



DATE: June 11, 2014

AGENDA ITEM # 4

**TO:** Parks & Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Beverly Tucker, Staff Liaison

**SUBJECT:** “Petiquette” Program

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive information on the Portland, Oregon “Petiquette” Program

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**BACKGROUND**

At the May 2014 Regular Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, Commissioner Lee Eng shared a resident complaint about dogs off leash in a City park and related a program implemented by the City of Portland, Oregon to address off-leash dogs. This report provides an overview of the Off Leash Areas provided by the City of Portland and the “Petiquette” education campaign for the off leash and “non-scoop” violators citation program enacted by the City of Portland in 2013.

**DISCUSSION**

The City of Portland, Oregon, with a population in excess of 600,000 people, is the 28<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States. The annual budget for the City of Portland is \$1.7 billion with \$46.2 million allocated for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department (PRCD). Portland has 203 developed parks, maintaining 11,415 acres of parkland and natural areas. PRCD has a staff of 440 full-time employees and over 1,000 part-time staff.

Portland has a vibrant dog community with the City operating nine fenced dog parks and 33 off leash areas (OLA) in other parks. The number one complaint of park visitors prior to introducing the new citation program was non-compliance with leash laws and dog owners not picking up after their dogs. In 2013, Portland introduced a formal citation ordinance for people violating the leash and scoop laws with fines up to \$150. (A complaint analysis following enactment of the new ordinance was not readily available.)

Formal public education campaigns with multiple components were developed to educate park users on the new fines and citation policy and encourage compliance. One educational campaign was the introduction of “Petiquette for Parks”, a brochure outlining the new policy, listing the City’s OLA and dog parks and providing tips and resource lists for dog owners.

Currently, the City of Los Altos Municipal Code does not allow dogs off leash in any City park. This ordinance is enforced on a complaint basis and citations are issued to violators.

If the Commission is interested in exploring a brochure outlining the policy for pet owners and guidelines for park use, it should be considered for addition the 2014 Work Plan. Research would be needed for: the criteria to include on a brochure, defining resources, design

and printing costs, distribution methods, display container costs and replenishment procedures.

If the Commission is interested in creating OLA areas or a Leash Scoop Compliance Program, a more formal process would be required with approval by the City Council prior to beginning any exploration.

Excerpts from the City of Portland Off Leash Area (OLA) policy:

**The Dog Off-Leash Program works to:**

- Provide OLAs that are healthy, fun places for dogs to play
- Promote compliance with leash laws and scoop laws
- Encourage responsible use of parks and OLAs
- Connect owners with the resources they need to enjoy off-leash areas
- Support volunteer and fundraising efforts

Leash laws ensure dogs are controlled by their owners at all times, which keeps people and other dogs safe, and protects park land and wildlife. Removal of dog waste prevents spread of disease that waste can carry, and avoids impacts to recreational use, water quality, wildlife, and vegetation.

**Leash/Scoop Compliance Program**

Portland Parks & Recreation encourages compliance with leash and scoop laws through education, enforcement, and by providing off-leash areas (OLAs) for legal dog-owner recreation. Our efforts include:

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- Education campaigns, such as Pet Health for Parks, Dogs for the Environment, and Petiquette for Parks
  - In-park outreach visits
  - Developing park signs, presentations, and flyers to increase awareness and understanding of leash/scoop laws
  - Park Ranger patrols, which use park warnings and citations to increase leash/scoop law compliance
  - Intensive outreach and enforcement efforts at parks where low compliance impacts park health, safety, or enjoy-ability
  - Special events like Flicks with Fido, and participating community and partner events like Doggie Dash and Aarf in the Park

**Obeying Leash & Scoop Laws**

Leashed dogs are welcome visitors in most Portland parks. Dog owners help keep parks fun and healthy for all visitors by obeying leash and scoop laws, following off-leash area rules of use, and complying with all Multnomah County Laws and Park Rules.

By law, dogs must always be on leash when not in a designated off-leash area. No dogs, on or off-leash, are allowed at Tanner Springs Park, Whitaker Ponds Nature Park, Foster Floodplain Natural Area, or the amphitheater at Mt Tabor Park. You must carry a leash for each dog in your care, and keep pets leashed on the way to and from off-leash areas. At unfenced off-leash areas, boundary maps are posted. Familiarize yourself with the boundaries, and play with pets within the designated area only.

Law also requires that pet waste must be picked up and disposed of in a trash can. Being in an off-leash area does not exempt owners or handlers from obeying scoop laws. Scoop bags are not supplied, so bring bags with you.

Violation of leash or scoop laws will result in a fine of up to \$150.

Attachments:

1. City of Portland Leash Scoop Compliance Program
2. City of Portland Council Crest OLA Map-Hours
3. City of Portland Petiquette Brochure