

Petitioning Ann Arbor Parks Advisory Commission

## Let's create a dog-run in Buhr Park!

[Henry Buchtel](#) Ann Arbor, MI



Buhr Park is awesome. Swimming pools, tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, the food forest . . . and acres and acres of open grassland.

**It's no wonder that many a dog (with the cooperation of their human...) is tempted to take off their leash and stretch their legs!**

But let's not forget that Buhr Park also has an elementary school, summer day-camps, two nearby preschools, and neighbors who may or may not appreciate being approached by unleashed dogs! And of course, the local ordinance that no dogs are allowed off-leash in A2's parks...

Sooner or later there is going to be an incident that brings this all to a boil, but we could be proactive here and create either a fenced dog-run area, or (this would be a first for Ann Arbor) off-leash hours for the entire park.

In the [2013 "Dog Park" survey](#) by the Parks Advisory Commission, one of the most requested features of a dog run/dog park is that it be *walkable* - in other words, that it be a neighborhood park. As the largest open space in the area, Buhr Park attracts dog-owners from the residential neighborhoods bordered by I-94 to the south, Stadium to the north, and Packard and Platt to the east and west.

The 2013 survey led to the publication of the [Recommendations and Guidelines](#) document, which laid out the necessary conditions for a successful dog-run. Key among these are size (one acre or ~200x200 ft), a 100-200 ft buffer for neighbors, good parking, mature shade trees, etc, all of which Buhr Park is able to offer.

**Would you like to see a dog-run in Buhr Park? Or would you prefer off-leash hours? In either case sign the petition, leave a comment, and let's get this started!**

Recipient: Ann Arbor Parks Advisory Commission

Letter: Greetings,

Let's create a dog run in Buhr Park!

Having a walkable neighborhood dog-run was one of the top priorities that came out of PAC's 2013 dog park survey. Dog owners in the dense residential area around Buhr Park would love to have this option available to their pets, as demonstrated by the outpouring of support for this petition.

A fenced off-leash area would be used year-round, unlike many of the other tax-payer funded amenities in the park. It would also serve to draw un-leashed dogs out of other open areas nearby, like Pattengill and County Farm. And if designed well, it could serve as a neighborhood gathering place that would result not just in happier dogs and owners, but a stronger sense of community.

Thank you for considering the wishes of those who signed this petition!

# Comments

Name	Location	Date	Comment
ulysses wong	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-06	This is a reasonable exercise of self regulation by and for AA Citizen dog owners. I stand with the originator of this petition.
Stephanie Powell	Milan, MI	2017-09-15	I take my little dog to Swift Run dog park. She and I both enjoy the companionship of the dogs and their owners without the stress/constraints of a leash. A dog run at Buhr would be within walking distance and a great addition to our neighborhood. I'm for it!
Jean Libs	Ypsilanti, MI	2017-09-16	I agree with this opportunity to have a dog run at Buhr Park, great idea for everyone whether you own a dog or not.
Hannah Richardson	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-17	I think this is a great idea!
Edward Arias	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-19	I love dogs, have a dog and they love dog parks ... thus I love dog parks ;)
Carol Deering	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-20	Ann Arbor parks should be for everyone, including people with their dogs. I have been a dog owner since 1973 and I would be thrilled to have another dog park, especially closer to my home.
Sheng Yang	US	2017-09-27	I strongly support this suggestion. Add more dog-run parks and Let Ann Arbor be pet friendly city :-) Sheng (Sam) YANG
Carisa Wilder	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18	I believe this will bring community together - I have seen this at other dog parks - and it's very positive. In fact, it's essential for healthy communities. Additionally I believe it's safer than having dogs off leash in Buhr Park AND County Farm Park! It will protect the wet meadows in Buhr Park as well. There is space in Buhr Park for this (behind the ice rink)!
Giedra Bowser	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18	Dog parks are great! If this becomes a reality please consider a small dog (20 pounds and under) only section. I really do not like to meet off leash dogs in regular parks/trails and neighborhoods.

