



5 Tips for Dog Owners Looking to Buy a Home in Los Angeles

Keep your pup's needs in mind when searching for your perfect L.A. home.

(Getty Images)

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If you are like most dog owners, you consider your furry friend to be a part of the family. Luckily, Los Angeles is great for dogs, and residents take dog ownership very seriously. “In West Hollywood, I’ve heard of divorced couples going to court for custody of their dog,” says Tami Halton Pardee of Halton Pardee + Partners.

When buying a home in a new neighborhood, you’ll want to take your dog’s needs into consideration. Neighborhood pet safety, easy access to parks and proximity to good pet stores and veterinary care are just some of the factors you’ll need to consider. Additionally, you’ll need to make knowing the local pet regulations and ordinances a top priority.

To help you prepare for your search for the perfect home for you and your pup, we sought advice from some of Los Angeles’ top real estate agents as identified by OpenHouse Realty, a real estate technology company (and a U.S. News partner). Here’s what they had to say.

Big dogs belong by the beach. Although there are no regulations mandating where owners of certain dogs may live, Halton Pardee has noticed a trend among dog owners. “People who own big dogs like to live by the beach,” she says. “You’ll usually find a lot of smaller dogs on the Eastside.”

Halton Pardee recommends Long Beach to large dog owners for its access to Leo Carrillo State Park, as well as Redondo Beach for its pup-friendly shoreline.

Dog parks are a great way to meet your neighbors. Finding a neighborhood with a dog park is not only important to your pooch's health, it's also a great way to connect with your neighbors.

According to Tracy Do, of Tracy Do Real Estate and Compass, the Eastside has plenty of dog parks to choose from. “The Silver Lake Dog Park, right next to the Reservoir, has always been popular,” Do says. Located in Silver Lake’s most desirable hillside pocket, homeowners are bound together by their shared love of small dogs. There’s even a separate area for the teacup varieties.

The coastal neighborhoods also feature an abundance of green space dedicated to dogs. A 4-acre dog park and walking loop at the Santa Monica Airport Park is beloved by Westside dog owners, as are the Westminster Off-Leash Park in Venice and the Playa Vista Dog Park.

Ask about homeowners association policies. Though Los Angeles does not have a uniform ordinance for homeowners associations, most HOAs have some rules regarding pets.

“Many HOAs won't allow dogs over 50 pounds, and some even limit you to a 35-pound dog,” Halton Pardee cautions. Do adds that they might also limit you to just one pooch, depending on the size and availability of outdoor facilities. Your HOA might also have specific areas in which your dogs can roam free or must be on a leash.

Review city ordinances. Los Angeles County has its own rules and ordinances regarding pets. All homeowners are limited to a total of three dogs in their residences, for example.

“It’s good for homeowners to refresh themselves with their city rules, as well as the county rules, before buying in a specific neighborhood,” Halton Pardee cautions.

Dogs are required to be on a leash whenever they are off of your private property, unless they have a license. Regulations also require dog owners to carry bags for cleaning all doggie defecation off public streets. “Many popular dog walking paths provide baggies along the trail for your convenience,” adds Halton Pardee.

You can find a complete list of regulations on the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control website.

Do what it takes to keep your dog happy and healthy. No matter which neighborhood best suits you and your pet, make sure you take precautions to keep your animal safe from the elements. Make sure to provide plenty of shade and water if you plan on keeping your pet outdoors during the daytime. If you have a yard, consider installing fencing, as that can help keep your animals from getting out and other animals – like coyotes and mountain lions – from getting in.

Additionally, the City of Los Angeles requires all dog owners to tag and license their pets, which will help shelters identify animals should they get lost. Before tagging, dogs must be spayed or neutered and receive a rabies vaccination. Owners pay a fee for a one- or three-year tag license, and dogs must wear their tags whenever they are off the owner's property.

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