

Project Outline – Review of Policies regarding Dogs in Madison Parks

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

This project will study and make recommendations regarding dogs in Madison parks (other than off-leash dog parks). At the December 11, 2014 meeting, the Park Commission called for a review of MGO 8.19 regarding dogs in parks. This project is prompted by the increase in the number of Madison residents, including apartment dwellers, and presumably the resulting increase in the number of dogs. This ordinance has been in place for over twenty years.

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

Research regarding dog access to parks and recommendations, focusing on a system that protects public safety, is easily understood by the public, is affordable for different classes of users, requires minimal enforcement, and is fairly self-supporting. Propose revisions to ordinances, if needed.

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

1. Research (summer/fall 2015)
 - current ordinances and their legislative history;
 - current signage;
 - park ranger experience regarding current compliance;
 - demographic information;
 - public interest, issues, and concerns;
 - potential costs associated with increased dog access to parks;
 - Madison and Dane County permitting system;
 - characteristics of parks currently allowing dogs on-leash.
2. Research and presentations to LRP in summer/fall 2015.
3. Public meetings in fall/winter 2015 to gauge interest, issues, concerns.
4. Further study, discussion by committee.
5. Draft written report and present proposal to Park Commission in spring 2016.
6. Propose ordinance revisions, if any.
7. Recommend signage changes, other ways to communicate policy changes (e.g., through partnership with Humane Society, local pet stores).

Internal/External Resources Need for This Project (List the resources)

Internal: Parks staff, PIO, rangers; City Attorney, if ordinance revisions needed.

External: Dane County Parks staff; Madison alders; City public health staff; parks staff in comparable cities; neighborhood associations; park users; dog owners.