# Signatures

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Henry Buchtel	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-02
ulysses wong	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-06
KUN SHI	Ortonville, US	2017-09-06
Camilla Stensen	Minneapolis, US	2017-09-08
CemRe Arslan	İstanbul, Turkey	2017-09-08
Crystal Eberly	South Lyon, US	2017-09-10
Chatura Vaidya	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-12
karen peach	Northville, US	2017-09-15
Julie Glazko	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15
Randy Williamson	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15
Samuel Nuxoll	Northville, US	2017-09-15
Catie Szedlak	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15
Aaron Bebee	US	2017-09-15
Kimmie Nickelson	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-15
Nichole Lorenz	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15
Susan Oblender	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15
Nicholas Durrie	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-15
Mary Suzanne Schuon	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-15
Jack Glazko	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15
Aaron Guarnaccia	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-15

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Colleen Seifert	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-15
Anne Murphy	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-15
Stephanie Powell	Milan, US	2017-09-15
Carrie Honore	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-15
Susan David	Hungary	2017-09-16
Barbara Kalisewicz	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-16
Christy Ferguson	Asheville, NC	2017-09-16
Elizabeth Sturgis	Westland, US	2017-09-16
Jean Libs	Ypsilanti, US	2017-09-16
Rosemary Buchtel	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-16
Elizabeth Cole	Ypsilanti, US	2017-09-16
Dustin London	US	2017-09-16
Barbara Widick	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-16
Virginia Laetz	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-16
barbara Rothbart	Walled Lake, US	2017-09-16
Anna Kirkland	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-17
Gus Buchtel	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-17
Hannah Richardson	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-17
arthur wasserman	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-17
Marcine McBride	West Babylon, NY	2017-09-17
Andy Brush	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-17
Zack Munce	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-17

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Danielle Hall	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-17
Gina Cervetti	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-17
Carrie Hammerman	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-18
Amanda Matusik	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-18
Laurent Burlion	Inkster, US	2017-09-18
Julieanne Lock	Detroit, US	2017-09-18
Michael Wolfe	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-18
Beth Merrow	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-19
Jane Glass	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-19
Gene Brown	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-19
Margaret Marinaro	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-19
Edward Arias	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-19
Tempest NeuCollins	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-19
Stephanie Chervin	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-20
Linda McCallum	Newburyport, MA	2017-09-20
Nina Juergens	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-20
Lori Dosh	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-20
Larry Scoville	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-20
Beth Dwoskin	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-20
Carol Deering	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-20
William Sturgis	US	2017-09-21
Erik Danskin	Garden City, US	2017-09-21

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Ricardo de Majo	Ann Arbor, US	2017-09-21
kathy clark	Bellingham, MA	2017-09-21
Molly Jarin	Milan, US	2017-09-21
Paula Pfeffer	Detroit, US	2017-09-21
Katie Jedynak	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-22
Jaimie Wagner	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-22
Mike Victor	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-22
Jeri Sawall	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-23
Evelyn Evans	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-23
Kyle Banner	US	2017-09-26
Sheng Yang	US	2017-09-27
Noreen Smith	Ypsilanti, MI	2017-09-27
Susan Davis	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-09-29
Ryann Cline	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-10-04
Jodi Ferich	Ypsilanti, MI	2017-10-05
Antoine Traisnel	Ypsilanti, MI	2017-10-31
Andrew Brown	US	2017-11-12
Scott Mann	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-11-20
Ben Lorenz	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
ella lorenz	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
desmond lorenz	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Sara Stanislawski	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18



<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
Carisa Wilder	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Leila Durrie	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Dagny Hanner	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
E. Martine Perreault	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Giedra Bowser	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Jessica Letaw	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Regan McBurney	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-18
Iggy Proffer	Detroit, MI	2017-12-18
Randy Parrish	US	2017-12-18
Malavika Sahai	Ann Arbor, MI	2017-12-19

## **Buhr Park dog-run proposal**

**Comments/Questions from Nextdoor (Allen) community discussion.**

**All identifying information removed.**

**81 comments from 9/17/2017 to 9/28/2017**

Where in Buhr do you propose locating this?

