs to run around on a hill, and they really could care less if there is no flat area... they just want to run) and the second would be at the old Police horse stables behind Children's Fairyland. Neither area would be good without the water source that I mentioned, so that could mean that both plans are non-starters. It would be unfortunate to make the dog owners wait as a new plan is crafted from scratch so I would be nice if the progress they have made thus far could be moved to one of these alternate locations.

Chris Norman
556 Boden Way #2
Oakland, CA 94610

From: JACQUELYN LEWIS <jsl510@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 6:09 AM
Subject: Email to Commissioners-Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

For the past 40 years I have lived 1/2 block from the park and actually have a view of it from my apartment. It has always been wonderful to see a beautiful green unfenced plot of land, but especially now that there is an unattractive fenced in lot across the street from the park where the Chevron station used to be. I enjoy seeing the different groups of people who use the park for soccer, volleyball and other sports, and I, myself, often bring a portable chair to the park in the summer months to read and relax in the sun. It would be awful to see another fence put up to serve the interests of a few, denying so many other people the use of the park.

I also use the bus stop in front of Astro Park every day to catch the #26 bus to go to work, and I would not like to have to stand and wait for the bus right in front of a dog park. I already do not like to wait for the bus at the stop under the freeway because of all the pigeon excrement which is there.

PLEASE DENY THE APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT FOR A DOG PARK AT ASTRO PARK. There must be somewhere else in the City that would be better suited for a dog park.

Jacquelyn Lewis

1 Excelsior Court, #209
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Katherine Gordon <katiegordon@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 7:05 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park!

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park, Astro Park. Along with many many other community members, I enjoy using this park for recreation with friends, picnics and exercise and I will no longer be able to enjoy the park if it is converted to a dog park. It would make more sense to plan and approve a dog park site in an open space that is not already being used by many community members on a daily basis. Can we open the conversation to look for alternate sites?

Kind regards,

Katherine Gordon

Resident of the Adams Point neighborhood

From: Paul Bertucci <pbert@covad.net>

Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 8:10 AM

Subject: Astro Park - May 2 Planning Meeting

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Ms. Clevenger,

I'm a 25-year resident of the Lakeshore district and enjoy the open park area around Lake Merritt.

I am opposed to the plan to grant a conditional use permit for a fenced dog-run facility at Astro Park.
Please forward my message to the Planning Commission on this matter.

Thank you,

Paul Bertucci
669 Calmar Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610
510-759-6422

From: Mary Ann Walsh <walshmaryann@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 8:26 AM
Subject: AGAINST the proposed dog park at Astro Park
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Clevenger:

Please deny the conditional use permit for a dog park at Astro Park on Lakeshore. The park, as it is now, is a vibrant multi-use park that's used by all generations at all times of day. It's green and open--a real boon to the neighborhood.

Taking up 1/4 of an acre of the current park to create a dog park makes no sense. It would eliminate a good portion of the open space and replace it with a single-use area. Instead of the happy sound of children and adults playing in the park, we'd have the sound of barking dogs and shouting dog owners. This would make the remaining park area much less attractive to people who still want to use it for recreation.

Why turn what is now a green oasis in our neighborhood into a smelly, noisy eyesore? The Lakeshore/Grand neighborhood is enjoying a resurgence. Why eliminate a good portion of one of the few open, green areas that we have available to us?

There are other dog parks that already exist that dog owners can use. Please deny this conditional use permit.

Mary Ann Walsh
668 Calmar Avenue
From: Patricia Hardy <hardypatricia@gmail.com>
Date: April 26, 2012 8:55:14 AM PDT
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Subject: Please don't let Astro Park go to the dogs

My children played at Astro, now I take my grand children to play in Astro Park.

I too love dogs and we have always had a family dog. However, I know for sure that humans actually benefit tremendously from the experiences they gain from the outdoor activities that our parks offer. Astro Park must remain as a people space. Finally, any and all family groups should have the option to enjoy Astro Park not the dogs.

(My dog does not care where she runs and play as long as she can go pee and poop in the process. She's the perfect dog!)

Sent from my iPhone

From: c haberberger <c-c-c@pacbell.net>
Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 9:51 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com

Ms. Clevenger,

As a local resident who regularly visits Astro Park for the children's play area and the library, I urge you to NOT use Astro park for a dog run. It is already well-used and parking is a premium in the area. Cutbacks have already severely affected recreation and library services. The area is well-used for people of all ages.

I respect dog owners' desire to have a dog area, but this is NOT the place for it. No fences, no poop, no unsupervised animals running around (despite promises, this always happens). Other areas are available and better planning might add to these in the future.

People first.

Carol Haberberger

From: <rfmel@comcast.net>
Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 9:53 AM
Subject: Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

As a resident of the Adams Point neighborhood and a dog owner I am opposed to securing a dog park on the corner of West MacArthur and Lakeshore known as AstroPark.

The area that is identified is used for many community activities and would not be safe for dogs.

Please consider other options for other dog free space.

Thanks,
Robyn Meltzer
Resident on Van Buren Avenue, Oakland, Ca

From: Ecaterina Burton <ecaterina.burton@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 10:17 AM
Subject: In opposition to dog area in Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ann,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park. I currently live at 1435 3rd Ave, a few blocks from Lake Merritt.

I see Lake Merritt as a beautiful space to bring community together through exercise and fitness. This is what I love about our neighborhood. As someone who runs around Lake Merritt often, I am so overjoyed to see a place like Astro Park being used for soccer games, pick-up football and even volleyball. I have even joined in on some of these games and made friends with my neighbors through this.

With such limited green space in Oakland, I know people come to Lake Merritt to exercise and play with each other, including to places like Astro Park. That's why I am in firm opposition to a fenced-off dog playground to supplant the real community playground that everyone else has been enjoying for years. It is not fair to take away this communal space for many to please the fancy of a few.

Astro Park is a valuable playspace for children and I prioritizes Oakland children's health over dogs playing with each other.

Thank you for taking my comment.

Sincerely,

Ecaterina Burton

From: tara ramanathan <tara.ramanathan100@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 11:38 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Co: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger-

This message is a request for the Planning Commission to keep Astro Park the way it is, and not turn it into a dog park. It does not feel like the right spot for a dog park. I do think dog owners should be able to let their dogs run unleashed, but why this park? I live right up the street from Astro Park, and I see kids and adults playing sports and families playing on the swings. It's exactly what I want in this neighborhood.

My friend's suggestion was to make Snow Park into a dog park. I don't see many people using that park, and I could see dogs having just an amazing of a time there.

Please keep Astro Park the way it is. I go there all the time, my friends and community use that park. We need it there to maintain a welcoming community feel.

Thank you

Tara Ramanathan

--

Tara Ramanathan

(858) 531-5593

From: Marcus Thomasson <marcusthomasson@rocketmail.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 1:48 PM

Subject: ASRO PARK

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Good Afternoon,

I ani a resident surrounding the Lake Merritt area and I also enjoy frequenting the Lake on the weekend for the Farmers Market and other enjoyable activites near or in the open area where the Dog area is being proposed to be built. I will admit that I do not completely oppose the dog park being built, but I do oppose the building architecture proposal that has been submitted for approval by the Oakland city board.

I do not believe that a structure with a 4 foot wall that includes wood chips, replacing over 50% of the open grass area, is a great image addition to the Lake. It will not look appealing at all. Outside of the image and looks of it the park when it comes to the woodchips being placed in the dog park that will cause a smell to overwhelm the entire park area and it will be directly next to where our Oakland youth are able to play in a safe environment, which as a resident of Oakland I can say there are not a lot of places a parent feels that are safe for their kids to play in.

In summary, dog owners deserve a place for their dogs to enjoy, but that can easily be the entire Lake area, not just a section, per board approval. Hopefully this message makes a difference

Best Regards,

Marcus

From: Lori Hall-Araujo <n8baglady@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 12:31 PM

Subject: Permit for Dog Park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

I write to request that you deny the proposed permit for an off-leash dog area at Astro Park. It is no secret that the city operates on a budget that can hardly meet all its fiscal responsibilities. Who will pay for the upkeep? Moreover, why create yet another dog park when there are already six others within walking distance of the proposed space at Astro Park? By now you will have heard many arguments for and against creating a fenced in area devoted to dogs in our neighborhood park. Among the points my neighbors have made to you requesting that you deny the permit include the following:

- The elimination of recreational space that gets used by, among others, picnicking families, intramural sports players, and others
- Concerns about increased traffic and parking space loss in an area where parking is already a challenge

- No budget to pay for maintenance

I want to expand on the last point, which is of especial concern to me. As someone who re-located here from Chicago two years ago, I am familiar with the sanitation issues that arise when dog feces is not properly removed. Over the years I saw Chicago neighborhoods become infested with rats when dog feces was left out or placed in inadequate containers. Rats, of course, have voracious appetites and will eat, among other things, dog feces. They can quickly become an urban pestilence that I suspect Oakland is ill equipped to combat. Moreover, they are capable of transferring disease to humans and to their beloved pets.

If a dog park is permitted to exist in Astro Park will the city supply closed containers and empty them on a regular basis? It seems unlikely. When I walk down Grand Avenue each day I regularly observe open waste containers filled to overflowing for several days on end.

I request that you please take a moment to read the short statement about rat infestation that the City of Chicago has posted to address its rodent problem and the impact on humans. Oakland cannot afford to add this sanitation cost to its lengthy list of unaddressed social and financial concerns. Deny the permit for a fenced off-leash dog run at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland.

http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/streets/provdrs/rodent/svcs/rats_in_chicago.html

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lori Hall-Araujo

Oakland Resident & Save Astro Park Supporter

From: Kristin Bard <kranbard@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Apr 26, 2012 at 6:41 PM
Subject: Please deny the dog run
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I'm writing to urge you to deny the dog run proposed for the corner of Lakeshore and Macarthur. I am concerned that the open green space of Astro Park, a prime location which currently serves a variety of users and purposes, be transformed into a specialized park for a much smaller subset of our community.

As someone who both lives and works beside Lake Merritt, I walk by the park on a daily basis and observe it being enjoyed by families that visit the children's playground, farmers market-goers, library patrons, soccer teams, fitness enthusiasts, picnickers, and more. While I understand that the proposed dog run will not fill the entire park, taking out the grass and putting up a fence will have a highly visible negative aesthetic impact, and will also significantly reduce the openness and multipurpose quality of this park. Many dogs coming together will naturally pose challenges related to cleanliness, noise, and safety, and I am certain that in combination with the reduced overall space, the impact of these conditions on the entire park environment will dissuade many community members from continuing to use the park for recreational purposes.

One of the things I love most about Lake Merritt is how much people enjoy being together outside in our beautiful neighborhood. I understand the need for the dog run and encourage the community to find a more appropriate place to establish it, but please keep our central spaces for coming together, like Astro Park, people-focused.

Thank you!
Kristin

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Scott Willis <scottwillis724@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Apr 27, 2012 at 9:18 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Ann,

Please let the city know for me - NO DOG PARK - for the astro park. I regularly run through that park and see pickup soccer and kids playing. Its a welcoming entry point in to Lake Merritt and does not need a fenced in area blocking that welcoming nature.

Thank you for organizing this effort.

Scott.

From: Mady Shumofsky <madyshum@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Apr 28, 2012 at 3:52 PM
Subject: Please! No fenced dog run!
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com,
nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I just learned that the City of Oakland is considering making a big chunk of the wonderful and well-used green park in the Grand Lake area into a fenced off unleashed dog run. I live and work in Oakland. I pay taxes here and vote here. That space matters to me.

Please, please do not take this welcoming grassy space away from all of us who use it for recreation and relaxation and turn it into a fenced off brown dog run!

Please do not take an attractive, well functioning city asset and make it an eyesore, a parking nighthare, a noise nuisance, and a potential financial liability! That is not what Oakland needs.

The park is wonderful as it is - please don't let a vociferous minority of dog-park promoters (who already have several other dog parks nearby) overrun their quieter neighbors and take away a peaceful, community gathering space.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mady Shumofsky
madyshum@gmail.com

From: <zorah@comcast.net>
Date: Sat, Apr 28, 2012 at 12:04 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello.

I am a 30 year Oakland homeowner, voter and founding member of the Metro Gardening Group. I am against the creation of a dog park at Astro Park for the following reasons:

- The fenced enclosure would reduce or eliminate existing recreational uses
- No budget for maintenance
- Dogs would be too near the tot lot
- Would create traffic and parking impacts near the Lakeview Library
- Turns green space brown
- There are six other dog parks nearby

Thanks for doing your part to save our green space!

To me the most compelling is the loss of another outdoor green space for children to run. This excerpt from Richard Louv captures a dilemma as a community.

"This sort of unstructured, imaginative play is increasingly lacking in an indoor, scheduled world—to children's great detriment, argues Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, a book that explores research linking the absence of nature in children's lives to rising rates of obesity, attention disorders, and depression."

I also plan on voicing my opinion at the May 2, 2012 meeting of Oakland's Planning Commission

Thank you

From: Emily <doskesq@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Apr 29, 2012 at 10:40 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>;

"rkaplan@oaklandnet.com" <rkaplan@oaklandnet.com>;

"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I'm writing to express my opinion against making any portion of Astro Park into a dog park.

Astro Park currently is an attractive multi-use green space that all Oaklanders can enjoy and make good use of. It isn't fair to limit its use to dog owners only, or to turn the lovely green space into unsightly brown space that smells of dog poop. This is especially true given the lack of budget for maintenance.

I also don't believe that having numerous dogs so near the library and playground is advisable. I am a dog lover and I know that most people train and control their dogs, but it only takes a few that don't to cause a dangerous situation.

The dog owners enjoy many other nearby options for dog parks, as well as miles and miles of beautiful trails in the nearby regional parks. People who choose to own dogs in the city must be prepared to find appropriate open space for their pets to enjoy, rather than trying to take over the limited urban park space that other Oakland residents rely on for recreation.

I urge you to reject the proposal to turn Astro Park into a dog park. Thank you for your time and attention.

Emily Doskow

Emily Doskow
Attorney and Mediator
180 Grand Avenue, Suite 1300
Oakland, CA 94612
510-698-4902 phone
510-318-7701 fax
www.emilydoskow.com

Sent from my iPad

From: David Weintraub <weintraub@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 29, 2012 at 7:23 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the Planning Commission:

This is not the first time I've been involved in a situation like one of these, so I understand there's a lot of tension regarding the situation. I'm hopeful it ends as amicably as it did elsewhere.

I play soccer for a team in San Francisco (Kezar), so it's somewhat odd to me that every time I want to go somewhere to practice I have to drive to Berkeley to do it. Except, of course, on weekends, or occasionally in the evenings, when a lot of people gather in Astro Park. It's the ONE SPACE I notice anywhere around here to play. And I have driven around to many places. To think that this ONE space will be cut in half for dogs seems strange to me.

Don't think for a second I'm against the idea of a dog park because I'm not. I've owned dogs :-(, and love animals, but there are not enough spaces for humans, let alone dogs. I can much more easily find a place to take a dog than I can to do activities in my own neighborhood.

I've spoken about this with a number of people, many which include dog owners, and I've yet to hear from someone without a dog that they want a dog run. Yet at the same time, I have heard from dog owners that it's not necessary right there, or even at all. So it would seem to me there's only a subset within a community that supports it, while there's a much larger group opposing it. Couple this in with the fact, more and more people are coming here to raise families, and as their kids grow up they will need space. The more space we take away from their use, the less likely they'll want to stay here, and support this community.

There are no flat, grassy spaces for humans around lake Merritt. Sharing the limited area with dogs seems like a shortsighted, and quite frankly, selfish idea.

David Weintraub
565 Bellevue Ave, 2101
Oakland, CA 94610

--

David Weintraub
646.528.9575
weintraub@gmail.com

From: Suzanne <stg916@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Apr 29, 2012 at 3:57 PM

Subject: Please DO NOT approve the dog park at Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Clevenger and Planning Commission:

I am an Oakland homeowner, currently in Lincoln Heights, but previously in Grand Lake for 11 years. I love that neighborhood, and still visit several times weekly for my gym, the Saturday Farmer's Market, shopping, dining, and walking around the lake.

I cannot imagine a more ill-conceived notion than fencing in Astro Park for a dog run. Seriously! This is the gateway to Lake Merritt, and would be a spit in the face to all the wonderful landscaping improvements that city has undertaken in the past few years. I like dogs, and in fact would own one if circumstances allowed. However, fencing in that particular parcel of land for a dog run is just plain crazy. During the week school-age children play soccer and use the playground, fitness buffs work through the par course, people lounge and stroll and have picnic lunches. It would be a terrible idea to block all that access and activity to satisfy a small percentage of people with dogs.

Please, please, PLEASE do not approve this monstrosity. There are other far more suitable, less heavily trafficked areas for a dog park.

Regards,

Suzanne Harris
2900 Morgan Ave, Unit B
Oakland, CA 94602

From: <myrna_dean@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, Apr 30, 2012 at 11:53 AM
Subject: Dog Paark
To: saveastropark@gmail.com

Commissioner:

I and apposed to the dog use permit application to the fenced off-leashed the area at the east of Lake Merritt. My question is why is this needed at this location.

From: dan harvitt <danharvitt@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 30, 2012 at 12:10 PM
Subject: Opposed to off-leash dog run

To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com"
<aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com"
<saveastropark@gmail.com>, "sue@heragency.com"
<sue@heragency.com>

Dear Ms. Clevenger,

I am asking that the Planning Commission to DENY the fenced off-leash dog run at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland.

I am a dog lover who opposes a dog park at Astro Park for the following reasons:

1. The close proximity to the child's playground. Many dogs do not co-exist well with small children. While the vast majority of dogs will be kept under good control, this park will increase the possibility of a child being hurt. Increased child-dog interactions will occur. This may be a rare event, but the consequences are potentially disastrous. Aside from bodily injury, a considerable number of kids are terrified of dogs. I can't believe that the dog run is that close to the playground in the plans.

2. Aesthetics. Actually, this is my #1 reason. Rather than a grassy field and trees, there will be metal fences, and a dusty wood chip ground cover. Nothing i have seen in the plans represent an improvement to the visual appeal to this area, which is the introduction to our neighborhood for those exiting off of HW580E. Right now, the field marks the end of the dominating concrete overpass and the asphalt lot beneath it, and the beginning of green space that leads to the lake. The dog park would certainly damage that. I believe that a dog park runs counter to the Planning Commission's goal of keeping Oakland beautiful! Can you show me a beautiful wood chipped, cyclone fenced dog park?

3. Displacement. This space is currently used for pick up soccer games, ultimate frisbee, and by all ages. These field sports need a broad and level field, which is not available elsewhere around the lake.

4. A dog park does not need to be located in such an ideal level space. Witness the dog park on a steep unattractive slope just about 3/4 mile away, on Linda Ave in Piedmont. Dogs seem to have a great time there, despite it's location beneath the Oakland Ave overpass. Perhaps there is another space in Lakeside Park, perhaps by the underused botanical gardens or the boating center, or the stable? If Lakeview Elementary is indeed closing, maybe the area behind the building can be used? Just because the current Lake Merritt master plan does not specify alternative areas, does not make those alternative impossible.

Sincerely,
Dan Harvit
29 Sylvan Way
Piedmont CA

From: Diann White <ahdini@pacbell.net>
Date: Mon, Apr 30, 2012 at 6:18 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: saveastropark@gmail.com

I read in today's paper the proposal to turn Astro Park into a dog park. Please save the park I live directly across from the park at 634 Grand Ave. and I really enjoy the green open space, while watching kids and adults enjoy the outdoors.
Thank you

From: Elizabeth Dey <elizabethdey@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, May 1, 2012 at 10:02 AM
Subject: A concerned parent regarding the proposed Astro park dog area
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Cleaver,

I found out through a neighbourhood gathering that there is a proposal before the city to augment Astro park into a dog park. My son, who is 15 mos. old plays at that park at least 3 - 5 times per week. He not only plays in the designated playground but also on the fantastic lawn/ green space that is there for us to use. It disheartens me to think that dogs take precedence over humans. We absolutely need space to play, practise sports, and gather with our children. Dogs and their owners have a multitude of other locations to use in the city and even near Grand Lake/ Lakeshore. They may freely contaminate the soil in those areas, not Astro park. The owners that already take their dogs onto the green space [COMPLETELY ignoring the plenitude of signs saying that dogs are not allowed on the lawn] do not pick up the feces from their animals, do not control them nor restrain them from coming close to the children. It is currently up to parents, and caregivers to lecture the animal owners to remove their animals from the park area, I have done this more than once. Having a designated dog park will not enhance the park, rather will detract from the wonderful area of play space that the city has allotted to its youngest inhabitants. With the school closing across the street one more play space is gone. I feel that the priorities of the city are horridly askew and we do not need another space turned brown, muddy and dangerous to our children.

Who knew that there was money in the city coffers for maintenance of the dog park when they don't even have enough funds to pay the police to patrol our neighbourhoods to prevent and stop the rash of burglaries in our area. Is there not more wisdom in maintaining a space for children to play with their families which in turn keeps families together? The playground allows people of ALL economic backgrounds to gather and have fun. It has built relationships that very likely would not have been made due to the fact that children are interacting regardless of the parents financial and social backgrounds. I have met so many interesting people at this park, shared and received childcare advice from other parents and my son has benefited from this. No dog park can do that.

With the rain runoff spreading into the soil on the property it will not be safe for our youngest of the children to play. They eat dirt, sand, leaves etc. no matter how much we try to prevent it and this proposed dog park will only raise the levels of germs due to the uncollected dog feces. No matter how many costly signs the city puts up, no matter how many bag boxes there are for dog owners to find a bag to 'help' them collect their animals feces someone always believes they are above the rules and will leave their animals detritus behind. I see it here in our sidewalks, and paths in the area. It is par for the norm.

We absolutely need a safe place to bring our children to, where we can teach them how to enjoy life, and stay active and healthy. Astro park was

one of the reasons why my husband and I chose to move to Crocker Highlands. There was a fantastic, safe, large, open green space near our home to which we could bring our son. There is no reason why animals need more green space than humans.

Thank you for your time, and patience.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Dey [a Very concerned parent and TAX PAYER]

--
Elizabeth Dey

From: Robert Gotto <robert.gotto@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, May 1, 2012 at 12:02 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners, Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

We have very few natural, flexible, open spaces such as this, and it would be an enormous shame to lose it to another dedicated project.

Thank you
Robert Gotto
Oakland

From: Caspar Mulder <caspar80@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 2, 2012 at 6:14 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing you in regards to the plans with Astro Park. I would like to ask you to deny the permit application for a dog park in this location. We always enjoy walking to this park from our home on Lakeshore Avenue and see our 11-month old daughter playing in the swings, chasing pigeons or watching people play soccer, baseball or other sports on the grassy area. We would be very sad to see this parkland being fenced off for a dog park.

In addition, we feel that having a dog park in Astro park will increase traffic, and make parking even more difficult than it already is. As a result, parents may not avoid going to Astro park, and the playground, which currently is always bustling with kids, will become emptier and emptier.

Surely, there must be some underutilized location in Oakland that would be more than perfect for a dog park. However, together with the rest of the neighbourhood I feel that Astro park is not that location.

Again, I would like to ask you to deny the permit application so our daughter, and so many other children, can keep enjoying the wide open grass area, without being stopped by a fence.

Kind regards,
Caspar Mulder

From: Helen Krayenhoff & Peggy Kass <kassenhoff@lmi.net>
Date: Wed, May 2, 2012 at 9:47 AM
Subject: dog park at astro park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Ms Clevenger

As a vendor at the Grand lake Farmers' Market and an Oakland resident, I'd like to voice my opposition to this proposed dog park at Astro park. While I understand the need for and support the thoughtful creation of leash-free dog spaces in the city, I believe this proposed project is not one of them.

The congestion in this neighborhood on Saturdays is already a problem, I believe this dog park will bring more cars with more parking needs to an already full capacity area.

I believe dogs and other pet companions are important at this time of social isolation and financial uncertainty. Dog parks can help create community and keep the animals well exercised and healthy.

The question is whether a dog park in such a congested area is furthers these goals. Since there are some dog parks available close by already, I think Astro Park should be maintained as a safe and roomy place for kids, families and others to play and exercise in. Judging from the use I've seen every time I pass, which is often, this is already happening.

Thanks for your time and attention,

Helen Krayenhoff

From: Randy & Caitlin <randyandcait@hotmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 2, 2012 at 11:40 AM
Subject: DENY dog run at corner of Lakeshore/MacArthur
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Ms. Clevenger,

I am writing to request that the Planning Commission DENY the fenced off-leash dog run at the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland.

While I was driving in the neighborhood today, I noticed a diverse group of children learning how to play a new sport in the very space that could soon be closed for the dog lot location. It was a beautiful sight and I realized that the amount of level, usable, grassy space in this area for people of all ages to use is VERY limited. Please don't take the little bit we have remaining away! There are other dog runs nearby that dog owners can use, but a grassy field like this one is very unique and should be a priority for the city to preserve.

Please do the right thing... DO NOT turn this beautiful greenspace into an brown eyesore that the city does not have the budget to maintain. Urge the supporters of the dog lot to look for a more suitable location. It really seems like a shame to turn a beautiful area that is used frequently by so many community members into an eyesore that would benefit the few.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Best regards,
Caitlin Whitaker
94610

From: Adam Sand <ASAND@ancestry.com>
Date: Wed, May 2, 2012 at 3:36 PM
Subject: Please deny the dog park...
To: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Ms. Clevenger,

I am a resident of the Grand Lake area, an attorney as well as a father of two. I am writing to ask that you and the planning commission deny the proposed dog park on the corner of Lakeshore Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard in Oakland. As you know, the area is vastly changed from 2002 when the dog park was first proposed for this area. At that time the main headlines for Oakland revolved around the astronomical rise in murders – a far cry from where we are today (being ranked the fifth most interesting travel destination by the **New York Times!**). Just as the city has evolved, so too has this neighborhood – numerous new restaurants, Trader Joes, and the weekend farmer’s market (to name just a few). But the planned dog park takes none of this into consideration. It is the wrong plan for this location. Indeed, any visit to this area on a Saturday morning will easily demonstrate that the best use of this area is exactly how the community uses it today.

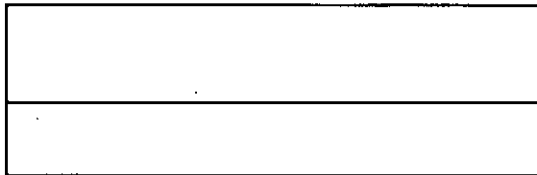
In addition, I write to express my concern with the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Oakland Dog Owners’ Group (ODOG). First, it doesn’t take a legal education to see that this MOU in no ways guarantees any funding or maintenance for the proposed dog park. As drafted, there is no enforcement provisions at all – instead this is just a statement of the two parties’ desires and “expectations.” Indeed, the ODOG group is not defined so even if the city wanted to enforce such an agreement, there is no way to do so. A more rational expectation from this lack of a concrete agreement is that the full cost of building and maintenance for the dog park will fall upon the city. Please insist upon a secure source of funding instead a toothless MOU.

I will see you tonight and hope we can discuss these issues further.

Thank you for your time.

/Adam Sand

ADAM SAND		Associate General Counsel	
F	415.7 44.17 42	M	415.5 72.80 80
E	asand@ancestry.com		
Ancestry.com			
501 Second Street		San Francisco, CA 94107	



----- Forwarded message -----

From: Timothy Terry <tterry21@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, May 18, 2012 at 4:24 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: PKernighan@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilwoman Kernighan,

This is to express my disgust that there is an appeal to the City Council of the Planning Commissions rejection of a proposal to put a dog park at Astro Park in the Lake Merritt area.

I have lived in this area all my life and having this open space is critical. The extra traffic and congestion of people driving to bring their dogs to defecate would definitely reduce the quality of the neighborhood. A CEQA study on traffic would be a necessity.

I hope you are not in support of this plan and the expending of precious public resources for a dog park in this area at this time. I really am unsure what your thinking is. After all you have been silent on the closure of Lakeview Elementary School. I have never seen you at any of the community meetings with regard to the school closures nor have heard your voice even once! How can just sit by and let our children be foreclosed out of their school?

Tim Terry
491 Crescent Street
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Patti Byram <patti@trademarkevents.com>

Date: Sat, May 19, 2012 at 3:14 PM

Subject: Deny appeal/Save Astro Park

To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "at-large@oaklandnet.com" <at-large@oaklandnet.com>, "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>,

"lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>,
"idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>,
"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,
"lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandneL.com>,
"saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council Members:

I ask that you please DENY the appeal for a conditional use permit application for the proposed fenced off-leash dog run in our neighborhood park – Astro Park. This green park is beautiful as it is and used in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife. This is not the place for a dog park. Thank you.

Patti Byram
Resident of Grand Lake area – 16 years

Patti Byram
Accounting/HR
Trademark Event Productions, Inc.
(415) 726-0777 Phone
www.trademarkevents.com

From: Esteban Sardera <esardera@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, May 19, 2012 at 4:06 PM
Subject: Please *deny* the appeal for a dog run in Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelifuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you DENY the appeal for a conditional use permit application for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I am a dog lover and would like to have a dog some day with me in my new house on Sunnyslope but do not feel a dog run so close to Lake Merritt in Astro Park is appropriate.

I am concerned about

- safety (e.g. pitt bulls)

- cleanliness
- space is better used for people in my opinion

Please deny the appeal so it better benefits the community as a whole.

Thanks

Esteban Sardera
448 Sunnyslope Ave
Oakland CA 94610

From: Pat Hea <patheaphy47@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 7:10 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "at-large@oaklandnet.com" <at-large@oaklandnet.com>, "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, "lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council members,

I ask that you deny the application for conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. The area between Grand and Lakeshore Ave and along MacArthur Blvd.

We need this open space for the people who live

in the area. The population density of the area leaves very few open green grassy fields for people to use.

The beauty of the expanse would be destroyed by fencing and breaking up of the large green field that so many people use.

I have seen dog parks in other areas and find them to be always dirty mud holes for much of the year. Not something that I want to look at everyday of the year.

Thank you,
Patrick Heaphy \\
614 Alma Ave
Oakland 94610

From: Catherine Baumgartner <oakcab@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 2:33 PM

Subject: SAVE ASTRO PARK

To: pkemighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, Ireid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

PLEASE DON'T BUILD A DOG PARK AT ASTRO PARK!!!!!! I have been living in Oakland for 26 years. Before coming here I lived in SF for 15 years. SF has it's massive Golden Gate Park. All Oakland has is the beautiful Lake Merritt and it's surrounding few parcels of grass. PLEASE DON'T COVER IT WITH BROWN DIRT AND WOOD CHIPS AND SMELLY LOUD BARKING DOGS. One of the nicest and smartest things Oakland has ever done for it's people is to beautify Lake Merritt and build up the neighborhood with it's fabulous Farmer's Market! KEEP THE DOGS AWAY AND LET THE PEOPLE PLAY PLAY PLAY PLAY PLAY.

Thank you.

Catherine

From: Cecilia Gunning <cecilia@me.com>
Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 3:18 PM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park
To: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. The park is already used to its full capacity by children and families, and I don't believe it will be possible to accommodate the dog run without affecting the people who already use the park. Dog owners deserve to have a place to let their dogs run and play, this is just not the right location for that use.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Gunning
1 Lakeside Drive Unit 1703
Oakland, CA 94612

From: Pat Madarang <pmadaran@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 3:58 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, Ireid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

My name is Pat Madarang and I am a resident of the City of Oakland living in Sequoyah Hills in Oakland, Ca. I am writing to you to Save Astro Park.

