



To: Mayor and Council

Agenda Item #: V. A.

From: Jordan Gilgenbach, Communications Coordinator

Action

Discussion

Date: Nov. 18, 2014

Information

Subject: October “Speak Up, Edina” Report

Action Requested:

Receive report on October 2014 “Speak Up, Edina” discussion about dog parks.

Information / Background:

Since June 2012, the City of Edina has used the online engagement website, www.SpeakUpEdina.org, to collect ideas and opinions from residents. One of the City Council’s six strategic priorities for 2014-2015 is Communication and Engagement: “To clearly understand community needs, expectations and opinions, the City will consistently seek the input of a broad range of stakeholders in meaningful and interactive communication.” A goal of that is to host a monthly discussion on www.SpeakUp.Edina.org. In October 2014, the discussion topic centered on dog parks/off-leash areas (OLAs). In this online discussion, the City posed the following questions:

- Should more dog parks/off-leash areas (OLAs) be added? Why?
- Where would you suggest the City consider adding more dog parks/off-leash areas (OLAs)?
- Do you currently use either of the City’s off-leash dog areas? If yes, what do you like best about it?

The discussion was open for comments between Oct. 1 and Nov. 3. During that time, 47 comments were made. Additionally, 1,877 users visited the site 2,748 times, garnering 8,941 page views. Note, during this same period, discussions on the CIP, Sidewalk Facility Map, Wooddale/Valley View and Vision Edina were also active. All commenters in this discussion were from Edina.

The discussion was promoted through various means, including a press release, Facebook, Twitter and NextDoor posts, City Extra messages and direct outreach.

Attached are the comments on this topic.

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▶ **SHARE** your feedback! ▶ **POST** your ideas! ▶ **JOIN** the discussion!

This Discussion channel is currently closed.

Discussion: [Dog Parks](#)

The City of Edina currently operates a year-round dog park/OLA (off-leash area) at Van Valkenburg Park, and a seasonal OLA at Strachauer Park. Should more be added?

The City of Edina is interested in what you think about dog parks.

Note: The City is not proposing a change at this time. By using this online discussion, feedback...

[3 Topics](#) [47 Answers](#) [Closed 2014-11-03](#)

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [More?](#)

Should more dog parks/off-leash areas (OLAs) be added? Why?

31 Responses

31 Responses



[barbara mason](#) about 1 month ago

I support creating more dog park areas in Edina.

7 Supports

comment...

Reply to barbara mason



[Stephanie x](#) about 1 month ago

No more dog parks. I live close to one and I am tired of everyone walking their dogs through my neighborhood and leaving behind a mess. The City of Edina has no business being in the Dog Park business. People need to take care of their animals and not look to the city to provide "fun" for their pets. I am sure the intent of a City Government was not to provide city workers./funds and space for other peoples dogs.

4 Supports

comment...

Reply to Stephanie x



[Lorenzo Tunesi](#) about 1 month ago

I would only support a new dog park if a careful analysis were done to ensure that the park in question would not take away precious public land that could be used for a more general purpose park that would include play areas for kids.

3 Supports



[Sandra McGoldrick-Kendall](#) about 1 month ago

I have spent the past 15 years, in two separate homes, living adjacent to two Edina parks: one lovely "pocket park" tucked in to a modest residential area, and one large park devoted to open space and recreational use (soccer, baseball, ice skating). My observation is "Where are the kids?" I seldom see any children at play, just empty playground equipment. More often than not, the users are retirees, dog walkers, joggers, and sports teams who bring in the kids only for structured practice sessions or games. Unfortunately, public land in Edina doesn't seem all that "precious."

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Sandra McGoldrick-Kendall

comment...

Reply to Lorenzo Tunesi



[Elizabeth Genovese](#) about 1 month ago

Van Valkenburg park is an "okay" dog park but it is better for dogs than for people. The path encircling the park is uneven and difficult to walk..I don't even think about going there in winter(when dogs need outside activity). I am in favor of making some improvements here.

3 Supports

[Reply to Elizabeth Genovese](#)



[FC Hanson](#) about 1 month ago

The only reason to add another dog park would be in the hopes of getting offending dog owners off city park walking paths, where they leave their dog's mess. Kudos to all dog owners who clean up after their dogs!