I'd want to know who maintains the dog parks and what is the recommended density of these parks for a city the size of Ann Arbor.

As someone who lives on the park I am not in favor at this point I love all the green space and hate to keep seeing more and more of it disappear Green space in and of itself is valuable to me and doesn't need to be used up

Maybe we can combine uses, such as adding fencing to all four sides of a baseball or soccer field, or even the tennis courts. That way, it could also serve as a dog free-play area when not in use by humans.

I think a small dog run mid south of town or west of town would balance existing parks out better. I have seen dog runs the size of a postage stamp.

Frisinger struck me as just the right size, not impeding on residential, and appropriate to multiuse. I don't think it is too small.

I thought about Rose White Park, but that is used more often.

Not sure on the off leash hours, seems like a liability issue for the parks dept.

I'm just tired of off leash dogs that run wild in the park now! I'd be happy if they had an off leash place to run.

I oppose this proposition.

I wonder if there are any statistics about how many non student "permanent" residents of Ann Arbor own dogs?

Swift Run parking lot was overrun tonight, forty dogs inside happily playing and walking alongside their owners. Is there a way to meet people's wish to walk with their dog off leash at Buhr while leaving it open land?

For one thing some people don't pick up after their dogs even when the city/county provide poop bags and trash containers at 7-8 locations within the park.

I walk in Buhr Park daily at different times. I love seeing the wet meadows, open green space, weddings and recreational multi-use. I see local preschools and

families doing activities at various times during the week and weekends. I would not want to see any of that disrupted with fencing or dogs off leash or dog droppings. I do love seeing dogs on a leash with their responsible owners in the park at any time.

I love dogs, but I do not like dogs running around in the neighborhoods without leashes. [...] We go to Buhr Park and nearby parks daily. A few years ago, when we took our children out, there were two big dogs running towards us. I got so scared and screamed with all my strengths and ran to block the kids! They were huge. I thought they would kill me and the kids. Luckily, they got scared by my scream and backed off. A truck driver saw the incident, called the police. I never saw the owner showed up! A dog park in a remoted part of the city with less population/young children would be a good idea. Please be very responsible if you are a dog owner!

I'm not in favor of this location. I AM a dog lover, though! The recommendations you linked to show that a fairly large area would be required in order for a dog park to be truly useful and I'm of the mindset that there are so few open spaces left that I would hate to see the park carved up. It's already used for soccer, baseball, school playground, a farmer's market, Cobblestone farm activities, ice skating, tennis, pool, not to mention the great native plant areas. Plus, Swift Run is close by - I'm just not convinced this is an ideal location. And, keeping in mind that I really am a dog lover, I can guarantee that dog droppings will be a problem. Thanks to all dog owners who pick up after their pets, BTW; it's just that not all do...

I would support an area for dog owners who walk to the park with their pet. The problem with Buhr is that parking is too readily available and many dog owners will drive in to unleash their pet. I'm not in favor of a drive-up dog park. Assuming people will walk their pet to the park from all directions, the lack of paths to the suggested areas needs to be addressed so that dogs are not walking across all the fields of play and defecating. Fines for tossing your dog-doo bag in the wet meadow should be loss of pet ownership privilege.

As someone who lives near the park and has two young children I completely disagree with allowing any hours that are "off leash". There are people that already have their dogs at the park without leashes and they don't seem to care about the rules. It is a safety issue. As much as one may think their dog would never hurt anyone, you never know. I would rather see more play options for kids, soccer fields, etc.

I think that is a good point about the parking lots -- the idea here is to make a walkable dog-run, rather than one that will become a driving destination.

