

All On Forum Responses sorted
chronologically

As of March 4, 2015



As with any public comment process, participation in A2 Open City Hall is voluntary. The responses in this record are not necessarily representative of the whole population, nor do they reflect the opinions of any government agency or elected officials

As of March 4, 2015, 12:01 PM, this forum had:

Attendees:	168
On Forum Responses:	40
Hours of Public Comment:	2.8

This topic started on February 6, 2015, 11:35 AM. This topic ended on March 4, 2015, 12:00 PM.

Dog Park Criteria and Guidelines

Given the research presented from other cities, and that there are not universally accepted dog park best management practices, does the proposed criteria for Ann Arbor provide sufficient guidance to determine potential sites for a new dog park?

		%	Count
Yes		55.0%	22
No		42.5%	17
No opinion		2.5%	1

Do you feel that the proposed scoring sheet provides an objective means to help determine whether or not a particular site should be proposed for a dog park?

Yes		60.0%	24
No		32.5%	13
No opinion		7.5%	3

Do you feel that the proposed process to establish new dog park locations provides for an open and fair decision making process for locating dog parks?

Yes		67.5%	27
No		25.0%	10
No opinion		7.5%	3

Dog Park Criteria and Guidelines

If you have additional feedback that you feel would enhance the criteria and decision making process, please share your thoughts.

Add exclusion provisions for churches and schools such as done for businesses that sell alcoholic beverages.

input was overwhelmingly from dog owners. not enough effort by city to get 50% of people involved to be from population of non dog owners to better represent the desires of the whole citizenry of Ann Arbor.

Cost of the parks must come from dog license fees

I don't see much mention of what a dog park facility would contain, at a minimum, especially regarding fencing, poop picking up supplies, frequency of cleaning, first aid. etc. I think it's problematic if people don't know what to expect from such a facility. Also, I am not a fan of the city's use of self-selected responders to unscientific surveys. Why doesn't the city contract with the Survey Research Center (a nationally known survey institute in our own back yard) to conduct truly meaningful surveys?

Dog parks are destinations, not neighborhood requirements. I'm concerned there is too much focus on geography and not enough focus on requirements. A2 is a compact city - nothing under consideration is more than a 20 minute drive. Size and resources count more than location.

It appears that the intent is to site dog parks in existing public parks. Please consider purchase/use of properties that meet design and siting criteria in locations that are not currently designated as public parks. Otherwise be certain that a dog park does not take up a significant proportion of an existing park area, in addition to avoiding conflict with natural areas, recreational areas, and playgrounds.

Maintenance is lacking in both off leash parks in AA.

Too vague. No meaningful criteria are provided.

I would like to see the residential buffer and protection strengthened. A dog park could really change the look and feel and sound of a community space, especially in an Ann Arbor city park.

Perhaps respondents could indicate whether they are dog owners.

Not in front of my church

Nearby residents should be notified by mail that a dog park is proposed near them, for maximum input.

I'm not sure - it would be helpful to take a preliminary look at sites that meet the criteria. How many sites meet the criteria that are proposed? I would hate to think that these criteria would eliminate the possibility of a dog park. Ann Arbor needs more dog parks.

These criteria functionally eliminate any potential for new dog parks in the future. The space limitations and neighbor approval process will never allow for a dog park on any currently existing park land.

I worry that with all of the criteria, there will be no new dog parks.

Dog Park Criteria and Guidelines

form a friends of the park committee as is done in other cities

I think these criterion are sensible on their surface, but can be used to prevent any dog park from being created.

Thanks for providing the background information

Small neighborhood dog parks.

The surveys only contacted residents, but failed to contract any business or religious institutions which a dog park would affect

Add exclusion provisions for churches and schools such as done for businesses that sell alcoholic beverages.

(would help if the score sheet could be enlarged for easier reading!)

Instead of lumping a bunch of criteria together under one heading, they should be pulled out and evaluated separately, since they don't have equal weight.

Dog parks should be managed just for dogs - not a shared family resource. Any park converted to dog park should not be considered for kids play. I do not see clear delineation in the scores.

Add scoring for use of property that is not currently designated as open to the public for park land. No prior designation as park land is a plus, as there would be less conflict with a change of use. Add determination of proportion of land used for a dog park, if sited within an existing park. Leave open space for those who do not use parks for dog play.d

It is not as complicated as is being made to appear. Only because AA is a contentious environment is this an issue.

Go for it ,but not in front of my Church

There are no listed criteria for a score of 4. Otherwise seems useful.

