

Your Town

[Weather](#) | [traffic](#) | [transit](#)

search [GO](#)

[< Back to front page](#)

Text size [-](#) [+](#)

BACK BAY, DOWNTOWN

Group seeks city approval to establish off-leash areas for dogs on Boston Common

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 18, 2013 05:50 PM

[Print](#) | [Comments \(\)](#)

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A nonprofit group hopes to establish off-leash areas for dogs within Boston Common.

The [Friends of the Public Garden](#), working with its [Common Canine](#) subcommittee, has applied with the city to create “dog recreation space” on the Common, according to parks department spokeswoman Jacquelyn Goddard.

The application is scheduled to be presented and discussed at the city’s Parks and Recreation Commission on Monday, Jan. 28, on the third floor of 1010 Massachusetts Ave., she said. The commission will vote on the proposal at a later date.

“We want to find a way where everyone can use and share the park happily enough and also provide a place for people to bring their dogs,” said Elizabeth Vizza, executive director of the friends organization.

The proposal calls for establishing off-leash areas in five locations, two of which

BostonShops »



Let the shopping begin. Get exclusive promotions and sales from your favorite retailers. And never miss a great deal again.

[SEE A SAMPLE](#)

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE »

28
Homes for sale

288
Rentals available

1
Open houses this week

0
New listings this week

SPECIAL ADVERTISING DIRECTORY

CAMP GUIDE »

A camp for every kid!

Adventure, sports, theater, music, arts or technology—find the perfect camp for your child at boston.com/campguide.



The proposal calls for establishing off-leash areas in five locations, two of which would be in use at any given time, she said. Every six months, the two sites that are in use would rotate so that the grounds do not become too worn and can have time to be restored between use.

The sites, which range in size from 21,000 to 57,500 square feet, would be open from 5 to 10 a.m. and 4 to 9 p.m. Three of the proposed sites are located near Beacon Street; two are near the Parkman Bandstand by Tremont Street.

The proposal would not involve building any fenced-off areas or designating any areas for dogs to use exclusively, the proponents said. Instead, signs and/or existing walkways would be used to mark the off-leash areas' boundaries.

Dog waste dispensers would be added and maintained by the friends organization.

Rules would also be posted, including that all dogs must be licensed and vaccinated, dogs must wear collars, no excessive barking and that dog owners may not bring more than three of their dogs to the area at a time.

Vizza said the hope is that those rules can be policed by the dog owners and other park users.

The friends group would be responsible for all costs associated with running and maintaining the spaces.

In 2004, the city enacted an ordinance that allows a private organization to seek city approval to create and manage a public recreation space for dogs that the organization would be responsible for paying for and running, according to the parks department spokeswoman.

About six or seven years, an off-leash area was established on the Common as part of a pilot program that the city approved, Vizza said.

But, that area, located between the Joy Street steps and the Frog Pond, is now suffering from overuse and turf damage, which in part led to the proposal for multiple sites that would be used on a rotating basis, she said.

Some dogs and their owners have also not followed rules in the pilot program, including wandering off beyond the designated areas.



Waiting for Twitter to feed in the latest..

[Follow other Boston.com Tweets](#) | [What is Twitter?](#)

"It's clear that the situation is overdue for repair," said Vizza.

Vizza said that the debate around off-leash areas for dogs in public spaces often ends up being a battle between dog owners and non-dog owners.

"I'd like to think it doesn't have to be that way," she said. "I hope we can figure out something that's a win-win for the park and users,"

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

--

For the latest updates about your community, follow some of our local neighborhood, city and town Twitter accounts, [here](#).

◀ Previous
entry

Next entry ▶

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Local Search](#)

[CONTACT BOSTON.COM](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Your Ad Choices](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#) | [Sitemap](#)

[CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Boston Globe Insiders](#) | [The Boston Globe Gallery](#) | © NY Times Co.