

Appeal to the Board of Park Commissioners
to change the master plan for Quann Park

Request to the Board of Parks Commissioners to change the master plan for Quann Park to preserve the area between the community gardens and the County's overflow parking area for off-leash dog park use.

The City of Madison has an agreement with Dane County's Alliant Energy Center (AEC) in which the city leased the rights "to develop and use Quann Park for general Exposition Center purposes, including use as a parking lot for Exposition Center patrons." This is a 50 year lease which will not end until 2043. The AEC has made it known that they intend to use Quann Park with a greatly increasing frequency. There are a minimum of 6 events (that we have been informed of) covering at least 29 days during the prime spring, summer and fall months, scheduled for the 2004 season. This is already twice the usage as in previous years. The off-leash dog exercise area at Quann, in the current master plan, is the same area as that occupied by the AEC overflow parking.

The park becomes *unavailable* for off-leash dog exercise during AEC use of the park for parking and/or other events, and the park is *unusable* for off-leash dog exercise for additional periods of time (up to a week or more is common) after AEC events, until AEC staff have completed clean-up. This is especially true in the case of livestock events when manure, rotting bedding, rotting feed and other wastes are left behind. These materials are very attractive to dogs yet are health hazards if eaten and are offensive when rolled in. Some AEC events may also restrict or eliminate the off-leash area prior to the actual events, for set-up (for instance the ESPN Great Outdoor Games target events).

The goal of the Mayor's Fit City initiative is to "increase physical activity among all Madison residents." Dog walking is an excellent low-impact activity which can be practiced by people of all ages and physical condition. Off-leash dog walking simultaneously provides the exercise level necessary for dogs and people thereby encouraging responsible pet ownership. Quann Park is the only off-leash exercise area in the city with a paved path running through it, which makes it suitable for dog walkers with impaired mobility or poor physical condition.

The planned athletic (soccer) field is incompatible with an adjacent unfenced, off-leash dog exercise area as determined by the Ad-Hoc Dog Committee (reference). The athletic field will also greatly increase the pedestrian and bicycle traffic along the path as well as vehicular traffic on Expo Drive adjacent to this unfenced off-leash area, therefore increasing the likelihood of conflicts and potential injuries to both dogs and people.

There is insufficient parking at the Quann Tennis Complex parking lot for the addition of the numerous vehicles of soccer participants and spectators. The

already existing patron vehicles of tennis players, community gardeners and dog park users often fill this lot.

The off-leash dog exercise area in Quann Park has already been reduced in size to accommodate a community garden and additional municipal buildings and shares the park with a tennis complex and a path utilized by other (non dog-owner) pedestrians and bicyclists. The city has only 4 off-leash dog exercise areas as compared to ~52 soccer fields. The loss therefore of even one off-leash dog park on a recurring basis is very significant. Madison Parks personnel have informed us that there is no plan to provide off-leash exercise space at Quann during AEC usage once the athletic field is established. The establishment of soccer field(s) in Quann along with the planned usage by the AEC will therefore effectively squeeze out the off-leash dog park users on an ever increasing basis over the years.

We request that the Board of Park Commissioners change the Quann Park master plan to replace the planned soccer field with a completely fenced, secure, off-leash dog area for use during AEC events and as a small dog/dogs in training area the rest of the time.

If the Board fails to change the master plan as requested, we ask that at the very least, no athletic fields should be placed in Quann park without prior installation of fencing to completely enclose either the athletic field or the off-leash dog area to avoid conflicts. We also request that precedence be given to off-leash users to the rest of Quann Park (including the athletic field, but not the community garden or tennis courts) when AEC events preclude use of the main off-leash area.

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