Kids need to play on grass too! Not enough grass to sit on in Oakland near LakeShore! Dog waste? We are not Golden Gate Park. Why?

My suggestion is to use the blighted area across the street and create a tourist location (e.g. dog hotel) for off-lease dog lover's around the world can visit Oakland and play; like San Francisco and follow the State of Nevada and put solar panels on the "for sale" Building. Keep the dogs cool on hot days from the shade of solar panels. Ask Danny Kennedy from Sungevity to help, he is from Oakland.

I am a graduate of the USC Price in Sacramento and we have a highly regarded Urban & Regional Planning Program in the country as part of our university. USC Sol Price School of Public Policy is older than the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, so I know something about the history of urban planning and public administration.

I think somebody has influenced your planning commission unwisely!

Brainstorming Ideas for dog friendly cities!

1. <http://www.yelp.com/biz/mission-creek-dog-park-san-francisco>
2. <http://www.bringfido.com/attraction/parks/city/san-francisco-ca-us/>

3.http://www.solaripedia.com/13/315/3639/animal_foundation_dog_park_pvs.html

--

Pat Madarang

FOTS Lead Solar Advocate

"Feet on the Street" Greater SF Bay Area

Real Goods Solar, Inc.

Solar Living Since 1978

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l1VMwM9_II

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUstFht_bso

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/pmadarang>

From: Mirabai Deranja <morticia.atoms@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 11:22 AM

Subject: No on Dog Park. Again.

To:

Dear Councilmembers,

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Thank you,
Mirabai

--

Aspire to inspire before you expire.

www.miratango.com

From: **Khalid Kadir** <khalidkadir@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 4:45 PM

Subject: Oakland Dog Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello -

As a long-time resident of Oakland who lives 1/2 block off of Lakeshore Avenue, I just wanted to register my opinion on the proposed dog park.

I think the location is horrible, and better alternatives exist (near Fairyland, for example).

Please vote against the proposed dog park and do not succumb to the wishes of a small, outspoken portion of our community at the expense of the rest.

Thank you,
Khalid Kadir
615 Brooklyn Avenue

From: Suzanne <stg916@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 4:53 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park!

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers:

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I am an Oakland homeowner, currently in Lincoln Heights, but previously in Grand Lake for 11 years. I love that neighborhood, and still visit several times weekly for my gym, the Saturday Farmer's Market, shopping, dining, and walking around the lake.

I cannot imagine a more ill-conceived notion than fencing in Astro Park for a dog run. Seriously! This is the gateway to Lake Merritt, and would be a spit in the face to all the wonderful landscaping improvements that city has undertaken in the past few years. I like dogs, and in fact would own one if circumstances allowed. However, fencing in that particular parcel of land for a dog run is just plain crazy. During the week school-age children play soccer and use the playground, fitness buffs work through the par course, people lounge and stroll and have picnic lunches. It would be a terrible idea to block all that access and activity to satisfy a small percentage of people with dogs.

Please, please, PLEASE do not approve this monstrosity. There are other far more suitable, less heavily trafficked areas for a dog park.

Regards,

Suzanne Harris
2900 Morgan Ave, Unit B
Oakland, CA 94602

From: <karenengel09@comcast.net>
Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 6:34 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council Members:

I am pleased that the Planning Commission voted not to place a dog park in our neighborhood Astro Park. This space is just too small to contain both an area with enough room for dogs to run free and also the frequent ball games and exercise groups that currently use the park.

I live near Astro Park and volunteer at Lakeview Library regularly, so I have plenty of opportunities to observe that Astro Park is in constant use whenever the weather permits.

I am fond of dogs, in fact, my only grandchild is my grand-dogger, Olive, who is a Boxer.

But when she visits me, Olive is perfectly happy to enjoy herself at dog parks on Beach Street and off of Wildwood Avenue, which are both near my home. So I am hoping that the Council will continue to oppose putting a dog park where it doesn't belong.

Thanks for listening,

Karen Engel
811 York St #114, Oakland, CA 94610

From: Adria Walker <adriawalker@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 8:02 PM
Subject: Please DENY dog park permit for Astro Park!

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Member,

As a resident of one of the neighborhoods that surround Lake Merritt, I am writing to ask that you please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

I am so proud to call this area of Oakland my home. With each new friend or family member who visits, one of my favorite outings is a Saturday walk down Lakeshore Avenue to the Farmers' Market and Lakeshore's small businesses and restaurants. Walking by Astro Park always makes me stop in my tracks and smile. I love watching toddlers at soccer practice and friends playing volleyball or just pausing to admire the broad stretch of green grass softening an otherwise urban block. My husband has joined the gym in hopes of getting fit enough to join the weekly soccer games!

A dog park would destroy the neighborhood appeal and enjoyment of Astro Park. Dog parks quickly become fenced-in stretches of dirt littered with feces, a sure blight on an otherwise beautiful stretch between the Lake and nearby businesses. Why take the chance on marring such a beautiful and popular spot, after all of the resources invested in lovely renovations?

As a dog lover, I hope a more appropriate location can be found for local dogs to play off-leash and hang out with friends. However, Astro Park is not the right spot for such plans. At such a busy car, bus and foot traffic area, the corner is not a safe spot for our local pups.

Astro Park is well utilized and loved by the humans in the neighborhood. I am sure the local dogs can appreciate that. Let's find a spot that meets the needs of dogs and humans and preserves the beauty of the Lake Merritt area.

Again, I ask that you please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced, off-leash dog area in Astro Park. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Adria D. Walker
Oakland Resident

--

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.

-Cohen

From: David Smith <ds@netwanderer.com>
Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 8:42 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com" <<pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, ">" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I feel this park serves a great purpose for the neighborhood and introducing a dog run at that location would be detrimental to its current function to the area.

Thank you for all that you do in support of Oakland.

David Smith
542 Weldon Avenue
94610

From: L Finney <finneylp@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 8:43 AM
Subject: Astro Park dog run, please DENY
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

i ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I have lived in this area for 3 years, and every time I go by I see all parts of Astro Park in use. Children playing, adults using it as a soccer field, groups of friends exercising, and couples laying in the grass. The day I was turned on to this issue there was a group of Special Olympics children practicing in the exact area identified for the run. It was pure kismet, why would we want to take away a activity area from the Special Olympics?

Personally, I use the proposed dog park area for exercise, and for relaxing and catching up with friends. I think it is beautiful to see a grassy area in such a packed city, and I love participating in, or watching people enjoying activities outside in the park. It makes a community, which is one of the things I love about the area.

This is the only open grassy area around enabling these sorts of activities. Please do not allow the application for the dog run. I am a dog lover, and big supporter of dog runs in general, however I think there are more appropriate areas that could be used for this purpose. There are other open areas near Lake Merritt that are currently underutilized, why take away an area that is under constant use? I understand the dog run would not take up the whole park, however it would cut into it significantly.

Thank you for your time, please deny the application for the dog run in Astro Park

Thanks,
Lecia Finney
Lake Merritt area resident for 4 years

From: Martin Rosson <mrosson@pacbell.net>
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com; pkernighan@oaklandnet.com;
nnadel@oaklandnet.com; atlarge@oaklandnet.com;
jbrunner@oaklandnet.com; lschaaf@oaklandnet.com;
idelafuente@oaklandnet.com; dbrooks@oaklandnet.com;
lreid@oaklandnet.com; saveastropark@gmail.com
Sent: Mon, May 21, 2012 6:41:29 AM
Subject: Proposed dog run near Lake Merritt - DENY

"Dear Councilmembers

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog run area in our neighborhood park near the Grand Lake theater. Among other things, it is too massive and restricts land use for people that play sports and create a health hazard with the dog feces dust that will be created next to a children play area.

Martin M. Rosson, P.E

From: Jennifer Chin <jentchin@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 10:14 AM
Subject: Proposed dog run at Astro Park--Please DENY
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I've been an Oakland Lake Merritt resident for nearly 15 years. I love dogs--I've owned a dog, and I've cared for others' dogs. I'm also a parent of a 4-year old who loves the green area of Astro park because my son can run around the field and play soccer on Saturday mornings before we walk over to the Farmers' Market. We can fly kites and play baseball there on Sunday afternoons. We play in the sandbox, but sometimes my son just wants to run on the green grass. All of these things will be changed or not even a possibility if there is a fenced, off-leash dog run built. I respectfully, but strongly request that you deny the permit request for the proposed dog run.

With all the wonderful park upgrades and road and walkway improvements done under Measure DD, I'm finding it very hard to imagine how a off-leash dog run with a wrap around fence, RIGHT on the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur is even a consideration. So many people use this space--adults have their own soccer games alongside the kids. Little toddlers run and chase the geese, kites are flown. There isn't enough room to push the soccer and field games to the area near the library parking lot. There are many dog parks in walking distance. Why do we need to have a chain fenced obstruction right in the heart of the busiest and attractive parts of Lake Merritt? Why are we going to put in something that will take away the green grass, block park access, increase traffic, and put off-leash dogs closer to tots?

I'm a single mother who is finding urban Oakland harder and harder to raise a child in. I own my property and I pay Oakland taxes. I support Oakland businesses because I believe in this city. Frankly, I will be extremely disappointed if this permit is allowed to push out more recreational space for residents and children where it is needed most. Why are we pushing out the people and children and making room for dogs? Dogs can have space--it's just not appropriate here.

To avoid sending large files, I'm including a link to photos of my son and his buddies making good use of this space as it is. Please don't take that away.

https://picasaweb.google.com/107385679758804445215/AstroPark?authuser=0&authkey=Gv1sRgCP_j27T-u5f6cA&feat=directlink

Respectfully,

Jennifer Chin (Oakland Lake Merritt resident since 1997)

Alex Chin (Oakland Lake Merritt resident since 2007)

1438 Lakeshore Avenue

From: Gail Price <gailprice1@comcast.net>

Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 10:15 AM

Subject: DENY conditional permit to turn Astro Park into a dog run.

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I live on the Lake and like many other individuals and families I use the park for recreation and exercise. I do not want part of my park taken up by dog poop and barking. I walk around the Lake daily and I see many many people walking their dogs around the Lake. I think dog owners benefit from walking WITH their animals rather than parking the animals and themselves. In this time of great obesity, don't take an exercise area away from humans and give it to dogs.

**Gail Price
277 Wayne Avenue
Oakland 94606**

From: sunnywindow@juno.com <sunnywindow@juno.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 11:03 AM
Subject: Preserving our urban meadow for all
To: pkernlghan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers~~

This is to ask that you keep Astro Park as it is: Invitingly Vast and Green. It is Our Urban Meadow, gladdening and soothing all people We smile at the sight of it and at the feel of it under us. Its healing civic benefit would be lost if a dogpark were put in it.

Thank you~~

Gayle Mohrbacker, sunnywindow@juno.com

From: Kasey Ellison <kaseydellison@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 11:13 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com

Cc: SaVe Astro Park <saVeastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park and please uphold the unanimous decision by the Oakland Planning Commission to deny a conditional use permit for the dog run. I am an avid dog lover, I volunteer at the East Bay SPCA and I donate to them annually as well so no one I understand that there is a need in the area for dogs to play. I however don't understand why it must be astro parks, since it's clear that this area is already being utilized by children, families, and many non profit organizations. Through all my visit to East Bay Regional Parks (I visit one weekly for a running club), I've yet to see a dog park that close to a children's play area most aren't even sharing the same land, and I'm sure this was done on purpose for the protection of both the children and the dogs. Why would Oakland do something so different from all the surrounding cities? I'm not one to complain without giving a suggestions. There is plenty of nice space inside the Lake Merritt area this would not only be better for the dogs as it would keep them away from street traffic, but because there is fee'd parking inside the Lake Merritt area it could help further fund the dog park. There is also one huge space that is very underutilized near Ahn's 1/4 burgers which states currently "NO DOGS" that could be blocked off for a dog park, as a current resident of the area who sees this park every day, and it's hardly has ANY human foot traffic through that area. Please do not place a dog park in Astro Park, please reserve this area so that children can play, adults can remain active/healthy, and non profit

organizations can flourish. ☐☐Thanks, ☐☐Kasey
Ellison☐Lake Merritt Area Resident.

From: Erica Mohar <e_mohar@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 11:44 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>,

"nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>,

"atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>,

"jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>,

"lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>,

"idela Fuente@oaklandnet.com" <idela Fuente@oaklandnet.com>,

"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,

"lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>,

"saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council members:

I ask that you deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I have lived in the immediate area for 10 years and love the openness of Astro Park. My husband and I come here often with our niece and nephew to enjoy the flexibility of the space and to make it our own. We play sports here, have a picnic, and exercise here. We also see the community using the space--to play soccer (no need for an "official" field), host fitness camps as well as to act as a venue for small celebrations. With the area becoming more and more developed, it is nice to have an open, flat green space near by.

I also would love to have a dog park as my husband and I will be adopting a dog in the immediate future but I am sure that Astro Park is not the right venue. In the winter and spring it floods and becomes a big mud heap. Also, its close proximity (15 feet or so?) to a playground where mostly young toddlers play is also a concern. Lastly, the venue is located off the 580 E Grand Lake Ave/MacArthur exit and is crowded and congested with cars. I have seen the dog pen roped off to illustrate the proposed plan and I am worried about its close proximity to the 580 E entrance where people are barreling down the road to make the light to get on the freeway. Can we find a space that is safer for pets and their pet owners? I would prefer a dog park that is not near a

freeway on ramp or crowded with children so everyone will be safe.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Erica Mohar

From: amy bell <amyk.bell@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 11:45 AM
Subject: Re: Astro Park-Not Saved, Not Yet
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I ask that you **DENY** the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at **Astro Park**.

I am a citizen of Oakland (Glenview/Trestle Glen) who, like so many of my neighbors and my husband, loves the Lake Merritt and Grand/Lake area. I am there nearly every day to shop, run errands, eat, exercise, take out Library books, and enjoy the land.

It would be a tragedy to introduce a dog run to Astro Park, for many reasons. I believe the most compelling argument here is the disruption a dog run would cause in the way the community uses the space.

A dog run would seriously impact the social and visual experience of the entire Embarcadero landscape. Many people travel some miles to get to the Lake Merritt area in order to enjoy its open spaces. The proposed brown dog run, surrounded by a fence, would disrupt and detract from that open space experience and seriously hinder the sense of community - whole community - that the space currently promotes in its simple, easily maintained way.

No one who does not own a dog wants to participate or take any personal responsibility for a dog park. A dog park is an off-limits area to them. It is negated space. Many people including small children are afraid of gathered dogs. Gathered dogs snarl and nip and become agitated, as is

their nature. Many dislike their smell and open defecation. Many have to live with barking dogs in their neighborhoods and seek the tranquility of public parks to be free of that.

Do we really want to build off-limits areas in such a wonderfully open and communal city space? Does fencing off a small, dusty or muddy area for dog owners and their pets truly serve the community at large? How much benefit is given to those dogs, and at what expense to the whole community?

The design of urban spaces has a subtle but profound way of influencing a community. Putting up fences, replacing green grass with dirt, and making space off-limits to certain community members will have a divisive and scornful effect on the way people treat Astro Park. A park shouldn't have privileged areas, and that is essentially what a dog run creates.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Best regards,
Amy K. Bell
Oakland Citizen against Astro Park Dog Run

From: Sophia Lai <sophia.lai@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, May 20, 2012 at 4:38 PM
Subject: Re: Astro Park-Not Saved, Not Yet
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Councilmembers,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you DENY the appeal for a conditional use permit application for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

There is already so little green space in Oakland for people to engage in group sports and other activities. I believe it is important to preserve this beautiful area, so please deny the permit for the dog run.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Sophia Lai

2422 E. 15th St.
Oakland, CA 94601

From: Jaime Boust <jaimeboust@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 10:15 AM
Subject: No Dog Run at Astro Park!
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. As a mother of two small children, who frequent the playground and use the green for playing, I ask you retain this space for kids, not dogs. Recently, a very good friend's one-year-old son was attacked by a pit-bull mix, requiring 400 stitches on his face, and the notion of a dog run adjacent to such a high-traffic children's area concerns me.

Please help the proponents of the dog run find a more suitable location for their needs.

Thank you,

Jaime Boust

(4133 Lakeshore Avenue)

From: Greg Macchi <gmac619@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 4:48 PM
Subject: Please deny dog park permit
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadei@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council members,

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I feel the proposed dog park would be too large as well as an eyesore. I urge you to keep the park as it is with its abundance of usable space for everybody.

Best,

Greg Macchi
Oakland resident

From: C.C. Abdullah <cc1gel@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 5:12 PM

Subject: Astro Park No Dogs

To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, "lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

- Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park...." Astro Park was established for the use of all of the community, the community was understood to mean "people". To take the area originally for the people and reassign it for the use of only some of the community (lock out man for the benefit of dogs) is to set the land usage for special interest. Do not do this to the tax payers of Oakland.

Will be looking to see how the vote goes. Thank you.

From: Marcia Lovelace <marcialovelace@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, May 21, 2012 at 7:50 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, "lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. The area in question is in constant use for games, drum circles and the kinds of eclectic gatherings that give Oakland its unique flavor. The proximity to the children's playground, library and bird sanctuary at Lake Merritt makes it the wrong

site for an off-leash dog run. I own and like dogs--and sympathize with those looking for such a facility. But this is not the right place for it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcia Lovelace
307 Jayne Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610

Marcia Lovelace
Librarian
Tehiyah Day School
2603 Tassajara Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 233-3013 ex. 111
library@tehiyah.org
www.tehiyah.org

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From: Scott Willis <scottwillis724@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, May 22, 2012 at 9:18 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelifuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, Save Astro Park
<saveastropark@gmail.com>

All,

Please do not approve the permit to allow a fence and dog run in the Astro Park field. This is great open space and it should stay that way! Grand and Lakeshore Aves are major access points into the Lake Merritt area.

We want the first impression to be open and inviting. No fences and shrubbery to hide it.

Please vote NO on this use permit request.

Thanks.
Scott.

From: Christina Grim <tunamarie16@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, May 22, 2012 at 9:21 AM
Subject: DENY application for conditional use permit for proposed dog run
To: dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park because I love the park as it is and a dog park will make the area stinky, dirty and unsanitary for kids. I enjoy the green field and going out to kick a soccer ball or throw a baseball. With limited community green space, I think making a dog park there is a gigantic mistake and one that the community will be very bitter about.

Thanks,
Christina

~Christina Grim

"When we see men of a contrary character we should turn inwards and examine ourselves."

-Confucius

From: Annalee Cobbett <afcobbett@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, May 22, 2012 at 12:06 PM
Subject: Please Deny Permit for a Dog run at Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I respectfully request that you deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. The space at the Northeastern arm of the lake should remain an open play area.

As a resident of Lake Merritt-Adams Point I notice people practicing soccer, track and field and fitness activity in that area daily. I feel that it's important to maintain a lawn area near the tot lot, for older children's games.

It's a no-brainer that dogs of all sizes and temperaments should not be placed next to a toddler playground. Dogs will be off-leash in the area and many dogs are not under voice control of the owner.

Astro Park also creates a welcome visual break from the surrounding business district. Maintaining open space is an important value in urban planning. Although I support the right of dog owners to build a dog run elsewhere, Astro Park provides a green vista along with a place of quietude and should remain as open play space.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours truly,

Annalee Cobbett, J.D.
201 Santa Rosa Avenue #2
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Phoenix/Chong <chongppr@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, May 23, 2012 at 12:09 AM
Subject: No Dog Park at Lakeshore & MacArthur
To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>,
"nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "at-large@oaklandnet.com" <at-large@oaklandnet.com>, "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>,
"lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>,
"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,
"lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>

To All:

Please uphold the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny a conditional use permit for a dog park at Lakeshore & MacArthur. The grassy field there is so wonderful and used by many different groups AS-IS. It is a wonderful open space in a congested area. Please don't ruin it by closing it off and fencing it in for a dog park.

Oy-Lene Chong
Lane Parker
Spruce & McKinley
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Murray Powers <murraypowers@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed, May 23, 2012 at 4:37 PM

Subject: Children before Dogs

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com.

Dear Oakland City Council Member,

I am truly appalled that the question of putting dogs before children will be up for your consideration, and **urge you most strongly to deny the application for a proposed dog park on Astro Park**. At the recent city planning meeting, I was outraged that a group of dog owners had the temerity to try to portray themselves as a persecuted minority who were not able to enjoy Lake Merritt or to "go places where others can." This is ludicrous! Dog owners are not an expelled tribe of Israelites or agonizing along the Trail of Tears. They are no different than anyone else, they just can't bring their dogs everywhere they go, parks, restaurants, grocery stores, etc, for very sensible health, safety and sanitary reasons.

We also heard from numerous folks who are so enamored with their pets that the distinction between humans and canines is a blurry one. One speaker told us his dog "was my child." But it is not a blurry line. At a time when we are cutting more and more services, especially for our children for whom lack of green space is just one of the myriad steep challenges before them, to commit even one thin dime towards a facility for dogs would be a terrible insult and a grotesque message to send to our youth.

I hope most fervently that you will not seriously consider voting for dogs before children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Murray Powers
Oakland resident

From: Claudia Hartley <claudiamhartley@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Fri, May 25, 2012 at 11:38 AM

Subject: Astro Park dog park permit appeal

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Member, I am writing to ask that you uphold the planning commission's unanimous decision	
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to deny
the use of Astro Park as a dog park.
As a member of the GrandLake
neighborhood, as a dog lover and dog
owner, as a longtime user of Lake Merritt
park including the playground with our kids, I
am unequivocally opposed to using
AstroPark as a dog-park. It is too small, it is
too close to the play-ground, it takes away
the land from our soccer, volleyball and
baseball playing comrades, it replaces the
fresh sight and smell of green grass with the
eyesore of chainlink fence and the unsavory
smell of dog feces. And it will certainly
increase not lessen the number of people
bringing dogs illegally through the rest of the
park on their way to the site. Please uphold
the planning commission decision and vote
no on the appeal.
Thanks for your attention.
claudia hartley
485 elwood ave
oakland, ca 94610

From: Jane Gabel <jane.gabel@mindspring.com>
Date: Fri, May 25, 2012 at 12:11 PM
Subject: Dog run at astro park??
To: "Ischaaf@oaklandnet.com" <Ischaaf@oaklandnet.com>,
"idelafuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelafuente@oaklandnet.com>,
"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,
"lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>

I hope we can count on you to vote against the proposed dog run in astro park. Taking play space away from children to give it to dogs is just plain wrong. Installing an eyesore at that location, right across from the library and so close to the lake, is a terrible idea. We have far too few grassy fields in our neighborhood. Please don't sacrifice a substantial portion of this one to the dogs!

Jane Gabel

From: Leigh McDougall <leighnan@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 28, 2012 at 7:34 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello

I am writing to you to express my concern over the proposed Dog Park project. As a resident of the neighborhood and a daily user of the Lake area for exercise and meditation, I feel strongly that the proposal would take away from our vital community public space. I urge you to reject the Astro Park Dog Park proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Warm Regards,
Leigh McDougall
377 Santa Clara Ave
Oakland, Ca. 94610

From: Steven Belcher <swbelcher007@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 28, 2012 at 9:36 PM

Subject: Porposed Dog Park at Astro/Lakeshore Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Steven W. Belcher
630 Longridge Road
Oakland, California 94610
(510) 301-5321
swbelcher@msn.com

□ May 28, 2012

Dear Members of the Oakland City Council,

This is a brief note regarding the proposed dog run in Astro Park/Lakeshore. I hope you had a chance to drive by during the recent nice weather and observed the wonderful urban phenomena of a many different groups engaging in different sports at the play field. There was baseball, soccer, frizbees, kites, and little kids just tripping. Related to this availability of multi-use recreational open space is consideration of future demands on this park. At sometime in the past the Planning Commission reviewed and approved a mid rise, 54 unit low and moderate income family housing project on a relatively small site opposite Ahn's Burgers, located at Belvue and Grand. There is apparently no on-site recreation space planned for a significant number children living in the project. I have been told that the developer is mitigating this need by using Lakeside Park. Since Astro/Lakeshore Park is the only open field within walking distance to the project, the proposed dog run may significantly impact this recreation resource for these children. I would appreciate this issue being addressed in the staff report presented at the appeal.

Thank You,

Steve Belcher

From: Steven Belcher <swbelcher007@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, May 28, 2012 at 9:45 PM

Subject:

To: at-large@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Steven W. Belcher
630 Longridge Road
Oakland, California 94610
(510) 301-5321
swbelcher@msn.com

Re: Opposition to Proposed Dog Run at Astro Park

Dear Members Members of the Oakland City Council,

Please "google" "off leash dog parks in Oakland" and you will see a great Yelp site rating 37 off leash dog parks in and around Oakland. Now search for programmed play fields near Lakeshore and they list places such as "Gilman" which is in Berkeley and scheduled to the hilt and Mosswood which is not flat. Astro Park (Lakeshore) is one of the few remaining pieces of unprogrammed playing field left in Oakland. That means, that you can see groups of pick up soccer, baseball, football, play without driving to a field, paying for a permit...or waiting for a permit.

In that vein, yesterday I passed the park and there was all the above activities go on at the same time, no stress, just having fun. Where will these citizens go for their outdoor fun? It also occurred to me that most of those children and young adults do not have a clue that their play fields are about to disappear or have the means to drive to an alternative.

Please leave one of the last big open green spaces, open and green. Some have this compulsion to fill empty spaces...let this one be. By the

way, with the City budget on life support, how will the proposed dog park be financed and maintained?

Sincerely,

Steve Belcher

From: Carmelia Stanton <cstanton@leapfrog.com>
Date: Fri, 1 Jun 2012 20:11:38 +0000
To: "'pkernighan@oaklandnet.com'" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>,
"'nnadel@oaklandnet.com'" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "'atlarge@oaklandnet.com'"
<atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, "'ibrunner@oaklandnet.com'" <ibrunner@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: Sue Levin <sue@heragencyv.com>
Subject: Astro Park - NO Dog Run

Dear Councilmembers:

I ask that you **DENY** the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park for the following reasons, among numerous others:

- Children and other community members frequently use the area proposed for the dog run. Just two days ago, I saw a parents lying on the grass watching their toddler learning to walk exactly where the dog run would be. My 4 year old son loves to run across the field to the playground after we cross the street. He would not be able to do this with the dog run on that corner of the field. He would not be able to run *at all* for safety reasons, with dogs all around entering and exiting the dog run.

- Proximity of the proposed dog run is too close to where children play. There is serious risk of bodily injury from dogs that are not properly controlled by their owners. As a child, I was bitten by a neighbor's dog, which darted out, knocked me down, and bit me on the back of the leg as I ran by on the sidewalk. The gate had been left open accidentally, and the dog attacked. There are myriad similar incidents throughout Oakland. Human error is likely at the proposed dog park, and a dog run so close to a popular playground is a recipe for serious injury to children. We need to put safety first.

- Dog runs are unsightly and dirty. The run-off of urine and feces is likely to further pollute Lake Merritt and the adjacent areas of the park. The smell would be noxious. The corner is currently a beautiful open space with lush grass leading to the playground, and beyond, views of the lovely portico and sparkling lake. The space is a jewel in Oakland and should be preserved.

- Many children are afraid of dogs. My son is afraid of dogs and barking unnerves him. A dog run so close to one of his favorite playgrounds is likely to cause him anxiety and significantly hinder his enjoyment of the playground.

- Parking is already limited. I go to the park a couple of nights a week at about 5:15pm, on my way home from picking my son up from preschool. Parking nearby is often a challenge. With a dog run, parking will be even more difficult.

Again, I urge you to **DENY** the application for the dog run. It's simply the wrong place.

Carmelia Stanton
Grand Lake Resident & Mother with Young Child

From: Kevin Duncan <kevinduncan2@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Jun 1, 2012 at 10:29 PM

Subject: Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, Ireid@oaklandnet.com

Dear Councilmembers--

My name is Jean-Philippe and I ask that you **DENY** the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I live in the Crocker Highlands area of Oakland. Prior to purchasing a home in Oakland, I lived for almost a decade in San Francisco. When it came time to have a family and settle down with a wife and kids, I carefully considered several areas around the Bay and Peninsula. To be honest, Oakland was not on top of my list (Piedmont and San Mateo were). But then a friend took me to Gold's Gym one Saturday morning (I had never been around there before).

After our workout, we made it to the green grass area which is Astro Park where several young kids from incredibly diverse backgrounds (Latin America, Brazil, Spaniards, French etc..) were playing soccer; I joined in (I grew up in Europe and I am a decent soccer player) . After the game, we headed to the Farmers Market nearby.

It is then that I realized Oakland could be a great option for me to buy a home and start a family: I could imagine my (then-future but now quite real) kids playing in the green grass, kicking balls with me and my friends, running to the nearby playground and then head to the lake to feed the birds. I was sold and bought a house in Oakland.

So it was with absolute horror that I heard a group of my fellow proud Oaklanders were planning to turn the green grass area known as Astro Park that lured me to Oakland into a ...dog park!

Why should we destroy one the best open spaces in Oakland and probably in the Bay Area into a dog park? Isn't there any other space anywhere else in the city to accommodate a dog park? How can we even consider taking a green, gorgeous space, open to all to do whatever one feels like and turn it into a potentially dirty space, reserved for the few of us who have dogs?

I strongly urge (ok, beg) you to not approve this plan, to not allow a dog park in this area so close to the children's playground, Lake Merritt, the Farmers Market and the best of Oakland. Help dog owners find another space somewhere else but not at Astro Park which I consider to be the heart and pride of Oakland.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to chime in.
Jean-Philippe

PS: in case you are wondering, I do love dogs, got two of them and consider them as part of our family but I believe Astro Park is too useful to too many people from too many walks of life to turn it into a dog park Useful only to those of us who are dog owners!

From: Ann Arizu <aarizu@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, 5 Jun 2012 13:05:40 -0700 (PDT)

To: <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>, <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, <lreid@oaklandnet.com>, <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Subject: PLEASE SAVE ASTRO PARK

Dear Councilmembers,

I ask that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. It's not the right place for a dog park for many reasons, which I know have already been presented to you.

I have owned two pieces of property, one off Grand and one off Lakeshore, for over 30 years and I love the area. Please vote no on this proposed dog park.

David and Ann Arizu

From: Maida Counts <countsmid@aol.com>

Date: Tue, Jun 12, 2012 at 7:16 AM

Subject: save beauty of nature for all

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelifuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers:

Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Let's keep the gateway to Lake Merritt as beautiful as possible for all visitors and residents.

When I have had a stressful day, it is a pleasure to drive along Lakeshore Avenue toward my home. The trees and open green space near the tot playground and library are a balm for me. There are no buildings or fences to shut out the view toward the lake. I am thankful to have Astro Park there.

To dedicate a large portion of this park area to a dog run is to destroy a jewel in the City of Oakland. I have driven by other dog runs in the East Bay. They are dismal in appearance. The ground is packed dirt at best or mud during the rainy season. It has been noted that the Astro Park area is especially wet due to underground water conditions. Will there be an odor from dog feces accumulating in this area in the warmer weather as well?

Although the dog run volunteers are enthusiastic about maintaining the area, how long will that last? Will they be here in 2 years - 5 years - 10 years? We have a mobile society. Will the City of Oakland have to step in and maintain the run at a cost to the taxpayers?

Where will these dog owners park their cars? Nearby residents will not be the only ones bringing their dogs to a run here. Parking is already difficult in this area especially on Saturdays with the Farmers' Market. The local theatre and merchants have already been impacted by lack of parking. During fair weather the majority of the parking along Lakeshore Avenue is utilized each day by joggers enjoying the path around the lake.

