

Why “Friends of the Dog Park” Groups Are Vital

Dog parks are now one of the fastest-growing park amenities and are seen as community hubs, not just fenced lawns.

- ✓ 91% of Americans value the benefits community dog parks.

Well-managed dog parks are proven to have positive mental and physical outcomes.

- ✓ 86% of members report dog parks improve social connection & create a positive sense of community.

Research consistently demonstrates that dog ownership is linked to improved physical and mental health. The [American Heart Association](#) has published a wealth of research on the benefits of pet ownership including:

- ✓ An average of 20 more minutes of physical activity
- ✓ Improved cardiovascular health
- ✓ Improved lifespan and quality of life

As dogs are increasingly viewed as family members, homes located near well-maintained dog parks are more desirable and yield higher market values.

The [National Association of Realtors](#) data reveals that a considerable percentage of homebuyers actively consider pet-friendly communities and amenities like dog parks when making their homebuying choices.

How “Friends of the Dog Park” Support Your Community

A “Friends of the Dog Park” group is **force multiplier** to parks and rec teams. Working in tandem to support off-leash areas, these volunteers’ groups ensure dog parks remain vital, high-quality, community assets.

- **Advocacy & Feedback:** Promote parks to residents and provide the community & city leaders with data driven feedback.
- **Stewardship:** Ensure the dog park is clean and safe for pets, their owners, and non-dog-owning residents.
- **Community Engagement:** Host local events such as “Yappy Hours,” breed meetups, or family fun days to foster social connections and a stronger sense of community.
- **Fundraising & Grants:** Access grants or private donations to fund improvements such as agility equipment, shade structures, or ongoing maintenance.
- **Education & Outreach:** Design educational materials on dog park etiquette and neighbor cooperation to ensure a safe environment for all community members.
- **Digital Presence:** Manage social media platforms to share park news, educate, and foster goodwill.
- **Strategic Planning:** Contribute to park management planning to help shape future improvements and ensure spaces meet evolving needs.

“Barkpass is an exception partner for our municipality. Their technical support team always demonstrates a willingness to understand how we manage operations. BarkPass understands public service; they listen and collaborate to meet the needs of our community.”

West Des Moines, Iowa



How to Form and Structure Your Group

Committed volunteer groups should build a diverse coalition of constituents including dog owners, residents, vets, shelter leaders & animal welfare leaders. Engage early to build advocacy.

Define Purpose & Scope

Mission & Scope Template: Define agency support including maintenance, programming & events, fundraising, and advocacy.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Template:

Define scope, communication cadence, decision rights, branding, and clarify what your group will and will not be doing. For example, rely on:

- ✓ Lawmakers for city ordinances
- ✓ Animal Care & Control for enforcement
- ✓ BarkPass for digital

Governance and Bylaws: Adapt group structure & oversight including: Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, and Government Liaison and supply sample bylaws outline and board role descriptions.

Engage Shelters: 90% of US jurisdictions have city ordinances governing pet licensing. A well-managed dog park increases pet licensing compliance and helps the live-saving work of animal shelters.

Partner with Animal Care & Control: Arm field agents with tools to ensure pet and resident safety.

- ✓ BarkPass’ mobile-first solution provides instant access to pet and owner details.

- ✓ Reduce shelter administrative burden by easily reunifying pets and owners.

Volunteers to Visionaries

Bridge the gap between an enthusiastic volunteer group to innovative solutions consultants. Proactively create community wins for your parks and recreation teams and neighbor with:

Digital Membership & Pass Management: Provide stakeholders with accurate and trusted information needed to ensure a successful and sustainable dog park.

Dog Safety & Vaccination Requirements: Ensure dogs meet the minimal standards for local health requirements.

Troublemaker Tracking: Digital incident accelerates the resolution of conflicts or issues and provides a structured system to help municipalities maintain a safe, high-quality environment for all users.

Engagement Platform: Send customized email and SMS messages to keep your community engaged with events, maintenance schedules, and park etiquette and rules

Data Driven Decision Making: Volunteer groups can easily demonstrate fiscal responsibility & asset management with clear reporting for city finance & treasurers. No drama, just actionable data that proves the value of your dog park.

Reduce Administrative & Labor Burdens: Parks and recreation teams want your dog park to success. However, they’re dealing with budget constraints and overburdened staff. BarkPass’ “Set it & Forget it” workflows fully automates processes and reduces human intervention.

“We have been a BarkPass client since 2024. Implementing BarkPass was smooth and easy for our team and our residents. Our program is stronger today than ever before.”

Claudia Orman, Deputy Clerk, Bull Valley, Illinois



Data-Driven Decisions

METRIC	MEASUREMENT	BENEFIT
Park Usage	Visits. Peak Days & Times. Dogs per Owner. Access Control. Dog & Owner Demographics.	Informed Decision-Making Intel. Support planning, maintenance, scheduling, & operations.
Membership & Revenue Streams	Resident vs. Non-Resident Users. Daily, Monthly or Annual Pass Options. Pet Licensing Compliance.	Demonstrate fiscal responsibility & oversight to City Council.
Community Engagement	Promote Park Events. Partner with Residents & Animal Welfare Organizations. Digital Fundraising Platform.	Easily connect communities in one platform via email or SMS.
Safety & Operations	"Troublemaker Tracking": BarkPass' State-of-the-Art Digital Incident Reporting Tools.	Mitigate Liability and Ensure Safe Environments for Pets & Their People.
Customized Pricing Options For All Residents	Flexible dog park packages for your entire community: Seniors, Veterans, Multiple Dog Owners, Service Animals, & more.	Public parks should be accessible and inclusive for all. Remove barriers vulnerable residents.
Capital Improvement	Patrons expect new amenities and upgrades.	Provide city council with an action plan based on ROI.

Additional Resources

1. [The Freemium Dog Park Model supported by NRPA](#)
2. [Dog Park Self-Assessment Checklist](#)
3. [20 Point Checklist for Volunteer Support Dog Parks](#)
4. [Parks & Recreation MOU Template](#)
5. [30, 60, 90, Annual Project Plan](#)

Consultants & Thought Leaders

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Product Demo & Risk-Free Trial

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