

From: [Allie Gator aka Wendy Wilbur , Executive Director](#)
To: [council](#); [Mayor](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Full public comment - Madison Roller Derby & Fast Forward closure
Date: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 7:12:07 PM

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Greetings Mayor, Alders, and Council members,

Wow, three minutes went by fast and I unfortunately ran out of time for my complete statement last night. I'm sharing my full statement below, and I look forward to future conversations to find solutions and opportunities to keep Roller Derby thriving in Madison.

See you later,
Allie Gator AKA Wendy Wilbur

My name is Wendy Wilbur, also known as Allie Gator, and I'm the Executive Director of Madison Roller Derby. We have been a member of the Madison community since 2004, and as a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, our mission is to provide a safe, inclusionary space to foster the development of a competitive women's flat track roller derby athletic program, build leadership skills through volunteer opportunities, and make a positive impact in our community by serving as role models for our peers and future generations

The loss of Fast Forward as a practice space would mean losing the capacity to serve our members, and make it virtually impossible to train and skate safely, and thus host bouts in the Madison area. This would also negatively impact our travel teams, The Dairyland Dolls and Team Unicorn, and prevent us from holding our Spring tournament (Udder Chaos) or other nationally sanctioned tournaments as we have previously hosted in 2008 and 2016. We would also be unable to restart our Junior Derby Program which has been on hold since 2020. Not only will the closure of Fast Forward have a detrimental effect on Madison Roller Derby, it will also be a loss for WURD, Wisconsin United Roller Derby, Wisconsin's All Gender Roller Derby league. Based out of Madison., recreational roller hockey, youth recreation and party space for the community.

I myself have been a member of MRD for the past 15 years and have filled various roles over that time from skater, practice leader, bench manager, being a safety trained member at practices, announcing, co-captaining home and travel teams, and even had the opportunity to co-captain when Team Unicorn played in Paris France, and now I'm Executive Director. Through roller derby I have developed skills and confidence as an individual, learned to be a leader on and off the track, and have had the opportunity to spread the love of roller derby and roller skating locally, nationally, and internationally.

I urge the City of Madison to explore options to invest in community spaces and infrastructure for roller skating. To better understand the loss of Madison's last roller skating facility in the community, I encourage you all to watch the 2018 documentary United Skates. There has been a huge surge in interest in roller skating as an activity for individuals and families over the past few years. With Madison's already extensive bike paths and park system the addition of a space for roller skating would be an asset to the city and the many communities that use the park systems. From hosting community skate events, renting out for roller derby bouts or roller hockey, or other larger community events like those hosted at McPike Park. The adjacency plans for the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park would be a great option to explore.

Madison Roller Derby asks for the closure of Fast forward to be delayed until at least May 2023, and ask for the city's support in finding and securing a long-term practice and bouting space so we can look forward to celebrating 20 years in Madison in 2024, and expanding our programming and positive impact for years to come. We are interested in non-profit and community partnerships, and I welcome collaboration to find solutions for not only our local roller derby community, but also the broader Madison community. I've listed our specific space needs below.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Our space needs are as follows:

- Overall space between 15,000 and 20,000 square feet (SF)

minimum - size will depend on dimensions and how the track fits into it

- At minimum, we need 10,000 SF of pole-free (clear span) area for our track, with dimensions of 75 x 108, OR poles that are spaced about 65 feet apart.
- Zoning: CC commercial center, PR parks and recreation
- Flat, level surface - preferably hard and skateable but we can put down our sport court if needed
- Ceilings at about 15 feet or higher
- Bathrooms (to accommodate up to 1,000 people if using for public bouts)
- HVAC sufficient for climate control

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Allie Gator, AKA Wendy Wilbur
Executive Director
[Madison Roller Derby](#)
[A Home to Hang Our Skates](#)
[Pronouns:](#) She/Her/They/Them