There is also the concern of safety not only to the small children nearby in the swings and slides of the tot playground but to people using the area near Grand Avenue. Will all the dog owners using the run have insurance in case of any incidents or will the City of Oakland be responsible?

Hopefully, another site will be found that benefit dogs and their owners. It might also be mentioned that the Oakland Hills have a number of trails in the East Bay Regional Park system that allow dogs. If people want to provide open space for their dogs, perhaps they should make an effort in this direction.

As a resident of this neighborhood for more than 15 years, I have witnessed the many uses of this valuable open space. From families with small children running on the grass to soccer teams practicing or young adults playing frisbee, it is enjoyed by many.

Similar to the beauty of Central Park that wonderful place in the middle of one of the world's greatest cities New York City, please reserve a bit of nature's beauty in Oakland for the human soul to be refreshed.

Maida Counts
468 Stow Avenue, # 7
Oakland, CA

From: Janaan A <attia.jan@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 12:24 PM

Subject: Vote to Save Astro Park for our health!
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear elected officials,

On a beautiful sunny spring day I am writing to ask you to vote against the proposed dog park that would take over open, green space in Astro Park. As a public health nurse here in Alameda County I can tell you that many of our residents are struggling to find accessible places to engage in exercise and relaxation; taking away Astro Park's open, green space will only make it all the more difficult for residents of Oakland and Alameda County to take part in these healthy activities.

I walk or drive by that area daily and there is not a day when it is not being used by people playing sports, families picnicking, and the list goes on. We have so little open space by the lake and it would be not only an eye-sore but a shame to prioritize a dog park over the health and well-being of our communities.

Thank you for voting to keep Oakland vibrant, healthy and beautiful!

Sincerely,

Jan Marie Attia, RN, PHN

From: Viet Nguyen <vnp_90@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 1:33 PM
Subject: Please SAVE Astro Park
To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>,
"nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>,
"atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>,
"jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>,
"lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>,
"idelafuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelafuente@oaklandnet.com>,
"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,
"lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>,
"saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>
Cc: "aclevenger@oaklandnet.com" <aclevenger@oaklandnet.com>,
"sue@heragency.com" <sue@heragency.com>

Dear Council Members,

I ask that you please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Making any part of our park into a dog-run is wrong and bad decision. Doing so will result in a bad environment and it will turn a nice clean park into a smelly and dirty area and unhealthy place for people to be around. Consequently, it will drive people away from the park and the area. Besides, I don't see any good reasons why we have to allow dog-run here. If people choose to have dogs, then they should find their own ways to take care of their dogs and should not ask people to give up the park to accommodate their needs. Dear Council, please remember that our park is beautiful as it is now, but we will lose it completely if we ever allow any part of park for dog-run. I can assure you that denying the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park is the right decision and is the best decision you will ever have made and that you will feel happy everyday knowing that you have helped saving our beautiful park for us.

Thanks in advance for your support,

Thank you,
Viet Nguyen

From: "David L. Hurty" <dave@hurty.com>

Date: Thu, 14 Jun 2012 15:57:29 -0500

To: "<pkernighan@oaklandnet.com; nnadel@oaklandnet.com; atlarge@oaklandnet.com; jbrunner@oaklandnet.com; lschaaf@oaklandnet.com; idelafuente@oaklandnet.com; dbrooks@oaklandnet.com; lrejd@oaklandnet.com; saveastropark@gmail.com>"

Cc: Kathleen Hurty <kathleen@hurty.com>

Subject: DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park

Dear City Council Members,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I live near this park and pass it often. Many small children and parents use the area for soccer and other field games. It is one of few areas where it can be used for such play activities in this neighborhood.

Cordially,

David L. Hurty

Rev. David L. Hurty
565 Bellevue Avenue, Apt. 707
Oakland, CA 94610-5016
Home: 510.465.3301
Fax: 510.465.3301
Mobile: 510.435.1568
dave@hurty.com

From: catalinac <catalinac@aol.com>
To: pkernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>; nnadel <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>; atlarge <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>; jbrunner <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>; lschaaf <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>; idelafuente <idelafuente@oaklandnet.com>; dbrooks <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>; lreid <lreid@oaklandnet.com>; saveastropark <saveastropark@gmail.com>
Cc: saveastropark <saveastropark@gmail.com>
Sent: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 2:13 pm
Subject: 30-Year Oakland Citizen says: Save Astro Park from the Dogs

Ladies and Gentlemen of the City Council,

I am a 30 year resident and citizen of Oakland. I pay taxes -- and I vote.

I have been walking Lake Merritt since 1980 and I lived on Grand Avenue Adams Point. I was married at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, and we now own our home in Maxwell Park.

I still enjoying walking Lake Merritt, the Cleveland Cascade, my son does canoeing and we love hanging out at the Farmer's Market on Saturdays.

In my opinion, the dog owners should work with East Bay Regional Parks for another appropriate place for dogs.

thank you!
Catalina Cariaga-Nakamura
4627 Fleming Avenue, Oakland, CA 94619

From: Jessica Rothhaar <jesseroth510@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 2:02 PM
Subject: Oppose dog park at Astro Park
To: nnadel@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com,

idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com,
lreid@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com

Dear Councilmember Nadel,

I write to express my strong opposition to turning Astro Park into a dog park. I am a permanent and very proud Oakland resident, live at 535 Bellevue Ave and have the good fortune to walk across Astro Park several times a week.

Astro Park as it is now provides a really important open green space -- a lung, really -- in a dense urban area. It's a place children can walk barefoot, and children and adults play ball games. The grass filters the pollution and particulates coming off 580 into our neighborhood.

It is vitally important to have open, green space in the middle of the city. I love dogs, but a dog park does not help filter our air, it does not provide space for people to walk and play, and it will really clog and overdevelop that space.

There are other places near the Lake that are underutilized and could be used for a dog park, including Snow Park (virtually unused except by the homeless), and the area around the gazebo on the east side of Lake Merritt.

What is your view on the dog park issue?

Many thanks for your work and your consideration,

Jessica Rothhaar
535 Bellevue Ave #12
Oakland CA 94610

From: Karen Mead <ckmead@comcast.net>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 2:33 PM
Subject: Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

City of Oakland Councilmembers □ City of Oakland □ 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza □ Oakland, CA 94612

June 14, 2012

Re: Application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park

Dear Councilmembers:

□ We urge you to DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Ever since we became aware of the movement to place a fenced, off-leash dog area at this relatively small but well-loved and heavily used neighborhood park, we've made a practice of observing the type of use it gets on a daily basis. The activities at this fabulous neighborhood resource include young children at the playground; seniors exercising; school children playing organized games; adults playing ball, exercising, and playing music; and other healthy and enjoyable activities that serve the entire community.

This park is also in extremely close proximity to the Grand Lake Farmers' Market, a wildly successful and enjoyable neighborhood asset that is another vital reason to consider Astro Park an inappropriate location for a dog run. □ □ While we understand the need for exercise areas for off-leash dogs, Astro Park is the wrong place for a dog park. The noise, smell, proximity to children, loss of play area, and damage to the green are just a few of the negatives. Decreased parking and increased noise – and odors – for library patrons and Farmers' Market attendees are also important considerations, as are the lack of funds to maintain a dog park so that it does not instantly become a serious health hazard. □ □ Please take into the strongest consideration the needs of the community at large and not the special interest of its proponents, and deny this conditional use permit. □ □ Thank you. □ □ Karen and Chris Mead □ Boulevard Way

From: <HARDYIC@aol.com>

Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 3:16 PM

Subject: Astro Park Dog Park

To: PKernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandneL.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello City Councilpersons

As a 29 year resident of the Grand Lake/Rose Garden area, I request you vote to DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

The area is highly trafficked, close to a tot lot, right next to an AC Transit stop, with high levels of vehicular traffic. Aesthetically there are problems with the location. It will be eliminating the only open green space in the general vicinity.

I have deep concerns for the safety of the dogs. With all the noise of the tots, the vehicles (cars and trucks), the freeway, a dog could very easily become agitated, jump the low 4 foot fence and attack a bus rider, a tot, a pedestrian or the dog could run out in tot he highly trafficked MacArthur Blvd or LakeShore and get seriously injured or killed. The close proximity of dogs in such a small space could also lead to dogs being stressed to the point of jumping the fence and running out into traffic or attacking a child. None of us want that.

The park is already small. If you apply ANOTHER USE to this small park, it will kill the park. The current activities are plenty for this small area.

Please vote to DENY the permit for this ill conceived dog un in this location.

Jana M. Hardy
441 Elwood Avenue
Oakland, Ca

From: schrager <schrager@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 3:33 PM
Subject: Dog Park proposal
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, Ireid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com
Cc: sue@heragency.com

Since I am unable to come to the upcoming meeting about a dog park, I want to voice my **OPPOSITION to a dog park in my neighborhood**. People who live in Montclair and perhaps other areas of town want to bring their pups down here. NO NO NO. As a child who grew up in the inner city where there was no greenery to play, I say **keep it for the kids for soccer and other community activities**.

I understand there is a plan afoot to try to share the area between the doggies and the community. NO NO NO. Do not break up this beautiful green spot. We don't need barking, dog poop, and people from other neighborhoods trying to tell us what to do down here.

Please do not let them have a dog park in any way in any size.

Nikki Schrager

Nikki Schrager Studio
647 Beacon Street, No. 4
Oakland, CA 94610
Phone: (510) 444-2553
Cell: (510) 289-0410
nikki@nikkischrager.com
www.nikkischraeger.com

From: **Stuart Offer** <stuart.offer@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 3:33 PM
Subject: Proposed Lakeview Dog Park
To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>,
"nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>,
"atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>,
"jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>,
"lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>,
"idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>,
"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,
"Ireid@oaklandnet.com" <Ireid@oaklandnet.com>,
"saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Members of the Oakland City Council,

I understand that the Council will be hearing an appeal from the unanimous decision of the Oakland Planning Commission to deny a conditional use permit for a dog run at Lakeshore and MacArthur. Unfortunately, it is likely that I will be unable to attend the Council meeting. I would like to have my views on the proposed park considered, and I'm sending this e-mail with the request that they be considered by the Council in its decision-making process.

I have been a resident of Crocker Highlands for 32 years, and a frequent user of the open spaces around Lake Merritt as a parent, dog owner, jogger, walker and library user. I fully support those who believe that a dog park in the vicinity of Lake Merritt would be a useful addition to the area. Unfortunately, the Lakeview site proposed for the dog park is simply the wrong place, for several reasons:

1. The proposed park would substantially reduce the available flat, grassed , unshaded space available in the area for human use. Lakeview Park is heavily used by for a variety of activities by a variety of age groups. It is used for informal soccer games, frisbee throwing, tag and other children's activities, workout space and informal meetings by friends and families. There is no similar site available around Lake Merritt.

2. The proposed site is not appropriate for a dog park. Successful dog parks, such as the Piedmont and Point Isabel parks have adequate space for dogs of all sizes to run, and for dogs of all personalities to find personal space. That's why you don't see many bad dog interactions at these parks. They also have both sun and shade spaces and variable terrain, neither of which is present at the Lakeview Park location. Proponents of the Lakeview park have identified a site convenient for some dog owners, but it seems likely that most owners of larger dogs will find the site a disappointment in use compared to other parks in the area. It is unfortunate that other sites, such as the site adjacent to the former stables near Children's Playland, which offers shade, variable terrain and more space, is not fully considered.

3. The proposed park will be an eyesore at the entrance to **Lake Merritt**. Instead of being presented with a view of grassy open space well used by a variety of persons of all ages and cultures, persons approaching Lake Merritt from the east will be presented with a bare dirt, fenced area blocking the remaining park. As I understand the proposal, maintenance of that area will depend on volunteers, so there really is no guarantee that the site will be adequately maintained.

4. The proposed use is inconsistent with the adjacent children's playground. It seems reasonable to assume that if the proposed dog park is approved, the number of dogs collecting in the area near the children's playground will increase. All of these dogs *supposedly* will be on leash, *supposedly* will be people-friendly and dog-friendly, and *supposedly* will be under the full control of their respective owners. Unfortunately, anyone who frequents the Lake Merritt area today knows that all of these suppositions are more than questionable.

I appreciate the opportunity to have my views considered by the Council.

Stuart Offer
770 Longridge Road
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Kathleen Taylor <Kathleen.Taylor@ucop.edu>

Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 3:40 PM

Subject: Please DENY the permit for the dog park at ASTRO park

To: "pkernighan@oaklandnet.com" <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>,

"nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>,

"atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>,

"jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>,

"lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>,

"idelifuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelifuente@oaklandnet.com>,

"dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>,

"lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>,

"saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

This is a wonderful little park. I have eight grandchildren and have taken them all here to swing, play Frisbee, and just run around. Usually we walk the 9 blocks to the park, but sometimes I drive with the really little ones. It

is already difficult to park in the area, and it is unreasonable to think that a dog park won't make this problem worse.

I always had dogs as pets growing up, and plan to get a dog when I retire, but this is just a bad place for a dog park. Compare this to the dog park in Alameda which has a large parking lot. The parking lot, a field, and a hill also separate the dog park from the children's play area.

And finally, dog parks are really not attractive, and it seems to me it would be an eyesore at the proposed location.

Thanks for your consideration.

From: Alaina Eldridge <alainaseldridge@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 5:07 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Counsel Members,

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I live in the neighborhood and have enjoyed the large grassy area for many years now. Every weekend I walk by the park, on my way to the farmers market, and often take the child I babysit to the park in order to play on the grass. The park is almost always being used by families or people playing sports. Getting rid of all the grass and putting in a brown dog area would make the neighborhood less attractive and appealing. I also think it's a poor spot for a dog park and wont be very successful, especially since there are much better dog parks just a couple miles away. So please deny the conditional application for the fenced off dog area and keep the park green. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Alaina Eldridge

From: Jessica Hurd <jessiehurd@hotmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 5:08 PM

Subject: No Dog Run at Astro ParkI

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

I'm writing to request that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I live at 1041 Walker Ave and frequent this park area and appreciate the green open space! Please keep it open for soccer and picnics and frisbee and not cluttered with fences and eye-sores!

thank you very much for your consideration,
Jessie Hurd

From: **Melissa Miyara** <mnmiyara@hotmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 5:47 PM
Subject: FW: Proposed dog run at Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

You recently made the right decision to deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Please affirm this decision at the end of the appeal process to ensure the park remains open and accessible for *all* users and not just one small but vocal segment of the population. **My** original message is below and I still stand by it:

I recently moved to the area, and the open green spaces are among the top factors that initially attracted me to the neighborhood. I am somewhat saddened to find that one of these beautiful spaces is already threatened by a feature that will only serve one small segment of the population.

Please reconsider the idea of building a fenced-in dog run in such a prominent and visible location. I enjoy dogs and even work in a dog-friendly office, however I also think it is important to be selective about where they are allowed to roam off-leash and impact the surrounding land. Astro Park is already host to a variety of recreational uses and I do not believe anything would be gained by deprioritizing those uses for a dog run.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Miyara

From: Melissa Miyara <mnmiyara@hotmail.com>

Date: Mon, Apr 23, 2012 at 3:24 PM

Subject: Proposed dog run at Astro Park

To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I recently moved to the area, and the open green spaces are among the top factors that initially attracted me to the neighborhood. I am somewhat saddened to find that one of these beautiful spaces is already threatened by a feature that will only serve one small segment of the population. Please reconsider the idea of building a fenced-in dog run in such a prominent and visible location. I enjoy dogs and even work in a dog-friendly office, however I also think it is important to be selective about where they are allowed to roam off-leash and impact the surrounding land. Astro Park is already host to a variety of recreational uses and I do not believe anything would be gained by deprioritizing those uses for a dog run.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Miyara

From: Bill Wong <jackson_wong@msn.com>

Date: Thu, Jun 14, 2012 at 6:31 PM

Subject: astro park

To: pkernighan@oakland.net, nnadel@oakland.net, atlarge@oakland.net, jbrunner@oakland.net, lschaaf@oakland.net, idelafuente@oakland.net, dbrooks@oakland.net, lreid@oakland.net, saveastropark@gmail.com

to the members of city council: please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run/park at astro park. once again, i ask that astro park remain as it is - a beautiful green space to play and to enjoy a picnic.
this is the wrong place for a dog run/park - much too dangerous for the dogs should they escape as it is adjacent to an extremely busy intersection.

thank you,
mary lew
athol avenue

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Scott McLaughlin <scott.mclaughlin@ngem.com>

Date: Fri, Jun 15, 2012 at 4:54 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I am a resident of the Lake Grand area and frequently enjoy Astro Park. Astro Park is an invaluable piece of land in our community that has too few green play areas for children.

Respectfully,

Scott McLaughlin
491 Mandana Boulevard, #7
Oakland, California
p. 510-301-3839

From: **Emily Mendel** <emily@mendelnet.com>

Date: Fri, Jun 15, 2012 at 10:21 PM

Subject: No dogs allowed

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

I am writing to ask you to DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. With such little grassy open space in Oakland, we need to reserve all of Astro Park for use my all citizens.

Regards,
Emily S. Mendel
1109 Ashmount Avenue
Piedmont, CA 94610
510.763.1898

From: Michael Sasso <michaelwsasso@hotmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jun 15, 2012 at 5:48 PM
Subject:
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com
Cc: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com

Council Members,

Please do not turn Astro Park into a dog run. Very few large open grassy places in our area of Oakland exist which are suitable for soccer and other field games. Converting a large area of the park into a dog run will severely impact these activities in a negative way. There are many other suitable dog run areas which would not displace play areas for our neighbors and children.

Thank you,

Michael Sasso

492 Staten Ave., #501
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Ronna Benjamin <ronnabenjamin@yahoo.com>
Date: Sat, Jun 16, 2012 at 4:54 PM
Subject: astro park

To: "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>, "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, "ischaaf@oaklandnet.com" <ischaaf@oaklandnet.com>, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Councilpersons,

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for a dog park in Astro Park.

This is a wonderful open green space that is used heavily on the week-ends by families and children and people of all ages. Tots play soccer. People of many nationalities play soccer together. Families run and play on the green. On week days the play lot is always in use.

It is a welcome green sight in an area busy with vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

I live in Adams Point and walk to the play lot with my granddaughter, use the library, and go to the farmers market weekly.

A dog park would be unsightly, with a chain link fence and dirt and wood chips and smells. There is no money for the city to maintain any landscaping and dog owners would have a hard time doing the gardening with their dogs in tow, despite their promises.

Please deny this use.

Sincerely,

Ronna Benjamin

325 Vernon St.

From: Teresa Green <trsgreen@mindspring.com>

Date: Sat, Jun 16, 2012 at 10:00 PM

Subject: I oppose the dog park at astro park

To: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com,

idela Fuente@oaklandnet.com, Ireid@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear council members:

I live in Adams Point at Lenox and Montecito. I frequently walk to Astro Park with my 3 year old daughter. I oppose the proposed dog park there. The dog run is too close to the tot land. I am concerned about the continued safety of my child, if the dog run is placed so close to the area where young children play. The proposed dog park takes up too much of the public open space at the park. If the dog run area were smaller and shifted to the other end of the park away from the tot land play area, I would not oppose it. I recognize the need for a dog park in this area. I don't think the current proposal is a good idea.

From: Rachel Broadwin <chezrachel@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 2:18 PM

Subject: Keep Astro Park Open to Public

To: "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, Pat Kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idela Fuente@oaklandnet.com" <idela Fuente@oaklandnet.com>, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "Ireid@oaklandnet.com" <Ireid@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Hello Councilmembers:

I live near Astro Park, and want to continue to enjoy the open space. I am pleased that the Planning Commission voted against the dog park. Just the other day I saw children and some parents playing soccer in the area proposed for the dog park. I don't think it's right to make this beautiful area for one-use - it should remain open to the public.

Please reject the appeal.

Sincerely,

Rachel Broadwin
900 block of MacArthur Blvd

=====

Greetings from Rachel B.
chezrachel@yahoo.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Lary Heath <laryheath@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 2:55 PM
Subject: Keep Astro Park Open to Public
To: "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, Pat Kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com" <nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "lschaaf@oaklandnet.com" <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idelafuente@oaklandnet.com" <idelafuente@oaklandnet.com>, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com" <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "lreid@oaklandnet.com" <lreid@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com" <atlarge@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers:

The astro park is used by many, not any ONE group.

Please reject the appeal.

Sincerely,
Lary Heath
934 MacArthur Blvd

From: Andrew Bearman <andrew.bearman@gmail.com>

Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 5:55 PM
Subject: Please deny Astro Park dog run appeal
To: pkemighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Hon. Council members,

Just a quick note to urge you to deny the dog-park request for Astro Park near Lake Merritt.

The open area is simply too important to fence off for dog owners. Our Lake Merritt open spaces are precious and should be kept that way whenever possible. Dogs are great, but I don't think we should be encouraging people to have more, larger dogs in the denser neighborhoods of Oakland.

Better places for dog parks might be in otherwise unused public space, like the dog park under the freeway off Clairmont Ave. That's a great use of space.

Let's keep the focus on the amazing improvements made to Lake Merritt this year. We are all excited about the west side bridge and parkway improvements. It's looking great! Thank you for your continued efforts to keep Lake Merritt the jewel of the East Bay. It's a big reason why I love and live in in-town Oakland.

Thanks for your consideration,

-Andrew

Andrew Bearman
438 W Grand Ave, Apt 417
Oakland, CA 94612

From: **Michelle McKenzie** <mmckenzie@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 6:36 PM
Subject: Astro Park Dog Park
To: aclevenger@oaklandnet.com, pkemighan@oaklandnet.com,
nnadel@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lreid@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com,

idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, Ischaaf@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello Oakland City Council Members,

As a resident of Oakland's lower hills and user and admirer of Lake Merritt's running paths and open, green space, I object to the enclosed dog run currently being proposed at Astro Park.

I don't oppose the existence of off-leash dog parks in general, at all. I know they tend to get good use by dogs and their owners. Oakland does have dog parks, and they are an asset for many. More concerning and critical, however, is the shortage of visible, safe, sizable, green spaces to accommodate both children and adults who make up Oakland's sizable population of nearly 400,000 people. There are depressed neighborhoods in Oakland that are completely without suitable open space and the residents of these neighborhoods have come to depend on places like Astro Park to provide a peaceful place for routine recreation. I have yet to run, walk, or drive past any corner of Astro Park and not find it filled with mixed groups of smiling, engaged people--parents, teenagers, children, some who live across the street, others who come from more distant neighborhoods.

There are suitable locations for housing enclosed dog runs (there are examples to be found of how and where it's done well), but this is not one of them. The proposed 21,000 square foot dog park consumes half of the existing space, and oddly chops it up, placing it too close to adjacent children's play areas, making undesirable confrontations more likely. In addition, willfully turning a highly visible green space brown, gray, or muddy, and encircling it with a chain (or any material) fence is just bad, selfish, shortsighted design.

Parks and open space have a health benefit. Open space makes running, soccer, and other calorie-burning group sports and activities possible. These activities promote 1) good health, 2) active lifestyle, 3) esteem-building, and 4) positive social interaction. In this ongoing recession, with high rates of unemployment, it is increasingly important that we provide our residents with safe, healthy, low-cost options for recreation and entertainment. These options are disappearing. Please don't take another away from the people of Oakland. Please keep in mind the basic needs, and health, of Oakland's greater population as well as the green-aesthetic

of the take Merritt environment. I urge you to reject the appeal for a permit to build the dog park in Astro Park.

Thanks for reading,

Michelle McKenzie
Oakland, CA

From: Emily Doskow <doskesq@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jun 18, 2012 at 8:58 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council members:

I'm writing for a second time to urge all of you to save Astro Park from going to the dogs! This lovely little park already is put to good use by a wide segment of Oaklanders. If it becomes a dog park, only the dog folks will have use of it, which doesn't seem fair given that there are numerous other dog parks in the area, not to mention a lot of beautiful nearby hills and trails for walking a dog. Having a dog park so near a toddler play area doesn't seem like a good idea, either. I also think it will be unsightly. I want to be clear that I love dogs and appreciate their need for exercise and socialization--I just think that the city of Oakland isn't required to provide them with every space available, especially one that is already put to good use.

Thanks for your attention.

Emily Doskow
Oakland Resident

From: <James_Jacobson@vfc.com>

Date: Mon, Jun 18, 2012 at 8:04 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello city council members,

My name is James Jacobson. I've lived on the lake for almost seven years now. One of the things about the lake that I cherish, is the tight community feeling. There's something so peaceful about kid's playing soccer on the grass, while all of us parents can just sit and talk. That's really one of the things that makes Lake Merritt special.

I'm not against dogs, but I'm pro kids having the space to interact normally, and watching adults interact normally. I think that kind of public environment is lacking, and it's one of the reasons why our society is broken. I ask that you please be firm in your commitment to keeping this a shared-use space, and not a dog park. For heaven's sake, there's already enough geese poop! :-)

Thanks for your consideration, and Best regards,
James Jacobson
The North Face
Business Manager: Equipment . Gloves

(o) 510 347 2529
(o) 510 219 6712
(f) 510 618 3547

From: Anneka Harper <annekaharper81@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 9:37 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park!
To: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com,
nnadel@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com,
idelifuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com,
lreid@aoklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please save Astro Park! I recently bought a home with my boyfriend and 2 year old son (I'm in Desley Brooks district). One of our favorite places to go is Astro Park. When I heard that people were trying to get a dog park built, I was applaud. This space needs to be kept for the people and growing families. When we visited last weekend, there were two groups of

children's soccer teams, a group doing boot-camp style athletics and another group of pre-teen cheerleaders. And that was on top of the 30+ families with young children playing at the park. A dog park will completely change this space to serve a few.

Please vote against turning Astro Park into a dog park.

Thanks,
Anneka Harper

From: Andrew Jones <amjjunk@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 7:36 PM
Subject: Astro Park - please no dog park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Hi all,

I love Lake Merritt and am lucky enough to call the area home. Among the things I love is the green grass of Astro Park, where people play frisbee, kick around a soccer ball with their kids, and generally enjoy themselves outdoors. I would hate to see a huge portion of that area become a brown dog park, which would make the area not only less enjoyable aesthetically, but inaccessible to people wanting to exercise and enjoy themselves outdoors.

I know many others feel the same way, and hope you'll take this into consideration.

Thanks,
Andrew Jones

From: Faith Darling <faith.darling8@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jun 18, 2012 at 8:40 PM
Subject: Please deny Astro dog park run conditional use permit
To: lschaaf@oaklandnet.com
Cc: idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com

To our city council members,

I am writing to urge you to deny the conditional use permit for a dog run at the Astro Park at the MacArthur Blvd. end of Lake Merritt. I have lived three blocks from this site for twenty-five years and watched it grow into the beautiful and well-used area that it is today. The tot playground, the wonderful Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings, the change in the streets at the end of the lake are all improvements that are enthusiastically used by nearby residents, as is the open playing field area near the library. Everyone likes dogs and knows they need a place to romp and run, but this is not the place. Please don't vote against the Planning Commission's wise decision to deny the permit. Thank you, Faith Darling, 509 Valle Vista Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610.

From: Evan Hirabayashi <ehirabay@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Jun 19, 2012 at 10:59 AM

Subject: Please Save Astro Park

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers, I ask that you please **DENY** the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I'm 29 years old and have lived and worked in the Lake Merritt area my entire life. I currently work at Berry & Berry Law Offices, which is located directly across the street from both Astro Park & the Lakeview Branch Library. I am opposed to the dog run because I strongly disagree with the proposed location. This area, especially on weekends, is already an extremely high trafficked area. During the 6 years that I have worked at Berry & Berry, I have personally witnessed 5 car accidents at the intersections of Lake Merritt & El Embarcadero and Lake Merritt & MacArthur. The intersection of Lake Merritt & MacArthur is particularly dangerous and I worry that the addition of a dog park would only exacerbate the problem. I know the chances are slim, but the potential for major catastrophe are great if a dog were to get loose on that side of the intersection. Most of the accidents I have witnessed are fender benders from either drivers not paying attention or driving too fast (down MacArthur) and not realizing there is another

traffic light before entering onto 580. I think that putting a dog park right on that corner would only add distraction to an already busy intersection. I love Oakland and I love what is currently happening in this great city ours. Uptown has been revitalized, with First Friday seemingly getting more and more popular with each passing month. I am also really excited for the completion of the new construction going on around the Lake. Once that is complete, Lake Merritt will truly be the crown jewel of the City. With that said, I revisit the location of this proposed dog run. The proximity of this dog run to the nearby tot lot is way too close. Again, I know the chances are slim, but what would happen if a dog were to attack a child? All it takes is one ugly incident and the consequences would be regrettable. More bad press for the City? Another costly lawsuit that we can ill afford? These are all potential issues that should be strongly considered.

Although I have several other issues with this proposed dog park, safety is my key concern. As Planning Commission Vice-Chair Huntsman said "I just truly don't believe this is the best place for it" and "I can't in good conscience support this." This proposed dog park increases the dangers of drivers, tots and dogs alike. As stated before, although the danger increase is negligible, all it takes is one ugly incident....one ugly incident to further ruin the image of this beautiful city and area of ours. I understand there is a great need for another dog park. I just truly do not believe this is the right location for it. Thank you all for your time and consideration. I <3 Oakland!

Sincerely,

Evan Hirabayashi | Berry & Berry Law Offices
Direct: 510.250.0442 | Fax: 510.835.5117
Email: EvanH@BerryandBerry.com

From: Joanna Sturiano <joannasturiano@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 21, 2012 at 7:29 PM
Subject: Please deny the application for a dog run at Astro Park
To: pkernlghan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Members,

I'm writing to ask you to deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I am an Oakland resident who lives in the Cleveland Heights area, and I often walk and bicycle along the Astro Park area, and use it as a picnic spot.

Astro Park is a small space to begin with. To add in a dog run to this busy park area would effectively cancel out the net practical and visual benefits of Astro Park's green space, which forms a pleasing continuation of the public lawn alongside Lake Merritt, and helps detract from the concrete span of highway on-ramps and elevated highways at that intersection.

I often see groups of very young children enjoying sports like soccer, which they play across a large span of Astro Park, thanks to its uninterrupted green space. I like knowing that they have this space available to them in which to play, and would not want to see them displaced if a dog run took over the space they needed in order to play their full-field games. I am also concerned about the safety of installing a dog run near a playground.

Finally, I find the traffic around Astro Park heavy enough as it is -- with gridlock frequently backing up underneath the overpass leading to the Lakeshore Ave. commercial district, and on MacArthur Blvd. between Grand Ave. and Lakeshore Ave. This is of course heaviest during the Grand Lake Farmer's Market on Saturdays. To add a dog run to that very area would be to court even more congestion and traffic, and could make any kind of access to Astro Park more difficult, and possibly even more dangerous for pedestrians and visitors to the Farmer's Market (which, it should be noted, does not allow dogs!).

I urge you to deny this application. Concerned dog owners will continue to have use of the generous, beautiful circumference of Lake Merritt right nearby this area along which to run their dogs. But as for a fenced in dog run, they should look somewhere less crowded, further from a playground, and less trafficked than Astro Park.