0 Supports

[Reply to FC Hanson](#)



[Sandra McGoldrick Kendall](#) about 1 month ago

We need more dog park space on the eastern side of Edina. Van Valkenburg is not convenient. In fact, it's not really convenient for anyone not interested in driving to the dog park. (I think driving the car to a dog park is sort of crazy.) Dog parks and cleaning up after your dog are really separate issues. It's not fair to users of dog parks to assume that they are irresponsible. I would argue that anyone willing to pay the licensing and dog park fees, and travel to an authorized dog park, is likely a very responsible pet owner.

8 Supports

[Reply to Sandra McGoldrick-Kendall](#)



[Sharon G](#) about 1 month ago

The steep slope of Van Valkenburg is too difficult for me to manage, creating a risk of falling down that hill, especially if I get tripped up by a dog. I pay extra to go to Eden Prairie dog park with trails through the woods, large open areas, & a picnic shelter with tables & shade. Edina could do better. At the very least, Van Valkenburg needs to be upgraded to eliminate the difficult walking terrain for the people.

5 Supports

[Reply to Sharon G](#)



[Bob York](#) about 1 month ago

I consider Van Valkenburg to be pretty inconvenient for most of the residents of Edina. It is pretty clear that it was a parcel of public land for which there really were few other uses, given the topography and location. I think dog parks are a community asset and would like to see at least one more, ideally more centrally located.

4 Supports

[Reply to Bob York](#)



[Bob York](#) about 1 month ago

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1 Support

[Reply to Bob York](#)



[Nancy Killilea](#) about 1 month ago

I am not sure the actual number of dog parks needs to increase but the location and the quality of the dog parks should be improved. Van Valkenburg is not a convenient location, it is difficult to navigate for humans and it seems to have been left over land used as a dog park rather than a suitable spot minimally designed to be a dog park. I have used the park in the past but no longer do because it is not acceptable space. I would support a dog park on the east side of Edina (please consider the Weber Park woods)

2 Supports

[Reply to Nancy Killilea](#)



[Michael X](#) about 1 month ago

Agree with Stephanie. Taxpayers should not get the bill for dog care. I like dogs, grew up with them and still enjoy OP dogs (other people's), as long as they and their owners behave well. We don't need any dog parks for that matter, and if a dog park is somehow deemed an unalienable right, it can be funded entirely by dog owners, not me.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Michael X



[Claudia Eggan](#) about 1 month ago

There should be more dog parks. I currently use Van Valkenburg and it's very convenient to where I'm located. If the only park in our city was on the east side of town, or even in the center of town, I would not use it, so I understand those in other parts of our city that want a park near them. I'm a big fan of any dog park as it promotes fitness for dogs AND their humans. City workers are not responsible for cleaning up any piles, they mow and maintain fencing. I've found that those using the park regularly are very responsible and pick up after their dog, as well as any other messes they find by not-so-responsible users. We want a clean space for us and our dogs so we're happy to police the area. I agree with the earlier posting that asked, "Where are the kids?" There is almost always someone using the dog park area. The park nearer my home with fancy, new playground equipment is mostly vacant. Users pay an additional fee for the dog park and I hope the city continues to use these fees to invest in upkeep of Van Valkenburg...and any new dog parks.

3 Supports

comment...

Reply to Claudia Eggan



[Larry Cipolla](#) about 1 month ago

The City probably has sufficient dog parks. The City does not have sufficient community gardens. Is the City serious about going green? encouraging healthier life styles? having more family friendly areas? teaching kids and parents how to grow some of their own chemical-free food? teaching kids about responsibility? Community gardens are one way to accomplish some of Edina's stated green and healthier living goals. When set up correctly, they are a proven method for creating community, they are almost maintenance-free and are self-supporting.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Larry Cipolla