Sure. It's posted at Swift Run not to do this, but people leave/return to their vehicles with their dog off leash. So my terrier and beagle are on leash (like many others) walking into the fenced area, but other people just let their dogs go. While I envy them a dog who doesn't run away in happy abandon. I also get upset, because their dogs come right up to my leashed dogs, or their dogs worry my dogs. Leash

aggression runs two ways. Dogs off leash can have their prey drives triggered against dogs leashed near by (that's why we have holding pens at the entrance, so dogs can come on and off their leashes safely), but also leashed dogs can have their survival drive triggered. I love to see dogs living full lives, with lots of spaces for them to explore safely, off-leash. Nonetheless, it is a safety hazard, one based mainly on ignorance of leash behavior and the danger that presents to the dogs and people around them. And if we think the dogs are difficult, try reasoning with the humans.

While I am not a user of the dog parks, from information provided on the parks web site, it appears that the 3 existing parks have the siting advantage of no adjacent residences (Swift Run), or a major street as an additional buffer to the park buffer (Dhu Varren for Olson and Fuller for Broadway). This advantage would not exist for the homes that back to Buhr Park. All the homes back directly onto the park, most without any vegetation or fencing between them and the park. I would not relish having an obstructed view into the once open park, hearing dogs bark and people talk all day (6am - 10pm) and smelling dog feces all the time. For the impacted homeowners, this is not the least bad option, it is simply bad.

I back up to the park, not near where the suggestion spaces are. But if someone suggested a dog park behind me, I would be livid to say the least. Not just my view and peace but the value of my home

I live along there and know exactly how much peace and quiet I currently enjoy. We're talking all day, every day here. Also, I don't currently have people consistently congregated with a view into my yard. Why should any home owner have to accommodate (one could argue reward, with city resources - a dog park), those who do not comply with current leash laws? Let those who violate the leash law pay the consequences. No homeowner should have a lower quality of life because leash laws are not followed or enforced.

I have stated in earlier posts that I am not sure that is the best location. But I also will say people whose yards back up to the park do not have some inherent right to the status quo. Further more if your unfenced back yard has a view of the park then by the same token anyone in the park has a view of your yard. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

Off-leash dogs aren't the only rationale (or the best one!) for building a dog park. It's an amenity that law abiding and poop scooping humans and their dogs would enjoy. If appropriately sited in the park, it would improve the lives of many. I always keep my dog on leash but I would love to be able to walk over to the park and let her run free -- safely and legally.

The purpose of city parks is to serve the citizens not to be an extension of the back yards that abut the park. As such an underutilized park is a bigger "sin" than an overutilized park, if there is such a thing. We build tennis courts that are often unused. Softball and baseball fields that are often empty in the summer and

completely empty in the winter. Swimming pools that are empty 8.5 months a year. It seems to me a fenced off dog section might get used year around more than than these other amenities we don't think twice about. Would that create some "noise" for the folks living against the park? Perhaps but I think the appropriate response might be "too bad, you live next to a city park not a wildlife sanctuary". We build parks to be used and I think tax paying citizens who want to let their dogs off a leash is as reasonable as a tax paying citizen who wants to play tennis.

Perhaps Mary Beth Doyle Park directly south of Buhr Park might be more suited for a dog park. There are somewhat remote areas of that park that don't border residential homes. It is large and mostly open with flat areas that could support a fenced dog park.

I don't see anyplace at Mary Beth Doyle to put in a dog run. You are right about trails and the frisbee course

I think that off-leash hours for the park would be a bad idea, mostly because of the mess that might be made all over the park rather than in a fenced in area. Reality is that many don't pick up after their pets. When dogs are walked on a leash the owner sees exactly where the mess is made and hopefully cleans it up. When a dog is running around by itself in the park, the owner might not know that a spot needs to be picked up. I would hate for Buhr park to be similar to many people's personal back yards with piles of poop everywhere.

I live near Mary Beth Doyle park and walk my German Shepherd there frequently on-leash. Given my experience with my dog off leash in my own yard, I would not support an off leash play time for dogs at Doyle Park due to the deer that frequent the park (and my neighborhood) - a dog is not going to stop chasing a deer once they see the deer and take off after it. My dog has run after 3 deer, and caught 2 that I had to pull her off of. If the dog run is not fenced in, it's not going to be safe for dogs who chase critters.