Joanna Sturiano
Oakland, CA

From: Fred Baumgartner <fredbaum@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Sun, Jun 24, 2012 at 10:21 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com,
nnadel@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com,

idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Oakland City Council Members:

Please deny the appeal for the dog park at Astro Park that received not one affirmative vote when taken before the Oakland Planning Commission. This central location is a focal point for many activities at that end of Oakland's jewel, Lake Merritt. Many people, Oaklanders and non-residents alike use the lake and its environs. Astro Park has, for many years, been an open green space that has played host to a multitude of outdoor activities for people of all ages. It would be a shame to reduce this space by half with a dog park in this beautiful high density neighborhood, my neighborhood. One wonders if even the half that remains open to humans would get much use at all once a dog park, defined by steel fences, barking, and feces is erected. Dogs are wonderful creatures and I've owned four in my lifetime but I don't see how a dog park in this particular place best serves the needs of the majority of Oaklanders. Surely another location can be found for man's best friend. Lake Merritt is a key component of the positive face of this great city. Let us all be careful how we treat it and remember the responsibility we all share as its conservators for the generations to come. □ □ Sincerely, □ □ Fred

Baumgartner □ Bellevue Ave.

Oakland Ca

From: <fspm@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Mon, Jun 25, 2012 at 5:23 PM

Subject: Dog Park Use Permit

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,

atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,

lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,

saveastropark@gmail.com

Cc: David Calabretta <dc3441@gmail.com>

Dear Council Members:

I am against having a dog play area near Astro Park because of its proximity to an area where many young children play. In addition to the potential physical danger to children from dogs whose owners who do not leash them on the way to the enclosed dog area, the barking is likely to frighten many young children, and the dog feces to attract flies and create an unpleasant odor. It would be great if all dog owners cleaned up after their dogs, but this is not the case.

This neighborhood does not have many safe public areas for children to play. Astro Park has provided such a place for many, many years. My own children played here over thirty years ago. It would be a shame if dogs' barking silenced children's laughter.

Sincerely,
Raynor Voorhies
1053 Trestle Glen Road
Oakland

I am requesting that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I own and operate a 38-unit apartment house, One Excelsior Court, which is perhaps the nearest residential property to the proposed dog park. Even now, without a dog park down the street the Resident Manager has to daily remove unwrapped dog droppings from our 6' wide greenbelt along MacArthur Blvd. We are both concerned what bigger problem this will become when dog owners from further away stream into the area with their dogs. Are we going to have to operate a dog station?

With only multi-family housing in the area, parking is already difficult. Parking available at the park is also very limited and the influx of people coming to use the dog park will only intensify this situation.

The Resident Manager is a dedicated champion of this neighborhood. He has taken it upon himself to enroll the owners of the fourplexes on Excelsior Court to prevent blight, keep track of vagrants, report abandoned cars and generally operate a Neighborhood Watch program. We believe there is enough going on in this area without invitng more traffic.

Thank you for your consideration. Please give us a break!

Fran Slate
Silk Purse Properties
c/o Fran Slate Property Mgmt

From: Raynor Voorhies <ravorhies@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Jun 28, 2012 at 9:27 AM
Subject: No dog park at Astro Park, please
To: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Pat Kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, saVeastropark@gmail.com

From: Terry Berman <terryberman2@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jul 2, 2012 at 11:54 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, comnnadel@oaklandnet.com, at-large@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, Ireid@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members,

As a local resident with a dog I am urging your to **DENY** the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. While having space for dogs is something I would appreciate this is not the place. It is far to small to be safe and would take away the precious open space something that is scarce in this city. I really urge you again please do not let this happen

Sincerely,

Terry Berman

From: Cathy <fredbaum@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Jul 3, 2012 at 2:44 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Are you crazy? That is the worst possible location for a dog park! It's right next to a children's playground. It's right next to a busy freeway entrance & shops, restaurants, and a farmers market. Just where do you think all these people will park & unload their dogs? And don't you think there's enough geese trampling all over the grass by the Lake without digging up even more grass for a dog park? Geez. You guys make such bad decisions sometimes. The entire city council voted against this dog park ! Why are you still deliberating this dog park at this site? Why not post "Don't Feed the Wildlife" signs around the Lake, allow dogs on a leash in the park where people pick up their dog's poop, and two big problems will be solved: **Not** as much geese poop around the Lake grass and dogs allowed in the park on a leash without tearing up the precious grass around the Lake!!!!

Catherine, 565 Bellevue Ave

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Gayle Mohrbacker, sunnywindow@juno.com
From: Molly Dowd <mollblaze@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jun 20, 2012 at 10:58 AM
Subject: Deny dog run at Astro Park
To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,
atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,
lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,
dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello.

As a resident of the Lake Merritt area, I do not support the proposition for a dog run at Astro park. It's one of the only grassy areas within the neighborhood for people to gather to play soccer, etc. We go there often with our child to play as well.

Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Thank you,
Molly Dowd

From: Ashlee McGrath <ashleemcgrath@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jul 3, 2012 at 5:28 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

This grassy area is one of few places around the lake that does not have goose/duck poo all over the grass.

A chain link fence would be ugly and the grass will die from all the dogs tearing it up.

In addition, I expect we would start to see unwanted "lawn" furniture start to appear to make this even more of an eye sore!

I believe there is a better location for a dog park/run, behind Fairyland would be better - it also has shade and that area is barley used for anything.

Regards,
Ashlee McGrath
12 year resident of Lake Merritt and dog owner.

From: Naomi Miroglio <naomi@argsf.com>
Date: Tue, Jul 3, 2012 at 7:33 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council,
Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. My family and I have been residents of Adam's Point since 1989, and Astro Park is a very important open space for the neighborhood. The lawn area is in constant use, for activities of all ages. It is the gateway to Lakeview and the Lake, and a fenced dog run is not appropriate in this location.

Sincerely,
Naomi Miroglio

From: Steven Belcher <swbelcher007@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jul 4, 2012 at 8:18 AM
Subject: Astro - Lakeshore Dog Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

This is a short note regarding the proposed dogpark. It was my impression at the last hearing before the Planning Commission that the dogpark supporters acknowledged that the Lakeshore site was not the optimum option (e.g., parking, conflicts with other users, heavy adjacent traffic) for a dogpark. Several speakers in support of the dog park reviewed their journey that led them to Lakeshore/Astro park and noted that they had been forced to consider this less than desirable site by strong opposition to other sites (e.g. Children's fairyland board). The dog supporters are

good people and their goal deserves Council support in revisiting previously rejected alternatives, which in hindsight, are much more appropriate and workable than the present proposal. Even the dog park supporters give the impression that putting their present proposal in Lakeshore/Astro Park is like trying to shove a size nine foot into a size five shoe.

Sincerely, Steve Belcher

From: Jennifer Keeler <jenniferkeeler@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 3:29 PM

Subject: Proposed dog run at Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I'm writing to let you know that I do not want a dog park at Astro Park. I would like you to Deny the application for a conditional use permit.

I have lived in Lake Merritt for 12 years and I have enjoyed the park consistently over this time. The area of the lake that has been chosen as a potential dog park site is used by many people for many different things. I do not agree with sectioning it off for one group to use, when it is used by so many groups currently. It is a nice open space. It strikes me as similar to making the area into a golf course that only golfers can use. It creates an area of the park for one group to use excluding all others.

This area is also a particularly populated area of the lake and I'm not sure why you would consider having a bunch of dogs so close to so many people, much less a children's playground.

Jennifer Keeler

From: Ann Marie Davis <hazeloutlaw@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 4:51 PM

Subject: Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Council members:

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I love dogs but I think that this particular place that you are considering putting a dog park is too close to children, and much too busy. I think that dogs do not need to run around and relieve themselves in such a congested place. Having dog urine and feces in this park would put an end to the enjoyment of the park for everyone else. Dog parks have been traditionally in places with more isolation from such intense human activities. Please reconsider.

Sincerely,

--

Ann Marie Davis

Poetry and art are everything magical and everything real

.....

From: Richard Hart <richard_p_hart@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 5:45 PM
Subject: Please deny the application for the dog run at Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

To the Oakland City Council :

Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I understand you are intending to vote on this issue in September. The Dog Run is an unnecessary incursion on a highly utilized and refreshingly green space in Oakland. The Oakland Planning Commission has already come to this conclusion. Moreover, at a time when the city is struggling for every dollar, there are many ways to spend the money on more critical items, such as better roads or better policing.

Thank for your support against this permit.

Richard Hart
951 Scott St
Oakland

email: richard_p_hart@yahoo.com

From: schrager <schrager@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 6:23 PM

Subject: DOG PARK

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: Sue Levin <sue@heragency.com>, saveastropark@gmail.com

I beg you PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS!!! This is my neighborhood – I can see the section of the park they want to fence off for “dogs” – I can hear any loud sounds that come up from that area. What I see is a beautiful **GREEN** spot where kids play soccer and where the community often has events. I do not want people, especially those who live up in the hills, to come to my neighborhood to walk their dogs. They want to come here, shop at the farmers market and let their dogs run and befoul my neighborhood. Yes, I keep emphasizing that word – **NEIGHBORHOOD**. I have lived here for 22 years. I do not want this. I support my local small business owners. I love Oakland.

As you must be aware by now, the City of Albany decided to put a dog park right in front of one of my colleague’s home. She is a 65 year old woman who oftentimes cannot find parking because of the dog owners. What used to be a beautiful **GREEN** area with trees now has a chain link fence, no GREEN grass, and is a constant muddy poop-smelling mess. Dog owners from Richmond bring their dogs there. They do not live in Albany. But they bring their dogs there. I do not want anything like this in my neighborhood. PLEASE DO NOT BE BROW BEATEN BY THE DOG OWNERS. Do not give in.

Very truly yours,

Nikki Schrager

Nikki Schrager Studio
647 Beacon Street, No. 4
Oakland, CA 94610
Phone: (510) 444-2553
nikki@nikkischrager.com
www.nikkischrager.com

From: John and Kira <johnandkira@comcast.net>

Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 6:56 PM

Subject: Astro park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To Oakland City Council members,
I would like to ask you to deny the request to turn part of Astro park into a dog park. Having lived near a dog park for years (Rockridge, under freeway) I know first hand the many issues that arise; dog poop that isn't cleaned up, blue waste bags littering the grounds and strewn about nearby, noise.

I often enjoy the park now as an expanse of open space shared freely by many different groups. A dog park would curtail that freedom.

I urge you to deny the conditional use permit.

Thank you,

John Lancaster

From: Carol sue Richardson <csrterp@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 7:03 PM

Subject: Our children need Astro Park!

To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

As a single, sole parent of a young child, and as an Oaklander who uses the public parks, I urge you to vote against the fencing off of part of Astro Park's field for a dog run. Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Spacious, attractive, healthful parks are critical for the upbringing of healthy, happy children. I and my daughter are animal lovers too, but the children must be our priority. Our children are our future, and whether or not you have children, please remember that you represent them and that the future well-being of all of us depends on the well-being of our children. Look into your heart and do the right thing for all of us.

Thank you.

Carol Sue Richardson

From: queenslu@yahoo.com <queenslu@yahoo.com>

Date: Thu, Jul 5, 2012 at 9:49 PM

Subject: SaVe Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello,

Please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I'm a responsible pit bull dog owner and I have plenty of places in Oakland & Berkeley to take my dog to play. I want my newborn baby to be able to play at Astro park. I don't feel that particular location is ideal for a dog park.

Rgds,

Varsha Brown

Sent from my HTC on the Now Network from Sprint!

From: Laura Jerrard <l_jerrard@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri, Jul 6, 2012 at 12:02 AM

Subject: Please DENY the application for a C.U.P. for the dog run at Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Persons,

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I am a dog owner and hope that the City of Oakland can make better provisions for dogs in the parks, but NOT HERE. This is a well-used open space and beautiful gateway to Lake Merritt Park. As someone that visits dog parks I can tell you - dog runs are ugly, with or without flower borders. They're utilitarian

spaces that are appropriate for screened, hidden or tucked away locations. Putting a dog run at Astro Park is like putting a washing machine in the living room - even the nicest model isn't going to fit.

Thank you for considering my input on this issue.

with regards,

Laura Jerrard
1114 E 19th St
Oakland, CA 94606

From: Kasey Ellison <kaseydellison@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Jul 6, 2012 at 10:06 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandneLcom
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I am an avid dog lover, I volunteer at the East Bay SPCA and I donate to them annually as well so no one I understand that there is a need in the area for dogs to play. I however don't understand why it must be astro parks, since it's clear that this area is already being utilized by children, families, and many non profit organizations. Through all my visit to East Bay Regional Parks (I visit one weekly for a running club), I've yet to see a dog park that close to a children's play area most aren't even sharing the same land, and I'm sure this was done on purpose for the protection of both the children and the dogs. Why would Oakland do something so different from all the surrounding cities?

I'm not one to complain without giving a suggestions. There is plenty of nice space inside the Lake Merritt area this would not only be better for the dogs as it would keep them away from street traffic, but because there is fee'd parking inside the Lake Merritt area it could help further fund the dog park. There is also one huge space that is very underutilized near Ahn's 1/4 burgers which states currently "NO DOGS" that could be blocked off

for a dog park, as a current resident of the area who sees this park every day, and it's hardly has ANY human foot traffic through that area.

Please do not place a dog park in Astro Park, please reserve this area so that children can play, adults can remain active/healthy, and non profit organizations can flourish.

Thanks,

Kasey Ellison
Lake Merritt Area Resident.

From: **Brandon Brown** <brandon@kathak.org>
Date: Fri, Jul 6, 2012 at 12:29 PM
Subject: Please don't destroy Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council,

My name is **Brandon Brown** and I am emailing you today to ask you to please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park! I have lived here in the Lake Merritt area for a year now and I love the whole area because there are so many things going on there and so many different spaces that you can utilize depending on your needs. The Astro Park is one of my favorite spaces of the Lake area because it is such a wide and open area which can be used for big events or when there are no events going on it can be used in multiple ways by many people at the same time. Part of the beauty of this particular space is that you can have a soccer game going on on one side of the park, loungers who just want to soak up sun on another side, and people like me who want to use the space to dance can do so as well without competing for the space. If you take half of that space away for the dog park, then it will destroy that peaceful coexistence of the Astro park patrons and I feel there will be more rallying for that open space.

I also feel the dog park is a terrible idea for this space because it would totally ruin the feel and aesthetic values of the Astro Park because it would no longer be a vast field of green for all to enjoy. It's beauty would be marred with the erection of the brown fenced enclosure... come on of all things, why a fence? That's just what we need are more fences to totally ruin one of the few flat and open green spaces we have in the area. I mean

in all fairness I can sympathize for the fact that dog owners want a space for their dogs to be able to run free, but with the knowledge that there are quite a few dog runs within the area, I really can't allow for such a beautiful space to be destroyed. So please, when you go to vote on this I beg you to vote to save this beautiful space. Thank you for your time and consideration

--

A concerned Lake Merrit resident
Brandon Brown
6th Ave, Oakland, CA 94606

From: stephen cunningham <stephent_94606@yahoo.com>
Date: Sat, Jul 14, 2012 at 10:14 AM
Subject: Doggie Park at Lakeside
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

<p>Dear Council Members,</p> <p>Please vote to preserve the open space at Lakeside. I have lived in the area for 40 years and clearly see that this land is swamp land and each winter becomes a natural swamp flooded with water and that is no place for a doggie park. Please deny the application.</p> <p>Concerned Citizen</p> <p>StephenT</p>	

From: Marisel Brown <mariselps23@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, Jul 29, 2012 at 2:07 AM
Subject: PLS VOTE NO/DENY-Conditional use permit to convert Astro Park to dog run
To: "nnadel@oakland.net" <nnadel@oakland.net>
Cc: "council@oakland.net" <council@oakland.net>

Dear Councilmember Nadel:

I am requesting that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Astro Park is the only large open greenspace in the Lakeshore area that is centrally located. I am a dog lover, but the site is well suited to team sports that require a wide open field. Moreover, undisturbed it can serve multiple purposes to a greater number of residents than a dog run.

Exercise is essential to good health for children, adults, & seniors; and we need to encourage as many free venues for physical activity as possible in the neighborhood. A better location for a dog run is under the freeway. A portion of the parking lot on the Lakeshore Avenue side could be sectioned off. There may be a loss of revenue from parking; however, this may be offset by purchases made on Lakeshore by dog

owners when they bring their canine companions for a romp.

It is my hope tha you will deny the application as requested.

Marisel Brown
Perkins St.

From: Mary Jo Rhyne <maryjorhyne@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 12, 2012 at 12:55 PM
Subject: Astro Dog Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com

This is a crazy idea. It is such a lovely open space available for whatever the mood wants it to be. Not fences, feces and fuzzy friends - take them away from this human space. Please do not do this!!! I am just one little voice representing my family of 4 and one on the way, as well as others who I tell and say "this is nuts." . Very sincerely, Mary Jo Rhyne, 4637 Park Bl., Oakland, CA. 94602 - homeowner, grandmother, walker, cat owner, formerly a dog owner, school librarian and other things.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Brian Collins <briancollins111@yahoo.com>
Date: Fri, Aug 10, 2012 at 9:07 PM
Subject: please DENY application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,
Whereas I realize that you are all dealing with several major issues in Oakland right now, I urge you to do the right thing on a very simple issue - that of denying a conditional use permit for a proposed dog run at Astro Park. I'm a big dog lover, but I also know that there are bounds to what we should allow dogs and their owners to do. In this case, it is clear that allowing a dog park in Astro Park would significantly alter both the existing use of the park by children and adults alike who use it for such things as soccer, frisbee, and just lounging in the sun, and the aesthetic value of the park itself - the "welcome mat" to Lake Merritt, after crossing under 580.

I urge you to DENY the conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Sincerely,
Brian Collins
872 Erie St., Oakland, CA

From: Elizabeth James <elizabeth.james82@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Aug 15, 2012 at 8:26 PM
Subject: Astro Park Dog Run Proposal
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council members,

I write to request that you please deny the proposal to add a dog run in Astro Park. This is a beautiful patch of green space in an otherwise busy, urban setting. My two-year-old daughter loves to play on the playground adjacent to there and then run through the large grassy patch unimpeded by sidewalks, bicyclists, and other hazards. We live in Upper Rockridge (near College and Broadway), an area surprisingly lacking in toddler-friendly playgrounds and green space, and her favorite activity in the world is to visit Astro Park and run wild. My husband and I have picnicked there with friends and played football, and when we used to live in Adams Point, the grass along Astro Park was a lovely counterpoint to the 580 as I walked daily to the stores on Lakeshore.

Please do not allow this park to be spoiled. Oakland is such a beautiful city. It would be a shame to allow over-development to wreak havoc through a beautiful part of town.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth James

From: dan harvitt <danharvitt@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 16, 2012 at 2:46 PM
Subject: Opposed to off-leash dog run at Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

I am asking that the City Council vote to DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I am a dog lover who opposes a dog park at Astro Park for the following reasons:

1. The close proximity to the child's playground. Many dogs do not co-exist well with small children. While the vast majority of dogs will be kept under good control, this park will increase the possibility of a child being hurt. Increased child-dog interactions will occur. This may be a rare event, but the consequences are potentially disastrous. Aside from bodily injury, a considerable number of kids are terrified of dogs. I can't believe that the dog run is that close to the playground in the plans.
2. Aesthetics. Actually, this is my #1 reason. Rather than a grassy field and trees, there will be metal fences, and a dusty wood chip ground cover. Nothing i have seen in the plans represent an improvement to the visual appeal to this area, which is the introduction to our neighborhood for those exiting off of HW580E. Right now, the field marks the end of the dominating concrete overpass and the asphalt lot beneath it, and the beginning of green space that leads to the lake. The dog park would certainly damage that. I believe that a dog park runs counter to everyone's goal of keeping Oakland beautiful! Can you show me a beautiful wood chipped, cyclone fenced dog park?
3. Displacement. This space is currently used for pick up soccer games, ultimate frisbee, and by all ages. These field sports need a broad and level field, which is not available elsewhere around the lake.
4. A dog park does not need to be located in such an ideal level space. Witness the dog park on a steep unattractive slope just about 3/4 mile away, on Linda Ave in Piedmont. Dogs seem to have a great time there, despite it's location beneath the Oakland Ave overpass. Perhaps there is another space in Lakeside Park, perhaps by the underused botanical gardens or the boating center, or the stable? If Lakeview Elementary is indeed closing, maybe the area behind the building can be used? Just because the current Lake Merritt master plan does not specify alternative areas, does not make those alternative impossible.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Dan Harvit
29 Sylvan Way
Piedmont CA

From: Scott Burger <sburg@hotmail.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 16, 2012 at 6:05 PM
Subject: Please no dog park at astro park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Distinguished Oakland City Council Members,
I have lived and worked in Oakland for almost 20 years. I love Oakland. I especially love the Grand Lake/Lakeshore area, in large part because of the play area at Astro Park. I play soccer there on Sundays. My kids play there quite often. A dog park in that space will ruin the park, both functionally and aesthetically. I have a five-year-old and a two-week-old. I am not going to bring my kids to a part that sits so close to a dog park.

I hope you make the right choice and DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run.

Best regards,
Scott Burger
2863 Birdsall Ave,
Oakland, CA 94619

From: Carole Glanzer <cglanzer@recknor.net>
Date: Thu, Aug 16, 2012 at 6:19 PM
Subject: Please DENY the dog run - SAVE AstroPark
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please reject the appeal to deny the application for a conditional use permit for the dog run at Lakeshore and MacArthur. I love dogs, and realize they need a space to run freely, but this is not the place. The surrounding fence will turn the current open space into a prison yard. It will no longer be an open space that leads into the Lake area.

From: Vivian Thomas <vivianne@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 16, 2012 at 7:40 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

To the Council,
There are not a lot of places the kids in the community can run and play safely. I find it incredible that people would want to take animals over people. It boggles my mind that someone would like to take a popular place that is used by the community at large and turn it into a dog park. If it were not widely used I would have no complaints but not Astro Park not a day goes by that you don't see lots of people playing soccer, tag, catch and frisbee in the park. Please do not turn this Park over to the Dogs.
Vivian Thomas

From: helen wren <tennis1girl@me.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 16, 2012 at 9:39 PM

Subject: No dog park!

To: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Please keep Astro park free of animals and people, children friendly. It's working as a safe, meeting, play place for children. My grandkids ages 6-11 loved playing there
Sent from my iPhone

From: Kristin H <bonmot_2000@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 17, 2012 at 11:33 AM

Subject: Astro Park - Please Deny the Permit!

To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Hello City Council members,

As an Oakland Resident I am writing to request that you deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I live right across the street on Beacon, my apartment sits on the hill and I can see down to the park and the surrounding areas. I have so enjoyed the view, the area, the people the close proximity to all the wonders that the Lake Merritt area offers, the small town feel and sense of refuge in a big city environment, during such tumultuous times of our world and economy etc has been such a wonderful experience.

That refuge will be greatly impacted with the addition of a dog park planted smack dab in the heart of one of the last remaining places for people to relax and seek exercise, release and refuge from the stresses of life.

here are bullet points of how it negatively would impact the area and our refuge:

1. Noise pollution. Dogs barking and parents yelling, when and if the dogs fight. Noise travels up, right to all the apartments on Beacon and Boden street. it's magnified by being on the hill.
2. Stress increased for residents. People need more than ever at this time their personal exercise, body and mind care. Taking away a play and exercise area for people that is used so frequently and joyously, and when there are dog park alternatives right nearby that DONT impact the people, is wrong. is unjust. and is unjustified. Let's take care of the people. The people pay the bills, not the dogs. It's easier to find solutions for the dogs than the people.
4. This is a VERY children-centric area. To allow a dog park right next to their jungle gym that they so love, to allow dogs SO incredibly close to the area that is crowded with family and children walking the streets, especially on weekends, is asking for trouble.

Consider just how many young people in Oakland also find it quite 'fashionable' to own a pit bull. you can argue that they are not aggressive, but there's too much evidence to the contrary.

SOLUTIONS Abound!

There are MANY wonderful parks already designated for dogs. AND there is a wonderful unused park near the lake designated for a dog park that is away from the kids area, away from the apartments that house those who want some peace.

Please act wisely and consider that there are solutions for those who need a dog park 2 feet from their door, and solutions which do not grossly impact the lives of those living near the park.

Thank you,
Kristin Hanke

From: Joshua Drake <jdjd123@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 20, 2012 at 12:17 PM
Subject: Please -- No Dog Park at Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To the City Council:

As an Oakland resident living two blocks away from Astro Park (at the corner of Lakeshore Ave and Macarthur Blvd), I am writing to ask that you DENY the application to create an area for dogs at Astro Park.

Here's why:

- 1) We have a severe shortage of open space and green space in our neighborhood. Creating a dog run is what you do with a surplus of open space. We have a shortage.
- 2) AESTHETICS -- It will spoil the beauty of that little patch of green in the midst of the gray roads and highways all around it.
- 3) FAIRNESS -- People need a green place to congregate, play sports, lounge and relax.
- 4) SAFETY -- There's a children's playground right there in the park.

5) OVERLOAD -- This is a small park. It is already home to a library, a playground, a sports field, and a small fitness (chin-ups) area. We don't want to cram in a dog run into our cute and already bustling park. Please find another place where it won't be so overloaded.

Please keep Astro Park the way it is.

Sincerely,
Joshua Drake
637 Beacon Street, Apt 16
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Tom Willging <twillgin@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 20, 2012 at 1:29 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, Chris Willging <cwillging@yahoo.com>, Judith Willging - Home <willjude2@gmail.com>

Dear Oakland City Council:

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for a dog run at Astro Park. My wife and I live in the Lake Merritt area as does our daughter and her family, including two young grandsons, and our son. All of us use Astro Park, primarily the grandchildren who use the playground often.

We all love dogs and want them to have room to roam. But this park does not seem to be the best place to put a dog run. In addition to endangering children, creation of a dog run would displace the many impromptu activities that occur in the mecca of green space we call Astro Park. Just yesterday, I was riding my bike in the area and saw a frisbee game, soccer players practicing in front of a portable goal, and lots of children using the slides, swing sets, and other equipment.

Please take into account these existing uses of Astro Park and reject the application for a conditional use permit. The Planning Commission thoroughly studied the question and concluded that a dog run would not be appropriate for space that the neighborhood uses so fully.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Willging

177 19th St #2D
Oakland, CA 94612

--

Tom Willging
177 19th Street, Apt. 2D
Oakland, CA 94612
510-835-0159 (home)
202-491-4747 (cell)

From: Evan Stone <evanstone777@hotmail.com>
Date: Sat, Aug 18, 2012 at 9:11 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park...
To: council@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council,

I am an AC Transit passenger, that uses the bus stop next to the proposed dog park site at Astro Park. I am very concern for both myself and even the dogs that will be using this as their place to run around freely. But as a bus passenger, I really don't think having a silly dog park is a pleasant environment to be around while waiting for my 57 bus with my grocery bags in hand. I can not stand the smells of dog messes.

And as a dog, this isn't the most pleasant part of the lake for the dogs. There is the continuous traffic noises of 580...Sirens of ambulances...and just many homeless individuals.

As I walk the lake on an almost daily basis...Maybe the lake area isn't the correct place within Oakland to really be setting up a dog park. I do observe many individual taking their dogs walking the area on leashes, which seem a great way to get their pets out. And their seem to be a couple of really great dog parks within a 5 mile radius of this location, both in Alameda and San Leandro Marina that these dog owners can be using.

Please keep Astro Park open to the current activities that are happening.

Sincerely,
Evan Stone
510-0502-5349

From: Chris PANKEY <19721976@pacbell.net>
Date: Thu, Aug 23, 2012 at 9:01 AM

Subject: A Dog Run at Astro Park? Please Don't Approve this.
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to request that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

I am against this because it because there are already plenty of areas for dog owners to walk their dogs, and at which the dogs can relieve themselves.

Astro Park is an area that experiences high usage by the public and to cut out some of the area for the sake of some dogs, is wrong. Especially so when one understands that the dogs (and their owners) will defile that land.

Having spent a lot of time at Oakland parks, schools, and soccer fields as a soccer referee, I am continually amazed at the irresponsible behavior of dog owners. Owners seem to treat their dogs as some cute family member that has license to relieve themselves anywhere they care to. The owners typically chuckle while their dogs mark their territory, and typically that territory is a bush, a tree, a downspout, a spot of lawn, or even a play structure. This is wrong. The dogs defile the structures and kill the plants, and yet the dog owners don't seem to care.

I have had plenty of run-ins with parents and spectators on the soccer fields because of this. Dogs are not allowed on the Jack London soccer fields because of what they do to the fields, and because of the health issues that come with defecating on the fields. Regardless of whether the owner carries their socially responsible plastic bag, and picks up the mess, residue and bacteria are left behind and this poses the biggest problem. Parvo,

Ringworm, and other maladies are carried by some dogs, and long after the dog and owner have departed, those maladies remain to afflict those using the parks or playgrounds.

And if the dog run were approved, does anyone believe that the dogs would only relieve themselves at this run, and not in the surrounding area? They mark their territory, and another dog marks over that, and it goes on and on. That's why the plant life within and around most dog runs has died.

Please deny this application request. It's a bad idea for a small park that sees high usage by the public.

Thank you.

Chris Pankey
510.220.9220

From: Liz Fuchs <eaf11182002@yahoo.com>
To: Pat Kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>; Councilwoman Schaaf <lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>; Councilmember Kaplan <atlarge@oakland.net>; Councilman Reid <llreid@oaklandnet.com>; Councilwoman Brooks <dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>; Councilman De La Fuente <jdelafuente@oaklandnet.com>
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2012 10:39 AM
Subject: Please Deny Dog Run at Eastshore/Astro Park

Honorable Councilmembers

I am urging you to deny the proposed dog run at Eastshore park that will come before you this fall because it will create more demands for maintenance of public facilities at a time when the city lacks sufficient resources to adequately maintain its existing public spaces.

If you think a fence will not create more maintenance demands, think again.

Attached are photos I took this morning 8/31 at 930 am while walking around the Lake. Two are fence posts outside the Essex building on Lakeside Drive. These posts (photos 71 and 73) are tagged often and never cleaned up. Even the new 12th street facilities are tagged and degraded and the project is not even done yet! Photos 77 and 80 are posts at 12th street and notice photo #80 is a tag with the encouraging line: "Thanks 4 makin new stuff to write on."

Approving new facilities that will be a magnet for tagging and thus add to the degradation of the neighborhood when the city lacks any sufficient resources to maintain current facilities is an irresponsible use of taxpayer funds. No more taxpayer funds should go to new facilities until the city can adequately maintain what it currently is responsible for. Please deny the request to create a fenced dog run at Eastshore park when it comes before you. And instead maybe we should turn all our energies to figuring out how to adequately fund graffiti abatement. Thank you.

Liz Fuchs
Merritt Ave.

From: Nicole LeBlanc <nikleb@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Sep 24, 2012 at 2:09 PM
Subject: No Dog Park (please!)
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,
I'm writing to request that City Council consider not turning Astro Park into a park for dogs.

I use this space as a human (with my human friends!) on a regular basis to play soccer and run drills with my local outdoor "boot camp" group. We run, play games, compete in tug-of-war and play hard in order to stay in shape and have fun in our neighborhood. The idea of having this precious green space overrun with dogs is a little disconcerting, and I would be really disappointed to see our beloved Astro park go to the dogs... literally.

Sincerely,
Nicole Le Blanc

From: Steve B <sbreg82@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Sep 24, 2012 at 2:44 PM
Subject: Astro Park Comments 092412
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Hello Oakland City Council,

I request that the council DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I believe this is a bad spot for the dog park. In my two years of being a resident of the area, I own a condo off Hanover, I have seen this park used by children, families, for recreational sports, and by passerbyers who are just enjoying the area. Building a park in such an established and well used area would only be blight on this area and degrade usage and quality of life in the area. The last vote by the planning commision was unaimously against this project and there is no question in anybodies mind this is not the right spot.