[Vicki Berg](#) about 1 month ago

We use the dog park on a daily basis, as do many other owners. I appreciate that the city has created the Van Valkenburg Dog Park. The comments regarding the terrain and safety are correct. Many of us have fallen on the uneven and icy paths. They really need to be graded. The lack of drinking water for the dogs is a huge issue. Most of us carry our own water to the park because the container that a kind pet owner provided isn't always filled. I would like the people who are against dog parks to understand that all of us pay for both a city license and a dog park collar on an annual basis. With the lack of frequent mowing, water, grading and benches, I doubt that much, if any, of people's taxes are being used to maintain the park. I wonder if those against dog parks have been to one and seen how much they are used. Another park centrally located would be wonderful, as the Van Valkenburg OLP is very crowded on afternoons and weekends. Crowded parks are a danger to both humans and dogs. And to Stephanie X, I would like to say that Edina isn't in the "business" of providing "fun" for dogs. We owners pay to have a safe place for our animals to exercise and socialize. I'm sorry she's experienced irresponsible dog owners walking through her neighborhood. More than likely, the more dog parks we would have, the less she'd see that. Also, we have traveled to many cities that market the availability of their dog parks to attract people. Unfortunately, Van Valkenburg doesn't hold a candle to any of them, but it's what we have to use. Obviously, I wholeheartedly support more and better dog parks.

3 Supports



Jordan Gilgenbach admin 28 days ago

Hi Vicki! Thanks for logging in and giving your feedback! Issues that affect existing dog parks is good information for staff to have. Thanks, again!

0 Supports



Vicki Berg 27 days ago

You're welcome, Jordan. Just a thought; when we travel, we use a book from AAA that, among other things, has a listing of dog parks in cities. That might be a good marketing avenue for Edina. Also, having the availability of a temporary use collar for visitors would help. The requirements would need to be the same for health and safety reasons. We paid, I believe, around \$75-90 for our two dogs to be able to use a dog park in FL. We had to provide proof of immunizations and a negative fecal test. The availability of temporary collars could be listed on the Edina website and in the About Town so that current residents would know of the collars for visitors. The number of people traveling with pets is increasing. Perhaps this is something Edina might want to consider.

0 Supports



Jordan Gilgenbach admin 27 days ago

Thanks for the suggestion! A temporary license could be beneficial not only for those travelling long distances with pets, but also regionally -- even just cross-metro!

0 Supports

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

Reply to Vicki Berg



claire lee about 1 month ago

I do use the Van Valkenburg Dog Park and would love to see another dog park in Edina on the condition that the city agrees to take better care of the current dog park and any future dog park. I agree with earlier comments about the lack of mowing, trimming of trees and brush, watering, bathroom (outhouse) facilities, water,

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to claire lee



JoAnn Hillstrom about 1 month ago

I'm a senior citizen with a dog and I love to take him to a good off leash dog park. We both need exercise. Sometimes he has more energy than I do and he can run around while I move a little slower. I love a woodsy nature area and it makes me happy to see my dog chase a squirrel up a tree. Being out in nature is so important to me. Neither of our off leash parks provides an experience like this for me. Van Valkenburg , although small and physically challenging in the winter (think icy toilet bowl), is an off leash dog park where regular visitors have created a sense of community and friendships between people and dogs. I live near Strachauer Park and I walk my leashed dog there daily. I rarely see dogs in the hockey rink off leash dog park. I usually drive to Bloomington or St. Louis Park to use their dog parks.

I remember when dogs were free to roam as they pleased. Those days are gone. Now we are required to vaccinate, leash, license, fence, and clean up after our dogs. Most dog owners are more than happy to do this. It helps so much if there are good off leash dog parks where dogs can be the animals they are while getting socialized, exercised, emptied, and becoming better neighbors for everyone. It seems reasonable to dedicate more than two acres for off leash dog parks in Edina.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to JoAnn Hillstrom



Elizabeth Bellas about 1 month ago

I live near Strachauer Park. Starting in 2013, the city started putting a gate across the entrance to the hockey rink from April to November to be used as an off-leash area. I think this is a smart use of the space. I walk my dog past the park every day, and although it is not heavily used, many times we meet a neighbor and stop at the off-leash area for some play time and chat time. I have met several neighbors this way. Dog owners keep the area clean and even stock the "doggie bag" container when it runs out of bags. It is not an exciting dog park, but it is an asset to the neighborhood and an efficient use of space and city dollars. I would like to see more hockey rinks around the city set up as off-leash areas during the warmer months.