Dog owners pay taxes and I bet there are more of them than tennis players or golfers. We the people own two golf courses that seem to be around 125 acres each. And if we assume a max of 18 foursomes at a time that's only 72 citizens using 125 acres allowed.

I was just reading an older article on MLive about how the dog parks had driven a substantial increase in the percentage of dogs that were licensed (also state law) -- and the subsequent increase in revenue, half of which goes to the Humane Society of Huron Valley for their rescue and shelter work.

I am one of those guys. Never bought a dog license till I had a dog I wanted to take to the dog park.

This may be a little far fetched (haha) but I'm wondering the possibility of co-creating an experience at the park that would be for more than just the dogs and their owners? I don't know exactly what this would look like, but trust in a creative group (students?) to come up with a few plans that may answer the concerns presented and serve the community to a greater extent?

But more seriously, the sense of community that is generated through neighborhood gathering places like this would be of general benefit. It could be a place to encourage people to volunteer to help maintain the wet meadows and food forest, or for other city-wide NAP volunteering. I was talking to someone today who suggested that it could help draw attention to the Tuesday farmers market at Cobblestone (assuming we used the area in the southwest corner of the park, next to the vet clinic).

I lived in Newburyport, MA for several years where most all of their parks have off leash hours in the morning and evening. It has worked out very well and I never heard complaints. I moved back to Ann Arbor for family but really did not want to leave Newburyport in that they do so well for dogs and their people. A place like that would be good to benchmark for success.

Personally I think it would be fun to see how kids of mixed age groups would solve the legitimate concerns presented – which I think I heard to be Increased noise – from barking dogs, Increased noise from people in conversation watching the dogs Increased dog poop Lack of aesthetics with fencing Increased danger to small children (and others?) with dogs running free

Example: Dog poop compost? ... Yes,... and.... we could google “sustainable dog poop” and look what shows up! Grape vines on the fence? Yes... I like the idea of creating an aesthetically pleasing view and... we could ask some dog experts as well as local plant experts what vegetation would be best suited for the dogs and the environment.

And, Yes, what you wrote here: “the sense of community that is generated through neighborhood gathering places like this would be of general benefit” I agree also with what I think Craig may have posted - that the baseball fields and tennis courts sit empty much of the time (my experience) and a dog play area seems likely to be more utilized by more residents.

Here's the link to the rules of the off leash, and not fenced, dog parks in Newburyport, MA. This has been so successful there, I'd love to see it work in Ann Arbor! <https://www.cityofnewburyport.com/animal-control-regional-services/pages/off-leash-dog-parks-in-newburyport>  
Thanked!

I am opposed to off leash times at the park. i walk during the morning or evening and I don't want to have to deal with off lease dogs approaching me.

I have concerns regarding the safety and effectiveness of a dog run in Buhr Park. Children's safety is paramount and I am doubtful it could be insured with a dog run here. If any dog owners were to leave their dog off leash going from their car to the dog park, as it sounds is common, my ability to ensure the safety of the children would be compromised.

I am curious about the effectiveness of a dog run as a solution for off-leash dogs in Buhr Park. Is there evidence a dog park reduces the number of dogs off-leash in a park?

Or would the number of off-leash dogs increase as some are off-leash getting in and out of their vehicles?

Do off-leash hours result in less dogs off-leash during on-leash hours?

How about looking further into Mary Beth Doyle Park?

I love dogs and would like to see more dog parks. To keep peace, dog parks need to be where they do not border a residential area.

I have been to many dog parks and even dog beaches in Florida and no where did I see owners let their dogs loose before entering the designated area. The dog parks are fenced in and have signs stating dogs must be kept leashed. They have two entrance gates as dogs get so excited and want to charge in so there is space between the first and second gates to allow the owner to remove the leash.

[..] our park space is shared for many purposes[...], the Farmer's Market each week, and sports instruction. How can we add dog activities to this mix?

I hope we can trust that the Parks Advisory Commission will take their duty seriously and find a solution that works for the neighborhood.

Let's make sure that whatever comes out of this, that it is something that we can be happy about years or decades from now, and that it adds more to our neighborhood than it takes away.