It would seem whomever is pushing this through continues to disregard the public wants and common sense. There are many better areas to build that would impact the area much less and cause much less of an outcry. At the last city planning meeting where this was unanimously rejected 50% of the people were for the project and 50% were against. As there is no clear majority I again request you reject this proposal and DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Steven Bregante
322 Hanover Ave.
APT 307
Oakland, CA 94606

From: Betsy T. Johnson <betsy.tyler@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 25, 2012 at 10:40 AM
Subject: Please no off leash dogs in Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council,

I've been following the Astro Park Dog Park saga for quite a while. I have lived on Lakeshore near E. 18th for almost five years now. I visit that park at least once a week on our walk to the shops and cafes on Lakeshore. My toddler loves to chase the geese on the lawn. The play ground is lovely, but we also value that big open green space in the middle of the city. So, if you're counting public opinions in consideration of the appeal, please know that my husband and I vote "no" on the dog park.

Thanks for all you do to keep our city beautiful and functional, we hope we never have to move.

Betsy Johnson
E. 17th SL, Oakland

ps. He also really loves to visit the construction site on the east end of the lake. Thanks for all the dump truck and digger action!

--

www.oaklandgardenkitchen.wordpress.com

From: Nora <bechange.nora@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 25, 2012 at 2:14 PM
Subject: Please save astro park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hi!

First, thank you for your work to make Oakland an amazing city to live in. I'm writing today to request that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Our city and our neighborhood needs open space and that open space is very used and appreciated. Kids and Adults alike play soccer, run and relax in that space. Please prioritize human use over pet use for that park.

Thank you very much,

Nora

--

NORA FEENEY PITTENGER

bechange.Nora@gmail.com

952.484.6692

From: David L. Hurty <dave@hurty.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 25, 2012 at 4:23 PM

Subject: DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Members,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I live near this park and pass it often. Many small children and parents use the area for soccer and other field games. It is one of few areas where it can be used for such play activities in this neighborhood.

Cordially,

David L. Hurty

Rev. David L. Hurty

565 Bellevue Avenue, Apt. 707

Oakland, CA 94610-5016

Home: 510.465.3301

Fax: 510.465.3301

Mobile: 510.435.1568

dave@hurty.com

From: Dynastyluv <dynastyluv_95@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 25, 2012 at 10:01 PM

Subject: Astro park in Oakland, Ca

To: council@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

This email is sent to you to please deny the appeal to have Astro Park become a dog park. My son and I love the park enjoy the open space to able to play a variety of games and sports or have picnics in that area. To have a dog park would not be a good idea. I'm sure there are other places to have the dog park created, but please not at Astro Park.

Concerned parent,

Penny Aporillo
dynastyluv_95@yahoo.com

Sent from my MetroPCS 4G Android device

From: Laura Sweitzer <laurasweitzer@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Oct 7, 2012 at 1:00 PM
Subject: Request to DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council,

I am writing to you to request that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I enjoy using the park often as is. I think it is very important that the city protect community green spaces that all Oakland residents can use. Please don't block off this park as a space for Dogs to run around and use the bathroom.

I look forward to accompanying your final decision on this matter in November or December. Please keep Astro Park a space we can all enjoy!

Thank you for your time and attention. Best,

--

Laura Ann Sweitzer
260-908-2395
1637 6th Ave
Oakland, CA 94606

From: jo edel <joedelbean@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, Oct 14, 2012 at 9:15 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

To the Council,

I am a long time homeowner in Oakland. Active in my neighborhood. I walk Lake Merritt park regularly. I am dismayed to hear of yet another attempt to ruin Astro park. Last time with a Trader Joe's. This time taking out a huge part of the space for a dog park.

There do not seem to be very many easy access spaces for open play for kids or adults, for soccer or other spontaneous play. Most of the park is covered in goose poop. There is already an absolute lack of dog control in the park where they are supposedly not allowed. I do not trust this would not also be poorly monitored. Do you really think that all of the dogs in that fenced in area are not then going to be taken for a walk around the lake?

I do have friends with dogs and know there are dog runs in various parts of Oakland. Off the beaten path where their "not-attractive" fenced in areas are not so public. I do not see any reason to take up so much of this fun part of the park for dogs. And believe it would be an eyesore.

Every trail in Oakland where I walk there are dogs off leash despite leash laws. I just cringe at the thought of a big fenced in area dedicated to dogs. The City seems to have no control over the parks and trails as it is. This would mean many many dogs near the children's play area. I have been jumped on by dogs off leash and a friend bitten while walking the trails of Oakland. Get a grip first on the areas where they are already taking up too much space.

If you need a park project deal with the geese poop that is ruining the space. And start to control the invasion of dogs already present.

Thank you for hearing my objections. Please do not let this happen. I would be interested in hearing which of you are backing this. It is election time.

Joanne E'del

From: Melinda Stockmann <melinda.stockmann@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Oct 14, 2012 at 3:05 PM
Subject: Please do not approve dog park at Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members:

I am writing to ask that you uphold the Planning Commission's vote to deny the creation of a dog park in Astro Park. I live just 2 blocks away from the park, I love the park, and I am strongly opposed to the allocation of space in this specific area for dogs and their owners.

Before living right near the lake, I lived on Kingston Avenue, just 2 blocks from the dog park on Linda Avenue. I saw that the area of the park allocated to dogs for a leashless run was a patch of dirt and dust that could not sustain turf or other groundcover plants.

While I do not currently own a dog, I love them and I think that the portion of the park on Linda Avenue that's been allocated to dogs is appropriately sited.

Lake Merritt is a gem and huge asset to the Oakland Community. Astro Park comprises an important anchor and gateway to not only the Lake Merritt landscape but also to the thriving neighborhood commercial district that is Lakeshore, Lake Park, and Grand Avenue. I love that this space accomodates formal and informal sports play as well as children using the playground and residents taking advantage of the branch library. I also love the opennes of this park and the fact that t can amble over there and watch the goings on in the neighborhood while enjoying an ice cream or talking to a friend on the phone.

As a resident and someone with a master's degree in landscape architecture, I urge you to deny the appeal for a dog park at Astro Park, which comes from a small sector of a large and diverse community, and to use your authority to preserve and enhance this wonderful public space.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinions.

Sincerely,

Melinda Alice Stockmann
534 Boden Way
Oakland, CA 94610

From: <emartinez15@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 11:18 AM
Subject: Astro Park/ Please DENY Permit for Dog Run
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,

We urge you to DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. We live two blocks from Astro Park, and have thoroughly enjoyed it, along with the Lakevie Library, since our kids were born six years ago.

Our kids love running through the grass and feel free because there are no dogs around. In an urban setting like ours, we (human beings, including children) need the green space. Also, unfortunately some dog owners do not restrain their dogs while on the sidewalks, and though we're sure they're harmless, the dogs still scare kids (and adults). We hope you are able to find another site for a dog run so that dog owners can have their needs met, but Astro Park is certainly not the place to do it.

Thank you very much,

Marisela Martinez

Sebastian Martinez
Sofia Martinez
Enrique Martinez

From: Marie Cruz <marie_cruz94@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 2:46 PM
Subject: Preserving Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Oakland Council,

I am a college student, and I deeply enjoy spending pleasant, dog free Saturdays at Astro Park. I am concerned that the proposal to turn the majority of Astro Park into a dog park will ruin the park, and is environmentally harmful. The dog park would be too close to the playground, which may cause unsanitary conditions, and limit the amount of grass and space for everybody to use. In reality, building a dog park limits the accessibility to a decent, well managed park, and will ruin the already lovely, simple nature of Astro Park.

There are plenty of other wonderful, more ideal locations for a great dog park, and Astro Park is not the best fit for such extreme, costly maintenance.

Please, consider whether allowing the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park is really beneficiary to the locals and surrounding community who also use Astro Park for recreation. A dog run would significantly limit accessibility to everyone who uses the park, would create a messy, noisy environment on such a small plot of land, is not cost effective, and is environmentally harmful.

Thank you,

Marie Cruz

From: Patti Byram <patti@trademarkevents.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 4:01 PM
Subject: Save Astro park.
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council:

I ask that you please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed fenced, off-leash dog run in our neighborhood park – Astro Park. This green park is beautiful as it is and used in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife.

This is not the right place for a dog run. Thank you.

Patti Byram
Resident of Grand Lake area – 17 years

Patti Byram
Accounting/HR
Trademark Event Productions, Inc.
(415) 726-0777 Phone
www.trademarkevents.com

From: Leslie Bilbro <lbilbro@sfgoodwill.org>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 6:32 PM
Subject: Please Save Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council,

I am a voting resident who lives in District 3. My seven year old son and I frequently use Astro park as well as the Lakeview Library. I respectfully request you deny the CUP for the proposed fenced, dog run at Astro Park.

I have continuously lived in Oakland since 2002, and also lived here in the late 80's through 1993. I love Oakland so much that I purchased a home in 2010, and my son's neighborhood school is Lincoln Elementary. Astro Park is a beautiful greenspace straddled between and the wonderful Lake Merritt (which I frequently run/walk) and Lakeshore/Grand Avenue shops, which I faithfully visit every weekend after completing my shopping at the Saturday Farmer's Market. In my opinion, Astro Park is not the ideal location for a dog run. The current use of Astro park, (impromptu soccer/flag football matches, softball games, the children's playground, Frisbee throwing, and general running around chasing your children area) perfectly aligns with the on-going modifications to the lake; the park is inviting to all in and around the Oakland community. The proposed dog park will disrupt and displace this harmony.

Therefore, I again ask you to deny the CUP for the proposed Astro dog park.

Leslie R. Bilbro | Director of Donations | VRE | (415) 575-2287

From: Max Klein <isalix@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 8:11 PM
Subject: Park on MacArthur and Lakeshore
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council,

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Primarily my reasoning is thus:

1. The space is currently multi-use being used as a children's playground, a soccer field, a workout zone, and a lawn to lay on.
2. Converting the space to a dog run, would make this space single-use.

3. And whereas, there is not enough room for both of these functions to coexist, (creating too small a space to play soccer etc.) the solution that serves the greatest amount of public best is to keep the open grass area.

4. The demography of dog-owners is skewed. Dog ownership is expensive, and therefore a hobby more heavily undertaken by those with higher incomes. In essence a space-tax on the poor, and those who are otherwise not able to own dogs.

5. Not everyone is a dog-ower, or even a dog sympathizer. Dog ownership can be considered immoral as it denies the animal its innate right to do what it pleases. Equally not everyone is a grass-lover, but cultivating grass is a less objectionable practice than keeping pets.

For all the reasons above, please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Sincerely,
Max Klein
7074787023

From: Martha Hill <martha@marthahillhomes.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 8:24 PM
Subject: No dog park in Astro Park
To: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>,
"coucil@oaklandnet.com" <coucil@oaklandnet.com>

Please add me to the list of Oakland residents who object to turning precious open space for humans along our gloriously rehabilitated Lake Merritt at Astro Park into a dog park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Martha Hill
1951 Telegraph Ave #507
Oakland 94612

From: Fred C. Riley III <fcriii@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 8:27 PM
Subject: Dog Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

To Whom it may concern,

Please deny the application for conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. This park is the first thing people see when they get off the highway. Adults and children playing in the sun at the gateway of Oakland's most beautiful attraction, Lake Merrit. It will be an eye sore and not all people are comfortable with groups of dogs. It will make the way to the Grand farmer's market more congested. I can't imagine that anyone who is a regular pedestrian here thinks this is a good idea.

I am not anti-dog. I just don't think this city needs a dog run at this very busy and conspicuous location.

Thank you,

Fred C Riley III

From: Cyril Velasquez <cmvelas@hotmail.com>

Date: Mon, Oct 15, 2012 at 10:49 PM

Subject: NO DOG PARK at Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members:

I would like to inform The Council that I am completely AGAINST allocating parkland for a dog recreation area at Astro Park.

Astro Park needs to be preserved the way it is since it is the only all-purpose flat field adjacent to Lake Merritt. Although Lake Merritt has an abundance of parkland surrounding it, much of it is inconvenient for sporting activities (such as soccer, softball, and football) since it is either sloped, narrow, obstructed by trees/vegetation, or occupied by picnickers and other people relaxing there. Splitting the parkland at Astro Park would limit the types AND amount of sporting activities on the open field area. There would be less versatility in having a tiny flat field. And I can assure you that developing half the field into a dog park would infuriate all the diverse residents who get together on that field to play soccer together.

Furthermore, Oakland does not have the money to construct a dog park and maintain it. I've run the Oakland Half-Marathon for the past 3 years and have seen runners trip over potholes in our streets. In fact, our streets are far worse than San Francisco or San Jose, which are cities that I've also participated in running events. I've called Oakland PD to have them cease ruffians from blasting their music next to my house at mid-night, but only to get no assistance because my annoyance is far less of a priority to a depleted police force contending with all the other terrible crimes occurring in Oakland. THE CITY OF OAKLAND NEEDS TO BE SPENDING ITS TAX MONEY ON MORE URGENT THINGS THAN A DOG PARK.

I've been living in Oakland for 33 years. From what I have seen, Astro Park is a vibrant area that should be left as it is.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Thank you.

Sincerelly,

Cyril Velasquez

1549 9th Ave.

Oakland, CA 94606

510-701-7492

From: KC <katanned@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Oct 16, 2012 at 11:25 AM

Subject: Proposed dog park in Astro Park near Lake Merritt library

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com, nerycarrillo@comcast.net

Dear Oakand City Council,

As a citizen of Oakland, I would like to register my objection to putting in a dog park next to the playground in Astro Park.

I have no problem with dog parks, but the area in question is frequently used by groups of people who play soccer and football. If that was not the case I would not object, but I believe that it's more important to keep the space for human activity, rather than dog. It's a very green, flat, and inviting space for young adults to run around in, and considering the current obesity rate in the US, I would let it continue for this purpose.

Regards,

Katharine Carrillo

2435 Ivy Drive

Oakland

From: Gordon jeong <gjeong8@hotmail.com>

Date: Tue, Oct 16, 2012 at 3:41 PM

Subject: Keep Astro Park Open

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To Oakland City Council,

I request the City Council to deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. I lived in Oakland for 61 years and always enjoy walking by the green, open area at Astro Park. It will be a shame to have the area fenced in for a dog run. Please keep Astro Park open.

Thanks,

Gordon

Morgan Simon <morgan.simon@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 12:41 PM

Subject: Please keep Astro Park open

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Greetings---I live at 3075 Richmond Blvd (near 30th and Broadway) and want to add another voice in opposition to the creation of a dog park in Astro Park. It's one of few open spaces and I'd love it to stay that way. Thanks!

Morgan

--

Morgan Simon

CEO, Toniic

Office: 415.375.0153

Cell: 310.617.8881

From: Avi Perna <avi.perna@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 17, 2012 at 6:09 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,

I am writing to request you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. Is the area not urban enough already? Tearing out the grass and replacing it with wood chips and a chain link fence will just add an eyesore to the intersection of MacArthur and Lakeshore. If the council would like to create something of value at Astro Park, plant more trees, provide more lighting, do something to curb the highway noise. Don't license a dog park.

Sincerely,

Avi Perna, Oakland Resident

From: matt gousman <mattgousman@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Oct 18, 2012 at 1:40 PM
Subject: Please DENY Astro Park Dog Permit
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I am a resident and homeowner in the City of Oakland. I am proud to call Oakland home.

One of my biggest joys is taking my 2.5 year old daughter to the Lakeview Branch Library each Saturday morning, then spending time at the playground next door in Astro Park, followed by a trip to the Grand Lake Farmer's Market across the street. This has been our ritual for practically my daughter's entire life.

I was deeply saddened to learn that a proposal was made for a conditional use permit to build a dog run at Astro Park. Not only would this change the entire dynamic of the park from a place where kids congregate and play freely, but it would endanger children to have a dog run right next to a playground that is used by hundreds of kids each weekend. I would be forced to end my Saturday ritual of using our public library and spending money locally in the community at the Grand Lake Farmer's Market. This would be a shame.

I implore you to DENY the conditional permit for a dog run at Astro Park. Please keep Astro Park open and safe for kids and families alike.

Thank you much,
Matt Gousman
6066 Romany Road
Oakland, CA 94618

Date: Friday, October 19, 2012 2:52 PM

To: "save-astro-park@googlegroups.com" <save-astro-park@googlegroups.com>

Subject: [SAP] re: proposed dog run at Astro Park

Greetings:

I am requesting that you DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. This location is just not appropriate for a dog run. This is too popular a location for recreational usage and the parking would be a nightmare. I urge you to deny this application and suggest a better location somewhere in the Oakland hills.

Thanks, Jeffrey

From: <scott@musqaria.com>

Date: Fri, Oct 19, 2012 at 1:02 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Hello -

I've recently become aware of an effort to make Astro Park, between El Embarcadero and 580, into a dog run.

I am writing to request that you deny the application for a conditional use permit for the dog run, and that Astro Park be kept as it is.

Astro Park is widely used by many people. To turn it into a dog park would restrict its use to a much smaller number of people than use it now, and will bring with it undesirable elements,

including more dogs in the area and bad smells right next to the playground. As someone who lives in the neighborhood, I don't want to see a dog run nearby.

Thanks for your consideration,
-Scott Bodarky

From: Elizabeth Benhardt <benhardt@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Mon, Oct 22, 2012 at 7:10 PM

Subject: Keep Oakland's open green space

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members:

I write to share my concern about the proposed plan to build a dog run at a location, fondly referred to as Astro Park. I live in the neighborhood and I bring my children to play in the park. I have sat on the benches and enjoyed the squeals of children at play. I have sat in the grass while the kids run around like maniacs. I have watched my own kids join other children in spontaneous games of tag. I have observed adults cavorting in the grassy field, playing volleyball or teaching little ones how to kick a soccer ball or catch a football.

Please do not deprive the families of Oakland of this pleasant grassy area. Please do not destroy this open space, prominently located at the gateway to Lake Merritt. I am a dog lover myself and expect to add one to our family in the near future. However, I think there are other options available for folks to exercise their dogs. I myself plan to use the one a bit further down off Grand Ave on Linda Street (Piedmont). I do not want the City Council to approve a plan which would both blight and reduce the community centered open space at Lakeshore and MacArthur.

Please advise me if you are in favor of building the dog run at this location. Please explain the plans, i.e. how much of the current park would be reduced? How high would the fence be? How often would the dog area be cleaned and how would that be funded? Also let me know what other areas have been considered and why they are deemed inadequate. As a long time resident of the neighborhood, I appreciate your response.

Elizabeth Benhardt

From: Steven Boranian <stevenboranian@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat, Nov 17, 2012 at 7:01 PM

Subject: No on the dog run

To: Pat Kernighan <PKernighan@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmember Kernighan,

I am writing again to tell you how critically important it is that you stop the selfish dog owners from taking over and ruining a widely used and highly visible open space.

I have written to you before on this issue, but I will repeat the key points.

As a preliminary matter, your public statements on this topic have referred to the proposed "dog park" or "dog play area." A park is a pretty place for people to gather and recreate. What the selfish dog owners are proposing here is a filthy brown patch where animals relief themselves. The proper terminology is "dog run."

The main reason to reject the dog run is that there is absolutely no demonstrated need for it. Every dog owner has a residence in which he or she can maintain a dog. Further, the neighborhood is already chock full of places for people to walk their dogs. I refer you to saveastropark.org, which identifies seven nearby dog runs. The proposal to fence off an open green space is a brazen land grab by dog owners who insist that everyone embrace their precious pets. Reject this selfishness and send them to the dog runs that have already been set aside.

In addition, the park that the selfish dog owners want to take over is already a well used public space. Drive or walk over there on any nice weekend day, as I often do. There are children playing; people playing soccer and other green space games; others exercising. My daughter, who has grown up in the neighborhood since she was a baby, used to walk there to sit and read (she has now left for college). How can you justify taking this thriving park away from our community, just because the selfish dog owners demand it?

Finally, this is highly visible public space, bordered on three sides by well traveled streets. It is literally the gateway to our neighborhood. At a time when you should be condemning urban blight and working to make Oakland a more attractive place, it would be disastrous for you to convert

this lovely green space into a disgusting brown scab, for the whole world to see.

I am, of course, most disappointed with the selfish dog owners for their inexcusable persistence in trying to steal this public space for their private use. I will be equally disappointed with you if you vote in favor of the dog run, and it is distressing that you have not publicly stated your opposition to this ill-conceived proposal.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Steven Boranian
780 Tresle Glen Rd.
510-893-1402

From: <lasaffold@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 3:38 PM
Subject: no dog park!
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please don't fence off the precious open space next to Astro Park!

Our 4-y-o son, friends, and family use it regularly (as we hope our child due in 6 weeks will). It's an invaluable space that Oaklanders of all ages use for a variety of pastimes and the wrong place for a dog run.

From: **Bonnie Forbes Wittenstein** <bonniemforbes@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 4:14 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers,

I am a concerned Oakland resident begging you to please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park by Lake Merrit. Oakland is doing so much work to beautify that area and it would be a shame to spoil it with ugly chain link fences, dog poop, and less green grass. The park should be available for kids, birds, people... Not just dogs.

I own a dog and love Oakland for its many off-leash trails within the lovely redwoods... Dog owners have plenty of other places to take their pups, and will survive if Astro park is kept the way it is.

Instead of putting a dog park in a zone that is already beautiful and used by many, why not improve one of the many unused, empty lots full of weeds and garbage (there are many to choose from in this town) by turning it into a nice dog park? I would gladly join a committee and volunteer time to help in this endeavor.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Forbes Wittenstein

Sent from my iPhone

From: Victoria Wong <vwoakland@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 4:38 PM
Subject: Please DENY CD for Astro Park dog park
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers:

I write to ask you to DENY the conditional use permit application for a fenced, off-leash dog park at Astro Park/Eastshore Park. As at least one Planning Commissioner correctly noted, this is a small, heavily used park that cannot accommodate further programming.

Many local families, including ours, use this highly visible and centrally located park (we live within half a mile of the park). A dog park at this location would eliminate one of the few large open playing fields in this neighborhood of Oakland. The field is used for children's soccer classes (Soccer Shots), recreational soccer and other sports, and various other activities every day of the week. The proposal would not leave sufficient space for a full-size playing field and would force kids to play closer to the busy surrounding streets in the little remaining space. In addition, the current open space serves as an important visual transition between SplashPad Park and the Lake, and fencing it off would make the

area much less attractive. I do not want a chain-link-fenced dirt area in that highly visible location. If the appearance of other dog parks, such as the one by FROG park, is any indication, this would be an unsightly and unattractive feature of the neighborhood.

In addition, there is no guarantee that the proposed dog park would be properly maintained. ODOG has no legal obligation to maintain the area. The neighbors of the park, like myself, should not be expected to rely on volunteers' promises to maintain the dog park. If it becomes dirty and smelly, the community will have no recourse for correcting the problem. Furthermore, this dog park, if it is to be located anywhere, should, like most dog parks, be placed in an underutilized area, as the Linda Park dog park (in Piedmont) and the dog park near FROG Park are (on a steep hillside and under a freeway, respectively), rather than in a highly used, attractive and visible area.

Furthermore, if ODOG does not adequately maintain the park, either it will fall to the City, which doesn't have adequate resources, to do so, or the area will simply deteriorate and become a blight on the neighborhood. As it is, Oakland does not have the resources to maintain existing parks, even with volunteer assistance. For example, the Oakland Rose Garden's condition has deteriorated severely since gardening staff was reduced, despite regular volunteer efforts. Oakland should not be spending its limited funds creating a dog park that benefits a limited segment of the population, especially where, as here, doing so may result not only in the elimination of heavily used playing fields but in the creation of an unmaintained fenced, dirt area. Oakland's parks funds would be far better spent maintaining existing parks than creating another park for which the City cannot afford maintenance.

Arguments that this location has been in the works for a long time and that the City should not spend additional money on planning a new park are not reasons to build this park, which is poorly planned. As you can see by the strong community opposition to

the park, many, many local residents had no idea about the plans, and there are many valid objections to it, including children's safety, aesthetics, and the elimination of a significant open space, where Oakland has a shortage of open park space already. The fact that this not a suitable location for a dog park remains true regardless of how much it would cost to plan an alternative location.

I strongly urge you to reject the proposal for a dog park in this location. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria Wong

From: Alexandra Williams <atw8@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 4:46 PM

Subject: Please keep Astro Park as it is today!!!

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Members of the Oakland Planning Commission:

Please DENY the fenced dog area in Astro Park!

I have been an Oakland resident since 2002. Since my daughter was born in 2006, we have gone weekly to Astro Park. Each week I run around Lake Merritt, with my daughter now accompanying me on her bike instead of being pushed in the jogger. We then go to the farmer's market and finish up the morning with an hour or two cavorting in the grass of Astro park and playing in the adjacent playground.

I am a lifelong dog owner and dog lover but Astro Park is not the right place to put a dog run! It is one of the few open, grassy spaces we have in Oakland and one of the few of those that is safe and at which I have no worries that my daughter will stumble across garbage or worse as we play in the park and grass.

Astro Park is one of the rare swathes of green in our city; it's very expanse is part of what is treasured by our family! Please, please do not put a dog park there. Even a relatively small area of grass being converted to a fenced off dog run will turn one of our few pretty, vibrant and open spaces into an ugly scar. As it stands now, the wide open grassy space, the library, the colonnade and the lake make that corner one of the best treasures in Oakland - please don't ruin it!

I fully support the effort to create more dog-friendly and dog-specific areas within Oakland but surely there are options that won't ruin one of the beautiful well-used spaces we've already got.

Thank you,
Alex Williams

From: Alexandra Williams <atw8@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 4:46 PM
Subject: Please save Astro Park!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Astro Park savers:

Hi, my name is Quinn and I am 6 years old. I want you to save Astro Park and I will make some signs that say "Save Astro Park". I want to save Astro Park because I like to play in the grass. I also like to play soccer on the grass. And I also like to play rugby on the green space. I live in Oakland. I do like dogs but I think the dog park should be somewhere else because I use the green space and other kids do too. And anyway, dogs might run into the street since it's very, very close to the cars. It's a better place for people than dogs.

I will bring the signs to the park and hang them up.

Thank you for saving the park,
Quinn Williams

PS I told my Mom what to say and she typed this email.

PPS I will try to take a picture of me playing in the green space and send it to you.

From: <chrmaine@wellsfargo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 5:33 PM
Subject: Please - do not build a dog park
To: saveastropark@gmail.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello City Council,

As a long-time resident and neighbor of Lake Merritt, I'm writing again to express my opposition to building a dog park at Astro Park at Lake Merritt. I spend a lot of time at the lake and love the open space. I see it getting great use – soccer games, flying kites, conversations, people exercising, and just staring at the sky. We need this type of space in an increasingly dense environment. I am appealing to you to keep it open and do not build the dog park!!

Thank you,

Charmaine Clay
510-763-6590

From: Jack <jack.ricci@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 5:38 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Please leave Astro Park alone. The park is place for our children to play. Our adults also make use of this outdoor Oakland city treasure. Yes, I love dogs, but this is not the place for a dog park. There are places we could be used that would not displace any of our city neighbors.

Vote no on the Astro Park dog park.

Have a great day. God Bless America

Jack

From: rich4gy@yahoo.com <rich4gy@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 5:40 PM
Subject:
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

After long thought and consideration I have decided to support my communities effort to preserve Astro Park as a playground/area for children. The space is just not accommodatible enough to serve both purposes.

--- Sent with mail@metro - the new generation of mobile messaging

From: Jan LeGassick <janle@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 6:53 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers:

Please deny the conditional use permit for a fenced-in dog area near Astro Park.

This is the only open public space in the surrounding neighborhoods that's suitable for ball games and other outdoor activites that attract many young people to the park today. I wouldn't be surprised if kids from other parts of the city are regular visitors to the park too. It's a safe space that's popular with many Oaklanders and should not be repurposed for a dog park. Surely there are other locations better suited to that.

I oppose the dog park on other grounds too. A fenced in area will be unsightly, regardless of whether it's covered with vines. This is a highly visible part of the city and it shouldn't be marred by a dog park. Upkeep is another concern. Even with

the best of intentions, volunteers are not a reliable resource for the daily maintenance that will be needed.

I urge you to consider the benefits of the park as it exists today and deny the permit for a dog park.

Thank you,

Jan LeGassick

From: sunnywindow@juno.com <sunnywindow@juno.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 6:58 PM

Subject: Preserving our urban meadow for all

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers ~~

This is to ask that you keep Astro Park as it is: Invitingly Vast and Green. It is Our Urban Meadow, gladdening and soothing all people. We smile at the sight of it and at the feel of it beneath our feet. Its healing civic benefit would be lost if a dogpark were put on it.

Please deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park.

Thank you ~~

Gayle Mohrbacker

Woman is 53 But Looks 25

Mom reveals 1 simple wrinkle trick that has angered doctors...

<http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL3141/50aaf229e582172294d57st03vuc>

From: Tom Anthony <tom@anthonyassoc.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 7:00 PM

Subject: Astro park

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear council,

I am a local developer/broker and lakeshore avenue resident.

The proposed location for a dog park is terrible.

I suggest revising the zoning and restrictions and put a dog park in lakeside park.

Lots of unused space there.

Thanks,

Tom Anthony
Anthony Associates
5666 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA. 94609
(c) 510-701-3700
(w) 510-653-6000
(f) 510-653-4667

From: j v <ja_7_4@yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 7:08 PM

Subject: Deny the Dog Park Request at Astro Park

To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council,

This letter is to implore the Council to deny the proposed dog park at Astro Park. I am a dog lover, I have two dogs and have had dogs as my friends and companions all my life. It is from this perspective that I express grave concern about this ill-concieved and poorly considered proposal to place a dog park at this location. The position that this is an unsued space is simply untrue; many organized and casual groups enjoy this park daily. As well, there are many reasons that this is the worst location for dogs to gather; three busy streets, the tot lot, parking and that with no city planned of funded maintenance it will quickly degrade to blight. Every official body or committee that has considered and denied this

proposal have consistently agreed that Astro Park is not an appropriate venue for a dog run.

In 1906 after the earthquake, my family relocated from San Francisco and bought their first home three blocks from Lake Merritt. Since that time, I have lived in Oakland for over 50 years, family members planted their roots here, worked, raised families and contributed to the betterment of Oakland. The City fathers then were visionaries, establishing a tradition of making the Lake the Jewel and a wonderful destination location.that it is. With the renovations the Lake is currently undergoing, it is clear that this tradition remains today. The Astro Park location is a grand Gateway to the Lake, it introduces Oaklanders and visitors alike to the Lake in a way that no other location can. The vision to capture this greatness remains a sacred responsibility. With planning for the future of Oakland's Lake Merritt area, many proposals are put forward, some have merritt, some do not. The dog park at Astro Park is one that should be denied.

Joseph Villatoro

From: Shannon Steen <shannon.steen@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 8:09 PM

Subject: Please Deny Dog Park Plans Near Grand Lake

To: council@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Member,

I have been a resident of the Grand Lake area for nearly ten years now, and I am writing to request that you deny the plans for a dog park in the current "Astro Park" area near the top of Lake Merritt, close to the Lakeshore retail district.

Please note that I love dogs -- my mother is a veterinarian, and I grew up with dogs all my life. I think it's important to have dog parks, but this is a good idea planned in a terrible location. Here are my reasons that you consider denying the application for the dog park:

1. The patch of grass at the top of the Grand Lake area is the only

grassy space nearby -- I have a one year old son, and I'd like that patch of grass for him to run around in.

2. Proximity to the playground: although I know most dogs are perfectly well behaved, I do have significant concerns about dogs so close to young children. There are just too many dogs who attack children -- if you google "dog attacks children bay area" you'll find examples of terrible maulings. Please put the dog park somewhere else.