This criteria provides an objective means of eliminating almost all options for future dog parks.

If the score sheet prevents new parks, one would have to question whether the criteria were determined with a particular end in mind - no new dog parks

Include all neighbors such as businesses, churches and schools as well as residential neighbors.

need to search out non dog owners for their opinions. such as a truly random telephone survey.

See my comment about scientific surveys, above.

Qualified Yes: Efforts must be made to contact non-users of dog parks, as they will be affected by implementation of a dog park, which could be viewed as a "take-away" of park land from general use.

Primarily the nay sayers participate or comment. A balanced process is what we think is needed.

It appears that the process is driven by a vocal minority. No objective data have been provided for demand or possible use. The data suggest that people will only use these parks if they are in

their backyard. Otherwise dog owners will continue to complain and lobby for more dog parks.

Dog Park Criteria and Guidelines

Consideration should be given for non-responding majority, for the non-dog owning majority.

Please reconsider location,(in front of my Church)?

Not enough people are aware of the existence of surveys; I had no idea although I hear some local news, read the paper & know lots of people.

Yes, as long as great care is taken to protect the interests of nearby residents and park users who fear dogs.

I am sure a lot of time and effort went into creating these criteria for a new dog park, and I understand that this was generated because of the West Park dog park proposal, but I believe this criteria is too restrictive to allow for much hope of establishing new dog parks. Dog parks are primarily intended for two reasons: 1) to increase socialization for dogs, 2) to provide an off-leash exercise area for dogs who may not have other options. Downtown residents do not have backyards, and some do not own vehicles or try not to drive as much. The city says it is trying to increase downtown density, yet one important quality of life aspect for many young professionals and empty nesters is to have a dog. This dog park criteria gives veto power to a few individuals, which does not address the long-term city vision for a dense downtown.

This is an unnecessary question. If I answer, yes, i am agreeing with the criteria.

It is very interesting to me to read the assumptions people make about dogs. For instance, it is interesting that someone would feel that because a dog can get exercise by walking on a leash with its owner, that such exercise is sufficient. Imagine saying to a jogger that he could get sufficient exercise by going on a leash through the neighborhood at the pace of a walker. It is also interesting that those who don't have dogs should object to amenities provided to the owners of dogs. I don't play softball, but I have no objection to the city providing soft ball fields for the people who do. I don't have small children but I have no objection of the city providing climbing equipment and slides for the parents of children who do. There is a lack of generosity of spirit in many of the surveys that disturbs me, as it seems reflective of the general lack of generosity currently apparent in our civic discourse.

The process fails to take into account how a dog park will affect businesses or other Institutions due to proximity

Are there any other comments you would like to share about the Recommendations and Guidelines for Dog Park Site Selection, Design, Operations and Maintenance draft document? Please reference the specific section in the document where you have comments.

The recommended lower limit for the size of the park should be increased to a minimum of one acre.

Dog park proponents should have to raise money like the skate park proponents did.

dog park needs to be minimum of 250yards from residence to not disturb home owners. as other communities have stated, need to have enforcement of current leash laws by officers to ticket those walking dogs off leash in neighborhoods and in general parks. most dog owners let their dogs run wild in most parks. Show enforcement of current laws before adding more responsibilities for animal control officers. Raise dog licensing fees and dog park fees so that dog parks are self financing along with licensing fees and off leash and not picking up feces fines.

I hope we can move as quickly as possible. It has been a very long wait for this.

Dog Park Criteria and Guidelines

I have a dog and have gone to dog parks. I actually don't think they are a good idea because I have seen irresponsible owners far too many times. Poop isn't picked up, dogs aren't properly trained, dog-unfriendly dogs are allowed to roam free. NOT a good idea in general. I'd maybe be in favor if there were a supervisor on site at all times, kind of like a lifeguard.

I suggest including Austin, TX as benchmark for dog parks - 12 parks are managed throughout the university city and are a key driver in Austin's rank as top US city for dog living. More information: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/leash-areas> Dallas also manages four dog parks - see <http://www.dallasparcs.org/205/Dog-Park-Rules> Additionally successful dog parks provide dog waste stations with bags as well as disposal at parks - I suggest adding this to the provisions.

Please drop this idea for a centrally-located dog park. It will surely disrupt the peace in the chosen neighborhood. There is plenty of land on the edge of town for dog parks. People who live in town do not need a dog park since they can safely walk their dogs in the neighborhoods. The health of one's dog is the responsibility of the owner, not the taxpayers.

