

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 all Madison parks (other than off-leash dog parks). The Park Commission has 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, presumably the resulting increase in the number of dogs. A modification would allow people greater legal access to parks with their dogs. Not allowing dog on leash in parks is unique to Madison. This ordinance has been in place for over 46 years. (Late October 1973)

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, as needed.

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

NOTE: All changes below were adopted by the LRP.

1. Research (spring 2019)
 - current ordinances and their legislative history;
 - current signage;
 - park ranger experience regarding current compliance;
 - review dog demographic information compiled in 2015;
 - ensure the process uses the RESJI Lenses;
 - ensure process is consistent with adopted Park and Open Space Plan;
 - review other cities dog ordinances and create a composite of pet plans in use;
2. Research and present to LRP in April 2019
3. Determine public meeting approach and survey questions at the June LRP meeting
4. Public meetings in July 2019 to gauge interest, issues, concerns.
5. Further study, discussion by working committee.
6. Draft written report on public input received and present DRAFT proposal to Long Range Planning in August 2019
7. Propose ordinance revisions (if needed) at the October LRP meeting
8. Recommend signage changes, other ways to communicate policy changes (e.g., through partnership with Humane Society, local pet stores)
9. Refer to Parks Commission November 2019

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; City public health staff and Animal Control; parks staff in comparable cities; park users; dog owners. Humane Society; Badger Kennel Club.