3. Metal fencing is ugly. Please do not undermine all the of the money and labor that has gone into beautifying Lake Merritt with a metal-fenced dog park.

Please do not build this dog park.

thank you,
Shannon Steen
Oakland CA 94606

From: Heather Holmes <heathermholmes@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 8:18 PM
Subject: Deny the Dog Park Project
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council Members.

Please deny the Astro Park dog park project. It is the right idea at the wrong place. The location is the only grass-surface to play soccer, baseball and other activities that require a large space while also leaving space for families to play, picnic, and gather without interfering with sports-play. Additionally, the numerous attacks of children by supposedly docile pet dogs is just a tragedy waiting to happen. Furthermore, the traffic flow is such that I fear a dog will out run its ball and end up getting hit in traffic. These scenarios are completely avoidable by denying the project. Again, it's the right project but at the totally wrong place.

Sincerely,
Heather Holmes
Oakland Native

Sent from my iPhone
From: Michelle Remy <michelle.remy@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 8:35 PM

Subject: Dog Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council,

I am a dog owner and parent living in Adams Point. As much as I love my dog, and would love to have a place close by to run her, Astro Park is not the place...I play ultimate frisbee there, my friends play volleyball, and I love to watch folks playing soccer on a Sunday morning on the way to the Farmer's Market. A big green, grassy field is hard to come by in the city, so please, please, just let the space be what it is...don't change it! Save Astro Park!

Michelle Remy
384

From: douglas gorman <djgorman@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 10:31 PM
Subject: I am opposed to the dog run
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

11/19/12

TO: Oakland City Council
FROM: Douglas Gorman (home: 94611; office: 94609)
RE: Astro Park

I am a resident of Oakland with a business also in Oakland. My wife and I regularly shop at the Lakepark farmers market, and on Grand and Lakeshore. We walk the Lake regularly as well.

I support the development of city dog runs in appropriate locations. I am unequivocally opposed to the effort to take over Astro Park for a fenced in dog run. It's a terrible location and a terrible idea.

Please work with the proponents of this concept to find appropriate alternate location(s) for dog runs, dog parks, dog play and run areas--they deserve the serious attention of the Council for this worthy concept. Just not at Astro Park.

Thank you.

From: Martin Rosson <mrosson@pacbell.net>

Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 11:56 PM

Subject: Dog park at Lake Merritt

To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers

Please vote AGAINST the proposed dog park at Lake Merritt. It takes up almost half of the open space and I don't think concentrated dog poop next to a kid's playground is where you would want your kids.

Sincerely

Martin M. Rosson P.E.

From: Rachel Broadwin <chezrachel@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, Jun 17, 2012 at 2:18 PM

Subject: Keep Astro Park Open to Public

To: "jbrunner@oaklandnet.com" <jbrunner@oaklandnet.com>, Pat Kernighan <pkernighan@oaklandnet.com>, "nnadel@oaklandnet.com"

<nnadel@oaklandnet.com>, "lschaaf@oaklandnet.com"

<lschaaf@oaklandnet.com>, "idelafuente@oaklandnet.com"

<idelafuente@oaklandnet.com>, "dbrooks@oaklandnet.com"

<dbrooks@oaklandnet.com>, "lreid@oaklandnet.com"

<lreid@oaklandnet.com>, "atlarge@oaklandnet.com"

<atlarge@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Hello Councilmembers:

I live near Astro Park, and want to continue to enjoy the open space. I am pleased that the Planning Commission voted against the dog park. Just the other day I saw

children and some parents playing soccer in the area proposed for the dog park. I don't think it's right to make this beautiful area for one-use - it should remain open to the public.

Please reject the appeal.

Sincerely,
Rachel Broadwin
900 block of MacArthur Blvd

=====

Greetings from Rachel B.
chezrachel@yahoo.com

From: Victoria A. Barbero [mailto:Vabarbero@comcast.net] **Sent:**
Tuesday, November 20, 2012 8:42 AM **To:**
'Council@oaklandnet.com' **Subject:** Save The Park

Dear Council Members:

Please deny the application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. Children and adults need this green space and use it every single day for a variety of activities. Astro park is surrounded by apartments with limited space for children to play and people to walk and enjoy the beauty of a park. There are plenty of other places for dog owners to take their animals.

Thank you for your support in helping the citizens of Oakland -- men women and children -- to be able to enjoy the little green space many people in our area have.

Sincerely,
Victoria and Reinaldo Barbero

Victoria A. Barbero
Barbero Communications LLC

510-387-3071

From: <chrmaine@wellsfargo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 19, 2012 at 5:33 PM
Subject: Please - do not build a dog park
To: saveastropark@gmail.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Hello City Council,

As a long-time resident and neighbor of Lake Merritt, I'm writing again to express my opposition to building a dog park at Astro Park at Lake Merritt. I spend a lot of time at the lake and love the open space. I see it getting great use – soccer games, flying kites, conversations, people exercising, and just staring at the sky. We need this type of space in an increasingly dense environment. I am appealing to you to keep it open and do not build the dog park!!

Thank you,

Charmaine Clay
510-763-6590

From: <moongy@aol.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 9:54 AM
Subject: Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com.

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

- • The fenced enclosure would reduce or eliminate existing recreational uses
- • No budget for maintenance
- • Dogs would be too near the tot lot
- • A dog park would create traffic and parking impacts near the Lakeview Library

few outweigh the needs of many (and their families) for open green space in Oakland.

Thank you,

Anne Gordon
460 Valle Vista Ave.
Oakland, CA 94610

--

Anne D. Gordon
gordon.anne@gmail.com
773.895.1609

From: Debra Rosencrance <drosencrance@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 12:20 PM
Subject: Don't allow dog park at Astro Park
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council:

I love dogs and I understand the need for more dog parks in Oakland, but Astro Park is not the right location. It's the only place around the lake that people can play sports and kids can run free. There isn't enough room for a dog park in this area. We need to keep this area for people.

Debra Rosencrance

3601 Brighton Avenue
Oakland CA

From: Rabiya Tuma <Rabiya@nasw.org>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 12:49 PM
Subject: Please DENY the dog park permit at Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. My daughter and I play at that

playground regularly and go to the Lakeshore library. We do not want a dog park taking over for numerous reasons:

- 1) The grassy area is already well-used by soccer players, kids, and impromptu games;
- 2) Dogs leave a mess behind, and even if most owners are considerate, there will always be a few who are not. This is not fair to the small children who use the playground and grassy area. We already have to contend with the goose poop at the playground by the lake (referred to as "goose poop park" by some parents); please don't let this playground turn into "dog poop park";
- 3) dogs and small children are not always a good mix. My daughter was chased and bitten by a dog at a playground in a neighboring city where there was a dog park near a playground. Again, most dogs are nice and most owners are responsible, but it only takes one bad seed to have a serious incident. Not only is this a concern for the safety of the children, but also a financial and legal liability for the city if the council knowingly votes to put a dog park right near a children's playground, and;
- 4) The area is now very pretty and opens the view to Lake Merrit -- why would we want to put in an ugly chain link fence and dirt?

Again, please deny this permit. Astro park is already heavily used and well-loved.

Sincerely,
Rabiya Tuma

1466 Allman Street
Oakland, CA 94602

From: Silva Skenderi <silvaskenderi@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 1:18 PM
Subject: Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park. The idea to have a fenced dog park is wonderful, but this is not the park to do it in. The neighborhood needs this park for all the members of the community to use for outdoor activities that require more space. A dog park can be placed anywhere that has a patch of land. Why put an end to the recreational use of Astro Park? It is so

perfectly located close to the library so young people can play and visit the library.

Please support the recreational use of this park for people of all ages, not for dogs.

Thank you,

Silva Skenderi-Brown

From: Fred C. Riley III <fcriii@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 1:34 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers,

Please deny the application for conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park. This park is the first thing people see when they get off the highway. Adults and children playing in the sun at the gateway of Oakland's most beautiful attraction, Lake Merrit. It will be an eye sore and not all people are comfortable with groups of dogs. It will make the way to the Grand farmer's market more congested. I can't imagine that anyone who is a regular pedestrian here thinks this is a good idea.

I am not anti-dog. I just don't think this city needs a dog run at this very busy and conspicuous location.

Thank you,

Fred C Riley III

P.S. Please do not take my absence at the City Council meeting as a sign that I do not care enough about this issue. I will be working out of town on the 4th and will be unable to attend.

From: Jeanne Brown <jeannemab@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 1:37 PM

Subject: Save our park!

To: saveastropark@gmail.com

We have other spaces to run our dogs!!!

Leave Astro Park open to our children, our families, and all of the community.

A dog run would cost money, degrade the space, be unsanitary, and would serve only a small segment of the community.

Is it fair that all should pay for someone else's pets??

From: Paul Saxton <paulsaxton@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 1:42 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please vote to deny the application for a dog park at Astro Park.. I write as a long-time Oakland homeowner in the Lakeshore area and as a long-time dog owner. The space was used often by our children and there are now often games on the field where there is no real substitute. Adequate alternatives for a dog park have been presented. Please preserve this crucial open space.

Paul Saxton
80 Portal Avenue
Oakland 94610

From: Tom Rauch <tomrauch@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 1:49 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park!

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers, please deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash area in Astro Park. We use this park for our weekly boot camp workouts, which is great way to build community, create

a healthier Oakland, and inspire passer-bys to start their own health and fitness programs! A dog park (as much as I love dogs!) would prevent us from enjoying our weekly boot camps.

Thanks, Tom

From: <scott@musqaria.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 1:58 PM
Subject: no on the dog park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Hello -

I understand that the matter of a dog park at Astro Park is coming before the council in several weeks. I am writing to again voice my objection to this proposal.

Currently Astro Park is a field of green which is heavily used by all the citizenry of Oakland. It lies between the lake, library, children's playground, and farmers market. Turning this resource into a feces infused mud pit for the benefit of dog owners just doesn't make any sense.

Apparently the Oakland Planning Commission has already unanimously denied this proposal and the dog owners are trying to ram it through anyway. Please deny this proposal once and for all.

Thanks,

-Scott Bodarky

2300 Lakeshore Ave. #5

Oakland

From: Laura Jerrard <l_jerrard@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 2:00 PM

Subject: Please deny the conditional use permit for the dog park at Astro Park

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council Persons,

Please deny the conditional use permit for the off-leash fenced dog park at Astro Park.

I love dogs. I'm a dog owner. I understand the need for such places. BUT, Astro Park is absolutely the wrong spot. This is one of the few open spaces in central Oakland. We need to keep it that way. Fences - whether for dogs or anything else - are not appropriate here.

I've written before on this subject. In light of the upcoming hearing I wanted to let you know that my opinion has not changed.

Thank you for your consideration.

sincerely yours,

Laura Jerrard
1114 E 19th St.
Oakland, CA 94606

From: Joyce Aris <joyaris@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 2:15 PM
Subject: Council Meeting regarding off-leash dog area
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers

I am requesting that you deny the use permit application for an off-leash dog area in Astro Park. We prefer the area remain open for children and people use.

Thank you.
Joyce Aris
Lake Merritt Oakland

Sent from my iPhone

From: Eduardo Perez <eduardolperez@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 2:05 PM
Subject: Don't ruin great flexible space
To: council@oaklandnet.com, saveastropark@gmail.com

Oakland City Council

Please don't ruin a great Open/Flexible space that Astro Park is. Soccer, Volley Ball, Parents playing catch with their kids, Picnicking . These are just a few of the many wonderful ways that the residents of Oakland get to enjoy the park. Don't ruin that.

Eduardo
Oakland Resident
From: Shelagh <sheelaymignon@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 2:20 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,
I'm writing to you today to ask you NOT to allow a fenced off dog area in Astro Park, located at the corner of MacArthur Blvd. and Lakeshore Ave.

As a local business person, having a highly visible, highly used park is wonderful to promote exploration of the area. I'm also very animal friendly, and hope to own a dog some day. I think there should be areas for dogs to play, I just don't think that at an amazingly high traffic corner, both pedestrian, and especially vehicular, is the right place for a dog park.

I spoke with a person who had mentioned that the old Oakland police horse stables were still already fenced in, saving the city a lot of money on infrastructure on a dog park. I don't know if that is still an option, but that or something similar seem to make a lot more sense, than a corner where one loose dog could get hit in front of the children on the playground.

Thank you for reading,
Shelagh Jackson
Weeds Salon Manager.

From: Claudia hartley <claudiamhartley@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 3:17 PM
Subject: astro park
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

dear oakland council members

we want to add our voices to those of our dogloving neighbors and friends who have already expressed a very strong and passionate plea that you abide by the planning committee decision to NOT allow a dog park at the astro park location. please vote no on the appeal. we love our dogs but we love and we need our precious dog-free park much much more.

thank you for your attention.

Claudia Hartley Family

485 Elwood Ave

Oakland 94610

From: Gina Hill <ginamariahill@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 3:20 PM

Subject: Save Astro Park!

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Concilmembers,

I am an Oakland resident and homeowner near Lake Merrit. I frequently walk around the lake and play with my young family members in Astro Park. It is very important to me and my family that we preserve this green space.

I am writing to persuade you to DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. Please, leave our park as is so that all in our community can continue to enjoy the space as it is.

Thanks for your attention to this matter

Gina Hill

From: Teresa Hoover <tesshoover@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 3:29 PM

Subject: Astros park

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Oakland Council Members,

As a resident of the Grand Lake area, I am writing to voice my strong plea that you vote to abide by the Planning Commission decision to not allow a dog park at Lakeshore Astro Park. Though I love my dog, this space does not seem large enough to accommodate a fenced off-leash area for dogs and maintain the already active use it gets for groups to play soccer or volleyball, or for one to teach a toddler how to play baseball. Not to mention, how unattractive will be a chain link fence and mud in what is now a lovely green oasis in the midst of our urban neighborhood.

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for the proposed dog run at Astro Park.

Thanks for your attention.

Tess Hoover
Elwood ave
Oakland

From: Lorrie Fink <lorrie@lorriefink.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 3:34 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park: NO Dog Park, Please
To: Council@oaklandneLcom, Pat Kernighan
<pkernighan@oaklandneLcom>
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park.

Our family owned a dog for years. I like dogs, I'm sympathetic to the desire for a dog park. But not in this particular place.

I've lived, worked, and walked around Lake Merritt since 1974. The Lake is one of the jewels of our city, reflecting Oakland's unique community. It is a place where people come together in harmony and share a sense of belonging.

Astro Park belongs to all of us. It offers beautiful public open green space. Fencing it off for the exclusive use of an exclusive group would be a terrible loss for the entire community, not just the local residents.

Not only is this green space used for a variety of activities by a variety of people, it also provides a VISUAL RESPITE, a beautiful verdant expanse

in an urban area to be treasured and protected, not ripped up and fenced off. Just because an area appears unoccupied does not mean that it is underutilized.

I strongly urge you to deny the permit for this plan.

Thank you,

Lorrie Fink
718 Santa Ray Ave.
Oakland, CA 94610

lorrie@lorriefink.com
(510) 326-1990 phone
<http://www.lorriefink.com>

From: Kim Goodwin <kimgoodwin@mac.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 3:40 PM
Subject: Please DENY Lakeshore /Astro Park dog park permit (12/4 agenda item)
To: Council@oaklandneLcom

Members of the council,

The planning commission denied a proposed dog run at Lakeshore & MacArthur for good reason: it would replace lovely and much-used open space with a brown space and unsightly chain fence. Oakland taxpayers did not approve Measure DD only to put an ugly dog park alongside all the newly renovated public space.

It's also the wrong time for Oakland to spend discretionary funds to benefit a small group of people. What little budget there is should go to maintain the parks and infrastructure we already have.

Thanks for your attention!

Kim Goodwin
Oakland resident

From: David Calabretta <calabretta@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 4:02 PM
Subject: Astro Dog Park

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>, "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Subject: Astro Dog Park

Dear Councilmembers, Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

I live in this neighborhood across the street from Astro Park for over 10 years now at 1 Excelsior Court and currently Astro Park is already filled to capacity with parking. Furthermore the size of this park is limited and cutting it in half or more would reduce the services we have come to enjoy.

Currently I am cleaning up a lot of dog waste along my property green belt which is on MacArthur Ave / Excelsior Court from people walking their dogs to and from Astro park. And as you may know Astro park has no dog waste pick up stations for dog owners who wish to do the proper disposal of their animals waste.

I do not see this situation getting any better as you attempt to import more people with more dogs into my neighborhood park which is already crowded for parking and play space.

Thank you

David Calabretta

Sent from my iPhone

From: Carole Eade <caroleade@verizon.net>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 4:02 PM

Subject: Astro Park for PEOPLE AND CHILDREN - not for dogs!

To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I come to Oakland every week to bring my grandchildren, who live nearby, to Astro Park. They LOVE it and I feel very safe and happy when I bring them there. I have a 3 year old grandson who loves to run around on the grass when he is finished playing on the slides and swing. He bring little bats and balls and he and his 2 year old sister hit the ball (and kick the ball) to each other and I have NO FEAR that they will run too far or get hit

by a car or get bitten by a dog because it is a large open and safe space in which to run. There is a sign that clearing states "NO Dogs in the park" and that sign is being respected by everyone (including my own daughter who has a dog).

If you start to allow dogs in the park you are going to have a problem. Dog owners do not obey the rules. They let their dogs off the leash and will respond with "don't worry, my dog is a good dog - he would never bite". It scares me to have a dog anywhere near children. In addition, I would not like the park to become an environment where there is dog poop, which bring flies and smells and takes away from such a wonderful space for neighborhood children. I think we should have more concern for families who are not fortunate enough to have large backyards than for dog owners.

Please do not ruin a good thing. Not only for the children but there are so many parents and young people who use that area to exercise and play together as families.

If dogs are to be brought into and out of a dog-only enclosure, I am sure that many people would not think twice about not putting their dogs back on the leash immediately upon leaving - on their way to their car or to pick up a child on the playground who they are about to bring home also. It only takes a few moments for a dog to scare or bite a child.

Carole Eade

From: schrager <schrager@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 5:33 PM

Subject: Dog Park proposal

To: pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com,

atlarge@oaklandnet.com, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com,

lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com,

dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com,

saveastropark@gmail.com

Cc: Sue Levin <sue@heragency.com>

I want to voice my **OPPOSITION** to a dog park in my neighborhood. People who live in Montclair and perhaps other areas of town want to bring their pups down here. **NO NO NO**. As a child who grew up in the inner city where there was no greenery to play, I say keep it for the kids for soccer and other community activities. I have lived in this neighborhood for over 23 years. I love my

neighborhood. I have already written you a lengthy letter about my feelings. I reiterate – this is a neighborhood. When I look out my window at the area they want to turn into a dog park, what I see are kids playing soccer, or touch football. It is green and beautiful. Keep it that way, I beg you.

I understand there is a plan afoot to try to share the area between the doggies and the community. **NO NO NO.** Do not break up this beautiful green spot. We don't need barking, dog poop, and people from other neighborhoods trying to tell us what to do down here.

Please do not let them have a dog park in any way in any size. Especially after the Lake is beginning to be incredible with all the work being done. Don't ruin it.

Thank you.

Nikki Schrager

Nikki Schrager Studio
647 Beacon Street, No. 4
Oakland, CA 94610
Phone: (510) 444-2553
Cell: (510) 289-0410
nikki@nikkischrager.com
www.nikkischrager.com

Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 5:39 PM, Tom Hanavan <tlhana00@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

My wife and I are dog lovers and dogs have been part of our family for over 20 years. We walk our dog usually 2X/day and make sure she gets time to play with other dogs. We strongly oppose the use of this precious, aesthetically pleasing and highly visible green space for a fenced-in dog park. I spend a lot of time in the area on weekends, and have observed many different recreational uses of the park--families with kids

playing, impromptu soccer games, volleyball and picnics, to name a few. It is also pleasant and relaxing to just sit nearby and gaze out at the expanse of unobstructed green lawn. It would be a shame to sully this urban oasis with a fenced-in enclosure. And I think it complements perfectly the adjacent Lake and surrounding park.

There just has to be a better place for a dog park. I encourage you to please ratify the unanimous decision of the well-considered decision of the Planning Commission.

Thank you.

Tom and Debra Hanavan

From: Patricia Durham <pdurham444@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 5:40 PM
Subject: DENY Permit for Dog Park !
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: SaVe Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Oakland City Council Members:

Please DENY the conditional use permit for the proposed location of a dog park at Astro Park.

I fear that many residents of Oakland have no idea that this issue is even being debated in City government. Proponents of the Dog Park have been organizing for years, quietly. There appear to be very few mechanisms to alert the general citizenry about this issue of general importance, especially where this group is well organized, likely well-funded, and has been able to pull together its plans out of the view of the majority of Oaklanders.

I have lived near Lake Merritt for nearly thirty years. I have enjoyed walking around the Lake countless times, training for races, getting in shape, just appreciating its natural

beauty, as do many other people of all ages and abilities. I also am a dog lover and have had a dog in the family for the past 20+ years. I drive past Astro Park perhaps three or four times each day. I am appalled and outraged that anyone would consider locating a dog park at this site.

These are a few of my reasons:

- The lovely grassy field at Astro Park is beautiful visually, and is one of few remaining public open spaces at the Lake or in the vicinity of this size and character. It is truly unique, a safe community oasis amidst the concrete, freeways, and commercial buildings.
- That field is used by soccer players of all ages, volleyball players, children, and families all the time, all year round, without restriction as to by whom and how it may be enjoyed. The community has cooperatively and informally shared its use for decades.
- I have taken my young grandchildren to Astro Park to play on many occasions, and would not want to fight even more for nearby parking; or be concerned about their safety from dogs traveling to and from the dog park, or be subjected to the eyesore and the odors that a dog park inevitably presents, no matter how well maintained.
- Only a few would be able to use the dog park area - a loss to all the rest of us who currently enjoy running around, picnicking, playing on, and admiring this great green field.
- Dog families and walkers have many other options in Oakland and in nearby areas to exercise their dogs, without impacting the entire community and its common lands: They can walk their dogs on leash in their neighborhoods; take them to off-leash dog parks in Joaquin Miller Park, Frog Park on Claremont Avenue, Redwood Park and almost all other EBRPD parklands, Piedmont, Pt. Isabel, etc.; arrange dog play dates at friends' homes with yards; take their dogs to dog gyms, etc.

- There are other areas for dog park use, rather than this centrally located and well-used public play area: Other places in Lake Merritt, such as near the recently renovated fountain or behind Fairyland; other less popular areas that are reclaimed from less-desirable spots, such as the area under the freeway at Frog Park.
- Dog parks are not pretty nor fragrant nor free of congestion: Why create what is essentially a blight on our public space, for the benefit of just a few?
- I understand that there is no money for on-going maintenance of such a dog park, even if it were to be constructed here.
- The few who want this park are among the few who will use it. The majority of Oaklanders have no idea what is planned for their inviting parkland. There has been no fair process to adequately inform the general public and evaluate pros and cons offered by ALL affected parties.

Please DENY this conditional use permit, and leave Astro Park for the enjoyment of all of us !!

Thank you,

Sincerely yours,
Patricia Durham
848 Longridge Road
Oakland CA 94610

From: cody eriks <codyeriks@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 5:52 PM
Subject: Preserve Astro Park - DENY the dog park proposal
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council,
I write you to implore you to DENY the Conditional Use Permit for the proposed dog park at Astro Park. I live on Astro Park's border and enjoy it on a daily basis. I jog around the Lake every day, shop at the Farmer's

Market at Splash Pad Park, exit 580 at Grand Avenue on my commute home from work and my front window looks down on Astro Park. Our neighborhood is wonderful and it is clear that the City has worked diligently to make it a great place to live, shop and recreate. To place a dog park at this awesome expanse of open space is a terrible notion to even consider.

Among the many valid reasons (children, parking, congestion, blight, heavy traffic, bus stops, ect.) I am sure you have received letters about for preserving Astro Park as it is, let me remind you that underground creeks flow under Astro park and directly into Lake Merritt. A dog park here would provide that potentially tons of untreated urine and fecal matter would seep annually into the creeks and dump directly into the Lake. Not to mention the stench and bacteria from these waste products. The cost to mitigate this issue would be great and there is no plan to address it.

Astro Park is not the only place for a dog park at the Lake. Many alternatives to this space have been identified that would be great locations for a dog park in the lake area. The old and abandoned Police Horse Stables is a perfect example of such a location. It is at the Lake, fenced, police dog training and horse stabling were regular uses of this space. Many more viable options exist and should be considered as alternatives to destroying Astro Park's beauty, grace and the tranquility and pleasure that is derived from it by everyone.

Again, I ask the Oakland City Council members to DENY the Astro Park dog park proposal and preserve this open green space for everyone to enjoy as they do now.

Cody

From: Steve Soby <scsoby@hotmail.com>

Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 8:26 PM

Subject: Astro-Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Building an off-leash dog park at the corner of MacArthur Blvd and Lakeshore Ave is a BAD idea.

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

This is an area that is highly visible and a high public traffic area. It is somewhat like an entryway into the Lakeshore Community. Is a dog park really the first impression you want to make when people visit this area? Have you seen the dog park in Alameda near the Washington Park tennis courts? Do you want the same thing RIGHT THERE?

Why not put a dog park at the corner of Bellevue and Grand? Across from Ahn's Burger. That's just as convenient for dog owners, yet not such a prominent location.

There are better solutions to this problem.

Thank you,

Steve Soby
Resident of Oakland

From: Brian Collins <briancollins111@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 20, 2012 at 9:23 PM
Subject: please deny the dog park permit at Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,

We are homeowners and residents of the Grand-Lake neighborhood. We appreciate the open spaces here - especially those that border Lake Merritt. The proposed dog park at Astro Park would negatively affect the neighborhood and the open spaces. This park was set aside to provide a green space in the area of an eight-lane highway. We encourage and ask the City Council to deny the application for the dog park.

Brian and Lara Collins
Erie Street, Oakland, California

From: JACQUELYN LEWIS <jsl510@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 5:05 AM
Subject: SAVE ASTRO PARK
To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

For the past 40 years I have lived 1/2 block from the park and actually have a view of it from my apartment. It has always been wonderful to see a beautiful green unfenced plot of land,. There is already an unattractive fenced in lot across the street from the park where the Chevron station used to be. I enjoy seeing the different groups of people who use the park for soccer, volleyball and other sports, and I, myself, often bring a portable chair to the park in the summer months to read and relax in the sun. It would be awful to see another fence put up to serve the interests of a few, denying so many other people the use of the park.

I also use the bus stop in front of Astro Park every day to catch the #26 bus to go to work, and I would not like to have to stand and wait for the bus right in front of a dog park. I would not want to alternatively use the bus stop under the freeway because of all the pigeon excrement which is always on the cement there.

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. There must be somewhere else in the City that would be better suited for a dog park.

Jacquelyn Lewis
1 Excelsior Court, #209
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Stuart Offer <stuart.offer@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 8:07 AM
Subject: Astro Park

To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Members of the Oakland City Council,

I understand that on December 4 the Council will be hearing the appeal from the unanimous decision of the Oakland Planning Commission to deny a conditional use permit for a dog run at Lakeshore and MacArthur. I wrote to the Council at the time the appeal was initially scheduled to be heard; since some time has passed, I am re-sending my comments out of concern that the initial comments may not be available to you at this time.

I have been a resident of Crocker Highlands for 33 years, and a frequent user of the open spaces around Lake Merritt as a parent, dog owner, jogger, walker and library user. I fully support those who believe that a dog park in the vicinity of Lake Merritt would be a useful addition to the area. Unfortunately, the Lakeview site proposed for the dog park is simply the wrong place, for several reasons:

1. The proposed park would substantially reduce the available flat, grassed, unshaded space available in the area for human use. Lakeview Park is heavily used by for a variety of activities by a variety of age groups. It is used for

informal soccer games, frisbee throwing, tag and other children's activities, workout space and informal meetings by friends and families. There is no similar site available around Lake Merritt.

2. The proposed site is not appropriate for a dog park. Successful dog parks, such as the Piedmont and Point Isabel parks have adequate space for dogs of all sizes to run, and for dogs of all personalities to find personal space. That's why you don't see many bad dog interactions at these parks. They also have both sun and shade spaces and variable terrain, neither of which is present at the Lakeview Park location. Proponents of the Lakeview park have identified a site convenient for some dog owners, but it seems likely that most owners of larger dogs will find the site a disappointment in use compared to other parks in the area. It is unfortunate that other sites, such as the site adjacent to the former stables near Children's Playland, which offers shade, variable terrain and more space, is not fully considered.

3. The proposed park will be an eyesore at the entrance to Lake Merritt. Instead of being presented with a view of grassy open space well used by a variety of persons of all ages and cultures, persons approaching Lake Merritt from the east will be presented with a bare dirt, fenced area blocking the remaining park. As I understand

the proposal, maintenance of that area will depend on volunteers, so there really is no guarantee that the site will be adequately maintained.

4. The proposed use is inconsistent with the adjacent children's playground. It seems reasonable to assume that if the proposed dog park is approved, the number of dogs collecting in the area near the children's playground will increase. All of these dogs *supposedly* will be on leash, *supposedly* will be people-friendly and dog-friendly, and *supposedly* will be under the full control of their respective owners. Unfortunately, anyone who frequents the Lake Merritt area today knows that all of these suppositions are more than questionable.

I appreciate the opportunity to have my views considered by the Council.

Stuart Offer
770 Longridge Road
Oakland, CA 94610

From: **Melissa Miyara** <mnmiyara@hotmail.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 11:42 AM
Subject: Proposed dog run at Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I moved to the area earlier this year, and the open green spaces are among the top factors that initially attracted me to the neighborhood. I am

somewhat saddened to find that one of these beautiful spaces is already threatened by a feature that will only serve one small segment of the population. Please reconsider the idea of building a fenced-in dog run in such a prominent and visible location. I enjoy dogs and even work in a dog-friendly office, however I also think it is important to be selective about where they are allowed to roam off-leash and impact the surrounding land. Astro Park is already host to a variety of recreational uses and I do not believe anything would be gained by deprioritizing those uses for a dog run.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Miyara

From: Fred Setterberg <fsetterberg@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 2:55 PM

Subject: Please say no to dogs at Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council members,

I am a long-time resident in the Grand Lake area, and very appreciative of all the neighborhood offers. I fear that opening a dog park would imperil much of the neighborhood's better qualities. Conversations with my neighbors, many of them dog owners, confirms my skepticism about the plan.

I urge you to deny the change permit that would allow a dog park in Astro Park for the following reasons.

1. Parking is already tight. A dog park will make it a nightmare, while denying customer access to local merchants. This in itself is a sufficient reason to deny.

2. Dogs are not supposed to be walked in Lake Merritt Park -- but we know they will be brought there with increased frequency once the area becomes a dog magnet. Already the park has many, many violators endangering the protected birds. There's little to no enforcement stopping Violators. It will only get worse.

3. There's a dog park not a mile away off Linda and Grand. We don't need another in the area.

4. The proposed park simply isn't large enough to suit big dogs. Several owners have told me that they would never bring their large dogs to the small site.

5. The fencing surrounding the site will be an ugly blight on the park and neighborhood.

6. To bring dogs to the park, walkers will have to cross very busy streets, further ensnaring traffic and inevitably making a mess

From: Robin Gibson <robin.christina.gibson@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 3:43 PM

Subject:

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear respected council members,

As a resident of the Lake Merritt area and mother of three who uses the children's park and neighboring grass field between Grand Ave and Lakeshore Ave, I am asking that you please vote to DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced, off-leash dog area in our

neighborhood park. Not only would a fenced dog area be an eye-sore to an area that our city is working hard to improve aesthetically, putting a dog park next to a children's play area that is designed for two to five year old children is simply not safe. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin Gibson

From: Casey Law <claw@astro.berkeley.edu>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 4:28 PM
Subject: Please keep Astro Park open
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council members,

We are writing to express our opposition to the conditional use permit for a fenced off-leash dog area near Astro park (a.k.a. Lakeview dog play area). As a resident of the neighborhood, we ask that you deny this permit.

