

Peninsula Dog PAC Questionnaire

1. Do you have a dog? If so, where are your favorite places to walk your dog on-leash and/or off-leash?

Dolce is our wonderful almost 14-year-old terrier mix (her birthday is this Friday, Sept. 24!). We rescued her when she was a puppy. Dolce is a lot slower than when I filled out this questionnaire in 2020, but she still loves to get out and walk. We often take her to walk the Bay Trail starting at Seal Point Park. She loves watching the birds and smelling the air. We also like to take Dolce to Water Dog Lake Park and out to Pillar Point Bluff where she loves to dig in the sand and then shake herself like crazy. We also do a lot of neighborhood walking.

I am a lifelong dog lover and have shared my life with a basset hound, a German Shepherd, and many, many wonderful mixes. We also now have two Chorky "grand doggies" that are often seen running in our back yard. All these wonderful animals have given me and my family unending happiness and consoled us when we needed it most.

2. Recognizing that over 40% of households in San Mateo have dogs, what schools, open spaces and trails in San Mateo do you think people should be allowed to walk dogs on-leash and/or off-leash?

It would be wonderful if schools and other public spaces in San Mateo could be open to walking dogs on-leash and/or off-leash when they are not in official use. We and other families use Aragon High Schools grassy areas to walk (it is the only ungated school in District 1). As a San Mateo City Council Member, I also would invite public comment on other ideal areas to pilot for on-leash and/or off-leash walking.

Outside of San Mateo, I would encourage pilot programs to expand the areas of the Coastal Trail open to walk dogs on-leash. I spoke up and wrote an email at SMC Supervisor meetings earlier this year in support of the off-leash pilot program at Pillar Point Bluff and Quarry Park. While Pillar Point Bluff access was denied, it was exciting to see that public opinion convinced the Supervisors to OK the Quarry Park pilot. This is a great example of how we can speak up on behalf of dogs' well-being while respecting the needs of others.

Along with this expanded usage, I think it is very important to enforce "Pick Up The Poop" regulations so that everyone can enjoy these open spaces.

3. San Mateo allows dogs off-leash in fenced in areas at Seal Point Park, Laurie Meadows Park, Los Prados Park, and Bayside-Joinville Park. Between 6-8 am ONLY, dogs are allowed at Fitzgerald Field in Central Park and Chanteloup Field in Beresford Park (weekdays only). Do you believe:

- (a) The amount of off-leash is right.
- (b) There should be more off-leash.
- (c) There should be less off-leash.

Please explain your choice.

B) I believe there should be more off-leash. While I respect the desire of others not to be interrupted or worried by off-leash dogs, our dogs need their exercise and play time as well. I would suggest putting in extended hours in places in San Mateo like Fitzgerald Field in Central Park and Aragon High School. These places became unofficial off-leash areas during the pandemic and provided much-needed stress relief and mental health support for man and dog alike. There is no more social

place in the early hours in San Mateo than Fitzgerald Field and the baseball players aren't complaining later in the day.

If there are not a lot of complaints, and there are a lot of "Great improvement!" comments, then the pilots could be further expanded.

I also would like to see pilot programs of more "dog parks" where dogs can run and play with each other, not just on their own. As a San Mateo City Council Member, I would work with our Parks and Recreation staff to get residents' input on where the City could pilot more off-leash areas, as well as new dog parks.

4. The only non-fenced in off-leash areas for dogs to play in San Mateo are Fitzgerald field and Chanteloup field (M-F only) in the early morning hours of 6-8 am. Should there be additional times (after most people are awake) at these parks for off-leash dog recreation? Are there additional areas and times where you believe dog owners should be allowed off-leash dog recreation? Please discuss.

I believe there should be additional times (after most people are awake) at these parks, as well as others, for off-leash dog recreation. There can be identified areas for dogs to run so that people who are nervous around dogs are not worried. Prohibiting dogs from fragile areas, however, such as the Japanese Tea Garden in Central Park, is very appropriate to preserve the area. I also doubt many dogs would have fun in the Japanese Tea Garden!

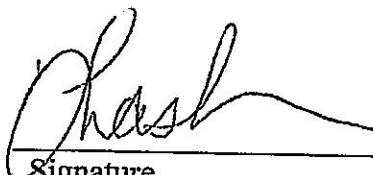
5. Is there anything else you would like voters to know about your position on recreational dog walking access?

Dogs can be great "therapy" for people, whether or not they are trained as "therapy dogs." As we saw during the pandemic and its COVID-19-induced social isolation, the relationship between people and their dogs is so important. As we emerge from the pandemic, we are so happy to gather again in groups of like-minded people. People and their dogs are one of the most natural social groups and come together spontaneously wherever they are. This type of social connection should be encouraged.

With that need for companionship comes the responsibility to take good care of your dog. That includes getting sufficient exercise and a chance to play. Walking on-leash gives a dog a certain amount of exercise, but it doesn't give them the vigorous exercise and playtime they need and want. Even Dolce, our "Dowager Dog Empress," likes to go running. She only stopped going to Smilin' Dogs earlier this year when she couldn't keep up with the other dogs any more. It's more important than ever that we have places where she can run to keep fit and have fun.

We need more on-leash and off-leash opportunities for our dogs. I hope the Dog Work Group that San Mateo County pulled together to study new on-leash and off-leash opportunities continues to operate. I believe, given the opportunity, that San Mateans and our Peninsula neighbors could come up with additional responsible suggestions that would respect the rights of people without dogs while also giving our dogs the exercise and fun they need and deserve.

Lisa Diaz Nash
Printed Name



Signature

9.22.22

Date

Thank you for answering these questions. If you have any questions, contact Matthew Greenberg, PeninsulaDogPAC@gmail.com, (650) 400-1280