That being said, I agree with JoAnn that it would be nice to have a dog park that is more woodsy and natural, as well.

2 Supports



Jordan Gilgenbach admin 28 days ago

Elizabeth, thanks for your comments. I'm glad to hear you enjoy using Strachauer Park! The City operates about 12 ice rinks in neighborhood parks in the winter. Would you support expanding the Strachauer Park concept to other parks with permanent rink boards?

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

Reply to Elizabeth Bellas



Lori Richman 29 days ago

I support another dog park on the east side of Edina as well. As a responsible pet owner, I clean up after my dogs and exercise them daily. I often use the Three Rivers parks as they are beautifully maintained and always have water, waste bags, and restrooms. (Bloomington's city dog park is great also!)

Seriously, let's be reasonable about tax dollars: not every program that exists is one that every individual uses or supports. Contributing together to create liveable communities, accepting differences, being respectful for each others' rights and property, this is what makes communities healthy and strong. Just because I don't use the soccer fields any more does not mean that I don't support upgrades, keeping them well maintained, etc. As it happens, dog park users pay not only license fees, but dog park fees. Hopefully this offsets tax dollars a bit. What IS the city in "the business of" if it is not to create and maintain a great community?

Finally, based on evidence, the Van Valkenburg dog park is a "low priority" for the City: frequent outages of bags, no water, poorly maintained, on the rare occasion that woodchips are put there, they include a variety of other debris such as shredded cans (which cut dog paws), the area is seldom policed for non-licensed users, etc. I support another east-side dog park and better upkeep. Thanks!

2 Supports

Reply to Lori Richman



Connie Carrino 28 days ago

Perhaps instead of more dog parks, we should have better, improved dog parks. We no longer take our dog to Van Valkenburg (too difficult to walk; dogs run out of owners' sight; too icy in the winter) and rarely go to Strachauer (BORING, no fun) Instead, we take him to Eden Prairie where they have dog parks that are more enjoyable for people and pets. At one park, off Shady Oak Rd, they have agility equipment which is great fun. And the size of that park is better for tossing the ball. Although the dog park layout/facilities in Eden Prairie are better, it seems as if the residents of Edina do a much better job of cleaning up. Or, maybe the dog parks don't have as many messes because they aren't frequented as much? I'd rather wear an old pair of shoes so my dog can safely run off-leash, have fun and do so in a park that we both want to visit.

1 Support



Jordan Gilgenbach admin 28 days ago

Thanks for your comments, Connie! Interesting comment about Van Valkenburg being "boring." Could something like an obstacle or agility course make Van Valkenburg more appealing? If something were explored, would you support an OLA permit price increase to fund it?

0 Supports



Jordan Gilgenbach admin 27 days ago

Thanks for that feedback, Connie!

0 Supports



Connie Carrino 27 days ago

Actually, it is Strachauer dog park (the enclosed ice arena) that is boring. Van Valkenburg is just too difficult to toss the ball, watch your dog (like owners are supposed to do, but many don't), or even walk with your dog because of the path (see others comments about the slope).

Hhmm... Would I support permit price increase? That would depend upon a few factors including if one of the parks were appropriately reconfigured to accommodate agility equipment (it wouldn't work in the current state of VV because of the "big gulp gully" topography), and if the price increase was competitive with what I'm paying in Eden Prairie. Everyone pays the same rate in EP, regardless if the dogs use the agility equipment or not. Since I have to drive to the parks in EP or Edina, convenience isn't a factor, but I would compare cost of permits in the two cities with amenities.

This year we purchased permits for both cities, thinking we would go to Edina off-leash parks, too. We won't do that next year because the EP parks are better. Edina Parks and Rec might want to visit some of the EP dog parks as a comparison, especially if they are considering adding a new park with dog and people-friendly amenities (would Pamela Park or Fred Richards work?).

BTW: When our dog gets into his agility routine, many other dogs follow him and the owners love it---their dogs are learning something new, too!

Sorry to give you "it depends" answer, Jordon, but it really is about what value we would receive.

2 Supports

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

Reply to Connie Carrino



John Wright 26 days ago

YES! I like the Strachauer Park version where the hockey rink is closed off with a temporary fence. Does not take land/facilities away from the rest of the park. I would love to see a OLA similar to this at Cornelia Park. As for the Van Vulkanburg park, it is a great OLA for dogs, other comments withstanding.

