

We are a group of Ward 4 & 5 residents, looking for support from the Parks Advisory Commission by establishing an Ad-Hoc Committee to explore the interest and feasibility of a dog park at Allmendinger Park.

According to documentation from the Parks Advisory Commission, the 2016-20 Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan identified a community interest in additional dog parks, especially “in or near downtown or on the West Side”. Given the influx of dogs in our neighborhoods since the start of the pandemic, this interest has further increased.

67.5% of respondents to the Dog Park Survey of 2015 indicated they owned at least one dog. 58.8% of respondents represented Zip code 48103, with an additional 18.9% representing Zip code 48104. It is probably safe to assume that these numbers have increased by at least 25% over the past 7 years.

Despite the high number of dog owners on the West Side, there currently is no dog park on the West Side. The only three dog parks of Ann Arbor (Swift Run, Olson, Broadway) are on the North and South Sides of the City.

Given Ann Arbor’s A2Zero Carbon Neutrality Plan, it seems counter-intuitive to require an entire City zip code (comprised of 1½ wards!) to get into their cars and drive to a dog park across town, when adequate land within walking distance is available.

Aside from environmental impacts, a desire for dog parks within walking-distance was already identified in the Dog Park Survey of 2015: 47.1% of respondents stated they would use a dog park daily if it were within a ¼ mile of their homes, and 37.2% of respondents said they would utilize a dog park at least weekly if it were within ¼-1 mile from their homes.

With almost 8 acres in size, Allmendinger offers enough space to allow designated areas for children, sports, family gatherings — and dogs. The southwest corner of the park provides ample room for a small dog park without disrupting these other uses of the park, and meets most of the criteria established by the City to move forward with a deeper analysis: the scoring sheet of the last Dog Park Ad Hoc Committee (fall of 2015), scored Allmendinger Park only second to Broadway Park — which was subsequently built.

We appreciate that not everyone owns a dog, however, feel that it is important to note that dog parks help dog owners and non-dog owners. Non-dog owners (as well as dog-owners) should welcome the idea of a local place where dogs can legally run free, instead of encouraging scoff-laws in non-dog parks.

While we feel strongly that dog ownership and interest in dog parks has increased, we realize that the data presented is dated. Unfortunately, the recent Parks & Recreation Master Plan Survey did not take advantage of gathering current data on this topic. We therefore respectfully request to establish a new Ad Hoc Dog Park Committee to formally evaluate our proposal and determine the best way forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

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