

**Sanderson Gulch Dog Park and Playground  
Responses to Public Meeting #1 Questions  
August, 2021**

**1. Did the 2010 Dog Park Master Plan and 2019 Technical Update include public communications and feedback opportunities?**

To provide some background, in 2010, Denver Parks & Recreation (DPR) created a [Dog Park Master Plan](#), which included city-wide engagement during its development.

DPR updated the Dog Park Master Plan in 2019 with the [Dog Park Technical Master Plan Update](#), which also included city-wide engagement during its development.

During both Master Plan processes, specific locations were not identified for dog parks, but rather broader gaps in the city. Because of the gap in dog parks that exists in southeast Denver and the growing demand for a dog park among residents, money was initially allocated to build a dog park in southeast Denver in 2019. Once the money was allocated, DPR began the process of assessing locations based on specific site criteria.

**2. How was this location selected?**

The Sanderson Gulch Park location was chosen based on specific site criteria as set out in the 2019 Technical Update. When assessing whether a park is suitable for a dog park, DPR considers a variety of factors, as outlined below:

- **Required conditions** are conditions that the potential site must meet in order to be considered for a dog park. If the site does not meet these conditions, it is not suitable to become a dog park.
  - City-Owned Property
  - Not located in Designated Natural Area
- **Priority Locations** are defined by the population density and the service area gap analyses of where dog parks are needed the most throughout the city. All sites considered were only in priority locations.
  - **Dense Residential Area**
  - **Service Area Gap**
- **Additional considerations** do not automatically preclude locations that meet these conditions from becoming a dog park site. However, additional attention is necessary to ensure how these considerations will be sensitively addressed.
  - Historic Landmark District or Park
  - Within 100 ft. of a school, playground, and/or recreation facility
  - Within 100 ft. of low density residential homes
  - Native grass area
  - Within 200 ft. of a waterbody / Location within a 100-year floodplain
  - Location heavily surrounded by trees
  - Location with steep topography

DPR reviewed multiple locations in Council District 7, including three along Sanderson Gulch, and found that the proposed site best met these criteria.

- 3. With population growth and increases in housing costs in Denver, individuals experiencing homelessness have also increased. Many of these individuals are staying in camps along Sanderson Gulch. What steps are being taken to have these locations restored for park use?**

DPR understands that there are concerns about camping along Sanderson Gulch and associated impacts to the park and gulch. While some of the issues need more long-term solutions, an active park helps alleviate many unwanted activities. Dog parks in particular help activate parks as users come throughout the day to bring their dog to the dog park, helping alleviate some illicit activity, not exacerbate it.

Rangers enforce park rules and regulations only within the park and adjacent Right of Way (sidewalk); typical issues include littering and dumping violations. Throughout this summer rangers have been at Sanderson Gulch Park at least once a week, talking to the occupants of the RVs to keep the area clean and sidewalk clear, and often cleaning up large piles of trash or hazardous materials.

- 4. Will the dog park increase automobile traffic?**

This dog park is being designed as a neighborhood amenity, which means we do not expect the dog park to be a regional amenity that many people will drive to. DPR is aiming to close dog park service gaps across the city over time, allowing more residents to have close dog park access.

- 5. What is the concern with the 100 year flood plain? What impact would that have on a dog park?**

The 100-year floodplain is regulated by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and has strict requirements. Construction within the floodplain would not be allowed to impact the 100-year flows by introducing any features that would cause a rise to the flood. Fencing can collect debris during storm events as well that would cause an obstruction of flows. There are also water quality considerations for dog parks next to streams and floodplains that need to be mitigated within the designs. This site is not within the 100-year flood plain.

- 6. Is it typical for a civil survey of the site to be conducted before the community engagement is complete?**

Surveying, like community engagement, is part of the planning process. These two processes often happen simultaneously.

- 7. Boulder (Valmont dog park) relies on neighborhood participation to remove dog waste. Has this been option been explored, to make the parks more dog friendly (grass, shade)?**

DPR Operations staff performs four basic maintenance tasks at all Denver dog parks: trash removal, cleanliness monitoring, surface raking and weed removal. Dog owners are expected to pick up their pet's waste and dispose of it properly to avoid park closures.

Many of DPR's dog parks have a group of neighborhood volunteers that monitor the cleanliness of the park. This often happens as an informal process, but is very effective. To assist in this, DPR has established a resident-driven "Adopt-A-Dog" Park program that makes it easier for citizens to become good stewards of their local dog park. The "Adopt-A-Dog Park" program gives community members the tools and support needed to accomplish maintenance tasks. In 2018, five dog parks were "adopted" through this program: Berkeley, Railyard, Kennedy, Fuller, and Green Valley Ranch Dog Parks.

In general, DPR's rules and regulations enforcement philosophy is to follow a progressive compliance approach (warning with discretion) for most park use violations. If the violation is safety-related or a multiple or repeat offense, then it may result in a citation. Additionally, DPR uses a "Red-Yellow-Green" approach to keeping our dog parks clean. If operations staff find a dog park not being kept to a clean standard, they put a yellow warning on the gate letting users know that if conditions do not improve the park will be closed for 30 days. The goal in all Park Rangers' and operational staff contacts with the public is education resulting in voluntary compliance.

To learn more about the Denver Park Rangers, Denver Animal Protection Officers, Denver leash laws and rules in Denver Parks, visit page 37 of the [Dog Park Master Plan Technical Update](#).

## **8. When is this project supposed to be constructed?**

The next steps for this project are as follows:

- **September 7th:** Public Survey Closes
- **October:** Second Public Meeting to present results of the survey and possible design(s) based on feedback.
- **November:** Third Public Meeting presenting a final design
- **Winter:** Construction begins and will likely take about a month

In order to receive as much feedback as possible, we will also be frequenting the park to get additional survey responses, as well as doing some pop-up events throughout the community engagement process.

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