

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR SITING FENCED OFF-LEASH DOG  
EXERCISE AREAS WITHIN THE MADISON PARK SYSTEM  
WITHIN THE MADISON PARK SYSTEM

**ATTACHMENT A**

**BACKGROUND**

In January 2015, the Board of Park Commissioners directed the Long Range Planning Subcommittee to develop standards for siting off-leash dog parks in Madison parks. This Statement of Policy and Guidelines is the product of that standard-setting process.

Demographics. City of Madison residents purchased over 11,000 dog licenses [in 2015]. The estimated population of the City of Madison as of July 1, 2014, was 245,691. U.S. Census Quick Facts, [www.census.gov/en.html](http://www.census.gov/en.html), visited April 21, 2016.

Summary of current law. Dogs are not allowed to run at large in the City of Madison. MGO Sec. 23.32(1). Madison ordinances further specify that dogs may not enter or remain in City parks. MGO Sec. 8.19(1).

There are two exceptions to these rules—specifically, leashed dogs may be walked on pathways in thirteen designated City parks, MGO Sec. 8.19(1)(a)3, and dogs may run off leash in the posted areas of nine other City parks. MGO Secs. 8.19(1)(a)4 and 23.32(2). The nine designated “dog exercise areas” are all fenced, with the exception of Lucia Crest Park; dogs may run off leash at large in Lucia Crest Park between 5 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. MGO 23.32(2)(a)3.

As of April 2016, violators of the City ordinance that governs dogs running at large (off leash) are subject to fines and court fees amounting to \$124.00. As of April 2016, violators of the City ordinances that governs dog park permits in parks designated for dogs are subject to fines of \$40 for lacking dog park permits.

Description of fenced dog parks. As of April 2016, there are eight off-leash dog parks within the City of Madison, or roughly one park per 30,700 residents:

Brittingham Park	0.37 acres	Walnut Grove Park	1.2 acres
McCormick Park	0.38 acres	Warner Park	8.2 acres
Demetral Park	0.72 acres	Sycamore Park	20.2 acres
Odana School Park	0.9 acres	Quann Park	36.8 acres

Dane County and the Cities of Middleton and Sun Prairie also have off-leash dog parks that are available to permit-holding Madison residents. Those range in size from three acres (Quisling Park, in Middleton) to 150.6 acres (Prairie Moraine Park, in Verona).

Permit requirements; permit revenue. A permit is required both to use the fenced off-leash dog parks and to walk a leashed dog on the pathways in the thirteen designated City parks. MGO Secs. 8.19(1)(a)3.e and 23.32(2)(b)5. Revenue from the permit fee must, by ordinance, be maintained in a segregated fund to be used in the establishment and maintenance of off-leash dog parks. MGO Sec. 23.32(2)(b)5.

Madison residents can purchase the permit from the City of Madison, Dane County Parks, certain other local municipalities, and a number of pet stores. The municipality that collects the permit fees can use the proceeds for its own dog parks. As of April 2016, the annual permit fee is \$30, with certain exceptions, such as for seniors and disabled individuals.