Please take into account the growing number of downtown residents with dogs but no automobiles.

Please implement measures to assure following leash laws in the city, as most parks are currently used as off-leash parks without repercussion to dog owners who allow their dogs to be off-leash.

Other than serving the residential home owner "equally" no specific recommendations.

I recommend creating several dog parks throughout the city and banning dogs at all other parks. The complaints by users of the current dog parks is revealing. Many don't clean up after their dogs and won't use the parks unless they accommodate their idiosyncratic desires. Warnings for violations should be eliminated. Violations at non dog parks should be strictly enforced with significant fines. Given the widespread violations currently with 2 dog parks, current enforcement is completely ineffective.

Not in the front of my Church, maybe closer to Seventh Street ?

Dog parks should have zero negative effect on current park activities. All parks in AA have dogs running off leash without any consequences like tickets or confiscation of the offending dog.

Enforcement of off-leash violations in other parks is key to success of new dog parks.

Making dog parks available to dog owners is a very considerate behavior on the part of the city. It is also necessary for dog owners to be considerate of citizens who do not want to come into contact with unknown dogs. In addition, there needs to be more policing of dog free areas. For example, the woods in County Farm park are supposed to be dog free but dog owners are often very insulted if reminded of that fact even though the rest of the park is available to dogs.

I don't know why Ann Arbor is such a contentious city regarding dogs. As a dog owner, I find it dismaying. I walk my dog nearly every day, regardless of temperature. So, dog owners are intensive users of parks. We should not be ostracized from society because of our relationships with our pets. I find it immensely frustrating that our community does not have an area where I can safely exercise myself, my young children and my pet. One stop shopping would be an amenity, not a liability. Best wishes on the continuation of this process. I look forward to the outcome.

There will always be a few dog owners who break the rules, but they should not be the driving force behind policy decisions. I would like to see ongoing discussion of having designated off-leash

Dog Park Criteria and Guidelines

hour(s) in existing parks. Cats do much more damage to wildlife and natural areas than dogs do, and cats aren't even required to be licensed. The difference is that cats are quiet, so their killing of birds and rodents goes unnoticed.

a dog park is badly needed within walking distance of downtown. I'm disappointed that a proposal for West Park, which is quite underused overall, was shot down. There were many many ways the objections of the church could have been addressed.

I am very glad that the issue of dog parks is being taken up. I agree that the current two dog parks are too far away to be useful and too barren in appearance to be very attractive to the humans who need to accompany their dogs there. There seems to be a lot of concern about dogs disrupting the peace of neighbors. It is not my experience that dogs that are running around playing with other dogs or fetching balls thrown by their owners do a lot of barking. My experience is that I have felt very annoyed by the barking of dogs left in backyards by themselves, and I have attributed the barking to loneliness, boredom and the hope that if they barked enough someone would finally come rescue them. I do not think these circumstances will occur at a dog park, as dogs will be accompanied by owners who will take responsibility for them much as parents bringing children to a park swing set stand guard to make sure that everyone is safe. I don't think a dog park has to be completely flat. And in terms of "avoidance of conflict", I think it is not necessary to have a huge divide between park activities and the dog park, which will presumably be fenced in anyway. For instance, I don't see any reason why the dog park couldn't be located reasonably close to the part of the park where children use swings and slides. I am delighted that the city is trying to do something about this. I had experience in a park in Palo Alto where a squiggly shaped dog park, surrounded by shrubs and with shrubs inside the fence as well, was located directly next to the area of the park where the small children were playing on swing sets. The dog park was also ringed, outside the fence, of course, by a paved path that the grade school kids were furiously peddling their bikes on, round and round the dog park,, and everyone was happy, esp the parents who were exercising their dogs while their kids exercised themselves.

I am so happy Ann Arbor is considering more dog parks. The current parks are so inconveniently located! Hope to see one in Ward 5!

Thanks for providing an opportunity to comment. The survey wasn't widely available. Perhaps some consideration for extending the time frame and further publicizing considered.

We need smaller neighborhood dog parks. They would be less obtrusive & provide for repeat users & familiarity. Small parks similar to the one on Salune Road (next to The Creature Conservancy) would provide open spaces without disrupting neighborhoods. Seventh Street Park should still be able to house a larger dog run. Placing closer to the center of the park (near the pond) would ameliorate neighbor concerns & the dog park would provide much needed neighbor traffic. Currently, Seventh h Street park is underutilized, in part because it tends to have few neighbors & persons using alcohol, etc. increasing local foot traffic would create a greater diversity of users and make it safer.