1 Support

Reply to John Wright



Bob Kearney 21 days ago

Would an additional dog park serve a public good? It's easy and inexpensive to find out. Throw up a fence, post a sign with the rules, and see if anyone goes there. If they do, great. If they don't, put the land to another use. (If you think I'm underestimating the infrastructure that's required, take a look at the

informal dog park north of Weber Park. It has no fence, no bathrooms, no city maintenance and it works very well. The people who use it are very good about picking up the trash and dog waste. The City of Minneapolis currently owns the property and has removed structures and cleaned out deadfall from time to time, but there's no mowing or trimming.) Final thought: a dog park doesn't preclude other uses; the informal Weber dog park is also used by mountain bikers, hikers and others.

2 Supports

comment...

Reply to Bob Kearney



[Cyd Perszyk](#) 19 days ago

We've lived in Edina 24 year and had a dog for 13 of them. We live next door to Pamela Park. We pick up discarded water bottles and trash from the football and soccer and baseball games. But we're not allowed to let our dog run off leash at 6:00 am when the park is deserted. Edina does not need more dog parks. Edina DOES need to allow people to use their neighborhood park to walk their dog off leash in the shoulder hours -- before 7:00 am, for example, and again after 9:00 pm. I understand that dogs should not be off leash during busy times when the parks are full of kids. But not allowing tax payers to use their neighborhood park to walk their dog off leash at 6:00 am is ridiculous. Dog parks concentrate too many dogs in one area, which degrades the vegetation and makes a poopy mess. Spreading out all off-leash dogs across all Edina parks during unused hours is a win for everyone. We always pick up our dogs' poop. And we often pick up the poop that other people have left behind. Non-scoopers SHOULD be ticketed heavily. People who bring their dogs off-leash outside of the off-leash hours SHOULD be ticketed heavily. The truth is that people whose dogs are not in control don't let their dogs off the leash because they will run away. People whose dogs ARE in control should be able to use their neighborhood parks during off hours. Boulder CO has a system where off-leash dog owners pay a small annual fee and their dogs are checked out by the City. If a dog is deemed to be aggressive or not in control, it's denied the license. I understand not wanting or allowing dogs off leash during peak park use hours. But I don't understand why we cannot walk a dog off a leash at 6:00 in the morning. There are no children in the park at that hour. The only other people in the park at that hour are those walking their dogs Or the animal control officer waiting with ticket pad in hand. The Valkenburg park is abysmal and it is ludicrous to drive to a dog park.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Cyd Perszyk



[Barb Spoehr Schlaefer](#) at November 01, 2014 at 12:16pm CDT

As the city of Edina continues to build and grow, it's important to our family that the rare open spaces that exist be preserved and maintained for recreational use - whether it be dog park, bikeway, walking paths or nature area. It's hard for local governments to resist the new tax revenue that a giant new development could generate. Ultimately, green space and recreational opportunities will do more to enhance our quality of life in Edina than a little bump in our tax base. We do not suffer from lack of services.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Barb Spoehr Schlaefer

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Discussion: Dog Parks

The City of Edina currently operates a year-round dog park/OLA (off-leash area) at Van Valkenburg Park, and a seasonal OLA at Strachauer Park. Should more be added?

The City of Edina is interested in what you think about dog parks.

Note: The City is not proposing a change at this time. By using this online discussion, feedback...

3 Topics 47 Answers Closed 2014-11-03

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Where?](#)

Where would you suggest the City consider adding more dog parks/off-leash areas (OLAs)?

6 Responses

6 Responses



[Sharon G](#) about 1 month ago

Todd Park has a nice back woods area where people walk their dogs anyway. How about fencing it in and making it official. Also, the areas around the water towers aren't used by anyone...might look into those spaces. How about the bottomland areas of 9 mile creek behind the industrial parks... no one said a dog park had to be square.

1 Support



[Jordan Gilgenbach](#) admin 28 days ago

Interesting idea about the land around water tower bases! Thanks for commenting!

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Jordan Gilgenbach

comment...

