

Project Outline – Standards for Off-Leash Dog Parks in Madison Parks

Project Description (Describe what is being proposed , why the project is needed)

This project will study and propose standards for siting off-leash dog parks in Madison to create a sustainable system. At the December 11, 2014 meeting, the Park Commission called for this study to assist it in responding to a neighborhood association’s request for an off-leash dog park in an area already served to some extent by other off-leash dog parks in the vicinity. The current process provides information on the steps to secure approval for an off-leash dog park, but doesn’t evaluate how many off-leash dog parks should be provided in the City at what locations and whether the current off-leash dog park model is sustainable.

Outcome (Research, Recommendation to Park Commission, Written Report, etc.)

Recommendation to Park Commission to adopt standards with proposed revisions to City ordinances if necessary.

Action Plan (List the major steps and timeframes you will follow to complete this project)

1. Research/study (spring/summer 2015)
 - current ordinance and legislative history;
 - current dog parks, including size, location, topography, amenities, service areas, and proximity to county/other municipality dog parks;
 - costs of constructing and maintaining off-leash dog parks;
 - demographic information regarding residents, types of dogs (e.g., elderly residents, smaller dogs);
 - transportation alternatives to get to existing dog parks;
 - possible sources of revenue to support more dog parks (e.g., permit fees, “friends” of dog parks);
 - information on where growth is occurring in the city;
 - similar programs such as the “Adopt an Ice” program.
2. Research and presentations to LRP in late summer 2015.
3. Written summary and recommendations to Park Commission fall 2015.
4. Propose ordinance revisions, if necessary, following Park Commission adoption.
5. Incorporate new standards, if any, into Park and Open Space Plan Update and Park Master Planning process.

Resources Needed

Internal: Parks Planning staff, Park rangers, Park Operations staff, Community Services staff; City Attorney if ordinance revisions required.

External: Alders; other cities’ experiences with siting off-leash dog parks; dog park users and advocates; City public health staff (i.e., how to design dog parks that promote exercise by dog owners); Dane County park staff regarding permitting process.