



Outlook

Park Commission Public Comment: 12-9-25 Meeting

From Wendi Hundley [REDACTED]

Date Tue 12/9/2025 10:12 AM

To Makayla Rodriguez <mrodriguez@rollingwoodtx.gov>

Dear Park Commission Members,

I am writing in support of the adopted Park Master Plan and the concept of a dedicated off leash dog area. I hope the background below is helpful as you continue your work on this important issue.

I have long supported off-leash dog use in our park. It creates a welcoming, multi-generational gathering place for residents and pets alike and encourages broader use of our shared green space. At the same time, I have seen firsthand that shared use between off-leash dogs and youth athletics creates real conflict points. Those conflicts are not insurmountable, but they do require thoughtful planning. A dedicated space for off-leash dogs is one of the most effective ways to reduce friction while preserving access for everyone.

As you know, the Park Master Plan is essential not just for visioning, but for funding. We cannot pursue most state and foundation grants without an adopted master plan. At the same time, the park has growing maintenance needs. The community built walking trail is visibly eroding and will require a significant investment to repair. We are also a City park with legal obligations to improve ADA accessibility. An ADA assessment has already identified real deficiencies, including the lack of an accessible upper to lower park connection that allows users to stay within the park.

Historically, RCDC funding has played a major role in park improvements, but RCDC's focus has shifted more heavily toward the business district. That means future park improvements will increasingly rely on fundraising and grants, many of which require a current master plan as a starting point.

The Park Master Plan was developed through a long and very public process from 2015–2018. It included multiple specially called Park Commission meetings, public workshops with Nudge Design, surveys distributed through water bills and local publications, and presentations to Park Commission, RCDC, and City Council before final adoption. The current plan reflects years of community input, compromise, and professional design work.

One of the most consistent areas of support in the plan has been the trail system. The master plan envisions realigning the main trail so it runs between the athletic fields and the dedicated off-leash area, along with a more naturalistic trail loop through the wooded area. Incorporating perimeter drainage along the fields as part of trail improvements could also help address existing erosion issues. There was also early interest, led by Mary Elizabeth Cofer, in using a composite trail surface rather than crushed granite due to its durability, permeability, and lower long-term maintenance.

The wooded area below the pool has long been a special place for neighborhood kids, including a small fort and message book that became a point of positive community connection when

Rollingwood PD even stopped by and left a note. That kind of informal play space is one of the unique things that makes this park special and worth preserving as plans evolve.

With respect to athletic fields, the master plan was designed to illustrate flexibility over time, not to freeze current uses in place forever. Right now, the upper fields primarily serve baseball and softball, which require different infrastructure and field layouts. As built, only those two sports can function there, and many kids age out of baseball at a young age. The proposal in the master plan maintains four permanent baseball/softball fields, improves their size and quality, and adds a true multi-use field to allow other sports such as soccer, lacrosse, rugby, and kickball to be contemplated in the future. The plan also includes a basketball court and wall ball area to serve older kids who have aged out of playground and early youth sports.

The current configuration includes two softball fields, the main baseball field, and a fourth permanent field that is primarily used for warm-ups, plus a temporary backstop used for tee-ball.

With regard to off-leash use, the City adopted an off-leash ordinance in 2015 and amended it in 2017 so that dogs are currently allowed off-leash on fields 3, 4, and 5 when organized sports are not taking place and dogs are under voice control. Fields 1 and 2 were excluded because of the specialized infield dirt and maintenance requirements.

The adopted Park Master Plan envisions a dedicated off-leash dog park within Hatley Park that could be used year-round. The plan includes a fenced, flat grassy corral area with shade trees, water access, seating, waste stations, and native landscaping, as well as a lower, more naturalistic dog area accessed by a stone scramble with existing canopy for shade. Together, these spaces total approximately 17,685 square feet. Most residential lots in Rollingwood fall within that same general size range, which helps put the scale into perspective.

Based on community feedback during the planning process, the concept was adjusted so the dedicated dog area would not completely replace field access. A double fence and transition zone was added so users could move between the dedicated dog space and the open fields when appropriate. This also creates an option for separating dogs by size or temperament when needed. A dedicated area would significantly reduce many of the current conflict points and provide shade, seating, and amenities that do not exist on the open fields today.

There does appear to be meaningful community interest in a dedicated dog area as a long-term amenity. If pursued in the future, there are also realistic opportunities for dog-focused fundraising efforts and community events that could contribute to maintenance and operations.

Before serving on City Council, I served on the Park Commission for four years and saw firsthand both the value and the challenges of shared-use fields. Youth sports and off-leash dog access are both important to our community. The master planning process was designed precisely to bring those interests to the same table, work through conflict points, and create a framework that supports collaboration rather than competition.

Thank you for the time, care, and energy you are investing in this work. I truly believe the adopted Park Master Plan provides a balanced and thoughtful path forward. I am always happy to serve as a resource if additional history or documentation is helpful.

Best regards,
Wendi Hundley