Reply to Sharon G



[Sharon G](#) about 1 month ago

Maybe incorporate something into the re- development of the Fred Richards Golf course near the freeway, and the re-development of the Grandview Heights area.

1 Support

comment...

Reply to Sharon G



[Nancy Killilea](#) about 1 month ago

Weber Park/Minikahda vista woods!

4 Supports

comment...

Reply to Nancy Killilea



[JoAnn Hillstrom](#) about 1 month ago

I agree with Nancy. The land at 40th and France that is currently used as a dog park and has been for decades. But there should be an area in south central area of Edina as well.

1 Support

Reply to JoAnn Hillstrom



Bob Kearney 21 days ago

I agree that Weber Woods is a logical place for a "new" park. (I put new in quotes because this green space has been used as a dog park for many years.) The two current parks are in the far northwest and far southeast of Edina. For balance, we would want a park in the northeast or southwest. I'm not sure what's available in the southwest. In the northeast, Weber Woods is an obvious choice. It also has the benefit of being adjacent to a large stormwater retention pond that might need to be expanded in the future.

0 Supports

Reply to Bob Kearney

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3 Topics

47 Answers

Closed 2014-11-03

[View Discussion](#)

Topic: [Do you use?](#)

Do you currently use either of the City's off-leash dog areas? If yes, what do you like best about it?

10 Responses

10 Responses



[Nancy Killilea](#) about 1 month ago

I no longer use the dog park at Van Valkenburg. I had previously paid to use the dog park but found it unpleasant and difficult space and an inconvenient location.

0 Supports

comment...



Reply to Nancy Killilea



[Claudia Eggan](#) about 1 month ago

YES!! I never expected to get to know other dog owners in my community so well. I've seen several good friendships blossom -- friendships that would not have been forged if this park wasn't available. The love of our dogs, and the need for exercise, brings us together. This park is not without its issues. The terrain can be an issue for some, but it's convenient for residents on the west side of town, so us "regulars" will continue to be advocates for improvements and do our best to maintain this park.

2 Supports

comment...



Reply to Claudia Eggan



[Vicki Berg](#) about 1 month ago

Claudia is correct. As a daily user, I have seen a number of friendships formed between humans and dogs, creating a real sense of community. I have also seen responsible dog owners picking up after other dogs and telling people without park collars how to get one. It is the community at the OLP and the opportunity for dogs to exercise that I appreciate the most.

0 Supports

comment...



Reply to Vicki Berg



[Vicki Berg](#) about 1 month ago

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0 Supports

comment...



Reply to Vicki Berg



[Vicki Berg](#) about 1 month ago

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0 Supports

[Reply to Vicki Berg](#)



[Vicki Berg](#) about 1 month ago

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0 Supports

[Reply to Vicki Berg](#)



[Julia Bartholomew](#) about 1 month ago

comment...

0 Supports

[Reply to Julia Bartholomew](#)



[Julia Bartholomew](#) about 1 month ago

comment... We just adopted a puppy this summer. We live near Strachauer Park and while this area is open, it really is just a dirt hockey rink. Van Valkenburg, while a nice area is very far from us. Since we are paying for the Off Leash collar, why not solicit ideas from this group of dog owners to see what might be available at Strachauer? The area closest to Hwy 62 is never used by children, hockey or soccer players. If some part of that space could be fenced in, it might be a nice grassy area for dogs to play in that would not be adjacent to homes or a playground area. I agree that it has been nice meeting other dog owners. That fosters community.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Julia Bartholomew



[JoAnn Hillstrom](#) about 1 month ago

I paid for the OffLeash Collar but have not used either dog park this year. I take my dog to a dog park at least twice a week, usually to the park on 40th and France. Sometimes to the Bloomington dog park in Nesbitt and 110th, a 20 mile round trip.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to JoAnn Hillstrom



[Elizabeth Bellas](#) about 1 month ago

I do use the Strachauer Park off-leash area. It's not terribly exciting, but it is fun for some doggie play time and neighbor chat time. During the Night to Unite party our neighborhood held at Strachauer Park, the off-leash area was bustling with several dogs and many neighborhood children playing, laughing, and having a wonderful time.

0 Supports

comment...

Reply to Elizabeth Bellas

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