

City of Newton, MA
Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture

PROPOSAL:
Off-Leash Designation for Edmands Park

BY:
Cabot Canines Working Group

Compromise Proposal
April 17, 2025

Introduction

In response to feedback to its April 30, 2024 Updated Proposal (“2024 Proposal”), the Cabot Canines Working Group (“the Group”) has created this Compromise Proposal.

Allowing off-leash dogs at Edmands Park would offer residents of the City of Newton (“the City”) the ability to exercise and find peace in nature, while appreciating the simple joy of allowing their well-behaved dogs to be off-leash. While the City currently does not offer a public area for residents to walk dogs off-leash on trails, other cities and towns in Greater Boston, including Wellesley, Weston, Lexington, provide successful examples of using clear rules of etiquette to create a safe, welcoming environment for *all* visitors on public trails. *See 2024 Proposal, p. 14 & Appendix H.*

For additional information regarding Edmands Park and why its topography and historic use for walking with off-leash dogs makes it uniquely appropriate to provide the City’s residents with an opportunity to enjoy trail walks with their off-leash dogs, please refer to the 2024 Proposal.

Scope of Proposal

2024 Proposal: Off-leash dogs allowed all the time in all of Edmands Park. *See 2024 Proposal, p. 9.*

Compromise Proposal: Off-leash dogs allowed in all of Edmands Park at the following times:

Off-leash allowed: Dawn to 11:00 am and 2:00 pm to dusk

On-leash only: 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

While Edmands Park is currently (and historically) routinely used to walk off-leash dogs during all hours of daylight, an informal analysis suggests that mid-day is less popular for off-leash dogs.

This schedule would allow adults who wish to avoid off-leash dogs an opportunity to enjoy the park every day, and would allow school-age children an opportunity to visit Edmands Park without off-leash dogs present on the weekends.

Proposed Signage

2024 Proposal: Signage for rules of etiquette derived from the City's ordinances and other cities' and towns' off-leash rules. *See 2024 Proposal, p. 14.*

Compromise Proposal: The Group proposes signage regarding sensitive environmental areas and rules of etiquette.

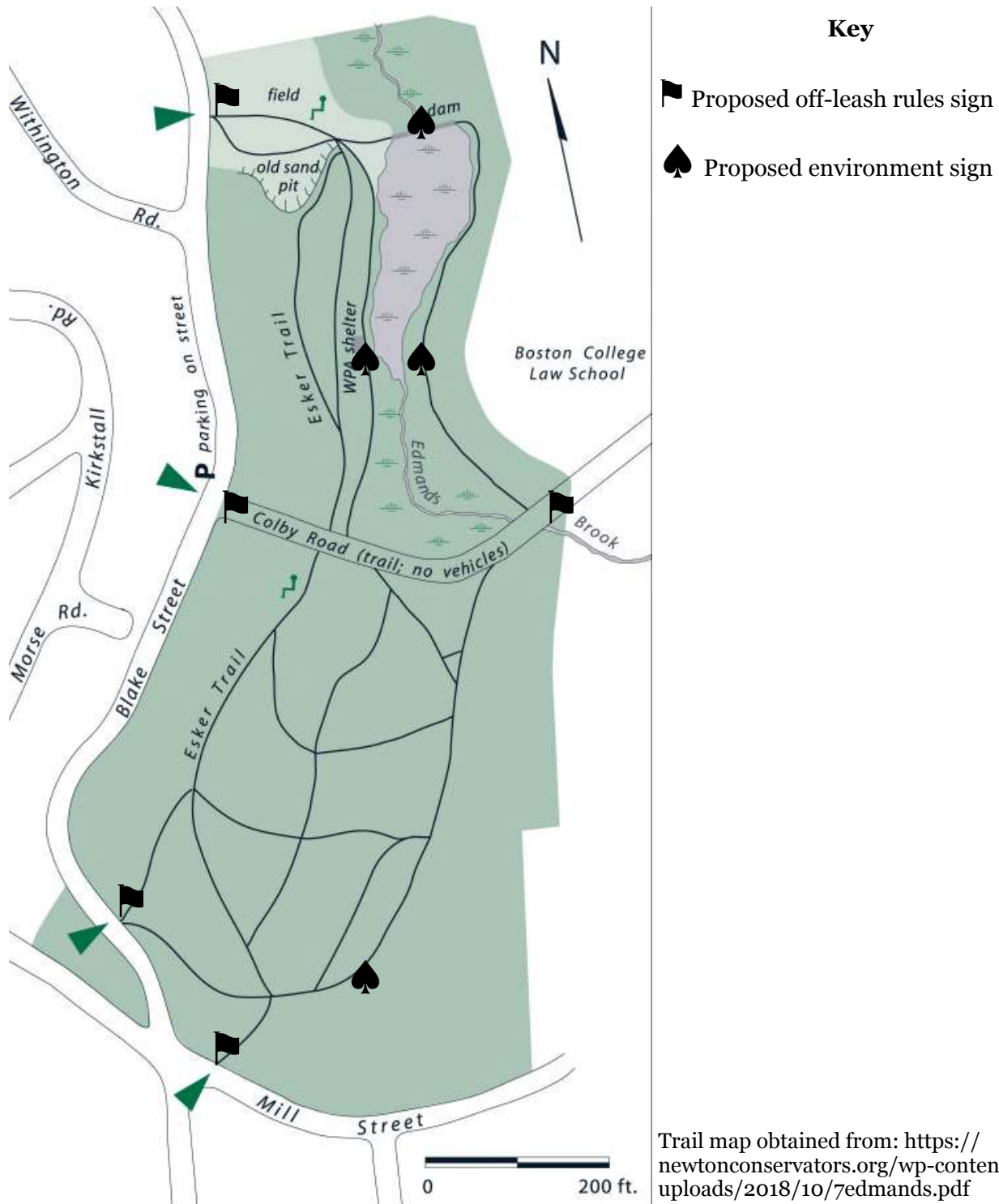
The Group proposes to work with the City's Planning and Development Department and Newton Conservators to develop appropriate signage and trail demarcation to protect sensitive environmental areas within Edmands Park. Such signs may indicate that dogs are not allowed in certain areas in order to protect certain species (in the northern wetlands area) and to warn of coyote habitat (in the southeastern wetlands area).

The Group also proposes signage of rules of etiquette:

- Dogs must be leashed between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm.
- From dawn to 11:00 am and 2:00 pm to dusk, dogs may be under voice control or leashed.
- Dogs must always be leashed while entering and exiting Edmands Park; keep your leash on hand at all times.
- Always bag and remove dog waste. Encourage others to do the same!
- All dogs must wear current license tag. Off-leash dogs must wear off-leash tag.
- Be mindful of your dog. Many people do not like unfamiliar dogs approaching them, and only you know whether your dog is friendly to other people or dogs.¹
- Check for "Park Closed" signs, crews working in the park, or permitted activities, all of which mean off-leash hours are suspended.
- Report violations to Animal Control: 617-796-2109
- Violations of these rules jeopardize others' safety and enjoyment!

¹ For consistency's sake, this language is borrowed from the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department's website: <https://www.newtonma.gov/government/parks-recreation-culture/off-leash-dog-parks>. The Group would support stronger language, however: Do not allow your dog to approach people or other dogs without their permission.

The Group proposes placement of signage of these rules of etiquette as indicated on the map below.



Waste Removal

2024 Proposal: Waste removal bag dispensers at each entrance. *See 2024 Proposal p. 16.*

Compromise Proposal: Placement of waste removal bag dispensers as well as pet waste bins as indicated on the map below.

