To Whom it May Concern:

Burlington is viewed as being a dog-friendly city, but in reality there are very few places that I may take my dog off leash to run. I have a well-trained dog, but to be in compliance with the city, I must not take my dog off leash unless in a designated dog park. I live in the South End, so it is not feasible to walk to Starr Farm dog park, nor to the Waterfront Dog Park, because my back will give out although I am only 30-something years old. I understand that there were pilot dog parks in Oakledge, the Intervale and another place, but no one seems to be able to communicate where you can take your dog off leash and during what hours the dog part of these parks are open.

Unfortunately, responsible dog owners all over the city are forced to either increase their carbon footprint by driving to a dog park (the two of which the public knows are overused and/or in need of repairs) or break the law by bringing their dog to a local park to run off leash. In order for dogs to be healthy and happy and without behavior issues, they need exercise and lots of it. We humans usually tire well before our dogs, and so that is why we need dog parks. I run or bike with my dog twice a day everyday, but she still needs at least another 30 to 60 minutes of vigorous exercise, and some play time in a dog park fits that bill. Adding more dog parks would reduce the amount of off-leash dogs in city parks not designated as dog parks. Moreover, dog parks help dog owners to interact to help solve behavioral and training issues for both the dogs and their often well-intentioned owners. A dog who is exercised regularly will not exhibit excessive barking, destructiveness or other nuisance behaviors which can cause friction between neighbors. So, in conclusion, I would like to emphasize that a tired dog is a good dog and that makes the entire neighborhood happy.

Regards,

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