The park is a valuable green space available for many uses, from soccer to fitness to enjoying the sun. The plan for a fenced area will lock up half of the green space in the park for a smaller number of users. As noted by the planning commission, this would over program the park and lead to more interference between users.

While we are sympathetic to the needs of dog owners, we feel this is not the best use of this limited open space. As a free, open space, the park creates a green "heart" for the Grand/Lake neighborhood. Being able to see and walk freely through that space is necessary for it to serve that function. This is especially important given that the freeway already cuts our neighborhood in two.

For these reasons, we ask that you will reject the conditional use permit as recommended by the planning commission.

Sincerely,
Casey and Jessica Law
570 Boden Way

From: mejonathan@netzero.net <mejonathan@netzero.net>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 4:13 PM
Subject: Astro Park - proposed dog park

To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I am against the dog park.

I can write quite a bit but will be brief:

As a resident of Oakland for a decade, I treasure the quality of life of the Lake Merritt area. I have a dog and would really like a dog park nearby, you bet! I sincerely appreciate the efforts made to create a dog park in my community.

But I also appreciate the unprogrammed park space that all can enjoy actively or passively. (I do not play soccer there - but I walk by there frequently and appreciate the unobstructed view from Grand to Lakeshore. It's special.)

This is the wrong place for a dog park.

Jonathan

<><><><><><><><><><><>

E-mailing you from a browser.

Woman is 53 But Looks 25
Mom reveals 1 simple wrinkle trick that has angered doctors...
<http://thirdpartyoffers.netzero.net/TGL3241/50ad6e79eb756e78729cst03>
due

From: Casey Law <claw@astro.berkeley.edu>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 4:28 PM
Subject: Please keep Astro Park open
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council members,

We are writing to express our opposition to the conditional use permit for a fenced off-leash dog area near Astro park (a.k.a. Lakeview dog play area). As a resident of the neighborhood, we ask that you deny this permit.

The park is a valuable green space available for many uses, from soccer to fitness to enjoying the sun. The plan for a fenced area will lock up half of the green space in the park for a smaller number of users. As noted by the planning commission, this would over program the park and lead to more interference between users.

While we are sympathetic to the needs of dog owners, we feel this is not the best use of this limited open space. As a free, open space, the park creates a green "heart" for the Grand/Lake neighborhood. Being able to see and walk freely through that space is necessary for it to serve that function. This is especially important given that the freeway already cuts our neighborhood in two.

For these reasons, we ask that you will reject the conditional use permit as recommended by the planning commission.

Sincerely,
Casey and Jessica Law
570 Boden Way

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jack T. Nagle <JNagle@goldfarbblipman.com>

Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 5:15 PM

Subject: Astro Park

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandneLcom>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers:

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog park in Astro Park.

I am a 29-year homeowner in Oakland. My family and I have long enjoyed the wide-range of recreational opportunities and diverse groups that use the current facilities, especially the open space area at the park.

I also coach the Team Oakland Special Olympics soccer team that makes use of the play fields at Astro Park for informal trainings and practices. Our group of approximately thirty special needs athletes and coaches finds this flexible space to be perfect for our informal sports play needs. Because of the park's excellent transit access, this is one of the few park areas in Oakland where our Special Olympics athletes—many of whom

have no private means of transportation—can come together. At the park our athletes have the chance to interact with a broad community of park users in informal soccer games—a rare chance for interaction that benefits both the Special Olympics athletes and other users of the park. This is the kind of informal interaction among a diverse range of park users that I witness and enjoy every time I go to Astro Park and that makes Oakland the special place that it is.

Unfortunately, these kinds of general public recreational uses and interactions would be sharply curtailed if the dog park proposal were to be implemented at Astro Park. I appreciate the value of having a dog park for dog owners. However, Astro Park is too precious a location for the type of general community use that I have described. Astro Park should be preserved for its current mix of flexible general public uses and a more appropriate location for a specialized dog park should be sought.

Again, please deny the dog park permit application when it comes before you on December 4. Thanks for your consideration of this request.

Jack Nagle
6048 Bullard Drive
Oakland, CA 94611 ☐

From: Fred Setterberg <fsetterberg@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Wed, Nov 21, 2012 at 2:55 PM
Subject: Please say no to dogs at Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council members,

I am a long-time resident in the Grand Lake area, and very appreciative of all the neighborhood offers. I fear that opening a dog park would imperil much of the neighborhood's better qualities. Conversations with my neighbors, many of them dog owners, confirms my skepticism about the plan.

I urge you to deny the change permit that would allow a dog park in Astro Park for the following reasons.

1. Parking is already tight. A dog park will make it a nightmare, while denying customer access to local merchants. This in itself is a sufficient reason to deny.
2. Dogs are not supposed to be walked in Lake Merritt Park -- but we know they will be brought there with increased frequency once the area becomes a dog magnet. Already the park has many, many violators endangering the protected birds. There's little to no enforcement stopping violators. It will only get worse.
3. There's a dog park not a mile away off Linda and Grand. We don't need another in the area.
4. The proposed park simply isn't large enough to suit big dogs. Several owners have told me that they would never bring their large dogs to the small site.
5. The fencing surrounding the site will be an ugly blight on the park and neighborhood.
6. To bring dogs to the park, walkers will have to cross very busy streets, further ensnaring traffic and inevitably making a mess

From: Jerel Mahaffey <jerelm490@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 12:45 PM

Subject: No permit for dog area

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear,

Council members, please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park.

Thanks,

Jerel

Sent from my iPhone

From: David L. Hurty <dave@hurty.com>

Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 11:39 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Members,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I live near this park and pass it often. Many small children and parents use the area for soccer and other field games. It is one of few areas where it can be used for such play activities in this neighborhood.

Cordially,

David L. Hurty

Rev. David L. Hurty
565 Bellevue Avenue, Apt. 707
Oakland, CA 94610-5016
Home: 510.465.3301
Fax: 510.465.3301
Mobile: 510.435.1568
dave@hurty.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: lee kraus <leekrausz@gmail.com>

Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 11:34 AM

Subject: Save Astropark

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please, please don't let Astro Park go to the dogs. A lot of fine work has been done in recent years to improve Lake Merritt. An area for dogs DOES NOT belong in one of the most beautiful spaces in Oakland. Frankly, it is disgusting to think that such an idea would even be considered. The open green space is for children, sun bathers, people enjoying walks, picnicking and many other forms of recreation. The space should not have to be shared with dog poop.

Leon Krausz
491 Chetwood St
Oakland 94610

Council Member
City Hall
1 Frank Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Council Member
Proposed dog park

Re:

There is a continuing need to protect Lake Merritt and its parks. There have been many proposals to carve up parts of the parks for other uses, but the public has successfully resisted them. For example, in the sixties the city council proposed to convert Snow Park to a hotel site, but the issue was submitted to the voters, who voted 2-1 against it. There have been proposals to build a supermarket and parking structures on the Lake's park lands, but public protest defeated them. In 2002 Measure DD, a \$ 198 million bond measure for park improvements, most of them around Lake Merritt, was approved by 80% of Oakland voters. In other words, Oaklanders treasure the Lake and its parks, desiring to enhance, not degrade them.

While those seeking to carve out part of the park land at Lakeshore and Mac Arthur for a dog park are well

intentioned, the proposal is not in the public interest for these reasons:

- 1 Losing green open space to a dog park degrades the appearance of the park. Many people enjoy the park just by driving around it and looking at it. It is an island of green in an otherwise built up area. The green space will give way to a wood chip surface surrounded by a chain link fence under this proposal.
- 2 It relegates one area of the park to use by one group, dog owners, to the exclusion of the rest of the public. This area is one of the few level grassy park spaces in Oakland where people can play Frisbee or a pick up ball game or just sit in sun. Such users are effectively excluded by a fenced dog park.
- 3 It replaces the current "No dogs in park" rule with "Dogs welcome." There will be much more dog use around the park. Many who walk, run or jog around the lake will not welcome the presence of numerous dogs. There will be a greater need to be on the lookout for more dog poop.
- 4 To a large extent, the proposal is to service for commercial enterprises on public park land without requiring payment to the city for the use of the property. Paid dog walkers will use this public park rather than finding private property to run their dogs.
- 5 There is already inadequate parking nearby. Many dog owners will arrive by car to an area that is already congested and has limited street parking.
- 6 If the proposal is approved by the city council, a message is sent that the city does not care about

protecting its prime park asset. Approval will invite other proposals to carve up the park's grass areas for various uses, such as parking lots, skateboard or BMX courses, tennis courts, etc. While such activities may be healthful for the participants, the net result is Oakland would lose much of its major park.

- 7 There are alternate sites. There is a vacant lot, a former Chevron station, across the street from the proposed site, another at Bellevue and Grand Ave, across the street from the park, and still another about a mile away on Park Blvd. next to Interstate 580. There is the parking lot under the freeway between Grand Ave. and Lakeshore. Of course there will be an expense if private property is used, but using public park land is not free. In fact the parcel the dog owners want for their exclusive use is probably one of the most valuable properties in Oakland. Consider what it would cost the city to purchase a comparable site.

Please protect the park. I urge the city council to reject the dog park proposal and retain the park as it is.

Sincerely,

John Sutter
3627 Klamath St.
Oakland, CA 94602
510 530 3711

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Richard Hart <richard_p_hart@yahoo.com>

Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 7:34 AM

Subject: Dog Park by Lakeview library - please deny permit

To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Application

From: Laura Sherman <laurasherm@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 1:16 PM
Subject: save astro park
To: cioucil@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

To City Council Members,

Please save Astro park and keep it green and unfenced. This is a beautiful park by the lake for all people to use for recreation and it creates a beautiful scenery as you walk around the lake. Please find another place for the dog park where we don't have to give up the beautiful grassy area. Even the parking lot across the street could be used for a dog park. That area has not been in use for a long time.

thank you,

Laura Sherman

From: Mirabai Deranja <morticia.atoms@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Nov 22, 2012 at 8:21 AM
Subject: Please keep Astro park green
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Please keep Astro Park the way it is. It's where we play volley ball. I'd love it to stay green and open for us to play on.

Thank you.

Mirabai Deranja, resident of Oakland, CA

--

www.miratango.com

From: lee kraus <leekrausz@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 2:59 PM

Subject: Astropark
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Please, please don't let Astro Park go to the dogs. A lot of fine work has been done in recent years to improve Lake Merritt. An area for dogs DOES NOT belong in one of the most beautiful spaces in Oakland. Frankly, it is disgusting to think that such a idea would even be considered. The open green space is for children, sun bathers, people enjoying walks, picnicking and many other forms of recreation. The space should not have to be shared with dog poop.

Leon Krausz
491 Chetwood St
Oakland 94610

From: Cecelia Conlon <tom-cecelia@att.net>
Date: Sat, Nov 24, 2012 at 3:41 PM
Subject: dog park at Lake Merritt
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

My wife and I are strongly opposed to a dog park at or near Lake Merritt. A fenced area at the MacArthur Blvd. end of the lake is a highly used area by people and their families and fencing off a major portion for dogs will not leave enough room for the historical activities that are enjoyed in the area. A fenced area would be very unattractive - a lot of money has been spent to make the area around Lake Merritt beautiful and to spoil it with a fenced area for dogs I would consider to be a major setback. Although it is proposed that the area would be fenced, the "dog park" would attract more dogs to the area with many of them being outside the fenced area. There are already way too many unleashed dogs around the Lake chasing the geese, tripping walkers/runners, and leaving dog poop all over the place - even though this is considered illegal (we have complained about unleashed dogs but have gotten no support from the City to inforce the regulations). The area is a

wildlife sanctuary and needs to be supported by the City not used by the City to appease special interest groups.

Tom & Cecelia MacDonald
788 Rosemount Road
Oakland, CA 94610
(510) 835-0406
email: tom-cecelia@att.net

From: Julie Chanter <juliechanter@aim.com>
Date: Sun, Nov 25, 2012 at 4:27 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park!
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I live on Merritt Avenue and plan to get a dog next year but I remain opposed to the proposed dog park. That field is the gateway to the lake, which is truly one of Oakland's jewels. The field in question is frequently flooded with rain and it will -without doubt- turn into a mud pit very quickly once the dog park is established. People visiting the area will have to drive by a barren piece of land which is not the image Oakland should present to outsiders. PLEASE don't let that very visible corner turn into an eyesore!

Julie Chanter
OUSD teacher
558 Merritt Ave.
Oakland, CA 94610

From: Joanna Katz <joannakatz4@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Nov 25, 2012 at 6:27 PM
Subject: No Dog Park by Lake Merritt
To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members,

I am very concerned that the proponents of the dog park by Lake Merritt are ignoring the unanimous rejection of the park by the planning commission. Please seriously consider the reasoning that led to that previous rejection.

My family and I regularly play at the playground and on the grassy field by our beloved Lakeview Branch library. We appreciate the green open space that is both restful and inviting of community activity by the lake. The dog park will be unsightly, unsafe, and unsanitary. If there is no budget for maintenance, it will be an eyesore. There are several other dog parks in Oakland and the great option of walking your dog on leash around the lake. Please deny the permit application of a small minority and save Astro Park for a grateful majority!

Sincerely,

Joanna Katz, mother of 2 boys under 9
4024 Loma Vista Avenue, Oakland 94619

From: Karen Mead <ckmead@comcast.net>
Date: Sun, Nov 25, 2012 at 9:01 PM
Subject: Astro Park is not the place for a dog park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members,

Please vote to deny the conditional use permit application to locate a fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park. We live near Lake Merritt, we shop at local stores, we're regulars at the Farmers' Market, and we visit the Lakeshore Branch Library. The park's large lawn area is a magnet for the many people who frequent this vibrant offshoot of Oakland's precious Lake Merritt. We've seen the park on different days of the week and different times of the day, and every time we're there, we marvel at the variety of ways that the grassy field is used, including for sports played by all ages, for various kinds of exercise, and for musical activities.

We understand the difficulty of exercising a dog in an urban setting, but Astro Park is simply the wrong place to locate a fenced dog run. It defies logic that this could be an acceptable plan for this much loved, and already

heavily used, resource, particularly since it's right next to a popular children's playground.

We urge you to please join the Planning Commission in denying this permit application.

Thank you,

Karen and Chris Mead
Boulevard Way

From: Sharice Biagas <sharicemb@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 8:23 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park!
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I spend many weekends and afternoons at this park running around with my nieces and nephews and it would really be a SHAME if this park was now going to be used for dogs!

Not only is this park used for kids, but in the mornings I participate in a bootcamp and I enjoy watching people play soccer games, and dance in the open grassy area. It is such a pleasure participating in outdoor activities and watching others participate in outdoor activities. It has become TRADITION to hang out at ASTRO PARK and be apart of all of these things.

It's EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, that a dog park does not take these simple but AMAZING pleasures away from PEOPLE! I love dogs but I would not trade in my community park, outdoor activities, and memorable times with my nieces and nephews at the park for a dog park!

PLEASE SAVE ASTRO PARK!!!

Sincerely,

Sharice B.

From: Liz Silzle <liz.silzle@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 8:56 AM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Oakland City Council,

it is a rare weekend where I do not find myself at Astro Park with my two young boys. Our favorite thing to do is kick a soccer ball around the large open space. In my neighborhood, this is absolutely the only flat, public, open space that we can walk to. After our walks to the park we often hit Lakeshore for a bite or go to the little library. If a large portion of the park were converted into a fenced-in dog park, this would be a great loss to the majority of the community who are utilizing this wonderful space to stay healthy, spend time with their children and immerse themselves in the wonderful Lake Merritt community. I understand the need for dog owners to have space for their pets to run safely off leash. In my mind there are many other places in this neighborhood where that could be accomplished with much less impact to the community. I am hopeful that you will hear my voice and the voice of my kids who say - please let us keep Astro Park open and free!

Liz Silzle

From: Julie Kono <julie.kono@sbcglobal.net>
Date: Sun, Nov 25, 2012 at 9:56 PM
Subject: Please save Astro Park!
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing to you today to please consider denying the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park. I am in no way against having a Dog Park in Oakland -- but to take away from beautiful green space that is my families neighborhood park I feel would not do justice the the beauty of the city. Astro Park is a perfect balance to the dark dingy underpass area of 580 and it would be a shame to see half of it become dirty and dust as well.

I'm sure you have received many suggestions of a more suitable location for the dog park that is convenient to for dogs and their owners without

making an an eye sore (i.e. the dog park under the Claremont Ave overpass) or taking away from valuable green space in the neighborhood. I hope that you consider the alternatives to the current plans at Astro Park before making a decision.

Thank you,
Julie Kono

From: Tom Willging <twillgin@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Nov 25, 2012 at 9:08 PM
Subject: Deny the permit for a dog park at existing Astro Park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>, Chris Willging <cwillging@yahoo.com>, Judith Willging - Home <willjude2@gmail.com>

Dear Oakland City Council:

Please deny the application for a conditional use permit for a dog run at Astro Park. My wife and I live in the Lake Merritt area as does our daughter and her family, including two young grandsons, and our son. All of us use Astro Park, primarily the grandchildren who use the playground often.

We all love dogs and want them to have room to roam. But this park does not seem to be the best place to put a dog run. In addition to endangering children and creating unsanitary conditions in an active urban environment, creation of a dog run would displace the many impromptu activities that occur in the mecca of green space we call Astro Park. I ride my bike regularly in that area and often see frisbee games, soccer players practicing in front of a portable goal, parents and children playing catch, pickup football and baseball, and lots of children using the slides, swing sets, and other equipment.

Please take into account these existing uses of Astro Park and reject the application for a conditional use permit. The Planning Commission thoroughly studied the question and concluded that a dog run would not be appropriate for space that the neighborhood uses so fully.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Willging
177 19th St #2D

Oakland, CA 94612

--

Tom Willging
177 19th Street, ApL 2D
Oakland, CA 94612
510-835-0159 (home)
202-491-4747 (cell)

From: Karen Mead <ckmead@comcast.net>
Date: Sun, Nov 25, 2012 at 9:01 PM
Subject: Astro Park is not the place for a dog park
To: Council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Council Members,

Please vote to deny the conditional use permit application to locate a fenced off-leash dog area at Astro Park. We live near Lake Merritt, we shop at local stores, we're regulars at the Farmers' Market, and we visit the Lakeshore Branch Library. The park's large lawn area is a magnet for the many people who frequent this vibrant offshoot of Oakland's precious Lake Merritt. We've seen the park on different days of the week and different times of the day, and every time we're there, we marvel at the variety of ways that the grassy field is used, including for sports played by all ages, for various kinds of exercise, and for musical activities.

We understand the difficulty of exercising a dog in an urban setting, but Astro Park is simply the wrong place to locate a fenced dog run. It defies logic that this could be an acceptable plan for this much loved, and already heavily used, resource, particularly since it's right next to a popular children's playground.

We urge you to please join the Planning Commission in denying this permit application.

Thank you,

Karen and Chris Mead
Boulevard Way

From: Frank Arthur <farthur@tricommercial.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 10:20 AM

Subject: Astro Park

To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>

Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Oakland City Council:

In my capacity as the Real Estate Representative of the Diocese of Oakland, as well as a citizen who frequents the Grand Lake/ Lakeshore area, I ask that you uphold the Planning Commission recommendation to not approve a dog park at this location.

As a dog owner myself I can empathize with the proponents regarding a need for facilities, but this is simply not a good location for numerous reasons which were well articulated at the Planning Commission meetings.

In addition, the Diocese of Oakland objects to such a use in a clearly business and commercial area where it is not compatible.

We urge you to uphold the reasoned and thoughtful decision of the Planning Commission.

Respectfully,

Frank Arthur

Franklin K Arthur III | Senior Investment Advisor

TRI Commercial Real Estate Services

1777 Oakland Blvd. Suite 100

Walnut Creek, CA 94596 | Ofc 925.296.3322 | EFax 510.336.8292

Fax 925.296.3399 | Cell 510.816.5914

DRE Lic #: 00472853

farthur@tricommercial.com

www.tricommercial.com

From: **Brandon Brown** <brandon@kathak.org>

Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 2:04 PM

Subject: Don't destroy Astro Park!

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council,

My name is **Brandon Brown** and I am emailing you today to ask you to please DENY the application for a conditional use permit for the

proposed dog run at Astro Park! I have lived here in the Lake Merrit area for a year and a half now and I love the whole area because there are so many things going on there and so many different spaces that you can utilize depending on your needs. The Astro Park is one of my favorite spaces of the Lake area because it is such a wide and open area which can be used for big events or when there are no events going on it can be used in multiple ways by many people at the same time. Part of the beauty of this particular space is that you can have a soccer game going on on one side of the park, loungers who just want to soak up sun on another side, and people like me who want to use the space to dance can do so as well without competing for the space. If you take half of that space away for the dog park, then it will destroy that peaceful coexistence of the Astro park patrons and I feel there will be more rallying for that open space.

I also feel the dog park is a terrible idea for this space because it would totally ruin the feel and aesthetic values of the Astro Park because it would no longer be a vast field of green for all to enjoy. It's beauty would be marred with the erection of the brown fenced enclosure... come on of all things, why a fence? That's just what we need are more fences to totally ruin one of the few flat and open green spaces we have in the area. I mean in all fairness I can sympathize for the fact that dog owners want a space for their dogs to be able to run free, but with the knowledge that there are quite a few dog runs within the area, I really can't allow for such a beautiful space to be destroyed. So please, when you go to vote on this I beg you to vote to save this beautiful space. Thank you for your time and consideration

--

Sincerely

Brandon Brown

Administrative Assistant

Chitresh Das Dance Company &

Chhandam School of Kathak

[p]415-333-9000 [f] 415-373-1731

2325 Third Street, Suite 320

San Francisco, CA 94107

brandon@kathak.org, www.kathak.org

Watch our [30th Year Anniversary video](#) highlighting excellence in dance, art, culture and service to society!

Follow us on:

From: <sidilipscomb@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 1:37 PM
Subject: SaVe Astro Park - REJECT Appeal!
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

TO: Oakland City Council

Our family have been part of the Lake Merritt community for several years and we feel strongly that the appeal for Astro Park should be rejected as there are plenty of kids in the area who deserve a clean playing area that is not contaminated by dog waste. Fencing is not a realistic option that will protect the area properly of dog waste. I understand dog owners - who seem incapable of following basic rules of poop pickup, based on all the poop we currently have to walk around in the neighborhood - want a play area for their animals, but we really need to put HUMANS first! I

Thank you,
Paul and Yasmin Lipscomb

From: Patti Byram <patti@trademarkevents.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 3:06 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear City Council Members:

I ask that you please **REJECT** the appeal of the proposed fenced, off-leash dog run in our neighborhood park – Astro Park. This green park is beautiful as it is and used in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife. Please keep Astro Park unfenced, open and green.

This is not the right place for a dog run. Thank you.

Patti Byram
Resident of Grand Lake Area - 17 years

From: Alan Beales <alan_beales@crescorent.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 3:15 PM
Subject: Concerned Oaklander
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Members:

I ask that you please **REJECT** the appeal of the proposed fenced, off-leash dog run in our neighborhood park – Astro Park. This green park is beautiful as it is and used in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife. Please keep Astro Park unfenced, open and green.

This is not the right place for a dog run. Thank you.

Regards,
Alan Beales
4th Generation Oaklander

Alan Beales

Cresco Equipment Rentals

Alan Beales | General Manager
From: Alan Beales
<alan_beales@crescorent.com>

From: Pikake2@gmail.com <pikake2@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 3:47 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Please **DENY** the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. This green area is one of the few safe spaces for children and grown ups in the neighborhood to play organized sport, or simply play, exercise or relax. There are other areas in the neighborhood designated for dog parks, but few designated for children.

Please be a part of creating healthy spaces for everyone.

Thank you,

Audrey Lum

From: Paul Hollenbach <hollcs@sbcglobalnet>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 9:12 PM
Subject: Lakeshore Ave. Dog Park
To: Council@oaklandneLcom

Dear Council members,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the off leash, fenced-in dog park proposed for my neighborhood.

I have two dogs so you might expect I would be in favor of this dog park. No, I am very much against it.

This is a beautiful grass space. It has no set program. It's not fenced-in. People can use it for whatever they wish. I play soccer with my daughter, play frisbee, play catch with my son, meet neighbors, and people from all over Oakland at this park.

It's just wrong on so many levels I can't believe it has gotten this far in the permit process.

While I appreciate the fact that this dog park has been talked about for a number of years. I and many of my neighbors found out about the proposed dog park last November. I believe if more people knew about this sooner it would not have gotten this far.

It's simply not the right place for a dog park.

Thank you,

Paul Hollenbach
695 Calmar Ave.
Oakland, CA 94610

hollcs@sbcglobal.net

M. 510.502.8108

From: Jaime Gutierrez <ato913@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2012 at 10:34 PM
Subject: Dog Park - Astro Park
To: "Council@oaklandnet.com" <Council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers,

As a long time resident of Adams Point and a father of a 5 year old son, we visit Astro park almost every weekend and a few times during the week.

I'm extremely concern with having a dog park even if it's fenced off near a children's playground. Introducing a dog park next to a playground full of children running around will most certainly create an environment for an accident to happen.

As I'm sure you are aware, the proposed location for the dog park is in a heavily traveled area of not only cars but pedestrians walking to the many shops and restaurants in that area and the wonderful Grand Ave. Farmer's Market on the weekend. Lets keep this wonderful area safe and clean.

I'm also concemed with the absence of funds to maintain the dog park.

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood Astro park.

Sincerely,

Jaime Gutierrez

From: Ann Arizu <aarizu@sbcglobal.net>

Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 4:48 AM

Subject: SAVE OUR PARK

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Members:

I ask that you please REJECT the appeal of the proposed fence around our neighborhood park – Astro Park. This green park is beautiful in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife unfenced, open and green.

This is not the right place for a dog run. Thank you.

Ann and David Arizu

Adams Point Homeowners

From: <ambeales@comcast.net>

Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 8:47 AM

Subject: Save Astro Park

To: council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear City Council Members:

I ask that you please REJECT the appeal of the proposed fenced, off-leash dog run in our neighborhood park – Astro Park. This green park is beautiful as it is and used in many ways by children, adults, families, Lake Merritt wildlife. Please keep Astro Park unfenced, open and green. This is not the right place for a dog run.

Thank you,

Michelle Beales

From: Jerry Wolfe <wingate63@vahoo.com>

Subject: Fw: Astro Park: Deny the Dog Park- An Important Perspective

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Date: Monday, November 26, 2012, 8:21 AM

Dear Council Person Brooks,

I have been a proud Oakland resident for the past 40 years and truly love the diversity and beauty of our city. For thirty of those years I worked in the Oakland Public Schools as a teacher and Principal(Frick Middle School, Castlemont). I currently serve on the Board of the Downtown Oakland YMCA and as a consultant to the many Youth Programs the Y provides to children and families from ALL neighborhoods of our city. In addition I have served on the development committee of La Clinica.I mention these experiences to give you a sense of my perspective of what is of great value to all the citizens of Oakland, especially our youth and families.

By now you have received volumes of letters, emails, info on various positions regarding this dog park location. I write to you to point out a perspective that is often overlooked in these discussions, which speaks strongly to the future of our City.

I know that you are deeply committed to providing the youth of our city with a strong sense of hope for the future and the strong belief that their needs and voices are heard by the leaders of our city. Having spent decades working with Oakland's young people I have learned one key lesson. They respond not to what adult leaders say as much as to THE ACTIONS THAT CITY LEADERS TAKE. The space at Astro Park is used by hundreds if not more young people from all the neighborhoods in our city. From soccer players, to high school students from a small alternative school in the neighborhood, to

Special Olympics, to YMCA summer camp activities, to families this is a much used(despite the misinformation by dog park supporters) safe, valued space. I have spoken to many of those kids and from their perspective it is seen as "What the city is going to take a space we use and value and make it a dog park"? Do they really care about us?

I urge you to deny this appeal and send a clear loud message to our youth, We hear you and value your needs!!

As I am sure you are aware, this dog park location has already been denied by a 3-0, with one abstention vote by our City Planning Commission. PRAC is currently developing a report for the City Council on guidelines and best practices for an overall city plan for dog parks which will be presented to the City Council in the near future. There are thousands of people opposed to this location for a dog park. Many of these people are enthusiastic and very open to working with the Council and all groups to find alternative locations in the same neighborhood for the needs of dog owners. Collaboration, communication and the willingness to work together to solve city issues are the key elements to the future of our city and its' progress. I strongly urge you to take the time to review all the information that you have received especially the carefully considered comments by the Planning Commissioners when they voted to unanimously deny the permit.

Please for the youth of our city and the future of all it's communities, vote to deny the appeal and be a voice of the future.

Sincerely,
Jerry Wolfe

From: Bettina Balestrieri <Balestrieri@grubbco.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 11:35 AM
Subject: Dog Park
To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

I think that creating a dog park at Lake Merritt is absurd. As an Oakland taxpayer who lives on a trail head I can no longer use the trail because of all the dog walkers I think it would be a nightmare to have the noise and dog urine smell all over the Lake neighborhood. Since the dogs would be walked to the park, they will pee all over and over time it will just sink not to mention the traffic congestion. The park should be for 2 legged citizens. Quit anthropomorphizing the dogs!.

Bettina Balestrieri
The Grubb Company
1960 Mountain Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94611
510 339-0400 ext. 225
Cell # 510 219-5876

DRE #01121218

From: Gilbert Vahanian <gvahanian@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 1:32 PM
Subject: Save Astro Park
To: "council@oaklandneLcom" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Council Members,

As a dog owner. I ask that you REJECT the merit-less appeal of the unanimous Planning Commission denial of the proposed dog run in our beautiful and serene neighborhood park - Astro Park.

This open, highly visible space in the center of our beautiful city is simply too valuable to too many people for it to be fenced off for the EXCLUSIVE use of any one group.

Please do not establish this unsightly precedent at the perimeter of the Crown Jewel of our city.

Lake Merritt is one thing we have here in Oakland that is going right. Let's give it all the care and attention it merits.

Respectfully,

Gilbert Vahanian
635 Spruce St.
Oakland, CA. 94610

From: Sue Levin <sue@heragency.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 2:31 PM
Subject: Astro Park-Please Deny With Direction Towards City-Wide Plan For Dog Parks
To: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandneLcom, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, PKernighan@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park Group <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Libby, Rebecca, Jane, Desley, Larry, Nancy, Pat and Ignacio,

As some of you probably know, I am a resident of the Grand Lake district and a dog owner. I am also strongly opposed to siting a dog run at the corner of Lakeshore and MacArthur, so much so that I helped to form Save Astro Park, a group of over 2000 friends and neighbors opposed to a dog park in this location.

Over the past few years I've been to many if not all the dog parks and dog friendly spaces in the area. And as someone deeply committed to Astro Park, along with the Save Astro Park team, I have spent nearly twenty Saturdays out at the space putting stakes up around the proposed footprint of the dog run and talking to neighbors.

I well understand that there are many dog owners who want play space for their dogs and a place to socialize with other dog owners at the same time. And I am intimately familiar with how much opposition there is to choosing this particular location for a dog run.

