

ITEM #:	29
DATE:	12-09-25
DEPT:	P&R

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 19 OF *MUNICIPAL CODE* (PARKS AND RECREATION)**

BACKGROUND:

At the March 11, 2025 City Council meeting, City staff made a presentation regarding the topic of micromobility uses in the City of Ames. As part of that presentation, City Council referred the micromobility uses in parks to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Shortly afterwards, at the March 27, 2025 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, City staff presented the topic of micromobility. A lengthy discussion occurred and the Commission proceeded to review Chapter 19 of the *Municipal Code* (Parks and Recreation) to see how the code might address micromobility use in the parks.

Upon reviewing Chapter 19, the Commission realized there were other sections of Chapter 19 and the Park Rules that could use some updates to reflect current practices and/or to provide clarity on expectations of park use.

It should be noted that the responsibility of updating the Park Rules is a function of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Council need not take any action regarding Park Rules.

As such, the Commission engaged the public and sought feedback regarding *Municipal Code* Chapter 19 and the Park Rules. An in-person public input session was held on April 2, 2025 and a public survey (1,200 responses) was made available. There were also additional email correspondences with community members on these topics.

Having received public feedback, the Commission has proposed updates to its Park Rules, which will be considered at its December 18 meeting. The Commission also proposed changes to *Municipal Code* Chapter 19, which were discussed with City Council at its November 18 meeting. **Notably, as it relates to micromobility and personal transportation device uses, the Parks Commission is recommending a park rule to implement a 10 mph speed limit on park trails and paths.**

The main concerns heard involved multi-modal uses on park trails and paths, and the need to institute a speed limit for safety purposes. This will be discussed more in depth at this same meeting when formal ordinance updates to *Municipal Code* Chapter 4: Bicycles are being considered by Council.

At its November 18 meeting, City Council directed staff to draft updates to *Municipal Code* Chapter 19. The ordinance has been drafted and is attached for the City Council's review.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 19 UPDATES:

Changes consist of updating existing language to be clearer on the intent of what was already

there as well as:

Sec. 19.2 - Appointment of Member, Term of Office

Remove the last sentence (The one year special term shall be applied to a position first becoming vacant after the date of this ordinance.). This is no longer needed since the ordinance has been in effect for many years.

Sec. 19.7 (7)(b) Leasing to Organizations

The language was very specific to "amateur or professional baseball or other athletic games" and is being changed to "activities" to provide the Commission greater flexibility if the opportunity arises.

Sec. 19.8 Damaging Plants, Property in Parks and Recreational Facilities

(1) Removed very specific examples.

(2) Added that foraging edible plants, fruits and nuts is allowed within the park system.

(3) Added a more generic statement regarding what is prohibited (this replaces what was removed in Sec. 19.8 (1)).

Sec. 19.10 Weapons Prohibited

Removes the prohibition on firearms in the parks so it is in accordance with Iowa State Law.

Sec. 19.13 Dogs at Homewood Golf Course

This change puts in writing that officially documented service animals are allowed at Homewood.

Sec. 19.15 Swimming Prohibited

A park rule prohibiting swimming in Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake has been in place. The Commission is proposing this to be an ordinance and to include any body of water on City owned property.

Sec. 19.15 Bait Dumping Prohibited

The prohibition is being expanded to include any lake, pond, river, or stream on City-owned property.

Sec. 19.19 Boat Motors

Adding an exception for emergency watercraft as approved in advance by the Parks and Recreation Commission. This would allow this use for events such as the Ames Triathlon.

Sec. 19.20 Fishing from Bridges Prohibited

Expands this prohibition to any bridge within the park system.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve on first reading of the attached ordinance regarding Ames Municipal Code Chapter 19 to take effect immediately after final ordinance adoption.

2. Direct staff to modify the proposed ordinance and bring it back to a future City Council meeting for City Council consideration

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Updating Municipal Code Chapter 19 will improve public safety and clarify what is acceptable behavior within the park system. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[DRAFT Ordinance Amending Chapter 19 to clarify expectations of park use.pdf](#)