Given my experiences, my conclusion is this: dog parks, if sited properly, are a super cool way to exercise your dog and to make life long human friends. Dog parks (or plans for ones), that are not sited properly, can turn into what we now have today--an ugly pitchfork battle between neighbors and the citizens of Oakland. On the surface all this squabbling could appear to be pretty petty. But look beneath and you see that this heated debate over 22,000 square feet has been a lightning rod for a great many critical and emotional issues: open space, rights of dog owners, space for kids, gentrification.

At the end of the day I think what we can agree on is that, as a City, we would benefit from appropriately sited dog play space.

Appropriate siting will come from guidelines. We will have those guidelines from our Park and Rec Advisory Commission in February. In the meantime, having reviewed dog park guidelines for Seattle, Kansas City and Denver, I strongly believe that this Astro Park location would be considered an unwise choice for all the reasons that our Planning Commission articulated when they unanimously denied the CUP in May (too busy, too used, too close to kids, too visible, too small.)

I ask that City Council deny this CUP and agree with what our Planning Commission already decided. But I also ask that Council direct Planning, OPR and PRAC to begin executing on a City-wide plan for dog play areas (both on leash and off leash.) This should include encouraging healthy dialogue with ODOG, Caltrans, Fairlyland, Oakland Unified School District and other stake holders who may be able to help with site selection and pilot plans.

I strongly believe that we cannot begin a path toward peace and health until the Astro Park issue is put to rest. It has been quite damaging to the neighborhood and, to some degree, our City. It's time to decide. And then to roll up our sleeves as a City and make something good come out of all this.

Respectfully,

Sue Levin
328 Elwood Ave.

From: Mark Popple <markpopple@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Nov 27, 2012 at 7:55 PM
Subject: Dear council members.
To: Council@oaklandnet.com

Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

I am writing to you to request that you deny the conditional use permit for the fenced off dog run in our neighborhood park. I am a home owner in the cleveland heights district and strongly disapprove of this use for this unprogramed space. I enclose with this email two pictures that were taken of me painting at one of the stakeouts that I attended this summer. As you can see in the first photo, I am standing under the shade of the trees at the grand avenue end of the park. The yellow tape comes quite close and marks the furthest extent of the enclosed space. The man walking around the fence off area is looking for somewhere to put his goalposts for a game of soccer. In the second photo, you can see my work has progressed some, and in the background is the said soccer game.

This space is already used by numerous groups:- The school up the hill, amateur football and volleyball players and aerialists to name but a few. It is a place for older brothers and sisters of the children in the playground to run around in. It is a place that is green and pleasant enough to spend the time painting it and it is a beautiful lead in to the jewel of Oakland, Lake Merritt. We Oakland tax payers have spent millions of dollars beautifying Lake Merritt; making nice wide sidewalks, replanting flowerbeds and reseeding the grassy areas.....and now we are going to turn one of the biggest grass areas we have into a smelly, fenced-off, brown woodchip wasteland???

This is surely some kind of cruel joke to foist onto the taxpayers of Oakland. What is behind this? I understand that there has been a lot of lobbying of council members by the O.D.O.G. pressure group. Well, if you give in to their bullying you will probably make them temporarily happy....but you will alienate many more than their numbers of other voters whose park you have taken away, and future voters who currently enjoy the space they can freely play in.

There has been a lot of propoganda circulated by the proponents of the theft of our public space; not least of which are their statistics as to how many people own dogs (they claim 40% of households have dogs) and would use the run. Well if 40% of households have dogs, maybe some of the dog license fees could pay for a feasibility study for a different site. The former police horse stables perhaps? If there are not the funds for this I would question how many households DO actually have dogs, and how many of them actually pay their dues. If they cannot responsibly pay their way then why should we believe them when they say that they will maintain the park?

As a former dog owner I can say that not all dogs/owners even use or like dog runs. The proponents say that people will go there to...' see the

doggies play'.... but no-one will go to a smelly dog run to do that, so our green space will be gone for good if this is allowed to proceed. Please do not undo all the good work that has been done in and around t.ake Merritt with this travesty.
Mark Popple.

From: Grace Webber <grace.webber@sloan.mit.edu>
Date: Wed, Nov 28, 2012 at 6:12 AM
Subject: Dog Park: Original information you won't have read before
To: jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, lschaaf@oaklandnet.com, lreid@oaklandnet.com, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, atlarge@oaklandnet.com, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, "Kernighan, Pat" <PKernighan@oaklandnet.com>

Dear Councilmembers,

I used to be neutral on the dog park issue.
Now I have more information. A lot more.
You won't have read this stuff before.

In 2010 I moved to Oakland and later that year I joined my neighborhood email list. In December I heard that there was a proposal to make a dog park down the hill from my house in a space I frequently walked by. I was curious and attempted to ask my neighbors a few questions - I wanted to read up on the plan, and get informed as a good citizen should.

A neighbor on the list had found out from a dog owner group that there was to be a meeting in a couple of days' time, at 4:30pm, on whether a fence should be 5ft high or just 4ft high. At that short notice I couldn't make the meeting, and I was astonished when my tentative enquiries to my neighbors and City officials seeking more information about the proposal were rebuffed and I was accused of being disrespectful. In my naivete I assumed that a proposal to change the use of a public space in a highly-visible location near a landmark attraction would have received serious study by "experts", and the results of that study and analysis would be available to the citizenry.

I hadn't ever visited a dog park. Where I grew up very few areas were restricted to dogs, so fenced dog areas didn't exist. Putting a lot of dogs

into a specific area to run about was a new concept to me.

Originally I was curious to learn about traffic impact, and what a visual representation of the space would be like. I asked the Councilmember's office for the studies of traffic impact from the change, and artists' representations of the views over the space, and I was puzzled that I didn't seem to be able to get hold of them. Councilmember Nancy Nadel said that the dog park that was proposed was described in the Adams Point Urban Design Plan, so I asked her office for the plan and all they could produce was a few pages extracted from it. I asked the City Clerk's office and was told there was no copy of this Plan on file at the City anywhere even though there were clear records of the City having paid \$90,000 for it.

I was told to go to the volunteer architect for the site for more information, *i.e.* to the proposer of the development. I wasn't able to get anything else from that person because as he pointed out he was a volunteer and didn't have any resources to do any research or make drawings'.

At this point I met with a group of people who became the founding core of Save Astro Park. I wasn't deeply committed to positioning on one side or the other, but what I did want to do was have support for getting hold of information and setting up a website where other neighbors could find it too. This group of people seemed intelligent and almost as curious as I was, and could help me figure out how to get hold of information, so I decided to throw in my lot with them.

Since this time I have conducted further research. What I found out:

Adams Point Urban Design Plan²

I found the consulting firm that made the Plan and bought a photocopy from them. I scanned it and posted it on the Save Astro Park website (that I set up, and maintain) so any Oaklander can read it.

The "extensive community input" touted by Councilmember Nadel and proponents for this plan amounted to a total of 99 comments on all topics, collected at a single meeting at a senior center. The stated goals for the work did not mention dogs at all, and the scope was pretty wide, and much more focused on retail/commercial development on Grand Avenue, and reconfiguration of the El Embarcadero roadway, than anything else. It seems unlikely that a high fraction of the people with an interest in the

Eastshore Park space were involved in the meeting. It's been pointed out by others that the whole proposal was very different in what it envisioned for Eastshore Park, with a large green open field undivided by roadways or fences being part of the long-term vision. Many of the comments from that meeting in favor of a dog park were seeking a dog park anywhere in Oakland, and lamenting that there were none - of course Oakland has now provided four more.

Dog owner numbers and responsibility

The proponents cite a figure of 40% of households having dogs - or "even as many as 50%". When I looked at the source for this I found the 40% came from a national study by a pet products association³. I wondered how it related to Oakland. I put in a records request for information on Oakland's mandatory dog licenses⁴. From that request, I learned there are 9,375 current dog licenses in all of Oakland, implying that a maximum of 6% of Oakland households⁵ have a dog license. 1,360 of these are in zip codes 94606 and 94610, *i.e.* Cleveland Heights and Adams Point, Grand Lake and Crocker Highlands. (There are fewer dogs with licenses in these neighborhoods than there are people signed up to the Save Astro Park group.) So either there just aren't that many households with dogs, or the people with dogs aren't buying the mandatory licenses for their dogs (and these only cost \$10⁶ for most dogs). This means it's harder to track down the owners when a conflict arises, and of course that the contribution to city costs for Animal Control and park upkeep is less. And one's trust of the idea of the "responsible dog owner" being the 99% of the case is rather shaken.

The City of Piedmont has four parks open for off-leash dog use. You may not know much about them because the map you have received from ODOG⁷ omits the northern part of the concentric circles where Piedmont is. However, there is no passport barrier between our cities. The nearest dog park to the Lake is in Piedmont, because Piedmont is very close to the Lake. Linda Park is less than a mile from the Grand/MacArthur end of Eastshore Park (just past Ace Hardware). I talked to one of the Animal Control Officers in Piedmont⁸ and in all the years of planning Lakeview, nobody has talked to them about these plans to take input. They would advise to protect any trees in the area from dogs, not to put a dog park on a level field, and to ensure strong Animal Control processes. Piedmont charges \$37⁹ per year per dog for Oakland dogs to use their parks off-leash. They spend \$70,000 per year on biodegradable poop bags and much more on Animal Control so the off-leash licenses help to support that

cost. Overall with the Piedmont data from Animal Control I calculated that Oaklanders, in total, are spending \$2,600 per year for Piedmont off-leash permits. Which pays for only 1 in 27 of Piedmont's poop bags.

How much sentiment is there on each side of this issue?

The information presented by the Planning Department to the Planning Commissioners on this point was particularly hard to work with. The Planners did no organizing of the submissions but simply reproduced everything in whatever order they put their hands on it. At first the PDF file posted on the city website was well-nigh undownloadable. I pushed to have the Planners upload a smaller PDF of the same content^o, and in the few days between obtaining the document and the Meeting I embarked on an analysis. Each Commissioner was presented with a 1436 page pack of correspondence and other documents. The letters were unsorted, but lumpy: big chunks seemed to be primarily "pro" or "against" but without any organization. Many letters were duplicated by the writers themselves or by other agencies. Many people wrote more than once to express their views. It was hard to know where sentiment stood.

I set up a database and coded up each letter-writer individually. It turns out that:

- 396 distinct people wrote individual letters saying they wanted to keep Astro Park as-is.
- 305 distinct people wrote individual letters saying they wanted the Lakeview Dog Park there.
- A further 119 distinct people clicked on the button to send an uncustomized "form letter" of one of three types supporting Lakeview Dog Park.
- Thousands on each side signed up to campaign or petition for their point of view.

I shared my raw data and analysis with Planning, with ODOG and with SAP, giving each party a copy on CD-ROM. I didn't want anyone else to have to go through the manual encoding pain I had endured. And I wanted my analysis to be open to scrutiny - my goal was accurate and impartial information to help decision-makers.

It's a shame that our Planners did not set up a reasonable database to code up these responses. I see that for the Appeal hearing they did a better job, presenting the submissions in alphabetical order, so it is easier to detect duplicate submissions from the same people. Unfortunately

opponents of the proposal are not represented in that pack since Planning did not inform the opponents that submissions to the Council's email address would not be automatically included.

What is the legal situation regarding walking a dog around the lake?

I was reading in the letters from the community a lot of concern about being arrested and ticketed for walking a dog around the lake. Yet all of Oakland's 1120 linear miles of sidewalks are permitted for dog-walking, including the ones specially widened for the purpose through Measure DD funds. I had a colleague check with the City Attorney and indeed it is right that all the sidewalks around the lake are legal for on-leash dog-walking and nobody gets arrested or ticketed for this. I made a map to illustrate the route¹¹ and the City Attorney agreed it is correct.

It's not currently legal to take a dog onto the grass on-leash. It's within Oakland City Council's powers to change this. I, for one, would not mind on-leash dogs in Eastshore Park. Owners would still be responsible for picking up waste - and it would be easier to know where the poop has fallen when it's just at the other end of a leash. Dogs would not tear around and tear up the grass and their numbers would be less, so wood chips would be unnecessary. Fences also would not be needed, and that makes a huge difference.

What happens at dog parks?

I went and visited a lot of dog parks. I took pictures¹². I bought books¹³ and read papers¹⁴. I talked to dog owners. I took a dog to a dog park. I read reviews of dog parks online¹⁵. I found that there are two major kinds of dog parks, suitable for different occasions. Dog owners and dogs seem to like the big spaces best, with visual interest, plenty of space for dogs and people, and lots of fresh air blowing through. There are several of these by the bay in Albany, Berkeley, San Leandro and Alameda, and up in the hills too. These are great for long visits, and people tend to go by car (indeed a UC Davis study¹⁶ found that across all the dog parks they studied, 95% of dog owners came by car). Then there are small urban dog parks. These get much more mixed reviews. Dog owners find the close confinement of their dogs with others can cause problems when they meet dogs and owners with different philosophies than their own. They seem to see these more as a "necessary evil" than anything else, and the range of dogs that is suitable to exercise there is smaller. Vets complain that many dog injuries result from the conflicts in these smaller spaces¹⁷. I found out that

the ground surface of a dog park needs a lot of maintenance; dog urine kills grass pretty quickly. Hence the idea to use wood chips at Lakeview: it's cheaper. But wood chips degrade into dust too and owners complain about this. Owners who visit these urban parks complain about smells. Less so where there isn't a highway over the top, and less so where the "Magic Can" is in use, but urine doesn't go in the "Magic Can" and is still smelly, as is left-behind poop, and I have seen plenty of each in east bay dog parks.

One of the Planning Commissioners - and many of my friends with dogs who have lived near or visited dog parks a lot - point out that dogs are often taken off-leash before arrival at the gate of a dog park or after leaving the dog park. This isn't really a big concern in most places dog parks are sited. Usually their entrances are set away from busy roads (at Grove Shafter, for instance, it's at the back of a recreation field). In bayside and hill parks there's usually a fairly quiet dedicated parking area for the trails, and often it's possible to load the dog into a car before any major traffic is encountered. Of course at Lakeview this would not be the case. There's an enormous amount of traffic entering and leaving the area by highway on and off ramps and local streets, all day long, every day. There are almost no parking spaces for dog owners that don't require crossing a road. And I was stunned, many months into this effort, to observe with my own eyes a dog being chased by other dogs (in fun), leaping with ease over a 5 ft high fence in a bay area peninsula dog park. The dog didn't even seem to realize what he/she had done, it was distracted by the excitement of the chase.

What happens at Astro Park?

Most of the time, nothing happens at Astro Park. Yes, it's true! It's night time, or people are busy going to or from work or are at work or school. That's no different from other parks in Oakland or elsewhere. Astro Park comes to life in fits and bursts around people's schedules. Meanwhile, it just looks green and good to all those scurrying around it.

- At nighttime, it's dark¹⁸ and empty. That includes times when a dog park there would be open (opening hours are proposed to go until 10pm¹⁹). No lighting. (Imagine, dogs running around on a brown lumpy area, pooping, off-leash. In darkness. And owners are supposed to pick up the poop? How will they even find it?)
- During the winter when it's really rainy it gets very squelchy and water pools there. Not a great surface for anything, and anyone on the surface will make it worse. Geese enjoy it. I made a video of exactly

how puddly it gets²⁰.

- I haven't been there midweek during the daytime because I am at work, but I understand that's when Bay Hill High School uses it.
- In the weekends in good weather in daylight is when the space comes to life. Kids and adults running about, working out, training and playing. Music and exercise, sports and fun. It's not all "organized" which may explain how ODOG research didn't discover all the groups using the space - it varies day by day and with the seasons.²¹

How this process has been working, or not

I respect the work of Emily Rosenberg and ODOG. Emily has a passion to make provision for her constituency happen. The group is an effective advocate for change. They have done good work in finding some neglected and unloved, even partially-blighted sites and putting the pieces together to guide Oakland City to set up dog parks there: in the sites they have found they have guided taxpayer and private investment to improve the situation. This is hard work, long hours with little thanks from the City. They've been able to fill the gap where Oakland City hasn't had the resources or organization to pursue this work for its citizens. They haven't met with opposition in other neighborhoods as they put in Mosswood Park, or Grove Shafter, or Jefferson Park, as it really has been the case that their development has added more than it has taken away from the neighborhood. They've managed to coordinate cleanups multiple times a season to enable harmonious time-sharing of the Joaquin Miller parking lot space with Woodminster Theater. Based on what I've seen of the Lakeview application I suspect they have made the arguments "this is a neighborhood park; there will be low impact" in each of these other sites, and they have been accepted and things have moved forward. They've been right. They've been successful in that provision is there (though marketing and use of the facilities could probably be improved: the amount of use of the existing Oakland dog parks, even the newer ones, seems to be pretty low). I believe that Emily deserves positive recognition for her services to Oakland.

But now this advocacy group has come up against a much different situation. They have their eyes on a park which is not blighted at all, but in active use, and furthermore is highly visible to far more people than ever set foot on it, and is exactly between a major "natural" leisure draw (the Lake and surrounding Park) and a major "commercial" draw (the restaurants and shops of Grand and Lakeshore Avenues). Although their initial scouting didn't turn this up, it is in fact well-loved by many people

(thousands of them, at least) for being exactly what it is: a large, flat, open green field available for all to use and appreciate, near the Lake and near our commercial and neighborhood heart. They've been led on to pursuing this spot by a rather un-worked-through reference in the city's LMMP document.

The process that ODOG used to generate support for their plan for this site was much as they had used for other locations - they made the plans themselves at their own cost, gathered their supporters together and went to the various city agencies to get approval on those plans. The Planning Department was used to working with them (ODOG does lots of work taking the burden off Planning!) and accepted "the way things have always been" with ODOG's parks - "this is a neighborhood park, no impact, fine to go through". So for instance Planning announces its verdict on traffic impact - this is a "neighborhood park" so by definition "everyone who comes to it is from the neighborhood and will walk"; hence "no traffic impact". But just saying this does not make it so! People don't choose where they go according to OSCAR classifications. They look on Yelp, or ODOG, or Doggones, or Google Maps to find the facilities they want to use. Wherever you live, you can find out about this dog park sited beside the Lake, where all that vaunted investment has been made. Sounds interesting! So, of course, you drive there. This one is not like other ODOG park sites: it is situated at an attraction.

It's not ODOG's job to determine what the right use is of our key city park spaces. It's not their job to consult with every constituency and determine the right approach that balances everyone's concerns. The failure of ODOG to anticipate the level of opposition from the people of Astro Park, or to be able to persuade everyone in opposition to change their minds, is not something ODOG needs to take any blame for (I'm sure if they had known up-front how much opposition there would be, they would not have embarked on this road). But the failure of ODOG to find an alternate space in the area that they themselves are willing to pursue is not a reason to move forward with this proposal. Indeed ODOG has been resolutely refusing to work on (and therefore effectively blocking) alternate site development for fear that it might reduce their chances of getting this site approved. This is a proposal from a private group to put a development for the benefit of their own members on public land. That development will include a 700 foot length of concrete to be dug into a trench and placed under the fence line, as well as the fencing itself. This is not a reversible decision. It will have a major impact on this park, neighborhood and Lake area for many decades.

Yes, Emily Rosenberg deserves recognition for her positive impact on the City of Oakland. No doubt Nancy Nadel has also put in lots of effort for the City in her years in role as Councilmember. However, I think this price is too high. Please do not vote to grant them their dog park just because you love them so much or because of their other good works; recognize them some other way, less costly to Oakland and less controversial, for all the other great and positive work they have done.

City Councilmembers, please respect the views of Oaklanders and realize that this plan has elicited such passionate opposition for good reason. This site is the wrong place for a dog park. Our city green space's future deserves a better process than a private group putting forward a proposal and a city agency rubber-stamping it without proper analysis. The Planning Commissioners recognized this in their denial. The PRAC seems to have some ideas of setting up a fairer and more appropriate process. Let them and the newly-elected Council go and find a way forward after we have put aside this particular proposal.

Please REJECT the appeal and uphold the Planning Commissioner's denial of a CUP for Lakeview Dog Play Area.

Thank you.

Grace Webber
American Citizen since 2008
Voting and paying Oakland taxes in Cleveland Heights since 2010

Footnotes and Backup Material:

1. Later Leal Charonnat, the volunteer architect, did put together two visual representations of views over the space, which was helpful. However, it did not cover the view through the gates on Lakeshore which I believe would be one of the most unpleasant views into the site, and it showed the wrong kind of vegetation. I do not believe his motive was to keep information from people. I think he did his best with limited resources to answer the requests for a mock-up. But we still have no representation of the view into the wood chipped area from outside the gates on Lakeshore.

2. Adams Point Urban Design Plan - download at <https://sites.google.com/a/saveastropark.org/save-astro-park/how-you-can-get-involved/decision-making-process?pli=1> or direct links at: [adams_pt_plan.pdf](#) and [adams_pt_appxs.pdf](#)

3. Source for "40% of households have dogs" statistic
http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/pet_overpopulation/facts/pet_owners_hip_statistics.html

4. Records request for dog licenses info - was filed as Public Records Request Log #3-10. Response received via Megan Webb, Director of Oakland Animal Services, on 17 June 2012. I have full by-zipcode information. Let me know if you would like a copy.

5. Number of households in Oakland and by zipcode - 2010 Census:
<http://census.abag.ca.gov/cities/Oakland.htm>

6. Cost is \$10 for an Oakland dog license - linked from City of Oakland official Oakland Animal Services page to <http://www.petdata.com/for-pet-owners/oak/license-fees>

7. ODOG map missing a chunk. Original map from ODOG is given in the Appeal documents.

- Corrected map below. The orange area is "whited out" in the ODOG map:
- Check that it's under a mile to make the walk: <http://goo.gl/maps/MUIGE>

8. Animal Control Officer in Piedmont:

- Phone conversation on 3/19/2011 between London Rivera, Animal

Control Officer in Piedmont Police Department and Grace Webber

9. Piedmont off-leash dog license for Oaklanders costs \$37 a year:
 - http://www.ci.piedmont.ca.us/html/forms/police_doglicense.pdf
 - Note that the "intact dog" license with a fee of \$68 a year is only held by 26 Oakland dogs at the moment (compared with 736 "altered dogs"). Usually only commercial breeders keep their dogs "intact".

10. PDF of Planning Commission submissions
 - http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/agenda/oa_k034695.pdf

11. Walking map around the lake
 - <http://www.saveastropark.org/it-s-legal---and-lovely---to-walk-your-dog-around-the-lake>

12. Ohlone dog park photos:
 - <http://www.saveastropark.org/top-ten-reasons-this-dog-run-is-a-bad-idea/the-city-green-or-the-city-brown>

13. Book read:
 - "So You Want To Build a Dog Park?" by DogParks USA(TM) and author Susyn Stecchi. (c)1997-2007.
 - Analysis at: <http://www.saveastropark.org/details-of-this-dog-run-plan/so-you-want-to-build-a-dog-park>

14. Papers read:
 - UC Davis Dog Parks study:
http://www.vmeth.ucdavis.edu/home/beh/Dog_Park/Dog_Park_Management_Guidelines.pdf
 - "20 Tips for Creating Successful Dog Parks In Your Community", at <http://www.dogparkusa.com/articles/20-tips-creating-successful-dog-parks-your-community> - discussed at <http://www.saveastropark.org/top-ten-reasons-this-dog-run-is-a-bad-idea/how-to-create-a-great-dog-run---how-does-this-one-score>
 - "Building Dog Parks Without Rancor" by the Trust for Public Lands: http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe_Dog_Park_Report.pdf

15. Reviews of dog parks
 - Extracted reviews: <http://www.saveastropark.org/top-ten-reasons-this-dog-run-is-a-bad-idea/what-is-a-fenced-dog-run-like>

- Yelp:
http://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Off+Leash+Dog+Parks&find_loc=Oakland%2C+CA#find_desc=%22Dog+Park%22
- Dog Goes: <http://www.doggoes.com/parks/california/east-bay>

16. UC Davis study

- http://www.vmeth.ucdavis.edu/home/beh/Dog_Park/Dog_Park_Management_Study_Results.html
- http://www.vmeth.ucdavis.edu/home/beh/Dog_Park/Dog_Park_Management_Guidelines.pdf

17. Veterinary testimony

- Testimony of Barb St. Amant at Community meeting, PRAC and Planning Commission. Barb is Registered Veterinary Technician, East Bay Veterinary Specialists. <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/barb-st-amant/49/637/8b2>
- Summary of most common dog park injuries, lists “laceration and bite wounds” as #2:
<http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/dvm/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=776783>

18. Lack of lighting in Astro Park

- Photos of Astro Park at night: <http://www.saveastropark.org/top-ten-reasons-this-dog-run-is-a-bad-idea/nocturne>

19. Closing not until 10pm

- 1st page of Planning Staff Summary to original application, “access hours, (6:00am - 10:00pm)”

20. Waterlogged ground in winter, video taken in March 2011

- <http://www.saveastropark.org/top-ten-reasons-this-dog-run-is-a-bad-idea/feelin-swampy>
- <http://youtu.be/6W1wnan2rOg>

21. People enjoying Astro Park

- See “The People of Astro Park” video at http://youtu.be/nrA_v7N-GXo

From: Liz Fuchs <eaf11182002@yahoo.com>

Date: Wed, Nov 28, 2012 at 6:13 AM

Subject: Please DENY proposal for Dog Run at Eastshore/Astro Park

To: "council@oaklandnet.com" <council@oaklandnet.com>
Cc: "saveastropark@gmail.com" <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Honorable Councilmembers,

Please **DENY** the appeal for a dog run at the **Eastshore/Astro Park at Lakeshore and MacArthur**. This is the wrong location for a dog run and is inconsistent with the General Plan Open Space Conservation and Recreation Element. The General Plan OSCAR identifies that active recreation is inadequately served in the **Lake Merritt Area** and this will remove half of the useable play area.

The project will displace active recreationists that need flat park land. Dogs don't need flat land and have other existing areas nearby for off-leash use including almost every trail of the **East Bay Regional Park District** and several nearby dog runs. They do not lack for off leash recreation area. **But** this area is the only park site in our neighborhood that offers flat lands suitable for adults and children who need and use flat land for active recreation. This is taking away from active recreation at a small, heavily used site.

OSCAR identifies this neighborhood park as "**Heavily Used**" and a "**Gateway**" to **Lake Merritt**. The proponents contend this area is not used which is false. The lawn area is used by a variety of recreationists predominately during peak after work and weekend hours. Conversely, the city has opened new dog areas and there is no evidence that the City's existing dog runs are overburdened to justify eliminating this active recreation area. **Many** times I checked the city's existing dog runs and no one was using them, even at peak hours.

This location violates impartial criteria for siting dog runs in cities. The Trust for Public Land studied siting dog runs in cities

http://cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe_Dog_Park_Report.pdf and confirms why this is a bad location—1

- this will create interference with other established uses ,
- the existing parking is already heavily constrained
- it does not avoid locations near children's play areas;
- it will have significant impacts on the visual character of this park;
- and impacts will spillover into adjacent areas.

The City lacks sufficient resources for Enforcement. This will insert a regional use into a very small neighborhood park and will increase burdens on the city. Due to the lack of adequate city funds for enforcement and maintenance, it is just going to result in increased conflicts and a constant enforcement issue for the city, especially when dogs get loose either intentionally or unintentionally. I personally have witnessed dog owners ignoring leash laws and have witnessed pit bulls off leash near the library. Inserting a dog run in this park is just asking for such conflicts to increase. As a result this will decrease public safety and increase city liability. Not every person is comfortable around dogs and that needs to be respected. Some dogs are aggressive and have behavioral problems that their owners excuse or are oblivious to. With the city's lack of adequate animal control resources, more conflicts will arise and the city will be exposed to increased liability for altercations, which the city cannot currently afford.

The project lacks enforceable assurance and resources for maintenance and will be an increasing maintenance

burden on the city. Fences can-and are- tagged with graffiti. I have previously sent evidence of fence posts being tagged around the Lake path. Reliance on volunteers for permanent maintenance is not a long term solution. There are inadequate resources to assure that this site over time will not degrade and become a nuisance. Most City parks are already suffering from lack of maintenance. Even the popular Splash Pad Park has had trouble maintaining the park with volunteers. It has been noted that over time volunteerism declines and the park degrades. As an example see the April 4 2012 Newsletter for Splash Pad Park that noted the documented maintenance problems resulting from trying to rely on volunteers: : <http://www.splashpad.org/4-4-12newsletter.html>

When the park opened in 2003, we were already aware that the City of Oakland's park maintenance staff was limited in what they could do and we had an unspoken pact that I would be the park's guardian angel...For the first few years, with the assistance of a hard-core group of volunteers, we did just that but, over time, we all drifted off to other projects and concerns....(emphasis added)

The city cannot keep up with maintenance now, yet alone new facilities!

Degradation of a Gateway protected by the General Plan. OSCAR identifies this as a Gateway to Lake Merritt. Yet this project would remove a green lawn area and replace it with a brown wood chip fenced area that will visually degrade this area. In the winter rains it will become an even worse eyesore.

Parking is already constrained and this will make it worse as many people will drive to the park. Other cities have found that dog runs become regional attractions and some are so

overwhelmed they close them down.

There are alternatives. The city should be looking for underutilized areas that could be upgraded to accommodate a dog run, not take away existing recreation space here. The current police stables site is one such alternative--it is already fenced, had supported police dogs and horses in the past and is abandoned and degraded. It should be pursued as an alternative. Or, new dog parks should be required in conjunction with any new development planned for the Adams Point area rather than eliminating existing park use area.

Sincerely,
Liz Fuchs
Merritt Ave

From: Jesse NACHEM <jlnachem@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 28, 2012 at 12:49 PM
Subject: Re: Save Astro Park-The Time Has Come: 12/4/2012
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

Dear Councilmembers,

I have written before, but in light of the upcoming City Council meeting, I once again write to urge you to deny the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in Astro Park.

This busy neighborhood park, at a very busy intersection, is no place for a dog park. Like many people are saying, it's the "right idea, wrong place" for a dog park.

A dog park would prevent most people from using Astro Park. I've seen people exercising, children's soccer practices, and people reading books from the Lakeview Library, among many other things. Cutting off this space would end these activities and would put dogs in a possibly dangerous situation, being so close to the intersection.

Again, I urge you to deny the permit.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely,
Jesse NACHEM
420 Merritt Avenue, Oakland

From: Jesse NACHEM <jlnachem@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 28, 2012 at 12:49 PM
Subject: Re: Save Astro Park-The Time Has Come: 12/4/2012
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: Save Astro Park <saveastropark@gmail.com>

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Again, I urge you to deny the permit.

Thank you for your time,
Sincerely,
Jesse NACHEM
420 Merritt Avenue, Oakland

From: Lake Raymond <lkaymond8@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Nov 28, 2012 at 3:48 PM
Subject: SAVE ASTRO PARK
To: council@oaklandnet.com
Cc: saveastropark@gmail.com

Dear Councilmembers,

Please DENY the conditional use permit application for the fenced off-leash dog area in our neighborhood park. I spend a lot of time in the Lake Merritt area and my daughter loves the openness of Astro Park. The neighborhood we live in is not safe enough for her to run around outside so coming to this park on a Saturday after Farmer's Market is something she looks forward to every week. Placing a dog park here would be expensive, impractical, messy and would deter from the family friendly aspect of the Lake Merritt Area. I think there should be a dog park but in a place that is more tucked away and would not affect local business, deter people from bringing their kids to the park, and somewhere that is less noisy (i.e. not next to the freeway!!) so the dogs can enjoy their time outdoors socializing.

Thank you for your time and consideration of all the residents of this beautiful city.

Lake Raymond
Oakland resident born and raised.